

Hays City Parks and Recreation Survey 2000

Executive Summary

Bucher, Willis, and Ratliff Corporation contracted with the Docking Institute of Public Affairs to conduct a telephone survey of 445 adult Hays residents for the City of Hays. The specific objectives of the survey included:

- \$ Determining the extent of Hays recreation programs and facilities usage.
- \$ Ascertaining attitudes toward the mix of athletic fields, playgrounds, and open space in Hays parks.
- \$ Determining preferences for the concentration of athletic fields into one major complex.
- \$ Assessing levels of satisfaction with certain types of recreational facilities in Hays.
- \$ Assessing opinions about needed improvements to existing recreation facilities in Hays.
- \$ Determining perceived importance of certain types of substantial changes to the Hays parks and recreation system.
- \$ Assessing levels of support for a sales tax increase to fund improvements to Hays parks and recreation facilities.

From analysis of survey results, we find that:

- \$ The majority (71%) of respondent households have a member that currently uses a City of Hays park or recreation facility. Non-school playgrounds receive the most use. Non-school activity fields are the next most used, followed by HRC programs and, lastly, open space.
- \$ A majority (59%) feel the mix of open space and athletic fields/playgrounds in parks is about right.
- \$ A majority (58%) do not want athletic fields to be concentrated in one major complex.
- \$ Overall, satisfaction with parks and recreation facilities tends to be high. Respondents are most satisfied with Hays Recreation Center Programs and least

- satisfied with biking and walking trails.
- \$ Among a list of possible improvements to existing facilities, respondents describe “more trails in parks” as the most important improvement needed, followed by “more picnic facilities in parks.”

 - \$ Among the list of possible substantial changes to the Hays parks and recreation system, those items respondents consider to be the most important are constructing outdoor organized athletic facilities and constructing a large multipurpose indoor facility. However, these items were considered less important than improving existing facilities. The item least important is constructing an indoor swimming pool.

 - \$ There is moderate support for a sales tax increase to fund improvements, with 44% “somewhat supporting” it and 24% “strongly supporting it.”

Methods

Between March 17 and March 29, 2000 Docking Institute's University Center for Survey Research conducted a survey of 445 households in the city of Hays. A random sampling technique was utilized to generate the telephone numbers. The survey was conducted using a Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system. The CATI system allows interviewers to code survey information into a computer database as the interviewers administer a questionnaire to a respondent. A total of 578 households were successfully contacted after up to six call attempts. In 445 of these households a resident agreed to complete the survey. This represents a response rate of 77%.

Using a 95% confidence interval, the results from the survey of households have a margin of error of $\pm 4.5\%$. In other words, given 100 different random samples of 445 Hays households, only 5% of the time would the total results obtained from the sample population vary by more than $\pm 4.5\%$ from the results that would be obtained if the total population were surveyed (assuming no response bias). Importantly, the margin of error for subgroups is higher. Any statistics for subgroups with less than 40 to 50 respondents are primarily suggestive.

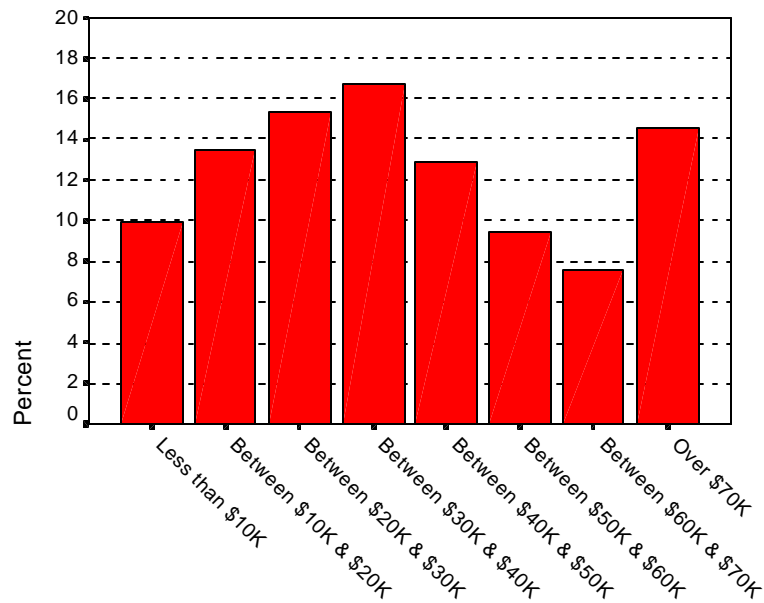
Survey Instrument

The Docking Institute; Bucher, Willis, and Ratliff Corporation; and the City of Hays Parks and Recreation Steering Committee agreed on survey items used. It was the responsibility of the Bucher, Willis, and Ratliff Corporation and the Parks and Recreation Steering Committee to identify information areas and objectives of the survey. It was the responsibility of the Docking Institute to develop survey items that were technically correct and without bias. Question wording and the design of the survey instrument are the property of the Docking Institute and are not to be used for additional surveys unless written permission is given by the Director of the Docking Institute. A copy of the survey instrument along with relative frequency distributions (percentages) or measures of central tendency on survey items is provided in Appendix 1. Appendix 2 shows results for open ended survey items.

