

**The City of Vacaville and  
The Sports Management Group:  
Perceptions About Vacaville's  
Park and Recreation System**

*January 30, 2012*

*Synopsis of Results, Graphic Summary,  
and Text of Responses to Open-Ended Questions*  
(with text of questionnaire)

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# Research Objectives

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In May 2011, The Sports Management Group, on behalf of the City of Vacaville, California, commissioned Strategic Research Associates to conduct a telephone survey of Vacaville residents aged 18 and older. The survey's primary objectives were to measure current perceptions about Vacaville's park and recreation system, explore how residents feel about the desirability of funding each of a number of proposed changes to this system, and investigate how voters would react to a potential ballot measure to fund park-related community facilities and services. Other objectives included measuring recent use of Vacaville's park system and assessing attitudes and preferences about the city's recreation programs and events.

These specific measurement areas are addressed in this report:

- **Current use of Vacaville park and recreation facilities**
- **Perceptions about Vacaville's existing park and recreation system**
- **Support for additional funding of park system changes**
- **Behaviors and perceptions about Vacaville's recreation activities**
- **Voter reactions to potential tax extension proposals**
- **Differences related to respondent background characteristics**

All reports in this volume are sub-divided by the first five objectives. The last was a general objective applicable within all sections.



# Executive Review of Primary Findings

The *Executive Review* provides a brief summary of selected survey findings. The *Synopsis of Results* (pages 8 through 19) offers a more thorough summary, while a comprehensive, detailed analysis is given in this volume's *Graphic Summary*.

## ● **Current use of Vacaville park and recreation facilities**

The 410 respondents were asked to identify, among 13 park locations, those they had visited within the last six months. Half (51%) had used the city's hiking, biking, and jogging trails; 46%, a city-operated community center, and 43%, Lagoon Valley Park. Fewer (between 25% and 35%) had visited a city group picnic area, a city baseball or softball field, a city soccer field, or Centennial Park. Less than one in five recalled visiting the pool at Graham Aquatic Center, the dog park at Lagoon Valley Park, any city tennis court, the McBride Center to participate in senior activities, or the Georgie Duke Sports Center/Davis Street gymnasium. Three in ten (31%) said that, within the last six months, they had been visiting Vacaville park and recreational facilities "four or more times a month"; 25%, "two or three times a month"; and 32%, a lower visiting rate. Eleven percent (11%) had not visited any of the 13 Vacaville park facility locations within the last six months. The frequency-of-visiting rate varied statistically by age, parental status, and household income, with younger to middle-aged respondents (aged 18 to 54), parents or guardians of children aged 17 or younger, and the more affluent significantly more likely than others to report higher park facility use. Asked to identify, unaided, their favorite Vacaville-area recreational activity, the most-mentioned responses were for the use of walking trails, Lagoon Valley Park, activities in various city parks, baseball or softball, soccer, hiking, and the use of biking trails.

## ● **Perceptions about Vacaville's existing park and recreation system**

Three in four (77%) rated the amount of land allocated to Vacaville's neighborhood parks as being "about right," while 18% judged it to be "too little" and 2%, "too much." For community parks, most (75%) again said they are satisfied with the current allocation of land, while 18% would add more and 3%, less. For Centennial Park, six in ten (61%) said the allocation is "about right," while 14% would add more and 6%, less. Asked to suggest ways to improve or add to Centennial Park, the most-cited responses included adding trails, adding a dog park, increasing the variety of activities or facilities, and creating more natural open space. Half (50%) rated themselves "very satisfied" and 45%, "moderately" so, with the overall quality of Vacaville's parks and outdoor recreation amenities. For park maintenance, 54% claimed to be "very satisfied" and 38%, "moderately." Respondents were slightly less enthusiastic about park safety; 45% judged themselves "very satisfied" and 41%, "moderately." (In judging level of safety, females, older respondents, the less affluent, and infrequent visitors were more likely than others to be critical.) Respondents, asked what they like most about Vacaville's park system, were most likely to note the park system's easy accessibility, its cleanliness, its well-maintained state, its walking or hiking trails, the natural open space, and the family-friendliness. Asked about the one most desirable improvement or addition to the Vacaville park system, the dominant recommendation was to improve the number and quality of restrooms.

# Executive Review of Primary Findings (cont.)

- **Support for additional funding of park system changes**

Respondents were asked to rate their degree of support or opposition to additional public funding to support each of 14 potential park system changes. Two options – to provide access to more nature open space and to expand and improve the city’s bikeway system – produced average ratings significantly higher than those for other test items. (Sixty percent [60%] or more favored each.) Five options – to provide space for community gardens, to add more gym space, to provide more fenced dog parks, to build a new multi-use recreation center, and to build another pool or aquatic center – had scores high enough to place them in the upper half of the rank-ordering. (Between 46% and 50% reported favoring each.) Forty percent (40%) or fewer favored each of seven other options; the three lowest-ranked ones – to build another community center, add more tennis courts, and build a city-owned and operated golf course – generated significantly more opposition than support. Younger to middle-aged respondents, the less affluent, and those visiting Vacaville park system facilities once a month or more all exhibited a higher propensity than others to support additional funding of park system changes. Respondents, also asked about their positions on funding each of four park programs or facilities, were most supportive of programs for disadvantaged youth, then for seniors’ programs, then for the theater, and finally, for aquatic facilities.

