

## G. Statistically-Valid and Open Web-Based Community Surveying

To add a quantitative element to the information gathering, the Needs Assessment process included a statistically-valid survey. A mail survey was distributed, allowing for hard copy completion and return via mail or completion online. An open, web-based survey was provided to the community as well. Statistically-valid surveying is important, as it is the only tool that reliably garners feedback from those who may be non-users of the system, but still pay taxes and support the system.

GreenPlay contracted with RRC Associates, a reliable research and planning firm that regularly conducts similar survey analyses for parks and recreation agencies. A list of key issues to explore was compiled from the initial Strategic Kick-Off meetings, Information Gathering, and Community and Stakeholder Engagement meetings. RRC then prepared draft surveys for review and approval from the Project Team prior to the survey implementation. Full survey results have been provided as a staff resource document and can be made available upon request.

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<sup>4</sup> "The Proximate Principle: The Impact of Parks, Open Space and Water Features on Residential Property Values and the Property Tax Base," 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. John L. Crompton, National Recreation and Park Association, 2004.

<sup>5</sup> The Trust for Public Land estimated that the health benefits of the park system of the City of Seattle contributed \$64 million annually to the City's economy. "The Economic Benefits of Seattle's Park and Recreation System," The Trust for Public Land Center for Park Excellence. March 2011.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

A total of 10,000 surveys were mailed to a random sample of Broward County residents in June 2012 (9,000 to residents in the County and 1,000 to second home-owners), with 9,212 being delivered after subtracting undeliverable mail. The final sample size for this statistically valid survey was 400, resulting in a margin of error of approximately +/- 4.9 percentage points calculated for questions at a 50 percent response. Results from the open link survey generated an additional 106 responses.

## **Summary of Survey Responses**

### **Location and Length of Residence**

- 71% of respondents live west of I-95; 29% east of I-95
- Average number of years lived in the area is 20.9 years
- 78% own their current residence; 22% rent
- 95% say Broward County is the location of their primary residence; 5% are second homeowners

### **Ethnicity, Race, and Need for ADA-Accessible Facilities**

- 26% of respondents were of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
- 66% identified themselves as White; 27% Black/African American; 3% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 3% other.
- 10% have household members with a need for ADA-accessible facilities

Note that this demographic spread does not match the actual demographics of the County, but is typical for survey response in a larger community with diverse populations like the County.

