



NORTH COUNTY RECREATION AND PARK DISTRICT

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Castroville Community Services District
P.O. Box 658
Castroville, CA 95012

July 12, 2018

Dear CCSD Board Members,

I'm sending this letter to inform you of the findings from our recent survey performed by EMC research and Board action taken in regards to a November tax measure for the North County Recreation and Park District.

I have attached a copy of a summary of the key findings of the survey and the survey results. Unfortunately the results are not in favor of us getting a tax measure passed this November. After careful review of the survey findings, the North County Recreation and Park District Board voted to not place a tax measure on the November ballot.

Other factors that led to our board's decision: the NMC Unified School District placed a measure on the ballot in June that failed. The North County Fire District received similar results for a fire tax measure from a recent survey they did, with a different consultant - SCI. Our survey results showed that all of those things were high on the priority list; traffic and road repairs, education, reducing fire risk and maintaining quality parks and recreational services. The respondents just do not want to pay taxes to support them.

We will continue to expand our community outreach and education in hopes that there will be a time in future that the community will support a tax measure for our district.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Judy Burditt".

Judy Burditt
General Manager
North County Recreation and Park District



TO: North County Recreation and Park District
FROM: EMC Research
RE: Key Findings from Recent North County Quantitative Survey
DATE: July 6, 2018

The following are key findings from a recent opinion survey of voters in the North County Recreation and Park District. Voters were invited to participate via a mailed print survey and those with emails available were invited to take the survey online. The survey was conducted from May 21-June 22, 2018 with 224 valid surveys returned from likely November 2018 voters in the North County Recreation and Park District. The survey was offered in English and Spanish.

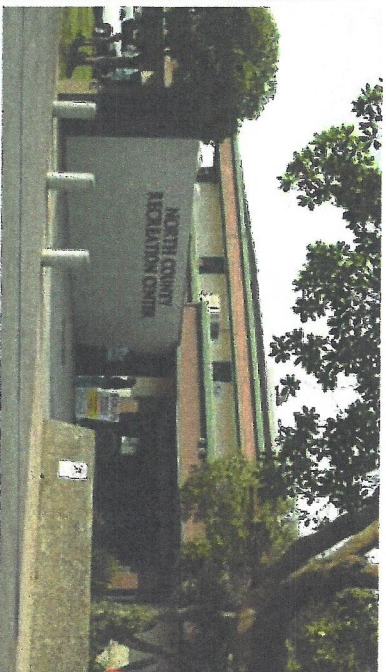
Key Findings

Most respondents (53%) are satisfied with the overall quality of local parks and nearly half of respondents (46%) report using local parks and recreational facilities at least a few times per year. Those with children are more likely to be park users (72%).

Park facilities and recreational programs are important to respondents. Accessibility, bathroom maintenance, safety, affordability, and improvements to youth programs are top priorities for local parks and recreation.

Despite recognition from local voters of the need for funding for local parks and recreation, a parcel tax does not appear feasible at this time. Nearly three-quarters of respondents (73%) recognize a need for additional funding for neighborhood parks and recreation programs; however, just 47% would support a parcel tax today, short of the necessary two-thirds threshold required to pass.

Even though parks and recreation programs are important to the community, other local issues take precedence, and tax aversion is an issue. A wide majority (71%) express maintaining high-quality parks and recreational services as a priority for the community. However, other local issues are even more important, such as reducing traffic and repairing local streets and roads (88% priority) and improving public education (80% priority). There is also significant resistance to new taxes, with 48% of respondents saying they generally oppose increases to property taxes regardless of what they are used for.



North County Recreation and Park District
We create community through people, parks, and programs



research

**Mail/Web Survey of
North County Recreation & Park District Voters**

Conducted May/June 2018

Methodology



- ▶ Survey of voters in the North County Recreation and Park District
- ▶ Voters were invited to participate via a mailed, printed survey; voters with emails available were invited to take the survey online via an emailed invitation
- ▶ 224 usable surveys were returned; 136 completed by mail and 88 by web
- ▶ 3,452 surveys were mailed with response rate of 3.9%
- ▶ 2,372 voters were invited by email with a response rate of 3.7%
- ▶ Survey conducted May 21-June 22, 2018
- ▶ Survey offered in both English and Spanish

Please note that due to rounding, some percentages may not add up to exactly 100%.

Key Findings



- ▶ Nearly half of respondents report using local parks and recreational facilities at least a few times per year. Not surprisingly, those with children are more likely to be park users.
- ▶ While most respondents value local parks and recreation and see a need for additional recreational funding, other priorities like transportation and education take precedence and there is significant resistance to new taxes.
- ▶ Even though more respondents support it than oppose it, a parcel tax for North County parks and recreation programs and facilities falls well short of the necessary two-thirds. General resistance to new taxes is the most frequently cited reason to oppose a measure.
- ▶ Accessibility, bathroom maintenance, safety, and affordability are top priorities for local parks and recreation. Youth programs are also very important.

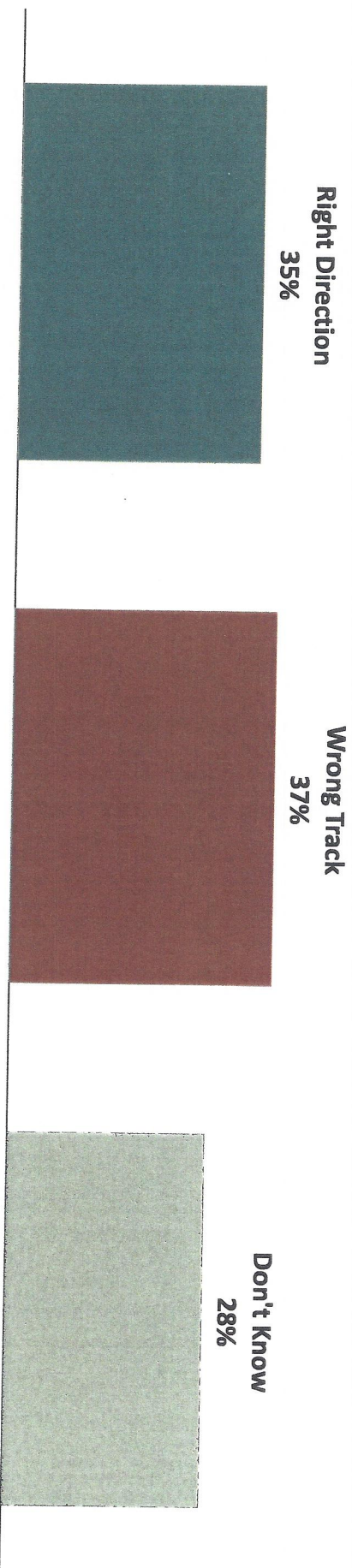


Issue Environment

Right Direction/Wrong Track



More respondents express pessimism than optimism about how things are going in the County.

