

Si View Metropolitan Park District

# COMMUNITY PRIORITIES SURVEY

JUNE 2016



***ELWAY RESEARCH, INC.***



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## Si View Metropolitan Park District

# COMMUNITY PRIORITIES SURVEY

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## INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the results of a sample survey of residents in the Si View Metropolitan Park District (SVMPD) to assess residents' evaluation of the Park District and their priorities for future development of recreation facilities in the Snoqualmie Valley.

A total of 404 adult heads of household were interviewed May 9-27, 2016: 112 by telephone and 292 via on-line questionnaire. Every household in the district in which at least one person is registered to vote was contacted either by telephone or mail and invited to participate in this survey.

The survey was designed to assess:

- Residents' evaluation of SVMPD's performance on various functions, facilities, and programs;
- Priorities for future park and recreation services and facilities;
- Level of potential support/opposition to various improvements under consideration by SVMPD;
- Overall satisfaction with the value to taxpayers being delivered by SVMPD.

Demographic information was collected so as to compare and contrast answers.

The survey was designed and administered by Elway Research, Inc. The questionnaire was developed in collaboration with District staff and consultants from Conservation Technix, Inc.

The report includes Key Findings, followed by annotated graphs summarizing the results to each question. The full questionnaire and a complete set of cross-tabulation tables are presented under separate cover.



**METHODS**

<b>SAMPLE:</b>	404 Heads of Household in the Si View Metropolitan Park District.
<b>TECHNIQUE:</b>	Mixed Mode 112 Telephone Survey with Live Interviewers 22% via cell phone; 292 via on-line survey.
<b>FIELD DATES:</b>	May 9-27, 2016
<b>SAMPLE FRAME:</b>	All households within the District in which at least one person was registered to vote (N=5664). Households for which we had telephone numbers (n=3034) were included in the telephone sample; those for which telephone numbers were not available (n=2630) were included in the online sample.
<b>MARGIN OF ERROR:</b>	±5% at the 95% level of confidence. That is, in theory, had all similarly qualified residents been interviewed, there is a 95% chance the results would be within ±5% of the results in this survey.
<b>DATA COLLECTION:</b>	<u>TELEPHONE:</u> Calls were made during weekday evenings and weekend days by trained, professional interviewers under supervision. Up to six attempts were made to contact each number in the sample. Questionnaires were edited for completeness and 10% of each interviewer’s calls were re-called for verification.  <u>ON-LINE:</u> Invitation letters were mailed to households asking residents to log on to the survey website to complete the questionnaire. A reminder postcard was mailed one week later and a second postcard one week after that.  Virtually every household in the District was either called or received a letter of invitation to participate in the survey.

It must be kept in mind that survey research cannot predict the future. Although great care and the most rigorous methods available were employed in the design, execution and analysis of this survey, these results can be interpreted only as representing the answers given by these respondents to these questions at the time they were interviewed.



## Mixed-Mode Survey Method

This survey was conducted using a mixed-mode sample design that combined land-line and cell phone telephone with on-line data collection.

The most recent count indicates 5,664 voter households in the Si View Metropolitan Park District. We obtained telephone numbers for 3,034 households, including cell phone numbers, and mailing addresses for the remaining 2,630.

All 3,034 telephone numbers were called up to 6 times each or until someone answered and either agreed or refused to be interviewed. The 2,630 households for which we had no telephone number were mailed a letter from the District Executive Director asking a designated adult<sup>1</sup> in the household to log on to our survey website and complete the questionnaire on-line. They were sent a thank you/reminder postcard one week after the initial mailing and a second reminder a week later.

The telephone survey resulted in 112 interviews, for a *completion rate*<sup>2</sup> of 4%, and a *cooperation rate*<sup>3</sup> of 20%.

The on-line survey resulted in 292 completed questionnaires for a completion rate of 11%.

The data from both modes were combined into a single data set. The combined data were statistically weighted by gender to align the sample with the most recent census data. This was necessary because 65% of the interviews were completed with women.

Research literature indicates that telephone respondents tend to give more positive responses than on-line respondents, particularly to rating scale items where on-line respondents are typically less likely to give the highest rating than are telephone respondents. In this survey, results were somewhat mixed. Telephone respondents gave the Department higher overall grades for all 10 of the functions included in the survey, and were more likely to give a "A" grade in 7 of the 10. On the other hand, on-line respondents were more likely to rate potential improvements as a "top priority" 18 of 20 times.

Because of this mode differential, it is often argued that the inclusion of an on-line survey in addition to the telephone sample produces a more representative result than either a telephone or web sample alone would have produced. In this case, compared to the telephone sample, the on-line sample was younger, more likely to be renters and less likely to have children.

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<sup>1</sup> Instructions were that the survey be completed by the adult (18+) in the household with the most recent birthday. This is a common practice to randomize respondents.

<sup>2</sup> The completion rate is the percentage of completed interviews by the total number of telephone numbers dialed. It includes numbers where no one answered the call.

<sup>3</sup> The cooperation rate is the percentage of completed interviews by the number of qualified respondents contacted.



## Interpreting the Findings

This survey makes extensive use of scale items to measure public opinion. There are a number of ways to interpret the results from scale items. A common practice is to combine "strongly support" and "support" into "total support" and then do the same for the "oppose" side of the scale. In the *realpolitik* of public debate, however, it is likely that those with the strongest opinion will have the loudest voices. In this case, those who said they "definitely" support a proposal are more likely to act on that position, and more likely to engage in the debate, than those who said "probably."

