

Demand Based Assessment of Needs

Demand was also used to determine what additional facilities are needed in Round Rock. Demand is based both on actual participation in organized activities and in use of the parks, as well as by the level of use and preferences expressed by citizens through the citizen telephone survey, online survey and public meetings.

Demand According to Citizen Expressed Need / Attitude

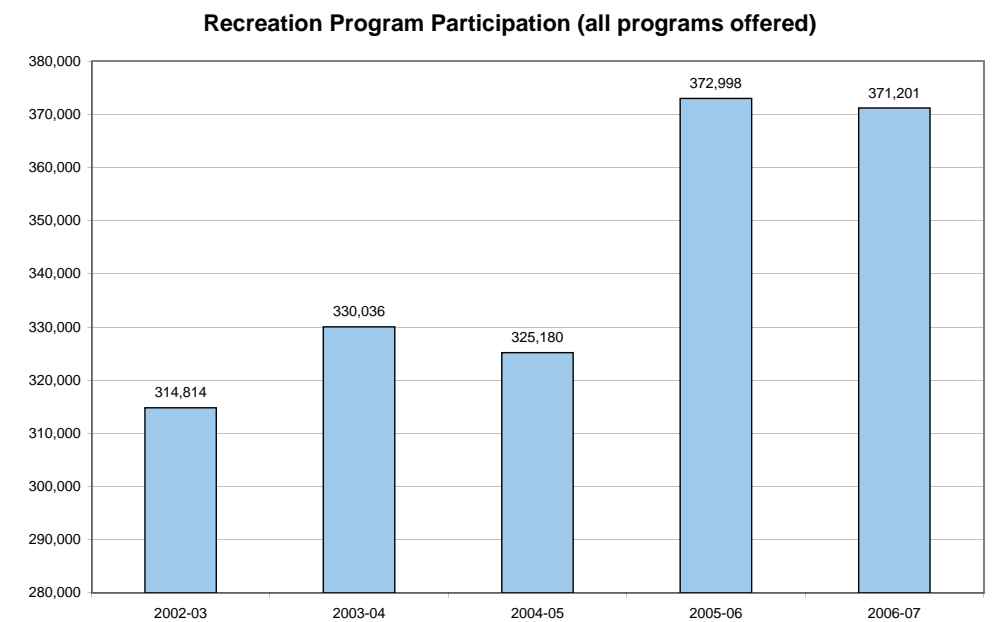
Respondents to the citizen telephone survey were asked to indicate which facilities they thought were most needed in the city. A summary of citizen participation is provided in Chapter 5.

In the citywide telephone survey, residents were asked which philosophy in terms of the type of facilities was the most important for the city to provide. The highest ranked facility was having parks that could be utilized by all residents including those with disabilities with 95% indicating it was either important or very important. This was followed by preserving environmentally sensitive areas such as natural creek corridors with 90% of the residents indicating it was important or very important. The third highest response was improving and enhancing the maintenance of park facilities with 85% indicating it was important or very important. The responses are shown in the table to the right.

Which Philosophy is the Most Important for the City to Pursue?

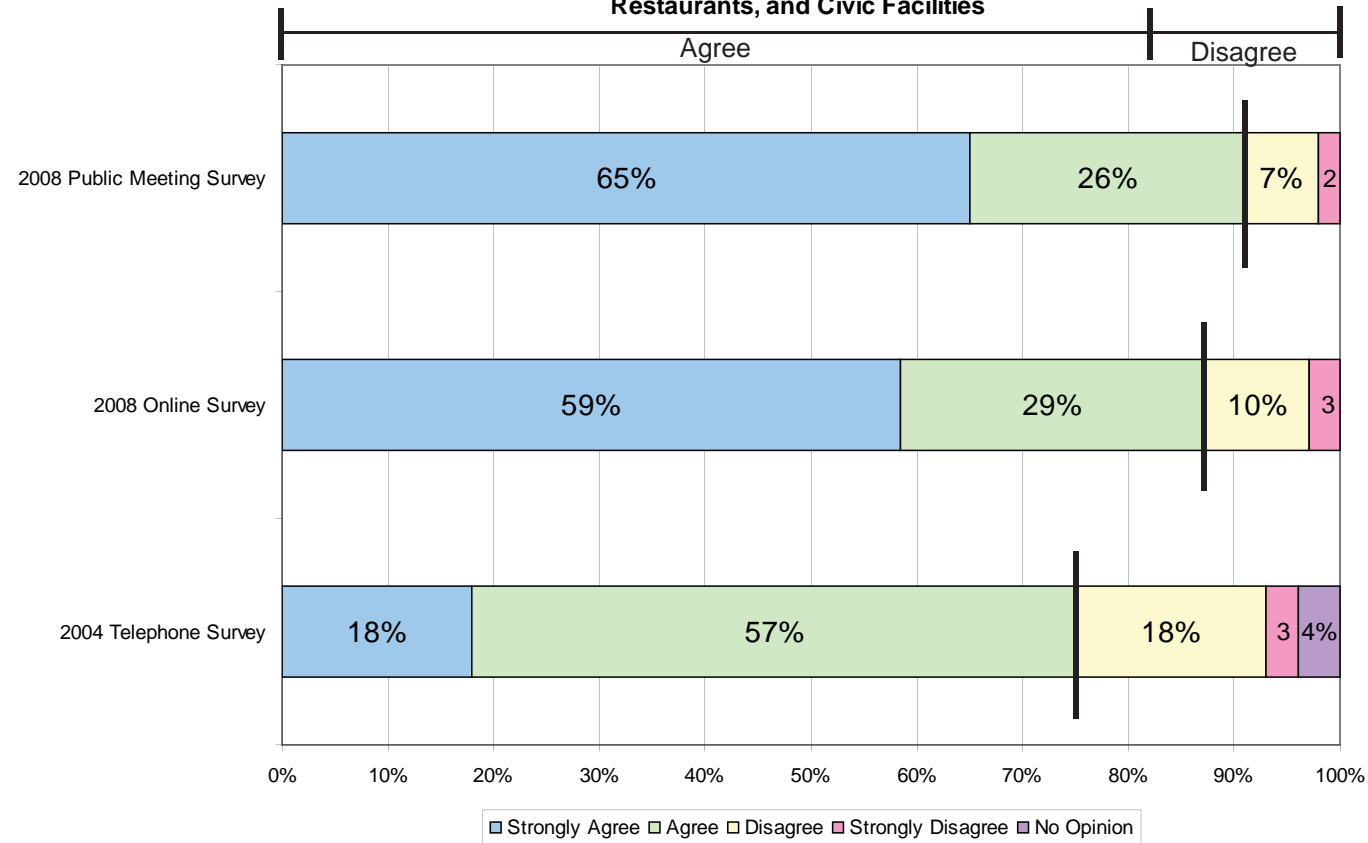
Have parks that can be utilized by all residents, including those with disabilities.....	95%
Work to preserve environmentally sensitive areas, areas such as natural creek corridors.....	90%
Improve and enhance maintenance of park facilities.....	85%
Renovate and add to existing parks in the city.....	82%
Expand youth recreation programs.....	80%
Work to increase the amount of public open space.....	80%
Have larger parks, within driving distance with more amenities.....	79%
Develop major trails for transportation and recreation in each sector of the city.....	78%
Construct more passive parks, facilities that do not include athletics as part of its amenities.....	74%
Offer large regional parks with a wide variety of facilities.....	74%
Develop signature park facilities such as a botanical garden, festival grounds or downtown park.....	69%
Have smaller parks, within driving distance with fewer amenities.....	68%
Construct more active parks, facilities that include athletics as part of its amenities.....	65%
Create an "Art in the Park" program.....	62%
Expand adult athletic leagues.....	52%
Increase registration and user fees so that those who use facilities or participate in programs fund a higher percentage of its operation and maintenance.....	51%

Demand According to Recreation Program Participation - the Round Rock Parks and Recreation Department tracks how many residents participate in the programs that are offered. The total number of residents who participated in any program that was offered by the department over the last five years is shown in the bar graph below. Although 2006-07 had slightly fewer participants than 2005-06, participation has increased a total of 17.9% since 2002. The recreation programs that the Parks and Recreation Department offer cater to a significant portion of population. Residents of Round Rock use and enjoy the recreation programs.



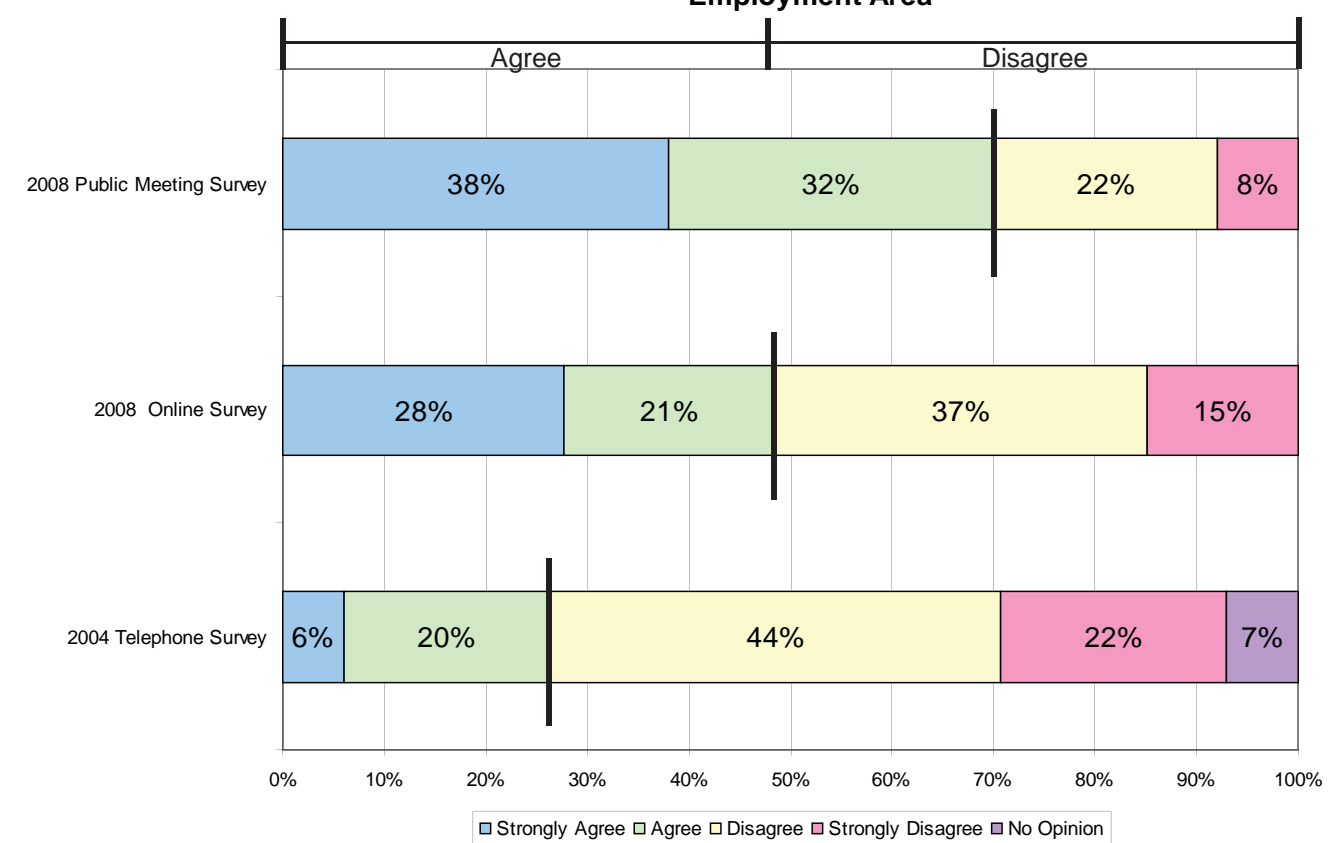
Mobility and Connectivity - Desired State Derived from Public Input

I Would Like Trails in Round Rock to Connect My Neighborhood to Nearby Schools, Shops, Restaurants, and Civic Facilities



Residents were asked in the 2004 Telephone Survey if they would like trails in Round Rock to connect their neighborhood to nearby schools, shops, restaurants, and civic facilities. The same question was then asked on the 2008 Public Meeting Survey and the 2008 Online Survey. In the 2004 Telephone Survey 75% of residents agreed that they would like trails to connect to places in Round Rock. This was higher among residents who participated in the 2008 Online Survey, with 88% agreeing. The 2008 Public Meeting Survey revealed slightly higher results with 91% agreeing with the statement that they would like to see trails in Round Rock connect to other facilities throughout the city.

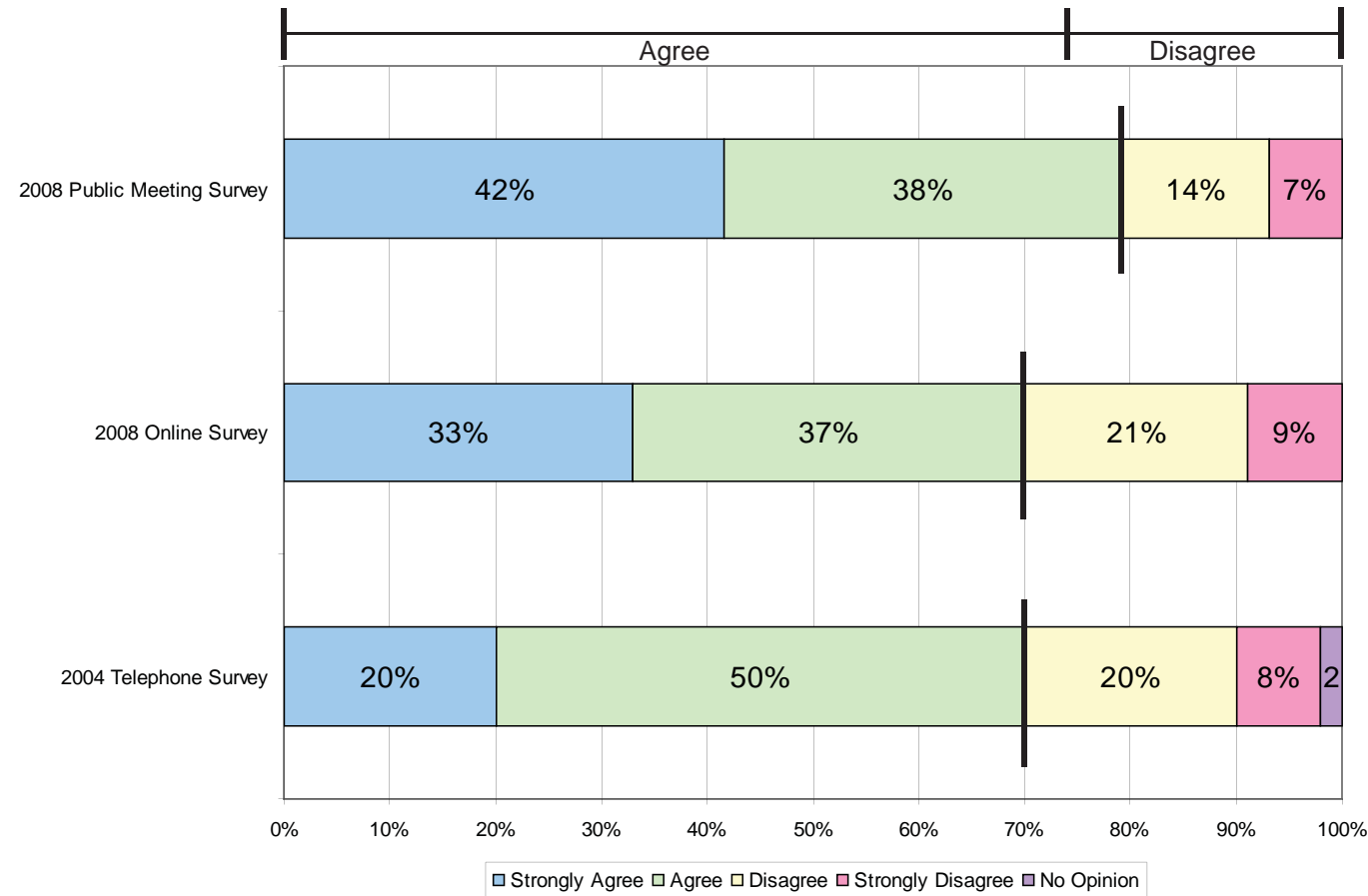
I Would Use My Bike to Get to Work if Trails Were More Accessible to My Employment Area



In 2004, only 26% of residents indicated they would use their bike to get to work if trails were more accessible to their employment area. In the 2008 Online Survey this percentage almost doubled with 49% agreeing that they would ride their bicycle to work if trails were more accessible to their work area.

In the 2008 Public Meeting Survey more than two-thirds, 70%, indicated they would ride their bike to work if trails were more accessible to their employment areas. With such a high percentage of the population willing to ride their bicycles, trails in Round Rock should be developed as an alternate form of transportation, not just for recreational use.

I Would Support Widening Some Roadways to Allow for Bicycle Lanes



In 2004 70% of residents agreed with the statement that they would support widening some roadways to allow for bicycle lanes. The results of the 2008 Online Survey were the same with 70% agreement. The 2008 Public Meeting Survey results were slightly higher with 80% agreeing that they would support widening some roadways to allow for bicycle lanes. Again with such a high level of support, trails and bicycle lanes should seriously be considered as an alternate form of transportation for the citizens of Round Rock.

Recreation and Culture - Desired State Derived from Public Input

The survey that was distributed at the public input meetings contained the same questions that were later posted on the city website as an online survey. The questions on these two surveys covered a wide range of topics, encompassing most of what the Parks and Recreation Department maintains and offers.

Residents were asked on which recreational program categories they would like the city to place more emphasis. They were then given a list of recreational programs and asked to check all the programs they felt needed more emphasis. The results are shown below.

Residents were given a list of events and special activities, then asked which events they would like to see the City of Round Rock sponsor. The results are shown below.

At the public input meetings and on the online survey, citizens were asked what additional amenities they would like to see in Old Settlers Park. They were then allowed to choose up to five amenities. The ten most popular amenities are shown below for each survey.

Programs Needing More Emphasis (Public Meeting Survey)

Fitness.....	41%
Athletic leagues.....	24%
Aquatics.....	24%
After school / day camps.....	20%
More emphasis not needed.....	13%
Gymnastics / dance.....	8%
Other.....	2%

Special Events Residents Would Like to See the City Sponsor (Public Meeting Survey)

Music / art festival.....	47%
Street fair.....	38%
Holiday festival of lights.....	36%
Cultural festival.....	29%
Food / beverage event.....	28%
Teen specific events.....	25%
Other.....	20%

What Additional Amenities Would You Like to See in Old Settlers Park? (Public Meeting Survey)

Botanical garden.....	61%
Preserved open space.....	50%
Additional trails.....	47%
Veloway.....	37%
Canoe rentals.....	36%
Additional football, soccer and cricket fields.....	36%
Dog park.....	33%
Skate park.....	33%
Amphitheater.....	25%

Programs Needing More Emphasis (Online Survey)

Fitness.....	38%
Athletic leagues.....	26%
Other.....	26%
Aquatics.....	21%
More emphasis not needed.....	19%
After school / day camps.....	18%
Gymnastics / dance.....	7%

Special Events Residents Would Like to See the City Sponsor (Online Survey)

Music / art festival.....	68%
Street fair.....	62%
Holiday festival of lights.....	59%
Food / beverage event.....	41%
Cultural festival.....	39%
Teen specific events.....	28%
Other.....	7%

What Additional Amenities Would You Like to See in Old Settlers Park? (Online Survey)

Additional trails.....	62%
Beautification and trees.....	40%
Botanical garden.....	39%
Amphitheater.....	36%
Canoe rentals.....	33%
Community / festival plaza.....	30%
Dog park.....	27%
Veloway.....	27%
Challenge course.....	23%
Additional pavilions.....	20%

Residents were asked at the public meeting and in the online survey which amenities they would like to see added as a basic component to neighborhood parks in Round Rock. Both surveys revealed trails were the number one rated response. The results are shown below.

