

Gilbert Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Engagement Plan and Summary of Results Final Report



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1.0 Background: Development of a Comprehensive Engagement Plan and Strategy

Gilbert Parks and Recreation Vision Statement:

Gilbert Parks and Recreation is committed to providing superior parks, recreation, and cultural programs, which exceed customer expectations, enhance the quality of life, and promote lifelong leisure and educational pursuits. These services are provided by a dedicated team focused on fairness, trust, and innovation with a commitment to excellence.

From February to July 2023, BerryDunn (along with partners) engaged with the Town of Gilbert's (Town's) community to help shape a vision for the Parks and Recreation Department. We executed a robust and innovative engagement strategy to reach the most voices ever documented by the organization for a single project. This lofty goal, which was aligned with the Town's core values (e.g., "We Are Driven," "We Are Bold") was attained through strong collaboration between Town staff and consulting partners.

This engagement strategy is built upon the foundation of the department's previous efforts and momentum, such as the vision of the *Department of the Future*. The strategy was carefully planned and conducted through the lens of equity and inclusiveness to reach as many diverse audiences as possible (e.g., residents, staff, partners, visitors, and Parks and Recreation system users and non-users) with a strong emphasis on engaging with hard-to-reach stakeholders.

BerryDunn's goals were to:

1. Increase awareness in the community about current services, successes, and challenges experienced by the department
2. Bring as many voices into conversations about future Parks and Recreation services as possible
3. Focus on several key areas of need to help support planning recommendations, such as:
 - a. Perceived quality of the department's service levels
 - b. Barriers to accessing Parks and Recreation services
 - c. Gaps in services provided by the department as well as trends and new ideas for future offerings
 - d. Research-based understanding of equitable provision of services

Project Brand and Portfolio of Materials (December 2022 – February 2023)

Town staff and BerryDunn developed the following brand to support outreach efforts:



BerryDunn staff applied this unique and engaging brand to a variety of campaign collateral, such as information handouts, flyers, poster boards, and comment cards. Materials were translated to other languages as needed and as appropriate.



2.0 Engagement Summary

Participation at a Glance

Public Engagement Totals*: **60,938 points of contact**

(Equivalent to 22.7% of population)

BerryDunn Assets

Platform	Engagements
Social Pinpoint	8976
Vision Boards/Pop-ups	9048
Children’s Workshop	109
Statistically Valid Survey	537
General Public Survey	311
Comment Cards/Post-its	1335
Real Time Feedback Pilot	22
Stakeholder/Focus Groups	118
Total:	20456

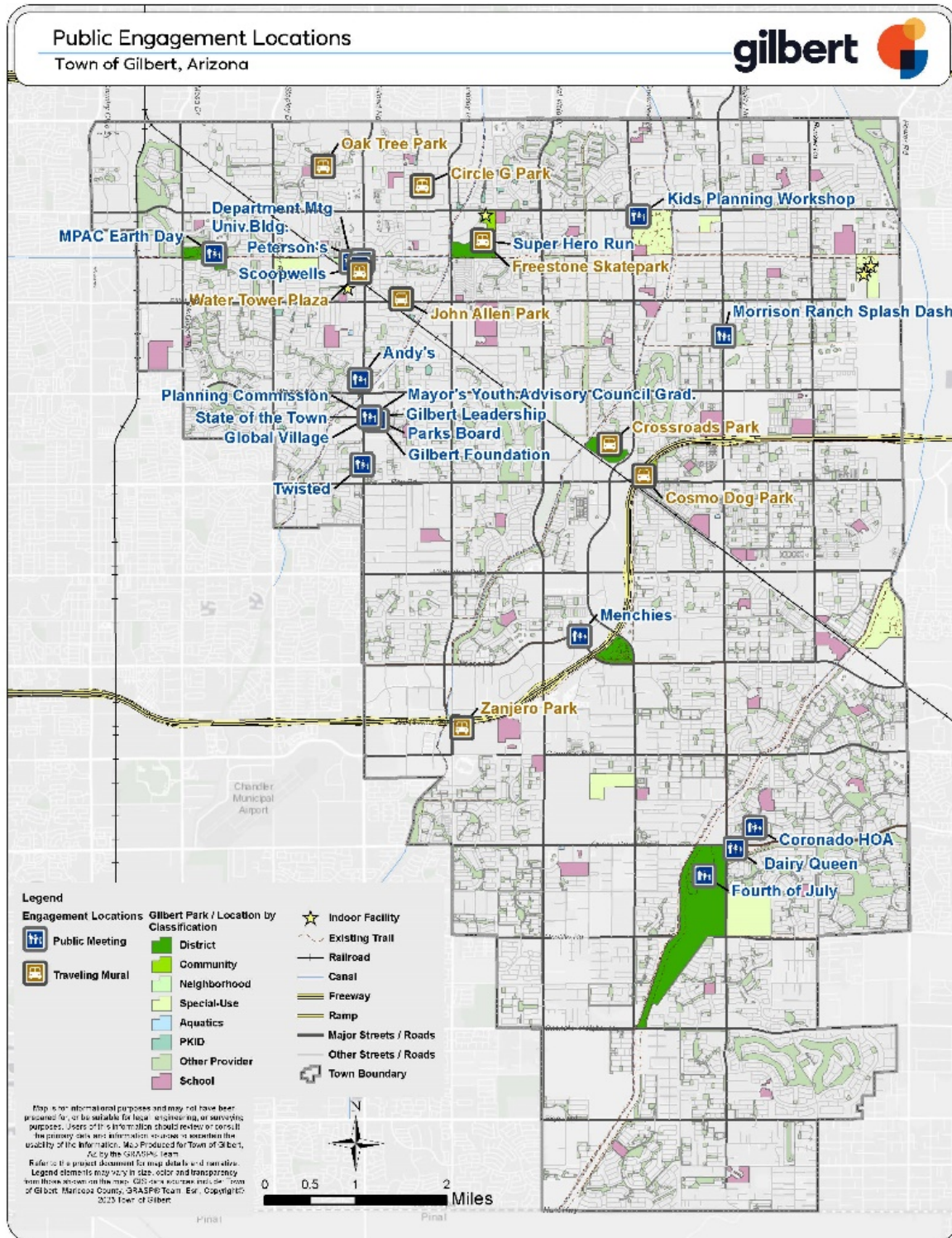
Platform	Engagements
Website loads	6646
Website clicks	1620
YouTube	640
Social Media: Gilbert	10102
Social Media: D. Lerner	1587
PeachJar Flyers	3262
May eNewsletter	786
April eNewsletter	293
MP Feedback eNewsletter	15009
MP Feedback eNews clicks	537
Total:	40482

Gilbert Parks and Recreation Assets

Public engagement supporting the Master Plan was collected over a period of five months. During that time frame, BerryDunn and the project team documented 60,938 points of contact of community touchpoints. This is no small achievement; in fact, these numbers represent the highest engagement numbers achieved in recent memory by both the Town and the hundreds of clients served by BerryDunn.

****For the purpose of this report, the term “public engagement” refers to the accumulated totals of documented points of contact (i.e., total number of individual/recorded instances of feedback). When measuring marketing impressions, this number increases dramatically due to numerous occurrences of earned media placements as well as utility bill inserts, facility marketing monitors, and facility and community signage.***

Figure 1: Public Engagement Locations



3.0 Social Pinpoint Analysis Report

Social Pinpoint is a powerful web-based tool that helps agencies gather feedback and insights from stakeholders. By using advanced mapping and engagement features, Social Pinpoint allows agencies to easily collect and analyze feedback from a wide range of stakeholders, including community members, customers, business, and employees.

Through this analysis, we aim to provide insights that can inform decision-making and help Gilbert Parks and Recreation better meet the needs and expectations of the community. These insights can lead to recommendations that drive positive change and improve outcomes for all stakeholders involved.

The Social Pinpoint site for Gilbert Parks and Recreation Master Plan received over 9,130 site visits and generated 577 Ideas Wall comments, 282 map comments, and 33 budget responses. The highest number of visits recorded on a single day was 764 visits on March 22, 2023, which aligned with the launch of a promotional campaign on Gilbert’s social media channels.

Online Engagement by the Numbers

9,130 Site Visits

3,130 Unique Users

577 Ideas Wall Comments

1 Forum Response

33 Budget Responses

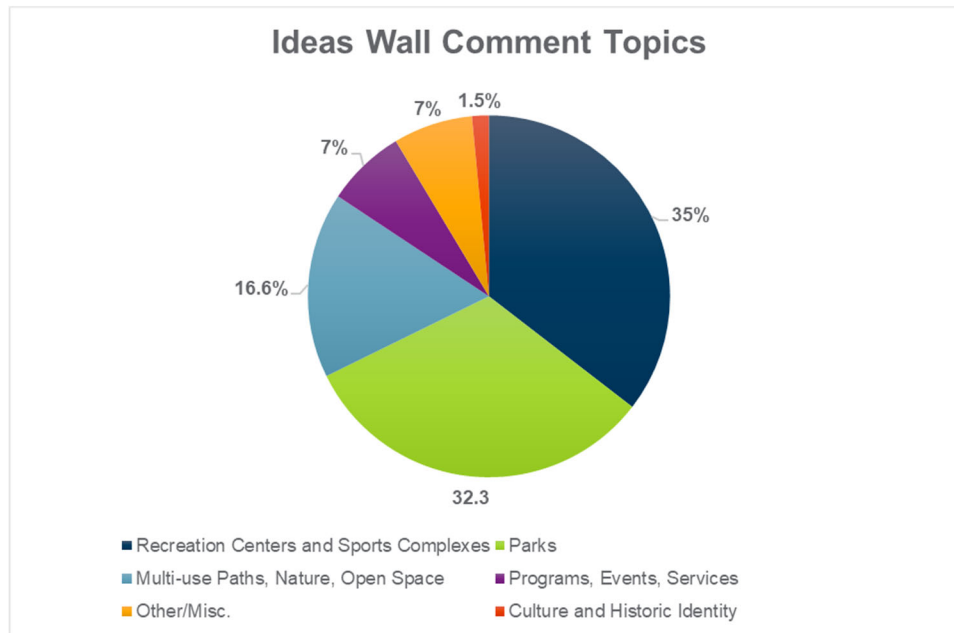
282 Map Comments

3.1 Ideas Wall and Forum

The Ideas Wall and Forum allowed community members to share their opinions, ideas, and feedback on local issues and initiatives. The platform was used to gather feedback regarding recreation centers and sports complexes; parks; multi-use paths, nature, and open space; programs, events, and services; culture and historic identity, and miscellaneous topics. Community members could submit their feedback anonymously and view other submissions on the platform.

A total of 577 stakeholders contributed to the Ideas Wall. Most of the feedback pertained to the community's preferences and needs for park improvements and new facilities. Below is a summary of the key themes identified for each category.

Figure 1: Ideas Wall Comment Topics



3.1.1 Recreation Centers and Sports Complexes

Of the six categories, recreation centers and sports complexes received the most feedback, with 200 comments (35.3%). The most significant theme, which garnered the highest number of votes, is the community's request for indoor facilities and recreation centers. Community members are interested in having spaces for activities such as rock climbing, yoga, aquatics, fitness, and wellness. The community's desire for indoor recreation and sports options are driven by the extreme heat during the warmer months. The community also desires additional diverse indoor activities to cater to various age groups and interests, including swimming pools, climbing gyms, and fitness centers. Community members also suggested the need for more accessible facilities throughout the Town, especially in the southern and southeastern areas. Comments highlight key themes listed below, related to recreation centers and sports complexes.

Need for year-round indoor facilities (111 mentions): There is a strong desire that Gilbert Parks and Recreation provides additional facilities and amenities to use year-round, particularly for use during the seasons of extreme heat. Community members desire year-round access to activities like indoor pools (with diving options), wellness center, tennis courts, volleyball, and climbing walls and skating rinks. One respondent asks, "Please have more indoor playgrounds for the kids! It's too hot for them to play outside for much of the year and the Community Centers are not equipped for their running and playing." This comment was supported by 37 votes.

Lack of recreation centers in south Gilbert (108 mentions): There were 76 respondents that commented on the absence of recreation centers in the southern area of Gilbert Respondents

expressed frustration over the distance needed to access facilities on the northern end of the Town and are requesting Gilbert provides easily accessible, centrally located facilities that provide a wide range of activities for residents of all ages. Additionally, respondents are requesting Gilbert Parks and Recreation consider developing a senior center in the southern part of Gilbert, to better cater to senior citizens' needs.