Moreover, there is a known tendency on the part of survey respondents to answer positively. Most respondents tend to want to be helpful and polite. It is therefore practical to treat "probably support" answers as considerably less reliable than "strongly support." Think of it as latent support. Those who said they "probably support" a proposal are positive inclined, but not convinced and not likely to act.

Because of this positivity bias, it is useful to consider "oppose" and "strongly oppose" responses to be reliable estimates of active opposition. If people naturally tend to give positive answers in surveys, then those who say they are opposed are likely to be genuinely opposed.

For purposes of situation assessment and strategy development, then, examining the "strong support" versus the "opposed" provides a prudent (some would say realistic) assessment of public thinking.



## RESPONDENT PROFILE

In interpreting these findings, it is important to keep in mind the characteristics of the people actually interviewed. This table presents a profile of the respondents in the survey. The results have been statistically adjusted by gender to align with the population. The "Combined" column displays the weighted sample profile used in this report

NOTE: Here and throughout this report, percentages may not add to 100%, due to rounding.

### Sample Profile by Survey Mode

		PHONE	ONLINE	COMBINED
<b>GENDER</b>	Female	68%	64%	52%
	Male	32%	36%	48%
<b>AGE:</b>	18-35	5%	20%	15%
	36-50	25%	47%	39%
	51-64	34%	33%	34%
	65+	37%	0	11%
<b>PARK USE *</b>	None	2%	13%	12%
	Light	9%	26%	25%
	Moderate	29%	27%	35%
	Heavy	27%	12%	28%
<b>HOUSEHOLD:</b>	Couple with children	30%	41%	36%
	Couple with no children	46%	39%	43%
	Single with children	4%	3%	3%
	Single with no children	16%	16%	17%
	NoAns	1%	2%	1%

\* Respondents were asked how many times in the last year someone from their household had visited each of four SVMPD facilities. The results were combined into a relative use scale with a range of 0 to 12. The scale is *relative*, because the answers were ranges, not exact numbers of visits. Thus, for example, there are a number of different combinations of visits that could result in a score of 4-7 (Moderate). The purpose of this index is to compare respondents in relation to one another. The scale was collapsed to four equivalent-size categories:

- NONE: No one had visited any of the 4 facilities;
- LIGHT: 1 to 5 visits;
- MODERATE: 4 to 14 visits; at least 2 facilities;
- HEAVY 9 to 20+ visits; at least 3 facilities.



# SUMMARY

◆ **Si View parks and facilities are well-used by these respondents. In the last year:**

- 9 in 10 respondents had visited at least 1 facility;
- Half visited at least 3 of the 4 facilities listed;
- Majorities reported visiting each of 3 facilities listed at least once;
- 6 in 10 visited more than one facility and made a minimum of 4 visits.

◆ **District gets "excellent" to "good" performance grades across a range of functions.**

- Asked to give a letter grade to 10 separate functions, facilities, and programs, majorities gave an "A" or "B" to 8 of them.
- The combined overall "grade point average" was 3.16 on the 4-point scale.
- The range of "grade point averages" was 3.50 for cleanliness and maintenance; to 2.78 for adult programs.
- The highest grades were given by the most frequent users, majorities of whom gave an "A" or "B" to every function.

◆ **District seen as good steward of tax dollars**

- Asked to rate the value they received from the District for their tax dollars 91% rated it as "satisfactory" or better, including 25% who said "excellent" and 39% who said "good."

◆ **Long list of priorities for future development.**

- Presented a list of 20 potential "park and recreation services," majorities of respondents rated 11 of them as "top" or "high" priorities for the District.
- When asked to pick just one (and then a second one), 4 items stood out:
  - Family aquatics center with pool (26% named it #1 or #2);
  - Park with riverfront access (24%);
  - Walking and biking trails (22%);
  - Natural areas and wildlife habitats (20%).





◆ **Broad inclination to support improvement proposals.**

- Respondents were reminded that improvements and facilities are supported by tax dollars and asked whether they supported or opposed 9 specific improvements "under active considerations" by SVMPPD.
- For all but one of the proposals (synthetic turf at Twin Falls Middle School), most respondents said they were inclined to "support" or "strongly support" each proposal.
- While most proposals were met with majority support, prudence suggests that most of that support should be considered latent.
- Three proposals had "strong support" that outweighed opposition:
  - Develop walking and biking trails that link parks and greenspace;
  - Acquire parkland for passive recreation such as trail walking, picnicking ;
  - Develop a new family aquatic center and pool.



