Appendix I Demographics and Trends Analysis

Identification of current park resources, as well as recreation trends, community demographics, and needs help us better understand future recreational opportunities and identify the unique niche for the City of Asheville.

Community Profile and Demographic Information

Introduction, Service Area and Population
The central elements of this demographic analysis include population, age, gender, race, education, household income and size, employment, health and obesity, and population forecasts.

The primary service area for this analysis is the City of Asheville, North Carolina. To sufficiently represent current and future demographics, several sources were consulted. These include ESRI Business Information Solutions, the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce, and the United Health Care Foundation and the recently completed Asheville Water Resources Master Plan. ESRI Business Information Solutions is a software development and services company providing Geographic Information System (GIS) software and geo database management applications. ESRI was originally founded in 1969 as Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) as a land-use consulting firm. Today, we use ESRI Business Information Solutions to provide a more current look at estimated populations, projections, and demographic breakdowns. The population estimate for Asheville for 2007 is 72,623. The growth rate stands at 11.4 percent, up from 10.2 percent reported in 2000.

The 2007 Asheville Economy Outlook states: “Asheville is continuing to experience stable economic growth. A balance of forces, centered on the area’s quality of life amenities, supports this durable pattern.” Furthermore, the economic strength of Asheville is led by “record-setting professional services growth, stable tourism activity, resilient housing market, and baby-boom population growth.”

Asheville is a progressive city focusing on quality of life issues and attracting the creative class. The City’s success in this pursuit is supported by the ranking of Asheville as one of the country’s “Best Places for Business and Careers” by Forbes Magazine (Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce).

To enhance the quality of life for residents, communities often devote their efforts towards strengthening parks and recreation amenities, a crucial piece of the puzzle for a healthy community. To better understand citizen needs for this public good, the demographic make-up of the population must be thoroughly understood.

Population, Age Ranges, and Family Information
Age Distribution
The following age breakdown is used to separate the population into age-sensitive user groups and to retain the ability to adjust to future age-sensitive trends. Population distribution by age for Asheville is demonstrated in

Figure **1***.*

Under 5 years (5.4%): This group represents potential users of preschool and tot programs and facilities, and as trails and open space users, are often in strollers. These individuals are the future participants in youth activities.

5 to 14 years (11.0%): This group represents current potential youth program participants.

15 to 24 years (13.6%): This group represents potential teen/young adult program participants moving out of the youth programs and into adult programs. Members of this age group are often seasonal employment seekers.

25 to 34 years (14.3%): This group represents potential adult programming participants. Many in this category are beginning long-term relationships and establishing families.

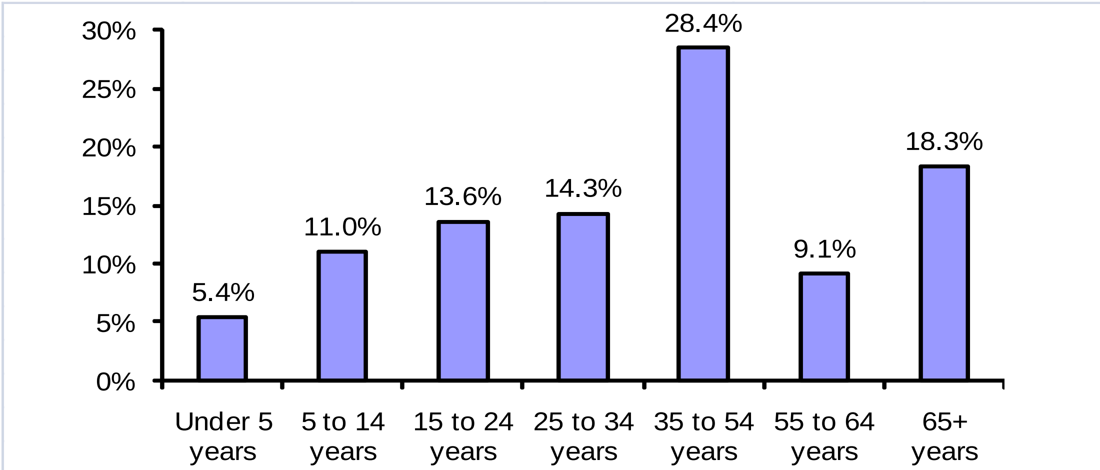
35 to 54 years (28.4%): This group represents potential users of a wide range of adult programming and park facilities. Their characteristics extend from having children using preschool and youth programs to becoming empty nesters.

