

Chapter 3

Recreation Programs and Facilities

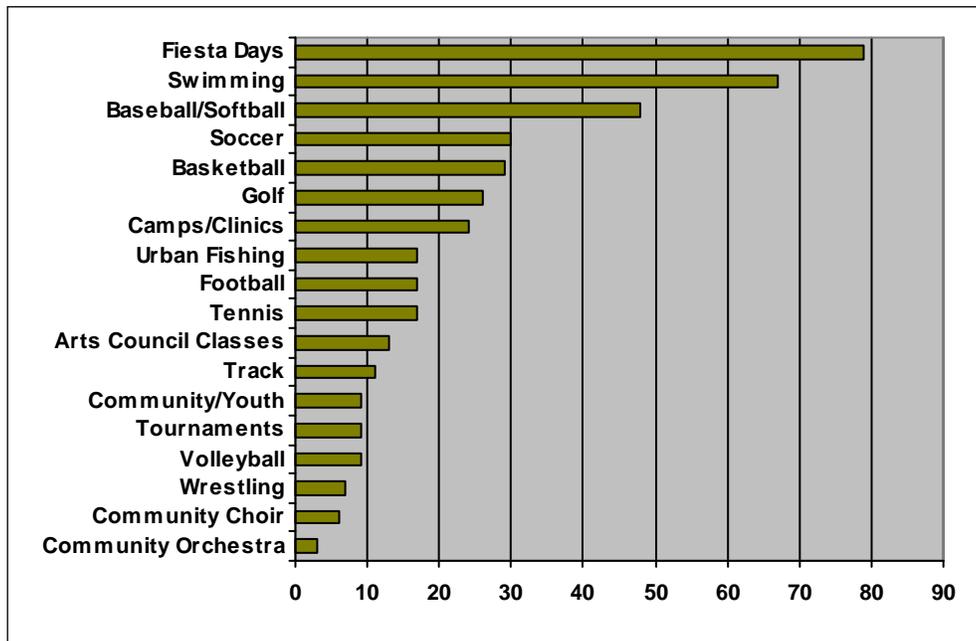
This Chapter addresses resident survey responses to questions regarding recreation programs and facilities, existing recreation facilities and programs, and recommendations for additional facilities and programs.

Resident Survey Responses Regarding Recreation Programs and Facilities

Resident Recreation Participation

The most popular city-sponsored events or programs are Fiesta Days, swimming, and baseball/softball. Fiesta Days ranked highest at 80 percent, followed by swimming (68 percent), and baseball/softball (49 percent). Thirty percent of respondents prefer soccer, 29 percent prefer basketball, and 27 percent prefer golf. Community orchestra and choir, volleyball, and wrestling were the least popular programs. Participation in these programs or events varied little among age groups, although those over the age of 65 appear to participate less often, with the exception of Fiesta Days. Table 3A illustrates responses for all programs listed in the survey.