- **Behaviors and perceptions about Vacaville’s recreation activities**

Eight in ten (81%) could recall that the city publishes and distributes the *Community Services Department Event Guide*. Females, older respondents, those with mid-level or higher household incomes, and frequent park users were most likely to claim awareness; even so, at least seven in ten or more in every major demographic category were aware of it. Within the last six months, 74% had reviewed a printed copy of the guide and 42% had accessed the city’s web site to find information on recreational activities or programs. A sizable minority (41%) had personally participated in a program, activity, or event offered by Vacaville’s Community Services Department within the last 12 months. Females, those with children, the mid- to more affluent, and frequent park users were more likely than others to report participation. Among those with children, 65% said at least one child had participated within the last 12 months in a program, activity, or event offered by Vacaville’s Community Services Department.

- **Voter reactions to potential tax extension proposals**

Among the sample’s 271 consistent voters – those registered to vote and voting “always” or “most of the time” in Vacaville municipal elections – 58% said they would “favor” extending the tax extension to maintain funding for existing community and park-related facilities and services, 2.5 times the percentage (23%) opposing it. Younger voters and more frequent park visitors were more likely than others to support it. Asked to explain their position, those favoring the extension were most likely to cite services needing to be continued, that the extension would make for a better or more vibrant community, that facility and infrastructure improvements are important, and that the city is doing a good job; those not favoring it were most likely to note the additional tax burden, that they lack information on cost or require more information overall, and that taxes could be better spent elsewhere. Voters opposed to the extension were asked what their position would be if the measure incorporated street maintenance funding; in that case, 37% within this sub-group would “favor” this revised measure and 37% would “oppose” it. Two other funding areas that could be incorporated, flood water detention basins and park maintenance, were evaluated more harshly.

# How the Survey was Conducted

- **A telephone survey with 410 completed interviews**

- The population of interest was defined to include adults aged 18 and older, currently living within the boundary of the City of Vacaville (in zip codes 95687 and 95688). Interviews with those living outside the city boundary or indicating having lived in Vacaville less than six months were politely terminated.
- Interviewing was conducted between November 30 and December 9, 2011.
- Households were randomly selected using a form of random digit dialing. (Residential prefix numbers known to cover the area within zip codes 95687 and 95688 were attached to randomly generated suffix numbers.) This provided coverage of both listed and unlisted landline numbers. In order to randomly obtain one adult in each household, interviewers asked to speak to the household occupant aged 18 or older with the most recent birthday. Only one person in a household was interviewed.
- Weighting of data
  - Because probability of selection of one adult within a household varies with the number of adult occupants residing in that household, base weights were applied to adjust for this. (The probability of within-household selection equals the reciprocal of the number of adult household occupants.)
  - To correct for sample imbalances, especially under-representation of those aged 18 to 34, (poststratification) weights were also applied to force sample gender-by-age proportions to match those for all adults living in the targeted area. All results described in the volume (except those for Figure 2 in the *Graphic Summary*) were generated from weighted data. This procedure ensured that no age or gender group would be over- or under-represented and also helped minimize sample-versus-population discrepancies for other demographic background variables (such as parental status and household income). The weighting procedure is described below.
- Most interviews were conducted between 4PM and 9PM on weekdays and between 10AM and 5PM on weekends. A few interviews were administered during weekday daytime hours to contact those difficult to reach in the evening. Interviewing was conducted by Mountain West Research Center, a professional field research organization located in Pocatello, Idaho. The computer-aided workstations used by interviewers for this survey allowed randomization and rotation of question order, reducing potential biases. A significant proportion of interviews were monitored on-line to verify for courtesy and completeness of interviewing, and one in ten respondents were re-interviewed to confirm interviewer professionalism. All interviewers working on this project were professionally trained and supervised.
- To reach a qualified contact, interviewers were allowed up to four call attempts per targeted telephone number.



# How the Survey was Conducted (cont.)

## ● The questionnaire

The questionnaire script included 65 questions, 6 of which were unaided (requiring respondents to answer in their own words rather than to choose among a list of options). Because of skip patterns included in the script, some respondents were not required to answer every question. The average interview took approximately 15-1/2 minutes to complete.

## ● Precision of estimates (for a weighted sample of 410)

With weighting, the survey's precision was slightly reduced (with margins-of-error being widened by the factor of roughly 1.08):

- At 95% confidence:  $\pm 5.2\%$
- At 90% confidence:  $\pm 4.4\%$
- Margins of error for sub-groups (for example, females or those aged 18 to 34) are less precise.