55 to 64 years (9.1%): This group represents potential users of older adult programming exhibiting the characteristics of approaching retirement or already retired and typically enjoying grandchildren.

65 to 85 years (18.3%): This group will be doubling in 14 years. Programming for this group should positively impact the health of older adults through networking, training and technical assistance, and fundraising. Recreation centers, senior centers and other senior programs can be a significant link in the health care system. This group generally also ranges from very healthy, active seniors to more physically inactive seniors. Many in this group participate in leisure activities such as arts and cultural activities.

Median Age
The median age in 2007 for Asheville is 40.8, which is older than the median for the State of North Carolina (37.2) and the Nation (36.7). This is an increase over the 2000 median age in Asheville of 39.1. The median age is projected to climb up to 42.3 in 2012, a significant demographic shift the Asheville Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Arts Department needs to understand and adapt to given this group’s unique recreation preferences.

Figure 1: Population Breakdown – Asheville (2007)

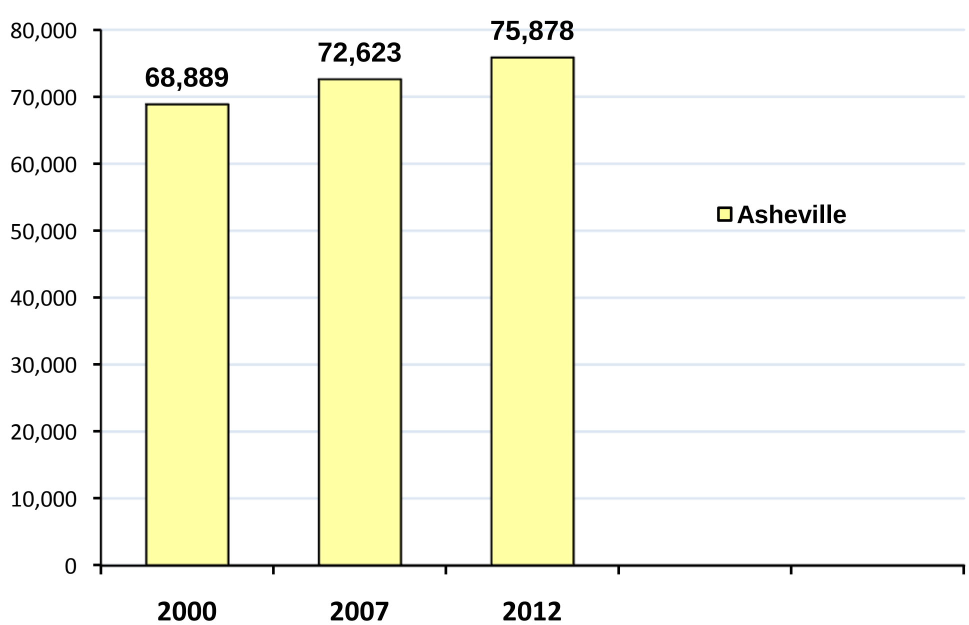


Source: ESRI Business Information Solutions

Population Comparisons

According to ESRI Information Solutions, in comparison to both North Carolina and the Nation, Asheville has around 4 percent fewer young people under the age of 14. The other significant age difference involves those over 65 years of age, with Ashville having 6.3 percent and 8.4 percent larger population of adults over 65 than both North Carolina and the United States respectively. This is consistent with the observation that older adults are choosing Asheville as the site for their retirement years, which in turn influences the demand for parks, recreation, cultural arts, and greenways services.

Figure 2: Population Estimates and Projected Growth- Asheville 2000, 2007, 2012



Source: ESRI Business Information Solutions

Race

Statistics gathered from ESRI spell this out Business Solutions provide the race breakdown for Asheville. As shown in ***Table 1*** the race with the largest population is White (76.1%). Those who identify themselves as being of Hispanic origin make up 5.0 percent of the total population regardless of race. ESRI data indicates Asheville is also experiencing the national trend towards increased racial diversity, with a significant demographic shift towards an increasing percentage of Hispanics. Although Asheville still has a significantly smaller percentage of Hispanics than the Country, this group is expanding, from 3.8 percent in 2000 to 5.0 percent in 2007. For 2012 and further into the future, these trends are forecast to continue.