Need for additional aquatic facilities and programs (68 mentions): Respondents desire the development of aquatic centers and improved access to aquatic programs, including competitive and lap swimming for children and adults.

Need for pickleball courts and other sports (44 mentions): Community members strongly desire both indoor and outdoor pickleball courts. Additionally, community members seek facilities for various sports like archery, shooting, badminton, and tennis.

Need for family-friendly amenities (35 mentions): Community members desire family-oriented amenities, including children's museums, playgrounds, splash pads, miniature golf courses, and amusement parks. One comment, "We would love a Children's Museum in downtown Gilbert!," was supported by 40 votes. Additional family-friendly events such as movie nights are also desired.

Increase community engagement and events (34 mentions): Respondents suggested Gilbert Parks and Recreation provide amenities like community gardens and an art and music museum; expand downtown with local businesses; and create walking paths that connect residents to the businesses, Town facilities, and parks. Additional events like movies in the park and adventure runs were also suggested.

Improvements at current facilities (31 mentions): Some respondents proposed adding solar panels to Parks and Recreation Department facility parking areas, providing shade, and capturing solar energy as an environmentally friendly solution.

Environmental stewardship and education (20 mentions): Respondents requested GPRD provide recycling and composting bins within parks to prioritize environmentally friendly features. Other suggestions included creating traffic parks for teaching road safety to children and incorporating educational elements like pollinator gardens and sundials.

Host tournaments and competitions (19 mentions): Requests were made to build facilities suitable for hosting tournaments and competitions, particularly for sports like tennis, pickleball, and swimming.

Increase cultural and art awareness (15 mentions): Ideas include expanding the downtown with local storefronts, restaurants, art sculptures, and gardens to enhance the cultural and artistic aspects of the community.

Develop bicycling and disc golf (14 mentions): Community members suggested the development of bicycle facilities, BMX tracks, pump tracks, and disc golf courses. There is also a desire for bicycle paths with underground crossings to enhance safety.

Community engagement (11 mentions): Several respondents appreciated the community's involvement in the decision-making process and emphasized the importance of their feedback being considered.

Increase youth programs (7 mentions): Respondents expressed the need for more programs and activities catering to youth, both indoors and outdoors.

3.1.2 Parks

The second most participated category is in the Parks category, with 188 suggestions from community members that commented on various topics such as enhancements of recreational opportunities, improving park amenities, and maintaining the natural beauty of Town parks. The key related themes are listed below.

Enhance recreation facilities (71 mentions): Community members are interested in developing recreational facilities such as roller hockey rinks, skate parks, splash pads, disc golf, bocce ball courts, and pickleball courts to enhance recreational opportunities at parks.

Development of botanical garden (31 mentions): Many community members support the idea of creating a Gilbert Botanical Garden, adding a touch of natural beauty to the Town.

Increase shade and greenery (29 mentions): Many participants emphasized the importance of adding more trees and shaded structures to parks, providing year-round access, especially during hot Arizona summers.

Inclusivity and accessibility (25 mentions): Respondents requested GPRD prioritize accessibility for all, including those with disabilities. Suggestions included wheelchair-accessible playground equipment, paved walkways, and amenities that are inclusive to all.

Bike parks and trails (18 mentions): Residents expressed a desire for more biking opportunities, including BMX pump tracks, mountain bike parks, and additional bike trails.

Additional dog park amenities (16 mentions): There is a strong interest in pet-friendly park features. Community members desire additional dog parks, agility equipment, and improved dog waste cleanup stations.

Miscellaneous (15 mentions): A variety of other suggestions include adding indoor skate areas, lower water fountains for dogs, miniature golf courses, labyrinths, and encouraging the use of recycled water for splash pads.

Improvements at current parks (14 mentions): Participants suggest increasing the number of trash bins throughout parks to promote cleanliness and decrease littering.

Recreational games (8 mentions): Ideas like geocaching and areas for graffiti art appeal to those seeking unique recreational activities in parks.

3.1.3 Multi-Use Paths, Nature, and Open Space

Within the multi-use paths, nature, and open-space category, 102 comments were made. Community members expressed enthusiasm about improving their outdoor experiences,

fostering nature preservation and stewardship by keeping these areas as open spaces. Below is a list of key themes identified in the multi-use paths, nature, and open-space category.

Shade and trees (46 mentions): Several participants highlighted the need for shaded areas, more trees along multi-use paths, and in parks to combat the Arizona heat. One comment that was supported by 37 votes said, “We live in the hot desert. Why do we not have more trees and covered walking areas? X number of sturdy trees should be replaced/added when removed at construction sites—HOAs, shopping malls, parks, parking lots, etc. San Tan south side of Williams Field has so much wasted areas of concrete parking. Put in more trees.”

Bicycle and pedestrian connectivity (45 mentions): Community members express the need for pedestrian and bicycle paths connecting local parks to regional parks and trails, creating networks for long walks, runs, and bike rides. Additionally, participants noted the need for outdoor spaces catering to seniors, with walking areas and three-wheel bike rentals, allowing older residents to exercise and socialize.

Nature preserves and trails (38 mentions): There is strong support for creating more natural preserves within walking trails, similar to the Gilbert Riparian Preserve at Water Ranch. One respondent suggests, “Gilbert take the Monarch Pledge through the National Wildlife Foundation. It wouldn't take much to put into action, and there is federal funding available. Both Phoenix and Flagstaff have already taken it.” This comment was supported by 38 votes.

Pollinator gardens (33 mentions): Community members suggested preserving wildlife habitats, creating pollinator gardens, and planting native vegetation to attract wildlife.

Outdoor educational programs (27 mentions): Ideas include outdoor classrooms, story walks, and educational kiosks in parks to enhance learning experiences for both children and adults.

Safety measures (9 mentions): Safety-related suggestions included well-lit paths, emergency buttons, and security patrolling walking, biking, and running paths.

Community gardens (9 mentions): Respondents proposed the creation of community gardens in parks to encourage people to learn and practice desert-specific gardening for growing their own food.

3.1.4 Programs, Events, and Services

In this category, 35 community members provided feedback. They seek additional park events, concerts, and family programs that are inclusive of children, youth, adults, and seniors. Additionally, respondents are looking for flexible spaces, improved Fourth of July experience, safety programs, and an expansion of aquatic and recreation opportunities. The themes below reflect the desires of community members regarding programs, events, and services.

Expand event offerings (31 mentions): Gilbert Regional Park is praised for its events; however, community members desire additional family-friendly events and concerts in the downtown area during evenings and weekends throughout the year, particularly during the fall and winter seasons to avoid the extreme heat. Additionally, community members request programs designed for kids with working parents, including evening and weekend options, parent-child yoga, and more diverse offerings beyond sports.

Additional flex spaces (27 mentions): Requests included more indoor community meeting spaces for groups like Girl Scout Troops and low-cost education classes at libraries and community buildings, including CPR training and nature education classes.

Specialized programming (20 mentions): Suggestions included the establishment of a ceramic studio similar to the one at Mesa Arts Center and the introduction of adult tennis and pickleball clinics for more experienced players.

Arts and educational programs (19 mentions): Requests included a variety of classes, including music and movement classes for toddlers, tap dance, gardening, birding, and classes in woodworking, metalworking, 3D printing, and bookbinding for teens and adults.

Need for diverse adult and senior programs (16 mentions): Respondents emphasized the need for a wider range of programs catering to adults and seniors, such as scrapbooking, photography classes, and chess lessons.

Improved July Fourth event experience (6 mentions): Concerns were raised about the setup of the July Fourth event, with respondents suggesting a more spacious location to accommodate the size of the event without ticketing and parking issues.

Safety programs (6 mentions): Requests included safety programs and classes for all ages, covering bicycle safety and golf cart safety, to increase awareness of rules and safe practices.

Expanding youth programs (6 mentions): Suggestions included expanding youth recreation sports programs year-round, increasing the age limit, and introducing new sports like baseball, softball, basketball, and more at Cactus Yards.

Aquatic programs (3 mentions): Interest was expressed in youth water polo, artistic swim (synchro), year-round swim, dive programs, and adult standup paddle boarding classes.

3.1.5 Culture and Historic Identity

There were 10 community members who provided feedback regarding culture and historic identity. They expressed a strong desire for:

- Historical signage and education near landmarks and multi-use paths
- Larger cultural and art facilities
- Pedestrian-friendly downtown area with retail, art, and community spaces
- Additional multicultural and ethnic events
- Preserving and promoting the Town's cultural heritage through historic sites and events

3.1.6 Miscellaneous Topics

A number of comments were made too infrequently to classify as “key themes;” however, these comments are grouped and included below in the interest of inclusivity:

Miscellaneous Suggestions (46 mentions): This category encompasses a wide range of suggestions, including the idea of a reality show featuring the community, concepts similar to Luci's at the Orchard (restaurant, coffee shop, ice cream shop with a splash pad in the courtyard), and adding misters in parent sitting areas for comfort during hot weather.

Internet improvements (9 mentions): Community members desire improved internet services, including the installation of fiber-optic networks.

Dog stations (7 mentions): Residents request more dog-friendly spaces and stations along trails.

Outdoor Amenities (5 mentions): Suggestions were made for enhancing outdoor amenities, such as creating outdoor fitness trails, sports facilities, and splash pads.

3.4 Interactive Mapping Tool

The interactive mapping tool allowed community members to share their suggestions, strengths, challenges, and favorite places to visit in Gilbert. Respondents were able to pin their comments in their desired locations within Town boundaries anonymously and view other submissions on the platform.

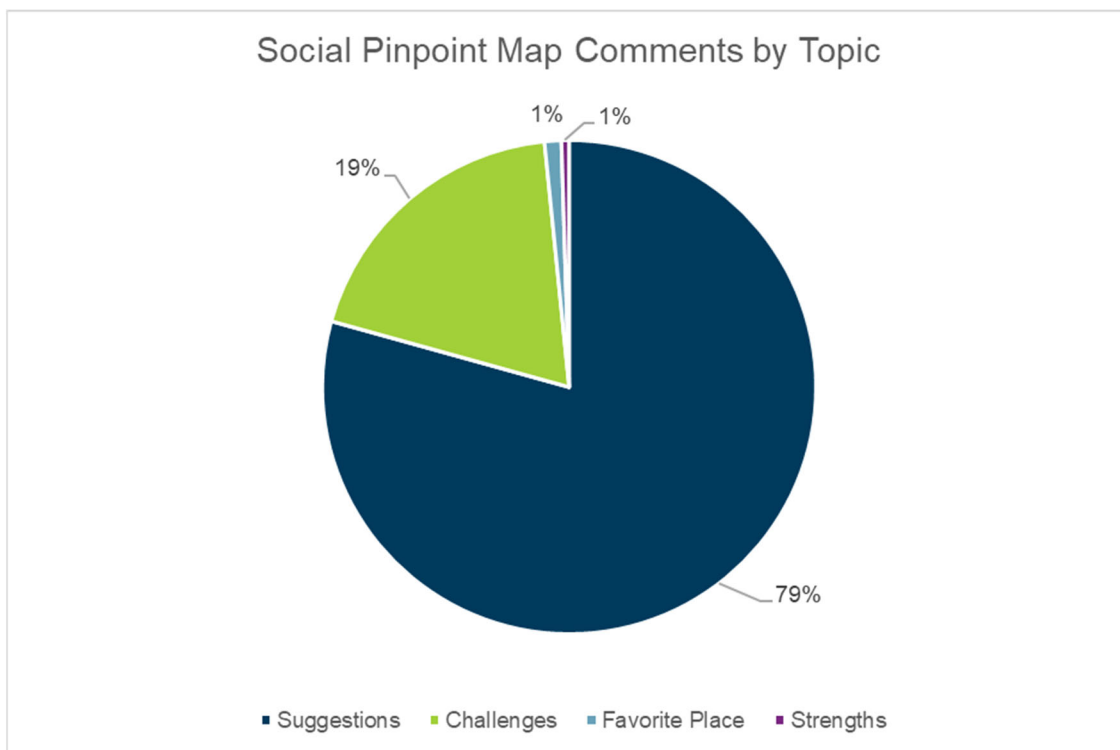
A total of 282 comments were made across different map layers. The Suggestions Category received the most comments (79.3%), followed by challenges (19.1%), loved places (1%), and strengths (.5%). The information below is broken down by category and park boundaries.