Table 3A – Resident Recreation Participation

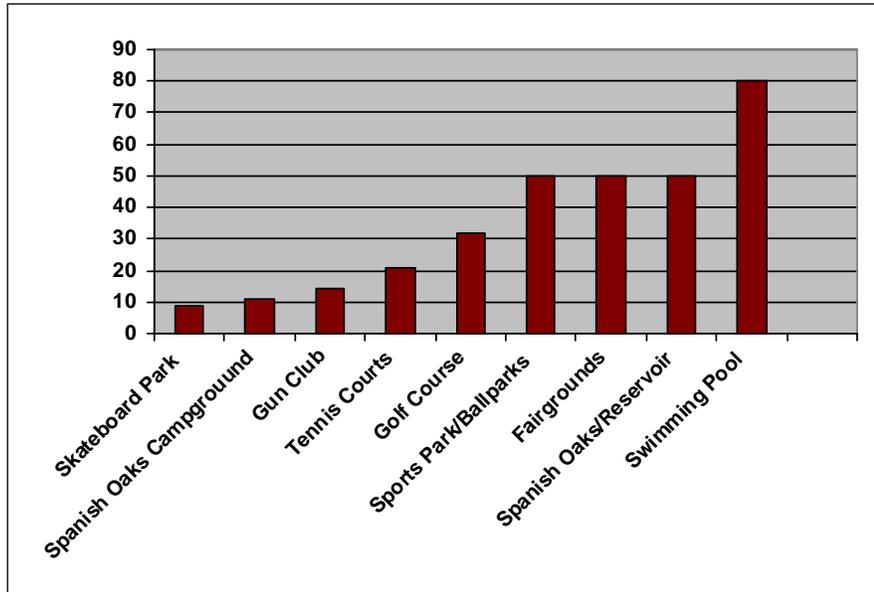


Most-Used Facilities

In support of the participation discussion above, it is not surprising to find that the most-used facilities in Spanish Fork are the pool, Spanish Oaks Reservoir, fairgrounds and sports parks/ballparks. Eighty percent of survey respondents use the swimming pool,

followed by 49 percent who use the reservoir, and 48 percent who use both the fairgrounds and the sports parks/ball parks. Specialty facilities such as the skateboard park, Spanish Oaks Campground, and the Gun Club are used least often. Table 3B illustrates responses for all facilities listed in the survey.

Table 3B – Most-Used Facilities



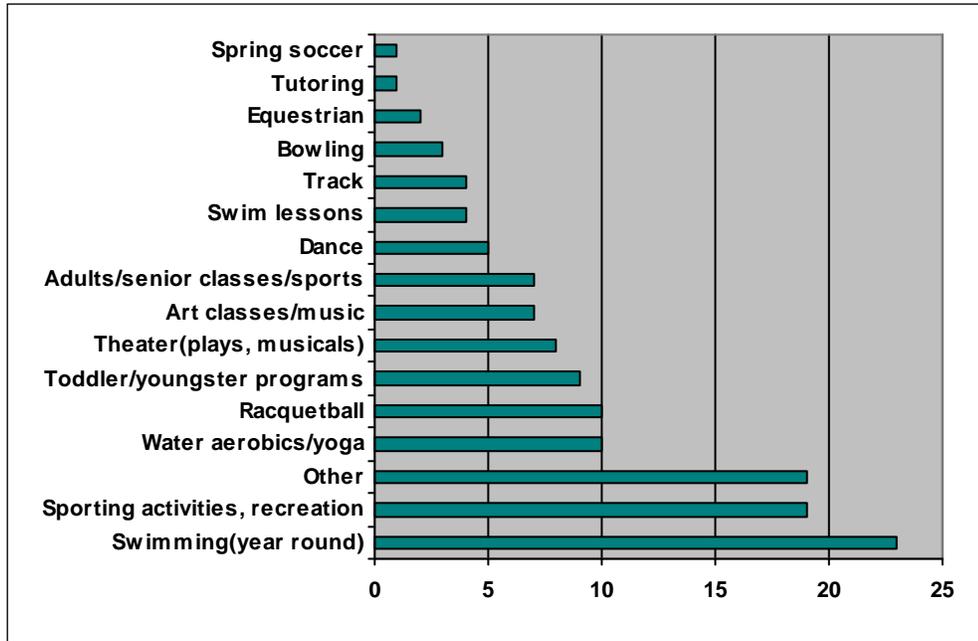
Survey respondents who do not participate in activities or use facilities cite a lack of time (24 percent), age (17 percent), or indicate that there are no activities of interest (15 percent). Those who responded that age was keeping them from participating were most likely to be over the age of 65. Fees and programs that are perceived to be expensive are of most concern to people aged 24-54 years old. Safety and transportation were the least important factors in deterring participation.

Most-Desired Activities and Facilities

Year-round swimming is the most desired activity of survey respondents (23 percent of all respondents), and 40 percent of those were over 65 years of age. Nineteen percent of respondents chose sports activities/recreation; racquetball and water aerobics/yoga were each mentioned by 10 percent of respondents, followed by toddler/youngster programs at 9 percent. Table 3C illustrates all of the new activities on the survey and the percent of responses.

