



ARAPAHOE COUNTY
OPEN SPACES

MASTER PLAN

ARAPAHOE COUNTY OPEN SPACES

2020 Master Plan Survey

Report of Results

September 2020

 **National Research Center**

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Executive Summary

Survey Background

More than a decade ago, Arapahoe County voters approved funding to create a new Open Spaces Program to acquire, develop and manage open spaces, regional parks, and trails for the use and enjoyment of citizens for generations to come. Now the County is crafting a vision for the future of the open spaces program. As a part of the Master Plan effort, a survey of residents was conducted.

Two data collection efforts were undertaken as a part of the survey project. The first, and main, effort was a mailed statistically valid survey, using survey research best practices and meant to represent the opinions of the adult population living in Arapahoe County. The statistically valid survey was administered by mail to 2,000 randomly selected households within Arapahoe County in June and July of 2020. Each survey recipient was contacted by mail a total of three times starting in March 2019. A total of 330 completed surveys were returned from the estimated 1,933 households that received a survey, for a response rate of 17%, which is considered a successful rate for surveys. Typical response rates for a survey of this type are between 12% and 25%. With 330 responses, the 95% confidence interval is plus or minus 5.4 percentage points. Survey results were weighted so that age, gender, tenure (rent versus own), housing unit type (detached versus attached) and area of residence (Commissioner District) were represented in the proportions reflective of the entire community.

After the mailed survey had been fielded, an online survey was made available to which anyone could respond. This open participation survey was widely publicized by Arapahoe County and received 931 responses. As the mailed statistically valid survey is believed to best represent the view of Arapahoe County residents, this executive summary focuses on these statistically valid results.

Survey Highlights

Support was strong for extending the Dedicated Open Space Sales Tax.

- ◆ Three-quarters or more of respondents said they would support or strongly support extension of the sales tax in all three of the scenarios presented to them on the survey (10 year expiration, 20-30 expiration or no expiration).
- ◆ Nearly three-quarters of those participating in the survey had not been aware before taking the survey that 50% of the Open Space Sales and Use Tax is distributed back to the 12 cities and towns that make-up Arapahoe County, to support local parks and trails projects. Only about 1 in 10 were certain they had known this before, and 18% said they had an idea it might be so.
- ◆ Support for extension of the sales tax was actually strongest among those who had not been aware that 50% of the tax revenue was distributed to towns and cities in Arapahoe County; 80% or more of these respondents would support any of the sales tax extension scenarios. Support was lowest among those who had an idea about the

distribution but weren't sure of it, but 50% or more of these respondents would still support extension of the sales tax. Among those who did know about the distribution, three-quarters or more would support any of the sales tax extension scenarios.

- ◆ In general, support for the extension of the sales tax did not vary by frequency with which respondents reported having visited open spaces, parks or trails, with one exception: among those who had not visited at all in the previous year, support dropped if the duration of the extension was extended past 10 years. However, about half of these respondents still supported the sales tax extension even if it did not expire at all.

Residents strongly supported preserving additional open space, developing regional trails and improving existing facilities over supporting more diverse types of recreation activities.

- ◆ Survey respondents were presented with a number of activities in which Arapahoe County open spaces, parks and trails could engage, and asked whether they agreed or disagreed that the program should be involved in each. Two-thirds or more of respondents agreed that the County should undertake each of the activities which were presented on the survey. However, three activities received near universal approval with more than 9 in 10 respondents agreeing they should be pursued: 1) preserving additional open space land, 2) continuing to develop regional trail systems and 3) improving existing parks, trails and open spaces.
- ◆ These priorities align with what most respondents reported that they like to do in Arapahoe County open spaces, parks and trails: 67% use the open spaces to enjoy nature and wildlife, 62% use the walking and hiking trails, 56% spend time with family and/or friends, and 41% relax/contemplate/meditate.
- ◆ Two-thirds of respondents were open to the County at least looking at supporting more diverse types of recreation activities such as OHV use, but this was the item garnering the most disagreement (32%). A majority of respondents from Districts 1, 3, 4 and 5 agreed that Arapahoe County should look at supporting more diverse types of recreation activities such as OHV use, but less than half of respondents from District 2 agreed with this idea.

When allocating hypothetical dollars among competing needs within Arapahoe County's open spaces, parks and trails, residents assigned the most dollars to maintaining and improving the condition of existing resources.

- ◆ To assess how residents would prioritize competing needs and programs within Arapahoe County's open spaces, parks and trails, they were presented with a hypothetical budgeting scenario. They were given \$100 to spend and asked to allocate it across 5 activities. On average, the amount assigned to each activity was:
 - Maintaining and improving the condition of current open spaces, parks and trails, \$29.17
 - Reducing negative impacts to the natural environment to protect and restore wildlife habitat, sensitive ecosystems, and riparian corridors, \$25.49
 - Providing more trails and more parks with recreation opportunities and developed amenities (playgrounds, athletic fields, etc.), \$19.64

- Preserving working farms and ranches (with limited or no public access), \$13.10
- Providing education, outreach and volunteer programs for all residents, including engaging and serving diverse communities, \$12.60

Protecting waterways and preserving & protecting wildlife were the reasons for acquiring and protecting available land as permanent open space that most resonated with residents.

- ◆ When asked how important it was to them that available land and related resources be acquired and protected as permanent open space for a variety of reasons, all the potential reasons were considered absolutely essential or very important by over half of respondents.
- ◆ However, 6 in 10 felt it was absolutely essential to acquire and preserve land to protect waterways or to preserve and protect wildlife, and over 90% felt these were absolutely essential or very important reasons to do so.
- ◆ Least important to respondents was using open space as a tool for directing development, either in directing energy development or shaping sprawl.
- ◆ Protecting waterways was a top priority in all five districts. Preserving water rights was a primary concern in Districts 1, 4 and 5. In fact, in District 5, the two highest priorities were related to water. Residents in Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4 considered it essential to preserve and protect wildlife and habitats.

Respondents gave high marks to the job being performed by Arapahoe County Open Spaces.

- ◆ When asked if they agreed that Arapahoe County does a good job of providing opportunities to enjoy nature, 95% strongly agreed or agreed.
- ◆ A majority of respondents gave positive ratings to the facilities managed by Arapahoe County open spaces, parks and trails. Five of the items evaluated were rated as excellent or good by about 9 in 10 respondents; these included historic sites, smaller neighborhood parks, trail conditions, 17 Mile House and playgrounds. Restrooms garnered the lowest ratings, but were still viewed positively by half of respondents.

About three quarters of residents had visited Arapahoe County parks, open spaces or trails at least once in the past 12 months.

- ◆ About one-quarter of survey respondents reported that they had never visited Arapahoe County parks, open spaces or trails in the past 12 months, while 20% had only visited between one to three times. About 3 in 10 respondents visited at least weekly.
- ◆ Only 9% of visitors reported having had an unpleasant experience.

Both resident awareness of the program/ offerings and access to parks and trails could be improved.

- ◆ While about half of respondents responded that nothing prevents them from visiting Arapahoe County parks, open spaces or trails more often, the top obstacles or barriers the County could address are respondents not knowing where to go, COVID-19 concerns, health or mobility issues, and no parks or open space of interest are close by them.

- ◆ As noted earlier, three-quarters of those participating in the survey had not been aware before taking the survey that 50% of the Open Space Sales and Use Tax is distributed back to the 12 cities and towns that make-up Arapahoe County, to support local parks and trails projects.

In general, however, appreciation for open spaces was high among those who reported visiting them and those who visited less frequently or not at all.

- ◆ Nearly 9 in 10 respondents (87%) who had not visited open spaces in the last year agreed that Arapahoe County does a good job of providing opportunities to enjoy nature, compared to near universal approval among those who had visited at least once (96% to 97%).
- ◆ Those who had not visited open spaces in the last year were as likely as those who had to agree that additional open space land should be preserved in Arapahoe County and that regional trail systems should continue to be developed.
- ◆ One difference between the users and non-users stood out, however; the non-users gave lower marks to the quality of some of the facilities managed by Open Spaces, in particular to the trail conditions, restrooms, maps and signage, playgrounds, 17 Mile House, the Fairgrounds Event Center and historic sites.

Some differences were observed between the mailed statistically valid survey and the open participation survey.

- ◆ The open participation survey respondents were more likely to have visited an Arapahoe County park, open space or trail at least once in the past 12 months (90% had done so) than were the mailed statistically valid survey respondents (73%).
- ◆ Open participation survey respondents were more likely to say they like to enjoy nature and wildlife or to use the walking and hiking trails in Arapahoe County parks and open spaces but were less likely to say they like to spend time with family and/or friends compared to the mailed statistically valid survey respondents.
- ◆ The mailed statistically valid survey respondents gave somewhat more positive ratings to the playgrounds, small neighborhood parks, 17 Mile House and to historic sites than did the open participation respondents.
- ◆ On average, open participation survey respondents allocated more dollars to providing more trails and more parks with developed amenities (\$22.58 out of \$100) than did the mailed statistically valid survey respondents (\$19.64). The mailed statistically valid survey respondents allocated more dollars on average to maintaining and improving the condition of current open spaces, parks and trails (\$29.17) compared to the open participation survey respondents (\$25.58).
- ◆ Three-quarters or more of respondents from each survey supported extending the dedicated Open Spaces Sales Tax in each of the three scenarios (expiring in 10 years, 20-30 years or no expiration), and differences in responses were not statistically significant.

Survey Background

Survey Purpose

More than a decade ago, Arapahoe County voters approved funding to create a new Open Spaces Program to acquire, develop and manage open spaces, regional parks, and trails for the use and enjoyment of citizens for generations to come. Now the County is crafting a vision for the future of the open spaces program. As a part of the Master Plan effort, a survey of residents was conducted.

Two data collection efforts were undertaken as a part of the survey project. The first, and main, effort was a **mailed statistically valid survey**, using survey research best practices and meant to represent the opinions of the adult population living in Arapahoe County. After the mailed survey had been fielded, an online survey was made available to which anyone could respond. This **open participation survey** was widely publicized by Arapahoe County.

Survey Administration

The statistically valid survey was administered by mail to 2,000 randomly selected households within Arapahoe County in June and July of 2020. Each survey recipient was contacted by mail a total of three times starting in March 2019. Mailing materials utilized the Arapahoe County logo and were branded as being from the County. The first mailing was a prenotification postcard announcing the upcoming survey, with an English and Spanish message. A few days later, the first survey packet was mailed. This packet included the questionnaire with a cover letter and a postage-paid return envelope. The letter, background materials and survey were in English, but the cover letter also included a web address so that the survey could be taken online by Spanish-speaking respondents, if the respondent preferred. They were also provided a telephone number they could call to request that a hard copy of the survey be mailed to them. Several days later a second survey packet was mailed, with instructions to recycle the packet if they had already responded to the first survey. A copy of the survey materials can be found in *Appendix G: Survey Materials*. A total of 330 completed surveys were returned from the estimated 1,933 households that received a survey (about 3% of surveys were delivered to addresses that were vacant), for a response rate of 17%. Typical response rates for a survey of this type are between 12% and 25%. With 330 responses, the 95% confidence interval is plus or minus 5.4 percentage points. Survey results were weighted so that age, gender, tenure (rent versus own), housing unit type (detached versus attached) and area of residence (Commissioner District) were represented in the proportions reflective of the entire community. More information about the survey methodology can be found in *Appendix F: Survey Methodology*.

Survey Report

Graphs and tables are used to summarize results in the body of this report, while a full set of frequencies for all response options to all questions appear in *Appendix A: Responses to Mailed Statistically Valid Survey*. Cross tabulations of survey results by respondent

characteristics can be found in *Appendix B: Selected Statistically Valid Survey Results by Respondent Characteristics*. When a table or a chart for a question that only permitted a single response does not total to exactly 100%, it is due to the customary practice of rounding percentages to the nearest whole number. When the total exceeds 100% in a table for a question in which the respondent can choose more than one category, it is because some respondents are counted in multiple categories.