### **Importance of Parks and Recreation**

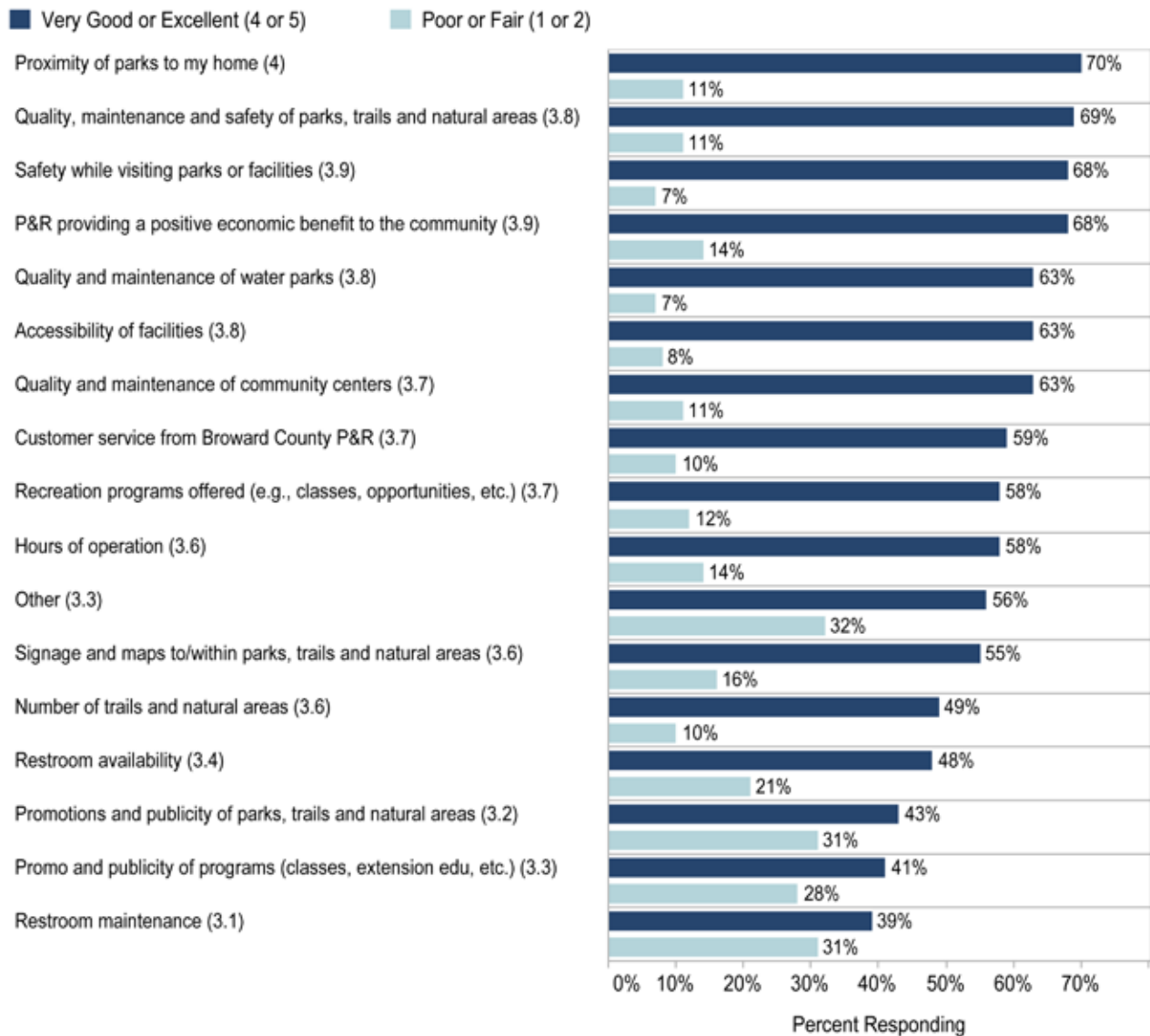
Residents of Broward County indicated that the availability of local parks and recreation opportunities in the County are very important with an average rating of 4.3 on a 5 point scale where 5 equals "extremely important." The majority of respondents (83%) rated the importance of parks and recreation opportunities at a 4 or 5.

The majority (81%) of respondents report having used Broward County Parks and Recreation Services in the past year. Respondents were also asked about which type of park they visit most often. Broward County Parks (52%) and City Parks (29%) were the top two responses.

### **Key Satisfaction Areas**

Seventy percent (70%) of respondents rated the proximity of parks as the element they are most satisfied with. Quality and Maintenance are also top scoring areas. Contrary to Focus Group responses, 68% feel that safety is excellent while visiting the parks.

**Figure 6: Satisfaction with Broward County Parks and Recreation Division Facilities and Services**



## Parks and Recreation Facilities and Services that Need Improvement

Respondents were asked to identify aspects of Broward County Parks and Recreation facilities or services that need improvement. A number of aspects were cited by a quarter to a third of respondents. Aspects that were most often identified as needing improvement included:

- Restroom maintenance (32%)
- Restroom availability (28%)
- Quality, maintenance/safety of parks/trails and natural areas (27%)
- Promotions and publicity of programs (27%)

When looking at responses by location of household in relation to I-95, there were some marked differences. Residents located west of I-95 were more likely to feel that restroom availability needs improvement (28%) compared to those living east of I-95 (18%).

## Importance

The following were rated **very important** to a majority of households:

- Neighborhood and regional parks (83% of respondents rated this a 4 or 5 on a 5 point scale or “very important”)
- Bike paths and walking trails (77%)
- Natural areas and nature centers (73%)
- Water parks (67%)
- Rental pavilions, shelters, or rooms (64%)
- Sports complexes, athletic fields (63%)

The following parks and facilities received the highest proportion of “**not at all important**” ratings:

- Cricket fields (58% rated this a 1 or 2 on a 5 point scale or “not at all important”)
- Velodrome (56%)
- Disc Golf (53%)
- Equestrian/riding stables (42%)
- Target range (41%)

