



Tulsa Parks Master Plan Needs Assessment

Introduction and Methodology

Extensive community outreach was undertaken (including coverage in the local media, public meetings, etc.) in the effort to encourage broad participation in the survey. Six primary research methodologies were utilized to obtain citizen input for the survey, in the three approaches summarized below.

Random Sample Survey

The Master Plan Survey was conducted primarily through a mail back survey, and was also supplemented with an online version and doorknob surveys. The survey was originally mailed to 8,000 randomly selected households located in the City of Tulsa and the ZIP codes associated with it, which may include households outside the City limits, as well as Tulsa P.O. boxes belonging to residents who live outside the City limits. A link and individually assigned password (one per household) were also included in the mailed invitation, in order to allow recipients to complete the survey online, should they prefer. In addition, 1,000 surveys were distributed via door hanging in selected neighborhoods and developments in Tulsa. The goal of the special outreach via door hanging was to try to encourage increased participation from some of the neighborhoods that otherwise might be expected to have relatively low response to the mailed surveys (however, only 11 surveys were returned through this effort).

Completed mail and online surveys received totaled 439 out of a net estimated 7,600 delivered (approximately 5 percent of surveys mailed are returned "undeliverable" due to invalid addresses and/or residents who have moved and no longer reside at a particular address). This represents a response rate of approximately 5.8 percent. Together with the door hanging surveys, a total sample size of 450 random survey responses were received, which have a margin of error of approximately +/- 4.6 percentage points calculated for questions at 50 percent response. Also, note that the resultant database is weighted by age, ethnicity, and area of residence of respondent to ensure appropriate representation of City residents across different demographic cohorts in the overall sample.

The primary list source used for the mailing was a third party list purchased from Melissa Data Corp., a leading provider of data quality solutions with emphasis on U.S., Canadian, and international address and phone verification and postal software. Use of the Melissa Data list also includes renters in the sample who are frequently missed in other list sources such as utility billing lists.

Open-link Web and Handout Surveys

Additionally, an open-link version of the online questionnaire was made available to all residents of Tulsa, who could complete the questionnaire if they did not receive one by invitation in the mail. Two hundred paper surveys were also made available as handouts in a few select locations around Tulsa. This allowed interested parties who may not have received the mail or the web version of the survey (or those who do not have internet access) to participate in the process. A total of 607 open-link web and handout surveys were completed.

Web Surveys Distributed To Agency Representatives, Stakeholders, and Associations

A web version of the survey was designed for email distribution through City agencies, neighborhood interest groups, sports organizations, and other various community stakeholders. The email survey was designed so that it could be forwarded to members and participants by all interested agency contacts. While it is not an exact random sampling of the community, it represents a means of gaining wider input from those who are interested in the issues and to obtain better information from segments of the community that otherwise might be under represented. Of the 420 agencies/associations emailed a survey invitation, a total of 249 association surveys were completed, representing approximately 61 total organizations in Tulsa.

Total Responses Received

Total responses received from all survey methodologies was 1,306, representing a very good response rate overall and an excellent database with which to work for analysis of the data. As the open-link, handout, and agency survey responses are “self-selected” and not a part of the randomly selected sample of residents, results are kept separate from the mail, invitation web, and door hanging versions of the survey. All surveys were considered in the overall analysis of the data and are broken out separately in the graphic illustrations and discussion of results that follow.

While the report primarily focuses on results from the randomly selected sample of residents, responses from the open-link/association surveys overall were very similar to random sample responses, and are shown in comparison to each other throughout the report. Given the high degree of similarity in results between the random and open-link/association samples, the subarea analysis, included as a separate section of the report, combines the random and open-link responses in order to increase sample sizes and information content at this level of analysis. This segmentation of the results helps to further identify “local” opinions and provides additional insight to parks and recreation issues in the area.

Respondent Profile

- Based on US Census data of the adult population (over 19 years old) for the City of Tulsa, the age profile of residents is distributed as follows (which is, in part, the basis for the weighting of the survey data): 10 percent are under 25 years old, 20

percent between 25 and 34 years old, 19 percent between 35 and 44 years, 20 percent between 45 and 54 years, 14 percent between 55 and 64 years, and 17 percent 65 years or over.

- Sixty-five percent are Caucasian, 17 percent African American, 11 percent Hispanic / Latino, 5 percent Native American, and 3 percent Asian or Asian American.
- Forty-seven percent of responding households have kids living at home, 23 percent are empty-nesters (couples and singles with kids no longer at home), 16 percent are single without kids, and 13 percent are couples without kids.
- More than half of respondents have lived in Tulsa for more than 20 years (52 percent) with an average length of residency being 25 years.
- The majority of respondents (95 percent) live in the City limits of Tulsa. More than one-third of respondents (36 percent) live in South Tulsa along with 28 percent who live in Midtown. The remainder live in North Tulsa (17 percent), East Tulsa (13 percent), and other areas (6 percent).
- In regards to household income, 48 percent of responding households had annual incomes less than \$50,000, 34 percent were between \$50,000 and \$100,000, and 18 percent were over \$100,000.

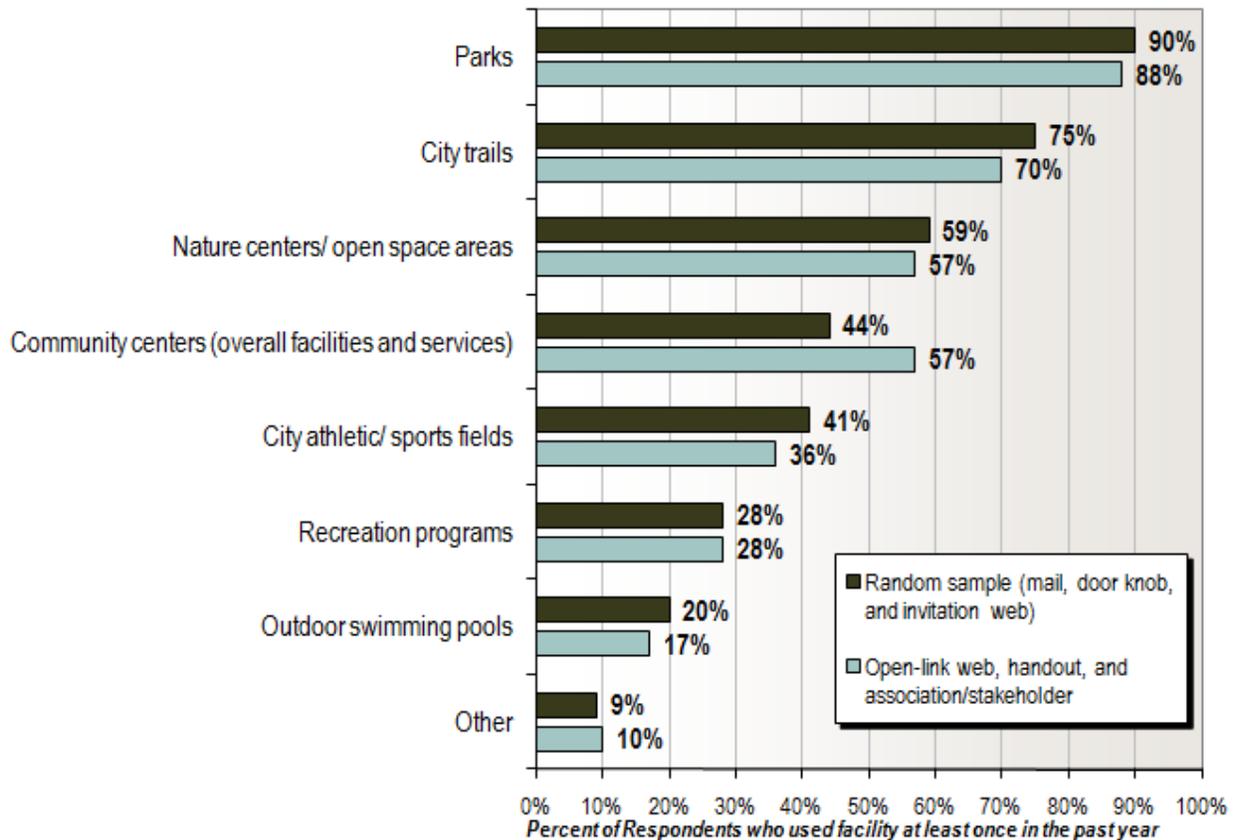
Current Programs and Facilities

Usage Levels

Among the facilities and amenities currently available in Tulsa, parks were used by the greatest proportion of respondents (90 percent of respondents have used a park at least once in the last 12 months) followed by City trails (75 percent of respondents) and nature centers/open space areas (59 percent). Approximately 41-44 percent have used community centers and City athletic/sports fields at least once in the last 12 months. Open-link/association respondents were more likely to have visited one of Tulsa's community centers in the last year than random sample respondents (57 percent vs. 44 percent). Used or attended the least were recreation programs and outdoor swimming pools.