## ● Presentation of results

- This volume is divided into sections. The presentation includes, in order, *Contents of this Report*, *Research Objectives*, *Executive Review of Primary Findings*, *How the Survey was Conducted*, *Synopsis of Results*, and *Graphic Summary*. Appendices include a *Verbatim Responses* section listing word-for-word responses to all unaided survey questions and a *Questionnaire* section displaying an annotated copy of the questionnaire with baseline results.

The *Synopsis* provides an overview of results, while the *Graphic Summary* contains a comprehensive analysis using a chart-based format. The *Executive Review* offers a capsule briefing. A companion volume of crosstabulated results augments the presentation in this volume.

- Regarding the charts displayed in this volume:
  - Responses to unaided questions were categorized and coded, with the coded results included in quantitative summaries.
  - All percentages are shown rounded to integer digits to enhance ease of review and interpretation. Because of this rounding, totals may not always seem to sum to 100%, but displayed values are nevertheless correct. Chart bar lengths reflect exact (unrounded) values, which is why two bars marked with the same value may sometimes vary slightly in length. Chart labels shown in uppercase identify a list of response options to a single question (or a list of background category measurements), while those in lowercase identify a set of different survey questions, the results for which are to be compared.

# How the Survey was Conducted (cont.)

- Appropriate inferential statistical tests were sometimes conducted to determine whether chance could be excluded from the list of possible causes of differences or associations in the sample data. For statistical tests, a probability level of .05 was used as the criterion to determine a statistically significant result. (The term “marginally significant” is sometimes used to refer to a result significant at the .10 level.) All tests were conducted using statistical procedures designed for weighted data. Statistically significant results are noted in the summaries and chart annotations.

- **The sample versus target population**

Base weights were applied first to the data to compensate for unequal probability of within-household selection of one adult. (These weights were a function of the reciprocal of the number of adults in a household, but truncated to reduce the negative effect of the weighting on margin-of-error.) To correct for sample-versus-population imbalances (especially significant under-sampling of younger adults), an additional set of weights (termed poststratification weights) was applied to force sample gender-by-age proportions to match the target population’s. Each individual in the sample was assigned a weight representing the relative contribution that individual’s data would make to final overall results. This procedure ensured that no age or gender group would be over- or under-represented and also helped to diminish sample-versus-population discrepancies for measurements such as parental status. Table 1 lists population targets, unweighted and weighted sample compositions, and the weights employed.

**Table 1**  
**Target Percentages and Compositions of Unweighted and Weighted Samples\***

Category	Population Targets	Unweighted Sample Composition	Sample Composition After Base Weighting	Sample Composition After Poststratification Weighting	Poststratification Weights
Males 18 to 34	21.2%	10.7%	11.4%	21.2%	1.860
Males 35 to 54	22.6%	26.8%	27.7%	22.6%	0.814
Males 55+	12.9%	18.3%	17.8%	12.9%	0.723
Females 18 to 34	12.0%	8.8%	8.9%	12.0%	1.342
Females 35 to 54	18.0%	20.5%	20.6%	18.0%	0.873
Females 55+	13.4%	14.9%	13.5%	13.4%	0.989
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

\* Population targets are from 2010 Census data; the target area including zip codes 95687 and 95688. Weights were calculated using unrounded values. The total sample size of 410 was unchanged by weighting.



## How the Survey was Conducted (cont.)

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Figures 1 and 2 in the *Graphic Summary Preface* (“*Summary of Respondent Background Characteristics*”) provide summary background category information, listing percent-of-total outcomes for categories representing gender, age, parental status, household income, location of residence, and frequency of park system use (a behavioral measurement). (Figure 2 shows the original unweighted sub-sample results.) Figures 48 to 55 in the *Graphic Summary Addendum* (“*Respondent Background Characteristics*”) provide additional details.



# Synopsis of Results

- **Current use of Vacaville park and recreation facilities** (Figures 3 through 9 in *Graphic Summary Section One*)

- **Recent use of Vacaville park system facilities:** The 410 respondents were asked to identify, among the 13 locations listed at Table 2, those they had visited within the last six months. The table lists the percentages – among all respondents and among frequent park system visitors – having visited each location. The table’s color-coding is explained below.

**Table 2**  
**Percentage Having Visited Each of 13 Vacaville Park and Recreation Facility Locations\***

Location (rank-ordered using second column percentages)	All respondents (n=410)	Those Visiting Vacaville Park Facilities Twice a Month or More (n=229)
Any Vacaville public park other than Lagoon Valley or Centennial Parks	69%	86%
Any of the city’s off-street hiking, biking, and jogging trails	51%	71%
Any city-operated community center	46%	62%
Lagoon Valley Park	43%	60%
Any of the city’s group picnic areas	36%	48%
Any city-operated baseball or softball field	27%	35%
Any city-operated soccer field, including those in Centennial Park	26%	36%
Centennial Park	25%	35%
The pool at Graham Aquatic Center	18%	28%
The dog park at Lagoon Valley Park	18%	24%
Any city tennis court	18%	27%
The McBride Center to participate in senior activities	15%	14%
Georgie Duke Sports Center or the gymnasium on Davis Street	14%	19%

\*The measurement used to identify frequent visitors is described below.