Online Mapping Tool

2,673 site visits

282 comments

Figure 2: Social Pinpoint Map Comments Topic



3.4.1 Suggestions

The Suggestions Category received the highest number of responses, with 223 comments made by community members who provided feedback and suggestions for the following parks:

- Gilbert Regional Park (55 comments)
- McQueen District Park (35 comments)
- Freestone District Park (24 comments)
- Riparian Preserve at Water Ranch (8 comments)
- Freestone Recreation Center (7 comments)
- Riparian Preserve at Neely Ranch (7 comments)
- Oak Tree Park (4 comments)
- Crossroads District Park (3 comments)
- Gilbert Soccer Complex (2 comments)
- John Allen Park (2 comments)
- South Area Water Recharge Site (2 comments)
- Cosmo Park (1 comment)
- Page Park (1 comment)
- Water Tower Plaza (1 comment)
- Zanjero Park (1 comment)

In the Suggestions Category, Gilbert Regional Park received the most comments, followed by McQueen District Park, and Freestone District Park. The information below summarizes identified themes within each park boundary in the Suggestions Category.

Gilbert Regional Park

Community members' feedback highlights a strong desire for additional recreational facilities, improved amenities, and more shade in Gilbert Regional Park to cater to the diverse interests and needs of the community.

Suggestions include the following:

- **Request for a recreation and aquatic center:** Respondents expressed a strong desire for a recreation center in the park, citing the lack of such facilities in the south Gilbert area. Additionally, community members expressed desire for a water park with features like a lazy river and water slides.

- **Rock climbing and wellness center:** Many community members requested the addition of a rock climbing and wellness center, offering activities like yoga and fitness.
- **Event organization:** Attendees generally appreciate the well-organized events at Gilbert Regional Park; however, they expressed concerns about high parking fees and the lack of free drinking water at events. One respondent said, “The water sales were controlled by the bar and the only free water was a watering station with warm water. I was also disappointed at the prices being charged for parking at a town park—at one point it was \$40, for an event I was already paying to attend.”
- **Courts:** Additional pickleball and tennis courts due to the sport's popularity are highly desired, with community members citing high demand and limited availability. For example, one respondent said they “Would love to see more pickleball courts be added because this is such a popular location for it, and it is often crowded.”
- **Community and aquatic center:** Some respondents inquired about the status for the proposed community and aquatic center in the park, as mentioned in the Master Plan.
- **Outdoor gym:** Respondents proposed the installation of outdoor exercise equipment for both adults and children.
- **Trail enhancements:** Suggestions included extending hiking trails to the south end of the park, adding a bike track/pump track, and creating pedestrian crossings over the canal.
- **Shade and seating:** Requests were made for additional shaded seating areas, particularly on top of the hill.
- **Park hours and lighting:** Concerns were raised about the early closure of the park. Community members requested extended hours, especially for pickleball players.
- **Splash pad improvements:** Community members suggested adding more shade and play features to the splash pad area.
- **Additional amenities:** Some community members suggested adding amenities such as water fountains, more trees for shade, fitness equipment along jogging paths, and horse-friendly pedestrian crossings.
- **Other recreational opportunities:** Ideas included an outdoor gym, disc golf course, baseball fields, a train ride, and a frisbee golf course.
- **Sports fields:** Requests for sports fields, including softball fields with lights, were also mentioned.

McQueen District Park

The suggestions received for McQueen District Park centered on enhancing recreational opportunities, updating existing facilities, and providing amenities that cater to the diverse needs and preferences of the community.

Suggestions included the following:

- **Pickleball courts:** Respondents requested additional pickleball courts at the park, emphasizing the sport's popularity and the lack of nearby facilities. One respondent expressed the need for "Pickleball courts like Gilbert Regional has." Another comment suggested that a "Pickleball Court would be a great addition. It is the fastest growing sport and encourages social interaction amongst all ages." While many support adding pickleball courts, concerns were raised about noise levels from the sport and its potential impact on nearby residents.
- **Splash pad:** Community members expressed a desire for a splash pad at McQueen District Park, citing the inconvenience of having to travel to other locations for this type of amenity. One comment that was supported by 14 votes said they "Would love a splash pad here or at Freestone – it is such a long drive to the nearest decent splash pad in Gilbert (the water tower plaza in downtown hardly counts as a splash pad—it is rough cement with minimal shade and less than ideal parking for people with young kids)."
- **Dog park:** There is interest in having a dog park in northwest Gilbert, as Cosmo Dog Park is relatively far away.
- **Playground improvements:** Some suggestions included updating the playground area to better accommodate families and spectators.
- **Baseball field renovation:** A few community members highlighted the need for renovations to the baseball fields, including improvements to the grass and infield.
- **Shade and benches:** Community members requested more shade trees and benches along the walking path, particularly due to the extreme heat during the summer season.
- **Field transformation:** Interest was expressed in transforming field #6 into a more traditional little league baseball field with grass and a mound.
- **Signage:** Respondents suggested adding signs to encourage courteous behavior among spectators leaving the ball fields, especially in terms of sharing sidewalks with cyclists.
- **Park improvements:** Some community members think that McQueen District Park has been overlooked and neglected and request general improvements to the park's amenities.
- **Additional amenities:** Suggestions included adding amenities like pickleball courts, a splash pad, a dog park, and walking paths to create a space that encourages outdoor activities and caters to different interests and age groups.

Freestone District Park

Suggestions for Freestone District Park centered on improving recreational amenities, catering to different age groups, and enhancing the overall park experience. The addition of a splash pad is a highly desired feature.

Suggestions for Freestone District Park are:

- **Splash Pad:** The most prominent request was for the need for a splash pad that includes a shaded structure, misters, a lazy river, and water zone area, as it is too hot during the summer season. Several community members expressed a strong interest in this feature, with one respondent agreeing to a thread stating that there is “more than ample space to house this.”
- **Pickleball courts:** There is support for the addition of pickleball courts at the park, with some community members highlighting the high demand for these courts and the need for a better reservation system. One respondent emphasized the sport’s growing popularity stating, “Pickleball is the fastest growing sport with an increase in over 159% of players in the last 3 years. Yet Freestone has TWO indoor “courts”?! There is enough space at Freestone to build MANY courts, just like GRP, which would give the residents of N. Gilbert a place to play.”
- **Roller hockey:** Some community members suggest the inclusion of roller hockey rinks within the park.
- **Fenced dog park:** There is a desire to have a fenced dog park at the park to cater to dog owners in the area.
- **Bike stands:** Some community members suggested adding bike stands to the playground areas to provide a place for families to secure their bikes when using the park’s amenities.
- **Playground:** Respondents requested a playground specifically designed for children ages five and under, as the current playground may be intimidating for toddlers due to its size and the presence of older children. Additionally, suggestions to enhance the playground include replacing some climbing structures with more interactive and interconnected equipment to promote imaginative play among children.
- **Pool and aquatic opportunities:** Some community members propose the addition of a public pool with various features such as slides, splash pads, diving boards, and lap pools. Additionally, requests for the development of a water zone with a lazy river, shaded areas, misters, and activities for various age groups were also mentioned.
- **Lights for soccer fields:** A request was made to add lights to the soccer fields to extend usability.

The suggestions for the remaining park boundaries encompassed a wide range of community-driven ideas that included park improvements and enhancements, from pickleball courts and playgrounds to improved lighting and walking trails. Community member suggestions for the remaining parks are summarized below.

Cosmo Park: Recommendations include installing shade over the dog play areas, addressing the need for sun protection for both pets and their owners.

Crossroads District Park: Suggestions include upgrading the park's lighting to new LED lights, improving the park's bathrooms.

Freestone Recreation Center: Suggestions include adding outdoor pickleball courts, much like those at Gilbert Regional Park. These suggestions reflect the community's desire for more sports facilities and recreational options at the park.

Gilbert Soccer Complex: Suggestions include sharing space for the growing sport of lacrosse and adding water fountains and additional shaded areas.

John Allen Park: Recommendations involve replacing old water fountains, adding tables, benches, and a dog waste bag station. Additionally, there is a suggestion to replace the wash area with a basketball court.

Oak Tree Park: Suggestions include installing larger shade structures and adding playground equipment, swings, and a splash pad.

Page Park: One respondent requested outdoor exercise equipment suitable for the elderly and others, aligning with the goal of promoting physical fitness and wellness within the community.

Riparian Preserve at Neely Ranch: Suggestions include paving some trails for improved accessibility, enhancing landscaping and maintenance, and creating a community garden.

Riparian Preserve at Water Ranch: Suggested improvements include adding play structures, swings, and large shade structures to provide a more family-friendly environment. There is also a proposal to develop a water park, potentially featuring a surf pool.

South Area Water Recharge Site: Recommendations include adding accessible trails and creating "photo spots" to promote the area as a destination location.

Water Tower Plaza: Suggestions include installing a drinking fountain to enhance the park visitor experience.

Zanjero Park: Recommendations include creating a mountain bike terrain park with obstacle courses and rock formations, catering to the growing popularity of mountain biking and adventure sports.

3.4.2 Challenges

The challenges category received 55 comments from community members who provided feedback as noted below.

Crossroads District Park: Community members expressed concerns regarding outdated lighting systems at the ball fields, suggesting the adoption of more energy-efficient LED lights. Additionally, there was a suggestion to have amenities like a carousel, playground, train, and picnic tables, to enhance the park's offerings.

Freestone District Park: Community members expressed challenges related to a largely unused parking lot, which is considered an eyesore and potential health hazard. Suggestions included transforming this space into a parking garage, incorporating solar panels, creating desert landscaping with walking paths, and adding large playgrounds catering to different age groups. Another idea was to establish a dog-friendly outdoor dining area that supports local businesses.

John Allen Park: Recommendations made by community members highlighted the need for maintenance improvements, including replacing old water fountains and adding more tables, benches, and a dog waste bag station. Additionally, there was a proposal to replace the wash area with a basketball court.

Oak Tree Park: Suggestions include the installation of larger shade structures, providing additional playground equipment and swings, and potentially converting the existing space into a splash pad to use during hot Arizona summers.

Page Park: One respondent suggested the inclusion of outdoor exercise equipment suitable for people of all ages, especially the elderly, to promote physical fitness and wellness.

Riparian Preserve at Neely Ranch: Challenges and suggestions included in the proposal to pave some trails to make the area more accessible. Additionally, there were suggestions to enhance landscaping by creating a community garden.

Riparian Preserve at Water Ranch: While several community members praise the location as a wonderful place for leisurely walks and conversations, the community has safety concerns regarding the cement surfaces, with requests to remove or smooth bumps. Community members suggested adding a playground similar to the one at McQueen Activity Center, increasing the number of covered ramadas with picnic tables, and providing additional parking spaces to accommodate the park's popularity.

Water Tower Plaza: Suggestions include installing a drinking fountain for the convenience of park patrons.

Zanjero Park: One suggestion was to develop a mountain bike terrain park featuring obstacle courses and rock formations.

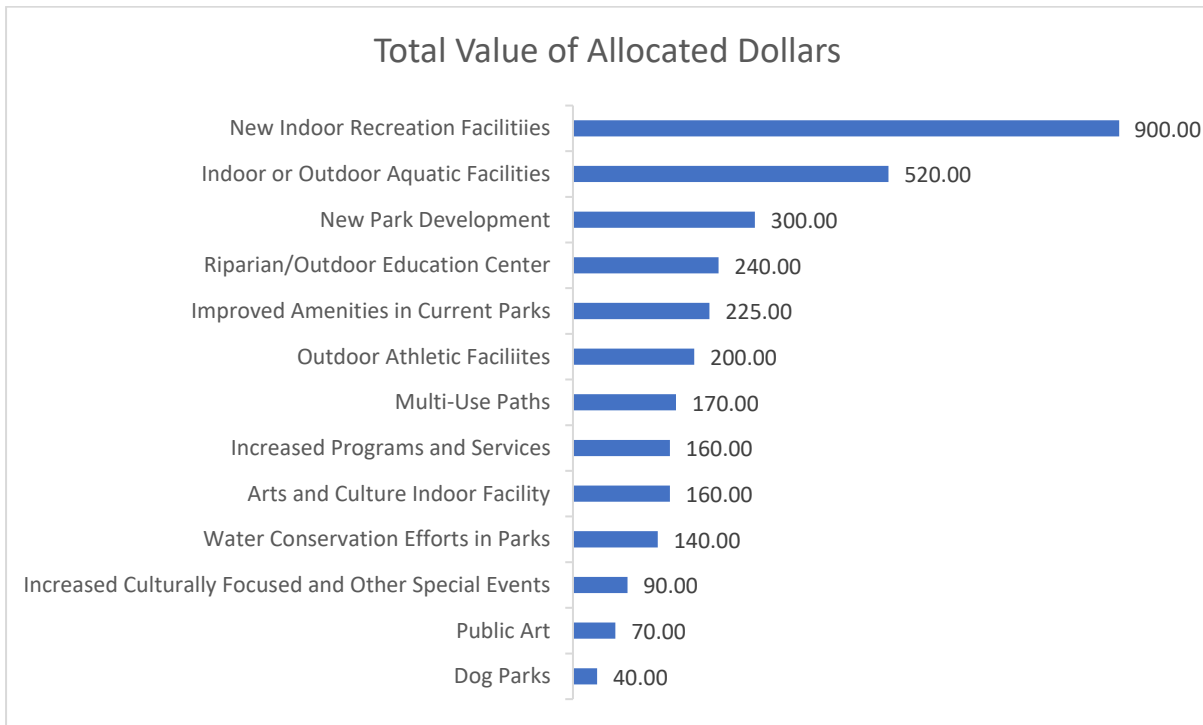
3.4.3 Favorite Place

Park patrons at the Riparian Preserve at Neely Ranch and the Riparian Preserve at Water Ranch share their appreciation for these parks' unique amenities. Both preserves are regarded as special and valued assets to the community. There is a shared desire for more spaces like the riparian throughout the Town, reflecting the enthusiasm for natural settings. Additionally, community members expressed an interest in expanding nature-based activities and educational opportunities within these preserves. These suggestions encompass various aspects, including wildlife identification, preservation efforts, and exploring the diverse botanical offerings within these ecosystems.