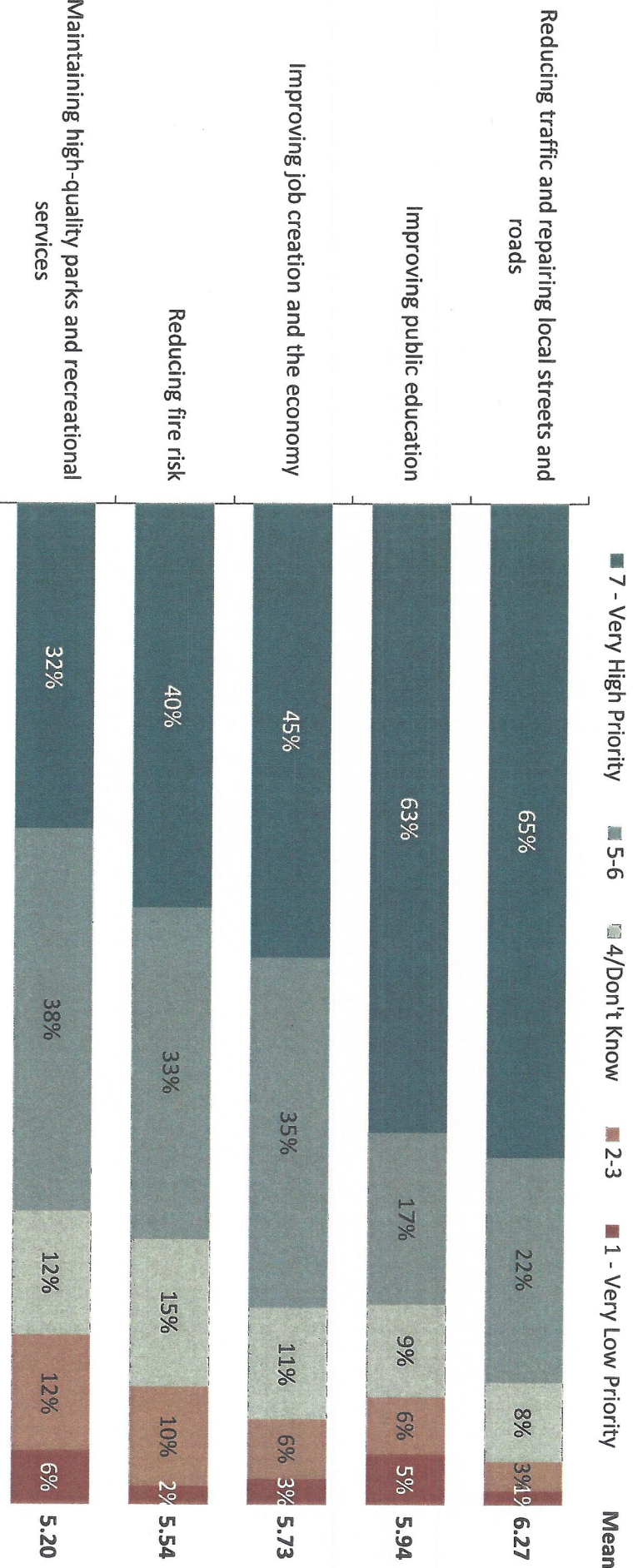


Q3. Do you feel that things in Monterey County are generally going in the right direction or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?

Community Priorities



Although high-quality parks and recreation are important to the vast majority, other issues like traffic/roads and public education are more urgent priorities.



Q5-9. For each of the following issues, please indicate how high a priority that issue should be for your community (scale from 1=very low priority, 7=very high priority).

Tax Sentiment



About half are averse to new taxes.



I generally oppose increases to property taxes regardless of what they are used for.

Q15. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: I generally oppose increases to property taxes regardless of what they are used for.



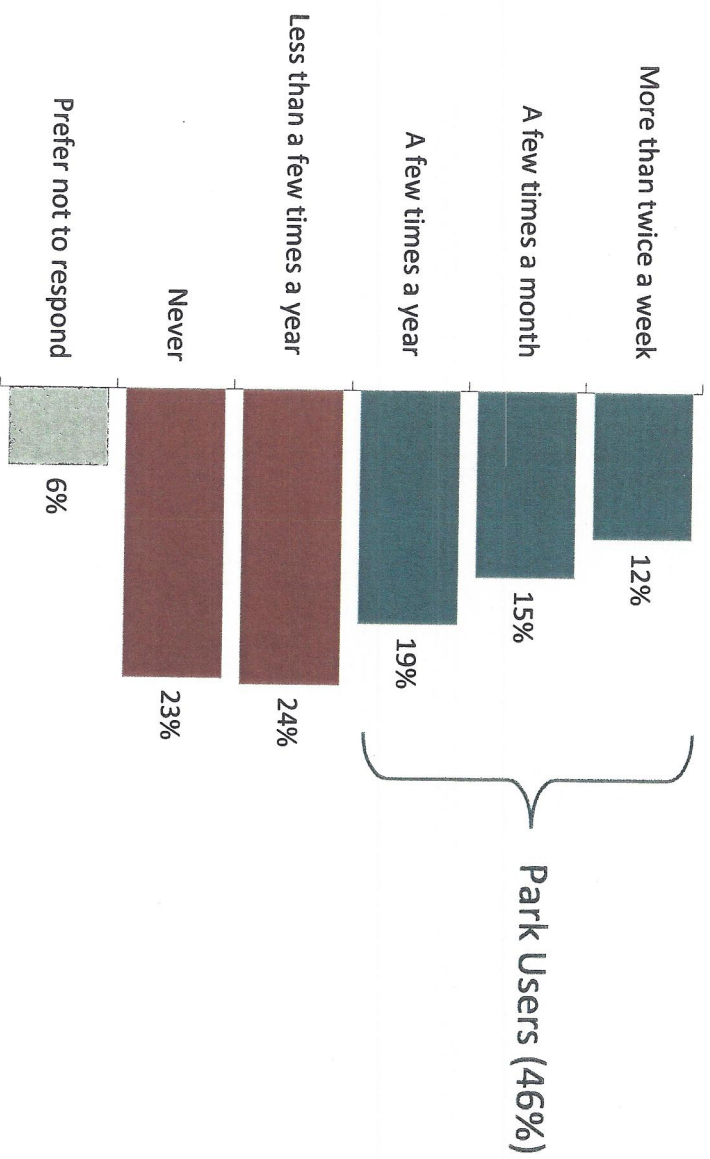
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North County Parks

Park Usage



Nearly half of respondents report using North County parks, facilities and programs at least a few times a year.

