

2012 Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation Survey



Gwinnett County Department of Community Services
Parks and Recreation Project Administration
75 Langley Drive
Lawrenceville, Georgia 30046

Conducted by:

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**A.L. Burruss Institute of
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Introduction

In the summer of 2012, the Gwinnett County Department of Community Services contracted with the A.L. Burruss Institute of Public Service and Research at Kennesaw State University to conduct a survey of Gwinnett County adult residents to obtain information about their usage of the county's park and recreation facilities and their opinions on a number of issues related to future development of the park system. The Institute implemented a dual mode survey approach for this project. The Institute surveyed 873 randomly selected adults with landline telephones and 245 adults who rely primarily on cellphones for their telephone needs. The surveys were conducted between July and early September of 2012. After data collection was completed, the data was weighted by survey mode (landline vs. cellphone), age, gender, race, education and ethnicity (Hispanic/non-Hispanic) to ensure that the sample respondents match Gwinnett adults as closely as possible on these key demographic characteristics. The margin of error for county-wide results is $\pm 3\%$ at the 95% confidence interval.

The survey results indicate that the vast majority of Gwinnett county adults utilize the county park system. Most respondents seem to be satisfied with the level of park services available to them in the areas where they live. Respondents of all ages indicated their favorite activity at the local parks is *walking*; many respondents also visit the parks for the purpose of allowing children to utilize park facilities.

A substantial majority of respondents indicated they would prefer the county renovate and improve existing park facilities rather than build new park facilities. Respondents living in southwest Gwinnett are more likely than respondents in most other areas of the county to want new facilities, however.

Gwinnett residents seem to be very receptive to the possible extension of the SPLOST tax for parkland acquisition and park development in 2013. Over two-thirds of the respondents indicated they would approve of an extension of SPLOST if the county puts such a referendum on the ballot in 2013.

Are More Recreational Facilities Needed?

The respondents were asked if, in their opinion, there are enough recreational facilities in their areas, or if more are needed. *Figure A* reveals slightly more than one-in-five adults in Gwinnett County believe more recreational facilities are needed in their area.

Figure B, which portrays the percentage of respondents in each Gwinnett county zip code who said their area needs more park facilities, reveals that residents in the southwest part of the county are more likely to think their area needs more facilities. Over thirty percent of the respondents in zip code 30071, and over 40% of the respondents in zip code 30093, believe more facilities are needed in their areas.

For the most part, residents across the northern stretches of Gwinnett County are less likely to think their areas need more facilities. One notable exception to this is those living in the far northwest corner of the county (zip code 30518).

Respondents who said their areas need more recreational facilities were asked what types of recreational services they would like have in their areas. *Figure C* provides a summary of their responses to this question.

Figure A: Are there enough recreational facilities in area, or are more needed?

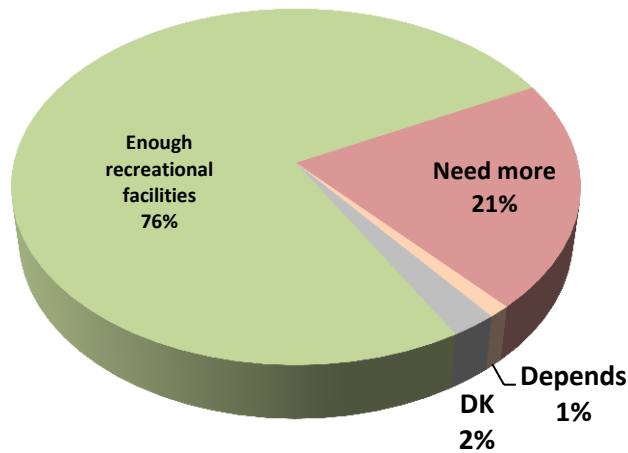
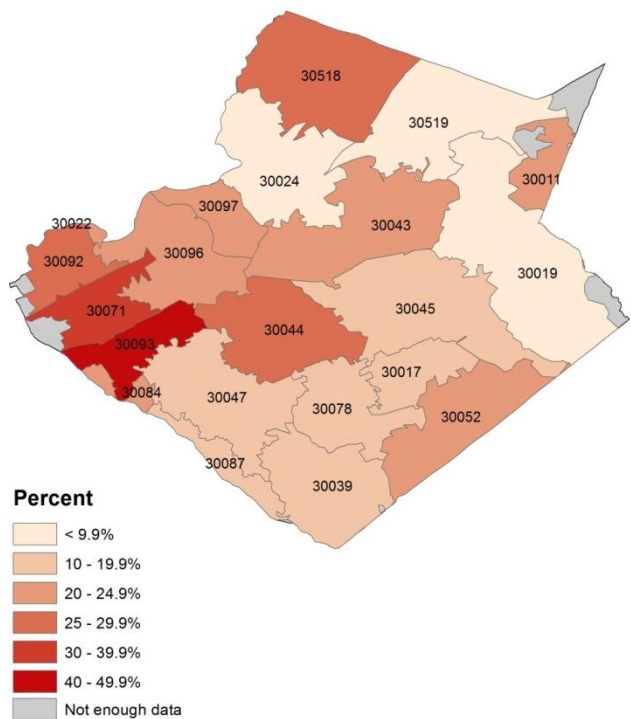
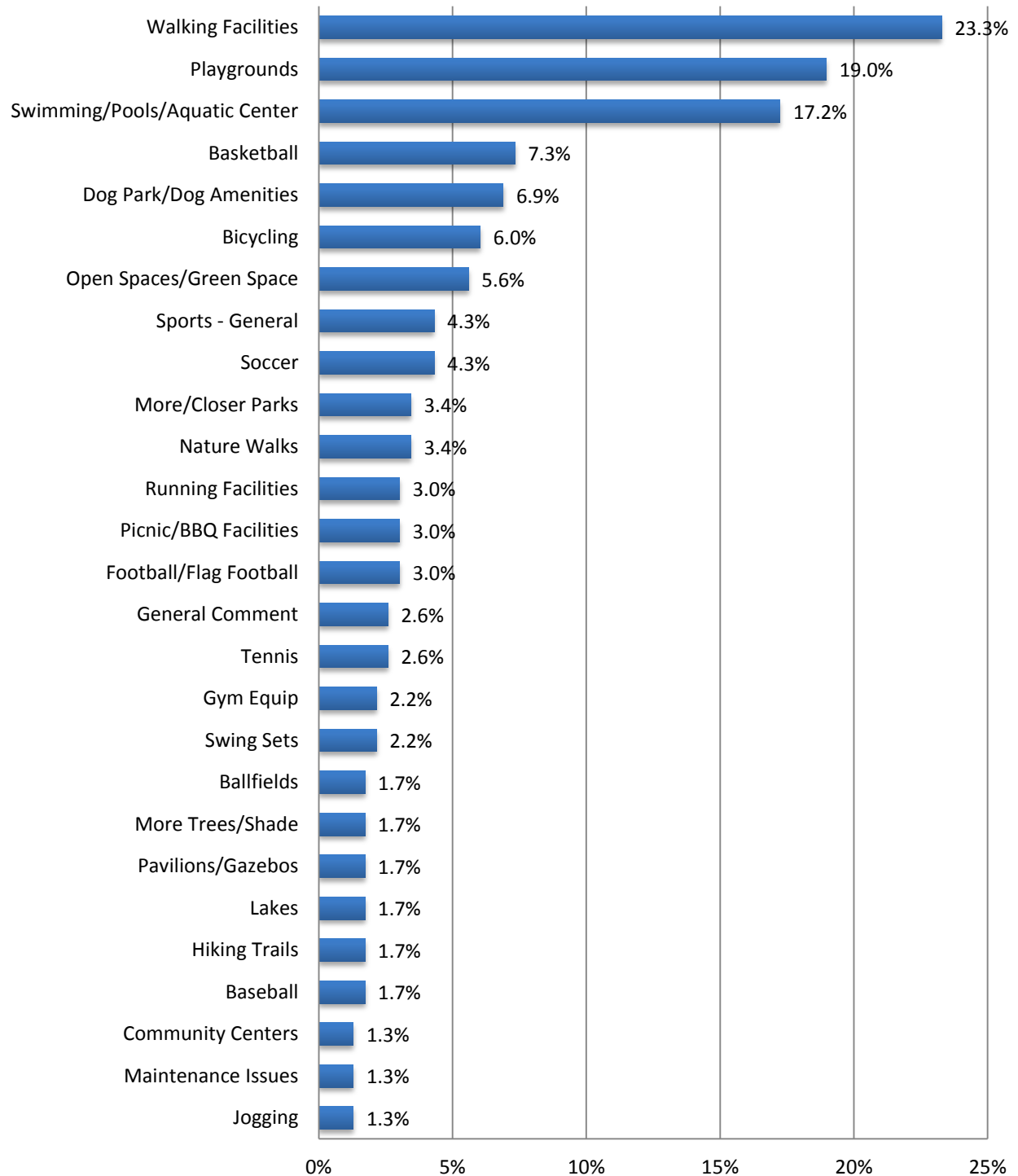


Figure B: Percent who believe their area needs more recreation facilities



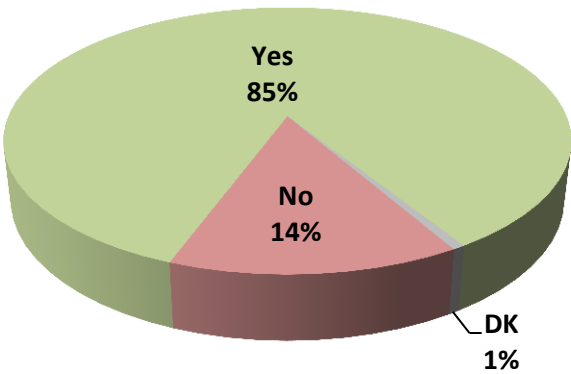
**Figure C: What Types of Recreational Resources Would Respondents
Like to See In Their Areas?
(For Those Who Said Their Area Needs More Recreational Facilities)**



Use of County Park Facilities

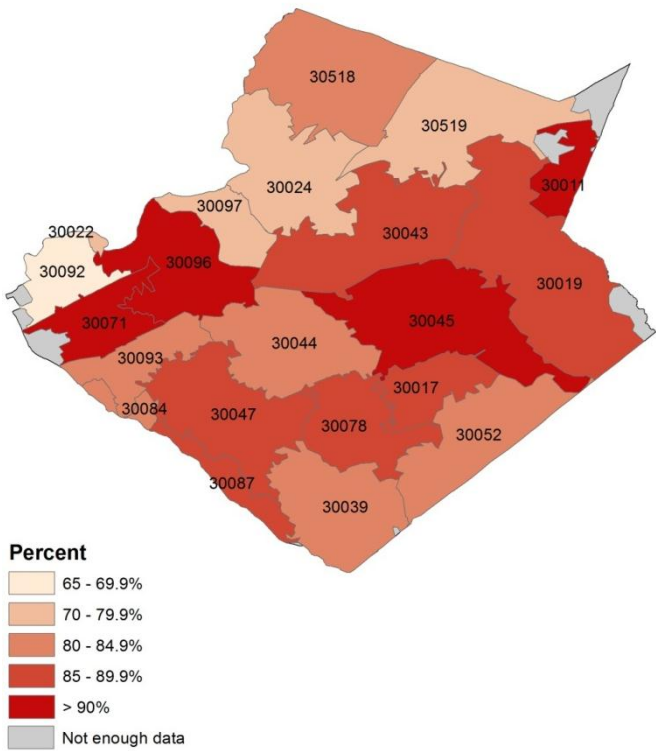
When asked if they have used a county operated recreational facility in the past year, 85% of the Gwinnett county adults responded affirmatively.

