

**GWINNETT COUNTY
PARKS AND RECREATION
2002 NEEDS ASSESSMENT
SURVEY**

Prepared By:

**The A.L. Burruss Institute of Public Service
Kennesaw State University
Kennesaw, Georgia**

On Behalf Of:

**The Department of Community Services
Gwinnett County Government
Lawrenceville, Georgia**

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INTRODUCTION

In 1994, the **A.L. Burruss Institute of Public Service at Kennesaw State University** completed a *Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment* for **Gwinnett County's Department of Community Services** to be used in the development of the Department's Parks and Recreation Master Plan. In 2002, as part of its continuing efforts to update and improve the county's recreational services and programs, Gwinnett County asked the Burruss Institute to conduct a new Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment. The major component of the 2002 Needs Assessment is a telephone survey with 895 randomly selected adults (18 years of age and older) living in the county. The telephone numbers utilized for the survey were provided by Survey Sampling, Inc., of Fairfield, Ct., a leader in the field for over twenty years. The numbers were randomly selected from working exchanges within Gwinnett County and were screened for disconnects, businesses and other non-qualified numbers. The survey's margin of error is $\pm 3.5\%$.

The purpose of the Needs Assessment is similar to that of 1994; namely, to identify the favorite recreational and leisure activities of Gwinnett residents, determine the extent to which they utilize county operated parks and other recreational facilities for these activities, obtain residents' general evaluations of various aspects of the county facilities, gauge levels of support for the use of SPLOST monies to pay for future parkland acquisition and park development, and obtain their opinions on a number of other miscellaneous issues related to parks and recreation in Gwinnett County.

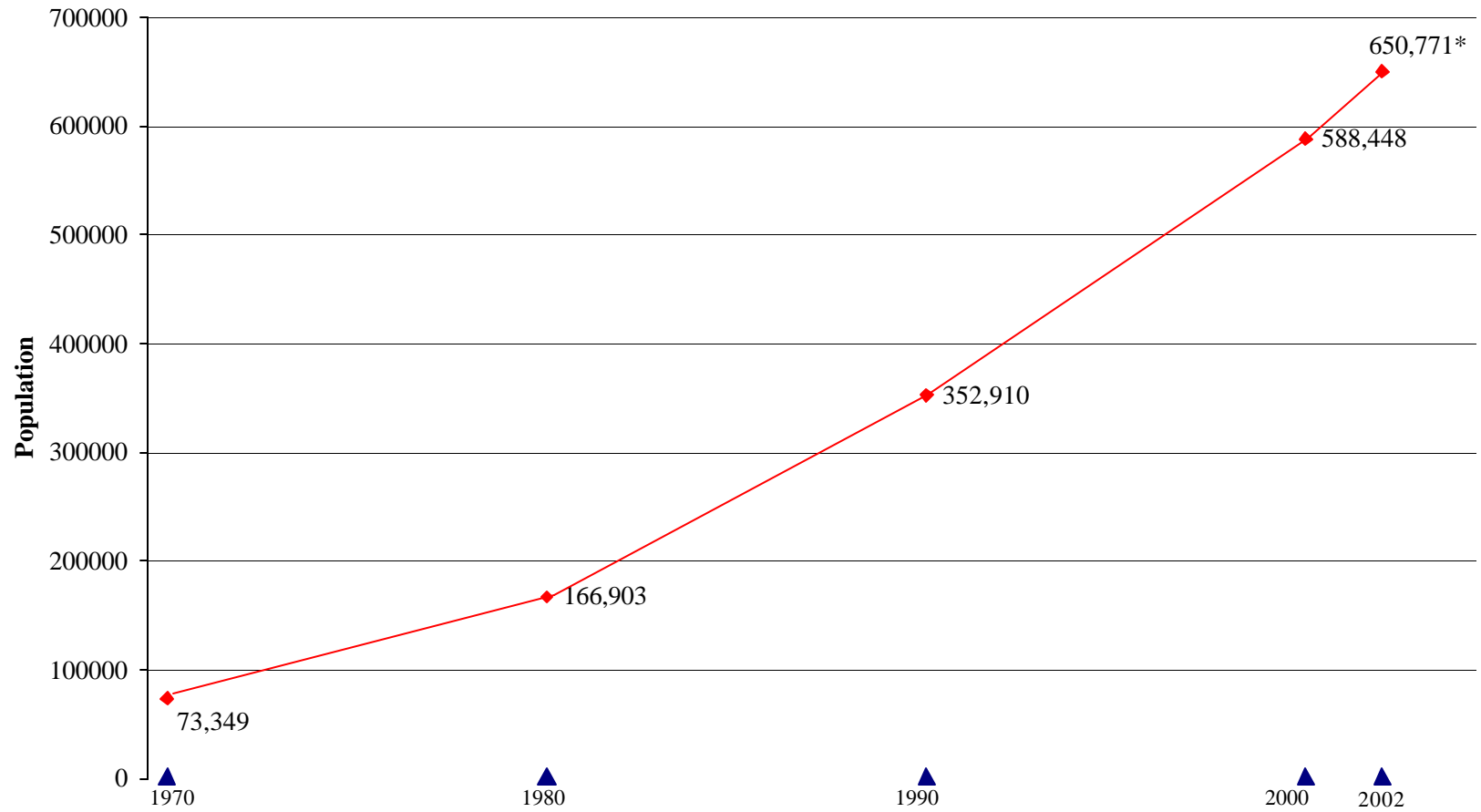
In addition to the survey of Gwinnett adults, a brief demographic profile of Gwinnett County that illustrates some important population changes in recent years is included immediately after this Introduction. The Burruss Institute also conducted focus group sessions with members of Gwinnett County's Hispanic and Korean populations. A summary of these discussions is included after the description of the survey results.

Demographic Profile Of Gwinnett County

Population Trends In Gwinnett County

Gwinnett County's population has been experiencing tremendous growth since the 1970s (see Figure A). The county's population in 1970 was 73,349; in 2000, the

Figure A
Gwinnett County Total Population, 1970-2002*
(*U.S. Census Bureau Population Estimate as of July 1, 2002)



population had grown to over one-half million people (588,448). The U. S. Census Bureau estimates that Gwinnett County's population in 2002 has grown to more than 650,000 people. The county more than doubled in population in both the 1970s and 1980s (see Figure B), and grew by another two-thirds (66.7%) between 1990 and 2000. The county's population has grown by more than 10% between 2000 and 2002, and if we assume the county's population will grow at a steady rate of 4% per year between 2002 and 2010, the county's population will have grown by more than 50% during 2000-2010.

Household Composition

The 1994 Needs Assessment noted a decline (from 45% to 37%) between 1980 and 1990 in the percentage of "traditional" households; namely, households with married adults and at least one child under the age of eighteen. That figure has declined only marginally to 35% since 1990 (see *Figure C*). The percentage of households with married couples who have no children living with them has seen a much more modest decline (29.9% to 27%) in the last twenty years. Households containing single females with children declined slightly between 1990 and 2000 (from 6% to 5.8%, respectively) after a small increase between 1980 and 1990. The percentage of households containing single males with children almost doubled (in relative terms) between 1990 and 2000 (1.0% to 1.9%, respectively; data for 1980 for this particular group is not available). The percentage of households containing single adults with no children has shown significant growth since 1980 (12.7% to 18.4%), although most of that growth occurred between 1980 and 1990. The percentage of non-family households is excluded from *Figure C* for the sake of clarity. The change in non-family households between 1990 and 2000 exhibited the same pattern as that for single females with children (down from 6% to 5.8% between 1990 and 2000; data for 1980 was not available).

The percentage of total households with children under the age of eighteen has remained virtually steady between 1990 and 2000 (44% to 45%, respectively; data for 1980 was not available). With a majority (55%) of households in 2002 containing no children, Gwinnett County must examine its ability to meet the recreational needs of this sizeable segment of its population, an issue which is particularly interesting given the survey findings (discussed later) which indicate that respondents with no children in their

Figure B
Rate Of Growth In Population, By Decade 1970-2000
(*2000-2010 Growth Rate Assumes 4% Yearly Growth From 2002-2010)