Open Participation Survey

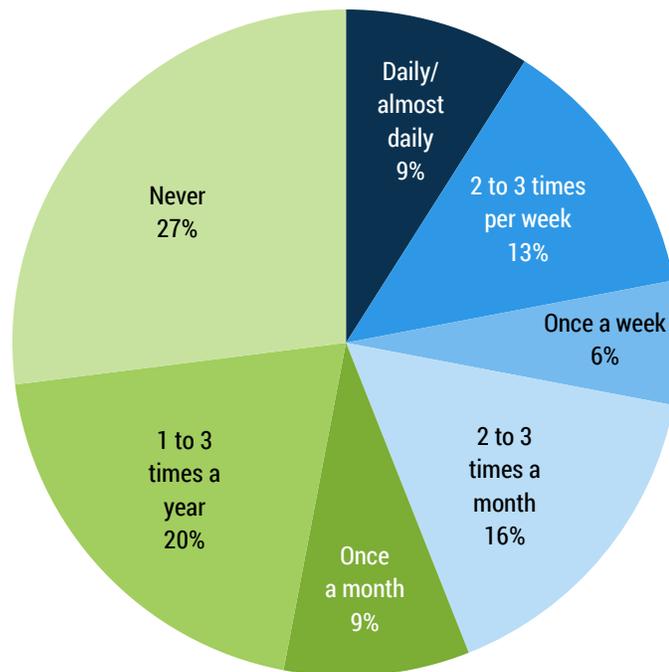
In addition to the statistically valid survey administered as described above, an open participation survey was made available and publicized by Arapahoe County. A total of 931 completed surveys were obtained; 14 in Spanish and 917 in English. A complete set of survey results for this survey effort can be found in *Appendix C: Responses to Open Participation Survey*. Comparisons of the mailed resident survey results to these other data collection efforts can be found in *Appendix E: Comparison of Survey Responses from Mailed Statistically Valid Resident and Open Participation Surveys*.

Report of Results

Visitation of Arapahoe County Parks, Open Spaces and/or Trails

About one-quarter of survey respondents reported that they had never visited Arapahoe County parks, open spaces or trails in the past 12 months, while 20% had only visited between one to three times. About 3 in 10 respondents visited at least weekly.

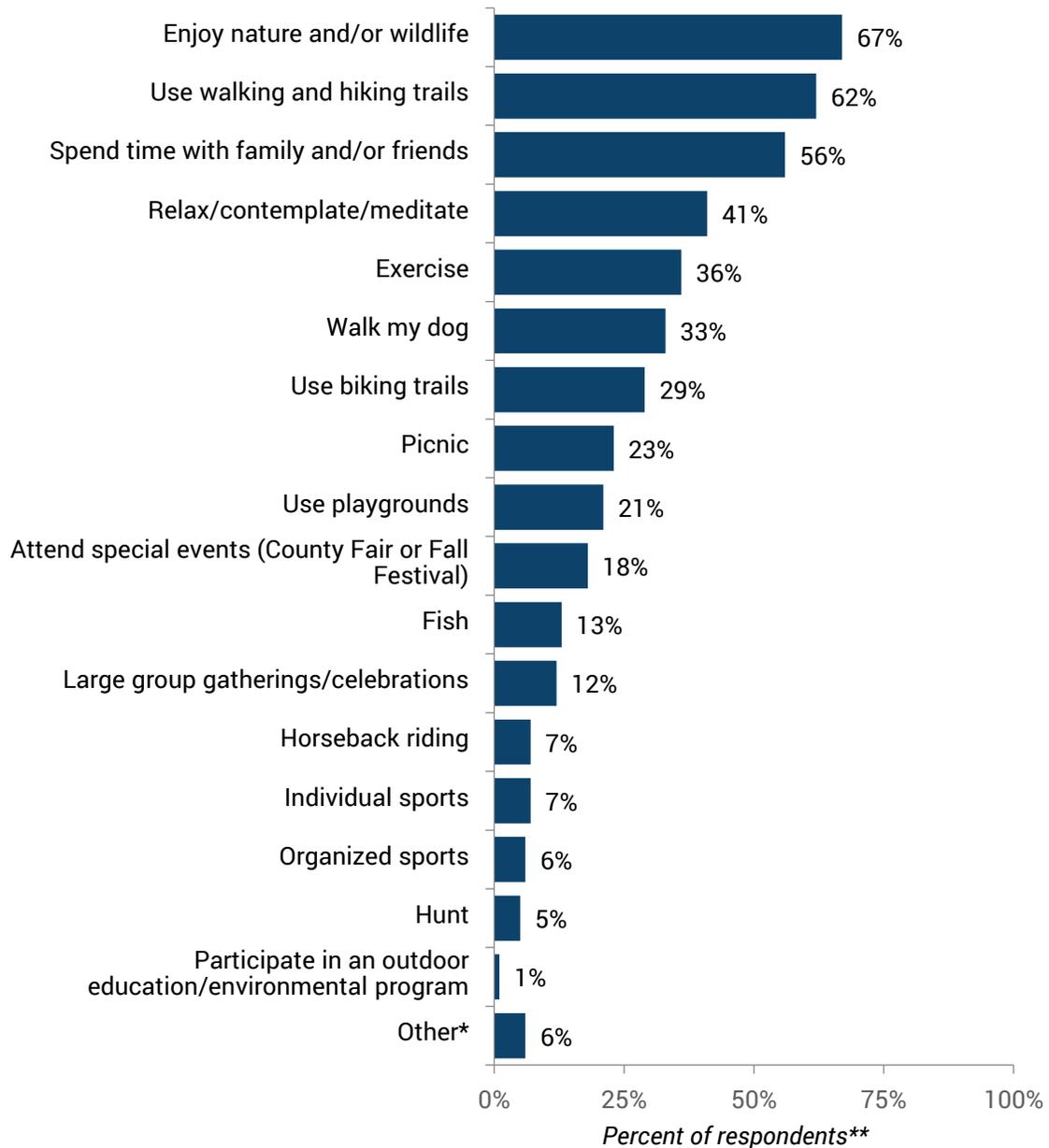
Figure 1: Frequency of Visitation of Arapahoe County Parks, Open Spaces and Trails
 On average, how often did you visit Arapahoe County parks, open spaces and/or trails in the past 12 months?



Respondents who lived in Districts 1, 3 and 5 were less likely to have visited Arapahoe County parks, open spaces and/or trails in the past 12 months than were those from Districts 2 and 4, but in District 5, those who did visit were very frequent visitors, with many visiting once a week or more (see Table 32 in *Appendix B: Selected Statistically Valid Survey Results by Respondent Characteristics*).

The most common activities in which visitors liked to participate in Arapahoe County’s parks, open spaces and trails were enjoying nature or wildlife, using the walking and hiking trails or spending time with family or friends; each of these was chosen as an appreciated activity by more than half of respondents who had visited these areas (see Figure 2 on the next page). About 4 in 10 visitors reported liking to use the open spaces for relaxation, contemplation or meditation. About one-third said they enjoy exercising, one-third took pleasure in walking their dogs and about 3 in 10 liked to use the biking trails.

Figure 2: Activities in Which Open Spaces Visitors Like to Engage
 What do you like to do in Arapahoe County parks and/or open spaces? (Select top five)



* Those who responded "other" could specify their activity in their own words. These responses can be found in Verbatim Responses to Survey Questions from Mailed Statistically Valid Survey in Appendix A: Responses to Mailed Statistically Valid Survey **Percentages add to more than 100% as respondents could chose up to five activities.

About 8 in 10 survey respondents who had visited Arapahoe County parks, open spaces or trails within the previous year said they usually visit the same two or three areas, while 2 in 10 said they usually visit several different areas (see Figure 3). About 1 in 10 respondents said they had suffered an unpleasant experience during a visit, while 9 in 10 had not (see Figure 4 at the bottom of the page).

Figure 3: Where Visitors Use Arapahoe County Parks, Open Spaces or Trails

Over the past year, did you usually visit the same two or three open spaces, parks or trails OR do you visit several areas? (Question only asked of those who had visited Arapahoe County parks, open spaces or trails at least once in last 12 months)

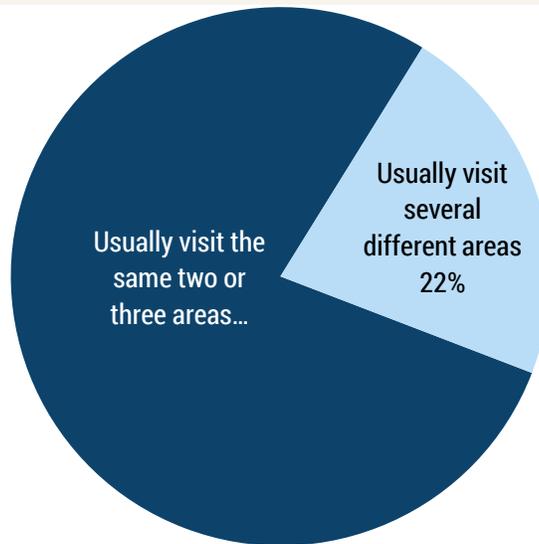
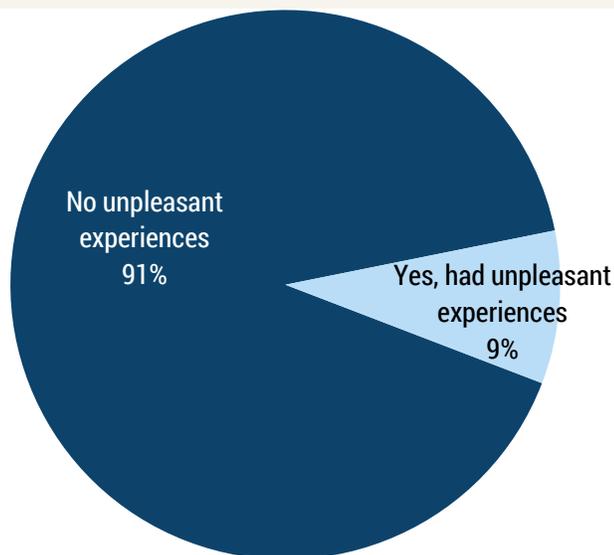


Figure 4: Whether Visitors Have Had Any Unpleasant Experiences

In the past year, did you have any unpleasant experiences in any of Arapahoe County's open spaces, parks or trails? (Question only asked of those who had visited Arapahoe County parks, open spaces or trails at least once in last 12 months)



Barriers to Visitation

When asked what prevents them from visiting Arapahoe County parks, open spaces or trails more often, about half of respondents said they did not experience any obstacles or barriers (see Figure 5 on the next page).

At the time of the survey, which was conducted during the coronavirus pandemic, nearly 2 in 10 respondents mentioned that concerns about COVID-19 was preventing them from visiting more often.

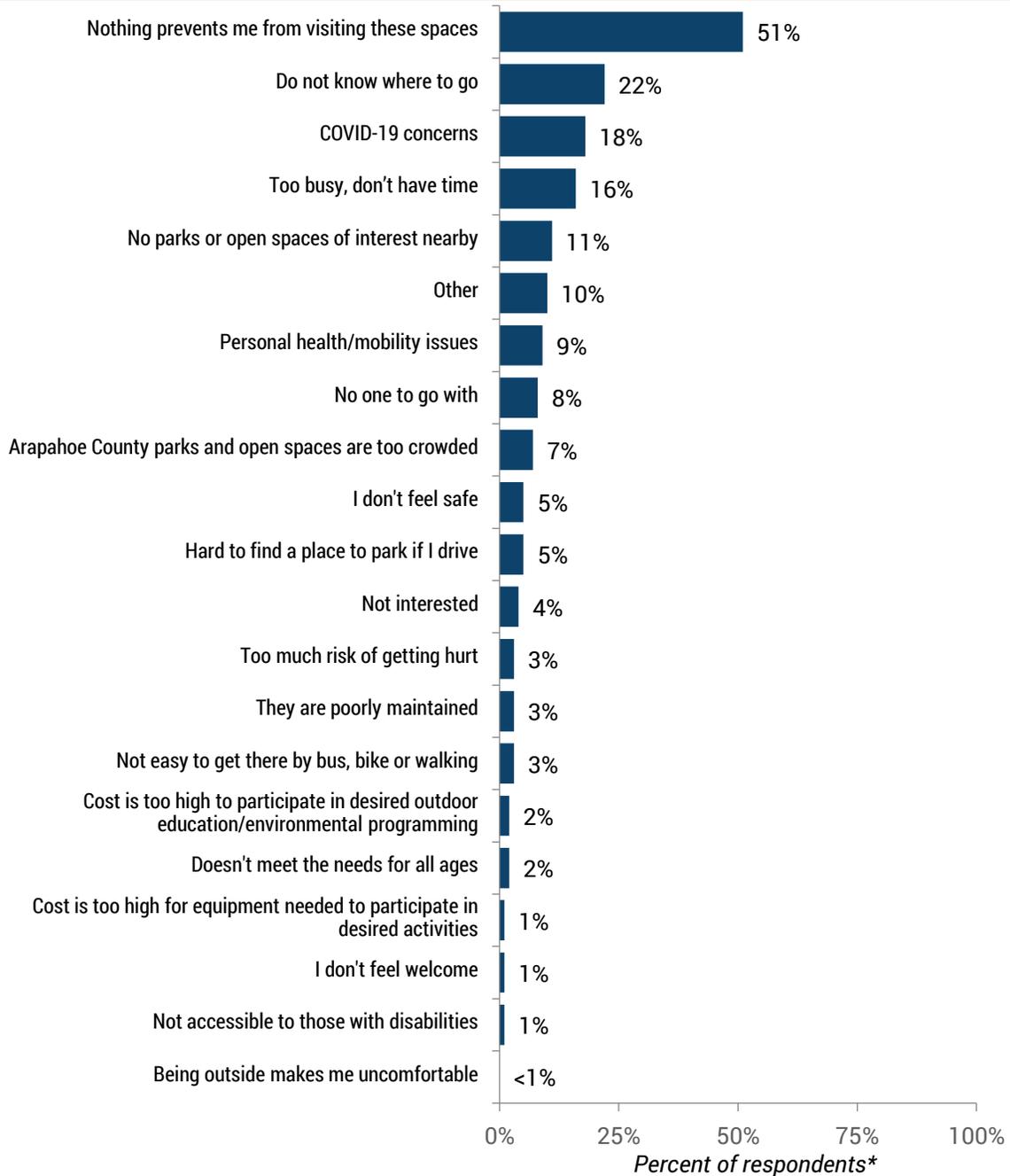
About 2 in 10 respondents said they did not know where to go, and nearly 2 in 10 (16%) said they were too busy to visit. For about 1 in 10 respondents, personal health or mobility issues prevented them from taking advantage of Arapahoe County parks, open spaces or trails. About 1 in 10 respondents said there was not a park or open space of interest close by to them.

