# Image result for survey money logoElectronic Survey

## Methodology

PROS Consulting conducted an online survey (powered by SurveyMonkey) to gain a better understanding of the characteristics, preferences, and satisfaction levels of Norfolk Recreation, Parks, and Open Space users. The survey was open for approximately two months, from April through June, 2021 and received a total of 784 responses, which speaks to a very good participation rate among the community.

This online survey mirrored the statistically-valid survey conducted by ETC Institute. This allowed residents who were not randomly selected to participate in the statistically-valid survey an opportunity to be part of the community input process.

## Findings

### Have you or any member of your household visited any parks and facilities offered by the city of norfolk during the last 2 years? (iNCLUDING THE TIME BEFORE THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC)

Approximately 92% of respondents indicated that they have visited a Norfolk park or facility within the last 2 years, while only 8% said they had not visited.

### How often have you visited City of norfolk parks and/or facilities during the last 2 years?

Assessing park/facility visitations, over 64% of survey participants visit a Norfolk park and/or facility at least once a week, with more than one-third visiting 2-4 times a week and 9% visiting almost daily. Less than 1% stated they never visit.



### Overall, how would you rate the physical condition of All the city of norfolk parks and/or facilities you have visited during the last 2 years?

Fifty-seven percent (57%) of survey respondents rated Norfolk parks and facilities as “good” or “excellent”. “Fair” was selected by 40% of participants, while just 3% stated they were “poor”.

### if your household has not visited any city of norfolk parks or facilities during the last 2 years, please check all of the following reasons you have not visited, before the covid-19 pandemic?

For those respondents who have NOT visited any Norfolk parks and/or facilities in the last 2 years, the most listed barriers were “Not aware of parks or trails locations” (34%), “Lack of features we want to use” (34%), and “Do not feel safe using park / trails” (33%) which were each listed on approximately one out of every three survey responses.

### In the city of norfolk, a neighborhood park is a smaller park which may have a play area, a picinic area, and a small outdoor open area. What is the maximum distance you would travel to visit a park like this?

Almost 59% of those surveyed would not travel more than a mile to visit a neighborhood park. Thirty-five percent (35%) would travel at least 2 miles and only 7% said they would not visit a neighborhood park.

### In the City of Norfolk, a Community Park is a larger park which may have a larger outdoor open area, play areas, athletic fields/game courts, a community building/gym, a childcare center or senior center. What is the maximum distance you would travel to visit a park like this?

When compared to a neighborhood park, we see those surveyed would be willing to travel a further distance for a community park with extra amenities. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of respondents stated they would travel more than 2 miles and only 3% said they wouldn’t visit this type of park.

### Has your household participated in any recreation programs offered by the city of norfolk recreation, parks, and open space department during the last 2 years?

Sixty-nine percent (69%) of respondents have had a member of their household participate in a City of Norfolk’s recreation program in the last 2 years.

### How many programs offered by the City of Norfolk Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Department have you or members of your household participated in during the last 2 years?

Seventy-two percent (72%) of those surveyed stated that they or a member of their household had participated in at least two programs offered by the City of Norfolk and 24% of survey respondents engaged in four or more recreation programs.

 

### How would you rate the overall quality of the City of Norfolk Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Department programs in which your household has participated?

Seventy-seven percent (77%) of respondents classified programs as “good” or “excellent” quality while only 1% stated they were “poor”.

### If your household has NOT participated in any City of Norfolk Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Department programs during the last 2 years, please CHECK ALL of the following reasons why you may have NOT participated, before the COVID-19 Pandemic.

“I don’t know what is offered” (59%) was by far the most listed barrier to program participation by respondents. This can be tied to marketing and shows an opportunity in promoting programs. “Program times are not convenient” (18%), “Old and outdated facilities” (17%), and “Too busy / not interested” (16%), “Lack of quality programs” (10%), and “Program not offered” (10%) were the only other program barriers mentioned by 10% or more of those surveyed.

The low number of responses for “Fees are too high” (6%), “Registration is difficult” (5%), “Poor customer service by staff” (4%), “Lack of quality instructors” (3%), “Lack of trust in government” (2%), and “Language / cultural barriers” (less than 1%) are all good signs to the quality of the product put forth by the Department.



