

THE TOWN OF SWANSBORO

Swimming Pool Committee – Community Survey Report

Executive Summary

The Swansboro Board of Commissioners established the Swimming Pool Committee on June 11, 2024, to evaluate the feasibility and community interest associated with the potential development of a swimming pool or aquatic facility within the Town of Swansboro. As part of that effort, the Committee conducted a community survey to gather data regarding anticipated usage, desired programming, preferred amenities, funding considerations, and potential concerns.

A total of 415 complete surveys were included in the final analysis. Responses were collected between September 11, 2025, and December 11, 2025, with the majority submitted on September 13, 2025, the day of the Tunnel to Towers event. Participation represents approximately 10.67% of the Town's full-time population when viewed broadly, and approximately 1.13% of the incorporated population considering only respondents physically located within Town limits at the time of submission.

Survey responses reflect strong interest among participants in swimming access, water safety education, and multi-generational aquatic programming. A majority of respondents indicated anticipated weekly or more frequent use of a nearby pool, expressed support for drowning-prevention initiatives, and identified learn-to-swim programs as a priority. Respondents' preferences favored indoor aquatic facilities with accessibility features, dedicated lifeguard staffing, and family-oriented design elements.

Participation levels, however, represent only a small fraction of the Town of Swansboro's overall population and should not be interpreted as a definitive measure of town-wide consensus. While the results are directionally positive and support continued exploration of an aquatic facility, they do not, on their own, establish broad community endorsement. Continued evaluation is recommended at a larger scale, incorporating expanded outreach, additional data collection, and collaboration with regional, intergovernmental, and private partners. Aquatic facilities and associated infrastructure often serve a broader regional function, and future analysis should consider governance, funding, and operational models that extend beyond a single municipal boundary.

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to present the results and findings of the Swimming Pool Committee's community interest survey. The report documents the survey process, summarizes quantitative and qualitative results, and identifies key themes relevant to future decision-making. Information presented herein is intended to support data-informed discussion by the Swansboro Board of Commissioners and to guide next steps in feasibility analysis and planning.

Background

On June 11, 2024, the Swansboro Board of Commissioners formally established the Swimming Pool Committee to research the feasibility and level of community interest associated with a swimming pool or aquatic facility. The Committee's charge included evaluating potential demand, identifying community priorities, and exploring funding and operational considerations.

On September 9, 2025, Matthew Prane, Chair of the Swimming Pool Committee, presented a proposal during the regular Board of Commissioners meeting requesting authorization to conduct a community survey. The proposal followed a joint committee meeting held on June 26, 2025, during which survey objectives, structure, and content were discussed. Following the presentation, the Board authorized the Committee to distribute the survey on behalf of the Town and to report findings back for review and consideration.

Goals & Objectives

The primary objective of the survey was to assess both community and regional interest in developing a swimming pool or aquatic facility and to understand how such a facility might be used. The survey sought to identify the anticipated frequency of use, preferred programs and amenities, and the perceived benefits related to water safety and drowning prevention. Additional objectives included identifying concerns and barriers to participation, acceptable methods for offsetting costs, and gauging respondents' willingness to remain engaged in future planning efforts as the project advances.

Survey Design

The survey was developed using ESRI ArcGIS Survey tools and coordinated with the Fire Chief and Parks Director to align with existing Town systems and recreational planning objectives. The Fire Department's ArcGIS account was utilized because the platform was already in place and actively maintained by the Town, allowing the Committee to leverage existing municipal resources without incurring additional

costs to the Town or its citizens. While the survey was initially drafted using SurveyMonkey, that platform did not provide the geospatial mapping capabilities necessary to analyze participant locations relative to the Town's incorporated limits and extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ). Transitioning the survey to ArcGIS enabled more robust data collection and spatial analysis while avoiding additional licensing or subscription expenses.

Survey design emphasized demand, accessibility, and efficiency, resulting in a 15-question format intentionally structured to be completed in approximately two minutes. The approach was selected to reduce participant burden while encouraging broad participation across a diverse audience. Questions were structured to capture both quantitative and qualitative information related to community interest, anticipated usage, desired programs and amenities, and perceived benefits and considerations associated with a potential aquatic facility.

The survey was formally presented to the Board of Commissioners during the September 9, 2025, meeting, after which distribution was authorized. Outreach occurred across multiple platforms to maximize visibility and accessibility, including the Town of Swansboro's social media channels, the Town's official website, coverage in Tideland News, and direct, in-person engagement during the Tunnel to Towers event held on September 13, 2025. Although the survey remained open for approximately three months, participation was concentrated during the initial outreach phase. Of the 415 completed surveys included in the analysis, 372 responses were submitted on September 13, 2025, coinciding with heightened public exposure and community interaction during the Tunnel to Towers event.

Survey Setting

The survey was intended to assess interest among residents and stakeholders in the Town of Swansboro, including individuals residing within the incorporated Town limits and the Swansboro Extraterritorial Jurisdiction. According to population estimates from Data USA, the Town of Swansboro has an estimated population of 3,887 residents, with the ETJ encompassing approximately 1,800 additional residents. While the study's primary focus was local, the public distribution model and online outreach platforms enabled participation from a broader geographic area. The survey was administered entirely online and accessible on desktop and laptop computers, as well as via a mobile-friendly format compatible with smartphones and tablets. The inclusion of ArcGIS geospatial analysis enabled the identification of response locations and differentiation of input originating within the incorporated Town limits, the ETJ, and surrounding communities.

Survey Inclusion & Sample Size

Inclusion criteria consisted of any individual who completed and submitted the full survey during the open collection period. No exclusion criteria were applied based on residency, age, or stakeholder classification, provided the survey was completed in full. Geographic data captured in ArcGIS enabled analysis of responses by physical location at the time of completion, with specific attention given to responses originating within the Town's incorporated limits and ETJ for analytical comparison.

The final sample comprised 415 completed surveys, all of which were included in the analysis. While the number of responses represents only a small portion of the Town's total population, the dataset provides valuable insight into community and regional interests, usage patterns, and priorities related to a potential aquatic facility.

Results

Participation & Geographical Context

A total of 415 complete surveys were included in the final analysis. Responses were received from participants in three states, including North Carolina, Virginia, and Michigan, with the majority originating in eastern North Carolina. Participation was most concentrated in Onslow and Carteret Counties, but it also included responses from Wake and Johnston Counties, reflecting both local and regional engagement.

Geographic analysis conducted through the ArcGIS platform identified 44 respondents physically located within the Town of Swansboro's incorporated limits at the time of survey completion, along with 7 respondents located within the Swansboro Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). Additional response clusters were observed in unincorporated areas of Onslow County, most notably the Bear Creek area with 34 responses, followed by smaller concentrations in Carteret County and surrounding communities.

When survey responses were cross-referenced with the question regarding receipt of a Town of Swansboro stormwater bill, discrepancies emerged between reported billing status and the physical location recorded at the time of survey submission. Several respondents who indicated receiving a stormwater bill were physically located outside the Town's incorporated limits when completing the survey. Plausible explanations include second-home ownership, business ownership within the Town, temporary travel, workplace network use, or interpreting the billing question as an indicator of stakeholder connection rather than actual residency. Because the survey did not collect address-level or personally identifiable information, definitive reconciliation between billing status and geographic location

was not possible. These limitations are important considerations when interpreting representation and stakeholder reach.

Participant Demographic Characteristics

Survey participants reflected a broad range of household age compositions. Adults between the ages of 18 and 64 were represented in 84.6% of participating households, while 42.9% reported having youth under the age of 18 residing in the household. Seniors aged 65 and older accounted for 15.4% of submissions. The overall distribution indicates participation across multiple life stages, with notable representation from households likely to utilize both recreational and instructional aquatic programming.

Participant Swimming Ability

Self-reported swimming ability varied among those surveyed. A majority (56.4%) identified as strong swimmers, while 41.0% reported being able to swim a short distance without assistance. A smaller proportion (2.7%) reported being unable to swim without a personal flotation device or other assistance.

Current Pool Use & Anticipated Demand

Approximately two-thirds of survey responses (66.5%) reported not currently using a pool facility, while 33.5% reported using one. Among households that do not use a pool, the most frequently cited barriers were distance to an available facility (186 responses) and membership cost (116 responses), followed by a lack of suitable programs (69 responses). Additional reasons included a preference for private pools and reliance on natural water resources such as the ocean or nearby beaches.

Anticipated usage of a nearby aquatic facility was notably strong among participants. 76.4% indicated their household would use a pool weekly or more frequently, including 21.7% who anticipated daily use and 54.7% who anticipated weekly use. Only 7.0% of those surveyed reported they would never use a pool facility, suggesting meaningful latent demand if access-related barriers are reduced.

Programs & Activity Preferences

Among participants who currently utilize pool facilities, the most common activities included recreational or open swim, lap swimming, fitness, and water aerobics or group fitness. Learn-to-swim programming and youth or competitive swim teams were also identified, though at lower rates.

When asked to identify programs or activities of importance in a potential new facility, those surveyed most frequently selected water aerobics (162), social interaction opportunities (160), and learn-to-swim lessons (125). Strong interest was also expressed in rehabilitation or therapy programs (97), lap swimming (89), and lifeguard training (76). The range of selections reflects demand for a multi-generational, multi-purpose facility rather than a single-use amenity.