Figure D: Has Respondent Used County Recreational Facility in Past Year?



High levels of usage are prevalent across all areas of the county, although there is some variation (see *Figure E*). The lowest incidence of park usage is in the far southwestern part of the county (zip code 30092), where approximately two-thirds of the respondents indicated they have used a county facility in the past year. Interestingly, the highest levels of usage (over 90%) can be found in two adjacent zip codes (30071 and 30096) and in one area in the center of the county (zip code 30045).

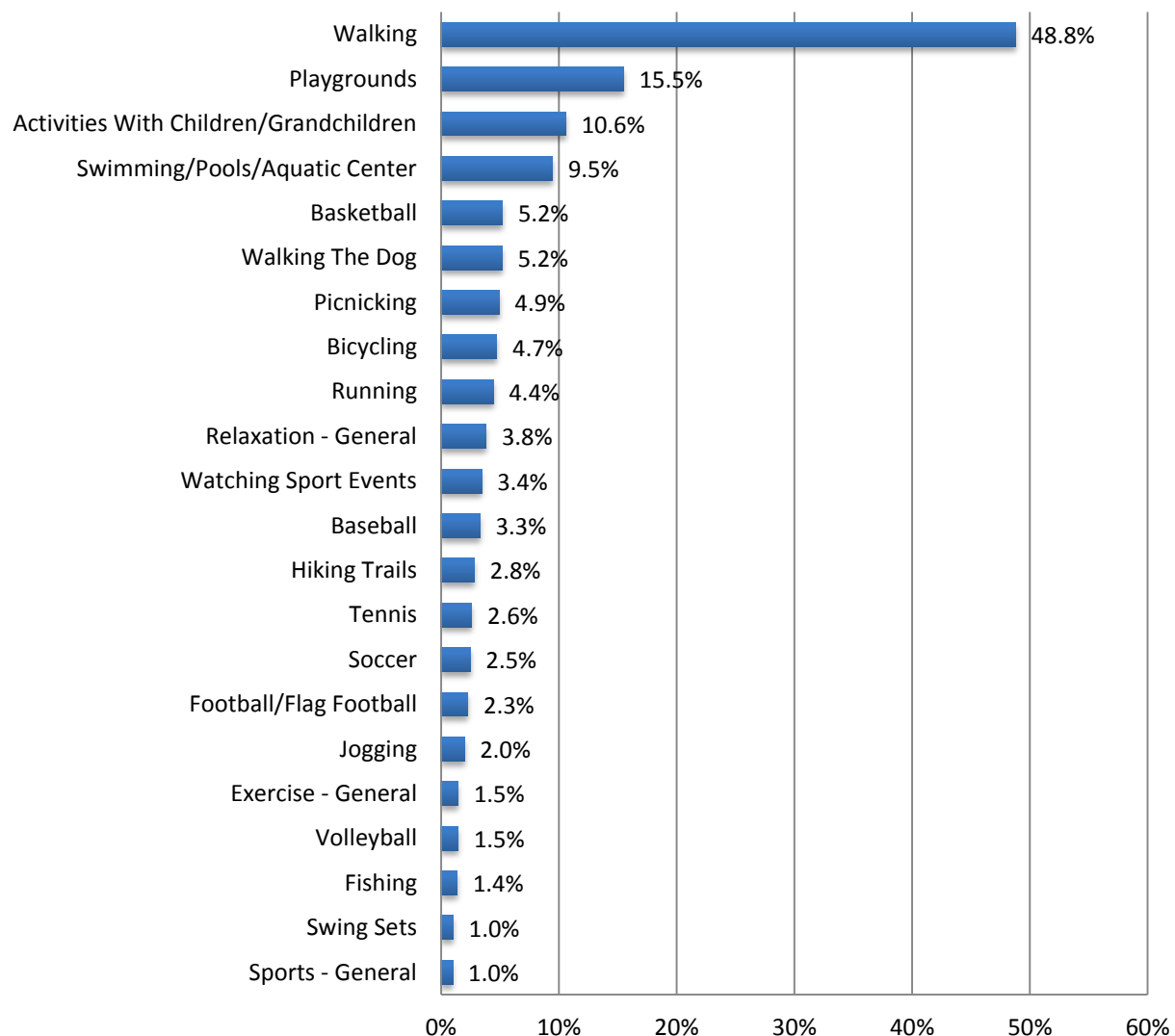
Figure E: Percent who have used county facility in the past year



Most Frequent Recreational Activities

When asked what activities they most often engage in at a county recreational facility, almost one-half (48.8%) of the respondents who have used a county park in the past year mentioned *walking* (see Figure F).

Figure F: Respondents' Most Frequent Recreational Activities at County Facility
(Pct. Mentioning Each Activity: Respondents Could Name as Many as Three Activities; Categories are Not Mutually Exclusive)



Other specific activities were mentioned by far fewer respondents, although some caution must be used when interpreting results related to activities involving a respondent's child or grandchild. The next most frequently mentioned activities, *playgrounds* (15.5%) and *activities with children or grandchildren* (10.6%), both represent instances where a respondent went to

the park for the purposes of allowing a child to engage in some type of recreational activity. However, since respondents were allowed to name as many as three activities, these categories are not mutually exclusive; that is, you can't add the percentages for the two categories to see how many unique individuals went to the park for these purposes. Suffice it to say that a significant percentage of adults visit Gwinnett county parks to allow their children to play.

Other popular activities include *swimming* (9.5%), *basketball* (5.2%), and *dog walking* (5.2%). Other activities were mentioned by less than 5% of the respondents. Activities not on the list were mentioned by less than 1% of the respondents, if at all.

Figures G - J provide a breakdown of the most frequent activities for respondents in different age groups. There is a general consistency in the results for all age groups; *walking* is by far the most popular activity for all age groups. *Activities for/with children or grandchildren* is relatively high among all age groups as well, as is *swimming*. Other activities vary by a few percentage points depending on the age group being examined.

**Figure G: Favorite Activities Among Adults
Ages 18 - 24**
(Pct. Mentioning Each Activity; Respondents Could Name as Many as Three Activities)

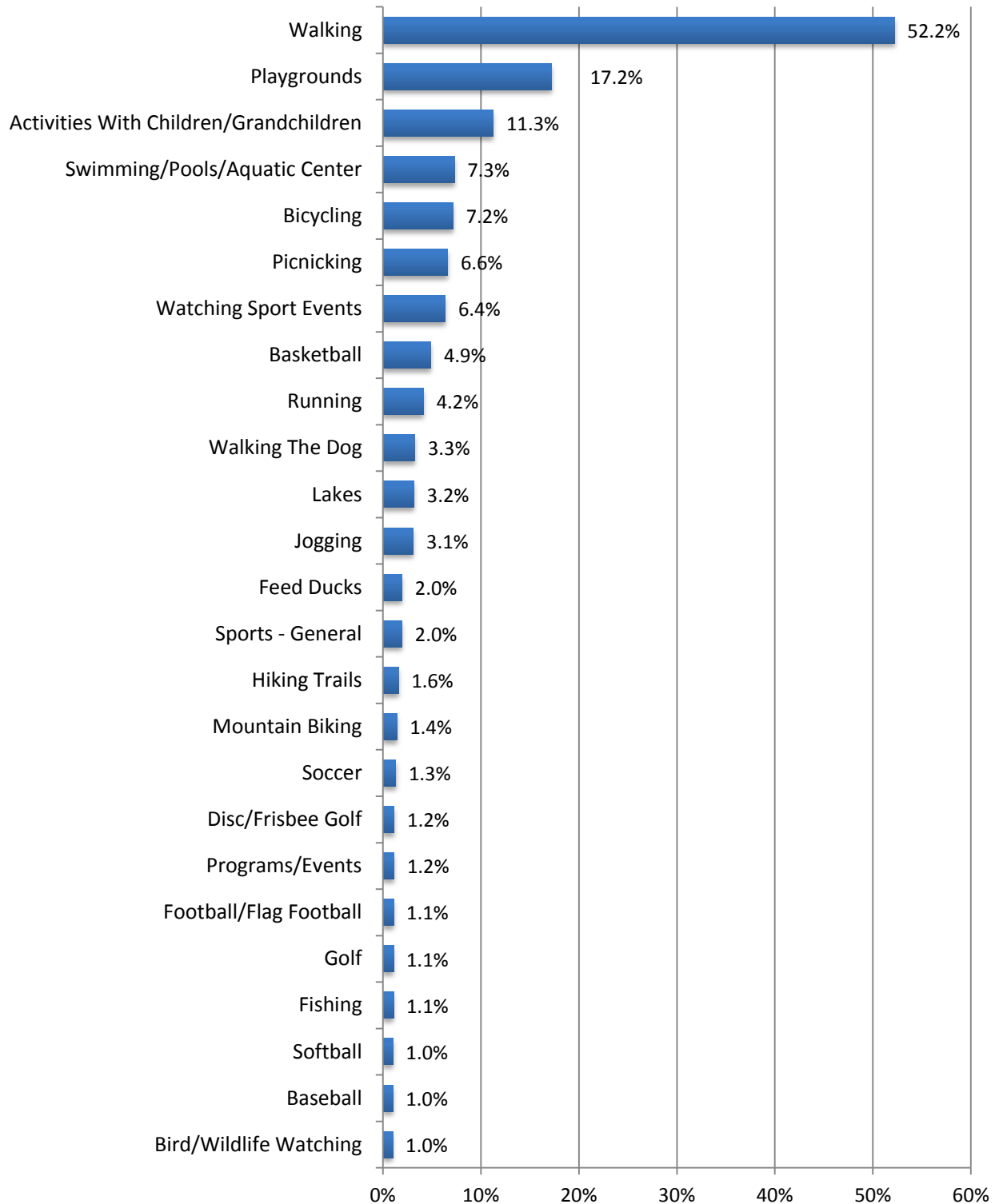


Figure H: Favorite Activities of Adults Ages 25 - 34
(Pct. Mentioning Each Activity; Respondents Could Name as Many as Three Activities)

