



Parks & Recreation Needs Assessment Survey Report

Town of Weaverville, North Carolina

October 31, 2017



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OVERVIEW

This report provides a summary overview and analysis of the responses received from the community for the Town of Weaverville Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The central goal of the survey was to gauge interest, behaviors, and demographics from the Town of Weaverville's residents and visitors regarding parks and recreation and more precisely, to act as a needs assessment to influence the development of a three-five year Parks and Recreation Master Plan for the Town. Results from the survey shed light on some of the community's recreation behaviors and desires for future parks and recreation investments in Weaverville.

METHODS

The self-administered survey was available in print, hard-copy format, as well as online via the Town's electronic newsletter distribution list of 377 contacts, and accessible via the Town's website and social media sites. Approximately 96% of the completed surveys were submitted via the online survey mechanism. The online survey was initiated on September 18, 2017 and closed on October 20, 2017. Three reminders were delivered between initiation of the survey and closing of the survey on October 20, 2017. The printed survey was available at the Buncombe County – Weaverville Library branch and was distributed to schools within the Town's jurisdiction. A copy of the four-page survey instrument and summary survey results are included in Appendix A. A total of 424 surveys were collected. This represents just over 11% of the Town's population. All Census comparisons within this report are attributed to the United States Census American Communities Survey¹ unless otherwise noted.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

A set of 6 questions was designed to elicit demographic information from respondents including age, employment status, household income, gender identity and race or ethnicity. These questions were included to provide information about the Town's makeup and potential recreation needs or desires.

Demographics

Seventy-seven percent (77%) of the survey respondents answered that they live or own property within the Town's jurisdiction.

Age

The majority of survey respondents (61.3%) categorized themselves as 55 years of age or older, while 38.2% categorized themselves as under 55 years of age, and less than 1% of respondents were noted as under the

¹ <https://factfinder.census.gov>

age of 18. The U.S. Census reported that the median age was 49 years for 2016. The following table depicts a summary of survey respondents:

Table 1: Age of Survey Respondents

Age Category	Percentage
18 – 44 years	21.2%
45 – 54 years	17.0%
55 – 64 years	23.1%
65 – 69 years	17.9%
Over 70 years	20.3%

Employment Status

Approximately 51.9% of respondents listed their employment status as employed full-time, part-time or self-employed, while 40.1% were retired. Approximately 2.4% categorized themselves as unemployed, which is less than the 3.2% unemployment rate for Buncombe County in April 2017 as reported by the United States Department of Labor.

Table 2: Employment Status of Survey Respondents

Employment Status Category	Percentage
Employed full-time	31.6%
Employed part-time	7.1%
Self-employed	13.2%
Unemployed – Looking for work	1.2%
Unemployed – Not looking for work	1.2%
Retired	40.1%
Student	0.5%
Military	0.5%
Prefer not to answer	0.9%
No response / Other	3.8%

Household Income

Approximately 2% of survey respondents had a household income of less than \$24,000, another 10% between \$24,000 and \$49,999 annually, 34.4% between \$50,000 and \$99,000 and over 27% above \$100,000. Approximately 26% of respondents chose not to provide information regarding household income. Census Bureau information notes that almost 5% of Weaverville’s population had a household income of over \$200,000 and the median annual household income of \$52,263 and a mean household income of \$74,629 as of the last certified census in 2015.

See Table 3 on the following page:

Table 3: Annual Household Income of Survey Respondents

Household Income Category	Percentage
Under \$24,000	1.9%
\$24,000 - \$49,999	10.4%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	17.2%
\$75,000 - \$99,000	17.2%
\$100,000 - \$124,999	12.7%
\$125,000 - \$149,999	5.4%
\$150,000 - \$174,999	3.8%
Over \$175,000	5.2%
No response / Prefer not to say	26.2%

Gender Identity

Approximately 59% of the survey respondents identified themselves as female, 35.4% as male and approximately 5% responded with other or they preferred not to answer. These percentages are relatively reflective of Census demographics of 52.3% female and 47.7% male.

Race or Ethnicity

The vast majority (86%) of survey respondents characterized themselves as Caucasian. Just over 3% identified themselves as Latino and/or Native American. Less than 1% of the survey respondents categorized themselves as African American and 10.3% provided no response or preferred not to answer this question. These findings are comparable to data provided from the U.S. Census for the year 2016.

Table 4: Race or Ethnicity of Survey Respondents

Race or Ethnicity	Percentage
African American	0.5%
Asian	0.0%
Caucasian	86.1%
Latino/Hispanic	1.7%
Native American	1.4%
No response / Prefer not to say	10.3%

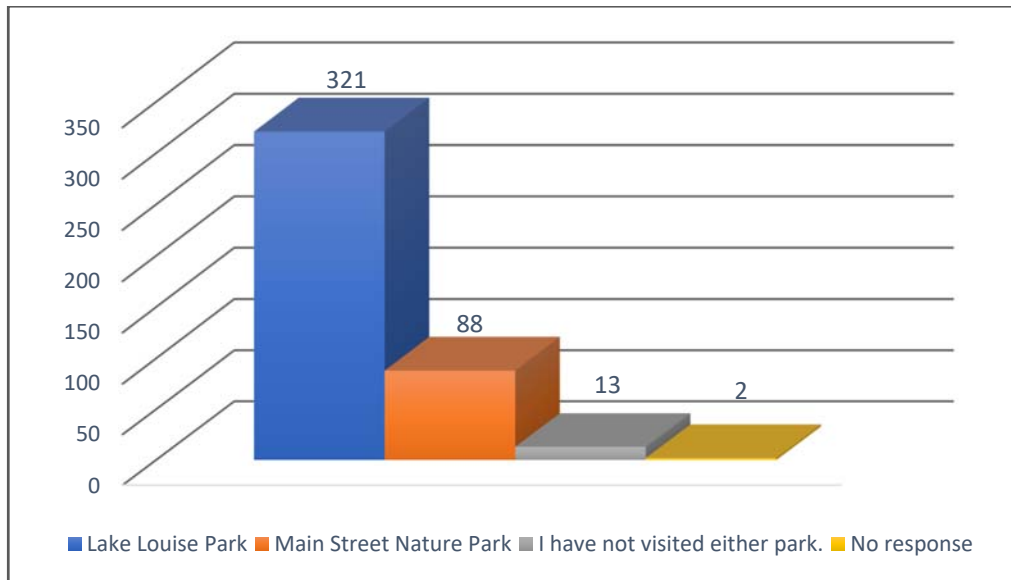
GENERAL FINDINGS

The survey was developed in a manner to focus on 1) General parks and recreation use, 2) Usage of the Town’s Main Street Nature Park and 3) Usage of Lake Louise Park. Questions in the survey were ordered in this manner.

