

City of Bellingham  
Department of Parks and Recreation:  
**Park, Recreation, Planning  
Survey**



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[www.arnorthwest.com](http://www.arnorthwest.com)  
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# Introduction

**Phone survey purpose: Identify public's priorities and preferences for parks and open space**

- 50 items (10 open ended)
- Questions about park usage, satisfaction, attitudes toward potential projects and funding
- 300 completes

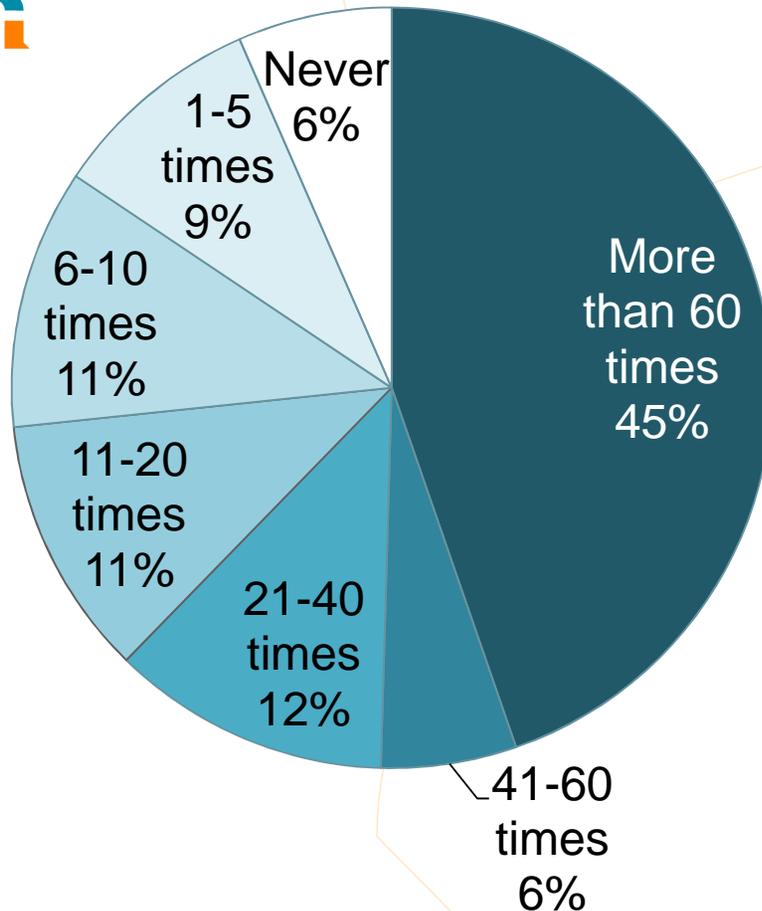


# Findings

## Analysis

- Compared to 2008 where possible
- Explored differences between relevant segments (frequency of park use, age, sex, children in household)

# Frequency of parks use

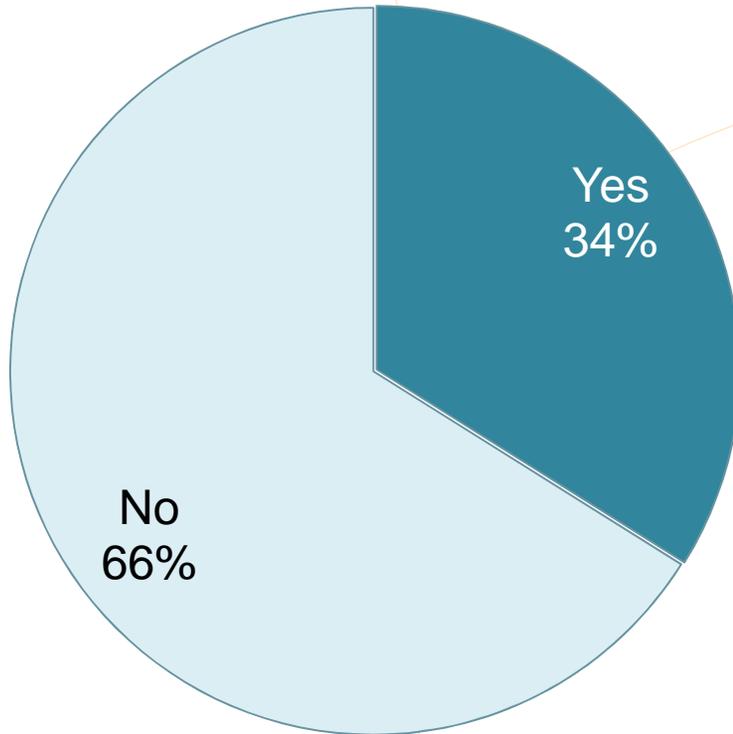


- ✓ Similar to 2008
- ✓ More likely to be high frequency visitors to the parks: <55 and kids in HH

n=299

Question: How many times have you visited any of the parks, trails, or other park facilities in Bellingham in the past year?

# Participation in recreational programming



- ✓ Similar to 2008
- ✓ Highest rates of participation: Frequent park visitors, 35-54, kids in HH

n=294

Question: Have you or anyone in your household participated in any recreational programs sponsored by the City Parks Department or any other local agency in the last year?

