



Columbus Parks & Recreation Strategic Master Plan

PUBLIC INPUT MEETING

SEP 2026

VISION:

To build a community where everyone belongs.

MISSION:



VALUES:

Equitable
Exceptional
Fun
Welcoming

Top Priority for Programs:

- Adult fitness and wellness programs
 - Farmer's Market
- Community special events
- Senior fitness and wellness programs
 - Cultural enrichment programs/events



Top Priority for Facilities/Amenities:

- Indoor walking track
- Restrooms
- Multi-use paved trails
- Indoor aquatics center
- Multi-use unpaved trails
- Indoor recreation facility

Big Moves!

Develop a marketing/branding approach built around telling our story

Master Plan Donner Park and pool

Pursue additional funding to reinvest in existing and new parks/facilities

Seeks CAPRA and National Gold Medal | Successful development of NexusPark campus

OVERVIEW OF PARKS BUDGET STRUCTURES

GENERAL FUND:



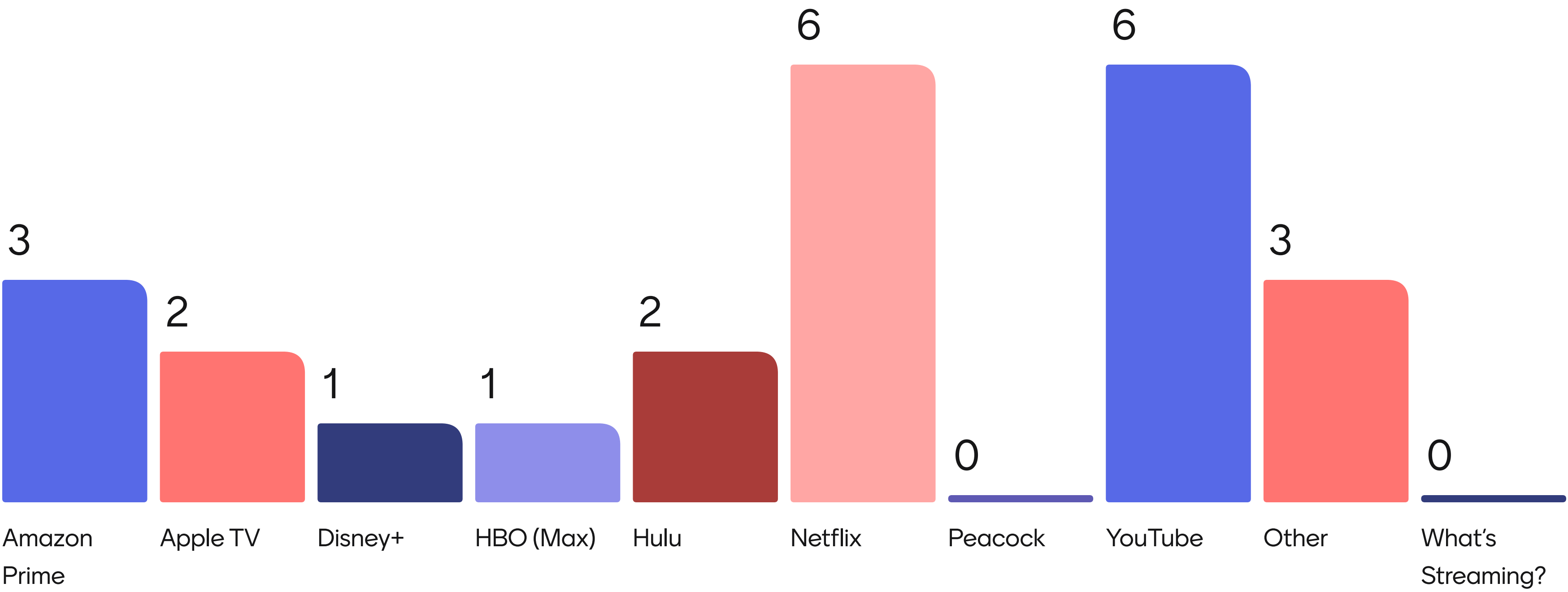
NON-REVERTING FUND:



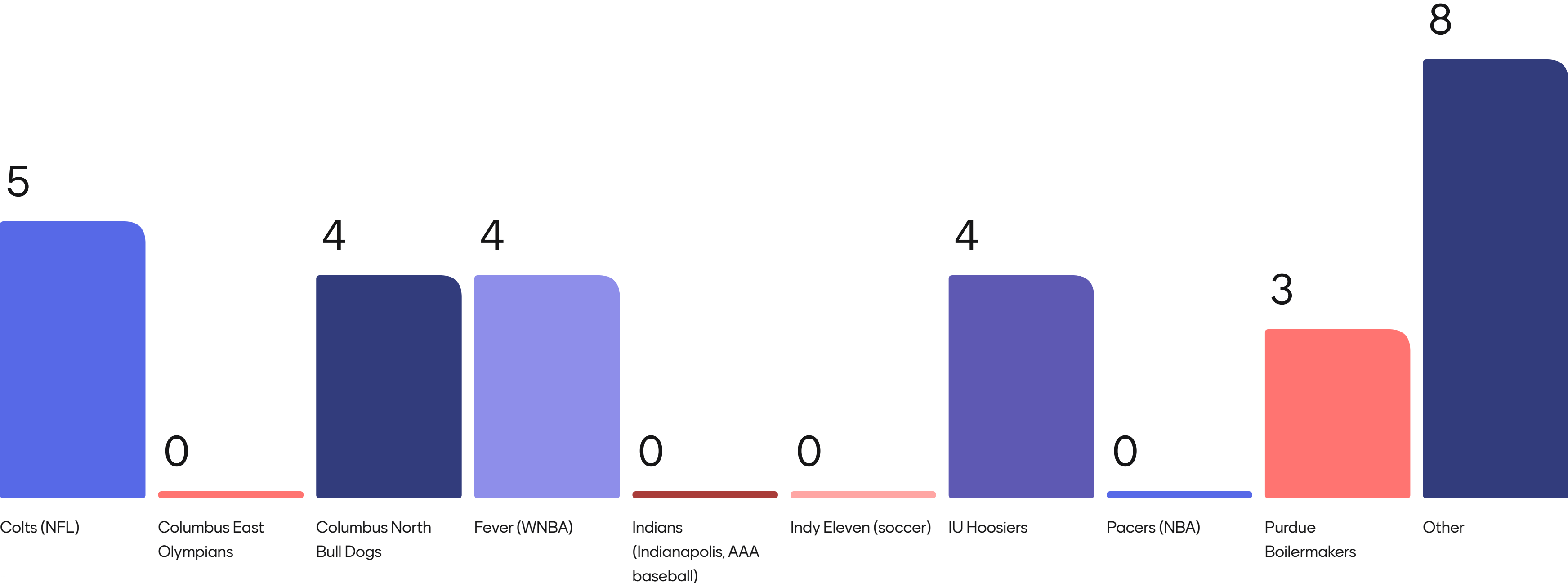
POLLING - AUDIENCE PROFILE



Which is your favorite Streaming Platform?



My favorite sports team is



Who Are We?



NEXT PRACTICE PARTNERS

be different

200+ Strategic and Master Plans

Previous Plans for Columbus

20% of CAPRA + Gold Medal Winners

Work - 6 continents / Speak Multiple languages

OUR VISION

A more inclusive and innovative
future for all

OUR MISSION

To help communities prepare for
what's next

OUR VALUES

Inclusion

+

Innovation

+

Information

=

Inspiration

Who Are We?

SMITHGROUP

173 Years in Business

Midwest-based – 20 Offices Nationally



ATHLETICS & RECREATION



COMMUNITY & REGIONAL PARKS



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE



GREENWAYS & TRAILS



NATURAL SYSTEMS & HABITATS



PARK BUILDINGS & STRUCTURES



PLAY AREAS



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

120+

Public Parks in
Our Portfolio

395

Design Awards in
the Past 5 Years

1,500

Multi-Disciplinary
Professionals

#7

Architecture &
Engineering
Firms, BD+C, 2025

SERVICES:

- Landscape Architecture
- Architecture
- Civil Engineering
- Urban Design / Planning
- Programming
- Sustainable Design and Climate Impact
- MEP/FP Engineering
- Structural Engineering
- Interior Design
- Lighting Design
- Historic Preservation

Who Are We?

MERGE DISABILITY INCLUSION



Who Are We?



Desired Outcomes

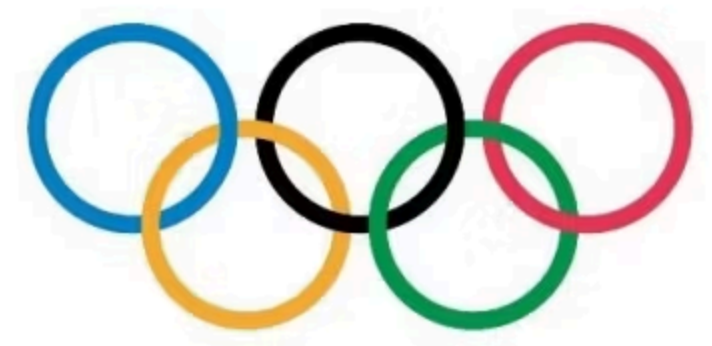
1. Maximize community engagement in an extensive and innovative manner
2. Utilize a wide variety of data sources and “Next Practices”
3. Ensure offerings and access are maximized citywide
4. Develop plans for Donner Park and Mill Race Park
5. Position the Department for future and sustained success

Align with Mission and Vision Statements:

Mission: To enrich lives

Vision: To build a community where everyone belongs

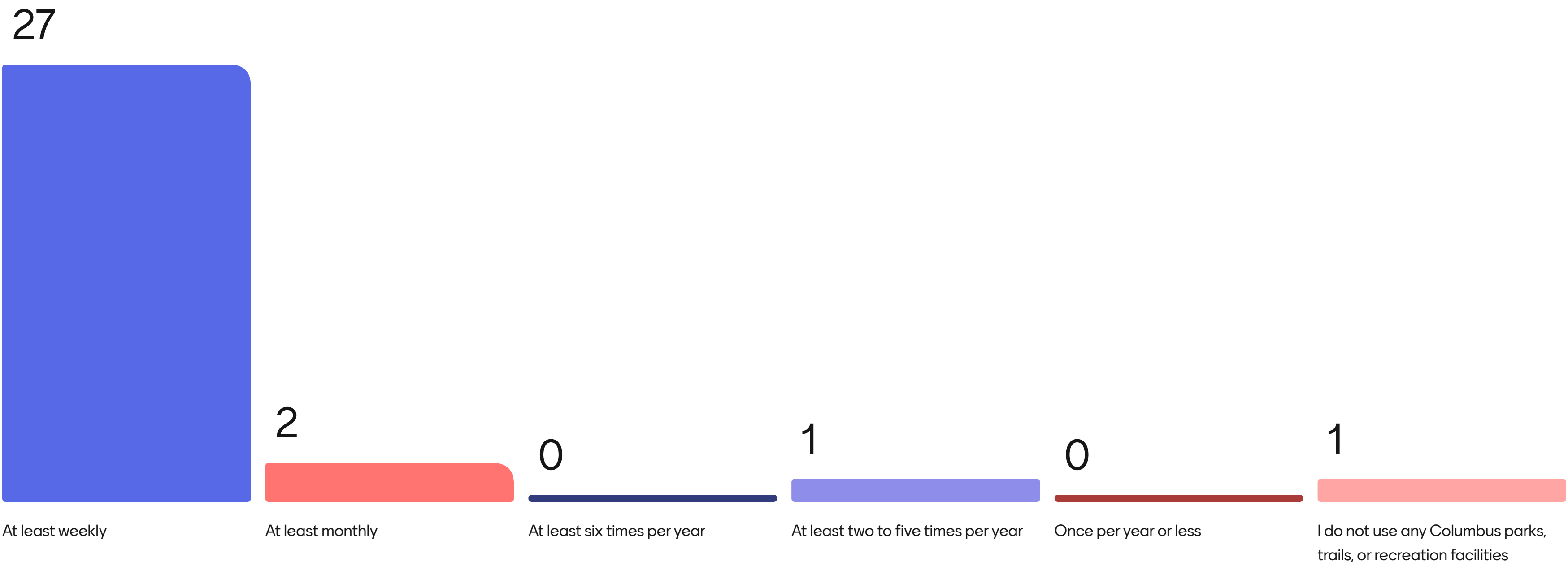




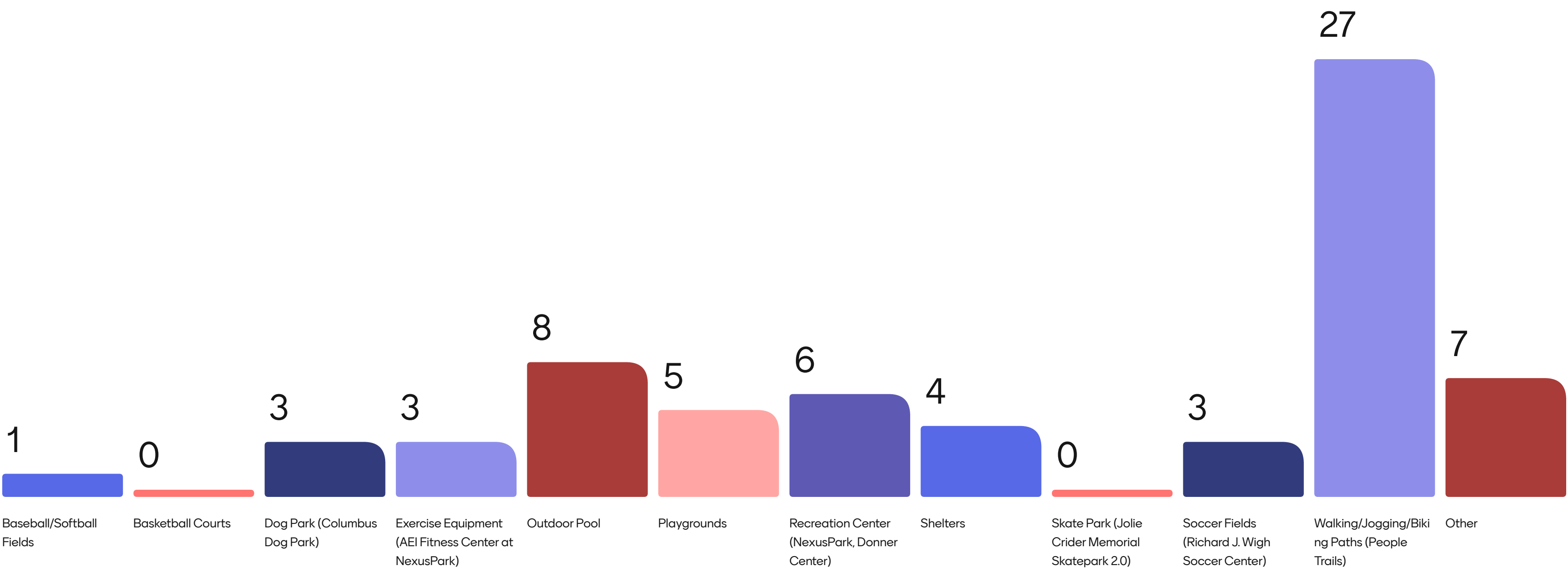
POLLING – USAGE & QUALITY



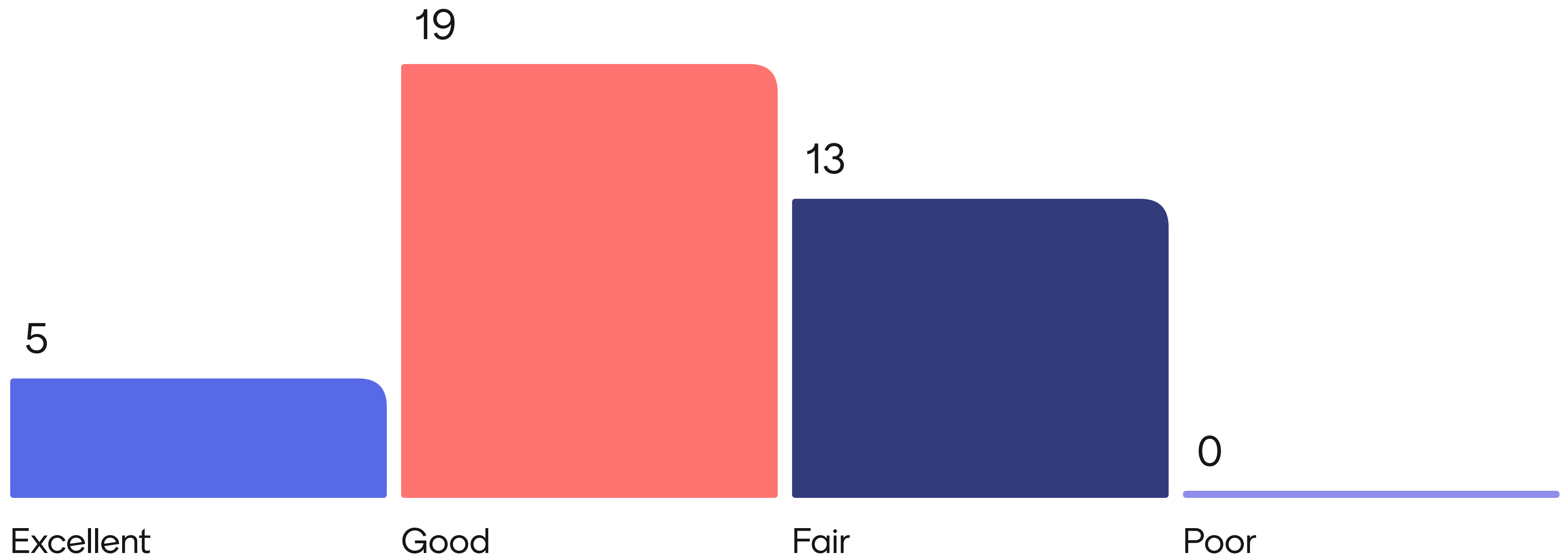
How often do you visit any Columbus parks, trails, or recreation facilities?



Which amenities do you use regularly?



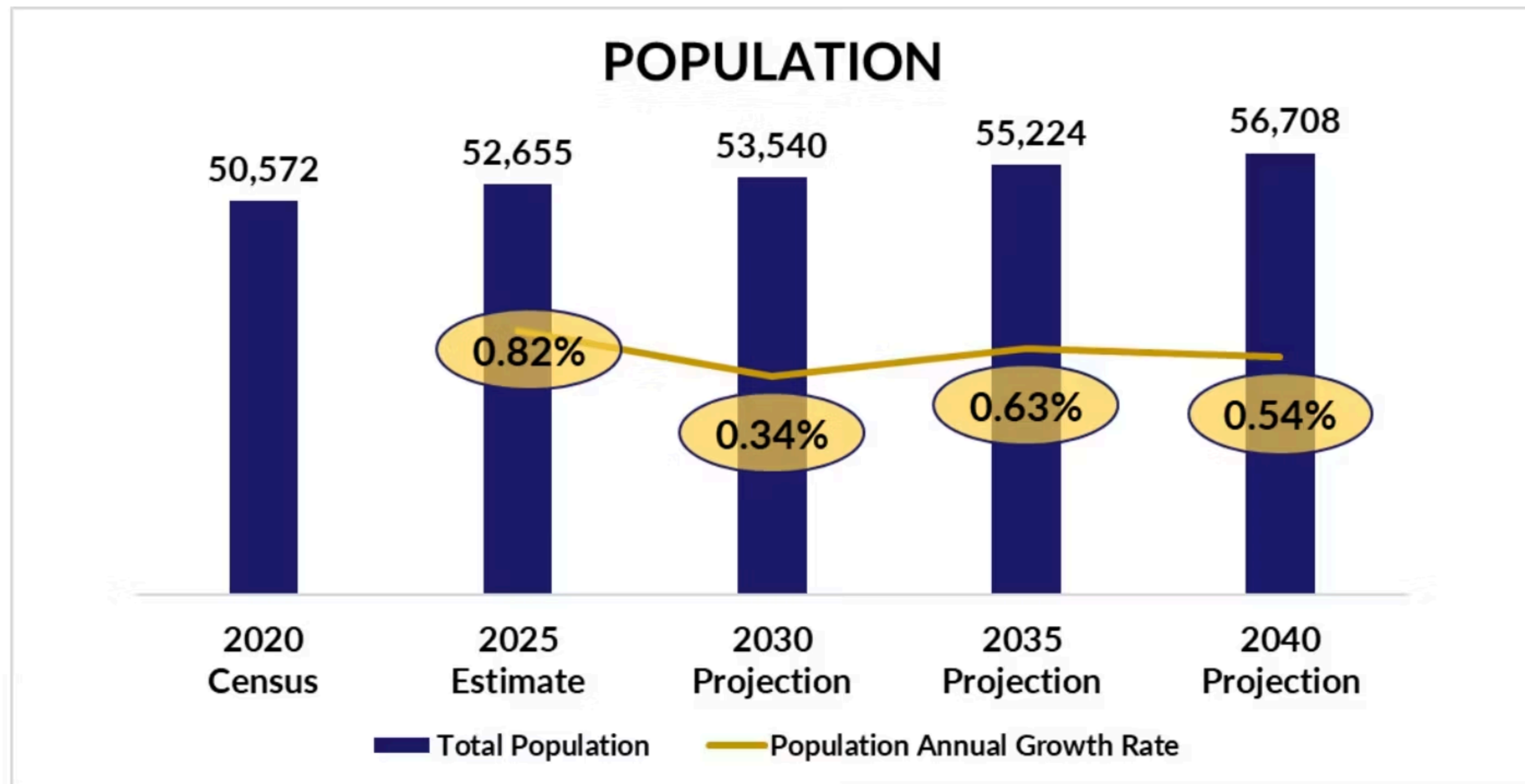
How would you rate the quality of Columbus' offerings?



39%

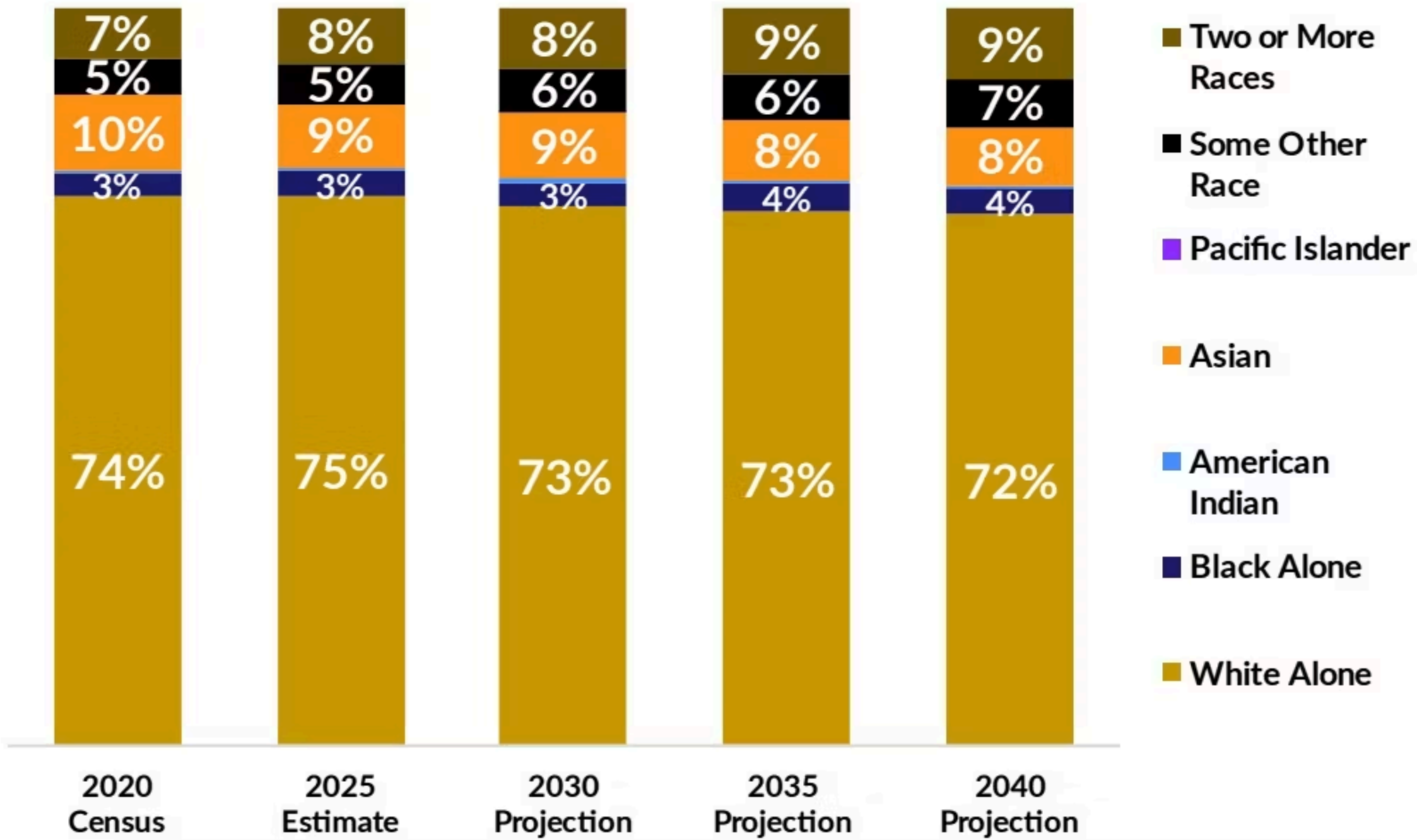
of Columbus residents live within a
10-minute walk
of a park

