
Erie Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan Survey 2008

FINAL RESULTS
DECEMBER 2008

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INTRODUCTION/METHODOLOGY

The Master Plan Survey was conducted primarily through a mailback survey, and was supplemented with an online version of the survey. The survey was originally sent to 3,500 randomly selected households located in the Town of Erie and the ZIP code associated with it (80516), which may include households outside the town limits as well as Erie P.O. boxes belonging to residents who live outside the town limits. A link and individually assigned password (one per household) were also included in the mailed invitation, in order to allow recipients to complete the survey online, should they prefer. Completed surveys received totaled 438 out of a net estimated 3,438 delivered (approximately 62 surveys out of the 3,500 originally mailed were returned "undeliverable" due to invalid addresses and/or residents who have moved and no longer reside at a particular address). This represents a good response rate of approximately 12.7%. Based upon the total sample size of 438 responses received, overall results have a margin of error of approximately +/- 4.7 percentage points calculated for questions at 50% response¹. Also, note that the resultant database is weighted by age of respondent to ensure appropriate representation of Town residents across different demographic cohorts in the overall sample.

The primary list source used for the mailing was a third party list purchased from Equifax, one of the three largest credit reporting agencies in the world. Use of the Equifax list also includes renters in the sample who are frequently missed in other list sources such as utility billing lists.

Additionally, a third, open-link version of the online questionnaire was made available to all residents of Erie, who could complete the questionnaire if they did not receive one by invitation in the mail. A total of 43 open-link surveys were completed online. As responses to the open-link version of the questionnaire are "self-selected" and not a part of the randomly selected sample of residents, results from the open-link questionnaire are kept separate from the mail and invitation web versions of the survey. Although these surveys were considered in the overall analysis of the data, the discussion and graphic illustrations of results that follow focus only on results from the randomly selected sample of residents. A brief summary of the open-link responses is included at the end of the report, as well as the full set of open-link data tables provided in the appendix sections to the report.

RESPONDENT PROFILE

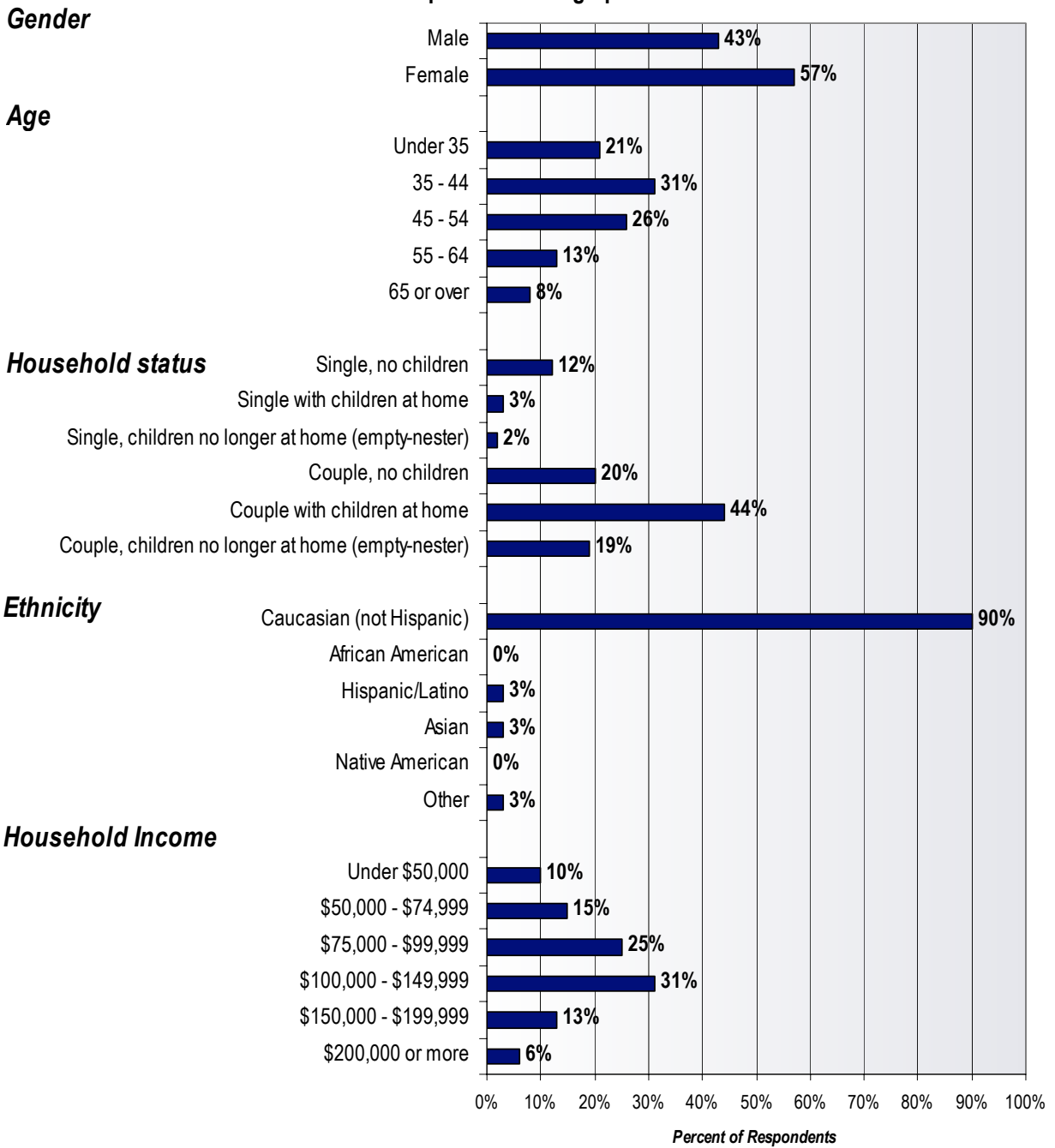
Based on US Census data and the 2008 ESRI forecast of the adult population (over 19 years old) for the Town of Erie, the age profile of residents is distributed as follows (which is the basis for the weighting of the survey data): 21 percent are under 35 years old, 31 percent between 35 and 44 years, 26 percent between 45 and 54 years, 13 percent between 55 and 64 years, and 8 percent 65 years or over.

Forty-seven percent of responding households have kids living at home, 20 percent are couples without kids, 12 percent are single without kids, and 21 percent are empty-nesters (couples and

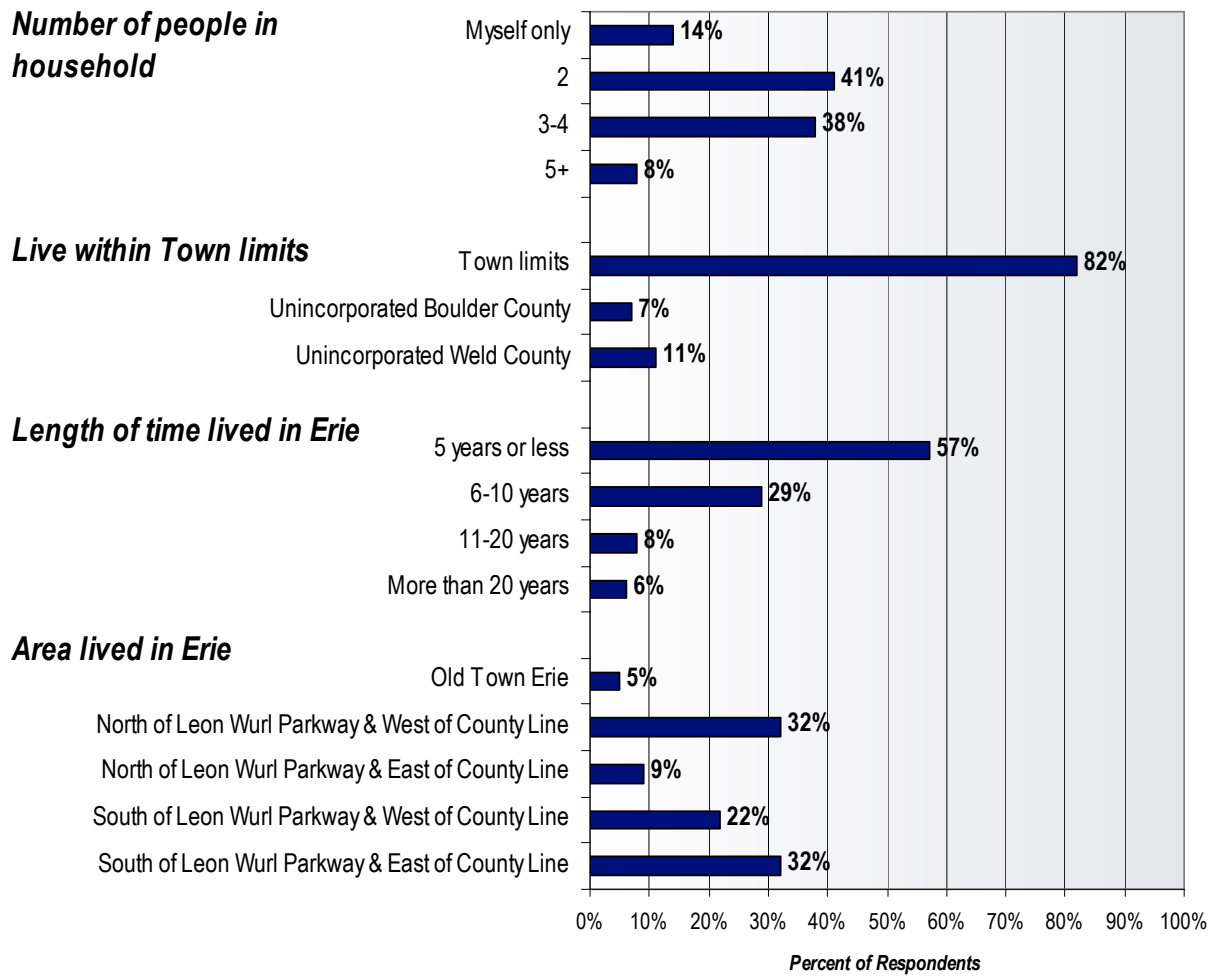
¹ For the total sample size of 438, margin of error is +/- 4.7 percent calculated for questions at 50% response (if the response for a particular question is "50%"—the standard way to generalize margin of error is to state the larger margin, which occurs for responses at 50%). Note that the margin of error is different for every single question response on the survey depending on the resultant sample sizes, proportion of responses, and number of answer categories for each question. Comparison of differences in the data between various segments, therefore, should take into consideration these factors. As a general comment, it is sometimes more appropriate to focus attention on the general trends and patterns in the data rather than on the individual percentages.

singles with kids no longer at home). Respondents were most likely to have lived in Erie for five years or less (57 percent) with an average length of residency being 7 years. The majority of respondents (82 percent) live in the Town limits of Erie, compared to 11 percent who live outside the Town in unincorporated Weld County and 7 percent in Boulder County. Almost one-third of respondents (32 percent) live in the northwest portion of Erie (north of Leon Wurl Parkway and west of County Line) along with 32 percent who live in the southeast portion (south of Leon Wurl Parkway and east of County Line). The remainder live in the southwest portion (22 percent), northeast portion (9 percent), and Old Town Erie (5 percent). In regards to household income, 50 percent of responding households had annual incomes greater than \$100,000.

**Figure 1
Respondent Demographics**



**Figure 2
Respondent Demographics**



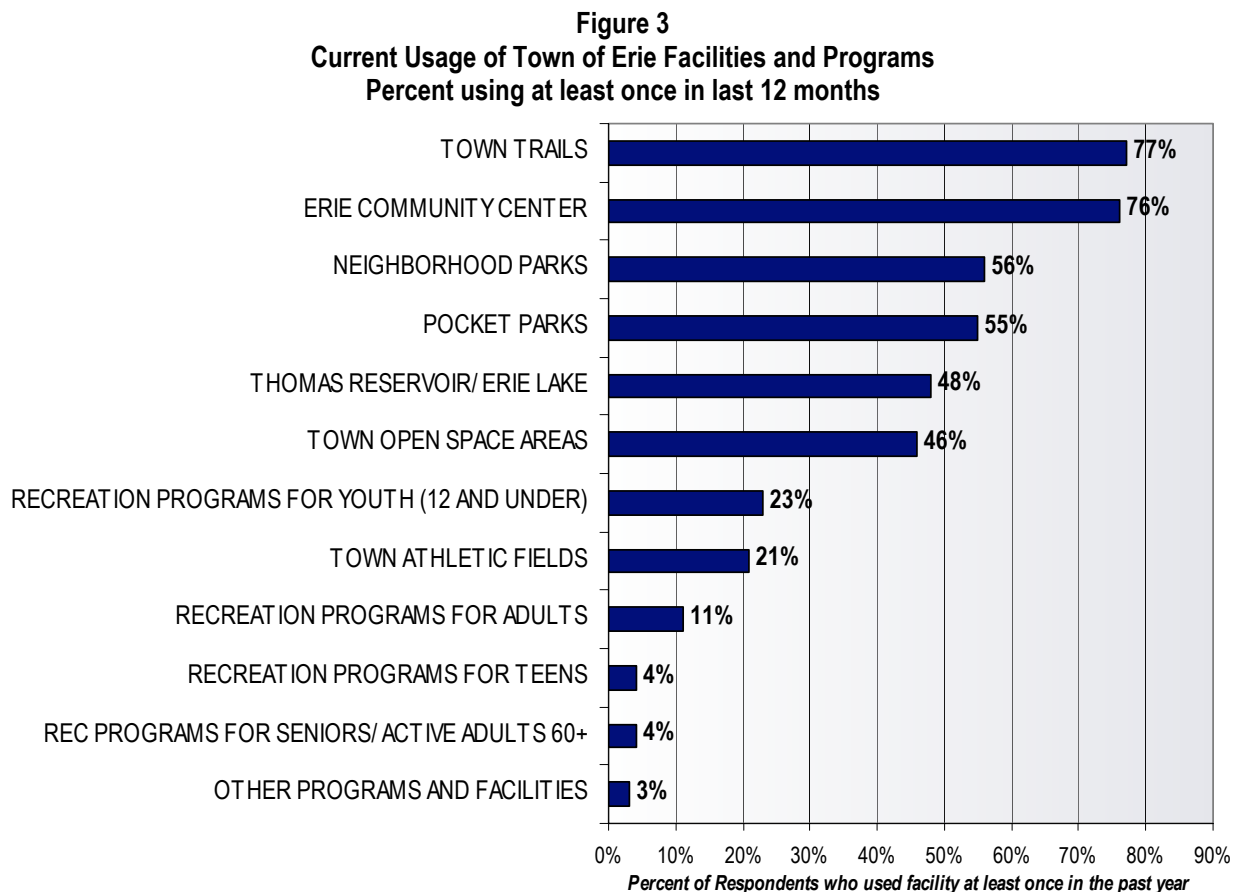
HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Key findings from the study are summarized below. Additionally, several of the questions on the survey form allowed respondents to “write in” their response or comment. Major themes that emerge from the comments are summarized in the report, while a complete set of the comments is provided as an appendix section.

In addition to overall responses, results are also segmented comparing respondents by location of residence, length of time lived in Erie, and household status. This segmentation of the results helps to further “explain” local opinions and provides additional insight to parks and recreation issues in the area. Three sets of data tables showing these segmentations are provided as appendix sections.

