



TOWN OF LELAND COMMUNITY CENTER SURVEY

OCTOBER 2010

PREPARED BY:



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INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

On July 1, 2010, the Town of Leland closed on the purchase of an 18,000-square-foot unfinished building just off Highway 17 in the Magnolia Village Commercial Center for use as a community center. Construction was originally started by the previous owner on a Peak Fitness health club, but was suspended prior to completion of the facility. The building sat vacant and unfinished for more than a year and had gone into foreclosure. The Town was able to purchase the building for \$560,000, just over a third of its tax value of \$1,492,250. The Town estimates it will take \$400,000 to \$500,000 to complete and furnish the facility.

OBJECTIVE

The intention of the Town is to create a viable and active community center that addresses a multitude of community needs and will be used by all of Leland's residents. In order to create such a center, public input is critical. As such, the Leland Town Council commissioned the Parks and Recreation Department to conduct a survey of residents' needs and desires. The document that follows outlines the results of the survey and will be used to help plan and design the new facility.

Some of the specific objectives of the study are to determine:

- Demographic characteristics of respondents
- Respondents' current recreational behavior and interests
- Likelihood of community center use and program participation
- Perceptions of what types of activity areas and spaces the center should have and what types of programs should be offered
- Perceptions of how the community center should be funded
- Ways respondents would travel to the center
- Ways the Parks and Recreation department can improve and focus its efforts

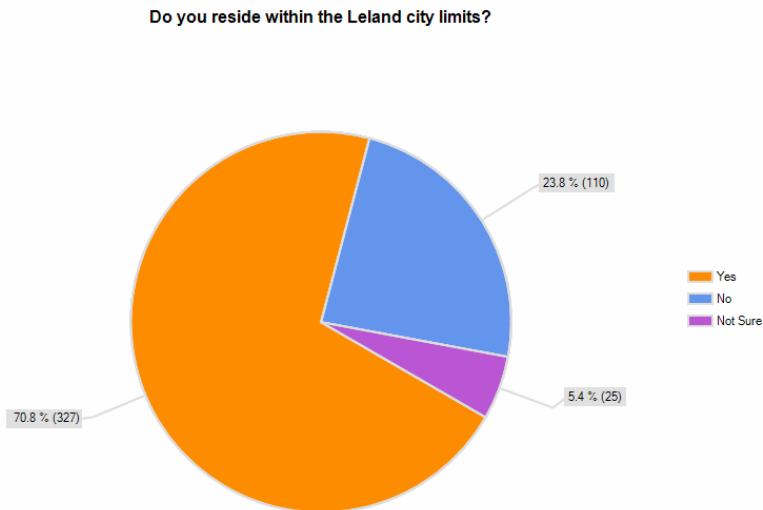
METHODOLOGY

The Town of Leland Community Center Survey was conducted from August 1, 2010 to September 20, 2010 as an electronic (online) survey hosted on Survey Monkey at www.surveymonkey.com/s/lelandcommunitycenter. The survey link was distributed via the Town of Leland Web site, Leland Parks and Recreation e-mail listserv, and included in local newspapers and area publications. Paper copies of the survey were available at Leland Town Hall, Leland Library, Leland Senior Center and were made available at other Town events including Founders' Day. The Town received 462 total responses (442 online, 20 paper).

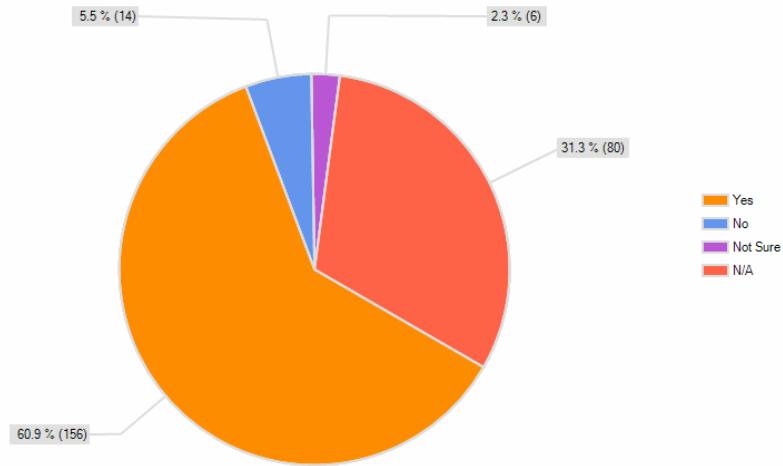
SUMMARY

DEMOGRAPHICS

Leland residents made up 70.8% of respondents, nonresidents made up 23.8% and those unsure of their residency made up 5.4%. Due to Leland's widespread geographic nature and the use of a variety of zip codes, staff recognized that there may be some confusion over residency, so a follow-up question was asked to determine how many residents who checked "no" on the first question live in the greater Leland area. Of those respondents, a majority (60.9%) lived within the 28451 or 28479 zip codes.

