



LAUREL CITIZEN SURVEY - PARKS

Prepared by nVision Research, Inc.



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OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

Background

The Laurel Park Board is considering alternatives for the development, maintenance, and governance of its own parks and park lands in the surrounding area. Looking for a valid measure of citizens' attitudes toward parks and potential administrative changes, the Board contracted with Peaks to Plains Design (PPD) to perform a broad-based citizen survey.

To assess community priorities, PPD and nVision Research, an independent marketing research firm, designed and administered a mail survey of Laurel households. The survey was conducted during October, 2013. A total of 314 completed responses were received, representing 44.7% of the 705 addresses that were selected for the survey sample.

This is a high participation rate for a mail survey. Though some individuals are always difficult to reach with a mail survey, higher participation rates provide less opportunity for bias due to over- or under-representation of entire segments of the community.

Survey Objectives

The survey questionnaire was designed to:

- Determine residents' usage of Laurel Parks.
- Assess citizen satisfaction with existing parks and preferences for various types of park lands.
- Obtain citizen feedback on how well Laurel Parks serve the community.
- Assess citizen preferences for potential new park facilities.
- Determine residents' positions on issues regarding future management, funding, and strategies for development of Laurel's parks.
- Profile park users and issue preferences by demographic characteristics.

A copy of the questionnaire developed for this study is provided in the appendix to this report. Detailed tables of survey findings and respondent comments are provided under separate cover. This report presents some of the key survey findings. Please consult the tables and comments for greater detail.

Survey Sample and Mailing Process

The survey covers all households in Laurel. A commercial list of residences was obtained, reflecting households with Laurel addresses in ZIP Code 59044, excluding rural routes. The list contained 2,614 addresses, from which 705 were randomly selected for the sample.

Sampled addresses were contacted up to 4 times:

Sep-19: Announcement letter (from Mayor Olson)

Oct-07: Questionnaire packet

Oct-14: Thank you/reminder letter

Oct-21: Duplicate questionnaire packet (to non-responders only)*

The sample is household-based, though a single respondent (typically a ‘head of household’) would generally complete the questionnaire. Where survey findings relate to an individual (e.g., voter registration), this respondent is represented; where survey findings relate to a household (e.g., frequency of park usage), the entire household is represented.

*Questionnaires were numbered to avoid including duplicate responses.

Quality Control

All completed returns received through October 29 are included in this report of findings, excluding:

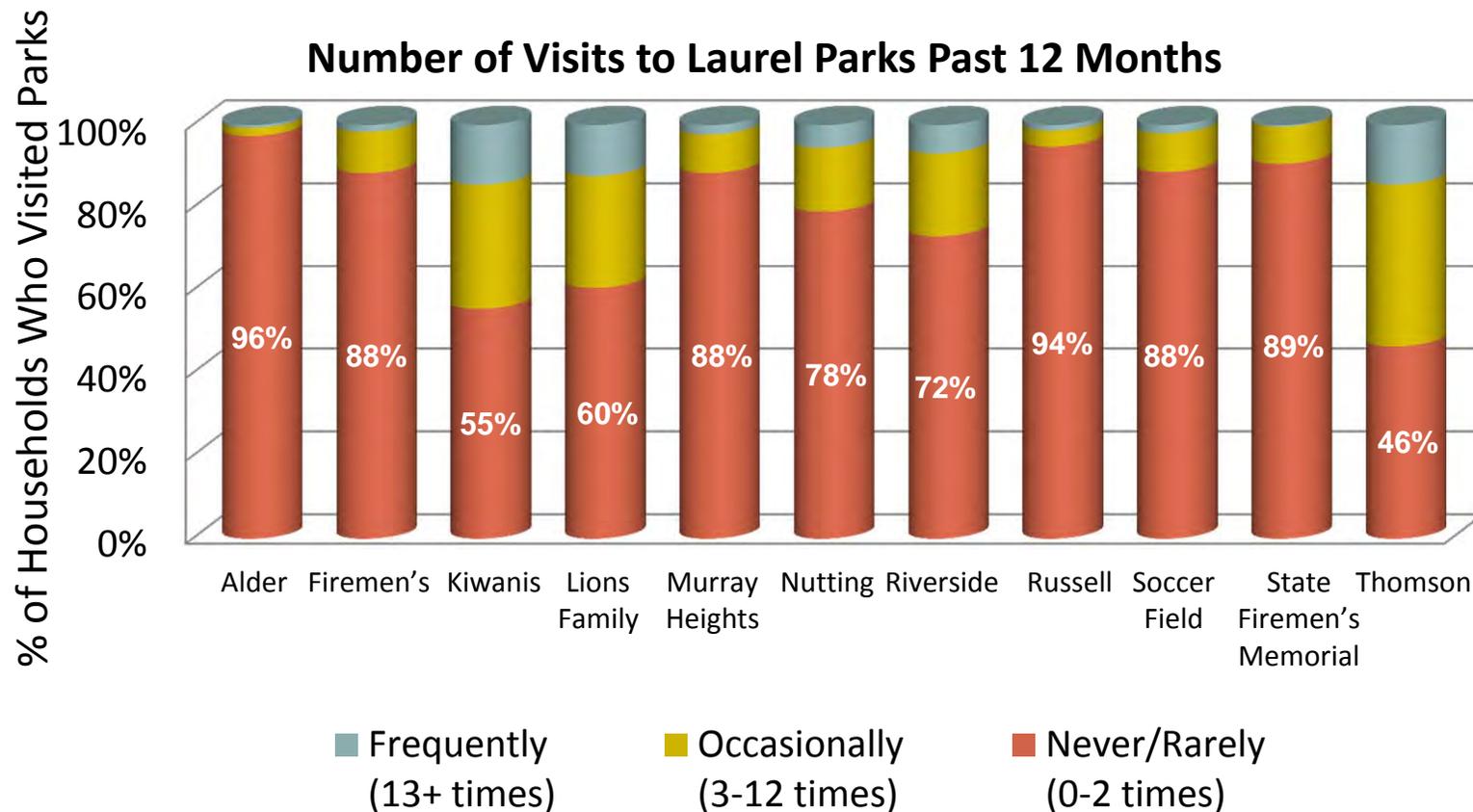
- 4 respondents who identified themselves as living outside the Laurel city limits
- 3 respondents who removed the survey tracking number from their questionnaires prior to returning the completed form (this exclusion was to avoid possible duplication)
- 6 duplicate responses (only the first return received from a given household was accepted)

Questionnaires received were reviewed for completeness and consistency; in some cases, editing of certain items was applied (e.g., to eliminate duplicate answers to a single question, to assure consistency on household composition questions, and to eliminate responses to the tax rate sensitivity question if all four parts were given the same value). After review, questionnaires were data entered and 100% verified to assure accuracy of the entry process. Survey comments were transcribed and edited to remove identifying information.

USAGE/PERCEPTIONS OF LAUREL PARKS

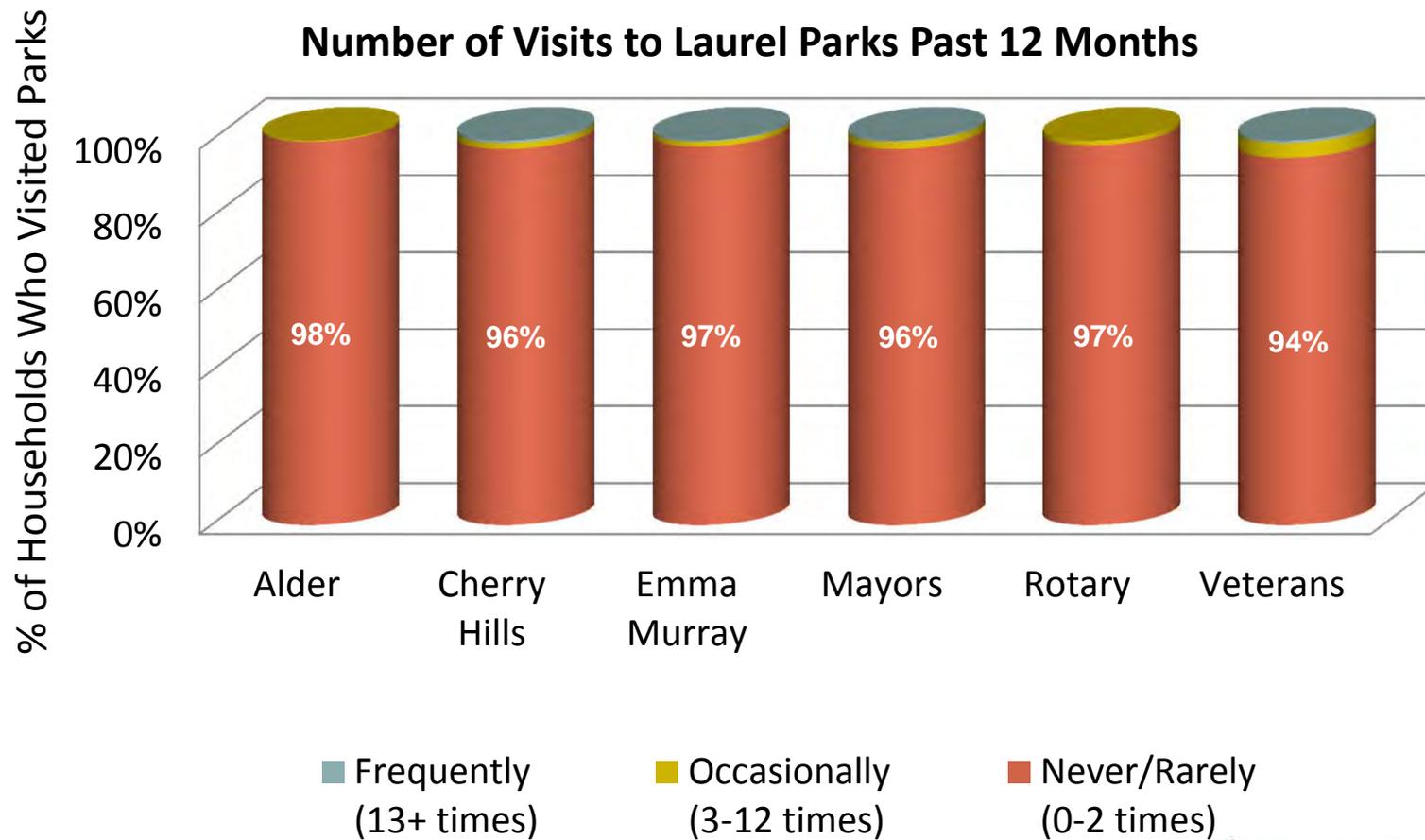
Frequency of Visits – Developed Parks

There are 6 of the 11 developed parks in Laurel that 85% or more of the City’s households never or rarely visit. Conversely, Kiwanis (Kid’s Kingdom), Lions Family Park (South Pond), and Thomson Park are frequent destinations (more than 12 times per year) for between 12%-14% of Laurel households.



Frequency of Visits – Undeveloped Parks

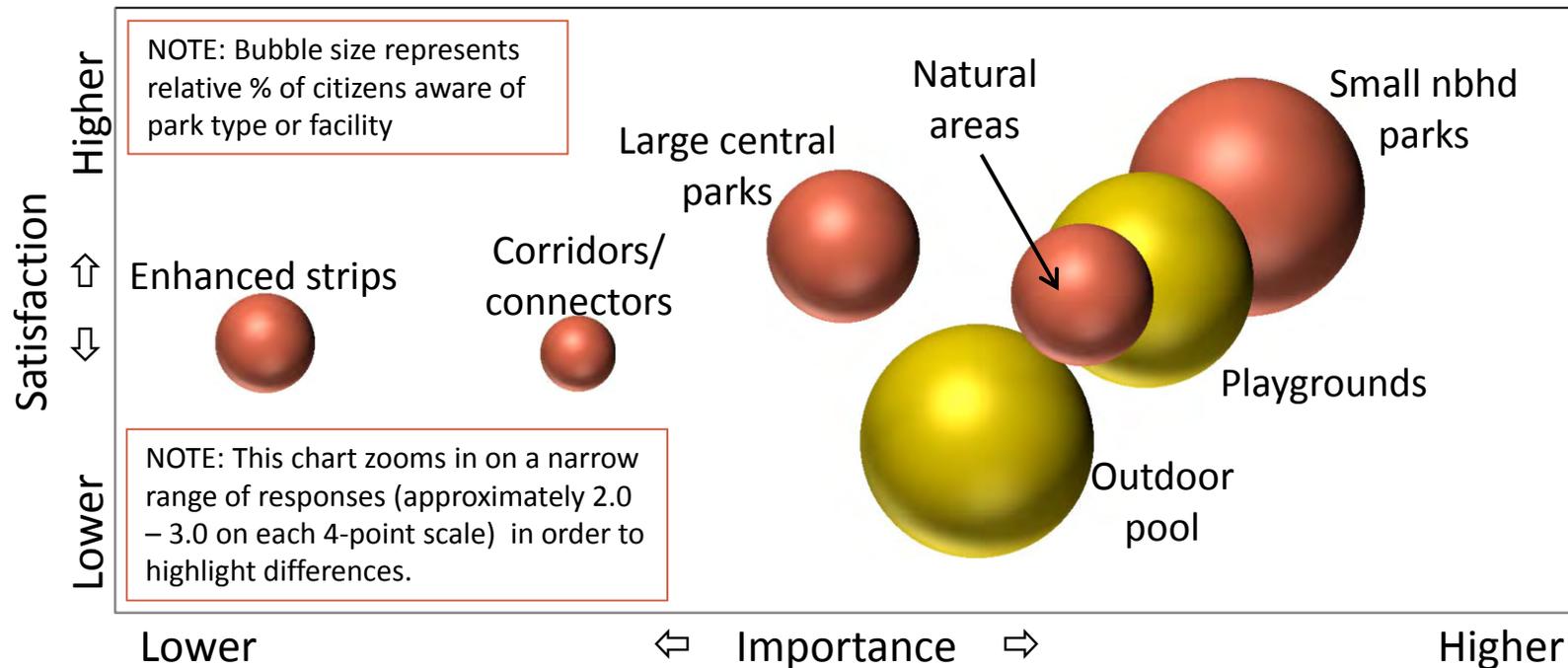
Only a very small percentage of Laurel households utilize any of Laurel’s undeveloped parks.



Satisfaction with Park Lands and Facilities

The chart below contrasts satisfaction (on the vertical axis) with importance (along the horizontal axis). Future planning should ensure that park types and facilities that are most important to citizens are also the most satisfactory. As examples, small neighborhood parks already meet that standard but the outdoor pool, which is moderately high on the importance scale receives the lowest marks on the satisfaction scale.

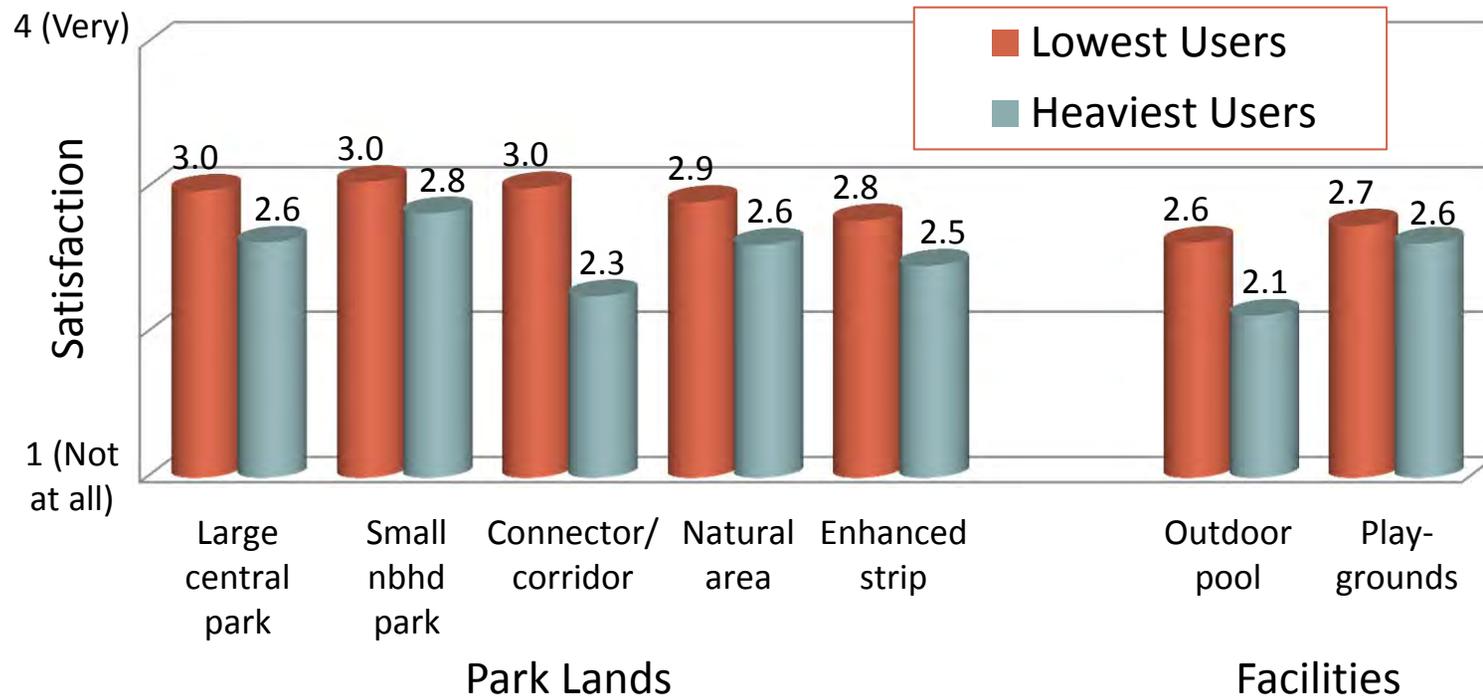
Relative Importance and Satisfaction with Park Types and Facilities



Satisfaction Related to Frequency of Park Use

Frequency of park usage has a strong relationship with ratings of satisfaction. Compared to those who never or rarely visit any city park, frequent park visitors (13 times/year or more) are significantly less satisfied with most park types and with the outdoor pool. There is not much difference in satisfaction with playgrounds.

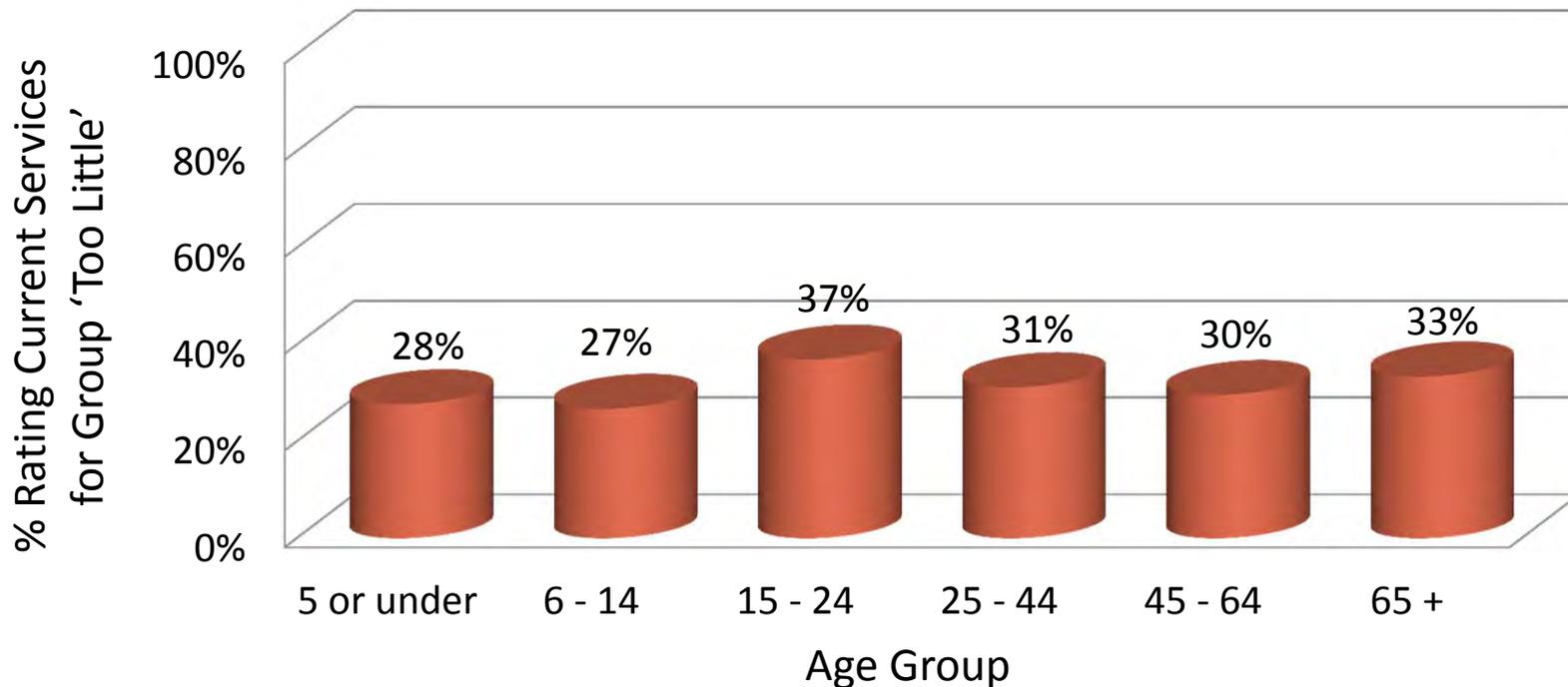
**Satisfaction with Park Types and Facilities
by Frequency of Park Use**



Underserved Age Groups

There are only small differences in perceptions of the adequacy of recreational opportunities for different age groups in the community. Slightly more households perceive inadequate opportunities for the 15-24 age group (37%) than for children under 15. This finding corresponds to comments volunteered by a few survey participants who echoed the sentiment that “...small children are covered, but our teens don’t have anything.”