Facility Features & Amenities

Clear preferences emerged regarding desired facility features and amenities. An indoor swimming pool was the most frequently selected option (312 selections), followed by an outdoor swimming pool (267 selections). Operational and safety-related features, including lifeguard staffing (219 selections), also received strong support.

Family-oriented and accessibility-focused amenities ranked highly, including outdoor patio areas with tables and shade (193 selections), a separate toddler pool (175 selections), waterslides (130 selections), and a warm water therapy pool (129 selections). These preferences indicate an interest in a facility designed to serve a broad demographic range, including children, older adults, and individuals seeking therapeutic or low-impact aquatic activities.

Funding Preferences & Concerns

Participants expressed a clear preference for funding models that limit financial impact to individuals who utilize the facility. Membership fees for users and grant funding were selected by 343 participants each, while sponsorships were selected by 289 participants. A comparatively smaller group (78 participants) supported a tax increase within the Town as a potential cost-offset mechanism.

When asked to identify concerns related to facility development, a majority of those surveyed (260) reported no concerns and expressed general support. Among participants who did report concerns, cost burden and increased taxes were cited most frequently (110 responses each), followed by operational sustainability (85 responses) and patron and community safety (54 responses). Environmental impacts, traffic, and privacy-related concerns were reported less frequently.

Future Participation

Interest in continued participation remained strong. 388 individuals indicated their willingness to participate in a future survey on pricing once a conceptual design is developed. Only 27 participants indicated they would not participate further,

suggesting sustained engagement among those who contributed input as planning efforts move forward.

Summary

The community survey conducted by the Swimming Pool Committee provides valuable insight into public interest, anticipated use, and desired programming for a potential aquatic facility in the Town of Swansboro. Survey results indicate strong interest among participants in swimming access, water safety education, and multi-generational aquatic programming. A significant majority of households in the survey anticipate using a nearby pool weekly or more frequently, with many identifying learn-to-swim programs, drowning-prevention initiatives, rehabilitation services, and social or fitness-oriented programming as priorities.

Participants' preferences consistently favored indoor aquatic facilities, supported by complementary outdoor amenities, lifeguard staffing, accessibility features, and family-oriented design elements. Funding preferences reflected a clear desire to limit financial impact to facility users through memberships, grants, and sponsorships, with comparatively less support for broad tax-based funding. Overall, survey participants' sentiment was supportive, with relatively few expressing oppositions to the concept of an aquatic facility.

Feasibility Considerations

Based on the data collected, the development of an aquatic facility appears feasible from both demand and programmatic perspectives. Anticipated usage levels, combined with strong interest in diverse programming and amenities, suggest that an appropriately designed facility could achieve sustained utilization. However, findings also indicate that feasibility is more realistic when evaluated through a broader, regional lens rather than as a single-municipality project.

Swansboro's geographic position and accessibility make it a logical and effective central location for a regional aquatic facility serving residents within the Town, the ETJ, and surrounding communities. A facility of this nature would likely exceed the demand generated solely within the incorporated limits, underscoring the importance of regional collaboration in both planning and implementation.

Sustainability & Long-term Operations

Operational sustainability emerged as a recurring concern among participants, particularly regarding long-term costs, staffing, and financial viability. Survey results indicate a strong preference for user-based revenue models supplemented by

grant funding and sponsorships, suggesting potential pathways to offset operating expenses while minimizing taxpayer impact.

Long-term sustainability will depend on careful consideration of governance structure, operational partnerships, staffing models, programming mix, and capital lifecycle costs. Regional or multi-organizational operating models, potentially involving shared governance, interlocal agreements, nonprofit partnerships, or private-sector participation, should be evaluated as part of any feasibility or business planning effort. Such models may improve cost sharing, expand access, and enhance operational resilience.

Adequate Representation & Community Reach

While the survey generated meaningful participation and valuable insights, the number of completed surveys represents a relatively small portion of the Town of Swansboro and the ETJ's total population. As a result, the findings should be viewed as directional rather than definitive, reflecting the perspectives of engaged participants rather than a full community consensus.

The use of ArcGIS geo-spatial analysis provided important context regarding respondent distribution and stakeholder connection. However, participation was heavily concentrated during a single high-visibility event and among individuals already engaged with Town outreach channels. Expanding representation remains an important consideration as planning progresses.

Survey Limitations

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the results of this survey and applying the findings to future decision-making. While the data provides meaningful insight into participant perspectives and regional interest, it does not fully capture the views of the entire Swansboro community or all potential stakeholders.

- I. Participation represented a limited proportion of the overall population within the Town of Swansboro and its Extraterritorial Jurisdiction. Although the survey received a substantial number of completed responses, the sample size remains a small fraction of the estimated combined population. As a result, findings should be interpreted as indicative of interest among engaged participants rather than a definitive representation of community-wide consensus. Certain demographic groups or perspectives may be underrepresented, particularly individuals who do not regularly engage with Town communication platforms or attend community events.

- II. Survey distribution methods may have influenced response patterns. Outreach relied primarily on online platforms and a single high-visibility public event. While this approach proved effective in generating rapid participation, it may have favored individuals who are digitally connected, socially engaged, or already involved in Town activities. Residents with limited internet access, differing work schedules, or less exposure to Town outreach channels may not have been equally represented.
- III. Geographic data captured through ArcGIS reflects physical location at the time of survey completion, which may not correspond precisely with residency, property ownership, or taxpayer status. Respondents may have completed the survey while traveling, at work, or from secondary residences. Although geospatial analysis enhanced the contextual understanding of response distribution, it cannot fully account for all variations in stakeholder connections. The absence of address-level data or personally identifiable information limited the ability to verify residency or reconcile discrepancies between reported stormwater billing status and geographic location.
- IV. Self-reported data introduces inherent variability. Responses related to swimming ability, anticipated facility usage, and program preferences reflect personal perception and intent at the time of survey completion. Actual behavior, participation rates, and utilization patterns may differ if a facility is developed, particularly as factors such as cost, scheduling, programming availability, and travel distance become more concrete.
- V. The survey was exploratory in nature and not designed as a statistically randomized study. The open-access format and voluntary participation model were appropriate for gauging interest and gathering community input during an early planning phase; however, the methodology does not support inferential conclusions or statistical generalization to the full population. Additional data collection efforts, including targeted outreach, randomized sampling, and supplemental qualitative engagement, would strengthen future analysis.

Collectively, these limitations underscore the importance of viewing the survey as an initial data point rather than a final determination. The findings provide valuable directional guidance and support continued exploration, but further research, expanded engagement, and formal feasibility analysis are recommended before advancing to design, funding, or implementation decisions.

Considerations & Recommendations

Future exploration of a swimming pool or aquatic facility should be approached through a deliberate, regional, and data-informed framework. Survey results demonstrate meaningful interest and potential demand; however, the scale, cost, and long-term operational requirements of aquatic facilities necessitate broader collaboration beyond a single municipality. Continued planning efforts should prioritize engagement with regional partners, including neighboring municipalities, county governments, school systems, healthcare providers, and nonprofit or private-sector organizations. Intra-governmental agreements and public-private partnership models may offer opportunities to share capital costs, diversify revenue streams, and enhance operational sustainability while expanding access for a wider population.

Advancing to a comprehensive feasibility study is recommended as the next formal step. Such a study should evaluate potential sites, capital and lifecycle costs, operational models, staffing requirements, governance structures, and funding strategies. Consideration should be given to phased development or scalable facility designs that allow expansion as demand, partnerships, and funding sources evolve. Feasibility analysis should also assess transportation access, land availability, environmental considerations, and compatibility with surrounding land uses to ensure long-term viability.

Exploration of alternative delivery and management models should remain a priority. Nonprofit management structures, contracted operations, or hybrid governance models may offer greater flexibility and lower financial risk than traditional municipal ownership. Evaluating examples of comparable regional aquatic facilities and benchmarking operational performance can further inform decision-making and identify best practices.

Conclusion

The survey results support continued exploration of a swimming pool or aquatic facility, with meaningful interest expressed among participants and demonstrated demand for water safety education, recreational access, and multi-generational programming. Although the findings do not establish a definitive town-wide consensus, they provide valuable insight into participant priorities and highlight broader regional opportunities.

An aquatic facility appears most viable when evaluated as a regional asset, with Swansboro positioned as a central, accessible location that can improve access for surrounding communities. Future efforts should emphasize expanded outreach, collaboration with regional partners, and completion of a comprehensive feasibility analysis to evaluate governance, funding, and operational models. Taken together,

these steps will help ensure that any potential development is fiscally responsible, operationally sustainable, and equitably accessible, supporting informed decision-making that aligns with long-term public benefit.