## Other types of desired recreational programming



- 27% said there are other types of programming they would like to see
- Suggestions:
  - Water activities (especially kayaking)
  - Serve particular age groups (most notably children, seniors)
  - Other: organized walks, programming for handicapped or disabled, snow activities, tennis, biking and bike safety, and fishing

Question: In addition to the opportunities that you know are already available in Bellingham, are there other types of recreational programs that you would like to see? What types?

# Facility use



## Facilities used in the past year

	n	%
Walking/biking trails (not mountain biking)	226	75
Playgrounds	149	50
Indoor swimming pools	108	36
Outdoor swimming areas	105	35
Athletic fields	100	33
Off-leash dog areas	99	33
Mountain biking trails/facilities	83	28
Boat launches for non-motorized boats	69	23
Disc golf courses	55	18
Boat launches for motorized boats	53	18

n=300

Question: Which facilities have you or anyone in your household used in the past year, regardless of whether they were managed by Bellingham Parks and Recreation?

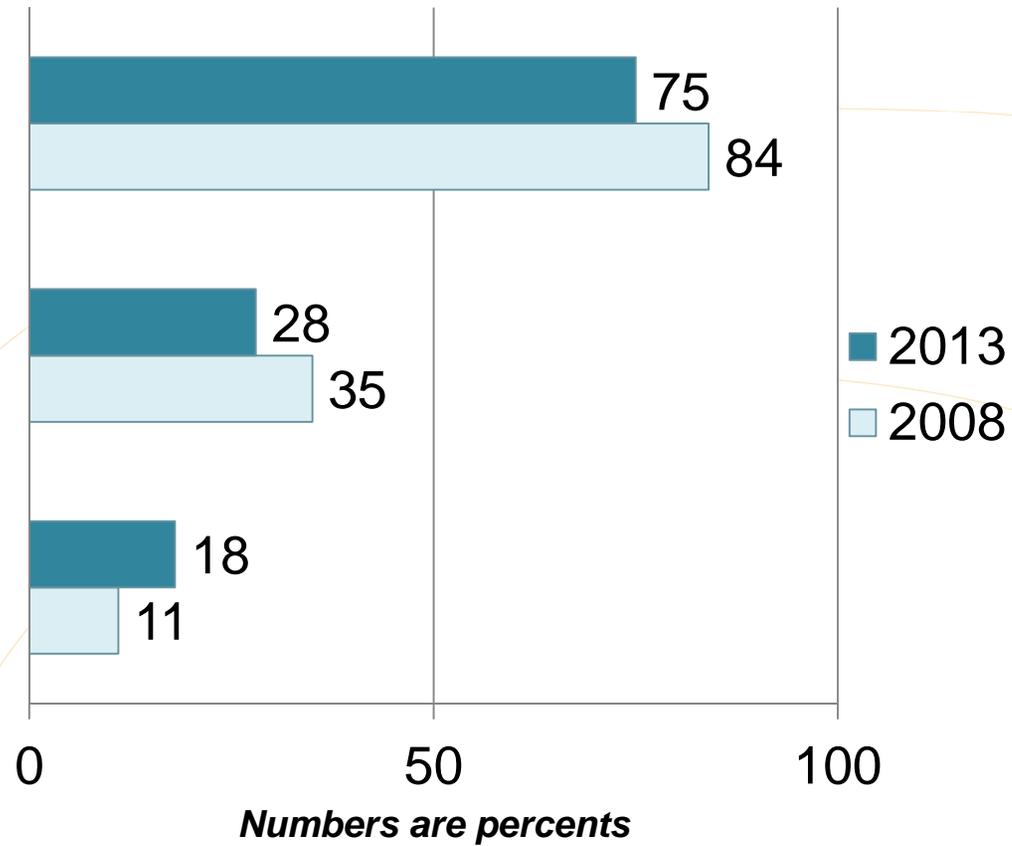
# Change in reported facility use: 2013 vs. 2008



Walking/biking trails

Mountain biking trails/facilities

Disc golf courses



n=296 to 300

Question: Have you or anyone in your household participated in any recreational programs sponsored by the City Parks Department or any other local agency in the last year?

## Other facilities needs



- 21% said there are other types of park facilities they would like to use
- Most frequent suggestions referred to:
  - Walkways, trails and connectivity
  - Waterfront or beach access
  - Swimming (mostly pools, both indoor and outdoor)
  - Other repeated suggestions:  
Downtown city park, athletic fields,  
indoor facilities, roller skating

Question: Are there any types of park facilities that you or someone in your household would like to use that don't currently exist in Bellingham? What types?