Table 1: Race Comparisons for 2007

Race	Asheville	North Carolina	United States
White Alone	76.1%	70.4%	72.7%
Black Alone	18.0%	21.5%	12.6%
American Indian Alone	0.4%	1.2%	0.9%
Asian or Pacific Islander Alone	1.3%	2.0%	4.5%
Some Other Race Alone	2.2%	3.3%	6.5%
Two or More Races	1.9%	1.6%	2.8%
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	5.0%	6.2%	15.0%

Source: ESRI Business Information Solutions

Educational Attainment of Residents Over Age 25

According to ESRI Business Information Solutions, 41.5 percent of Asheville resident's highest level of educational attainment was graduating high school or less. This is a lower percentage than both North Carolina and United States, at 50.2 percent and 48.2 percent respectively. The population's highest level of educational attainment at 28.2 percent was some college or an associate degree. In addition, 30.4 percent of the Asheville population has a Bachelor's, a Master's degree, a Professional degree, or a Doctorate, which is higher than both the US (24.4%) and the state of North Carolina (22.5%). Asheville is therefore better educated than North Carolina and the Country as a whole. The educational attainment breakdown is shown in *Table* ***2***.

Table 2: Highest Level of Educational Attainment – 25 Years and Older (2000)

Degree	Asheville	North Carolina	United States
Less than 9th Grade	6.3%	7.8%	7.5%
9th-12th Grade, No Diploma	11.5%	14.0%	12.1%
High School Graduate Only	23.7%	28.4%	28.6%
Some College, No Diploma	21.7%	20.5%	21.0%
Associate Degree	6.5%	6.8%	6.3%
Bachelor's Degree	19.6%	15.3%	15.5%
Master's/Prof/Doctorate Degree	10.8%	7.2%	8.9%

Source: ESRI Business Information Solutions

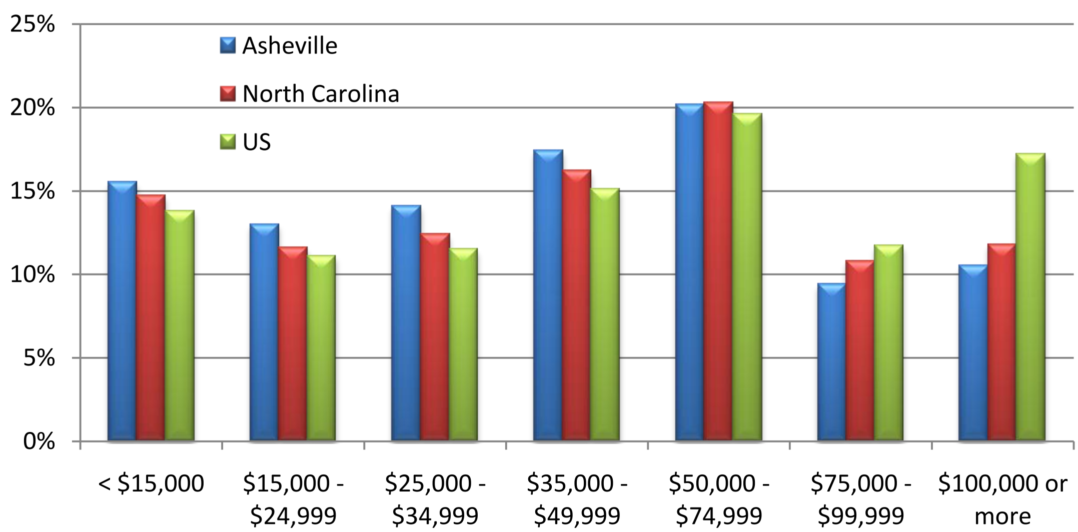
Household Income

According to the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce the estimated 2006 median household income for Asheville is $37,018, which is well below both the North Carolina median household income level at $44,524 and the national median household income at $48,271. However, per capita income for Asheville is $29,883, well above the per capita income for North Carolina at $22,616 and the US at $24,529. These differences are experienced mostly in income levels at the top and the bottom ranges.

The average household size in Asheville, at 2.09 is smaller than North Carolina's figure, at 2.59. This explains why the per capita income in Asheville is higher than in all of North Carolina while the median household income in Asheville is lower.

At the bottom end of the income scale, the percentage of households making less than $25,000 in Asheville is higher, at 28.5 percent, than both North Carolina and United States, at 26.3 percent and 24.9 percent respectively. At the top of the spectrum, Asheville has 10.5 percent of households at or above $100,000, compared to both North Carolina, at 11.8 percent, and the United States, at 17.2 percent.
Figure **3** further represents these levels by showing households by income.