### From the following list, please CHECK ALL of the ways you learn about City of Norfolk Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Department programs and activities.

The most popular way those who were surveyed learn about City of Norfolk programs and activities is “Friends of neighbors” (48%) with “City website” (40%) and “Facebook” (39%) rounding out the top 3 responses. “Good Times” Magazine (30%) comes in much lower than the national benchmark for a “rec guide” ranked by survey respondents.

### which THREE methods of communication would you MOST PREFER the City use to communicate with you about recreation programs and activities?

Survey respondents indicated that their most preferred ways to receive information from the City are Email / Eblasts (277), the City website (212), and Facebook (210).

While Email/ Eblasts was the number one response for Marketing Preference, it only ranked fifth on the ways they currently receive information. Conversely, friends and neighbors was the number one way survey respondents currently receive information, even though it was only identified as a preferred method for less than 6% of those surveyed.



### please CHECK ALL the organizations that you or members of your household have used for recreation and sports activities during the last 2 years.

City of Norfolk recreation programs (36%) was the 2nd most utilized organization for recreation and sports activities during the last 2 years by survey respondents, behind only Virginia State Parks (57%).

The responses below indicate that survey participants favor public programs over private ones; however, the engagement with the City is a little low. It could also be that the closure of recreation centers and pools along with limited other offerings during the pandemic resulted in more people accessing the State Parks which were mostly open during that time. It would be helpful to continue to track these responses as a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) with a goal to close the gap with Virginia State Parks for engaging people through programming.



### Please indicate if you or any member of your household has a need for each of the listed parks and recreation facilities/amenities in the City of Norfolk. if yes, please rate how well your need for that amenity is being met.

Survey respondents indicated that the most needed amenities to their households were Walking and Biking trails (91%), Beaches (90%), Neighborhood Parks (82%), and Open / green space (79%). This indicates a community interested in open space in which they can recreate on their own. There is a lack of need among survey respondents for Skateboard parks (24%), Rectangular Sports Fields (27%), Large sports complex facility (29%), Diamond sports fields (30%), and Indoor basketball / volleyball courts (31%).

This shows a possible lack of unmet need by respondents towards athletic based amenities that tend to be youth oriented.



### if yes, please rate how well your need for that amenity is being met.

From respondents who answered yes to an amenity need, only 35% stated that their needs for Walking and biking trails were “100% or 75% met”, indicating that is a large unmet need. On the other hand, 72% indicated that their need for Beaches is “100% or 74% met”, indicating that the current levels of service fulfil the existing need.

There is a similar trend of significant levels of “need” accompanied by low levels of “need met” among respondents for amenities such as Outdoor amphitheater / Performing arts center, Community gardens, Splash pads, and Indoor walking / Jogging track.

### Which FOUR facilities / amenities from the previous list are MOST IMPORTANT to your household

Of the facility / amenity choices listed below, survey participants most mentioned beaches (245) and walking and biking trails (213) as the top two most important facility / amenities. These were also the top 2 answers for facility / amenity need, just in opposite order. Indoor pools / aquatics (129) was the third most “important” facility / amenity, and 66% of survey participants stated that their needs for those facilities were not adequately met (i.e. 0%-25% need met) on the previous question.

The least “important” amenities by respondents were Skateboard parks (11), Large sports complex facilities (18), Rectangular sports fields (20), and Indoor basketball / volleyball courts (21).



### Please indicate if you or any member of your household has a need for each of the listed parks, recreation, and senior programs in the City of Norfolk

The top 5 needed programs according to survey participants were Adult fitness and wellness programs (71%), Exercise classes (65%), Community special events (60%), Cultural enrichment programs (58%), and Water fitness programs / lap swimming (54%). The low numbers for programs such as EGaming / Esports (9%), Birthday parties, Teen / Tween programs (21%), Gymnastics / Tumbling programs (21%), and Recreation / competitive swim team (22%) may be due to the niche nature of the offerings (e.g. Egaming / ESports; Gymnastics / Tumbling) or the smaller age segment they serve (e.g. Teen / Tween programs).

