

# City of Manassas

## Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Needs

### Appendix C. Citizen Survey Results

**April 2016**



Prepared for:

*GreenPlay, LLC.*

*Manassas Department of Community  
Development*

Prepared by:

*RRC Associates LLC*

4770 Baseline Rd, Ste 360

Boulder, CO 80303

303/449-6558

[www.rrcassociates.com](http://www.rrcassociates.com)





# ***Table of Contents***

<b>INTRODUCTION &amp; METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>SUMMARY OF SELECTED FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>DEMOGRAPHICS .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>CURRENT FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS .....</b>	<b>6</b>
Importance and Knowledge of Parks and Recreation Opportunities .....	6
Facilities .....	7
Programs .....	14
<b>PROGRAMS, ACTIVITIES, AND SPECIAL EVENTS .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>VALUES AND VISION .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>FUTURE FACILITIES, AMENITIES, AND SERVICES .....</b>	<b>30</b>
Most Important Areas that Would Increase Use of Facilities .....	30
Future Facilities to Add, Expand, or Improve .....	31
<b>COMMUNICATION .....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>FINANCIAL CHOICES/FEES .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>ADDITIONAL OPEN-ENDED COMMENTS .....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>A COMPARISON TO THE OPEN LINK SAMPLE.....</b>	<b>48</b>

## ***Table of Figures***

Figure 1: Demographic Profile .....	4
Figure 2: Residential Profile .....	5
Figure 3: Importance of and Familiarity with Local Recreation Opportunities .....	6
Figure 4: Importance of Facilities.....	9
Figure 5: Importance of Facilities (Average Rating).....	10
Figure 6: Degree to Which Community Needs Are Met by Facilities .....	11
Figure 7: Degree to Which Community Needs Are Met by Facilities (Average Rating) .....	12
Figure 8: Current Facilities Importance vs. Needs Met Matrix.....	13
Figure 9: Importance of Programs .....	16
Figure 10: Importance of Programs (Average Rating) .....	17
Figure 11: Degree to Which Community Needs Are Met by Programs.....	18
Figure 12: Degree to Which Community Needs Are Met by Programs (Average Rating) .....	19
Figure 13: Current Programs Importance vs. Needs Met Matrix .....	20
Figure 14: Household Need for Programs .....	22
Figure 15: Household Need for Programs (by Age) .....	23
Figure 16: Household Need for Programs (by Presence of Children in Household) .....	24
Figure 17: Top Three Priority Programs for Households .....	25
Figure 18: Top Three Areas to Focus on Improving.....	27
Figure 19: Top Three Areas to Focus on Improving (by Presence of Children in Household).....	28
Figure 20: Top Three Areas to Focus on Improving (by Annual Household Income) .....	29
Figure 21: Three Areas that, if Addressed, Would Increase Your Use of Facilities .....	30
Figure 22: Importance of Adding, Expanding, or Improving Facilities.....	32
Figure 23: Importance of Adding, Expanding, or Improving Facilities (Average Rating).....	33
Figure 24: Top Three Most Important Facilities to Add, Expand, or Improve.....	34
Figure 25: Top Three Most Important Facilities to Add, Expand, or Improve (by Presence of Children in Household) .....	35
Figure 26: Best Method for Reaching You .....	36
Figure 27: Willingness to Support Increases in Real Estate Taxes.....	39
Figure 28: Potential Impact of Fee Increases on Current Level of Participation .....	39
Figure 29: Allocation of Funding Towards Facilities/Services/Programs (Average Allocation)....	40
Figure 30: Allocation of Funding Towards Facilities/Services/Programs (Average Allocation) by Age .....	41
Figure 31: Willingness to Support Increases in Real Estate Taxes by Household Income.....	42
Figure 32: Potential Impact of Fee Increases on Current Level of Participation by Household Income .....	43

## INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to gather public feedback on Manassas parks and recreation facilities, services, and programs. This survey research effort and subsequent analysis were designed to assist Manassas's Department of Community Development in planning for capital improvements and to better understand community needs.

The survey was conducted using three primary methods: 1) a mail-back survey, 2) an online, invitation-only web survey to further encourage response from those residents already within the defined invitation sample, and 3) an open-link online survey for members of the public who were not part of the invitation sample. The analysis herein primarily focuses on responses from the invitation sample that provide a statistically valid sample. Analysis by additional segments is included where differences were apparent and omitted where trends were similar to the overall sample. The open link responses are additionally analyzed and discussed in a separate section of the report, highlighting differences from the invitation sample.

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

A total of 3,000 surveys were mailed to a random sample of Manassas residents in February 2016. After accounting for undeliverable addresses (29 total), 2,971 survey mailings were delivered and 317 responses were received, resulting in a satisfactory response rate of 10.7 percent. The margin of error for the 317 statistically valid responses is approximately +/- 5.5 percentage points calculated for questions at 50% response<sup>1</sup>. Additionally, the open link survey received 374 responses. The survey responses were gathered from February 6, 2106 to March 17, 2016.

The underlying data were weighted by age and race to ensure appropriate representation of Manassas residents across different demographic cohorts in the sample. Using the U.S. Census Bureau 2014 American Community Survey five-year estimates, the age and race distribution within the invitation respondent sample was matched to the 2014 demographic profile of the City of Manassas.

Due to variable response rates by some segments of the population, the underlying results, while weighted to best match the overall demographics of residents, may not be completely representative of some sub-groups of the population.

---

<sup>1</sup> For the total invitation sample size of 317, margin of error is +/- 5.5 percent calculated for questions at 50% response (if the response for a particular question is "50%"—the standard way to generalize margin of error is to state the larger margin, which occurs for responses at 50%). Note that the margin of error is different for every single question response on the survey depending on the resultant sample sizes, proportion of responses, and number of answer categories for each question. Comparison of differences in the data between various segments, therefore, should take into consideration these factors. As a general comment, it is sometimes more appropriate to focus attention on the general trends and patterns in the data rather than on the individual percentages.

## SUMMARY OF SELECTED FINDINGS

This section provides a brief overview of some of the key findings in the survey with a primary focus on the statistically valid invitation sample.

- Current Facilities and Programs. Three facilities fell into the category of high in importance to a majority of households yet not fully meeting the needs of the community: pathways and trails, passive open spaces, and a community/recreation center. Improvements in these areas would likely have a positive impact for a sizeable portion of the community.

Using the same measures to assess programming in Manassas, wellness/health/yoga programs and fitness classes were the two areas deemed important to a majority of households yet not fully meeting the needs of the community. Again, enhancing or expanding these programs could improve the degree to which respondents feel their needs are being met by the City.

- Programs and Special Events. A large majority of respondents expressed a need or desire for both community events (78 percent) and concerts/live performances (73 percent). When segmented by age, it showed that respondents under the age of 35 have an especially strong interest in community events (91 percent).
- Values and Vision. The top areas that invitation sample respondents most want focused on are pathway and trail connectivity (30 percent), maintenance of parks and facilities (28 percent), family-oriented activities (26 percent), and safety and security (25 percent).
- Future Facilities, Amenities, and Services. Pathways and trails were rated at a top priority for future investment by 39 percent of respondents (14 percent ranked this as a first priority, 11 percent as a second priority, 13 percent as a third priority), and improved park amenities were a priority for 36 percent of respondents (12 percent first priority, 12 percent second priority, 11 percent third priority).
- Financial Choices/Fees. Although there are a number of comments voiced about fiscal responsibility and against additional or increased taxes, a strong majority of respondents (82 percent) reported they would likely or definitely support a real estate tax increase of \$5. A majority also said they would support a \$10 increase (66 percent). Support declined to below half of respondents for larger increases.

When given the opportunity to allocate a hypothetical \$100, respondents allocated the largest amount of funding toward improving, renovating, or maintaining existing park facilities with an average allocation of \$16. This was followed by average allocations of \$13 for both expanding aquatics and additional pathways/trails.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

This section of the report details the respondent and household demographics of the invitation and open link samples. By understanding the characteristics of these two sample groups, we are in a better position to understand response patterns for various questions on the survey.

- Gender. The invitation sample had more female respondents than male respondents, with 67 percent female and 33 percent male. The gender distribution in the open link sample was very similar (64 percent female, 36 percent male).
- Age. Twenty percent of invitation sample respondents were under 35 years of age, 32 percent were between 35 and 44, 21 percent were between 45 and 54, and the remaining 27 percent were 55 years of age or older. The open link sample was less evenly distributed, with fewer respondents between 35 and 44 and a larger cohort of respondents aged 45-64.
- Household Profile. Invitation respondents were most likely to report that they live in a household with children (single or a couple, 53 percent). Open link respondents were comparatively more likely to be empty-nesters (29 percent).
- Household Income. Twenty-two percent of invitation sample respondents reported an annual household income of less than \$75,000. Fifty-five percent reported an annual household income between \$75,000 and \$149,999, and 22 percent reported earning over \$150,000 annually. The open link sample had a relatively similar distribution.
- Ethnicity/Race. As a result of the weighting process, 73 percent of invitation respondents identify themselves as white, 7 percent as African American, 7 percent as Asian, 1 percent as Native American, and 11 percent as some other race. In addition, 12 percent indicated that they are of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin. The open link sample is less diverse, with 91 percent identifying themselves as white.
- Household Need for ADA-Accessible Facilities. Seven percent of invitation households and 9 percent of open link households indicated a need for ADA-accessible facilities.
- Years in Manassas. Invitation respondents are typically long-time residents of Manassas, with 53 percent having lived in the City for eleven or more years. The average was 15.8 years for the invitation sample and 17.1 years for the open link sample.
- Own or Rent. A large majority of respondents in both samples own their household (95 percent invitation, 82 percent open link).

Figure 1: Demographic Profile

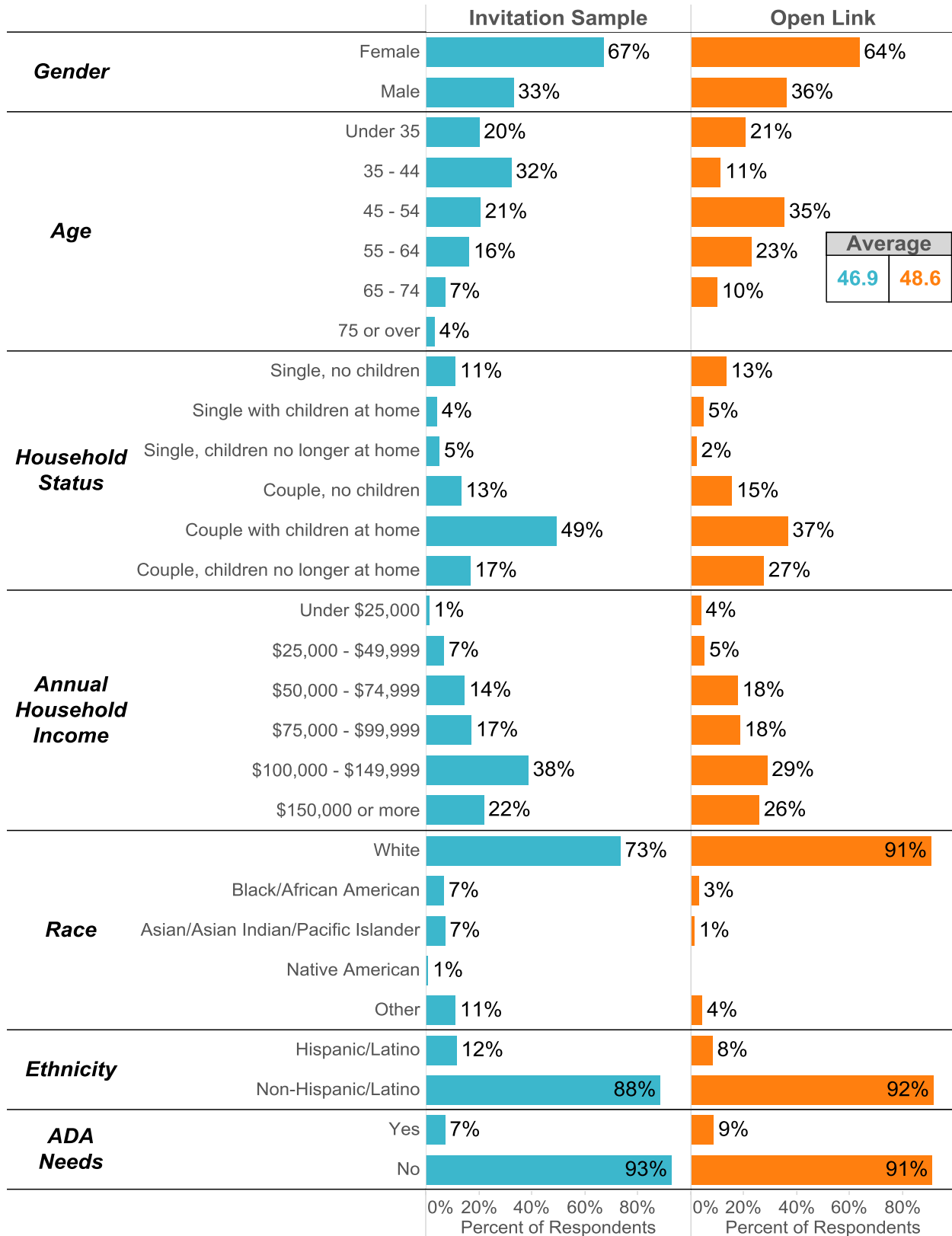
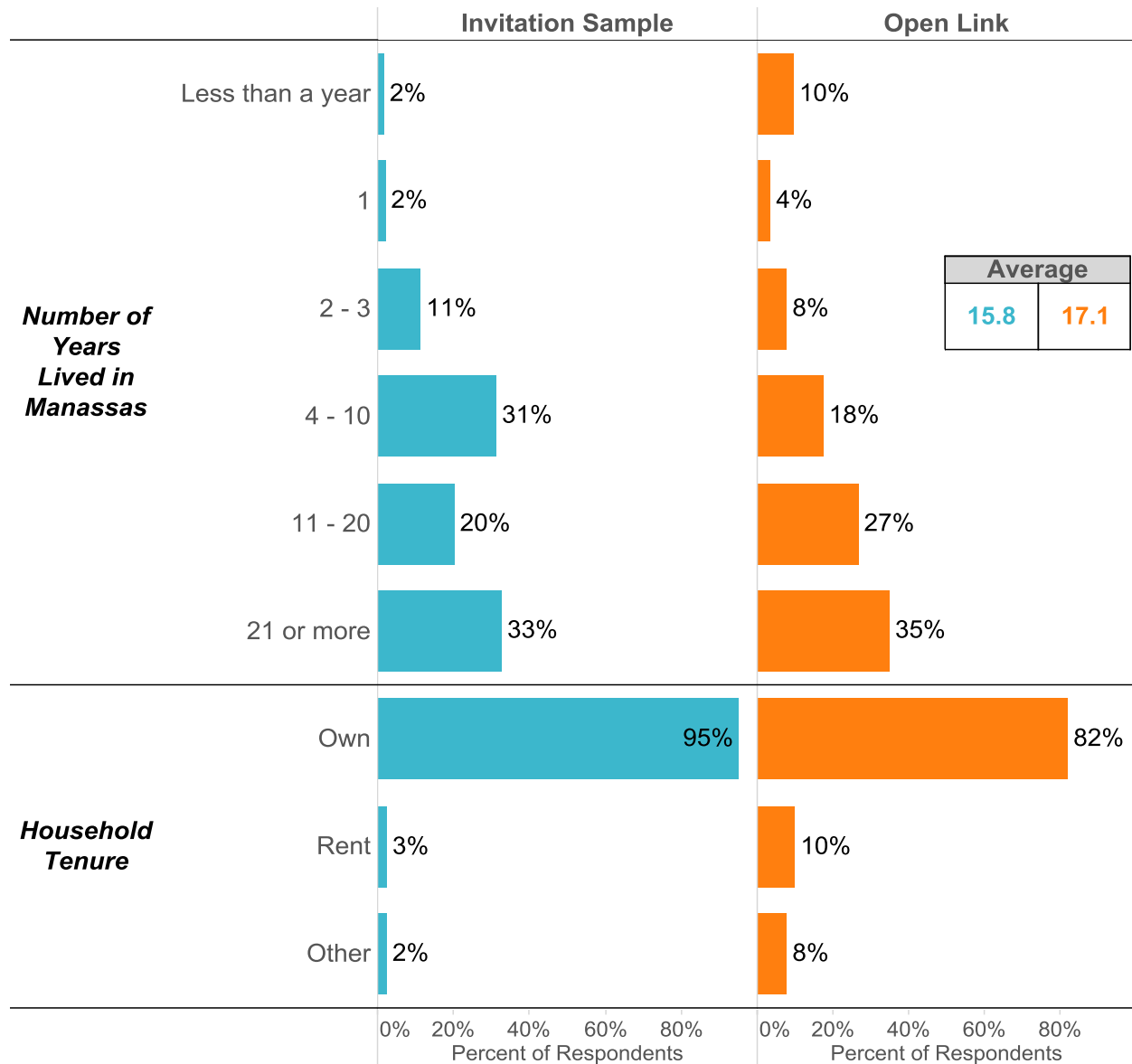




Figure 2: Residential Profile



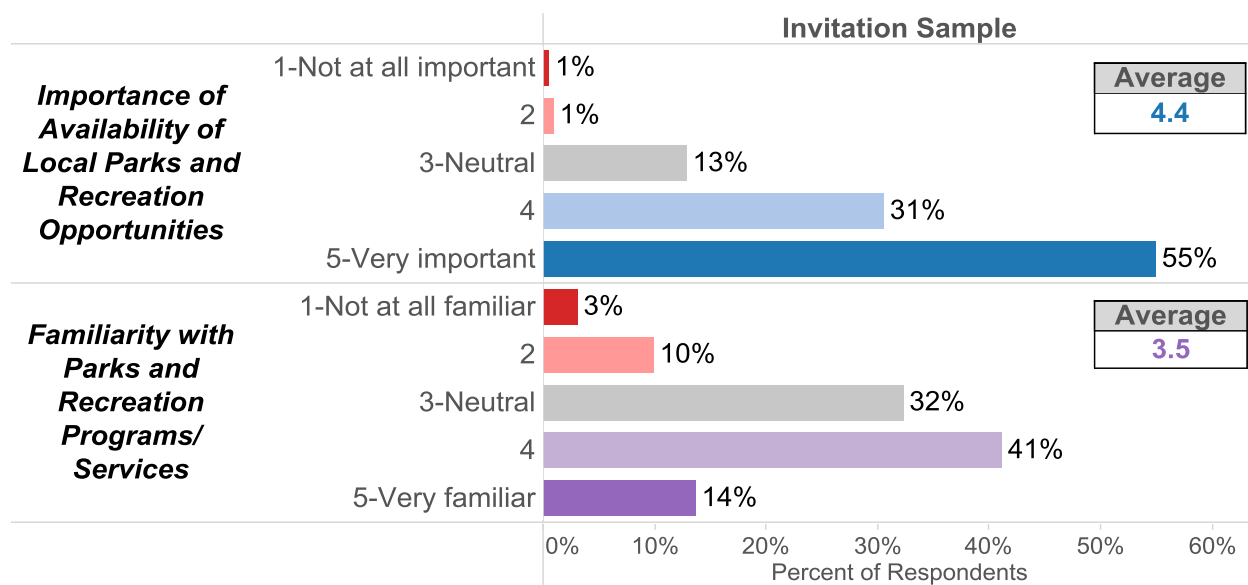
## CURRENT FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS

### Importance and Knowledge of Parks and Recreation Opportunities

Importance of Local Recreation Opportunities. Respondents were asked to indicate the importance of the availability of local parks and recreation opportunities to their household on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 meaning “not at all important” and 5 meaning “very important.” Invitation respondents reported that local parks and recreation opportunities are highly important to their household, with 86 percent of respondents providing a “4” or “5” rating. The average rating of importance was 4.4.

Knowledge/Familiarity with Current Parks and Recreation Offerings. Respondents were also asked to rate their level of familiarity with current parks, recreation, and cultural facilities, programs and services on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means “not at all familiar” and 5 means “very familiar.” Familiarity ratings were somewhat lower than importance ratings, with 55 percent of invitation sample respondents indicating that they are familiar with Manassas parks and recreation offerings (providing a “4” or “5” rating) for a 3.5 average rating.

Figure 3: Importance of and Familiarity with Local Recreation Opportunities



## Facilities

Importance of Facilities to Household. Respondents rated the importance of Manassas parks and recreation facilities to their households on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is “not at all important” and 5 is “very important.” Figure 4 to follow illustrates the responses for each facility with facilities then sorted by their midpoint rating. Figure 5 depicts the average importance rating provided by invitation respondents for each facility.

The amenity rated as most important was community parks with an average importance rating of 4.5 and 88 percent of respondents providing a 4 or 5 rating. This was followed by libraries (4.4 average rating, 87 percent rated 4 or 5), pathways and trails (4.3 average rating, 83 percent rated 4 or 5), and cultural facilities (4.3 average rating, 83 percent rated 4 or 5). Out of the 19 facilities provided to rate, only skate parks were not rated as important with an average importance rating of 2.8.

Degree to Which Community Needs Are Met by Facilities. Using the same list of facilities, respondents also rated the degree to which they feel these facilities are meeting the community’s needs on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means “not at all” and 5 means “completely.” Figure 6 shows the percentage of invitation respondents selecting each rating for each facility, and the facilities are again sorted by their midpoint needs met rating. Figure 7 immediately after depicts average ratings.

Respondents provided the highest needs-met ratings for historical sites (average rating of 4.1, 79 percent provided a “4” or “5” rating), ice skating rinks (4.0 average, 71 percent rated 4 or 5), libraries (3.9 average, 72 percent rated 4 or 5), and museums (3.9 average, 69 percent rated 4 or 5). Only two facilities were rated, on average, as not meeting community needs. Dog parks received an average rating of 2.6 and bike lanes received an average rating of 2.9.

Importance vs. Needs Met Matrix – Current Facilities. To better illustrate areas for future facility improvements, the “Importance vs. Needs-Met” matrix shown in Figure 8 compares the level of importance and the degree to which community needs are being met for each facility. The matrix is sectioned into four quadrants using the midpoints for both questions. The Importance scale midpoint was 3.7 (the median importance rating across all programs), and the Needs-Met midpoint was 3.5.

