



TOWN OF VALDESE

2025 Comprehensive Recreation Plan



Adopted by the Valdese Town Council
on January 5, 2026

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Adopted 1/5/2026

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Summary of Citizen & Staff Identified Recreation Improvements

The Town of Valdese offers a wide range of recreation facilities and programs. In a recreation survey (made available to all Town citizens on paper and online; **321 responses were received**) and during 2 public drop-in meetings, citizens identified improvements that they would like to see made to each Town facility. ***Citizen responses focused mainly on desired improvements to existing facilities*** rather than on adding or constructing entirely new facilities or amenities.

Below is a summary of the top 5 citizen and staff identified facility improvements. The Town of Valdese can use this information to prioritize future facility improvements and guide the Recreation Department's future decision-making process. For additional information, see the full survey results in the Appendix.

Valdese Recreation Center and Pool – Top 5 Improvements		
<i>Citizen Identified</i>	<i>Staff Identified</i>	<i>Alignment</i>
Pool Improvements	A/C in gymnasium	
Additional Seating Around Pool	Paint and flooring in bowling alley	
Improve Parking Lot Lighting	Additional playground space at splash pad	
Improve Concession Stand	Resurface/re-pour tennis court	
Improve Restrooms	Improve bowling alley restrooms	YES

McGalliard Falls Park – Top 5 Improvements		
<i>Citizen Identified</i>	<i>Staff Identified</i>	<i>Alignment</i>
Improve Restrooms	Restroom improvements	YES
Increase Beautification	Parking improvements (repave/seal/stripe)	
Improve Falls Viewing Area	Provide access to base of falls and add viewing platform at Grist Mill	YES
Improve Grist Mill House/Provide Pedestrian Access	Stream restoration	
Improve Picnic Shelters/Grilling Areas	Add disc golf along greenway	

Summary of Citizen & Staff Identified Recreation Improvements

Valdease Lakeside Park – Top 5 Improvements		
<i>Citizen Identified</i>	<i>Staff Identified</i>	<i>Alignment</i>
Add Picnic Areas	Additional parking along Lake Rhodhiss Drive (30-50 spaces)	
Add New Fishing Areas	--	
Add Nature/Lake Observation Areas	--	
Add New Trails	Combined staff identified trail improvements: Improve connection between park and Hoyle Creek sidepath; Establish connection to 11-acre property south of Lovelady Dr.	YES
Improve Lighting in Parking Areas	Add boulders for climbing/play	

Children's Park – Top 5 Improvements		
<i>Citizen Identified</i>	<i>Staff Identified</i>	<i>Alignment</i>
Improve Public Restrooms	Bathroom/concession replacement	YES
Improve Playground Equipment	Playground equipment replacement	YES
Improve Picnic Shelter, Grilling, and Sitting Areas	Streambank restoration and bridge replacement	
Improve Ballfield	Improve field drainage	YES
Increase Beautification	Landscaping around Memorial	YES

Fletcher Park – Top 5 Improvements		
<i>Citizen Identified</i>	<i>Staff Identified</i>	<i>Alignment</i>
Improve Restrooms; Improve Concession Stand (combined)	Renovate bathrooms/concessions	YES
Improve Scoreboards	Scoreboards (being installed Winter 2025)	YES
Improve Ballfields/Seating Areas	Level fields (overseed and dirt)	YES
Improve Ballfield Lighting	Replace batting cage net and add hard surface	
--	Parking lot work (paint, additional lighting in parking lot and possible walkway lighting to MFP)	

Summary of Citizen & Staff Identified Recreation Improvements

Tiger Gym/Temple Field – Top 5 Improvements		
<i>Citizen Identified</i>	<i>Staff Identified*</i>	<i>Alignment</i>
Improve Public Restrooms	Renovate bathrooms	YES
Improve Seating Areas at Football Field	--	Owned by BCPS
Improve Gym Accessibility/Building Maintenance	<i>Combined staff identified improvements:</i> Strip gym floor to natural wood and add polyacrylic layer (with appropriate volleyball anchors); Renovate concessions for use as concessions/check in area; Finish bathrooms	YES
Increase Beautification	Convert old office to storage for football/soccer/basketball equipment	
Improve Lighting in Parking Lot	--	









*Tiger Gym only.



In the recreation survey, **citizens also identified potential new facilities/amenities** that they would like to have available. Citizens were asked to “rank the FIVE most important recreation facilities to your household. *Not all of these facilities are in the Town of Valdese.* Choose only FIVE. (1 = highest priority, 2 = high priority, 3 = medium priority, 4 = low priority, 5 = lowest priority).”

By examining the highest, high, and medium priority responses ‘below, the Valdese community can evaluate potential new facilities/amenities and consider appropriate locations for each. In the tables below, red arrows indicate the activities/amenities with larger responses to ‘highest priority’, ‘high priority’ and ‘medium priority’ categories.

Additional Citizen Identified Recreation Improvements

	Recreation Activity	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	Total
	Paved Walking/Jogging/Running/Biking Trails (i.e. "Greenways")	84 responses	32 responses	35 responses	30 responses	19 responses	200
	Kayaking/Canoeing Access	9 responses	16 responses	25 responses	12 responses	22 responses	84
	Disc Golf Courses	4 responses	5 responses	16 responses	10 responses	33 responses	68
	Dog Parks	7 responses	20 responses	19 responses	22 responses	23 responses	91
	Fishing Access	21 responses	16 responses	15 responses	19 responses	14 responses	85
	Hiking Trails	32 responses	32 responses	36 responses	22 responses	23 responses	145
	Horseshoe pits/cornhole/suffleboard/bocce ball courts	5 responses	15 responses	23 responses	12 responses	11 responses	66
	Baseball/Softball Fields	35 responses	24 responses	24 responses	15 responses	17 responses	115
	Outdoor Soccer Fields	12 responses	13 responses	14 responses	16 responses	22 responses	77
	Indoor Soccer Fields/Courts	8 responses	9 responses	13 responses	13 responses	24 responses	67
	Outdoor Fitness Equipment	8 responses	11 responses	14 responses	22 responses	21 responses	76
	Indoor Fitness Equipment	36 responses	26 responses	33 responses	20 responses	13 responses	128
	Open Space/Natural Areas	29 responses	18 responses	20 responses	15 responses	11 responses	93

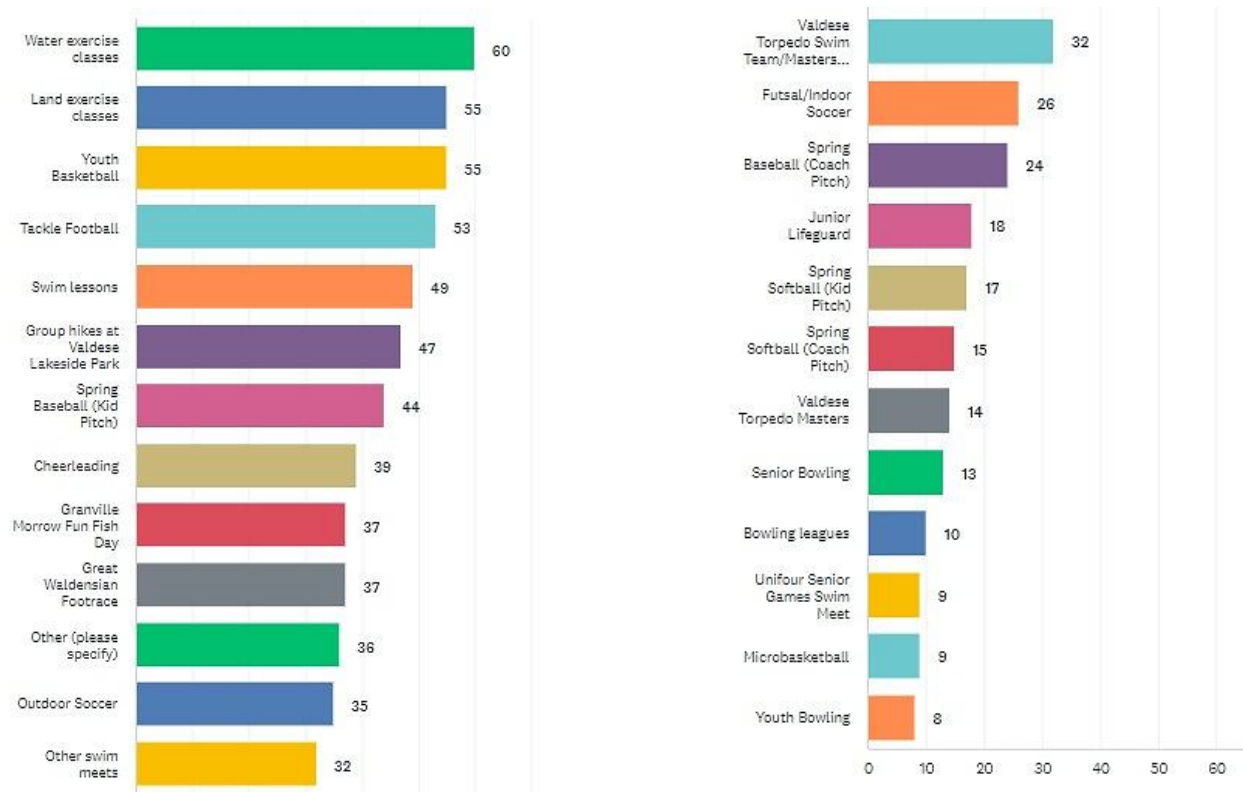
By examining the highest, high, and medium priority responses below, the Valdese community can evaluate potential new facilities/amenities and consider appropriate locations for each. In the table below, red arrows indicate the activities/amenities with larger responses to 'highest priority', 'high priority' and 'medium priority' categories.

Additional Citizen Identified Recreation Improvements (continued)

	Climbing Walls	5 responses	10 responses	10 responses	15 responses	31 responses	71
	Amphitheaters/ Stages	12 responses	14 responses	19 responses	16 responses	29 responses	90
→	Playgrounds	51 responses	27 responses	25 responses	13 responses	17 responses	133
→	Outdoor Tennis Courts	7 responses	11 responses	21 responses	18 responses	15 responses	72
	Indoor Tennis Courts	2 responses	8 responses	14 responses	16 responses	21 responses	61
→	Outdoor Pickleball Courts	15 responses	11 responses	21 responses	18 responses	18 responses	83
→	Indoor Pickleball Courts	5 responses	16 responses	23 responses	14 responses	22 responses	80
→	Outdoor Basketball Courts	11	15	16	9	13	64
→	Indoor Basketball Courts	18 responses	17 responses	12 responses	15 responses	13 responses	75
→	Picnic Shelters	18 responses	23 responses	30 responses	20 responses	14 responses	105
→	Picnic Tables (not covered)	8 responses	11 responses	22 responses	14 responses	12 responses	67
→	Outdoor Grills	10 responses	11 responses	15 responses	15 responses	13 responses	64
→	Outdoor Football Fields	33 responses	19 responses	14 responses	13 responses	16 responses	95
→	Community Garden	13 responses	13 responses	21 responses	16 responses	13 responses	76
	Outdoor Sand Volleyball Courts	5 responses	11 responses	17 responses	16 responses	18 responses	67
	Indoor Volleyball Courts	8 responses	7 responses	16 responses	15 responses	19 responses	65
→	Restrooms	44 responses	32 responses	21 responses	18 responses	25 responses	140
→	Outdoor Swimming Pools	57 responses	52 responses	27 responses	15 responses	19 responses	170
→	Indoor Swimming Pools	72 responses	36 responses	15 responses	17 responses	21 responses	161
→	Splash Pads	28 responses	21 responses	17 responses	15 responses	17 responses	98
	Skateboard Parks	8 responses	9 responses	19 responses	10 responses	27 responses	

Additional Citizen Identified Recreation Improvements: Programs & Classes

In the survey, citizens were asked to identify [w]hich of the following recreation programs/classes do you or others in your household participate in regularly? Please check all that apply.



Finally, when asked to “[l]ist any other recreation programs/classes that you or others in your household **WOULD** participate in **if the Town offered them**, citizens responded:

- Weightlifting/Fitness – 23 responses
- Adult Sports (Basketball, volleyball, softball, pickleball, tennis) – 13 responses
- Swimming/Lane Swimming – 11 responses
- Leagues for Older Kids (13+) – 11 responses
- Yoga – 7 responses
- Adaptive Activities for Special Needs/Disabled Persons – 7 responses
- Arts and Crafts – 6 responses
- Skatepark - 2 responses

- Track/Running – 4 responses
- By examining the level of participation in classes and programs, and citizen responses indicating desired programs/classes, the Valdese community can evaluate potential additional or new programs/classes.**

Introduction



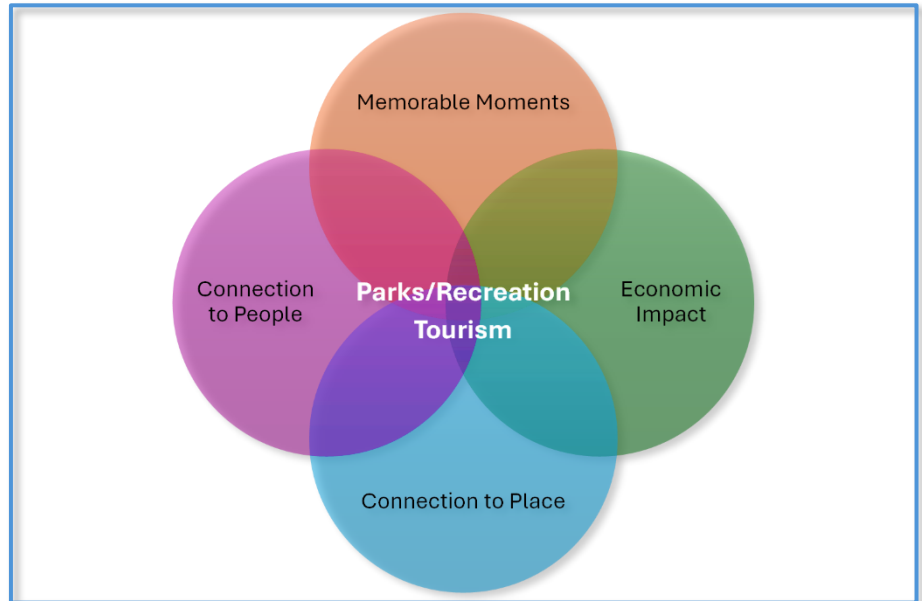
Introduction:

Parks, recreation, and tourism create meaningful and memorable moments by offering spaces and experiences that bring people together. Whether it's a family picnic in a local park, a hike through scenic trails, a community festival, or a vacation to a unique destination, these experiences become cherished memories that enrich people's lives. Recreational activities and shared outdoor experiences promote health and emotional well-being, while also offering opportunities for learning, play, and cultural engagement across generations.

In addition to personal enrichment, parks, recreation, and tourism contribute significantly to local economies and community connections.

They attract visitors who support local businesses, create jobs, and boost public revenue through tourism-related spending.

Parks also serve as gathering places that build social bonds and strengthen community identity. By connecting people to their natural surroundings, cultural heritage, and one another, recreation spaces foster a strong sense of belonging and stewardship toward the places we call home.



Source: Outdoor Recreation Roundtable.

Plan Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to help the Town of Valdese make informed decisions regarding recreation planning. This document will enable the Town to achieve the following objectives:

- ✓ Ensure that future facilities are wanted, needed, and will be used
- ✓ Ensure that future facilities will be available, accessible, and convenient to as much of the Town's population as possible
- ✓ Consider the need for recreation facilities in the context of Valdese's climate, topography, population patterns & trends, and other factors
- ✓ Maximize the impact of each dollar spent on recreation
- ✓ Plan with existing resources in mind, maximize the use of existing facilities, and make the most of recreation offered by other entities
- ✓ Ensure that the recreational concerns of all citizens and groups are addressed
- ✓ Avoid duplication of facilities and services where duplication is unnecessary and undesired
- ✓ Help justify the need for facilities when applying for grant funding

Background



Background:

The Town of Valdese developed this Plan with the dual purpose of planning recreation facilities for the next 10 years and positioning the Town to qualify for grant funding for future facility improvements. This Plan will allow the Town to better serve the needs of local taxpayers by aligning recreation demands with supply. The Plan will also guide the Town of Valdese in vital areas such as determining how best to utilize the Town's existing facilities and identifying future recreational needs and opportunities.

Plan Methodology:

This Plan identifies the recreational needs of the Town through various methods including household surveys, staff interviews, an inventory of existing facilities, and community meetings. The benefits of recreation in general are listed, along with an explanation of the role of recreation in creating successful communities.

Existing recreation facilities are analyzed as are demographics. Natural features are also considered in relation to existing and future recreation facilities. All of this information is then analyzed to produce recommendations for future facilities.

Limitations and Revisions:

Various efforts have been made to accurately forecast the recreation needs of the Town's citizenry, as well as the feasibility of achieving these objectives. This Plan, however, reflects situations and outlooks at a particular point in time, and will need to be amended as necessary to remain current and relevant.



*This document is a guide for recreation planning, **but not a prescription**. Priorities can change rapidly due to cultural trends, fluctuating costs, and activities of private businesses and organizations.*

*Other variables include unexpected donations and unique opportunities tied to new grant sources, a particular new form of recreation, and other unforeseen factors. **Flexibility is paramount.***

North Carolina Recreation Enabling Law:

The State of North Carolina's Recreation Enabling Law (G.S. 160A Article 18) declares "the lack of adequate recreational programs and facilities is a menace to the morals, happiness, and welfare of the people of this State." From this it can be concluded that recreation is a basic human physical and mental need, widely recognized as essential to the proper functioning of society, and as important as other local government services such as waste disposal, law enforcement, or education.

The provision of recreation as a government service ensures that all citizens- regardless of income level- have access to parks and recreation facilities. Government entities are able to provide parks and natural areas that may not produce income directly but do have a value to society. Local governments offer stability and permanency to parks and basic recreation facilities that might otherwise be subject to changing economic conditions or short-term trends.




§ N.C.G.S 160A-351. Declaration of State policy.

The lack of adequate recreational programs and facilities is a menace to the morals, happiness, and welfare of the people of this State.

Making available recreational opportunities for citizens of all ages is a subject of general interest and concern, and a function requiring appropriate action by both State and local government.

The General Assembly therefore declares that the public good and the general welfare of the citizens of this State require adequate recreation programs, that the creation, establishment, and operation of parks and recreation programs is a proper governmental function, and that it is the policy of North Carolina to forever encourage, foster, and provide these facilities and programs for all its citizens. (1945, c. 1052; 1971, c. 698, s. 1.)



Town of Valdese Recreation Related Expenditures:

The following chart provides highlights of the Town’s main recreation-related expenditures. Expenditures are from the 2024-2025 recommended budget.



Natural Features & Climate



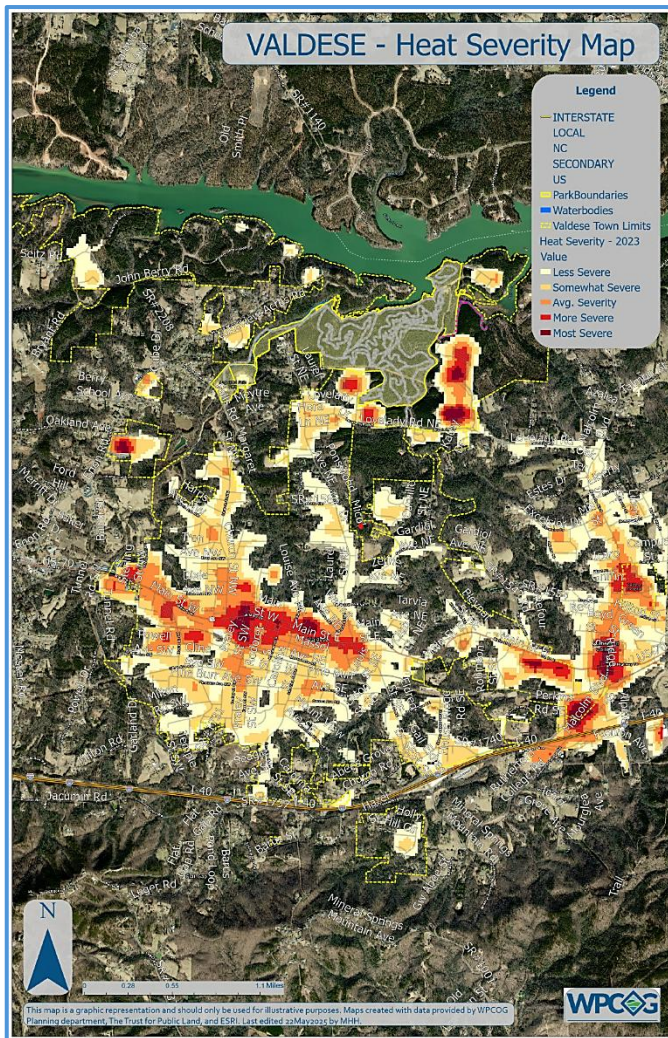
Natural Features and Climate:

Climate:

Valdese's climate is characterized by four distinct seasons, with cold winters and hot summers. Seasonal transition times in the fall and spring often result in unpredictably wide temperature fluctuations over a short period of time.

July is typically the hottest month (average high of 88 degrees and average low of 67 degrees), while January is the coldest (average high of 50 degrees and average low of 28 degrees). Valdese's frequently wet and chilly late fall and winter climate affects opportunities for outdoor recreation and makes planning for events and other activities challenging. The Town's indoor recreation facilities and programs offer a wide range of activities for residents to take part in during hot and cold periods, helping to ensure the availability of year-round recreation access.

Some areas of town are hotter at the surface than others, primarily due to the presence of pavement, concrete, buildings, or fewer trees. Data from the Landsat 8 satellite shows these areas, with darker red areas being hotter than orange areas, or areas with no coloring at all.



For the comfort of those participating in recreational activities, it should be a priority of the Town to either leave existing trees in place or replace trees if their removal is necessary for a project. Trees provide the added benefits of slope stabilization and stormwater filtration, both of which are important to the usability of the Catawba River and the town's other streams as recreation resources

Topography:

Familiarity with the Town's topography (i.e. terrain or 'lay of the land') enables one to understand existing population and transportation patterns, which in turn guide the placement and success of future recreation facilities. Topography is a factor in Valdese because the town's rivers and streams are themselves existing or potential recreation facilities - which may become more accessible in the future.

In addition to topography, several factors influence potential locations for recreation facilities, including proximity to residential neighborhoods, accessibility, available land/structures, other nearby facilities, and landform characteristics (e.g. amount of grading

needed). Geographic proximity to a neighborhood alone, for example, does not guarantee a desirable

recreation site if the site is not accessible or requires excessive grading. The topographic features described above and their influence on population and transportation patterns should be considered when planning future recreation facilities. Though most Town residents are inherently mindful of these features and patterns from everyday living, a deliberate awareness and analysis of the Town's topography will result in confident placement of future recreation facilities.

Surface Waters:

The Catawba River, McGalliard Creek, Hoyle Creek, Micol Creek, Dye Branch and Double Branch are located in Valdese. These bodies of water serve a variety of functions – from providing drinking water and scenic settings to wildlife observation and recreation opportunities. Importantly, the Catawba River provides a recreational link between Valdese, Morganton, Burke County, the City of Hickory and the wider region.