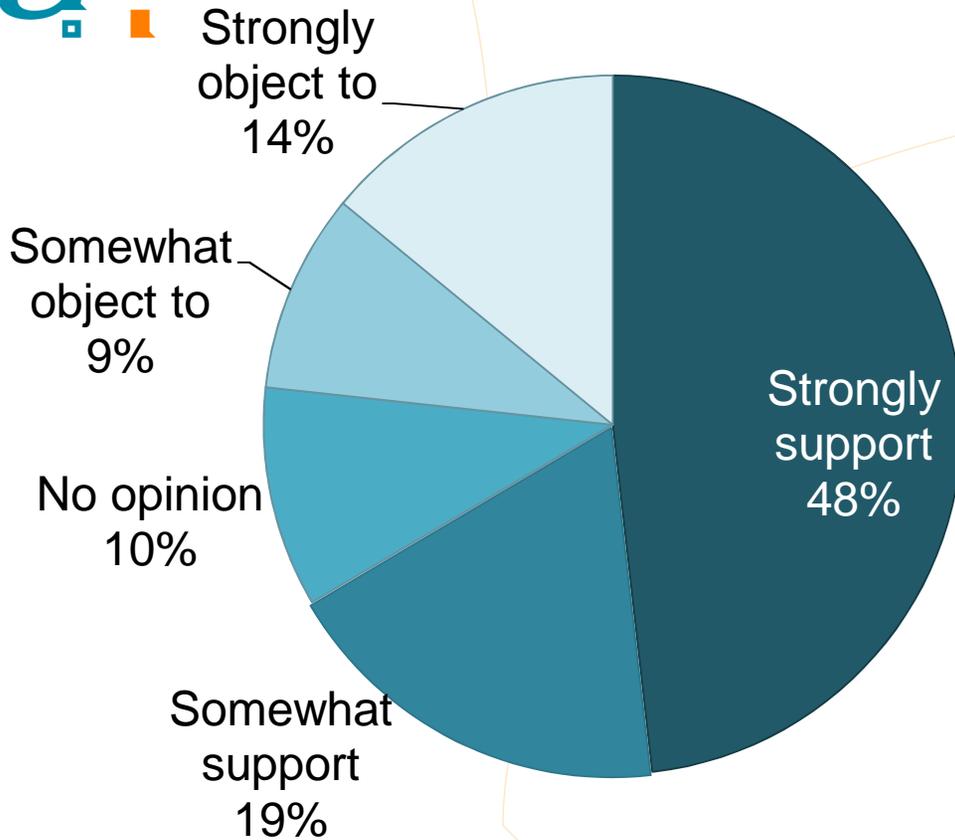
# Pickleball



- 27% said they have played a game of pickleball or seen it played (higher incidence among age 35-54)
- 7% said they knew the tennis courts at Cornwall Park are striped for pickleball
- 11% would like to see additional pickleball courts (higher incidence among age 35-54)

Question: Have you ever played a game of Pickleball, or seen it played? Did you know that the tennis courts at Cornwall Park are striped for Pickleball play with a tennis net? Would you or someone in your household like to see additional Pickleball provided in the city?

# Off leash dog areas

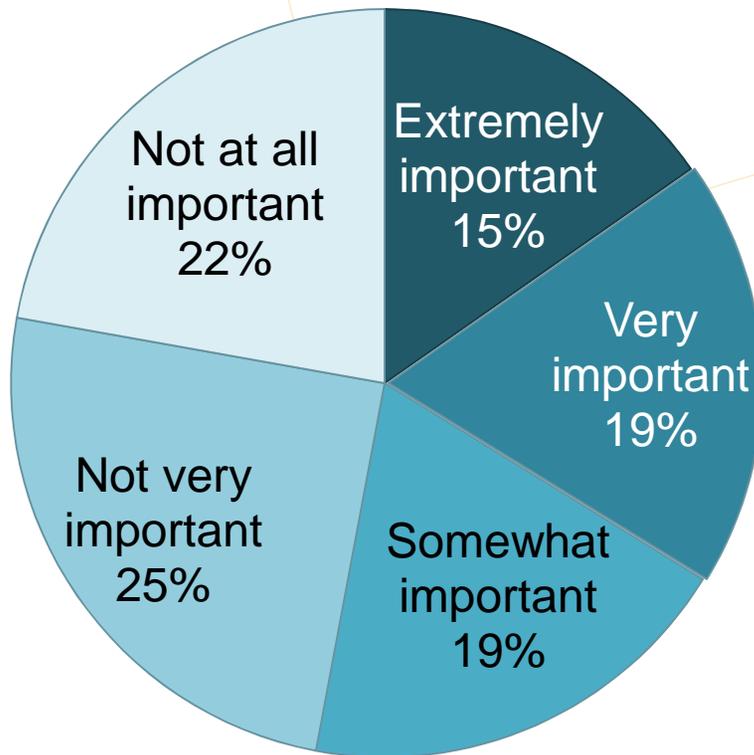


✓ Highest incidence of strong support: Frequent park visitors, <35, kids in HH, users of off-leash dog areas

n=293

Question: Would you support or object to the Parks department designating certain trails for off leash dog walking? Strongly or just somewhat?

