



Columbus Parks & Recreation Strategic Master Plan

PUBLIC INPUT MEETING
SEP 2026



NEXT PRACTICE PARTNERS
be different

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:

Administration

FFY

Cemetery

Aquatics

Donner

NexusPark
Administrative Offices

Athletic Facilities

Park
Operations

Landscape

Arts & Recreation

Marketing



NON-REVERTING FUND:

Marketing

Administration

Gymnastics

Hamilton Center

Golf
(Par 3 and Greenbelt)

Teams & Leagues

Sports Camps

Recreation & Arts

People Trails

Farmer's Market

Fieldhouse at
NexusPark

Teaching Kitchen

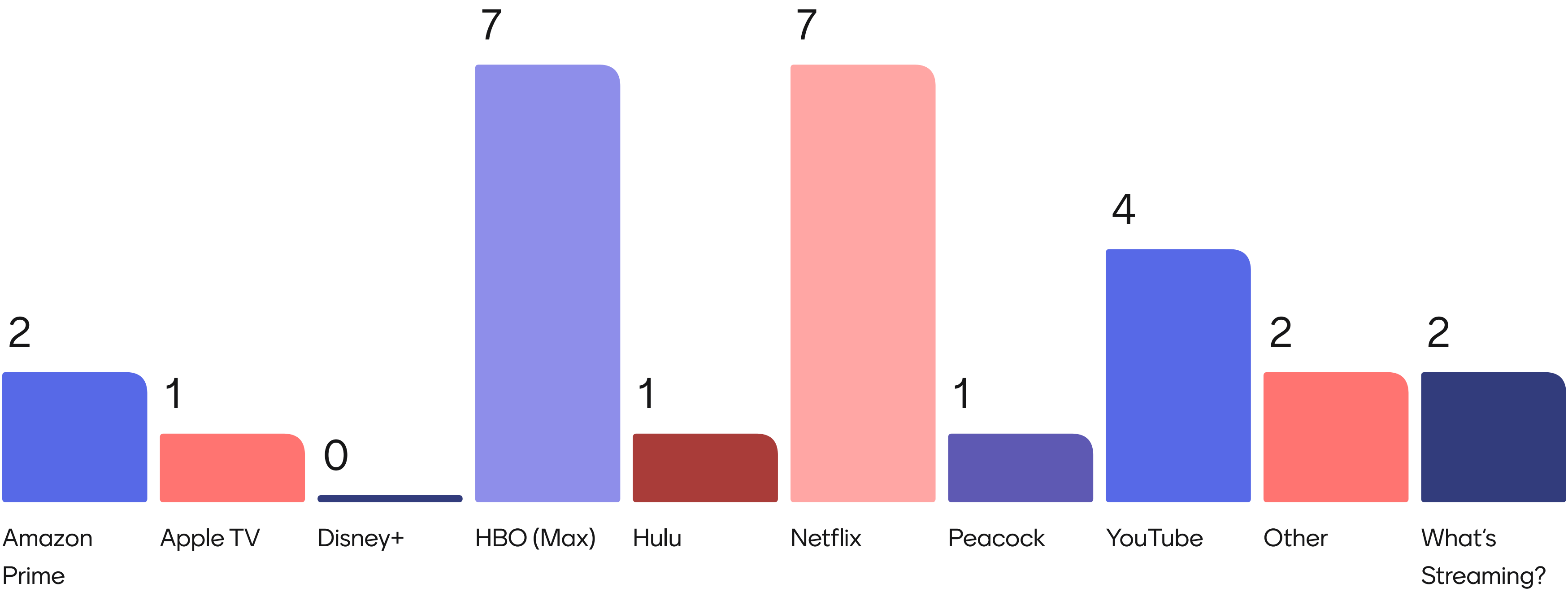
Fitness Center

The Commons

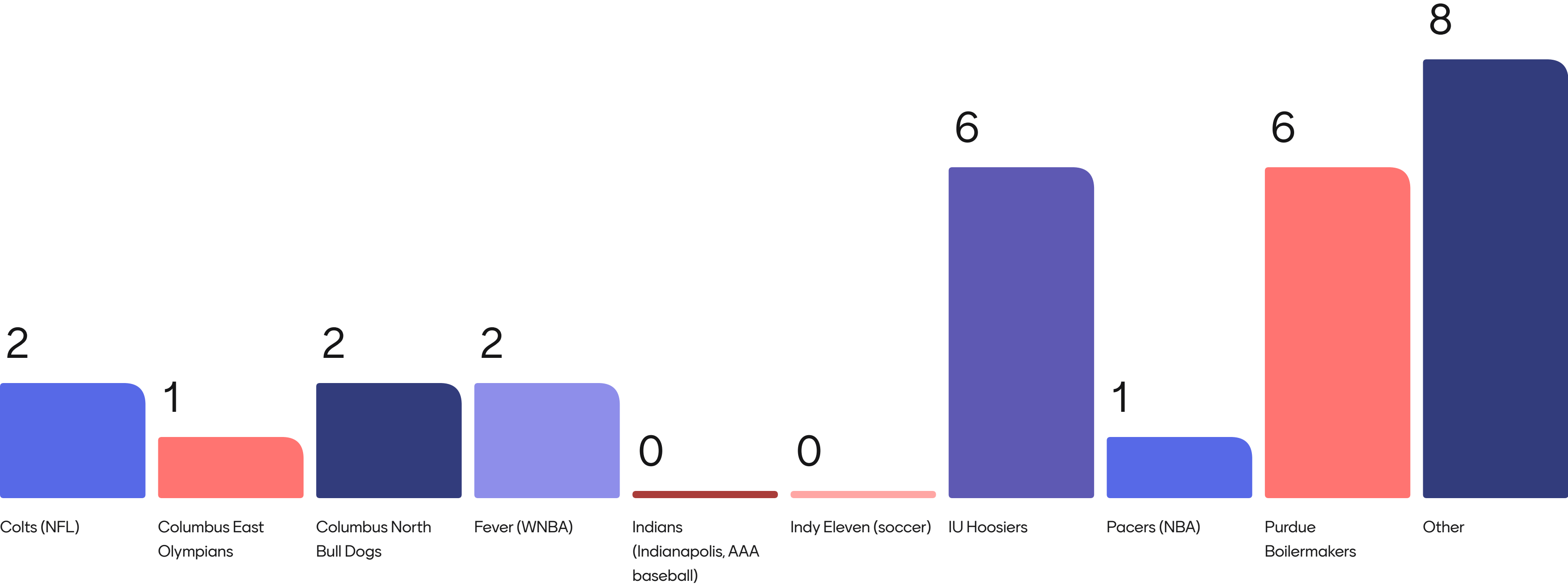
POLLING - AUDIENCE PROFILE



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

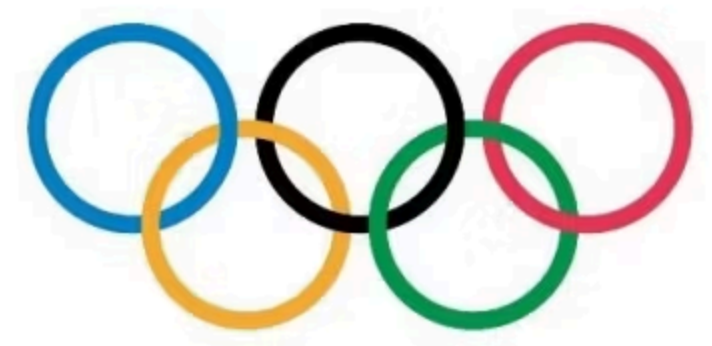
1. Maximize community engagement in an extensive and innovative manner
2. Utilize a wide variety of data sources and “Next Practices”
3. Ensure offerings and access are maximized citywide
4. Develop plans for Donner Park and Mill Race Park
5. Position the Department for future and sustained success

Align with Mission and Vision Statements:

Mission: To enrich lives

Vision: To build a community where everyone belongs







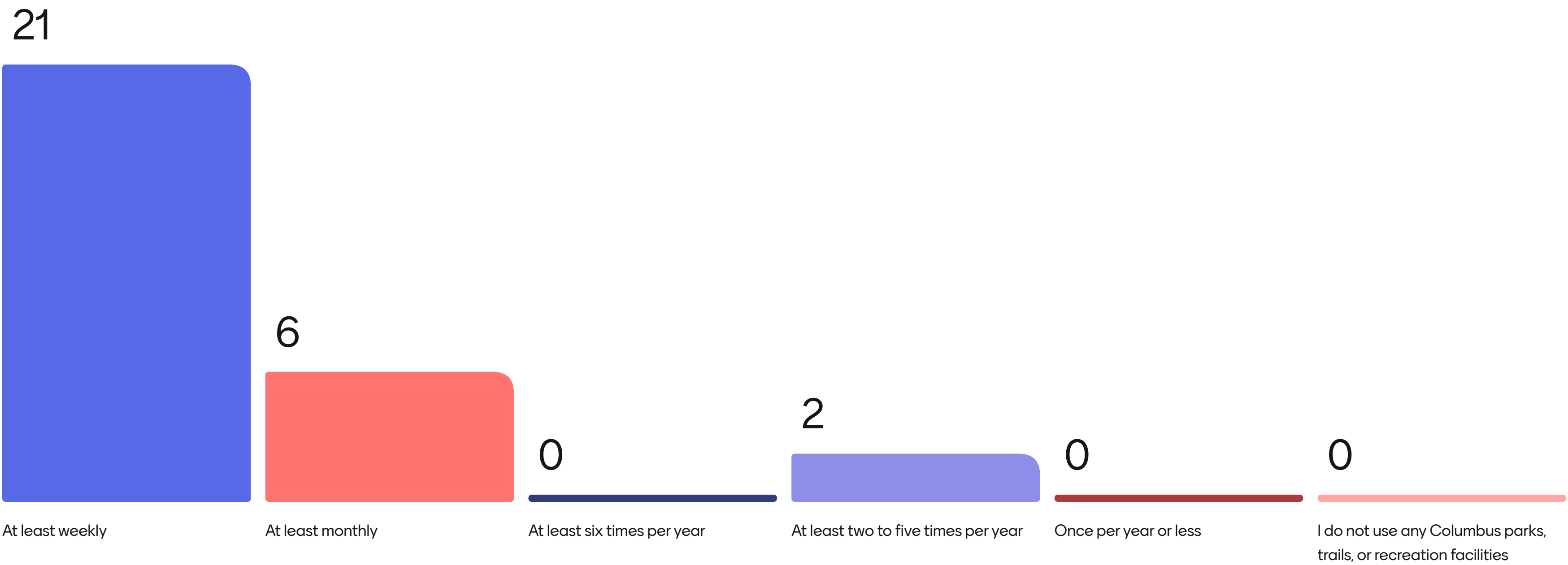
Department of
**PARKS
& REC**
Columbus, IN



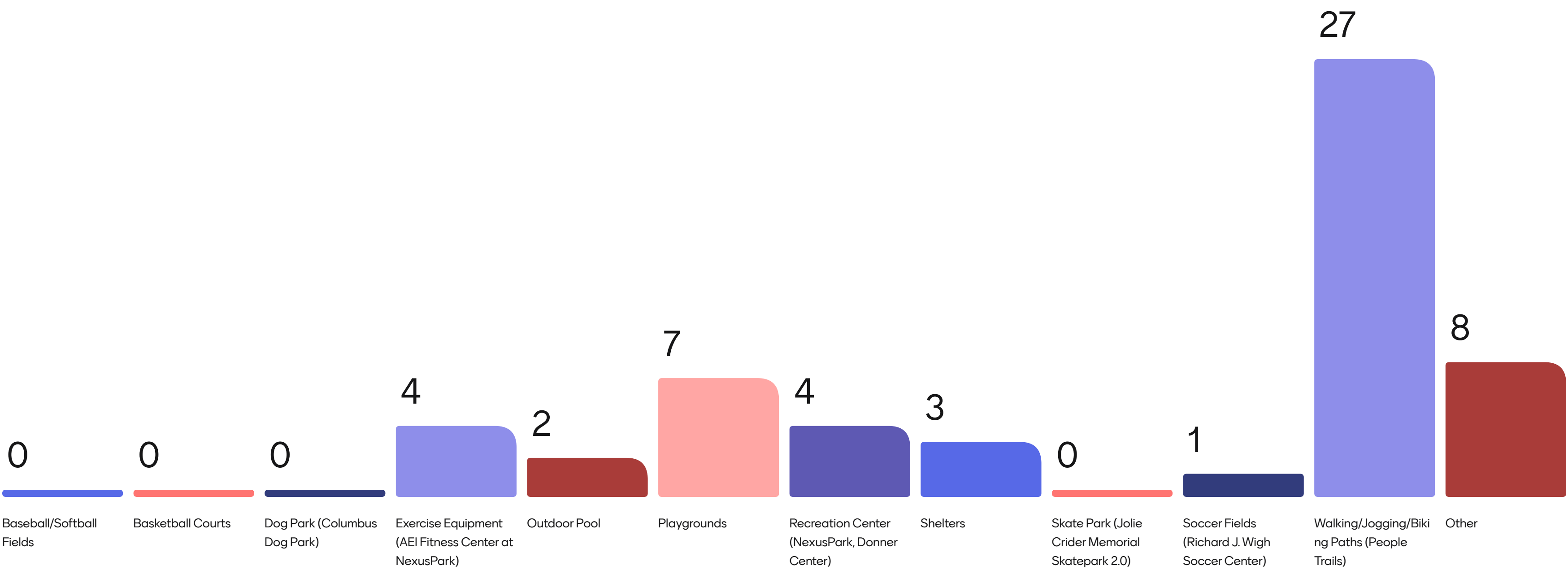
POLLING – USAGE & QUALITY



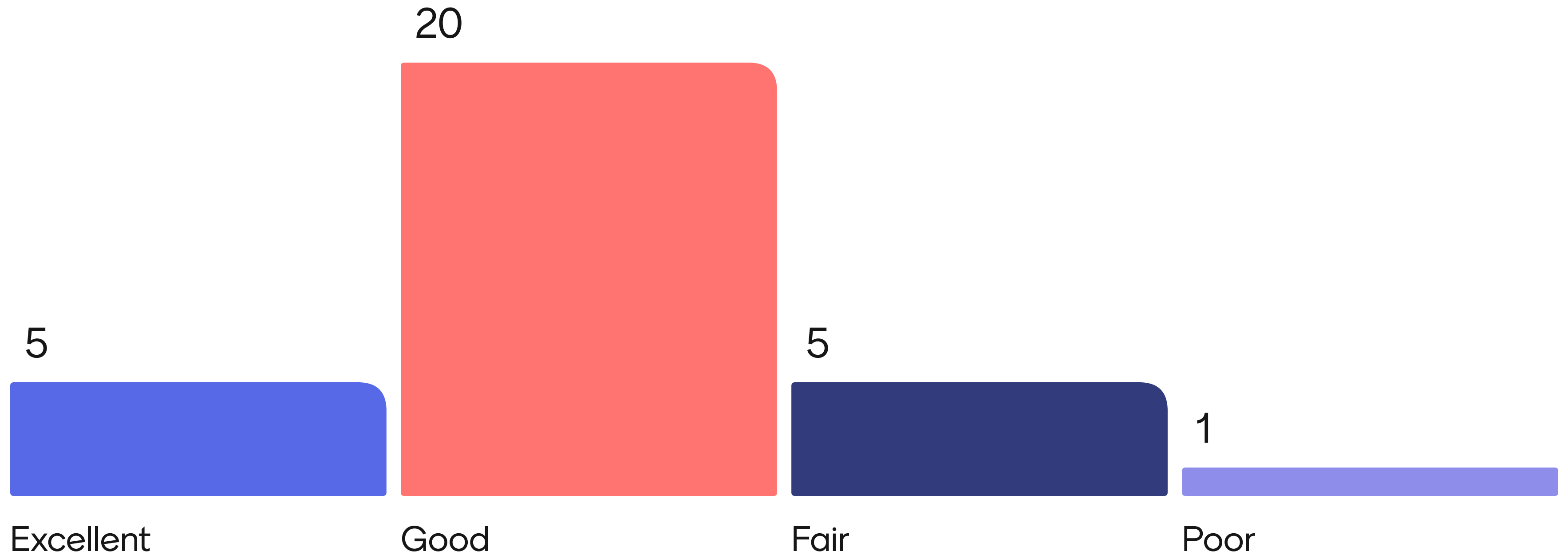
How often do you visit any Columbus parks, trails, or recreation facilities?



