

## INTRODUCTION/METHODOLOGY

The Master Plan Survey was conducted through a mailback methodology. The survey was originally sent to 3,000 randomly selected households located in the City of Steamboat Springs and the ZIP codes associated with it, which may include households outside the city limits as well as Steamboat P.O. boxes belonging to residents who live outside the city limits. Completed surveys received totaled 391 out of a net estimated 2,685 delivered (approximately 315 surveys out of the 3,000 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 14.6%. Based upon the total sample size of 391 responses received, overall results have a margin of error of approximately +/- 4.9 percentage points calculated for questions at 50% response<sup>1</sup>. Also, note that the resultant database is weighted by age of respondent to ensure appropriate representation of City 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 Steamboat, who could complete the questionnaire if they did not receive one by invitation in the mail. 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 this questionnaire are kept separate from the mail and invitation web versions of the survey. The discussion and graphic illustrations of results that follow focuses only on results from the randomly selected sample of residents, although results to the open-link version are provided in the tables included as appendix sections to the report.

## RESPONDENT PROFILE

Based on US Census data and the 2008 ESRI forecast for the City of Steamboat Springs, the age profile of residents is distributed as follows (which is the basis for the weighting of the survey data): 10 percent are between 20 and 24 years old, 25 percent between 25 and 34 years, 21 percent between 35 and 44 years, 25 percent between 45 and 54 years, 12 percent between 55 and 64 years, and 7 percent 65 years or over.

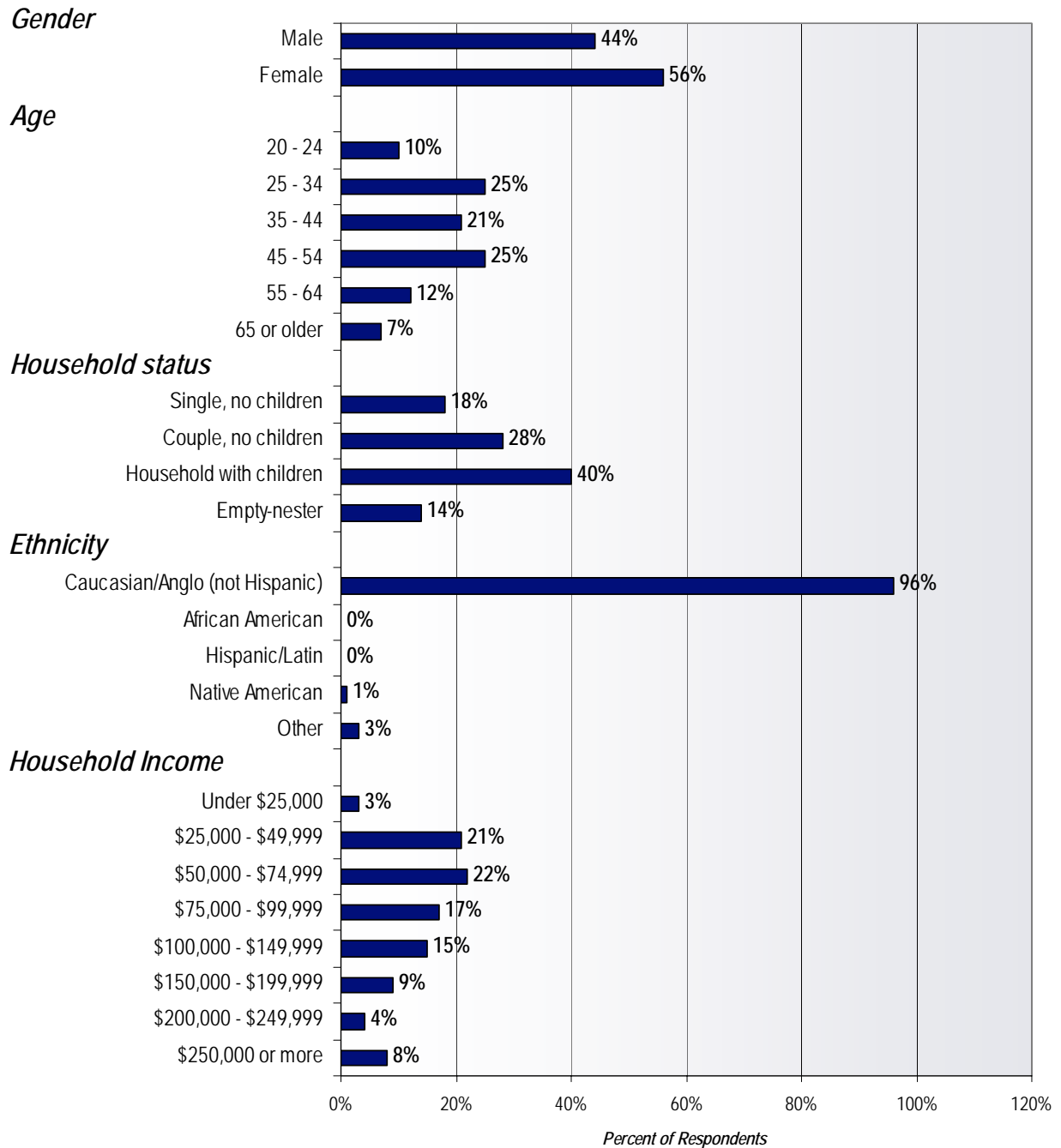
Forty percent of responding households have kids living at home, 28 percent are couples without kids, 18 percent are single without kids, and 14 percent are empty-nesters (couples and singles with kids no longer at home). Respondents were most likely to own their own residence (87 percent of respondents vs. 13 percent renters) with average length of residency being almost 14 years (although 49 percent of respondents have lived in the area 10 years or less). The majority of respondents (73 percent) live in the City limits of Steamboat Springs, compared to 27 percent who live outside the City in the unincorporated county or other areas. In regards

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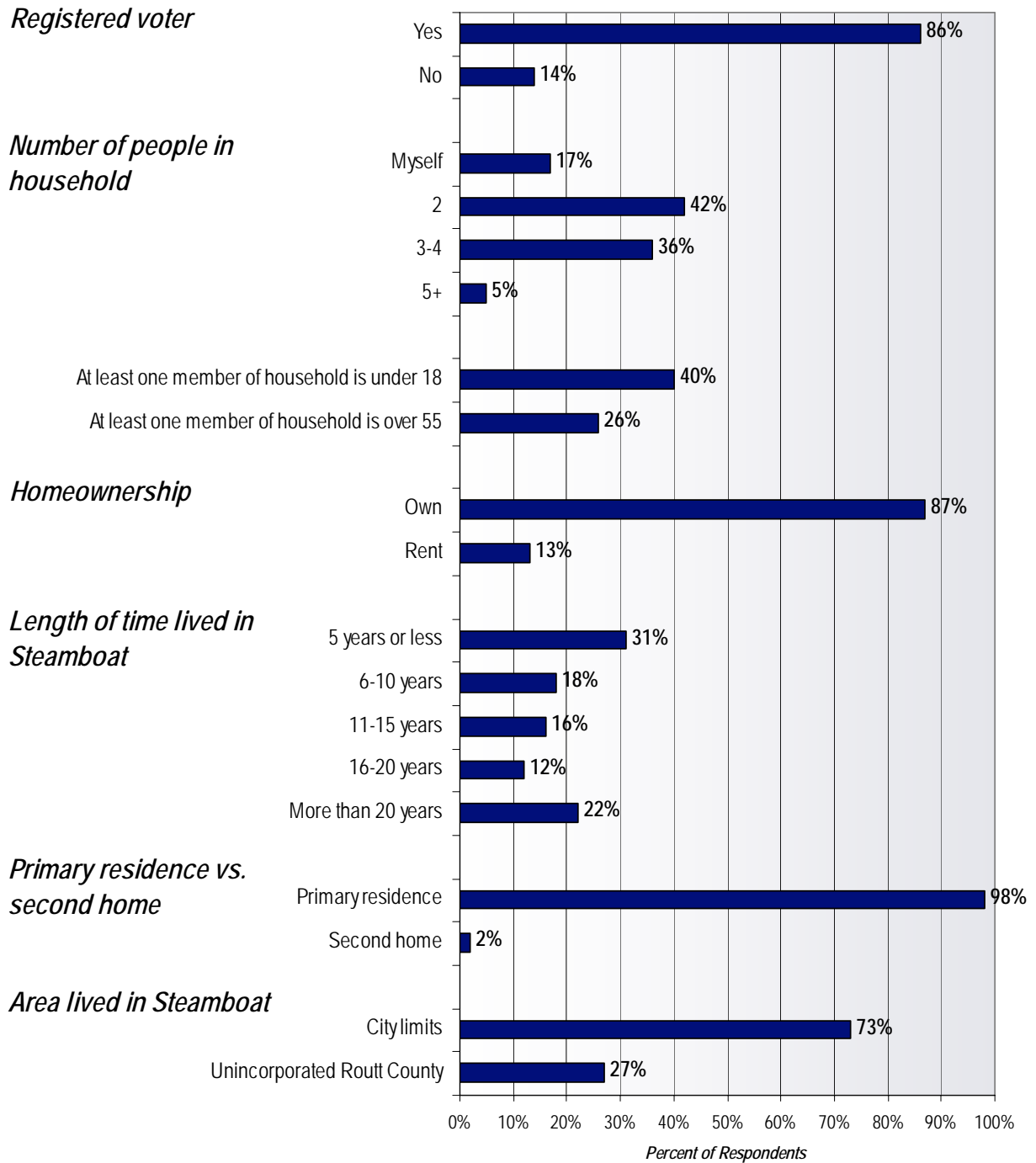
<sup>1</sup> For the total sample size of 391, margin of error is +/- 4.9 percent calculated for questions at 50% response (if the response for a particular question is "50%"—the standard way to generalize margin of error is to state the larger margin, which occurs for responses at 50%). Note that the 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.

to household income, 63 percent of responding households had annual incomes less than \$100,000, 24 percent were between \$100,000 and \$200,000, and 12 percent were more than \$200,000.

