



CITY OF ROME PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

APPENDIX E: BENCHMARK ANALYSIS

ROME
the copper city



BENCHMARK ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

The goal of the benchmark analysis is to evaluate how Rome Parks and Recreation's ("Rome") recreation services are positioned amongst peer communities, therefore, the information sought was a combination of operating metrics that factor budgets, staffing levels, programming, and inventory.

Information used in this analysis was obtained directly from agency websites (when available) and information available through the National Recreation and Park Association's ("NRPA") Park Metrics database.

Budgetary information was pulled directly from each agency's publicly available budget documents on their respective websites.

Due to differences in how each system collects, maintains, and reports data, variances may exist and some assumptions have been made for budgetary and staffing benchmarking. These variations can impact the per capita and percentage allocations, and the overall comparison must be viewed with this in mind. Additionally, benchmark comparisons are not direct comparisons as each peer agency has differences in organizational structure, as well as parks, facilities, amenities, and programming that have unique budgetary needs.

The benchmark data collection for all systems was completed as of July 2025, and it is possible that information in this report may have changed since the original collection date. In some instances, the information was not tracked or not available from the participating communities, which is shown by a "NA" in the data tables where the information was not able to be verified.

The communities listed below were selected for benchmarking because they are communities of similar sizes or within the region. Each community has varying socioeconomic characteristics.

- Binghamton Parks and Recreation
- Queensbury Parks and Recreation Department
- Utica Parks and Recreation Department

The table below lists the population figures for each benchmark community in the study.

Agency	Population	Jurisdiction Size (Sq. Mi.)	Population per Sq. Mi.
Binghamton Parks and Recreation	47,969	10.48	4,577
Queensbury Parks and Recreation	29,169	64.84	450
Rome Parks and Recreation	32,136	75.70	425
Utica Parks and Recreation	65,283	16.98	3,845

SYSTEM INVENTORY

The following table provides a general overview of each system. Rome's total acres per 1,000 residents (6.4) falls below Queensbury and Utica as well as national benchmarks. Additionally, Rome is just above the NRPA lower quartile for residents per City owned and operated parks (One park per 1,461 people).

Agency	Population	Total Acres Owned or Managed	Total Developed Acres	Percentage of Developed Acres	Total Acres per 1,000 Residents
Binghamton Parks and Recreation	47,969	512	NA	NA	10.7
Queensbury Parks and Recreation	29,169	430	NA	NA	14.7
Rome Parks and Recreation	32,136	206	155	75%	6.4
Utica Parks and Recreation	65,283	677	NA	NA	10.4

NRPA Median 9.2 Acres per 1,000 Residents
NRPA Lower Quartile 3.9 Acres per 1,000 Residents
NRPA Upper Quartile 16.1 Acres per 1,000

Rome has 1,461 residents per City owned and operated park.

Residents per park	
NRPA Median	2,017
NRPA Lower Quartile	1,277
NRPA Upper Quartile	3,829

FINANCIALS

Rome's total operating budget (\$1,905,761) is under NRPA's lower quartile (\$2,040,046) but comes in higher than Queensbury and Utica in operating expenses per resident at \$57.20. This is still lower than the NRPA lower quartile of \$63.98 per resident.

Agency	Total Non-Tax Revenue	Total Operating Expense
Binghamton Parks and Recreation	\$ 1,174,234	\$ 4,121,744
Queensbury Parks and Recreation	\$ 420,000	\$ 1,343,590
Rome Parks and Recreation	\$ 147,149	\$ 1,905,761
Utica Parks and Recreation	\$ 40,700	\$ 3,663,359

Agency	Population	Total Operating Expense	Operating Expense per Resident
Binghamton Parks and Recreation	47,969	\$ 4,121,744	\$ 85.93
Queensbury Parks and Recreation	29,169	\$ 1,343,590	\$ 46.06
Rome Parks and Recreation	32,136	\$ 1,905,761	\$ 59.30
Utica Parks and Recreation	65,283	\$ 3,663,359	\$ 56.12



Total Annual Operating Expenditures	Operating Expense per Resident
NRPA Median \$3,682,806	NRPA Median \$112.38 per Resident
NRPA Lower Quartile \$2,040,046	NRPA Lower Quartile \$63.98 per Resident
NRPA Higher Quartile \$7,647,556	NRPA Higher Quartile \$227.55 per Residents

With the least amount of total park acres of the benchmark communities, **Rome has the highest operating expense per acre at \$9,241 per acre.** This is slightly higher than the NRPA median for operating expenses per acre (\$8,979).