Figure 3: Households by Income – Asheville compared to North Carolina and the US (2007)



Source: Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce: Income Report

Household Size, Units, and Building Permits

The 2007 average household size in Asheville is 2.09 people, lower than the Nation at 2.59, and the State of North Carolina at 2.59. This situation is likely connected to the relatively higher median age and the high levels of retirement age community members.

Table ***3*** shows that a significantly lower percentage of housing units in Asheville are owned and a significantly higher percentage of housing units in Asheville are rented when compared to the state and the nation. This indicates that relatively speaking, Asheville has either a more transient population and/or fewer citizens able to afford buying their living accommodations.

Table 3: Housing Units (2007)

	Asheville	North Carolina	United States
Owner Occupied Housing Units	52.5%	62.1%	61.3%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	38.6%	25.8%	28.8%
Vacant Housing Units	8.9%	12.1%	9.9%

Source: ESRI Business Information Solutions

Additional understanding of housing trends is generated by looking at the building permits issued by the City. Asheville is experiencing a steady increase in the number of building permits, which could ensure development is paying its own way and the level of parks and recreation service is maintained in Asheville, assuming the city is making sufficient requirements of developers. This growth is as follows:

Residential Building Permits

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
New Units	3,817	3,269	4,007	4,318	4,343

Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce

Employment

According to ESRI Business Information Solutions, a total of 35,744 people over 16 years of age are employed in Asheville in 2007. White Collar jobs account for 60.1 percent of employment opportunities, such as management/business/financial, professional, sales and administrative support. The service industry accounts for 19.8 percent of employment, and 20.0 percent are employed in blue collar occupations. These figures regarding employment per sector compare with the state and national levels in the following regards:

- The White Collar employment level is 3.2 percent more than the state percentage of 56.9 percent, and only slightly lower than the nation at 60.2 percent.
- The service sector employment level in Asheville is higher than the state, at 15.5 percent and higher than the nation, currently at 16.5 percent.
- The Blue Collar employment level is less than both the state and nation, at 27.6 percent and 23.3 percent respectively.

Health and Obesity for North Carolina:

The United Health Foundation has ranked North Carolina 36th in 2007 overall State Health Rankings, unchanged from 2006. Obesity rates continue to climb, up from 25.9 percent of the population in 2006 to 26.6 percent in 2007, ranking North Carolina at 39th in the nation for obesity. These rates are significantly higher than the 2000 level, at 21.5 percent, and the 1990 level, 12.9 percent.

The state's greatest strengths include:

- Low prevalence of binge drinking at 11.2 percent of the population
- Ready access to adequate prenatal care with 80.8 percent of pregnant woman receiving adequate prenatal care and
- High immunization coverage with 82.3 percent of children ages 19 to 35 months receiving complete immunizations

Some of the challenges North Carolina faces include:

- High rate of uninsured citizens at 17.9 percent
- High infant mortality rate at 8.8 deaths per 1,000 live births
- High premature death rate with 8,472 years of potential life lost before age 75 per 100,000 population
- Low high school graduation rate with 71.4 percent of incoming ninth graders who graduate within four years
- High percentage of children in poverty at 20.5 percent of persons under age 18