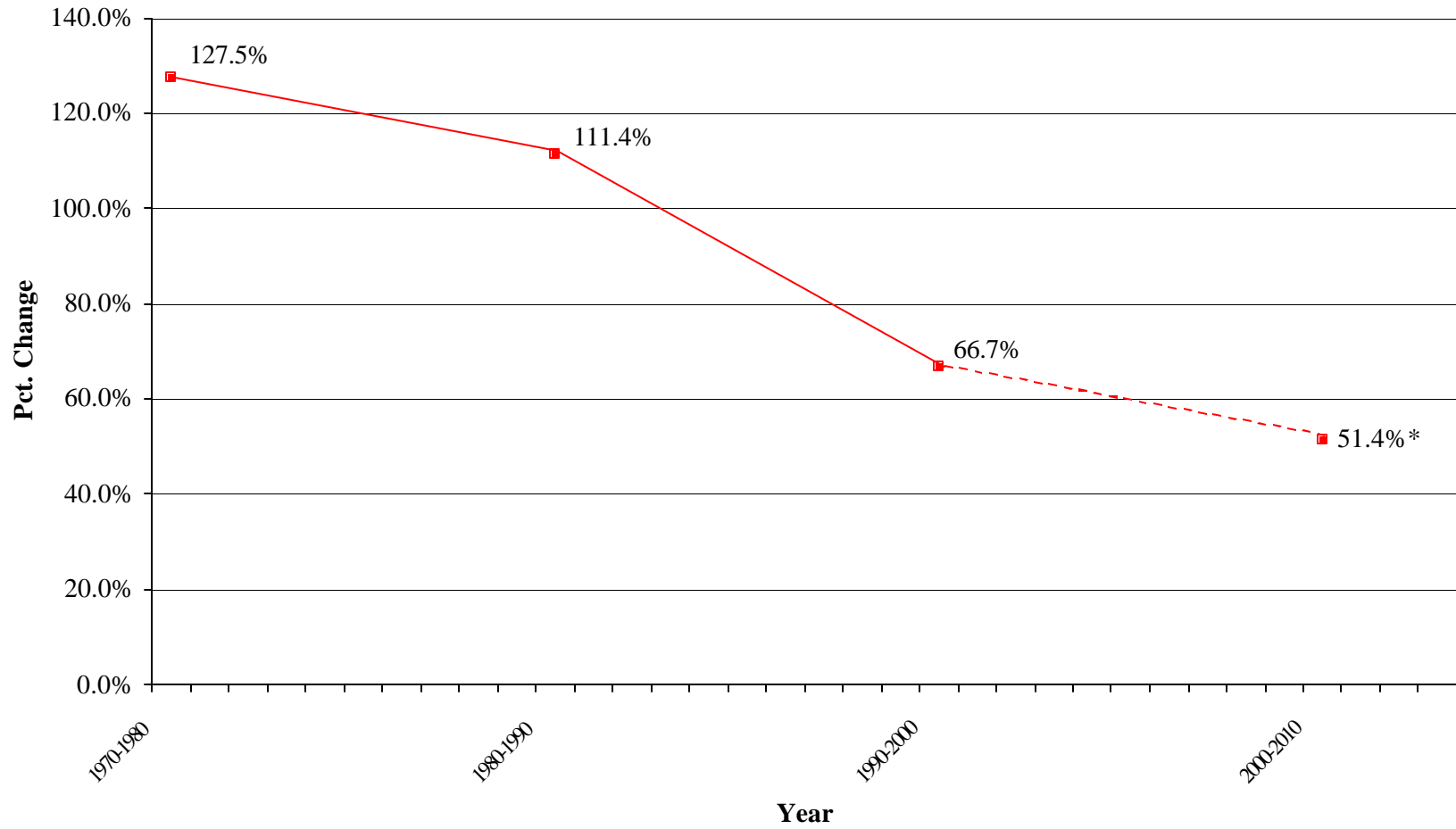
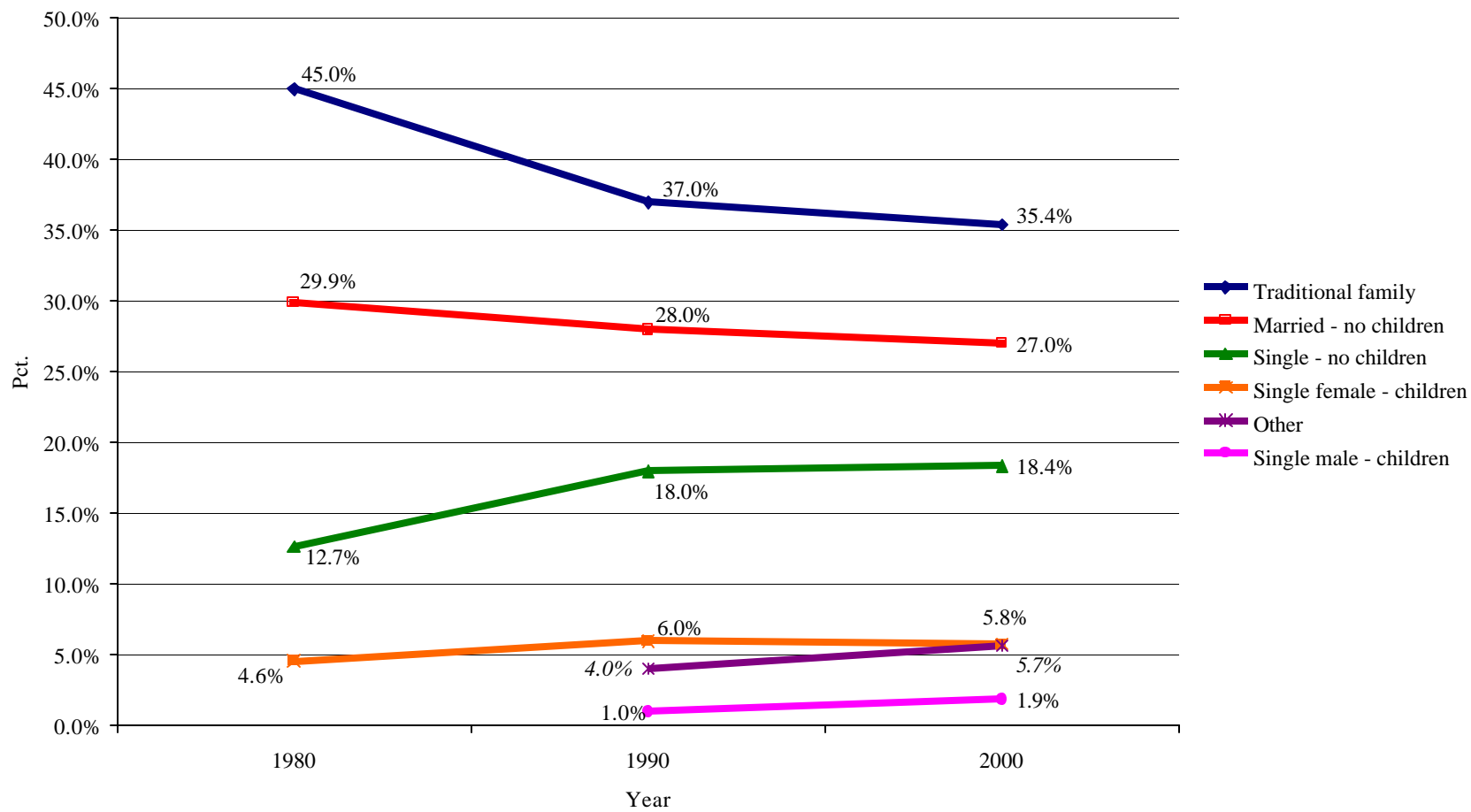


Figure C
Changes In Household Composition, 1980-2000*
(*See note in text concerning non-family households)

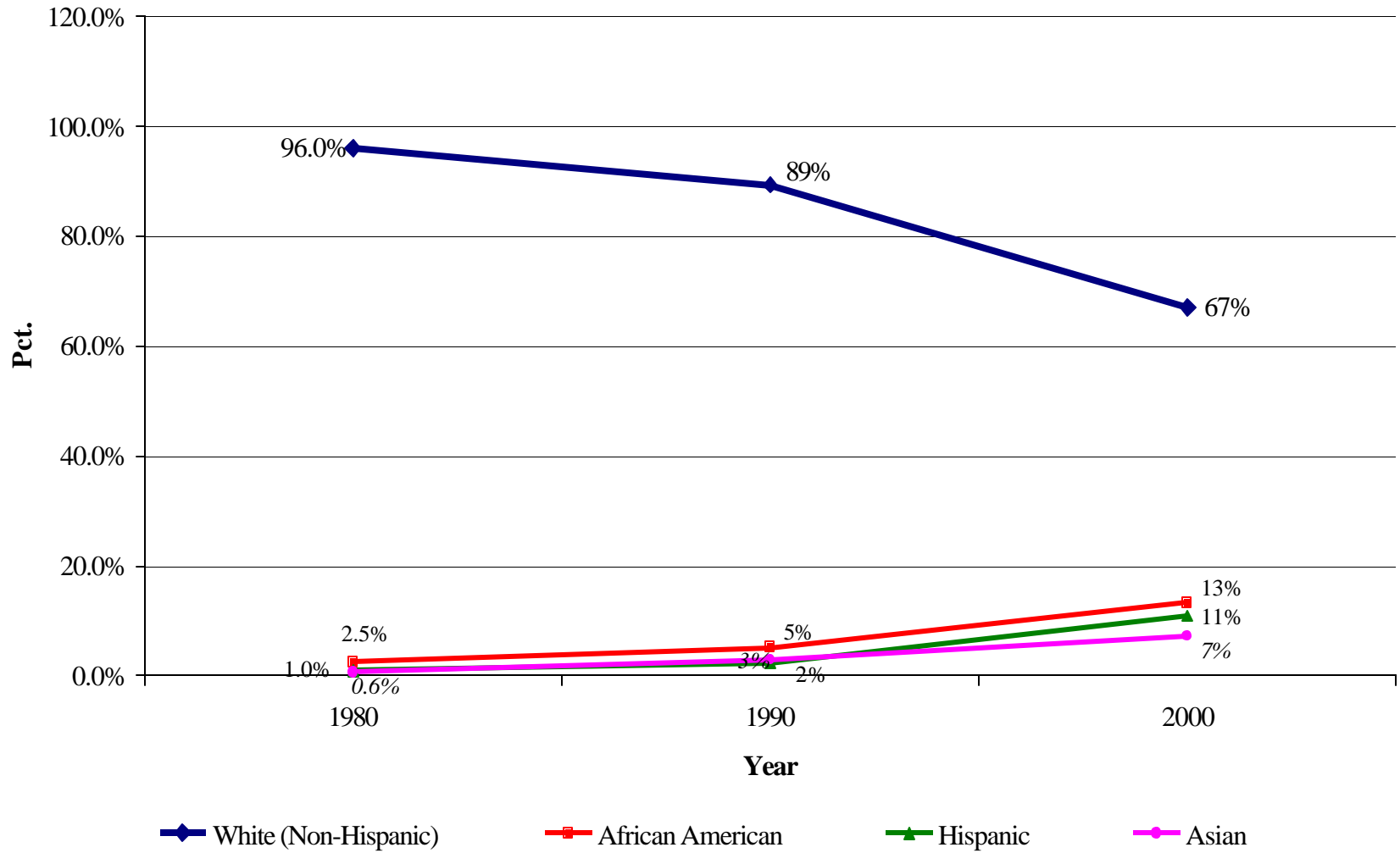


households are significantly less likely to have utilized a county park facility in the past year.

Racial Composition

Gwinnett County also has a growing diversity in its racial (and ethnic) population. As indicated in *Figure D*, the relative percentage of Gwinnett's white (non-Hispanic) population has declined from approximately 96% in 1980 to 67% in 2000, with the largest part of that decline occurring between 1990 and 2000. (Due to limitations in the available documentation for the 1980 Census data, the 1980 percentage cited here is the midpoint of the potential range of the relative size of the white, non-Hispanic population in 1980. The actual percentage falls between 95.5% and 96.5%). The African-American population has increased from just 2.5% in 1980 to 13% of the county's population in 2000. The increase in the percentage of Hispanic residents is just as impressive, rising from just 1% in 1980 to 11% in 2000. The increase in the relative percentage of Asian residents has been slightly less dramatic, although significant in numbers. In 2000, Asians made up 7% of Gwinnett County's population; in 1980, less than 1% of the county's population were Asian.

