

Proposed Community Center in Washington, CT Survey
Preliminary Summary Report

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Executive Summary

The Economic Development Committee in the town of Washington, Connecticut is in the process of developing a Community Center to serve residents of all generations. Currently, the town has a Senior Center, but there is not a space in the town which sole purpose is to provide programming for intergenerational learning and community. A site in the Titus Park area of town has been identified as a potential site, and concept plans have been developed with SLAM Collaborative.

In October 2022 the Community Center Planning Committee created and distributed a survey to gauge Washington residents' values in terms of programmatic offerings at the proposed Community Center. Questions asked about residents' interest in programming types, potential barriers for using the proposed Community Center, and what was the greatest potential impact on residents' lives. The following is a summary report of the data collected.

Methods

Google Forms was used to create a survey that incorporated multiple choice and rating scale questions. The survey was shared virtually with residents of Washington through the town Selectman's weekly email blast for three consecutive weeks. Additionally, the survey was shared through the town's Facebook page and through snowball sampling. Screening questions were included to ensure respondents were 18 years of age and were residents of Washington.

Results

Question 1: Are you a resident of Washington, CT?

215 responses were recorded. 4 of the respondents reported that they were not residents of Washington, so for the purpose of this data analysis those 4 respondents' data was excluded. The information below is based off 211 respondents who reported they were residents of Washington.

Question 2: Are you at least 18 years old?

Respondents were asked to confirm they were 18 years of age. All respondents reported that they were 18 years of age.

Question 3: What is your age?

Of the respondents, the largest demographic of respondents were those 60 years of age and older. This age group accounted for 61% of respondents. The percent of respondents in each age category can be seen in Figure 1.

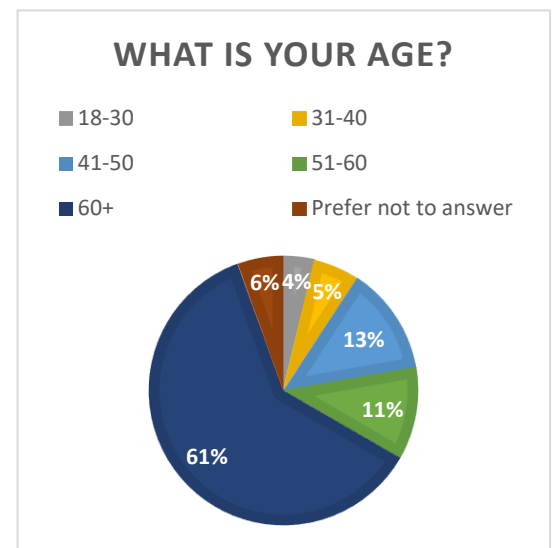


Figure 1

Question 4: How long have you lived in Washington, CT?

Most respondents (54%) stated they have lived in Washington for more than 21 years. Only 7% of respondents reported living in Washington for less than 5 years.

Question 5: Are you able to drive yourself?

There were 3 respondents that stated they were unable to drive themselves.

Question 6: What type of programming and activities are the most important to you for a community center to have? Please rate the following on a scale of 1-5.

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of proposed activities and programs on a scale of 1-5 where 1 was not important and 5 was the most important. The programs/activities that was ranked the most important by the most respondents were adult and senior specific programming (37%), health clinics (36%), and fitness classes (31%). The percent of respondents that marked each offering the most important can be seen in Figure 3.

