



**Illinois Extension**

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN



# Olympia Fields Park District

---

**OLYMPIA FIELDS PARK DISTRICT**

**COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS**

**Department of Recreation, Sport and Tourism  
Office of Recreation and Park Resources (ORPR)**

**University of Illinois Extension**

A solid orange horizontal bar at the bottom of the page.

# Introduction and Purpose of Survey

---

## Obtain input from Olympia Fields Park District Residents on:

- Use of OFPD parks, facilities, events, and programs
- Opinions regarding OFPD operations (e.g., staffing, facility/parks upkeep, programs)
- Understand reasons for not using OFPD parks, facilities, programs, and events
- Assess resident opinions of priorities for capital improvement projects
- Evaluation of programs (e.g., youth, fitness, adult, older adult, special events)
- Assess use and awareness of Irons Oaks Environmental Learning Center
- Assess interests in programs and events
- Obtain a demographic profile of users and non-users

# Research Methods

---

- Survey developed collaboratively by UIUC ORPR Staff and OFPD Staff and Board
- Valid and reliable survey questions were used
- All 1,995 OFPD households invited to participate
- Survey postcard mailed twice – 2<sup>nd</sup> mailing was a reminder mailing
- Survey link & QR code was emailed to current and past participants and shared via signs and social media



# Research Methods

---

- 120 valid responses
- Most responses were from the mailed postcard
- Lower response rate = 92% confidence we have 8% or less error in the results – acceptable per industry standards

# Description of Sample: Age and Years Lived in Olympia Fields

---

- Mean Age of Sample = 57 Years (SD = 15)
  - Ages ranged from 24 years to 92 years old
    - Mean Age of Olympia Fields Residents = 41 Years (US Census, 2020)

This sample is older than the age of Olympia Fields residents

- Years lived in Olympia Fields = 21 Years

# Household Size and Gender

---

- Average Household Size Sample= 2.9
  - Olympia Fields Household Size = 3.3 (US Census, 2020)
  
- 67% of respondents were female



# Ethnicity

---

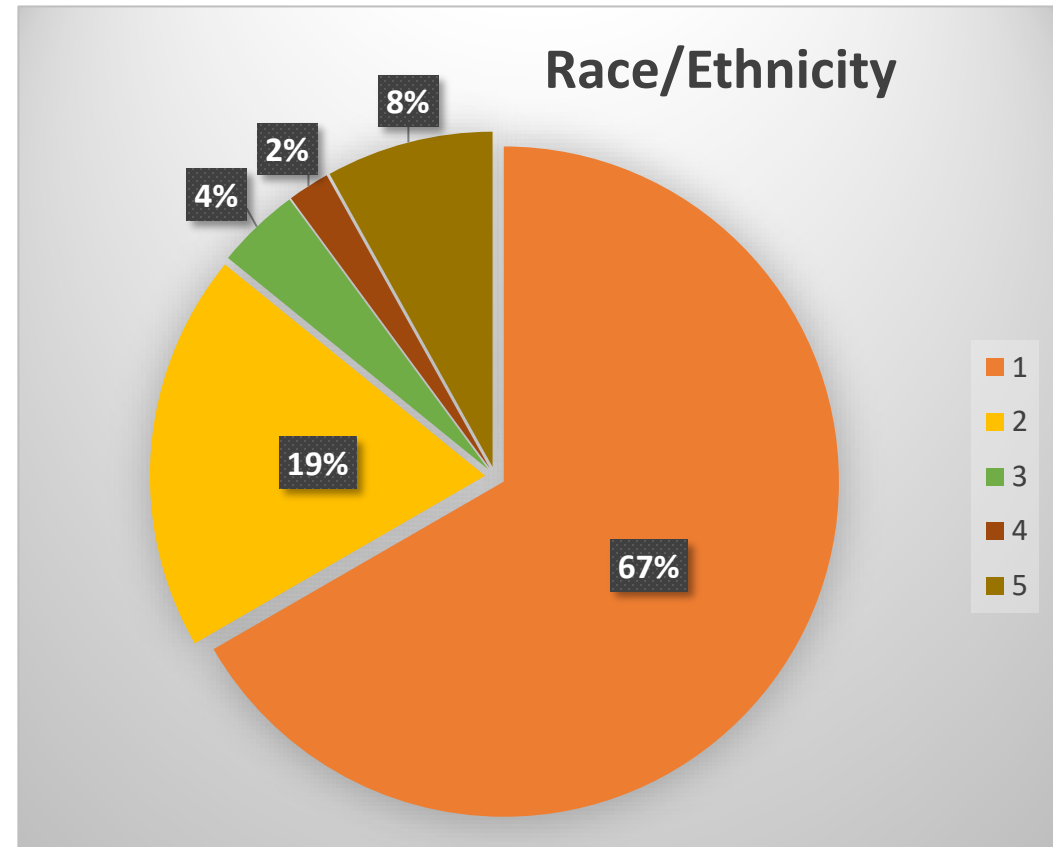
Black 66.3% (59)

White 19.1% (17)

Hispanic 4.5% (4)

Other 2.3% (2)

Prefer not to answer 7.8% (7)

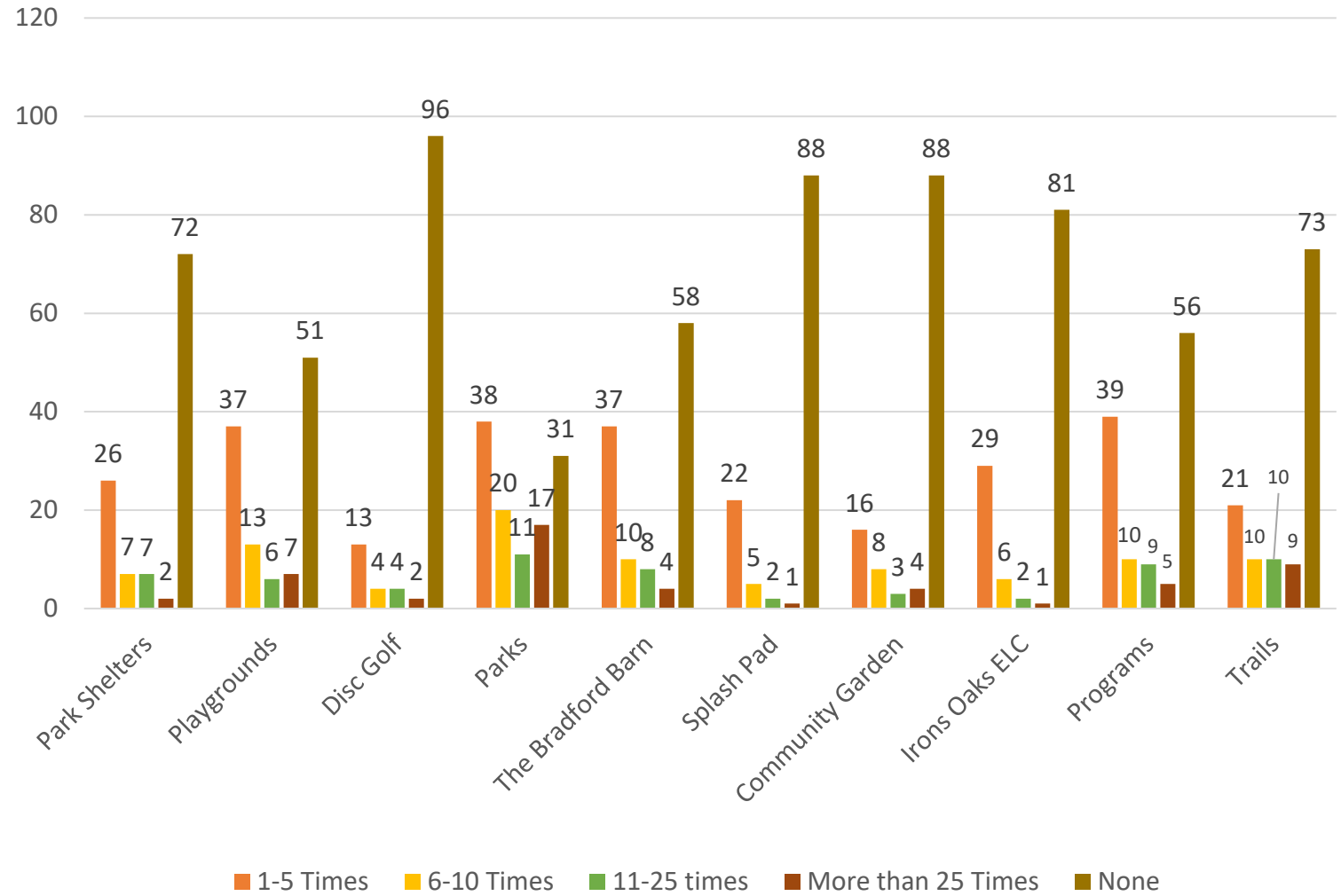


# Facility Usage

Parks and trails are used More often by this sample:

- 38 use parks 1-5 times per years
- 39 attend programs
- 37 use The Bradford Barn
- 38 use playgrounds
- 26 use park shelters

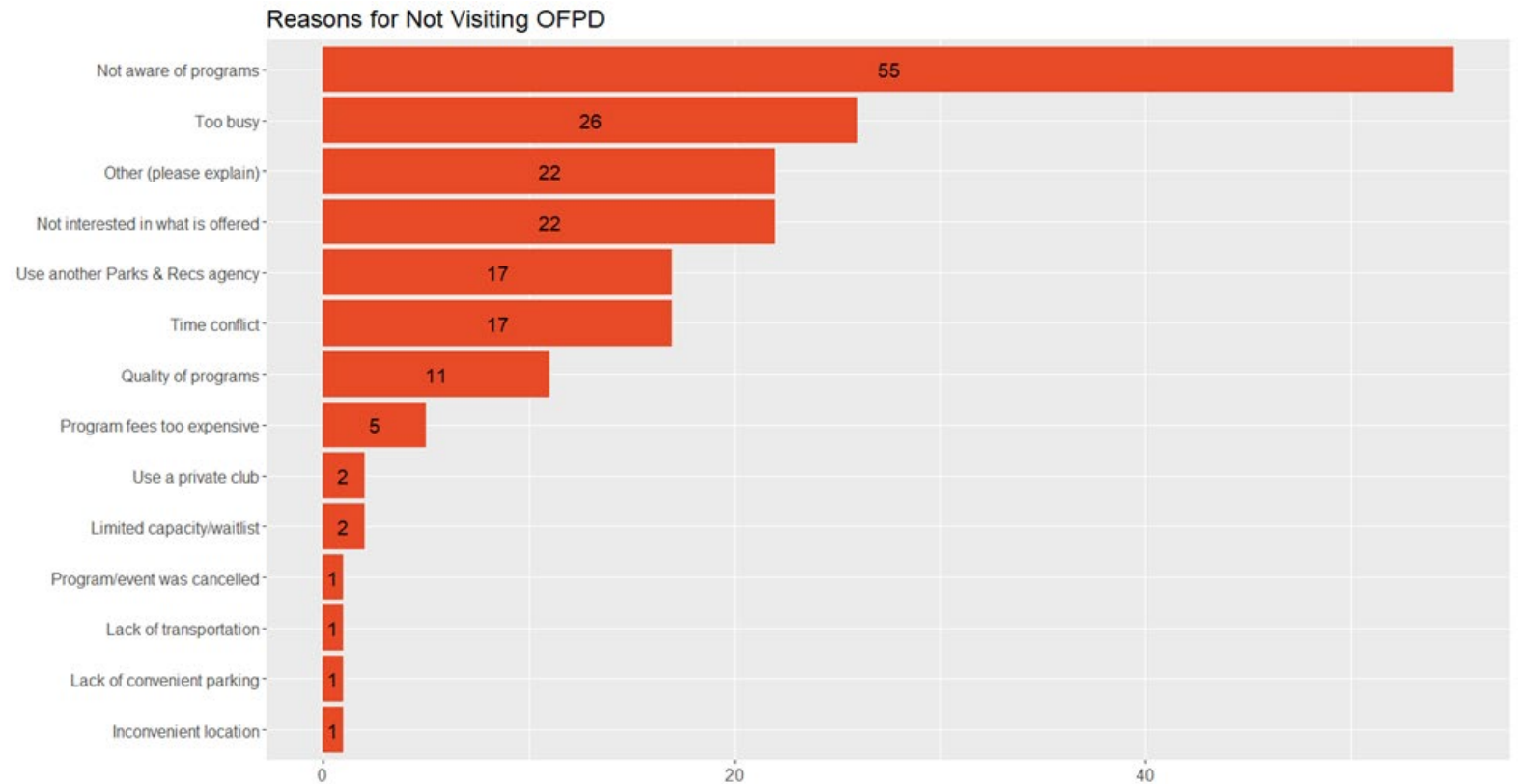
Low participation was reported for Disc Golf, Splash Pad, Community Garden and Irons Oaks



# Reasons for Non-Participation

A majority of (n=55) indicated they are “not aware of programs”

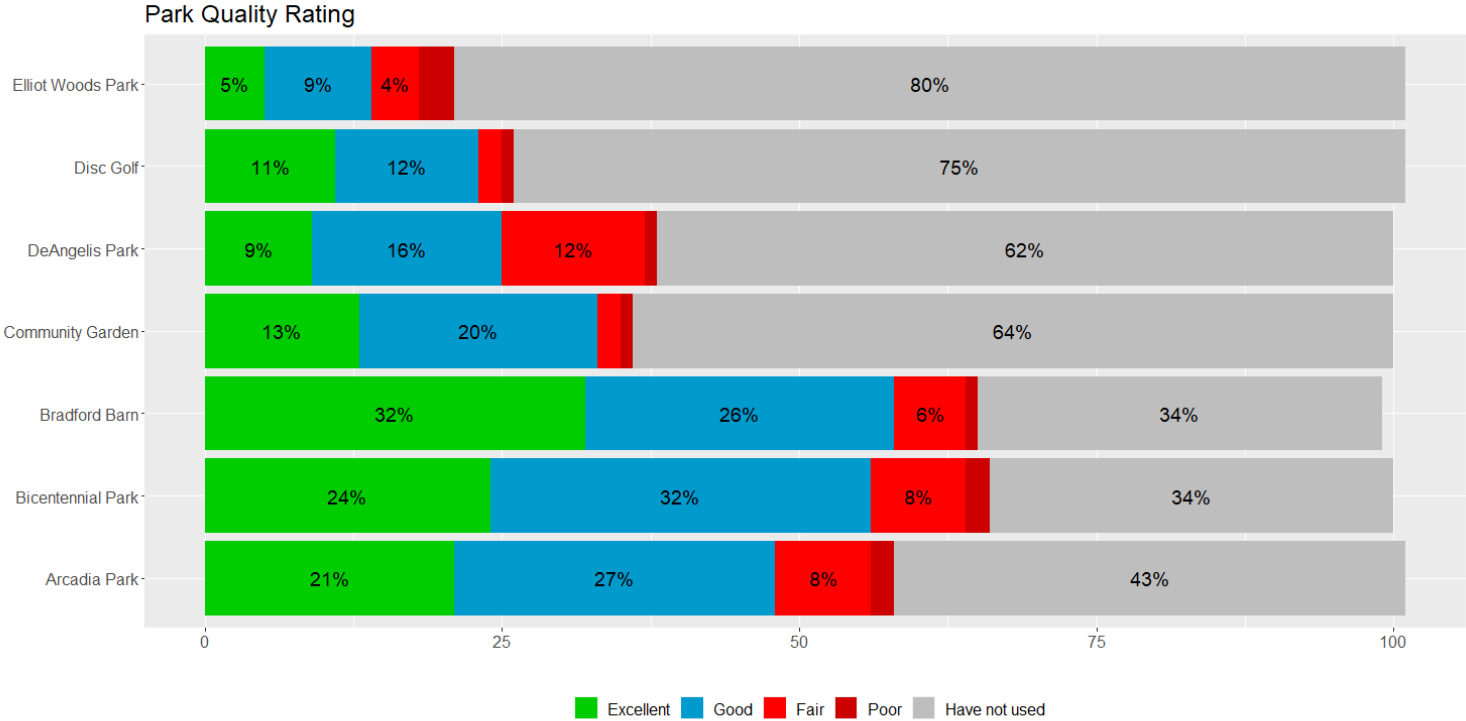
- Additional reasons they don't participate are:
  - Too busy (n=26)
  - Other (n=22; e.g., need for adapted programs for people with disabilities, more walking trails needed, more programs for youth)
  - Not interested (n=22)
  - Use another parks and rec agency (n= 17)
  - Time conflicts (n=17)
  - Program quality (n=11)
  - Program fees too expensive (n=5)



