

# McCarren Park Pool

## PlaNYC Survey Results



### Capital Project

Thanks to Mayor Bloomberg's PlaNYC, the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation (DPR) is developing plans for a major investment in McCarren Park Pool, one of 11 pools opened by Robert Moses in 1936. Built to hold 6,800 swimmers, the pool was a summertime social hub for Greenpoint and Williamsburg until it was closed in 1984. The pool re-opened in the summer of 2005 as a venue for performances and movies. The \$50 million allocated will renovate the pool for swimming, create a year-round recreation center, and preserve and restore the historic bathhouse building and entry arch.

### Surveying Methodology

Partnerships for Parks, a joint program of City Parks Foundation and DPR, led the development of the survey, working with DPR and design consultants hired to prepare plans for the site. Survey questions were developed based on feedback from two community design charettes, available funding, and current and projected park use patterns. Surveys were distributed by Partnerships for Parks and the Open Space Alliance (OSA) in person, in print, and by email to over 50 local organizations, newspapers, and blogs in the summer and fall of 2007. 1,665 surveys were collected: 23% on weekdays and weekends at the McCarren Park track, in the pool during a free concert, and in nearby McGolrick Park; 3% via mail; and the remaining 74% online through the DPR and OSA websites.<sup>1</sup>

### Survey Respondents

*69% of respondents (1137 people) are interested in participating in future meetings about the design of the park.* Because surveys were most likely to be completed by people in their 20s and 30s, and the majority of survey responses (74%) were collected online, young adults without children are overrepresented in the sample. In our analysis of the data, we separated survey respondents into subgroups by age, the presence of children in their household, the language used to complete the survey, and their neighborhood of residence so that the interests of underrepresented populations would be expressed in the survey results.

#### Age:

- 76% of respondents are under 40 years old, while only 3% of respondents are 50 or over.
- 88% of respondents do not have children under the age of 18.
- Of the 12% of respondents who do have children under 18, 63% have children under 5.

#### Place of residence:

- 19% of survey respondents live in Williamsburg.
- 16% in Greenpoint.
- 28% live in other Brooklyn neighborhoods.
- 9% in Manhattan; 8% in the Bronx, Queens, or Staten Island, and 4% live outside New York City.
- 16% did not identify their place of residence.

Age of Respondents	
Under 18	2%
18-22	7%
23-29	39%
30-39	29%
40-49	8%
50 and over	3%
No response	13%

<sup>1</sup> Because the survey did not use a random selection of the population, a margin of error cannot be computed for the data.

## Key Findings

Please see accompanying graphs for information regarding desired summertime and off-season pool activities and recreation center programs. Some key differences in the choices of respondents from different neighborhoods, different age groups, and between those with/without children are represented here:

### Summertime pool activities

- Pool-dependent uses are more popular among Greenpoint/Williamsburg residents than those from other parts of NYC, and concerts/films are more desirable among non-Brooklyn residents than Brooklyn residents.
- Pool-dependent uses are most popular among respondents 40 and older and respondents with children, while concerts/films are most popular among college-aged respondents and those in their 20s and 30s.
- Respondents who were surveyed by mail or in a park (not at a concert or by the website) ranked pool-dependent uses ahead of concerts/films.

### Off-season pool activities

- Live music and dance are the most popular off-season use among those under 40, and ice skating is the most popular choice for those over 40.
- Those with children under 18 consistently rank ice skating as their first choice for off-season use. Ice skating is overwhelmingly popular for parents of children of all ages, except for those with teenagers.

### Recreation Center programs & pool area facilities

- Those with school-age children rank summer camp as their first choice, and older residents are most interested in senior programs and a community meeting space.
- When asked what kinds of facilities they wanted in the pool area, the majority of survey respondents listed a concert/performance space as their top choice and benches/tables/seating area as their second choice. Public art space was a close third.

## Open ended responses

The following table shows the number of times each issue was mentioned.

Issues Brought Up in Open-Ended Responses	
Keep concerts and films; use the pool as an art/performance space	154
Safety and security concerns	134
Cleanliness and maintenances, esp. clean pool water	119
Diversity; pool should serve entire community (all ages, new and longtime residents, multilingual materials/staff)	90
Overcrowding (of both pool and neighborhood)	62
Keep all programs free or low-cost, esp. rec. center membership	57
Preservation (of historic architectural elements, incl. the original size of the pool, and graffiti)	48
Space should be flexible: open all year and long hours, space should accommodate multiple uses (swimming, concerts, etc.)	46
Concerts are too noisy; no more concerts	45
Fear of commercialization/Disneyification	44
Concerns about children's safety/sufficient children's programming	41
Concerns about pool safety: lifeguards, fear of diving boards	39