Findings on General Parks and Recreation Use

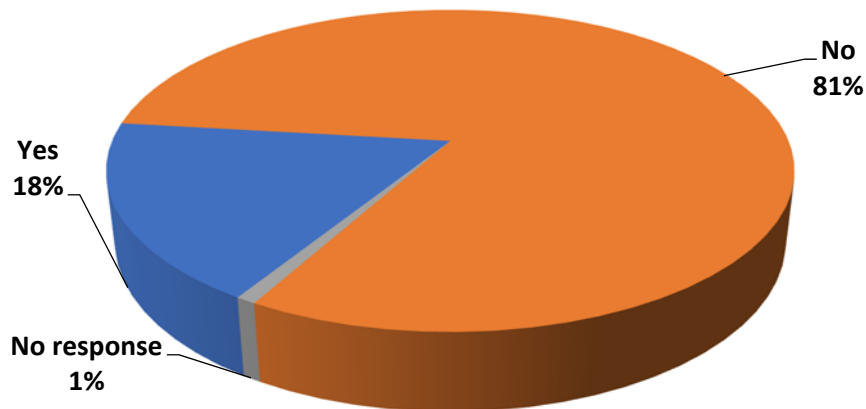
When asked which Town park they visited most often, the vast majority, 76%, answered that they visit Lake Louise Park most often, while 21% visit the Main Street Nature Park most often. The remaining 3.6% stated they have not visited either park or chose no response.

Figure 1: Which park do you visit most often?



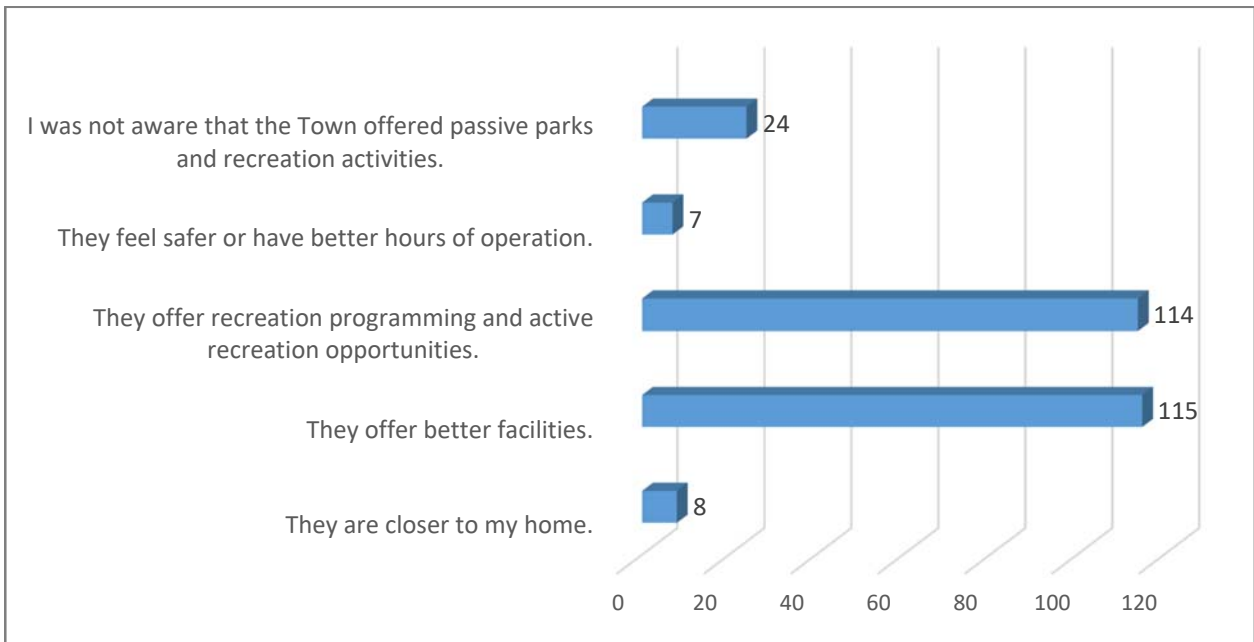
Next, the survey focused on gathering information regarding whether the survey respondents use private facilities, such as privately-owned gyms, non-profit recreation services, etc. If respondents replied yes, the survey set out to determine the reason for using other recreation opportunities to better assess how the Town’s parks and recreation amenities may be lacking. Figures 2 and 3 depict these findings.

Figure 2: Do you use recreation facilities offered by a private provider (i.e. Golds Gym, YMCA, etc.)?



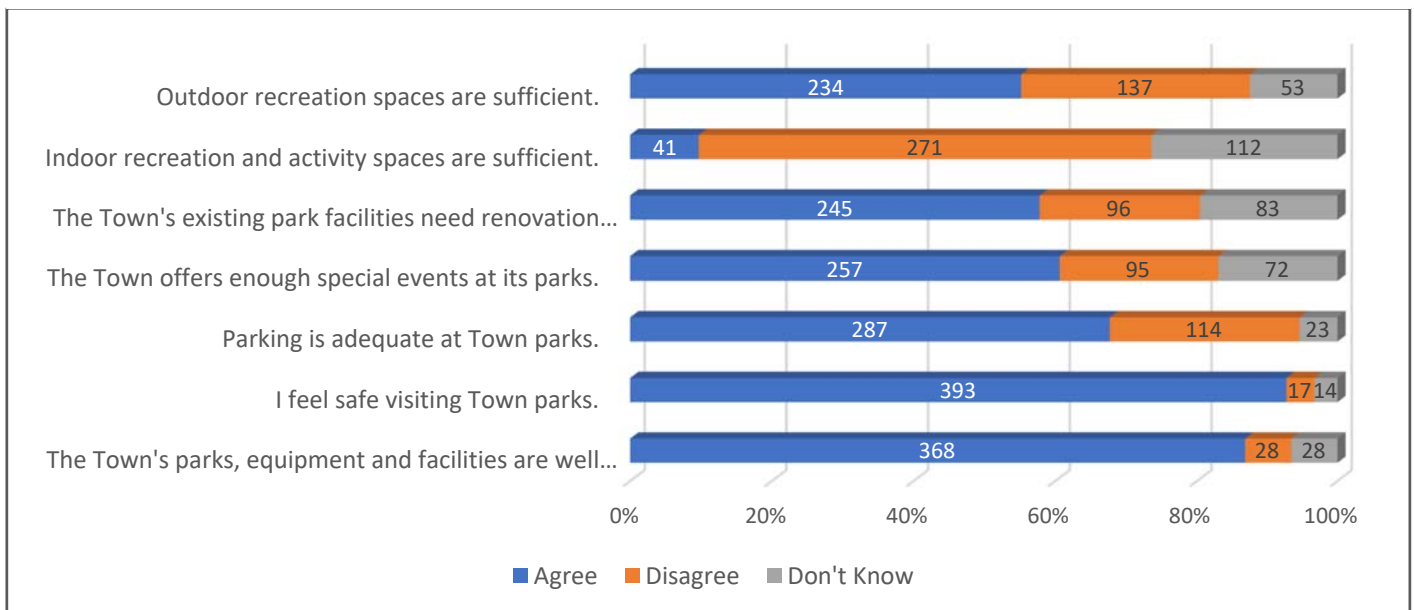
Of the 81% who do utilize a private provider for recreation services, the reasons are depicted in Figure 3.

