



MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
PARKS AND RECREATION NEEDS  
ASSESSMENT  
DRAFT REPORT - APRIL 2017



**ABSTRACT**

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<b>Author</b>	Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), Department of Parks - <a href="http://MontgomeryParks.org">MontgomeryParks.org</a> , Park Planning and Stewardship Division
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**MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
PLANNING BOARD**

Casey Anderson, Chair  
Marye Wells-Harley, Vice  
Chair  
Commissioners  
Marye Wells-Harley  
Gerald R. Cichy,  
Norman Dreyfuss  
Natali Fani-Gonzalez

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
RECREATION DEPT.**

Jeff Bourne

**MONTGOMERY PARKS**

Brooke Farquhar  
Mark Wallis  
Christina Sasaki  
Barbara Lerch  
Pamela Zorich

**COMMUNITIES CONNECT  
TEAM**

Mayra Bayonet  
Raul Medrano  
Maria P. Rodriguez  
Desiree Bayonet  
Ana Reyes

**ETC INSTITUTE TEAM**

Chris Tatham  
Jason Morado  
Ryan Murray  
PROS Consulting Team  
Leon Younger  
Neelay Bhatt  
Austin Hochstetler  
Margaret Bransford  
Brayton McClure

**PEAK DEMOCRACY**



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	I
CHAPTER ONE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.2 COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW.....	1
1.3 MAJOR THEMES FROM OUTREACH AND ANALYSIS.....	4
CHAPTER TWO INTRODUCTION AND PROCESS .....	8
2.1 PARKS AND RECREATION OF THE FUTURE OUTREACH CAMPAIGN.....	8
2.2 NEEDS ASSESSMENT BY CONSULTANTS.....	9
CHAPTER THREE STATISTICALLY VALID COMMUNITY SURVEY .....	11
3.1 OVERVIEW .....	11
3.2 METHODOLOGY .....	11
3.3 SURVEY RESULTS.....	14
CHAPTER FOUR KEY STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS .....	25
4.1 OVERVIEW .....	25
4.2 METHODOLOGY .....	25
4.3 FOCUS GROUP RESULTS .....	25
CHAPTER FIVE INTERCEPT SURVEY #1– USAGE, INTEREST, AND MARKETING PREFERENCES.....	35
5.1 OVERVIEW .....	35
5.2 METHODOLOGY .....	35
5.3 SURVEY RESULTS .....	36
CHAPTER SIX INTERCEPT SURVEY #2– PRIORITIZATION OF FACILITIES AND SERVICES .....	45
6.1 OVERVIEW .....	45
6.2 METHODOLOGY .....	45
6.3 SURVEY RESULTS .....	45
CHAPTER SEVEN COMMUNITY INTERNET FORUM .....	48
7.1 OVERVIEW .....	48
7.2 METHODOLOGY .....	48
7.3 FORUM RESULTS.....	48
CHAPTER EIGHT COMMUNITY CREATE PARKS AND RECREATION OF THE FUTURE SURVEY .....	51
8.1 OVERVIEW .....	51
8.2 METHODOLOGY.....	51
8.3 SURVEY RESULTS .....	52
CHAPTER NINE PRIORITY RANKINGS.....	58
9.1 FACILITY / AMENITY PRIORITY RANKING .....	58
9.2 OVERALL FACILITY / AMENITY PRIORITY RANKINGS.....	59
9.3 PRIORITY RANKINGS BY LANGUAGE.....	60

9.4 PRIORITY RANKINGS BY RACE..... 61

9.5 PRIORITY RANKINGS BY ETHNICITY .....62

CHAPTER TEN APPENDICES ..... 63

10.1 APPENDIX A- FULL STATISTICALLY VALID SURVEY RESULTS .....63

10.2 APPENDIX B- FULL COMMUNITIES CONNECT REPORT ..... 81

10.3 APPENDIX C- INTERCEPT SURVEY #1 .....92

10.4 APPENDIX D- INTERCEPT SURVEY #2 .....95

10.5 APPENDIX E- MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMUNITY INTERNET FORUM ..... 104

10.6 APPENDIX F- PEAK DEMOCRACY FORUM: COMMUNITY CREATES PARKS AND RECREATION OF THE  
FUTURE SURVEY ..... 104



## CHAPTER ONE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) contracted PROS Consulting, in collaboration with Montgomery Parks, Communities Connect Consulting, ETC Institute, and Peak Democracy, to complete a Needs Assessment for Montgomery County, Maryland. The Needs Assessment is the focus of the initial phase of the 2017 Montgomery County Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan Update.

The overarching goal of the Community Needs Assessment is to solicit comprehensive feedback from residents of the community. The process engaged a broad range of demographic segments present within Montgomery County to better understand the characteristics, preferences, and satisfaction levels of residents in relation to parks and recreation activities. Once a thorough understanding of residents served is established, a variety of data sources and best practice standards is applied to quantify and prioritize community needs for parks and recreation services and amenities in Montgomery County.

This Needs Assessment consists of six (6) community input methods and an analysis of priorities and highlights the major findings and recurring themes. Ultimately, these key findings and themes lay the framework of the needs, interests, and preferences of residents served by Montgomery County Parks. These key findings are then aggregated into Priority Rankings.

### 1.2 COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

#### STATISTICALLY VALID SURVEY

ETC Institute administered a statistically valid needs assessment survey for Montgomery County. This survey was mailed to a random sample of households within Montgomery County. A total of 705 households completed the survey.



Overall, 20% of those surveyed indicated that English was not their primary language. A total of 21 different languages were represented in the survey, with Spanish and Mandarin being the two highest non-English languages noted amongst respondents. The overall results indicated that 95% of respondents communicated that high-quality parks, trails, recreation facilities and services are either Very Important (82%) or Somewhat Important (13%) to the quality of life in Montgomery County.

#### KEY STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS



Communities Connect Consulting conducted an extensive public engagement outreach effort, focused on minority communities. Over a period of four (4) weeks, six (6) focus groups consisting of 61 total participants were conducted with an experienced facilitator, a native language interpreter, and a research analyst to record notes.

These focus groups were open to individuals who live in the selected specific minority population areas. The group was evenly distributed in terms of race/ethnicity, with 30% African American, African, or Black; 33% Hispanic and/or Latino; and 37% Asian or Pacific Islander. Participants resided in 16 different zip codes, and ranged from recent arrivals to residents living in the U.S. between 5-10 years. Of participants, 58% were female and 42% were male. Throughout the process, all ideas from the public were carefully documented, and used to summarize the development of the outreach plan to the minority communities. The following are key themes from focus group results:

- Improve park security and safety - increase lighting; improve traffic crossings; add cameras
- Cleanliness of facilities - clean up litter on trails and remove trash; cleaner restrooms
- Programming - programs for families/small children; culturally relevant programs and sports



- Physical facilities - for small children in walking distance; large outdoor event amenities
- Engage communities - parks as gathering spaces; engage partners
- Accessibility - language barriers in signage; prohibitive cost; service to elderly and families

## INTERCEPT SURVEY #1 – USAGE, INTEREST, AND MARKETING PREFERENCES



The PROS Consulting team collected survey information from residents and system users via intercept survey method. The purpose of these surveys was to help develop a better understanding of the needs, preferences, and satisfaction levels of Montgomery County residents in relation to parks, natural resources, and recreation activities. Surveys were collected at community recreation centers, local grocery stores, churches, and parks.

To help ensure collection from a representative cross-section of County residents, Mandarin, Spanish, and Hindi interpreters were also present assisting the PROS Team throughout this process. A total of 174 responses were collected throughout this method. Respondents' language of preference included: 49% English, 10% Spanish, 25% Mandarin, and 16% Hindi.

Key themes of open-ended question responses include:

- **Positive feedback** - almost 30% of the feedback was a positive and satisfied comment
- **Maintenance** - outdoor fields, landscaping, sidewalks/paths; indoor hot water, signage, steps
- **Additional amenities** - water fountains, waste bags, restrooms, indoor gym, greenspace
- **Hours** - additional operating hours for both facilities and specific programs (ping-pong)
- **Communication** - outreach for updates, programs, and events; outreach in Chinese community
- **Accessibility, cleanliness, & security** - better access, facility cleanliness, better security

## INTERCEPT SURVEY #2 – PRIORITIZATION OF FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Montgomery County Parks staff conducted a second complementary survey (Intercept Survey #2). The primary focus of Intercept Survey #2 was system users. Respondents were asked to rank the following facilities/ services, provided by Montgomery County Parks, in order of most to least important (Sports, Trails, Nature, History, Events, Special Places, and Gathering Places).

Surveys were conducted at two community events in the fall of 2016; where a total of 534 responses were collected. The most important facilities and services in the community include:

- |           |                   |
|-----------|-------------------|
| 1. Trails | 4. Nature         |
| 2. Events | 5. History        |
| 3. Sports | 6. Special Places |

Key themes of open-ended questions include:

- **More** - playgrounds, picnic areas, shade, bathrooms, water amenities, programs, information
- **Cleanliness & safety** - litter issue, need for trash cans and recycling bins, addition of lights
- **Transportation & access** - bicycle access, public transportation, parking, wheelchair access
- **Appreciation** - about 25% of the feedback was a positive and satisfied comment



## INTERACTIVE FORUM FOR USAGE & NEEDS

Montgomery County Parks also created an internet forum in order to obtain additional community input. The purpose of this internet forum was to reach additional community members that they were not able to reach during the intercept surveys, and the forum was accessible through the Montgomery County Parks website.



Respondents were prompted with two overarching topics: park needs and park usage. Approximately 300 participants left their thoughts, opinions, concerns pertaining to these topics on the message board.

Key themes of park needs and usage included:

- **Amenities** - signage, a dog park, programs, parkland developed into parks, picnic tables, swings
- **Access** - positive comments on traffic solutions, bicycle access, safer pedestrian access
- **Positive Feedback** - approximately 50% of the feedback was a positive or satisfied comment.
- **Connections**- connections to other parks preservation of urban green and open space
- **Urban Parks** - converting current open space to an “energized park,” or an “urban park”
- **Security** - additional lighting (Rock Creek Park)
- **Art/History** - interest in art history behind the area, art student use, historic education
- **Wildlife** - leave pockets of trees as habitat for wildlife, joy of seeing wildlife
- **Maintenance** - better landscape maintenance, cleaner restrooms, flooding issues

## PARKS AND RECREATION OF THE FUTURE SURVEY

Peak Democracy conducted an online survey focusing on the future of parks and recreation in Montgomery County. A key objective of this survey was to obtain feedback from as many geographic planning areas within Montgomery County as possible. To help ensure this, individual respondents' zip codes were obtained during the survey process.



In doing so, the Planning Team is able to identify what regions specific feedback came from and can better understand the needs and preferences within each planning area of the county. As of March 30, 2017- 10:30am EST, a total of 714 surveys had been completed; with responses from 25 of the 28 total Planning Areas.

Of those surveyed, 71%-80% gave a positive rating of either excellent or good, for Parks, Facilities, and Services; while only 12%-17% consider their needs to be fairly or poorly met.

## PRIORITY RANKINGS

PROS Consulting uses a weighted scoring system to formulate the Priority Ranking. The purpose of the Facility Priority Rankings is to provide a prioritized list of facility/amenity needs for the community served by the Montgomery County Parks and Recreation Department. This rankings model evaluated both quantitative and qualitative data.



Quantitative data includes the statistically valid community survey, which asked residents to list unmet needs and rank their importance. Qualitative data includes resident feedback obtained via community input, such as through the intercept surveys and focus groups, as well as demographics and trends. The weighted scoring system considers the following:

- **Community Survey- 60 %** (30% unmet needs, plus 30% importance rankings)
- **Consultant Evaluation- 40%** (consultant's evaluation of qualitative community input)





These weighted scores were then summed to provide an overall score and priority ranking for the system as a whole. The results of the priority ranking were tabulated into three categories: High Priority (top third), Medium Priority (middle third) and Low Priority (bottom third).

The combined total of the weighted scores for Community Unmet Needs, Community Importance, and Consultant Evaluation is the total score based on which the Facility/Amenity Priority is determined. The top five priorities based on this evaluation system are:

1. Paved multi-use trails (walking, biking)
2. Natural surface trails (walking, biking, horseback riding)
3. Natural areas & wildlife habitats
4. Public gardens
5. Park shelters & picnic areas

## 1.3 MAJOR THEMES FROM OUTREACH AND ANALYSIS

### PLAN GUIDANCE

While analyzing the results from the community input collection process, Montgomery County Parks staff used best practice to guide recommendations as they emerged from the data.

### NATIONAL RECREATION AND PARK ASSOCIATION

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), has as its core mission to impact communities through three pillars of Conservation, Health and Wellness, and Social Equity (<https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/Three-Pillars/>). These overarching themes are important in guiding the priorities of Montgomery Parks and the Recreation Department.

### GUIDANCE FROM PREVIOUS PLANS

Several plans and policies have guided the formation of the 2017 PROS Plan including the Vision 2030 Strategic Plan for Parks and Recreation (Vision 2030), completed in June 2011, and the 2012 PROS Plan. Building on these plans, the 2017 PROS Plan includes updated service delivery strategies for several priority facilities and resources. The strategies will guide the Department of Parks and the Recreation Department in locating the right park and recreation facilities in the right places, and to ultimately help ensure that the parks and recreation system continues to play a major role in shaping Montgomery County's high quality of life.

### MAJOR THEMES FROM OUTREACH AND ANALYSIS

Overall, Montgomery County residents report a high degree of satisfaction with the parks and recreation facilities and programs, which are considered by 82% of respondents of the statistically valid survey (2017 PROS Survey) to be important to the quality of life in the County. Seventy percent of respondents are satisfied with the overall value their household receives from the M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks and Montgomery County Recreation Department. One out of four respondents (25%) indicated they are very proud of M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks recreation facilities, parks, and services, and 42% indicated they are proud.

Three major themes emerged from the extensive outreach and analysis for guiding the park and recreation facilities and services for Montgomery County into the future:

- **Optimize what we have** - utilize existing park and recreation facilities and lands more fully
- **Build community through parks** - provide spaces and programs that bring people together
- **Plan for future generations** - increase land for natural resource protection and conservation

## OPTIMIZE WHAT WE HAVE

In a County where developable or re-developable land is scarce and expensive, it is more important now than ever to make sure existing developed and undeveloped lands and facilities are utilized to their maximum potential, and if not, to renovate and repurpose them to best meet needs.

This theme was strongly expressed by respondents of the statistically valid survey as well as participants in other outreach venues. Repairing and renovating of existing park facilities was considered a funding priority by 49% of the survey respondents, followed by purchasing land for natural resource protection and conservation for future generations (45%). This theme was a major recommendation in Vision2030 from 2011 as well. The Department of Parks has responded over the past six years in several ways.

Recommendations include to adjust and to continue to:

- **Assess** underutilized areas and facilities that could be repurposed with facilities for which there are identified needs
- **Balance** funding for renovation and repair with acquisition and development of new lands and facilities
- **Program** parks and facilities to attract more users

Key themes for tactics from the Community Needs Assessment supporting this strategic priority include:

### ENHANCE CLEANLINESS, SECURITY, & ACCESSIBILITY

- Enhance cleanliness of parks, especially restrooms
- Maintenance of existing facilities, including repair or renovation
- Added security, including lights or staff/personnel
- Accessibility by public transportation, pedestrian-friendly traffic elements, and connectivity to sidewalks, trails
- Emphasis on multi-use trails

### PROGRAMS AND AMENITIES FOR SMALL CHILDREN

- Organized activities for small children and families
- Playgrounds and accessible outdoor play amenities for children

## BUILD COMMUNITY THROUGH PARKS

In order to build communities, there first must be an understanding of who makes up our communities. Serving the residents of the County has always been a goal of Montgomery Parks and the Recreation Department. One of the values of Montgomery Parks is to “support and embrace cultural differences and offer suitable programs, activities, and services.” The mission of the Recreation Department is to “provide high quality, diverse, and accessible programs, services, and facilities that enhance the quality of life for all ages, cultures, and abilities.”

Using refined tools to improve our delivery of facilities and services equitably to all communities in the County has been a focus of the *2017 PROS Plan*. With better methods for outreach, the outreach listening sessions and survey results were tailored according to areas of minority populations. With improved geospatial analysis methods, the results of the outreach were correlated with population data on a finer level. This allowed recommendations to reflect the reported needs of traditionally underrepresented populations such as individuals with disabilities and foreign-born residents.

Recommendations include:

- Add park equity to the criteria for prioritization of the Capital Improvements Program to promote equitable access to parks for all
- Include facilities that serve all ages and abilities in service delivery strategies



- Recognize the importance of social gathering - Recommend additional social gathering spaces in our areas of highest population densities and in our destination parks

Key themes for tactics from the Community Needs Assessment supporting this strategic priority include:

#### CREATE CULTURALLY-RELEVANT PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

- Program offerings that relate to diverse demographics of the area
- Historic and cultural events that demonstrate and relate history of the amenity or area
- Large-scale festivals and music events

#### DIVERSE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND NATIVE LANGUAGE OUTREACH

- Use of email blasts, consistent website updates, and social media outreach, the preferred communication methods as noted in the intercept surveys
- Outreach to diverse communities through native language and in partnership with culturally-focused organizations
- Proactive outreach and communication with underserved communities

#### GATHERING SPACES

- Emphasis on benches and picnic shelters as a place for people to meet and groups to gather
- Large picnic shelters for long-term rentals (1/2 day or longer) and bathroom facilities nearby
- Flexible adjacent lawn areas for large gatherings and pick-up sports

#### PLAN FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Montgomery County has historically emphasized the need to manage land toward natural resources protection and conservation, and the community has historically been supportive and encouraging of such efforts. The *2005 Land Preservation, Parks, and Recreation Plan* shows this historic emphasis. The recent community outreach as part of the Community Needs Assessment has shown that this ethic or preservation of these resource for future generations is still evident, even with the changing demographics. Recommendations include:

- Development of program and service amenities that balance activity with the natural environment, such as nature playgrounds
- Connecting current open spaces together using sustainable trails, and use of interpretive signs to show natural open space as a critical piece of the parks system
- Land preservation and acquisition strategies based on the development of natural, cultural, or light adventure amenities balanced with land strategies for traditional sports, such as sport fields and courts

Key themes for tactics from the *Community Needs Assessment* supporting this strategic priority include:

#### PRIORITY RANKINGS

Priority rankings identified using the quantitative and qualitative input from all of the community needs input methods included:

- An emphasis on natural trails, natural space and wildlife habitat, and gardens, indicating that the community values the opportunity to preserve enjoy these amenities
- Nature Parks over traditional sports parks

#### OPPORTUNITIES FOR NATURE RECREATION

- Contemplative and active educational and adventure elements

- Connections to natural trails and other natural/cultural amenities, including dog parks and playgrounds
- Preservation of current open space, greenspace and existing urban parks



## CHAPTER TWO - INTRODUCTION AND PROCESS

During the development of the *Vision 2030 Strategic Plan* in 2010, the Department of Parks and the Montgomery County Recreation Department pledged to “engage a diverse community and proactively respond to changing demographics, needs, and trends”. Accordingly, for the *2017 PROS Plan*, a great deal of input was collected through a variety of methods including the Parks and Recreation of the Future campaign and surveys, interviews, and focus groups conducted by a team of consultants.

Several Montgomery County demographic trends shaped the outreach methods for the *2017 PROS Plan*, including:

- Increasing racial and ethnic diversity, with a projected growth in minority groups from 55 percent of the population in 2015 to 68 percent of the population in 2040
- Projected growth in the population people over age 65 from 12 percent of the population in 2010 to 20 percent in 2040
- A large and widely diverse foreign-born population speaking a multitude of languages and having varying English speaking proficiencies

### 2.1 PARKS AND RECREATION OF THE FUTURE OUTREACH CAMPAIGN

Montgomery Parks launched a multi-pronged outreach strategy in November 2016 to engage diverse communities for input about the future of parks and recreation named *Parks and Recreation of the Future* ([http://www.montgomeryparks.org/projects/public-input/#peak\\_democracy](http://www.montgomeryparks.org/projects/public-input/#peak_democracy)), was aimed at soliciting public input to inform three separate but related park programs: the *2017 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan*, the *Energized Public Spaces Functional Master Plan*, and the *Capital Improvement Program*.

The outreach efforts targeted a vast array of audiences including, but not limited to ethnically diverse communities, senior populations, and people with disabilities. A variety of channels and tactics were leveraged to reach these audiences including:

#### TRADITIONAL OUTREACH METHODS

- Public and community meeting presentations to regional and citizen advisory boards
- Email outreach to elected officials, Homeowner and Civic Associations
- Posters and flyers distributed at frequented locations such as recreation centers, park facilities and libraries

#### MEDIA OUTREACH

- A segment on WRC-TV News Channel 4 (NBC affiliate for the DC market)
- Interviews on County Cable TV programs Que Pasa and County Report This Week, and Radio program Montgomery Al Dia, and WHAG
- Outreach to regional and ethnic outlets including TV affiliates, Washington Post, Bethesda Beat, Olney Greater News, Germantown Pulse, MYMCMedia, WTOP, WAMU, El Pregonero, Univision

#### MEDIA ADVERTISING

- El Tiempo Latino
- Radio One
- Radio America
- The Beacon

#### SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING & OUTREACH

- Facebook and Twitter posts

- Facebook advertising

### ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- A new online open town hall platform (Peak Democracy) for people to easily submit their comments, suggestions and respond to a survey.
- Face-to-Face Outreach: via a listening tour in which parks staff presented the details of the campaign among various organizations and groups such as the Office of Community Partnership Advisory Boards
- Commission on the People with Disabilities
- Age-Friendly Montgomery Advisory Group

### INTERCEPT SURVEYS

Targeting diverse audiences conducted at community locations such as:

- Grocery stores
- Faith organizations
- Recreation centers
- Community events

### FOCUS GROUPS

Targeting minority communities, specifically:

- The Latino community
- The African community
- The Asian and Asian-Pacific communities

## 2.2 NEEDS ASSESSMENT BY CONSULTANTS

The Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) contracted PROS Consulting, in collaboration with Montgomery Parks, Communities Connect Consulting, ETC Institute, and Peak Democracy, to complete a Needs Assessment to solicit comprehensive feedback from residents of the community. The process engaged a broad range of demographic segments present within Montgomery County to better understand the characteristics, preferences, and satisfaction levels of residents in relation to parks and recreation activities.

Once a thorough understanding of residents served was established, a variety of data sources and best practice standards was applied to quantify and prioritize community needs for parks and recreation services and amenities in Montgomery County. This Needs Assessment consisted of six (6) community input methods and a cumulative analysis of priorities which sorted the major findings and recurring themes. Ultimately, these key findings and themes laid the framework of the needs, interests, and preferences of residents served by Montgomery County Parks. These key findings were then aggregated into Priority Rankings of community needs.

### STATISTICALLY VALID SURVEY

ETC Institute administered a statistically valid needs assessment survey for Montgomery County. This survey was mailed to a random sample of households within Montgomery County. A total of 705 households completing the survey. Overall, 20% of those surveyed indicated that English was not their primary language. A total of 21 different languages were represented in the survey, with Spanish and Mandarin being the two highest non-English languages noted amongst respondents.





The overall results indicated that 95% of respondents communicated that high-quality parks, trails, recreation facilities and services are either very important (82%) or Somewhat Important (13%) to the quality of life in Montgomery County.

### KEY STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS

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The group was evenly distributed in terms of race/ethnicity, with 30% African American, African, or Black; 33% Hispanic and/or Latino; and 37% Asian or Pacific Islander. Participants resided in 16 different zip codes, and ranged from recent arrivals to residents living in the U.S. between 5-10 years. Of participants, 58% were female and 42% were male. Throughout the process, all ideas from the public were carefully documented, and used to summarize the development of the outreach plan to the minority communities.

### INTERCEPT SURVEYS

The PROS Consulting team collected survey information from residents and system users via intercept survey method. The purpose of these surveys was to help develop a better understanding of the needs, preferences, and satisfaction levels of Montgomery County residents in relation to parks, natural resources, and recreation activities. Surveys were collected at community recreation centers, local grocery stores, churches, and parks. To help ensure collection from a representative cross-section of County residents, Mandarin, Spanish, and Hindi interpreters we also present assisting the PROS Team throughout this process. A total of 174 responses were collected throughout this method. Respondents' language of preference included: 49% English, 10% Spanish, 25% Mandarin, and 16% Hindi.

## CHAPTER THREE - STATISTICALLY VALID COMMUNITY SURVEY

### 3.1 OVERVIEW

ETC Institute administered a statistically valid needs assessment survey for Montgomery County during the winter of 2016-17. The survey was administered as part of the County's efforts to establish priorities for the future development of parks and recreation facilities, programs, and services. The results of this survey will assist the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Montgomery Parks, and the Montgomery County Recreation department in taking a resident-drive approach to making decisions that will enrich the future of parks and recreation services in the County, and affect the lives of its residents.

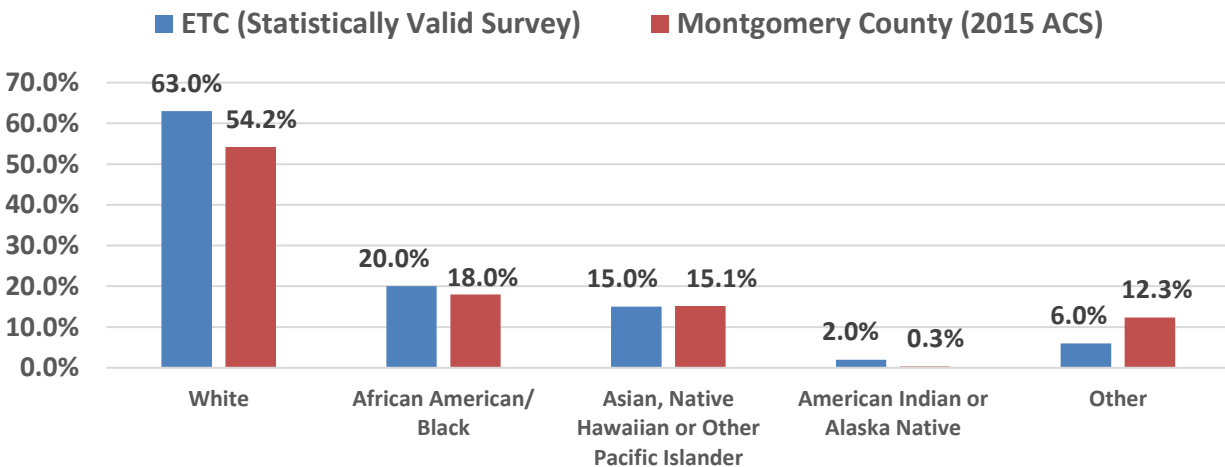
### 3.2 METHODOLOGY

ETC Institute mailed a survey packet to a random sample of households in Montgomery County. Residents who received the survey were given the option of returning the survey by mail or completing it on-line at [bit.do/montgomeryparks2017](http://bit.do/montgomeryparks2017). Once the surveys were mailed, resident households who received the survey were contacted by phone. Those who indicated that they had not returned the survey by mail were given the option of completing it by phone. The goal was to obtain completed surveys from at least 700 residents. The goal was accomplished with a total of 705 residents completing the survey. The overall results for the sample of 705 households have a precision of at least  $\pm 3.7\%$  at the 95% level of confidence.

A reported 20% of respondents to the survey did not speak English as their primary language. Spanish and Chinese were the 2-non-english language that were most represented. People who speak 21 different languages participated in the survey.

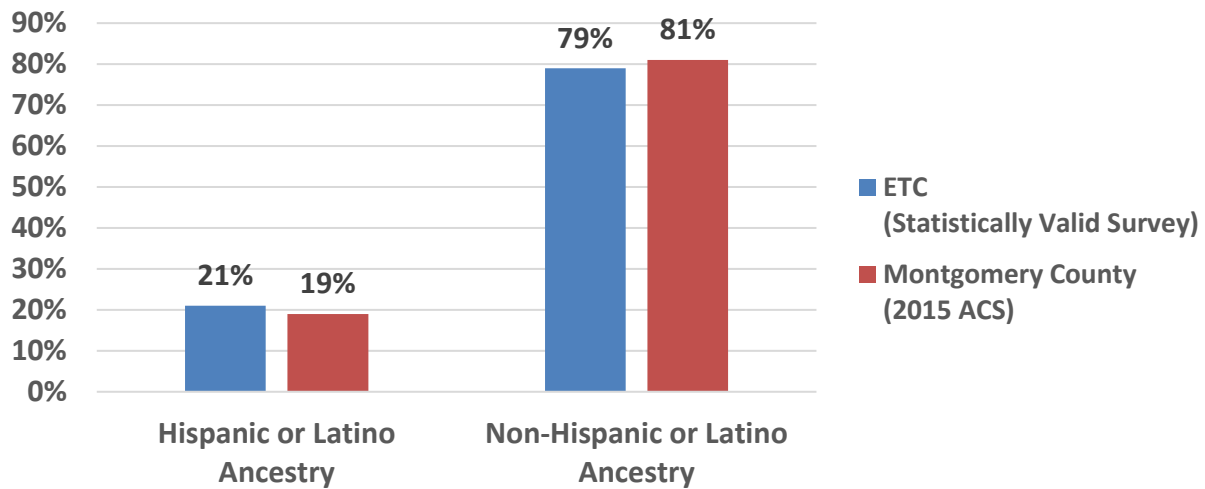
The demographic comparison below and on the following page compares the survey respondents' demographics to those of the County.