Which amenities do you use regularly?



How would you rate the quality of Columbus' offerings?

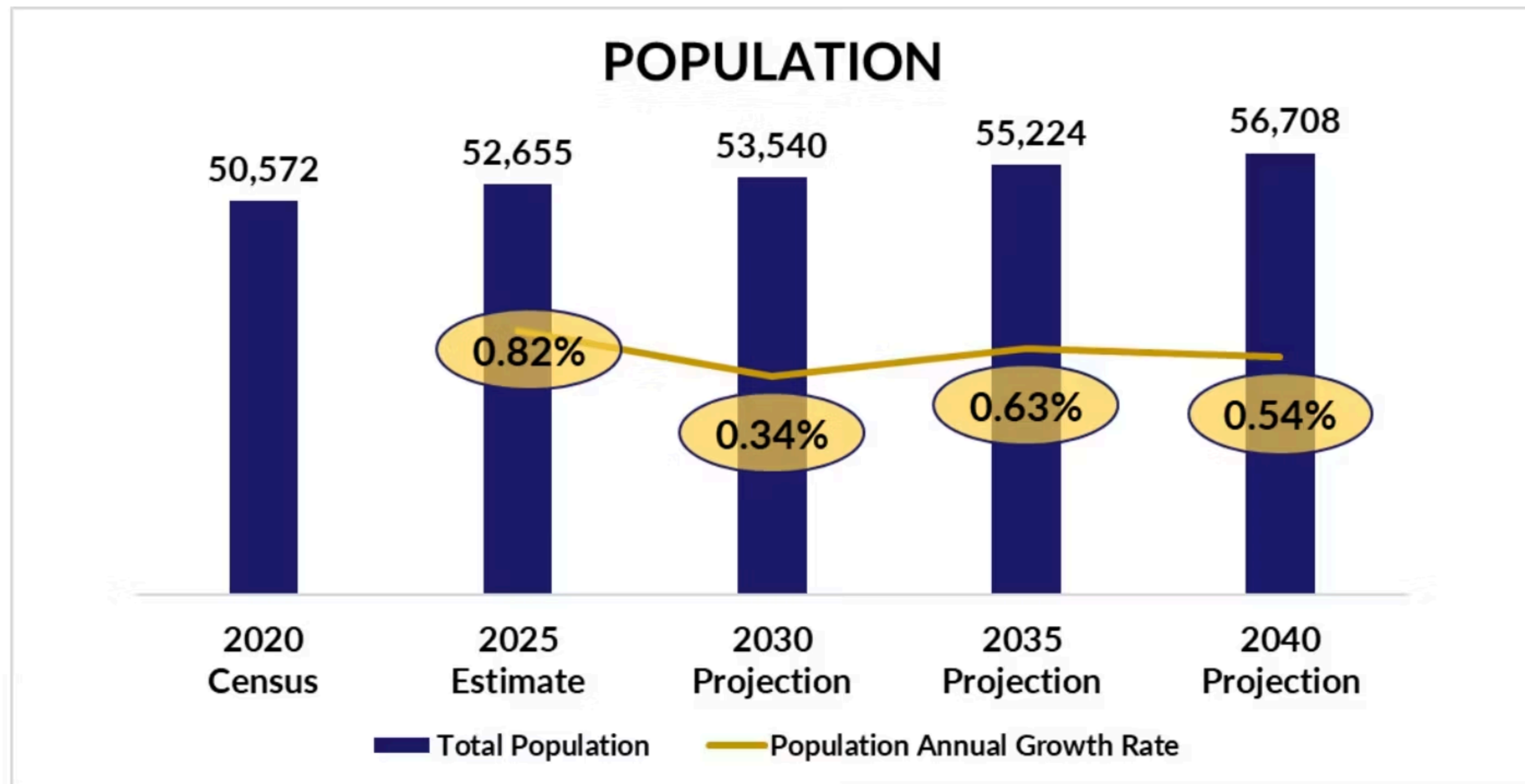


39%

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

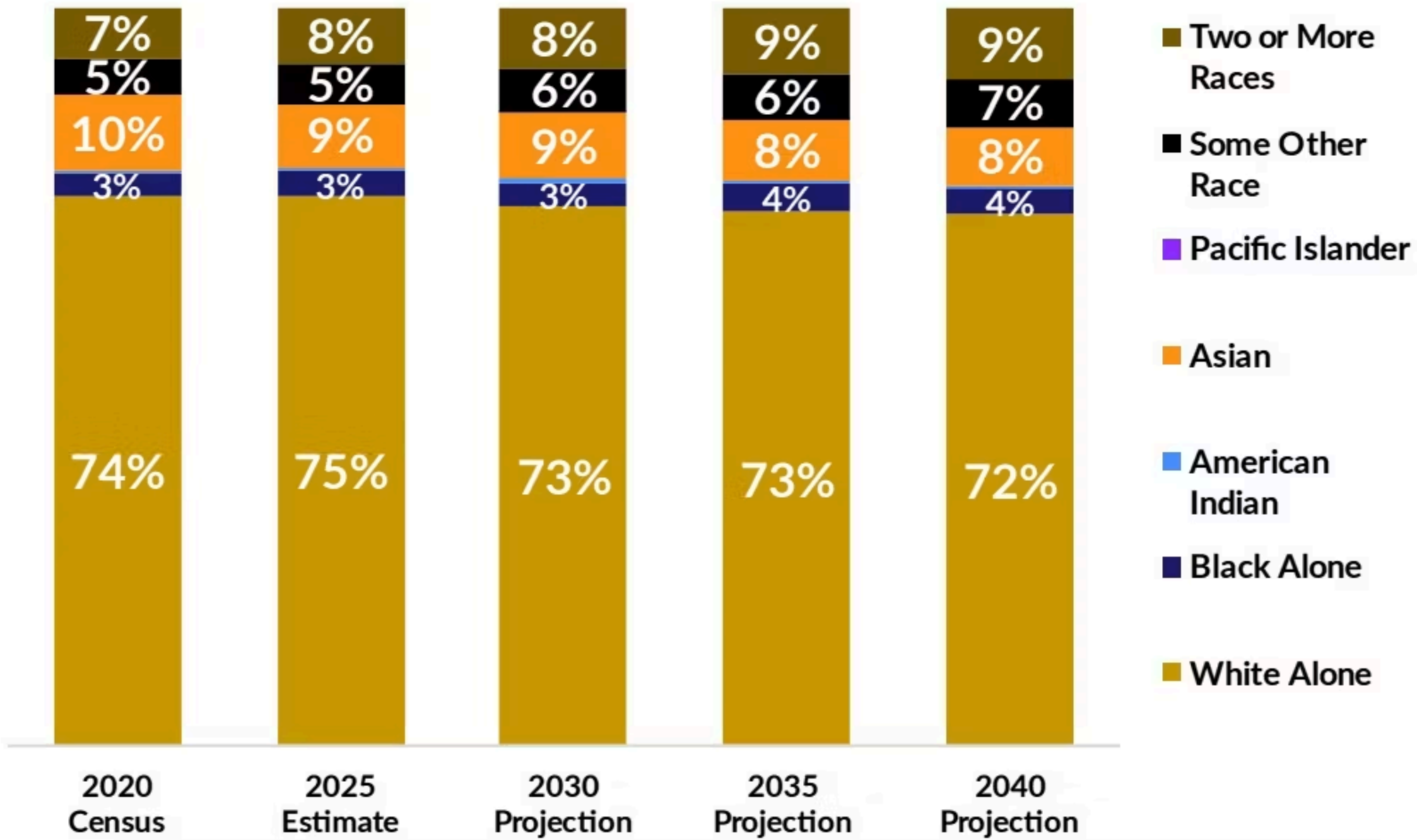
National Median: 57%



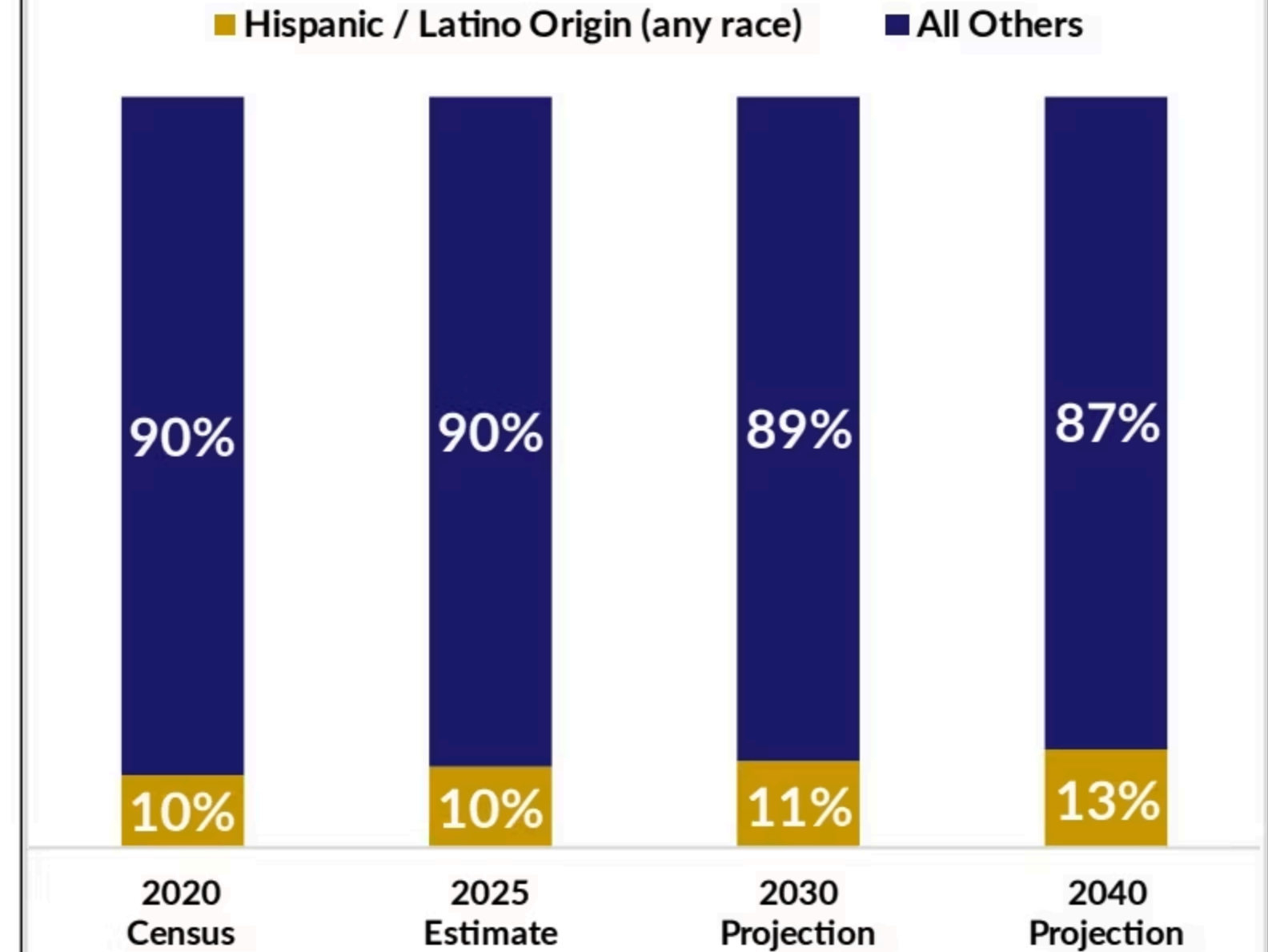


Population

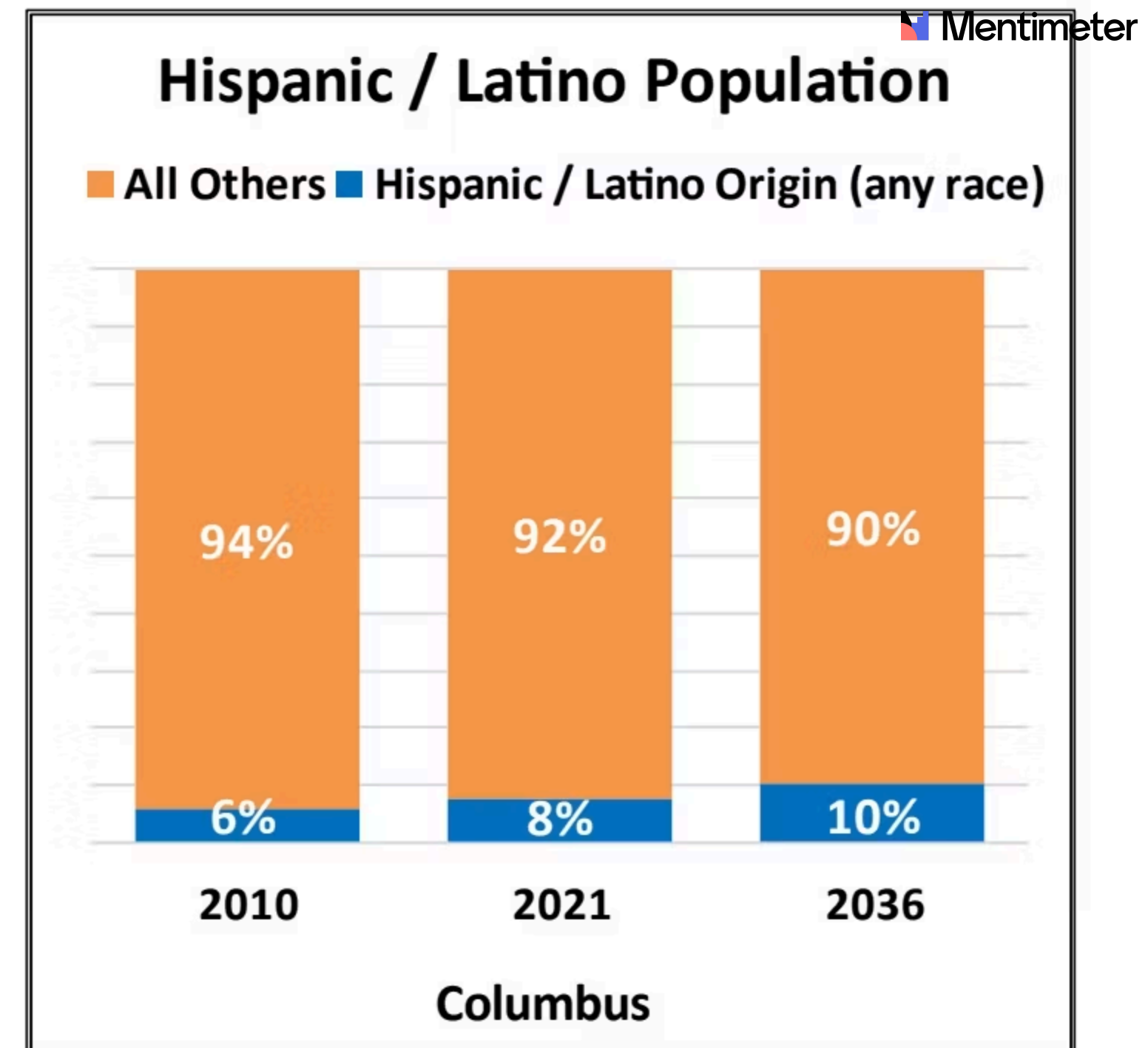
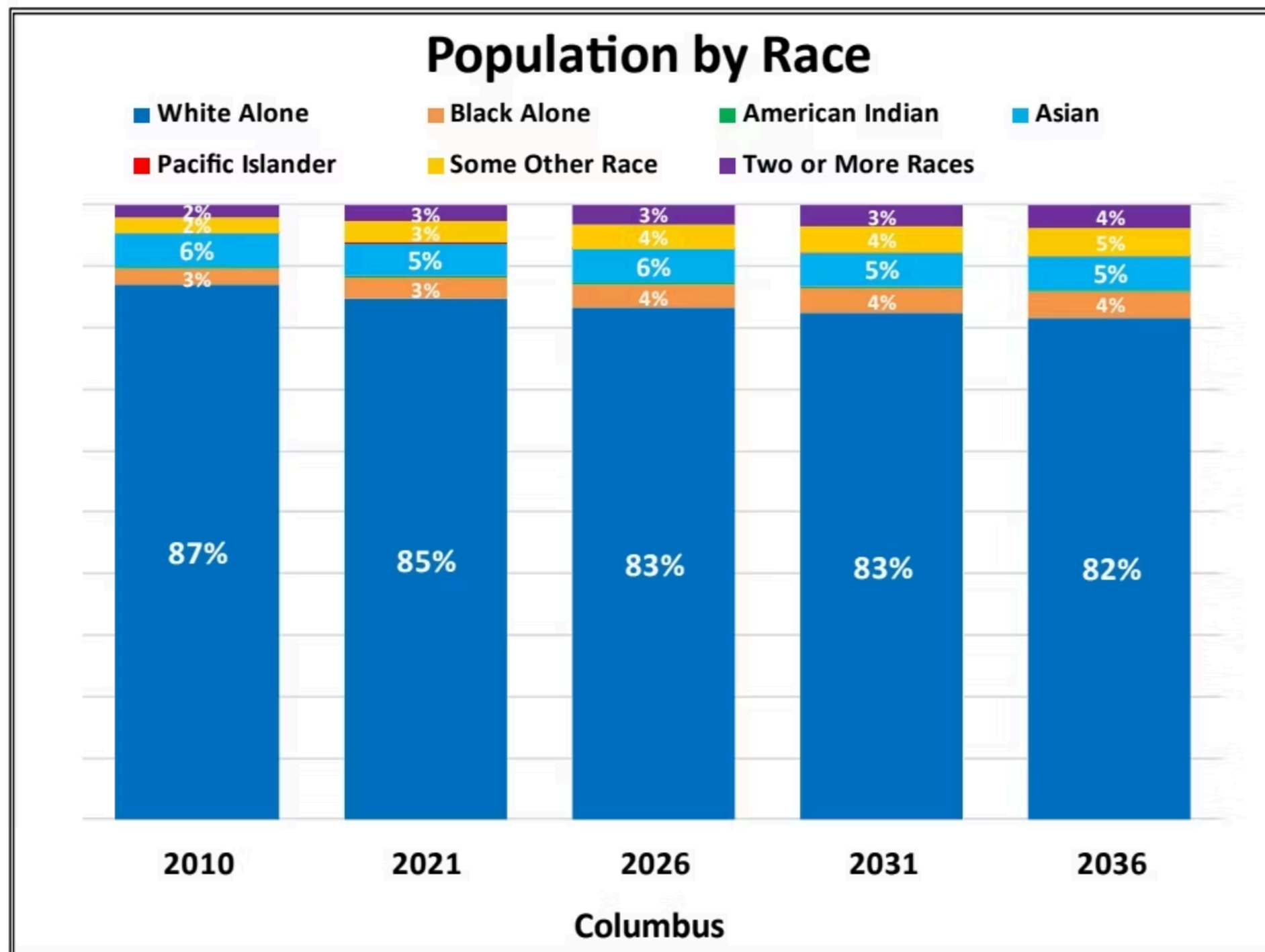
RACE