# Non-motorized boat launch

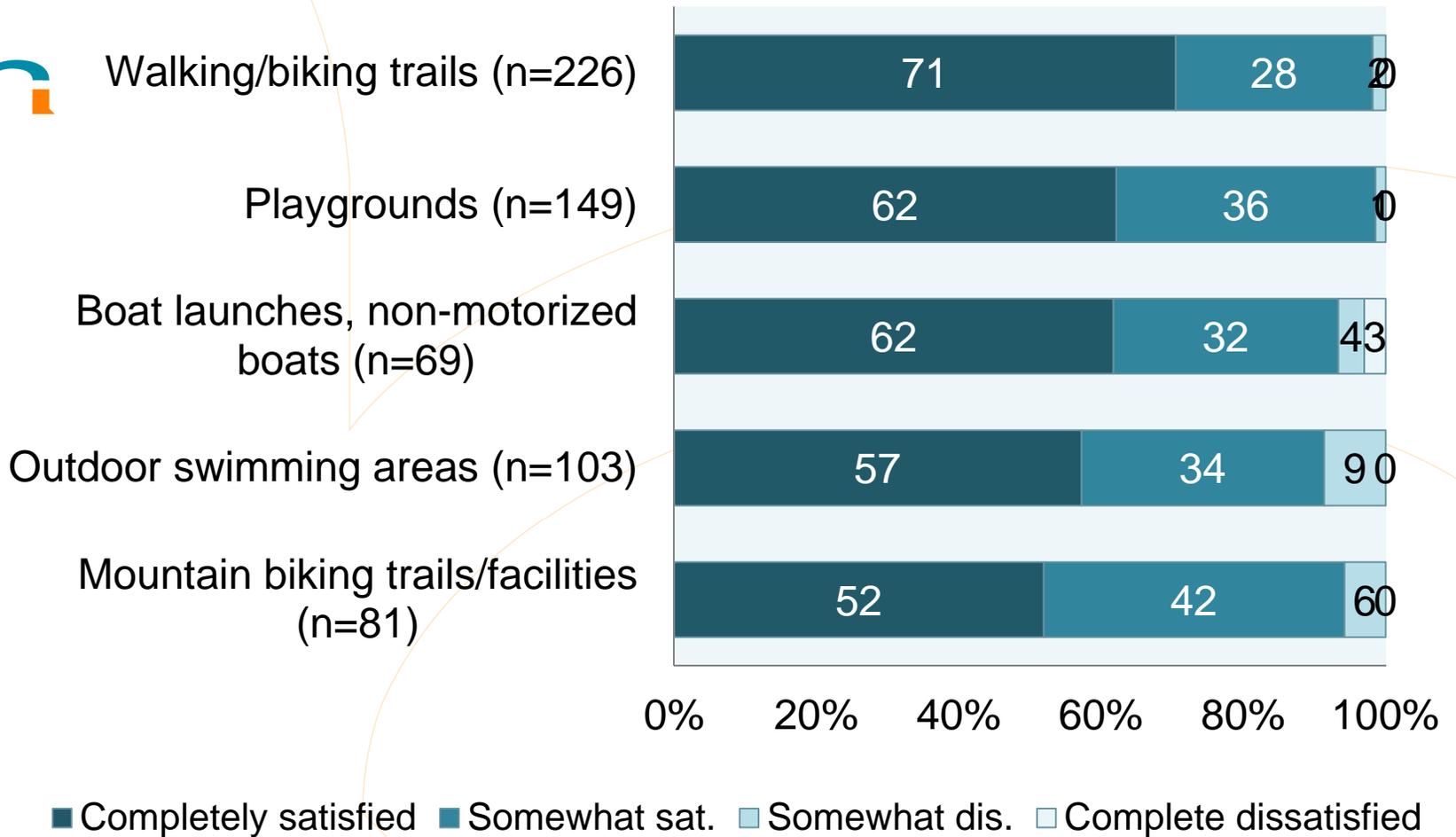


✓ Highest incidence of strong support: kids in HH

n=291

Question: How important is it to you or someone in your household that the city add non-motorized boat launch sites to shorelines and waterways?