The upper right quadrant depicts facilities that have high importance to households in Manassas and also adequately meet community needs. As these facilities are important to most respondents, they should be monitored and maintained in coming years but are less of a priority for immediate improvements as needs are currently being met:

- Community parks
- Libraries
- Cultural facilities
- Museums
- Historical sites
- Playgrounds (borderline low in needs met)

Facilities located in the upper left quadrant have a high level of importance but a lower level of needs being met, indicating that these are potential areas for enhancements. Improving these facilities would likely positively affect the degree to which community needs are met overall:

- Pathways and trails
- Passive open space
- Community/recreation center

Shown in the lower right quadrant are facilities that are less important to most households and are meeting the needs of the community well. Future discussions evaluating whether the resources supporting these facilities outweigh the benefits may be constructive:

- Ice skating rinks
- Ball fields (baseball, softball, etc.)
- Athletic fields (on the cusp of low needs met)
- Courts (basketball, tennis, etc.) (borderline low in needs met)

Finally, facilities found in the lower left quadrant do not meet community needs well but are also important to fewer in the community. Deemed “niche” facilities, these amenities may have a small but passionate following, so measurements of participation in discussions of future improvements may prove to be valuable:

- Aquatics (borderline high in importance)
- Picnic shelters (on the cusp of high importance)
- Bike lanes
- Senior centers
- Dog parks
- Skate parks

**Figure 4: Importance of Facilities**  
Invitation Sample Only

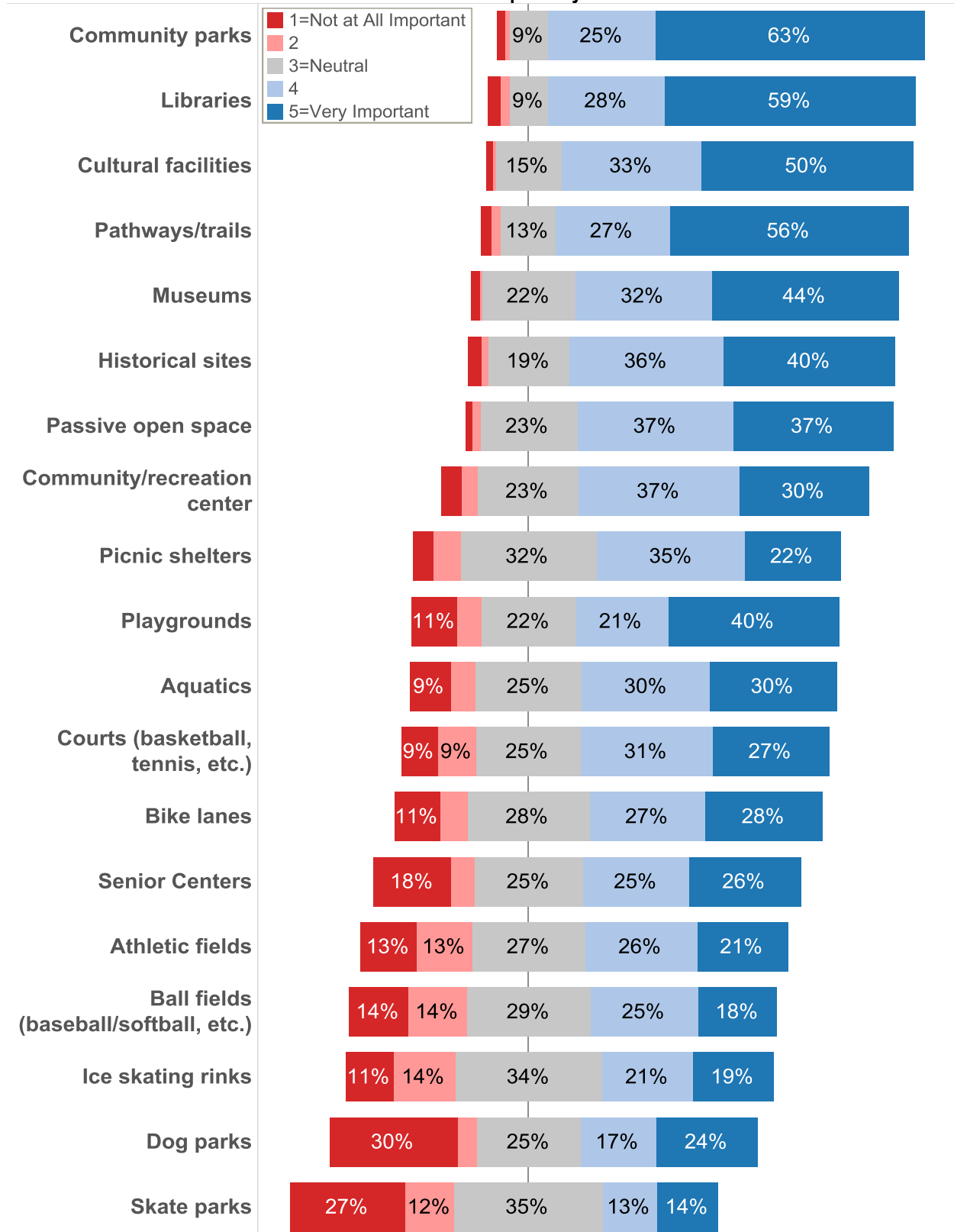
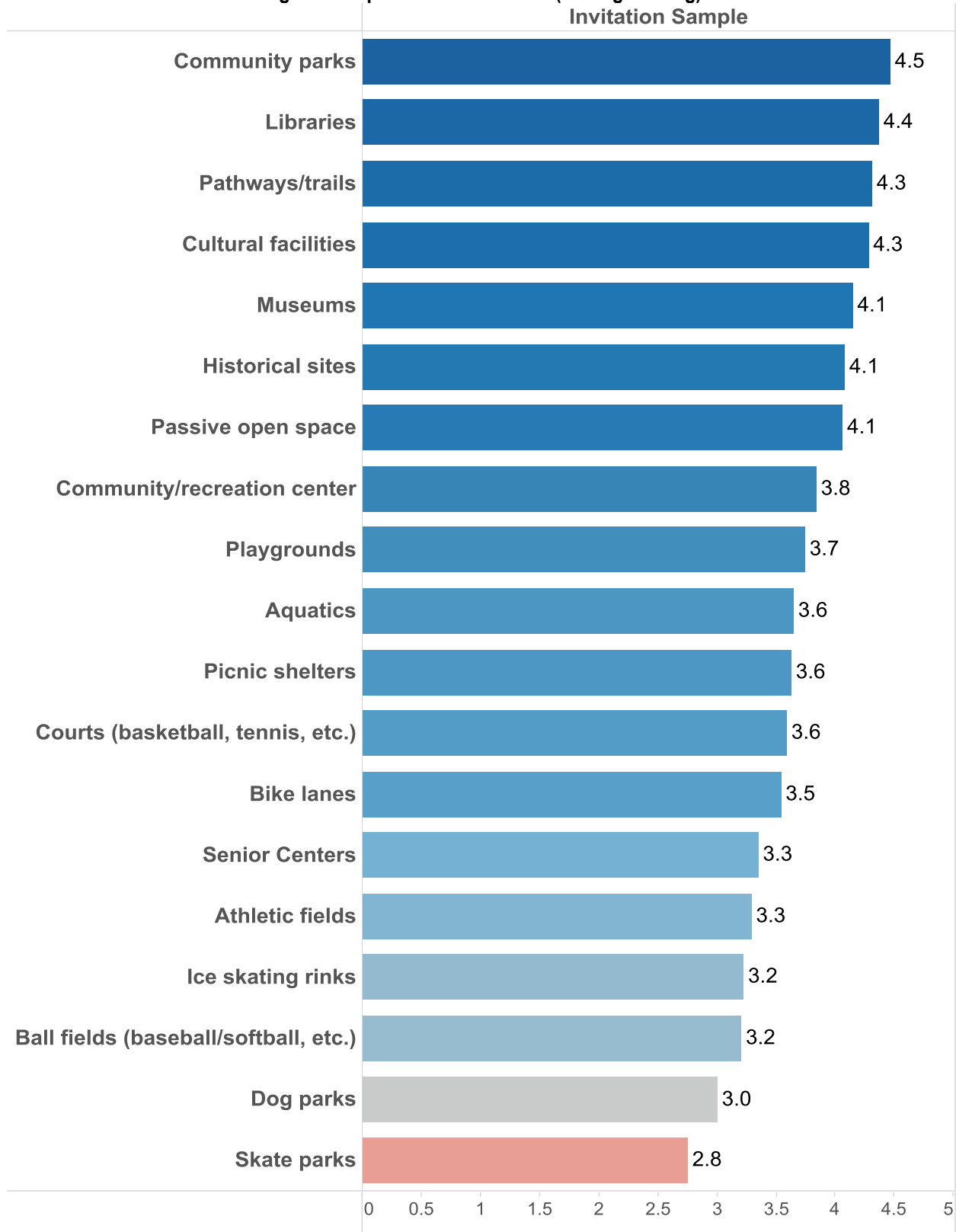


Figure 5: Importance of Facilities (Average Rating)



**Figure 6: Degree to Which Community Needs Are Met by Facilities**  
**Invitation Sample Only**

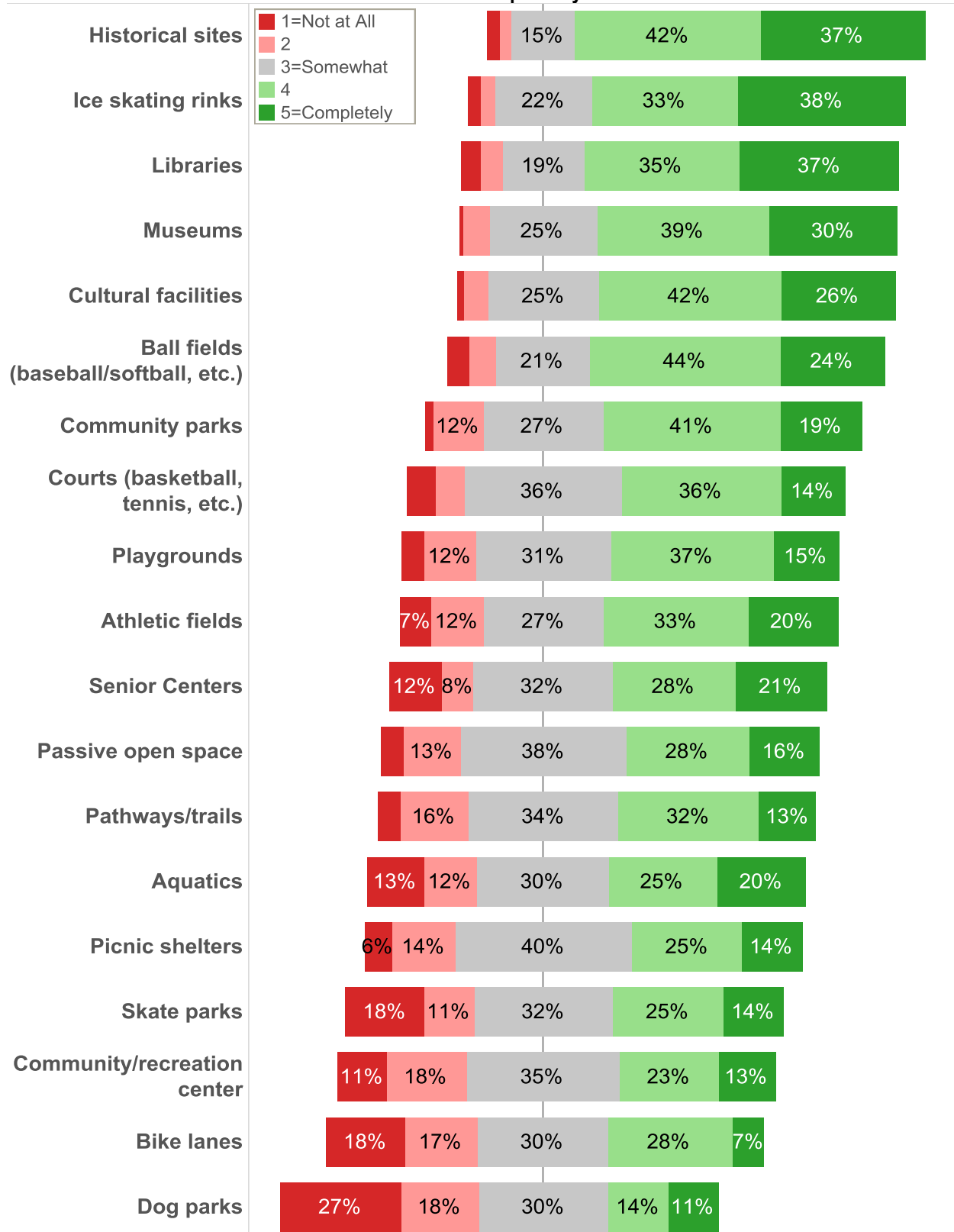


Figure 7: Degree to Which Community Needs Are Met by Facilities (Average Rating)

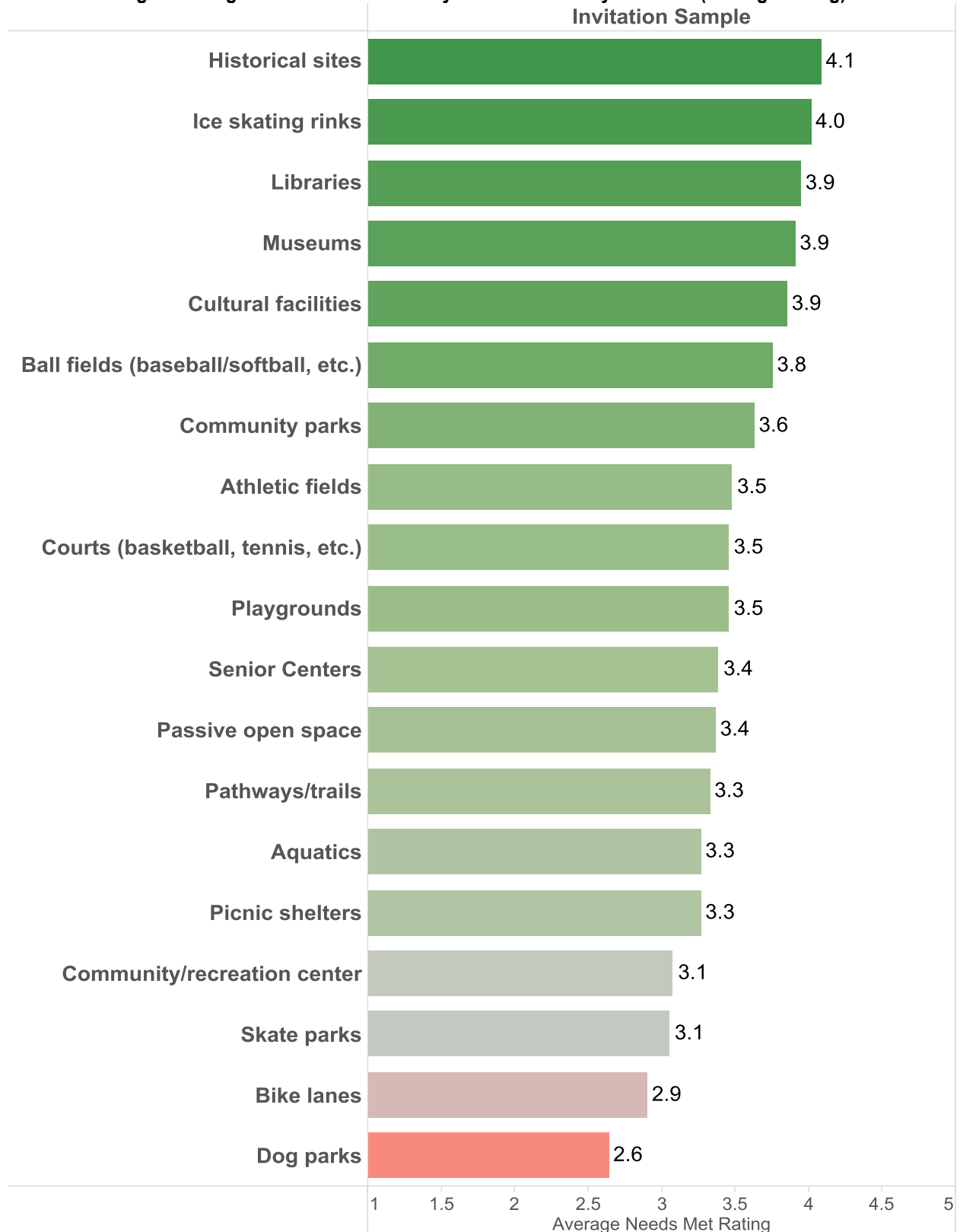
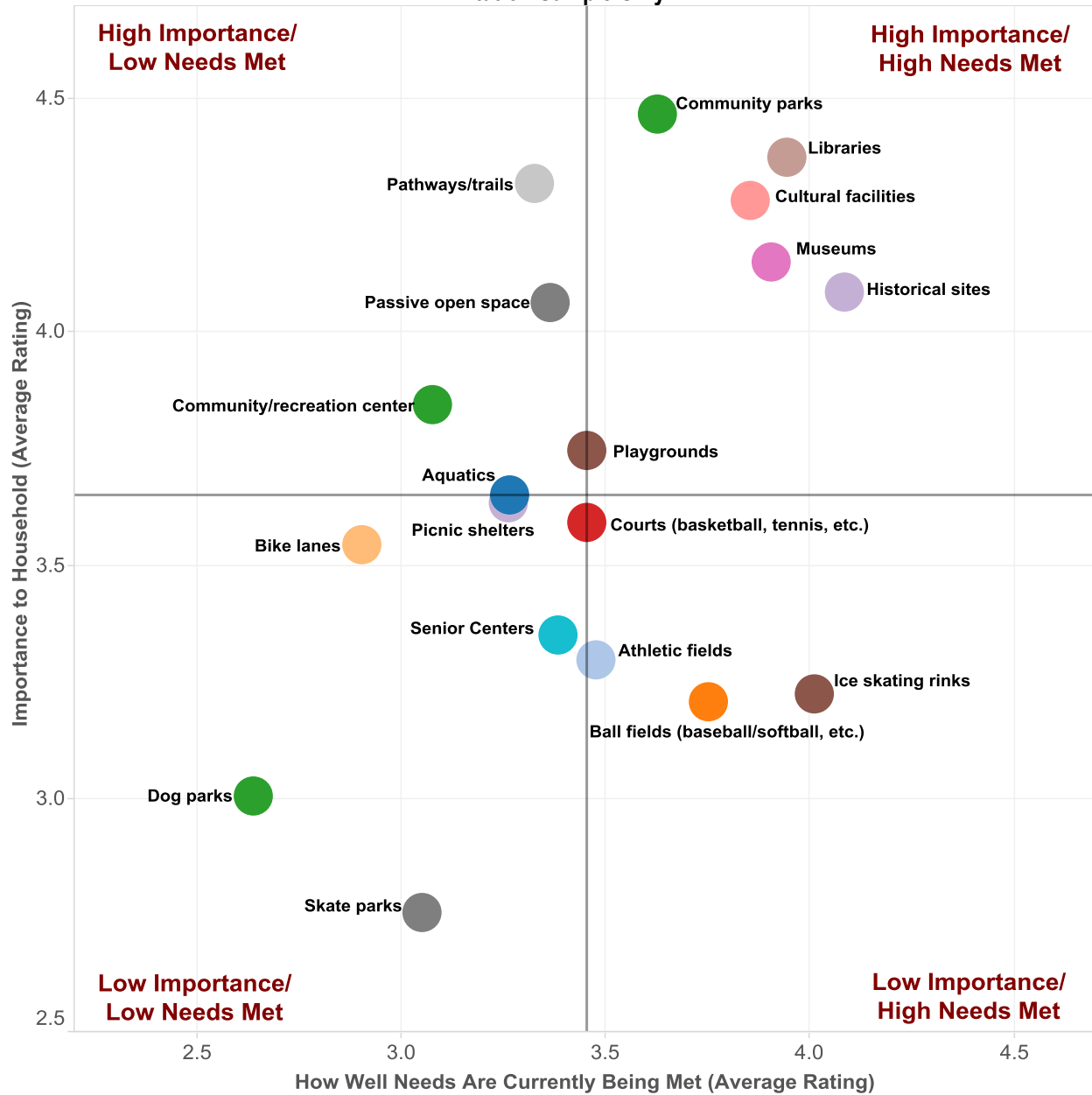




Figure 8: Current Facilities Importance vs. Needs Met Matrix  
Invitation Sample Only



## Programs

Importance of Programs to Household. Similarly, respondents rated the importance of Manassas parks, recreation, and cultural programs to their households on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is “not at all important” and 5 is “very important.” Figure 9 to follow depicts the percentage of invitation respondents selecting each rating, and each program is then sorted amongst the others based on its midpoint rating. Figure 10 shows average importance ratings among invitation respondents for each program.

Respondents provided moderate to high importance ratings for the sixteen listed programs. The programs with the highest ratings were community events (4.3 average rating, 87 percent rated 4 or 5) followed by cultural events/programs (4.1 average, 79 percent rated 4 or 5) and performances (music, theater, etc.) (4.0 average, 73 rated 4 or 5). Volunteer programs, wellness/health/yoga programs, and fitness classes all received an average importance rating of 3.8. There were no programs with an average rating below 3.0.

Degree to Which Community Needs Are Met by Programs. Using the same list, respondents also rated the degree to which they feel these programs are meeting the community’s needs on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means “not at all” and 5 means “completely.” Figure 11 shows the percentage of invitation respondents selecting each rating for each program, and the facilities are sorted by their needs-met midpoint rating. A summary of average ratings for each item is presented in Figure 12.

Respondents provided more moderate ratings when evaluating the degree to which community needs are currently being met by programs. Community events (festivals, concerts, etc.) were identified as best meeting needs with an average rating of 4.1 and 80 percent of respondents rating a 4 or 5. Cultural events/programs were rated 3.7 on average, performances (music, theater, etc.) were rated 3.7 on average, and history lectures/tours were rated 3.6 on average. The remaining programs ranged from an average of 3.0 to 3.4.

Importance vs. Needs Met Matrix – Current Programs. Another “Importance vs. Needs-Met” matrix allows a similar comparison of programs based on the level of importance and degree to which community needs are being met. Scores are illustrated in the matrix in Figure 13 by using the mid-points for both questions to divide the grid into four quadrants. The Importance scale midpoint was 3.5 (the median importance rating across all programs); the Needs-Met midpoint was 3.4.

