

Chapter 2:

Trends

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In order to keep pace with the demands of a growing population, the City of Rochester needs to consider how the dynamic nature of technologies, trends, cultures, and activities will affect facility and programming needs. The following chapter explores key trends and their potential implications for the parks and recreation system.

By building flexibility into the City’s recreation and park facilities, Rochester will be able to adapt quickly and efficiently in order to meet these new demands.



Changing Social Trends

Increasing Demands on Time

- » The average American works 46.7 hours/week
- » The amount of unstructured play in a child's day is 4-7 minutes/day on average, while time spent in front of an electronic screen is more than 7 hours per day.

Implications for Parks & Recreation

- » Convenient, safe locations
- » Flexible hours
- » More hours
- » Individualized schedules
- » After school programs



Changing Social Trends

Increasingly Anxious About Safety

- » Perception of Safety and Income: 15% of adults with household income less than \$35,000 have been afraid to leave their homes, versus 1% of adults with household income greater than \$75,000
- » 5% of Olmsted County adults experienced a time in the last year in which they were afraid to leave home because of violence in the area.

Implications for Parks & Recreation

- » Better lighting
- » Safer trails and parks
- » Closer facilities



Changing Social Trends

Increasingly Disconnected From Nature

- » Children's play has changed from outdoors to indoors since the 1950s.
- » Greater understanding of developmental benefits of different types of play, including unstructured, exploratory, creative play

Implications for Parks & Recreation

- » More natural areas
- » More educational/interpretive programs
- » Balance of environment & recreation
- » Desire for passive open space
- » Interest in aesthetics & gardens
- » Adventures/Nontraditional sports



Changing Social Trends

Increased Importance of Place + Experiences

- » The increased mobility of the creative class (telecommuting, freelance work) has resulted in individuals choosing where they live based on lifestyle and proximity to other creative people rather than employment opportunities.
- » 78% of millennials would choose to spend money on a desirable experience or event over buying something desirable.

Implications for Parks & Recreation

- » Placemaking in parks and other public places
- » Inclusion of public art
- » Programs & events
- » Co-production of services and experiences
- » Distinctive programming
- » Destination features



Changing Health Trends

Increasing Physical + Mental Health Problems

- » 64% of Olmsted County adults are overweight, with 28% being obese
- » 10% of Olmsted County youth feel sad all or most days

Implications for Parks & Recreation

- » Integration of body & mind
- » More support for active living
- » Walking, running, & biking trails
- » New fitness opportunities
- » Fitness and weight lifting facilities
- » Spaces designed for reflection and meditation



Changing Health Trends

Increased Interest in Aging Actively

- » 14.4% of Olmsted County residents were 65+ in 2015
- » According to a 2013 survey, issues related to aging (elderhealth) was cited as one of the most pressing community health issues in Olmsted county

Implications for Parks & Recreation

- » More senior recreation
- » More mid-day recreation programs
- » Less strenuous outdoor recreation- more walking, gardening, culture, etc.
- » Desire for volunteer opportunities



Changing Demographic Trends

Increasing Diversity

- » In Rochester, racial and ethnic minorities have grown from 14% of the population in 2000 to 18% in 2010
- » 12.4% of Olmsted County speak a language other than English at home

Implications for Parks & Recreation

- » Accommodate family gatherings
- » Clustering activities to support multi-generational events
- » Playgrounds / sport courts
- » Multi-purpose fields (Including soccer & cricket)
- » Need for culturally appropriate programs & spaces



Changing Demographic Trends

More Transient

- » 24% of U.S. adults reported moving to a different city within the United States in the past five years
- » The average American moves 11.7 times during the course of their lifetime

Implications for Parks & Recreation

- » Strong outreach to new residents
- » Flexible & multifaceted
- » Effective wayfinding



Changing Financial Trends

Pinched Household Budgets

- » 9% of Rochester residents live in poverty
- » 29% of Rochester household incomes are less than \$50k

Implications for Parks & Recreation

- » Access challenges
- » Affordability
- » Increased social service needs

Pinched Government Budgets

- » Many cities are apprehensive about spending
- » Many cities face a backlog of deferred maintenance and replacements from the past decade

Implications for Parks & Recreation

- » Need for partnerships & shared facilities
- » Focus on quality over quantity
- » Need for stable funding
- » Balance between new and existing
- » Life-cycle cost considerations
- » Use of volunteer labor for building and operations



Changing Environmental Trends

Demand for Green Alternatives

- » Transportation: biking, walking, and transit
- » Stormwater treatment
- » Maintenance practices
- » Native/habitat restoration
- » Education
- » Local food systems

Implications for Parks & Recreation

- » Need for staff knowledgeable about sustainable practices
- » Increased interest in community gardens
- » Interest in year-round commuting routes and amenities (bike racks, lockers, showers) to support transportation alternatives
- » Need for improvements to, and thoughtful management of, natural areas



Changing Parks + Rec Trends

Rise in Informal Adult Recreation versus League Participation

- » In 2011, participation in softball leagues in Minnesota was at half of 1994 levels
- » Basketball participation has seen a 75% decrease since 1994
- » Increased popularity of other fitness options
 - Running/jogging
 - Bicycling
 - Yoga
 - Circuit programs/cross fit

Implications for Parks & Recreation

- » Increase in demand for specialized recreation facilities
- » Changing demand for traditional sports facilities like diamonds and courts
- » Expanded interest in using parks by entrepreneurs for classes or events



Changing Parks + Rec Trends

Interest in Specialized Facilities + New/Non-Traditional Sports

- » Dog Parks - 39% of US Households own at least one dog
- » Lacrosse has recently been the fastest-growing high school sport
- » Pickleball has become an alternative to tennis and is particularly popular with Baby Boomers

Implications for Parks & Recreation

- » Requests for additional specialized, single-use facilities
- » Increased coordination needed to accommodate new sports that use fields similar to traditional sports
- » Potential for reduced demand for current athletic facilities