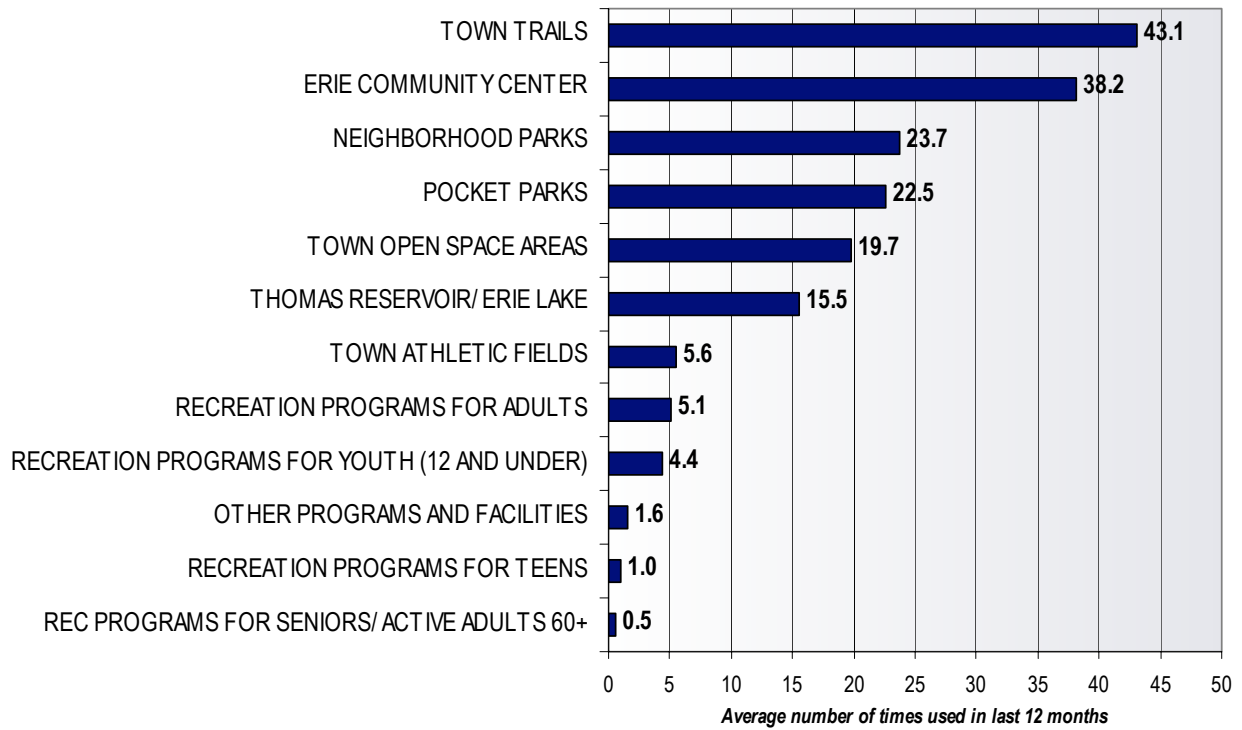
Current Programs and Facilities

Usage levels. Among the facilities and amenities currently available in Erie, town trails were used by the greatest proportion of respondents (77 percent of respondents have used a town trail at least once in the last 12 months) followed by the Erie Community Center (76 percent of respondents). Approximately 46-56 percent have used neighborhood parks, pocket parks, Thomas Reservoir/Erie Lake, and town open space areas at least once in the last 12 months. Used or attended the least were recreation programs for teens and seniors/active adults.



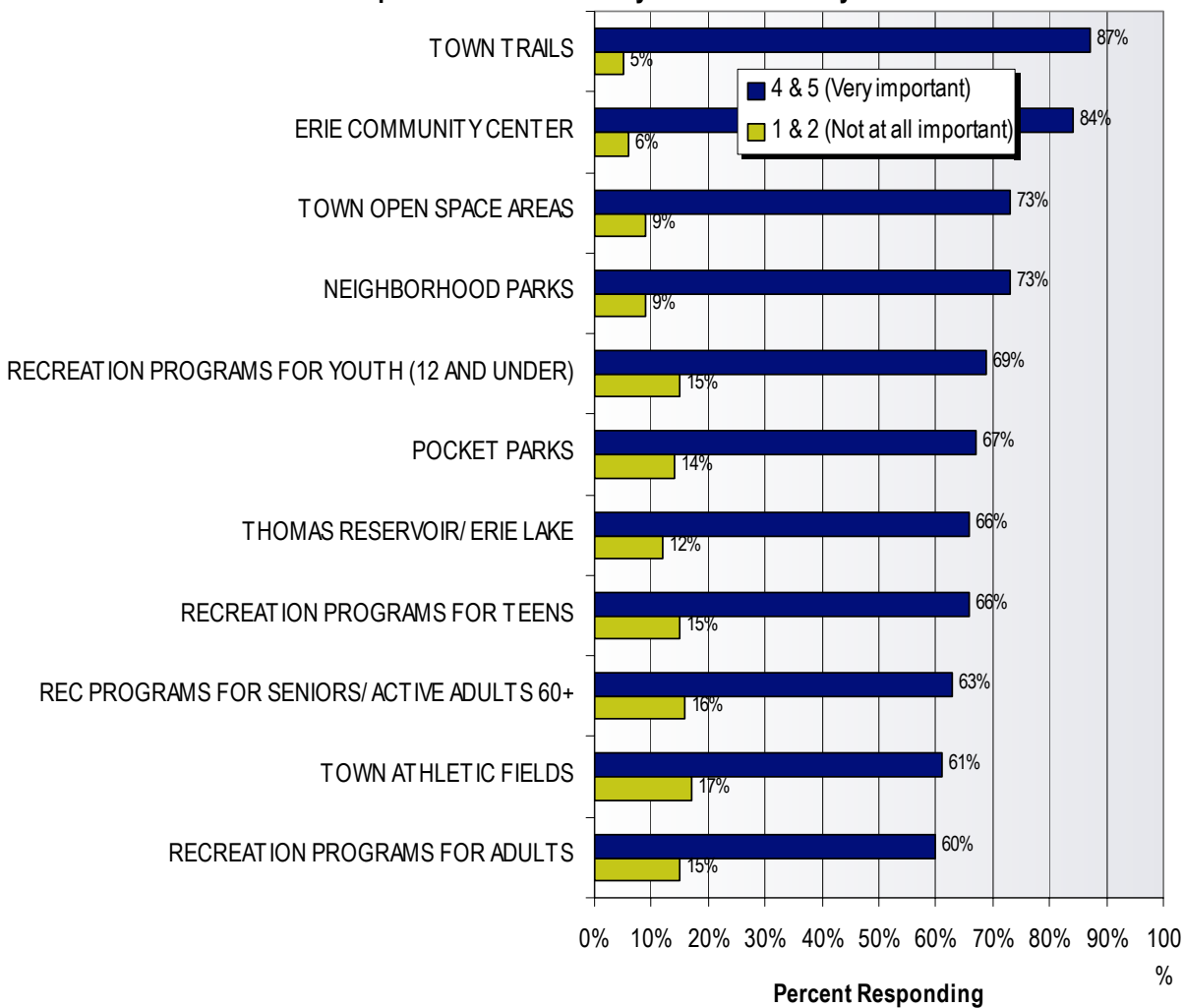
When asked about their frequency of use, respondents indicated the highest number of average uses per year to town trails (43.1 times per year), again followed relatively closely by the Erie Community Center (38.2 times). Neighborhood parks (23.7 times per year), pocket parks (22.5 times per year), Town open space areas (19.7 times per year), and Thomas Reservoir/Erie Lake (15.5 times per year) were also used frequently throughout the year.

Figure 4
Current Usage of Town of Erie Facilities and Programs
Average number of visits in last 12 months



Importance to the community. Respondents were then asked to indicate how important each of these parks and recreation amenities are to the community. While the majority of facilities and amenities are rated as being relatively important to the community, town trails and the Erie Community Center were rated the highest (84-87 percent of respondents rated it “very important,” a 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale). Next was Town open space areas (73 percent) followed by neighborhood parks (73 percent). Recreation programs for adults (60 percent of respondents rated it “very important”) and the Town athletic fields (61 percent) were rated among the least important, however, only a small margin behind some of the top amenities, indicating a high level of importance overall for all facilities in the area.

Figure 5
Importance of each facility to the community

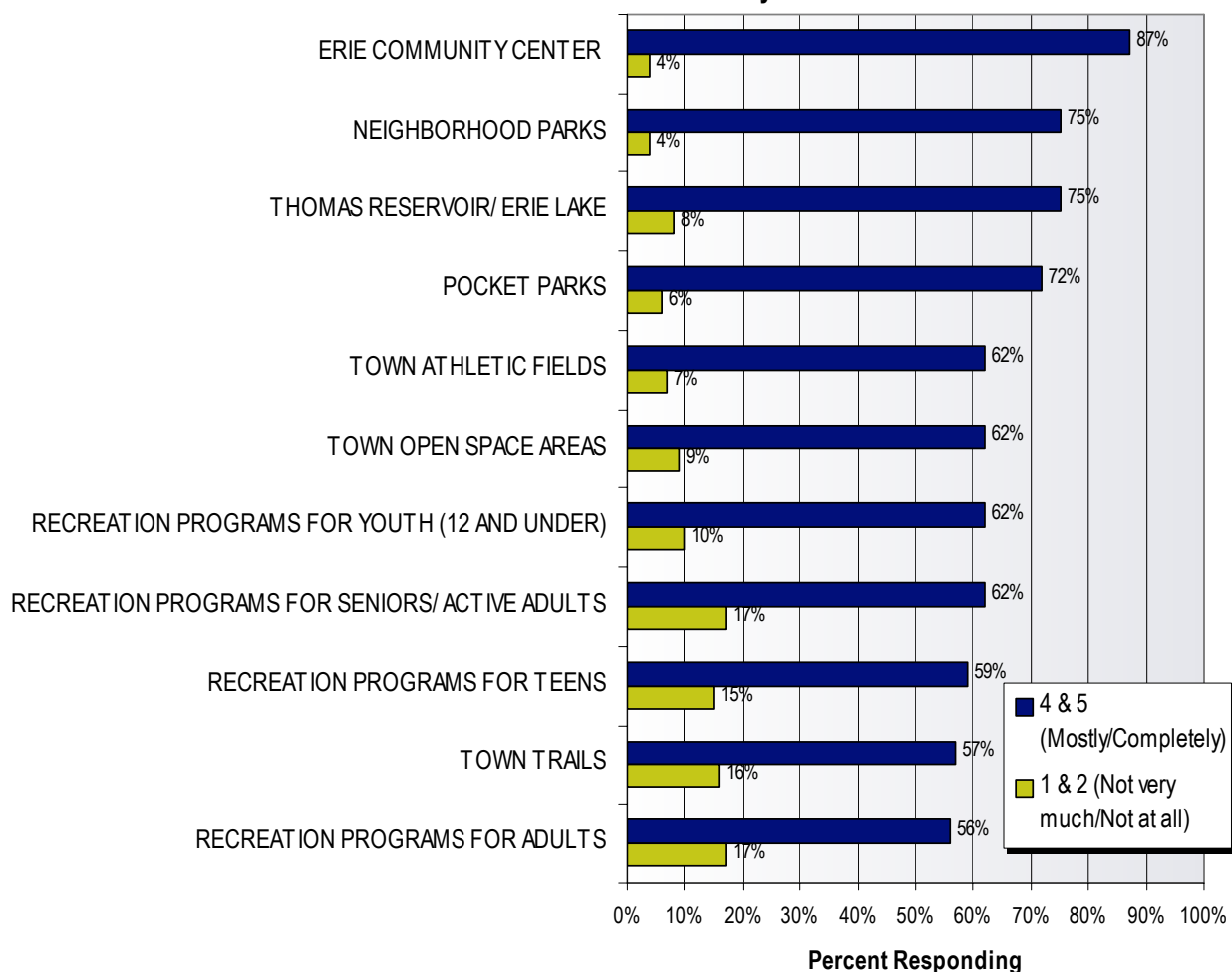


How well are parks, trails, recreation facilities, and programs currently meeting the needs of the community? Overall, most parks, facilities, and amenities available in Erie received relatively positive satisfaction ratings. Similar to the frequency of use of current facilities, respondents indicated that the following facilities meet the needs of the community the most:

- ◆ Erie Community Center
- ◆ Neighborhood parks
- ◆ Thomas Reservoir/Erie Lake
- ◆ Pocket parks
- ◆ Town athletic fields
- ◆ Town open space areas
- ◆ Recreation programs for youth

Unlike what was indicated in the levels of usage and importance, Town trails ranked near the bottom in terms of satisfaction. However, it's overall satisfaction rating was still relatively positive (57 percent were "mostly or completely" satisfied, ratings of "4" and "5" on a 5-point scale), with 16 percent indicating needs were not being met very much or at all (ratings of 1 or 2). Recreation programs for seniors/active adults, teens, and adults similarly received 15-17 percent responses of needs not being met.

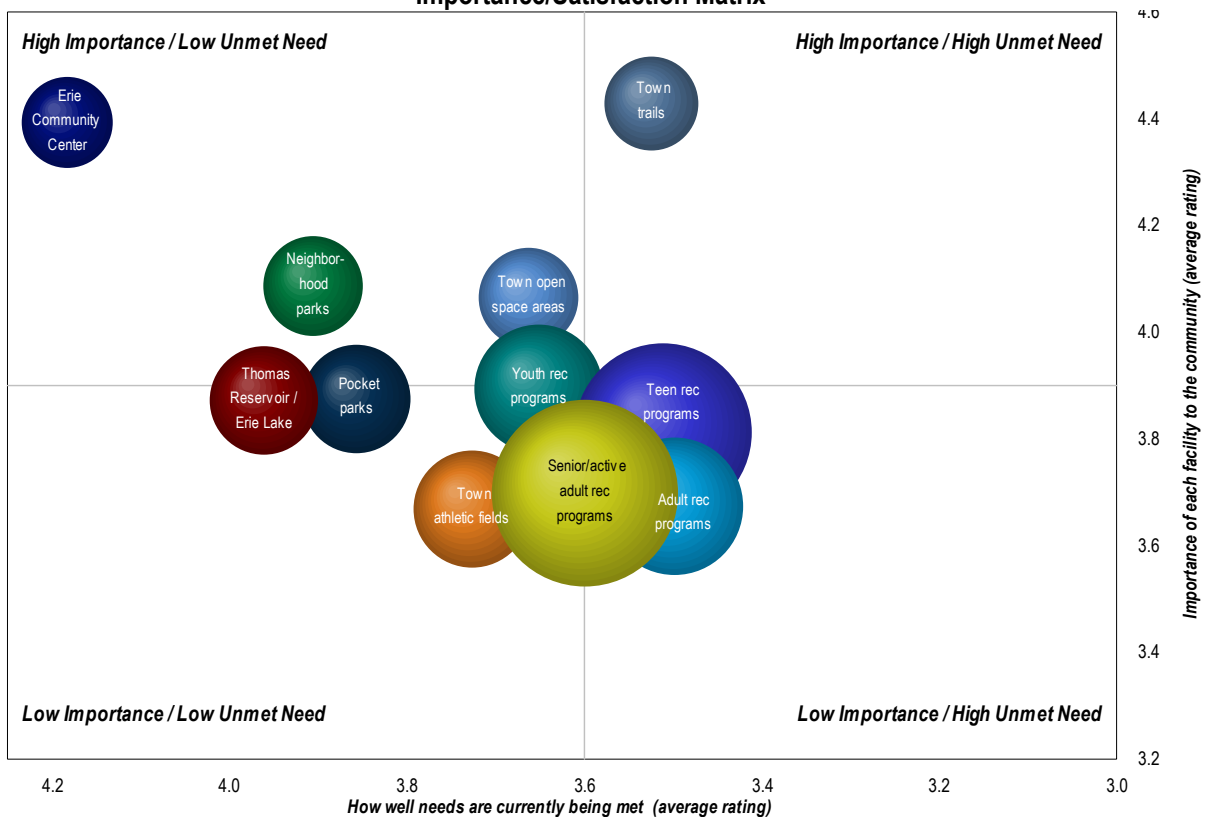
Figure 6
How satisfied are you that the parks, trails, recreation facilities, and programs provided in Erie are meeting the needs of the community?



Importance-Performance Matrix. It is also instructive to compare and plot the importance scores against the performance scores in an “importance-performance” matrix. As illustrated in the graph, although perhaps not meeting a certain level of need for some residents, note that many of the same facilities listed above that are meeting needs are also considered the most important to the community (Erie Community Center, neighborhood parks, and Town open space). As previously mentioned, Town trails are important to respondents overall, but are not quite meeting the needs of the community as well as the Community Center, parks, or to a lesser extent, open space. As also previously identified, after trails, adult recreation programs, teen recreation programs, senior/active adult recreation programs, and to a lesser extent, youth recreation programs, while considered less important to the community as a whole, are not meeting the needs for many respondents.

The size of each circle in the graph represents the confidence interval for each amenity. Confidence Intervals (CI) are used to determine the reliability of an estimated range of values by measuring the spread of data (the range of values around a point estimate that takes sampling error into account). The narrower the spread (smaller the circle on the graph, such as with the Erie Community Center), the smaller the sampling error and the greater the confidence that the indicated value is accurately represented by the data point. For the Erie Community Center, for example, the CI is +/- 0.1, so there is little variability in responses and a high level of confidence that the indicated value is true. The wider the spread (i.e. the larger circles on the graph, such as senior programs) indicates a larger CI, or more variability in responses or greater spread of distribution of responses. In the case of senior programs, the CI is +/- 0.2.

**Figure 7
Importance/Satisfaction Matrix**



*Data point size is equal to 95% confidence interval for each amenity. When confidence interval of importance and satisfaction differed, the greater value was used.