Appendix

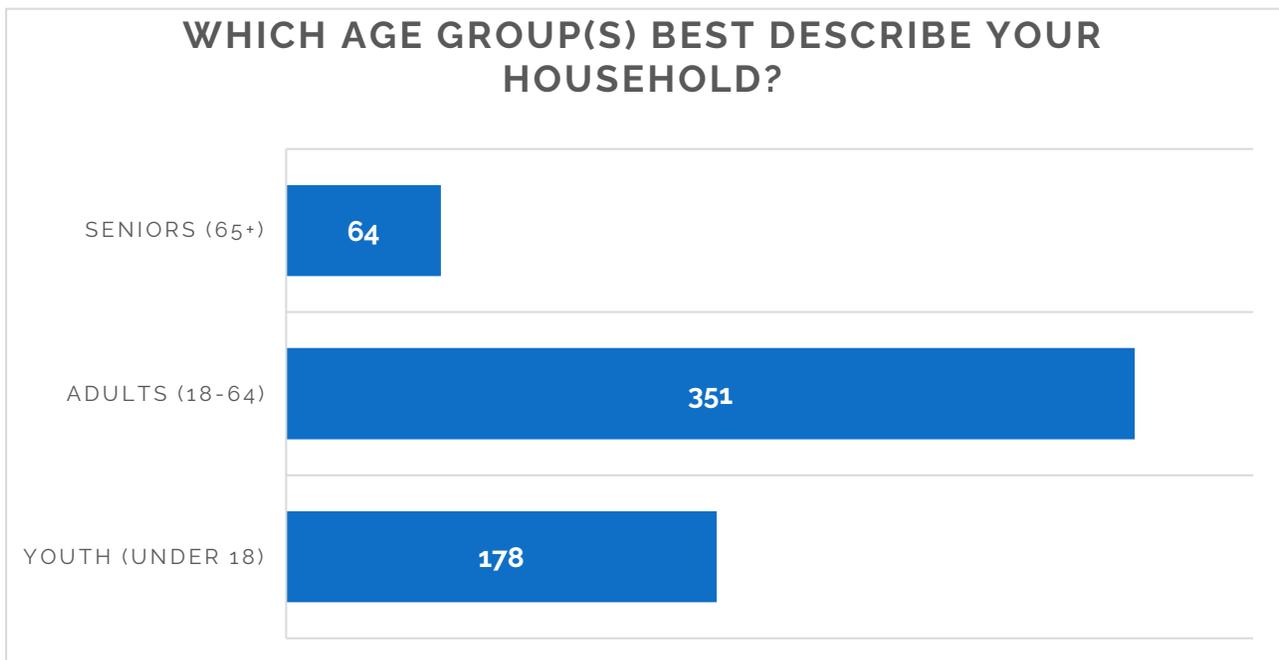
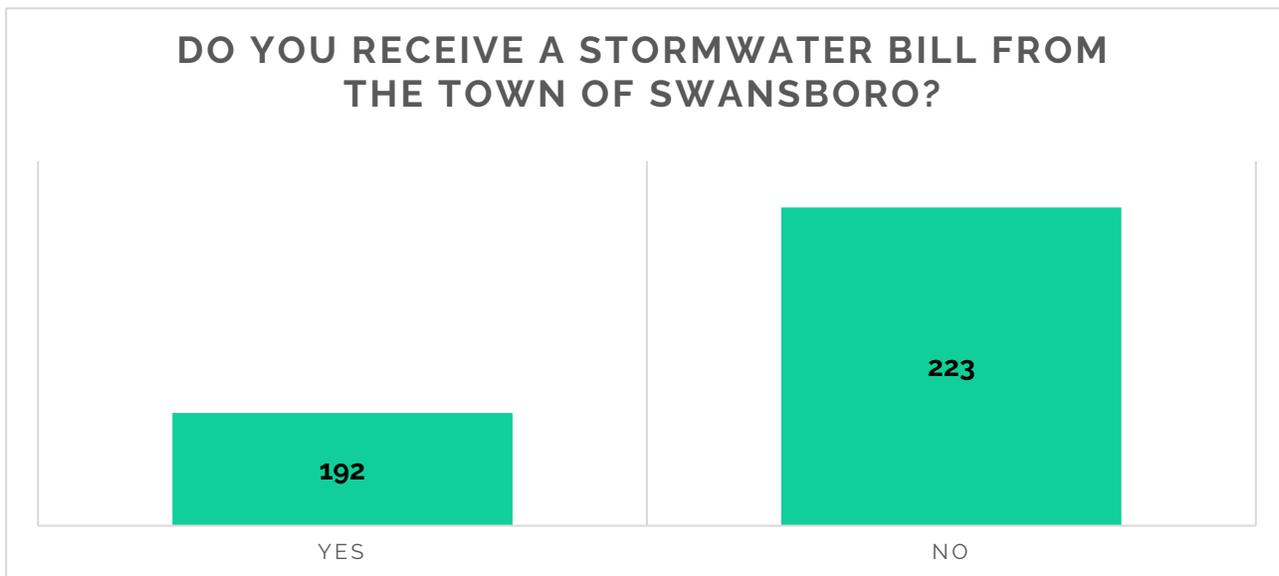
Appendix I – Survey Questions

- I. Do you receive a stormwater bill from the Town of Swansboro?
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No
- II. Which age group(s) best describe your household? (Select all that apply)
 - i. Youth (Under 18)
 - ii. Adults (18-64)
 - iii. Seniors (65+)
- III. Which of the following best describes your swimming ability?
 - i. I can NOT swim without some form of assistance (Personal Flotation Device)
 - ii. I CAN swim a short distance (Across a 25-yard pool) with no assistance
 - iii. I am a Strong Swimmer
- IV. Would your family benefit from drowning prevention?
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No
- V. How often would your household use a nearby pool?
 - i. Daily
 - ii. Weekly
 - iii. Monthly
 - iv. Never
 - v. Only when family comes to visit
- VI. Do you currently use a pool facility?
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No
 - b. (If No) Why do you not use a pool facility?
 - i. Membership Cost
 - ii. Distance to Pool
 - iii. No Suitable Programs
 - iv. I Can't Swim
 - v. I Prefer to Use My Own Pool
 - vi. Other
 - c. (If Yes) What programs do you utilize at the pool?
 - i. Recreational Use/Open Swim
 - ii. Lap Swimming & Fitness
 - iii. Water Aerobics & Group Fitness
 - iv. Swim Lessons & Learn-to-Swim Programs
 - v. Youth & Competitive Swim Teams

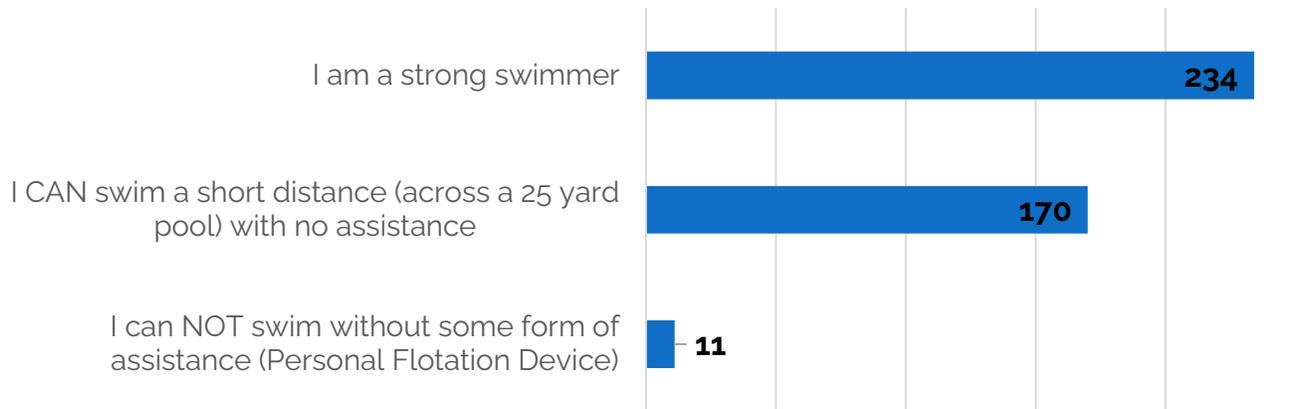
- vi. No Specified Programs
- VII. Which programs or activities would be of importance to you? (Select up to 5)
- i. Learn-to-Swim Lessons
 - ii. Lap Swim 25-Yard
 - iii. Lap Swim 50-Meter Olympic Distance
 - iv. Diving Lessons/Springboard
 - v. Water Aerobics
 - vi. Scuba Training
 - vii. Lifeguard Training
 - viii. Rehabilitation/Therapy
 - ix. Baby Water Acclimation
 - x. Home School Program
 - xi. Social Interaction
 - xii. Swim Team/Competitions/Master Swimming
 - xiii. Other
- VIII. If a pool were to be developed, which feature or amenities would be important to you? (Select up to 5)
- i. Indoor Swimming Pool
 - ii. Air Quality (Indoor Pool)
 - iii. Outdoor Swimming Pool
 - iv. Concession Stand
 - v. Diving Board/Platforms
 - vi. Waterslide
 - vii. Zero-Entry Access
 - viii. Warm Water Therapy Pool
 - ix. Outdoor Patio with Tables & Shade Umbrellas
 - x. Lifeguard Staff
 - xi. ADA Amenities for Safe Access In & Out of Water (Handrails, Chair Lift, Ramps, etc.)
 - xii. Separate Toddler Pool
 - xiii. Fountain/Sensory/Interactive Amenities
 - xiv. Other
- IX. If a pool were to be developed, which of the following ways would you consider to be practical to offset the cost? (Select all that apply)
- i. Membership Fees Only for Patrons Who Use the Facility
 - ii. Tax Increase within the City to Help Offset the Cost of Membership Fees
 - iii. Grants (Local, State, Federal) to Help Offset the Cost of Membership Fees