HISPANIC POPULATION

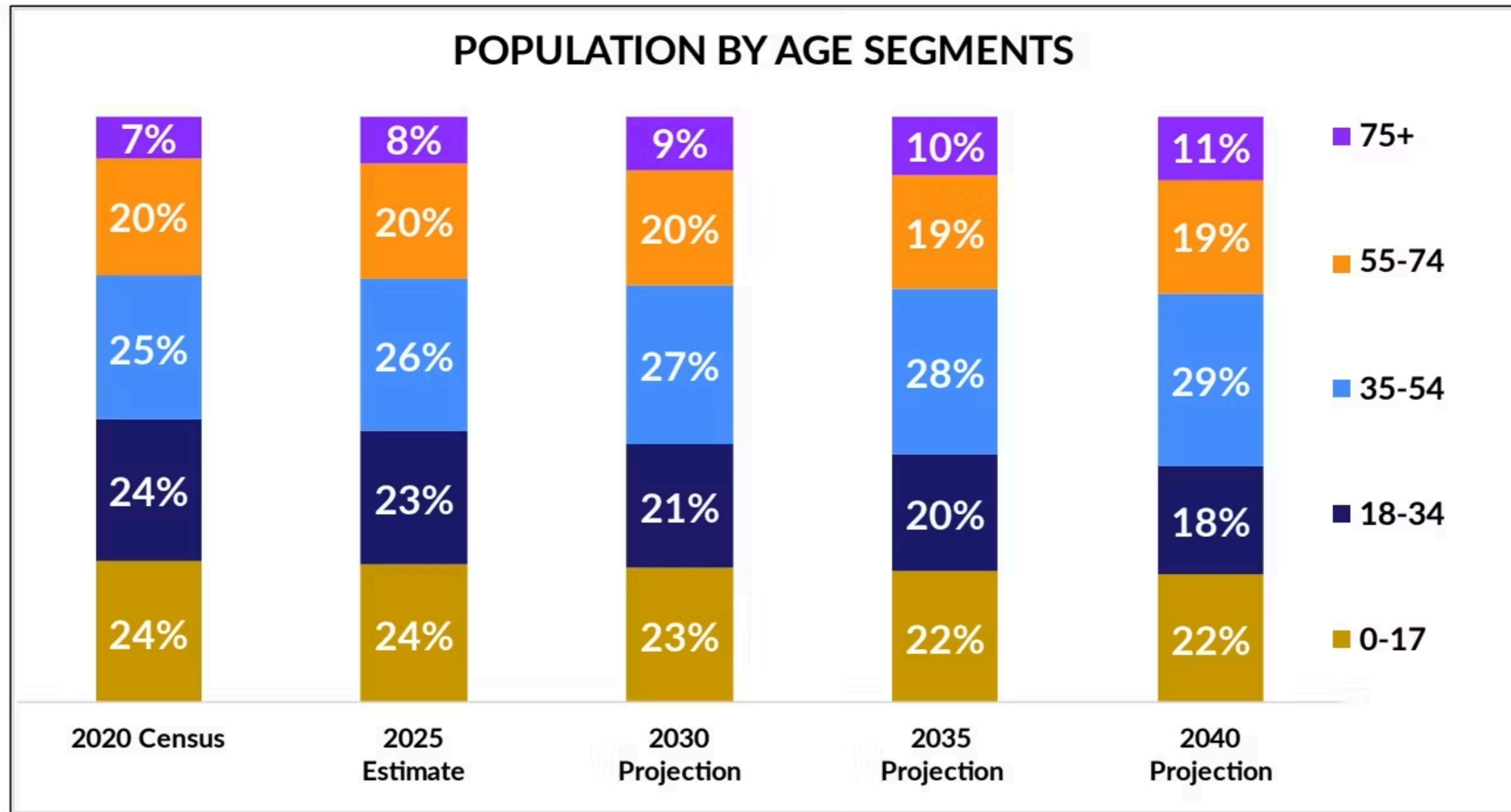


Race/Ethnicity



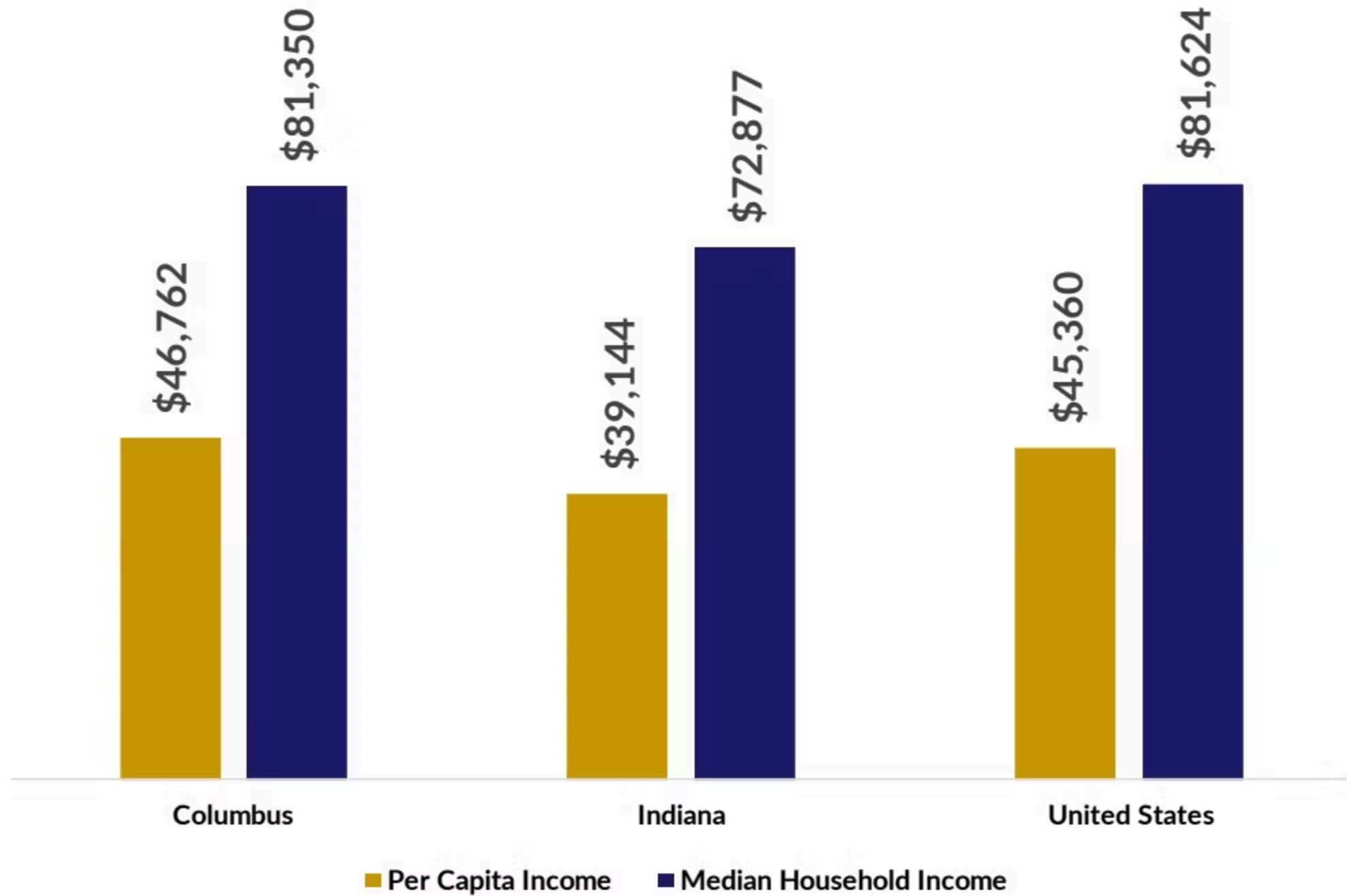
2021 Race/Ethnicity



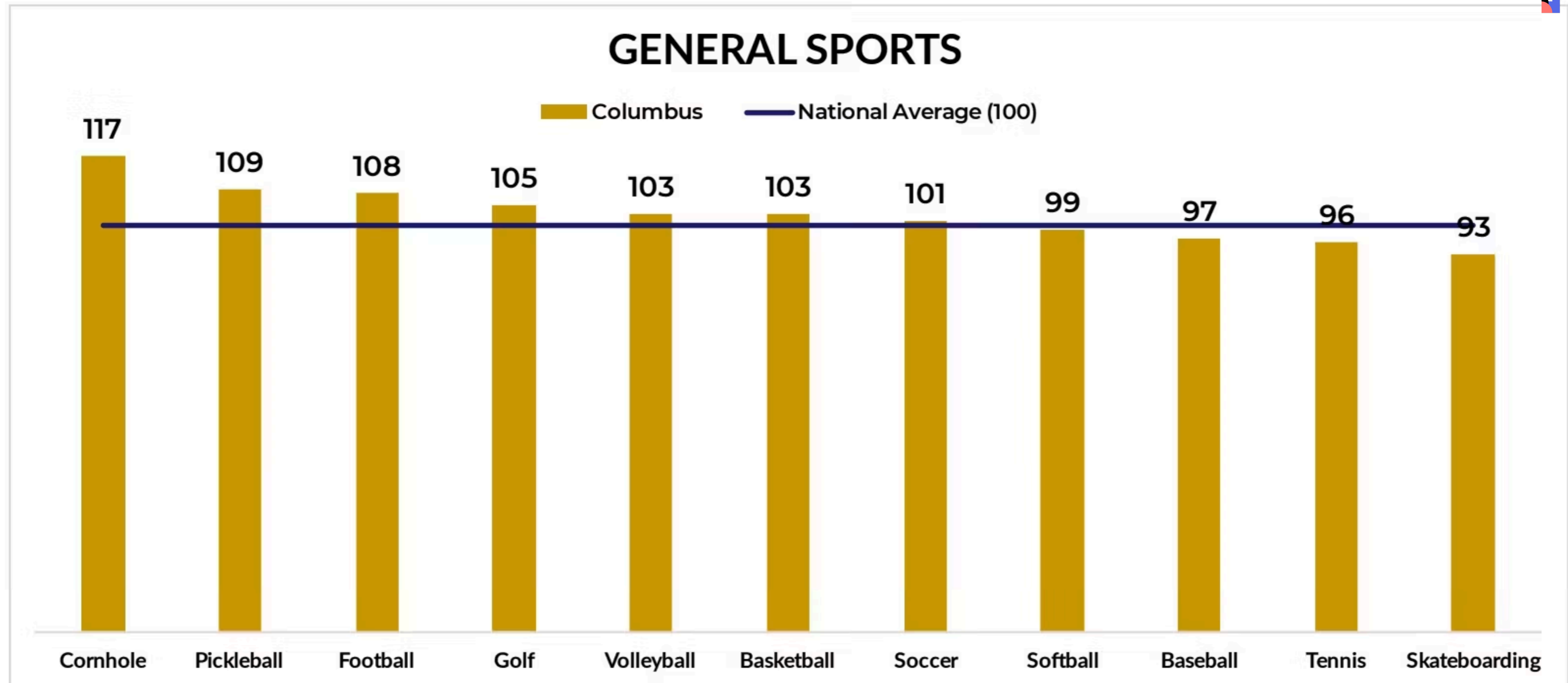


Age Segments

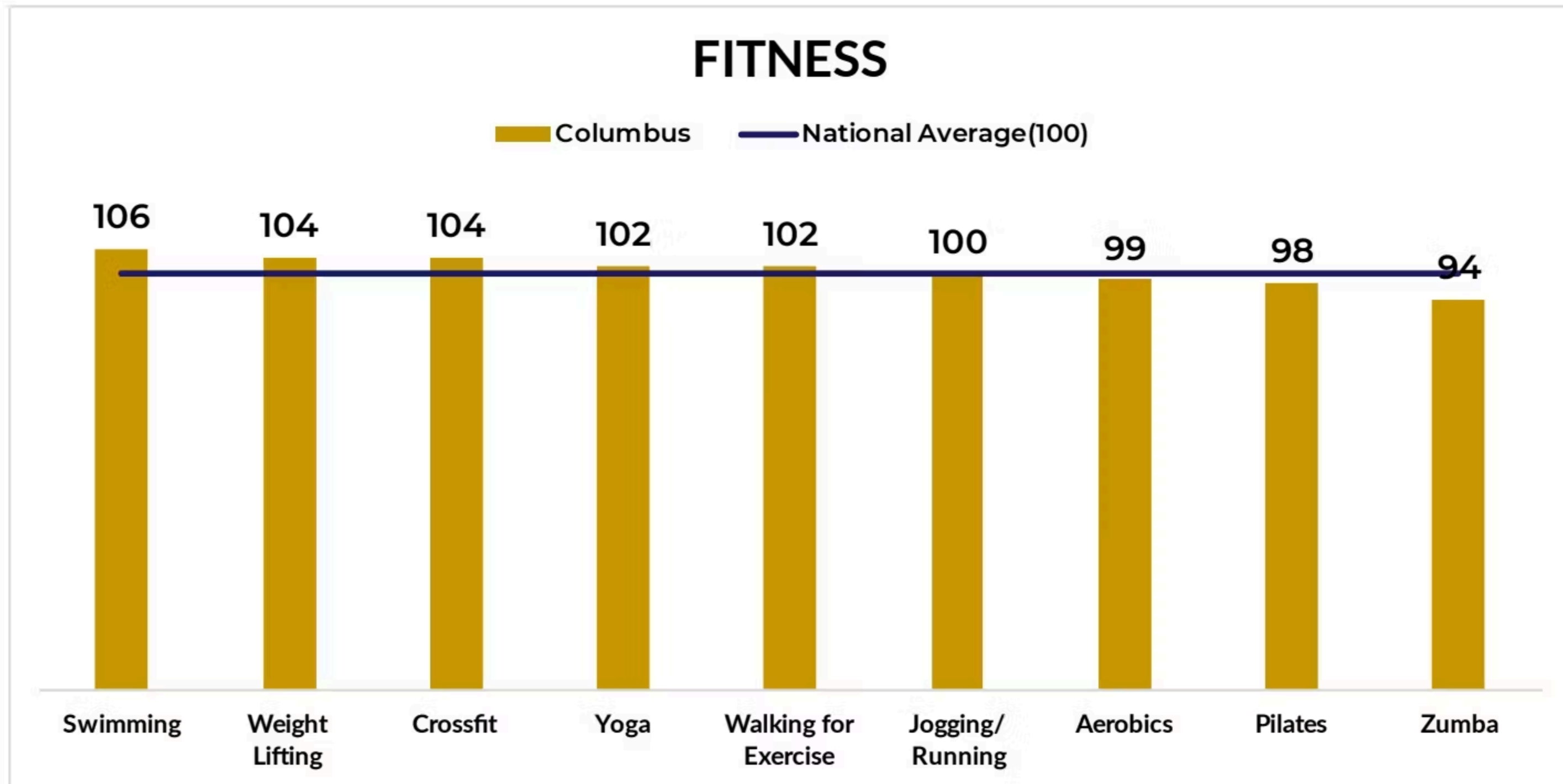
INCOME COMPARISON



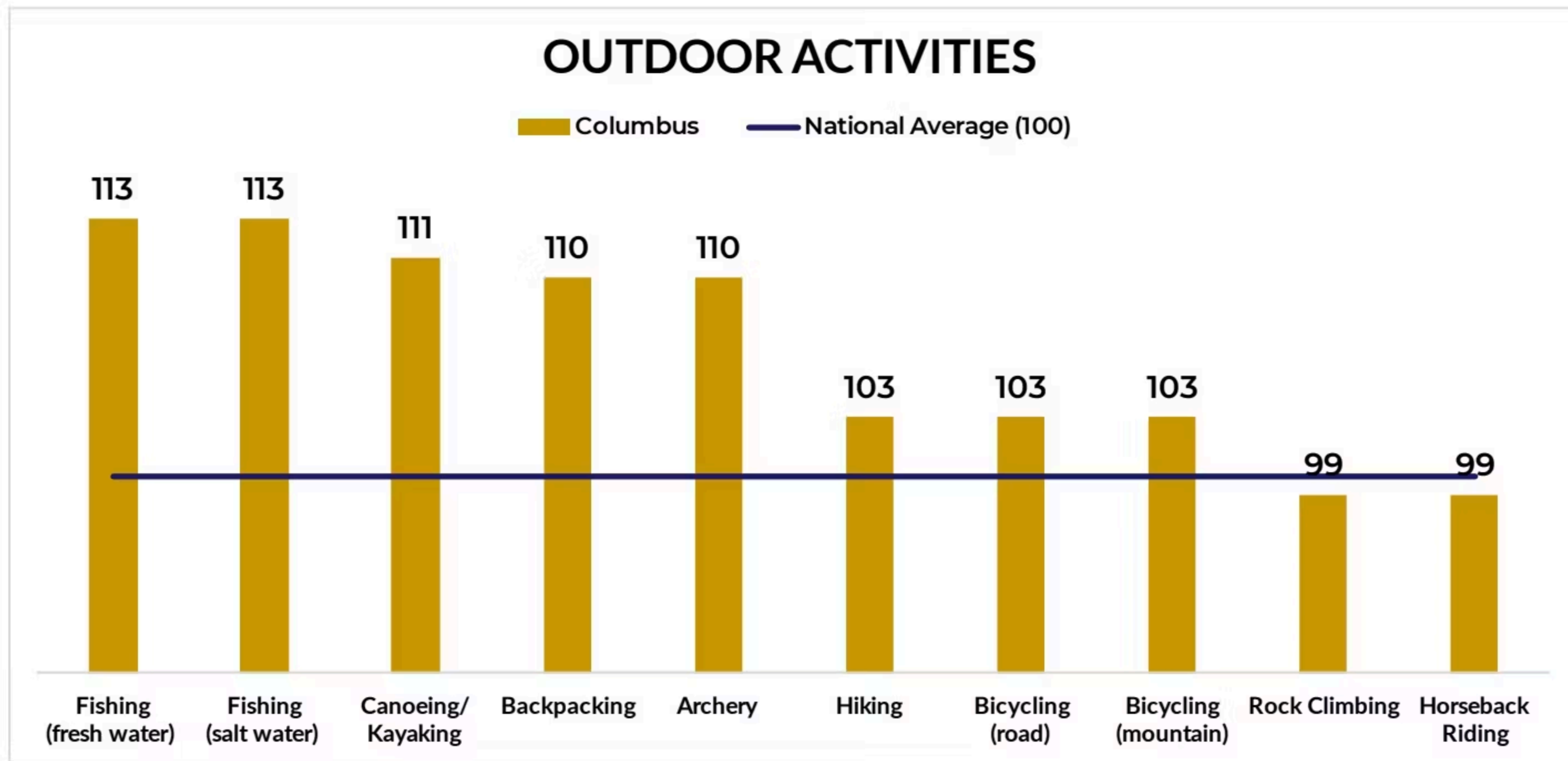
Income Levels



General Sports MPI



Fitness MPI

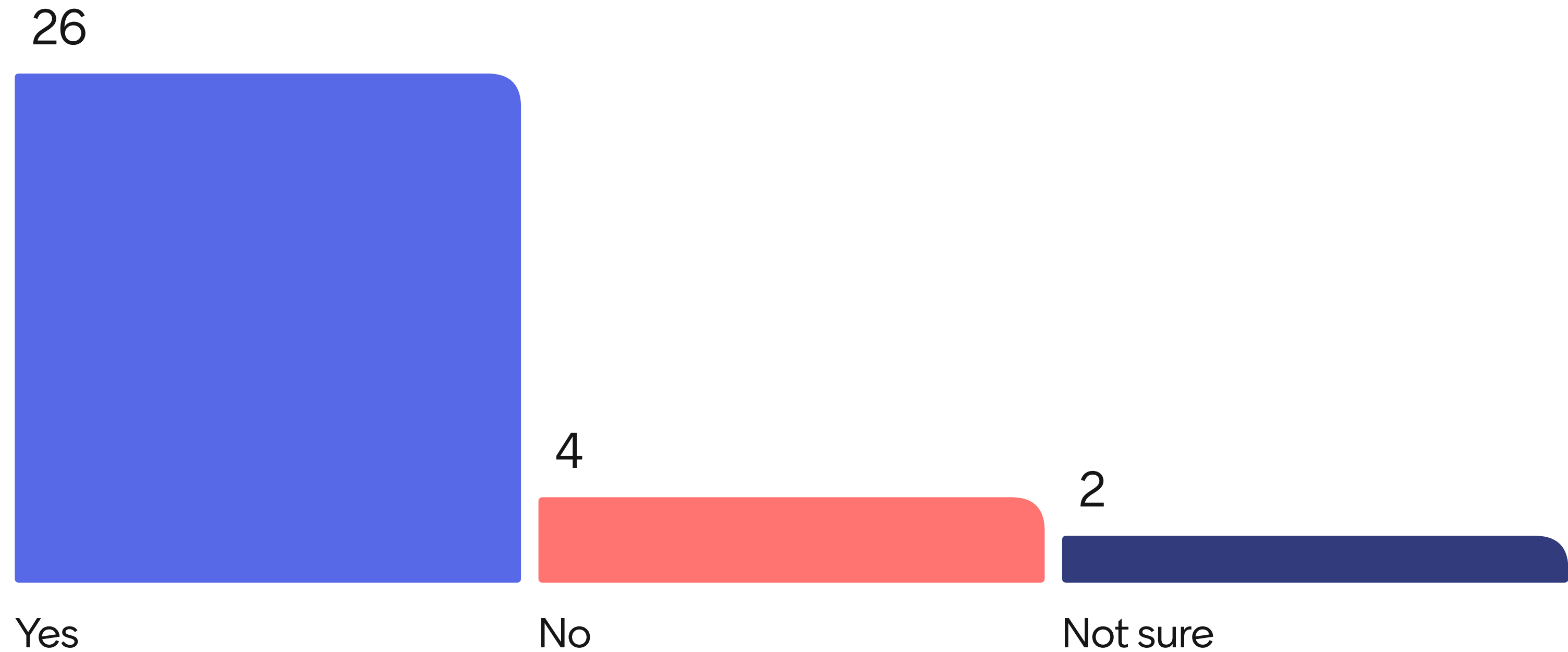


Outdoor Activities MPI

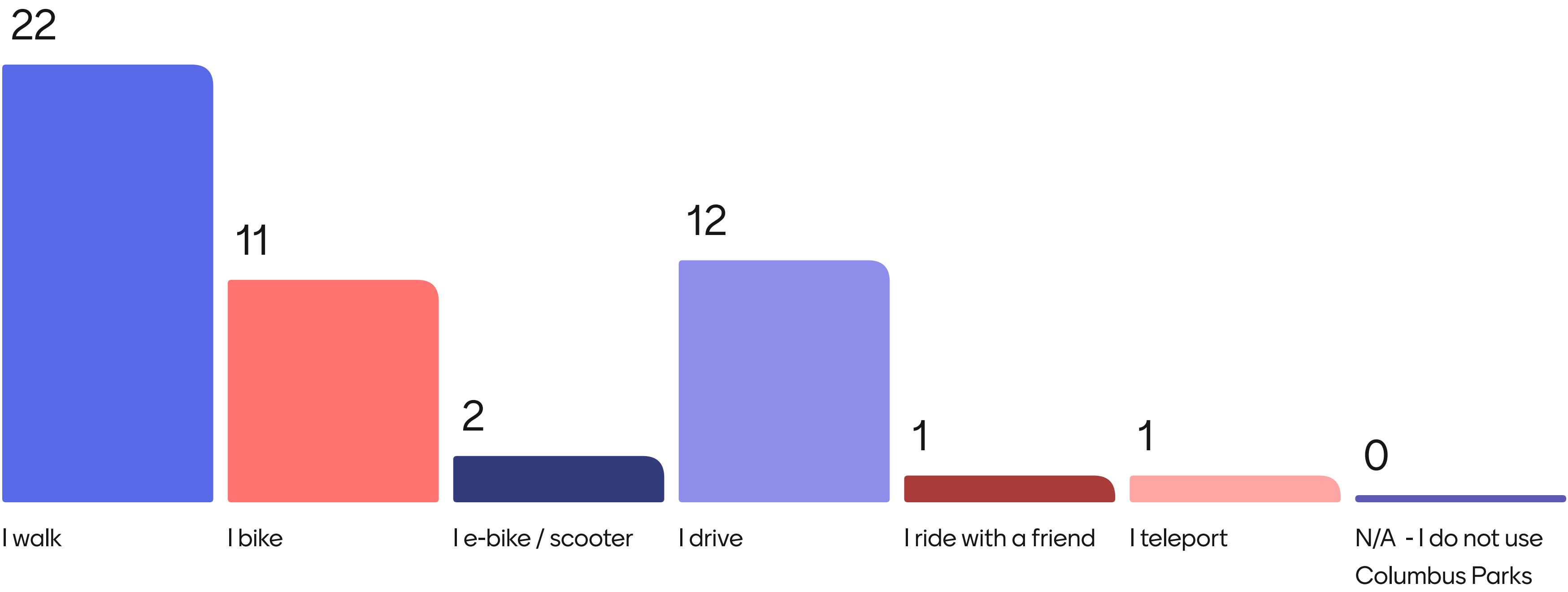
POLLING – ACCESS AND TRAVEL

