City of Greer Parks and Recreation Strategic/Master Plan Evaluation

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Introduction

Park and recreation agencies are an important component of local government. The benefits and services they provide are vital to the community. They promote community health, social capital, environmental benefits, and economic benefits. The services of park and recreation agencies reach all ages, ethnicities, and income levels. They are essential to the quality of life of individuals and the community as a whole.

One of the critical objectives of park and recreation agencies is to provide outlets for improving community health (Lehman 2012; Bedimo-Rung, et al., 2005; Maller, et al 2008; and Kaplan and Kaplan 1989). They facilitate community wellness programs; provide trails for running, biking, and walking; provide access to exercise equipment, pools, and sporting facilities (Lehmann, 2012). Health benefits include lower risk of obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and stress reduction (Bedimo-Rung, et al., 2005). Park and recreation agencies also enhance youth development and fitness through the sport programs that they provide. The amenities provided through the agency support the overall well-being of the entire community.

Parks and recreation enhance the social capital of a community (Flora and Flora, 2008; Bedimo-Rung, et al. 2005; Maller, et al. 2008; Coleman 1988; Glover and Hemingway 2005; Putnam 1993; and Stebbins and Graham 2004). Social capital consists of the networks, norms, and trust that exist among groups within a community (Flora and Flora, 2008). The agency provides open space for festivals and events that bring a community together. The activities facilitated through the parks and recreation department creates an improved sense of community pride. Research shows that youth development programs supported by these agencies reduce juvenile delinquency and help build strong families, and strong communities. The social capital stimulated by parks and recreation also provides social connections such as increased social

networks, improved health and community image, lower crime rates, and higher educational achievement (Anderson et. al, 2009).

The environmental benefits of parks are also important to the future of communities. Sustainable development is the current and future direction that cities, businesses, and government are beginning to embrace (Bedimo-Rung, et al., 2005; Maller, et al., 2008). Parks play a role in this by preserving and purifying the environment. Trees from parks reduce air pollution, moderate temperatures, and alter building energy use (Bedimo-Rung, et al., 2005). As such, parks and recreation agencies will play an important role in retaining green space in the community. Revitalizing open space is not only an environmental benefit, but a social, economic, and health benefit as well. Parks are a place for people to gather, exercise, and enjoy the outdoors. Studies also suggest there are psychological, emotional, and mental health benefits from being able to view nature (Bedimo-Rung, et al., 2005; and Maller, et al., 2008). Other advantages from open space include reduction in disease, crime, and social unrest (Maller, et al., 2008). There is also a correlation between parks and nature and enhanced work productivity. Evidence shows that access to nature in the work place is related to lower levels of job stress and higher levels of job satisfaction. Employees also reported fewer illnesses and used less sick days (Kaplan and Kaplan, 1989).

Park and recreation agencies can help cities and towns revitalize green space by using infill development. Infill development has its own benefits like less motor vehicle use, provision of new housing, access to services or jobs, use of existing infrastructure, and restoration of the ecosystem (Wheeler, 2002). By responsibly using open space and abandoned areas, parks and recreation departments can provide social, health, economic, and environmental benefits to the community.

Parks and recreation can be one of the catalysts for local economic growth (Lehman 2012; Bedimo-Rung, et al., 2005; Maller, et al., 2008; Kaplan and Kaplan 1989; Crompton 2006 and 2010; Crompton and Lee 2000; Sherer 2006, Florida 2000). The economic impact of parks and recreation are increasingly recognized as an essential component to economic development. The services and facilities created are important in the recruitment of new business and residents. The services and facilities offered are a direct link to the quality of life that businesses can promote and residents demand. The amenities offered also typically increase property value, which leads to an increase in the tax base. Additionally, parks and recreation agencies are the engines of local tourism, which is a $134 billion dollar industry (www.commerce.gov). The economic impact of parks and recreation agencies can have a profound effect on the overall well-being of a community.

In today's fast changing society it is important for government organizations to be able to adapt to trends and events to better meet the needs of the people they serve. One way to plan for and adjust to change is for organizations to create a strategic plan. Through strategic planning organizations will understand who they are, where they need to be, and how to get there. All levels of government organizations stand to benefit from strategic planning and "municipal officials are encouraged to use it as a tool to manage the change and complexity present in their environments. The core idea in strategic planning is to focus selectively on the future in order to 'build on strengths and take advantages of opportunities while minimizing weaknesses and threats" (Wheeland, 1993: 65). A strategic plan must incorporate a thorough understanding of what needs to be achieved now and in the future to allow for detailed plans on how to achieve specific objectives. A successful plan includes measureable goals that would result from the implementation of the strategic plan (Gordon, 1993).

Agencies need detailed strategic plans as a road map to reach their final goals. Moreover, the evolving plan needs to be reevaluated over time to determine if strategic plan metrics are being met. In this sense, the department's strategic plan is an important tool in accountability and communication with other departments, agencies, and the community. Strategic planning can accommodate different interests and values; facilitate communication and participation among community members; promote wise decision making based on informed and reasonable analysis, enhance ongoing learning; and promote successful implementation and accountability (Bryson, 2011).

Reviewing a department's strategic plan will not only aid in implementation and accountability, but it will also create public value. "Public value argues that public services are distinctive because they are characterized by claims of rights by citizens to services that have been authorized and funded through some democratic process" (Coats, David; Passmore, Elanor, 2008: 4). These processes can assist city professionals in thinking about the department as a valuable service to the community now and in the future. The public value imbedded in the mission of the strategic plan will promote the ideas, wants, and needs of the community along with playing an important role in budget decision-making. Ultimately, it will explain what the organization stands for, who they are accountable to, and if they are successful.

The process of strategic planning can also be used to find and create ideas on how to better serve the community. To best serve the community, it is critical for the Parks and Recreation Department to consider the broad needs, interests and goals of their stakeholders. Developing strategic planning can be time consuming and expensive, but it can be argued "all communities want to provide efficient and effective services to their constituents and enhance the general quality of life of their communities" (Gordon, Gerald L. 1993: 7).

In 2009 Dr. Robert Brookover of Clemson University's Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management researched and designed a strategic plan for the City of Greer's Parks and Recreation Department. The strategic plan was used in implementing recommendations for future growth for the city and the parks and recreation department. The benefits outlined in the plan include social, personal, and environmental advantages. The American Planning Association upholds that communities use parks in the following ways:

1. revive failing or threatened commercial areas,

2. turn around distressed areas,

3. build a sense of community and improve quality of life,

4. increase municipal revenues and real property values,

5.   attract knowledge workers and talent,

6. engage children in learning through play and closing the educational gap,

7.   provide health benefits, special events, festivals, and sports tournaments;

8. and have voter support to direct public funds toward growth management, mixed development, and redevelopment strategies (Anderson, et. al, 2009).

The report concludes that the economic impact of parks and recreation will always be recognized as an important part of the cost-benefit equation for communities. Moreover, research has consistently identified an array of additional benefits that parks and recreation agencies can contribute to their communities, often at a far lesser cost than private sector recreation providers (Anderson et. al, 2009).

The foundation of this project was to review, evaluate, and possibly revise the City of Greer Parks and Recreation's 2009 Strategic Plan. This research seeks to determine if the strategic plan created in 2009 has been implemented, as determined by a survey of customer

satisfaction and suggest revision of the plan based on the review, survey, and evaluation of results. The revision of the 2009 City of Greer Parks and Recreation Strategic/Master Plan is important to the department's future. Demographics, policies, and business in the city have all changed in the past four years and this revised plan will assist the city in ongoing adaptation to a changing environment. This research will conclude with recommendations for the City of Greer based on literature reviews, needs assessment, and data analysis.

2009 City of Greer Parks and Recreation Strategic/Master Plan

In 2009 Dr. Robert Brookover of Clemson University's Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management was contacted to develop a Parks and Recreation Strategic/Master Plan for the City of Greer. Greer is a municipality in both Greenville and Spartanburg counties in South Carolina (Appendix 2). This was considered an important planning process for both the city and the department. The methodology of the 2009 Strategic/Master Plan was to review and develop a purpose for the parks and recreation department. In order to develop this, a facility inventory, peer agency comparisons, needs assessment survey and focus group interviews were conducted. Methods of research included meetings with the Recreation Director, City Manager, City Planner, review of previous city planning efforts, tour of city recreation facilities and amenities, input sessions, and a needs assessment survey. From all of these methods a vision and mission plan was created along with future recommendations for improvement.

Overall, the 2009 Strategic Plan has provided the Parks and Recreation Department with a vision and a mission. The vision is "parks and recreation creates community through people, parks and programs" (Anderson et al, 2009: 11). The mission is to support economic development, strengthen safety and security, promote health and wellness, foster human development, strengthen community image and sense of place, increase cultural unity, protect

environmental resources, facilitate community problem solving, provide recreational experiences, and provide community opportunities for fun and celebration (Anderson et al, 2009: 11).

One of the critical pieces of this process was an agency comparison between the City of Greer Department of Parks and Recreation and other similar agencies throughout South Carolina (www.cityofgreer.org/docs/ParksandRec/GreerPlan.pdf). This comparison was important for the development of future resources, planning, and oversight. "As Greer continues to grow, the demand for recreation programs and services will increase dramatically" (Anderson et al, 2009: 21). The agency comparison was meant to serve as a benchmark to aid in development, budgeting, and staffing of current and future services. This research concluded that in order to reach peer agency average the department should add at least 12 full time staff positions, 18 part time positions, 130 acres of outdoor space, and $881,062 to the recreation department's annual budget (Anderson et al, 2009). While this research will not be conducting an agency comparison, it will be comparing how the city's demographics have changed since 2009 and efforts made since 2009 to hire staff, develop acreage, and enhance funding. The demographic changes alone may provide additional support for Clemson University's recommendation for growth within the department.

The Clemson report recommended that the City of Greer Parks and Recreation Department implement the South Carolina Vision Plan for Parks and Recreation (Appendix 3). To accomplish the overall mission of parks and recreation, nine strategies were recommended to the City of Greer. The strategies include:

- Communicate the vision and value of parks and recreation and the vision plan to the community and decision makers.
- Form partnerships with allied professionals, citizens, the media, and policymakers to develop partners and allies.

- Expand professional competencies by building capacity within the parks and recreation staff by providing professional and continuing education opportunities that increase skills in the core competencies that will be needed for future success.
- Demonstrate and prove results.
- Document best practices by identifying, developing, and documenting new or current practices that clearly demonstrate the value of parks and recreation.
- Strengthen the parks and recreation ethic by integrating this vision into all aspects of the K-12 education experience.
- Impact public policy at the local, state, and federal level to promote the value of parks and recreation.
- Expand resources by identifying new resources and strategic partnerships to move parks and recreation towards professional and community goals.
- Identify the trends that will have a major impact on parks and recreation in the future.

With the implementation of these nine strategies, this plan will act as the foundation of all decision making and evaluation efforts for the Department of Parks and Recreation in the near future.

Another critical piece of the Clemson University research was a detailed parks and recreation facility inventory detailing all of the facilities under the umbrella of the Parks and Recreation Department. The overview includes pictures, acres, use, amenities, areas of concern, and areas of opportunity. Overall the department oversees 148 acres. Amenities include picnic shelters, basketball courts, playgrounds, baseball fields, a baseball stadium, a disc golf course, soccer fields, amphitheater, promenade, gazebo, football stadium, performing arts center, flexible programming space, meeting and conference rooms, tennis courts, community center, gymnasium, paved trail, and a Veteran's Memorial with army vehicles. The department is one of only two recreation departments in South Carolina with clay tennis courts. A simple strength weakness, opportunities, and threats analysis on all facilities was completed and recommendations for improvement were made based on the analysis. Some of the areas for future consideration are an extensive and scenic trail system along the Tyger River, more green

space, and revitalization of existing and dilapidated facilities. This research will review how well these and other recommendations have been met.

The needs assessment data made up the majority of the Clemson report and were used to create recommendations and implementation plans. Some important highlights of the needs assessment are highlighted below (Anderson et al, 2009):

- 31.5% of respondents believe Greer currently has adequate recreation facilities; 44.8% do not think Greer has adequate recreation facilities; and 23.5% were undecided.
- 62.7% of the respondents indicated that the City of Greer Parks and Recreation Department's facilities and programs have improved in the past 3 years.
- Trails/Greenways; Walking/Jogging Paths, Outdoor Community Pools, Fitness/Recreation Centers and Indoor Aquatics Centers were the top five facility needs identified.
- Fitness Classes, Open Gyms, Swimming Instructions, Adult Activities, and Concerts were the top five programs identified.