# Condition, Upkeep & Cleanliness of Parks & Facilities

## Parks and Facilities Rated Favorably:

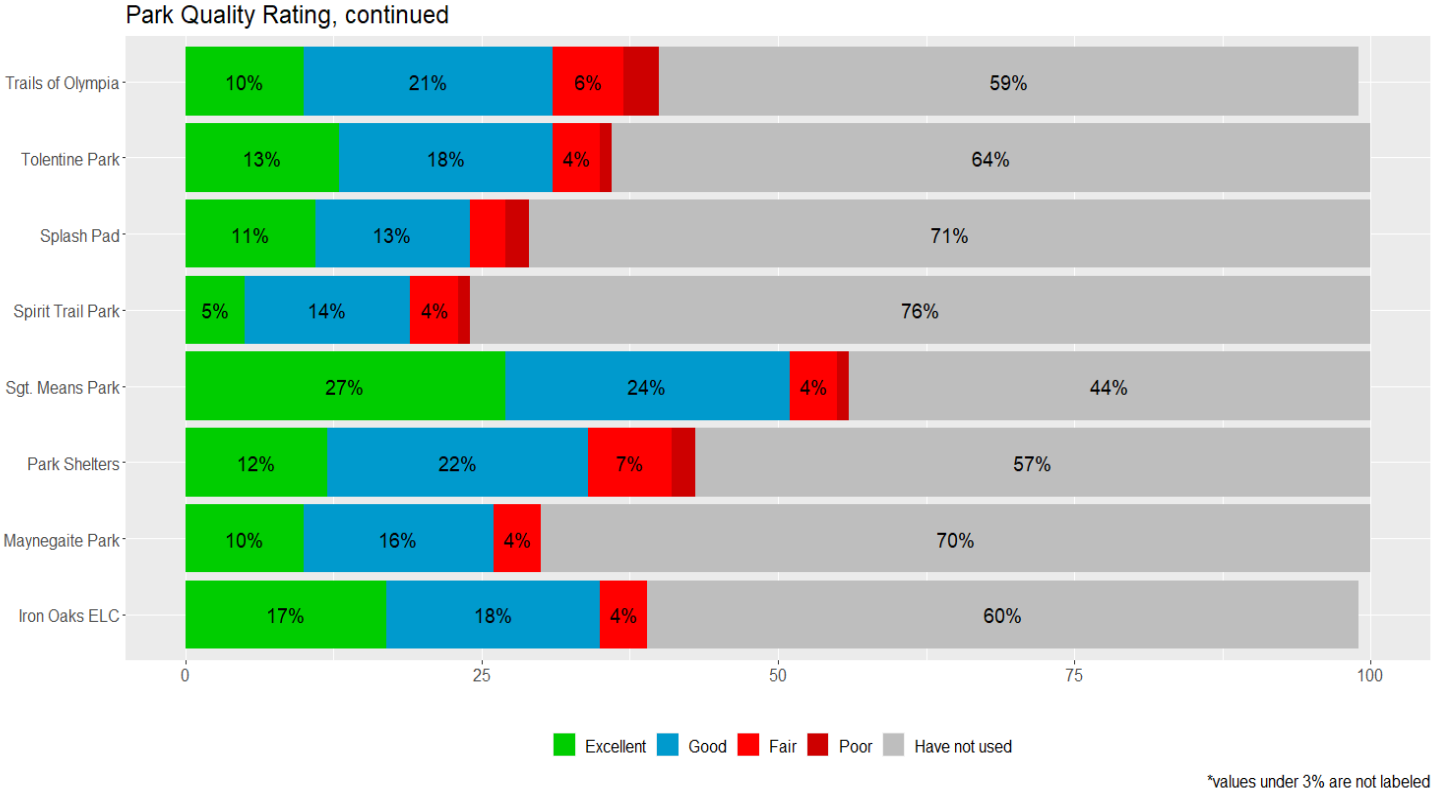
- Bicentennial Park
- Arcadia Park
- Sergeant Means Park
- Tolentine Park
- Park Shelters
- The Bradford Barn



# Condition, Upkeep & Cleanliness of Parks & Facilities

## Facilities and Parks Rated Lower Include:

- DeAngelis Park
- Trails of Olympia Fields
- However, from between 44% to 80% of respondents indicated they have not used any of these parks or facilities – Thus, results should be interpreted cautiously



# Additional Insights about Parks and Facilities

---

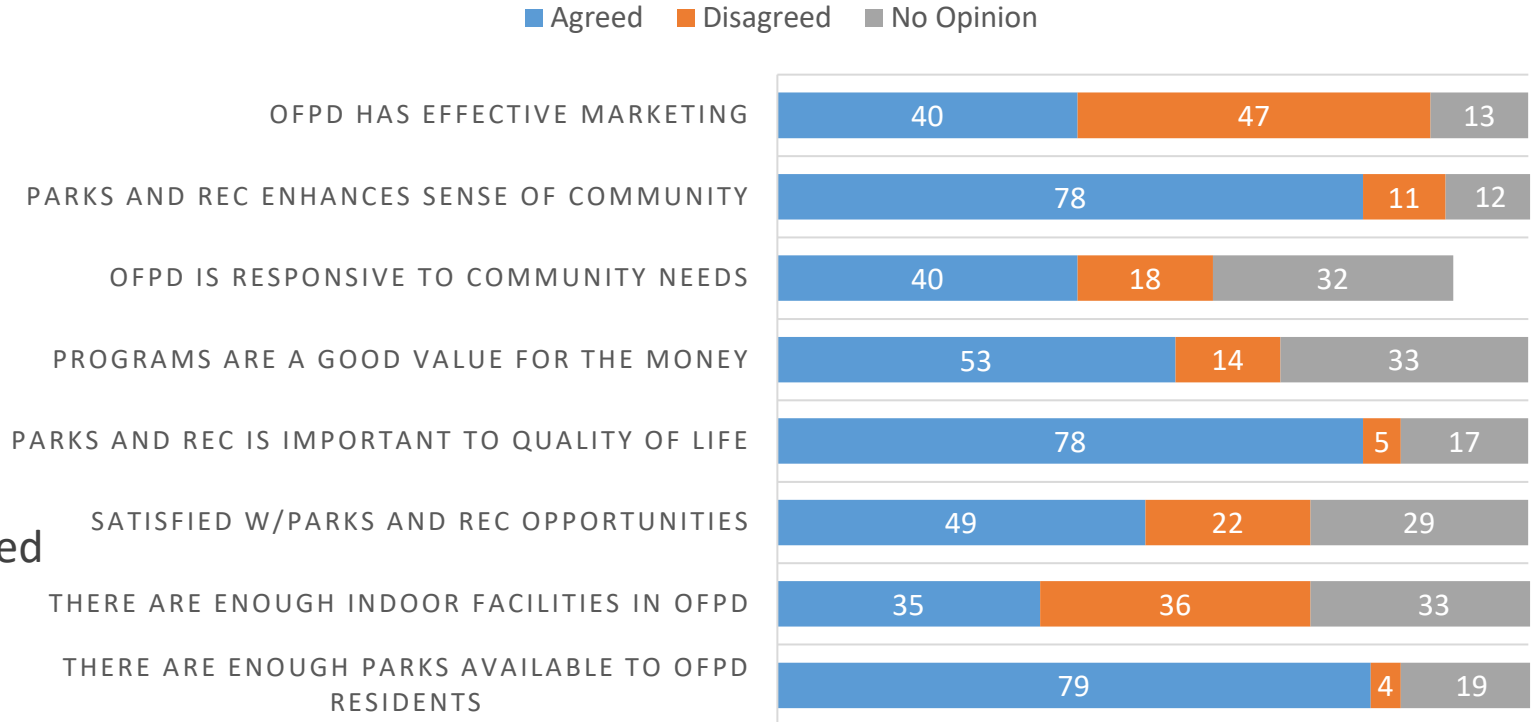
- **Trails Need Maintenance:**
  - Several respondents noted trails need attention (e.g., trails need repaved, low tree branches cleared)
- **Park Updates:**
  - A few respondents mentioned updates are needed at Bicentennial and Arcadia Park
    - Specifically mentioned maintenance of baseball fields



# Opinions about Park District Performance

- Almost 80% of respondents agree:
  - Parks and rec is important to quality of life
  - Parks and rec enhances the sense of community
- A majority agree:
  - Programs are a good value and
  - OFPD is responsive to community needs
- 78% agree there are enough parks available
- Respondents are split on the need for indoor facilities
  - 36% agree more indoor facilities are needed
  - 35% disagree more indoor facilities are needed
- Marketing is an area that needs improvement with 47% who disagree that OFPD has effective marketing

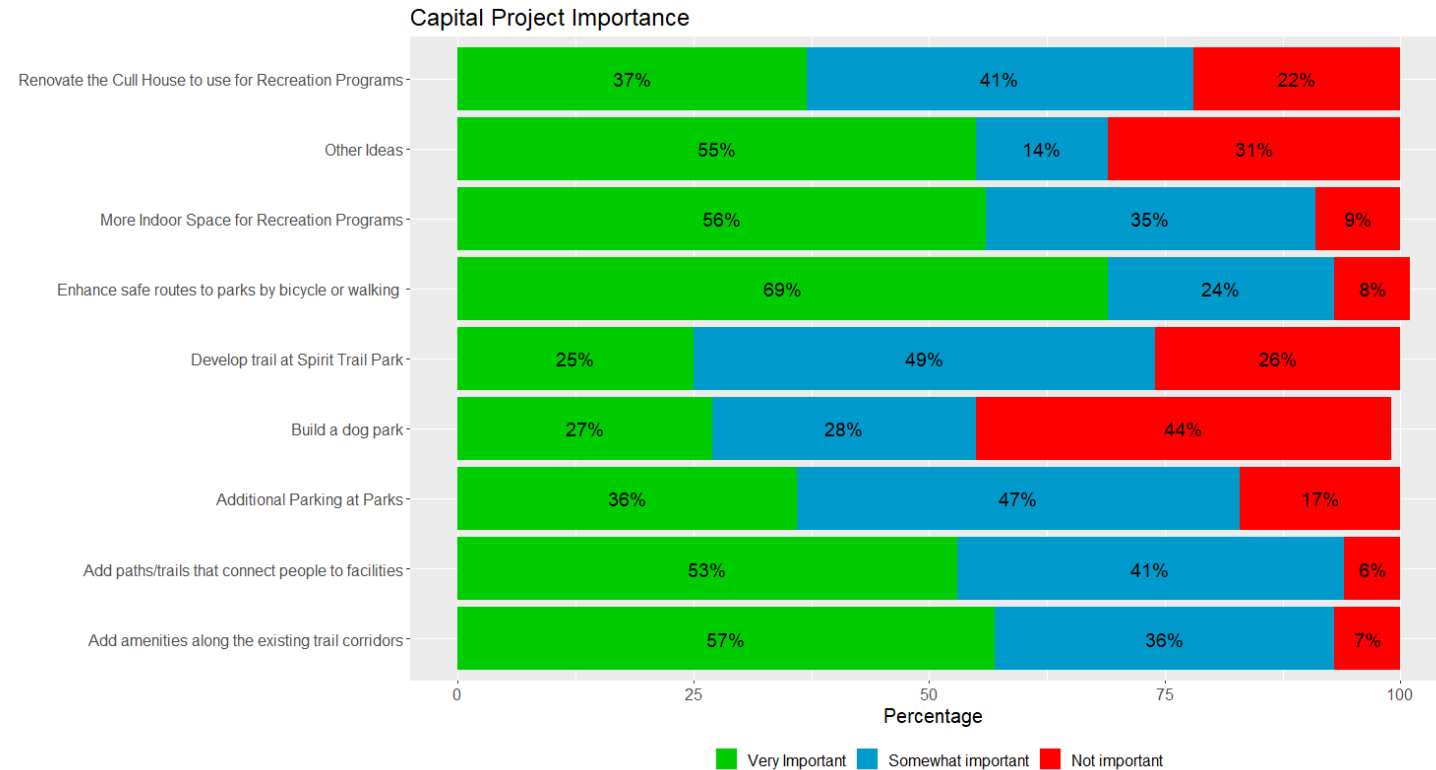
## PARK DISTRICT PERFORMANCE (%)



# Capital Project Importance

## The Initiatives Rated Most Important are:

- Enhance safe routes to parks by biking and walking
- Adding amenities along trail corridors
- More indoor space for recreation
- Renovate Cull House for programs
- More parking at parks
- Other ideas include: Fitness center, recreation center, indoor turf, adapted equipment, and trails

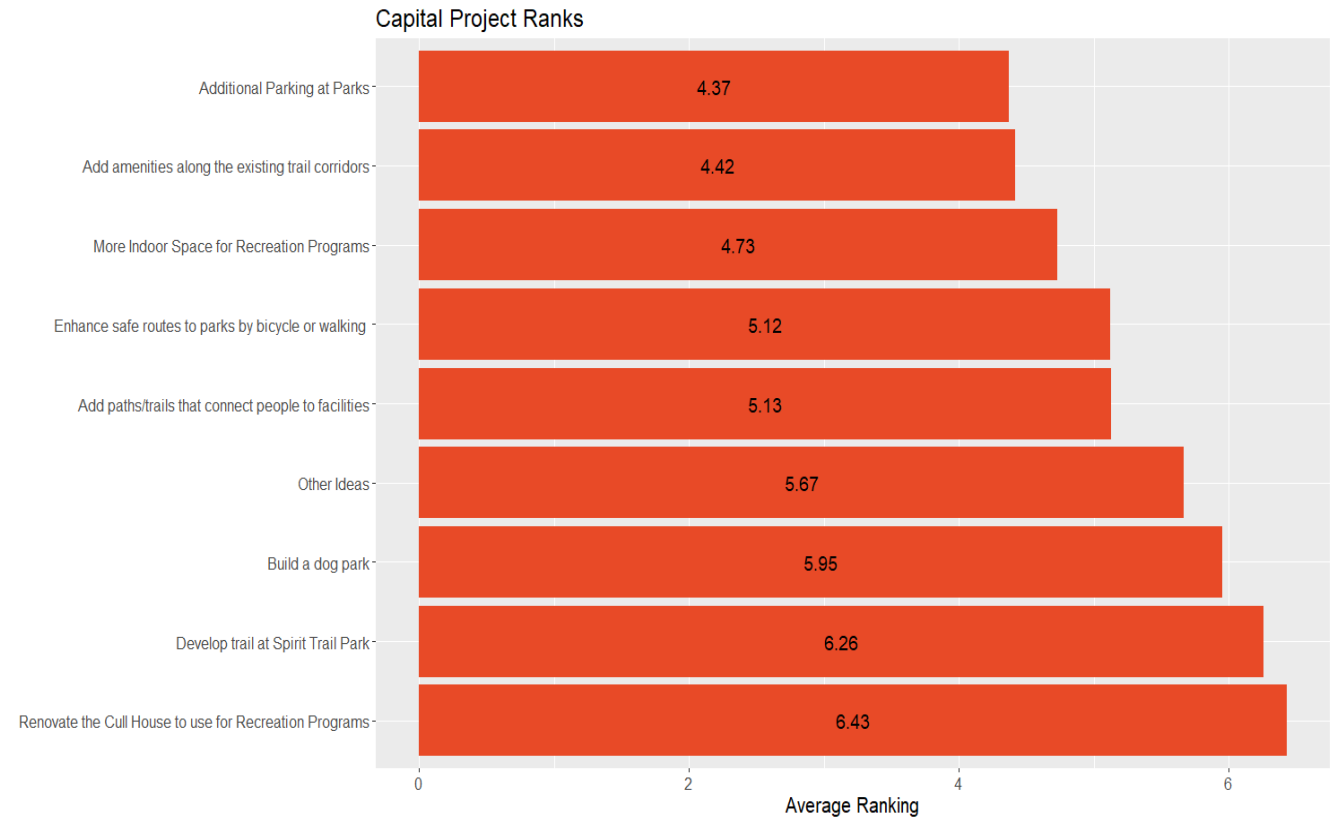


# Capital Project Ranking (Ratings Closer to 1 Ranked Higher)

Results closely mirrored the importance ratings for capital projects with:

- Additional parking at parks
- Add amenities along existing trail corridors
- More indoor space for recreation programs