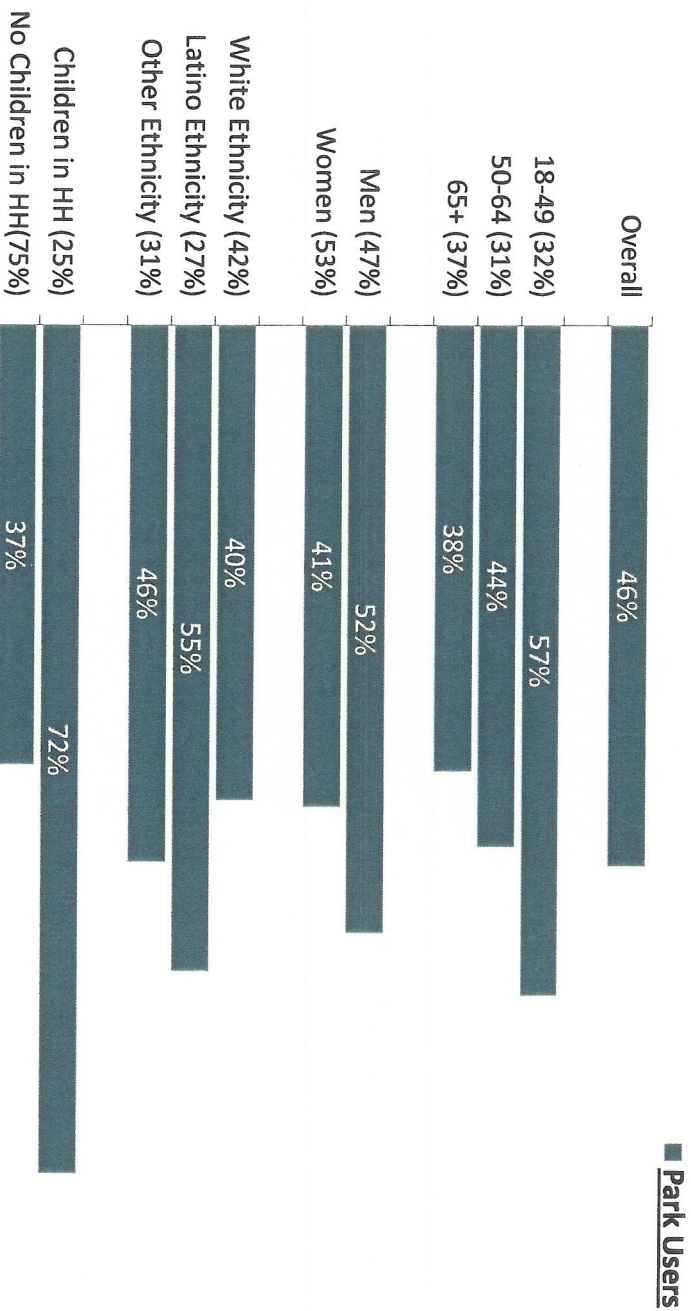


Q36. On average, how often would you say you or a member of your household uses North County park facilities or programs?

Park Usage by Subgroup*



Many younger respondents and those with children in the household are park users.

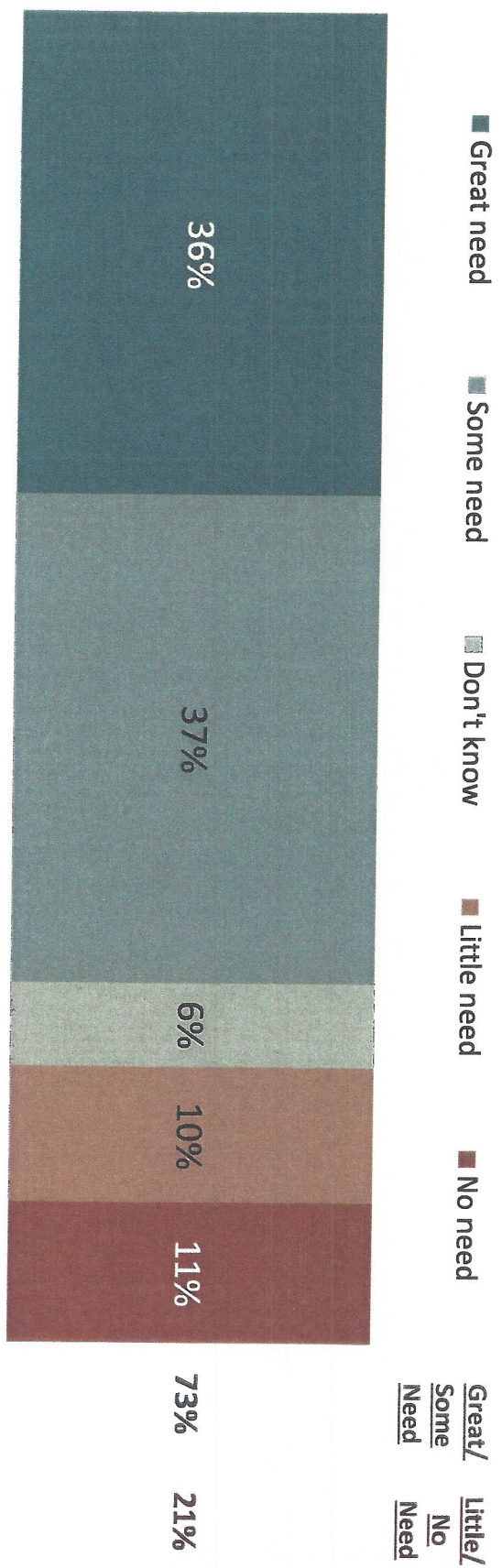


*Note small subgroup sizes limit reliability

Q36. On average, how often would you say you or a member of your household uses North County park facilities or programs?

North County Parks Need for Funding

Most respondents do see at least some need for additional funding for parks and recreation programs.



Great/
Some
Need

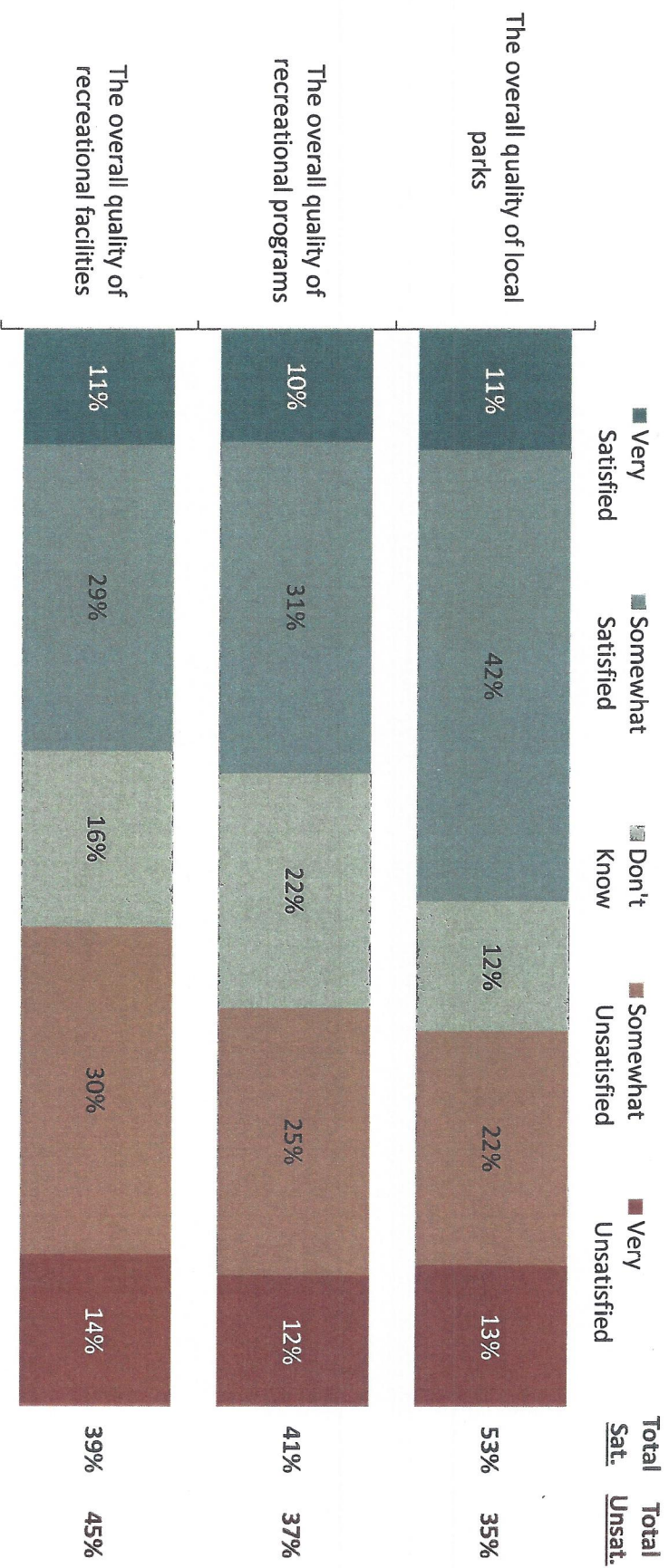
Little/
No
Need

73% 21%

Q4. Would you say that neighborhood parks and recreation programs in your community have a great need for more money, some need for more money, only a little need for more money, or no real need for more money?

