



Office of the Town Manager
Stephanie Miller

Warrenton Town Council

Carter Nevill, Mayor
Roy Francis, Ward 1
William Semple, Ward 2
Larry Kovalik, Ward 3
Michele O'Halloran, Ward 4
Eric Gagnon, Ward 5
Paul Mooney, At Large
David McGuire, At Large

STAFF REPORT

Council Meeting Date:	January 13, 2026
Agenda Title:	Citizen Public Opinion Survey Options for the WARF
Requested Action:	Provide direction on survey options
Department / Agency Lead:	Parks and Recreation
Staff Lead:	Kelly Koernig

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As the Town prepares for next year's budget, Council has expressed interest in obtaining objective, actionable feedback from citizens regarding the future of the WARF.

As part of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, a citizen survey was conducted from August 12 – October 26, 2025, receiving 574 total responses, including 236 from Town residents. According to the survey vendor, this is a statistically valid sample with a $\pm 6.3\%$ margin of error, consistent with standard practice for municipal surveys. The survey included a range of WARF-specific questions, including facility usage frequency, satisfaction, barriers to attendance, support for Town operation, facility enhancements, and willingness to pay additional fees.

The survey provides Council with objective, data-driven insight into community perspectives, including residents' priorities for the WARF, potential enhancements, and openness to funding options. This information can help guide decision-making regarding the facility's operations, programming, and budgetary considerations. Staff recommends reviewing survey results in conjunction with fiscal analyses to support informed discussion on the WARF's future, along with determining if an additional survey is needed at this time.

BACKGROUND

The Warrenton Aquatic and Recreation Facility (WARF) is a community asset that provides year-round aquatics, fitness, recreation programming, and community wellness opportunities. The facility also requires an ongoing Town subsidy to support operations. As the Town prepares for upcoming budget deliberations, several members of Council have expressed interest in gaining a clearer understanding of resident perspectives regarding the facility's value, funding approach, and long-term operation.

As part of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan process, an additional section was included in the Needs Assessment specifically related to a WARF evaluation. As a part of the evaluation, Kimley Horn provided the following information:

- Peer facilities comparison (Manassas Park Community Center, Herndon Community Center, Ida Lee Recreation Center and Freedom Aquatic and Fitness Center),
- Pricing structure evaluation
- Public engagement findings relevant to the WARF
- Facility systems and capital risk (3-5 year outlook)
- Recommendations for the WARF
- WARF pricing elasticity study
- WARF revenue scenario modeling

The following is a summary of their findings: The Warrenton Aquatic and Recreation Facility (WARF) is the Town's flagship indoor recreation hub, highly visited and well-rated by users. While appropriately sized and offering strong aquatics and fitness amenities, aging systems, scheduling constraints, and high demand highlight the need for operational optimization, targeted reinvestment, and modest revenue strategies rather than near-term expansion. Short-term priorities include program schedule adjustments, pilot child-watch services, limited non-resident fee increases, and phased capital planning. Public input supports continued Town ownership, improved aquatics access, and therapeutic programming, while peer comparisons underscore the value of incremental upgrades, maintenance, and resident/non-resident pricing differentiation.

Per the request from council for a clearer understanding of resident perspectives, please accept the following information taken from the citizen survey that was conducted as a part of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan from August 12, 2025 – October 26, 2025. Several survey questions were directly related to the Warrenton Aquatic and Recreation Facility (WARF), including:

1. Frequency of visits to the WARF
2. Satisfaction with value/experience at the facility (last 12 months)
3. Barriers to visiting more frequently
4. Support for continued Town ownership and operation
5. Support for facility enhancements
6. Level of support for potential actions
7. Willingness to pay additional rates per person

The survey results provide Council with a baseline understanding of citizen preferences, usage patterns, and willingness to pay, which can be used to inform budget decisions, programming priorities, and long-term planning for the WARF.

Here is a summary of the results from Town residents only:

How often do you visit the Warrenton Aquatic and Recreation Facility (WARF)?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Weekly (multiple times per week to once a week)	36.61%	67
A few times a year	21.31%	39
Monthly (multiple times per month to once a month)	19.67%	36
Once a year or less	12.02%	22
Daily	7.10%	13
I have never been to the WARF	3.28%	6
	Answered	183
	Skipped	53

If you have visited the WARF within the last 12-months, how satisfied are you with the value received and/or experience you had at the facility and/or with staff.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Very satisfied	41.86%	72
Satisfied	38.95%	67
Neutral	9.88%	17
Dissatisfied	5.23%	9
Not sure	3.49%	6
Very dissatisfied	0.58%	1
	Answered	172
	Skipped	64