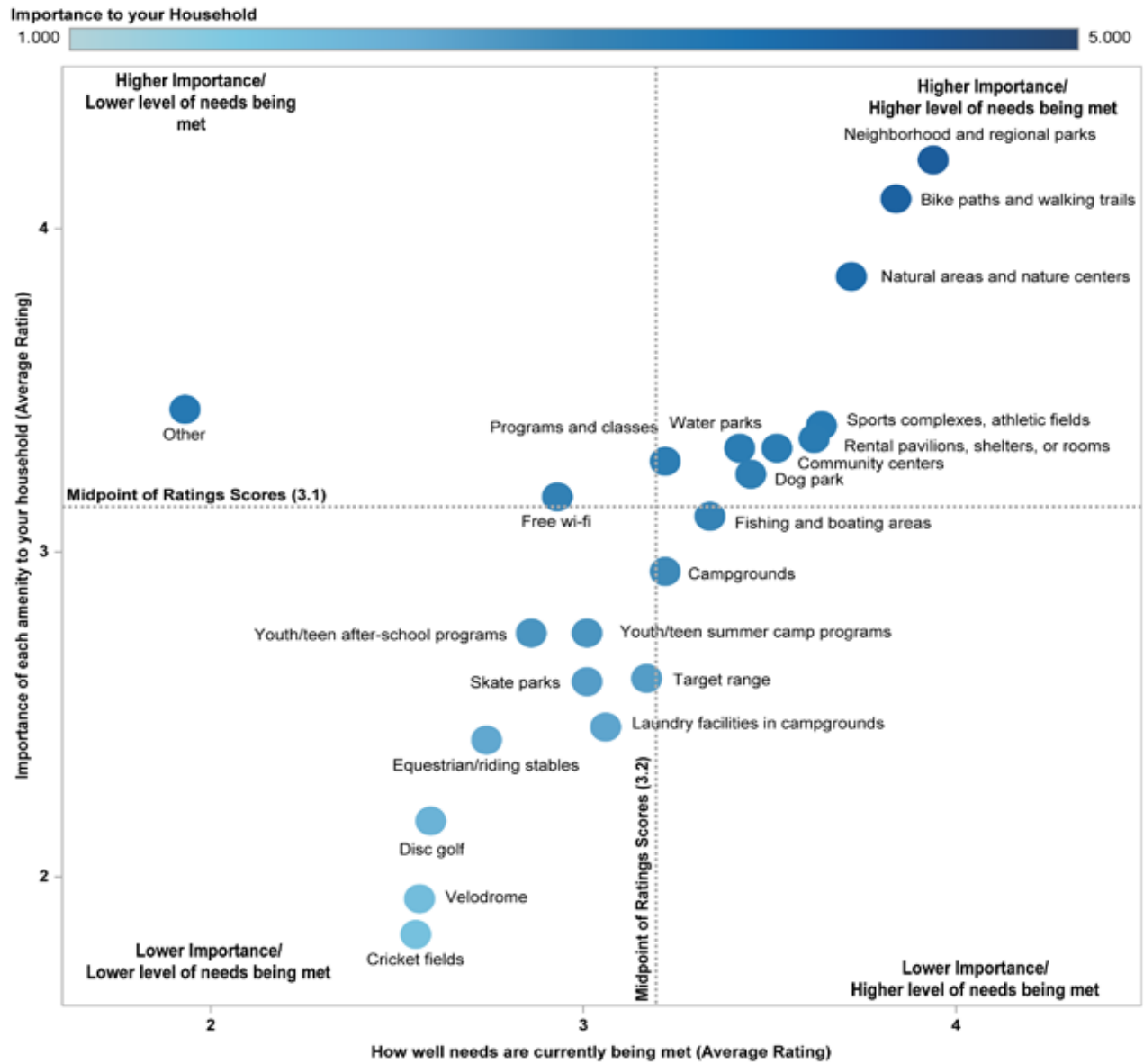
## Importance vs. Needs Met

The Division is doing a great job in providing programs, services, and facilities that are important, with less emphasis on those that are not. Many of the top facilities meeting household needs are also considered the most important. Maintaining these important assets is an indispensable function of Broward County Parks and Recreation.