Looking at the second column results – those for all 410 respondents – this was observed:

# Synopsis of Results (cont.)

- **Well above-average visiting rate (burgundy in Table 2):** Seven in ten (69%) reported having recently visited a Vacaville public park other than Lagoon Valley or Centennial Parks. This visiting rate was significantly higher than those for other locations.
- **Above-average visiting rates (turquoise):** Half (51%) had used the city's hiking, biking, and jogging trails; 46%, a city-operated community center, and 43%, Lagoon Valley Park.
- **Average visiting rates (green):** These four locations placed in the middle of the rank-ordering. Thirty-six percent (36%) had visited a city group picnic area; 27%, a city baseball or softball field; 26%, a city soccer field; and 25%, Centennial Park.
- **Below-average visiting rates (blue):** Less than one in five recalled visiting the pool at Graham Aquatic Center, the dog park at Lagoon Valley Park, any city tennis court, the McBride Center to participate in senior activities, and the Georgie Duke Sports Center or the gymnasium on Davis Street.

The chart compares location visiting percentages for the 229 respondents typically using Vacaville park and recreation facilities at least twice a month with those for less frequent park system visitors.

The 229 frequent park visitors – the results for whom are shown in the third column of Table 2 (also see below) – produced a rank-ordering similar to that for all respondents, with the one major difference that frequent visitor outcome percentages were, on average, eight percentage points higher than those in the second column. As shown, 86% of frequent park users had visited a Vacaville public park other than Lagoon Valley or Centennial Parks, while 71% had used off-street trails; 62%, a city community center; 60%, Lagoon Valley Park; and 48%, any of the city's group picnic areas. Slightly more than one-third had visited a city-operated soccer, baseball, or softball field and about the same percentage had used Centennial Park. Frequent park users were over four times more likely than other respondents to have visited the Graham Aquatic Center pool or to have used any city tennis court. They were at least 2-1/2 times more likely to have visited Centennial Park, a city-operated soccer field, Lagoon Valley Park, any of the city's off-street trails, and the Georgie Duke Sports Center/Davis Street gym.

- **Frequency of visiting Vacaville park and recreation facilities:** Three in ten (31%) said that, within the last six months, they had been visiting Vacaville park and recreational facilities “four or more times a month,” while one-quarter (25%) reported “two or three times a month,” and 32%, a lower visiting rate. Eleven percent (11%) had not visited any of the 13 Vacaville park facility locations tested in Table 2 within the last six months.

The frequency-of-visiting rate varied statistically by age, parental status, and household income:

- **Age:** On average, younger to middle-aged respondents (aged 18 to 54) were twice as likely as those aged 55 and older to report visiting twice a month or more.

# Synopsis of Results (cont.)

- **Parental status:** Parents or guardians of children living in Vacaville and aged 17 or younger were about 1.7 times more likely than others to report a visiting rate of at least twice a month. The parental status difference was significant even after controlling for variations in age and other background measurements. Rate differences among those with only children 12 or younger (75% were visiting twice a month or more), with only teenage children aged 13 to 17 (66%), and with children in both age groups (78%) were not statistically significant.
- **Household income:** The least affluent respondents (with under \$50,000 in annual household income) were 1.7 times less likely than their more affluent counterparts to report a higher visiting frequency.

Differences for gender and location of residence were not large enough to be statistically meaningful.

- **Favorite Vacaville-area recreational activity:** Asked to identify, unaided, their favorite Vacaville-area recreational activity, 10% cited use of walking trails; 9%, Lagoon Valley Park; 9%, activities in various city parks; 8%, baseball or softball; 6%, soccer; 6%, hiking; 6%, use of biking trails; and 5%, use of Andrew's Park. Other responses are listed in the *Graphic Summary's* Figure 7.

Frequent visitors were more likely than infrequent users to cite use of Lagoon Valley Park, activities in other parks, and use of biking trails.

Detailed findings and additional results can be found in *Graphic Summary Section One* (“*Current Use of Vacaville Park and Recreation Facilities*”). Verbatim responses to unaided question Q3 (favorite Vacaville-area recreational activity) are listed in this volume’s appendix. Section Addendum Figure 9 lists by-location visiting rates for gender, age, and parental status categories.