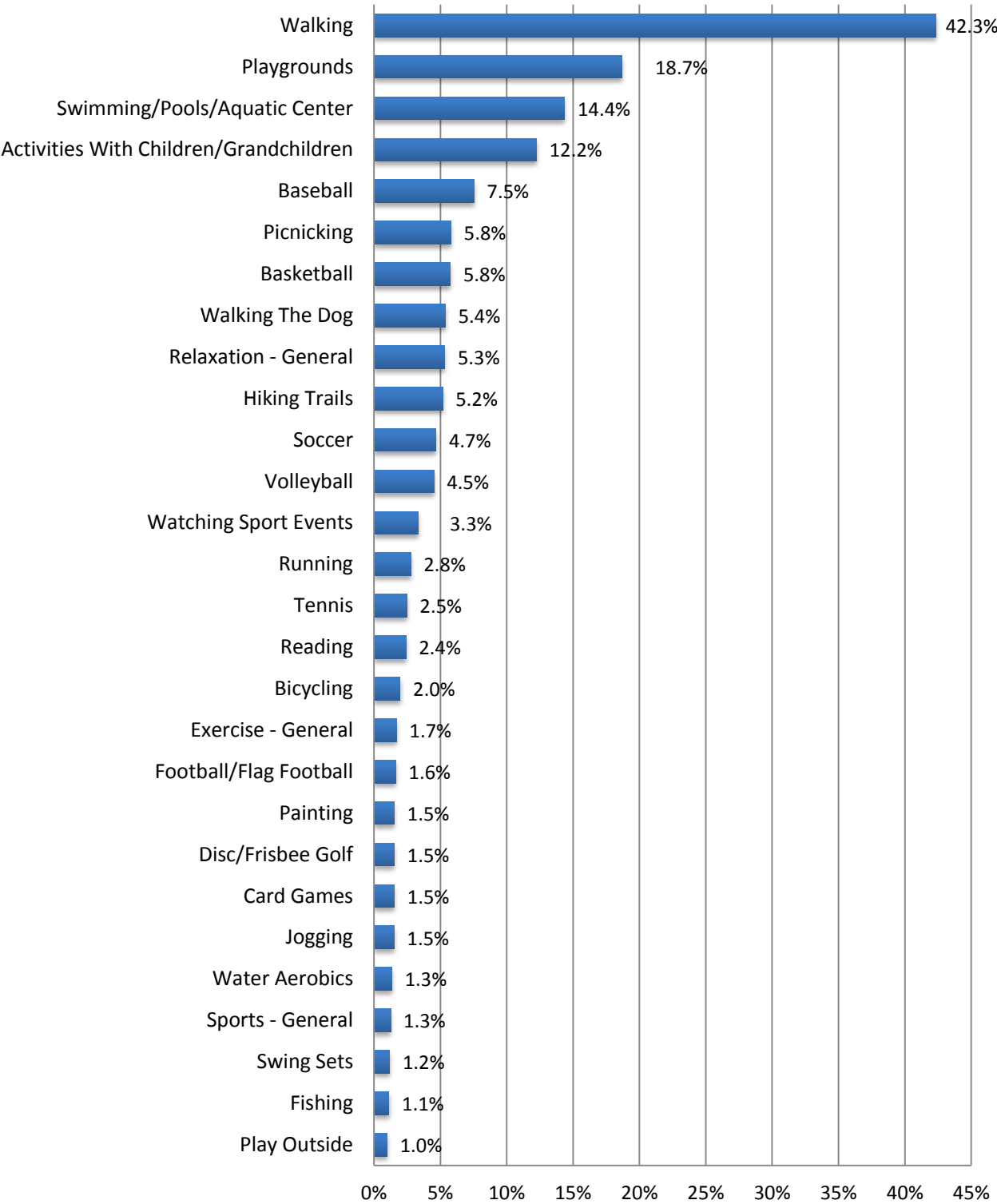
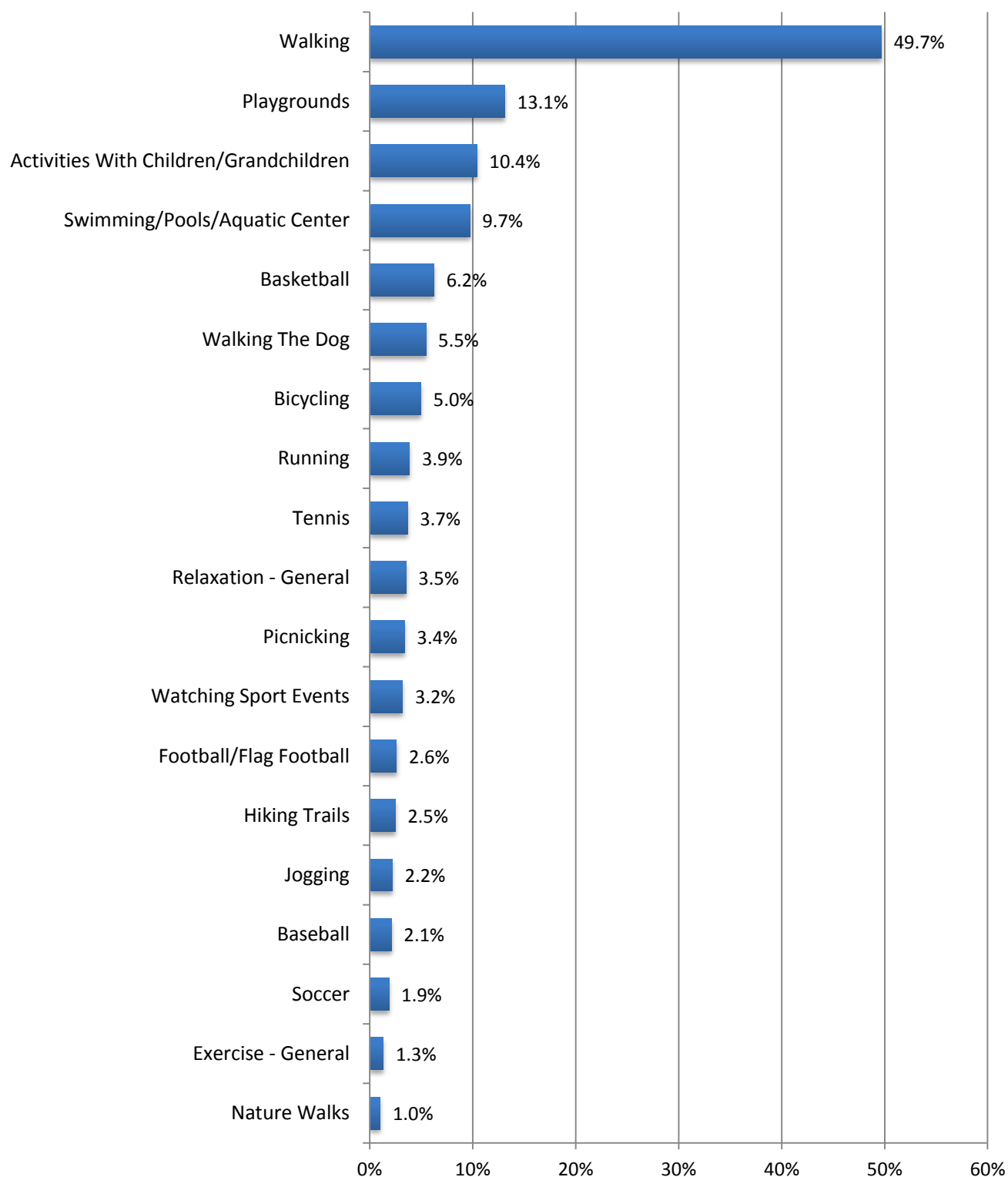
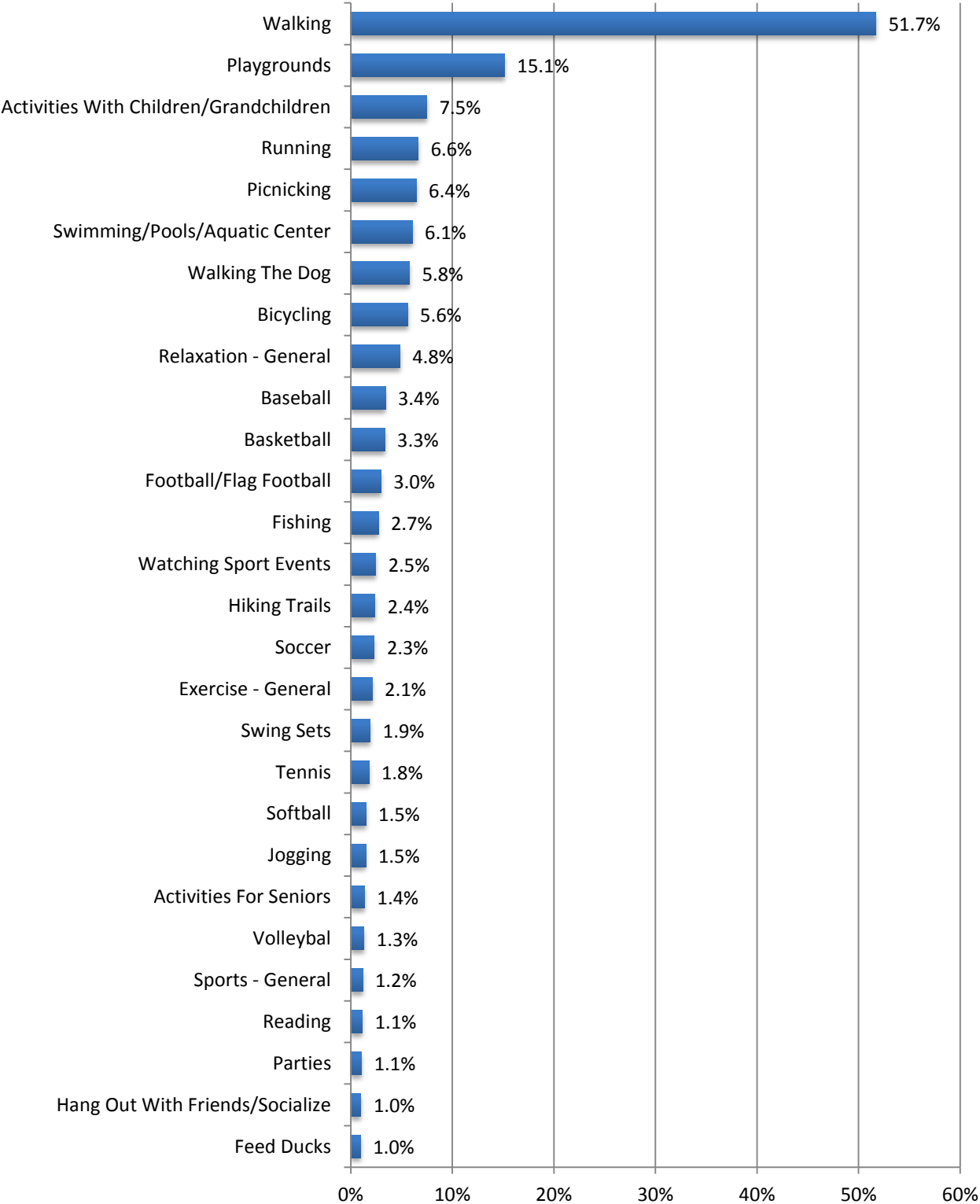


Figure I: Favorite Activities of Adults Ages 35-54
(Pct. Who Mentioned Each Activity; Respondents Could Name as Many as Three Activities)