*"The music, film, and performance events that have been offered over the past two summers were all very widely attended and enjoyed. While the pool being filled with water will further promote its use by the community, I would like the concerts to also be incorporated into the new design of the space."*

*"I fear that the pool won't be big enough. Could there be multiple pools for various activities?"*

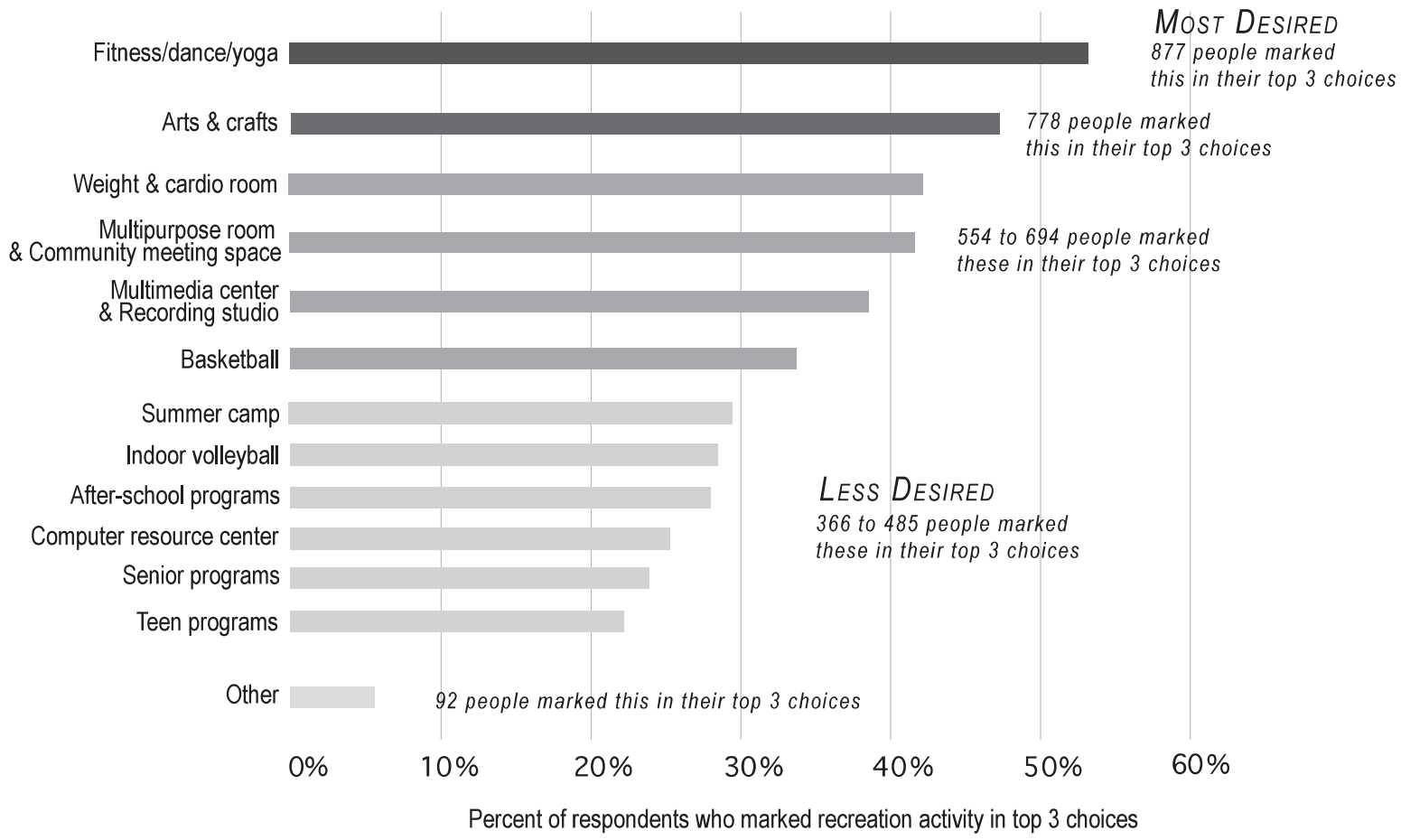
*"Please try to incorporate as much multi-purpose public space as possible."*

*"I really love the way the pool looks - a thing from the past, very anachronistic. I would hate to see the pool looking entirely brand new."*