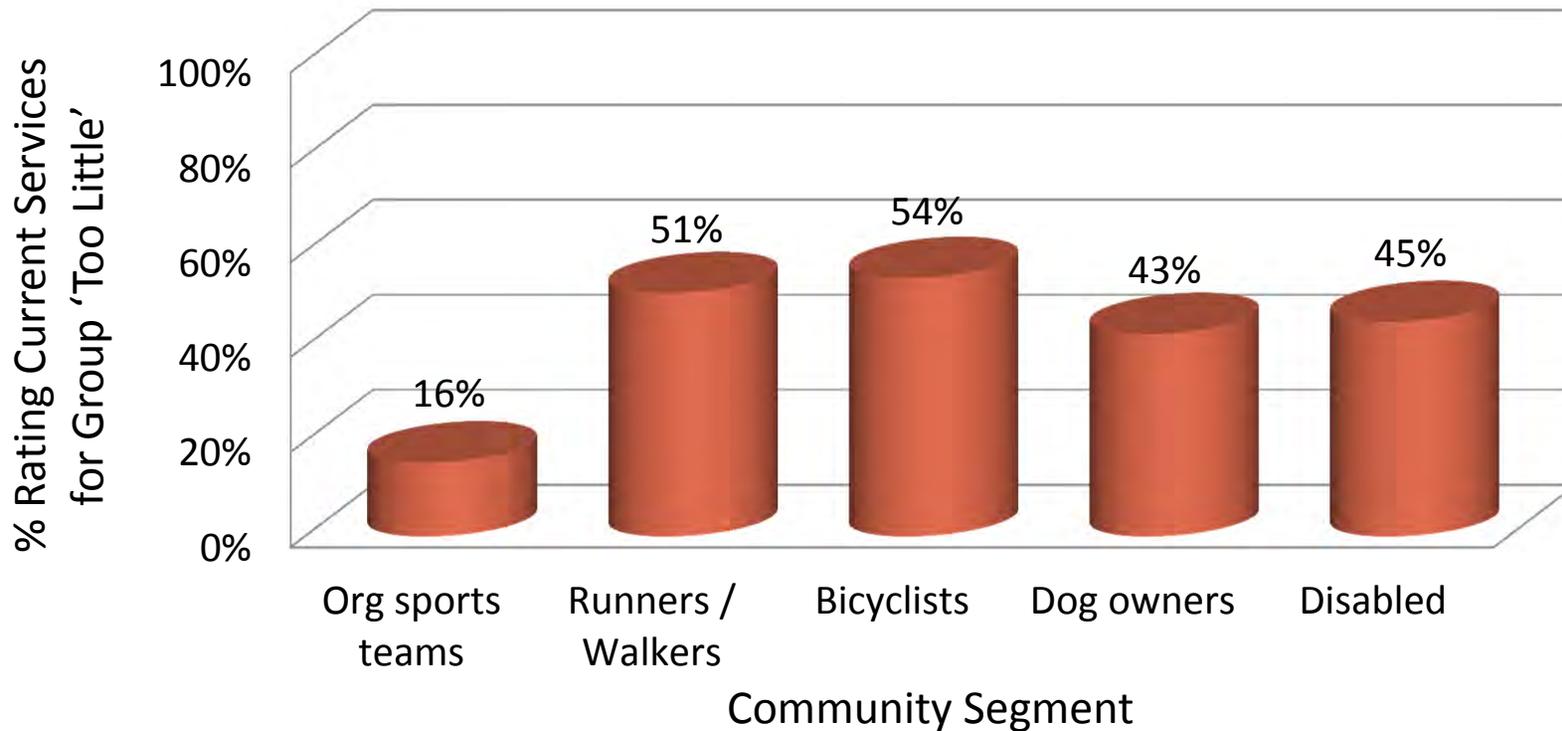
Age Groups Inadequately Served by Current Parks in Laurel



Underserved Community Segments

Compared to age groups, Laurel households are much more likely to perceive that various other types of segments are underserved, except for organized sports teams. About half of all households believe the needs of runners, walkers, and cyclists are not adequately addressed; about 40% believe dog owners and the disabled are underserved.

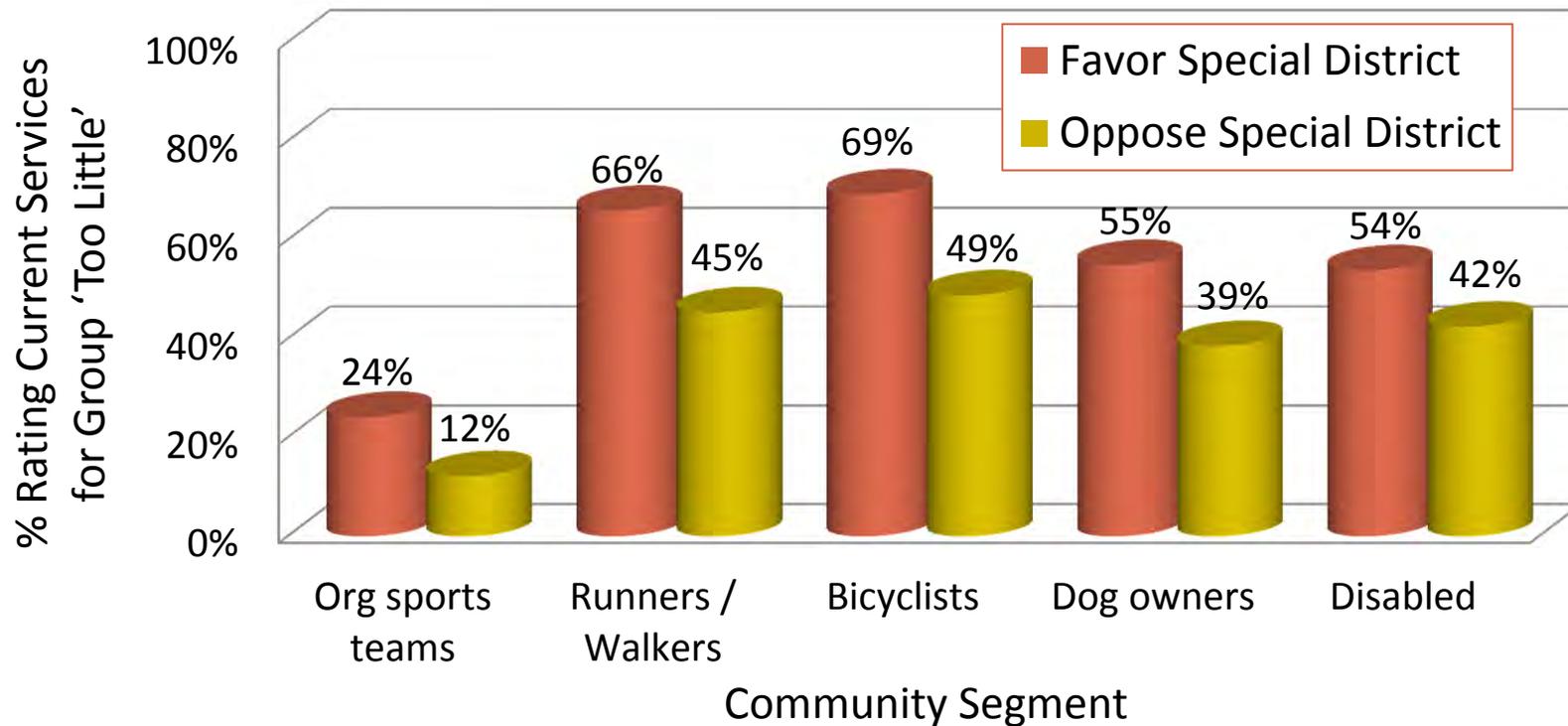
Community Segments Inadequately Served by Current Parks in Laurel



Underserved Segments by Special District Support

There is a strong, consistent relationship between support of creation of a special district for parks and perceptions of whether the various community segments are underserved by existing parks. Among those who believe runners, walkers, and cyclists are underserved, the concept of a regional district might offer greater potential for trails.

**Community Segments Inadequately Served
Contrasted by Support for Special District**

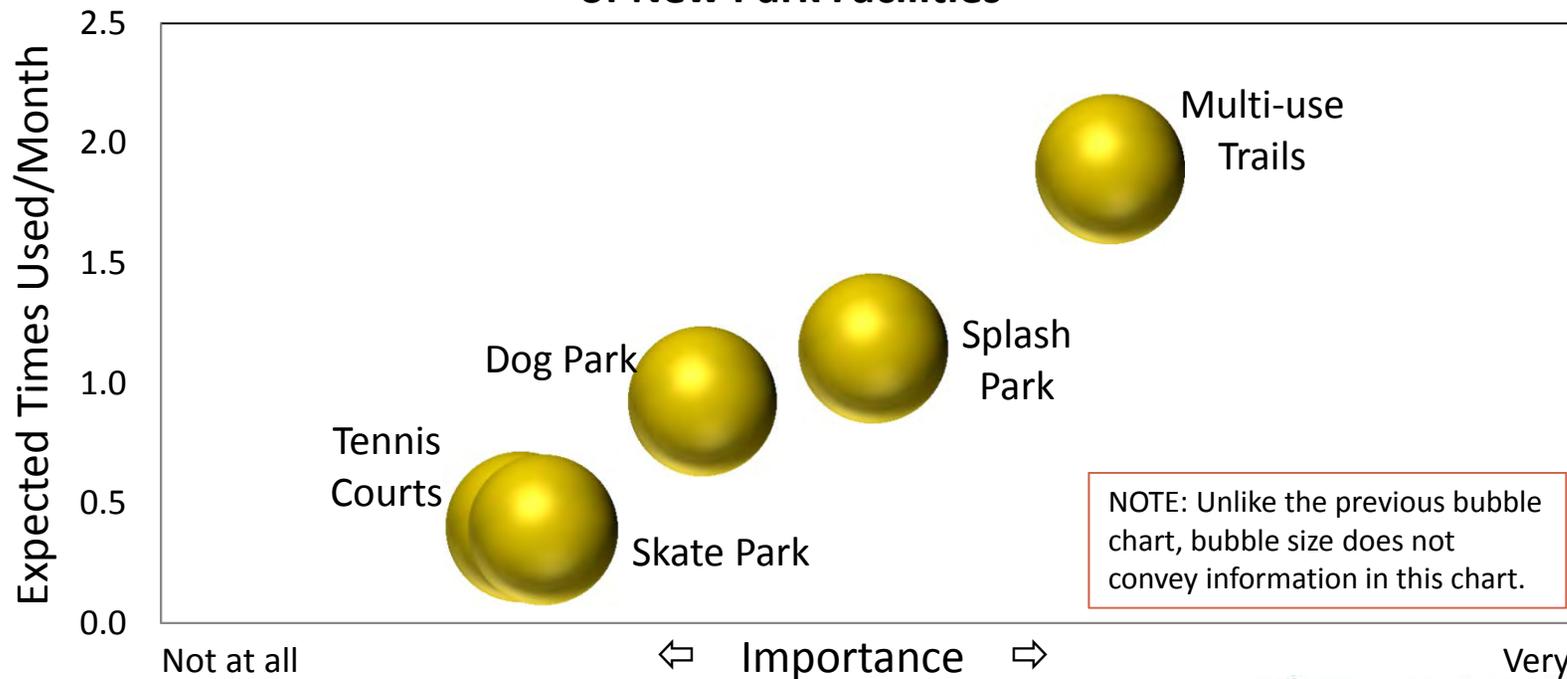


PARK DEVELOPMENT PREFERENCES

Importance and Usage of New Park Facilities

In planning for new improvements for parks, it is critical to consider both how important the facilities are to citizens, but also how often the community intends to use them. The chart below displays these two considerations for 5 new park facilities addressed in the questionnaire. Tennis courts and a skate park are weakest in both importance and expected usage. Trails for walking, running, or bicycling rank highest, with anticipated usage averaging about 2 times per month among all Laurel households.

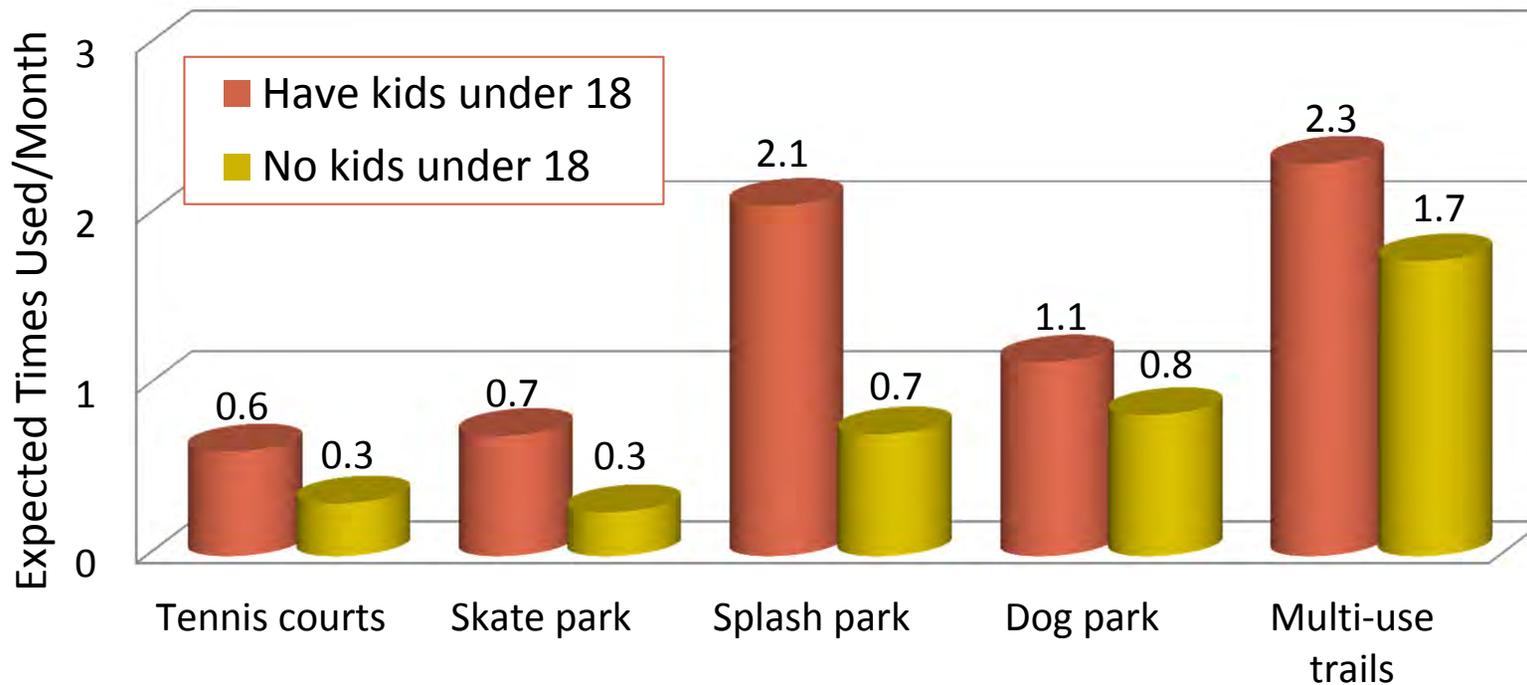
Relative Importance and Expected Usage of New Park Facilities



Expected Facility Usage by H/H with Children

For every new facility addressed, households with children under 18 expect greater usage. Not surprisingly, this trend is particularly evident for the splash park, which is designed primarily as a children’s facility. For all households, trails would receive the highest usage. Among only households with no children, no other facility comes close to anticipated trail use.

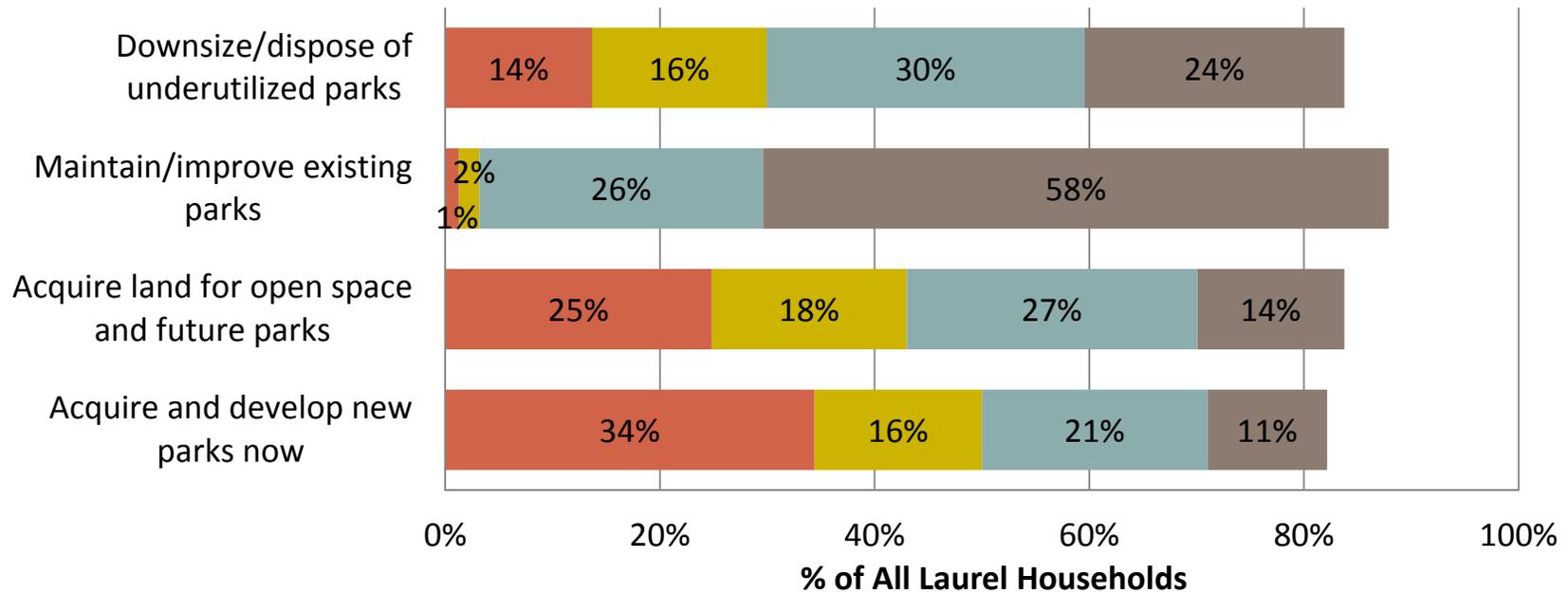
**Expected Monthly Usage of New Facilities
Contrasted by Presence of Children in Household**



Preferences for Long Term Park Strategy Options

By far, maintenance and improvements to existing parks are the most favored policies. Half of all households oppose acquiring and developing new parks; almost as many oppose acquiring land for open space and future parks. A majority approves of downsizing the city’s park network by disposing of current parks that are underutilized.