## ● **Perceptions about Vacaville’s existing park and recreation system** (Figures 10 through 21 in *Graphic Summary Section Two*)

- **Perceptions about Vacaville park system land allocations:** Respondents, asked to judge (using a three-point scale) whether the right amount of land has been allocated to each of Vacaville's three categories of public parks, generated these results:
  - **Neighborhood parks:** Three in four (77%) said the amount of land allocated is “about right,” while 18% judged it to be “too little” and 2%, “too much.” Younger to middle-aged respondents, those with children, and more frequent park visitors were statistically more likely than others to respond that not enough land has been allocated. Other background measurement variations were not large enough to be meaningful.
  - **Community parks:** Again, most (75%) said they are satisfied with the current allocation of land, while 18% would add more and 3%, less. Frequent park visitors were more than twice as likely as less frequent ones to say that not enough land has been allocated to community parks. The most affluent respondents tended to be marginally more likely than others to do the same, but other background measurement variations were not significant.

# Synopsis of Results (cont.)

- **Centennial Park:** Six in ten (61%) said the allocation is “about right,” while 14% would add more and 6%, less. (Another 19%, presumably not familiar with the park, did not offer an opinion.) Among 102 respondents reporting having visited Centennial Park within the last six months, 68% were happy with the current amount of land allocation, but 25% said it is “too little”; 5%, “too much”; and 2% had no opinion.

Those visiting Vacaville park facilities four times a month or more were 1.5 times more likely than others to favor additional land allocation to Centennial Park. Gender and location differences were marginally significant, with males and those residing in zip code 95688 slightly more likely than their opposites to say “too little.” Other variations were not significant.

- **Recommendations about expanding Centennial Park:** Respondents were asked to suggest, unaided, ways to improve or add to Centennial Park. Six percent (6%) recommended adding hiking, biking, or jogging trails; 6%, adding a dog park; 5%, increasing the variety of activities or facilities; 5%, creating more natural open space; and 4%, providing better restrooms. About half (47%) could offer no opinion (likely because of lack of familiarity with Centennial Park), while 7% said the park was fine as is. Other responses are listed in the *Graphic Summary’s* Figure 14.

The 102 respondents having visited the park within the last six months produced a slightly different rank-ordering of priorities. Among them, 10% advocated for no change, but 9% recommended better restrooms; 9%, improved parking; 7%, a dog park; 7%, more hiking, biking, or jogging trails; 7%, basketball courts; 6%, a greater variety of activities or facilities; 6%, more natural open space; and 5%, more safety and security.

- **Overall satisfaction with elements of Vacaville’s park system:** Respondents, asked to rate their level of satisfaction with elements of Vacaville's current park system, produced the relatively favorable results shown in Table 3.

# Synopsis of Results (cont.)

**Table 3**  
**Satisfaction Rating Distributions for Elements of the Vacaville Park System\***

<b>Rating Option</b>	<b>Overall Quality of Vacaville's Park and Outdoor Recreation Amenities (n=410)</b>	<b>Maintenance of Vacaville's Park and Outdoor Recreation Amenities (n=410)</b>	<b>Safety of Vacaville's Park and Outdoor Recreation Amenities (n=410)</b>
Very satisfied	50%	54%	45%
Moderately satisfied	45%	38%	41%
Not very satisfied	2%	4%	7%
Not at all satisfied	0%	2%	2%
Don't know	2%	3%	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* Unrounded percentages in each column sum to 100%. The averages by column were (using a four-point scale and excluding "don't know's") 3.48, 3.49, and 3.35, respectively. There was no meaningful statistical difference between averages for quality and maintenance, but the average for safety was significantly below the others.

This was observed:

- **Overall quality of Vacaville's parks and outdoor recreation amenities:** Table 3 shows that (50%) rated themselves “very satisfied” and 45%, “moderately” so. The “very satisfied” percentage varied significantly by park visiting frequency and marginally by age. More frequent park visitors and older respondents were statistically more likely than others to report themselves “very satisfied” with park quality. (That older respondents would evaluate Vacaville's parks slightly more favorably than others is ironic, since older respondents were less likely than younger ones to visit the parks.)
- **Maintenance of Vacaville's parks and outdoor recreation amenities:** Fifty-four percent (54%) claimed to be “very satisfied” and 38%, “moderately.” Background measurement variations in the “very satisfied” percentage were not large enough to be meaningful.
- **Safety of Vacaville's parks and outdoor recreation amenities:** The performance for this element was statistically below the other two. Forty-five percent (45%) judged themselves “very satisfied,” and 41%, “moderately.” Males were significantly more likely than females to report being “very satisfied”; younger respondents, marginally more than older ones; the more affluent, significantly more than the less affluent; and those visiting parks one or more times a month, significantly more than those visiting less.