National Median: 57%

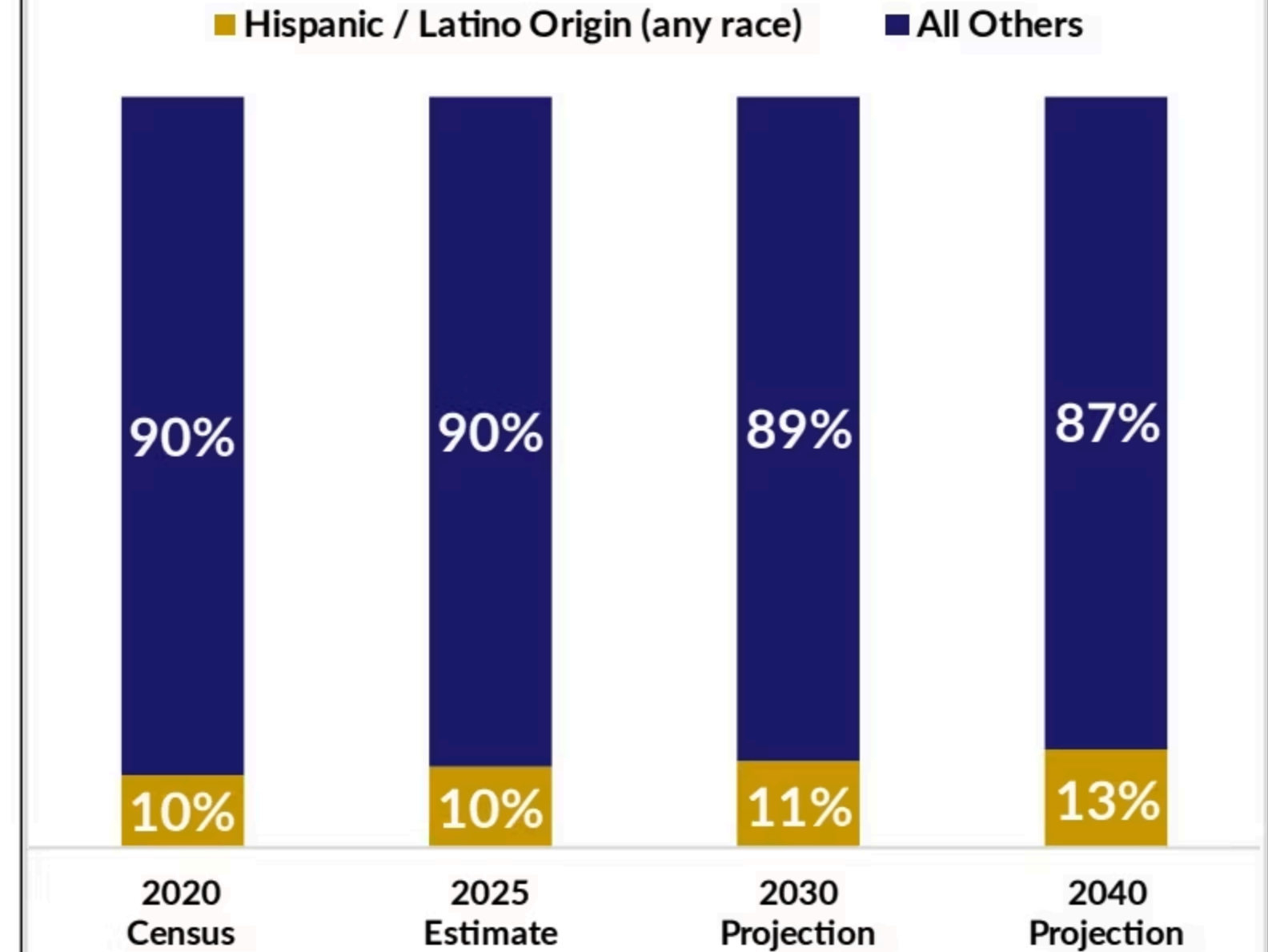


Population

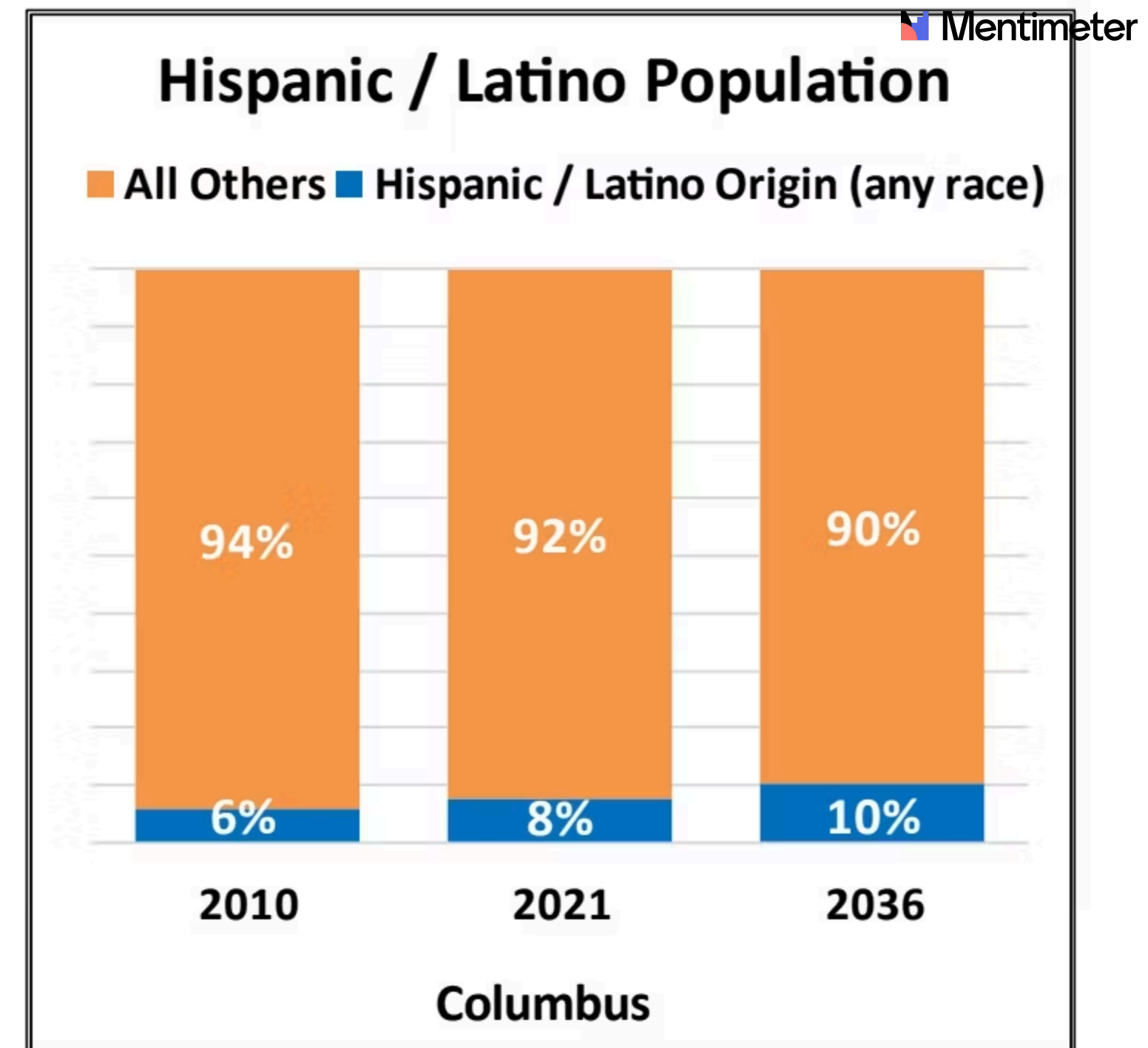
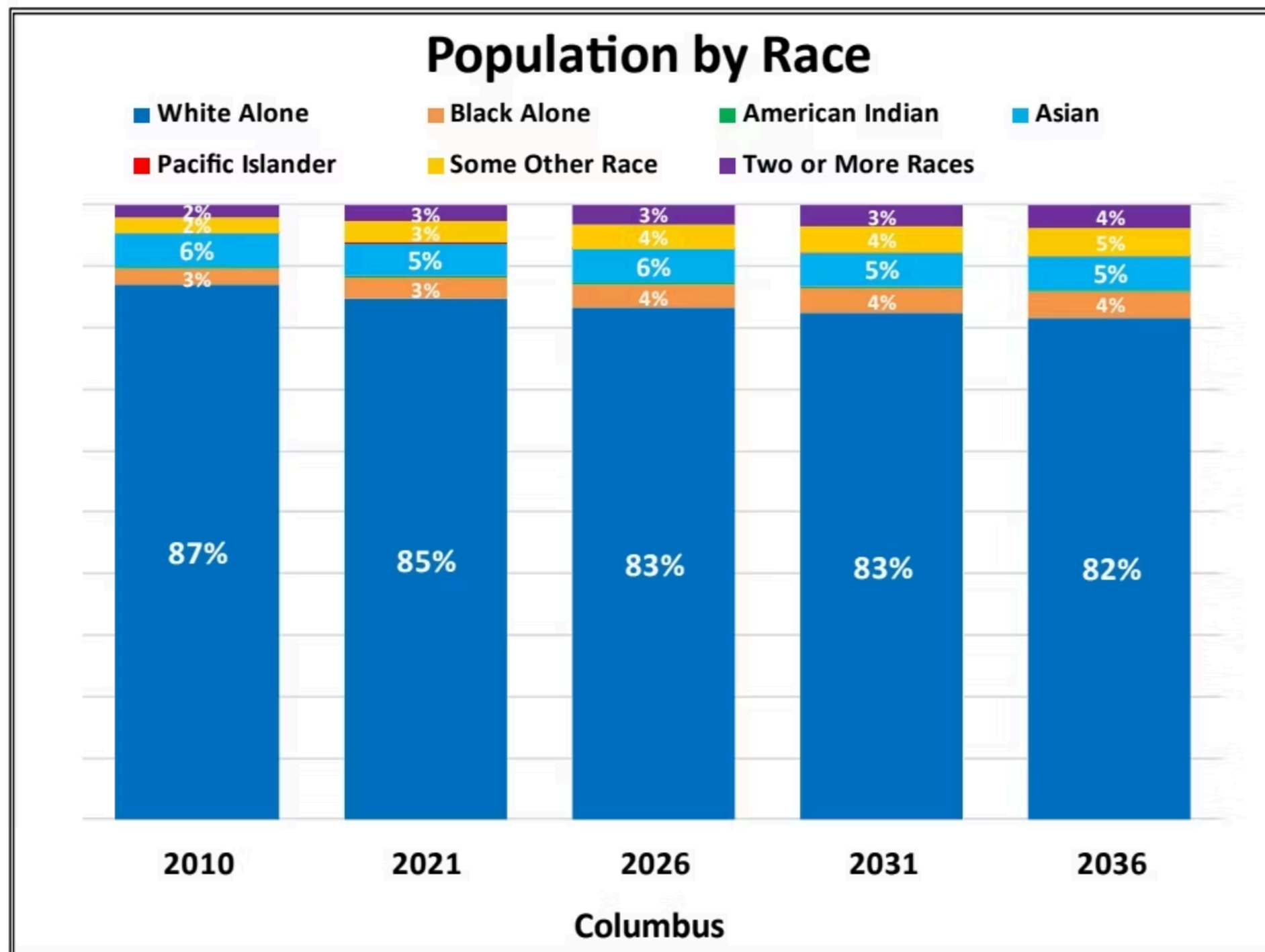
RACE