- iv. Sponsorships from Local, State, and County-Wide Aquatic Associations
 - v. Other
- X. What concerns do you have, if any, about the development of a pool in the Town of Swansboro? (Select all that apply)
 - i. Increased Traffic
 - ii. Cost Burden
 - iii. Environmental Impact
 - iv. Operational Sustainability
 - v. Increased Taxes
 - vi. Privacy/Noise
 - vii. Safety of Patrons and Community Members
 - viii. None, I think it Would Be Great for the Town and Surrounding Communities
 - ix. Other
- XI. What else should the planning team consider when deciding on the development of an aquatic facility?
- XII. Do you have any additional thoughts, comments, or ideas that were not addressed in this questionnaire?
- XIII. Would you participate in another survey on pricing, once a design is drafted from the results of this survey?
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No

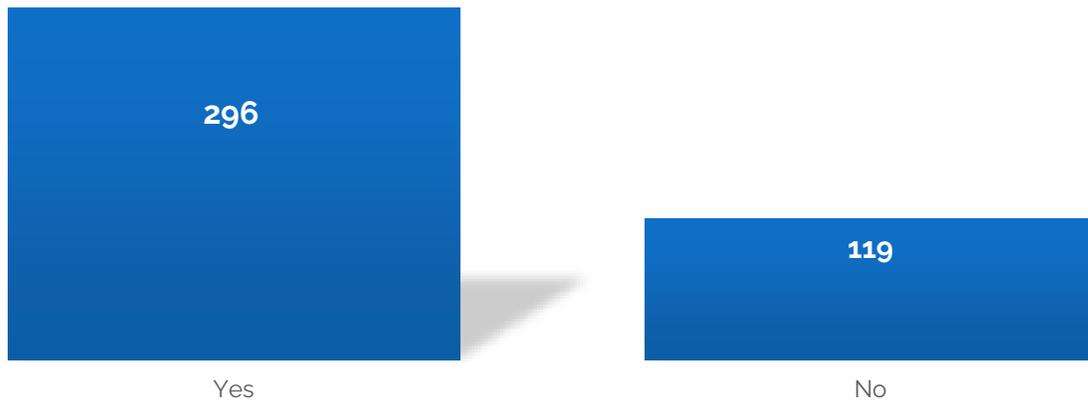
Appendix II – Survey Responses



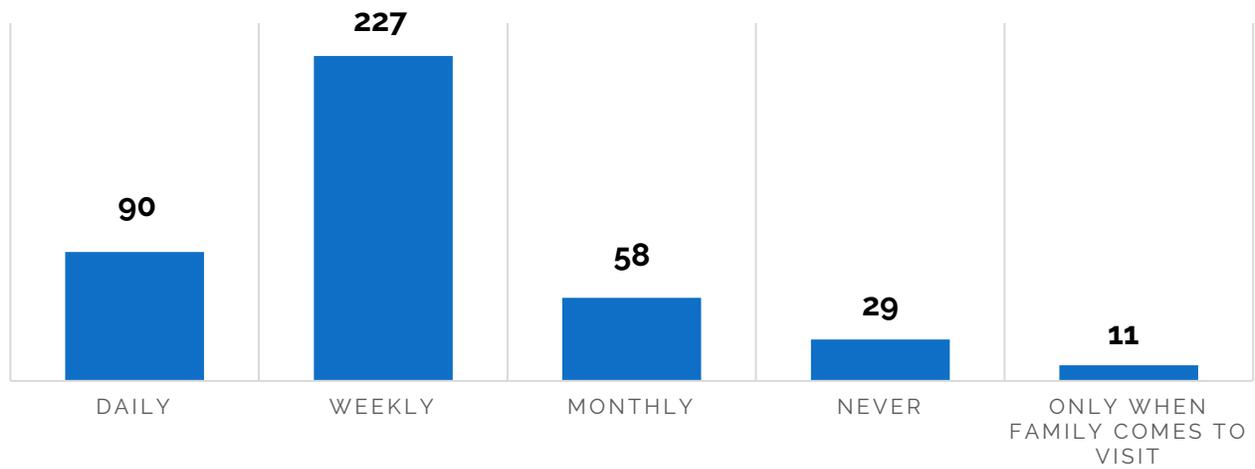
Which of the following best describes your swimming ability?



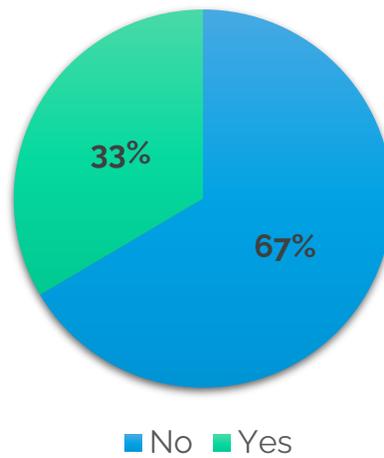
Would your family benefit from drowning prevention?



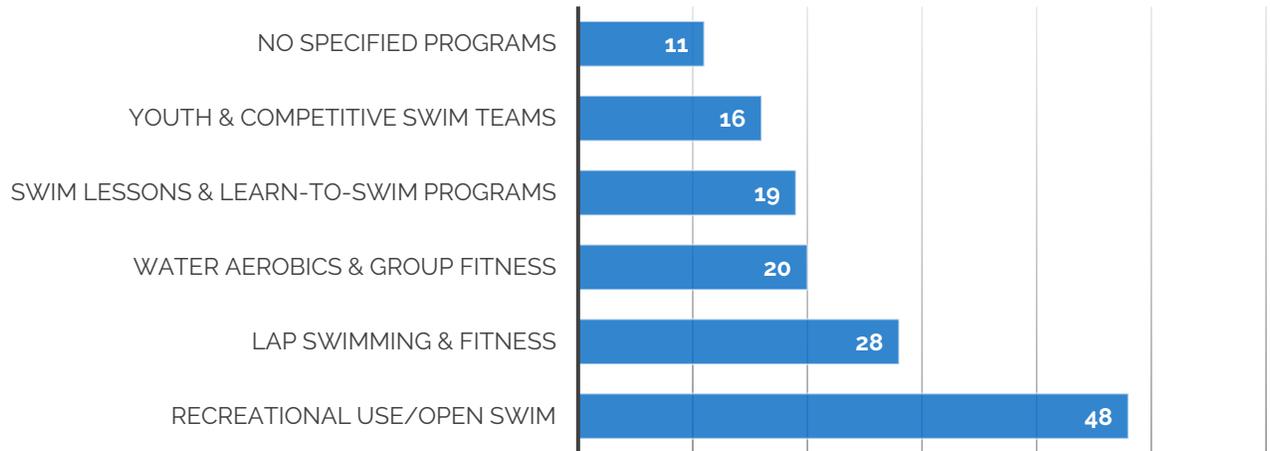
HOW OFTEN WOULD YOUR HOUSEHOLD USE A NEARBY POOL?



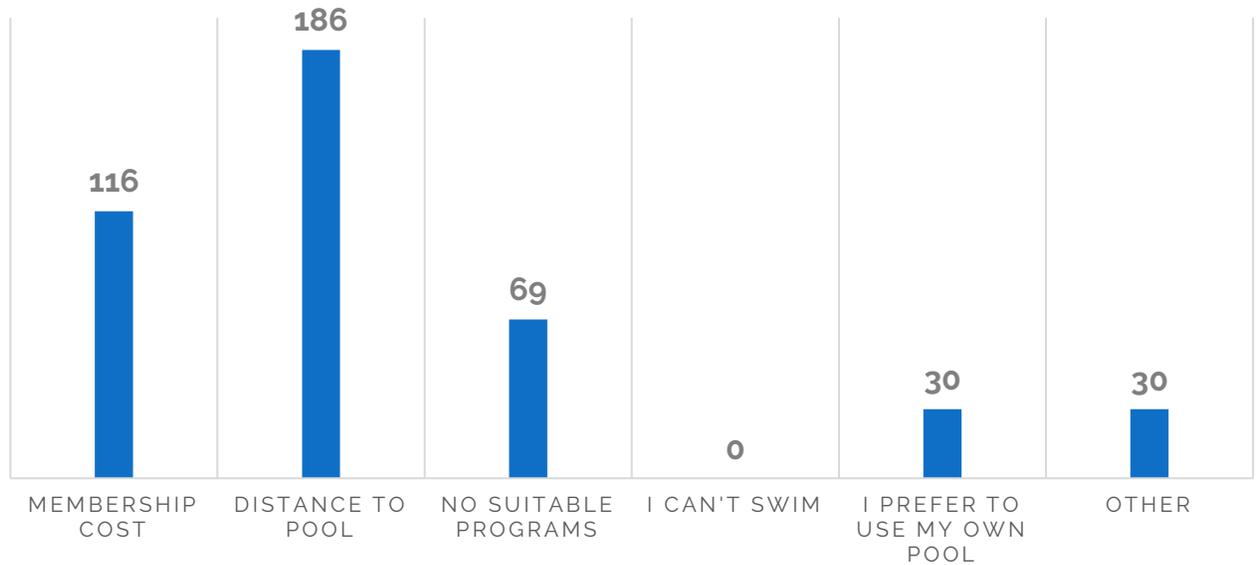
Do you currently use a pool facility?