Respondent Comments. To further probe satisfaction and desires of what is currently available in Erie, respondents were asked in an open-ended question if they had any comments or suggestions of what improvements could be made to better meet the needs of the community. A number of suggestions were offered, particularly in regards to trails and trail connectivity, creating a trail map, the need for bike lanes, meaningful and unfragmented open space, a modern skate park, dog park, more athletic fields and better maintained, more youth sports programs and better coaching/instruction, pricing and user fees (particularly for residents over 55), additional lap lanes for the swimming pool, longer hours of operation at the Erie Community Center (longer hours in general, but also to help manage perceived lack of space and facility issues), better staff training, and size of facilities. While overall satisfaction levels are very high, there exists a sense that “everything was built too small” to accommodate the current level of demand and usage. Most of these topics emerged as consistent themes throughout the survey’s open-ended comments. A sampling is listed below, but the full set of comments can be found in the attachments.

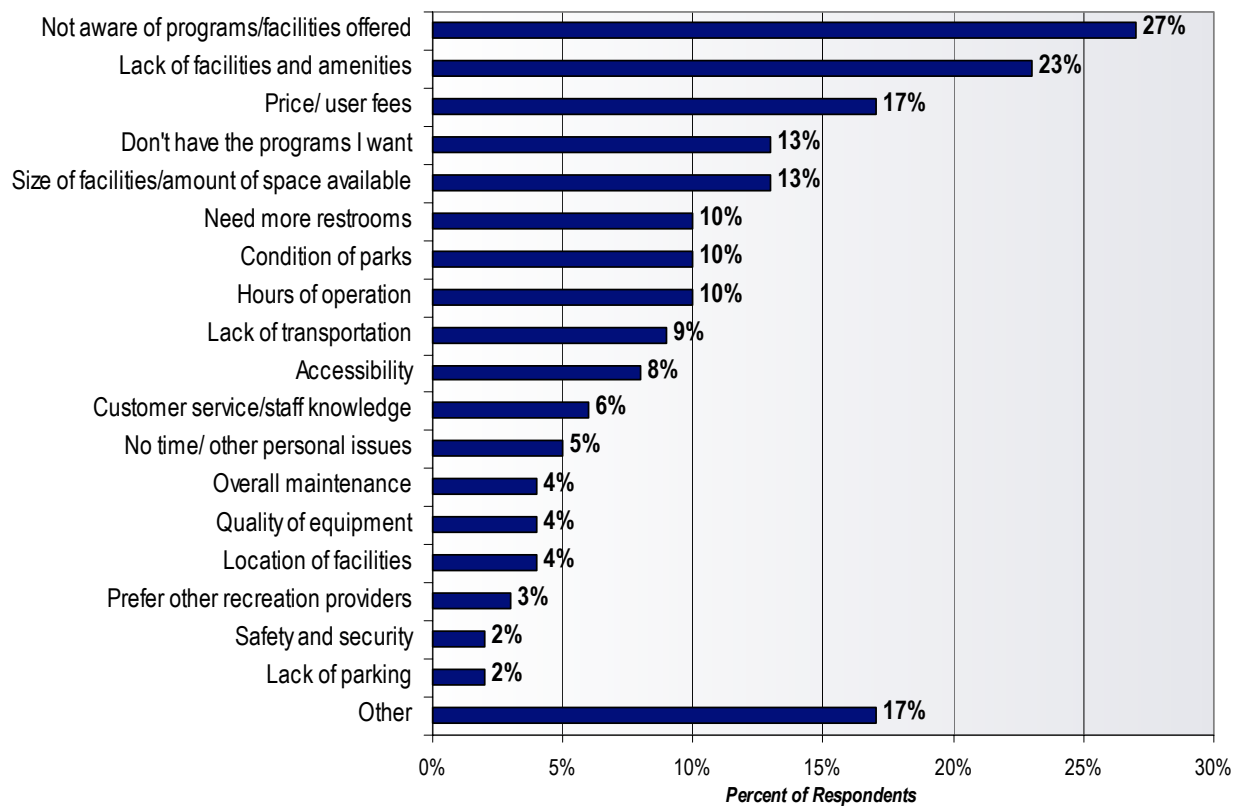
- ◆ *Acquire meaningful open space instead of small chopped up parcels*
- ◆ *Better lighting along trails and in parks, additional trash receptacles along the trails*
- ◆ *Better trail signage on open space/trails.; More lap lanes in the rec center, though I realize this is a hard one to change...*
- ◆ *Build new modern skate park*
- ◆ *Connect the trails*
- ◆ *Connect town trails to Boulder and Lafayette trails!*
- ◆ *Dedicated coaches that WANT to coach!*
- ◆ *Erie needs to add an outdoor swimming pool. Trails should have dirt paths as well as concrete. County Rd. 1 should be widened to accommodate bikes.*
- ◆ *Have more programs in evening/weekends; rec center stay open later on weekdays*
- ◆ *I would like to see the trail system continue to expand. Great job so far, keep going!!!*
- ◆ *Improve and increase number of bike lanes. Most roads are dangerous.*
- ◆ *Improved bike lanes on roads, or beside roads to get down county line or 119th w/o risk of traffic.*
- ◆ *Knowing where all are located - improve website and info by front desk staff at community center*
- ◆ *More athletic fields are needed, more connecting of trails to town center*
- ◆ *More trails connected, better bike lanes, disappointed new roads didn't make bike lanes*
- ◆ *Need a dog park*
- ◆ *Open space - need more! Plus define access and educate us - e.g. they do not show up on the parks and rec map*
- ◆ *Open space seems fragmented, it needs to be connected from larger areas. I think open space has been neglected in favor of parks and the community center. I see a lot of trails, where is the open space?*
- ◆ *Senior rates should apply at 55 - because of your high age limit I joined the Lafayette rec center*
- ◆ *The price is too high in comparison to Lafayette. My husband and I are 58 and 59 and an annual pass is \$300 total for the two of us (in Lafayette). At our hometown center (in Erie) the cost is more than twice as much.*
- ◆ *More tennis courts, more tennis programs for youth, teens and adults*

Aspects of Town’s facilities and/or programs most in need of improvement. When asked what parks and recreation facilities, services, and programs they think are most in need of improvement, respondents indicated a lack of awareness of programs/facilities offered (27 percent of respondents) and a lack of facilities and amenities (23 percent). Other aspects (indicated by 10-17 percent of respondents each) include the following:

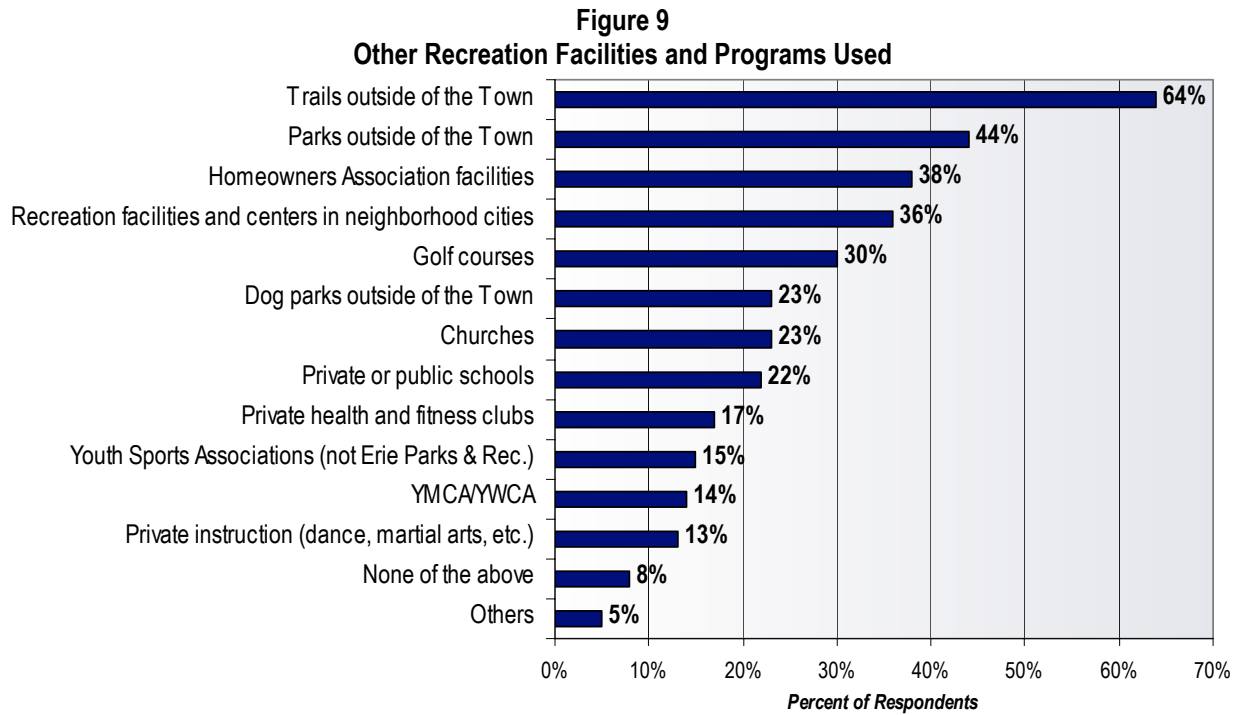
- Price/user fees
- Don’t have the programs I want
- Size of facilities/amount of space available
- Need more restrooms
- Condition of parks
- Hours of operation

Again, many of the facilities and amenities listed in open-ended comments to this question were summarized on the previous page, including trails, bike lanes, modern skate park, etc.

Figure 8
What parks and recreation facilities, services, and programs are most in need of improvement?

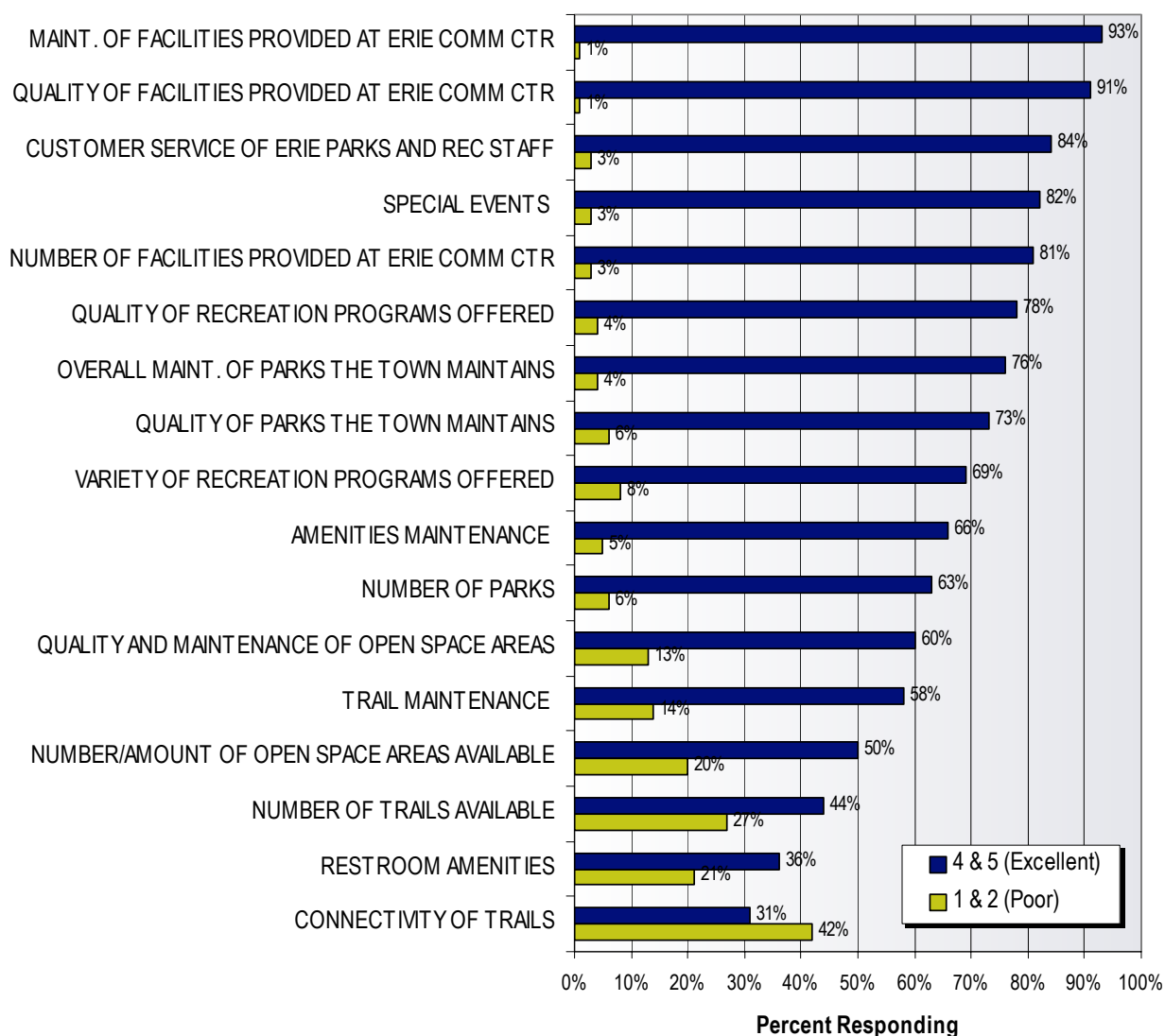


Other recreation facilities used. When asked what other organizations respondents and their household members use for recreation facilities and programs, 64 percent of respondents indicated that they use trails outside of the Town, along with 44 percent who indicated they use parks outside of the Town. Other facilities used include homeowner’s association facilities (38 percent), recreation facilities and centers in neighboring cities (36 percent), golf courses (30 percent), dog parks outside of Town (23 percent), churches (23 percent), and private or public schools (22 percent).



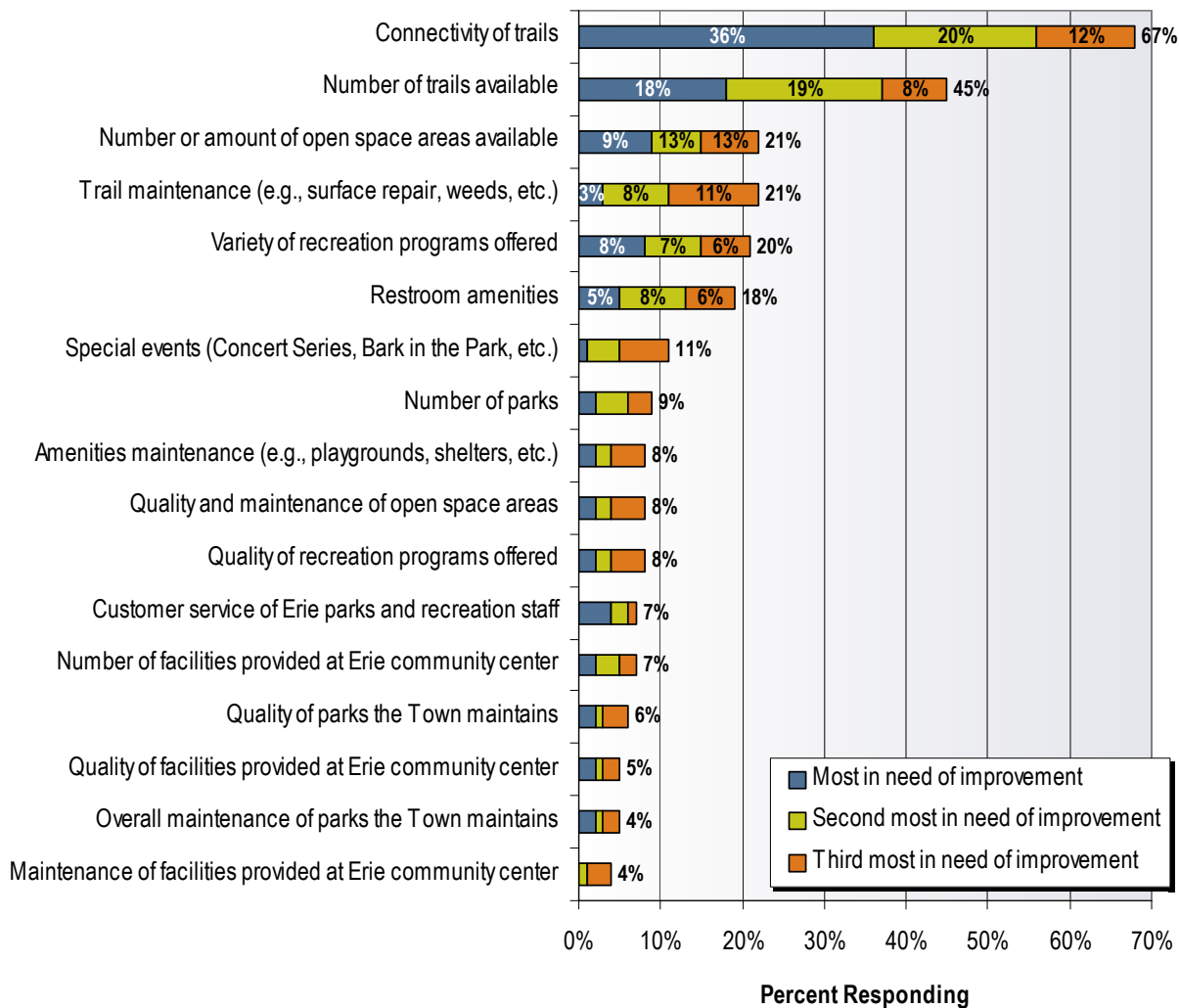
Current Ratings of Erie Parks and Recreation. Respondents were asked to rate a variety of aspects of the Parks and Recreation department overall in Erie, such as maintenance, service, and facilities provided in Town. Ratings were positive overall with “maintenance of facilities provided by the Erie Community Center” ranking the highest (93 percent of respondents indicated it was a 4 or 5 “Excellent” on a 5-point scale), followed by “quality of facilities provided at Erie Community Center” (91 percent), “customer service of Erie Parks and Recreation staff” (84 percent), “special events” (82 percent), and “number of facilities provided at Erie Community Center” (81 percent). Rated the lowest were “connectivity of trails” (42 percent of respondents indicated it was a 1 or 2 “Poor” on a 5-point scale), “number of trails available” (27 percent), “restroom amenities” (21 percent), and “number or amount of open space available” (20 percent). “Trail maintenance” and “quality and maintenance of open space areas” received 13-14 percent responses of “poor.”