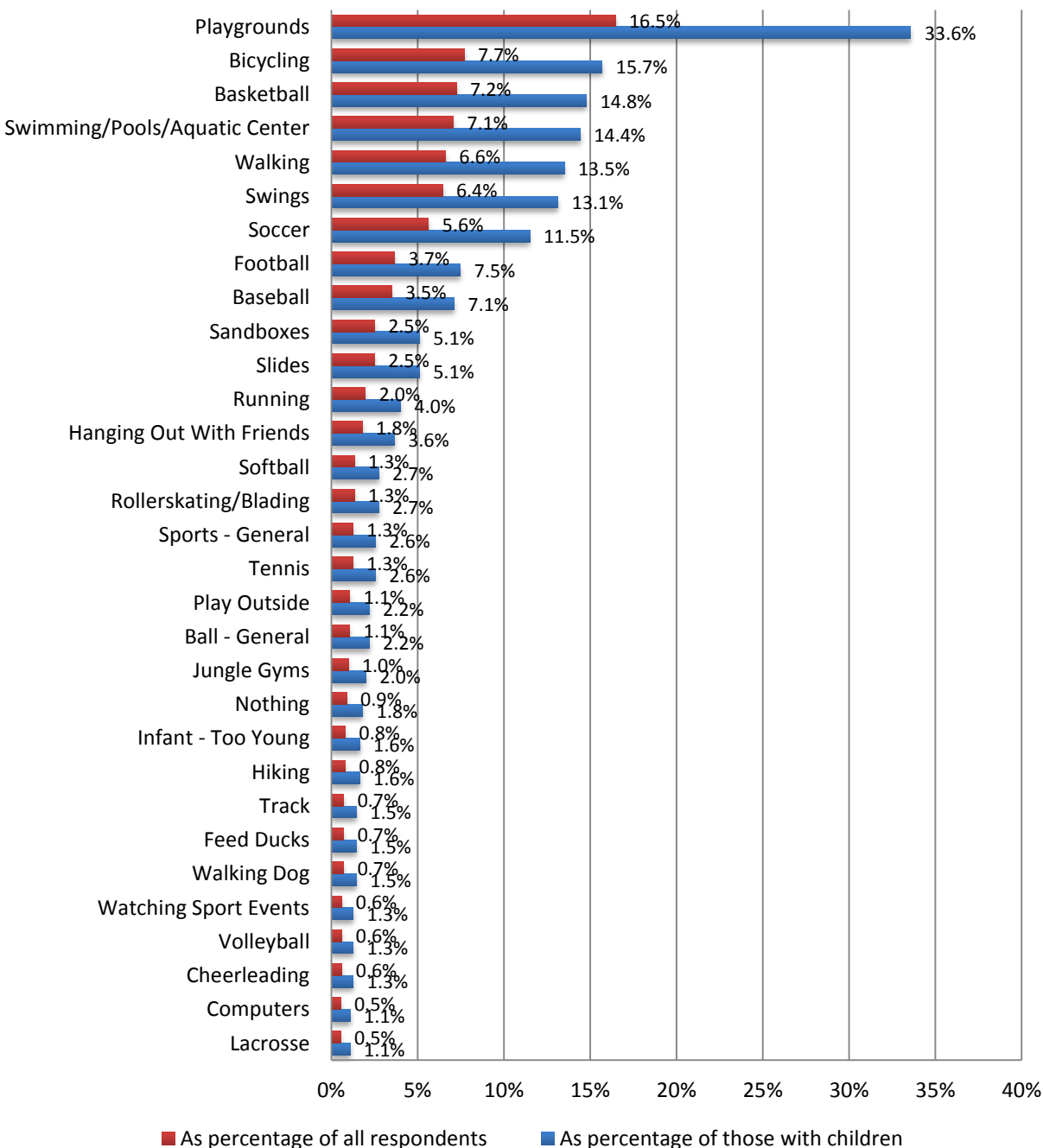
**Figure J: Favorite Activities of Adults Ages 55+
(Pct. Mentioning Each Activity; Respondents Could Mention as Many as Three Activities)**



Favorite Recreational Activities of Children

Respondents were asked if they have children of different age ranges in their households and, if so, what the favorite activities of those children are. Forty-nine percent of all respondents indicated there is at least one minor child in their home. *Figure K* provides a breakdown of the favorite recreational activities of children of all age groups combined.

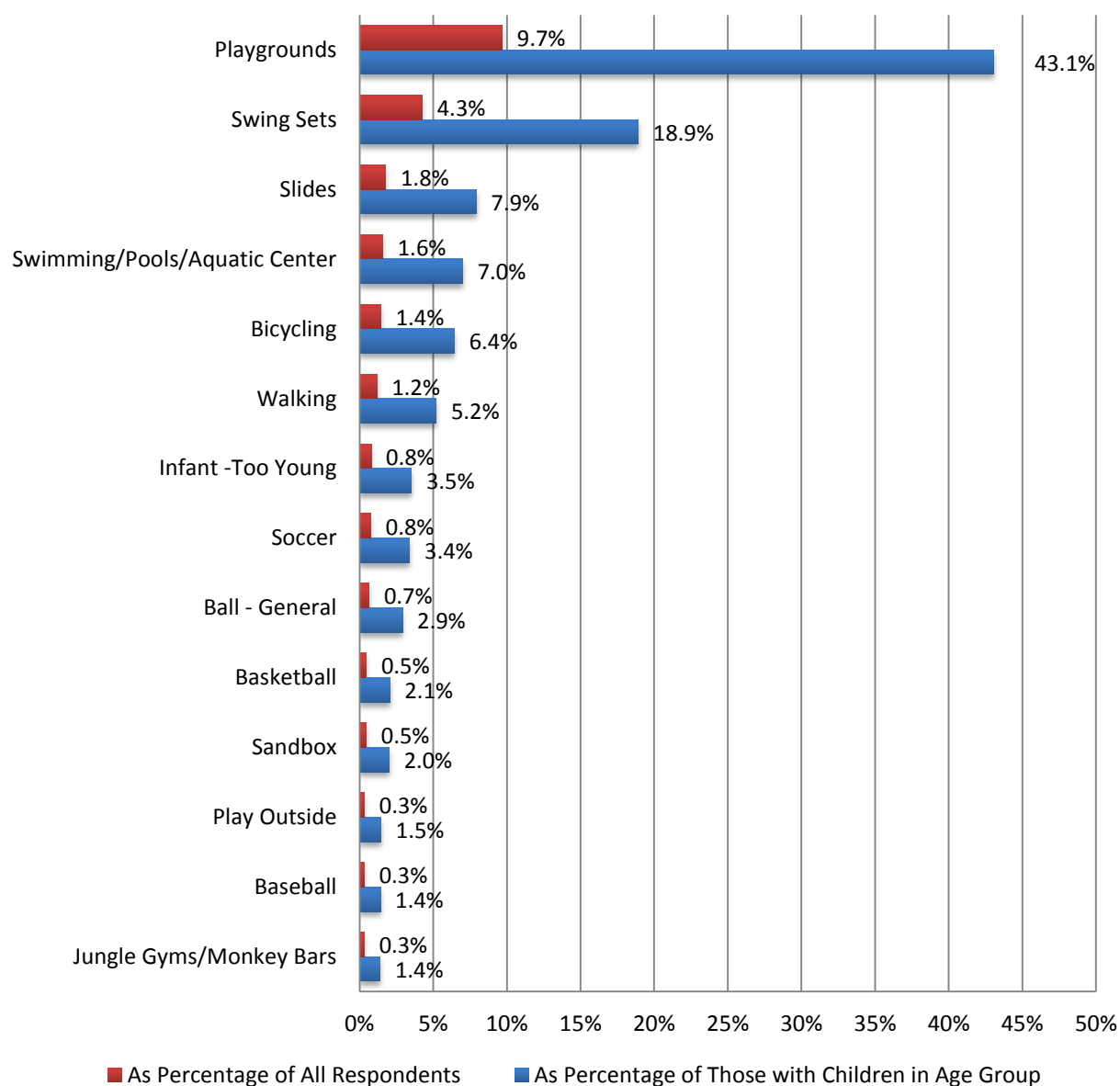
Figure K: Favorite Recreational Activities of Children



Children Under 6 Years of Age

Of those with children in their homes, 46% indicated at least one of those children are five years of age or younger. The favorite recreational activities of the respondents' children are reported in *Figure L*. Not surprisingly, parents of children in this age group mentioned *playgrounds* (43.1%) more often than any other single activity, while some parents mentioned specific playground equipment such as *swings*, *slides*, and *jungle gyms*. *Water-related recreation activities* (swimming, playing in a pool, water parks), *bicycling* and *walking* also are relatively popular among this age group.

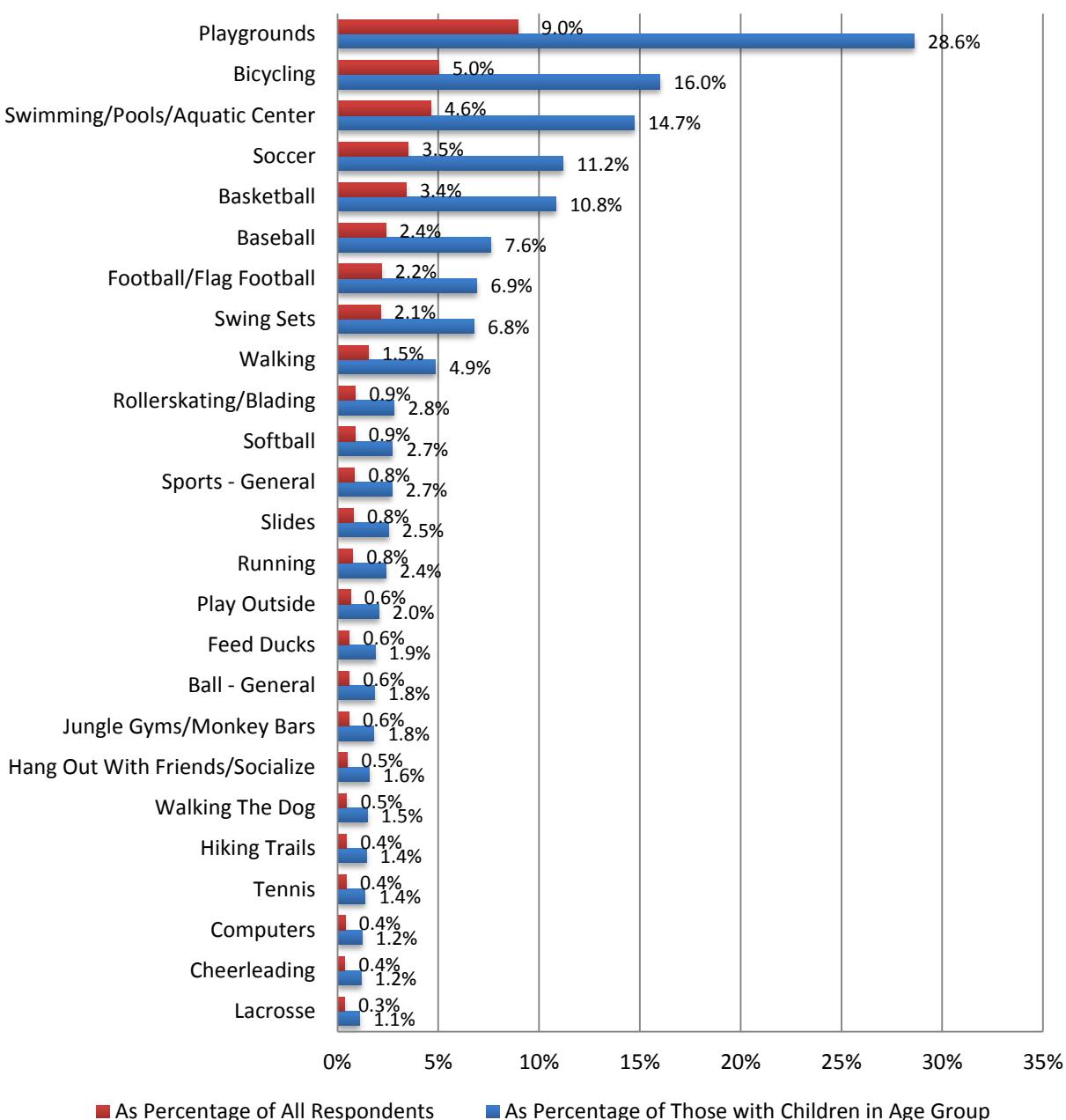
Figure L: Favorite Recreational Activities of Children Under 6 Years of Age



Children Ages 6 - 13

Of those with children in their homes, 64% said at least one of those children is between the ages of 6 and 13. The favorite recreational activities of the respondents' children in this age range are reported in *Figure M*. Once again, *playgrounds* (28.6%) were mentioned more than any other single activity. More children in this age range are involved in a broader range of activities, however. *Bicycling*, *water-related activities*, *soccer*, *basketball*, *baseball* and *football* also are relatively popular among children of this age group.