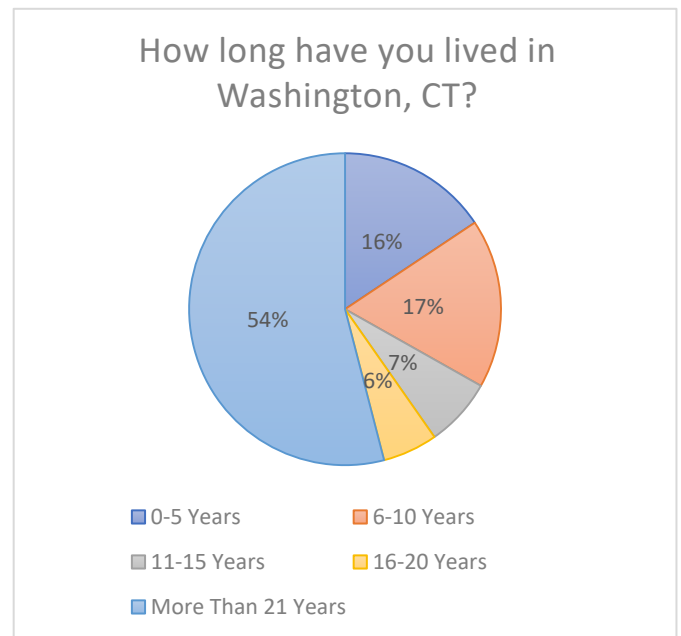


Figure 2

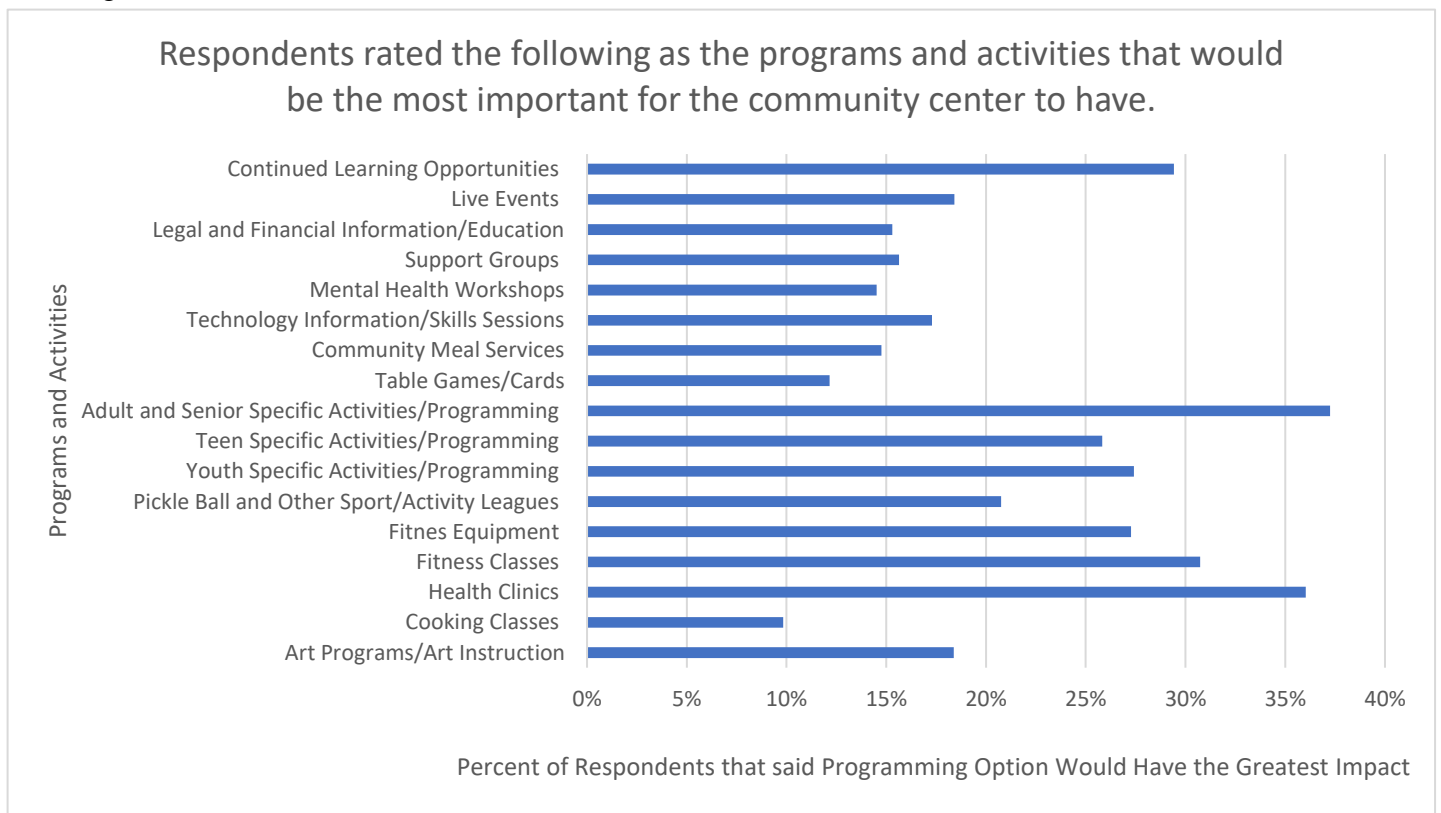


Figure 3

Question 7: Are there any other programs or activities that are important for the community center to have that are not listed above?