Figure D
Racial Composition Of Gwinnett County 1980-2000
(For Four Major Racial/Ethnic Groups)



Demographic Characteristics Of The Respondents

Of the 895 Gwinnett County adults surveyed for this Needs Assessment:

- The average age of the respondents is 47 years. Over one-half (59%) are between the ages of 31 and 54; one-fourth (26%) are ages 55+;
- Fifty-eight percent (58%) are female;
- Over one-half (53%) do not have any children under the age of 18 living in their household;
- Almost one-third (29%) have lived in the county for five years or less. Almost one-half (49%) have lived in the county for more than 10 years. The average respondent has lived in Gwinnett County 14 years;
- Eighty-four percent (84%) said they are registered to vote;
- Eleven percent reported their household income in 2001 was under \$30,000. Over one-third (36%) said their household income was over \$75,000;
- Three-fourths (78%) are white. Eight percent (8%) are African-American; three percent (3%) said they consider themselves to be Hispanic. The remaining respondents were scattered across a number of other racial or ethnic categories. (The respondents were not given a list of race/ethnic categories from which to choose their identification. They were simply asked which racial or ethnic group they most closely identify with, and allowed to answer according to their own definition of this characteristic), and;
- Fourteen percent (14%) indicated at least one person in their household normally speaks a language other than English.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Questions asked of all respondents:

- Over one-half of all respondents (52%) said they are “somewhat familiar” with the county’s parks and other recreational facilities. 27% are “not familiar at all” with the facilities, and 22% are “very familiar” with them;
- One-half of the respondents (50%) said there are enough county parks in the area where they live. 39% felt the county should provide more facilities in their areas. The remaining respondents either weren’t sure, or didn’t express an opinion;
- Almost three-fourths of the respondents (74%) said they have used a county park facility in the past year for recreational or leisure activities they enjoy;
- Seventeen percent (17%) indicated they have rented a county recreational facility. Over 80% of these respondents rated those facilities either “good” (54%) or “excellent” (31%);
- When asked to evaluate how well the county meets the recreational needs of a number of targeted groups, a significant number of respondents failed to offer an opinion one way or another for each group. For those who did express opinions, a majority of respondents indicated the county does only a “fair” or “poor” job of meeting the needs of the physically handicapped. A substantial number of respondents also believe the county could be doing a better job of addressing the needs of teenagers, young adults ages 20-30 and seniors;
- Eighty-four percent (84%) of the respondents said they support the use of SPLOST monies for parkland acquisition and development. Three-fourths of the respondents (74%) indicated they would support the renewal of the SPLOST if the county continues to use those funds for these purposes;
- When asked what type of park development should receive top priority if the SPLOST is extended in 2004, 37% preferred “passive park development,” 44% said “active park development,” while 13% prefer to maintain a balance between the two types of development;
- When asked what types of improvements should receive highest priority for the funds generated by any future SPLOST extension, nineteen percent (19%) mentioned *park maintenance and security issues* (i.e., better security, more lighting, general upkeep), followed by *more trails* (walking, jogging, biking) (17%), *open-space parks/greenways* (15%), *athletic fields* (15%), *after-school programs* (14%), *children’s programs* (12%), *swimming facilities* (10%), *community centers* (7%), *more parks (general reference)/land acquisition* (7%),

arts and cultural programs (6%), mixed-use parks (5%), gymnasiums/indoor facilities (5%) and preservation of historical sites (5%);

- The respondents are almost evenly split on the issue of whether non-Gwinnett residents should pay higher access fees for the use of county facilities;
- One-fourth of the respondents (25%) said they have participated in classes or special events offered by the Parks and Recreation Department. Evaluations of those courses are generally quite good;
- Two-thirds of the new residents of Gwinnett County (less than five years) who said they are at least somewhat familiar with the park system believe the facilities in Gwinnett are better than those where they use to live;
- Most (85%) of the long-time residents (defined as those who lived in Gwinnett more than five years) believe the county's facilities are better now than they were five years ago. In fact, 52% said the facilities are *much* better now;
- Thirty-seven percent (37%) of the respondents said "direct mailings to their homes" is the best way of reaching them with information about the Parks and Recreation program. The *Gwinnett LIFE* magazine was mentioned by 18% of the respondents. Newspaper ads (17%) and the county website (10%) were the only other options mentioned by at least 10% of the respondents;
- Almost one-half (46%) of the respondents said they currently receive *Gwinnett LIFE*. Thirty-seven percent (37%) of those respondents have registered for one of the county's classes as a result of reading the magazine;
- The vast majority (86%) of respondents said they have access to the internet either at home or work;
- Over one-half of the respondents (53%) do not have any children under the age of 18 living in their household;
- According to the respondents with children under the age of 13 living in their households, these children's favorite activities are: *swimming* (31%), using *playground equipment* (24%), *soccer*, *baseball* and *bicycling* (20% each), *basketball* (17%), *football/cheerleading* (16%), *softball* and *tennis* (9% each), and *gymnastics* and *skating* (roller/rollerblading and/or inline skating) (4% each);
- According to respondents with teenagers (13-17 year olds) living in their homes, the favorite activities of these young people are: *basketball* (27%), *swimming* (24%), *baseball* (20%), *soccer* (18%), *football* (17%), *running/jogging* and *softball* (9% each), *cheerleading* (8%), *watching television* and *bicycling* (7% each);

Questions asked only of park users:

- When asked what type of recreational activity they engage in *most often* at a county park facility, 38% mentioned *walking* or *walking/strolling with their children*. Other activities mentioned most often were *swimming* (8%), *tennis*, *other activities with children*, and *picnicking* (5% each), *softball*, *baseball*, and *running/jogging* (4% each);
- One-fourth (26%) of the park users said they engage in their favorite activity several times a week; over one-third (38%) said they only go to a park a few times a month for their favorite activity, while 34% said they go less than once a month. Only 1% indicated they go to a park every day;
- When asked about other favorite uses of county park facilities, 26% mentioned *walking* or *walking/strolling with their children*. Other activities include *picnicking* (15%), *swimming* (14%), *tennis* and *bicycling* (7% each), *baseball*, *basketball*, *softball* and *playground equipment for children* (6% each);
- Lenora Park (15%), Mountain Park Park (14%), Collins Hill Park (13%), Bogan Park (11%), Bethesda Park (10%) and Rhodes Jordan Park (10%) were mentioned most often by respondents as the parks they use most often;
- Eighty percent (80%) of the respondents who have used a county park facility said parking at county parks is either “adequate” or “more than adequate”;
- Evaluations of the parks’ physical facilities are generally “good” or “excellent”;
- Evaluations of the respondents’ personal safety while in the county parks is generally good. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 meaning “very secure”), 62% of the respondents rated their personal safety as a 1 or 2;
- When asked about the parks’ biggest security issues, 21% said *the lack of an adequate police presence*. Twelve percent (12%) mentioned *lack of adequate lighting*. Three out of every ten respondents (29%) did not provide an answer to this question. No other option received more than 5% of the responses;
- Over one-half (56%) of the respondents said they have *never noticed* the presence of Park Police in a county operated park;
- Sixty-three percent (63%) of the respondents said it takes them 10 minutes or less to get to the park they use most often. One-half of the respondents (50%) said they would use a county park more often if one were located closer to their home;

Questions asked only of non-users:

- One-fourth of the respondents (25%) said they have not used a county operated park and recreational facility in the past year;
- When asked why they have not used a county recreational facility in the past year, at least 26% indicated *they don't have the time*. No other individual answer received more than 5% of the responses, although a number of respondents offered multiple reasons for not utilizing a park;
- When asked about their favorite recreational and leisure activities, the most often cited activities were *walking* (34%), *swimming* (19%), *reading* (16%), *tennis* (13%), *golf* (12%), *watching television*, *fishing*, and *hiking* (7% each), and *crafts*, *basketball* and *gardening* (6% each).

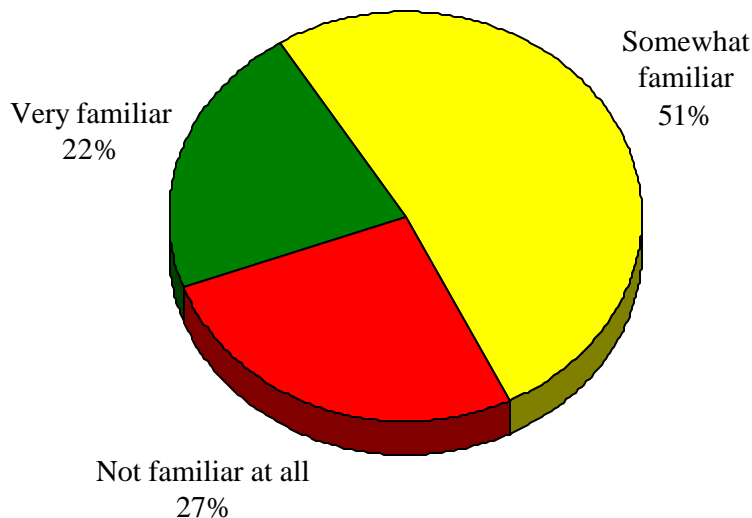
RECREATIONAL INTERESTS IN GWINNETT COUNTY

The respondents were asked a number of questions about the county parks and recreation system, including their degree of familiarity with the system, whether or not there are enough facilities in the areas where they live, whether or not they have used a county park facility in the past year, their favorite recreational activities, and their evaluations of various aspects of the park system.

Familiarity With County Park System

When asked to indicate the extent to which they are familiar with the county park system and other recreational facilities, over one-fifth of the respondents (22%) said they are “very familiar” with the recreational resources in their areas (see *Figure E*). Over one-half of the respondents (52%) said they are “somewhat familiar,” while over one-fourth of all respondents reported they are “not familiar at all” with the resources and programs in their area.