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# FINDINGS

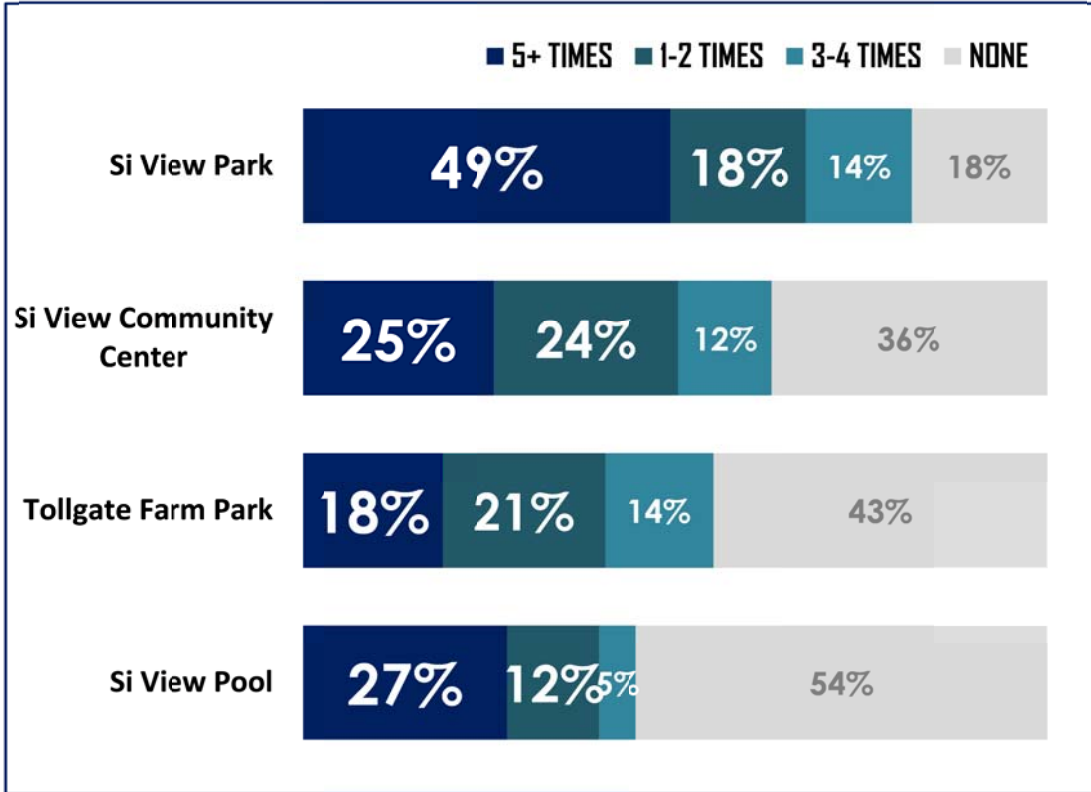
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- This section presents the survey findings in the form of annotated graphs.
- Bullet points indicate significant or noteworthy differences among population subgroups.



Park Usage

### Majorities of respondents had visited 3 of 4 park facilities as least once in the last year



Q2: These questions are about parks and recreation. I am going to read the names of some parks and facilities in your area. As I read each one, I would like to know how many times – if at all – anyone from your household visited that facility in the last year: 0 = none; 1 = 1-2 times; 2 = 3-4 times; 3 = 5+ times.

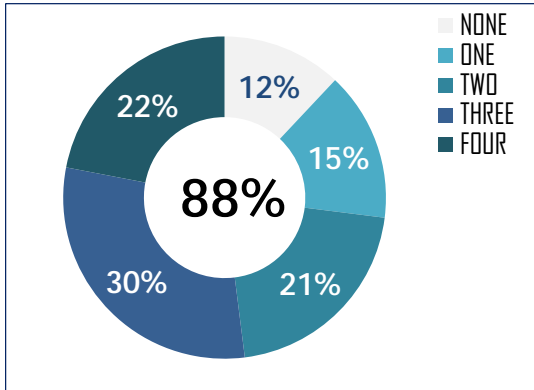
- **Majorities of respondents had visited 3 of the 4 park facilities as least once in the last year.**
  - Most popular was Si View Park, with 82% of households having visited in the last year and 49% visiting 5 times or more.
  - Even the least-used facility, Si View Pool, was used by 46% of households, with 27% using the pool 5 times or more on the last year.
- **For each of the facilities, families with children were the heaviest users:**
  - 93% of households with children used Si View Park last year, including 71% who used it at least 5 times.
  - 67% of households with children used the pool last year, including 42% who used it at least 5 times.
  - 79% of households with children visited the Community Center last year; 40% visited at least 5 times.
  - 70% visited Tollgate Farm Park; 23% visited at least 5 times.



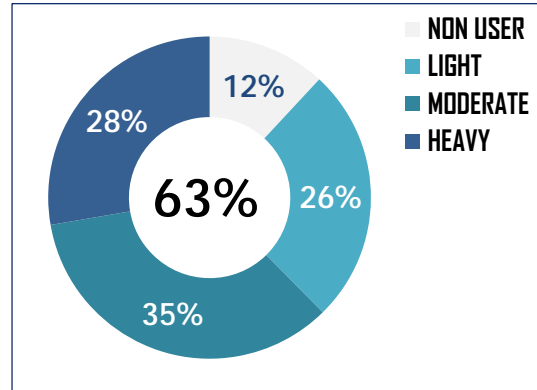
Park Usage

# Nearly 9 in 10 had visited as least one facility in the last year

NUMBER OF FACILITIES VISITED



TOTAL VISITS IN LAST YEAR



Q2: These questions are about parks and recreation. I am going to read the names of some parks and facilities in your area. As I read each one, I would like to know how many times – if at all – anyone from your household visited that facility in the last year: 0 = none; 1 = 1-2 times; 2 = 3-4 times; 3 = 5+ times.

- **88% of respondents had visited at least one Si View park facility in the last year.**
  - 52% had visited at least 3 of the 4 facilities listed in the survey, and
  - 28% had made at least 9 visits in the last year.
- **Most respondents (63%) were moderate to heavy users of Si View facilities, meaning they visited at least 2 different facilities and visited a total of at least 4 times in the last year.**

The results from the usage questions were combined into a relative use scale from 0 to 12 (4 facilities x [0 - 3]).

The scale is *relative*, because the response categories were ranges, not exact numbers of visits. Thus, for example, there are a number of different combinations of visits that could result in a score of 4-7 (Moderate).