North County Parks: Satisfaction

While a majority are satisfied with the overall quality of parks, many indicate a need for improvements to recreational facilities.

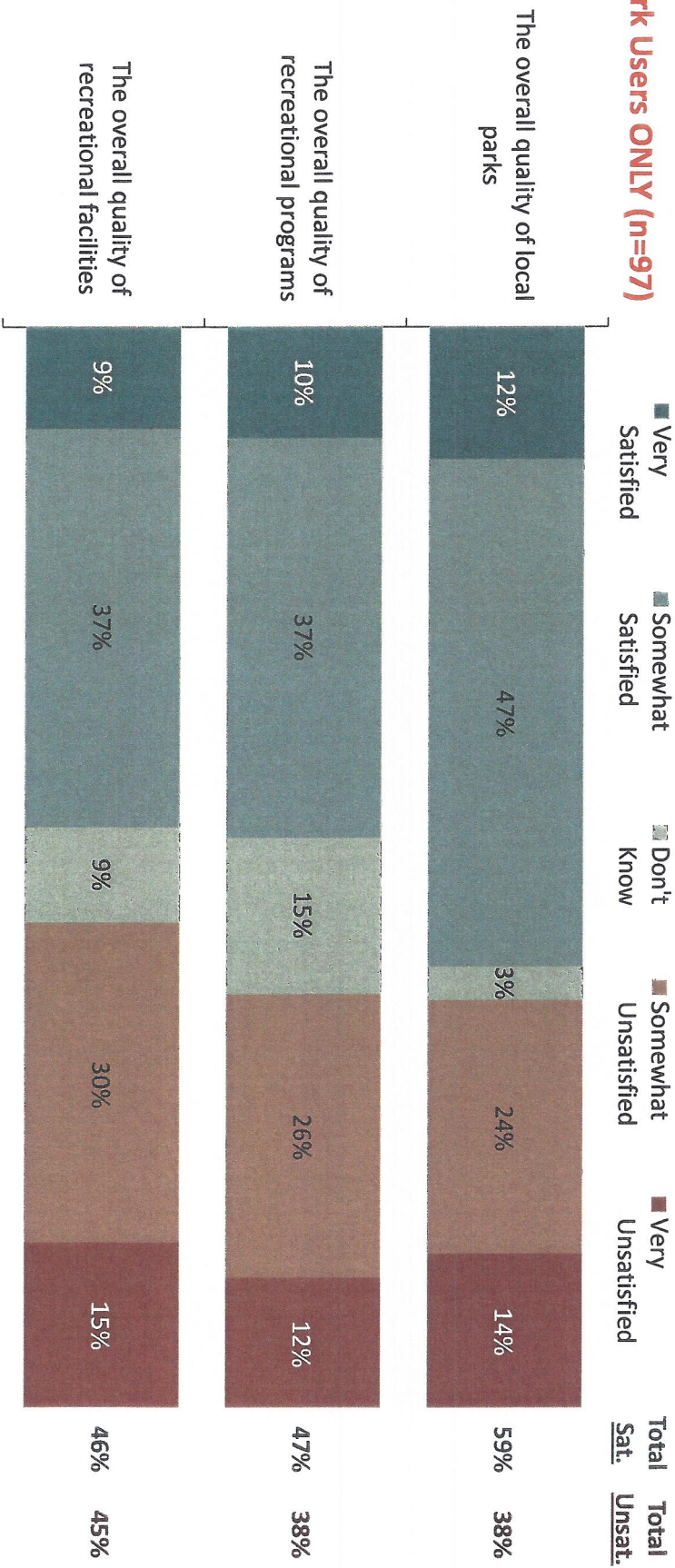


Q10-Q12. As you may know, you live in the North County Recreation and Park District. Thinking about the existing local park facilities and recreation programs in your area, please indicate your level of satisfaction with each of the following:

North County Parks: Satisfaction Among Park Users

Satisfaction is slightly higher among park users, but there is still some desire for better facilities and programs.

Park Users ONLY (n=97)



Q10-Q12: As you may know, you live in the North County Recreation and Park District. Thinking about the existing local park facilities and recreation programs in your area, please indicate your level of satisfaction with each of the following:



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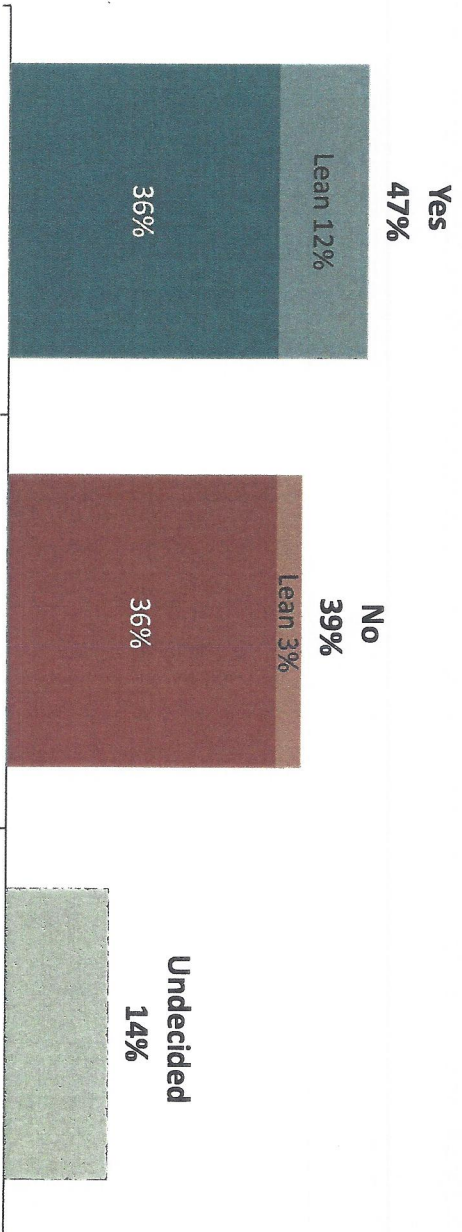
Potential Parcel Tax Measure

Initial Vote



Support for a potential parcel tax measure for parks, recreational programs and facilities is well short of the two-thirds needed for passage.