Programs located in the upper right quadrant are identified as having a high level of importance and are also perceived to be meeting community needs adequately. While improvements are less of an immediate priority for these programs, they are important to monitor so that community satisfaction stays strong:

- Community events (festivals, concerts, etc.)
- Cultural events/programs
- Performances (music, theater, etc.)
- Volunteer programs
- Youth sports
- History lectures/tours (on the cusp of low importance)

Depicted in the upper left quadrant are programs that are generally important to households but are not fully meeting the needs of the community. Therefore, enhancing or expanding these programs may boost the degree to which respondents feel their overall community needs are being met:

- Wellness/health/yoga programs
- Fitness classes

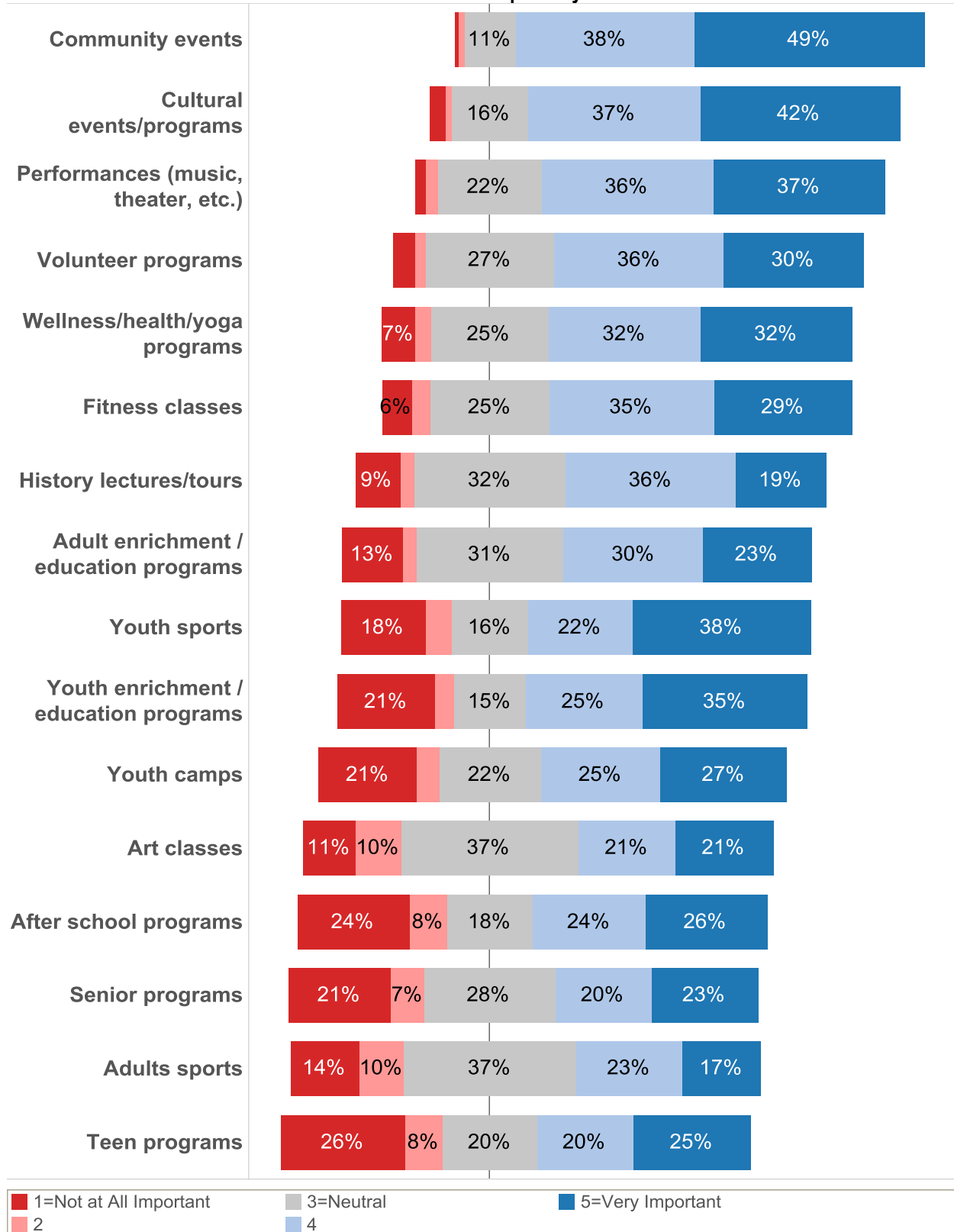
The programs in the lower right quadrant are less important to most respondents and are also currently meeting the needs of the community. Current levels of support appear to be adequate, so future resource allocation discussions should consider community needs:

- After school programs
- Senior programs

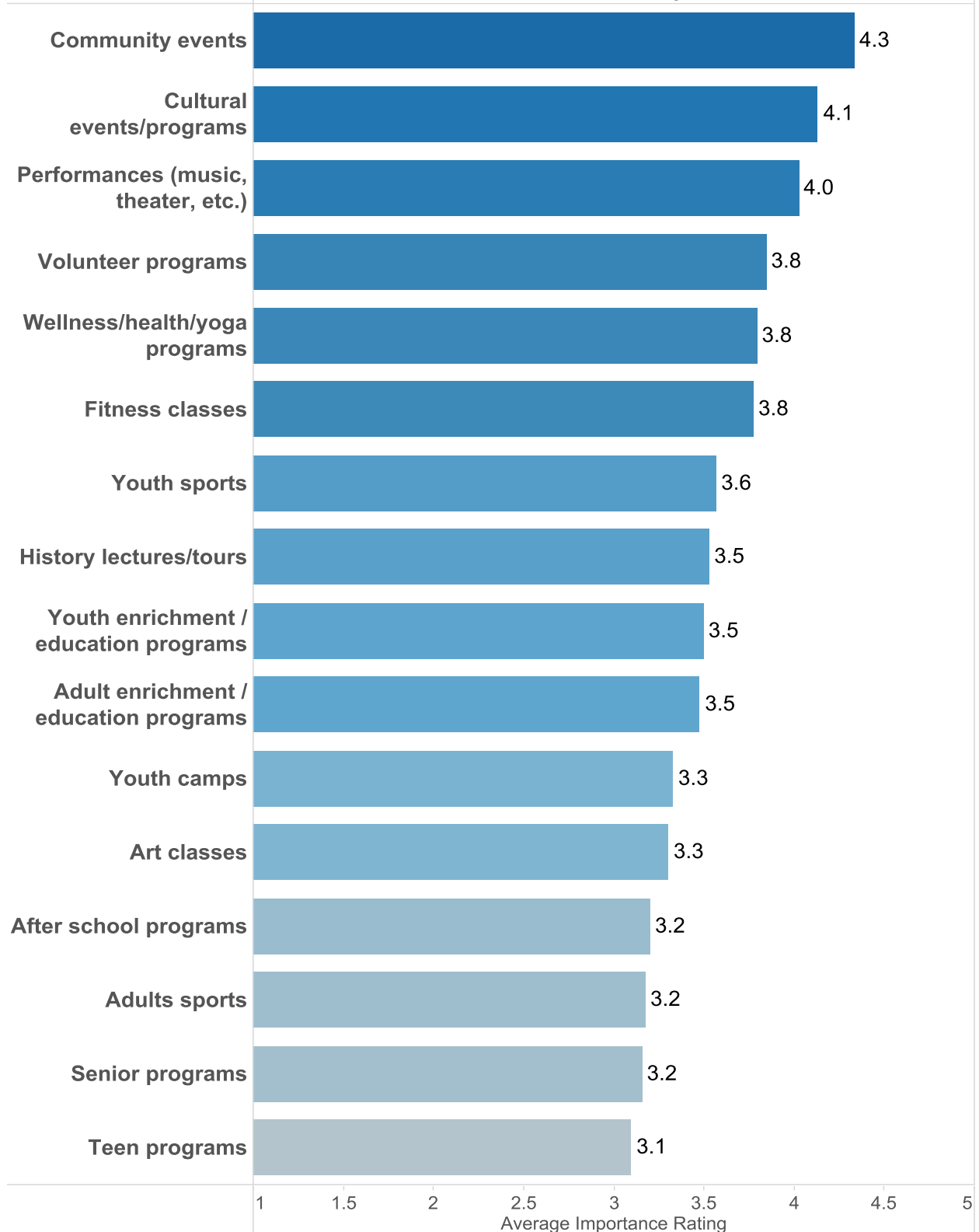
Finally, lower left quadrant programs have a low level of meeting community needs even though they are only important to a smaller group of households. These “niche” programs are typically not critical for the satisfaction of the whole community, but should be monitored to understand whether or not improvements would be constructive:

- Youth enrichment/education program (on the cusp of high importance)
- Adult enrichment/education programs
- Art classes
- Youth camps
- Adult sports
- Teen programs

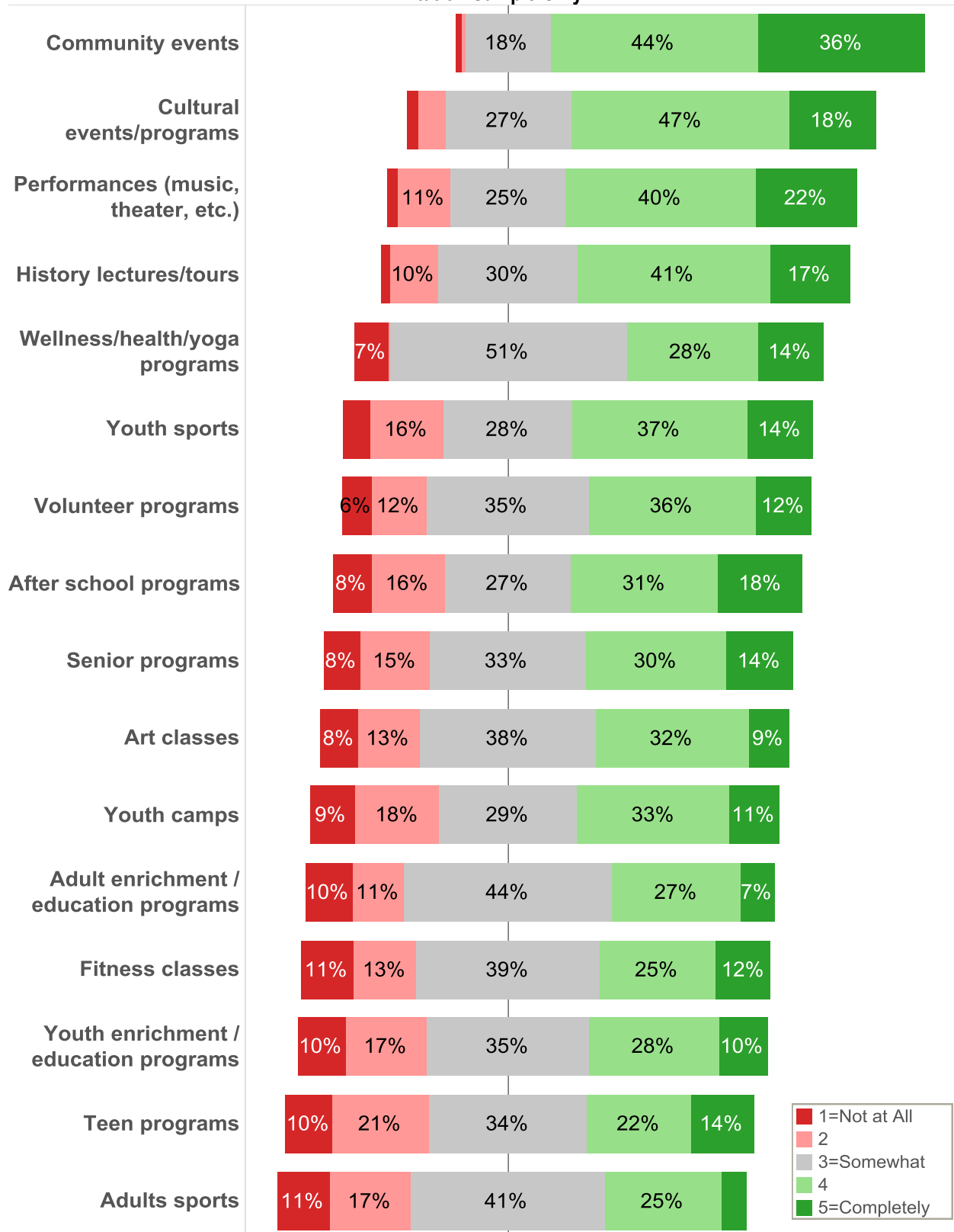
**Figure 9: Importance of Programs**  
Invitation Sample Only



**Figure 10: Importance of Programs (Average Rating)**  
Invitation Sample



**Figure 11: Degree to Which Community Needs Are Met by Programs**  
**Invitation Sample Only**



**Figure 12: Degree to Which Community Needs Are Met by Programs (Average Rating)**

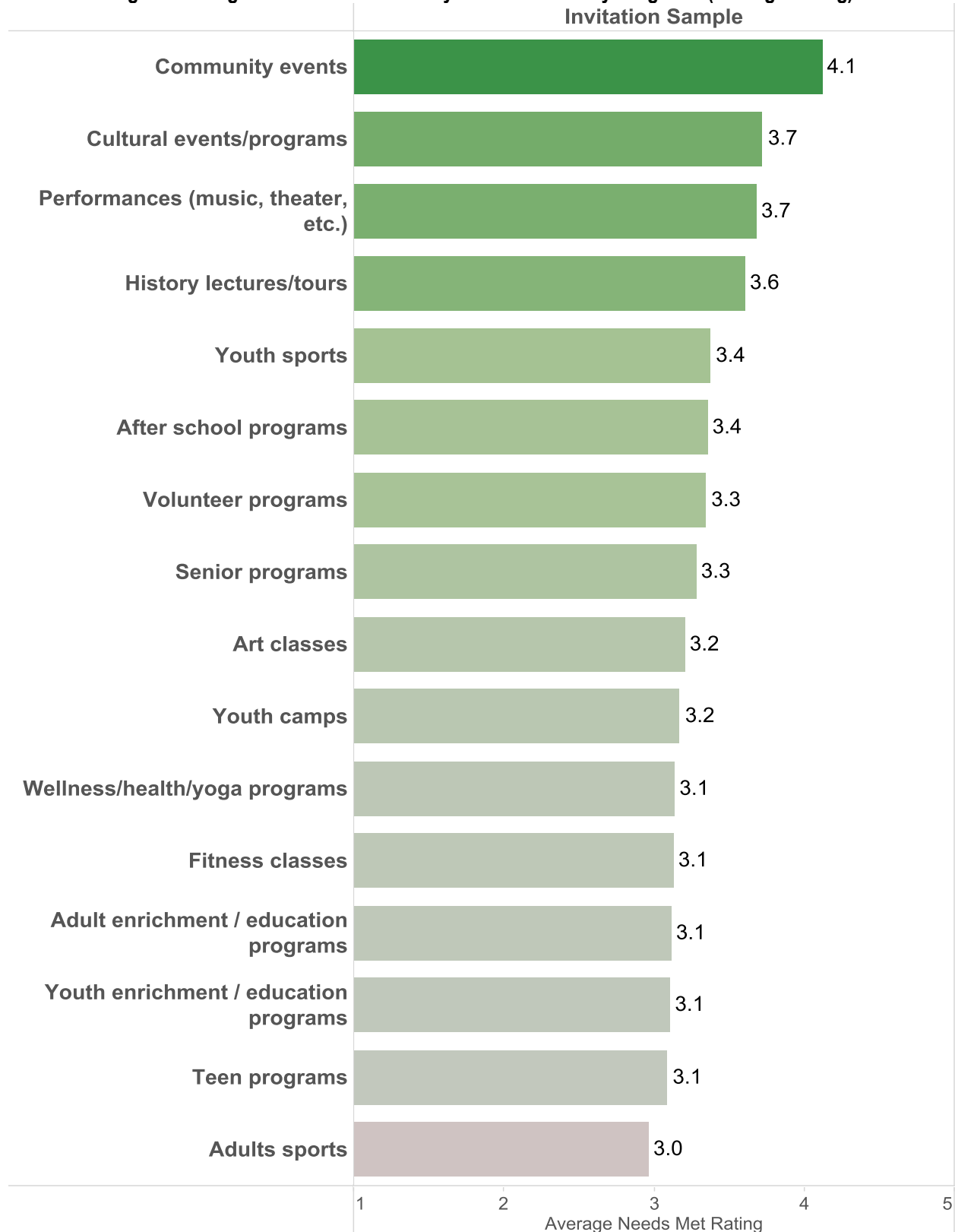
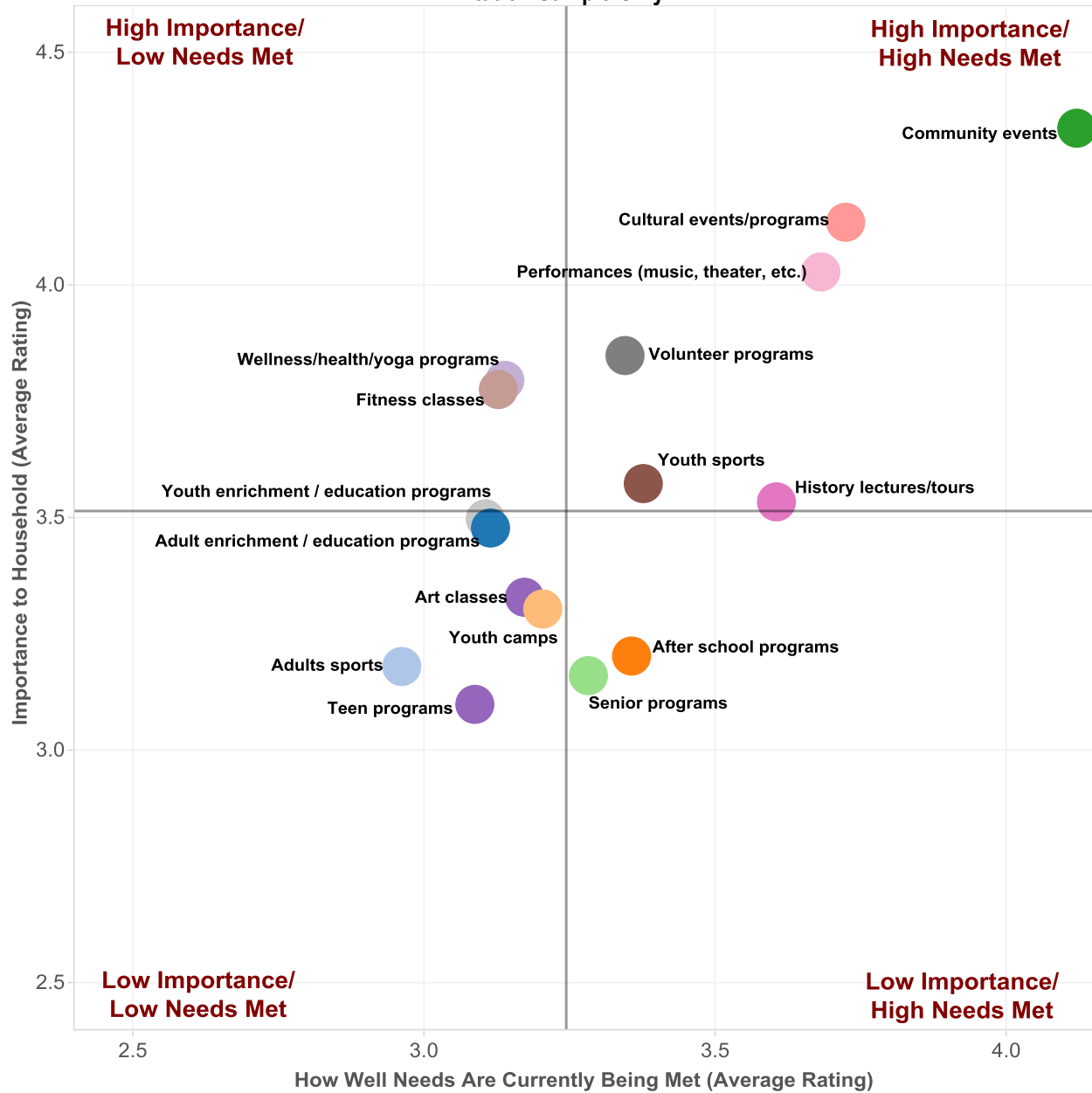


Figure 13: Current Programs Importance vs. Needs Met Matrix  
Invitation Sample Only





## PROGRAMS, ACTIVITIES, AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Respondents were given a list of 22 programs and activities and asked to identify all of the options their family currently participates in or would like to participate in. Figure 14 shows the total response for each program while Figure 17 shows the percent of respondents ranking each program as their first, second, and third priorities to be added, expanded, or improved.

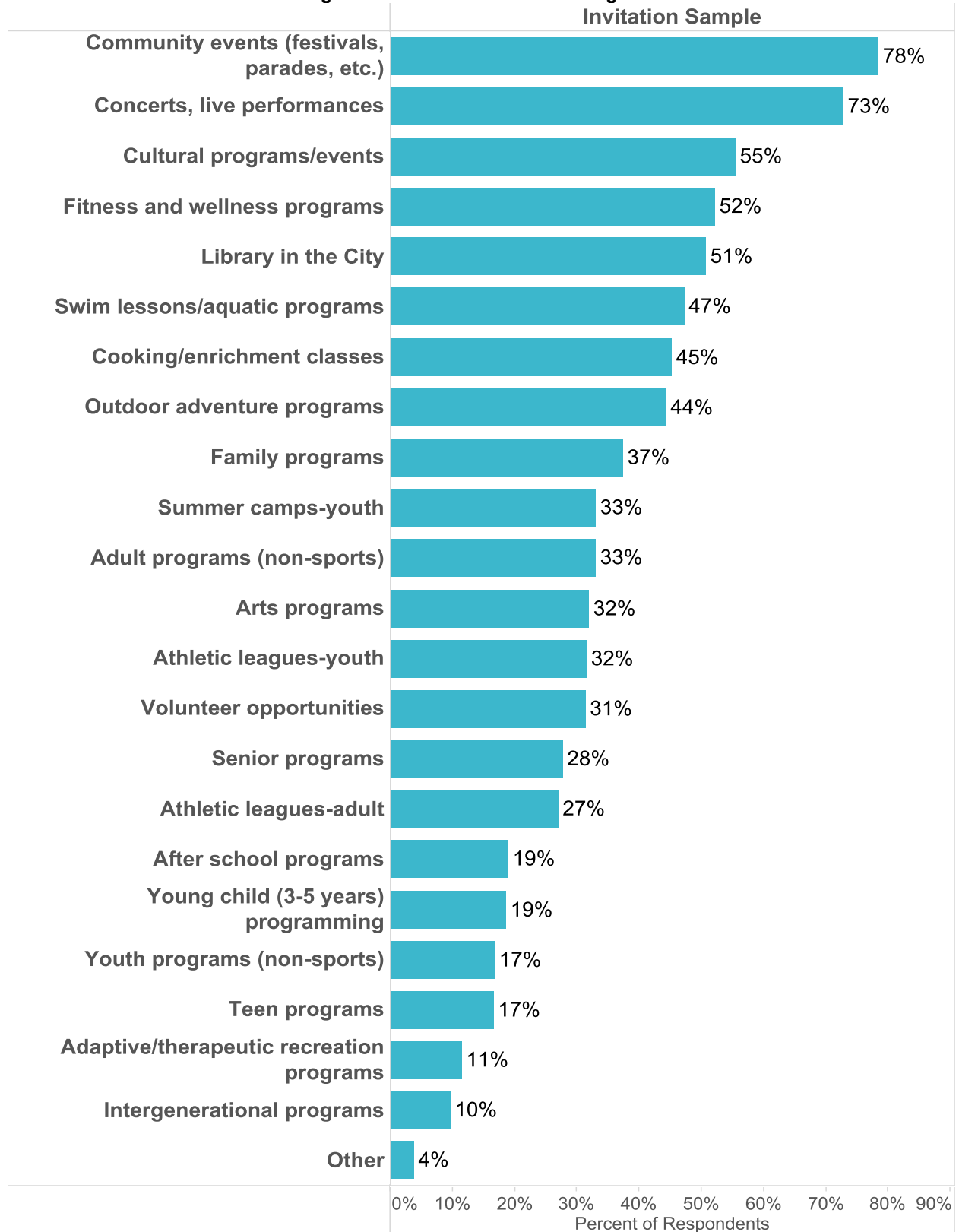
A large majority of households indicated a need or desire for both community events (78 percent) and concerts/live performances (74 percent). This was followed by cultural programs/events (55 percent), fitness and wellness programs (52 percent), and Library in the City (51 percent).

Respondents were asked to select their first, second, and third priority programs from the list of 22 options to be added, expanded, or improved. Community events remained the most selected option with 43 percent of respondents ranking this in their top three priorities (13 percent ranked it as their first priority, 21 percent ranked it as their second priority, and 10 percent ranked it as their third priority). Concerts and live performances were ranked as a top priority by 36 percent of respondents, fitness and wellness programs were a top priority for 24 percent, and Library in the City was a top priority for 22 percent.