Sample Demographics

Fifty-one percent of the respondents are female. The mean (average) age of the respondents is 44 years and the median is 41 years. The number of years lived in Hays ranges from less than one year to 82 years. The mean number of years lived in Hays is 20. The household income distribution is shown in Figure 1. Among those who answered this question, the income category representing the largest percentage (about 17%) is the \$30,000 to \$40,000 per year group. The second largest income category at about 15% is the \$20,000 to \$30,000 group. A substantial percentage (about 14%) have household incomes of over \$70,000. The majority (about 85%) are registered voters. These demographic characteristics are very similar to sample characteristics of another general population survey of Hays conducted about one year ago by the Docking Institute (see *Hays City Services Survey 1999* report available from the City of Hays). Respondents were also asked to indicate the number of people living in the household. The number of people living in a household ranges from one to seven, and the mean number is 2.72. Almost half (48%) of the households in the sample have a member who is 20 years old or younger.

Figure 1
Household Income



q15 Yearly income

Parks and Recreation
Facilities Usage

Respondents were asked to indicate whether any household member uses “City of Hays recreation programs or recreation facilities, like playgrounds, athletic fields, parks, and indoor facilities.” Figure 2 shows that 71% of the households surveyed have a member that uses City recreation

programs or facilities. Those who indicated that a member of the household does use recreation programs or facilities were asked to indicate the approximate number of times a member of the household used certain facilities. Table 1 shows that the number of times a household member used a non-school playground in the past year ranges from 0 to 300 times, with a mean of approximately 14 times. The number of times using a non-school activity field ranges also ranges from 0 to 300, with a mean of approximately 16 times. The number of times in which an open space area is used ranges from 0 to 365 (every day), with a mean of approximately 11 times.

Finally, the number of times that a Hays Recreation Commission program is used ranges from 0 to 340, with a mean of approximately 14 times.

Figure 2
Household Member Uses Program or Facility

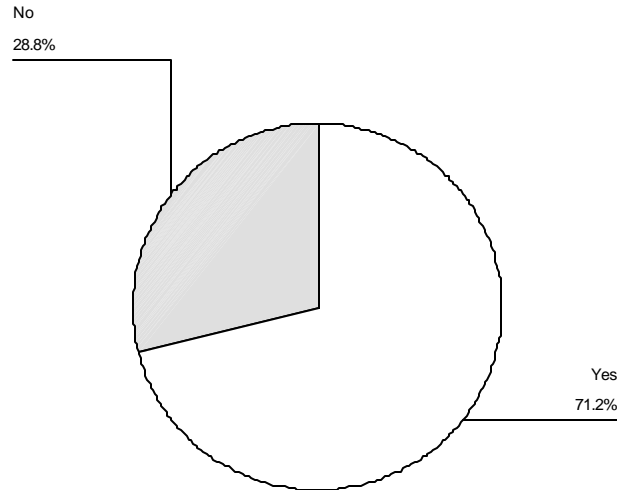


Table 1
Levels of Program and Facility Usage

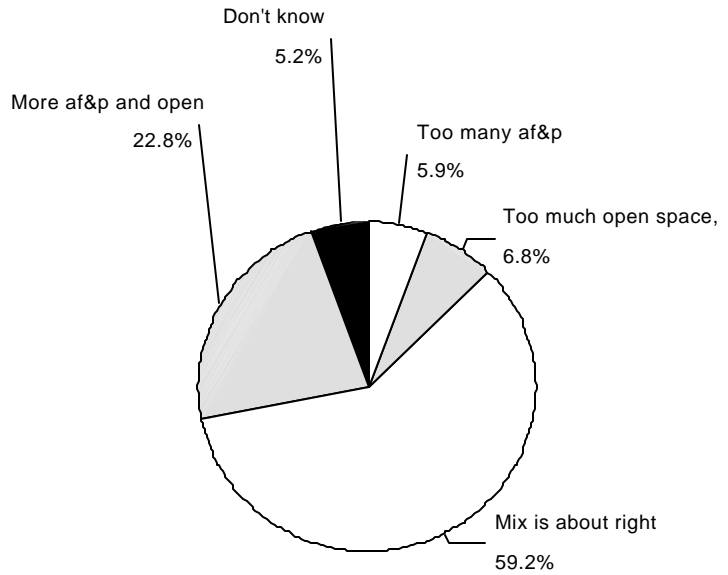
		q5a Times used non-school playground	q5b Times used non-school activity field	q5c Times used open space area	q5d Times used HRC programs
N	Valid	314	314	314	313
	Missing	131	131	131	132
Mean		14.40	13.70	8.78	10.74
Median		5.00	2.00	2.00	1.00
Mode		0	0	0	0
Std. Deviation		21.83	22.26	18.32	23.07
Minimum		0	0	0	0
Maximum		300	300	365	340

a. Footnote Because the mean is highly influenced by outliers, and there were a few cases on each variable that were above 100, all values above 100 were truncated to 100 for purposes of calculating the mean.