Which Elements Would You Like to See Added as Basic Components of a Neighborhood Park? (Public Meeting Survey)

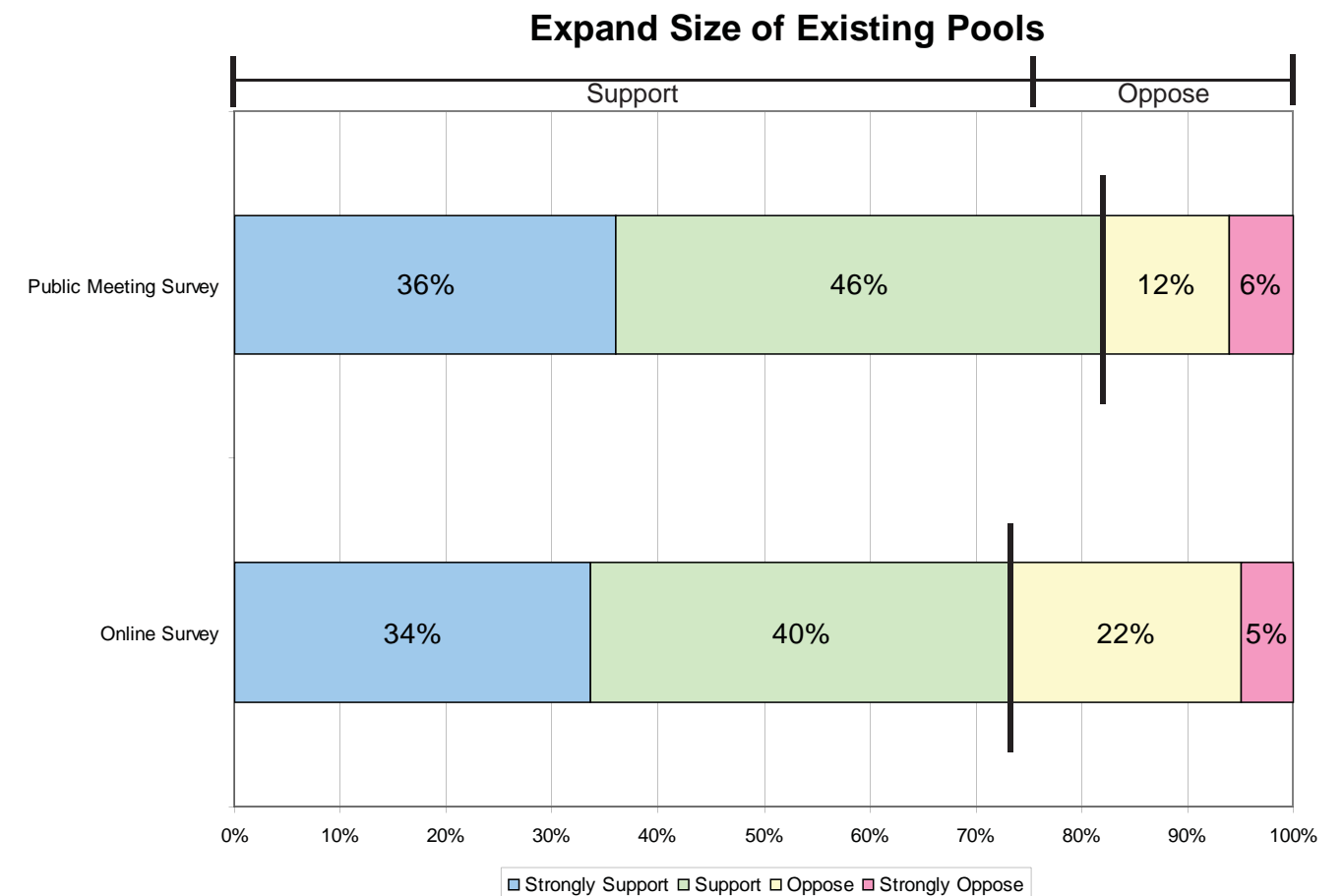
1) Trails.....	62%
2) Lighting.....	48%
3) Beautification and Trees.....	47%
4) Add Picnic Tables/Benches.....	38%
5) Playscape Shade Structure.....	34%
6) Exercise Stations.....	26%
7) Basketball Court.....	24%
8) Small Pavilion.....	24%
9) Sand Volleyball.....	16%
10) Additional Playscape.....	16%

Which Elements Would You Like to See Added as Basic Components of a Neighborhood Park? (Online Survey)

1) Trails.....	57%
2) Beautification and Trees.....	45%
3) Lighting.....	34%
4) Playscape Shade Structure.....	34%
5) Add Picnic Tables/Benches.....	30%
6) Small Pavilion.....	21%
7) Basketball Court.....	16%
8) Exercise Stations.....	16%
9) Additional Playscape.....	13%
10) Sand Volleyball.....	10%

In both the public meeting survey and the online survey, residents were asked how much they would support or oppose expanding or adding new aquatic and recreation facilities. Their responses are discussed below and on the following pages.

When residents were asked whether they would support or oppose expanding the size of the existing pools in Round Rock, 82% of those who participated in the public meeting survey and 74% of those who took the online survey said they would support the expansion. Many of the pools in Round Rock are older pools with little or no sprayground features such as the Lake Creek Pool. Simple improvements and renovations can be made to these pools that will attract more people to the facility.



The Round Rock Strategic Parks and Recreation Master Plan

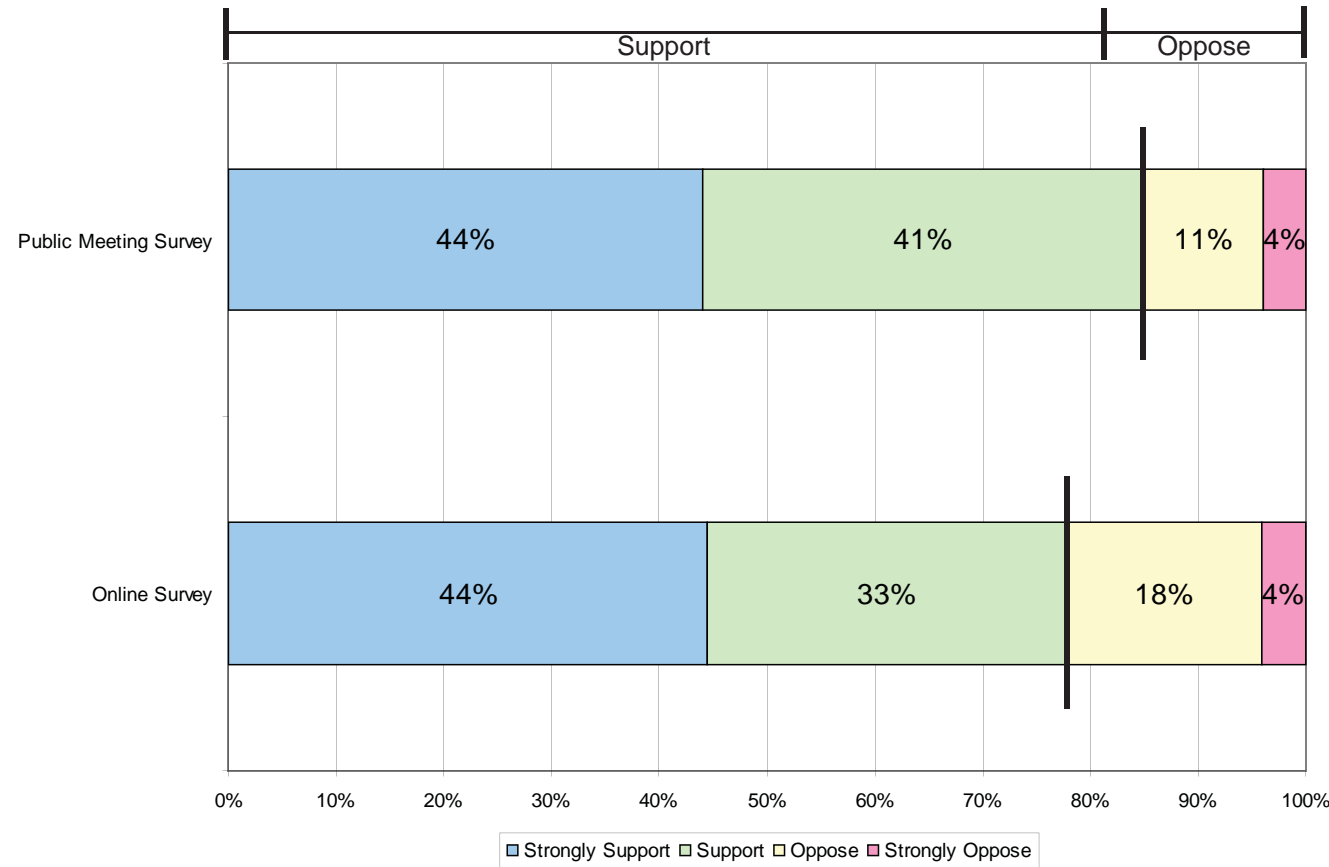
Mobility & Connectivity • Recreation & Culture • Community & Character • Natural Resources & Environment • High Value Governance



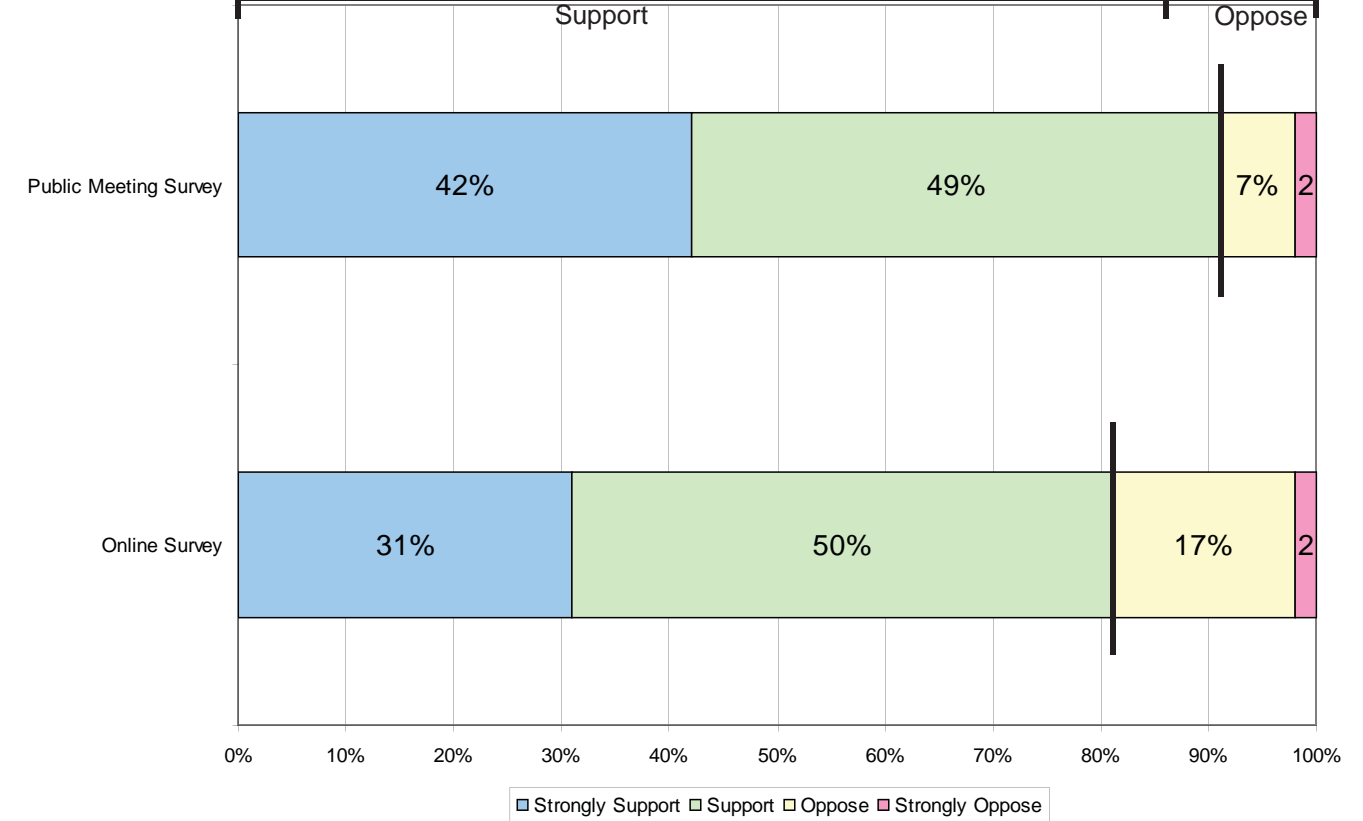
The Rock 'N River Family Aquatic Center currently has two additional phases planned for expansion. When residents were asked whether or not they would support the expansion, 85% of the public meeting survey respondents and 77% of the online survey respondents indicated they would support the expansion. The current facility has many features for families with young children and toddlers. With the expansion that is proposed, water recreation activities would be available to an older group of teenagers and young adults.

Round Rock currently has one recreation center, the Clay Madsen Recreation Center, with plans for a second recreation center (field house format) adjacent to the high school on the west side of IH-35. Residents were asked if they would support expanding the current facility with more amenities or additional space. 91% of the public meeting survey respondents and 81% of the online survey respondents indicated they would support expanding the current facility. If it is not feasible for the City to expand the current center, then providing multiple centers is one way to reduce the amount of needed space at the Clay Madsen Center.

Expand Rock 'N River Family Aquatic Complex



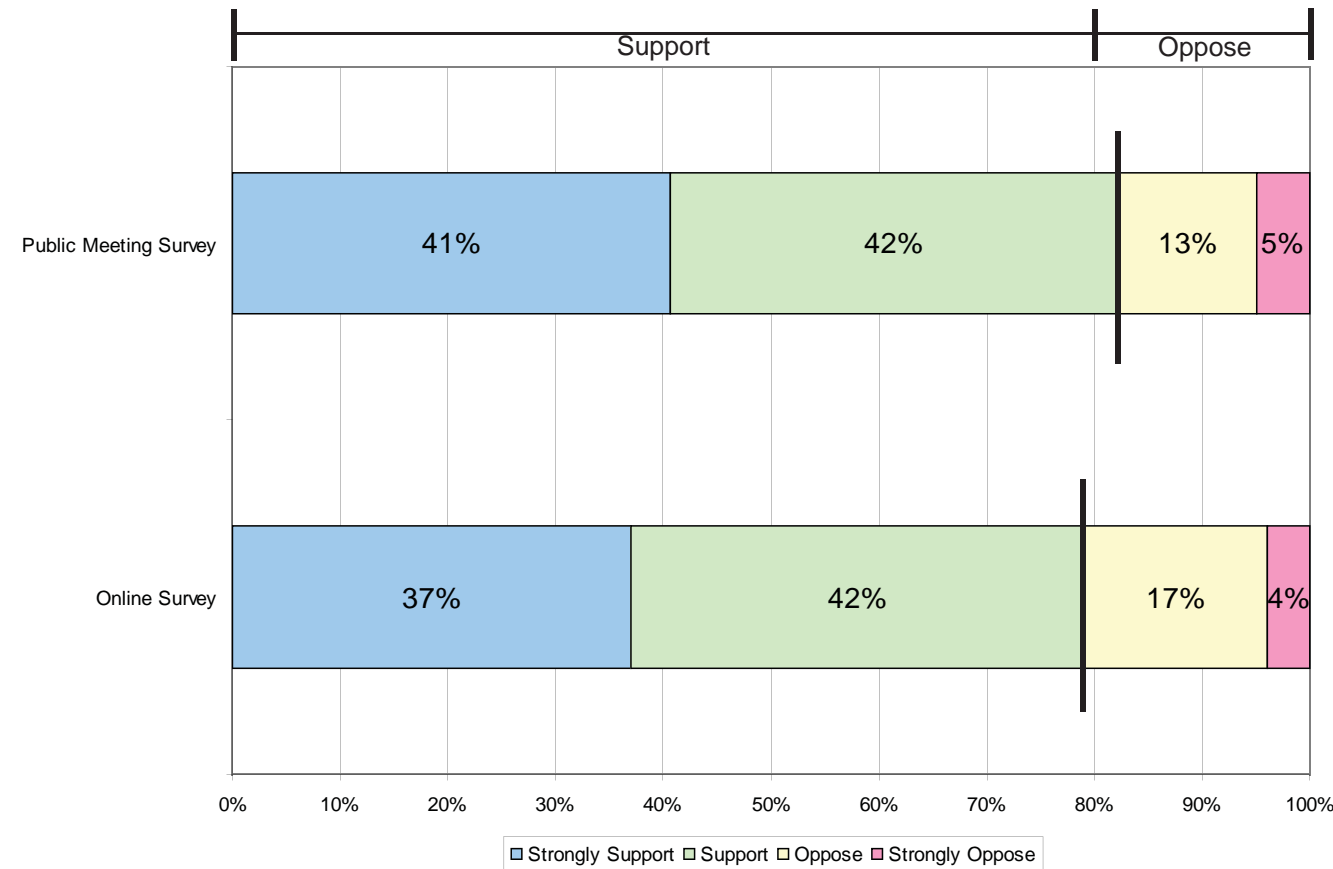
Expand Current Recreation Centers through More Amenities or Space



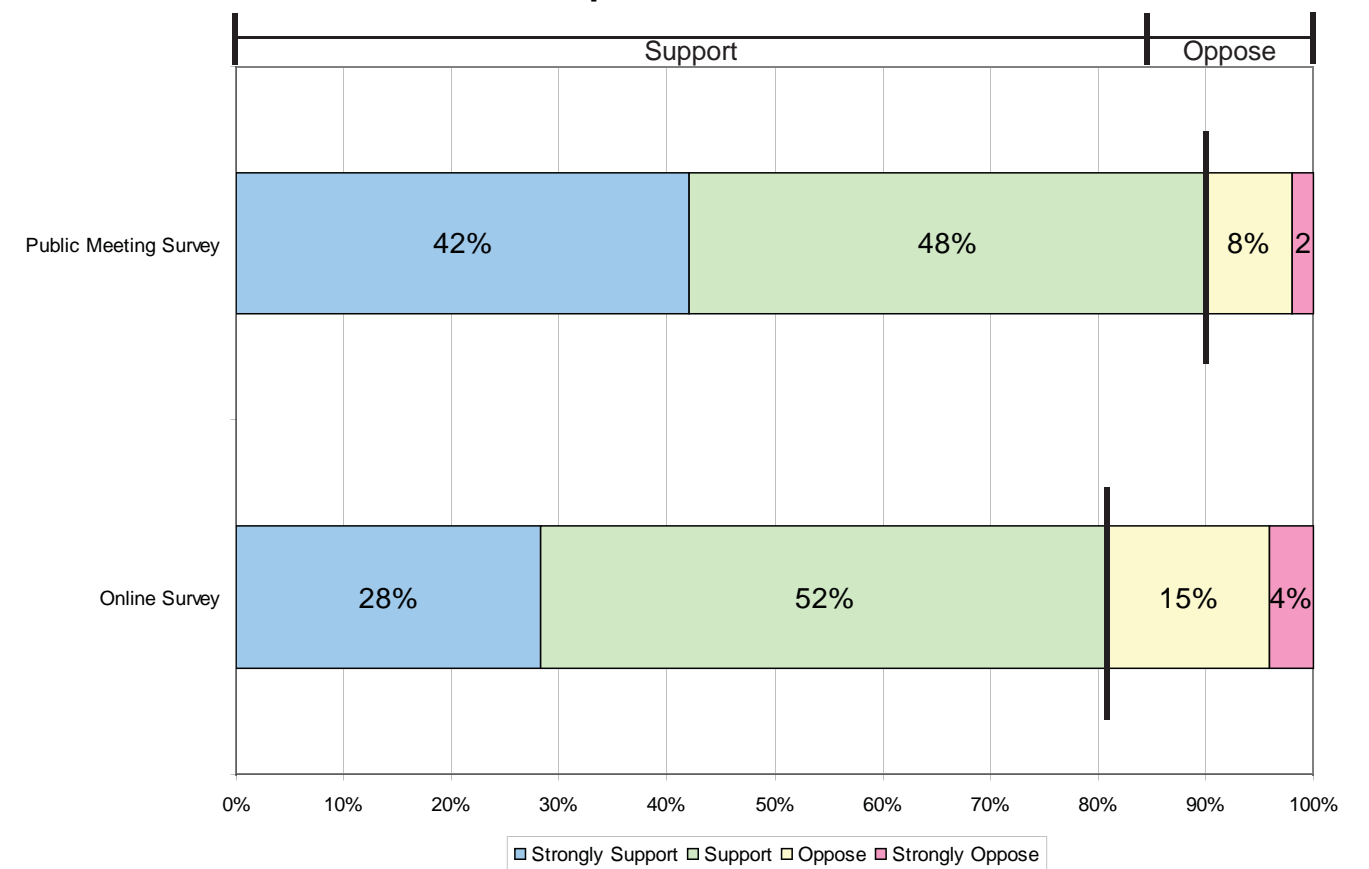
As mentioned previously, Round Rock currently has one recreation center with plans for a second on the west side. As the population of Round Rock continues to grow, it may be necessary for the City to construct a third center in the north long term. When residents were asked whether or not they would support building a center in the north, 83% of those who participated in the public meeting survey and 79% of those who took the online survey said they would support a center in the north.