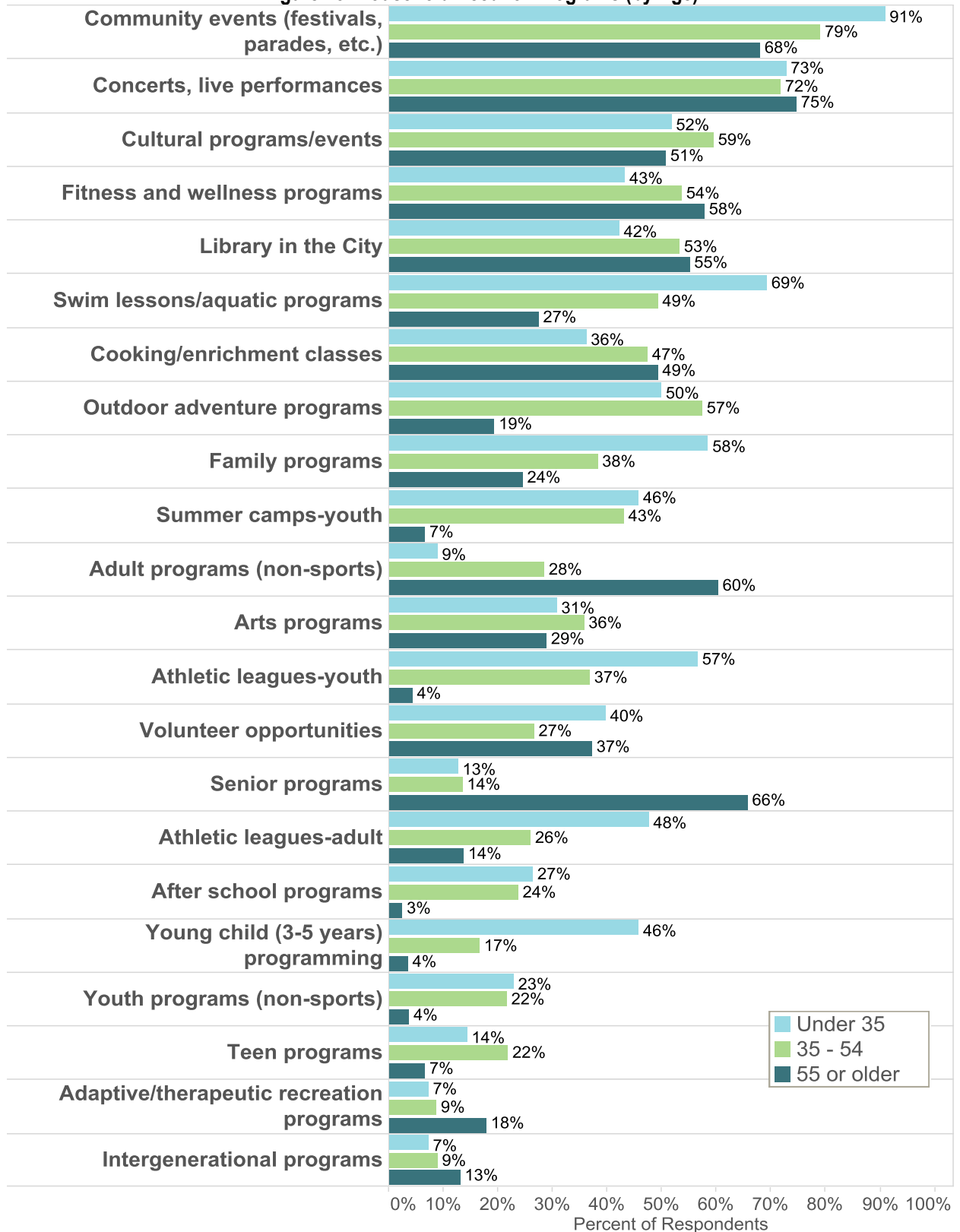
Invitation responses for household need of programs were also analyzed by age (Figure 15), and by presence of children in the household (Figure 16).

- By Age. Those under the age of 35 showed a strong desire for community events (91 percent), and this was also the most selected option by those aged 35-54 (79 percent). Respondents over the age of 55 most often selected concerts and live performances (75 percent). Those over the age of 55 reported more need for adult programs (non-sports) while respondents under the age of 35 expressed more need for adult athletic leagues, youth athletic leagues, youth child programming, and family programs.
- By Presence of Children in Household. Many of the differences in program selection by age are also correlated with the presence of children in the household. Households with children are more likely to express a need for swim lessons/aquatic programs (69 percent), family programs (60 percent), summer youth camps (57 percent), youth athletic leagues (58 percent), after school programs (33 percent), young child programming (32 percent), non-sport youth programs (28 percent), and teen programs (26 percent).

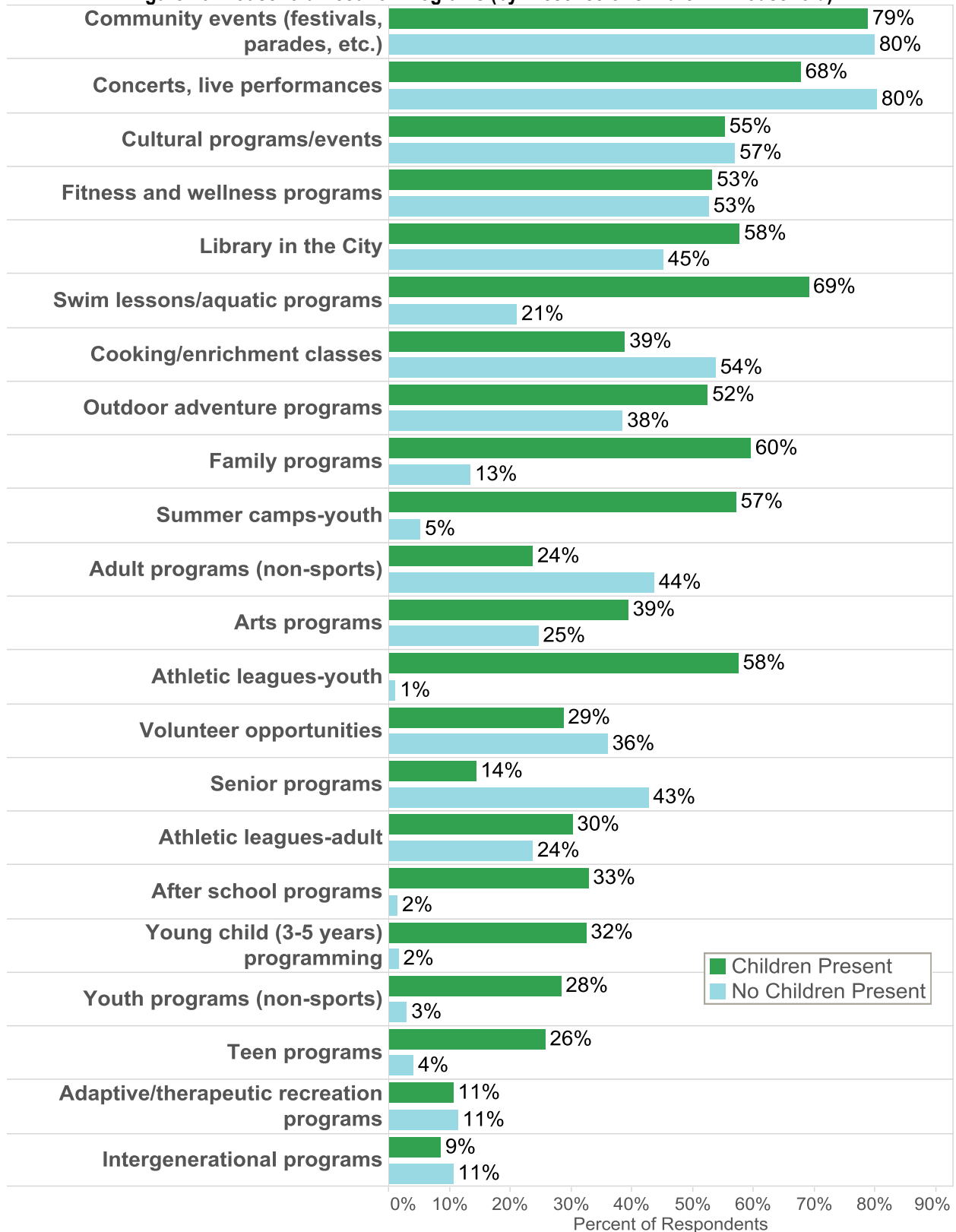
**Figure 14: Household Need for Programs**

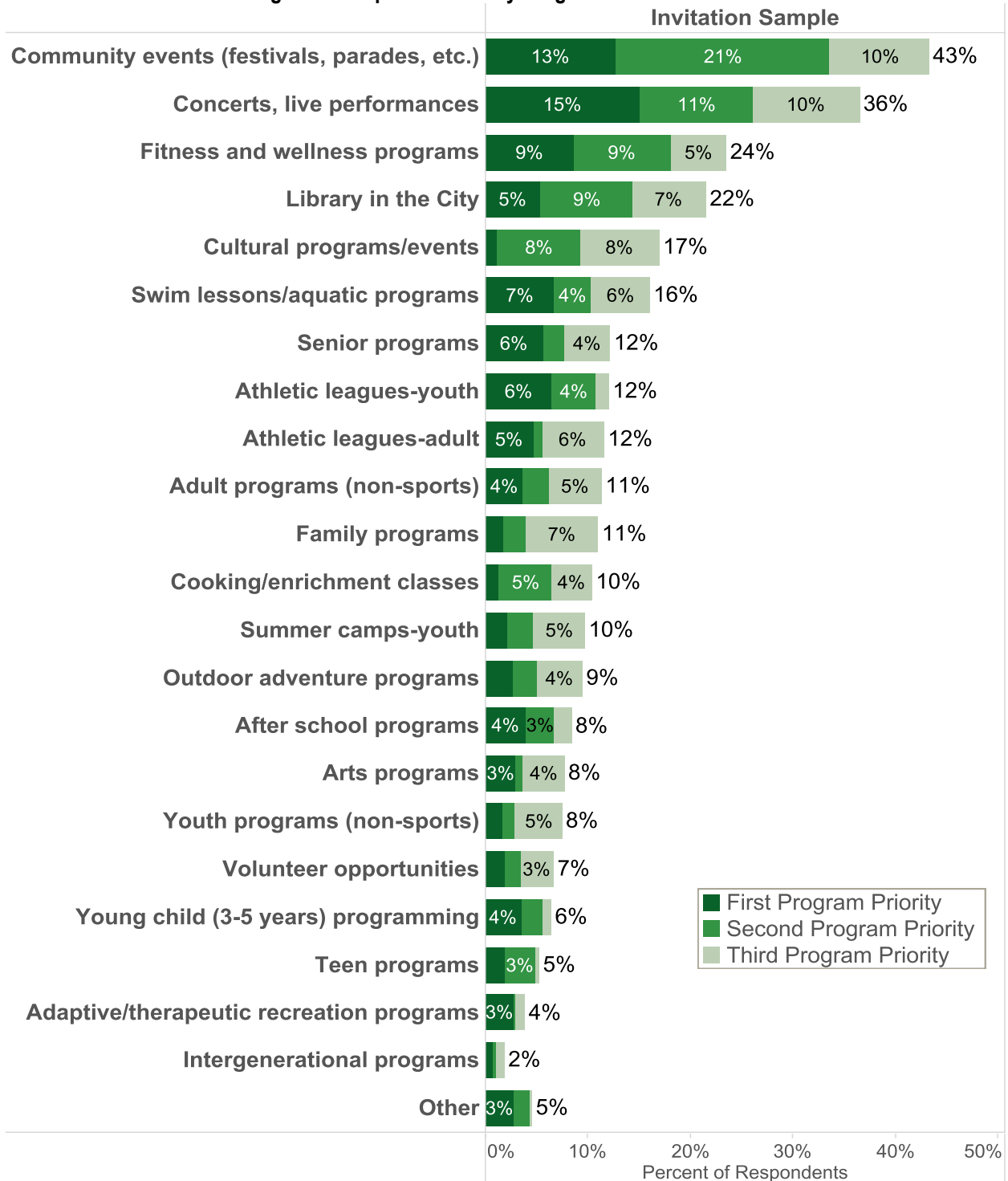


**Figure 15: Household Need for Programs (by Age)**



**Figure 16: Household Need for Programs (by Presence of Children in Household)**



**Figure 17: Top Three Priority Programs for Households**


## VALUES AND VISION

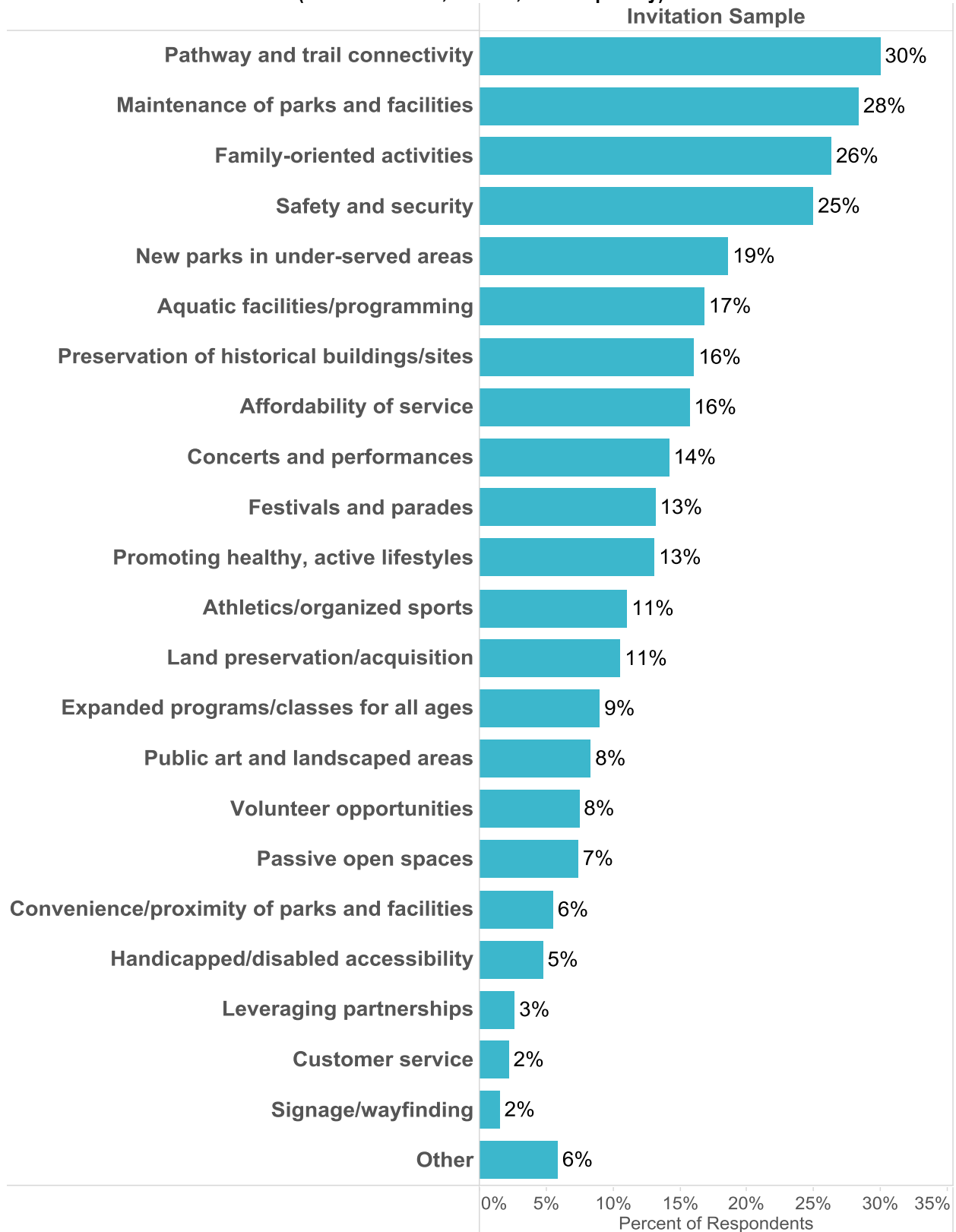
Respondents were asked to identify the top three community values or issues that Manassas should focus on improving from a list of twenty-two potential areas. Figure 18 illustrates the share of respondents who chose each of the items as one of their top three priorities in aggregate.

As shown, the areas that invitation sample respondents most want focused on are pathway and trail connectivity (30 percent), maintenance of parks and facilities (28 percent), family-oriented activities (26 percent), and safety and security (25 percent).

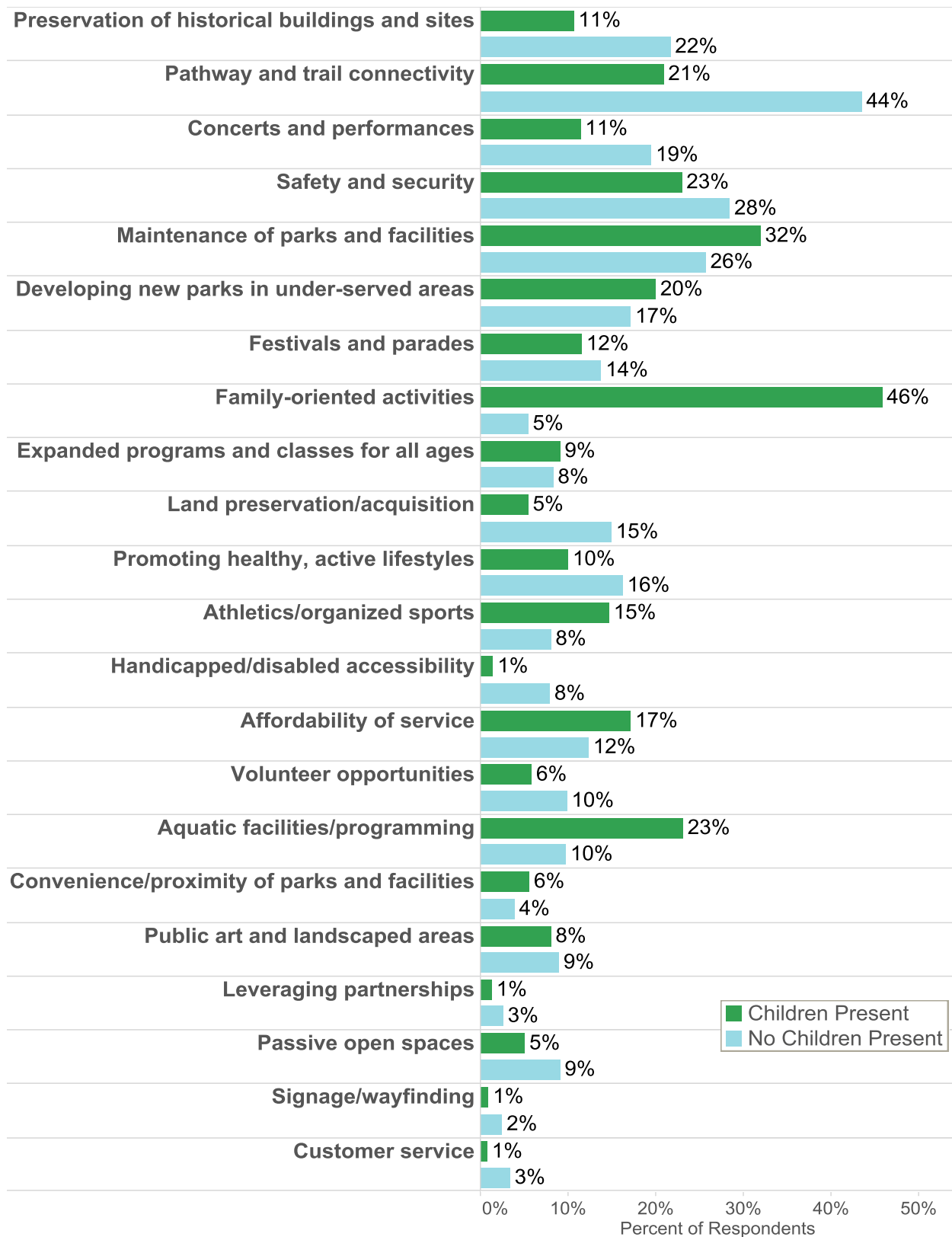
Invitation responses were also analyzed by presence of children in the household (Figure 19) and by annual household income (Figure 20):

- By Presence of Children in Household. Households with children present placed family-oriented activities as their top priority (46 percent) and were more likely than households without children to prioritize aquatic facilities/programming, maintenance of parks and facilities, and athletics/organized sports. Households without children placed pathway and trail connectivity (44 percent) as their top priority and were more likely to prioritize preservation of historical buildings and sites, concerts and performances, and land preservation/acquisition.
- By Annual Household Income. When segmented by income, there were a few areas of difference between higher and lower income houses. Lower income households prioritized affordability of service along with athletics/organized sports more often than higher income households. Higher income households prioritized festivals and parades and promoting active lifestyles more often than other households.