Ranked in the Top 3



# Special Event Attendance

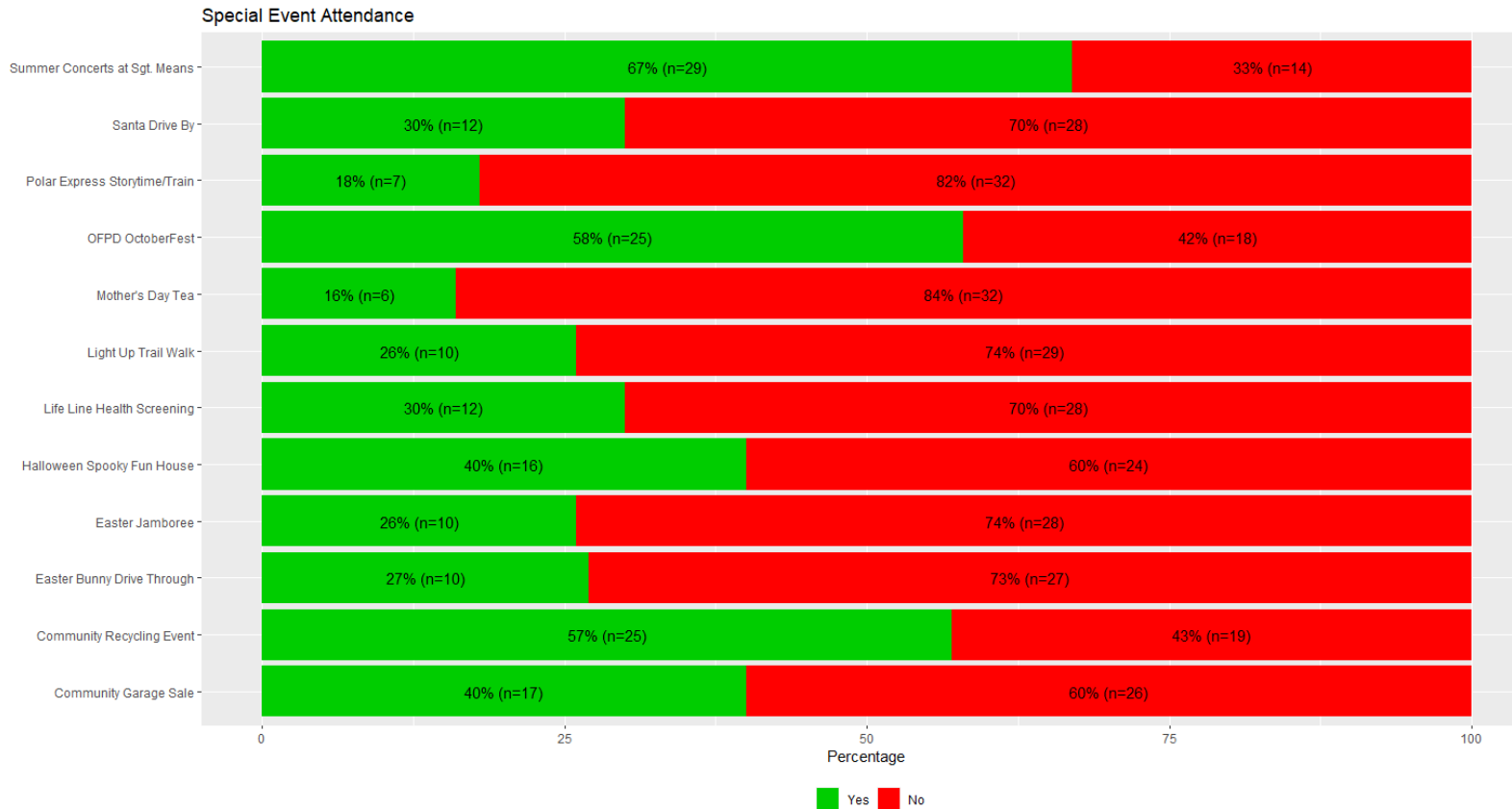
A majority of respondents (between 57% & 67%) have attended:

- Summer Concerts at the Park
- OFPD Octoberfest
- Community Recycling Event

There is also good participation in:

- Community Garage Sale
- Halloween Spooky Fun House

Events such as Santa Drive By, Easter Jamboree, Mother's Day Tea, and Polar Express Storytime/Train were attended by fewer respondents.

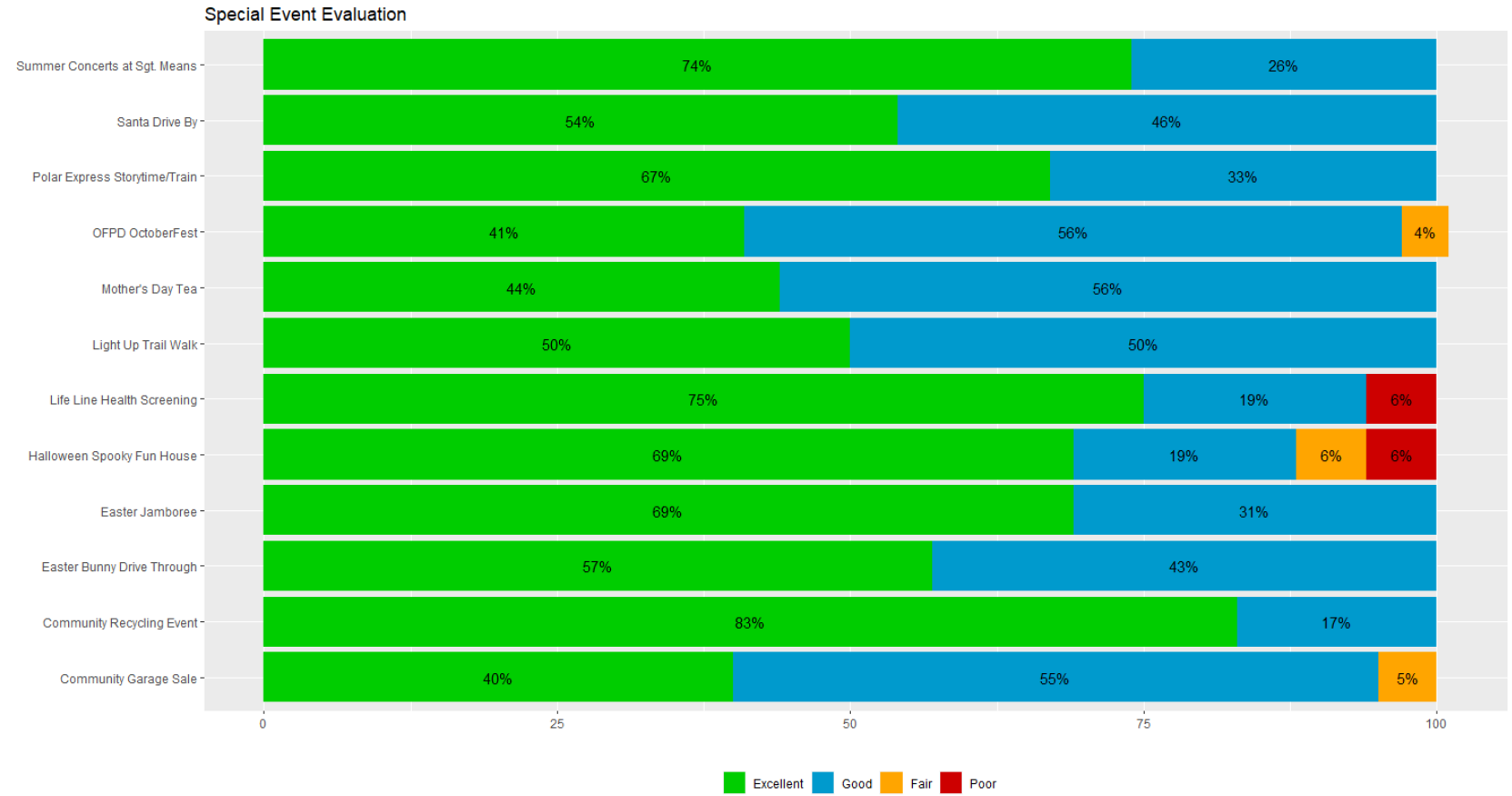


# Special Event Evaluation

**Special events is an area where the Park District shines!**

Overall, special events were rated Very favorably. The highest rated Events were:

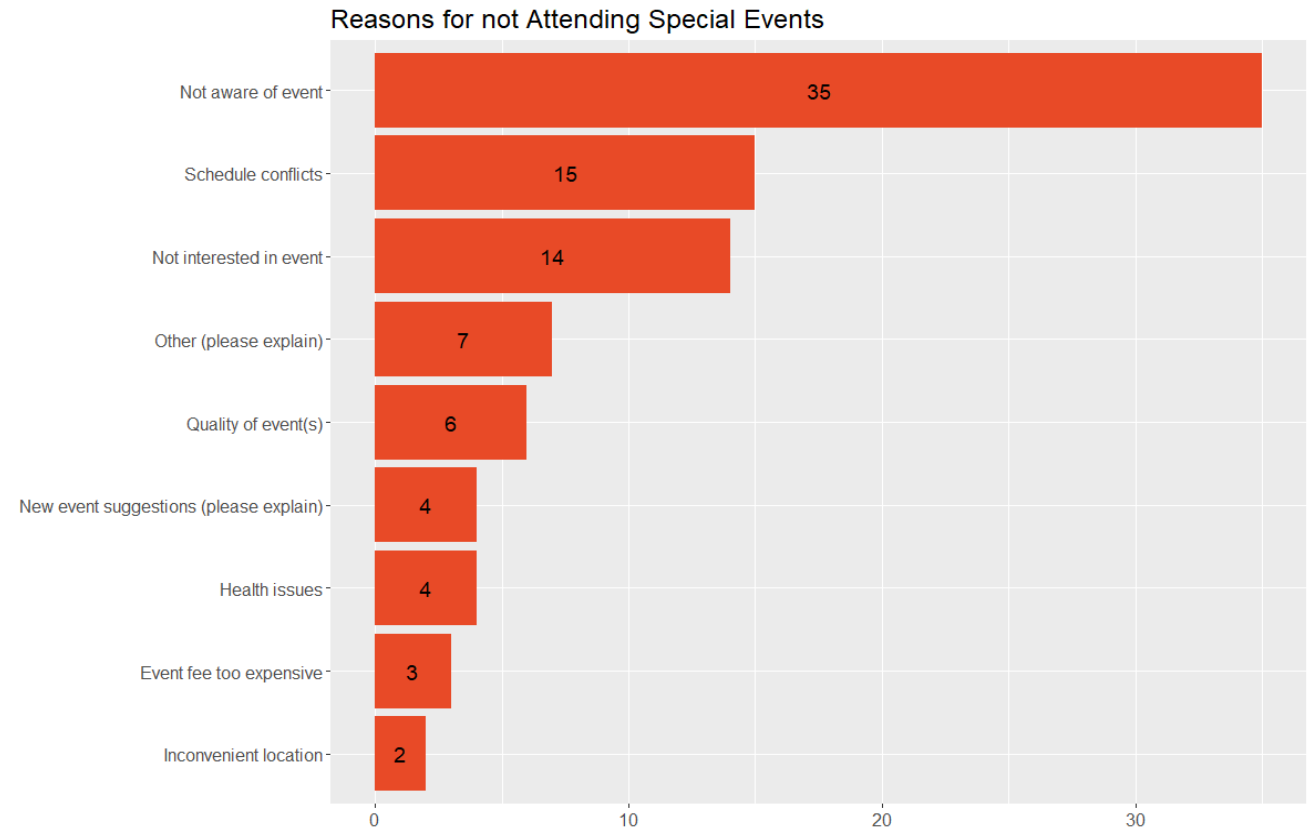
- Community Recycling Event
- Summer Concerts
- Lifeline Health Screening
- Polar Express Storytime/Train
- Halloween Spooky fun House
- Easter Jamboree
- Easter Bunny Drive Through



# Reasons for missing special events

## The top reasons for not attending special events were:

- Not being aware of the event
- Scheduling conflicts
- No interest in the event
  
- Event suggestions:
  - Food trucks at parks
  - E-bike rentals
  - Arts/crafts fair



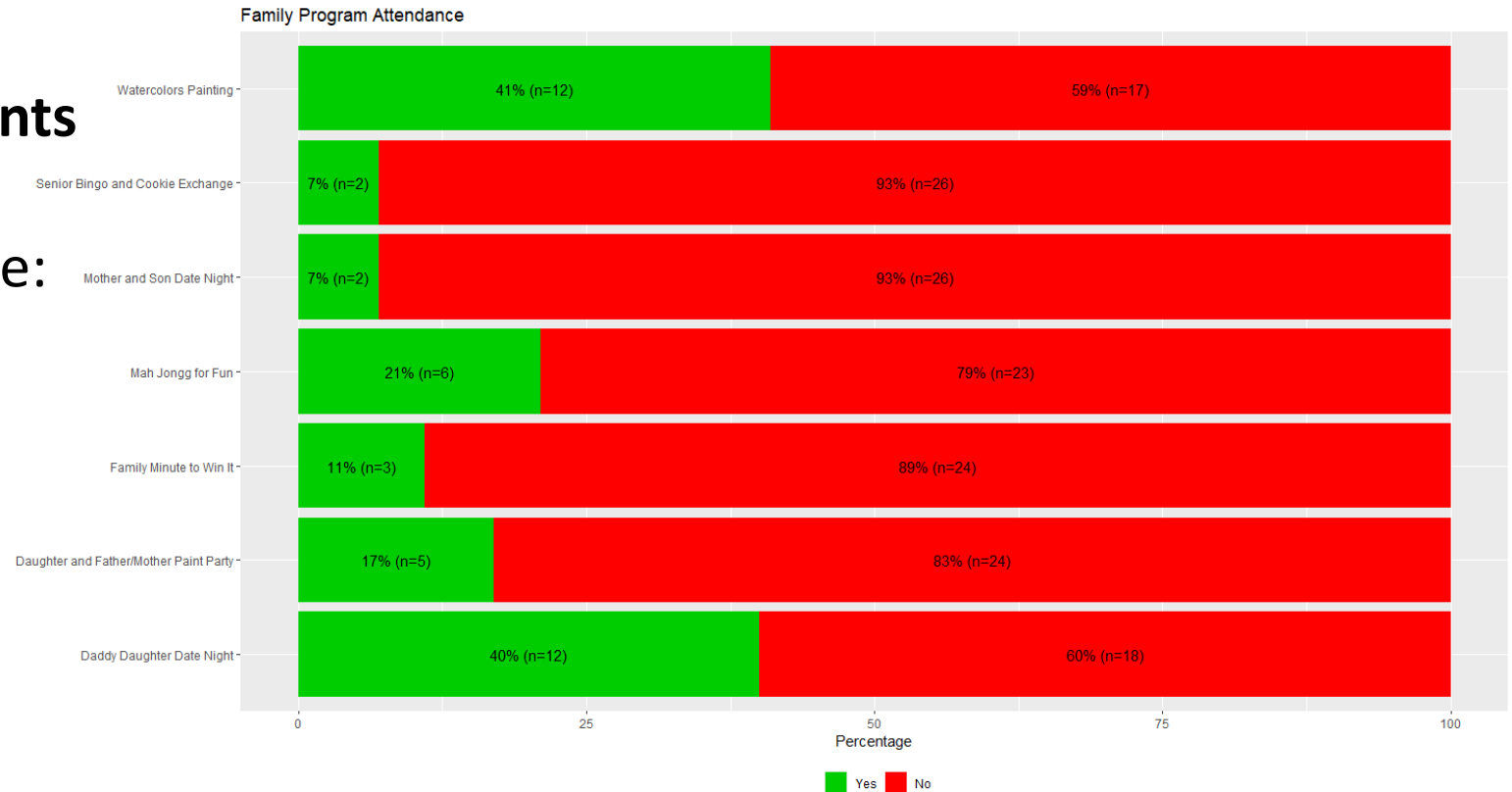
# Adult and Family Program Attendance

**Overall, relatively few respondents indicated they attended.**

The best attended programs were:

- Watercolors Painting
- Daddy Daughter Date Night

Attended most frequently  
(n= 12 respondents each)