#### Demographics by Race

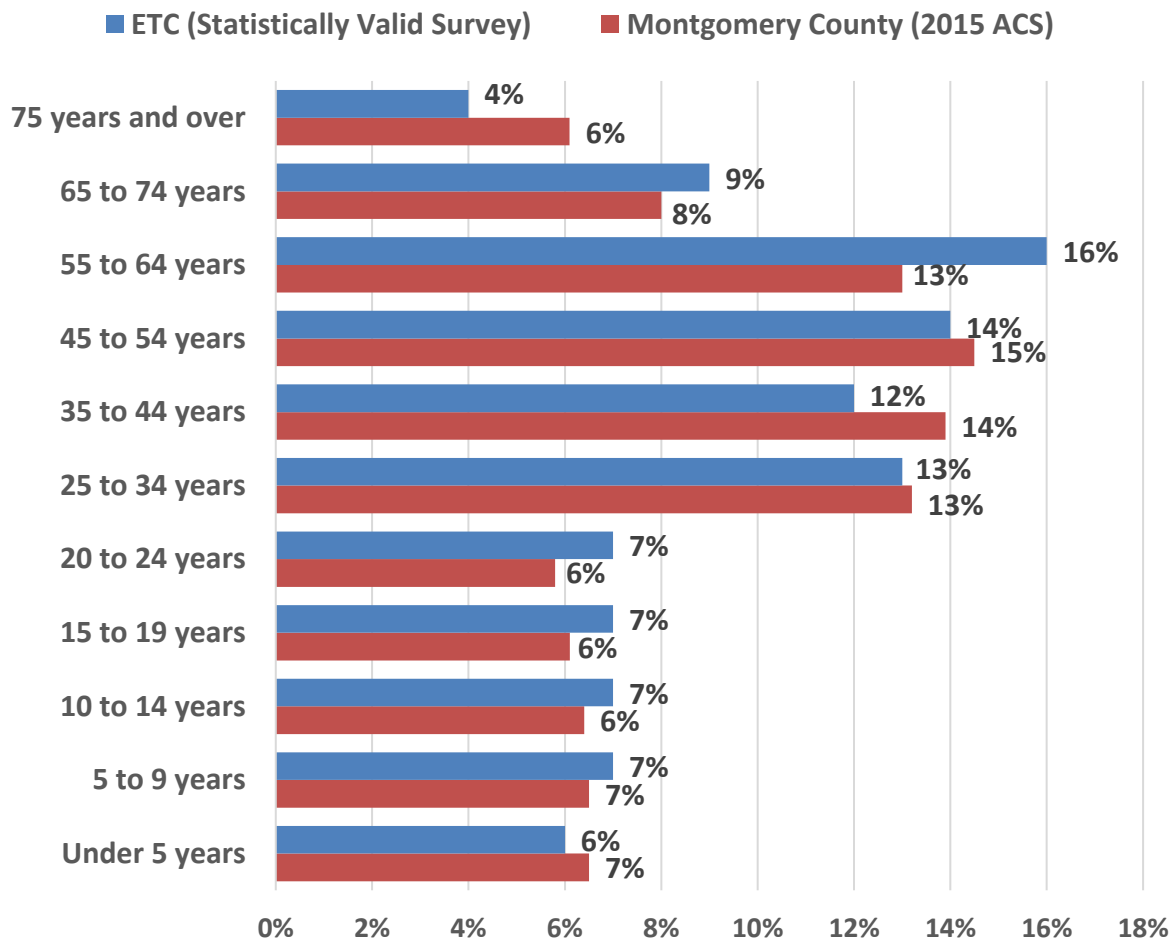




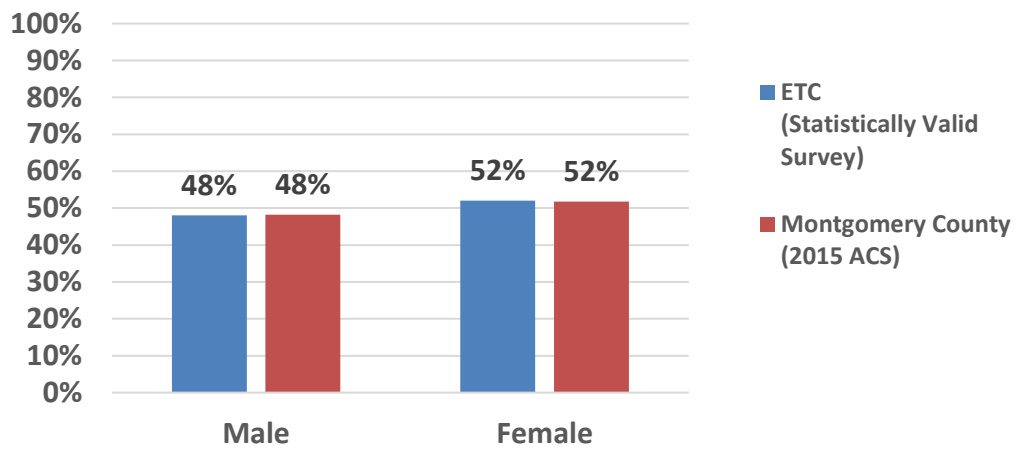
### Demographics by Hispanic Origin



### Demographics by Segment



### Demographics by Gender





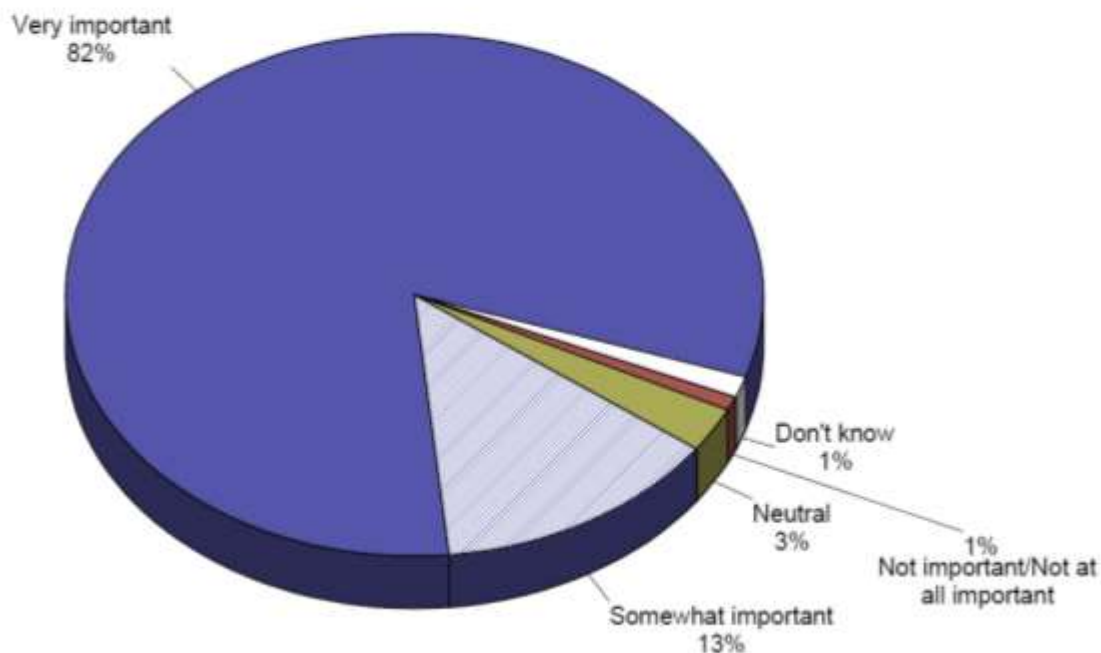
### 3.3 SURVEY RESULTS

#### OVERALL PERCEPTIONS

Eighty-two percent (82%) of respondents indicated that high quality parks, trails, recreation facilities, and services are very important to the quality of life in Montgomery County, 13% think they are somewhat important, 3% are neutral, and only 1% think they are not important or not at all important. When asked to rate the physical condition of all the parks, trails, and recreation facilities operated by M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks and Montgomery County Recreation Department that respondents have visited during the past year, 21% indicated they were excellent, 55% indicated they were good, 16% fair, 1% poor, and 6% indicated they have not visited any M-NCPPC parks, trails, or recreation facilities during the past year.

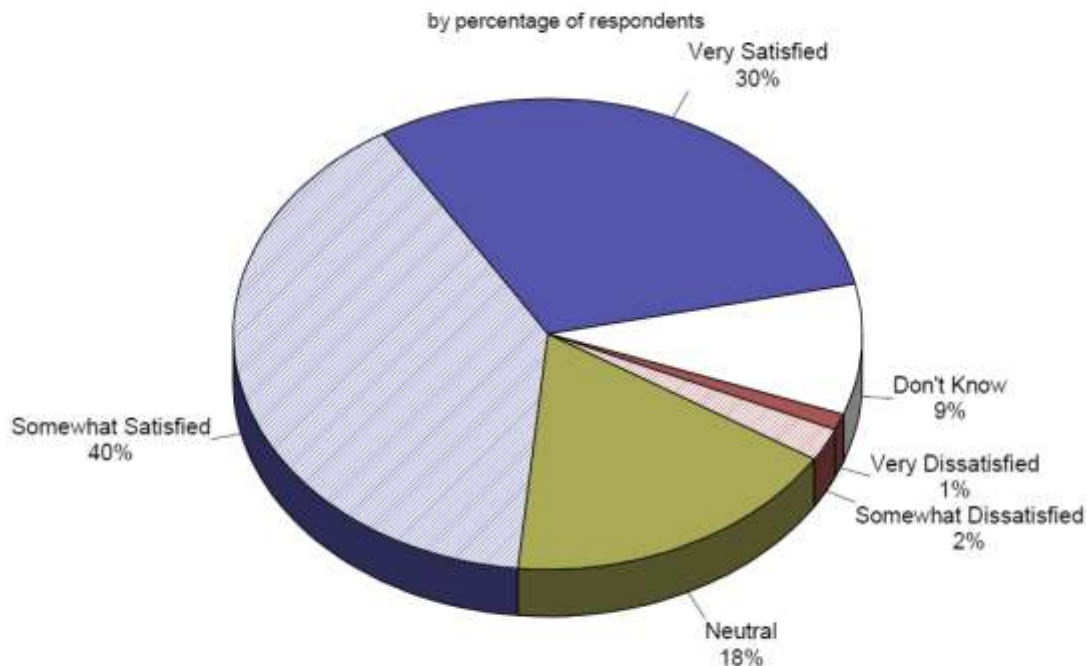
#### Q1. How important are high quality parks, trails, recreation facilities and services to the quality of life in Montgomery County?

by percentage of respondents



Based on the sum of very satisfied and somewhat satisfied responses 70% of respondents are satisfied with the overall value their household receives from the M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks and Montgomery County Recreation Department, 18% of respondents are neutral, and 3% were either somewhat or very dissatisfied. One out of four respondents (25%) indicated they are very proud of M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks recreation facilities, parks, and services, 42% indicated they are proud, 26% are neutral, and only 2% indicated they were not proud or not at all proud.

### Q20. Satisfaction with the overall value your household receives from the M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks and Montgomery County Recreation Department



ETC Institute (2017)



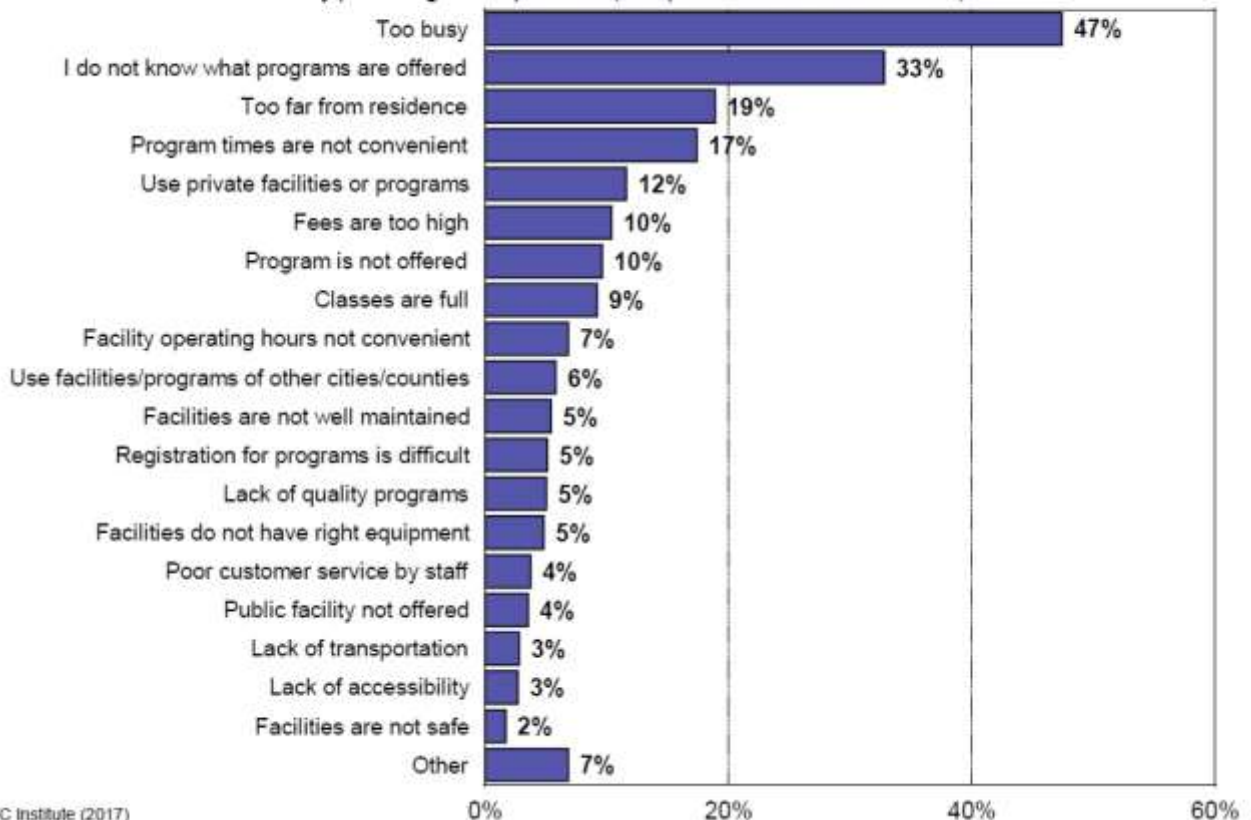


### BARRIERS TO PARK, FACILITY AND PROGRAM USAGE

Respondents were asked from a list of 20 potential reasons to identify what prevents them from using parks, recreation facilities, or programs of the M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks and Montgomery County Recreation Department more often. The top four reasons selected were: being too busy (47%), not knowing what programs are offered (33%), programs are too far from the residence (19%), and program times are not convenient (17%).

#### Q7. Reasons why your household does not use parks, recreation facilities, or programs of the M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks and Montgomery County Recreation Department more often.

by percentage of respondents (multiple selections could be made)

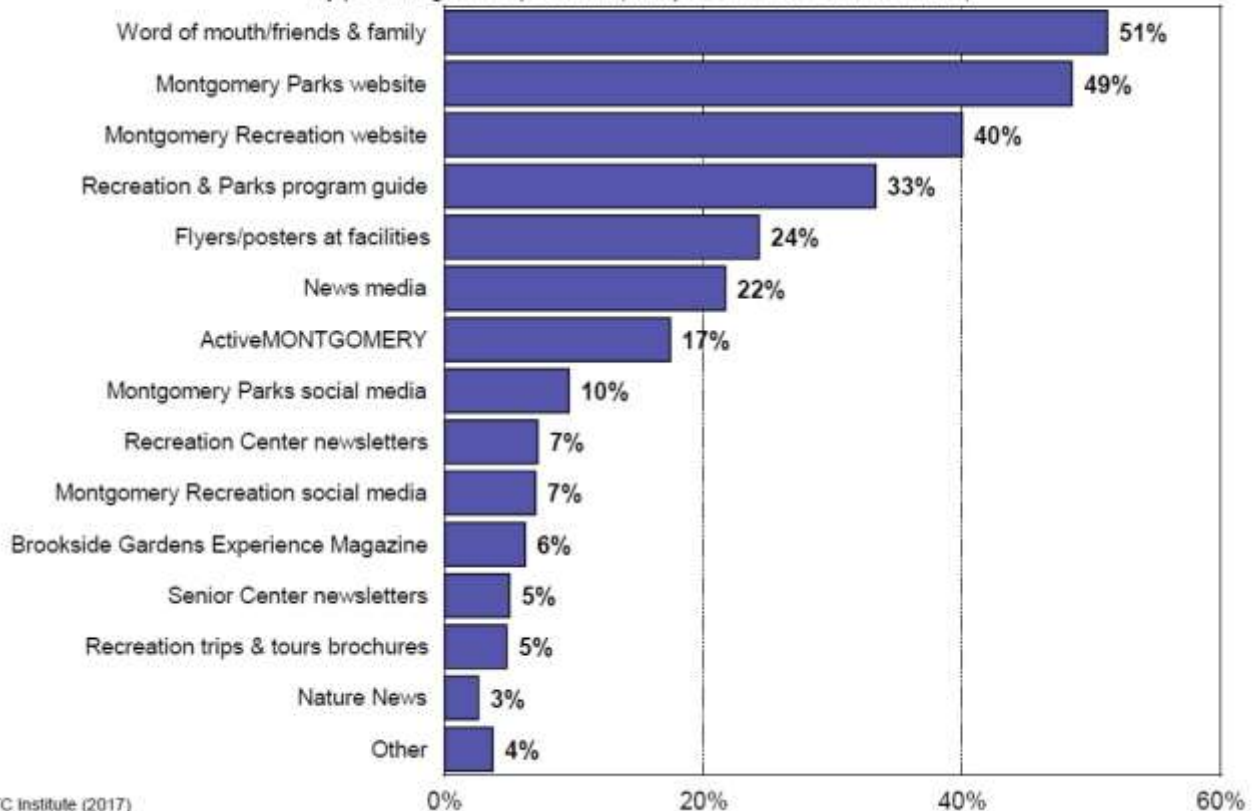


ETC Institute (2017)

Fifty-one percent (51%) of respondents indicated they learn about M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks and Montgomery County Recreation Department programs and activities by word of mouth from friends and family, 29% use the Montgomery Parks website, 40% use the Montgomery Recreation website, and 33% use the Recreation and Parks program guide.

### Q18. Ways respondents learn about M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks and Montgomery County Recreation Department programs and activities

by percentage of respondents (multiple selections could be made)

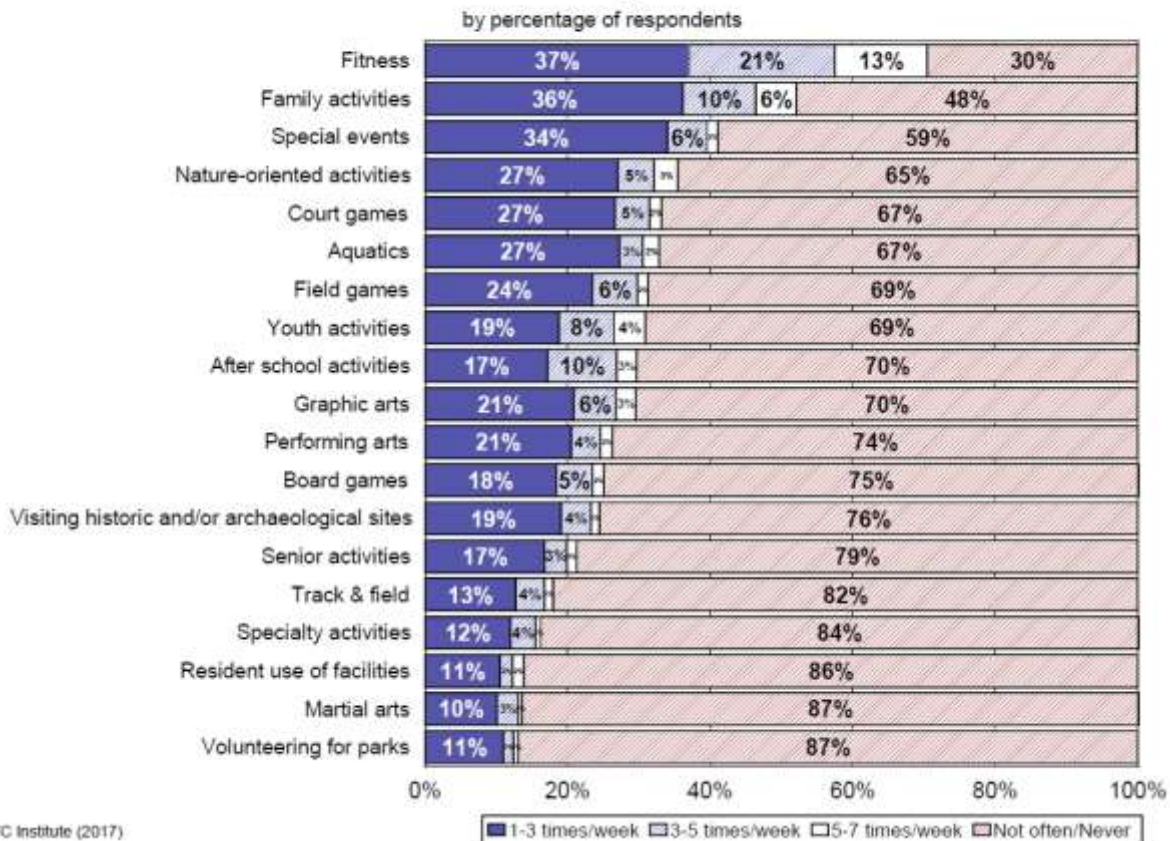




## CURRENT PARTICIPATION IN RECREATION ACTIVITIES

All 705 respondents indicated how often they currently participate in 19 various activities, and indicated how their usage of those facilities may change over the next ten years. The three facilities which respondents indicated they participated in most often, based on the sum of 1-3 times/week, 3-5 times/week, and 5-7 times/week responses were: fitness (weight lifting, aerobics, walk/jobbing, yoga, Zumba, Pilates, spinning, nutrition, etc.) (71%), family activities, (52%), and special events (concerts, festivals, movie nights, etc.) (42%).

### Q14. How often respondents currently participate in the following activities.

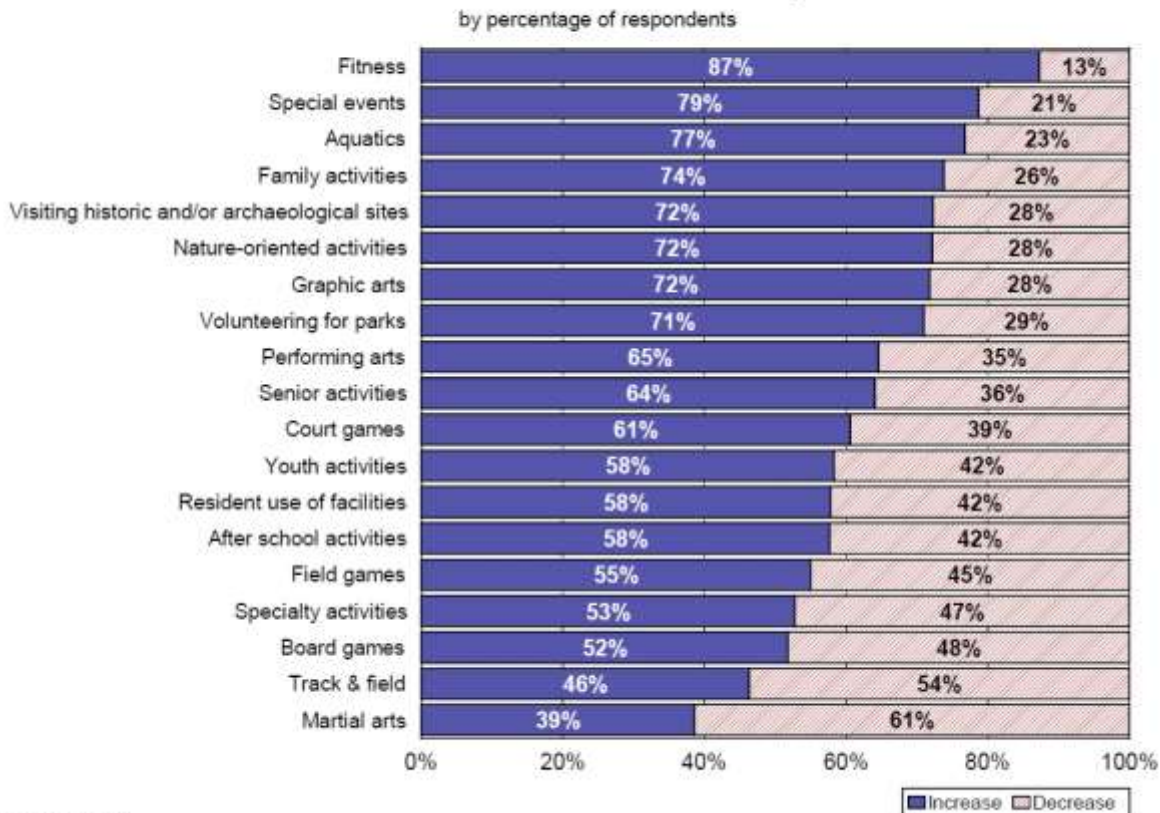


ETC Institute (2017)

Eighty-seven percent (87%) of respondents indicated they rarely (not often/never) participate in volunteering for parks (stream cleanups, weed warriors, water quality monitoring, trail building and maintenance, tree planting, deer management, public gardens, nature centers) and martial arts (karate, boxing, judo, etc.). Martial arts also received the highest number of respondents who indicated their participation in the program would decrease over the next 10 years.

Eighty-seven percent (87%) of respondents indicated their participation in fitness (weight lifting, aerobics, walk/jobbing, yoga, Zumba, Pilates, spinning, nutrition, etc.) activities would increase over the next 10 years, 79% indicated their participation in special events (concerts, festivals, movie nights, etc.) would increase over the next 10 years, and 77% of respondents indicated their participation in aquatics (swimming, diving, competition, scuba, etc.) would increase over the next 10 years.

### Q14-1. How will the usage of the following types of activities increase or decrease over the next 10 years?



ETC Institute (2017)



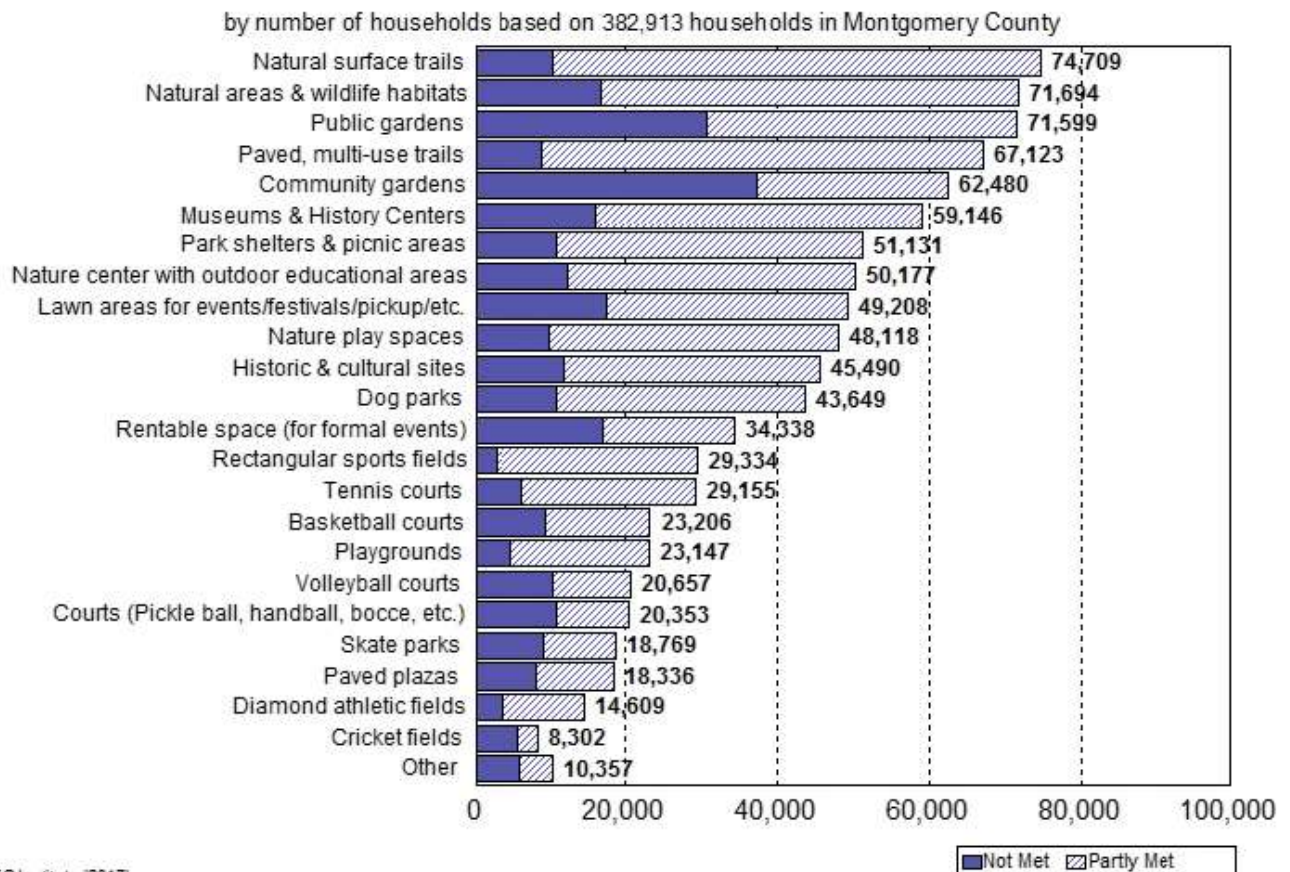


## FACILITY NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

**Facility Needs:** Respondents were asked to identify if their household had a need for 24 recreation facilities and amenities and rate how well their needs for each were currently being met. Based on this analysis, ETC Institute was able to estimate the number of households in the community that had the greatest “unmet” need for various facilities.

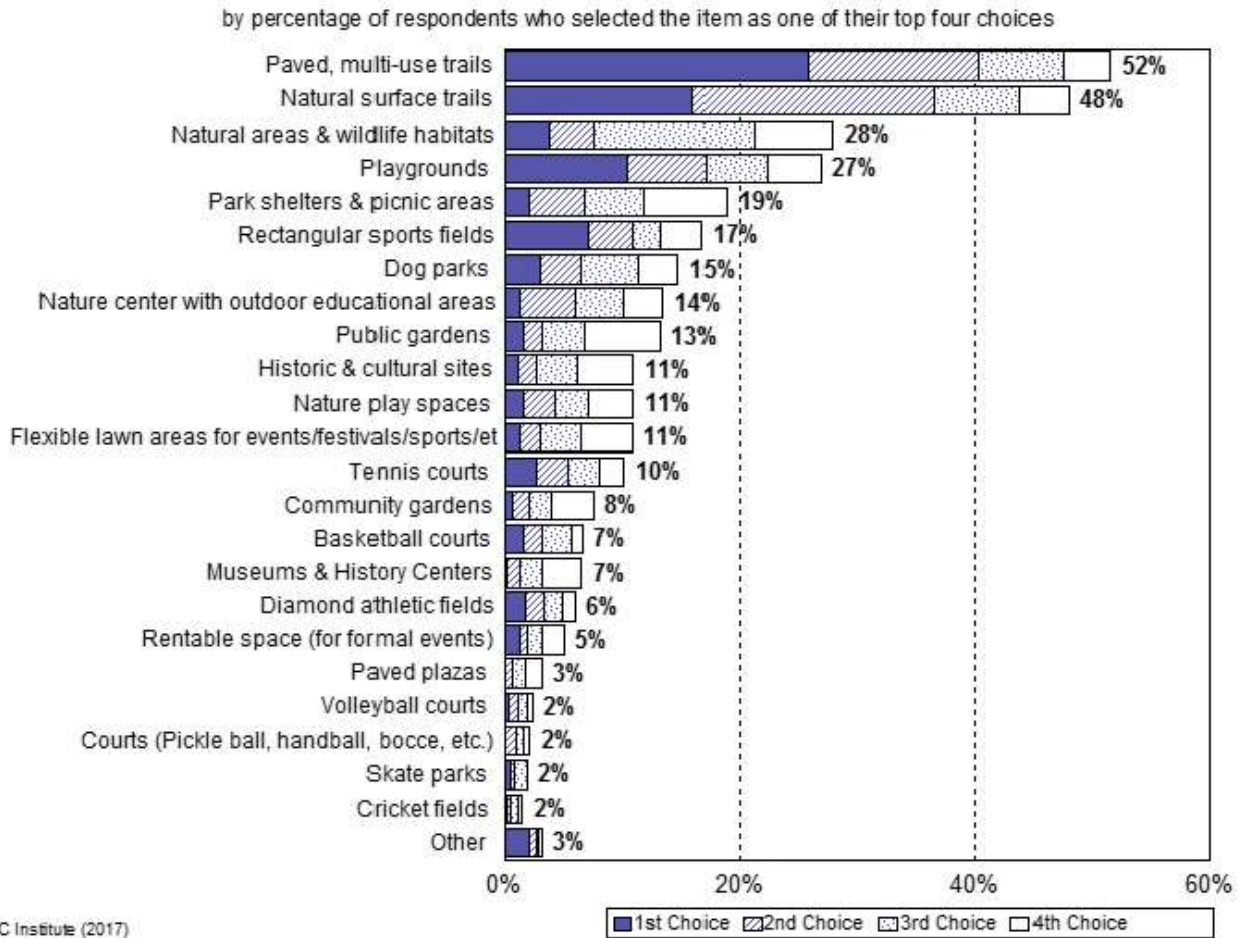
The three recreation facilities with the highest percentage of households that indicated a need for the facility were: paved, multi-use trails (walking, biking) (70%), natural surface trails (walking, biking, horse-back riding) (69%), and natural areas and wildlife habitats (52%). When ETC Institute analyzed the needs in the community, three facilities had an unmet need that affected more than 70,000 households. ETC Institute estimates a total of 74,709 of the 382,913 households in Montgomery County have unmet needs for natural surface trails (walking, biking, horse-back riding). The estimated number of households that have unmet needs for each of the 24 facilities that were assessed is shown in the chart below.

### Q10-3. Estimated Number of Households Whose Needs for Facilities Are Being Partly Met or Not Met



**Facility Importance:** In addition to assessing the needs for each facility, ETC Institute also assessed the importance that residents placed on each facility. Based on the sum of respondents' top four choices, the three most important facilities to residents were: paved, multi-use trails (walking, biking) (52%), natural surface trails (walking, biking, horse-back riding) (48%), and natural areas and wildlife habitats (28%). The percentage of residents who selected each facility as one of their top four choices is shown in the chart below.

### Q11. Which four facilities are most important to your household?







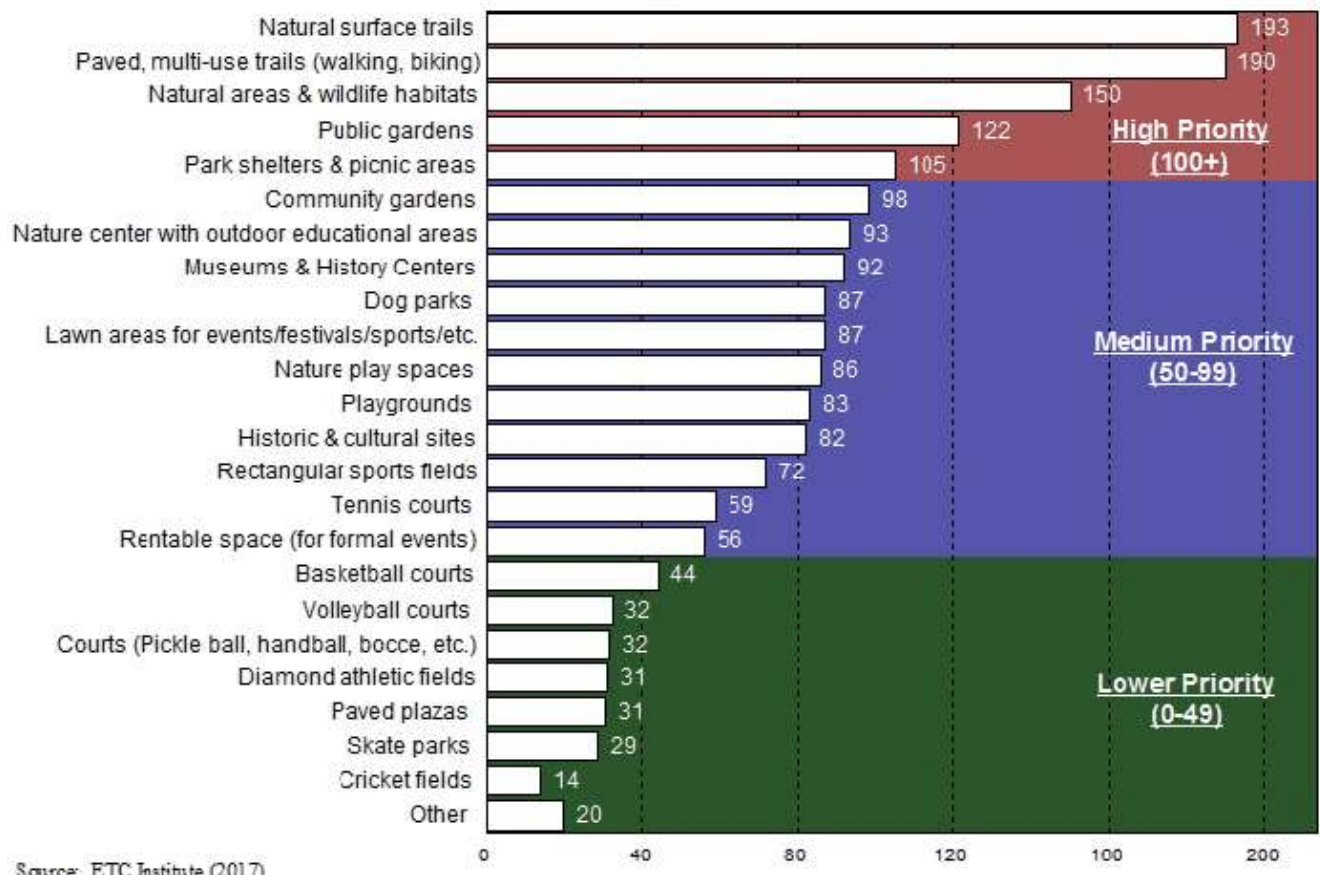
**Priorities for Facility Investments:** The Priority Investment Rating (PIR) was developed by ETC Institute to provide organizations with an objective tool for evaluating the priority that should be placed on parks and recreation investments. The Priority Investment Rating (PIR) equally weights (1) the importance that residents place on facilities and (2) how many residents have unmet needs for the facility.