Agency	Total Acres	Total Operating Expense	Operating Expense per Acre
Binghamton Parks and Recreation	512	\$ 4,121,744	\$ 8,050
Queensbury Parks and Recreation	430	\$ 1,343,590	\$ 3,128
Rome Parks and Recreation	206	\$ 1,905,761	\$ 9,241
Utica Parks and Recreation	677	\$ 3,663,359	\$ 5,411

NRPA Median \$8,979 Operating Expense per Acre
NRPA Lower Quartile \$4,620 Operating Expense per Acre
NRPA Upper Quartile \$22,482 Operating Expense per Acre

STAFFING

Additionally, **Rome allocates approximately 70% of its operating expenses toward personnel.** Binghamton devotes 59% of its budget to personnel, Queensbury allocates approximately 73% of its budget to salaries and wages and Utica has 41% of its operational budget devoted to personnel.

Nationally, parks and recreation agencies allocate 54% of their operating budget to personnel services.

Personnel Budget - % of overall budget allocated to personnel			
Agency	Budget	Personnel Budget	% of budget allocated to personnel
Binghamton Parks and Recreation	\$ 4,121,744	\$ 2,437,909	59%
Queensbury Parks and Recreation	\$ 1,343,590	\$1,343,590	73%
Rome Parks and Recreation	\$ 1,905,761	\$1,334,754	70%
Utica Parks and Recreation	\$ 3,663,359	\$1,505,929	41%

Also, NRPA Park Metrics show that agencies have 44% of their staff manage operations and maintenance, 32% of staff dedicated to recreation programming, and the other 26% for administration and other responsibilities. The table below shows the breakdown of how each agency allocates their personnel budget to the various parks and recreation responsibilities. Binghamton appears to allocate a higher portion of their personnel budget to operations and maintenance than the other peer agencies and the national benchmark. Binghamton is the only community that breaks out administrative personnel within available budget information from their website. Alternatively, Queensbury allocates a high portion of their personnel budget to recreation services. This amount could also include administrative responsibilities. Similarly, Rome's and Utica's allocation percentage is likely to also include administrative responsibilities that are divided into operations and maintenance as well as recreation personnel budget amounts.

Personnel Budget - % of budget allocated to operations and maintenance, recreation programming, and administration and other responsibilities				
Agency	Personnel Budget	O&M %	Recreation %	Admin. %
Binghamton Parks and Recreation	\$ 2,437,909	61%	26%	13%
Queensbury Parks and Recreation	\$ 1,343,590	30%	70%	NA
Rome Parks and Recreation	\$ 1,334,754	39%	61%	NA
Utica Parks and Recreation	\$ 1,505,929	53%	47%	NA

Additionally, this information does not identify how each agency works with other municipal departments, such as Public Works, to maintain parks and recreation facilities, amenities, or properties. It is likely that other departments within each municipality allocate staffing and resources to assist with parks and recreation management.

RECREATION PROGRAMMING

According to NRPA Metrics benchmarks, the top five programs offered by jurisdictions serving 20,000-49,999 include: themed special events (93%), social recreation events (90%), team sports (90%), fitness classes (84%), and health and wellness education (80%).

Rome's core program areas align with national benchmarks and both Queensbury and Utica's offerings. However, both benchmark communities have more core program areas than Rome. **Fitness and wellness and adult sports** are two core program areas that should be a key focus for Rome's future programming.



Core Recreation Program Areas			
Binghamton	Queensbury	Rome	Utica
Adult Recreation	Adult Fitness	Aquatics	Aquatics
Golf	Adult Sports	Camps and Out of School (Lunch Programs)	Fitness/Wellness
Seniors	Camps	Community Events	Out of School programs
Youth Sports	Creative Arts	Youth Sports	Seniors
	Enrichment		Youth Enrichment
	Schools Out		Youth Sports
	Summer Sport Camps		
	Swim Lessons		
	Toddler/Preschool		
	Training and Education		
	Youth Events		
	Youth Fitness		
	Youth Sports		