Recommendations were provided to the department based on the needs assessment data. Such recommendations include (Anderson et al, 2009):

- Leverage Greer Recreation Association's 501c3 status to identify, solicit and secure sponsorships and donations.
- Increase full-time staff by at least 12 positions and part-time staff by at least 18 positions to reach peer agency average.
- Increase recreation department budget by $881,062 per year to reach peer agency average.
- Facility Development
  1. Develop interconnected, city-wide system of trails, greenways, walking paths, and jogging paths. Incorporate a river trail system on the Tyger and Enoree River into the plan.
  2. Develop a comprehensive indoor recreation facility to include fitness/wellness amenities, courts, and an indoor aquatic facility.
  3. Develop an outdoor pool.
  4. Develop a large, multi-use park to include active and passive recreation spaces.
  5. Develop/renovate cultural arts facility.
  6. Renovate/upgrade community parks and community centers and add new as development warrants.
- Program Needs

  1. Create fitness and wellness programs to include weight training, aerobic, and cardio classes.
  2. Create swimming instruction and water aerobics programs.

3. Expand availability of open gyms.
4. Increase cultural arts, performing arts, and concert offerings.
5. Develop outdoor adventure camps, nature programs, and outdoor adventure activities.
6. Expand teen programs.

- Identify future expansion – Adjacent to County Club Park and Greer High School and the "Golden Box" area.
- Review, evaluate, and update current plan by end of year 5; initiate new plan midway through year 9.

The recommendations provided were to be used as a starting point for the department to plan for future growth. The recommendations to develop a large, multi-use destination park to include active and passive recreation space, and develop a cultural arts facility have been accomplished. Other recommendations like developing an interconnected, city-wide system of greenway trails, walking paths, jogging paths, and the river trail system on the Tyger and Enoree rivers have begun. Renovating and upgrading community parks and community centers have also been initiated. Recommendations such as developing a comprehensive indoor recreation facility to include fitness/wellness amenities; basketball courts, an indoor aquatic facility and an outdoor pool have not been planned for. The department has also not yet leveraged the Greer Recreation Association's 501c3 status to identify, solicit and secure sponsorships and donations. Other recommendations that have not been completed or planned for include creating fitness and wellness programs, swimming instruction, expanding the availability of open gyms, nature programs, outdoor adventure activities, and teen programs. This research will help provide an extension of the Clemson research that helped develop the original strategic plan along with assisting in the evolution and update of this important document for the city.

Demographic Changes

Since the 2009 Strategic Plan, the City of Greer has seen growth and change. It is important for this research to understand the rapid changes that the city has experienced along

with the potential impacts of these changes. These changes affect the services that may be demanded from the community parks and recreation department by new and existing residents. Greer Development Corporation provided the demographic and income profile that shows the city's growth over the past four years (Appendix 4).

According to the Greer Development Corporation the City of Greer encompasses two zip codes, 29650 and 29651. Greer is the 16th largest municipality in South Carolina, and is the third largest city in both Greenville and Spartanburg Counties (www.greerdevelopmentcorp.com). The city is situated in both Greenville and Spartanburg Counties, which makes it unique, but also provides an opportunity for the parks department to form partnerships with both county parks departments as well as other city organizations.

The growth of the city has been astounding over the past decade. The city had 51.4 percent population growth between 2000 and 2010, and is projected to increase 5.1 percent by 2017. In 2010 the median age was 33.9, which has been on the decline since 1990. As the median age declines residents will likely demand more and different services from the Parks and Recreation Department. In addition, the area has experienced immigration that has contributed to its diversification over the past few years; though still the majority with 75.2% of the population, the white population has been falling since 2000. The African American population has remained steady at 15% since 2010, while the Hispanic population has seen the most notable change increasing from .4 percent in 1990 to 11.1% percent in 2012. The Hispanic population is projected to increase to 13.6% of the population by 2017, which will influence the programs and services provided by the Parks and Recreation Department.

Table 1: City of Greer Population by Race and Ethnicity

Race and Ethnicity	Number 2010	Percent 2010	Number 2012	Percent 2012	Number 2017	Percent 2017
White	39,149	76.9%	39,254	75.2%	40,158	73.2%
African American	7,933	15.4%	8,129	15.6%	40,158	73.2%
American Indian	120	0.2%	127	0.2%	152	0.3%
Asian	560	1.1%	589	1.1%	686	1.3%
Pacific Islander	18	0.0%	21	0.0%	30	0.1%
Hispanic	5,319	10.3%	5,810	11.1%	7,487	13.6%
Other	2,725	5.3%	2,986	5.7%	3,897	7.1%
Two or More Races	1,025	2.0%	1,098	2.1%	1,321	2.4%

Ongoing evidence on how different demographics use parks and recreation facilities and programs will be important for future planning and research. The Hispanic population is a growing ethnic group not only in the city of Greer but also in our country. Studies suggest that there are meaningful social and cultural differences in the types of activities that different ethnic groups participate in (Hutchinson, R., 1987; Baas, et al., 1993; and Sasidharan, et al., 2007). There are significant differences not only in the types of activity, but also in sex, age, size, and composition of activity groups (Hutchinson, R., 1987). Future development of facilities and programs should take this growing clientele into consideration. Research suggests that Hispanics participate in activities that have a strong social element (Bass, et al., 1993; Sasidharan, et al.,

2007). Studies also show that Hispanics tend to spend long durations of time in park settings with a large group of people typically during the weekend (Sasidharan, et al., 2007).

Management of recreation sites may differ when comparing predominately white communities with more diverse locations. Language barriers and ethnic differences in attitudes towards rules and regulation will play a role in how sites are managed. For example, visitors may not understand or accept a regulation limiting group size because they value recreating in large groups (Bass, et al., 1993). Park and recreation managers will need to keep this research in mind when creating future policy and facility development such as pavilions and picnic areas, extended park operation hours, and concession stands (Sasidharan, et al., 2007).

The City of Greer has depended upon jobs in manufacturing, and the retail and service sector industries for improvements in economic growth and the local standard of living. Table 1 provides data comparing the per capita and median household incomes of the United States, South Carolina, Greenville and Spartanburg Counties, and the City of Greer. Both Greenville and Spartanburg Counties were included since Greer is situated in both. The City of Greer's per capita income is higher than that of Spartanburg County and on par with the South Carolina average. The City of Greer's Median Household income is the lowest out of the data being compared.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Spartanburg County has seen their unemployment rate slowly decrease. In January 2005 the unemployment rate was 7.9%, it increased to 12.9% in January 2010, and decreased in January 2013 to 8.9%. Greenville County's unemployment rate has been considerably lower when compared to Spartanburg County. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the January 2005 unemployment rate for Greenville County was 6.3%, the rate increased in January 2010 to 10.9%, and the

unemployment rate decreased in January 2013 to 7.3%. As the unemployment rate continues to decrease in both counties the City of Greer's per capita and median household income should increase over time.

Table 2**: Per Capita and Median Household Income Comparisons**

	Per Capita	Median Household
United States	$27,915	$52,762
South Carolina	$23,854	$44,587
Greenville County	$26,412	$48,518
Spartanburg County	$22,275	$43,563
City of Greer	$23,591	$42,454

Information was taken from the U.S. Census Bureau website. All data is from 2012.

An exciting announcement for the City of Greer is the groundbreaking later this year of the South Carolina Ports Authority's Inland Port. This has the long run potential to result in increasing population, household income, and standard of living. The Inland Port project will connect over 200 miles of railroad to link Charleston, SC with Greer, SC in order to more efficiently move freight across the state (www.cityofgreer.org). U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham stated, "the center connects the international shipping powerhouse in Charleston with Interstate 85, which is one of the key highways not just in the state, but in all of the Southeast" (Collins, Jeffrey, 2013). This new port will lessen some of the traffic congestion on Interstate 26, as well as bring the shipping industry closer to planes, trains, and other major highways. The Inland Port project will have a significant effect on the Parks and Recreation Department. As more people relocate to the area for employment opportunities more amenities will need to be provided.

The project should lead to a manufacturing boom in not only the state but in the city of Greer as well. The Inland Port project's construction, operation, and support facilities will be the

single largest investment the city has seen in many years (www.cityofgreer.org). The South

Carolina Ports Authority has approved a total investment of $47.4 million for the Inland Port

Project. The Greenville-Spartanburg International Airport has completed its land use study,

identifying, among other things, 300 acres adjacent to the Inland Port that is now available for

industrial development. Early projects indicate that sites within a 25-mile radius of the Inland

Port facility will be influenced by this project (Ott, Jessica, May 7, 2013). The Inland Port

Project will bring jobs, economic development opportunities, international attention, and tourism

to the city.

      Figure 1 shows a map of the Greenville-Spartanburg Airport property that was part of the

land use study. Tract B land is available for industrial and private development. This land will be

used in attracting new business to the area. The Parks and Recreation Department can aid in

attracting new firms to occupy the available land by providing an enhanced quality of life that

both employers and employees are looking for.

Figure 1: Greenville-Spartanburg Airport Property Map
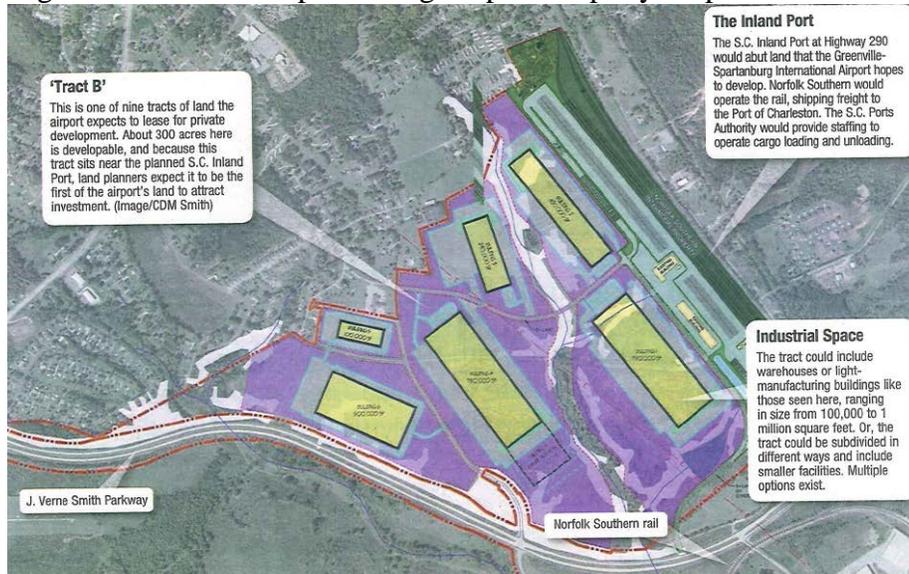
Literature Review: Economic Development and Parks and Recreation

Parks and recreation departments across the country have had a positive impact on local economic development (Lehman 2012; Bedimo-Rung, et al., 2005; Maller, et al. 2008; Kaplan and Kaplan 1989; Crompton 2006, 2010; Crompton and Lee 2000; Sherer 2006; and Florida 2000). Parks and recreation provide opportunities for community health improvement, social capital, community development, tourism, and quality of life. To fully understand the importance of parks and recreation to a community, it is necessary to have a well-developed body of literature. Current studies and literature show the rapid pace that parks and recreation agencies have developed. Each agency's impact is different depending on demographics, location, and size among others, which makes it difficult to quantify a "one size fits all" approach to the study.

Research indicates that parks and recreation facilities have a profound effect on public health (Lehman 2012; Bedimo-Rung, et al., 2005; Maller, et al., 2008; and Kaplan and Kaplan 1989). Parks and recreation departments can provide facilities at a low per person cost. These

facilities and open space encourage physical and leisure activity, which leads to better health. Possible health advantages include reduction in disease, crime, and social unrest (Maller, et al., 2008). Open space also fosters psychological well-being such as reduction in stress. Physical activity and better public health will lower the cost of public health care (Bedimo-Rung, et al., 2005).