Many cities have a recreation center specifically geared towards teens. Teens are often the hardest market for a city to reach and providing a safe place specifically for them can increase participation in programming and activities. Residents were asked if they would support or oppose developing a center for teen activities. 90% of the public meeting survey respondents and 80% of the online survey respondents indicated they would support developing this type of facility.

Build a New Recreation Center in the North



Develop a Center for Teen Activities

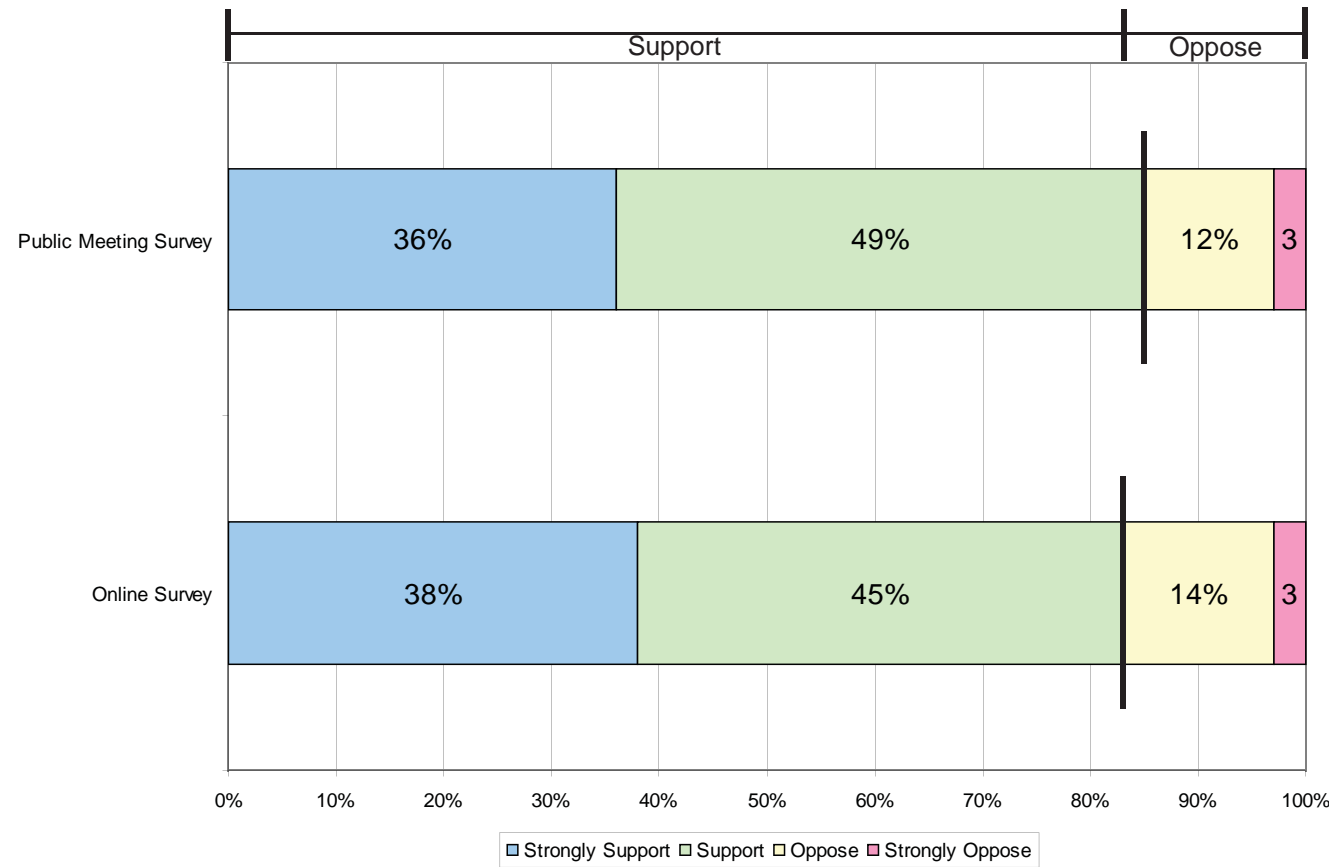


Community and Character - Desired State Derived from Public Input

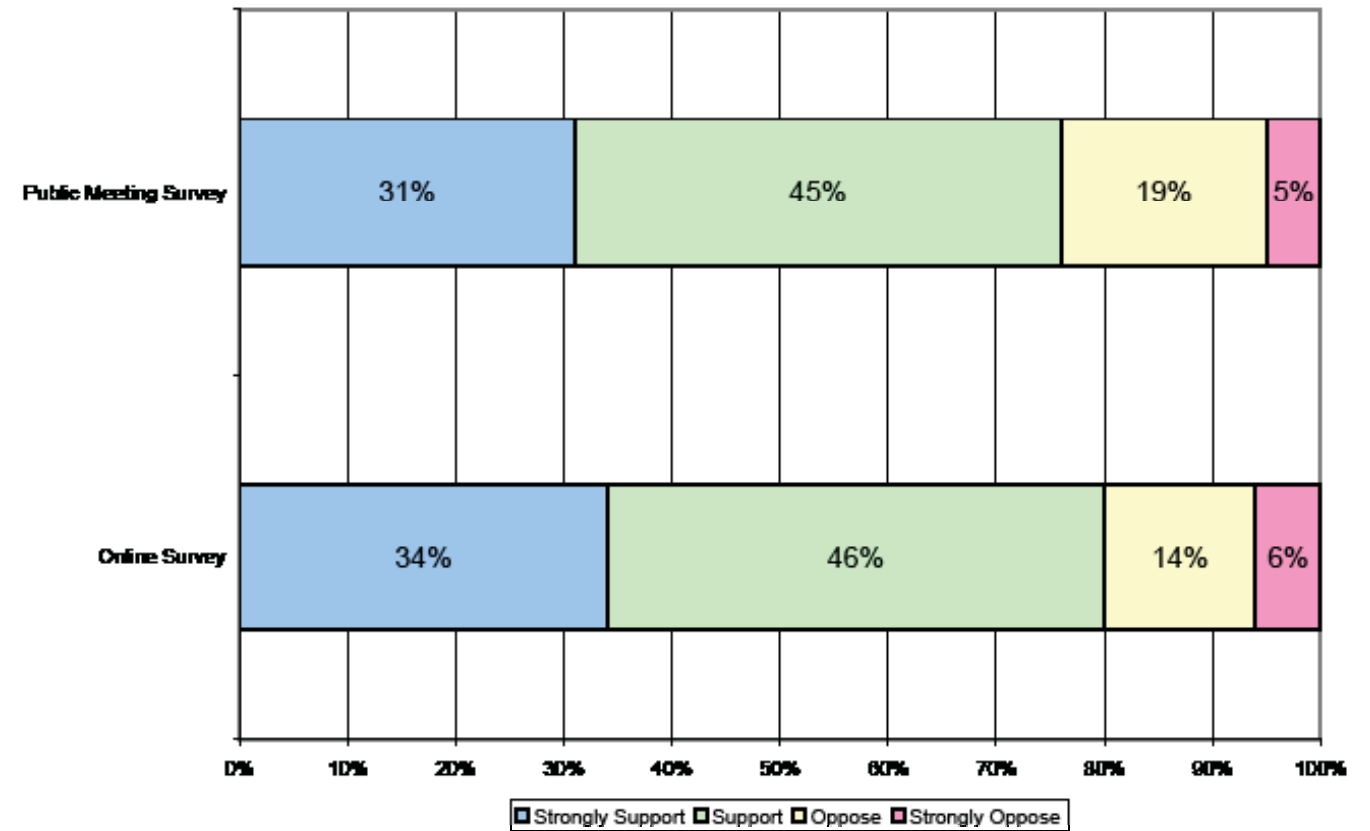
A botanical garden received the highest level of support among residents surveyed. There was 85% support among those who took the public meeting survey and 83% support among those who participated in the online survey for a botanical garden. With such a high level of support, Round Rock should install a botanical garden to increase the community's character and image.

The only current outdoor performance venue in Round Rock is the amphitheater behind the BACA Center. The facility is small and can only accommodate a few hundred spectators. Residents were asked if they would support the City constructing a new, much larger amphitheater and there was a very high level of support for this type of facility. 76% of those who attended the public meetings and 80% of those who participated in the online survey indicated they would support a new, larger amphitheater.

Support or Oppose a Botanical Garden



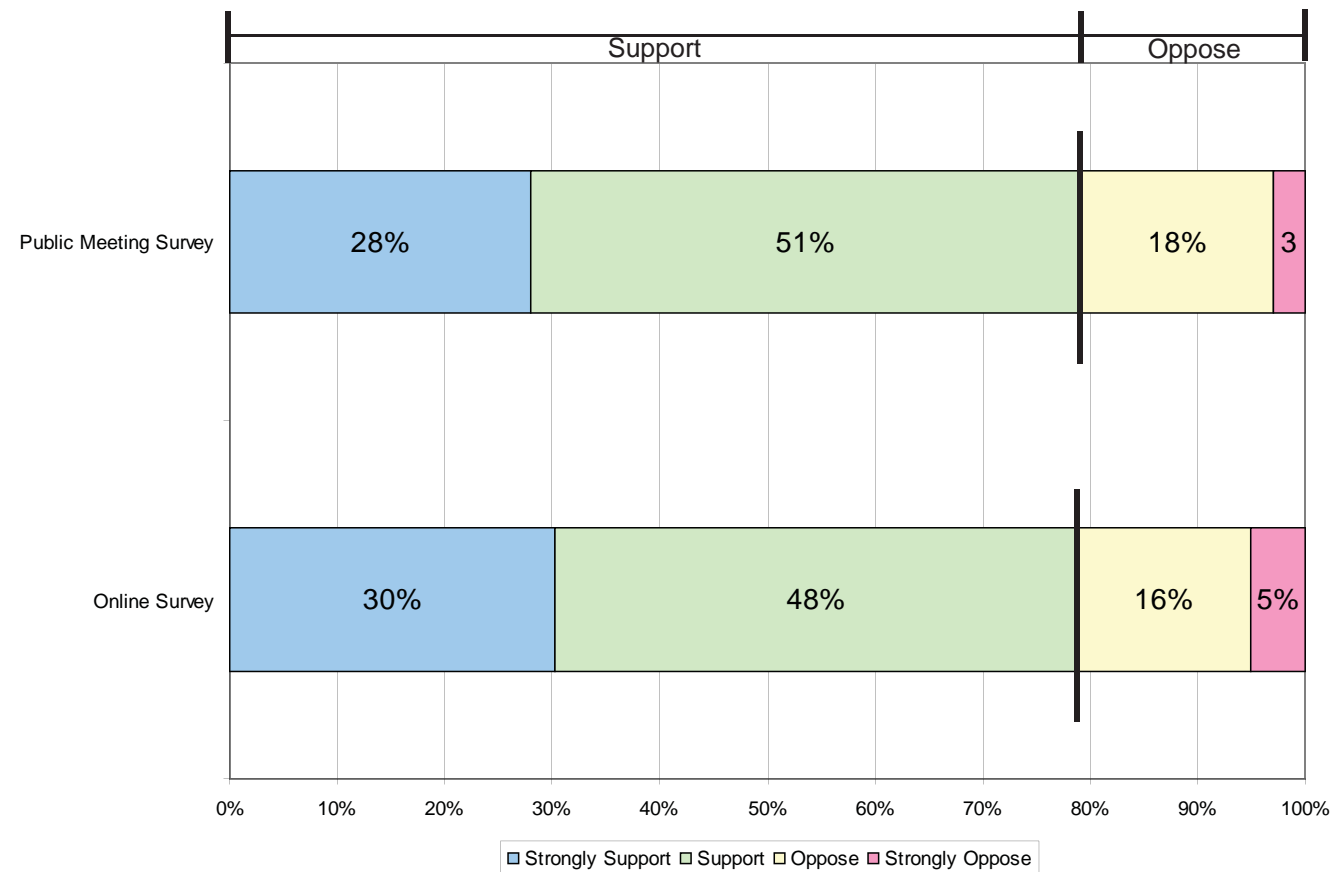
Support or Oppose a New Large Amphitheater



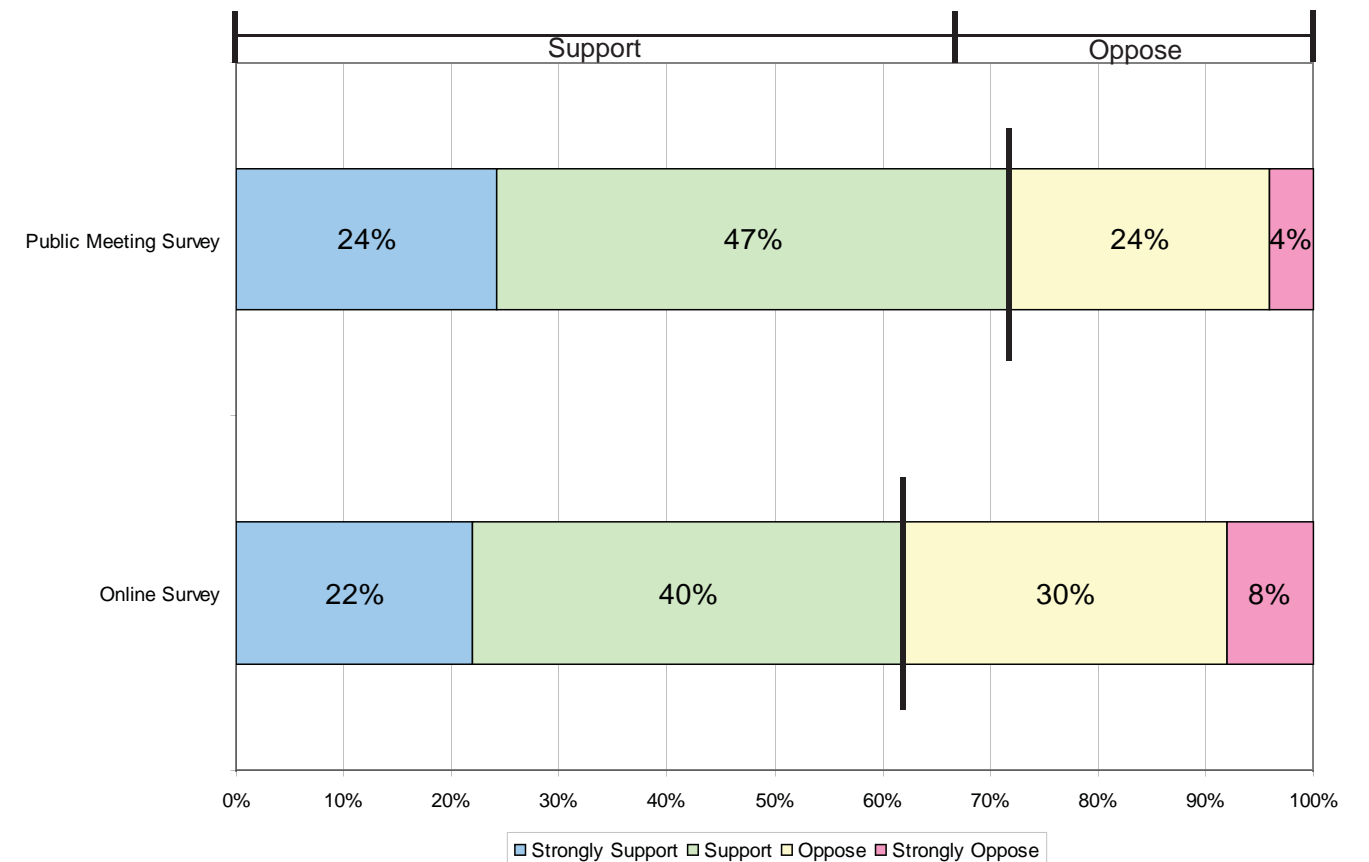
Having a community performing arts theater building received high level of support with over three-fourths of the population surveyed indicating they would support such a facility. 79% of the residents who took the public meeting survey and 78% of those who took the online indicated they would support a community performing arts theater building. A facility such as this could offer a large variety of live performances such as plays, musicals, ballets, operas, symphonies, children’s productions, and seasonal holiday productions.

Adding an art museum in Round Rock also received a high level of support. 71% of the public meeting surveyed residents and 62% of the online survey participants indicated they would support constructing an art museum. When constructing a facility such as this, the city could partner with other entities such as Williamson County, Round Rock ISD, the universities in Round Rock, local art groups and dealers, and other area businesses.