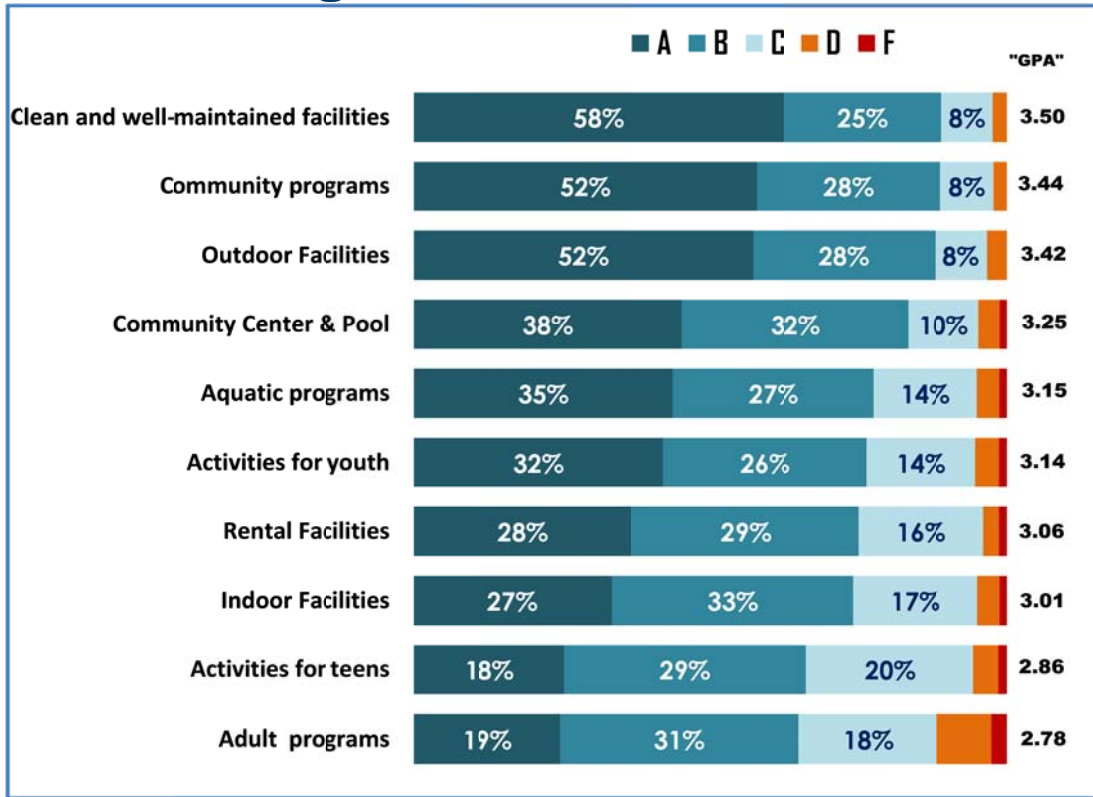
The purpose of this index is to compare respondents in relation to one another. The scale was collapsed to four user categories:

12%	NONE:	No one had visited any of the 4 facilities;
26%	LIGHT:	1 to 5 visits;
35%	MODERATE:	4 to 14 visits; at least 2 facilities;
28%	HEAVY	9 to 20+ visits; at least 3 facilities.



Park District Performance

Majorities graded each SVMPD function as "excellent" or "good"



Q3: Si View Metro Parks performs a number of functions. As I read some of these, I would like you to give them a grade, like they do in school, where A is excellent, B is good, C is satisfactory, D is unsatisfactory and F is poor. The first one is [INSERT LIST]. What grade would you give Si View for that?

- Providing clean and well-maintained parks and facilities
- Providing Family Nights, Farmer's Market, and other community programs
- Providing outdoor recreation facilities like playground and sport fields
- Managing the operation of Si View Community Center & Pool
- Providing aquatic programs
- Providing activities for toddlers & youth
- Providing rental facilities for birthdays, meetings, activities
- Providing indoor recreation facilities like gymnasiums, dance and fitness rooms
- Providing activities for teens
- Providing adult recreation programs