Figure 1  
Respondent Demographics



**Figure 2**  
**Respondent Demographics**



## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

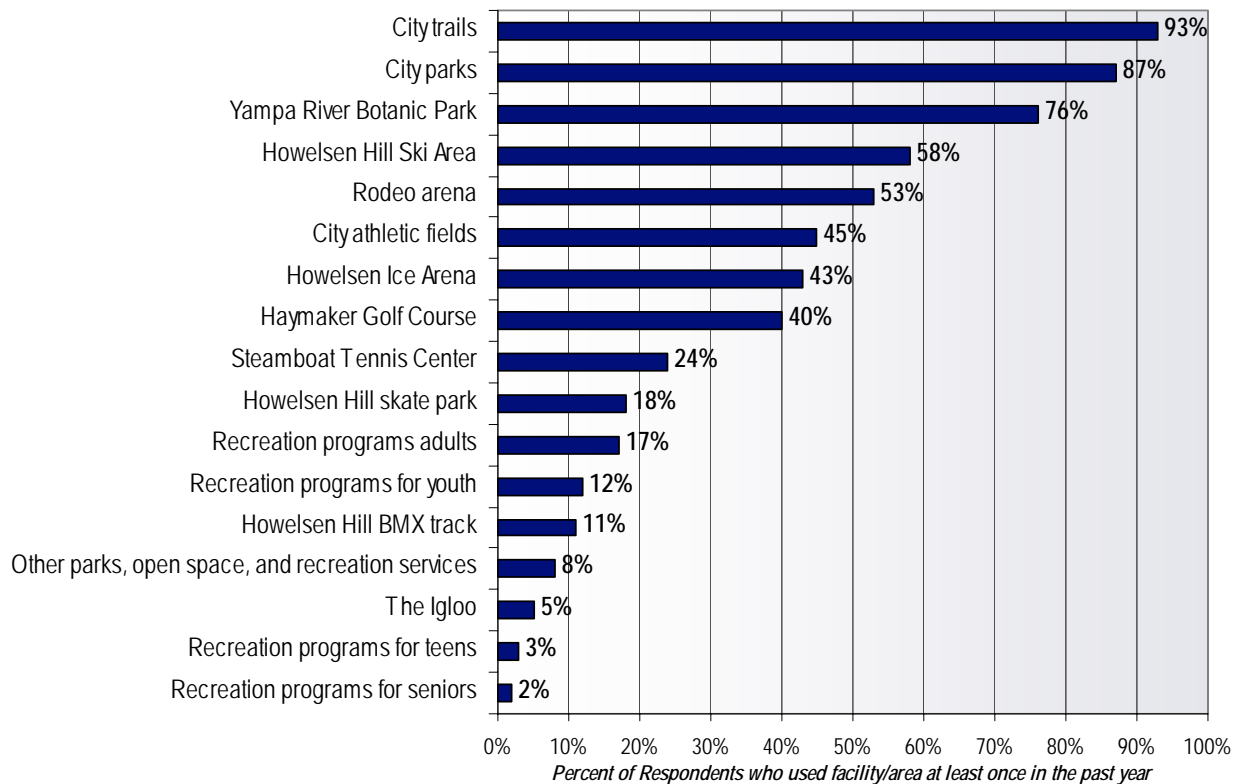
Key findings from the study are summarized below. Additionally, several of the questions on the survey form allowed respondents to “write in” their response or comment. Major themes that emerge from the comments are summarized in the report, while a complete set of the comments is provided as an appendix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

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

### *Current Programs and Facilities*

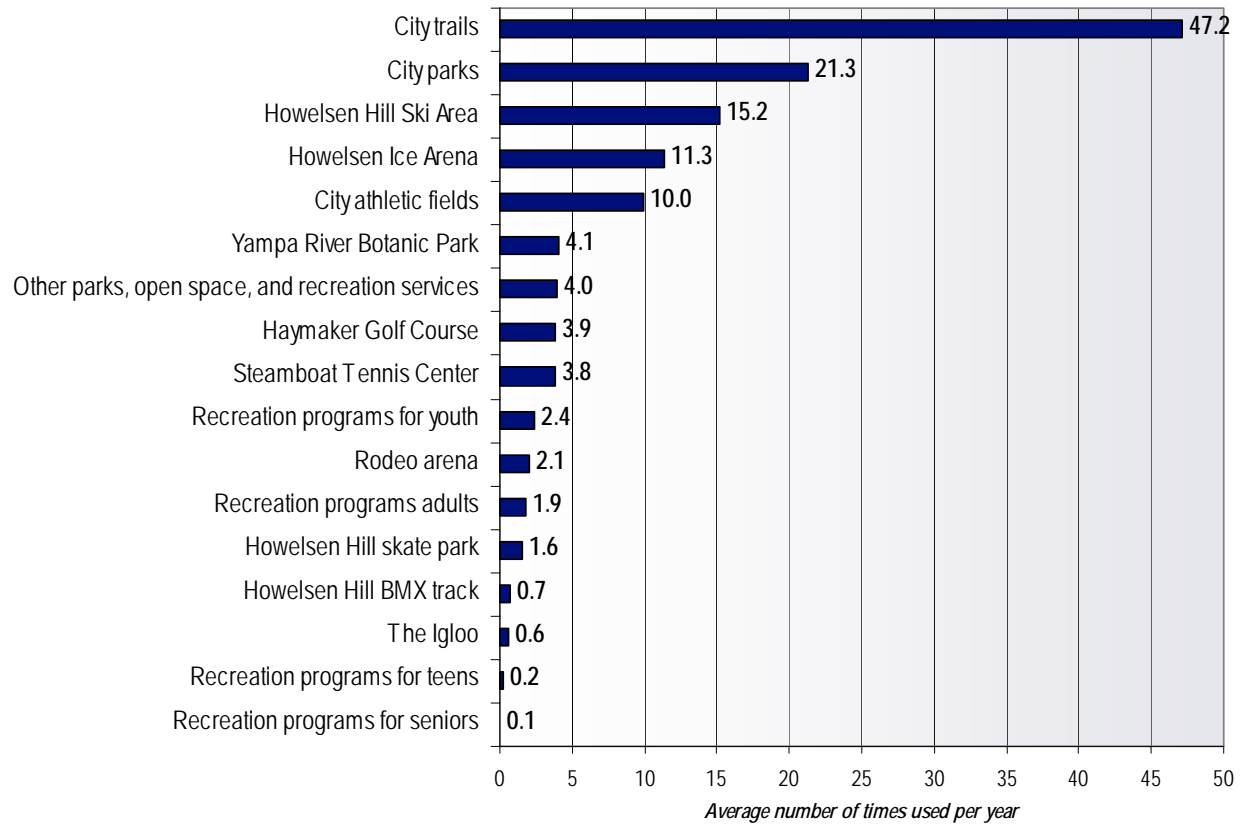
**Usage levels.** Among the facilities and amenities currently available in Steamboat Springs, city trails were used by the greatest proportion of respondents (93 percent of respondents have used a city trail at least once in the last 12 months), followed by city parks (76 percent of respondents), and the Yampa River Botanic Park (87 percent of respondents). Approximately 40-58 percent have used Howelsen Hill Ski Area, the rodeo arena, city athletic fields, Howelsen Ice Arena, and/or Haymaker Golf Course at least once in the last 12 months.

**Figure 3**  
**Current Usage of Facilities and Areas**  
 Percent using at least once in last 12 months



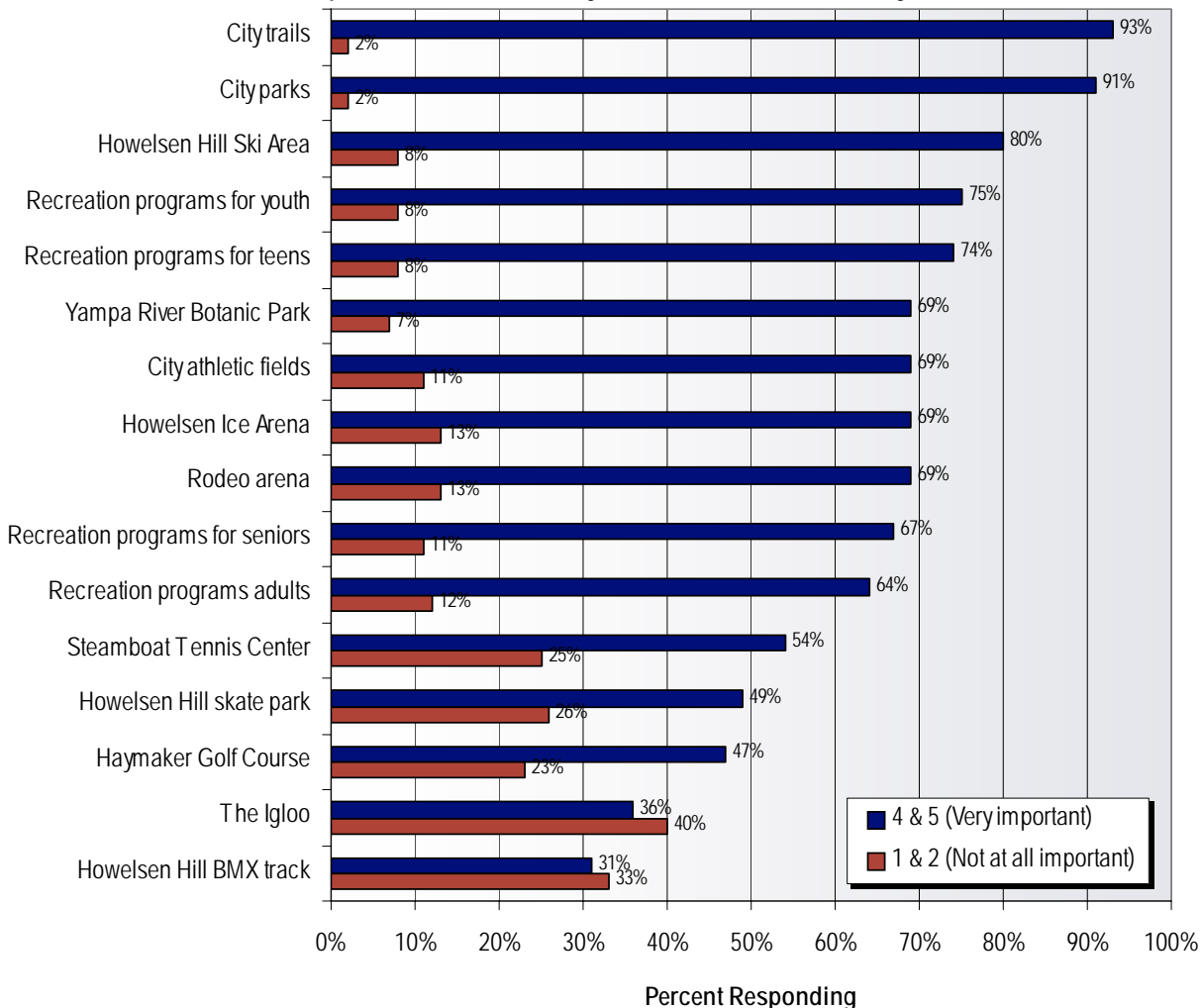
When asked about their frequency of use, respondents indicated the highest number of average uses per year to city trails (47.2 times per year). City parks were also used frequently, however significantly lower than city trails (21.3 times per year). Howelsen Hill Ski Area (15.2 times per year), Howelsen Ice Arena (11.3 times per year), and city athletic fields (10 times per year) were also used frequently throughout the year.

