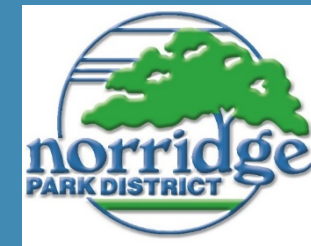


POOL SURVEY: FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

NORRIDGE PARK DISTRICT



University of Illinois Extension

Office of Recreation and Park Resources (ORPR)

Department of Recreation, Sport & Tourism



Illinois Extension

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN



Introduction and Purpose

Purpose: To assess Norridge Park District (NPD) residents' viewpoints regarding plans to repair or replace the park district's outdoor pool

- Pool is almost 60 years old - pools have a 25-30 year life expectancy.
- Resident support is needed to build a new pool.
- The pool is becoming mechanically and structurally obsolete.
- Pool has failed in recent years. Approximately \$2.4 million or more to address immediate repair needs. Additional failures, and additional cost, will occur in future.
- If there is limited support to fund a pool replacement, the pool may have to close due to mechanical and structural issues.

Methods

ORPR at UIUC worked with the Director of the Norridge PD, Annemarie Flaherty, to develop a survey:

- Open and closed – ended questions were included in the survey
- Questions included:
 - Respondents pool use rates and activities
 - Likelihood of support for a referendum on the 2021 and/or 2022 election ballots
 - Perceived Support for 2 Funding Scenarios
 - Impact a pool closure would have on respondents' and their household members
 - Demographics: Age, household size, and years lived in Norridge Park District

Partnering with ORPR, the Norridge Park District distributed a survey to 7,570 individuals in Mid-December, 2020.

- Findings only include residents who completed the survey
- Random sample of 1,500 households received the survey with a pre-paid and addressed return envelope
- An online survey reached a contact list of 6,227 individuals (6,000⁴ deliverable- included residents and non-residents)
- The survey link was shared on the park district's website and Facebook page

Findings

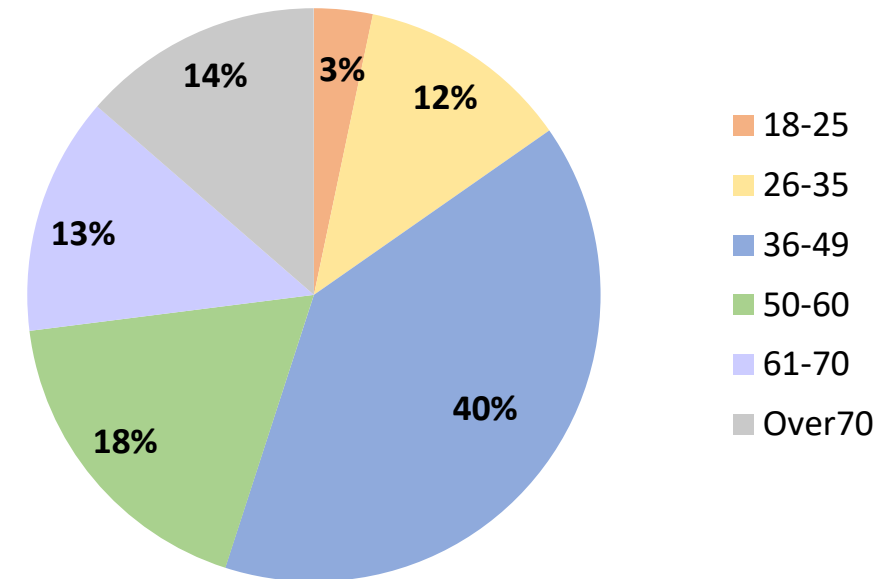
Final Sample of Respondents:

- 507 Sample of Resident Respondents
 - 163 Mail Surveys
 - 344 out of 422 Online Surveys (were resident respondents)
 - 78 surveys from non-residents excluded from final sample
 - Age demographics in line with the U.S. Census