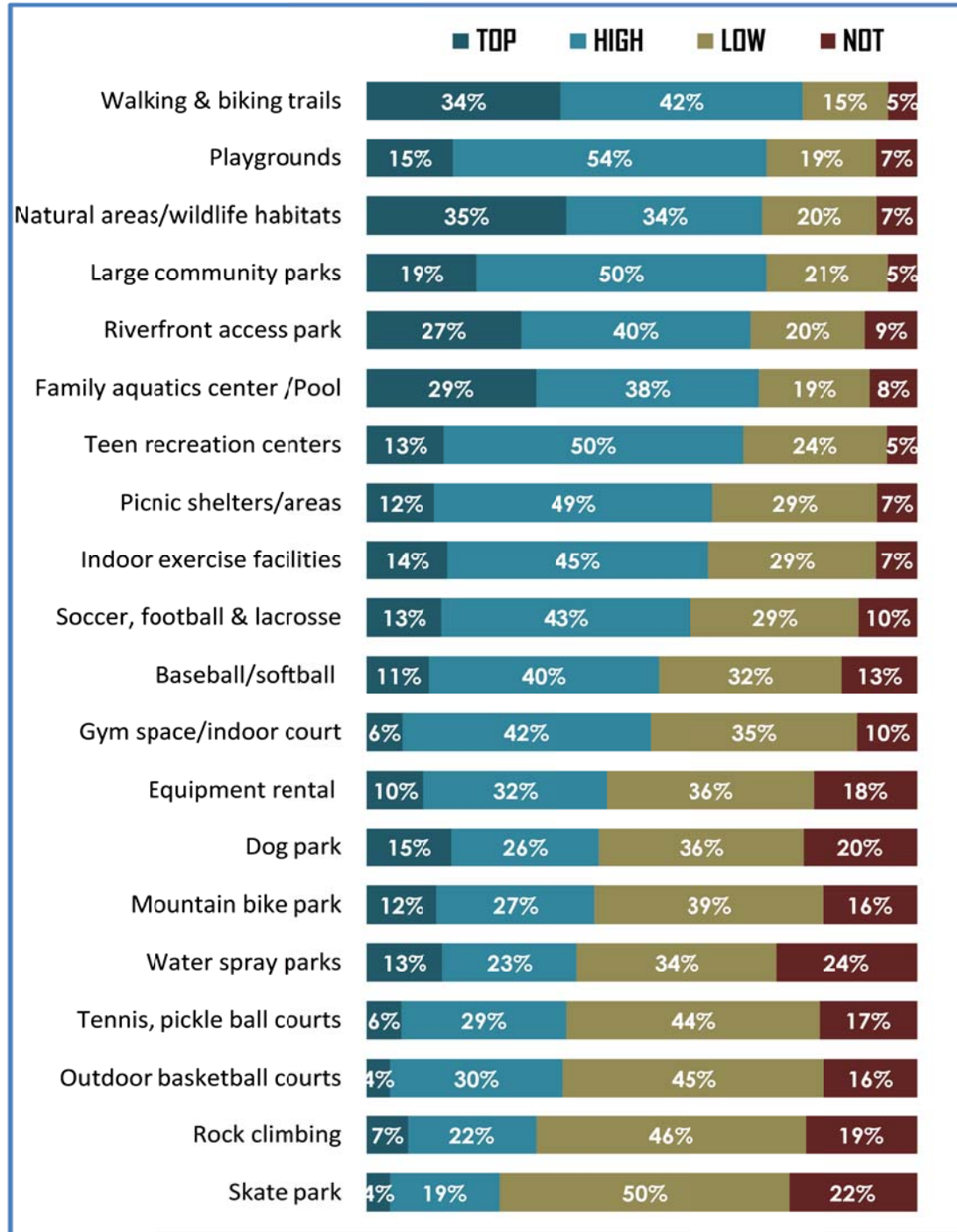
Respondents were asked to give a letter grade "like they do in school" to 10 functions performed by SVMPD.

- For each of the 10 functions, majorities gave an "A" or "B" grade.
- The overall "grade point average" was 3.16 ("B").
- The highest grades were given by the heaviest users, majorities of whom gave an "A" or "B" to every function. Among heavy users, the range was from
  - 96% giving an "A" or "B" for cleanliness & maintenance, to
  - 58% giving an "A" or "B" for providing activities for teens.



Recreation Priorities

Priorities for future development



Q4: Si View Parks is planning for future park and recreation services. As I read the following list of potential facilities, please indicate what priority you think development of that type of facility should be for Si View Parks: Not a Priority at all; a Low Priority; a High Priority; or a Top Priority.

Respondents were asked to rate 20 potential services and facilities as a "top priority" for SVMPD, a "high priority," "low priority," or "not a priority." (cont.)>

*Recreation Priorities***Priorities for future development**

The descriptions of the options were as follows:

	TOP	HIGH	LOW	NOT	DK
Walking and biking trails	34	42	15	5	3
Playgrounds	15	54	19	7	4
Natural areas and wildlife habitats	35	34	20	7	4
Large community parks	19	50	21	5	5
Park with riverfront access, including kayaking, canoeing & swimming	27	40	20	9	4
Family aquatics center with pool	29	38	19	8	6
Teen recreation centers	13	50	24	5	8
Picnic areas and shelters	12	49	29	7	4
Indoor fitness and exercise facilities	14	45	29	7	5
Sport fields for soccer, football & lacrosse	13	43	29	10	6
Sport fields for baseball/softball	11	40	32	13	5
Gym space/indoor court	6	42	35	10	7
Outdoor recreation equipment rental such as bikes, kayaks, paddleboards, and so on	10	32	36	18	5
Dog park	15	26	36	20	4
Mountain bike park	12	27	39	16	5
Outdoor water spray parks	13	23	34	24	6
Tennis and pickle ball courts	6	29	44	17	4
Outdoor basketball courts	4	30	45	16	5
Rock climbing	7	22	46	19	6
Skate park	4	19	50	22	5

This exercise allows people to indicate the importance of each item in the absence of other considerations. Rating the items one by one allows respondents to assign a "top" or "high" priority to any number of the items. In this case, majorities rated 11 of the 20 items were rated as a "high" or "top" priority.

