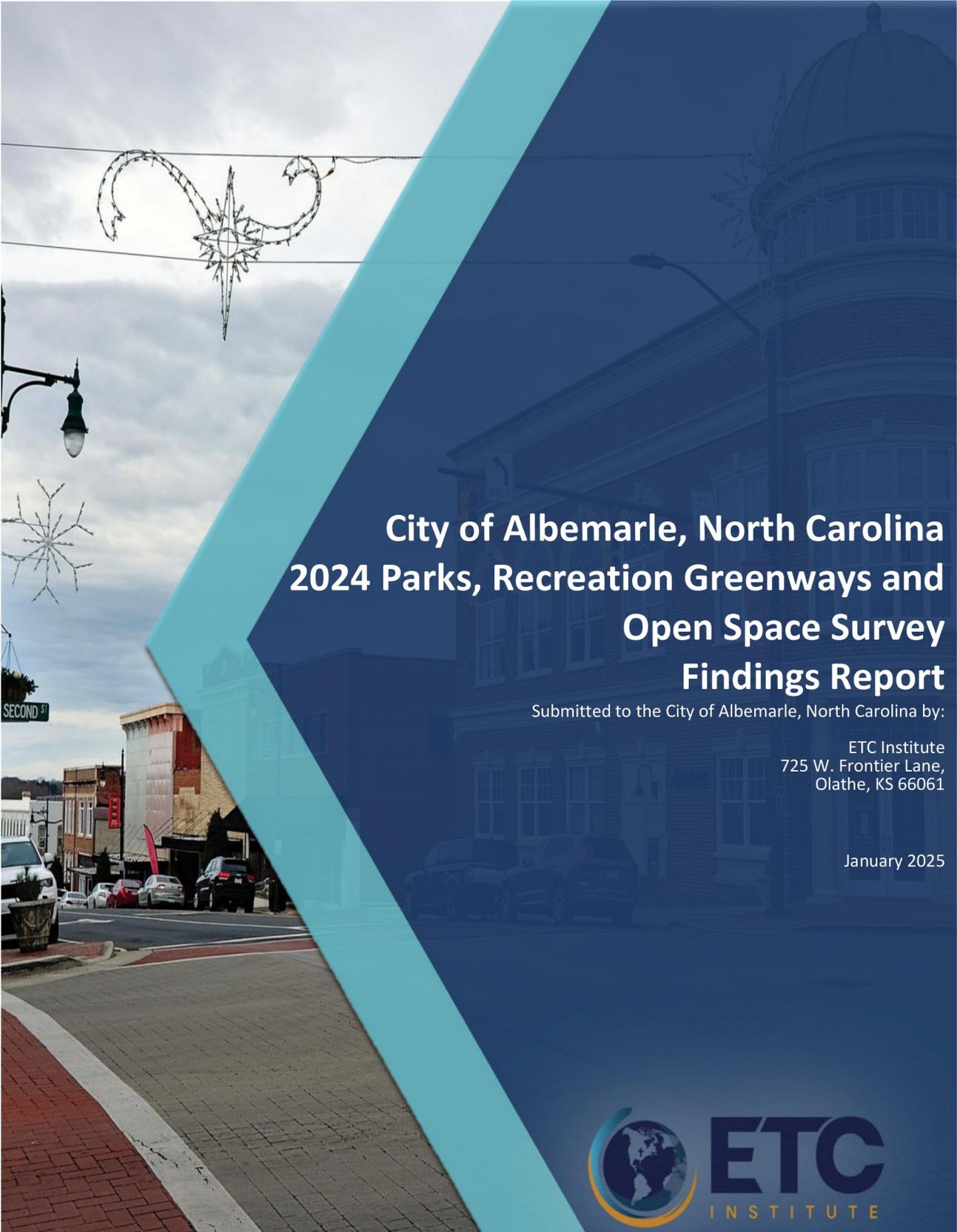




Appendix A



City of Albemarle, North Carolina 2024 Parks, Recreation Greenways and Open Space Survey Findings Report

Submitted to the City of Albemarle, North Carolina by:

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1 Executive Summary

City of Albemarle, North Carolina

Parks, Recreation Greenways and Open Space Survey

Executive Summary

Overview

ETC Institute administered a parks, recreation greenways and open space survey for the City of Albemarle, North Carolina during the winter of 2024-2025. The purpose of the survey was to assess community parks and recreation needs and priorities for the City of Albemarle.

Methodology

ETC Institute mailed a survey packet to a random sample of households throughout the City of Albemarle. Each survey packet contained a cover letter, a copy of the survey, and a postage-paid return envelope. Residents who received the survey were given the option of returning the survey by mail or completing it online.

After the surveys were mailed, ETC Institute followed up with residents to encourage participation. To prevent people who were not residents of Albemarle from participating, everyone who completed the survey online was required to enter their home address prior to submitting their survey. ETC Institute then matched the addresses entered online with the addresses originally selected for the random sample. If the address from a survey completed online did not match one of the addresses selected for the sample, the online survey was not included in the final database for this report.