Previous Recreation Related Plans



Previous Recreation Related Plans:

Town of Valdese Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan:

Town of Valdese Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan



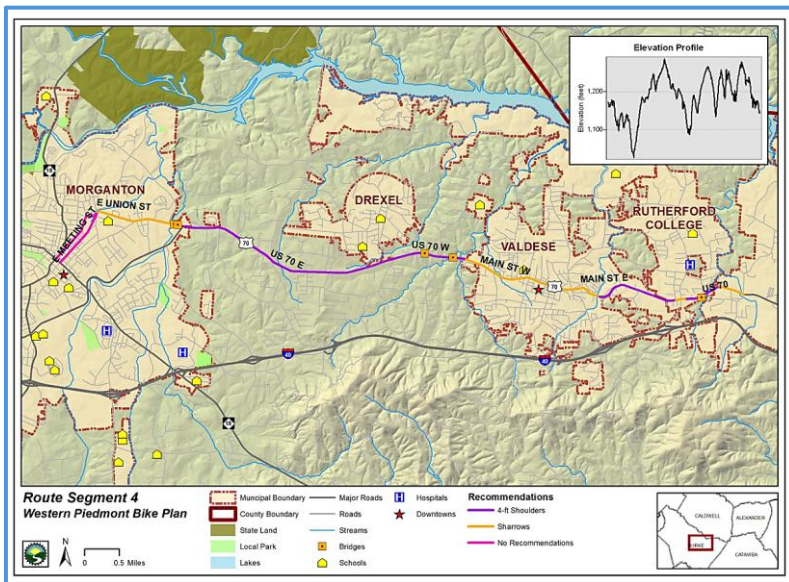
April 2013

In 2013, the Town worked with the Western Piedmont Council of Governments to develop a **Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan**. The plan made several recommendations to improve parks and recreation facilities in Valdese.

https://static.townofvaldese.com/public/media/uploads/valdeseparksandrecplan_final.pdf

The Western Piedmont Bicycle Plan:

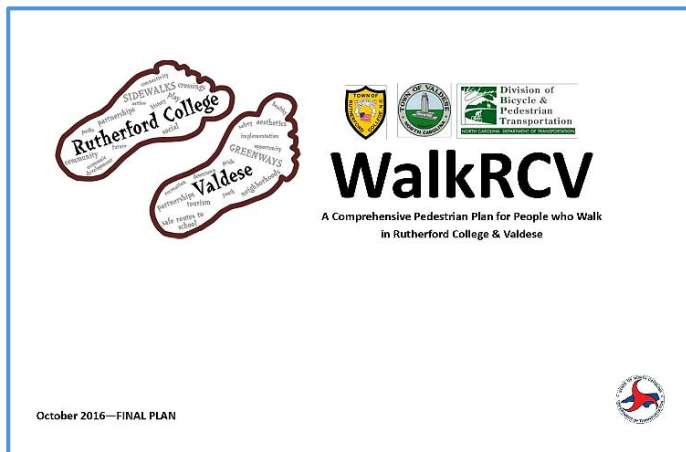
In 2014, the Western Piedmont Council of Governments completed the **Western Piedmont Bicycle Plan**, a regional bicycle plan for the four-county region of Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, and Catawba Counties.



The plan provided a framework for the development of new facilities, programs, and policies that will support safe and efficient cycling throughout the region, including Valdese. Route Segment 4 in the plan shows a connection between the Town of Valdese, the City of Morganton, Drexel and Rutherford College.

<https://connect.ncdot.gov/municipalities/PlanningGrants/Documents/Western%20Piedmont%20Bicycle%20Plan%20Compressed.pdf>

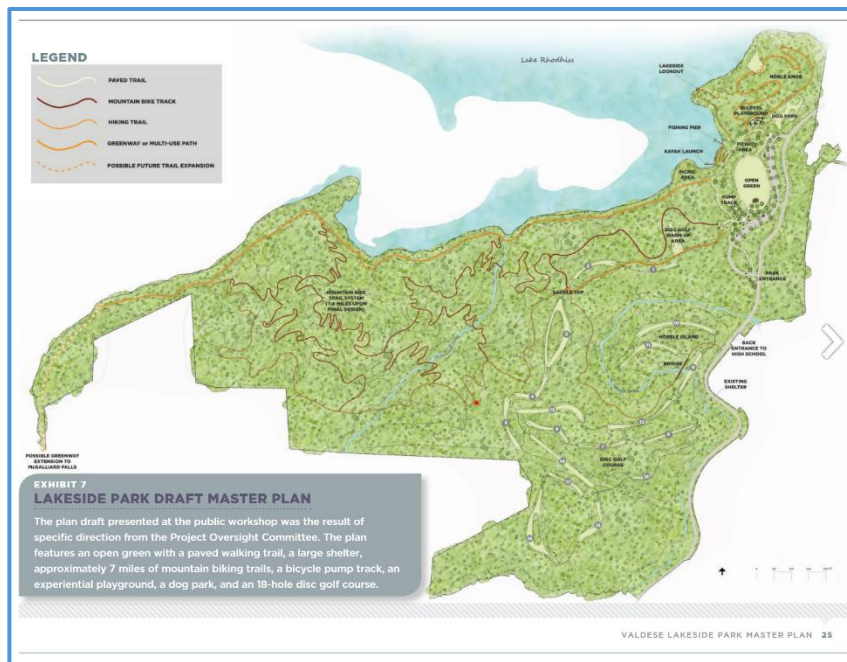
Walk RCV Plan:



Although not strictly a recreation plan, the **WalkRCV** plan (2016) recommended several ways to safely improve pedestrian and bicycle mobility in Valdese. The plan recognizes the importance of improving connectivity between neighborhoods, downtown, and recreation facilities. As such, the plan addresses the need for facilities that provide opportunities to walk, run and roll – which are all directly related to recreation.

<https://connect.ncdot.gov/municipalities/PlanningGrants/Documents/Rutherford%20College%20and%20Valdese%20Ped%20Plan.pdf>

Valdese Lakeside Park –Master Plan:



In 2019, Friends of Valdese Rec worked with a consultant to develop a **Master Plan for Valdese Lakeside Park**. The plan served as a guide for the creation and development of the park.

https://issuu.com/dbdplanning/docs/lakesidepark_finalplan110518_1_?fr=xKAE9_zU1NQ

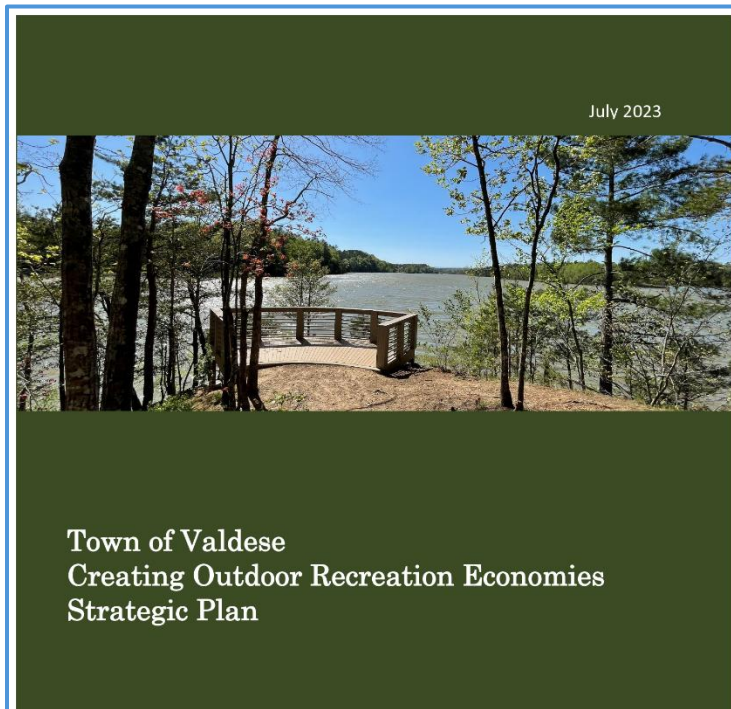
River Trail of Burke County Feasibility Study:



https://www.wpcog.org/_files/ugd/960958_c9c6148c67ad44e7839086280db56784.pdf

In 2023, the Town worked with Western Piedmont Council of Governments to develop a **trail feasibility study** to determine a preferred alignment for a non- motorized, contiguous trail extending from Morganton, through Valdese and on to Hickory, Long View and Hildebran.

Creating Outdoor Recreation Economies (CORE) Strategic Plan:



In 2023, the Town worked with the North Carolina Department of Commerce's Rural Economic Development Division and local stakeholders to develop the **Creating Outdoor Recreation Economies (CORE) Strategic Plan**.

The plan makes a total of 29 recommendations under 3 priority areas. These priority areas, identified by the local work group, include:

1. Parks, Trails, and Facilities: To provide and maintain a variety of recreation amenities that improve quality of life and encourage a sense of community for residents and visitors.

2. Communication and Activation: Promote and educate residents and visitors about the community's recreation amenities.

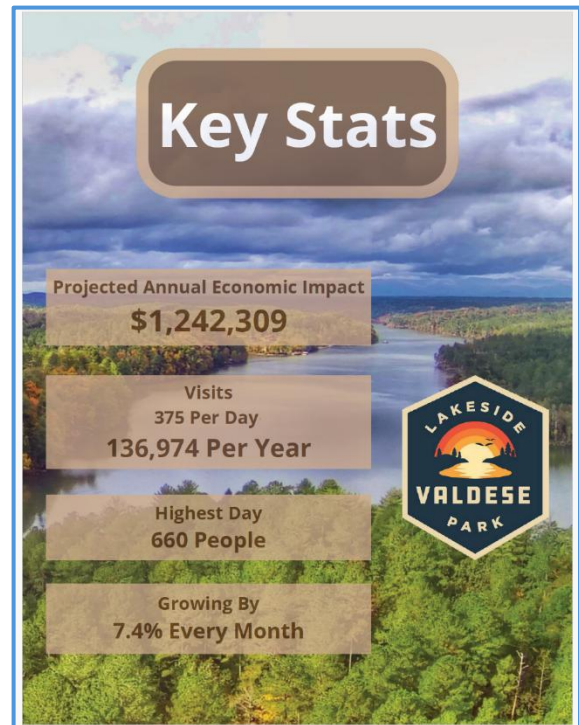
3. Economic Impacts: Utilize the community's outdoor assets to improve the downtown, local and regional economies.

[https://static.townofvaldese.com/public/media/uploads/2023_town_of_valdese_core_strategic_plan_\(1\).pdf](https://static.townofvaldese.com/public/media/uploads/2023_town_of_valdese_core_strategic_plan_(1).pdf)

Valdese Lakeside Park Economic Impact Study:

Also in 2023, Friends of Valdese Rec completed an **economic impact study** of Valdese Lakeside Park. The study examines park visitation levels, estimates economic impacts and explores the impact of the park's amenities.

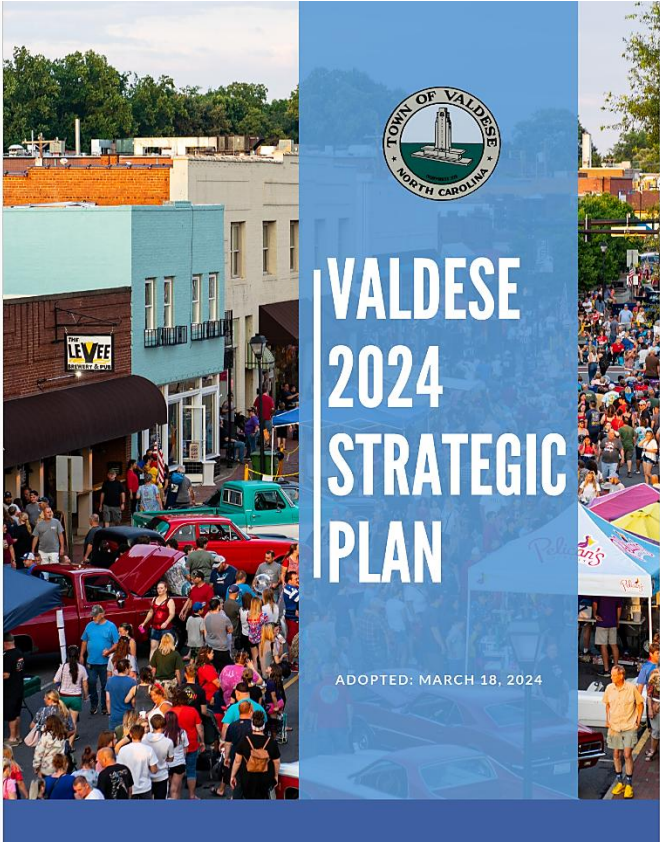
its



<https://friendsofthevaldeserec.org/files/2023/05/VLP-Economic-Impact-Report.pdf>



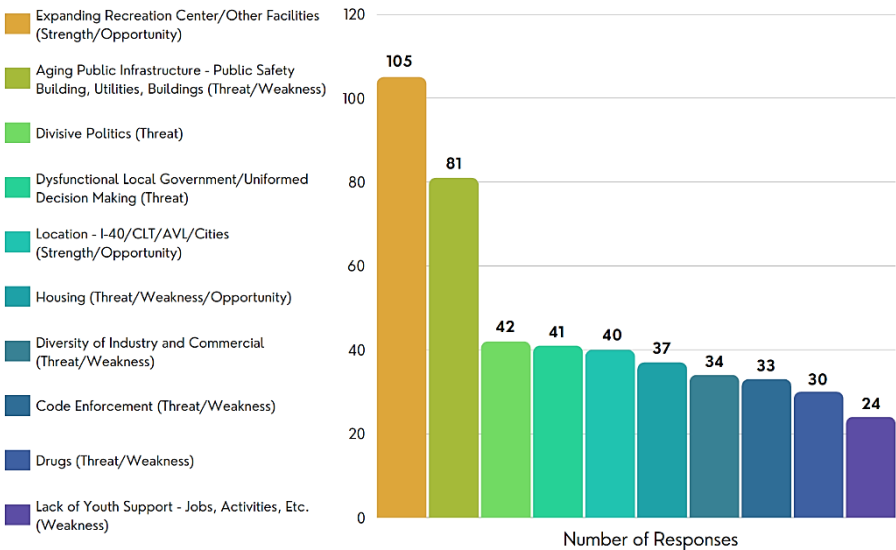
Valdese Strategic Plan:



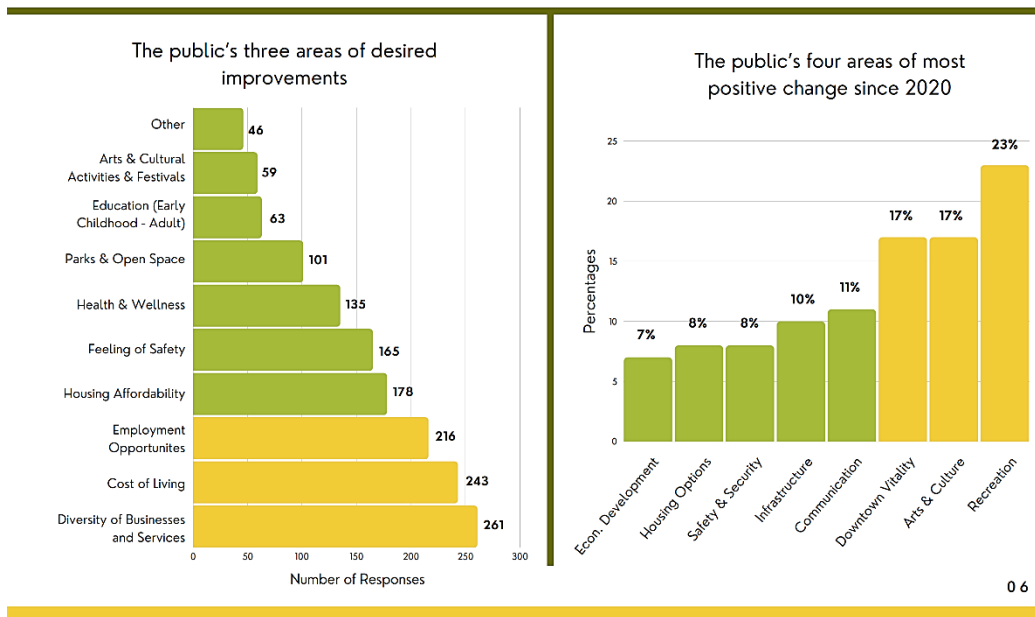
Completed in 2024, the **Valdese Strategic Plan** identified four areas for the Town to focus on. Recreation was included in the Public Infrastructure focus area

Public Input Meeting Top Issues

Expansion of the Recreation Center was identified by citizens as being the most important issue for the Town of Valdese.



Valdese Strategic Plan (Cont'd):



Citizens identified Parks & Open Space and Health & Wellness as areas of desired improvement.

Citizens also identified Recreation as having the most positive change since 2020.

2. Construct a permanent structure over the pool at the Valdese Aquatic and Fitness center.

a. Identify possible coverage options, compare the cost and functionality and determine a construction timeline.

b. After construction is complete encourage and market the pool for year-round swimming.

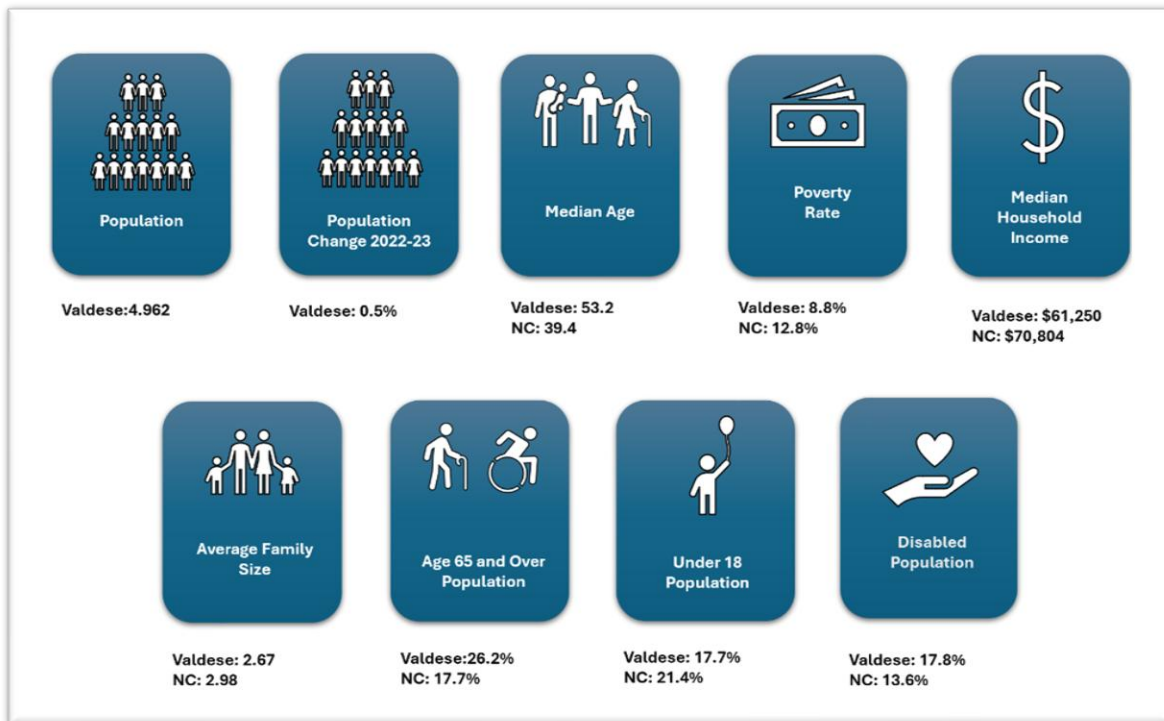
Focus Area 3 of the plan identified the need to address the construction of permanent pool cover at the Valdese Aquatic and Fitness Center.

Demographics Overview



Population and Demographics Overview:

The chart below provides an overview of population and demographics in Valdese. Generally speaking, Valdese's population is older than North Carolina. Valdese has not experienced major growth since 2020 and has a lower poverty rate than North Carolina as a whole. Compared to the state, Valdese has a lower median household income, higher percentage of disabled people and a lower percentage of children under 18 years of age.



Source: North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management; American Community Survey.

Recreation Planning & Demographics

For the purpose of recreation planning, one conclusion from the demographic data is that facility planning should take place with an older population in mind. This might affect the type of recreation facilities provided in the future, with a possible marginal shift away from children and youth focused facilities/activities to a more mature population. However, any changes in age proportions will be incremental, not dramatic; meaning that sudden demands for different age facilities will not be as likely.

The Need for Recreation



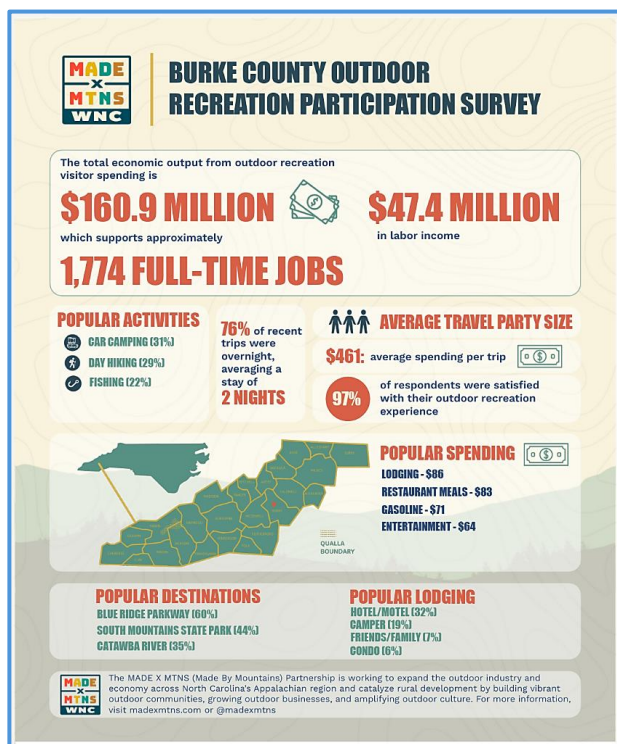
The Need for Recreation:

The need for recreation facilities may not seem obvious at first. Valdese's close proximity to the City of Morganton and the fact that Burke County is a popular choice for recreation enthusiasts can reinforce the perception that recreation is close at hand, with little need for deliberate provision.

While open space in the area may seem to be fairly abundant, access to it is not universal. Even where access is available, barriers may be present and/or facilities may not exist to make recreation possible (a potential streamside walk, for example, may be impossible due to vegetation or fencing). In addition, meaningful recreation is often group related - as such, recreation often requires planning, organization, and structure.

Regional/Remote Recreation Opportunities:

Regional recreation facilities (e.g. Lake James State Park, South Mountains State Park,), should not be seen as substitutes for the recreation facilities typically provided by local governments. Their relative remoteness and limited accessibility often present significant barriers to local citizens. For example, a Valdese resident who regularly walks on the Temple Field track for health-maintenance purposes may not be able to travel to Lake James State Park on a regular basis. Many regional recreation opportunities are located at a considerable distance from Valdese.