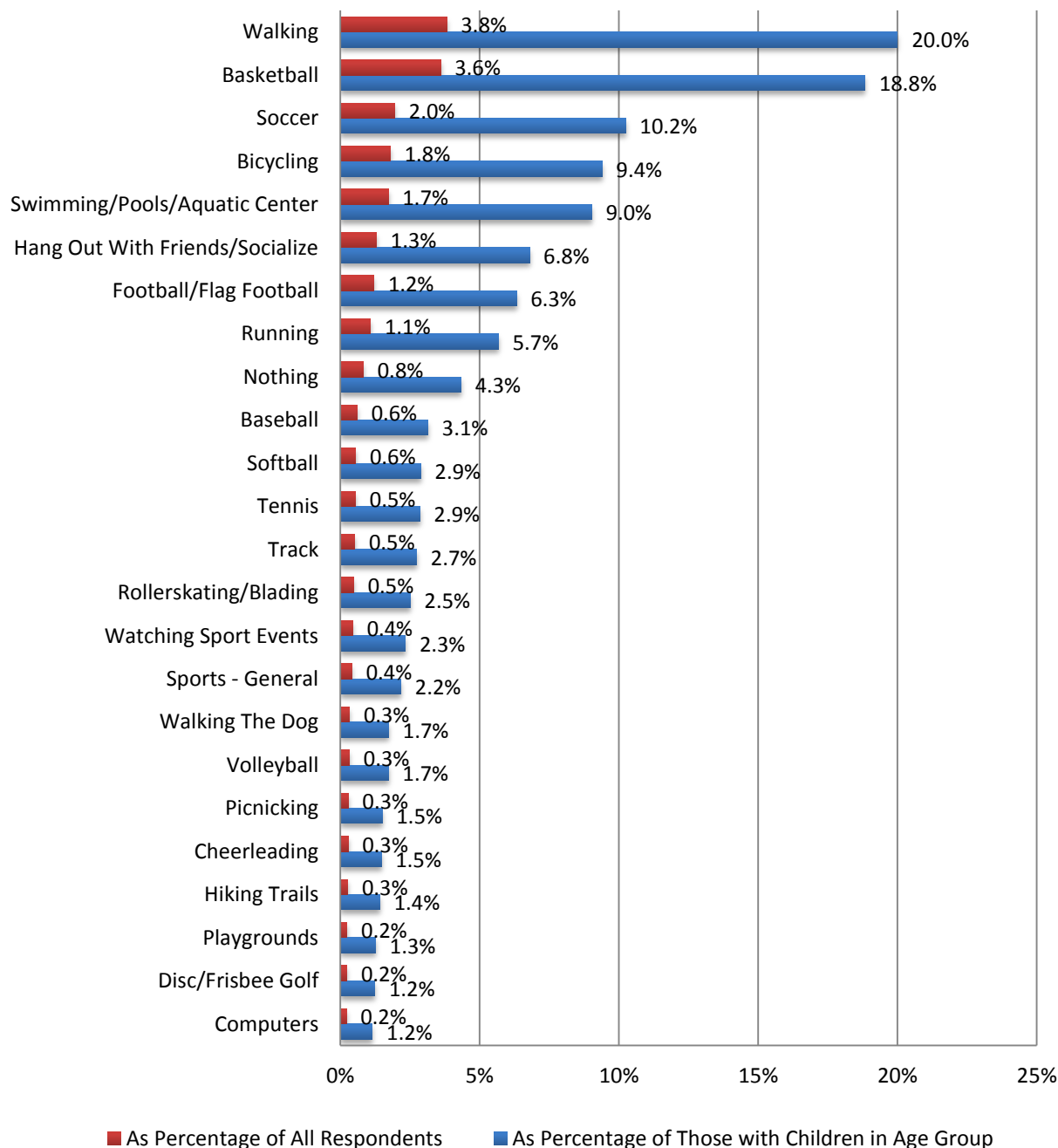
Figure M: Favorite Recreational Activities of Children Ages 6 - 13



Children Ages 14 - 17

Of those with children in their homes, 39% said at least one of those children is between the ages of 14 and 17. The favorite recreational activities of the respondents' children in this age range are reported in *Figure N*. *Walking* (20%) was mentioned more often than any other single activity. *Basketball* (18.8%), *soccer* (10.2%), *bicycling* (9.4%), and *water related activities* (9%) also are popular among this age group.

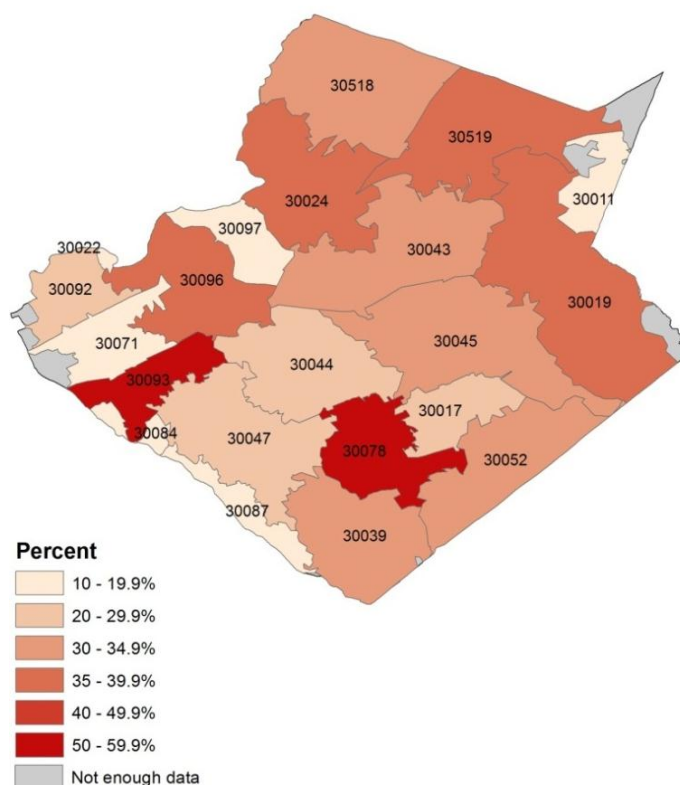
Figure N: Favorite Recreational Activities of Children Ages 14-17



Do Children Play Organized Sports?

Respondents with children in their households were asked if any of those children play organized youth sports at a Gwinnett park facility. Almost one-third (29%) of the respondents with children in their homes indicated at least one child plays an organized youth sport in Gwinnett County. *Figure O* indicates that this percentage is lower in zip code areas 30071 and 30097, located on the western side of the county, as well as in zip code area 30011 in the northeast corner of the county. Participation is particularly high (over 50%) in zip code areas 30078 and 30093.

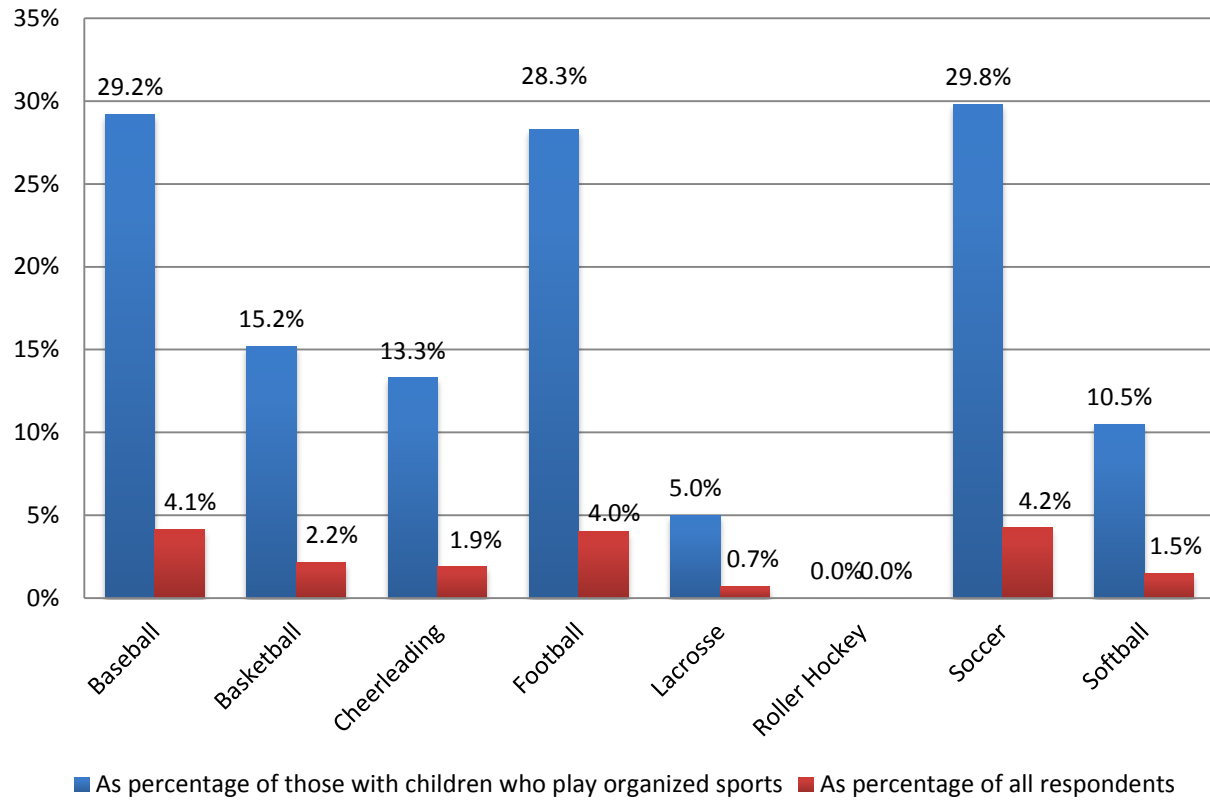
Figure O: Percent who said their children play organized sports



Which Organized Sports Do Children Play?