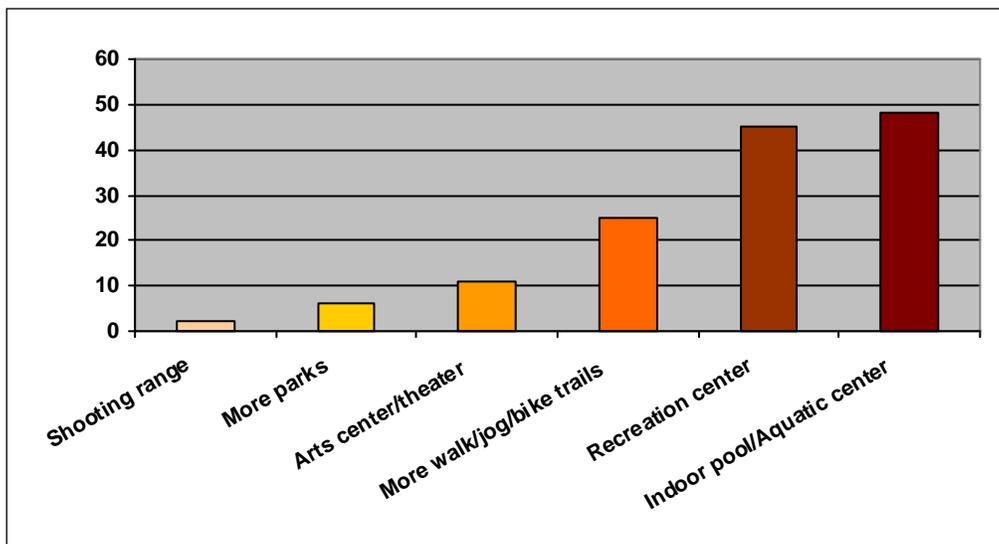
In response to this question about desired activities and facilities, 19 percent of respondents chose “other”, which is relatively high. The question asked respondents to choose up to three activities and facilities, of which “other” was one choice; however, the question did not provide a follow-up which identified what “other” might be. This is an area where additional information may be needed from focus groups or other sources of community input.

Table 3C – Most-Desired Activities



Responses to the survey about facilities, corroborate responses about activities; an indoor pool/aquatic center is most-desired (50 percent), followed by a recreation center (46 percent). The most desired activities, year-round swimming, racquetball, and water aerobics/yoga are most likely to take place in a recreation center/swimming pool facility. More walking/jogging/biking trails are desired by 25 percent of respondents. Given the limited number of existing trails in Spanish Fork, this is an important finding. Table 3D illustrates all of the facilities on the survey and the percent of responses for each.

Table 3D – Most-Desired Facilities



Importance of Facilities and Performance in Providing Facilities

Survey respondents were asked to evaluate the importance of certain facilities to them and their households and then to evaluate how the City was performing in providing those services. With most facilities, respondents felt that the relative importance of a facility and their expectations were either equal or were exceeded. However, there were areas identified where facilities are very important, but are not being provided. Those identified in the list that follows with an asterisk (*) showed the largest difference in importance and performance. These findings are consistent with those in Table 3D, where indoor facilities (aquatic and recreation) and trails are most-desired. Some facilities listed are addressed in either the Parks or Trails Chapters.

- Indoor exercise and fitness facilities*
- Indoor gyms for basketball/volleyball*
- Indoor aquatic center*
- Recreation center*
- Trails - linking the City, along the river bottoms, and walking and biking trails in general*
- Outdoor ice skating rink
- Performing arts center
- Picnic shelters/areas
- Playgrounds
- Preservation of open space
- Small neighborhood parks

Funding Facilities and Priorities

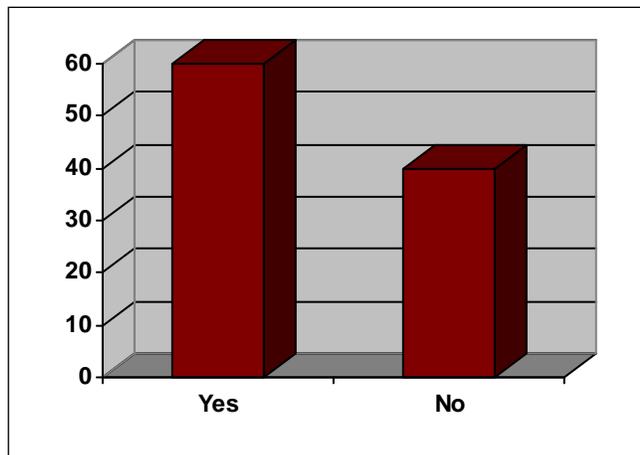
Sixty percent of all residents expressed willingness to pay additional property taxes or utility fees to construct a recreation center or indoor aquatic center (see Table 2E). These findings corroborate similar findings from other questions where an indoor aquatic center/recreation center complex is highly desired.