**Figure 4**  
**Current Usage of Facilities and Areas**  
**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, city trails (93 percent of respondents rated it “very important,” a 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale) and city parks (91 percent) were rated the highest, followed by Howelsen Hill Ski Area (80 percent), youth recreation programs (75 percent), and teen recreation programs (74 percent). Least important to the community were The Igloo (40 percent of respondents rated it “not at all important,” a 1 or 2 on a 5-point scale) and Howelsen Hill BMX track (33 percent).

**Figure 5**  
**Importance of each facility and area to the community**



How well are parks, facilities, and/or programs currently meeting the needs of the community?  
 Overall, most parks, facilities, and amenities available in Steamboat Springs 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:

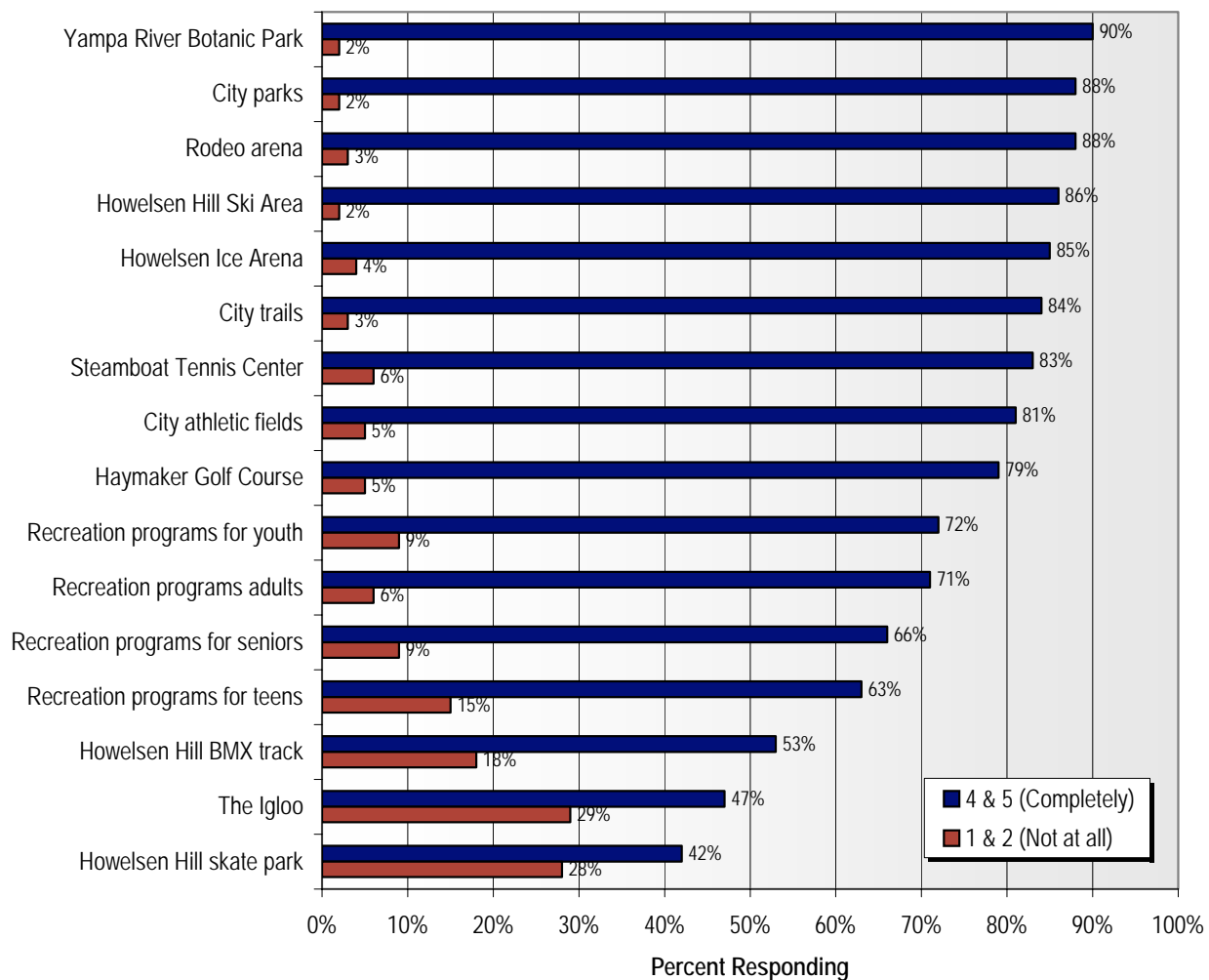
- ◆ Yampa River Botanic Park
- ◆ City parks
- ◆ Rodeo arena
- ◆ Howelsen Hill Ski Area
- ◆ Howelsen Ice Arena
- ◆ City trails
- ◆ Steamboat Tennis Center
- ◆ City athletic fields
- ◆ Haymaker Golf Course

In terms of facilities not meeting the needs of the community, approximately 28-29 percent cited the following two facilities as not meeting the needs of the community, including:

- ◆ The Igloo
- ◆ Howelsen Hill skate park

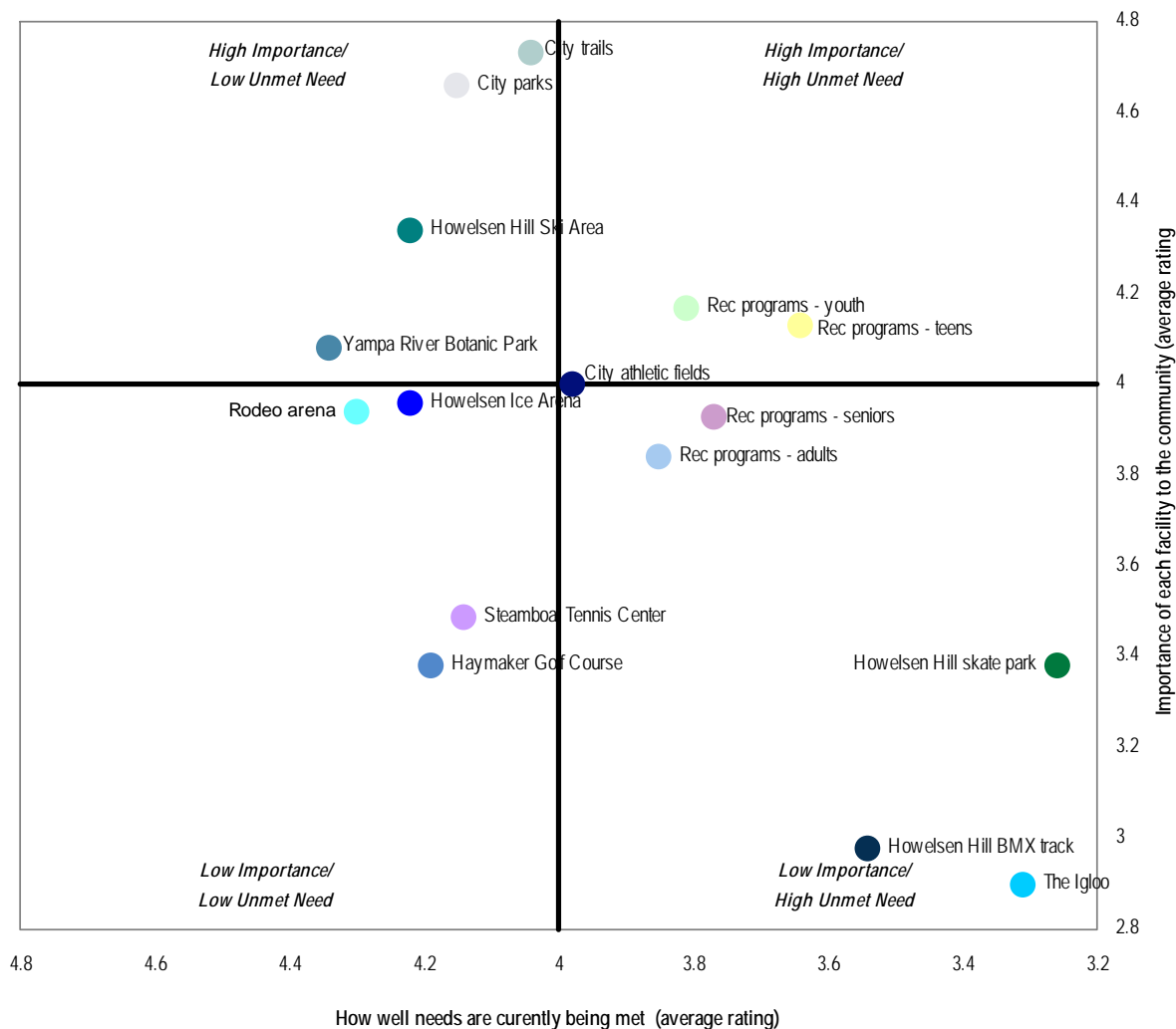
Figure 6

How well are the facilities provided by the City of Steamboat Springs meeting the needs of the community?