3.5 Budget Priorities

Community members submitted 33 budget priority responses regarding parks, recreational facilities, programs, and amenities. Community members were asked to allocate \$100 in \$10 increments to various categories.

Figure 3: Budget Priority Responses



4.0 Statistically Valid Survey

Consulting team partner ETC created a Statistically Valid Survey, which was implemented to help ensure that the feedback collected through the master planning process accurately reflected the Town’s demographics. The goal was to garner a minimum of 500 completed surveys from Town residents. That goal was met with 537 completed surveys collected. The overall results for the sample of 537 households have a precision of at least +/-4.2 at the 95% level of confidence.

Figure 6: Top Priorities for Investment for Facilities/Amenities

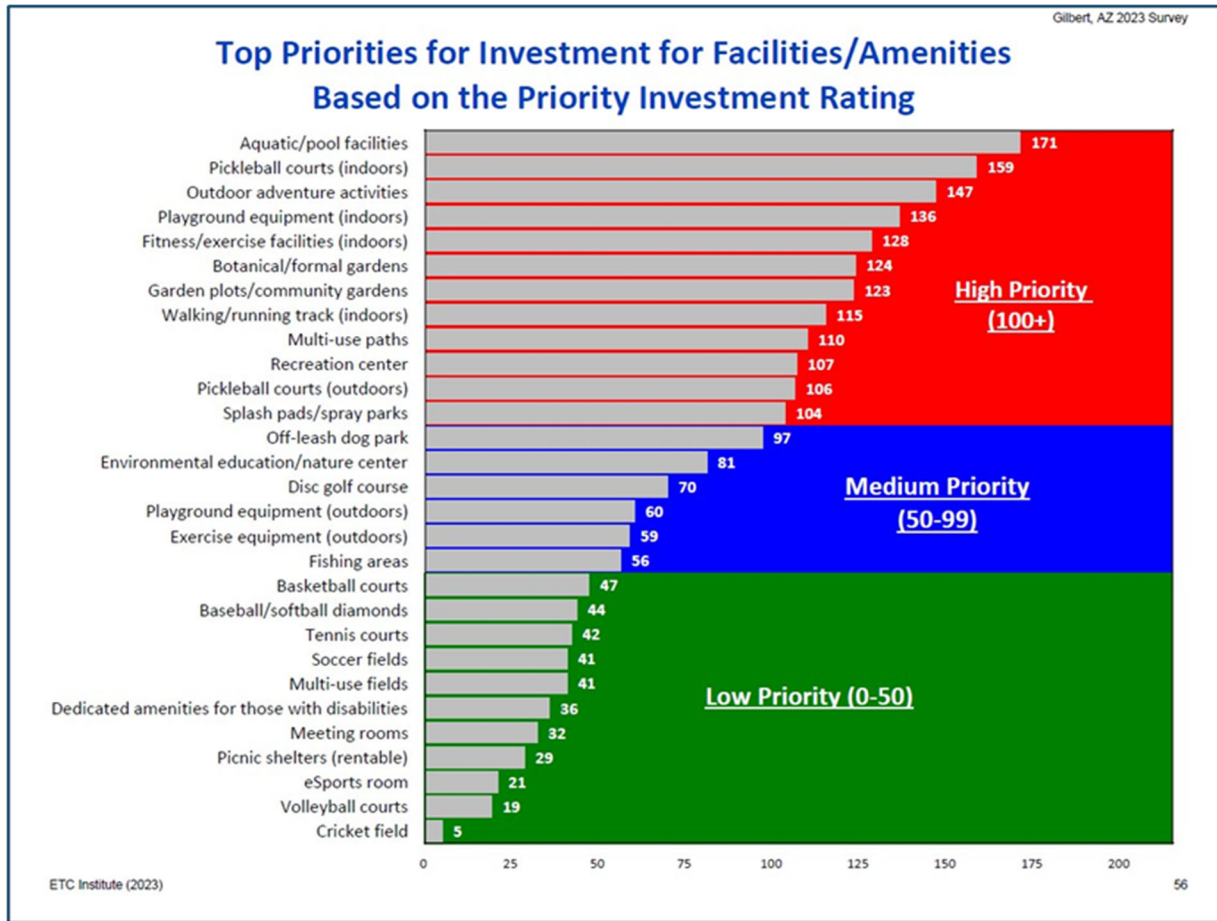
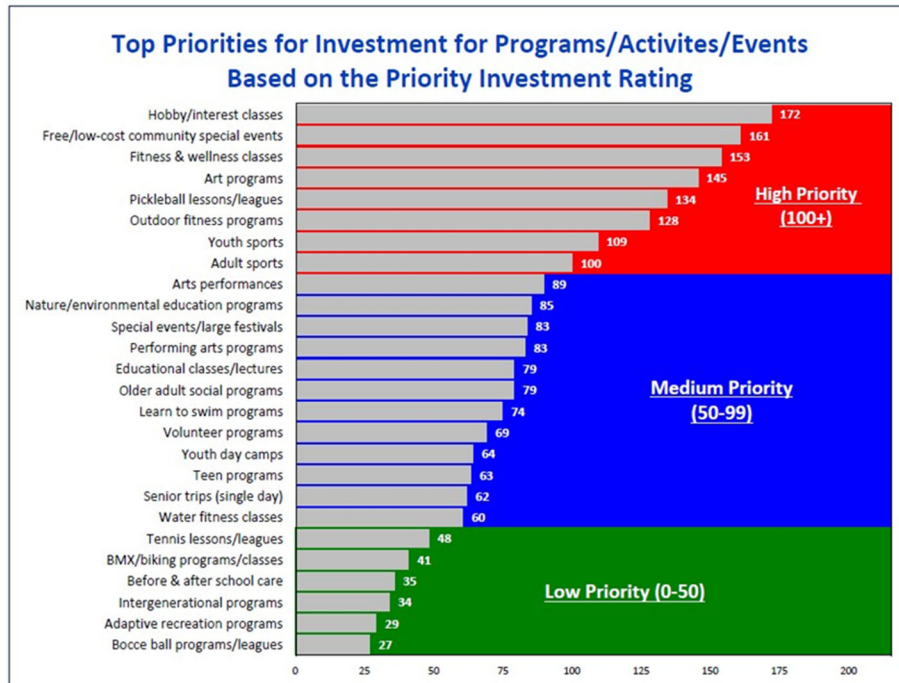


Figure 7: Top Priorities for Investment for Programs/Activities/Events



Statistically Valid Survey Key Observations

- As with many of the platforms following this section, aquatics ranks high in terms of community needs (facility and programming).
- While athletic fields rank low priority in the area of facility/amenities ratings, youth and adult sports rank high priority in the program’s ratings. Clearly the two are inextricably linked; additional programming requires additional space.
- Free special/community events rank remarkably high in program needs, followed closely by arts programming; clearly, “wellness” is not limited to sports and fitness activities.

Key Findings by Capital Needs

High-Priority Capital Needs (not necessarily in order of priority):

- Aquatic/Pool Facilities
- Pickleball Courts (indoor and outdoor)
- Indoor Fitness/Playground Amenities
- Splashpads
- Multi-Use Paths
- Indoor Track
- Community Gardens

Medium-Priority Capital Needs (not necessarily in order of priority):

Dog Parks

Nature Center/Programs

Disc Golf

Art Performances/Special Events

Outdoor Playground/Exercise Equipment

Adult Enrichment Activities

Teen Programs

Water Fitness Programs

Low-Priority Capital Needs (not necessarily in order of priority):

Athletic Fields

Meeting Rooms

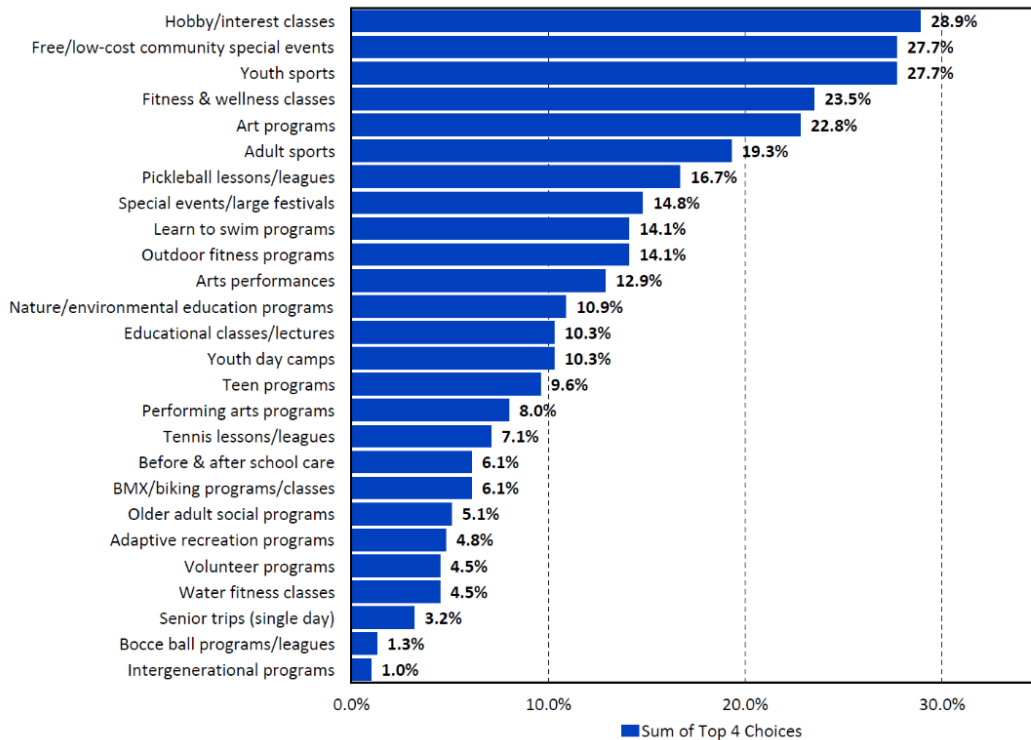
Picnic Shelters

Dedicated Amenities for the Disabled

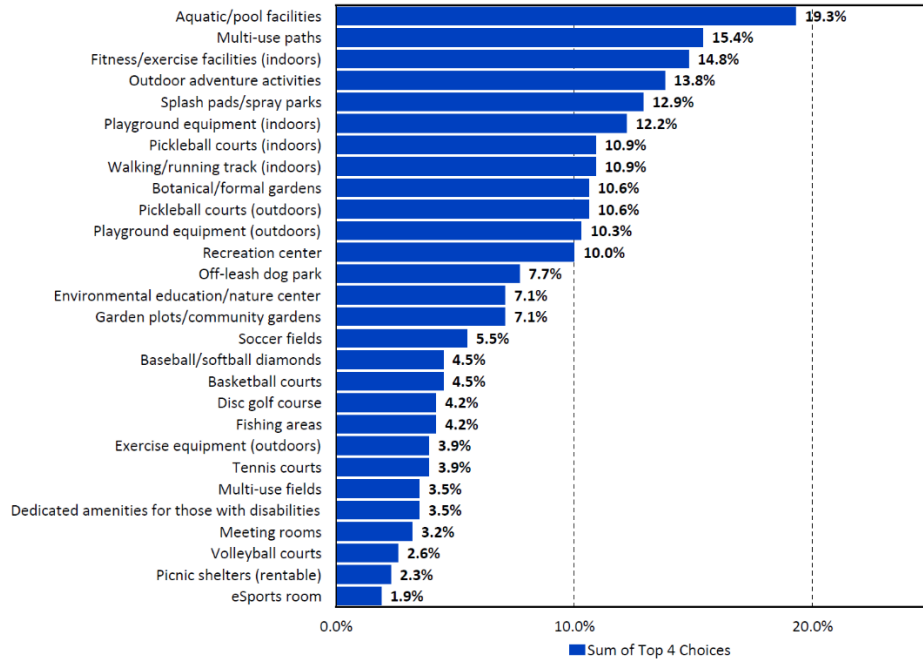
5.0 Public Survey

In addition to the Statistically Valid Survey, the consultant team recognized the value of inviting the public to use the same survey tool to participate in the master planning process. While not “statistically” valid, this additional feedback helps validate the scientific sample while also soliciting community buy-in to planning efforts. In this case, the additional data collected for GPRD aligned with the findings reported in other measurement tools.