Figure E
Familiarity With County Park System



Further analysis reveals:

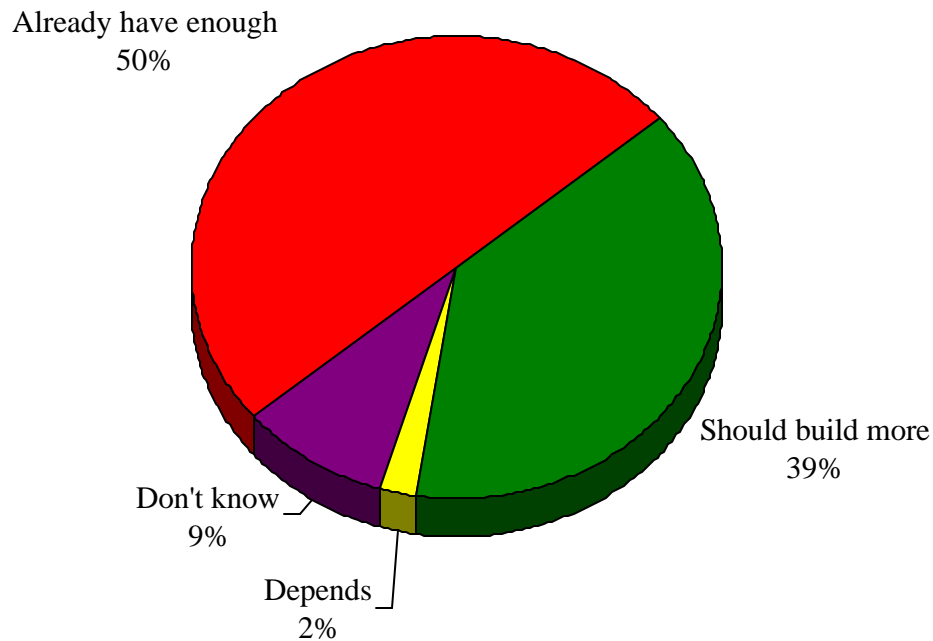
- Respondents who have lived in Gwinnett County five years or less are significantly less likely to have any familiarity with the county park system. Forty-one percent (41%) of these respondents said they are “not familiar at all” with these resources, compared to 20% of the respondents who have lived in the county for more than five years;
- Respondents with children under the age of 18 living in their households are almost three times more likely to say they are “very familiar” with the county’s park system compared to those who do not have minors living in their homes (33% to 12%, respectively). Thirty-five percent (35%) of the respondents with no minors in the home said they are “not familiar at all” with these resources, compared to just 16% of the respondents living with minor children;
- Respondents between the ages of 31 and 54 are more likely to have at least some familiarity with the park system. Only one-fifth (20%) of these respondents said they are “not familiar at all” with the parks and other facilities in their areas, compared to 35% of the adults ages 55 and older, and 40% of the respondents ages 18 – 30. Even among middle-age adults, however, over one-half (55%) said they are just “somewhat familiar” with these resources;
- Registered voters also are more likely to have some familiarity with the county parks and recreation system. Slightly less than one-fourth of these respondents (23%) indicated they are “not familiar at all” with these resources, compared to almost one-half (45%) of the respondents who are not registered;
- Familiarity with the county parks and recreation system generally increases with household income. Over one-half (55%) of the respondents with household incomes under \$30,000 indicated they are “not familiar at all” with the parks and other resources in their areas, compared to one-fourth (26%) of the respondents with incomes between \$30,000 and \$75,000, and just 15% of those with incomes over \$75,000;
- Respondents who live in households where at least one person (but not necessarily the respondent) normally speaks a language other than English are only slightly more likely to be unfamiliar with the parks and recreation system than those living in “English-only” households (35% to 25%, respectively), and;
- There is no relationship between gender and the respondents’ degree of familiarity with the park system.

A depiction of the percentage of respondents in each Gwinnett County census tract who said they are “not familiar at all” with park and recreation resources in the county is provided in Appendix A (Figure O).

Should County Build More Parks In Respondent's Area?

The respondents were asked whether the areas where they live already have enough parks and other recreational facilities or if the county should provide more of these types of resources to people in their areas. As shown in *Figure F*, one-half of the respondents said their areas already have enough resources of this type available to them. Thirty-nine percent (39%) would like Gwinnett County to provide more recreational facilities in their areas. A few individuals (2%) said their opinion on this issue would depend on other factors (usually costs and taxes or, in a few cases, the types of services to be provided at the new facilities). The remaining respondents (9%) did not offer an opinion on this question.

Figure F
Should County Build More Parks In Respondent's Area?



Further analysis reveals:

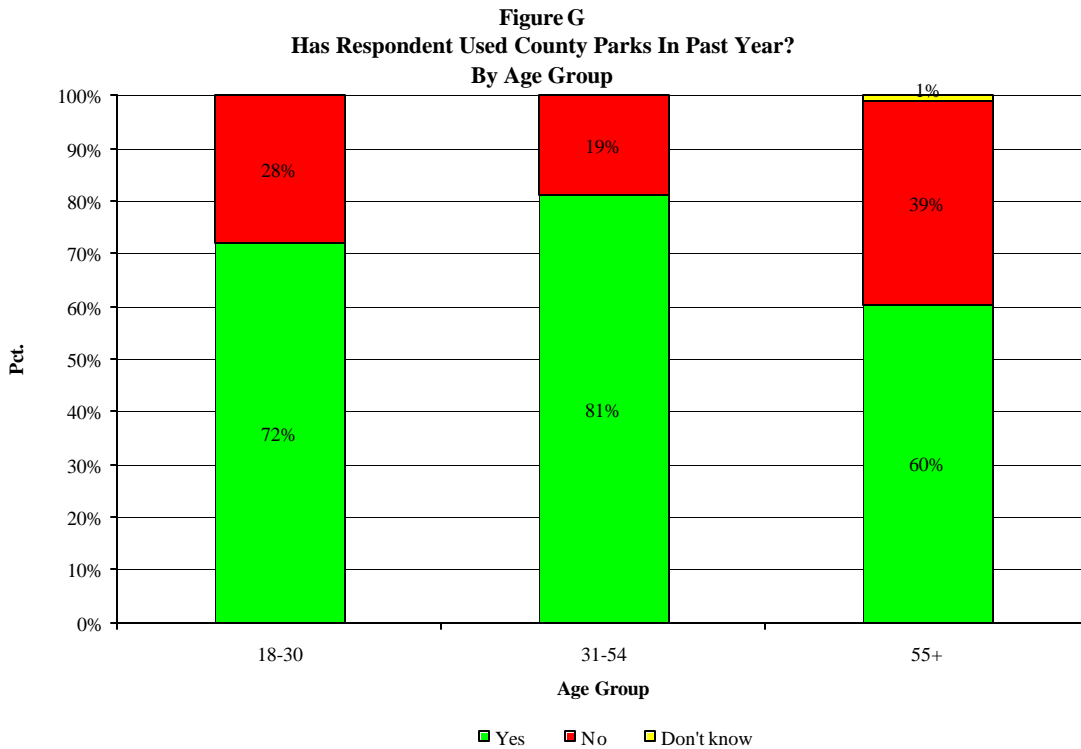
- The feeling that the respondent's area already has enough recreational facilities is more prevalent among long-time residents of Gwinnett County. A majority of respondents (56%) who have lived in Gwinnett for more than 10 years said their areas already have enough recreational facilities, compared to 44% of the respondents who have lived in the county 10 years or less. An equal number of the residents who have lived in Gwinnett for less than 10 years said the county should build more facilities in their areas. Most of the remaining respondents in this group did not express an opinion;
- Although there is no meaningful difference of opinion on this question based on the respondents' ages, it is interesting to note that a slight majority (52%) of respondents in the 31 – 54 age group (the age group that is most likely to be familiar with the county park system and is most likely to have used a County park in the past year) indicated there are enough recreational facilities in their areas already. Slightly less than a majority of the respondents in the younger and older age groups responded in a similar fashion, and these age groups had more respondents who could not offer an opinion on this issue;
- A majority (53%) of another group of respondents who are most likely to be familiar with the county park system and who also are more likely to have used a county park system in the past year – namely, those who have minor children living in their households – believe there are enough recreational facilities in their areas already. As was the case with age, however, the difference between these respondents and those who do not live with minor children (48% of whom believe there are enough facilities in their areas) is minor and virtually insignificant given the fact that 13% of the latter group did not express an opinion either way on this issue;
- Respondents who live in a household where at least one person normally speaks a language other than English are evenly divided on this issue (44% in favor of each option, with the rest unable to express an opinion), while 51% of the respondents in "English-only" households believe there are currently enough facilities in their areas;
- A majority (52%) of respondents who are registered voters believe there are enough facilities in their areas. A substantial number (17%) of those who are not registered to vote were unwilling to express an opinion while the remainder were almost evenly split on the issue, and;
- There were no meaningful differences in the responses to this question based on the respondents' gender or household income.

A depiction of the percentage of respondents in each Gwinnett County census tract who believe the county should provide more recreational facilities in their area is provided in Appendix A (Figure P).

Utilization Of County Park System

Almost three-fourths (74%) of all respondents surveyed indicated they have visited a county park or other recreational facility in the past year to participate in activities they enjoy. Further analysis reveals:

- Utilization is highest (81%) among adults ages 31 – 54, followed by 72% of the adults ages 18 – 30, and 60% of the adults ages 55 and older (see *Figure G*);
- Adults with minor children living in their households are much more likely to have utilized a county recreational facility in the past year than are respondents with no minor children in the household (87% to 64%, respectively);



- Utilization of county recreational facilities is relatively low among respondents with household incomes under \$20,000 (42%), and among those with incomes between \$20,000 and \$30,000 (50%). Rates of usage among respondents in various income categories above \$30,000 are, for all practical purposes, the same;
- Registered voters are somewhat more likely than non-registered respondents to have utilized a county facility (76% to 65%, respectively), and;
- There is no correlation between responses to this question and the respondents' gender, or whether or not they live in an "English only" household.

A depiction of the percentage of respondents in each Gwinnett County census tract who said they have utilized a county park facility in the past year is provided in Appendix A (Figure Q).

Activities And Impressions Of Park Users

Respondents who indicated they have utilized a county park or other recreational facility in the past year (n=664, or 74% of the entire sample) were asked a number of questions about their recreational interests and various qualities of the county's park facilities.

Favorite Recreational Activities At County Operated Facilities

The respondents were asked to specify the one recreational activity they engage in most often at a county operated recreational facility. *Table 1* provides a list of the most-often mentioned recreational activities. Clearly, the results in *Table 1* emphasize the importance of *walking* as a favorite recreational activity at county operated parks.