Respondents aged 65 years and above were the least willing to pay additional property or utility taxes (38 percent);

however, the range of responses for all other age groups was fairly close and ranged between 51 percent and 66 percent, where 25 to 44 year olds are the most willing.

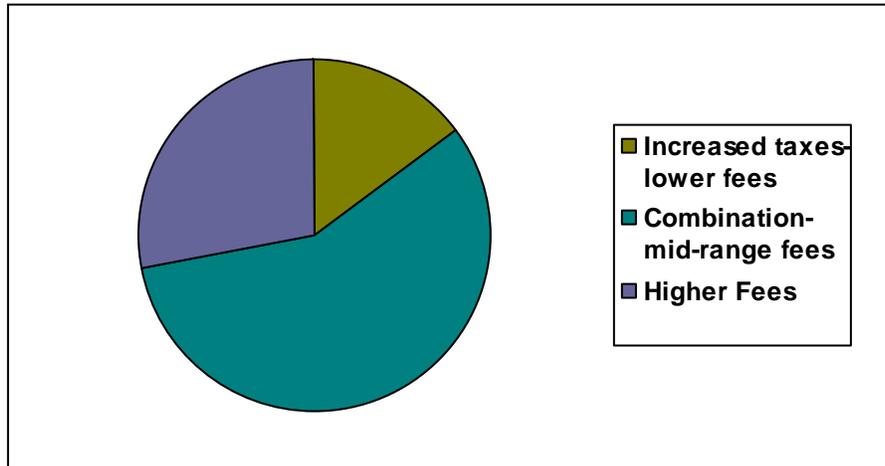
Though the majority of survey respondents are willing to pay higher property taxes, they are less willing to use the increased taxes for operating and maintaining facilities, nor are they willing to fund operations and maintenance exclusively through higher fees. The

Table 2E: Willingness to Fund a Recreation/Aquatic Center



most favorable funding source for operations and maintenance of facilities is a mid-range fee increase combined with an increase in taxes. Table 2F illustrates graphically the preferences for funding operations and maintenance of the desired indoor aquatic/recreation center.

Table 2F: Preferred Funding Sources for Maintenance and Operations of New Facilities



As a means of further refining community-desired improvements and priorities, survey participants were asked to allocate \$100 to various recreational facilities. Nearly one-third elected to spend the money on an indoor aquatic center, followed by just over 20 percent who would spend the money on a recreation center, and almost 18 percent who would spend the money on walking and bike trails.

Summary

- Fiesta Days is the event in which most residents participate.
- Swimming and baseball/soft ball are the activities in which most residents participate.
- The swimming pool (water park), reservoir, fairgrounds, and sports parks/ball parks are the most-used facilities.
- An indoor pool/aquatic center, recreation center, and more walking/jogging/biking trails are the most desired facilities.
- Year-round swimming and activities that take place in recreation centers (racquetball, water aerobics, and yoga) and programs for toddlers and youngsters were most-desired.
- Residents are willing to pay more taxes to fund a recreation center/aquatic center.
- Operations and maintenance of a recreation center/aquatic center should come from a combination of taxes and mid-range fees.

Existing Recreation Facilities

In addition to parks, Spanish Fork includes several very impressive recreation facilities, many of which are regional and even national attractions. These add greatly to the range of opportunities available to residents. The facilities are described briefly here, more information can be found in the *Spanish Fork Parks and Recreation 2007 Annual Report* (January 2008)

Spanish Fork City Fair Grounds

This 20-acre site is the home of a Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA) event during Fiesta Days in July, as well as many other smaller equestrian and agriculture-related events and activities throughout the year. Fiesta Days is among the most popular events in the City and the fairgrounds serves as one of the most visited facilities. The High Chaparral room is a popular location for family gatherings and wedding receptions, as well. In 2007, total revenue reached a five-year high and the third highest revenue total recorded in Fairgrounds history. The competition for horse shows has increased in recent years due to new facilities throughout the state. With the return of the Utah County Fair in 2008 and additional planned improvements, the future looks to be promising.