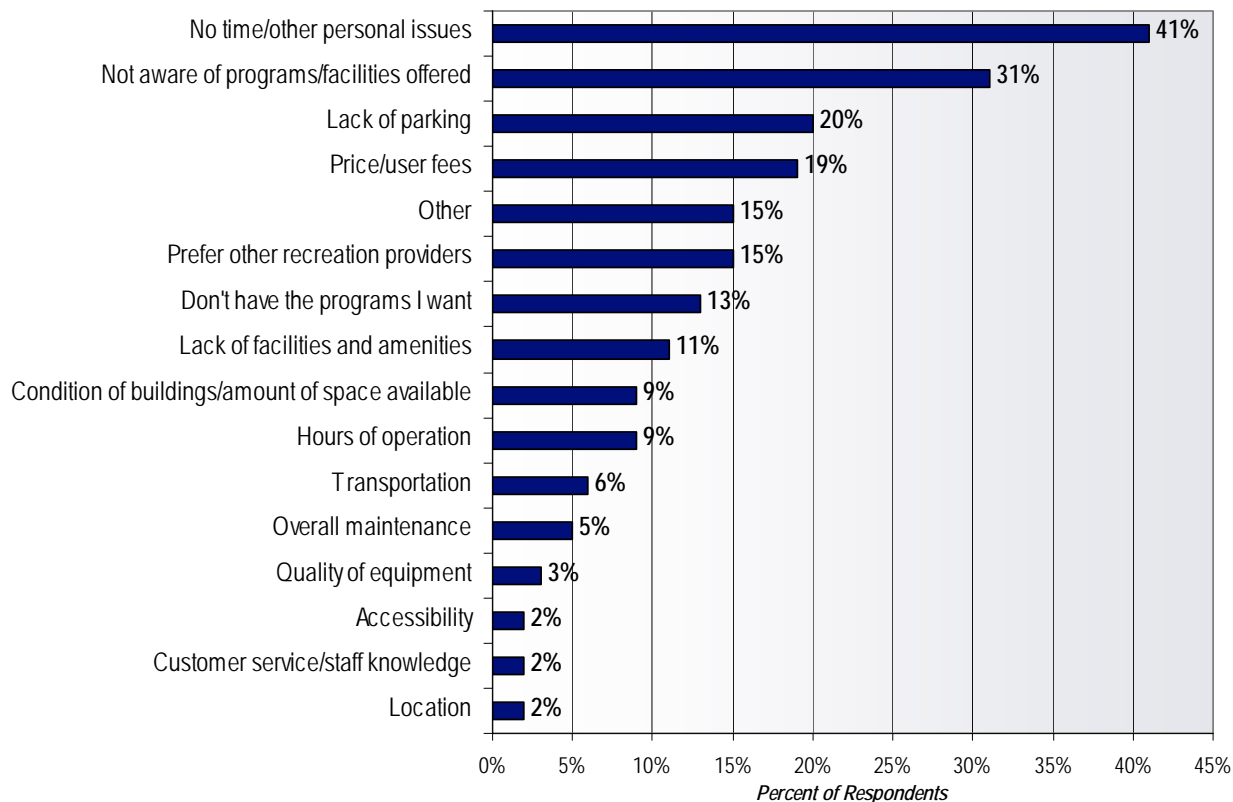
**Importance-Performance Matrix.** It is also instructive to compare and plot the importance scores against the performance scores in an “importance-performance” matrix. As illustrated in the graph, although perhaps not meeting a certain level of need for some residents, note that many of the same facilities listed above that are not meeting needs are also considered less important to the community (The Igloo, Howelsen Hill BMX track, and Howelsen Hill skate park). In comparison, the city trails, city parks, Howelsen Hill Ski Area, and Yampa River Botanic Park, which are considered very important to the community, are meeting the needs pretty well for most respondents. Recreation programs for youth and teens, also being relatively important, are perhaps not meeting the needs of some residents as well as the trails, parks, Howelsen Hill Ski Area, and Yampa River Botanic Park.

**Figure 7**  
Importance/Satisfaction Matrix



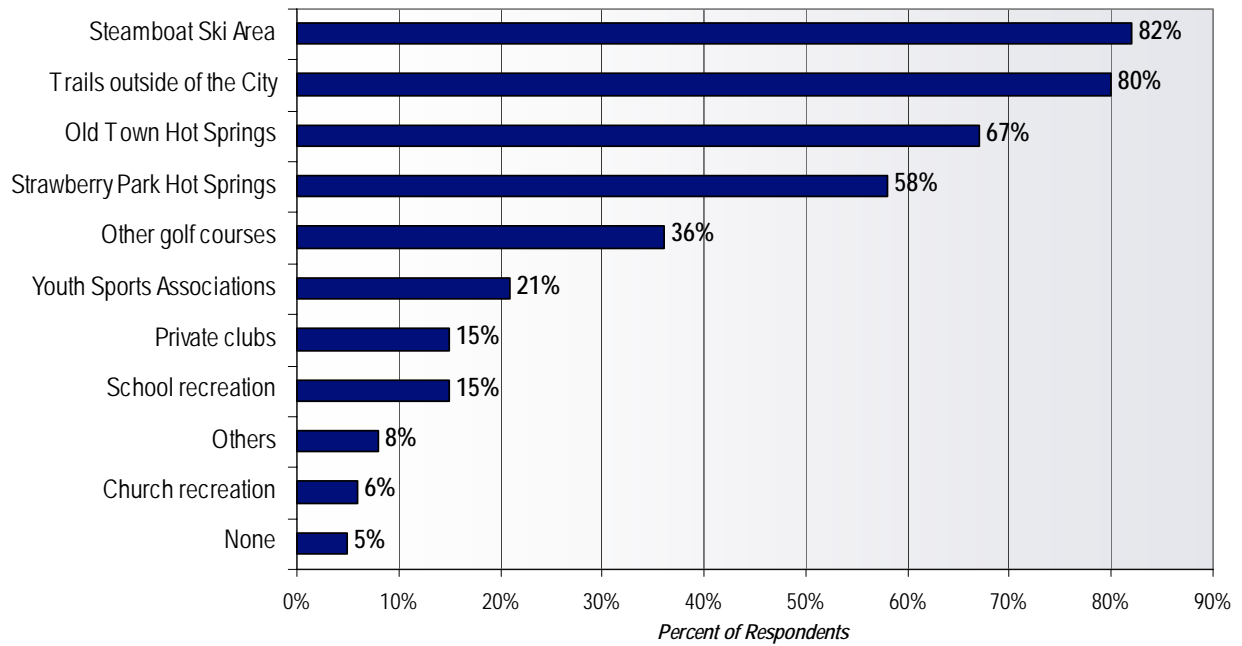
**Reasons for not using City’s facilities and/or programs.** When asked why respondents do not use City recreation facilities or programs, 41 percent of respondents identified “no time/other personal issues,” followed by “not aware of programs/facilities offered” (31 percent), “lack of parking” (20 percent), and “price/user fees” (19 percent). A few respondents also indicated in the open-ended comments that they do not use the facilities/programs because they are too crowded.

**Figure 8**  
**If you do not use City recreation facilities or programs, why not?**



Other recreation facilities used. When asked what other organizations respondents and their household members use, 82 percent of respondents indicated that they use the Steamboat Ski Area, along with 80 percent who identified trails outside of the city. Other facilities used include Old Town Hot Springs (67 percent), Strawberry Park Hot Springs (58 percent), other golf courses (36 percent), youth sports associations (21 percent), private clubs (15 percent), and school recreation (15 percent).

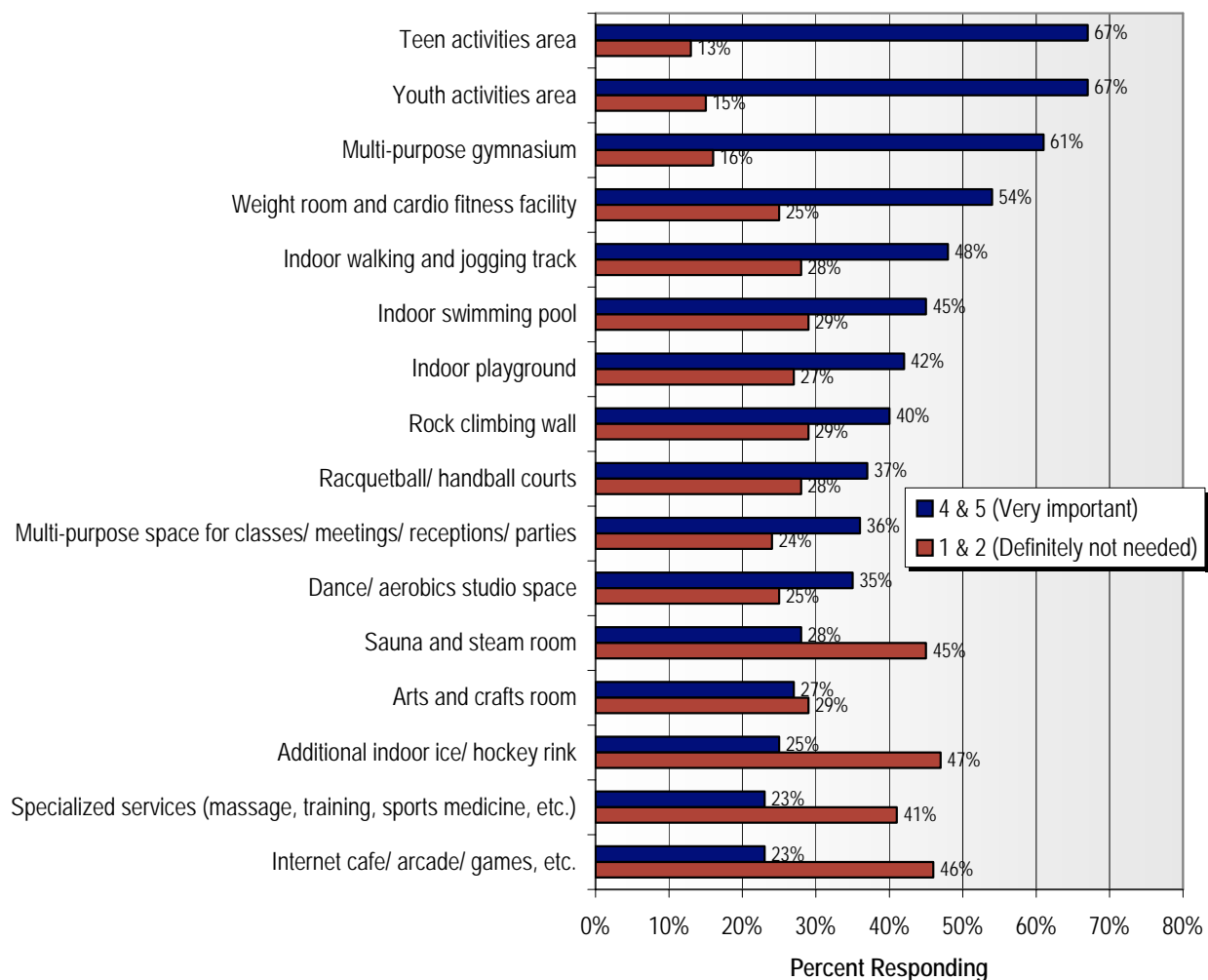
**Figure 8**  
**Other Recreation Facilities Used**