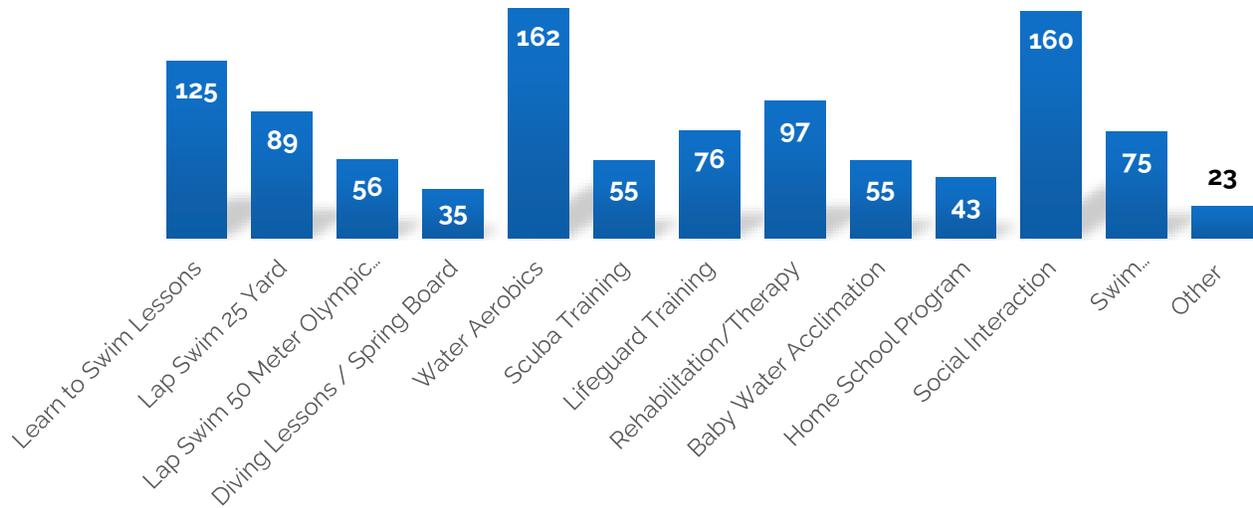
(If Yes) What programs do you utilize at the pool?



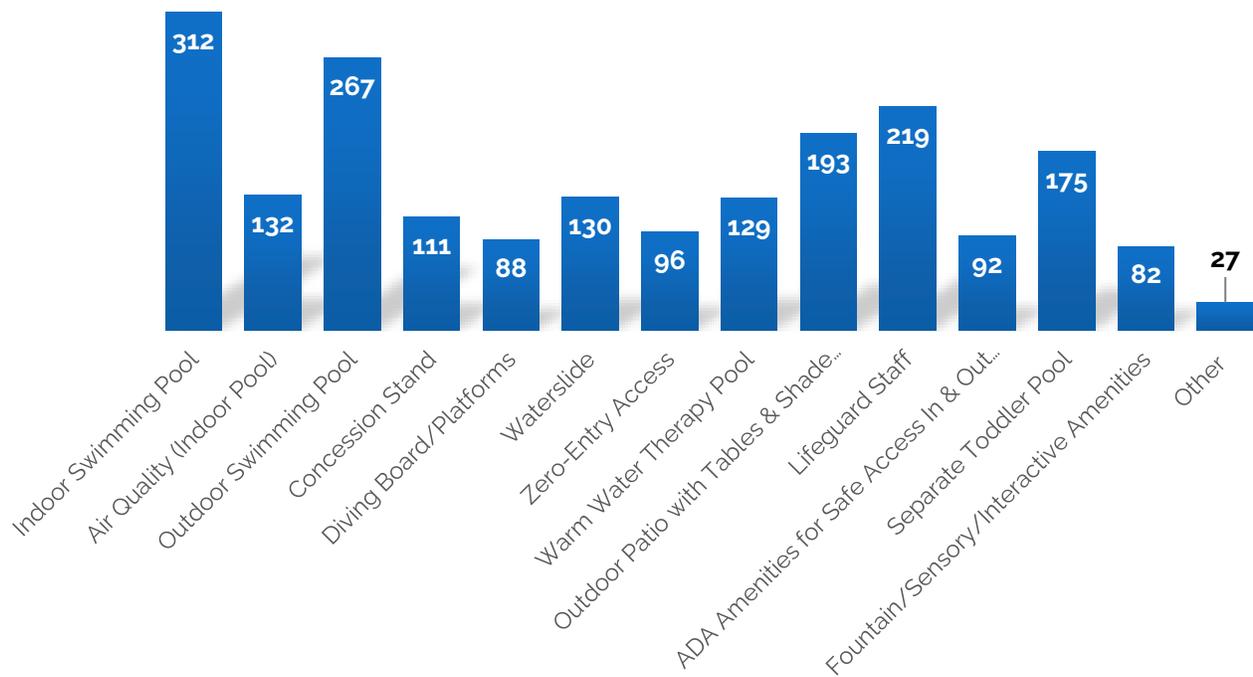
(IF NO) WHY DO YOU NOT USE A POOL FACILITY?



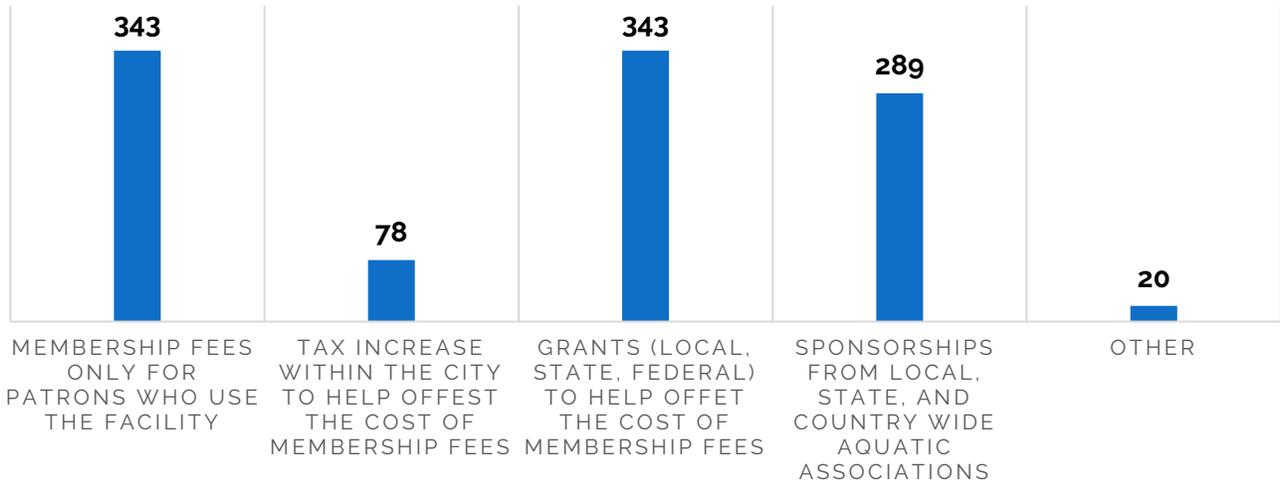
Which programs or activities would be of importance to you?



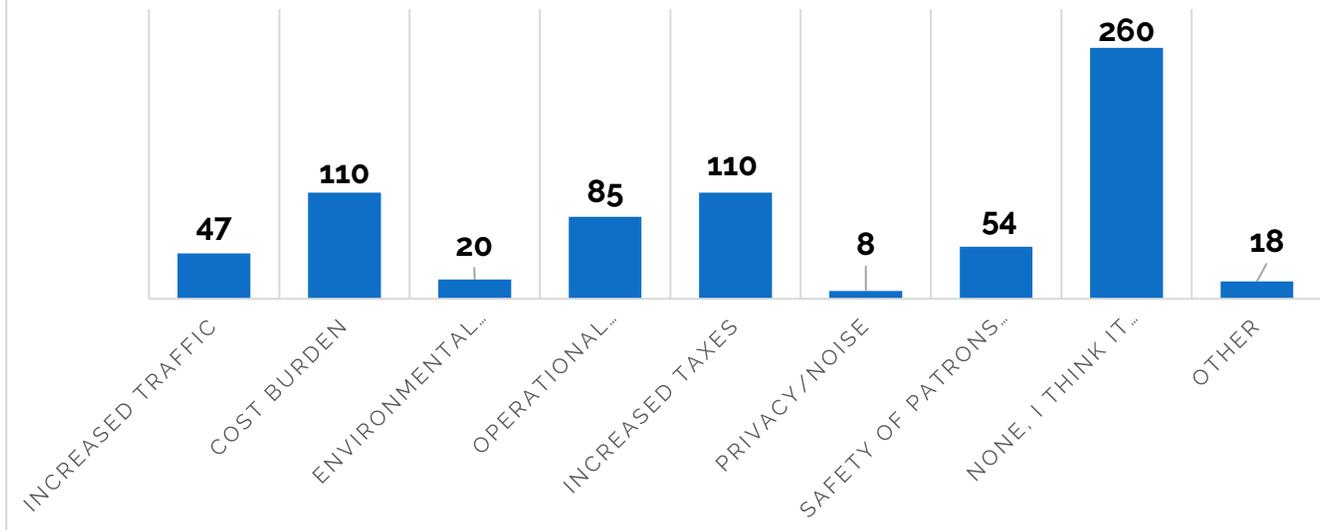
If a pool were to be developed, which feature or amenities would be important to you?