The goal was to receive 300 completed surveys from households within the City of Albemarle. This goal was exceeded, with 314 completed surveys collected. The overall results for the sample of 314 residents have a precision of at least +/-5.5% at the 95% level of confidence.

This report contains the following:

- Executive Summary with major findings (Section 1)
- Charts showing the overall results of the survey (Section 2)
- Benchmarks (Section 3)
- Priority Investment Ratings (PIR) (Section 4)
- Tabular data showing the overall results for all questions on the survey (Section 5)
- A copy of the cover letter and survey instrument (Section 6)

The major findings of the survey are summarized in the following pages.

Parks/Facilities/Programs Use

Parks/Facilities Use: The top parks/facilities that respondents have used in the past year were: City Lake Park (78%), Rock Creek Park (72%), and Chuck Morehead Park (65%). Based on the sum of top two choices, the top visited parks/facilities were: City Lake Park (55%), Chuck Morehead Park (41%), and Rock Creek Park (41%). 17% rated the overall quality excellent, 49% rated the overall quality good, 28% rated fair, and 5% rated poor. 4% visit parks/facilities daily, 22% visit parks/facilities 2-3 times a week, 15% visit once a week, 34% visit a few times a month, 7% visit once a month, and 18% visit every couple of months. The common barriers that respondents said have prevented them from either using the parks/facilities or using them often were: lack of information/don't know what is offered (40%), lack of maintenance (27%), and lack of cleanliness (22%).

Greenways/Parks Access: 76% of respondents drive to greenways/parks, 2% ride a bike to greenways/parks, 21% walk, and 1% selected other. 3% visit greenway trails daily, 8% visit greenway trails a few times a week, 22% visit a few times a month, 30% visit a few times a year, and 38% never visit any greenway trail. 12% want to use greenway trails daily, 28% want to visit greenway trails a few times a week, 24% want to visit a few times a month, 20% want to visit a few times a year, and 16% never want to visit. The barriers that discourage respondents from using any greenway trails were: personal safety concerns (48%), lack of information about existing greenway trails (47%), and lack of safe connections to greenway trails (35%). The destinations that respondents would most like to get to by greenway trails are: parks & playgrounds (68%), natural areas & open space (67%), and shops & restaurants (48%).

Programs Use: Fifty-five percent (55%) of respondents indicated that they have participated in a program/special event in the past year. 28% rated the overall quality excellent, 64% rated the overall quality good, 8% rated fair, and 1% rated poor.

Outside Organizations

The most used organizations that provide the parks/facilities that respondents have used for recreation during the last year are: state parks (72%), YMCA (55%), and adjacent municipality parks & facilities (39%). The organizations that respondents use most for their recreation needs are: state parks (24%), YMCA (21%), and adjacent municipality parks & facilities (13%).

Communication

The top used resources that respondents use most to learn about the City's parks, facilities, and special events are: social media (66%), word of mouth (62%), and banners in public places (59%). Based on the sum of top 2 choices, the most common used resources are: social media (59%), banners in public places (31%), and direct email (26%).

Benefits, Importance, and Improvements to Parks and Recreation

Agreement: The most agreed statements regarding the parks and recreation system are: public parks add quality of life in the community (97%), recreation & parks are an essential service provided by the City (93%), and I am aware of parks, facilities, & events that are offered (54%).

Support: The actions (to improve the parks and recreation system in the City) that respondents supported most were: investing in improvement & upkeep of existing facilities (89%), hosting events to foster a sense of connected community (78%), and developing greenway trails to connect City’s existing greenway trail segments (76%). Based on the sum of top three choices, the actions that respondents would be most willing to support with their tax dollars were: investing in improvement & upkeep of existing facilities (52%), developing greenway trails to connect City’s existing greenway trail segments (29%), and acquiring undeveloped land for future parkland locations (26%).

Funding Mechanisms: The funding mechanisms that respondents supported the most were: State & Federal Grants (76%), Enterprise operations (70%), and bond issue approved by voters within existing tax structure (67%). Based on the sum of top 3 choices, the funding mechanisms that respondents felt should be the most important considerations for the department when prioritizing parks and recreation investments were: creating connections & developing a sense of community (38%), ensuring affordability to users (38%), and ensuring accessibility for all users regardless of ability status (34%).

Recreation Facilities/Amenities Needs and Priorities

Facility Needs: Respondents were asked to identify if their household had a need for 27 recreation facilities and amenities and to rate how well their needs for each were currently being met. Based on this analysis, ETC Institute was able to estimate the number of households in the community that had the greatest “unmet” need for various facilities.

