

## DEMOCRACY IN ACTION



Democracy in Action Launch Party, Spring 2020

## PARKS AND RECREATION USER SURVEY SPRING 2020

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# PROJECT DESCRIPTION

## DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

Democracy in Action emphasizes civic learning and democratic engagement. Through Democracy in Action, the university contracts with a local city entity in the capacity of consultant. Faculty and students partner with a regional city to conduct research, gathering qualitative and quantitative data to benefit city projects that are challenges and/or are backlogged. Democracy in Action is a program facilitated by the Office of Civic Learning within the Division for Community Engagement at California State University San Marcos (CSUSM).

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Uses U.S. and international parks and protected areas to explore themes of human-environment interaction, sustainability, and conservation. Explores the history of parks and protected areas, including the development of the U.S. National Park system. Examines representative case studies to explain evolving ideas regarding wilderness, public space, principles of multiple use, and sustainability. Course learning outcomes related to the City of San Marcos Parks and Recreation Department project are:

- Identify and assess new challenges and opportunities for public spaces.
- Demonstrate the connection between academic knowledge to civic engagement while expanding their sense of civic identity and participation in the community.
- Communicate effectively in writing to various audiences.
- Find, evaluate, and use information appropriate to the course and discipline.

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

This Democracy in Action project is a California State University San Marcos (CSUSM) initiative program that the Geography 450 Parks and Protected Areas (GEOG 450) class participated in during the spring 2020 semester. The class collaborated with the City of San Marcos (the City) Department of Parks and Recreation (P&R) to initiate a survey of the public demographics and needs. This survey was aimed at bettering the park space and determining the needs of the public.

The Parks and Recreation Department is an invaluable part of the City as they provide public space, management of lands, activities, and classes for the public. The City requested that the GEOG 450 class collaborate with them as consultants to create, implement, and analyze a survey to gain more understanding of the changing wants and needs of the public.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this project is to support the development of a community-wide survey with a focus on parks and recreation programming and facilities. This opportunity for civic engagement will allow CSUSM students to learn about how local city government works, and to assist the City in problem solving and development of local community. Our research will highlight areas of improvement for the City Parks and Recreation facilities, specifically for the 18-34 age group. By using the analysis provided and the direct recommendations from the public, we hope to provide the city with clear guidelines for future improvements and projects for the facilities in San Marcos.

## OBJECTIVES and DELIVERABLES

Students will develop a comprehensive survey related to city-provided parks and recreation programming, services, and facilities. The goal of this deliverable is to provide the City P&R information and understanding of the community as to how they learn about P&R programs, utilize services, and see areas for improvement. The following are expected deliverables that students will provide in a formal research report and public presentation:

- Students will develop a community survey to solicit information regarding current utilization, successes and gaps in coverage of the City P&R programs and facilities.
- Students will outline the methods and strategies that they propose we utilize such as social media, web, incentives for completion, number of administrators, and use of technology.
- Students will administer the survey to community members in conjunction with the City P&R department. The focus of the students will be obtaining survey responses throughout the community with a focus on obtaining responses from a variety of demographic areas.
- Students will analyze survey results and provide recommendations based on outcomes (areas for additional research, areas for focus, areas to increase outreach, etc.).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

This survey was conducted for the City P&R department to help gain a better understanding of the wants and needs of the community. Survey topics included park management, public safety, activities and events currently offered by the City and activities San Marcos citizens would like to see in the future. In total, 1,242 people participated in this survey, the majority being San Marcos residents. Overall, the survey conducted by GEOG 450 found that most survey participants feel safe and satisfied with the parks, services, programming, and facilities offered by the City. Along with this, the parks that were used the most by survey participants were Discovery Lake and Double Peak Park, while parks such as Simmons Park, Bradley Park, and Mulberry Park were visited less frequently. Suggestions in which San Marcos Parks and Recreation Department can better fulfill the needs of the community include:

- Improving park and trail maintenance.
- Reducing safety hazards and improving park lighting.
- Integrating more trails and sport fields.
- Integrating more community events such as music festivals.

## CONCLUSIONS

The solutions and recommendations presented in this report were made based on the analyzed survey data collected by GEOG 450 in spring 2020. We gathered data about the City of San Marcos residents and how to best fit their recreation needs. Our solutions and recommendations are based on the opinions of San Marcos residents and by people that use the parks on a regular basis. Following these recommendations would contribute greatly to the already high levels of satisfaction among regulars at the San Marcos City parks and potentially attract even more people to the parks.

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# DATA SUMMARY

## PARKS & RECREATION USER SURVEY DATA SUMMARY

**83.8%**

are satisfied with P&R parks, facilities, services, and programming.

**93.4% of users feel safe at parks & facilities.**



Many people would prefer multiple means of contact (e.g., San Marcos 360 and social media) and a large number of responses indicate a preference for electronic means of receiving information.

**User concerns relate to cleanliness, amenities, safety, and programming.**

Concerns align with issues at other public spaces (e.g., trash, bathrooms), but were uncommonly reported.

**57.1%**

identified their ethnicity/race as white and 21.1% identified as Hispanic/Latino.



**Current & future needs are related.**

Trails, sports fields, dog parks, and spaces/activities for children and teens.

Increased diversity in class offerings, times, and modes.

Maintenance and/or updating of trails, facilities, and playground equipment areas.

More music, food, and other festivals.

**> 2/3**

of respondents have completed post-secondary education/training.

# SURVEY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

## OVERVIEW

Students in GEOG 450 developed survey questions and responses to correspond with, and expand upon, the P&R directive of measuring the current areas of success and limitations of city-offered parks and recreation programming, with a specific interest in 18-34 year olds, as they are often underrepresented in other P&R outreach initiatives. The survey instrument was developed according to the following survey best practices (American Association for Public Opinion Research, 2020):

1. Unbiased questions and survey formatting
2. Understandable format
3. Designed for a specific audience
4. Informed participation (opt-in)
5. Anonymous results

## QUESTION DESIGN

Students divided themselves into ten groups and each group developed eight questions and potential responses. Groups were instructed to develop a mix of question types (e.g., rating/ranking of statements, yes/no or true/false, multiple choice/selection, open-ended). Each student was then responsible for rating the 80 potential questions according to the student’s opinion on importance of the question (rated as a 5) or if a question should be omitted (rated as a 1). If several questions were similar, the one that was perceived as the most appropriate and/or worded the best was rated as a 5, and the other questions were rated a 3. Students provided feedback on question formatting, order, and wording. After a draft of the survey was created in Survey123, students worked in groups to edit the question prompts and responses, reorder to place related questions next to or near each other, and develop/reword the questions in the demographics section to align with the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey and the Population Estimates Program data collection and reporting. Finalized questions and response prompts are included as [Appendix A](#). An introduction was created for the students to use as introductory statement to the survey purpose and to obtain consent for participation. The introduction was visible to those who completed the survey independently, providing them with context as to who was collecting the data and how the data were intended for used. Independent survey takers were asked if they would like to continue the survey (opt-in) after reading the introductory statement.

## SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The survey was constructed in Environmental Systems Research Institute’s (ESRI) Survey123 app. Survey123 surveys can be conducted face-to-face or independently. There are two ways to enter data into the survey: download to a locally installed instance of the Survey123 app and the specific survey or via a link in any web browser. The app permitted the construction of various question types, including the option of allowing for follow-up questions, including free response submissions. Internet or network connectivity are not required if using the Survey123 app. However, connectivity is required if embedding links and provides the best estimate of current location (if a desired question prompt) if not on a GPS-enabled device. Surveys are submitted once Wi-Fi or network connectivity is re-established and are automatically uploaded to a database in the online version of Survey123 (log-in credentials can be required to access or view data). Data can be downloaded

from Survey123 in a variety of formats for distribution (e.g., Excel, shapefile). A Spanish language version was developed, but responses ( $n = 9$ ) were not evaluated in this report.

## SURVEY LOCATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION

GEOG 450 students collaboratively created the list of locations. City parks and trails were included, but not the San Marcos Library, Senior Center, Recreation Center, or pools. P&R indicated that they interact with the public at those specific locations regularly and were interested in obtaining information from people who may not utilize those locations or programming. The interest in the 18-34 year old and/or college-student demographic led to the inclusion of CSUSM and Palomar Colleges, as well as locations we anticipated were frequented by these specific demographics (e.g., restaurants, coffee shops, gyms, and bars near campuses). A complete list of in-person sampling locations is included as [Appendix B](#), and visualized in Figure 1.

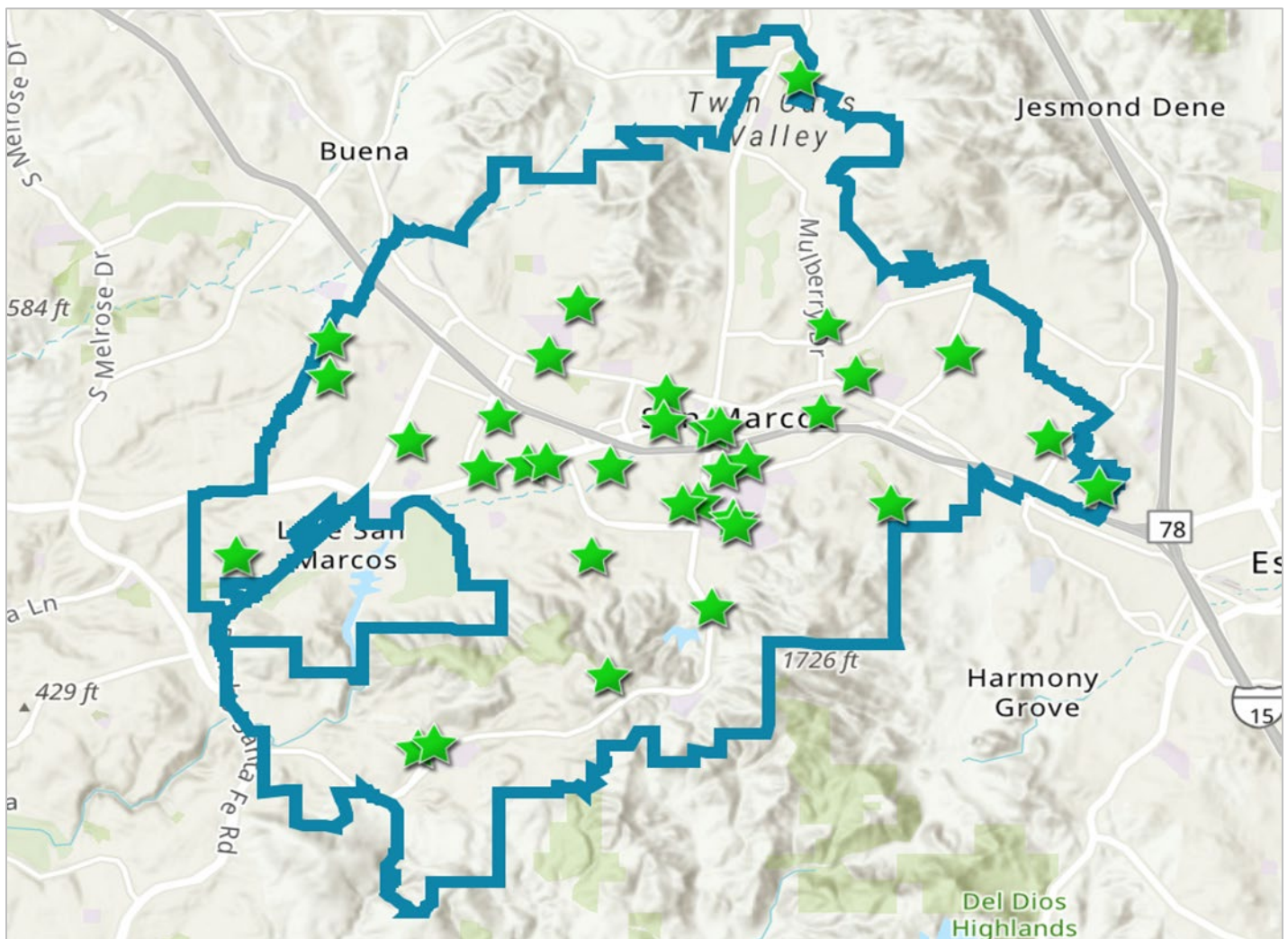


Figure 1. Map displays all locations where in-person surveys were conducted. The link includes the name and specific addresses for all sampling locations used for this analysis <https://arcg.is/1fTy4z> and a list of sampling sites is included as Appendix B. Map designed by Jeahna Kertzman.

Groups collected in-person surveys from February 23, 2020 – March 18, 2020. Group members determined their sampling dates, times, who collected surveys at which locations, and work independently or with a partner to conduct the surveys. Groups also created their own strategies for approaching potential survey participants, as well as how to increase sampling size (e.g., times of week/day surveyed). Groups were tasked with collecting at least 25 surveys from each location throughout the survey period, resulting in 1,630

interactions with the public. Survey opt-in rate was high, and 1,242 completed parts of the survey. Participants could skip questions or components of multi-part questions, so the response rate for each question varied, as was as high as 1,260 for some questions, even though those people indicated they did not want to complete the survey. If an individual indicated they did not want to complete the survey, the survey was supposed to direct them to the submit button; however it appears that people were able to (either by choice or they thought the questions were required to exit) answer some of the question prompts before exiting the survey.

## DATA ANALYSIS

Due to changes relating to Covid-19, classes at CSUSM were held in a virtual format after March 13, 2020. This changed the data analysis strategy, as in-person collaboration, discussion, and analysis was no longer possible. Thus, each group was assigned a subset of questions to investigate, visualize, and discuss. Groups generally focused on their assigned questions as individual questions, or as related to a follow-up question instead of viewing the dataset more holistically and distinguishing cross-question patterns and relationships. The dataset is provided as [Appendix D](#), enabling the City to continue to evaluate cross-sectional trends, relationships, and statistical properties. Results are presented in each group’s section.

Assuming that the population of San Marcos is 97,000, at a 95% confidence level, the theoretical margin of error of a sample size of 1,242 is +/- 2.76%. Although each question varies in its response rate, for all questions with  $n > 1,056$ , we can be 95% confident, within a margin of error of 3%, that the responses represent the general population of San Marcos.

## REFERENCES

American Association for Public Opinion Research. “Best Practices for Survey Research.” Accessed January 22, 2020. <https://www.aapor.org/Standards-Ethics/Best-Practices.aspx>.



# **PARTICIPATION AND RESIDENCY**

Brandon Huezo, Jeahna Kertzman, Erin Rimmereid, & Emily Swarthout

## **INTRODUCTION TO GROUP’S FOCUS AND PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Our group’s focus was to analyze the following questions.

1. Would you like to participate in this survey?
2. Are you a current City of San Marcos Resident?
3. Which city council voting district do you live in?
4. Which city do you currently live in?

Originally when looking at the data, we decided to split up each question amongst the four of us, but we all ended up helping each other to decide which type of graph best suited the data displayed. The first question was asked at the very beginning of the survey, with 1,242 opting in and 388 people declining to take the survey. There were some errors with participants taking the survey on their own, without having a survey administrator, as participants could accidentally click out of the survey. The next question allowed us to determine responses relating to the City of San Marcos Master Plan since it was geared mostly to San Marcos residents, providing the clearest answers on park improvements residents desired. The voting district helped determine areas that may have responded to other park surveys once before and show areas that were limited in responses. Lastly, the question, “which city do you currently live in” gives the City a better idea of where other people come from to utilize P&R facilities, programs, and services. The City was also interested in obtaining information from people who do not frequent the parks, why they currently do not utilize the parks.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Our group conducted the surveys at four different locations: at Urge Gastropub & Common House, on campus at California State University San Marcos, around Jack’s Pond Nature Center, and the Starbucks located on Twin Oaks Valley Road. These locations were chosen specifically with the intention to reach college students who do not normally participate in community surveys. We visited each location once per week, over the course of three weeks in order to obtain 25 responses from our chosen locations. While conducting the surveys, we quickly realized that the locations we chose were not as busy as we anticipated, so it took several attempts to obtain the number of responses we needed. The groups of people at the locations were also more varied than originally anticipated. To get a more accurate representation of the student demographic we began targeting people who were studying in groups or had backpacks on.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The first survey question that was asked was “Would you like to participate in this survey?” Figure 2 illustrates the number of people who agreed to participate in the survey as well as the percentage of those who declined. The potential participants were given a brief, unscripted introduction as to what the survey was about and then asked if they were willing to participate. The data does not show the reasons they might have

chosen not to participate. The total number of participants was 1,630 with more than 75 percent of the people asked willing to participate.

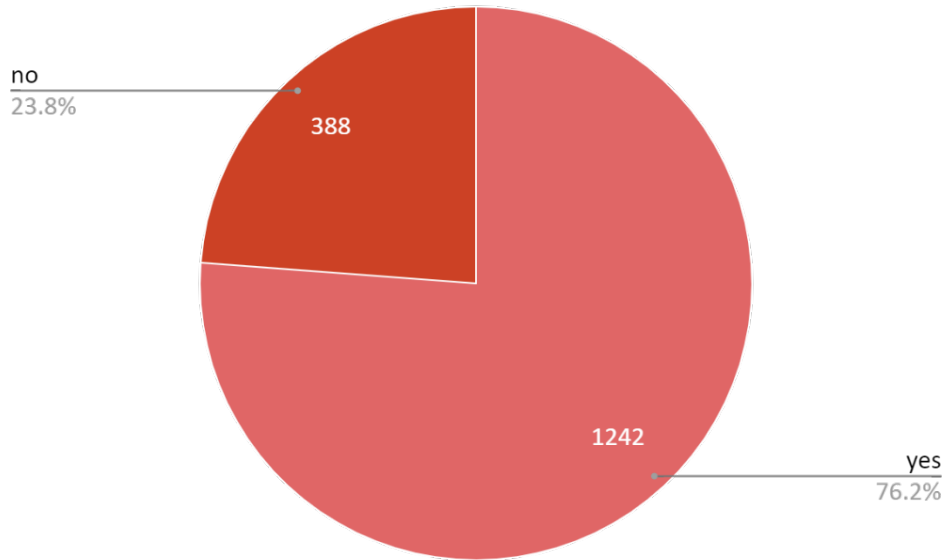


Figure 2. Diagram illustrates the number and percentage of participants and those who declined participate in the 2020 San Marcos Parks and Recreation User Survey.

For those who selected “yes,” to participate in the survey, the second question they received on the survey asked: “Are you a current City of San Marcos resident?” Figure 3 displays the data collected from the 1,260 survey respondents. The results of this question showed 72.5 percent of participants as residents of San Marcos and 27.4 percent as non-San Marcos residents. This information is important for interpreting the needs of the local and non-local sectors in terms of the respondent’s opinions on parks and recreation in the city of San Marcos.

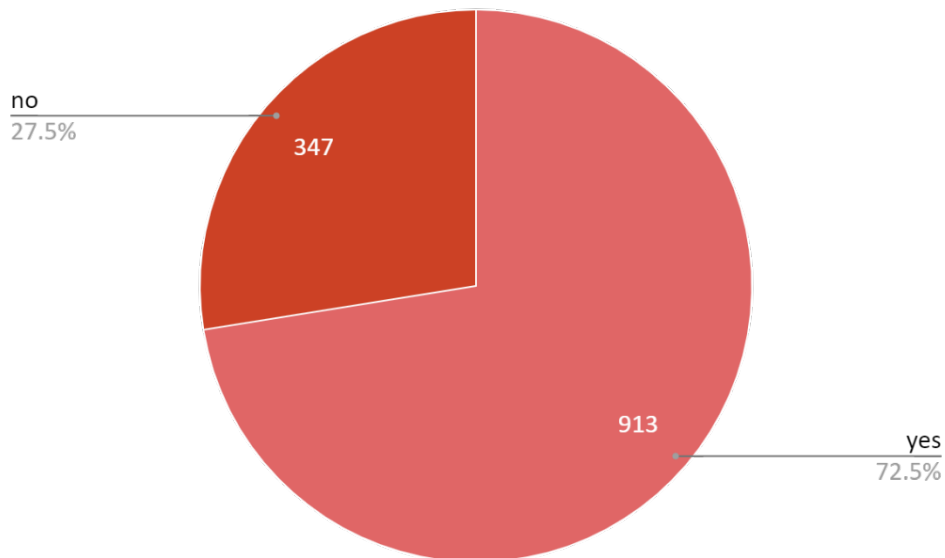


Figure 3. Diagram illustrates the number of respondents who are San Marcos residents versus non-residents. Although only 1,242 people indicated they wanted to participate in the survey, 1,260 people responded to this question instead of exiting out of the survey after declining to participate.

If the survey participant answered “yes” to being a City of San Marcos resident, they were prompted to respond to the question “Which City Council voting district do you currently live in?” Figure 4 represents the number of participants living within each of the districts and 834 individuals responded to this question. The results indicate that most of the participants lived in districts two and three. A link to a map reference of the City of San Marcos voting districts (Appendix C) was provided within the survey.

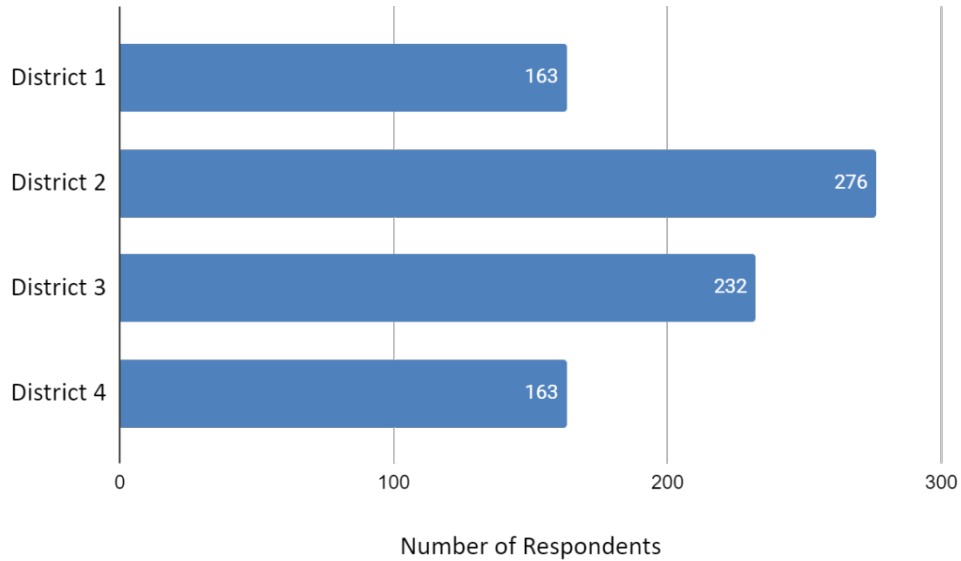


Figure 4. Illustrates City of San Marcos resident selected voting districts (n = 834).