**Figure 18: Top Three Areas to Focus on Improving  
(selected as first, second, or third priority)**

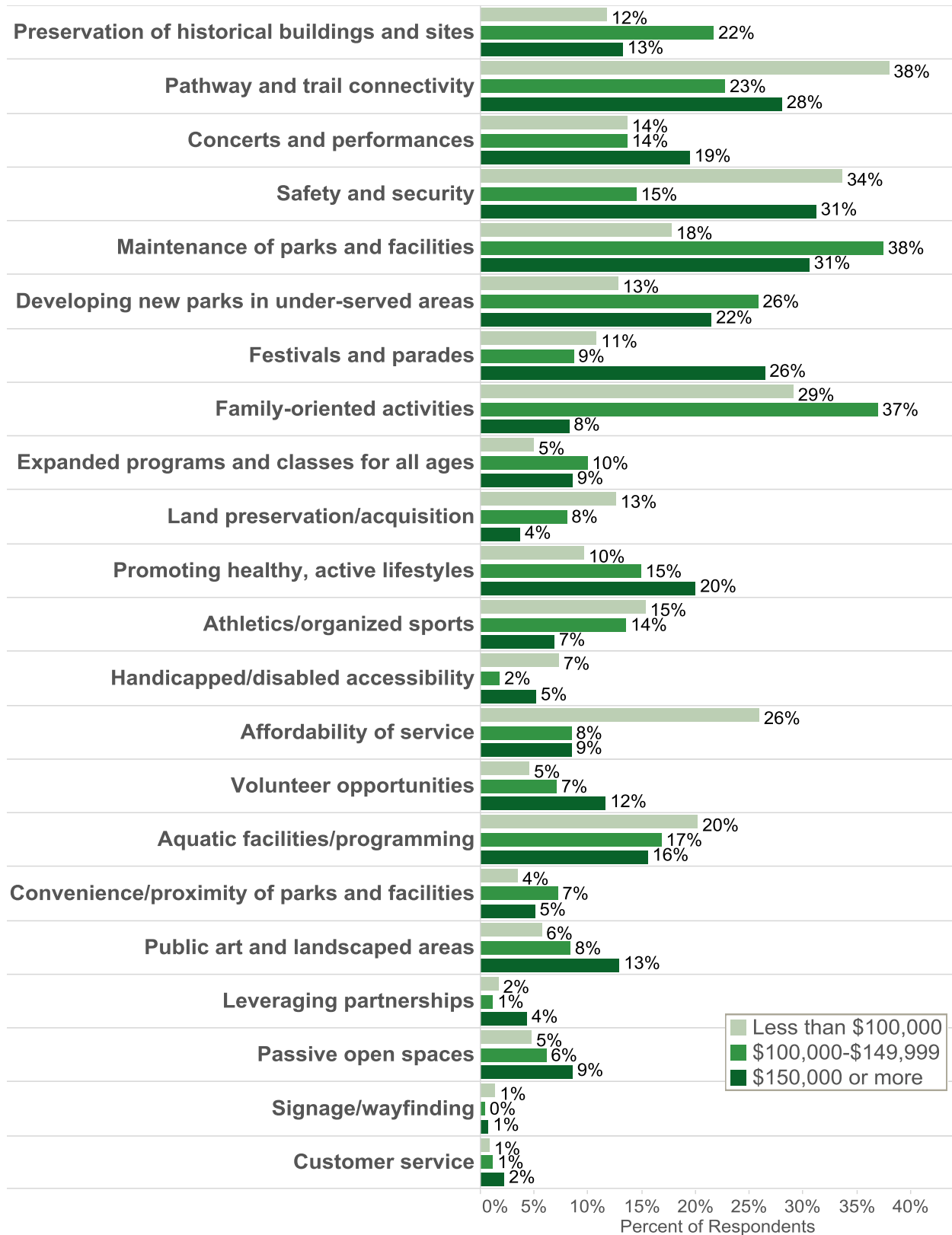


**Figure 19: Top Three Areas to Focus on Improving (by Presence of Children in Household)  
(selected as first, second, or third priority)**





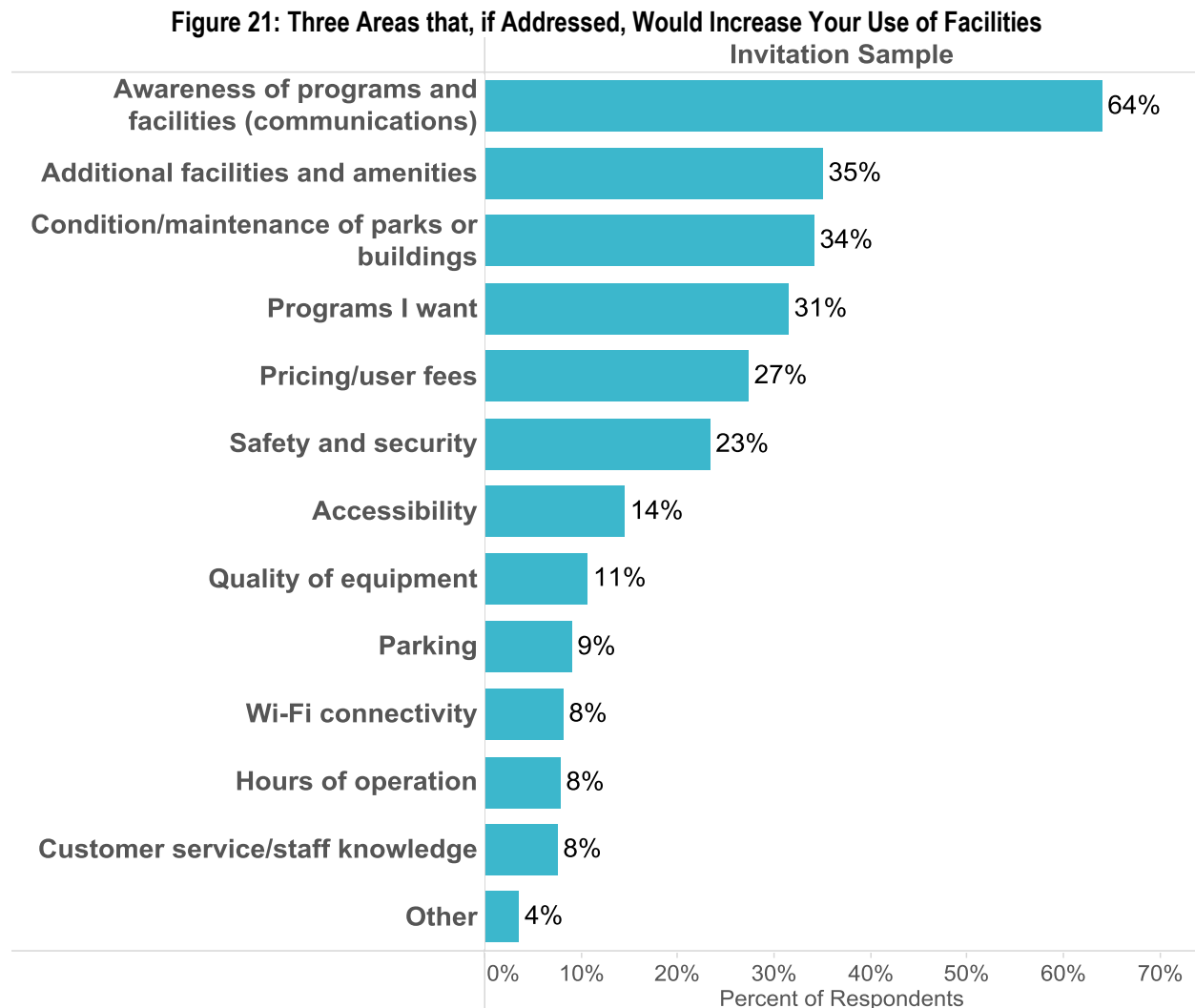
**Figure 20: Top Three Areas to Focus on Improving (by Annual Household Income)**  
(selected as first, second, or third priority)



## FUTURE FACILITIES, AMENITIES, AND SERVICES

### Most Important Areas that Would Increase Use of Facilities

Respondents selected the three most important areas that, if addressed by Manassas, would increase their use of public parks, recreation, and cultural facilities. As shown in Figure 21 below, awareness of programs and facilities (communications) was the top area that could increase utilization of facilities (64 percent). Additional facilities and amenities was selected by 35 percent of respondents, condition/maintenance of parks or buildings was selected by 34 percent of respondents, and desired programming was selected by 31 percent. Few respondents selected parking (9 percent), Wi-Fi connectivity (8 percent), hours of operation (8 percent), or customer service/staff knowledge (8 percent), indicating that these areas are not barriers for participation and/or are already adequately provided.



## Future Facilities to Add, Expand, or Improve

Respondents were provided a list of twenty indoor and outdoor facilities and asked to rate the importance of adding, expanding, or improving those facilities over the next 5-10 years. They were also asked to select their top three priorities to be added, expanded, or improved upon in Manassas. This section discusses the findings from these two questions.

Importance of Adding, Expanding, or Improving Future Facilities. On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means “not at all important” and 5 means “very important,” respondents rated the importance of adding, expanding, or improving the twenty potential future facilities over the next five to ten years in Manassas. The percentage of invitation respondents selecting each rating is depicted in Figure 22 to follow where facilities are sorted by their midpoint importance rating. The average importance rating for each item is shown in Figure 23.

The highest importance was given to improving park amenities (4.1 average, 81 percent of respondents rating a 4 or 5) and pathways and trails (4.0 average, 73 percent of respondents rating a 4 or 5). This was followed by the community/recreation center (3.8 average), lights for outdoor athletic facilities (3.8 average), library, shade structures in parks, and bike lanes (3.7 average each). Disc golf was the only option to be rated, on average, as unimportant.

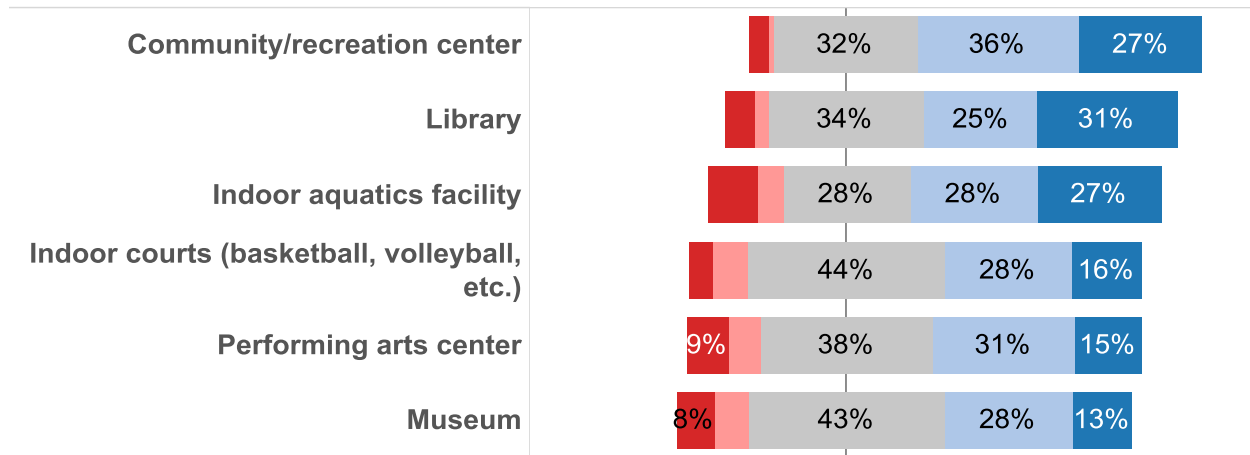
Top Three Priorities to Add, Expand, or Improve. Using the same list of facilities, respondents chose their first, second, and third priorities for the most important future facilities to their households. Figure 24 illustrates the percentage of invitation respondents who selected each facility as their first, second, and third priority, ranked by the combined total to show prioritization of the facility overall.

Pathways and trails and improved park amenities again topped the list. Pathways and trails were rated as a top priority by 39 percent of respondents (14 percent first priority, 11 percent second priority, 13 percent third priority), and improved park amenities were a priority for 36 percent of respondents (12 percent first priority, 12 percent second priority, 11 percent third priority). Bike lanes were given priority by 24 percent of respondents, dog parks by 23 percent, and indoor aquatics facilities by 20 percent.

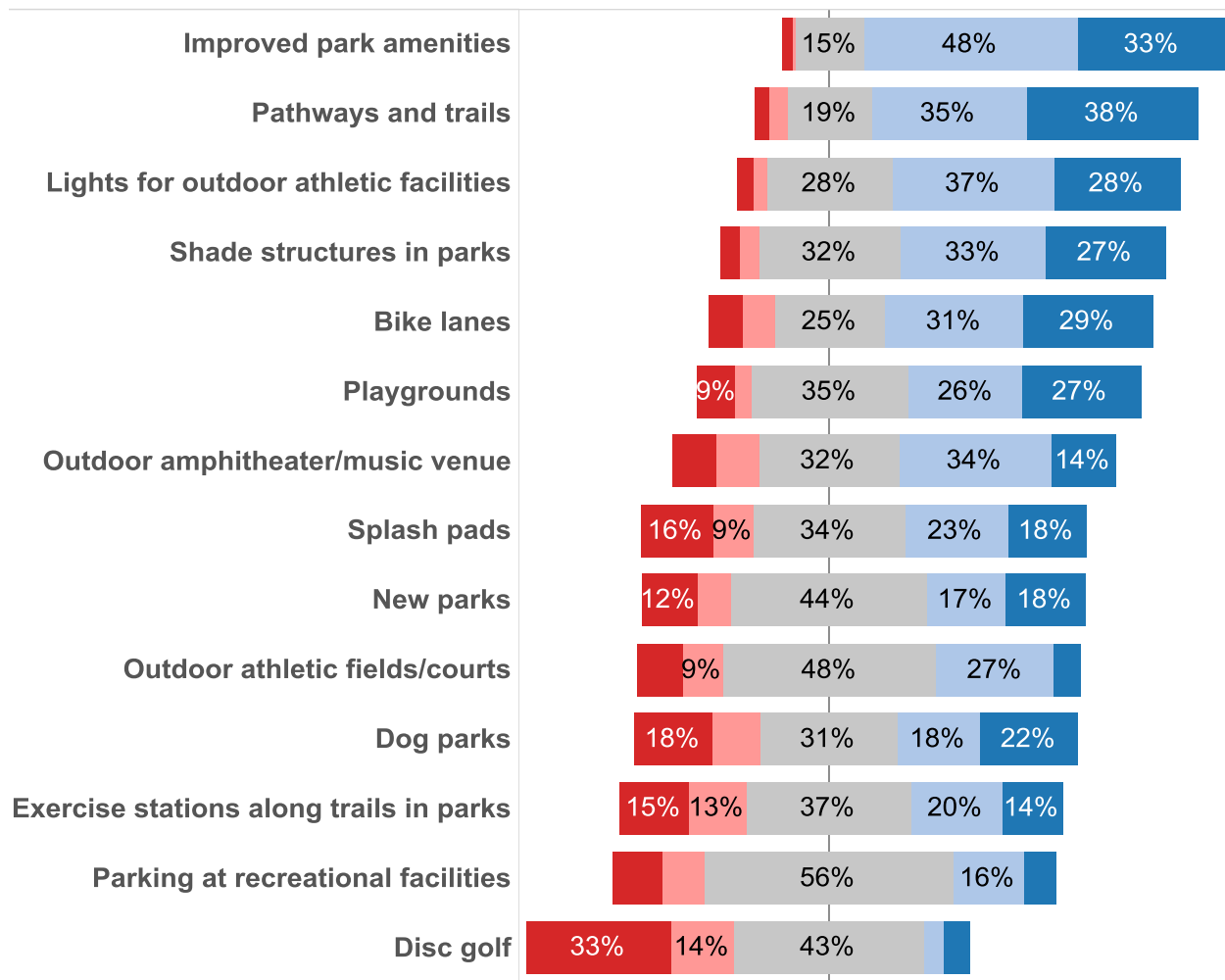
Invitation responses for this question were also analyzed by presence of children in the household (Figure 25).

- By Presence of Children in Household. Respondents with children present in their household showed a stronger interest in improved park amenities (42 percent versus 28 percent), playgrounds (27 percent versus 4 percent), and splash pads (21 percent versus 3 percent) compared to households with no children present. They also reported more desire for indoor aquatics facilities (24 percent versus 14 percent). Households without children showed a stronger interest in pathways and trails (43 percent), though households with kids also rated trails as important (35 percent).

**Figure 22: Importance of Adding, Expanding, or Improving Facilities**  
**Invitation Sample Only**  
*Indoor Facilities*

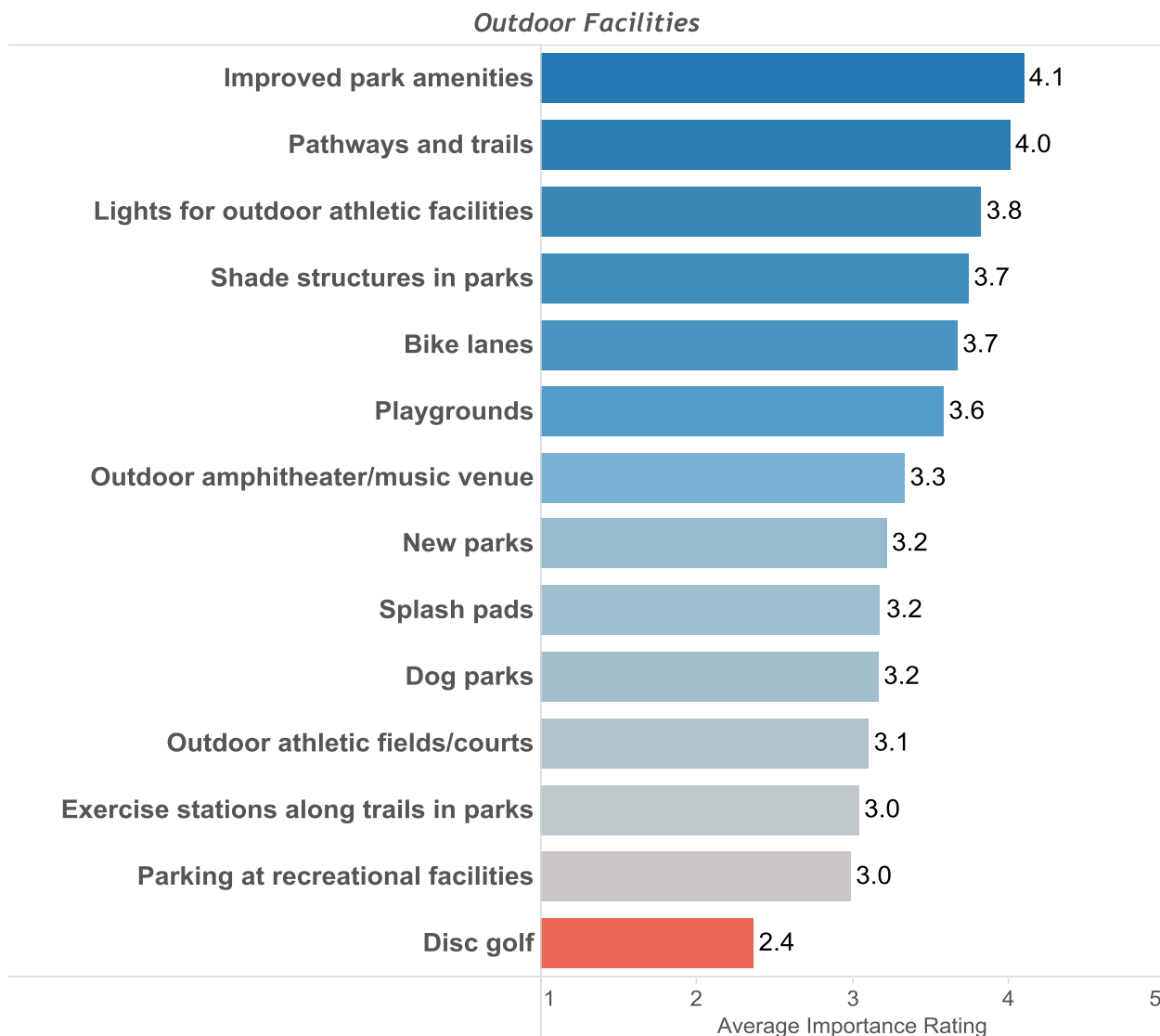
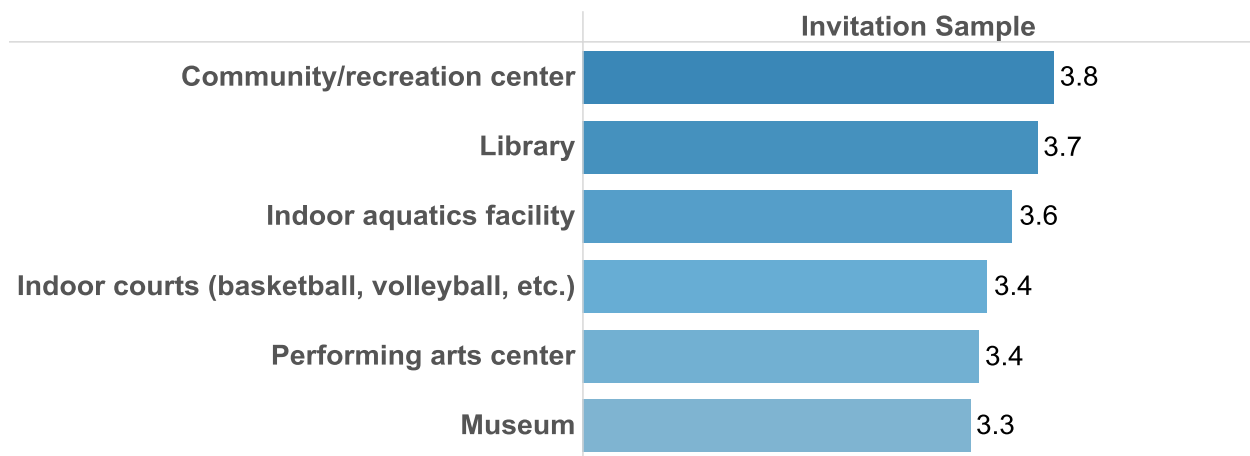