# Program Evaluation

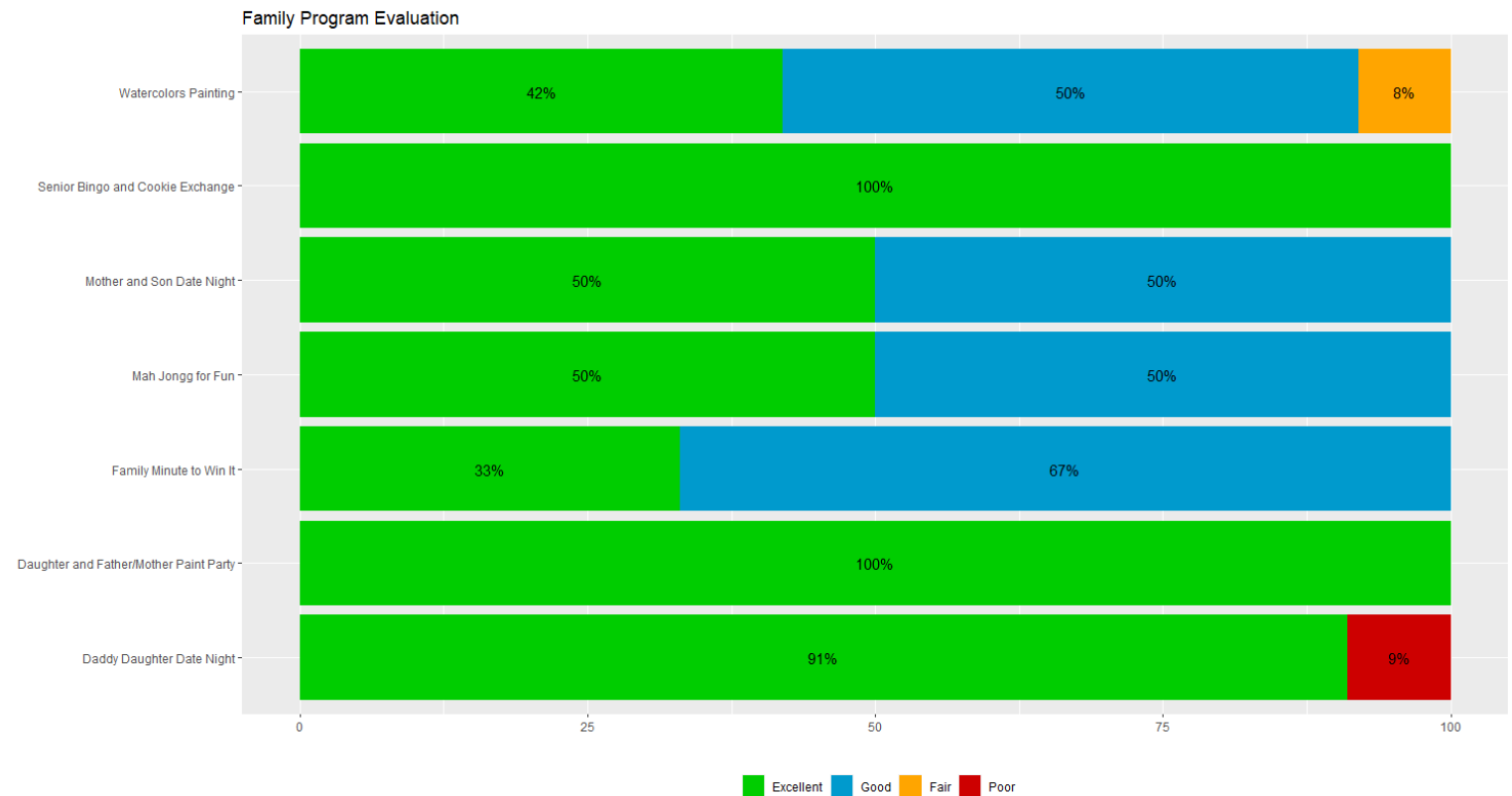
**Overall, programs were rated favorably by attendees**

91% - 100% of respondents rated

The following programs “excellent”:

- Daughter and Father (Grandparent) Paint Party
- Daddy Daughter Date Night
- Senior Bingo and Cookie Exchange

All programs were well received with a large majority rating them as “excellent” or “good”

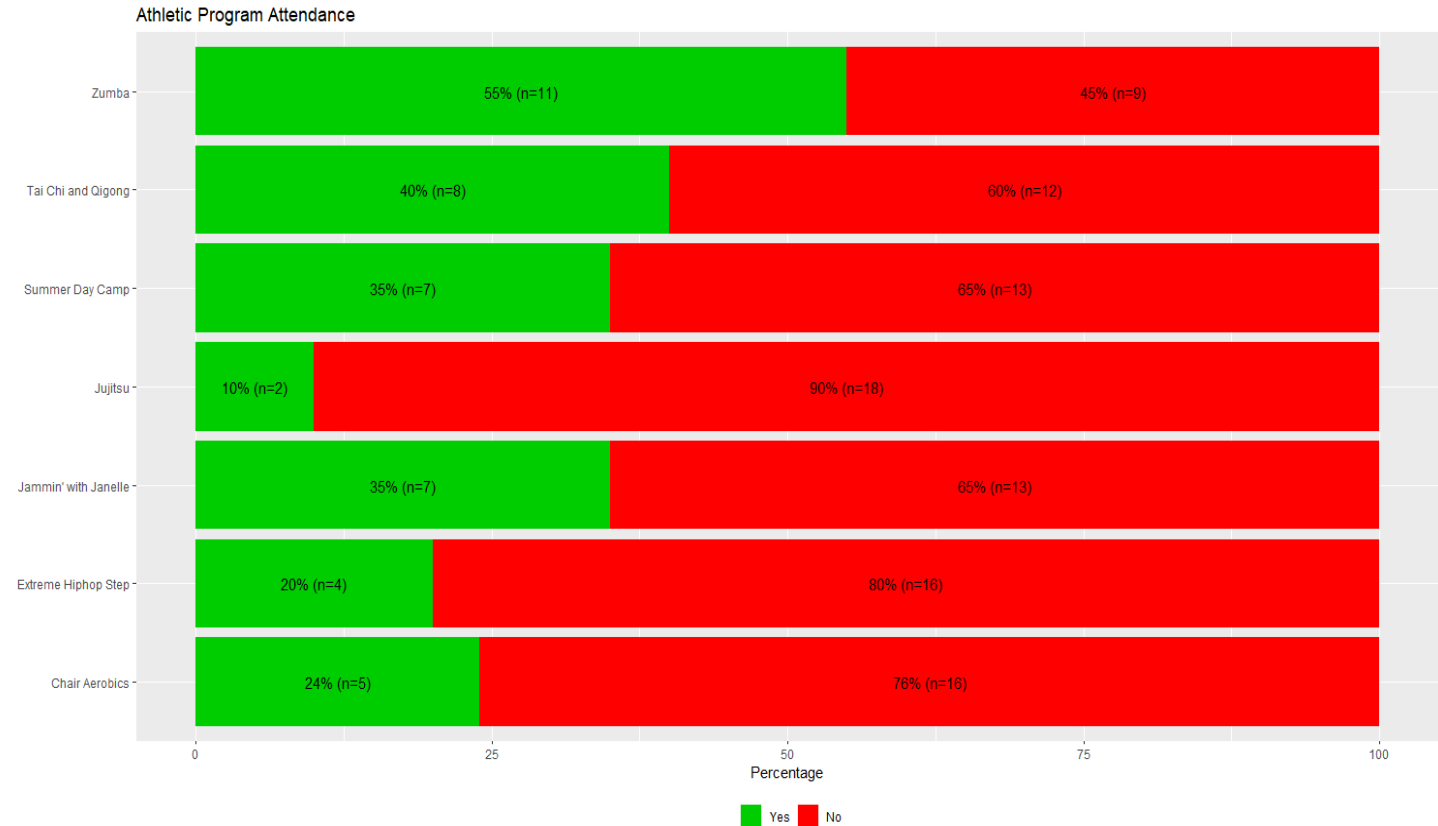


# Athletic, Fitness & Summer Camp Program Attendance

## The most frequently attended programs were:

- Zumba
- Jammin' with Janelle
- Tai Chi Qigong
- Summer Camps

35% - 55% reported attending one of these four programs

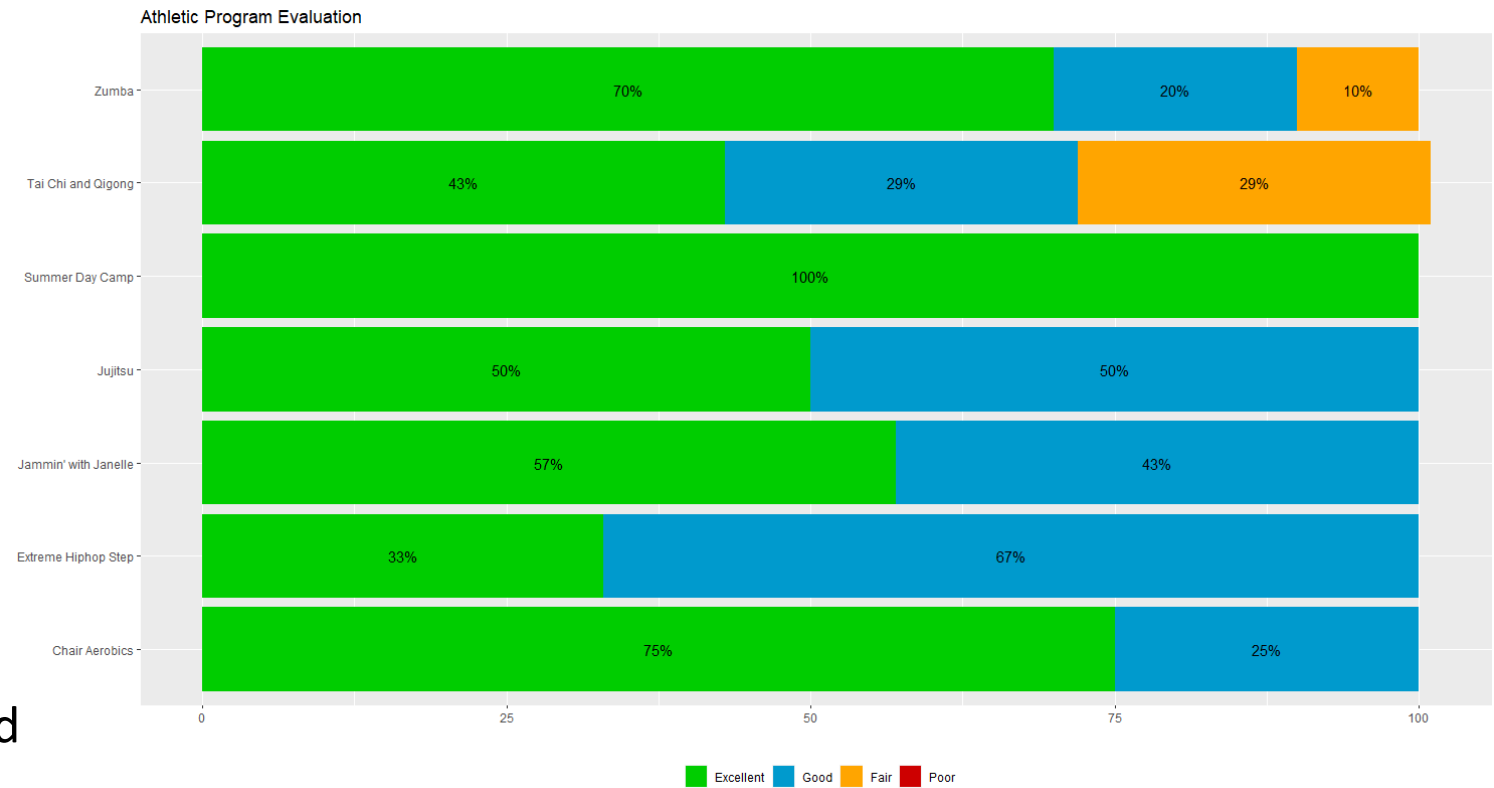


# Athletic, Fitness & Summer Camp Program Evaluation

**Overall, these programs were favorably rated, especially:**

- Summer Day Camp
- Chair Aerobics
- Zumba
- Jammin' with Janelle
- Jujitsu

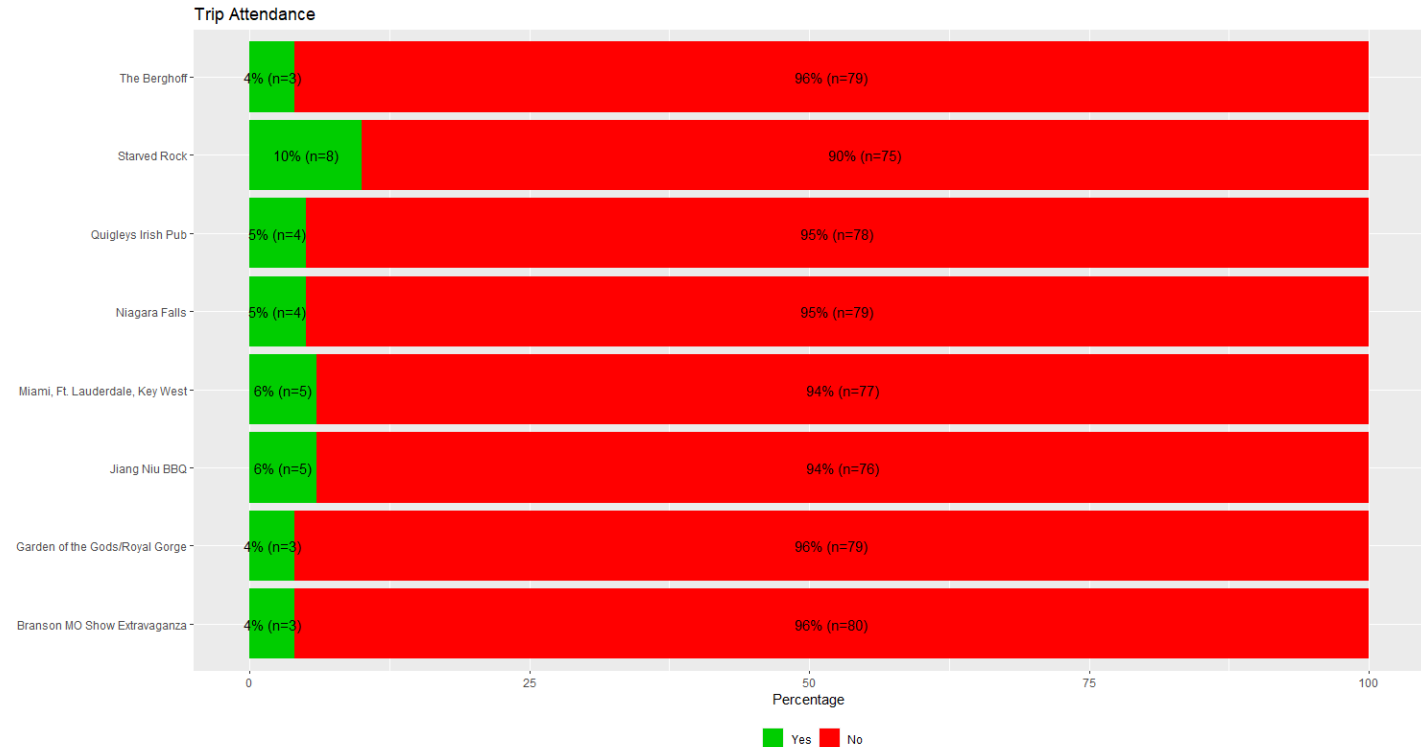
Tai Chi and Qigong and Zumba were rated a little lower, with 10% of Zumba participants indicating Zumba was “fair” and 29% indicating Tai Chi and Qigong was “fair”



# Trip Attendance

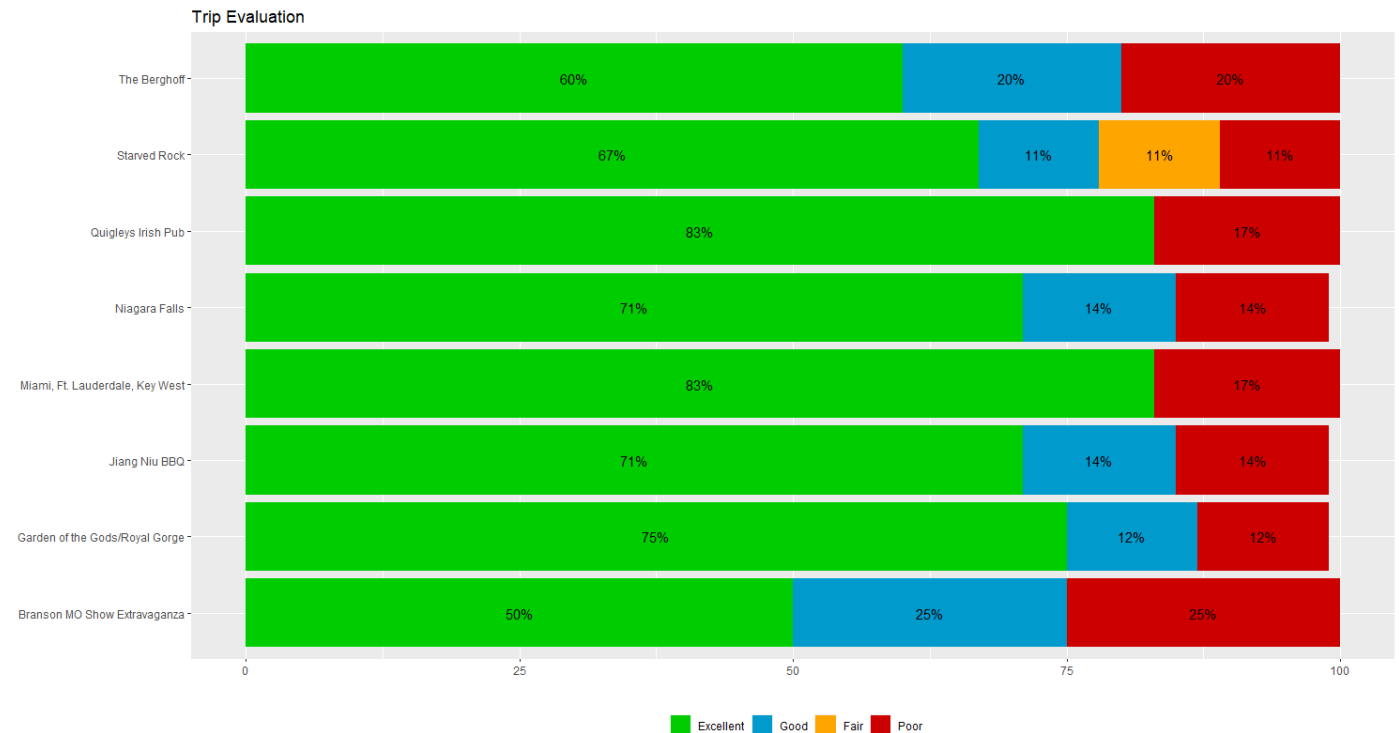
A very small number of respondents indicated they Participated in trips.  
Only 4% to 10% went on a trip.