Figure 1: Current Usage of City of Tulsa Facilities and Programs- Used Once in Last 12 months

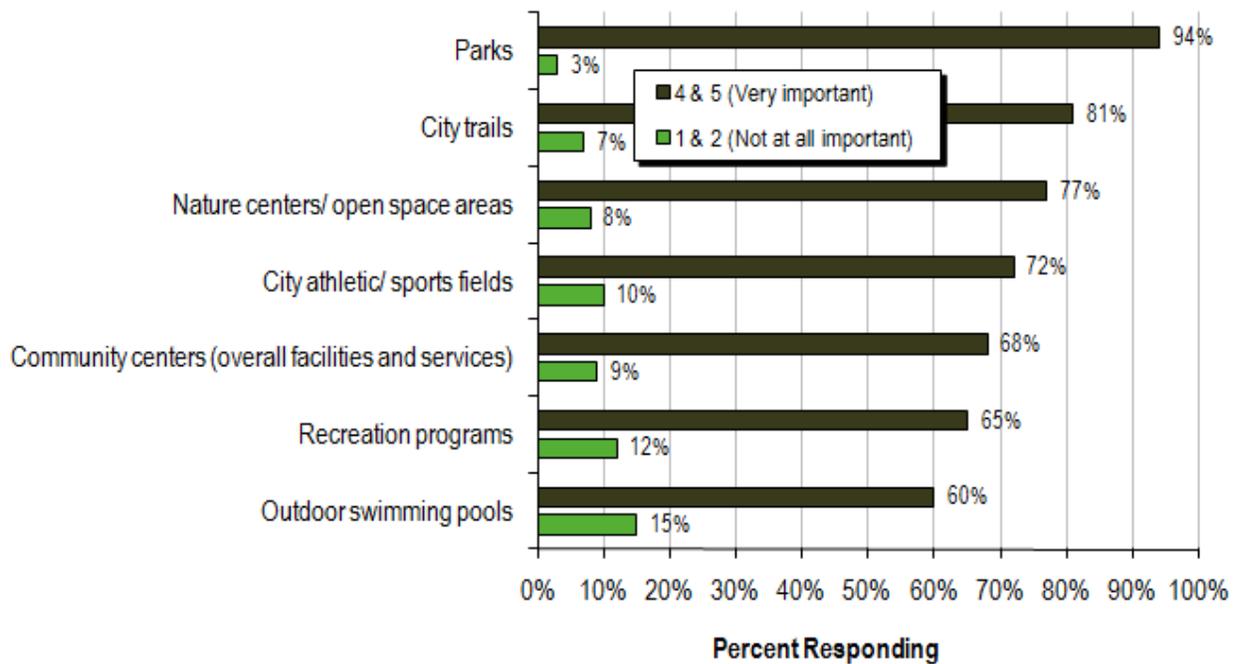
(Percent using at least once in last 12 months)



Importance to the Community

Respondents were then asked to indicate how important each of these parks and recreation amenities are to the community. While the majority of facilities and amenities are rated as being relatively important to the community, parks were rated the highest (94 percent of respondents rated it “very important,” a 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale). Next were City trails (81 percent), followed by nature centers/open space areas (77 percent), City athletic/sports fields (72 percent), community centers (68 percent), and recreation programs (65 percent). Although still rated “very important” by 60 percent of respondents, swimming pools ranked behind the other amenities in importance (15 percent also indicated swimming pools were “not at all important”).

Figure 2: Importance of Facilities, Programs, and Services to the Community
(Random Sample Only)



Satisfaction Levels

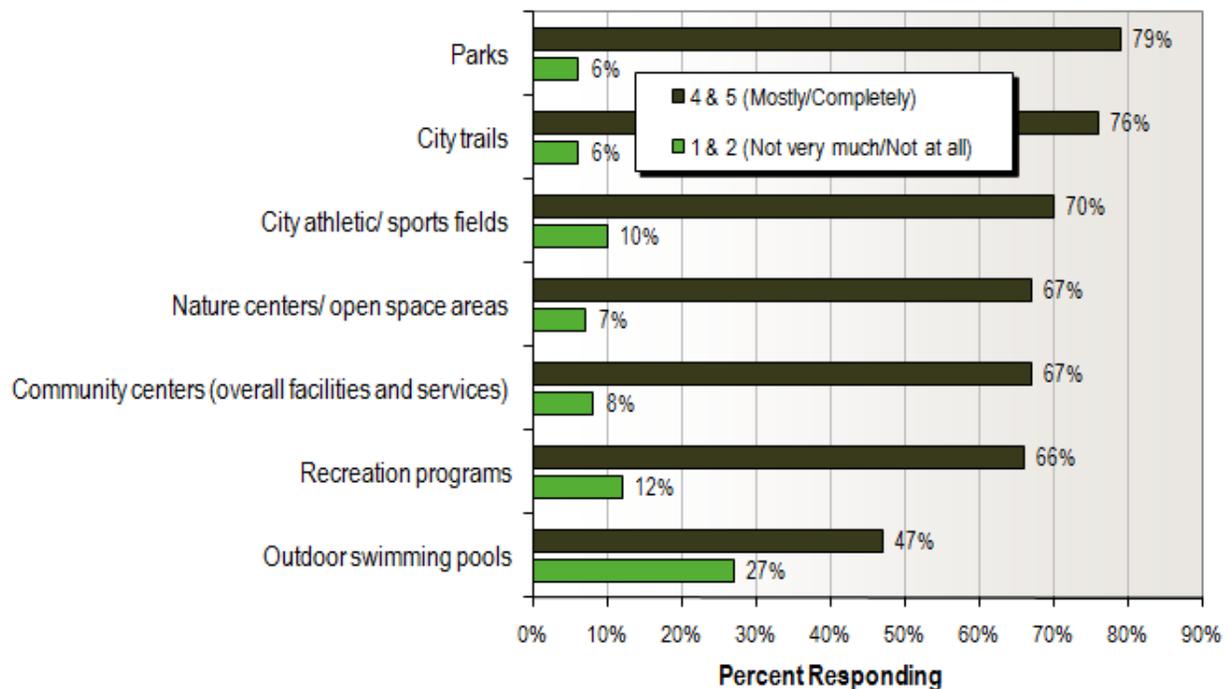
Respondents were asked, “How well are parks, recreation facilities, and programs currently meeting the needs of the community?” Similar to the frequency of use of current facilities, parks and City trails received the most positive satisfaction ratings (79 percent and 76 percent, respectively). Respondents also indicated that the following facilities meet the needs of the community for the most part (all with 66-70 percent indicating “mostly/completely” meeting the needs):

- City athletic/sports fields
- Community centers
- Nature centers/open space areas
- Recreation programs

Rated significantly lower, outdoor swimming pools received 47 percent of responses of needs mostly or completely met, but 27 percent of responses of needs not being met.

Further regarding community centers, 25 percent said needs are “somewhat” being met (rating of 3), while 8 percent said needs are not being met at all.

Figure 3: Satisfaction that Facilities and Programs are Meeting Community Needs
 How satisfied are you that the parks, recreation facilities, and programs provided in Tulsa are currently meeting the needs of the community?
 (Random Sample Only)



Respondent Comments

To further probe satisfaction and desires of what is currently available in Tulsa, respondents were asked in an open-ended question if they had any comments or suggestions of what improvements could be made to better meet the needs of the community. A number of suggestions were offered, particularly in regards to increased maintenance and upkeep of facilities and parks, more amenities in parks and on trails (such as restrooms, lighting, water fountains, benches, and picnic facilities), and keeping parks and pools open throughout the summer.

While overall satisfaction levels are mostly positive, there exists a sense in the comments that maintenance and upkeep of facilities and parks throughout the city is lacking and that it should be the focus before new facilities, parks, or trails are built. A sampling of the open-ended comments is listed below:

- *#1 priority is CLEAN the parks up. Debris is everywhere including broken glass on the tennis courts and in the sand around the play areas. Springdale park is a prime example of a neglected area. Play equipment is broken, old, inoperable, and filthy. I would not take my child to that pool, ever.*
- *Additional classes to be available at Community Centers that are more varied than current classes. 2. Have grills at more of the picnic tables located in the Parks.*

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- *A lot of the community centers are small and have limited facilities. I think there should be a renewed partnership with Tulsa Public Schools to use school facilities for community center activities, youth centers, etc. so there is less duplication of using funds for buildings, operations, maintenance, etc. and more money to go toward program implementation and staffing.*
- *Better maintenance, trimming, mowing; restrooms and water fountains*
- *Bike lanes would help a lot. The trails (especially River Parks) are good but they do not promote alternative transportation for commuters. Driving somewhere to ride a bike is a little silly.*
- *City pools are very important in our area for the lower income children. I suggest that the city use a pay per use program with waivers for children under a certain family income.*
- *Cleaner facilities*
- *Community Centers are very outdated and old. The idea of a "community center" is old fashioned and doesn't fit anymore. They need to be more like a health club or YMCA/YWCA where they could offer the same classes and programs. The integrated city trails are great, we just need to keep building more trails. I am very pleased with this. Let's keep it going. I know money is tight, but the pools need to be open.*
- *Educate/inform where they are located*
- *I think the maintenance and availability can be improved*
- *I use the walking trail at N. 56th & Cincinnati the most. There are vacant houses along the north side of the trail and there's a lot of brush and weeds/trees that is not safe for walkers. I sure wish this brush could be removed. The park itself is perfectly maintained - I love that I don't have to go south every time I want to enjoy some quiet time and exercise.*
- *I would like to see 5-6:30 AM lap swim times at city pools, and would pay up to \$300 for a summer membership if I could lap swim outside. Don't add new stuff you can't maintain. FIX AND IMPROVE WHAT YOU'VE GOT AND EVALUATE FROM THERE.*
- *Improve recreation programs available to those with special needs, especially summer day camps.*
- *Keep parks and pools open in North Tulsa.*
- *May not be a Tulsa parks issue, but we need separated bike lanes on our arterial streets to make this a truly bike friendly city. We need some bike trails that cross the city diagonally, like the BA or I-44.*
- *Modernization of facilities; cleaner environment; improved parking*
- *More lights in the parks and trails in the north side parks*
- *More places to sit, more trash cans, nicer grills*
- *More walking trails, bike trails, and dog parks are needed.*
- *Open more pools - find private donations to fund*
- *Parks are dirty/unkept and not secure; not enough rec programs*
- *Rec programs for kids with disabilities need to be a priority*