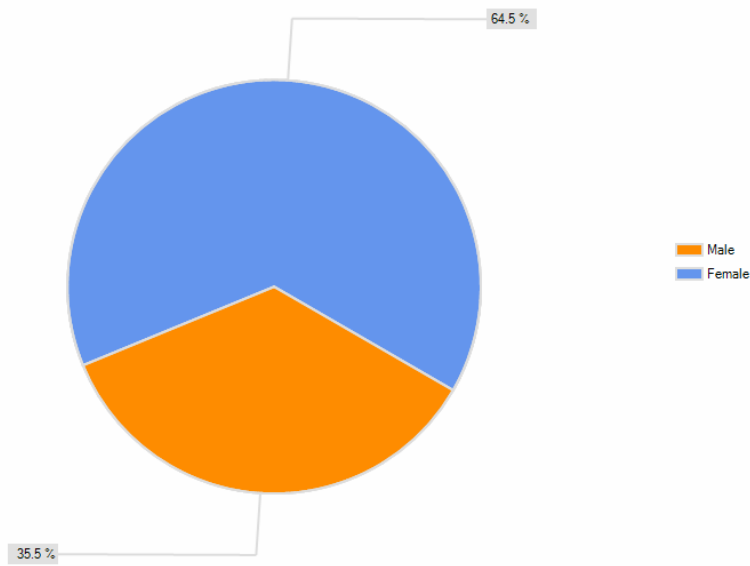


If you checked no to question 1, do you live in the greater Leland area (outside city limits, but in the 28451 or 28479 zip code)?

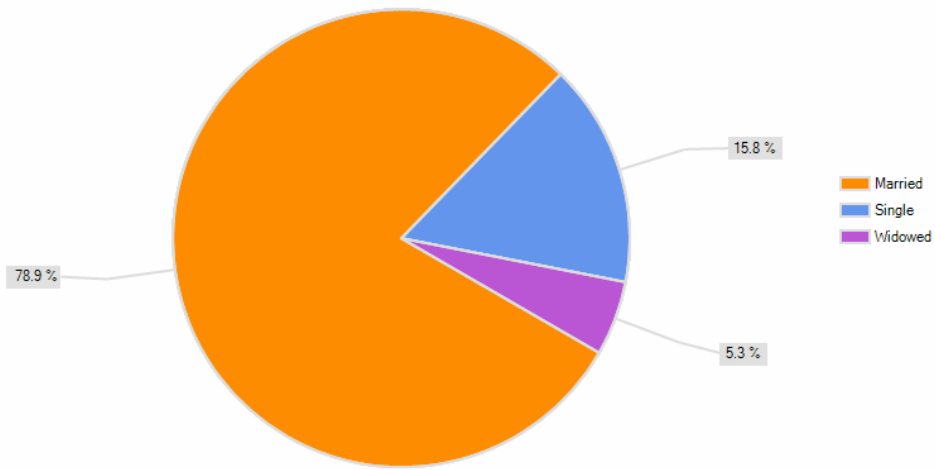


The typical respondent was female (64.5%), married (78.9%) and retired (56%).

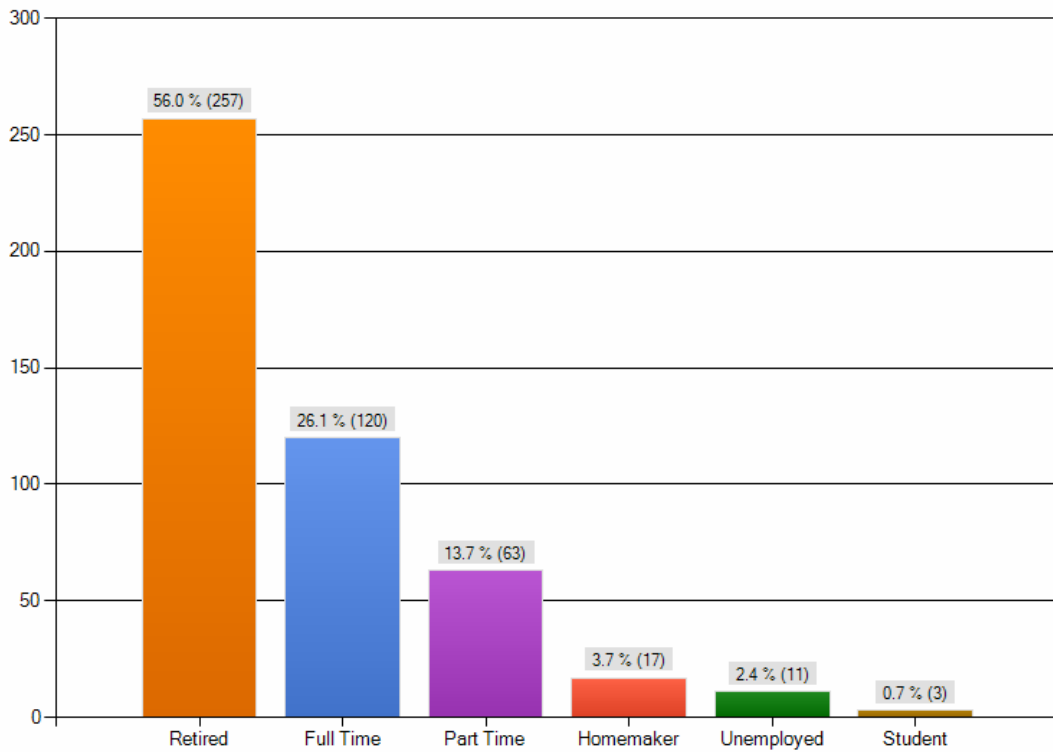
What is your gender?



What is your current marital status?



What is your current employment status?



Most respondent households consisted of two people between the ages of 51 and 65.