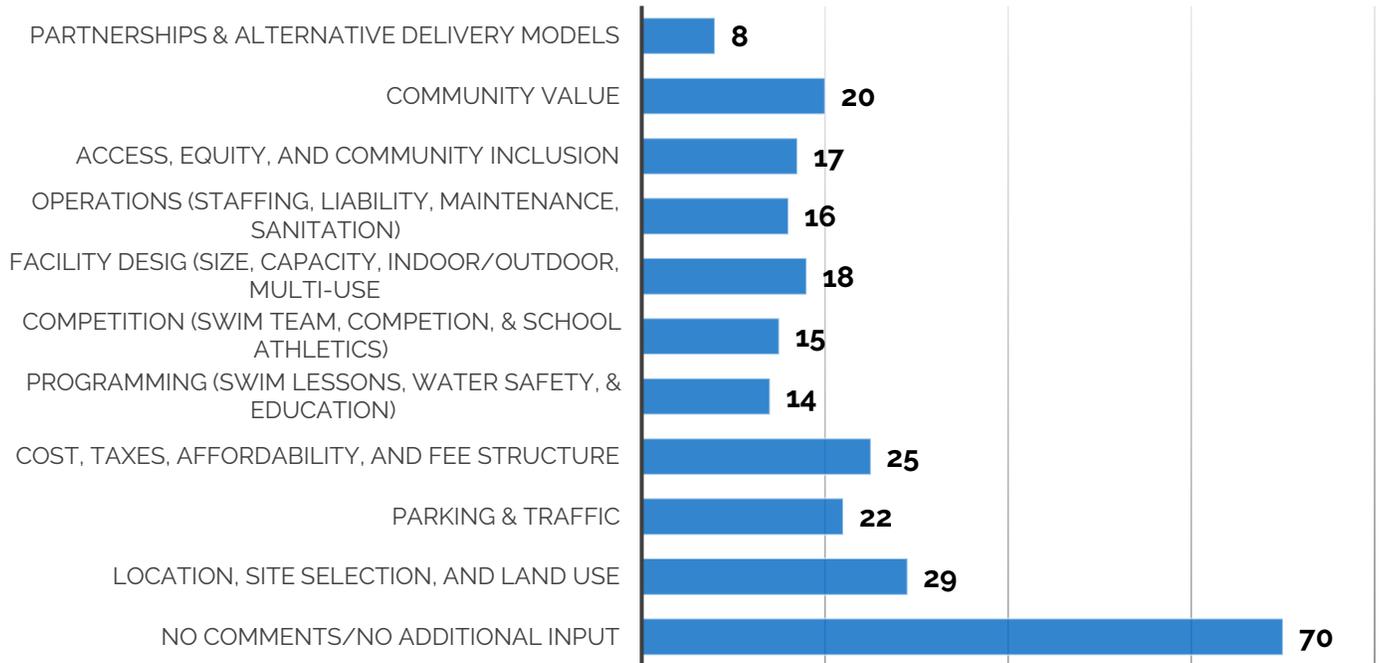
IF A POOL WERE TO BE DEVELOPED, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING WAYS WOULD YOU CONSIDER TO BE PRACTICAL TO OFFSET THE COST?



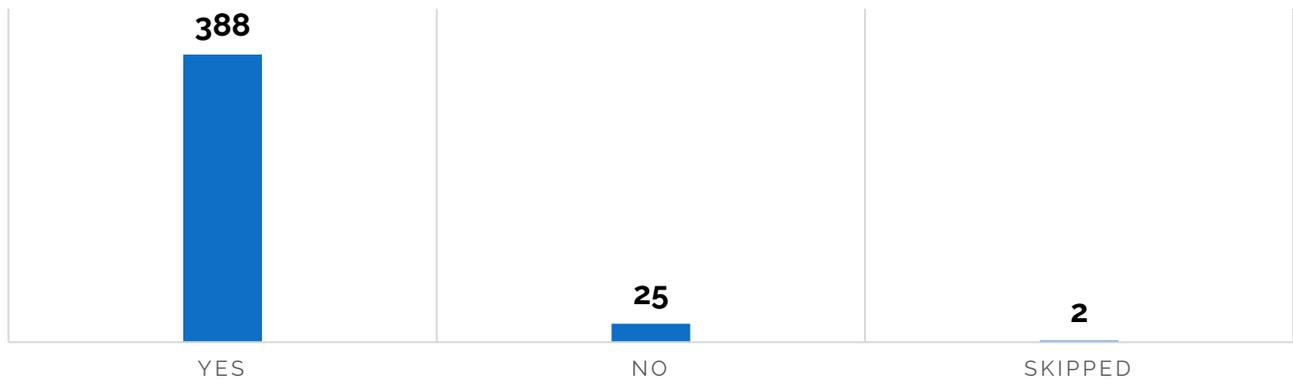
WHAT CONCERNS DO YOU HAVE, IF ANY, ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF A POOL IN THE TOWN OF SWANSBORO?



What else should the planning team consider when deciding on development of an aquatic facility?

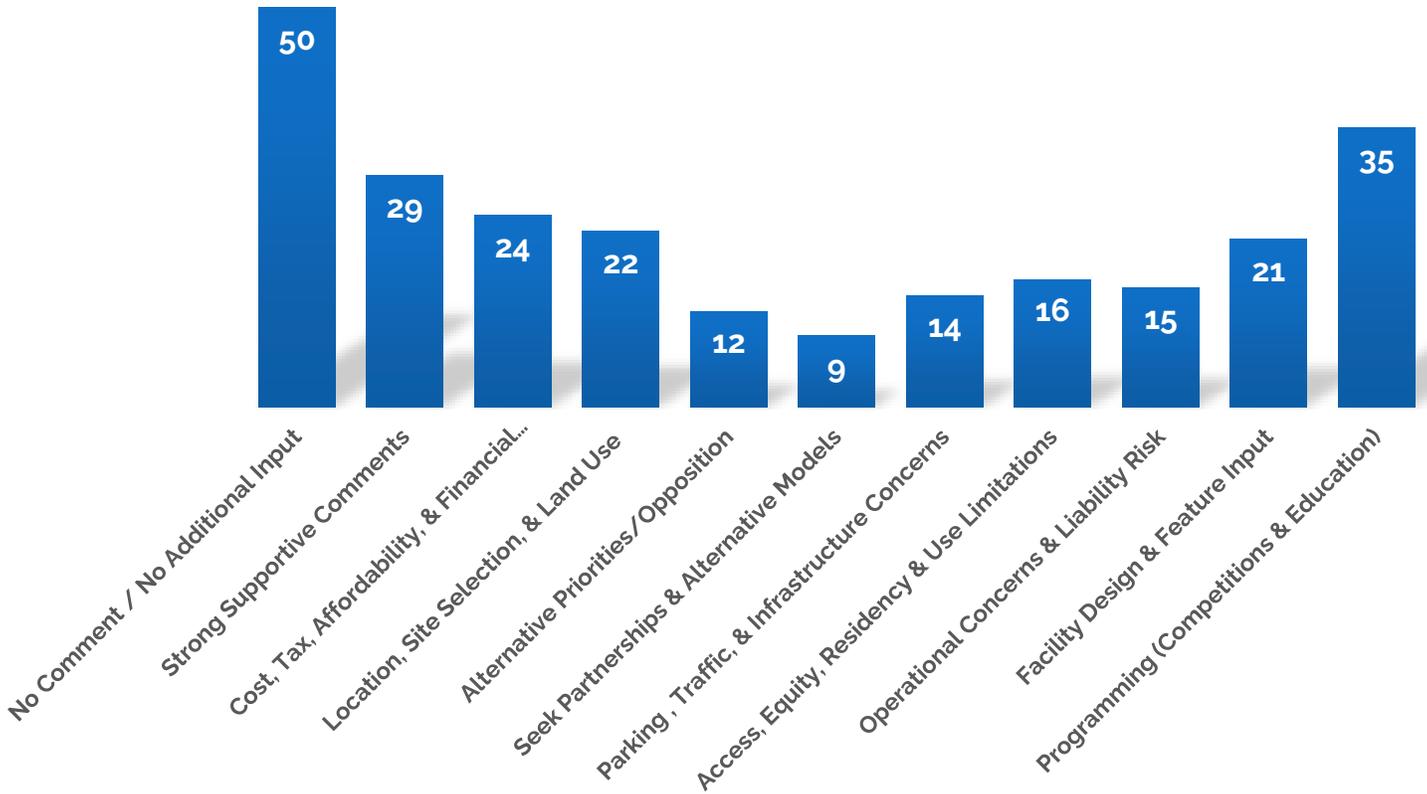


WOULD YOU PARTICIPATE IN ANOTHER SURVEY ON PRICING, ONCE A DESIGN IS DRAFTED FROM THE RESULTS OF THIS SURVEY?