The three facilities with the highest percentage of households that have an unmet need:

1. Picnic shelters
2. Greenway & trails with trailheads
3. Outdoor athletic fields

Facility Importance: In addition to assessing the needs for each facility, ETC Institute also assessed the importance that residents placed on each item. Based on the sum of respondents’ top four choices, these were the four facilities that ranked most important to residents:

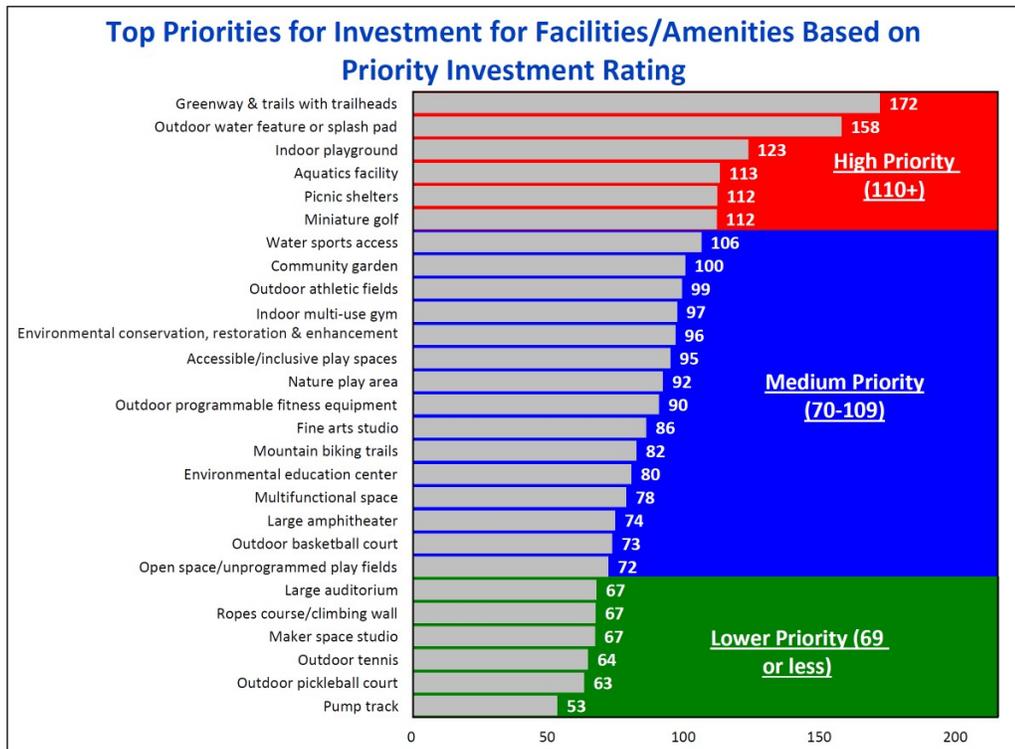
1. Greenway & trails with trailheads
2. Outdoor water feature or splash pad
3. Picnic shelters
4. Aquatics facility

Priorities for Facility Investments: The **Priority Investment Rating (PIR)** was developed by ETC Institute to provide organizations with an objective tool for evaluating the priority that should be placed on recreation and parks investments. The Priority Investment Rating (PIR) equally weighs (1) the importance that residents place on facilities and (2) how many residents have unmet needs for the facilities. [Details regarding the methodology for this analysis are provided in Section 4 of this report.]

Based the Priority Investment Rating (PIR), the following facilities were rated as high priorities for investment:

- Greenway & trails with trailheads (PIR=172)
- Outdoor water feature or splash pad (PIR=158)
- Indoor playground (PIR=123)
- Aquatics facility (PIR=113)
- Picnic shelters (PIR=112)
- Miniature golf (PIR=112)

The chart on the next page shows the Priority Investment Rating for each of the 27 facilities assessed in the survey.



Recreation Programs/Activities Needs and Priorities

Programs Needs: Respondents were asked to identify if their household had a need for 31 recreation programs and to rate how well their needs for each were currently being met. Based on this analysis, ETC Institute was able to estimate the number of households in the community that had the greatest “unmet” need for various facilities.

The three programs with the highest percentage of households that have an unmet need:

1. Special events & festivals
2. Outdoor movies & concerts
3. Fitness & wellness programs

Program Importance: In addition to assessing the needs for each program, ETC Institute also assessed the importance that residents placed on each item. Based on the sum of respondents’ top four choices, these were the four facilities that ranked most important to residents:

1. Special events & festivals
2. Outdoor movies & concerts
3. Fitness & wellness programs
4. Art programs

Priorities for Program Investments: The **Priority Investment Rating (PIR)** was developed by ETC Institute to provide organizations with an objective tool for evaluating the priority that should be placed on recreation and parks investments. The Priority Investment Rating (PIR) equally weighs (1) the importance that residents place on facilities and (2) how many residents have unmet needs for the programs. [Details regarding the methodology for this analysis are provided in Section 4 of this report.]

Based the Priority Investment Rating (PIR), the following programs were rated as high priorities for investment:

- Outdoor movies & concerts (PIR=195)
- Special events & festivals (PIR=175)
- Art programs (PIR=178)
- Fitness & wellness programs (PIR=171)
- Life skills programs (PIR=149)
- Adult athletics (PIR=143)
- Aquatics programs (PIR=133)
- Music lessons & classes (PIR=130)

The chart below shows the Priority Investment Rating for each of the 31 programs assessed in the survey.