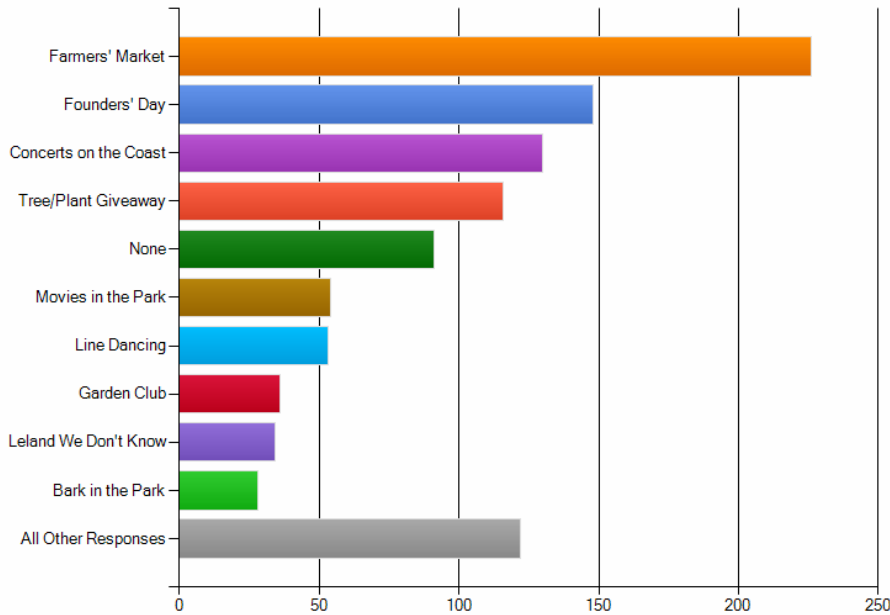
Leland Community Center

| How many people from each of the following categories are there in your household? | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------|-------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-------------|----------------|
| Number | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | More than 6 | Response Count |
| Under 6 years | 70.0% (28) | 25.0% (10) | 5.0% (2) | 0.0% (0) | 0.0% (0) | 0.0% (0) | 0.0% (0) | 40 |
| 7 to 12 years | 54.2% (13) | 41.7% (10) | 4.2% (1) | 0.0% (0) | 0.0% (0) | 0.0% (0) | 0.0% (0) | 24 |
| 13 to 17 years | 94.1% (16) | 0.0% (0) | 5.9% (1) | 0.0% (0) | 0.0% (0) | 0.0% (0) | 0.0% (0) | 17 |
| 18 to 30 years | 56.8% (21) | 35.1% (13) | 8.1% (3) | 0.0% (0) | 0.0% (0) | 0.0% (0) | 0.0% (0) | 37 |
| 31 to 50 years | 38.9% (37) | 60.0% (57) | 0.0% (0) | 1.1% (1) | 0.0% (0) | 0.0% (0) | 0.0% (0) | 95 |
| 51 to 65 years | 40.6% (104) | 59.4% (152) | 0.0% (0) | 0.0% (0) | 0.0% (0) | 0.0% (0) | 0.0% (0) | 256 |
| 66 and over | 50.6% (86) | 48.2% (82) | 0.6% (1) | 0.0% (0) | 0.6% (1) | 0.0% (0) | 0.0% (0) | 170 |
| <i>answered question</i> | | | | | | | | 455 |
| <i>skipped question</i> | | | | | | | | 7 |

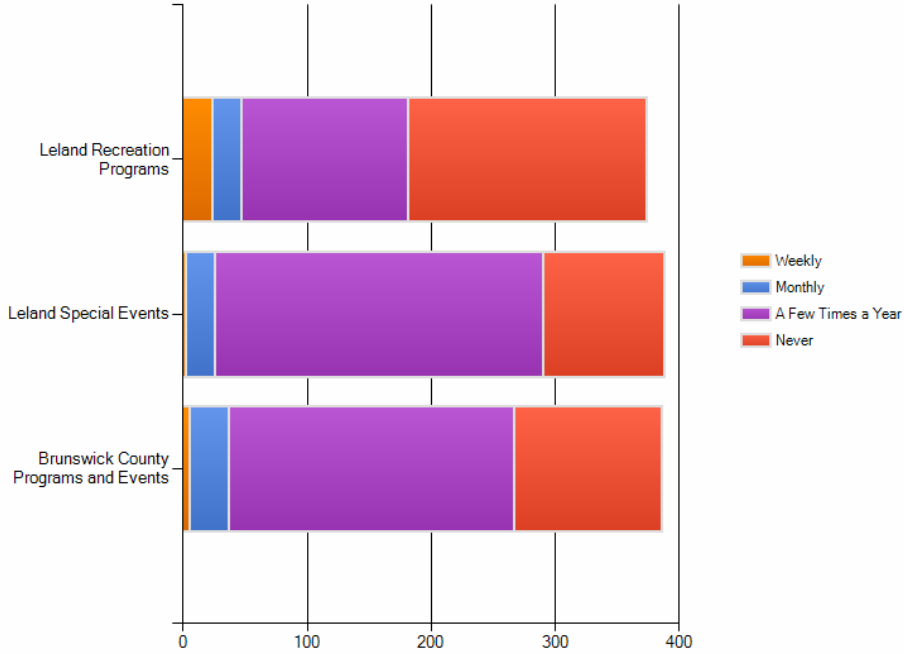
ACTIVITIES AND INTERESTS

Of the activities offered over the past year by Leland Parks and Recreation, the Farmers’ Market had the most participation, followed by Founders’ Day and the Concerts on the Coast series.