*Outdoor Facilities*

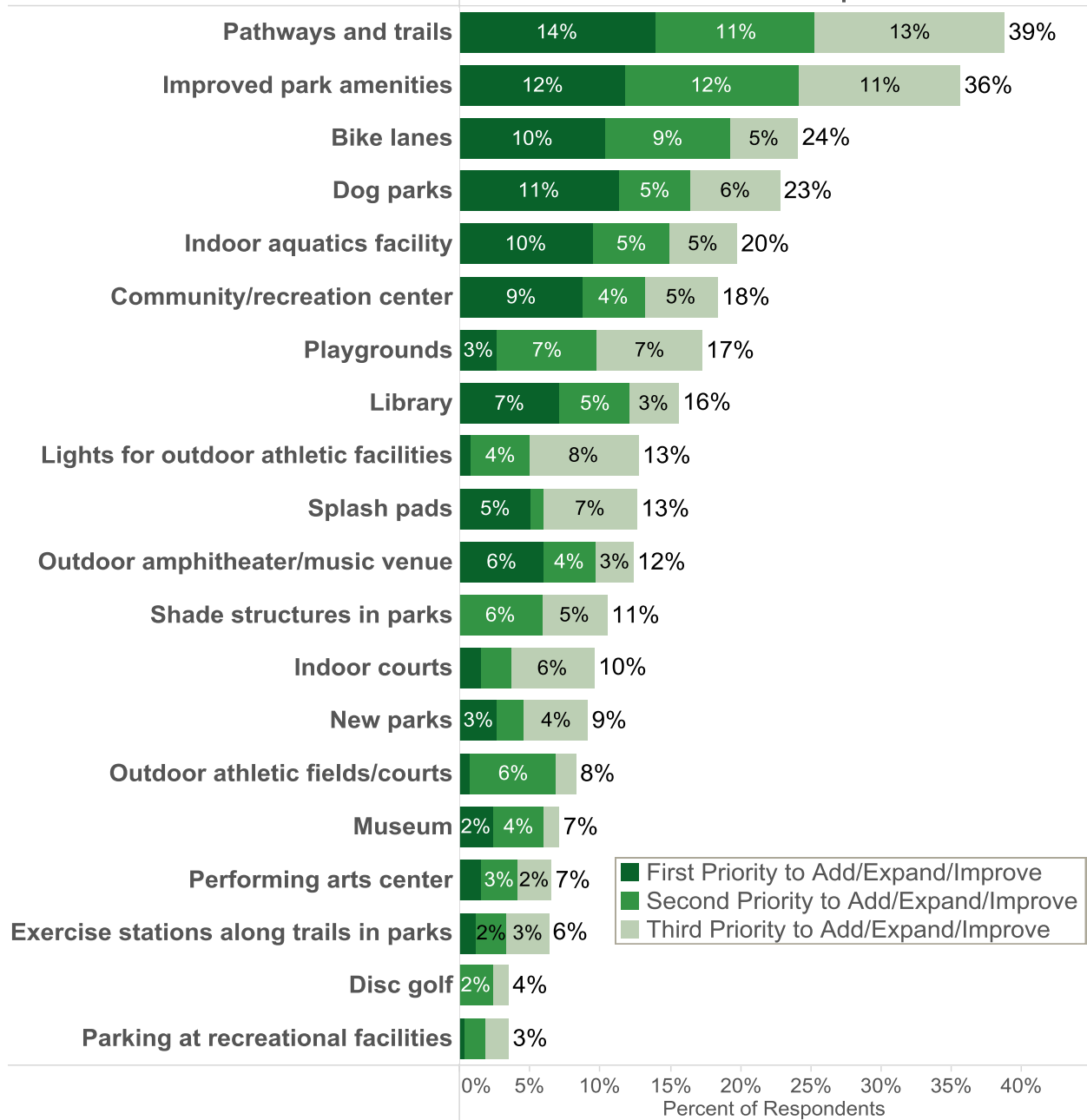


■ 1=Not at All Important   
 ■ 3=Neutral   
 ■ 5=Very Important  
■ 2   
 ■ 4

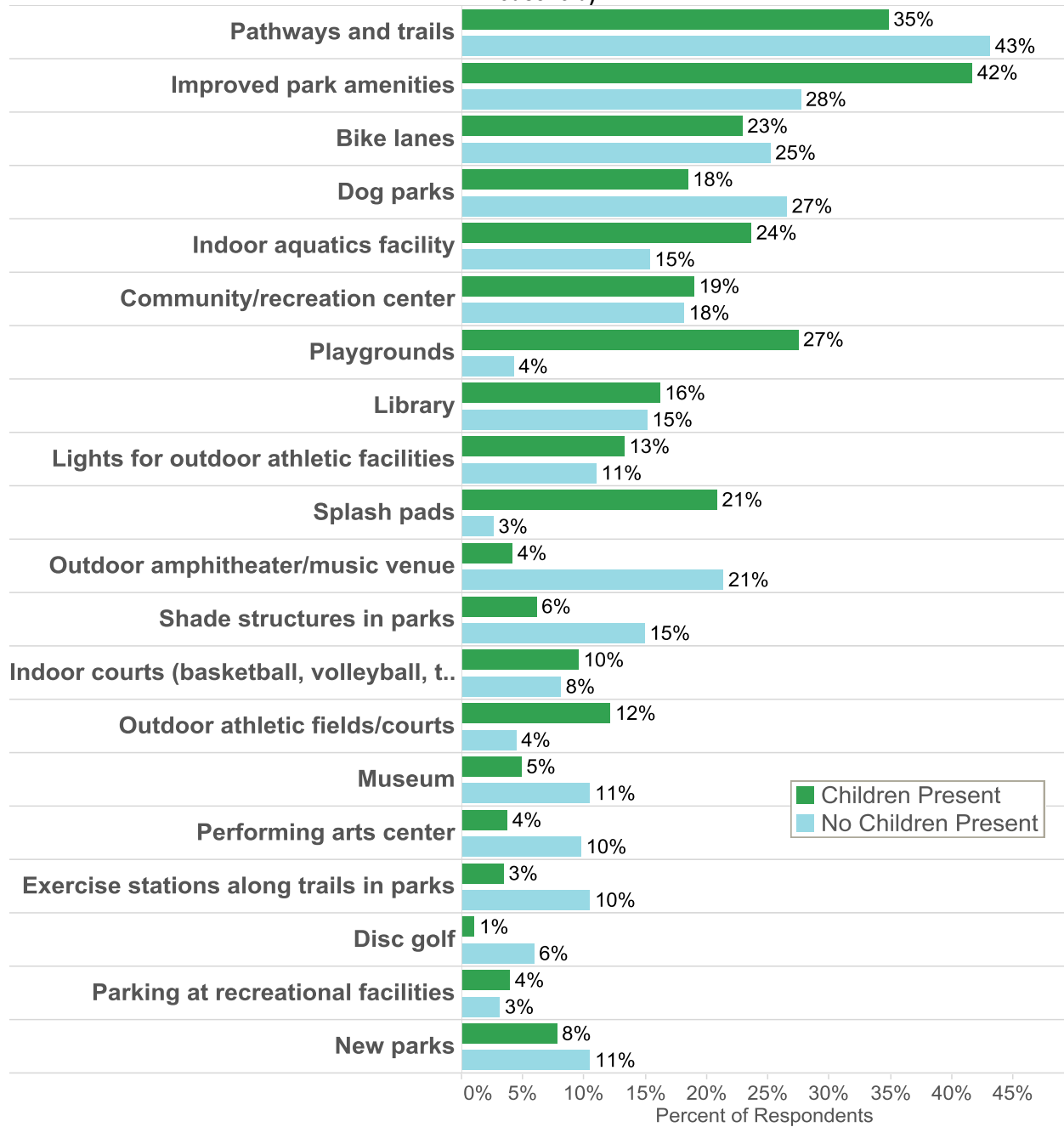
**Figure 23: Importance of Adding, Expanding, or Improving Facilities (Average Rating)**  
*Indoor Facilities*



**Figure 24: Top Three Most Important Facilities to Add, Expand, or Improve**  
Invitation Sample



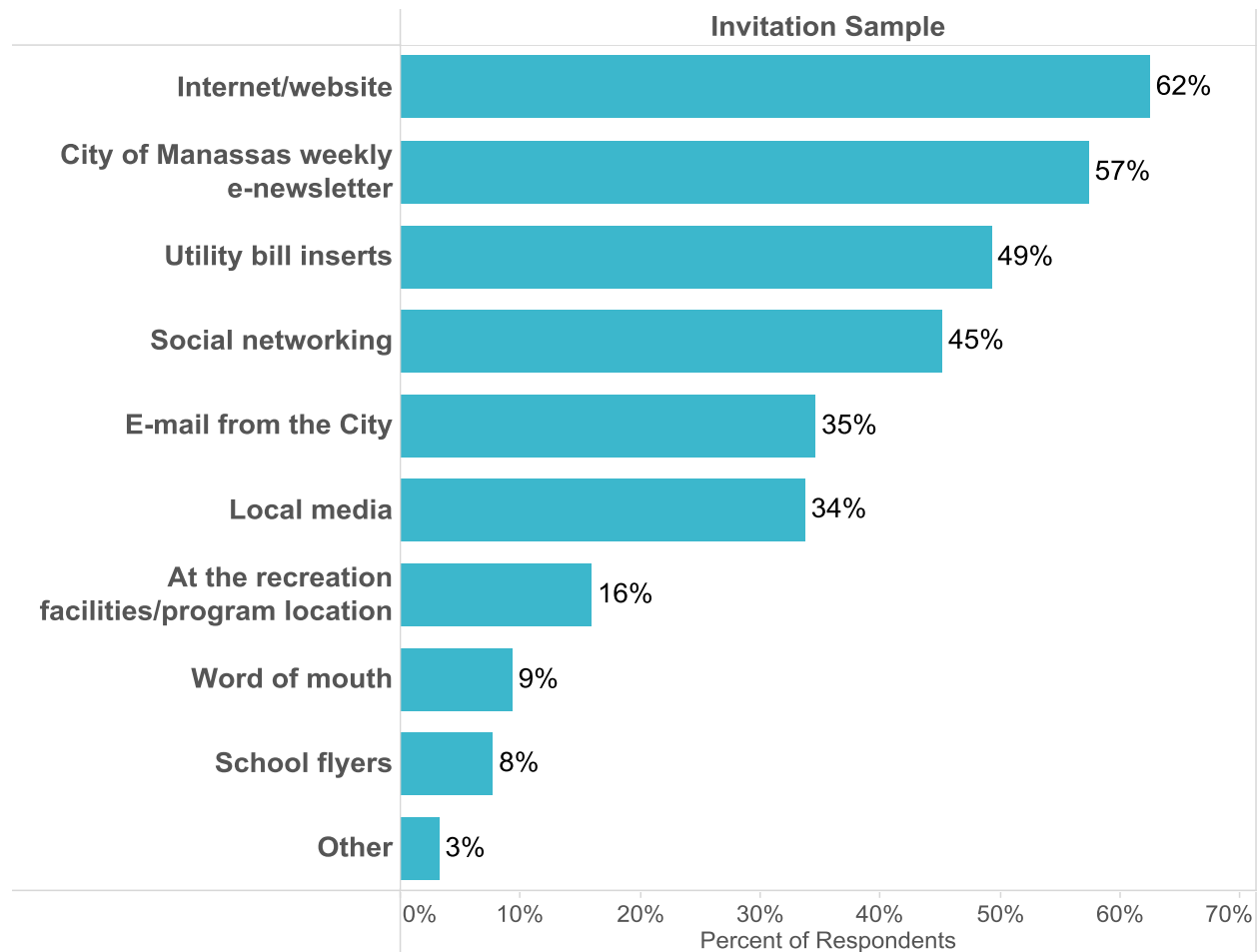
**Figure 25: Top Three Most Important Facilities to Add, Expand, or Improve (by Presence of Children in Household)**



## COMMUNICATION

When asked to identify best methods of communication for receiving information about parks and recreation offerings, respondents were most likely to select websites (62 percent). This was followed by the City of Manassas weekly e-newsletter (57 percent), utility bill inserts (49 percent), and social networks (45 percent).

**Figure 26: Best Method for Reaching You**





## FINANCIAL CHOICES/FEES

In a final section of the survey, respondents answered questions about hypothetical financial choices. These questions included an evaluation of willingness to support potential funding mechanisms, the impact of potential fee increases on participation, and funding allocation choices. The results from each of these questions are detailed below.

Support of Various Funding Mechanisms. It was explained that \$80/year of the average taxpayer's real estate taxes goes towards Parks and Recreation, Museum and Library services and facilities. Respondents were then asked how willing they would be to support various levels of real estate tax increases, ranging from a \$5 increase to a \$20 increase. They were given a scale from 1 to 5 where 1 is "definitely not support" and 5 is "definitely support."

The lowest increase in real estate taxes received a majority of support; 82 percent of respondents said they would probably or definitely support a \$5 increase with an average rating of 4.3. The level of support decreased with each increase in the dollar amount. An increase of \$10 a year still received a majority (66 percent) support with an average rating of 3.8. Increases of \$15 and \$20 did not receive a majority of support and had average ratings of 3.4 and 3.2 respectively.

Impact of Fee Increases. Respondents were asked what impact, if any, fee increases would have on their current level of participation in programs, services, or use of facilities. Over half of invitation respondents believed that moderate fee increases would not limit their ability to participate (54 percent). Of those who expected fee increases to impact participation, 17 percent said it would somewhat limit their participation while 11 percent said it would significantly limit their participation. An additional 18 percent said they were uncertain.

Allocation of Funding. Lastly, respondents were given the opportunity to allocate a hypothetical \$100 across parks, recreation, and cultural facilities, services and programs using \$5 increment. They were provided ten potential categories for funding, and Figure 29 depicts the average amount allocated to each category. Overall, invitation respondents allocated the largest amount of funding toward improving, renovating, and/or maintaining existing park facilities with an average allocation of \$16 out of \$100. Expanding aquatics and additional pathways/trails both received an average allocation of \$13.

Invitation responses for this question were also analyzed by age (Figure 30) and by household income (Figure 31 and Figure 32).

- By Age. Respondents under the age of 35 allocated the most money to improvements, renovations, and/or maintenance of existing park facilities and expanding aquatics (\$21 average allocation for both) and more than other age groups. Respondents over the age of 55 were more likely than younger respondents to allocate towards improving, expanding, or maintaining cultural facilities and a new/expanded community/recreation center (\$14 average allocation and \$11 average allocation respectively).

- By Household Income. As might be expected, households earning less than \$100,000 annually show less support for all levels of potential tax increases compared to higher income households. At the same time, households earning less than \$100,000 annually did show a majority support for an increase of \$5/year (76 percent reporting they would probably or definitely support the increase) and \$10/year (59 percent would probably or definitely support). Support dips to 31 to 37 percent for higher tax increases for these households. Higher income households reported a majority of support for all potential levels

Potential increases in user fees would likely limit the participation level of many households earning less than \$100,000 annually. Twenty-one percent reported that a moderate increase would somewhat limit their participation while 16 percent reported it would significantly limit participation (37 percent overall who reported potentially being limited by fee increases). Of households earning over \$100,000, 19 percent said a fee increase would somewhat or significantly limit their participation.

Figure 27: Willingness to Support Increases in Real Estate Taxes

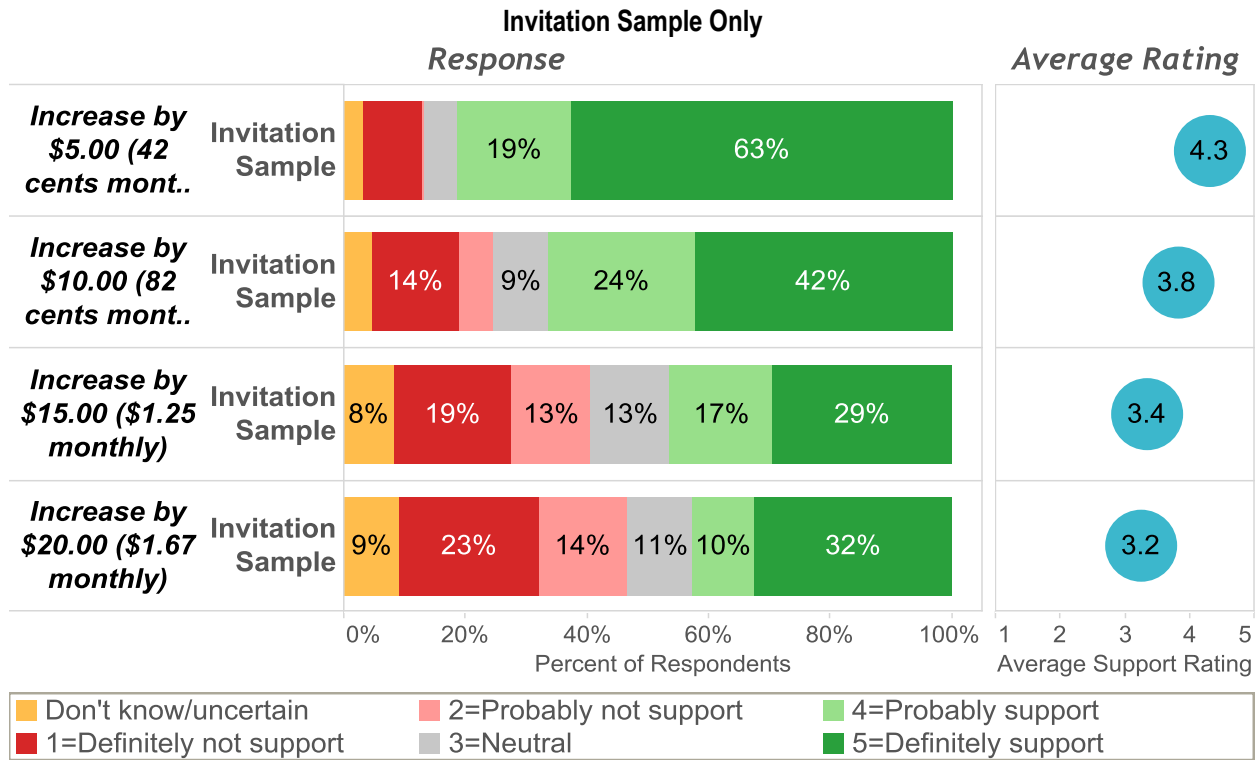


Figure 28: Potential Impact of Fee Increases on Current Level of Participation

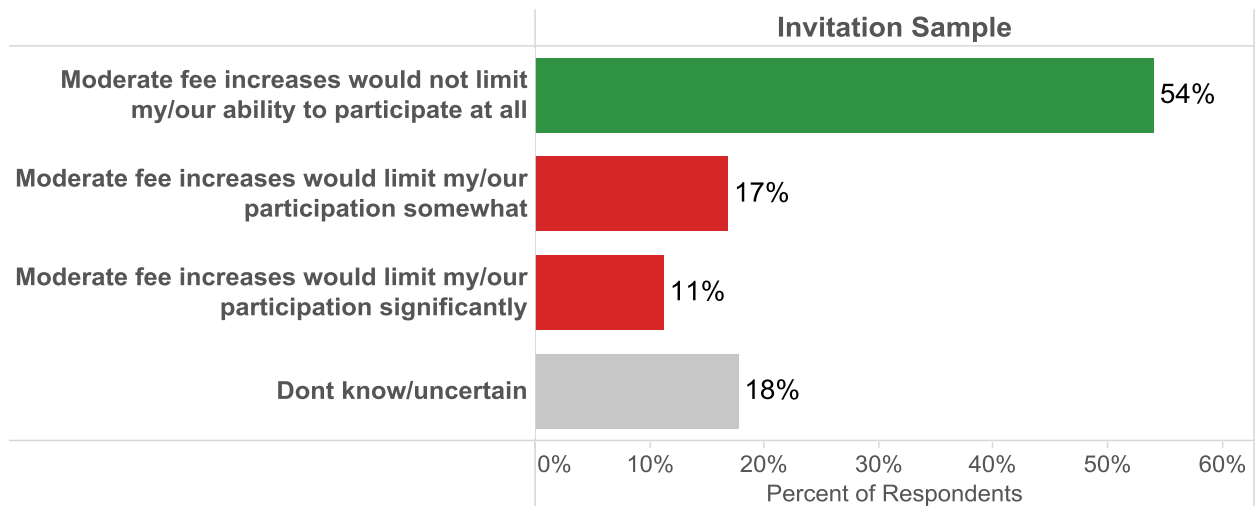
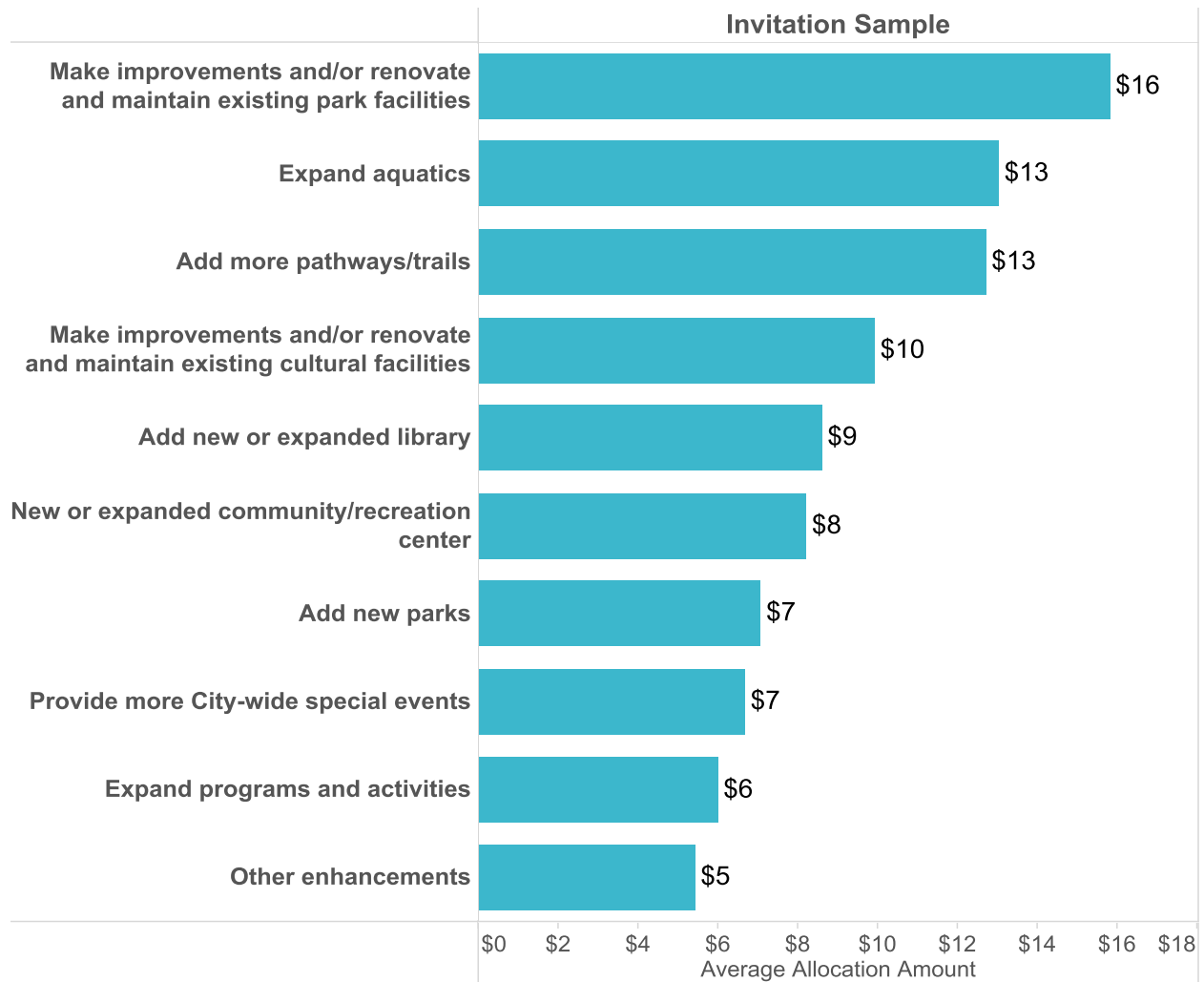


Figure 29: Allocation of Funding Towards Facilities/Services/Programs (Average Allocation)