Data Analysis:

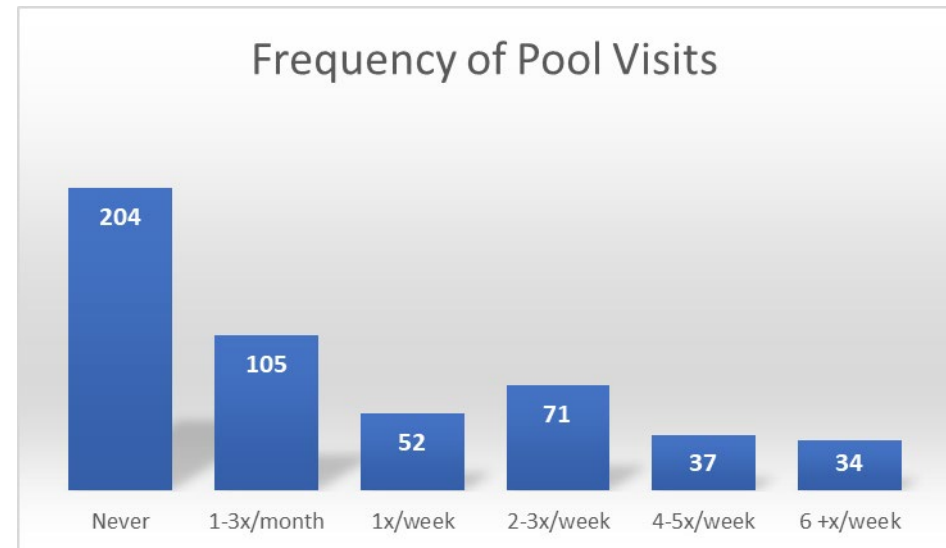
- Data checked for outliers and data entry errors
- Data analyzed through SPSS version 27
- Frequency and descriptive analysis were conducted and follow-up analyses to compare support for the referendum by selected demographics (age, frequency of using the pool, household size)