Figure 3: If you answered yes to the previous question, why do you use other recreational facilities?



As Figure 4 shows, the majority of survey respondents appeared to be pleased with the Town’s outdoor recreation spaces, but did not agree that the Town has sufficient indoor recreation activity spaces and that the existing facility (i.e. the community center) is in need of renovation and improvements.

Figure 4: How do you rate the Town's current recreational facilities?



To determine how the Town could improve upon its recreation options, survey respondents were asked to answer why they use external recreational facilities. Of the respondents 56% answered that other providers offer better facilities and recreation programming, fitness classes and active recreation opportunities. The Town does not currently offer these options due to lack of space. The majority of survey respondents agreed that the Town’s parks and equipment are well maintained and they feel safe when visiting the parks. Approximately 68% surveyed responded that parking is adequate at the parks and 61% responded that the Town offers enough special events at the parks.

Table 5: Existing Parks

<i>Top number is the count of respondents selecting the option. Bottom % is percent of the total respondents selecting the option.</i>	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
I feel that the Town's parks, equipment and facilities are maintained well.	368 86.8%	28 6.6%	28 6.6%
I feel safe in visiting the Town's parks.	393 92.7%	17 4.0%	14 3.3%
Parking is adequate at the parks.	287 67.7%	114 26.9%	23 5.4%
The Town offers enough special events at its parks.	257 60.6%	95 22.4%	72 17.0%
The Town's existing park facilities need renovations or improvements.	245 57.8%	96 22.6%	83 19.6%
Indoor recreation and activity spaces are sufficient within the Town.	41 9.7%	271 63.9%	112 26.4%
Outdoor recreation spaces are sufficient within the Town.	234 55.2%	137 32.3%	53 12.5%

Of all survey respondents, approximately 59% answered that they have visited Weaverville’s Main Street Nature Park located in downtown Weaverville Forty percent responded that they have not, while less than one percent provided no response (Figure 5). For those who responded that they have not visited the Main Street Nature Park, the majority (42% aggregate) responded that they lacked information about the park and/they found better recreational opportunities elsewhere (Figure 6). When asked how often survey respondents or those in their households visited the Main Street Nature Park (Figure 7), the majority at 70% responded that they visit the park monthly, while 23% responded that they visit the park weekly. Only 6.4% of respondents stated that they visit the park daily. In rating the Main Street Nature Park for passive recreation opportunities, survey respondents who visit the park rated the park as *good* and approximately 16% rated the park as *excellent* (Figure 8). Walking and general nature viewing were the top two activities that survey respondents participate in at the park (Figure 9).



The final survey question specific to the Main Street Nature Park was used to identify perceived needs for the park (Figure 10). Of those responses, 27% responded that the park meets their needs, while 24%

responded that they would like to see picnic shelters at the park. The next largest percentage of 17% responded with *other*. A summary of these other amenities is found in Table 6 page 11 of this report.

Figure 5: Do you or anyone in your household visit the Main Street Nature Park in downtown Weaverville?

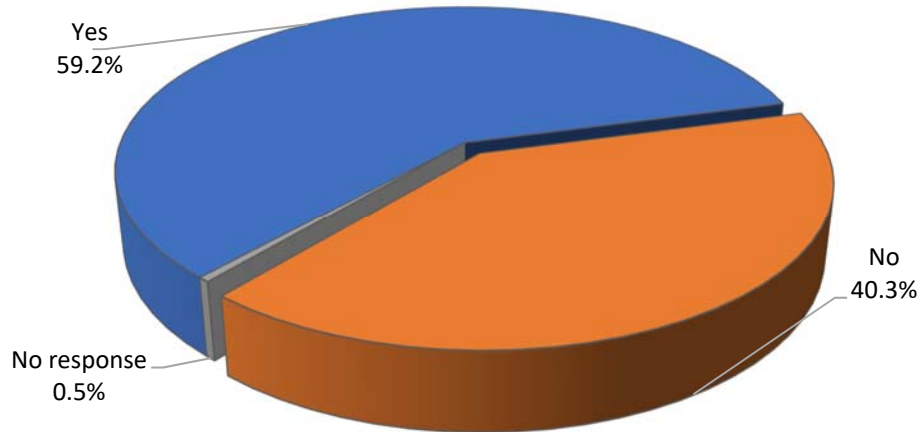


Figure 6: If you answered no to the previous question, please indicate why not below.

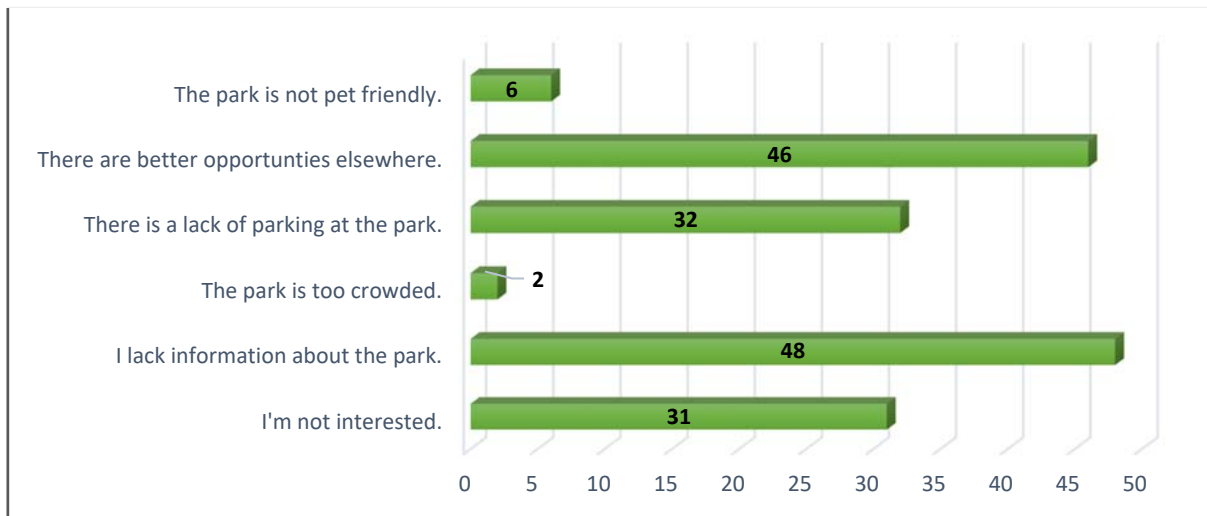


Figure 7: How often do you or anyone in your household visit the Main Street Nature Park?