**Figure 30: Allocation of Funding Towards Facilities/Services/Programs (Average Allocation) by Age**

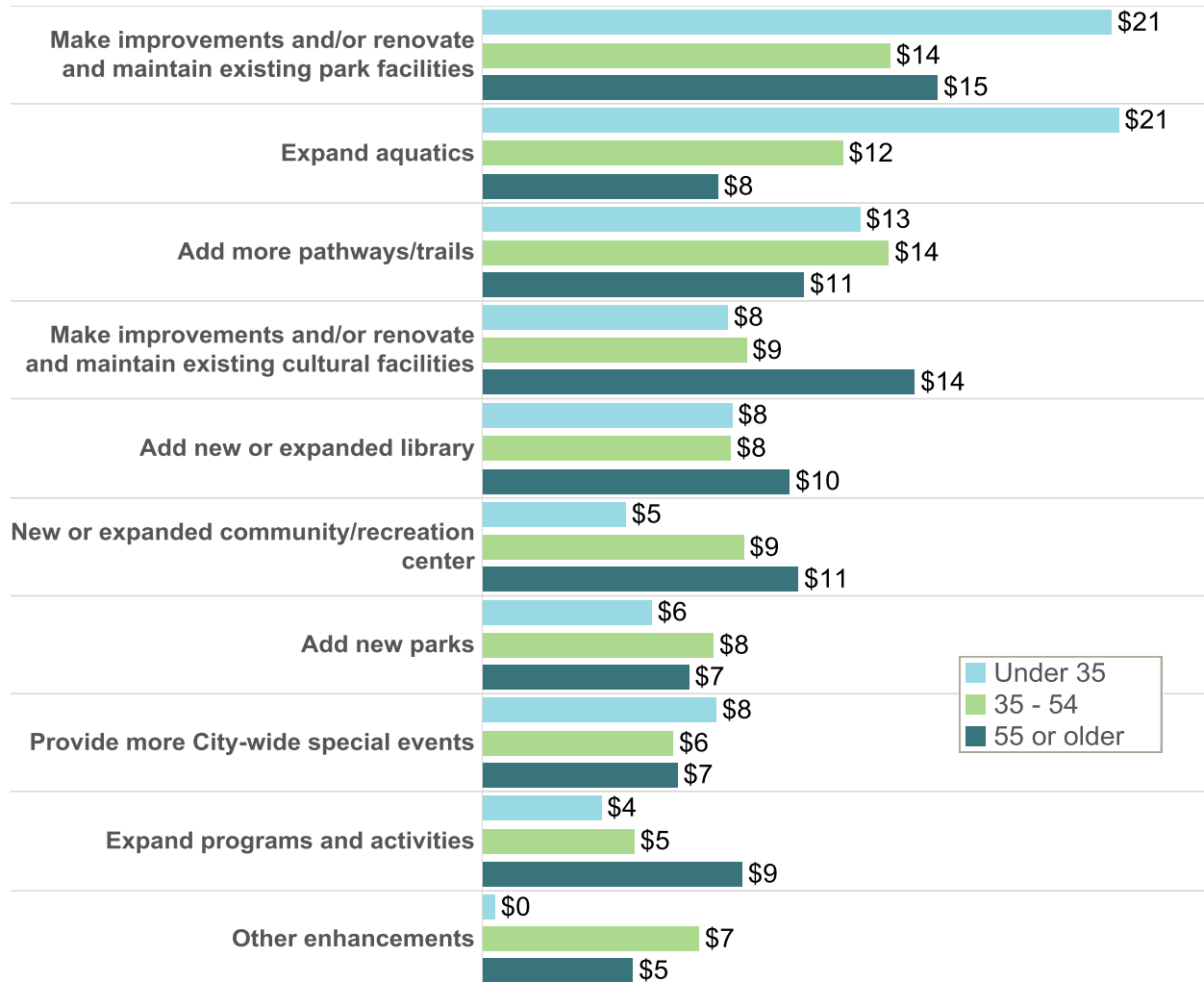
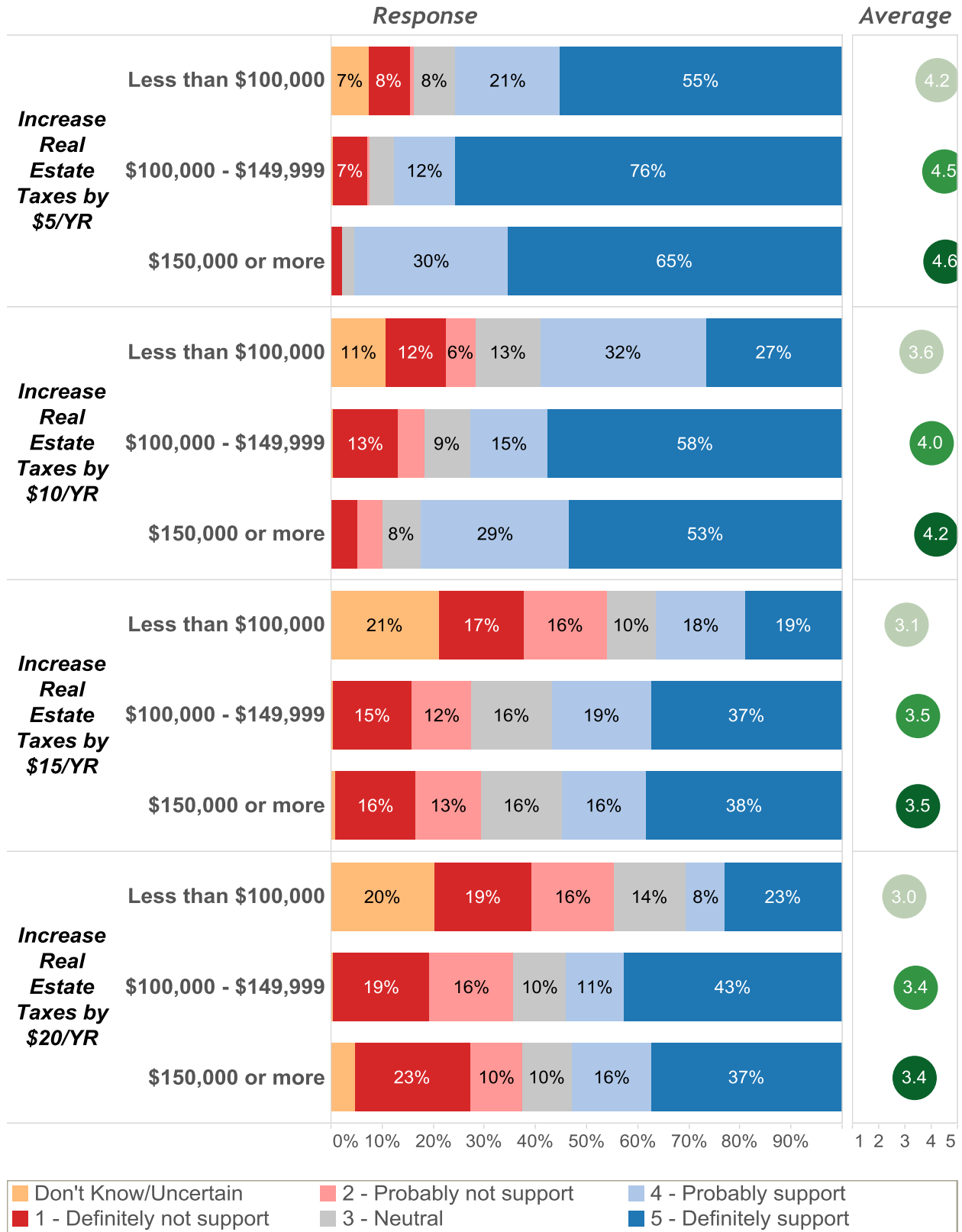
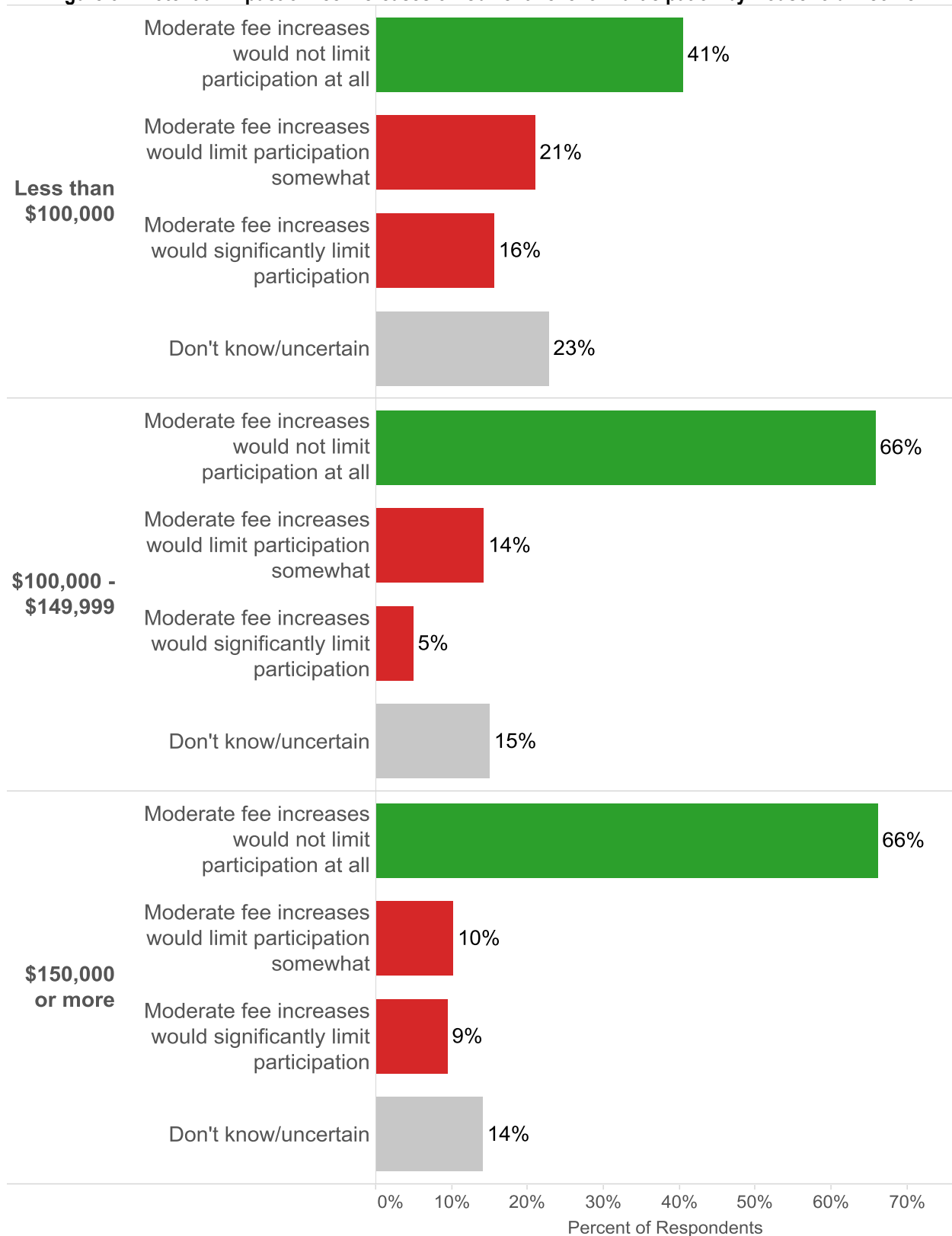


Figure 31: Willingness to Support Increases in Real Estate Taxes by Household Income



**Figure 32: Potential Impact of Fee Increases on Current Level of Participation by Household Income**



## ADDITIONAL OPEN-ENDED COMMENTS

At the end of the survey, respondents were offered an opportunity to provide any additional comments or suggestions to help Manassas better serve the needs of their household and the community. Comments are provided as an appendix section and should be read in their entirety in order to grasp the full breadth and depth of opinions. Some comments from the invitation sample are provided below for illustration and are grouped by common themes:

### ***Additional facilities, including a community/recreation center, trails, and aquatics:***

- Since Manassas Park and PW County already have indoor facilities that address some of these "wish to have" - perhaps a better partnership and awareness of what is already available might be cost saving where \$ could be used elsewhere for parks, etc.
- Would love to see a splash pad and more activities for babies and toddlers, as well as better maintenance of trails (ex: trash piling up by trash cans/being dumped near them on Winters Branch Road).
- I would like to see more emphasis on health and fitness i.e. bike racks, trails, facilities, more local aquatics with more lanes open to all, not just swim teams. More fitness opportunities for seniors and more signage, bike lanes.
- Kinsley Mill Park needs a public restroom and a fix on the trails.
- I think a splash pad would be great! My children (ages 11, 4, 2) all enjoy going somewhere that has one.
- City has nice facilities- improvement on parking would be a plus. Not a lot needs to be added- dump bike lanes.
- One pool in Manassas City (public) is a crime.
- Lights along park from Hastings to Dean School.
- As I mentioned in an earlier comment box; maintain the partnerships with PW county and GMU which give us the Freedom Center and the Hylton Arts center. Maintain our partnership with the county for the PWC library. I would like to see a community center which includes spaces for small clubs, athletic and other-wise, that cannot find spaces to meet or practice. I know of square dancing groups, fencing clubs, tai chi groups and others that meet in odd places at odd times because it is difficult to find space at reasonable rates.



***Increased awareness and improved communications:***

- Stay "cutting edge" with PR, marketing of park services. Instant easy info. Integrate all marketing platforms.
- I had no idea City of Manassas had adult programs. More awareness and communication about them would be nice. The only time I have interaction with the city is when I go pay utilities, so that will be a good place to promote them!
- Sadly the info in the utility bills is often outdated by the time received.
- The city does not promote the connection with Freedom Center at all. This needs to be addressed as it is supposed to be a partnership with GMU and PWC.
- The info in the utility bills are ALWAYS outdated by almost a MONTH! Any new parks should be neighborhood accessible.
- Why is the calendar always out of date in our utility bills? It is not helpful.
- Put events in electronic newsletter a month before event. Too many events have already happened by time electric bill arrives.
- I'd really like to have more information on craft/art classes available. That would include stained glass, re-upholstering, and more.
- We love the city wide activities and attend them regularly and the museum but are not as aware of the other opportunities. Perhaps some of these services are more available than I already know.
- Most of the time, I am unaware of events that are occurring in the city...The information that comes in the monthly utility bill is about a month late. Most of the events in the flyer have already past...and I open my bill immediately upon receipt. It would be great if the information could be sent a month earlier.
- The parks are not well advertised. Most of the parks we know about are in the County not the City.

***Additional parks and greenspace for a variety of activities:***

- Green space/parks are most important. In the past 5 years several lots have been for sale that should have been purchased for city.
- There are no places in the city to go with your family and have a little cook out and play in the park. Can't cook out unless you have a house.
- Quality dog park (downtown).
- It would be great to have a wooden playground like Fantasy Land in Front Royal
- Open Lake Manassas! This is a resource sitting idle. Stop spending city money to have police patrol it. Open the lake! Sell city boat permits and fishing licenses. Let high school crew teams use it for practice. These activities will not hurt our water supply reservoir!
- There should be a difference between "community" parks where organized recreation can take place and "neighborhood" parks where rec events should be limited or not take place. Those areas should be for the quiet enjoyment of the neighborhood residents.
- We need one or two children's playgrounds in the Cloverhill area- with equipment for toddlers
- More greenspace, well-maintained, with trails, ponds, and fountains would be great. Knowing about everything available would be wonderful too, especially after my retirement (soon).
- New parks are important to the quality of life. Not only is fresh air, wildlife, quiet spaces important, so is fitness. The Hylton Performing Arts Center meets the cultural needs as does the Freedom Center. I don't see the need for an aquatic center (there is an indoor private pool on Godwin toward Hastings as well). History is important to preserving as well.
- Safe, non-secluded areas dedicated to play areas where parents, grandparents, caregivers can take preschool aged children that are not attached to schools and therefore can't be used until after school hours PLUS safe running/biking trails.
- The playground area in my neighborhood has been bulldozed and is a mud pit in Oakenshaw development. Why? No flyers, no E-mail, nothing through the bills- ZERO communication.

***Upkeep and safety:***

- The biggest problem in my neighborhood for the last 8 years has been vandalism like graffiti on houses, fences, HOA property. Also we have trouble with breaking and entering, driving while drinking, slashing car tires, and breaking house and bar windows. ANYTHING the city could do to stop this would improve my neighborhood. Busy kids aren't usually destroying property.
- Adding modern amenities and ADA accessible upkeep, maintenance is top of list
- I live near Weems Park and have a small grandson. The parks have had some improvements but the kids/teens that play there use foul language and never pick up after themselves.
- Most are worn down, not safe and extremely dirty. Manassas needs more reasons for households to go outside. An example of a great place is Mount Trashmore in Virginia Beach.
- Need to address littering, safety, clean & safe public restroom facilities at parks.
- Overall better trash pickup cleaning of park, benches, trashcans, lighting, and security is very important especially our area Byrd Park but throughout the community. I think we have enough parks etc. Georgetown South community could use a nice big playground with great security as well.

***Financial comments, concerns, and suggestions:***

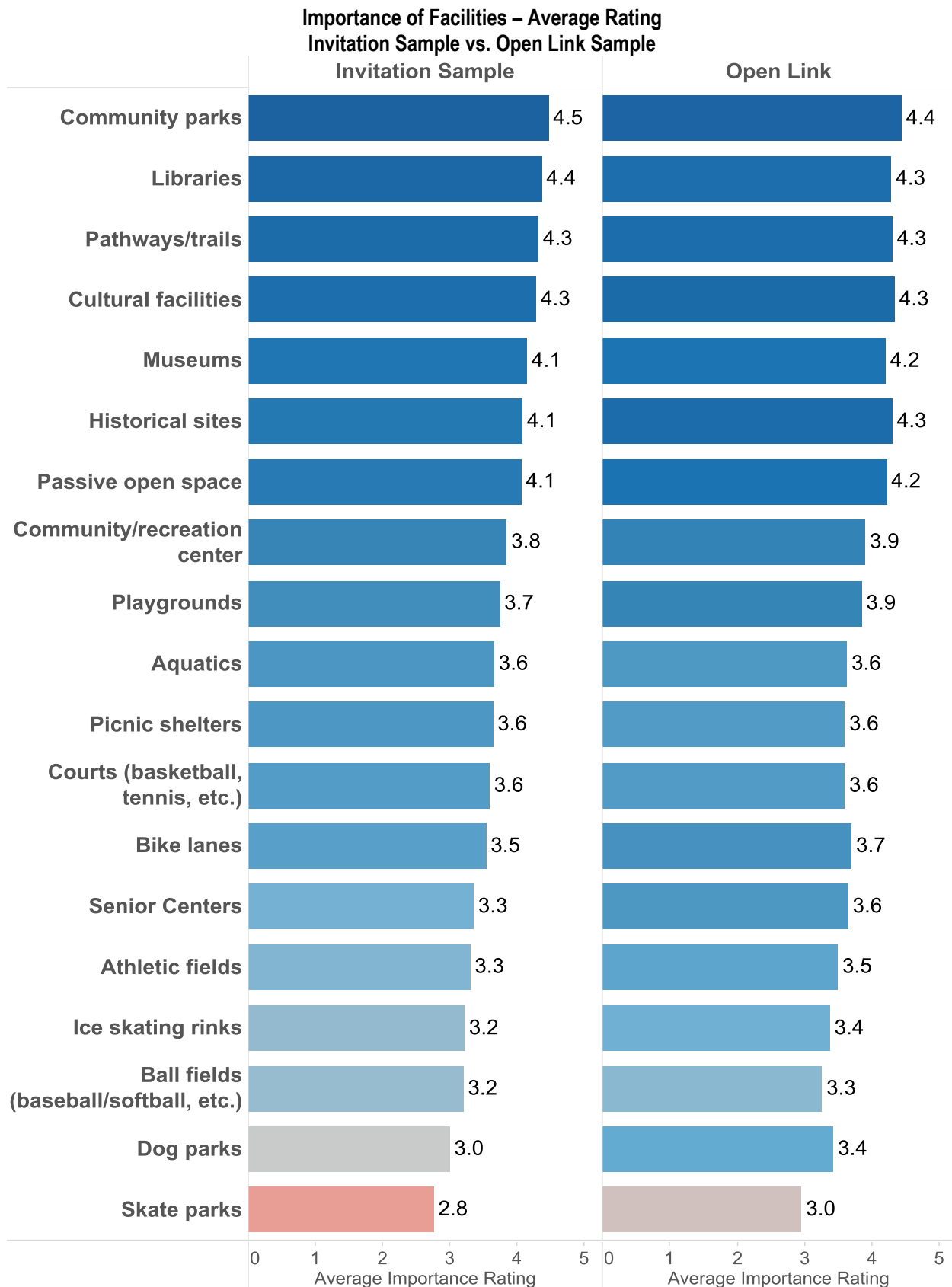
- I would prefer a reallocation of real estate taxes that focuses on quality of life issues like parks and recreation
- Please don't raise our taxes anymore. We have enough facilities and programs. People in this city are expressing taxes are too high and are looking to MOVE.
- Paying for more community programs and facilities (through increased taxes) is an investment in our city and will benefit all residents, even those who do not use those amenities. These elements make our city a desirable place to live and secure our home values.
- Of course everything listed in this survey would be wonderful, IF each were free. However, they are not and would likely require more taxes unless cuts were made. The next survey would be better if areas to be cut were suggested.
- I'm not in favor of more taxes. Fees for the people who use these facilities are more appropriate.
- Manassas Park provides seniors with yearly memberships to their fitness facility for a very modest fee. The Freedom Center is very expensive. The City of Manassas would consider subsidizing seniors and other needy families.
- It is important that those who spend taxpayer funds remember that increasing taxes is only one method of identifying new revenues!