The most common responses were that residents would like there to be spaces in the Community Center for group and activity meetings to be held. Other responses showed a community interest in space for gardening, book clubs, and that outdoor areas for walking, sitting, and that would allow for gathering space were important.

Question 8: What is the most important physical feature for the Community Center to have? (Ex. Walking trails, gym space, art room, etc.)

The most common feature noted by respondents was their desire to have a gym space and well-maintained walking trails. Additionally, meeting space that could be used for group activities or for organizations and clubs to rent and access to kitchen space was important to residents.

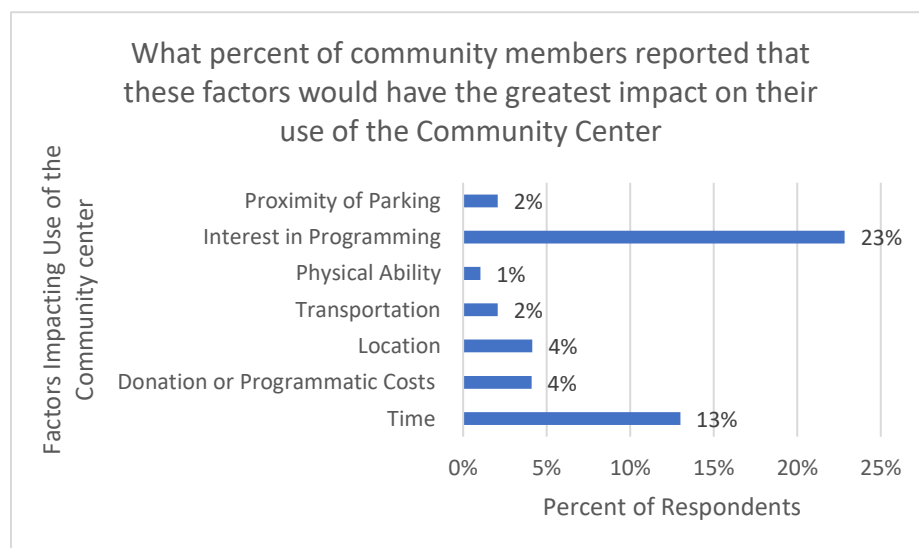


Figure 4

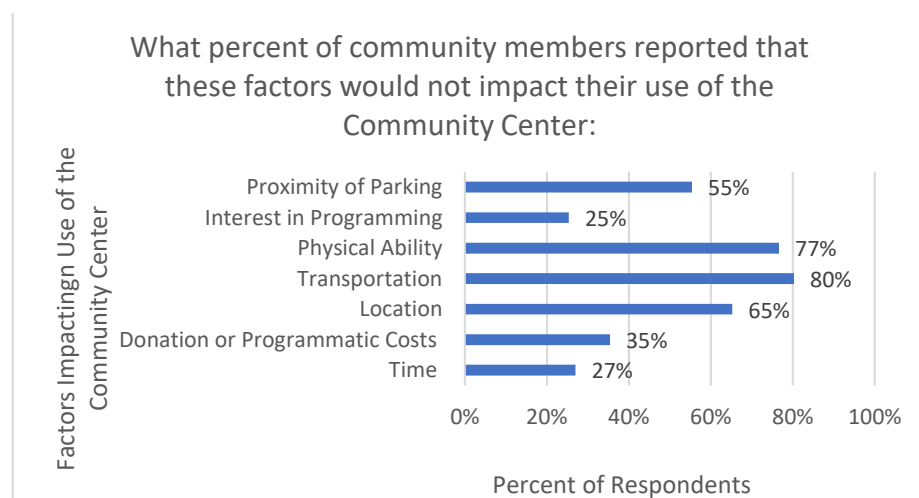


Figure 5

Question 9: Would any of the following limit your ability to use the community center?

Respondents were asked to rate if factors would impact their ability to use the community center. Examples of factors that could impact use were time, donation or programmatic costs, location, transportation, physical ability, interest in programming, and proximity of parking. 23% of residents reported that interest in programming would limit their use of the Community Center. 80% of respondents reported that transportation would have no impact their use of the Community Center. Figures 4 and 5 show the frequency in which respondents

stated factors would have no impact versus the greatest impact on their use of the Community Center.