Recreation: Regional & Local Economic Impacts

Tourism is a key component of Valdese's overall economic development strategy. According to a study and survey conducted by Appalachian State University (ASU) and the Building Outdoor Communities program (Western North Carolina Outdoor Recreation Participation Survey, 2024), the total annual economic output from outdoor recreation in Burke County is \$160.9 million. The study also showed that the County's tourism economy supports 1,774 full-time jobs.

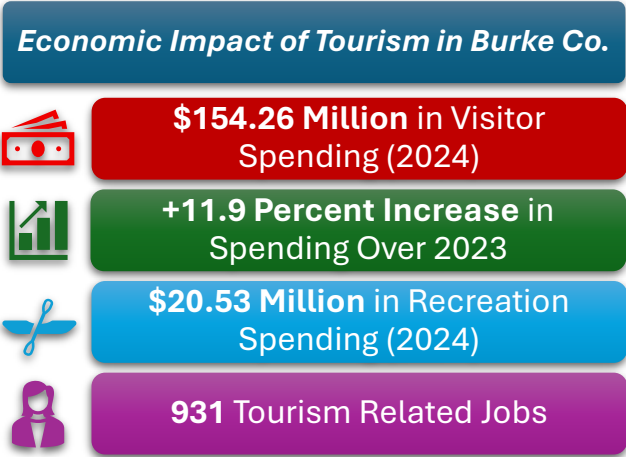
The ASU study showed that two very popular tourist activities in Burke County are day hiking (29%) and fishing (22%). Significantly, the Catawba River is a popular destination (35%) for visitors.

The ASU study clearly shows that the Town of Valdese is in an ideal position to leverage the popularity of the

Catawba river, day hiking and fishing by both maintaining and developing additional recreation amenities that cater to outdoor recreation enthusiasts.

Several other studies have shown that parks contribute significantly to local economic development in other ways, including the 2023 Valdese Lakeside Park Economic Impact Study, which concluded that the park’s projected annual economic impact was \$1.24 million and generates 375 visits per day, or 136,974 annually.

The North Carolina Department of Commerce (NCDoC) also provides tourism data. While NCDoC’s data differs from ASU’s



data, both sets of data underscore the significant economic impact of recreation and tourism in Burke County. Tourism in Burke County generated \$154 million in visitor spending in 2024, which represented a 12% increase over the previous year. That increase in visitor spending over 2023 indicates a very strong post-Helene tourism recovery – and was the second highest in North Carolina. Understanding the economic impacts of parks and recreation facilities can help Town decision makers as they evaluate the creation, improvement and maintenance of their parks.



This chart (left) summarizes several of the economic impacts associated with parks and recreation facilities.

Source: National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA); <https://www.nrpa.org/contentassets/f568e0ca499743a08148e3593c860fc5/2023-economic-impact-report.pdf>.

Recreation & Quality of Life



Recreation & Quality of Life:

The provision of recreation is a common service offered by most local governments, but the benefits of recreation to a locality are not always fully recognized. Various studies show that recreation has a significant positive impact on everything from mental health to economic development.

Parks and recreation facilities provide space for exercise – working out, walking, jogging, cycling, and sports. Studies have shown that exposure to nature and green space help lower stress and anxiety. Parks can foster connections, reducing loneliness and isolation. In addition, recreation programs provide constructive outlets and mentorship for children and teens, while events, sports leagues and cultural activities held at parks bring communities together.

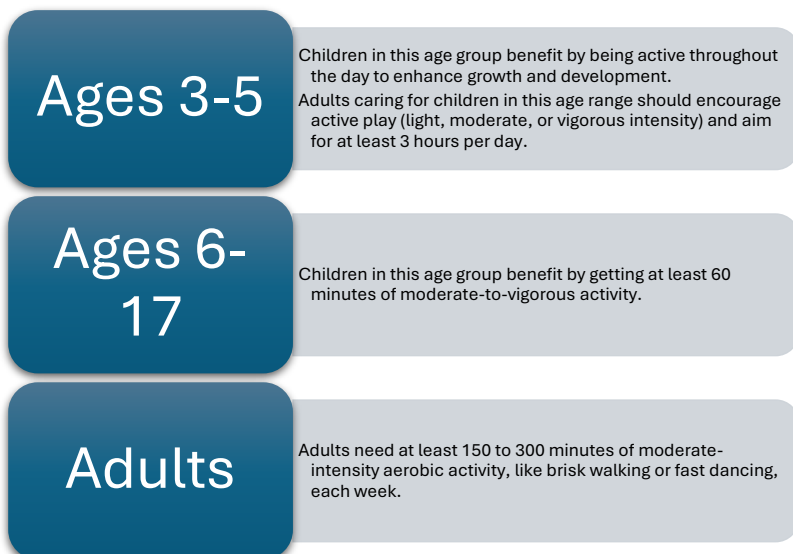
Well-known parks can attract visitors, boost local economies and significantly influence an employer's decision to locate new facilities in a certain area.

Employers increasingly consider quality of life factors like parks in determining new site locations as a part of their ability to attract and retain talent. Homes near parks often have higher property values.

Recreation, Health and Fitness:

Research shows a strong correlation between regular exercise and good physical and mental health. Physical activity can lower the risk of early death, heart disease, stroke, diabetes, high blood pressure, some cancers, depression, and other maladies.

The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services' recommendations for physical activity are as follows:



Recreation and Mental Health in Burke County:

The County Health Rankings website provides county-level health and wellness data. The following table summarizes several measures that are useful in understanding the link between community health and the need for recreation facilities, given the Department of Health & Human Services' recommendations.

Measure	North Carolina	Burke County
• Poor Mental Health Days	• 4.9 days	• 5.5 days
• Feelings of Lonliness	• 31%	• 30%
• Suicide	• 13 per 100,000 population	• 15 per 100,000 population
• Poor Physical Health Days	• 4.1 days	• 4.5 days



Source: County Health Rankings and Roadmaps, 2025.

In Burke County, adults reported that their mental health was not good on 5.5 of the previous 30 days, while 30% of adults reported that they always, usually or sometimes feel lonely. In addition, there were 15 deaths by suicide per 100,000 people (2018-2022), and adults reported that their physical health was not good on 4.5 of the previous 30 days.

Given the clear links between recreation, improved physical and mental health, higher quality of life and economic development, the Town should pursue a strategy of ensuring that it offers a balance of recreational opportunities that appeal to a wide range of users. The Town should also be intentional about developing new facilities (or improving existing facilities) by ensuring that they maximize their appeal to both existing residents and potential new ones. In addition, Valdese may need additional facilities to "catch up" with the current population's expressed recreational needs.



Youth: Recreation and Mental Health:

Several studies have shown that youth mental health and physical activity are linked. According to KABOOM!, a national nonprofit that works to improve access to play spaces, there is a clear need for “[s]paces where young people can be active, express themselves, connect with friends and neighbors, or just blow off steam are critical...[parks and playgrounds] should be part of a comprehensive approach to meeting the needs of the one in five youth who experience mental illness.” Understanding how parks and recreation facilities relate to youth mental health can help decisionmakers assess the overall impact that those facilities have on the community.

According to the National Parks and Recreation Association:



The infographic consists of four horizontal blue bars, each preceded by a circular image. The first bar shows a silhouette of a person jumping over a ball against a sunset background. The second bar shows a close-up of a young girl's face. The third bar shows a woman in a pink shirt running on a path in a park. The fourth bar shows a close-up of a person's face looking upwards.

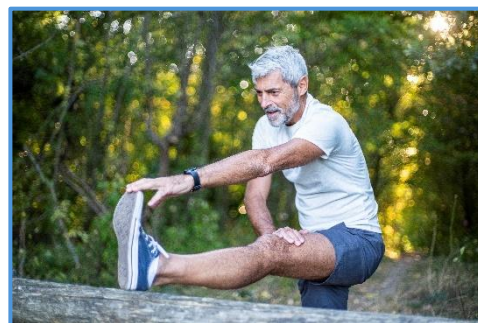
- Several studies have confirmed that separation from nature is detrimental to human development, health and wellbeing, and that regular contact with nature is required for good mental health.
- More time spent in parks and green spaces can help individuals fight against mental health issues like depression, anxiety and stress.
- A strong body of evidence suggests that physical activity in green spaces has stronger mental health benefits than physical activity in non-green spaces.
- Use of green spaces is associated with decreased health complaints, improved blood pressure and cholesterol levels, reduced stress, improved general health perceptions and a greater ability to face problems.

Refer to the Demographics section of this plan for additional discussion about planning for youth recreation in Valdese.



Seniors: Recreation, Accessibility and Mental Health:

A study published in the journal *Geriatric Nursing* surveyed older adults' (those 65 and over) favorite activities and concluded that seniors preferred activities that involved considerable body movement or strength. 'Walking/Jogging' was the most popular choice, followed by 'Playing Sports' at number three. 'Other Physical Activity' and 'Other Outdoor Activity' are ranked fifth and sixth, respectively. 'Walking with Pets' was also identified by older adults as being a favorite physical activity¹. Another study in the journal *Lancet* concluded that "older people need to interact with others to be healthy and happy, and social isolation has been linked with higher mortality rates."².



In order to help senior citizens participate in these (and other) recreation activities, it is important to ensure that new recreation facilities (and modifications to existing facilities) are designed with this population group in mind. The checklist below summarizes several of the recreation-related facilities or amenities that the Town can provide to help achieve this goal.

Recreation Facilities & Older Adults	Tree shaded benches and places to rest
	Pet-friendly parks
	Tennis Courts
	Gardening spaces/Community gardens
	Game spaces (cards, board games, shuffleboard, and billiards)
	Fitness centers with low-impact equipment
	Community centers (for socializing, dancing, arts & crafts, celebrations)
	Group exercise classes
	Well-lit & accessible walking paths/sidewalks/trails/nature areas
	Pickleball Courts

¹ Sarah L. Szanton, PhD, CRNP. *Older adults' favorite activities are resoundingly active: Findings from the NHATS study*, Geriatric Nursing 2014.

² Steptoe A., Deaton A., Stone A.A. Subjective Wellbeing, Health, and Ageing. Lancet. 2014.

Refer to the Demographics section of this plan for additional discussion about recreation planning for Senior Citizens in Valdese.

Resource-Based and User-Oriented Facilities:

Recreation facilities can be categorized either as 'resource-based' or 'user-oriented'. Resource-based facilities are focused on natural or semi-natural features such as rivers, lakes, geologic features, scenic settings, etc. They usually encompass many acres and are significant to a broad constituency, i.e. having regional or even national significance. An example in the Valdese area is South Mountain State Park.

User-oriented facilities generally focus on particular activities including exercise, ball games and picnicking. These activities usually require a relatively small land area and typically are not dependent on a natural feature; hence it is possible to establish them in more locations.

Towns typically focus on providing user-oriented facilities- such as ball fields, playgrounds and local greenways because of space limitations.

The Town of Valdese is unique in that it currently offers a range of user-oriented facilities yet also has the added benefits of having the Catawba River (and several other streams) running through town. For recreation planning purposes, these water bodies should be considered as potential resource-based and user-oriented recreation facilities.



Other Recreation Facilities: Public Schools & Churches

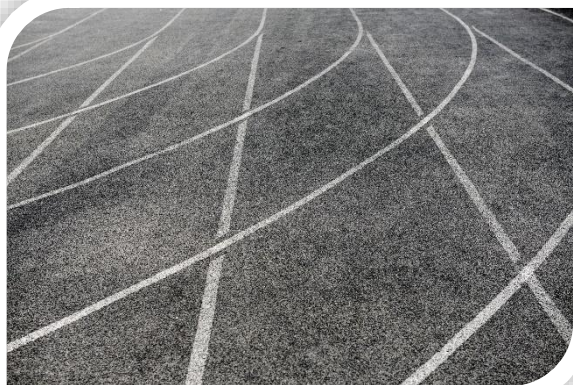
The Town of Valdese currently shares the use of Temple Field with Valdese Elementary School, holding events like Family Friday Nights and Football on the field. The possibility exists to expand the shared use of facilities to Heritage Middle School or Jimmy C. Draughn High School, if there is demand for additional outdoor programming or need for additional access to recreation facilities – subject agreement between the Town and Burke County Schools.

N.C.G.S 115C-203 Article 13, Community Schools Act addresses the use of public-school facilities by the public. Section § 115C-206 states that:

“The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall prepare and present to the State Board of Education recommendations for general guidelines for encouraging increased community involvement in the public schools and use of public-school facilities. These recommendations shall include, but shall not be limited to provisions for:

- (1) The use of public-school facilities by governmental, charitable or civic organizations for activities within the community...”

Some area churches may also allow limited use of their facilities by the public. Many churches have picnic shelters, tables and other outdoor recreation facilities. While these facilities generally are not open to the public, they are available to a significant segment of the local population who are members of these churches. Assessing the need for additional picnic facilities should take this situation into account.



“The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall prepare and present to the State Board of Education recommendations for general guidelines for encouraging increased community involvement in the public schools and use of public-school facilities. These recommendations shall include, but shall not be limited to provisions for:

- (1) The use of public-school facilities by governmental, charitable or civic organizations for activities within the community.***

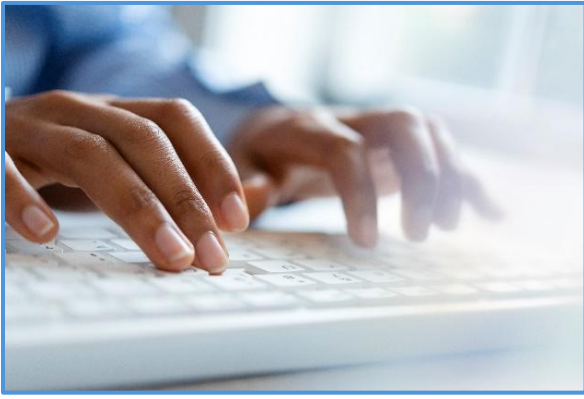
...”

N.C.G.S 115C-203 Article 13, Community Schools Act

Recreation Needs Survey



Recreation Needs Survey:



As a part of the development of this Plan, a recreation survey of Valdese residents was conducted in 2025. The survey was made available to all Town residents via SurveyMonkey, and paper copies were also available at the Recreation Center. In addition, the Town promoted the survey via its social media accounts and at community events. The Town received 321 completed surveys in response.

The survey provided respondents with different ways to express their opinions regarding recreation needs; (i.e. similar questions were asked in varying formats), and respondents were provided with open-ended questions to ensure that a wide range of views could be expressed.

Key Survey Takeaways:

Citizens of Valdese are heavily involved in recreation activities. The survey's respondents indicated a high level of interest in recreation facilities and programs that serve families, children and seniors.

Active recreation activities were popular amongst survey respondents:

Walking/Jogging/Running (243 responses)

Swimming (187 responses)

Hiking (159 responses)

Playground activities (123 responses)

Weightlifting/Fitness Classes (107 responses)



- Respondents showed a clear interest in active recreation. But passive recreation activities like bird/nature watching, fishing and picnicking were also popular (245 responses combined).
- When asked “How many people in your household (counting yourself) are in each age range below?”, ages 30-39 and up to 60+ garnered the most responses (608 persons aged 30 – 60+). However, a cluster of 9–12-year-olds (125) was also indicated.

The top 5 recreation programs/classes ranked by household participation were:

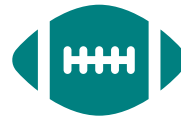
Water Exercise Classes (60 responses)

Land Exercise Classes (55 responses)

Youth Basketball (55 responses)

Tackle Football (53 responses)

Swimming Lessons (49 responses)




- Responses indicated the importance of the pool for recreation programs and activities. Other respondents indicated that groups hikes, spring baseball, cheerleading, Fun Fish Day and the Great Waldensian Footrace were popular.
- **The Town's recreation facilities are well used.** Survey takers were asked 'how many times in the past year have you or someone in your household used' each recreation facility.

Facility	None*	1 to 5 Times	5 to 10 Times	10 to 15 Times	15+ Times
Valdese Community Center and Pool	17.2	21.0	10.3	10.3	41.0
McGalliard Falls Park	14.7	43.2	17.8	9.7	15.3
Valdese Lakeside Park	12.5	27.8	16.3	12.5	30.7
Children's Park	40.2	27.0	14.4	8.4	9.7
Fletcher Ballpark	64.3	8.5	8.5	4.4	14.0
Tiger Gym	64.4	17	7.4	4.5	6.7


**Caution should be exercised when interpreting usage at specialized facilities, because survey respondents may not participate in the specific recreation activities that take place at those facilities.*

- Of the respondents who said they had visited Children's Park in the past year (1 to 15+ times), about 70% (133 respondents) have children under the age of 18.
- Of the respondents who said they had visited Fletcher Ballpark in the past year (1 to 15+ times), about 80% (90 respondents) have children under the age of 18.
- Of the respondents who said they had visited Tiger Gym in the past year (1 to 15+ times), about 83% (92 respondents) have children under the age of 18.

- About 63% of respondents said ‘Yes’ when asked if the Town provides enough information to them about recreation activities, special events, leagues etc.
- **When asked to rate how well maintained the Town’s parks and recreation facilities are** the average rating was 4 out of 5, meaning most respondents believe that the Valdese’s facilities are well maintained.
- **When asked how well the Town’s parks and recreation facilities are staffed**, 51.2% said that additional staff were needed, and 39.7% said current staffing levels were adequate.

 **Yes, the Town provides enough information to them about recreation activities, special events, leagues etc.: 63%**

 **Maintenance of Town Parks and Recreation facilities: ★★★★★**

 **Additional staff needed: 51.2%**
Current staffing levels are adequate: 39.7%

It is recommended that Recreation Department staff determine facilities in need of additional staffing, in dialogue with citizens, potentially by using a survey specifically designed to determine staffing needs and financial resources.



User Ratings:

Survey takers were asked to **rate each of the Town's recreation facilities** as being either 'Excellent', 'Good', 'Fair' or 'Poor'. This question also included an option for selecting 'Don't know/haven't used park.' or facility.

User ratings for Valdese Community Center/Aquatic Center, McGalliard Falls Park and Valdese Lakeside Park respectively were as follows:

Excellent
or Good

75%

Excellent
or Good

65%

Excellent
or Good

83%

User ratings for Children's Park, Fletcher Ball Park and Tiger Gym respectively were as follows:

Good or
Fair

60%

Good or
Fair

33%

Good or
Fair

32%

- Respondents clearly rated the Community Center/Pool, McGalliard Falls Park and Valdese Lakeside Park as being "Excellent or Good."
- Children's Park, Fletcher Ballpark and Tiger Gym were more frequently rated as being "Good/Fair."

Facility Improvements:

Survey takers were asked to *list improvements that they felt should be made to each recreation facility.*

Valdese Recreation Center and Pool:



Top 5 Survey Responses

- Pool Improvements
- Add Seating Around Pool
- Improve Parking Lot Lighting
- Improve Concession Stand
- Improve Restrooms

Mc Galliard Falls Park:



Top 5 Survey Responses

- Improve Restrooms
- Increase Beautification
- Improve Falls Viewing Area
- Improve Grist Mill House/Provide Pedestrian Access
- Improve Picnic Shelters/Grilling Areas

Valdese Lakeside Park:



Top 5 Survey Responses

- Add Picnic Areas
- Add New Fishing Areas
- Add Nature/Lake Observation Areas
 - Add New Trails
- Improve Lighting in Parking Areas

Children's Park:



Top 5 Survey Responses

- Improve Public Restrooms
- Improve Picnic Shelter, Grilling, and Sitting Areas
- Improve Playground Equipment
 - Improve Ballfield
- Increase Beautification

Tiger Gym/Temple Field:



Top 5 Survey Responses

- Improve Public Restrooms
- Improve Seating Areas at Football Field
- Improve Gym Accessibility/Building Maintenance
 - Increase Beautification
- Improve Lighting in Parking Lot

Fletcher Ball Park:



Top 5 Survey Responses

- Improve Public Restrooms
 - Improve Scoreboards
- Improve Ballfields & Seating Areas
 - Improve Concession Stand
 - Improve Ballfield Lighting



Inventory of Existing Facilities



Children's Park – 5.14-acre park with 0.66-acre parking area.



Facility	Number	Condition
Picnic Shelter	1	Good
Picnic Tables	10	Good
Restrooms	2	Fair
Playground	1	Fair
Swings	8	Poor
Field	1	Fair
Field Light Poles	2	Fair
Open Space for Passive Recreation		Good

✓ Improvement Focus Areas:

Restrooms, swings, playground, sandbox, field and lighting.



Fletcher Ball Park/McGalliard Falls Park – 26.41-acre park (combined land area).

Fletcher Ball Park:



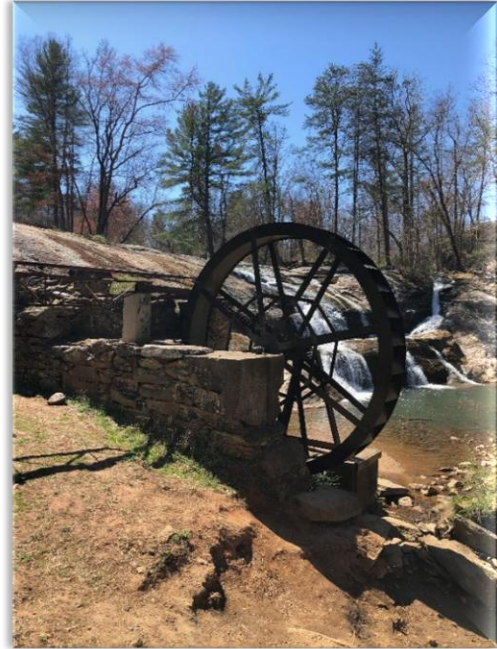
Facility	Number	Condition
Ballfields	2	Poor
Concession Stand	1	Fair
Restrooms	1	Fair
Field Light Poles	16	Good
Scoreboards	2	Poor
Metal Bleachers	3	Good
Wood Bleachers	2	Fair
Parking Lot		Poor

✓ Improvement Focus Areas:

Ballfields, Concession Stand, Restrooms, Scoreboards, Wood Bleachers, Parking Lot.



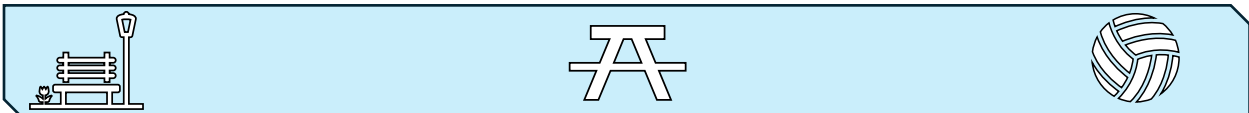
McGalliard Falls Park:



Facility/Area	Number	Condition
<i>Stairs at Greenway Entry/Exit</i>	1	Good
<i>Bicycle Racks</i>	3	Good
<i>Unpaved Walking Path</i>	1	Good
<i>Covered Picnic Benches</i>	2	Good
<i>Sand Volleyball Court</i>	1	Good
<i>Covered Picnic Shelters</i>	2	Poor
<i>Picnic Tables (at Shelter)</i>	20	Good
<i>Grill</i>	1	Good
<i>Restrooms</i>	2	Good
<i>Falls Observation Deck</i>	1	Good
<i>Stairs to Falls Observation Deck</i>	1	Fair
<i>Concrete Picnic Table (Creek Area)</i>	1	Good
<i>Benches (Creek Area)</i>	4	Fair
<i>Unpaved Walking Path (Creek Area)</i>	1	Poor
<i>Paved Parking Area</i>	1	Good
<i>Observation Deck (far side of falls)</i>	1	Good

✓ Improvement Focus Areas:

Stairs, Creek area path and amenities.