Support or Oppose a Community Performing Arts Theater Building



Support or Oppose an Art Museum



The Round Rock Strategic Parks and Recreation Master Plan

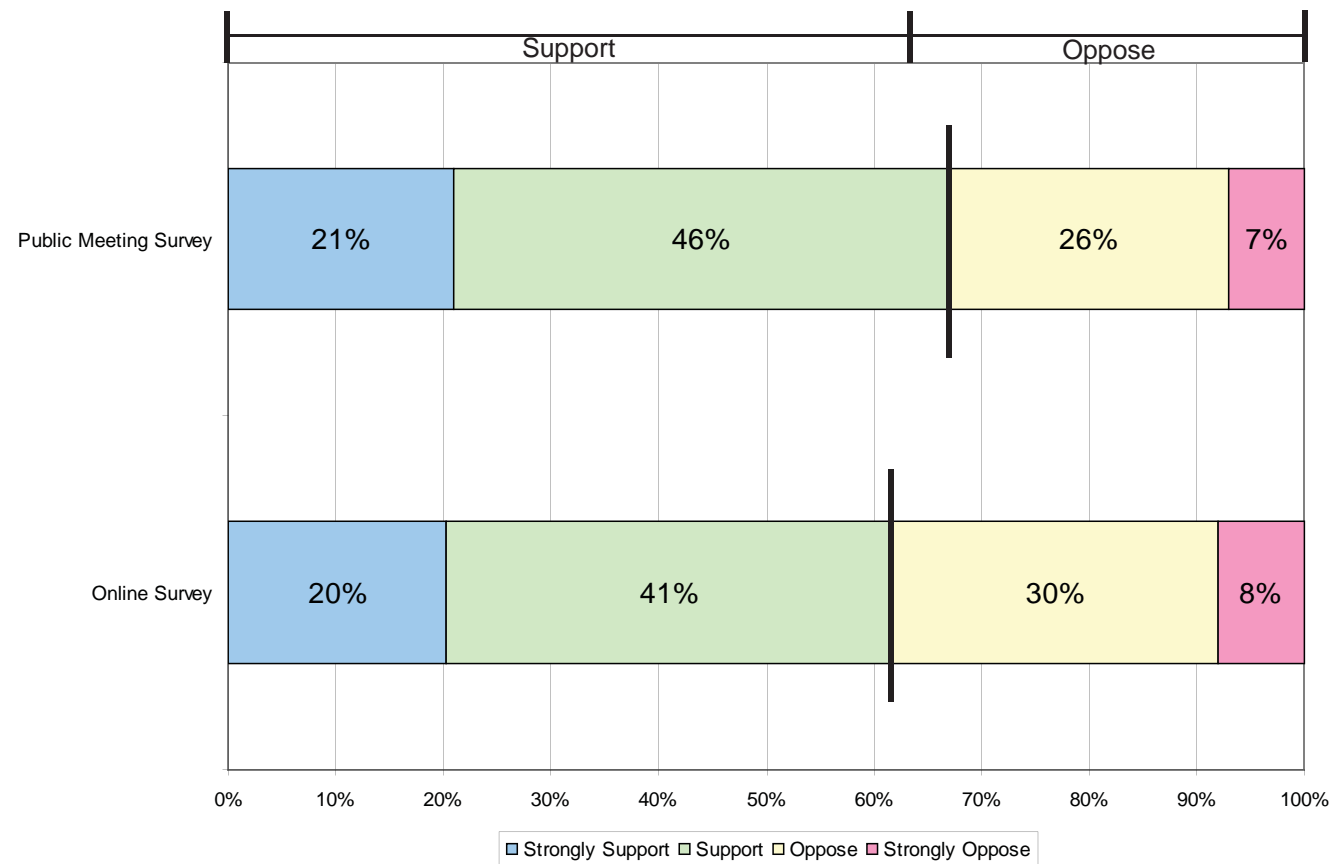
Mobility & Connectivity • Recreation & Culture • Community & Character • Natural Resources & Environment • High Value Governance



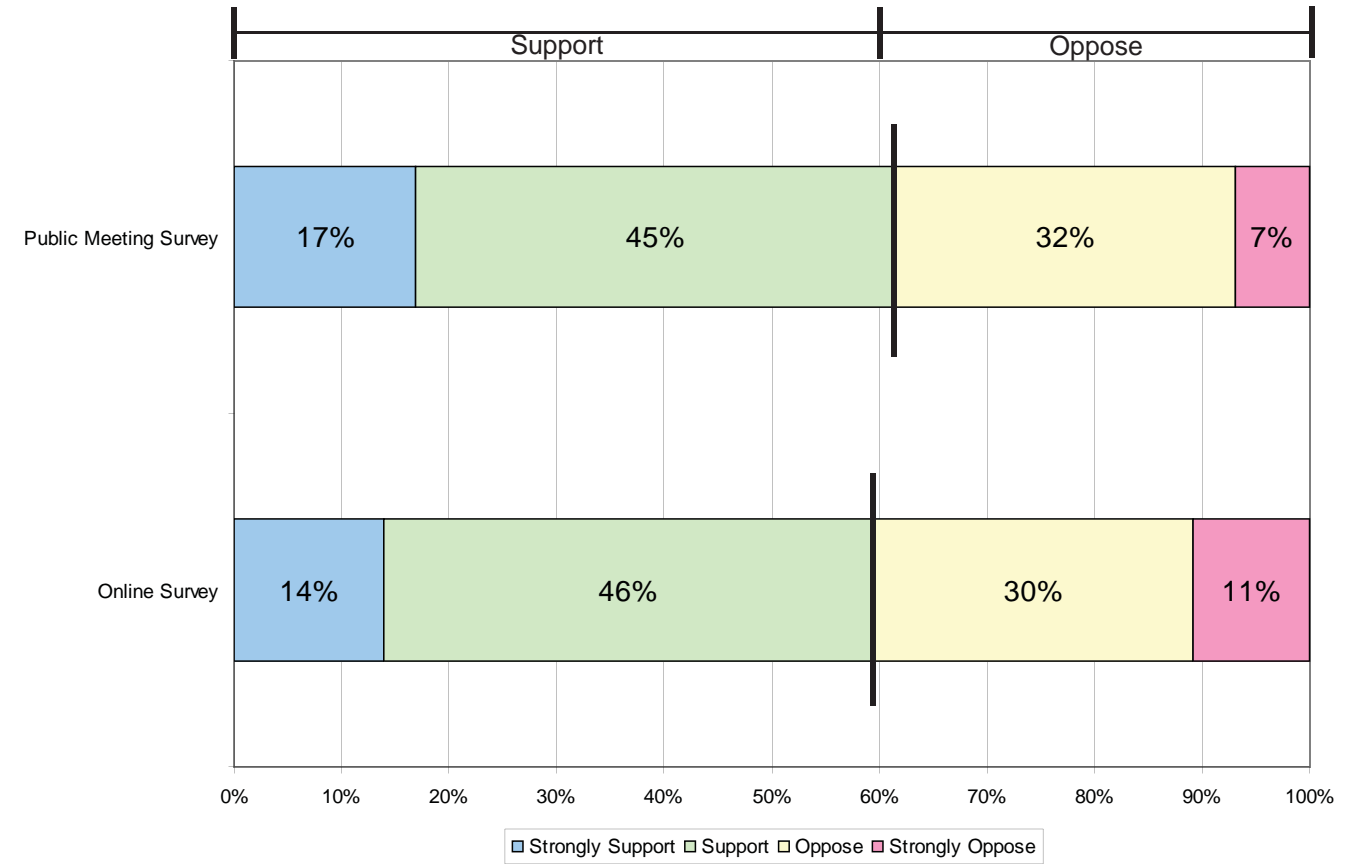
Residents who attended the public meetings and who participated in the online survey were given a list of ways to improve Round Rock's community and character image. The residents were asked how likely they were to support or oppose the different methods. When asked how likely they would support or oppose installing a sculpture garden, 67% of those who attended the public meetings and 61% of those who participated in the online survey indicated they would support or strongly support a sculpture garden.

Support for commissioning public art received the lowest amount of support of all the ways of improving Round Rock's community image and character. However, more than half of the residents still supported this method. 62% of those who filled out a public meeting survey and 60% of those who took the online survey supported commissioning public art in Round Rock.

Support or Oppose a Sculpture Garden

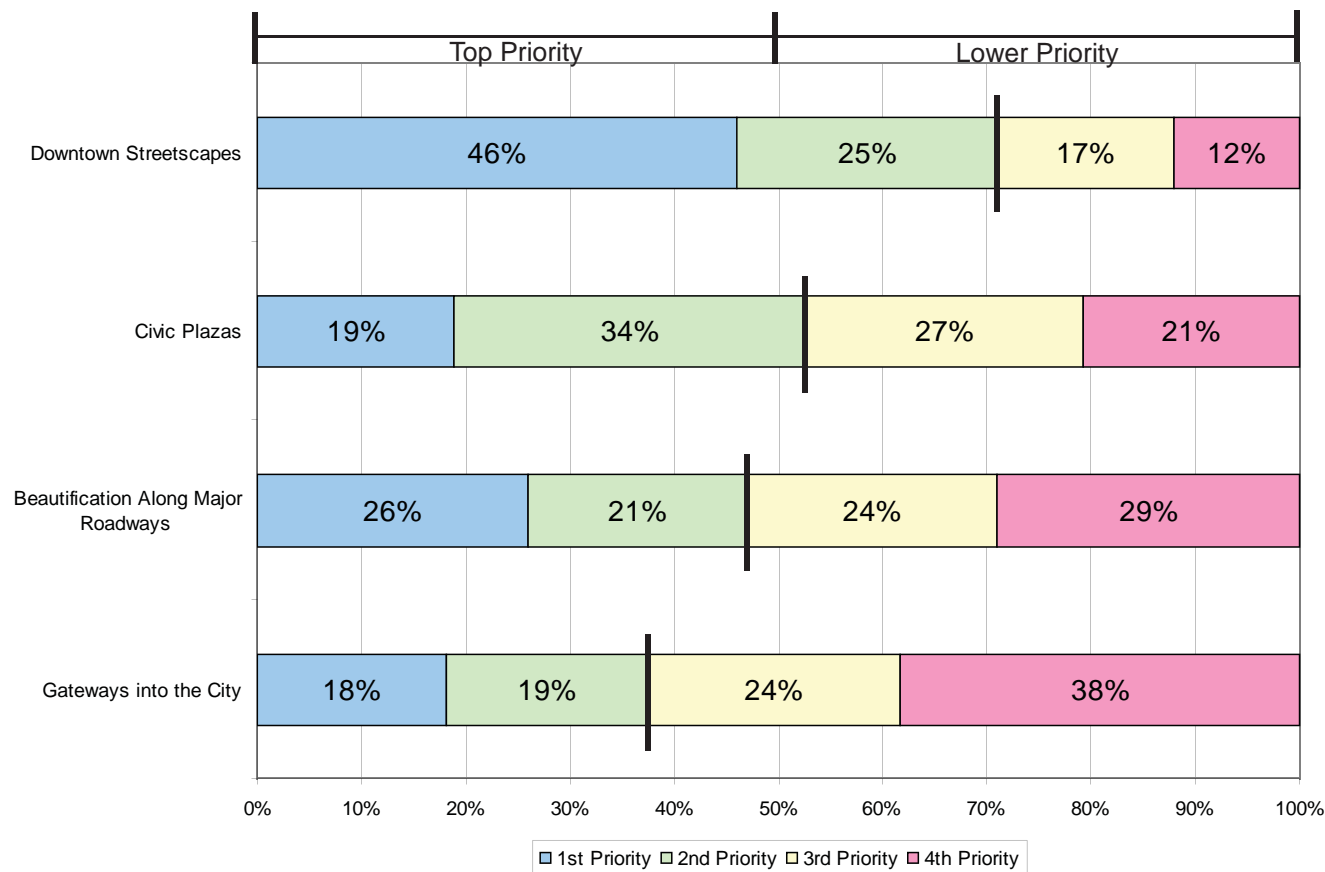


Support or Oppose Commissioning Public Art



Residents were given a list of four different types of beautification efforts that are done by the City of Round Rock. They were then asked to rank in order which effort they felt should be the first, second, third and the fourth priority. Downtown Streetscapes was the top beautification priority; and the City is going to address Downtown Streetscapes in the Downtown Master Plan which is currently being developed. The second priority was Civic Plazas. Round Rock currently does not have a signature plaza area, especially in the downtown area. This should also be addressed in the Downtown Master Plan. The third priority was beautification along major roadways in Round Rock; followed by the fourth priority of beautification of the gateways into the City.

Ranking of the Most Important Public Space Beautification Efforts



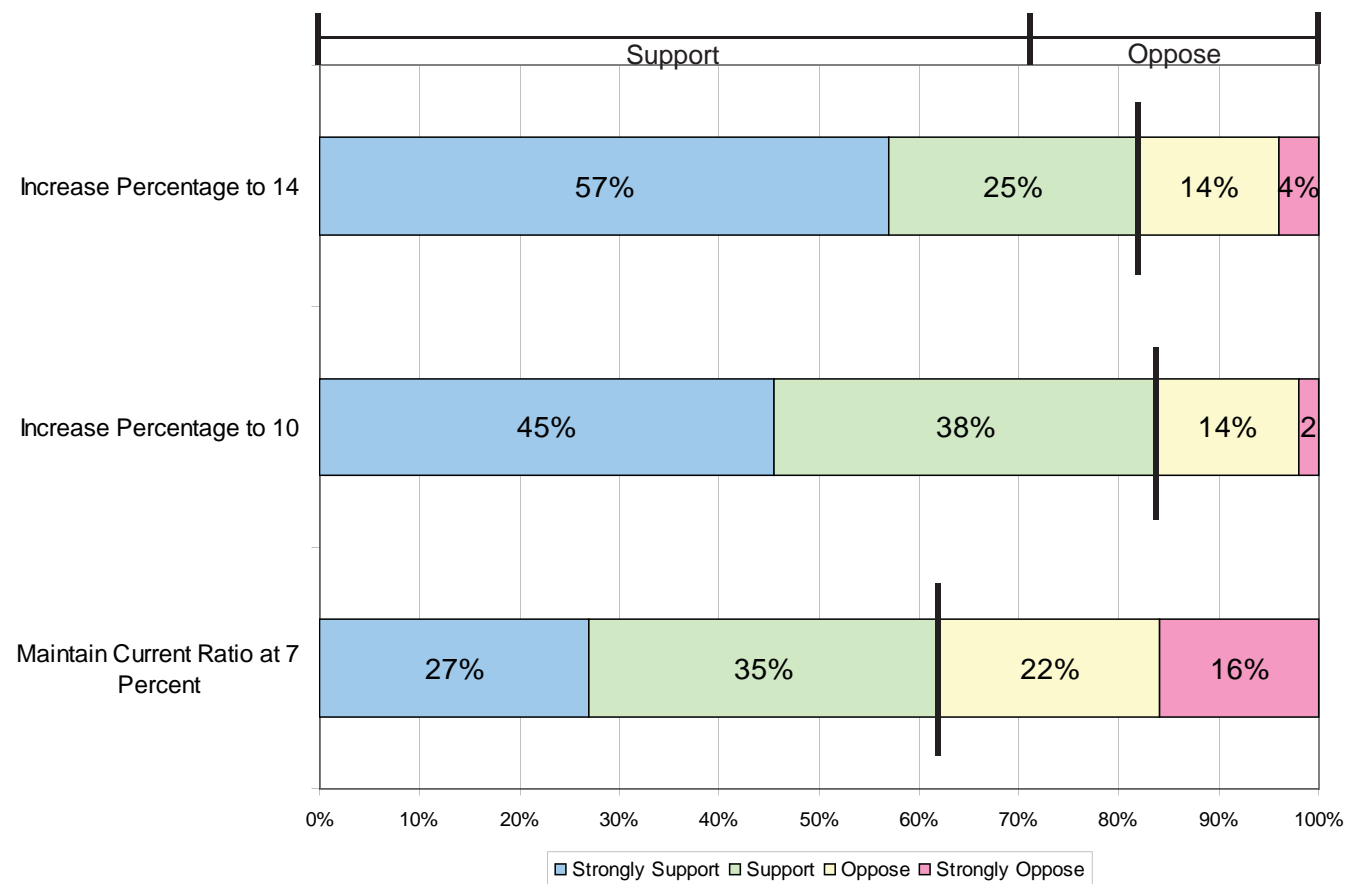
Natural Resources and the Environment - Desired State Derived from Public Input

Round Rock currently has a ratio of 7% Public Open Space / Designated Parkland to the Overall Area of the city limits. Over the next two decades, Round Rock is expected to continue growing rapidly and the city limits will increase through annexation and other methods. Residents of Round Rock who participated in the public meeting surveys and the online survey were asked their opinion of the issue of open space to land area. Residents were asked to rate if they would support or oppose three potential measures in

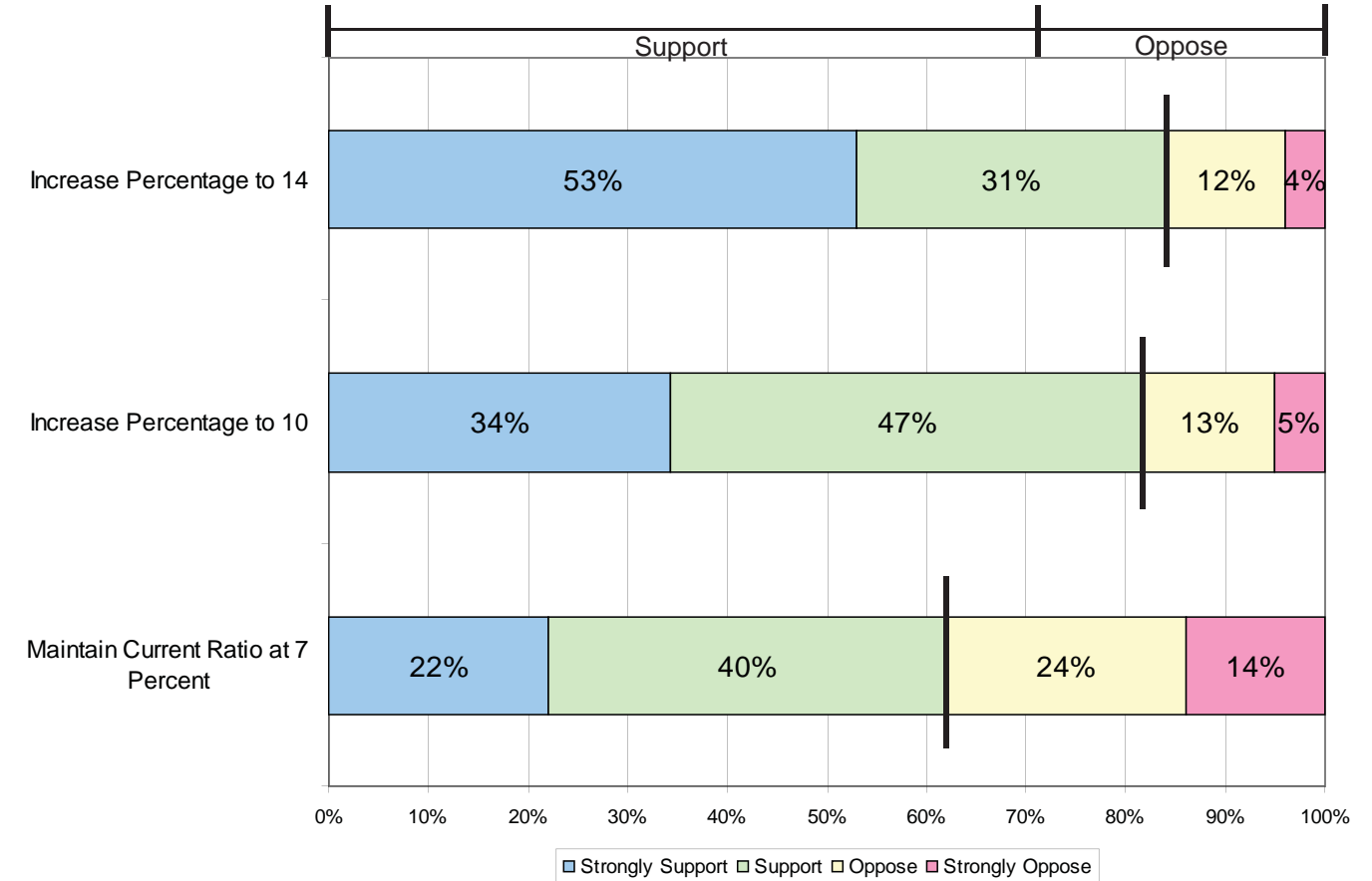
regards to public open space. The first was doubling the amount of open space from a ratio of 7% to 14% (14% is the equivalent to the ratio of open space that the City of Austin has). The second option was to increase the percentage to 10%. The third option was maintaining the current amount of open space to overall land area. For both surveys, increasing the amount of open space was ranked much higher than maintaining the current amount of open space. This indicates that residents highly support adding more public

open space and dedicated parkland throughout all of Round Rock so that the ratio of public open space to overall land area more closely resembles that of neighboring communities such as Austin.