- *The Outdoor Swimming Pools are very outdated. The design does not meet the program needs of today's users. The city keeps spending money to keep outdated facilities operational, what ever happened to the master planning aquatic effort. There were a few public presentations/meetings and then nothing was ever presented to the public!!*
- *We need more restroom facilities located at the parks, especially near the children play areas. We need to re-open more outdoor swimming pools.*

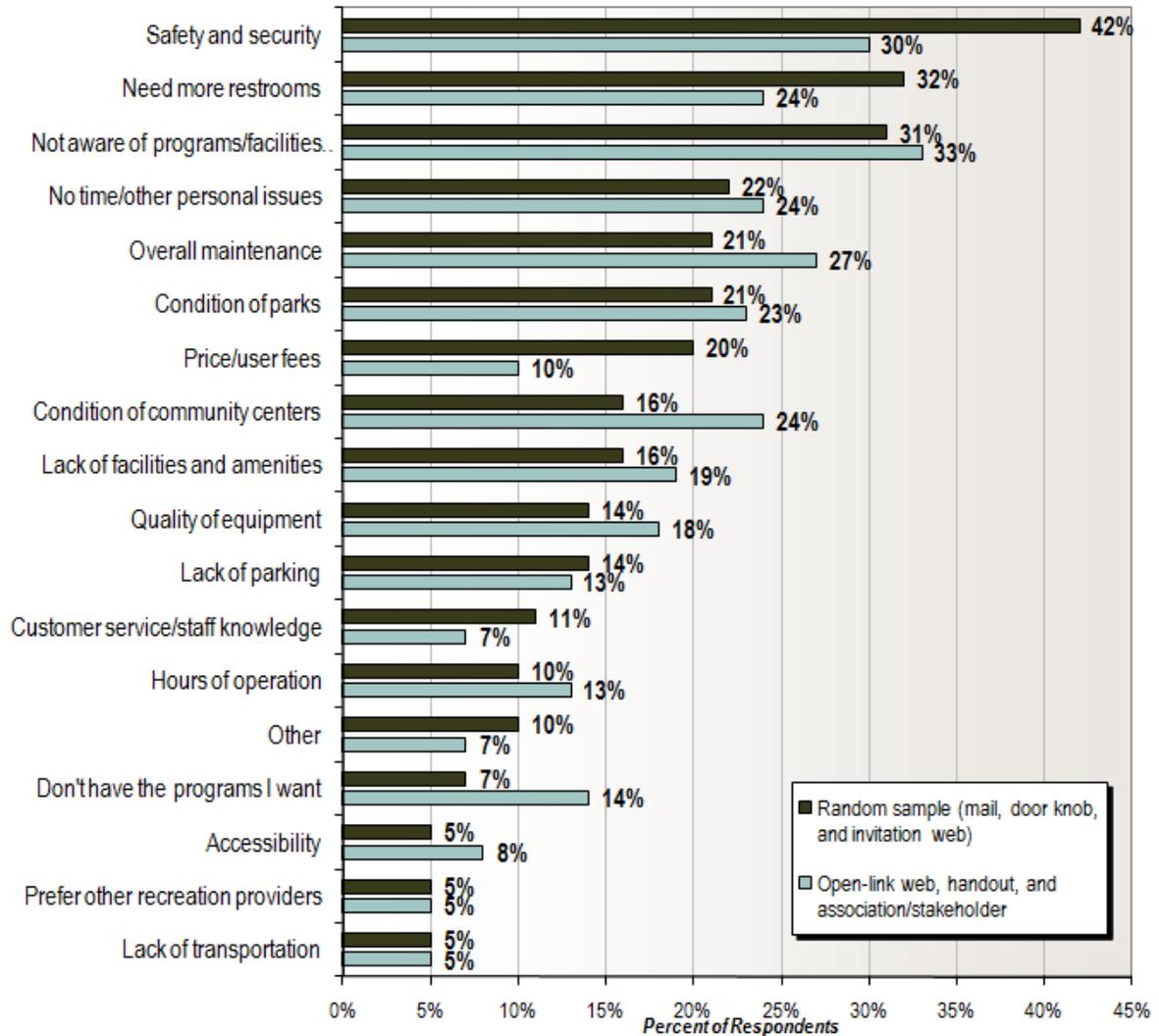
Barriers to Use

When asked why they do not use the City's facilities, or if they do, what is most in need of improvement, many respondents indicated safety and security (42 percent of respondents), a need for more restrooms (32 percent), and a lack of awareness of the programs/facilities offered (31 percent). Also indicated by respondents were no time/other personal issues, overall maintenance, condition of parks, and price/user fees (each indicated by 20-22 percent of respondents). Other aspects (indicated by 10-16 percent of respondents each) include the following:

- Condition of community centers
- Lack of facilities and amenities
- Quality of equipment
- Lack of parking
- Customer service/staff knowledge
- Hours of operation

Figure 4: Areas for Improvement and Reasons for Not Using Facilities

If you do not use Tulsa parks and recreation facilities, why not? If you do use Tulsa parks and recreation facilities, what do you think is most in need of improvement?

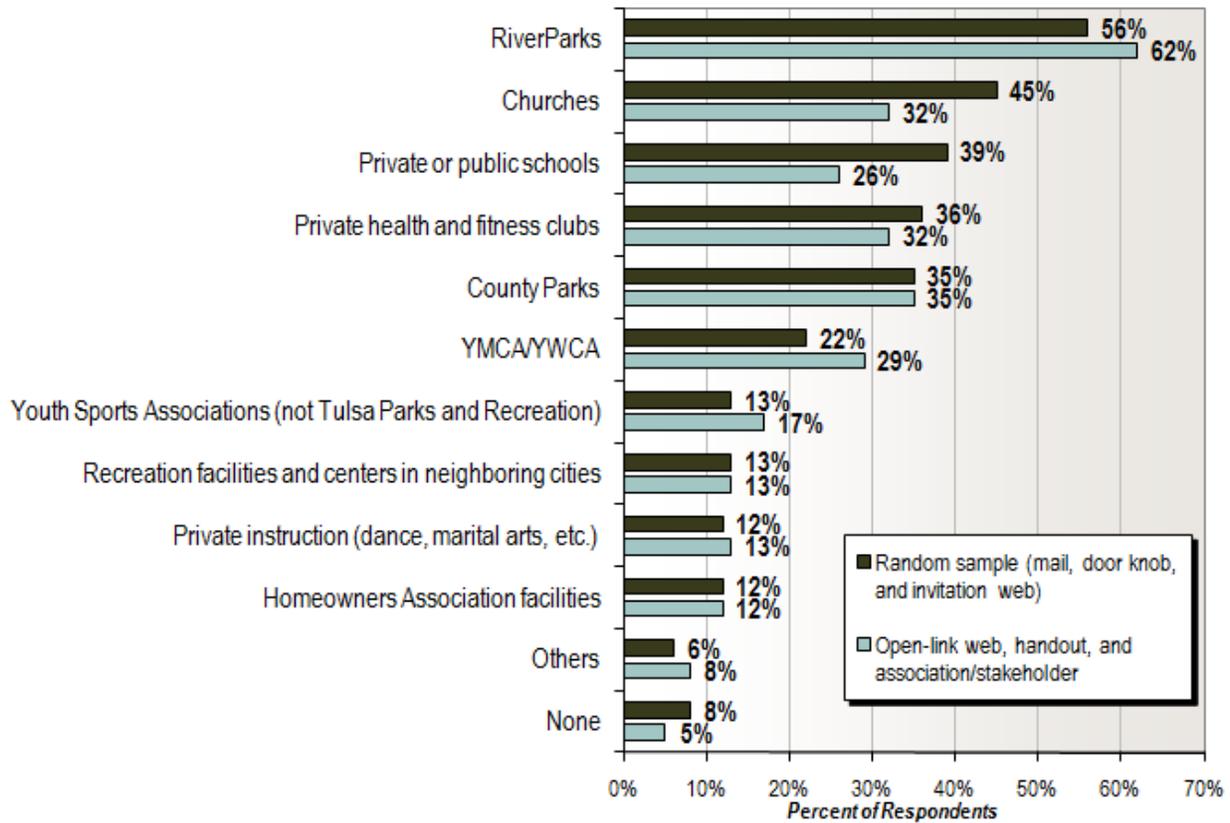


Other Recreation Facilities Used

When asked what other organizations respondents and their household members use for recreation facilities and programs, 56 percent of respondents indicated that they use RiverParks, followed by churches (45 percent), private or public schools (39 percent), private health and fitness clubs (36 percent), County parks (35 percent), and YMCA/YWCA (22 percent).