Which reasons prevent you from visiting the WARF more often? (select all that apply)

Answer Choices	Responses	
No reason	39.34%	72
Other (please specify)	26.78%	49
Fees are too high or lack of affordability	11.48%	21
I do not have a need to visit	10.38%	19
Programs and/or recreation opportunities offered do not interest me	8.74%	16
I go to other recreation facilities (private or public)	7.10%	13
Operating hours are not convenient	5.46%	10
Quality of staff or instructors	4.37%	8
Physical health limitations	4.37%	8
I do not know what is offered	3.28%	6
Facility is not well maintained	3.28%	6
I do not live nearby or too far from my residence	1.64%	3
Poor customer service by staff	0.55%	1

Lack of public transportation	0.00%	0
I do not know the location of the WARF	0.00%	0
	Answered	183
	Skipped	53

Other responses:

No reason

I visit it often !

Na

I am at WARF 4-6 times a week.

Fees are too high or lack of affordability

Money

Programs and/or recreation opportunities offered do not interest me

No interest

Operating hours are not convenient

earlier hours on weekends would be great

Quality of Staff or instructors

Our swim instructors were pretty bad. Other moms agreed (we were in a preschool class) and the instructor had kids jumping in all at once and almost caused injuries

Physical Health limitations

An accident.

Surgery has led to temporary physical limitations

Facility is not well maintained

Broken Changing rooms, Broken diaper changing stations, showers always freezing cold concerns regarding consistent availability/reliability of elevator

Old exercise equipment

Elevator is often out of service.

elevator was not working and I have trouble getting in the vehicle used for shuttle

Chlorine in pool is too much

Group Fitness classes

Group fitness schedule is limited and/or too crowded to participate at the times I can attend

Group classes are either over crowded so I can't get in, scheduled at inconvenient times, gym is really crowded with equipment/people

class times and offerings

would prefer fitness classes at more off-hour times

Group exercise classes I'm interested in not offered when I am free to go to them

They no longer offer Body Pump classes,

Classes cancelled too often, fitness classes beyond capability of seniors

I wish there were afternoon classes, especially yoga

some other classes (dance!!) And held during more hours, maybe a few more evening programs like 6PM

Swim Lessons

Need more swim lesson times for all levels. Classes fill up fast

Limited swim classes prevent admissions

Pool Availability

Pool too crowded during mornings

Too many blocked out lanes for organizations/non-members

Classes are way too early in the am for aquatic exercises. I would go every day for late morning or afternoon classes

Rude people and overcrowded. Please get rid of the basketball goal because it almost always have rude people there who bonk ball on other people in other lanes and they also get in other lanes which is dangerous for swimmers who are old and/or have health concerns.

Competing for lanes with the swim clubs

As said before, swim team season prevents more usage due to lane unavailability

Wish there was an outdoor lap pool

Time and Scheduling

Lack of time.

Our own work schedules and sometimes water temperatures

Time constraints

Out of town/vacation/scheduling conflict

Time

Time, which I need to make time now.

Too many other scheduled commitments

I would love to visit more, but I'm in busy time of life temporarily

Lack of childcare

Child care

Childcare hours

Other

Lack of shaded seating for adults at the playground, lack of shade for children using playground, swings are often broken

Walking distance of Rady Park

Children

Everyone does not wear proper swim attire as posted crowded

Need more room

The fitness room is too small and not enough fitness equipment. Other private gyms in town are much bigger. Also, there is no indoor gym space for indoor sports (i.e. volleyball, basketball, etc.).

Would you support any of the following actions the Town could take to enhance the WARF facility. (select all that apply)

Answer Choices	Responses	
Add an outdoor pool	56.97%	94
Expand the fitness area	41.21%	68
Expand or enhance the indoor pool	34.55%	57
Provide additional indoor space for fitness programming	23.64%	39
Add additional classrooms for more educational or instructional programming	18.18%	30
Other (please specify)	18.18%	30
Provide indoor space for additional youth programming	16.97%	28
Provide additional meeting or party rooms for rental	9.70%	16
Answered		165
Skipped		71

Other responses:

The town NEEDS an outdoor pool.
 Open the indoor pool to the outdoors in summer as originally planned
 Please add an outdoor pool
 Have more free weights & squat racks in the fitness area.
 Free weights
 The rowing machine is gone. It was very helpful and easy to use.
 Update the old equipment
 switch to salt water in pool
 Lap swim lane's available more times
 Add some dance classes like Zumba, Salsa. More water classes at later times. More yoga.
 Offer Body Pump classes,
 Schedule aquatic fitness classes, yoga, etc later in the day. Have a non-Shirley class on Wed. (she is good but the class is too strenuous)
 Sauna
 Sauna , red light equipment
 Basketball court
 Add a gym space.
 Childcare
 Adding childcare
 Childcare
 add more tables and chairs in the lobby for socializing before and after class
 Discount membership
 Close WARf and use money for needed sewer upgrades
 I would not recommend any expansion, it seems to be under utilized as is.
 Must find creative ways to generate revenue before adding any new feature(s). Town Council Finance Committee needs to provide Council with solution or seek public help. Everyone including Town Employees pay user fee (no free passes).
 Focus fixing what you already have before spending money on more things that don't work
 Better short usage cost options for in town
 Replace outdoor lighting that was removed when entrance was renovated. Major safety issue!
 Take better care of the playground
 Build a fence around the playground to be sure that kids are going to be safe
 Tennis Courts
 No

Do you support the Town of Warrenton continuing to own and operate the WARF with Town resources?

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	67.76%	124
I'd like the Town to explore other options including partnerships and non-profits to help support the WARF	23.50%	43
Not sure	4.92%	9
No	2.73%	5
I'd like the Town to consider leasing the facility to a different (private or non-profit) operator	1.09%	2

Answered 183
Skipped 53

Indicate your level of support for the following options.

Increase all user fees for the WARF

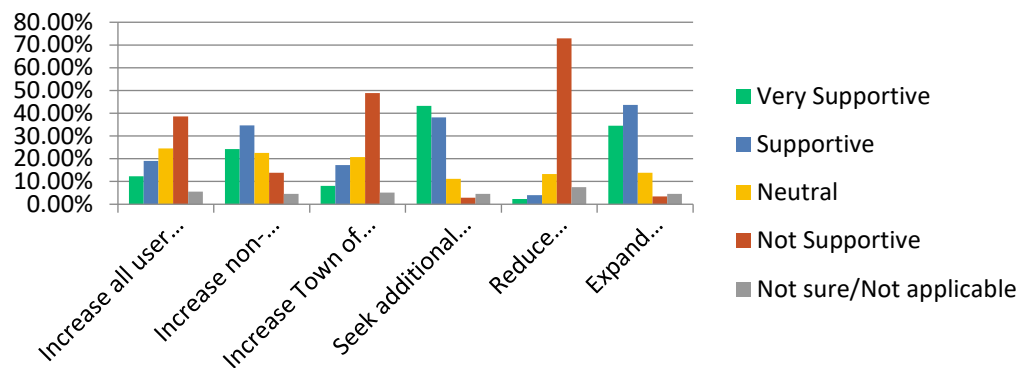
Increase non-resident of the Town of Warrenton rates/fees for the WARF