# Synopsis of Results (cont.)

- **The most liked characteristic of Vacaville’s parks and recreation system:** Respondents were asked to specify, unaided, the characteristic(s) liked most about Vacaville's park system. Twenty-four percent (24%) replied by noting the park system's easy accessibility; 20%, its cleanliness; 20%, its well-maintained state; 10%, its walking or hiking trails; 9%, its natural open space; 8%, its family-friendliness; 7%, its playgrounds for children; 7%, its safe environment; 7%, the variety of activities; and 6%, its attractive landscaping. Less frequently cited answers are listed in the *Graphic Summary’s* Figure 19.

Among both frequent and infrequent park users, about one in five liked the park system’s cleanliness and maintenance. But infrequent visitors (tending to be older) were much more likely to note accessibility, while more frequent ones (tending to be younger and with children) were more likely to mention trails, family-friendliness, playgrounds, and variety of activities.

- **The most desirable improvement or addition:** Respondents were asked to identify, unaided, the one most desirable improvement or addition to the Vacaville park system. The dominant recommendation, mentioned by 17%, was to improve the number and quality of restrooms. Six percent (6%) said park facilities were good as is. Between 3% and 4% mentioned improving water fountains, adding or improving trails, adding dog parks, adding more neighborhood parks, improving cleanliness, adding natural landscapes or open spaces, increasing the range of available activities, improving security and safety, and providing better lighting. Less frequently cited answers are listed in the *Graphic Summary’s* Figure 21. No important differences were found between respondents using the park system often and those who were not.

Detailed findings and additional results can be found in *Graphic Summary Section Two* (“*Perceptions about Vacaville’s Existing Park and Recreation System*”). Verbatim responses to unaided questions Q5 (improving Centennial Park), Q7 (the characteristic liked most about Vacaville’s park system), and Q8 (the most desirable improvement or addition) are listed in this volume’s appendix.

- **Support for additional funding of park system changes** (Figures 22 through 32 in *Graphic Summary Section Three*)

- **Levels of support for additional public funding of park system changes:** Respondents were asked to rate (using a five-point scale) their degree of support or opposition to additional public funding to support each of 14 potential park system changes. Table 4 lists average ratings (in the second column), the percentages favoring and opposing each (in the third and fourth), and the difference between favor and oppose percentages (in the fifth). The table’s color-coding is explained below.

# Synopsis of Results (cont.)

**Table 4**  
**Levels of Support for Additional Funding of 14 Proposed Park System Changes\***

<b>Proposed Changes (rank-ordered by averages)</b>	<b>Rating Averages on a Five-Point Scale (n=410, excluding “don’t know’s”)</b>	<b>Percent “Strongly” or “Mildly” Favoring (n=410)</b>	<b>Percent “Strongly” or “Mildly” Opposing (n=410)</b>	<b>Difference Between Favor and Oppose Percentages</b>
Provide access to more natural open space for hiking, biking, horseback riding, and other open-space activities	3.78	64%	18%	46%
Expand and improve the city’s bikeway system	3.71	60%	18%	42%
Provide space for community gardens	3.43	50%	24%	26%
Add more gym space for basketball, volleyball, dance, and fitness	3.30	48%	28%	20%
Provide more fenced dog parks	3.23	46%	30%	16%
Build a new multi-use recreation center large enough to host indoor sports tournaments	3.23	49%	33%	16%
Build another pool or aquatic center	3.21	46%	34%	12%
Build an additional senior center	3.02	37%	35%	2%
Add more soccer fields	3.01	37%	35%	2%
Provide overnight camping areas	2.97	40%	39%	1%
Add more baseball and softball fields	2.87	34%	40%	-6%
Build another community center	2.76	30%	44%	-14%
Add more tennis courts	2.71	25%	41%	-16%
Build a city-owned and operated golf course	2.57	28%	50%	-22%

\* Rating were on a five-point scale, with “5” as “strongly favor” and “1” as “strongly oppose.”

Table 4 displays these results:

# Synopsis of Results (cont.)

- **Highest average scores, relative to other test items (turquoise in Table 4):** Two options – to provide access to more nature open space for hiking biking, horseback riding, and other open-space activities, and to expand and improve the city’s bikeway system – produced average scores significantly higher than those for other test items. As shown in the table’s third column, 60% or more “strongly” or “mildly” favored each.
- **Relatively strong scores (green):** Five options – to provide space for community gardens, to add more gym space for basketball, volleyball, dance, and fitness, to provide more fenced dog parks, to build a new multi-use recreation center large enough to host indoor sports tournaments, and to build another pool or aquatic center – had scores high enough to place them in the upper half of the rank-ordering. Between 46% and 50% reported favoring each.

Respondents were less likely to recommend funding the bottom seven options listed (shown with shades of blue). Forty percent (40%) or fewer favored each, and the three lowest-ranked options – to build another community center, add more tennis courts, and build a city-owned and operated golf course – generated significantly more opposition than support.