If the survey respondent answered “no” to being a City of San Marcos resident, they were prompted to respond to the question “Which city do you currently live in?” Summarized in Figure 5, other places of residency were specified in the free-response box. Vista, Escondido, Carlsbad, Oceanside, and Murrieta made up the bulk of those responses.

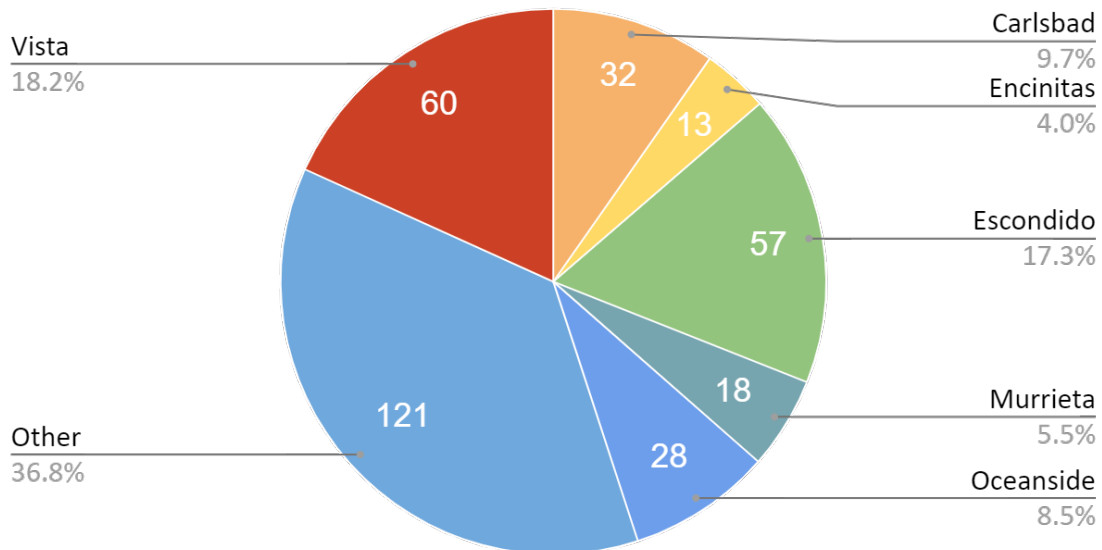


Figure 5. Current place of residence for those who answered “no” to being a resident of San Marcos (n = 329).

## CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, our group can't make any specific recommendations about the parks from our set of questions, however those same questions are the foundation for a proper survey. We can offer some tips for future use in a parks survey. For example, the voting district question should have a physical copy of the districts or a survey device that can open internet links without a WIFI connection. This would increase the accuracy of the selected district for those who live in San Marcos. A uniform or shirt that shows association with the school or city might increase respondents. An addition to the survey could be a section for individuals who chose not to participate to indicate why they could not participate. Last, changing the city of current residence to a checkbox, with a free response for locations not available among the listed options, could eliminate redundancies in the data due to spelling errors or different word choice.

## SOLUTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

The questions in this section were about residency and participation rather than suggestions for the improvement of the Parks and Recreation Department, thus there are no solutions to the responses we received. Although we cannot offer any recommendations based on the data from our respondents, there were a few discrepancies during the collection process that could be addressed to improve the quality, ease, and accuracy of future responses.

The first question we were asked to analyze read, "Would you like to participate in this survey?" Although most of the people who chose to not participate would have done so anyways, we believe that if we had dressed in official California State University San Marcos attire, and had a scripted introduction stating the purpose of our survey, we may have been able to collect more responses. In addition, it would have been beneficial to include a section where the surveyor could leave a comment about why the individual refused to partake in the survey. The surveyor would be able to note useful information such as the park visitors at the picnic shelter preferred not to be disturbed and guests at Starbucks were in a rush and did not have time to participate. By doing this, we would be able to obtain information about areas where people were more willing to participate and use it to avoid locations where the public do not have the time or were not willing to take part.

When analyzing the survey questions about residency, multiple areas could use improvement. The question of whether the respondent was a current City of San Marcos resident was straightforward, but if they clicked yes, the following question was difficult for many of the participants to answer. When asked which city council voting district the respondents lived in, most did not know off the top of their head. We provided a hyperlink to an image on the city website that depicted the four city council voting districts, but if the device that the survey was displayed on did not have any service or WIFI connection, the hyperlink was inoperable. As a result, the data we collected for the spring 2020 survey may be skewed as numerous respondents did not have access to the image, forcing them to either guess or skip the question all together. In order to improve the ease, quality, and accuracy of the responses to this question, a physical map should be provided.

If the participant responded that they were a resident of a different city, they were asked to provide the name of the city they currently resided in. We allowed them to answer via free response, which meant that we received a variety of answers. When analyzing the data, it was difficult to sort through the responses because if something was misspelled, lacked a capital letter, or had any extra words or spaces, it had to be separated and counted manually. One of the biggest problems we saw with this question was numerous individuals had entered that they lived by Lake San Marcos, which is technically a part of county land. Each response differed

slightly in vocabulary and therefore was counted as a new location. In order to keep the data clear and concise, it would have been more beneficial to make the question multiple choice. Most of the responses were for San Marcos and neighboring cities, with only a few from areas farther away. If we made this a multiple-choice question, we could include all our neighboring cities, have Lake San Marcos as its own category, and have a general location choice at the bottom. This would make it so we are still able to receive information about where our park guests are coming from, but it would keep the data more organized.

# SURVEY COLLECTION TIMES AND BASIC DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Olivia Barrett, Miranda Boone, Dyana Gonzalez, and Katie Sherman



## INTRODUCTION TO GROUP'S FOCUS AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Based on the specific data our group was assigned, we completed an analysis of survey data we collected on date and time of survey, marital status of participants (including an evaluation of "other" marital status), and gender of participants. This data on survey collection times provides insight into the significance of our data as well as how we could improve our data collection methods in the future. The basic demographic information we collected on marital status and gender of participants helps to provide a better understanding of how representative our sample is of the general population in the City of San Marcos. Based on the data analysis our group conducted on these specific survey questions, we can further help determine how the survey data we collected relates to the Parks and Recreation Department's goals for current and future populations in San Marcos.

The survey we conducted for the City P&R helps them to achieve their goal of better understanding how they can provide for all members of the population here in San Marcos. Parks, activities, classes, and other events are beneficial to the City's population in many ways. Current research shows how having a neighborhood park, green space, or other recreational facility can improve mental health and wellbeing (Wood et al. 2017). By analyzing the data from our recent survey, we can help the City have a greater understanding of some of the new events, programs, or public parks and green spaces that residents want. Studies that show a correlation between parks and better mental health are motivation to continue providing better parks, green spaces, and other physical activity options so that the overall physical and mental health of the city population can continue to improve.

## METHODOLOGY

The questions on our survey were intended to address the needs of P&R in understanding specific demographics. P&R wanted to have people answer the survey who would not normally do so, such as college students and other young adults. While the City has many programs for the younger and older sectors of the population, they are hoping to improve their ability to address the desires of all the individuals in San Marcos. Looking toward the intermediate, young adult age group of the population, city officials hoped this survey would help them make decisions that are more informed about what the parks and recreation programs could do in the future to encourage and help more people in this demographic reap the benefits of the parks.

Because our group gathered data on marital status and gender, we are able to utilize our data analysis to see who contributed to our survey and how their responses can inform future parks and recreation decisions in San Marcos. Information on gender and marital status can be advantageous to include in surveys because it can shed light on what characteristics may be desirable in current and future parks. Marital status can help provide insight into what to expect in the future, potentially in terms of children who will eventually be able to use parks. Many parents/guardians want young people to utilize parks for their perceived benefits: such as fighting the problem of obesity, and improving academic performance in adolescents by more exposure to nature (Larson, Whiting, & Green 2013).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Marital Status Analysis

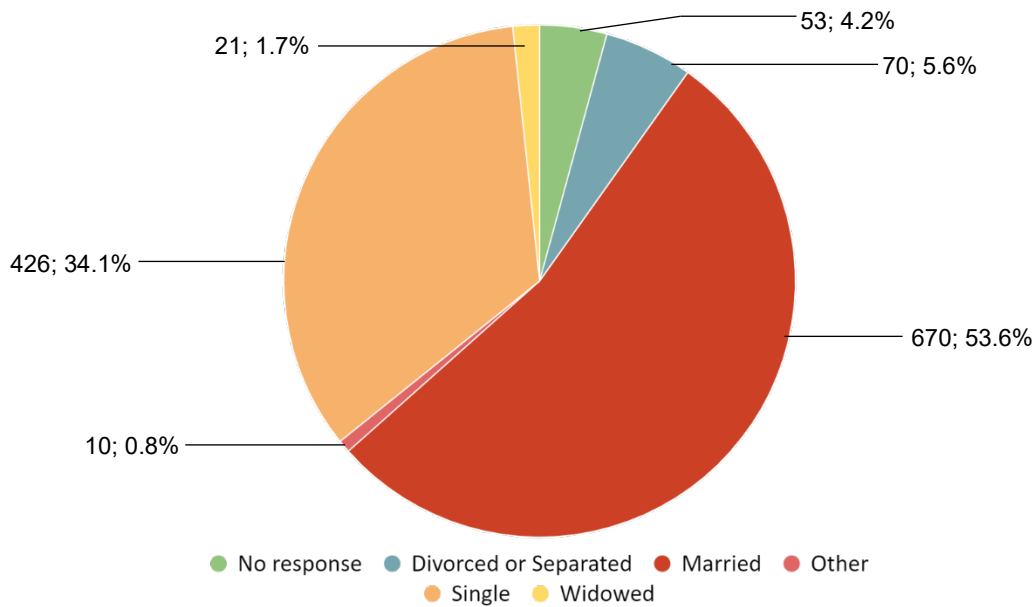


Figure 6. Self-identified marital status of respondents (n = 1,197 for those that responded; total n = 1,250).

From the data collected on the individuals' marital status, we gathered 1,197 responses to this question (Figure 7) and 4.2 percent of survey participants chose not to respond to the question. For those who did respond, we found that the greatest majority of individuals identified as married (670 individuals, or 53.6 percent). That is, more than half of the respondents said that they were currently married. The second largest group of data was individuals who responded that they were currently single (426 individuals, or 34.1 percent). Approximately 6 percent, or 70 individuals, selected divorced or separated. Twenty-one of the respondents (1.7 percent) were widowed. Lastly, the smallest group of data consisted of individuals who responded to the question as 'other,' (only 0.8%). A further explanation and evaluation of the data collected on the individuals who responded 'other' is detailed in Figure 8. Others can include those who live with someone but aren't married.

**Marital Status Analysis ('Other' selected in previous question about marital status)**

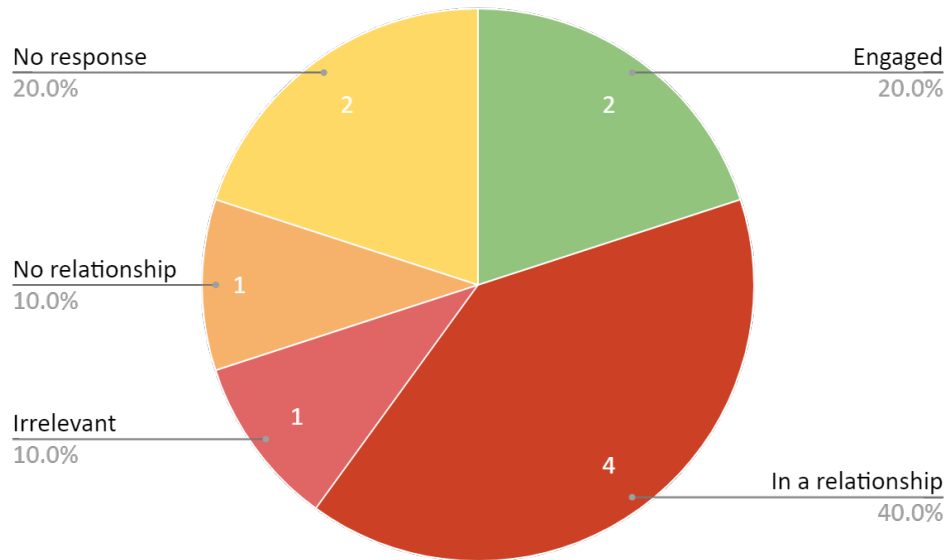


Figure 7. Responses for individuals who selected 'other' as their marital status (n = 10).

Of the 10 survey participants who responded 'other' to the question on marital status, we were able to categorize further their responses as follows:

- 4 of the individuals who responded (40 percent) said that they were currently in a relationship
- 2 participants (20 percent) said that they were engaged
- 1 person (10 percent) responded that the question was 'irrelevant'
- 2 individuals chose not to participate in this question

For the survey participants who chose 'other' for their marital status, some of them indicated they were 'not in a relationship'. We determined that this was the same as indicating they were single and therefore added those people back to the single category (Figure 7). A few people also indicated 'partner' as an answer, which we determined was the same as 'in a relationship'.

**Gender of Participants**

From the survey question on gender of participants, we were able to collect responses from 1,201 participants, plus 41 people who did not respond to this question (n = 1,242). Based on the data, we determined that more than half of the survey participants identified as female (692 participants or 55.7 percent of participant responses; Figure 9). Fewer than half of the participants identified as male (472 or 38.0 percent of responses). Only a small portion of the data collected on the gender of participants included 'declined to answer,' 'other,' and 'non-binary.' In total, 29 participants selected the option 'Declined to answer.' Three participants (0.2 percent) answered 'other' and five (0.4 percent) who identified as non-binary. The selection of 'other' could include transgender, gender questioning, genderqueer, pangender, etc.



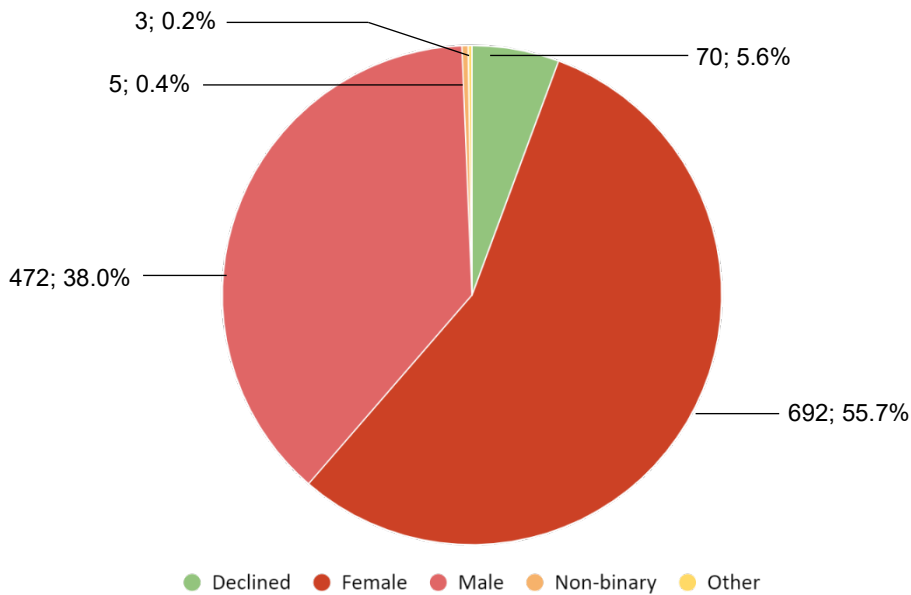


Figure 8. Self-identified, preferred gender of participants (n = 1,242). The category "Declined" includes 41 people who skipped the question.

One thing we altered in the data were participants who chose not to answer this question. Instead of choosing 'Declined to answer,' 41 people left this question blank. We determined that this is the same as a participant selecting 'Declined to answer'.

**Date and Time Analysis**

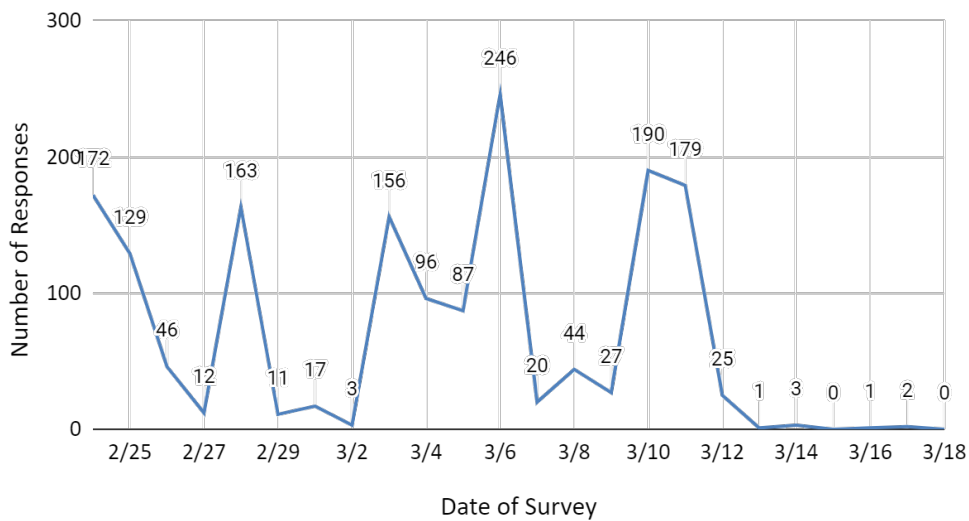


Figure 9. Figure depicts the frequency of survey responses across the open survey period, February 23 to March 18, 2020. Figure includes those that opted out of the survey, representing 1,630 contacts.

Over the course of a 3.5 week period, from February 23 to March 18, 1,640 people were asked to participate in the survey. Figure 10 illustrates the frequency of contacts for each day over the survey period. Figure 10 illustrates only the proportion of those who elected to participate in the survey (n = 1,250). We saw spikes in survey participation on February 23 (10.0 percent of total survey responses collected were completed on this

day), March 3 (14.7 percent of total survey responses collected were completed on this day), and March 10 (11.2 percent of total survey responses collected were completed on this day) (Figure 11). Between March 10 and 11 there were 232 surveys conducted, that is 18.6 percent of the total survey responses were completed during this period. This makes sense, as these were technically the last days to conduct face-to-face surveys. Seven additional surveys (that is 0.6 percent of the total collected surveys) were conducted in the following six days, with the last survey being completed on March 18. This is explained by the fact that the survey was available online, and the City was utilizing social media to inform people.

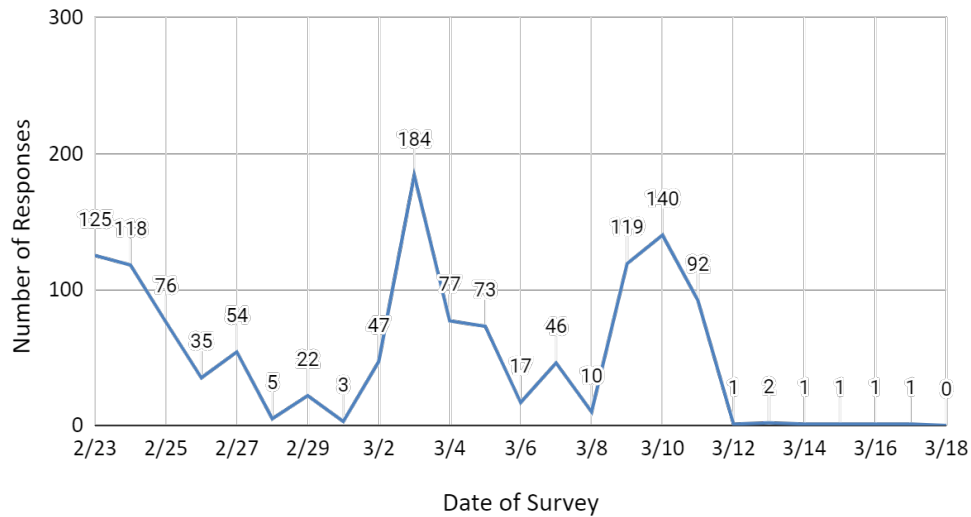


Figure 10. Figure displays the frequency of responses for those who opted to participate in the survey.

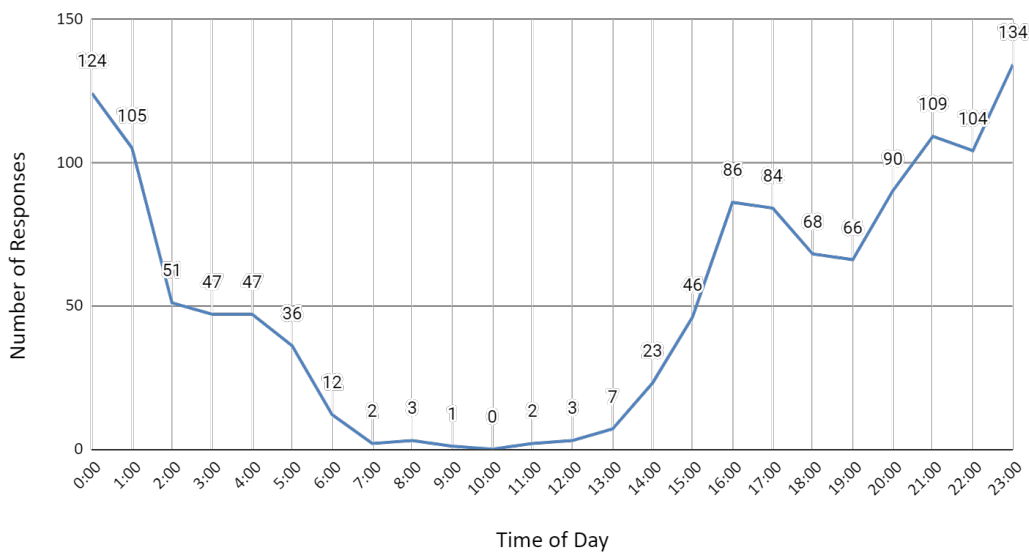


Figure 11. Frequency of responses according to time of day. Data displayed only include those who consented to participating in the survey (n =1,250).

According to the data, the majority of surveys were completed at night with less than 7 percent of the surveys completed between 7:00 AM and 3:00pm, which is normally the time people are in school or at work. The most interesting part of these data is that between the hours of midnight and 5:59 AM there were 410 surveys

completed. Based on the time and location of these surveys we determined that 375 of them indicate an issue with uploading, location information, or data entry mistakes. For example, there are a number of surveys that were conducted at Churchill's Pub and Grill at 4:00 AM. There were also surveys that say they were completed at parks in the San Marcos Area at around 2:00 AM. On top of this, most of the surveys done during these late hours are on the night before the face-to-face survey completion deadline. Plausible explanations for this could be that the survey was available online, where some participants could have accidentally checked the wrong box for locations or type of survey. Another explanation is that some of the groups had technical issues with the tablets and online surveys; therefore, they had to manually record and enter responses into the survey form.