Which of the following programs or activities offered by Leland Parks and Recreation have you or a member of your family participated in the past year? (Check all that apply)

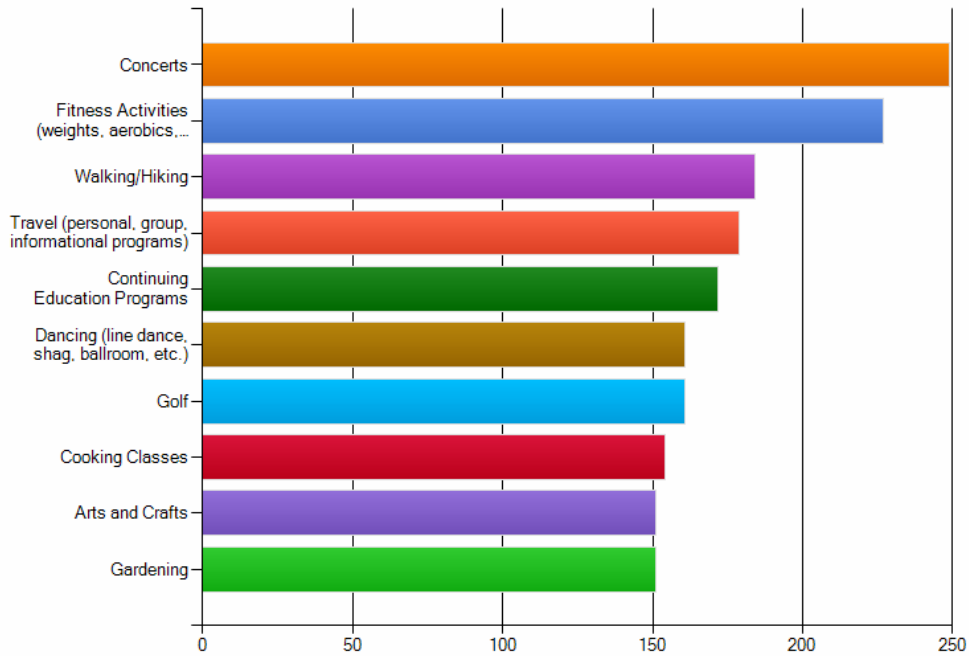


How often do you or your family participate in the following?