Based the Priority Investment Rating (PIR), the following five facilities were rated as high priorities for investment:

- Natural surface trails (walking, biking, horse-back riding) (PIR=193)
- Paved, multi-use trails (walking, biking) (PIR=190)
- Natural areas and wildlife habitats (PIR=150)
- Public gardens (PIR=122)
- Park shelters and picnic areas (PIR=105)

The chart on the following page shows the Priority Investment Rating for each of the 24 facilities that were assessed on the survey.

## Top Priorities for Investment for Recreation Facilities Based on the Priority Investment Rating



### ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

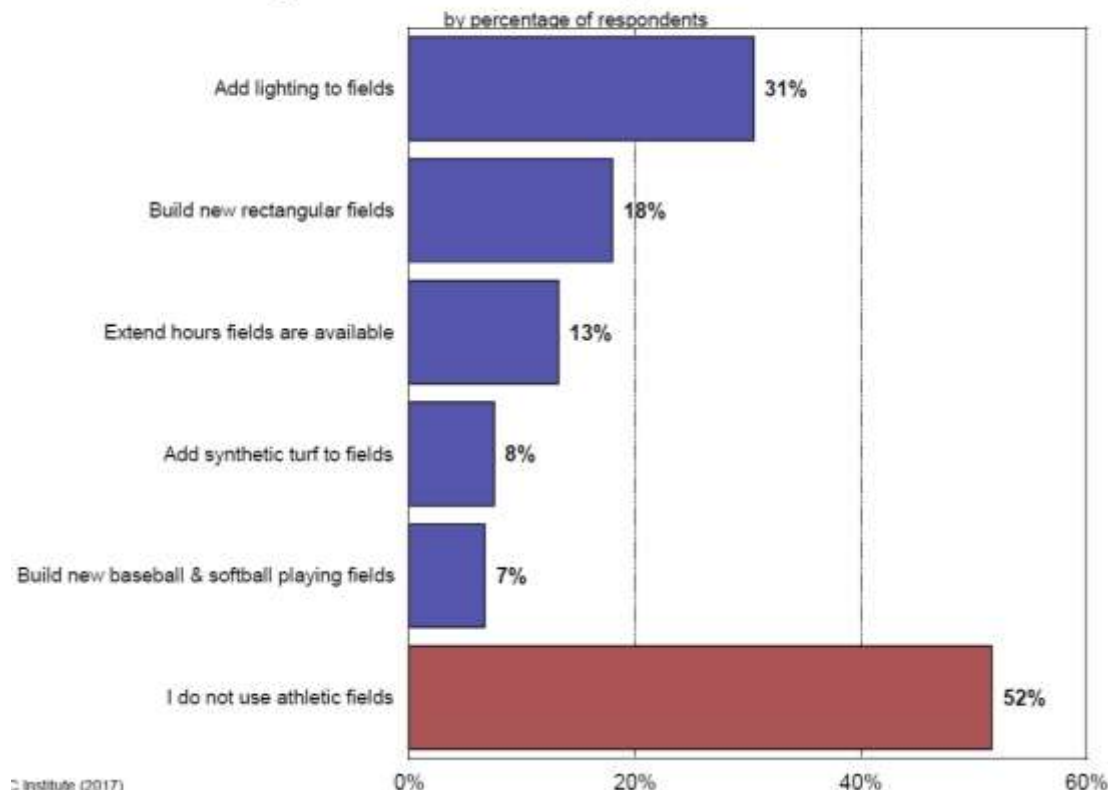
Montgomery County asked its respondents to indicate the ways they travel to parks, trails, and recreation facilities in the County. The most used methods of transportation are driving (89%), walking (77%), and biking (39%) followed by the Metrorail (12%) and bus (9%).

- A majority of respondents indicated the latest they would consider using outdoor recreation facilities was between 8pm and 9pm during weekends and weekdays.
- Roughly one out of three respondents indicated the latest they would consider using indoor recreation facilities was between 9pm and 10pm or 8pm and 9pm during the weekends and weekdays.
- The most important improvements that could be made to baseball, softball, and rectangular fields are:
  - Add lighting to fields (31%)
  - Building new rectangular fields (18%)
  - Extend hours fields are available (13%)

Most (52%) of respondents indicated they do not use athletic fields.

- Fifty-seven percent (57%) of respondents indicated M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks and Montgomery County Recreation Department should ensure children (under 13) and teens (ages 13-17) are their top priority to serve for programs.
- Fifty-percent (50%) of respondents indicated they would be interested in using surveys in the future as a public engagement tool, 38% indicated community events, and 32% indicated they would use online forums.

#### Q16. Which two improvements are most important to you and members of your household?





## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Facility Priorities:** When analyzing the facilities offered by M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks the three most important facilities to households were also among the highest for unmet need. ETC Institute estimates that at least 65,000 households in Montgomery County have unmet needs for paved, multi-use trails (walking, biking), natural areas and wildlife habitats, and natural surface trails (walking, biking, horse-back riding). Focusing on these facilities within the County would provide the greatest benefit for the largest number of residents.

In order to ensure that Montgomery County continues to meet the needs and expectations of the community, ETC Institute recommends that M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks sustain and/or improve the performance in areas that were identified as “high priorities” by the Priority Investment Rating (PIR). The facilities and programs with the highest PIR ratings are listed below.

### Facility Priorities

- Natural surface trails (walking, biking, horse-back riding) (PIR=193)
- Paved, multi-use trails (walking, biking) (PIR=190)
- Natural areas and wildlife habitats (PIR=150)
- Public gardens (PIR=122)
- Park shelters and picnic areas (PIR=105)

**Action Items:** When given a list of 13 action items respondents indicated the three most important actions for M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks and the Montgomery County Recreation Department to prioritize based on the sum of respondents’ top three choices, are: providing opportunities to improve physical health and fitness (54%), conserve natural resources and the environment (45%), providing recreation facilities/programs for children and teens (29%), and making Montgomery County a more desirable place to live (29%). Providing history programs (6%) was the least important action for respondents.

**Funding Priorities:** The four actions respondents are most supportive of M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks and Montgomery County Recreation Department funding with tax dollars in order to improve the Parks and Recreation system, based on the sum of respondents’ top four choices, are:

- Repair/renovate existing park facilities (49%)
- Purchase land for natural resource protection and conservation for future generations (45%)
- Develop new walking/biking trails and connect existing trails (40%)
- Purchase land for developing trails (29%)

For complete survey results, reference **Appendix A**.

## CHAPTER FOUR - KEY STAKEHOLDER FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS

### 4.1 OVERVIEW

Communities Connect Consulting was retained for professional experts' services to conduct an extensive public engagement outreach effort, focused on minority communities and to assist in the development of *the 2017 Montgomery County Parks, Recreation and Open Space*

*(PROS) Plan Update*. Montgomery County Parks encouraged the involvement and participation of the minority communities in the planning and review process.



Over a period of four weeks, six (6) focus groups consisting of 61 total participants were conducted with an experienced facilitator, a native language interpreter, and a research analyst to record notes. Throughout the process, all ideas from the public were carefully documented, and used to summarize the development of the outreach plan to the minority communities.

These focus groups were open to individuals who live, in the selected specific minority population areas. The group was evenly distributed in terms of race/ethnicity, with 30% African American, African, or Black; 33% Hispanic and/or Latino; and 37% Asian or Pacific Islander. Participants resided in 16 different zip codes, and ranged from recent arrivals to residents living in the U.S. between 5-10 years. Of participants, 58% were female and 42% were male.

### 4.2 METHODOLOGY

From the beginning of February 2017, the Communities Connect team orchestrated a diverse public involvement process that incorporated an intense outreach effort in the minority communities organizing six (6) focus groups to hear what the minority communities of Montgomery County had to say, gathering opinions, beliefs and attitudes, encouraging discussion and providing an opportunity to learn more about the parks. The focus group team was able to deal tactfully with outspoken group members, keep the discussion on track, and made sure every participant was heard.

In order to gather input and test ideas with the public, the focus groups were held over a period of four weeks. These focus groups were open to individuals who live in the selected specific minority population areas and were consistently well attended, indicating a strong community interest in the future of the Parks.

Following Communities Connect's introduction presentation, participants were asked to respond to five (5) questions in order to gather verbal feedback. Additionally, respondents were asked to fill out an eight (8) question survey. Each focus group was recorded and an audiotape of each meeting is provided as part of the Communities Connect report. Communities Connect engaged in intensive outreach and partnering efforts in order to draw attention to the PROS Plan Outreach process and encourage participation at focus groups. These efforts returned very positive results, as participation at each focus group ranged from 8 to 15 people.

### 4.3 FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

In this report, findings have been summarized by focus group to show preferences by country of origin. Key themes from all focus groups have also been extracted to demonstrate overall non-native resident preferences. In addition, location information was gathered from each participant, including city, zip code, and nearest school. Some participants chose not to state the location of their residence. The following tables detail the location information of participants, where provided.



## FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT SUMMARY

<i>Total Number of Focus Groups</i>	<i>Total Number of Participants</i>
6	61

## CITY OF RESIDENCY

City	%	City	%	City	%
Silver Spring	28%	Wheaton	5%	Bethesda	2%
Gaithersburg	21%	Derwood	3%	Montgomery Village	2%
Takoma Park	10%	Potomac	3%	Rockville	2%
North Potomac	5%	Bel Air	2%	No response	18%

## ZIP CODE OF RESIDENCY

ZIP CODE	%
20902	15%
20877	13%
20878	8%
20904	8%
20912	8%
20901	7%
20906	5%
20817	3%
20855	3%
20879	3%
20886	3%
20852	2%
20854	2%
20905	2%
20910	2%
21014	2%
29854	2%
No response	13%

## NEAREST SCHOOL TO RESIDENCE

SCHOOL	%
Gaithersburg High School	7%
Arcola Elementary School	5%
Candlewood Elementary School	3%
Fairland Elementary School	3%
Georgian Forest Elementary School	3%
Highland Elementary School	3%
Potomac Elementary School	3%
Stone Mill Elementary School	3%
Ashburton Elementary School	2%
Blair High School	2%
Brown Station Elementary School	2%
Burnt Mills Elementary School	2%
Cannon Road Elementary School	2%
Davis Library	2%
Falls Mead Elementary School	2%
Farmland Elementary School	2%
Glen Haven Elementary School	2%
Glenallen Elementary School	2%
Jones Lane Elementary School	2%
Leiderman School	2%
Page Elementary School	2%
Piney Branch Elementary School	2%
Sligo Creek Elementary School	2%
Stedwik Elementary School	2%
Stonegate Elementary School	2%
Westwood School	2%
No response	39%

Zip Code of Residency					
20902	15%	20906	5%	20854	2%
20877	13%	20817	3%	20905	2%
20878	8%	20855	3%	20910	2%
20904	8%	20879	3%	21014	2%
20912	8%	20886	3%	29854	2%
20901	7%	20852	2%	No response	13%

Nearest School to Residence					
Gaithersburg High School	7%	Blair High School	2%	Jones Lane Elementary School	
Arcola Elementary School	5%	Brown Station Elementary School	2%	Leiderman School	
Candlewood Elementary School	3%	Burnt Mills Elementary School	2%	Page Elementary School	
Fairland Elementary School	3%	Cannon Road Elementary School	2%	Piney Branch Elementary School	
Georgian Forest Elementary School	3%	Davis Library	2%	Sligo Creek Elementary School	
Highland Elementary School	3%	Falls Mead Elementary School	2%	Stedwik Elementary School	
Potomac Elementary School	3%	Farmland Elementary School	2%	Stonegate Elementary School	
Stone Mill Elementary School	3%	Glen Haven Elementary School	2%	Westwood School	
Ashburton Elementary School	2%	Glenallen Elementary School	2%	No response	

Demographics and additional context and details regarding the focus group results are included here. Full, detailed responses to questions and the survey can be found in Appendix B, where the full Communities Connect report is provided under separate cover.





## FOCUS GROUP 1: UP-COUNTY

### DEMOGRAPHICS

**Focus Group No.:** 1

**Date:** February 16, 2017

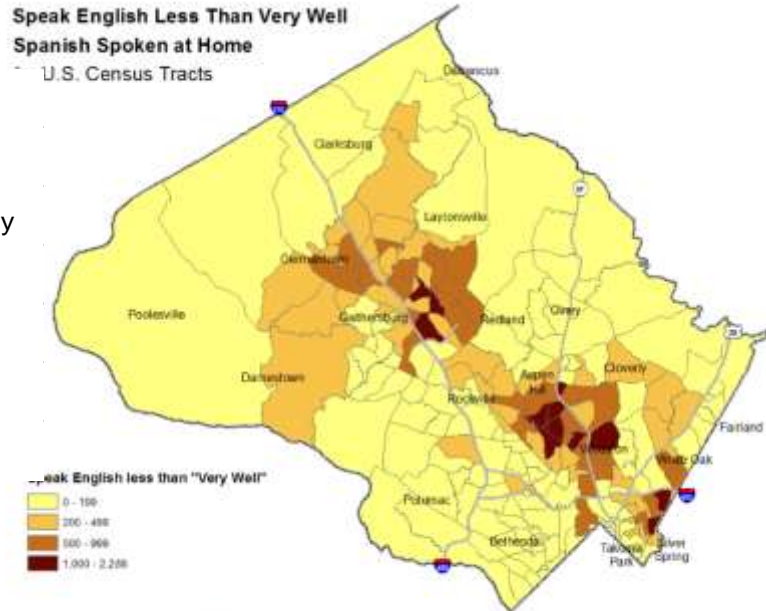
**Geographic site area:** Upcounty

**Language:** Spanish

**# of participants:** 11

**Group:** Latino

**City:** Gaithersburg



### PARTICIPANTS AND FINDINGS

This group was characterized by generally having small children in the household. Participants generally use the parks to spend time with family and for social gatherings. The group in this session had two recurring concerns:

- (1) That there should be more focus on facilities and amenities for small children ages 2 - 3 and their parents and;
- (2) that there should be more efforts for safety, particularly with security and lighting issues being highlighted.

A variety of amenity and facility related desires were mentioned, including vending areas to buy water, benches, and a place to change the children. Ten years from now, participants would like to see more parks, bigger parks, and parks with more activities for children and sports. The group also expressed that they would like the park to communicate more with them in their language and in ways that are representative of their communities. Additionally, some expressed confusion regarding permitting processes.

#	Name	Country of Origin
1	Cristian	Honduras
2	Reyna	El Salvador
3	Rafael	El Salvador
4	Myrna	El Salvador
5	Cindy	El Salvador
6	Mynor	Guatemala
7	Lastenia	Ecuador
8	Ana	El Salvador
9	Gilberto	El Salvador
10	German	El Salvador

## FOCUS GROUP 2: MID-COUNTY

### DEMOGRAPHICS

**Focus Group No.:** 2

**Date:** February 17, 2017

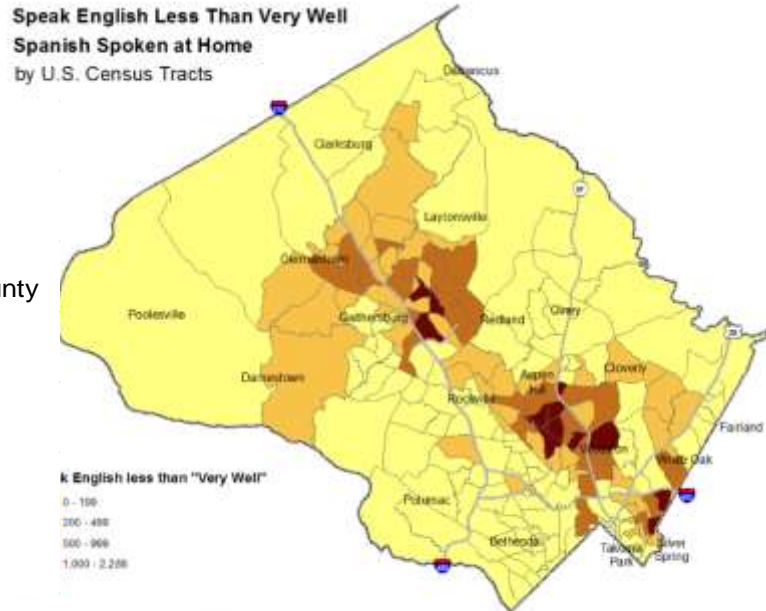
**Geographic site area:** Mid-County

**Language:** Spanish

**# of participants:** 10

**Group:** Latino

**City:** Wheaton



### PARTICIPANTS AND FINDINGS

Generally, the group in this session had four recurring concerns:

- 1) Safety and security with a focus on illicit activities and concerns about poor lighting;
- (2) Having more services for children, including programming and spaces where small children can play safely;
- (3) Accessibility was a recurring theme, particularly with the danger of crossing Georgia Avenue, the high cost of renting facilities; and
- (4) Cleanliness of facilities was also an issue for this group.

This group also expressed the desire for there to be vending at the parks. Additionally, this group discussed the need for more outreach and communication from the parks to the community to facilitate accessibility for community members. It is worth noting that this group also discusses language barriers and wanting more culturally relevant programming as sub-themes of accessibility of the parks. Though not discussed in depth in the focus group, survey responses showed a desire from participants of this focus group to conduct outreach to better serve the elderly.

#	Name	Country of Origin
1	Ana Maria	Peru
2	Nurys	El Salvador
3	Rosa	Honduras
4	Maria	Honduras
5	Lina	El Salvador
6	Socorro	Venezuela
7	Yissel	Puerto Rico
8	Brenda	Puerto Rico
9	Margarita	Mexico
10	Monica	Mexico
11	Alan	
12	Patrick	



## FOCUS GROUP 3: DOWN-EAST COUNTY

### DEMOGRAPHICS

**Focus Group No.:** 3

**Date:** February 20, 2017

**Geographic site area:** Down & East County

**Language:** African, French

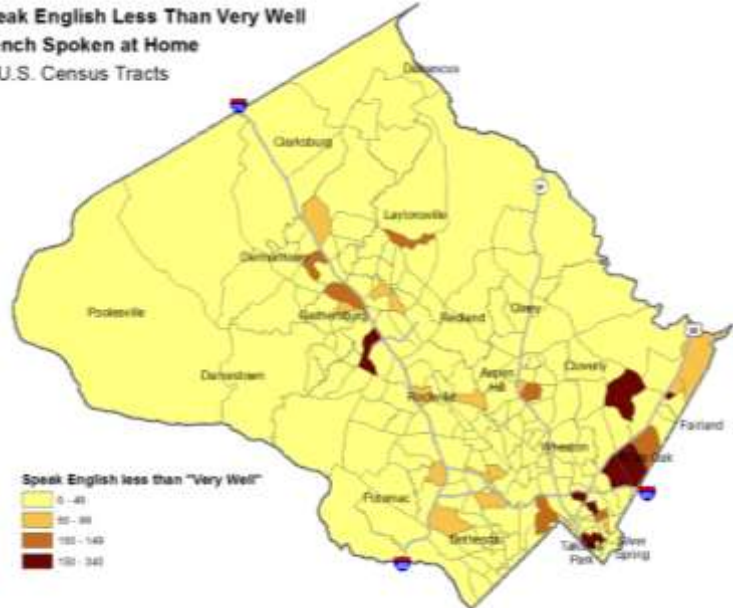
**# of Participants:** 9

**Group:** African

**City:** Silver Spring/ Takoma

**Zipcodes Represented:** 20901(2) 20912(4)

Speak English Less Than Very Well  
French Spoken at Home  
by U.S. Census Tracts



Source: 2010-2014 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates, Research & Special Projects, Montgomery County Planning Dept.

### PARTICIPANTS AND FINDINGS

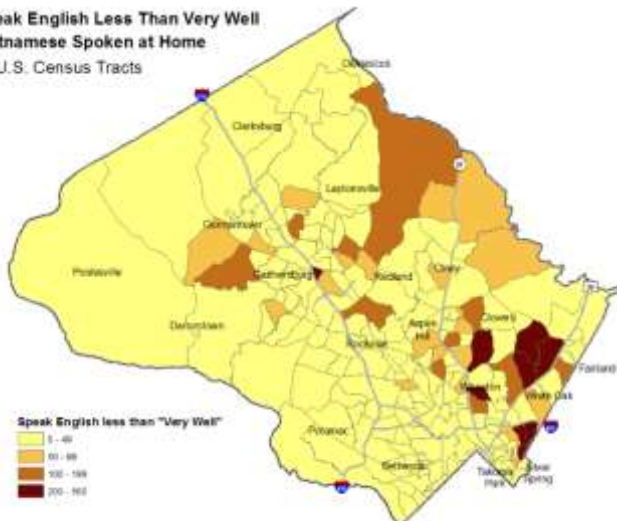
Answers in this focus group were characterized by having settled in Montgomery County very recently compared to other focus groups. All but one respondent indicated they have lived in Montgomery County for less than one year. Some participants in this group had not yet had the opportunity to visit a park however many spoke about what a park is like in their native country and what they would like to see here.

Participants were primarily interested in having more varied and targeted sports activities like health and wellness programming for people of all ages. It was also important to this group that the park act as a place of building community through social gatherings so people can meet each other. Cleanliness of the parks, including trails, was an issue that came up as well for this focus group. This group was much less familiar with Montgomery County Parks and how they operate and felt that transportation was a barrier to park access as well as expressed the importance of park guidance, including signage.

#	Name	Country of Origin
1	Cyprius	Cameroon
2	Ines	Cameroon
3	Fuka	Cameroon
4	Oliedraogo	Burkin-Faso
5	Chabrol	Cameroon
6	Yves	Cameroon
7	Christele	Cameroon
8	Wamo	Cameroon
9	Beacon	Cameroon

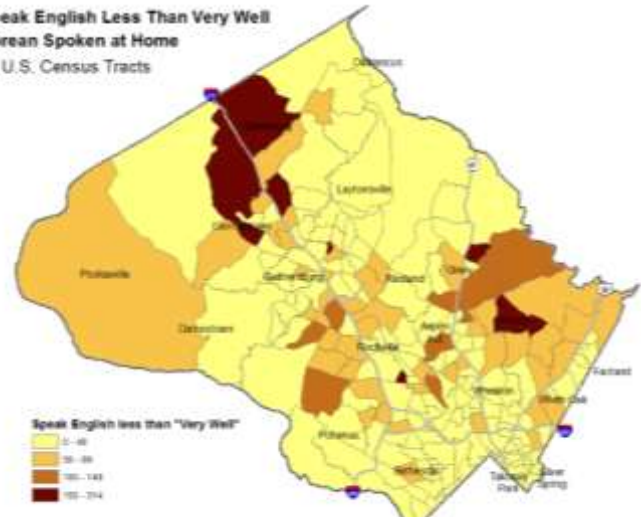
## FOCUS GROUP 4: UP-DOWN EAST COUNTY

**Speak English Less Than Very Well  
Vietnamese Spoken at Home**  
by U.S. Census Tracts



Source: 2010-2014 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates, Research & Special Projects, Montgomery County Planning Dept.

**Speak English Less Than Very Well  
Korean Spoken at Home**  
by U.S. Census Tracts



Source: 2010-2014 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates, Research & Special Projects, Montgomery County Planning Dept.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Focus Group No.: 4  
Language: Asian

Date: February 21, 2017  
# of Answers: 12

Geographic Site Area: Up - Down county  
Group: Asian Pacific

## PARTICIPANTS AND FINDINGS

Participants in this focus group highly stressed the importance of various types of programming, including health and fitness programming, cultural programming, and events. This group talked about parks as meeting points and vehicles for community building and gatherings. In regards to increased accessibility to the parks, this group discussed transportation, proximity, and more outreach to diverse communities, youth and seniors.

#	Name	Country of Origin
1	Tho	
2	Stan	
3	Matthew	
4	Asoka	
5	Ashima	
6	Rajika	
7	Song	
8	Diane	
9	Sam	
10	Nazmin	
11	Ishani	
12	Neel	
13	Jaemin	



## FOCUS GROUP 5: DOWN-EAST COUNTY

### DEMOGRAPHICS

**Focus Group No.:** 5

**Date:** 02/24/2017

**Geographic site area:** Down & East County

**Language:** African, Amharic

**# of Answers:** 9

**Group:** Ethiopian/Ethiopian American

**City:** East Silver Spring



### PARTICIPANTS AND FINDINGS

Participants in this focus group predominantly utilize parks for health and fitness and sports. When discussing improvements, participants stressed the need for more security and regards for safety.

Importantly, this group discussed ways that the parks can better engage communities to further their mission, including through partnerships with schools, volunteerism and cultural programming. Regarding how the parks can best reach out to the community participants suggested not focusing only on online outreach but also to conducting outreach through more traditional media such as print (flyers, grocery stores, schedule inserts) and radio.

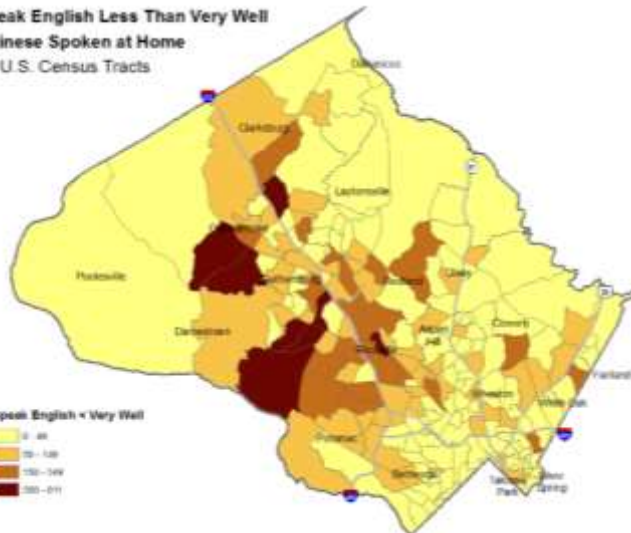
The desire for urban parks was also expressed along with the concern that with increased population in the county, there should be close attention paid to preserving existing green spaces.

#	Name	Country of Origin
1	Helena	Ethiopia
2	Ephrem	Ethiopia
3	Saba	Ethiopia
4	Mekedes	Ethiopia
5	Abdurahr	Ethiopia
6	Tilahum	Ethiopia
7	Wondwos	Ethiopia
8	Rebecca	Ethiopia
9	Amde	Ethiopia



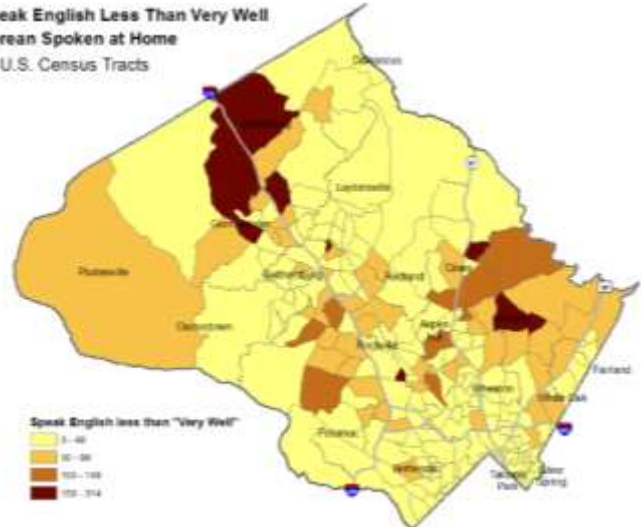
**FOCUS GROUP 6: UP-WEST COUNTY****DEMOGRAPHICS**

**Speak English Less Than Very Well  
Chinese Spoken at Home  
by U.S. Census Tracts**



Source: 2010-2014 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates; Research & Special Projects, Montgomery County Planning Dept.

**Speak English Less Than Very Well  
Korean Spoken at Home  
by U.S. Census Tracts**



Source: 2010-2014 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates; Research & Special Projects, Montgomery County Planning Dept.

Focus Group No.: 6  
Language: Asian

Date: March 3, 2017  
# of Answers: 12

Geographic Site Area: Up - West County  
Group: Asian

**PARTICIPANTS AND FINDINGS**

For this focus group, culturally relevant programming and park design came up as prominent themes. Participants expressed that they would like to see parks utilized as centers to promote cultural understanding and learning particularly through more programming and events.

Regarding events, some participants felt there could be expanded capacity to accommodate large outdoor events that would need staging and other related equipment like concerts. The majority of participants indicated that they currently utilize the parks for social gatherings with large groups of people like alumni associations or church members. It was suggested to work in partnership with the community, particularly through non-profits to accomplish more cultural programming. Respondents expressed concern with the high cost of Montgomery County Parks as compared to other similar services or adjacent counties.

#	Name	Country of Origin
1	Corinna	
2	Angela	
3	Li-Fang	
4	Kihoon	
5	Haiwen	
6	Su Lee	
7	Liu	
8	HyunSook	
9	Annie	
10	Sunghee	
11	Hyunoo	
12	Chung	





## KEY THEMES FROM ALL FOCUS GROUPS

The consulting team analyzed the results of all of the focus group and survey responses, and identified the following major themes:

### Improve Park Security and Safety

Eliminate illicit/illegal activities and make improvements to poor lighting. Decrease the danger of crossing Georgia Avenue by making pedestrian improvements, and provide visible security such as cameras/video recording and security personnel presence within parks and open space facilities.

### Cleanliness of Facilities

Improve the cleanliness of the facilities, including trails, and trash removal.

### Programming

Provide more varied and targeted sports activities and health and wellness programming for people of all ages. Target and improve programs for small children ages 2-3. Provide more cultural programming and events.

### Physical Facilities

Increase facilities and amenities for small children ages 2-3 including spaces where small children can play safely and their parents can engage in meaningful activities. There is a desire for more urbanized parks to preserve existing green spaces in communities, located within walking distance. Expand the park capacity to accommodate large outdoor events that would need staging and other related equipment for venues such as concerts.

### Engage Communities

Further the mission of the communities, through partnerships with schools, volunteerism and cultural programs. Many residents currently utilize the parks for social gatherings for large groups of people to hold events for alumni associations, churches, and culturally relevant programs.

Utilize parks as meeting points and vehicles for community building and gatherings. The parks should function as a place for building community through social gatherings so that people can meet each other. Work in partnership with the community, through nonprofits to accomplish more cultural programming. Parks should be utilized as centers to promote cultural understanding and learning particularly through more ethnic programming and events.

### Accessibility

Eliminate language barriers in staffing and signage. Conduct outreach to better serve the elderly and families. Eliminate the high cost of utilizing Montgomery County Parks as compared to other similar services or those in adjacent counties.

Provide outreach through more traditional media such as print (flyers, grocery stores, schedule inserts) and radio. Regular communication is needed from the parks to the community to facilitate accessibility for community members. The high cost of renting facilities is prohibitive. Transportation cost is a barrier to park access for many participants.

## CHAPTER FIVE - INTERCEPT SURVEY #1- USAGE, INTEREST, AND MARKETING PREFERENCES

### 5.1 OVERVIEW

In order to understand the needs and desires of the community, the PROS Consulting team collected survey information from residents and system users via intercept survey method. The surveys were conducted December 2016 throughout February 2017.

The purpose of these surveys was to help develop a better understanding of the needs, preferences, and satisfaction levels of Montgomery County residents in relation to parks, natural resources, and recreation activities. The goal was to obtain completed surveys from at least 150 residents/system users. The goal was exceeded and a total of 174 responses were collected throughout this process.

### 5.2 METHODOLOGY

The project team used “intercept surveys” to collect information from the public about the system. Intercept surveys are conducted in-person, in a public place, and consist of a short, quick interview about a certain topic. In this case, the intercept survey consisted of three questions, and were carried in local parks, recreation centers, grocery stores, and churches. Gathering community input in this way allows Montgomery County to understand the perspectives of both users and non-users.

