

An aerial photograph of a wide river winding through a lush, green forest. The riverbank is sandy and grassy. In the lower part of the image, several people are seen kayaking on the river. The background shows rolling hills under a slightly overcast sky.

2026 Recreation & Parks Needs Assessment

What We Heard Report

Municipality of Central York Rural Community

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Introduction

The Municipality of Central York Rural Community (CYRC) conducted a Recreation & Parks Needs Assessment Survey to better understand how residents currently use recreation programs, parks, facilities, and community spaces, and to help guide future recreation and parks planning within the community.

The survey was open from January 19 to February 2, 2026, and received 89 total responses through both online and paper formats. Residents were invited to share feedback on a wide range of topics including recreation participation, parks and green spaces, outdoor recreation opportunities, arena use, programming interests, accessibility, and future priorities.

The purpose of this survey was not only to understand current recreation trends, but also to identify gaps, barriers, and opportunities that will help shape future municipal decision-making. The information collected will support future planning initiatives, budget discussions, facility development, grant applications, and alignment with Council's 5-Year Strategic Plan.

Survey Snapshot:

- 89 total responses
- Survey open January 19 to February 2, 2026
- 97% online participation
- Average completion time: 17 minutes



Who We Heard From

Survey responses reflected a broad cross-section of the community and provided valuable insight into the experiences and priorities of residents of different ages and household types.

The highest levels of participation came from adults between the ages of 30–44 and 45–64, representing many working adults, families, and long-term residents within the community. Responses included both adult-only households and households with children and youth, helping provide a balanced understanding of recreation needs across multiple age groups.

The survey captured strong participation from long-standing residents, while also engaging newer community members who contributed valuable perspectives on recreation opportunities and future growth.

72% of respondents reporting they have lived in the community for more than 10 years

Together, this broad participation provides a meaningful snapshot of how residents currently perceive recreation, parks, and community spaces within Central York Rural Community.

Key Findings:

- Strong participation from adults aged 30–44 and 45–64
- Responses included both adult-only households and families with children
- Long-term residents made up the majority of respondents



Recreation Participation & Community Well-Being

Survey results showed that recreation and community activities continue to play an important role in the lives of residents. Most households reported participating in recreation opportunities on a regular basis.

49% of residents participate daily/weekly
84% participate the most during the summer months

Participation was strongest during the summer season, although residents indicated that recreation occurs year-round depending on the availability and type of activities offered. This highlights the importance of maintaining a variety of seasonal opportunities that support both indoor and outdoor recreation.

Residents also indicated that recreation and parks services contribute significantly to overall quality of life within the community. Feedback throughout the survey reinforced the importance of recreation not only for physical activity, but also for mental health, social connection, family engagement, and overall community well-being.

82% of residents indicated that recreation and parks services are important to their household's quality of life

The results demonstrate that residents value recreation as an essential municipal service and see continued importance in maintaining and expanding opportunities for people of all ages.

What We Heard:

- Recreation participation occurs year-round
- Summer showed the highest participation levels
- Residents view recreation as important to quality of life



Barriers to Participation

While residents expressed strong interest in recreation opportunities, the survey also identified several common barriers that may prevent people from participating more often.

The most frequently identified barriers included scheduling conflicts, limited programming options, lack of awareness of available opportunities, financial accessibility, and physical accessibility considerations. These barriers varied somewhat depending on age group and household type, but the overall message was consistent. Many residents are interested in participating more, but practical challenges can limit involvement.

59% reported neutral or dissatisfied feelings toward current recreation opportunities

The survey findings suggest that improving communication, expanding program offerings, increasing flexibility in scheduling, and continuing to focus on accessibility and affordability may help reduce some of these barriers over time.

Understanding these challenges is important because it allows the Municipality to focus not only on what recreation opportunities are offered, but also on how residents are able to access and participate in them.

Most Common Barriers:

- Scheduling conflicts
- Limited programming options
- Lack of awareness
- Financial accessibility
- Physical accessibility



Parks, Trails & Outdoor Recreation

Residents identified strong interest in parks, trails, and outdoor recreation opportunities throughout the community. Survey feedback showed that outdoor spaces are widely used and highly valued for both active recreation and informal community use.

67% of residents visiting municipal parks, trails and outdoor spaces daily, weekly, or monthly

Walking and nature trails, playgrounds, seating areas, lighting, and well-maintained parks were among the most commonly identified priorities. Residents also emphasized the importance of safe, accessible, and welcoming outdoor environments that can be enjoyed by individuals and families of all ages.