Figure 5: Other Recreation Facilities and Programs Used

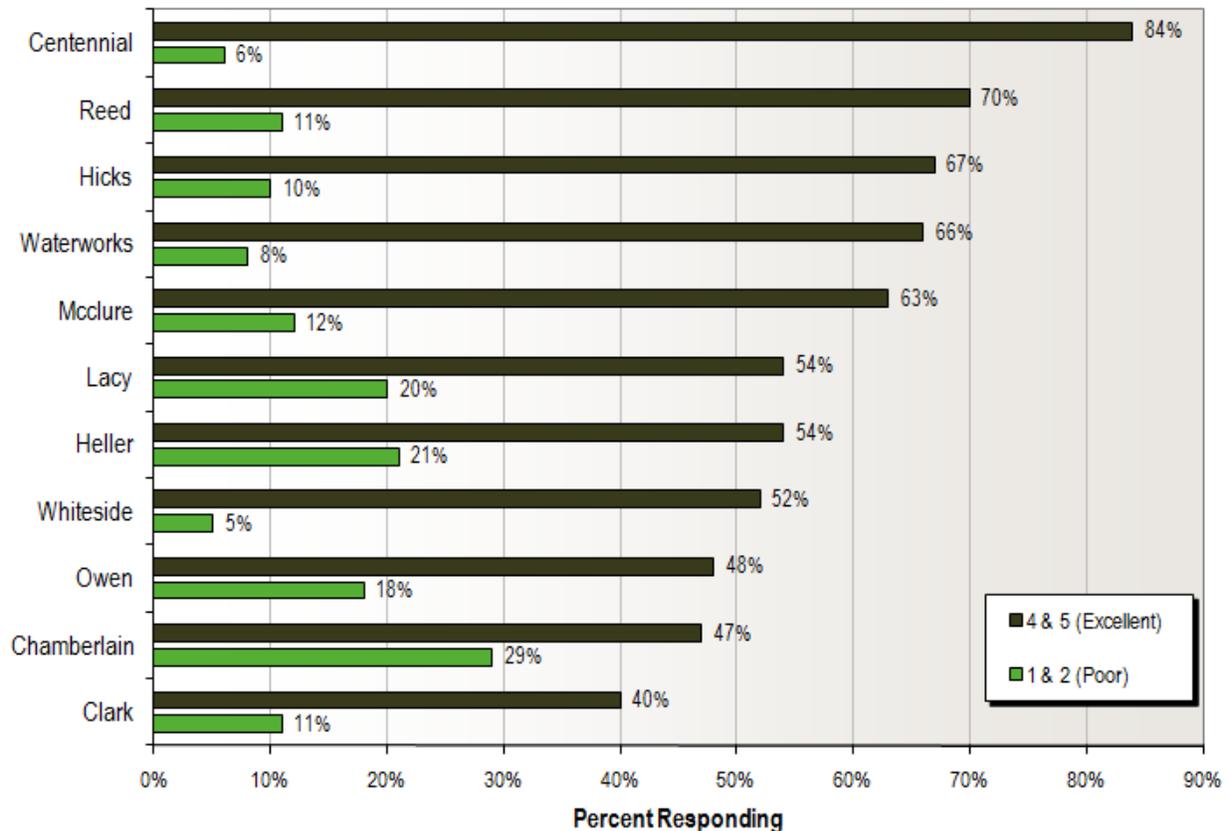
What other recreation facilities and programs, if any, do you use?



Respondents were also asked to rate the overall quality of services and facilities provided by each of Tulsa’s community centers. Centennial’s ratings were the most positive overall with 84 percent of respondents indicating it as “excellent” (ratings of 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale). Also rated relatively high were Reed (70 percent), Hicks (67 percent), Waterworks (66 percent), and McClure (63 percent). Rated slightly lower were a second tier of centers including Lacy (54 percent), Heller (54 percent), Whiteside (52 percent), Owen (48 percent), and Chamberlain (47 percent).

Similar to the levels of usage, Clark received the lowest proportion of “excellent” ratings (40 percent). However, the centers that received the greatest proportion of “poor” ratings include Chamberlain (29 percent of respondents rating it as a 1 or 2), Heller (21 percent), Lacy (20 percent), and Owen (18 percent).

Figure 6: Quality of Services and Facilities Provided by Each Community Center (Random Sample Only)



Respondents of the open-link web survey and agency/stakeholder survey were also asked for suggestions of which centers could potentially be considered for closure, demolition, or replacement. Many respondents indicated a desire to not close or demolish any facilities, or indicated that they did not know enough about the facilities currently available in order to make a fair judgment. However, a few facilities emerged as possibilities for closure, including Heller, Chamberlain, and Whiteside, although some comments included notes that these should be replaced, rather than just closed or demolished.

Future Recreation Facilities, Amenities, and Services

Importance of Adding, Expanding, or Improving Indoor Recreation Facilities

The survey provided a list of indoor facilities, amenities, and services and asked respondents what they thought would be the greatest needs for indoor facilities within the next 5-10 years. The results show that respondents feel additional youth and teen activity areas would be the most important (84 percent of respondents indicated each as “very important,” a 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale).

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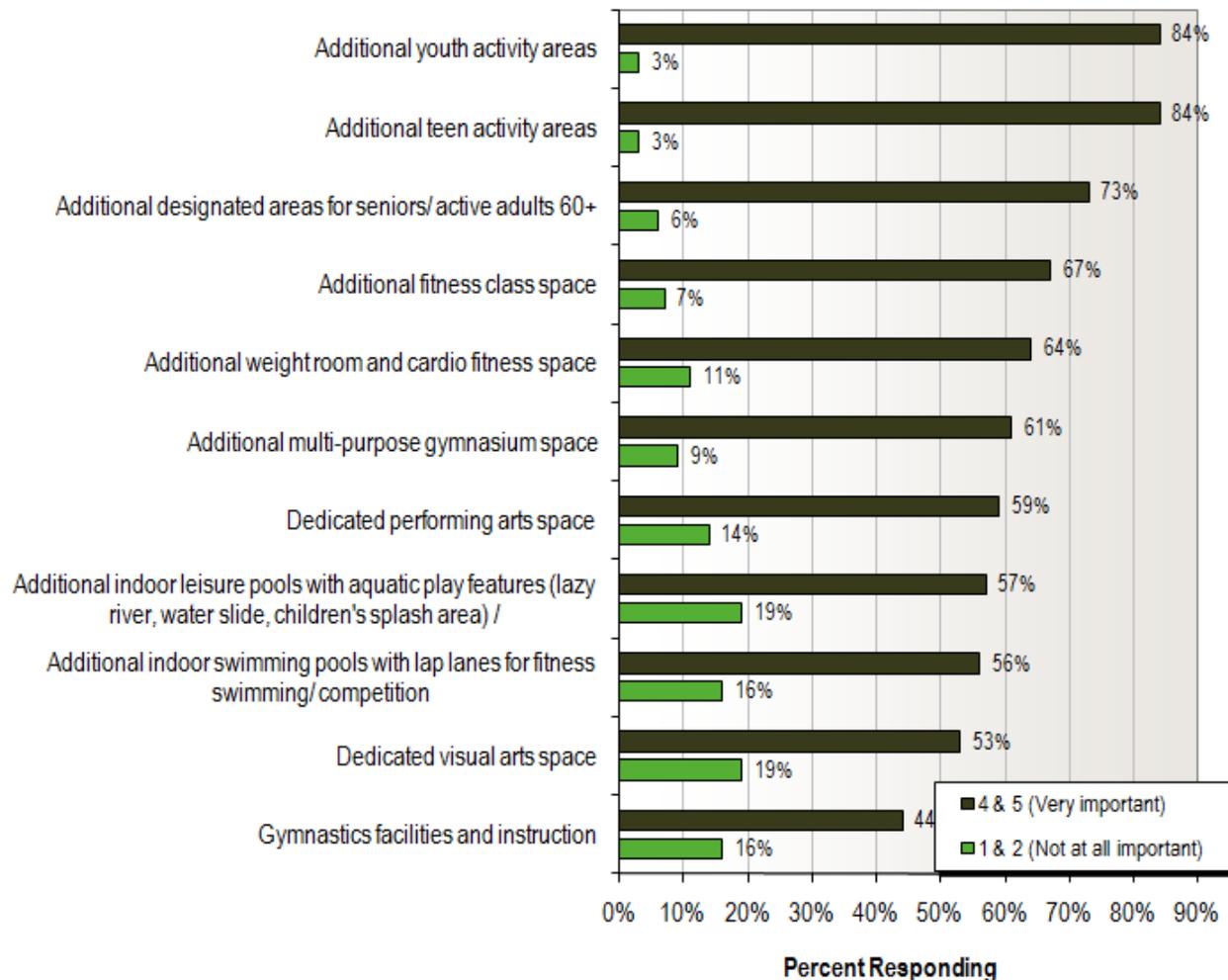
Also important were the addition of the following amenities, each with between 53 and 73 percent of respondents indicating them as “very important”:

- Designated areas for seniors/active adults
- Fitness class space
- Weight room and cardio fitness space
- Multipurpose gymnasium space
- Dedicated performing arts space
- Indoor leisure pools with aquatic play features
- Indoor swimming pool with lap lanes for fitness swimming and competition
- Dedicated visual arts space