Question 10: Are there any other factors that were not listed above that would limit your use of the community center?

Responses from residents consistently noted that crowding of the facility would limit their use of the Community Center. Additional responses also cited that communication about programming (lack of communication) and how to enroll in programs (online sign ups) could limit their use of the Community Center. Respondents also noted that the hours of the facility could impact their use, and they would prioritize afternoon, evening, and weekend hours.

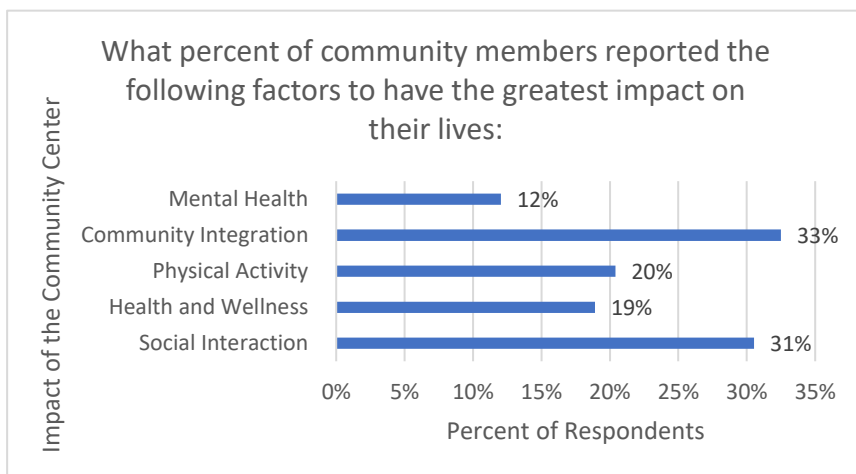


Figure 6

Question 11: Please rate the following based on the impact you think a community center will have on your life. 1 indicates it will have no impact while 5 indicates it will have the greatest impact.

Factors that residents were asked to consider regarding the impact of the Community Center were social interaction, health and wellness, physical activity, community integration,

mental health, and continued education/lifelong learning. Residents responded that the Community Center would have the greatest impact on community integration and social interaction. 33% of respondents stated community integration would have the greatest impact, while 31% of participants ranked social interaction as having the greatest impact as shown in Figure 6.

Question 12: Are there any additional factors the community center planning committee should consider when making program recommendations that were not covered in this survey?

Respondents frequently mentioned their desire for the Community Center to be a facility that offered a wide range of programming to engage all age groups present in town, especially the youth and senior populations.

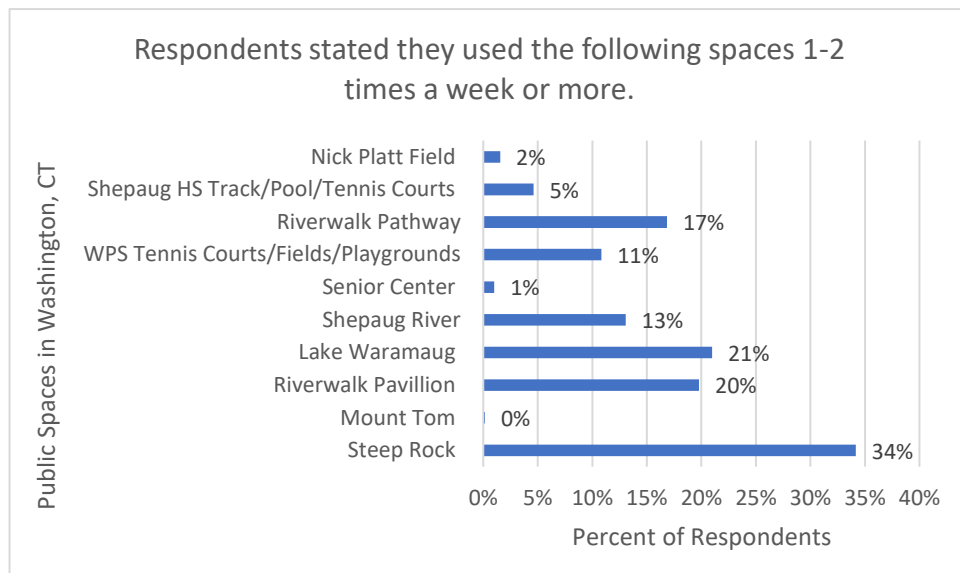


Figure 7

Riverwalk Pavillion (20%). Figure 7 shows the percent of respondents that use spaces in town 1-2 times a week or more.