Starved Rock was attended by the most respondents (n=8)



# Trip Evaluation

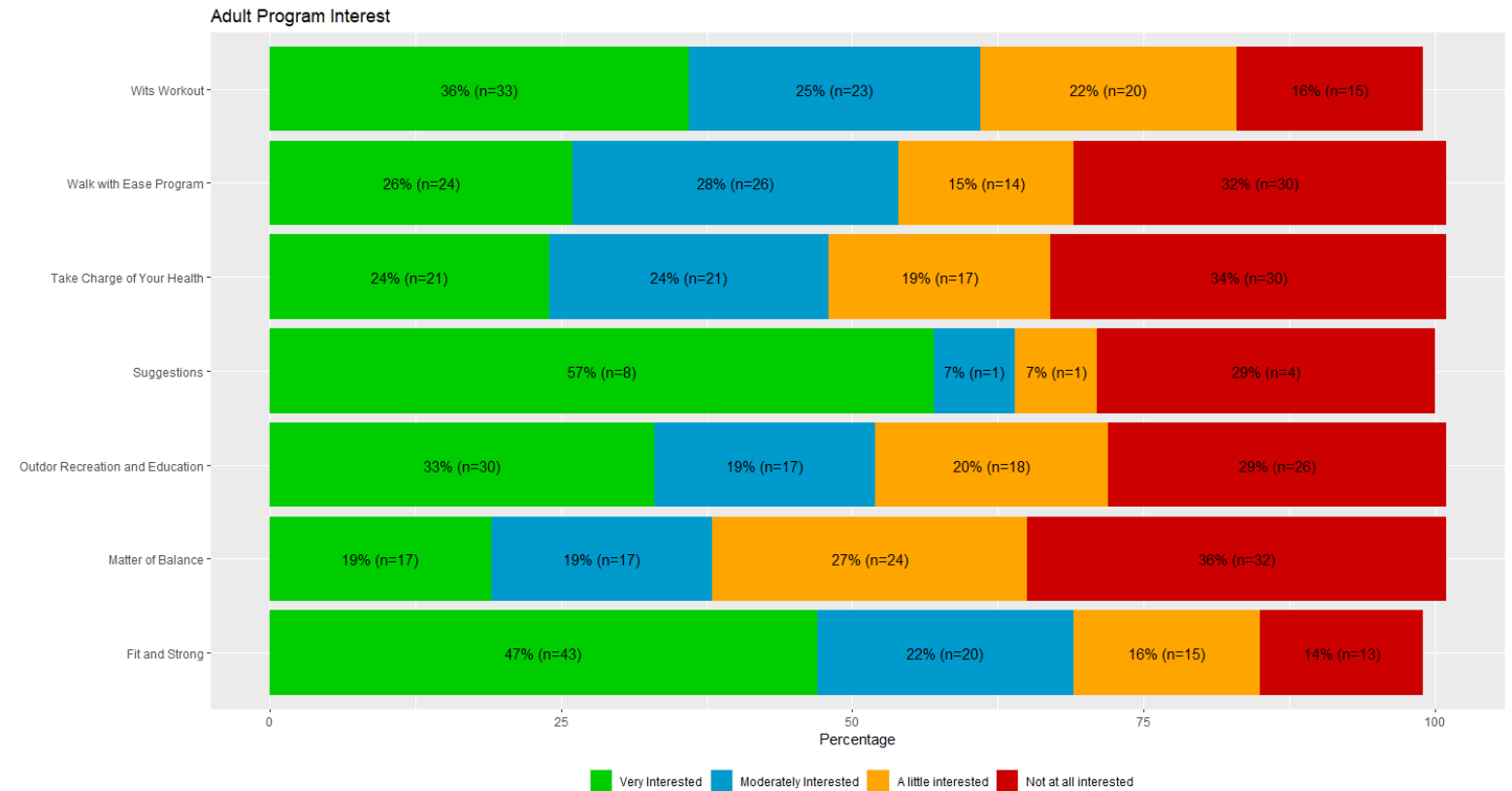
Although trips were generally evaluated favorably by the few respondents who participated, responses were very small with a range of 4-8 responses per trip so results should be interpreted with caution



# Adult Program Interest

There is moderate to high interest in the following programs to be added:

- Fit and Strong (Fitness Program)
  - 69% Interested
- Wits Workout (Wellness Program)
  - 61% Interested
- Walk with Ease (Arthritis Wellness)
  - 54% Interested
- Outdoor Recreation and Education
  - 52% Interested



# Additional Active Adult Program Suggestions

---

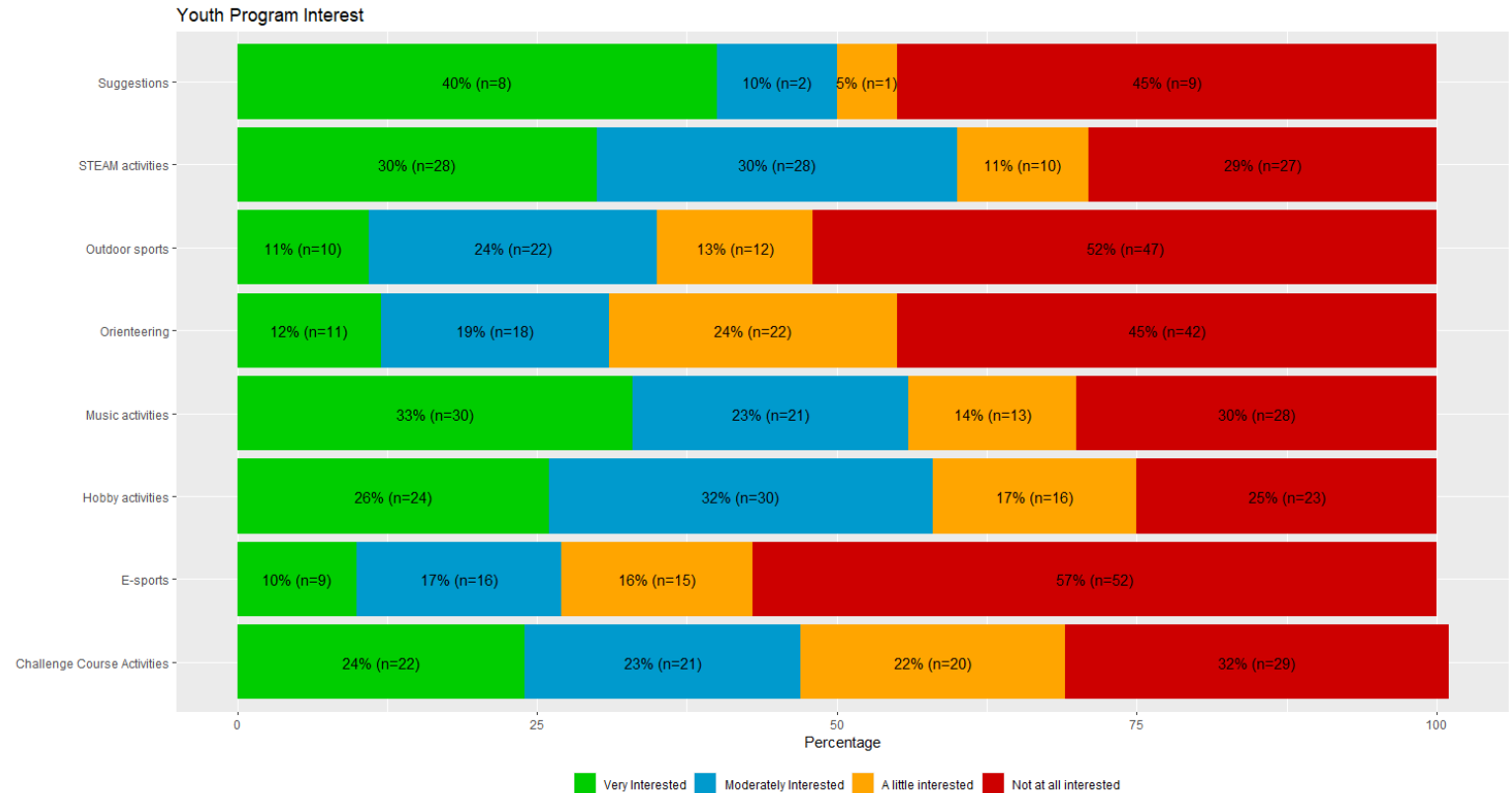
- Social activities
- More fitness activities that are fun
- Adult game / fun nights
- Dance classes
- Swimming
- Kudos for summer concerts!

# Youth Program Interest

There is modest to moderate interest in the following youth programs:

- STEAM Activities
  - 60% Interested
- Hobby Activities
  - 58% Interested
- Music Activities
  - 56% Interested
- Challenge Course Activities
  - 47% Interested
- Outdoor Sport Activities
  - 35% Interested

Fewer respondents are interested in E-Sport and orienteering



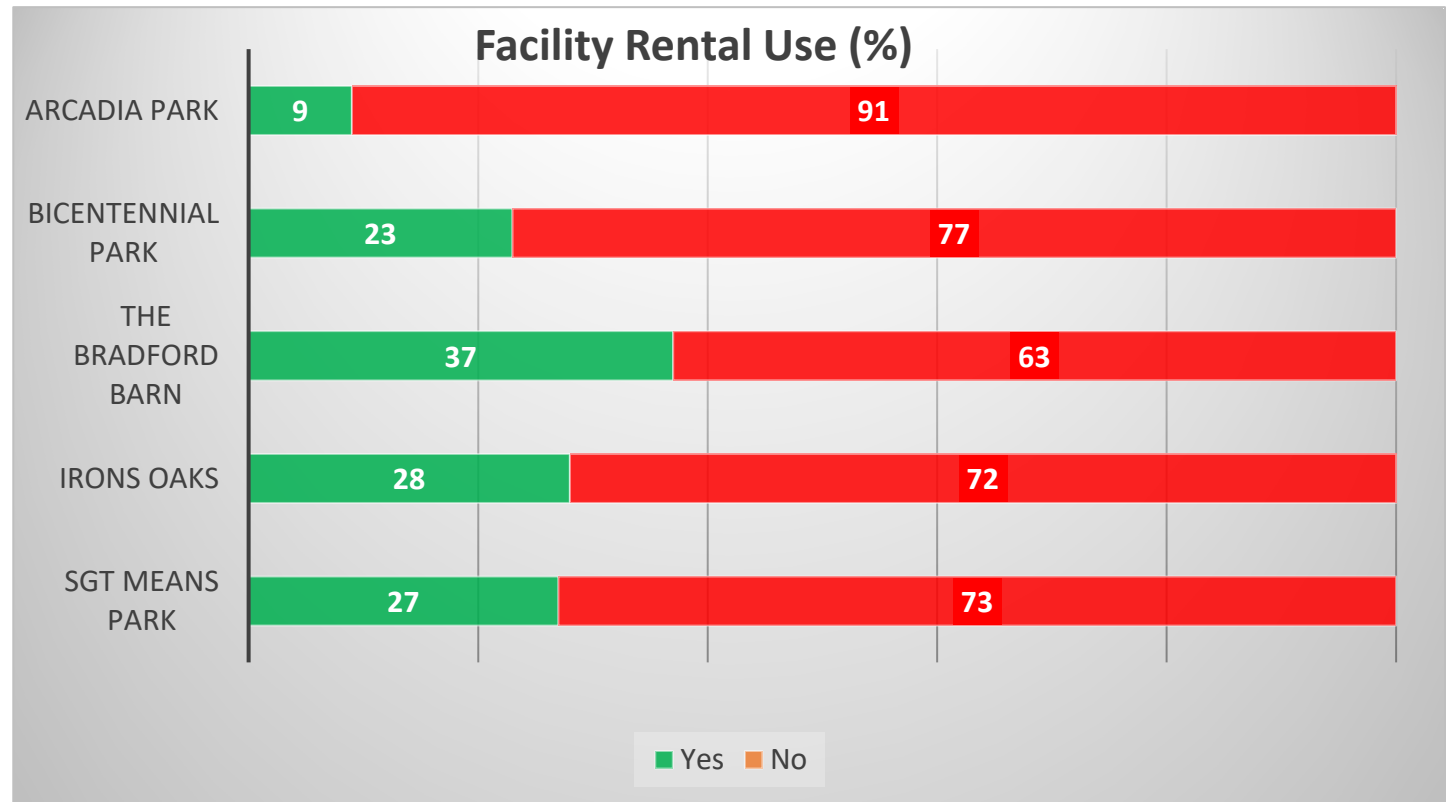
# Additional Youth Program Suggestions

---

- Sports and physical activities such as:
  - Open gyms for various age groups
  - Gymnastics and tumbling
  - Soccer
  - Baseball
  - Dodgeball tournament
- Music and art activities (e.g., guitar, piano)
- STEAM activities (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math)
- Weekend youth activities (where my children can go for several hours on the weekend)

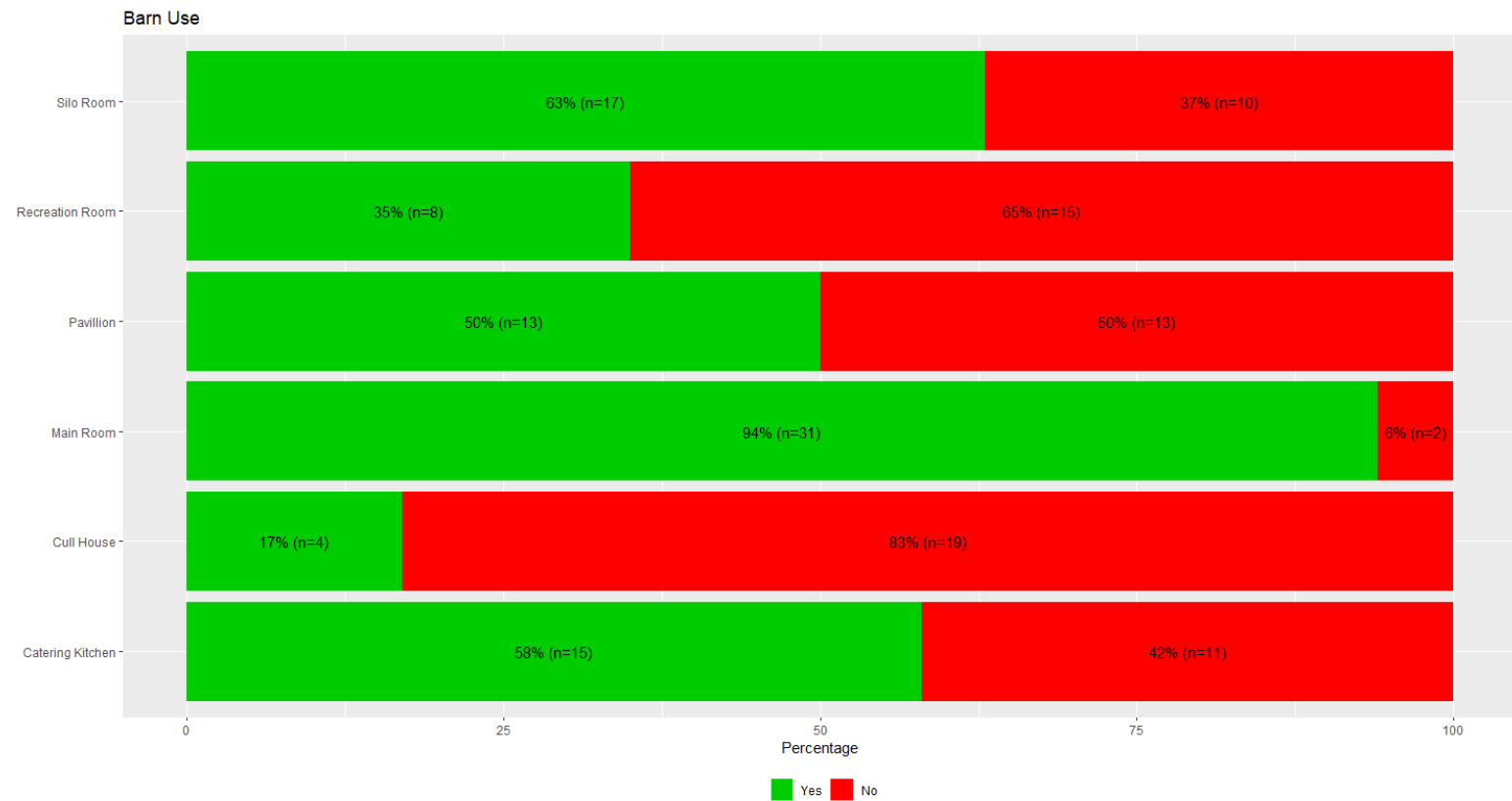
# Overall Facility Use for Rentals

- Bradford Barn was utilized by 37%
- Irons Oaks Environmental Learning Center was utilized by 29%
- Sgt. Means Park was utilized by 27%
- Bicentennial Park utilized by 23%
- Least utilized for rentals was Arcadia Park (9%)