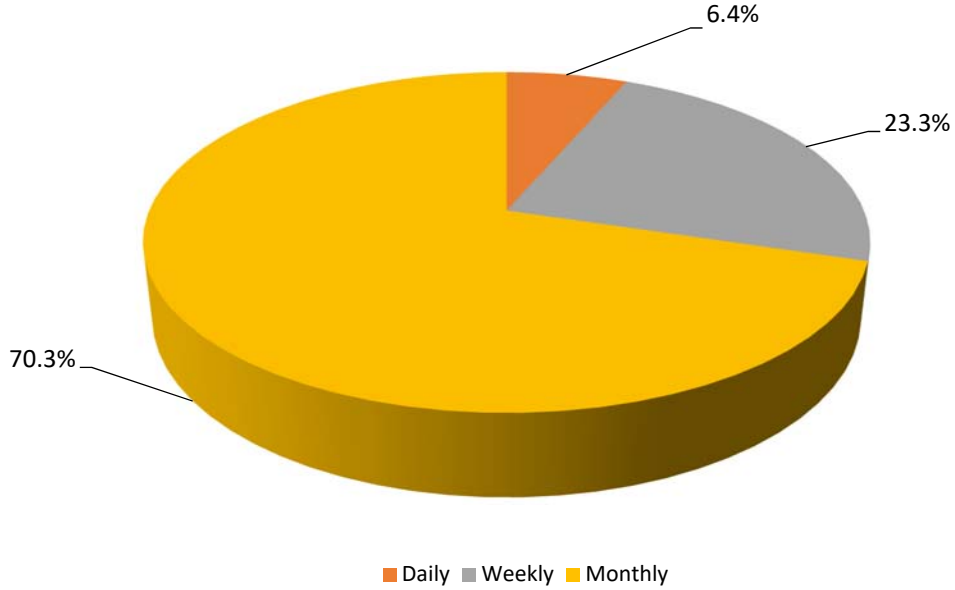


Figure 8: How would you rate the Main Street Nature Park for passive recreation (i.e. walking, dog walking, bird watching, etc)?

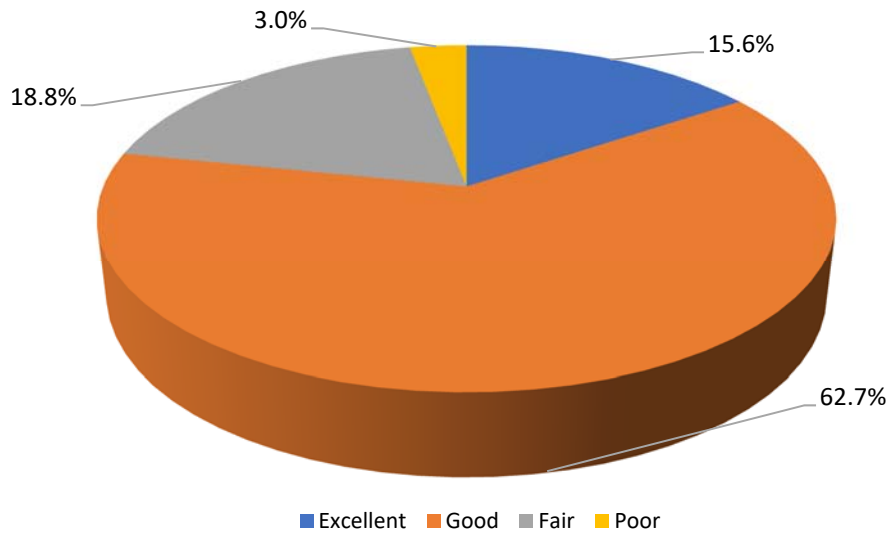


Figure 9: Please indicate which activities you or anyone in your household participate in at the Main Street Nature Park.

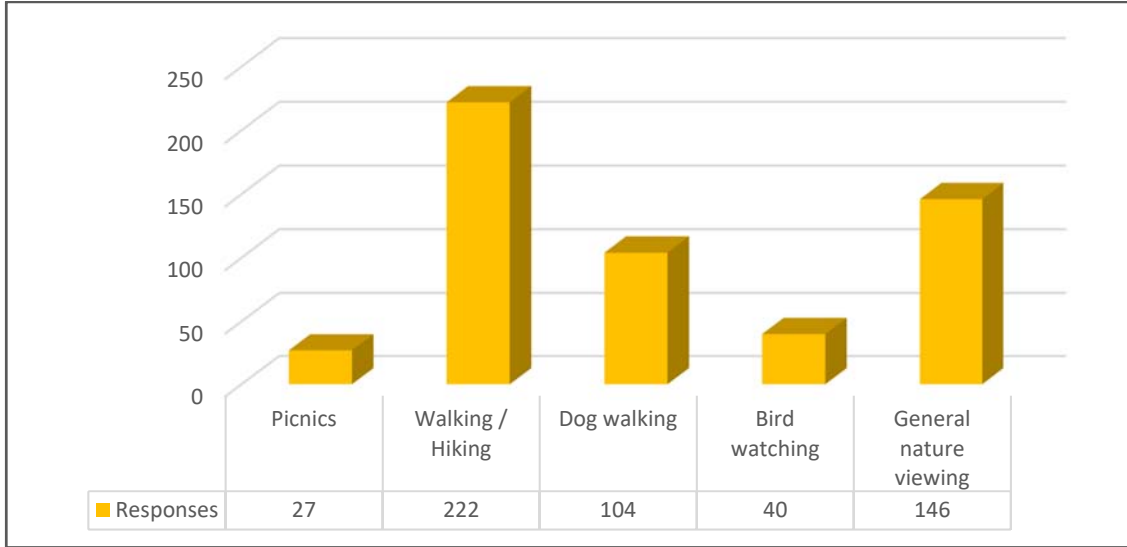
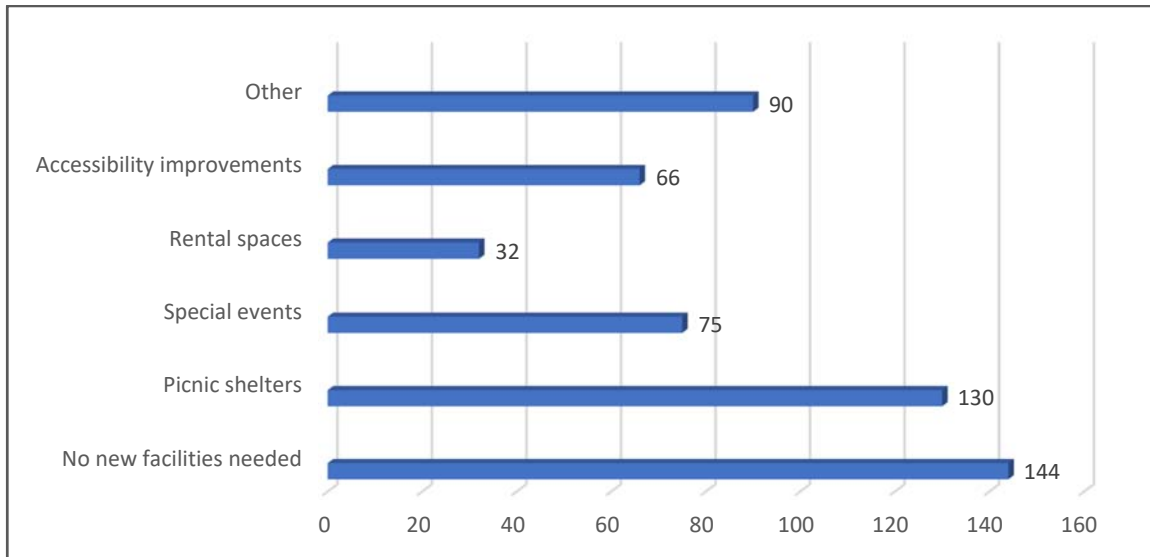