Ratio of Public Open Space to Overall Land Area (Public Meeting Survey)



Ratio of Public Open Space to Overall Land Area (Online Survey)

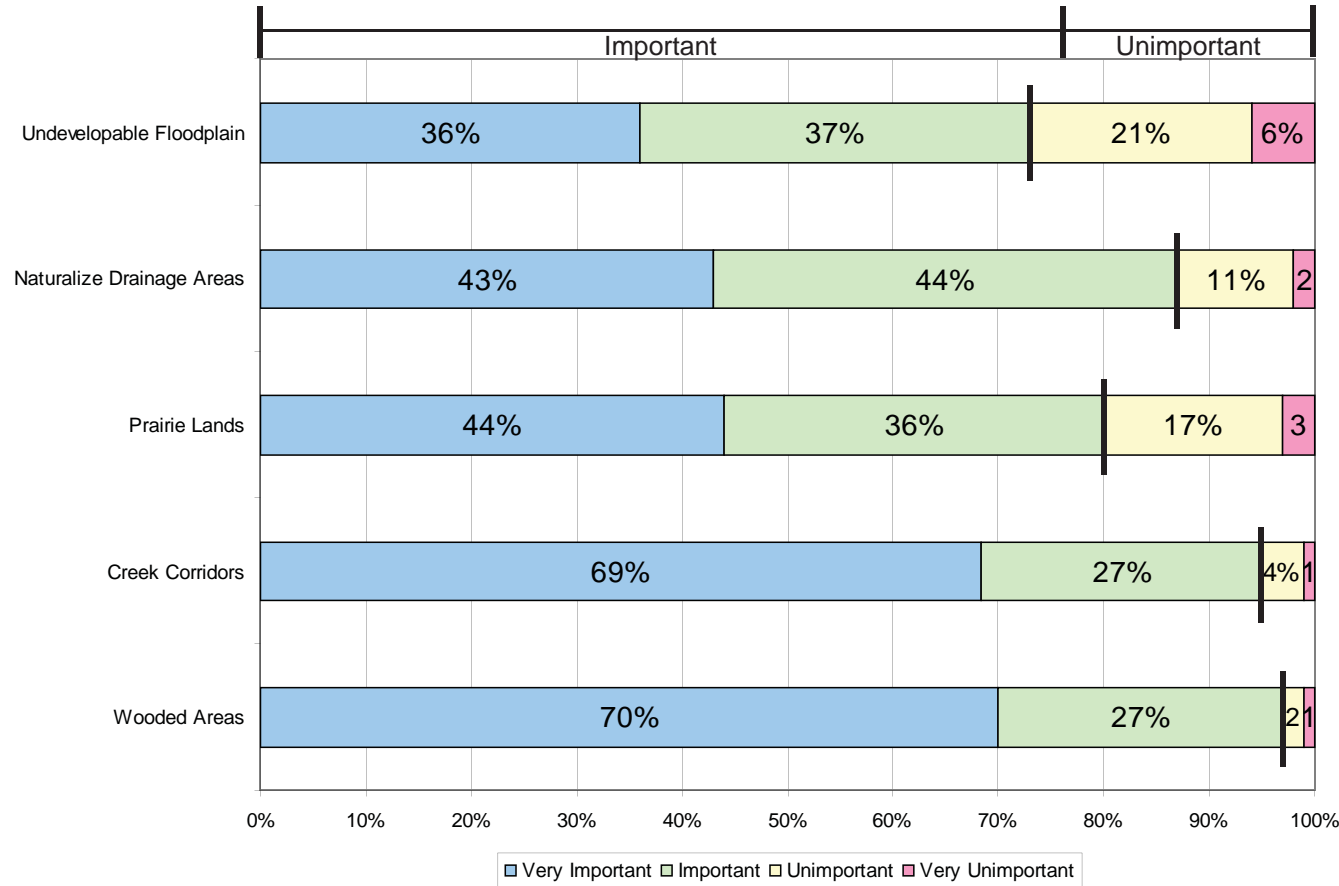


Public Input Regarding Natural Resources/Envir:

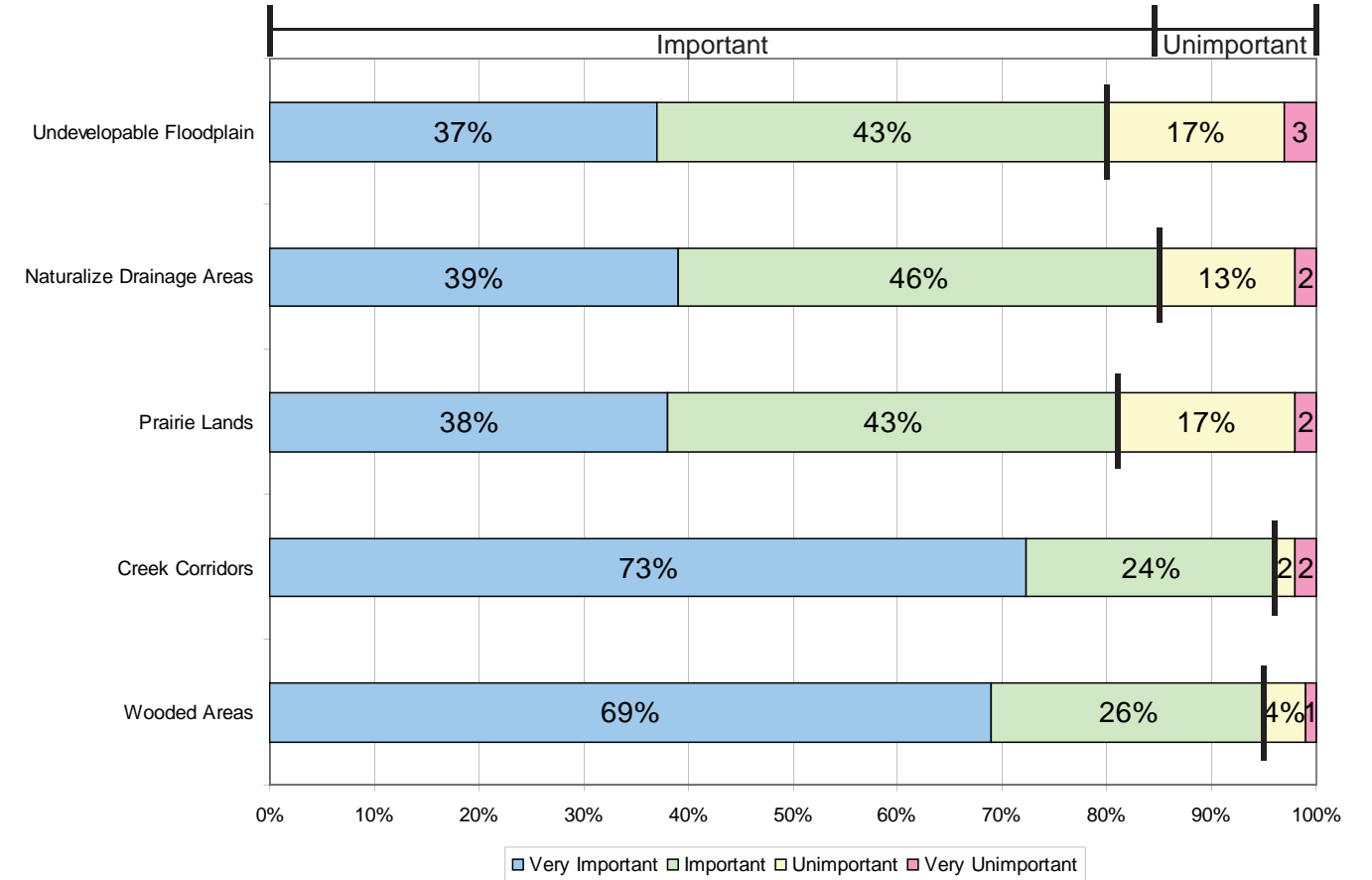
Residents were given a list of five different types of open space and were asked to rate how important or unimportant it was for the City of Round Rock to preserve each one. The open space types included undevelopable floodplain, naturalized drainage areas, prairie lands such as open land or farm land, creek corridors, and wooded areas. It is not surprising that all types received a high level of importance from residents of both surveys. In fact the type receiving the lowest level of importance was undevelopable

floodplain on the public meeting survey with 73% indicating it was important which is still close to every three out of four people indicating it is important. As the City continues to grow, it is important for Round Rock to seek opportunities to preserve every type of open space so that the character of the city will offer different opportunities to experience unique portions of nature.

Importance of Preserving Each Type of Open Space (Public Meeting Survey)



Importance of Preserving Types of Open Space (Online Survey)

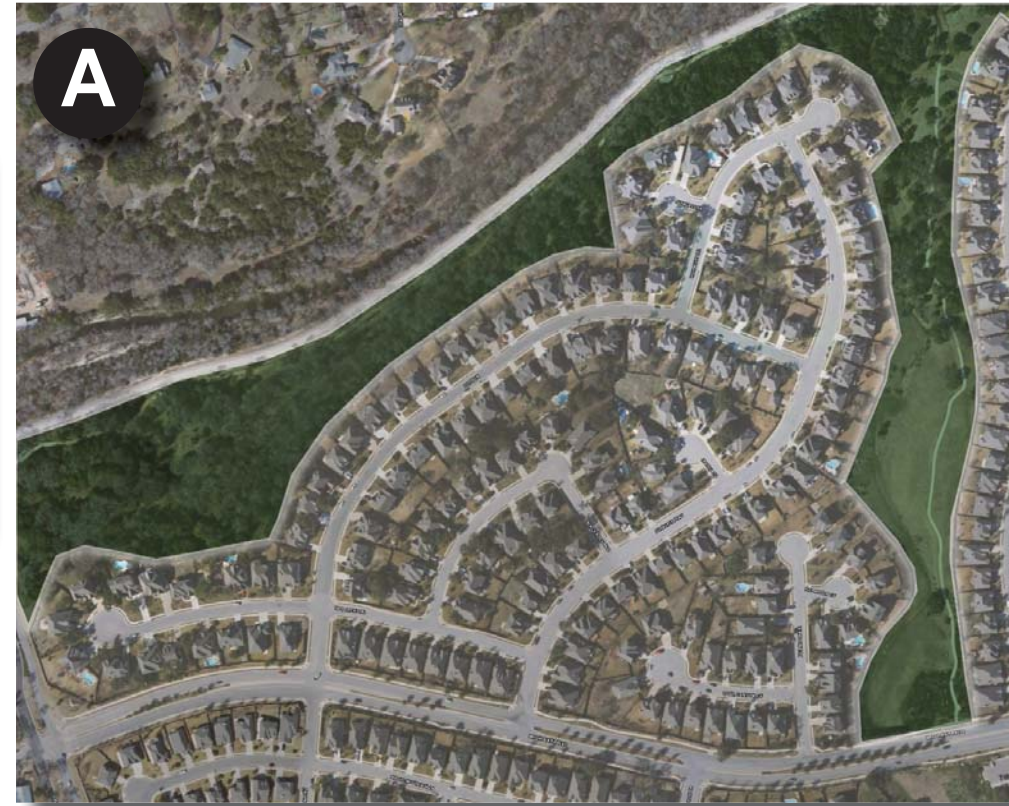


The Round Rock Strategic Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Mobility & Connectivity • Recreation & Culture • Community & Character • Natural Resources & Environment • High Value Governance



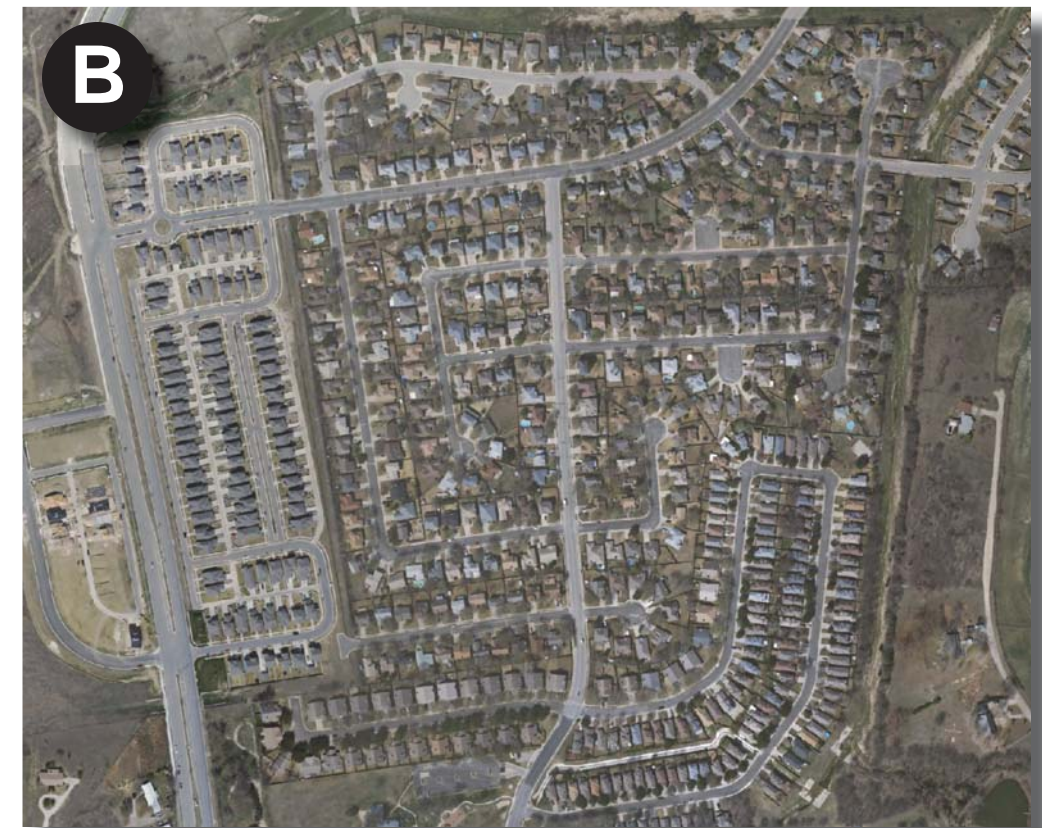
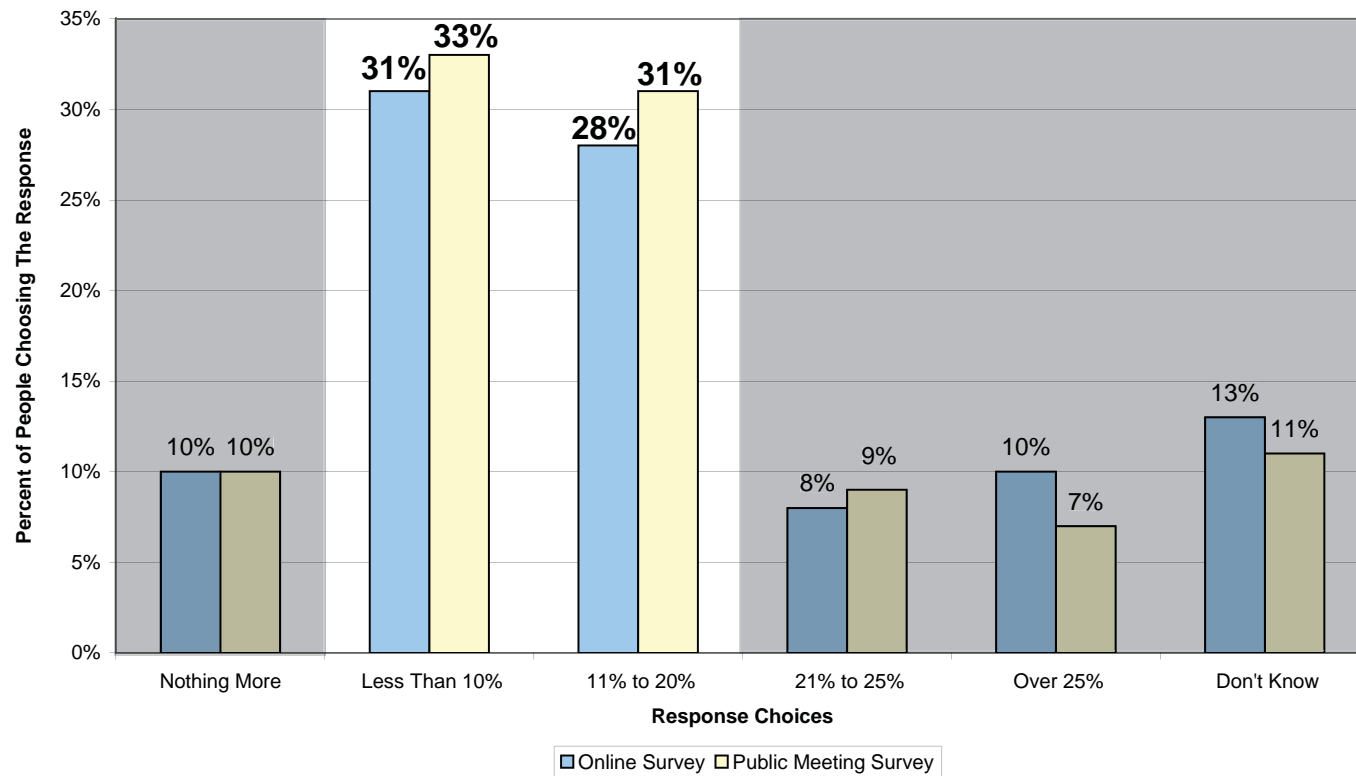
It was previously shown in this report that parks can raise the value of homes within a 600 foot proximity thus resulting in higher property taxes. However, during this planning process it was also assessed whether or not people would initially pay more for a home that was within walking distance of a park or open space. On both the online survey and the public meeting survey, the percentage receiving the highest level of responses was “Less Than 10%” indicating most people (almost one-third) would pay up to 10% more for a home that was located closer to a park or open space. The next percentage in terms of level of responses was “11% to 20%”. This shows there is a significant portion of the population that would be willing to pay up to 20% more for a home that is located within walking distance of a park or open space.



The majority of people in Round Rock would be willing to pay more for a home located within walking distance of a greenbelt, park or open space (A) as opposed to a house they like equally well that is not within walking distance of a park (B).