Favorability of Long-Term Park Planning Strategies



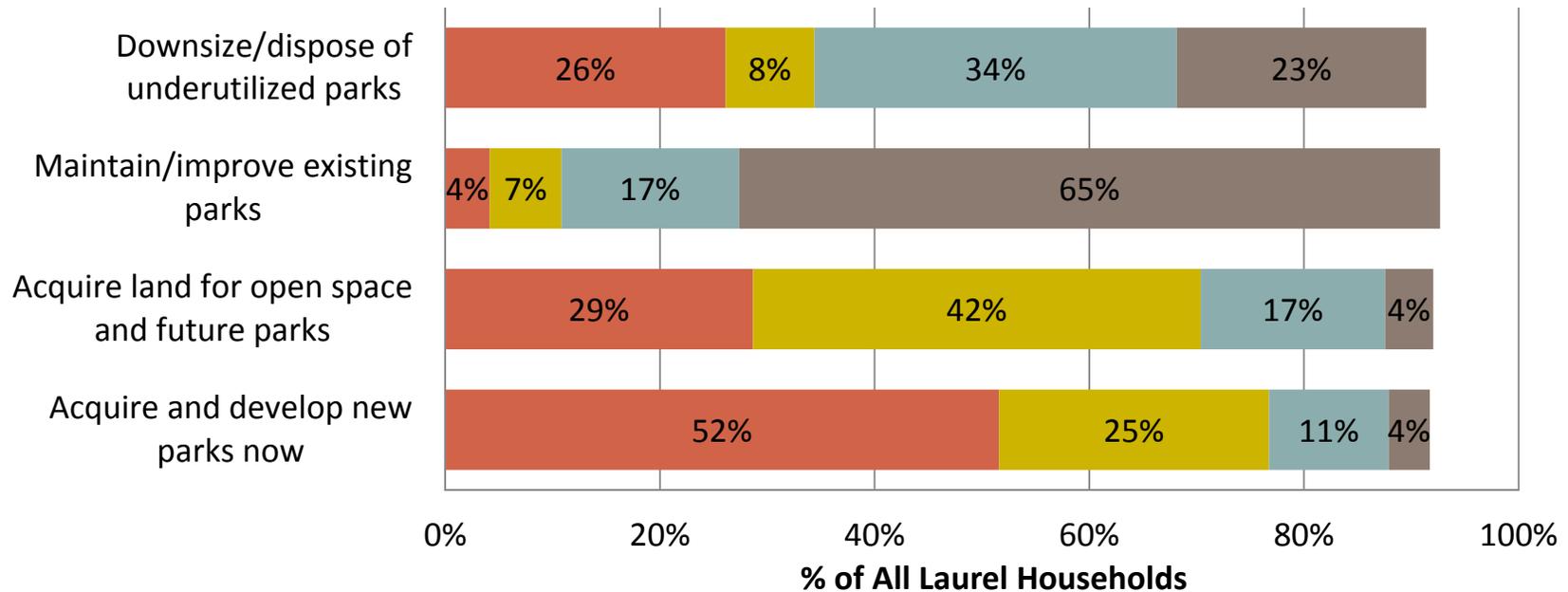
NOTE: Values shown sum to less than 100% because some respondents had no opinion or did not answer the questions.

■ Strongly Oppose ■ Somewhat Oppose
■ Somewhat Favor ■ Strongly Favor

Priorities for Long Term Park Strategy Options

The same picture emerges when the long term options presented in the questionnaire are ranked by priority. Expansion of park lands is the first priority of only 4% of Laurel households. Nearly two out of three households rank maintenance and improvement of existing parks as the number one priority, while one-fourth assign top priority to downsizing.

Prioritization of Long-Term Park Planning Strategies



NOTE: Values shown sum to less than 100% because some respondents did not answer the questions. Some respondents gave tied ranks, so the totals of the individual ranking categories are not 100%.

■ Fourth Priority ■ Third Priority
■ Second Priority ■ First Priority

ACCEPTANCE OF TAX INCREASES

Tax Rate Sensitivity Analysis

The following analysis of tax rate sensitivity is developed from an adaptation of a survey method used often in market research to assess reactions to various price levels. The method obtains the perceptions of respondents on four price points ranging from 'too cheap' to 'too expensive.'

In this survey, respondents were told that the annual amount of property tax revenue used for parks in Laurel is about \$90/year for an average home in the city. They were then asked to provide tax bill amounts that they felt corresponded to the following concepts:

- a. What annual tax amount on the average household would you consider *so low that you would question whether parks could even be maintained adequately* by the City?
- b. What annual tax amount on the average household would you consider a *good value for parks* that meet your needs?
- c. What annual tax amount on the average household would you consider *expensive, but worth it*, as long as the parks meet your needs?
- d. What annual tax amount on the average household would you consider *too expensive for parks* in Laurel; that is, you would oppose a levy that included this amount for parks?

Tax Rate Sensitivity Analysis

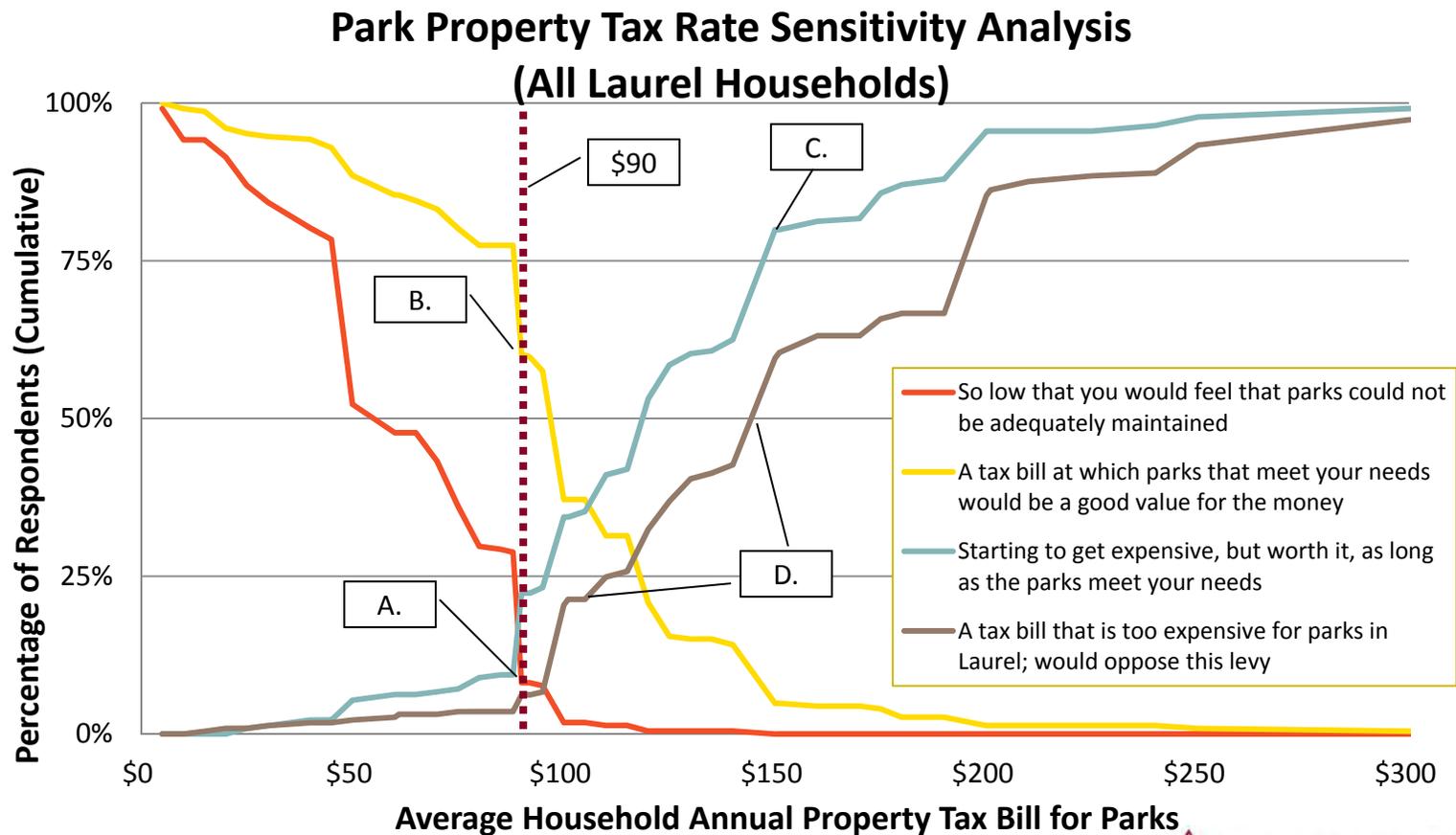
The findings of this analysis are presented as lines showing cumulative percentages of the responses to these four questions. For clarity on the charts, the two 'expensive' questions are plotted starting with the lowest price and accumulating upward as price increases; the two 'inexpensive' questions are reversed, showing the accumulation going downward from the lowest price.

This exercise in a questionnaire is difficult for some respondents. The data was edited to ensure that the question battery was properly answered, though editing was not intended to influence the findings. Editing was performed generally to eliminate cases where all four answers were the same, or where zero value responses were given. In total, usable responses were obtained from 226 of the 314 survey respondents.

The purpose of the analysis is to provide insight into how the community reacts to different park-related tax bills, in more depth than simply whether they would favor or oppose a specific amount. Results are displayed for all households combined and for households who favor the special park district separately. A few highlights are noted on the charts that follow, but those highlights do not reflect all the conclusions possible.

Tax Rate Sensitivity – All Households

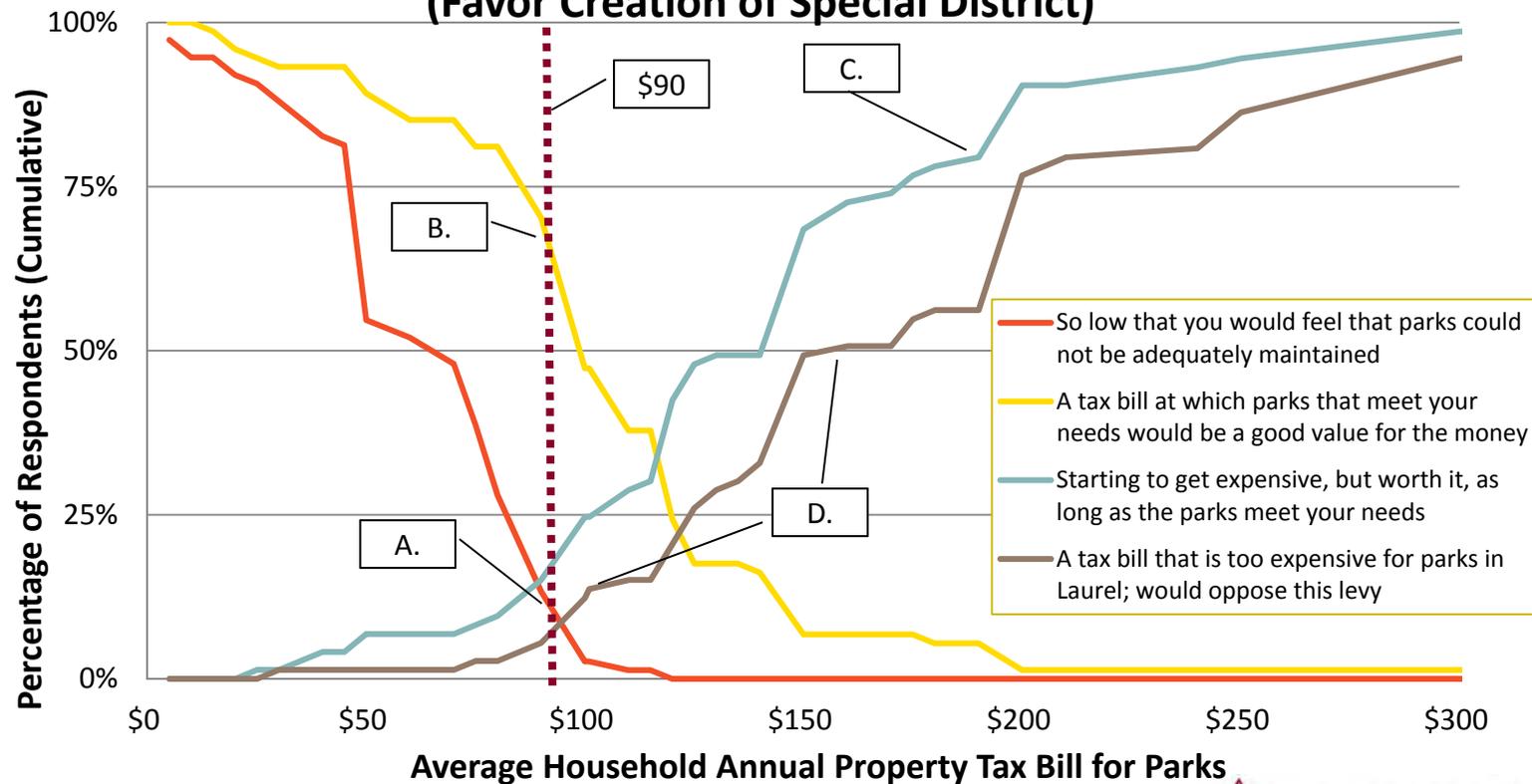
- A. Only about 8% feel more than \$90/year is required to assure minimum maintenance.
- B. About 60% feel a bill as low as \$90/year is a good value for parks that meet their needs. However, this percentage declines rapidly above \$90.
- C. Almost 20% consider a bill of \$150/year or more to be worth the price of parks that meet their needs.
- D. 50% feel a bill as high as \$145/year is too expensive. Only 20% feel \$100/year or more is too expensive.



Tax Rate Sensitivity – Favor Special District

Compared to all households, respondents who favor the special parks district display a greater acceptance of higher tax bills. For example, points A and B are slightly higher on the percentage scale compared to all households. At higher price points, point C shows 20% believe a tax bill of \$190/year or more is acceptable for parks that meet their needs (compared to \$145 for the city as a whole). Finally, at point D, 14% feel \$100 or more is too expensive (compared to 20% of all households), and 50% feel a price as high as \$160/year is too expensive (compared to \$145 among all households).

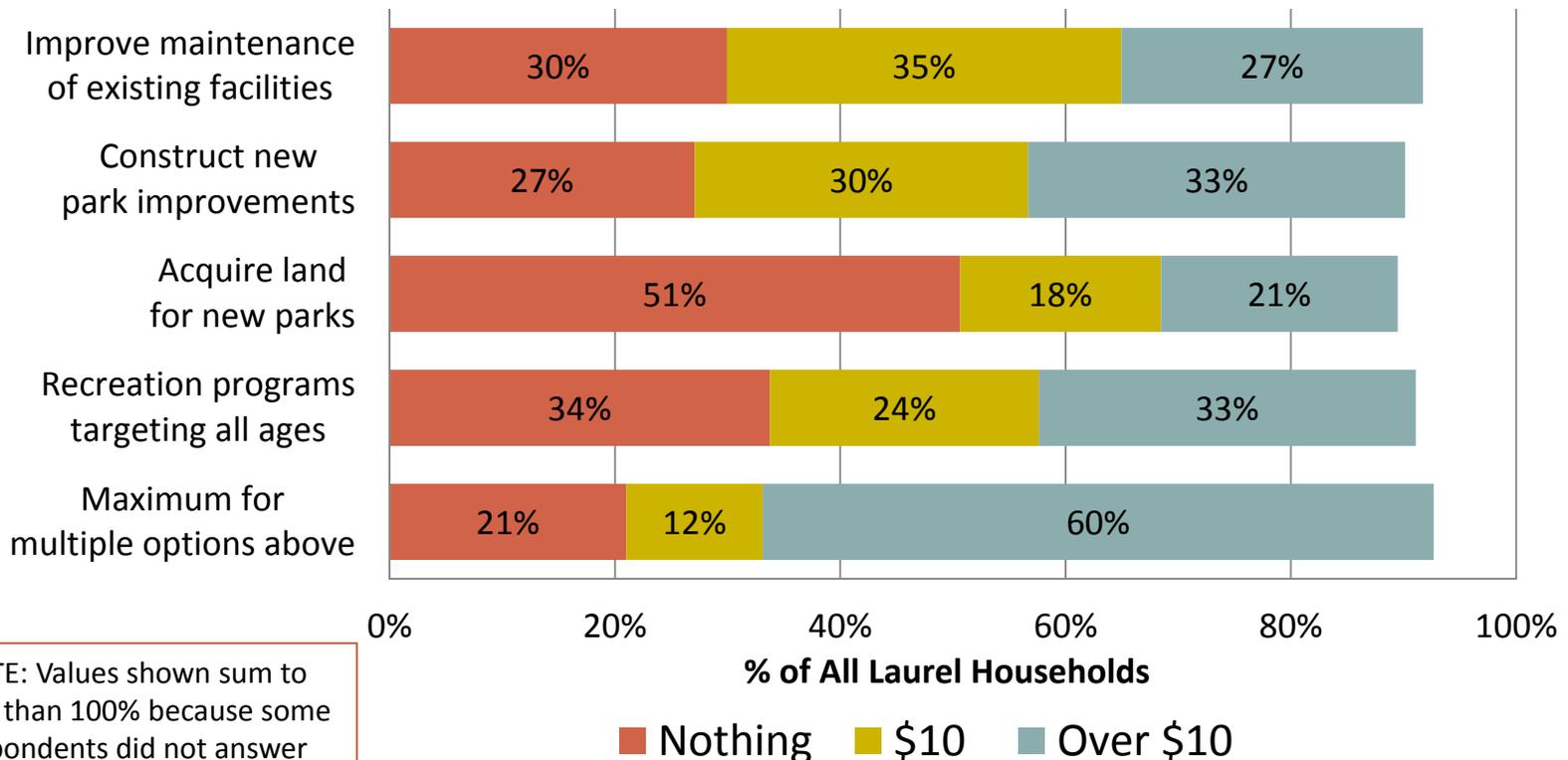
Park Property Tax Rate Sensitivity Analysis (Favor Creation of Special District)



Willingness to Accept a Tax Increase

About one-fourth or more of Laurel households are unwilling to pay any additional tax for each of the park options addressed in the questionnaire. Half of all households are unwilling to pay any increase to fund land acquisition for new parks. This finding may correspond to the current low usage levels observed for many of Laurel's existing parks.

Additional Annual Property Tax Willing to Pay for Option

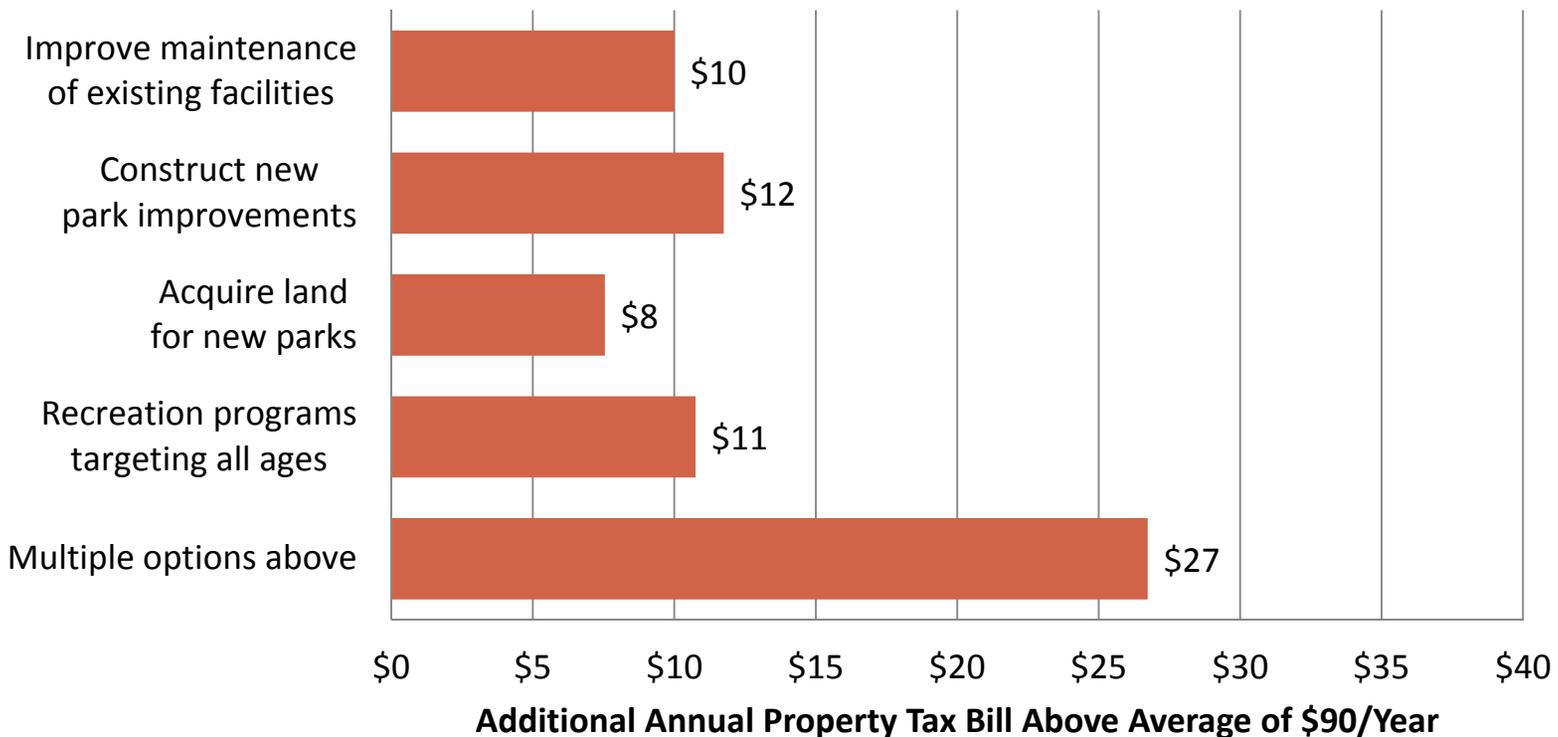


NOTE: Values shown sum to less than 100% because some respondents did not answer the questions.

Amount Willing to Pay for Park Options

Across all households, the average acceptable tax increase for each option ranges from \$8 - \$12/year. Compared to a \$90 average which was established in the questionnaire, this represents an acceptable increase of about 9% - 13% for any individual option. For desirable multiple attributes combined, Laurel households are willing to accept up to a 30% increase.