*Future Recreation Facilities, Amenities, Programs, Activities, and Services*

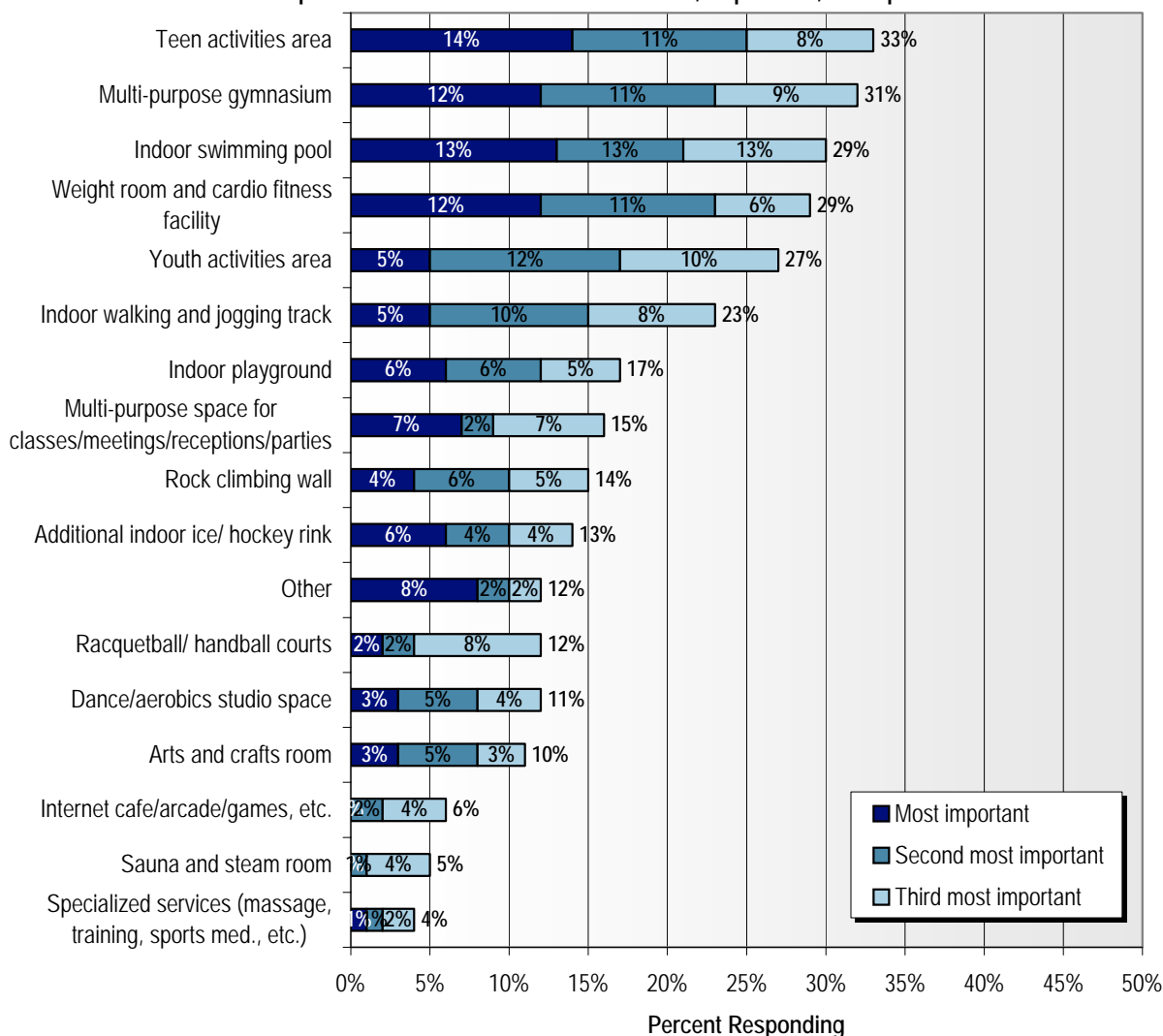
**Importance of adding, expanding, or improving indoor recreation facilities.** The survey provided a list of indoor facilities/amenities that could be added, expanded, or improved in the Steamboat Springs area. The results show that respondents feel a teen activities area and youth activities area would be the most important to add, expand, or improve (67 percent of respondents indicated each as “very important,” a 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale), followed by a multi-purpose gymnasium (61 percent). A weight room and cardio fitness facility, indoor walking and jogging track, indoor swimming pool, indoor playground, and rock-climbing wall are also relatively important (40-54 percent of respondents indicating they are “very important”). One facility mentioned in the open-ended comments was to add an indoor playground facility for toddlers and families to utilize during the winter. As shown in the following figure, amenities such as an additional indoor ice/hockey rink, Internet café/arcade, sauna/steam room, and specialized services (massage, training, etc.) were among the least important.

**Figure 9**  
**Importance of the following indoor recreation facilities to be added, expanded, or improved**



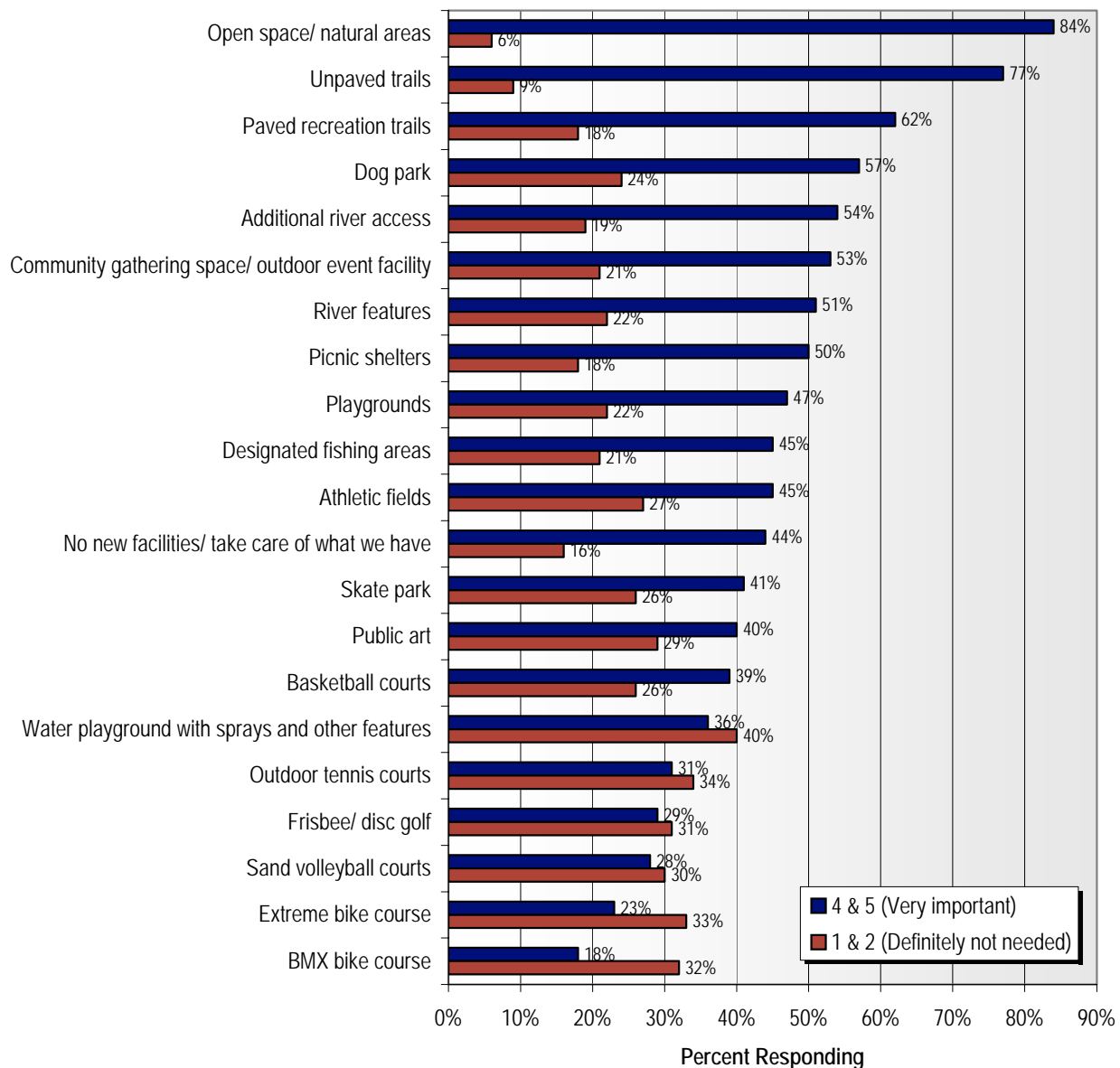
Respondents were also asked to indicate which of the potential facilities and amenities were the three most important to them and their household. This provides the opportunity to not only see what amenities are important to respondents, but also to get an idea of how the same amenities are viewed in relation to each other, allowing priorities to become more evident. While the teen activities area remained as the top priority, some minor shifts were seen among the other top amenities. The top four amenities (shown in the figure below) are all relatively close in prioritization, but the teen activities area is slightly higher (14 percent of respondents indicating that it is their top choice and 33 percent indicating that it is one of their top three priorities), followed by the multi-purpose gymnasium, indoor swimming pool, and weight room/cardio fitness facility. Other amenities that emerged as high priorities include a youth activities area and indoor walking and jogging track.