Figure 7: Greatest Needs for Indoor Facilities in 5-10 Years

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

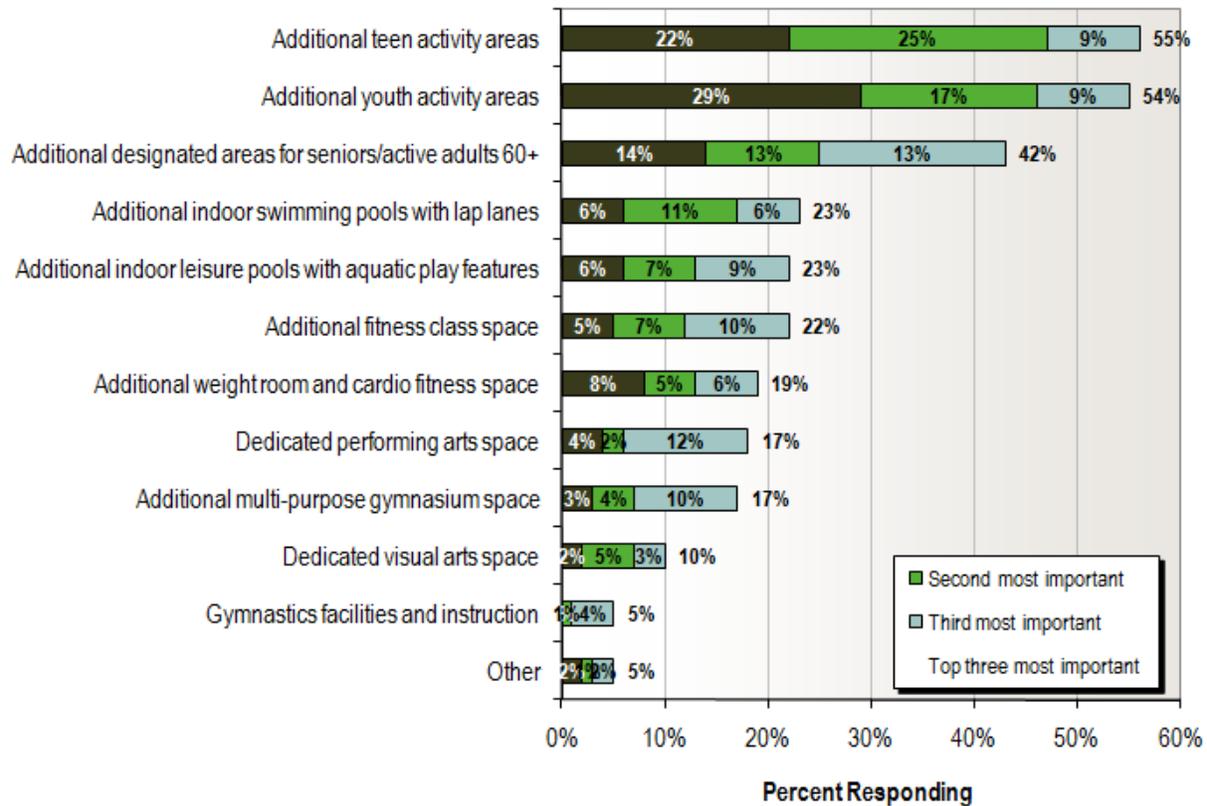
(Random Sample Only)



Respondents were also asked to indicate which of the potential facilities and amenities were the three most important to them and their household. This provides the opportunity to not only see what amenities are important to respondents, but also to get an idea of how the same amenities are viewed in relation to each other, allowing priorities to become more evident. The teen and youth activity areas remained as the top priorities, followed by additional designated areas for seniors/active adults. Additional youth activity areas emerged as a slightly higher priority (29 percent of respondents indicating that it is their top choice and 54 percent indicating that it is one of their top three priorities) than teen activity areas (22 percent of respondents indicating that it is their top choice and 55 percent indicating that it is one of their top three priorities). Additional designated areas for seniors/active adults had 42 percent of

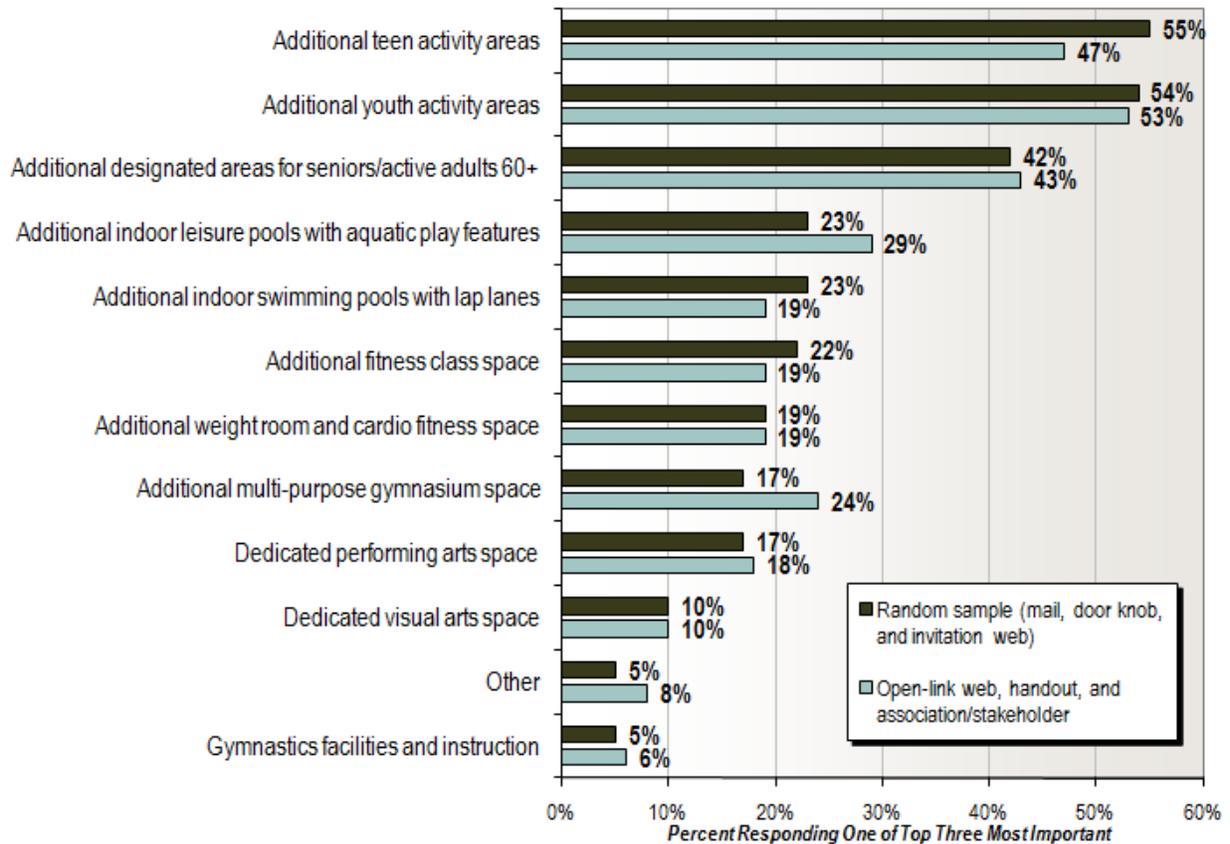
respondents indicating it as one of their top three priorities. A second tier of facilities followed, including additional indoor swimming pools with lap lanes, leisure pools with aquatic play features, and additional fitness class space (each with 23 percent of respondents indicating it as one of their top three priorities).

Figure 8: Most important Needs for Indoor Facilities
(Random Sample Only)



Random sample and open-link/association survey responses were relatively similar overall, with only slight differences seen in the overall importance of potential amenities and services to be added. Open-link/association survey respondents placed a slightly higher importance on additional indoor leisure pools and additional multipurpose gymnasium space than random sample respondents.

Figure 9: Most Important Needs for Indoor Facilities- Top Three Combined
(Top three most important combined)