Respondent Age Groups



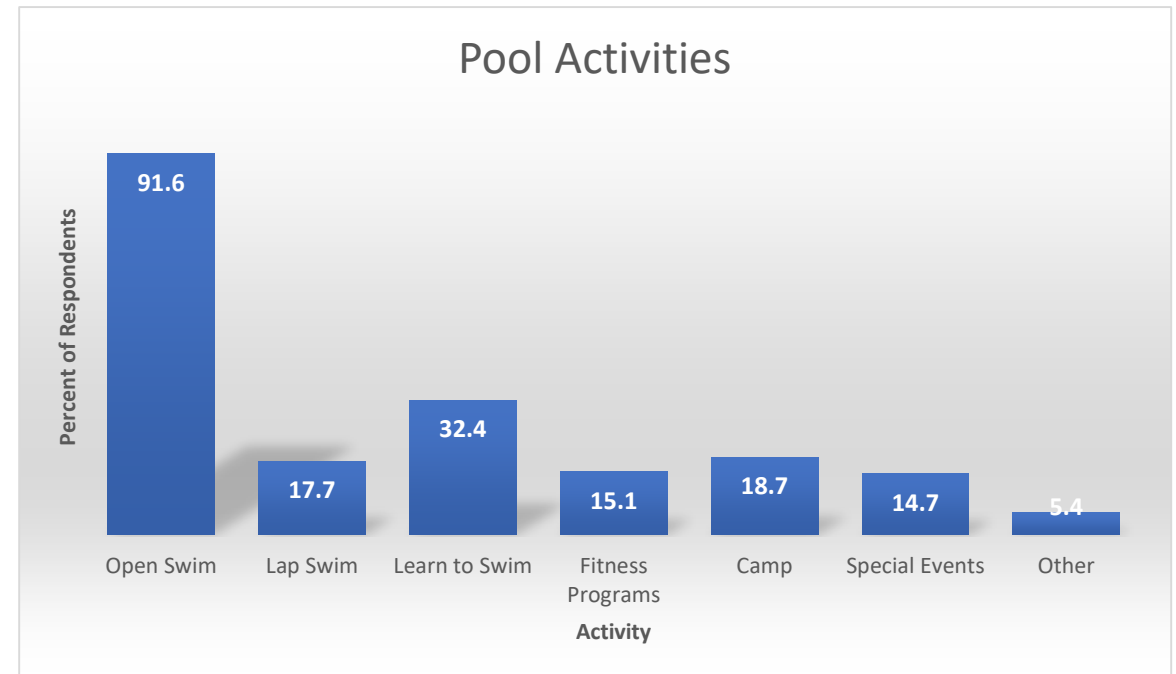
Norridge Park District Pool Use

- 59.5% (N=299) visit at least 1 time per month
- 40% (N=204) have not visited the Norridge pool in the summer
- 20.9% (N=105) visit the pool 1-3 times a month
- 14.1% (N=71) visit the pool 2-3 times per week



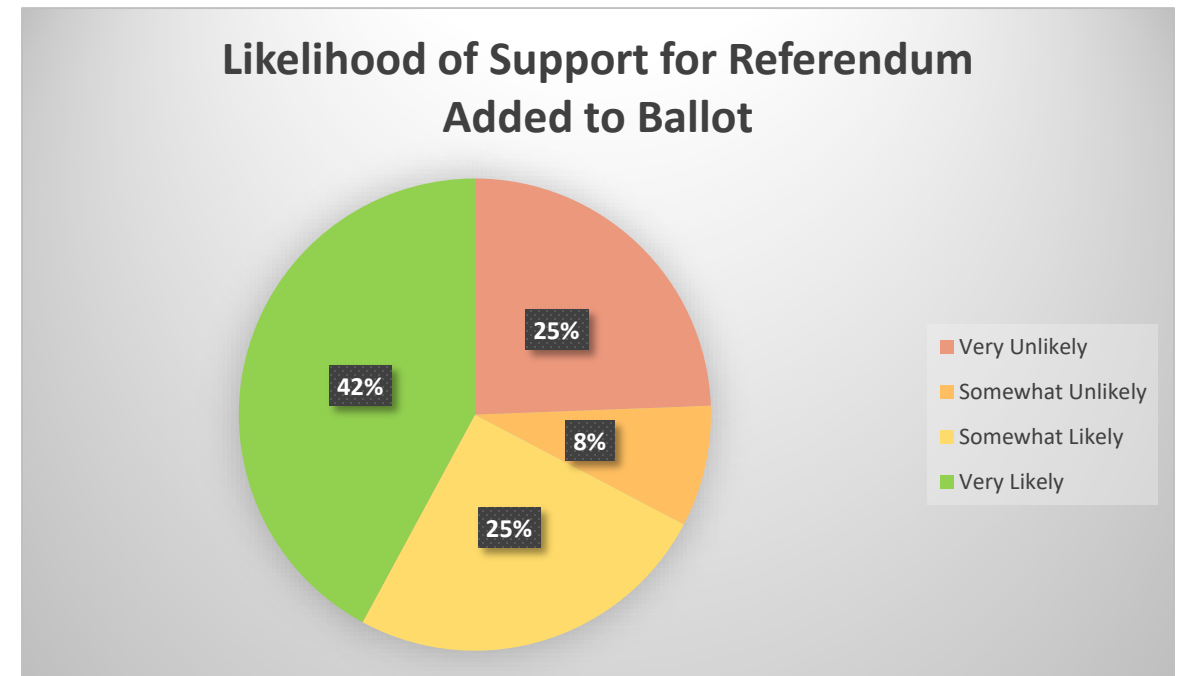
Pool Activities

- 91.6% (N= 274) reported their main activity at the Norridge pool is open swim
- 32.4% (N= 97) indicated they visit the pool to learn to swim
- 15.1% (N= 45) fitness programs
- 14.7% (N= 44) special events
- Other:
 - 2.7% (N= 8) Swim Team
 - Work
 - Socializing with others