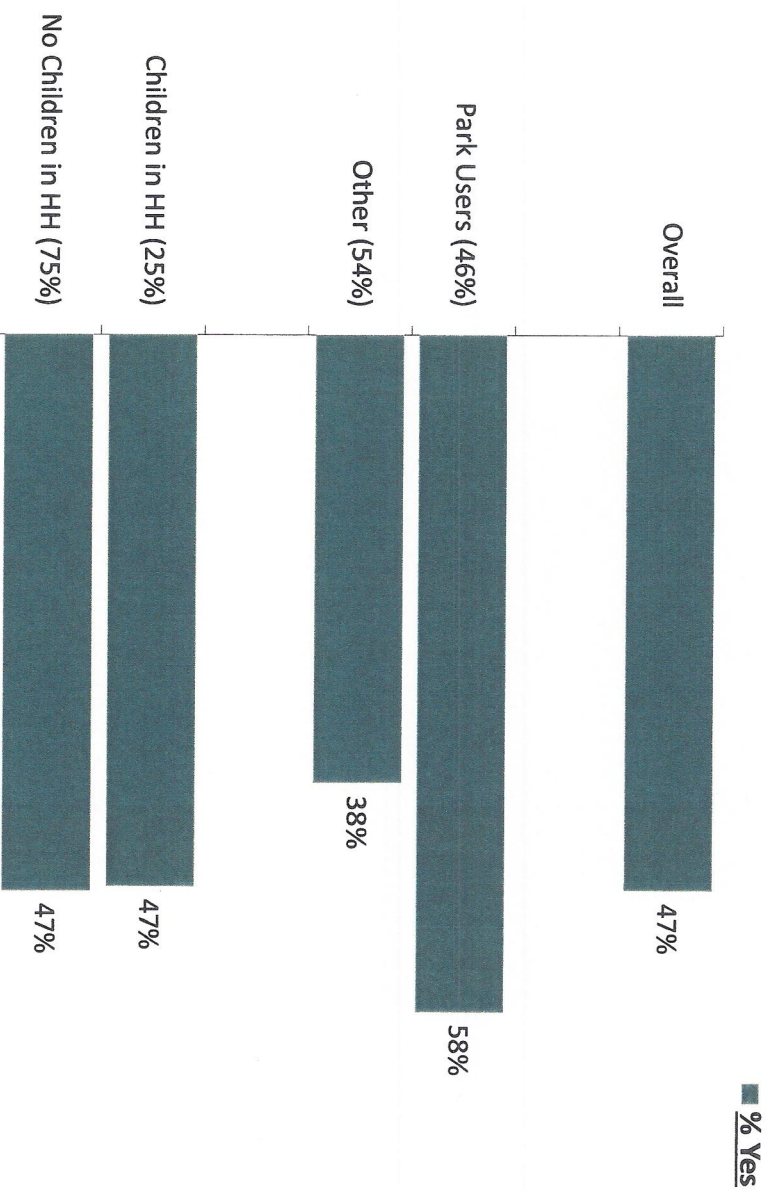
To provide clean, safe parks for local residents; enhance recreational programs and facilities for children, youth, adults, and seniors; ensure park facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities; maintain park bathrooms; and, attract and retain experienced staff to operate facilities and supervise recreation programs, shall the North County Recreation and Park District annually levy \$80 per parcel on each parcel within the District, raising approximately \$300,000 per year, unless ended by voters, with all funds for local parks and recreation?



Q13. If the election were held today, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject this measure? (IF UNDECIDED: If you're not sure, do you lean towards voting yes or no on the measure?)

Measure Initial Support, by Subgroup

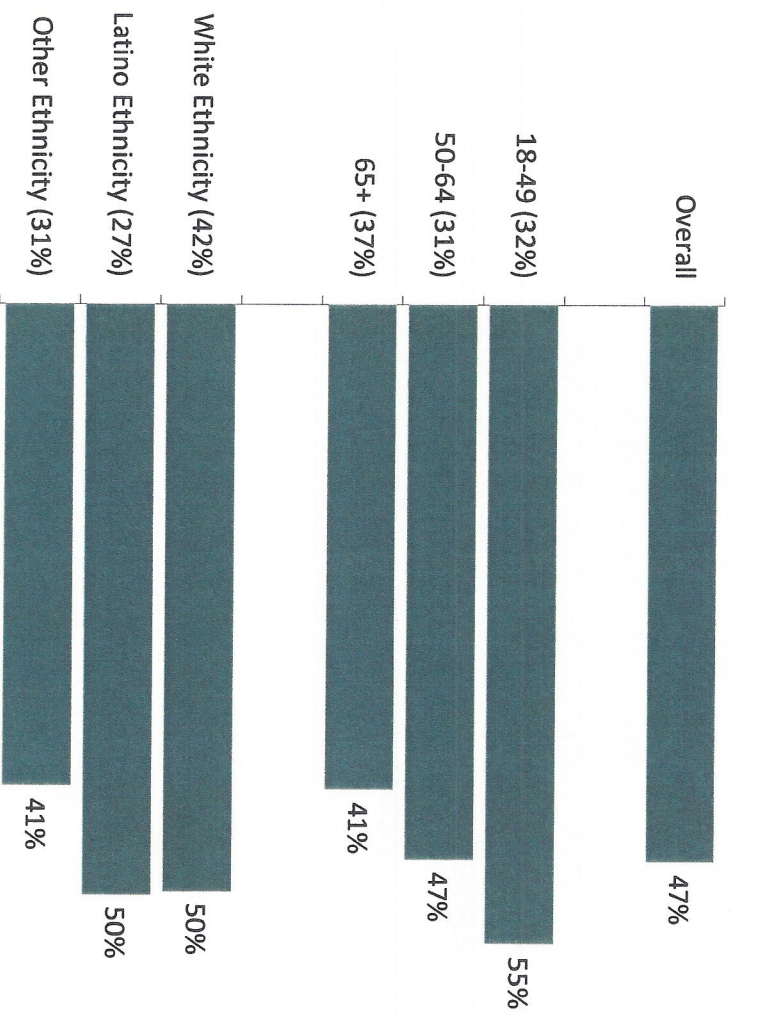
Support is higher among those who use the parks, but still short of two-thirds.



Q13. If the election were held today, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject this measure?