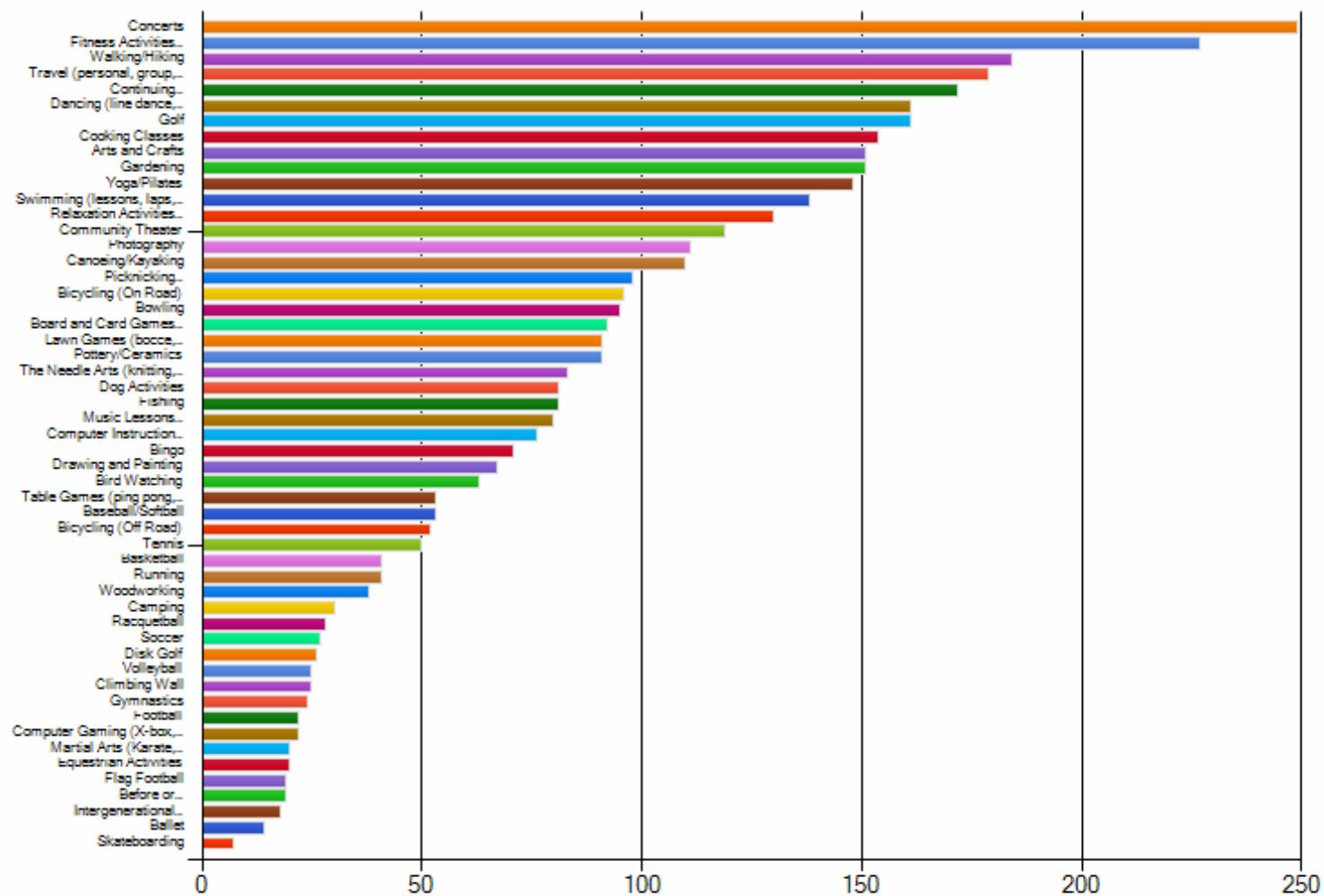


Of particular note to this survey were the responses regarding areas of interest. Concerts were the most popular activity, followed by fitness activities and walking/hiking.

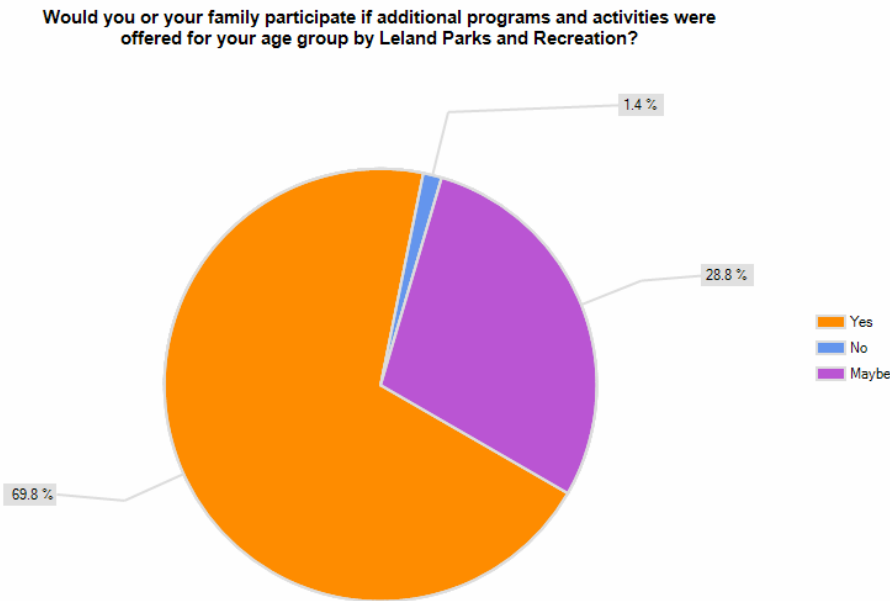
In what activities are you or members of your family interested in participating? (Check all that apply)



In what activities are you or members of your family interested in participating? (Check all that apply)



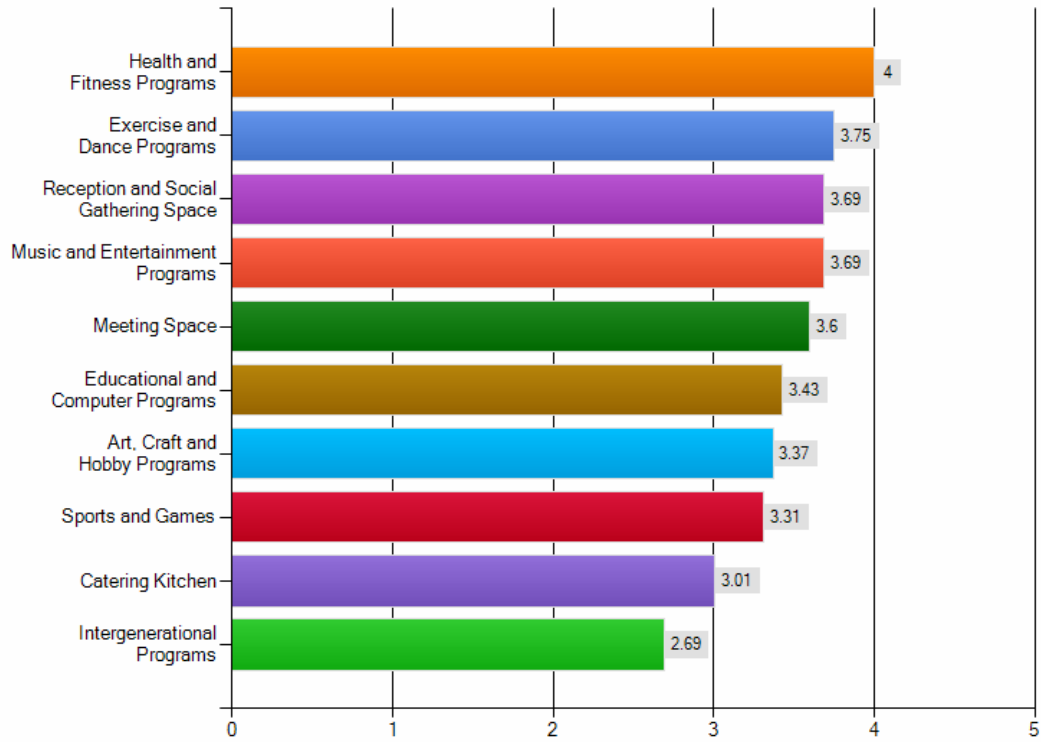
A majority (69.8%) of respondents stated they would participate if additional programs and activities were offered by Leland Parks and Recreation. Only 1.4% stated they would not participate.