The seven highest-ranking options – providing access to more natural open space, expanding and improving the city’s bikeway system, providing space for community gardens, building a new multi-use recreation center, adding more gym space, building another pool or aquatic center, and providing more fenced dog parks – produced favor/oppose splits significantly better than 50%/50%. That is, ignoring those “neutral” or replying “don’t know,” each “favor” percentage was significantly higher than the “oppose” one. (The percentage point differences listed in Table 4’s fifth column clearly illustrate this.) The bottom three options listed – building another community center, building a city-owned and operated golf course, and adding more tennis courts – generated splits significantly worse than 50%/50% and clearly lack community support for additional funding.

Some options were related to each other in the sense that they tended to be rated similarly by respondents. The inter-item correlations produced this grouping of options:

- **Open space activities:** More access to open space, a better bikeway system, or space for community gardens – 77% favored at least one; 36%, all.
- **Indoor space:** More gym space or a multi-use recreation center – 61% favored at least one; 36%, both.
- **Dog parks and a senior center:** More fenced dog parks or an additional senior center – 57% favored at least one; 26%, both.
- **Team sport facilities:** Adding baseball and softball fields, soccer fields, or tennis courts – 48% favored at least one; 16%, all.
- **A community center and golf:** Building a community center or a golf course – 43% favored at least one; 14%, both.

# Synopsis of Results (cont.)

- **Levels of Support for Additional Public Funding by Park Visiting Frequency:** Frequent park users and infrequent users produced similar rank-orderings of the 14 options. However, frequent visitors generated significantly higher “favor” percentages for the top seven options listed in Table 4: providing access to more natural open space, expanding the city’s bikeway system, providing space for community gardens, adding more gym space, providing more fenced dog parks, building a new multi-use recreation center, adding more gym space, and building another pool or aquatic center. (They were marginally more enthusiastic about two other less-popular options: providing overnight camping areas and adding more tennis courts.)
- **Overall propensity to favor additional public funding by background category:** Younger to middle-aged respondents, the less affluent, and those visiting Vacaville park system facilities once a month or more all exhibited a higher propensity than others to say they would “favor” additional funding of any of the 14 options. Variations by gender, parental status, and location were not statistically significant.
- **Levels of support for other types of funding:** Respondents, asked if they would “favor,” “be neutral to,” or “oppose” funding for each of the four park programs or facilities listed, produced the results listed in Table 5. For each, those favoring funding greatly outnumbered those opposed. However, the rank-ordering in the table is meaningful, with each test item significantly out-performing those listed below it. Respondents exhibited the most enthusiasm for funding programs for disadvantaged youth, then for seniors’ programs, then for the theater, and finally, for aquatic facilities. Table 5 also describes the types of respondents most supportive of each.

**Table 5**  
**Percentages Favoring and Opposing Additional City Funds for Other Types of Funding\***

Funding Area (rank-ordered by “favor” percentage)	Percent Favoring (n=410)	Percent Opposing (n=410)	Respondents Statistically Most Likely to “Favor”
Programs for disadvantaged youth	65%	14%	Females, the less affluent, and frequent park visitors
Programs for seniors	56%	14%	The less affluent and frequent park visitors . . . surprisingly, older respondents were not more supportive than others.
Vacaville’s performing arts theater	49%	20%	Females, the less affluent, and frequent park visitors
Pools and other facilities for aquatic programs	43%	25%	Younger respondents, those with children, those residing in zip code 95687, and more frequent park visitors

\* Respondents were asked if they would “favor,” “be neutral to,” or “oppose” allocating additional city funds to support each.

# Synopsis of Results (cont.)

Detailed findings and additional results can be found in *Graphic Summary Section Three* (“*Support for Additional Funding of Park System Changes*”). Section Addendum Figure 32 lists “favor” percentages for each of the 14 tested options by gender, age, and parental status categories.

- **Behaviors and perceptions about Vacaville’s recreation activities** (Figures 33 through 41 in *Graphic Summary Section Four*)
  - **Awareness of the event guide:** Eight in ten (81%) recalled that the City of Vacaville publishes and distributes the *Community Services Department Event Guide*. Females, older respondents, those with mid-level or higher household incomes, and frequent park users were most likely to claim awareness; even so, at least seven in ten or more in every major demographic category were aware of it.
  - **Assessing information on the city’s recreational activities and programs:** Three in four (74%) reported having reviewed a printed copy of the guide within the last 12 months. Females, respondents aged 35 to 54, those with children, the more affluent, and frequent park visitors were statistically more likely than their opposites to recall having done so.