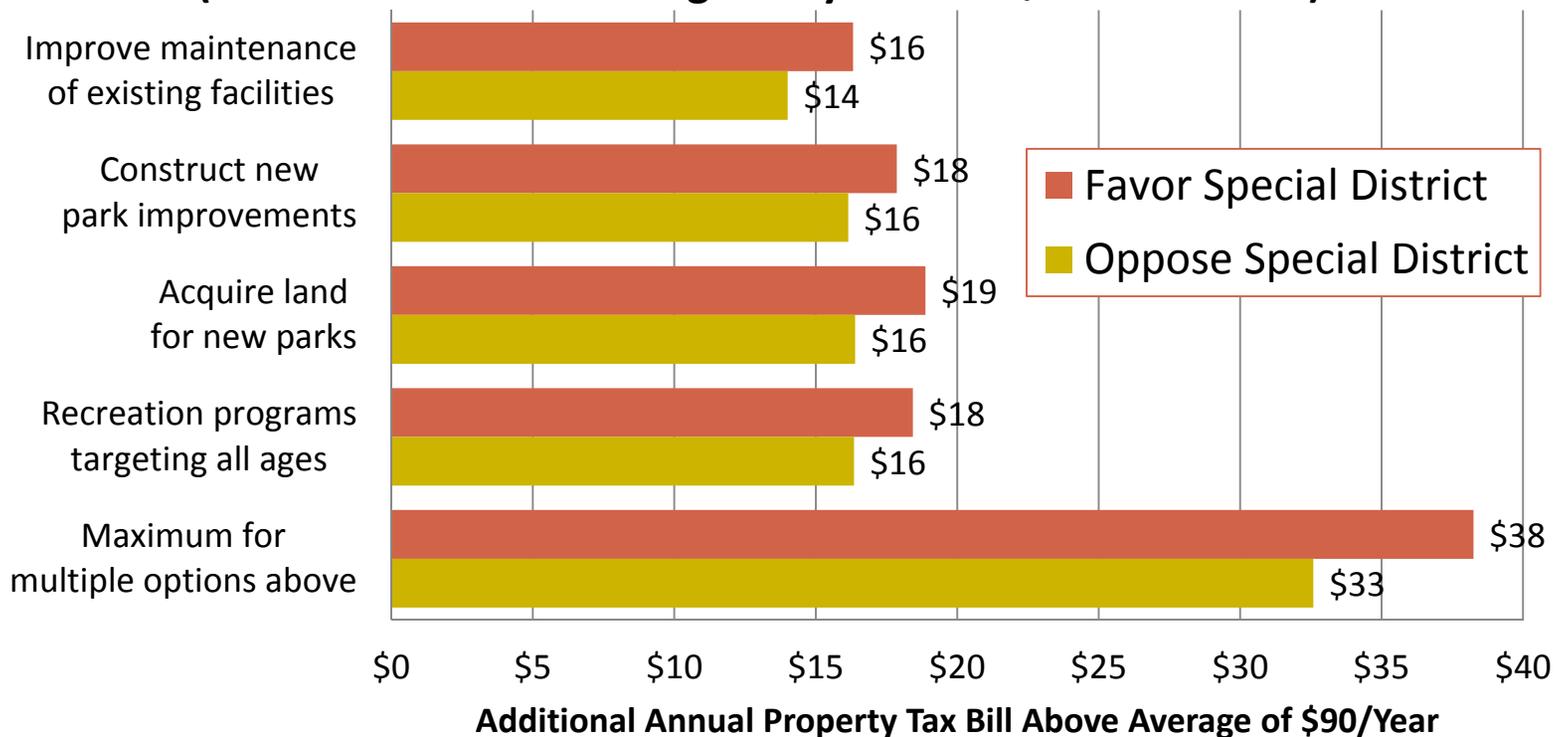
Average Additional Property Tax Willing to Pay for Option (Base: All Households)



Willingness to Pay by Special District Support

Examination of only those households willing to pay at least some additional amount (excluding households who said \$0), reveals there is nearly equal support for all of the individual options. In addition, those who favor creation of a special district are willing to pay only \$2-\$3/year more than district opponents for any individual option.

Average Additional Property Tax Willing to Pay for Option (Base: Households Willing to Pay at Least \$10 Additional)



SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL PARK DISTRICT

Concepts Presented for Creation of Special District

The survey posed two questions to respondents relative to the creation of a special district for park management in Laurel and the surrounding region:

- In your opinion, which of the following organizational options for the oversight function of parks would you most prefer?
- In your opinion, should parks owned by the City of Laurel continue to be managed by the City, or should a special district manage parks owned by the City and surrounding areas?

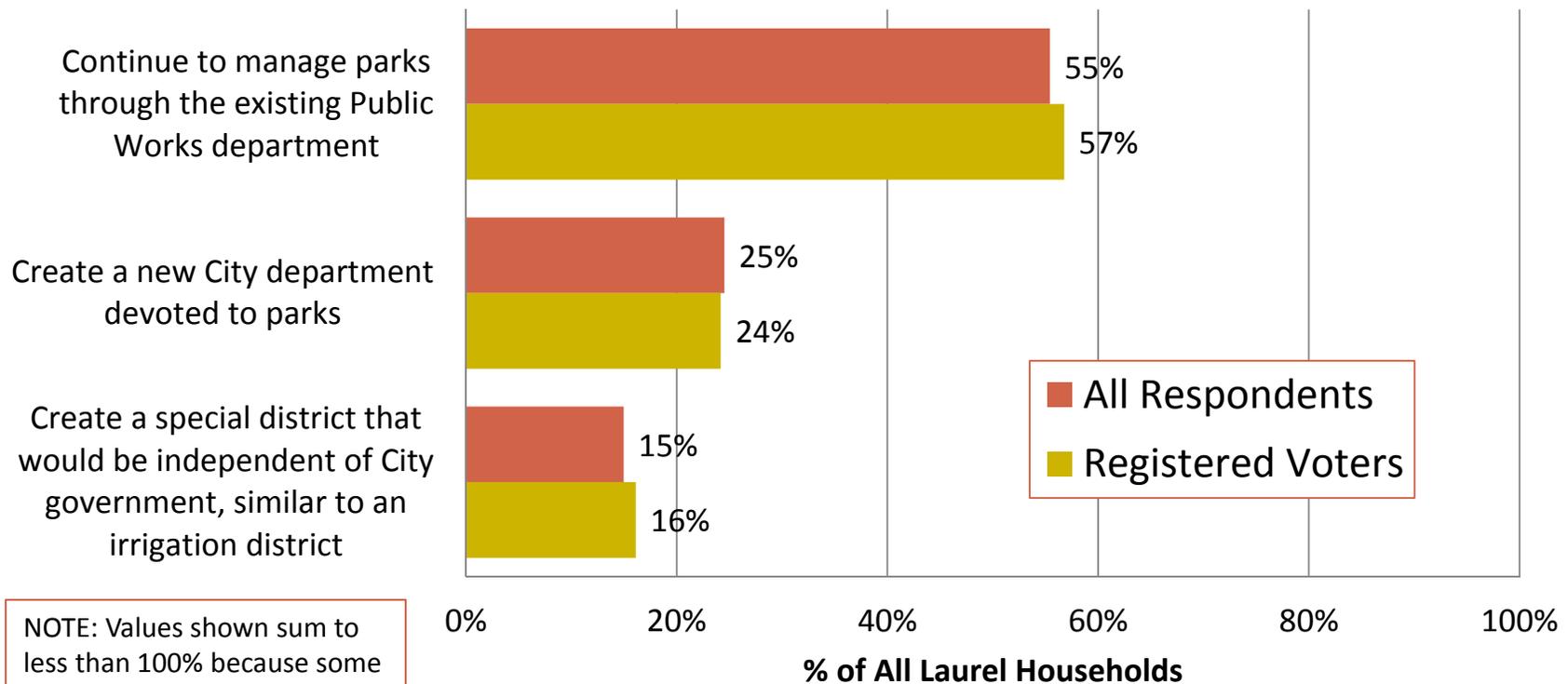
The findings of these questions are combined in this report to demonstrate differences among those who favor and oppose the special district.

In addition, respondents were asked their acceptance of the taxing authority of a special district for various functions regarding parks located inside and outside Laurel city limits.

City vs Special District Control of Parks

The majority of Laurel residents prefer no change to the administrative function of city parks, with 55% opting for continuation of the function within the Public Works department. Only 15% favor transfer of park administration to an independent special district. These findings do not change when the results are tabulated only for the 87% of respondents who are registered to vote.

Preferred Option for Oversight of Laurel Parks

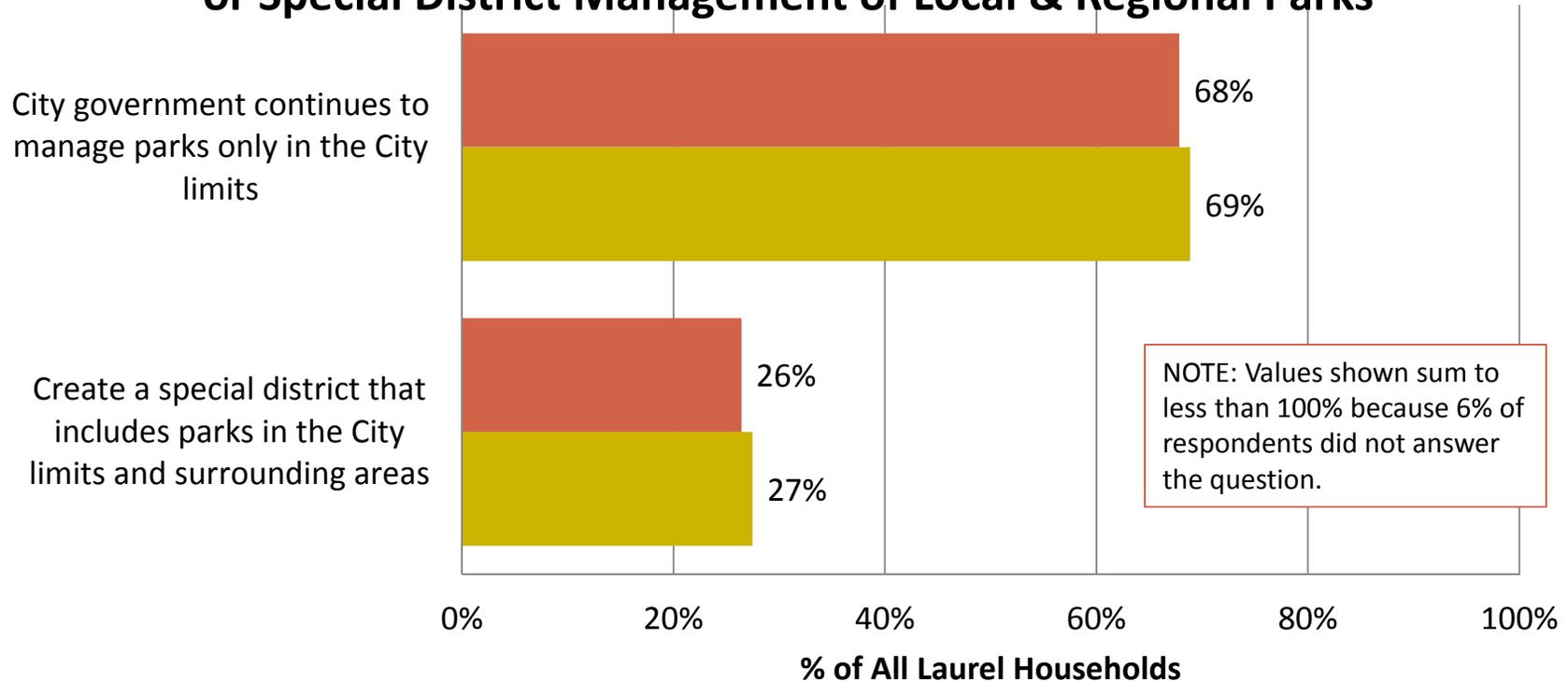


NOTE: Values shown sum to less than 100% because some of respondents did not answer the question.

Local vs Regional Parks

Support for creation of a special district is somewhat stronger when the ability of a district to develop parks in surrounding areas is specified in the district’s description. Nonetheless, two-thirds of all Laurel residents support continued city government management of local parks only, even given the option of regional parks. As before, these findings do not change when only registered voters are considered.

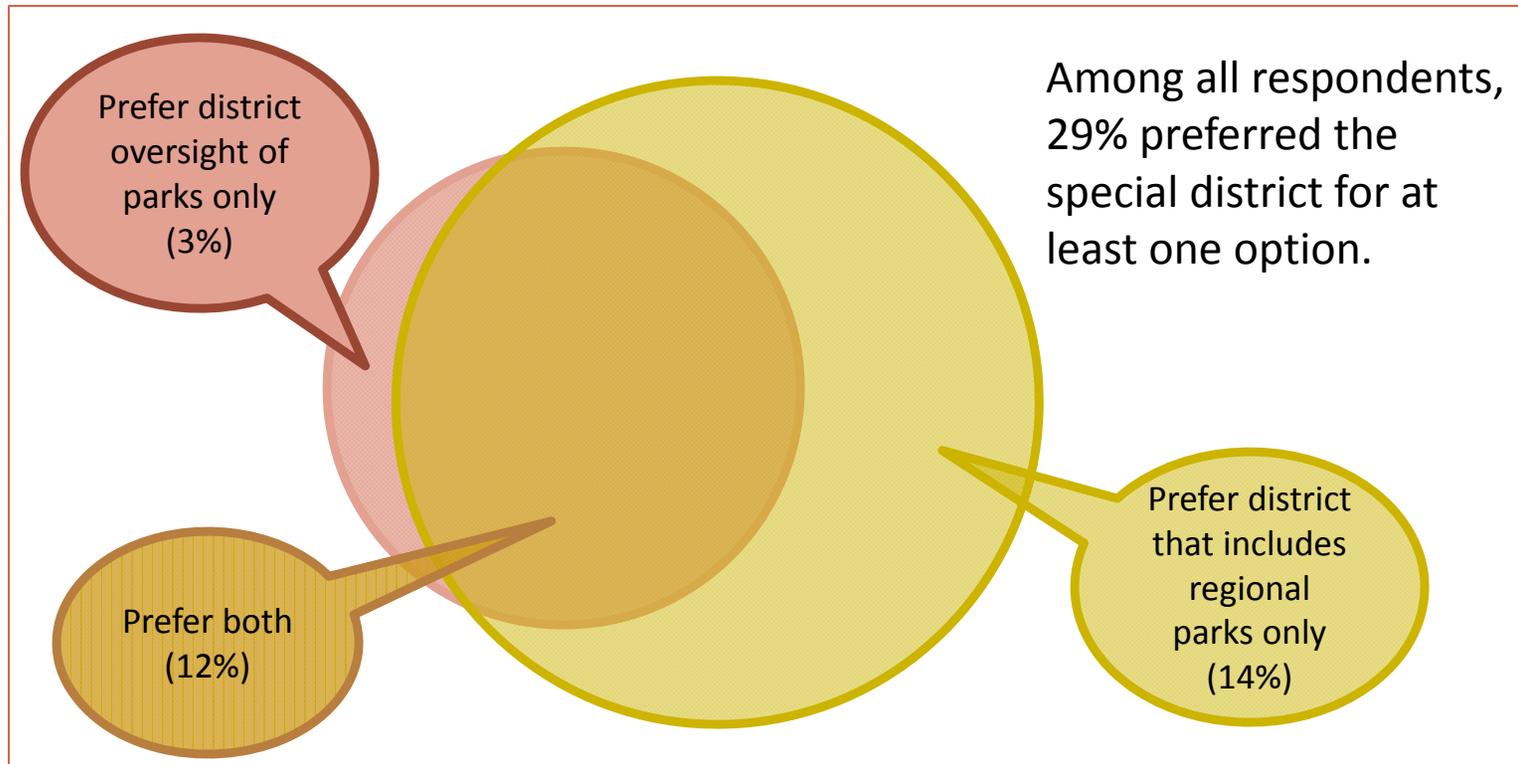
Prefer City Management of Local Parks or Special District Management of Local & Regional Parks



Special District Support

Because support for a special parks district was addressed in two different ways, the results of both questions were combined for comparisons of those who favor vs those who oppose creation of the special district. On a combined basis, 29% of all respondents favor the special district.

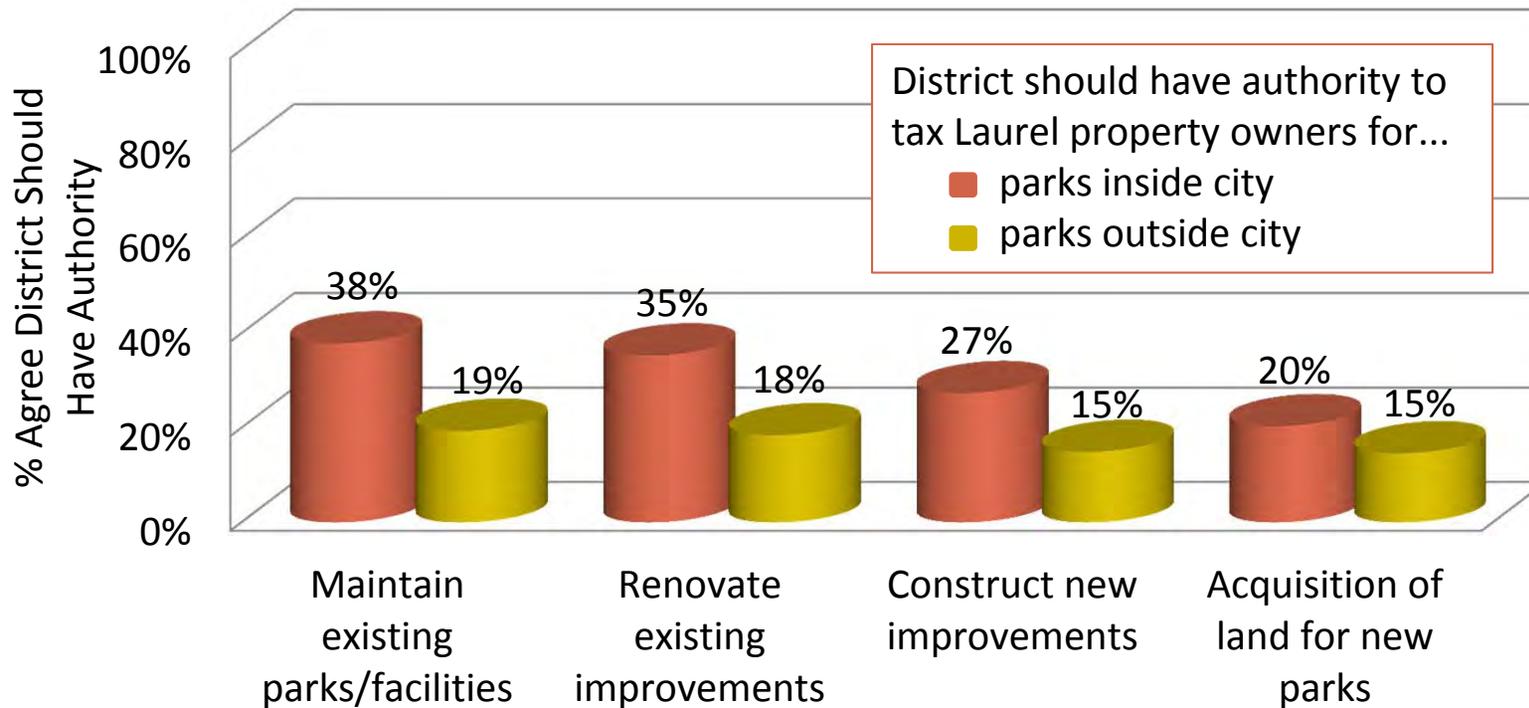
Sources of Support for Special Park District



Support for Special District Tax Authority

Whether or not the respondent favored the special district, s/he was asked to indicate what activities would be acceptable for a district to levy taxes against Laurel property owners. Only a minority of Laurel households favors a special district taxing for parks within the city limits. Opposition is even stronger for the prospect of paying taxes for parks outside of Laurel.