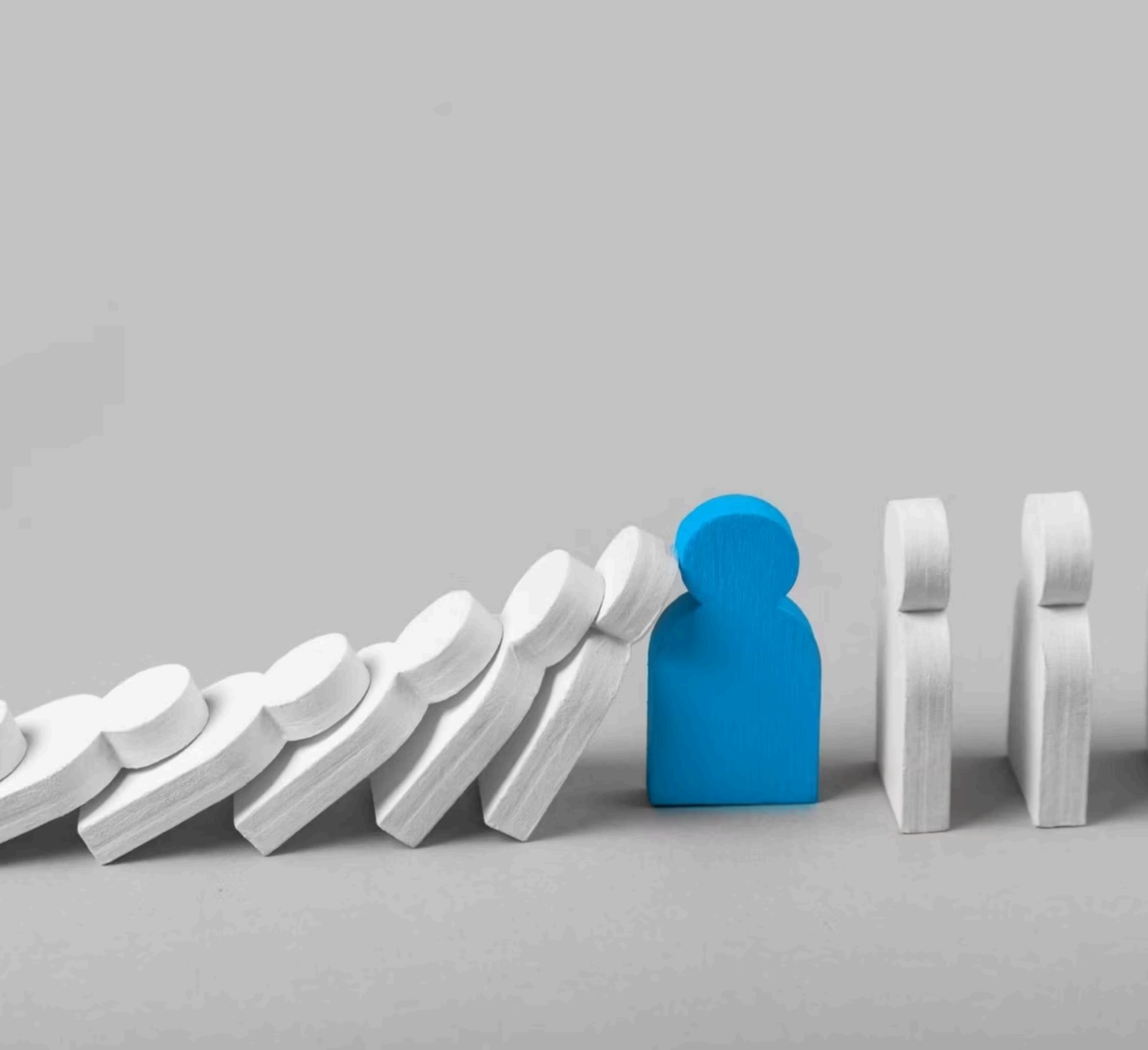


Do you live within a 10-minute walk to a park or trail?



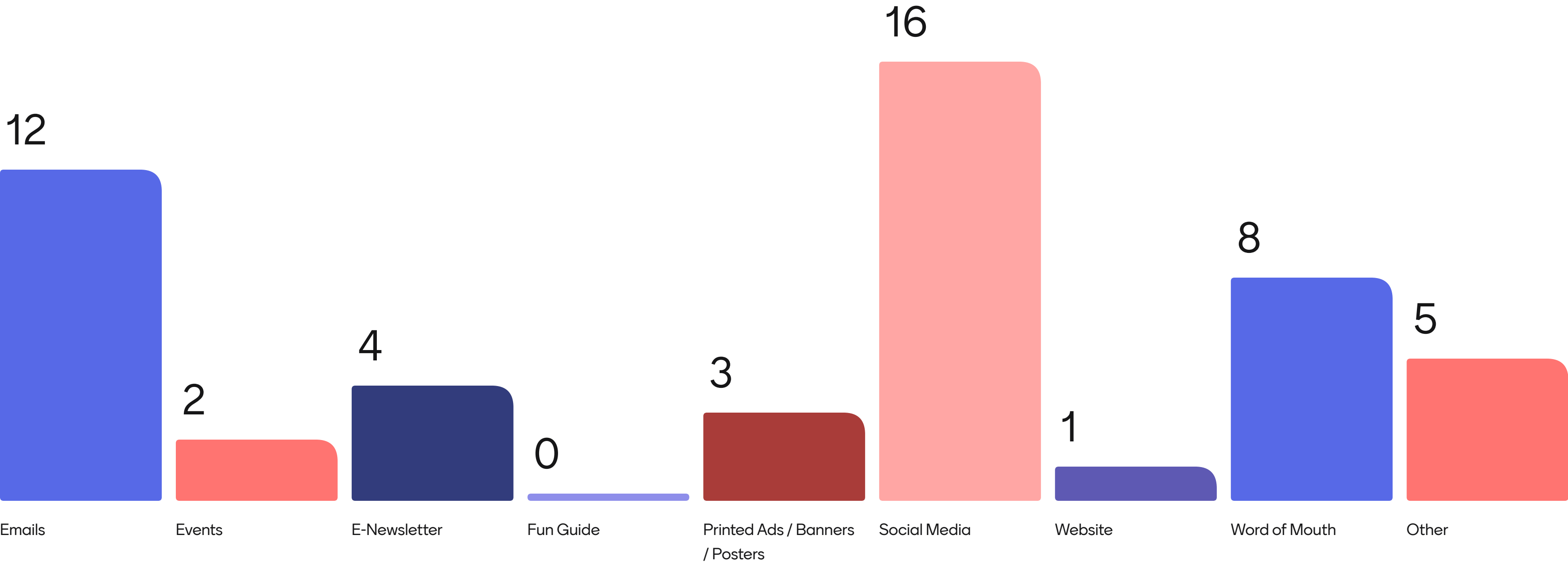
How do you travel to your nearest local park?



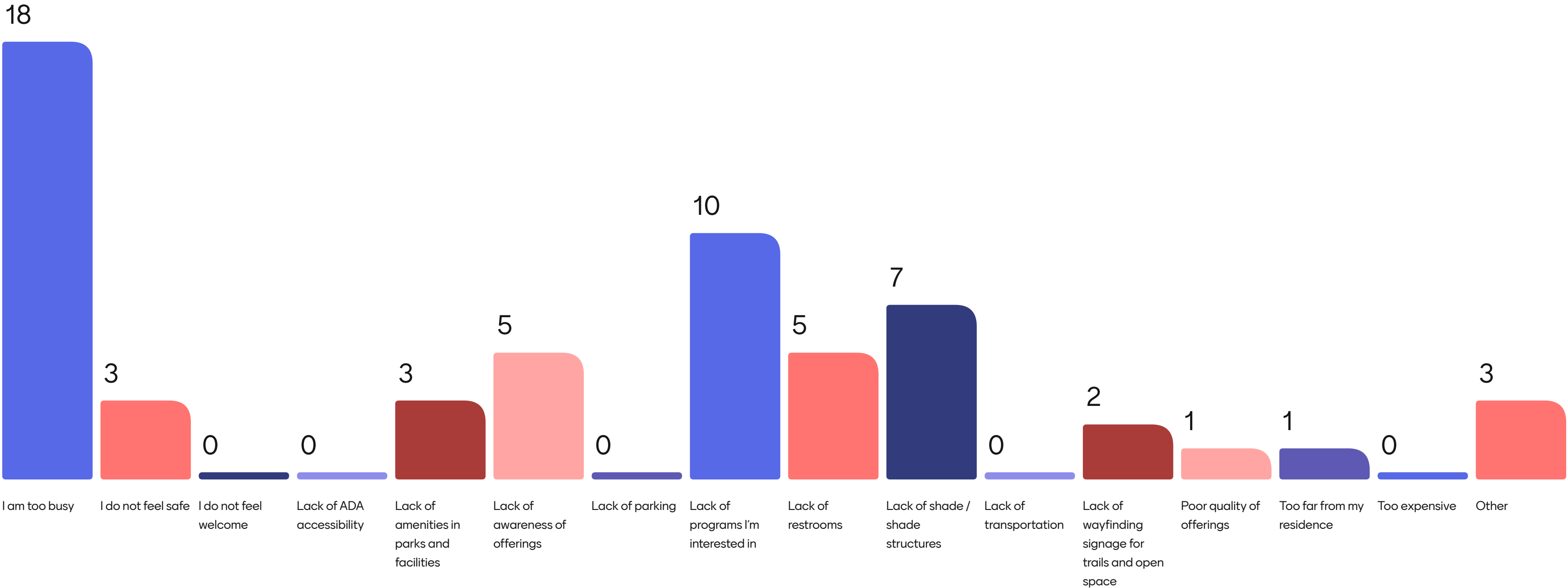


POLLING – COMMUNICATION & BARRIERS

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, some wearing hooded raincoats, are gathered around a campfire in a forest at dusk. The scene is dimly lit, with the fire providing the primary light source. The background shows tall trees and a dark sky.