## CONCLUSIONS



The City's best tool for gaining further insight into the local populations wants and needs when it comes to our parks and recreational facilities are surveys. Direct input from a wide demographic can provide valuable information that will ultimately aid the City in tailoring its programs and developments. As mentioned above, current research is finding causal links between the access to neighborhood parks and improvements in mental health. Recreational facilities and green spaces seem to have an impact on wellbeing. This can contribute to the justification and motivation behind the improvements and continued development of San Marcos' parks and recreation facilities.

One problem we found was in the structure of survey questions. In our analysis, we spent some time optimizing data by removing results pertaining to marital status. If the City's aim is to target the younger demographics, these questions should be more tailored to this group. Marital status should be changed to relationship status, which would provide more data than simply asking if someone is married, single, widowed, or other. We found that a number of survey participants did not answer this question and some answered it incorrectly citing their additional responses in 'other.' It should be noted that the structure of this survey question aligns with previous census data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau. Restructuring this question may not be ideal for past data comparisons.

As stated above, social media is a valuable tool in reaching the younger demographics. This would not only increase survey participation while decreasing survey costs, but this could also help with data integrity. In our current model, we found that data integrity was possibly in question with roughly 30 percent of our results. Although the explanation of these discrepancies we found are most likely explained by online survey participation, we feel that it is still necessary to bring it up.

Our data showed that the parks and recreation centers are very well maintained and thanks to San Marcos being a relatively newly developed area of San Diego County, there is much opportunity for new facilities and improvements.

## SOLUTION/RECOMMENDATIONS:

As mentioned before, prior to the survey, P&R was looking for insights from a certain demographic, which were college students and young adults. Young adults were a main target due to the lack of feedback from them in previous surveys. After the survey, we learned that many young adults and college students don't

visit these facilities because of not enough time in the day or lack of awareness. A solution to this problem can be to spread awareness through social media because over 80 percent of young adults are using some type of social media platform. Spreading the awareness of the open green spaces available for them around college campuses as well as local coffee shops or in areas that many young adults visit would be beneficial. Some of the young adults and college students answered that the reasons they do visit parks and recreation centers are because they like open spaces, like to study there, like to take their pets there, and for fitness/health reasons.

The main purpose of the questions this group analyzed was to identify demographic data relating to the current park users and non-users. Additional questions in the survey address what people would like to see or use, which could include more playgrounds, skating rinks, bingo nights, festivals, with the next step to match these responses with the demographic groups of interest. After identifying what the residents would enjoy the most, the City could examine the economic components to implementation.

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# ONLINE SURVEY, IMPORTANT PARK SERVICES, AND COMMUNITY COMMENTS/SUGGESTIONS

Lluvia Prieto, Grisel Raymundo, Jesus Martinez, and Kaitlyn Byrne

## INTRODUCTION TO GROUP’S FOCUS AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

GEOG 450 conducted this survey to gather information about services and facilities San Marcos citizens would like to see in the City’s parks. The survey helps the San Marcos Parks and Recreation Department meet their Vision of “a healthy community that fosters positive relationships through exceptional recreation opportunities” (City of San Marcos). Survey results indicate residents needs/wants include better management of parks, a wider range of activities, and increased public safety. The questions and key information from the survey that this group analyzed were: “Are you completing this survey online? (independently, without a survey administrator)”, “What types of recreational facilities, services, and programing do you think will be important to you or other community members in the next 5 to 10 years?”, and “what suggestions or comments do you have for improved parks and recreation services, programing, and spaces?” From the responses to these questions, the overall take-aways were:

1. Participants did not need much help from a survey administrator,
2. Programs and facilities the important in the next 5 to 10 years were walking/hiking trails, and
3. Comments and suggestions focused on having well-maintained parks, ensuring other users clean after themselves and their pets, and increased community events.

## METHODOLOGY

The purpose of one of the first questions on the survey was to look at whether the community was taking the survey individually or not. The question, “Are you completing this survey online? (independently, without a survey administrator)” provides the Parks and Recreation department a look at how many surveys were completed online and how many were completed with a surveyor present. Overall, this question in the survey helps to identify who in the community knew about the survey on their own and find the best way to reach people for future information on the parks in our community.

A later question specifically asks what community members to identify what future needs they anticipate. “What types of recreational facilities, services, and programing do you think will be important to you or other community members in the next 5 to 10 years?” provides P&R with community-derived needs and permits longer-term planning within the City’s various organizational units.

Last, our group analyzed the open-ended question, “What suggestions or comments do you have for improved parks and recreation services, programing, and spaces?” The intent of this question is to allow community members the opportunity indicate their needs and concerns that were not addressed in prior questions. Responses provide insight on minor or “hidden” issues that P&R may be able to remedy to ensure a positive parks and recreation experience.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### ***"Are you completing this survey online? (independently, without a survey administrator)"***

From the 1,242 valid participant survey answers, 783 participants answered 'yes' (62.6 percent) while 457 participants answered 'no' (36.4 percent) and the remaining 2 answers fell under 'no response' (1.0 percent) as demonstrated in Figure 12. The results demonstrate that the majority of the participants completed the survey independently and without a survey administrator.

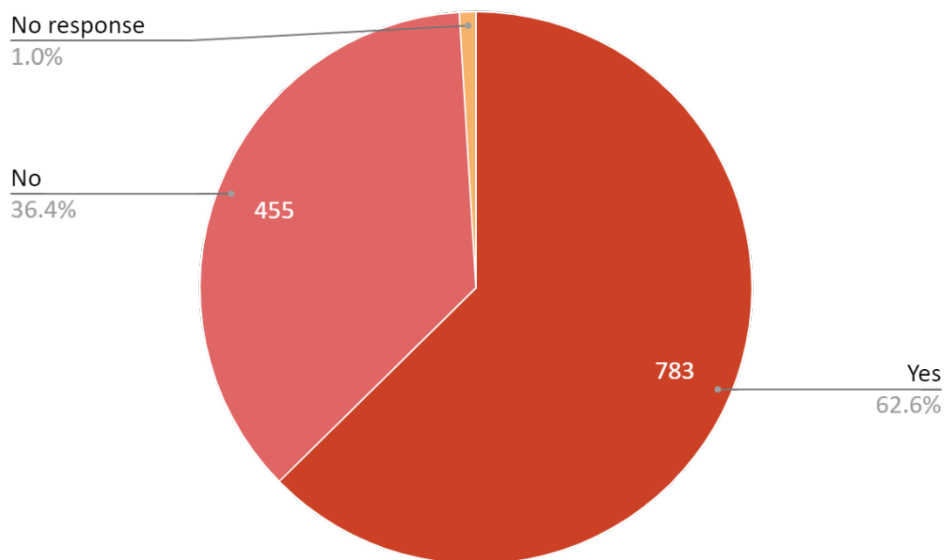


Figure 12. The majority of survey respondents completed the survey on their own, likely through the website P&R promoted through their social media.

### ***"What types of recreational facilities, services, and programming do you think will be important to you or other community members in the next 5 to 10 years?"***

The results displayed as Figure 13 indicate that the majority of individuals ( $n = 154$ ; 17.5 percent) foresee walking/hiking trails as being important amongst the community within the next five to ten years. The other two major services seen as important by participants were sports fields ( $n = 127$ ; 14.4 percent) and dog parks ( $n = 122$ ; 12.7 percent). The results also indicate that fewer participants find after school programs/education (3.3 percent), senior activities (3.2 percent), and skate parks (3.2 percent), which may be attributed to appealing to a smaller percentage of the overall population's interests. An alternative suggestion is that these may be activities or services the participants do not yet see themselves needing or wanting, or as no longer wanting or needing. These results connect to survey question, "What types of classes or events would you be interested in attending?" (see [Park/Facilities Utilization and Community Interests](#)), where the majority of survey participants answered that they were interested in 'sports'. Looking at Figure 13, there are considerable gaps among the percentages, clearly indicating that the population's interest lies within four key recreational areas those being; walking/hiking trails, sports fields, dog parks, and activities for children/teens. The rest of the percentages incorporated within Figure 13 are less than 8 percent of responses and/or could be considered a component of the four recreational areas. For example, 'playgrounds' and 'after school programs/education' could be considered components of 'activities for children/teens'.

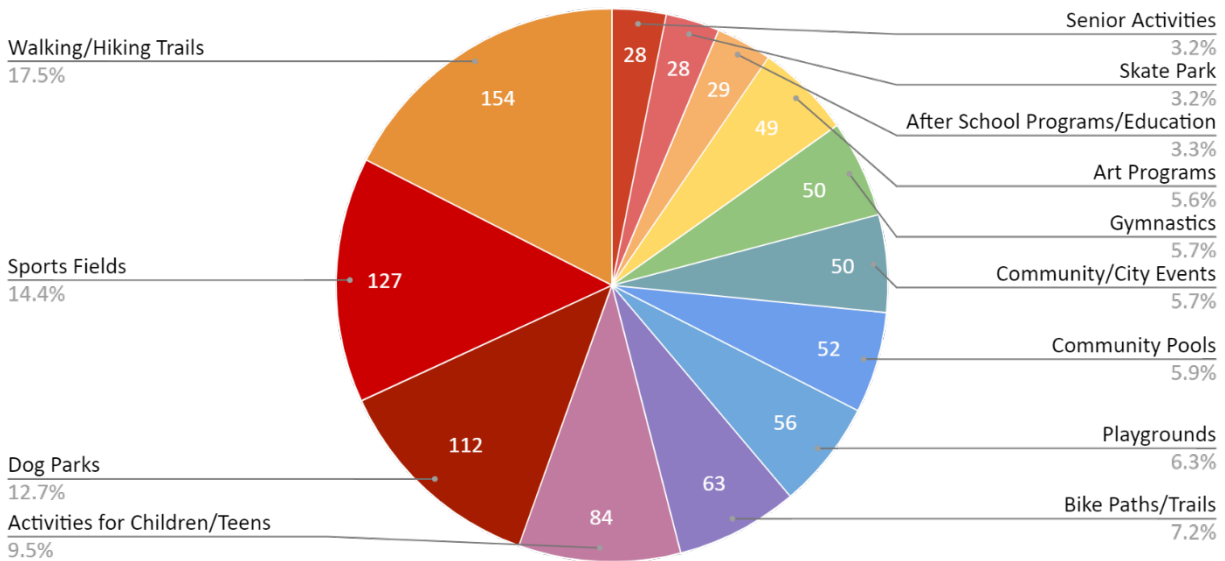


Figure 13. Responses to the open-ended question asking participants (n = 882) about future (5-10 years) wants and needs from P&R.

***"What suggestions or comments do you have for improved parks and recreation services, programming, and spaces?"***

As seen in Figure 14, the majority of survey participants are concerned with maintenance (n = 335; 46 percent), and for there to be more community events (n = 211; 29 percent). A major concern is to have a well-maintained park and most of the comments were concerned about cleanliness, particularly people cleaning up after themselves and their pets. The second most reported suggestion was having P&R create more community events, such as music festivals, which corresponds to the survey question, "What types of classes or events would you be interested in attending?" (see [Park/Facilities Utilization and Community Interests](#)) as respondents answered they were most interested in festivals. We also noticed that respondents wanted more swimming pools with extended hours.

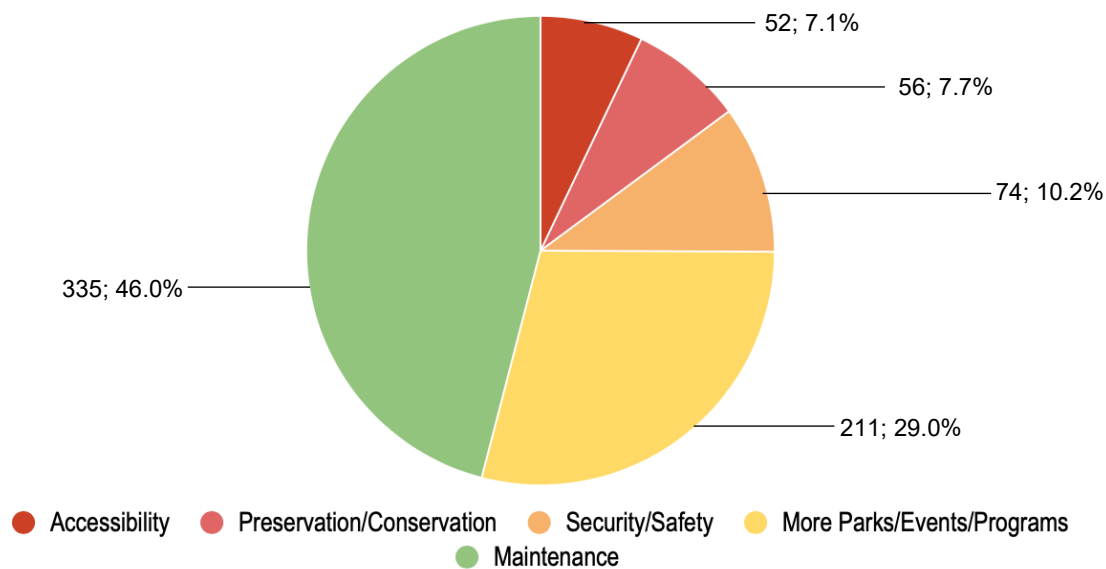


Figure 14. Free-response suggestions and concerns from 729 participants. A majority of respondents were concerned with park maintenance, aligning with other questions in the survey instrument.

## SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the results, the top three most important recreational facilities the community of San Marcos in the next 5 to 10 years are walking/hiking trails (17.5 percent), sports fields (14.4 percent) and dog parks (12.7 percent). Based the question, “Are you completing this survey online? (independently, without a survey administrator)” we conclude that while most participants were able to complete the survey without a survey administrator, there was still a significant number of participants who did complete the survey in a face-to-face setting. We recommend that there continue to be survey administrators in future surveys for participants who may not be familiar with the technology being used or who need further explanation of survey questions.

For the question “What suggestions or comments do you have for improved parks and recreation services, programming, and spaces?”, residents want to become more active and involved in the recreational facilities, this increasing those opportunities is important. Survey respondents also suggested that maintenance, security/safety, accessibility, preservation/ conservation, and programming events were among the most important to concerns for the City to address. Specific to maintenance, the residents want to see worn-out equipment replaced or fixed, updated landscaping, increased parks/ facilities that welcome and allow pets.

## CONCLUSIONS

The majority of survey participants voiced their thoughts independently, without a survey administrator. Within the next five to ten years, users would like to see increased numbers of walking/hiking trails, in addition to sporting fields and dog parks. Overall, the citizens of San Marcos would like to have access to well-maintained parks within the community. Residents expressed concerns that users cleaned up after themselves, as well as their pets. By ensuring that the parks within the City are well manicured, it will increase the likelihood that residents of the community will utilize the facilities. The survey responses will enable P&R to adjust budgeting/funding and time put forth, in order to adequately ensure that changes within the parks in the near future are in the best interest of residents. The reporting of survey responses does not guarantee



future programming, facilities, or funding. However, the responses are still useful in program planning and development over the next 5 to 10 years.

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# SATISFACTION AND SAFETY IN THE PARKS

Neil Lorenzana, Fernando Langarica, Ben Plackemeier, and Brandon Thompson

## INTRODUCTION TO GROUP'S FOCUS AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

In looking to increase the level of community engagement, we looked at various issues that were brought up by residents of the San Marcos area. "Democracy in Action" would give residents the chance to further improve their City by suggesting what they believed were necessary changes to the City's parks and open spaces. After collecting surveys from a large number ( $n = 1,630$ ), representing a variety of people who use said parks, the Sunrise Group was then given specific questions to further analyze. The two main issues were that of satisfaction and safety, both of which affected the other. Residents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction, and were given the opportunity to list what type of services or facilities that would help increase this satisfaction. Given that safety often promotes higher levels of satisfaction, participants were then asked about how safe they felt in the City's parks. Those who felt like the City could provide a stronger feeling of safety and security were then asked to give suggestions on improvements the City could make in this regard. The following sections will go more in depth as we analyze whether people are happy, as well as if they feel safe or how they could feel safer.

## METHODOLOGY

The questions that pertain in this portion of the survey addresses the satisfaction and safety levels within the parks and recreational services provided by the City of San Marcos. Regarding satisfaction of their residents and visitors, a question was asked in regards if they were satisfied with what the City offers to them. If the survey taker felt that they were unsatisfied with what they were offered, they were given the option to put in what they would like to see added to San Marcos about public space use. This will allow the City to gauge what their residents and visitors would like to see added or improved in their spaces. Safety is an important factor within public spaces, so survey takers were asked if they felt safe within the spaces that they use. If the survey taker did not feel safe within the spaces that they use, they were able to enter in why they felt unsafe in the public spaces. This information collected will allow the City of San Marcos to improve and work on keeping its parks and public spaces safe for everyone to use. Park officials hope to use this information to increase satisfaction and safety levels in the parks and public spaces. The data collected by the group was analyzed by looking at the respondent's answers for the assigned questions and what different comments survey takers have left in order to determine satisfaction and safety levels within the parks.

In order to collect data, the Sunrise Group was assigned four different locations in order to implement the survey. The group visited the following locations: Crunch Fitness, Connors Park, San Elijo Dog Park, and Sprouts Farmers Market. Different combinations of team members visited each location, and the amount of time that was utilized at each location varied on a number of factors, including how busy the location was, and how often the group was able to get people to take the survey. These locations were picked mainly by the class due to the need to get a wide variety of survey takers to respond. The group and the class wanted as diverse of a population sample as they possibly could, so therefore a wide variety of public spaces were chosen.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data that pertains to this section focuses on the opinions of San Marcos’ residents and visitors in relation to their satisfaction and safety within utilizing the City’s public parks and services. The two questions in particular “Are you satisfied with the City of San Marcos parks and recreation facilities, programming, and services?” and “Do you feel safe in this park or facility?” were created in order to measure the satisfaction and safety levels within San Marcos parks. By collecting the opinions of satisfaction and safety levels within the parks, the City can determine the next steps they would want to take in order to improve or maintain these levels.

Focusing on satisfaction levels of San Marcos parks and recreational services, the following question was asked to survey takers: “Are you satisfied with the City of San Marcos parks and recreation facilities, programming, and services? (Yes/No)”. It is important to track if users of the parks are satisfied because “...satisfaction derives from the widely held view that improvement in performance quality and resultant satisfaction will result in the retention or expansion in the numbers and support of visitors, as well as political support”(Tonge, Moore and Taplin, 2011). If users of public parks and recreational services are satisfied, there will be more retention in using these spaces and services, along with more support from the public. The more support and interest that is generated because of the high level of satisfaction from current park and recreational service users, it is more likely that the City will see an increased want for different types of public spaces and services within the City. Figure 15 showcases the data collected regarding asking survey takers if they were satisfied with using San Marcos public parks and recreational services:

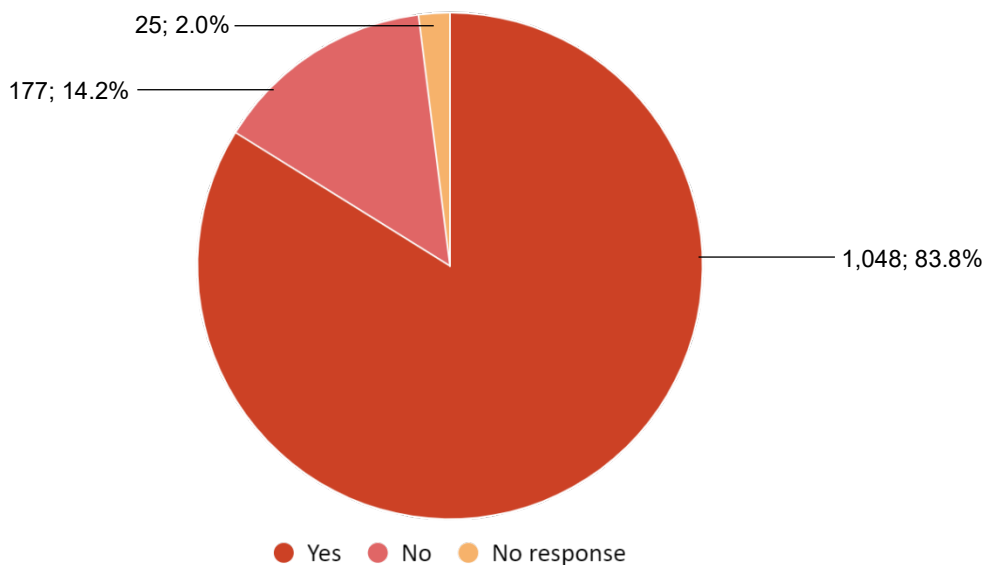


Figure 15. An overwhelming majority of people surveyed indicated they were satisfied with San Marcos parks and public services (n = 1,227 for those that responded 'yes' or 'no'; total n = 1,250).

Out of the 1,227 people that chose to answer this question on the survey, 1,048 people felt that they were satisfied with the parks and services the City provides to the public. On the opposite spectrum, only 177 out of the 1,227 people that answered this question felt that they were not satisfied with the parks and services the City provides to the public. The data regarding this question was answered via a yes or no prompt and was analyzed in both a whole number form and in percentage form. By analyzing the data in these two forms, it is easier to visualize the amount of people that chose either answer. However, 14.2 percent of the people that

answered this question felt that they were not satisfied by the parks and recreational services provided by the City, showing that even though there is a high amount of approval, there is always room for improvement in regards to satisfaction levels.

For the 177 survey takers that felt that they were not satisfied with the parks and recreational services provided by the City, they were asked to specify what types of parks, facilities, and programming/services they would like to see added. However, there were five people that were satisfied with the parks/recreational services that chose to answer this question also. They were given a list of options to choose from, and respondents were able to select as many of those options as they wanted. Figure 16 depicts the data collected from this portion of the survey:

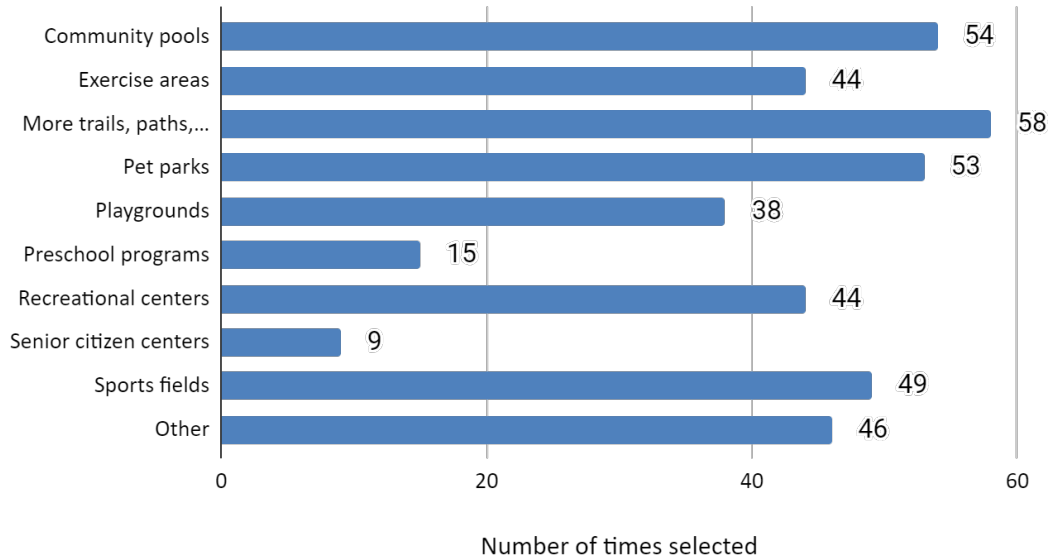


Figure 16. From a list of options, people who were not satisfied with P&R spaces and services could indicate as many areas as they thought needed attention/improvement. Five people who indicated they were satisfied chose to answer this question, thus the number of respondents was 176.