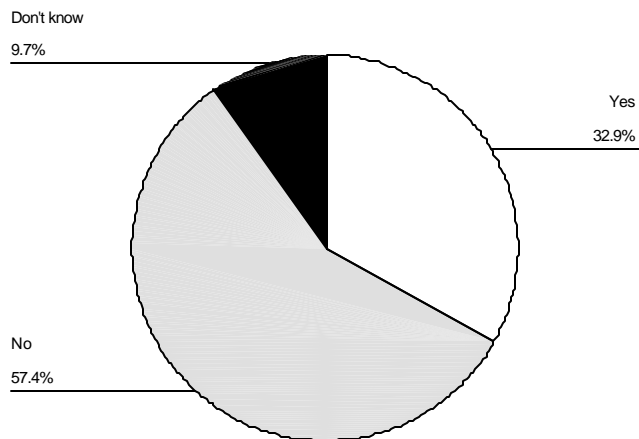
Attitudes Toward the Mix of Space Usage

In an effort to ascertain the preference for use of park space, a survey item asked respondents to indicate whether there are “too many athletic fields/playgrounds and not enough open space, too much open space and not enough athletic fields/playgrounds, the mix is about right, or parks need more athletic fields/playgrounds *and* more open space.” Figure 3 shows that the majority (59%) of respondents feel the mix between athletic fields/playgrounds and open space in parks is about right. The next largest percentage (23%) prefer more athletic fields/playgrounds and open space. About 7% feel there is currently too much open space, and only slightly less (6%) feel there is currently too many athletic fields and playgrounds and not enough open space.

**Figure 3
Preference for Mix of Park
Space Usage (N=439)**



**Figure 4
Preference for Concentration of
Athletic Fields (N=434)**



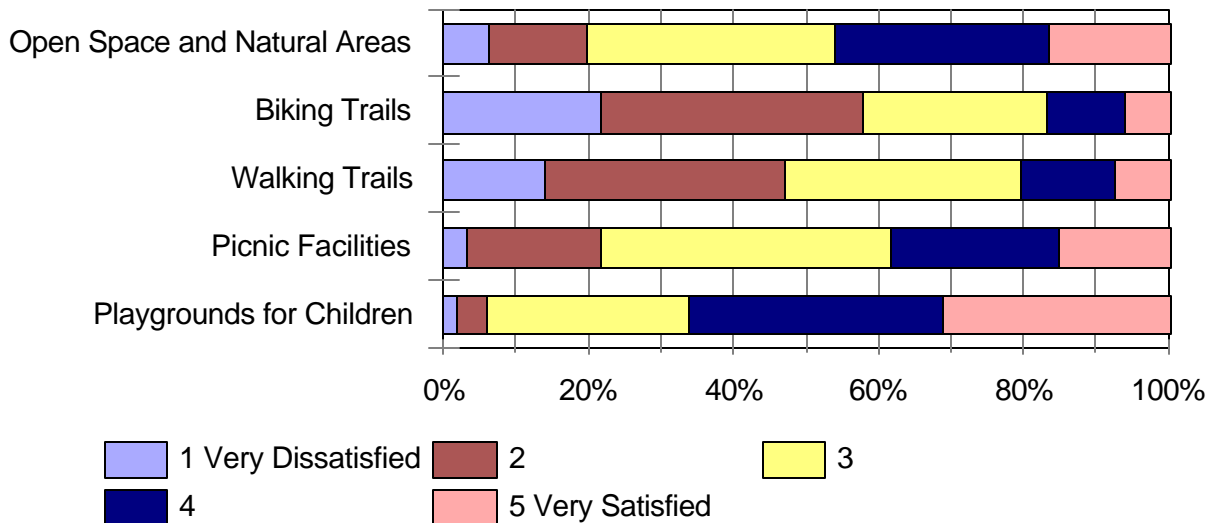
Respondents were also asked, “Would you prefer that athletic fields be located in one major complex.” Figure 4 shows that the majority (57%) do not prefer that athletic fields be concentrated in one major complex.

About 33% do feel that athletic fields should be concentrated, and about 10% do not have an opinion at this time. An analysis (not shown) of association between preference toward concentrating athletic fields in a major complex and use of recreation programs and facilities shows no significant relationship. In other words, using programs or recreation facilities has no influence on the preference to concentrate athletic fields in one major complex. In addition, there is no relationship between preference for athletic field concentration and the extent to which someone in the respondent's household uses organized athletic fields in Hays.