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+

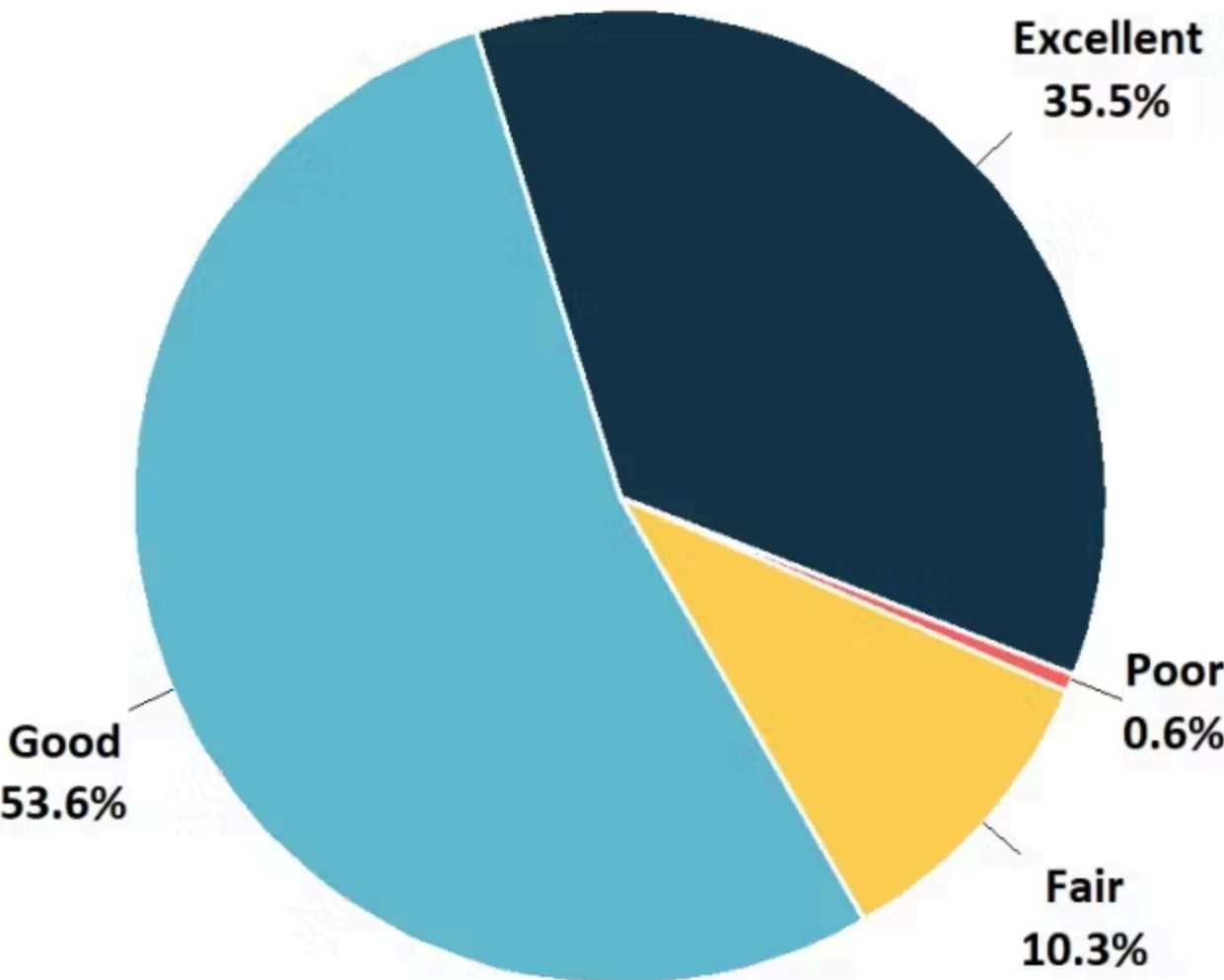
FACILITIES



Defensible

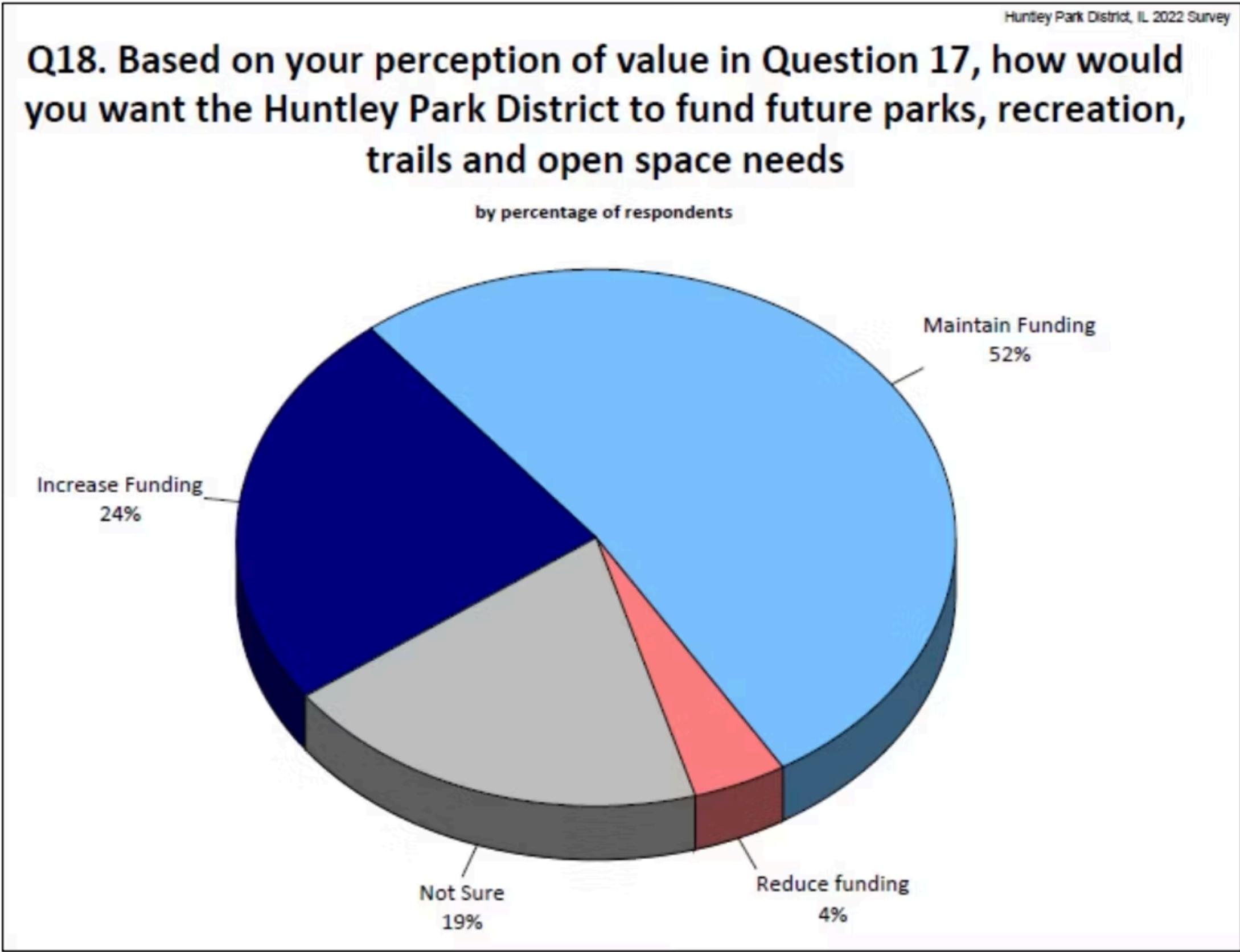
Q5b. How would you rate the overall quality of the Columbus Parks and Recreation Department's recreation programs in which your household has participated?

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



2021 Plan
Survey Results

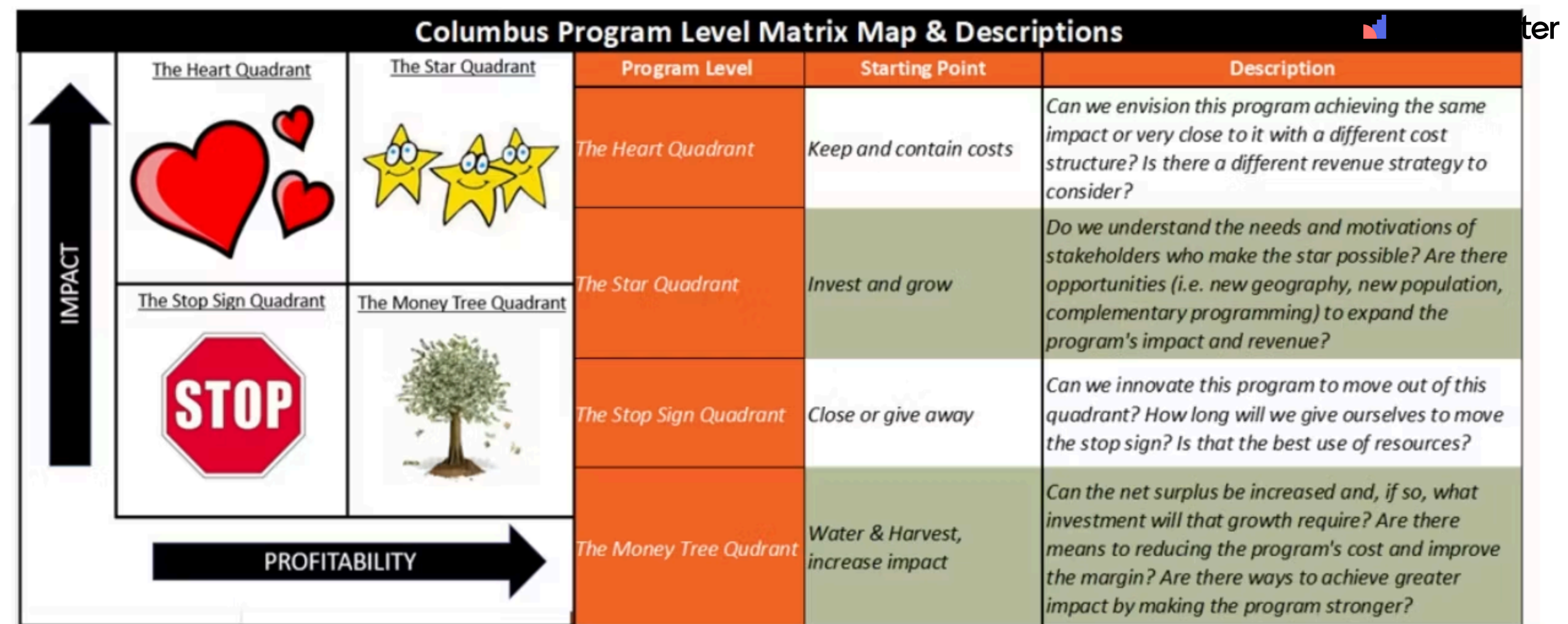
Defensible





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

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT



FIELD INPUT

V.I.B.E SITE ASSESSMENT INPUT DATA

ASSESSMENT DETAILS

CLIENT / AGENCY NAME

DATE OF ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT PERIOD / PHASE

Columbus Parks and Recreation

06/18/2026

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

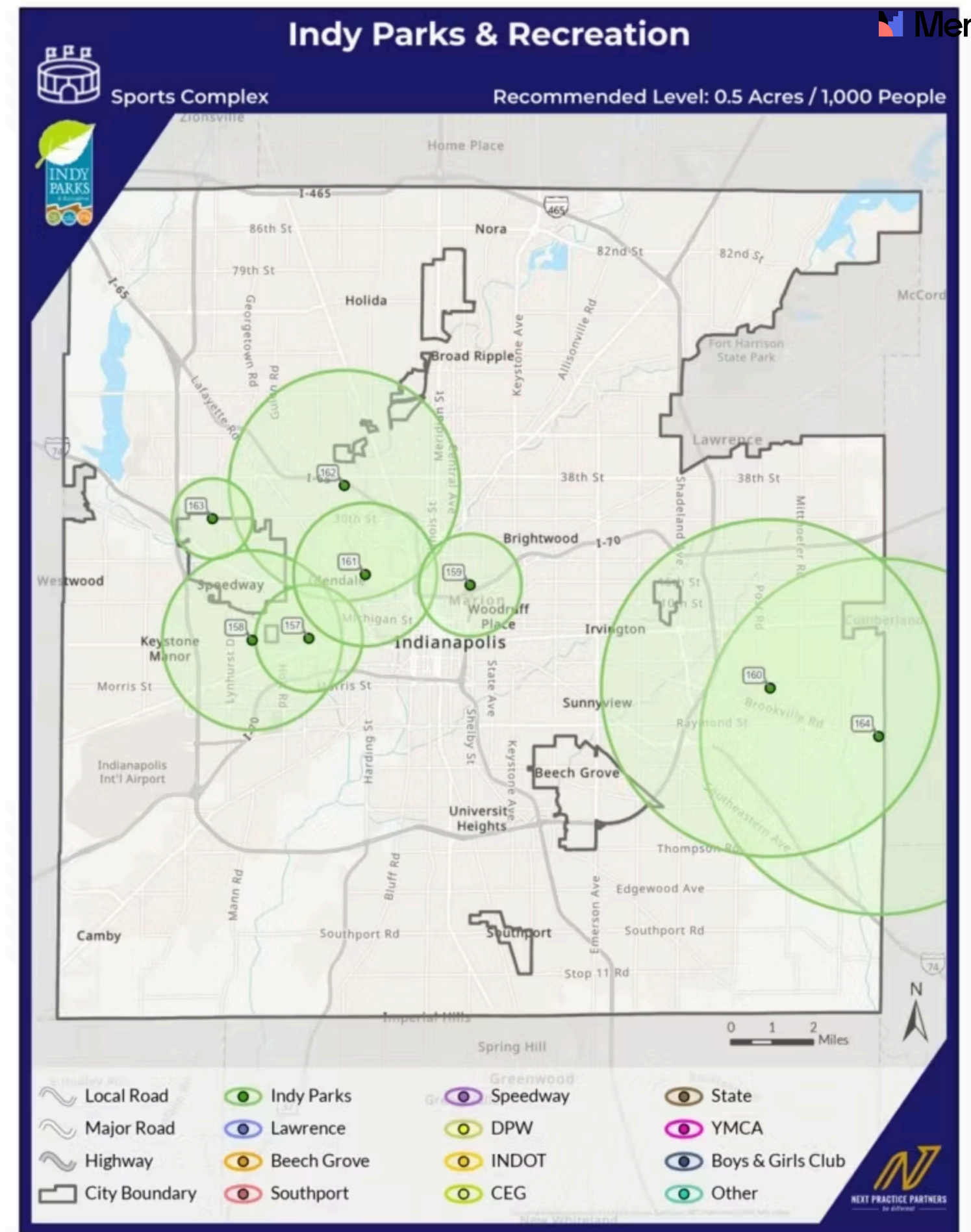
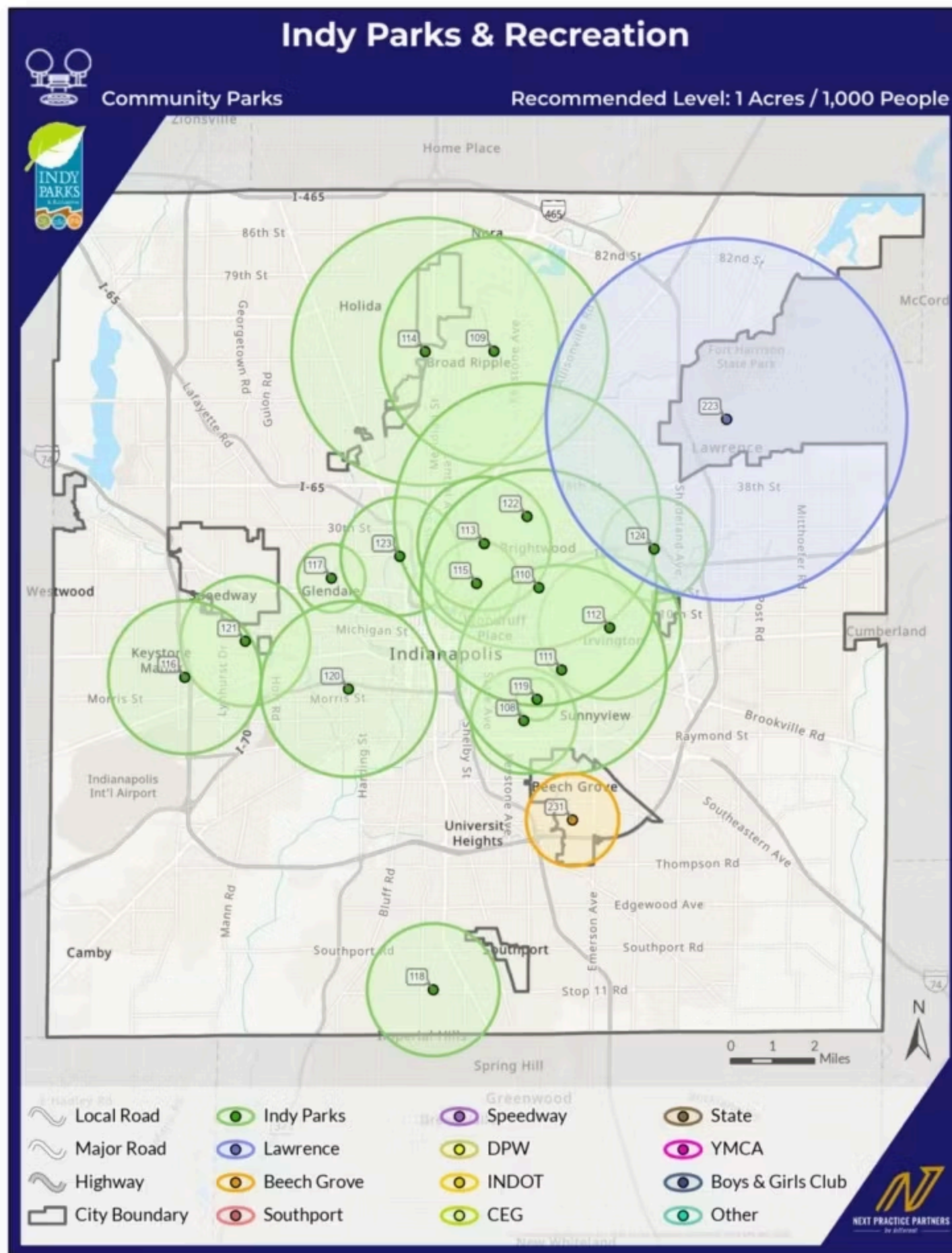
Factors that limit or discourage use, including stewardship, flexibility, demand, and operational challenges.