Support for Including a Pool Referendum on the 2021 Ballot

- 42% (N = 212) very likely to support the pool referendum be added to the ballot
- 25% (N= 127) somewhat likely to support
- 25% (N= 123) very unlikely
- 8.3% (N= 42) somewhat unlikely



Reasons Likely / Unlikely to Vote for a Pool Referendum

Respondents gave a variety of reasons why they are unlikely to likely to vote for a referendum to replace the pool:

- **Unlikely to Support:**

- Financial Burden / Tax Increase (N = 60)
- Limited / No Use (N = 26)
- School / Other Priorities (N = 11)

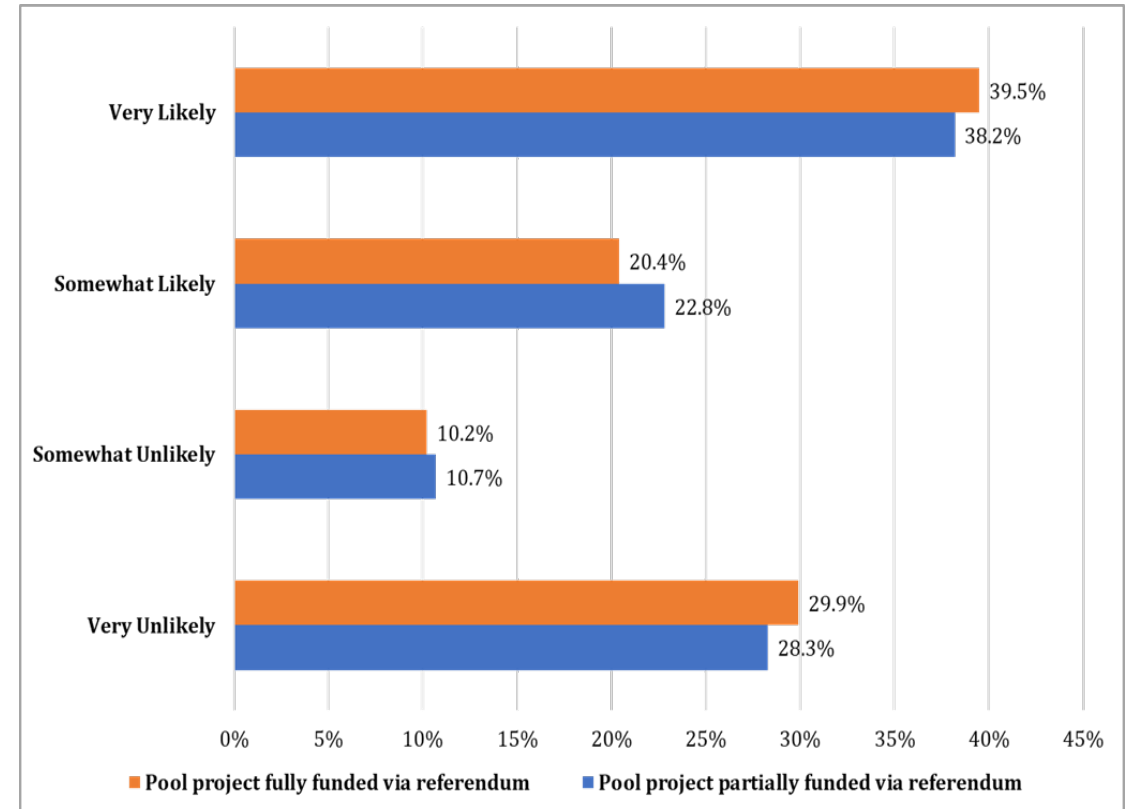
- **Likely to Support:**

- Community Asset (N = 89)
- Family and Friend Use (N = 36)
- Improvement / New Pool Needed (N = 22)
- Health and Wellness (N = 10)