**Table 1:
 Respondents' Single Most Frequent
 Recreational Activity In County Parks**

Walking/Walking-Strolling With Children	38%
Swimming	8%
Tennis	5%
Activities For Children	5%
Picnicking	5%
Baseball	4%
Softball	4%
Running/Jogging	4%
Soccer	3%
Basketball	2%
Fishing	2%
Other Activities	Less than 2% each

Table 2 reveals that *walking* is the most frequently mentioned favorite activity for each of three age groups, and is particularly popular among Gwinnett seniors.

**Table 2:
 Single Most Frequent Recreational Activity
 In County Operated Facilities - By Age Group**

<i>Most Frequent Reason For Visiting County Facility Among Users Ages 18-30</i>	%
Walking	29%
Softball	9%
Basketball	9%
Swimming	7%
Children's Activities	6%
Playground/Jungle Gyms	4%
Running	4%

Table 2 (cont.)

<i>Most Frequent Reason For Visiting County Facility Among Users Ages 31-54</i>	%
Walking	37%
Swimming	10%
Tennis	6%
Children's Activities	5%
Baseball	4%
Soccer	4%
Softball	4%

<i>Most Frequent Reason For Visiting County Facility Among Users Ages 55+</i>	%
Walking	45%
Picnicking	9%
Tennis	6%
Swimming	6%
Children's Activities	5%
Fishing	4%
Baseball	2%
Hiking	2%

Other Favorite Recreational Activities

Park users were asked to name some of their other recreational interests which might cause them to utilize a county park. The most frequently mentioned alternative activities included *walking/walking with children* (26%), *picnicking* (15%), *swimming* (14%), *tennis* and *bicycling* (7% each), and *baseball*, *basketball* and *softball* (6% each).

Favorite Activities Of Users Who Have No Minor Children In Household

Many park users utilize county parks because their children participate in activities at county operated facilities. But a significant number of Gwinnett residents (55%) have no children living in their households. What activities do respondents who do not have children living in their households most often participate in at a county operated recreational facility? Are they significantly different from those respondents who do have children in their households?

It doesn't appear that they are appreciably different. Almost one-half (44%) of these individuals indicated they also use a county facility most often for *walking*, followed by *picnicking* and *tennis* (6% each), *swimming* (5%), *fishing* and *softball* (3% each), and *running*, *baseball*, *basketball* and *soccer* (2% each).

Recreational Interests of Young People

Respondents who live with young people under the age of 18 were asked to identify the favorite recreational activities of these youth. A distinction was made between the favorite recreational activities of children under the age of 13, and teens between the ages of 13 and 17.

Recreational Interests of Children Under The Age Of Thirteen

Table 3 provides a breakdown of the favorite recreational activities of children under the age of thirteen, as reported by the adult respondents in households with children in that age category.

**Table 3:
Favorite Recreational Interests of Children Under Age of Thirteen**

Favorite Activities	%
Swimming	31%
Playgrounds	24%
Soccer	20%
Baseball	20%
Bicycling	20%
Basketball	17%
Football (10%)/Cheerleading (6%)	16%
Softball	9%
Tennis	9%
Rollerskating/Blading/Inline Skating	4%
Gymnastics	4%
Ballet/Tap Dancing	3%
Walking/Strolling	3%
Dancing	3%
Reading	3%
Television	3%
Art	2%
Karate/Martial Arts	2%

Table 3 (cont.)

Skateboarding	2%
Hiking	2%
Other Activities	<2% each

Swimming (31%) was mentioned most often as one of the favorite recreational activities of younger children. Playing on *playground equipment* is enjoyed by the children in almost one-quarter (24%) of the households with children in this age group. Other “old favorites” were mentioned by significant numbers as well, including *soccer*, *baseball* and *bicycling* (20% each), and *basketball* (17%). When combined, *football* and *cheerleading* were mentioned by 16% of the respondents with children under the age of thirteen in their households. At this age level, all organized cheerleading activities are associated with the youth football program. Children involved in these two activities utilize county facilities at the same time.

Recreational Interests of Teenagers

Respondents with teenagers between the ages of 13 and 17 living in their households were asked about their favorite recreational activities. *Table 4* provides a summary of their interests.

**Table 4:
Favorite Recreational Activities of Teens Ages 13-17**

Favorite Activities	%
Basketball	27%
Swimming	24%
Baseball	20%
Soccer	18%
Football	17%
Softball	9%
Running/Jogging	9%
Cheerleading	8%
Tennis	7%
Bicycling	7%
Listening to Music	5%
Playing Video Games	5%
Volleyball	5%

Table 4 (cont.)

Computers	4%
Playing Music/Instruments	4%
Rollerskating/Blading/Inline Skating	4%
Walking	4%
Other Activities	< 4% each

Again, the most frequently mentioned activities are “traditional” sports: *basketball* (27%), *swimming* (24%), *baseball* (20%), *soccer* (18%), *football* (17%) and *softball* (9%).

How Often Does One Utilize a County Park For Their Favorite Activity?

When asked how often they visit a county recreational facility for the purpose of engaging in their most frequent recreational activity, thirty-eight percent (38%) of the park users said they go *only a few times a month*, while an almost equal number (34%) indicated they visit a county park facility *less than once a month* for their favorite activity (see *Figure H*). Twenty-six percent (26%) said they go to a county facility *several times a week*, and just 1% go *every day*.

Figure H
How Often Do Respondents Visit County Recreational Facilities
For Favorite Activities?
(Asked Only Of Park Users)



Park users also were asked about their levels of park usage during the warmer months (April – October) and the cooler months (November – March). During warmer weather, park users indicated they visit a county park facility an average of 7.4 times in a typical month, in contrast to an average of 3.39 visits per month in cooler weather.

What Parks Does Respondent Use Most Often?

Park users were asked to identify which county operated recreational facilities they typically use for their recreational interests. Respondents were allowed to mention up to three different parks if they so desired. *Lenora Park* was the most often mentioned county facility (see *Table 5*), cited by 15% of all park users. *Mountain Park Park* facility was mentioned by almost as many respondents (14%), followed by *Collins Hill Park* (13%) (an additional 6% specifically mentioned the *Collins Hill Aquatic Center*), *Bogan Park* (11%, plus an additional 7% who mentioned the *Bogan Park Aquatic Center*), *Bethesda Park* (10%), and *Rhodes Jordan Park* (10%, with an additional 4% mentioning the *Rhodes Jordan Tennis Center* or the *Community Center*).

**Table 5:
Percentage of Respondents Using Specific Parks**

Park	Percent Who Mentioned
Lenora Park	15%
Mountain Park Park	14%
Collins Hill Park	13%
Bogan Park	11%
Bethesda Park	10%
Rhodes Jordan Park	10%
George Pierce Park	8%
Bogan Park Aquatic Center	7%
Shorty Howell Park	7%
Collins Hill Aquatic Center	6%
Tribble Mill Park	5%
Jones Bridge Park	5%
Pickneyville Park	5%
Dacula Park	4%
Best Friend Park	4%
Lucky Shoals Park	3%

Table 5 (cont.)

Pickneyville Soccer Complex	2%
Rhodes Jordan Community Center	2%
All Other Facilities	Less than 2% each

Evaluating Park Facilities

Park users were asked to evaluate several different aspects of the county's recreational facilities, including parking availability, park security issues, and the condition of parks' physical facilities.

Parking

Eighty percent of the park users surveyed indicated parking availability at the recreational facilities they most often use is either more than adequate (25%) or adequate (55%). Fourteen percent (14%) feel like parking availability is somewhat inadequate, and 5% believe parking is extremely inadequate. Respondents who said parking is extremely inadequate (20 respondents) were asked to specify which parks suffered from this problem. *Best Friend Park* was mentioned by five respondents, and the *Rhodes Jordan Park/Tennis Center/Community Center* complex was mentioned by nine respondents. The *Collins Hill Park/Aquatic Center* complex was cited by seven respondents.

Physical Facilities

The respondents were asked to rate the condition of the physical facilities (picnic tables, benches, playground equipment, etc..) at the parks they most often visit. Once again, very few respondents provided negative evaluations of this aspect of the parks. Eighty-five percent (86%) of the park users said the parks' physical facilities are either excellent (32%) or good (54%). Twelve percent (12%) indicated these facilities are fair, while just 1% said they are poor.

Safety In The Parks

The respondents were asked to rate their feeling of personal security when visiting the park facilities they use most often. A scale of 1 to 5 was used, where 1 represented "very secure" and 5 meant "not secure at all". The average security score was 2.25.

Sixty-two percent (62%) of all park users rated their sense of personal security as a 1 or 2, while 12% responded with a rating of 4 or 5.

Biggest Security Issue In The Parks

The respondents were asked to specify the biggest security issue in the parks they most often frequent. Almost thirty percent of the park users surveyed did not provide a useful response to this question. Twenty-one percent (21%) said *lack of an adequate police presence* was the biggest problem, followed by *lack of adequate lighting* (12%). *General vandalism* and *vandalism/burglary to cars*, when combined as similar answers, were also mentioned by 10% of the respondents. *Too many secluded areas/lack of visibility* was mentioned by 5% of the respondents. Other factors were mentioned by fewer than 5% of the respondents.

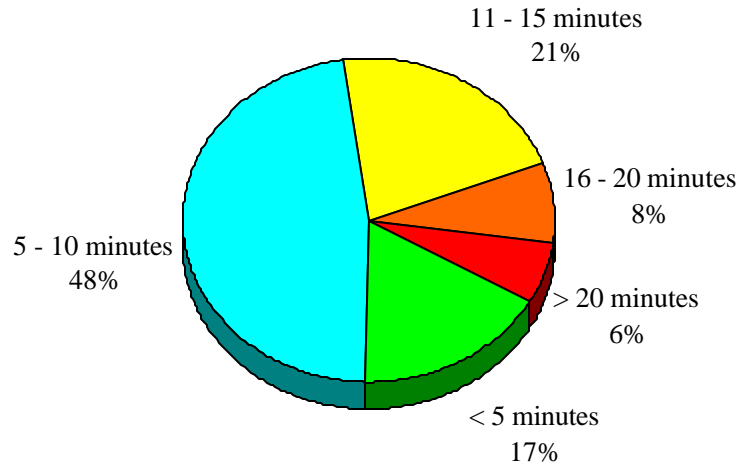
For respondents who mentioned they utilize Mountain Park Park and Rhodes Jordan Park, *lack of adequate lighting* seems to be the most serious security issue (mentioned by 19% and 26% of the respondents, respectively). For the other parks that were mentioned by a significant number of respondents, security issues follow that same general pattern as that for the parks as a whole.