Increase Town of Warrenton resident rates/fees for the WARF

Seek additional funding partners and keep current rates/fees for the WARF

Reduce programming and/or operational hours of the WARF

Expand programming and/or facility offerings to increase usage of the WARF



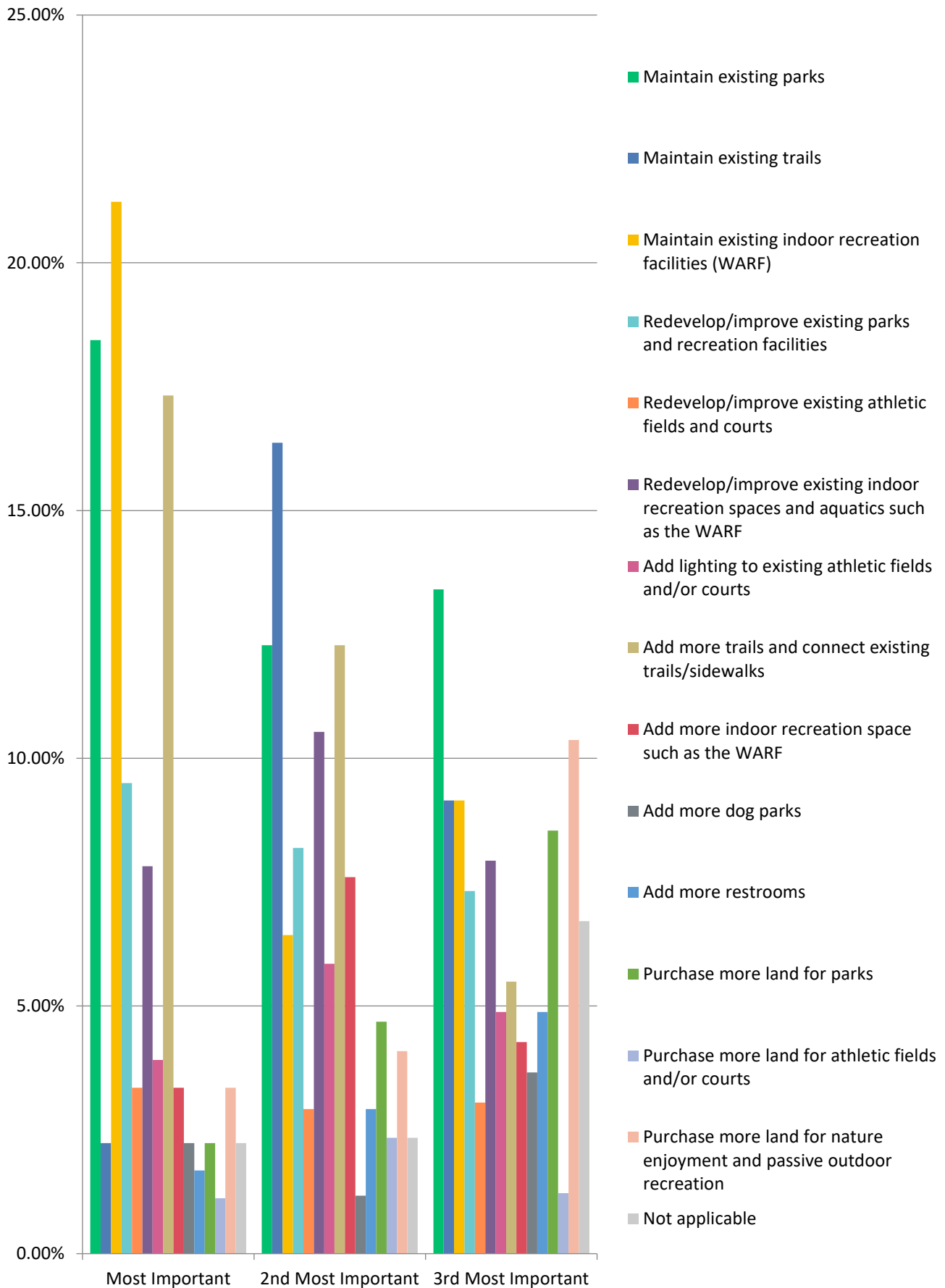
Please check the additional percentage in membership/daily rates per person you would be willing to pay for use of the WARF.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Not willing/able to pay additional rates.	39.89%	73
+5-9%	33.33%	61
+10-14%	16.39%	30
+15-24%	3.83%	7
+25-32%	3.83%	7
+33-49%	1.64%	3
+50-99%	1.09%	2
+100% or more	0.00%	0
Answered		183
Skipped		53

The following questions were not specific to the WARF, but do speak to actions and additional fees, residents would be willing to support.

The following are actions that the Town of Warrenton could take to improve parks, recreation, and trails. Select up to THREE actions you would support with your tax dollars.

Actions



From the following list, please check the additional amount you would be willing to pay to fund the actions you selected as most important.

Answer Choices	Responses	
\$26-\$50 per year	18.99%	34
\$11-\$25 per year	17.32%	31
\$51-\$100 per year	17.32%	31
\$1-\$10 per year	15.08%	27
Not willing to pay additional taxes for parks, recreation facilities, or trails.	13.97%	25
\$100-\$200 per year	11.73%	21
More than \$200 per year	3.35%	6
Not applicable	2.23%	4
	Answered	179
	Skipped	57

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Receive this update on the WARF-related survey findings from the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, and determine whether additional public opinion research is warranted. If so, direct staff to proceed with the appropriate next steps.

Service Level/Collaborative Impact

Findings from the community survey help align services with resident needs and expectations. The results guide planning, resource allocation, and program development to ensure Parks & Recreation services remain responsive, inclusive, and supportive of community priorities. Collaboration across departments, as well as council members, helps translate survey feedback into actionable improvements for residents.

Policy Direction/Warrenton Plan 2040

CF-1.1: Foster high quality, equitable and accessible community facilities that meet the Town's service requirements and support a high quality of life for the community.

CF-1.3: Ensure that community facilities are accessible to persons in all stages of life and all abilities.

CF-1.4: Encourage and strengthen a sense of community and the character of Warrenton through the design and appearance of public facilities.

CF-5.1: Implement robust maintenance schedules on community facilities to extend the life of investments.

P-4.3: Develop a system Park Master Plan for the town to guide long term investments.

Fiscal Impact

None at this time, but revenue and expenditures could be altered based on council direction during the budget.

Legal Impact

N/A

ATTACHMENTS

1. Online Survey Results Town only