Lakeside Park – 320.34 acres (in cooperation with Friends of Valdese Rec.):

Facility/Area	Number	Condition
Welcome Area:		
Restrooms	2	Good
Bicycle Rack	1	Good
Bicycle Tire Inflator	1	Good
Bicycle Service Rack	1	Good
Unpaved Parking Area	1	Good
Drinking Fountain	1	Good
Dog Park:		
Shelter	1	Good
Fence	1	Good
Dog Ramps	4	Good
Bone Bench	1	Good
See Saw Obstacle	1	Good
Greenway/Trails:		
Total Mileage: 12.2 mi.	--	Good
Mountain Bike Optimized Trails: 4.6 mi.	--	Good
Crushed Cinder Greenway: 2 mi.	--	Good
Meditation Point Observation Deck	1	Good
Amphitheater	1	Good
Dock/Fishing Area:		Good
Kayak Dock	1	Good
Stairs	1	Good
ADA Accessible Ramp	1	Good
Other:		
Bridges	4	Good
Benches (Total)	45	Good
Small Bridge/Board Crossings	5	Good
Picnic Tables (Total)	24	Good
Mountain Bike Obstacles	3	Good
Burke River Trail (0.6 mi. segment)	1	Good
Lovelady Road Parking Access	1	Good
Wood Pedestrian Path	1	Good
Wood Balance Beam	1	Good



Tiger Gym and Temple Field: Gym: 1.5-acre facility; Field: 7.39 acres
(Temple Field owned by Burke County Schools)



Tiger Gym:

Facility/Area	Number	Condition
Restrooms	2	Poor
Lobby/Concession Stand Area	1	Poor
Drinking Fountain	1	Poor
Gymnasium Floor	1	Poor
Scoreboards	2	Good; Poor
Metal Bleachers	1	Good
Basketball Backboards with Nets	2	Good
Public Address System	1	Fair
Gymnasium Lights	12	Good
Exhaust Fans	2	Good

✓ Improvement Focus Areas:

Restrooms, Lobby, Drinking Fountain, Gymnasium Floor, Scoreboard, Public Address System.



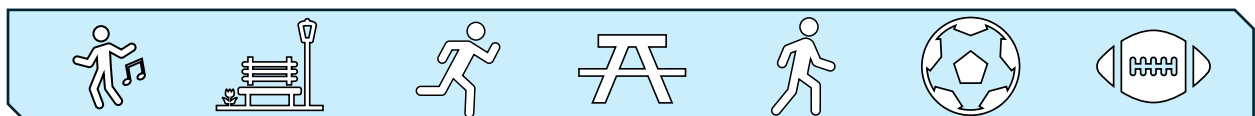
Temple Field (Owned by Burke County Public Schools):



Facility/Area	Number	Condition
Field	1	Good
Concession Stand/Field House	1	Good
Restrooms	2	Good
Picnic Shelters with Picnic Tables and Benches	2; 2	Good
Field Light Poles	9	Good
Scoreboard	1	Good
Bleachers	2	Good; Poor
Paved Walking/Running Track	1	Good
Stage	1	Good
Bench @ Concession Stand	1	Good
Drinking Fountain	1	Good
Bean Bag Toss Area	4	Good
Stairs to School	2	Good
Benches @ Walking/Running Track	2	Good

✓ Improvement Focus Areas:

Bleachers.



Splash Pad Park



Facility/Area	Number		Condition
Splash Pad	1		Good
Playground	1		Good
Picnic Shelter	1		Good
Picnic Tables with Benches	6		Good
Multipurpose Space	1		Good
Restrooms	2		Good
Drinking Fountains	2		Good
Kitchen Area	1		Good

✓ **Improvement Focus Areas:**
Additional space for the playground.



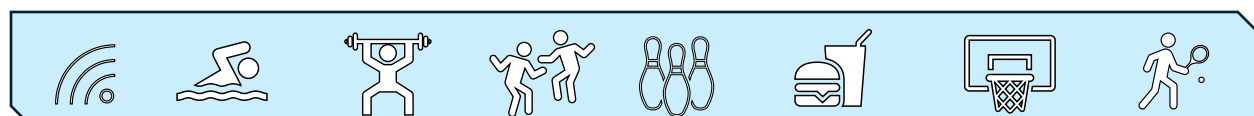
Recreation Center



Facility/Area	Number	Condition
Pool	1	Good
Children's Pool	1	Good
Bowling Area	1	Good
Snack Bar/Grill	1	Fair
Event Room	1	Fair
Fitness Center	1	Good
Locker Rooms	2	Good
Gymnasium	1	Good
Restrooms	4	Good
Gymnasium Air Conditioning – Currently Limited to Heating Only	--	Fair
Tennis/Pickleball Courts	2	Good
Rotary Park:		
Grill	1	Good
Picnic Shelter	1	Good
Tables @ Picnic Shelter	4	Good
Additional Tables	2	Good
Water Fountain	1	Poor
Benches (Tree Area)	4	Good

Improvement Focus Areas:

Gymnasium Air Conditioning, Locker Rooms, Snack Bar, Event Room.

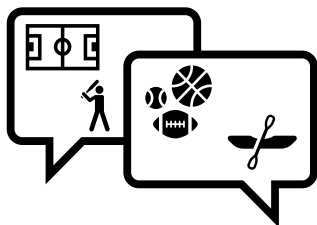
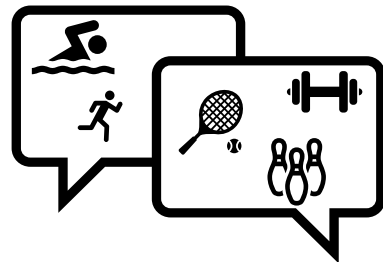
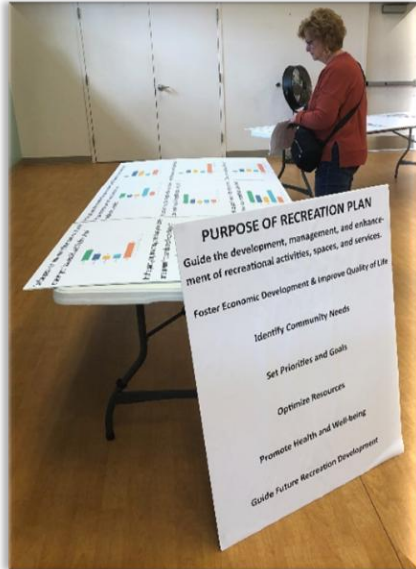


Public Participation

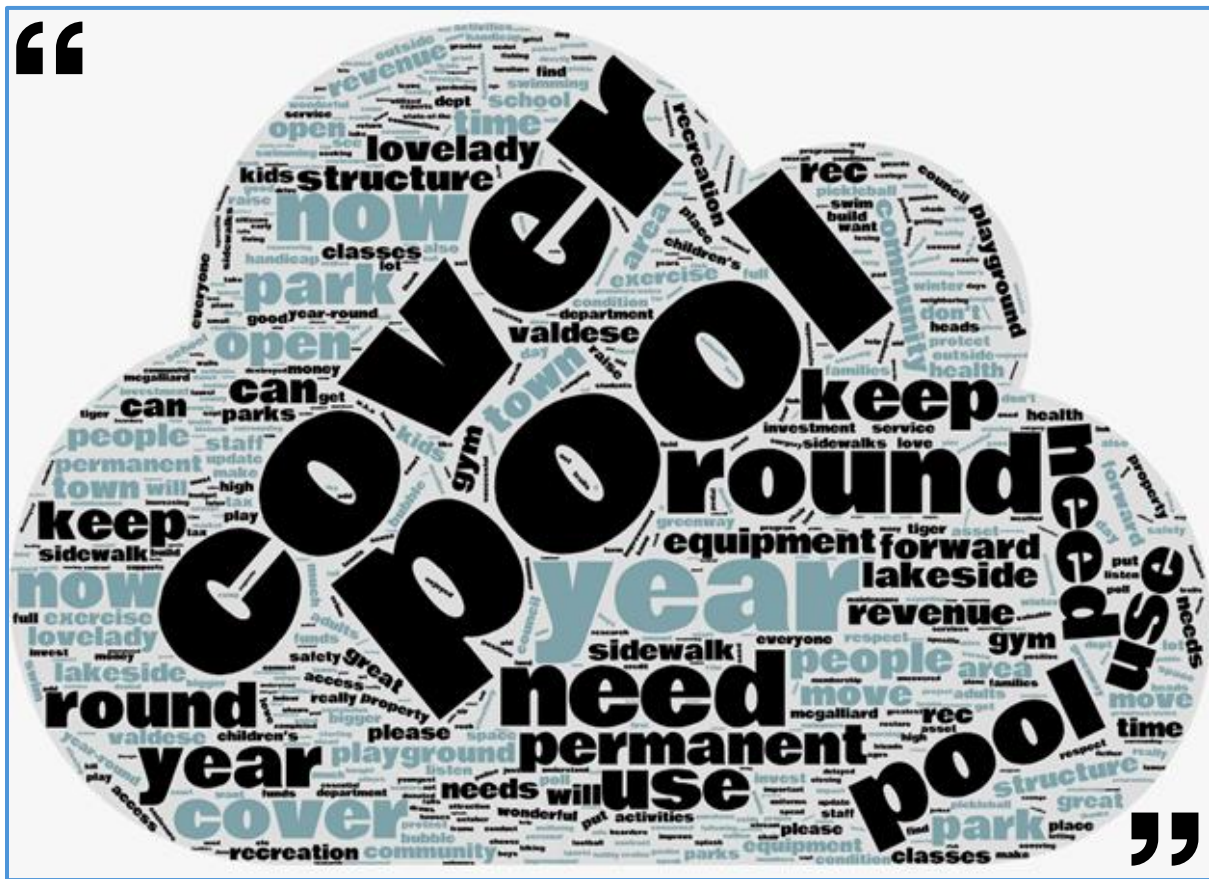


Public Participation:

In addition to the public input survey, 2 public drop-in meetings were held to provide opportunities for citizens to review the results of the survey and provide comments on the development of the plan. Staff attended each meeting and were on hand to answer questions and receive feedback and comments. Public comments received at the drop-in meetings are summarized below, and all public comments are listed in the Appendix.



Public Drop-In Meetings Word Cloud:



The vast majority of the comments made in writing at the public drop-in meetings had to do with the Town's pool. Many commenters stated that they wanted a cover for the pool so that it could operate year-round or mentioned the importance of the pool for health and recreation needs. **Of the 73 comments received, 53 mentioned the pool. Other non-pool related comments included:**

"State-of-the art playground at Valdese Lakeside Park with ADA play equipment."

"More pickleball courts inside/outside (Tiger gym)
Bigger space to have dance class (Tiger Gym)."

"I really appreciate the senior activities."

"Handicap access to tennis court and gym
Age proper equipment for splash pad area."

"Sidewalk connecting all town parks."

"See McGalliard Fall as a historic and recreation attraction. Grist Mill update."

Other non-pool related comments (continued):

"Playground at
McGalliard Falls."

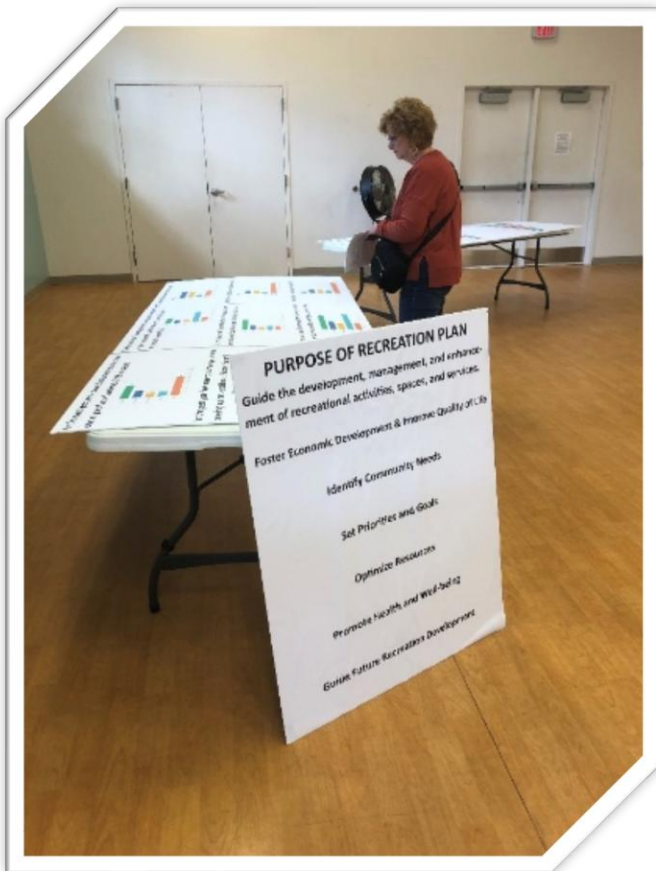
"Community garden."

"Air condition Rec Center
gym."

"Improve Children's Park
playground and field
Add playground and
improve fields at Fletcher."

"Place for indoor
pickleball."

"Invest in equipment and
uniforms for football
(great program)."



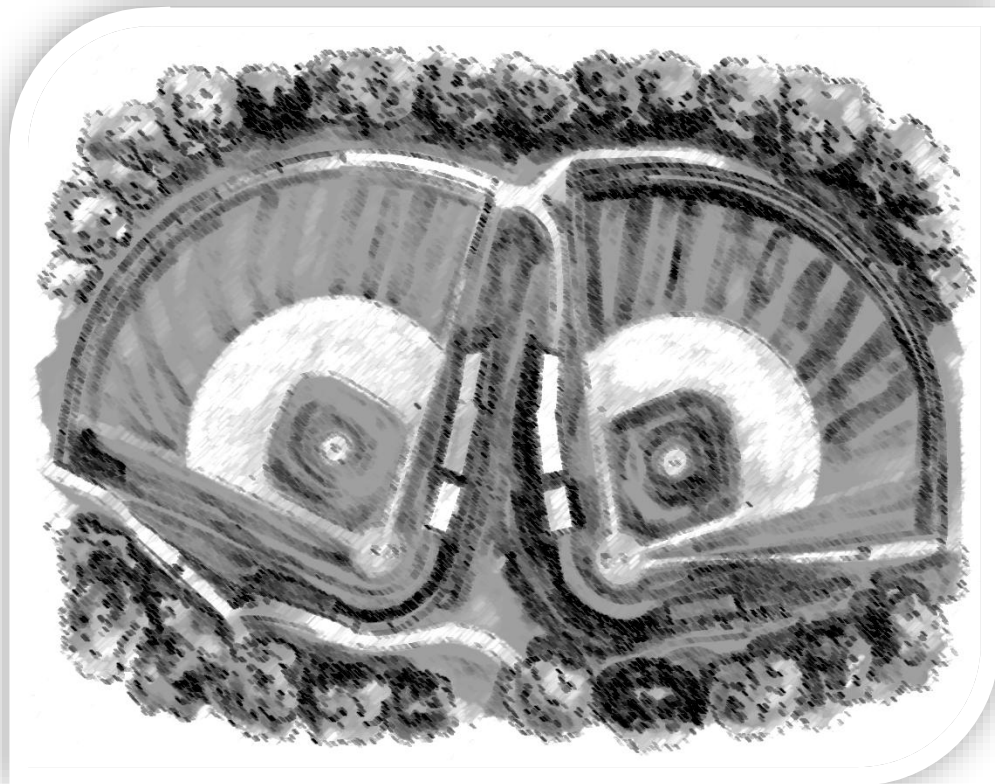
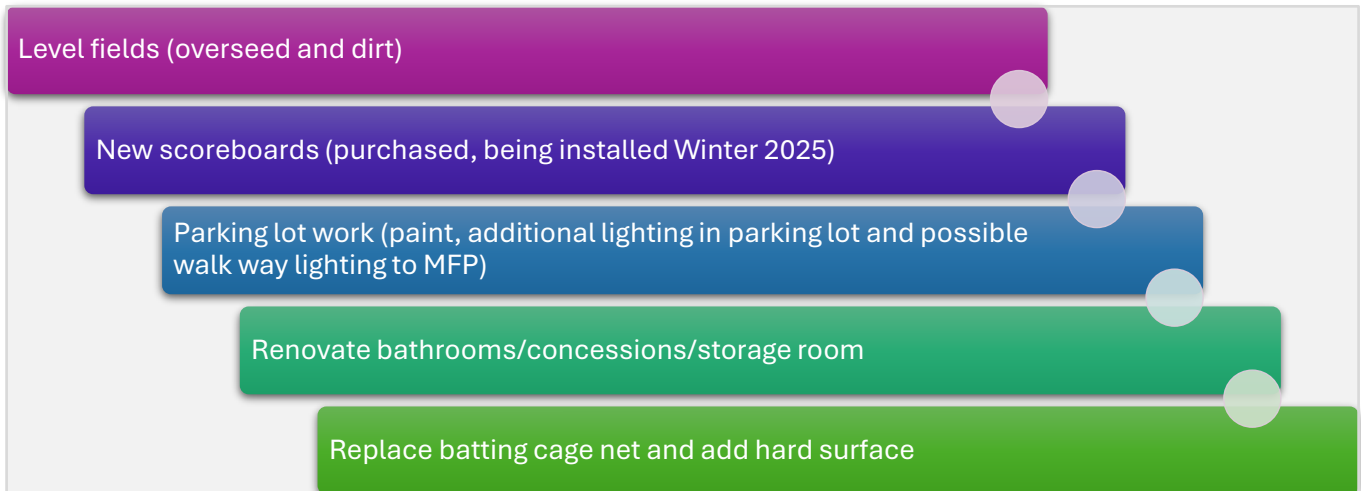
Staff-Identified Improvements



Facility Improvements – Recreation Department Staff Input:

The results of the public input survey, the input received during the public drop-in meetings and **discussions with Town staff (see charts below) resulted in the identification of several potential recreation improvements.** The results of these discussions should be used to guide the Town's future recreation investment priorities.

Fletcher Ball Park:



Rendering for illustrative purposes only.

Tiger Gym:

Strip gym floor to natural wood and add polyacrylic layer (with appropriate volleyball anchors)

Renovate bathrooms

Convert old office to storage for football/soccer/basketball equipment

Renovate concessions for use as concessions/check in area



Rendering for illustrative purposes only.

Children's Park:

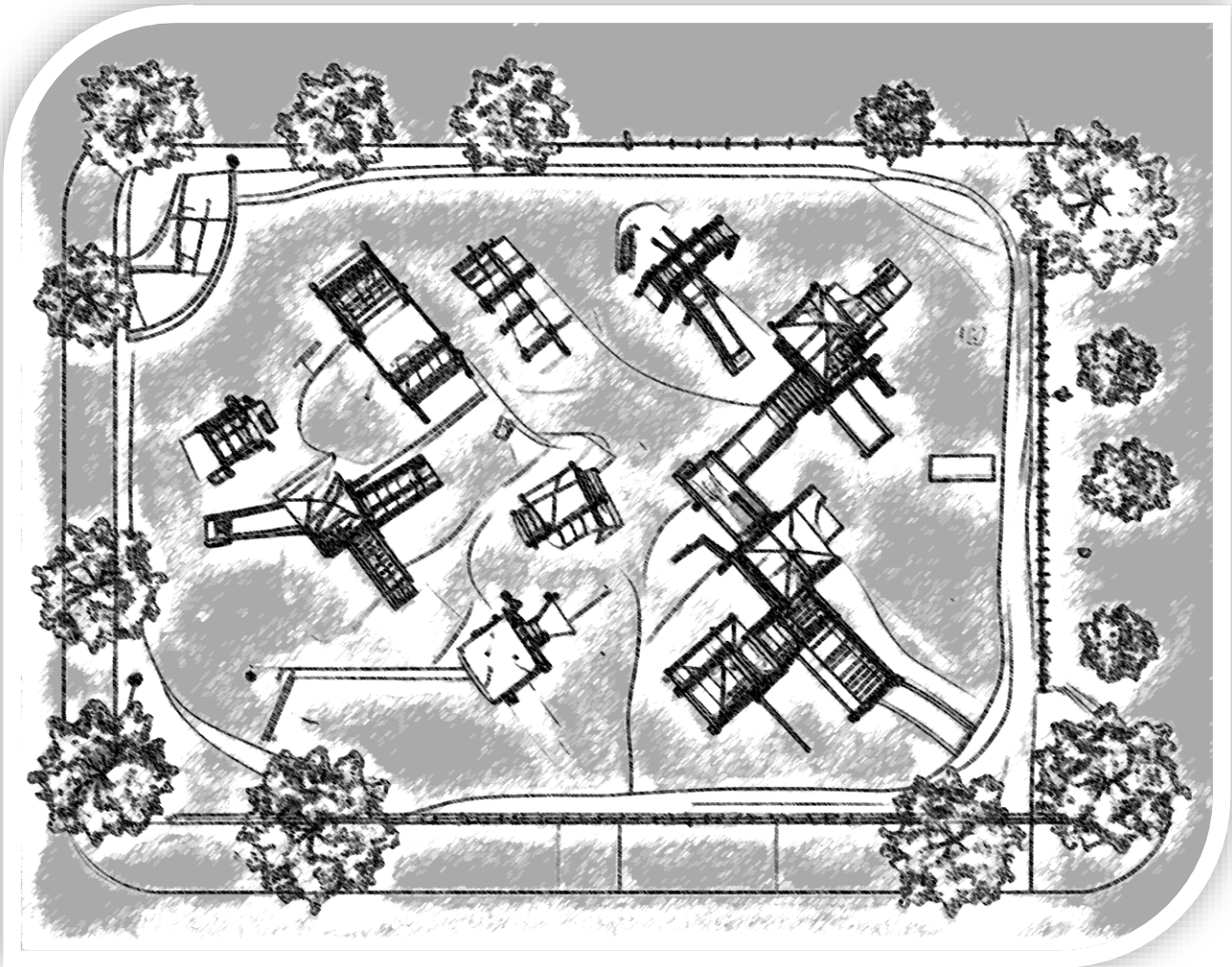
Playground equipment replacement

Streambank restoration and bridge replacement

Bathroom/concession replacement

Landscaping around Memorial

Drainage for field



Rendering for illustrative purposes only.

Valdese Lakeside Park:

Additional parking along Lake Rhodhiss Drive (30-50 spaces)

Improve connection between park and Hoyle Creek sidepath

Establish connection to 11 acre property south of Lovelady Dr.

Add boulders for climbing/play



Rendering for illustrative purposes only.