About 7% indicated crowding or congestion as a reason they did not use these areas more. About 5% said they did not feel safe in the areas, and 3% felt there was too much risk of getting hurt. About 5% cited difficulties finding a place to park.

Very few mentioned cost, not feeling welcome or being uncomfortable outside as reasons they did not use Arapahoe County open spaces.

Figure 5: Barriers to Visiting OSMP Areas More Often

What prevents you from visiting Arapahoe County parks, open space and trails more often? (Select top three)



* Those who responded "other" could specify their reason in their own words. These responses can be found in Verbatim Responses to Survey Questions from Mailed Statistically Valid Survey in Appendix A: Responses to Mailed Statistically Valid Survey. Some of the reasons given included: Age/health reasons, Did not know about them/need more information, Conflicts with dogs, Heat/lack of shade, Homeless, Use own property or go to spaces managed by other entities, Crowded, Bugs, snakes, Too far from home, COVID-19/pandemic, Area I want to use is closed, Lack of hunting, Lack of horse trails, Fewer choices in eastern portion of county, Do not want the County to preserve open spaces/oppose the tax/Open Spaces not needed, Lack of OHV/ATV/UTV areas.

**Percentages add to more than 100% as respondents could indicate more than one reason.

Distance Willing to Travel To Various Types of Natural Areas or Outdoor Recreation

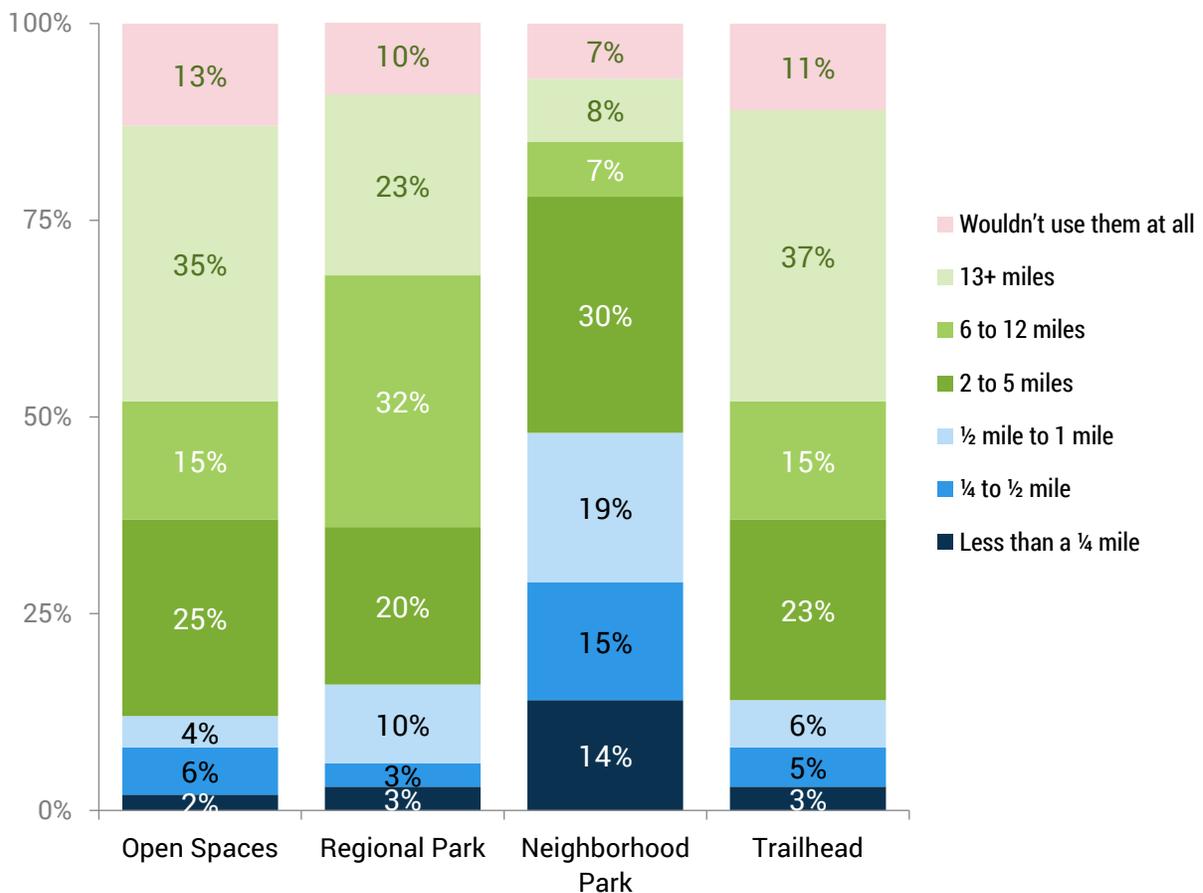
Those participating in the survey were asked how far they would be willing to travel to access four different types of natural areas or outdoor recreation. About 1 in 10 said they wouldn't use each at all (see Figure 6 below).

Residents were willing to travel further to open spaces, regional parks or trailheads than neighborhood parks, with about 5 in 10 saying they would be willing to travel up to 6 miles to access these types of amenities compared to less than 2 in 10 saying they would be willing to go that far for a neighborhood park.

About 5 in 10 respondents would not travel more than 1 mile to get to a neighborhood park.

Figure 6: Distance Willing to Travel to Various Types of Natural Areas or Outdoor Recreation

What is the furthest you and your household are willing to travel to access each of the following types of natural areas or outdoor recreation in Arapahoe County?



Quality of Arapahoe County Open Spaces, Parks and Trails Facilities

In general, survey respondents gave high marks to the facilities managed by Arapahoe County open spaces, parks and trails. Five of the items evaluated were rated as excellent or good by about 9 in 10 respondents: historic sites, smaller neighborhood parks, trail conditions, 17 Mile House and playgrounds (see Figure 7 on the next page).

The Fairgrounds Event Center and larger regional parks were given positive ratings by about 8 in 10 respondents, while the athletic fields at Dove Valley received high marks from about three-quarters of respondents.

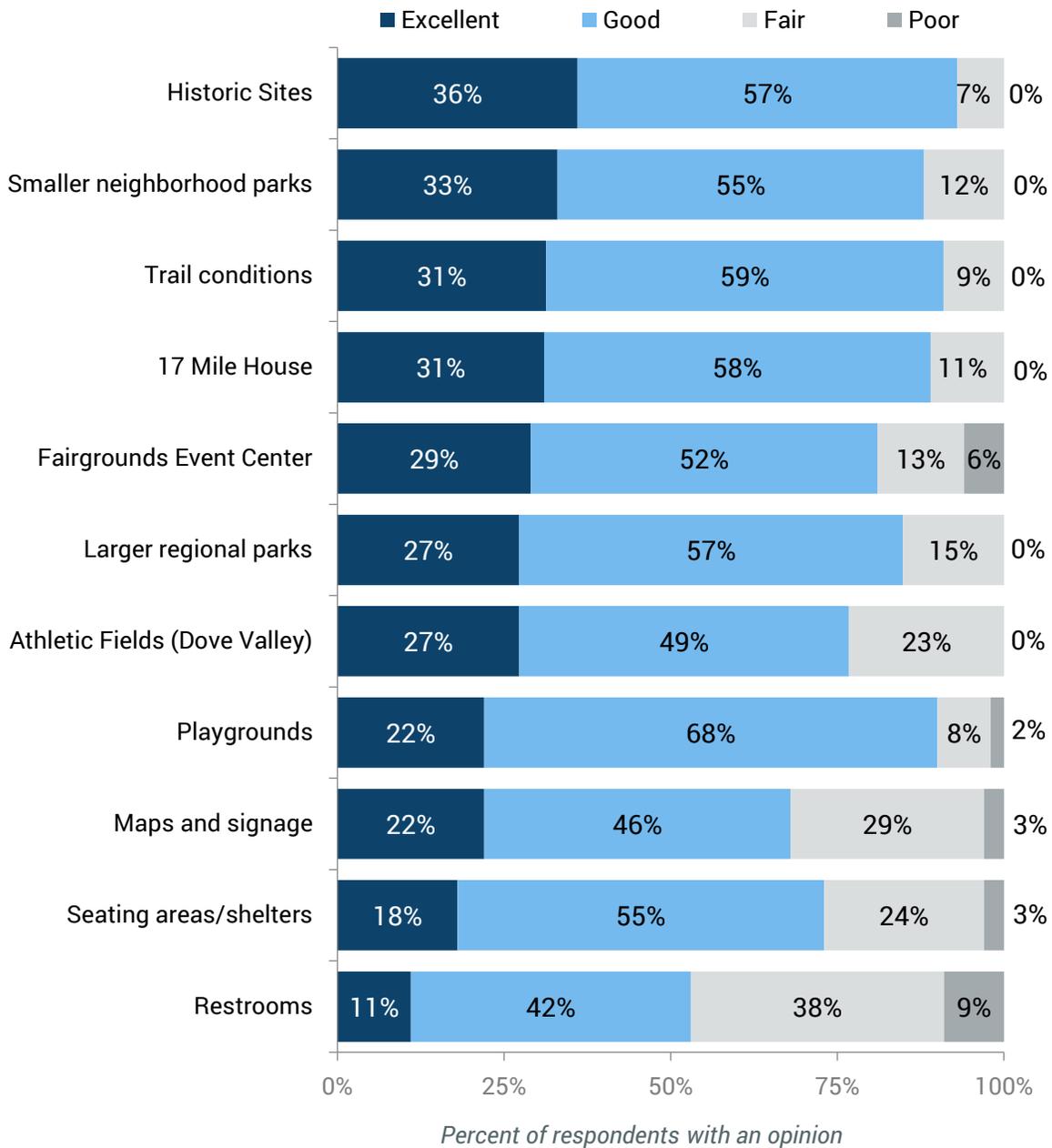
Map & signage and seating areas/shelters were considered excellent or good by about 7 in 10 respondents.

As might be expected, restrooms received the lowest ratings, but were still considered excellent or good by over half of those with an opinion.

Those who had not used open spaces in the last year gave lower marks to the quality of some of the facilities managed by Open Spaces, in particular to the trail conditions, restrooms, maps and signage, playgrounds, 17 Mile House, the Fairgrounds Event Center and historic sites (see Table 64 in *Appendix B: Selected Statistically Valid Survey Results by Respondent Characteristics*).

Figure 7: Quality of Arapahoe County Open Spaces, Parks and Trails Facilities

Please rate the quality of the following facilities managed by Arapahoe County open spaces, parks and trails.



Note: Between 30% and 79% answered “don’t know” to each of the facilities rated (see Table 8 in Appendix A: Responses to Mailed Statistically Valid Survey).