Figure 10: Please choose from the following new facilities needed at the Main Street Nature Park, given that it will likely remain the Town's primary open space for nature-related recreation activities.



Other Comments Regarding Main Street Nature Park (Grouped into Similar Categories):

Table 6: Other Amenities Needed in the Main Street Nature Park per Survey Respondents

Other Amenities Summarized & Ranked
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrooms • Water fountains • Paved walkways • Wider trails / Improvements to trails • Off-leash dog park area

Findings Specific to Lake Louise Park

Of all survey respondents, approximately 92% answered that they have visited Weaverville’s Lake Louise (Figure 11). For those who responded that they have not visited the park, 36% indicated that they do not perceive the park as *pet friendly*. Another aggregate majority responded with *there are better opportunities elsewhere* and *there is a lack of parking* (Figure 12). This survey question also gave the opportunity for respondents to provide *other* comments. These comments centered around dogs not being allowed on the trails and the lack of sidewalks to and around the park.

Forty-three percent (43%) of survey respondents answered that they visit Lake Louise Park weekly and 40% answered that they visit monthly (Figure 13). In rating the park, 63% of survey respondents who visit the park rated the park amenities as *good*, 19% rated them as *fair* 15% rated them as *excellent* (Figure 14). Of the survey respondents who utilize Lake Louise Park, the majority (approximately 22%), use the trails for walking, followed by respondents who visit the park for Town-sponsored events and the Tailgate Market at 16% and 12% respectively. The next highest ranked activities include general nature viewing, the use of the children’s playground equipment and picnics (Figure 15).



The final question within the survey asked respondents to choose any *new facilities or amenities needed at the Lake Louise Park*. Multi-purpose indoor spaces for recreation and fitness was the top-ranked amenity at 13%. This was followed closely with 12% suggesting the addition of multi-purpose sports courts, such as tennis, pickleball, basketball, etc. The third in ranking, with approximately 11%, was the addition of more restrooms. Finally, additional parking and open outdoor spaces for *yard recreation* and *greenways/greenspace* followed with 10% and 9% respectively. See Figure 16.

Figure 11: Do you or anyone in your household visit Lake Louise Park?

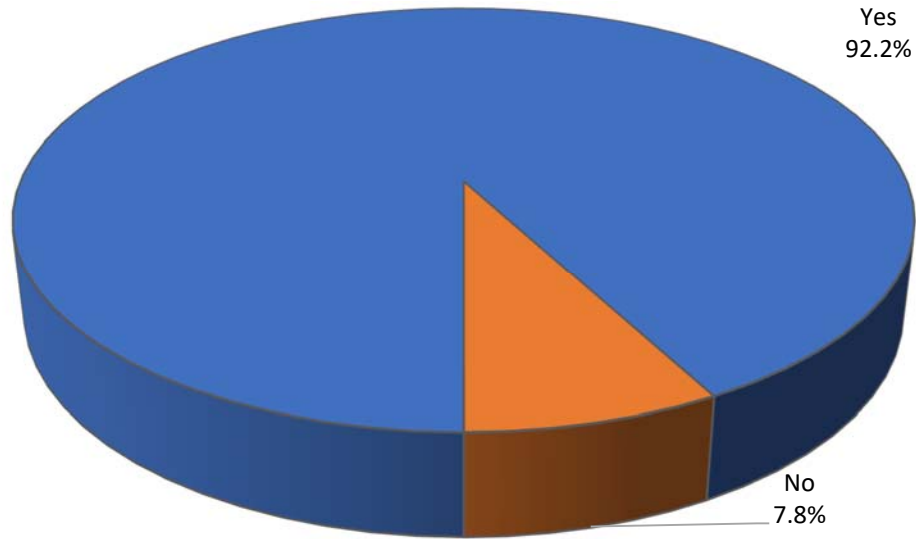


Figure 12: If you answered no to the previous question, please indicate why not below.