Source: http://www.unitedhealthfoundation.org/shr2007/states/North Carolina.html

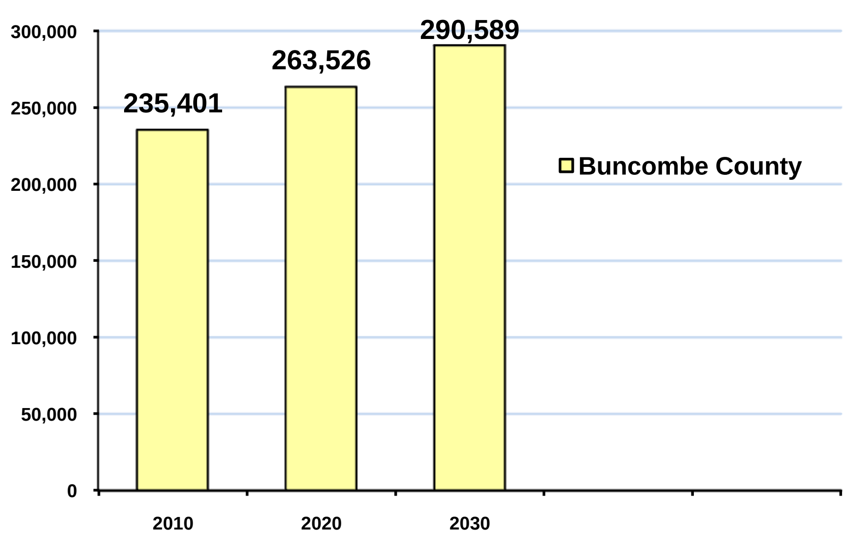
Population Forecast

Although we can never know the future with certainty, it is helpful to make assumptions about it for planning purposes. *Figure* ***4*** details the population projections for Buncombe County provided in the "Buncombe County Population Projections for the Asheville Water Resources Master Plan." ***Figure 2*** above details the population projections for Asheville given by ESRI Business Information Solutions.

This study indicated the following:

- From 1990-2000, the percentage growth in the Asheville population was substantially lower (11%) than growth in Buncombe County as a whole (18%)
- Average annual growth for the City of Asheville population is slightly higher between 2000 and 2006 (1.7%) than Buncombe County population (1.2%)
- City of Asheville population increases are largely due to annexation
- Buncombe County population increased substantially by 18 percent from 1990 to 2000, though this remained below the statewide growth rate of 21 percent
- Since 2000, the population of Buncombe County is estimated to be growing at a slower rate (7%) than over the previous 10 years, though growth continues
- Most population growth in the county is due to net migration, rather than to natural growth (excess of births over deaths)

Figure 4: Buncombe County Population Projections 2010 to 2030



Summary Market Profile and Demographics for Asheville

This market profile is based upon information from ESRI, the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce, and the United Health Foundation.

- According to ESRI, the population of Asheville is 75,948 for 2006.
- Median age is 40.8 years, with the largest age cohort being 35 to 54 years old.
- 47.2 percent of the population is male and 52.8 percent is female.
- The majority of citizens are white, at 76.1 percent in 2007. Those identifying themselves as being of Hispanic origin of any race increased, from 3.8 percent in 2000 to 5.0 percent in 2007.
- Of the population 25 years and older, 41.5 percent have only a high school education or less; 28.2 percent of the population's highest level of educational attainment was some college or an associate degree; and 30.4% of the Asheville population has either a Bachelor's, a Master's, a Professional degree, or a Doctorate.
- Key industries in Asheville include Services (54.2%), Retail Trade (12.5%), Manufacturing (9.0%) and Construction (7.3%).
- The median household income is $37,018 in 2007, lower than the State and Nation.
- Average household size is 2.09 persons, lower than the state and nation.
- In 2007, 52.5 percent of housing units are owner occupied, 38.6% are renter occupied, and 8.9 percent are vacant. Owner occupied units constitute a lower percentage than both the North Carolina and national rates, at 62.1 percent and 61.3 percent respectively.
- Obesity rates continue to climb, up from 25.9 percent of the population in 2006 to 26.6 percent in 2007, ranking North Carolina at 39th in the nation.

Resources

Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce.
http://www.ashevillechamber.org/economicdevelopment/demographics.asp

Buncombe County Population Projections for the Asheville Water Resources Master Plan. Feb. 8, 2008. Prepared by Equinox Environmental Consultation and Design Inc.

ESRI Business Analyst Online.
http://bao.esri.com/esribis

United Health Foundation. State by State Health Snapshots.
http://www.unitedhealthfoundation.org/ahr2007/states/NorthCarolina.html

Current Park and Recreation Trends

In this fast-paced modern society, it has become essential to stay on top of current trends impacting parks and recreation. The recreational provider is faced with the challenge of meeting and exceeding user expectations. Part of this task involves understanding what participants want now and projecting future recreation trends. The following information highlights relevant local, regional, and national parks and recreational trends from various sources.

Seniors

The following are trends related to the aging population in the United States:

- America is aging and it is estimated that by 2010, the median age will be 37 years, and by 2030 the median age will be 39 years.