Satisfaction with Parks and Facility Availability

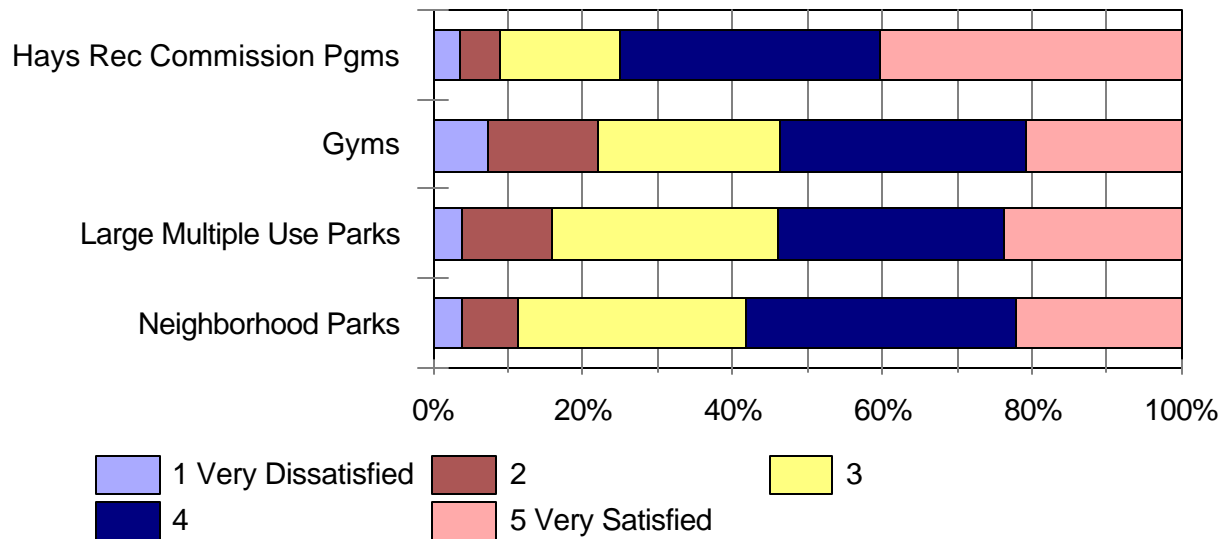
Respondents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction with a number of Hays Park and Recreation facilities on a scale from one to five, where 1 means “very dissatisfied” and 5 means “very satisfied.” Of the facilities or areas reported in Figure 6 respondents express the most satisfaction with playgrounds for children, with 31% giving it a “5” (very satisfied) and 35% giving it a “4” on the five point scale. Twenty-eight percent give playgrounds a “3”, which can be interpreted as “neutral.” Only 4% give playgrounds a “2”, and only 2% give it a “1” (very dissatisfied). Relatively high levels of satisfaction with availability are found for picnic facilities and open space and natural areas as well. The lowest level of satisfaction with availability of a facility reported in Figure 6 is found for biking trails, with about 22% giving biking trails a “1” (very dissatisfied), and approximately 36% giving them a “2” on the five point scale. Figure 7 shows satisfaction with availability for more recreation facilities and areas. Of the items in Figure 7, the highest levels of satisfaction with availability are found for Hays Recreation Commission Programs, with

Figure 6
Satisfaction with Parks and Facility Availability
(chart 1)



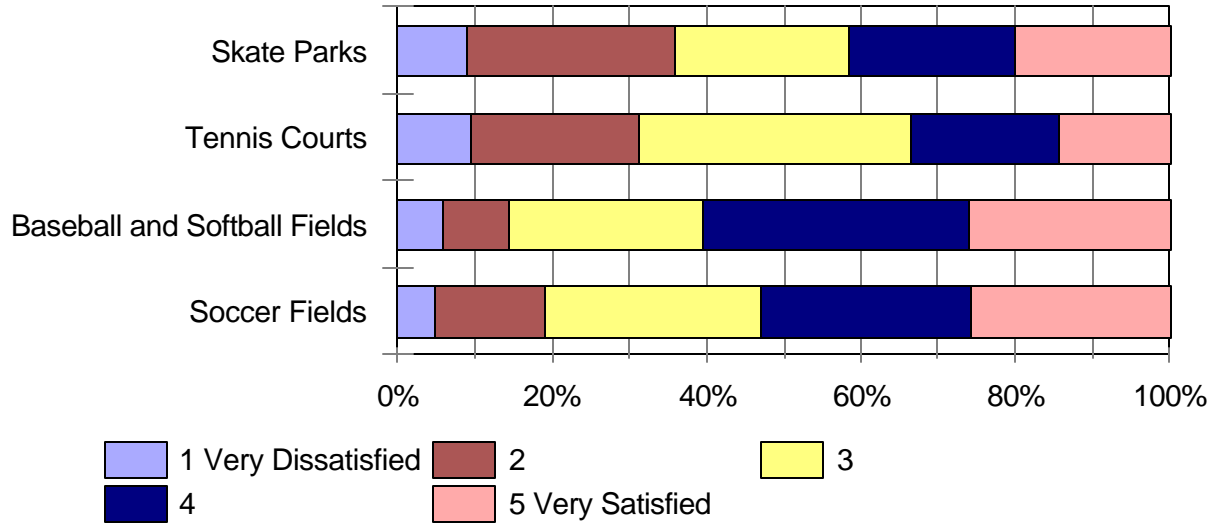
approximately 40% giving them a “5” (very satisfied) and 35% giving them a “4” on the five point scale. Satisfaction with availability of neighborhood parks, large multiple use parks, and gyms are very similar. Over 50% of respondents give both at least a “4” on the five point scale. The highest levels of dissatisfaction shown in Figure 7 are with gyms. Still,

Figure 7
Satisfaction with Parks and Facility Availability
(chart 2)



only about 7% give gyms a “1” (very dissatisfied), and about 15% give gyms a “2”. Figure 8 (next page) reports on the remainder of the facilities and areas that respondents were asked to consider. Of the facilities reported in Figure 8, the highest levels of satisfaction with availability are expressed for baseball and softball fields, with 26% giving them a “5” (very satisfied) and about 35% giving them a “4” (on the five point scale). Satisfaction with availability of soccer fields is also high, with about 26% giving them a “5” (very satisfied) and 27% giving them a “4”. Less than 50% of the respondents give skate parks and tennis courts a “4” or a “5” (very satisfied). More dissatisfaction is expressed with these facilities, with a combined 36% giving skate parks a “2” or a “1” (very dissatisfied) and a combined 31% giving tennis courts a “2” or a “1” (very dissatisfied).