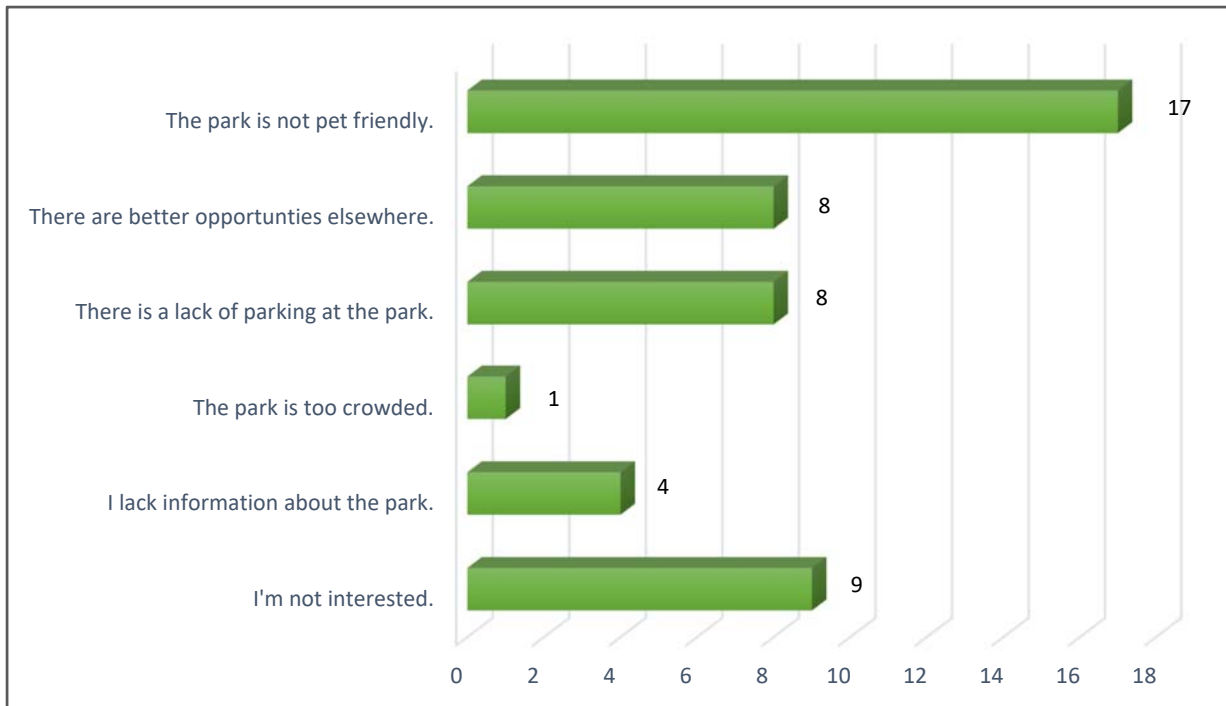


Figure 13: How often do you or anyone in your household visit Lake Louise Park?

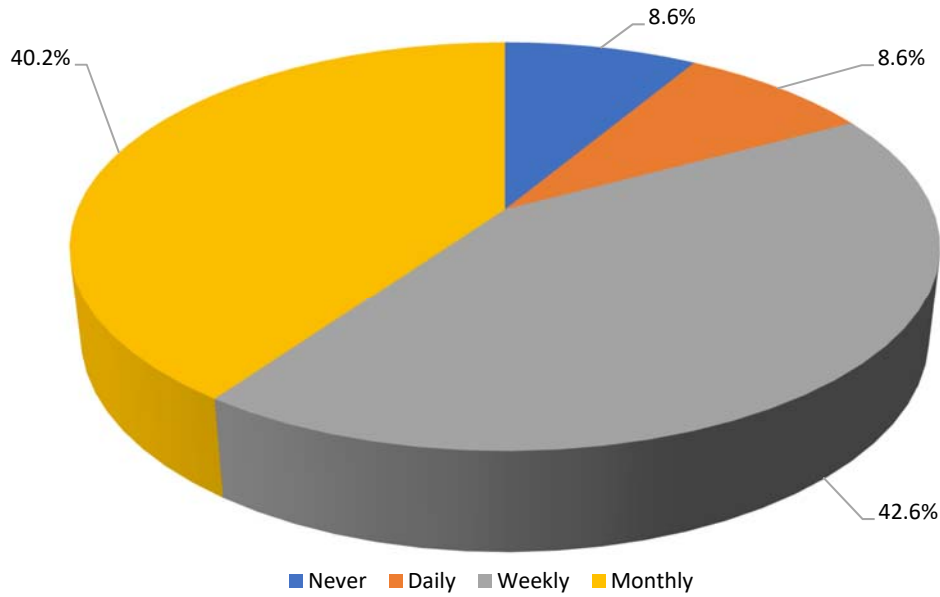


Figure 14: How would you rate the Town's current amenities at Lake Louise Park?

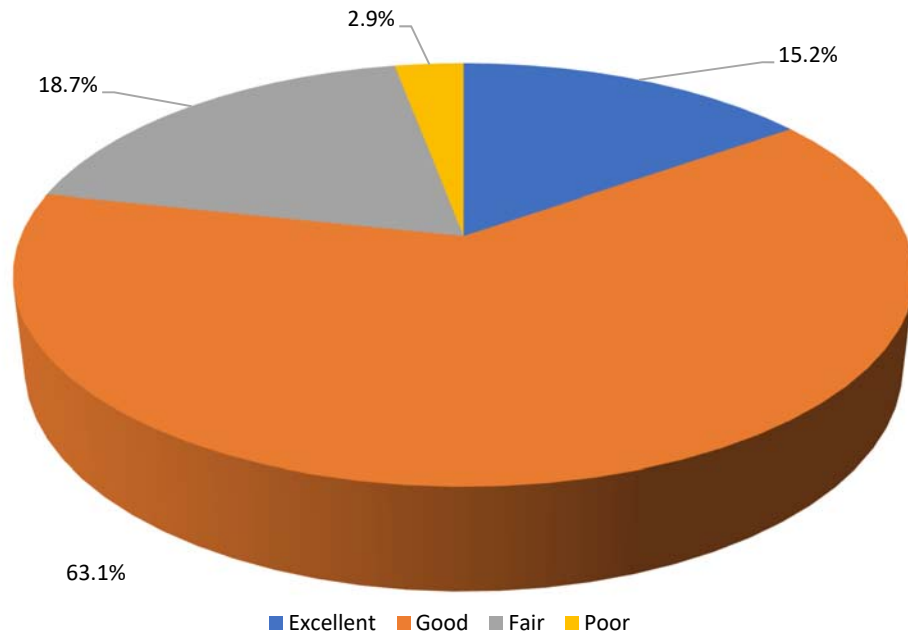


Figure 15: Please indicate which activities you or anyone in your household participate in at Lake Louise Park.