Travel Time To County Parks

The respondents were asked how long it takes them to get to the county operated recreational facility they most often use. As the results in *Figure I* show, almost two-thirds (64%) either live less than five minutes from the park (17%) or five to ten minutes away (47%). Only 14% said it takes them more than 15 minutes.

Gwinnett County's 1986 Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment established a maximum desirable travel time of fifteen minutes to the park(s) a resident typically utilizes. In 2002, eighty-six percent (86%) of all park users are able to get to the parks they use most often within this desired allotted time.

Figure I
How Long Does It Take Park Users To Get To Park
They Use Most Often?



Would Respondent Use County Parks More Often If One Were Closer To Them?

Even though most respondents live within 10 minutes of the facility they said they use most often, one-half of the respondents (50%) said they would use a county operated recreational facility more often if one were located closer to their home.

Rental Of County Park Facilities

A number of facilities, such as community centers and park pavilions, are available for rent to Gwinnett residents. Seventeen percent (17%) of all respondents indicated they have rented a county recreational facility, and 85% of these respondents indicated the facilities were either “good” (54%) or “excellent” (31%).

Non-Users of County Operated Recreational Facilities

Why Haven’t They Used County Facilities?

One-fourth of the people surveyed indicated they have not used a county operated recreational facility in the past year. When asked why they have not utilized these resources, the single most frequent response (26%) was “*I don’t have the time*”. Other individual reasons were each cited by fewer than 10% of the respondents. Twelve percent (12%) did not provide an answer.

Favorite Recreational Activities Of Non-Users

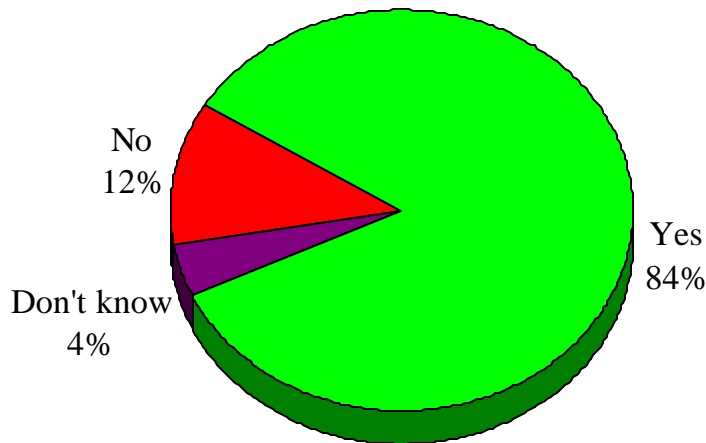
Walking (34%), *swimming* (19%) and *tennis* (12%) are popular recreational activities among people who have not used a county park in the past year. In this way, they are not any different from many park users. They do differ significantly on some of their other favorite recreational activities, however. Other relatively popular activities among non-users are *reading* (16%), *golf* (12%), *watching television* (8%), *crafts* (6%) and *gardening* (6%). *Fishing* and *hiking* (7% each) and *basketball* (5%) also were mentioned by at least 5% of the non-users of county facilities.

OPINIONS ON ISSUES RELATED TO FUNDING FUTURE PARKLAND ACQUISITION AND PARK DEVELOPMENT

Opinions On Use Of SPLOST Funds To Pay For Park Development

In 2000, Gwinnett County voters approved an extension of the Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST), funds from which were designated for capital improvement projects including parkland acquisition and park development. The respondents were asked if they approve or disapprove of this method of funding these improvements to the county's park and recreation program. The vast majority of respondents (84%) approve of the use of SPLOST funds for these purposes (*Figure J*). The only demographic subgroup for which the level of approval of this method of funding park improvements is significantly lower is those with household incomes under \$20,000, 63% of whom still approve of the use of SPLOST funds for this purpose.

Figure J
Does Respondent Approve Of Use Of SPLOST Funds For Park Development And Acquisition?

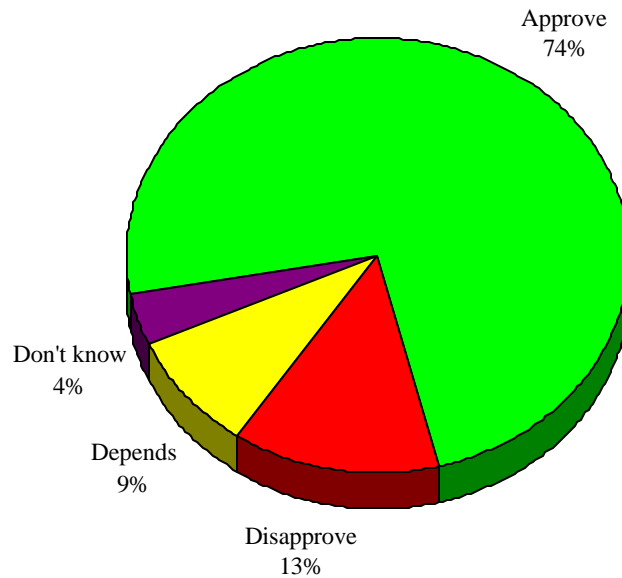


A depiction of the percentage of respondents in each Gwinnett County census tract who said they approve of the past use of SPLOST funds to pay for parkland acquisition and park development is provided in Appendix A (Figure R).

Would Respondent Vote To Extend SPLOST in 2004?

Gwinnett voters may have to decide in 2004 whether or not to extend SPLOST. The respondents were asked if they would approve or disapprove of a SPLOST extension in 2004 if the money generated from that tax is used for continued park development and parkland acquisition. Again, a large majority (74%) of the respondents indicated they would approve of an extension for SPLOST under these circumstances (see *Figure K*). Support for an extension of SPLOST is slightly lower among Gwinnett seniors. Two-thirds (66%) of the respondents ages 55 and older approved of a SPLOST extension. Support is also significantly lower (58%) among respondents with incomes under \$20,000.

Figure K
Would Respondent Approve Or Disapprove Of SPLOST Extension In 2004
If Money Is Used For Parks?

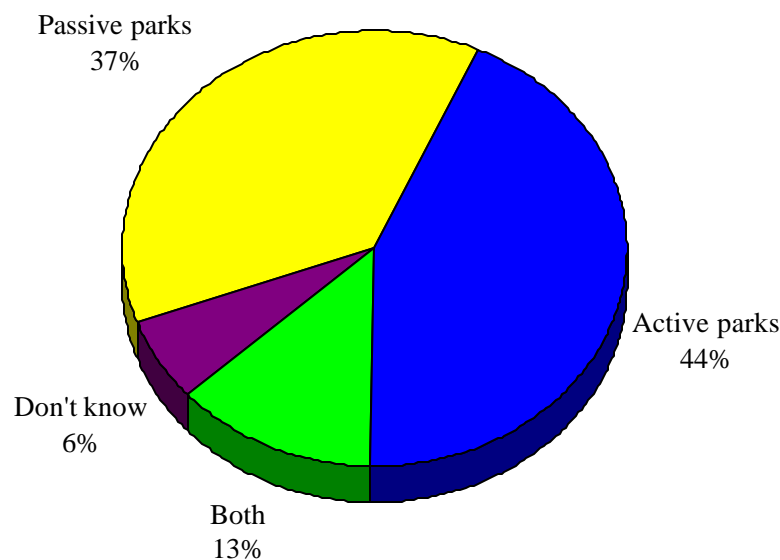


A depiction of the percentage of respondents in each Gwinnett County census tract who said they approve of an extension of the SPLOST is provided in Appendix A (Figure S).

Should SPLOST Money Be Used To Develop Active Or Passive Parks?

The respondents were asked if future SPLOST money should be used to develop “active” or “passive” parks. The results, displayed in *Figure L*, provide support for the future development of both types of park facilities. Forty-four percent (44%) said the county should concentrate on “active” park facilities in the future, while 37% prefer the

Figure L
Should County Develop More Passive Or Active Parks?



development of “passive” parks. Thirteen percent (13%) prefer the development of both types of parks. Further analysis reveals:

- Registered voters are almost evenly split on this issue, while unregistered respondents prefer active parks (53%) to passive parks (29%);
- Males are evenly split on this question, while females also prefer active parks (47%) to passive parks (35%);
- Respondents with children under the age of 18 in their households prefer active parks over passive parks (51% to 32%, respectively) for future development, while respondents without children in their households are just slightly more inclined towards passive parks (42%, to 37% for active parks);
- Young adults (ages 18-30) much prefer active parks (67%), while other adults are more evenly split on the issue;

- Respondents who have lived in Gwinnett County for 5 years or less also prefer active to passive parks (48% to 33%, respectively) for future development, and;
- The preference for future development of active parks is higher among every income category, with the exception of respondents with household incomes over \$100,000 in 2001.

Respondents' Priorities For Expenditures Of Future SPLOST Funds

The respondents were asked what other park and recreation priorities should benefit from revenues that will be generated if the SPLOST is extended in 2004. The most often mentioned priorities included *park renovations and security/lighting improvements* (19%), *bike and pedestrian trails* (17%), *greenways* (15%), *athletic facilities* (15%), *after-school programs* (14%), *children's programs* (12%), *swimming facilities* (10%), *community centers* (7%), and *more parks/land acquisition* (7%).

User Fees For Out-Of-County Visitors

Gwinnett County currently assesses a "users fee" for select facilities and programs. The respondents were asked if people living outside of Gwinnett County who use these particular facilities or programs should be required to pay more than county residents for using these resources. The respondents were almost evenly divided on this issue. Forty-eight percent (48%) said out-of-county users should not be charged more, while 46% believe they should pay higher fees. Six percent (6%) were undecided.