- The current life expectancy at birth in the United States is 77.9 years.
- There is a growing body of evidence that indicates that aging has more to do with lifestyles and health behaviors than genetics.
- Seniors control more than 70% of the disposable income and have more than $1.6 trillion in spending power, according to Packaged Facts, a division of MarketResearch.com, which publishes market intelligence on several consumer industries.
- Seniors also are the fastest growing segment of health club memberships, according to the International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association (IHRSA).
- The top three sports activities for persons 65 years and older in 2004 were: exercise walking, exercising with equipment, and swimming. (NSGA)

Baby Boomers

Baby Boomers are made up of adults born between 1946 and 1964. This generation makes up approximately 25% of the total population in the United States. The following are trends of this generation:

- According to International, Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association data for 2003, 91% of Boomers feel the need to take measures to ensure their future health.
- Also, Boomers claim 37.6% of all health club memberships.
- Eighty percent of Boomers in a study by American Association of Retired Persons believe they will continue to work either full- or part-time into their retirement years.

Young Adults

According to the International, Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association (IHRSA), 80 percent of Millennials, and almost 90 percent of Generation X feel the need to make sure their health will be good when they get older. There is a growing trend in adult populations of a need for more drop-in programming within recreation facilities, and less structured classes.

However, according to the National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA), the average age for participants in team sports ranges from 16 to 29 years. For males, the range is 18.2 to 29.3 years, compared to 16.2 to 25.3 years for females.

Aquatics

According to the National Sporting Goods Association, swimming ranked second in terms of participation in 2006. There is an increasing trend towards indoor leisure and therapeutic pools. Respondents ranked indoor competitive pools as the 5th most important indoor recreation facilities to be added, expanded, or improved in the 2008 Citizen Survey. Additionally, they ranked indoor aquatic center 5th and indoor competitive pool 6th when asked to indicate which facilities were the three most important to them.

Athletic Recreation

Sports Participation

Highlights from the National Sporting Goods Association participation survey **(Table 4)** include:

- Tennis participation led sports growth in 2007 at 18.7 percent.
- Exercise walking made the number one sports and recreation activity with 89.8 million participants. It grew 2.7 percent in 2007.

- Among fitness activities, only aerobic exercising, with 30.3 million participants in 2007, showed a significant decline (-9.9%). Some of the decline may have come from the inclusion of yoga in the survey for the first time. Yoga attracted 10.7 million participants in 2007.
- Other sports and recreation activities showing less than 5 percent growth in 2007 include skateboarding (4.2% to 10.1 million participants); in-line skating (2.1% to 10.7 million participants); weightlifting (0.9% to 33.2 million participants); and exercising with equipment (0.8% to 52.8 million participants).

Table 4: Top 10 Activities & Sports Measured by Participation Growth from 2006 to 2007

Activity	Total Participation In millions	Percent Change 2006 - 2007
Tennis	**12.3**	18.7%
Scooter Riding	**10.6**	11.4%
Target Shooting	**20.9**	9.7%
Boating (Motor/Power)	**31.9**	8.9%
Volleyball	**12**	8.7%
Target Shooting – airgun	**6.6**	7.9%
Running/jogging	**30.4**	5.5%
Bicycle Riding	**37.4**	5.0%
Skateboarding	**10.1**	4.2%
Exercise Walking	**89.8**	2.7%
Source: National Sporting Goods Association *Participated more than once, for persons seven (7) years and older.*		

Team Sports

- The typical age for participants in team sports ranges from 16 to 29 years. For males the range is 18.2 to 29.3 years compared to 16.2 to 25.3 years for females. *(NSGA)*
- Overall participation in amateur softball has been declining since 2000. The number of adult Amateur Softball Association teams decreased three percent (3%) between 2004 and 2005. *(2007 Statistical Abstract)*
- Among team sports ice hockey rebounded to over 2.5 million participants in 2005 from 1.9 million in 2004. *(SGMA)*

Table 5: Participation in Team Sports (in millions) 2001 to 2006

Sport	2001 Participation	2006 Participation	Percent Change 2001 to 2006
Baseball	14.9	14.6	**-1.5%**
Basketball	28.1	26.7	**-4.9%**
Football (Tackle)	8.2	11.9	**45.0%**
Hockey (Ice)	2.2	1.9	**-12.2%**
Soccer	13.9	14.0	**1.0%**
Softball	13.2	12.4	**-5.8%**
Volleyball	12.0	11.1	**-8.0%**
Source: National Sporting Goods Association ***Participated more than once, for persons seven (7) years and older.***			

