



PARKS & RECREATION... SO MUCH MORE

Social Media Toolkit

Parks and recreation departments are **vital** to establishing and maintaining quality of life in a community, contributing to its economic and environmental well-being, and promoting the mental and physical health of its residents.

The pandemic sparked a change in the perceived value of parks and recreation departments' programs, facilities, and services. As a new budget year is approached, it is more important than ever to **advocate** for your department while highlighting these accomplishments and **building support for the future**.

To facilitate this, CRPA has developed a **"So Much More" Social Media Toolkit** with video, graphics, statistics, and suggested social media messages. Use this toolkit to **demonstrate to local elected officials and your community at large** that parks and recreation departments provide **essential services** and are **"so much more"** than the outdated perceptions of the past. We hope you will find these resources helpful as you engage your community.

SHARE!

Use your department/organization's social media outlets to promote the value of the programs, spaces, and facilities your department offers. Use the sample social media messages, statistics, and graphics to educate your community on the essential services you provide.

HASHTAG!

Connect with CRPA and other towns promoting the value of parks and recreation by using #SoMuchMore

TAG US!

Show us how you're promoting your department by tagging us in your posts:

Facebook: @CTRecreationandParksAssociation **Twitter:** @CT_Rec_and_Park

“SO MUCH MORE” VIDEO CAMPAIGN

CRPA has developed a 60-second video “Parks and Recreation... So Much More” to help **modernize people’s perception of parks and recreation**. This video shows that our services are inclusive, affordable, and contribute to mental & physical wellness. It also highlights the **essential services** we provide such as childcare and lifesavings services such as swim lessons, emergency services, and park maintenance.

As we enter a new budget year, fighting to **maintain (or keep) funding** could prove to be an uphill battle. This video is intended to supplement your budget packets as a way of highlighting parks and recreation as an essential service and building support for future years.

Use the supplemental statistics and information on the following page to augment and amplify the message in the video. Some examples include:

- *Parks are a tangible reflection of the quality of life in a community.*
- *About 1/3 of school-age children in the US come home to an empty house after school. Our department provides safe, fun, and supervised places for kids to go when no one is at home.*
- *Quality parks and recreation programs are cited as one of the top three influencing factors for businesses when considering relocation.*
- *A study by Penn State University showed significant correlations with reductions in stress, lowered blood pressure, and perceived physical health to the length of stay in visits to parks.*

CLICK ON THE IMAGE BELOW TO VIEW THE VIDEO!



If you are unable to access the video by clicking the image, please use the link below:

<https://youtu.be/tKGpsh3tQwg>

Sample Social Media Posts: The messages below are intended for use with social media tools such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Most messages are 140 characters or less. These messages may be used as written or customized to address local or other specific needs. Feel free to use our images or use photos from your own facilities.

MAKE SURE TO ADD #SoMuchMore TO YOUR POSTS!

- Your parks and rec department offers ESSENTIAL SERVICES to the community - in the past year an estimated # people safely visited our parks
- Did you know more than # people attended parks and recreation special events last year?
- Every hour, drowning claims over 40 people - last year, our department prevented drownings by teaching # swim lessons
- Our department offers over # different programs to help residents learn something new, explore their talents, or keep active
- Our lifeguards are first responders, performing about # rescues each year - that's # lives SAVED!
- From fishing to STEM activities to sports clinics, our residents participate about # times annually in programs and classes
- Parks are great for mental and physical wellness - our department cares for over # acres of parks and open spaces in our town
- Your Town Parks and Recreation conducts about # playground safety inspections every year to keep equipment in good repair and safe for your children
- Our department employs over # staff members from ages # to # !
- Parks and recreation is one of the largest employers of teenagers in our community
- # % of your town/city residents use our parks!
- Our department maintains over # miles of trails for our community to safely bike, walk, run, and hike
- Parks and recreation departments are leading providers of affordable childcare. Our department oversees # children annually in before and after school programs and # children in summer camp programs starting at just \$ per week!
- There is an intrinsic value that parks and recreation brings to a community
- Our department prides itself on having a robust, active system of parks and recreation programs for public use and enjoyment
- Parks and recreation programs and services contribute to the health of children, youth, adults, and seniors
- Parks are a tangible reflection of the quality of life in a community
- Parks provide gathering places for families, social groups, and individuals of all ages and economic status, regardless of their ability to pay for access
- Parks and recreation programs provide places for health and well-being that are accessible by persons of all ages and abilities
- Access to parks and recreation opportunities has been strongly linked to reductions in crime and reduced juvenile delinquency
- Parks provide a sense of public pride and cohesion to every community