Water Park

The Water Park opened summer 1994 and was the first water park of its kind in Utah; in 2004 the splash pad was added. Since opening, the Water Park has been very heavily used for lessons, open swim, swim meets, special events, and private pool and pavilion rentals by schools, churches, families, and business/civic groups. In 2007, 114 groups reserved the Water Park and pavilion amounting to 16,792 participants. Swimming is the second most participated-in activity for respondents to the city-wide resident survey, and the most-used facility in the City. Additional opportunities for swimming, particularly year-round, are highly desired by the community – year-round swimming was the most-desired activity identified on the survey and an aquatic center/indoor pool was the most desired facility. Senior citizens represented the largest age group desiring year-round swimming and facilities.



Golf Course

This 18-hole course sits on 180-acres at the mouth of Spanish Fork Canyon. Recent improvements to the club house and renewed efforts to improve customer service were goals for 2007. Marketing efforts, the addition of flags on putting greens and driving ranges, more yardage signs and new Geographic Positioning System (GPS) units for customers to use while they play were among the noticeable changes that increased

customer satisfaction. The City feels it is on the right “course” to reclaim its share of dedicated golfers.

The golf course staff also assists with the annual Festival of Lights, which occurs in adjacent Canyon View Park each Christmas season and attracts upwards of 800 to 1000 cars on peak evenings. In 2007, 12,752 cars drove through Canyon View Park to enjoy the lights, generating added revenue for the City.



Gun Club

The Spanish Fork Gun Club is considered the most popular gun club in Utah, and a regional and national attraction that has hosted the Utah State Shoot for six years in a row. In addition to hosting eight major shoots in 2007 with shooters from throughout the country and Canada, the club hosts activities for corporations, church and scout groups, and other events that attract shooters of all ages and skill levels year-round. The club also sponsors local youth through the Scholastic Clay Target Program, a national program that offers children in school the opportunity to compete at the state and national level where every year Spanish Fork youth have qualified and competed at the national finals. The Gun Club is adjacent to Spanish Oaks Reservoir and includes approximately 16 acres, which features a 71-site RV park.

Spanish Oaks Reservoir

The Spanish Oaks Reservoir area is the second most-used facility in the City, and occupies approximately 163 acres including the reservoir and beach area, eight overnight campsites, and acres of open space on the hillside. With the addition of the new Mt. Country Pavilion which can accommodate 150 persons seated at picnic tables, it will continue to be a popular location for swimming, sunbathing, and gathering.



Sports Park

The Sports Park has grown to 80 acres and includes lighted baseball/softball diamonds, as well as soccer and football fields. It serves as a Community Park because of its many other attractions (picnicking, tennis, play structure, trails), but is one of the most important sports complexes in the region.



Russell Swenson Baseball Complex

The Complex includes five baseball fields and a

softball field. It too serves as a Community Park, occupying 17 acres. The paved parking lot was recently improved and enlarged, and nearly one and one-half acres of overflow parking was added. The Complex includes Dons Field, which is used by the Spanish Fork High School baseball team for home games and practices.



Existing Recreation Programs

The City offers a broad range of sports-related recreational programs for all age groups and skill levels. Existing Recreation Programs are described briefly here, more information can be found in the *Spanish Fork Parks and Recreation 2007 Annual Report* (January 2008)

Swimming

For the past five years, swimming classes have filled almost immediately leaving a demand for more that cannot be accommodated in the current facility. Classes include private, semi-private, and group swim lessons, diving, parent and me classes, and water aerobics. Between swimming lessons, classes for boy scouts seeking their swimming and life saving badges are offered. In 2007, 1,598 individuals participated in classes at the Water Park of which 4.68% were non-residents.

The Spanish Fork Parks and Recreation Swim Team trains at the Water Park and competes with other Utah County swim teams. The Team included 195 swimmers in 2007, which is the highest number of participants in history.

Baseball and Softball Programs

Programs are offered for boys and girls beginning at age 4 and continuing through high school grade 12. In 2007, 2,525 children and youth participated in these programs, which have growth steadily over the years. The City also manages the Grand Slam Batting Cages which it leases from private owners and operates at a small profit.

Several special events related to baseball and softball are sponsored by the city, including Boys Pizza Factory Baseball, Girl's Big Slam Softball Tournament, Men's Summer Baseball Tournament, and Individual Adult Softball Tournaments. All of these events attract people from outside of the City who contribute to the local economy. Ball fields are also rented to organizations and tournaments – an additional source of revenue to the City of Spanish Fork.