- Neighborhood and regional park
- Bike paths and walking trails
- Natural areas and nature centers
- Sports complexes, athletic fields
- Rental pavilions, shelters, and rooms
- Community centers
- Water parks
- Dog parks
- Programs and classes



**Figure 7: Importance vs. Needs Met Matrix**



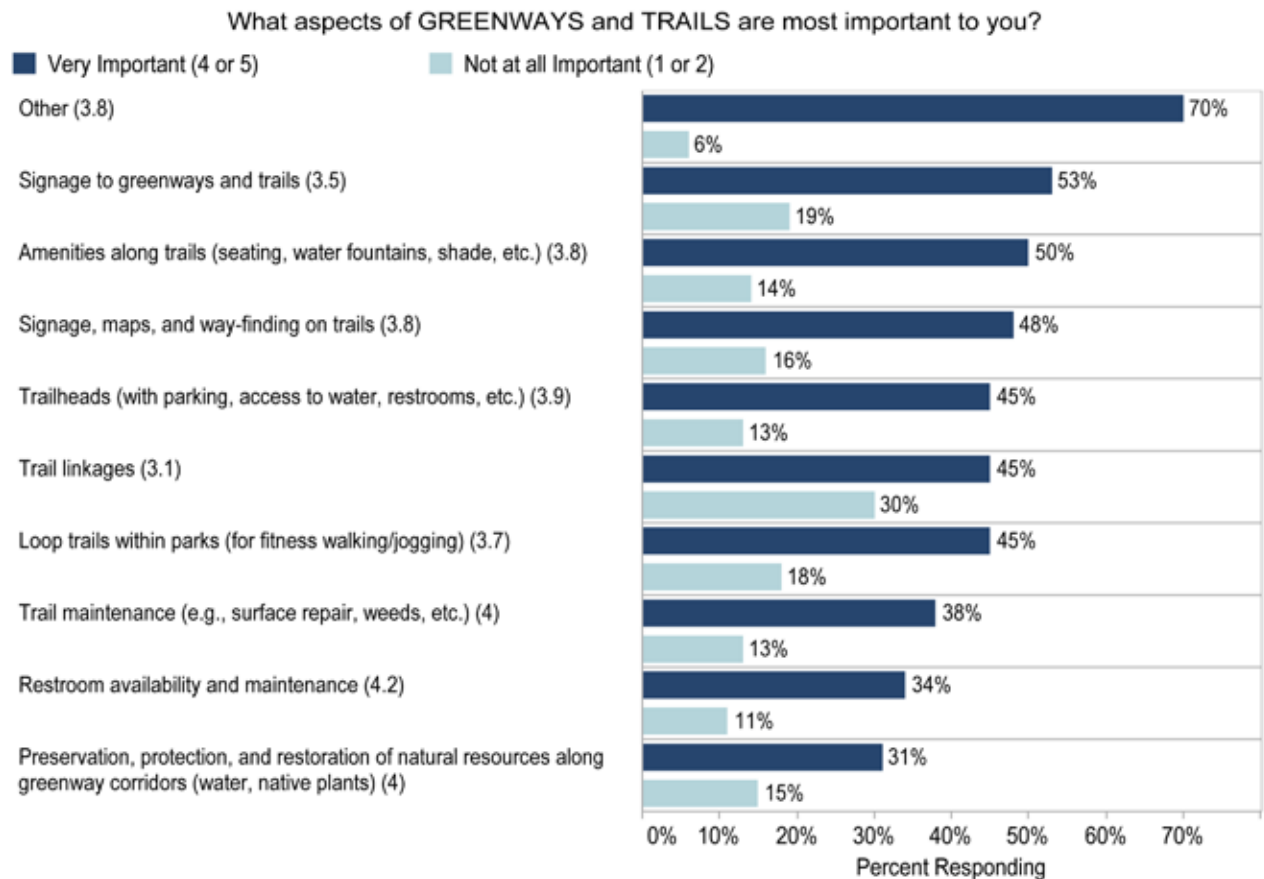
### Greenways and Trails

Greenways and Trails are very important to 77% of the respondents. Respondents were asked to identify the aspects of greenways and trails that are most important to them. All aspects were rated as very important (4 or 5) by a third or more of respondents.