Parks and open space also enhance work productivity. Evidence shows that access to nature in the workplace is related to lower levels of job stress and higher levels of job satisfaction (Kaplan and Kaplan, 1989). Employees with lower levels of job stress are less likely to use sick days and healthier communities are more likely to attract residents and businesses to the community thus increasing the tax base and economic activity. The city of Greenville, South Carolina is one example of a city using their parks and recreation department to improve community health and economic growth. Their Trails and Greenways Master Plan is an important part of local planning efforts to achieve a range of community health and development goals. By working at the policy level, changes have been made to create a cultural norm for healthy living (Lehmann, 2012). Greenville wants to be known as one of the healthiest cities in the nation and implementing this plan is a critical part of achieving this goal (Lehmann, 2012). Achieving this goal will attract new business, residents, and tourists, which will have a major impact on the local economy.

Enhanced social capital is an important benefit resulting from the activities of park and recreation agencies (Bedimo-Rung, et al., 2005; Maller, et al., 2008; Coleman 1988; Glover and Hemingway 2005; Putnam 1993 and 1995; and Stebbins and Graham 2004). Social capital provides public goods such as leisure activities, social integration, supportive social networks, and civic participation that affect all members of a social network or structure (Glover and

Hemingway, 2005; and Putnam 1995). Parks provide a setting where people can develop these social ties (Bedimo-Rung, et al., 2005). Community engagement is encouraged through formal and informal activities and activities provide members with opportunities to form social ties, networks, and gain a sense of trust.

One of the most important forms of social network is the voluntary association (Putnam, 1993). Volunteer networks facilitate coordination and communication among members. This strengthens trust between members and increases the social life of the community. Volunteering at community events is a creative social building activity (Stebbins and Graham, 2004). Parks and recreation agencies can provide volunteers with social connections and social networks. Social capital has many well-documented community benefits; it reduces the probability that students will drop out of school, creates enhanced civic engagement, and improves government and community networks and institutions (Glover and Hemingway 2005; Putnam 2000; and Coleman 1988).

Parks and recreation departments can have a positive economic impact by creating a more stable community. Pigg and Bradshaw's (2005) catalytic community development theory is a collection of approaches that will lead to community development (Pigg and Bradshaw, 2005). The catalytic development theory emphasizes leveraging local resources and networks to find solutions to expand local and regional investments. Catalytic development can be a cost effective way to improve community development to make it more attractive to businesses and tourists. For example, a developer in Kansas persuaded the garden club, Boy Scouts, and Veterans of Foreign Wars to build a marker at the town's entrance (Pigg and Bradshaw, 2005). This marker did not cost the town anything and brought diverse groups together thereby improving social capital and networks community wide. A related way to strengthen community development is

through capacity building. Training leaders using organizational skills that will enhance human and social capital, as well as complete projects that will benefit the community accomplish this. Parks and recreation agencies can use these approaches to implement projects and gain volunteer support for parks and recreation activities.

Real estate studies suggest that proximity to parks increases property value (Bedimo-Rung, et al 2005; Crompton 2006, 2010; Crompton and Lee 2000; and Sherer 2006). "The real estate market consistently demonstrates that many people are willing to pay a larger amount for a property located close to parks and open space areas than for a home that does not offer this amenity" (Sherer, 2006; 15). Trees from parks reduce air pollution, moderate temperatures, and alter building energy use, which increases the economic value of a home (Bedimo-Rung, et al., 2005). Ultimately, a higher value of homes means higher property taxes, which creates a larger tax base for the community.

Parks also have a positive impact on commercial property values (Sherer, 2006; and Kuo and Sullivan 2001). For example, in 1980 Bryant Park in New York City was a dilapidated area that attracted crime. After a 12-year renovation the park reopened in 1992 and became the site of major fashion shows, a jazz festival, outdoor movies, and an outdoor café (Sherer, 2006). These activities attracted thousands of visitors to the park who spent their money at local businesses in the area. Eventually leasing in the area increased 60 percent and the park became one of the main reasons people wanted to live in the area. Commercial office space demand grew between 155 and 225 percent over the time period, nearly triple that of surrounding markets. An Ernst and Young study concluded "commercial asking rents, residential sale prices, and assessed values for properties near a well-improved park generally exceeded rents in surrounding submarkets" (Sherer, 2006; 17).

Another study suggested that the greener the building's surrounding, the fewer crimes, aggression, and violence were reported (Kuo and Sullivan 2001). The presence of safety in the community attracts buyers and renters to the area. Similar outcomes are true in other areas such as Atlanta, Chicago, and Portland to name a few. Economic revitalization efforts often team with local parks and recreation departments to aid in renewing their community to attract and retain businesses and residents. Examples of this include, Park and Post Office Square in Boston, Bryant Park in New York City, Centennial Olympic Park in Atlanta, Downtown Dallas, Portland, Oregon, and Confluence Greenway in Missouri and Illinois. Another example, Boeing Company, chose a Chicago location over Dallas and Denver because of the city's quality of life. This inspired Dallas to revitalize their downtown and utilize the Dallas Parks and Recreation department to help achieve their new vision.

Parks and recreation agencies are also the catalyst for bringing entrepreneurs to a region (Florida 2000; and Sherer 2006). Florida's (2000) research suggests that quality-of-place affects the ability to attract talent to a region. Sherer (2006) confirms that by improving the quality of life well-educated young people will stay in the region. The competitive advantage in the old economy was cost, now it is how quickly an area can mobilize the best people and bring together the resources needed to ensure innovation and small business success. Florida (2000) argues in this environment communities must shift from low cost to high quality. There is a correlation between the leading high technology regions and high amenity, and high diversity regions. The old economy emphasized "big ticket" amenities like professional sports, while amenities in the new economy revolve around outdoor recreational activities and lifestyle. Quality of place, availability of jobs and career opportunities, recreational amenities, and diversity are important to attracting and retaining talent. Research suggests that regions should do the following things

to become more competitive: (1) make quality of place a central feature; (2) integrate amenities and natural assets; (3) invest in outdoor, recreational, and lifestyle amenities; (4) develop a comprehensive amenity strategy for university districts; (5) encourage smart growth and sustainable development on a regional basis; and (6) create mechanisms for harnessing the knowledge and ideas of all citizens to improve quality of place (Florida, 2000).

Related to this research are studies that focus on the importance of art and creative activity throughout a community (National Governors Association, 2005). These communities can attract creative class professionals and therefore bring higher-quality jobs and more tax revenue. A focus on quality of life and amenities is necessary to attract the creative class. The federal government supports the creative class theory and has begun giving federal funding to help local communities benefit creative class policies and investments. This funding can be used to build new structures, restore historic areas, and support arts programming. Parks and recreation departments could benefit from this type of federal funding with a focus on creative and innovative activities.

Research shows that park and recreation agencies are the engines of tourism and generate substantial economic impacts from these activities (Crompton and Lee 2000; Frechtling and Horvath 1999; and Johnson and Moore 1993). Many park and recreation agencies organize festivals and events to attract tourists to their community. The tourists that come to the community for these events stay in local hotels, shop at local stores, and eat in local restaurants. The impact of tourism creates a favorable impact on local sales, incomes, and employment (Frechtling and Horvath, 1999). Even a small-scale tournament or recreation facility can help diversify a region's economy (Johnson and Moore, 1993). Tourism also helps provide city identity and gives residents a sense of community pride. Crompton's (2010) research suggests

that agencies should conduct an economic impact study for taxpayers and elected officials to recognize the importance of parks and recreation in growing the tax base. This type of analysis related to parks and recreation programming and activities is an important marketing tool to attract businesses to the community.

Quality of life is an important piece of local economic growth (Deller 2001; Drabenstott 2005; Drabenstott and Henderson 2006). Amenities and quality of life are critical how people and businesses decide where to locate. As people and businesses relocate to the community and region the demand for amenities and quality of life increases. It is imperative that public policy is created to preserve and develop sustainable growth initiatives. Sustainable growth policy will increase amenities and enhance quality of life thus leading to more people and businesses relocating to the community and region.

In order for the United States to stay competitive in the global market we need to change our economic development policies and the way we think about them (Drabenstott, 2005). Currently federal economic development programs are spread throughout many different agencies and Drabenstott suggests that the government needs to refocus these policies and coordinate them more effectively. The federal government spends billions of dollars a year on economic development and the focus must shift to policies that encourage and support regional development. Research suggests that rural areas and cities need to join together and find what makes them unique as a region and develop this regional potential. For rural areas to compete in the growing global market research suggests they create a partnership with cities and take a regional approach (Drabenstott and Henderson, 2006). Rural communities have a difficult time gaining economic opportunities because they do not have the work force and the amenities that a nearby city provides. Government policy must shift to assist rural areas in creating

agglomeration economies so they can continue to grow and develop. All communities stand to benefit from a regional partnership as both rural areas and cities can benefit from the spillover effects of an economic development partnership (Drabenstott and Henderson, 2006).

One researcher suggests that "outcome impact" should be used to estimate the impact of policies on local economic outcomes (Bartik, 2002). This type of evaluation identifies a cause and effect between programs and conditions. Bartik gives three methods to tie program activities with economic outcomes. They are: (1) modeling how different programs affect business decisions; (2) targeted surveys like "customer satisfaction" surveys; and (3) determining if data correlates with the program's purpose. Bartik also states that results should be used to improve programs not hurt them. Evaluations should not just inform us about the negative results, but also the positive results so that others can adopt and modify these policies to suit the community (Bartik, 2002).

Research shows that park and recreation departments have a positive impact on local economic development. These agencies provide opportunities to improve community health, social capital, community development, tourism, and quality of life. Many research methods can be used to aid park and recreation departments in determining their potential contributions to impacting and improving the community. Once these potential contributions are determined a strategic plan should be established.

Methods and Data

The foundation of this research is to review, evaluate, and update the City of Greer's Parks and Recreation Department's 2009 Strategic/Master Plan. In order to accomplish this task, a review of the plan was conducted with the Director and Assistant Director of the Parks and Recreation Department in order to determine what recommendations have been accomplished,

which recommendations are being implemented, and which recommendations have not been executed. To evaluate this more completely there was a need to understand Greer residents' satisfaction with the implementation of the 2009 strategic/master plan. This was completed through a needs assessment survey. A community needs assessment will aid in evaluating the implementation of the plan and developing future plans for the Greer Parks and Recreation Department.

Methods

A series of meetings were conducted with the Director and Assistant Director of the Parks and Recreation Department to review the 2009 strategic/master plan. During the meetings a thorough review was conducted of the recommendations provided in the original plan. It was determined which recommendations were accomplished, which recommendations are currently being implemented, and which recommendations have not been realized. A critical component of this research is to understand which recommendations have not been employed. Financial constraints were the primary reason that all recommendations were not implemented. However, some of the recommendations that were not implemented from the 2009 plan such as develop an outdoor pool, a fitness/wellness center, and an indoor aquatic facility was ranked highest among community members as amenities that the department needed to provide. Other identified needs from the 2009 strategic/master plan included teen programs, nature activities, swimming instruction, and water aerobics programs.

The 2009 needs were determined through a community needs assessment survey and five input sessions by the researchers. The current research will evaluate the previous recommendations for merit. During one of the meetings with the Director of Parks and Recreation a tour of city-owned recreation facilities and amenities was conducted. This was

proof of what had been achieved from earlier recommendations, what was in the process of being accomplished, and what still needed to be done.

The approach to determining customer satisfaction is a survey methodology similar to the 2009 Strategic/Master Plan survey. Collecting information about residents' attitudes towards recreation is important to strategic development planning. The scope of the questions asked in the survey was similar to the original questions in order to determine continuity and consistent outcomes. The survey design will ultimately contribute to assisting parks and recreation officials in identifying the main factors that contribute to resident satisfaction.

The survey was distributed through the City of Greer's ETrack system. ETrack is an email database that stores the email address of citizens that participate in park and recreation programs. The ETrack system reaches a diverse group of people throughout the region. These people either participate in athletic or recreation programs or come to festivals or other events. The survey was distributed to approximately 2000 people. One of the issues concerning the distribution of surveys through ETrack is that many emails are no longer in service, many surveys went to people under the age of 18, and surveys went to people living in the same household. The survey was also distributed via email to members of the chamber of commerce, as well as, placed on the chamber's Facebook page. The chamber has approximately 676 members that had the opportunity to participate in the survey (www.greerchamber.com). 157 total responses were received through the survey distribution, which provided a 7.85% response rate.