Within the last 12 months, approximately four in ten (42%) had accessed the city’s web site to find information on recreational activities or programs. Females, younger to middle-aged respondents, those with children, and those visiting Vacaville parks at least once a month were much more likely than others to report accessing it
  - **Recent personal participation in city recreational activities:** A sizable minority (41%) claimed to have personally participated in a program, activity, or event offered by Vacaville’s Community Services Department within the last 12 months. Females (marginally), those with children, the mid- to more affluent, and frequent park users were statistically more likely than others to say they had participated.
  - **Participation by a child in city programs or activities:** Among 164 parents or guardians of Vacaville children aged 17 and younger, 65% said at least one child had participated within the last 12 months in a program, activity, or event offered by Vacaville’s Community Services Department.
  - **Recommendations for recreational activities the city should offer:** Asked to specify, unaided, new recreational programs, activities, or events they would like to see offered by the city, respondents produced a range of suggestions but no consensus. Four percent (4%) recommended more youth activities or programs; 2%, swimming; 2%, golf, 2% gun or archery instruction; 2%, tennis instruction; and 2%, dance or ballet. (Sixty-eight percent [68%] offered no opinion.) The *Graphic Summary’s* Figure 41 lists other responses.

Detailed findings and additional results can be found in *Graphic Summary Section Four* (“*Behaviors and Perceptions About Vacaville’s Recreation Activities*”). Verbatim responses to unaided questions Q15 (other recreational programs, activities, or events to offer) are listed in this volume’s appendix.

# Synopsis of Results (cont.)

- **Voter reactions to potential tax extension proposals** (Figures 42 through 47 in *Graphic Summary Section Five*)

- **Perceptions among voters about extending Measure I:** The following question was read to the sample's registered voters:

*In 1988, Vacaville voters approved Measure I, which authorized a general tax used to fund the construction of the Ulatis Cultural Center complex, the ball fields at Arlington Park and Centennial Park, the operation of Vacaville's Performing Arts Theater, and the on-going maintenance of streets. The tax will expire in 2013. Before then, the city may ask voters to extend the general tax to maintain funding for existing and new community facilities and services. Would you tend to favor, be neutral to, or oppose extending this tax measure?*

Among the sample's 271 consistent voters – those registered to vote and voting “always” or “most of the time” in Vacaville municipal elections – 58% said they would “favor” extending the tax measure, 2.5 times the percentage (23%) opposing it. Seventeen percent (17%) described themselves as “neutral” and 2% said “don't know.”

Among these consistent voters, the “favor” percentage varied significantly by age and frequency of park use. Voters aged 18 to 34 – a group with a relatively high average park usage rate – were 1.4 times more likely than others to “favor” the extension. Steady park users (visiting at least once a month) were 1.8 times more likely than others to do the same. Differences by gender, age, parental status, and location were not large enough to be statistically meaningful.

Margin of error ranges (at 90% confidence) overall and for the majority of major sub-group demographic categories – females, those aged 18 to 34, those with children, the mid-affluent, residents of 95687 and 95688, and those visiting parks at least once a month – exceeded the “50% line,” a favorable result. (See the *Graphic Summary's* Figure 44 for these ranges.)

- **Reasons for favoring or not favoring the proposed extension:** Voters were asked to describe, unaided, the reasons for their position (“favor,” “oppose,” or “neutral”) on the tax extension.

Among the 158 consistent votes favoring the extension, 23% said services need to be continued as in the past; 21%, that the extension would make for a better or more vibrant community; 13%, that facility and infrastructure improvements are important; 11%, that the city is doing a good job; 7%, that the extension benefits children and families; 7%, that they typically support funding for community improvements; and 6%, that they currently use park and recreation facilities that could be affected by the extension. (The *Graphic Summary's* Figure 45 lists less frequently cited reasons.)

Among 109 consistent voters not supporting the tax extension, 31% cited as their reason the additional tax burden the extension would seemingly generate; 15%, that they did not have enough information on cost; 12%, that they require more information overall; 12%, that taxes could be better spent elsewhere; 8%, that their support would depend on how the extension is managed; and 5%, that the extension is not

# Synopsis of Results (cont.)

economically feasible under current conditions. (Less-cited reasons are shown in the *Graphic Summary*'s Figure 46.)

- **Anticipated positions on various tax extension measures:** The 63 consistent voters opposing the proposed tax extension were asked if they would support a different measure including coverage of, in turn, each of the three areas listed in Table 6. As shown, group members were most open to the idea of incorporating street maintenance funding – 37% would “favor” this revised measure and 37% would “oppose” it. The other two funding areas, flood water detention basins and park maintenance, were evaluated more harshly.

**Table 6**  
**Anticipated Positions on a Measure Covering Each of Three Areas\***

<b>Incorporation of Area into Measure</b>	<b>Percent Favoring (n=63)</b>	<b>Percent Opposing (n=63)</b>
Street maintenance	37%	37%
Flood water detention basins	24%	48%
Parks maintenance	16%	54%

\* Respondents were asked if they would “favor,” “be neutral to,” or “oppose” a different measure that would help fund each.

Detailed findings and additional results can be found in *Graphic Summary Section Five (“Voter Reactions to Potential Tax Extension Proposals”)*. Verbatim responses to unaided question Q19 (reasons for favoring or not favoring the proposed tax extension) are listed in this volume’s appendix.