McGalliard Falls Park:

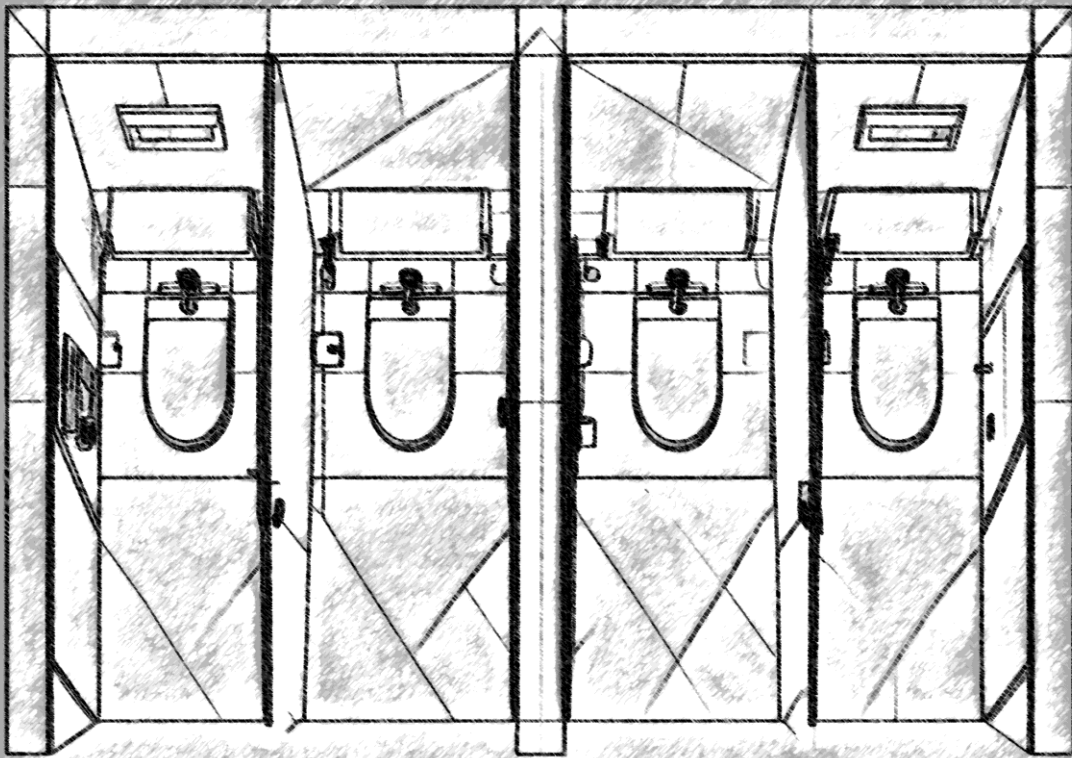
Restroom improvements

Parking improvements (repave/seal/stripe)

Provide access to base of falls and add viewing platform at Grist Mill

Stream restoration

Add disc golf along greenway



Rendering for illustrative purposes only.

Community Center/Splash Pad:

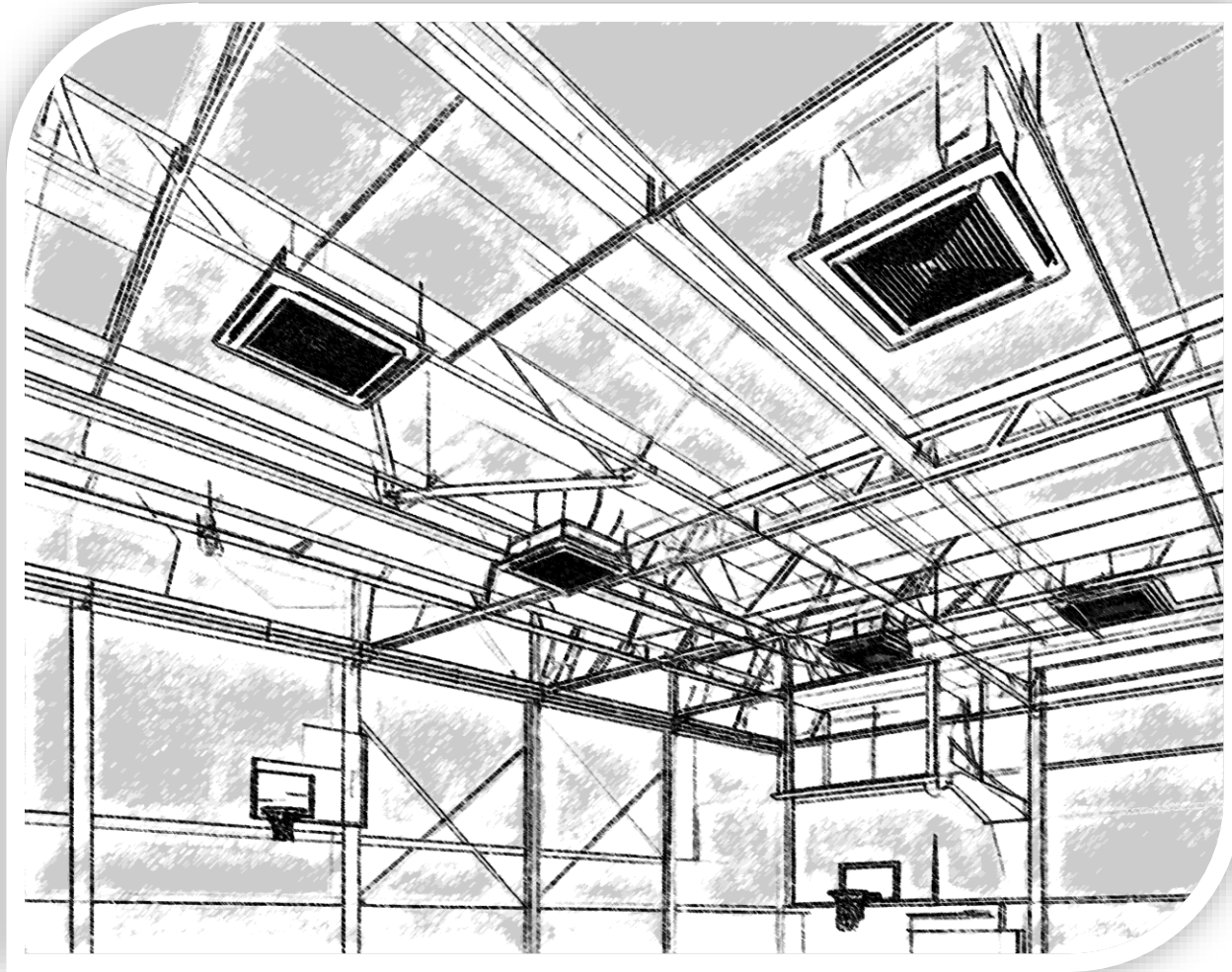
A/C in gymnasium

Paint and flooring in bowling alley

Improve bowling alley restrooms

Resurface/re-pour tennis court

Additional playground space at splash pad



Rendering for illustrative purposes only.

Recommendations



Plan Recommendations:

While decisions involving future facility development should be made in accordance with the recommendations contained in this Plan, **it is recognized that the implementation of the recommendations in this Plan may change** if the Recreation Department’s goals change, if a specific grant opportunity becomes available or if a cash or land donation is made for a particular project.

Recommendations Table:



Implement the facility improvements that were identified through the public input survey, staff discussions, and drop-in community meetings by applying for grant funding and through continued implementation of CIP.



Repair and maintain existing recreation facilities as needed while also focusing on new opportunities to expand or develop new facilities.



Consider the recommendations resulting from other recent planning efforts (for example the Valdese 2024 Strategic Plan, Town of Valdese CORE Strategic Plan etc.) when undertaking future recreation development projects.



Develop surveys to determine citizen interest in adding Recreation Department staff, expanding existing recreation programs, developing new programs, or adding new facilities/amenities.



Upgrade existing recreation facilities to include amenities that reflect community preferences.



Develop easements/acquire land for future recreation use, including trails, parks, passive recreation water/stream access and other activities.



Continue to explore ways to improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity between recreation facilities and residential neighborhoods/downtown.



Monitor the Town's demographics and review this plan's public input survey to ensure that all recreation facilities are developed with all age groups and abilities in mind.



Upgrade recreation facilities to address ADA requirements.



Leverage technology (including location analytics) to more precisely understand recreation facility demand and economic impacts.



Explore the feasibility of developing a centrally located facility to house recreation program equipment and maintenance supplies.



Activate underutilized park spaces.



Continue to work with nearby municipalities, Burke County and Burke County Public Schools to identify and develop facility usage partnerships as needed.



Continue to develop passive recreation facilities that provide opportunities for nature watching and lake/falls/stream viewing.



Continue to promote Valdese as a destination that offers a high quality of life by providing unique and memorable recreation opportunities.



Continue to leverage the popularity of Lakeside Park as a destination to promote Valdese's downtown, as well as other recreation facilities and community events.



Work with the Greater Hickory Metropolitan Planning Organization to identify trail/sidepath/natural surface trail routes that are eligible for construction under the NCDOT Trail Encroachment Agreement program.



Improve pedestrian/bicycle connectivity between the town's parks/facilities, downtown, surrounding neighborhoods, and planned/new recreation facilities by using grant funding available through the Greater Hickory Metropolitan Planning Organization's Locally Administered Projects Program (LAPP) and other programs as they are established.

Funding Options



Grant Funding Sources:

The information provided below is taken from each entity's website.

The **North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF)** provides dollar-for-dollar matching grants to local governments for the acquisition and/or development of park and recreational projects to serve the general public. A local government can request a maximum of \$500,000 with each application. Local governments can apply to acquire land for parks and build recreational facilities for use by the public. A PARTF grant can also be used to protect the natural and scenic resources or renovate older park facilities. A project must be located on a single site.

An applicant must match the grant dollar-for-dollar, 50 percent of the total cost of the project, and may contribute more than 50 percent. The appraised value of land to be donated to the applicant can be used as part of the match. The value of in-kind services, such as volunteer work, cannot be used as part of the match. An applicant must own or have at least a 25-year signed lease or easement for the property where a PARTF facility will be located. Property acquired with PARTF must be dedicated forever for public recreational use. Facilities built or renovated with a PARTF grant must be available for public recreational use for at least 25 years. Link:

<https://www.ncparks.gov/about-us/grants/parks-and-recreation-trust-fund>

In addition to the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, other grant sources may be available to fund projects. Grant funding is subject to availability.



Land and Water Conservation Fund Federal Grant - The Land and Water Conservation Fund has historically been a primary funding source of the U.S. Department of the Interior for outdoor recreation development and land acquisition by local governments and state agencies. In 2019, Congress permanently reauthorized the fund and then permanently funded the program the following year with the passage of the Great Outdoors Act.

In North Carolina, the program is administered by the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. The Governor appoints a state liaison officer (SLO), who reviews the LWCF allocation in consultation with and with advice from the LWCF staff. The SLO determines the minimum and maximum amount of grant awards for state agency and local government projects. During each funding cycle, the LWCF staff will review the evaluations of each application submitted, consider the ranking of the projects, and recommend a list of projects to the SLO for funding. The SLO recommends the list of projects to the National Park Service for final review and funding. Link: <https://www.ncparks.gov/about-us/grants/land-and-water-conservation-fund>

Locally Administered Projects Program (LAPP) – The LAPP program is offered by the Greater Hickory Metropolitan Planning Organization (GHMPO) and is designed to prioritize and program local

transportation projects in the region that use federal transportation funding. The process involves a regular call for projects, and results in new projects added to the GHMPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). LAPP funding enables local governments to plan, design, and construct bike/pedestrian improvements. Funds are commonly use funds for sidewalk extension/expansion and multi-use path construction. Link: <https://www.wpcog.org/local-admin-project-program>

Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program - The Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program is a nationally competitive grant program that provides matching grants to create outdoor recreation spaces and reinvigorate existing parks in underserved urban communities. Grants are selected by the federal Department of the Interior's National Park Service, following a solicitation and nomination by the state.

ORLP was created in 2014 in coordination with Congress and the Secretary of the Interior. This program is funded through the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, so all projects must be consistent with the purposes and requirements of the LWCF Act. ORLP grants do not count against state LWCF appointments. Link: <https://www.ncparks.gov/about-us/grants/outdoor-recreation-legacy-partnership-program>

The Recreational Trails Program – the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) has provided funding for construction of new trails, maintenance and repair of existing trails, land acquisition, purchase of trail tools and planning, legal, environmental and permitting costs. This federal grant program designed to help states provide and maintain recreational trails for both motorized and non-motorized recreational trail use. The program is administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration.

RTP is a reimbursement grant program. Funds must be spent and then reimbursed upon completion of deliverables. Eligible applicants must be a state, federal or local government agencies or qualified nonprofit organization. All applications are reviewed by the North Carolina Trails Committee and recommendations are made to the Secretary of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. The Secretary makes the final determination on grant awards. Link: <https://trails.nc.gov/trail-grants>

NCDOT Project Prioritization – funding for pedestrian projects may be available. Contact the Greater Hickory MPO for further information. <https://www.wpcog.org/metropolitan-planning-org>

Other Recreation Development Methods:

Cooperative Approaches

Examples of cooperative approaches include a joint town/county project, town/civic club project, town/community group project, and a town/individual and local government/corporate/business sponsored project.

Donation

Individuals, organizations, and businesses can donate land to the Town for recreational and open space purposes. In return, the donor is eligible to receive federal and state deductions on personal income and may be able to avoid inheritance taxes, capital gains taxes and recurring property taxes.

Fee-Simple Purchase

The Town can purchase property outright, obtaining full title to the land by using general funds or monies donated to the Town that were raised to be used specifically for land acquisition for recreation.

Easements

The acquisition of an easement entitles the Town to only those rights granted in the easement agreement. Easements are a method by which the Town can acquire land for recreational and conservation purposes. Water, sewer and electric utility property easements can be negotiated with landowners to provide space for public recreation.

Right of First Refusal:

A local government can establish an agreement with a property owner to provide the right of first refusal on a parcel of land, scheduled to be placed on the market. This means the Town would be notified first, prior to the sale of the parcel to any other agency or person.

Maps



Appendix



Valdese Parks: Children's Park

Legend

- Existing Sidewalk
- Park Boundaries
- Valdese Town Limits



Main St E

70

Main St E

Micol Creek

Torre Pellice St SE

Micol Park

Torre Pellice St SE

Whisnant St SE

Micol Creek

N

WPCOG

0 0.01 0.02 0.04 Miles

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Valdese Parks: Fletcher Park

Legend

-  Park Boundaries
-  Parcels
-  Park Trails
-  Valdese Town Limits

McGalliard Creek

McGalliard Creek

McGalliard Falls Park

McGalliard Park Ave

N

WPCOG

0 0.01 0.03 0.05 Miles

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Valdese Parks: McGalliard Falls/Meytre Grist Mill

Legend

-  Park Boundaries
-  Park Trails
-  Valdese Town Limits

MEYTRE GRIST MILL

McGalliard Creek

McGalliard Falls Park

Falls Rd NW

N

WPCOG



0 0.01 0.02 0.04 Miles

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Valdese Parks: Tiger Gym/Football Field

Legend

-  Park Boundaries
-  Parcels
-  Park Trails



0 0.01 0.02 0.04 Miles



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Valdese Parks: Lakeside Park

Legend

-  Park Boundaries
-  Trails
-  Park Amphitheater, Other Structures
-  Valdese Town Limits




0 0.13 0.25 0.5 Miles

This map is a graphic representation and should only be used for illustrative purposes. Maps created with data provided by WPCOG Planning department, the Friends of Valdese Lakeside Park ESRI. Last edited 17Dec2025 by MHH.

NC CGIA, Microsoft, Vantor

Valdese Parks: Valdese Recreation Center and Family Splash Pad

Legend

 Park Boundaries

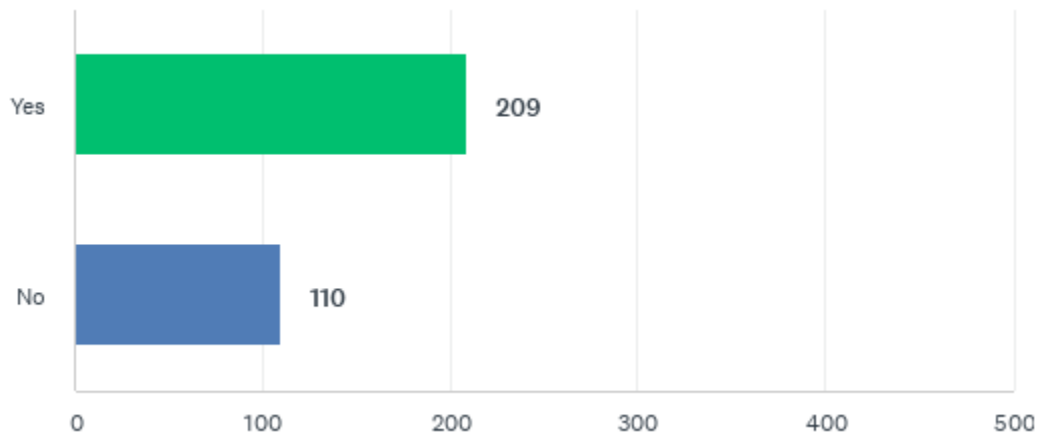


This map is a graphic representation and should only be used for illustrative purposes. Maps created with data provided by WPCOG Planning department and ESRI. Last edited 5 June 2025 by MHM.

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321 Responses

1) Are you a resident of Valdese?



- About 66% of respondents are residents and 34% are not.

2) From the list below, rank the FIVE most important recreation facilities to your household. Not all of these facilities are in the Town of Valdese. Choose only FIVE. (1 = highest priority, 2 = high priority, 3 = medium priority, 4 = low priority, 5 = lowest priority)

Recreation Activity	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	Total
Paved Walking/Jogging /Running/Biking Trails (i.e. “Greenways”)	84 responses	32 responses	35 responses	30 responses	19 responses	200
Kayaking/Canoeing Access	9 responses	16 responses	25 responses	12 responses	22 responses	84
Disc Golf Courses	4 responses	5 responses	16 responses	10 responses	33 responses	68

Dog Parks	7 responses	20 responses	19 responses	22 responses	23 responses	91
Fishing Access	21 responses	16 responses	15 responses	19 responses	14 responses	85
Hiking Trails	32 responses	32 responses	36 responses	22 responses	23 responses	145
Horseshoe pits/cornhole/s huffleboard/bo cce ball courts	5 responses	15 responses	23 responses	12 responses	11 responses	66
Baseball/Softba ll Fields	35 responses	24 responses	24 responses	15 responses	17 responses	115
Outdoor Soccer Fields	12 responses	13 responses	14 responses	16 responses	22 responses	77
Indoor Soccer Fields/Courts	8 responses	9 responses	13 responses	13 responses	24 responses	67
Outdoor Fitness Equipment	8 responses	11 responses	14 responses	22 responses	21 responses	76
Indoor Fitness Equipment	36 responses	26 responses	33 responses	20 responses	13 responses	128
Open Space/Natural Areas	29 responses	18 responses	20 responses	15 responses	11 responses	93
Climbing Walls	5 responses	10 responses	10 responses	15 responses	31 responses	71
Amphitheaters/ Stages	12 responses	14 responses	19 responses	16 responses	29 responses	90
Playgrounds	51 responses	27 responses	25 responses	13 responses	17 responses	133
Outdoor Tennis Courts	7 responses	11 responses	21 responses	18 responses	15 responses	72
Indoor Tennis Courts	2 responses	8 responses	14 responses	16 responses	21 responses	61
Outdoor Pickleball Courts	15 responses	11 responses	21 responses	18 responses	18 responses	83
Indoor Pickleball Courts	5 responses	16 responses	23 responses	14 responses	22 responses	80

Outdoor Basketball Courts	11	15	16	9	13	64
Indoor Basketball Courts	18 responses	17 responses	12 responses	15 responses	13 responses	75
Picnic Shelters	18 responses	23 responses	30 responses	20 responses	14 responses	105
Picnic Tables (not covered)	8 responses	11 responses	22 responses	14 responses	12 responses	67
Outdoor Grills	10 responses	11 responses	15 responses	15 responses	13 responses	64
Outdoor Football Fields	33 responses	19 responses	14 responses	13 responses	16 responses	95
Community Garden	13 responses	13 responses	21 responses	16 responses	13 responses	76
Outdoor Sand Volleyball Courts	5 responses	11 responses	17 responses	16 responses	18 responses	67
Indoor Volleyball Courts	8 responses	7 responses	16 responses	15 responses	19 responses	65
Restrooms	44 responses	32 responses	21 responses	18 responses	25 responses	140
Outdoor Swimming Pools	57 responses	52 responses	27 responses	15 responses	19 responses	170
Indoor Swimming Pools	72 responses	36 responses	15 responses	17 responses	21 responses	161
Splash Pads	28 responses	21 responses	17 responses	15 responses	17 responses	98
Skateboard Parks	8 responses	9 responses	19 responses	10 responses	27 responses	

Other Activities Mentioned:

- Adaptative activities for special needs/disabled (3 responses)
- Yoga/Pilates/Dance studio (2 responses)
- Mountain bike trails (2 responses)
- Bowling lanes (2 responses)

- Top 5 activities that had the most responses for “1 = Highest Priority”
 1. Paved Walking/Jogging/Running/Biking Trails (i.e. “Greenways”) – **84 Responses**
 2. Indoor Swimming Pools – **72 Responses**
 3. Outdoor Swimming Pools - **57 Responses**
 4. Playgrounds – **51 Responses**
 5. Restrooms – **44 Responses**

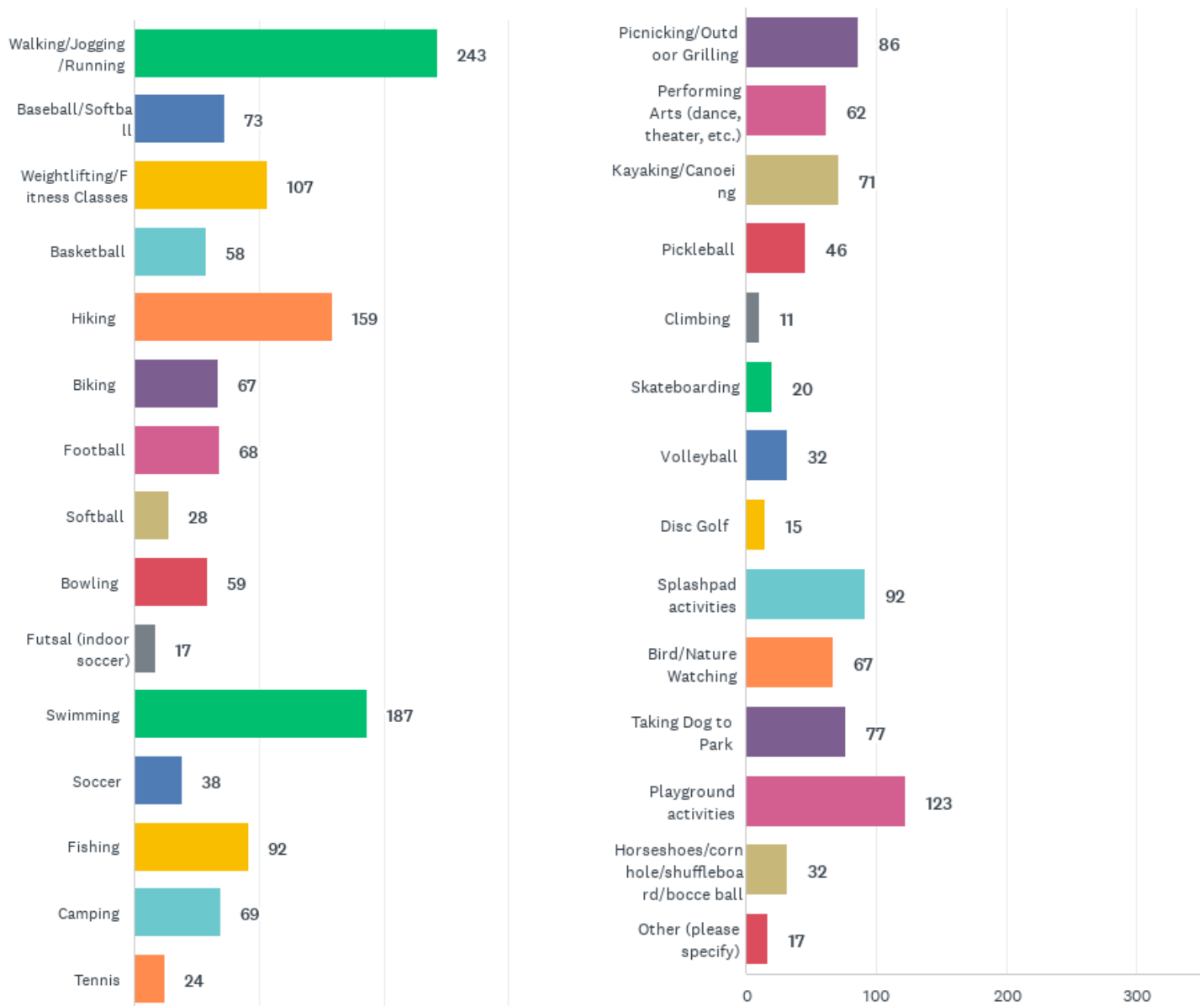
- Top 5 activities that had the most responses for “2 = High Priority”
 1. Outdoor Swimming Pools – **52 Responses**
 2. Indoor Swimming Pools – **36 Responses**
 3. Restrooms – **32 Responses**
 4. Hiking Trails – **32 Responses**
 5. Paved Walking/Jogging/Running/Biking Trails (i.e. “Greenways”) – **32 Responses**

- Top 5 activities that had the most responses for “3 = Medium Priority”
 1. Hiking Trails – **36 Responses**
 2. Paved Walking/Jogging/Running/Biking Trails (i.e. “Greenways”) – **35 Responses**
 3. Indoor Fitness Equipment – **33 Responses**
 4. Picnic Shelters – **30 Responses**
 5. Outdoor Swimming Pools – **27 Responses**

- Top 5 activities that had the most responses for “4 = Low Priority”
 1. Paved Walking/Jogging/Running/Biking Trails (i.e. “Greenways”) – **30 Responses**
 2. Dog Parks – **22 Responses**
 3. Hiking Trails – **22 Responses**
 4. Outdoor Fitness Equipment – **22 Responses**
 5. Indoor Fitness Equipment – **20 Responses** / Picnic Shelters – **20 Responses**

- Top 5 activities that had the most responses for “5 = Lowest Priority”
 1. Disc Golf Courses – **33 Responses**
 2. Climbing Walls – **31 Responses**
 3. Amphitheaters/Stages – **29 Responses**
 4. Skateboard Parks – **27 Responses**
 5. Restrooms – **25 Responses**

3) Which of the following recreation activities do you or others in your household participate in regularly? Please check all that apply.