Priorities for Arapahoe County Open Spaces, Parks and Trails

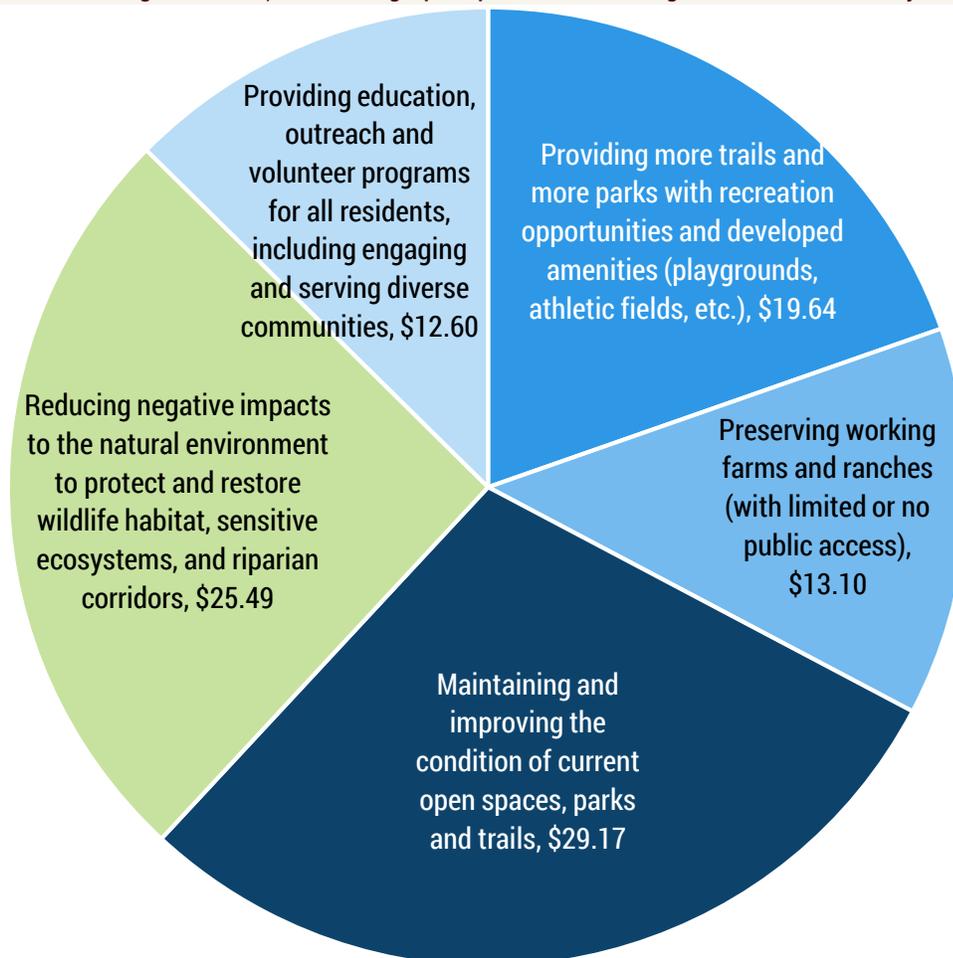
To assess how residents would prioritize competing needs and programs within Arapahoe County’s open spaces, parks and trails, they were presented with a hypothetical budgeting scenario. They were given \$100 to spend and asked to allocate it across five categories. Figure 8 on the next page shows the average amount apportioned by respondents to each of these categories.

The categories given the most funding by respondents was maintaining and improving the condition of current open spaces, parks and trails; nearly \$30 (\$29.17). About \$25 was distributed, on average, to reducing the negative impacts to the environment and restoring natural conditions.

Respondents allocated about \$20 on average to active recreation, with more trails and parks with recreation opportunities and developed amenities. Preservation of work farms and ranches and providing education & outreach were each assigned about \$13 by respondents.

Figure 8: Average Allocation of Dollars to Various Items

If it were up to you to develop the budget for Arapahoe County’s open spaces, parks and trails (and assuming each costs about the same), how would you allocate \$100 among each of the following options? (You can allocate all \$100 to one item or spread it among the items.) Dollars in graph represent the average amount allocated by respondents



Survey respondents were presented with a number of activities in which Arapahoe County open spaces, parks and trails could engage, and asked whether they agreed or disagreed that the program should be involved in each. As seen in Figure 9 on the next page, two-thirds or more agreed that the County should undertake each of the activities.

Three activities received near universal approval with more than 9 in 10 respondents agreeing they should be pursued: preserving additional open space land, continuing to develop regional trail systems and improving existing parks, trails and open spaces.

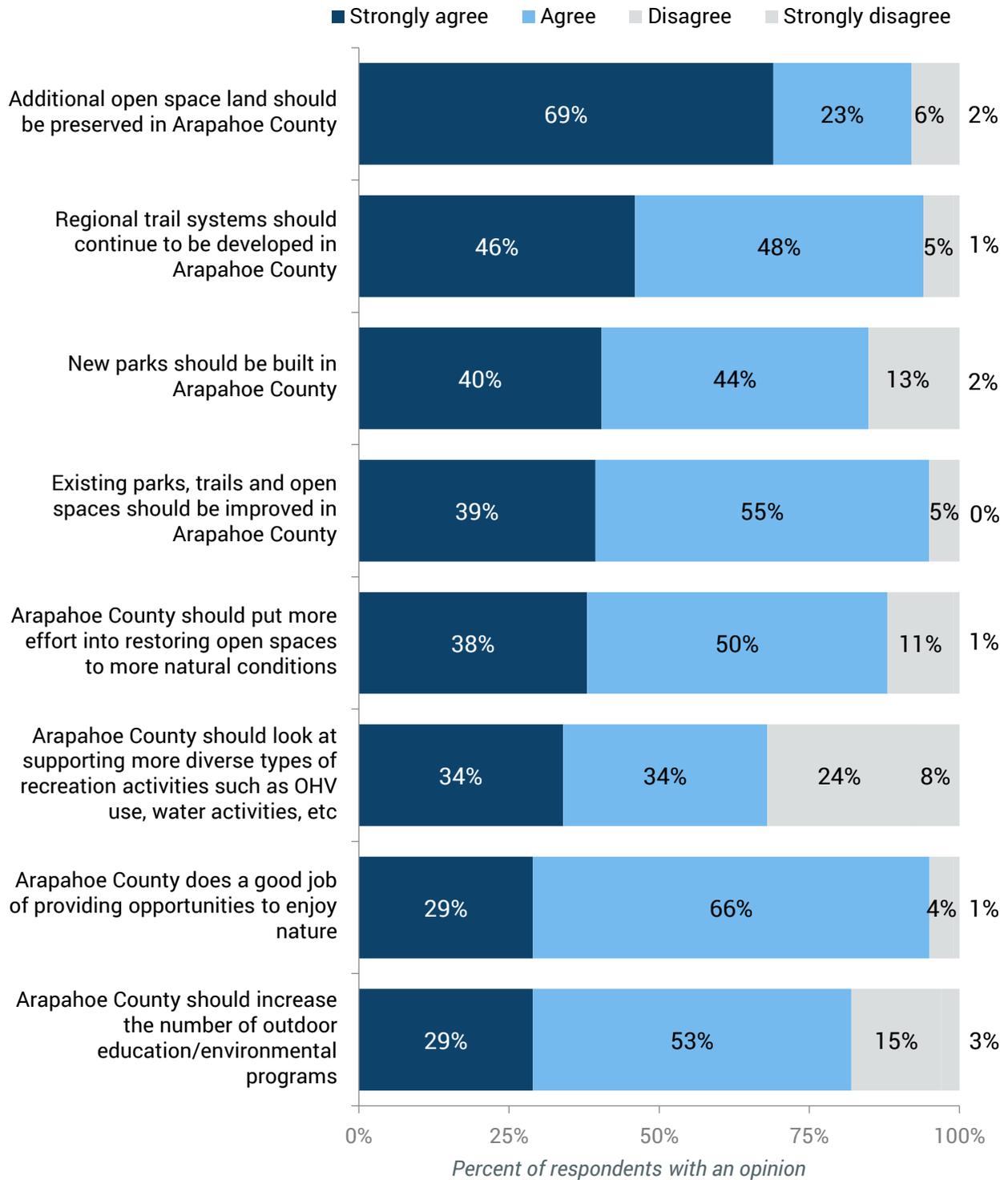
More than 8 in 10 of respondents agreed that new parks should be built, that more effort should be put to restoring open spaces to more natural conditions, and that outdoor education and environmental programs should be increased.

Two-thirds of respondents were open to the County at least looking at supporting more diverse types of recreation activities such as OHV use, water activities, etc., but this was the item garnering the most disagreement (32%). (It should be noted that between 14% and 31% of respondents answered “don’t know” to each of the items on this list, see Table 10 in *Appendix A: Responses to Mailed Statistically Valid Survey*.)

A majority of respondents from Districts 1, 3, 4 and 5 agreed that Arapahoe County should look at supporting more diverse types of recreation activities such as OHV use, but less than half of respondents from District 2 agreed with this idea (see Table 39 in *Appendix B: Selected Statistically Valid Survey Results by Respondent Characteristics*).

Figure 9: Priorities for Arapahoe County Open Spaces, Parks and Trails

How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?



When asked how important it was to them that available land and related resources be acquired and protected as permanent open space for a variety of reasons, all the potential reasons were considered absolutely essential or very important by over half of respondents (see Figure 11 on the next page).

Four reasons were considered absolutely essential by a majority of respondents and as absolutely essential or very important by over 80% of respondents. These included protecting waterways, preserving water rights for ecosystems and local agriculture, preserving and protecting wildlife and special habitats, and protecting and connecting high-quality wildlife habitats.

Slightly less important, but considered essential or very important by 70% or more of respondents was preserving scenic areas and views, preserving natural and agricultural lands, providing natural places for outdoor recreation, and supporting future trail connections.

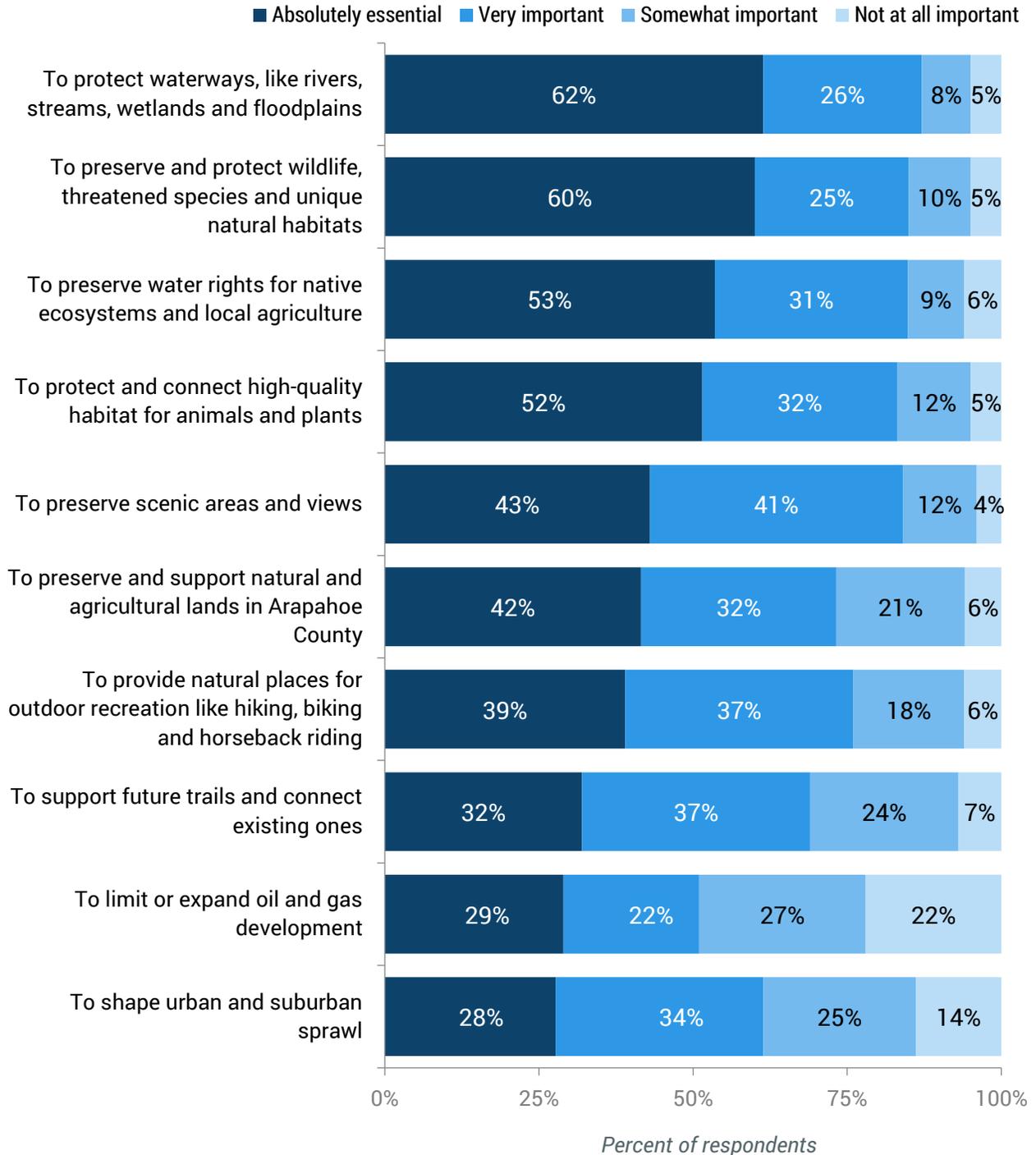
Least important was using open space as a tool for directing development, either in directing energy development or shaping sprawl.