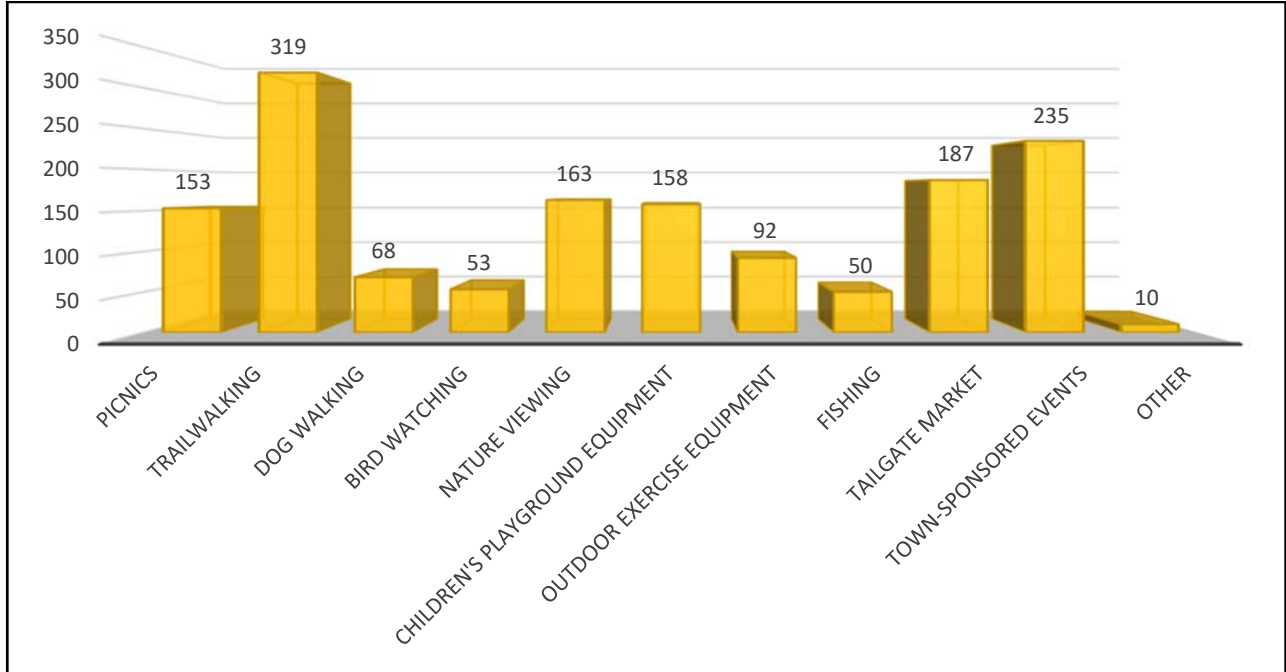
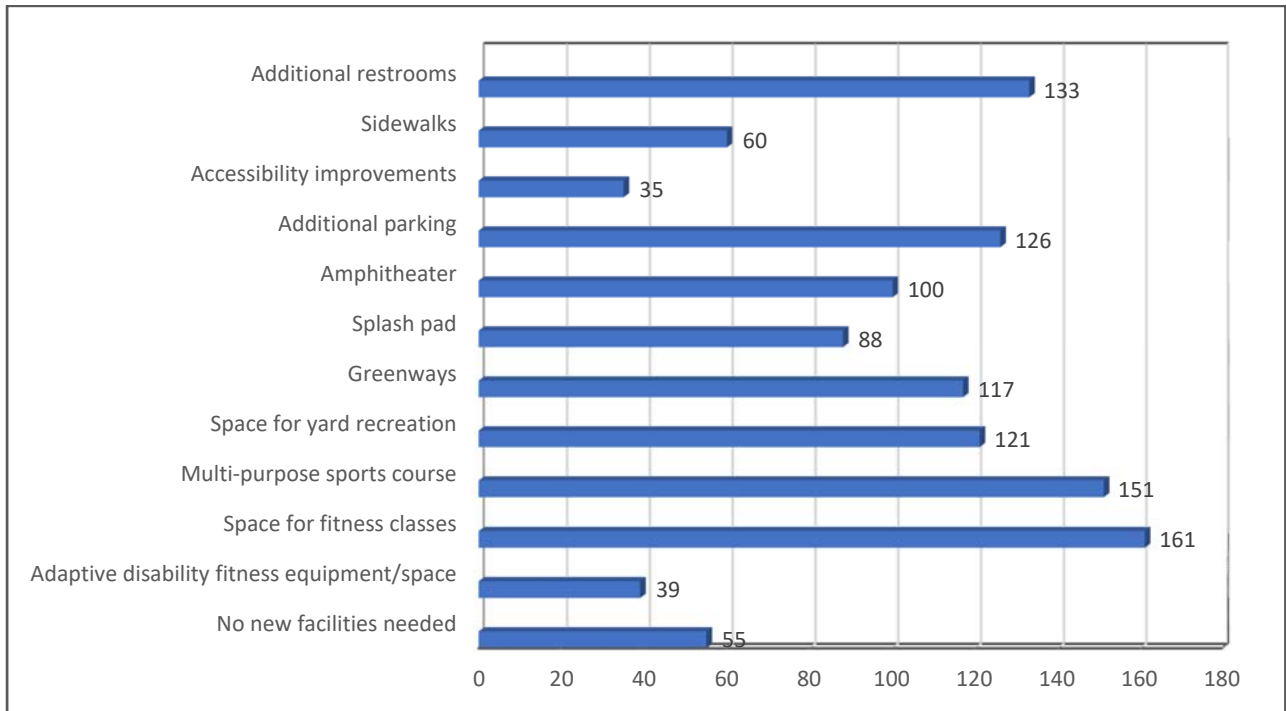


Figure 16: Please check any of the following new facilities or amenities that you feel are needed at Lake Louise Park.



Other Comments Regarding Lake Louise Park (Comments Grouped into Similar Categories):

Amenities listed under *other* not captured in the previous survey questions for new amenities, are summarized below:

Table 7: Other Amenities Needed at Lake Louise Park per Survey Respondents

Other Amenities Summarized
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of a new “Clubhouse” / Community center • Improvements to trails / Paved trails • Dog walking permitted throughout the park, including on the trails • Spaces for toddlers / Improvements to children’s outdoor play areas • Connection to future greenways • Improvements to restrooms / Extended hours for restrooms to be open

KEY POINTS

In addition to responding to the formal survey, respondents were given the opportunity to make general comments regarding the Town’s parks and recreation amenities. These were reviewed and assimilated along with the formal questions to inform the following key points:

- The vast majority of the survey respondents (76%) prefer Lake Louise Park for active recreation, while Main Street Nature Park is the preferred park for solo recreation and use for nature-related activities.
- Approximately 95% of survey respondents indicated that they would like to have indoor recreation space for adult and children’s activities such as fitness, yoga, martial arts and health classes.
- The majority of respondents indicated that they would support the renovation or demolition and new construction of the community center, formerly known as *the Clubhouse*.
- The survey indicated support, based on informal comments and formal survey questions, for permitting leashed dogs in both parks, but strong support for allowing leashed dogs on the walking paths at Lake Louise Park. These responses also included the need for additional waste stations throughout the park. Further, there was moderate indication within the informal survey comments that survey respondents would like to see a dog park within or near Town limits.
- Many of the survey respondents were aware of the *Connect Buncombe* greenway initiative and responded overwhelmingly positively to the Town’s active participation in this initiative.
- The survey responses indicated that the Town should continue to fund improvements and maintenance for both the Main Street Nature Park and the Lake Louise Park.
- The survey results indicated strong support for the construction of sidewalks down Merrimon Avenue from downtown to Lake Louise Park.
- The survey indicated strong support for improvements to the Main Street Nature Park with the addition of water fountains and restrooms and improvements to existing trails.