Measure Initial Support, by Subgroup

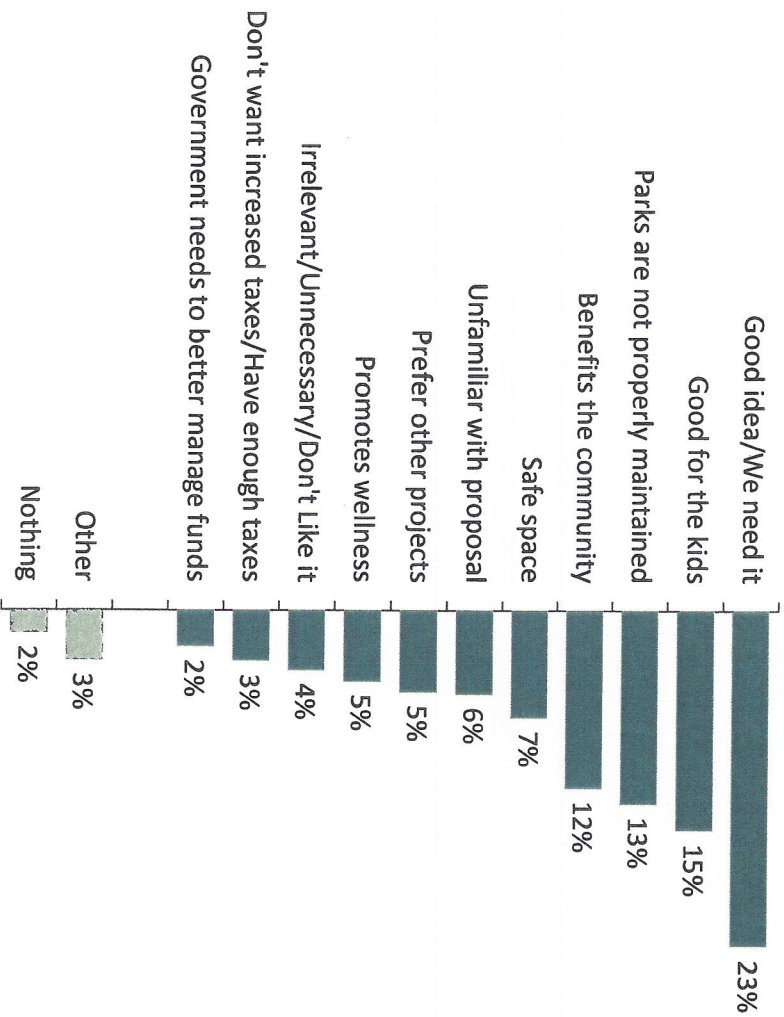
Younger respondents are more supportive of a measure than older respondents.



Q13. If the election were held today, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject this measure?

Reasons for Voting Yes

Respondents provide a range of reasons for supporting the measure, including that there is a need and citing the benefits to kids and the community.



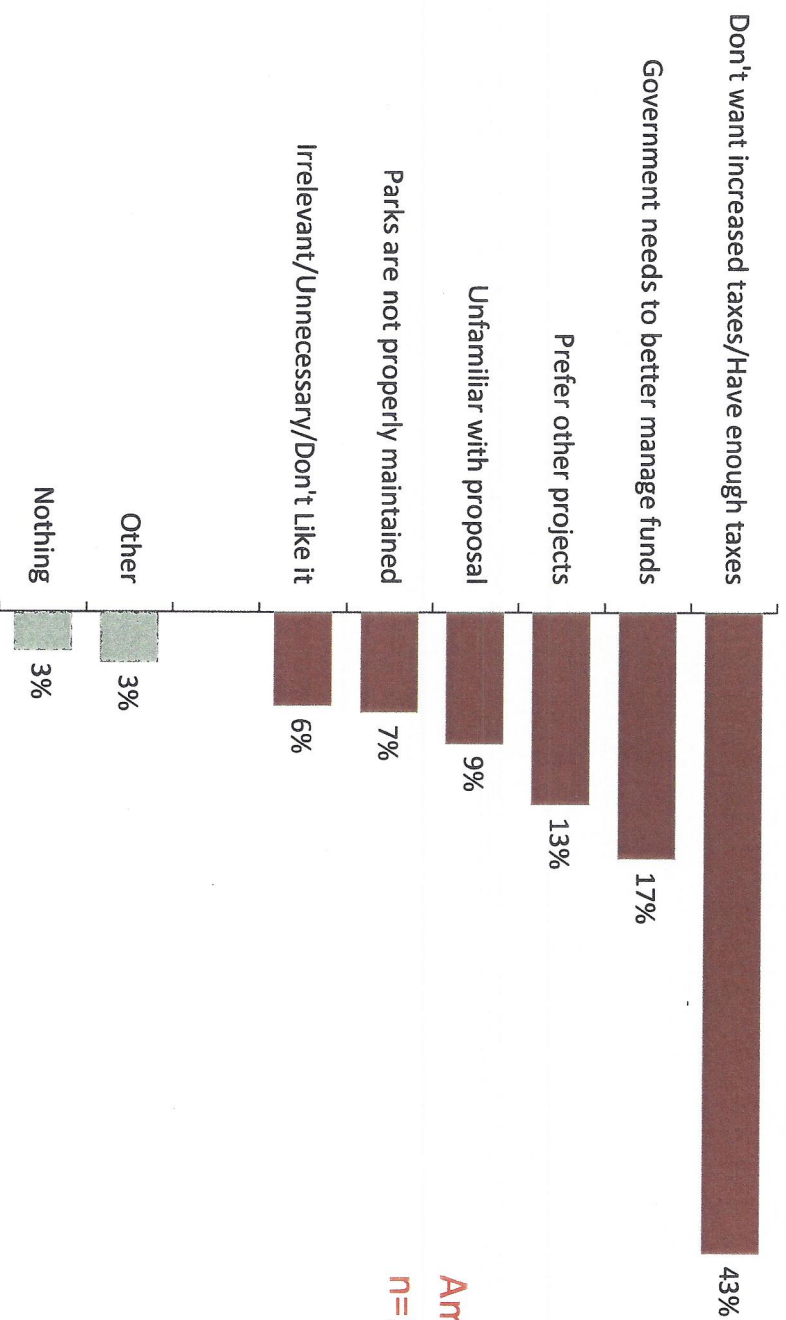
Among Yes Voters
n=103

Q14. Why would you vote yes or no on this measure?

Reasons for Voting No or Undecided



Resistance to taxes and government are the most common reasons for opposing the measure.