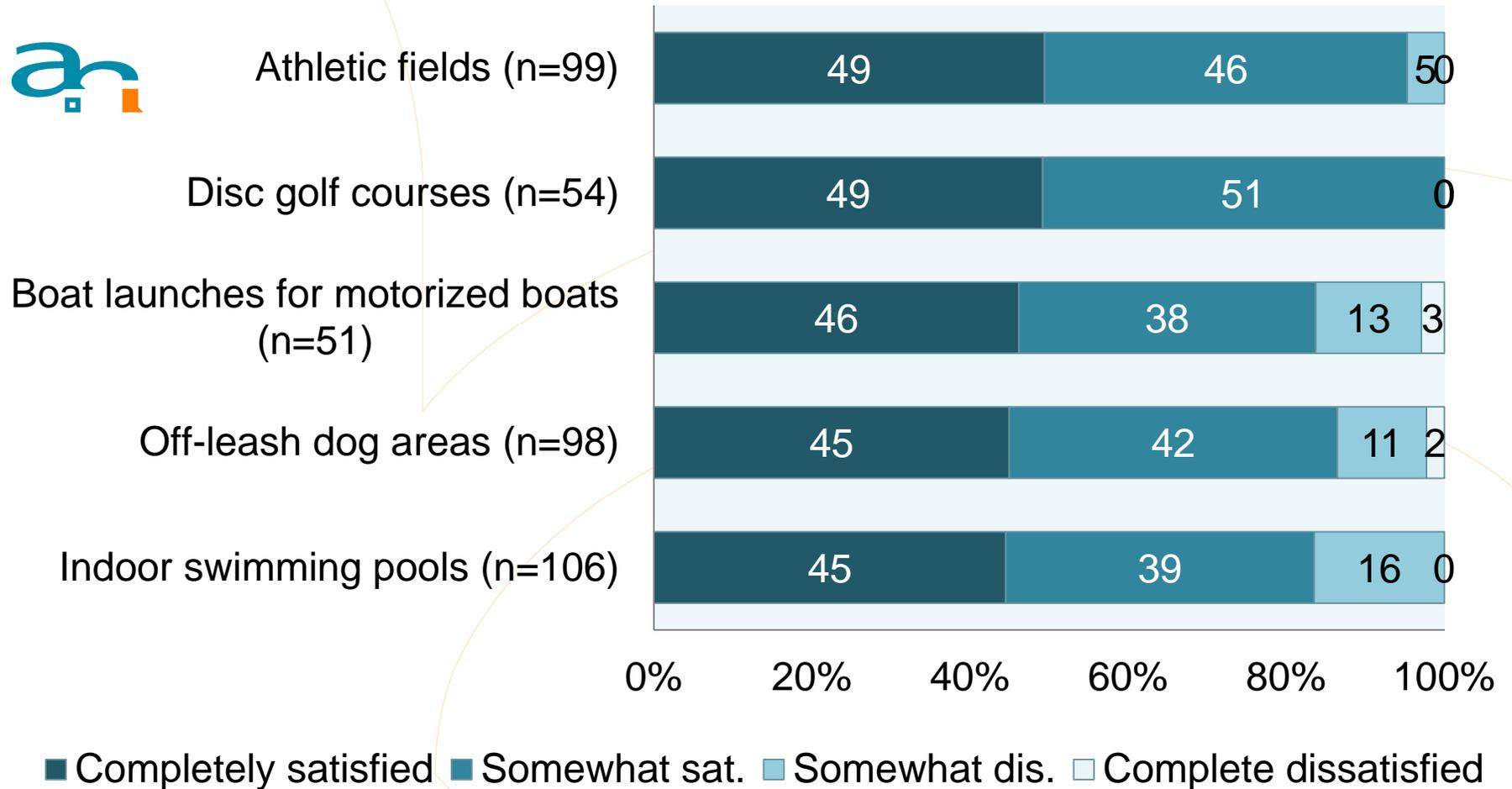
# Park facilities satisfaction, part 1



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Question: For each facility that you used, how satisfied are you with what is available in Bellingham?

# Park facilities satisfaction, part 2



Question: For each facility that you used, how satisfied are you with what is available in Bellingham?

# Elaboration on dissatisfaction with athletic fields



## What is it about the athletic fields that keeps you from being completely satisfied?

	n	%
Condition of the fields	28	55
Availability of the fields	9	18
Lighting	5	10
Some other reason	12	24

n=51

Question: What is it about the athletic fields in Bellingham that keeps you from being completely satisfied?