COMMUNITY CENTER PLANNING

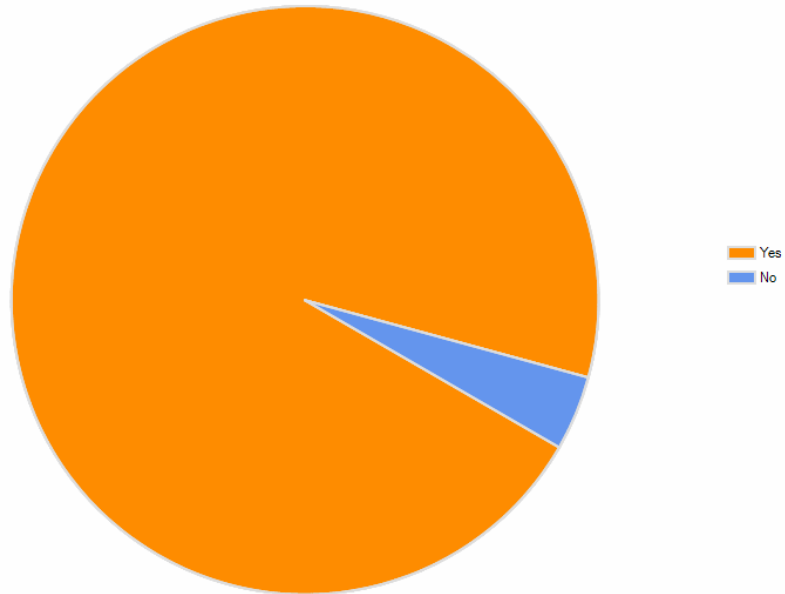
In determining what was most important to include in the community center, respondents were asked to rate whether 10 different items were 1) Not Important at All; 2) Not Very Important; 3) Somewhat Important; 4) Very Important; or 5) Extremely Important. The numerical average of responses was used to determine the final ratings. Nine of the 10 choices were determined to have some degree of importance, with only Intergenerational Programs being deemed "Not Very Important." The most popular choice was Health and Fitness Programs (4) followed by Exercise and Dance (3.75), Reception and Social Gathering Space (3.69), Music and Entertainment (3.69) and Meeting Space (3.6).

How important is it that the following are included in the new community center?



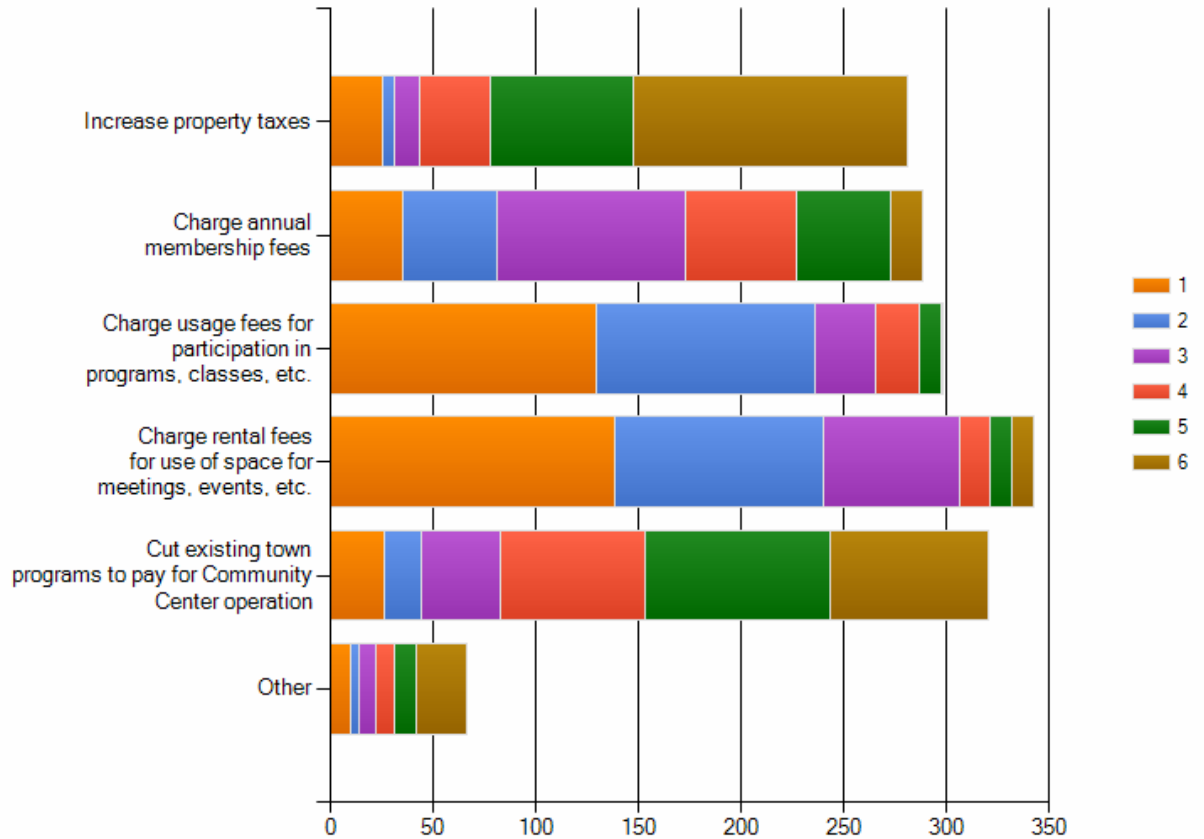
A large majority (95.9%) of respondents stated they would use the community center.