Figure 10  
Most important indoor facilities to be added, expanded, or improved



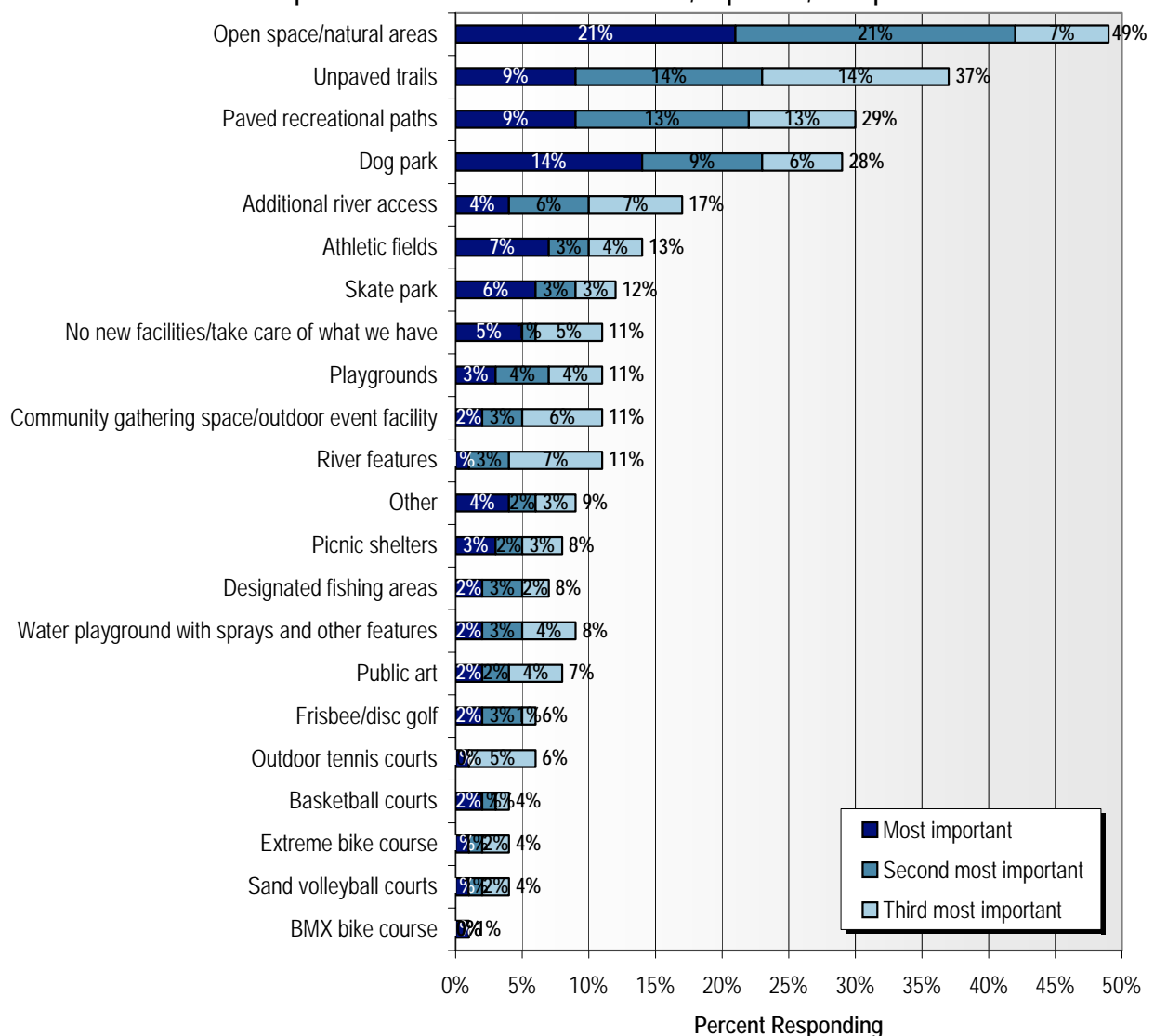
**Importance of adding, expanding, or improving outdoor recreation facilities.** The survey also provided a list of outdoor facilities/amenities that could be added, expanded, or improved in the Steamboat Springs area. The results show that respondents feel open space/natural areas and unpaved trails are the most important to add, expand, or improve (rating between 77 and 84 percent “very important”). Paved recreation trails, a dog park, additional river access, community gathering space, river features, and picnic shelters are also relatively important (all with more than 50 percent of respondents indicating they are “very important”). A few open-ended comments described a need to extend the core trail/bike path. Water playground with sprays and features, outdoor tennis courts, an extreme bike course, and a BMX course were among the least important.

**Figure 11**  
**Importance of the following outdoor recreation facilities to be added, expanded, or improved**



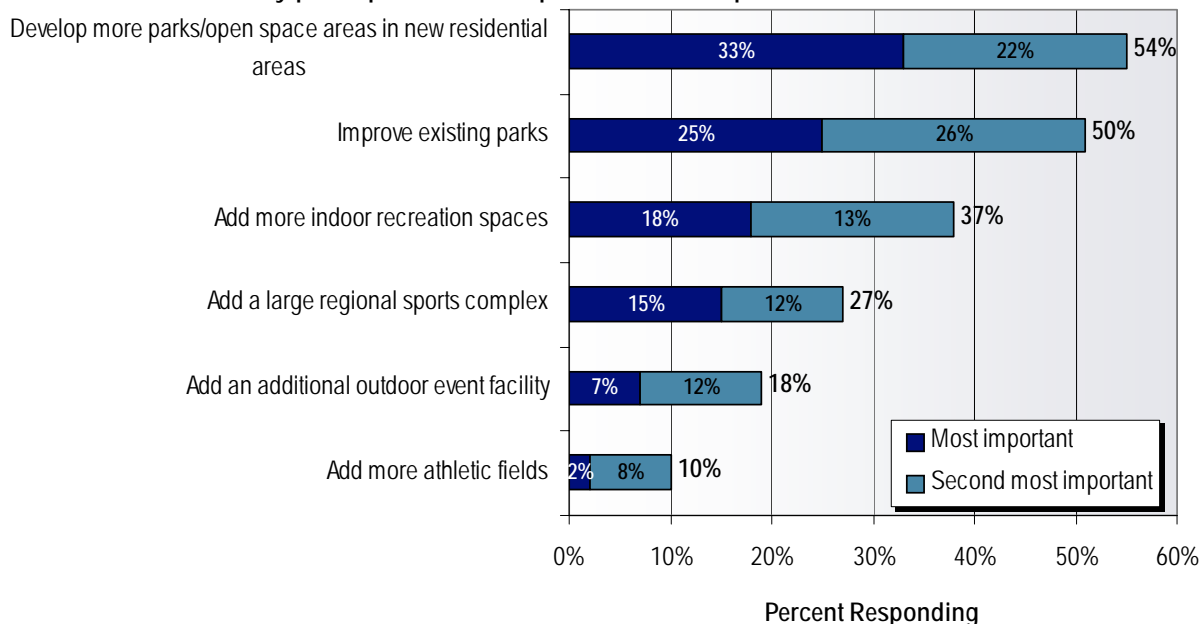
As done with the indoor facilities, respondents were also asked to indicate which of the potential outdoor facilities and amenities were the three most important to them and their household. Open space/natural areas emerged as the clear top priority (21 percent of respondents listing it as their number one priority and 49 percent of respondents listing it as one of their top three priorities). Similar to the previous ratings, other top priorities for outdoor facilities/amenities include unpaved trails (9 percent listing it as their number one priority and 37 percent listing it as one of their top three priorities), paved recreational paths (9 percent listing it as their number one priority and 29 percent listing it as one of their top three priorities), and a dog park (14 percent listing it as their number one priority and 28 percent listing it as one of their top three priorities). Although rated somewhat lower in regards to respondents' top three priorities, more respondents listed the dog park as a number one priority (14 percent, compared to 9 percent who listed unpaved trails and paved paths as their number one priorities).

**Figure 12**  
**Most important outdoor facilities to be added, expanded, or improved**



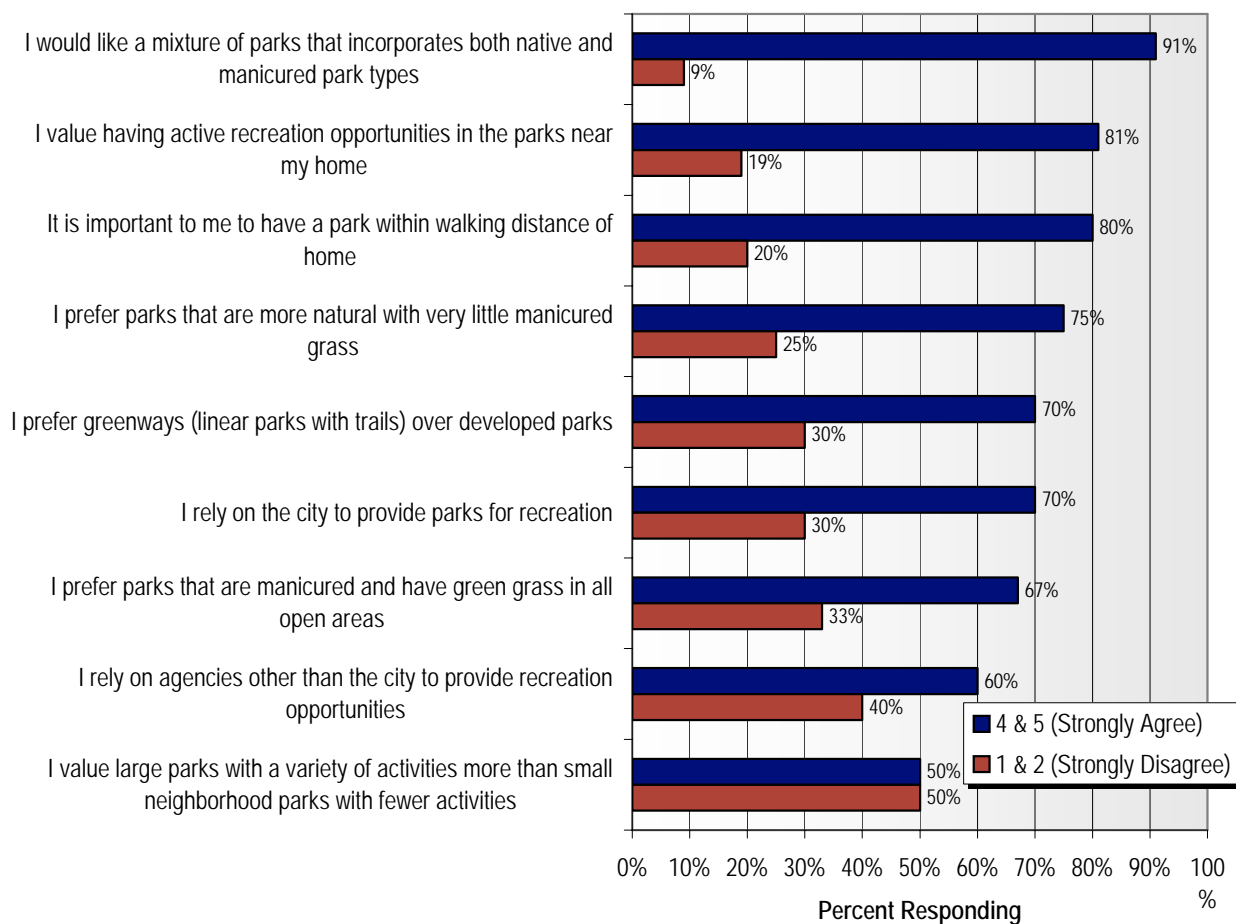
Facility and Park options that could be developed in the Steamboat area. The survey listed six general options of facilities or parks from which respondents were asked to choose their top two priorities. Indicated as the top priority was to develop more parks/open space areas in new residential areas (33 percent of respondents chose it as their number one priority and 54 percent chose it as one of their top two priorities). Other high priorities were to improve existing parks (25 percent chose it as their number one priority and 50 percent indicated it as one of their top two priorities) and add more indoor recreation spaces (18 percent chose it as their number one priority and 37 percent indicated it as one of their top two priorities).

**Figure 15**  
**Facility/park options most important to develop in the Steamboat area**



**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 Figure 13. Overall, respondents indicated a high level of agreement with all statements, with the exception of "I value large parks with a variety of activities more than small neighborhood parks with fewer activities" (50 percent of respondents agreed with this statement, while 50 percent disagreed). Respondents agreed the most with the statement "I would like a mixture of parks that incorporates both native and manicured park types" (91 percent agreed, 9 percent disagreed).