- Top 5
1. Walking/Jogging/Running (243 responses)
 2. Swimming (187 responses)
 3. Hiking (159 responses)
 4. Playground activities (123 responses)
 5. Weightlifting/Fitness Classes (107 responses)

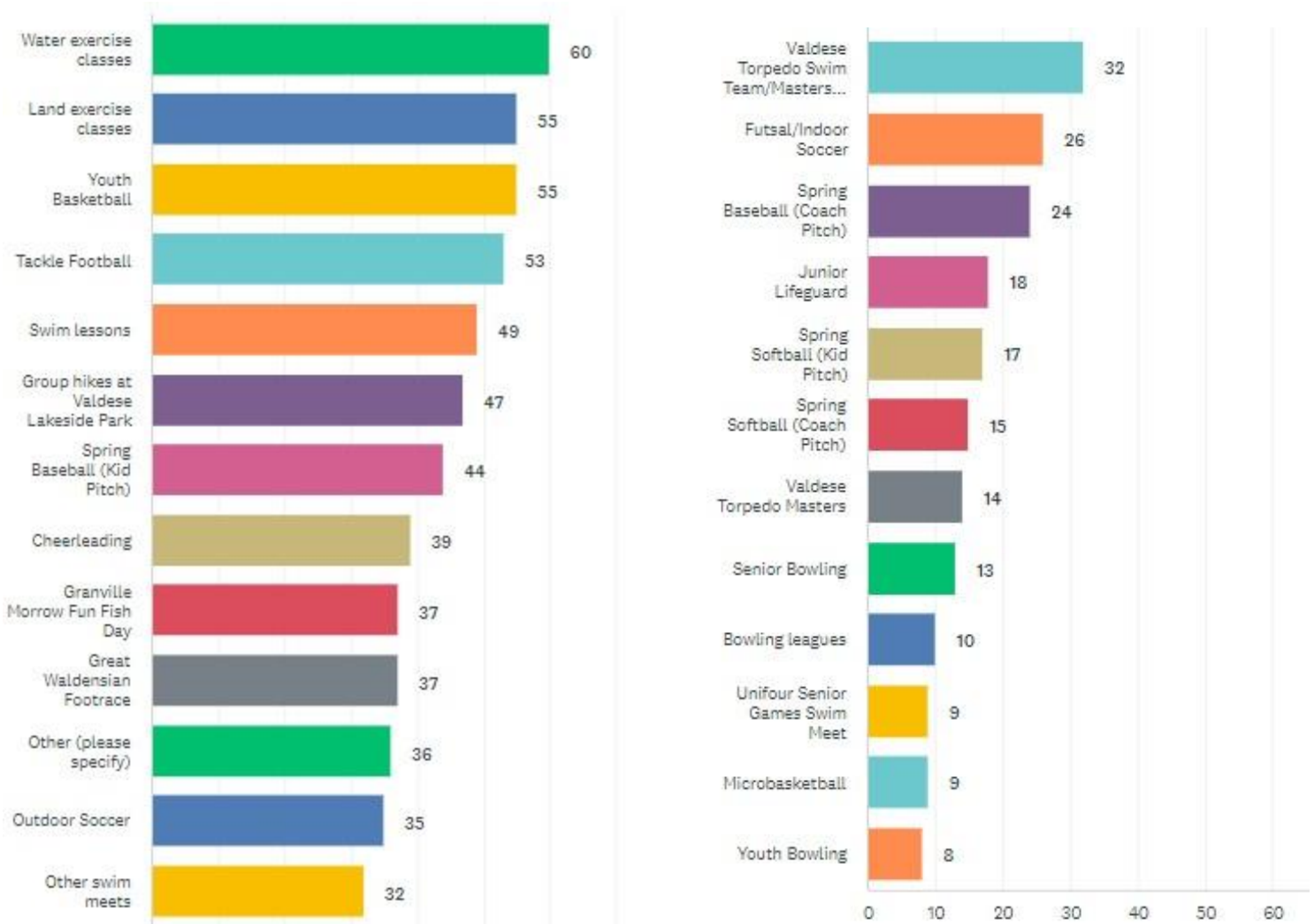
- Other answer option:
 - Yoga/Pilates/Dance
 - Mountain Bike
 - Football
 - Senior Water Activities
 - Jiu Jitsu
 - Bowling

4) How many people in your household (counting yourself) are in each age range below?

Age Groups	Total
Age 0-5	87
Age 6-8	73
Age 9-12	125
Age 13-15	68
Age 16-18	49
Age 19-21	32
Age 22-29	65
Age 30-39	153
Age 40-49	162
Age 50-59	102
Age 60+	191

Number of Households with Children 18 or Under	168
Number of Households with 1 Child 18 or Under	31
Number of Households with 2 Children 18 or Under	81
Number of Households with 3 Children 18 or Under	34
Number of Households with 4 Children 18 or Under	16
Number of Households with 5 Children 18 or Under	6
Number of Households with Adult Children (19-21)	26
Number of Households with only Adults 22 or Older	137

5) Which of the following recreation programs/classes do you or others in your household participate in regularly? Please check all that apply.

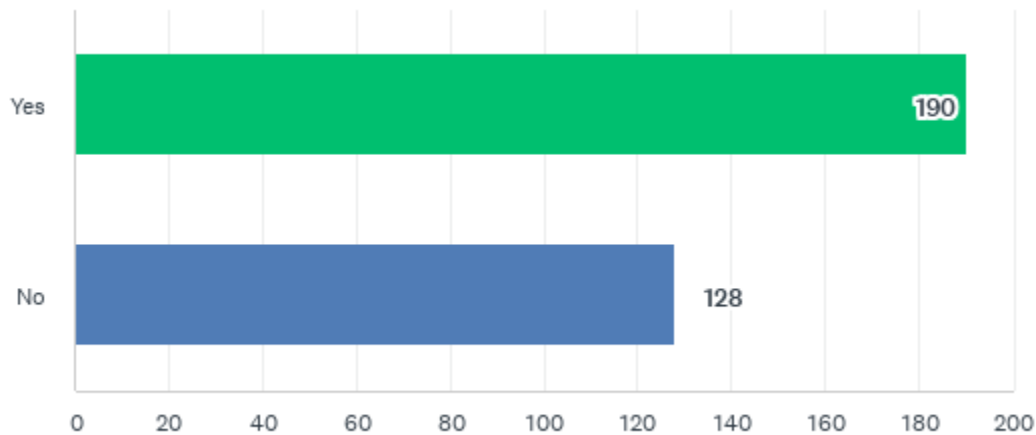


- Top 5
 1. Water Exercise Classes (60 responses)
 2. Land Exercise Classes (55 responses)
 3. Youth Basketball (55 responses)
 4. Tackle Football (53 responses)
 5. Swimming Lessons (49 responses)

6) List any other recreation programs/classes that you or others in your household WOULD participate in if the Town offered them.

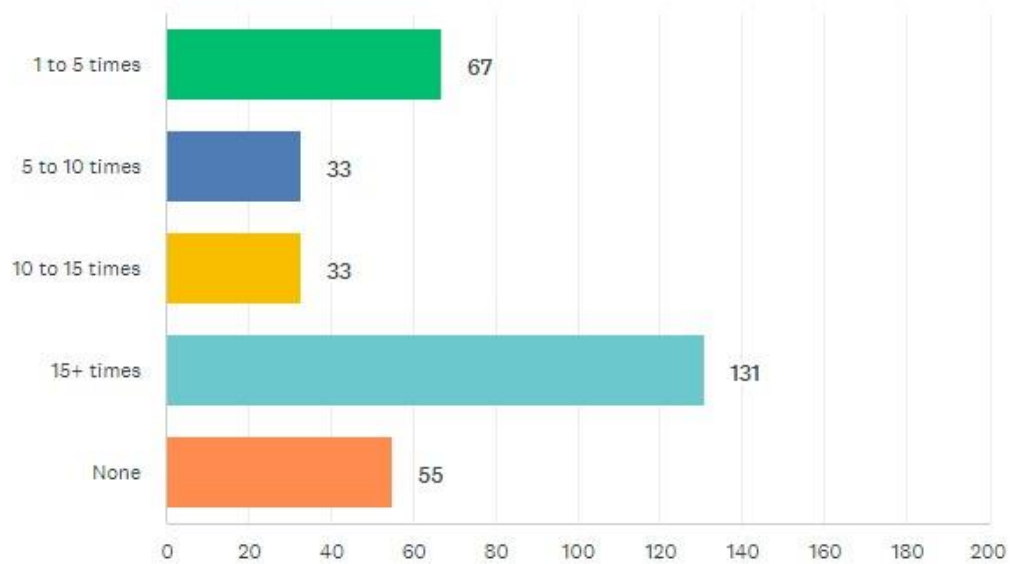
- Weightlifting/Fitness
- Swimming/Lane Swimming
- Yoga
- Adult Sports (Basketball, volleyball, softball, pickleball, tennis)
- Leagues for Older Kids (13+)
- Adaptive Activities for Special Needs/Disabled Persons
- Skatepark

7) Do you pay Town taxes?



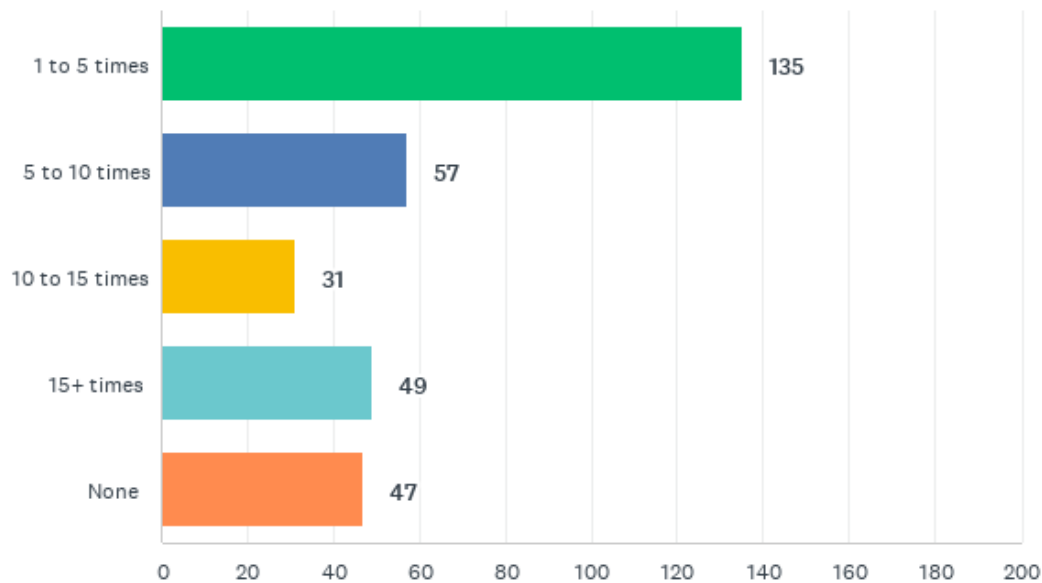
- About 60% of respondents do pay taxes and 40% do not.
- Of those respondents that live in Valdese, 182 (87.5%) said that they do pay taxes and 26 (12.5%) said they do not pay taxes.

8) In the past year, how many times have you or someone in your household used the Valdese Community Center/Aquatic Center Pool?



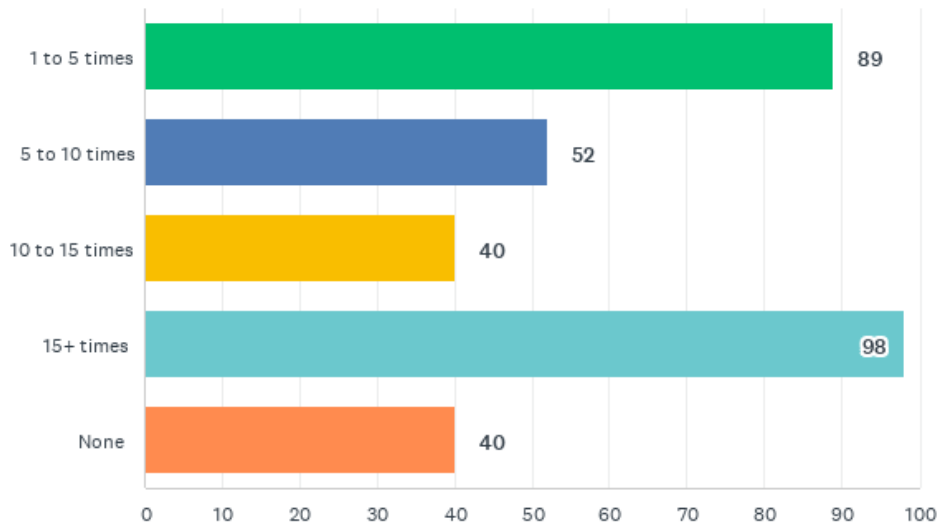
- 21% responded 1 to 5 times, 10.34% responded 5 to 10 times, 10.34% responded 10-15 times, 41.07% responded 15+ times, and 17.24% responded none.
- Of those that responded “15+ times”, around 50% (66 respondents) have children under the age of 18. About 10% (13 respondents) have adult children (those 19-21) and 40% (52 respondents) are households with adults aged 22+.
- Over half, about 51%, of respondents said that they have visited the Community Center/Pool between 10 to 15+ times in the past year.
- Of the respondents who said they had visited the Community Center/Pool in the past year (1 to 15+ times), about 57% (150 respondents) have children under the age of 18. About 7% (20 respondents) have adult children (those 19-21) and 36% (94 respondents) are households with adults aged 22+.

9) In the past year, how many times have you or someone in your household used McGalliard Falls Park?



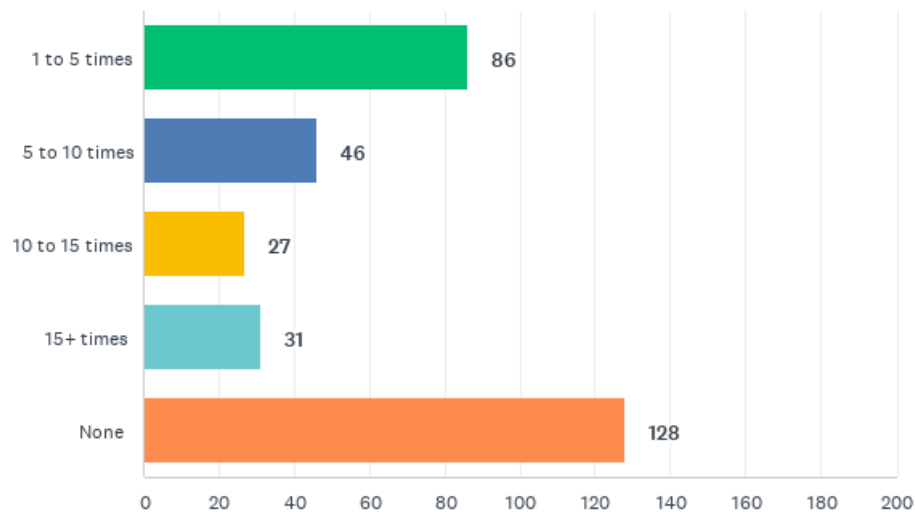
- 42.32% responded 1 to 5 times, 17.87% responded 5 to 10 times, 9.72% responded 10-15 times, 15.36% responded 15+ times, and 14.73% responded none.
- Of those that responded, “1 to 5 times”, around 53% (72 respondents) have children under the age of 18. About 8% (11 respondents) have adult children (those 19-21) and 39% (52 respondents) are households with adults aged 22+.
- Over half, about 60%, of respondents said that they have visited the park between 1 to 10 times in the past year.
- Of the respondents who said they had visited McGalliard Falls Park in the past year (1 to 15+ times), about 55% (151 respondents) have children under the age of 18. About 9% (24 respondents) have adult children (those 19-21) and 36% (97 respondents) are households with adults aged 22+.

10) In the past year, how many times have you or someone in your household used Valdese Lakeside Park?



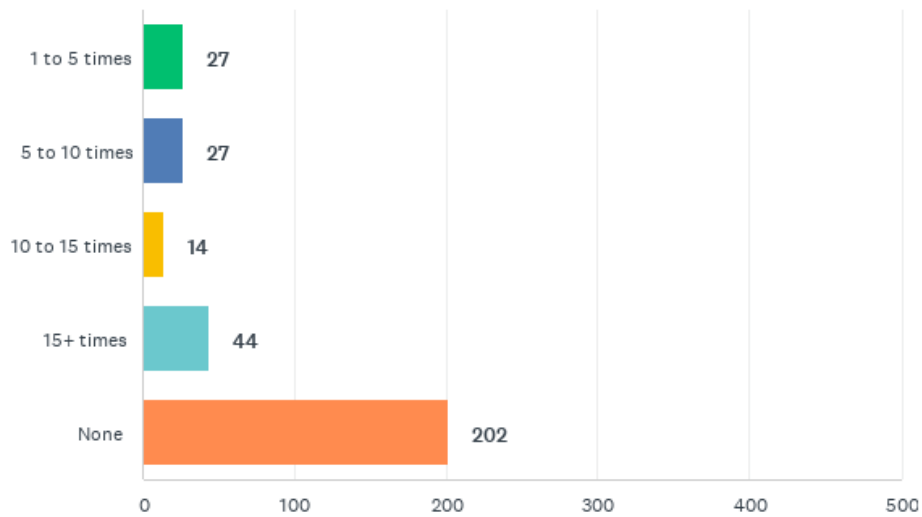
- 27.90% responded 1 to 5 times, 16.30% responded 5 to 10 times, 12.54% responded 10-15 times, 30.72% responded 15+ times, and 12.54% responded none.
- Of those that responded, “15+ times”, around 39% (38 respondents) have children under the age of 18. About 11% (11 respondents) have adult children (those 19-21) and 50% (49 respondents) are households with adults aged 22+.
- At about 13%, Valdese Lakeside Park received the lowest number of respondents who had not visited in the past year.
- Of the respondents who said they had visited Valdese Lakeside Park in the past year (1 to 15+ times), about 53% (147 respondents) have children under the age of 18. About 8% (24 respondents) have adult children (those 19-21) and 39% (108 respondents) are households with adults aged 22+.

11) In the past year, how many times have you or someone in your household used Children's Park?



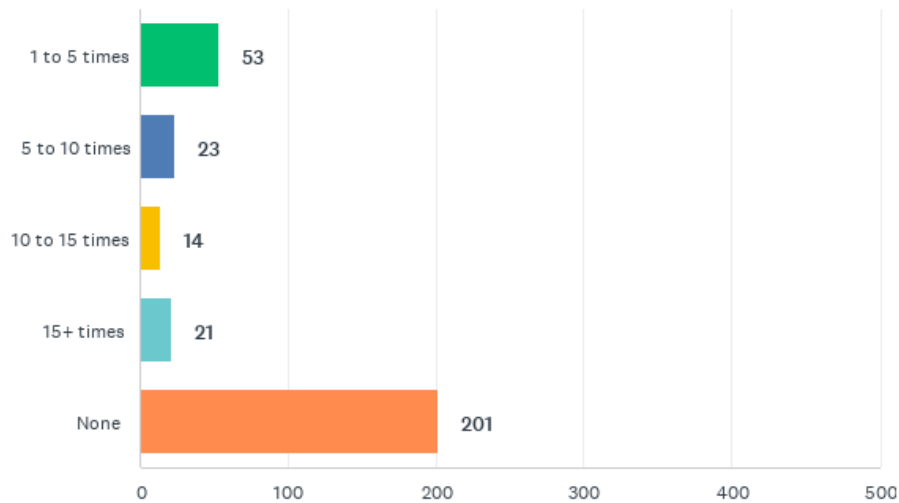
- 27.04% responded 1 to 5 times, 14.47% responded 5 to 10 times, 8.49% responded 10-15 times, 9.75% responded 15+ times, and 40.25% responded none.
- Of those that responded, “None”, 26% (34 respondents) have children under the age of 18. About 8% (10 respondents) have adult children (those 19-21) and 66% (84 respondents) are households with adults aged 22+.
- Over half, 214 respondents (67%), said that they have visited the park between 1 to 5 times or not at all in the past year.
- Of the respondents who said they had visited Children’s Park in the past year (1 to 15+ times), about 70% (133 respondents) have children under the age of 18. About 8% (16 respondents) have adult children (those 19-21) and 22% (41 respondents) are households with adults aged 22+.