Intercept Survey #1 was administered by members of the PROS Consulting team, which included Mandarin, Spanish, and Hindi translators, to enable survey collection from a representative cross-section of County residents. There were two rounds of community outreach for this survey:

- Community recreation centers, December 2016
  - Plum Gar Neighborhood Recreation Center
  - Germantown Community Recreation Center
  - Upper County Community Recreation Center
  - Gwendolyn E. Coffield Community Recreation Center
  - Long Branch Community Recreation Center
  - White Oak Community Recreation Center
- Local grocery stores, churches, and parks, February 2017
  - Islamic Society of Germantown (ISG)
  - Great Wall Supermarket
  - Everlu Food
  - Angkor Supermarket
  - Wheaton Regional Park

Respondents were asked whether they used Montgomery County parks and facilities; if yes which parks they preferred, and if no, why not. They were also asked if there were any programs and amenities that should be added or changed, and how they would like to be communicated with in the future regarding program offerings, events, etc. Respondents were also given the opportunity to provide additional comments via an open-ended question. Surveys were offered in English, Spanish, Mandarin and Hindi. Consultants noted that some were reluctant to complete the survey, possibly signaling distrust or fear.



### 5.3 SURVEY RESULTS

The following is an overview of the top 5 answers given for each question:

#### PARK AND FACILITY USAGE

The following parks and facilities were **most visited** by those surveyed.

Black Hill  
Regional  
Park

Wheaton  
Regional  
Park

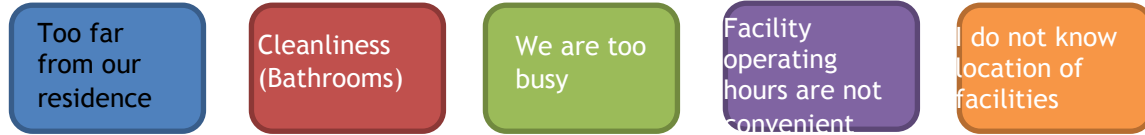
Germantown  
Community Rec  
Center

Johnson's  
Local Park

Plum Gar  
Neighborhood  
Rec Center

### PARTICIPATION BARRIERS

Those that were surveyed indicated that the following barriers prevent respondents from using Montgomery County parks, facilities, and programs.



### PROGRAMS AND AMENITIES

The following programs were considered to be missing or in need of changes in the community by survey respondents.



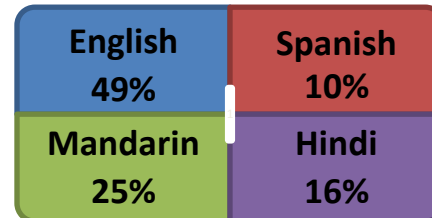
### COMMUNICATION METHODS

Survey participants wanted to be communicated with about future offerings and updates in the following ways.



### RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN BY PREFERRED LANGUAGE

The primary objective for this survey was reach large groups of minority community members. Of respondents who were surveyed, 51% indicated English was a secondary language in their households. Please note that just because a respondent chose to speak English during the intercept survey, doesn't necessarily mean that they don't also speak another language.



### SUMMARY OF OPEN-ENDED QUESTION RESPONSES

The project team pulled our key themes of the open-ended question responses. The following are major areas in which the community expressed needs and desires in response to this survey. Detailed survey responses are included in Appendix C.

- **Positive Feedback.** Almost 30% of the feedback was a positive and satisfied comment.
- **Maintenance.** Survey respondents asked for better maintenance, from outdoor areas such as fields, landscaping beds, and sidewalks/paths to indoor facility maintenance items such as hot water, signage, and steps.
- **Additional amenities.** These items ranged from additional water fountains, waste bags, cell phone service, and restrooms to additional indoor gym space, greenspace, and flower beds.
- **Hours.** Particularly with surveys gathered at the recreation centers, respondents asked for additional operating hours for both facilities and specific programs (ping-pong).
- **Communication.** Survey respondents asked for better communication and outreach regarding updates, programs, and events. Respondents also asked for more outreach in Chinese community.



Montgomery Parks

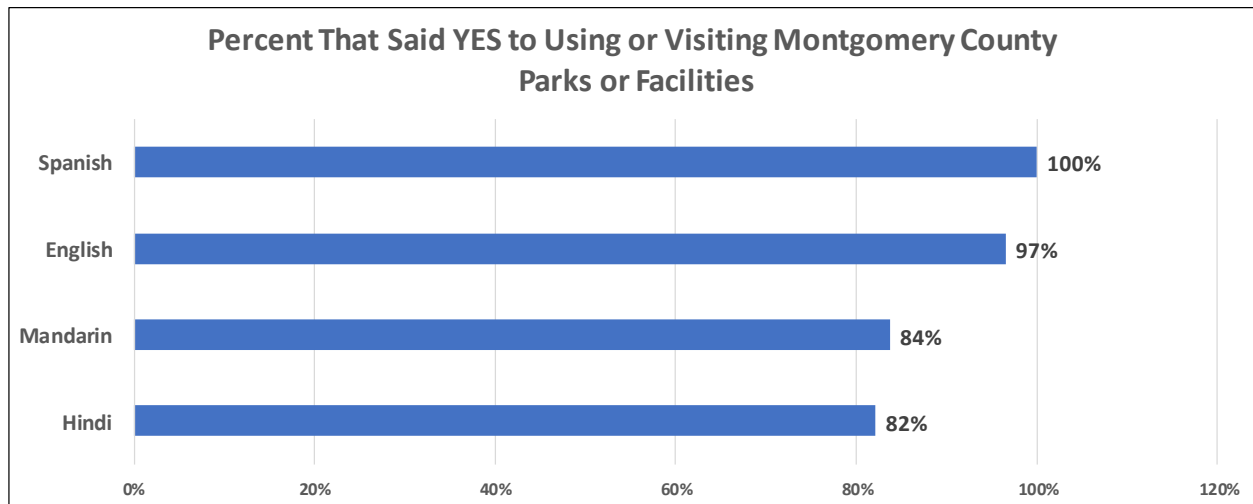
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- **Accessibility, cleanliness, & security.** A few respondents asked for better access to amenities, cleaner amenities, and better security at amenities, both indoor and outdoor.

## MOST VISITED PARKS AND PROGRAM NEEDS

### RESULTS BROKEN DOWN BY PREFERRED LANGUAGE OF RESPONDENTS

**Question #1** in this survey asked respondents whether they use or visit Montgomery County parks or facilities. Results show that all Spanish speakers and most English speakers used parks, while fewer Mandarin and Hindi speakers had done so.



If respondents answered “No” to the first question, they were asked the reasons why they do not use Montgomery County parks or facilities. While not all respondents answered this question, of those that did, the following most common reasons were given, broken down by preferred language:

Reasons survey respondents do not use Montgomery County Parks, by Preferred Language	
Language	Reason, and percentage stating this reason
English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Too far from our residence, 42%</li> <li>Facility operating hours, 25%</li> </ul>
Spanish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Too far from our residence, 100%</li> </ul>
Mandarin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I do not know location of facilities, 20%</li> <li>Other, 30%</li> </ul>
Hindi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilities are not well maintained, 31%</li> <li>We are too busy, 23%</li> </ul>

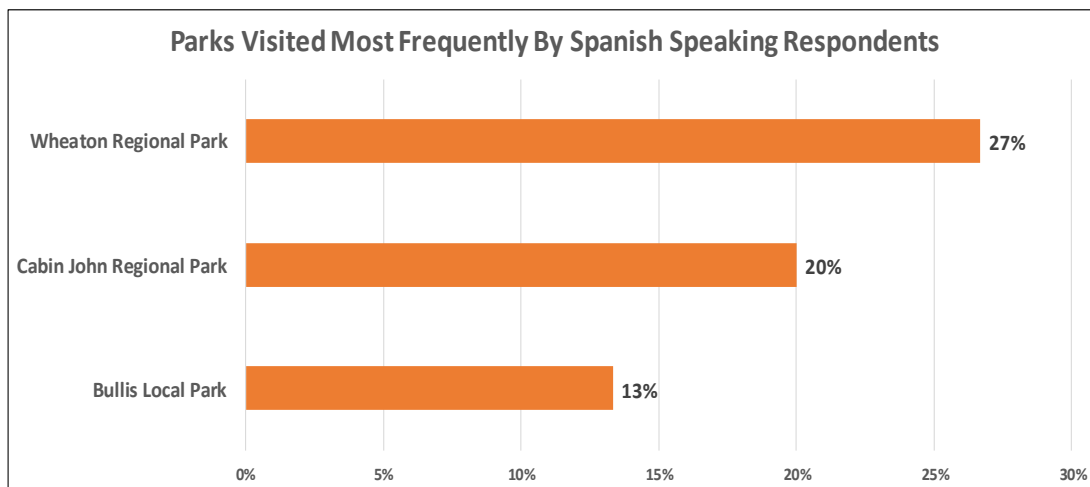
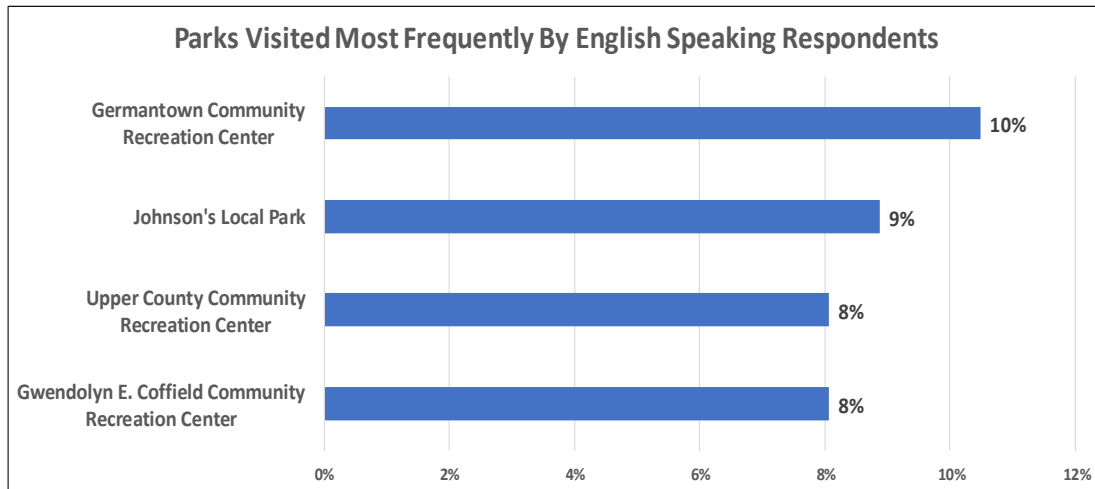
If respondents answered “Yes” to the first question, they were then asked which parks they like to visit most. The four charts on the next page show a breakdown of most visited parks by preferred language. Results show that respondents with English as their preferred language tend to prefer recreation and community centers, while respondents with another language as their preferred language are drawn toward the regional and more nature-based parks.

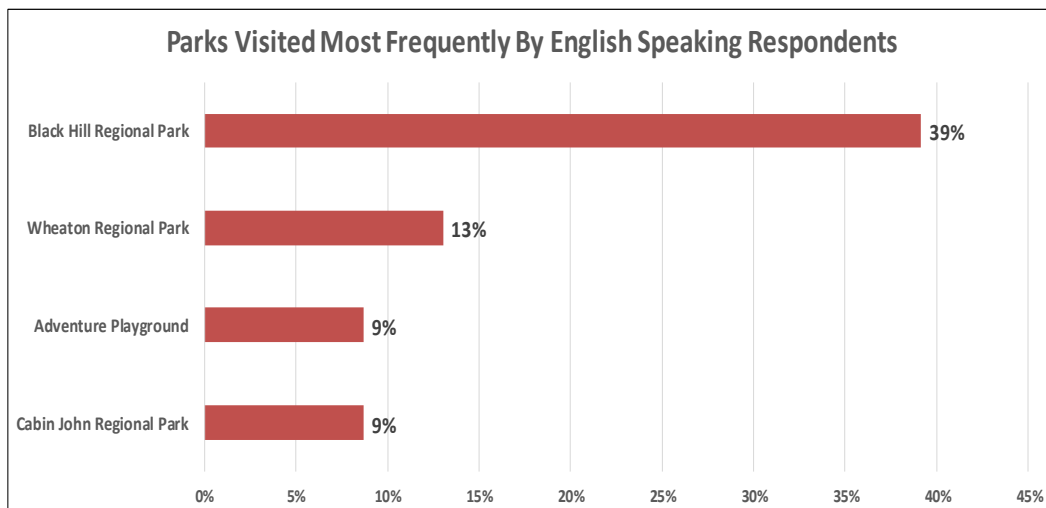
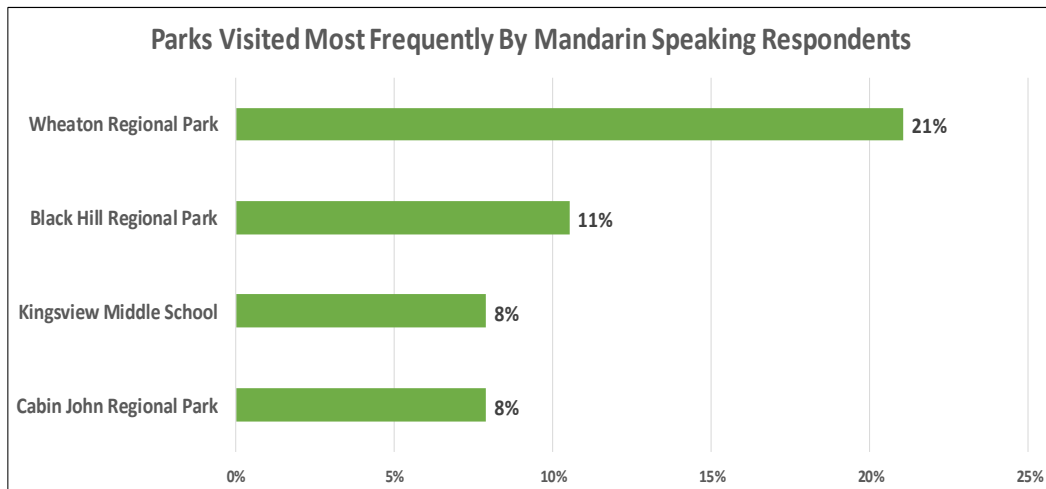
**Question #2** in this survey asked respondents whether there were any park amenities or recreation programs missing in the parks that they visit, or if there is anything they would like to see added or changed to make their experience better. Results show that all respondents want more playground equipment and restrooms, while security is important to Mandarin and Hindi speakers.





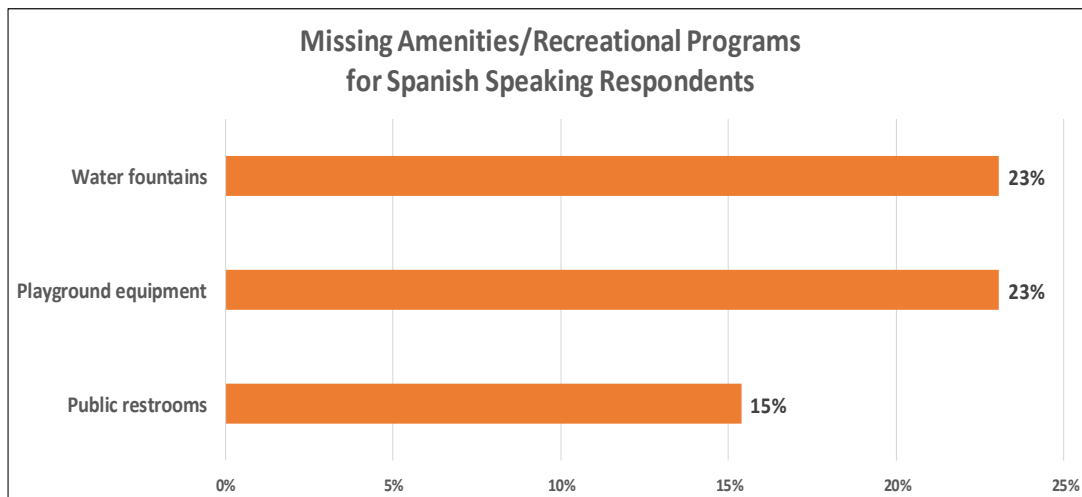
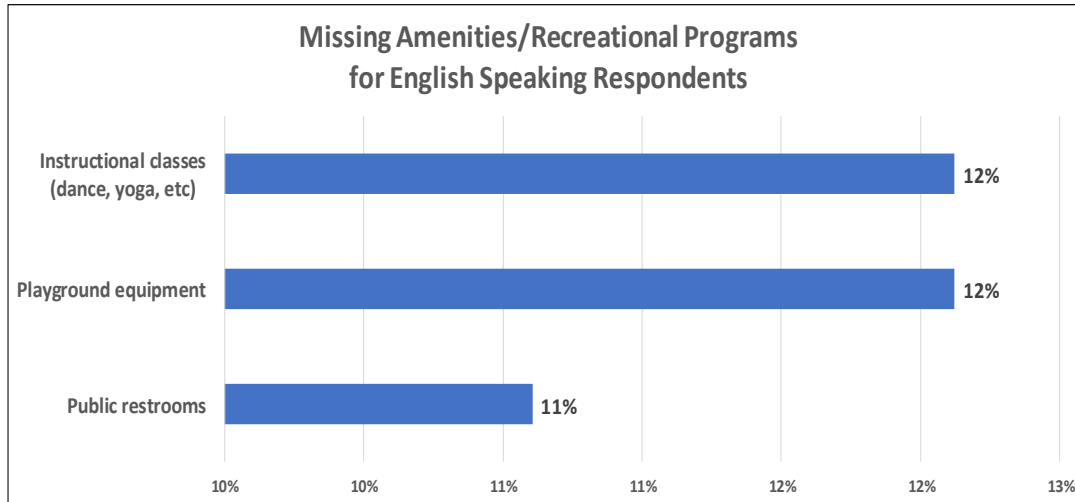
**QUESTION #1: PARKS VISITED MOST FREQUENTLY, BROKEN DOWN BY PREFERRED LANGUAGE**

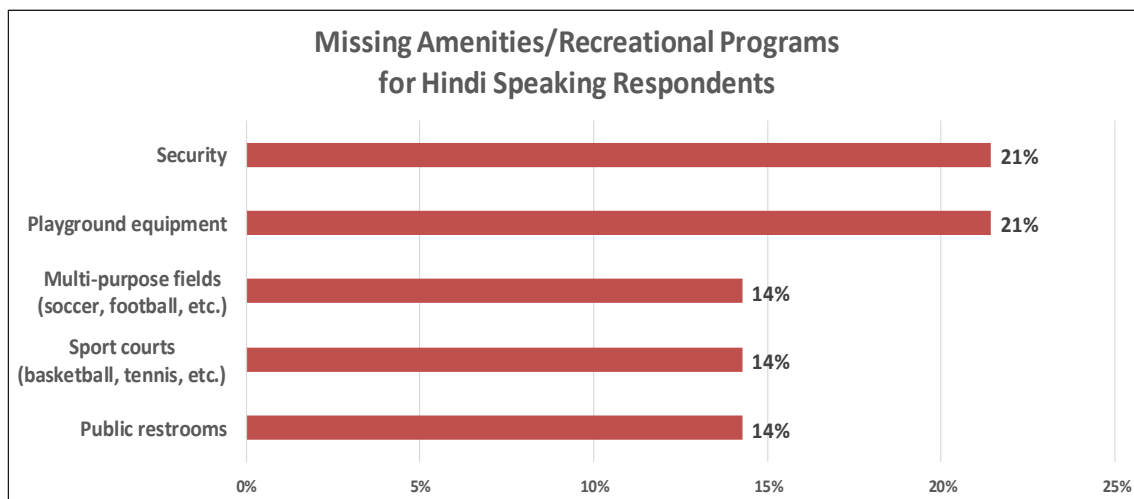
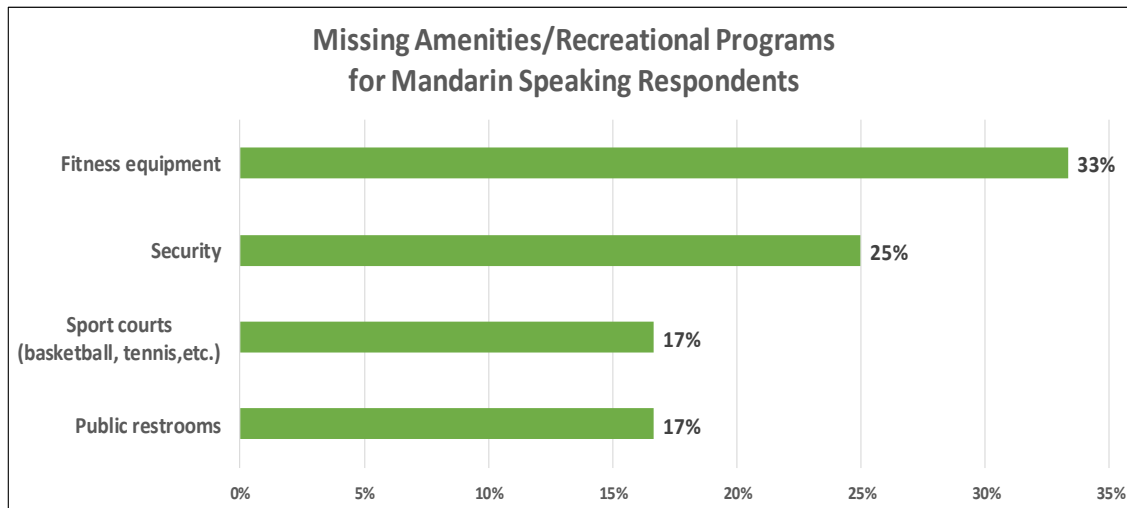






**QUESTION #2: MISSING AMENITIES OR PROGRAMS, BROKEN DOWN BY PREFERRED LANGUAGE**







### QUESTION #3: PREFERRED COMMUNICATION METHOD REGARDING PARK OFFERINGS AND RECREATION PROGRAMS

The last question in the survey asked respondents to name their preferred communication method for future park offerings and updates. Results have been broken down by preferred language, and show that while all groups like to receive information by email, Mandarin speakers prefer social media, and Hindi speakers are as likely to prefer the website or flyers as they are email. Spanish speakers prefer email or text, and English speakers are much more likely to prefer email.

Preferred Communication Methods					
Primary Language	Email	Phone (Text)	Website	Flyers	Social Media
English	47%	16%		8%	
Spanish	36%	27%			
Mandarin	17%	17%	20%		26%
Hindi	26%		26%	26%	

## CHAPTER SIX - INTERCEPT SURVEY #2- PRIORITIZATION OF FACILITIES AND SERVICES

### 6.1 OVERVIEW

In addition to Intercept Survey #1, Montgomery County Parks staff conducted a second complimentary survey (Intercept Survey #2). The primary focus of Intercept Survey #2 was system users. The surveys were conducted October 2016 throughout November 2016.

The goal was to obtain completed surveys from at least 500 residents/system users. The goal was exceeded and a total of 534 responses were collected throughout this process.

### 6.2 METHODOLOGY

Intercept Survey #2 consisted of one ranking question and were carried at two community events in the fall of 2016:

- World of Montgomery Festival, Rockville, MD, October 16, 2016
- Silver Spring Tree Lighting, Silver Spring, MD, November 12, 2016

Zip codes were collected in order to determine geographic area of the respondent, and respondents had the option to include their email address with the survey. Respondents were asked to prioritize their top facilities/services provided by the Parks Department, and were given 7 options in English, Spanish, and pictographs:

- Sports
- Trails
- Nature & Camping
- History & Education
- Events & Festivals
- Special Places
- Gathering Places

### 6.3 SURVEY RESULTS

#### PARK FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The following park facilities and services were rated **most important** by survey respondents. (Organized by highest total number of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> choice votes.)







### SUMMARY OF OPEN-ENDED QUESTION RESPONSES

The project team pulled out key themes of the open-ended question responses. The following are major areas in which the community expressed needs and desires.

- **More...of many things.** Respondents asked for more of the following amenities, services, or programs:
  - Playgrounds and kid-friendly activities
  - Bathrooms
  - Benches, Picnic Tables, Water Fountains, and Shade
  - Water amenities and activities
  - Adventures, events and activities
  - Information
- **Cleanliness and safety.** Respondents would like to see less litter in parks, more trash cans, and more recycle bins. More lights were noted and an increase in safety measures.
- **Transportation and access.** Respondents cite a desire for better access via bicycle and public transportation, more parking, and better wheelchair accessibility.
- **Appreciation.** Respondents used the words “great,” “love,” “perfect,” and “thanks,” to describe the parks as they are today.

Detailed results from the surveys and key themes that arose out of the open-ended questions are included here. Answers to the open-ended questions are shown in the Appendix D.

### RANKING OF FACILITY AND SERVICE IMPORTANCE

Respondents were asked to rank their top three activities to do in parks:

- |            |                     |
|------------|---------------------|
| 1. Sports  | 5. Events           |
| 2. Trails  | 6. Special Places   |
| 3. Nature  | 7. Gathering Spaces |
| 4. History |                     |

Montgomery Parks Intercept Survey Total Results (World of Montgomery Festival & Silver Spring Tree Lighting)							
Choice	SPORTS	TRAILS	NATURE	HISTORY	EVENTS	SPECIAL PLACES	GATHERING PLACES
1st	121	139	61	43	93	24	25
2nd	53	98	101	50	94	32	26
3rd	55	51	67	46	83	69	59
Total:	229	288	229	139	270	125	110

Trails, Nature, and Events were the most often ranked of Highest Importance to respondents, receiving the most 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> choice votes (respectively). Overall, **Trails** were acknowledged as **Most Important** to survey respondents; receiving the **highest total number** of votes. Trails were followed by Events (2<sup>nd</sup>), Sports (T-3<sup>rd</sup>), Nature (T-3<sup>rd</sup>), and History (5<sup>th</sup>) having the next highest level of importance.

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## DETAILED THEMES OF OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

### MORE...OF MANY THINGS

#### PLAYGROUNDS

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Several respondents noted the need for more playgrounds, new playground equipment, or more kid-friendly areas and activities. Specific requests ranged from updated maintenance on current equipment, a nature playground, and more modern playground equipment.

#### BATHROOMS

---

The need for additional bathrooms in or near parks was stated by several respondents, as was the need for current spaces to be better maintained.

#### BENCHES, PICNIC TABLES, SHADE & WATER FOUNTAINS

---

More park amenities such as rest areas, benches, picnic tables, shade, and water fountains were cited by several respondents as a need for the parks.

#### WATER AMENITIES

---

Water amenities and features such as ponds, swimming pools, water play areas, and other water amenities were cited as a need on several occasions by respondents.

#### PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

---

While some respondents cited the need for more un-programmed open space and natural areas, a higher amount of respondents asked for additional activities, events, or programs.

#### INFORMATION

---

Several respondents asked for more information from the parks in general.

### CLEANLINESS & SAFETY

Littering and cleanliness of the parks was a major theme of respondents. Respondents were disappointed in the amount of litter and asked for additional trash cans and recycle bins throughout the parks. Some respondents noted smoking as a nuisance. Safety, including the addition of lights in some particular areas, was another concern.

### TRANSPORTATION & ACCESS

Another theme of the open-ended responses was accessibility to the parks. Respondents cite a desire for better access via bicycle and public transportation, more parking, and better wheelchair accessibility.

### APPRECIATION

Many survey respondents expressed appreciation for the parks and encouraged Montgomery County Parks to “keep it up.” Respondents used the words “great,” “love,” “perfect,” and “thanks,” to describe the parks as they are today.



## CHAPTER SEVEN - COMMUNITY INTERNET FORUM

### 7.1 OVERVIEW

Supplementary to Intercept Survey #2, Montgomery County Parks also created an internet forum in order to obtain additional community input. This forum was open for just over four weeks, spanning from February 2017 to March 2017.

The purpose of this internet forum was to reach additional community members that they weren't able to reach during the intercept surveys. Using an online forum allowed Montgomery County Parks to reach a broad range of the community. Roughly 300 residents participated in this online forum.

### 7.2 METHODOLOGY

An Internet forum, or message board, is an online discussion site where people can hold conversations in the form of posted messages. This particular forum was accessible through the Montgomery County Parks website (<http://www.montgomeryparks.org/>). This internet discussion forum was administered by Montgomery County Parks. The forum was open to the public February 23, 2017 through March 27, 2017.

Respondents were prompted with two overarching topics; park needs and park usage. Forum participants were then allowed to leave their thoughts, opinions, concerns pertaining to these topics on the message board. Comments varied in themes, including:

#### PARK NEEDS DISCUSSION

- Park Accessibility
- Park Amenities
- New Park Locations
- Park Safety
- Park Condition
- Other Comments

#### PARK USAGE DISCUSSION

- Daily Visits
- Weekly Visits
- Monthly Visits
- Occasionally (4-8 Visits/Year)
- Rarely (1-3 Visits/Year)

### 7.3 FORUM RESULTS

The internet forum platform used was able to group responses by planning area from the geolocation of the comment. Planning area locations of the respondents are listed below in order of most frequent, with number to the right of the planning area name indicating frequency and length of the comment:

#### SPECIFIED PLANNING AREAS RESULTS

Planning Area		Planning Area	
Silver Spring	69	Olney	5
Kensington/Wheaton	45	Upper Rock Creek	5
Cloverly	38	Rockville	4
Kemp Mill/Four Corners	33	Germantown	3
Bethesda/Chevy Chase	28	Gaithersburg Vicinity	2
White Oak	15	Lower Seneca	2
Takoma Park	13	Bennett	1
Aspen Hill	9	Clarksburg	1
North Bethesda	8	Goshen	1
Potomac	8	Patuxent	1
Fairland	5		

Similarly, if a user noted a specific park or facility when commenting, that park or facility was noted in the forum results. The following park or facility locations were submitted:

### SPECIFIED PARKS/FACILITIES

Park/Facility	Count	Park/Facility	Count	Park/Facility	Count
Sligo Creek	34	C&O Canal NHP	2	Glenmont	1
Wheaton Regional Park	19	General Getty	2	Good Hope	1
Northwest Branch	18	Kemp Mill	2	Great Seneca	1
Jesup-Blair	15	Maydale	2	Hubert Humphrey	1
Rock Creek	12	N Four Corners	2	Kilgour Branch	1
Long Branch	10	Olney Acres	2	Layhill	1
Fairview	8	Paint Branch	2	Little Bennett Regional Park	1
Henson	8	Patuxent River	2	Little Falls	1
Upper Paint Branch	8	Rockcrest Parks	2	Little Seneca Reservoir	1
Spencerville	7	Sherwood Forest	2	Long Branch-Garland	1
Hopefield	5	Twinponds	2	Lynbrook	1
MRO Building	5	White Flint	2	Maiden Lane	1
Nolte	4	Arcola	1	Mill Creek	1
Battery Lane	4	Autre-St. Mary's Park	1	Opal A. Daniels	—
Cabin John	4	Brookdale	1	Potomac	1
Countryside	4	Capital Crescent Trail	1	Randolph Hills	1
Ellsworth	4	Cashell	1	Ray's Meadow	1
Seven Oaks	4	Cannon Road	1	Ridge Road	—
Wembrough	4	Cedar Creek	1	Somerset	1
Breewood	3	Civic Center Park	1	Southeast Olney	1
Norwood	3	Cloverly	1	St. Paul Park	1
Sligo-Bennington	3	Colt Terrace	1	Traville	1
Sligo-Dennis	3	Dale Drive	1	Whittier Woods	1
South Germantown	3	Druid Drive	1	Willoughby	1
Woodside	3	Evans Parkway	1	Willard Avenue	1
Acorn	2	Fairland	1		
Burnt Mills	2	Forest Grove	1		



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## SUMMARY OF PARK NEEDS

The project team pulled out key themes of the open-ended question responses regarding park needs. The following are major areas in which the community expressed needs and desires in response to this survey. From the qualitative feedback, key themes have been pulled out approximately in order of frequency. There were approximately 100 total comments on this topic. A full aggregation of forum comments, grouped by comment threads, are included in Appendix E.

- **Amenities.** Additional desired amenities mentioned in the comments ranged from specific items such as signage, a dog park, ferris wheel, parking surface and fencing, to general comments such as “lack things to do” or “more amenities.” Playgrounds, slides, and swings as well as shade structures and water fountains, for humans and dogs, were also noted.
- **Access.** Forum participants were looking for both vehicular traffic solutions, including better bicycle access, as well as safer and more accessible pedestrian solutions. Also discussed was lack of access points to parks, including fencing that looked prohibitive and lack of public access near privately-held land.
- **Maintenance.** Many respondents discussed a need for better maintenance, especially with landscaping (existence of weeds), neglect of tennis and basketball courts, and general littering problems. A need for better trash cleanup and trash bins was also noted.
- **Positive Feedback.** Approximately 12% of the feedback was a positive or satisfied comment.
- **Connected/Urban Parks.** Connections to other parks within the system and preservation of urban green and open space was another theme of the comments in this section. Better bicycle and walking paths were a common theme.
- **Security.** Comments regarding additional lighting were most common, as was a general comment, “it’s not safe here!”
- **Art/History.** A few comments discussed the unique art/architectural history behind the area.
- **Wildlife.** One participant expressed the desire to leave pockets of trees as habitat for wildlife.