Do you anticipate you or your family using the community center if it offers programs and activities you are interested in?



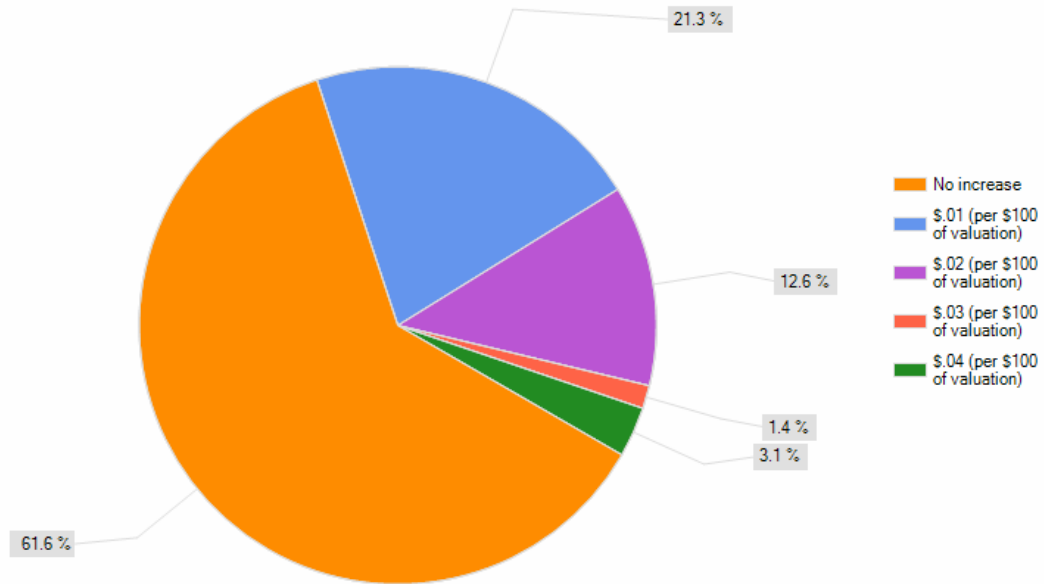
Respondents were asked to rank their preferences 1-6 for funding the upfit and operation of the center on an annual basis, with 1 being the most preferred method. Charging rental fees for the use of space for meetings, events, etc. was the most popular method, with charging usage fees for participation in programs, classes, etc. following close behind. The increase of property taxes and cutting of existing programs were the least popular options.

Please rank your preferences for funding the upfit of the Community Center and operating it on an annual basis (1 being the most preferred method).

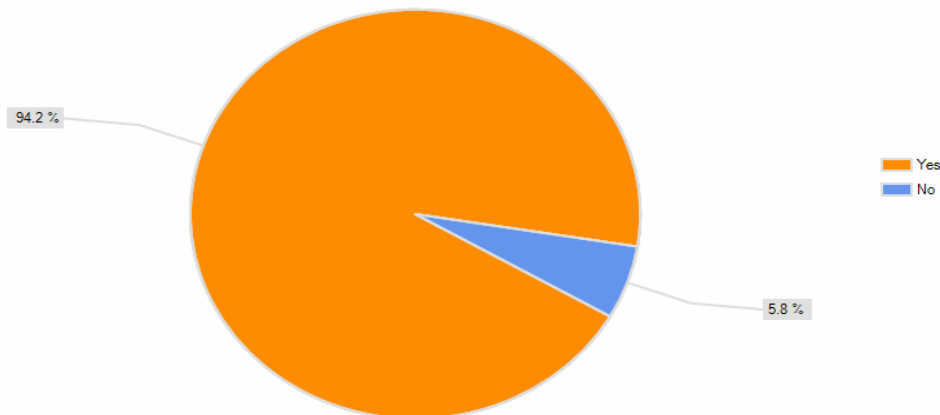


When asked their preferences for a property tax increase, 61.6% stated they favored no increase, while 38.4% would be willing to pay an increase from \$.01 to \$.04. A large majority (94.2%) preferred renting the space to pay for operations costs.