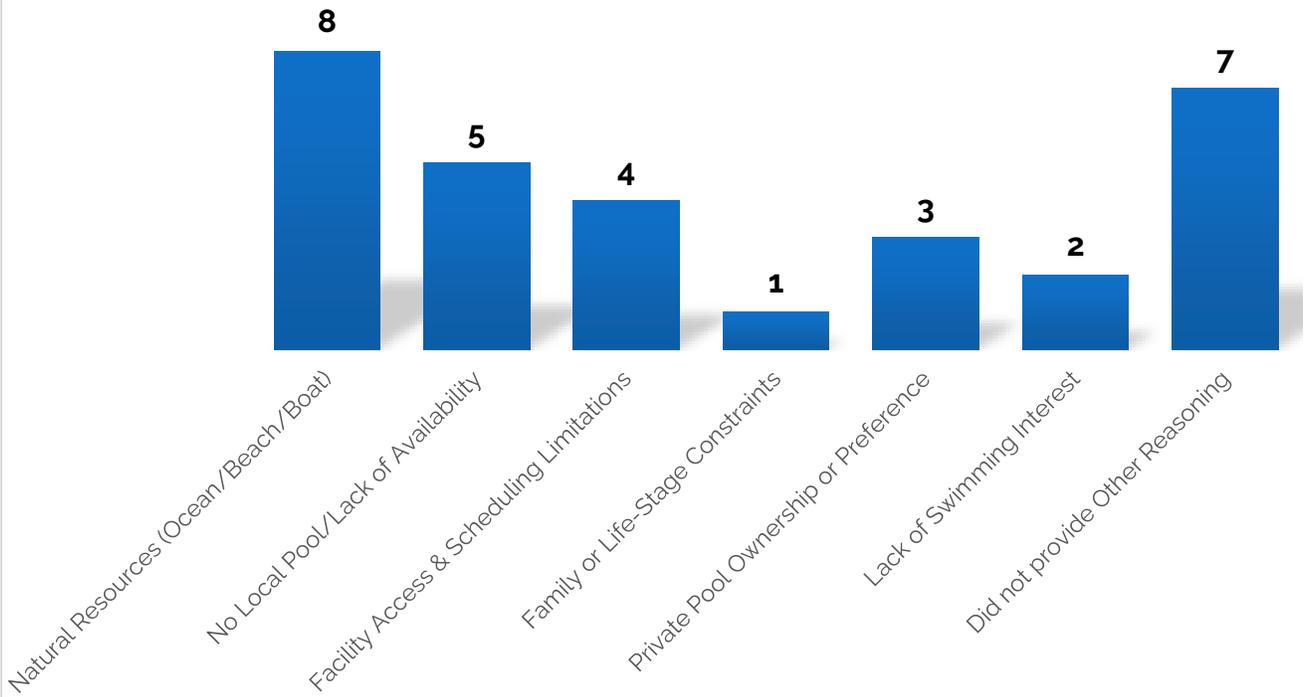


Appendix III – Survey Responses (Other, By Common Category)

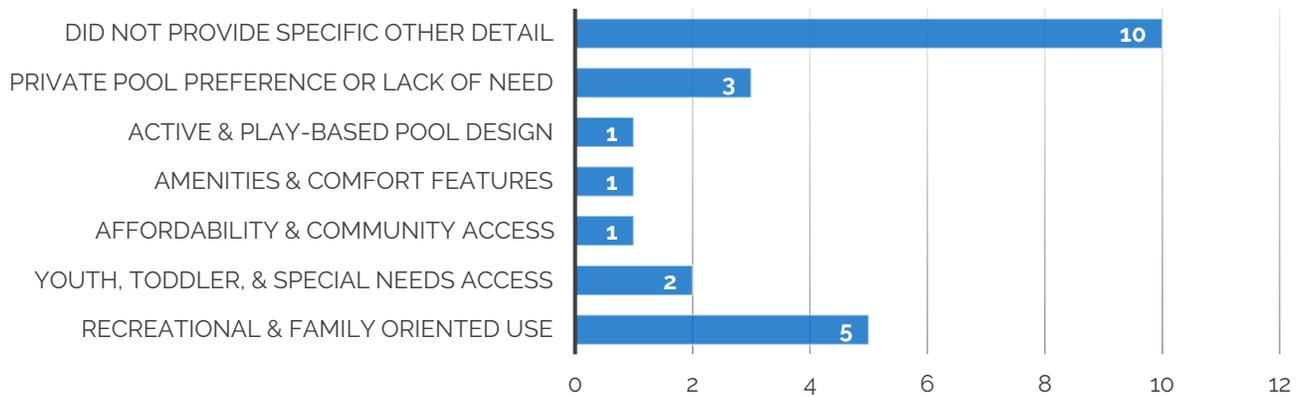
Do you have any additional thoughts, comments, or ideas that were not addressed in this questionnaire? (Common Groupings)



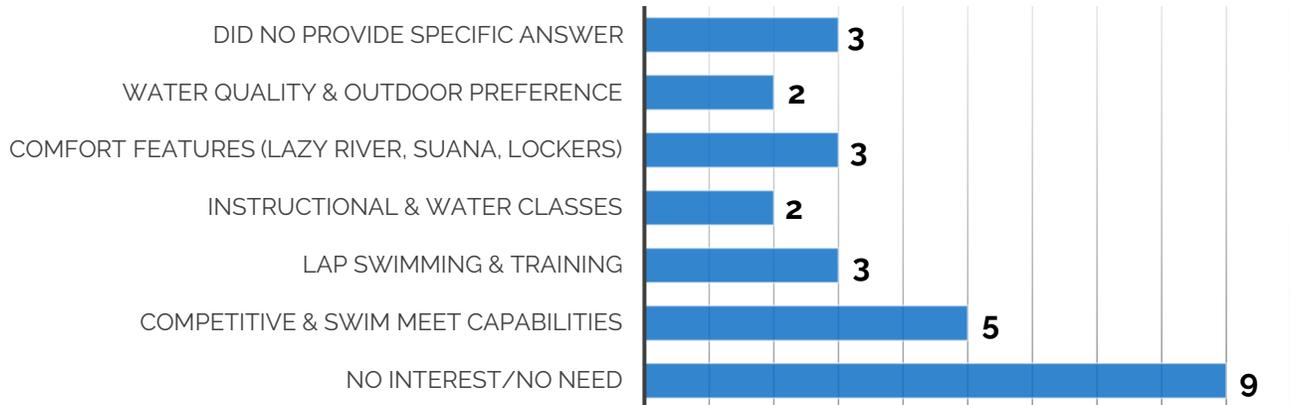
(If No) Why do you not use a pool facility? (OTHER, Common Groupings)



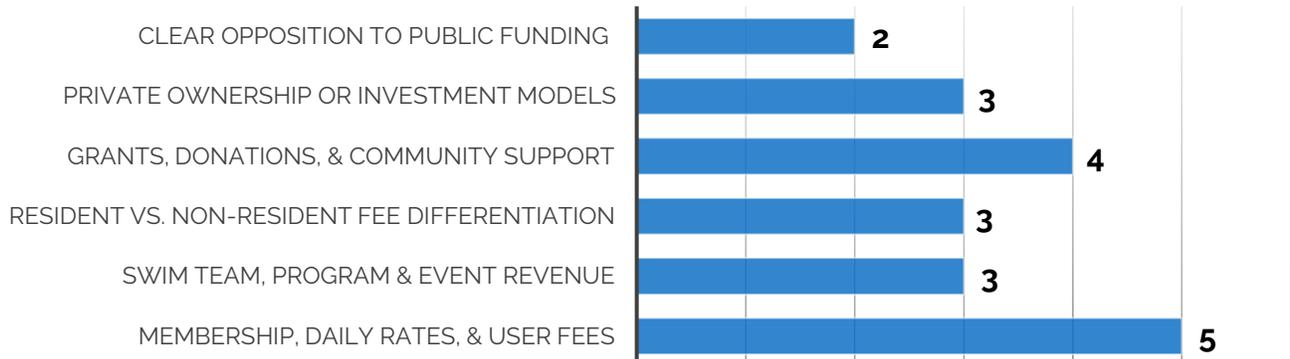
Which programs or activities would be of importance to you? (OTHER, Common Grouping)



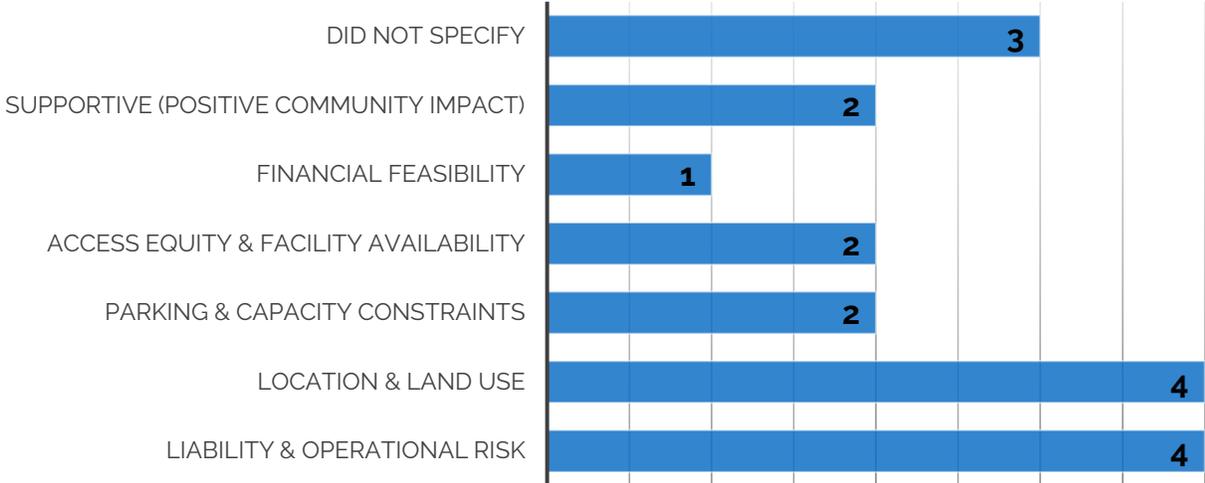
If a pool were to be developed, which feature or amenities would be important to you? (Other, Common Groupings)