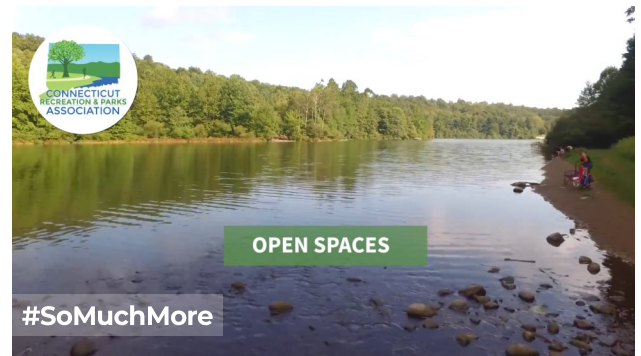
Supplemental Statistics & Information: Use the information below as optional, supplemental information to share with local elected officials when presenting program and budget materials.

- "There are no communities that pride themselves on their quality of life, promote themselves as a desirable location for businesses to relocate, or maintain that they are environmental stewards of their natural resources, without such communities having a robust, active system of parks and recreation programs for public use and enjoyment." (NRPA)
- About 1/3 of school-age children in the US come home to an empty house after school. Our department provides safe, fun, and supervised places for kids to go when no one is at home. (Afterschool Alliance)
- Creating, improving, and promoting places for physical activity can improve individual and community health and result in a 25% increase of residents who exercise at least three times per week. (CDC)
- A study by Penn State University showed significant correlations with reductions in stress, lowered blood pressure, and perceived physical health to the length of stay in visits to parks.
- Parks and protected public lands are proven to improve water quality, protect groundwater, prevent flooding, improve the quality of the air we breathe, provide vegetative buffers to development, produce habitat for wildlife, and provide a place for children and families to connect with nature and recreate outdoors together. (NRPA)
- Parks and recreation services are often cited as one of the most important factors in surveys of how livable communities are. (NRPA)
- An ongoing study by the Trust for Public Land shows that over the past decade, voter approval rates for bond measures to acquire parks and conserve open space exceeds 75%. Clearly, the majority of the public views parks as an essential priority for government spending.
- American Forests, a national conservation organization that promotes forestry, estimates that trees in cities save \$400 billion in storm water retention facility costs.
- Quality parks and recreation programs are cited as one of the top three influencing factors for businesses when considering relocation. (NRPA)
- Parks and recreation programs provide significant indirect revenues to local and regional economies from sports tournaments and special events such as arts, music, and holiday festivals. Economic activity from hospitality expenditures, tourism, fuel, recreational equipment sales, and many other private sector businesses is of true and sustained value to local and regional economies. (NRPA)
- Parks have a value to communities that transcends the amount of dollars invested or the revenues gained from fees. Parks provide a sense of public pride and cohesion to every community. (NRPA)
- Just as growing communities need to upgrade and expand their existing infrastructure of roads, sewers, and utilities, they also need to upgrade and expand their green infrastructure. This interconnected system of green spaces conserves natural ecosystem values and functions, sustains clear air and water, and provides a wide array of benefits to people and wildlife. Green infrastructure is a community's natural life support system, the ecological framework needed for environmental and economic sustainability. (APA)
- For parks and open spaces, community engagement allows mayors and public officials to directly involve their constituencies in the ongoing design, planning, and management of these resources. This process results in informed and engaged residents who feel better connected to their communities. (APA)

Sample Graphics for Social Media Posts

All of these images are available for download on the CRPA website:

<http://crpa.com/advocacy/So-Much-More>



**CONNECTICUT
RECREATION & PARKS
ASSOCIATION**

Support Your Local Parks and Recreation...
They're So Much More!