Youth Sports

Sports and Fitness

- According to the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association (SGMA), seven (7) of the fifteen (15) most popular activities for children are team sports. Organized, after-school activities, club sports, and programs targeted at school-aged children could help to fill the fitness void that is growing larger in United States schools.
- Specific offerings for kid's fitness are slowly increasing in health and fitness facilities. (*IDEA*)
- For youth seven to 11 years of age, bicycle riding has the highest number of participants.
- According to the NSGA **(**Table 6**)**, in terms of overall youth participation for selected sports, skateboarding experienced the largest increases in participation from 1998-2007 at 75 percent, while snowboarding (39%), and tackle football (23%) also increased by more than 20 percent In-line skating experienced the largest decrease in participation at 60%, followed by softball (36%), alpine skiing (29%) and fishing (20%). Volleyball, basketball, and golf also experienced decreases of more than 15 percent in participation rates.

Table 6: NSGA Youth Participation in Selected Activities and Percent Change 1998-2007

	Overall % Change 1998-2007	Age 7-11 % Change 1998-2007	Age 12-17 % Change vs 1998
Total U.S.	9.3%	-2.3%	9.0%
Baseball	-12.0%	-15.7%	-32.5%
Basketball	-17.9%	-21.5%	-15.7%
Bicycle Riding	-14.1%	-29.9%	-16.9%
Bowling	8.5%	4.6%	12.5%
Fishing (Fresh water)	-20.2%	-37.5%	-24.0%
Football (Tackle)	-23.5%	19.1%	29.6%

Golf	-17.3%	-48.3%	-40.7%
Ice Hockey	-2.8%	-31.0%	-29.3%
In-line Skating	-60.4%	-66.7%	-50.9%
Mountain Biking (off road)	-13.8%	-38.5%	-23.0%

Natural Environments and Open Space

Environmental Education

In April, 2007 the NRPA sent out a survey to member agencies in order to learn more about the programs and facilities that public park and recreation agencies provide to connect children and their families with nature. A summary of the results follow:

- 68 percent of public park and recreation agencies offer nature-based programming and 61 percent have nature-based facilities. More than 30 percent of public agencies offer no nature programming, and slightly less than 40% have no nature-based facilities.
- The most common programs include nature hikes, nature-1 oriented arts and crafts, fishing-related events, and nature-based education in cooperation with local schools.
- When asked to describe the elements that directly contribute to their most successful programs, agencies listed staff training as most important followed by program content and number of staff/staff training.
- When asked what resources would be needed most to expand programming, additional staff was most important followed by funding.
- Of the agencies that do not currently offer nature-based programming, 90 percent indicated that they want to in the future. Additional staff and funding were again the most important resources these agencies would need going forward.
- The most common facilities include: nature parks/preserves, self-guided nature trails, outdoor classrooms, and nature centers.
- When asked to describe the elements that directly contribute to their most successful facilities, agencies listed funding as most important followed by presence of wildlife and community support.

According to the Outdoor Industry Association (OIA) report "the Active Outdoor Recreation Economy" released in 2006:

- Over three-quarters of Americans participate in active outdoor recreation each year.
- Five percent of Americans, almost 6.5 million, depend on the active outdoor recreation economy to make a living.
- Americans spend $289 billion each year on gear, trip-related items and services to enjoy active outdoor recreation.

Cultural Arts

According to a survey published in the 2007 Statistical Abstract of the United States, the highest percentage of persons visiting historic sites was in the 45-54 age group (38.0%), followed by the 35-44 age group (35.8%). The highest percentage of persons visiting art museums and galleries was in the 45-54 age group (32.9%) followed by the 55-64 age group (27.8%).

- Attendance at the traditional performing arts events has steadily increased between 2000 and 2004 for all categories except opera and symphony/orchestra. (2007 Statistical Abstract)
- Those with incomes less than $29,999 enjoy arts/craft fairs and festivals. Individuals with income levels between $30,000 and $74,999 enjoy art museums, galleries, arts/craft fairs, festivals and historic sites. More than 50 percent of those with incomes over $75,000 visit historic sites. (2007 Statistical Abstract)
- Organized events held in public parks (arts festivals, athletic events, food festivals, musical and theatrical) often bring substantial positive economic impacts to their communities, filling hotel rooms and restaurant, and bringing customers to local stores. (Trust for Public Land)

A study released by the Statistical Abstract of the United States in 2007 showed attendance at arts activities by age group for persons 18 years old and over. *Table* ***7*** shows results of the study.