Question 14: Were there other spaces in Washington not listed above that you regularly use?

The most used spaces that respondents wrote in were specific parks within the Steep Rock Preserve and the Judy Black Memorial Garden, which is a privately owned entity. Some respondents noted that they used roadways and other unmaintained greenspaces for exercise and recreation and expressed frustration about the lack of connectivity between green spaces and walkability of the community.

Question 15: Do any of the following prevent you from using the spaces in Washington, CT that are listed below?

Residents were asked why they did not use public spaces in Washington and to indicate what barriers prevented them from using the space. Barriers for not using the spaces were no interest, unable to get to the location, no time, no knowledge of the space/facility, and physically unable to use the space. The most common answers for residents not using public spaces in Washington were no interest, no time, and no knowledge of the space/facility.

Question 16: Are there other reasons than those listed above that prevent you from using public spaces in Washington, CT?

A theme in responses was that residents felt that many of the public spaces have become too crowded and this has impacted their ability to enjoy the space. Residents also reported knowledge of spaces and activities that were occurring in Washington to be a barrier for their use and recommended improved signage and advertisement of activities and opportunities.

Discussion

There were 211 respondents to the Community Center Survey which was open for three weeks. While this response rate represents approximately 7.7% of the population 19 years of age or older based on the 2021 Town Profile by CTData Collaborative, the results of this survey

Question 13- How often do you utilize the following spaces in Washington?

Respondents were asked to rank how often they used public spaces in Washington. Respondents stated they used the following spaces 1-2 times per week or more: Steep Rock Preserve (34%), Lake Waramaug (21%), and the

provided valuable information for the Community Center Planning Committee (CTData Collaborative). Program and activity interests of the community were centered around increasing community integration, socialization, and physical activity. Overall, there was a positive response from community members and a strong desire for the Community Center to be built in Washington. A gap in services in town is centered around there being a public space that is solely dedicated to intergenerational programming. Creating a centralized hub of programming and activities is a strong desire of the community.

Analysis on what public spaces community members currently used and what barriers exist for respondents to use these existing spaces showed that outdoor spaces are frequently used in town, but knowledge of the spaces and facilities is a barrier for some residents. Additionally, residents frequently commented on the availability of outdoor facilities but how the community lacks indoor spaces for community use to use in inclement weather or the colder months of the year.

A limitation of this survey was that it was primarily distributed through online resources such as the Town Selectman's Weekly Update and the Facebook page for Washington Residents, both of which require residents to sign up for access to their updates. This may have limited the reach of the survey to residents that are not on the mailing list of the Weekly Update or who do not have access to the town's private Facebook group. Additionally, residents were able to record their responses anonymously and identifiers such as name or email address were not collected. To increase likelihood of responses respondents were not asked to enter their email address, and therefore there is a possibility that respondents submitted more than one response to the survey.

References

CTData Collaborative. 202. "Town Profile: Washington, CT." <https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/cerc-pdfs/2021/Washington.pdf>

Appendix 1: Proposed Community Center in Washington, CT Survey

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1uxGCziZjF0sV8jCStT_wwWHjT0q7qz0lt1W7Nz-oiPE/prefill

This survey will gauge residents' interest in programmatic offerings of the proposed Community Center in Washington, Connecticut. Additionally, this survey will ask residents about their use of current public spaces in Washington. Responses to this survey will help guide the work of the Community Center Planning Committee.

The proposed Community Center would be built in Titus Park along the Shepaug River and would be connected through sidewalks to the rest of the downtown area.

1. Are you a resident of Washington, CT?

☐ Yes

☐ No

2. Are you at least 18 years old?

☐ Yes

☐ No

3. What is your age?

☐ 18-30

☐ 31-40

☐ 41-50

☐ 51-60

☐ 60+

☐ Prefer not to answer

4. How long have you lived in Washington, CT?

☐ 0-5 years

☐ 6-10 years

☐ 11-15 years

☐ 16-20 years

☐ More than 21 years

5. Are you able to drive yourself?

☐ Yes

☐ No

6. What type of programming and activities are the most important to you for a community center to have? Please rate the following on a scale of 1-5.