Registered voters (48%), respondents in English-only households (48%), females (50%), and respondents over the age of thirty (48%) all are significantly more likely than their counterparts to believe the county should charge out-of-county residents higher users fees when visiting Gwinnett County facilities.

Meeting The Recreational Needs Of Targeted Residents

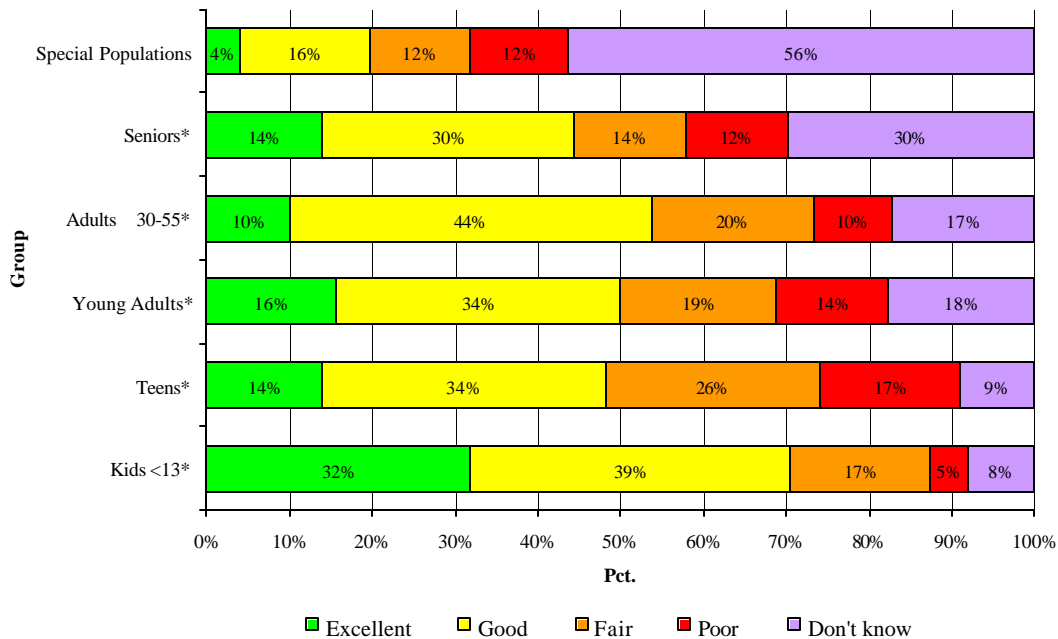
The respondents were asked how well the county is meeting the recreational needs of six specific groups: children under the age of 13; teenagers ages 13–17; young adults ages 20–30; adults ages 30–55; Gwinnett seniors ages 55+; and "special populations" such as the physically disabled. Substantial percentages of respondents could not, or would not, offer an opinion on each of these questions; the results indicate

that these questions are best analyzed by restricting each analysis to those respondents most relevant to each targeted group. (See *Figure M* for a summary of these evaluations.)

Meeting The Needs of Young Children

Seventy-one percent (71%) of the respondents with children under the age of thirteen in their households (n=308) indicated the county is doing an excellent (32%) or good (39%) job meeting the recreational needs of these children. Seventeen percent (17%) said the county is doing just a “fair” job in this endeavor, while 5% believe the county’s efforts are “poor.” Respondents who have lived in Gwinnett for 10 years or less, males, people who are not registered to vote, people who have not used a county park in the past year, and people who live in a household where at least one person normally speaks a language other than English, are all slightly more likely than their respective counterparts to look less favorably on the county’s efforts in this regard, but

Figure M
How Well Does County Meet Recreational Needs Of Specific Groups?
 (*See explanatory comment in text)



the differences are minimal in most cases, and at least a majority of each of these groups gives the county a generally positive rating on this question.

Meeting The Needs Of Teenagers

Fewer than one-half (48%) of the respondents with teenagers between the ages of 13 and 17 living in their households believe the county is doing an excellent (14%) or good (34%) job meeting the recreational needs of this age group. Forty-three percent believe the county is doing a “fair” (26%) or “poor” (17%) job. There are no meaningful differences on this question across any of the demographic subgroups.

Meeting The Needs Of Young Adults

Exactly one-half (50%) of the respondents between the ages of 18 and 30 said the county is doing an excellent (16%) or good (34%) job of meeting the recreational needs of adults in their age group. Thirty-two percent said the county’s efforts are fair (19%) or poor (14%). Eighteen percent (18%) offered no opinion on this issue. Registered voters in this age group are twice as likely as those who are not registered to believe the county is doing only a fair or poor job (40% to 21%, respectively). Forty-four percent (44%) of the respondents in this age group who have *not* used a county facility in the past year said the county is doing only a fair or poor job meeting the needs of their age group. Negative opinions on this question also are slightly higher among respondents living in a household where at least one person speaks a language other than English.

Meeting The Needs Of Adults Ages 30-55

Slightly over one-half (54%) of the adults in this age group said the county is doing an excellent (10%) or good (44%) job of meeting their recreational needs. Twenty percent (20%) said the county’s efforts are fair, while 10% said its efforts are poor. The remainder (17%) offered no opinion on this issue. No meaningful differences were found among the various subgroups on this issue, although respondents in this age group who have not used a county park in the past year were much less likely to offer any opinion on this issue at all (35%, to just 13% of the park users).

Meeting The Needs Of Seniors

Fourteen percent (14%) of the respondents over the age of 54 indicated the county is doing an excellent job meeting their recreational needs, while thirty percent (30%) said the county’s efforts are good. Fourteen percent (14%) believe the county is doing just a

fair job in this area, while twelve percent (12%) said the county's efforts are poor. Almost one-third (30%) of the respondents ages 55 and older failed to offer an opinion on this question. No meaningful differences were found among the various subgroups on this issue.

Meeting The Needs Of Special Populations

The survey made no effort to identify households that might contain members of "special populations," particularly the physically disabled. A targeted group of respondents who's opinions might be more relevant to this question cannot be identified, thus making it necessary to look at all respondents when analyzing the results for this issue. As *Figure M* indicates, over one-half (56%) of the respondents did not offer an opinion on this issue. Twenty percent said the county does an excellent (4%) or good (16%) job of meeting the recreational needs of the county's special populations, while one-fourth (24%) believe the county is doing a fair (12%) or poor (12%) job.

OTHER PARKS AND RECREATION ISSUES

Has Respondent Taken Special Classes Or Participated In Other Special Events?

One-fourth (25%) of the respondents indicated they have taken classes offered by the County Parks and Recreation, or have attended special events sponsored by the County. When asked to evaluate the quality of these classes or events, very few of attendees gave these programs a negative evaluation. Seven percent (7%) said they were just “fair,” while 2% indicated the classes or events were “poor.”

Relative Comparisons Of County Parks And Recreation Facilities

For the purposes of comparing the quality of the county’s parks and recreation facilities, the respondents who indicated they are at least somewhat familiar with the county’s recreational facilities (656 respondents) were divided into two groups; those who have lived in Gwinnett for less than five years (117 respondents), and those who have lived in Gwinnett five years or more (539 respondents). The respondents who have lived in the county for less than five years were asked to compare the county’s facilities with those of the locality where they previously lived. Respondents living in the county for five years or more were asked to compare the county’s current facilities with those that existed five years ago.

Comparisons of Newer Residents

Gwinnett County’s parks and recreation facilities compare quite favorably to those in the previous home areas of the newest county residents. Two-thirds (69%) of these respondents indicated the county’s facilities are either *much better* (42%) or *a little better* (27%) than those where they used to live. Fifteen percent (15%) said the facilities in the two locations are *about the same*.

Comparisons of Long-Time Residents

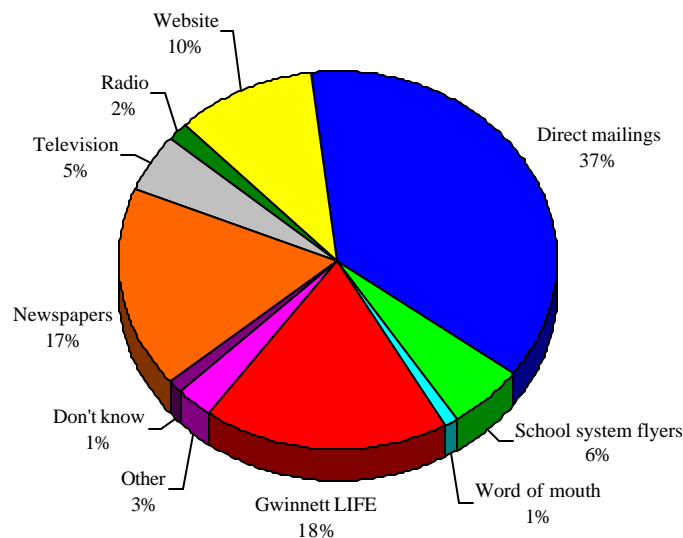
The respondents who have lived in Gwinnett County for at least five years also have a high regard for the relative quality of the county’s current park and recreation facilities. A vast majority (86%) indicated the current facilities are either *a lot better* (52%), or at least *a little better* (34%) now than they were five years ago. Only two

percent (2%) of the respondents indicated they believe the quality of the county's facilities has declined to any degree during that period.

Best Way To Reach Residents With Information About Parks And Recreation Program

The respondents were asked how the county could best reach them with information about the county's park and recreation program. Thirty-seven percent of the respondents (37%) said *direct mailings to their homes* would be the most effective way of reaching them (see *Figure N*). Eighteen percent (18%) mentioned the *Gwinnett L.I.F.E. magazine* which is published by the county and mailed to every Gwinnett household. *Newspaper ads/articles* were cited by 17% of the respondents, while 10% mentioned *the Internet*. Other forms of communication were mentioned by fewer than 10% of the respondents. There are few deviations from this pattern based on the respondents background characteristics, although Gwinnett seniors would like to rely on *newspaper ads* as much as *direct mailings* (31% each). Residents of more than 20 years in Gwinnett County also were more likely to mention newspaper ads along with direct mailings (27% and 35%, respectively). Finally, *information on a website* is somewhat more attractive to males and younger respondents, but even among these groups the Internet lags behind direct mailings.

Figure N
Best Way To Reach Respondents With Information
About Parks And Recreation Resources And Programs



Does Respondent Receive “Gwinnett L.I.F.E.”?