Start Smart Baseball accommodates children 4-5 years of age and develops the skills needed for organized T-Ball teams. It is a parent-child participatory program intended to

be non-threatening and instructional. Participation in the program expanded in 2007 to include 128 boys and girls.

Girls and Boys T-Ball, Coach Pitch and Machine Pitch takes children from kindergarten through second grade. T-Ball accommodates kindergarten children and some first grade children. In 2006, the program included 18 boys' teams and 10 girls' teams. Children then move into Coach Pitch for girls and Machine Pitch for boys, where they start hitting from a pitched ball rather than a stationary ball. 2007 included 30 boys' teams and 16 girls' teams.

Boys Baseball takes boys through the Mustang League (3rd and 4th grade), Pinto League (5th and 6th grade), and Pony League (7th and 8th grade). All leagues are part of the Utah Boys Baseball Association, where both the Mustang League (22 teams) and Pinto League (15 teams) in the City of Spanish Fork were the largest in Utah County.

Girls Softball is associated with the Utah Girls Softball Association and offers girls in the same age ranges an opportunity to play in the Falcon League, Filly League, and Fox League through the 9th grade. All three leagues play fast-pitch softball, and include 13, 12 and 9 teams respectively.

Colt League and Phoenix League offers high school-aged boys (Colt) and girls (Phoenix) opportunities to play league baseball and fast-pitch softball. The leagues are small as high school-aged youth have many other activities competing for their time, but those who are interested in participating have that opportunity. In 2007, Spanish Fork sponsored five Colt teams and three Phoenix teams.

Accelerated Baseball & Softball Leagues were added in 2007. Monday Night Baseball had four age divisions with 24 teams. Monday Night Softball had just one division with seven teams.

Men's Softball is one of the largest adult programs offered in the City. In 2007, 60 teams played spring/summer and 24 teams played in the fall league. Four different divisions accommodate all skill levels from competitive play to recreational play.

Women's Softball included 22 teams in 2007, with two divisions -- competitive and recreational.

Co-Ed Softball is offered in the fall and in 2007 included 39 teams divided into divisions based on skill level.

Men's Roy Hobbs Baseball was new in 2007 and included 123 participants on ten teams. Previously this program was sponsored by Provo City and they rented Spanish Fork fields. When Provo City decided to drop the administration of this program, the City of Spanish Fork picked it up.

Growth in adult programs is usually smaller than that of youth programs, however, in 2007, many adult programs showed significant growth. The combined growth in Men's, Women's and Co-ed softball was 11 teams. Adult programs include both residents and non-residents. Non-residents may play on teams but are charged slightly higher fees.

Football Programs for Children and Youth

Flag Football continues to grow in popularity and includes a 3rd and 4th Grade League and a 5th and 6th Grade League for a total of 23 teams. This is an increase of five teams over 2006. The City Parks and Recreation Department has reported a shortage of available football fields for practices and for play during the fall months. New fields available at the Sports Park will be used for these programs.

Tackle Football includes three age groups - 6th, 7th, and 8th/9th grade Leagues. The 7th and 8th/9th grade teams play in the Nebo League, which includes teams from Spanish Fork, Salem, and Payson. Participation in this program has varied in the last few years, seeming to be more affected by the parents' league teams that have been formed outside of programs provided by Spanish Fork.

Football Programs for Adults

Men's Flag Football included 108 participants on ten different teams in 2007.

Soccer Programs for Children and Youth

Little Kicker's Soccer is a beginning program for 4-5 year old boys and girls, which focus on skills development. Parents are encouraged to participate. The program grew to 80 participants in 2007.

Youth Soccer is offered for children kindergarten through 9th grade each fall. It is the second largest youth sports program offered in Spanish Fork, and in 2007 the program grew by 12 teams for a total of 134 teams or 1,490 individuals. With the new fields added to the Sports Park in 2007, the City will be able to fulfill citizen requests and begin to offer a spring season of soccer in 2008.

Soccer Programs for Adults

Men's Outdoor Soccer is growing in popularity and because Spanish Fork is the only community in Utah County to offer men's soccer, which includes a large percentage of non-resident participants. In previous years, Men's teams have played in both spring and fall leagues, however, due to sportsmanship issues in the spring, the fall season was canceled. The spring season had 10 teams with 105 participants, 73 percent of which were non-residents. Serious evaluation is underway as to whether this program will be continued.