**Figure 13**  
How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

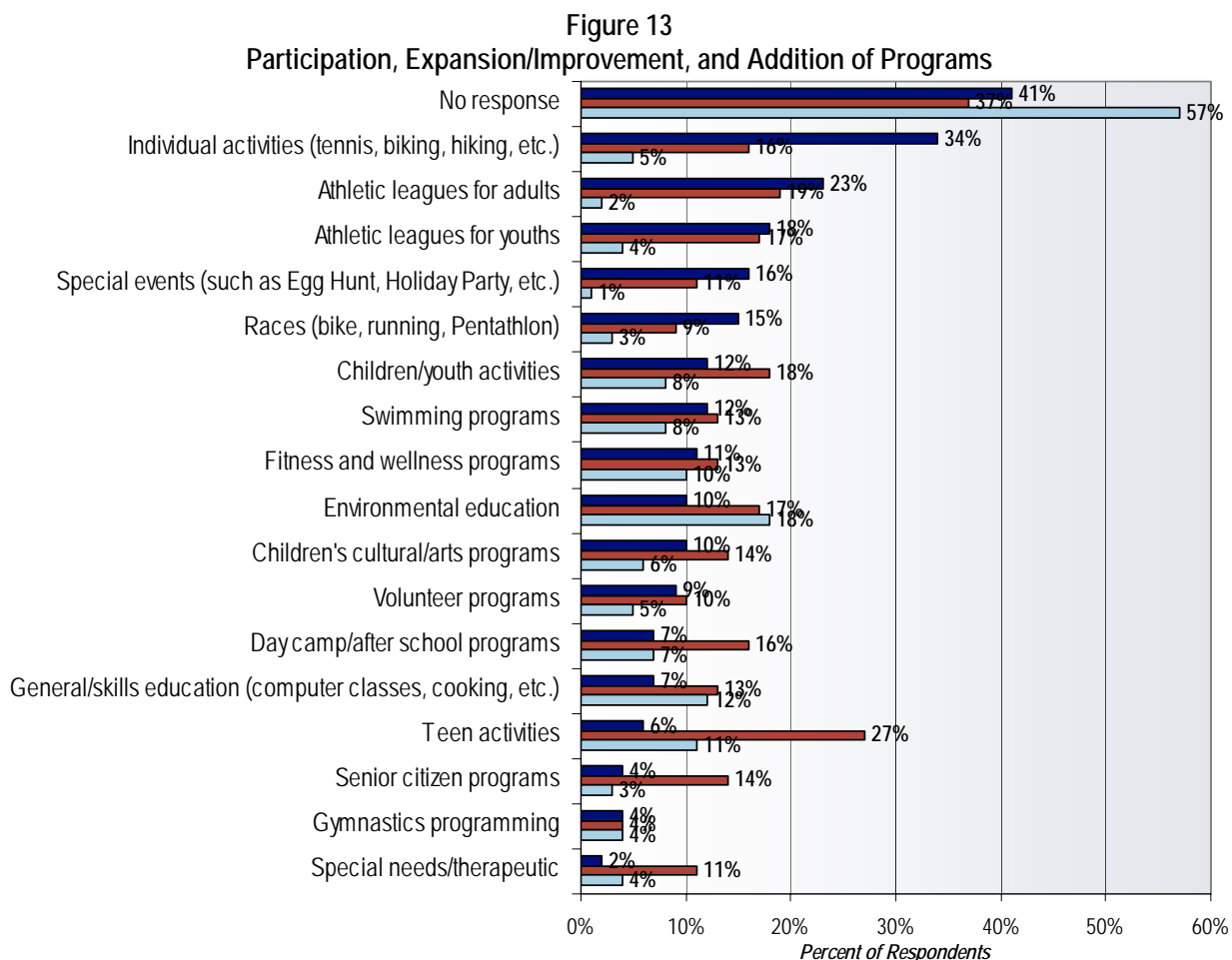


**Programs and Activities.** The survey listed a variety of programs, activities, and special events that are currently available in Steamboat Springs or could be added in the future. Respondents were asked to indicate which ones members of their household participate in and which should be expanded, improved, or added.

**Programs, activities, and special events participation.** Individual activities such as biking and hiking (34 percent of respondents), adult athletic leagues (23 percent), youth athletic leagues (18 percent), and special events (such as Egg Hunt, Holiday Party, etc.) (16 percent) were indicated to have the highest participation rates among responding households (other activities had participation rates of 12 percent or less).

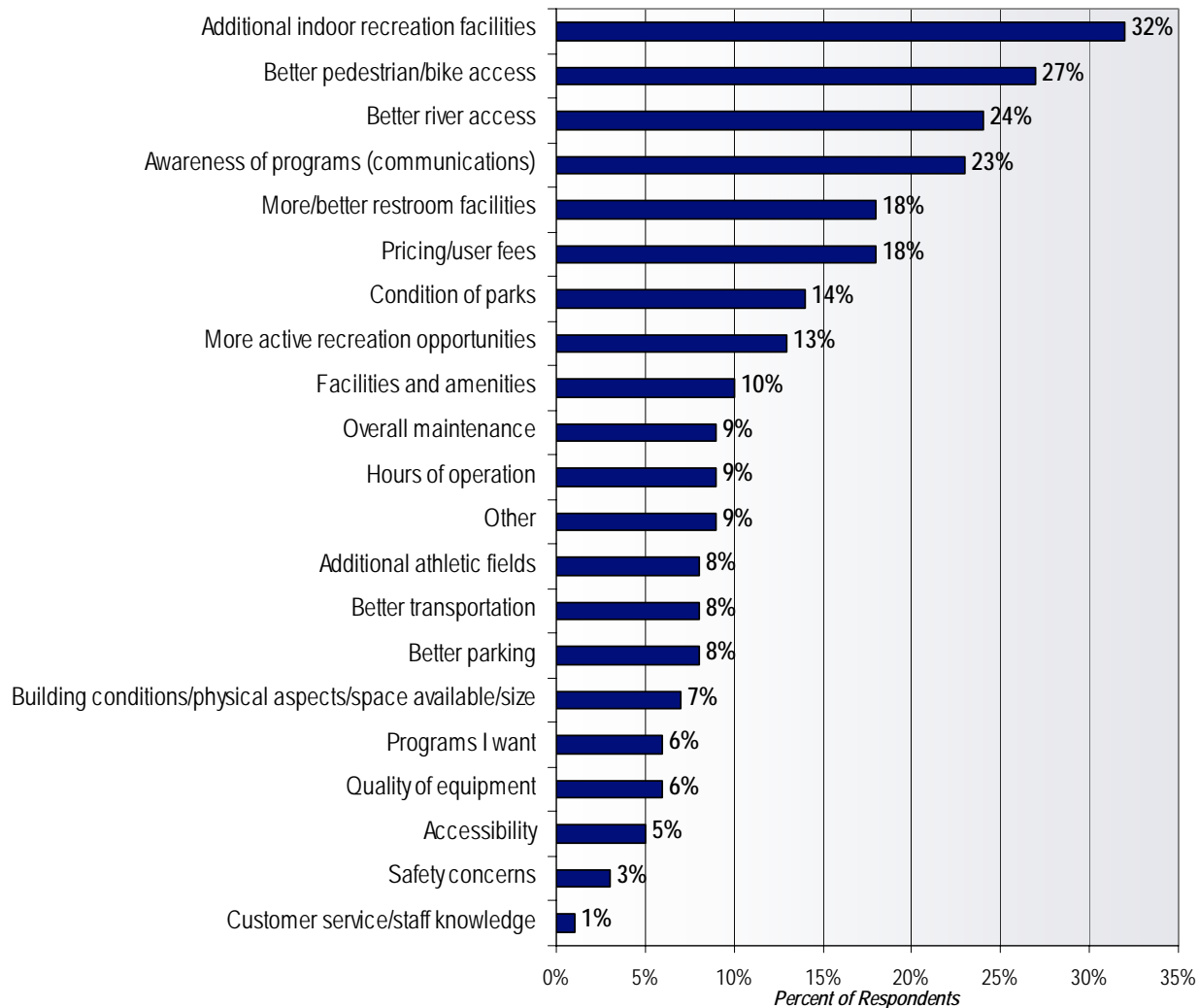
**Programs, activities, and special events that should be expanded/improved.** Among the same list, teen activities (27 percent), adult athletic leagues (19 percent), children/youth activities (18 percent), youth athletic leagues (17 percent), and environmental education (17 percent) were the most frequently identified as potentials for expansion or improvement (other activities received 22 percent or less).

**Programs, activities, and special events that should be added.** Programs, activities, or special events respondents indicated that they would like to see added in the Steamboat Springs area include environmental education (18 percent), general skills education such as computer or cooking classes (12 percent), and teen activities (11 percent).



What are the three most important concerns for the City of Steamboat Springs to address that would increase your utilization of parks and recreation facilities and programs? The top priorities indicated by respondents include additional indoor recreation facilities (indicated by 32 percent of respondents), better pedestrian/bike access (27 percent), better river access (24 percent), and awareness of programs (23 percent). A second tier of priorities includes more/better restroom facilities, pricing/user fees, condition of parks, and more active recreation opportunities.