Likelihood of a “Yes” Vote for Two Funding Scenarios

- **Two Potential Referendum Options:**
 - 1) \$6.5 million referendum that fully covers a pool project (*\$54/yr. for 20 yrs. on \$300k home*)
 - **60% of respondents at least somewhat likely**
 - 2) \$3.5 million referendum that partially covers a pool project with additional allocated funds (*\$29/yr. for 20 yrs. on \$300k home*)
 - **61% of respondents at least somewhat likely**



Waiting Until 2022 for the Referendum: Would it make or not make a difference?

Respondents reported many reasons why waiting a year would or would not make a difference in their support for a pool referendum:

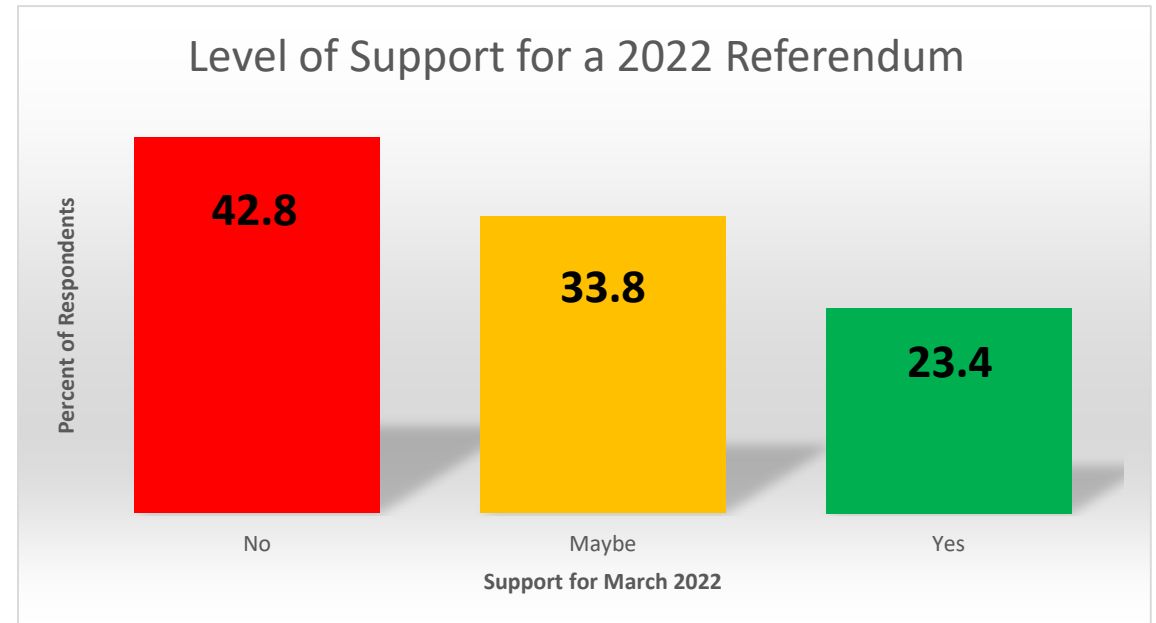
- Don't Wait / Indifferent (N = 69)
- Covid / Economy Concerns (N = 34)
- Financial Burden / Tax Increase (N = 17)
- Limited / No Use (N = 9)
- Other Feedback:
 - Additional time would provide families time to review
 - A public forum would be beneficial
 - A plan needs to be provided and what exactly will the funds be going towards?