HISPANIC POPULATION

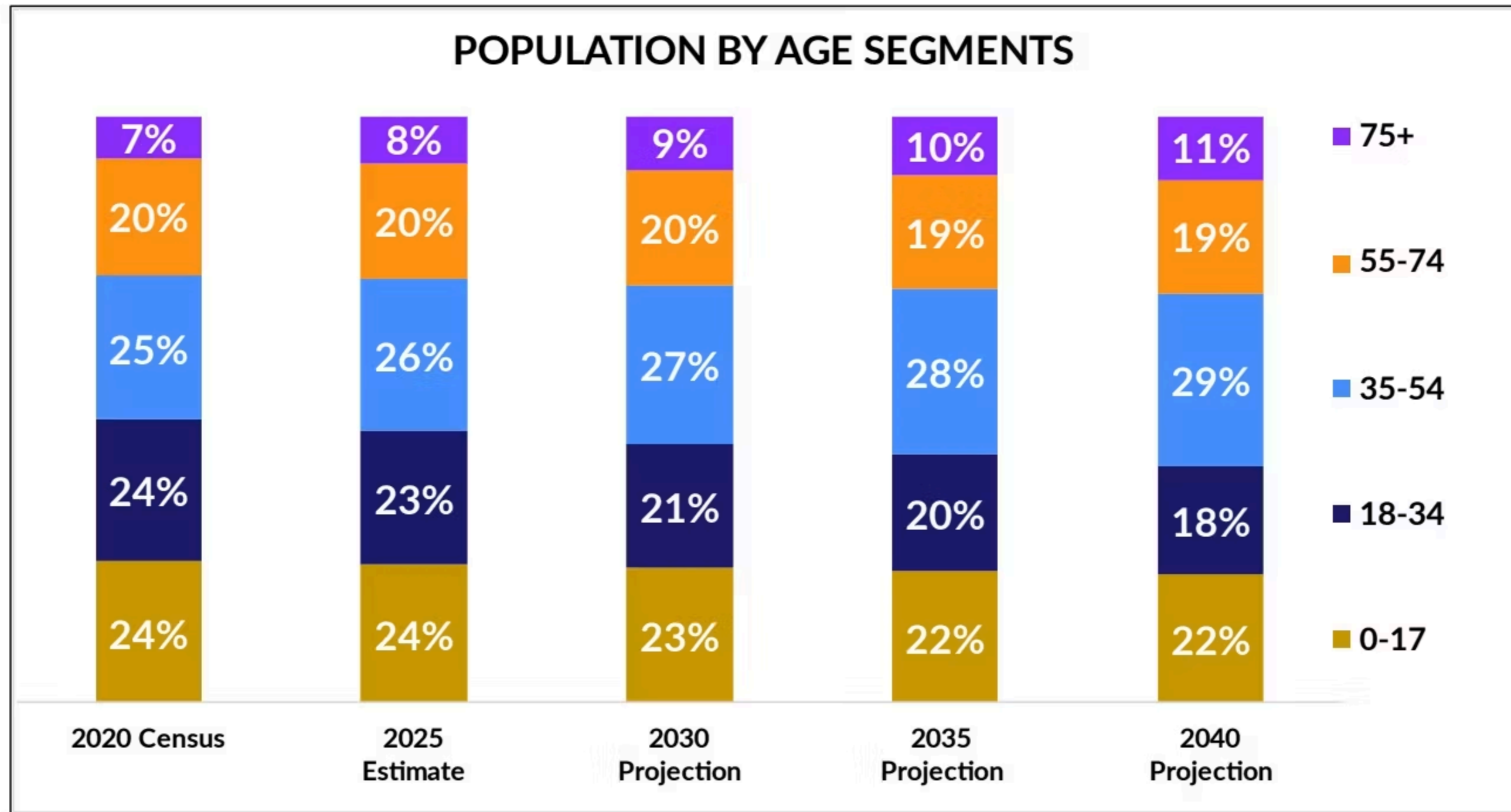


Race/Ethnicity

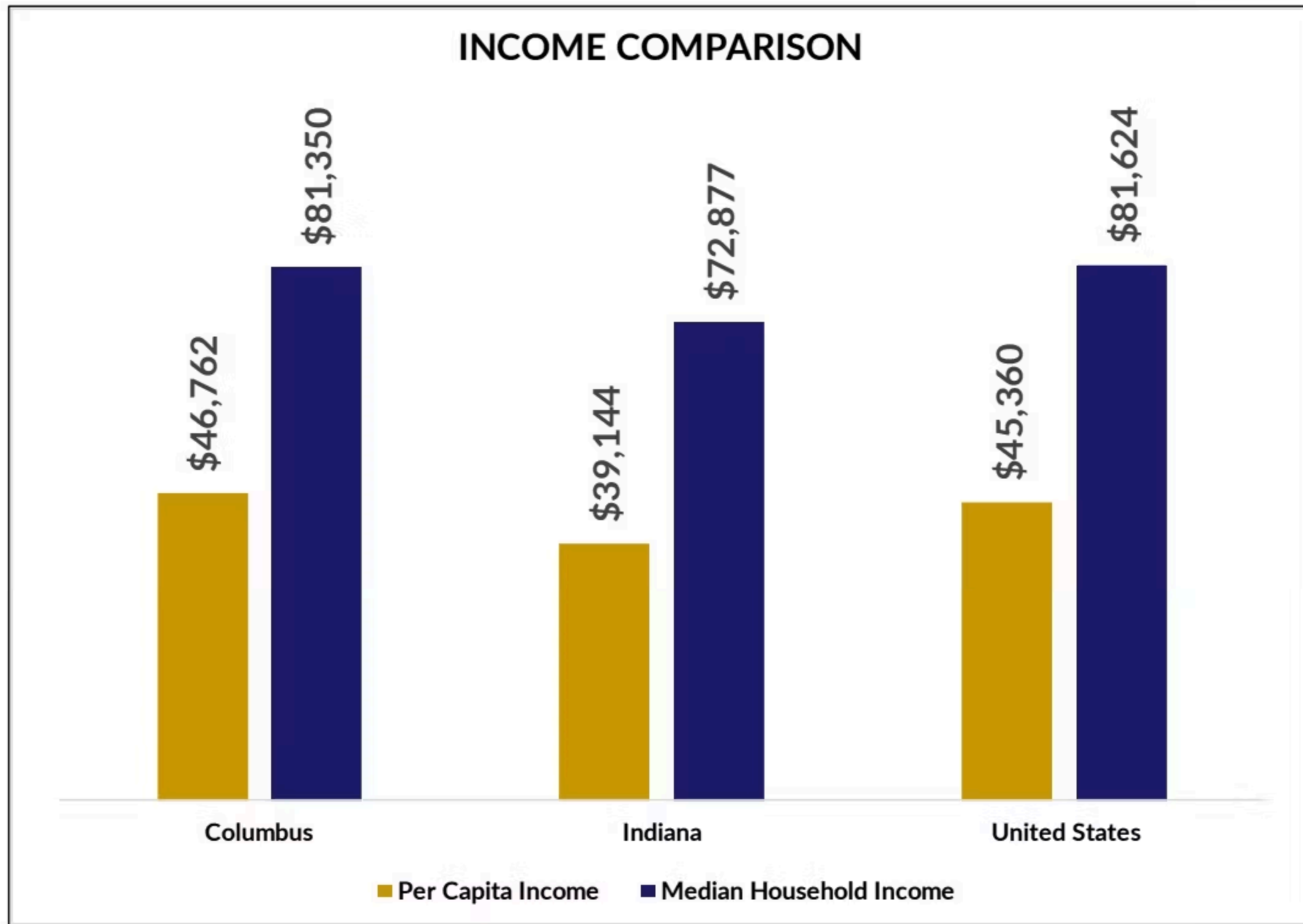


2021 Race/Ethnicity

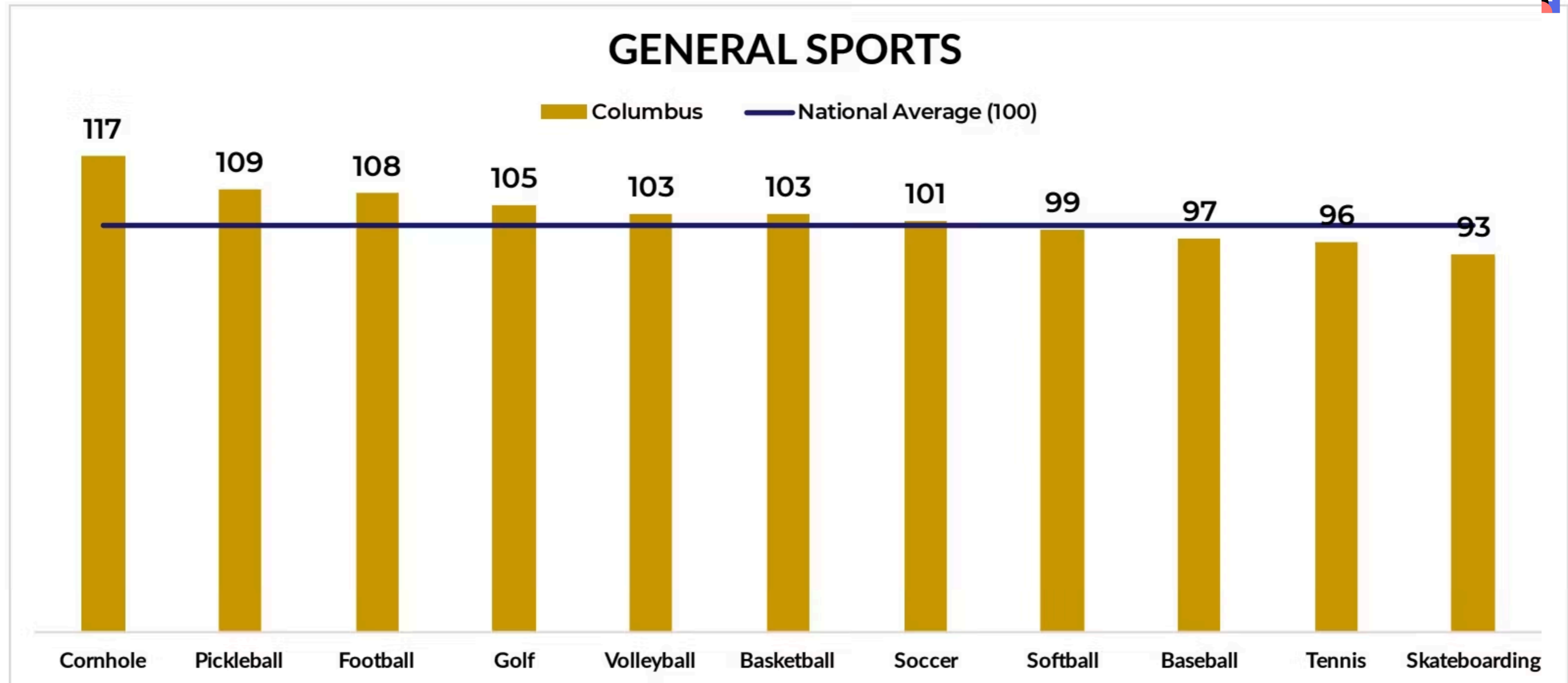




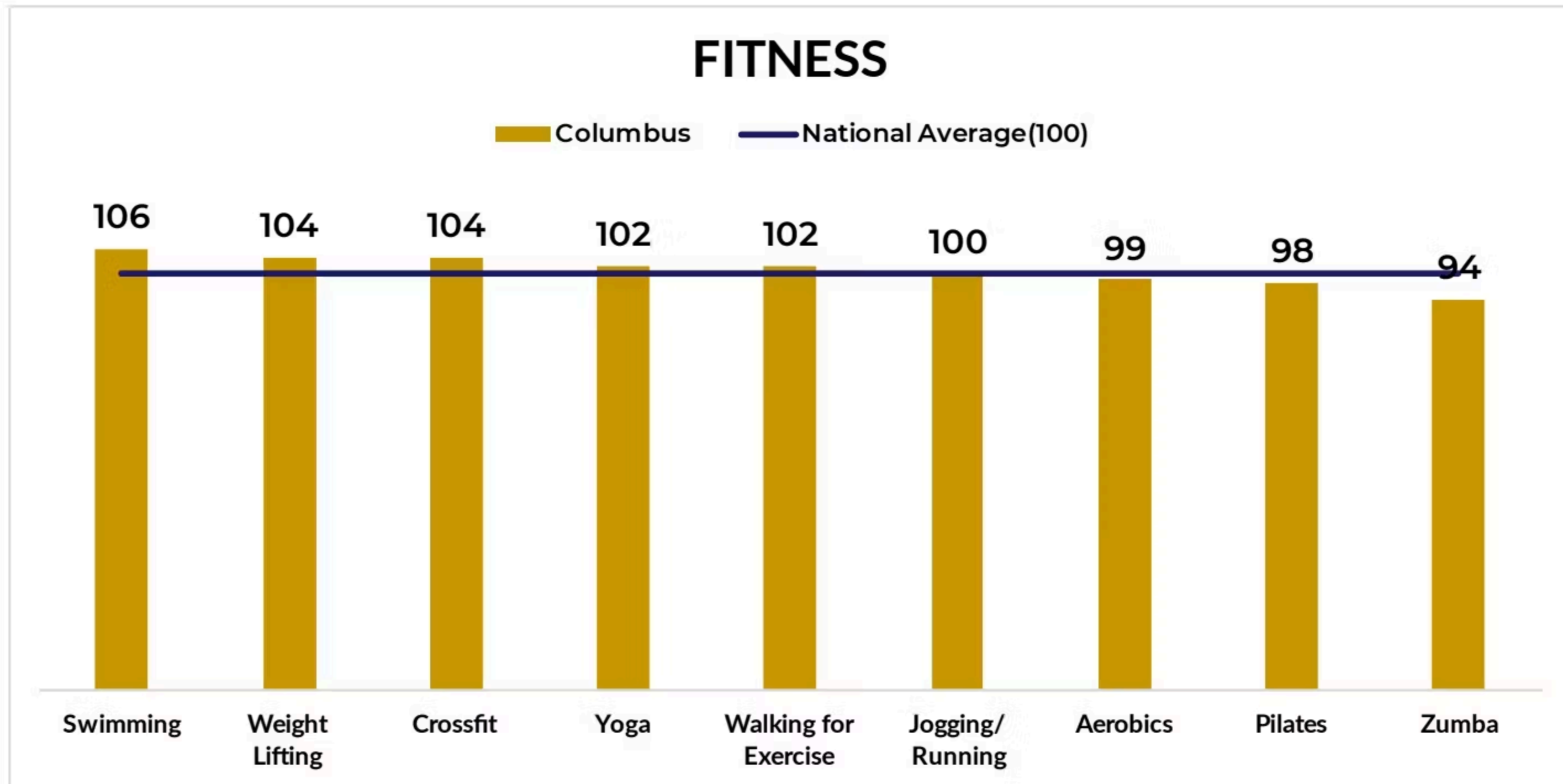
Age Segments



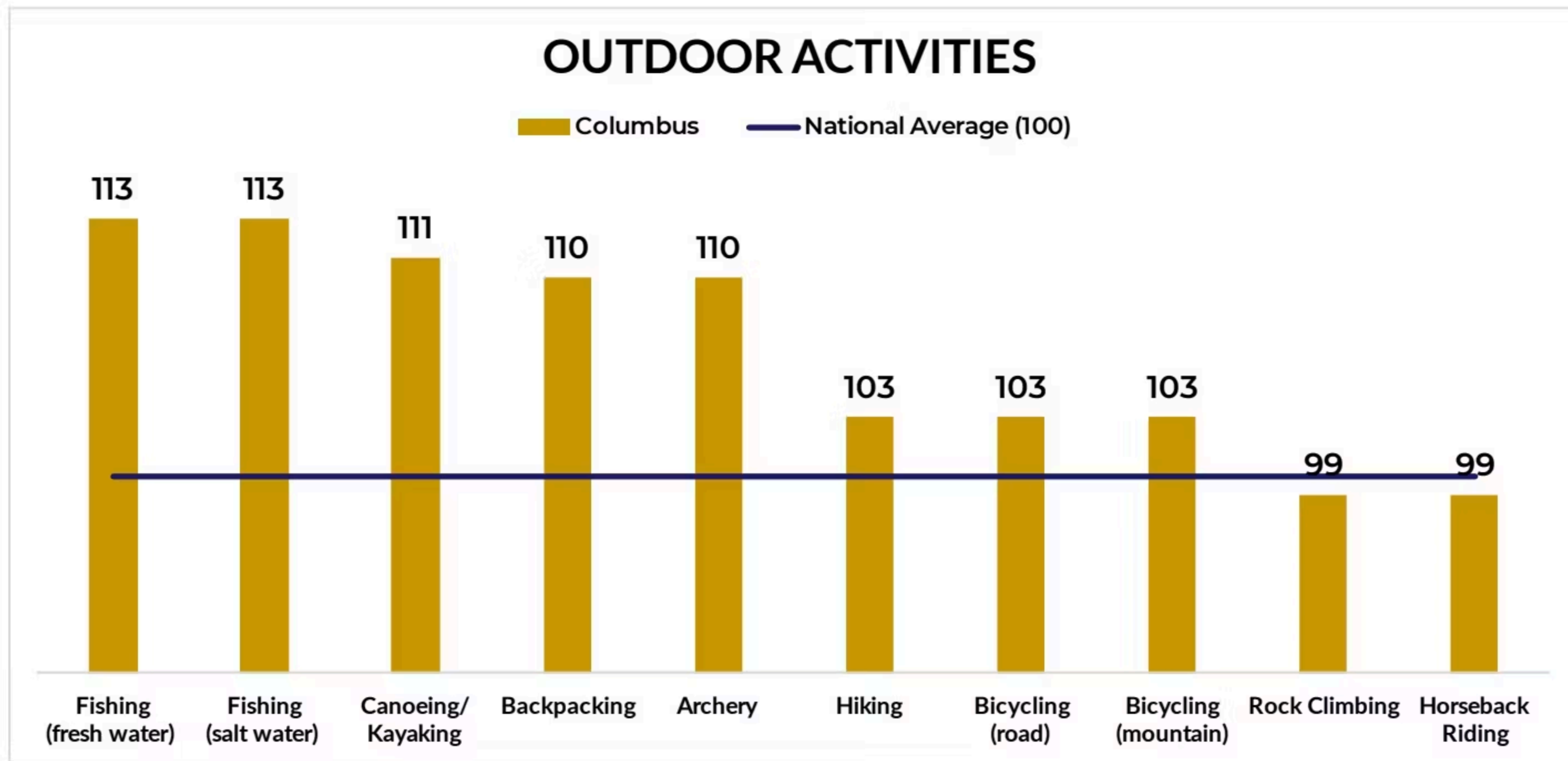
Income Levels



General Sports MPI



Fitness MPI

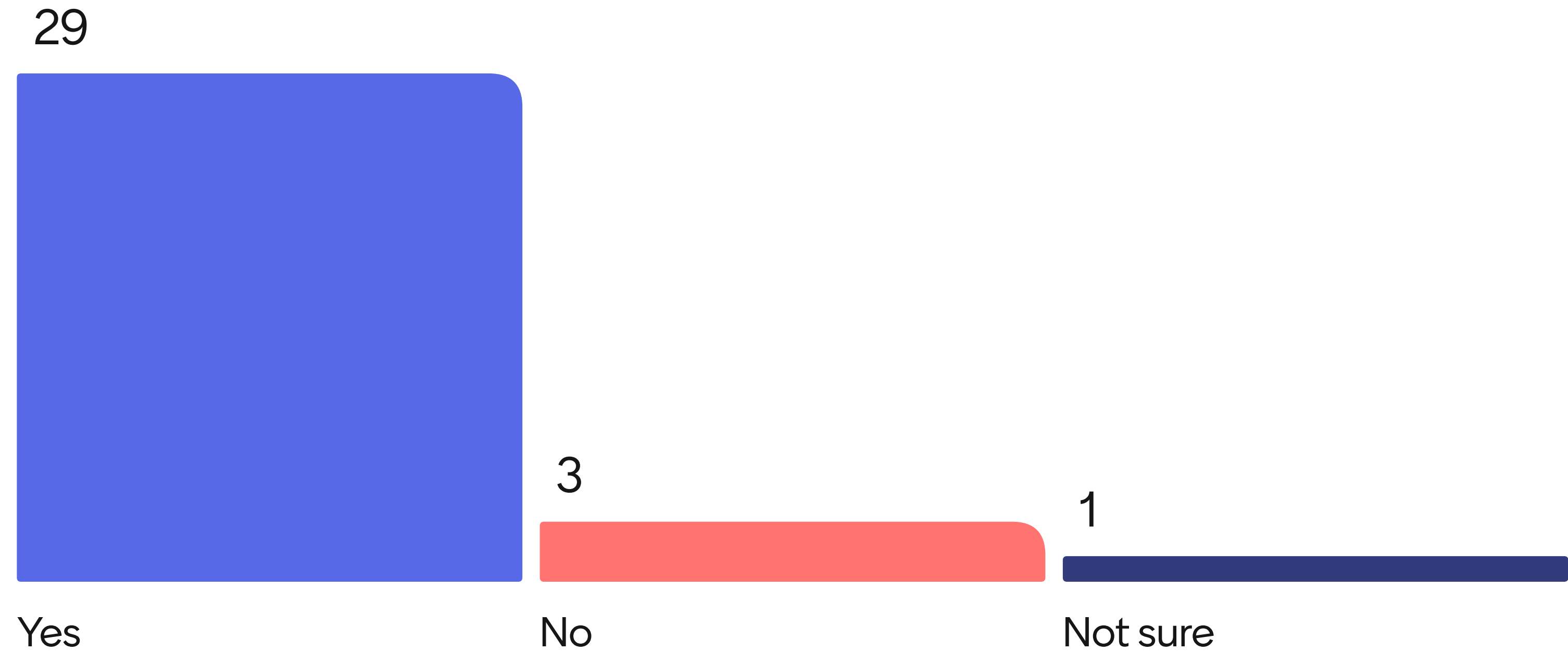


Outdoor Activities MPI

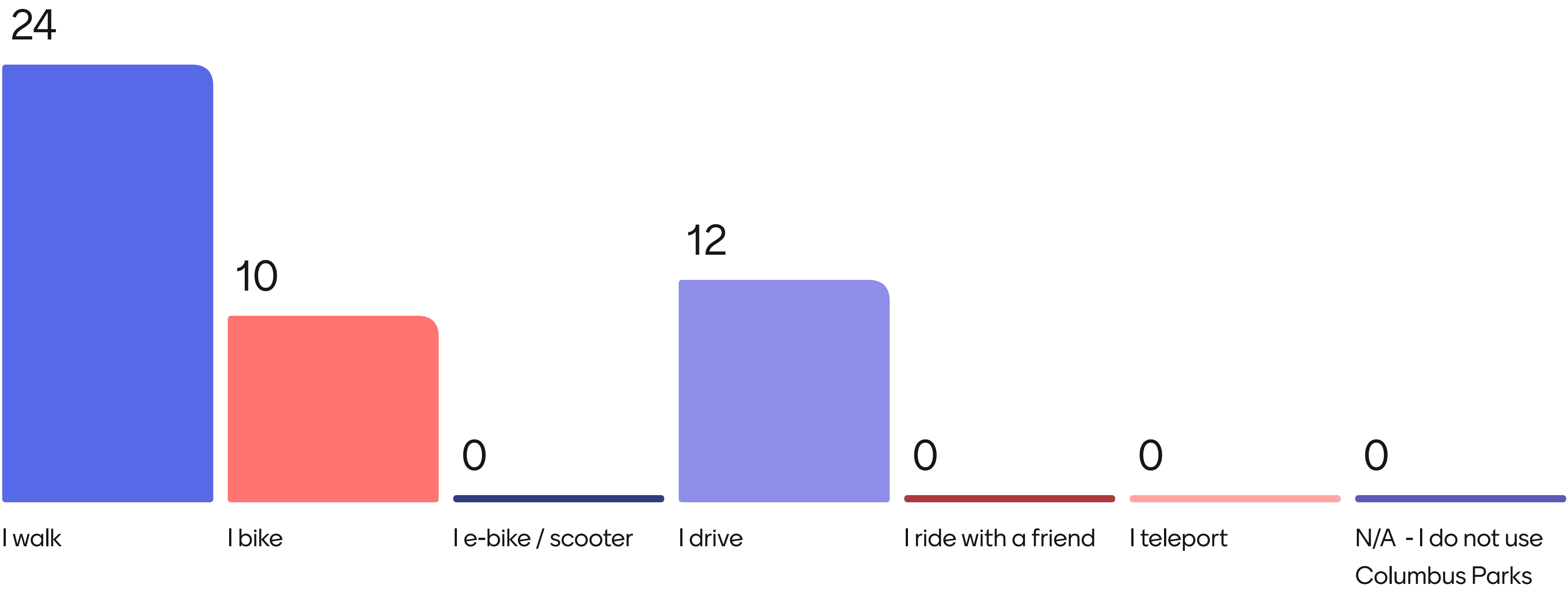
POLLING – ACCESS AND TRAVEL

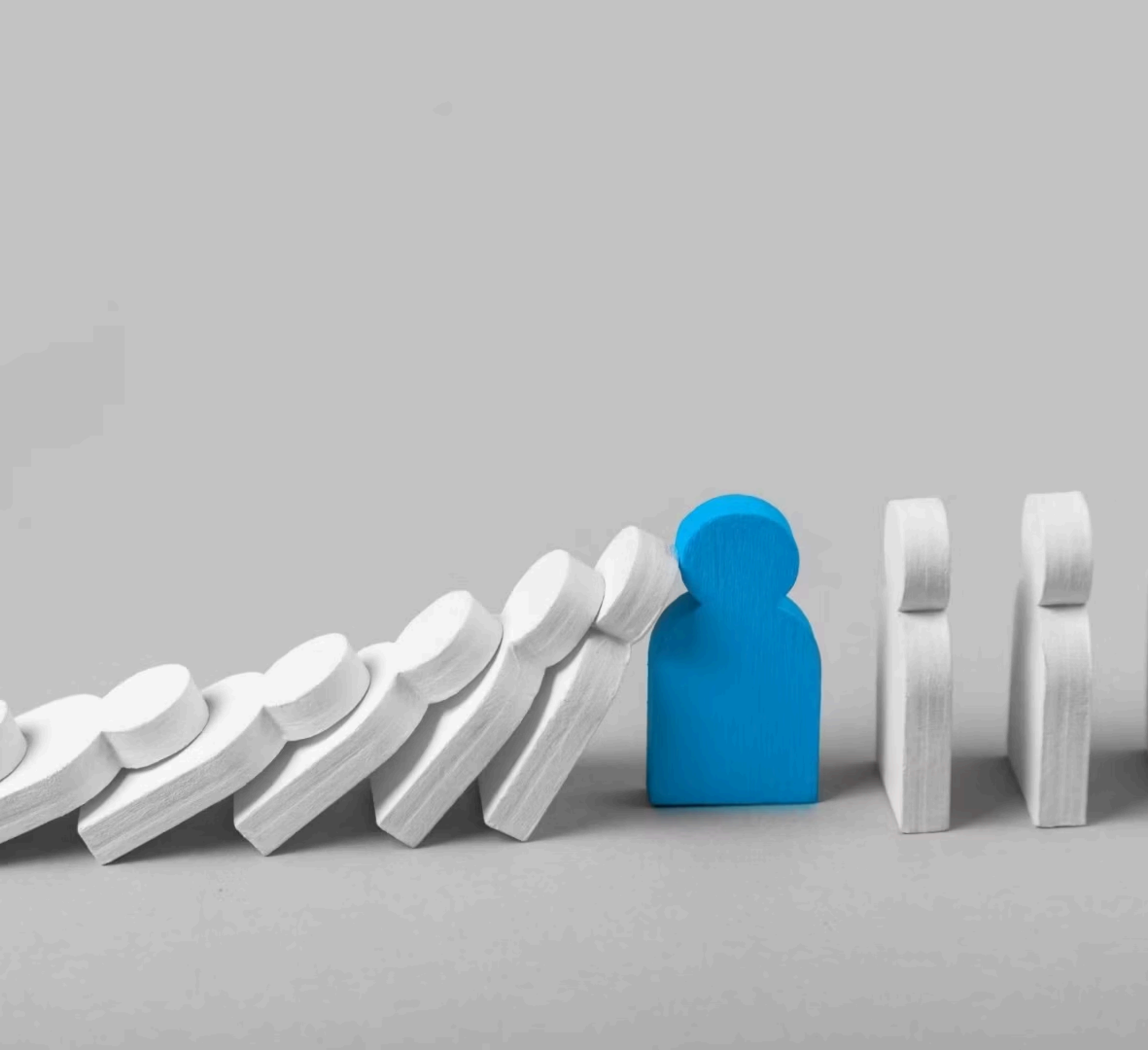


Do you live within a 10-minute walk to a park or trail?



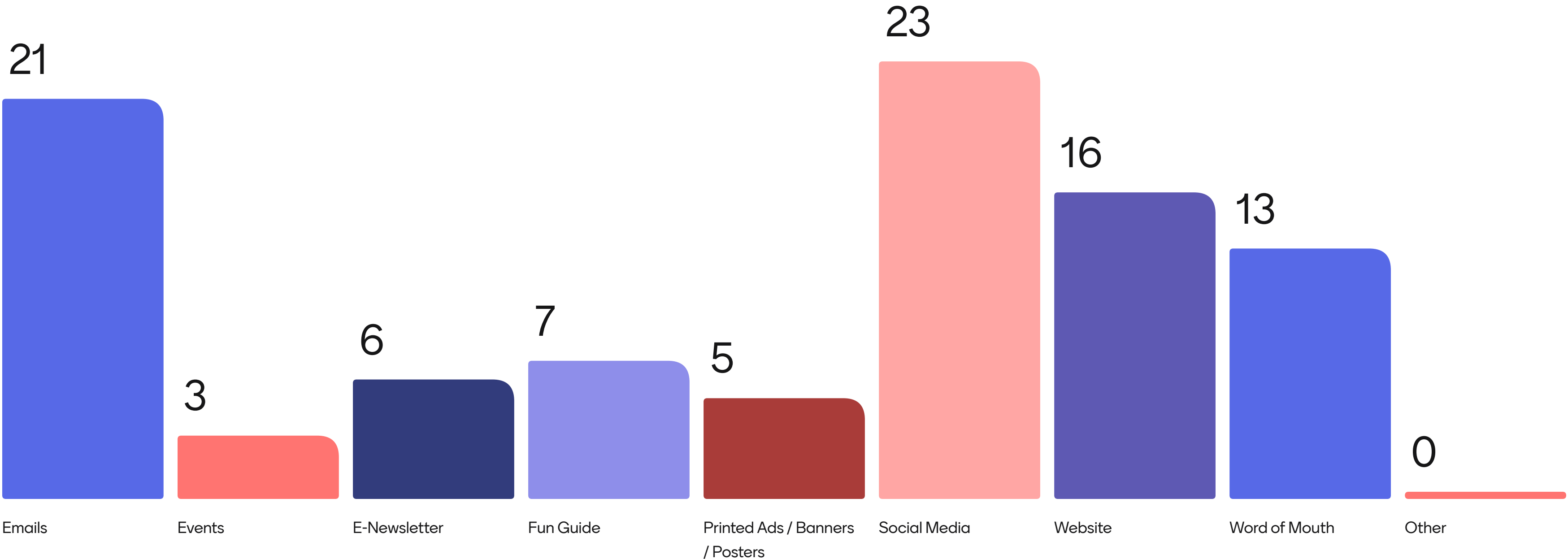
How do you travel to your nearest local park?



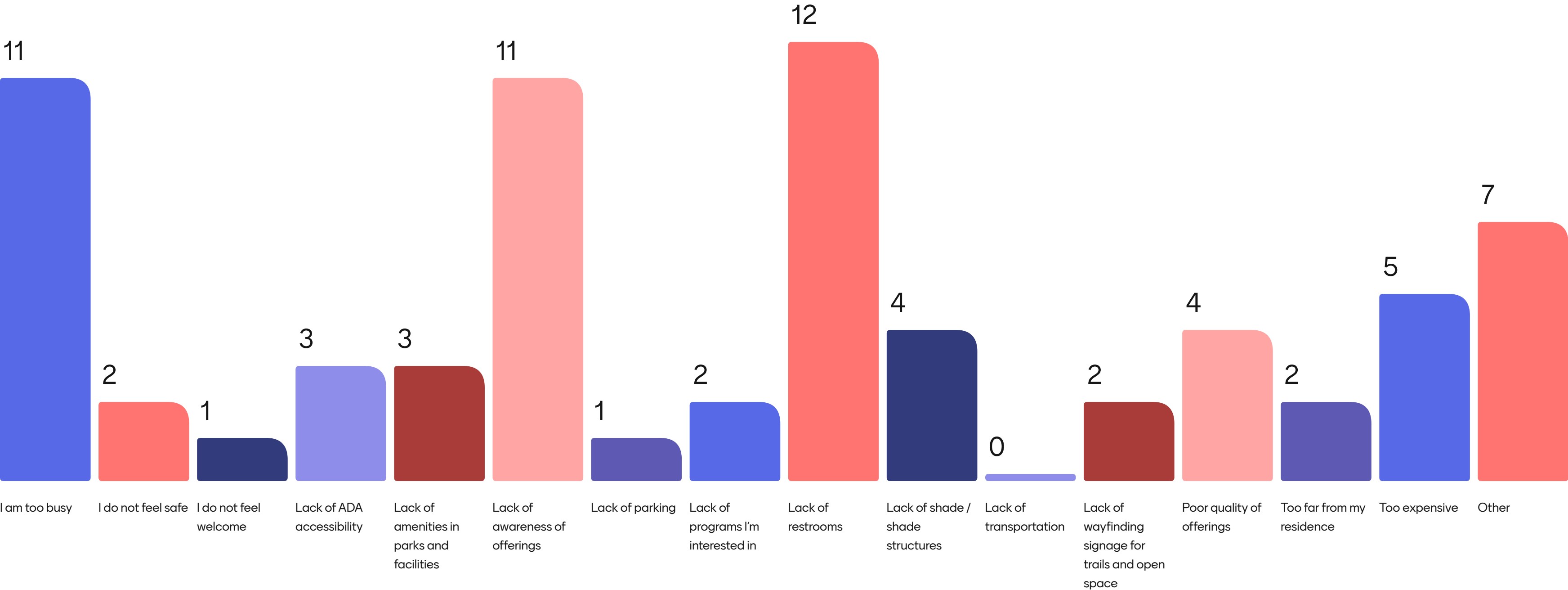


POLLING – COMMUNICATION & BARRIERS

What are your THREE MOST PREFERRED ways to learn about Columbus' offerings?



What are the THREE LARGEST BARRIERS that prevent you from using Columbus parks, programs, and/or facilities more often?



PROPOSED PROCESS

Where Are We Today?

- Review Existing Documentation
- Community Outreach / Education Strategy
- Community Demographics and Trends
- Assess Existing Parks & Facilities
- Analysis of Programs and Services
- Assess Staff & Organizational Culture

Where Are We Going Tomorrow?

- Leadership & Stakeholder Interviews
- Multi-Lingual Outreach
- Public Workshops
- Youth & Teen Engagement
- Multi-lingual Statistically-Valid Survey
- Bi-Lingual Electronic Survey
- Multi-lingual ADA Accessible Digital Platform

How Do We Get There?

- Assess Needs and Levels of Service
- Equity Mapping and Gap Analysis
- Create Vision, Mission, Values and Objectives
- Priorities & Capital Improvement Plan
- Funding and Revenue Strategies
- Program Plan



DISCOVER



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

A group of people are gathered in a forest at dusk, sitting around a campfire. The scene is dimly lit, with the fire providing the main source of light. The people are wearing warm clothing, and the background shows tall trees and a dark sky. The text "We Must Go Where The People Are" is overlaid in white, and "Our Fundamental Community Input Philosophy" is in a black box below it.

We Must Go Where
The People Are

Our Fundamental Community Input Philosophy

Plan The Future Of Columbus Parks

Discover spaces to relax, play, connect, and enjoy the outdoors. Find the park places and experiences that fit your needs and make every visit your own.