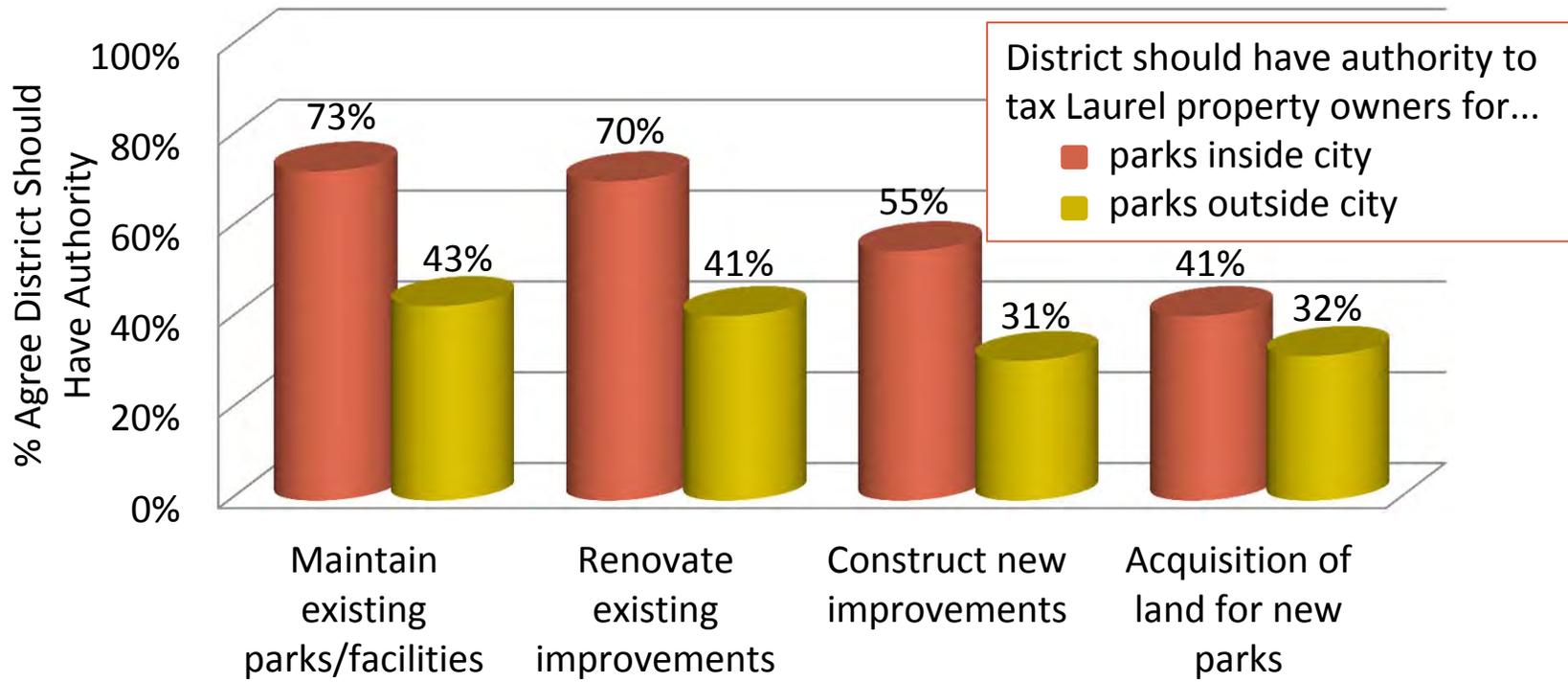
Acceptance of District Taxing Authority for Park Budget Activities
(Base: All Respondents)



Support for Special District Tax Authority

Even among respondents who favor creation of a special district, acceptance of paying taxes for parks outside Laurel is weak. A majority of the special district proponents believe the district should tax for all activities except acquisition of land in Laurel. However, support for the same activities outside Laurel is little more than half as strong.

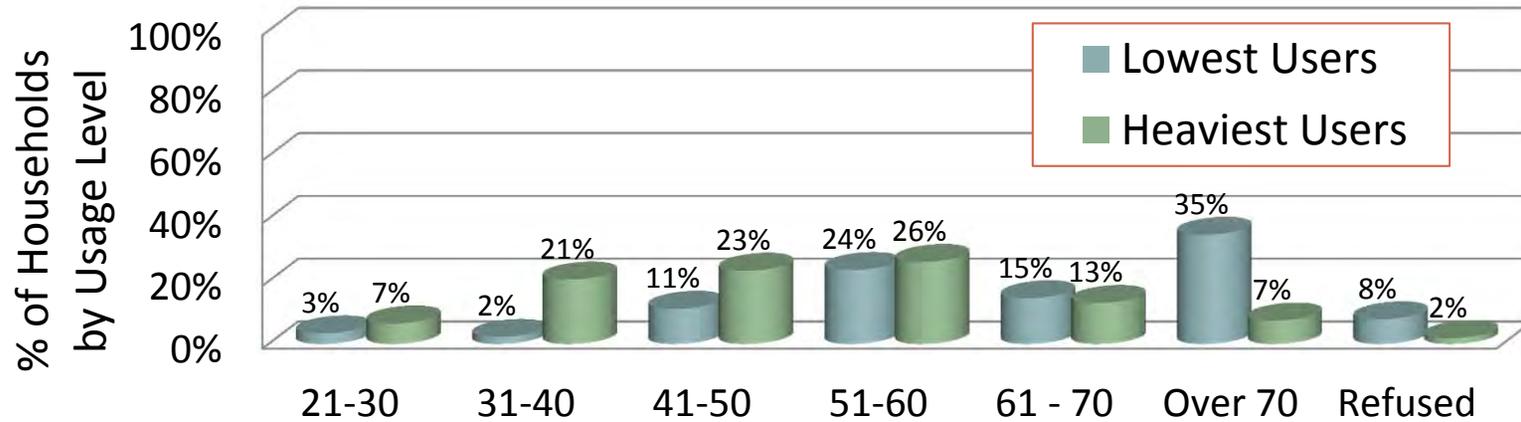
Acceptance of District Taxing Authority for Park Budget Activities
 (Base: Respondents Who Favor Special District)



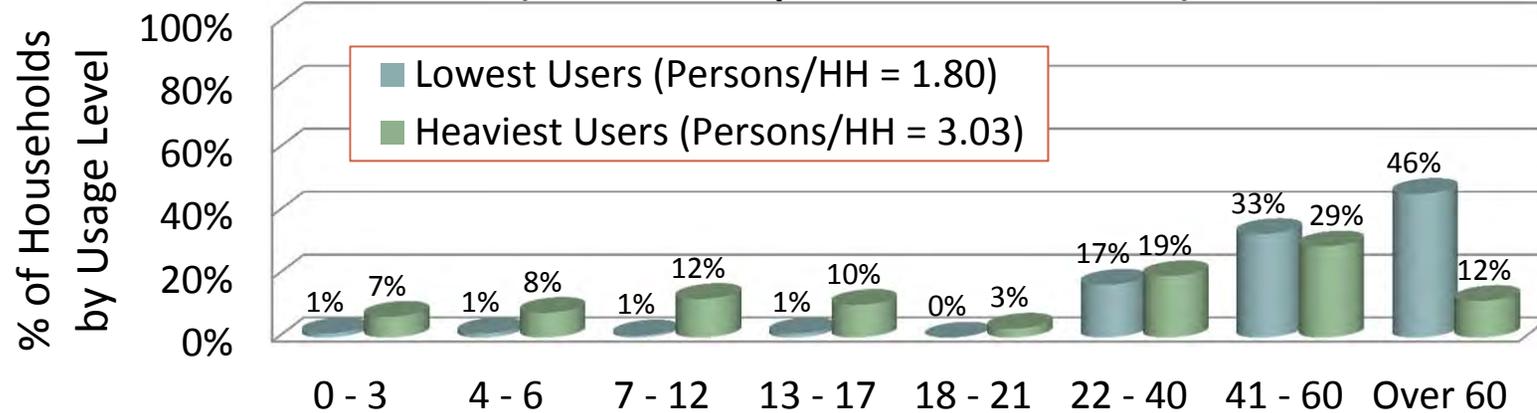
CHARACTERISTICS OF PARK USERS

Demographics of Low vs Heavy Park Users

Age of Respondent (Household Head)



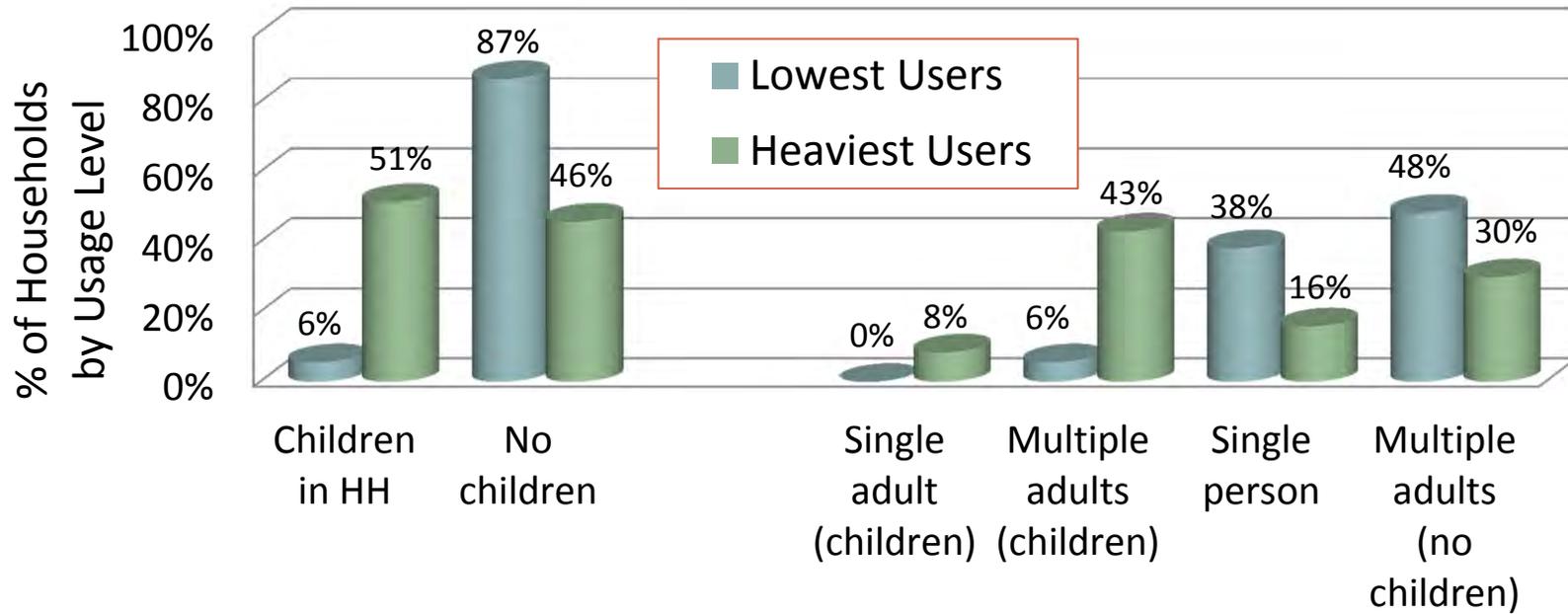
Age of Household Members (Base: Total Population in Households)



NOTE: Values shown sum to less than 100% because some of respondents did not answer the question.

Demographics of Low vs Heavy Park Users

Household Composition

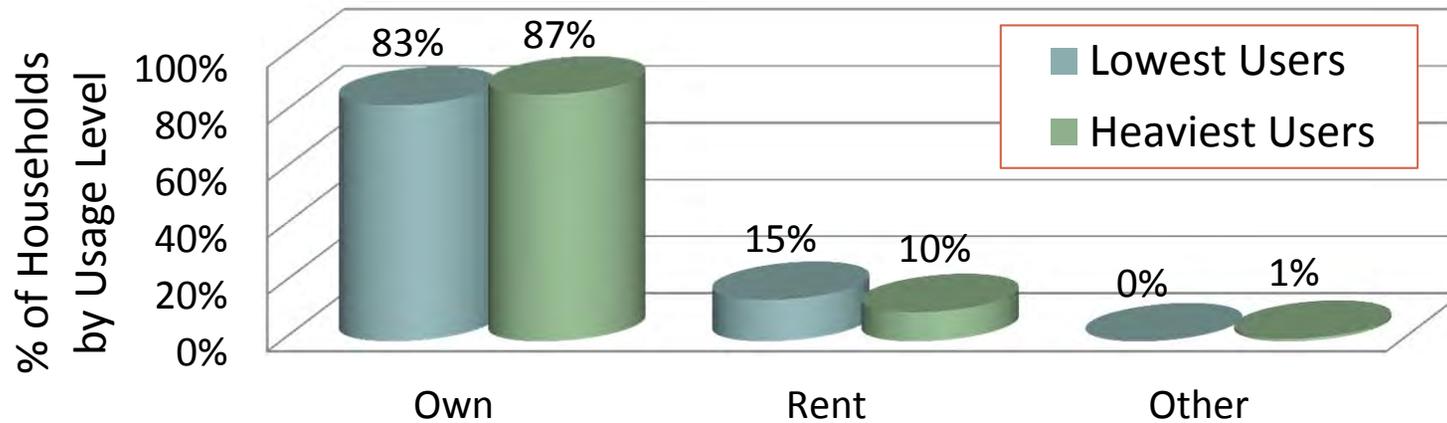


NOTE: Values shown sum to less than 100% because some of respondents did not answer the question.

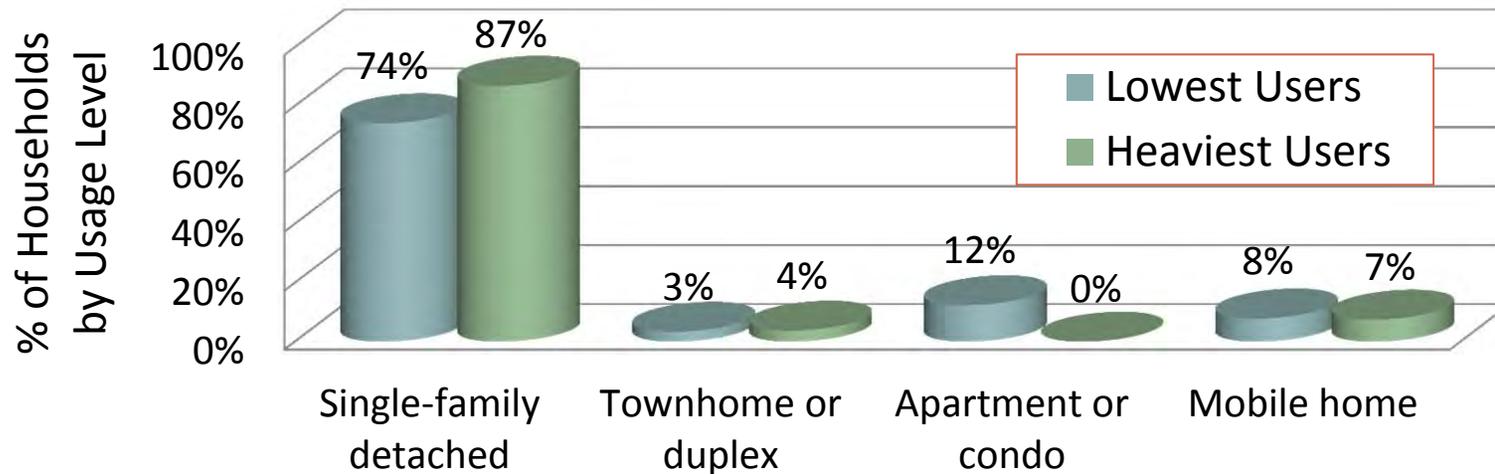
NOTE: The survey questionnaire included space for respondents to identify Ward. 65% were unsure, so those data are not presented in the report.

Demographics of Low vs Heavy Park Users

Housing Tenure



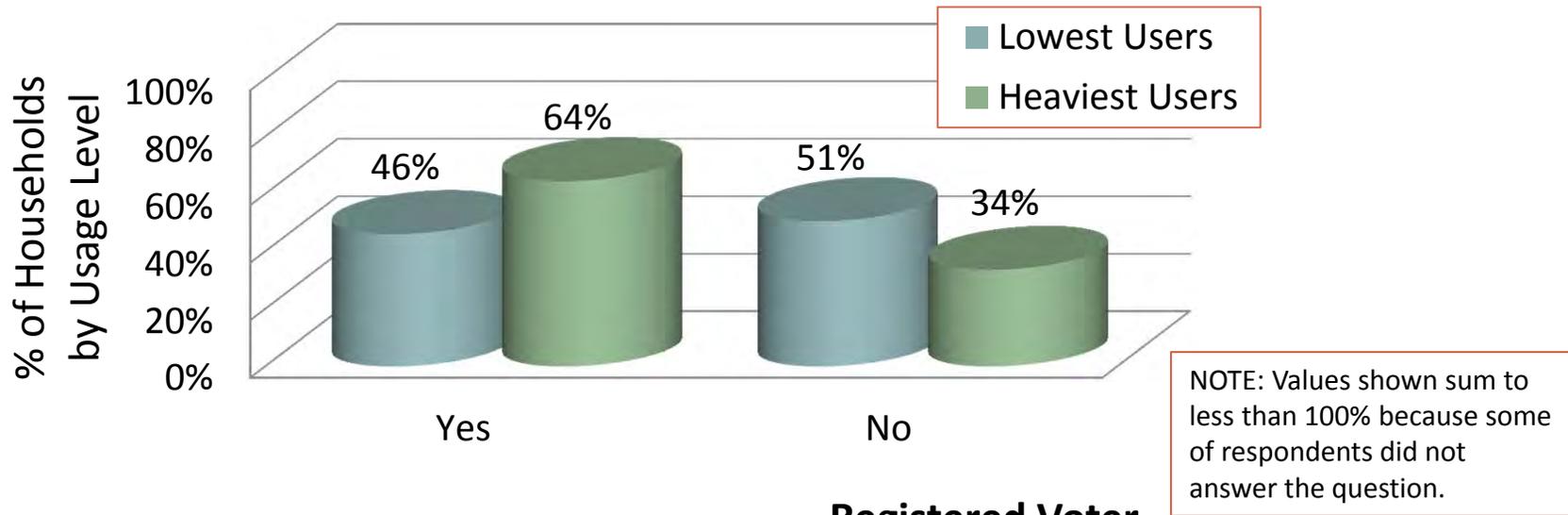
Type of Home



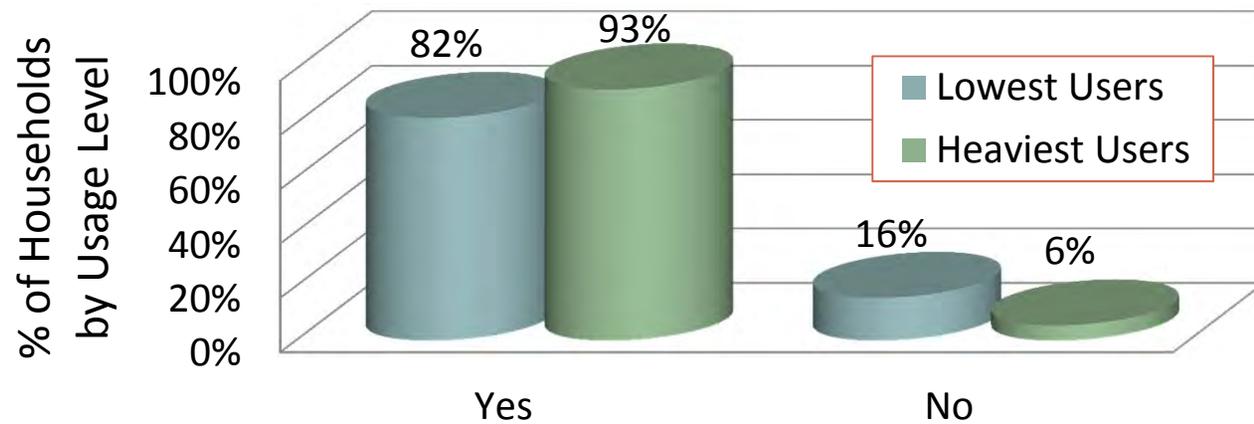
NOTE: Values shown sum to less than 100% because some of respondents did not answer the question.