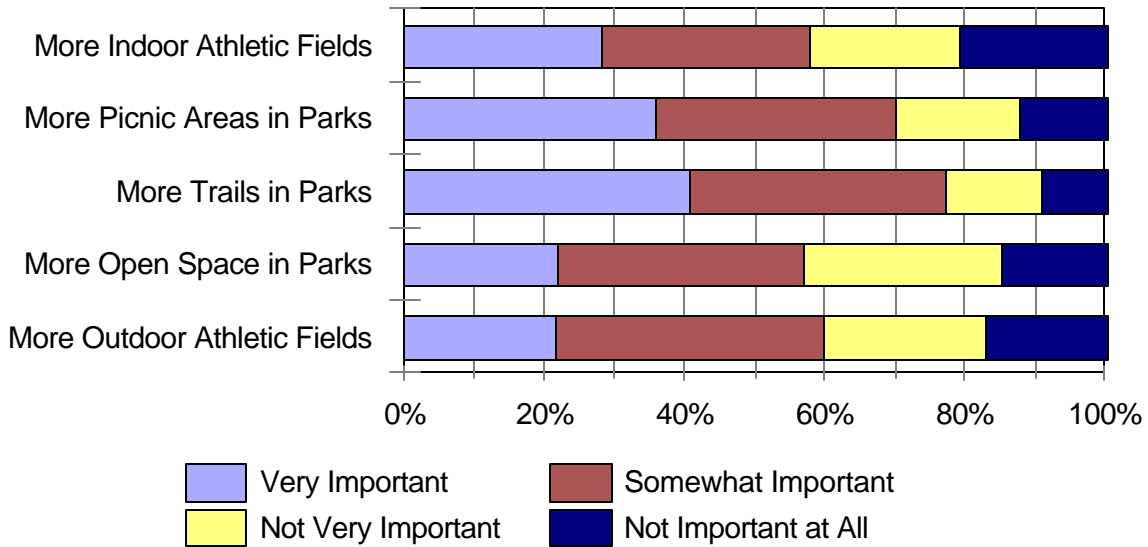
Figure 8
Satisfaction with Parks and Facility Availability
(chart 3)



Importance of Improvements to Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities

Respondents were read a list of possible improvements to existing parks and recreation facilities and asked to indicate whether the improvement is “very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not important at all.” Figure 9 shows that “more trails in parks” is the improvement with the largest percentages of respondents indicating very important (41%) or somewhat important (37%). Respondents indicate that the second area in most need of improvement is “more picnic areas in parks”, with 36% describing this as very important and 34% as somewhat important. About 28% feel “more indoor athletic fields” is a very important improvement. Results for “more open space in parks” and “more outdoor athletic fields” are very similar overall. Only 22% describe these improvements as very important.