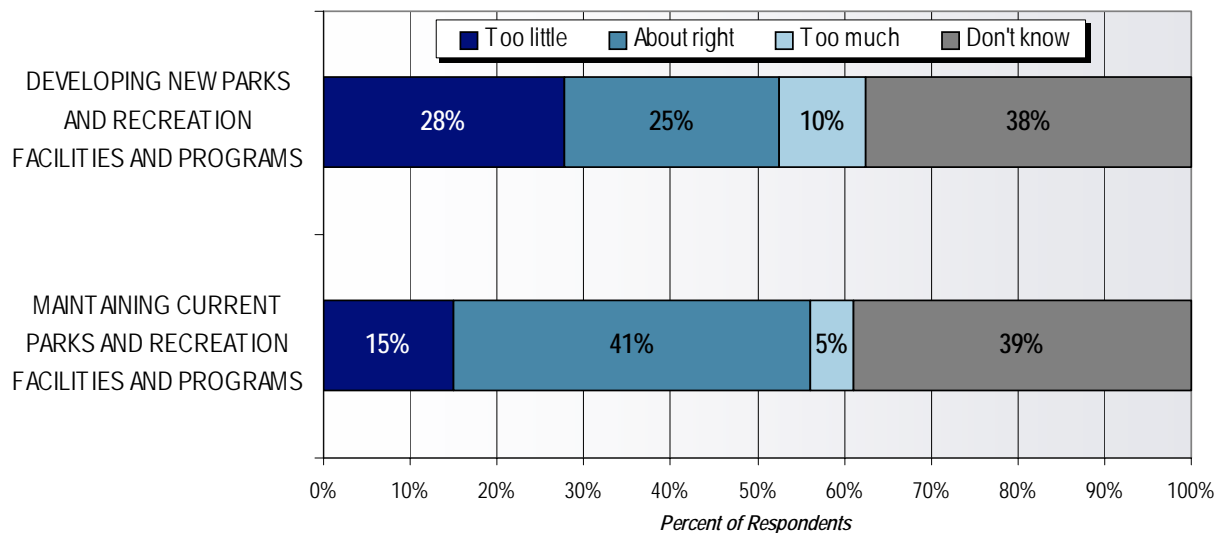
**Figure 17**  
**Three most important concerns for the City to address**  
**that would increase your utilization of Steamboat Springs Parks and Recreation facilities**



*Financial Choices*

Amount of money currently being spent by the City of Steamboat Springs. Respondents were asked what their opinion is concerning how much money is currently being spent to develop new parks and recreation facilities and programs and maintain current parks and recreation facilities and programs. For all three categories, there is a high percentage of respondents who are unsure about how much is currently being spent (38 to 39 percent). Approximately 25 percent of respondents felt the amount of money being spent to develop new parks, facilities, and programs is “about right,” while 28 percent indicated that it is “too little” and 10 percent indicated that it is “too much.” There was a stronger consensus among respondents that the amount of money being spent to maintain current parks, facilities, and programs is “about right” (41 percent), while 15 percent indicated that it is “too little” and 5 percent indicated that it is “too much.”

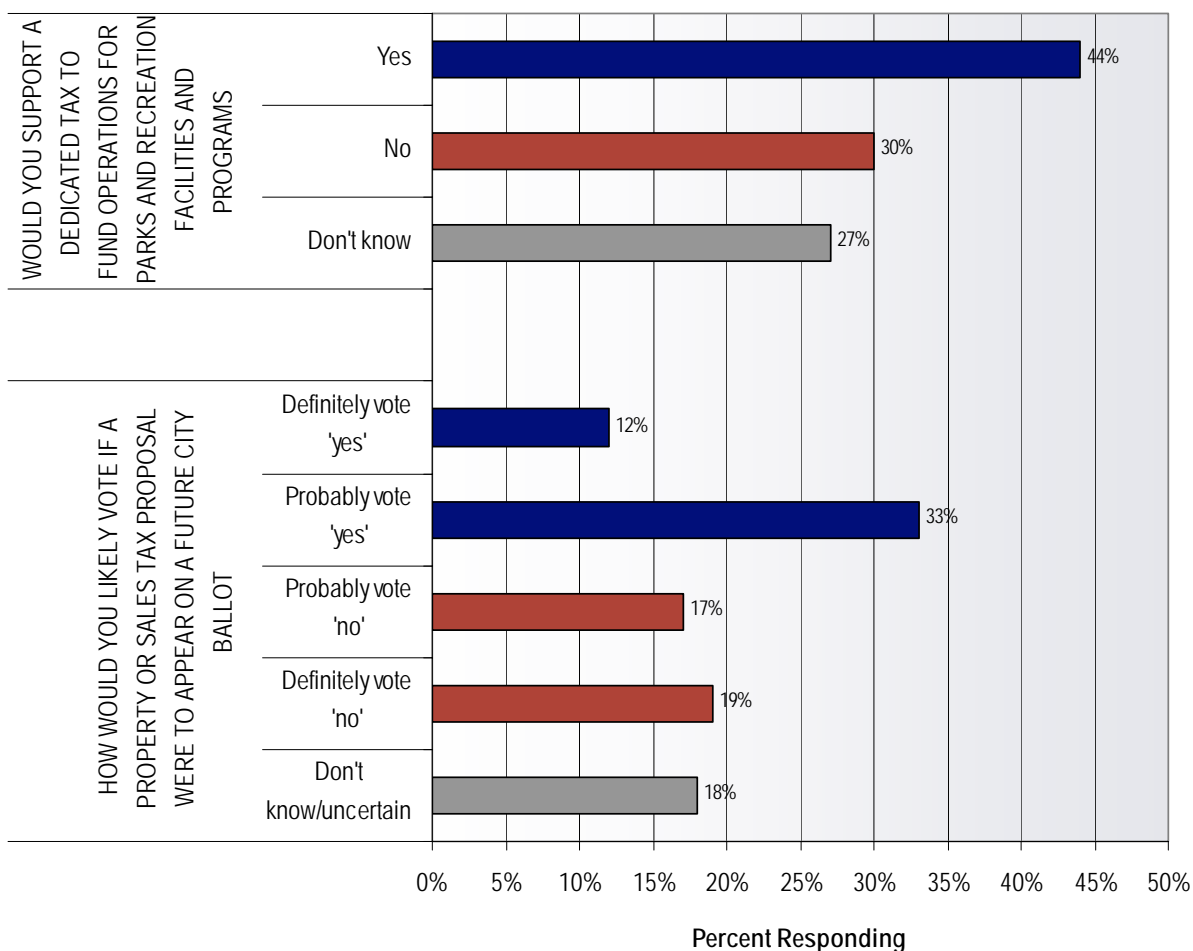
Figure 18  
 What is your opinion concerning the amount of money currently being spent by the City of Steamboat Springs in:



Would you support a dedicated tax to fund operations for parks and recreation facilities and programs? Approximately 44 percent of respondents indicated that they would support a dedicated tax, while 30 percent would not support it, and 27 percent were unsure. Support was stronger among respondents between the age of 35 and 44, residents who have lived in Steamboat less than five years, and households with kids at home.

In order to allow the City to issue bonds in support of building and operating new recreational facilities, would you support a property or sales tax or another financial method? When asked how they would likely vote if such a proposal were to appear on a future City ballot, 45 percent of respondents indicated that they would definitely or probably vote “yes,” while 18 percent were unsure, and 36 percent indicated they would definitely or probably vote “no.” Support was stronger among residents who have lived in Steamboat less time (less than 10 years), households with kids at home, and singles.

Figure 19  
Support of property or sales tax



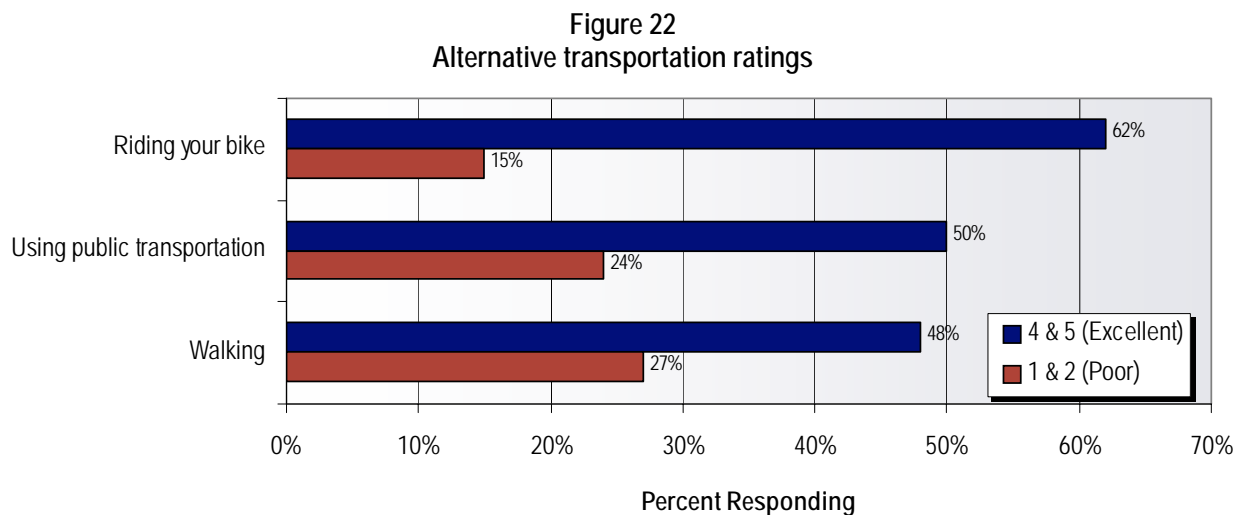
Respondents were asked to include any comments they had in regards to the survey’s financial questions. Many of the open-ended comments indicated a preference for further assessment of the community’s needs so that money is spent efficiently, no additional taxes, and effort to ease

the financial burden on local residents by exploring funding options from visitors. A few comments are listed below, but the entire set can be viewed in the appendix section.

*So many people that use/want facilities live outside city limits, I don't think city residents should carry entire burden*  
*Voted against last rec center on ballot due to: 1) redundancy of OTHS facilities, and 2) TOO MUCH proposed - need to see just the important things we currently lack - just indoor pool, more gym space - not every wish list item serving a few such as racquetball, etc.*  
*Need to balance the budget and use what we have - NO MORE taxes or bonds*  
*The economy has hit lower and middle class families so now is not the time*  
*Would vote for proposal to address pressing needs, NOT all things to all people that is beautiful and majestic*  
*I would NOT be in support of a property tax as homeowners seem to pay enough for tourist to use our facilities as well as the transients that live here*  
*A yes vote on funding would depend on what amenities were being proposed. A blanket request for funds would elicit a no vote on my part.*  
*Fees should only be charged to visitors*  
*I would support funding for a community facility but will NOT support funding for Triple Crown or additional baseball fields*

### Transportation and Communication

Transportation. Respondents rated their ability to get to parks, recreation facilities, and programs in Steamboat Springs using alternative means of transportation average overall. Using a 1 to 5 scale (5 being “excellent” and 1 being “poor”), 62 percent of respondents rated their ability to ride their bike to a facility or program “excellent,” while 50 percent rated their ability to use public transportation as “excellent,” and 48 percent rated their ability to walk to facilities or programs “excellent.”



When asked what it is that most influences their decision to walk or bike to parks and recreation facilities in Steamboat Springs, 38 percent of respondents cited a “safe and enjoyable route.” “Distance” was also indicated as a primary influence of their decision to walk or bike by 34 percent of respondents.

Communication. Many respondents currently get information on recreation services and programs from the Steamboat Pilot & Today newspaper (79 percent). Other sources of information include information at the recreation facilities/program location (24 percent of

respondents), local radio stations (18 percent), posters (12 percent), flyers (10 percent), Internet/websites (9 percent), e-mail (6 percent), registration form (4 percent), and Steamboat Cable TV channels (3 percent). When asked how the City can best communicate with them, the Steamboat Pilot & Today newspaper was mentioned the most (by 54 percent of respondents), followed by e-mail (25 percent), and Internet/websites (9 percent). 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 City to explore in future communications.