The table below displays which reasons for acquiring and protecting land and related resources most resonated with respondents from each district. The number in parentheses is the proportion rating that reason as absolutely essential. Protecting waterways was a top priority in all five districts. Preserving water rights was a primary concern in Districts 1, 4 and 5. In fact, in District 5, the two highest priorities were related to water. Residents in Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4 considered it essential to preserve and protect wildlife and habitats.

Figure 10: Priorities for Acquiring and Preserving Land by Commissioner District

District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To preserve water rights for native ecosystems and local agriculture (60%) • To protect waterways, like rivers, streams, wetlands and floodplains (58%) • To protect and connect high-quality habitat for animals and plants (58%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To preserve and protect wildlife, threatened species and unique natural habitats (55%) • To protect waterways, like rivers, streams, wetlands and floodplains (50%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To preserve and protect wildlife, threatened species and unique natural habitats (65%) • To protect waterways, like rivers, streams, wetlands and floodplains (51%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To preserve and protect wildlife, threatened species and unique natural habitats (86%) • To protect waterways, like rivers, streams, wetlands and floodplains (76%) • To preserve water rights for native ecosystems and local agriculture (75%) • To protect and connect high-quality habitat for animals and plants (75%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To protect waterways, like rivers, streams, wetlands and floodplains (74%) • To preserve water rights for native ecosystems and local agriculture (60%)

Figure 11: Reasons for Acquiring and Protecting Available Land as Permanent Open Space
 How important to you, if at all, are each of the following reasons for acquiring and protecting available land and related resources as permanent open space?



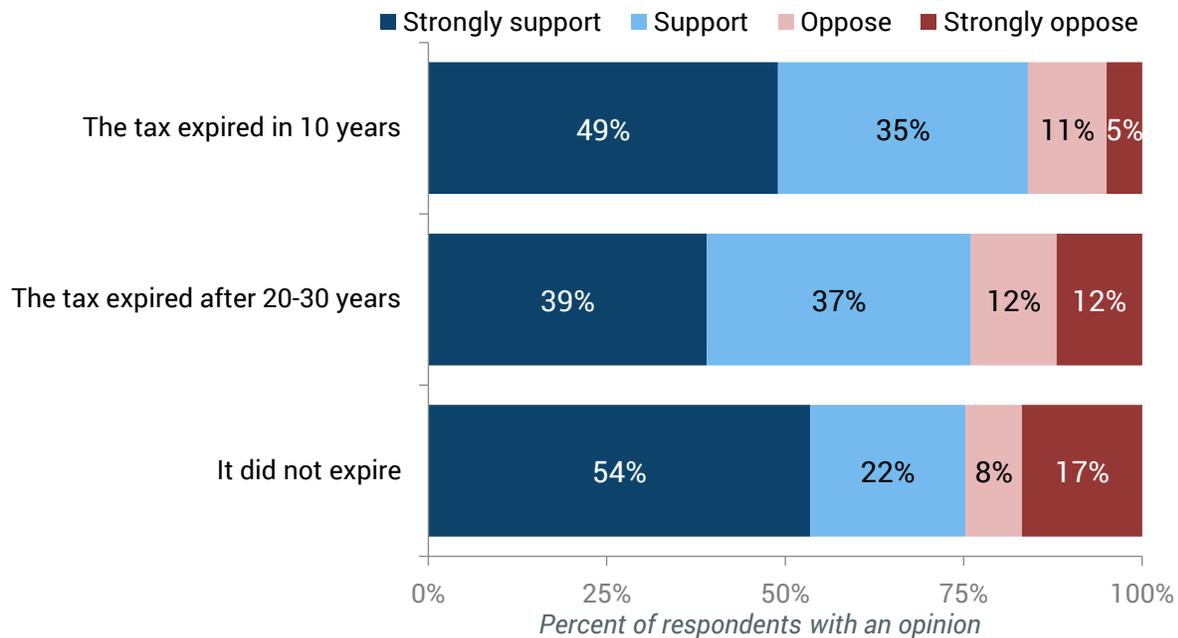
Arapahoe County Open Spaces Sales Tax

The Arapahoe County Open Spaces program began in November 2003 with passage of Question 1A: Water, Wildlife, Open Space, Trails and Neighborhood Park measure, which established a quarter of a penny in sales tax (for every dollar spent countywide on taxable sales) to fund the Program. This tax is due to expire in 2023, and voters will be asked if they want to extend it. Survey respondents were asked how much they would support or oppose extension of this sales tax. Three-quarters or more of respondents said they would support or strongly support extension of the sales tax in all three of the scenarios presented. The scenario garnering the most “strong” support was extending the sales tax with no expiration date; however, it had the lowest combined proportion of residents saying they would strongly support or support, but support still outweighed opposition, with 76% supporting and 25% opposing.

The option where the sales tax would expire in 10 years garnered the largest proportion of respondents saying they would strongly support or support the sales tax: 84%. The option where the tax expired in 20 to 30 years garnered support by 66% of respondents.

Figure 12: Support for or Opposition to Extending the Dedicated Open Spaces Sales Tax

For every \$100 spent in Arapahoe County, a 25-cent tax is collected to support the Open Space program. Since its inception, the program has built more than 73 miles of new trails, supported more than 160 park and trailhead projects, and conserved more than 31,000 acres of open space. The 0.025% dedicated Open Space Sales Tax will expire in 2023 and be on the ballot to be extended. How much would you support or oppose extending this dedicated Open Spaces Sales Tax in each situation below?

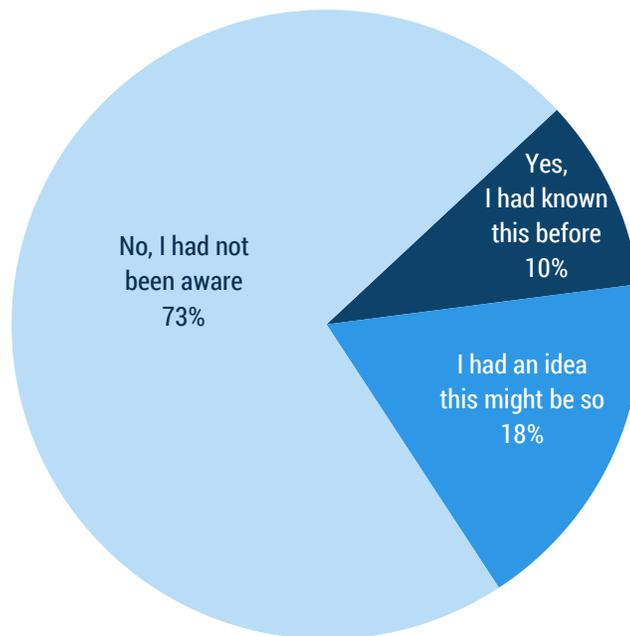


While well over half of respondents in every District (62% or more) strongly supported or supported extending the Open Space Sales Tax, support was especially strongly in Districts 4 and 5, where 86% or more supported extending the sales tax in each scenario (see Table 44 in *Appendix B: Selected Statistically Valid Survey Results by Respondent Characteristics*)

Nearly three-quarters of those participating in the survey had not been aware before taking the survey that 50% of the Open Space Sales and Use Tax is distributed back to the 12 cities and towns that make-up Arapahoe County, to support local parks and trails projects. Only about 1 in 10 were certain they had known this before, and 18% said they had an idea it might be so.

Figure 13: Awareness of Open Space Sales and Use Tax Distribution

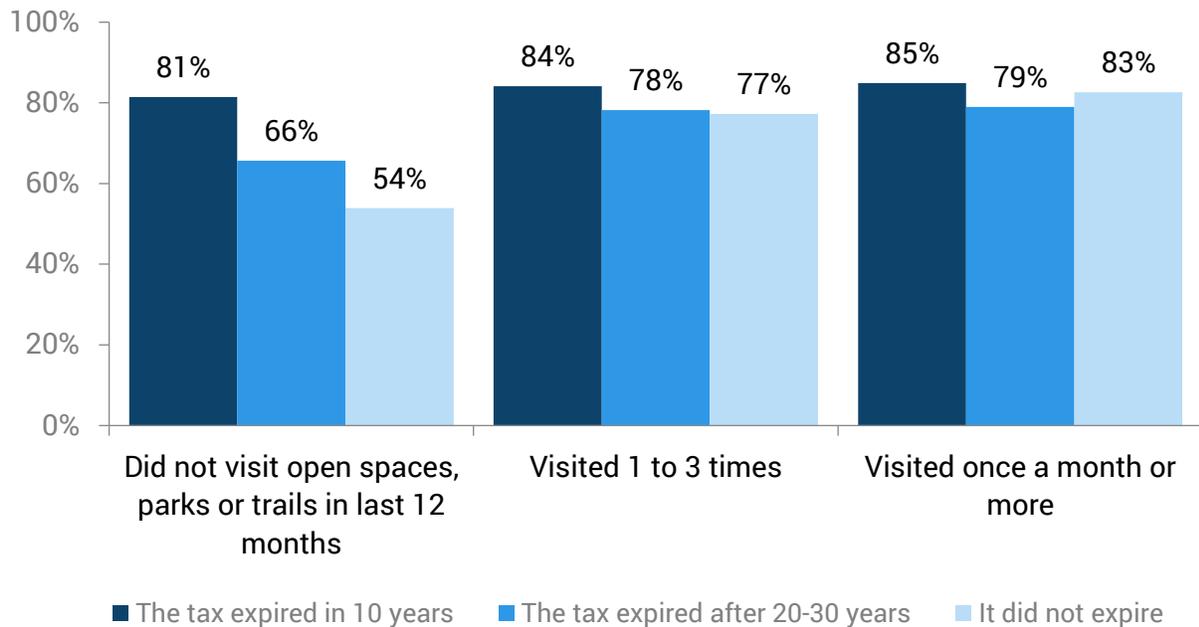
Before taking this survey, were you aware that fifty percent of the Open Space Sales and Use Tax is distributed back to the 12 cities and towns that make up Arapahoe County, to directly support local parks and trails projects?



In general, support for the extension of the sales tax did not vary by frequency with which respondents reported having visited open spaces, parks or trails, with one exception: among those who had not visited at all in the previous year, support dropped if the duration of the extension was extended past 10 years. However, about half of these respondents still supported the sales tax extension even if it did not expire at all.