# The Bradford Barn Use

- The Main Room was used by most participants (94%)
- The Silo Room and Catering Kitchen were used frequently (63% and 58% respectively)
- The Pavilion was used by 50% who responded
- The Recreation Room and Cull House were used least

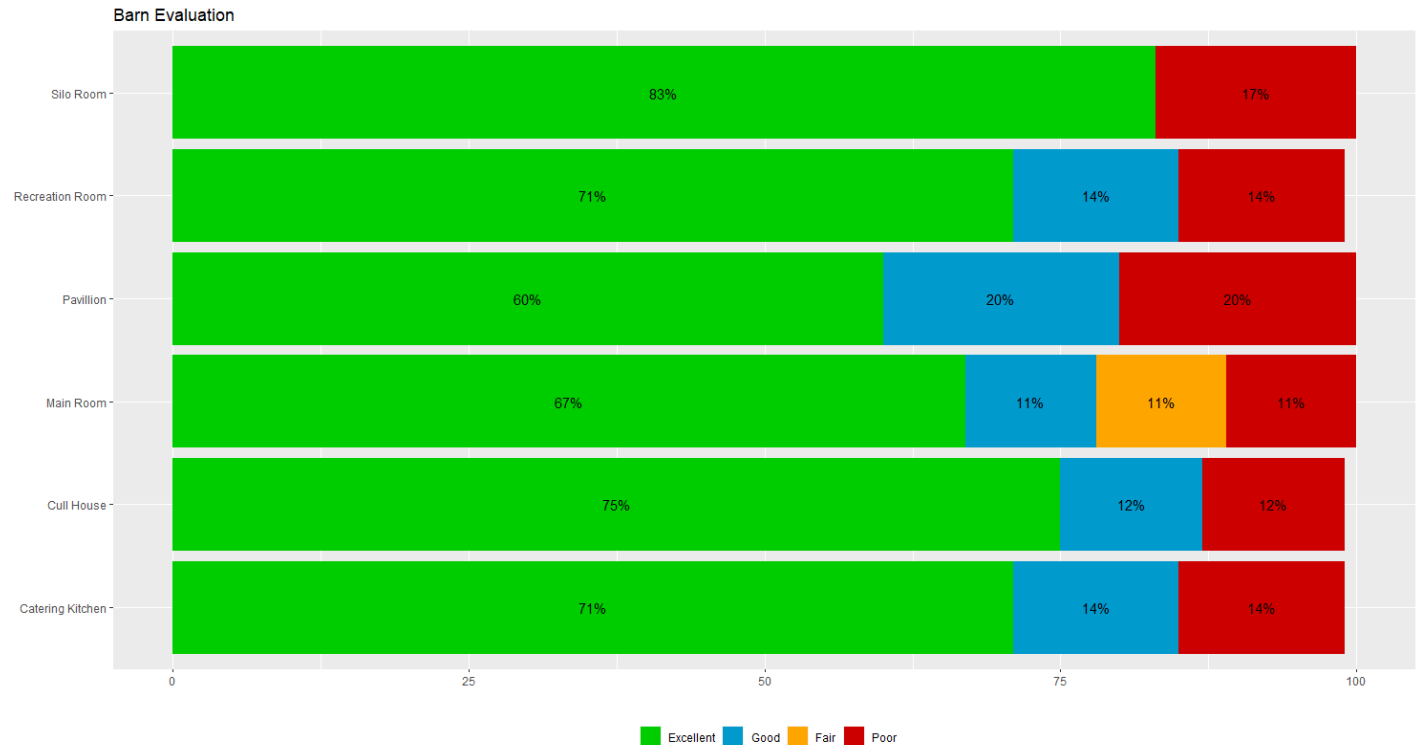


# The Bradford Barn Evaluation

All of the facilities within The Bradford Barn were rated positively by 50% to 83% of respondents.

20% of respondents rated the Pavilion as “poor” however that may be due to it being an outdoor venue

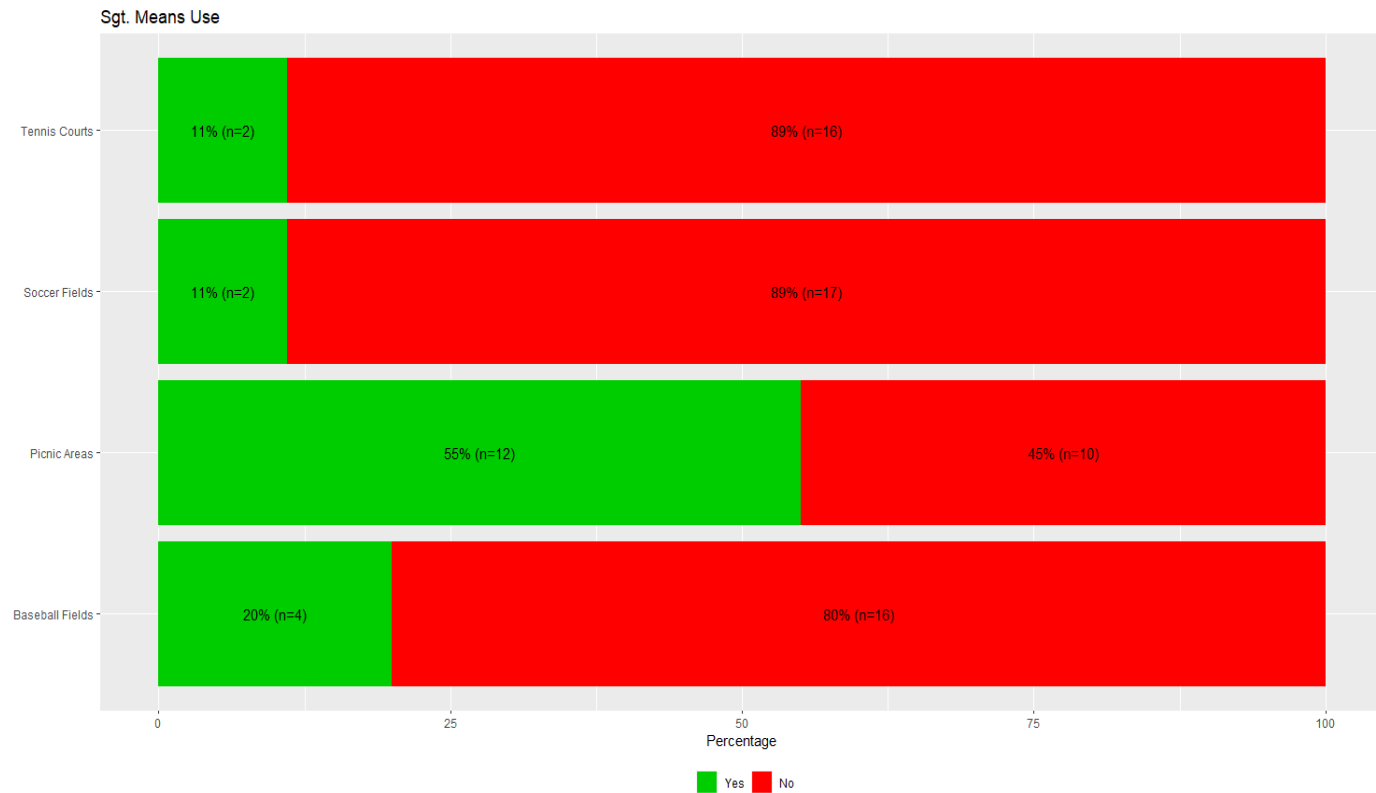
22% rated the Main Room as “fair” or “poor”



# Sgt Means Park Rentals

Picnic areas are the most popular rental among respondents with 55% indicating they rented a picnic area

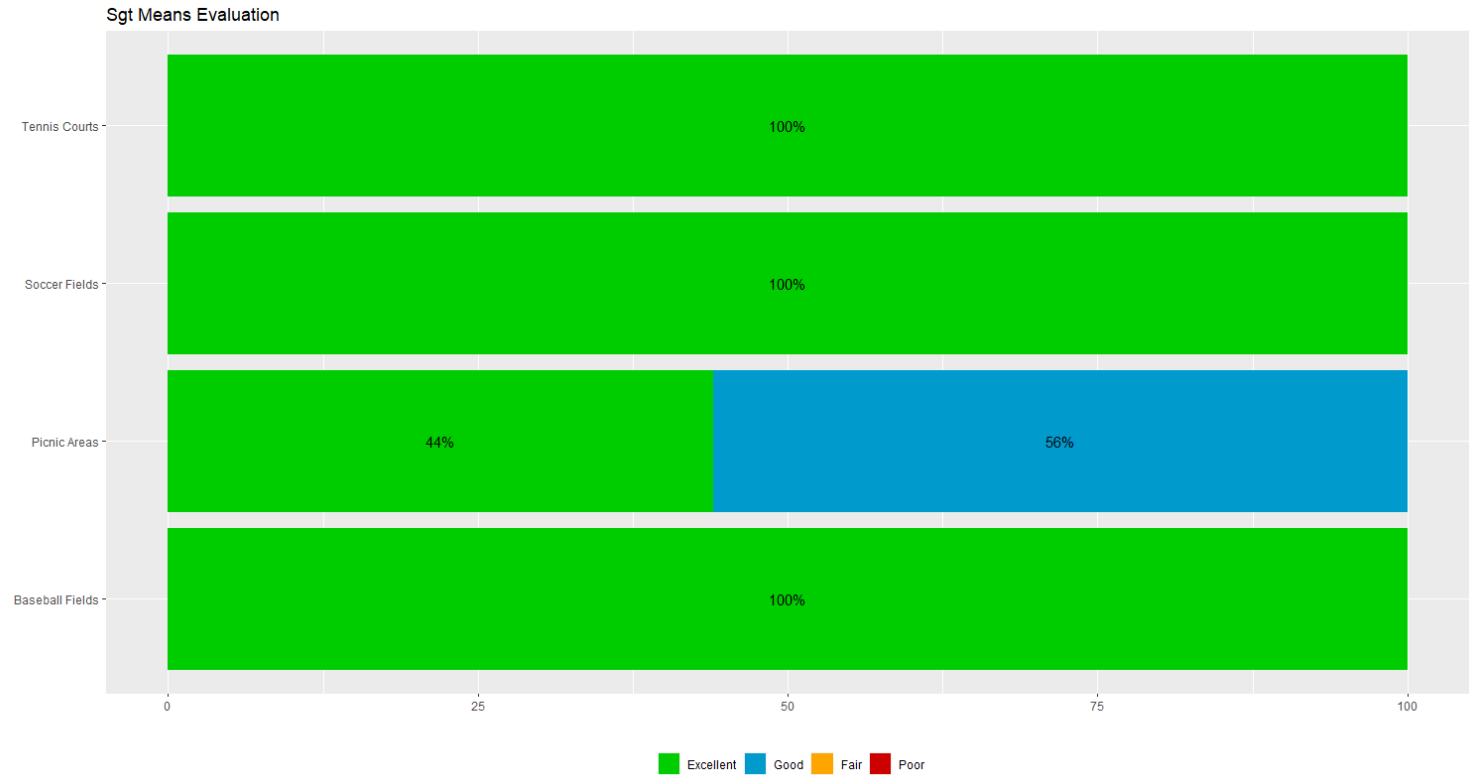
Very few respondents indicated they rented tennis courts, baseball fields, or soccer fields.



# Sgt Means Rental Evaluation

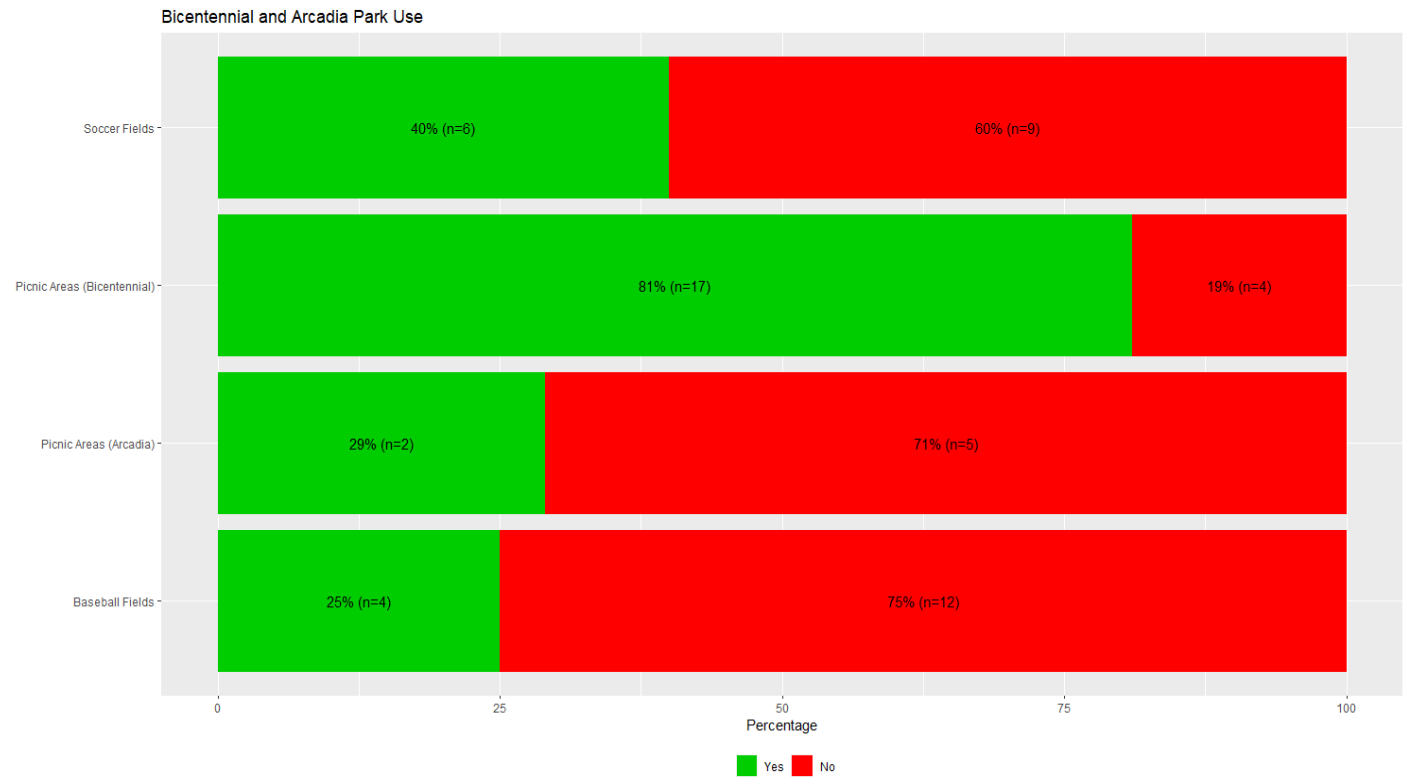
---

All of the park facilities rented by respondents were rated positively with 100% rating them as “excellent” or “good”