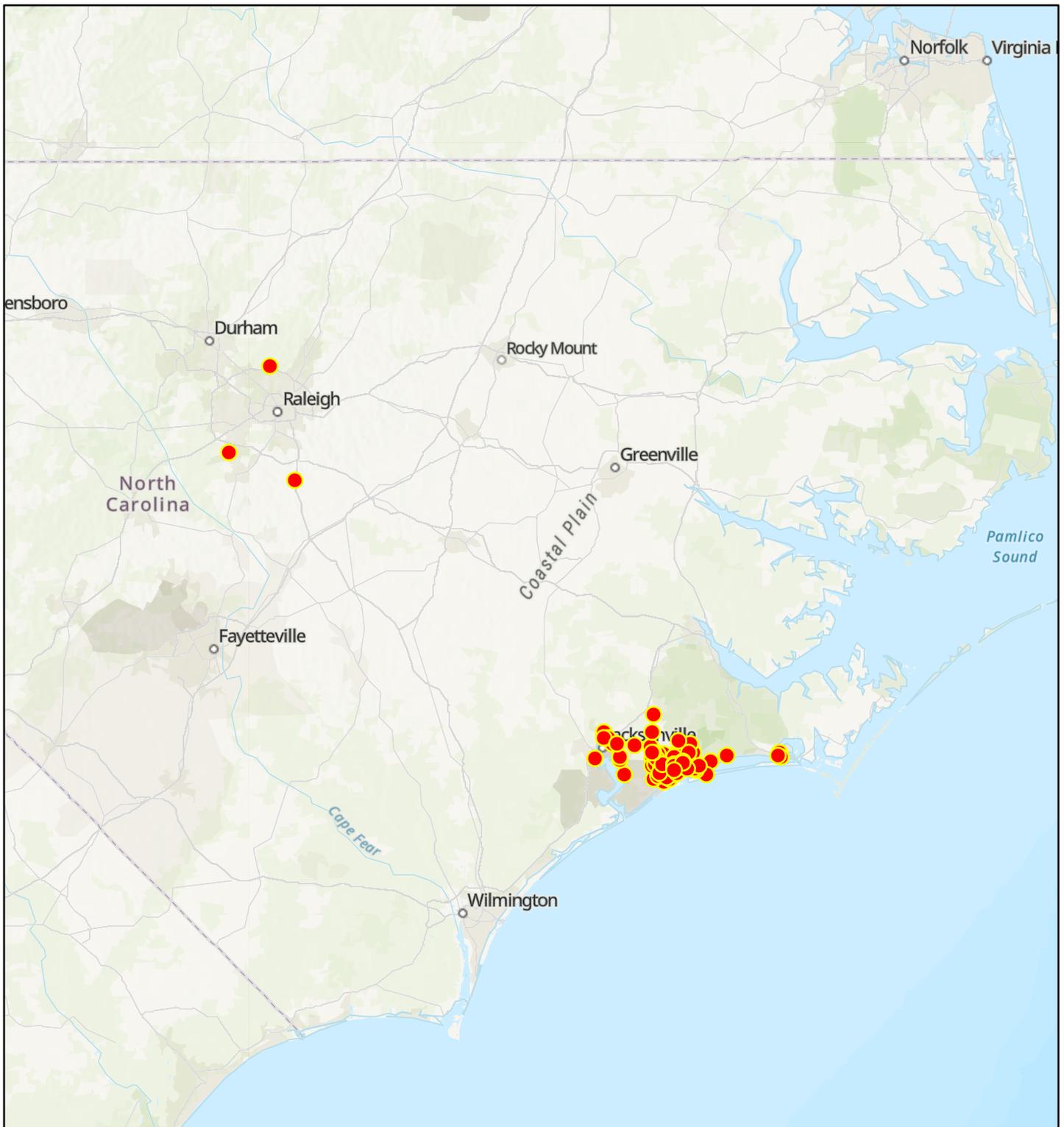
If a pool were to be developed, which of the following ways would you consider to be practical to offset the cost? (OTHER, Common Grouping)



What concerns do you have, if any, about development of a pool in the Town of Swansboro? (OTHER, Common Grouping)



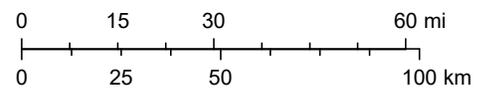
Pool Survey Geospatial Data _ North Carolina View



1/19/2026

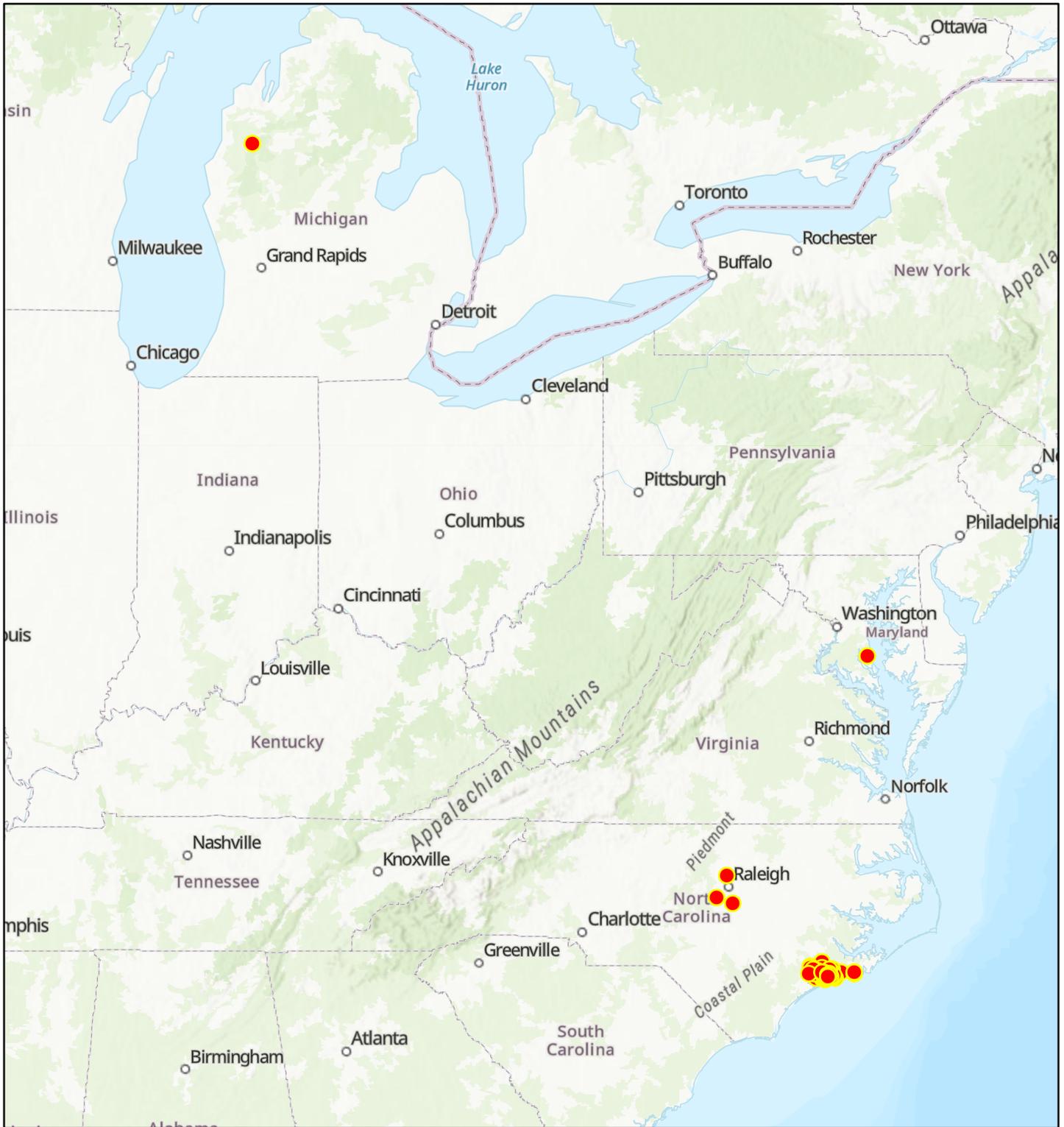
1:2,315,681

- Survey Point
- World_Hillshade



Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Esri, USGS

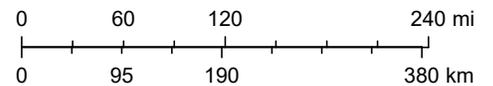
Pool Survey Geospatial Data _ United States View



1/19/2026

1:9,262,723

● Survey Point
World_Hillshade



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