

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the study was to offer statistically valid data regarding the recreation-related needs, interests, opinions and behavior of the people in Sioux Falls. This was achieved by designing a questionnaire based on focus group meetings with different segments of the community and members of the staff of the public recreation providers in Sioux Falls. Once the questionnaire was completed it was mailed to a random sample of residents resulting in a response rate of 15.7%.

Major findings:

The issues important to the respondents include the use of trails and activities that could lead to social interaction and offer opportunities for self-improvement.

In general a certain set of trends emerge in terms of programs and facilities and it is possible to take the entire data from the study and suggest a set of priorities that emerge. Although not in a specific hierarchical order, these remain the top issues that THE DEPT has to address in the near and long term:

1. Neighborhood parks
2. Regional parks
3. Availability of trails
4. An indoor multi-use facility
5. Engage in fund raising through solicitation of sponsorships
6. Better advertise location of facilities and programs
7. Programming for seniors and special needs populations
8. Special events
9. Offering activities at times convenient to the community
10. Programming for year-round recreation

Selected Recommendations:

Facilities

- *DEPT should make efforts to offer tax-supported trails, natural areas and greenways for the community.*
- *DEPT should examine the feasibility of providing a multi-purpose indoor facility with different options as indicated in this data.*
- *DEPT should further examine the level of need for a dog park.*
- *DEPT should ensure that there are sufficient facilities with adequate parking to avoid overcrowding.*
- *DEPT should ensure that the level of maintenance and safety of parks and facilities should continue at its current level.*
- *DEPT should offer picnic shelters in their parks.*
- *DEPT should ensure that there are sufficient opportunities for aquatic activities in the community.*

Programming

- *DEPT should ensure that community is offered sufficient opportunities to express their personal interests and meet with other people who have similar interests.*
- *DEPT should ensure that community is offered sufficient opportunities to for arts and crafts activities as well as self-improvement activities where some could easily overlap.*
- *DEPT should consider ways in which it can offer recreation opportunities in winter, especially in an indoor setting.*
- *DEPT should continue to offer recreation for the whole family including families with special needs.*
- *DEPT must offer more recreation opportunities at times convenient to the community by examining the data from this study.*

Financial

- *DEPT should offer affordable recreation to the community with appropriate cost adjustments to fit the financial abilities of different groups.*

- *DEPT could explore different fee-based service given there is a willingness to pay user fees for services.*
- *DEPT should actively pursue private and grant support for its activities and facilities.*
- *DEPT should consider using appropriate user fees for its operations and offer concessions at activities and facilities to develop a new funding stream.*

Marketing

- *DEPT should maintain a strong presence in the traditional mass media so that all sections of the community have access to the information about recreation opportunities.*
- *DEPT should offer a direct mailed brochure to the community.*
- *DEPT should consider expanding on digital modes of information distribution.*