# Bicentennial and Arcadia Rentals

- Picnic Areas at Bicentennial Park were rented by the most respondents (81%; n= 17)
- Fewer respondents indicated they rented picnic areas at Arcadia Park, and fewer rented baseball fields and soccer fields at Bicentennial Park

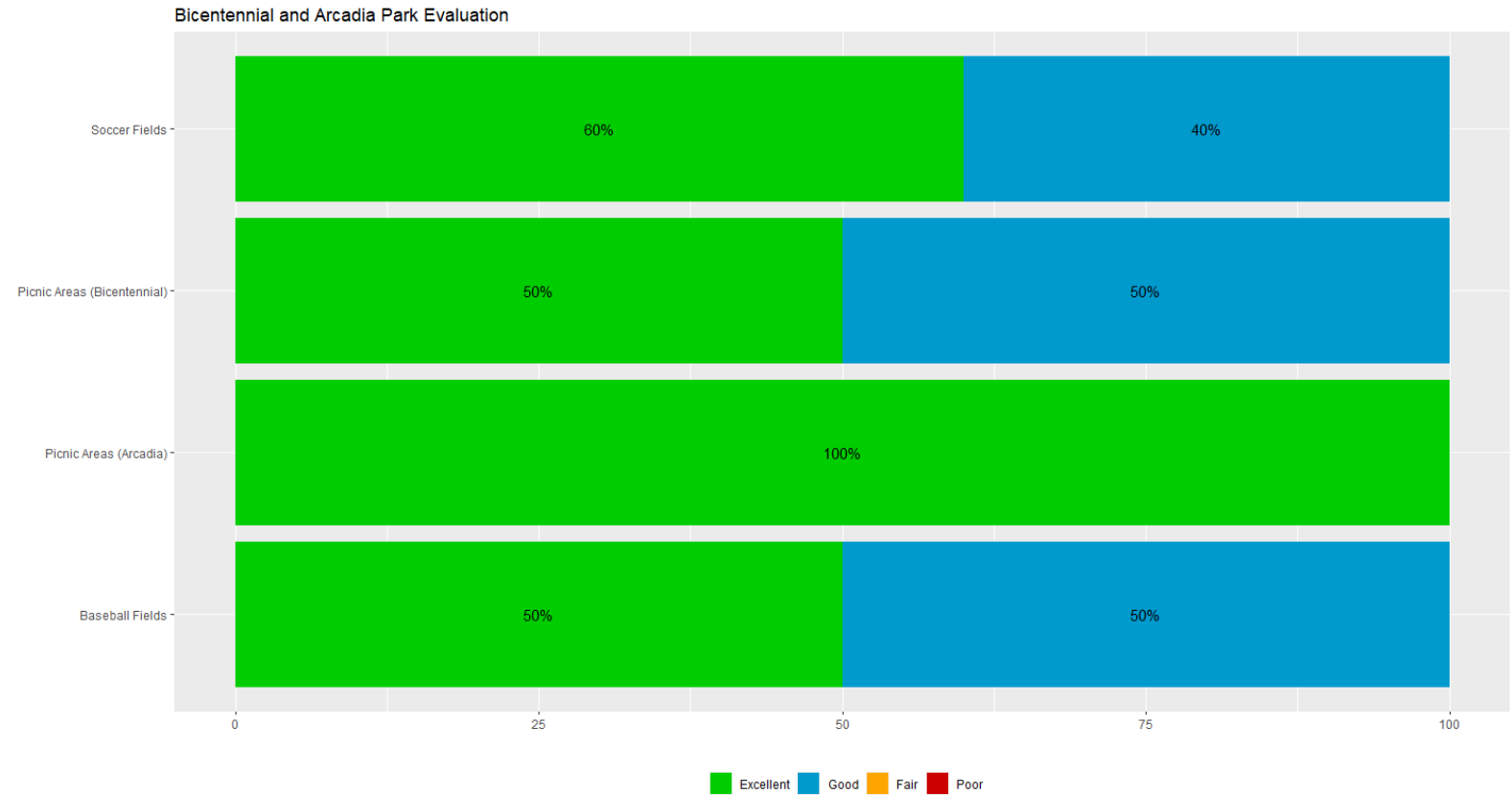


# Bicentennial and Arcadia Rental Evaluation

The Picnic Areas at Bicentennial and Arcadia were very favorably evaluated as were:

- Baseball Fields
- Soccer Fields

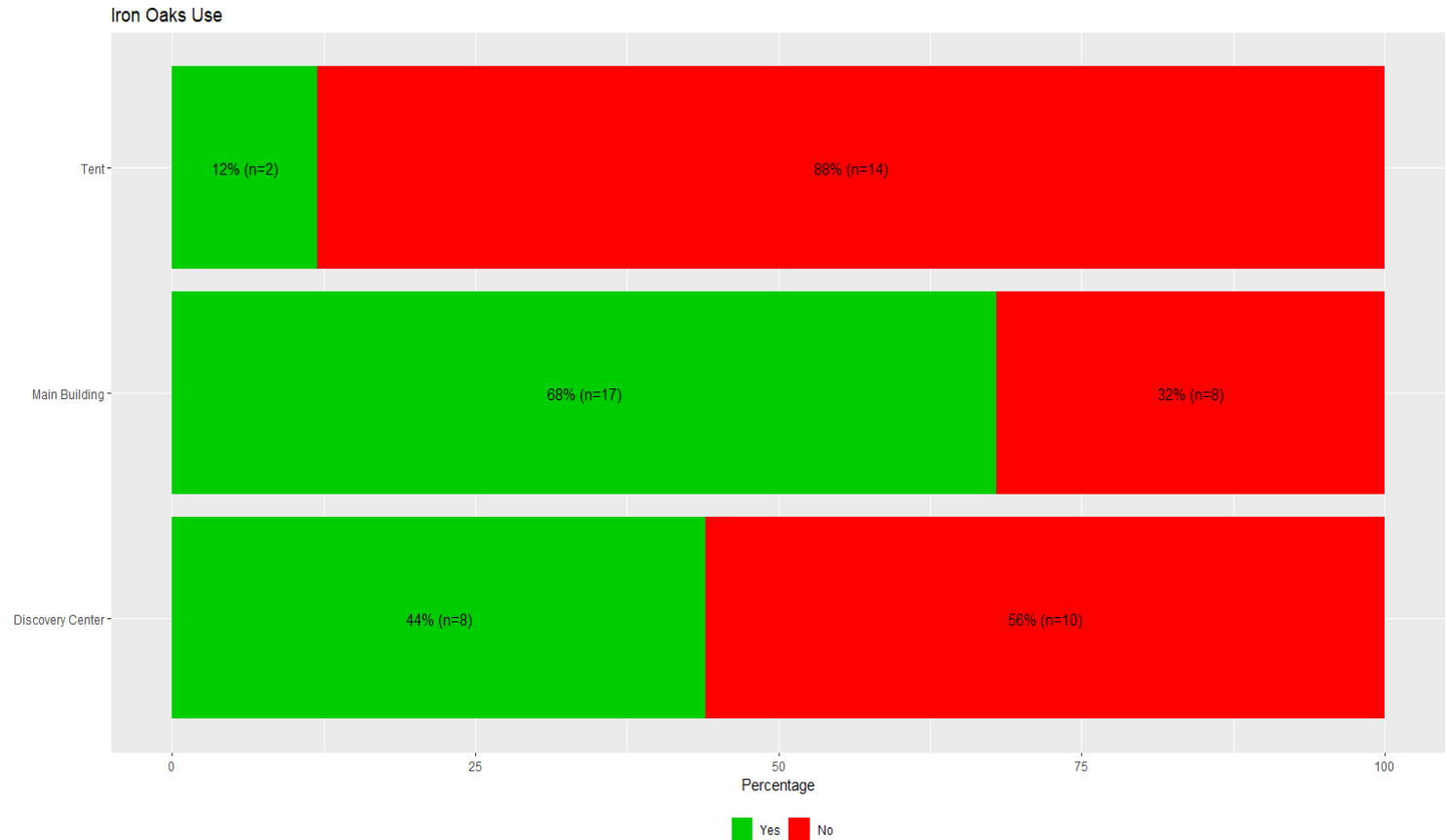
All respondents rated these park facilities as either “excellent” or “good”



# Irons Oaks Rentals

Of the respondents who used Irons Oaks for rentals,

- The Main Building was rented most frequently (68%; n=17)
- Discovery Center (44%; n= 8)
- Only two respondents reported they rented the tent

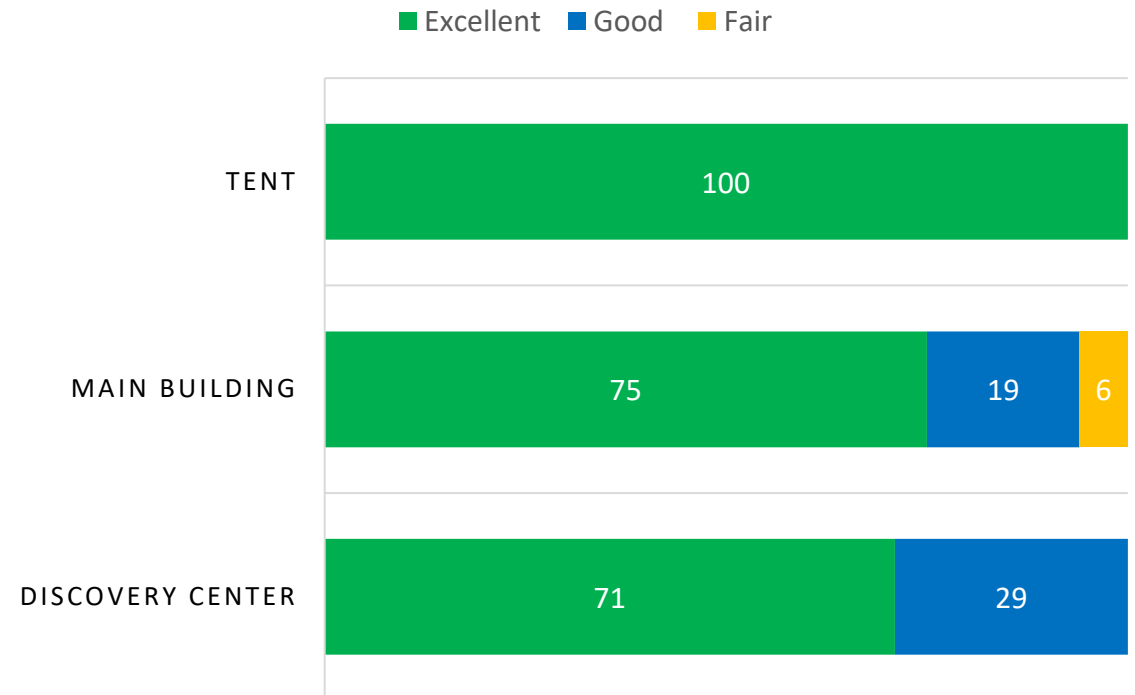


# Irons Oaks Rental Evaluation

Of those who rated Irons Oaks facilities...

- All rated the Tent and Discovery Center as “excellent” or “very good”
- The Main Building was also highly rated, but with 6% who rated this facility as “fair”

## IRONS OAKS EVALUATION (%)



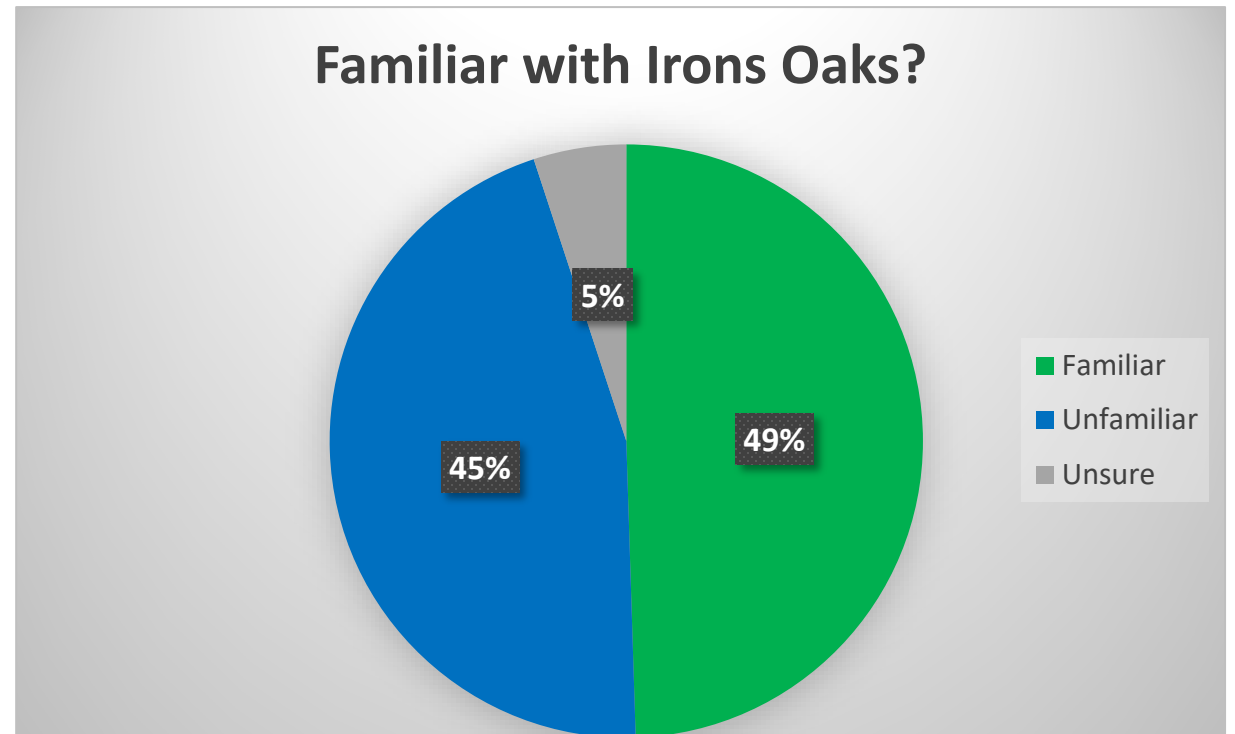
# Are You Familiar with Irons Oaks?