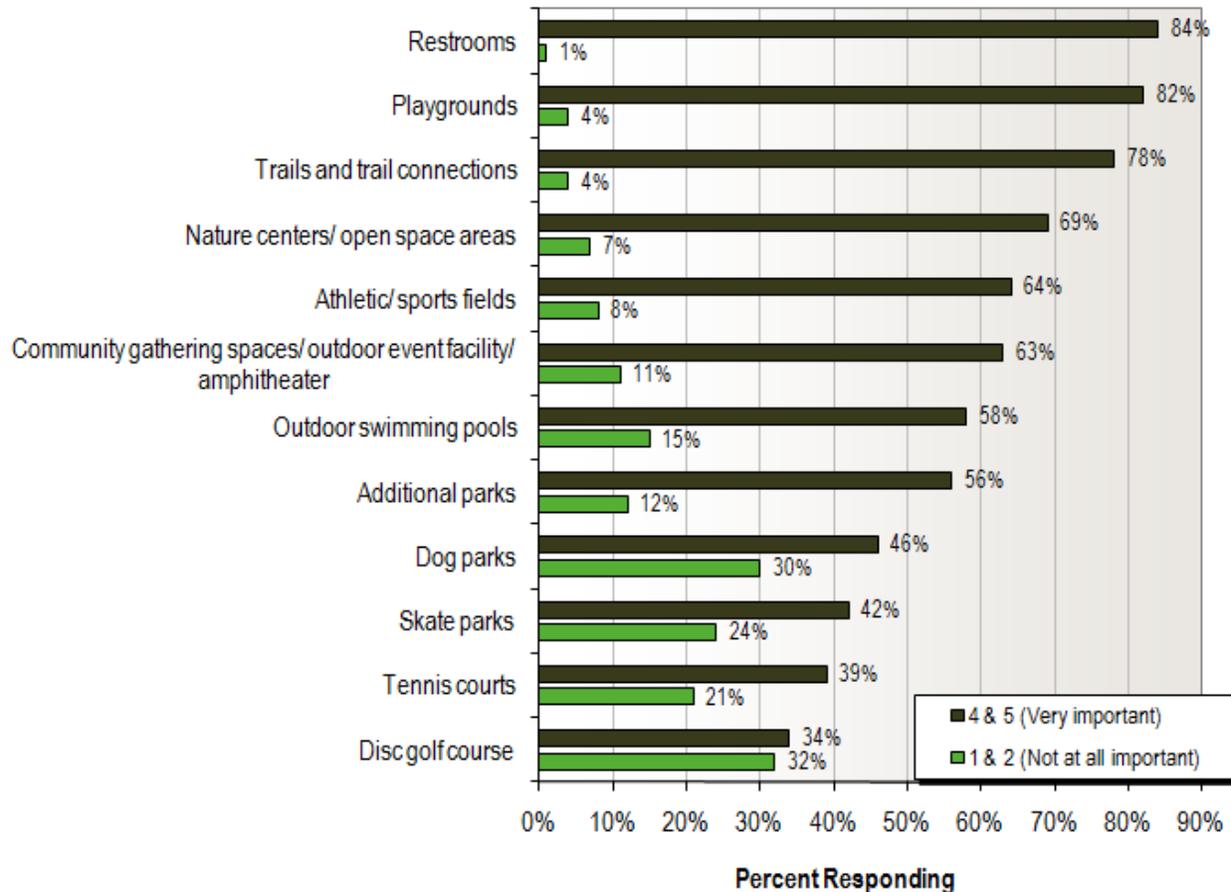


Importance of Adding, Expanding, or Improving Outdoor Recreation Facilities

The survey also provided a list of outdoor facilities/amenities that could be added, expanded, or improved in the Tulsa area. The results show that respondents feel restrooms, playgrounds, and trails and trail connections are the most important to add, expand, or improve (rating between 78 and 84 percent “very important”). Nature centers/open space areas, athletic/sports fields, community gathering spaces/outdoor event facility/amphitheater, outdoor swimming pools, and additional parks are also relatively important (all with between 56 and 69 percent of respondents indicating they are “very important”). A disc golf course, tennis courts, skate parks, and dog parks were rated as somewhat less important.

Figure 10: Importance of Outdoor Facilities to be Improved or Added- Group One

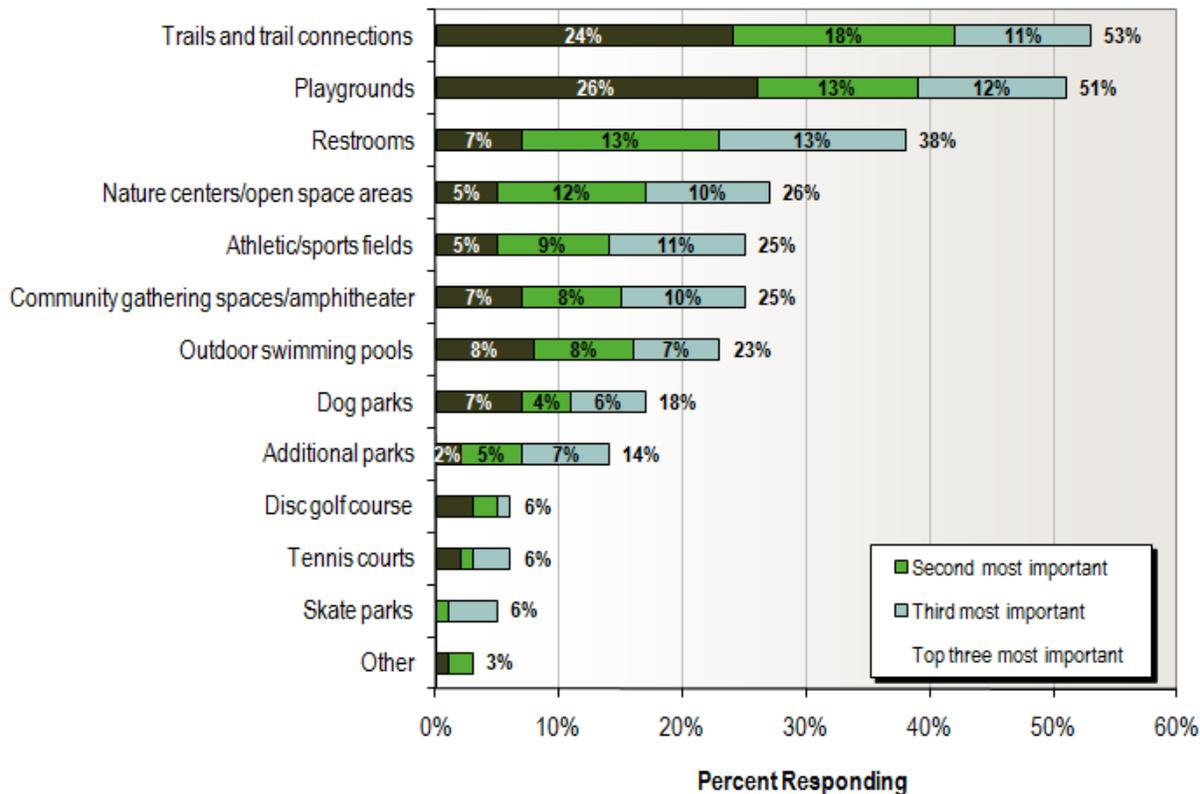
Importance of the following outdoor recreation facilities that could be improved or added
(Random Sample Only)



As done with the indoor facilities, respondents were also asked to indicate which of the potential outdoor facilities and amenities were the three most important to them and their household. In a shift from the previous figure, trails and trail connections and playgrounds emerged as the top priorities, with 24 percent of respondents listing trails and trail connections as their number one priority and 53 percent of respondents listing it as one of their top three priorities. Twenty-six percent of respondents listed playgrounds as their number one priority and 51 percent of respondents listed it as one of their top three priorities. When prioritized against the other amenities, restrooms became the third priority with 7 percent of respondents listing it as their number one priority and 39 percent of respondents listing it as one of their top three priorities. Similar to the previous ratings, other top priorities for outdoor facilities/amenities include nature centers/open space areas, athletic/sports fields, community gathering spaces/outdoor event facility/amphitheater, and outdoor swimming pools (each with 23-26 percent of respondents listing them as one of their top three priorities).

Figure 11: Importance of Outdoor Facilities to be Improved or Added- Group Two

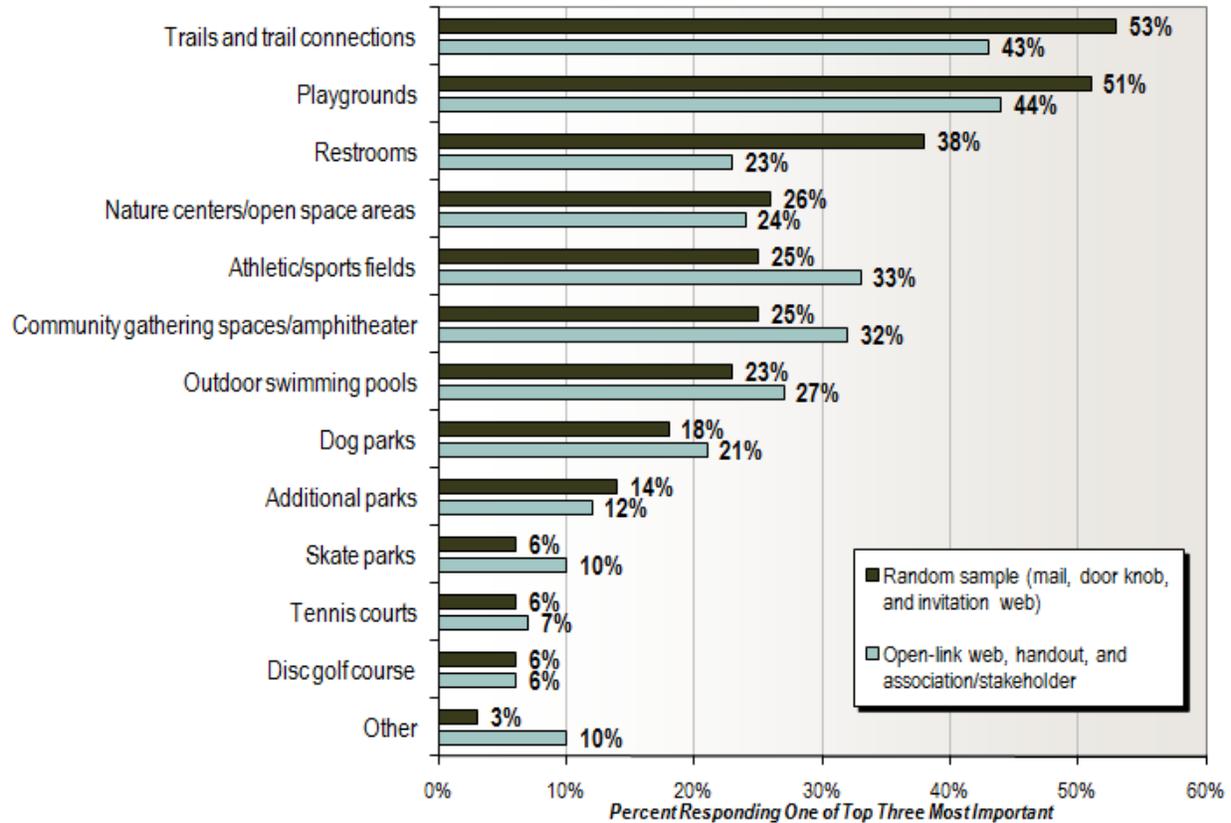
Most Important Outdoor Facilities to be Improved or Added in the Tulsa Area
(Random Sample Only)



There are some noticeable differences in opinion when looking at priorities by survey type. Trails and trail connections and playgrounds were most important to both groups, followed by restrooms, nature centers/open space areas, athletic/sports fields community gathering spaces/amphitheater and outdoor swimming pools (in that order) for the random sample respondents. Open-link/association survey respondents followed their first two choices with athletic/sports fields, community gathering space/outdoor event facility/amphitheater, outdoor swimming pools, nature centers/open space areas, and restrooms (in that order).