12) In the past year, how many times have you or someone in your household used Fletcher Ballpark?



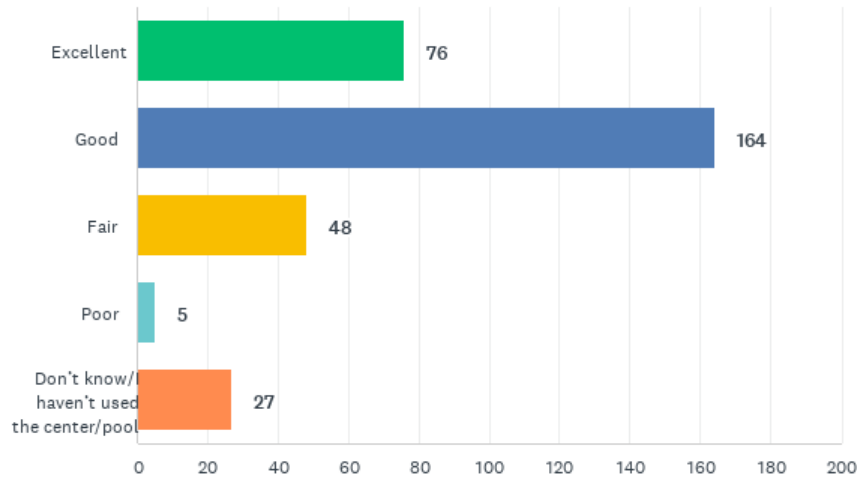
- 8.60% responded 1 to 5 times, 8.60% responded 5 to 10 times, 4.46% responded 10-15 times, 14.01% responded 15+ times, and 64.33% responded none.
- Of those that responded, “None”, about 37% (75 respondents) have children under the age of 18. About 8% (16 respondents) have adult children (those 19-21) and 55% (111 respondents) are households with adults aged 22+.
- Over half, 202 respondents (64%), said that they have not visited the park in the past year.
- Of the respondents who said they had visited Fletcher Ballpark in the past year (1 to 15+ times), about 80% (90 respondents) have children under the age of 18. About 9% (10 respondents) have adult children (those 19-21) and 11% (12 respondents) are households with adults aged 22+.

13) In the past year, how many times have you or someone in your household used Tiger Gym?



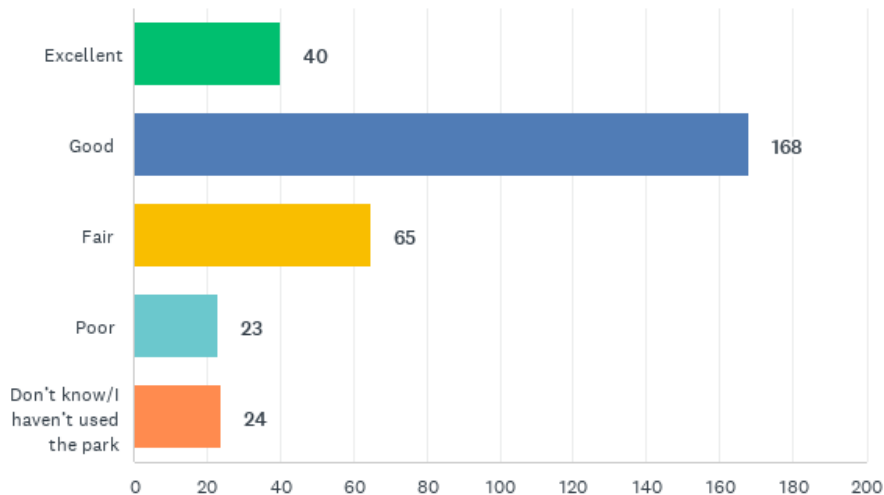
- 16.99% responded 1 to 5 times, 7.37% responded 5 to 10 times, 4.49% responded 10-15 times, 6.73% responded 15+ times, and 64.42% responded none.
- Of those that responded, “None”, about 36% (73 respondents) have children under the age of 18. About 8% (16 respondents) have adult children (those 19-21) and 56% (112 respondents) are households with adults aged 22+.
- Over half, 201 respondents (64%), said that they have not visited the gym in the past year.
- Of the respondents who said they had visited Tiger Gym in the past year (1 to 15+ times), about 83% (92 respondents) have children under the age of 18. About 9% (10 respondents) have adult children (those 19-21) and 8% (9 respondents) are households with adults aged 22+.

14) Overall, how would you rate the Valdese Community Center/Aquatic Center Pool?



- 23.75% responded excellent, 51.25% responded good, 15% responded fair, 1.56% responded poor, and 8.44% responded don't know.
- 75% of respondents rated the Community Center/Pool as either "Good" or "Excellent".
- Of the respondents who said they had visited the Community Center/Pool in the past year, about 26% rated the facilities as "Excellent", 53% rated it "Good", 17% rated it "Fair", 1% rated it "Poor", and 3% responded "Don't Know".

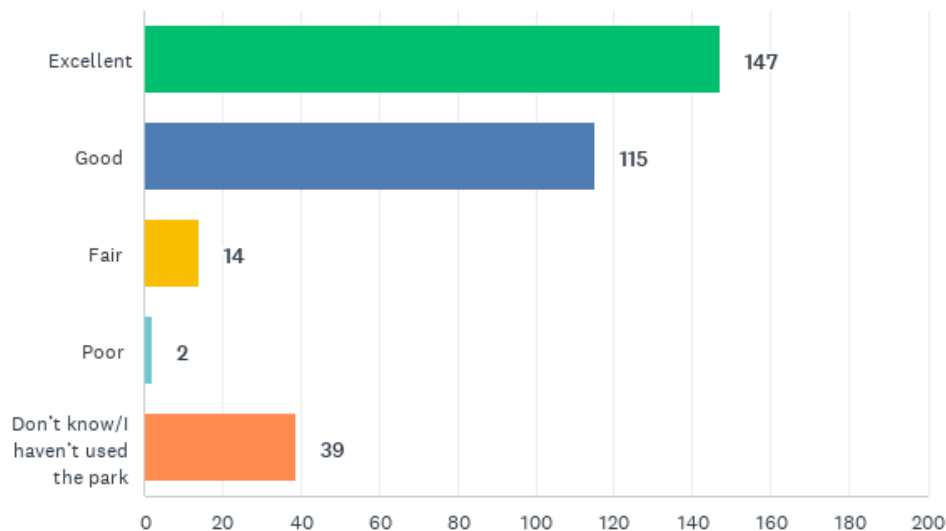
15) Overall, how would you rate McGalliard Falls Park?



- 12.5% responded excellent, 52.5% responded good, 20.31% responded fair, 7.19% responded poor, and 7.5% responded don't know.

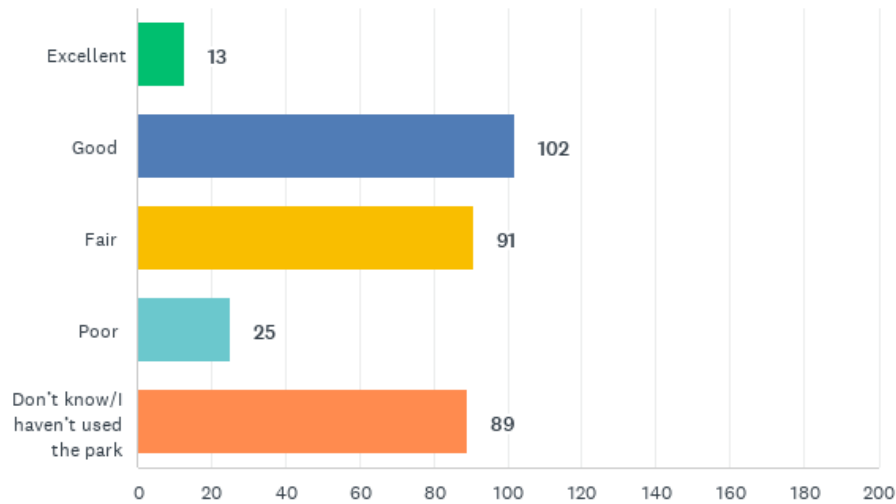
- 65% of respondents rated McGalliard Falls Park as either “Good” or “Excellent”.
- Of the respondents who said they had visited McGalliard Falls Park in the past year, about 14% rated the facilities as “Excellent”, 58% rated it “Good”, 21% rated it “Fair”, 6% rated it “Poor”, and 1% responded “Don’t Know”.

16) Overall, how would you rate Valdese Lakeside Park?



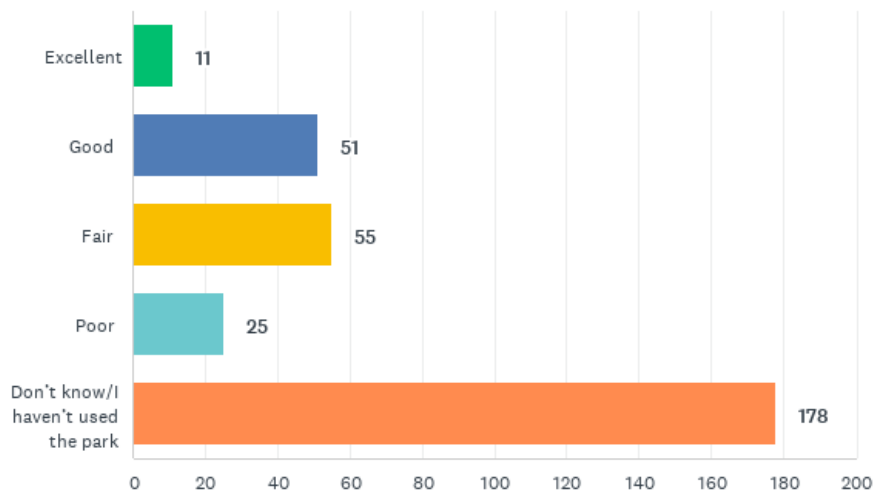
- 46.37% responded excellent, 36.28% responded good, 4.42% responded fair, .63% responded poor, and 12.3% responded don't know.
- 83% of respondents rated Valdese Lakeside Park as either “Good” or “Excellent”.
- Of the respondents who said they had visited Valdese Lakeside Park in the past year, about 53% rated the facilities as “Excellent”, 40% rated it “Good”, 4% rated it “Fair”, 1% rated it “Poor”, and 2% responded “Don’t Know”.

17) Overall, how would you rate Children's Park?



- 4.06% responded excellent, 31.87% responded good, 28.44% responded fair, 7.81% responded poor, and 27.81% responded don't know.
- 60% of respondents rated Children's Park as either "Fair" or "Good".
- Of the respondents who said they had visited Children's Park in the past year, about 6% rated the facilities as "Excellent", 44% rated it "Good", 37% rated it "Fair", 11% rated it "Poor", and 2% responded "Don't Know".

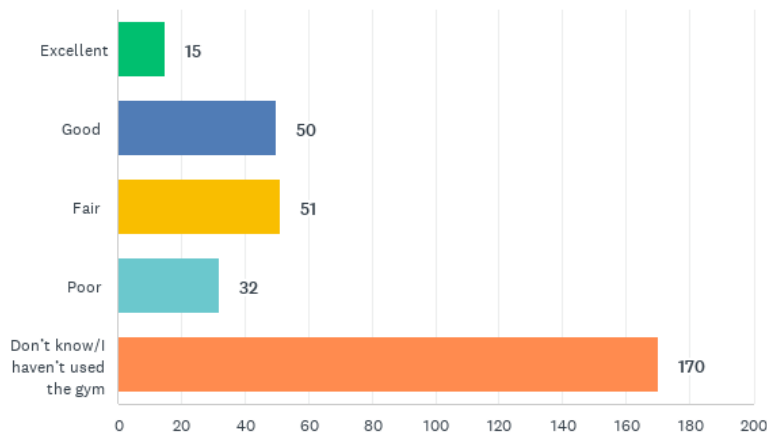
18) Overall, how would you rate Fletcher Ballpark?



- 3.44% responded excellent, 15.94% responded good, 17.19% responded fair, 7.81% responded poor, and 55.63% responded don't know.
- About 30% of respondents rated Fletcher Ballpark as either "Fair" or "Good".

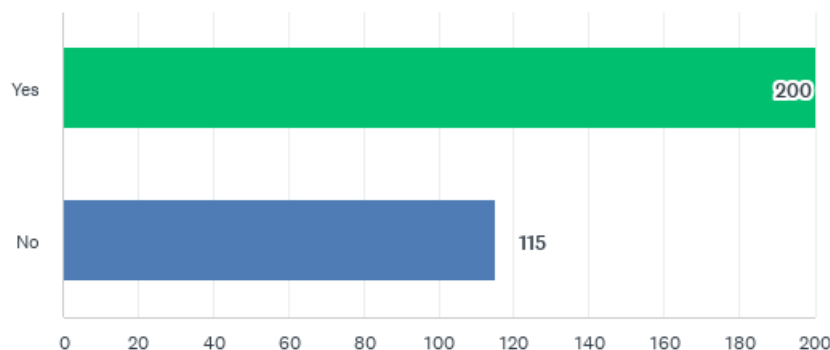
- Of the respondents who said they had visited Fletcher Ballpark in the past year, about 10% rated the facilities as “Excellent”, 33% rated it “Good”, 37% rated it “Fair”, 17% rated it “Poor”, and 3% responded “Don’t Know”.

19) Overall, how would you rate Tiger Gym?



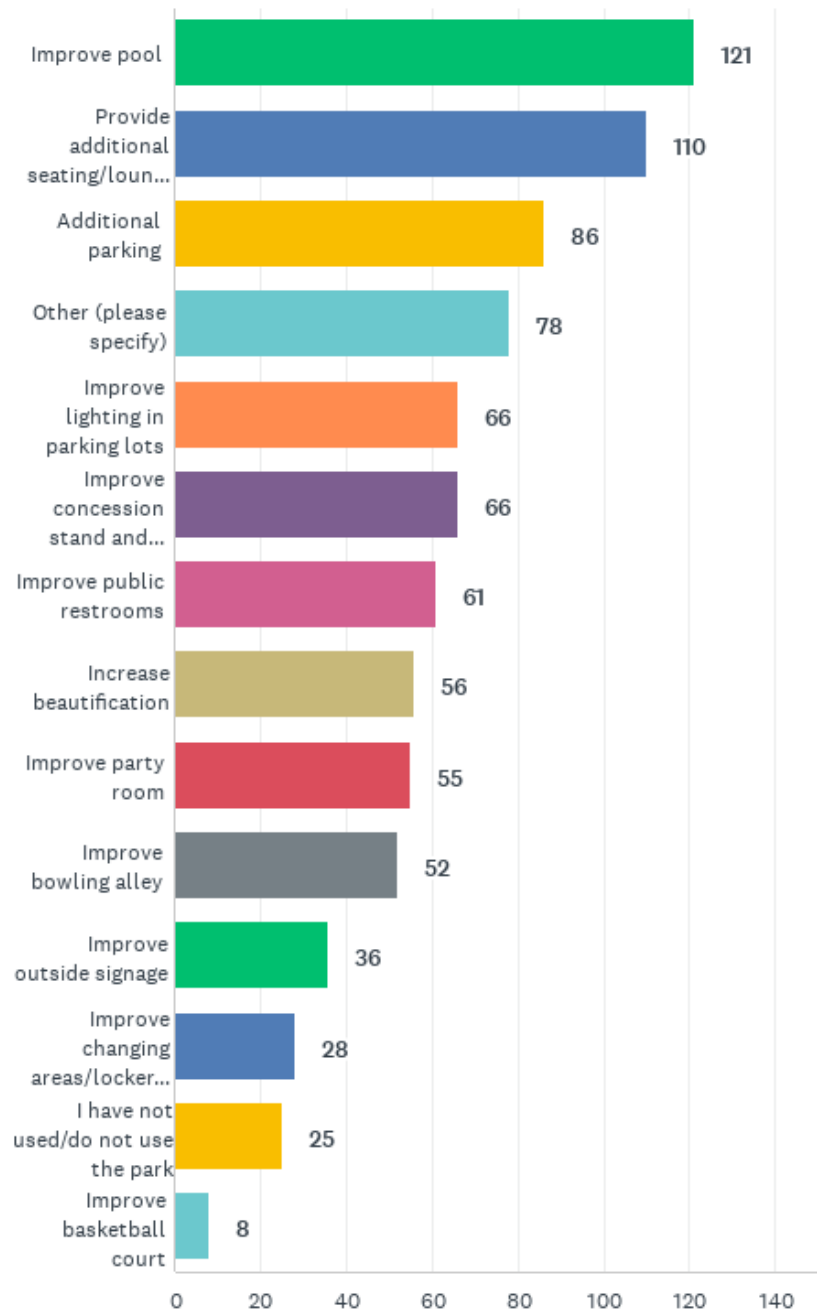
- 4.72% responded excellent, 15.72% responded good, 16.04% responded fair, 10.06% responded poor, and 53.46% responded don’t know.
- About 32% of respondents rated Tiger Gym as either “Fair” or “Good”.
- Of the respondents who said they had visited Tiger Gym in the past year, about 9% rated the facilities as “Excellent”, 35% rated it “Good”, 31% rated it “Fair”, 22% rated it “Poor”, and 3% responded “Don’t Know”.

20) Do you feel that the Town provides enough information to you about recreation activities, special events, leagues etc.?



- About 63% of respondents said yes and 37% said no.

21) Which improvements do you feel could be made to the Valdese Community Center/Aquatic Center Pool? Please check all that apply.



- Top 5

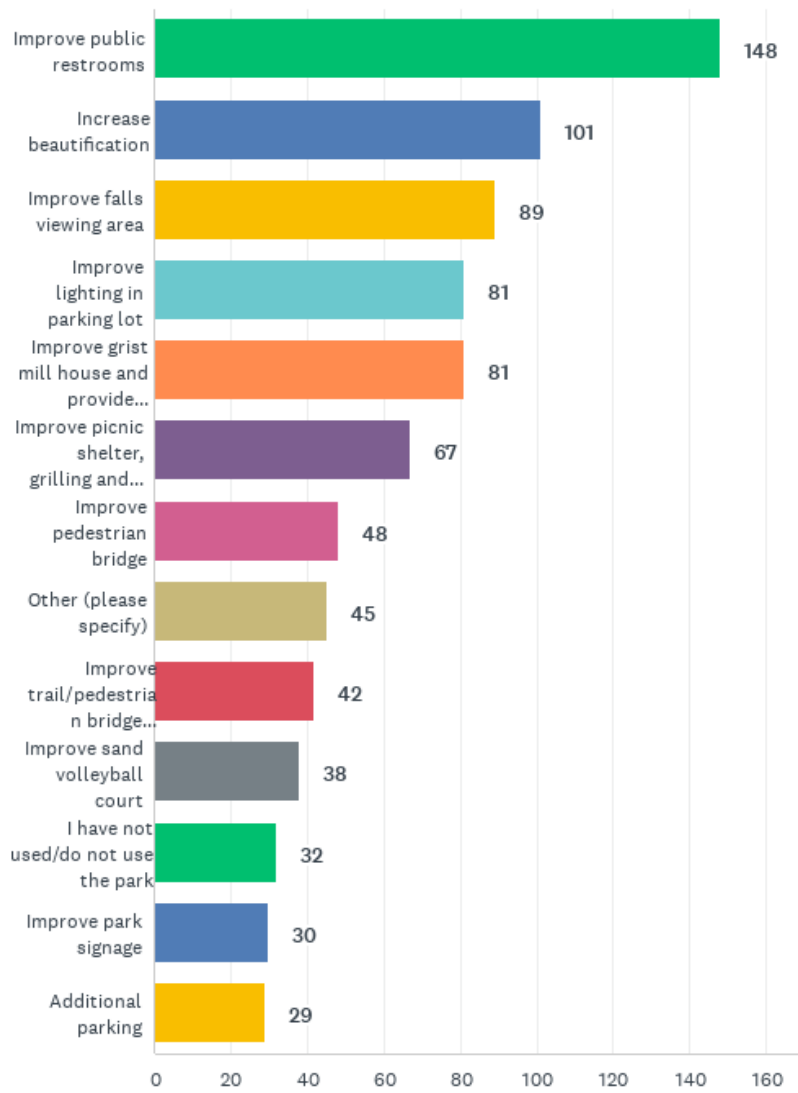
1. Improve pool (121 responses)
2. Provide additional seating/lounging around pool (110 responses)
3. Additional Parking (86 responses)

4. Other (Specify) (78 responses)

- a. New gym equipment
- b. Extended hours for open swim
- c. Permanent pool cover for winter usage
- d. Better accessibility for those with special needs
- e. More shaded areas
- f. More lighting at the fields
- g. Better landscaping/pest control around pool and splash pad areas

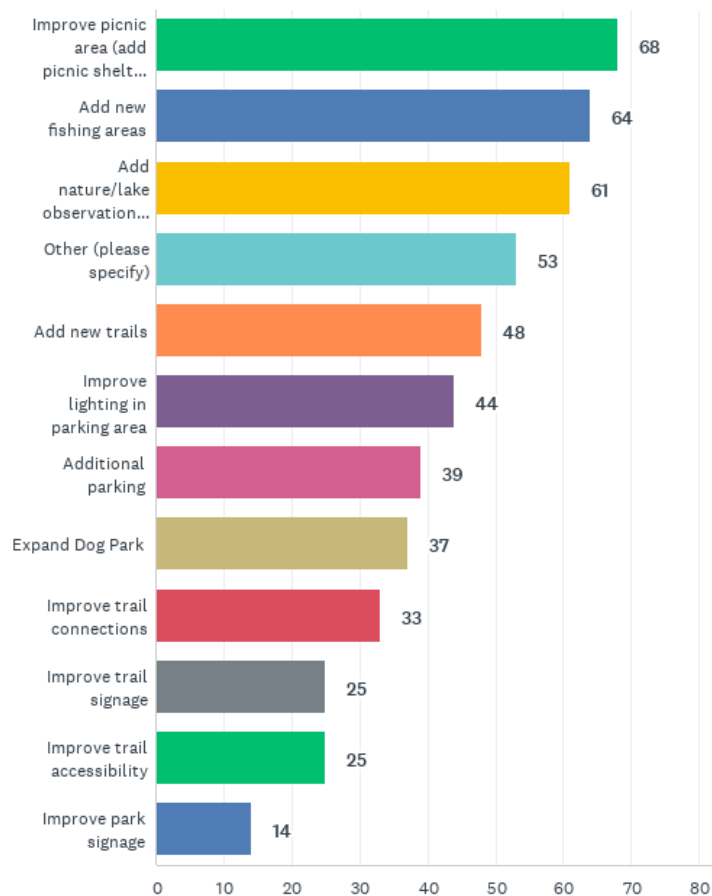
5. Improve lighting in parking lots (66 responses)

22) Which improvements do you feel could be made to McGalliard Falls Park? Please check all that apply.