In comparing, the 2009 needs assessment survey was completed by 203 individuals (Anderson, et al., 2009). The current response rate is very low and can give rise to sampling bias. However, the results from the survey were similar to those in 2009. The 2009 survey was

distributed through the ETrack system, but paper versions were also distributed to the public. Though email is a fast and convenient method of distributing the survey there are concerns. One issue is that only people with access to computers and email can participate in the survey, which may have afforded more opportunities for citizens to participate. Many people who are directly affected by the programs and activities provided by the parks and recreation department may not get a chance to participate in the 'customer satisfaction' survey. Another concern with conducting survey research through email is that there is no way for the researcher to determine if the participant was an adult or a child. This type of participation may create bias results. Future survey research needs to find ways to include all community members either through mail or providing surveys at local events. This will ensure that more people have the opportunity to participate in the survey and this method will likely increase the response rate.

Survey research is an important research method used to answer questions, solve problems, and gain consensus. The data collected in survey research is often used to assess needs and set goals, determine if objectives have been met, establish baselines for future comparisons, and analyze trends (Glasow, 2005). "Survey research is one of the most important areas of measurement in applied social research" (Trochim, 2006). The survey methodology is important in gauging "customer satisfaction" across a wide range of issues. One of the most important strengths of surveys is that it is a subjective way to quantitatively describe specific aspects of the general population. Questions throughout the survey distributed to participants were designed to determine if the objectives laid out for the Greer Parks and Recreation agency have been met over the past three years, assess future needs for the city and set goals to meet those needs, and establish a baseline for the future. Surveys are also a useful technique used to gather information from large samples of the population. They are an easy way to gather demographic information

about the population and can be used to assess the needs or opinions of large groups. Surveys can also be used to evaluate demand and examine impact (Glasow 2005). Further, survey research is valuable in collecting information about attitude and consumer satisfaction, which is the main objective of this research.

The purpose of this survey was to gauge customer satisfaction of residents toward the previous strategic plan and toward the Parks and Recreation Department today. Ongoing assessment of citizen opinion is important for understanding the quantity and quality of programs and services provided. One of the challenges for this research is determining which households are tax-paying citizens of Greer. Many people have a Greer address but are not considered a citizen of Greer because their taxes do not go to the city. Given this, a control question was developed; do you have a rollout residential garbage container collected by the City of Greer. This question allows for the determination of the tax-paying status of each household? The primary dependent variables are customer satisfaction and were determined through several key questions:

- We would like your opinion regarding the adequacy of the recreation facilities available in the City of Greer?
- Do your think the City of Greer has adequate recreation facilities compared to surrounding and other similar cities in South Carolina?
- Do you think the City of Greer's Parks and Recreation Department has improved its programs and facilities in the last 3 years?
- We would like your opinion regarding the adequacy of the Recreation Programs that are available to you regardless of where those programs are offered.
- How satisfied are you with the same elements of community life from the previous question?
- How conveniently located are the recreation facilities provided by the City of Greer?

Other questions in the survey were used to determine demographic information and to aid in recommendations for future plans. A few of the questions that focused on future planning included:

- Of the previously mentioned facilities that do not meet your needs, which are the top three most important for the City of Greer to develop?
- Please list any other facilities not mentioned above that you feel are needed in the City of Greer.
- Please list any other recreation programs or activities you would like to participate in but are not available in the City of Greer or the surrounding area.
- When developing new parks and recreation facilities and amenities in the future, I would prefer that the City of Greer….

A mix of open-ended and closed-ended questions was used in the design of the survey. Open-ended questions were largely used to allow respondents to answer in their own words and to provide the researcher with ideas and insight that would have not been possible otherwise. Answers from open-ended questions will be used in determining recommendations for the future. Other questions used a Likert scale with an agreement continuum. A Likert rating scale was also used to measure the adequacy of the programs and facilities available to the population. These questions are an important piece of this research as they gauge whether community needs have been met and prioritizes needs for the future.

While survey research is an excellent method for data and demographic collection there are some biases that may occur. Potential survey biases from the results include respondent bias towards the survey. The argument could be made that respondents only answered questions that pertain to their family. For example, those that participate in the softball program may want a new facility and find the existing available programs inadequate because of this bias. Others who do not participate in the softball program may find that it meets their needs because the program is available and they do not know or care about the scope of service or facilities. Another potential bias in the survey is that there were questions that had no opinion option. By answering no opinion the number of people providing important information about community attitude towards the Parks and Recreation Department decreases. Future survey research should take caution in using the no opinion option.

Another weakness of survey research is the accuracy of the responses received. A number of measures were taken to reduce any of this type of bias in this research effort. One method used to avoid misinterpretation of questions was the survey was pre-tested with Greer Park and Recreation supervisors. The survey was emailed to the supervisors in the same method that it was going to be sent out to the public. This process provided the opportunity to make corrections to the survey, adjust response measures, and to understand the analysis that Survey Monkey provides.

Data

Survey

Residents' opinion is important to the City of Greer Parks and Recreation Department's mission. The information collected from the survey helps to determine the satisfaction, as well as satisfaction of the quantity and quality of recreation services it provides. The majority of respondents (79.8%) felt that the City of Greer's Parks and Recreation Department has improved its programs and facilities in the last 3 years (Table 3). The results are presented in the following sections, divided into the following categories; demographics, recreation facilities, recreation programs, community life, quality of life, and funding preferences.

Table 3: Frequency Distribution of the City of Greer Respondents by Improvement of the Parks and Recreation Programs and Facilities in the last 3 years.

FACILITY AND PROGRAM IMPROVEMNENT	PERCENT
Yes	79.8%
No	11.6%
No Opinion	8.5%

Demographics

The majority (53.9%) of respondents reported that they lived in the 29651 zip code, and the 29650 (26.3%) zip code. The remaining respondents reported living in the 29687 (7.2%) zip code and 12.5% reported living in other zip code areas (Table 4). 62.6% of respondents reported not receiving garage collection from the City of Greer, and 37.4% reported that they did receive this service (Table 5). The next question asked if respondents are a resident of the City of Greer. 51.0% indicated that they are not a resident (Table 6) Approximately 40.4% of respondents reported an age of 36 to 45 and the remaining respondents reported ages of 26 to 35 (30.1%), 46 to 55 (9.0%), 66 to 75 (8.3%), 56 to 65 (7.1 %), 76 or more (3.2%), 18 to 25 (1.3%), and under 18 (0.6%) (Table 7).

Out of the respondents 64.9% were female and 35.1% were male (Table 8). Approximately 30% of respondents reported living in the City of Greer for 6-10 years. The remaining respondents reported living in the City of Greer less than 1 year (11.8%), 1-2 years (8.4%), 3-5 years (16.8%), 11-20 years (10.1%), and more than 20 years (23.5%) (Table 9). The majority of respondents (70.1%) reported having dependent children living at home (Table 10). Almost 80% of respondents indicated they had elementary school aged children living at home, 50.5% have middle school aged children, 43.2% preschool aged, and 34.2% high school aged dependents (Table 11). The majority of respondents (84.5%) are White/Non-Hispanic, 7.1% Black/Non-Hispanic, and 3.9% are Hispanic (Table 12). The respondents reported an annual household income of $50,000 to $74,999 (25.2%), $75,000 to $99,000 (24.5%), $25,000 to $49,999 (23.1%), $100,000 or more (17.5%), and under $25,000 (9.8%) (Table 13).

Table 4: Frequency Distribution of the City of Greer Respondents by Zip Code.

ZIP CODE	PERCENT
29650	26.3%
29652	0.0%
29651	53.9%
26987	7.2%
Other	12.5%

Table 5: Frequency Distribution of the City of Greer Respondents by garbage collection from the City of Greer.

SERVICE	PERCENT
Yes	37.4%
No	62.6%

Table 6: Frequency Distribution of the City of Greer Respondents by Resident.

ARE YOU A RESIDENT	PERCENT
Yes	49.0%
No	51.0%

Table 7: Frequency Distribution of the City of Greer Respondents by Age

AGE	PERCENT	CITY OF GREER
Under 18	0.6%	27.3%
18 to 25	1.3%	6.4%
26 to 35	30.1%	14.2%
36 to 45	40.4%	13.5%
46 to 55	9.0%	13.6%
56 to 65	7.1%	11.6%
66 to 75	8.3%	7.8%
76 or More	3.2%	5.6%

Percentages of City of Greer residents by age are also a component of this chart for the purpose of comparing the average age with the average respondents' age. This illustrates that a reliable sample was taken when conducting the research. The highest percentage of Greer residents by age is the 18 and under category (27.3%). This group is underrepresented in the survey responses (0.6%), but this was expected since this group contains those that may not be able to read or respond to the survey. However, the rest of the response categories are comparatively represented.   More females (64.9%) than males (35.1%) responded to the survey in comparison to City of Greer percentages. This was expected considering there are more female citizens in Greer than males generally.

Table 8: Frequency Distribution of City of Greer Respondents by Gender.

GENDER	PERCENT	CITY OF GREER
Male	35.1%	48.6%
Female	64.9%	51.4%

Table 9: Frequency Distribution of the City of Greer Respondents by years lived in the city.

YEARS	PERCENT
Less than 1	11.8%
1-2	8.4%
3-5	16.8%
6-10	29.4%
11-20	10.1%
More than 20	23.5%

Table 10: Frequency Distribution of City of Greer Respondents by Dependent Children Living at Home.

Dependent Children	Percent
Yes	70.1%
No	29.9%

Table 11: Frequency Distribution of the City of Greer Respondents to the Number of Dependent Children Living at Home.

AGE OF CHILDREN	PERCENT
Preschool Aged (under 5 years old)	43.2%
Elementary School Aged (5-10 years old)	79.3%
Middle School Aged (11-13 year old)	50.5%
High School Aged (14-19 years old)	34.2%

Table 12: Frequency Distribution of the City of Greer Respondents by Ethnic Background.

ETHNICITY	PERCENT	CITY OF GREER
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1.3%	0.2%
Black/Non-Hispanic	7.1%	15.6%
Asian/Pacific Islander	0.6%	1.1%
Hispanic	3.9%	11.1%
White/Non-Hispanic	84.5%	75.2%
Other	2.6%	5.7%

Demographic information from the City of Greer is also illustrated to show that the sampling of respondents is close to the demographic representation of the City. The top three ethnicities to respond to the survey were White/Non-Hispanic (84.5%), Black/Non-Hispanic (7.1%), and Hispanic (3.9%). These responses reveal an adequate sampling from each of these primary demographic groups.

Table 13: Frequency Distribution of the City of Greer Respondents by Annual Household Income.

ANNUAL INCOME	PERCENT	CITY OF GREER
Under $25,000	9.8%	33.5%
$25,000 to $49,999	23.1%	27%
$50,000 to $74,999	25.2%	20.5%
$75,000 to $99,000	24.5%	9.3%
$100,000 or more	17.5%	9.7%

Additionally, City of Greer annual household income is used to illustrate the income profile of city residents and of respondents to the survey. The city has a higher percentage (33.5%) of people with an annual income under $25,000 compared to the other respondent categories. However, this income category has the lowest percentage of survey respondents. It is unclear if respondents from this category chose to not participate in the survey or if other factors, such as access to email, contributed to the low response rate.

Recreation Facilities

The next section of the survey questioned respondents about the adequacy of the recreation facilities available in the City of Greer (Table 14). Respondents were presented with numerous examples of recreation facilities and asked to report whether the facilities "meet my needs," "available but inadequate for my needs," "important but not available," "not interested," and "no opinion." The recreation facilities in the City of Greer with the highest percentage for "meet my needs" are playgrounds (71.3%), baseball fields (57.1%), small community parks (53.2%), large parks/open space (52.8%), and theater/cultural arts facility (44.6%). Respondents reported several recreation facilities in the City of Greer that are "available but inadequate for

my need." They include football fields (16.3%), indoor basketball courts (15.9%), small

community parks (15.1%), baseball fields (15.0%), and soccer fields (15.0%). "Important but not

available" responses include indoor aquatic facility (41.9%), outdoor community pool (38.0%),

fitness/recreation center (37.4%), walking/jogging path (26.2%), and trails/greenways (26.0%).

Results from an open-ended question asking respondents to list the three most important

recreation facilities that do not meet their needs include aquatics facility, walking/jogging paths,

trails/greenways, baseball fields, and fitness/recreation center. When asked to compare

recreation facilities in the City of Greer to surrounding and other similar cities in South Carolina,

51.2% of the respondents indicated the City of Greer does have adequate recreation facilities

compared to other cities (Table 15).

Table 14: Frequency Distribution of the City of Greer Respondents by Adequacy of Current
Recreation Facilities.