The following were rated “Very Important” (4 or 5) by the majority of households:

- Signage to greenways and trails (53%)
- Amenities along trails (seating, water fountains, shade, etc.) (50%)

**Figure 8: Aspects of Greenways Most Important**



### Programs

Broward County provides a broad range of programs. The following programs were identified as being needed by the majority of respondents:

- Special events (e.g., concerts, festivals) (70%)
- Fitness and wellness programs (68%)
- Swimming programs (59%)

Programs with the highest degree of needs being met include:

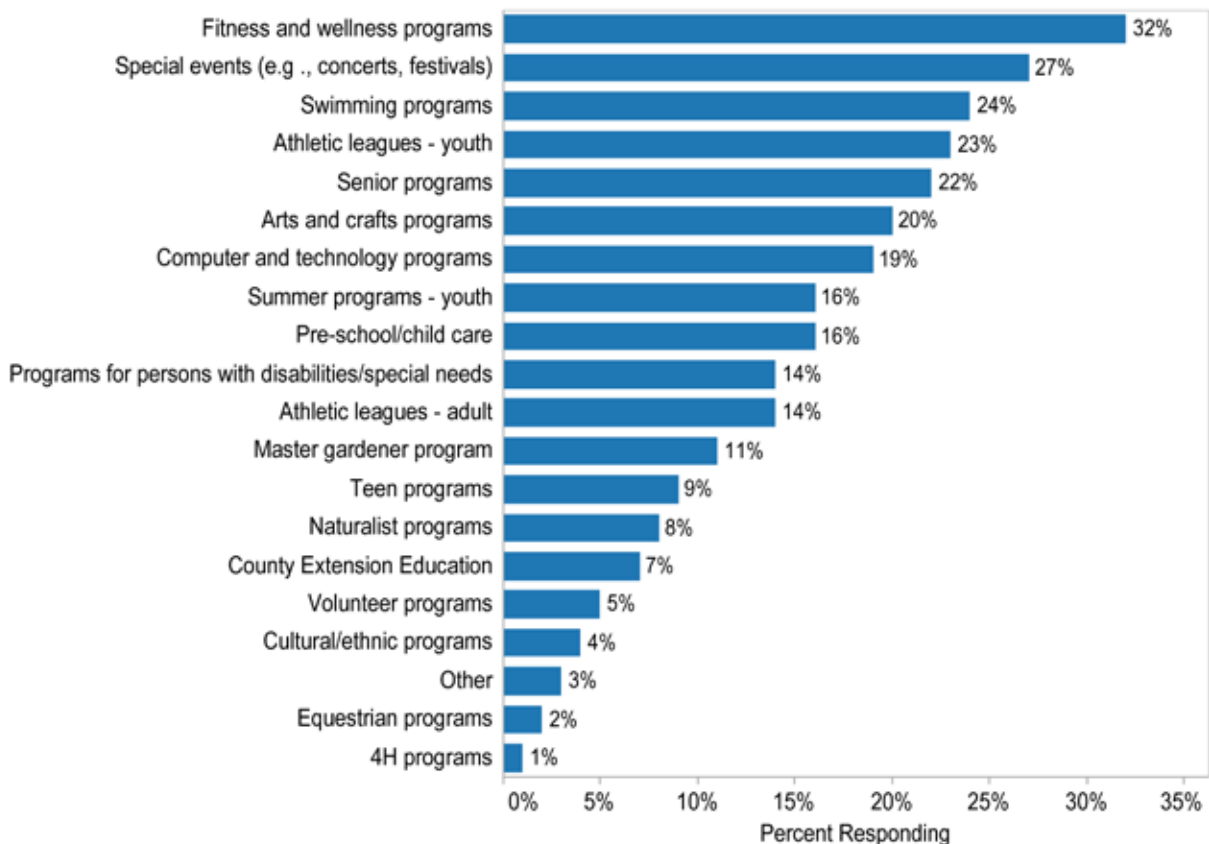
- Athletic leagues – youth (71% rated this a 4 or 5 or “needs 75 to 100% met”)
- 4H Programs (60%)
- Special events (e.g. concerts, festivals) (59%)
- Pre-school/child care (58%)
- Volunteer programs (52%)

For all programs and facilities, the proportion of the community that indicated that their needs were being met was larger than the proportion whose needs were not being met. However, there were several programs in which slightly more than half of respondents indicated that their needs were not being met at all (1 or 2 on a 5 point scale):

- Master gardener program (54%)
- Naturalist program (52%)
- Programs for persons with disabilities/special needs (50%)

Respondents were also asked about top programs to be added or expanded.