The survey also explored future opportunities related to newly acquired municipal green space. Feedback showed strong interest in developing flexible, multi-use outdoor spaces that support both active recreation and passive enjoyment of nature.

In addition, residents expressed interest in strengthening outdoor recreation opportunities connected to water access, trails, and non-motorized recreation such as kayaking, canoeing, and paddleboarding.

Overall, the results demonstrate that outdoor recreation and green spaces continue to be a significant priority for residents and are viewed as important community assets.



Outdoor Recreation Priorities:

- Walking and nature trails
- Open green space
- Playgrounds and family amenities
- Lighting and seating areas
- Safe and accessible parks



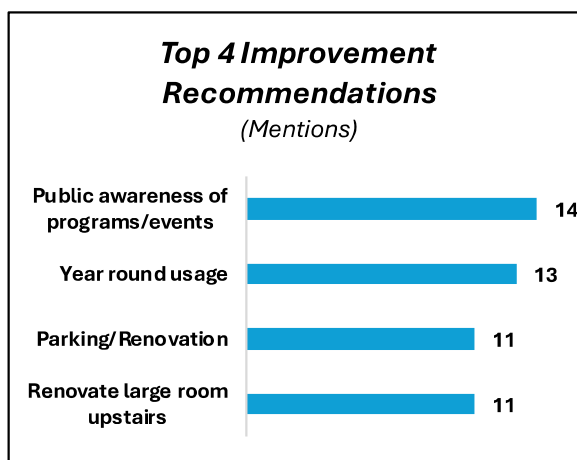
Arena & Community Facilities

The Keswick Valley Arena continues to be viewed as an important recreation and community asset within Central York Rural Community.

Residents reported using the arena for a variety of purposes including hockey, public skating, rentals, and community events. Feedback also reflected interest in seeing the facility continue to evolve under municipal operation to support broader community use and programming opportunities throughout the year and not limited to the colder season.

Survey responses highlighted the importance of maintaining community facilities that are welcoming, accessible, and adaptable to changing recreation needs. Residents expressed interest in expanded programming opportunities, improved scheduling availability, and continued investment in facility upkeep and enhancements.

The survey findings reinforce the arena's role not only as a sports facility, but also as a gathering place that contributes to community connection and activity throughout the year.



What We Heard:

- The arena remains an important community asset
- Residents support expanded programming opportunities
- Facilities should continue evolving to meet community needs



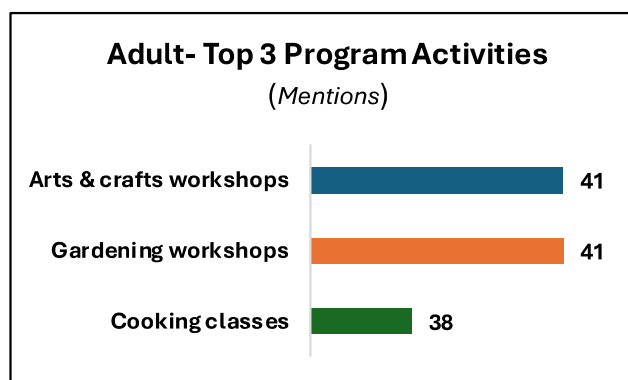
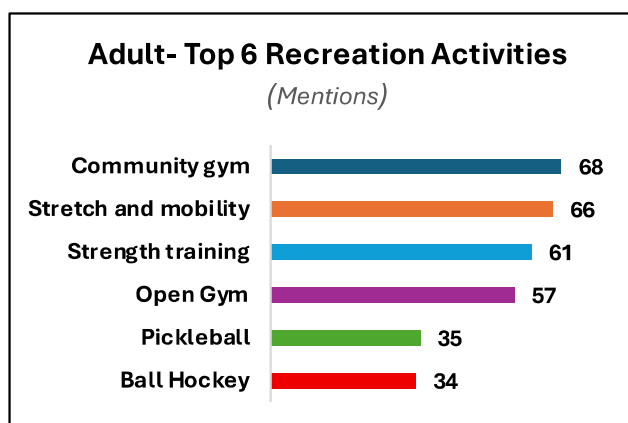
Adult Programming Interests

Adult respondents identified interest in a wide range of recreation, wellness, and community-based programming opportunities.

There was particularly strong interest in flexible, drop-in style opportunities that allow residents to participate without committing to long-term schedules. Community gym opportunities, stretch and mobility classes, and light strength training were among the highest areas of interest related to physical activity and wellness.

In addition to fitness programming, residents also showed strong interest in social and creative opportunities such as community gardening, arts and crafts workshops, and cooking classes. These responses highlight the importance of recreation opportunities that support not only physical health, but also social connection, learning, and community engagement.