1-Meets My Needs, 2- Available but Inadequate for My Needs, 3- Important but Not Available,
4- Not Interested, 5- No Opinion

RECREATION FACILITY	1	2	3	4	5
Baseball Fields	57.1%	15.0%	0.7%	7.1%	20.0%
Softball Fields	33.1%	12.9%	4.3%	12.9%	36.7%
Indoor Basketball Courts	15.9%	15.9%	11.6%	15.2%	41.3%
Football Fields	35.6%	16.3%	1.5%	11.9%	34.8%
Soccer Fields	44.4%	15.0%	1.5%	12.0%	27.1%
Golf Courses	16.7%	6.8%	10.6%	23.5%	42.4%
Golf Practice Facilities	11.4%	6.1%	14.4%	23.5%	44.7%
Disc/Frisbee Golf Courses	26.1%	6.7%	1.5%	26.1%	39.6%
Rollerblade/Skateboard Facility	6.7%	0.7%	15.6%	32.6%	44.4%
Shooting Sports/Facilities	6.6%	2.9%	22.1%	28.7%	39.7%
Tennis Courts/Facilities	20.6%	8.1%	5.9%	23.5%	41.9%
Walking/Jogging Paths	34.6%	13.1%	26.2%	17.2%	22.3%
Trails/Greenways	19.8%	14.5%	26.0%	33.3%	29.8%
Boat Ramps/Docks/Water Access	18.5%	6.2%	6.9%	61.8%	42.3%
Fishing	21.7%	9.3%	11.6%	68.2%	34.1%
Community Centers	28.1%	9.4%	15.6%	36.4%	34.4%
Indoor Aquatic Facilities	5.4%	4.7%	41.9%	40.9%	34.1%
Outdoor Community Pools	9.3%	7.0%	38.0%	73.5%	26.4%
Fitness/Recreation Centers	16.0%	10.7%	37.4%	23.7%	29.0%
Playgrounds	71.3%	10.1%	1.6%	46.7%	11.6%

Large Parks/Open Space	52.8%	14.2%	8.7%	24.0%	19.7%
Small Community Parks	53.2%	15.1%	2.4%	37.0%	21.4%
Dog Parks	12.6%	7.1%	22.0%	80.5%	32.3%
Waterfront Parks and Amenities	16.0%	6.4%	19.2%	52.1%	38.4%
Theater/Cultural Arts Facilities	44.6%	6.2%	10.0%	37.8%	28.5%

Table 15: Frequency Distribution of the City of Greer Respondents by the Agreement with the Adequacy of Current Recreation Facilities.

ADEQUACY OF CURRENT RECREATION FACILITIES	PERCENT
Yes, the City of Greer has adequate recreation facilities	51.2%
No, the City of Greer does not have adequate recreation facilities	26.4%
Undecided	22.5%

Recreation Programs

The next section of the survey questioned respondents about the adequacy of the recreation programs available in the City of Greer. Respondents were presented with numerous examples of recreation programs and asked to report whether the facilities "meet my needs," "available but inadequate for my needs," "important but not available," "not interested," and "no opinion." The recreation programs in the City of Greer with the highest percentage for "meet my needs" are sports team play (62.5 %), special events 59.6%, sports instruction (46.0%),

performing arts (42.1%), concerts (40.4%), and cultural arts (40.4%). Respondents reported several recreation programs in the City of Greer that are "available but inadequate for my needs" which include, sports instruction (18.6%), sports team play (17.9%), open gyms (17.3%), concerts (14.9%), and day camps (14.4%). "Important but not available" responses include, cardiovascular equipment (35.8%), swimming instruction (33.3%), water aerobics (33.3%), fitness classes (33.3%), and weight training (27.3%) (Table 16). Results from an open-ended question asking respondents to list any recreation programs or activities that they would like to see developed include, concerts, swimming lessons, special needs activities, youth basketball, art activities, teen fitness, adult cooking classes, bike/run club, swimming team, and festivals.

Table 16: Frequency Distribution of the City of Greer Respondents by Adequacy of Recreation Programs.

1-Meets My Needs, 2- Available but Inadequate for My Needs, 3- Important but Not Available, 4- Not Interested, 5- No Opinion

RECREATION PROGRAMS	1	2	3	4	5
Arts and Crafts	32.4%	8.1%	11.7%	18.0%	29.7%
Performing Arts	42.1%	6.1%	5.3%	19.3%	27.2%
Concerts	40.4%	14.9%	12.3%	9.6%	22.8%
Dances	23.9%	4.4%	10.6%	34.5%	26.5%
Sports Instruction	46.0%	18.6%	10.6%	6.2%	18.6%
Sports Team Play	62.5%	17.9%	3.6%	2.7%	13.4%
Open Gyms	22.7%	17.3%	26.4%	8.2%	25.5%

Nature Programs	16.2%	3.6%	25.2%	14.4%	40.5%
Day Camps	24.3%	14.4%	8.1%	18.9%	34.2%
Outdoor Adventure Camps	18.9%	9.0%	18.9%	15.3%	37.8%
Fitness Classes	18.2%	8.2%	32.7%	6.4%	34.5%
Water Aerobics	9.9%	5.4%	33.3%	15.3%	36.0%
Weight Training	16.4%	6.4%	27.3%	13.6%	36.4%
Cardiovascular Equipment	13.8%	6.4%	35.8%	8.3%	35.8%
Special Events	59.6%	8.7%	2.9%	6.7%	22.1%
Pre-Kindergarten Programs	11.8%	7.8%	11.8%	28.4%	40.2%
Teen Activities	11.1%	11.1%	21.3%	18.5%	38.0%
Activities for Older Adults/ Seniors	21.7%	8.5%	5.7%	19.8%	44.3%
Before and After School Programs	17.9%	14.2%	12.3%	17.0%	38.7%
Swimming Instruction	8.6%	9.5%	33.3%	11.4%	37.1%
Recreation Programs for the Disabled	6.8%	5.8%	16.5%	20.4%	50.5%
Child Development Activities	11.5%	9.6%	17.3%	19.2%	42.3%
Outdoor Adventure Activities	12.6%	9.7%	22.3%	8.7%	46.6%
Cultural Arts	40.4%	6.7%	5.8%	12.5%	34.6%

Community Life/Quality of Life

The next part of the survey asked respondents to consider different contributions that parks and recreation programs and facilities can have on a community's quality of life. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree) with various elements of community life. Results from the analysis

revealed that respondents strongly agree that parks and recreation programs have an effect on providing community opportunities for:

1. fun and celebration (64.1%),

2. attracting new residents and business (62.4%),

3. strengthening safety and wellness (59.4%),

4. strengthening community image and sense of place (58.8%),

5. providing new opportunities for lifelong learning (53.9%),

6. fostering human development (53.4%),

7. supporting economic development (52.4%),

8. increasing cultural unity (51.0%),

9. protecting environmental resources (46.5%),

10. and facilitating community problem solving (43.1%) (Table 17).

Respondents were also asked to indicate the importance (very important, important, neutral, unimportant, and very unimportant) of specific elements of community life. The results revealed that police protection/public safety (86.7%) is the most important element of community life followed by fire protection/EMS service (83.7%), public schools (78.1%), public works (75.5%), medical/health care facilities (73.5%), parks and open space (67.7%), a sense of community pride (65.3%), public recreation programs (63.3%), libraries (61.2%), social and human services (52.6%), entertainment/commercial programs (50.5%), opportunities to become familiar with other residents (37.4%), and public transportation (29.3%) (Table 18). Next, respondents were asked how satisfied they are with these elements of community life. Respondents are most satisfied with fire protection/EMS service (48.4%), police/protection/public safety (46.3%),

medical/health care facilities (39.4%), public works (37.2%), and libraries (36.2%). However,

respondents reported being unsatisfied with public transportation (23.2%) (Table 19).

Table 17: Frequency Distribution of the City of Greer Respondents by Agreement with Potential Contributions Parks and Recreation Programs Impact Quality of Life.

1-Strongly Agree, 2- Agree, 3-Neutral, 4- Disagree, 5- Strongly Disagree

CONTRIBUTIONS OF PARKS AND RECREATION	1	2	3	4	5
Support Economic Development	52.4%	38.8%	8.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Strengthen Safety and Wellness	59.4%	32.7%	6.9%	1.0%	0.0%
Foster Human Development	53.4%	36.9%	9.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Strengthen Community Image and Sense of Place	58.8%	35.3%	4.9%	0.0%	1.0%
Increase Cultural Unity	51.0%	29.4%	18.6%	0.0%	1.0%
Protect Environmental Resources	46.5%	36.6%	14.9%	2.0%	0.0%
Facilitate Community Problem Solving	43.1%	34.3%	22.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Provide Community Opportunities for Fun and Celebration	64.1%	31.1%	3.9%	1.0%	0.0%
Provide Opportunities for Lifelong Learning	53.9%	35.3%	8.8%	2.0%	0.0%
Attracts New Residents and Businesses	62.4%	27.7%	6.9%	2.0%	1.0%

Table 18: Frequency Distribution of the City of Greer Respondents by Importance of Elements of Community Life.

1- Very Important, 2- Important, 3- Neutral, 4- Unimportant, 5- Very Important

ELEMENTS OF COMMUNITY LIFE	1	2	3	4	5
Parks and Open Space	67.7%	26.3%	6.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Entertainment/Commercial Recreation	50.5%	39.4%	10.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Public Recreation Programs	63.3%	29.6%	7.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Public Schools	78.1%	11.5%	9.4%	0.0%	1.0%
Opportunities to Become Familiar with Other Residents	37.4%	38.4%	21.2%	2.0%	1.0%
Public Transportation	29.3%	22.2%	34.3%	11.1%	3.0%
Fire Protection/EMS Service	83.7%	11.2%	5.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Police Protection	86.7%	9.2%	4.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Social and Human Services	52.6%	35.1%	10.3%	2.1%	0.0%
Medical/Health Care Facilities	73.5%	20.4%	6.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Public Works (water, sewer, electric, gas, solid waste)	75.5%	18.4%	6.1%	0.0%	0.0%
A Sense of Community Pride	65.3%	27.6%	6.1%	1.0%	1.0%
Libraries	61.2%	24.5%	12.2%	1.0%	1.0%

Table 19: Frequency Distribution of the City of Greer Respondents by Satisfaction of Elements of Community Life.

1-Very Satisfied, 2- Satisfied, 3- Neutral, 4- Unsatisfied, 5- Very Unsatisfied

ELEMENTS OF COMMUNITY LIFE	1	2	3	4	5
Parks and Open Spaces	29.2%	43.8%	19.8%	5.2%	2.1%
Entertainment/Commercial Recreation	24.2%	44.2%	21.1%	9.5%	1.1%
Public Recreation Programs	24.0%	47.9%	16.7%	10.4%	1.0%
Public Schools	29.0%	48.4%	17.2%	5.4%	0.0%
Opportunities to Become Familiar with Other Residents	16.1%	36.6%	43.0%	3.2%	1.1%
Public Transportation	10.5%	10.5%	50.5%	23.2%	5.3%
Fire Protection/EMS Service	48.4%	38.7%	12.9%	0.0%	0.0%
Police Protection/Public Safety	46.3%	38.9%	13.7%	1.1%	1.1%
Social and Human Services	27.7%	33.0%	37.2%	1.1%	1.1%
Medical/Health Care Facilities	39.4%	39.4%	21.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Public Works (water, sewer, electric, gas, solid waste)	37.2%	47.9%	13.8%	0.0%	1.1%
A Sense of Community Pride	29.8%	44.7%	20.2%	4.3%	1.1%
Libraries	36.2%	45.7%	18.1%	0.0%	0.0%

Development Preferences and Funding

      The next section of the survey is to determine if recreation facilities are conveniently located, preferences as to where to build new facilities, and how to fund new recreation facilities. The majority (63.9%) of respondents indicated that the recreation facilities provided by the City of Greer are conveniently located (Table 20). When asked about the preference of developing new park and recreation facilities and amenities in the future respondents indicated they would prefer (50.5%) a balance of larger community parks and small parks (Table 21). Results from the survey showed that respondents would like new facilities and amenities to be located in the North 14 (Blueridge) area (38.6%) and South 14 (Riverside/Pelham) area (32.7%) (Table 22). Finally, respondents were asked their preference on how to fund the development of future recreation facilities. The majority (78.6%) indicated they would prefer that new development be funded through a combination of taxes and user fees (Table 23).

Table 20: Frequency Distribution of the City of Greer Respondents by Location of Recreation Facilities.