Q2. Which FOUR types of **PROGRAMS/ACTIVITIES/EVENTS** from the list in Question 1 are MOST IMPORTANT to your household?



Q8. Which FOUR types of FACILITIES/AMENITIES from the list in Question 7 are MOST IMPORTANT to your household?

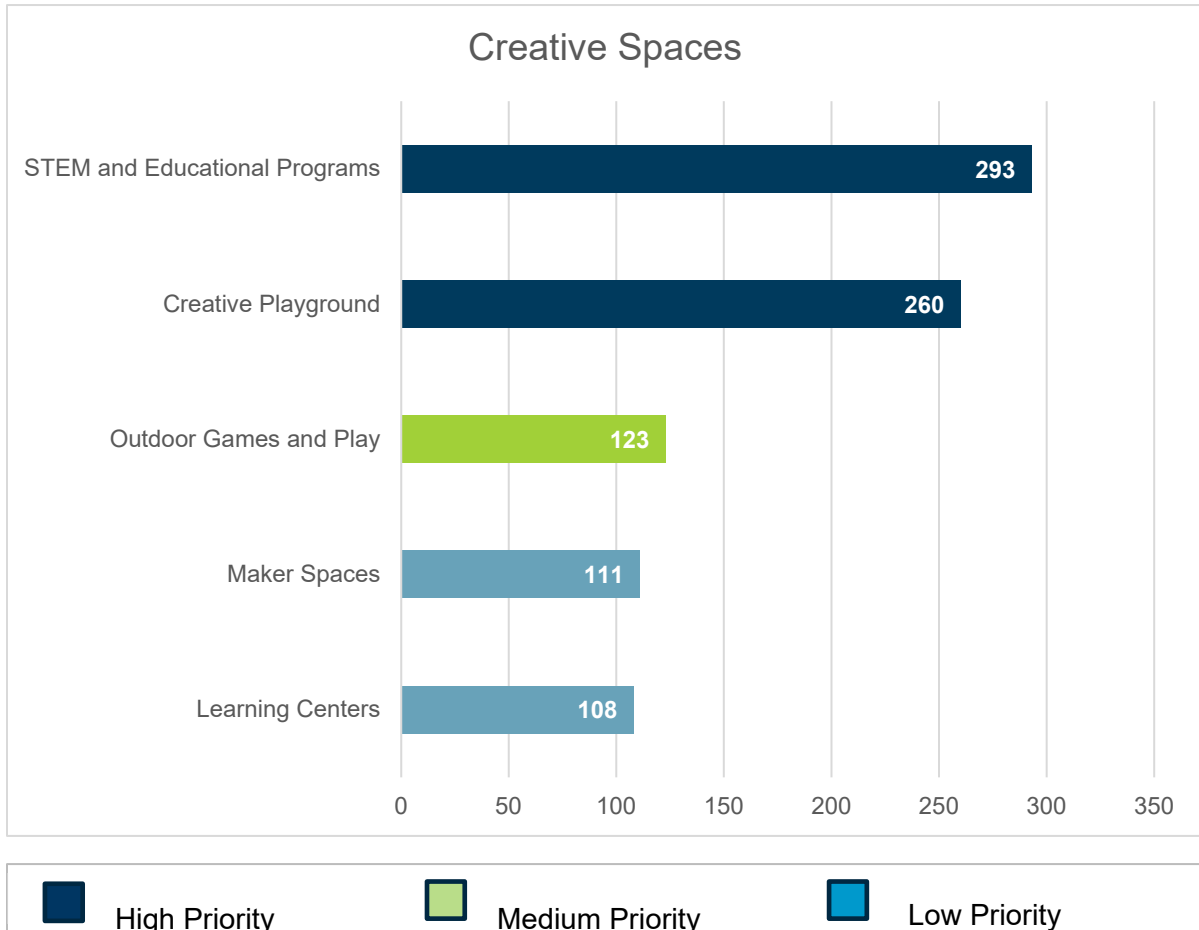


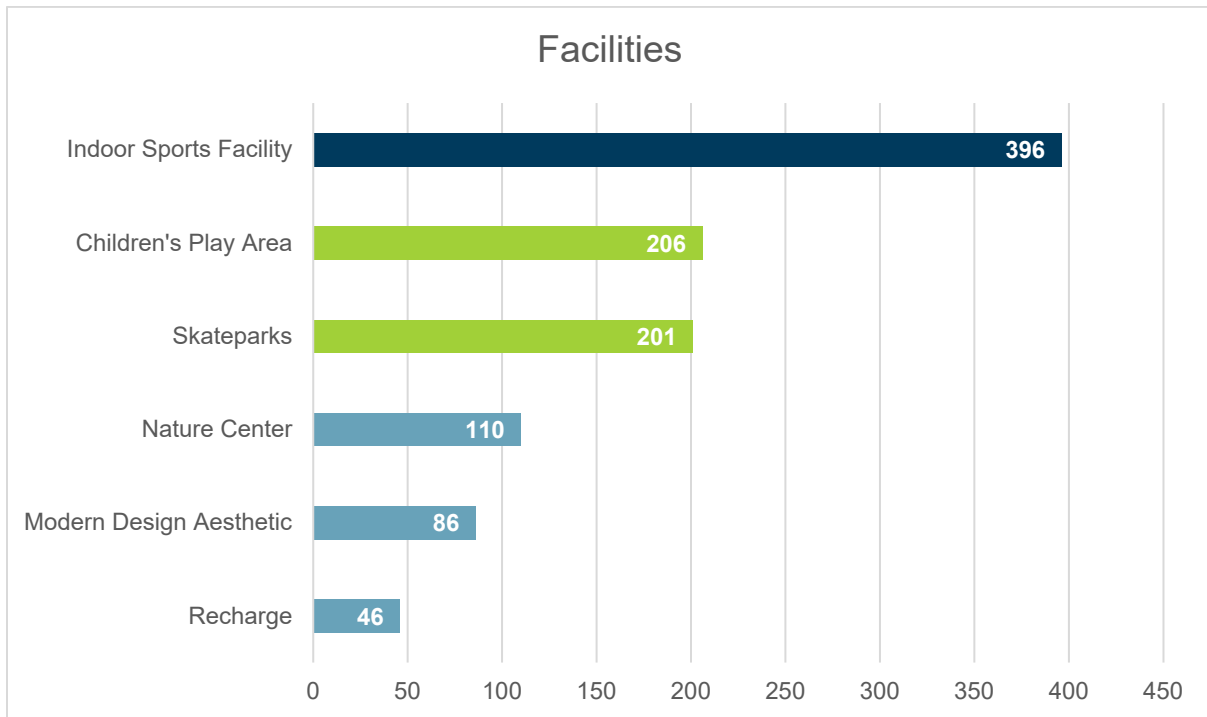
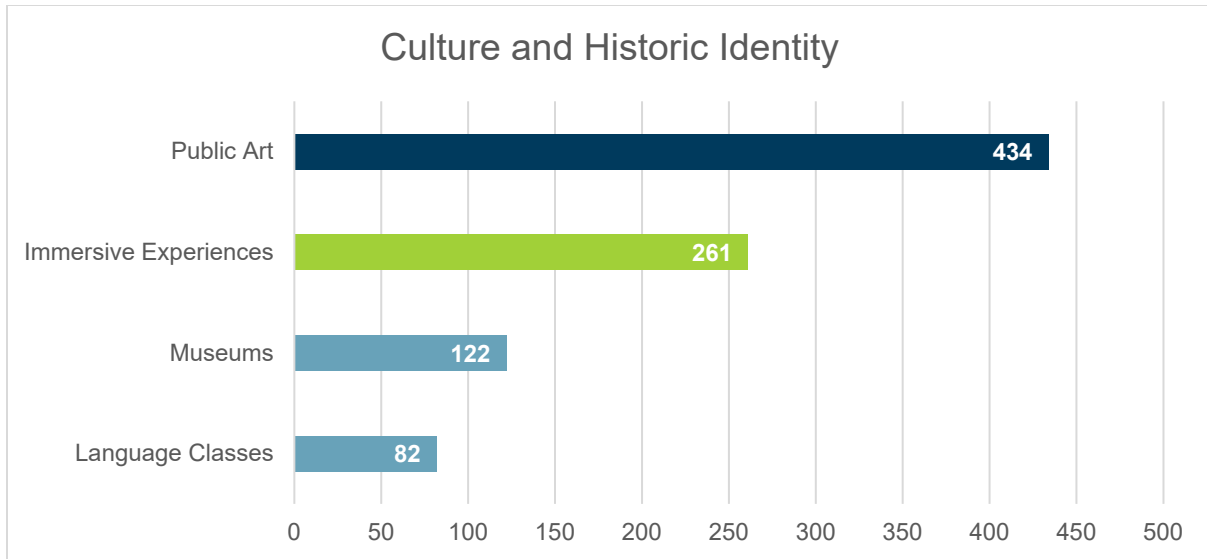
6.0 Crowd Sourcing

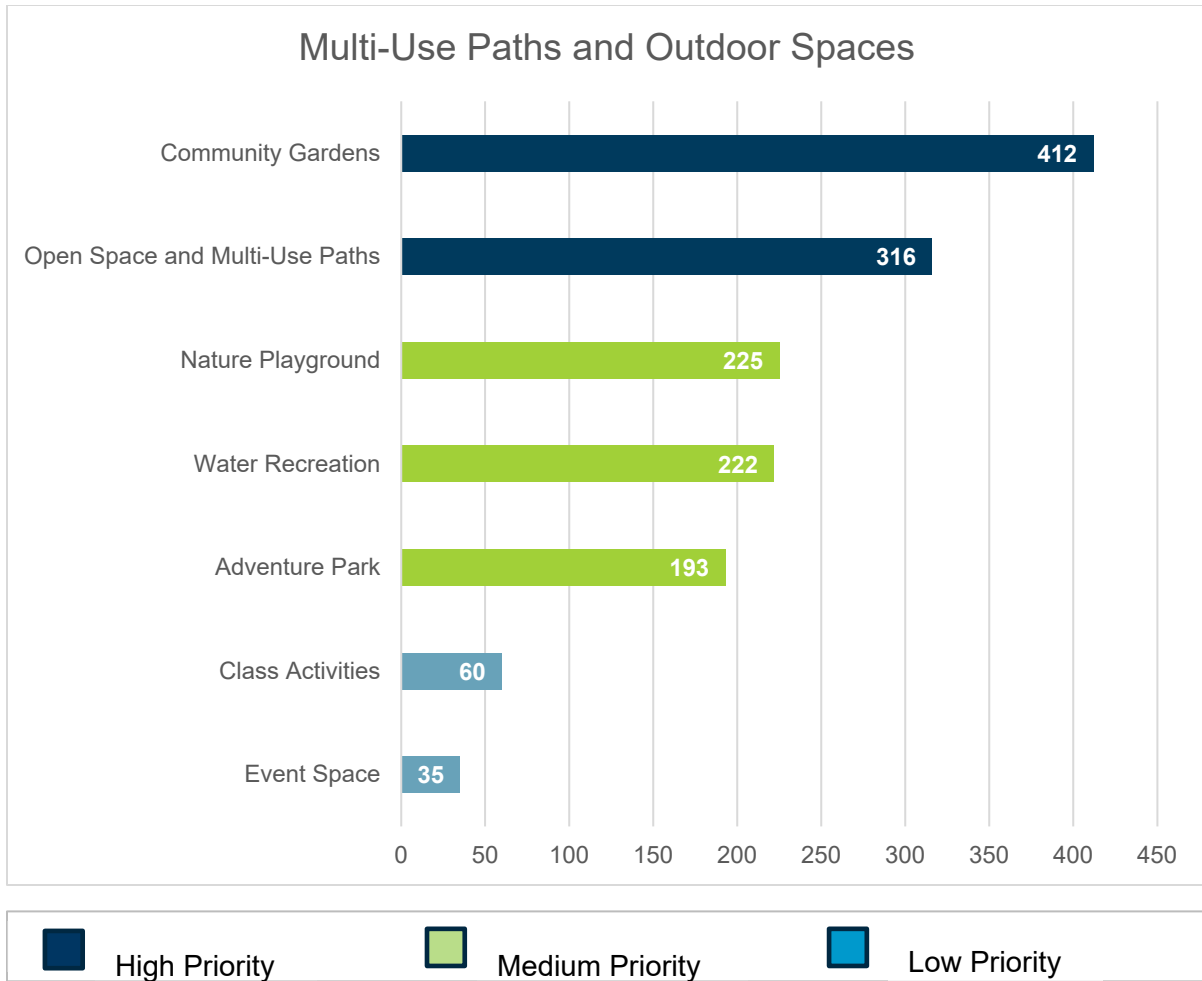
6.1 Crowd Sourcing: Dotmocracy Board Summaries