Figure 10
Overall ratings of Erie Parks and Recreation



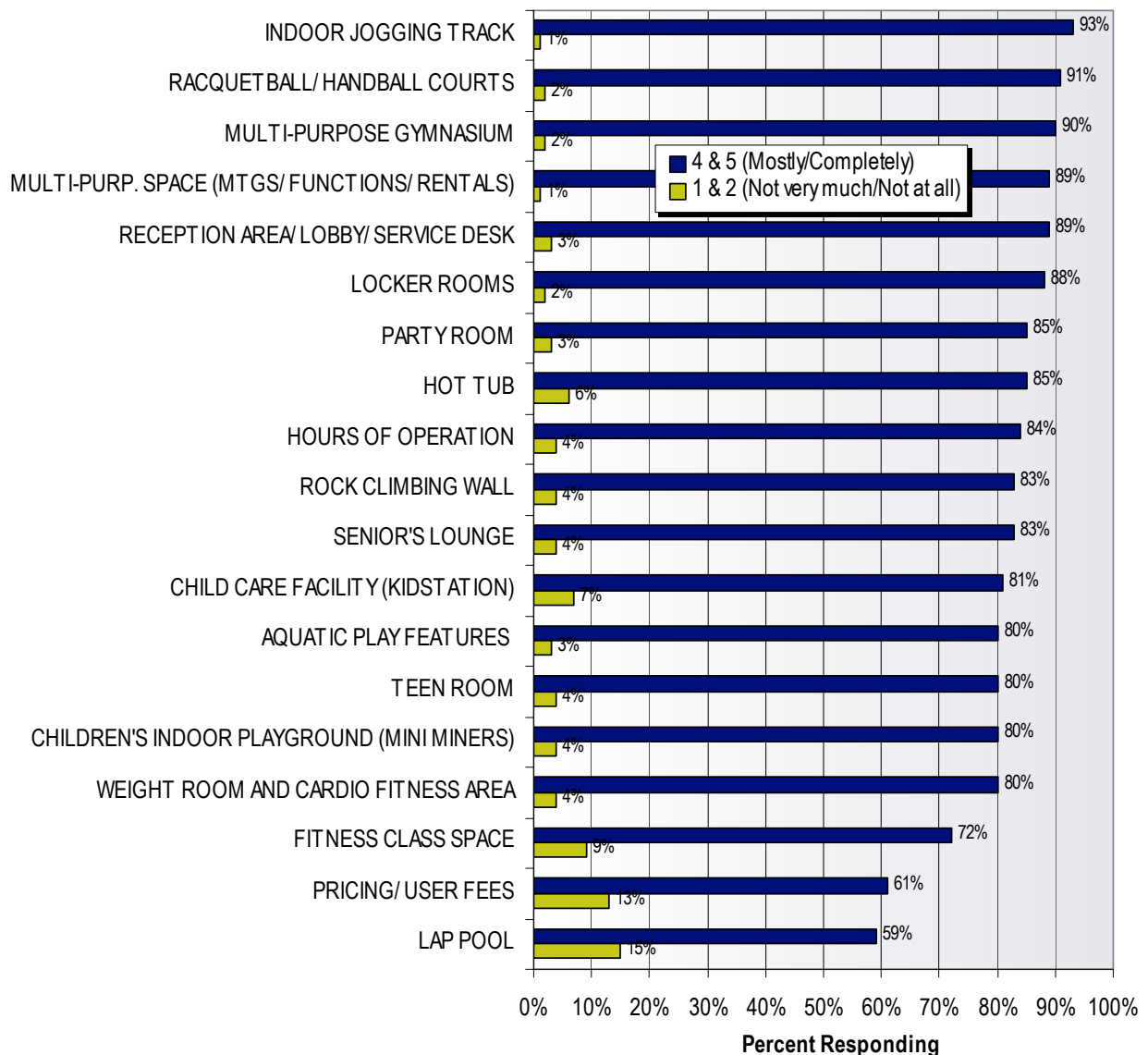
Respondents were also asked to indicate which three of the aspects they felt were most in need of improvement. This provides the opportunity to not only see what aspects are currently viewed positively by respondents but also to get an idea of how important it would be to improve each one and how respondents prioritize these improvements in relation to each other. Not surprisingly, “connectivity of trails” is ranked, by far, the highest priority in need of improvement (36 percent of respondents indicating that it is their top choice and 67 percent indicating that it is one of their top three priorities). Also indicated as a relatively high priority was the “number of trails available” (18 percent of respondents indicating that it is their top priority and 45 percent indicating that it is one of their top three priorities), followed by a second tier of responses including “number or amount of open space areas available,” “trail maintenance,” “variety of recreation programs offered,” and “restroom amenities” (all with 18-21 percent of respondents indicating each as one of their top three priorities).

Figure 11
Which aspects of Erie Parks and Recreation are most in need of improvement?
(Top 3 most important)



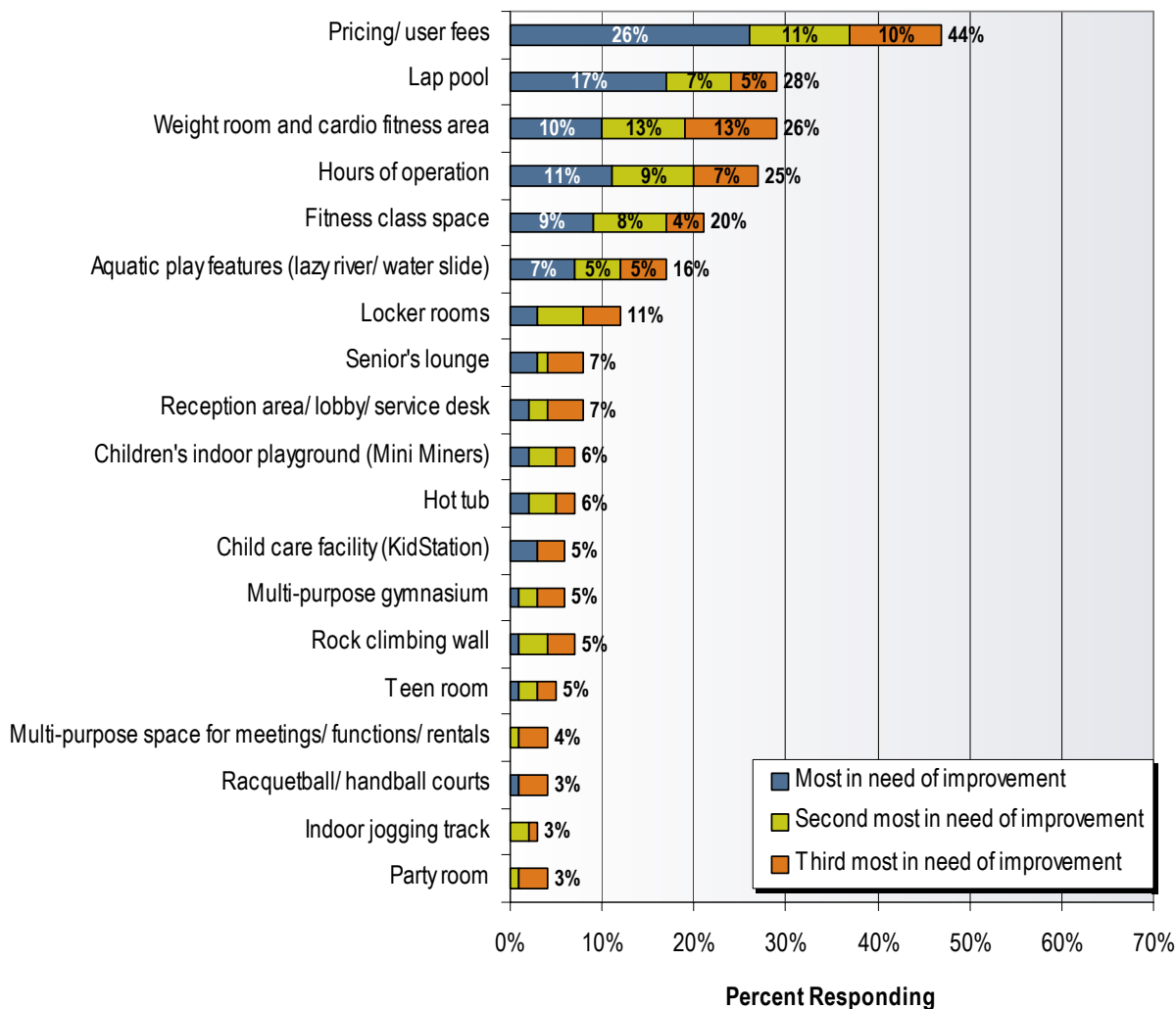
Erie Community Center. Respondents were asked to indicate how well they think the Erie Community Center is currently meeting the needs of the community, and similar to the previous section, which aspects of the Community Center are most in need of improvement. Ratings were extremely positive overall with 16 out of the 19 amenities listed, receiving ratings of 4 or 5 (“mostly or completely meeting the needs of the community”) on a 5-point scale from 80 percent or more of respondents. Rated the highest were indoor jogging track (93 percent of respondents indicated it was a 4 or 5), followed by racquetball/handball courts (91 percent), multi-purpose gymnasium (90 percent), multi-purpose space for meetings/functions/rentals (89 percent), reception area/lobby/service desk (89 percent), and locker rooms (88 percent). While still receiving relatively positive ratings, fitness space (72 percent rating “excellent”), pricing/user fees (61 percent), and the lap pool (59 percent) were rated relatively lower than the others (13-15 percent rated the lap pool and pricing/user fees as not meeting needs).

Figure 12
How well do you think the following facilities and services provided by the Erie Community Center are meeting the needs of the community?



When asked which three aspects of the Erie Community Center respondents felt were most in need of improvement, “pricing/user fees” is ranked as the highest priority in need of improvement (26 percent of respondents indicating that it is their top choice and 44 percent indicating that it is one of their top three priorities). Also indicated as relatively high priorities were the lap pool (28 percent of respondents indicating that it is one of their top three priorities), weight room and cardio fitness area (26 percent), and hours of operation (25 percent). Fitness class space was mentioned by 20 percent of respondents, aquatic play features by 16 percent, and locker rooms by 11 percent.

Figure 13
Which aspects of the Erie Community Center are most in need of improvement?
(Top 3 most important)



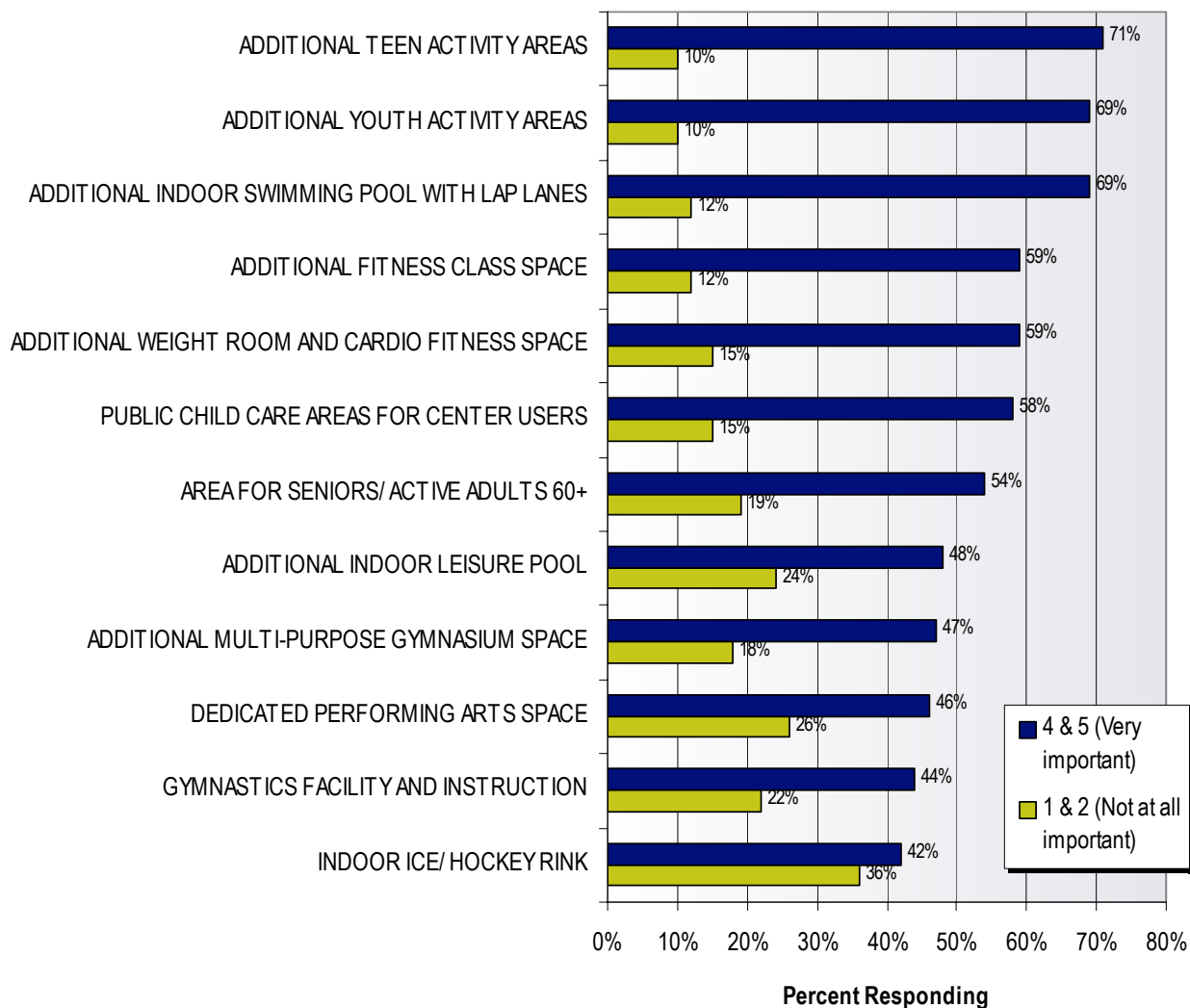
Additional comments were offered by respondents in regards to the programs and facilities offered at the Erie Community Center, many of which pertain to the limited number of lap lanes in the pool, user fees, and locker rooms. A sampling of comments is listed below, but the full set of comments can be found in the appendix.