A bar graph was chosen to display this set of data in order to easily show the number of times each of the options was chosen by the survey takers. From the data collected, there is a wide variety of types of parks and services San Marcos residents and visitors would like to see added. The most popular option that was chosen was that people would like to see more trails and walking paths added, with the option being picked 58 times. As of April 20th, 2020, Alltrails.com lists 18 different trails in the San Marcos area. With 2,463 reviews, and a 4.5-star rating overall for the trails located in San Marcos, it would make sense that residents and visitors of San Marcos would like to see more trails and walking paths added into the City. Some other options that proved to be popular were more community pools (chosen 54 times), pet parks (chosen 53 times), and sports fields (chosen 49 times). The data also shows that people would like to see more recreational centers and activities within these centers added. This would include the centers themselves for both the general public and senior citizens, along with preschool programs. Survey takers were also given the option of choosing 'other'. If the survey taker did not see any of their wants from the given list of parks and services, they can select this option and enter a free response into a text box. Table 1 shows the most common and some of the rarer response answers that were recorded.

Table 1. Among the options for those unsatisfied, was the option of 'other,' which allowed respondents to type their responses into a text box (n=40). Comments were added verbatim to the table.

If you are not satisfied with parks and recreation facilities, programming, and services, what would you like to see more of (select all that apply)? Example 'other' free responses.
Disc Golf
Restrooms in more parks
More basketball courts
Skate parks
Sport courts would be great! Basketball, tennis, racketball, etc.! I just want to add that I love San Marcos and appreciate all of the wonderful trails, parks, and recreational areas that there are. It's what makes me love living here.
Wheelchair accessible social spaces, sidewalks throughout connecting parks
For all park equipment to have shade. Example, Sunset park playground has shade, but Richmar park does not.
Free generalized meeting spots. Like a large room with lots of tables and chairs where people can meet up to study, play board/card games, hang out, have lunch, etc.

Because the 'other' option was provided to the survey taker, more data was able to be collected in terms of what people would like to see added with regard to options that were not initially listed in the survey. The information gathered from this question will allow the City to see what their residents and visitors would like to be added for public use.

Focusing on safety within parks and public facilities, the following was asked to survey takers, "Do you feel safe in this park or facility? (Yes/No)". Figure 17 depicts the data collected for this given question.

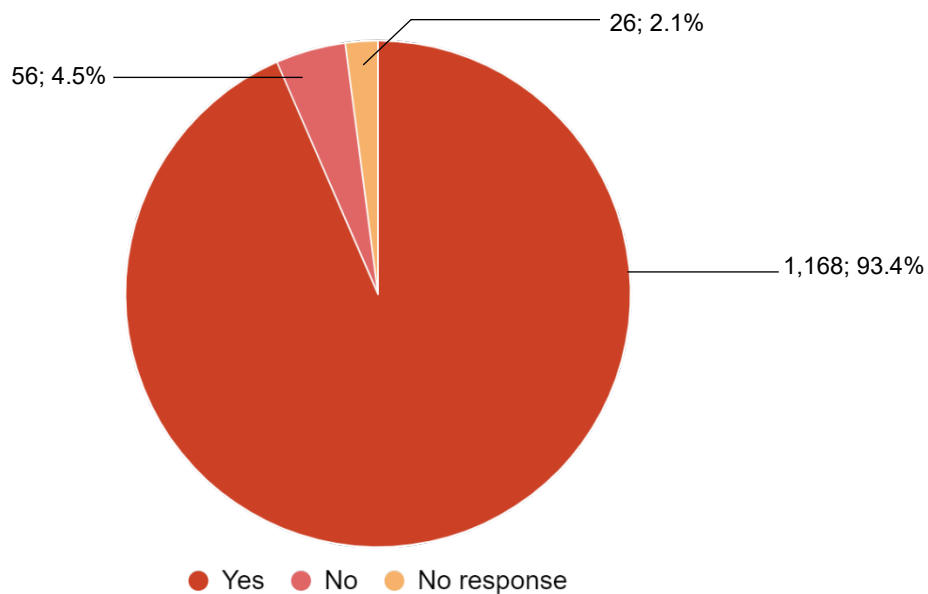


Figure 17. Over 93 percent of park users feel safe within the City's parks, facilities, and recreation areas (n = 1,224 for those that responded; total n = 1,250).

From the data collected, out of the 1,224 survey takers that answered this question, 1,168 of them felt that they felt safe when they were using a public park or facility in San Marcos. This statistic shows that the City of San Marcos is doing a good job in enforcing and focusing on safety within their locations. From visiting these locations during data collection, the parks that were visited and surveyed did feel that they were built with safety in mind. However, much like with the data collected for satisfaction levels, there is always room for improvement for safety in the parks/facilities. Fifty-six out of the 1,224 survey takers felt that they did not feel safe within the parks and facilities in San Marcos. City residents who did not feel safe did have the option to

put in a free response answer on why they felt that they did not feel safe in the parks. Table 2 highlights some of the answers that were received.

*Table 2. Survey respondents who selected 'no' to the question of safety in the parks, were given the option to provide free-response feedback (n = 49). Responses were added verbatim to the table.*

<b>Please explain why you selected 'No'.</b>
At night it feels unsafe i want more security
Bradley bathrooms are dirty/have limited water/soap. I also witnessed adults using drugs in the bathrooms or men walking/pacing and looking into women's bathrooms when children's sports teams are practicing/playing games.
The Montiel park needs a bathroom facility with actual running water. It also needs signs informing disc golf players to stay off the private road (St Paul Dr) for their safety. More signs also inform dog owners to keep their dogs on a leash. More lighting would help prevent homeless from sleeping/camping in the park.
Bradley is very sketchy. Not enough lighting. Too many drugs and creepy men lurking around.
Gang presence and homeless population
Homeless when running at night
Not enough lighting or police patrolling for security guards lots of rowdy teenagers
The bushes at the Discovery Creek Children's Park provide a xpot for snakes and coyotes to hide. Also some fencing between the park and Via Vera Cruz would make it safer for children.
Disc golfers in the middle of the street. Concerned for their safety with respect to automobile traffic on private roads.
This isn't one I utilize much, mostly because I don't feel safe there- Bradley Park. I've heard of druggies and suspicious people hanging out there. I feel safe elsewhere. The discovery lake park has had rattlesnakes in the playground area, though.

As shown by some of these comments, various reasons exist as to why people do not feel safe in the parks. One of the major suggestions from users that tend to use the parks at night is to install more lights in the parks. Some survey takers did comment about both gang influence in parks and homeless individuals in parks. Survey takers did blame gang influence and homeless individuals compromising their safety in the parks, for example, homelessness did come up in the comments seven times. People also did not feel safe because of the wildlife within the parks, and they noted that they believe that animals such as snakes and coyotes can be a negative influence on their safety in the parks. There were also a few comments collected that were based on the bathrooms. One survey taker did mention the bathrooms at Bradley Park did have limited water and soap, which could contribute to possible health hazards for park users. Plenty of comments left by survey takers do have some overlap with one another, one such example being where increasing lighting in the parks could possibly decrease homeless individuals using the parks for sleeping and shelter. Overall, the City of San Marcos is doing a great job in ensuring safety within their parks and public facilities; however, some users indicate areas for improvement.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

In conclusion, the City of San Marcos is doing a great job regarding making its residents happy with their parks and recreation facilities. Overall, they have many quality parks and our data shows that most residents are happy with parks, facilities, and services. Addressing safety concerns at the parks is the most important thing right now, because the more that people feel safe at the parks, the more people that will come to the parks. In addition, attention should be given to the small percentage of people who still aren't having their needs met by the parks and recreation facilities and programs. This would progress community engagement and participation even further in the City as well as further contributing to the overall health and wellness in the community.

Respondents chose to provide feedback for P&R, starting with the question that addressed if users were satisfied with P&R parks, facilities, and services. As with any problem, there is always room for improvement of any existing programs and services. The top answers were community pools, more pathways to the parks, and more pet friendly parks as some do not permit pets, and lastly sports fields to accommodate the growing population of kids who may choose to enter school sports that require fields.

The second question addressed issues of safety. Respondents identified several safety hazards in the parks. More lighting could potentially relieve most of the illegal activities that also take place in the parks identified by the respondents, which include, stalking by homeless or gang members, drug activity, child abduction, the lack of park ranger or police presence during the evening hours. One respondent felt it needed to be safe enough to utilize the park alone and the extra security would help.

Encounters with wildlife surrounding the park were a common response. As with any park or open space, a non-emergency call number available during hours of operation should be posted for wildlife encounters that are deemed a threat to human and/or pet safety. Coyotes and snakes are common to San Marcos, and a response team for wildlife issues influences security of not just people, but also of the wildlife. The City can increase public awareness of wildlife encounters and to teach the public the do's and don't's in those kinds of situations.

Several respondents identified disc golfers playing from the middle of private streets and concerns for pedestrian/vehicle encounters. Increased signage that indicates that the street is not a safe zone for park activities and increased enforcement of City ordinances pertaining to street safety are suggested solutions.

Lastly is litter, park and municipal codes for litter should also be enforced, as well as managed per the City's climate action plan for solid waste removal (City of San Marcos, 2013). Respondents have identified the restrooms sanitation conditions at certain parks need addressed. A potential solution is to check at regular intervals to clean and stock restroom facilities. The City could possibly look into hiring through a third-party service regarding sanitation and cleanliness, or the City could possibly have one of their current city services take care of it, like garbage disposal teams. Overall, most of the respondents do feel content with the satisfaction of provided services and safety of the parks.

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# PARK USER ACTIVITIES AND FREQUENCY OF VISITS

Arturo Garcia, Marina Campbell, Marie Kodis, and Rebecca Harper



## INTRODUCTION TO GROUP'S FOCUS AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Geography 450: Parks and Protected Area class at California State University San Marcos (CSUSM) was assigned to conduct a survey at different parks and places throughout the San Marcos area from February 23<sup>th</sup> through March 18<sup>th</sup>. The ten groups in the class selected the selected parks, places, and areas for in-person surveys.

Our group selected the locations: Perks Coffee, Cerro de Las Posas Park, North City Area, and Montiel Park. After the in-person survey process was completed, each group was assigned to analyze a subset of the questions. Our questions were: What activities do participants engage in at the parks? and How frequently did the people go to the parks? In addition, those who answered 'rarely' or 'never' on the question regarding frequency had follow up questions that inquired about reasons for not using the parks regularly. If the participants selected 'other' in this section, they could fill in an answer. Overall, 1,630 people took our survey in person or online through a link provided by the City. In person GEOG 450 students conducted in person surveys utilizing tablets or other mobile devices. Out of 1,630 participants, 388 declined to participate, which left us with 1,242 participants' data to analyze. It is important to note that the participants could skip questions, so the number of responses to each question can vary.

## METHODOLOGY

When this group started the surveys, we determined the best times we could all meet up that would also provide the best outcome of surveys. We started visiting assigned locations throughout the city at times we believed people would be out and about. We visited each location at different hours as that could affect the number of surveys obtained during each visit. For example, going to dog parks in the evenings around 5:00 pm as many dog owners have more time to take their dogs out at that time and it is usually much cooler temperatures for their pets. Once we had collected our data, we went through each of the responses to get a better understanding of how effective our surveys were and to create charts in order to get a visual representation of the data since this could make data interpretation easier.



## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Figure 18 highlights the range of activities people engage in while at P&R facilities. Many participants engage in some form of exercise, including walking/hiking/running, general exercise, mountain biking, and sport play. Respondents could identify 'other' reasons for utilizing P&R facilities in a free response text box. Responses for other included pickle ball, tennis, disc golf, swimming, studying/reading, art exhibitions/concerts, picnicking/lunch, and biking on paved paths. Many of these responses could be recategorized as 'Sport play' or 'Exercising' but we did not regroup responses in this analysis, as it seemed important to the respondents to call attention to these specific activities.

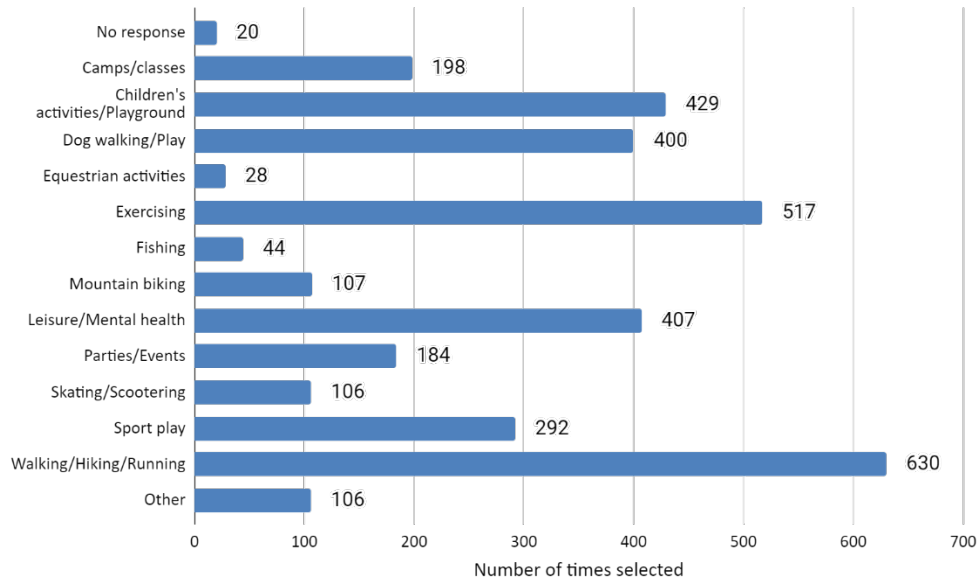


Figure 18. Responses indicate the main reasons people visit P&R parks and facilities. Respondents (n = 1,230) could select as many options as they wished, as well as indicate 'other' reasons for visiting.

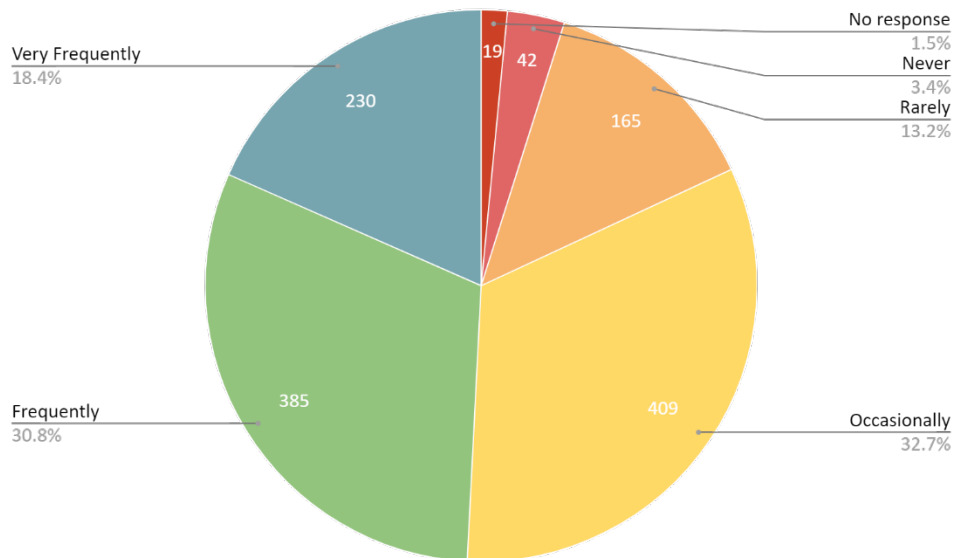


Figure 19. Frequency of use for P&R parks, facilities, and programming. 1,231 respondents provided feedback and 42 people skipped this question.

Figure 19 allows a clear view of the frequency of San Marcos park attendance of those who participated in our survey (see [Survey Design and Methodology](#) for an explanation of response options). Approximately half of the respondents (49.2 percent) utilize the parks and facilities frequently to very frequently. We were particularly interested in people who completed the survey, yet self-identified 'rarely' or 'never' utilizing P&R parks, facilities, and programming as these people may provide insights into ways P&R can attract new users.

We asked those who selected 'rarely' or 'never' ( $n = 207$ ; 16.6 percent) to identify the reasons that they selected one of these options. Respondents could select multiple reasons, as well as fill in additional reasons by choosing 'other' (Table 3).

*Table 3. Summary of reasons selected for rarely or never utilizing P&R parks, facilities, and programming ( $n = 205$ ). More than one option could be selected and respondents could identify additional reasons by selecting 'other.'*

<b>Reason for rarely or never visiting parks</b>	<b>Count</b>
Limited time	133
Other	48
Does not have features I'm interested in	35
Lack of transportation	33
Disability or age	8
Concern for personal safety	7
No response	2

Table 3 illustrates that the most common answers for why residents do not regularly visit the parks is because they either have limited time (selected 133 times) or because the park does not contain the features they are interested in (selected 35 times). Several participants that said they were concerned for their safety at the parks (selected 7 times). P&R can address features and safety in an effort to encourage increased visitation. More frequent users and residents highlighted these two areas of concern in responses to other questions on the survey.

*Table 4. Reasons listed for rarely or never visiting parks if the respondent selected 'other' to the question of why they do not utilize the City's P&R services.*

<b>'Other' reasons for rarely or never visiting parks</b>	<b>Count</b>
Not a resident	22
Location	6
No desire	2
Rather use gym	2
Parking and crowds	1
Didn't realize San Marcos had parks	1
Only use to host parties	1
Trails	1

Table 4 addresses the 'other' option when the participants answered why they rarely visit the parks. If their answers were not represented by the options provided, then they shared their own. The main reason why participants do not regularly visit the parks is because they do not live in the area (indicated 22 times). The ultimate problem here for why participants are rarely visiting the parks is somewhat less concerning because these participants are not local to San Marcos.

The response of 'limited time' and 'not a resident' may also be a feature of the demographics of interest, college students at Palomar and CSUSM, and people 18-34 years old. Many students commute from other areas, and even if they are residents of San Marcos, their time is often limited with school-related activities, as well as work and family obligations. People in the age range of 18-34 are often working full time, as well as

potentially beginning families or have young children, potentially limiting the time they prefer to devote to attending P&R parks, facilities, and programming.

## CONCLUSIONS

Our data illustrates how often the local and non-local survey participants are actually using the parks in the City. As the City has a high number of public parks (20), it is important to be aware of and acknowledge the number of visitors it may be getting on a consistent basis in order to keep up with the park maintenance. Besides getting an idea of park visitors for maintenance, another aspect from our section was to get an understanding of which features and activities were the most important. From this, we noticed that many responses involved activities that did not require any specific features, such as exercising, hiking/walking/running, and dog walking. Activities such as equestrian activities, fishing, and mountain biking did not have many selections. However, this could be because the city parks lack areas in which these activities can be engaged in, or simply because people would rather utilize areas that are specifically set for such activities. For example, some as lakes, rivers, mountains, or open fields allow horses to roam without having to worry about other people getting in the way.

## SOLUTION/RECOMMENDATIONS



Some solutions include possibly conducting a survey or public information session to gather feedback about what sorts of amenities and activities the public would be interested in at specific parks. Potentially, events could be hosted at parks where the activities are introduced, which would also gauge which areas are interested most in which activities and whether or not they could be permanently implemented. Increasing public outreach that specifically identifies which activities and features are available each park is also a must. As there was a concern for personal safety from some survey participants, security and related topics recommendations should be investigated (see [Satisfaction and Safety in the Parks](#)).

## REFERENCES and IMAGE CREDIT

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*Solutions - Omdia*, technology.informa.com/Solutions. <https://technology.informa.com/Solutions>

# PARK/FACILITY UTILIZATION AND COMMUNITY INTERESTS

Kenedie Hemrich, Isabel Navarro, Tanner Prehoden, and Gabriela Rubio

## INTRODUCTION TO GROUP’S FOCUS AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

This survey was created to collect data from the San Marcos community to learn more about what the people of San Marcos want and expect from the parks, facilities, and programming offered by the city. The group’s focus is to evaluate and analyze survey response questions:

- “What types of classes or events would you be interested in attending?”
- “Please list the San Marcos facilities, programming, and services that you utilize”

The goal of this survey is to determine the services that should be prioritized for the City of San Marcos Parks and Recreation Department to implement based on the community’s feedback and the community’s needs. The researchers grouped together the raw data for each question and separated it into categories that reflected different desires from each respondent. From there, the researchers compiled the results into more digestible graphs and charts for an interested viewer. The City of San Marcos Parks and Recreation department can evaluate the charts to determine which activities, events, and classes are most demanded by the public community.

Pre-existing uses of parks and facilities should be taken into consideration when a decision is being made to implement a new program or plan.

### ***Problem Statement***

The City is trying to reach a wider range of its constituents; the goal is to provide a space for everyone to enjoy the parks and services the City has to offer. The goal is to focus on certain demographics to understand the parks and services that these demographics want or need. The focus is to understand which parks to host these programs and events, to address community perceptions of programming and service shortcomings in particular locations. We used the answers collected from these two survey questions to gain a better understanding on the parks that are being used more frequently and the events and activities that the community is interested in. The overall mission is to have enriching parks and programs for the public to enjoy.

## METHODOLOGY

This survey was conducted throughout the four different city council voting districts in the city of San Marcos to gain a better understanding of what the community wants from the city parks and recreational facilities. To ensure that community members had an equal opportunity to participate, the survey was conducted in city parks along with other areas such as local cafes, restaurants, grocery stores, and universities. This group, Cougar Crew, conducted the survey at California State University San Marcos, Discovery Lake, Palomar College, and Ryan Bros Coffee. The goal was to conduct one hundred surveys as a group in two weeks. Along with this, the survey was also available online to better ensure that San Marcos citizens from different backgrounds, ages, and demographics, had the opportunity to participate.

Our research focuses on the answers collected from the survey questions:

- “What types of classes or events would you be interested in attending?”
- “Please list the San Marcos facilities, programming, and services that you utilize”

The answers collected from these two survey questions were organized in an excel spreadsheet to better analyze the data. For the survey question, “What types of classes or events would you be interested in attending”, survey participants were asked to choose their answers from a list of classes and events. These responses were used to create a bar graph (Figure 20). Survey participants also had the opportunity to express their interest in classes and events not listed on the survey by choosing the ‘other’ option. These answers were separated and are listed in Table 5. The answers for the question, “Please list the San Marcos facilities, programming, and services that you utilize,” were tallied and separated into two groups, parks/trails and facilities (Figures 21 and 22).