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## SUMMARY OF PARK USAGE

The project team completed a similar analysis of the park usage forum comments. Many comments were similar in nature to the park needs section, though some noted specific uses. There were approximately 200 total comments on this topic. A full aggregation of forum comments, grouped by comment threads, are included in Appendix E.

- **Positive Feedback.** Approximately 72% of the feedback was a positive and satisfied comment.
- **Amenities.** Additional desired amenities range from parkland developed into parks, to picnic tables and swings. Flood control infrastructure, more trash cans, bike racks, playground equipment, and availability of rental space were mentioned.
- **Access.** Forum participants had some positive comments specifically regarding recent access improvements, including traffic on Cedar Lane, ICC bike trail connection for safer access from Olney to Rock Creek, and the bicycle trail near Bethesda. Others cite the need for better traffic control around parks, more parking, and better trail connectivity and access.
- **Maintenance.** Feedback ranged from cleaner restrooms to better trail maintenance and the need for stream/creek cleanup or restoration. Weeds and poison ivy were also mentioned.
- **Art/History.** Participants appreciated the ability for art students to use spaces for drawing, enjoy history of the area, and want to see more collaboration for reenactments and programs.
- **Use and Value.** Some forum commenters noted that parks seem to be underused or undervalued by the public and the parks department, while others cited overuse at certain parks, especially when used for tournaments or events.
- **Urban Parks.** Converting current open space to an “energized park,” or an “urban park” were mentioned by some participants, as was better design of current space and more park space.
- **Wildlife and Nature.** Several participants remarked on the joy of seeing various wildlife during their time in the park, and spending time enjoying nature alone and in groups.

## CHAPTER EIGHT - COMMUNITY CREATE PARKS AND RECREATION OF THE FUTURE SURVEY

### 8.1 OVERVIEW

A key component of collecting community input is allowing all areas of the community equal opportunity to voice their opinions. In order to help ensure all planning areas' voices were heard, Peak Democracy was hired to conduct an online survey. Peak democracy is a research firm that specializes in a cloud-based online citizen engagement.

This type of engagement allows for each individual respondents' zip code to be tracked/mapped (if they choose to register that information). In doing so, the Planning Team is able to identify what regions specific feedback came from and can better understanding of the needs and preferences within each zone of the county. In this case, the object was to focus on the county's various (29) planning areas. As of March 30, 2017- 10:30am EST, a total of 714 responses had been received. Of those responses, 296 respondents elected to "register" prior to taking the survey; 418 respondents chose to remain "unregistered."

### 8.2 METHODOLOGY

Peak Democracy is using this online engagement platform to collect information from the public regarding the future of parks and recreation within Montgomery County. The online survey took approximately 10- minutes to complete, and consisted of 13 multiple choice and free response questions regarding: usage, recreation priorities, overall perception of the parks system, current issues/challenges, missing programs/amenities, demographics, and an open-ended additional comment question.

The Create Parks and Recreation of the Future survey successfully received responses from 25 of 28 total Planning Areas. The geographic distribution of respondents are shown below.

#### SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY PLANNING AREA

Planning Area	Planning Area	Planning Area			
Bethesda/Chevy Chase	47	Potomac	10	Bennett	1
Kensington/Wheaton	47	Germantown	9	Clarksburg	1
Kemp Mill/4 Corners	26	Gaithersburg City	8	Lower Seneca	1
North Bethesda	19	Gaithersburg Vicinity	6	Upper Rock Creek	1
Olney	19	Darnestown	5	Dickerson	0
White Oak	19	Patuxent	4	Martinsburg	0
Aspen Hill	13	Travilah	3	Poolesville	0
Rockville	13	Damascus	2	Outside Planning Area	7
Silver Spring	13	Fairland	2		
Takoma Park	11	Goshen	2		

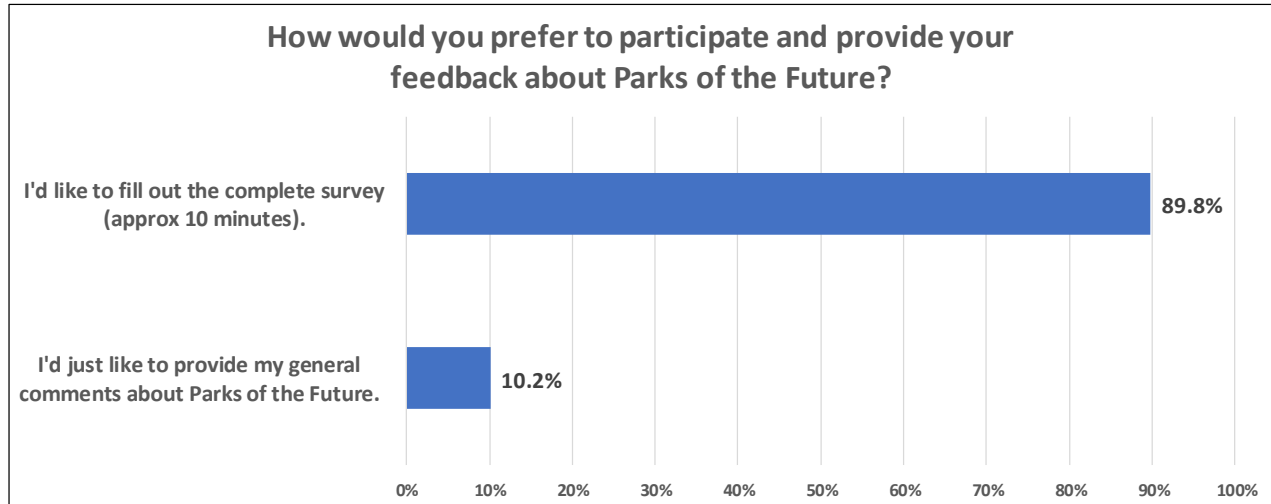




### 8.3 SURVEY RESULTS

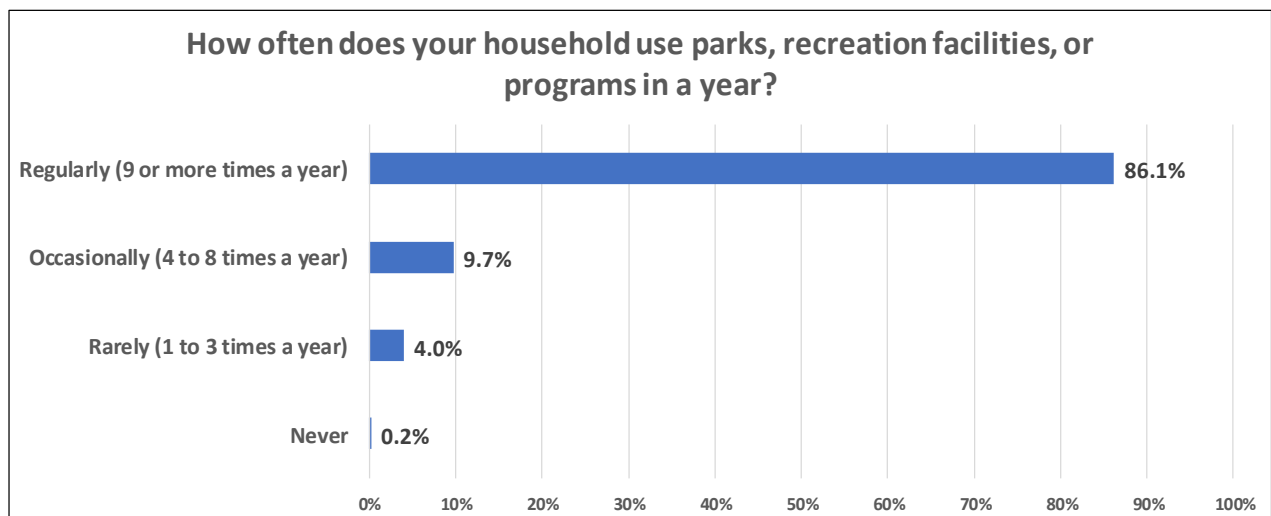
#### HOW WOULD YOU PREFER TO PARTICIPATE AND PROVIDE YOUR FEEDBACK ABOUT PARKS OF THE FUTURE?

Approximately 90% of survey respondents indicated that they would prefer to fill out the complete survey as opposed to just providing general comments about parks of the future (10%).



#### HOW OFTEN DOES YOUR HOUSEHOLD USE PARKS, RECREATION FACILITIES, OR PROGRAMS IN A YEAR?

When asked how often does your household use parks, recreation facilities, or programs in a year 86.1% of survey participants answered Regularly- 9 or more times a year. The other 13.9% answered Occasionally- 4 to 8 times a year (9.7%), Rarely- 1 to 3 times a year (4.0%), or Never (0.2%).



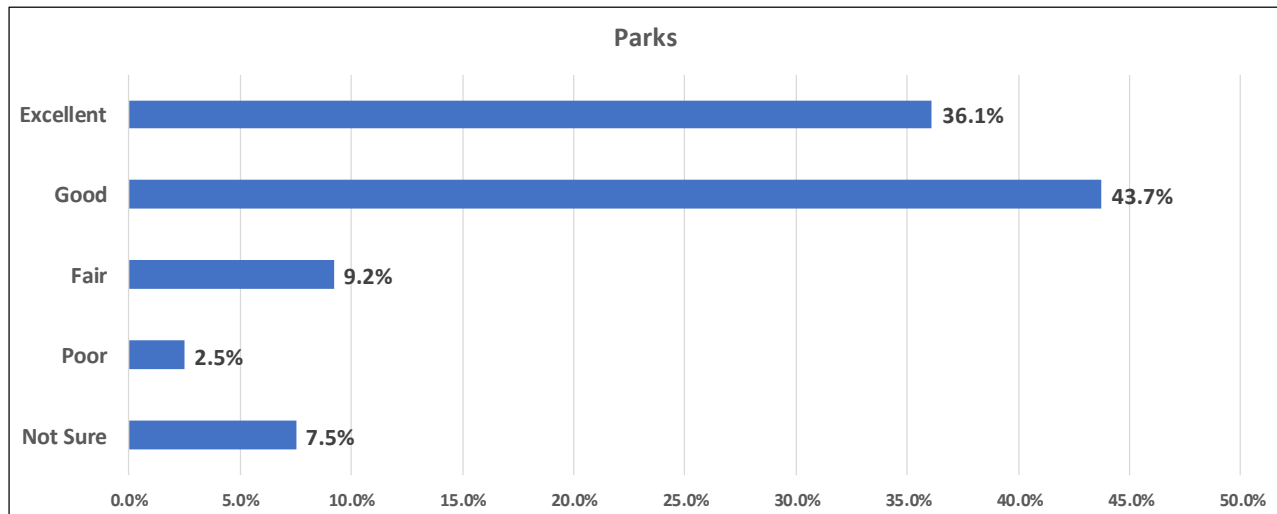
### WHAT DO YOU FEEL ARE THE TOP THREE FUNCTIONS PROVIDED BY MONTGOMERY PARKS AND THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY RECREATION?

The top six (6) most frequent responses are as follows:

1. Preservation of natural resources
2. Fitness and health
3. Preservation of cultural / historic resources
4. Sports
5. Social gathering
6. Events

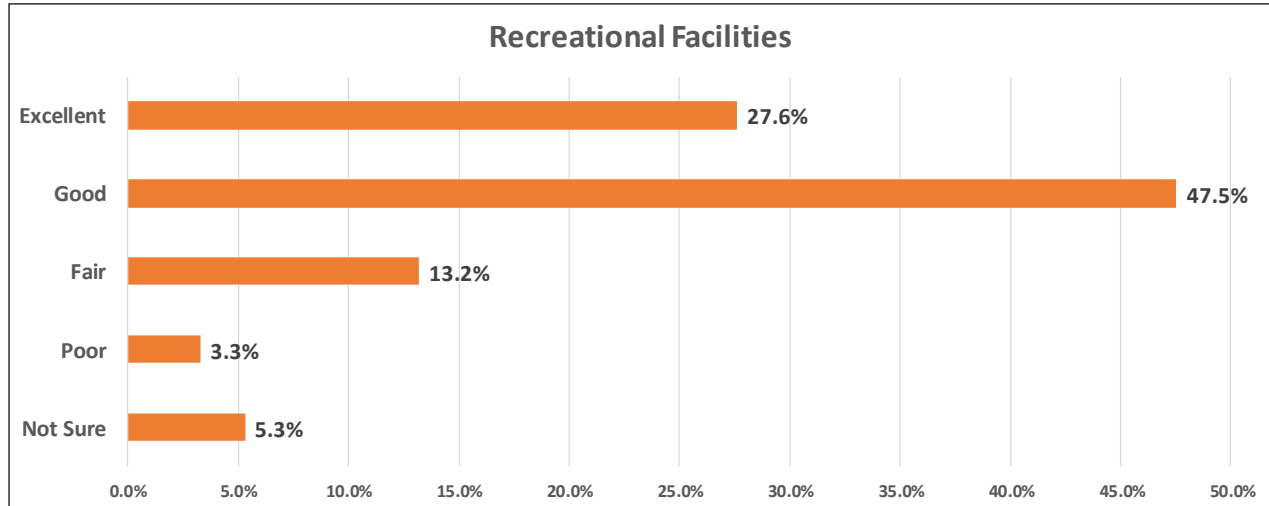
### HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE AGENCY'S PARKS, FACILITIES AND SERVICES IN MEETING THE COMMUNITIES NEEDS?

When rating parks, an estimated 79.8% percent of those surveyed gave a positive rating of either excellent (36.1%) or good (43.7%), while the other 11.7% consider the quality of parks to be in either fair (9.2%) or poor (2.5%). Roughly 7.5% indicated that they were unsure.

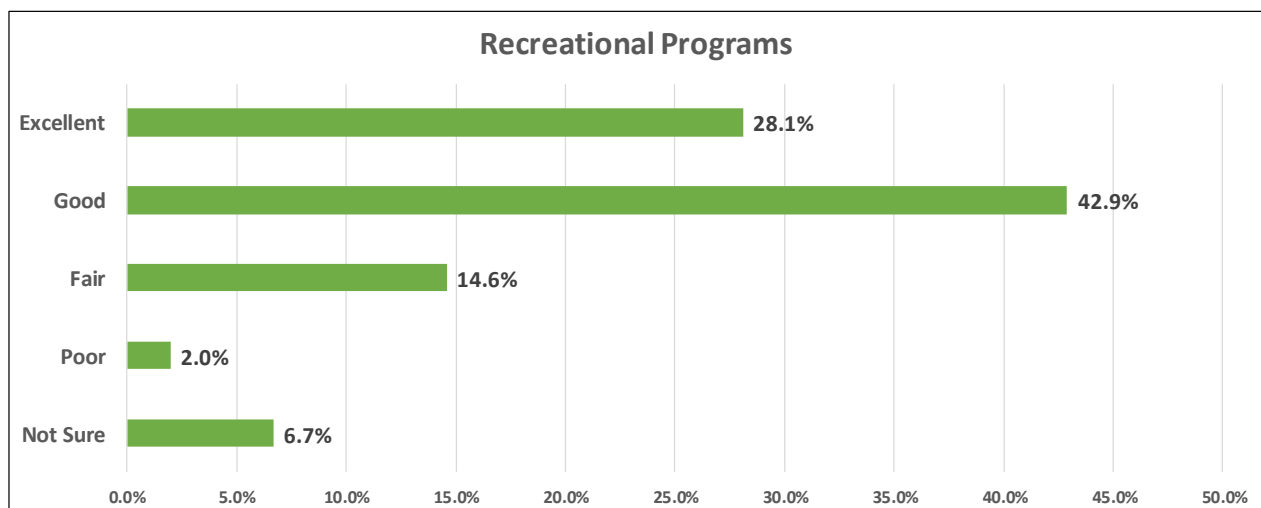




When rating facilities, an estimated 75.1% percent of those surveyed gave a positive rating of either excellent (27.6%) or good (47.5%), while the other 16.5% consider the quality of recreation facilities to be in either fair (13.2%) or poor (3.3%). Roughly 5.3% indicated that they were unsure.



When rating programs, an estimated 71% percent of those surveyed gave a positive rating of either excellent (28.1%) or good (42.9%), while the other 16.6% consider the quality of recreation programs to be in either fair (14.6%) or poor (2.0%). Roughly 6.7% indicated that they were unsure.



**ARE THERE ANY SEGMENTS OF THE COMMUNITY THAT NEED TO BE BETTER SERVED BY MONTGOMERY PARKS AND MONTGOMERY COUNTY RECREATION? IF SO, WHO ARE THEY AND HOW CAN THEY BE BETTER SERVED?**

The following four questions prompted the participant to provide an open-ended response. Responses are grouped in the form of a word cloud, which uses size, shade, and weight of font to visually represent frequency a particular word or phrase was used. These word clouds are designed for the visually impaired to read as well as the general public. Full open-ended question results are located in Appendix F.

need outdoor pickleball courts tennis Seniors Montgomery County could they available use growing additional needs better senior who play over out center kids population Players great just While all older were other them do equipment community time More One area access also areas only up Dedicated new sport without facilities very which like see some most sports how parks especially near communities those t even young activities trails Bethesda recreation residents good s from donprograms Potomac know so walk space please Families children people fields playground open natural nature walking Teens far Park think Urban centers been green school Downtown silver spring dog much public Wheaton Regional dogs than Horse soccer

**WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE ARE THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES / CHALLENGES FACING MONTGOMERY PARKS AND MONTGOMERY COUNTY RECREATION IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS?**

More pickleball courts programs needs Upkeep parks facilities Montgomery County use who 1 Population 2 Budget 3 people growing aging all community moneyresources up funding Maintaining existing new park recreation Maintenance t especially enough natural current preservation trash areas land them green invasive speciesimportant residents need also open space developers public from fields Preserving spaces infrastructure getting Keeping so maintain they make development Lack

**WHAT AMENITIES, PROGRAMS OR EXPERIENCES ARE MISSING THAT WOULD BETTER SUPPORT YOUR RECREATION NEEDS THAT WE SHOULD BE PLANNING FOR IN THE FUTURE?**

Outdoor pickleball courts tennis which better county summer kids so needs need facilities play sport very Montgomery other existing could used sports One park indoorschool s See they Center some more centers all local help parks up out Love like also recreation



children programs public community use new people from areas adultsspace just especially bike paths make area fields nature natural trails dog t events well Trail gardens

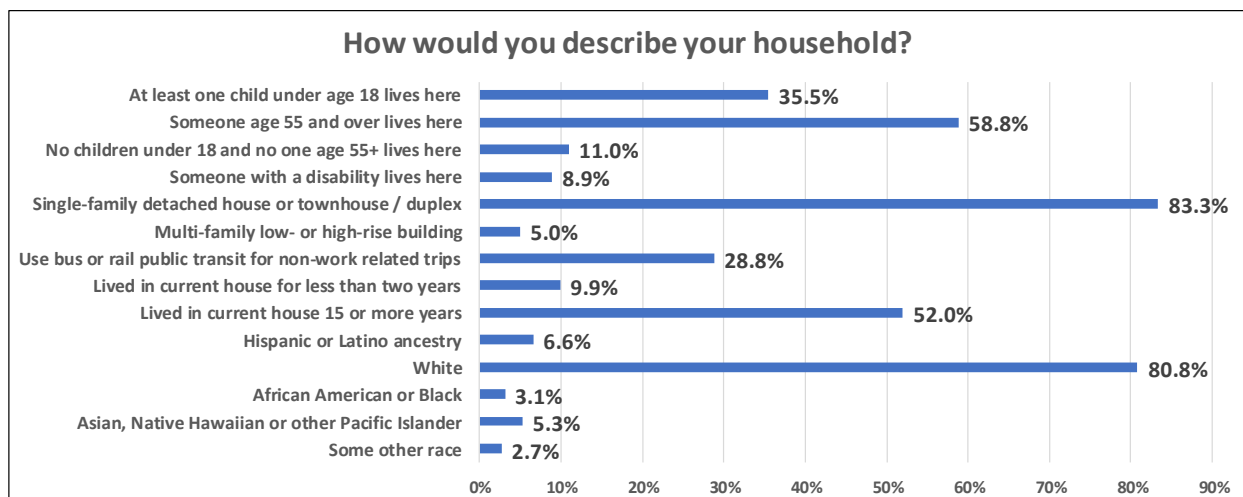
**DO YOU HAVE ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS TO HELP MONTGOMERY PARKS AND MONTGOMERY COUNTY RECREATION STAFF PLAN FOR THE COUNTY'S FUTURE PARKS, RECREATIONAL FACILITIES OR PROGRAMS?**

Provide Pickleball tennis courts County Growing playing need outdoor SO please new use sport community space court more equipment verypeople all Branch Trail think Do public needs dedicated only lines play Potomac one live Centers facilities like see some parks Wheaton game seniors been used couldjust make they both sports Recreation

ball over players its where which Also Montgomery high them Thank area s d especially park into those was years from other anysummer available Bethesda Love what families up great most important programs Center kids after work number nice EVERY private time residents help keep enjoy well wonderful greenout Brookside Gardens fields support development land trees nature trails rugby facility areas neighborhood dogs Creek children staff who SCHOOL field Don t riding Horse

### HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR HOUSEHOLD?

When asked to describe their households, a majority of survey participants answered: Single-family detached house or townhouse/duplex (83.3%), White (80.8%), Someone age 55 and over lives here (58.8%), and Lived in current house 15 or more years.



**PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR ZIP CODE HERE TO HELP US TO DETERMINE WHERE FACILITIES AND SERVICES ARE NEEDED.**

Of the 714 survey respondents, 626 provided a zip code.

**ZIP CODES OF FORUM PARTICIPANTS**

20902	56	20832	20	20886	8	20860	1
20901	47	20853	16	20833	7	20861	1
20817	42	20874	16	20872	6	20873	1
20906	41	20903	11	20876	6	20950	1
20904	36	20905	10	20877	6	20954	1
20910	34	20850	9	20879	6	21771	1
20815	33	20851	9	20841	4	21773	1
20852	32	20871	9	20868	2	21797	1
20878	31	20882	9	20007	1	29095	1
20814	30	20912	9	20008	1	29879	1
20854	27	20816	8	20818	1		
20895	24	20855	8	20838	1		



## CHAPTER NINE - PRIORITY RANKINGS

### 9.1 FACILITY / AMENITY PRIORITY RANKING

The purpose of the Facility Priority Rankings is to provide a prioritized list of facility/amenity needs for the community served by the Montgomery County Parks and Recreation Department.

This rankings model evaluated both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data includes the statistically valid community survey, which asked residents to list unmet needs and rank their importance. Qualitative data includes resident feedback obtained in community input, such as through the intercept surveys and focus groups, as well as demographics and trends.

A weighted scoring system was used to determine the priorities for parks and recreation facilities/amenities. For instance, as noted below, a weighted value of 3 for the Unmet Desires means that out of a total of 100%, unmet needs make up 30% of the total score. Similarly, importance-ranking also makes up 30%, while Consultant Evaluation (driven by public input and overall assessments) makes up 40% of the total score, thus totaling 100%.

This scoring system considers the following:

- Community Survey
  - **Unmet needs for facilities-** This is used as a factor from the total number of households mentioning whether they have a need for a facility and the extent to which their need for facilities has been met. Survey participants were asked to identify this for 23 different facilities/ amenities.
  - **Importance ranking for facilities-** This is used as a factor from the importance allocated to a facility by the community. Each respondent was asked to identify the top four most important facilities.
- Consultant Evaluation
  - Factor derived from the consultant's evaluation of facility priority based on community input (Intercept Survey #1, Key Stakeholder Focus Groups and Interviews, Intercept Survey #2, Statistically Valid Survey, and Market Definition of Estimated Participation Rates and Frequencies).

The weighted scores were as follows:

- 60% from the statistically valid community survey results
- 40% from consultant evaluation using community focus groups and public meetings, demographic and trends data, and levels of service

These weighted scores were then summed to provide an overall score and priority ranking for the system as a whole. The results of the priority ranking were tabulated into three categories: High Priority (top third), Medium Priority (middle third) and Low Priority (bottom third).

The combined total of the weighted scores for Community Unmet Needs, Community Importance, and Consultant Evaluation is the total score based on which the Facility/Amenity Priority is determined.



## 9.2 OVERALL FACILITY / AMENITY PRIORITY RANKINGS

As observed below, Paved multi-use trails (walking, biking), Natural surface trails (walking, biking, horseback riding), Natural areas & wildlife habitats, Public gardens, and park shelters & picnic areas are the top five highest facility / amenity priorities county-wide.

FACILITY/AMENITY	OVERALL RANKING
Paved, multi-use trails (walking, biking)	1
Natural surface trails (walking, biking, horseback riding)	2
Natural areas & wildlife habitats	3
Public gardens	4
Park shelters & picnic areas	5
Nature center with outdoor educational areas	6
Playgrounds	7
Flexible lawn areas for events & festivals, pickup sports, etc.	8
Museums & history centers	9
Community gardens	10
Dog parks	11
Rectangular sports fields (soccer, football, Ultimate Frisbee, etc.)	12
Nature play spaces	13
Historic & cultural sites	14
Tennis courts	15
Rentable space (for formal events)	16
Basketball courts	17
Diamond athletic fields (baseball, softball, kickball, etc.)	18
Volleyball courts	19
Courts (pickleball, handball, bocce, etc.)	20
Skate parks	21
Paved plazas	22
Cricket fields	23



### 9.3 PRIORITY RANKINGS BY LANGUAGE

The following table depicts the facility / amenity priority rankings based on whether or not English is the primary language spoken in the household. When analyzing survey responses by language, the results closely resembled the overall priority rankings. The non-English speaking group exhibited the most notable deviation, as this segment overvalued Rectangular sports fields compared to the overall priority rankings.

	English - Yes	English - No
Paved, multi-use trails (walking, biking)	1	2
Natural surface trails (walking, biking, horseback riding)	2	1
Natural areas & wildlife habitats	3	5
Public gardens	4	7
Park shelters & picnic areas	5	3
Nature center with outdoor educational areas	6	6
Playgrounds	9	4
Flexible lawn areas for events & festivals, pickup sports, etc.	7	9
Museums & history centers	8	10
Community gardens	10	12
Dog parks	11	15
Rectangular sports fields (soccer, football, Ultimate Frisbee, etc.)	12	8
Nature play spaces	13	11
Historic & cultural sites	14	13
Tennis courts	15	16
Rentable space (for formal events)	16	14
Basketball courts	17	17
Diamond athletic fields (baseball, softball, kickball, etc.)	18	22
Volleyball courts	20	20
Courts (pickleball, handball, bocce, etc.)	19	23
Skate parks	21	19
Paved plazas	22	18
Cricket fields	23	21

## 9.4 PRIORITY RANKINGS BY RACE

Facility/amenity priority rankings results based on race were rather diverse. With the White, African American, and Asian segments being somewhat similar to the overall rankings. The American Indian/Alaskan Native and Other segments varied a great deal from the overall priority rankings. The American Indian/Alaskan Native population indicated a higher preference for Community gardens and Rentable space (for formal events) but were less interested in Paved, multi-use trails (walking, biking) and Park shelters & picnic areas. The Other category indicated a higher preference for Community gardens and Nature play spaces but were less interested in Nature center with outdoor educational areas and Rectangular sports fields.

	White	African American or Black	Asian, NH, Other Pacific	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Other
Paved, multi-use trails (walking, biking)	1	1	1	8	1
Natural surface trails (walking, biking, horseback riding)	2	2	2	2	2
Natural areas & wildlife habitats	3	5	5	4	8
Public gardens	4	8	4	7	6
Park shelters & picnic areas	9	4	3	10	3
Nature center with outdoor educational areas	5	7	7	1	14
Playgrounds	6	3	8	9	5
Flexible lawn areas for events & festivals, pickup sports, etc.	8	6	6	5	12
Museums & history centers	7	10	9	11	9
Community gardens	10	12	10	3	4
Dog parks	11	13	15	12	10
Rectangular sports fields (soccer, football, Ultimate Frisbee, etc.)	12	9	14	15	16
Nature play spaces	13	17	12	14	7
Historic & cultural sites	14	11	17	13	11
Tennis courts	15	14	16	15	18
Rentable space (for formal events)	16	15	11	6	15
Basketball courts	17	16	13	15	13
Diamond athletic fields (baseball, softball, kickball, etc.)	18	23	23	18	17
Volleyball courts	21	18	21	18	20
Courts (pickleball, handball, bocce, etc.)	19	19	19	18	22
Skate parks	20	20	20	18	21
Paved plazas	22	21	22	18	19
Cricket fields	23	22	18	18	22



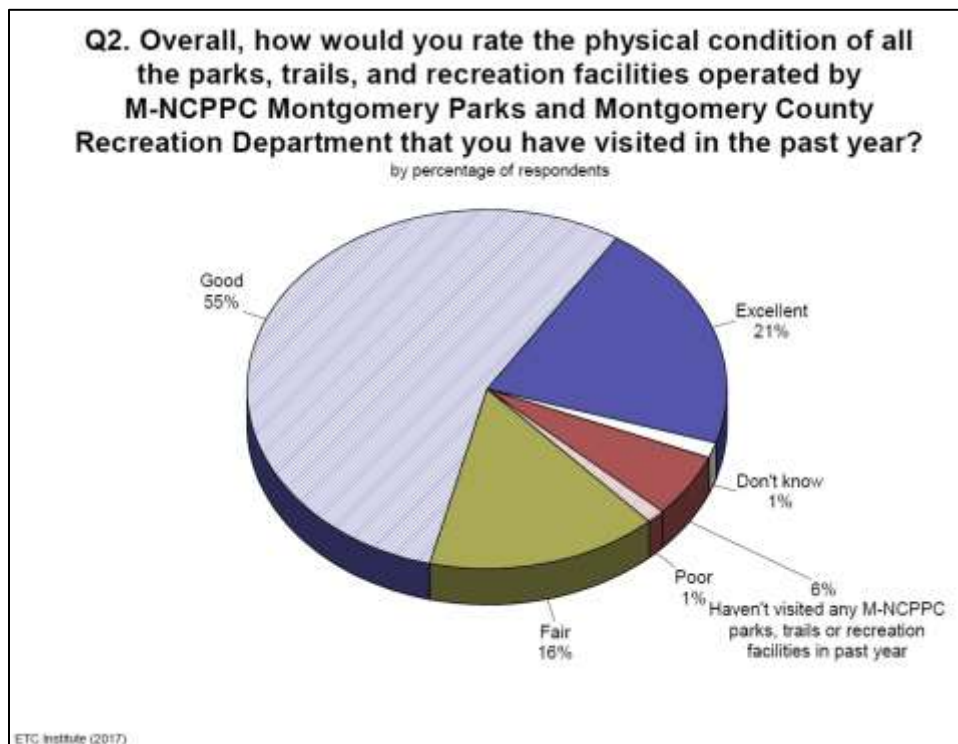
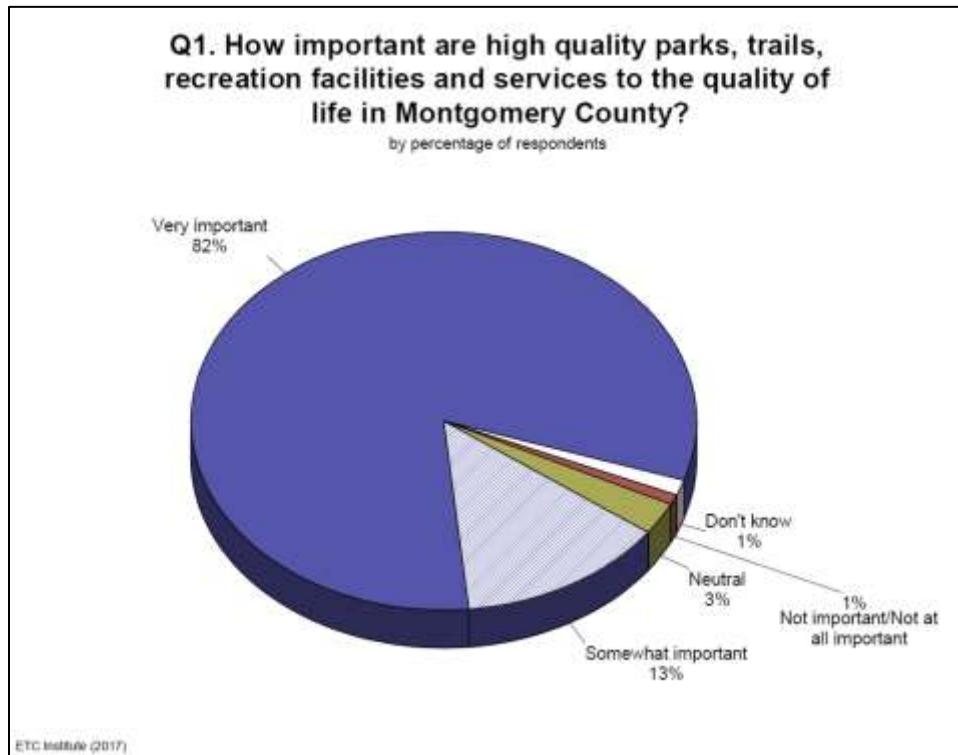
## 9.5 PRIORITY RANKINGS BY ETHNICITY

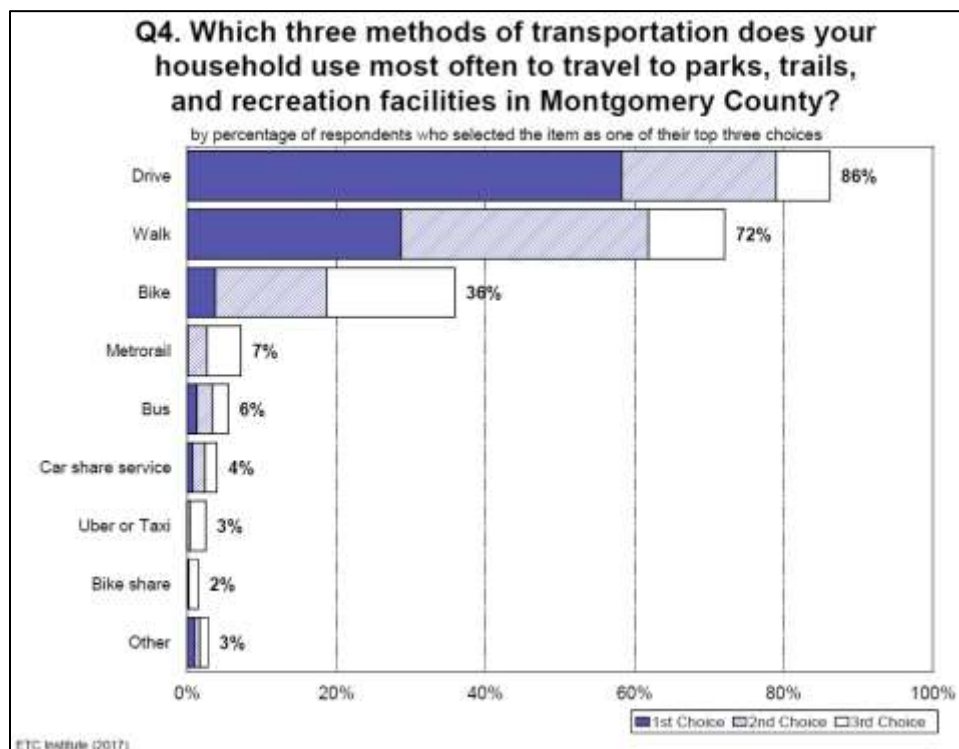
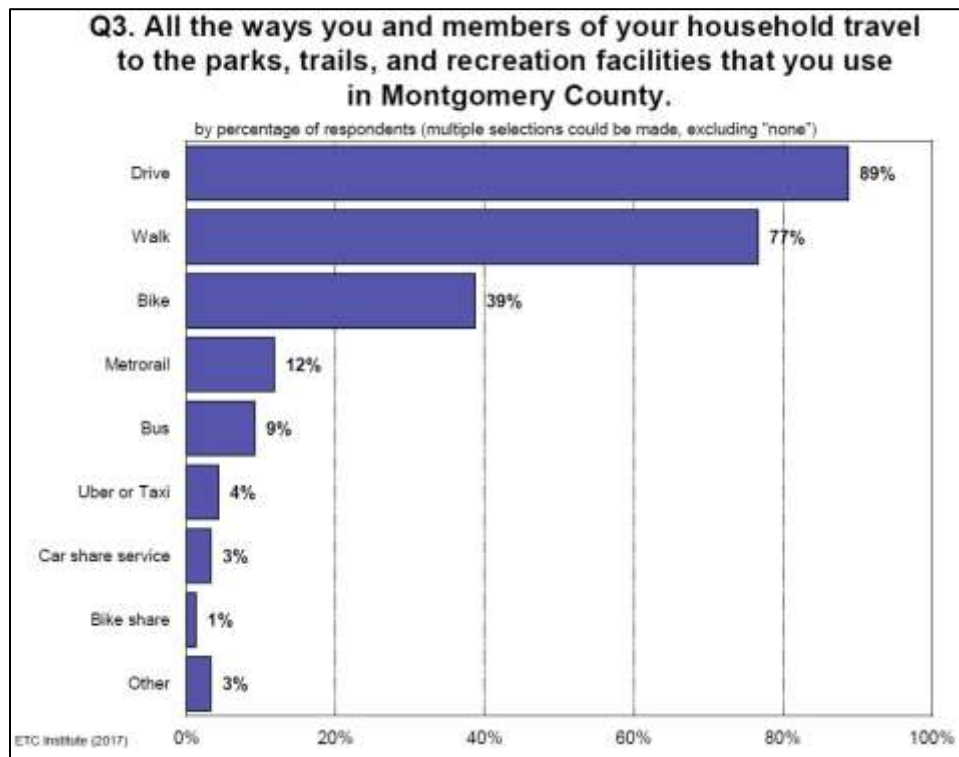
The following table depicts the facility / amenity priority rankings based on respondent Hispanic/Latino origin. When analyzing survey responses by ethnicity, the results closely resembled the overall priority rankings.