Respondents who indicated children in their households participate in organized youth sports in Gwinnett County were asked which sports the children play. *Soccer* (29.8%), *baseball* (29.2%) and *football* (28.3%) were mentioned most often by these respondents.

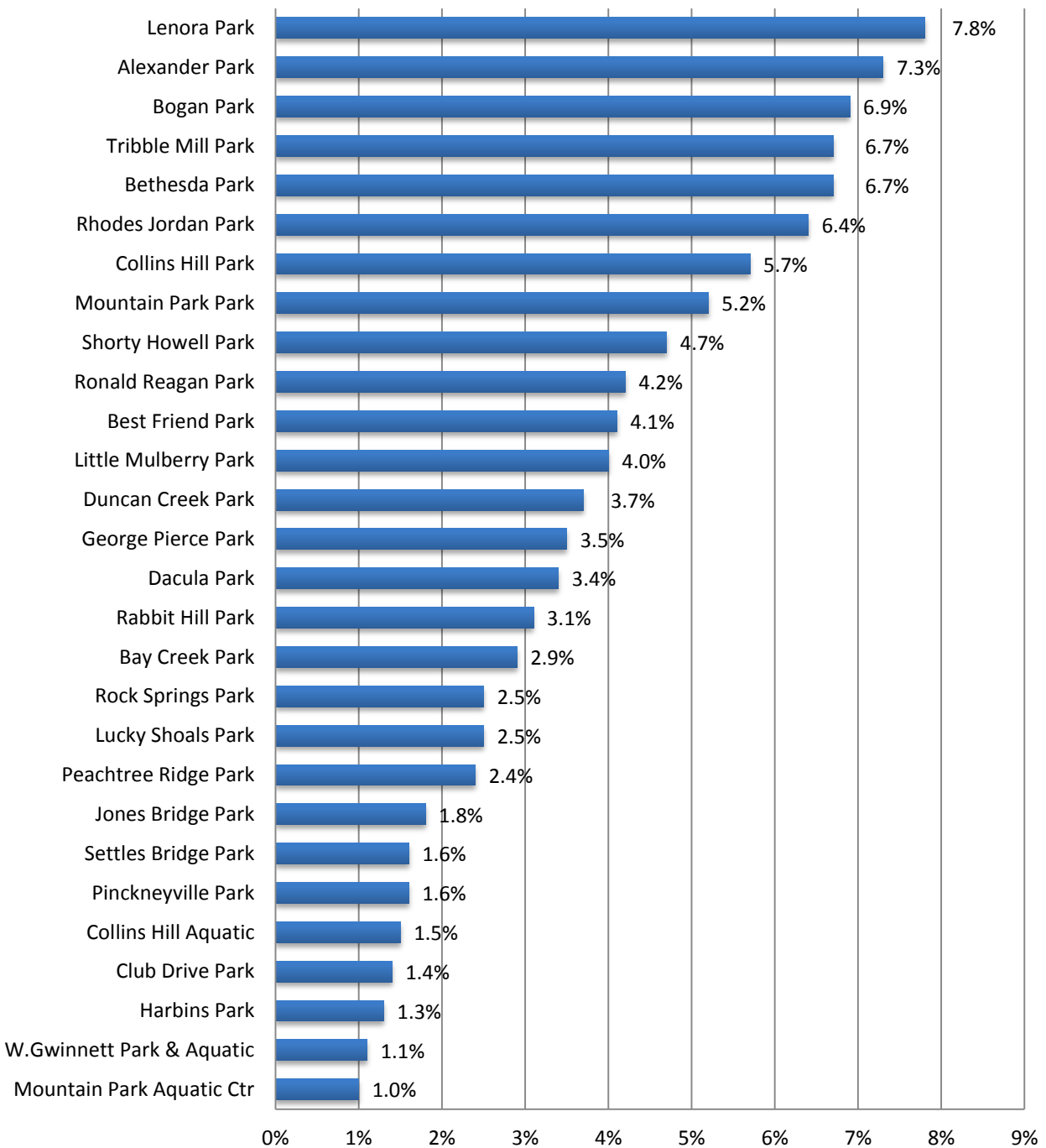
Figure P: Which Organized Sports Do Children Play?



Which County Park Does Respondent Use Most Often?

Park users were asked which county park facility they use most often. No single park was mentioned by as many as 10 percent of the users. *Lenora Park* was mentioned by the most users (7.8%), followed by *Alexander Park* (7.3%), *Bogan Park* (6.9%), *Tribble Mill* and *Bethesda* parks (6.7% each), *Rhodes Jordan Park* (6.4%), *Collins Hill Park* (5.7%) and *Mountain Park Park* (5.2%). Parks not listed in *Figure Q* were mentioned by less than 1% of the users.

Figure Q: Which Recreational Facility Does Respondent Use Most Often? - Pct. mentioning Each Facility

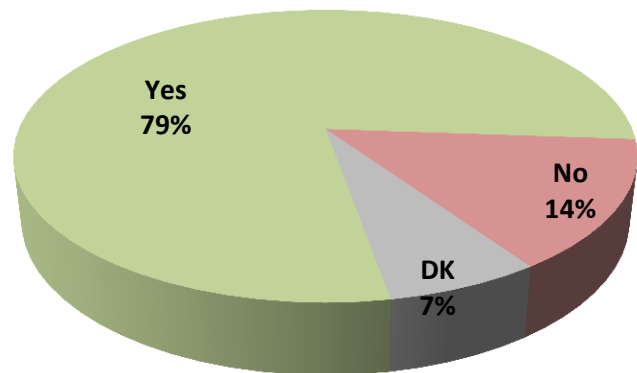


When asked how they usually travel to the park they most frequently visit, 88% of the park uses said they *drive* to the park. Fewer than ten percent (8.9%) indicated they walk to the park they use most often.

Opinions on SPLOST Revenues and Park Improvements

Special Purpose Local Option Sales Taxes (SPLOST) are frequently used by local governments to raise revenue for specific capital improvement projects. These taxes must be approved by the voters and typically expire after a specified amount of revenue has been raised, or after a certain period of time has elapsed (typically five years). Residents of Gwinnett County passed a SPLOST referendum in 2004 to raise money for parkland acquisition and other capital improvements to the parks program. The SPLOST was renewed by the voters for five years in 2008.

Figure R: Does respondent approve of SPLOST as means of generating revenue?



Respondents were asked if they support the use of this revenue tool as a way of funding improvements to the parks system. Over three out of every four Gwinnett adults (79%) indicated they do support this method of funding (See *Figure R*).

Figure S: Percent who approve of SPLOST as way of raising revenue

Support for this method of funding park improvements is generally high across the county. *Figure S* indicates support for the use of SPLOST to fund these improvements is highest in the western and southwestern parts of the county, while support for this method is lowest (but still more than 60%) in the far northeastern parts of the county, and in far southeast Gwinnett.

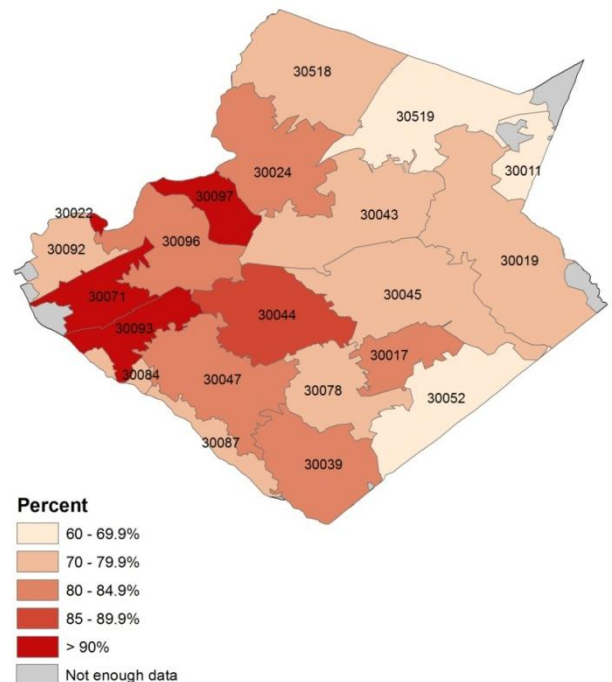
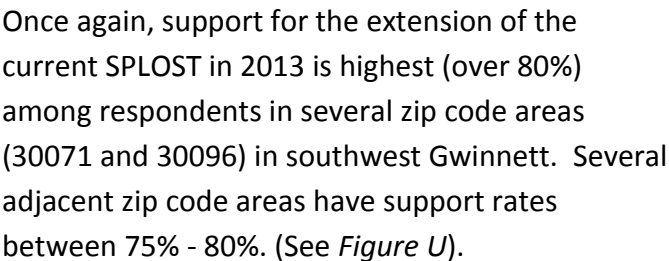


Figure T: Would Respondent Approve or Disapprove of Renewal of SPLOST in 2013 if Revenue is Used to Fund Park Development?



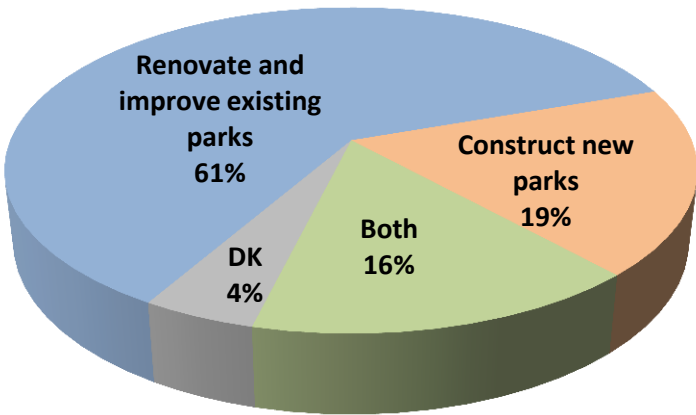
Percent

Lightest Orange	55 - 59.9%
Light Orange	60 - 64.9%
Medium Orange	65 - 69.9%
Dark Orange	70 - 74.9%
Red-Orange	75 - 79.9%
Dark Red	80 - 84.9%
Grey	Not enough data

What Should County’s Focus Be in Regards to Future Park Development?