We used this data to analyze which parks and facilities are being used more than others, and used the responses about the classes and events that San Marcos citizens are interested in to create a solution to better encourage the community to utilize the variety of parks and facilities that San Marcos offers.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overall, our survey found that the community of San Marcos is interested in sports and festivals. For the question, “What types of classes and events would you be interested in attending,” participants could choose as many classes and events they were interested in attending from a list provided in the survey (Figure 20). In total, 471 survey participants selected sports, 473 selected music events, and 464 selected festivals (possibly related to music). On the other hand, activities such as group dog walks and eSports were less popular (selected 216 times and 97 times, respectively). Participants also had the opportunity to express their interest in other classes and events not provided on the list. In total, 97 survey participants were interested in other classes that were not listed.

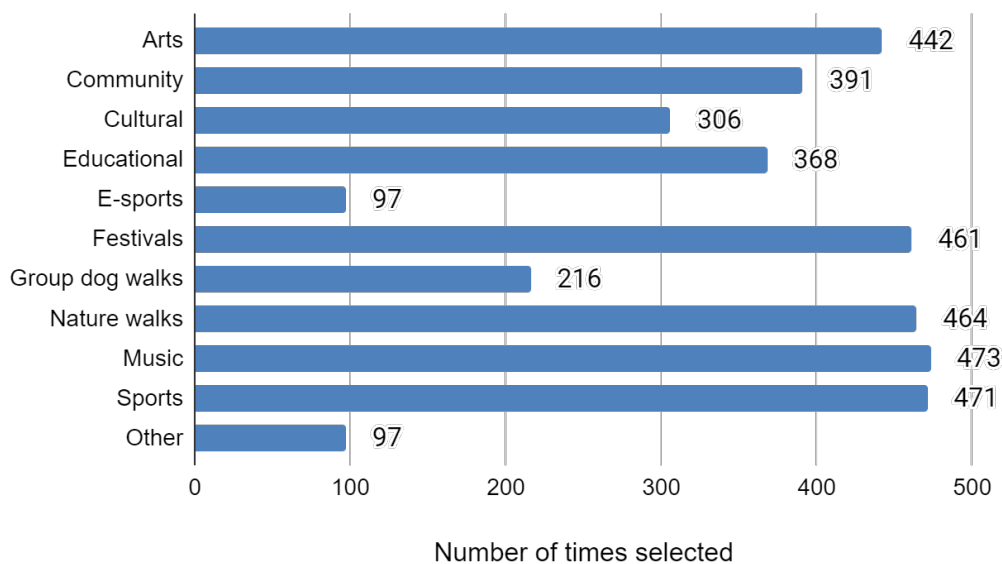


Figure 20. Provided options for classes and events. Participants (n = 1,172) could select as many options as they wanted, as well as indicate options not listed by selecting ‘other.’

In total, 97 participants selected 'other,' and 58 participants provided specific feedback in this category. Responses were separated into six categories (Table 5).

*Table 5. Categories and specific responses provided in the 'other' classes and events survey respondents were interested in attending. The number in parenthesis indicates the number of times the response was provided by separate respondents. Respondents could list as many items as they liked in the free-response text box.*

<b>'Other' classes and events categories</b>	<b>Specific responses</b>
Sports	Disc golf (5) Equestrian sports (3) Archery Skating competitions Sports events for kids Races
Fitness	Dance (4) Exercise (3) Tai Chi (2) Outdoor fitness classes Yoga Outdoor workout stations Senior balance and exercise Biking exercise group
Classes	Classes (3) Cooking/Food related (2) Photography Wellness Pickle ball for beginners Science Mountain biking for youths Computers Language Adult martial arts Music Writing
Community events or groups	Children's events (2) (e.g., UpShot Archery) Mountain bike group Meditation group Social events Summer concerts Equestrian exhibits Mommy stroller meet-ups Clubs for tweens/teens Sewing group Reading groups Movies in the park
Facilities	Community pool Bike park with dirt track for kids Hiking trails Community gardens Farmers markets
Other	Road trips from parks Nature and camping Equestrian rides Guided mountain biking

The data collected from the survey question, “Please list the San Marcos programming, facilities, and services that you utilize” demonstrates that some parks and facilities are used more frequently than others are (Figure 21). The parks and trails that were indicated most often are Discovery Lake (153 responses) and Double Peak Park (132 responses). On the other hand, parks such as Lakeview Park, Bradley Park, Las Posas, Simmons Parks, and Mulberry Park were indicated less than 25 times each. Figure 22 demonstrates the facilities used by participants that were not categorized as parks or trails.

**Parks and Trails**

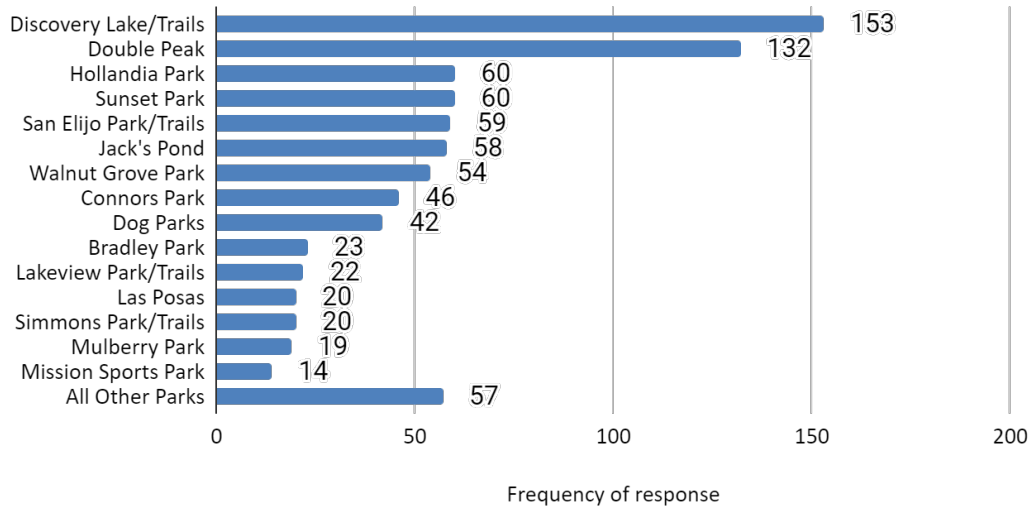


Figure 21. Respondents (n = 960) indicated the programming, parks, and services that they utilize. Respondents could list as many options as applicable (free response format). The responses were separated into Parks and Trails (this figure) and San Marcos Facilities (Figure 22). Discovery Lake/Trails and Double Peak appear the most frequently, indicating their popularity/utilization. Parks and Trails with fewer than 10 responses were grouped into the category 'All Other Parks.'

**Facilities**

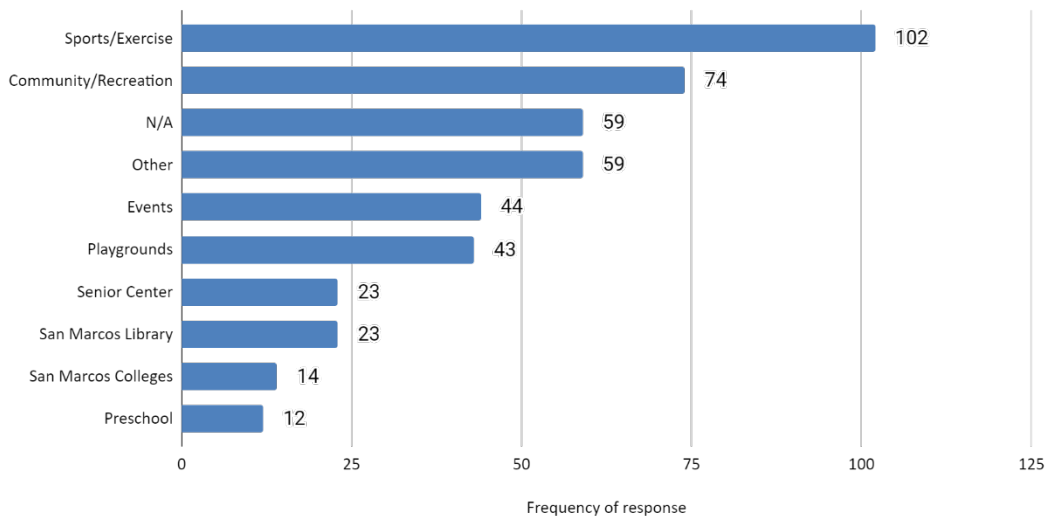


Figure 22. Responses for specific facilities or programming offered by P&R, collected from the question, “Please list the San Marcos programming, facilities, and services that you utilize.” The N/A category represents participants who stated they did not utilize facilities in San Marcos.

Overall, the responses gathered from the two survey questions demonstrate that San Marcos citizens expressed interest in sports activities and music events. The data collected demonstrates also that some

parks and facilities are used more than others are. The most popular parks among survey participants were Discovery Lake and Double Peak Park.

## CONCLUSIONS

The City of San Marcos offers a variety of parks, trails, recreational facilities, and activities for the community. This survey was created in association with the San Marcos Parks and Recreation Department to gain a better understanding of the wants and needs of the people, and to find ways the city can better meet the needs of the diverse community. The answers and data collected from the survey question, "Please list the San Marcos facilities, programming, and services that you utilize" demonstrates which parks are utilized the most frequently. The answers collected from the survey question, "What type of class or events would you be interested in attending" can be used to gain a better understanding of the activities that San Marcos citizens desire the most.

Our data identified Discovery Lake and Double Peak Park as the most visited parks in the city. Overall, Discovery Lake and Double Peak Park are the most popular/utilized parks and trails (indicated 153 and 132 times, respectively). On the other hand, Mulberry Park, Simmons Park, Las Posas, Bradley Park, and Lakeview Park were mentioned less than 25 times each. The data collected demonstrates the community has a large interest in sports and music and/or festival-type events while group dog walks and eSports were less popular.

The City currently offers sports for youth and adults; however, festivals were not listed as an activity offered by the San Marcos Department of Parks and Recreation. Since survey participants expressed a great interest in festivals, incorporating festivals into the parks and facilities that are used less frequently may help encourage the community to visit the parks and better utilize the recreational resources the city offers.

## SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Parks and Recreation Department has a variety of communities that utilize the City's P&R facilities. The City is already utilizing solutions for various parks and recreational areas in order to accommodate the communities' needs and interests. Many people of the community have more of an interest in utilizing specific locations. According to our results, many people are interested in attending a variety of fitness/sports classes and arts and science activities. For the respondents that answered they enjoyed the sports facilities, the City has already been improving certain sports facilities and areas for the community. In Figure 20, many people in the San Marcos community are highly interested in sports, festivals, and music activities and classes. The San Marcos Parks and Recreation Department provides many classes and events. Some of the events that they provide allow for a certain demographic of the community to enjoy. The big demographic that the surveyors have established are people in the community who show a big interest in activities such as festivals. Most of these festivals that are held by the City are focused on festivals for children or family friendly festivals. A lot of these activities and festivals are geared towards more of a family demographic, a solution for this is to try to change and add more of these activities and festivals that are and could be more inclusive, such as having certain festivals that are for specifically for adults (e.g., over 18 concerts/events). It could also be beneficial to broadcast these new changes on the City's social media and website. Some modifications that could be implemented offer more and a wider variety of classes where they can be provided, such as the community center. Only 9.0 percent of people who were surveyed utilize the community center (Figure 22), thus changing the class and activity offerings could provide more use of the



community center. Another situation that the City of San Marcos has is many parks, such as Bradley Park and Los Posas Park are underutilized. Something that can be improved within these parks that already exist, is to make more fields, specifically baseball fields.

Overall, the City of San Marcos Parks and Recreation Department is utilizing most of these recommendations in order to improve each park and recreation area in the City in order to satisfy the communities' needs and wants.

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# PARK MAINTENANCE AND TRAVEL DISTANCE TO PARKS

David Reis, Emerson Peluso, Clifford Acedo, and Benny Hadley

## INTRODUCTION

Our focus for this section is to address the specific issues that the public has with the parks and recreation facilities in San Marcos. With the survey we were able to pinpoint areas of weakness in the current system and suggest areas of improvement. We did this by providing an open response question, which gave us specific recommendations to better the park spaces.

## PROBLEM

The problem we set out to answer was to see if the public feels that the P&R facilities are well maintained. We then dove deeper into the question to ask for specific recommendations for areas of improvement. With those answers, we were able to sort them into categories and find clear trends in the recommendations. Finally, we wanted to see how far people were traveling to visit the facilities in order to evaluate how well distributed San Marcos parks are.

## METHODOLOGY

For our group’s choice of methodology, each member selected a location to visit and collect survey responses. We chose these locations based on the type of people and activities we anticipated observing while we are visiting the area to collect data, such as students, workout groups and individuals, pet owners, parents with their children, co-workers after work, etc. Different individuals might share the same grievances as others or identify different perspectives on the current parks that other groups would otherwise not recognize. The locations from which our group collectively gathered data from were Churchill’s Pub & Grill, Woodland Park, The Urge Gastropub, Knob Hill Park, and Mulberry Park. Each of us has gathered data from these locations at least once for at least 2-3 hours. Two locations, Mulberry Park and Churchill’s Pub & Grill, locations were visited twice by group members.

We organized the responses to the current conditions of San Marcos by first categorizing the general responses of the park maintenance. Next, we organized the open responses based on the type of recommendations of improvement from the public. Identifying what the public is most concerned about in addition to park maintenance provides a better perspective for what citizens want to see prioritized in developing city projects.

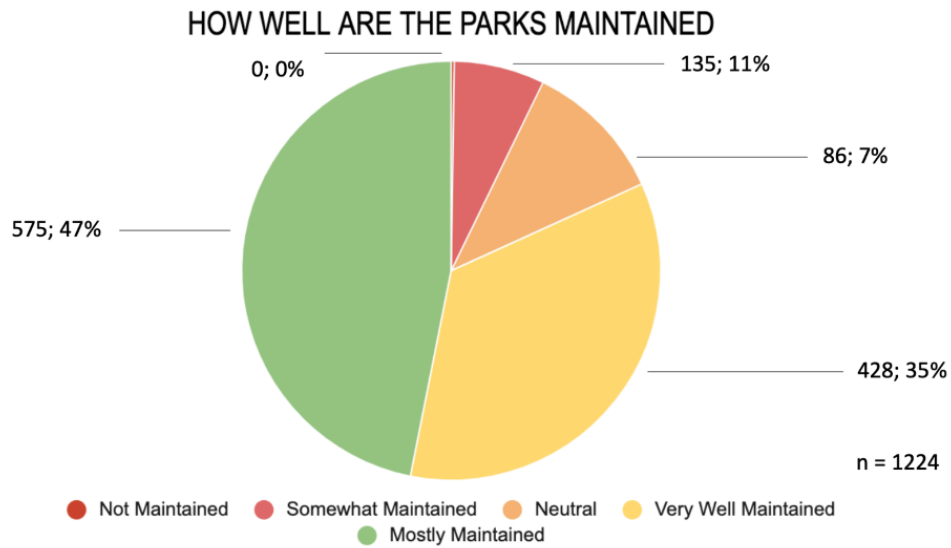


Figure 23. This figure illustrates the categorization of park maintenance by 1,224 survey respondents. A large majority, 82 percent, categorized the parks as very well to mostly maintained.

Figure 23 demonstrates the overall rating of P&R maintenance quality by categorizing maintenance into mostly maintained, very well maintained, neutral, somewhat maintained, and not maintained. Overall, only 7 percent of the data we collected was negative and an overwhelming 82 percent of the responses were positive.

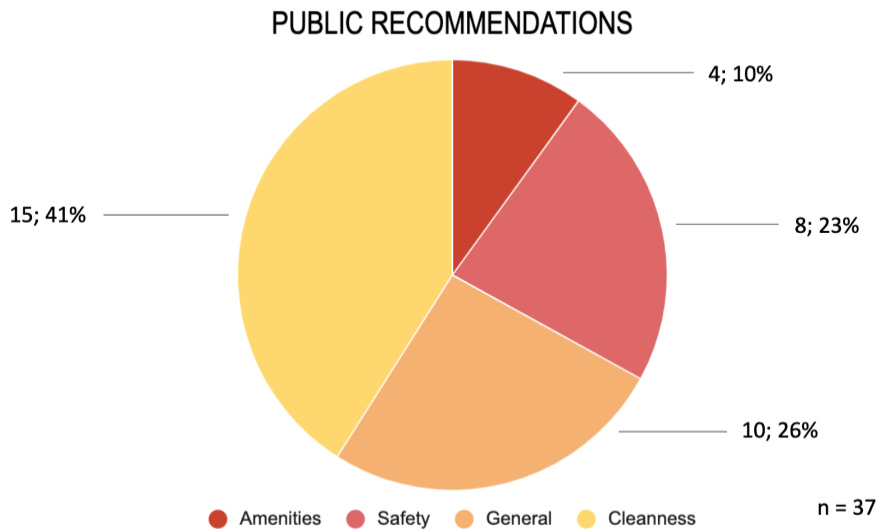


Figure 24. Recommendations for improvements were placed into four categories, with cleanliness as the most frequently reported maintenance issue.

We consolidated the recommendation suggestions into four categories; safety, cleanliness, amenities, and general ways to better the park space. The cleanliness of the park space was the most common response, occurring 41 percent of the time. (Figure 24). We divided the categories into more specific recommendations coming directly from the free response questions (Table 6). Bathroom cleanliness specifically appears in seven different free responses and trash problems in six responses.

Safety is a big concern for San Marcos residents. Referring to Figure 24, 23 percent of results indicating an issue with the parks were safety related. While many people (approximately 82 percent of survey respondents) indicated that the parks were well maintained, a few specific responses noted that the play equipment is ill maintained and the temperature of the play structures can burn children. This can cause families to avoid the parks on warm or hot days due to safety concerns. Another safety issue that came up was the issue of grounds and trail maintenance. The grounds in some places are uneven, the playgrounds with sand become slippery when damp or wet, and the trails have deep fissures. This can cause tripping hazards, bike accidents, falls, and other safety concerns. It was noted that fencing is needed in specific areas of the parks to prevent injury, most notably around the Discovery Pond fishing deck. Without proper fencing, people and children could accidentally fall into the pond. Another safety issue that people are concerned about is there not being enough bright lighting for parks at night. This leads people to avoid going to the parks and other surrounding areas as it is considered to be unsafe for people to pass through later in the evening (Table 6).

General responses made up 26 percent of the open response results. This category contains specific issues that did not fit into the other categories. Responses ranged from new parks, more classes of all types, ignored issues, and to differing grass levels.

Amenities had the fewest responses making up only 10 percent of the results. These responses mainly called for an increase in the number of dog parks. We had one response for an increase in trail maintenance.

*Table 6. Public responses we placed into each category to understand general trends in public concern regarding P&R maintenance.*

Categories and Responses	Number of Responses
Safety	<i>n</i> = 8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Injury related</li> <li>• Increase shape</li> <li>• General safety</li> </ul>	5 2 1
Cleanness	<i>n</i> = 16
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bathroom maintenance</li> <li>• Trash problems</li> <li>• Overall cleanness</li> </ul>	7 6 3
Amenities	<i>n</i> = 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase number of dog parks</li> <li>• Trail maintenance</li> </ul>	3 1
General	<i>n</i> = 9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updating/new parks</li> <li>• More pre-school classes</li> <li>• More equestrian parks</li> <li>• More classes</li> <li>• Ignored issues</li> <li>• Grass levels</li> </ul>	4 1 1 1 1 1

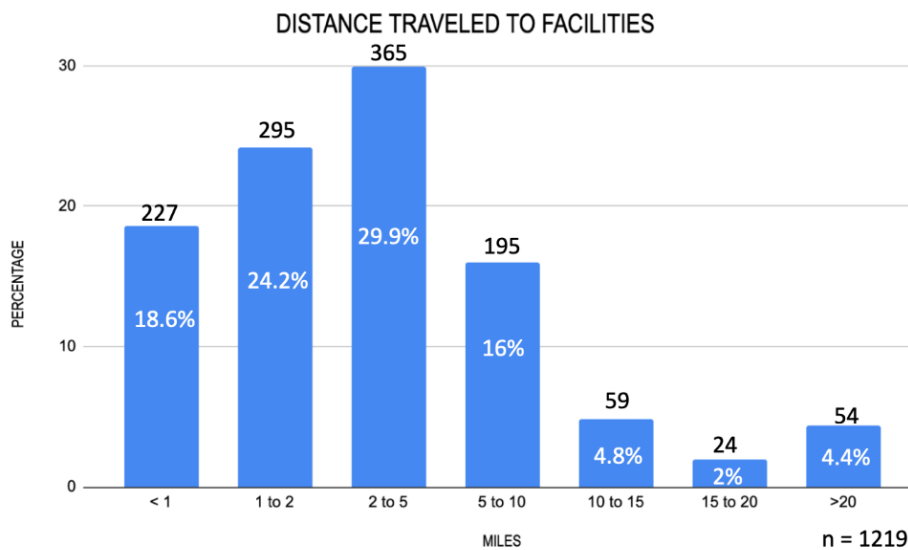


Figure 25. Respondents estimated the distance they travel to the park, facility, or programming they utilize most frequently. Most respondents travel fewer than 5 miles to enjoy their favorite P&R services.

Figure 25 shows the distribution of how far people travel to visit the park and recreation facilities of San Marcos. Since there is a wide distribution of facilities placed throughout the city, the majority of people only need to travel 2 to 5 miles to utilize P&R parks, facilities, and programming. People who have to travel further than 10 miles only comprise 11.2 percent of respondents. Overall, 73 percent of people travel 5 miles or less to visit the facilities, while 27.2 percent travel more than 5 miles to a park or facility. Some of the respondents who travel long distances to utilize the parks and facilities are students from CSUSM and Palomar College, who utilize the parks and facilities close to each institution while they are in San Marcos. Other possibilities include those who use the parks and facilities during special events and/or who work in San Marcos but live in another community.

## SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This portion of the group’s report will discuss possible solutions to consider in resolving safety issues presented by the survey respondents. One of the major concerns for the park is during the elevated temperatures in the spring and summer seasons children are susceptible to burns from the recreation areas. One possible solution is to have a shaded covering over the playground, which will protect the children from high UV rays and mitigate any burns. A case study depicting sustainable urban park Victor Civita Plaza in Brazil is an example of how improvements to parks benefit the community. This park project exemplified significant innovations in creating a shaded stage structure that held events, concerts, playground facilities, lectures, and other community events (Cohen 2018). There are certain playgrounds that are not foundationally leveled or may contain slipping hazards that are of concern to the public. According to the San Diego County Parks Association there is mandatory code stating, “The preferred surfacing is rubber tile or poured-in-place rubber surfacing with the stipulation that the critical fall height be increased by one foot” (CSDP 2020). One effective response is to construct a non-slip versatile material called polysoft paving, which would diminish any slip or falls on the play structures. Another effective response is to execute a volunteer organization to manage a volunteer program to maintain the trails, possibly based around mountain bikers and equestrian users. As for the trails that have deep fissures, there must be more personnel working on trail maintenance. A way to amend the trail deterioration issue is to fill or seal the fissure with dirt or other clay materials. A pragmatic solution to prevent injury to visitors around the Discovery Pond trail is to

construct fencing, and lighting structures to restrict access to only certain regions of the Discovery Pond. The best way to implement safety measures is to provide adequate night lighting and fencing in city parks (Gold 1977). Another possible response to protecting the public from illegal activity at Pebble Stone Park is to increase security or have a neighborhood watch or managing plan.

Multiple people recommended additional dog parks, possibly through the acquisition of new park lands. A prominent suggestion presented to revamp older parks. One way of doing it is to add more play structures, grass areas, equestrian structures, and educational classes for children and adults.

## CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the issues noted in this study, cleanliness, safety, general issues, and amenities, only made up about 7 percent of the total feedback, indicating that the majority of respondents were satisfied with the maintenance plans within the current parks system. The proposed solutions to the specified issues are also simple to implement; such as adding fencing, changing the sand in the playground to non-slip rubber, and additional janitorial shifts and trail maintenance. The responses to the distance traveled to the various parks in San Marcos showed the majority of the communities in San Marcos are able to travel a short distance to the parks, which is a great example of how P&R has successfully created parks throughout the city.

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# PREFERRED AVENUES OF PARK MEDIA/NEWS CONSUMPTION

Erika Berry, Victoria Reynoso, Madison Laney, and April Zimmerman

## INTRODUCTION TO GROUP'S FOCUS AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

### *General Introduction*

Our group worked with the City of San Marcos to conduct surveys that accurately reflect the park and recreational needs of the local residents. The survey's goal was to give the public a chance to voice their concerns, suggest changes, and give critical feedback on the structures of the existing parks. It also gave citizens the opportunity to request future programs, amenities, and recreational facility changes.

### *Data Collection*

The group surveyed Hollandia Park, Simmons Family Park, and the businesses in the Restaurant Row area to collect data (Figure 26). We aimed to get participants under the age of 25 to take our survey as per the city's request; however, many of the willing participants were women over the age of 28 and senior residents over the age of 65.



Figure 26. Survey locations, from left to right, Hollandia Park, Simmons Family Park, and Restaurant Row.

## METHODOLOGY

The problem that we are addressing is determining what residents want and need within San Marcos P&R parks, facilities, and programming. We conducted survey and analyzed the resulting data in order to consider the opinions and suggestions of residents in the area. The City will use these data to consider future P&R facilities, parks, and programming. As a group, we were assigned questions regarding how participants currently learn and how they prefer to learn about the parks and activities in their area. These questions address the ways people learn about parks in order to ensure that residents are equipped with the necessary knowledge to access parks and recreation activities and news regarding the area. With the analysis of these questions, we want city council members to have a clear indication of the sheer number of people who keep up with news/information regarding the City's parks and recreation services. We want to demonstrate the ways in which park visitors currently receive that information and what ways they want to receive that information in the future. Our findings were significantly diverse, but we concluded that most individuals like to hear about parks in San Marcos online and on social

media. We also found that participants get much of their information about parks and activities from family and friends, city websites, and even park and trail kiosks.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION<sup>83</sup>

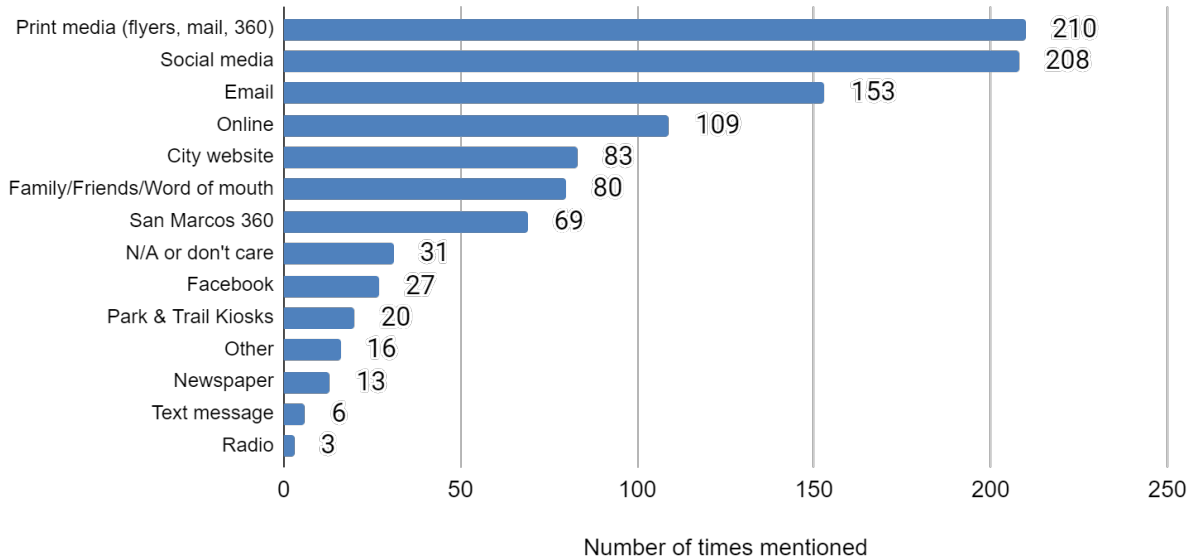


Figure 27. Respondents indicated the various ways that they prefer to learn about parks and activities in San Marcos (n = 885). Participants could select as many options as they wanted.

Figure 27 shows the responses from 885 participants and suggests the preferred way of obtaining information is through various modes of printed media and the City’s social media accounts, but only by a two mentions of preference. We kept specific and general instances of responses separate (e.g., Facebook and social media) to ensure we did not double count responses. In addition, certain types of information are provided in a variety of formats (e.g., San Marcos 360). We included San Marcos 360 in the print media count only when specified this format was preferred and did not count this instance within the San Marcos 360 category. Many people would prefer multiple means of contact (e.g., San Marcos 360 and social media) and a large number of responses indicate a preference for electronic means of receiving information.

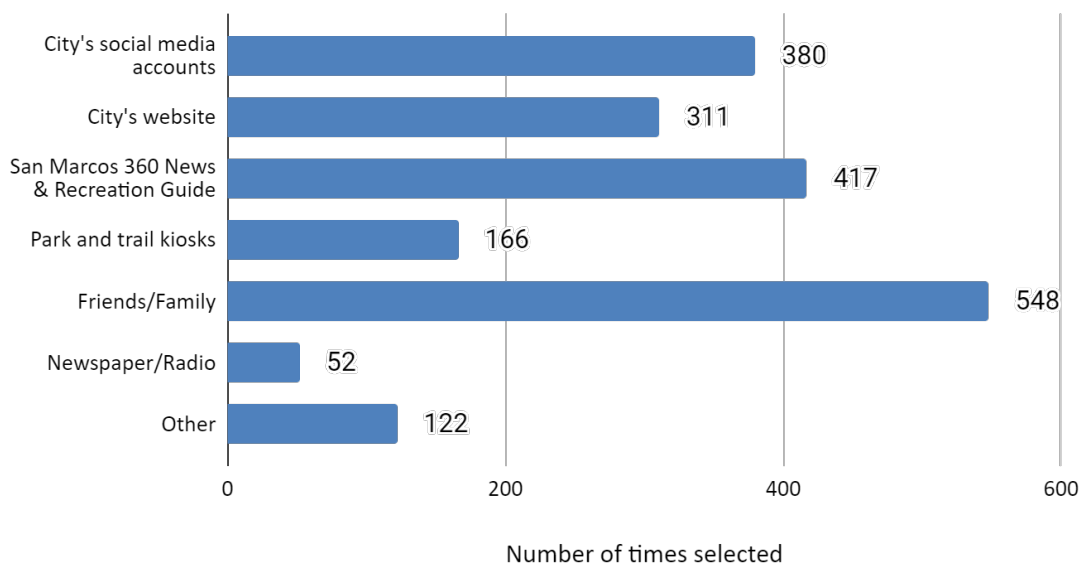


Figure 28. Participants selected the various ways that they currently receive information about P&R programming and events (n = 1,206).



Figure 28 shows the ways participants already obtain their knowledge about the parks and opportunities that are offered through P&R. We had a diverse response to this question. The data shows that quite a few people rely on family and friends to get their information ( $n = 548$  responses), but they also rely on social media, city websites, and park and trail kiosks. The San Marcos 360 News and Recreation Guide is a popular choice ( $n = 417$  responses); however in this survey prompt, participants were unable to provide information on whether they use the print or online version of the guide.

## CONCLUSIONS

The goal of this survey was to gather information from a target group of individuals 18-34 years of age. This age group is underrepresented in previous survey attempts and does not often directly reach out to P&R. P&R was interested in this being the target group so they could get a better understanding and sense of what are the wants and needs of this group regarding the parks and recreation programs and facilities. Unfortunately, while gathering the data, we found that the majority of those who participated in the survey were women over the age of 34 (426 females of 692 respondents aged 35+ or 61.6 percent). Females aged 35+ account for 35.2 percent of the 1,211 people who responded to the age question, nearly equal to the target demographic of 18-34 years of age, which accounts for 40.6 percent of respondents to the age question ( $n = 492$ ; also see [Age, Education, and Importance of Green Spaces](#) section). Although this was not necessarily the intended target demographic, we were still able to gather useful data and opinions from the residents of San Marcos on how they think the Parks and Recreation department could improve different facilities.

## SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The information and data that was received was not from the intended target age group. While our results helped further understand older age groups, the younger targeted age groups were not well represented in our survey. Within the age groups that participated, not all would thoroughly, or seriously, answer the survey prompts.

A possible solution to survey administration issues would be to have a more controlled survey where surveyors go to parks at days or times where younger age groups are more likely to be present. It would also help to survey places not associated with parks, but at locations heavy with younger generations to ask questions specifically relating to why they are not utilizing parks as much as older generations.

We also believed that the survey should have been shorter and available in a more private setting so that participants could be more honest and confident with their selections and answers.

## REFERENCES

"Parks & Recreation Facilities Directory." Parks & Recreation Facilities Directory | San Marcos, CA. Accessed April 15, 2020. <https://www.san-marcos.net/play/parks-recreation-facilities>.

# AGE, EDUCATION, AND IMPORTANCE OF GREEN SPACES

Bethany Anaya, Lilly Flores, Halle Montgomery, and Saud Aldosri

## INTRODUCTION TO GROUP’S FOCUS AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

The City of San Marcos Parks and Recreation Project was conducted in order to better local public recreation areas. In spring 2020, P&R and CSUSM GEOG 450 created a survey for the public. An anonymous survey was conducted to collect data from residents of the city of San Marcos, CA. The focus of the survey was to develop a better understanding about what people desire, want, and need from local parks and recreation services in San Marcos, CA. In total there were 1,630 surveys collected. The data collected was from 1,242 of the surveys because 388 people declined to participate.

## METHODOLOGY

A survey was developed to better assess the needs of San Marcos residents. Several locations were visited in order to obtain more information from a diverse demographic. Many factors such as age and education were taken into consideration when collecting survey data. The goal was to determine the needs of various age groups and education levels. Surveys were optional for participants to complete. Students were present to assist in survey administration.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *AGE RANGE OF SURVEY*

A main goal of the project was to gather information about the public’s interest relating to local parks and recreation spaces. Because much of the data previously collected by the City reflected youth sports and children’s needs, the City desired more information from the 18-34 age range. The age range for this survey was from eighteen years old to sixty-five years and older. One goal of the project was to reach a younger demographic, specifically from the age range of 18-34. San Marcos wanted more information regarding parks and recreational areas from this range to better serve their needs since they are the least heard from. The data collected, displayed as Figure 29, indicated that 2.2 percent of information was collected from people under eighteen years old. The survey was able to reach 22.8 percent of people 18-24 years old and 17.8 percent of people 25-34 years old, which accounts for 40.6 percent of people who responded to this question ( $n = 1,211$ ).

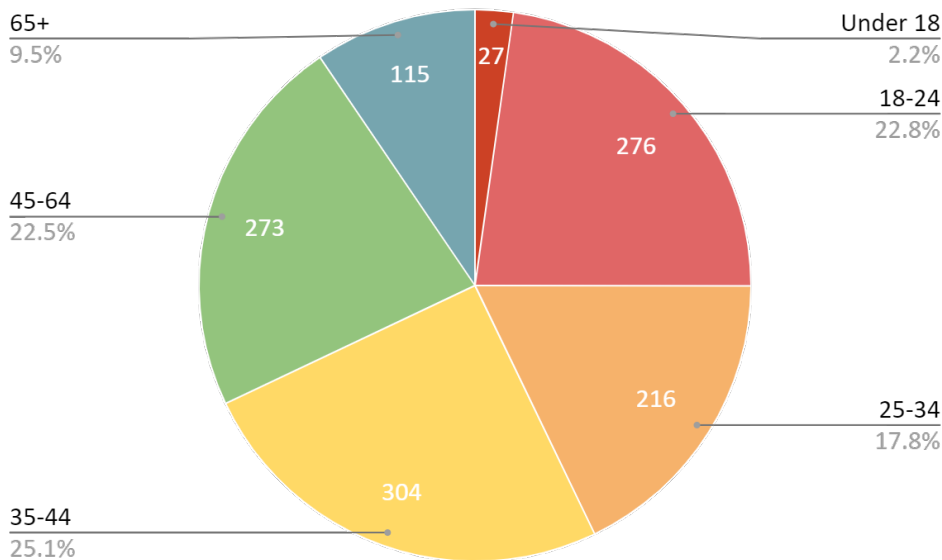


Figure 29. Number of responses from each age category (n = 1,211). The target demographic of 18-34 is represented within 40.6 percent of the survey responses. The 18-24 age group accounts for the second largest proportion of survey responses, at 22.8 percent, or 276 responses, but is nearly equal to responses provided by the 45-64 year olds.

### EDUCATION LEVELS OF PARTICIPANTS

The education results indicate various education levels of survey participants (Figure 30). Survey options to indicate level of education were no schooling, less than a high school diploma, high school diploma, some college, associate’s degree, bachelor’s degree, graduate professional’s degree, and other. Participants were given the option to answer or decline to answer.

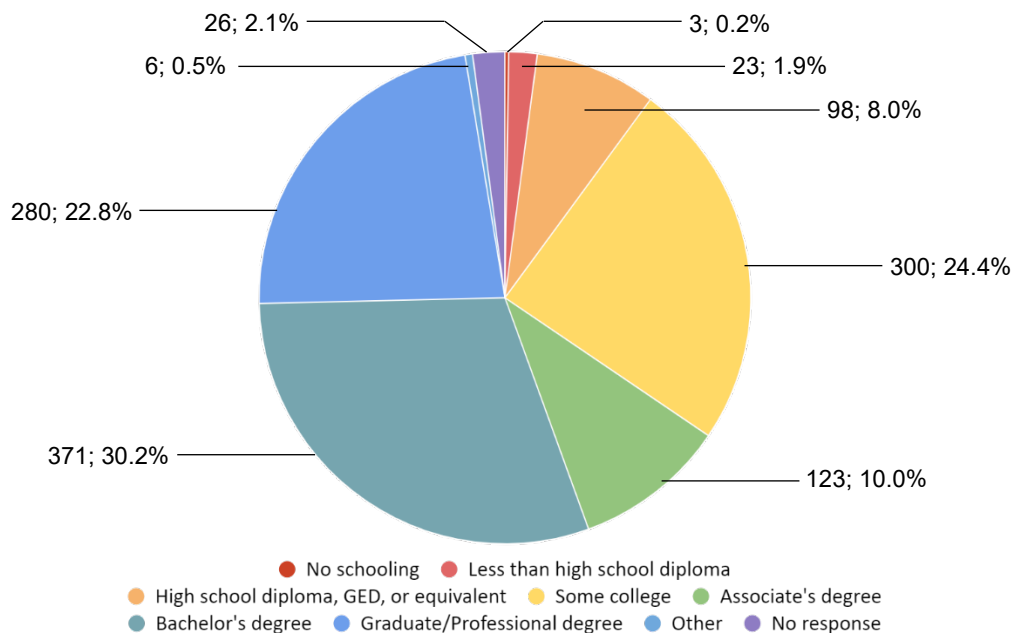


Figure 30. Distribution of self-identified highest level of education completed (n = 1,204). Approximately one-third of survey respondents indicated they had completed a bachelor’s degree (30.2 percent; 371 respondents). Over two-thirds of respondents have completed some type of post-secondary education (63 percent; 774 respondents).

As illustrated in Figure 30, 371 respondents (30.2 percent) completed a Bachelor’s Degree. A majority of the participants (63 percent; 774 respondents) have completed some type of post-secondary education. A number of participants (24.4 percent; 300 respondents) indicated they have completed some and/or were in progress of completing post-secondary education. The data indicates a wide range of education levels among participants, but overall, survey participants, the majority of which are San Marcos residents, are highly educated.

### ***LOCATIONS OF SURVEYS***

The surveys were conducted throughout various locations sprawled across the City of San Marcos (see [Figure 1](#) and [Appendix B](#)). A variety of locations visited in order to obtain various survey responses. The locations for the survey were chosen based on class input. Students chose locations that were highly visited by residents. In addition, locations where we anticipated we could capture information from demographic groups who are less frequently heard from were also chosen. This group was responsible for visiting Buelow Park, California State University San Marcos, Woodland Park, and Churchill’s Pub & Grill.

### ***THE IMPORTANCE OF GREEN SPACES***

The benefits of more natural environments include mental and physical health. While today society is very urban and contemporary in many areas of America, the lack of green spaces can be detrimental for mental health (Carlowicz and Rocchio 2019). A nationwide study conducted by researchers from Denmark discovered that exposure to greenspaces as a child reduces mental health issues in later life. Satellite imagery identified green areas and correlated this to the relation demographic data of people living in those areas. The conclusion was that those who grew up without much green space had as much as 55 percent higher inclination to disorders like depression and anxiety (Carlowicz and Rocchio 2019). For many, green spaces are a necessary outlet that provide services such as exercise, activity, and socialization. They allow physical and mental restoration for their users. With much of the United States industrialized and city like, it is important to take into consideration the drastic benefits green spaces and parks offer. Carlowicz and Rocchio (2019) state, “encourage exercise, provide spaces for socializing, decrease noise and air pollution, and improve immune function by providing exposure to beneficial microbiota.” By having access to green spaces, the people in this study had a higher potential to achieve increased benefits for their health. From this study we can make inferences relating to the Parks and Recreation User Survey results. The participants of the P&R survey seem to care about and support the creation of green spaces. Many participants’ answers to specific survey questions relate to their wants, needs, and desires as they relate to public park and recreational services. Because the City of San Marcos provides people with an abundance of public parks and recreation services, it is safe to conclude that continuing such efforts is important. The public supports green spaces and utilizes the many benefits that these areas provide.

### ***HEALTH BENEFITS OF GREEN SPACES***

A related study discusses the health benefits of parks and green spaces (Wolf 2017). In many urban areas, parks are a source of both physical activity and overall wellness. Mental health can be improved with access to parks and open green spaces. Parks can help with preventing or lowering risks to chronic diseases like diabetes. By incorporating natural and constructed green spaces, these areas can be more accessible and limit concrete deserts. Measures can be taken to allow parks to be multifunctional. Water drainage can be controlled or plants can be used in green spaces to improve local air quality, while still maintaining an area of recreation for people. Such measures are a part of green infrastructure, which is a way of water management that is similar to the natural water cycle. With this method, communities can benefit from local parks, while

the surrounding natural environment is restored and better protected. Overall, there are many health benefits of local parks. A negative aspect of this information is the focus on manicured parks. A lack of biodiversity present in an area can disrupt ecosystems. According to Wolf (2017), green spaces can reduce stress, improve mental health, improve mood, and spark creativity. Green spaces offer so many resources to people beyond physical space. While the Parks and Recreation User Survey did not focus on the mental health benefits of green spaces, it is important to discuss. The positive health benefits associated with green spaces further instills the need for them to be accessible to the public. The Parks and Recreation Department of the City of San Marcos fulfills basic needs of residents. By allowing both residents and non-residents to have access to public resources people can have healthier relationships with nature.

## CONCLUSIONS

In the future, if more face-to-face surveys were collected there would be a better understanding of what the public desires. In addition, if the timeline of the in person surveys was extended then more information could be gathered. Because this survey did not target a wide range of participants, it may be better to extend the reach of this project. Since most surveys were gathered during the day there is a high probability that those working, in school, or others may not have had a chance to take this survey. While the targeted demographic of 18-34 was reached, if more surveys were done with this age group the results may be more enriched. Overall, the public provided insightful answers to this survey. Through conducting this survey, the City can consider improvements to the local parks and recreation services that the public considers important or a priority.

## SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

If more surveys were collected among the 18-34 age range, even more input from this demographic could be potentially obtained. The short timeline of this survey, conducted from February 23, 2020–March 18, 2020, limited interactions among various potential participants. Extending the window for interviews, considering variables such as weather and time of year could also increase survey counts. Towards the end of our short survey collection window, the weather got cool and we experienced some rain. Two of our collection sites were outdoor spaces, city parks nonetheless; it more than likely lessened our chances to collect maximum surveys on those days. Another recommendation would be to collect surveys during spring or summer break. The likelihood that the targeted age range of 18-34 would be present in the settings we conducted our surveys at is most likely higher. The factor of no class or work outside of classes could allow increased spare time for recreation. In addition, the demographics varied based on location and time of day, two other variables to consider and account for when choosing to collect in-person surveys.

The various education levels of participants provided useful information about the backgrounds of participants because they may overlap into other areas such as employment and average household income. We witnessed some apprehension when questions such as these were asked. Survey administrators conducted the surveys differently, some handed the tablets to the participants, while others read and recorded answers for participants. Some participants skipped the more intrusive questions and we suspect that they could have been dishonest or even exaggerated regarding income or the like. Training survey collectors to hand off tablets to entrants to ensure complete privacy could potentially increase total completion of survey. As well as more data, the data could potentially be more accurate as well. A QR code with a link to the survey, or a short link that entrants can scan or input from their own devices could also be potentially beneficial.