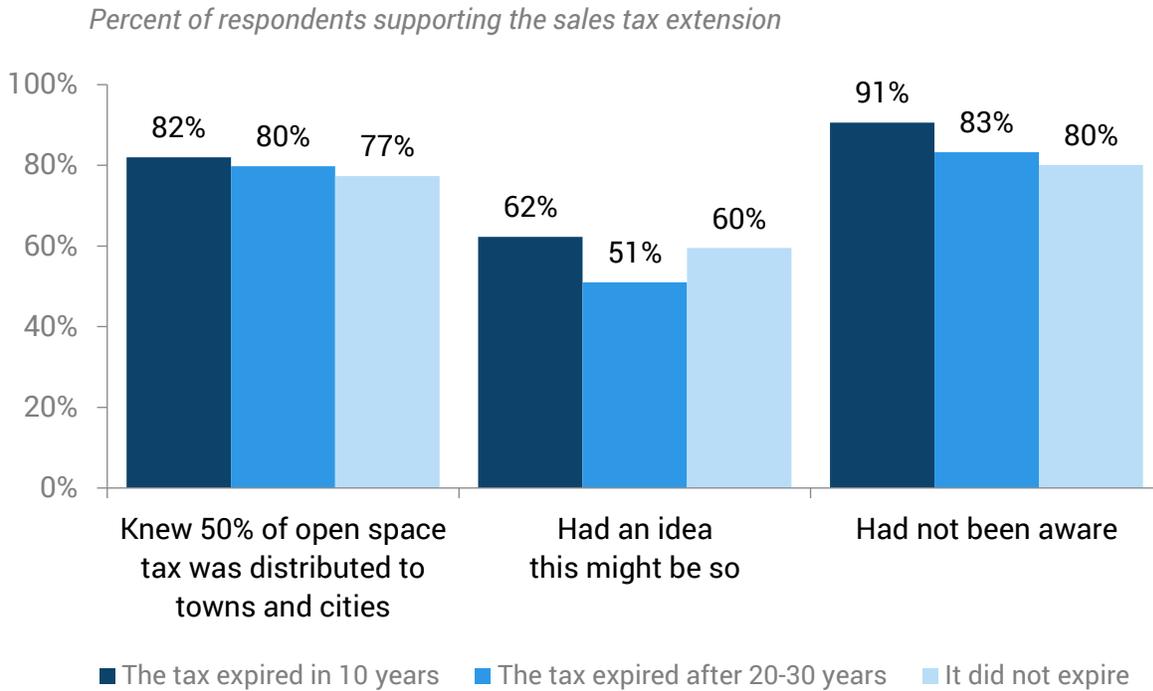
Figure 14: Support for Extending the Open Space Sales Tax by Use of Open Spaces

Percent of respondents supporting the sales tax extension



Support for extension of the sales tax was actually strongest among those who had not been aware that 50% of the tax revenue was distributed to towns and cities in Arapahoe County. Support was lowest among those who had an idea about the distribution but weren't sure of it.

Figure 15: Support for Extending the Open Space Sales Tax by Awareness of the Distribution of 50% of the Revenue to Towns and Cities



Arapahoe County Open Spaces Communications

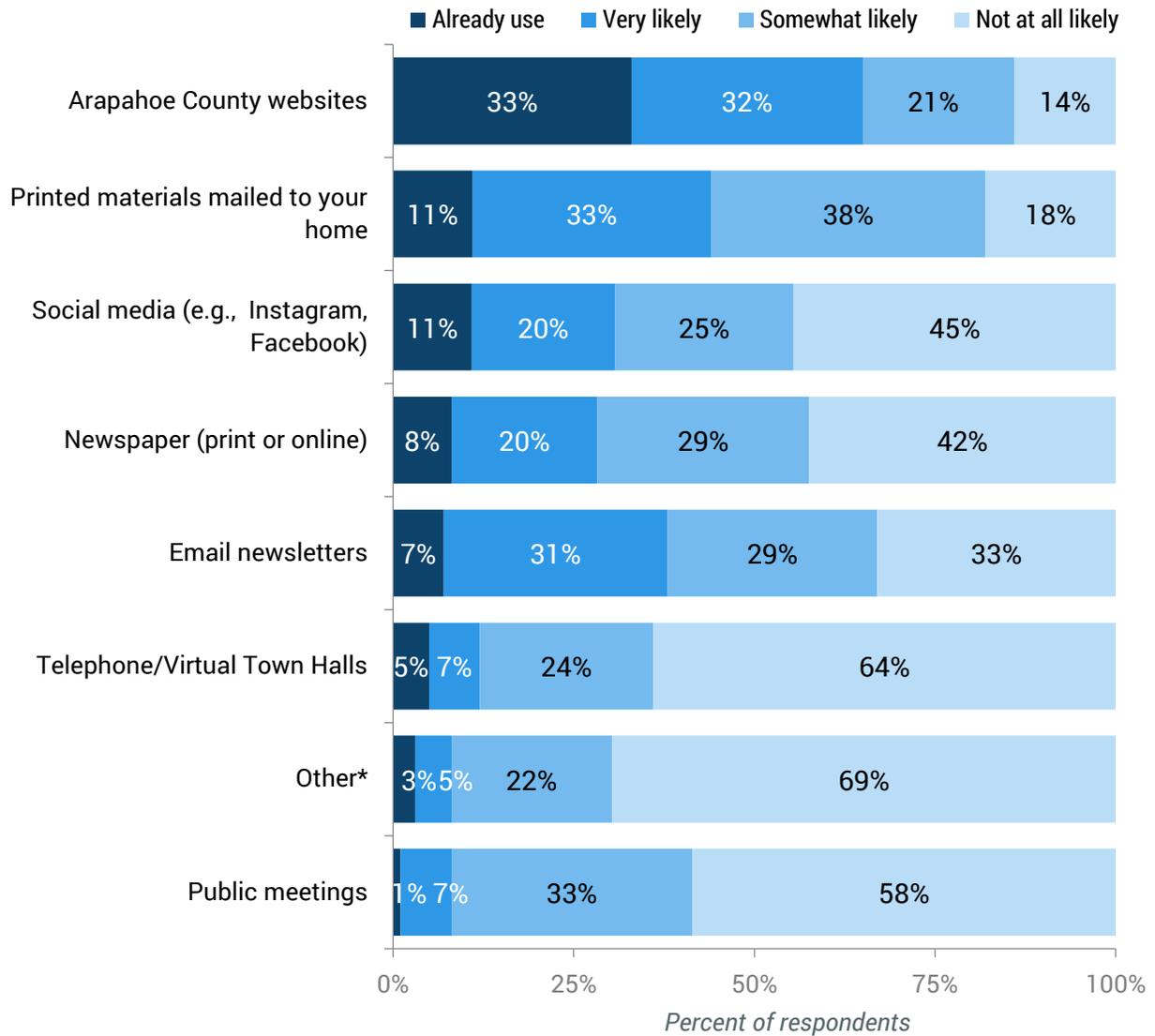
Those completing the survey were asked how likely, if at all, they were to use a variety of communications methods the County could employ to engage with the public about nature, recreation, agriculture, education, programming, volunteering opportunities and cultural resources. The most likely to be used or already be in use were the County's websites, which were already used by one-third of respondents, and an additional one-third were very likely to do so (see Figure 16 on the next page).

The next most popular forms of communication were printed materials mailed to the home and email newsletters – these were already used or would be very likely to be used by about 4 in 10 respondents. Social media and newspapers were either already used or were very likely to be used by about 3 in 10 respondents. Only a handful (less than 10%) said they would participate in public meetings or virtual town halls, although this may represent enough people to be considered a good turn-out for these types of events.

Respondents who reported having used Arapahoe County open spaces, parks and trails within the last year were more likely to be already using or likely to use the various communication methods. The rank order of which forms of communication would be mostly likely used was similar, however, regardless of whether the respondent had used the open spaces or not (see Figure 17 on page 26).

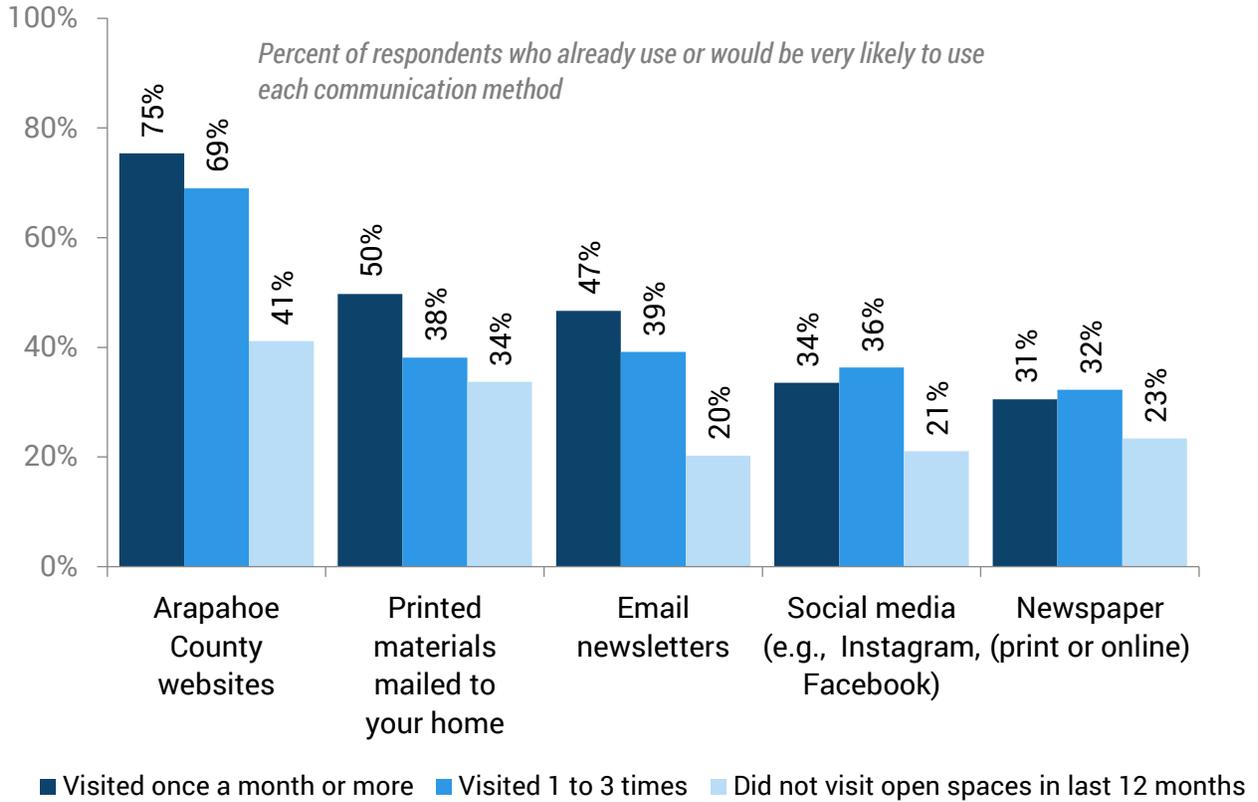
Figure 16: Use of Various Forms of Communication from Arapahoe County

Arapahoe County is always trying to improve our communications with the public about nature, recreation, agriculture, education, programming, volunteering opportunities and cultural resources. How likely would you be to use each of the following?



* Those who responded “other” could specify their reason in their own words. These responses can be found in Verbatim Responses to Survey Questions from Mailed Statistically Valid Survey in Appendix A: Responses to Mailed Statistically Valid Survey

Figure 17: Use of Various Forms of Communication from Arapahoe County by Use of Open Spaces