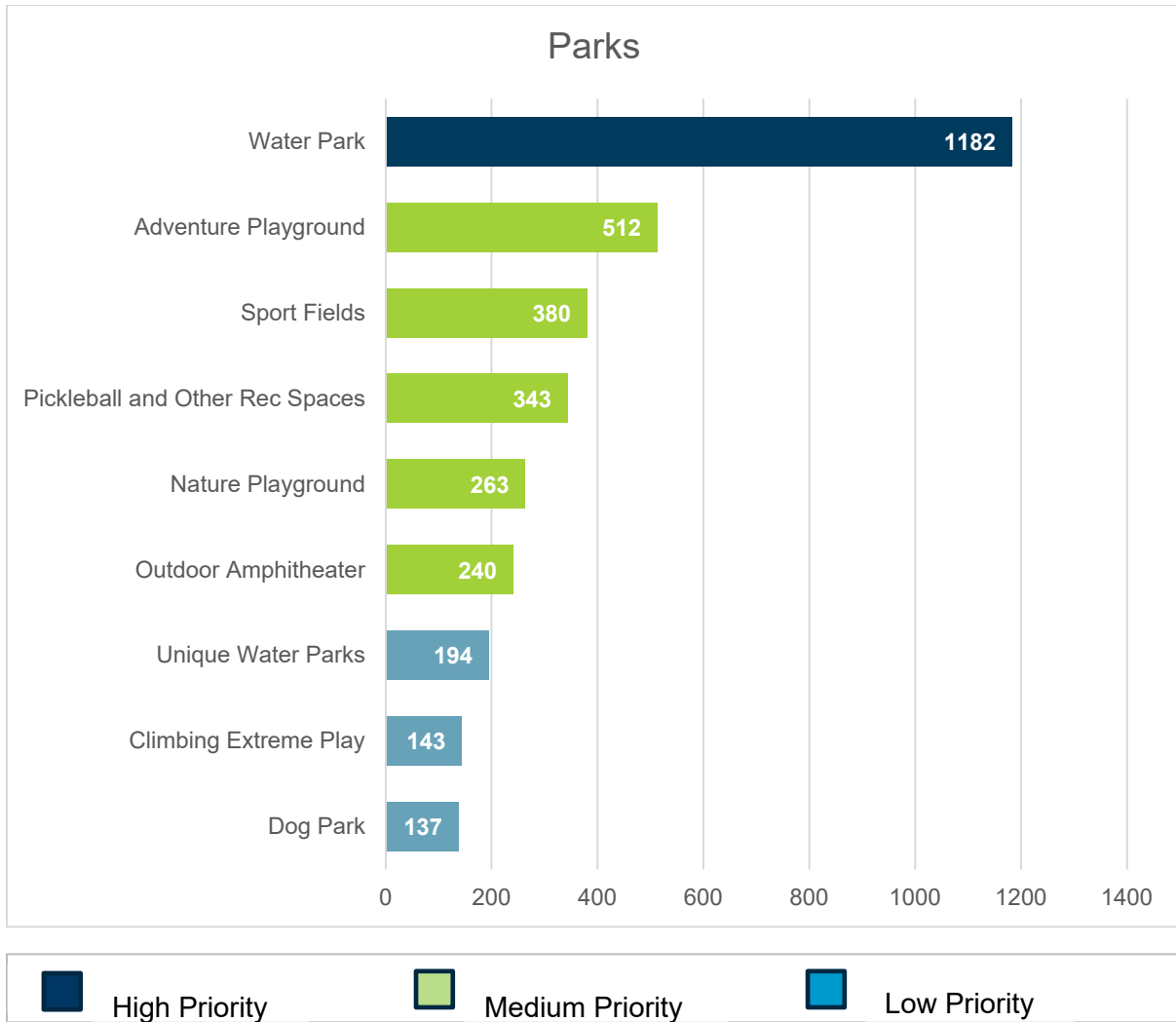
Between April 2 and July 4, GPRD conducted **21 pop-up engagements** throughout the community that used visioning boards to capture feedback using a simple, dot-based voting system known as dotmocracy. In total, **9,048 pieces of feedback** were collected.

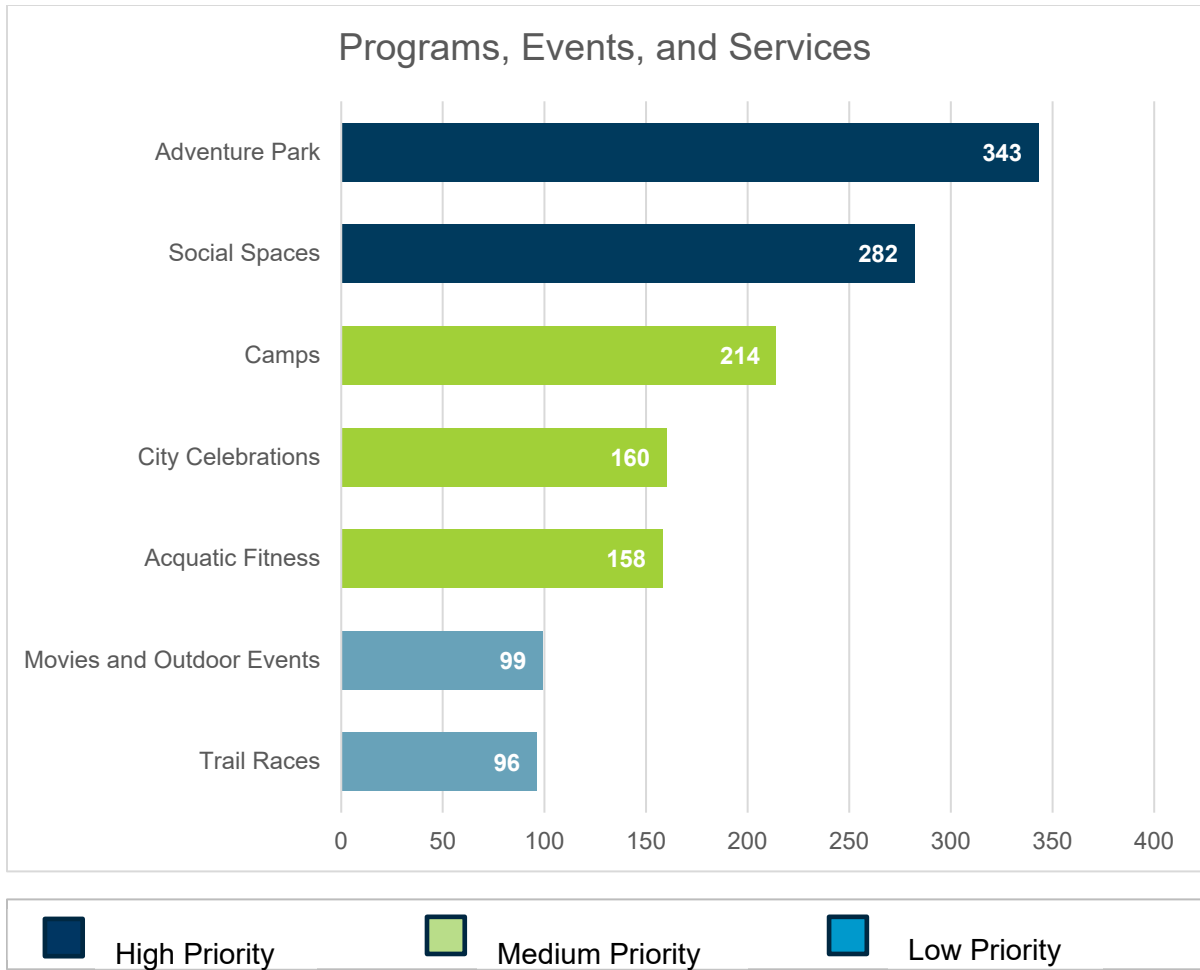
Dotmocracy Board Results by Category











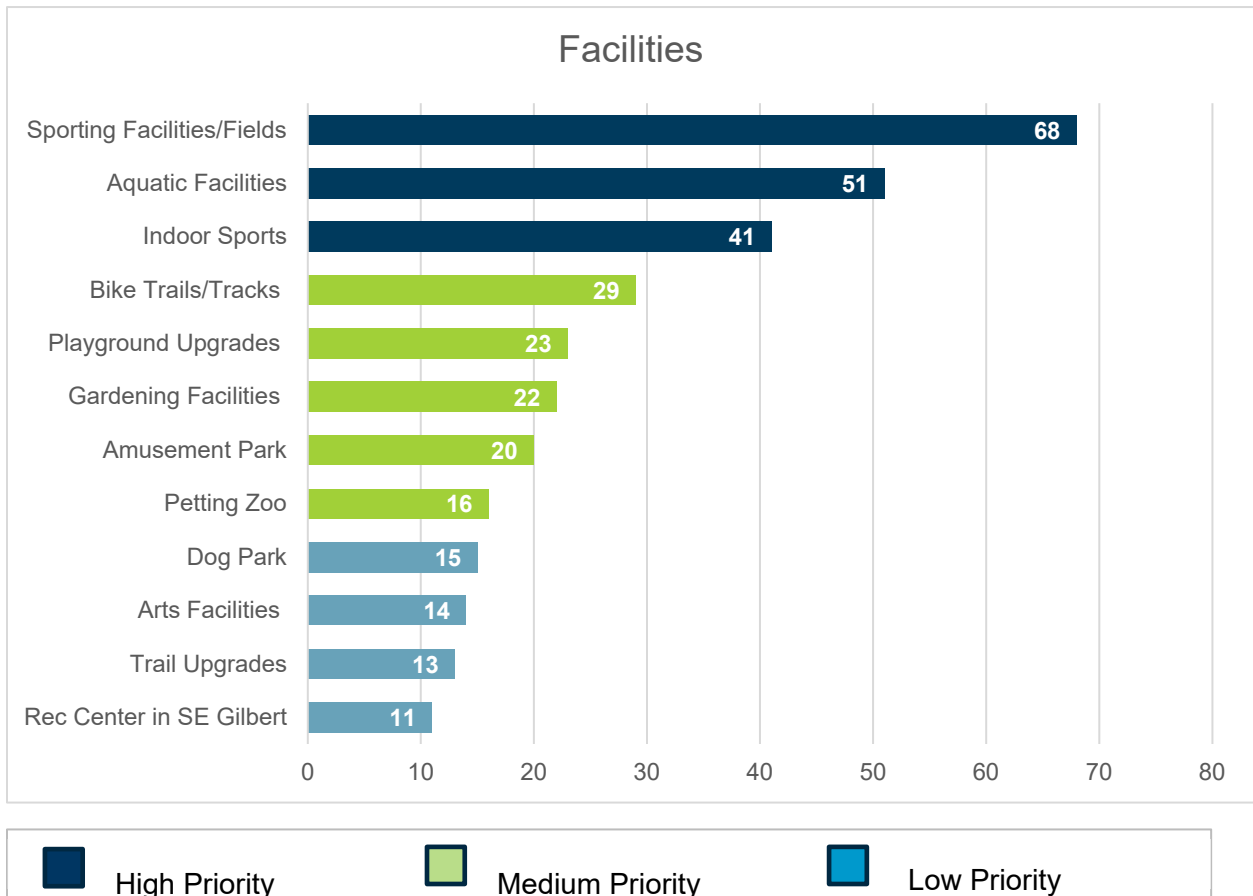
When all six dot boards are combined and compared, the key findings can be broken down into three categories of capital needs:

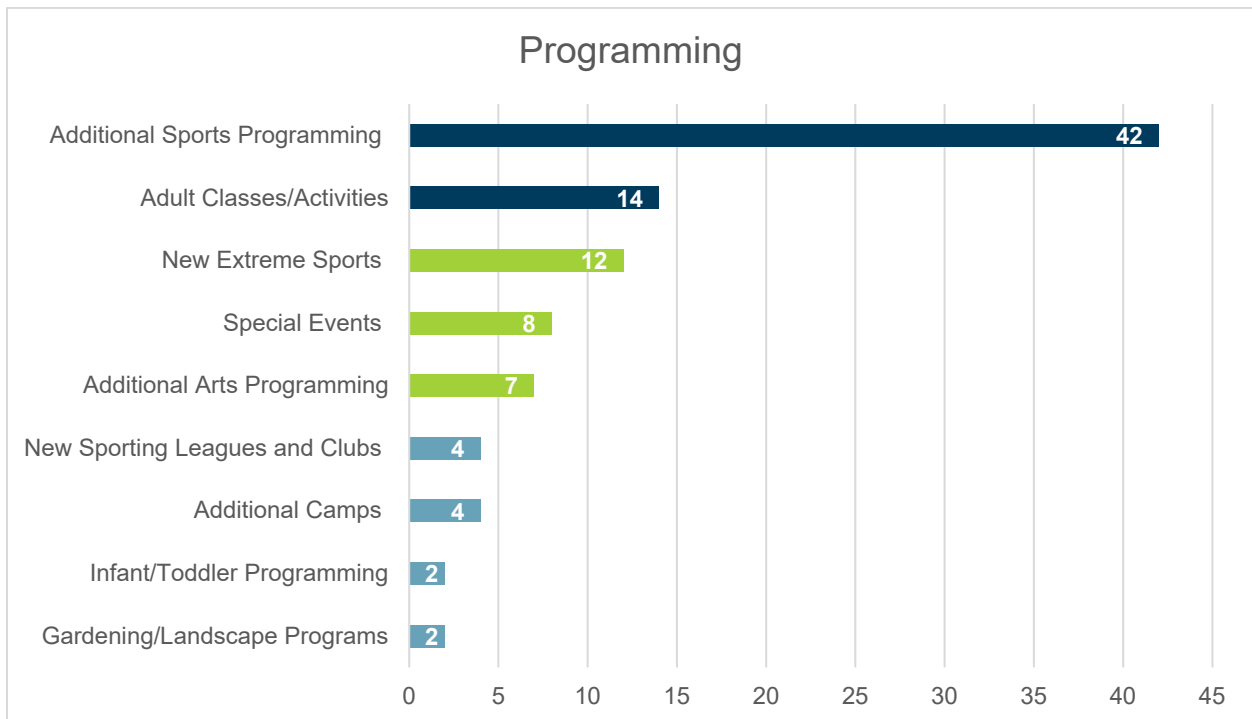
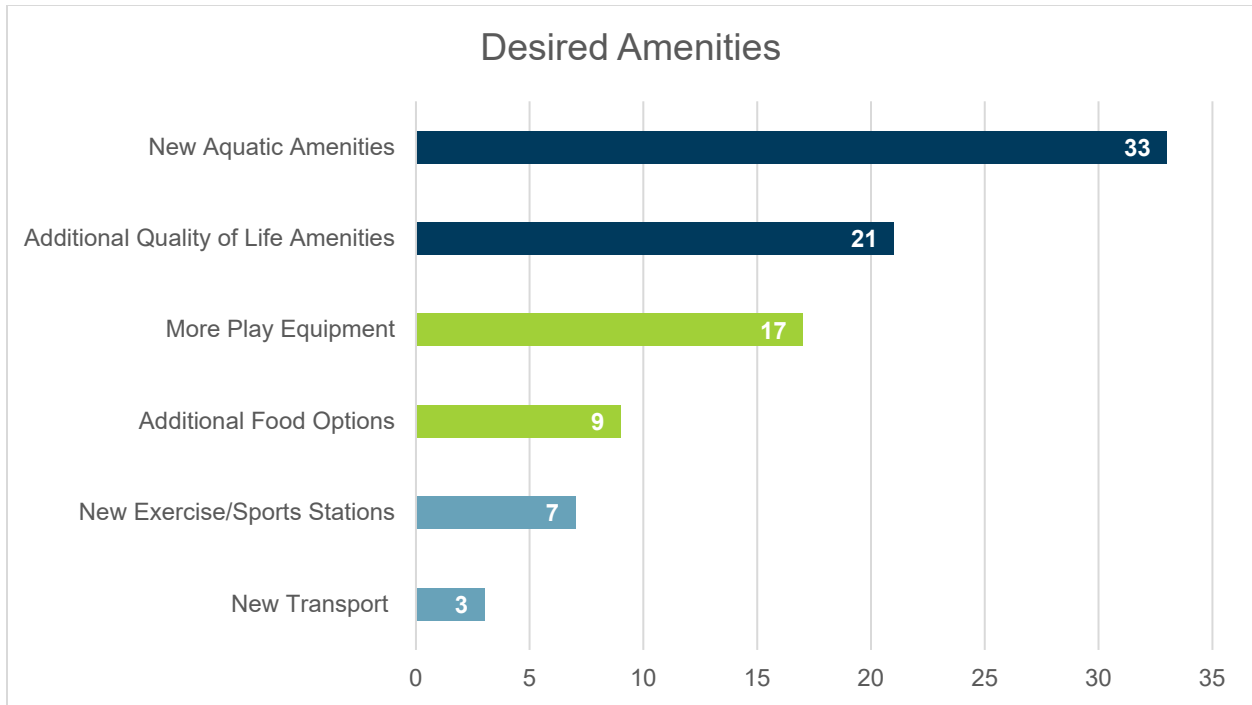
Crowd Sourcing: Dotmocracy Key Findings for Capital Needs

High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
Aquatic/Pool Facilities	Sports Fields	Nature Center
Indoor Fitness/Playground Amenities	Water Fitness Programs	Event Space
Multi-Use Paths	Skate Park	Dog Park
Community Gardens	Nature/Adventure Playground	Outdoor Sports
Shade	Food Options	
Public Art	Immersive Experiences	
Rec Center in SE Gilbert		

6.2 Crowd Sourcing: Open Comments Summary

While dotmocracy boards are an extremely useful tool for measuring public preferences, for practical reasons they limit responses to defined categories. To help ensure collection of project ideas and desires outside the categories provided by dotmocracy boards, staff also recorded open feedback (submitted via Post-It® notes). These comments were sorted into categories and are reported below.





Crowd Sourcing: Open Comment Findings for Capital Needs

High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
Sporting Facilities/Field	Bike Trails	Dog Park
Aquatic Facilities	Playground Upgrades	Arts Facilities
Indoor Sports	Gardening Facilities	Trail Upgrades
Additional Sport Programming	Amusement Park	Rec Center in SE Gilbert
	Petting Zoo	
	Play Equipment/Upgrades	
	Food Options	

7.0 Focus Group Summary

The master planning process invited various community groups from around the Town to provide input on what the Parks and Recreation Department should focus on, how it can improve, and what the community wants.

BerryDunn collaborated with GPRD staff to develop a diverse and comprehensive list of community groups to invite for input on the Master Plan. While not every group or representative was able to participate (which is common in engagement efforts for master planning), each group was invited and reminded multiple times to attend one of the twelve (12) sessions offered. Based on BerryDunn's planning experience, community group input for the GPRD Master Plan was significant and represents a diverse, broad range of interests for the community. The groups that were invited to attend include:

Outdoor Recreation and Natural Resources:

- Arizona Game and Fish Department
- Arizona Master's Naturalist
- Arizona Model Yacht Boat Club
- Center of Native and Urban Wildlife
- Desert River Audubon Society
- East Valley Astronomy Club
- Mother Natures Farm-Agri-tainment
- Liberty Wildlife
- Kinsey County Farm

Adaptive Recreation:

- Arizona Autism
- SOAZ
- Boys & Girls Club of the Valley – Gilbert Branch
- Gilbert Public Schools – Special Education Dept
- Higley School District – Special Education Dept

Sports and Athletics:

- Beginners Edge Sports Training
- Fundamentals Sports & Fitness
- Stetch-N-Grow
- TWBB - Brett Hall
- USSSA Adult Softball
- USSSA Boys Baseball

- USSSA Boys Baseball

Seniors and Active Adults:

- AZCEND – Gilbert Senior Center
- American Orchards
- Sunrise Senior Living of Gilbert
- Clearwater Agritopia
- Eternal Spring
- American Groves
- Trilogy at Power Ranch

Aquatics:

- Perry High Athletic Director
- Gilbert Public Schools Athletic Director
- Mesquite High Athletic Director
- Goldfish Swim School
- Aqua Tots
- LifeTime Fitness Senior Swim Coach
- Williams Field High School Swim Coach
- British Swim School
- Perry High Swim Coach
- Mesquite High Swim Coach

Business Community:

- Gilbert Chamber of Commerce
- Macrich- San Tan Mall
- Verde Cooley Station
- Agritopia/Epicenter
- Global Bikes
- Pedego Bikes

Public Health and Safety:

- Maricopa County Health-assessment
- John Volken Academy
- Dignity Health- AZ
- Banner Health Center- Gilbert
- Heritage Center- Gilbert
- MD Anderson- Banner Health
- Unfailing Love Recovery Ministry

Youth and Teens:

- Youth Summer Camp Participants
- Youth Summer Reading Program Participants
- MYAC Teen students
- MYAC Staff advisor

Moms Groups:

- Parent Organizations - PTOs, Mom Groups, Homeschool Groups
- Gilbert Moms
- AZ Mom Squad
- Desert Bloom Multiples
- AZ Homeschool
- Scottsdale Homeschoolers
- Homeschool
- Online Homeschool Group

Arts and Culture:

- HD South - Gilbert Historical Museum
- Gilbert Rodeo
- Just Serve
- Gilbert Symphony
- Gilbert Sister Cities

Nonprofits:

- AZCEND
- Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Boys and Girls Club

Gilbert Coalition Members:

- Arizona Soccer Club
- AYSO Soccer #688
- Gilbert American Little League
- Gilbert Chandler Youth Football League
- Gilbert National Little League
- Gilbert Softball Little League
- Gilbert Southeast Diamondbacks
- Gilbert Youth Football League (GYFL)
- Gilbert Youth Soccer Association (GYSA)

Event Promoters:

- Starting Line Running
- Candalonian Society-Scottish Games
- Candalonian Society-Scottish Games
- Forty8Live- Oktoberfest
- Activated Events-Boots in the Park
- Gilbert Farmers Market
- Made with Love Market
- Gilbert Art Walk
- Friends for Life – Barktoberfest

Schools and Partner Agreement Participants:

- Chandler School District
- Friends Place
- Gilbert Public Schools
- Gilbert Public Schools
- Higley School District
- Maricopa County Library District

P3 Groups:

- AZ Ice
- Cactus Surf Park
- Craft Culinary Concepts
- Freestone Batting Cages
- Freestone Carnival

Higher Education:

- Park University
- Arizona State University
- Chandler Gilbert Community College
- University of Arizona

Program Providers and Instructors:

- Contender Esports Gaming Center
- Snapology-Gilbert
- Sanchin Ryu Karate
- Bonanza Educational
- Tricia FreemanN
- Kylie Neef
- Rita Emrick

- Reygan Taylor
- Lissa Coari

Below is a summary of some top comments, commonalities, and trends identified within the Focus Group responses (in no particular order).

What town-wide challenges do you foresee in the next 5 to 10 years?

- Traffic
- Population growth
- Water conservation
- Affordable housing
- Maintaining infrastructure

What role do you think the Parks and Recreation Department plays in addressing these town-wide challenges?

- Listen to the community and integrate what they want; keep up with current trends
- Anticipate growth and other community changes
- Be inclusive to ideas from other cultures as the community grows
- Keep safe, well-maintained parks

What is your favorite park or recreational facility in our community and why?