Demographics of Low vs Heavy Park Users

Dog Ownership

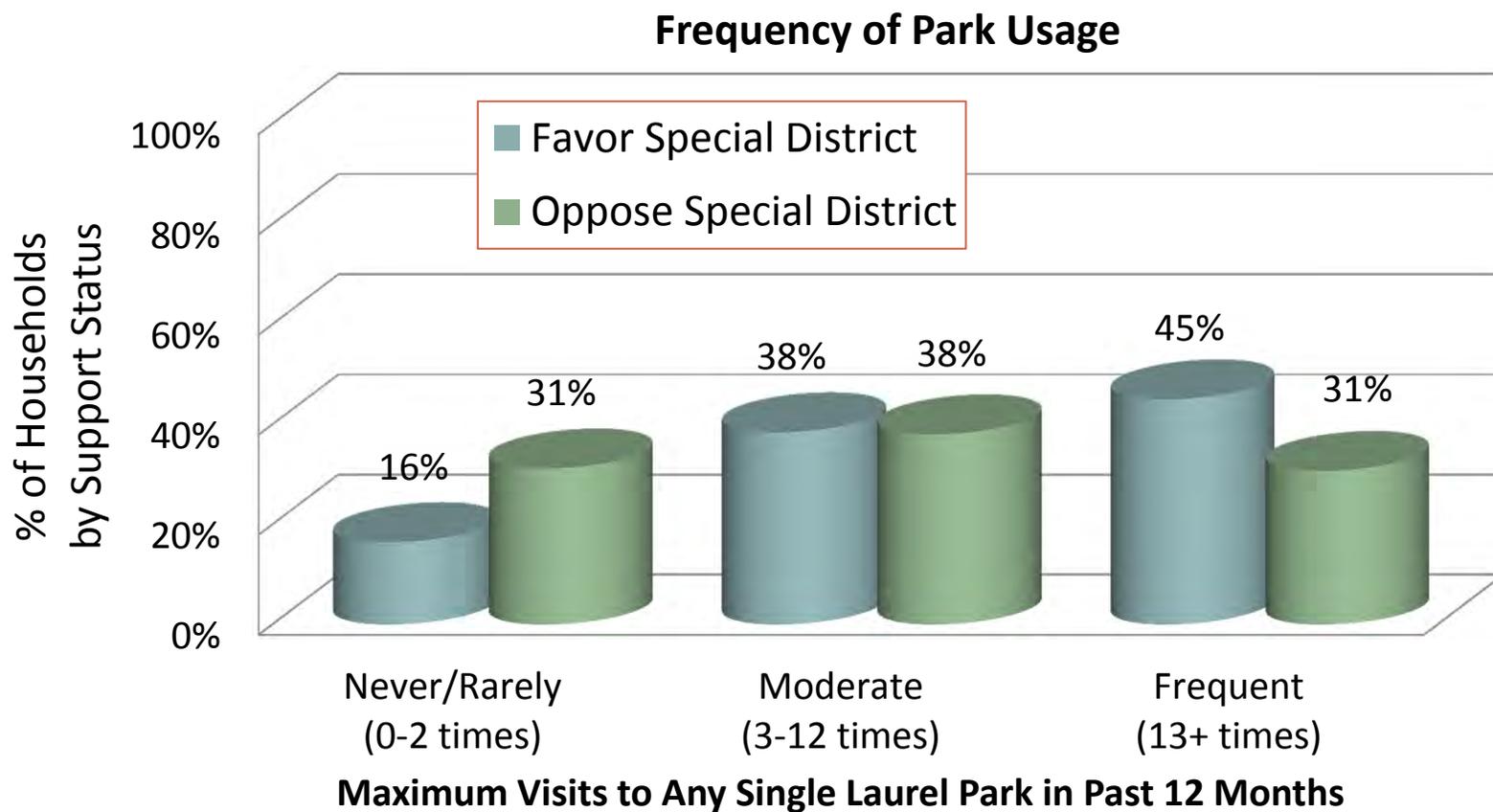


Registered Voter



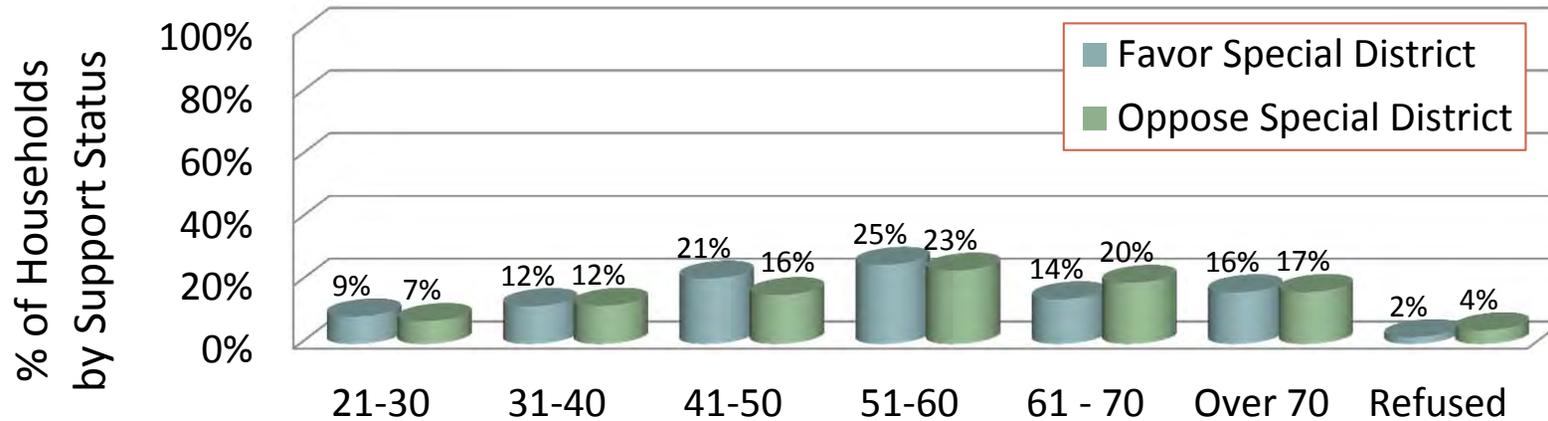
CHARACTERISTICS OF PARK DISTRICT SUPPORTERS

Park Usage of District Supporters/Opponents

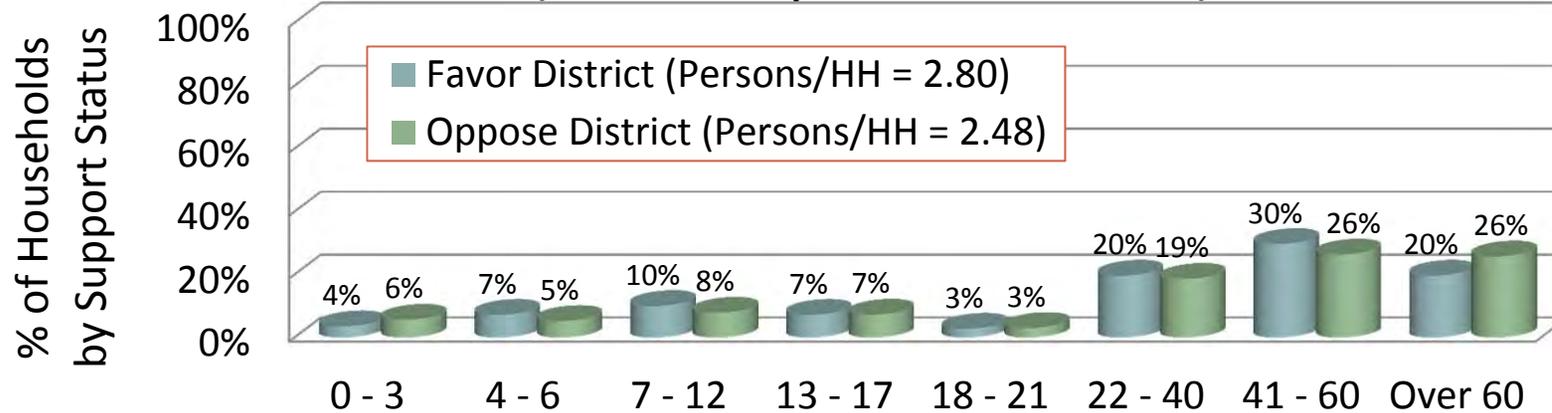


Demographics of District Supporters/Opponents

Age of Respondent (Household Head)



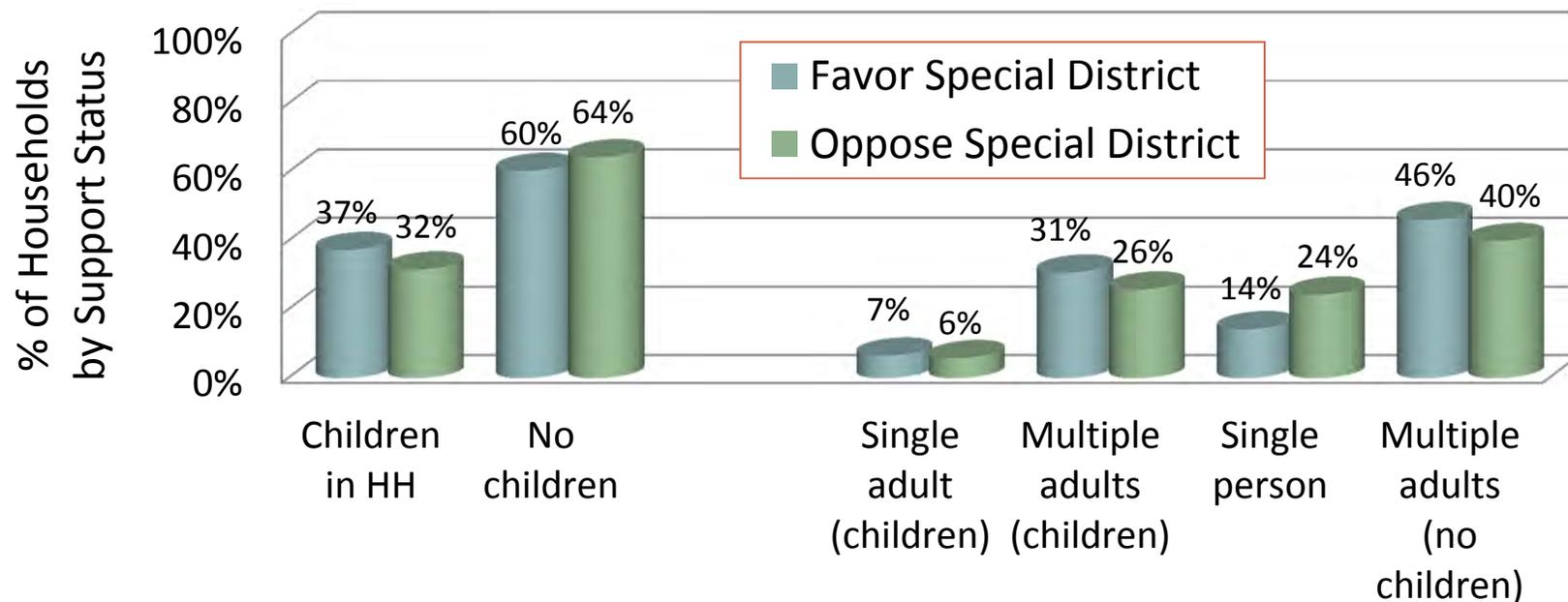
Age of Household Members (Base: Total Population in Households)



NOTE: Values shown sum to less than 100% because some of respondents did not answer the question.

Demographics of District Supporters/Opponents

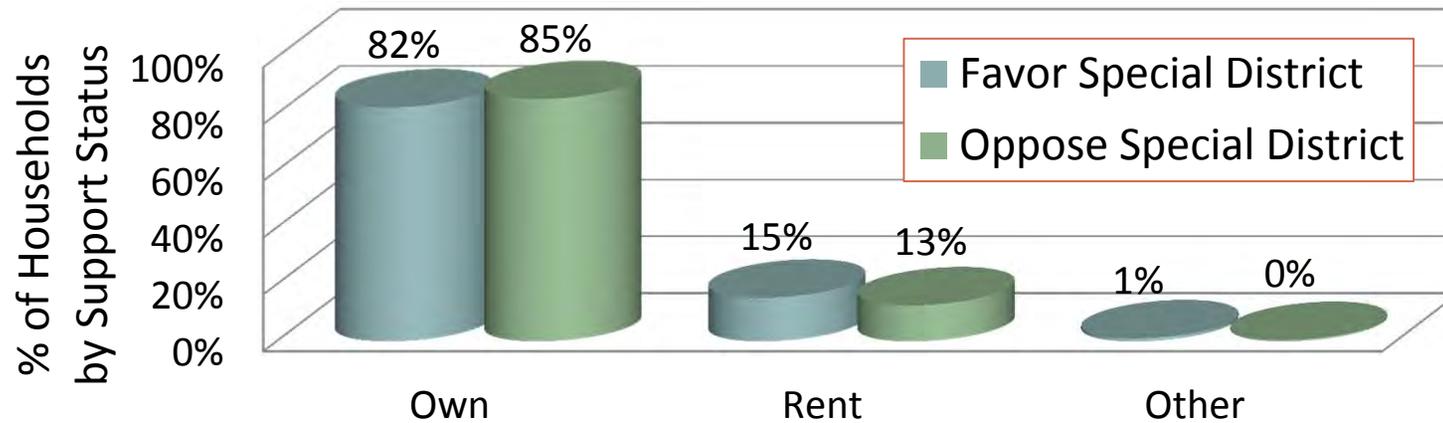
Household Composition



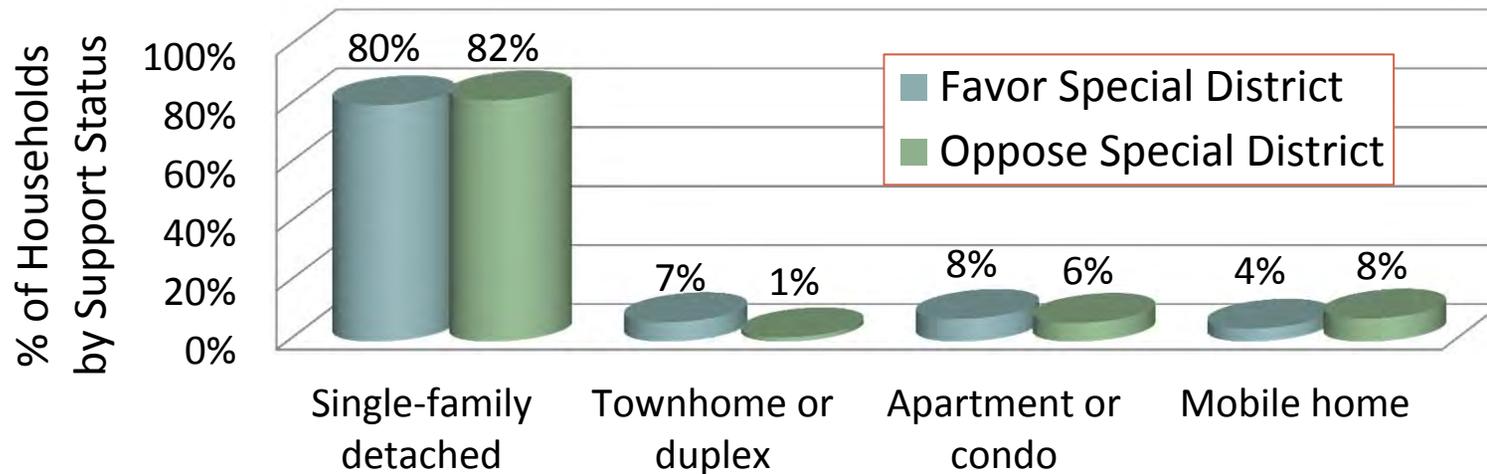
NOTE: Values shown sum to less than 100% because some of respondents did not answer the question.

Demographics of District Supporters/Opponents

Housing Tenure



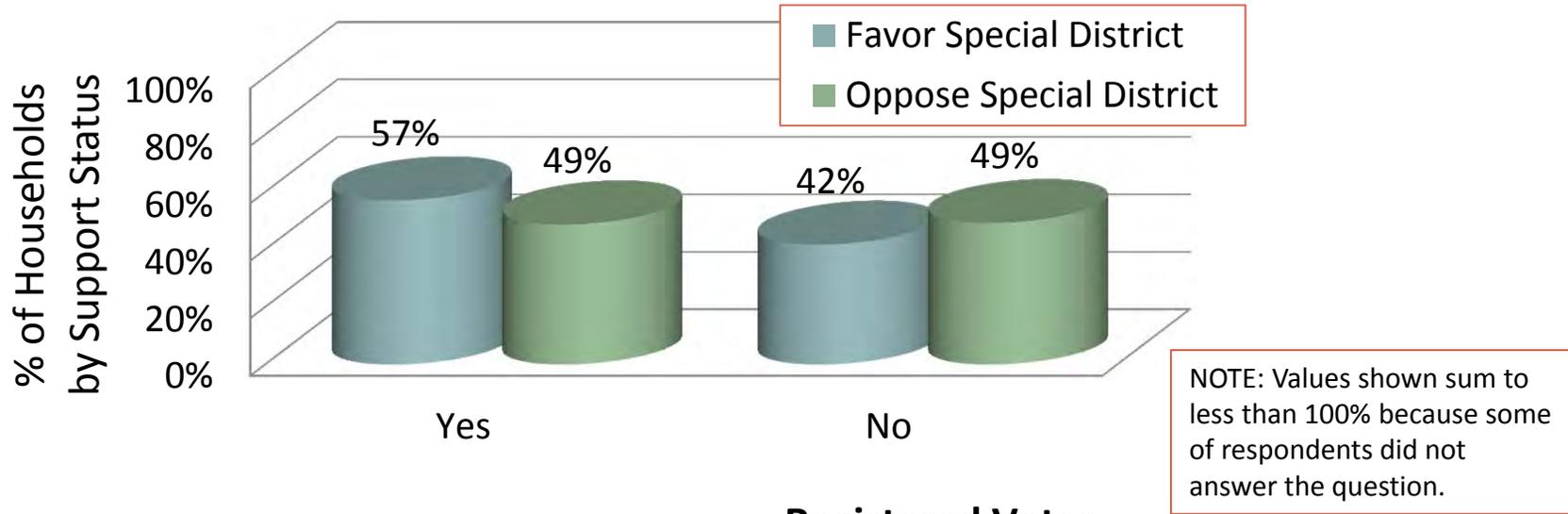
Type of Home



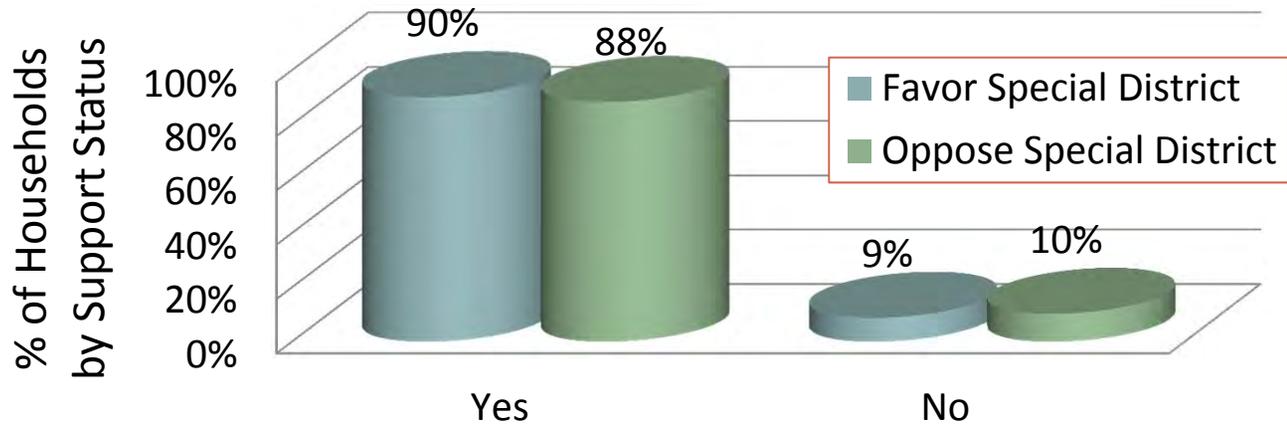
NOTE: Values shown sum to less than 100% because some of respondents did not answer the question.

Demographics of District Supporters/Opponents

Dog Ownership



Registered Voter



APPENDIX: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

LAUREL CITIZEN SURVEY
I. YOUR USAGE OF LAUREL PARKS

1. Please provide your best estimate of how often during the past 12 months you or other members of your household visited each of the parks shown. (Please select an answer for each park shown, or "Never" if you didn't visit a park at all during the past year.)

A. Developed parks	Never	1-2 times	3-6 times	7-12 times	13-24 times	25+ times
Elena Park	<input type="checkbox"/>					
NW Maryland and Duval	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Firemen's Park South 1st Ave & East Main Street	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Kiwanis Park (Kid's Kingdom) 2nd Ave North & Mountain View Lane	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Lions Family Park (South Pond) South 8th Ave & East Railroad Street	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Murray Heights Park 5th Ave North & West 13th Street	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Nutting Park Alder Ave & East 6th Street	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Riverside Park Hwy 212 South & Yellowstone River	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Russell Park Maple Ave & South 5th Street	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Soccer Field Park First Ave & East 8th Street	<input type="checkbox"/>					
State Firemen's Memorial Park North 2nd Ave & West 1st Street	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Thomson Park 1st Ave North & East 6th Street	<input type="checkbox"/>					

B. Undeveloped parks	Never	1-2 times	3-6 times	7-12 times	13-24 times	25+ times
Alder Park Atchison Drive & Santa Fe Drive	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Cherry Hills Park 13th Ave North & West 12th Street	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Emma Murray Park North 4th Ave & Grandview Lane	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Mayors Park Washington Ave & East 1st Street	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Rotary Park Birch Ave & East Main Street	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Veterans Park Colorado Ave & East 1st Street	<input type="checkbox"/>					

II. YOUR PREFERENCES AND SATISFACTION WITH VARIOUS TYPES OF PARKS

2. Parks can take many different forms, from small to large in area and with few to many amenities such as playgrounds, picnic tables, restrooms, etc. For each park described below, please indicate how important that type of park is to you (and your household), and then how satisfied you are with the parks of that type available in Laurel.