# Facilities not used due to dissatisfaction



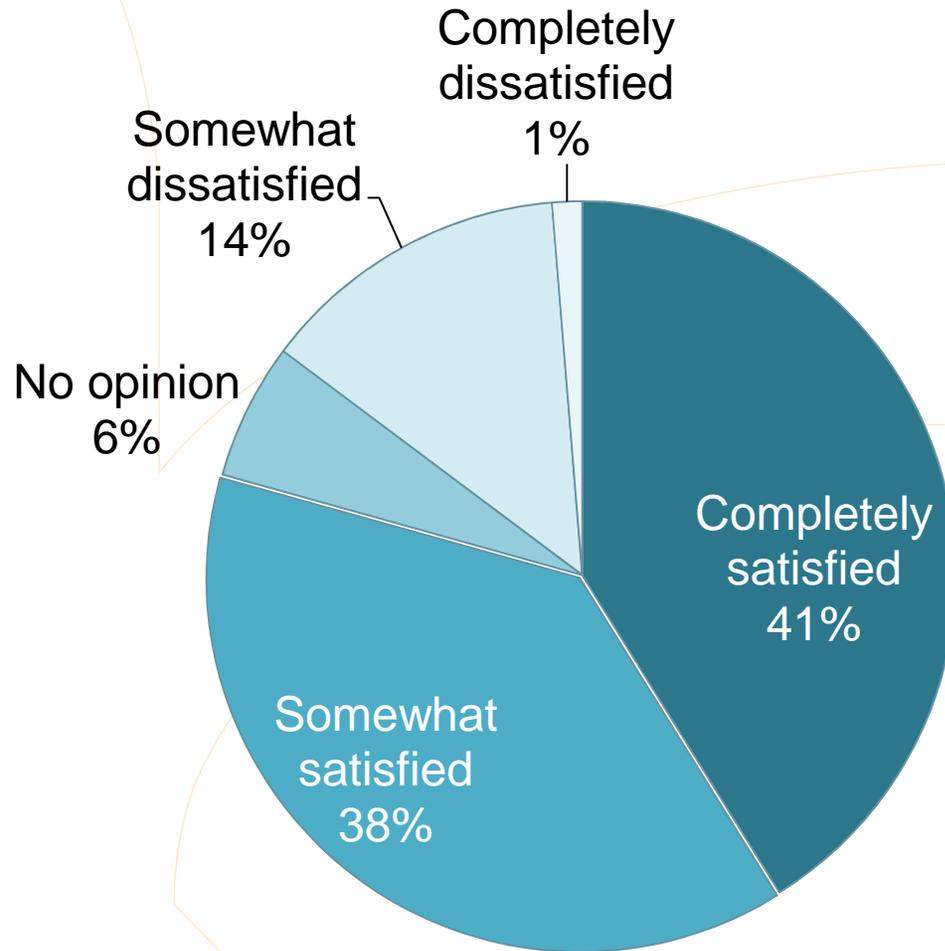
## Not used due to dissatisfaction

	n	%
Indoor swimming pools	7	18
Off road walking and biking trails	6	15
Off-leash dog areas	5	13
Safety	3	8
Playgrounds	2	6
Handicap access	2	5
Other specific park or reason	13	33

n=39

Question: Are there any facilities that you would like to have used, but didn't because you are dissatisfied... Which facilities?

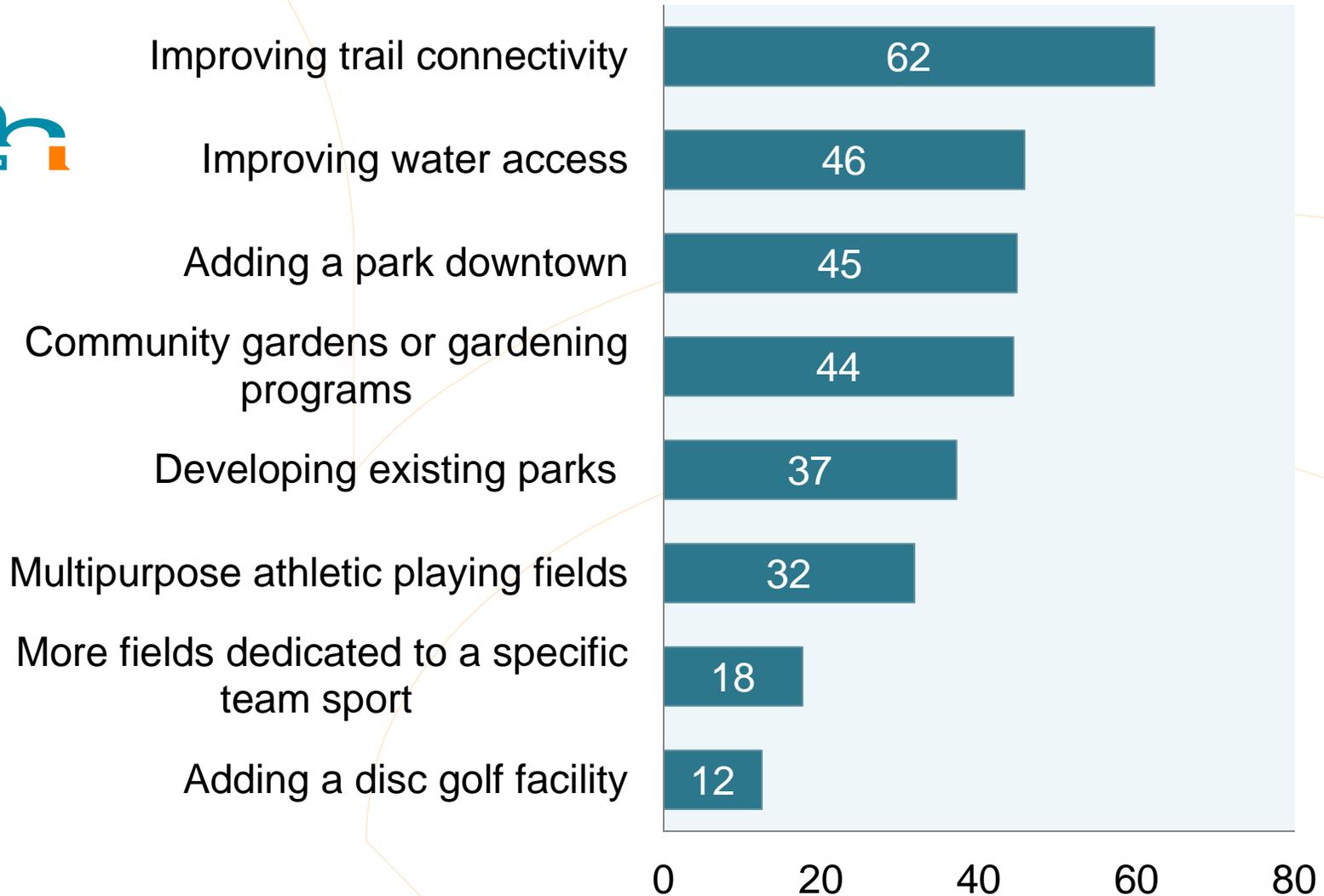
# Open space for wildlife habitat



n=296

Question: How satisfied are you with the amount of natural open space there is for wildlife habitat in the city?

# Park priorities



**Combined ratings: extremely and very important**

n=289 to 300

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Question: Please tell how important each of these projects would be to you or your household.