- ◆ *A bigger lap pool and longer hours of operation.*
- ◆ *Everything should have been bigger! Too small!*
- ◆ *Extend operating hours on weekends. Outdoor pool!!!*
- ◆ *I don't understand why our excellent library is free to Erie residents but the rec. center has a huge annual fee*
- ◆ *I think the front desk staff attempt to do well in customer service, however, my experience is they just aren't knowledgeable enough about how the programs are run within the facility.*
- ◆ *Lap pool is getting really crowded for adult lap swim. Probably too late to add lanes, but maybe more after-work times; longer weekend hours. Evening yoga in community room is challenging when martial arts/loud meetings are next door.*
- ◆ *Larger area for lap lanes or more times available; larger free weight area*
- ◆ *Pool way too small. Swim at neighboring town. Large lap lanes, warm water and smaller fees.*
- ◆ *Senior discount and services should be reduced to age 55*
- ◆ *The family locker room is a great idea but it's so small and often a long wait for cabanas. Later hours Saturday night would be great.*
- ◆ *The folks at reception area are the first people guests see. They should be out-going, helpful, and friendly making everyone feel welcome.*
- ◆ *The front desk staff has not been well trained. They provide conflicting information regarding fees, hours of climbing wall, requirements for climbing wall, class information, age requirement for soccer, the pool. This greatly affects our family's ability to fully use the center.*
- ◆ *Dry and wet saunas are strongly needed in Erie Community Center. We still frequently use Lafayette Community Center rather than Erie because Lafayette has those.*
- ◆ *Lafayette, has dry and steam rooms. Very little offered for youth programs 98% of our recreation is done outside of Erie.*
- ◆ *Locker room needs a swim suit dryer. Not enough space for water classes*
- ◆ *Locker rooms are always freezing--even before coming out of the pool wet. Kids hate to leave the pool because it is so cold.; ; Timing of swim lessons during the week is suboptimal for working parents--classes between 5&7 pm would be huge improvement (similar to neighboring towns)*
- ◆ *Need a steam or sauna room.*
- ◆ *Need more family changing areas. Need more lap lanes and bigger pool overall (can get very crowded). Teen room is great! Staff is great and very flexible. Sports programming needs improvement--can be disorganized.*

Future Recreation Facilities, Amenities, and Services

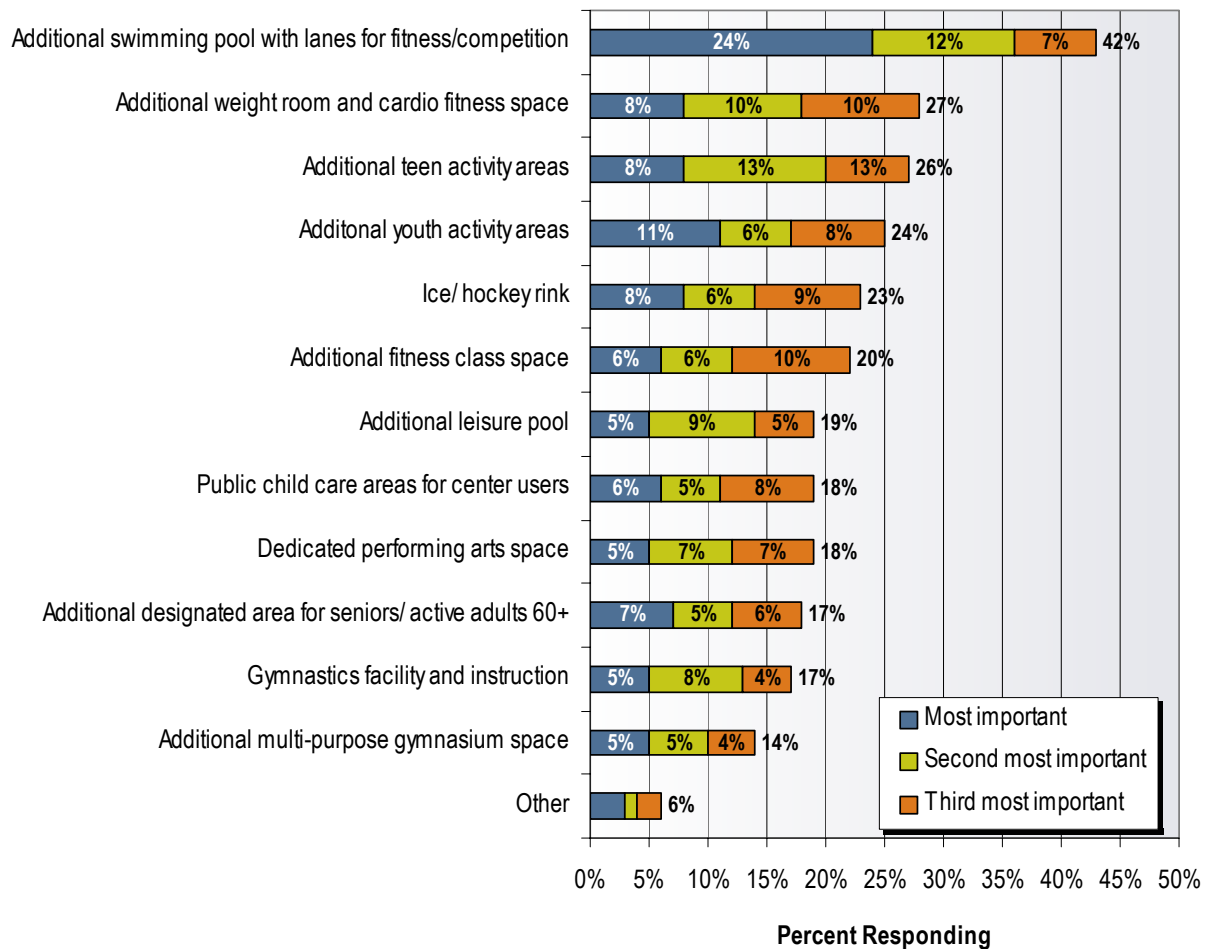
Importance of adding, expanding, or improving indoor recreation facilities. The survey provided a list of indoor facilities/amenities and asked respondents what they thought would be the greatest needs for indoor facilities within the next 5-10 years. The results show that respondents feel additional teen activity areas would be the most important (71 percent of respondents indicated it as “very important,” a 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale), followed by youth activity areas (69 percent), and additional indoor swimming pool with lap lanes for fitness swimming and competition (69 percent). Additional fitness class space, additional weight room and cardio fitness space, public child care areas for center users, and additional designated area for seniors/active adults are also relatively important (54-59 percent of respondents indicating they are “very important”). As shown in the following figure, amenities such as an indoor ice/hockey rink were among the least important.

Figure 14
In the next 5-10 years, what do you think will be the greatest needs for indoor facilities in Erie?



Respondents were also asked to indicate which of the potential facilities and amenities were the three most important to them and their household. This provides the opportunity to not only see what amenities are important to respondents, but also to get an idea of how the same amenities are viewed in relation to each other, allowing priorities to become more evident. While the teen and youth activity areas remained as high priorities, the additional swimming pool with lanes emerged as the clear top priority (24 percent of respondents indicating that it is their top choice and 42 percent indicating that it is one of their top three priorities). The three priorities behind the additional swimming pool (additional weight room and cardio fitness space, additional teen activity areas, and additional youth activity areas) are all relatively close in prioritization (24-27 percent indicating each as one of their top three). Interestingly, the ice/hockey rink emerged as a high priority, but had a relatively low individual rating overall (shown in the previous figure). This indicates that it is not hugely important to the community overall, but to the respondents that it is important to, it is a top priority. Additional fitness class space was also relatively important to respondents (20 percent indicating it as one of their top three).

Figure 15
Most important needs for indoor facilities
(Top 3 most important)



Importance of adding, expanding, or improving outdoor recreation facilities. The survey also provided a list of outdoor facilities/amenities that could be added, expanded, or improved in the Erie area. The results show that respondents feel a seasonal farmer's market space, soft surface trails, open space/natural areas, and paved trails are the most important to add, expand, or improve (rating between 69 and 81 percent "very important"). Winter activities (such as sledding, cross-country skiing, etc.), mountain bike trails/facility, multi-purpose athletic fields, outdoor swimming pool, outdoor tennis courts, picnic shelters, and playgrounds are also relatively important (all with more than 50 percent of respondents indicating they are "very important"). A BMX bike course and Frisbee disc golf course were among the least important. (See Figure 16)

As done with the indoor facilities, respondents were also asked to indicate which of the potential outdoor facilities and amenities were the three most important to them and their household. Soft surface trails and paved trails emerged as the top priorities, with 11 percent of respondents listing soft surface trails as their number one priority and 38 percent of respondents listing it as one of their top three priorities. Sixteen percent of respondents listed paved trails as their number one priority and 31 percent of respondents listed it as one of their top three priorities. Similar to the previous ratings, other top priorities for outdoor facilities/amenities include a seasonal farmer's market space (29 percent), outdoor swimming pool (24 percent), and open space/natural areas (20 percent). (See Figure 17)

Figure 16
Importance of the following outdoor recreation facilities to be added, expanded, or improved

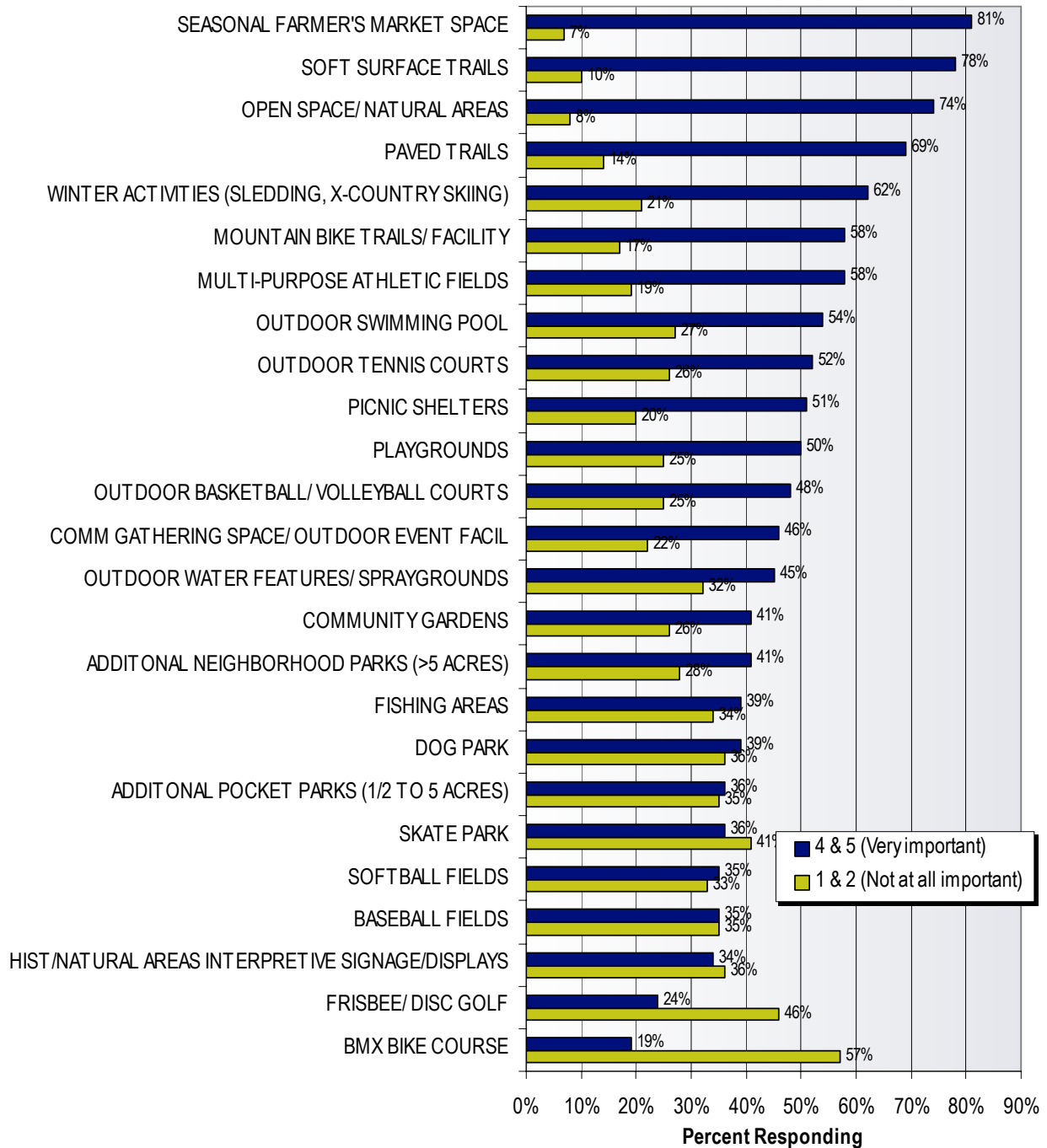
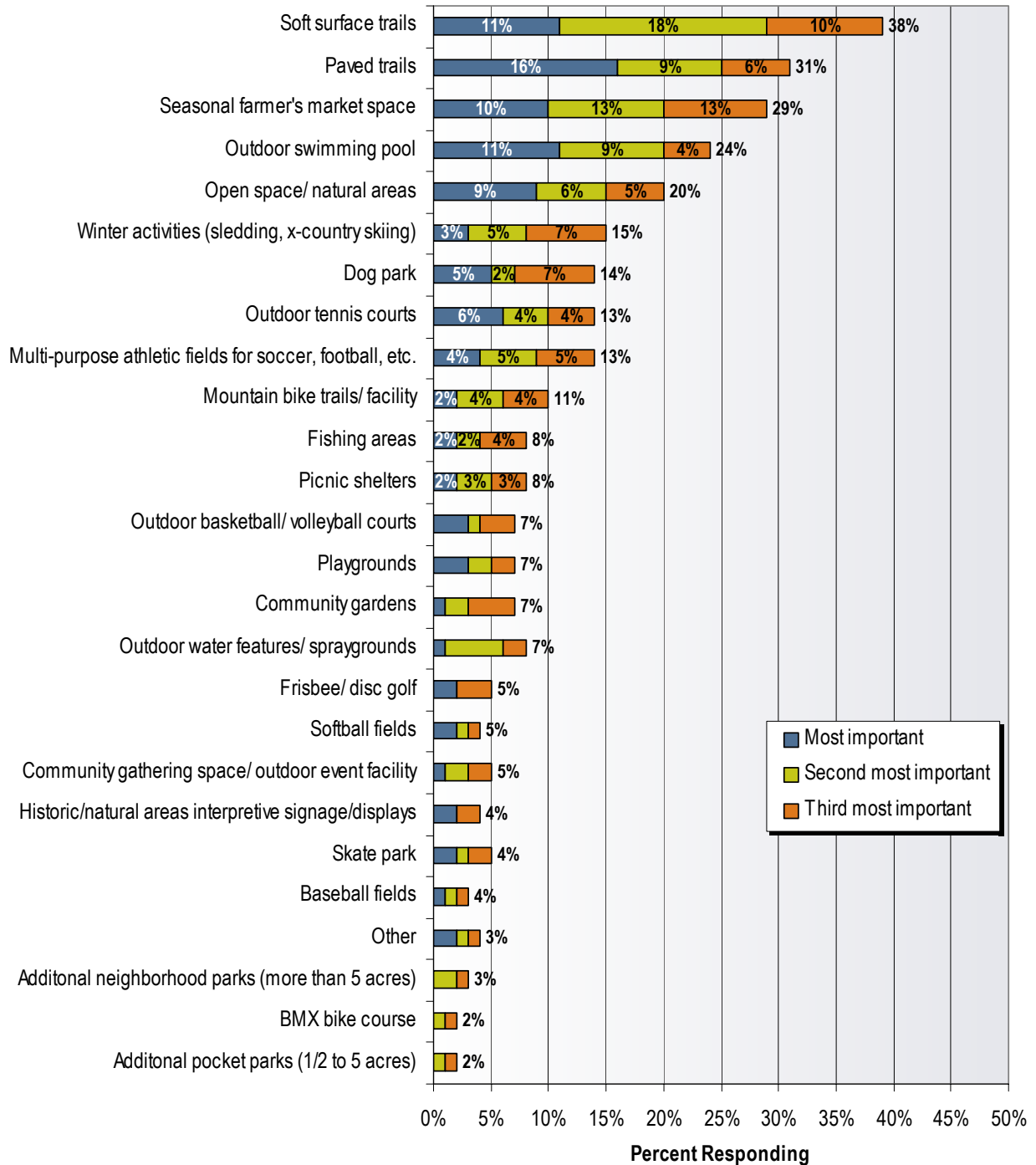