Almost one-half of the respondents (46%) said they receive *Gwinnett L.I.F.E.*, an informational quarterly magazine published by the county. Registered voters (48%), females (55%), respondents with children under the age of eighteen living with them (52%) and middle-aged adults (51%) were more likely than their counterparts to say they receive *Gwinnett L.I.F.E.* Respondents who live in English-only houses also are more likely to have received this publication than are respondents living in households in which at least one person normally speaks a language other than English (48% to 34%, respectively).

Over one third (37%) of those who indicated they receive the publication said they have registered for a class offered by the county as a result of looking at the information contained in *Gwinnett L.I.F.E.* Females are twice as likely as males to have registered for a class (45% to 20%, respectively). Middle-aged adults and people who have lived in Gwinnett County for more than five years also are more likely than their counterparts to have registered for a class as a result of reading *Gwinnett L.I.F.E.*.

Does Respondent Have Access To The Internet?

Although access to the Internet has nothing to do directly with parks and recreation, the county was interested in determining how many residents have access to the Internet. The vast majority of respondents (86%) have access to the Internet either at home or work. Eighty-one percent (81%) said they have access to the Internet at home, while 59% have access to the web at work. Lack of access is twice as high among non-registered respondents as it is among registered voters in Gwinnett (25% to just 12%, respectively). In addition, 20% of the respondents who do not have children living with them do not have Internet access, compared to just 6% of those with children. Finally, Internet access is lacking among a substantial percentage (30%) of the respondents over the age of 54.

SUMMARY OF FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS WITH HISPANIC AND KOREAN RESIDENTS

The ethnic and racial diversity of Gwinnett County has grown significantly over the past ten years. A portion of the demographic profile noted the increase in the relative numbers of Asians, Hispanics and African-Americans living in Gwinnett. Even though these populations are increasing in numbers, as individual subgroups of the population they still make up a relatively small percentage of Gwinnett's population and this, coupled with barriers such as language problems and other assimilation issues, prevents the inclusion of a sufficient number of members of these subgroups in telephone surveys with relatively small sample sizes. Accordingly, Gwinnett County arranged separate focus group meetings with members of the Hispanic and Korean communities in the county. These meetings were facilitated by Burruss Institute staff. The meetings were held to identify special recreational needs of these minority groups and to identify any potential problems that may dissuade members of these groups from utilizing county recreational facilities.

Summary Of The Focus Group Meeting With The Hispanic Community

Approximately 12-15 people attended the focus group session for the Hispanic community. A majority of these individuals were service providers to this population; the session would have benefited from more representation from the general population of Hispanic residents.

Favorite Activities

When asked about the types of recreational activities they most like to engage in, many typical activities were mentioned, particularly *soccer, running, volleyball, baseball, bicycling, basketball, and fishing*. Numerous members of the focus group mentioned two other relatively unique activities, however. First was the practice of *socializing with their friends and neighbors*, particularly in the *evenings after dinner*. The participants noted that it is quite common in the Hispanic culture for people to go outside of their homes in the evenings and visit with their friends and neighbors, either in their respective yards or in *small plazas* equipped with benches and tables that can be used to play games (such as checkers, chess, backgammon, etc.) or cards. To this end, the need for a number of small

plazas located in strategic places in their communities was a popular request on the part of the participants. As noted earlier, these plazas would not have to be very large, only large enough for some benches and tables where small groups of residents could visit and talk. Several members of the focus group commented that this was an activity that few Americans seem to engage in.

The second activity that was mentioned by numerous participants was the enjoyment of “*danza*”, or *native dancing*. The respondents noted that members of their community often gather for special events related to their culture and *would benefit from the availability of facilities – both indoor and outdoor – that would allow for live music (mostly small bands) and a suitable area for dancing*. The respondents noted that there are no open-air facilities in their neighborhoods that have an area with a platform, or some other type of “paved” area, suitable for dancing. They noted that this activity is very restricted if the weather has been bad because there is no dry place to dance. They also would like to have an indoor facility that would be suitable for their community gatherings and dancing.

Neighborhood Parks

In addition to the two specific needs already mentioned, other general comments about the availability and suitability of parks in their neighborhoods centered around the fact that the parks that are available are difficult to get to. The participants noted that many members of their community would be willing to walk to the parks that are located near their neighborhoods, but that it is difficult to walk to them due to the lack of adequate sidewalks and the heavy traffic that plagues most of the roads leading to these facilities.

The respondents also indicated that the county parks seem to exist mostly for the organized sports leagues. Several respondents mentioned that they had a hard time finding a suitable location for a “pick-up” game of ball or soccer. Fields specifically designed for these purposes seem to be dominated by the organized leagues, with little additional unreserved open space for the desired informal games.

Another access issue that was raised by a number of participants related to the *closing of the parks at night*. Several members mentioned that the parks are closed at sundown, preventing them from using the facilities they want access to. (They didn’t

specify that some parks with certain facilities such as basketball courts, football and baseball fields, and tennis courts may stay open after dark.) Several people mentioned that the police would chase them out of the park at sundown if their cars were in the parking lots. These people indicated they (and others) often park somewhere on the street in the surrounding neighborhoods after sundown and walk into the park on foot to be able to use the facilities. They were not satisfied with this, however.

Some participants made comments related to safety/security issues. Some made general comments that the parks were not safe, or that more security was needed. When asked, no one mentioned noticing the presence of the park police in the parks they frequent. A few mentioned poor lighting; others questioned the safety of the bathroom facilities, including holes in some of the walls and ceilings.

When asked, a few participants noted that many of the parks don't have the necessary signage that tells members of their communities what facilities are available in their parks, or any other information about the park system. There was some feeling that there needs to be more information at the parks about what resources are available in each park, where those resources are located within a park, and that this information needs to be provided in Hispanic (and other languages) as well as English.

Feeling Welcome In Gwinnett Parks

To the extent the respondents feel they are not welcome in the parks, it is due to the lack of the types of facilities that have already been discussed. They don't go to the parks as often as they might because the parks lack adequate space for many of the things they like to do. No one mentioned that they had been made to feel unwelcome by others due to their ethnic background.

Organized Leagues

When the issue of organized sports leagues and other special activities that charge a participation fee was discussed, the respondents made the comments that one would normally expect; namely, the fees can be excessive for lower income residents and for residents with more than one child who wants to participate in these activities.

Transportation

The participants were asked if transportation problems to and from county park facilities is a particular problem among members of their communities. Once again, the participants' responses were not surprising. They noted that transportation can be a problem, particularly for low income members of their community, if the family has only one vehicle. That vehicle may be unavailable during much of the day because it is being used by others to travel back and forth to work. Otherwise, the participants didn't seem to be overly worried about alternate forms of transportation. They reiterated that many members of their communities would be willing to walk to local parks if the trek were made safer by adding sidewalks.

Summary Of The Focus Group Meeting With The Korean Community

Between 15-20 members of the Korean community attended the focus group meeting for their community. The general impression gleaned from the discussion is that members of the Korean community feel culturally isolated, not only in terms of use of county operated parks, but in their overall, everyday interaction (or lack thereof) with their large larger community as a whole.

Favorite Activities

When asked about their favorite recreational activities, the usual suspects were mentioned: *soccer, baseball, basketball, volleyball, tennis, walking, jogging and swimming*. Other less traditional activities that were mentioned included *ping pong, billiards, watching movies, church activities, Chinese checkers/chess, singing* (choral and karaoke), and *traditional dancing*.

Neighborhood Parks

Utilization of county operated parks appears to be low among members of the Korean community, as represented by the participants at the focus group meetings. When asked how often they visit a county operated facility, some respondents shrugged and said maybe once a month; others said maybe once a year. A few seemed to suggest they never use a county park. The participants mentioned *Jones Bridge Park, Collins Hill Park* and *Best Friend Park* as facilities that have been used in the past, but most of the

participants indicated that the parks do not really have most of the activities they are interested in, so they rarely go to the parks. One participant noted that the Korean people "...work very hard, go home, and go to church...."

When asked what types of facilities and programs would be popular among members of their community, one participant was particularly interested in an inexpensive retreat facility with overnight housing capabilities that could cater to smaller community groups, such as church groups. Such a facility could hold organized community and youth activities, training and educational workshops and other meetings. Other participants encouraged the county to provide a Korean Community Center that would serve as a focal gathering place for members of their community. An employee of the county Parks and Recreation Department tried to explain to the participants that the county could not build such a facility solely for the use of the Korean community, but that the general idea of a community center available to Koreans and other county residents would be taken into consideration.

In regards to specific programs that might be appealing to members of the Korean community, most of the responses centered on educational and/or informational classes that would provide them with the skills and knowledge needed to better adapt to the political, economic and social structures in Gwinnett County. The participants were particularly vocal about voter education and elections-related information, as well as English classes for Korean residents. They also mentioned classes on U.S. history and other civic education classes.

Finally, there was some interest in spa facilities that would provide sauna (Turkish) baths.

Other Barriers To Utilization Of County Parks

As we eluded to earlier, the most prevalent feeling coming out of the discussion with members of the Korean community was their overall sense of cultural isolation. They do not feel like they are integrated well with the surrounding community, and therefore are not prone to using county parks. They are more inclined to keep amongst members of their own community. The discussion turned to strategies that can help them overcome these feelings.

In addition to English and civic education classes mentioned earlier, the participants said the *county needs to be more proactive in their communication efforts* with the Korean community. The participants agreed that they are most receptive to receiving information about county parks and programs through personal contacts within their own communities. The county needs do a better job of getting information to key members of the Korean community so that this information can be disseminated to the community at large. Furthermore, the county needs to *provide written information in Korean*, not English, to better insure that the Korean community will understand and pay attention to the information. This includes maps and brochures describing the what resources are available. Specific suggestions included hiring more Koreans in the county's Park and Recreation Department and in Public Relations who can serve as a liaison with the Korean community; provide more information (in Korean) to the local Korean newspaper; have a Korean bulletin board in prominent community locations, and provide a web page (in Korean) for younger people on the Parks and Recreation website.

Finally, the participants noted that Korean senior citizens cannot afford the fares on the county's public transportation system and are dependent on their families or church for transportation, which limits their ability to utilize county recreational facilities. Transportation is not a problem among the Korean working class, however.