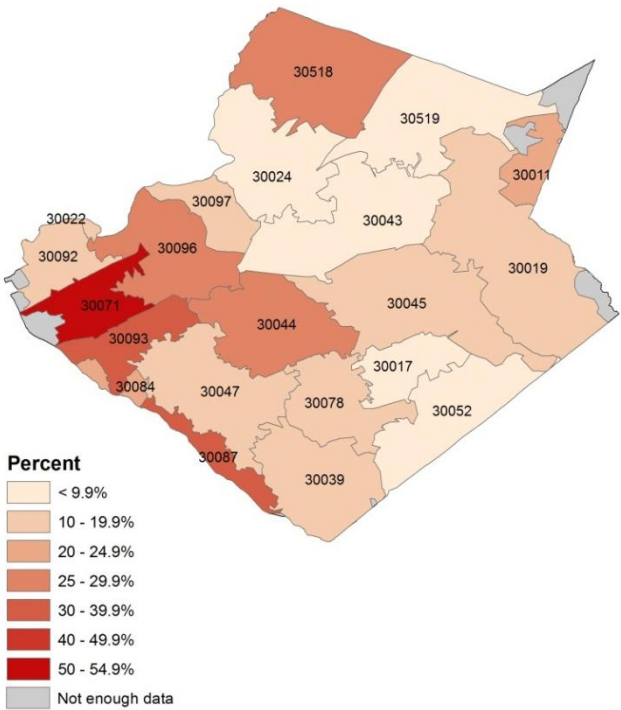
The respondents were asked if, in the future, they would prefer the county concentrate on *renovating and improving existing parks*, or on *constructing new parks*. A significant majority of respondents (61%) indicated they *would prefer the county focus on renovating and improving existing parks*. Only 19% indicated they would like the county to build new park facilities, while 16% said they would like the county to pursue *both* strategies.

Figure V: Should County Concentrate on Renovating and Improving Existing Parks, or Should It Build New Parks?



The feeling that the county should focus on building new facilities is highest among residents in southwest Gwinnett, particularly in zip code area 30071 where more than 50% of the respondents said they would like to see the county build new facilities. This was the only zip code area with a majority of respondents favoring new facilities. Other adjacent zip code areas also have significant numbers of respondents favoring new construction. Approximately one-third of the respondents in the far northwestern part of the county (zip code 30518) also would like the county to focus on new facilities.

Figure W: Percent who believe county should focus on building new facilities



What Type of New Facilities Should Be Developed?

Respondents who indicated they would like the county to build new park facilities (including those who said they would like the county to pursue *both* strategies) were asked to rank four possible types of facilities in terms of their desired priorities for future development. Those options they were given to rank included:

- Athletic fields (baseball diamonds, football fields, soccer fields, etc.)
- Parks that would provide activities for all ages
- Preservation of open space/ natural park settings
- Community centers, gymnasiums, senior centers, etc.

In terms of the respondents' first priorities, *community centers, gymnasiums and senior centers* was selected by the largest percentage of respondents (29.9%) as their first priority, barely edging *preservation of open space* (25.7%). *Athletic fields* and *parks that would provide activities for all ages* were not far behind, however (See Figure X).

In fact, when taking into account the respondents' first *and* second priorities, *athletic fields* and *parks that would provide activities for all ages* come out well ahead of the other two options. Very few respondents picked community centers as their second priority.

Figure X: What type of new facilities should receive priority?
(Asked only of those who said county should pursue new construction, and those who said county should pursue new construction and renovate existing facilities)

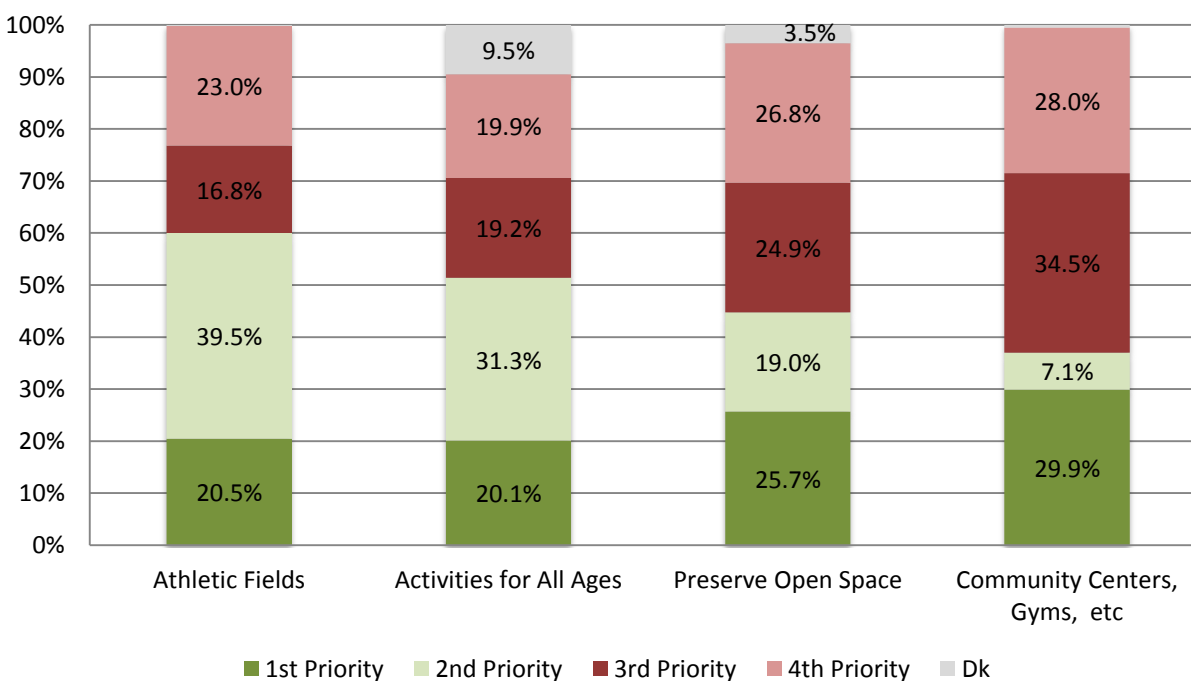


Table 1 presents the results displayed in Figure X in a slightly different way. In Table 1, the percentages are expressed as the proportion of *all* respondents assigning a given priority to each of the potential types of new construction, keeping in mind that 65% of *all respondents expressed no desire for the county to pursue the construction of new park facilities*. (Essentially, these respondents can be thought of as expressing *no priority* for all of the types of new construction.) Expressed in this fashion, Table 1 reveals that 10.5% of *all* respondents in Gwinnett County would give first priority to new community centers, gyms, senior centers, etc.

Table 1:
Level of Priority to be Given to Different Types of New Construction
As Percentage of ALL Respondents

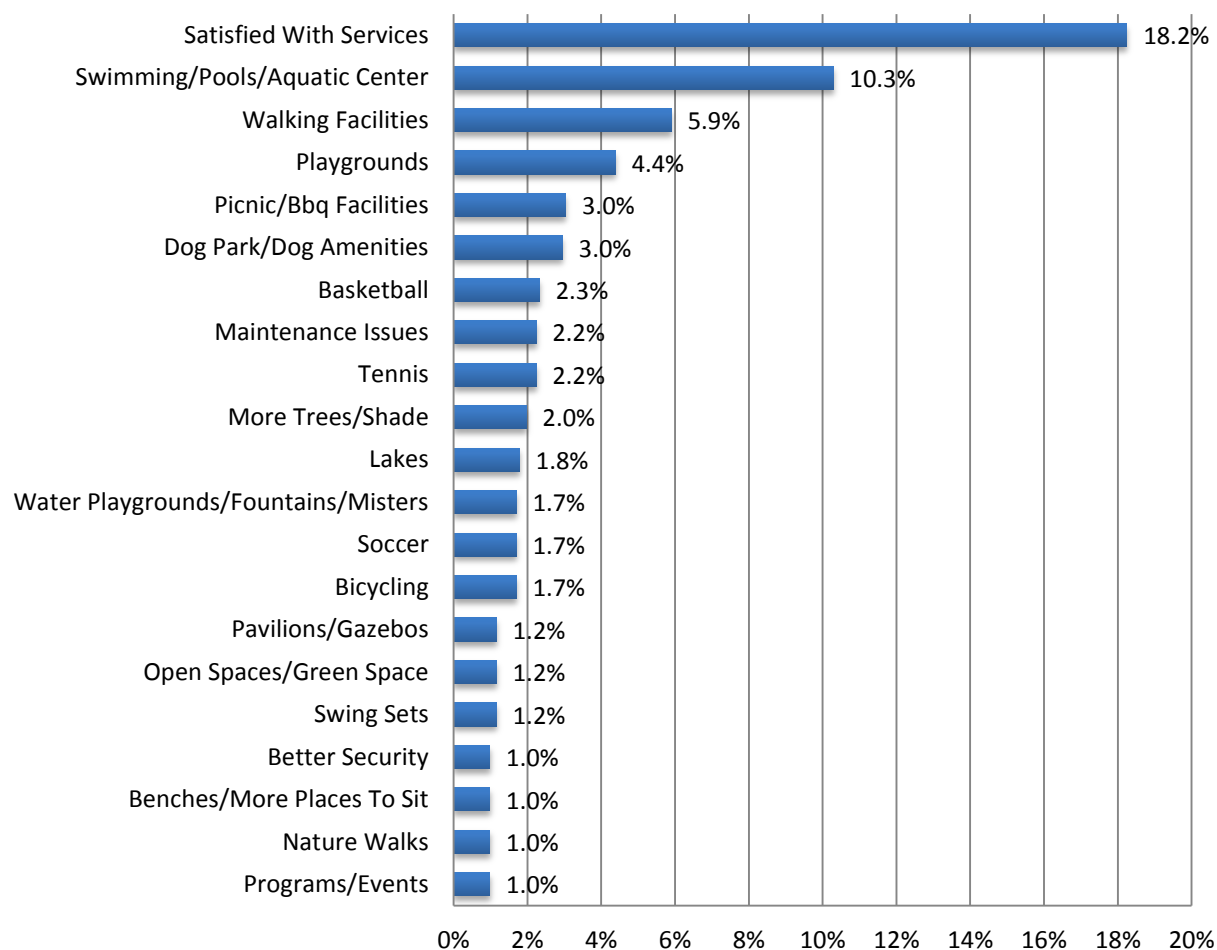
	1st Priority	2nd Priority	3rd Priority	4th Priority	DK
Athletic Fields	7.2%	13.8%	5.9%	8.1%	0.1%
Activities for All Ages	7.0%	11.0%	6.7%	7.0%	3.3%
Preserve Open Space	9.0%	6.7%	8.7%	9.4%	1.2%
Community Centers, Gyms	10.5%	2.5%	12.1%	9.8%	0.2%

Activities and Services That Would Appeal to Respondent and Family

The respondents were asked to identify the types of park facilities and services that would be fun for them and/or their families. Figure Y provides a breakdown of the general categories of services and improvements most often mentioned by the respondents.

First, it is important to note that a significant number of respondents (33%) did not offer a response to the question. Almost one-fifth (18.2%) of the respondents said the *parks already satisfy their needs*. Ten percent of the respondents would like to see some type of improvements in regards to *water recreation services* – including more swimming pools (including indoor facilities) and water parks.

Figure Y: What Would Respondent Like to See in Parks That Would Be Fun for Them and Family?