Public Input Regarding Natural Resources/Envir:

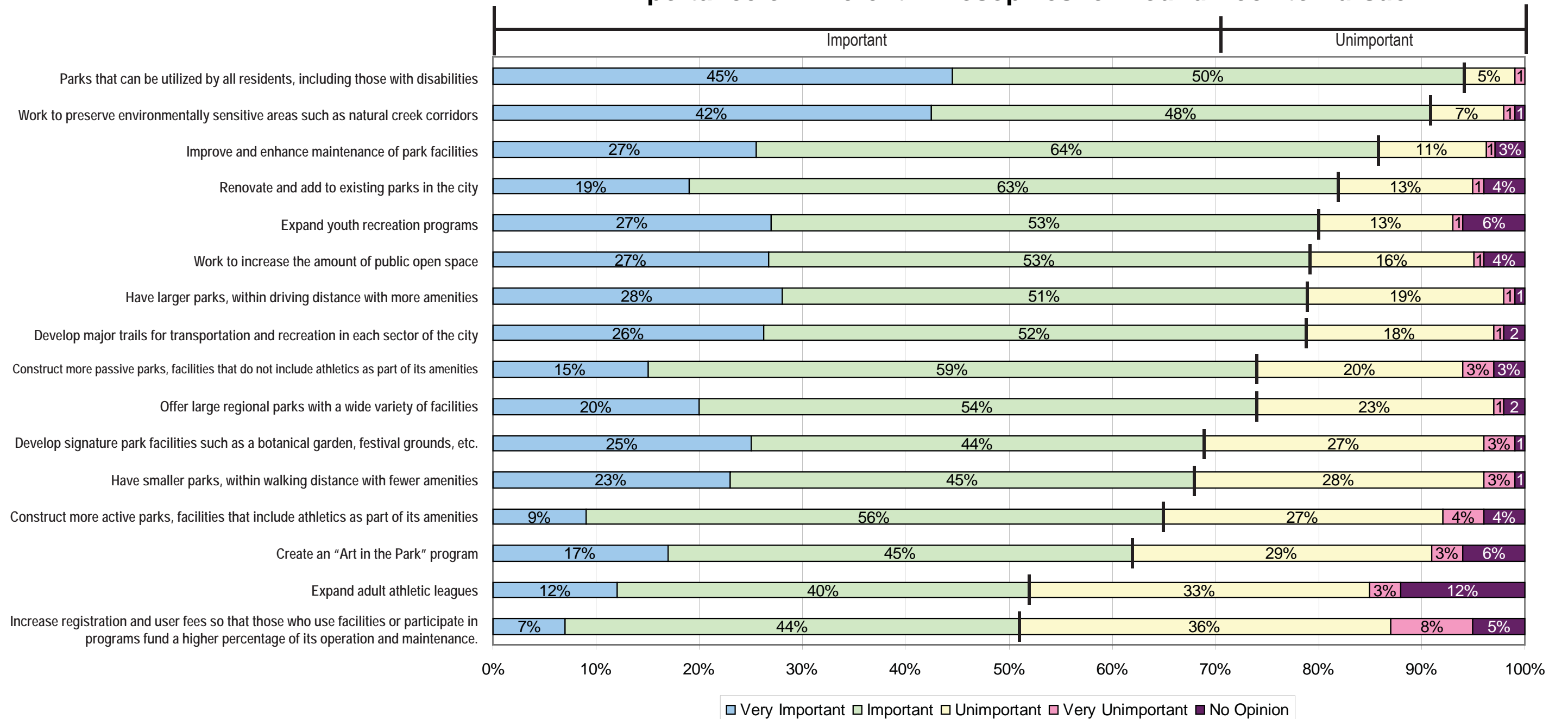
What Percent More Would You Pay for a Home Within Walking Distance of a Park?



High Value Governance - Desired State Derived from Public Input

Residents were given a list of different philosophies by which the City of Round Rock Parks and Recreation Department could potentially direct their future actions. Residents were asked to rate how important or unimportant each of these philosophies was to them. The highest rated action in terms of importance was having parks that could be utilized by all residents including those with disabilities with 95% of the population stating this was either important or very important. The second highest rated philosophy was working to preserve environmentally sensitive areas such as natural creek corridors with 90% of the population indicating this was important or very important. The third highest rated philosophy was improving and enhancing maintenance of park facilities with 85% indicating this was either important or very important. The results of each philosophy are shown below.

Importance of Different Philosophies for Round Rock to Pursue



The Round Rock Strategic Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Mobility & Connectivity • Recreation & Culture • Community & Character • Natural Resources & Environment • High Value Governance



After rating each of the different philosophies in terms of importance, residents were asked the open ended question of which philosophy they thought was the most important for the city to pursue. The answers are shown below.

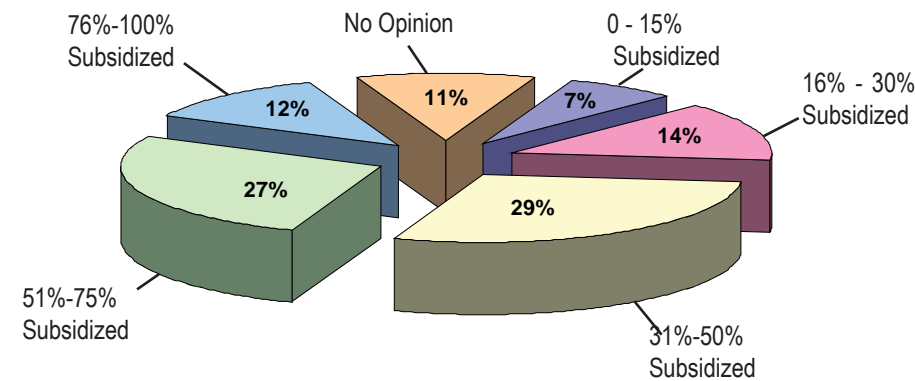
What Philosophy is the Most Important for the City to Pursue?

Develop signature park facilities.....	14%
Preserve environmentally sensitive areas.....	12%
Develop major trails.....	11%
Improve and enhance maintenance.....	10%
Parks utilized by all residents.....	10%

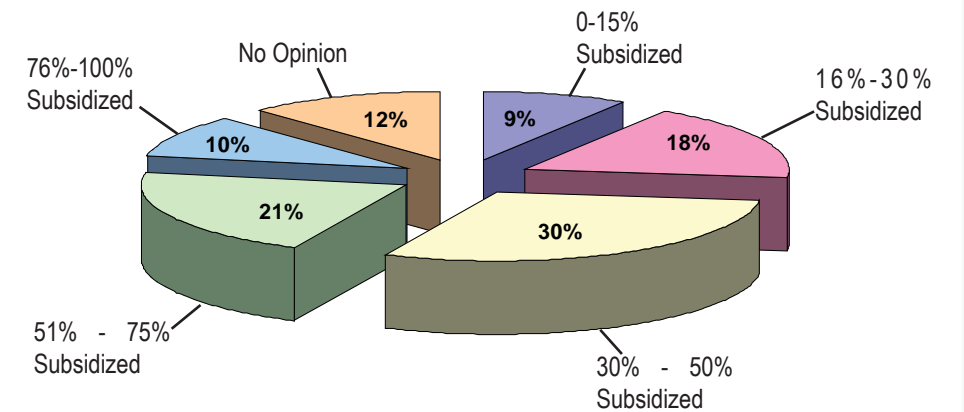
Citizens were told that for any new facilities such as a new recreation center, the city would have to finance a portion of the maintenance and upkeep. Some of the maintenance would be supported through user fees, with the city financing the remainder. Citizens were asked what percentage of maintenance they thought the city should subsidize. The percentage that received the highest response rate was 31% to 50% of maintenance costs being paid by the city. The results are shown in the pie chart below.

Citizens were also asked what portion of recreational programming expenses such as sport leagues, should be subsidized by the City of Round Rock. Again, the range that received the highest response was 31% to 50% of expenses being paid for by the city. The results are shown in the pie chart below.

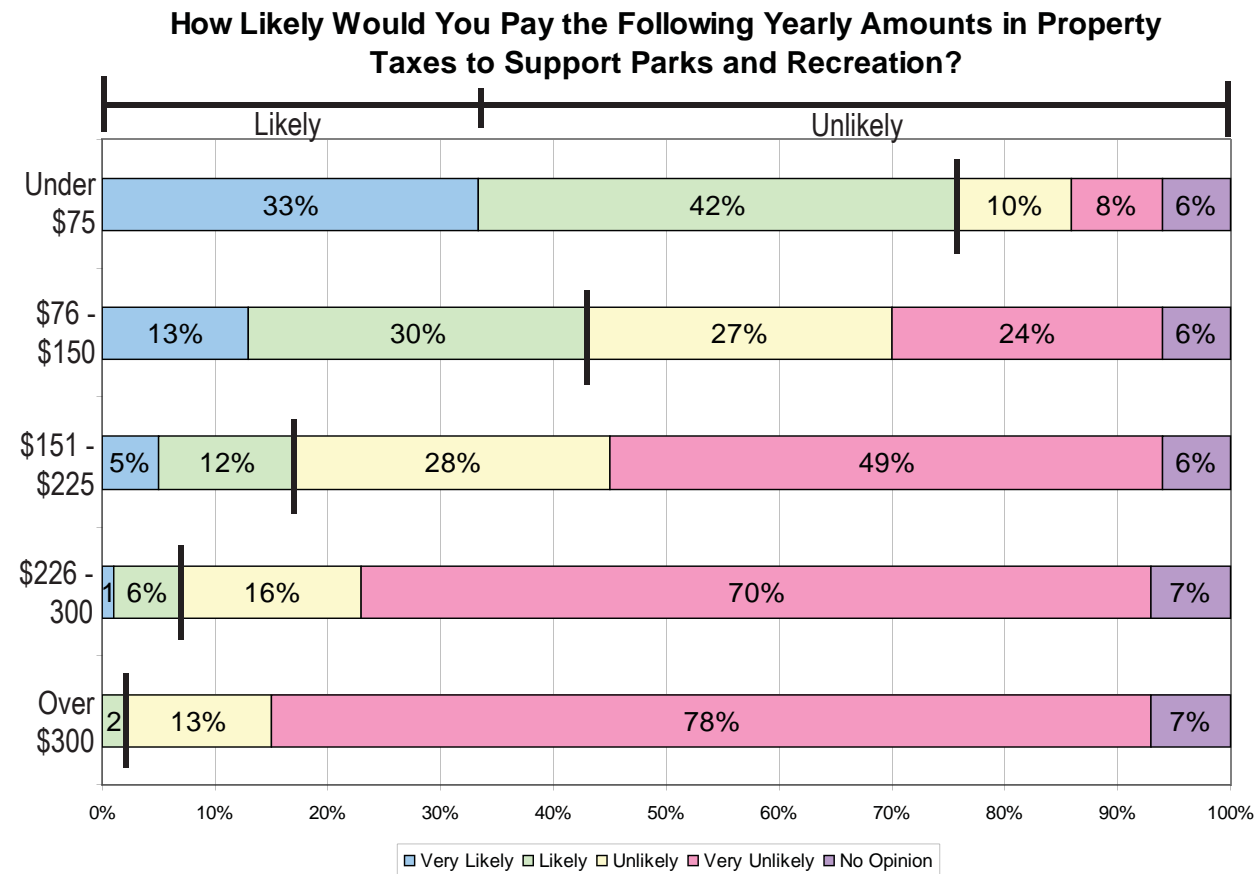
What Percent of Maintenance and Operations Fees Should Be Subsidized by the City of Round Rock?



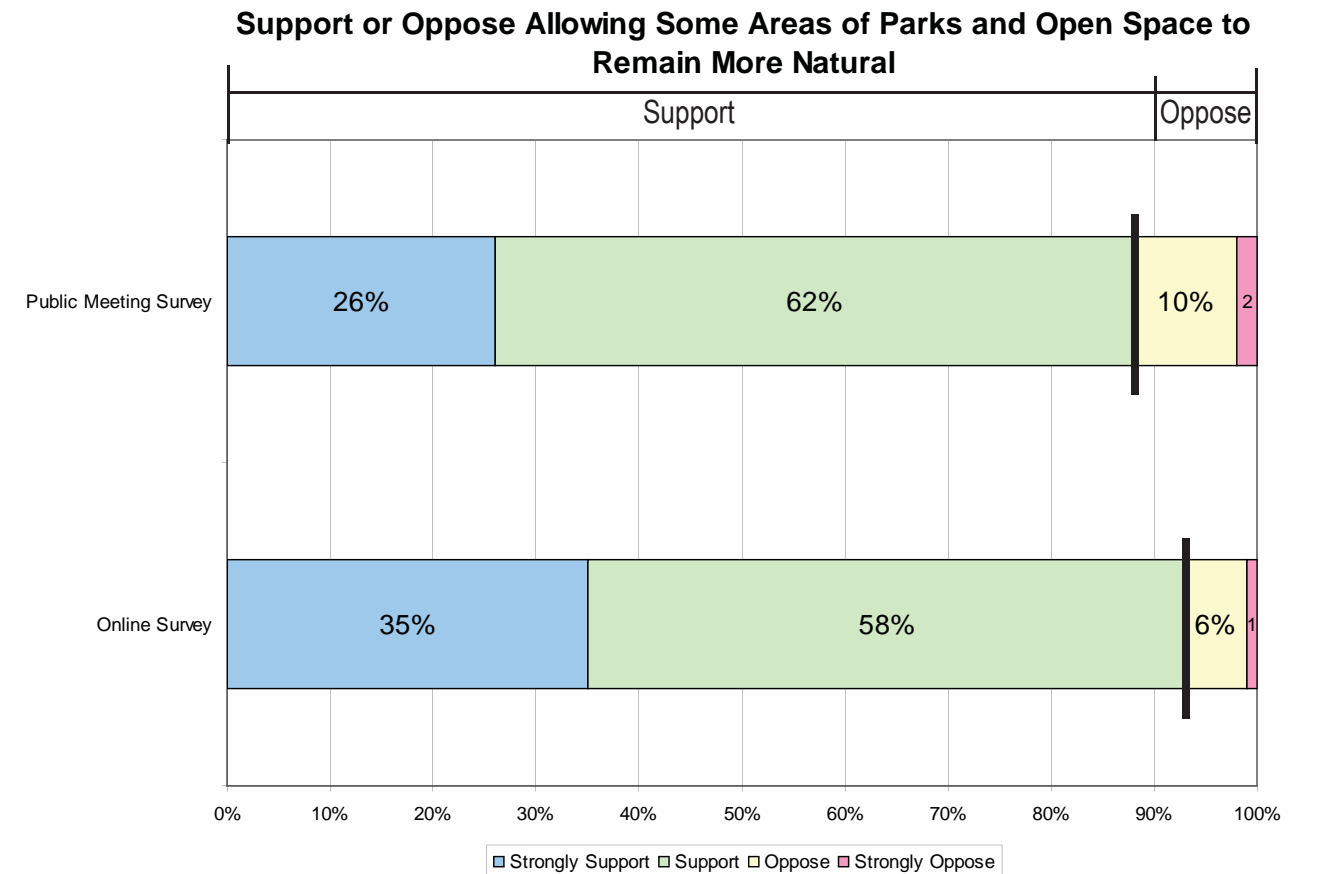
What Percent of Recreational Programming Should be Subsidized by the City of Round Rock?



Citizens were informed that the Parks and Recreation Department is financed by way of user fees, bond funds, and monies collected from the city's general operating fund, better known as property taxes. They were then asked if they were able to determine the amount of funding they would be willing to pay for parks and recreation, what would that amount be. Citizens were then given a list of price ranges and asked how likely or unlikely would they approve paying the yearly amounts to support parks and recreation in Round Rock. The results are shown in the bar graph below.



The public meeting survey and the online survey asked citizens if they would support or oppose the reduced maintenance option of allowing some areas of parks and open space to remain more natural. 93% of those who participated in the public meeting survey said they would either support or strongly support this reduced maintenance option. 88% of those who took the online survey said they would support or strongly support allowing some areas of parks and open space to remain more natural.



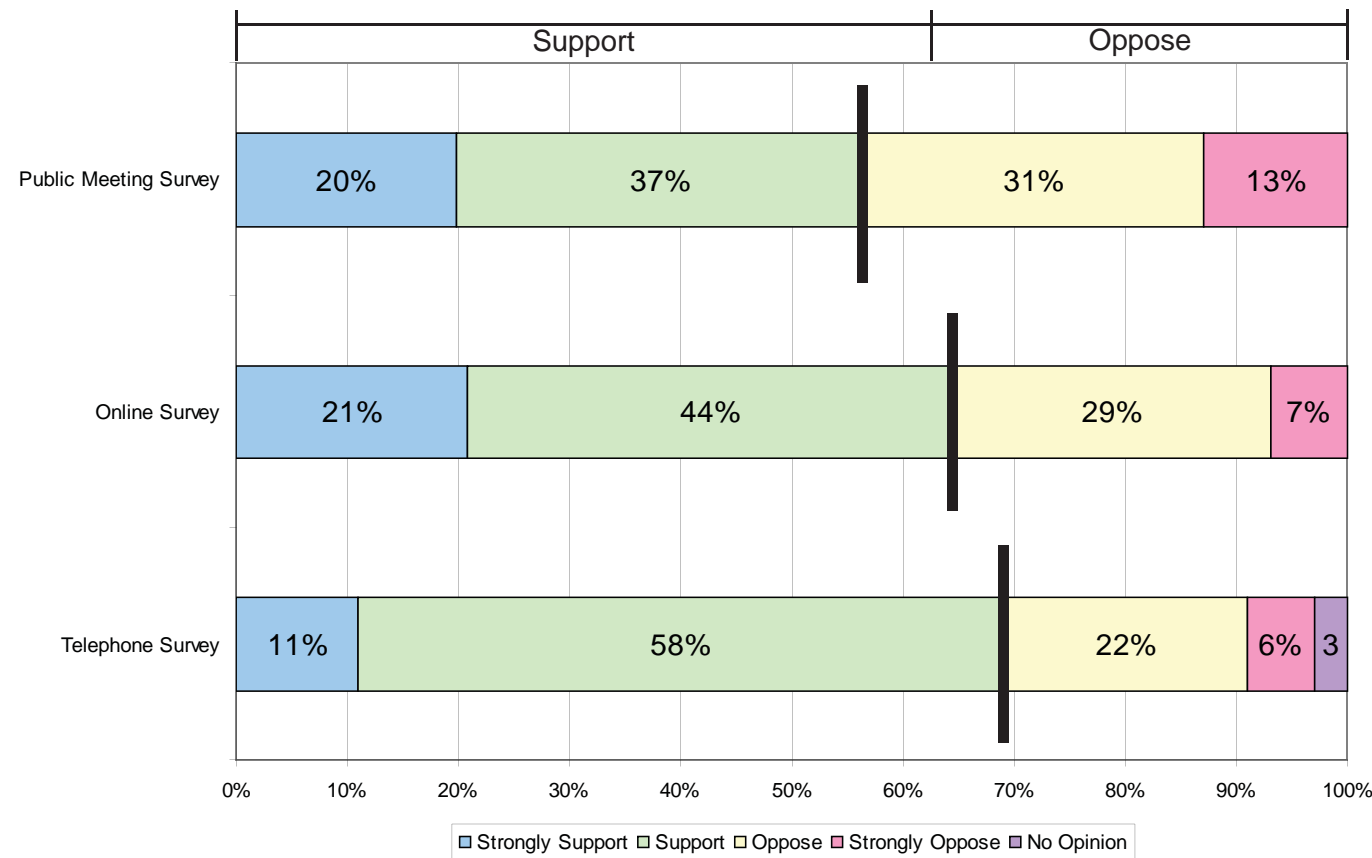
The Round Rock Strategic Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Mobility & Connectivity • Recreation & Culture • Community & Character • Natural Resources & Environment • High Value Governance