In the future, having more locations for this survey would be beneficial. While there were several locations utilized for this survey, additional locations could be used in the future to further gather information. Targeting more campuses for reaching specific age ranges such as young to mid adults could also increase data from that specific demographic. Increasing publicity through social media, email, and the San Marcos website to promote virtual data collection could be an option. Simply posting a link to the survey and promoting it online could reach those on the internet that necessarily do not utilize parks or recreation services because they do not serve to their needs. Especially for reaching those who might reside in a neighboring city, yet work, attend school, or send their children to school in San Marcos. From the few one hundred surveys we conducted, a large number of entrants did not reside in the city of San Marcos yet reported frequent usage of the parks and recreation services offered by the City.

The Parks and Recreation Department of the City of San Marcos does a tremendous job offering residents public parks and recreational services. The results from Carlowicz and Rocchio (2019) emphasize the need to continue providing such services to residents. Green spaces are vital for improving mental health. In addition, by breaking up densely populated urban areas with more green spaces allows for better air quality. Miniature ecosystems can be created within parks, further encouraging biodiversity in local areas heavily populated by humans. Physical health can be vastly improved by access to resources such as green spaces. The City of San Marcos should continue to provide such services to the public.

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- Wolf, Kathleen, L., (2017). The Health Benefits of Small Parks and Green Spaces. *National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA)*. Retrieved from, <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine2017/april/the-health-benefits-of-small-parks-and-green-spaces/>.

# DEMOGRAPHICS: ETHNICITY, EDUCATION, AND INCOME OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

## INTRODUCTION TO GROUP’S FOCUS AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

In collaboration the City of San Marcos Parks and Recreational Department, we conducted a survey to get more information about those who use the parks and why they use the parks. In the portion of data that this group analyzed, we discussed the demographics of those who participated. To gather this information, we asked the survey participants what their race/ethnicity, occupation, and income were. The City wanted hear the voices of those who normally do not participate, in particular people 18-34 years of age. The Parks and Recreation Department wants to include and welcome everyone into the City of San Marcos, but also wants to know how they can provide a better park experience for everyone. By including the race/ethnicity, occupation, and income question, the City can focus on these particular groups.

## METHODOLOGY

We implemented the survey by going to Bradley Park, Sunset Park, San Elijo Hills, and Double Peak. We asked park goers if they would be interested in taking our survey, in order to get their input on how to better and improve their individual park experiences. We continued to go to each park, until we conducted 25 surveys at each location. This took us about two weeks to complete. We picked these parks because they are prominent and the most popular parks in the area.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We analyzed the race and ethnicity, occupations, and the income level of survey participants. We asked 1,630 people to take the survey, but 388 declined leaving 1,242 participants. For race and ethnicity, we asked the participants to select one or more categories that applies to them. These categories consisted of White, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, Black or African American, American Indian, or Alaskan Native, two or more Ethnicities, and Preferred not to say (Figure 31). The ethnicities with the greatest participation were White (57.1 percent) and Hispanic/Latino (21.1 percent). Participants who preferred not to say equaled 7.6 percent of the participants, followed by 6.3 percent Asian, 4.5 percent two or more ethnicities, 3.0 percent Black or African American, and 0.4 percent American Indian or Alaskan Native. This leads to the conclusion that most of the residents visiting San Marcos parks or deciding to participate in the survey identify as white. Due to the structure of the survey question, not all races and ethnicities were listed, leaving some participants feeling unrepresented. This data is interesting because more than half of the respondents were white, showing that other groups of people, such as Hispanic, are not frequenting the park at much or utilized the parks at times other than when we conducted the survey. These findings will allow for P&R to find new ways to get more ethnicities, other than white, to attend their parks and/or participate in community outreach, such as community surveys. For example, they can host cultural events that are aimed at a certain group, such a free event featuring traditional styles of music, with food and dancing. Music lovers from all ethnicities would be interested in an event like this. These results are important because this allows for P&R to strategically attract different groups of people to come and enjoy their parks.

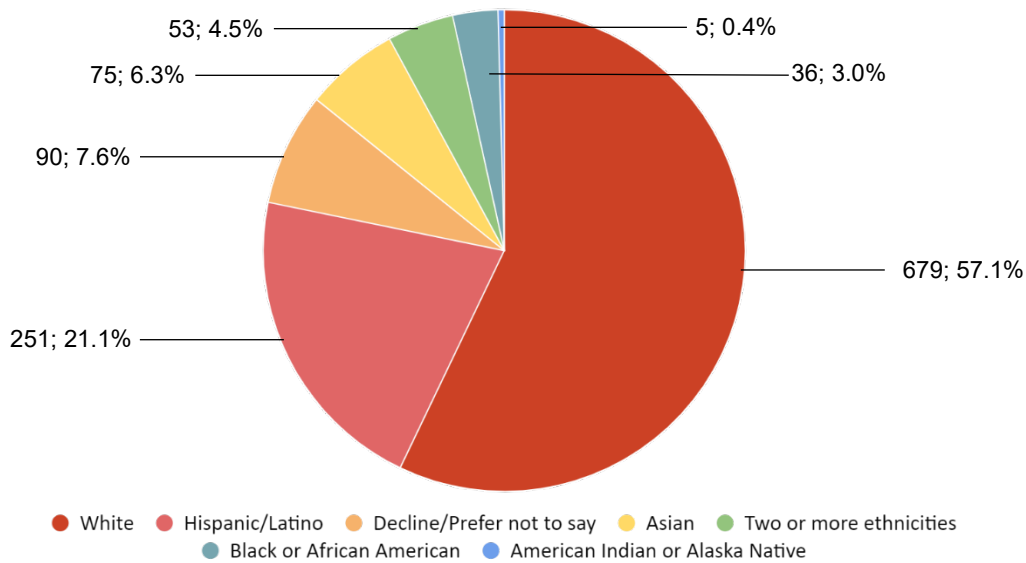


Figure 31. Respondents by Ethnicity. Counts of responses for each category are indicated, followed by the percentage of responses for the same category (n = 1,189). Anyone who indicated 'Prefer not to say' was counted in this category, even if they also indicated additional options.

A free response question asked participants to indicate their occupation. This seemed to be a sensitive or private question for some because 392 individuals (31.56 percent) did not answer the question (Figure 32). We categorized the responses in to 19 groups. Table 7 details the occupations that we put into each category.

**THE OCCUPATIONS OF THOSE WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE SURVEY**

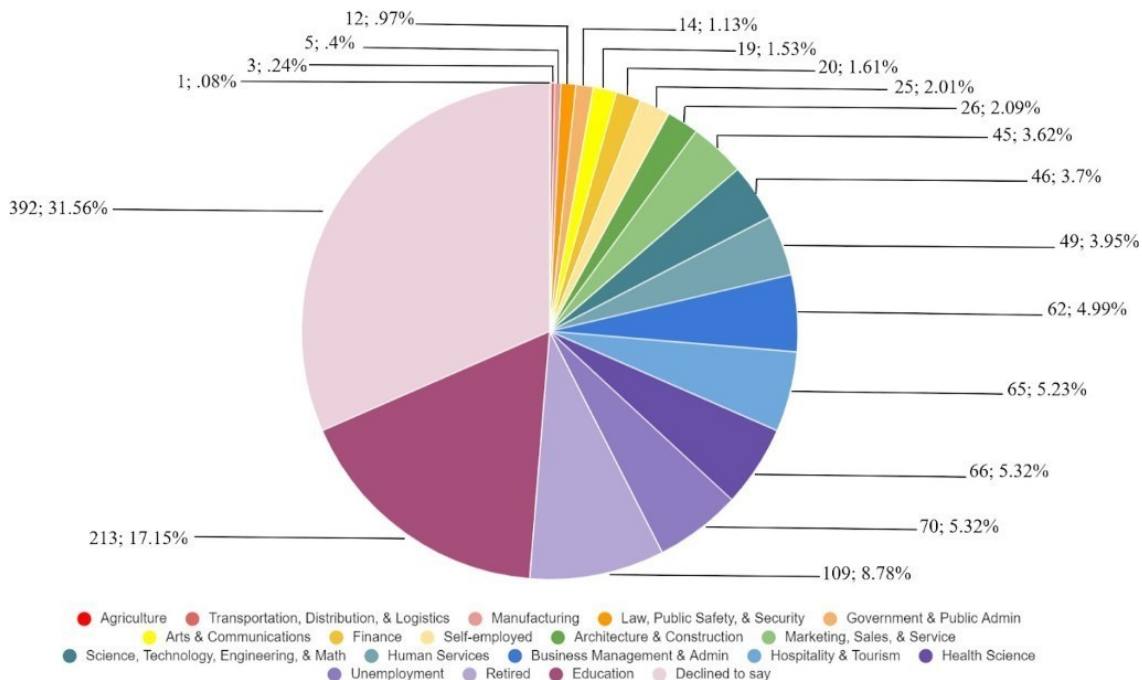


Figure 32. Occupational categories of those who answered the occupation question (n = 850). We derived 19 categories from the free responses provided by the participants. Values indicate the number of responses in that category, followed by the percentage of responses for the same category.



Table 7. Grouped occupation categories and example responses from survey that were included in each category.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Listed occupations</b>
Agriculture	- Organic Farmer
Transportation, Distribution, & Logistics	- Mechanics, Bus driver, UPS Driver, USPS Driver, Amazon, & Mailman
Manufacturing	- Maintenance Repair, Product manager, City maintenance, & City trail worker
Law, Public Safety & Security	- Police Officer, Attorney, Expert witness, Firefighter, Paramedic, Judge, Lawyer, & Legal assistant
Government & Public Admin	- Benefit administration, Federal employee, Government employee, Human Resources, & Military
Arts & Communications	- Artist, Communications manager, Director, Editor, Event planner, Freelance writer, & Graphic designer
Finance	- Clerk, Accountant (CPA), Analyst, Bookkeeper, Budget analyst, Claims manager, Financial analyst/advisor/consultant/service supervisor, & Insurance Agent
Self-employed	- Blogger, Business owner, & Gamer
Architecture & Construction	- Carpenter, Construction worker/ manager, Contractor, & Electrician
Marketing, Sales & Service	- Advertising, Car parts advertiser, Car salesman, Costco employee, Sales Director, Food Sales, Job recruiter, Marketing director/manager, & Medical Device Sales
Science, Technology, Engineering, & Math	- Alarm technician, Biochemist, Clinical Researcher, Computer Programmer, Data Technician, Cable employee, Computer system analyst, Engineer, Geotechnical engineer, & Information Technology
Human Services	- Caretaker, Community volunteer & organizers, Customer service rep, Dog groomer, Esthetician, Fitness instructor, Social worker, & Nanny
Business Management & Admin	- Administration, Secretary, Assistant manager, Business analyst, Corporate executive, Executive, General manager, & Office assistant
Hospitality & Tourism	- Bartender, Barista, Cashier, Chef, fast food worker, Flight attendant, Hostess, & Hotel Management
Health Sciences	- Nurse, Behavioral Specialist, Chiropractor, Mental health Clinician, Pharmacist, Dentist, Physical therapist, Nutritionist, Physical & Occupational Therapist, & Surgeon
Education	- Teacher, Teachers assistant, Student, Professor, Dance teacher, Librarian, & Music Teacher
Unemployed	- At home parents, Homemaker, & Housewife

### PARTICIPANTS OCCUPATION IN EDUCATION

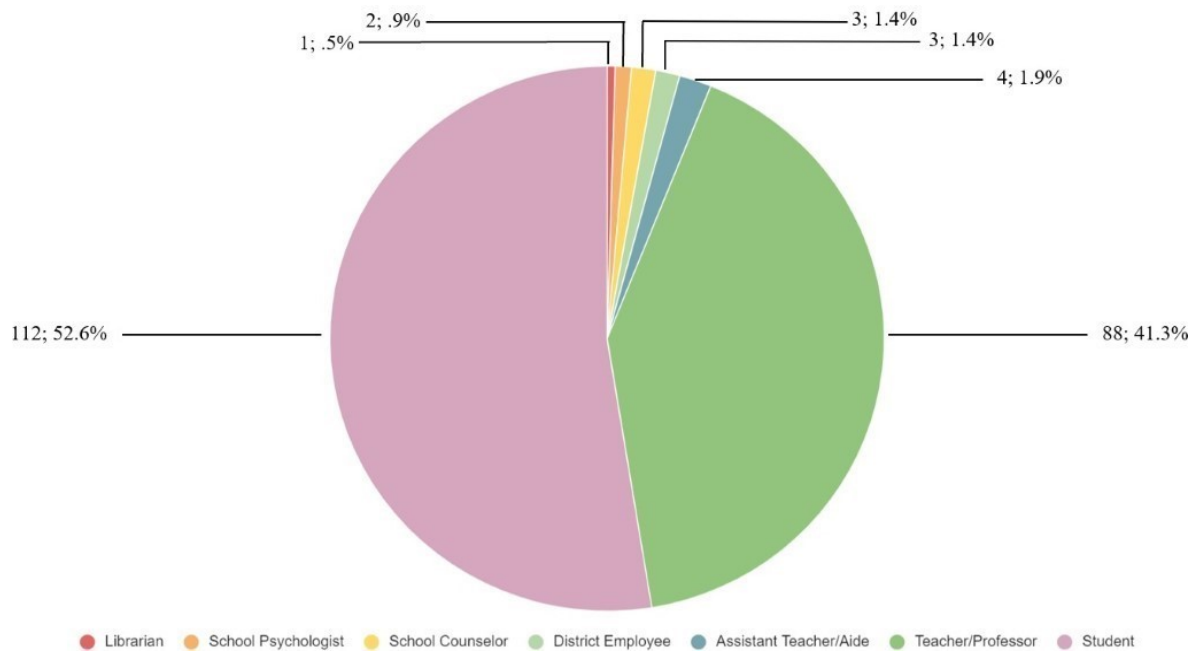


Figure 33. Participants’ whose occupations are in the Education category. Education was the largest occupation category, with 213 responses or 17.15 percent. This figure breaks the Education category into specific job titles or occupations, as P&R was interested in college student response to the survey.

San Marcos P&R facility users come from a variety of occupations, but respondents the Education field go more often (Figure 33). P&R was looking to understand more about the needs of the 18-34 year old demographic and the student component of the education occupation could provide some of those insights. Out of 213 participants in the education category, 112 of those were students (Figure 33).

With the question about the participants’ occupation, we found that not everyone wanted to fill out this question. We had 392 participants (32 percent) who declined to answer. It left of us wondering if they just did not feel comfortable responding or passed because it was fill in the blank. Our group also found it interesting that we were asking the question to begin with. We did not find it very relevant to the survey, but it does give the City of San Marcos and idea of those who use the parks. We did not find it relevant because the purpose of the survey was to find out who uses the parks (not based on their job) and what they would like the parks to incorporate. With these results, P&R can find different ways of integrating other occupations that may not go as often, including programs and services targeted at specific occupations. For example, a networking opportunity for people within the various transportation occupations. Knowledge of occupation could also lead to interesting collaborations between the City and those individuals/industries. As one example, P&R could work with specific industries on public services and programming, such as habitat restoration or citizen science in areas of water and air monitoring.

Next, participants were asked to select from seven income range categories (Figure 34). We had 167 participants who declined to answer leaving us with 1,075 responses to evaluate. A majority (23.8 percent) of people who visit San Marcos parks and recreational areas have an income between \$40,126 and \$85,525 (Figure 34).. For income, the phrasing of the question confused the participants, and although the question specified individual income, participants may have responded using household level income.

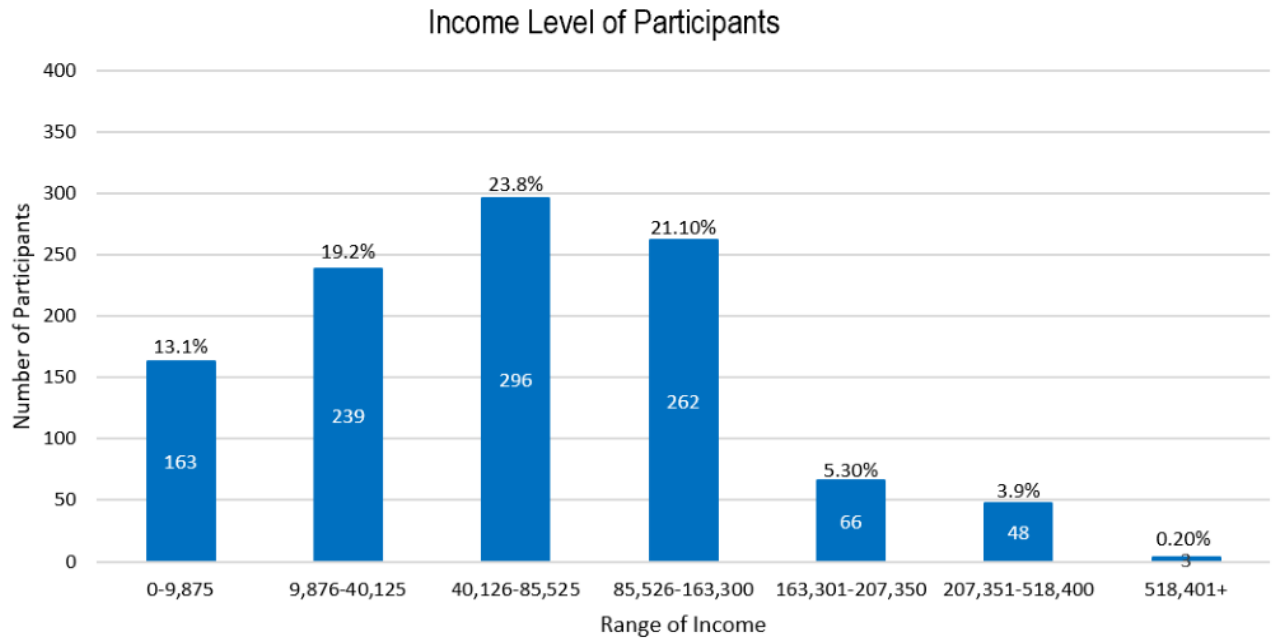


Figure 34. Income ranges presented in the survey (n = 1,075). Numbers inside each bar indicate the number of responses, with the percentage of responses indicated above each bar.

## CONCLUSIONS

As a group, we analyzed the different ethnicities, occupations, and income levels of San Marcos survey participants. While analyzing the ethnicity data we found the two most prominent ethnicities were White at 57.1 percent and Hispanic/Latino at 21.1 percent. However, 7.6 percent of participants declined to give their ethnicity information. This may have been because it is a sensitive topic for some individuals who did not feel they could identify with the ethnicity choices given on the survey. In order to help future participants, feel confident about answering questions about their identity, there should be another option where they can type in the ethnicity that they identify with. After analyzing the varying occupations of those surveyed, we differentiated 19 different occupational categories. Even though there were many different types of occupations of those surveyed, through the data we determined that the people working in the educational field were most people attending the parks.

Finally, from the data we collected on resident’s income levels, we determined that most people surveyed, fell under the mid-level socioeconomic category, ranging from \$40,126 and \$85,525 a year. It is important for the City to know what different groups of people are using the parks from the information we collected in the survey about their ethnicities, occupations, and income levels. This way parking planning is more inclusive to all demographics, as well as better cater to the needs and desires of what the residents of San Marcos want out of their parks.

## SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Nineteen different occupational categories were created from a free response question asking users to enter their occupation. In a future survey, we suggest providing participants general occupational options to check off, rather than giving them a free response answer. After deciding which general categories to use, an 'other' option would provide participants the opportunity to write in their occupation if they feel it does not fit within one of the provided categories.

Regarding the ethnicity and race question, some people did not feel as though their identity was represented within the survey's option, so they did not know what option to choose, or they just skipped the question. Due to this lack of representation, it would be beneficial for future surveys to include an 'other' option where they can write in their ethnicities.

Although the income question stated, "Please select the range that best represents your individual income level," many people were confused about this question because they were not sure if the question was asking for their own personal annual income, or if the question referred to a joint household income. To take away any confusion, in future surveys it would be beneficial for the question to clearly state (by bolding or underlining key parts or providing a longer explanation) if the question is asking about household or individual income.

This group came up with different ways of welcoming more diverse communities to P&R facilities. Our first idea was to host events throughout the year to get as many people involved within the community. Making these events free would encourage more people to come and allow people to meet new people and in general have some fun. For example, host free concerts, invite food trucks and collaborate with breweries so that people have something to eat and helps other local business. To spread the word, present a roadmap at the council meeting and partner up with local schools and businesses to encourage students and consumers to attend. For example, going to CSUSM and passing out brochures with a roadmap of the events would encourage more students to get involved in the community and join in with the fun. Another way we could get more people to take surveys would be to design a pamphlet letting people know what we are about, then distributing it with a link to our survey online. This way people would be able to take it in the privacy of their own home, allowing them to have more time and to construct thoughtful answers to survey prompts. By teaming up with other local businesses there could be a way to get the word out and make distributing the pamphlets easier. These could also include pictures and maps of San Marcos parks, to inform people about upcoming events or features in parks within 5 miles of their mailing address. Finally, to get a more diverse response to the survey a longer period should be allotted for people to collect surveys in person. This will allow people to go at different times of the day and week, because this may affect the groups of people that will be at the park.

# CONCLUSIONS

## *The Big Picture*

The city of San Marcos is a beautiful place to enjoy recreational activities and programs. The data collected from the survey totaling 1,424 participants and 1,240 counted towards making the park better for the whole community. The community enjoyed using Discovery Lake and Double Peak Park are used the most while Mulberry Park, Las Posas, Bradley, Simmons, and Lakeview are all used by less than 3% of the survey participants. Double Peak Park is used the most because the residents are all from San Marcos totaling 912 in order to distract two totaling 276 respondents. Participate are willing to travel two to five mile totaling 22.39%. People of San Marcos want to see more trails, paths and other pathways to enjoy more of what is offered totaling 14.15%. The big picture for San Marcos is to gather more data and continue to adjust to participants requests. The data we as a class will help the parks focus more on the park user and what they are looking for in San Marcos. The focus to get a better park is adding to the one we already have like adding more basketball courts, skate parks, golf courses, and bathrooms. The changes can be all made by looking at the data and getting more surveys done to accurately understand the general public.

# SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Solutions and Recommendations

The following below is the solutions and recommendations that class has made for the City of San Marcos regarding the parks and public spaces. These recommendations are focused on either improving the public spaces and services provided to by the City, or if the City were to reimplement this survey at a future date, some of the recommendations are focused on that aspect.

### *Age Range*

We found that the most important was the age range. The City of San Marcos Parks and Recreation requested the feedback especially from a younger age group of likely activities for the age ranges 18-25. This became significant because the surveys were conducted during breaks from school and because during certain weekdays and weekends the age range in the parks are likely to be more present because no class means an increase in spare time for recreation in the San Marcos City parks.

### *Education Levels*

In the next group of people we surveyed were the education level of the people using the park, now some survey givers were a bit hesitant in giving this information out, some of the surveyors handed off the tablets to the respondents to eliminate any privacy contingency, some even read and recorded to the tablets on their own. Some even scanned the QR code so the respondents could do it in complete privacy.