Weaverville Parks and Recreation Master Plan Needs Assessment Survey

The Town of Weaverville maintains two beautiful parks, **Lake Louise Park** and **Main Street Nature Park**, each unique in its characteristics. While the Town does not fund recreational program staffing, it offers passive recreation opportunities in both parks. For this purpose, we define passive recreation as those activities such as trails for walking or hiking, playground equipment and open spaces for picnics.

This survey will provide the foundation for the Town's first Parks and Recreation Master Plan. While the Town already has many recreational opportunities within its own parks, we want to make them even better! By completing this survey you will help us understand what you like, don't like, and what we can do better. Even if you don't use our parks and trails, your feedback is valuable!

1. Which park do you visit most often?

- Main Street Nature Park
- Lake Louise Park
- I have not visited either park.

2. Do you use recreation facilities offered by a private provider (i.e. Golds Gym, YMCA, etc.)?

- Yes
- No

3. If yes, please tell us why you use other recreational facilities.

- They are closer to my home.
- They offer better facilities.
- They offer recreation programming and active recreation opportunities.
- They feel safer or have better hours of operation.
- I was not aware that the Town offered passive parks and recreation activities.
- Other: _____

4. Please respond to the following statements:

	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
• I feel that the Town's parks, equipment and facilities are maintained well.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• I feel safe in visiting the Town's parks.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Parking is adequate at the parks.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• The Town offers enough special events at its parks.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• The Town's existing park facilities need renovations or improvements. (Examples: restrooms, playground equipment, community center, picnic pavilions, outdoor exercise equipment.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Indoor recreation and activity spaces are sufficient within the Town.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
• Outdoor recreation spaces are sufficient within the Town.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The **Main Street Nature Park** provides opportunities for walking, dog walking, and bird watching. It also serves as a demonstration facility for creating natural habitats for flora and fauna. The Town's Conservation Board has, in recent history, been responsible for making recommendations to the Town regarding the use of park facilities, development of park infrastructure and restoration of the native plant community. The following questions are directly related to the Main Street Nature Park.

5. Do you or anyone in your household visit the Main Street Nature Park in downtown Weaverville?

- Yes
- No

6. If you answered no to the previous question, please indicate why not below.

- I'm not interested.
- I lack information about the park.
- The park is too crowded.
- There is a general lack of parking.
- There are better opportunities elsewhere.
- The park is not pet friendly.
- Other: _____

7. How often do you (or anyone in your household) visit the Main Street Nature Park?

- Never
- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly

8. How would you rate the Main Street Nature Park for passive recreation (i.e. walking, dog walking, bird watching, etc.)?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Don't know

9. Please indicate which activities your or anyone in your household participates in at the Main Street Nature Park. You may check multiple activities.

- Picnics
- Walking / Hiking
- Dog walking
- Bird watching
- General nature viewing
- Not applicable
- Other: _____

10. Please check any of the following new facilities that you feel are needed at the Main Street Nature Park, given that it will remain the Town's primary open space for nature-related types or recreation activities.

- No new facilities need; Meets my needs
- Picnic shelters
- Special events
- Rental spaces
- Accessibility improvements
- Other: _____

The Town of Weaverville maintains **Lake Louise Park**, which consists of the lake itself, which may be used for fishing, children's playground equipment, outdoor exercise equipment, a gravel walking trail, picnic pavilions/shelters, access to Reems Creek for passive recreation including hiking/walking, dog walking, photography, bird watching, etc. A beautiful waterwheel and fountain accent this property. The park also houses a community center, historically known as the Clubhouse. The Town cannot permit full use of the community center at this time because the structure does not meet building codes and is not accessible for those with disabilities (i.e. it is not ADA accessible).

11. Do you or anyone in your household visit Lake Louise Park?

- Yes
- No

12. If you answered no to the previous question, please indicate why not below.

- I'm not interested.
- I lack information about the park
- The park is too crowded
- There is a general lack of parking.
- There are better opportunities elsewhere.
- The park is not pet friendly.
- Not applicable.
- Other: _____

13. How often do you (or anyone in your household) visit Lake Louise Park?

- Never
- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly

14. How would you rate the Towns' current amenities at Lake Louise Park?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Don't know

15. Please check any of the following activities you or anyone in your household participates in at Lake Louise Park.

- Picnics
- Trail walking
- Dog walking
- Bird watching
- General nature viewing
- Children's playground equipment
- Outdoor exercise equipment
- Fishing
- Tailgate Market
- Town-sponsored events (Examples: July 4th Celebration, Veterans Day Observance, 9/11 Patriots Day Observance, etc.)
- Not applicable
- Other _____

16. Please check any of the following new facilities that you feel are needed at Lake Louise Park.

- No new facilities need; Meets my needs
- Adaptive disability fitness equipment and spaces
- Spaces for fitness classes (Examples: yoga, dance, martial arts, gymnastics, summer kids' activity programs, etc.)
- Multi-purpose sports courts (Examples: Basketball, Volleyball, Pickleball, Tennis, etc.)
- Open space for yard recreation (Examples: Horseshoes, Cornhole, Bocce, Topple Tower, Ladder Ball, etc.)
- Greenways
- Splash pad
- Amphitheater
- Additional parking
- Accessibility improvements
- Sidewalks
- Additional restrooms
- Other _____

17. Would you like to provide additional comments regarding the Town's parks and recreation amenities?

18. About you (optional)

First Name: _____

Last Name: _____

Address: _____

State: _____

Postal Code: _____

19. Are you a resident and/or own property in the Town of Weaverville

- Yes
- No

20. What is your age?

- 17 years or younger
- 18-44 years
- 45-54 years
- 55-64 years
- 65-69
- 70 years or older

21. Which of the following best describes your employment status?

- Employed full-time
- Employed part-time
- Self-employed
- Unemployed – Looking for work
- Unemployed – Not looking for work
- Retired
- Student
- Military
- Prefer not to answer
- Other _____

22. What is your household income?

- Under \$24,000
- \$24,000 - \$49,999
- \$50,000 - \$74,999
- \$75,000 - \$99,999
- \$100,000 - \$124,999
- \$125,000 - \$149,999
- \$150,000 - \$174,999
- \$175,000 or higher

23. Which of the following best describes your gender identity?

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say
- Other: _____

24. Which of the following best describes your race and ethnicity?

- African American
- Asian
- Caucasian
- Latino
- Native American
- Prefer not to say
- Other: _____

25. How many people, including yourself, currently live in your household? _____

Please return this survey by **October 20, 2017**. You may submit the completed survey via the following:

Complete online at:
Mail to: Survey, Town of Weaverville, PO Box 338, Weaverville, NC 28787
Email: survey@weavervillenc.org
Hand deliver: Town Hall, 30 South Main Street, Weaverville