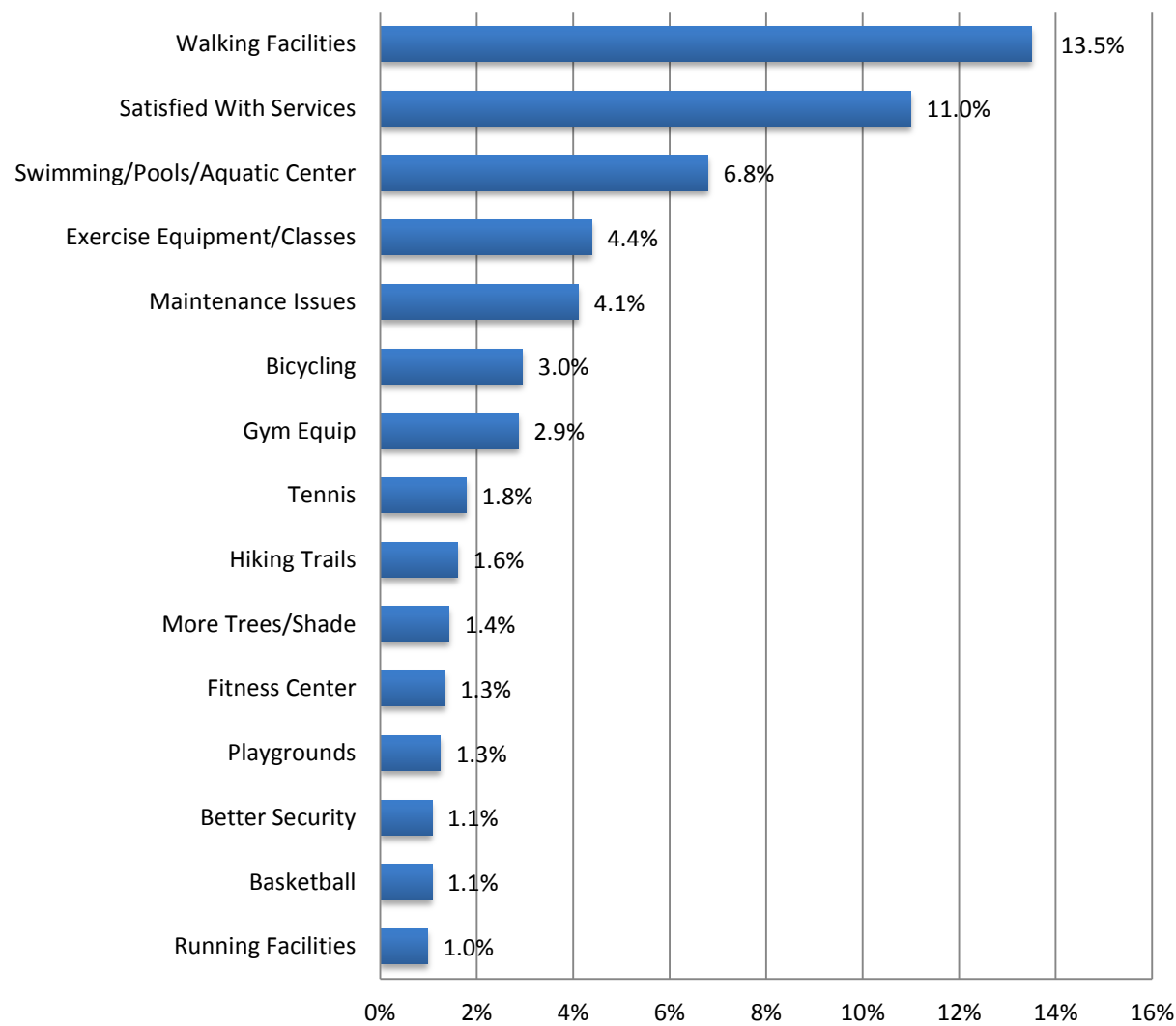


In addition, respondents would like to see more walking trails, playgrounds for children, picnic areas, and amenities related to dog parks. The category “maintenance issues” includes comments related to general maintenance, bathroom cleanliness, lighting, etc.

Services That Would Help Maintain Health

The respondents also were asked what type of recreational programs and services they might like to have available to them to help them maintain their health. General categories of responses are provided in *Figure Z*. Again, a large number – 43% - of the respondents did not offer a response to this question. An additional 11% indicated they are *satisfied with the programs and services* already being offered. Thirteen percent would like to see some type of *expansion or improvement to the system of walking trails*. Other services were mentioned by less than 10% of the respondents.

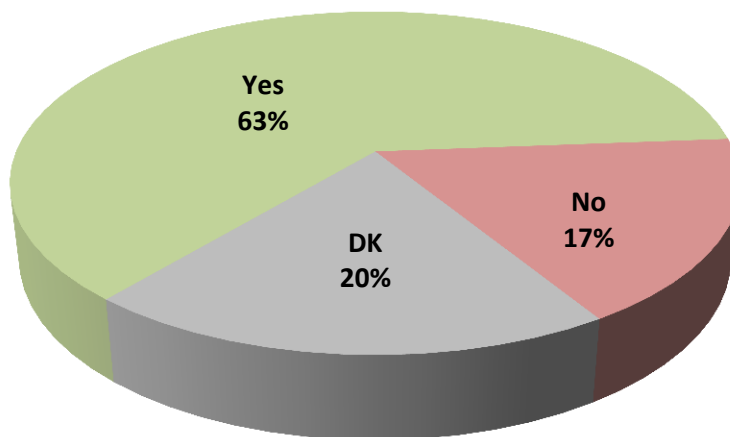
Figure Z: What Programs or Services Would Help You Maintain Your Health?



Are There Enough Recreational Opportunities for Seniors in Area?

Finally, respondents ages 55 and older were asked if there are enough recreational opportunities for seniors in the area where they live. Only 17% of these older respondents said *no*.

Figure AA: Are There Enough Recreational Opportunities for Seniors in Respondent's Area? - Asked Only of Respondents Ages 55 and Older



A Note on Non-Users of Gwinnett County Recreational Facilities

Respondents who indicated they have not used a county park facility in the past year were asked to identify their reasons for not using the parks. Over one-third (34%) of these respondents said they are *too busy* to go to the parks. Seven percent said they cannot utilize the parks because of *bad health*, while six percent said they are *too old*. Other reasons provided by the respondents include *use other facilities*, *not familiar with/don't know what's available in local parks*, *safety concerns*, and *parks are too far away*.

These respondents also were asked if there is anything Gwinnett County could add to its park and recreation program that might cause them to utilize a county park facility. A significant portion of the respondents either *didn't offer an opinion* or said there was *nothing the county could do* that would cause them to visit a local park. A small number of respondents mentioned making the parks *more convenient/closer to their homes*, *walking trails*, *swimming pools*, and *activities for seniors*.

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

GWINNETT COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION SURVEY (2012)

MOREREC

In your opinion, are there enough county parks in the area where you live, or should the county provide more recreational facilities in your area?

1. Enough facilities already
2. County should build more facilities
3. (RESPONDENT OFFERS) Depends.... (specify how)
4. DK/NA

If MOREREC = 1 or 4, SKIP TO USEPARKS

WHATKIND

What kind of park facilities would you MOST like to see added to your area?

<Follow up with second and third most important facilities/services to be added>

USEPARKS

In the past year, have you visited a COUNTY operated park or other county facility that offers recreational or leisure activities for the purpose of participating in activities you enjoy?

1. No
2. Yes
3. DK/NA

IF (USEPARKS = 2 "YES") SKIPTO RECACT

NOUSE

Is there a particular reason why you haven't visited a COUNTY operated park in the past year?

(The possible responses below will NOT be read to the respondent. They will make the coding easier later. The "Other" response will allow us to pick up on reasons that aren't listed.)

Too old

Bad health

Don't know what resources are available

Use other facilities (private gyms, neighborhood parks, parks in other cities/counties, etc.)

Not active/don't need them

Nothing there I like to do/don't offer things I like to do

Park facility not close enough to home/work

Safety issues/personal safety/parks not safe

Too busy

Other (SPECIFY)

NONUSERACTIVITES

What resources or activities could be added to county park facilities that might entice you to utilize the parks?

RECACT

We'd like to know ask about the types of recreational activities that you engage in most often at a county-operated facility. By "recreational activities" we mean to include hobbies and leisure activities that a person might do for relaxation, competition, wellness or quiet enjoyment...

RECACT1

What recreational activity do you engage in MOST OFTEN at a county park facility?

<Follow up with 2nd and 3rd most frequent activities at a county park facility>

WHATPARK

Which county-operated parks do you most often use for any of the recreational activities you mentioned earlier?

TRAVEL

How do you usually get to the parks you use most often? Do you usually...

1. Walk....
2. Drive, or...
3. Ride a bicycle....to the parks you most often use?
4. Other (specify)
5. DK

KIDS

Are there children under the age of 18 living at your residence?

1. Yes
2. No

IF KIDS = NO, SKIP TO MOSTFUN

<Will ascertain whether or not children in age groups 5 years or younger, 6-13 years old and 14 – 17 years old live in each residence, then ask about favorite activities of children in age groups that are present in home...>

KIDSACT05

What are the favorite activities of the children who are 5 or younger in your household?

KIDSACT613

What are the favorite activities of the children who are between the ages of 6 and 13?

KIDSACT1417

What are the favorite activities of the children between the ages of 14 and 17?

SPORTS

Do any of these children participate in organized youth sports at a Gwinnett County park?

1. Yes
2. No

IF SPORTS = 2 SKIP TO KIDSACT

WHATSPORT

What sports do they play? (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| Baseball | Football |
| Softball | Basketball |
| Lacrosse | Rollerblade Hockey |
| Soccer | Cheerleading |
| Other (specify) | |

MOSTFUN

What would you like to see in a park near you that would be the most fun for you and your family?

LIFESKILLS

What would you like to see in a park near you that would help you develop and maintain your health and the health of your family?

SPLOST

Gwinnett County voters approved a referendum in November 2008 which extended a special one-cent sales tax for designated County capital projects including parkland acquisition and park development. Do you support this method of funding these improvements to the parks and recreation program?

1. No
2. Yes
3. DK/NA

VOTE

In 2013, county voters may be given the opportunity to extend this special 1-cent sales tax. Would you approve or disapprove of the renewal of this 1-cent sales tax if the money generated from it continued to fund parkland acquisition and park development?

1. Approve
2. Disapprove
3. Depends
4. DK/NA

PRIORITY

If the 1-cent sales tax is renewed, which of the following approaches would be most desirable to you?
Would you prefer the county....

1. Renovate and improve existing parks, or...
2. Construct new parks
3. DK

If PRIORITY = 1 or 3, SKIP TO YRBORN

NEWPARKS

In regards to the construction of new parks, we would like you to rank the following four options in terms of their relative importance to you. I'll read the options first and then let you rank them. The options are...

1. construction of new parks with an emphasis on sports fields (baseball/softball, soccer, football)
2. construction of new parks with an emphasis on activities for all ages (playgrounds, dog parks, trails, basketball courts)
3. construction of new parks with an emphasis on preserving open space and natural areas.
4. construction of new parks with an emphasis on Community Center Buildings, Gyms, Senior Centers

Which of these options would be most important to you?
(Follow up for second, third and fourth priorities)

YRBORN

In what year were you born?

IF RESPONDENT IS LESS THAN 50 YEARS OLD, SKIP TO DEMOGRAPHICS

OLDFOLKS

In your opinion, does Gwinnett County offer adequate recreational opportunities for residents who are 50 or older in its park facilities?

1. Yes
2. No
3. DK

IF OLDFOLKS = 1 or 3, SKIP TO Demographics

SENIORACT

What types of activities should Gwinnett County provide for senior citizens at its park and recreation facilities?