

Additionally, the results of the questionnaire administered at the Kick-off meeting were used to develop a number of discussion topics that were the focus of five separate small group discussions (Focus Groups) held at various locations in the city. Participation in the focus groups was based on willingness to participate, as expressed on the questionnaire, and then sorted accordingly by the volunteer's preference on topics of discussion, existing zip code, and availability. A diverse cross-section of senior citizens was present at each focus group.

The prioritization of identified senior program needs in this report is based on a blending of proposed program needs as expressed senior citizen participants, by city staff and by other agency personnel.

The "Space Usage Matrix" for building space and site needs is based upon data gathered by visiting several senior centers, interviewing successful senior center directors, the experience of the Taylor Wiseman and Taylor team, and by input from the Parks and Recreation staff.

Geographic data was obtained from the Wake County GIS department, the City of Raleigh GIS department and the Parks and Recreation Department GIS coordinator. Preparation of the site selection model utilized standard ERSI software compatible with that operated by the Parks and Recreation Department.

Budget information was obtained through interviews with directors of other senior centers and city staff.

A considerable amount of information and consultation was provided by various members of the City of Raleigh Parks and Recreation Department who have guided the direction that portions of this study took and by a team of professors from the Center for Aging Research and Educational Services, Jordan Institute for Families at the School of Social Work at The University of North Carolina.

II. SENIOR PROGRAMS AND PROGRAMMING

City of Raleigh Senior Programs

The City of Raleigh currently offers a wide variety of directed activities and programs for its citizen seniors. These are provided through the Parks and Recreation Department and are available to anyone aged 55 and up. With the primary objective of providing services throughout the City within easy reach of all of seniors, the City offers some 48 'Golden Years' clubs to its citizens. These clubs are housed in a wide variety of places including community centers, churches and residential communities, and they meet weekly or twice a month. The clubs offer a wide range of activities and the opportunity for participants to get to know seniors who live in their area.

The City also offers seniors a range of travel opportunities through day trips and longer overnight trips. They even offer the opportunity for foreign travel through the senior adult program.

This program provides a number of opportunities for seniors to stay active and fit including low impact exercise classes, fitness equipment rooms available to seniors through the parks system, ballroom dancing, and yoga. It also provides for sporting activities including horseshoes, shuffleboard, softball, table tennis, tennis, golf, bowling, and walking groups.

Other activities made available for seniors through the City of Raleigh include various classes, games such as bingo, a chorus, and health and wellness sessions.

Below is a list of programs currently provided through the Raleigh Parks and Recreation Department:

- Aquatics / Swimming
- Badminton
- Ballroom / Social Dancing
- Basketball
- Bowling
- Cards, Board Games, Bingo
- Computers / Internet Access Classes
- Fitness Equipment
- Golf
- Health And Wellness Classes
- Horseshoes
- Indoor Exercise and Fitness
- Line Dancing
- Meetings And Clubs
- Music / Chorus
- Ping-Pong
- Putting Green, Croquet, Shuffleboard
- Racquetball / Handball
- Self-Help / Repair Classes
- Social Activities
- Softball
- Speakers / Programs
- Table Tennis
- Tai Chi, Yoga And Pilates
- Tennis
- Theater and Entertainment
- Trips and Travel
- Walking Trails

These programs are well received and attended and are providing a vital function for the Seniors of Raleigh.

The following tables were based on responses from the questionnaires collected for this study. In order to develop facility program requirements for different types of both indoor and outdoor space, the responses are sorted by "type" of space. They do NOT include all the programs offered to seniors by the city; however, they do serve as a means of prioritizing relative interest and importance for this study.

TABLE 1
COMBINED SUMMARY OF PROGRAMS REQUESTED FROM FOCUS GROUPS AND QUESTIONNAIRES

Programs requiring large multi-purpose type room

Program	Responses	Program	Responses
Indoor exercise and fitness	110	Theater and entertainment	8
Line dancing	10	Ping-Pong	2
music	7	Ballroom dancing	18
Choral singing	3	Evening / weekend activities	4
Tai chi, yoga and palates	3		

Programs requiring small meeting / classroom

Speakers / programs	29	Indoor activities	13
Meetings and clubs	24	Computers / internet	19
Cards, board games, bingo	127	Book exchange	5
genealogy	5	Educational offerings	44
Cultural activities	7	Social activities	36

Programs requiring special facilities

Therapeutic activities	5	Fitness equipment	10
Library and reading room	6	Racquetball / handball	1
Cooking classes	4	Walking trail	27
Arts, crafts and wood shop	44	Bowling	1
Aquatics / swimming	41	Meals	25
showers	2	Billiards	6
TV / sports / movies	2	Car / home repair	1

Programs requiring office type space

Resources / volunteer services	6	Career and employment	3
Help for caregivers	1	health and wellness	38

Programs requiring outdoor space

Outdoor low impact exercise	13	Gardening	2
Putting green, croquet, shuffleboard	7	Walking trail	27
sports	5	Wildlife Programs	2
golf	1		

Programs beyond a center

Trips and travel	73	Transportation service	7
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Future Participation and Coordination of Programs

Two separate streams of thought became obvious during the data-gathering phase of this project. First, that there was strong consensus that the City of Raleigh should establish a single location that will be designated as a Senior Center. Secondly, that since those currently involved in senior programs and activities have become accustomed to programs offerings close to where they live, there is a sense that a single Senior Center would not serve the senior population as well as expansions of program spaces at existing locations would, or perhaps as well as some new facilities, more conveniently located, would serve them.

As previously stated, the study identified both the importance of programs already offered by the city and the need for programs that are not currently offered. A single new facility cannot only provide space for the additional programs sought by the seniors in the city because the seniors living in close proximity to the center would want some of the same services that have already been offered by the city at other locations. The addition of space or staff to a number of the existing community centers for additional programs would also not meet the need of some specialized programs that should only be offered in one location. A unique facility such as the warm, therapeutic pool at the former YWCA, is the only program of its type in the city. Likewise, if meal programs such as Meals-on-Wheels were added in one or more locations, it would not be good stewardship of public monies to have the facilities replicated at many locations. City-provided coordination of all new and existing programs, with the continued addition of new senior clubs, should continue.

Figure 2 below shows a rating of programs offered by the city by the responses to the questionnaires and input from the focus groups. In the following section, the need for additional programs will be covered in more depth.

FIGURE 2
QUESTIONNAIRE AND FOCUS GROUP RATING OF IMPORTANCE OF SENIOR PROGRAMS
ALREADY OFFERED BY THE CITY