Art programs/Art instruction	1- Not Important	2	3	4	5-Most Important
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Cooking Classes	1- Not Important	2	3	4	5-Most Important
Health Clinics (ex. Blood pressure or vaccine clinics)	1- Not Important	2	3	4	5-Most Important
Fitness classes (chair yoga, cardio classes)	1- Not Important	2	3	4	5-Most Important
Fitness Equipment (ex. Treadmill, recumbent bike)	1- Not Important	2	3	4	5-Most Important
Pickle ball and other sport/activity leagues	1- Not Important	2	3	4	5-Most Important
Youth specific activities/programming	1- Not Important	2	3	4	5-Most Important
Teen specific activities/programming	1- Not Important	2	3	4	5-Most Important
Adult and Senior specific activities/programming	1- Not Important	2	3	4	5-Most Important
Table games/cards	1- Not Important	2	3	4	5-Most Important
Community meal services	1- Not Important	2	3	4	5-Most Important
Technology information and skills sessions	1- Not Important	2	3	4	5-Most Important
Mental health workshops	1- Not Important	2	3	4	5-Most Important
Support groups (ex. Caretake support)	1- Not Important	2	3	4	5-Most Important
Legal and financial information and education	1- Not Important	2	3	4	5-Most Important
Live events (ex. Magician, musicians, etc)	1- Not Important	2	3	4	5-Most Important
Continue learning opportunities (ex. Language courses)	1- Not Important	2	3	4	5-Most Important

7. Are there any other programs or activities that are important for the community center to have that are not listed above?

8. What is the most important physical feature of the Community Center to have? (Ex. Walking trails, gym space, art room, etc)

9. Would any of the following limit your ability to use the community center?

Time	1- No Impact	2	3	4	5- Greatest Impact
Donation or program fee	1- No Impact	2	3	4	5- Greatest Impact
Location	1- No Impact	2	3	4	5- Greatest Impact
Transportation	1- No Impact	2	3	4	5- Greatest Impact
Physical ability	1- No Impact	2	3	4	5- Greatest Impact
Interest in programming	1- No Impact	2	3	4	5- Greatest Impact
Proximity of parking	1- No Impact	2	3	4	5- Greatest Impact

10. Are there any other factors that were not listed above that would limit your use of the community center?

11. Please rate the following based on the impact you think a community center will have on your life. 1 indicates it will have no impact while 5 indicates it will have the largest impact.

Social interaction	1- No Impact	2	3	4	5- Greatest Impact
Health and wellbeing	1- No Impact	2	3	4	5- Greatest Impact
Physical activity	1- No Impact	2	3	4	5- Greatest Impact
Community integration	1- No Impact	2	3	4	5- Greatest Impact
Mental Health	1- No Impact	2	3	4	5- Greatest Impact
Continued education	1- No Impact	2	3	4	5- Greatest Impact

12. Are there any additional factors the community center planning committee should consider when making program recommendations that were not covered in this survey?

13. How often do you use the following spaces in Washington?

Steep Rock Preserve	Never	1-2 times per year	1-2 times per month	1-2 times per week	Everyday
Mount Tom State Park	Never	1-2 times per year	1-2 times per month	1-2 times per week	Everyday
Riverwalk Park	Never	1-2 times per year	1-2 times per month	1-2 times per week	Everyday
Lake Waramaug	Never	1-2 times per year	1-2 times per month	1-2 times per week	Everyday
Shepaug River	Never	1-2 times per year	1-2 times per month	1-2 times per week	Everyday
Senior Center	Never	1-2 times per year	1-2 times per month	1-2 times per week	Everyday
WPS Tennis Courts/Fields/Playgrounds	Never	1-2 times per year	1-2 times per month	1-2 times per week	Everyday
Riverwalk Pathway	Never	1-2 times per year	1-2 times per month	1-2 times per week	Everyday
Shepaug HS Track/Tennis Courts/Pool	Never	1-2 times per year	1-2 times per month	1-2 times per week	Everyday
Nick Platt Field (New Preston)	Never	1-2 times per year	1-2 times per month	1-2 times per week	Everyday