## Change in park priorities: 2013 vs. 2008



Improving water access is extremely important



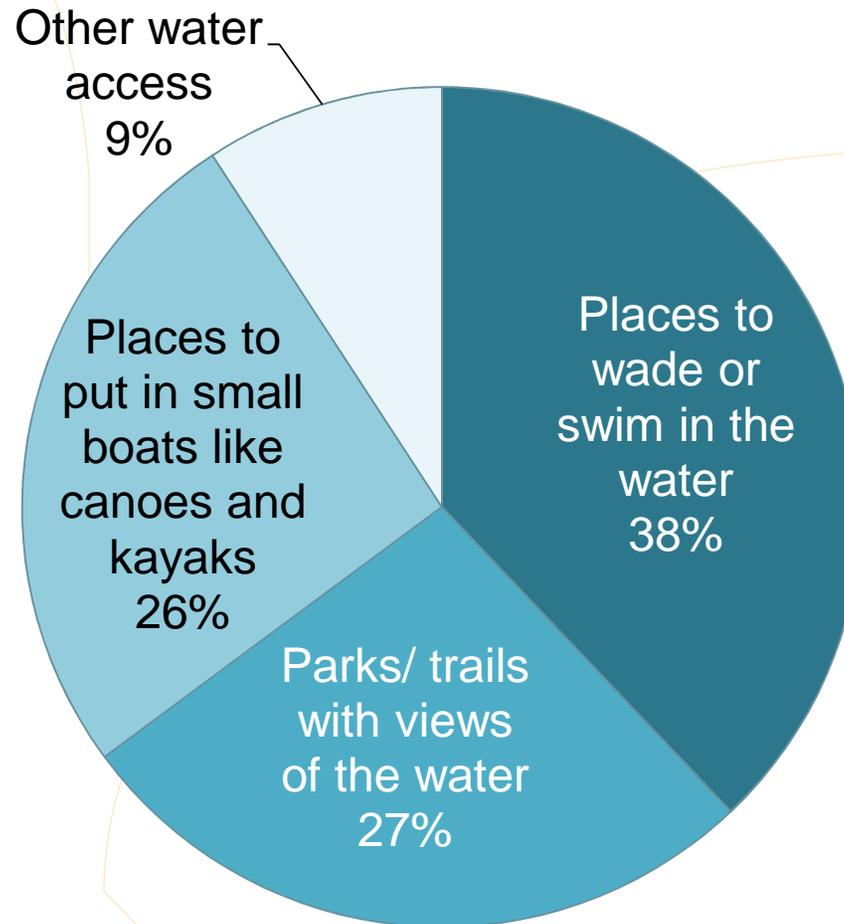
2008: 24%  
2013: 16%

Trail connectivity is not very or not at all important



2008: 12%  
2013: 19%

# Ways of improving water access



n=296

Question: You said that water access would be important. Please tell me which one is the most important to you and your household.

# Prioritizing improvements to existing parks



Top suggested improvements		
	n	%
Maintenance (landscaping, trash/recycling, trails, other)	49	31
Park amenities (parking, specific improvements at particular parks, handicap access, seating, lighting, other)	42	27
Trail connectivity/extending trail	24	15
More/updated/diverse/maintained playgrounds	18	12
Safety (crime/unsafe facilities)	14	9
Restrooms (maintenance, additions, access)	11	7
Dog control & clean up; enforcement of leash laws	11	7
Bike paths/trails	9	6
More/improved/maintained dog areas	9	6

n=156

Question: You said that improvements to existing parks would be important. Can you tell me one or two ways that the current parks could be improved.

# Top priorities

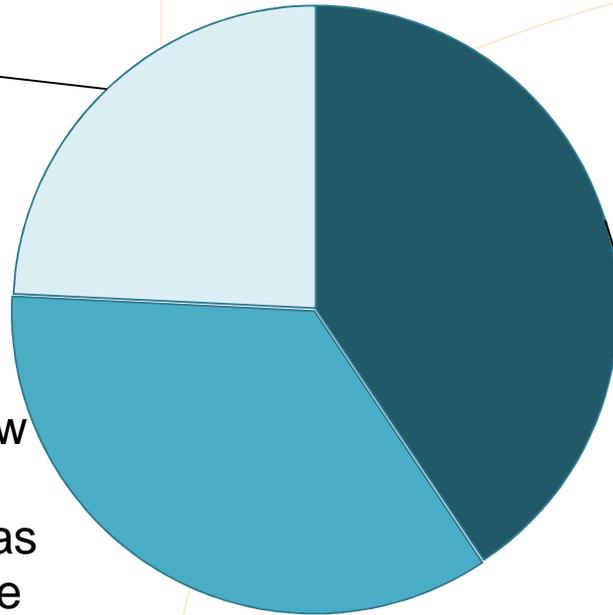


Add activities, such as playgrounds, courts athletic facilities to existing parks  
24%