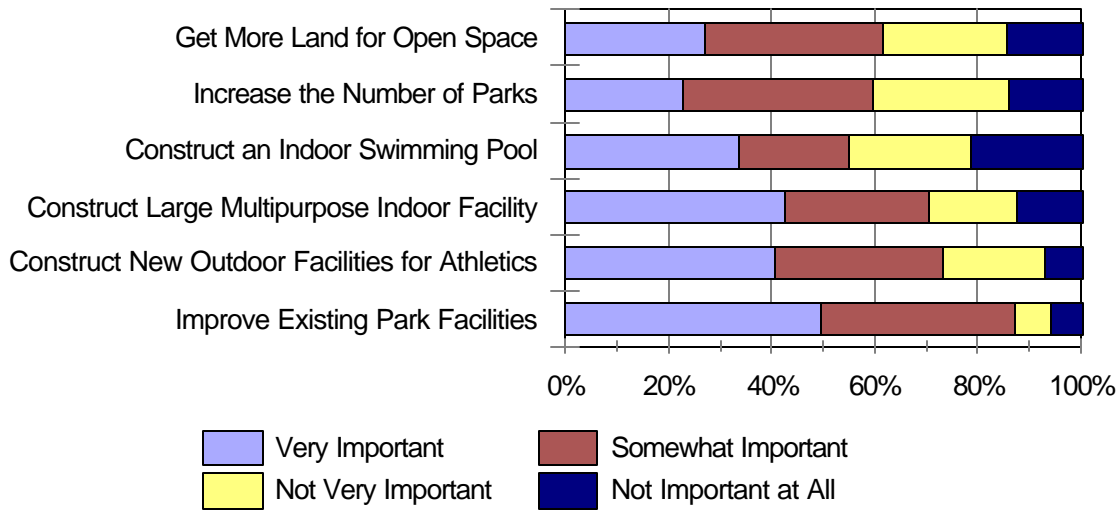
Figure 9
Importance of Improvements



Importance of Substantial Changes to the Hays Parks and Recreation System

Respondents were read a list of possible large changes to Hays parks and recreation facilities and again asked to indicate whether the improvement is “very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not important at all.” Included in the same list is “improving existing park facilities.” This was included to measure the importance of making certain types of large changes relative to the importance of improving facilities that are already present. Of the items shown in Figure 10, the item with the largest percentage of respondents indicating very important (50%) and somewhat important (38%) is “improving existing park facilities.” “Constructing new outdoor facilities for athletics” is second in terms of importance, with 40% describing it as very important and 32% describing it as somewhat important. This is followed closely by “constructing a large multipurpose indoor facility”, with 42% describing it as very important and 28% describing it as somewhat important. The item appearing to be least important relative to the other items is “constructing an indoor swimming pool”, with a combined percentage of 55% describing this as very important or somewhat

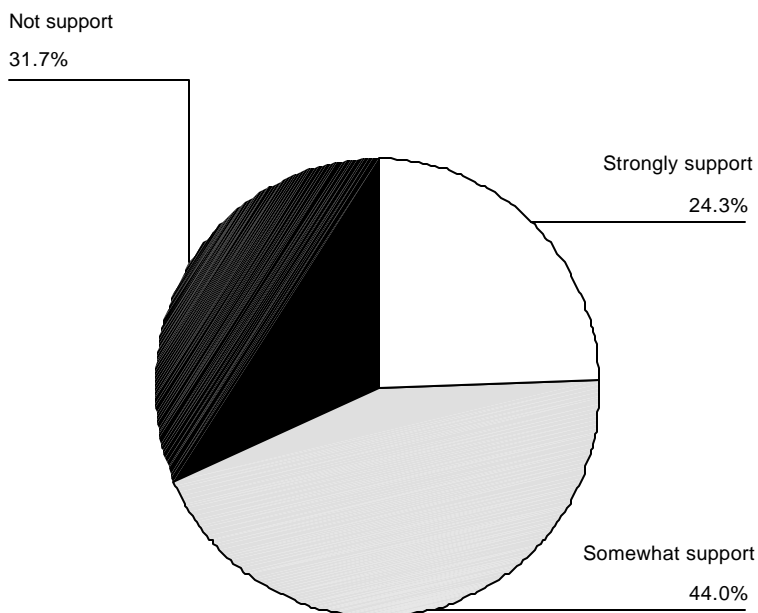
Figure 10
Importance of Large Changes to Parks and Recreation Facilities



Support for Sales Tax Increase to Fund Parks and Recreation Improvements

A final survey item measured support for a sales tax increase to fund improvements. Respondents were asked, “Would you strongly support, somewhat support, or not support a sales tax increase that would be used to make improvements to the parks and recreation system?” Overall, Figure 11 shows moderate support for a sales tax increase. About one-fourth (24%) of respondents strongly support a sales tax increase to fund improvements to the parks and recreation system. Another 44% somewhat support an increase. A substantial percentage (32%) do not support a sales tax increase.

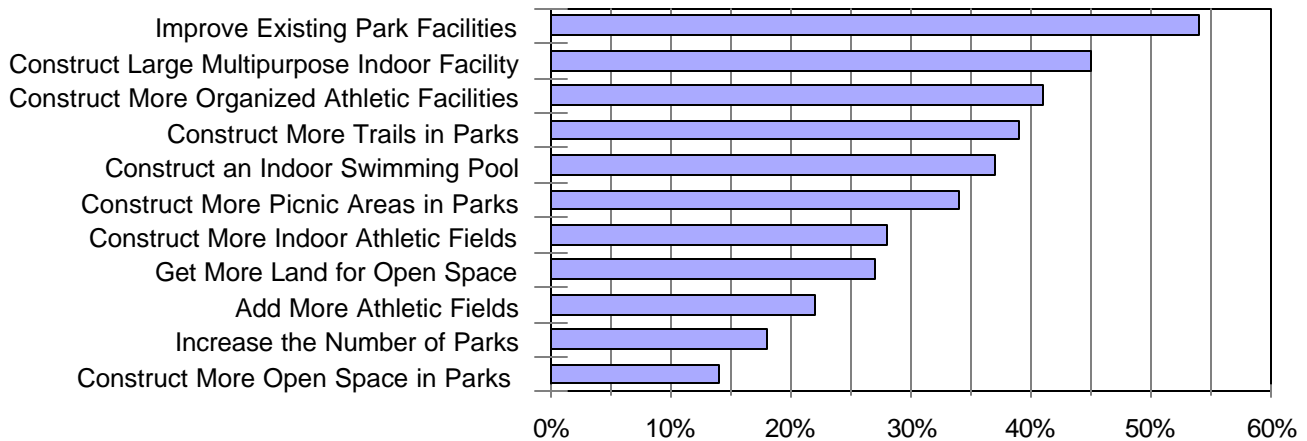
Figure 11
Support for a Sales Tax Increase



For planning purposes, it is informative to ascertain which types of improvements are most important to those who express reserved or qualified support for a tax increase. The 44% (N=186) who “somewhat support” a tax increase were analyzed in greater detail to determine which types of improvements this groups feels are most needed. Answers to

survey items regarding improvements to Hays parks and recreation facilities and programs were compared for the group of respondents that “somewhat support” a sales tax increase. Figure 12 reports the percentage of this group of respondents that answered “very important” to a number of possible improvements to Hays parks and recreation facilities and programs. “Improvement to existing park facilities” is the only item on which a majority (54%) of respondents indicated improvement is very important. Constructing a large multipurpose indoor facility ranks second in terms of the percentage (45%) of respondents indicating it is very important. Construction of more outdoor organized athletic facilities ranks third at 41%.