Image courtesy of City of Missoula Parks Department

a. Large and centrally-located areas with many amenities which may require a vehicle to access

How important is this type of park to you (and your household)?	Not at all important <input type="checkbox"/>	Of little importance <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderately important <input type="checkbox"/>	Very important <input type="checkbox"/>
--	--	--	--	--

How satisfied are you with the parks in Laurel that fit this description?	Very dissatisfied <input type="checkbox"/>	Somewhat dissatisfied <input type="checkbox"/>	Somewhat satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>	Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>
--	---	---	--	--

Check here if you are unfamiliar with this type of park area in Laurel.



b. Small park areas with few amenities located near or in your neighborhood within walking distance

How important is this type of park to you (and your household)?	Not at all important <input type="checkbox"/>	Of little importance <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderately important <input type="checkbox"/>	Very important <input type="checkbox"/>
--	--	--	--	--

How satisfied are you with the parks in Laurel that fit this description?	Very dissatisfied <input type="checkbox"/>	Somewhat dissatisfied <input type="checkbox"/>	Somewhat satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>	Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>
--	---	---	--	--

Check here if you are unfamiliar with this type of park area in Laurel.

II. YOUR PREFERENCES AND SATISFACTION WITH VARIOUS TYPES OF PARKS



- c. Corridors of park land connecting neighborhoods and other parks, which could be used as traditional park land, but primarily serve as connectors

How important is this type of park to you (and your household)?	Not at all important <input type="checkbox"/>	Of little importance <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderately important <input type="checkbox"/>	Very important <input type="checkbox"/>
--	--	--	--	--

How satisfied are you with the parks in Laurel that fit this description?	Very dissatisfied <input type="checkbox"/>	Somewhat dissatisfied <input type="checkbox"/>	Somewhat satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>	Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>
--	---	---	--	--

Check here if you are unfamiliar with this type of park area in Laurel.



- d. Natural areas with minimal development and access to natural resources

How important is this type of park to you (and your household)?	Not at all important <input type="checkbox"/>	Of little importance <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderately important <input type="checkbox"/>	Very important <input type="checkbox"/>
--	--	--	--	--

How satisfied are you with the parks in Laurel that fit this description?	Very dissatisfied <input type="checkbox"/>	Somewhat dissatisfied <input type="checkbox"/>	Somewhat satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>	Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>
--	---	---	--	--

Check here if you are unfamiliar with this type of park area in Laurel.



- e. Small strips of enhanced land providing aesthetic values in an urban area (such as roadway medians, entry signs, etc.)

How important is this type of park to you (and your household)?	Not at all important <input type="checkbox"/>	Of little importance <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderately important <input type="checkbox"/>	Very important <input type="checkbox"/>
--	--	--	--	--

How satisfied are you with the parks in Laurel that fit this description?	Very dissatisfied <input type="checkbox"/>	Somewhat dissatisfied <input type="checkbox"/>	Somewhat satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>	Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>
--	---	---	--	--

Check here if you are unfamiliar with this type of park area in Laurel.

III. HOW WELL DO LAUREL PARKS SERVE THE COMMUNITY?

3. Parks and park amenities are developed to serve many segments of the community. For each group below, please indicate whether you feel the current parks in Laurel offer too little, too much, or just the right amount in the way of recreational opportunities. (Please select an answer for each group shown, or 'No opinion' if you don't know about one of these categories.)

A. Age groups	Too little	Just right	Too much	No opinion
Ages 5 and younger	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ages 6 - 14	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ages 15 - 24	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ages 25 - 44	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ages 45 - 64	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ages 65 and older	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

B. Other groups	Too little	Just right	Too much	No opinion
Organized sports teams	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Runners/Walkers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bicyclists	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dog owners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People with disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Now, please indicate how important the types of facilities shown below are to you (and other members of your household), and how satisfied you are with the pool and playgrounds available in Laurel.



a. Outdoor swimming pool

How important is this type of facility to you (and your household)?	Not at all important <input type="checkbox"/>	Of little importance <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderately important <input type="checkbox"/>	Very important <input type="checkbox"/>
--	--	--	--	--

How satisfied are you with the existing swimming pool in Laurel?	Very dissatisfied <input type="checkbox"/>	Somewhat dissatisfied <input type="checkbox"/>	Somewhat satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>	Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>
---	---	---	--	--

Check here if you are unfamiliar with the Laurel swimming pool.



b. Playgrounds

How important is this type of facility to you (and your household)?	Not at all important <input type="checkbox"/>	Of little importance <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderately important <input type="checkbox"/>	Very important <input type="checkbox"/>
--	--	--	--	--

How satisfied are you with the existing playgrounds in Laurel?	Very dissatisfied <input type="checkbox"/>	Somewhat dissatisfied <input type="checkbox"/>	Somewhat satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>	Very satisfied <input type="checkbox"/>
---	---	---	--	--

Check here if you are unfamiliar with the playgrounds in Laurel.

IV. YOUR PREFERENCES FOR NEW PARK FACILITIES

The remaining questions in this survey will ask you about priorities for park facilities, your willingness to fund parks and potential improvements, and your opinions about how the parks in Laurel and the surrounding area should be developed and managed. Please read the information below, which will provide background that will help you answer these questions.

LAUREL PARKS MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

Currently, the Public Works Department has responsibility for park development and maintenance. Laurel's Public Works Department is also responsible for street maintenance, cemetery management, water, sewer, and solid waste disposal.

The budget for parks in Laurel varies from year to year, depending on City priorities and on the availability of tax revenue. The budgeted expenses generally fall under the category of maintaining existing park grounds and facilities. For Fiscal Year 2013-14, parks account for about 6% of the City's General Fund budget.

In total, the budget for parks represents planned expenditures of about \$244,000. There are approximately 2,800 households in Laurel. Thus, for the purposes of this survey, consider that the average Laurel household pays taxes totaling approximately \$90/year for parks.

COSTS OF IMPROVING PARKS AND PARK FACILITIES

The tables below show examples of the approximate costs for a variety of investments in parks to help you form opinions about the issues addressed in this survey.

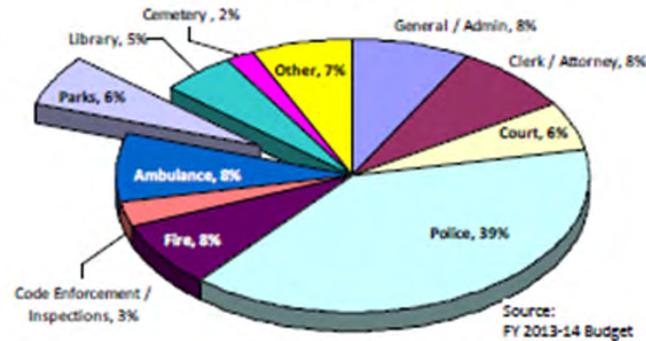
Park land acquisition	Cost
5-acre neighborhood park	\$125,000
25-acre community park	\$625,000
50-acre regional park	\$1 million

Facility construction	Cost
Dog park (per acre)	\$50,000
Tennis court (unlighted)	\$65,000
Playground (including surfacing)	\$75,000

Facility construction	Cost
Splash park fountain	\$500,000
Skate park (concrete)	\$500,000
Multi-use trail (concrete, per mile)	\$515,000

Costs shown are approximate, and depend on location, terrain, and size of improvement.

City of Laurel General Fund Budgeted Appropriations
Total Expenditures: \$4.2 Million



IV. YOUR PREFERENCES FOR NEW PARK FACILITIES

5. The Laurel Park Board is considering investing in the development of new park facilities for the community. Thinking about the activities you and others in your household enjoy, please answer the following questions regarding how important each option is to you, and how often you or others in your household might use the facility, if it were available.

The following facilities would be new additions in Laurel:



a. Tennis courts

How important is this type of facility to you (and your household)?	Not at all important <input type="checkbox"/>	Of little importance <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderately important <input type="checkbox"/>	Very important <input type="checkbox"/>
How often do you think you (or someone in your household) would use this type of facility, weather permitting?	Never <input type="checkbox"/>	Less than once a month <input type="checkbox"/>	Once or twice a month <input type="checkbox"/>	More than twice a month <input type="checkbox"/>



b. Skate park

How important is this type of facility to you (and your household)?	Not at all important <input type="checkbox"/>	Of little importance <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderately important <input type="checkbox"/>	Very important <input type="checkbox"/>
How often do you think you (or someone in your household) would use this type of facility, weather permitting?	Never <input type="checkbox"/>	Less than once a month <input type="checkbox"/>	Once or twice a month <input type="checkbox"/>	More than twice a month <input type="checkbox"/>



c. Splash park

How important is this type of facility to you (and your household)?	Not at all important <input type="checkbox"/>	Of little importance <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderately important <input type="checkbox"/>	Very important <input type="checkbox"/>
How often do you think you (or someone in your household) would use this type of facility, weather permitting?	Never <input type="checkbox"/>	Less than once a month <input type="checkbox"/>	Once or twice a month <input type="checkbox"/>	More than twice a month <input type="checkbox"/>

IV. YOUR PREFERENCES FOR NEW PARK FACILITIES



Image courtesy of Forsyth County Parks & Recreation

d. Dog park

How important is this type of facility to you (and your household)?	Not at all important <input type="checkbox"/>	Of little importance <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderately important <input type="checkbox"/>	Very important <input type="checkbox"/>
How often do you think you (or someone in your household) would use this type of facility, weather permitting?	Never <input type="checkbox"/>	Less than once a month <input type="checkbox"/>	Once or twice a month <input type="checkbox"/>	More than twice a month <input type="checkbox"/>



e. Trails for walking, running, or bicycling

How important is this type of facility to you (and your household)?	Not at all important <input type="checkbox"/>	Of little importance <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderately important <input type="checkbox"/>	Very important <input type="checkbox"/>
How often do you think you (or someone in your household) would use this type of facility, weather permitting?	Never <input type="checkbox"/>	Less than once a month <input type="checkbox"/>	Once or twice a month <input type="checkbox"/>	More than twice a month <input type="checkbox"/>

V. MANAGEMENT AND FUNDING OF LAUREL'S PARKS

6. For the following questions, consider how you feel about the quality of the City's parks today. Please keep in mind that for the purposes of this survey, the current property tax "cost" of parks is about \$90 per year for the average household in Laurel. (For the questions below, place a dollar amount in each of the four boxes. As a general rule, the amount you place in each box should be higher as you go down the list. The \$90 average serves as a reference to the average current cost – your answers may be higher or lower than \$90.)

- a. What annual tax amount on the average household would you consider *so low that you would question whether parks could even be maintained adequately* by the City?
- b. What annual tax amount on the average household would you consider a *good value for parks that meet your needs*?
- c. What annual tax amount on the average household would you consider *expensive, but worth it, as long as the parks meet your needs*?
- d. What annual tax amount on the average household would you consider *too expensive for parks in Laurel; that is, you would oppose a levy that included this amount for parks*?

7. Again, for the following questions, please keep in mind that for the purposes of this survey the current property tax "cost" of parks is about \$90 per year for the average household in Laurel.

- a. Thinking about what's important to you (and others in your household), how much in additional annual property tax would you be willing to pay for each of the following? (Please select *only one answer* for each option.)

Options to be funded	Amount willing to add to property tax				
	\$0	\$10	\$15	\$20	\$40
Improve maintenance of existing facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Construct new park improvements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Acquire land for new parks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Allow for recreation programs targeting all ages	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- b. If *multiple* options shown on the left were desirable, what is the total combined amount you would you be willing to pay in additional annual property tax? (Please select *only one answer*.)

\$0	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$10	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$20	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$30	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$40	<input type="checkbox"/>
\$50	<input type="checkbox"/>
More than \$50	<input type="checkbox"/>

V. MANAGEMENT AND FUNDING OF LAUREL'S PARKS

8. There are a number of alternatives being considered by the Park Board that would change the way parks are established, developed, maintained, and funded. Please provide your opinions about these potential alternatives in the questions below.

a. In your opinion, which of the following organizational options for the oversight function of parks would you most prefer?

Which option do you prefer? (Please choose only one)	
Continue to manage parks through the existing Public Works department	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create a new City department devoted to parks	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create a special district that would be independent of City government, similar to an irrigation district	<input type="checkbox"/>

b. In your opinion, should parks owned by the City of Laurel continue to be managed by the City, or should a special district manage parks owned by the City and surrounding areas?

Which option do you prefer? (Please choose only one)	
City government continues to manage parks only in the City limits	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create a special district that includes parks in the City limits and surrounding areas	<input type="checkbox"/>

c. In your opinion, should a special district have authority to tax *Laurel property owners* for the following purposes for parks located **INSIDE** Laurel City limits? (Please indicate "Yes" or "No" for each activity shown.)

Budget activity	Yes, district should have authority	No, district should NOT have authority
Maintenance of existing parks and facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Renovation of existing improvements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Construction of new improvements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Acquisition of land for new parks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

d. In your opinion, should a special district have authority to tax *Laurel property owners* for the following purposes for parks located **OUTSIDE** Laurel City limits? (Please indicate "Yes" or "No" for each activity shown.)

Budget activity	Yes, district should have authority	No, district should NOT have authority
Maintenance of existing parks and facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Renovation of existing improvements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Construction of new improvements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Acquisition of land for new parks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

V. MANAGEMENT AND FUNDING OF LAUREL'S PARKS

9. Regardless of issues about specific funding and organizational structure, the Park Board is planning ahead to anticipate the future needs of the Laurel community. The following questions will help the Board incorporate the opinions of residents in its decisions on long-term park planning strategies. Please answer the questions below to indicate how you feel about these alternatives.

The key strategies available involve choices among:

- ✓ downsizing or disposing of land and amenities in underutilized parks
- ✓ maintaining and improving existing parks
- ✓ acquiring and setting aside land that will serve as open space now and be available for park development later
- ✓ acquiring and developing new parks now

a. In the table to the right, please indicate how strongly you oppose or favor each of these long-term strategy alternatives for Laurel parks. (You may "oppose" or "favor" any or all of the strategies in this table.)



Long-term strategy for park land	Strongly oppose	Somewhat oppose	Somewhat favor	Strongly favor	No opinion
Downsize/dispose of underutilized parks	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Maintain/improve existing parks	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Acquire land for open space and future parks	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Acquire and develop new parks now	<input type="checkbox"/>				

b. Assuming that adequate funding was available, how would you rank the priority of these alternatives as strategies for long-term planning? (Please select one answer in each column, and make sure you rank each strategy alternative only once. Please answer this question – ranking your first through last choices – even if you said you "oppose" any of these strategies in the question above.)



Long-term strategy for park land	First priority	Second priority	Third priority	Fourth priority
Downsize/dispose of underutilized parks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintain/improve existing parks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Acquire land for open space and future parks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Acquire and develop new parks now	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

VI. QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU

10. These final questions will be used to classify your answers to enhance the Park Board's understanding of the factors that impact citizens' park usage and preferences. *Reminder: This survey is completely confidential, with results reported in aggregate form only. None of your answers to these or previous questions will be associated with any information that identifies you individually. Your completed questionnaire will be returned to and tabulated by an independent data processing firm, contracted to the City of Laurel.*

a. How old are you? (Please choose only one answer.)

Under 21	<input type="checkbox"/>	51 - 60	<input type="checkbox"/>
21 - 30	<input type="checkbox"/>	61 - 70	<input type="checkbox"/>
31 - 40	<input type="checkbox"/>	Over 70	<input type="checkbox"/>
41 - 50	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer to not answer	<input type="checkbox"/>

b. Do you own or rent your current home?

Own	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Please describe:

c. Which best describes your home? (Please choose only one answer.)

Single family detached home	<input type="checkbox"/>
Townhome or duplex	<input type="checkbox"/>
Apartment or condo	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mobile home	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Please describe:

d. Including yourself, how many people in your household are in the following age groups? (Please write the appropriate number in the blank after each age group.)

Age 3 or younger		Ages 18 - 21	
Ages 4 - 6		Ages 22 - 40	
Ages 7 - 12		Ages 41 - 60	
Ages 13 - 17		Over age 60	

Total in your household (including yourself) _____

e. Do you (or does anyone in your household) own a dog?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

f. Are you registered to vote?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

g. Do you live in ... ?

Ward 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ward 3	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ward 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ward 4	<input type="checkbox"/>		

VII. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Please use this space to provide any comments you would like to make regarding Laurel's parks. Comments will be transcribed for analysis with any identifying information removed.

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS IMPORTANT SURVEY!

Please place your completed questionnaire in the pre-stamped envelope provided and return it for confidential data processing to:

nVision Research, Inc.
1602 S. Parker Road, Suite #203
Denver, CO 80231
ATTN: City of Laurel Survey

For More Information

Please contact:

Peaks to Plains Design, P.C.

404 North 31 Street, Suite 405

Billings, Montana 59101

(406) 294-9499

www.peakstoplains.com

nVision Research

1602 S. Parker Road, Suite 203

Denver, Colorado 80231

(303) 322-1220

www.nvisionresearch.com

**This is a project of the
City of Laurel's
Park Board**

CONTACT

Laurel Citizen Survey , 2013 – Voluntary Comments

<p>Although I live alone, I have 5 grandchildren who visit and love the parks. I answered most of my questions with them in mind.</p>
<p>I think improvements such as tables and restrooms would greatly enhance any park. And surface paths, friendly to bikes, scooters, roller skates, etc. would also be nice, although a skate park would attract an undesirable crowd.</p>
<p>I would like to see South Pond Park have some improvements. A paved bike, running walk trail. More trees planted. Benches to sit on. A splash park put in the center grass area (see drawing). Develop all around the edge of the pond not just one side. A skate park would be fun for the kids. How about a park with all kinds of roses? Each different color has a name tag. Gazebo in the center. Charge for a wedding ceremony. Permit fee.</p>
<p>I would like to see a park within the city limits that is large enough to have a dog park, but also a walk and bike trail. I would also like the current parks to be "remodeled" -- updated, to include a skate park and nice pool with water slides. This town needs things for our kids to do, needs to be centrally located. Not all kids are interested in sports and even if they are, they still like to cool off w/"fun" entertaining splash parks, meet their friends and "skate" or ride on bike trails. The community would get to know each other by including a dog park. This town has a lot of dog owners and what a better way for people to get to meet other people in the community.</p>
<p>I very much enjoy the parks in Laurel and think they should be improved (especially the tennis courts at Thompson Park) as opposed to new ones being built.</p>
<p>Maintain the existing parks. There's a lot of room at Kiwanis Park to put in a spray park. Also, the pool is old and the YMCA took it over for the summer. They charge too much to swim in such a small non-heated pool. The tennis courts at Thompson Park are old, need resurfacing and nets! These would be great if they were fixed up. The high school allows people to use track to run/walk, but have no limited hours!</p>
<p>I am over 80 years old and don't feel qualified to give advice now as I am not involved in much anymore. Sorry!</p>
<p>I think it is an embarrassment that people from the surrounding cities think that all Laurel parks are just baseball fields. Show some creativity in park developments: have a few hills and some landscaping, not just flat areas. I appreciate the Soccer Field Park on Eleanor Roosevelt Drive.</p>
<p>Laurel has plenty of parks. The only thing I see them used for is sports, sports, sports. I think the parks we have now should be maintained and kept clean but we don't need more. Dog parks are a problem -people who do not like dogs put poison and sharp objects in dog parks and dog diseases are spread there. Billings has parks with lakes or the river and people I know prefer to go there. We like our yard & never go to parks.</p>
<p>Metal detecting should be allowed as long as holes are covered. Bathrooms need to be cleaned more often.</p>
<p>I live down the street from Nutting Park and what could be a great park is treated like the ugly stepchild. No dumpsters on each end so there is garbage strewn. You'd be surprised how the public can help if you give them the chance. Also, the watering schedule is wonky. A gooey grass is a wrecked grass. This also refers to the storm drain that must not work since it floods. There are also no tables or benches, so unless it is being used for pee wee football or t-ball there is little use for it.</p>
<p>Generally, my use of the public parks is in the company of my grandfather. Parks we use frequently are very appreciated by us. Aesthetically, I find the number of parks in Laurel very appealing. My only concern has been with Kiwanis Park, a lovely, versatile park that serves</p>