Support to Postpone Until 2022

Respondents who were somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely, or very unlikely to support the 2021 referendum were asked if they would be more supportive in March 2022

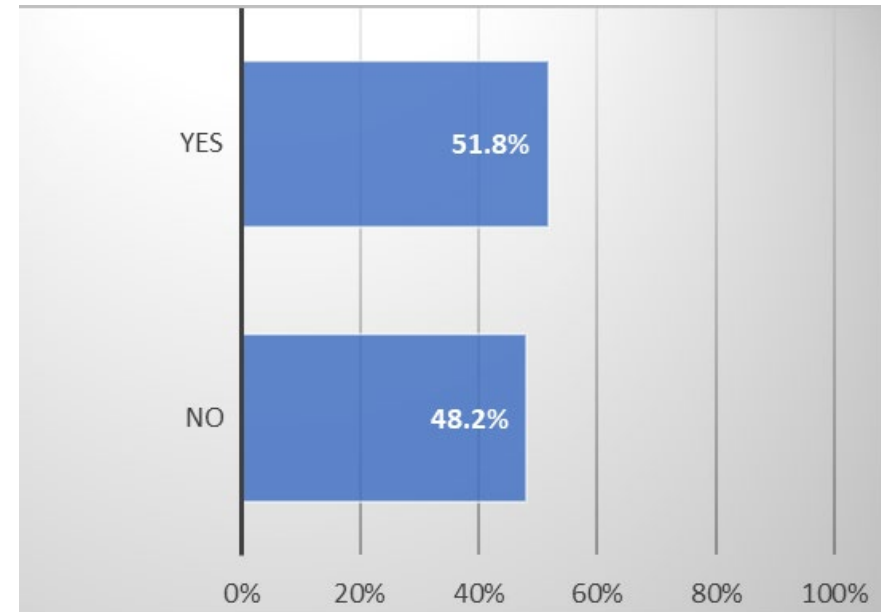
- 23.4% (N= 99) more supportive
- 33.8% (N= 143) might be more supportive
- 42.8% (N= 181) still vote no



Impact of Pool Closure on Residents

Respondents were asked whether the closing of the Norridge pool would impact them or their family in any way.

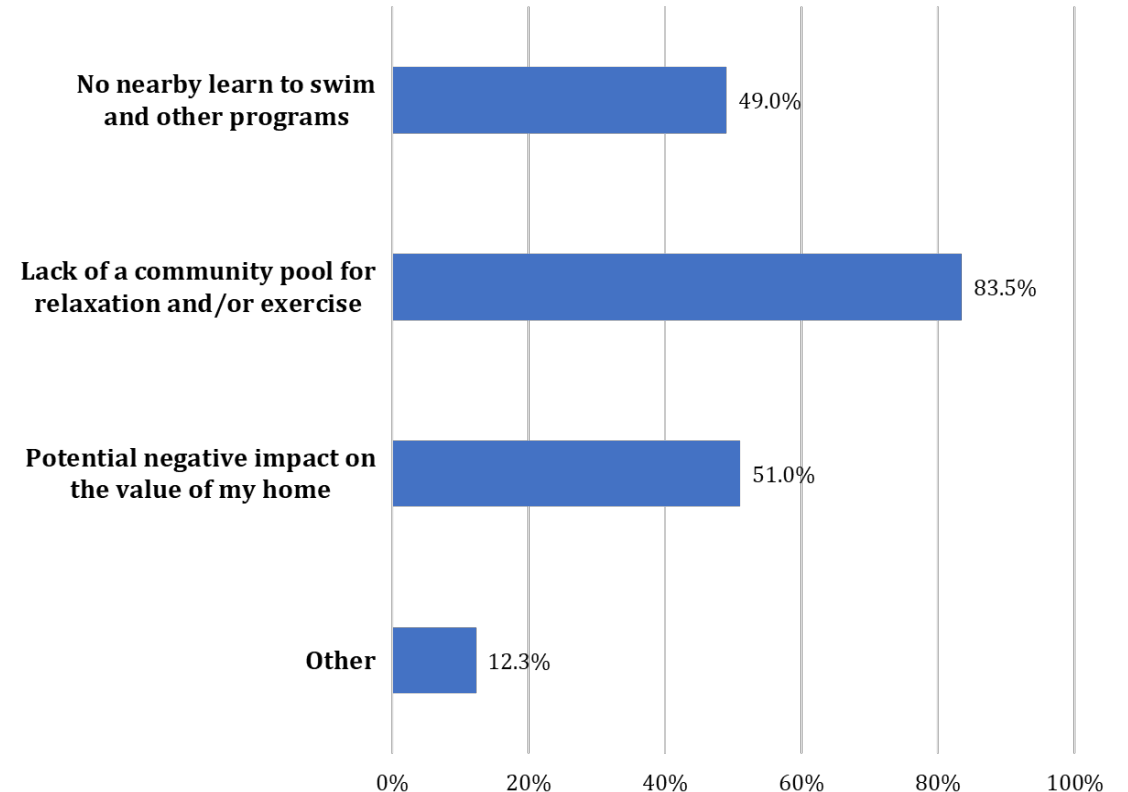
- **51.8% reported yes** closing the pool would impact them or their family
- **48.2% reported no** it would not impact them