Figure 12
Percentage of Respondents Somewhat Supportive of Sales Tax
Who Feel that Improvements to Facilities are “Very Important” (N=186)



Summary

The majority (71%) of respondent households have a member that currently uses a City of Hays park or recreation facility. Non-school playgrounds receive the most use, non-school activity fields the next most use, HRC programs the third most use, followed by open space use. A majority (59%) feel the mix of open space and athletic fields/playgrounds in parks is about right. A majority (58%) do not want athletic fields to be concentrated in one major complex. Overall, satisfaction with parks and recreation facilities tends to be high. Respondents are most satisfied with Hays Recreation Center Programs and least satisfied with biking and walking trails. Among existing facilities, respondents describe “more trails in parks” as the most important improvement needed, followed by “more picnic facilities in parks.” Among the list of possible substantial changes to the Hays parks and recreation system, those items respondents consider to be the most important are constructing outdoor organized athletic facilities and constructing a large multipurpose indoor facility. However, these items were considered less important than improving existing facilities. The item least important is constructing an indoor swimming pool. There is moderate support for an increase in sales tax to fund improvements, with 44% “somewhat supporting” it and 24% “strongly supporting it.”

Appendix 1

Hays Parks and Recreation Survey

Hello, my name is (FIRST NAME). I am calling from Fort Hays State University on behalf of the City of Hays and the Hays Recreation Commission to ask some questions about Hays parks and recreation facilities.

May I speak with the male (or female) head of the household?
 [IF CONTACT IS NOT THE TARGETED RESPONDENT, REPEAT INTRODUCTION WHEN TARGETED RESPONDENT IS ON THE PHONE]
 [AFTER READING THE INTRODUCTION TO THE TARGETED RESPONDENT, CONTINUE....]

Our survey will take about five minutes. May I ask you a few questions?

Including you, how many people live in your household?[Q1]mean 2.72
median 2.00

Including you, how many people in your household are... [Q2]
 [ENTER THE NUMBER MENTIONED FOR EACH CATEGORY;
 ENTER "0" IF THERE ARE NONE IN THE AGE CATEGORY]

	0	1	2	3	4	5+	Total
Under 5 years old	85%	11%	3%	0	0	0	99%
5-9 years old	87%	9%	3%	0.5%	0	0	99.5%
10-20 years old	67%	14%	15%	3%	1%	0	100%
21-30 years old	69%	14%	14%	1%	1%	1%	100%
31-40 years old	72%	14%	13%	0	0	0	99%
41-50 years old	73%	13%	13%	0	0	0	99%
Over 50							

65%	15%	17%	1%	0	0	98%
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Several of our questions involve opinions on open space. For this survey, open space means areas like an open field and areas with vegetation in a park but no playground equipment, athletic facilities, or picnic facilities. Currently most parks in Hays are a mix of athletic fields and playgrounds with some open space.

Thinking of Hays parks in general, do you think that (1) there are too many athletic fields and playgrounds and not enough open space, (2) that there is too much open space and not enough athletic fields and playgrounds, (3) that the mix of athletic fields and playgrounds with open space is about right as it is, or (4) Hays needs more athletic fields and playgrounds and more open space? [Q3]

- 1 Too many athletic fields/playgrounds and not enough open space 6%
- 2 Too much open space and not enough athletic fields/playgrounds 7%
- 3 Mix is about right 58%
- 4 Parks need more athletic fields/playgrounds and more open space 23%
- 8 Don't Know 5%
- 9 Refused Answer 0.5%

Do you or other members of your household use City of Hays recreation programs or recreation facilities, like playgrounds, athletic fields, parks, and indoor facilities? [Q4]

- 1 YES 71%
- 2 NO 29%
- 9 REFUSED ANSWER 1%

[IF "YES" ON Q4]

Over the past year, about how many times have you or someone in your family used... [ENTER "0" IF NOT USED IN PAST YEAR]

a playground in Hays that is not a school playground [Q5A]

an organized athletic field in Hays that is not a school facility [Q5B]

an open space area [Q5C]

Hays Recreation Commission programs [Q5D]

		q5a Times used non-school playground	q5b Times used non-school activity field	q5c Times used open space area	q5d Times used HRC programs
N	Valid	314	314	314	313
	Missing	131	131	131	132
Mean		14.40	13.70	8.78	10.74
Median		5.00	2.00	2.00	1.00
Mode ^a		0	0	0	0
Std. Deviation		21.83	22.26	18.32	23.07
Minimum		0	0	0	0
Maximum		300	300	365	340

a. Footnote Because the mean is highly influenced by outliers, and there were only a few cases on each variable that were above 100, all values above 100 were truncated to 100 for purposes of calculating the mean.