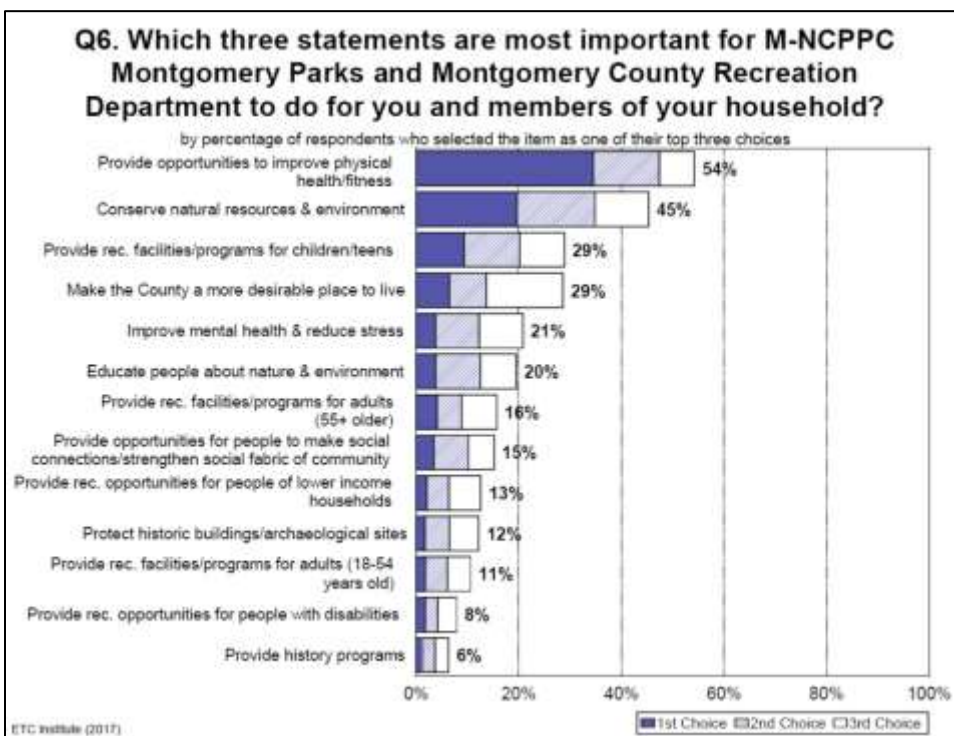
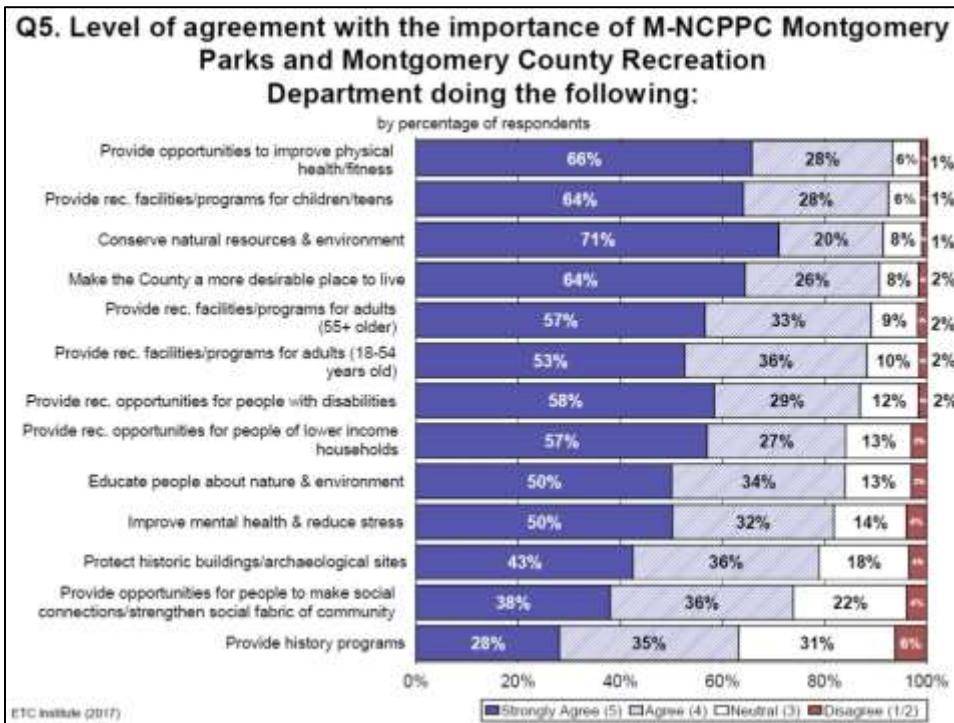
	Hispanic
Paved, multi-use trails (walking, biking)	1
Natural surface trails (walking, biking, horseback riding)	2
Natural areas & wildlife habitats	3
Public gardens	7
Park shelters & picnic areas	5
Nature center with outdoor educational areas	6
Playgrounds	4
Flexible lawn areas for events & festivals, pickup sports, etc.	11
Museums & history centers	8
Community gardens	9
Dog parks	13
Rectangular sports fields (soccer, football, Ultimate Frisbee, etc.)	10
Nature play spaces	12
Historic & cultural sites	14
Tennis courts	15
Rentable space (for formal events)	16
Basketball courts	17
Diamond athletic fields (baseball, softball, kickball, etc.)	18
Volleyball courts	21
Courts (pickleball, handball, bocce, etc.)	22
Skate parks	20
Paved plazas	19
Cricket fields	23

## CHAPTER TEN - APPENDICES

## 10.1 APPENDIX A- FULL STATISTICALLY VALID SURVEY RESULTS





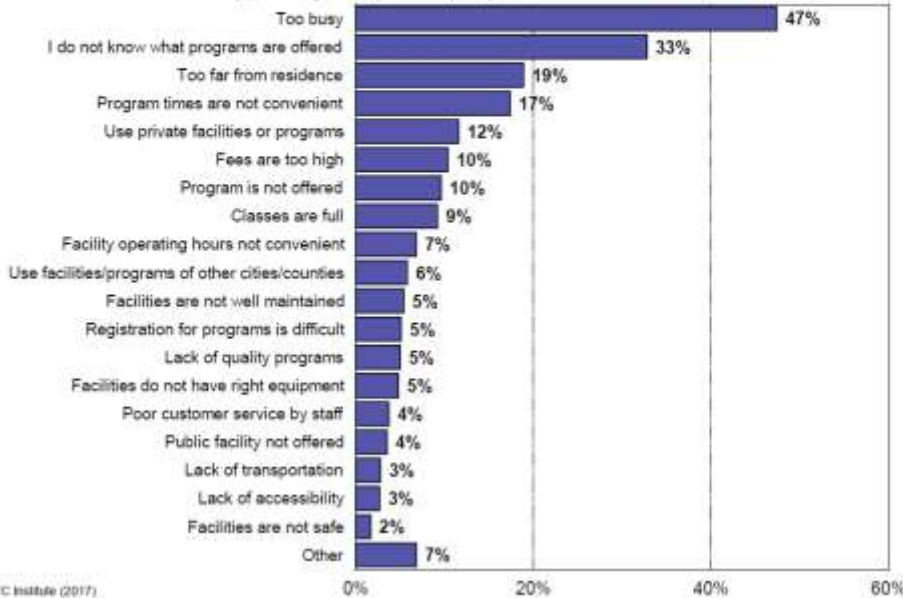






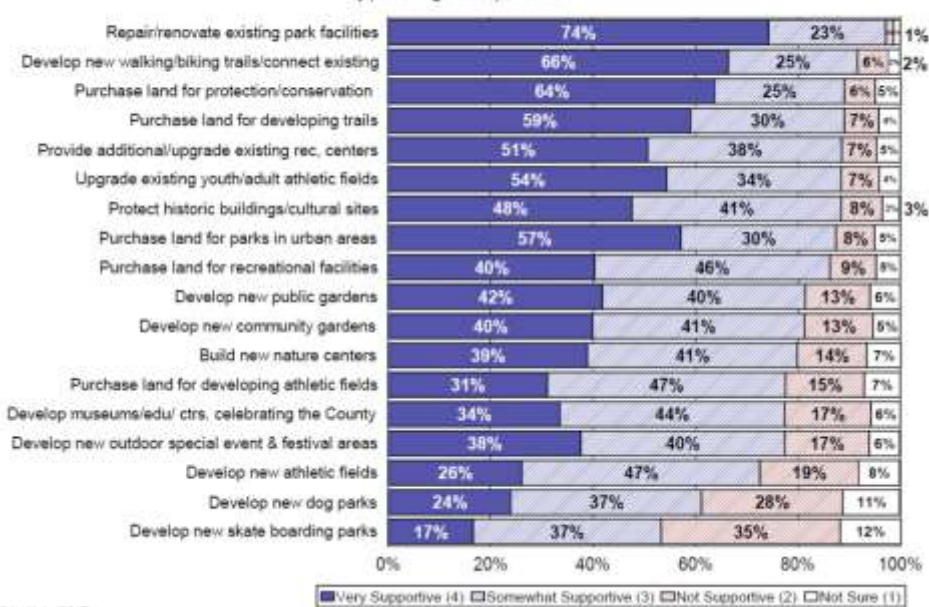
**Q7. Reasons why your household does not use parks, recreation facilities, or programs of the M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks and Montgomery County Recreation Department more often.**

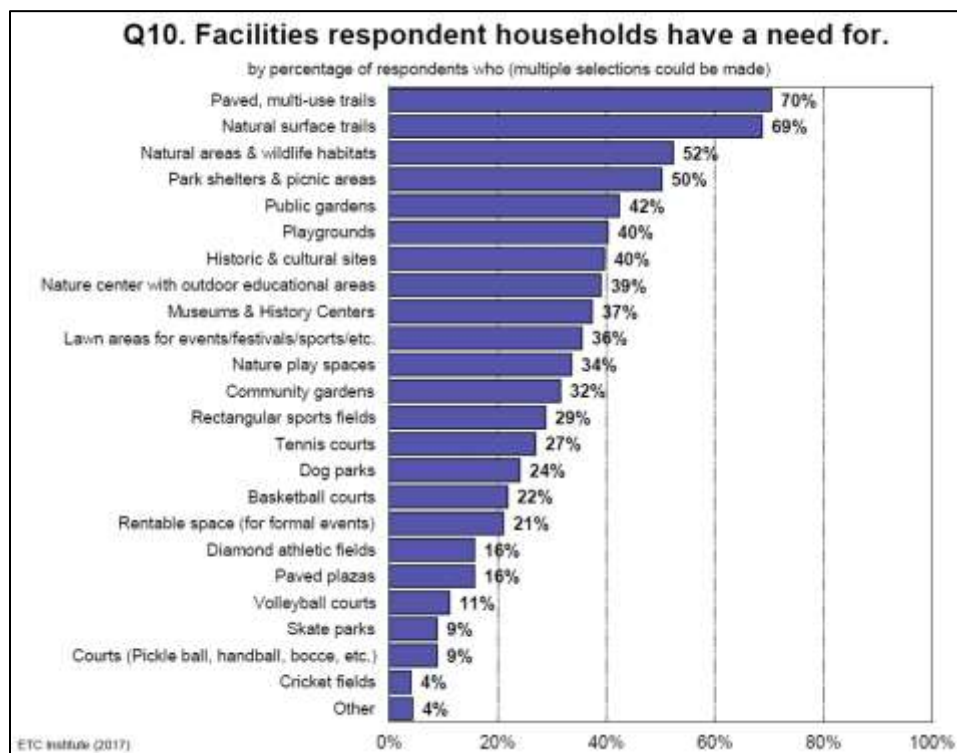
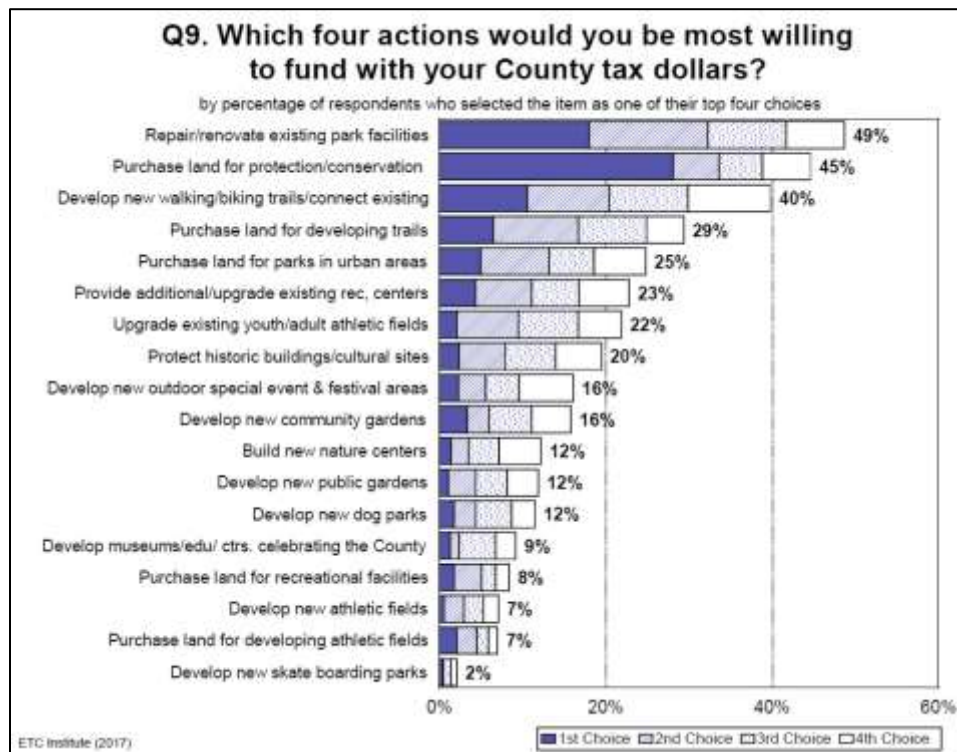
by percentage of respondents (multiple selections could be made)

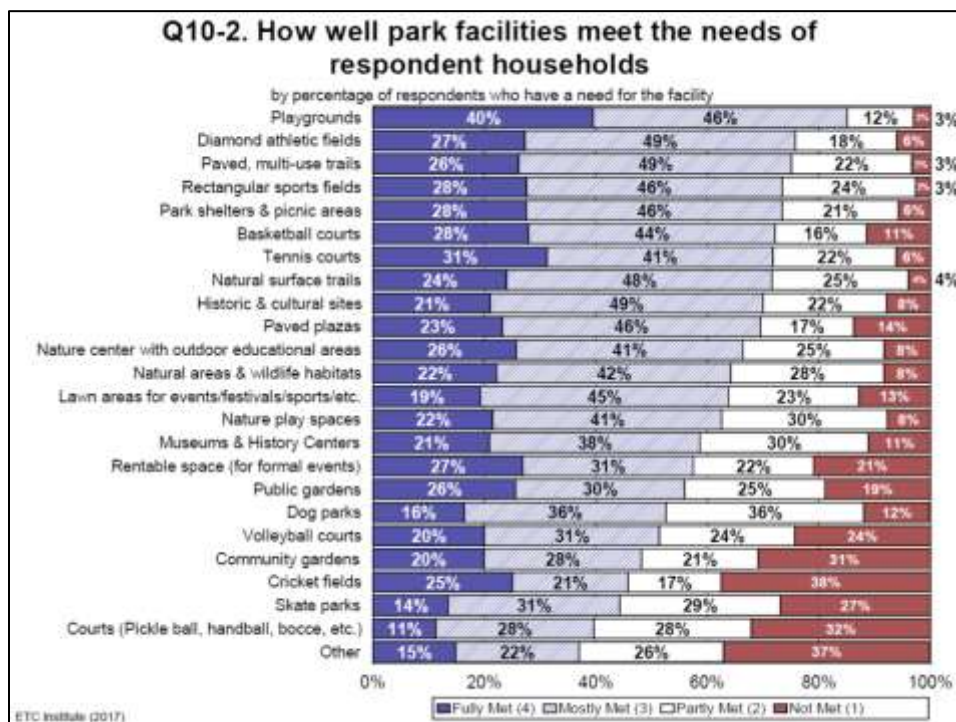
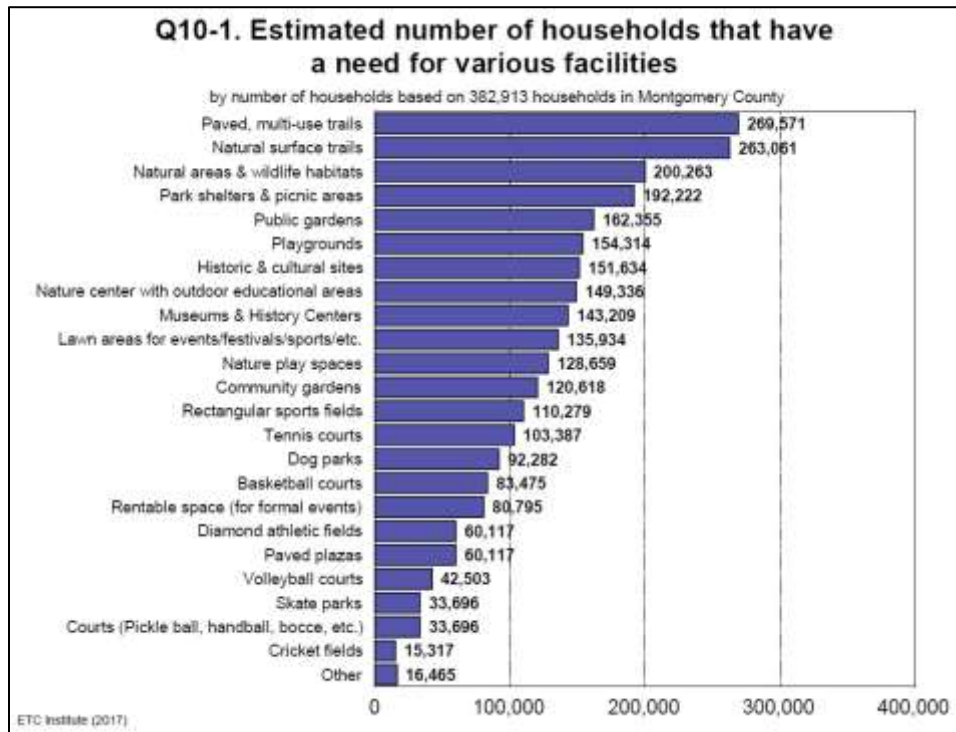


**Q8. Level of support for having M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks and Montgomery County Recreation Department do the following.**

by percentage of respondents

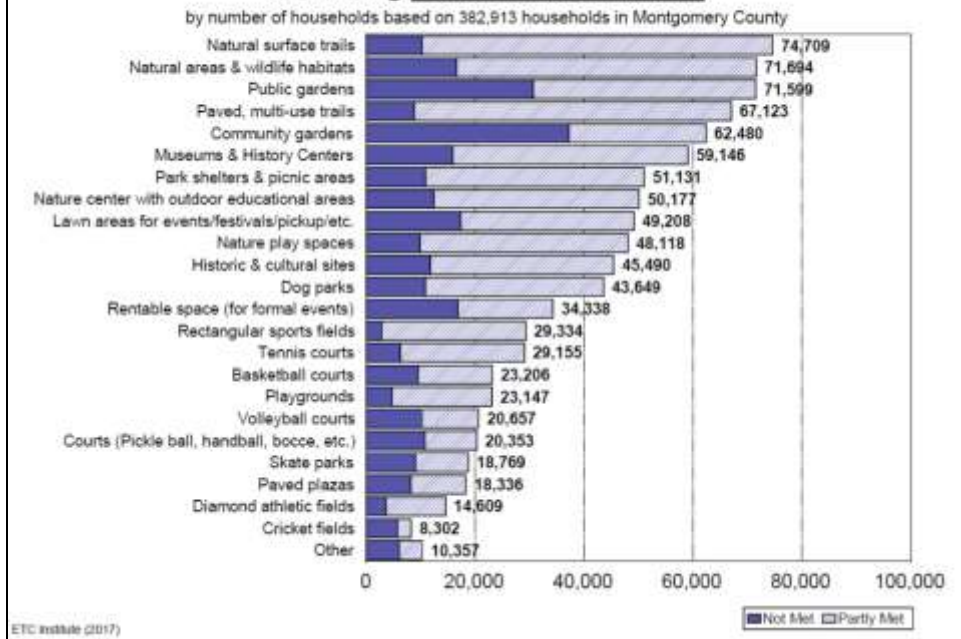




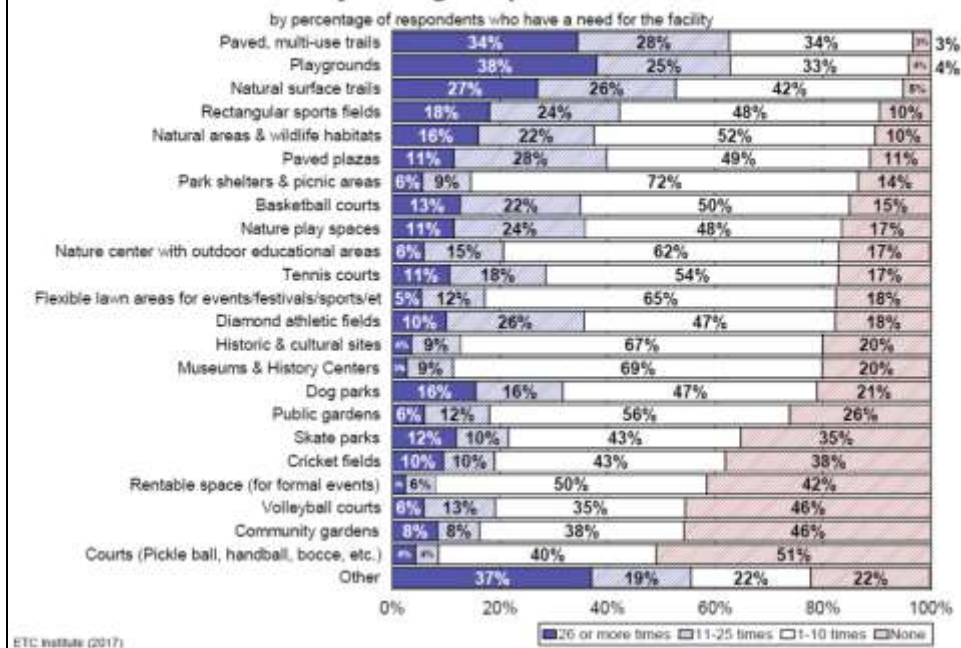




### Q10-3. Estimated Number of Households Whose Needs for Facilities Are Being Partly Met or Not Met



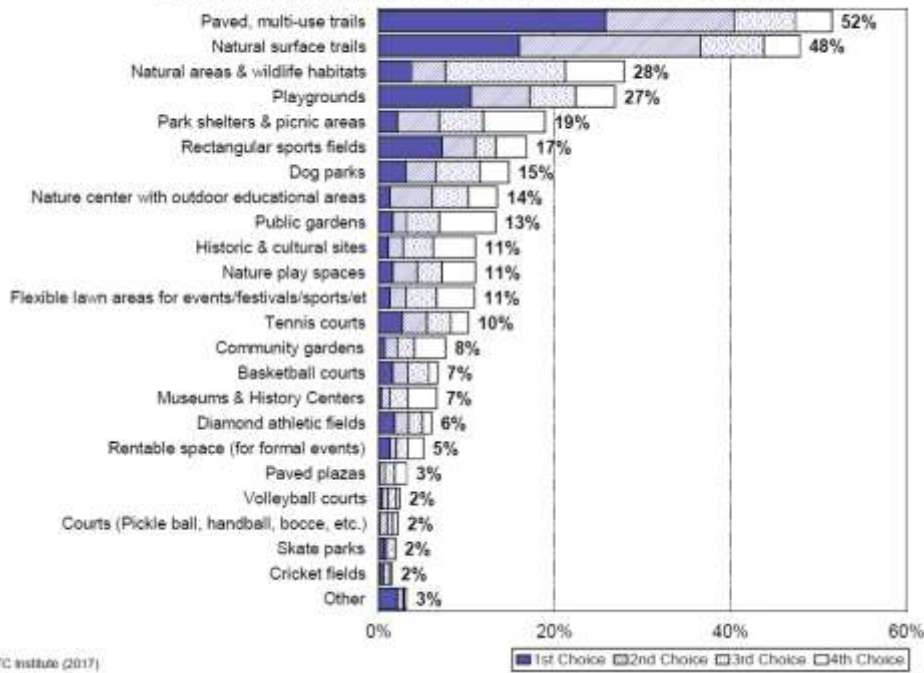
### Q10-4. Number of times households used this type of facility during the past 12 months





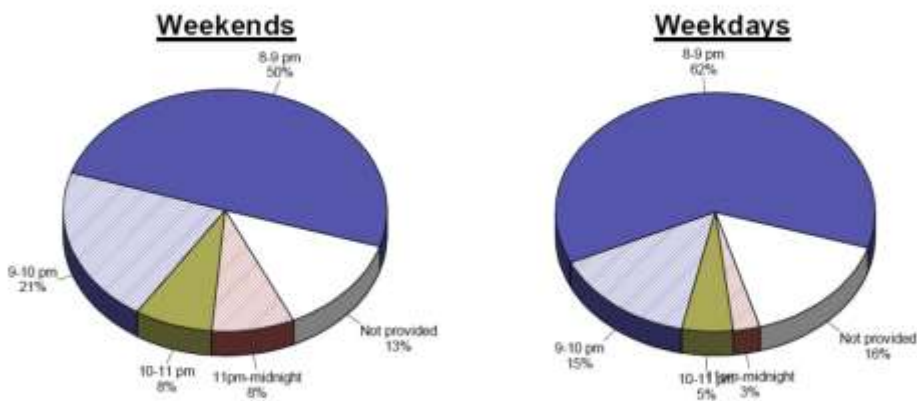
### Q11. Which four facilities are most important to your household?

by percentage of respondents who selected the item as one of their top four choices



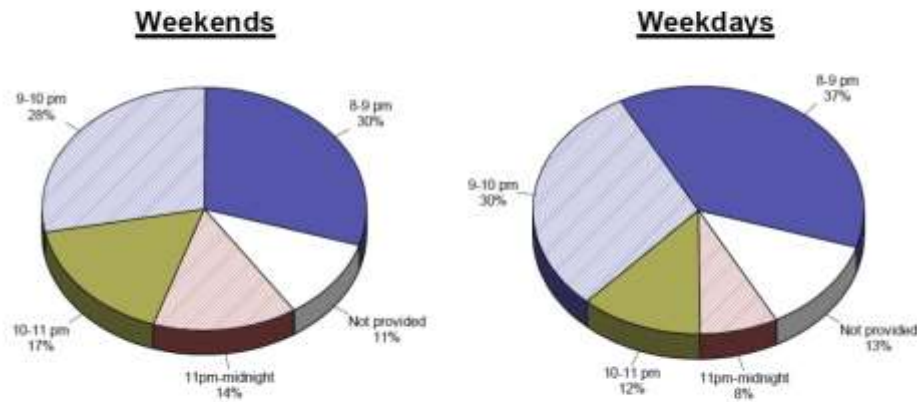
### Q12. What is the latest time in the evening you would consider using outdoor recreation facilities?

by percentage of respondents



**Q13. What is the latest time in the evening you would consider using indoor recreation facilities?**

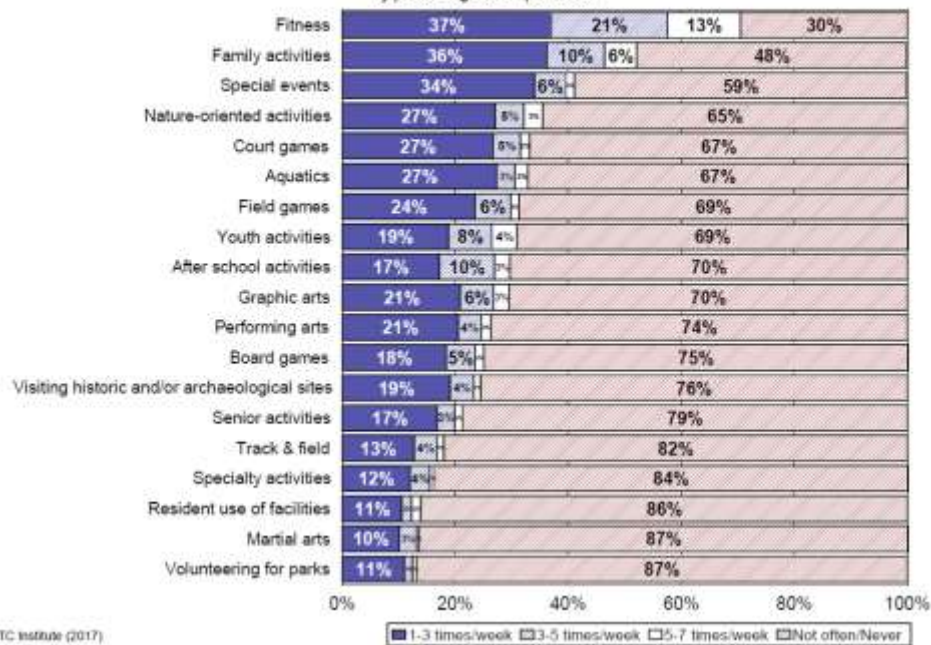
by percentage of respondents



ETC Institute (2017)