### If "Yes", please rate how well your need for that activity/program is being met.

There is a higher percentage of respondents that indicated their program needs are “0% met” when compared to the previous results for amenity needs. Four of the six programs that more than 50% of respondents selected as having a “need” had a high unmet need (i.e. 0-25% met). Most notably in Water fitness programs / lap swimming was considered a “need” by 54% of those surveyed and 57% of the those that indicated a need reported that 0% of their needs are currently met by the City.

Overall, program needs had a much higher unmet need than amenities/facilities, as 14 different program areas received more than 50% of respondents that indicated their needs were completely unmet (i.e. 0% met). This could also be due to the facility closures during the pandemic and the unavailability of certain types of amenities in the small neighborhood style centers.

### Which FOUR activities/programs listed previously are MOST IMPORTANT to your household?

Survey respondents indicated that, by far, the most important activities / programs to their households were adult fitness and wellness programs (179), exercise classes (124) and water fitness programs / lap swimming (92).



### Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements about some potential benefits of the City of Norfolk's parks and recreation services.

Survey respondents agree at a high level that the City of Norfolk’s Parks and Recreation Services provide significant potential benefits. All 13 potential benefits listed had an agreement rate (a combination of “Strongly agree and “agree”) of at least 66% by participants.

Over half of those surveyed “strongly agreed” with the statements, “makes Norfolk a more desirable place to live” (52%), “improves my (my household’s) physical health and fitness” (50%), and “preserves open space and protects the environment” (50%). No single benefit listed below had a disagreement rate (including “disagree” and “strongly agree”) above 10%, which points to a high perception of value for parks and recreation services.



### The City of Norfolk is exploring developing a Sports Complex Facility. Below are some amenities that could be included in that facility. Please indicate how often your household would use each of these amenities.

Survey respondents indicated that the Sports Complex Facility Amenity they would utilize the most is Regional walking / jogging trails, for which 85% of participants said they would use at least once a month, followed by Aquatic facility at 71% and Outdoor exercise / fitness area at 69%.

There were many sports complex facility amenities that respondents said they would seldom/never use at a high rate (i.e. >50% of survey respondents): Football fields (75%), Cricket pitches (74%), Skateboard parks (69%) Volleyball courts (65%), Basketball courts (63%), Baseball/softball fields (63%), Soccer Fields (61%), Indoor batting cages (54%), and Tennis courts (54%).



### Which FOUR of the amenities listed previously would your household be MOST LIKELY to use if they were included in a new Sports Complex Facility?

Aquatic facility (271), regional walking / jogging trails (267), and outdoor exercise / fitness area (181) were the prospective sports complex amenities that were most likely to be used by survey respondents. The least likely options were cricket pitch (6), football fields (6), and volleyball courts (11).

These numbers pretty much mirror the responses from the previous question, and, once again, show that survey respondents are interested in more passive, self-driven amenities, while more traditional, organized sports offerings rank towards the bottom.



### The City of Norfolk is exploring replacing smaller, older community centers that are beyond their lifecycle with a larger Multigenerational community center. Below are some elements that could be included in the community center. Please indicate how often your household would use each of these features.

Survey respondents indicated that the elements they would use the most (i.e. “several times a week”) in a multigenerational community center would be swimming pool lap lanes (32%), aerobics / fitness / gymnastics space (30%), weight room / cardiovascular equipment (26%), and Indoor walking / running track (24%). Those elements with the highest “Seldom/Never” response rates were Preschool space (72%), Teen lounge area (69%), Childcare (68%), and Youth counseling services (66%). This demonstrates that survey respondents are more open to multipurpose and multigenerational activities for all.



### Which FOUR of the features listed previously would your household be MOST LIKELY to use if they were included in a new Multigenerational community center?

The feature that was identified by survey respondents as the most likely to be used at a multigenerational community center was Lap lanes for swim lessons, exercise swimming, competitive swimming, or therapeutic purposes (211).

This was followed by aerobics / fitness / gymnastics space (186) and indoor walking / running track (174). The least mentioned options were youth counseling services (13), teen lounge area (19), and preschool space (23).