Laurel Citizen Survey , 2013 – Voluntary Comments

<p>many children, and the fact that vandalism occurs by older kids who aren't there to play, but to "hang out." Little supervision of the park seems to exist in terms of police attention or any of the people who worked hard to build and support it.</p>
<p>Would love to see beautiful parks of all kinds for Laurel citizens but feel any new taxes should be used for our pathetic streets. We have children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren that would benefit from parks and recreation facilities. Right now I know the streets would be a better benefit for them all.</p>
<p>This city shouldn't be concerned about future parks or upkeep at this time. They need proper leadership and fix things that are more important (such as waste and sewer).</p>
<p>The Park Board should do a better job of keeping its trees trimmed.</p>
<p>There are plenty of parks in Laurel. Taking care of them and improving them is the better option than building new ones. Use what we have. Reuse that we can. Don't waste. Host community clean ups/building plans. Laurel is a small, beautiful town. Let's keep it that way.</p>
<p>Currently some of the parks are run down. Instead of being fixed or replaced, things are taken away, (e.g., swings removed from Thompson Park) and at Kids Kingdom there is writing on slides, boards missing & always trash in the park.</p>
<p>Riverside Park and walking trails along Yellowstone River -- do what you can with these.</p>
<p>There could be more (covered) garbage cans.</p>
<p>I would like to see a splash park and skate park supplemented by private donations and have maintenance, etc. be supplemented by community service groups and students.</p>
<p>We often go to Kids Kingdom and use Kiwanis Park but since there are no facilities that young teens can use, they have "overed" on Kids Kingdom and because of their language and pushing of children we have been going there less. The teens need a skate park and there is even room on the west end of Kiwanis Park.</p>
<p>Shocked that this kind of time and money put into survey about parks when it seems there are so many other issues to be addressed in Laurel. But do appreciate the opportunity to comment.</p>
<p>I'm 86, no longer drive. Sorry I'm not much help. Thank you</p>
<p>Laurel used to be a safe place to raise kids-we had a lot to do when I was a kid. Now all we have are bars, casinos, gas stations, drugs. We had a dance hall, pool hall, tennis court, diving boards at our pool. My grandkids say our pool here is boring and there is nothing to do here. When I visit my kids in Missoula we go to the farmers market (huge), they have the merry-go-round there, huge playground for all ages. Here we still spend a lot of time at South Pond. The kids still love to fish there. Maybe if we had other places to go fish with a playground included for family fare. I think it is great that they planted trees on Main Street again and we had the drug store fountain at Geri's Pharmacy. Laurel was fun and families did things together. Now parents do their thing and kids run and do theirs.</p>
<p>People doing community service should be cleaning trash from all parks. During school, kids on detention should clean parks and around school property. If you need someone for supervision, ask some of us. We are willing to help.</p>
<p>(All) baseball fields need work, especially the coach pitch and mechanic pitch fields.</p>
<p>Creating a special district for parks management would be outstanding, but it would be a mistake to isolate that group. Much more cost effective and efficient and motivating to share equipment and resources when it's common sense to do so (i.e., if the new parks department/special district needs a backhoe for a 2 hour repair at downtown park). Public works should accommodate and share, not turn a blind eye. Any parks entity will operate with</p>

Laurel Citizen Survey , 2013 – Voluntary Comments

<p>a shoestring budget, so every daily efficiency needs to be embraced. Continue to grow student summer employment that benefits the Parks Dept. Laurel has great opportunity for a linear park system, especially along the ditch, full west to east and beyond. This can stitch together parks and communities.</p>
<p>My answers in section IV are based on the fact that, although I live alone, family from out of state comes to visit occasionally. Also, I believe everyone in a community benefits from being outside as much as possible, both physically and mentally/emotionally. So, in an indirect way I feel I benefit from people having access to skate parks, pools, playgrounds, walking/biking paths whether I use them or not. I also believe in involving the community as much as possible in park maintenance, land acquisition, etc. as volunteers (like clean-up, donations of materials, donations of land, etc.).</p>
<p>Please, please, please establish family friendly bike/walking/running trails priority one.</p>
<p>Laurel currently has Riverside Park which has a vast resource for public use. I think it is a shame that the city has let this beautiful park go to [...] and has not maintained the park. It could be a nice family place to spend a day with many things for people of all ages to enjoy if the city would do some maintenance and upkeep.</p>
<p>Health problems keep me from walking or using any of the parks. But do enjoy when they are kept up. Makes the whole area look nice.</p>
<p>We have no extra income to pay for parks, as much as we would enjoy them. We live paycheck to paycheck. We would prefer to see Laurel streets repaired. It is an embarrassment to see grass growing through the pavement. In our opinion, this would be a priority. Can't tax \$ be collected from CHS Refinery, the railroad and Wal-Mart?</p>
<p>I'm in my 80's and not the typical resident that utilizes park features very often. Some of what I list as "not important" is highly so, to younger families. So it's all relative. I understand that. I hope you can find a middle ground. I commend you. I'm all for keeping children busy. I raised 5 herein Laurel. I can help some, but retirement is another "kettle of fish". Good luck to you.</p>
<p>I would like to see the buildings @ Riverside Park updated and brought back to life. There could be some money earned there if the space was rented out for events or weddings. I know the boat ramp was washed away but the shooting range is still usable and there is a lot of potential. It just needs to be seen.</p>
<p>Parental partnering in field maintenance has insured youth sports success in Laurel's daily living. I would appreciate and would support increased funding directed toward increased public library availability - park and library combine to increase quality of living.</p>
<p>I am a senior, but want parks. Things for our children to do besides roam the streets.</p>
<p>I believe we should maintain the parks we have and make improvements in each park. Some of these parks have very little to offer the public.</p>
<p>Parking area for buses and vehicles around the stadium area. They now park on the streets and not enough parking anywhere for private vehicles. Since this is used for state meets it is a mess around grade school and high school.</p>
<p>We have enough parks and for sure enough taxes. Times are tough!</p>
<p>I/we don't use the parks in Laurel, because there's too much garbage and glass on the ground to enjoy the parks.</p>
<p>I have lived in Laurel all my life - 78 yrs. I used the parks a lot when younger but not much now except for Riverside. I would like to see park improvements, but due to limited income have not much money to pay for them.</p>
<p>I'm 82 years old and don't go to any parks.</p>

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<p>Laurel is a great town. Keep it simple but yet creative and you will do fine. Connect parks with walk, bike trails. Need trees around South Pond.</p>
<p>As [...] we do not vote in elections, but we do realize additional funds will be needed to improve existing parks and build new ones. My answers on the tax questions reflect that view. Laurel is a nice small town, but we could do better. Especially the area around the Interstate.</p>
<p>Tennis courts and city pool are inadequate and embarrassing to a city this size. Skate park would be a nice addition.</p>
<p>There are several places that could be put to better use by surrounding neighborhoods, but they have no toys, activity-developed space, or appeal. We use the main two parks here and the kids get bored. Adding a splash park (i.e.: Terry Park) to a small strip park would draw citizens to another part of town and expose a new area for neighborhood improvements, ultimately increasing property value by surround homeowners. Good luck! Park improvement has my vote 100%!</p>
<p>I feel the priority should be on repairing/maintaining/improving existing parks - not on creating new parks (except for a dog park). I feel the park district idea could work as the people can vote to approve or not-tax increases, but who exactly has oversight of this proposed district? City or county or state?</p>
<p>I think the parks in Laurel could be better kept. Boards are missing, garbage is everywhere, wood chips are clear to the edge and black under material is showing. I would love to see a splash park, but really my first priority would be to clean up some of our major parks first.</p>
<p>Think opinions from people who don't use parks should carry less weight than people who use the parks.</p>
<p>Bees and wasps have been a problem and keep us from going and staying at the city parks. I am mostly concerned about the teenagers being poor influences on the younger children.</p>
<p>I feel the parks we have in Laurel are adequate. I do not want to see an increase in taxes for park expansion. Put the money toward the water problem.</p>
<p>Laurel parks don't appear appealing. This has a lot to say if visitors are looking for a place to rest and eat, etc. As a longtime resident, the parks haven't changed that much appearance-wise. The newer ones are primarily for sport recreation, etc. Thanks for allowing my opinions to be heard.</p>
<p>I have used Laurel's parks since childhood. More as a child. The neighborhood park and the main park, Thompson for baseball, and 4th of July fireworks always. Not so much now. Live near a very nice park, well maintained. Use only two others in the last two years. Grandchildren do not get out much due to computers and PSP and other gaming toys. It would be nice have an indoor pool to use year round.</p>
<p>I think that maintenance and improvements should be done by private contracted companies, not city workers, to keep costs down.</p>
<p>I live on Medicare and have no extra to spare. The parks here in Laurel are very nice and are kept up wonderfully. I have no extra money for parks or anything. I need my basement fixed now, so it won't leak anymore. No one is stepping up to help with this, so I can't really get jumping up and down about the city parks.</p>
<p>Please excuse the answers. I haven't lived in town long enough to know the parks.</p>
<p>Additional park services need to be looked at along the river. Riverside Park has mostly been closed since the flooding and nothing appears to be on the agenda.</p>
<p>My wife and I are seniors on fixed incomes, but many answers are based for future generations and not so much for ourselves. Our "pet concern" would be more non-paved</p>

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walking/bike trails completely around Laurel for the future and need not be built all at once. We also think the city has done a good job in keeping up the available parks. Plus, this is a well thought out survey instrument and we are proud to be selected.
I think Russell Park needs to be upgraded. Get a little playground for the kids. I would like to see walking trails also.
We must be able to protect the parks from vandalism and young people destroying the parks!! Much more severe fines and community service to clean up messes!!
Due to the fact that we are over the age of 65 and have no children, we don't have much use for parks. We are living on Social Security and have very little money left over for parks and recreation.
We do not have dogs. We do not have children. We pay homeowner's dues (\$300/yr.) to maintain private walking trail in our neighborhood [....].
I don't believe parks should be a priority in these times. Infrastructure maintenance should be.
I am a local daycare provider and we like to be able to walk to the park during the summer. The closest one is Kids Kingdom and that one is going downhill fast with vandalism and inadequate garbage cans around the park.
Another park like Kids Kingdom would be good - maybe at Russell Park. Parks with play equipment should be lighted at night to curb vandalism. More police should be hired to protect this investment!
My girls and I like to run/walk together and it's fun to take the dog along. There is really nowhere we know of to go for walks with a dog (and we're talking about several miles) around Laurel without having to walk in the street or on a highway - dealing with traffic. So a bicycle/running path system would be great. It would be a great way to encourage the physical fitness of all ages of our population!
No YMCA controlling the pool. We need a spray park for little children. Better maintenance, better restrooms (clean). Consequences for vandalism.
Laurel only has "improved" parks for sports teams and the west end. If you live on the south or east side, forget it.
Yes, our parks in Laurel are pathetic. However, any increase in taxes in this economy for parks is not a priority. I view this survey as a waste of time and money. It should be blatantly obvious that there are more important things than this.
With my children being young, we visit parks with facilities for children specifically and bathrooms. My family would love to see some bike trails around Laurel. We are a very busy family that would not use the sports type facilities yet. However, as my son and his buddies get older, that will change. Thank you for taking the time to get feedback from us, the homeowners!
I feel that money allowed for parks could be better managed so the parks would be better.
Some of our parks are wasting our tax dollars. We need something for our teens. Smaller children are covered, but our teens don't have anything. I'm a grandma of teenagers and we really should get something to keep them off the streets and out of trouble.
Laurel needs a park comparable to Riverfront Park in Billings. There are maintained gravel and dirt paths as well as unmaintained areas. A park where one can have a dog off leash and with enough area for long distance running or biking.
Improve old street light by the underpass, by the 'Welcome to Laurel caboose' please. Not about parks but needed before a child or person gets hurt! (By Taco John's and Hardee's.)
Clean up the trash, graffiti and broken playground equipment at Kids Kingdom. We have seen

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<p>used condoms in the play area. It used to be a nice place to go but now it's run down. More parks with covered areas for parties and BBQ's would be great! There aren't places for kids' parties when the weather is not good.</p>
<p>Thank you for allowing us to participate in the survey.</p>
<p>Sell unused parks. I don't know about a lot of these - or there is nothing there - and have lived here almost 25 years and raised two children. Someone to maintain/keep up playground equipment. We went to Kids Kingdom (our newest) - broken items, graffiti (cuss words) written on equipment. Trees along 8th Ave. (new ones just planted) - some are dead, weeds, etc. This isn't about parks, but the weeds need to be controlled when you first come into Laurel off Interstate; doesn't say much about Laurel for new people coming into our town for first time. Or on Main Street by a few businesses weeds are huge. Splash park would be nice even though our kids are grown; could see for future grandkids. We have tennis courts but no one has maintained them - cracks/weeds. Skate park, if it is built, needs to be downtown locally where the family neighborhood won't complain and a better eye can be kept on it. Can't ever see my family using it, though.</p>
<p>I think a skate park and a walking/biking trail are important additions to our community. Sell off underutilized parks and use the \$\$ to help fund new park or a trail.</p>
<p>Sell underutilized park property; use the money to improve others.</p>
<p>A long term goal of a bike trail from Laurel connecting to Billings trail system for walking/riding would be fantastic!</p>
<p>The Kids Kingdom park is a fantastic park and well maintained and is a joy to go to. However, we opt to go to Billings for some of the park experiences that we don't have in Laurel, such as a tennis court. I would really love to be a community that has wonderful parks that can be enjoyed by so many people.</p>
<p>While I agree that parks are important I am more concerned about our streets. We were told many years ago that our taxes were increased to ensure that streets would be maintained. However, in 35 years, I have only witnessed having a few potholes filled (and not well). The streets are becoming dangerous. I believe Laurel needs to establish priorities in a more realistic fashion. The town is growing rapidly, but the older parts of town are being allowed to disintegrate in order to provide amenities for those building new homes, etc. Perhaps those in less valued, older homes pay less tax now but these homeowners have paid taxes for 75 to 100 years. They deserve service, too.</p>
<p>Spend \$ on street improvement before parks. Didn't know there were so many parks in Laurel.</p>
<p>2 years ago, in Riverside Park I was attacked and bitten by one of 3 out of control dogs that were not under control by the young woman they were with. I feel like Riverside Park is dog owners only territory and this needs to be addressed!</p>
<p>I am a runner and there are no safe running trails in Laurel.</p>
<p>Laurel parks lack seating options for parents while watching children play. The current "dog park" has so many ticks due to its location and lack of development; we will not take our dogs, but would rather drive to Billings. Laurel is lacking in safety for children traveling between parks as well as "trails" for biking and running.</p>
<p>I am 80 and use a walker, so visit parks for birthdays or picnics.</p>
<p>Although I am a family of one - I think parks are important, especially for children.</p>
<p>I would prefer to see a City Parks Department with oversight and direction provided through and by the City Park Board with final approval of recommendations through the City Council.</p>

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<p>Much money was raised and donated, given for a Laurel indoor pool. Where is that money???</p> <p>Laurel needs and wants an indoor pool. Yes to a skate park, yes to a wading pool. These are the things a lot of Laurel people want and need. Things for kids to do. Nutting Park needs a shelter for the playground for summers. What happened to money during the Exxon spill in the Yellowstone? Money for the security of the park. Find all that money - use it!</p>
<p>Question the process involved in setting district that would have the taxing authority for both city and rural.</p>
<p>I think that the citizens of Laurel should have enough pride to keep their parks clean and repaired. The city should keep the grass maintained, and that the people should watch out for each other.</p>
<p>City took away our ability to shoot at Riverside Park. Current parks are filthy with graffiti and garbage, dirty bathrooms. Built a shelter in 2 parks but we have to pay to use them. More basketball courts, benches, trails for use by adults. City work with schools so our kids can use the playgrounds that are age appropriate.</p>
<p>I and other members of the household would really like to see a splash park in the Laurel area for the younger children in our community. Thank you for your time in this matter!</p>
<p>This survey is a joke; City of Laurel is going to do what they want.</p>
<p>I think we need to improve the parks we have. It would be nice to have indoor pool so school kids could compete in swimming with other schools. Maintenance of existing parks is pretty good. But tennis court is not up to date. We need more for younger to do so they don't hang out and get in trouble. Maybe we need more activities in parks for children.</p>
<p>I am now considered one of Laurel's senior citizens. I try to walk at least 5 days out of the week, thus walking around our parks. The care of our existing parks is very important to me. Also, I have young grandchildren who like to play at those parks that have playground equipment. Again, maintenance and upkeep of those parks is important to us as well. Thank you!</p>
<p>I do not use all of the parks, but I think they are taken care of very well. When I was younger, I used the parks a lot more.</p>
<p>I would favor expansion of pool. Tennis courts are an eyesore - need to be removed or updated.</p>
<p>I'm sorry I wasn't much help in your survey. I didn't answer all the questions since we are on a fixed income. It's kind of hard to determine the financial questions and we don't use the parks enough to have a good opinion.</p>
<p>Bike trails and dog parks would be nice.</p>
<p>Almost all of our parks are "behind the times." We have no bike lanes in the town. We do not have a skate park. Many of the smaller towns in our area within a 100 mile radius have much nicer parks and amenities than we do in Laurel. We have many new families with new houses and expensive houses - \$200,000+; maybe they need to be taxed more.</p>
<p>I feel like I shouldn't be doing this survey as I haven't lived here very long. But parks are important to have and be kept up or no one will go there. We have gone to Billings to play tennis but would rather stay in Laurel. Thanks!</p>
<p>Put money into improving current parks and not looking for new land or using it on parks not being used. Construct actual paved walkways/paths for cycling/running. Construct or make an existing park available for unleashed dogs! A district should be created for more focus on parks and recreation. The more things left out of the hands of the City of Laurel the better!!</p>
<p>At this time I feel that it is of little importance to maintain or build parks when the roads of Laurel specific to everywhere in Laurel are not maintained. I have a hard time funding for</p>

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<p>something that is unnecessary when our roads look the way they do, not to mention the lack of sidewalks for families to be able to walk and ride their bikes. Fix roads!!</p>
<p>Money should be spent on improving roads and emergency services first. Anything left over should be put to parks for children. No money should be used for dogs, walking or biking. We have plenty of sidewalks for that purpose.</p>
<p>More of the parks need restrooms. There are only a few that we can use because they don't have bathrooms. Also, a splash park would be amazing. We drive to Billings weekly during summer just to go to a splash park.</p>
<p>Can't afford any more taxes or bills.</p>
<p>I am the grandmother of 7 kids ages 3 - 13 years. The 3 – 6 year olds enjoy Kids Kingdom for a while; not enough trees or tables to sit at. The older kids don't play sports - they're too expensive - there's nothing for them to do in town. I would enjoy a walking park that could be year round. Thank you.</p>
<p>I've only lived in Laurel 15 months. I'm a retired active senior citizen who lives alone. But the fact I haven't used the parks doesn't mean I don't care about them. I believe parks are important to the citizens of any town, particularly children and families with children. I've tried to answer the questions showing that I care about the future of the parks in Laurel. Thank you for asking.</p>
<p>It would be nice to have safe walking/biking trails so we wouldn't always have to watch out for cars, uneven sidewalks, pot holes, etc.</p>
<p>We have some nice parks but need to keep them up. Kiwanis Park has a lot of family usage. The weeds (stickers) need to be gotten rid of. Do something with the old tennis courts in Thompson Park. Dog friendly parks would be great.</p>
<p>I'm almost 80 years old, so this isn't a concern for me, and I can't take any more taxes. Getting old isn't fun or easy on your wallet!</p>
<p>My husband and I feel Laurel has enough parks already - try to maintain and improve the ones we have already. Furthermore, the summers are so hot in Laurel, MT a person can't enjoy being in a park atmosphere hardly at all until the weather cools off - especially senior citizens.</p>
<p>The only park I go to is the Lions Family Park. I enjoy it every day as I live across from it on 8th Ave. A lot of people use it all the time. It would be great if more parks were as nice. I'm sorry I can't say anything about these other parks listed. Thanks</p>
<p>We would love to see a safe bikeway through (or around) Laurel! Also, even if most parks don't have many amenities, porta-potties would be nice. It's a pain to pack up and head home just because somebody has to pee!</p>
<p>In the parks there should be some chairs or benches for elderly to sit to rest to continue. More for the disabled persons and blind. More improvements for the wheelchair handicapped persons.</p>
<p>More parks that have picnic tables and BBQ grills for family gatherings, more swings, slides, swimming that has areas for little kids, a wading pool. Skate boarders use public roads for skateboarding and no one seems to want to do anything about it, including law enforcement, so a skate park would be a good investment.</p>
<p>There is always room to improve our city parks for the younger generation to give them more things to do.</p>
<p>We are both in our 80's and don't use the parks but our grandkids and our small neighbor kids do.</p>
<p>It seems that many would like to have horseshoe pits available like in Thompson Park.</p>

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I have 12 grandkids using every park in town, so they are important to me. I am on hospice and a widow which affected a lot of my answers.

The parks here are very nice - adding to them if possible would be nice. I strongly believe an independent district outside city government would be perfect. That way the parks would be their only priority and they would not get caught up in the city's existing governing priorities. Once the city repairs the existing parks, their job is done and the independent district takes over. Thanks so much for allowing the citizens of Laurel to have a voice in this.

I would like to have installed in Kiwanis Park swings for adults on one end of the park, and bigger picnic tables, and be allowed to use all of our parks 24 hours a day.

We need a new swimming pool - the city can partner with the school and YMCA to share costs. We need a bike path from Alder Ave. to the trailer park (Yard Office Road) for the many, many children who walk and bike to school and parks and pool in season.

Laurel has a lot of small parks that are not equipped or maintained well enough to be of any use. Most of Laurel's parks are set up for small kids. We do not have any that draw middle school or high school age kids.

We have a lot of park space that is not being used as much as it could be. Why not add to/fix up these areas instead of thinking about buying/acquiring new land?

Sorry. I wrote through the survey...we would like basketball and tennis courts. We were recently kicked off a school basketball court during weekend daylight hours. We don't use the public pool, but have heard that many are disappointed that it is now run by YMCA. We would love bike paths anywhere since the roads are so rough and would be happy to pay to have that happen! There are beautiful bike paths between Missoula and Lolo MT that would be great to work towards. Kiwanis Park is beautiful but Thompson Park has so much broken glass on the pathways and playground that we have quit using it. Thank you!