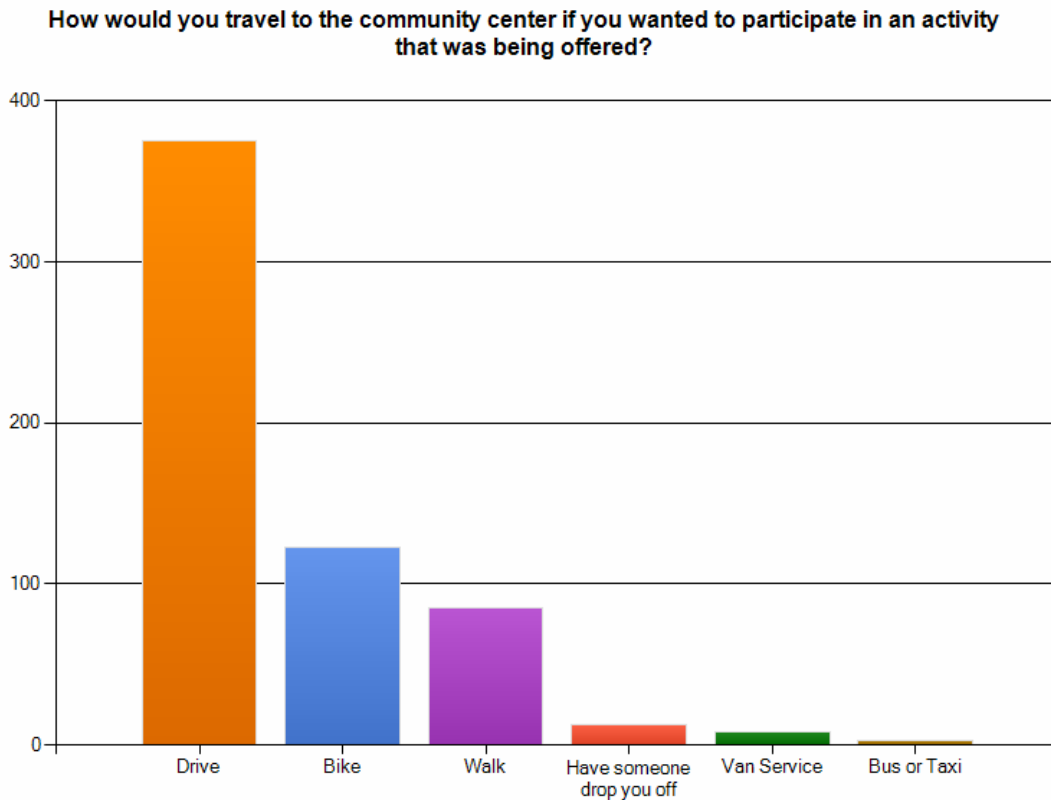
How much would you be willing to raise the property tax rate to pay for upfitting the building and annual operations costs?



Would you support renting space in the facility for meetings, wedding receptions, etc. to help pay the operating costs?



Most respondents stated they would likely travel to the community center by driving.



HOW CAN WE IMPROVE?

A series of questions were presented designed to guide Leland Parks and Recreation with future planning efforts. Respondents indicated that they felt the department should focus the majority of its efforts on addition of new recreation programs and that e-mail was the preferred means of receiving information about programs and events. Open-ended questions allowed respondents to indicate what they felt were the three most important recreation issues or needs and what they would do if they had \$100 to spend to improve parks and recreation opportunities. These responses varied widely and are included in Appendix B.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the survey, the following comments and conclusions are offered:

- It is highly probable that the demographic profiles of respondents will match the community center’s user groups. Many of the respondents fall into the category of “older persons.” These people, aged 51-65, reject the traditional categorization of “seniors” or “senior citizens.” Research has shown that they are active, generally well-educated, tend to be middle to upper-middle class and enjoy volunteering and community involvement. They would be less likely to go to a “senior center”

- facility, instead preferring an intergenerational type of center that is not exclusively for one user group. It is this group that will be critical to the community center's success, particularly in the early stages of the facility. This group would also be a potential pool for volunteers and part-time center staffing.
- Nearly all of the respondents stated their intention to use the community center if it offers programs and activities they are interested in. This is encouraging, but also reminds us that it will be critical to identify early on the desired programming that will bring people to the center.
 - Most respondents who indicated they are not residents of Leland, did indicate that they live in the greater Leland area. Therefore, these people can still be considered potential users of the facility, whether that be for classes, activities or rentals. It will still have to be determined what level of participation nonresidents are allowed, but most comparable community centers do allow for high levels of participation by nonresidents albeit at slightly higher costs.
 - The question regarding activities and interests gives us a wealth of information that can be used in planning for the community center. The selection of concerts as the top activity or interest indicates a strong affinity for music and performances. This should be taken into account in planning for the community center as it could be designed to accommodate such activities. The same holds true for the selection of fitness activities and walking/hiking as the other two top choices. This clearly indicates that there is a strong desire – if not an expectation – for a fitness component to be included in the community center.
 - The responses in the activities and interest question are reflected in the question as to what should be included in the new community center. Health and Fitness Programs were thought to be important by 93.8% of respondents, with 35.1% of those respondents feeling it was “extremely important” that those programs are included. Exercise and Dance was thought to be important by 87.4%; Reception and Social Gathering Space by 86.5%; Music and Entertainment by 90.1%; and Meeting Space by 83.8%. This indicates that there is strong desire for a facility with spaces that can be adaptable for a variety of uses.
 - As for funding the facility, charging rental fees for the use of space for meetings, events, etc. was the most popular method, with 94.2 percent supporting rental fees to cover operating costs. Usage fees (pay to play) were also a popular option. Tax increases and cutting existing programs were the least popular options. While 61.6% stated they favored no tax increase, 38.4% stated they would be willing to pay an increase from \$.01 to \$.04 per \$100 of valuation. This indicates there would likely be some – albeit limited – support for a tax increase to operate the center. Therefore, it is critical that the Town consider and adopt a fee schedule that enables the recovery of a significant amount of operating funds.