### What is the maximum distance you would travel to use a new Multigenerational community center if it had the features you indicated in the previous question as the most important to your household?

Survey respondents indicated a strong willingness to travel to a multigenerational community center if it had the features they desired. Twenty-six percent (26%) stated they would travel 1-2 miles, thirty-five (35%) reported they would go 3-4 miles, and twenty-four percent (24%) indicated they would travel 5-6 miles. Combined, 99% of survey respondents would travel at least 1 mile to use a multigenerational center, while only 1% said they would not use such a facility.



### Please rate your level of satisfaction with the overall value that your household receives from the City of Norfolk Recreation, Parks, and Open Space Department.

Approximately 38% of survey respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the value they receive from the City of Norfolk RPOS, while 28% ranked their level of satisfaction at dissatisfied or below.



###  Given the recent COVID-19 Pandemic, how has your and your household’s perception of the value of parks, trails, open spaces and recreation changed?

Over 62% of survey respondents claim that their perception of the value of parks, trails, open spaces, and recreation has increased to some degree during the COVID-19 pandemic, while only twelve (12%) expressed that their perception of the value received decreased. While the previous question indicated that satisfaction levels for RPOS are somewhat split, there was a clear increase in perceived value among survey respondents for parks, trails, open space, and recreation, in light of the pandemic.



### Based on your perception of value, how would you want the City of Norfolk to fund future parks, recreation, trails, and open space needs?

Seventy-eight (78%) of survey participants said they would want the City of Norfolk to increase funding for parks, recreation, trails, and open space based on their perception of value. Eleven percent (11%) would maintain existing funding levels, and only 1% would reduce funding. Ten percent (10%) indicated they were unsure.

This shows that survey respondents are highly supportive of funding future parks, recreation, trails, and open space.



### Please rate your level of support for each of the following actions the City of Norfolk could take to improve the parks and recreation system.

Strong support exists among survey respondents for most of the improvements listed below. Develop walking / biking trail along the waterfront (79%) had the highest “very supportive” percentage, followed closely by develop new trails and connect existing trails (75%), improve existing neighborhood and community parks (74%), and develop new nature trails, nature centers, and nature programs (71%); once again showing community interest in passive, self-paced recreation from survey respondents. Develop a Sports Complex facility had the lowest “very supportive” percentage at 35% and ranked behind only Wi-Fi in parks (21%) in highest “not supportive” response rate at 17%.

### Which FOUR actions from the previous list would you be MOST WILLING to fund?

Passive recreation and open space opportunities once again rose to the top of the list, as develop walking / biking trails and parks along the waterfront (148), develop new nature trails, nature centers, and nature programs (138), and develop new trails and connect existing trails (135) were the actions that survey respondents would be most willing to fund.

Those least likely to be funded were improve existing youth / adult athletic fields (12), purchase land for additional athletic fields and larger recreational areas (15), improve existing sport courts (27), utilize school facilities for City recreation programs (27) and Wi-Fi- in parks (27).



## Demographics

### What is your gender

Nearly 70% of survey respondents were female with 27% identifying as male at 3% preferring not to answer.



### Including yourself, how many people in your household are...

Of the survey respondents and all those in their household, Thirty percent (30%) were age 19 and under. Sixteen percent (16%) were between the ages of 20-34 and twenty-seven percent (27%) were 35-54. Over a quarter of survey participant households were 55 and older (27%).



### How many years have you lived in the City of Norfolk?

Of those who participated in the survey, over 56% have lived in Norfolk for over 20 years, with 17% stating they had been residents for over 50 years. Only 5 of the 367 respondents stated they had lived in the city for less than a year. The longest tenured resident response was 82 years.



### Which of the following best describes your race / ethnicity? (check all that apply)

Over 87% of survey respondents identified as White / Caucasian. This shows that White / Caucasian was overrepresented on the online survey when compared to current demographic data (45% White in 2020).

On the other hand, Black / African American made up only 5% of the survey participants, which is much lower than the actual representation of City residents (43% Black / African American in 2020).