LOCATION OPINION	PERCENT
Very Conveniently Located	25.9%
Conveniently Located	63.9%
Inconveniently Located	7.4%
Very Inconveniently Located	0.9%
No Opinion	1.9%

Table 21: Frequency Distribution of the City of Greer Respondents by Preference of Future Development.

PREFERNCE OF FUTURE DEVELOPMENT	PERCENT
Develop centralized facilities and amenities (larger parks in 3 or 4 locations)	35.0%
Develop decentralized facilities and amenities (small community/neighborhood parks)	14.6%
Provide a balance of larger community parks and small parks	50.5%

Table 22: Frequency Distribution of the City of Greer Respondents by Area in Need of New Recreation Facilities and Amenities.

AREA	PERCENT
North 14 (Blueridge)	38.6%
South 14 (Riverside/Pelham)	32.7%
East 29 (Spartanburg)	19.8%
West 29 (Greenville)	8.9%

Table 23: Frequency Distribution of the City of Greer Respondents by Development of Recreation Facility Funding.

FUNDING	PERCENT
Strictly through taxes.	10.7%
Strictly through user fees.	10.7%
Through a combination of taxes and user fees.	78.6%

Findings and Analysis

Survey Comparison

The main objective of this survey was to compare the results with the 2009 strategic/master plan to determine if residents are satisfied with existing Greer Parks and Recreation facilities and programs along with improvements that continue to be implemented. The 2009 plan indicated that 62.7% of respondents felt that the City of Greer's Parks and

Recreation programs had improved over the last three years. The current findings indicate that 79.8% of the respondents feel that the department has improved over the past three years (Table 3). This indicates that implementation of the 2009 strategic/master plan has continued to improve the public's opinion of local facilities and programs.

Demographics Comparison

In comparison to the 2009 survey the majority of respondents in this survey still live in the 29651 zip code (Table 4). The 2009 survey shows that respondents who receive garbage collection service was 50%, compared to the 62.6% of current respondents who do not receive City of Greer garbage collection services (Table 5). Garbage collection service is the key indicator of whether the respondent is a tax-paying citizen and in the current survey less than 40% of respondents can claim this service. If they receive this service from the city their taxes go directly to the City of Greer. The results also reveal that respondents may be confused as to whether they are a resident or not. Almost 38% of respondents reveled that they receive garbage collection services, but 49.0% said that they are a resident of the city (Tables 5 and 6).

The majority of respondents from both surveys are between the ages of 36 to 45 and 26 to 35 (Table 7). The 2009 survey indicated that 51.2% of the respondents were female compared to the current survey where 64.9% are female (Table 8). The majority of respondents from both surveys have lived in the city 6-10 years (Table 9). The majority (70.1%, 2013; 64.3%, 2009) of respondents from both surveys have dependent children living at home (Table 10). The White/Non-Hispanic population remains the majority in both surveys (Table 12). The primary household income range is $50,000 to $74,999 in both survey but the $100,000 and more category dropped from 24.7% (2009 survey) to 17.5%, and the $75,000 to $99,999 increased from 20.5% to 24.5%. These statistics reveal there has been a decrease in annual household

income over the past three years (Table 24). It is unclear whether this decline is largely due to the recession and a decline in overall economic activity or some other external factors.

Table 24: Annual Household Income Comparison of 2013 and 2009 Survey.

ANNUAL INCOME	PERCENT (2013)	PERCENT (2009)
Under $25,000	9.8%	8.7%
$25,000 to $49,999	23.1%	18.5%
$50,000 to $74,999	25.2%	27.2%
$75,000 to $99,000	24.5%	20.5%
$100,000 or more	17.5%	24.7%

Recreation Facilities Comparison

The results from the current survey indicate that playgrounds, baseball fields, small community parks, large parks/open space, and theater/cultural arts facility are recreation facilities that meet the needs of respondents. The results have changed slightly from the 2009 survey where playgrounds, baseball fields, community parks, soccer fields, softball fields, and large parks/open space met the needs of respondents. Baseball fields and small community parks were also the highest percentage of facilities that are "available but inadequate" for the needs of respondents. Other facilities that respondent found available but inadequate include football fields, indoor basketball courts, and soccer fields. The recreation facilities that are "important but not available" according to respondents are indoor aquatic facility, outdoor community pool, fitness/recreation center, walking/jogging paths, and trails/greenways (Table 14). The results are similar to the 2009 results as the top facilities that are "important but not available" were trails/greenways, walking/jogging paths, outdoor community pools, and fitness/recreation center.

The consistency in these responses is a clear indication that residents would like to see the department develop these facilities. When asked if the city has adequate facilities compared to other cities 51.2% of respondents indicated that they do (Table 15). This is an improvement from the 2009 survey where 31.5% said they had adequate facilities. The 2009 survey indicated that 44.8% of the respondents believed the City of Greer did not have adequate recreation facilities compared to other cities.

Recreation Programs Comparison

The recreation programs that meet the needs of respondents are sports team play, special events, sports instruction, performing arts, concerts, and cultural arts. These are the same results from the 2009 survey. Sports instruction and sports team play are also among the highest percentage of "available but inadequate for my needs" along with open gyms, concerts, and day camps. Follow up research could be useful in determining why sports instruction and sports team play are both in the majority of "meets my needs" and "available but inadequate for my needs" categories. Future research may want to create a survey that asks questions pertaining to sports instruction and sports team play or host a focus group for clarifying "customer satisfaction" in this area. In the 2009 survey it was indicated that cardiovascular equipment, swimming instruction, water aerobics, fitness classes, and weight training were among the programs that were "important but not available." The current survey produced the same results. This clearly shows that respondents would like to see the department provide these recreation programs to the community (Table 16).

Community Life/Quality of Life Comparison

For community and quality of life issues, the only difference in results across the surveys was that previous respondents seem somewhat unsatisfied with public transportation, parks and

open spaces, entertainment/commercial recreation, and public recreation programs. However, the

current results also illustrate that the Parks and Recreation Department has improved. The only

element that respondents are still unsatisfied with is public transportation (Table 19). This is

further confirmation of why respondents believe the department has improved over the last three

years.

Development Preferences and Funding Comparison

The 2009 survey indicated that respondents preferred the City of Greer provide a balance

of community parks and small neighborhood parks. Respondents prefer the city fund the

development of recreation facilities through a combination of taxes and user fees as opposed to

strictly through taxes or strictly through user fees. Results from the 2009 plan reveal that

respondents believed the Riverside/Pelham (South 14) area is in the most need of facilities

followed by the Blueridge (North 14), Spartanburg (East 29), and Greenville (West 29) areas.

The current analysis reveals the same results with the exception that the majority of respondents

feel that the Blueridge (North 14) area is in the most need of new facilities followed by

Riverside/Pelham (South 14) (Table 22).

Recommendations

Prior to providing recommendations, an interview was conducted with Dr. Robert

Brookover of Clemson University's Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management. Dr.

Brookover was the lead researcher in the 2009 Strategic/Master Plan so it was important to

understand why he made certain recommendations. Dr. Brookover indicated that when he

conducted his research the department had good recreation programs compared with similar

departments throughout South Carolina. The Parks and Recreation Department had good

leadership and a lot of resources. Unfortunately, they also had outdated programs, which they

kept in operation, and a few programs that were barely performing. The first step for the City of

Greer Parks and Recreation Department was to figure out where they were going and to expand.

Creating a strategic/master plan was crucial for the department to create. It is a document that is

needed when applying for grants and is also vital to gain accreditation. Dr. Brookover believed

that the department had lots of potential and made recommendations based on this observation.

His recommendations were to give the department concepts that people want to see

accomplished. It was suggested that some of the previous recommendations would need to be

outsourced in order to successfully complete the project.

Recommendation 1

One of the recommendations in the 2009 strategic plan was to leverage Greer Recreation

Association's 501c3 status to identify, solicit, and secure sponsorship donation (Anderson et. al,

2009). This has not been implemented but should be seriously considered by the City and Parks

and Recreation Department. This is a simple way to gather resources to add value to existing or

future projects. The Greer Recreation Association could be used to gain funds needed for

additional services and to secure volunteers to aid the department in meeting the ongoing needs

of the community. The Greenville Parks and Recreation Department's Association is an

excellent example of how park associations can aid in community development. This

Association has a website that informs community members of when and where volunteers are

needed, and supplies that programs require. For example, community members can support the

Swamp Rabbit Trail, Greenville's trail and greenway project, by making a donation or

volunteering online to support the project. Greer Parks and Recreation may want to seriously

consider leveraging this organization for broader community development goals.

Currently, the Greer Recreation Association is a seven-member board that meets quarterly to discuss upcoming projects and department concerns. Board members are appointed by a council member or the mayor to represent each district's needs. Board members are local business leaders and are a direct link between the Parks and Recreation Department and community members. Leveraging the association is vital for the department as board members can network and encourage other businesses and citizens to donate time or money to support the department and future projects.

A strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis of the Greer Recreation Association was conducted in the fall of 2012. A review of the Association's guidelines was conducted along with an interview with the Director and Assistant Director of the Parks and Recreation Department. After conducting this analysis it appears the following steps would be important to create and annual fund:

- Re-organize the board.
- Create and maintain a Website.
- Conduct a "mail drop" several times a year.
- Establish a Fundraising Event (Sargeant, et al., 2010).

Once the annual fund is established a major gift program should be created so that annual donors can become ongoing gift givers to the community Parks and Recreation Department. The major gift program should also consider naming opportunities for residents who value this type of giving. In addition, if the community has identified major infrastructure needs the association could initiate a capital campaign to try to fund and implement these projects. These efforts are often combinations of annual giving and a major gifts program.

Recommendation 2

Another important objective outlined in the 2009 plan is to maximize potential partnerships between the Greenville County Parks and Recreation and Spartanburg County Parks

and Recreation (Anderson et. al, 2009). Currently the department partners with each of these county departments on some programs throughout the year, but the city's programs and facilities operate independently of the counties. This remains an important area of growth for the department. Greer is located in both Greenville and Spartanburg Counties, a partnership with both park and recreation departments is important to ensuring enhanced access to funding and support. This research highlighted facilities and programs not available in Greer that residents would like to have or participate in. Partnerships with Greenville and Spartanburg Parks and Recreation Departments could improve opportunities and access to new programs and facilities.

Recently Greenville County Council passed a resolution that would merge outlying recreation districts into one county department (Alongi, Paul; 2013). This merger has the potential to aid Greer in gaining the additional resources needed to develop the programming and facilities the community desires. One regional or county recreation department would have access to a larger tax base compared to individual recreation departments. This could potentially fund larger community programs and facilities. The merger also has the potential to end the need for the Greer Parks and Recreation Department. It could cause competition that would send more participants to Greenville County programs and facilities rather than Greer's programs and facilities. An issue that may arise however is that part of the city of Greer is located in Spartanburg County. Current research shows that people do not know where they live and where their tax money is going and this could become a potential issue if Greer Parks and Recreation tries to remain independent.

Recommendation 3

One of the ongoing dilemmas for parks and recreation departments is understanding and measuring the broad community impacts they have. As such, one of the recommendations is to

conduct an economic impact study on the department every year. "The purpose of economic impact analysis is to measure the broader economic benefits that accrue to a community" (Crompton, 2006: 67). Currently, the department is only conducting an economic impact study on the athletics' division every year. As discussed earlier, most parks and recreation departments are viewed as important economic engines in their community because they attract non-resident visitors who spend money in the local community (Thomas and Crompton, 2004). An economic impact study could be used by the Greer Recreation Association to solicit and secure sponsorships and donations from community members who are directly affected by impacts from the department's programs.

This summer the department plans to begin collecting data at city events and festivals in order to conduct a more thorough economic impact study. Crompton's (2010) research suggests that an annual economic impact report of multiple events at different locations can be done by collecting data at a relatively small number of events and then extrapolating these results to similar events that were not surveyed. This would reduce the time and cost of collecting data at every event. Crompton and Lee's (2000) research suggests that a simple questionnaire could be handed out at festival and spectator events to gauge economic impact. The questionnaire should ask participants to estimate how much money they spent at local restaurants, retail stores, hotel, car, and entertainment. Other questions such as, would you have come to the city on your own, how many days did you spend here, and do you plan on returning to the city in the future would also be useful in determining the overall economic impact of these events.

Recommendation 4

Finally, the last recommendation focuses on parks and recreation agencies ability to help cities and towns revitalize by using infill development. Infill development can have many rewards such as less motor vehicle use, providing new homes, services, or jobs. It can also allow communities to take advantage of existing infrastructure, reduce the costs of local government services, and restore the ecosystem (Wheeler, 2002). By responsibly using the open space and abandoned areas, parks and recreation departments can provide social, health, economic, and environmental benefits to the community.