- Riparian Preserve: the natural space, diversity of activities, and amenities
- Regional Park: sporting activity availability, amenities, and event variety

What are we doing well, and what might be some areas for improvement?

Well:

- Parks and facilities are clean and well maintained
- Staff and park rangers are great; events run well
- Variety and diversity of programs

Improvement:

- More parking
- Need more shade
- More year-round programming/activities
- Irrigation and watering of grass needs improvement

For those of you who haven't visited one of our recreation facilities or parks, why not?

- Lack of awareness of programs or events; not enough marketing
- Overcrowding of programs
- Location

What amenities would you like to see added to our existing parks or recreation facilities? Anything we could improve?

- More shade
- More parking
- More restrooms
- More aquatic amenities (pools, splash pads, etc.)
- Senior programming

How do you feel about the maintenance and upkeep of our Parks and Recreation facilities?

- General consensus is that facilities are exceptionally clean and well kept

Are there any areas in our community that you feel are lacking in Parks and Recreation opportunities?

- Multigenerational opportunities
- Partnerships with schools, libraries, and local business

What barriers do you think might keep people from participating in Parks and Recreation programs?

- Transportation and accessibility – it's hard to find parking and you must drive to get there
- Heat and lack of shade
- Competition and lack of unique offerings
- Large turnout for events and programs causing overcrowding

How do you think we can better engage diverse communities in our Parks and Recreation program offerings?

- Better marketing efforts, social media presence, and promotion within the Town
- Reach out to kids (and other community members) to see learn interests
- Affordable activities and hangouts for kids

What are some expanded ways you believe that Parks and Recreation could better serve the community?

- Reach out to minority populations to determine what they want
- Advertising
- Accessibility efforts

What ideas do you have for increasing community involvement and volunteerism in our Parks and Recreation programs?

- Reach out to students and local schools/universities
- Host events where the students can practice their skills
- Partner with the community service groups and local nonprofits

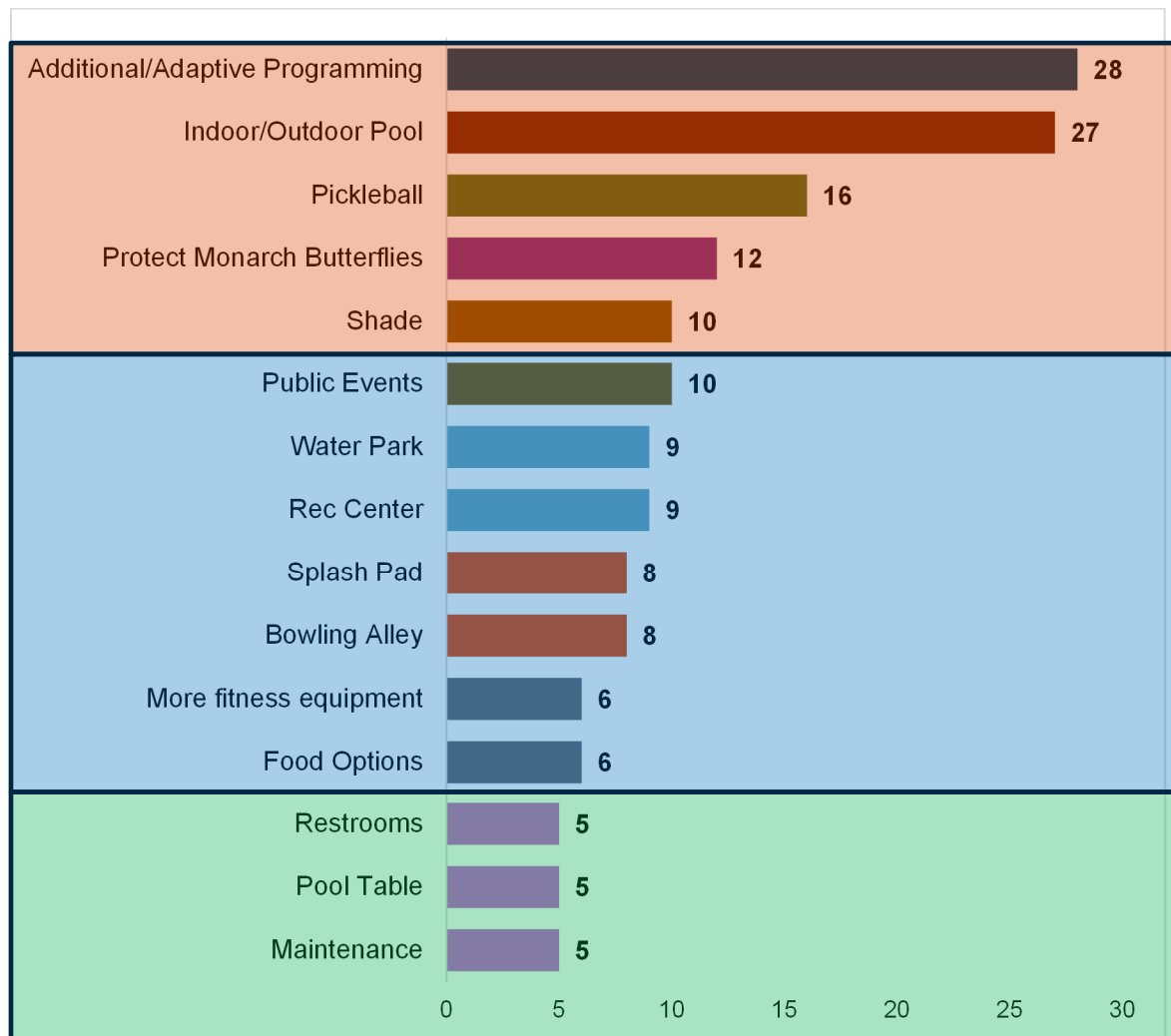
8.0 Facility Vision Board Comments

(Collected at facilities): 816

During the public engagement phase of the master planning process, GPRD staff collected comment cards and Post-it® notes from visitors across various public facilities. Top comments are reported below; colors correspond to priority of needs (High, Medium, Low).

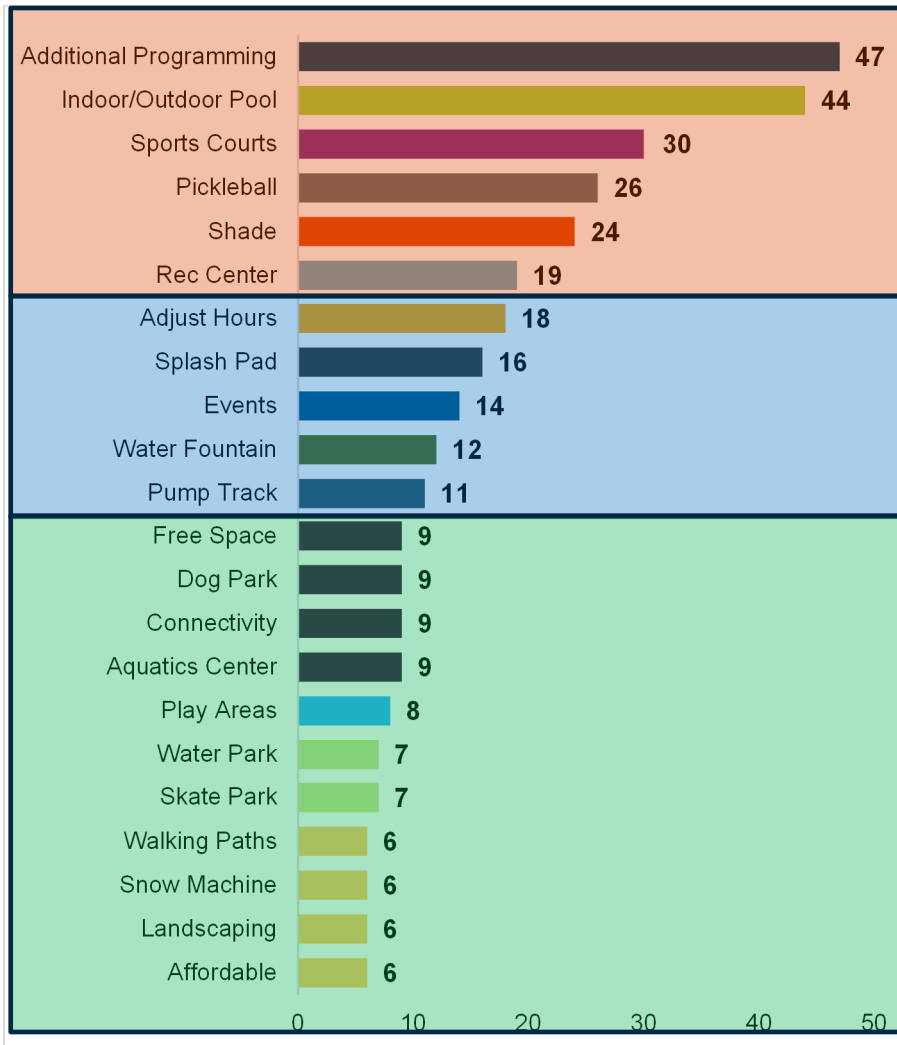
Facility Comment Cards: 284

Top 15 Comments (> 4 mentions)



Facility Post-it® Notes: 532

Top 22 Comments (> 6 mentions)



Cumulative Capital Needs Assessment: Recommended Priorities

High-Priority Capital Needs:

- Aquatic/Pool Facilities/Splashpads
- Indoor Fitness/Playground Amenities
- Sports Fields
- Community Gardens
- Multi-Use Trails/Paths
- Pickleball Courts (indoor and outdoor)
- Shade
- Public Art

Medium-Priority Capital Needs:

- Skate Park
- Dog Parks
- Nature Center/Programs
- Disc Golf
- Food Options
- Art Performances/Special Events
- Arts Programming
- Amusement Park/Petting Zoo
- Outdoor Playground/Exercise Equipment
- Adult Enrichment Activities
- Teen Programs
- Water Fitness Programs
- Nature/Adventure Playground
- Playground Updates

Low-Priority Capital Needs:

- Meeting Rooms
- Picnic Shelters
- Dedicated Amenities for the Disabled



Outdoor Sports

Rec Center in SE Gilbert

Dog Park

Transportation (boats, trolleys)

Infant/Toddler Programming

Dedicated Makerspace/Arts Center

9.0 Youth-Specific Outreach Efforts: Workshop and Traveling Mural

While this report was culled from an abundance of quantifiable data, some notable engagement efforts resisted traditional categorization: a youth workshop and a giant, traveling mural.

On June 10, 2023, GPRD staff and the consulting team co-led a youth engagement workshop in which children of various age groups were invited to design and build “The Greatest Playground in the World” using an abundance of craft supplies (e.g., pipe cleaners, marshmallows, uncooked spaghetti, construction paper, etc.).



BerryDunn also worked with Gilbert staff to design a giant mural (5' x 17') that traveled to various locations and invited children of all ages to illustrate desired features.



These two exercises resulted in creations that are best summarized by their commonalities. Children preferred playgrounds and parks with the following five features:

- A central attraction of monumental scale
- Lots of opportunities for climbing and exploring
- Bright color pallets and large, textural shapes
- Nature-play elements (e.g., water attractions, tree facsimiles)
- Incorporation of hometown landmarks (e.g., Gilbert’s historic water tower)

10.0 Conclusion

As illustrated in Section 2 of this report (Engagement Summary), this document is based upon feedback collected from nearly 61,000 documented community touchpoints. This remarkable abundance of feedback could not have been achieved without the passion and dedication of Gilbert Parks & Recreation employees. Through such creative pop-up engagements as a community-wide ice cream giveaway and neighborhood night at a local brewery, the Gilbert Parks & Recreation Department achieved a level of engagement that far exceeded national best practices.

The findings in this report are intended to inform the Master Plan visioning process. This data (along with other Master Plan report findings) will be used to help guide discussions and decision-making on goals, objectives, and key performance indicators for the Master Plan. Based on a high-level, objective overview, the following priorities are recommended as a starting point for planning purposes:

High-Priority Capital Needs:

- Aquatic/Pool Facilities/Splashpads
- Recreation Center with Indoor Fitness/Playground Amenities
- Sports Fields
- Garden Spaces
- Multi-Use Trails/Paths
- Pickleball Courts (indoor and outdoor)
- Shade
- Public Art

Medium-Priority Capital Needs:

- Skate Park
- Dog Parks
- Nature Center/Programs
- Disc Golf
- Food Options
- Art Performances/Special Events
- Arts Programming
- Amusement Park/Petting Zoo
- Outdoor Playground/Exercise Equipment
- Adult Enrichment Activities