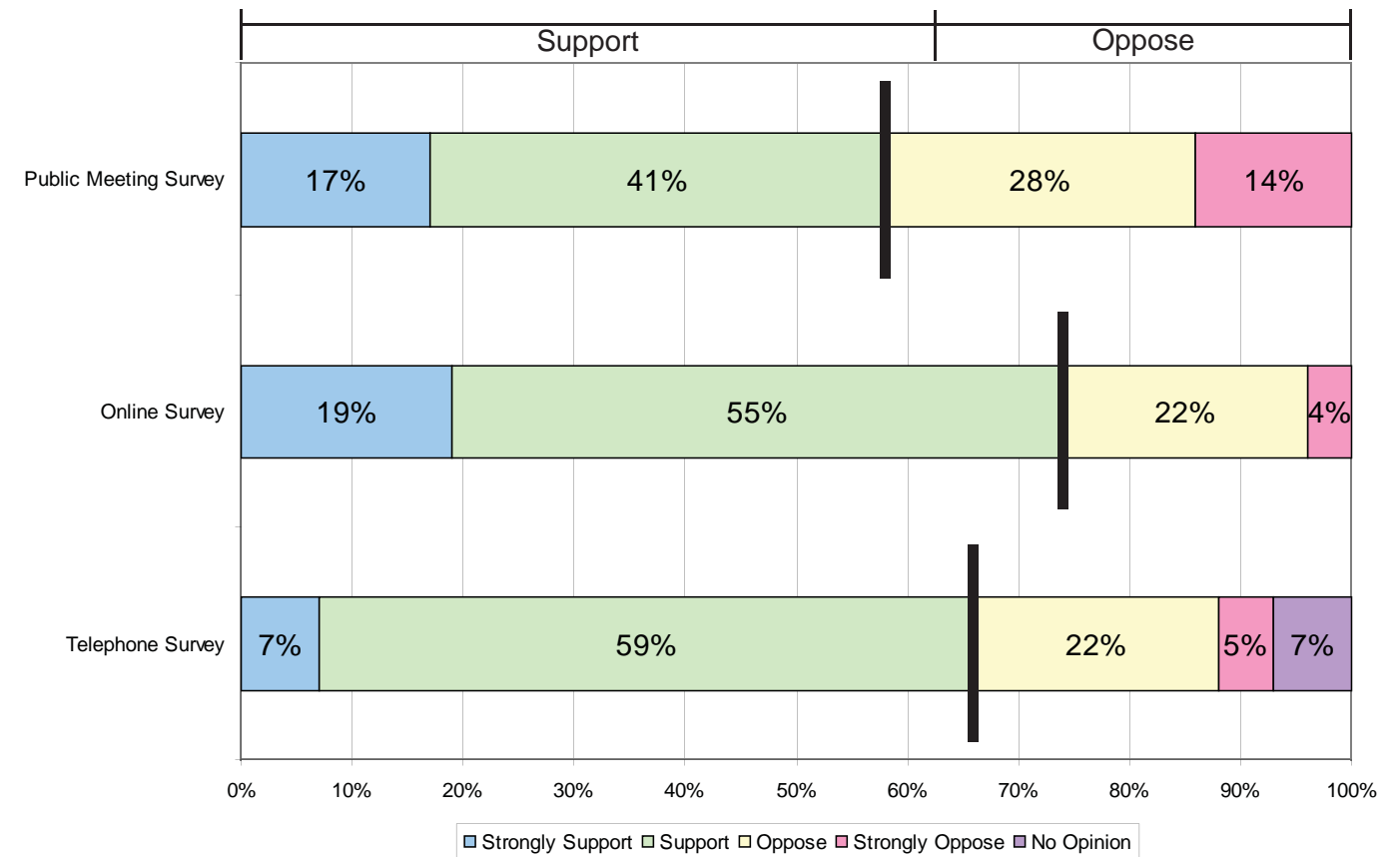
There was some difference in responses when citizens were asked if they would support or oppose increasing fees for those who participate in organized sports and recreational programs. Only 57% of those who took the public meeting survey said they would support this financing strategy, 65% of those who took the online survey said they would support it, and 69% of those who took the telephone survey said they would support it.

Support or Oppose Financing Strategy of Increasing Fees for Those Who Participate in Organized Sports and Recreational Programs



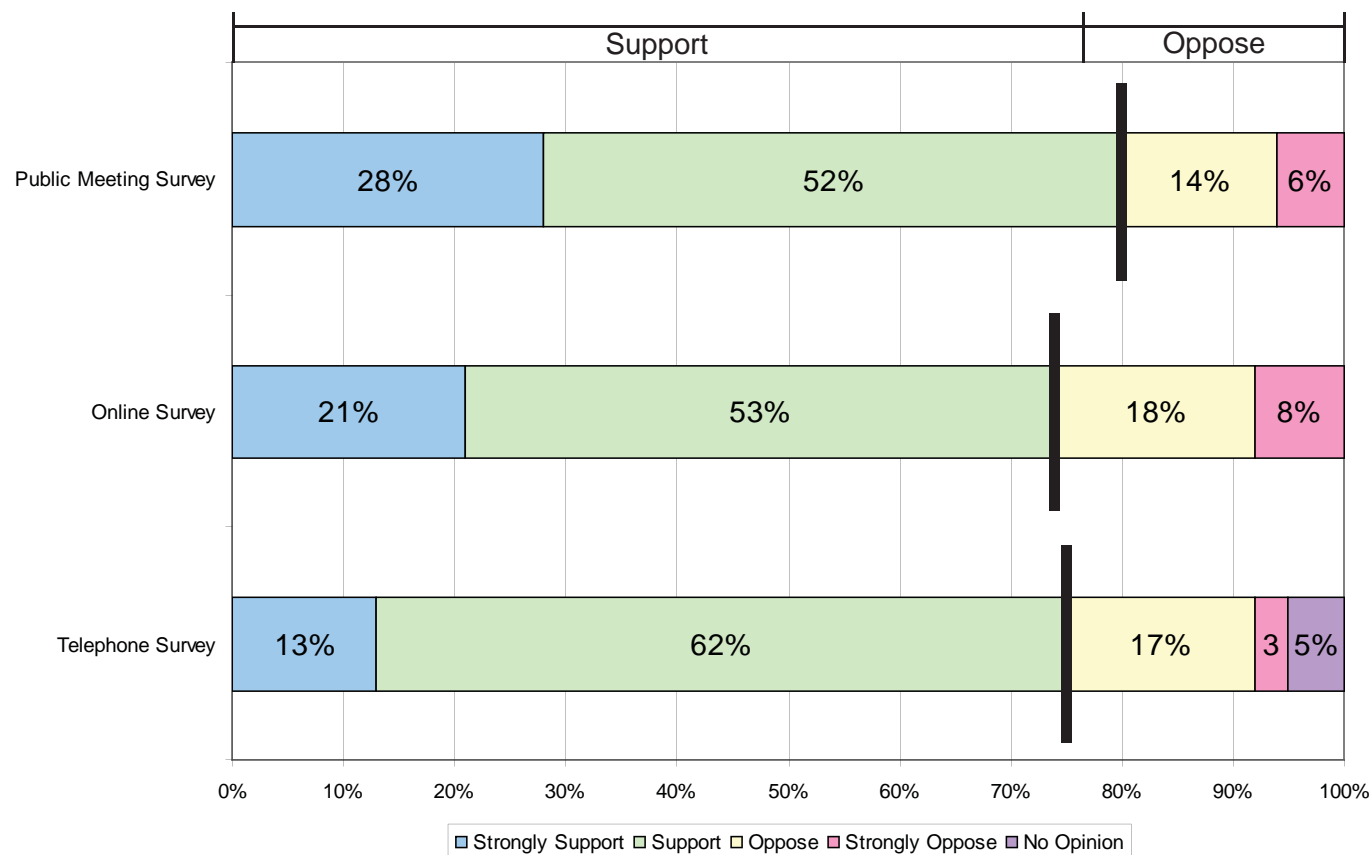
The percentages of people who would support the financing strategy of increasing rental fees for park facilities varied among the three different surveys. 58% of those who took the public meeting survey indicated they would support this, whereas 74% of those who took the online survey would support this. 66% of those who took the telephone survey said they would support this financing strategy indicating that two-thirds of the population would support this.

Support or Oppose Financing Strategy of Increasing Rental Fee for Park Facilities



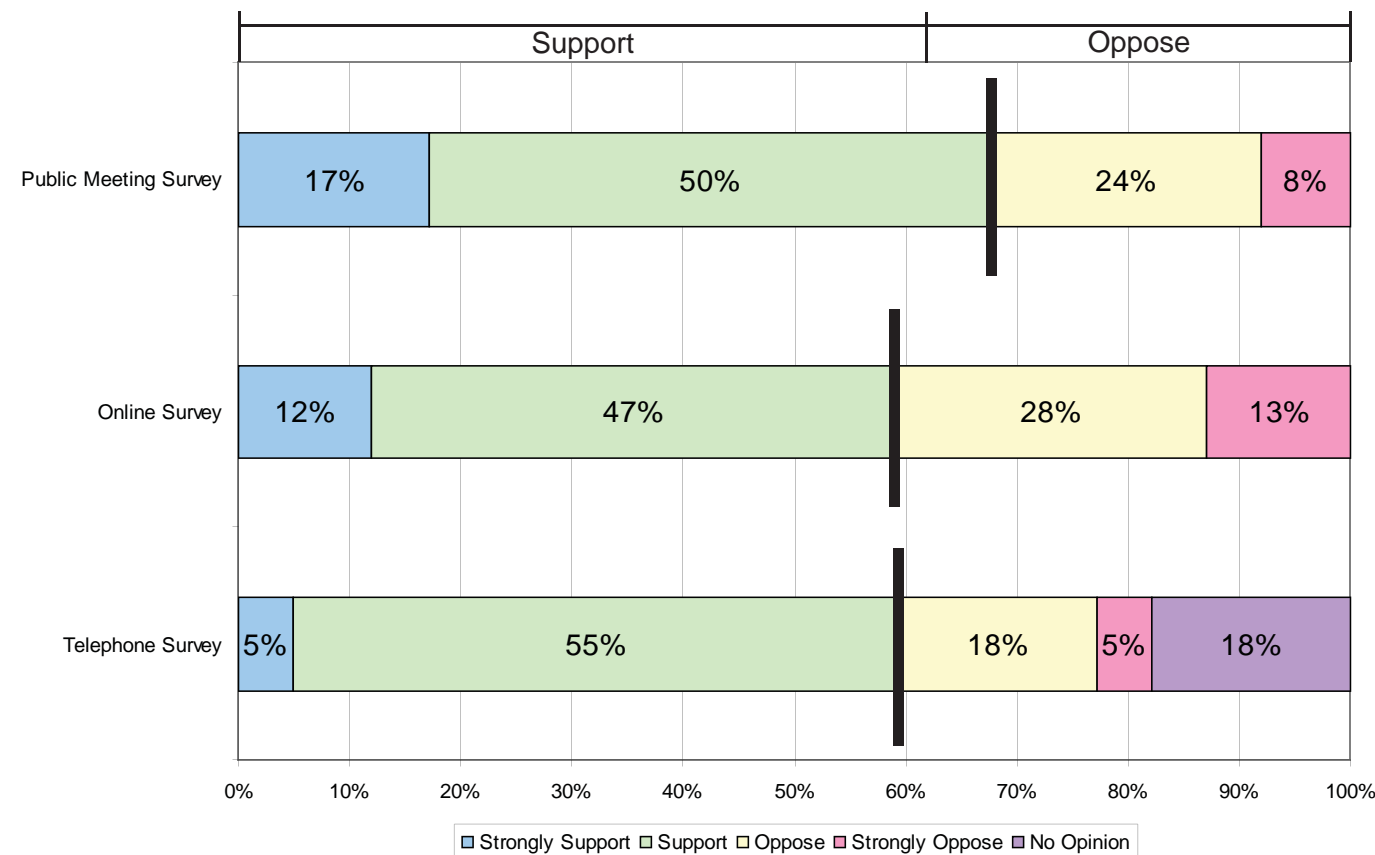
The results of the surveys closely resembled one another when asking citizens if they would support or oppose the financing strategy of voter approved bond programs. 80% of the public meeting responses were in support, 74% of the online survey responses were for support, and 75% of the telephone survey responses were for supporting this strategy.

Support or Oppose Financing Strategy of Voter Approved Bond Programs



In both the online survey and the telephone, the financing strategy of a special or specific assessment for parks and recreation received the lowest amount of support with 59% and 60% respectively. 67% of those who took the public meeting survey supported this strategy. One explanation of the low level of support is that people may be unaware or do not know what a special or specific assessment may be referring to or how it will impact their tax rate.

Support or Oppose Financing Strategy of a Special or Specific Assessment for Parks and Recreation



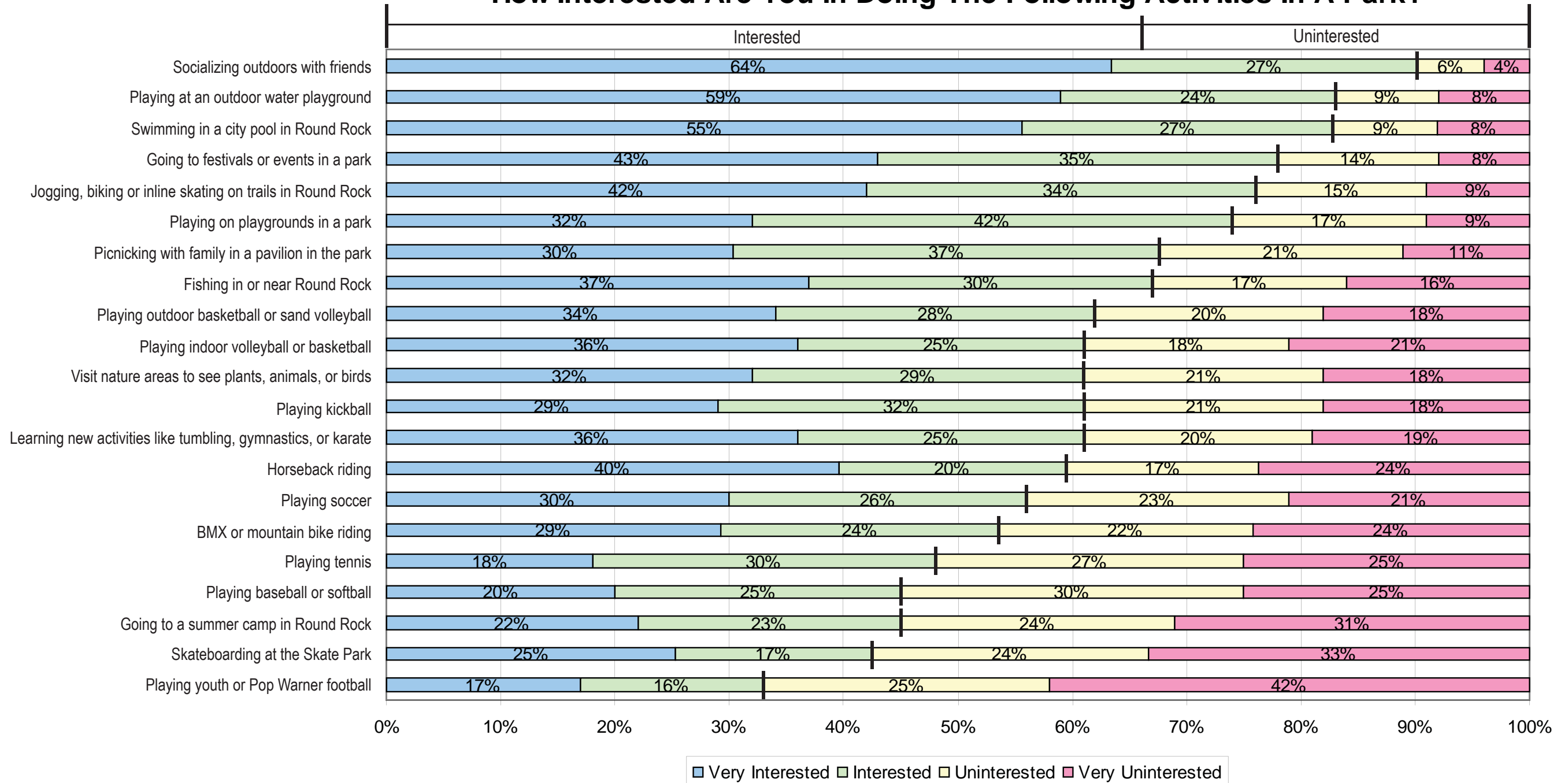
The Round Rock Strategic Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Mobility & Connectivity • Recreation & Culture • Community & Character • Natural Resources & Environment • High Value Governance



The students were given a list of activities that are potentially offered to them while visiting a park. They were then asked to rate how interested or uninterested they were in each activity. Socializing outdoors with friends was the highest rated activity in terms of interest with 91% of students indicating they were either interested or very interested in this activity while visiting a park. Second was playing at an outdoor water playground with 83% indicating they were either interested or very interested. This was followed closely by swimming in a city pool with 82% indicating they were interested or very interested in this activity when visiting a park. The results are shown in the graph below.

How Interested Are You In Doing The Following Activities In A Park?



Student Survey Regarding Desired State

Students were asked what their favorite recreational activity to have in Round Rock was based on the previous list of activities. Swimming in a city pool was rated the highest with 53% of students indicating it was their favorite. The top six results are shown below.

What is your favorite recreational activity to have in Round Rock?

Swimming in a city pool.....	53%
Socializing outdoors with friends.....	49%
Playing at an outdoor water playground.....	46%
Going horseback riding.....	37%
Playing indoor volleyball or basketball.....	35%
Fishing in or near Round Rock.....	35%

Finally, students were asked what are some of the main reasons why they might not be able to participate in their favorite recreational activities. The most common response was that there was no place for their favorite recreational activity close to where the student lives. The results are shown below.

What are some of the main reasons why you might not be able to do your favorite recreational activities in Round Rock?

No place for that sport or activity near where I live.....	35%
That activity or sport is too expensive.....	35%
Other.....	32%
Hard to get a ride to that activity or sport.....	27%
I prefer to do indoor activities like video games or watch tv.....	26%
I prefer to play at my house instead of at a park.....	24%
I don't have the right equipment for that activity or sport.....	23%

Summary of Demand Based Needs

Through the public input process, data collection, and input from the Round Rock City Council and Mayor, the Parks and Recreation Department has determined the ideal state of parks, trails, facilities, and recreational opportunities for the future of Round Rock.

The demand for an increase in mobility and connectivity is highly desired by the residents of Round Rock. Trails that connect neighborhoods to schools, shops, restaurants and civic facilities was the most desired in the surveys. The results concluded that 70% of Round Rock residents would ride their bike to work if the trails were more accessible to their employment areas. This a major jump from the 2004 survey in which only 26% of residents would ride their bikes to work. This dramatic increase in demand illustrates the City's need for additional trails and connections to existing trails. The City's trail system should be evenly distributed in all sectors of the City providing all residents trail access.

The desired state of recreation and culture includes development, expansion and upgrading the Round Rock parks and recreation system. The highest ranked demand was having parks that could be utilized by all residents including those with disabilities (95%). The residents need more fields including fields for league play as well as everyday use. A majority of those surveyed felt the City should have a music and/or art festival. The need for expansion of Rock N' River as well as developing additional recreation centers also ranked high among those polled.

In the desired state, the community and character of Round Rock will be clearly recognizable and unique. Downtown streetscapes ranked highest among beautification efforts needed. The City should preserve and enhance all historic and culturally significant landscapes. The residents highly supported the development of a botanical garden, a community performing arts theater center, and an art museum. The City's need for art in public places should be addressed in the near future.

The demands for natural resources and the environment clearly suggests the need to preserve and acquire open space. The public highly supports acquiring public open space and dedicated parkland. Additionally, the majority of residents were willing to pay more for a home located within 600' of a park, greenbelt or open space.

The needs pertaining to high governance concluded that the City will need to further develop funding mechanisms to help supplement the City's limited funding resources. Fee structures will be accessed and cooperation with private citizens and developers will be encouraged. Citizen participation will continue to be utilized in long-term planning for parks and recreation in Round Rock.

Resource Based Assessment of Needs

In the resource based assessment, key physical features of the city that may create recreation opportunities are assessed. Both man-made and natural features can be considered. The City of Round Rock has a number of landscape features that should be preserved and/or adapted for recreational use and open space preservation where feasible. These are the creek system corridors, areas around Paloma Lake and Meadow Lake, rural landscapes, historic / cultural landscapes, utility right-of-ways and the railroad right-of-way.