How a Pool Closure Could Impact Residents

Residents were asked to check all that apply from a list of ways closely the pool indefinitely could impact them. Responses indicated:

- 51.8% (N = 261) impact them or their family
 - 83.5% - “the lack of a community pool for relaxation and/or exercise”
 - 51% - “potential negative impact on the value of my home”
 - 49% - “no nearby learn to swim and other programs”
 - Other: Socializing, outdoor recreation engagement, entertainment for kids, job opportunities



Open-Ended Feedback about the Norridge Park District

Topics varied widely (e.g., parks, programs, facilities, staff, customer service, etc.): **Main themes:**

- **Aquatics:**

- Enclosed / Indoor Pool
- Greater rule enforcement in pool area and better staff training
- Pool too restrictive: Exit the pool every 45 minutes

- **Programming:**

- Wider array of programs for seniors, teens, aquatics, arts, and inclusivity

- **Financial considerations**




- Fiscal irresponsibility / increase in property taxes
- School Referendum
- Including Hardwood Heights

- **Overall about the park district:**

- Front line staff viewed more positively, leadership and park board viewed more negatively
- Residents feel input is not valued in past, rules being too restrictive, and improvement in marketing

- **Lesser extent:**

- Athletics, Safety/crime reduction, Allowing pets in parks

Other		
Field/Facility	Condition	Notes
Pool	 Closed	Closed for the season.
Baby Pool	 Closed	Closed for the season.
Splash Pad	 Closed	Closed for the season.

Level of support by selected demographics

Length of Residency and Support for the Referendum being Added to the Ballot:

As length of residency increases, support for adding the pool referendum to the ballot decreases.

Length of residence	Mean¹	N
10 years or less	3.07	141
11 to 20 years	2.90	84
20+ years	2.63	184
Total	2.84	409

Age, Pool Use, Household Size, and Level of Support

- As age increases, level of support decreases.

Age	Mean	N
18-25	3.37	16
26-35	2.83	58
36-49	2.99	191
50-60	2.78	87
61-70	2.62	65
70+	2.48	64
Total	2.83	481

- There is a positive relationship with frequency of pool use and support for the referendum.
- People with larger households are also more likely to support the referendum.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- About 60% of respondents visited the pool at least once per month.
- There is fairly substantial support for replacing the pool.
- Support for both funding scenarios are similar – Thus, if a bond referendum is requested, ask for the larger amount.
- Provide factual information and education about the pool re-development plans and funding strategies to all residents of the NPD, especially respondents/citizens who are “somewhat likely and somewhat unlikely” to support respondents for a referendum campaign
- Develop a friends of the park group – A volunteer non-profit organization is helpful to provide information and education about expanding and renovating NPD parks and facilities.
- There is considerable concern about lower support among Norridge residents for school district referendums.

Questions and Discussion

Thank You for Your Time!

Further questions may be directed to:

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