Home

About Us

Reports

Engage

Contact Us

23

PARKS

1,000+

ACRES OF PARKLAND

23+

MILES OF TRAILS

1947

ESTABLISHED

10+

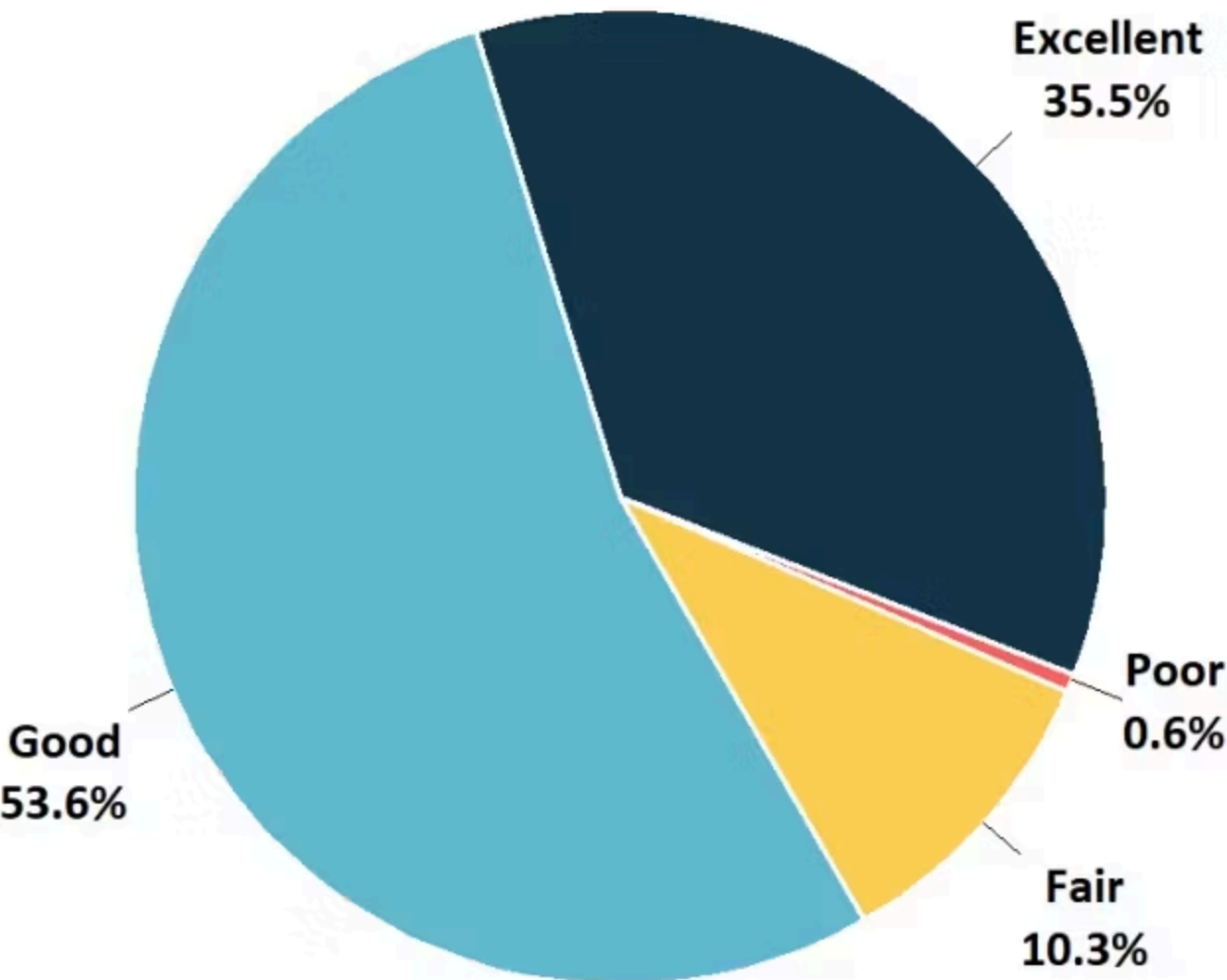
FACILITIES



Defensible

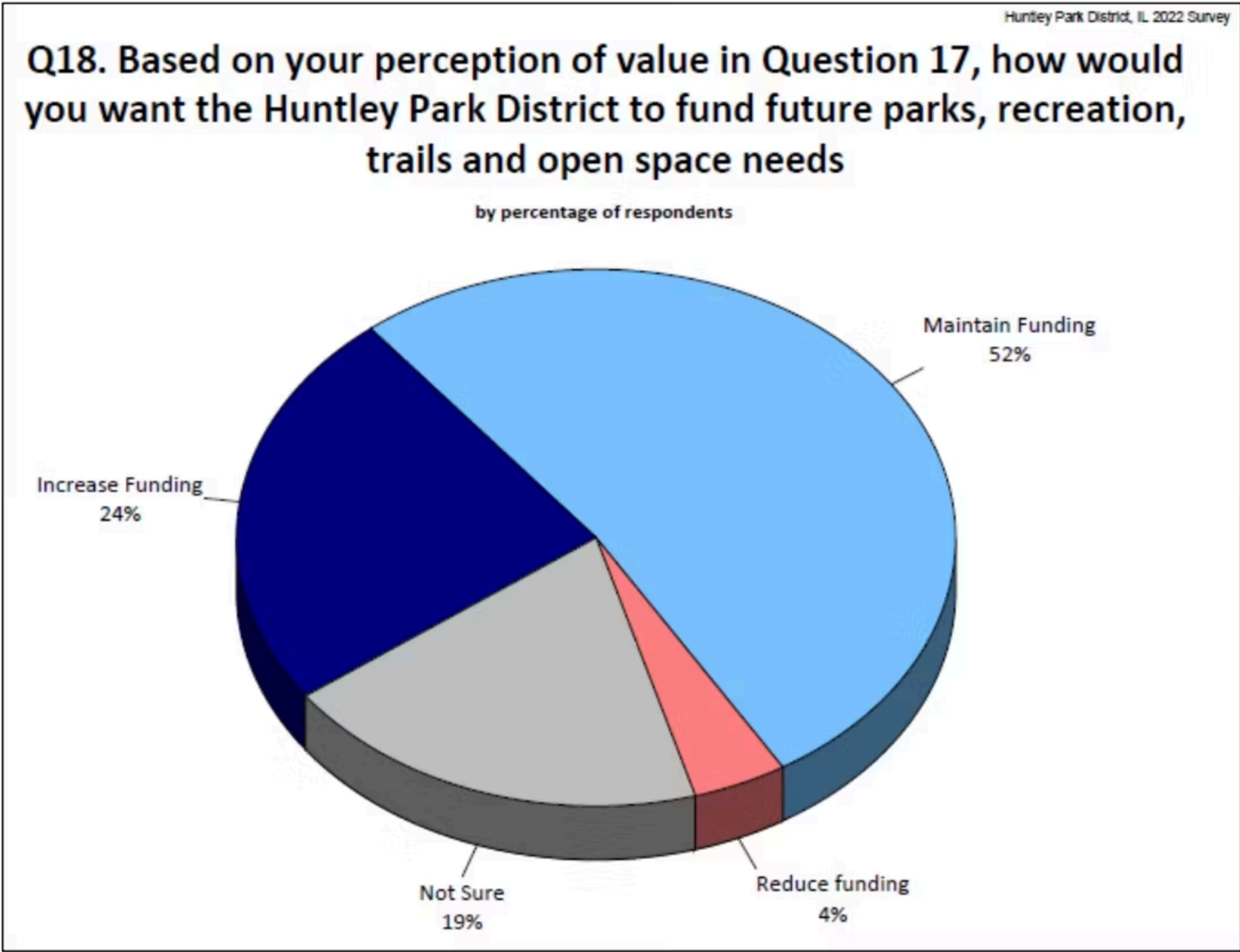
Q5b. How would you rate the overall quality of the Columbus Parks and Recreation Department's recreation programs in which your household has participated?

by percentage of respondents (excluding *not provided* responses)



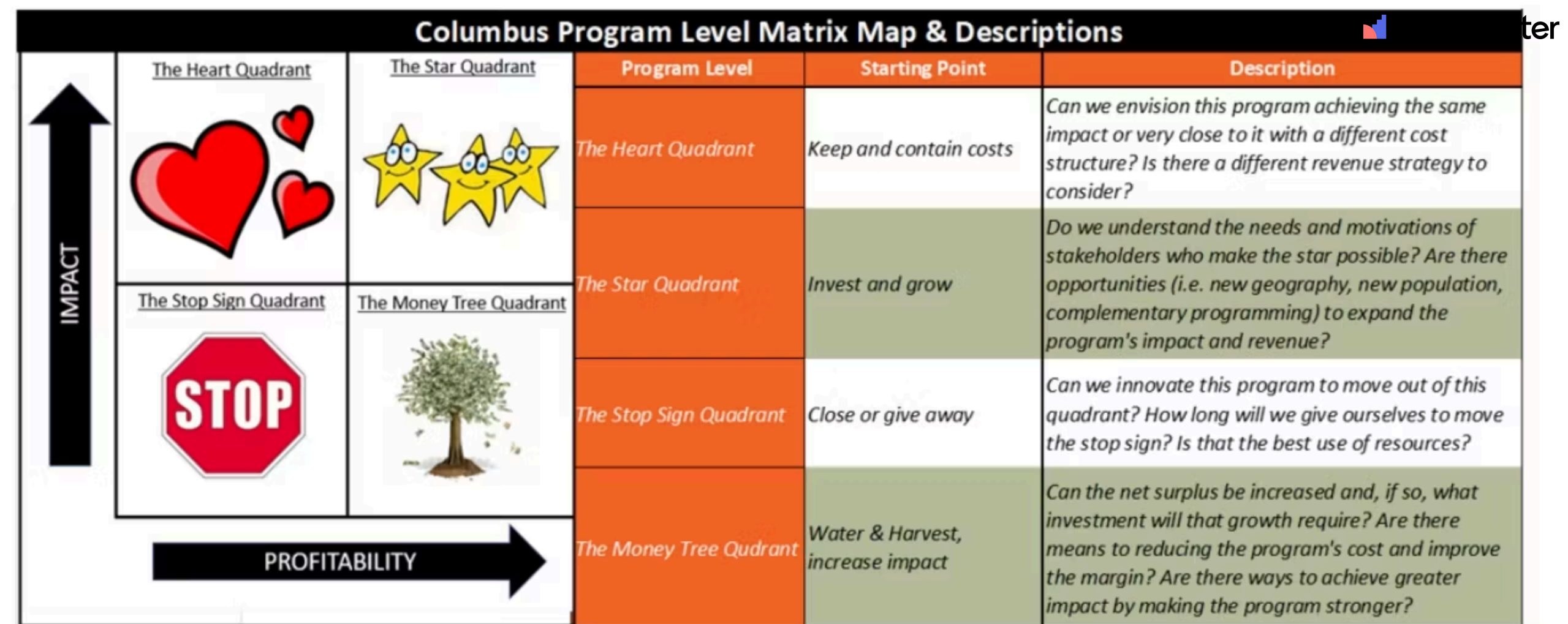
2021 Plan
Survey Results

Defensible



ASSESS





Pricing Strategies										
Core Program Area	Age Segment	Family / Household Status	Residency	Weekday / Weekend	Prime / Non-Prime Time	Group Discounts	By Location	By Competition (Market Rate)	By Cost Recovery Goals	By Customer's Ability to Pay
Aquatics	X				X	X			X	X
Golf	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Recreation						X	X		X	X
Sports			X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Gymnastics						X			X	X
Ice				X	X	X		X	X	X

FIELD INPUT

V.I.B.E SITE ASSESSMENT INPUT DATA

ASSESSMENT DETAILS

CLIENT / AGENCY NAME

Columbus Parks and Recreation

DATE OF ASSESSMENT

06/18/2026

ASSESSMENT PERIOD / PHASE

e.g. Summer 2026 Masterplan

SCORING SCALE (5 = BEST) 1 Critical 2 Poor 3 Fair 4 Good 5 Excellent

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Comfort, belonging, safety, maintenance, cleanliness, and branding that shape how welcoming the site feels.

INFRASTRUCTURE CONDITION

Structural quality, design, finishes, building systems, and accessibility of the facility's physical assets.

BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

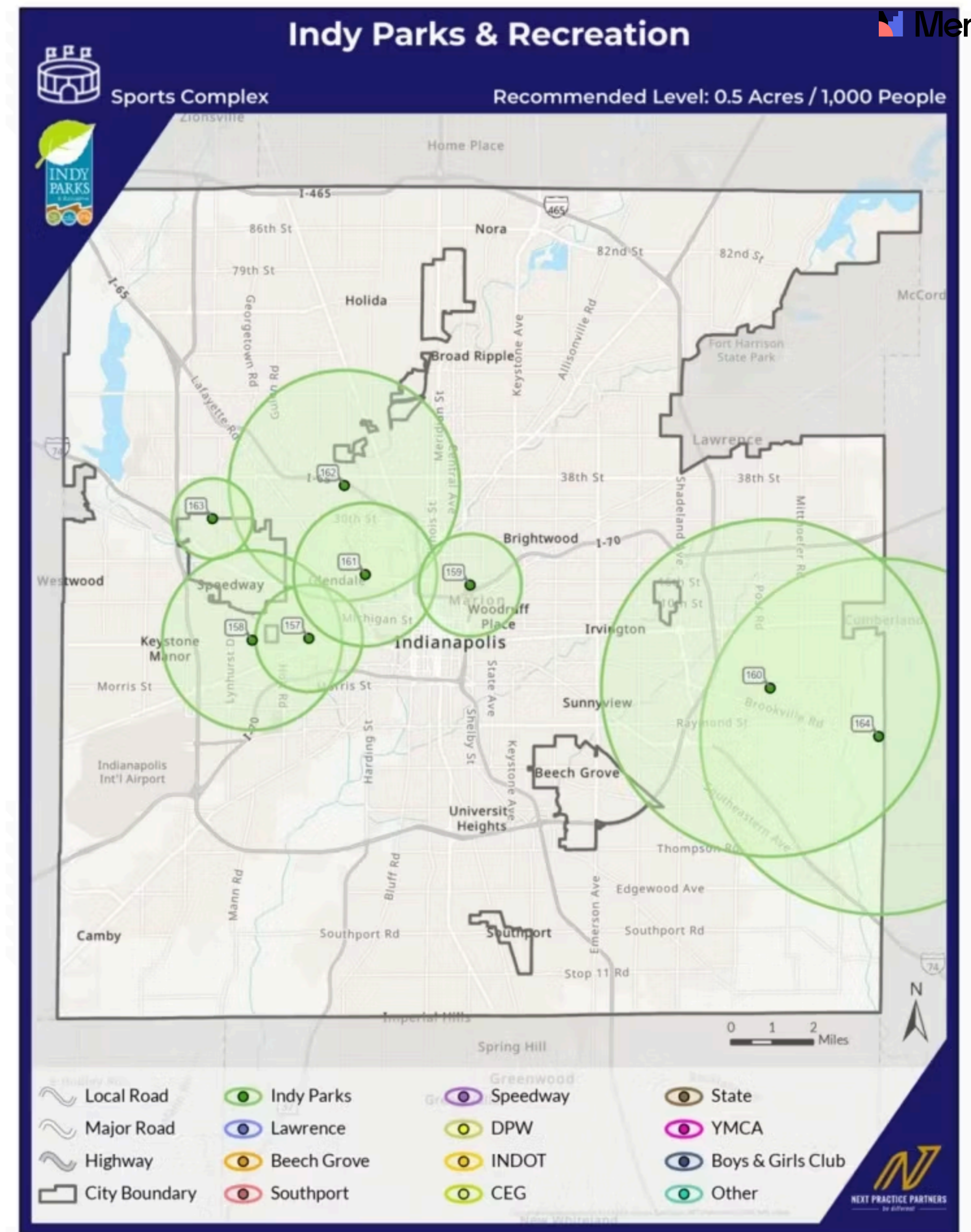
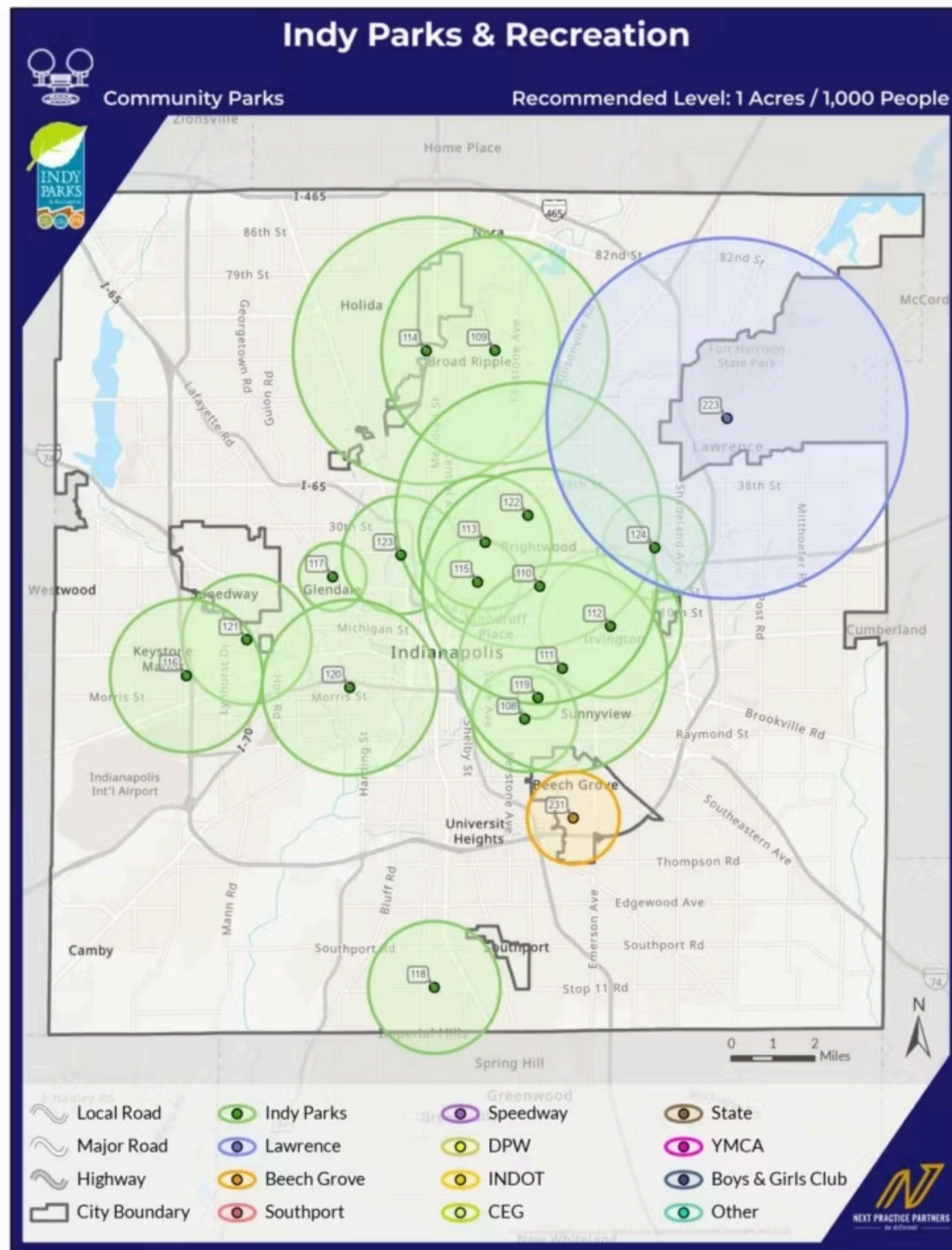
Factors that limit or discourage use, including stewardship, flexibility, demand, and operational challenges.