The location of the surveys and the targets that were given could be more spread out, we could target more campuses, especially elementary schools with the specified age range requested by the San Marcos Parks and Recreation. In these modern times Social Media, email and internet promotions become a useful tool in gaining the interest of younger individuals.

### *Ethnicity*

Respondents were asked their ethnicity. People of ethnic backgrounds may utilize parks more differently than others. This assures everybody is included in San Marcos parks which can have a positive impact in areas where racism against different ethnic groups is an issue. To ensure fairness the "other option" in the survey was left to make sure every ethnicity was represented which became a huge benefit in the survey taken.

### *Green Spaces*

The use of green spaces would have a significant impact in densely populated areas enabling better air quality, better mental health, and increasing property values significantly based on the area. This process would have to go through City planning depending which areas are requiring the green spaces.

### *Utilization of public spaces*

The utilization public services in the park had a variety of responses, the top responses included offering more classes for different age ranges, the possibility of opening more public lands of open space for public use. This has the potential of creating more jobs in the parks and recreation sector, it was pointed out park attendants were needed for maintenance, cleaning and safety in any of the parks. This may include Revamping and upgrading current parks which includes more play areas, and facilities, increase in trails which has the potential of needing more maintenance and safety measures. Safety was a common concern from respondents this included but not limited to increased lighting during evening hours and increase in police or

park ranger presence for security, encounters with wildlife. It was recommended a non-emergency call number be listed or posted along the trail in case of such emergency arises. Park and municipal ordinances strictly enforced due to the wide safety concerns respondents had pertaining to the parks.

*More events/options*

Respondents also had suggestions for more activities this included the hosting of different events to gauge public interests and increase public awareness of these events. The purpose of asking the respondents of their occupation is how their occupation aligns with park interests.

# APPENDIX A: SURVEY PROMPTS AND RESPONSES

English language version

Link to Survey 123 survey instrument: <https://arcg.is/1CHrmb>.

## Survey description

Hello. This survey is a collaboration between the City of San Marcos Parks and Recreation and California State University San Marcos. The survey is being conducted as part of course requirements for Geography 450 - Parks and Protected Areas and is designed to identify the wants and needs of the community with regards to parks and recreation opportunities. The survey is designed to capture responses from individuals who utilize the parks and recreation facilities, as well as those who are not current users. We appreciate your time and feedback.

**The survey will take you between 5 and 10 minutes to complete. The data collection and results of this survey are anonymous and no personally identifying information is collected via any means of completing this survey.**

**Would you like to participate in this survey?**

Yes

No

*If "No" is selected, then the participants will see:*

**Thank you for your time. Please scroll to the end of the survey and select the 'Submit' button.**

*Regardless of Yes/No selection, participants will see the following autofilled question.*

**Date/Time of survey**

*If "Yes" was selected, then the following appears:*

**Are you a City of San Marcos resident?**

Yes

No

*If "Yes" was selected, then the following appears:*

**Which City Council voting district do you currently live in?**

**If you're unsure of which district you live in, you can find a map at [San Marcos City Council Voting Districts](#).**

District 1

District 2

District 3

District 4

*If "No" was selected, then the following appears:*

**Which city do you currently live in?**

**Are you completing this survey online (independently, without a survey administrator)?**

Yes

No

## CITY OF SAN MARCOS PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

**Are you satisfied with the City of San Marcos parks and recreation facilities, programming, and services?**



Yes  
No

*If "No" was selected the following appears:*

**If you are not satisfied with parks and recreation facilities, programming, and services, what would you like to see more of (select all that apply)?**

- Community pools
- Exercise areas
- More trails, paths, etc.
- Pet parks
- Playgrounds
- Preschool programs
- Recreational centers
- Senior citizen centers
- Sports fields
- Other

**Do you feel safe in this park or facility?**

**If not currently at a City park or facility, please respond with regards to the park or facility you utilize the most often.**

Yes  
No

*If "No" was selected, the following appears:*

**Please explain why you selected 'No'.**

**What is your main reason for visiting San Marcos Parks and Recreation facilities (select all that apply)?**

- Camps/classes
- Children's activities/Playground
- Dog walking/Play
- Equestrian activities
- Exercising
- Fishing
- Mountain biking
- Leisure/Mental health
- Parties/Events
- Skating/Scootering
- Sport play
- Walking/Hiking/Running
- Other

**How often do you use City of San Marcos Parks and Recreation parks/resources or attend services and events?**

Never      Rarely      Occasionally      Frequently      Very Frequently

*If "Never" or "Rarely" are selected, the following appears:*

**If you rarely use or do not use San Marcos parks and/or facilities, what are the reasons (select all that apply)?**

- Concern for personal safety
- Disability or age
- Does not have features I'm interested in

- Lack of transportation
- Limited time
- Other

**How well maintained are the parks and recreational spaces you attend?**

- Not maintained
- Somewhat maintained
- Neutral
- Mostly maintained
- Very well maintained

*If “Not maintained” or “Somewhat maintained” are selected, the following appears:*

**Please describe the issues that need addressed.**

**How do you currently learn about the services, events, and resources offered by the City of San Marcos Parks and Recreation Department (select all that apply)?**

- City’s social media accounts
- City’s website
- San Marcos 360 News & Recreation Guide
- Park and trail kiosks
- Friends/Family
- Newspaper/Radio
- Other

**How do you prefer to learn about parks and recreation facilities, programming, and services?**

**What types of classes or events would you be interested in attending?**

- Arts
- Community
- Cultural
- Educational
- E-sports
- Festivals
- Group dog walks
- Nature walks
- Music
- Sports
- Other

**How far do you usually travel to visit Parks and Recreation facilities?**

- <1 mile
- 1-2 miles
- >2-5 miles
- >5-10 miles
- >10-15 miles
- >15-20 miles
- >20 miles

**Park or facility that you currently or normally use.** *A map interface is below this prompt.*

**If you are currently at a San Marcos park or facility, please verify the marker represents the location.**

**If you're not currently at a San Marcos park or facility, please move the marker to place it at the park or facility that you utilize the most frequently.**

**Please list the San Marcos facilities, programming, and services that you utilize.**

**This includes parks, trails, recreation facilities, and other programming provided by the City of San Marcos.**

**What types of recreational facilities, services, and programming do you think will be important to you or other community members in the next 5 to 10 years?**

**What suggestions or comments do you have for improved parks and recreation services, programming, and spaces?**

### **DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

**Please select the range of your current age.**

- Under 18**
- 18-24**
- 25-34**
- 35-44**
- 45-64**
- 65+**

**Please select the response that best represents your formal education.**

- No schooling**
- Less than high school diploma**
- High school diploma, GED, or equivalent**
- Some college**
- Associate's degree**
- Bachelor's degree**
- Graduate/Professional degree**
- Other**

**Please indicate your marital status.**

- Single**
- Married**
- Widowed**
- Divorced/Separated**
- Other**

**Please select the option that best represents your preferred gender.**

- Female**
- Male**
- Non-binary**
- Other**
- Decline/Prefer not to say**

**Ethnicity/Race. Please select all that apply.**

**White (A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East or North Africa)**

**Black or African American (A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa)**

**American Indian or Alaska Native (A person having origins in any of the original people of North, South, and Central America and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment)**

**Asian (A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam).**

**Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (A person having origins in any of the original people of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands)**

**Hispanic/Latino (A person who is a descendent from Spanish-speaking populations, or descended from people from Latin America)**

**Decline/Prefer not to say**

**Current occupation.**

**Please select the range that best represents your individual income level.**

**0-\$9,875**

**\$9,876-\$40,125**

**\$40,126-\$85,525**

**\$85,526-\$163,300**

**\$163,301-\$207,350**

**\$207,350-\$518,400**

**\$518,401+**

*Submit button*

## Spanish language version

Link to Survey123 survey instrument: <https://arcg.is/ajmS4>.

### Descripción de la encuesta

Hola. Esta encuesta es una colaboración entre el Departamento de Parques y Actividades Recreativas de la Ciudad de San Marcos y la Universidad Estatal de California Campus San Marcos. La encuesta se está llevando a cabo como parte de los requisitos del curso de Geografía 450 - Parques y Áreas Protegidas y está diseñada para identificar las necesidades y los deseos de la comunidad con respecto a los parques y actividades recreativas. La encuesta tiene por objeto captar las respuestas de las personas que utilizan los parques y las instalaciones recreativas, así como de los que no son usuarios en este momento. Agradecemos su tiempo y sus comentarios.

**La encuesta le tomará entre 5 y 10 minutos para completarla. La recopilación de datos y los resultados de esta encuesta son anónimos y no se obtendrá ninguna información de identificación personal por ningún medio para completar esta encuesta.**

**¿Le gustaría participar en esta encuesta?**

**Sí**

**No**

*Si se selecciona "No", entonces los participantes verán:*

**Gracias por su tiempo. Por favor, vaya hasta el final de la encuesta y seleccione el botón "Enviar".**

*Independientemente de la selección de Sí/No, los participantes verán la siguiente pregunta de autorespuesta*

**Fecha y hora de la encuesta**

*Si se ha seleccionado "Sí", aparece lo siguiente:*

**¿Es usted residente de la ciudad de San Marcos?**

**Sí**

**No**

*Si se ha seleccionado "Sí", aparece lo siguiente:*

**¿En qué distrito electoral del Cabildo de la Ciudad vive actualmente?**

**Si no está seguro de en qué distrito vive, puede encontrar un mapa en Distritos de votación del ayuntamiento de San Marcos. [San Marcos City Council Voting Districts](#).**

**Distrito 1**

**Distrito 2**

**Distrito 3**

**Distrito 4**

*Si se ha seleccionado "No", aparece lo siguiente:*

**¿En qué ciudad vive actualmente?**

**¿Está llenando esta encuesta en línea (independientemente, sin un administrador de la encuesta)?**

**Sí**

**No**

**PARQUES E INSTALACIONES RECREATIVAS DE LA CIUDAD DE SAN MARCOS**

**¿Está satisfecho con los parques e instalaciones recreativas, los programas y los servicios de la ciudad de San Marcos?**

**Sí**

**No**

*Si se ha seleccionado "No", aparece lo siguiente:*

**Si no está satisfecho con los parques y las instalaciones recreativas, los programas y los servicios, ¿qué más le gustaría ver de (seleccione todo lo que corresponda)?**

**Piscinas públicas**

**Áreas de ejercicio**

**Más senderos, caminos, etc.**

**Parques para mascotas**

**Parques infantiles**

**Programas preescolares**

**Centros recreativos**

**Centros para la tercera edad**

**Campos deportivos**

**Otros**

**¿Se siente seguro en estas instalaciones o en este parque?**

**Si no se encuentra actualmente en las instalaciones o en algún parque de la ciudad, por favor responda con respecto al parque o instalaciones que utiliza más a menudo.**

**Sí**

**No**

*Si se ha seleccionado "No", aparece lo siguiente:*

**Por favor, explique por qué seleccionó "No".**

**¿Cuál es la principal razón por la que visita los Parques y participa en las Actividades Recreativas de San Marcos (seleccione todas las que correspondan)?**

**Campamentos/clases**

**Actividades infantiles/juegos infantiles**

**Actividades/Paseos para perros**

**Actividades ecuestres**

**Ejercicio**

**Pesca**

**Bicicleta de montaña**

**Descanso/Salud mental**

**Fiestas/Eventos**

**Patinaje/Andar en patín del diablo**

**Juegos deportivo**

**Caminar, senderismo, correr...**

**Otros**

**¿Con qué frecuencia utiliza los parques e instalaciones recreativas/recursos de la ciudad de San Marcos o asiste a eventos y recibe servicios?**

**Nunca                  Raramente                  Ocasionalmente                  Frecuentemente                  Muy Frecuentemente**

*Si se selecciona "Nunca" o "Rara vez", aparece lo siguiente:*

**Si raramente usa o no usa los parques y/o instalaciones de San Marcos, ¿cuáles son las razones por las que no los utiliza (seleccione todas las que correspondan)?**

- Preocupación por la seguridad personal**
- Discapacidad o edad**
- No tiene cosas que me interesen**
- La falta de transporte**
- Tiempo limitado**
- Otras**

**¿Cree que se les dá un buen mantenimiento a los parques y áreas recreativas que utiliza?**

- No tienen buen mantenimiento**
- Les dan mantenimiento más o menos**
- Neutral**
- En su mayoría están bien mantenidos**
- Muy buen mantenimiento**

*Si se selecciona "No tienen buen mantenimiento" o "Mantenimiento más o menos", aparece lo siguiente:*

**Por favor, describa los problemas que deben solucionarse.**

**Actualmente, ¿Cómo se entera de los servicios, eventos y recursos que ofrece el Departamento de Parques y Actividades Recreativas de la Ciudad de San Marcos (seleccione todos los que correspondan)?**

- Las cuentas de redes sociales de la ciudad**
- El sitio web de la ciudad**
- Guía de Noticias y Actividades Recreativas de San Marcos 360**
- Kioscos de parques y senderos**
- Amigos/Familia**
- Periódico/Radio**
- Otros**

**¿De que manera prefiere recibir información sobre los parques y las instalaciones para actividades recreativas, los programas y servicios?**

**¿A que tipos de clases o eventos le interesaría asistir?**

- Artes**
- Comunidad**
- Cultural**
- Educativo**
- E-sports**
- Festivales**
- Paseos de perro en grupo**
- Paseos por la naturaleza**
- Música**

Deportes  
Otros

¿Qué tan lejos suele viajar para visitar los parques y las instalaciones recreativas?

- <1 milla
- De 1 a 2 millas
- >2-5 millas
- >5-10 millas
- >10-15 millas
- >15-20 millas
- >20 millas

Parques o instalaciones que usted usa actualmente o de manera cotidiana. *Una interfaz de mapa está debajo de esta indicación.*

Si en este momento se encuentra en un parque o en las instalaciones de la Ciudad San Marcos, por favor verifique que el marcador represente la ubicación. Si no se encuentra actualmente en un parque o en las instalaciones de la Ciudad de San Marcos, mueva el marcador para colocarlo en el parque o instalaciones que utiliza con más frecuencia.

Indique las instalaciones, los programas y los servicios de la Ciudad de San Marcos que utiliza.

Esto incluye parques, senderos, instalaciones recreativas y otros programas proporcionados por la ciudad de San Marcos.

¿Qué tipo de instalaciones, servicios y programas recreativos cree que serán importantes para usted u otros miembros de la comunidad en los próximos 5 a 10 años?

¿Qué sugerencias o comentarios tiene para mejorar los servicios, los programas, parques y los espacios recreativos?

## INFORMACIÓN DEMOGRÁFICA

Seleccione el rango de su edad.

- Menores de 18 años
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-64
- 65+

Seleccione la respuesta que mejor represente su nivel de educación formal.

- Sin escolaridad
- No recibió el diploma de la preparatoria
- Diploma de Preparatoria, GED, o equivalente
- Algunas clases de la universidad
- Título de asociado
- Licenciatura
- Maestría/Título Profesional
- Otros



Indique su estado civil.

- Soltero
- Casado
- Viudo
- Divorciado/Separado
- Otros

Seleccione la opción que mejor represente género de su elección.

- Femenino
- Masculino
- No binario
- Otros
- Declina/Preferir no decir

Etnia/raza. Seleccione todo lo que corresponda.

Blanco (Una persona con orígenes en cualquiera de los pueblos originarios de Europa, el Medio Oriente o el Norte de África)

Negro o Afroamericano (Una persona con orígenes en cualquiera de los grupos raciales negros de África)

Indio Americano o Nativo de Alaska (Una persona que tiene orígenes en cualquiera de los pueblos originarios de América del Norte, del Sur y Central y que mantiene una afiliación tribal o un vínculo comunitario)

Asiático (Una persona que tiene orígenes en cualquiera de los pueblos originarios del Lejano Oriente, el Asia sudoriental o el subcontinente Indio, incluidos, por ejemplo, Camboya, China, India, Japón, Corea, Malasia, Pakistán, las Islas Filipinas, Tailandia y Viet Nam).

Nativo de Hawai y otras islas del Pacífico (Una persona que tiene orígenes en cualquiera de los pueblos originarios de Hawai, Guam, Samoa u otras islas del Pacífico)

Declina/Prefiere no decir

Ocupación.

Seleccione el rango que mejor represente su nivel de ingreso individual.

- 0-\$9,875
- \$9,876-\$40,125
- \$40,126-\$85,525
- \$85,526-\$163,300
- \$163,301-\$207,350
- \$207,350-\$518,400
- \$518,401+

*Enviar*

## APPENDIX B: LIST OF SAMPLING LOCATIONS

List of in person survey sampling sites, sorted according to group responsible for surveying at those locations. Multiple groups sampled several locations.

Bethany Anaya, Halle Montgomery, Lilly Flores,  
Saud Aldosri

Churchill's Pub & Grille  
Buelow Park  
CSUSM  
Woodland Park

Fernando Langarica, Neil Lorenzana, Benjamin  
Plackemeier, Brandon Thompson

Crunch Fitness  
Connors Park  
San Elijo Hills Dog Park  
Sprouts Farmers Market

Kenedie Hemrich, Isabel Navarro, Gabriela Rubio,  
Tanner Prehoden

CSUSM  
Discovery Lake  
Palomar College  
Ryan Bros Coffee

Marina Campbell, Arturo Garcia, Rebecca Harper,  
Marie Kodis

Cerro de las Posas Park  
Montiel Park  
North City Area  
Perks Coffee House

Kaitlyn Byrne, Jesus Martinez, Lluvia Prieto, Grisel  
Raymundo

LA Fitness  
Ralph's  
San Marcos Regal Cinema  
WinCo Foods

Brandon Huevo, Jeahna Kertzman, Erin  
Rimmereid, Emily Swarthout

Urge Gastropub  
CSUSM  
Jack's Pond  
Starbucks 342 S Twin Oaks Valley Rd #145

Erika Berry, Madison Laney, Victoria Reynoso,  
April Zimmerman

Hollandia Park  
Old Restaurant Row  
Simmons Family Park

Nicole Dean, Molly Dunn, Carrigan LoucksClapper,  
Noah Ortega

Bradley Park  
Double Peak/Ridgeline Trail  
San Elijo Park  
Sunset Park

Clifford Acedo, Benny Hadley, Emerson Peluso,  
David Reis

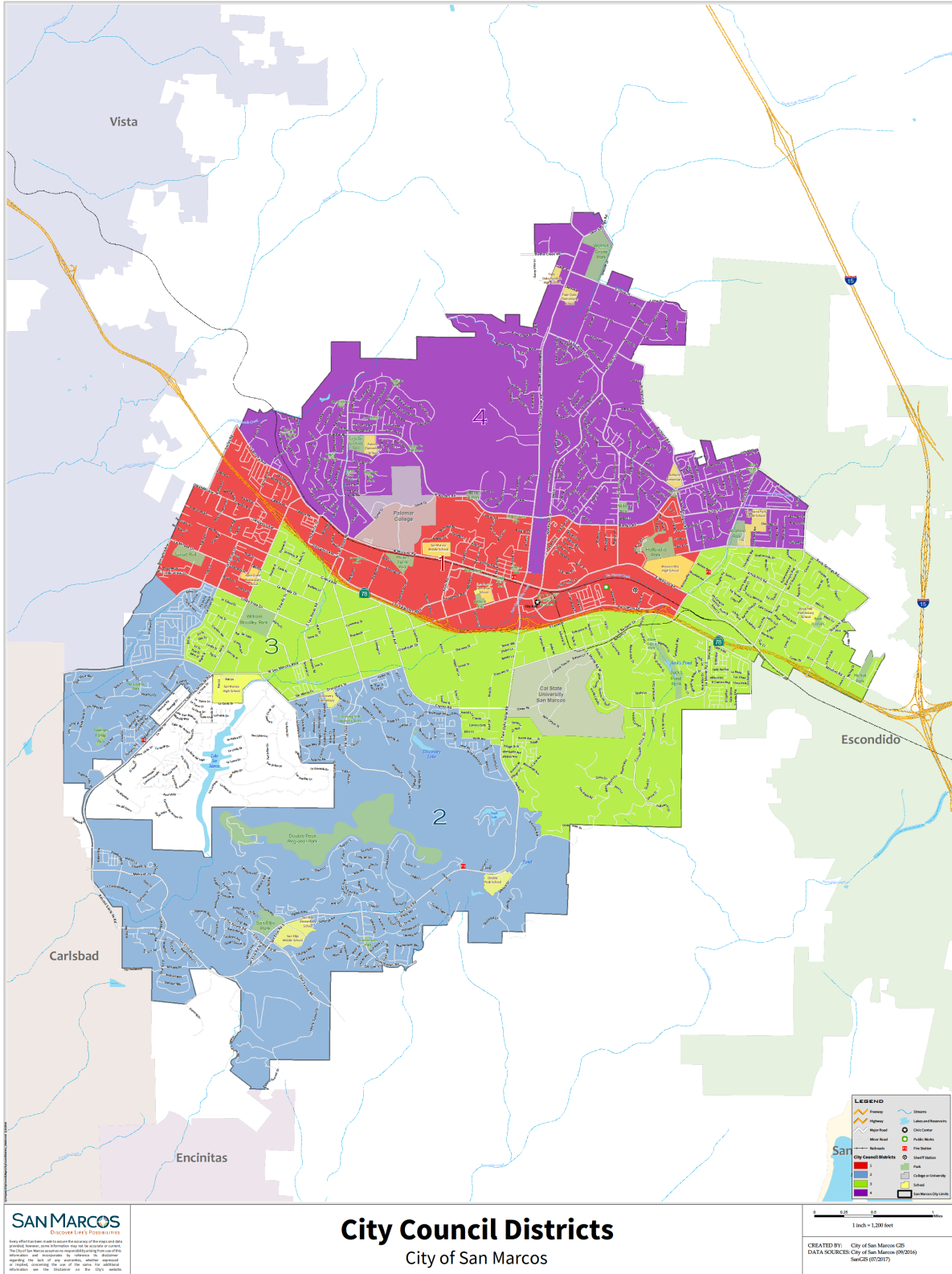
Churchill's Pub & Grille  
The Urge Gastropub  
Knob Hill Park  
Mulberry Park  
Woodland Park

Olivia Barrett, Miranda Boone, Dyana Gonzalez,  
Katie Sherman

LA Fitness  
Lost Abbey Brewery  
Walnut Grove Park  
San Elijo Hills Dog Park

# APPENDIX C: CITY OF SAN MARCOS VOTING DISTRICT MAP

The map used as reference for the surveys is pictured below and is also currently located on the City of San Marcos website at: <https://www.san-marcos.net/home/showdocument?id=21619>.



## APPENDIX D: SURVEY DATA UTILIZED FOR REPORT

Provided as separate Excel file (*file name:* APPENDIX D\_SM Parks and Rec survey data 02282020\_03182020). Covers survey period of February 23, 2020 through March 18, 2020.