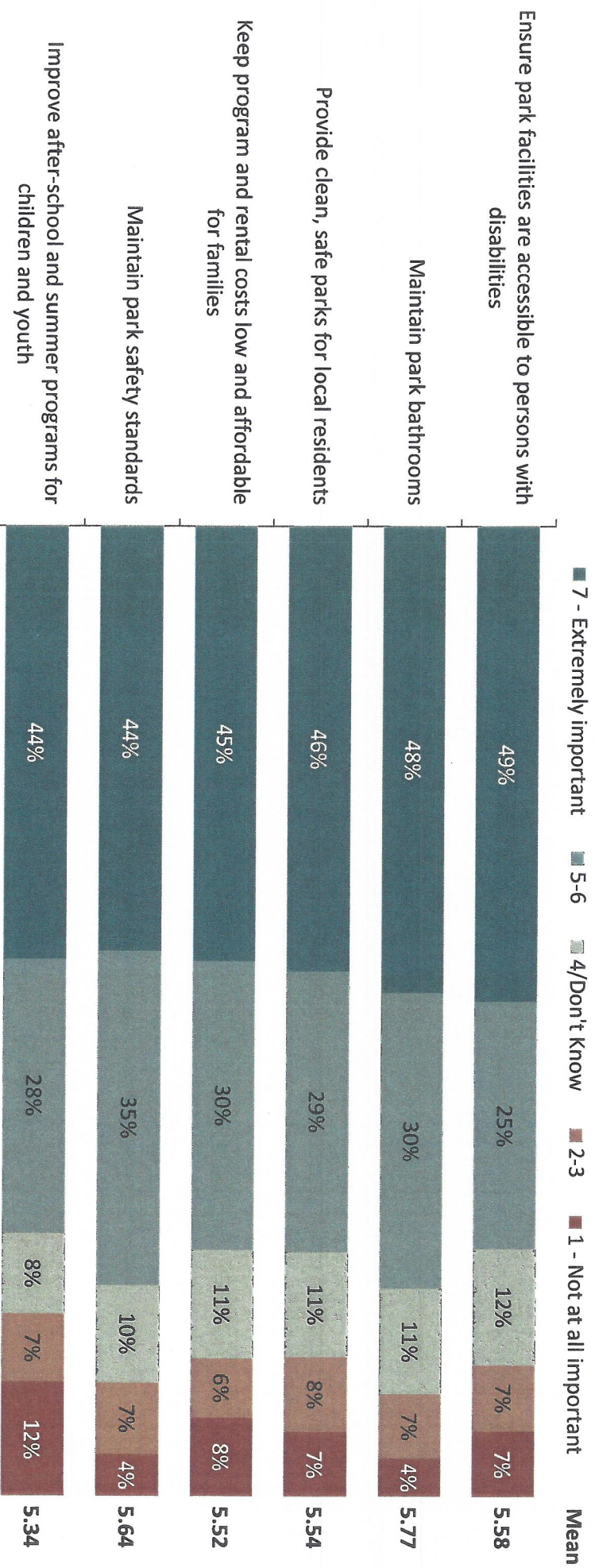
**Among No/Undecided Voters
n=121**

Q14. Why would you vote yes or no on this measure?

Parks & Recreation Priorities



Accessibility, bathroom maintenance, safety, and affordability are top priorities for local parks and recreation. Youth programs are also very important.

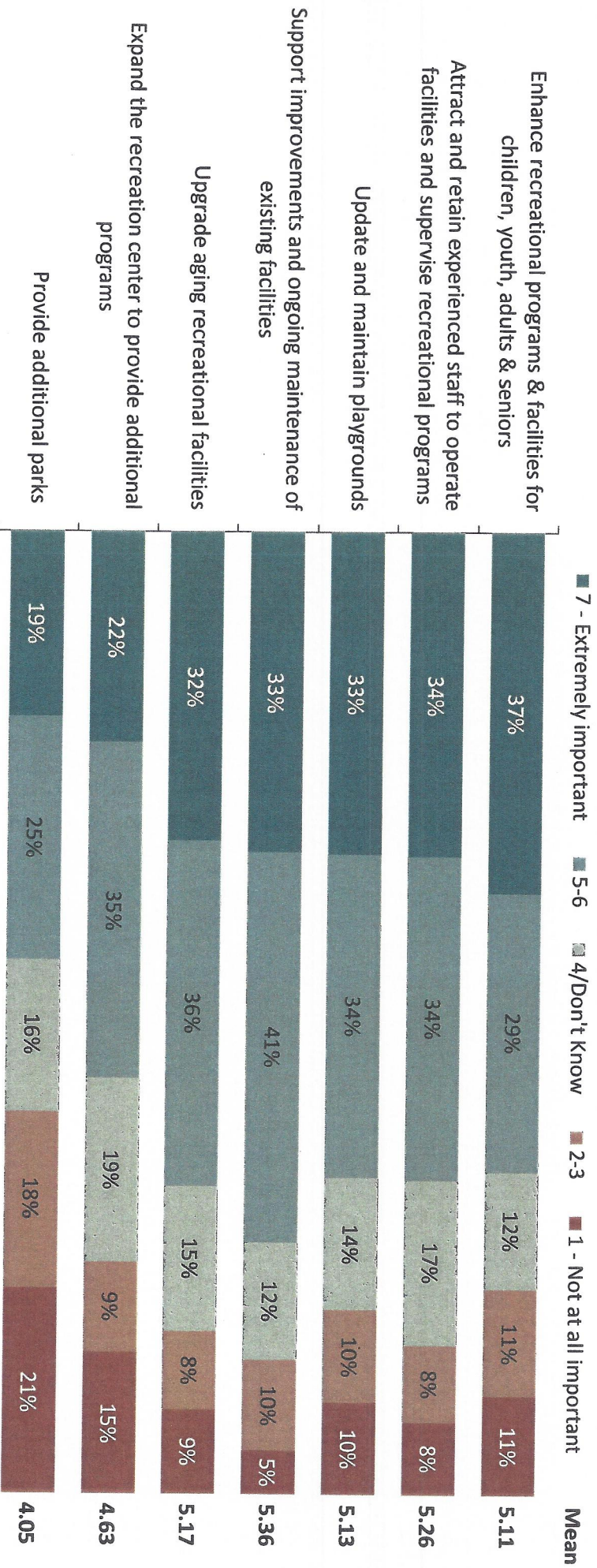


Q16-28. Below is a list of projects and priorities for parks and recreation in the North Monterey County area. Using the scale below, please indicate how important that item is to you.

Parks & Recreation Priorities



Other elements are also important. Maintenance and improvement of existing facilities is a higher priority overall than expanding the rec center and providing additional parks.