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						

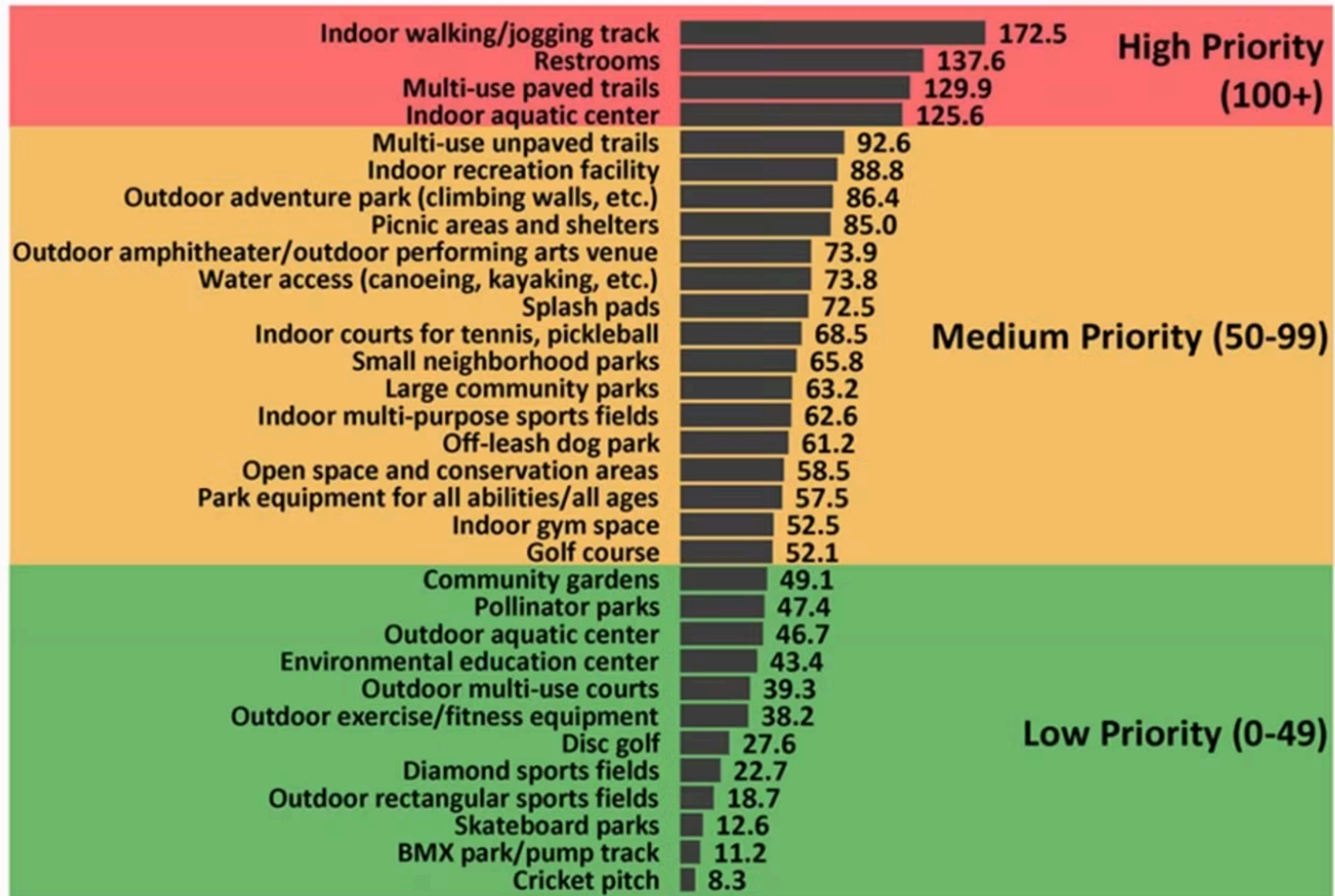


EQUITY MAPPING



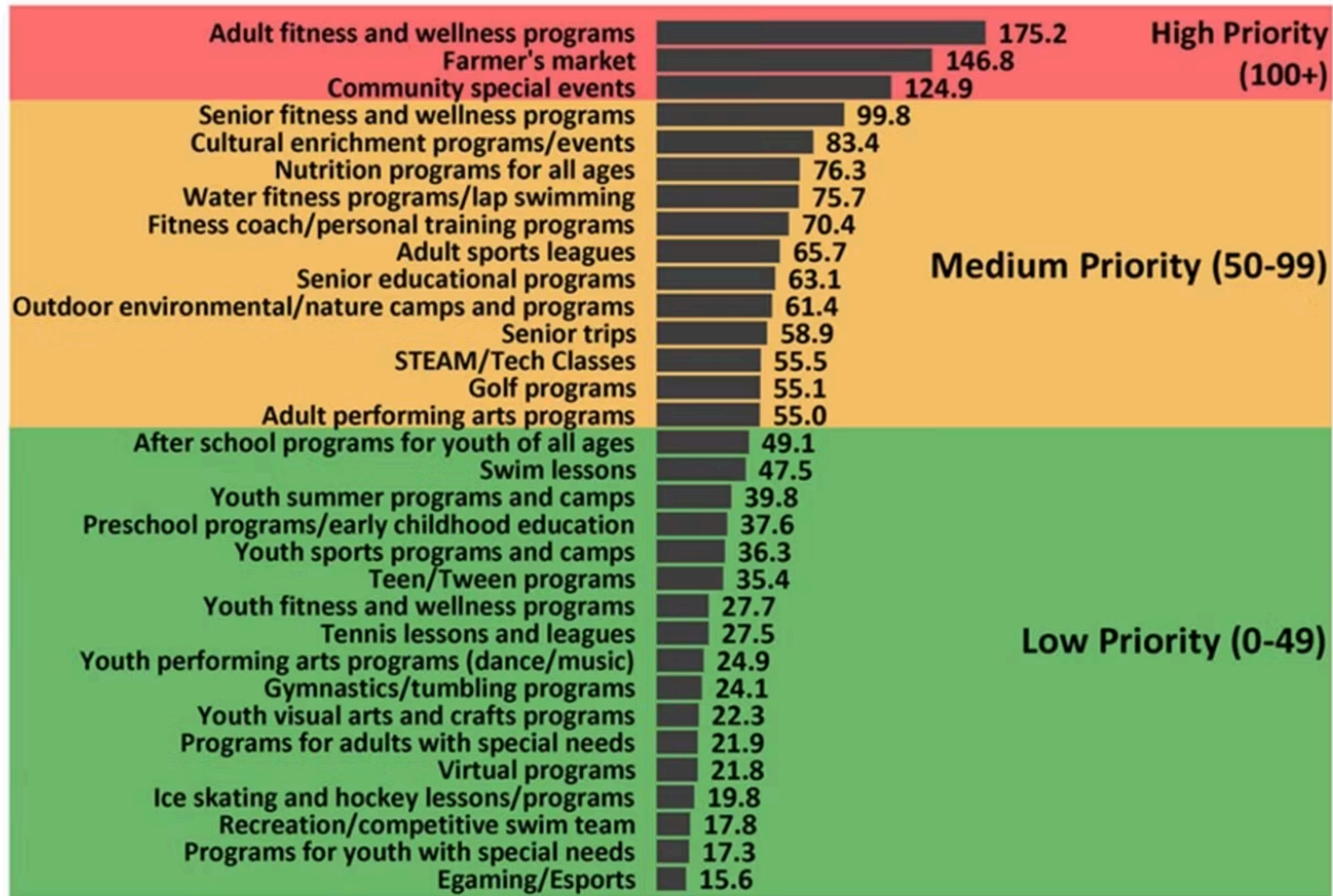
Top Priorities for Investment for Parks and Recreation Facilities/Amenities

Based on the Priority Investment Rating (PIR)



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

Based on the Priority Investment Rating (PIR)