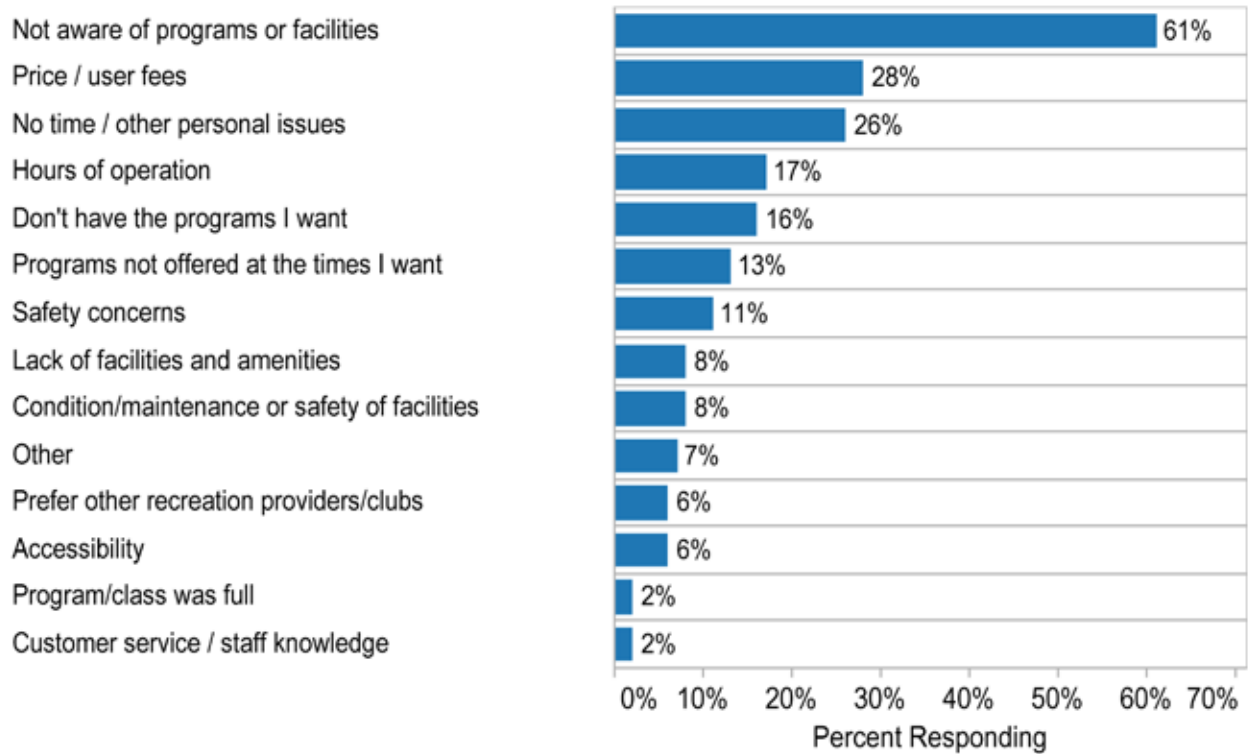
**Figure 9: Top Programs to Be Added, Expanded, or Improved.**



### Reasons for Non-Use

A very significant 61 percent say that the primary reason they do not use the County's offerings is that they are not aware of them. Twenty-eight percent (28%) say that price is a factor. The desired response from a management standpoint comes in third at 26 percent – that they do not have time or have other personal issues. Ideally, this answer would be the number one reason, so it points to opportunities for the County to work on the first two.

**Figure 10: Reasons why you do not utilize County programs and/or services**



Respondents were asked how they usually receive information on parks and recreation facilities, services, and programs. The top three answers are:

- Local newspapers/magazines (47%)
- Word of mouth (37%)
- Internet/website (31%)

Respondents were also asked how they may best be reached by Broward County Parks & Recreation. The top three answers are:

- Internet/website (33%)
- County emails (Listserve) (24%)
- Local newspapers/magazines (12%)