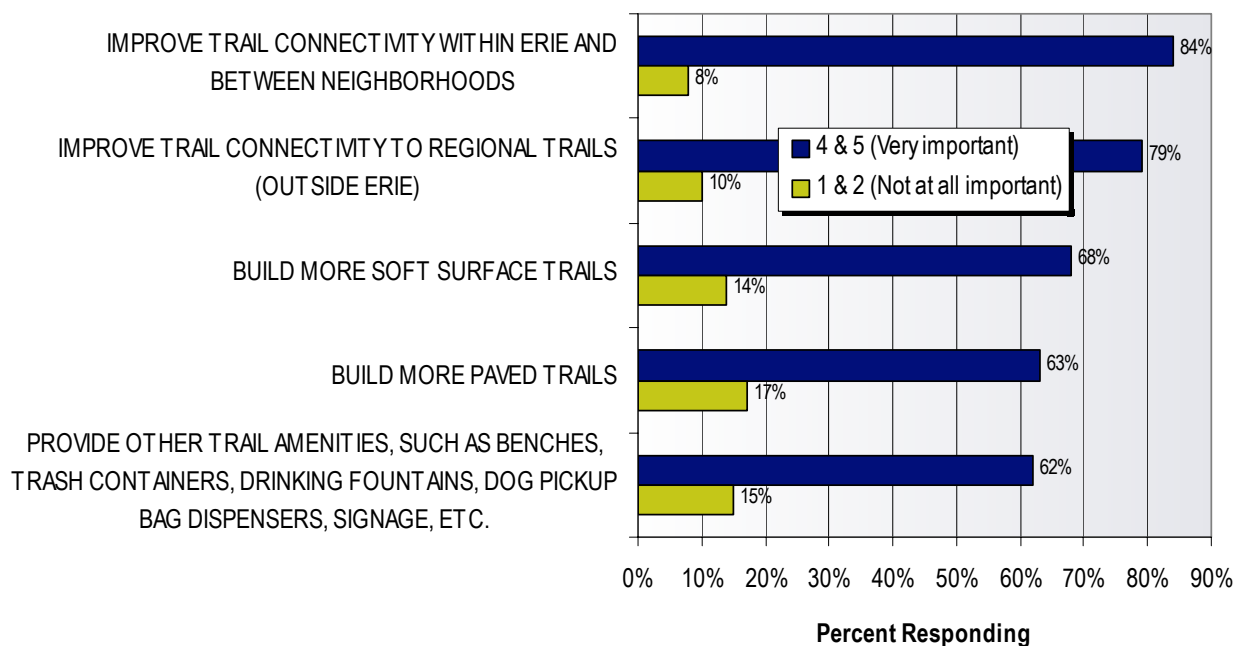
Figure 17
Most important outdoor facilities to be added, expanded, or improved
(Top 3 most important)



Trails and Open Space

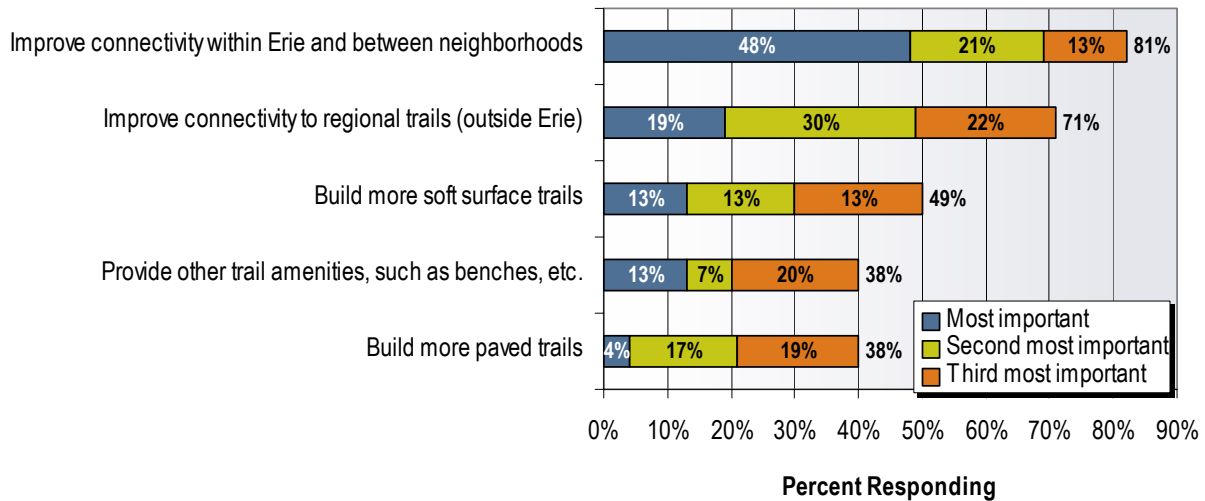
Trails. Respondents were asked to indicate how important various aspects of trail improvements in Erie are to them and their household. All five categories were relatively important to the respondents overall. “Improve trail connectivity within Erie and between neighborhoods” was most important to respondents (84 percent of respondents indicating it as a 4 or 5 “very important” on a 5-point scale), followed closely by “improve trail connectivity to regional trails outside Erie” (79 percent). As discussed in the previous section, the desire for soft surface trails is just slightly more important to respondents than hard surface trails.

Figure 18
With respect to trails, how important are the following to you and members of your household?



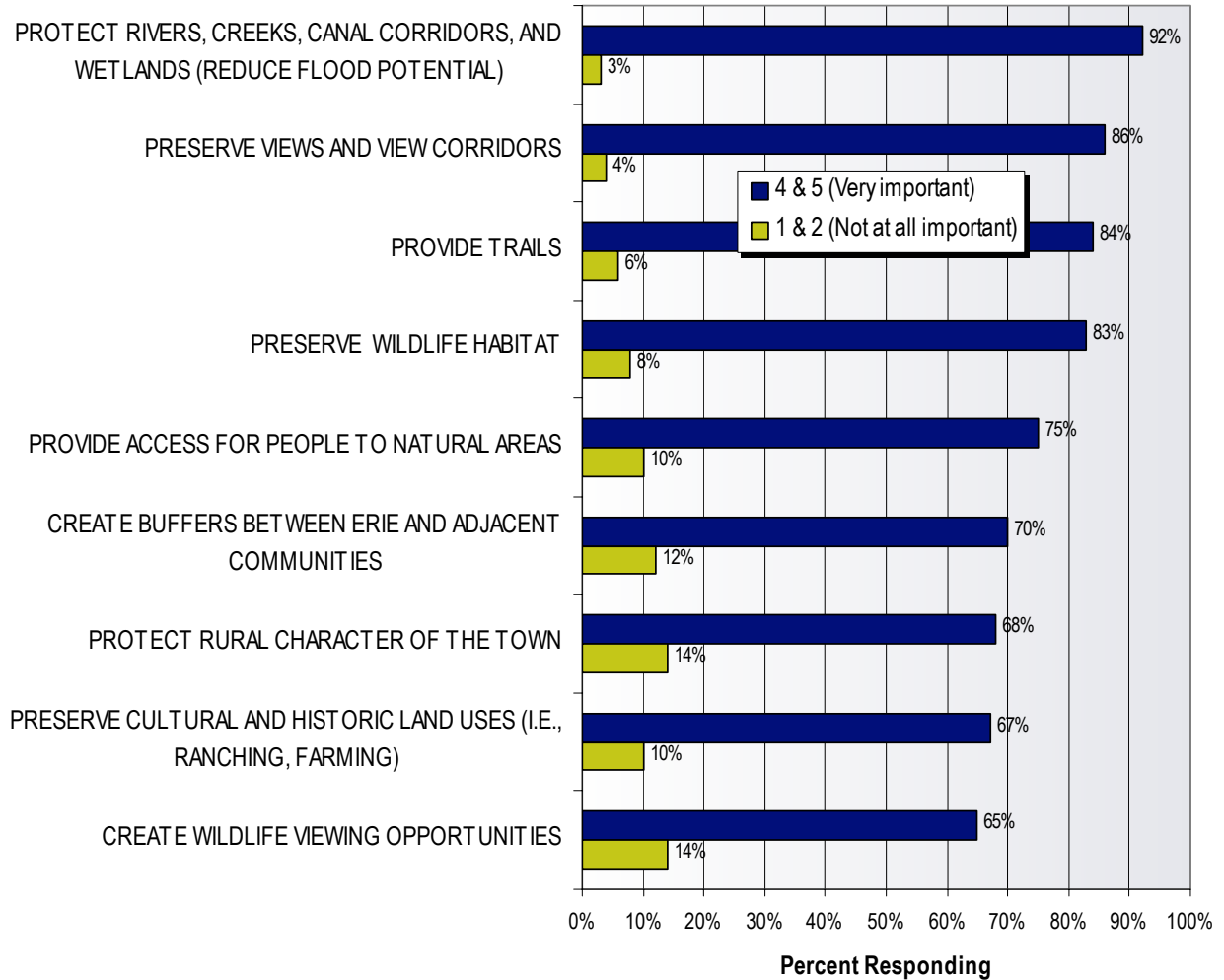
Since all categories were relatively important to respondents overall, it is useful to look at the prioritization of which categories respondents selected as their top three. For the most part, the order did not change, but the top priorities become clearer, as shown in the following figure. “Improve connectivity within Erie and between neighborhoods” was the highest priority with 48 percent of respondents listing it as their number one priority and 81 percent listing it as one of their top three priorities. Also important was to “improve connectivity to regional trails (outside Erie)” with 19 percent of respondents listing it as their number one priority and 71 percent listing it as one of their top three priorities.

Figure 19
Most important aspects of trails (Top 3 most important)



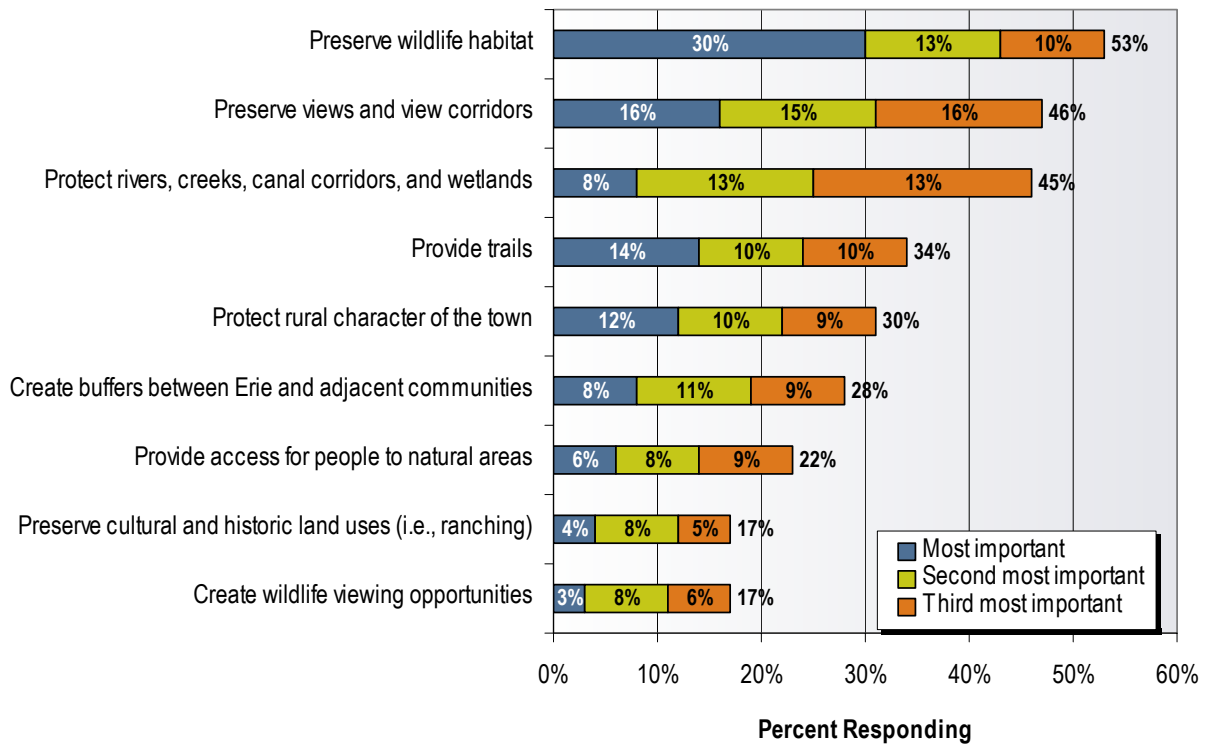
Open space. Respondents were also asked to indicate what they think the most important functions of open space are. As shown in the following figure, “protect rivers, creeks, canal corridors, and wetlands” was rated the highest (92 percent of respondents indicating it as a 4 or 5 “very important” on a 5-point scale), followed by “preserve views and view corridors” (86 percent), “provide trails” (84 percent), and “preserve wildlife habitat” (83 percent).

Figure 20
What do you think are the most important functions of open space?



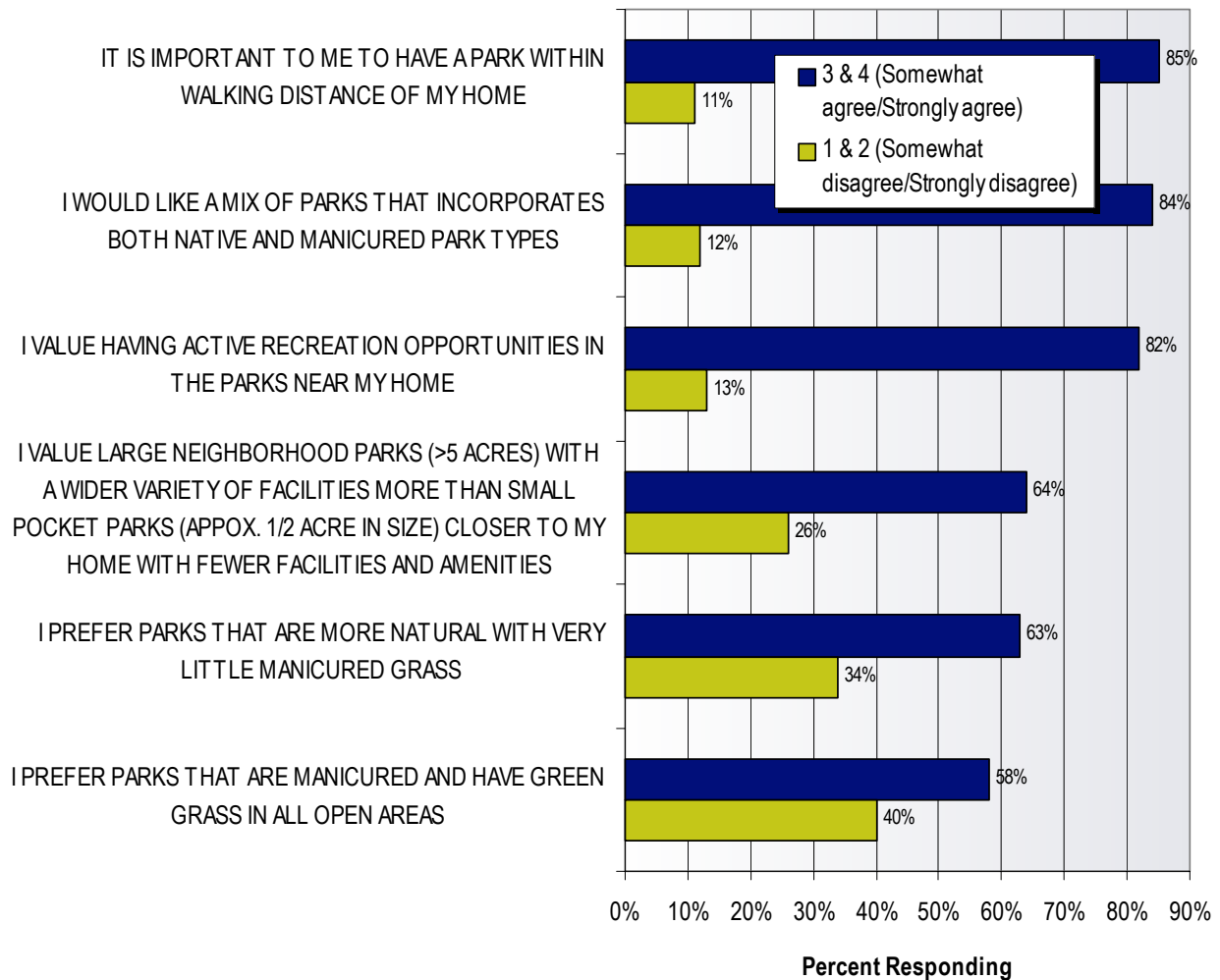
As done in previous sections, a follow-up question asked respondents to select their top three most important functions of open space from the same list. While the top four functions remained the same, they shifted somewhat in their order of importance. “Preserve wildlife habitat” emerged as the top priority (30 percent of respondents listing it as their number one priority and 53 percent listing it as one of their top three priorities). Next are “preserve views and view corridors” (46 percent), “protect rivers, creeks, canal corridors, and wetlands” (45 percent), and “provide trails” (34 percent).