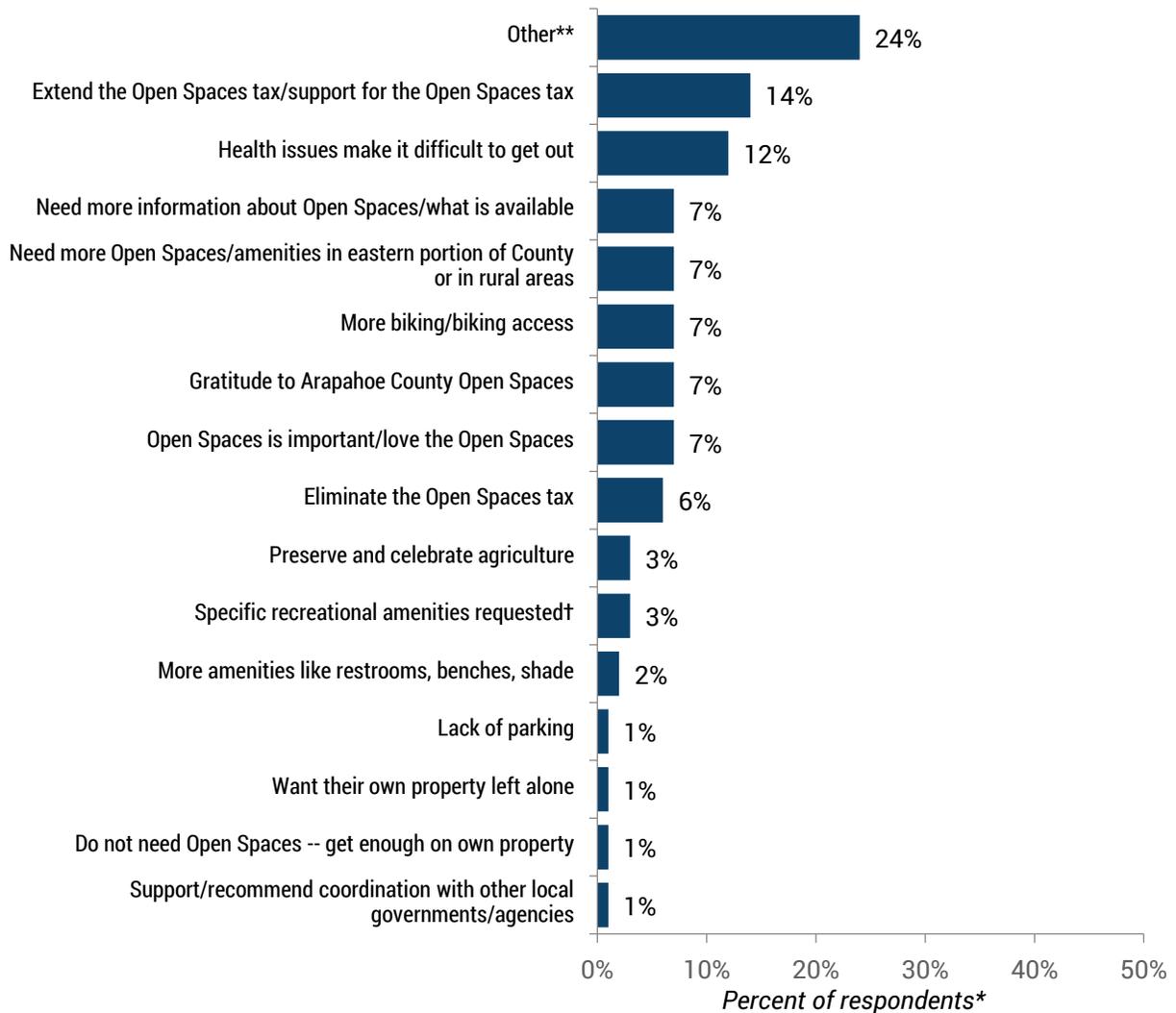
Additional comments

At the end of the survey there was a space for respondents to share anything they wished about the ACOS Master Plan. Of the 330 residents completing the survey, 69 (21%) provided additional comments which were categorized into thematic groups. All comments can be seen in the section “Verbatim Responses to Survey Questions from Mailed Statistically Valid Survey” in *Appendix A: Responses to Mailed Statistically Valid Survey*. Responses varied widely, but the most commonly observed themes were support for extending the Open Spaces sales tax, expressions of appreciation and gratitude for Arapahoe County Open Spaces, requests for more biking access, more open spaces or amenities in the eastern part of the county, and wanting more information about Open Spaces.

Figure 18: Additional Comments

Is there anything else you would like to share about the Arapahoe County Open Spaces Master Plan?*

*Percents may add to more than 100% as some responses were coded into more than one category



**Respondents wrote in a response in their own words. These verbatim responses can be found in the next section “Verbatim Responses to Survey Questions from Mailed Statistically Valid Survey”

†(e.g., covered tennis courts, OHV/ATV/UTV areas, public shooting range, dog parks, indoor arena)

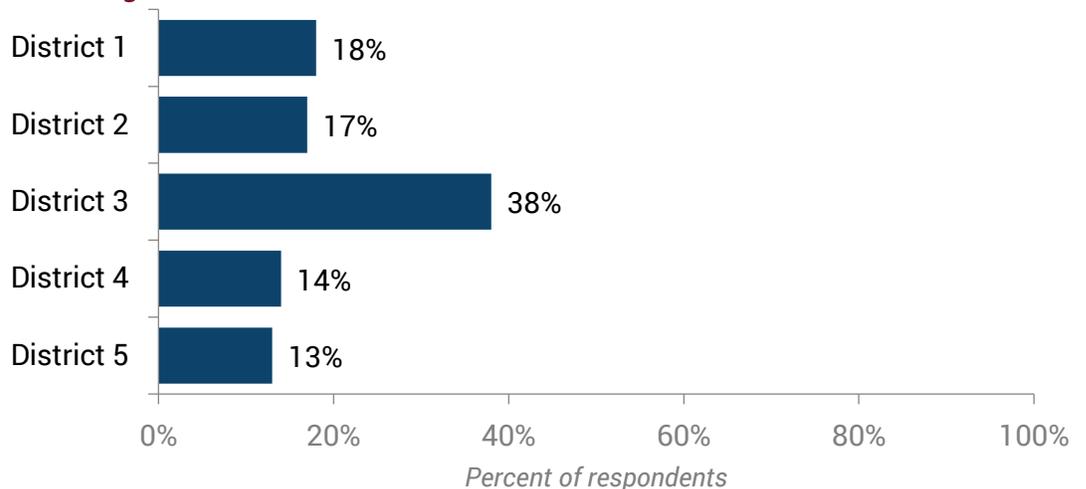
Demographic profile of survey respondents

The figures on the following pages, starting with Figure 24 below through Figure 31 on page 32, show the demographic profile of survey participants.

Respondents came from every Commissioner District, with the highest proportion from District 3, which is reflective of the population distribution across the districts. About 80% of respondents were from the western portion of the county, which includes the suburban cities and towns; about three-quarters lived in an incorporated city or town. Roughly 6 in 10 respondents lived in a single-family home, and two-thirds owned their place of residence. About one-quarter of respondents had lived in Arapahoe County less than 5 years, while nearly a third had lived in the county for 20 or more years. A greater proportion of households included a dog (62%) than included children under age 13 (33%) or that included teenagers (24%). The age, gender and race/ethnicity distribution of respondents, after weighting the survey results, roughly matched the profile of the county from Census data. (See also Table 262 on page 314 in *Appendix F: Survey Methodology*.) Annual household income was also similar to what was observed for Arapahoe County in the 2018 American Community Survey.

About 84% of respondents lived in a single-family house or apartment complex that did have a yard or outdoor spaces for play/relaxation, while 16% did not (see Figure 30). Those who lived in District 5 and in the eastern portion of the county were less likely to have a yard or outdoor place space (71%) than those in the rest of the County (84% to 90%), but the differences but the differences were not statistically significant (see Figure 31).

Figure 19: Commissioner District of Residence



See the map on page 310 in *Appendix F: Survey Methodology* for the boundaries of these areas shown in Figure 20.

Figure 20: Area of Residence in Arapahoe County

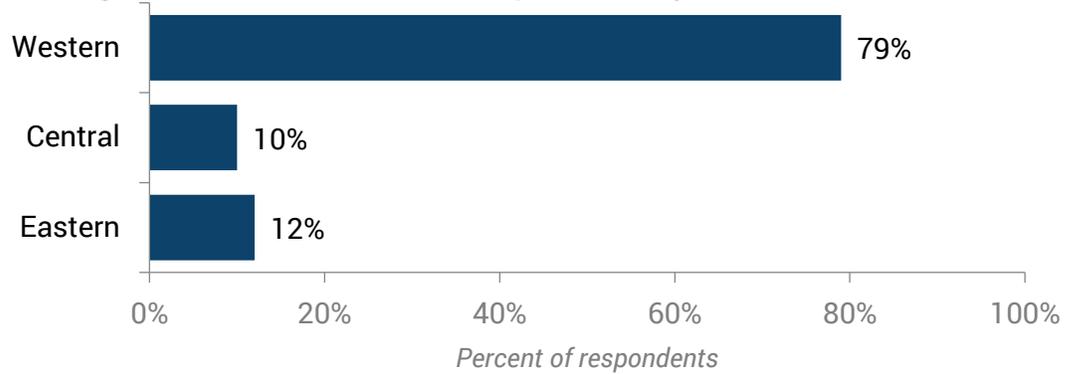


Figure 21: Whether respondent Lives in an Incorporated or Unincorporated Area

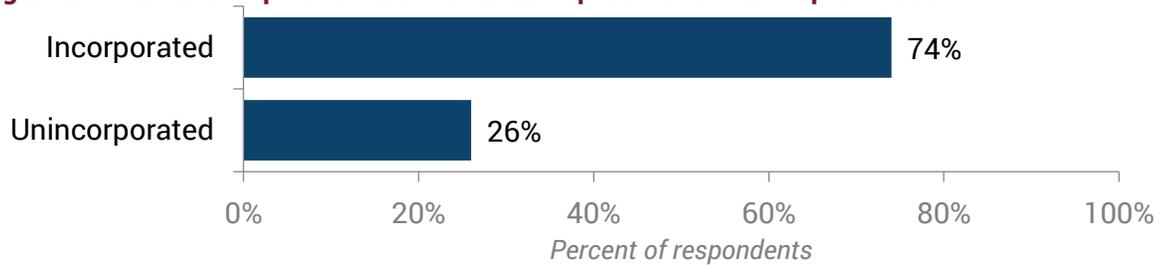


Figure 22: Type of housing unit

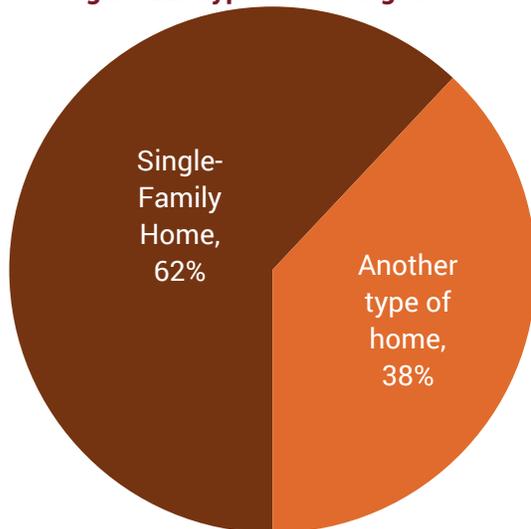


Figure 23: Housing tenure (rent or own)