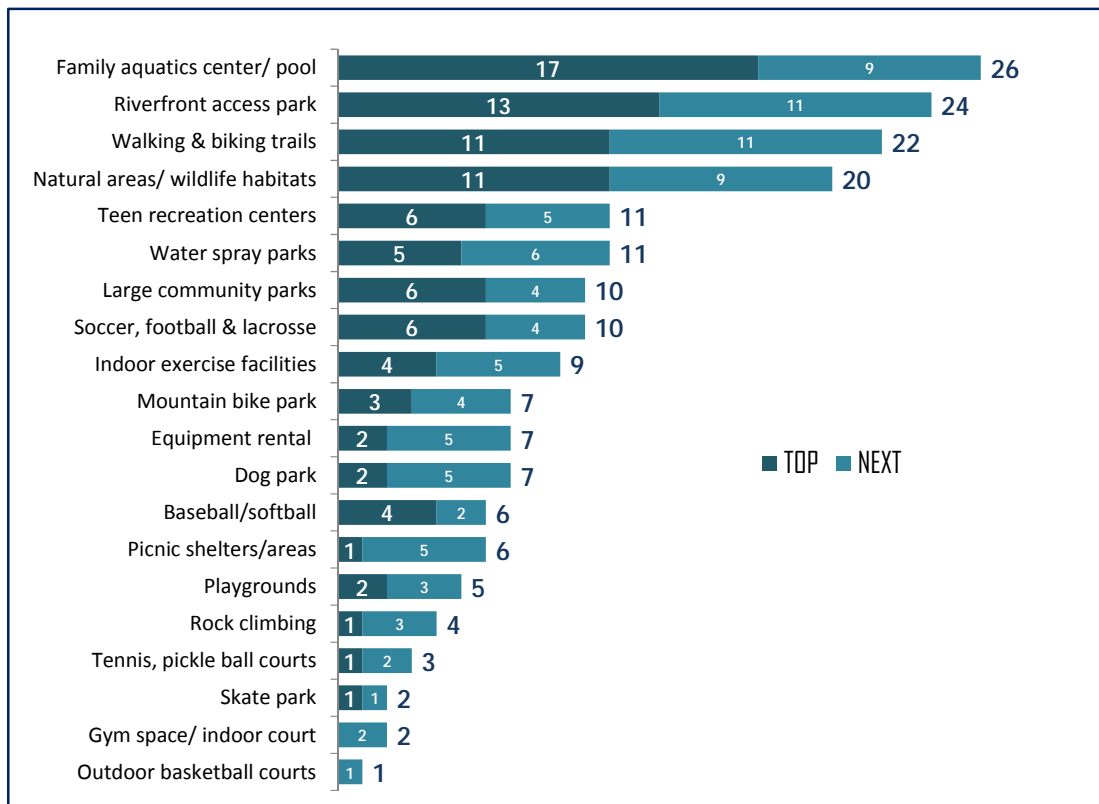
Four were rated a "top priority" by at least 1 in 4 respondents:

- Natural areas and wildlife habitats (35%);
- Walking and biking trails (34%);
- Family aquatics center with pool (29%); and
- Park with riverfront access (27%).



Recreation Priorities

"Top Priorities"



Q5: Of the facilities we have talked about, which one do you think should be the highest priority for Si View to develop?

5.1. What should be the next highest priority?

Respondents were asked to name their "highest priority" from the list of 20 projects, and then their "next highest priority." This forces people to choose, thus providing a measure of the desirability of the items in relation to all the other items on the list.

The same 4 items separated themselves from the list, but in different order:

- Family aquatics center with pool (26% named it #1 or #2);
- Park with riverfront access (24%);
- Walking and biking trails (22%);
- Natural areas and wildlife habitats (20%).

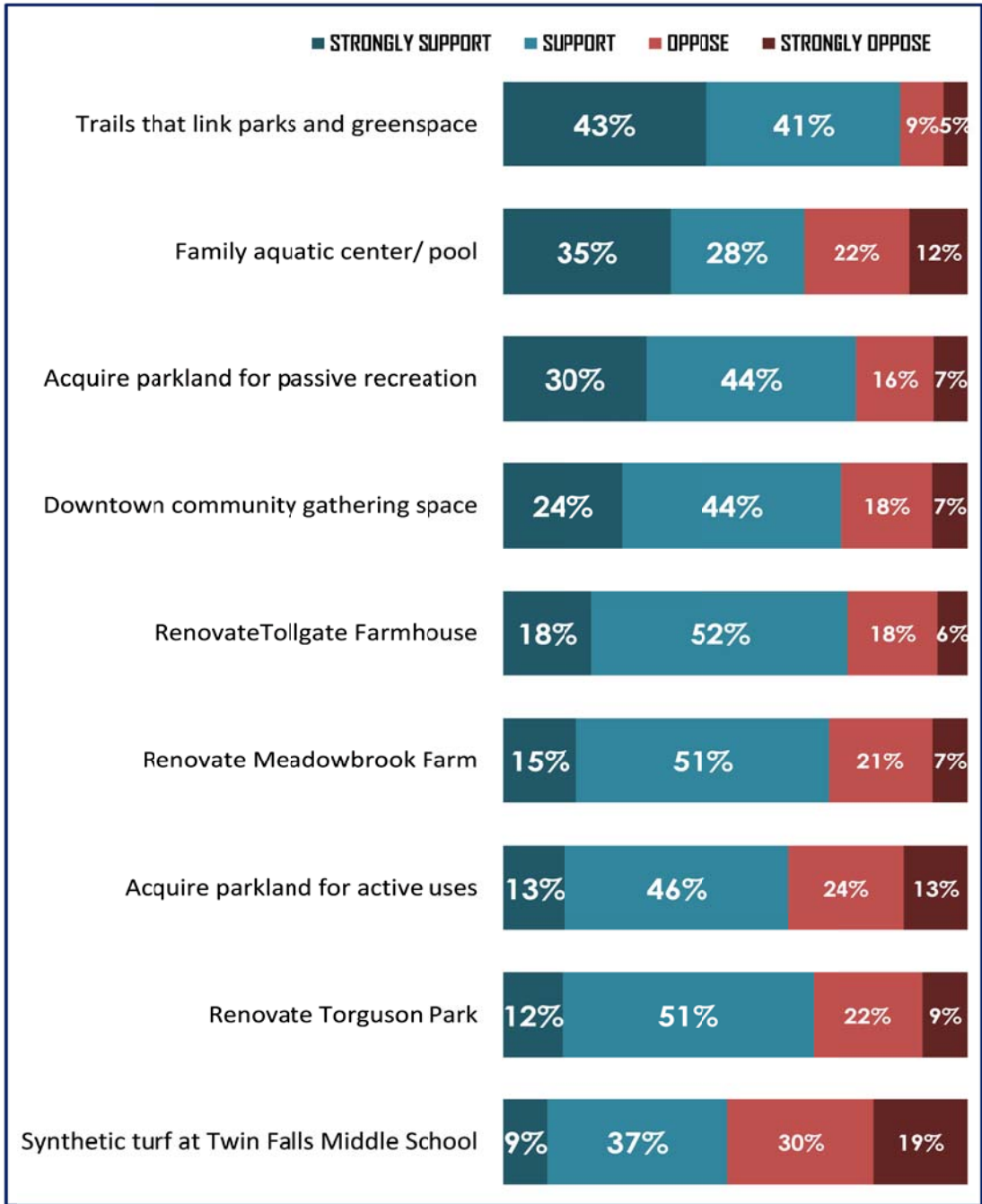
The combination of this rating and ranking indicates that these 4 facilities are the highest priorities for respondents. Other facilities certainly have their constituencies, but these 4 rise to the top across the community.