Figure 21
Most important functions of open space
(Top 3 most important)



Parks and recreation values and preferences. The survey listed a number of statements regarding respondents' preferences and values for parks and recreation amenities, with which respondents were to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement. For a full list of the statements, refer to the following figure. Overall, respondents indicated a high level of agreement with statements pertaining to having a park within walking distance of their home (85 percent), a mix of parks that incorporates both native and manicured park types (84 percent), and active recreation opportunities in the parks near their homes (82 percent). Of lesser importance to respondents were parks that are manicured and have green grass in all open areas, and parks that are more natural with very little manicured grass.

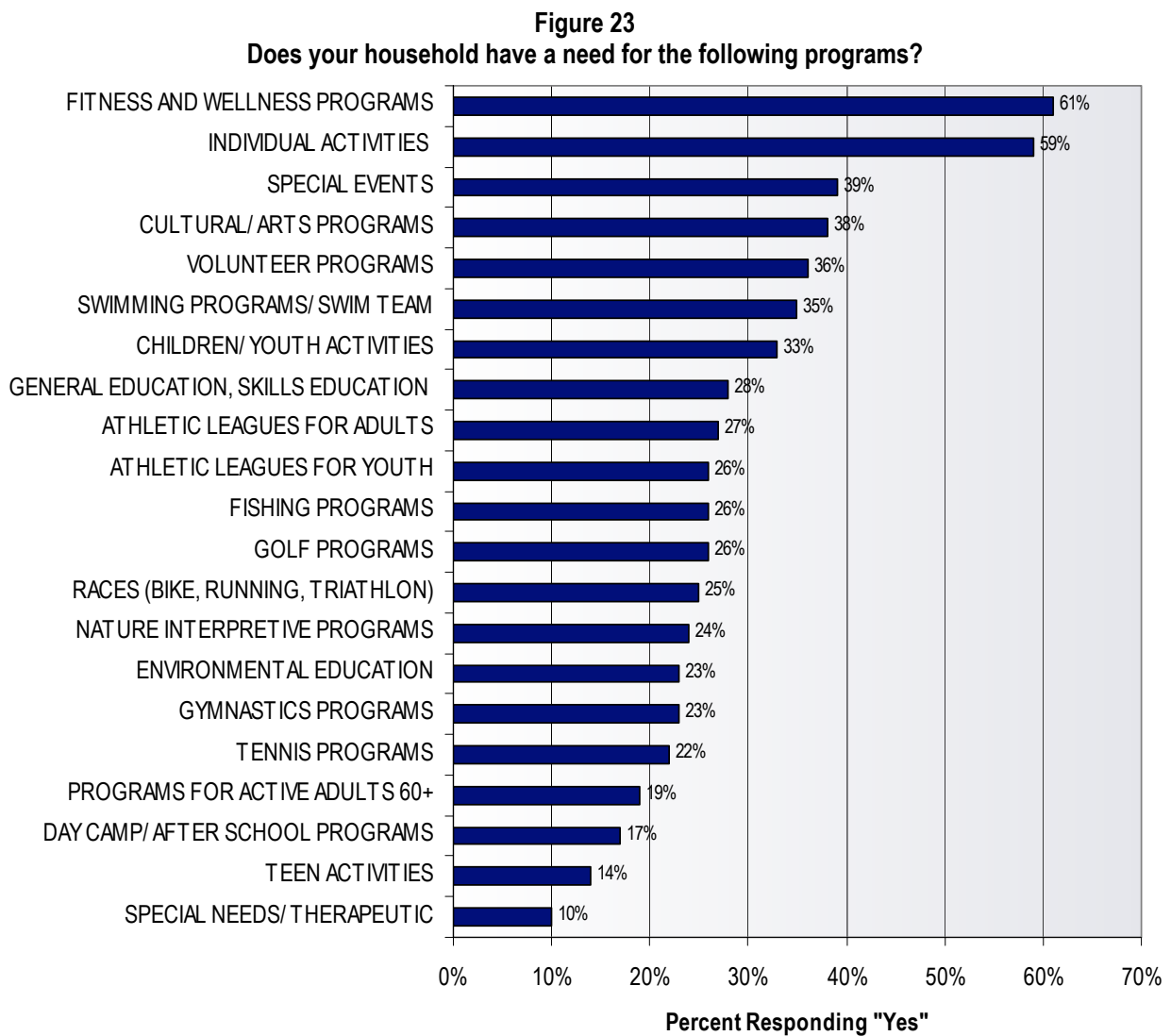
Figure 22
Preferred Park Types (respondents' level of agreement with statements)



Programs, Activities, and Special Events

Programs and Activities. The survey listed a variety of programs, activities, and special events that are currently available in Erie and asked respondents to indicate for which ones their household has a need, then of the ones for which they have a need, how well those programs are meeting their needs.

As shown in the following figure, the programs and activities with the highest need include fitness and wellness programs (61 percent of households have a need) and individual activities (such as tennis, road biking, hiking, etc.) (59 percent of households). A second tier of programs and activities include special events, cultural/arts programs, volunteer programs, swimming programs/swim team, and children/youth activities (all with 33 to 39 percent of households expressing a need).



Of the respondents who indicated a need for each of these programs or activities, the level at which their need was being met was relatively low for most programs. Rated the highest was fitness and wellness programs with 50 percent of respondents indicating that 75 to 100 percent of their needs are being met. Special events (44 percent) and children/youth activities (34 percent) were the only other categories where a higher percentage of respondents indicated their needs were being met in comparison to the percent that indicated their needs are not being met (rating of 1 or 2, “0-25 percent of needs being met”), as shown in the figure below.

Figure 24
Of the programs your household has a need for, how well are your needs currently being met?

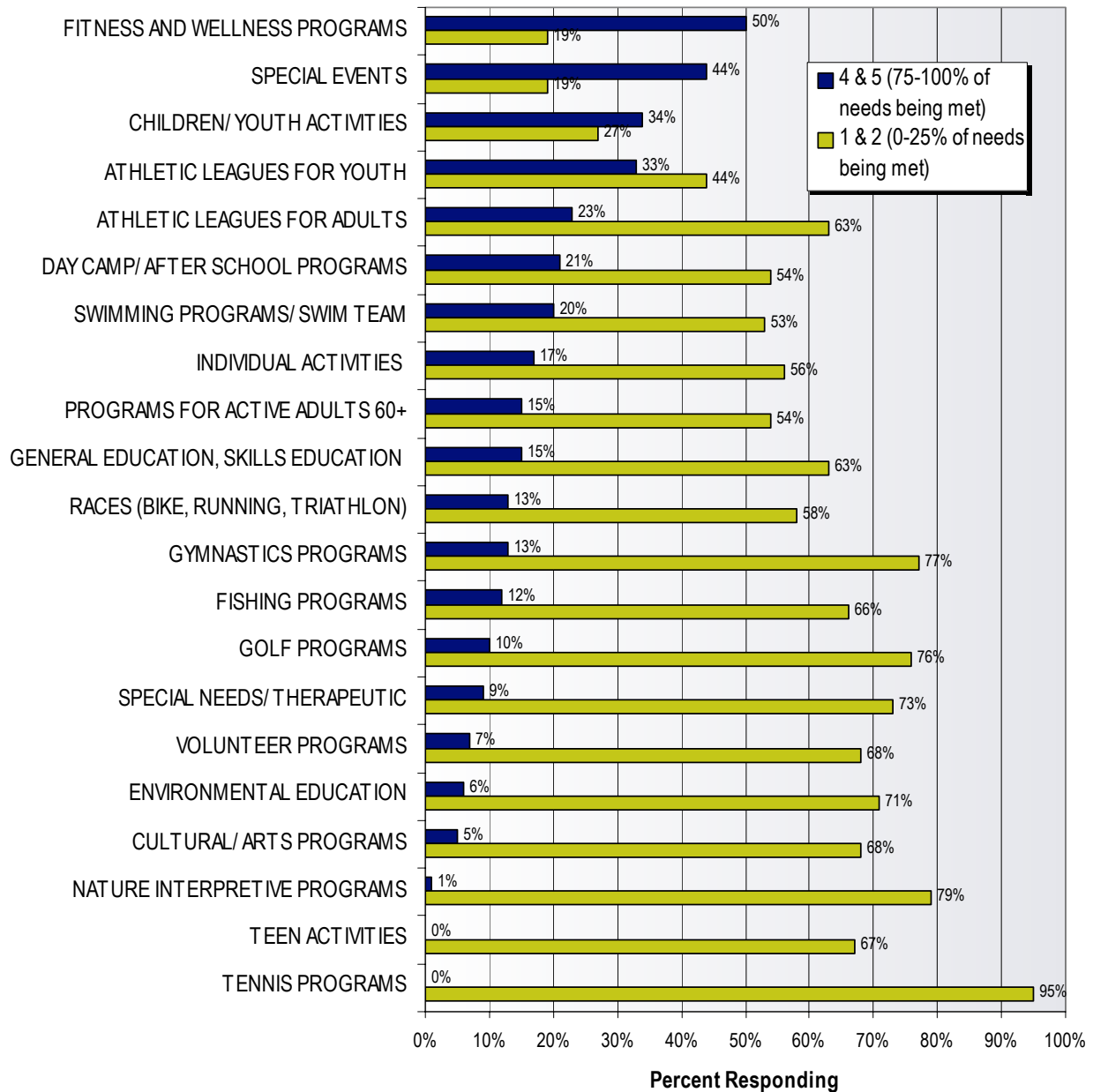
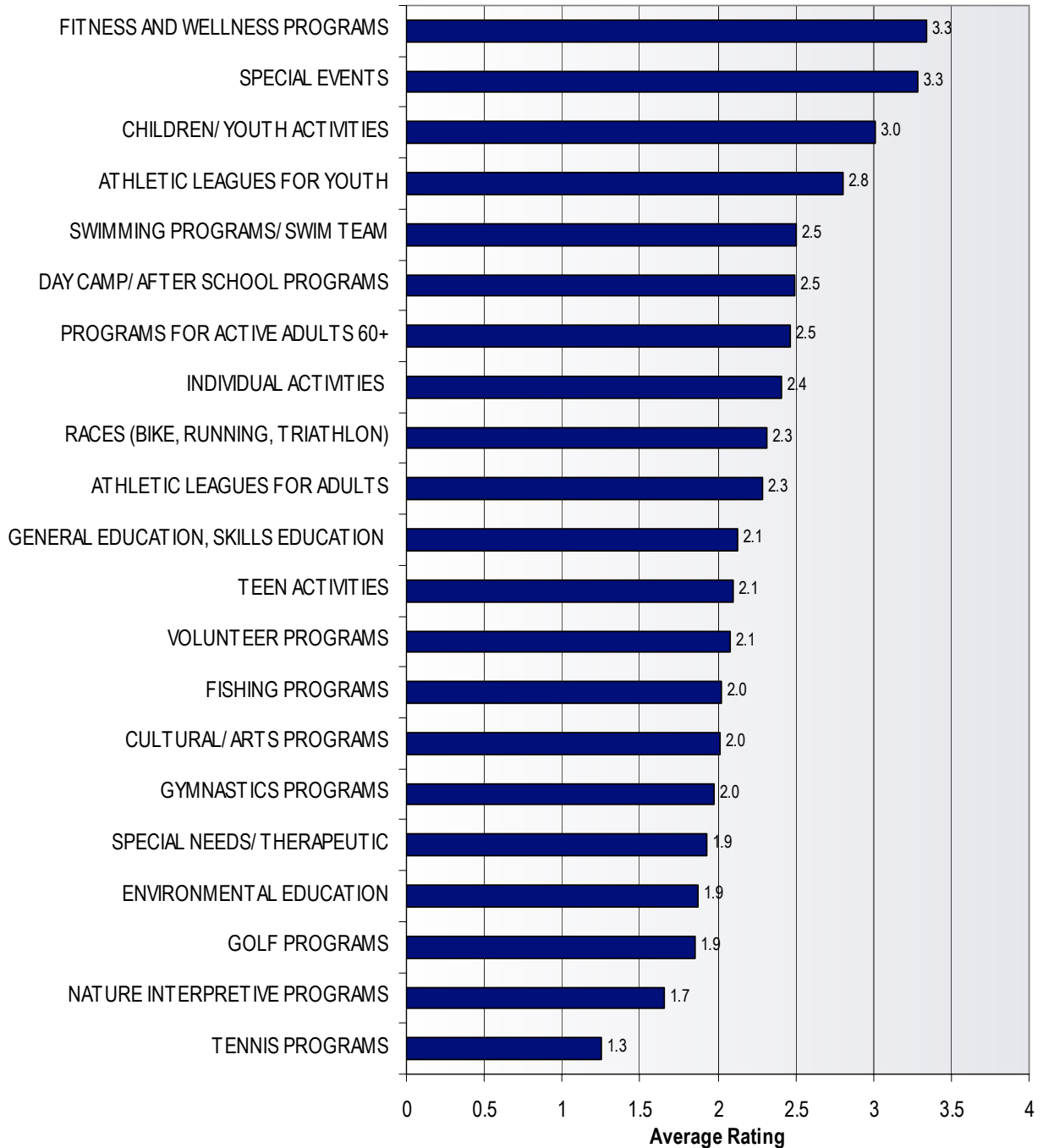


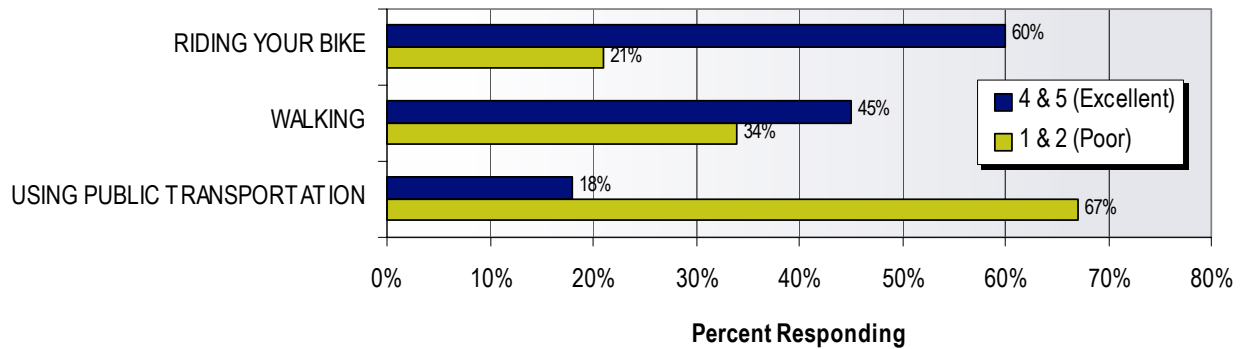
Figure 25
Of the programs your household has a need for, how well are your needs currently being met?
Average Rating (1="0% of needs being met"; 2="25% of needs being met"; 3="50% of needs being met"; 4="75% of needs being met"; 5="100% of needs being met")



Transportation and Communication

Transportation. Respondents rated their ability to get to parks, recreation facilities, and programs in Erie using alternative means of transportation. Using a 1 to 5 scale (5 being “excellent” and 1 being “poor”), 60 percent of respondents rated their ability to ride their bike to a facility or program “excellent,” while 45 percent rated their ability to walk as “excellent” (34 percent rated walking access as “poor”). Eighteen percent rated their ability to use public transportation “excellent” (67 percent rated public transportation as “poor”).