Women's Outdoor Soccer is offered both spring and fall, and included 12 teams in spring and 14 teams in the fall.

Basketball Programs for Children and Youth

Little Hoopsters is an introductory program for girls and boys in the 1st and 2nd grades. The program began in 2002 and has grown rapidly causing additional sessions to be offered. In 2007, 24 teams (capacity) played in the fall and an additional 20 teams were accommodated with the winter program. A total of 351 participants were accommodated between the two sessions.

Youth Basketball Association (YBA) Basketball Leagues are available to boys and girls from 3rd grade through high school. Participation increases in this program every year. In 2007, there were a total of 133 teams which is an increase of eight teams over 2006. The YBA works closely with the Mountain West Conference, and local colleges and universities to promote youth basketball on the local level.

Basketball Programs for Adults

Men's Basketball included 46 teams during the 2007-2008 season, playing in seven leagues. The leagues use locally trained officials, and participate in the Nebo Tournament that is jointly sponsored by Spanish Fork, Springville, and Payson. The summer league added in 2006, doubled in size to 16 teams. Offering basketball during the summer is easily accommodated, as there are fewer demands on facilities during the summer months.

Women's Basketball includes resident and non-resident players, with 12 teams playing. Overall Men's and Women's Basketball teams increased to 16 teams and 120 participants.

Volleyball Programs for Children and Youth

Girls Volleyball Training began fall 2006 and is offered to 5th through 9th grade girls. This program was developed at citizen request, and doubled in size from 46 to 92 participants.

Volleyball Programs for Adults

Women's Volleyball League included 36 teams in 2007-08, an increase of five teams. The season culminates with city-wide tournaments and an Invitational Nebo Tournament which includes teams from other communities.

Coed Volleyball League included 16 teams in 2007, an increase of six teams. After experiencing a lapse from 1999-2004, the program is again up and running and is offered in the spring. Since it was revived and changed to spring beginning in 2005, the number of teams participating has doubled.

Wrestling Programs for Children and Youth

Junior Wrestling is available to kindergarten through 6th grade children, with two leagues – kindergarten and 1st grade, and 2nd through 5th grade. Participation has remained steady with six teams participating. The season culminates in the annual Nebo Wrestling Tournament held in Spanish Fork, which draws wrestlers from the region.

Intermediate Wrestling for 6th through 9th grade youth was not sponsored by the City in 2007-08. This program will return to the jurisdiction of Nebo School District with the formation of Jr. High Athletics under the direction of the Community School Director.

Track and Field Programs for Children and Youth

Youth Track Team includes youth from 8 to 14 years of age, and is affiliated with the Central Utah Track and Field Association (CUTFA). Affiliation with CUTFA allows participants to be involved with local track and field events, as well as county-wide competitive meets. This program has grown dramatically in the few years, growing from 24 participants to 111.

Hershey Track and Field Program includes youth from 3rd to 8th grade. Participation in 2007 averaged 969 individuals in each of three elementary track meets and over 100 boys and girls in the Intermediate Meet. This program is valued for its encouragement of physical fitness and active lifestyles for youth.

Tennis

Indoor Tennis is played on courts at the fairgrounds. Resident and non-resident memberships are sold to individuals and families for the use of the facilities. A large number of non-residents have tennis memberships; 80 percent for Individual Memberships and almost 64 percent for Family Memberships. Coed youth tennis programs are also offered, and lessons are taught on city courts during the summer.

Urban Fishing

Fishing classes are held at Canyon View Park and at Spanish Oaks Reservoir through a program designed by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR) and taught locally. It is a non-sports related program that has been very successful, with classes filled to capacity instructing 150 youth between 6 and 13 years of age. The City's relationship with DWR has resulted in a large grant which was used to make improvements at Spanish Oaks Reservoir.

Special Events and Activities

Fiesta Days enjoys the most participation of any other city-sponsored activity. Eighty percent of respondents to the community-wide parks and recreation survey participate in Fiesta Days. The Parks and Recreation Department offers a variety of events including a

tennis tournament, softball tournament, a Fiesta Days Kickball event, an Annual Speedy Spaniard Fun Run on the 24th of July, and a Mile Run open to youth 12 years of age or younger. All of these events and activities have enjoyed increased participation and are highly valued in the community.