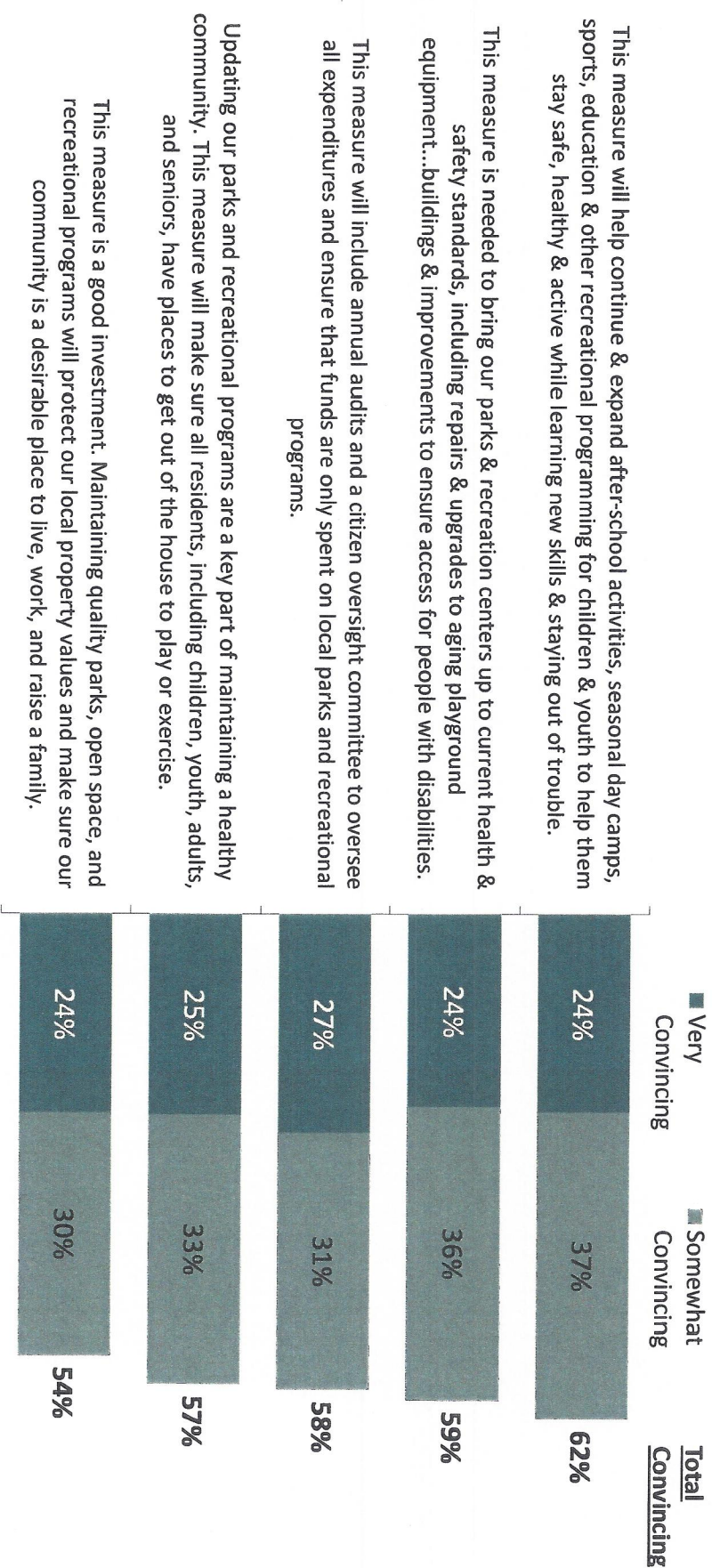


Q16-28. Below is a list of projects and priorities for parks and recreation in the North Monterey County area. Using the scale below, please indicate how important that item is to you.

Support Messages



All messages explaining the benefits of a measure are convincing to a majority, but none of them are convincing to two-thirds.

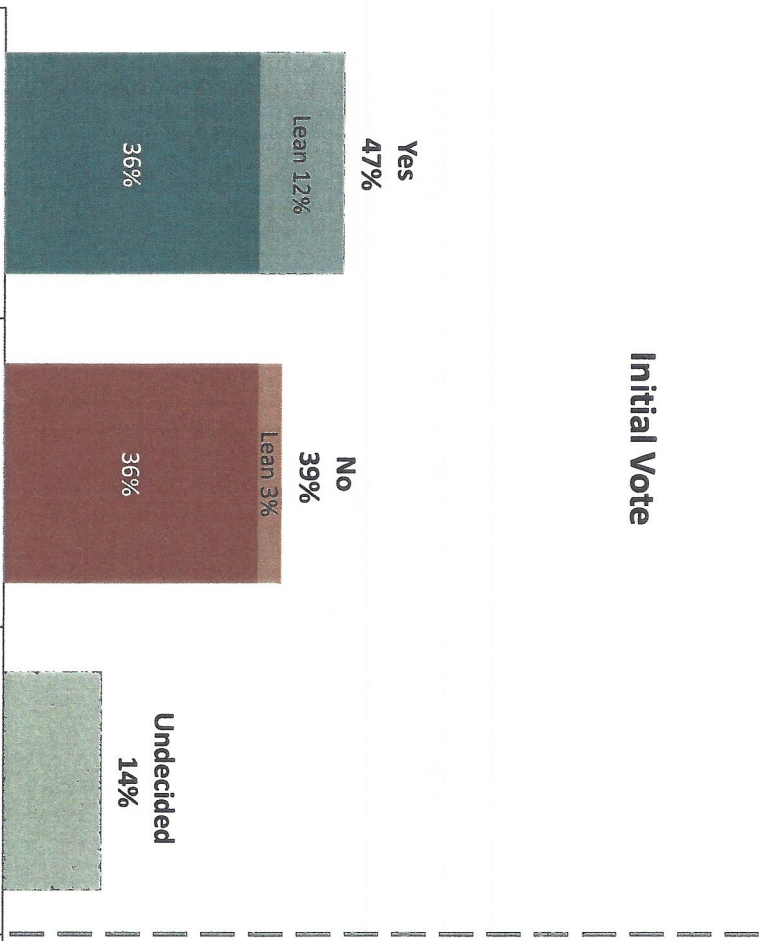


Q29-34. Below are some things supporters of this measure have said. Please rate how convincing each statement is as a reason to vote FOR the measure you read earlier for local parks and recreation.

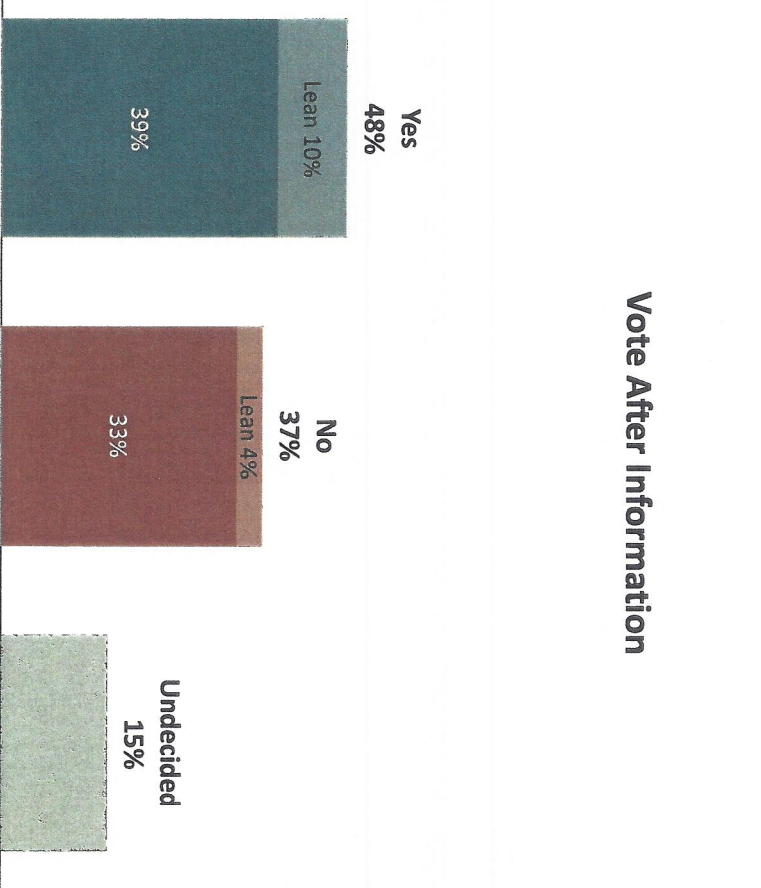
Vote After Information

There is only a very slight improvement in support for a parcel tax measure after information has been presented.

Initial Vote



Vote After Information



Q34. Given everything you have read, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject a measure that reads... (IF UNDECIDED: If you're not sure, do you lean towards voting yes or no on the measure?)

Measure Vote After Opposition Statement



After an opposition statement, over half of respondents vote "no".

Some people say that we already pay too much in taxes. If we have to raise taxes, it shouldn't be for parks and recreation. We need to focus on more important priorities, like affordable housing and public safety. Most tax measures have an expiration date, but this measure has no end date, that means we'll continue getting taxed even if the funding is no longer needed.



Q35. Given everything you have read, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject the \$80 parcel tax for local parks and recreation programs? (If UNDECIDED: if you're not sure, do you lean towards voting yes or no on the measure?)

Conclusions



- ▶ Despite recognition from local voters of the need for funding and desire for improvements to local parks and recreation, a parcel tax does not appear feasible at this time.
- ▶ While a measure this November is not recommended, an outreach and communications effort to raise awareness of the District and the work being done to maintain local parks and recreation may help, over time, to forge a relationship between voters and the District and thus increase support for a revenue measure in the future.



research

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