**Q14. How often respondents currently participate in the following activities.**

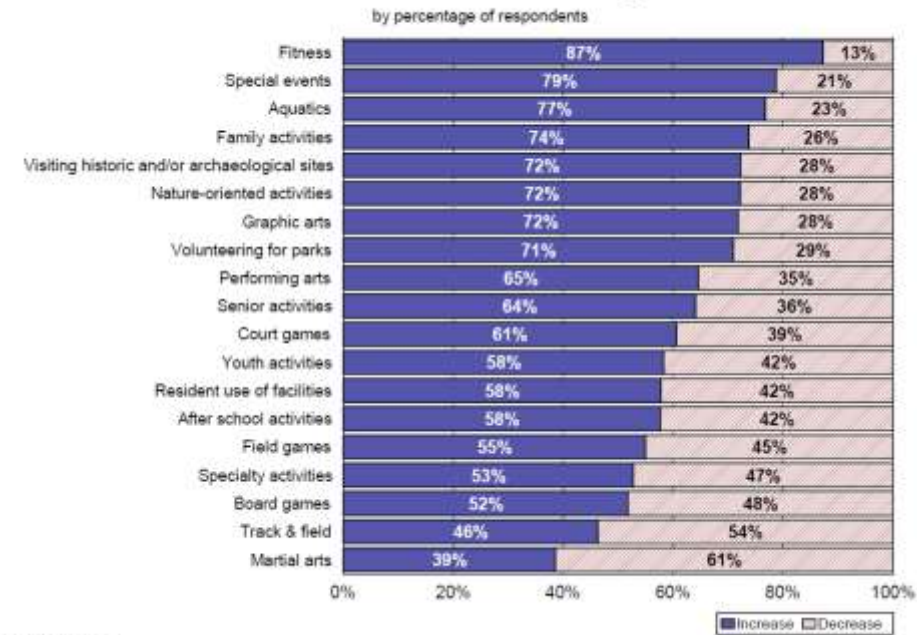
by percentage of respondents



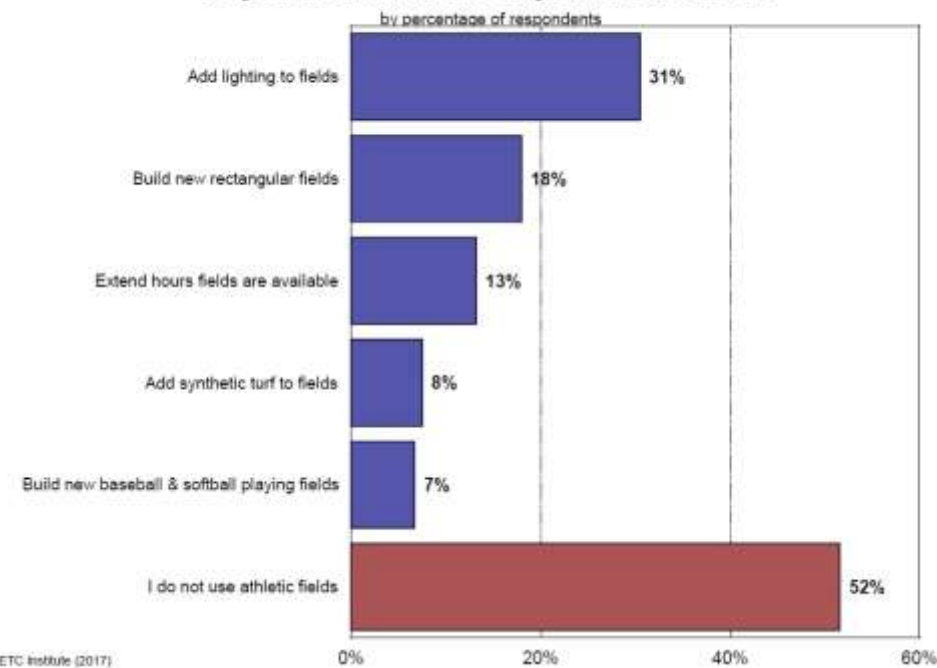
ETC Institute (2017)



**Q14-1. How will the usage of the following types of activities increase or decrease over the next 10 years?**

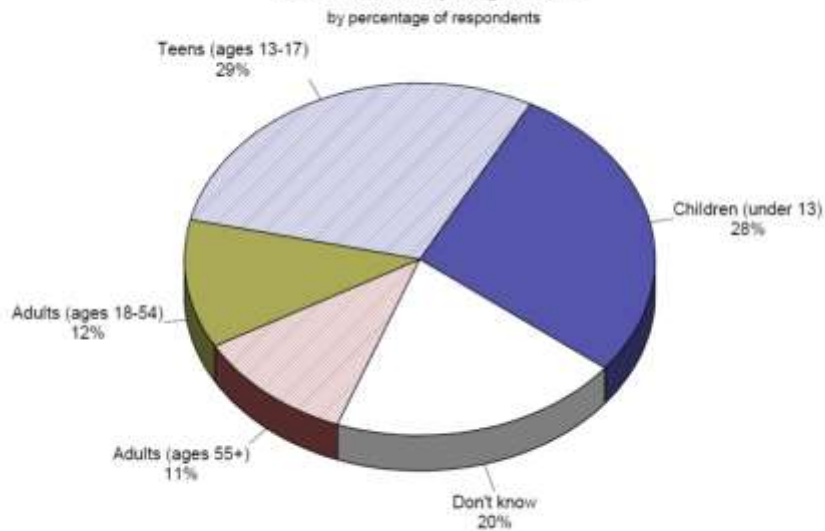


**Q16. Which two improvements are most important to you and members of your household?**



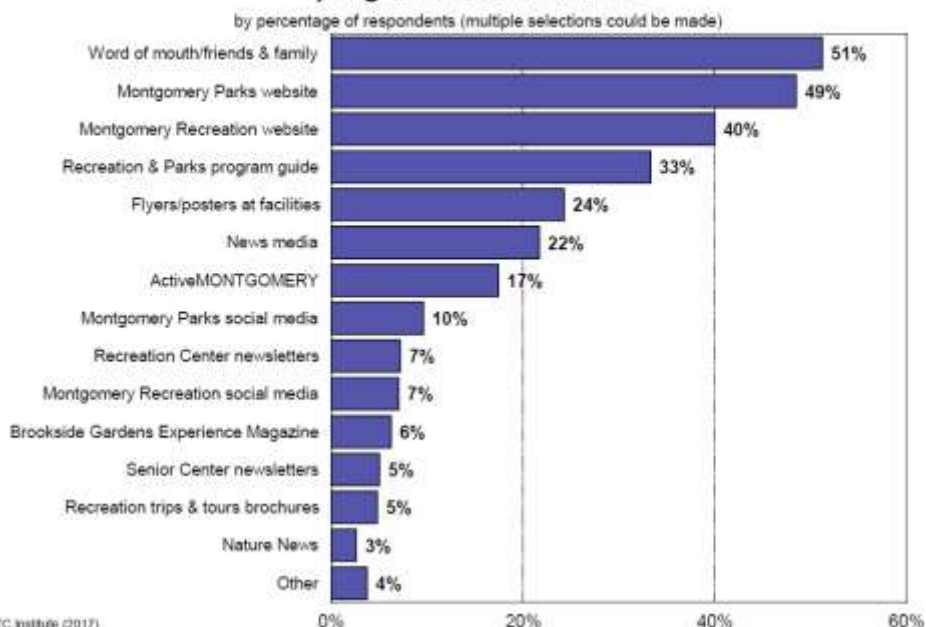


**Q17. Which group do you think should be M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks' and Montgomery County Recreation Department's top priority to serve for programs?**

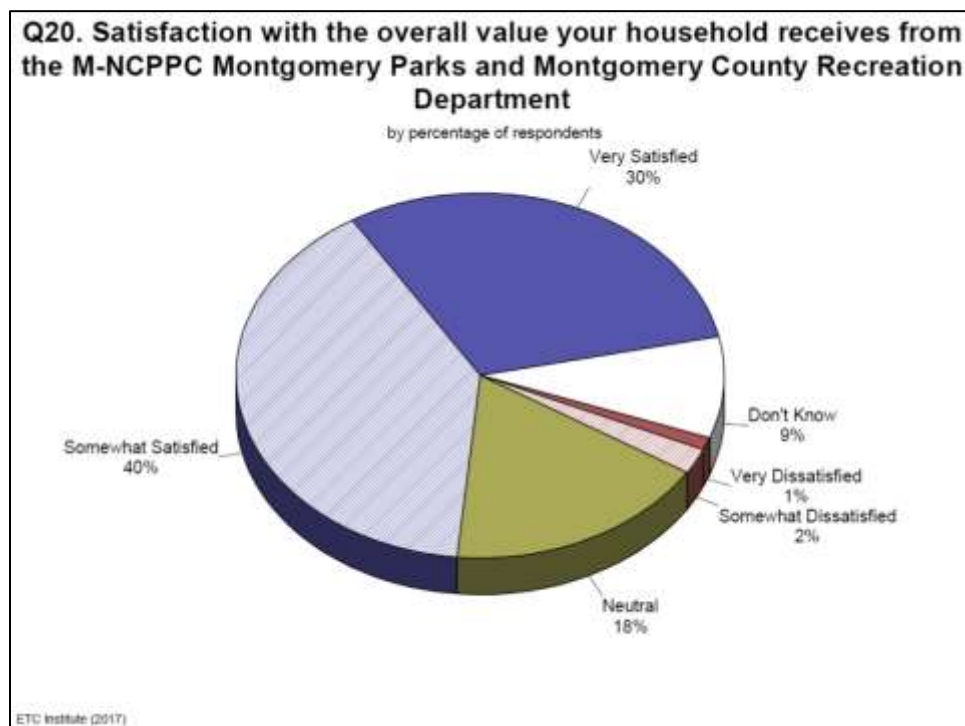
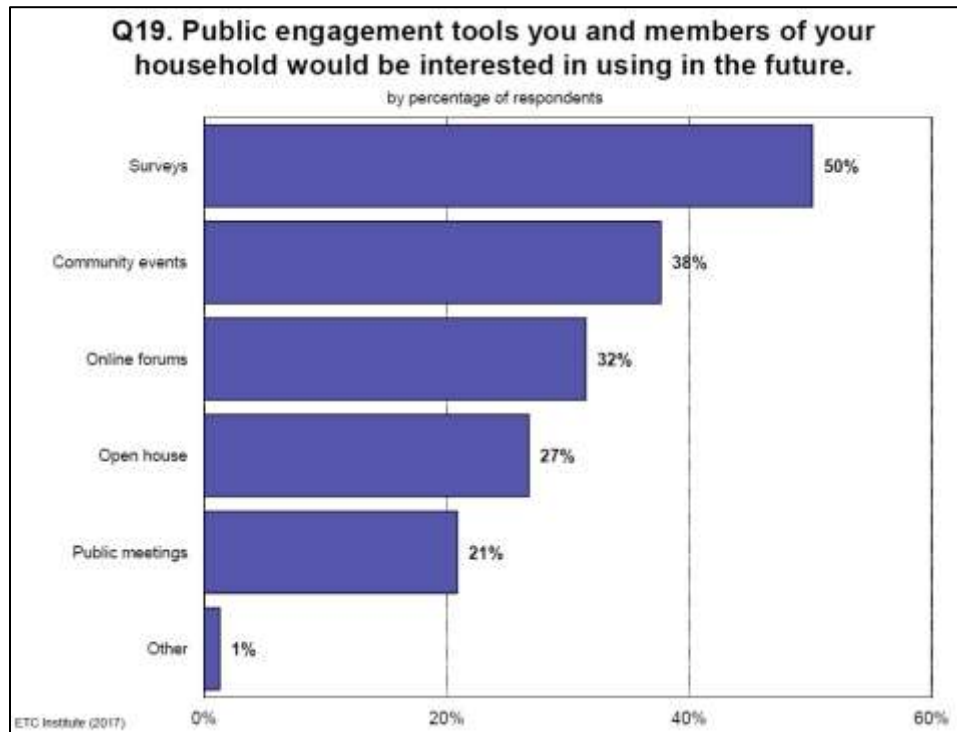


ETC Institute (2017)

**Q18. Ways respondents learn about M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks and Montgomery County Recreation Department programs and activities**

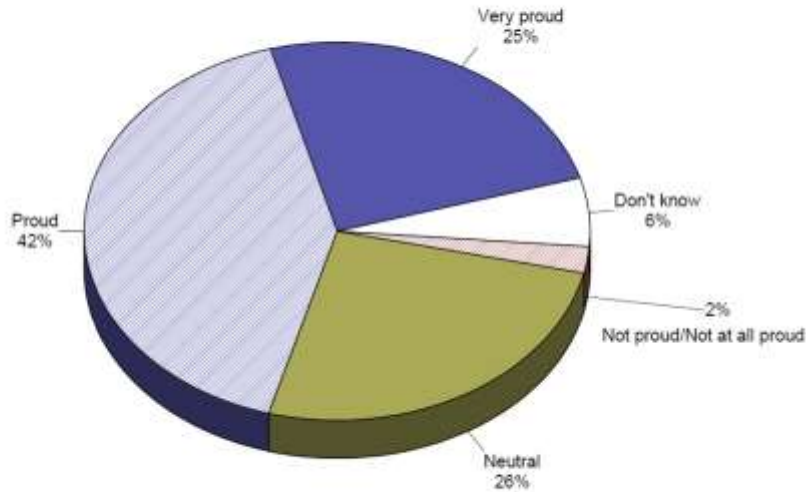


ETC Institute (2017)



**Q21. How would you describe your sense of pride in M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks recreation facilities, parks, and services?**

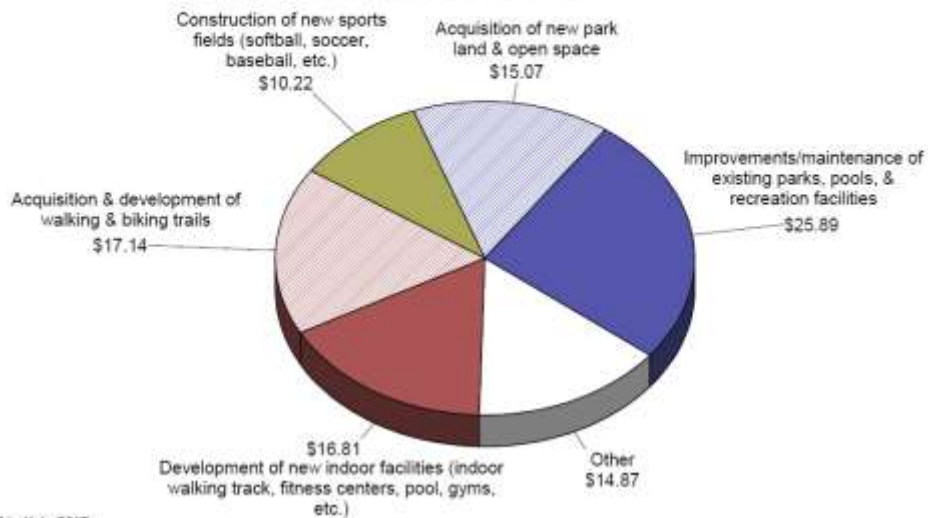
by percentage of respondents



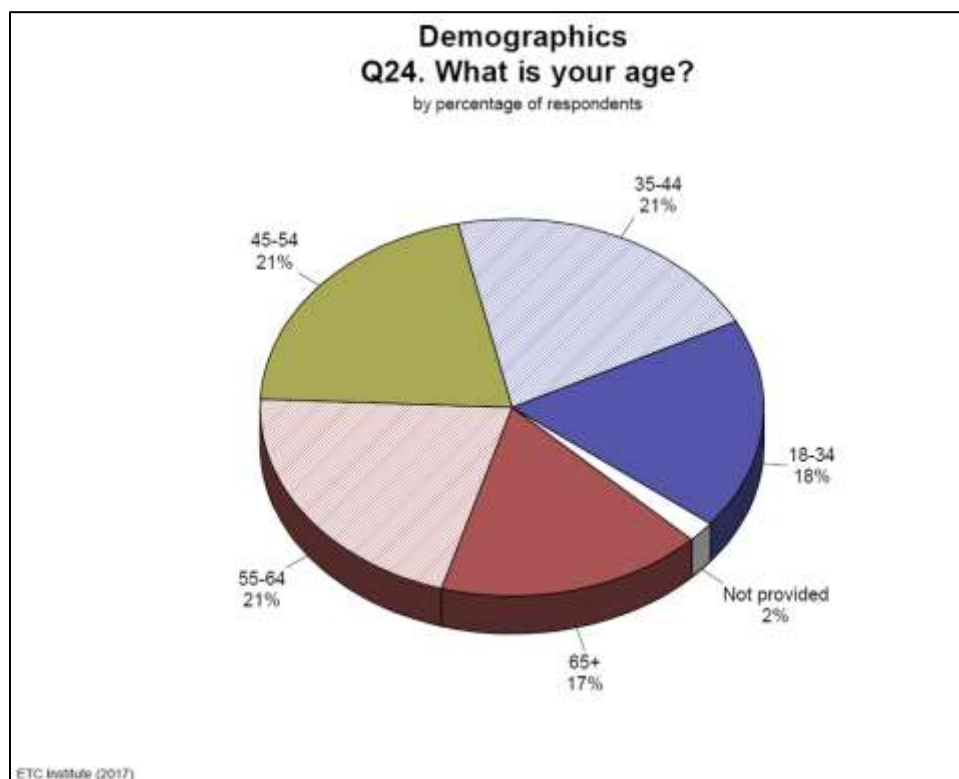
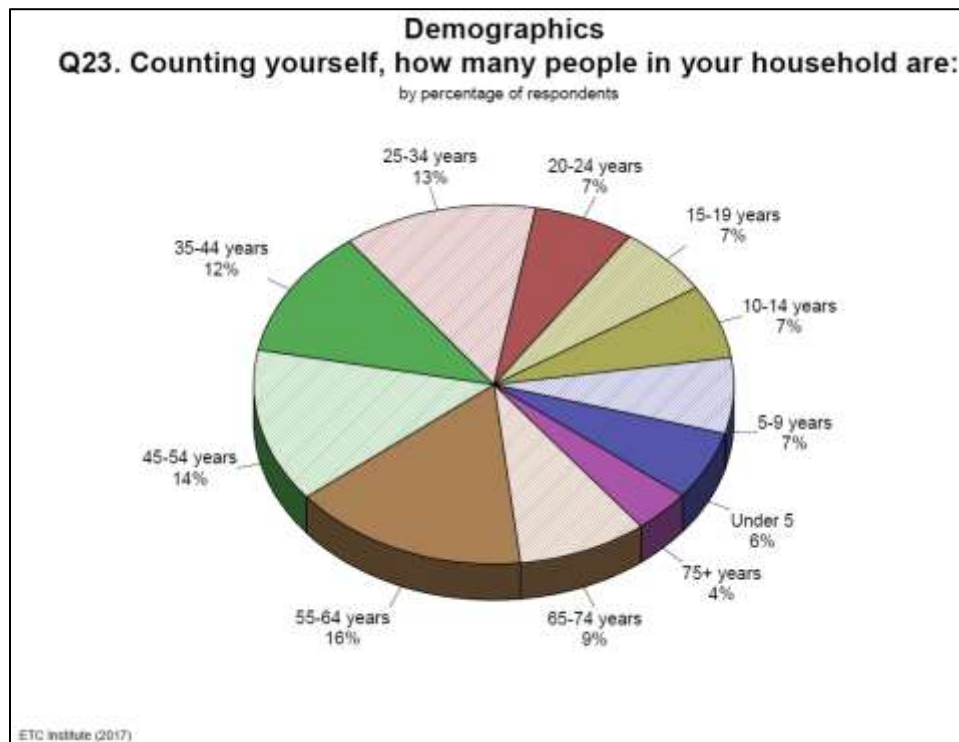
ETC Institute (2017)

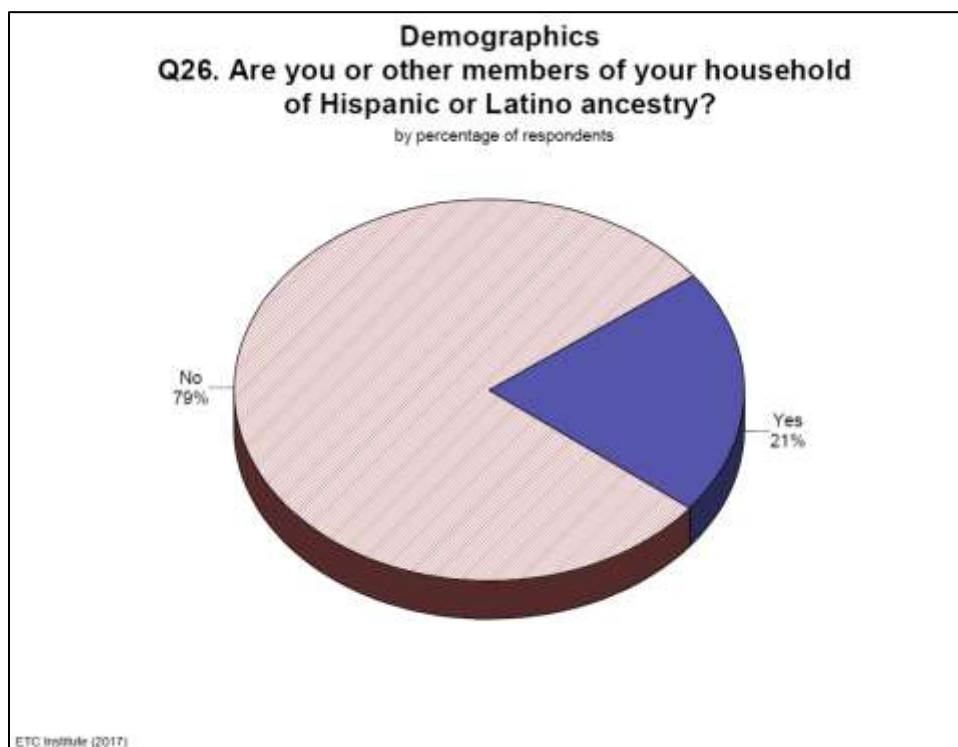
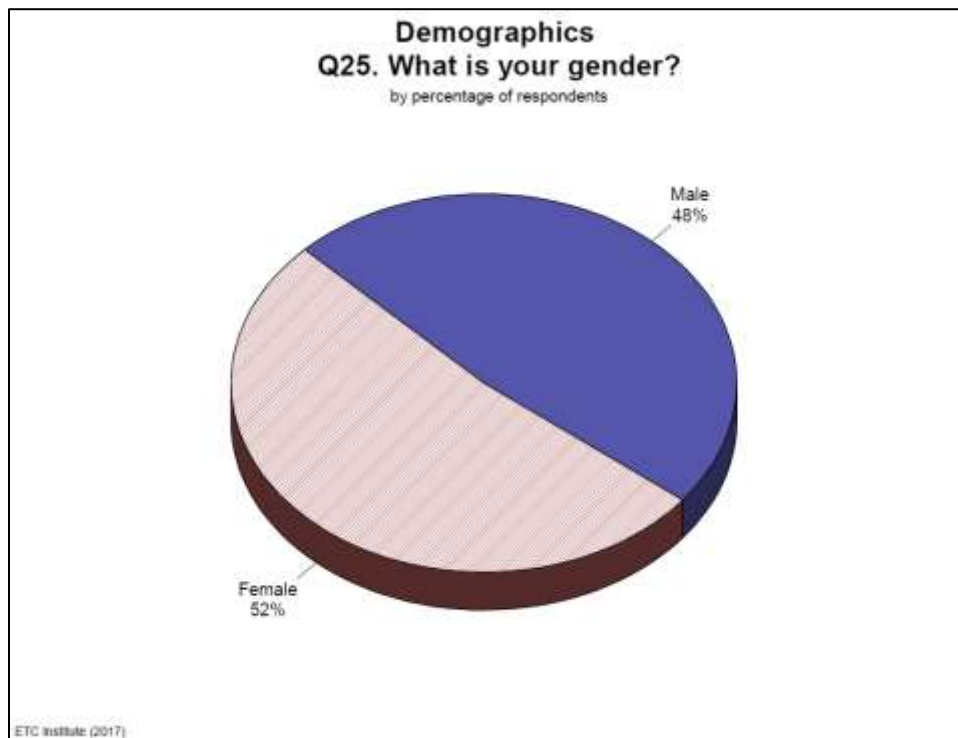
**Q22. If an additional \$100 were available for M-NCCPC Montgomery Parks and Montgomery County Recreation Department trails, parks, natural and cultural resources, sports, and recreation facilities how would you allocate the funds among the following categories of funding?**

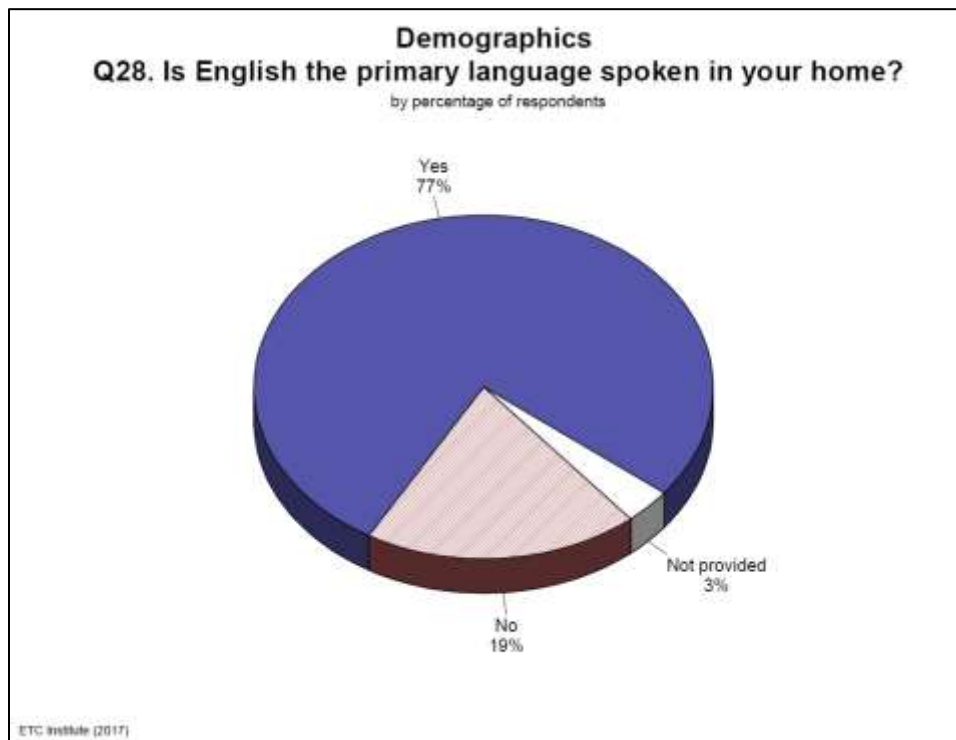
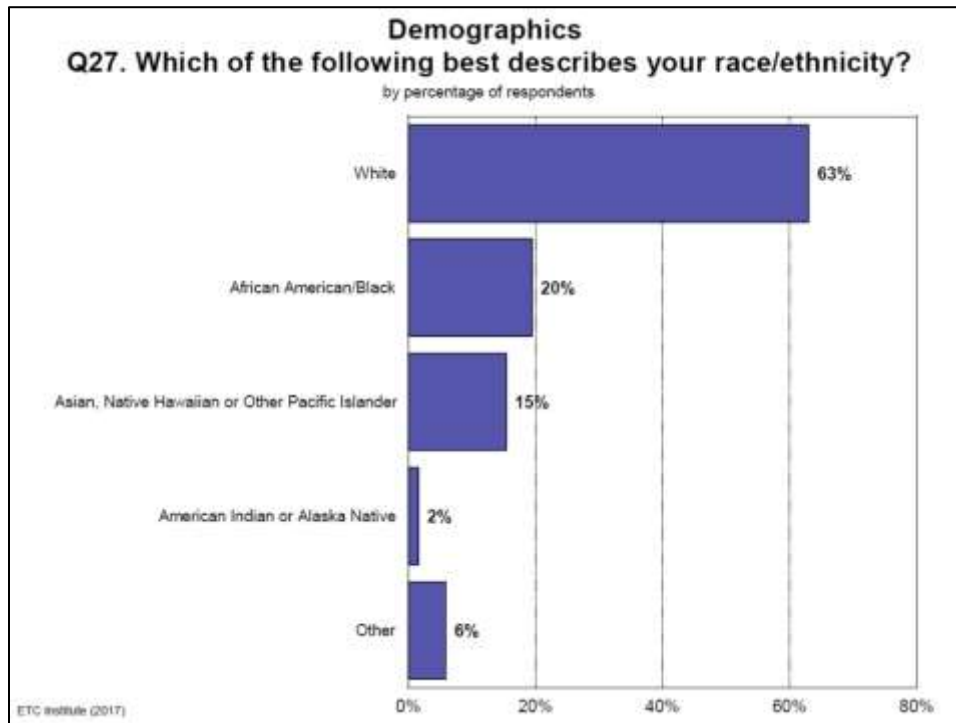
by percentage of respondents



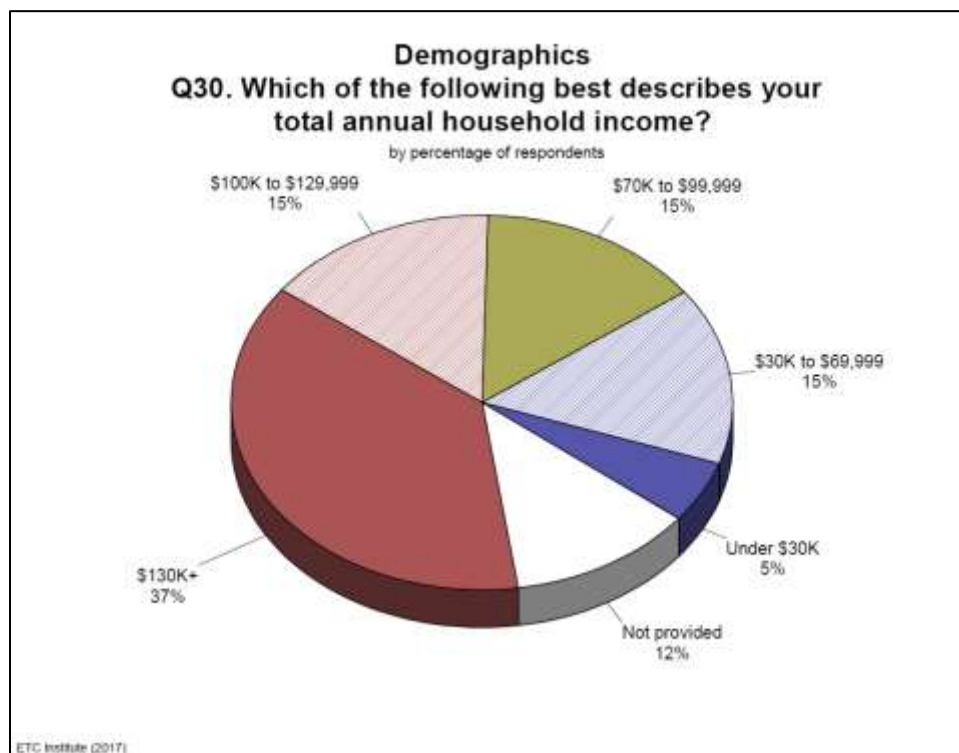
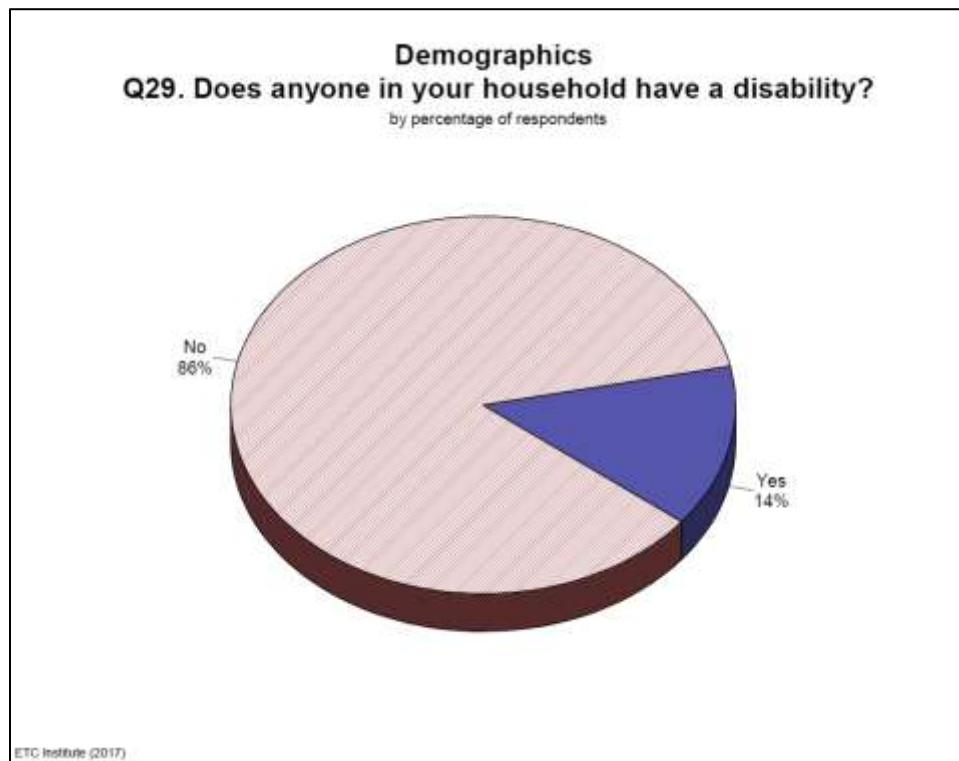
ETC Institute (2017)



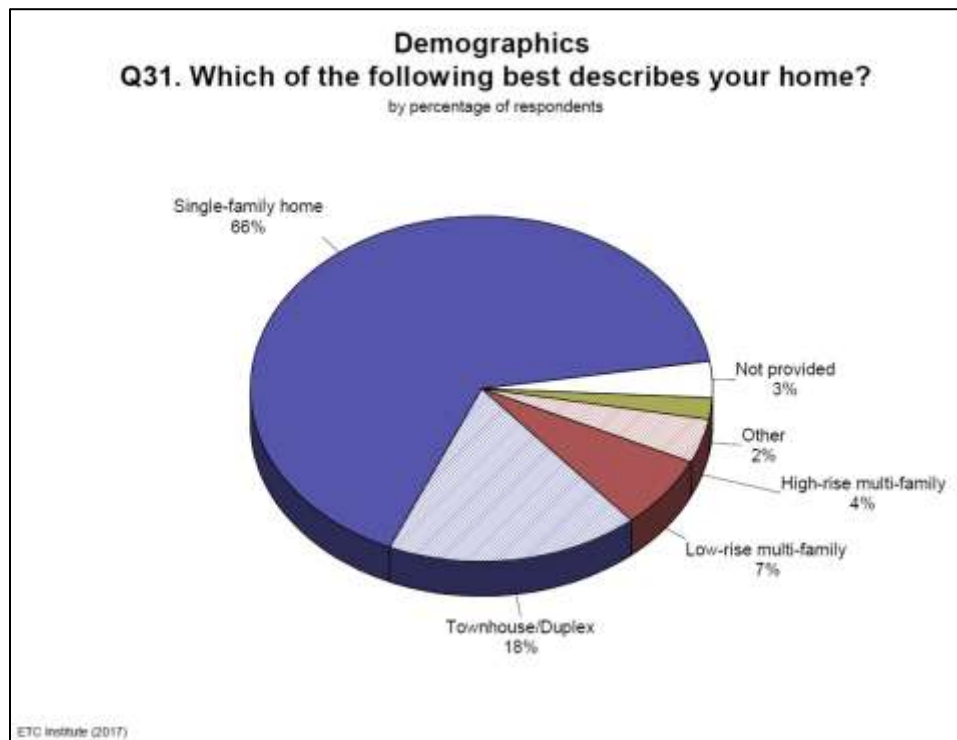












## 10.2 APPENDIX B- FULL COMMUNITIES CONNECT REPORT

MONTGOMERY COUNTY,  
PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACES  
**PROS PLAN - FOCUS GROUPS**  
MINORITIES COMMUNITIES - 2017





## **INTRODUCTION**

Communities Connect Consulting was retained for professional experts services to conduct an extensive public engagement outreach effort, focused on minority communities and to assist in the development of the *2017 Montgomery County Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan Update*. The Department of Parks encouraged the involvement and participation of the minority communities in the planning and review process.