The results suggest that residents are looking for a balanced mix of recreation opportunities that support different interests, abilities, and lifestyles.



Highest Areas of Interest

- Community gym opportunities
- Stretch & mobility classes
- Arts & crafts workshops
- Cooking classes
- Community gardening



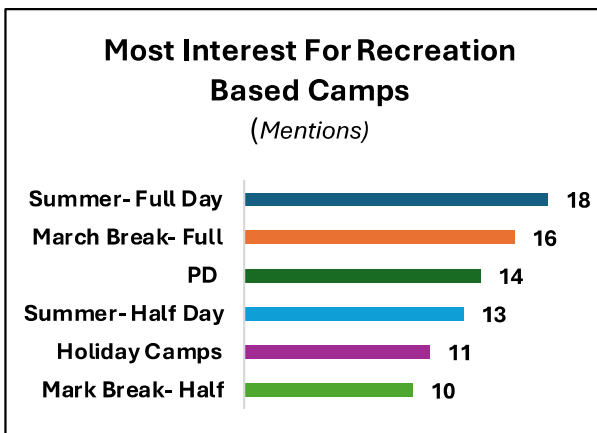
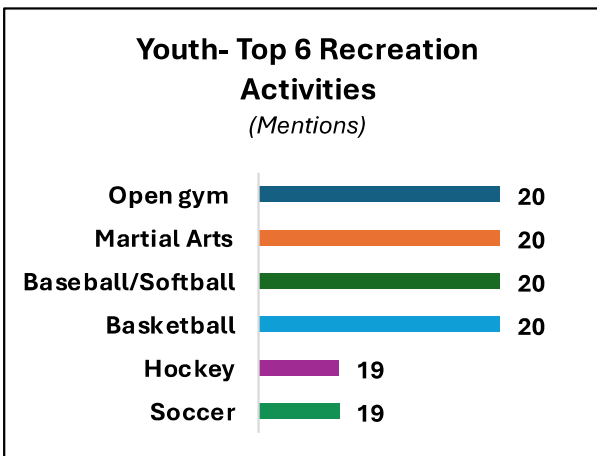
Children & Youth Programming

Families within the community expressed strong interest in structured recreation opportunities for children and youth.

Registered programs showed particularly high levels of interest for younger age groups, especially in areas such as learn-to-skate, hockey, multi-sport activities, outdoor recreation, and creative programming opportunities.

Parents and caregivers also identified interest in camps and childcare-based recreation programs, including summer camps, March Break programming, PD Day programs, and holiday break activities. These types of programs were identified as valuable supports for both recreation participation and family scheduling needs.

The survey results demonstrate the importance of continuing to provide accessible, age-appropriate recreation opportunities that support healthy development, physical activity, social interaction, and community involvement for children and youth.



Key Family Priorities:

- Registered recreation programs
- Camps and childcare programs
- Learn-to-skate and hockey
- Multi-sport opportunities
- Outdoor recreation programs



Overall Themes

Several consistent themes emerged throughout the survey results.

Residents clearly value recreation, parks, and community spaces as important contributors to quality of life and community well-being. There is strong interest in maintaining and expanding recreation opportunities that are accessible, flexible, affordable, and responsive to the needs of residents.

The survey also highlighted the importance of outdoor recreation, green space, and multi-use community facilities. Residents expressed interest in opportunities that support both active lifestyles and social connection, while also identifying practical barriers that can impact participation.

Overall, the results demonstrate a strong desire for recreation and parks services that continue to evolve alongside the changing needs of the community.

Overall Community Themes:

- Recreation and parks are highly valued
- Outdoor recreation continues to be a priority
- Residents want flexible and accessible programming
- Affordability and awareness impact participation
- Community spaces support overall well-being



What Happens Next

The information gathered through this survey will help guide future recreation and parks planning within Central York Rural Community.

Survey results will support future discussions related to programming, facilities, green space development, accessibility, operational planning, funding opportunities, and long-term municipal priorities. The findings will also help strengthen future grant applications and provide data-driven support for recreation and parks initiatives.

Most importantly, this feedback provides valuable direction directly from residents and helps ensure that future recreation and parks planning reflects the needs and priorities of the community.

Thank You

The Municipality of Central York Rural Community would like to sincerely thank all residents who participated in the 2026 Recreation & Parks Needs Assessment Survey.

Your time and input are greatly appreciated and help ensure that community voices are reflected in this process.

We appreciate your continued engagement and support in helping strengthen recreation and parks in our community.