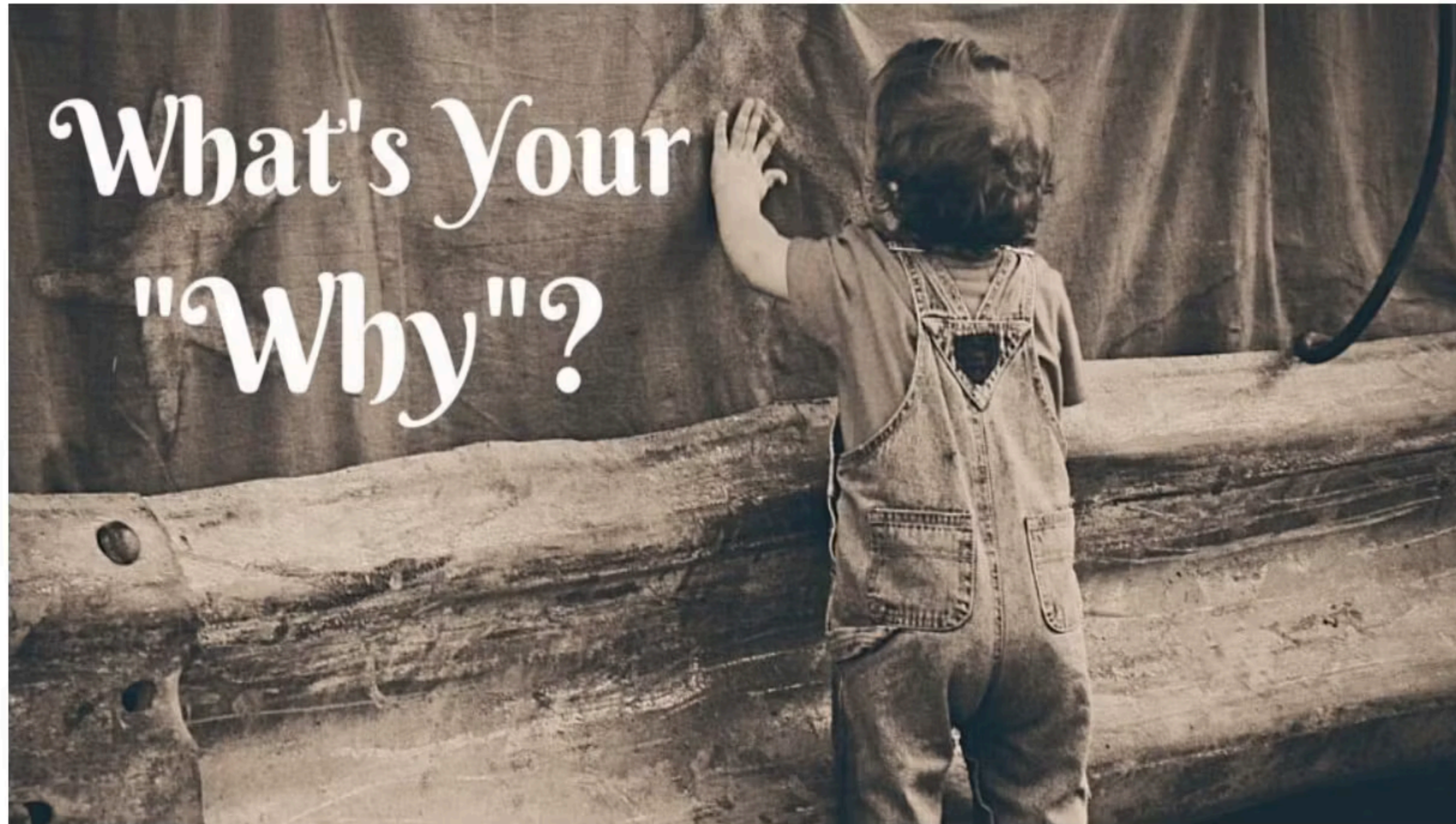




ENVISION & IMPLEMENT



Values, Vision and Mission



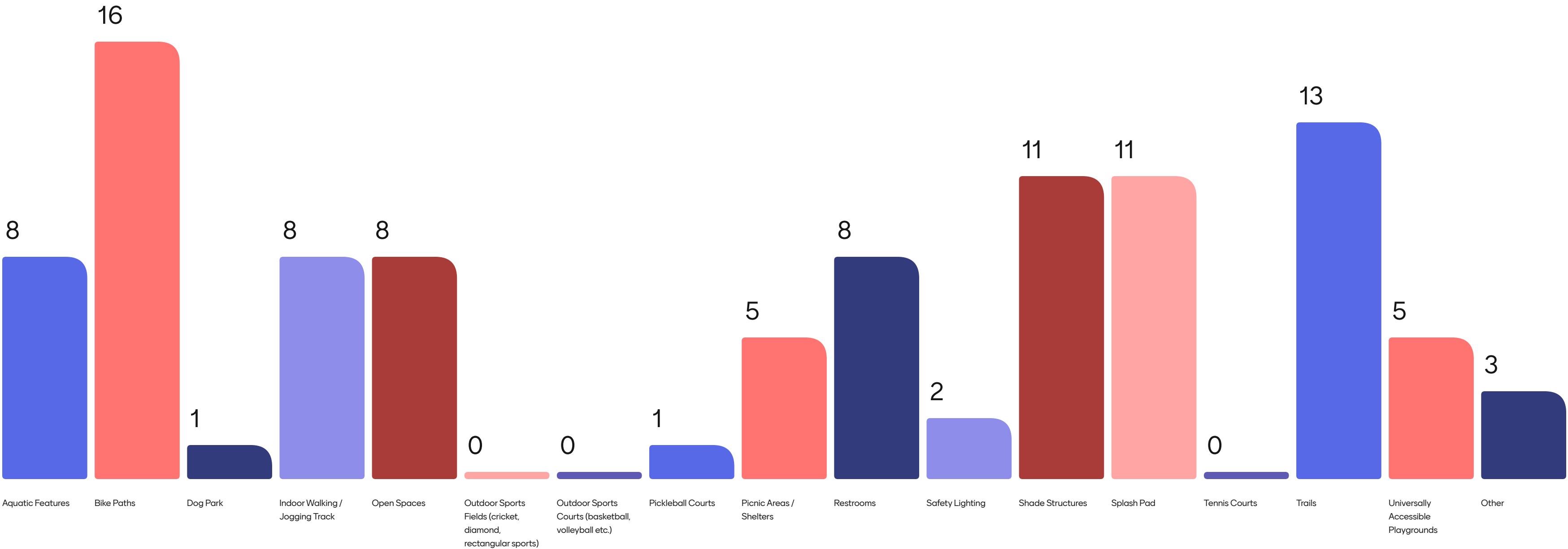
Action Plan

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

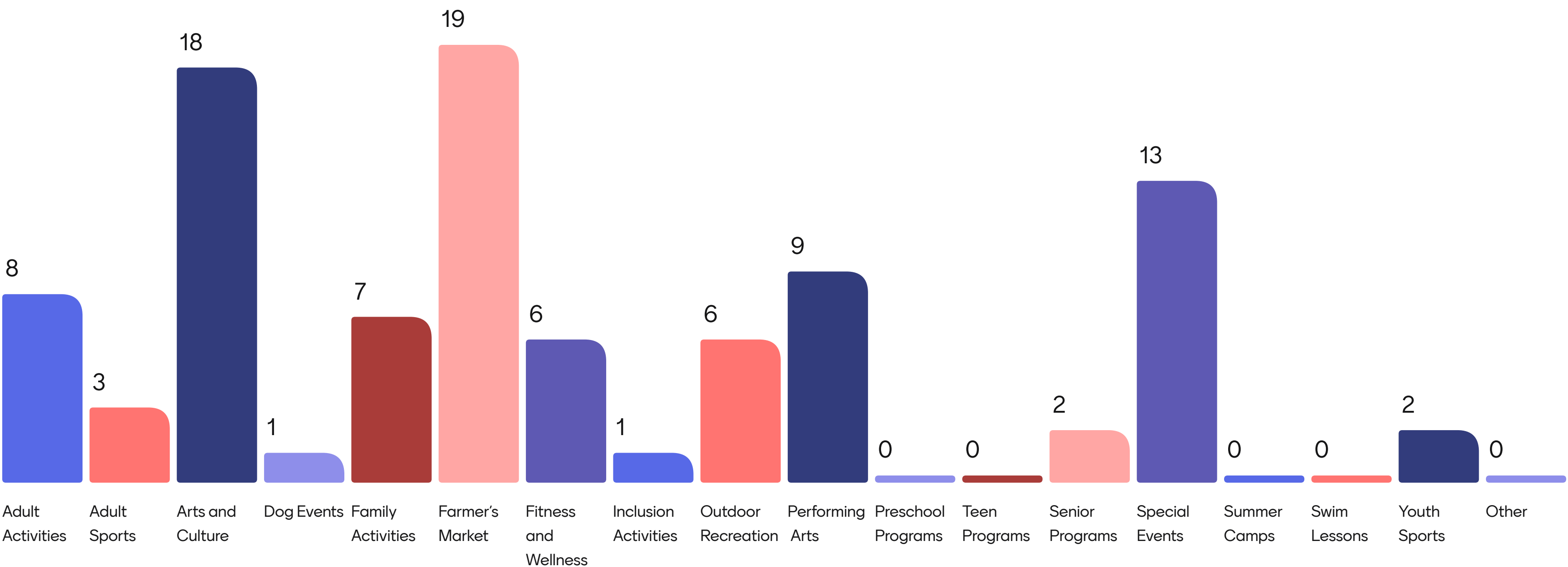
POLLING – FUTURE NEEDS



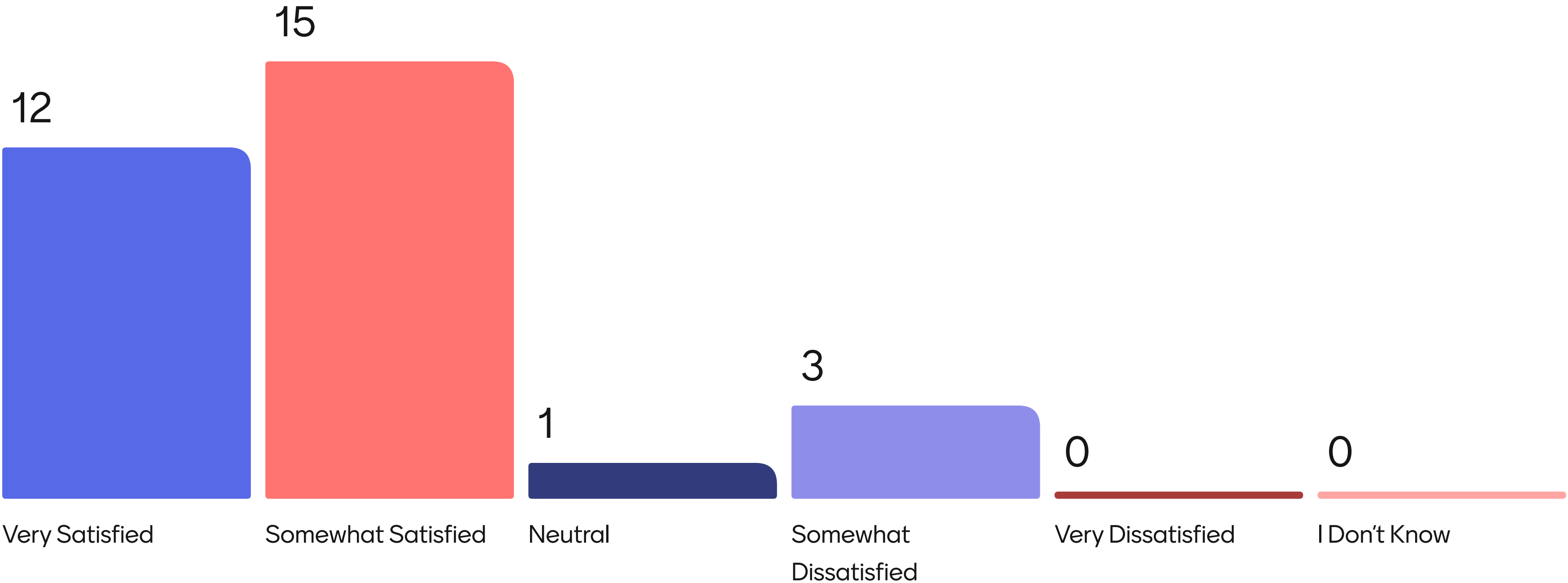
Which THREE facilities / amenities are you and members of your household most interested in?



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?

Keep maintaining the people trails

People trails

People trail

Splash pad

Free splash pad

People Trail

Long term vision for growth and stability.

General upkeep of parks and facilities we already have

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

Unpaved trails along side of the people trail that would be Mt b oriented

Get the kids' input before making a plan

Splash pad

Maintenance

Plant native plants including more trees

Trails

Increasing the scope of public service that parks spaces and programming can provide

safe walking/cycling paths

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

Funding for maintenance.
Not building more that can't
be maintained

Inclusivity for those with
mobility issues

Safer restrooms.

Wholistic wellness

Maintenance

People trial maintained
for people

How to respectfully fund
raise for these free events
and amenities.

More hours at a pool!

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

Single track mountain bike trails with built in technical features that run along side the people trail.

More natural areas in the parks - no mow/pollinator

Additional expansion of People Trails closer to commerce - shopping, restaurants

People Trail

Bike parking downtown