The *2017 PROS Plan Update* supports the park and recreation goals and objectives contained in the County's *1993 General Plan Refinement – Goals and Objectives*. The new Plan will also build upon and expand the work of the current *2012 PROS Plan*. The purpose of the *PROS Plan* is developing strategies to deliver the “right parks in the right places, and to recommend policies and implementation steps for park acquisition, renovation, development and preservation, addressing methods to achieve social equity, health and conservation. The plan will include a policy framework; identify future facility needs and resource conservation priorities.

## **THE PROCESS**

From the beginning of February 2017, the Communities Connect team carefully and diligently orchestrated a diverse public involvement process that incorporated an intense outreach effort in the minority communities organizing six focus groups to hear what the minority communities of Montgomery County had to say, gathering opinions, beliefs and attitudes, encouraging discussion and providing an opportunity to learn more about the parks (the communities findings). A focus group team that was able to deal tactfully with outspoken group members, keep the discussion on track, and made sure every participant was heard. The outreach effort created through this process will be part of the outreach strategy plan, will undergo further public review and is scheduled for adoption in the winter of 2017.

In order to gather input and test ideas with the public, focus groups were held over a period of four weeks. These focus groups were open to individuals who live, in the selected specific minority population areas and were consistently well attended, indicating a strong community interest in the future of the Parks. Throughout the process, all ideas from the public were carefully documented, and used to summarize the development of the outreach plan to the minority communities.

### **WHY ENGAGE THE MINORITY COMMUNITIES?**

The updated plan for the Parks is very timely, with the growing diverse community in the County. Planning for the Parks is important for a variety of reasons:

- Diverse Population Growth throughout the county is generating increased park users and starting to see indications that the system is approaching resources and accommodations saturation.
- Notwithstanding fluctuations in the real estate market, properties in the county will continue to develop, growing a need for parks, recreational, and open space areas.
- The appearance of the Parks do not reflect the diverse community. Parks are aging, are designed primarily to accommodate physically passive individuals, and are unfriendly to the socialization.

The combination of the need to address approach to saturation, the strength of the development potential, and the opportunity to turn the Parks into a signature address for Montgomery County and the region make the 2017 *Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan Update* a timely and vital undertaking.

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

Following Communities Connect's introduction presentation, participants were asked to respond to five (5) questions in order to gather verbal feedback. Additionally, respondents were asked to fill out an eight (8) question survey.

Each focus group was recorded and an audiotape of each meeting is provided as part of the Communities Connect report.

Communities Connect engaged in intensive outreach and partnering efforts in order to draw attention to the *PROS Plan Outreach* process and encourage participation at focus groups. These efforts returned very positive results, as participation at each focus group ranged from about 8 to 15 people.

The *Focus Groups with the Minority Communities outreach* process incorporated detailed information the community findings about the parks. This section highlights several of the key findings that arose from the summaries:

**FOCUS GROUP 01** - Up-county Area - Targeting the Latino Community

Focus Group One was held in the up-county area. The group in this session generally had two main concerns:

- (1) That there should be greater focus on facilities and amenities for smaller children (between ages 2- 3) and their parents, and;
- (2) That there should be greater efforts on safety, particularly with security and lighting issues being highlighted.

A variety of amenities and facilities related needs were mentioned, including vending areas to buy water, benches, and a place to change the children. Ten years from now, participants would like to see more parks, bigger parks, and parks with more activities for children and sports. The group also expressed that they would like the park to communicate more with them in their language and in ways that is representative of their communities. Additionally, some expressed confusion regarding permit processes.

**FOCUS GROUP 02** - Mid-county Area - Targeting the Latino Community

Generally, the group in this session had four recurring concerns:

- (1) Safety and security with a focus on illicit activities and concerns about poor lighting.
- (2) Having more services for children, including programming and spaces where smaller children can play safely.
- (3) Accessibility was a recurring theme, particularly with the perceived danger of crossing Georgia Avenue, the high cost of renting facilities. Additionally, this group discussed the need for more outreach and communication from the parks to the community to facilitate accessibility for community members. It is worth noting that this group also discusses language barriers and wanting more culturally relevant programming as sub-themes of accessibility of the parks.
- (4) Cleanliness of facilities was also an issue for this group. Additionally, though not discussed in depth in the focus group, survey responses showed a desire from participants of this focus group to conduct outreach to better serve the elderly.

**FOCUS GROUP 03** - Down-East County area - Targeting the African Community

The answers in this focus group were characterized by settling in Montgomery county very recently compared to other focus groups. All but one respondent indicated they have lived in Montgomery County for less than one year. Some participants in this group had not yet had the opportunity to visit a park but many spoke about what a park is like in their native country and what they would like to see here. Participants were primarily interested in having more varied and targeted sports activities like health and wellness programming for people of all ages. It was also important to this group that the park act as a place of building community through social gatherings so people can meet each other. Cleanliness of the parks, including trails, was an issue that came up as well for this focus group. This group was much less familiar with Montgomery County Parks and how they operate and felt that transportation was a barrier to park access.

**FOCUS GROUP 04** - Up - Down East County area - Targeting the Asian Pacific Community

Participants in this focus group highly stressed the importance of various types of programming, including health and fitness programming (such as drop-in yoga outdoor classes), cultural programming, and events. This group talked about parks as meeting points and vehicles for community building and gatherings. In regards to increased accessibility to the parks, this group discussed the need for transportation, proximity, and need of more outreach to diverse communities, youth and seniors. Participants suggested having more outreach by the parks through native language printed media. Two participants discussed the need to have a more updated website in regards to up to date information and a more user-friendly permit application.

**FOCUS GROUP 05** - Down - East County area - Targeting the African Community

Participants in this focus group predominantly utilize parks for health, fitness and sports. When discussing improvements, participants stressed the need for more security and regards for safety. Importantly, this group discussed ways that the parks can better engage communities to further their mission, including through partnerships with schools, volunteerism and cultural programming. Regarding how the parks can best reach out to the community participants suggested not focusing only on online outreach but also to conducting outreach through more traditional media such as print (flyers, grocery stores, schedule inserts) and radio. The desire for urban parks was also expressed along with the concern that with increased population in the county, there should be close attention paid to preserving existing green spaces.



### **FOCUS GROUP 06** - Up - West County area - Targeting the Asian Community

For this focus group, culturally relevant programming and park design came up as prominent themes. Participants expressed that they would like to see parks utilized as centers to promote cultural understanding and learning particularly through more programming and events. Regarding events, some participants felt there could be expanded capacity to accommodate large outdoor events that would need staging and other related equipment like concerts. The majority of participants indicated that they currently utilize the parks for social gatherings with large groups of people like alumni associations or church members. It was suggested to work in partnership with the community, particularly through non-profits to accomplish more cultural programming. Respondents expressed concern with the high cost of Montgomery County Parks as compared to other similar services or adjacent counties.

### **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### ❖ **IMPROVE PARK SECURITY AND SAFETY**

Eliminate illicit/illegal activities and make improvements to poor lighting. Decrease the danger of crossing Georgia Avenue by making pedestrian improvements, and provide visible security such as cameras/video recording and security personnel presence within parks and open space facilities.

#### ❖ **CLEANLINESS OF FACILITIES**

Improve the cleanliness of the facilities, including trails, and trash removal.

#### ❖ **PROGRAMING**

Provide more varied and targeted sports activities and health and wellness programming for people of all ages. Target and improve programs for small children ages 2–3. Provide more cultural programming and events.

#### ❖ **PHYSICAL FACILITIES**

Increase facilities and amenities for small children ages 2–3 including spaces where small children can play safely and their parents can engage in meaningful activities. There is a desire for more urbanized parks to preserve existing green spaces in communities, located within walking distance. Expand the park capacity to accommodate large outdoor events that would need staging and other related equipment for venues such as concerts

❖ **ENGAGE COMMUNITIES**

Further the mission of the communities, through partnerships with schools, volunteerism and cultural programs. Many residents currently utilize the parks for social gatherings for large groups of people to hold events for alumni associations, churches, and culturally relevant programs.

Utilize parks as meeting points and vehicles for community building and gatherings. The parks should function as a place for building community through social gatherings so that people can meet each other. Work in partnership with the community, through non-profits to accomplish more cultural programming. Parks should be utilized as centers to promote cultural understanding and learning particularly through more ethnic programming and events.

❖ **ACCESSIBILITY**

Eliminate language barriers in staffing and signage. Conduct outreach to better serve the elderly and families. Eliminate the high cost of utilizing Montgomery County Parks as compared to other similar services or those in adjacent counties.

Provide outreach through more traditional media such as print (flyers, grocery stores, schedule inserts) and radio. Regular communication is needed from the parks to the community to facilitate accessibility for community members. The high cost of renting facilities is prohibitive. Transportation cost is a barrier to park access for many participants.



## **PROJECT LEADERSHIP**

Communities Connect Leadership provided overall strategic direction and continuing participation in the *Montgomery County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan Focus Groups with the Minority Communities*. The Leadership carefully deliberated on ideas and issues that surfaced throughout the focus groups. The support of these individuals enhanced and encouraged the development of this process. The Communities Connect, which designed and guided the process. Their guidance ensured that every detail of the process was addressed. Communities Connect is most appreciative of their efforts on our behalf.

## **PARTICIPANTS**

The foundation of *Montgomery County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan Focus Groups with Minority Communities* is made up of the ideas generated at the focus groups and written comments. The community comments received during the process will be very important in shaping the plan principles. These individuals fulfilled their roles as citizens in a clear and concrete fashion by investing their time and energy into this project. Their work constructed part of the basic content of the vision that will become the Montgomery parks future. In addition to the government agencies, other public and private entities provided essential contributions for which we are grateful.

## **PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM**

The project manager team managed and implemented the process, including working in partnership with the prime consultant team PROS Inc. Project team members carefully deliberated on ideas and issues that surfaced through the community process in organizing the focus groups, and brought their own technical expertise. This team has been working diligently since beginning of 2017. We are grateful to make possible the extraordinary level of public participation in the *Montgomery County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan Focus Groups with Minority Communities*.

**MAYRA BAYONET - COMMUNITIES CONNECT PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Ms. Bayonet is a community development relationship manager that holds a degree in architecture/urban planning. Her career spans 34 years of experience in community planning, customer relations, community development, and community outreach. She also has over 15 years of public service experience at the city and county level, and has worked primarily in diverse, multi-cultural and often times disadvantaged environments. She has a deep knowledge of government processes with an exemplary record of strengthening communication between communities and organizations. Ms. Bayonet is a recognized force in the community who is present at many community outreach and advocacy events. She is constantly creating connections between community groups and in turn gets things done.

**RAUL MEDRANO - ENTREPRENEUR | ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONAL | EDUCATOR**

Raul was born in Washington, DC, his parents are from Honduras-Central America. He currently resides near downtown Silver Spring, Maryland with his wife and family, as well as lived in Montgomery County for over 20 years. Graduated from Johns Hopkins University-Carey Business School with an MBA and concentration in Organizational and Leadership Development. Also, he is a graduate of the University of Maryland-College Park Campus, having earned a B.S. Degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Marketing. Medrano, has an extensive background in economic development, having worked for the Montgomery County Economic Development Department from 2006-2011 and under two County Executive administrations. Formed part of the Germantown Sector Plan update from 2006-2010, as well as the Germantown Task Force which was an alliance of community stakeholders and business leaders during the Germantown Sector Plan Study period. Manager and Instructor, Small Business & Entrepreneurship Program, Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School for Adults in NW, Washington, DC. Campus Director, Ana G. Mendez University System, Capital Area Campus, Wheaton, MD. Business Development Specialist, Montgomery County Department of Economic Development.

**MARIA P. RODRIGUEZ - INTERPRETER | ADMINISTRATIVE | PARALEGAL**

President/Owner of MPR Translations, LLC, recognized by the Daily Record of Baltimore as Maryland's Top 100 Women for 2012. A graduate of John Jay College, BS in Criminal Justice, Paralegal and Spanish Interpreter-Translator. A devoted community member at the local, county and states levels. Involved with private organizations to advance opportunities for women in business, the Hispanic community and charitable organizations, notably MD Hispanic Business Conference, The Featherstone Foundation, The Susana De Moya Foundation, CODR, Alzheimer's Association and the Hispanic Chambers of Commerce.

**DESIREE BAYONET - AUDIO TECHNICIAN**

Désirée is a multimedia producer with experience in video, audio, and graphic design. She holds a B.A. in Electronic Media from George Washington University and a M.A. in Educational Communication and Technology from New York University. Désirée is particularly interested in the intersection of technology, education, and storytelling. Désirée co-founded audio storytelling collective, From Block2Block, which engages community members in telling stories from their own community. She is currently the Program Director for WOWD-LP, a community radio station just outside of Washington, D.C.

**ANA REYES - RESEARCH ANALYST**

Ana holds an M.A. in Latin American and Latino Studies from the University of Illinois at Chicago where she was an Abraham Lincoln Fellow. She also holds a B.A. in Anthropology and Spanish Language and Cultures from the University of Maryland, College Park. She has formal training in quantitative and qualitative data collection methods and has extensive experience in methodologies of social science research, including oral histories, focus group facilitation, and surveying. Her past roles have allowed her to combine this social science research background with administrative experience, including strategic planning and project management for nonprofit organizations. For over ten years, she has worked to increase opportunities for diverse communities of the DC-Metro Area through direct service, research, advocacy and policy work.



### 10.3 APPENDIX C- INTERCEPT SURVEY #1

#### COPY OF INTERCEPT SURVEY #1 (ENGLISH & SPANISH VERSIONS)



Montgomery County, MD

Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission

1. Do you use or visit Montgomery County Parks or Facilities? (If yes, go to 1a else go to 1b)  
1a. If yes, what parks do you like to visit most?

1b. If not, what are the reasons you don't use Montgomery County Parks or Facilities?

2. Are there any park amenities or recreation programs missing in the parks that you visit that you would like to see added or changed to make your experience better?

3. How would you want us to communicate with you about future offerings and updates?

Other Comments, if any:

English



Montgomery County, MD

Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission

1. ¿Usted visita los parques o usa las instalaciones del Condado de Montgomery?  
(Si su respuesta es "sí" pase a pregunta 1a. Si su respuesta es "no" pasa a 1b)  
1a. ¿Cuáles parques le gusta visitar más?

1b. ¿Cuáles son las razones por cual no utiliza los parques o instalaciones del Condado de Montgomery?

2. ¿Hay comodidades del parque o programas de recreación que no existen en los parques que visita que gustaría ver añadido o modificado para mejorar su experiencia?

3. ¿Cómo desea que nos comuniquemos con usted acerca de información de última hora o programación?

Otros comentarios, si los hay:

Spanish

## INTERCEPT SURVEY #1: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS BY QUESTION

A	1	Keep parks natural, don't let in commercial shops, advertisements, etc.
	2	The city is doing a good job of keeping kids safe at the playgrounds
	3	City's current management of the parks is good
	4	Plants and flowers need to be kept well-maintained
	5	Need more access to public restrooms
B	6	Staff is great, especially with kids
	7	Dissatisfied in the limited summer camp offerings
	8	People with pets don't have any space for leisure activity
D	9	Water fountains sometimes don't work in the parks
	10	Whetstone Park's fences need to be fixed
	11	Need to ensure parks are <b>clean</b> and <b>safe</b>
	12	Hours for boating need to be extended
	13	More pavilions are needed
	14	We really enjoy the ferris wheel at Watkins Park
	15	Better signage is needed for restrooms
	16	Better signage is needed for fields (Fredrick)
	17	Website needs to be kept updated with most important information
	18	Restrooms are currently self-maintained





### INTERCEPT SURVEY #1: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS, BY LOCATION

Plum Gar Neighborhood Recreation Center	<p>Can we open earlier. Other facilities open at 9am but Plum Gar doesn't open until 10am. Also,</p> <p>1 it needs to be open longer on Sundays.</p> <p>2 So far things are great.</p> <p>3 Need to listen more to the Chinese community in this area (Plum Gar)</p> <p>4 Need to sound proof game room, its too noisy</p> <p>5 Opened limited hours to the public</p> <p>6 Limited summer hours and limited hours for seniors regularly</p> <p>7 Limited time for playing ping pong (only available for 2-hours on Fridays)</p>
Germantown Community Recreation Center	<p>8 Better communication through the schools, outreach</p> <p>9 Extended operating hours</p> <p>10 Market in local newspaper about community center events</p> <p>11 Need beeter landscaping (more flowers)</p> <p>12 Enjoy talking to the Chinese staff members at the community center</p> <p>13 Ping pong tables are great</p> <p>14 Staff members are nice</p> <p>15 Facility lacking hot water</p>
Upper County Community Recreation Center	<p>16 I have a lot of fun at the park</p> <p>17 Love being at the community center and at the parks</p>
Gwendolyn E. Coffield Community Recreation Center	<p>18 It is always clean in here and I like that they offer classes for people with disabilities</p> <p>19 I'm glad that the trash cans went back in the parks</p> <p>20 I think the parks are great; Montgomery County gives great value for our taxes</p> <p>21 Soccer fields need irrigation</p> <p>22 There is some erosion down by the playground</p> <p>23 Thank you for blowing the leaves instead of just mowing over them like in previous years</p> <p>24 I think MNCPPC does a great job</p> <p>25 Please keeo the paved paths in prime condition</p> <p>26 Keep creeks free of "strainers" so canoes and kayaks can float safely</p> <p>27 The bathrooms always stink</p> <p>28 Recreation centers need to offer affordable rental space for small vendors</p>
Long Branch Community Recreation Center	<p>29 I like the Tai Chi and Zumba classes that are offered</p> <p>30 More security is needed in the parks; especially when kids are playing</p> <p>31 Last year there was a secuirty problem at Long Branch, would like to see the security increased</p> <p>32 There are major accessibility issues getting into the park ADA</p> <p>33 It would be nice to have waste bags</p> <p>34 More park land needs to be purchased in this area, especially around Silver Springs Library</p>
White Oak Community Recreation Center	<p>35 Mid County gym is to small</p> <p>36 Long Branch needs to fix their steps and have more stairs</p> <p>37 Long Branch needs to have more parking spaces for the disabled</p> <p>38 I wish White Oak was open throughout the holidays</p> <p>39 Long Branch needs enhanced since gas line explosion</p> <p>40 Long Branch is a dead zone for phones</p> <p>41 System is doing a great job</p> <p>42 Schweinhaut Senior Center needs to be renovated</p>

## 10.4 APPENDIX D- INTERCEPT SURVEY #2

## COPY OF INTERCEPT SURVEY #2

Please rank your top 3 favorite things to do in parks • Por favor clasifique sus 3 cosas favoritas para hacer en los parques

#	sports • deportes	       
#	trails • caminos	       
#	nature & camping • naturaleza & campamentos	       
#	history & education • historia & educación	       
#	events & festivals • eventos y festivales	       
#	special places • lugares especiales	       
#	gathering places • lugares para reuniones	       

What would make our parks better? • ¿Cómo mejoraríamos los parques?

zip code • código postal:

email:

Please rank your top 3 favorite things to do in parks • Por favor clasifique sus 3 cosas favoritas para hacer en los parques

#	sports • deportes	       
#	trails • caminos	       
#	nature & camping • naturaleza & campamentos	       
#	history & education • historia & educación	       
#	events & festivals • eventos y festivales	       
#	special places • lugares especiales	       
#	gathering places • lugares para reuniones	       

What would make our parks better? • ¿Cómo mejoraríamos los parques?

zip code • código postal:

email:

**INTERCEPT SURVEY #2: FULL RESULTS**

Ranking of the top 3 most important facilities/services provided by Montgomery County Parks.

WORLD OF MONTGOMERY FESTIVAL - ROCKVILLE, MD, OCTOBER 16, 2016

Choice	SPORTS	TRAILS	NATURE	HISTORY	EVENTS	SPECIAL PLACES	GATHERING PLACES
1st	47	61	28	19	44	12	13
2nd	29	46	43	16	41	19	11
3rd	25	24	31	21	40	34	31

SILVER SPRING TREE LIGHTING - SILVER SPRING, MD, NOVEMBER 12, 2016

Choice	SPORTS	TRAILS	NATURE	HISTORY	EVENTS	SPECIAL PLACES	GATHERING PLACES
1st	74	78	33	24	49	12	12
2nd	24	52	58	34	53	13	15
3rd	30	27	36	25	43	35	28

**INTERCEPT SURVEY #2: WHAT WOULD MAKE OUR PARKS BETTER?**

Number Responses

1	More isolated, natural places.
2	More nature centers and events.
3	Adventure.
4	Lots of activities and parks.
5	If we could also go on stage.
6	I wish there were more fields and trees.
7	gardens
8	more events.
9	involve community more, disseminate event information.
10	easy access for all family to enjoy.
11	more of them.
12	nature trails, love how montgomery county has already kept play grounds and updated and clean
13	about outdoor fitness stations, more dog parks.
14	more kids facilities.
15	more trash cans.

Number	Responses
16	renovate maydale - return the programs.
17	Prizes
18	bathrooms.
19	keep them cleaner.
20	with more park policies.
21	no smoking
22	making dog registration information more available (dog parks)
23	more activities.
24	creating more activities for students and young people.
25	more accessibility and information known.
26	better trash receptacles.
27	ride bikes.
28	don't waste.
29	make them cleaner and set up more trash cleaning events.
30	large space for more people.
31	more parks.
32	more community awareness.
33	keep it clean.
34	keep clean.
35	a water museum would be great.
36	more recycling bins by every trash can.
37	safety.
38	diversity culturally.
39	make more.
40	Fenced area for toddlers and special needs. Shaded play parks, sensory gardens.
41	Restrooms.
42	Easy public transit and bike lanes to the parks.
43	Easier methods to learn about events like a weekly or monthly digest.
44	More bike trails, easy public transportation.
45	Swings.
46	recycling bins, swings, carousel.
47	More kids activities.
48	with animals.
49	organized and clean



Number	Responses
50	more parks for children.
51	ensure accessibility for all.
52	better signage (wheaton regional)
53	playgrounds.
54	neighborhood activities for us to meet each other.
55	dog bag stations.
56	plaques saying to clean up and not litter.
57	park with water recreations and activities.
58	swimming pool.
59	water fountains.
60	keep it up. These are natural treasure.
61	electric outlets at pavilions.
62	parking.
63	clean all the time.
64	less taxes.
65	Clean quiet spaces.
66	Prevent littering. More picnic areas and bathrooms.
67	If they could have a kids nature park.
68	8ft Basketball hoops.
69	Some of them need more clean up.
70	More trash cans.
71	More Sanitary.
72	Trails stay safe and clean.
73	Recreation Centers in Jessup Blair Park.
74	Clean facilities.
75	Fun structures.
76	Separate area to promote animal habitat. More trees and shade near playground areas.
77	More water fountains.
78	Make more accessible to shelters.
79	More picnic areas.
80	More pools.
81	More fun biking trails.
82	More activities for children such as train.
83	Rachel Carson - allow bikes.

Number	Responses
84	More tot and playgrounds for older kids.
85	More lights in the evening by kurliy.
86	More trash cans on nature trails.
87	Benches, shaded places. Water fountains.
88	Better landscapes with colorful flowers.
89	Nature.
90	Sports.
91	Animal Zoo and more swings.
92	Keep them clean.
93	Ziplines.
94	Playgrounds.
95	More programs.
96	Dirty.
97	More greenery.
98	To make sure it's geared for all ages.
99	Better access to parks by bike and safe roads.
100	More water fountains and playgrounds.
101	Facilities maintainance in small park areas.
102	Our Parks are the best.
103	Cleaning.
104	I think the parks are so pretty.
105	More options of play areas for kids.
106	More ramping sites, and events.
107	You do good things. Just keep protecting the parks.
108	The parks are great normally. Keep it up.
109	More exposure about various events.
110	By putting candy at the end of the trail.
111	Parks are great.
112	We need more parks.
113	More water parks.
114	More events.
115	Better Playgrounds.
116	Park near my appartment.
117	Everything is perfect.



Number	Responses
118	Swings.
119	Playgrounds.
120	Toddler friendly swing sets.
121	More playgrounds.
122	More festival events.
123	More hockey classes, not just ice hockey.
124	Better managed soccer fields.
125	More bathrooms.
126	Better trails for running with guides. More bathrooms.
127	Making it more family friendly, such as installing more benches, barbeque places, etc.
128	Cookouts much fun.
129	Adult/senior sports/fitness activities in evenings and weekends.
130	More swings.
131	Better maintenance of buildings.
132	More playgrounds! But they're great how they are.
133	Special musical events.
134	A skate park.
135	Add resources for kids.
136	Petting zoo.
137	Printed trail maps.
138	Modern playgrounds.
139	More events for older people.
140	More sports.
141	More open to dogs.
142	I would like more playgrounds and park in New Hampshire Estates.
143	Trash collection.
144	More activity and trails.
145	Happy with them.
146	See more animals, concert in Parks.
147	More activities and fun for children.
148	Bathroom facilities in all.
149	Benches.
150	Benches, Water fountains.
151	A heated or coll building.



Number	Responses
152	Extended time please.
153	More kid friendly activities at the play grounds.
154	I love the parks, I just wish people would stop littering.
155	More lighting for evening events.
156	Filtered water fountains.
157	Swimming pools, fitness centers.
158	Working swings, cleane jungle gym.
159	Clean restrooms.
160	I really enjoy all the programs that you provide. Thank you.
161	Swimming pools.
162	They are geat as is.
163	More lights for the night.
164	Event days, flower watching
165	Attention to older parks, down county that have proper drainage, weeding needed, etc to make them usable, safe and beautiful.
166	More slides.
167	More history.
168	More seesaws.
169	Tennis courts, dog parks.
170	We need more park space in silver spring downtown.
171	More parks.
172	Wheelchair accessible.
173	Fix active montgomery/not user friendly.
174	Recycling Containers.
175	Access to public transportation.
176	Events that engage and educate the community. Although I know this is already done.
177	More animals and animal centers.
178	More places outdoors, more trees in cities.
179	More lights, better crossing, more, safety crossings.
180	Make trails smoother.
181	Not much, maybe just more frequent maintainance of the playgrounds, some of the stations are broken or I need of a paint job.
182	All dog accessible.
183	More open space.
184	Pet friendly.



Number	Responses
185	Playgrounds, well marked hiking trails.
186	More woods; communal farming areas.
187	OK.
188	All together.
189	Updated play sets (Becca Lilly Park)
190	Post events on social media.
191	Good lighting.
192	Horse back riding.
193	More bathrooms. They're pretty great already.
194	Jungle gyms for kids.
195	Lot more play stuff for kids.

#### INTERCEPT SURVEY #2: WHAT ELSE?

Number	Response Text
1	Everything is perfect, more information.
2	More events and ways to know them.
3	Parks are great.
4	Water
5	Swimming
6	You are doing good.
7	unprogrammed open spaces, trees, flowers.
8	bicycles
9	more events.
10	camoes/kayaks (but rentals cost too much)
11	dog parks
12	more adventures.
13	more activities.
14	playgrounds
15	play areas.
16	trash collection
17	It's more a matter of how do I find out all that is going on. I feel I miss a lot. I don't know what is available. Is there a map of MC or symbols. What is available?
18	clean up for SSL Hours.
19	water sports.

20	bikes and boats.
21	public activities.
22	more organized events.
23	rides and activities.
24	more camp grounds locally.
25	food.
26	lots of area to have fun in.
27	dog parks.
28	places for picnics.
29	a water fountain.
30	bathrooms.
31	more water fountains for people.
32	free coffee libraries and chess games.
33	More preschool nature programs on different days. Clarksburg only on Mondays, wanted something closer to Boyds on Tuesdays and Thursdays.
34	fun rides, train rides.
35	The slide.
36	Feeling of Safety.
37	Maybe public movie nights.
38	North Potomac needs an indoor swimming pool.
39	wheelchair accessible trails, BBQ pits
40	floral gardens.
41	ponds with lily pads.
42	playgrounds for kids.
43	some security.
44	tennis facilities for solo tennis.
45	video games.
46	playgrounds.
47	If there were trampolines.
48	More info to know what's happeninig.
49	Summer camp programs, love the nature camps. They were great.
50	Roller skating rink in the park. Community sign-up for family camping trips in parks
51	Basketball and art.
52	Tall rock climbing walls.
53	Dog Parks.
54	I like to walk with my dogs.



55	I love group biking and hiking.
56	More gardens, like brookside gardens.
57	Recreation Centers.
58	Playgrounds.
59	Bike Paths.
60	Slides.
61	Geocaching.
62	Playgrounds.
63	More places for shade, especially the fields.
64	Running Trails and water.
65	Maybe some more zen places like squares with fountains or rides.
66	Holiday Festivals and Events.
67	Summer Camps.
68	Basketball Courts.
69	Play area for kids.
70	Maintainence and trails free of weeds.
71	More trash cans.
72	Playgrounds.
73	Rest areas (benches)
74	We enjoy the view, nature and atmosphere.

#### 10.5 APPENDIX E- MONTGOMERY COUNTY COMMUNITY INTERNET FORUM

Full detail regarding open-ended comments can be found under separate cover, in an Excel spreadsheet format.

#### 10.6 APPENDIX F- PEAK DEMOCRACY FORUM: COMMUNITY CREATES PARKS AND RECREATION OF THE FUTURE SURVEY

Full detail regarding survey results and open-ended comments can be found under separate cover, in an Excel spreadsheet format.