EASE OF ACCESS

Transportation, wayfinding, and universally designed movement that support intuitive, inclusive access.

OUTDOOR FACILITIES

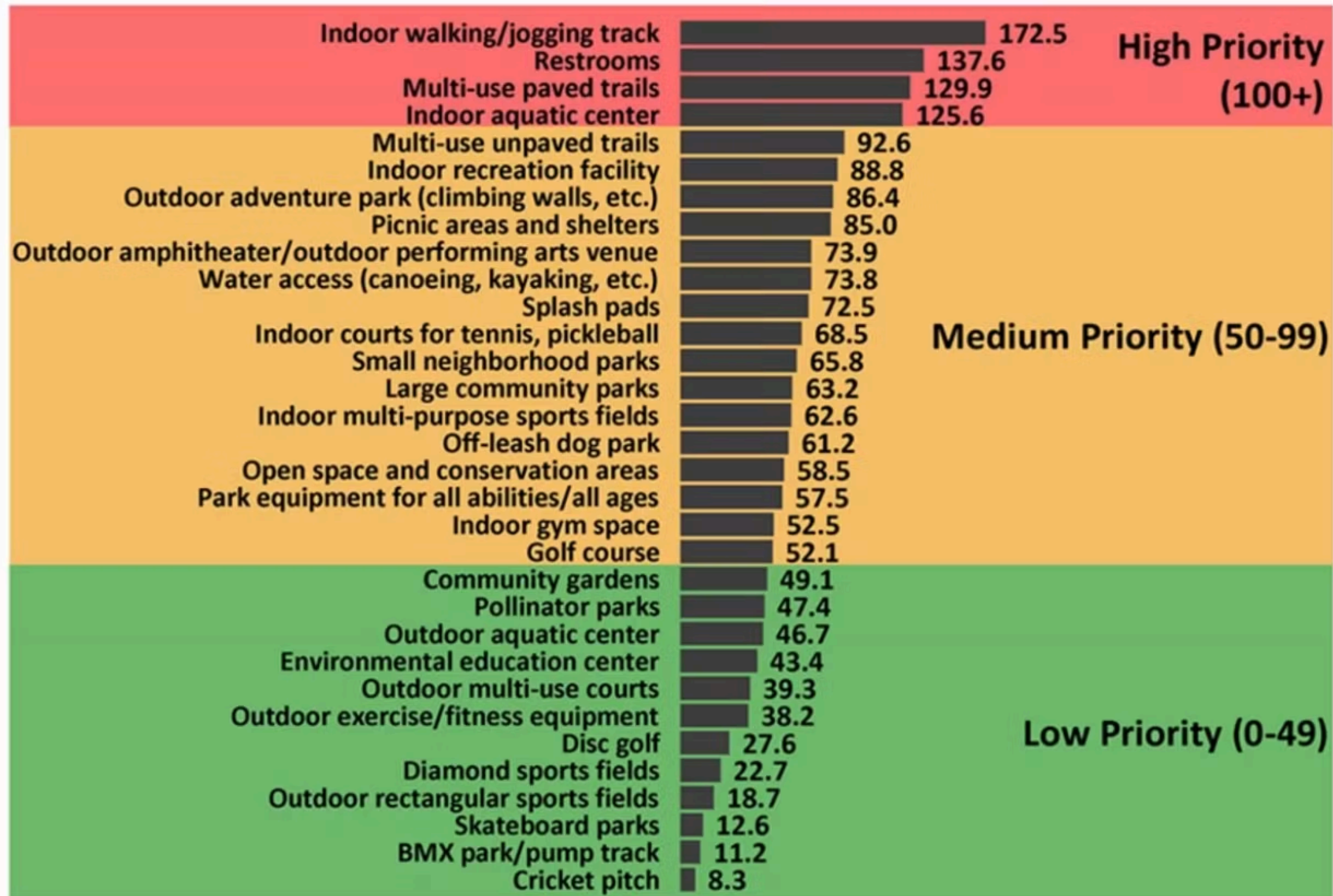
OUTDOOR PARKS & SITES						22 FACILITIES
FACILITY	VISITOR EXP.	INFRASTRUCTURE	BARRIERS	EASE OF ACCESS	PRIORITY	
Northbrook Park ▸ Detail View	3 - Fair	2 - Poor	3 - Fair	2 - Poor	MEDIUM	x
Clifty Park ▸ Detail View	3 - Fair	4 - Good	4 - Good	3 - Fair	LOW	x
Lincoln Park ▸ Detail View	4 - Good	4 - Good	4 - Good	5 - Excellent	LOW	x
Everroad Park						



EQUITY MAPPING

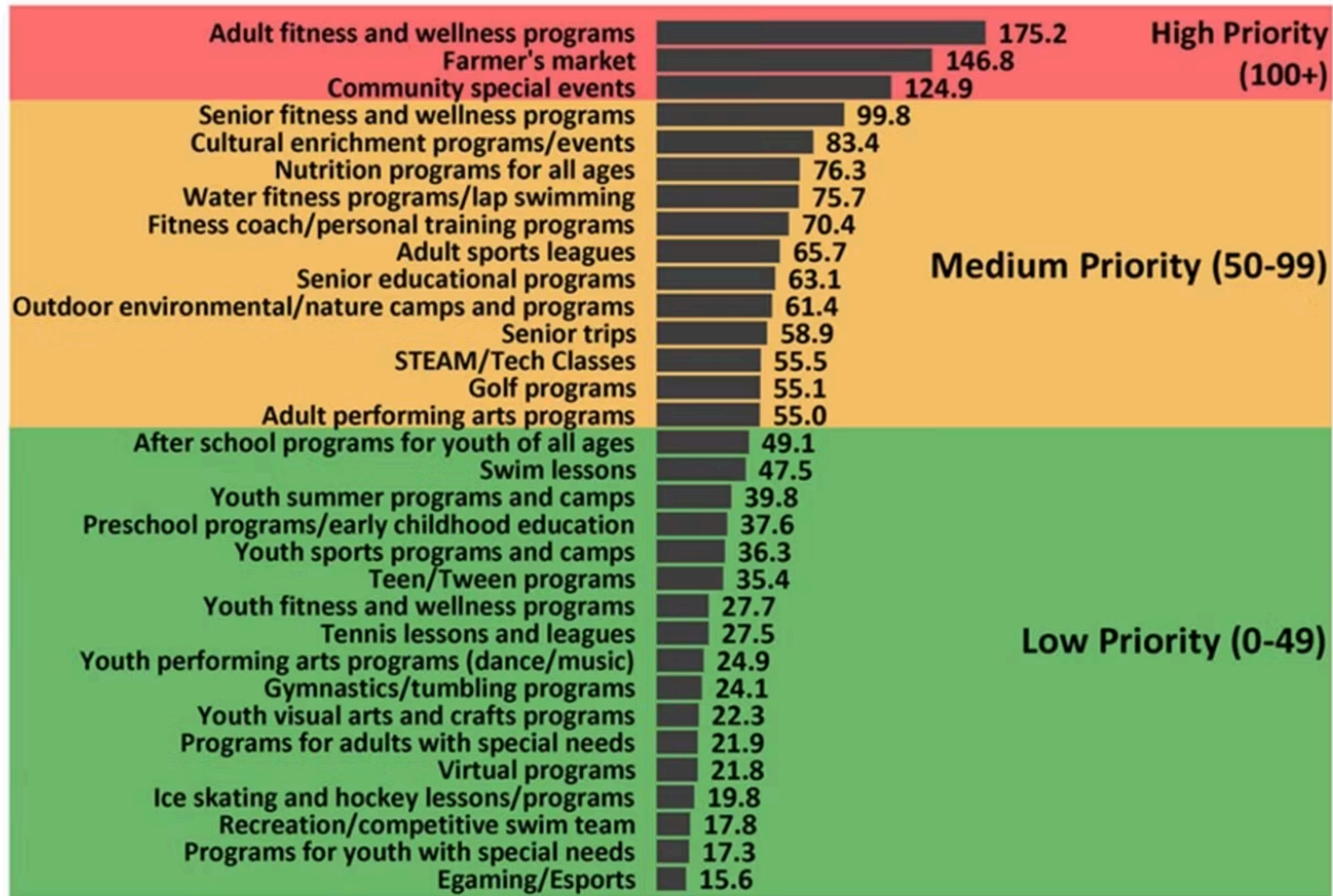
Top Priorities for Investment for Parks and Recreation Facilities/Amenities

Based on the Priority Investment Rating (PIR)



Top Priorities for Investment for Parks, Recreation, and Senior Programs

Based on the Priority Investment Rating (PIR)