The city has already established infill development with the creation of City Park. Land in a rundown part of the city was turned into a park with an amphitheater, gazebo, picnic shelters, and green space. City hall is also located on the property and features a rental space for conferences, weddings, and private events. Another example of infill development is the Cannon Centre. Renovation of the Cannon Centre was completed in 2012. It was an old armory with a gymnasium. Upgrades were made to the floor, an HVAC system was installed, and a movable stage with seating was added along with a kitchen, office space, and classrooms. The Cannon Centre is currently being used as the cultural arts facility and a rental space. Unused land was purchased by the department and will be used as additional parking at Century Park and Kids' Planet and South Suber Road Soccer Complex. Empty space was turned into green space at Greentown Community Park and possibly at South Suber Road Soccer Complex. Other land is available for development. The department to develop the facilities and programs that the community would like to participate in can use abandoned buildings throughout the city and around City Park.

Facility Development Recommendations

As recommended by the 2009 Strategic/Master Plan, it is still important to develop a comprehensive indoor recreation facility to include fitness/wellness amenities, basketball courts, and an indoor aquatic facility. The department also still needs to meet the recommendation of development of an outdoor community pool. Partnering with private companies and a non-profit organization are encouraged to meet the financial demands of this project. Reviewing similar cities' facilities is also recommended in order to gain ideas on how to accomplish this task. Possibly even sharing resources with other communities would allow residents access to these kinds of facilities.

Development of an interconnected, city-wide system of trails, greenways, walking paths, and jogging paths was recommended in the 2009 plan along with including a river trail system on the Tyger and Enoree rivers. This plan is currently being constructed. This will be a positive addition to the community as results indicate that these are important community facilities and services. The Greenville Parks and Recreation Department could aid the City of Greer in developing a plan for a city-wide system of trails, greenways, walking and jogging paths as they just implemented their trail system.

Program Needs Recommendations

The 2009 Strategic/Master Plan specified the creation of fitness and wellness programs that included weight training, aerobic and cardio classes, swimming instruction, and water aerobics programs. This is highly recommended since the current data illustrates that this recommendation has not been completed, but is still an important program need to respondents. The creation of a comprehensive indoor recreation facility, including a pool and other documented community needs, could house all of these programs.

Conclusion

The City of Greer Parks and Recreation Department has continued to make improvement of their facilities and programs over the past three years. Though improvement has continued, it is important for the department to consider the recommendations from the 2009 strategic plan and the current update to this plan. It is suggested that the department take the time to improve facilities and programs that fall in the category of "available but inadequate for my needs" so when the strategic/master plan is reviewed and evaluated in the next 3-5 years those facilities and programs will be meeting the identified needs of respondents.

The next step in is for the City to understand where the department is currently and where it would like to be in the next five to ten years. Some of the projects such as an indoor aquatic facility are very expensive. Recommendations such as the indoor aquatic facility, fitness/recreation center, and walking/jogging paths will need outside consultation in order to implement. Leveraging the Greer Recreation Association's 501c3 status is a start in gaining the support needed for improvement. The Association is already in place; they just need to re-organize in order to bring in additional funds for services and to secure volunteers. Maximizing potential partnerships between the Greenville County Parks and Recreation and Spartanburg County Parks and Recreation is another area that the department should consider. These partnerships can aid the department in completing future projects. Establishing this partnership could be a cost effective way in developing facilities that the community deems necessary. Conducting an economic impact study is something that the department can do internally. There are already plans in place to begin collecting data at events and festivals in July 2013. Infill development is an important means of restoring run-down areas of the city. The department with

plans to add value to certain parks has already purchased some of the abandoned land for infill development. Other infill development may need outside guidance before projects are planned.

The City of Greer Parks and Recreation Department has taken the recommendations from the 2009 Strategic/Master Plan seriously. Research concludes that the department has improved in the opinion of the community. The department should consider the research and the recommendations in their future plans.

Appendix

Appendix 1   *Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment*

Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment

1. What is your zip code?

○ 29650

○ 29652

○ 29651

○ 26987

○ other

If you chose "other," please enter your zip code

[   ]

2. Do you have a roll out residential garbage container collected by the City of Greer?

○ Yes

○ No

3. Are you a resident of the City of Greer?

○ Yes

○ No

4. What is your age?

○ Under 18   ○ 36 to 45   ○ 66 to 75

○ 18 to 25   ○ 46 to 55   ○ 76 or more

○ 26 to 35   ○ 56 to 65

5. Are you male or female?

○ Male

○ Female

6. How many years have you lived in the City of Greer?

○ Less than 1   ○ 3-5   ○ 11-20

○ 1-2   ○ 6-10   ○ More than 20

7. Do you have dependent children living at home?

○ Yes

○ No

8. Please enter the number of dependent children you have living at home in each category.

Preschool aged (under 5 years old)	
Elementary school aged (5-10 years old)	
Middle school aged (11-13 years old)	
High school aged (14-19 years old)	

9. What is your ethnic background?

○ American Indian/Alaskan Native

○ Black/Non-Hispanic

○ Asian/Pacific Islander

○ Hispanic

○ White/Non-Hispanic

○ Other

10. What is the joint annual income of your family?

○ Under $25,000

○ $25,000 to $49,999

○ $50,000 to $74,999

○ $75,000 to $99,000

○ $100,000 or more

11. We would like your opinion regarding the adequacy of the recreation facilities available in the City of Greer.

	Meets My Needs	Available but Inadequate for My Needs	Important but Not Available	Not Interested	No Opinion
Baseball Fields	○	○	○	○	○
Softball Fields	○	○	○	○	○
Indoor Basketball Courts	○	○	○	○	○
Football Fields	○	○	○	○	○
Soccer Fields	○	○	○	○	○
Golf Courses	○	○	○	○	○
Golf Practice Facilities	○	○	○	○	○
Disc/Frisbee Golf Courses	○	○	○	○	○
Rollerblade/Skateboard Facilities	○	○	○	○	○
Shooting Sports/Facilities	○	○	○	○	○
Tennis Courts/Facilities	○	○	○	○	○

12. We would like your opinion regarding the adequacy of the recreation facilities available in the City of Greer (cont.).

	Meets My Needs	Available but Inadequate for My Needs	Important but Not Available	Not Interested	No Opinion
Walking/Jogging Paths	○	○	○	○	○
Trails/Greenways	○	○	○	○	○
Boat Ramps/Docks/Water Access	○	○	○	○	○
Fishing	○	○	○	○	○
Community Centers	○	○	○	○	○
Indoor Aquatic Facilities	○	○	○	○	○
Outdoor Community Pools	○	○	○	○	○
Fitness/Recreation Centers	○	○	○	○	○
Playgrounds	○	○	○	○	○
Large Parks/Open Space	○	○	○	○	○
Small Community Parks	○	○	○	○	○
Dog Parks	○	○	○	○	○
Waterfront Parks and Amenities	○	○	○	○	○
Theater/Cultural Arts Facilities	○	○	○	○	○

13. Of the previously mentioned facilities that do not meet your needs, which are the top three most important for the City of Greer to develop?

14. Please list any other facilities not mentioned above that you feel are needed in the City of Greer.

15. Do you think the City of Greer has adequate recreation facilities compared to surrounding and other similar cities in South Carolina?

○ Yes, the City of Greer has adequate recreation facilities.

○ No, the City of Greer does not have adequate recreation facilities.

○ Undecided

16. Do you think the City of Greer's Parks and Recreation Department has improved it's programs and facilities in the last 3 years?

○ Yes

○ No

○ No Opinion

Comments

17. We would like your opinion regarding the adequacy of RECREATION PROGRAMS that are available to you regardless of where those programs are offered.

	Meets My Needs	Available but Inadequate for My Needs	Important but Not Available	Not Interested	No Opinion
Arts and Crafts	○	○	○	○	○
Performing Arts	○	○	○	○	○
Concerts	○	○	○	○	○
Dances	○	○	○	○	○
Sports Instruction	○	○	○	○	○
Sports Team Play	○	○	○	○	○
Open Gyms	○	○	○	○	○
Nature Programs	○	○	○	○	○
Day Camps	○	○	○	○	○
Outdoor Adventure Camps	○	○	○	○	○
Fitness Classes	○	○	○	○	○
Water Aerobics	○	○	○	○	○
Weight Training	○	○	○	○	○
Cardiovascular Equipment	○	○	○	○	○

18. We would like your opinion regarding the adequacy of RECREATION PROGRAMS that are available to you regardless of where those programs are offered (cont.).

	Meets My Needs	Available but Inadequate for My Needs	Important but Not Available	Not Interested	No Opinion
Special Events	○	○	○	○	○
Pre-Kindergarten Programs	○	○	○	○	○
Teen Activities	○	○	○	○	○
Activities for Older Adults/Seniors	○	○	○	○	○
Before and After School Programs	○	○	○	○	○
Swimming Instruction	○	○	○	○	○
Recreation Programs for the Disabled	○	○	○	○	○
Child Development Activities	○	○	○	○	○
Outdoor Adventure Activities	○	○	○	○	○
Cultural Arts	○	○	○	○	○

19. Please list any other recreation programs or activities you would like to participate in but are not available in the City of Greer or the surrounding area.

20. The following are potential contributions parks and recreation programs and facilities can have on a community's quality of life. Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Support Economic Development	○	○	○	○	○
Strengthen Safety and Wellness	○	○	○	○	○
Foster Human Development	○	○	○	○	○
Strengthen Community Image and Sense of Place	○	○	○	○	○
Increase Cultural Unity	○	○	○	○	○
Protect Environmental Resources	○	○	○	○	○
Facilitate Community Problem Solving	○	○	○	○	○
Provide Community Opportunities for Fun and Celebration	○	○	○	○	○
Provide Opportunities for Lifelong Learning	○	○	○	○	○
Attracts New Residents and Businesses	○	○	○	○	○

21. How important are the following elements of community life to you as a citizen of the City of Greer?

	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Very Unimportant
Parks and Open Space	○	○	○	○	○
Entertainment/Commercial Recreation	○	○	○	○	○
Public Recreation Programs	○	○	○	○	○
Public Schools	○	○	○	○	○
Opportunities to Become Familiar with Other Residents	○	○	○	○	○
Public Transportation	○	○	○	○	○
Fire Protection/EMS Service	○	○	○	○	○
Police Protection/Public Safety	○	○	○	○	○
Social and Human Services	○	○	○	○	○
Medical/Health Care Facilities	○	○	○	○	○
Public Works (water, sewer, electric, gas, solid waste)	○	○	○	○	○
A Sense of Community Pride	○	○	○	○	○
Libraries	○	○	○	○	○

22. How satisfied are you with the same elements of community life from the previous question?

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Unsatisfied	Very Unsatisfied
Parks and Open Spaces	○	○	○	○	○
Entertainment/Commercial Recreation	○	○	○	○	○
Public Recreation Programs	○	○	○	○	○
Public Schools	○	○	○	○	○
Opportunities to Become Familiar with Other Residents	○	○	○	○	○
Public Transportation	○	○	○	○	○
Fire Protection/EMS Service	○	○	○	○	○
Police Protection/Public Safety	○	○	○	○	○
Social and Human Services	○	○	○	○	○
Medical/Health Care Facilities	○	○	○	○	○
Public Works (water, sewer, electric, gas, solid waste)	○	○	○	○	○
A Sense of Community Pride	○	○	○	○	○
Libraries	○	○	○	○	○

23. In your opinion, how conveniently located are the recreation facilities provided by the City of Greer?

○ Very conveniently located

○ Conveniently located

○ Inconveniently located

○ Very Inconveniently located

○ No Opinion

24. When developing new parks and recreation facilities and amenities in the future, I would prefer that the City of Greer....

○ Develop centralized facilities and amenities (larger parks in 3 or 4 locations).

○ Develop decentralized facilities and amenities (small community/neighborhood parks).

○ Provide a balance of larger community parks and small neighborhood parks.