Provide new parks and trails in areas where there aren't any  
35%

✓ Highest incidence of support for activities/facilities: <35

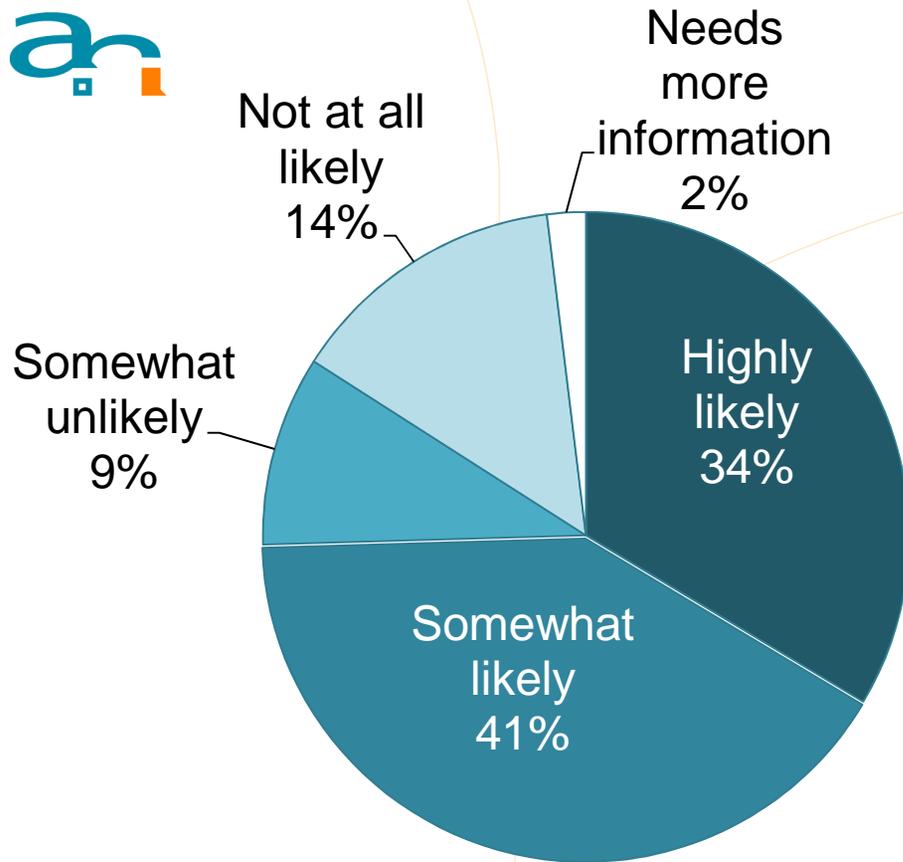
Develop new trails and trail connections throughout the city  
41%



n=283

Question: Which of these three is the most important priority for you?

# Likelihood of support for a new bond or levy

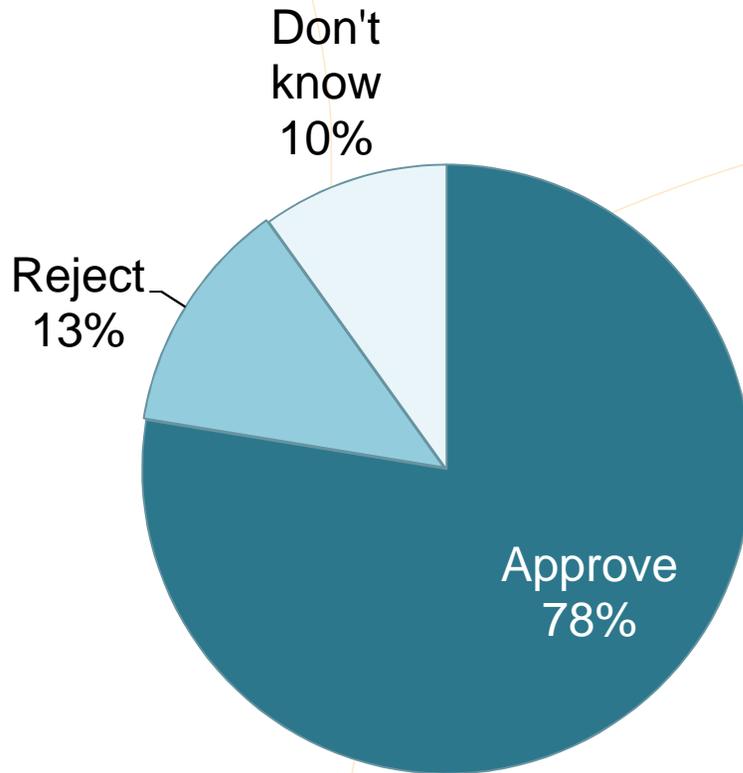


✓ Highest incidence of support: frequent park visitors, women, off-leash dog walkers

n=297

Question: If additional funding were needed for Bellingham's highest priority projects, how likely would you be to support a future bond or levy to cover the costs that are not already included in the current funding?

# Approval of replacement levy



- ✓ Highest incidence of approval: frequent park visitors, <35, HH with kids, off-leash dog walkers

n=295

Question: Would you approve or reject a new levy that replaced the existing one at the same level?



# Conclusion

## Notable

- Usage of walking trails decreased yet still high interest in trail connectivity
- Swimming pools high usage, low satisfaction
- Strong support off leash trails
- Continued support for parks



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