

Anacortes Parks and Recreation

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To: Jeroldine Hallberg	From: Jonn Lunsford
Date: March 19, 2009	Re: Skagit County Planning and Development Services

Pages: 5 w/ cover

I am sending a copy of the relevant pages of a recent telephone survey in Anacortes that shows 88 percent of respondents cite walking or hiking as one of their recreational activities.

Our current Parks and Forest Lands comprehensive plans are in their draft form and are working their way through the local approval process. Both support our current trail system and pedestrian networks and expanding those where possible in future.

Please contact me if you have any questions @ (360) 299-1953 or fax (360) 293-1928.

Thank you

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FINAL REPORT
**Anacortes Parks and Recreation
Planning Survey**

September 2007

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Anacortes Parks and Recreation Department (APR) conducted a phone survey during July and August of 2007 to gather feedback and help establish priorities in preparation for completing its long-range plan. Applied Research Northwest (ARN) performed the 300 phone interviews with the residents of the greater Anacortes area.

Included in the survey were questions about park usage, recreational activities, APR recreational programming and communication. The survey also addressed potential focus areas for long term planning, asking residents to consider what types of facilities they would likely use and to rate the importance of possible expansion efforts.

KEY FINDINGS

The majority of respondents say they visit the parks with regularity; most visit an Anacortes park at least once a month (68%). Washington Park is the most popular park with 41% of respondents visiting once a month or more.

Anacortes residents participate in a wide range of activities. The majority of respondents (88%) cite walking or hiking as an activity they have participated in during the past year. Other popular activities include picnicking, dog-walking, swimming and boating.

Nearly half of all respondents say there is someone in their household who would be interested in city sponsored recreational programming. A majority of interested households say that they would be interested in programming geared towards adults. This was supported by open-ended comments asking for adult and senior classes.

Most respondents learn about the Parks Department programming through the quarterly menu that is sent out in the mail. About one-quarter of respondents also use the website. Respondents like the quarterly menu and it is the preferred top choice for information.

When asked to rate the importance of two possible expansion projects, respondents showed a slightly stronger interest in expanding the Tommy Thompson Parkway than expanding on the Community Forest Lands, but both possible projects have moderate to strong support.

Respondents were presented with three possible new facilities and asked to consider how likely they would be to use the facilities. The most popular of these possible facilities overall was a small boat facility, with 36% of respondents saying they would be likely to use it. Households with children showed a preference for an indoor multi-purpose athletic field with 71% likely to use it. While seniors were significantly less likely to say they would use any of the three facilities, they rated the small boat facility the most favorably of the three.

When asked how likely they would be to financially support a project that they favor, three-quarters of respondents (74%) said they would be likely to agree to a tax increase. Respondents over the age of 64 were less likely to support a tax increase but a solid majority was still favorable toward supporting a tax.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The residents of Anacortes are highly satisfied with the Department of Parks and Recreation and are active users of the facilities they provide. They are especially satisfied with the overall quality of the parks and forestlands.

Based on the current survey results, these are some recommendations to consider when establishing priorities for the long range plan:

- ▣ Continue to utilize a variety of methods for communicating programming information.
- ▣ Gear additional programming toward adults and seniors.
- ▣ Further pursue the prospects of an indoor athletic field and small boat facility. They have strong support and seem to be a good match for the community.

RESPONDENT ACTIVITIES

Respondents were asked what activities their household members have engaged in during the past year. The majority of respondents (88%) said they have engaged in walking or hiking as an activity. Other popular activities include picnicking (68%), dog-walking (49%), swimming (47%), and boating (46%).

Table 1 shows that households with children under 18 had a higher rate of participation in all activities. This is likely due to the fact that households with children have more people to account for and a higher overall activity level.

	Count	% of All Respondents (N=300)
Walking or hiking	256	85
Picnicking	198	66
Dog-walking	141	47
Swimming	138	46
Boating	134	45
Other	107	36
Camping	102	34
Running	90	30
Mountain biking	73	24
Soccer	46	15
Baseball or softball	46	15
Tennis	42	14
Motorcycling	21	7
Horseback riding	20	7
Skateboarding	15	5

Note: Additional activities mentioned by 5% of all respondents (included here in "Other" category) were basketball and golf.

Analysis showed that senior respondents were significantly less likely than younger respondents to participate in every activity with the exception of dog-walking. Forty percent (40%) of seniors surveyed said that they have engaged in dog-walking in the past year.

Interestingly, 64% of respondents who have engaged in dog walking did not visit the off-leash dog park in the past year.