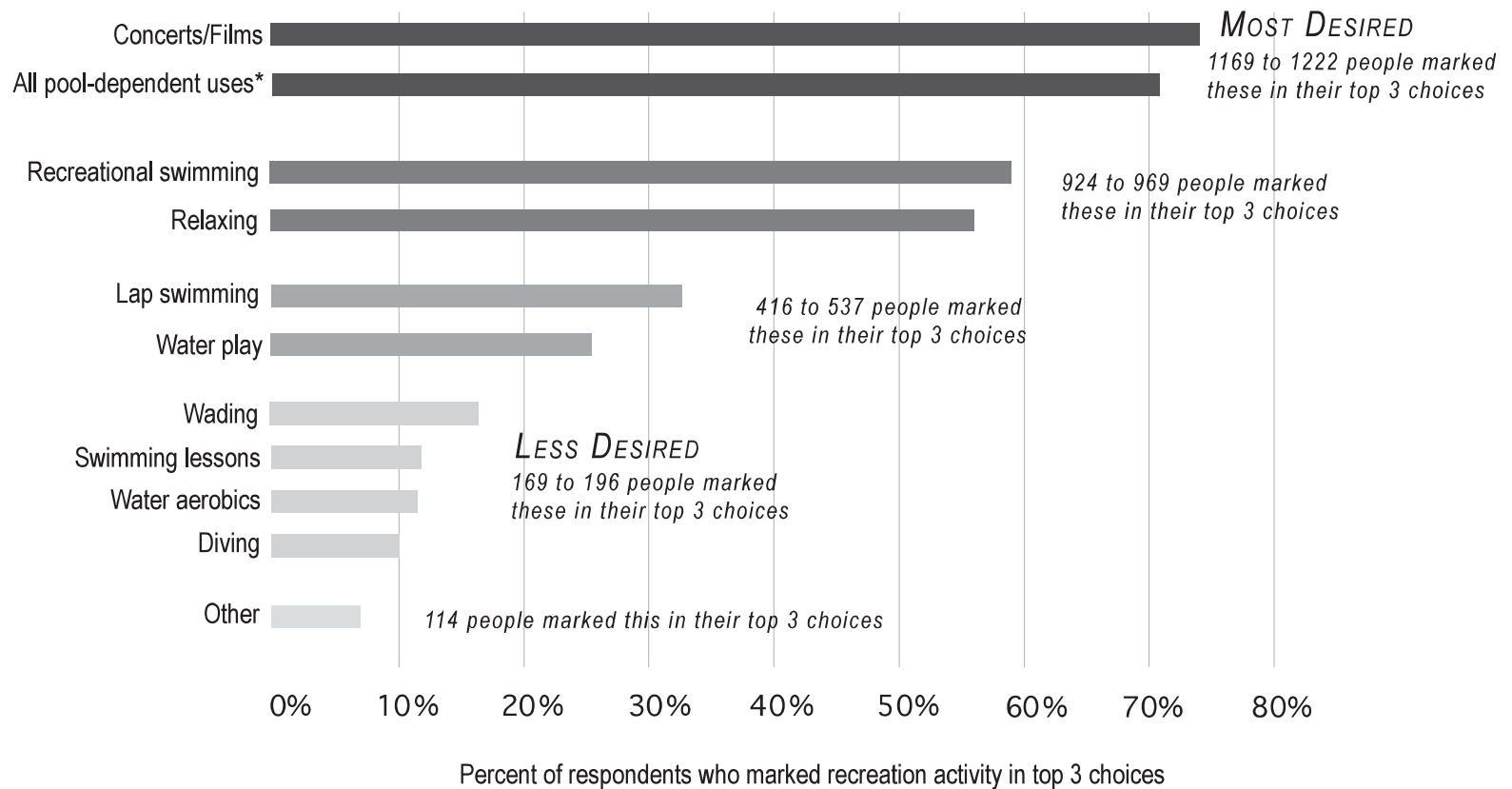
*"My family appreciates the careful process of giving new life to the pool. Please keep it for the whole community."*

**Parks, pools, or recreation centers with interesting or beautiful elements** that respondents suggested as inspiration include: Bosque Playground in Battery Park, Brooklyn Bridge Park, Bryant Park, Fort Greene Park, The Floating Pool, Hamilton Fish Pool & Recreation Center, Metropolitan Pool, Millennium Park in Chicago, MoMA sculpture garden, PS1 summer installations, Red Hook Park and Pool, Riverbank State Park, Riverside Park, Rockefeller Playground, and Socrates Sculpture Garden.

# McCarren Park Pool Recreation Center Activities



# McCarren Park Pool Summer Activities



*\*This was not a separate choice on the survey. The number represents the combined number of people who put recreational swimming, lap swimming, swimming lessons, water aerobics, or diving in their top 3 choices.*

# McCarren Park Pool Off-Season Activities