I am going to read several improvements that could be made to the existing City of Hays parks and recreation facilities. Please tell me whether you think each improvement is very important, somewhat important, not very important or not important at all.

- [1 VERY IMPORTANT
- 2 SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT
- 3 NOT VERY IMPORTANT
- 4 NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL
- 8 DON'T KNOW
- 9 REFUSED ANSWER]

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Very Important	Not Important at All	Don't Know
Adding more outdoor athletic fields [6A]	20%	35%	21%	15%	7%
Creating more open space areas in parks [6B]	20%	33%	26%	14%	5%
Constructing more trails in parks [6C]	38%	34%	13%	9%	5%
Constructing more picnic areas in parks [6D]	34%	32%	17%	12%	4%
Constructing more indoor athletic fields [6E]	25%	27%	19%	18%	7%

On a scale from 1 to 5, where (1) means "very dissatisfied" and (5) means "very satisfied", please rate your overall satisfaction with the availability of the following types of recreational areas in the City of Hays.

[ENTER THE NUMBER MENTIONED, 8 DON'T KNOW, 9 REFUSED ANSWER]

	1 Very Dissatisfied	2	3	4	5 Very Satisfied	DK
Playgrounds for children [Q7a]	2%	4%	25%	31%	28%	9%
Picnic facilities [Q7b]	3%	17%	37%	21%	14%	7%
Walking trails [Q7c]	12%	29%	28%	11%	6%	12%
Biking trails [Q7d]	16%	27%	19%	8%	5%	25%
Open space/natural areas [Q7e]	6%	12%	31%	27%	15%	7%
Neighborhood parks [Q7f]	4%	7%	28%	34%	21%	5%
Large multiple use parks with playgrounds and open space like Frontier Park [Q7g]	4%	11%	29%	29%	22%	4%
Soccer fields [Q7h]	4%	11%	22%	21%	20%	21%
Baseball and softball fields [Q7i]	5%	8%	22%	30%	23%	11%
Tennis courts [Q7j]	7%	17%	27%	15%	11%	20%
Skate parks [Q7k]	6%	19%	16%	15%	14%	27%
Gyms [Q7l]	6%	13%	20%	28%	18%	14%
Hays Recreation Commission Programs [Q7m]	3%	5%	14%	30%	35%	11%

Would you prefer that athletic fields be located in one major complex? [Q8]

1 YES 32%
 2 NO 56%
 8 DON'T KNOW 10%
 9 REFUSED ANSWER 0.5%

I am going to read several possible changes for Hays parks and recreation facilities, please tell me whether you think each change is very important, somewhat important, not very important, not important at all.

[1 VERY IMPORTANT
 2 SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT
 3 NOT VERY IMPORTANT
 4 NOT IMPORTANT AT ALL
 8 DON'T KNOW
 9 REFUSED ANSWER]

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Very Important	Not Important at All	DK
Constructing new outdoor facilities for organized athletics like little league baseball, softball, and soccer [Q9A]	37%	30%	18%	7%	6%
Constructing a large multipurpose indoor facility for activities like ice skating, roller skating, and a soccer field [Q9B]	40%	27%	16%	12%	4%
Getting more land for open space areas [Q9C]	26%	32%	23%	14%	4%
Increasing the number of parks [Q9D]	21%	35%	25%	13%	3%
Constructing an indoor swimming pool [Q9E]	32%	20%	23%	20%	2%
Improving existing park facilities [Q9F]	47%	36%	7%	6%	3%

Would you strongly support, somewhat support, or not support a sales tax increase that would be used to make improvements to the parks and recreation system? [Q10]

1 STRONGLY SUPPORT	23%
2 SOMEWHAT SUPPORT	42%
3 NOT SUPPORT	30%
8 DON'T KNOW	3%
9 REFUSED ANSWER	2%

Is there any thing else you would like to mention about the Hays parks system or the Hays Recreation Commission? [Q11] **SEE APPENDIX 2**

Now I'd like to ask a few questions about yourself.

About how many years have you lived in Hays?[Q12] mean 21
 median 19

What year were you born? [Q13] mean 1956
 median 1959

Are you registered to vote? [Q14]

1 YES	84%
2 NO	15%
9 REFUSED ANSWER	1%

Was your total family income for the last year above or below \$30,000? [Q15]
 [IF BELOW \$30,000, READ THE FOLLOWING RESPONSES]

[1] Was it less than \$10,000,	8%
[2] Between \$10,000 and \$20,000,	11%
[3] or between \$20,000 and \$30,000?	13%

[IF ABOVE \$30,000, READ THE FOLLOWING RESPONSES]

[4] Was it between \$30,000 and \$40,000,	14%
[5] Between \$40,000 and \$50,000,	11%
[6] Between \$50,000 and \$60,000,	8%
[7] Between \$60,000 and \$70,000,	6%
[8] or was it over \$70,000?	12%
[9 REFUSED ANSWER]	15%

Okay, that's all the questions I have. Thank you very much for your participation.

Was the respondent [Q21]

[1] male	49%
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[2] female 50%