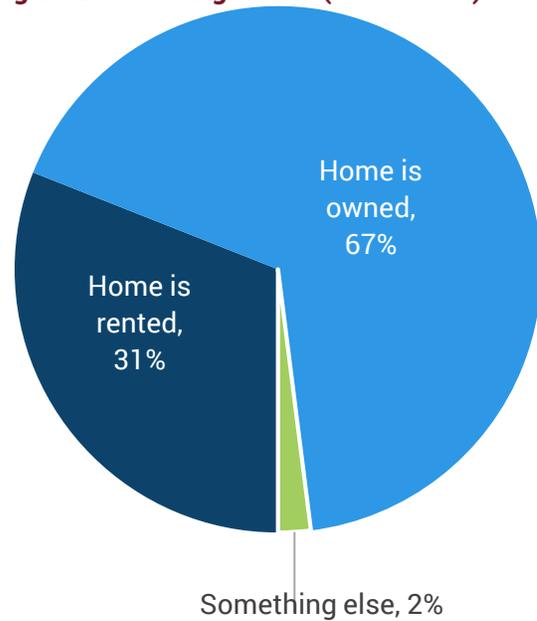


Figure 24: Length of Residency in Arapahoe County

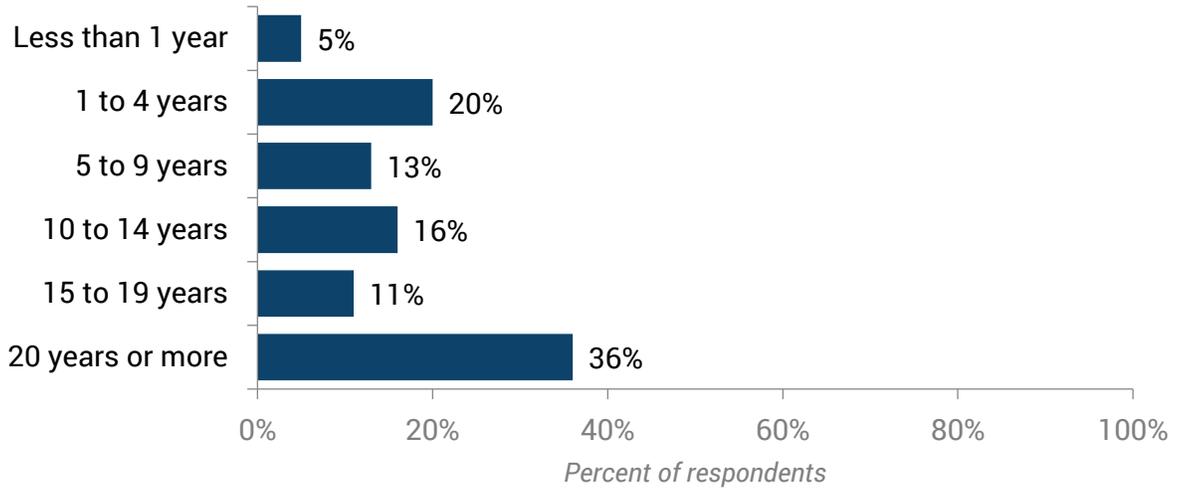


Figure 25: Household Composition

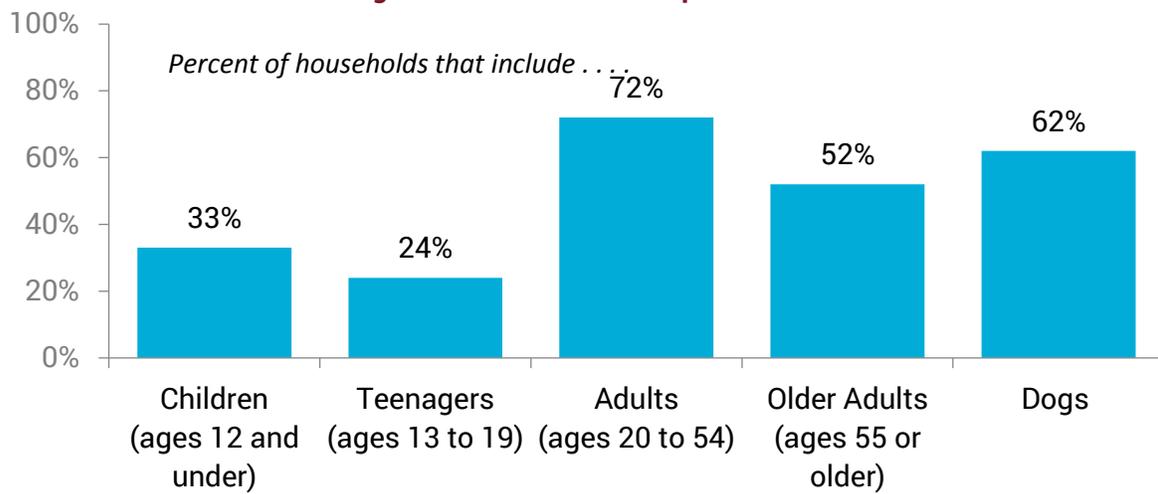
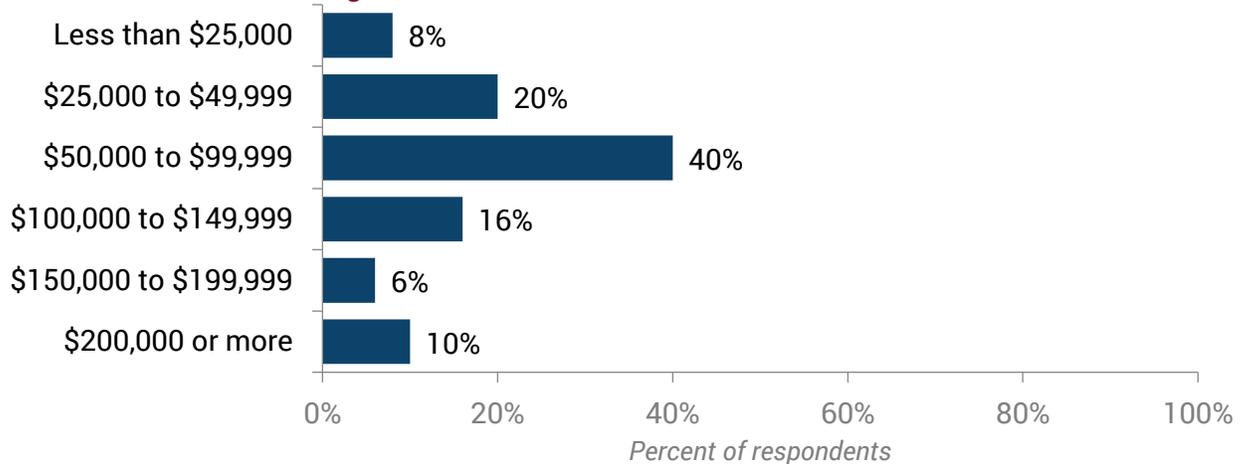
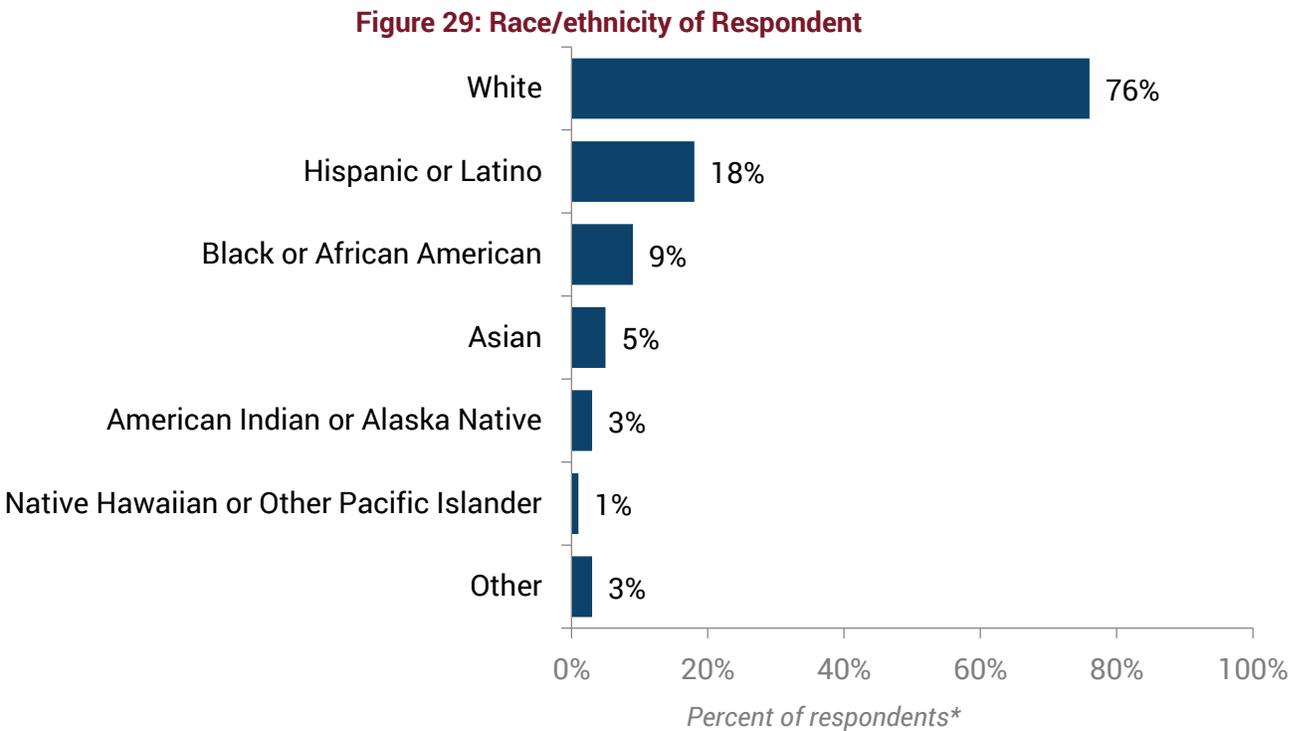
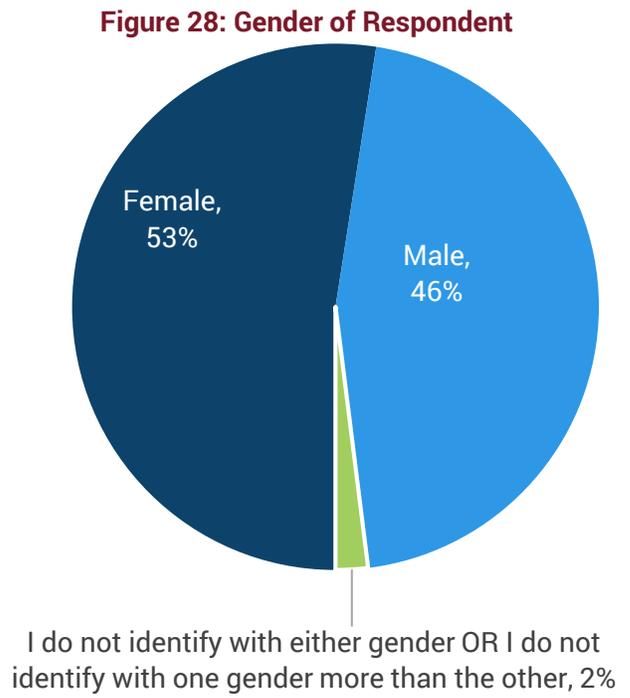
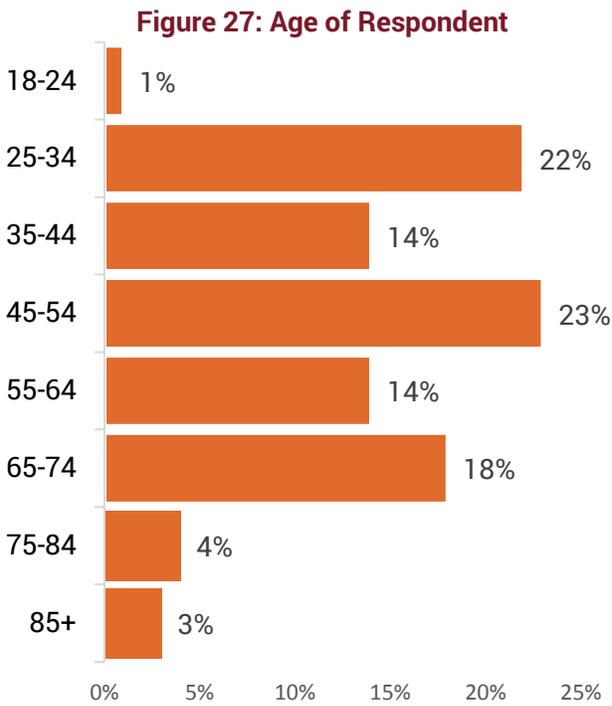


Figure 26: Annual Household Income





*Percents may add to more than 100% as respondents could choose more than one category.

Figure 30: Whether Home Has a Yard or Outdoor Spaces

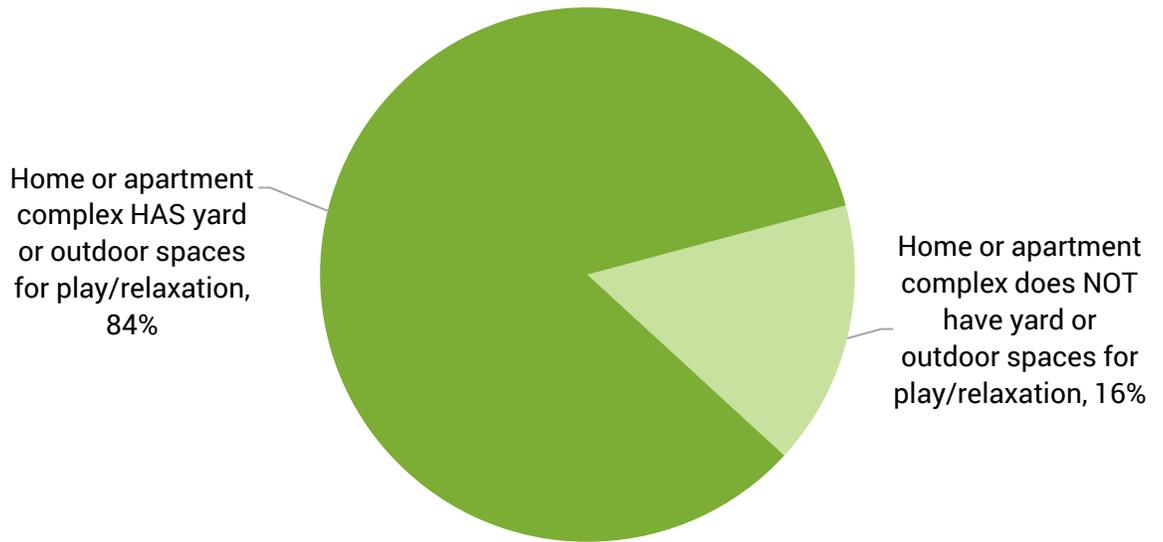


Figure 31: Percent of Respondents with a Yard or Outdoor Space, by Area of Residence