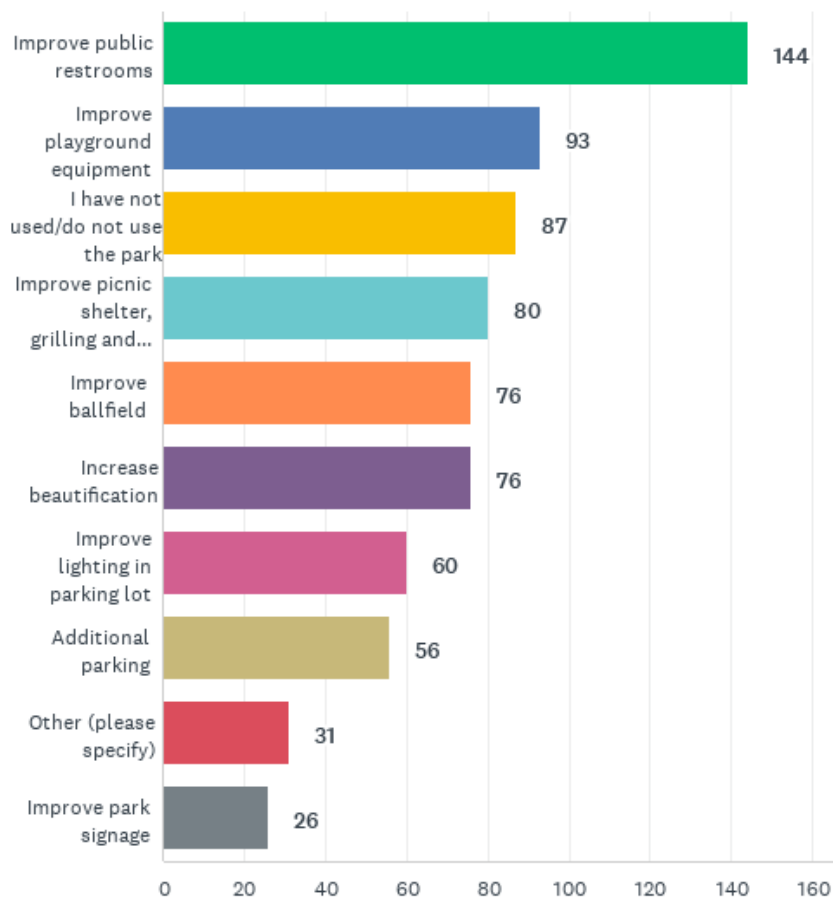
- Top 5
 1. Improve Public Restrooms (148 responses)
 2. Increase Beautification (101 responses)
 3. Improve Falls Viewing Area (89 responses)
 4. Improve Lighting in Parking Lot (81 responses)
 5. Improve Grist Mill House and Provide Pedestrian Access (81 responses)
- Other answer option:
 - Keep bathrooms clean
 - Add playground
 - More trash receptacles
 - Focus on cleaning the water
 - Add benches
 - Native foliage / better landscaping

23) Which improvements do you feel could be made to Valdese Lakeside Park? Please check all that apply.



- Top 5
 1. Improve Picnic Area (add picnic shelter, grilling/sitting area) (68 responses)
 2. Add New Fishing Areas (64 responses)
 3. Add Nature/Lake Observation Areas (61 responses)
 4. Other (Specify) (53 responses)
 - a. Add more benches
 - b. Keep bathrooms clean
 - c. Better accessibility for those with special needs
 - d. Add public safety
 - e. More trash receptacles
 - f. Improve parking lot surface
 - g. Pave walkway
 5. Add New Trails (48 responses)

24) Which improvements do you feel could be made to Children's Park? Please check all that apply.



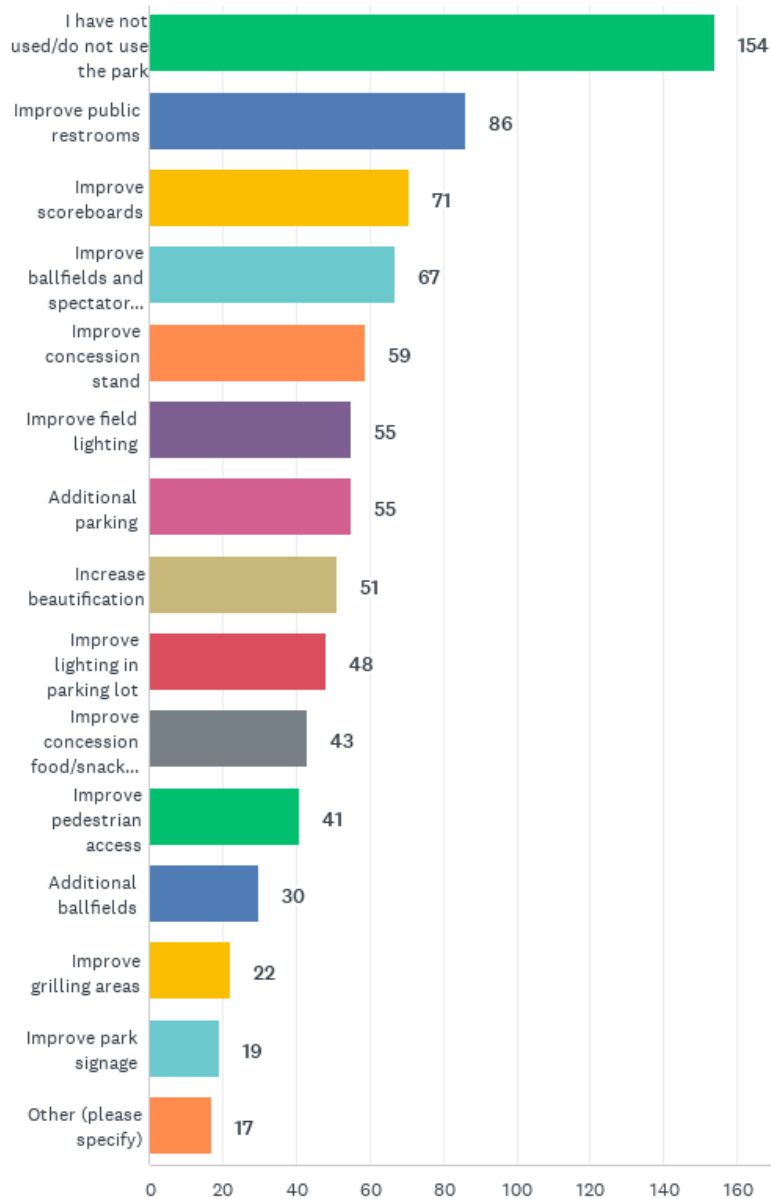
- Top 5

1. Improve Public Restrooms (144 responses)
2. Improve Playground Equipment (93 responses)
3. I Have Not Used/Do Not Use the Park (87 responses)
4. Improve Picnic Shelter, Grilling, and Sitting Areas (80 responses)
5. Improve Ballfield (76 responses)

- Other answer option:

- Keep bathrooms clean
- Fix drainage issue on field
- New playground equipment
- Increased shade areas
- Better upkeep of park
- Park accessibility

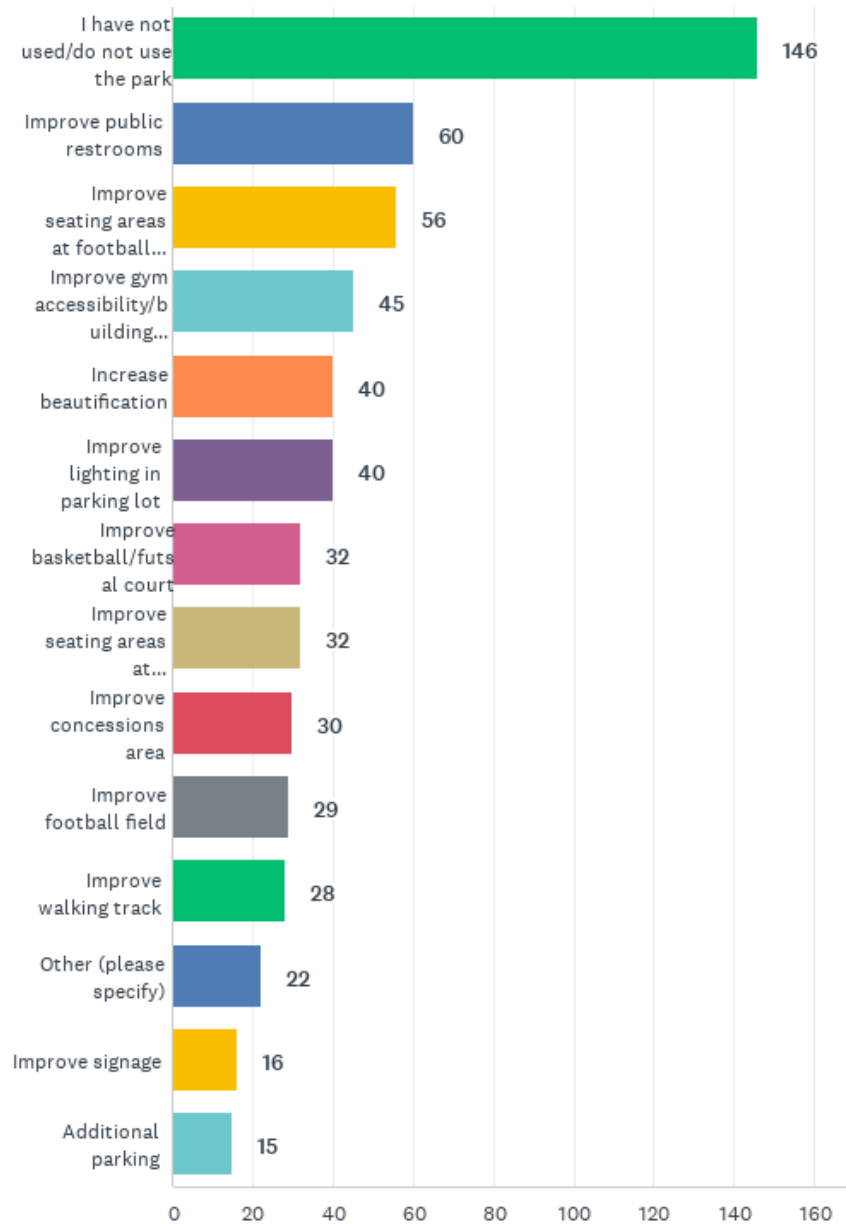
25) Which improvements do you feel could be made to Fletcher Ballpark? Please check all that apply.



- Top 5
1. I Have Not Used/Do Not Use the Park (154 responses)
 2. Improve Public Restrooms (86 responses)
 3. Improve Scoreboards (71 responses)
 4. Improve Ballfields and Spectator Seating (67 responses)
 5. Improve Concession Stand (59 responses)

- Other answer option:
 - Improve lighting
 - Park accessibility
 - Improve parking lot

26) Which improvements do you feel could be made to Tiger Gym? Please check all that apply.

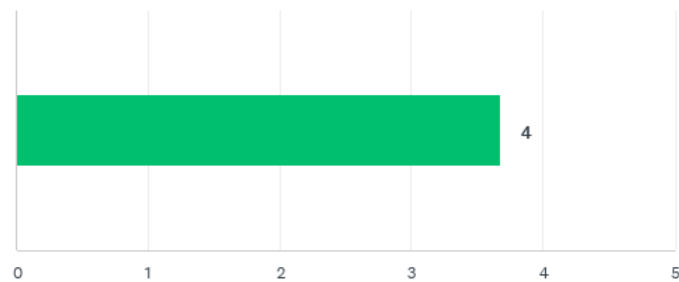


- Top 5

1. I Have Not Used/Do Not Use the Park (146 responses)
2. Improve Public Restrooms (60 responses)
3. Improve Seating Areas at Football Field (56 responses)
4. Improve Gym Accessibility/Building Maintenance (45 responses)
5. Increase Beautification (40 responses)

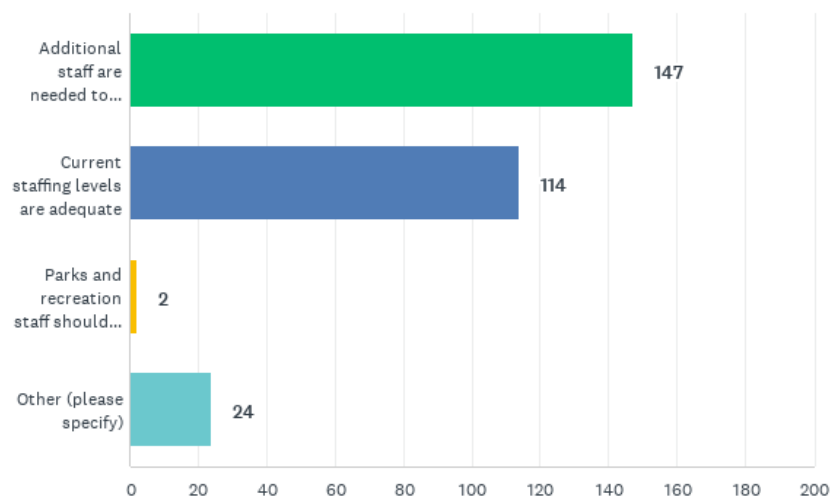
- Other answer option:
 - Improve gym floors
 - Lighting at football field
 - Add air conditioning in the gym
 - Bleachers for Saturday games
 - Improve accessibility

27) On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being poor and 5 being outstanding), please rate how well maintained the Town's parks and recreation facilities are:



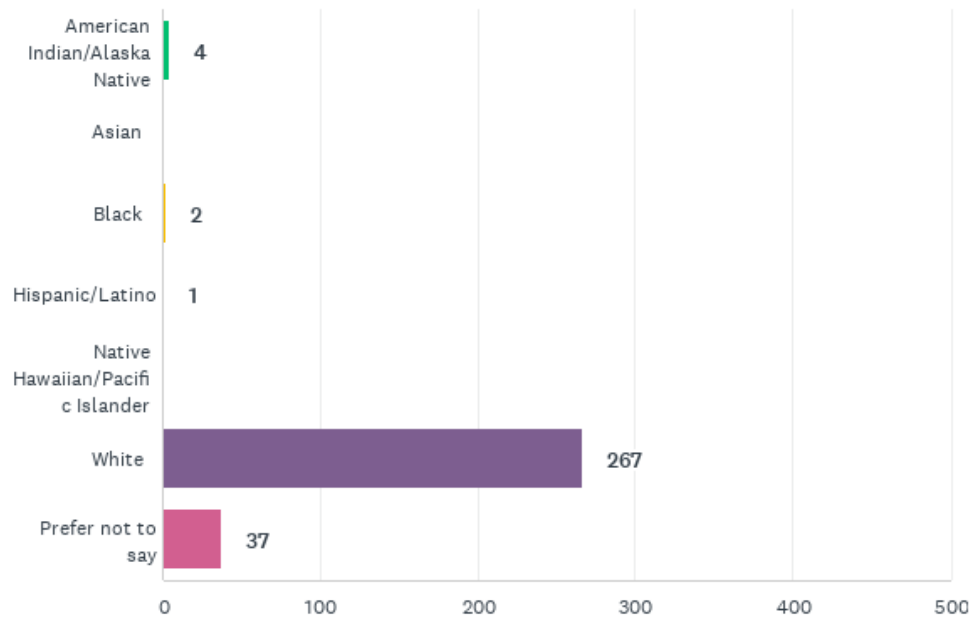
- The average rating was 4 out of 5, meaning most respondents believe that the Valdese's Park and Recreation facilities are well maintained.

28) How well do you feel the Town's parks and recreation facilities are staffed

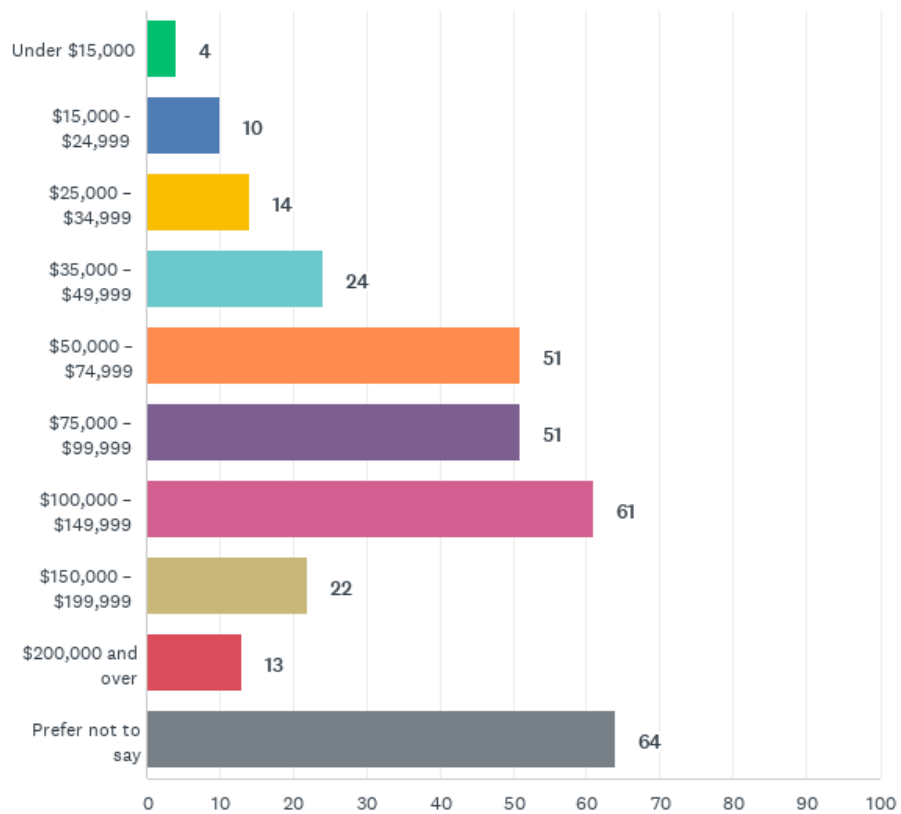


- Over half, about 51% of respondents, think that additional staff are needed. In contrast, about 40% of respondents think that current staffing levels are adequate, and 1% think staff should be reduced.
- Other Option:
 - From the written responses, respondents value the staff that work at the park and rec facilities, but know they are understaffed and underpaid.

29) What is your race?



30) What is your annual household income?



- About 17% of respondents said that their household income was below \$49,999, 32% said that their household income was between \$50,000 and \$99,999, and 32% said their income was above \$100,000. About 20% of respondents chose not to report their household income.

TOWN OF VALDESE REC PLAN PUBLIC MEETING

PUBLIC COMMENTS

FEBURARY 2025

- Listen to your department heads. Respect their expertise.
- Move forward on year round pool structure
- Keep your promises/votes to Valdese citizens - Council Don't back pedal.
- Keep pool open & cover year round!
- Move on with getting the cover fixed
- Pool Structure
- The year-round pool is a community need. Please move forward on covering it.
- Build Permanent Pool Cover. Listen to town staff. They know far more than they are given credit for
- I think long term a pool cover (permanent structure) makes more overall sense than (a) a bubble & (b) letting the 10M pool be destroyed by weather conditions. Need to act, or, risk losing a unique, valuable town & county facility.
- Sidewalks between towns. Link for safety & Health.
- Pool Structure for year-round swim.
- Pool Cover would be a great asset to the community. This would aid in growth and revenue to the area.
- We need to start a specific pool fund monies set aside for pool alone. Like funds raised for the Old Rock School or Lakeside Park.
- Keep pickle ball nets in good condition.
- Pave Lakeside Park greenway to fishing pier handicap ramp.
- Cover the pool now! Police patrol of Lakeside greenway.
- Air condition rec center gym.
- Handicap access to tennis court and gym.
- Put sidewalk on Lovelady to Lakeside Park from Laurel.
- Respect the department heads. They are experts and need to directly speak to Council.
- Keep the pool open year round. Our High School students, kids, adults and everyone needs access to the pool 365 days a year!
- Pool maintenance. Dirty walls could be cleaned by guards (not in guard chair) their time should be utilized better.
- We need to cover the pool so it can be used year round. The high school kids and year round swimmers need it to keep up.
- We really need the pool full time. All year. A lot our four members are recovering from surgery and use the poll for essential exercise. Exercise is important for healthy living. We need a permanent cover.
- Cover the pool now.
- Keep pool open year round with cover / structure. Keep pool open! Keep pool open! Great investment for all! We can do this! We must do this for all!

- We need a permanent cover full time 365! Very Very Very sad that the plans were just jerked out from the people.
- Pool furniture
- Families need winter swimming
- I want more equipment at the dog park.
- It was our intent to use our tax savings from W.H.O to purchase a year round pool membership. The pool needs to be covered. An investment needs return.
- I really appreciate the senior activities. The staff is wonderful and concerned amount our health and wellbeing.
- Permanent cover over pool so we can make revenue.
- Our pool – one of this town’s greatest assets needs a permanent cover. This pool also supports neighboring communities.
- We need a cover on the pool now so everyone can get good use of it. The cover is a small project and should be completed first. A lot of people use the pool early in the morning. Get it done!
- We need a permanent cover over the pool! The cover will protect the pool and also the people from the sun. The pool could be a revenue stream if there was shade for families. The swim teams need the pool for year round to be successful.
- Cover the pool! Please! We need it for our community. I miss my friends!
- Services delayed for this length of time is effectively service denied. Find a way to cover this pool now! Restore a service this town has enjoyed for 25 years that they now don’t have.
- Understand economic impact of parks, trails, rec programming
- Age proper equipment for splash pad area
- Move forward with pool cover now!!
- Community garden
- Playground at McGalliard Falls
- Camping on town property south of Lovelady Rd
- Realize when people come in from the outside they spend money which creates revenue other than property tax. Keep closing borders and you will kill our town.
- Protect your asset if you leave pool uncovered it will ruin a futility worth \$8-10 million
- From a mom of 3 boys who play all Valdese Rec sports we would love to see the following (1) improvement to Children’s Park playground and field (2) add playground and improve fields at Flether (3) invest in equipment and uniforms for football (great program) (4) invest in personal for our Rec Dept we have and much opportunity we need the help. (5) We would love to have a year round pool. Thank you.
- More sidewalks for biking
- Move forward with permanent cover for pool now! Choose contract now so it can be put in place Sept – October time frame. Pool will be open for summer and winter. Raise money starting now! Pool serves all ages youngest to seniors. For recreation and health. Draws people not only from Valdese but surrounding area. Many people have bought houses in this area because of the wonderful year round pool.
- Go ahead with pool cover (not bubble). It had been voted on and funds were granted and others have been donated. Don’t want to lose any of it. So lets go forward. Thanks

- Find or conduct research that shows the positive correlation between recreation and public safety kids adults parks lower crime etc.
- Connect Children's Park to Lovelady Rd
- Build a cover for the pool now
- Place for indoor pickleball
- Bigger space for exercise equipment
- Sidewalk connecting all town parks
- Accept NCDOT Lovelady sidewalk grant. Raise \$286k later
- Market budget for rec dept
- Cover pool for year round use!
- Cover pool for year round use and revenue. Keep it open all day
- See McGalliard Fall as a historic and recreation attraction. Grist Mill update
- Please cover pool for year round use
- Cover the pool now! Increasing staff so we can use pool all day
- Cover the pool for year round use. I have arthritis and it helps so much!
- Cover the pool! Update park facilities
- Year round use of pool with enclosure
- More pickleball courts inside and outside (Tiger gym)
- Bigger space to have dance class (Tiger gym)
- Lifestyle activities / classes (cooking, gardening, make and take classes)
- State-of-the art playground at Valdese Lakeside Park with ADA play equipment
- Cover pool for year round swimming and classes now!
- Sidewalk from Lovelady to Lake Rhodhiss Drive
- Cover the pool