The Creek System

The City of Round Rock has many major creek corridors that run through the much of the city: Brushy Creek, Chandler Creek, Onion Creek, and Lake Creek. In addition to this creek, there are extensive drainage corridors throughout the city that connect many of the small area lakes and city parks. The nature of creek and drainage systems is that they are linear and thus ideal corridors for activities like hiking, jogging, and biking.

The city should make serious effort to secure functional corridors along these creeks and drainage systems. The key criteria should be:

- Along undeveloped or underdeveloped creek areas preserve the larger of the 100 year floodplain or a 300 foot wide corridor along all creeks and their tributaries to ensure flood control and recreation opportunity by preventing unrestricted encroachment on creeks and destruction of the forested areas along creeks. Acquisition of land may include purchase of property, donation as undevelopable, or the purchase of development rights. The implication is that the city becomes the custodian of the land by holding the development rights in perpetuity with an agreement that it will never be developed. The model of the Texas Nature Conservancy may be followed in acquiring these development rights.
- Acquire and preserve, where feasible, drainage streams that can create linkage to adjacent neighborhoods. Preserve more than just the bare minimum for drainage purposes.
- Work with land and homeowners to create linear vehicular and pedestrian parkways along the edges of the floodplain, rather than

The Round Rock Strategic Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Mobility & Connectivity • Recreation & Culture • Community & Character • Natural Resources & Environment • High Value Governance



backing lots up to the wooded areas. Such single loaded parkways open the creek areas up to the benefit of informal enjoyment by all and not just a few residents, with the added benefit of informal surveillance. Where feasible this concept should be retrofitted to existing conditions.

- Create linear trail segments in phases. Identify key trail linkages to develop first. With proper city support, funding and marketing, these trails will become the impetus for the development of similar trail connections.
- Acquire land that is regularly subjected to flooding, remove all improvements and restore the flood area to a healthy and functional ecosystem. This means returning the floodplain to the creek with the benefit of flood control and recreation access.

Developing creeks and drainage corridors will assist in answering the need for linear parks in the City. This will also provide the opportunity for the development of hike and bike trails which rated consistently as one of the most important recreational facilities needed in the city. Recommendations for the development of trails along creeks are discussed in more detail in the Trails Master Plan Update Document.

Rural Landscapes

Visually rural landscapes are defined by long and open vistas, typical of the Texas landscape. Such landscapes may be experienced in various ways, including the use of hike and bike trails and driving along rural roads. To be effective, it requires expansive lands seen over a distance uncluttered by development, signs, and utilities. This may be achieved with winding roads and well defined views. Views in the northeast and northwest sectors of the city are candidates for preservation of views and a rural character.

The rural experience can be maintained without compromising development opportunities through the protection of floodplains along creek and the preservation of open space by applying principles of Conservation Planning and Design. One of the most basic principles is to demand single loaded roads whereby roads serve as access to developed areas yet at the same time provide rural experiences through views on the surrounding landscape.

Cultural Landscapes

The National Park Service describes Cultural Landscapes as “setting we have created in the natural world. They revive fundamental ties between people and the land - ties based on our need to grow food, give form to our settlements, meet requirements for recreation, and find suitable places to

bury our dead. Cultural Landscapes are intertwined patterns of things both natural and constructed: plants and fences, watercourses and buildings. They range from formal gardens to cattle ranches, from cemeteries and pilgrimage routes to village squares. They are special places: expressions of human manipulation and adaptation of the land.”

Round Rock has a very rich history and culture especially in the downtown area. The historic downtown and surrounding area encompass a number of historical properties and archaeological sites that represent some important aspects of the early settlement and subsequent development of the Round Rock area. However, the recognition and preservation of individual sites and structures are not enough to ensure the protection of the landscape as a whole, which is essential to evoke the quality and essence of the history of the area. In fact, Round Rock’s historical and cultural heritage is inextricably linked to the natural environment. Once a site or feature is severed from its context a tremendously important part of the cultural experience is lost. Within the context lie visual clues as to the way in which people from an earlier generation and era related to their environment. It is thus imperative to protect the integrity of the entire landscape in which the cultural features and sites are contained.

The historic district encompasses the following designated sites and landmarks:

- Andrew J. Palm House (current Visitor Center and Chamber of Commerce)
- J.A. Nelson Company (early commercial building)
- Otto Reinke Building
- Old Broom Factory (marker on the Mays side of the building)
- Sam Bass Death Site (on the south side of Round Rock Avenue just west of Mays Street)
- Chisholm Trail Crossing
- The round rock in Brushy Creek which is where Round Rock received its name
- The Brushy Creek Corridor
- Total of 25 sites and markers in Round Rock

Utility Right-of-Ways

The linear nature of utility right-of-ways makes them ideal as hike and bike trails. Developing trails along regional utility right-of-ways and other easements is essential for mobility and connectivity throughout Round Rock.

Rail Right-of-Ways

Two characteristics of a rail right-of-way make it ideal as a hike and bike trail: its linear nature and gentle topography change. An added aesthetic value of a rail right-of-way is that trees along its length often provide special character and natural interest.

The City of Round Rock has a railroad that stretches across the entire length of the city from east to west, along McNeil Road. Its continued use as a freight line places limitations on the use of the right-of-way. However, the City of Round Rock should continue to pursue an option for a trail that runs parallel to tracks through the center of the city. This trail could be placed against the back of curb to calm fears of danger from the adjacent tracks. If deemed absolutely necessary, 4’ high fencing could be placed between the trail and the tracks.

There is also a proposed Cap Metro rail line that will run north / south through Round Rock. Placing trails along the railroad right-of-way will provide a pedestrian and bicycle connection to Georgetown in the north and the Austin area to the south.

Essential Partnerships in the Future for Round Rock Parks and Recreation Department

For a parks and recreation system to be successful within a community, it helps to have a working and beneficial partnership with other entities. The Round Rock Parks and Recreation Department should continue to foster strong working relationships with other city departments such as: the Planning Department to ensure that quality and useful property is obtained for parkland; the Transportation Department to ensure that proper trails and bike lanes are being developed throughout all of Round Rock; the Convention and Visitors Bureau to help promote being the Sports Capital of Texas; the Economic Development Corporation to promote the park and recreation system and how it improves the quality of life for residents and business owners in Round Rock; and the Police Department to ensure that the parks and the special events held by the Parks and Recreation Department continue to be safe and successful.

There are other government entities beyond just the local government that the Round Rock Parks and Recreation Department should partner with such as Williamson County. A strong partnership with the county would ensure there is not a duplication of services when it comes to providing park and recreation facilities and to partner with in the development of facilities. Also a partnership with the governments of nearby communities is needed to enhance the connectivity of trails from one area to the other such as along the Brushy Creek corridor.

There are many local businesses that could be beneficial as partners such as Dell Inc. or the Round Rock Medical Center. Medical centers and hospitals all over the nation often partner with local park and recreation departments because the two entities share the common goal of promoting physical activity and leading a healthier lifestyle. There are also several large automotive dealerships in Round Rock which could become potential partners in the future.

Round Rock also has a Greater Round Rock Community Foundation. This foundation has helped create the sculptures at Chisholm Trail Crossing; and the Foundation has created a People and Parks Fund where people can donate money to directly contribute enhancing and improving Round Rock's parks.

One other major partnership which should be strengthened in the future and as Round Rock continues to grow is the partnership with Round Rock Independent

School District. The school district offers various types of recreational facilities which should continually be made available to the taxpayers. Leagues and residents should have adequate use of practice fields and playscape equipment when school is not in session or on the weekends. The school district also has significant gym space which could be used for basketball or volleyball leagues. A partnership with Round Rock ISD is important to the success of recreational programs that are offered through the Parks and Recreation Department.

Summary of the Desired State for Parks and Recreation in Round Rock

The desired state for the Round Rock Parks and Recreation Department is based on a careful combination of trend analysis and projection, public input data collection, and input from the Round Rock City Council and Mayor. From this information, the Parks and Recreation Department has determined the ideal state in which to operate and function as a whole.

In terms of mobility and connectivity, Round Rock should provide a system of trails, greenbelts, and open space that encourages residents to be outdoors living a healthy lifestyle and learning about local natural features. Connectivity also serves to facilitate an alternative transportation opportunity for Round Rock residents. By connecting residents to locations such as schools, public spaces, neighborhoods, places of employment, and retail destinations, the City gains a healthier more active and close-knit community. Providing such linkages rewards the users and relieves traffic congestion.

The desired state of recreation and culture encompasses short and long range programs for development, expansion, and upgrading the Round Rock parks and recreation system. Recreation amenities would include providing an adequate number of fields for league use, facilities that address the needs of all age groups, activity levels, and socio-economic categories.

Round Rock will have provided for programs and facilities of the expanded leisure market trends. The City's park system will be distributed evenly throughout the city so that all residents have access to trails, athletic activities, and neighborhood and community parks. In the desired state, the community and character of Round Rock will be clearly visible to visitors. The City's identity will be clearly conveyed through beautification efforts, defined entry signage, and the continuation of tree plantings along streets and in parks.

The preservation and enhancement of historic and culturally significant landscapes will have resulted in the development of such significant features as the round rock, the Chisholm Trail Crossing Sculpture Park, and the Brushy

Creek corridor. A particular emphasis will be made to celebrate the history and culture of this city.

Areas of cultural value, geological and topographic interest, and natural creek corridors will have been preserved, and funding mechanisms in place to acquire more lands for protection. The Parks and Recreation Department will maintain all of the Round Rock parks and recreation facilities in a superior condition and sustainable manner. Funding and manpower resources will be in place in order to regularly/proactively ensure the safety and quality of the City's amenities. Coordination with multi-jurisdictional entities with respect to issues that affect recreation opportunities will actively be pursued. Relationships will be strengthened and the City will work together in order to accomplish regional solutions.

The City will develop other funding mechanisms to help supplement the City's limited funding resources. The Parkland Dedication and Park Development Ordinance will continue to fund land acquisition and park development. Fee structures will be assessed and cooperation with private citizens and developers will be encouraged in which development and Adopt-A-Park programs may become realized. Citizen participation will continue to be utilized in determining long-range planning to reflect the changing conditions in Round Rock.



The Round Rock Strategic Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Mobility & Connectivity • Recreation & Culture • Community & Character • Natural Resources & Environment • High Value Governance



Leisure Market Expansion - What Gaps Can Round Rock Parks and Recreation Department Fill?

With Round Rock's desire to be the Sports Capital of Texas, there are more sports to be offered and recreational facilities needed than just the traditional sports of baseball, softball, soccer or football. Sports with increasing participation every year over the last decade include Pilates, yoga, lacrosse, and tennis. Extreme sports such as skateboarding, mountain biking, rock climbing and paintball have all seen an increase in participation and were some of the most popular sports last year. The sports and recreational activities that are growing across the nation are discussed below. In order for Round Rock to truly be the Sports Capital of Texas, many of these sports should be offered. There are several gaps in the recreation and leisure industry that Round Rock's Parks and Recreation Department can fill for its residents.

Key National Trends

The rate of change in the world and United States is accelerating, and many of these trends are having a direct impact on recreation. These trends include:

- Instead of having more leisure time, the world's increasingly competitive marketplace is forcing us to work harder to keep up. As a result, we have less leisure time, and fewer opportunities to enjoy recreational activities. We therefore tend to seek structured activities with a specific goal, rather than simple unstructured activities such as going for a spontaneous walk.
- We have many more leisure time choices. Greatly increased at-home leisure opportunities are available today, such as hundreds of channels of television, sophisticated computer games and the Internet.
- Safety is a great concern to parents. Many parents do not allow their children to go to area parks unattended. In many places the use of neighborhood parks has decreased.
- We live in an era of instant gratification. We expect to have high quality recreation and to be given activities that we will like. We have many other leisure time activities and outlets, and can pick and choose what we want to do. Cities must be willing to provide a much broader menu of recreation activities, but must draw the line if those activities become too costly.
- Through the media and the Internet, we are exposed to the best from around the world. Because of this, we expect our facilities and activities to be of the highest quality possible.
- New revenue sources for public funding are difficult to come by. The federal surpluses briefly experienced at the turn of the century are now a thing of

the past, and deficit spending is probable for the next decade. As a result, little help can be expected from the federal government, and even popular grant programs such as enhancement funds for trails and beautification may not always be available.

Baby Boomer Trends

It is projected that there are 77 million Americans born between the years of 1946 and 1964. The Baby Boomer generation comprises one-third of the total U.S. population. With such a significant portion of the population entering into the retirement age, they are redefining what it means to grow old. Many Baby Boomers are opting not to retire at a traditional retirement age. Because of their dedication to hard work and youthfulness, this population is expected to stay in the work force because they take pleasure in being challenged and engaged. According to Packaged Facts, a demographic marketing research firm, trends that are beginning to take off because of the Baby Boomers include:

- Prevention-centered healthcare to keep aging bodies disease free.
- Anti-aging products and services that will keep mature adults looking as young as they view themselves to be.
- Media and internet technology to facilitate family and social ties, recreation and lifelong learning.
- Innovation in housing that allows homeowners to age in place.
- Increasing entrepreneurial activity among those who have retired, along with flexible work schedules that allow for equal work and leisure time.
- Growing diversity in travel and leisure options, especially with regard to volunteer and eco-friendly opportunities.

High School Sports Trends

The National Federation of State High School Associations reported in September 2008 that participation in high school sports had increased for the nineteenth year in a row. In fact, the 2007-2008 school year had the highest level of sports participation ever recorded with 58% of students enrolled in high school participating in sports. The State of Texas had the highest number of sports participants, followed by California, New York, Ohio, Illinois, Michigan, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Minnesota, and Florida as the top 10 states with regards to participation.

The most popular sports for high school girls are (in order of most participants):

- Basketball
- Track and field
- Volleyball
- Fast pitch softball
- Soccer

- Cross country
- Tennis
- Swimming and diving
- Competitive Spirit Squad
- Golf

The most popular sports for high school boys are (in order of most participants):

- Football
- Basketball
- Track and field
- Baseball
- Soccer
- Wrestling
- Cross country
- Golf
- Tennis
- Swimming and diving



Leisure Market Expansion

Fitness Trends

Americans want to get in shape. Programs such as strength training, conditioning, and aerobics are gaining in popularity. The Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association performs annual surveys and marketing studies to analyze what activities and sports Americans are participating in and whether or not interest has increased in those activities. In 2007 the most popular sports and fitness activities ranked by highest number of participants were:

- Walking for fitness
- Treadmill walking
- Stretching
- Hand weights
- Weight resistance machines
- Running / jogging
- Freshwater fishing
- Dumbbells
- Bicycling on paved surfaces
- Billiards / pool
- Basketball
- Barbells
- Home gym exercise
- Bowling
- Low impact aerobics

The top 10 sports and fitness activities that had the highest growth rate since 2000 were:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------|
| ■ Pilates training | 490.9% growth |
| ■ Elliptical motion trainer | 220.0% growth |
| ■ Yoga / Tai Chi | 125.2% growth |
| ■ Lacrosse | 104.2% growth |
| ■ Paintball | 51.5% growth |
| ■ Stretching | 47.0% growth |
| ■ Treadmill | 34.3% growth |
| ■ Spinning | 34.1% growth |
| ■ Running / jogging | 30.8% growth |
| ■ Tennis | 30.6% growth |

Extreme Sports Trends

The Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association also analyzed the growth in extreme sports. Most extreme sports have been growing steadily in participation since 2000. The most popular extreme sports in terms of participation in 2007 were:

- Inline skating - nearly 45% of all inline skaters participate 13 days or more a year.
- Skateboarding - more than 3.8 million skateboarders participate 25+ days a year.
- Mountain biking - overall participation has grown a mere 2% in the last month.
- Snowboarding - this is the second most popular winter sport behind Alpine skiing.
- Paintball - overall participation has grown by more than 50% since 2000.
- Cardio kickboxing - more than 60% of participants are casual - less than 50 days per year.
- Climbing (indoor, sport, boulder) - popular on cruise ships, at spas, and in many homes.
- Trail running - total participation has been steady since 2000.
- Ultimate Frisbee - it is more popular than lacrosse, wrestling, beach volleyball, fast-pitch softball, rugby, field hockey, ice hockey and roller hockey.
- Wakeboarding - participation is affected by rising fuel costs.
- Mountain / rock climbing - overall participation grew by 30% from 2006 to 2007.
- BMX bicycling - more than 60% of these participants engage in the sport 13+ days per year.
- Roller hockey - one of its biggest challenges is getting access to proper venues.
- Boardsailing / windsurfing - it is dependent upon weather as this sport needs wind and water in order to participate.

Sports Equipment Sales Trends

With an increased desire to get into shape, people are spending more money than ever on the equipment for sports and activities. The Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association reported in 2007 that the sports industry is a nearly \$70 billion business. This includes all the apparel, footwear, and equipment people buy for their desired sports activity. The three activities in 2007 that had the largest statistical gain in spending were martial arts with a 12.1% increase, tennis with a 6.5% increase, and boxing with a 5.0% increase in the necessary equipment. The activities that are expected to have high levels of sales growth in 2008 are:

- Yoga / Pilates
- Fitness walking
- Lacrosse
- Running
- Strength training



The Round Rock Strategic Parks and Recreation Master Plan

Mobility & Connectivity • Recreation & Culture • Community & Character • Natural Resources & Environment • High Value Governance



The Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association identified issues that affected industry sales included:

- The popularity of mixed martial arts was confirmed when CBS featured it as prime-time programming.
- Only one-third of all sports apparel and athletic footwear are purchased with the intent that it will be used for active sports.
- More than 80% of respondents to SGMA's annual State of the Industry survey said they used factories in China.
- Older Americans are buying and using fitness equipment.
- From 1990 to 2007, number of boys on high school varsity teams rose 27% while the number of girls on high school varsity teams rose 60%.
- Despite a 1% drop in sales, retail sales of sports licensed products with Alma Maters remained very strong at \$13.7 billion, according to estimates by The Licensing Letter.
- The women's market is biggest in sports apparel with 42% of all spending being for women's items.
- Nearly one-third of all spending on athletic footwear is by those ages 13-24, who also pay the highest average retail price for athletic footwear.
- Free weights are the most common form of fitness equipment in the home, while people spend more on treadmills.
- There are 44.1 million Americans who are members of health clubs, which is 21% more than there were in 2000.

Ways Round Rock Can Capitalize on These Trends

There are many ways that the City of Round Rock can capitalize on these national trends.

- Because the Baby Boomers are a very active generation, Round Rock Parks and Recreation Department should provide stronger senior programs and physical fitness exercise classes for seniors.
- High school sports teams are growing in participation but not all high school students will be good enough to make a team. Round Rock should consider offering their sports leagues to teenagers, not just offering the leagues for youth or adults.
- Fitness trends that are gaining in popularity include Pilates, spinning, and low impact aerobics. Round Rock Parks and Recreation Department should offer these fitness classes at the Clay Madsen Recreation Center. Because these classes are most likely to include adults, they should be offered in the very early morning or early evening hours when most people are not at work.
- Extreme sports that the City of Round Rock could potentially offer include constructing an indoor rock wall for climbing possibly at Clay Madsen Recreation Center or the new field house recreation center, offering cardio kickboxing classes, and Ultimate Frisbee leagues or tournaments.
- Other classes that would capitalize on these trends are martial arts and possibly boxing.
- A morning fitness walk/run could be popular because of the amount of people interested in walking for fitness and Round Rock's trail system. This program could be in conjunction with the Sports Capital of Texas Ambassadors.