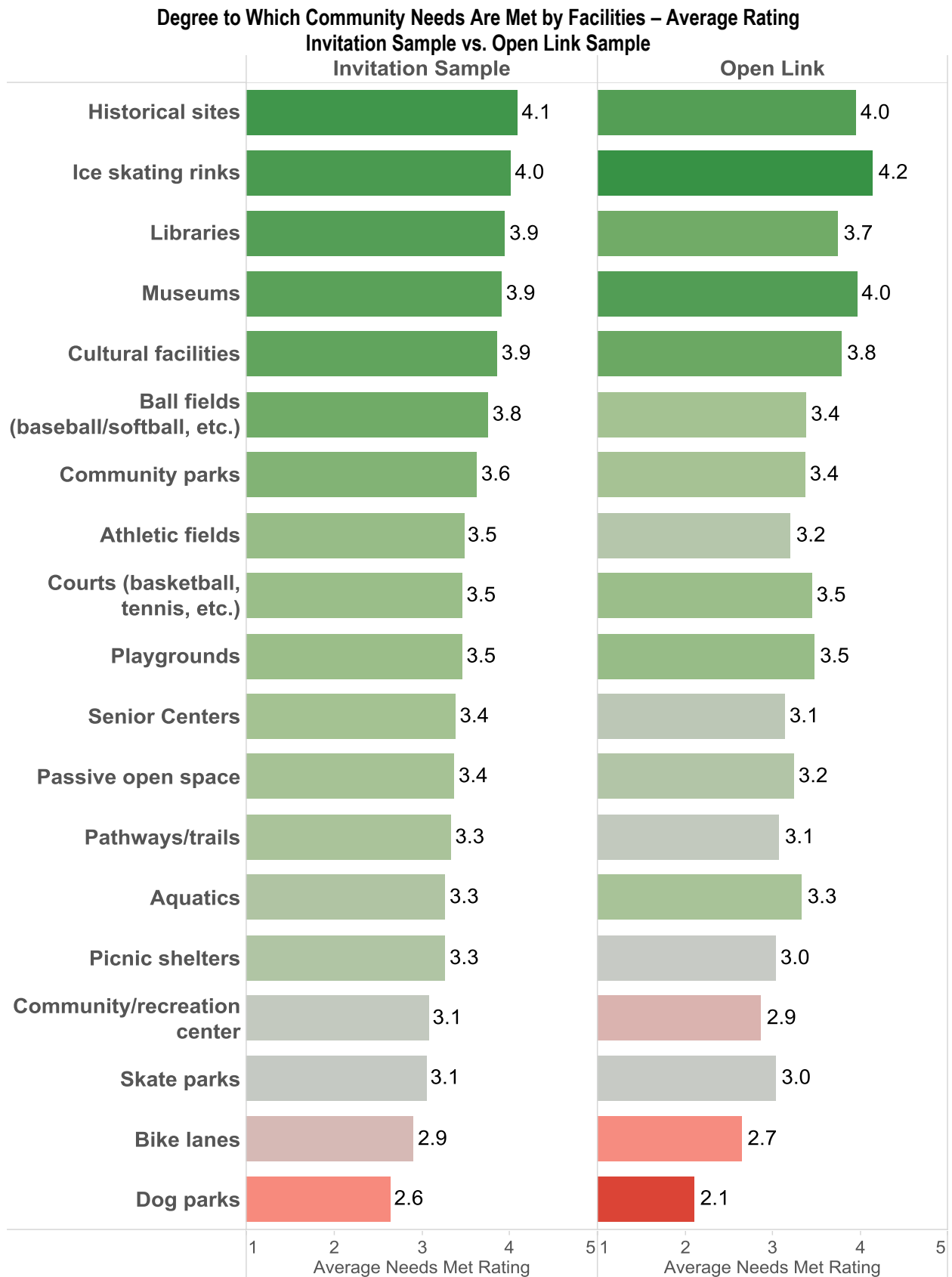
## A COMPARISON TO THE OPEN LINK SAMPLE

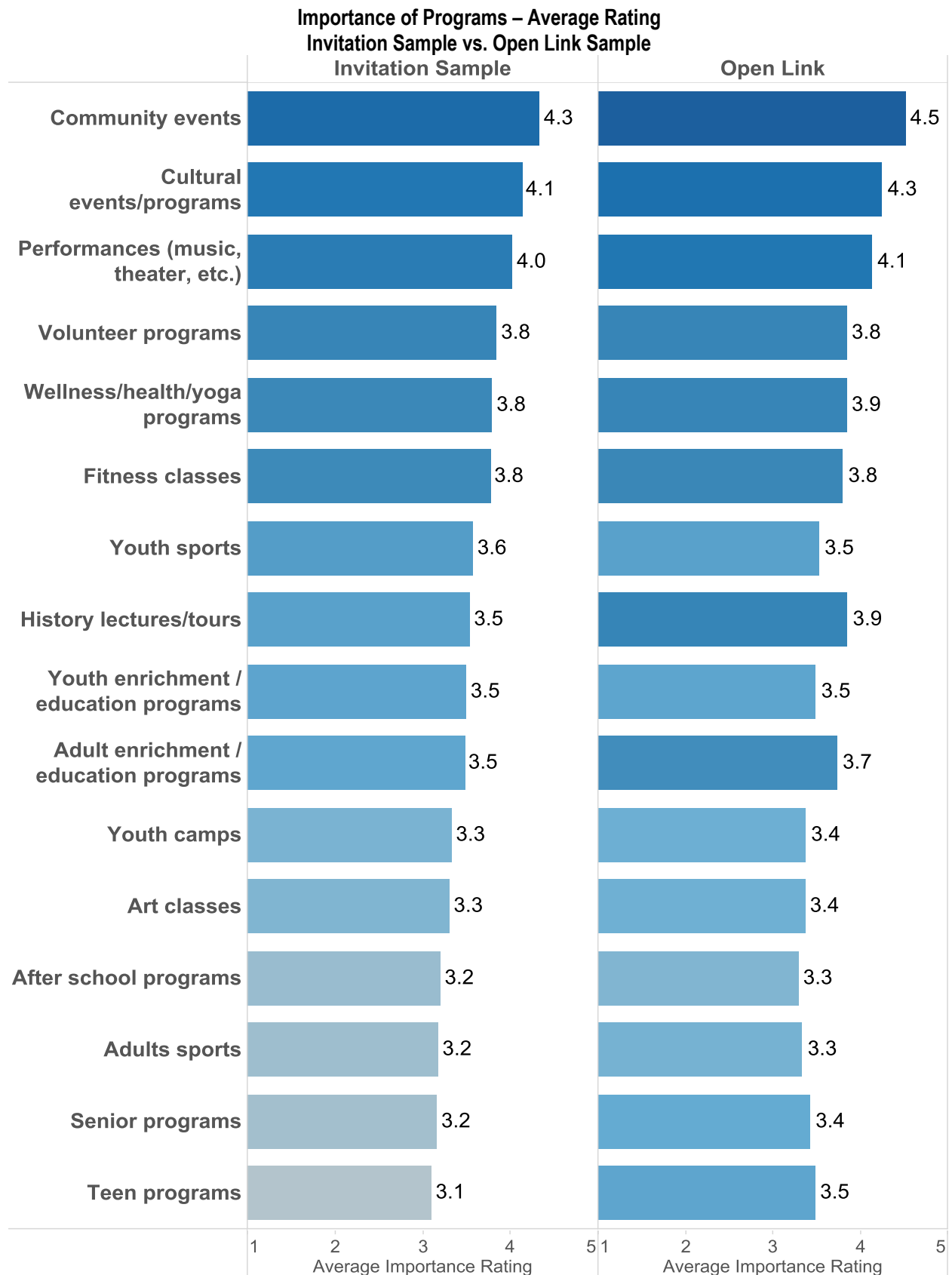
The responses gathered in the open link survey were generally similar to the invitation sample responses across most topics. This section will discuss some areas of difference and interest between the two samples. Selected graphical illustrations follow to show further detailed comparison. The demographic profile is overall similar, though the open link is less diverse (91 percent white), slightly older (average age of 48.6), and includes more renters (10 percent).

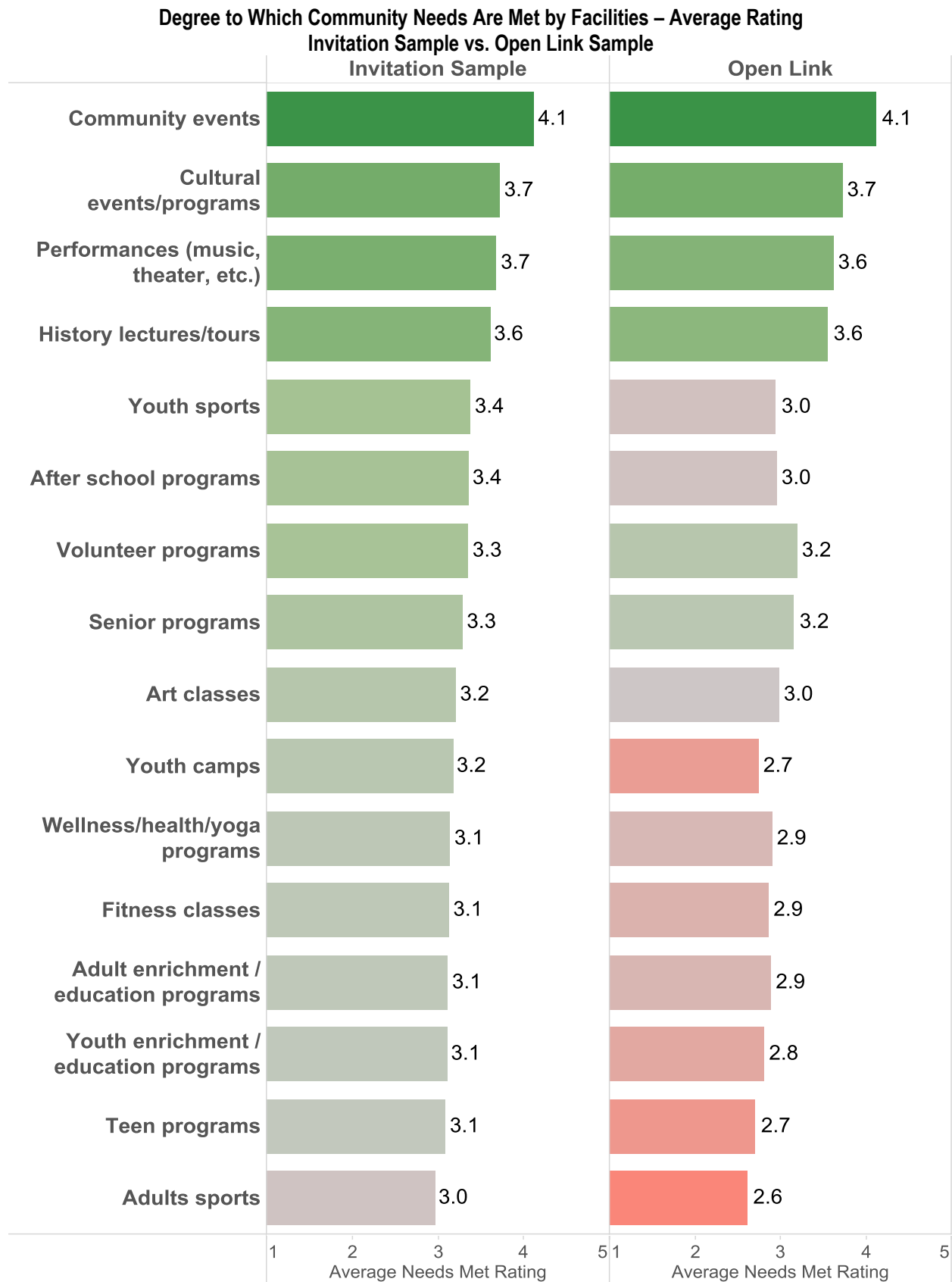
- Current Facilities and Programs. Open link respondents rated many facilities as slightly more important than the invitation respondents, though the overall rankings were similar. Conversely, open link respondents reported lower needs-met ratings for many facilities. Programs were also rated higher in importance but lower on meeting community needs overall compared to the invitation sample, with many programs being rated as not meeting community needs overall. The open link often sees higher intensity in responses since these respondents are usually more interested and involved in parks and recreation opportunities.
- Values and Vision. The open link respondents rated maintenance of parks as a top priority for Manassas to focus on (30 percent rating as a first, second, or third priority), followed by preservation of historical buildings/sites (25 percent). Promoting healthy, active lifestyles (20 percent) and pathway and trail connectivity (19 percent) were also important to open link respondents.
- Future Facilities, Amenities, and Services. The overall prioritization of which facilities to add or improve upon was fairly similar. Improved park amenities ranked as most important for the open link and invitation with both samples reporting a 4.1 average importance rating.
- Financial Choices/Fees. Open link respondents reported a higher likelihood of supporting each level of real estate tax increases with a majority of support for all levels. An increase of \$5 received a strong 87 percent of support in the open link.

When given the opportunity to allocate funds across a variety of facilities, services, and programs, the open link respondents allocated an average of \$15 for improving, renovating, and maintaining both park facilities and cultural facilities. This was followed by an average allocation of \$11 for more pathways and trails.

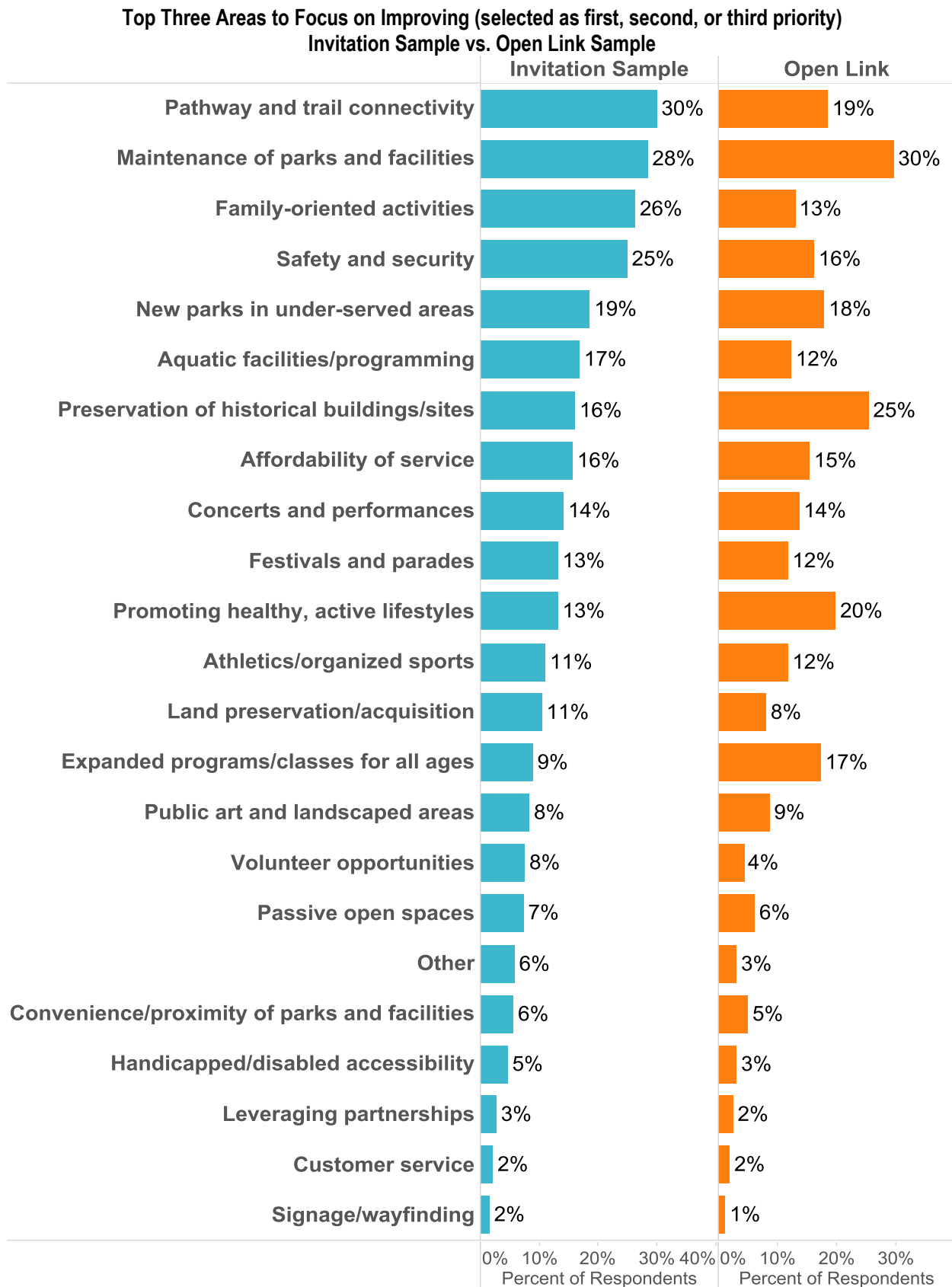






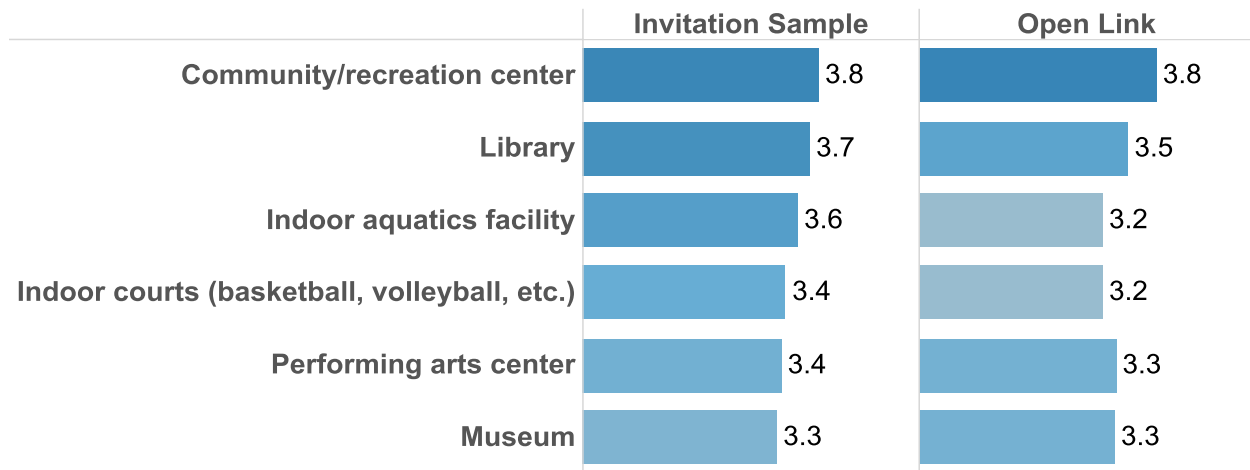




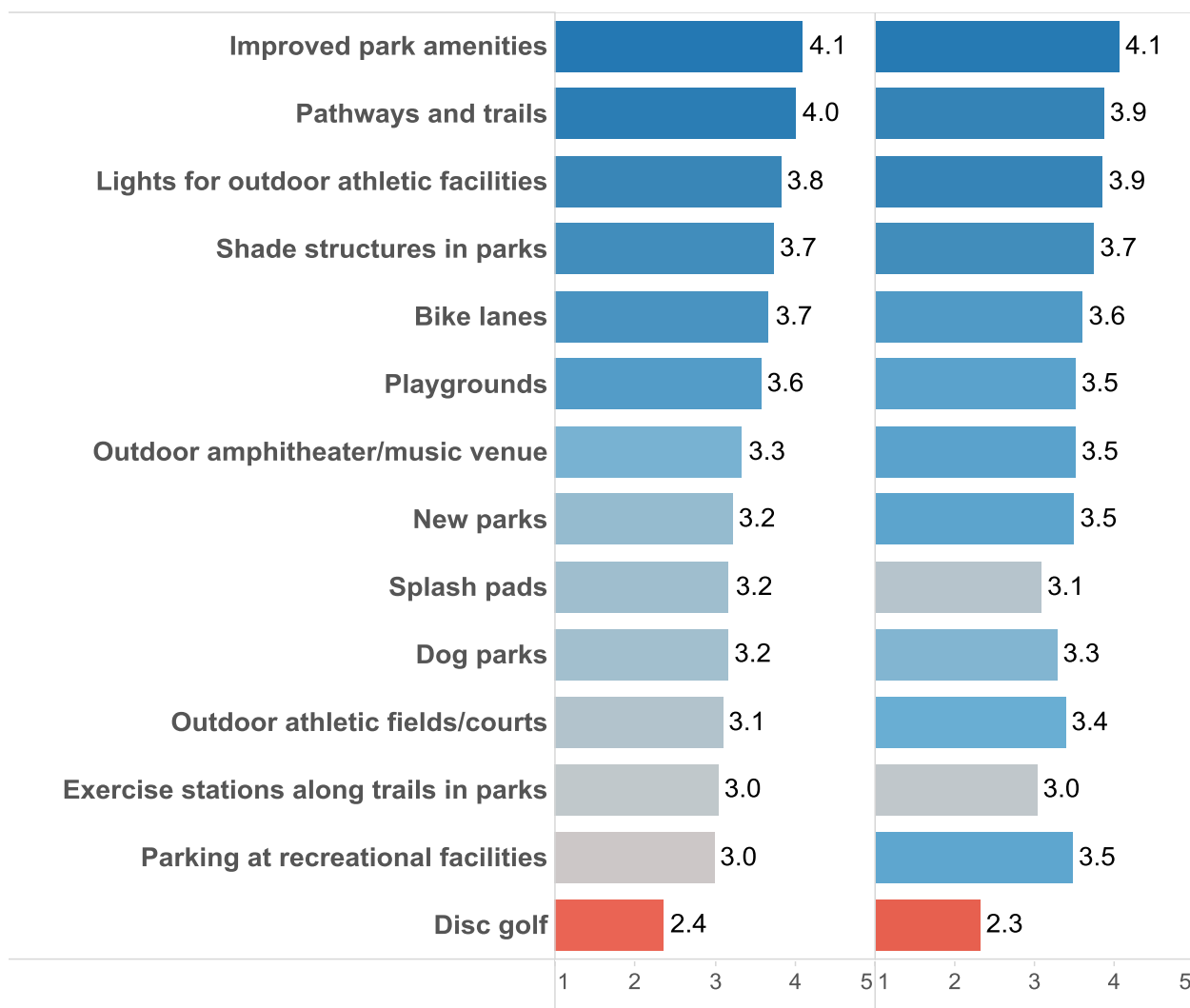


### Facilities to Add, Expand, or Improve – Average Rating Invitation Sample vs. Open Link Sample

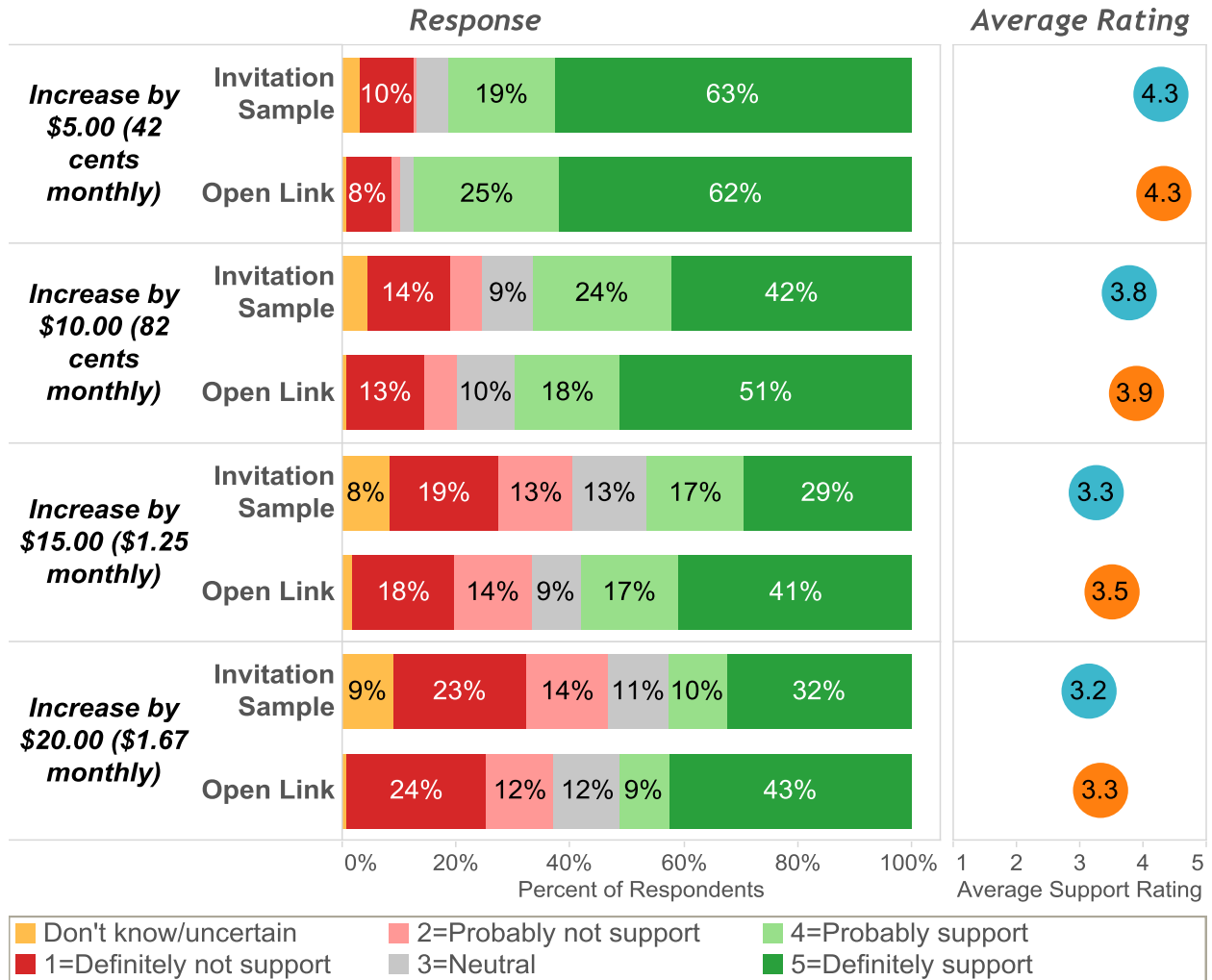
#### Indoor Facilities



#### Outdoor Facilities



Willingness to Support Increases in Real Estate Taxes  
Invitation Sample vs. Open Link Sample



**Allocation of Funding Towards Facilities/Services/Programs – Average Allocation Amount  
Invitation Sample vs. Open Link Sample**