Support for Improvements

### Broad inclination to support improvement proposals



Q6: Next is a list of improvements and facilities under active consideration by Si View Parks. Each one would be funded by tax dollars. As I read this list, tell me whether you are inclined to Strongly Oppose, Oppose, Support, or Strongly Support that improvement.

**Respondents were reminded that improvements and facilities are supported by tax dollars and asked whether they supported or opposed nine specific improvements "under active considerations" by SVMPD. The results are discussed on the following page.**



## Support for improvements

The real test of support for facilities or improvements is willingness to pay for them. While these questions did not ask directly whether respondents were willing to pay higher taxes to support certain improvements, the implication was clear.

- Majorities expressed support for 8 of the 9 proposals tested.
  - The only exception was synthetic turf at Twin Falls Middle School, which was supported by 46% and opposed by 49%.
  - The strongest support was for connecting trails between parks and greenspace, which was supported by 85%.

While that is encouraging and indicative of residents' willingness to support parks programs, it should be taken with a healthy skepticism. As before, proposals were considered one at a time so true prioritization did not occur.

As noted previously (p.4), it is prudent to consider that responses at the end points of the scale provide more actionable information than "middle-ground" answers when interpreting response to scale items.

As a way to produce a conservative estimate of potential support, we calculated the differential between "strongly support" and "oppose" plus "strongly oppose." Using this method, only 3 of the proposals have a net positive support level:

- Develop walking and biking trails that link parks and greenspace (+29%);
- Acquire parkland for passive recreation such as trail walking, picnicking (+7%);
- Develop a new family aquatic center and pool (+1%).

These are the same three proposals that top the list when total support is considered, but in a different order, owing to the level of opposition to the aquatic center.

To summarize, all but one of the proposals met with majority support. For most proposals, however, the support should be considered latent at this time. That is, respondents are *inclined* to support, but that support would need to be firmed up and mobilized. Only these three proposals had "strong support" that outweighed opposition. Given that these three proposals are rated positively by more than one measure, it seems safe to conclude that they enjoy solid community support.

- Support for the proposals generally came from respondents with children at home and those who rated SVMPD as an "excellent" value for taxes spent.
  - Those categories were consistently most likely to say they supported each of the 9 proposals.
  - Opposition was primarily related to age, with older respondents more likely than younger ones to say they opposed the proposals.
  - The table on the following page indicates the highest levels of support and opposition to each proposal. The support levels are total support ("Support" plus "Strongly Support").