Figure 12: Importance of Outdoor Facilities to be Improved or Added- Top Three

Most important outdoor facilities to be improved or added in the Tulsa area
(Top three most important)



Programs, Activities, and Special Events

Programs and Activities

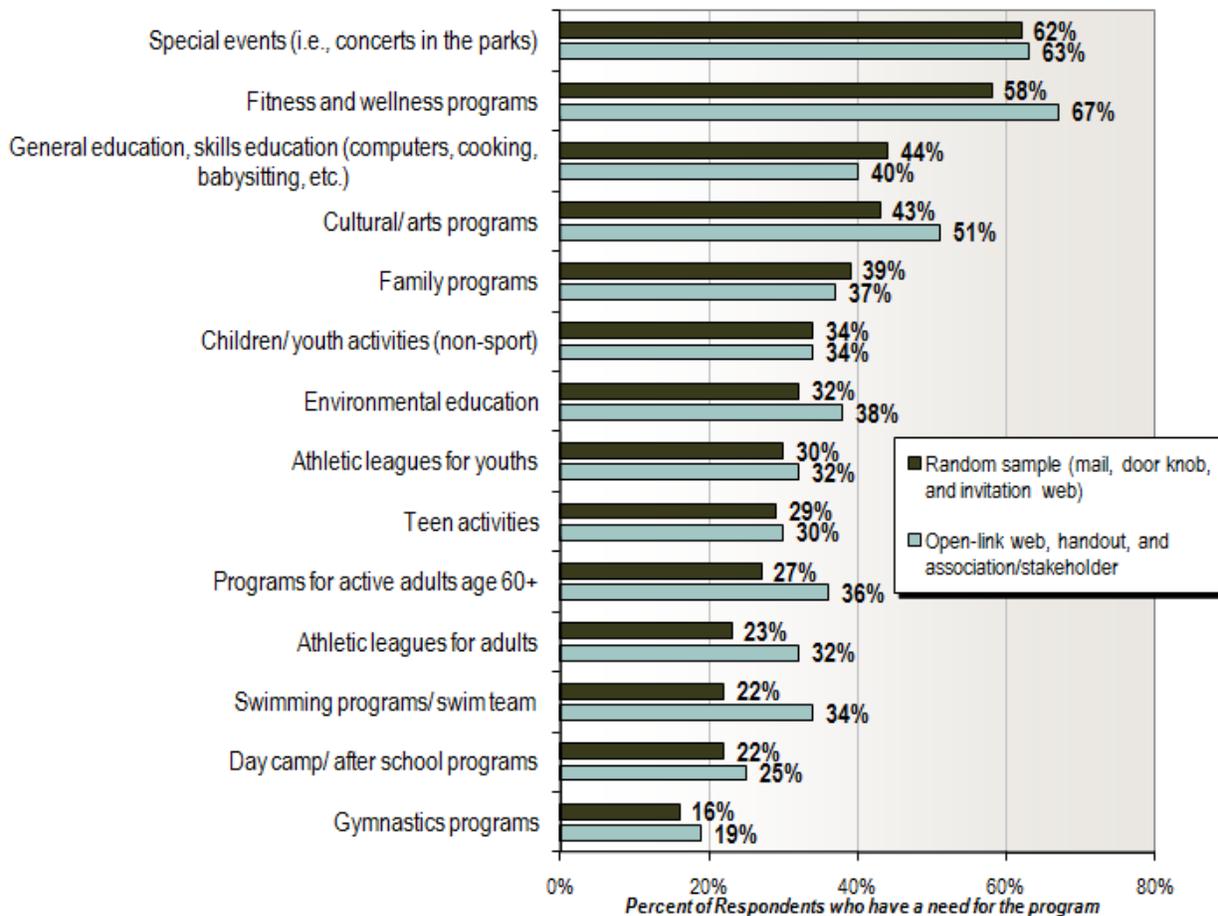
The survey listed a variety of programs, activities, and special events and asked respondents to indicate for which ones their household has a need. Then of the ones for which they have a need, how well programs currently available from the City are meeting their household's needs.

As shown in the following figure, the programs and activities with the highest need as indicated by random sample respondents include special events such as concerts in the parks (62 percent of households have a need) and fitness and wellness programs (58 percent of households have a need). Other programs/events respondents expressed a need for include general skills education, cultural/arts programs, family programs, children/youth activities, and environmental education (each with 32-44 percent of households expressing a need).

Open link/association respondents identified the same top five needs, although in a slightly different order, starting with fitness and wellness programs (67 percent), special events (63 percent), cultural/arts programs (51 percent), general skills education (40 percent), and family programs (39 percent).

Figure 13: Programming Needs

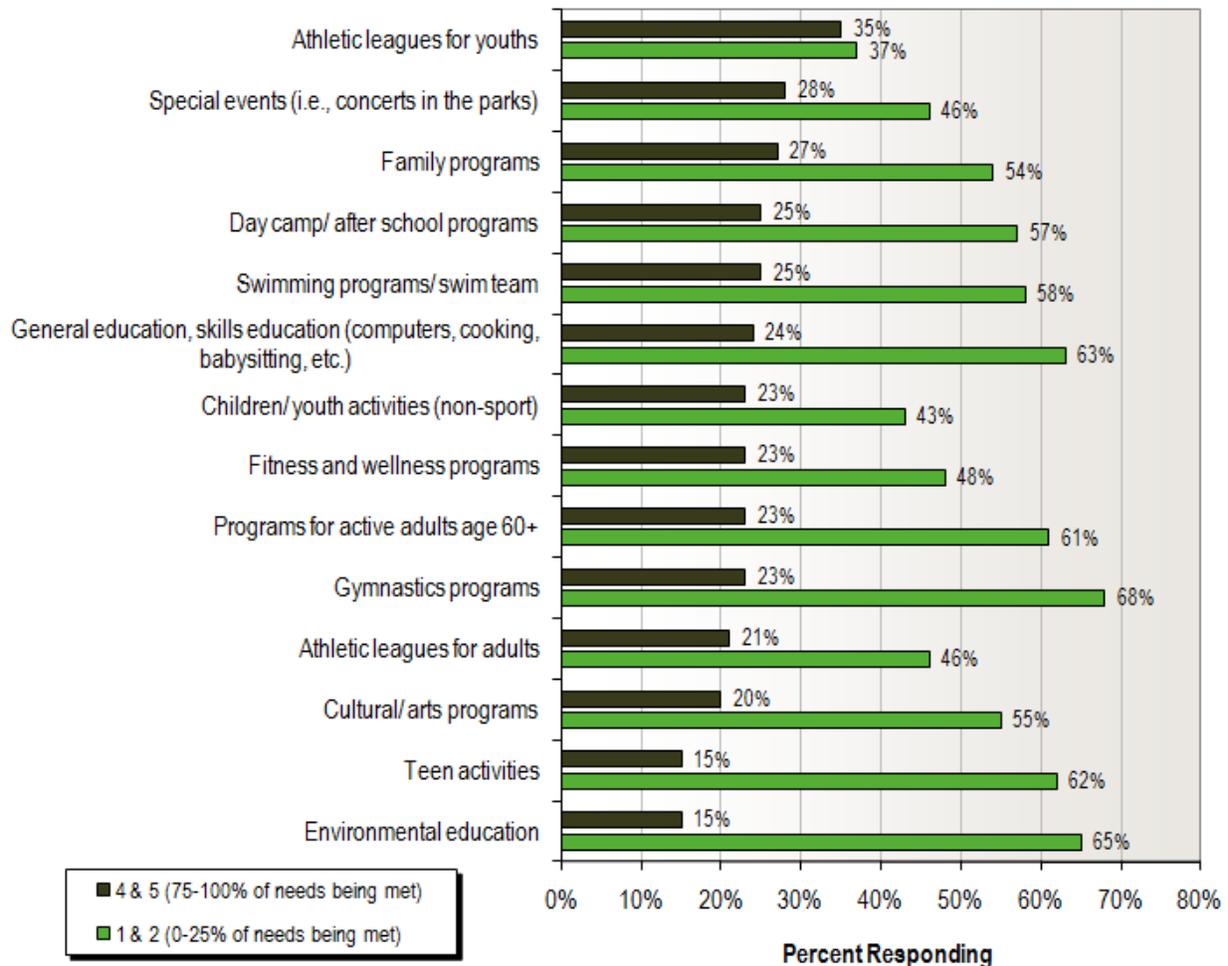
Does your household have a need for the following programs?



