



Executive Summary

The following information provides a summary of the key findings from the demographics, recreation programming, and arts programming data analysis. National trends and local participation figures were reviewed as part of this analysis to better understand future needs and provide a baseline for future recommendations as part of the Your Parks, Your Future project.

Demographics Key Findings

For purposes of this study, Ballard*King & Associates (B*K) used a 5, 10 and 15-minute drive time from a central point in Walnut Creek to develop a demographic profile. Key characteristics and findings from the demographic analysis of these three service areas is described below.

Median Age – The median age is higher in all three service areas when compared to the State and National numbers. This points to an older population, but one that still has children and young families present. Approximately 34.4% of the population is aged 55+, while 20.0% of the population is under the age of 18. The median age, and age distribution point to a population that will demand a vast array of arts and recreation programs and services, which the City currently works to provide. It is also important to note that all the age categories, except 45-54, are expected to increase through 2023, with significant growth expected in the 55+ age categories. This is a community that can anticipate growth in participation in all programs offered, if they have the facilities to support such programming.

Median Income – The median income in all three service areas is greater when compared to the State and National numbers. This is particularly true when examining the percentage of household making more than \$50,000 per year. While there is no perfect indicator regarding the success of recreation facilities and programs, a higher median income allows for market priced programs and a more aggressive cost recovery model. The City currently has this in place and has a higher cost recovery percentage in comparison to their peers.

Household Budget Expenditures – The statistics for Household Budget Expenditures are consistent with what one would expect in areas with higher median income. An interesting note is that while the spending potential index for entertainment and recreation is significantly higher than the national number of 100 in all three service areas, it equates to approximately 4.5% of total household spending. This is interesting in Walnut Creek, because it provides a larger overall “pool” of dollars from which the City can capture a portion through their programming efforts and rental opportunities.

Tapestry Segments – B*K provided the top 10 segments within the 15-Minute Drive Time service area for purposes of the report. Those segments account for 74.5% of the population within the service area. Within the description of each service area an average household budget index for entertainment and recreation is provided. In all 10 segments, except for 1, the index for



entertainment and recreation is greater than the national number of 100. This is a strength within the community because it again points to how arts and recreation programming is embraced and is part of the culture.

The demographics of the service areas point to a vibrant community and area. One that has embraced the Arts & Recreation Department in Walnut Creek as a regional provider of services, and one that will continue to do so.

Recreation Participation Key Findings

The key findings from the analysis of recreation program participation are described below, including national trends, local participation and potential demand.

Activities Increasing in Participation Nationally:

- Yoga
- Gymnastics
- Running/Jogging
- Aerobic Exercise
- Hiking
- Cheerleading
- Lacrosse
- Exercise Walking
- Weight Lifting
- Soccer
- Pilates
- Exercising w/ Equipment

Activities Decreasing in Participation Nationally:

- Tennis
- Boxing
- Football
- Basketball
- Workout @ Club
- Bicycle Riding
- Martial Arts
- Baseball
- Swimming
- Volleyball
- Table Tennis/Ping Pong
- Softball
- Skateboarding
- Mountain Biking

The trend that B*K sees on a national level and that the City of Walnut Creek is also experiencing is that participants in youth sports are becoming specialized in one or two sports at a younger age. With that specialization comes the expectation of better facilities and travel teams. The City of Walnut Creek has accomplished this by working with the youth and adult sports groups to provide the facilities, while the sports agencies have provided the instruction and organization. This points to consistent demand for sports fields and amenities in the future, but the City is constrained in that they cannot expand fields within Heather Farm Park. There is opportunity within the park to consolidate the community center and aquatic center and diversify and expand the offering within the facility.



For adult participation activities like volleyball and softball, participation in leagues have continued to decrease. In contrast, especially with softball, there has been an increase in weekend tournament participation. However, to host such events communities require a significant number (4, 6, 8, 12) of fields.

While swimming is decreasing nationally, mainly due to cost and availability of facilities, participation in Walnut Creek continues to be strong. There is opportunity to re-invest in the aquatic center and expand the reach of the facility to a broader base of participants.

Another trend that is occurring nationally and within Walnut Creek is the passive use of trails and green space within parks. In both Heather Farm Park and Civic Park there are internal trails and external trail connections, additionally there is passive green space that individuals or families can enjoy as they see fit. In both of these parks, maintaining green space is essential for the parks to be enjoyed by the total population.

Arts & Other Participation Key Findings

The key findings from the analysis of participation for arts, childcare and senior activities are described below.

The City of Walnut Creek is very unique in providing the depth and breadth of successful arts and enrichment programming to the region. B*K has worked with hundreds of agencies across the country and very few provide this type of programming as well as Walnut Creek.

The arts and enrichment programming that the City provides primarily takes place at Civic Park and Shadelands Arts Center. Within Civic Park participation at the Center for Community Arts and the programs that they offer are very strong. The future of those programs will be successful based on the continued instruction.

In all three location; Heather Farm Park, Civic Park and Shadelands, the City offers preschool services which are in high demand from the community. This demand in Civic Park is going to grow in the future. In both Heather Farm Park and Civic Park, each preschool facility should be consolidated with the community center building and potentially expanded. The sharing of spaces and staffing in both locations could lead to a more stream-lined financial operation.

Based on the statistics from the National Endowment for the Arts, adult participation in arts activities is on the rise. Within Walnut Creek, participation rates in arts and enrichment programming for all ages have either remained steady or are increasing.. This indicates a need to maintain and/or expand spaces that accommodate this level of programming. The benefit of the spaces for the arts and enrichment programming is that the multi-purpose, multi-use nature of the space that is needed to accommodate these uses allows for flexibility of programming as trends continue to shift and change.



An important national trend that occurring is that more and more, parks and recreation departments are becoming the home for arts and enrichment programming in communities. Many school districts are having to make the hard decision to limit or eliminate art, music, theater and the like from their curriculum. Subsequently, it has created an opportunity for many agencies to provide those programs. Many agencies have embraced this opportunity, but few as enthusiastically as the City of Walnut Creek. Art and theater are something that the community is known for and they've aptly named their department Arts & Recreation.

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