---

The sample was split with 49% (n=46) indicating they are familiar with Irons Oaks

45% (n=42) are unfamiliar with Irons Oaks

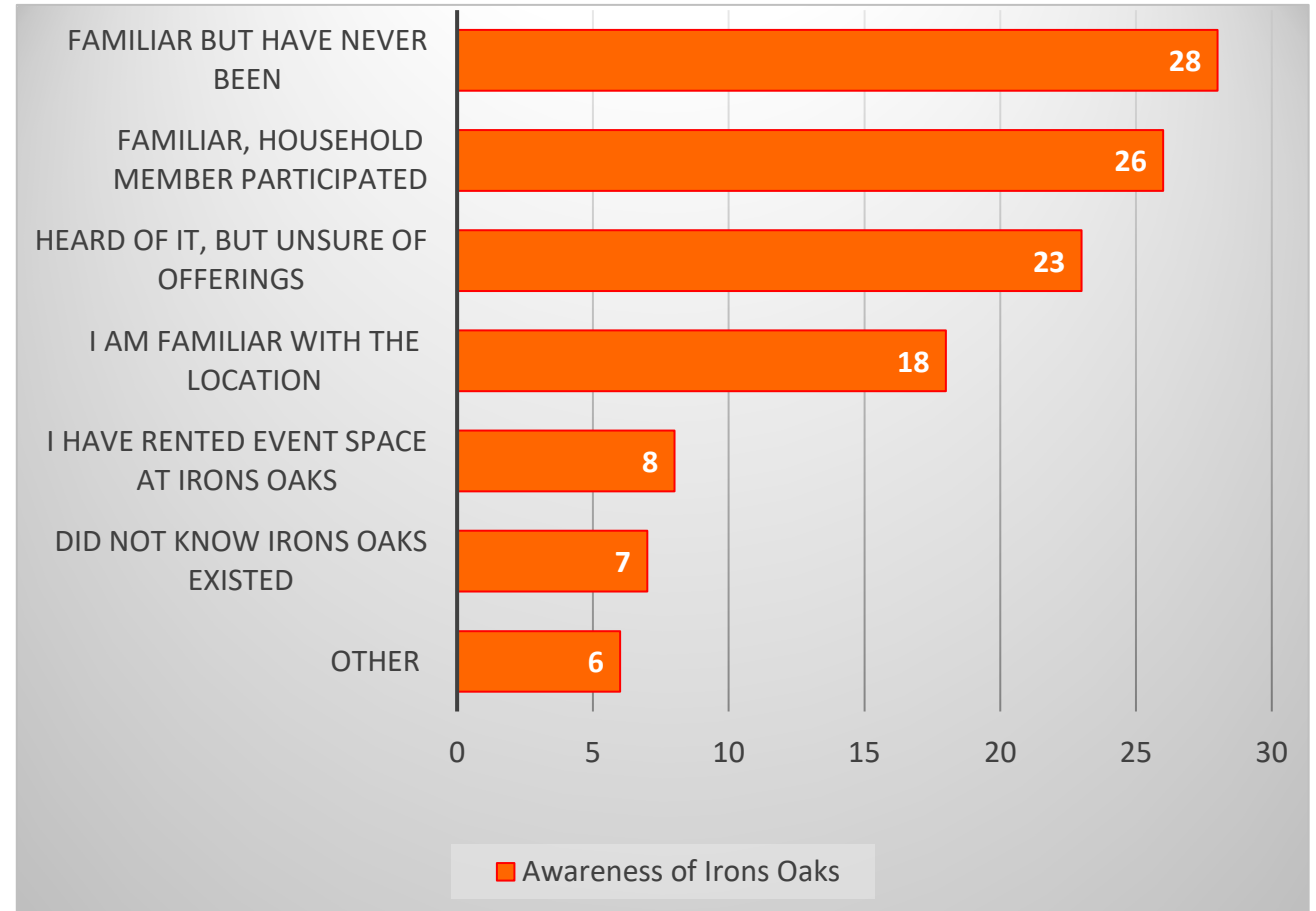
5% (n= 5) are unsure



# Awareness of Irons Oaks

- 28 respondents are aware of Irons Oaks but have not visited
- 26 respondents are familiar and someone in their household engaged in a program at Irons Oaks
- 23 respondents heard of Irons Oaks but are unsure of their offerings
- 18 are familiar with Irons Oaks location

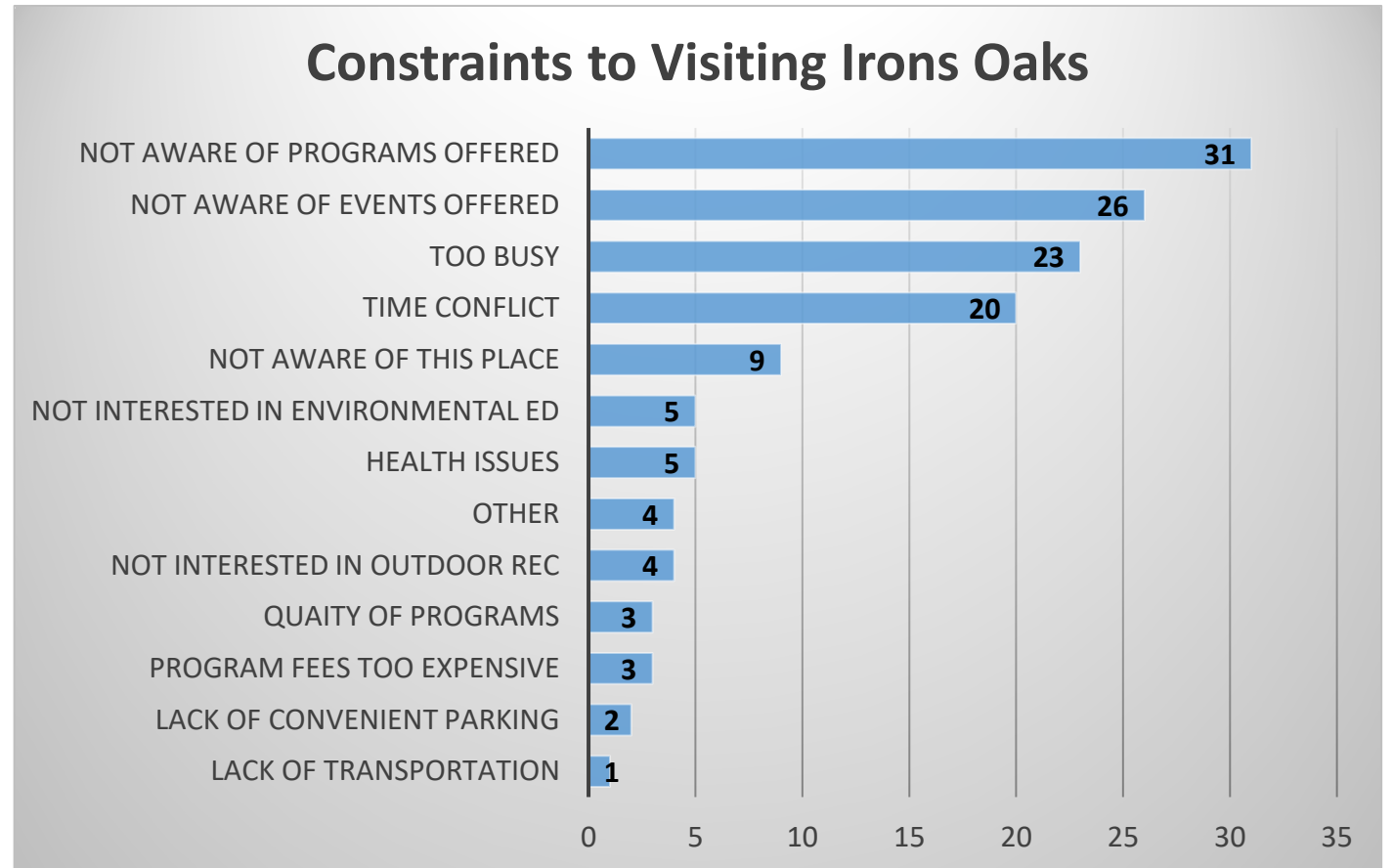
Awareness is relatively high among this sample



# Constraints to Visiting Irons Oaks ELC

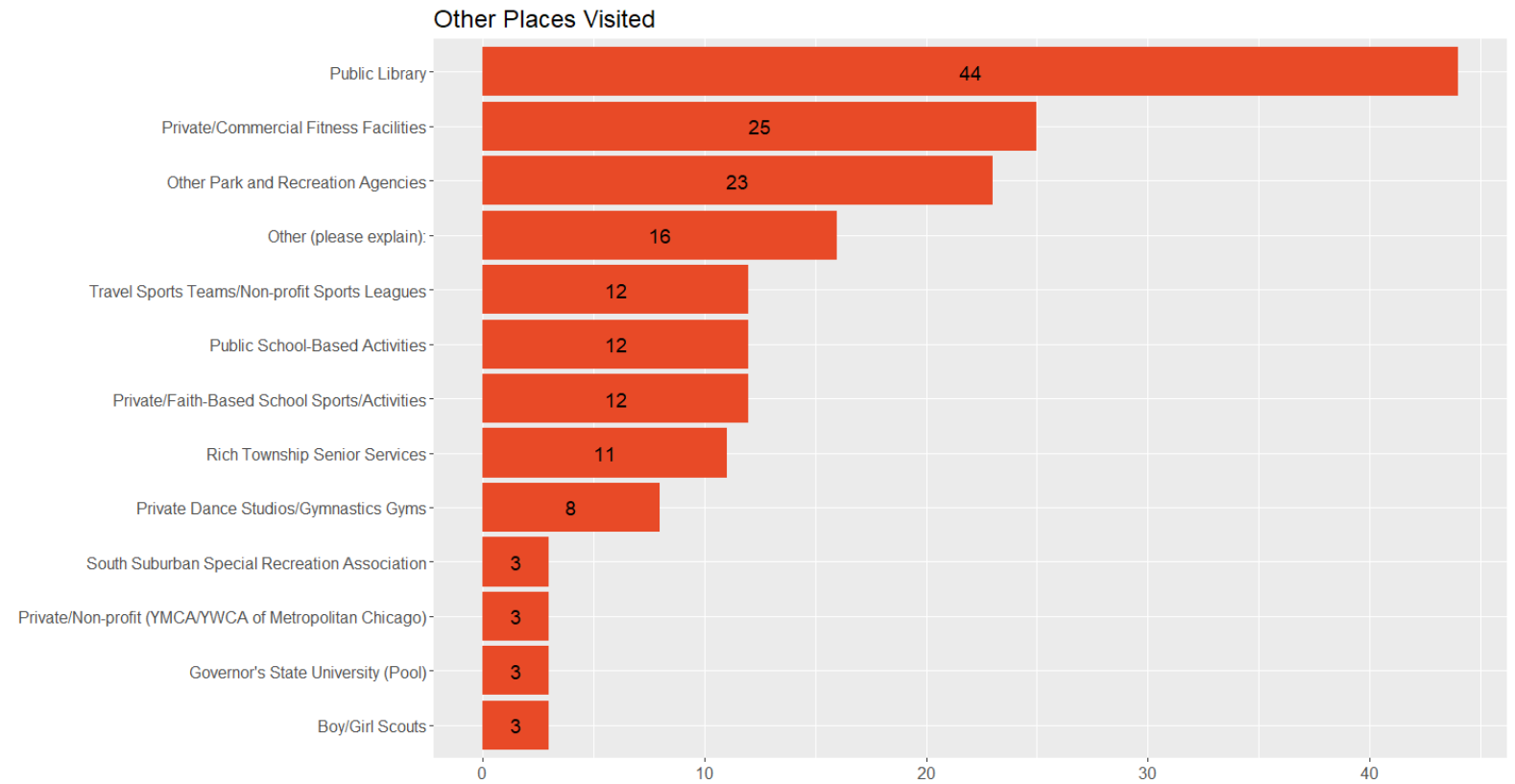
The most commonly reported  
Constraint to visiting Irons Oaks  
is:

- Unaware of programs (n=31)
- Not aware of events (n=26)
- Too busy (n=23)
- Time conflict (n=20)
- Not aware of this place (n=9)



# Other Recreation Sites Visited

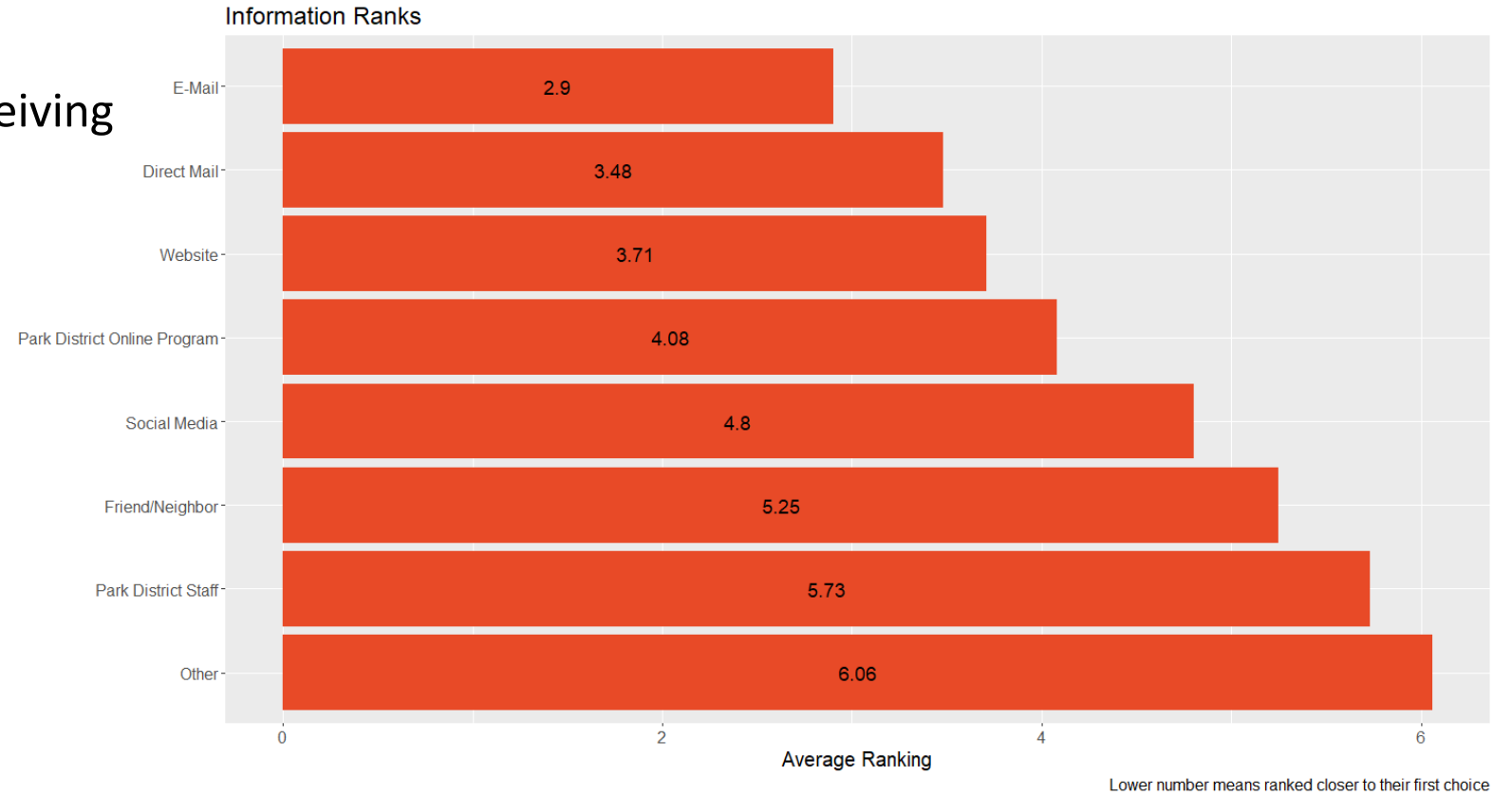
- The Public Library was most frequently visited (n=44)
- Private/commercial fitness facilities (n=25)
- Other park and recreation agencies (n=23)
- Other answers included: Matteson Community Center, Homewood-Flossmor Park District, and private horseback riding



# Preferences for Receiving Information about the Park District

The most preferred method of receiving Information is:

- Email
- Direct Mail
- Website
- Park District Online Program
- Social Media



# Strengths of the Park District

---

- Almost 80% of respondents agreed that parks and recreation is important to the quality of life in Olympia Fields and that parks and recreation enhances the sense of community
- Most parks and facilities were rated favorably for condition, upkeep and cleanliness
- Two-thirds agreed that programs are a good value



# Strengths of the Park District

---

- Special events are highly rated and well attended by respondents
- All programs were rated favorably, indicating this is an area the park district excels. In particular, respondents highly rated:
  - Summer Day Camp
  - Fitness Programs (i.e., chair aerobics, Zumba, Jammin' with Janelle)
  - Jujitsu
- The Bradford Barn and Picnic Areas are the most popular facilities for rentals within the OFPD

# Capital Project Importance & Rankings: Future Initiatives

---

The park district should consider prioritizing the following capital projects:

- Add amenities along existing trail corridors (e.g., benches, water fountains)
  - Trails of Olympia were rated lower and some respondents indicated trails need maintenance (e.g., re-paving, tree trimming)
- More parking at parks
- More indoor space for recreation programs
- Enhance safe routes to parks by bicycle or walking
- Renovate the Cull House for programs
  - This is relatively untapped space for programming

# Recommendations

---

- **Active Adult/Senior Programs:** Consider adding:
  - Fitness Programs: Moderately high interest in more health and fitness programs
    - 50% or more are interested in:
      - Fit and Strong (strength, flexibility and walking program)
      - Wits Workout (wellness program focused on 6 factors that affect brain health)
      - Walk with Ease (arthritis management program focused on walking and nutrition)
      - Outdoor recreation and education programs

# Recommendations

---

- **Youth Programs:** Consider adding:
  - STEAM Programs
  - Hobby Programs
  - Music Activities
  - Challenge Course Activities

**Utilizing Irons Oaks More for Youth Programs:** Utilize Irons Oaks for outdoor adventure programming such:

- Introduction to climbing
- Challenge course program
- Introduction to snow shoeing
- Nature education and outdoor skills
- Bring STEAM and hobby programs to Irons Oaks (space permitting)

# Recommendations: Irons Oaks Awareness

---

- Most respondents are familiar with Irons Oaks
  - Many have not visited themselves
- **Recommendation:**
  - Increase programming at Irons Oaks year round
    - Hobby / special interest
    - Fitness and wellness
    - Outdoor recreation and education
  - Increase the presence of Irons Oaks on OFPD Website
  - Make the link to Irons Oaks easier to find on the website



# Recommendations

---

- Marketing:
  - 47% disagree that OFPD has effective marketing
  - Redesign the park district website
    - Some information is outdated
    - Difficult to find the seasonal program brochure online (for viewing and downloading)
    - Organization and user-friendliness of the website could be improved
    - Continue to grow social media activity and increase your presence on Instagram