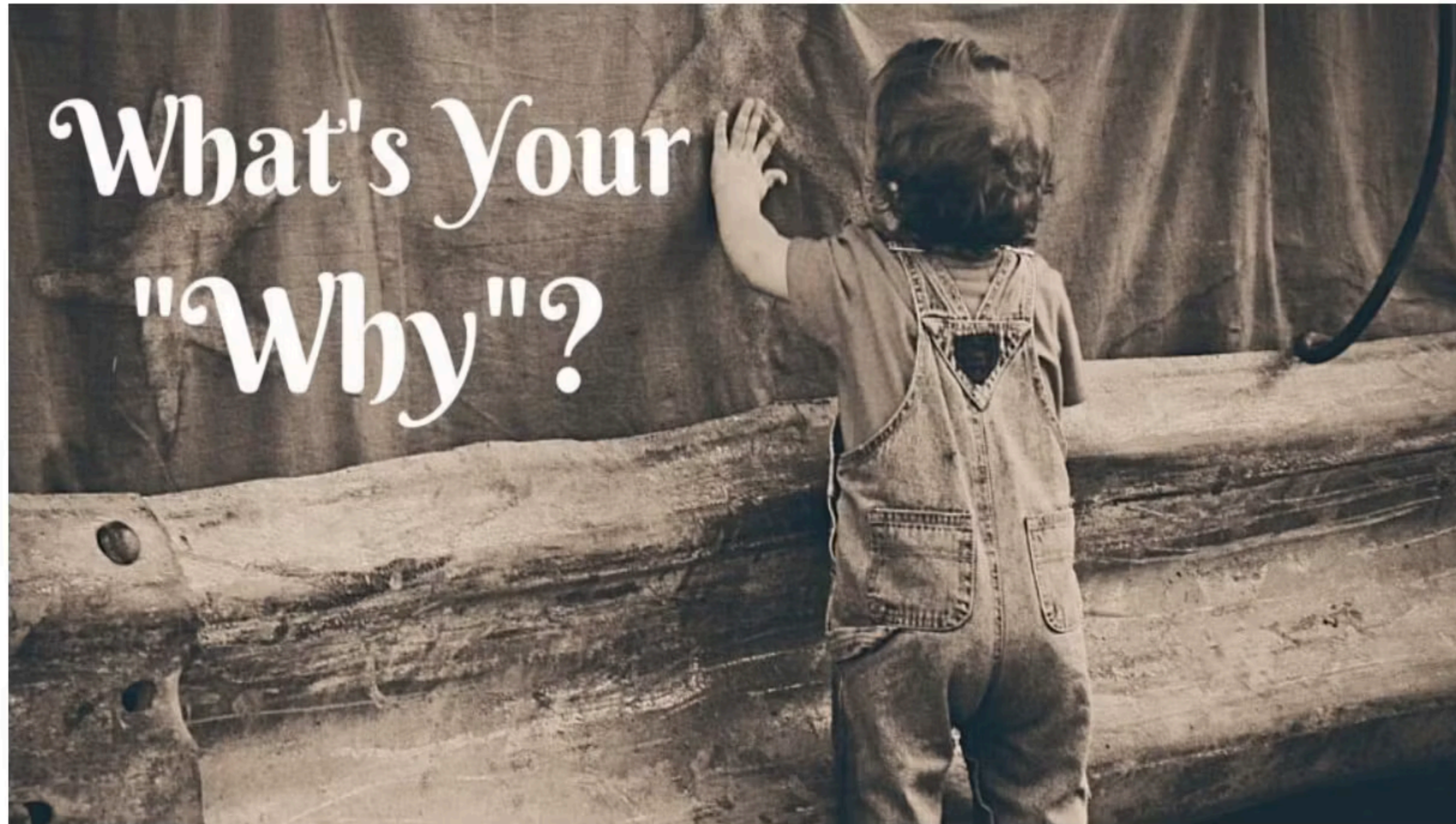




ENVISION & IMPLEMENT



Values, Vision and Mission



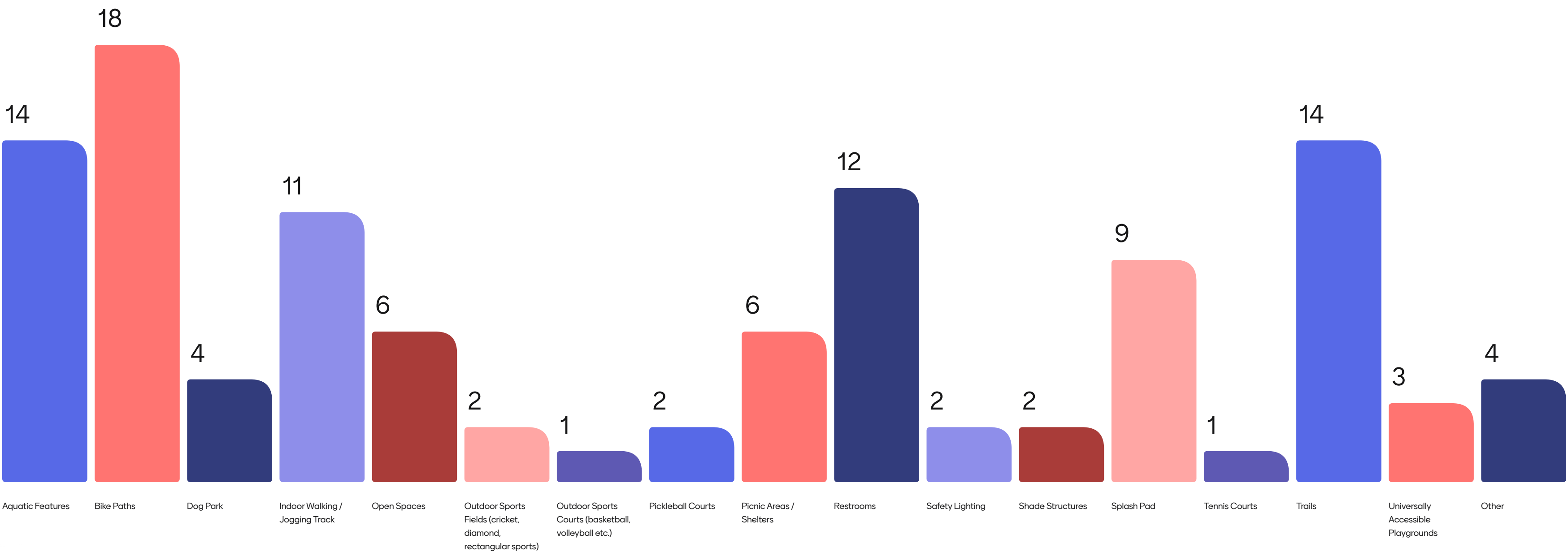
Action Plan

Core Values	Vision	Healthier lives, inspiring experiences, and vibrant communities	Major Outcomes	Timelines
Inclusion			1. Build a staff culture based on inclusion and accountability	Short Term = Up to 5 years
Fun	Mission	To provide enriching experiences for all	2. Increase funding and staffing	Long Term = Beyond 5 years
Collaboration			3. Parks and facilities are well planned and maintained	On-Going
Stewardship	Goal	A financially sustainable system with dedicated funding, external partnership and resource support	4. Programs and services address community needs & desires	
			5. Position parks as community resources and hubs	
			6. Tell the story of why Indy Parks matter	
FINANCE				
Action Items	Values	Major Outcomes (1-6)	Responsibility	Timelines
	Choose from dropdown menu	Choose from dropdown menu		Choose from dropdown menu
Develop creative financing options for the department	Collaboration	2		On-Going
Meet per capita funding goal	Stewardship	2		Long Term
Seek a dedicated funding source to support operations and maintenance standards	Stewardship	6	Outcome 2 and 3	
Engage with advisory groups, foundations, and volunteer groups to support recreation facilities/parks programs	Collaboration	2		On-Going
Develop an new income strategy through grants, alliances, partnerships, and sponsorships	Stewardship	2		Short Term
Develop stronger partnerships for facilities to raise more operational and capital dollars for the system	Collaboration	2		
Collaborate to track the economic impact of parks and trails to the city	Collaboration	2		On-Going

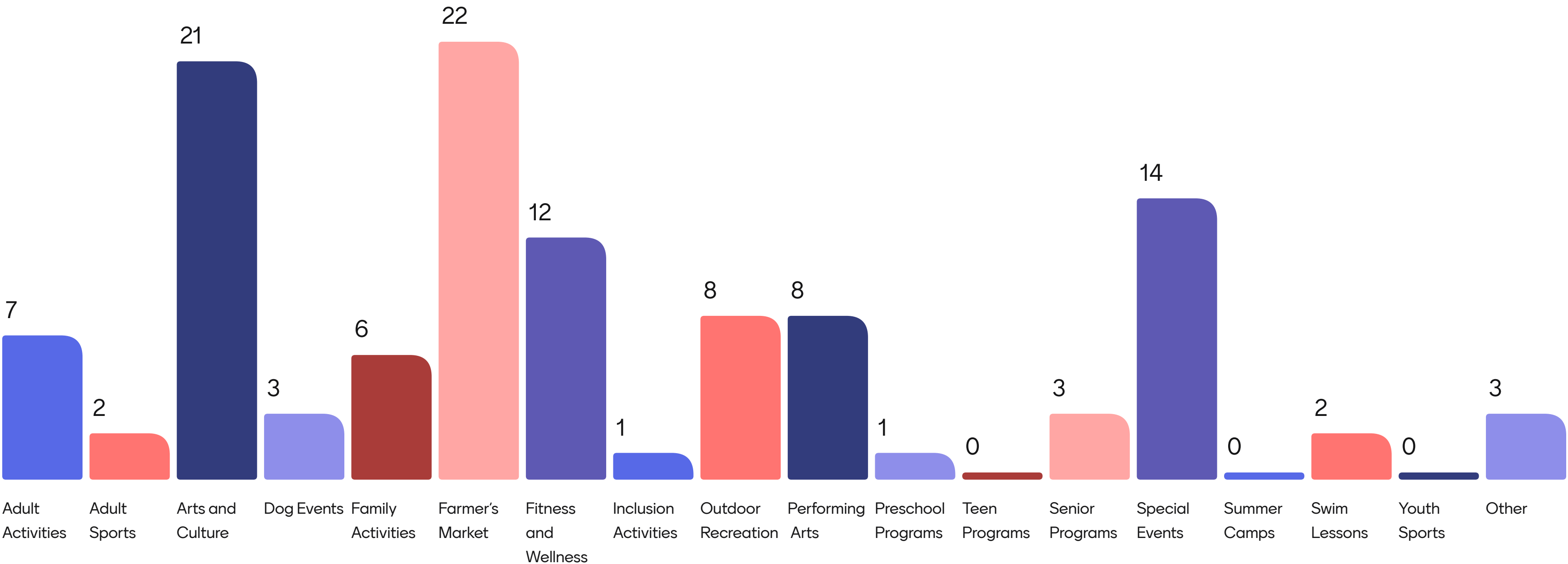
POLLING – FUTURE NEEDS



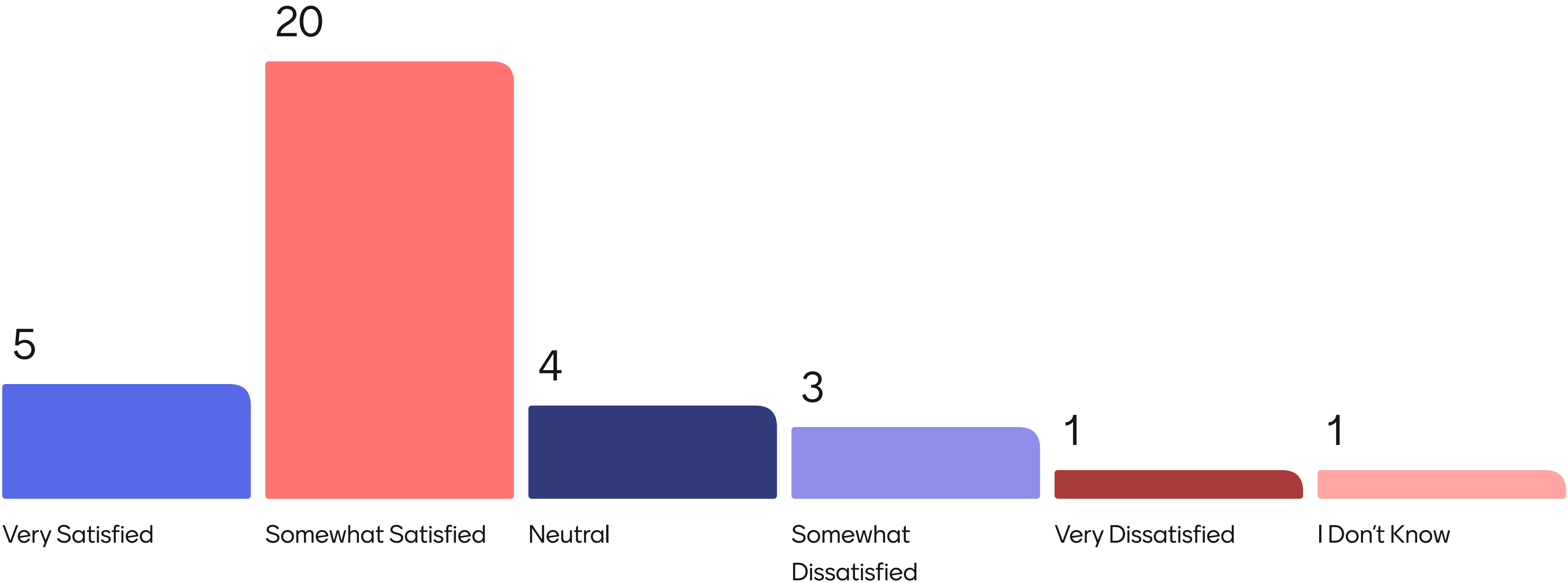
Which THREE facilities / amenities are you and members of your household most interested in?



Select the TOP THREE TYPES of programs you would be most interested to participate in?



Please rate your satisfaction with the overall value you receive from Columbus Parks and Recreation?



What is your top priority that you want to have included in this plan?

A plan that involves the kids input and not just adults

More disc golf courses

Aquatics Center

Maintenance

Indoor aquatic center

Pro-active maintenance plan to sustain what we have built.

East Columbus bike trail connectivity

The maintenance of our existing parks

What is your top priority that you want to have included in this plan?

maintenance and
upkeep

Update golf facilities.

Better maintenance of
existing facilities before
more facilities come online!

Maintain free swim

Aquatic center

City needs to invest more in
maintaining parks and hiring
more staff at higher wages.
Please tax me more to pay
for these

Stop damaging trees
with mowers

Affordability for adult
fitness.

What is your top priority that you want to have included in this plan?

Completely encircle the city with People Trails.

Safety

Do not ruin what is great to pursue something niche. Sometimes it is enough to leave lawns open

Wayfinding, lighting and other amenities to complement our People Trails

Aquatics for adults year round. FFY caters to swim lessons and children as it should. It is not accessible to the working individual.

We want to see our parks MAINTAINED. It seems like there is no upkeep, especially at Donner.

People Trail reach and connectivity. South to Fairgrounds.

More general purpose fields

What is your top priority that you want to have included in this plan?

Disc golf please

Aquatic center

Update golf facilities

Design that sets
Columbus apart and is
future focused.

Maintain what we have

Better general
maintenance.

Aquatics year round for
adults

Commuters using the
people trail

What is your top priority that you want to have included in this plan?

Better support from the community

Homeless helpers

We have two exclusive golf courses with HLCC and Otter - would be great to have a nice 18 hole course for those who cannot afford the other two.

Donner Center and pool maintenance. Updated locker rooms. Evening swim hours to benefit working families. Extended swim opportunities later in season.

Aquatics for adults year round

Design that enhances community

upkeep to Donner pool

Protect trees you have and more native plants

What is your top priority that you want to have included in this plan?

Native plants

Bike trail lighting

Design that fits in the
community

What is one thing you would add / change to improve Mill Race Park?

More concerts

Maintenance

Disc golf course

Better mowing to reduce bugs

More festivals art shows etc

Improved restrooms.

Take down the tower.
Bug control!

River access

What is one thing you would add / change to improve Mill Race Park?

Clean up around the pond

Improve people trail

Fix trails that are uneven

clean restrooms

Clarity whether bikes are permitted on the people trail there

Protected and completed loop for safe biking/running/roller skating

Concerts and festivals

Improve amphitheater

What is one thing you would add / change to improve Mill Race Park?

People path by river
needs attention.

Remove invasive plants and
protect trees from mowers
and more trees and
restrooms

Maintains the landscape

Improve trails to it. IE
safety and maintenance

Improved ampitheatre

Restore the structures

More shade and bug
control

Better river access for
fishing.

POLLING - AUDIENCE



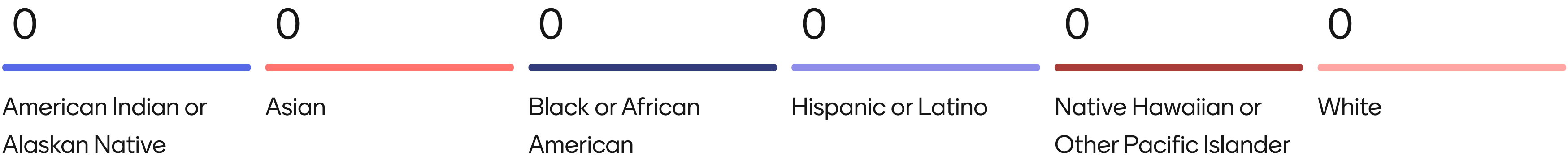
Age Segment



Gender



Race / Ethnicity



Next Steps

- Program Assessments
- Statistically-Reliable Survey (Oct – Nov 2026)
- Online only Survey (Oct – Dec 2026)
- Donner Park / Mill Race Park draft design layouts (Jan – Feb 2027)
- Visit – www.ImagineYourColumbusParks.com

QUESTIONS?

Columbus Parks & Recreation Strategic Master Plan

PUBLIC INPUT MEETING

SEP 2026