Transporters in every park

Using the resources and spaces we already have.

There is room for improvement in maintenance. Overall, I think we need to better promote all the programs and facilities that are available. My focus would be marketing and communications.

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

Plan needs to weigh financial cost vs expected benefit. ROI needs to be based on reality of tax-base supporting improvements, otherwise this becomes a wish list that frustrates people.

Sade well lit

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

Restrooms and more tables

Splash pad

Add splash park.

Restrooms need to be improved

Update

Pollinator area

Add splash pad

The bathrooms

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

More trees planted and upkeep of current trees to keep them healthy

Splash pad

Updated playground

Update bathrooms and shelter house

Offer the building for use again. If safe to do so.

Shelter update

Year round restrooms / water fountains

Update the shelter.

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

More picnic tables

Updated playground facility

Tree management with older trees and branches falling.

Restrooms

Maintenance. Not adding more activities to detract from the open spaces.
Taking care of what is there

Maintenance

More sidewalks leading to/from the park

Shelter house update

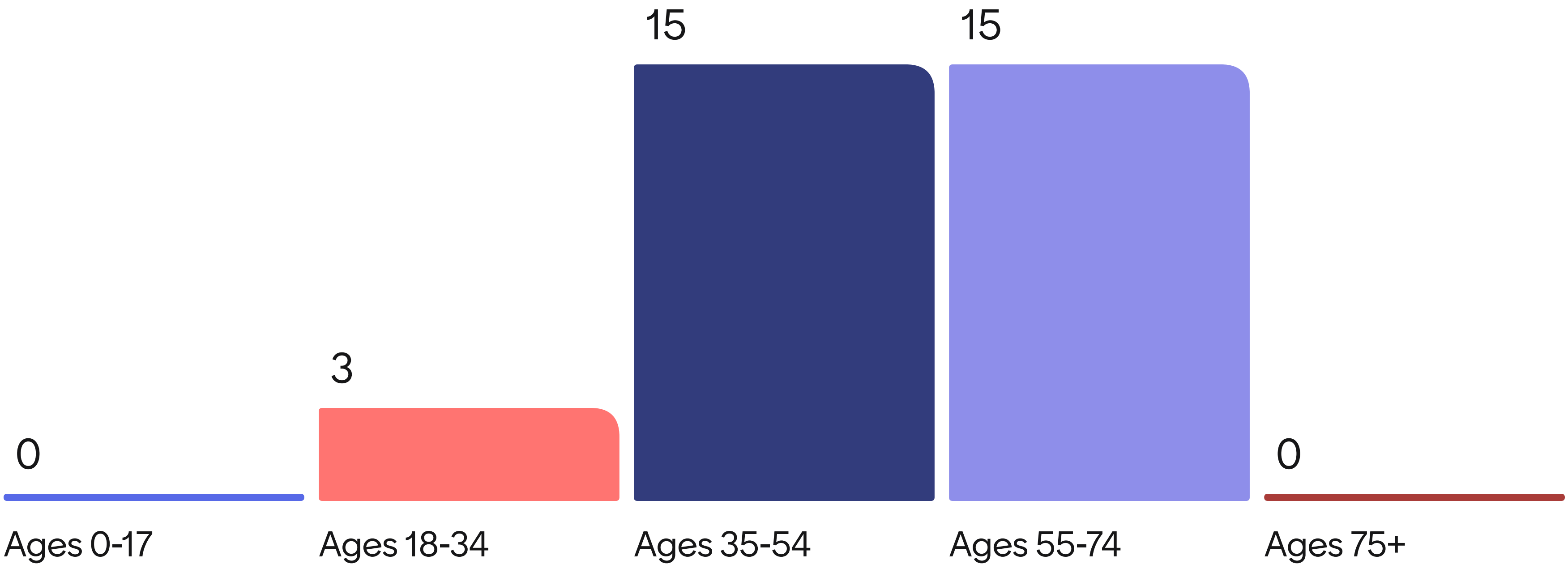
What is one thing you would add / change to improve Mill Race Park?



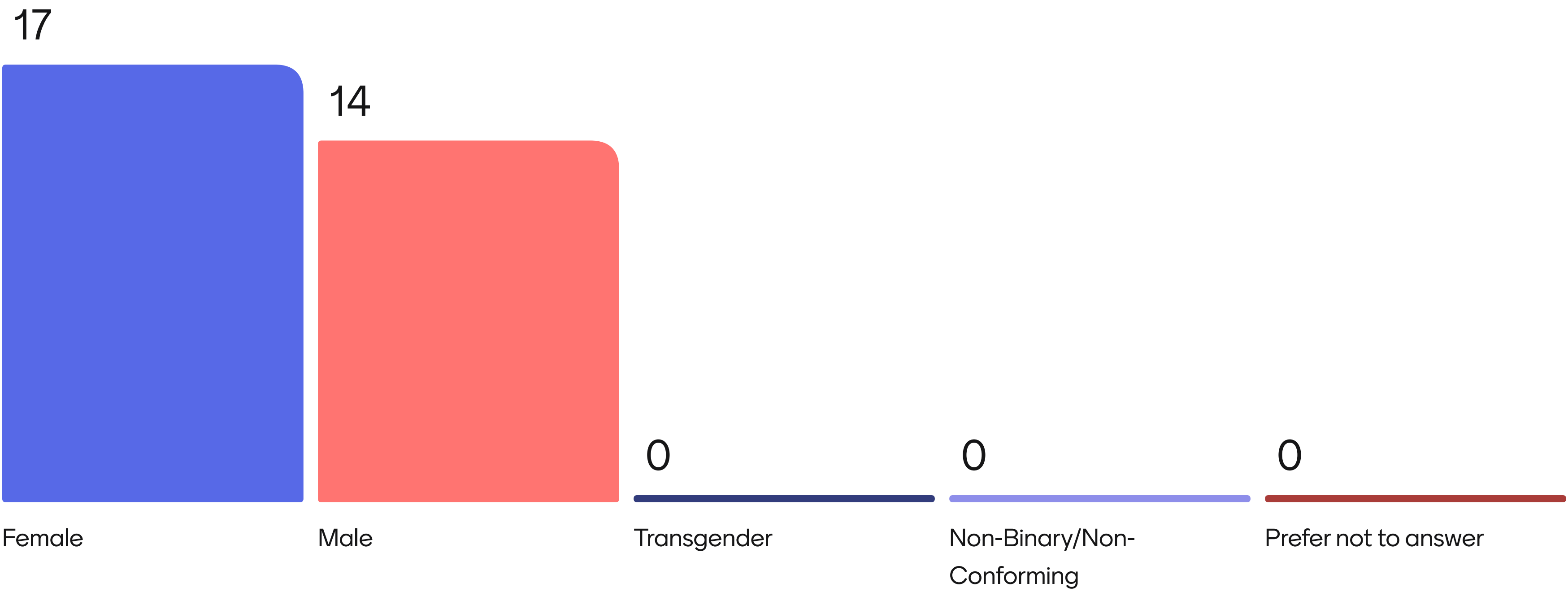
POLLING - AUDIENCE



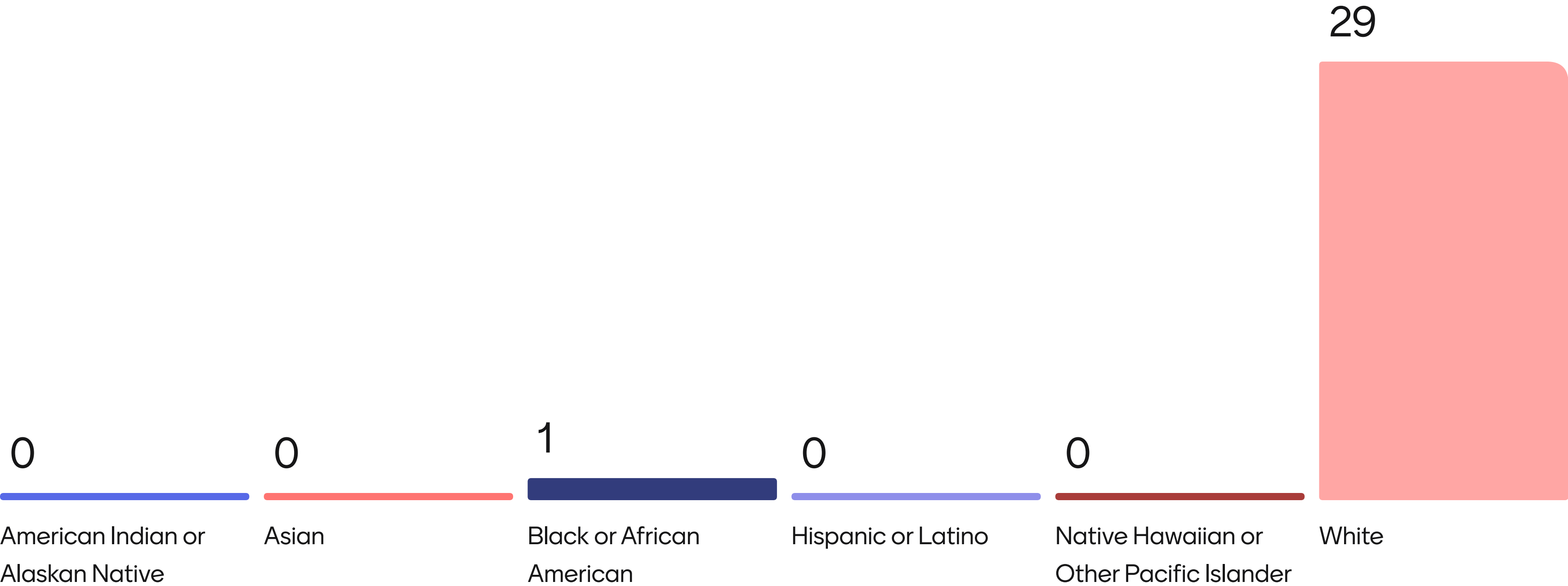
Age Segment



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



NEXT PRACTICE PARTNERS
be different