14. Were there other spaces in Washington not listed above that you regularly use?

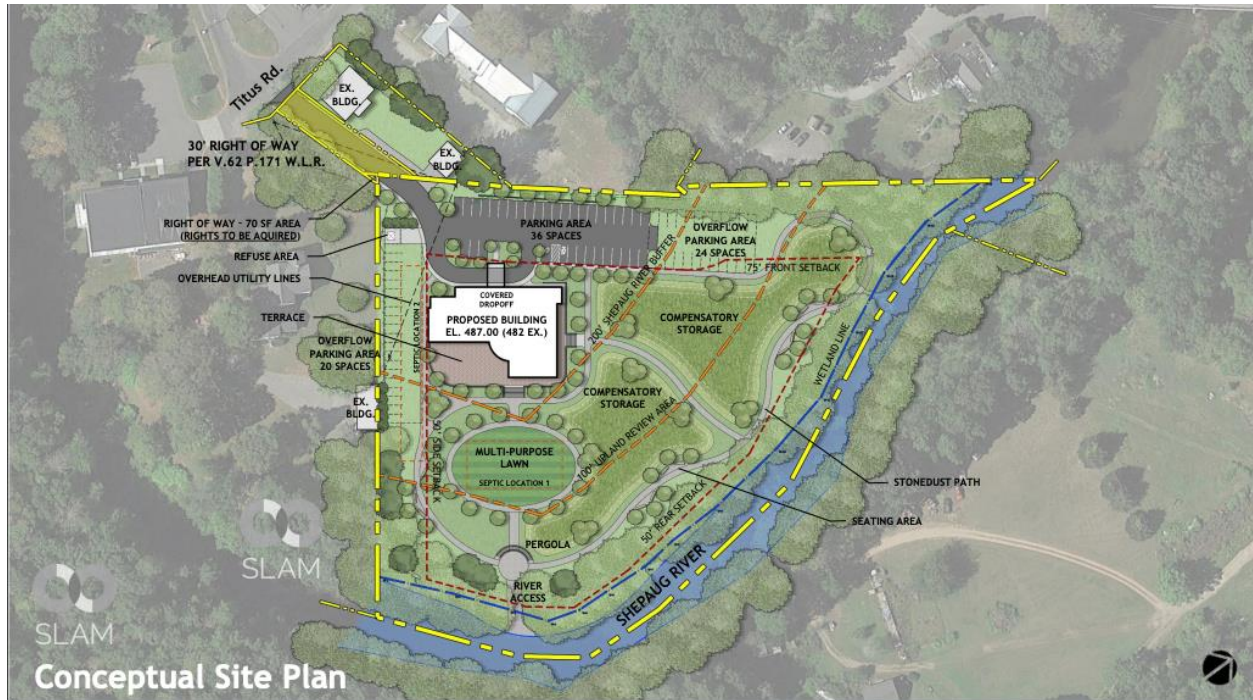
15. Do any of the following prevent you from using the spaces in Washington, CT that are listed below?

Steep Rock Preserve	No Interest	Unable to Get to Location	No Time	No Knowledge of the Space/Facility	Physically Unable
Mount Tom State Park	No Interest	Unable to Get to Location	No Time	No Knowledge of the Space/Facility	Physically Unable
Riverwalk Park	No Interest	Unable to Get to Location	No Time	No Knowledge of the Space/Facility	Physically Unable
Lake Waramaug	No Interest	Unable to Get to Location	No Time	No Knowledge of the Space/Facility	Physically Unable

Shepaug River	No Interest	Unable to Get to Location	No Time	No Knowledge of the Space/Facility	Physically Unable
Senior Center	No Interest	Unable to Get to Location	No Time	No Knowledge of the Space/Facility	Physically Unable
WPS Tennis Courts/Fields/Playgrounds	No Interest	Unable to Get to Location	No Time	No Knowledge of the Space/Facility	Physically Unable
Riverwalk Pathway	No Interest	Unable to Get to Location	No Time	No Knowledge of the Space/Facility	Physically Unable
Shepaug HS Track/Tennis Courts/Pool	No Interest	Unable to Get to Location	No Time	No Knowledge of the Space/Facility	Physically Unable
Nick Platt Field (New Preston)	No Interest	Unable to Get to Location	No Time	No Knowledge of the Space/Facility	Physically Unable

16. Are there any other reasons than those listed above that prevent you from using public spaces in Washington, CT?

Appendix II: Conceptual Site Plan



Appendix III: Concept Plan Diagram