25. Which area of Greer is in most need of new recreation facilities and amenities?

○ North 14 (Blueridge)

○ South 14 (Riverside/Pelham)

○ East 29 (Spartanburg)

○ West 29 (Greenville)

26. I would prefer that the City of Greer fund the development of recreation facilities....

○ Strictly through taxes

○ Strictly through user fees
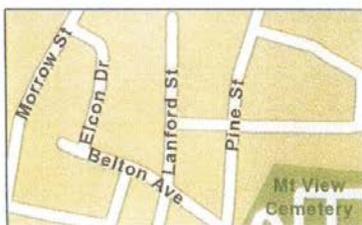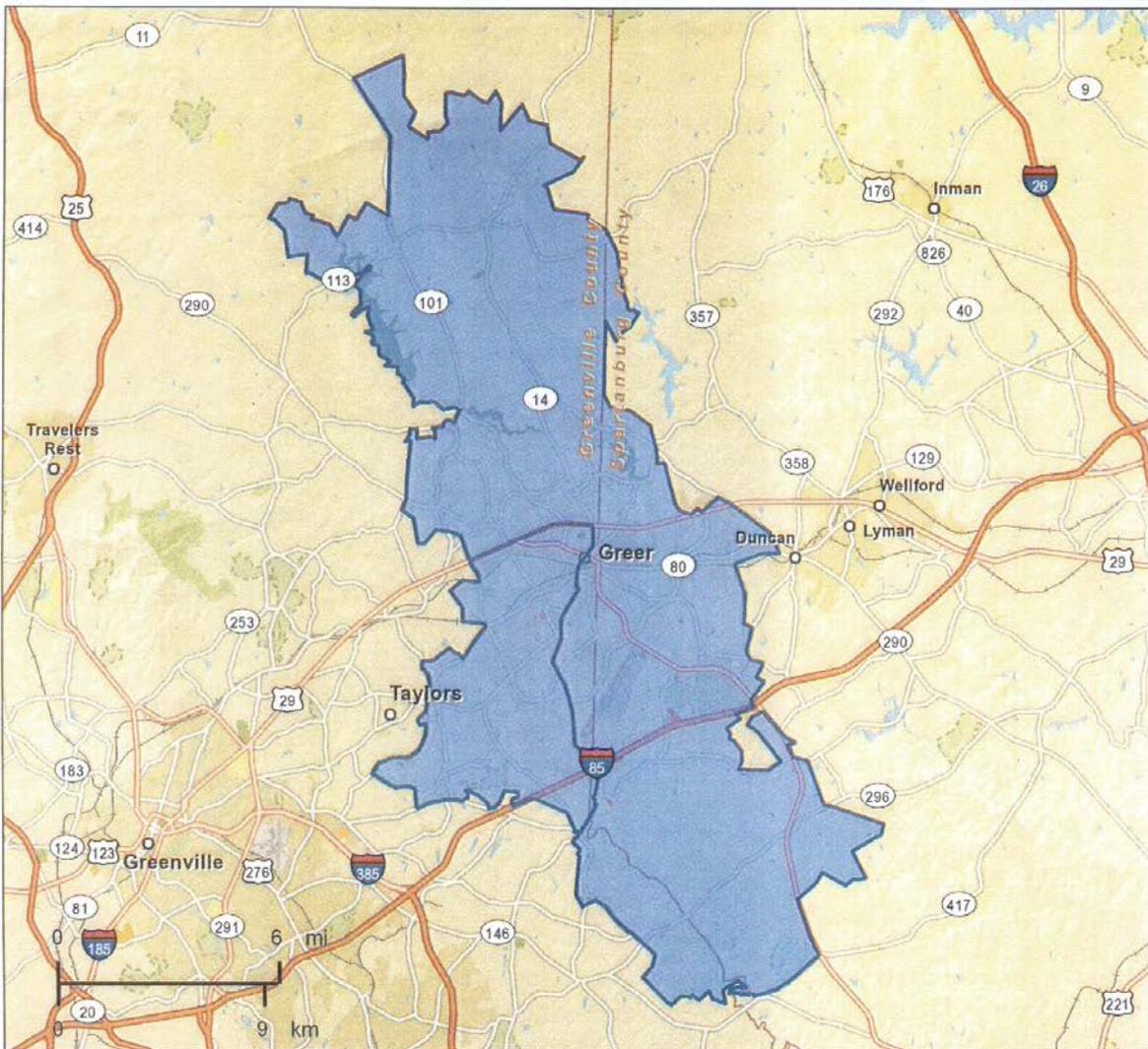
○ Through a combination of taxes and user fees

27. Please use the space below to provide any other comments or suggestions you have to improve, develop, and enhance recreation programs and facilities in the City of Greer. Otherwise please click on the "Submit" button below to complete your survey.

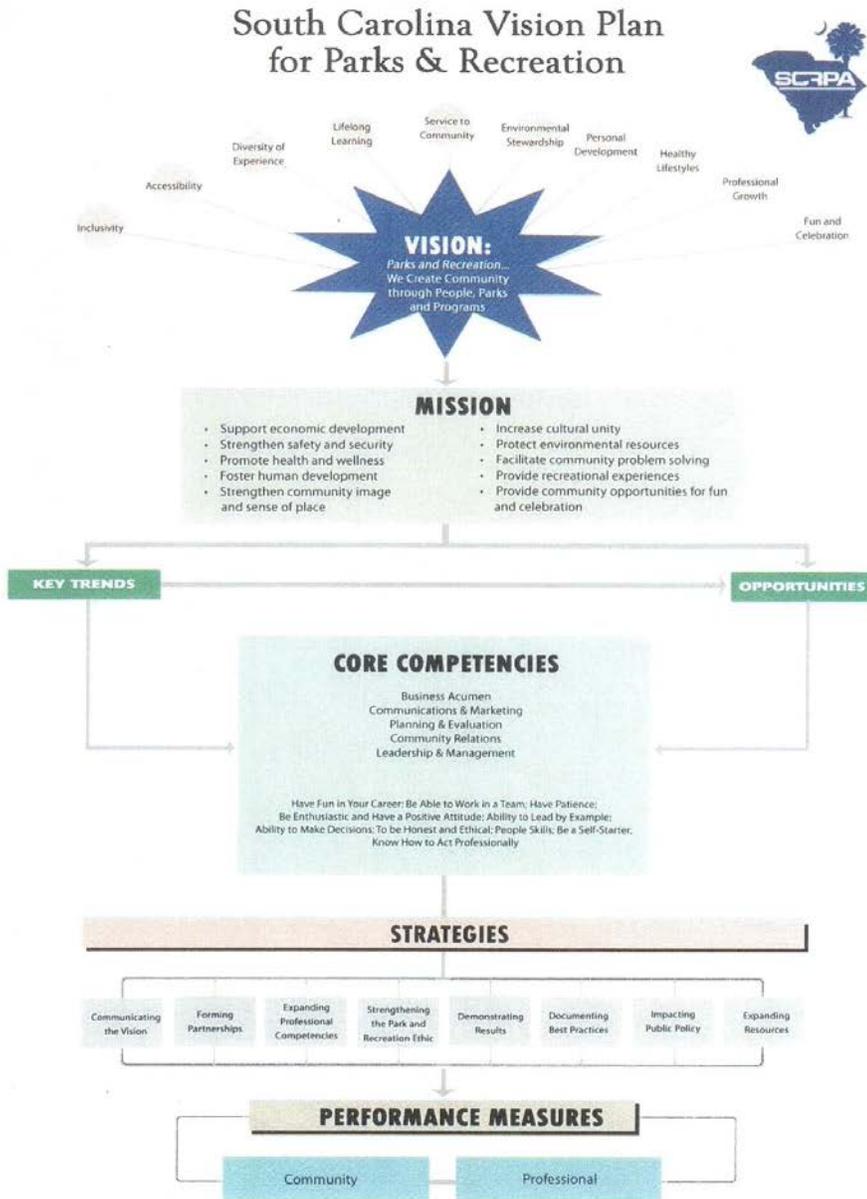*Appendix 2: Map of City of Greer Residents by Zip Code.*

Appendix 3: South Carolina Vision Plan for Parks and Recreation

South Carolina Vision Plan for Parks & Recreation

SCRPA

Lifelong Learning · Service to Community · Environmental Stewardship · Personal Development · Healthy Lifestyles · Professional Growth · Fun and Celebration · Diversity of Experience · Accessibility · Inclusivity

VISION:
Parks and Recreation...
We Create Community
through People, Parks
and Programs

MISSION

- Support economic development
- Strengthen safety and security
- Promote health and wellness
- Foster human development
- Strengthen community image and sense of place
- Increase cultural unity
- Protect environmental resources
- Facilitate community problem solving
- Provide recreational experiences
- Provide community opportunities for fun and celebration

KEY TRENDS   **OPPORTUNITIES**

CORE COMPETENCIES

Business Acumen
Communications & Marketing
Planning & Evaluation
Community Relations
Leadership & Management

Have Fun in Your Career; Be Able to Work in a Team; Have Patience;
Be Enthusiastic and Have a Positive Attitude; Ability to Lead by Example;
Ability to Make Decisions; To be Honest and Ethical; People Skills; Be a Self-Starter;
Know How to Act Professionally

STRATEGIES

Communicating the Vision · Forming Partnerships · Expanding Professional Competencies · Strengthening the Park and Recreation Ethic · Demonstrating Results · Documenting Best Practices · Impacting Public Policy · Expanding Resources

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Community   Professional

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esri — Demographic and Income Profile

J Verne Smith Pky, Greer, SC, 29651
Donut: 0 - 5 miles

Latitude: 34.94771
Longitude: -82.18352

Summary	Census 2010		2012		2017
Population	51,530		52,205		54,870
Households	19,988		20,275		21,235
Families	13,986		14,020		14,658
Average Household Size	2.56		2.56		2.57
Owner Occupied Housing Units	13,751		13,859		14,512
Renter Occupied Housing Units	6,237		6,416		6,723
Median Age	36.3		36.5		37.0

Trends: 2012 - 2017 Annual Rate	Area		State		National
Population	1.00%		1.20%		0.68%
Households	0.93%		1.32%		0.74%
Families	0.89%		1.29%		0.72%
Owner HHs	0.93%		1.37%		0.91%
Median Household Income	3.40%		3.22%		2.55%

			2012		2017	
Households by Income			Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<$15,000			3,728	18.4%	3,790	17.8%
$15,000 - $24,999			3,060	15.1%	2,510	11.8%
$25,000 - $34,999			2,611	12.9%	2,265	10.7%
$35,000 - $49,999			2,863	14.1%	2,832	13.3%
$50,000 - $74,999			4,160	20.5%	5,153	24.3%
$75,000 - $99,999			1,878	9.3%	2,358	11.1%
$100,000 - $149,999			1,408	6.9%	1,647	7.8%
$150,000 - $199,999			366	1.8%	451	2.1%
$200,000+			202	1.0%	229	1.1%
Median Household Income			$37,997		$44,904	
Average Household Income			$49,693		$54,449	
Per Capita Income			$19,434		$21,204	

	Census 2010		2012		2017	
Population by Age	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
0 - 4	3,928	7.6%	3,967	7.6%	4,163	7.6%
5 - 9	3,555	6.9%	3,572	6.8%	3,727	6.8%
10 - 14	3,514	6.8%	3,496	6.7%	3,680	6.7%
15 - 19	3,347	6.5%	3,229	6.2%	3,228	5.9%
20 - 24	3,282	6.4%	3,385	6.5%	3,259	5.9%
25 - 34	7,190	14.0%	7,400	14.2%	7,816	14.2%
35 - 44	7,153	13.9%	7,035	13.5%	7,199	13.1%
45 - 54	7,241	14.1%	7,101	13.6%	6,879	12.5%
55 - 64	5,715	11.1%	6,047	11.6%	6,622	12.1%
65 - 74	3,757	7.3%	4,054	7.8%	5,079	9.3%
75 - 84	2,057	4.0%	2,075	4.0%	2,288	4.2%
85+	791	1.5%	844	1.6%	929	1.7%

	Census 2010		2012		2017	
Race and Ethnicity	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
White Alone	39,149	76.0%	39,254	75.2%	40,158	73.2%
Black Alone	7,933	15.4%	8,129	15.6%	8,626	15.7%
American Indian Alone	120	0.2%	127	0.2%	152	0.3%
Asian Alone	560	1.1%	589	1.1%	686	1.3%
Pacific Islander Alone	18	0.0%	21	0.0%	30	0.1%
Some Other Race Alone	2,725	5.3%	2,986	5.7%	3,897	7.1%
Two or More Races	1,025	2.0%	1,098	2.1%	1,321	2.4%
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	5,319	10.3%	5,810	11.1%	7,487	13.6%

Data Note: Income is expressed in current dollars.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2010 Summary File 1. Esri forecasts for 2012 and 2017.

February 20, 2013

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