Of the respondents who indicated a need for each of these programs or activities, the level at which their need was being met was relatively low for most programs. Rated the highest was youth athletic leagues with 35 percent of respondents indicating that 75 to 100 percent of their needs are being met (however, 37 percent of respondents indicated that their needs were not being met by the youth athletic leagues). As shown in the figure, greater proportions of respondents in each category indicated that the programs, activities, and events were not meeting the needs of their household (0-25% of needs being met), than the proportion that indicated needs were actually being met.

Figure 14: Programming Needs Met- Random Sample Respondents

Of the programs your household has a need for, how well are programs provided by the City currently meeting the needs of you and your household?
(Random Sample Only)

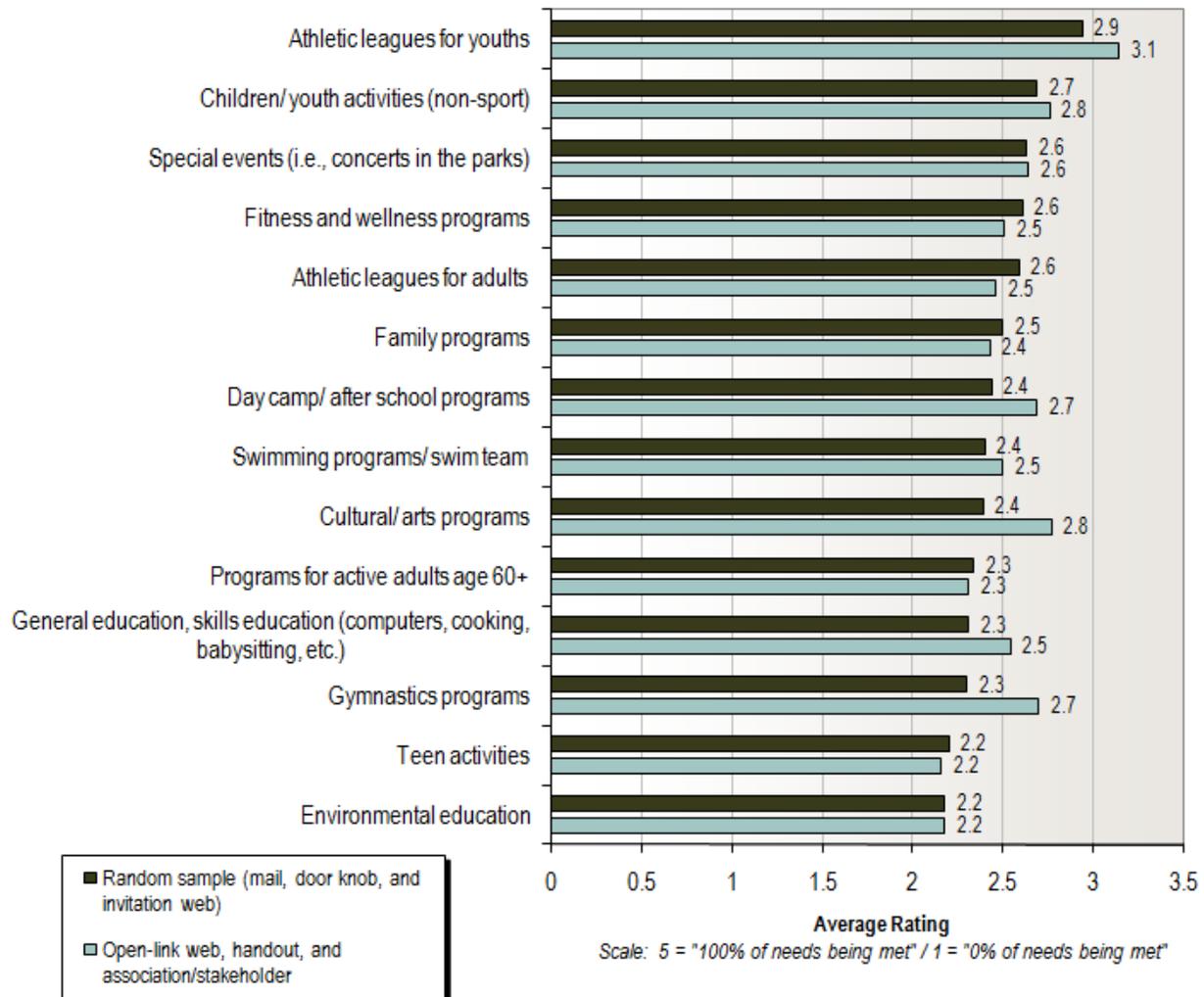


Average ratings of each program and activity by survey type are shown in the following figure. Almost all average ratings were below a score of “three,” with only slight differences between the random sample and open-link/association responses. The levels of need being met were slightly higher among open-link/association respondents in regards to youth athletic leagues, day camp/after-school programs, cultural/arts programs, general skills education, and gymnastics programs.

Figure 15: Programming Needs Met- Random Sample and Open-Link/Association Respondents

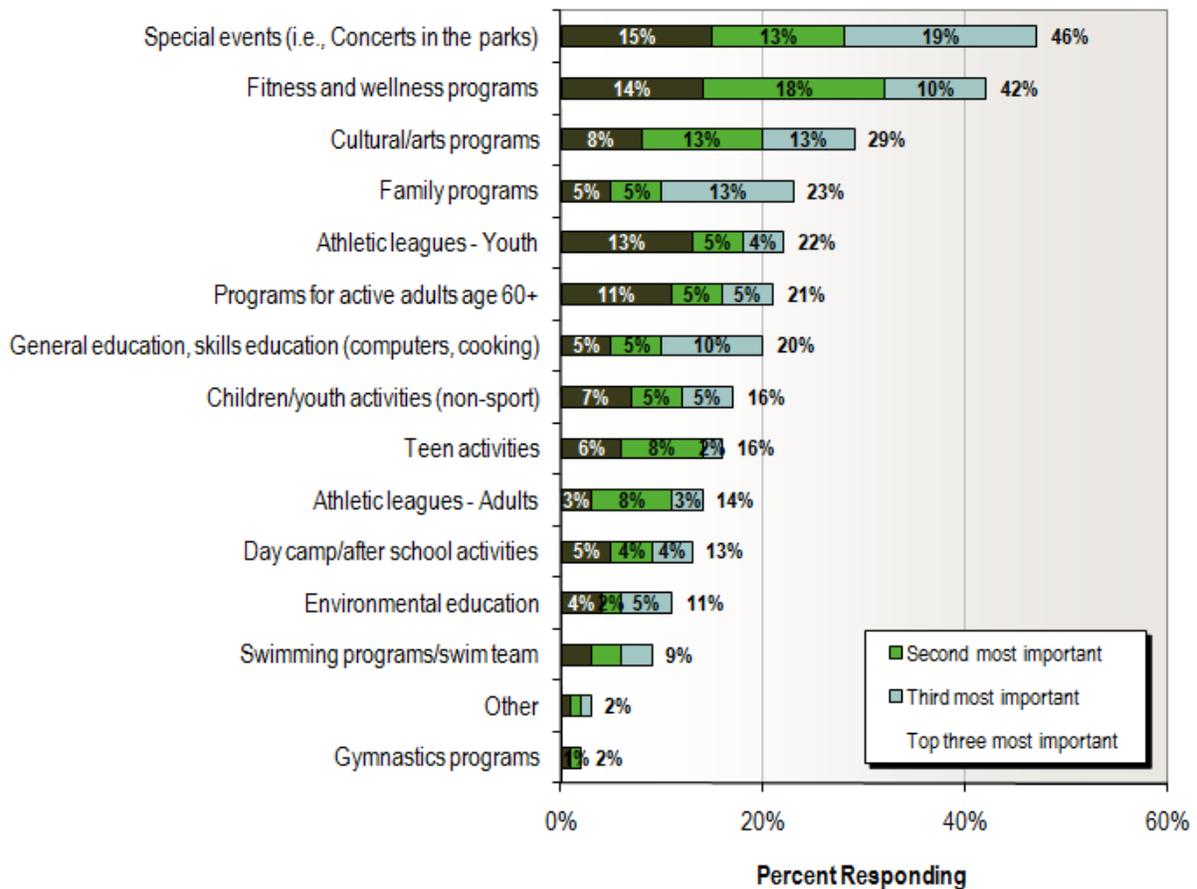
Of the programs your household has a need for, how well are your needs currently being met?

Average Rating (1="0% of needs being met"; 2="25% of needs being met"; 3="50% of needs being met"; 4="75% of needs being met"; 5="100% of needs being met")



When asked which programs, activities, and events were the three most important, special events emerged as the top priority (15 percent of respondents listed it as their number one priority and 46 percent of respondents listed it as one of their top three priorities). Also important were fitness and wellness programs (14 percent of respondents listing it as their number one priority and 42 percent of respondents listing it as one of their top three priorities).

Figure 16: Most Important Needs for Programs
(Random Sample Only)



When looking at responses by survey type, priorities of random sample respondents and open-link/association respondents were relatively similar overall. However, family programs were somewhat less important than athletic leagues for youth, programs for active adults, general education, and teen/children/youth activities to open link respondents.

Figure 17: Most Important Needs for Programs- Top Three
(Top three choices)