*Support for Improvements*

**Support for Proposals in Order of Net Support**

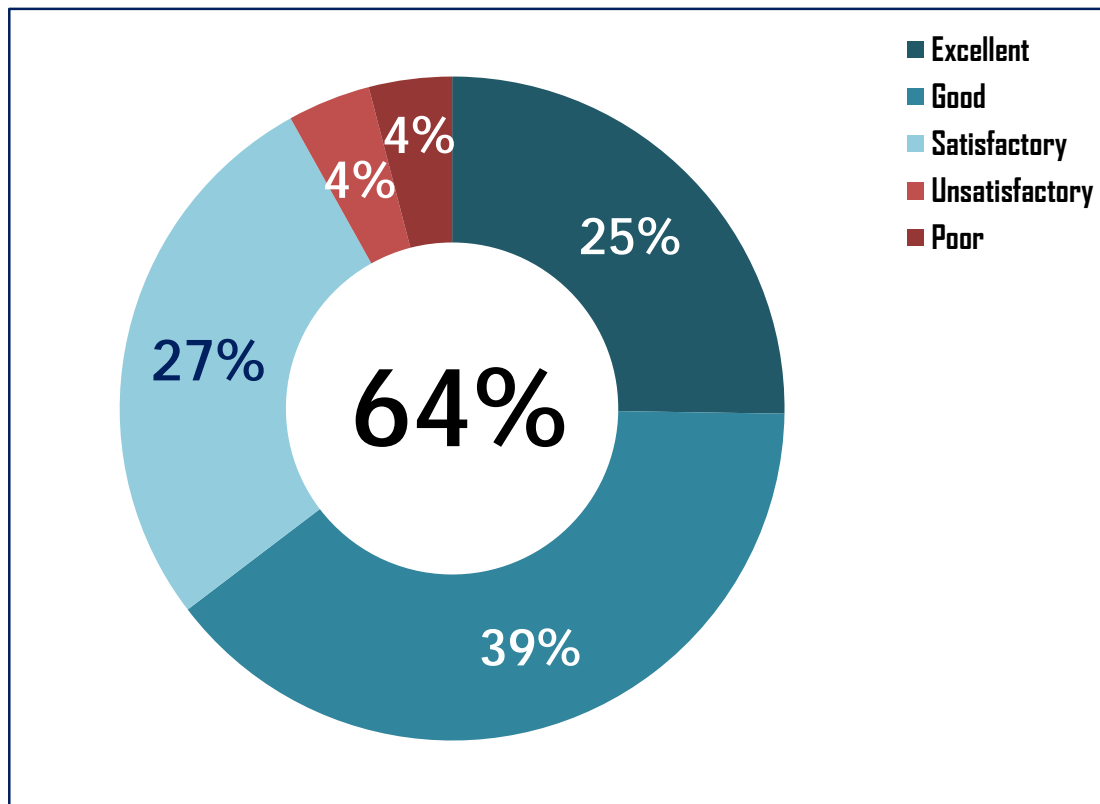
	STRONG SUPPORT	OPPOSE	STRONG	DIFF	
<b>Trails that link parks and greenspace</b>	43%	41%	9%	5%	<b>+29%</b>
<b>Acquire parkland for passive recreation</b>	30%	44%	16%	7%	<b>+7%</b>
<b>Family aquatic center/ pool</b>	35%	28%	22%	12%	<b>+1%</b>
<b>Downtown community gathering space</b>	24%	44%	18%	7%	<b>-1%</b>
<b>Renovate Tollgate Farmhouse</b>	18%	52%	18%	6%	<b>-6%</b>
<b>Renovate Meadowbrook Farm</b>	15%	51%	21%	7%	<b>-13%</b>
<b>Renovate Torguson Park</b>	12%	51%	22%	9%	<b>-19%</b>
<b>Acquire parkland for active uses</b>	13%	46%	24%	13%	<b>-24%</b>
<b>Synthetic turf at Twin Falls Middle School</b>	9%	37%	30%	19%	<b>-40%</b>

HIGHEST LEVELS OF	SUPPORT	OPPOSITION
Trails Linking Parks	Rate MPD Excellent (95%) Families w Children (92%)	Rises with age: from 4% under 35 to 24% over 65
Passive parkland	Rate MPD Excellent (83%) Families w Children (77%)	Over age 65 (36%)
Aquatics Center	Women (82%) Families w Children (78%) Rate MPD Excellent (71%)	Men (42%) Over age 50 (41%)
Community Gathering Space	Families w Children (81%) Rate MPD Excellent (81%)	Age 51-64 (36%) Rate MPD Unsatis. (32%)
Tollgate Farmhouse	Rate MPD Excellent (81%) Families w Children (74%) Women (74%)	Age 51-64 (33%) Rate MPD Unsatis. (30%)
Meadowbrook Farm	Rate MPD Excellent (81%) Families w children (74%)	Over age 50 (32%)
Torguson Park	Rate MPD Excellent (75%) Families w Children (72%)	Rises with age: from 23% under 35 to 38% over 65
Sports Fields	Rate MPD Excellent (74%) Families w Children (66%)	Age 51-64 (44%)
Synthetic Turf	Rate MPD Excellent (62%) Families w Children (57%)	Over age 50 (55%)



Value of Si View Parks

## 2/3 Rate Value of SVMPPD as "Excellent" or "Good"



Q7: Finally, as you may know, the Si View Metropolitan Park District is a public agency supported by local tax dollars. Overall, how would you rate the value your household receives from Si View Parks? Would you say the value is...

**At the end of the interview, respondents were asked to rate the value they received from Si View Parks for their tax dollars.**

- **91% rated the value of SVMPPD as "Satisfactory" or better, including**
  - 25% who said "Excellent" and
  - 39% who rated the value as "Good"
- **As seen on the previous page, these value ratings were strongly related to support for improvements proposals. Those who rated the value as "excellent" were consistently among the most likely to support proposals improvements and new facilities.**
  - This indicates that there exists a reservoir of trust for the District to draw on as it presents its plans for future development.



# DISCUSSION

As it plans for the future of recreation in the Snoqualmie Valley, the Si View Metropolitan Park District will be working with a long list of aspirations and a reservoir of community support.

Si View parks and facilities are well-used and highly appreciated by District residents. Nearly every household had visited at least one facility and most had visited more than one in the last year. The District received high marks for its performance across a range of functions, with the highest marks coming from the most frequent users – those most familiar with the facilities, services and programs.

This high level of usage and performance evaluation extends to perceived community value: 9 in 10 respondents rated the value they received from SVMPD for their tax dollars as "satisfactory" or better, including 2 in 3 who rated the value as "excellent" (25%) or "good" (39%).

The community is broadly in favor of expanding and developing recreation opportunities and generally inclined to fund future development. Majorities of respondents rated 11 of 20 "potential facilities" as "top" or "high" priorities for the district as it plans for future park and recreation services.

Owing to past performance and perceived value, most respondents were inclined to support 8 of 9 proposed improvements – after being reminded that these would need to be paid for with their tax dollars.

Of course, it is easier to express support in a survey than to actually vote for a tax increase. Caution is therefore advised in the interpretation of these results. Nevertheless, these results indicate that the District is in a favorable position to engage with the community about the development of recreational opportunities, services and facilities – including how to fund that development.