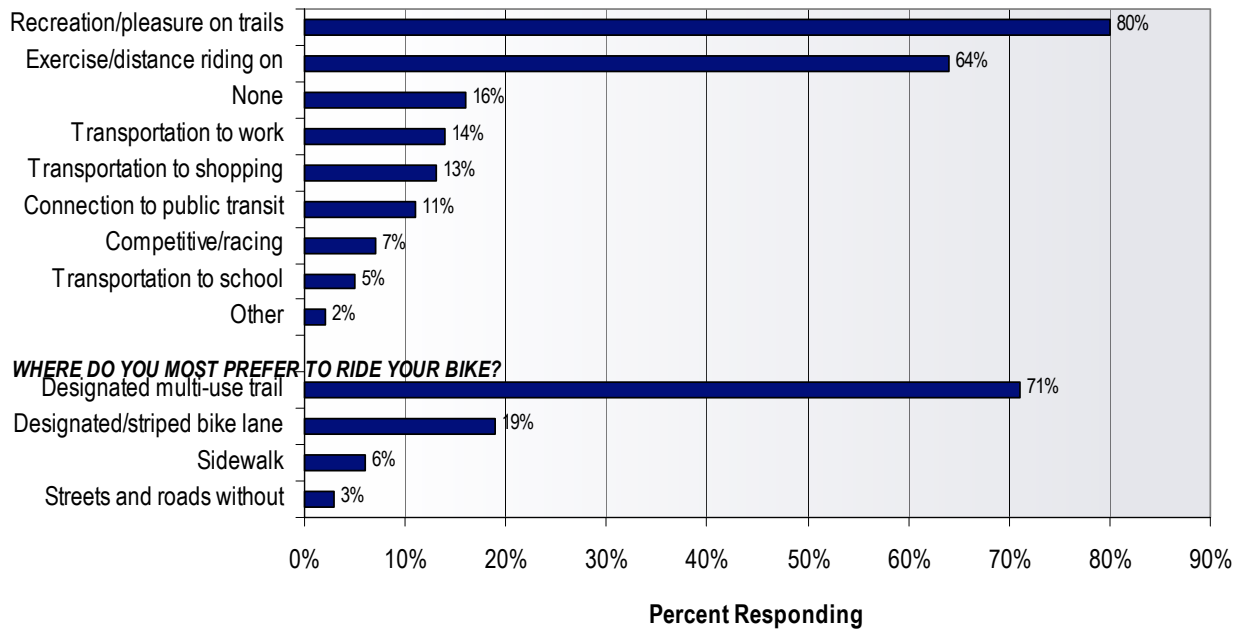
Figure 26
How would you rate your ability to get to parks, recreation, facilities, services, and programs in Erie by:



When asked if they had ridden a bike within the last 12 months and for what purposes, 84 percent indicated that they had ridden a bike. The reasons most cited for riding a bike included for recreation/pleasure on trails (80 percent) and exercise/distance riding on streets (64 percent). Other reasons included transportation to work, transportation to shopping, and connection to public transit (each indicated by 11 to 14 percent of respondents). When asked where they most prefer to ride their bike, the majority of respondents (71 percent) indicated “designated multi-use trails.” A significant proportion (19 percent), however, prefer on-street bike lanes.

Figure 27
Bike riding frequency and characteristics

IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS, HAVE YOU OR MEMBERS OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD USED A BIKE FOR ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

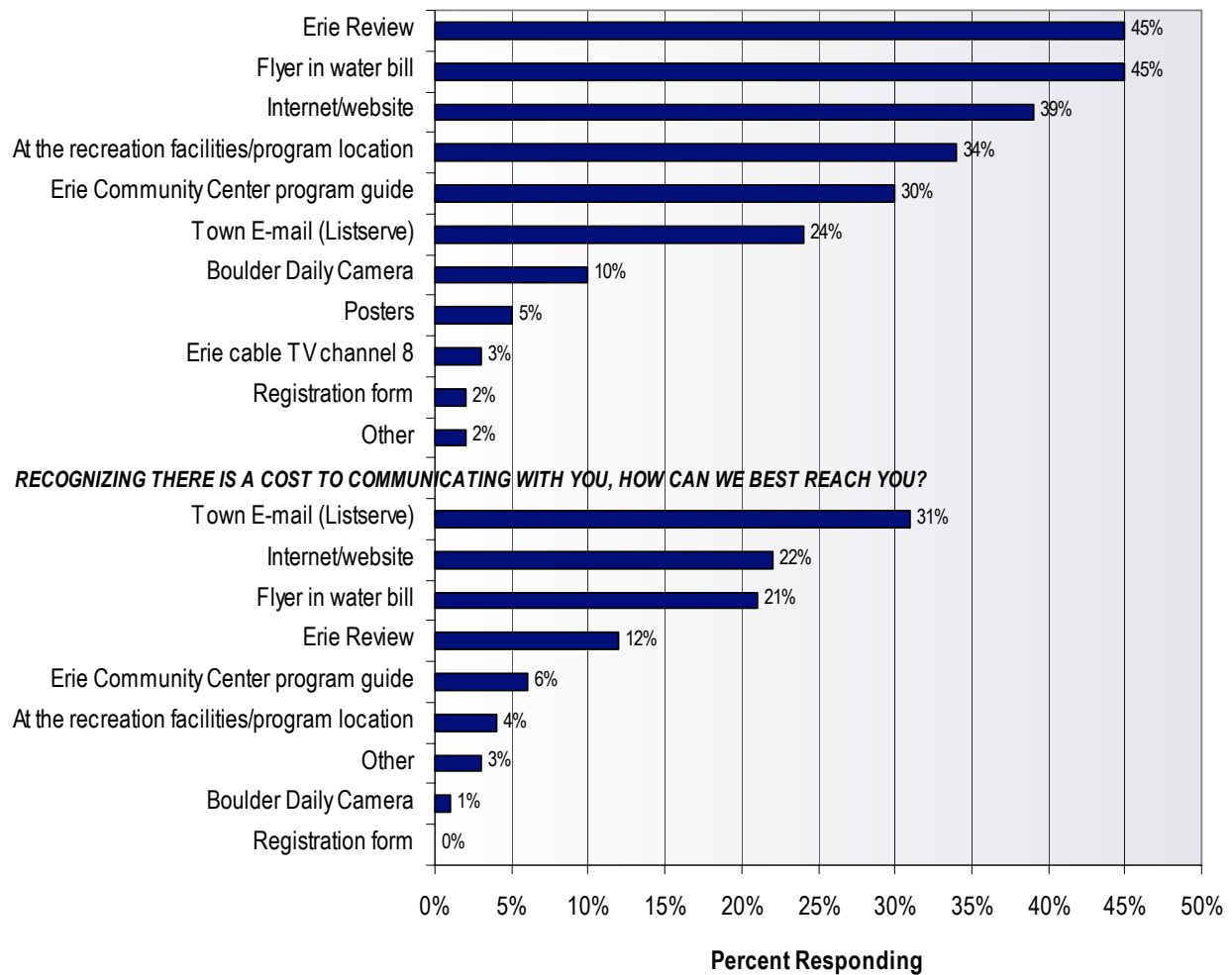


Communication. Almost half of respondents currently get information on recreation services and programs from the Erie Review (45 percent) and flyers in their water bill (45 percent). Other sources of information include Internet/websites (39 percent), information at the recreation facilities/program location (34 percent of respondents), Erie Community Center program guide (30 percent), and the Town e-mail listserve (24 percent).

When asked how the Town can best communicate with them, Town e-mail listserve was mentioned the most (by 31 percent of respondents), followed by Internet/websites (22 percent), and flyers in the water bill (21 percent). Compared to the proportion currently receiving information through e-mail, the relatively large proportion of residents who would like to get their information through e-mail is notable, and poses a potential opportunity for the Town to explore improvements in future communications.

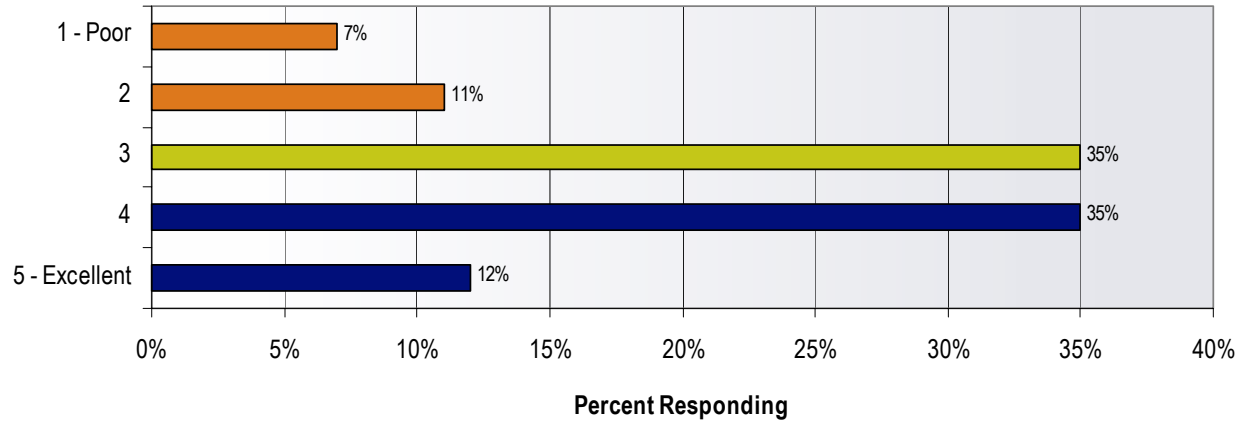
**Figure 28
Communications**

HOW DO YOU USUALLY OR CURRENTLY RECEIVE INFORMATION ON PARKS, RECREATION FACILITIES, SERVICES, AND PROGRAMS (WHETHER TOWN OF ERIE OWNED OR NOT)?



Respondents were asked to rate how good of a job the Town does in providing them with information about recreation facilities, parks, open space, trails, and programs. Overall, the average rating was 3.3 (on a 5-point scale), with 35 percent of respondents rating it as a “3,” 35 percent rating it as a “4,” and 12 percent rating it as a “5 – Excellent.”

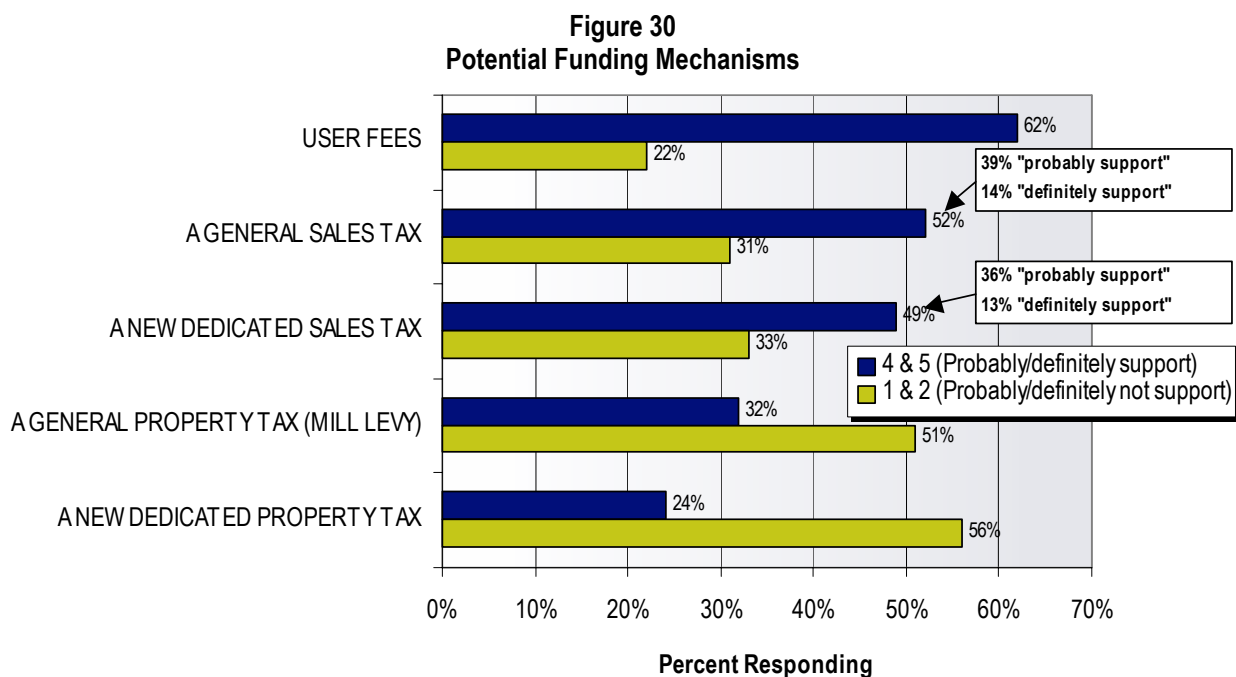
Figure 29
Overall, how good a job does the Town of Erie do providing you with information about recreation facilities, parks, open space, trails, and programs?



Financial Choices

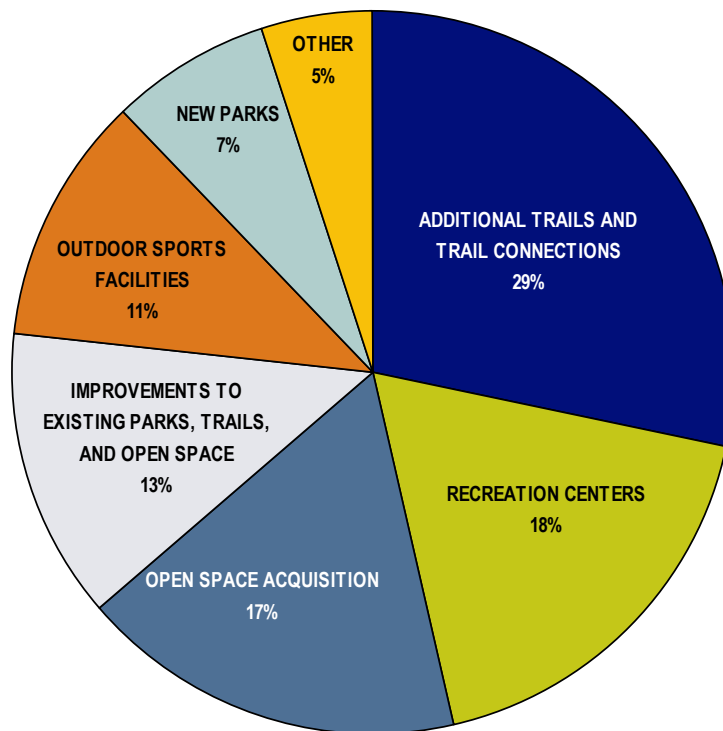
It was explained in the survey that “the Town of Erie receives taxes, grants and impact fees from new development to build parks, recreation facilities, open space, and trails. Additional funds are required for the operations and maintenance of new facilities. User fees, grants, and donations offset some costs.”

Respondents were then asked to what extent, if any, they would be willing to support a number of different funding mechanisms to fund operations and maintenance costs of new parks and recreation facilities, open space, trails, and programs in Erie in the future. Of the list of potential mechanisms (shown in the figure below), user fees has the strongest support, followed by the general sales tax (52 percent) and a possible new dedicated sales tax (49 percent), both of which had moderate support. At the same time, most of that support is “probable,” with very few respondents indicating “definite” support of a sales tax to fund operations. Overall, respondents were largely not supportive of any kind of additional property tax.



Priorities for budgeting department funds. As another broad measure of resident priorities, it was explained in the survey that “the Town of Erie Parks and Recreation Department develops and manages a variety of park and recreation services and facilities. If you were responsible for budgeting \$100 of Department funds for new development or park improvement projects, how would you spend it?” As illustrated in the following figure, residents clearly distributed the greatest share to additional trails and trail connections—\$29 or 29% of their total \$100 allocation. Allocations to other categories include recreation centers (\$18), open space acquisition (\$17), improvements to existing parks, trails, and open space (\$13), outdoor sports facilities (\$11), new parks (\$7), and other facilities (\$5). Included in the “other” category were a number of written-in suggestions, including bike lanes, dog parks, and an outdoor pool.

Figure 31
Allocation of department funds



Comparison of Open-link Web Survey Results

The results from the open-link web survey were analyzed separately in order to maintain the representative sample of the mail and invite web responses. For the most part, open-link responses were very similar to the mail and invite-web responses. A few differences were seen in the data, which are summarized in the following key observations. It is important to keep in mind that the open-link web responses represent a small proportion of the total surveys received (43 open-link web surveys were completed, representing approximately 9 percent of the total surveys), and therefore do not represent a majority of the community opinion, but are worth noting.

Overall, open-link respondents use the facilities, trails, and open space available in Erie noticeably more than the random sample respondents. Along these same lines, they also place a higher importance on the availability of recreation facilities, trails, and open space in the community. Not surprisingly, open-link respondents are the ones who use the amenities more, have a greater need for them, but have a similar or lower level of satisfaction with how well the same facilities are meeting the needs of the community. When asked what facilities, services, and programs were most in need of improvement, random sample respondents indicated that they were “not aware of programs/facilities offered” and that there is a “lack of facilities and amenities,” while open-link respondents indicated that the facilities “don’t have the programs I want” and that there is a “lack of facilities and amenities,” indicating that, for the most part, open-link respondents are aware of the programs and facilities offered, they are just not as satisfied with what is available.

In regards specifically to the Erie Community Center, open-link respondents were less likely to feel “pricing and user fees” were the aspect most in need of improvement (like the random sample respondents), but felt the “lap pool” and “hours of operation” were the most in need of improvement. When asked what will be the greatest needs for indoor facilities in Erie in the next 5 to 10 years, open-link respondents indicated a high importance for additional fitness class space and additional weight room and cardio fitness space.

Overall, open-link respondents were much more supportive of each financial mechanism listed to fund operations and maintenance costs of new parks and recreation facilities, open space, trails, and programs in Erie in the future.

As would be expected, open-link respondents tend to more often get their information from websites and email currently, and would most prefer to receive information through Town emails (listserv) in the future.