The Thanksgiving Dodgeball Tournament is held the Tuesday before Thanksgiving and in 2007 included 13 teams of twelve players each.

Recommended Recreation Programs and Facilities Priorities

The City of Spanish Fork is doing an excellent job with sports programs and facilities; some are among the best in the region. And with the completion of the Sports Park fields, competition for practice space and sporting events should be lessened, though there will always be demand. It is time however, for the City to focus on other opportunities in facilities and programs and provide for a broader variety of recreation opportunities.

Indoor Aquatic Center/Recreation Center

An indoor aquatic/recreation center is the most-desired facility in the community – 50 percent of survey respondents identified an indoor pool and 46 percent identified a recreation center. The City's current water park is highly used (80 percent of survey respondents use the facility); swimming lessons are full with people being turned away, and residents (many senior citizens) want options for exercise and recreation during the winter months.

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA, 1987) once developed a guideline for swimming pools that recommended one swimming pool for every 20,000 residents. The City's current population is 30,404 and is anticipated to grow to nearly 70,000 in the year 2025. The City should be planning to develop an indoor pool that is associated with a recreation center within the next five years.

The recreation center could include additional facilities that provide space for non-competitive recreational activities such as special interest classes and programs, acting, dance, and art classes, meeting rooms for groups and clubs, a gathering place for youth and teens, a running track, after-school programs, exercise and weight rooms, and other facilities and programs that will provide additional options for leisure and recreation, and encourage healthy lifestyles. This will require a large expenditure of resources, some of which can come from willing residents; the rest of which may need to come from other sources and possibly other communities. Chapter 5 addresses a range of funding options and opportunities.

Walking, Jogging, and Biking Trails

This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4; however, walking, jogging, and biking are extremely popular. Given the small number of trails currently available to residents, the fact that 25 percent of survey respondents want more walking, jogging, and biking trails

is an indication of their growing popularity. More resources will need to be directed toward trails in the future.

Cultural/Performing Arts Center

Ten percent of survey respondents indicated a need for a cultural arts/performing arts center as an alternative to facilities at the High School, and to provide additional opportunities. Write-in comments mentioned an amphitheater-type facility; others assumed a building. Regardless, the feelings expressed in those comments suggest it is time for a cultural arts center or a performing arts center that is specifically designated and designed for a broad range of arts and cultural activities. A feasibility study is needed to determine space requirements, costs and funding, location criteria, potential partnerships, fundraising, and revenue projections.

Non-Competitive Programs and Activities

While sports participation in Spanish Fork is large and growing, there is a segment of the population interested in programs and activities for children and adults that are not competitive or necessarily team-related. Suggestions found in some of the write-in comments on the survey suggest classes for children and adults, classes that are held in the evenings, more activities for smaller children, rock climbing, an enlarged and improved skate park, after-school programs and programs that parents can participate in with their children, and just more options that are not team or sports related.

Goals and Policies

Goal **Provide and maintain a broad variety of recreation programs and facilities to serve the diversity of City residents.**

Policy Provide a recreation center/indoor aquatic center facility to serve residents.

Implementation Measure: Develop a program for and conduct a Recreation Center/Indoor Aquatic Center feasibility Study that looks at funding, management, operations, financial implications, and site selection.

Policy Provide neighborhood and community parks where programs can be scheduled and coordinated.

Implementation Measure: Upgrade existing Neighborhood and Community Parks according to the recommendations in Chapter 2.

Implementation Measure: Identify appropriate funding strategies for new construction, upgraded facilities, and long term maintenance of facilities.

Policy Provide multipurpose trails for the health and enjoyment of residents.

Implementation Measure: Expand the existing trail system according to the recommendations in Chapter 4.

Policy Provide non-competitive recreation activities, classes, and programs to address the needs of individuals who do not or cannot participate in team related sports activities.

Implementation Measure: Conduct focus groups and other means of determining the kinds of classes, activities, and programs desired.

Implementation Measure: Work with local interest groups and others to identify partners and locations for a diverse range of classes.

Policy: Provide additional opportunities and facilities for cultural arts and performing arts programs.

Implementation Measure: Develop a program for and conduct a Cultural Arts/Performing Arts feasibility Study that looks at funding, management, operations, financial implications, and site selection.