Table 7: Attendance by Age Group- Selected Arts Activities 2007

Activity	Age 18-24	Age 25-34	Age 35-44	Age 45-54	Age 55-64	Age 65-74	Age 75+
Jazz	10.5%	10.8%	13.0%	13.9%	8.8%	7.6%	3.9%
Classical Music	7.8%	9.0%	10.7%	15.2%	15.6%	12.5%	9.5%
Musicals	14.8%	15.4%	19.1%	19.3%	19.7%	16.6%	10.1%
Plays	11.4%	10.7%	13.0%	15.2%	13.8%	13.0%	5.4%
Ballet	2.6%	3.5%	4.9%	5.1%	3.3%	3.3%	2.2%
Art Museums/Galleries	23.7%	26.7%	27.4%	32.9%	27.8%	23.4%	13.45
Art/Craft Fairs & Festivals	29.2%	33.5%	37.2%	38.8%	35.1%	31.1%	15.7%
Historic Sites	28.3%	33.3%	35.8%	38.0%	31.6%	24.2%	12.8%
Literature*	42.8%	47.7%	46.6%	51.6%	48.9%	45.3%	36.7%

Trails and Specialty Parks

- Trails, parks, and playgrounds are among the five most important community amenities considered when selecting a home, according to a 2002 survey of recent homebuyers by the National Association of Home Builders and National Association of Realtors. (Pack & Schunuel)
- Two of the emerging specialty parks include skate parks and dog parks. (Van Der Smissen et al.)
- The Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association estimates there are about 1,000 skateboard parks in the United States.

Facilities

The June 2007 “State of the Industry” report surveyed all types of organizations including public, private, and non-profit. The largest percent of respondents were in the Midwest (31.9%), and the highest percent of respondent organizations were public (67.1%).

- More than three-quarters of respondents reported that they have plans to build new facilities, add to their existing facilities, or renovate their existing facilities within the next three years.
- On average, facilities are planning to spend nearly $3.8 million on new facilities, additions and renovations over the next several years.
- Across the board, the most common amenity included in facilities of all kinds were outdoor sport courts for such sports as tennis and basketball, locker rooms, bleachers and seating, natural turf sports fields for sports like baseball, football and soccer, and concession areas.
- More than 60 percent of respondents said their facility included an outdoor sports court.

The current national trend is toward a “one-stop” facility to serve all ages. Large, multipurpose regional centers help increase cost recovery, promote retention, and encourage cross-use. Agencies across the U.S. are increasing revenue production and cost recovery. Amenities that are becoming “typical” as opposed to alternative include:

- Multipurpose, large regional centers (65,000 to 125,000+ sq. ft.) for all ages/abilities with all amenities in one place. This design saves on staff costs, encourages retention and participation, and saves on operating expenses due to economies of scale.
- Leisure and therapeutic pools
- Interactive game rooms
- Nature centers/outdoor recreation and education centers
- Regional playground for all ages of youth
- Skate parks
- Partnerships with private providers or other government agencies
- Indoor walking tracks
- Themed décor

Amenities that are still considered “alternative” but increasing in popularity:

- Climbing walls
- Cultural art facilities
- Green design techniques and certifications such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED). A recent Building and Construction Authority (BCA) survey indicated that 52 percent of the recreation-industry survey respondents indicated they were willing to pay more for green design knowing that it would significantly reduce or eliminate the negative impact of buildings on the environment and occupants.

Partnerships

In the Parks and Recreation industry it is common to form partnerships with other organizations either to increase funding potential or to improve programming options. According to the June 2007 State of the Industry Report published in Recreation Management Magazine, 96.3 percent of survey respondents in the Parks and Recreation industry have found one way or another to partner with other organizations to accomplish their missions.

- Over 78 percent of parks and recreation departments reported forming partnerships with local schools.
- Local government was the second most common partnership. More than 67 percent of parks and recreation departments in the survey listed local government as a partner.

- Other partners listed in the survey include: International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association (HRSA), the American Camp Association, Professional Golf Association (PGA), Rotary International, Lions and Elks Clubs, faith-based organizations, the Boys and Girls Clubs, Boy Scouts and Girl Scout, the Special Olympics, and local and state tourism boards.
- Facilities least likely to form partnerships with external organizations included: resorts and hotels, water parks, amusement parks and theme parks, campgrounds, youth camps, private camps, and RV parks.