



Strategic Plan

Friends of WC Park District
January 11, 2025



OUTLINE

- PROCESS UPDATE
- ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY
- MISSION & VISION
- GOALS, OBJECTIVES & RECOMMENDATIONS
- NEXT STEPS - PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES

Park District Strategic Plan

- **Understand community needs and trends** as they relate to parks, open space, and trails
- Craft the Park District's **mission, vision, goals, and objectives**
- Define the Park District's **unique value proposition** – i.e. what sets a Park District apart from municipal and township park providers?



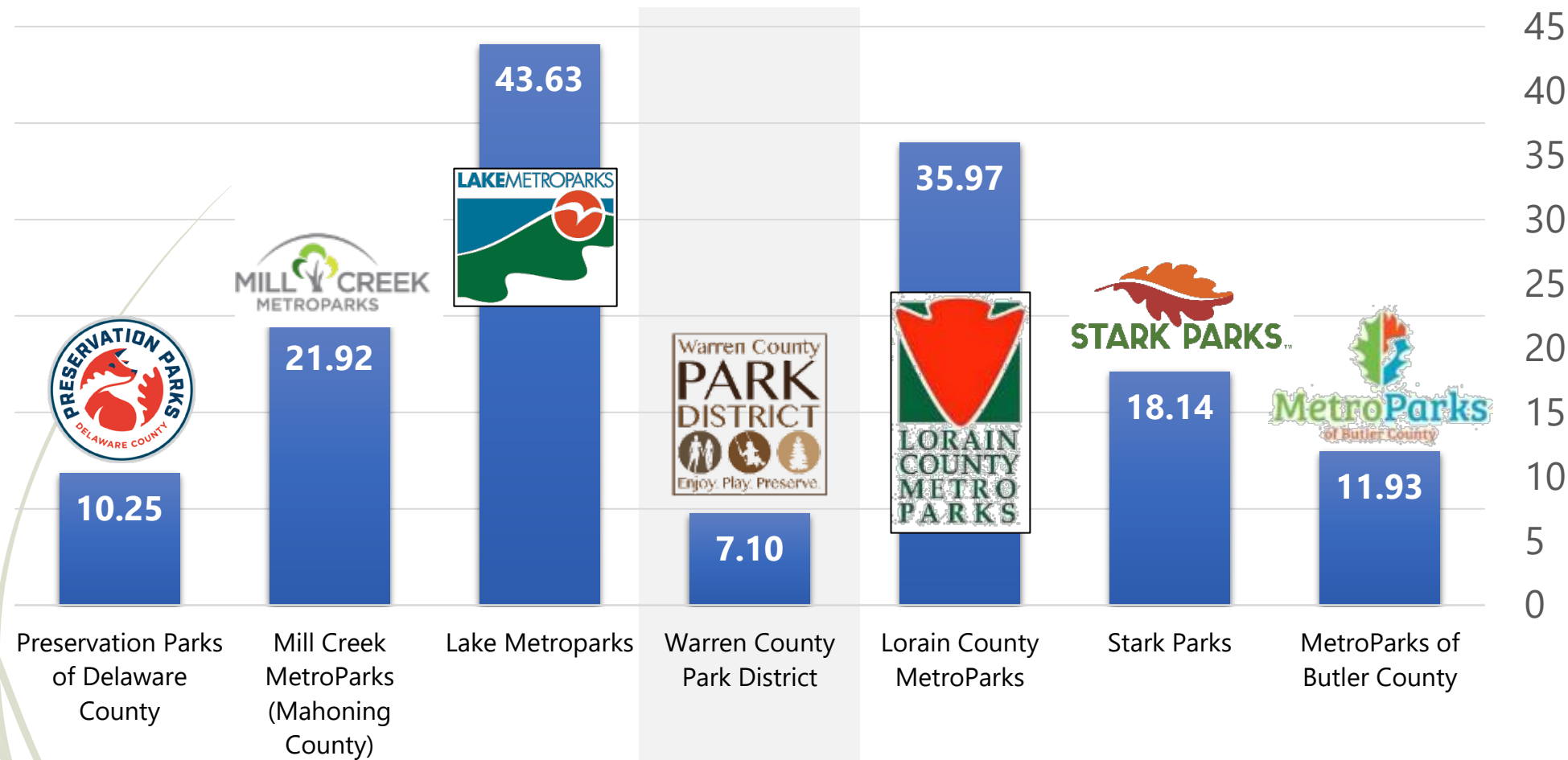
STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS



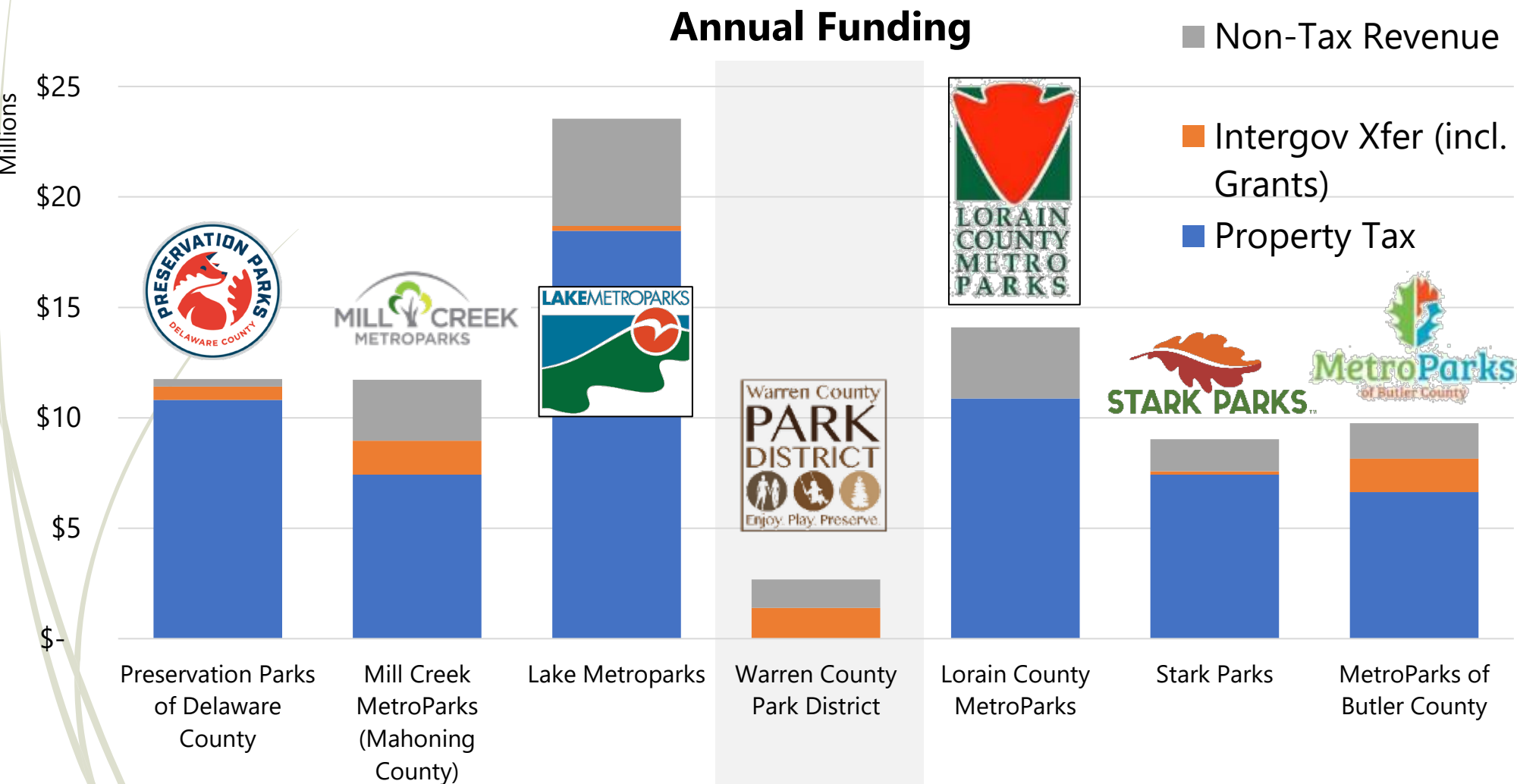
BENCHMARKING

How do we compare to peers?

Acres of Park District Land Per 1,000 Population



How do we compare to peers?



WHAT WE HEARD

WHO WE HEARD FROM

- Public Survey (**365** responses)
- **3** WCPD Steering Committee Meetings
- Board of Park Commissioners
- Warren County Municipal League
- Lebanon Chamber
- Leadership WC Class
- Friends of WCPD
- **8** Stakeholder Focus Groups (**122** participants)
- **3** WCPD Staff Meetings/Workshops (Awareness, Mission & Vision, Goals/Objectives/Recommendations)



SURVEY DETAILS N=365

Respondent Demographics

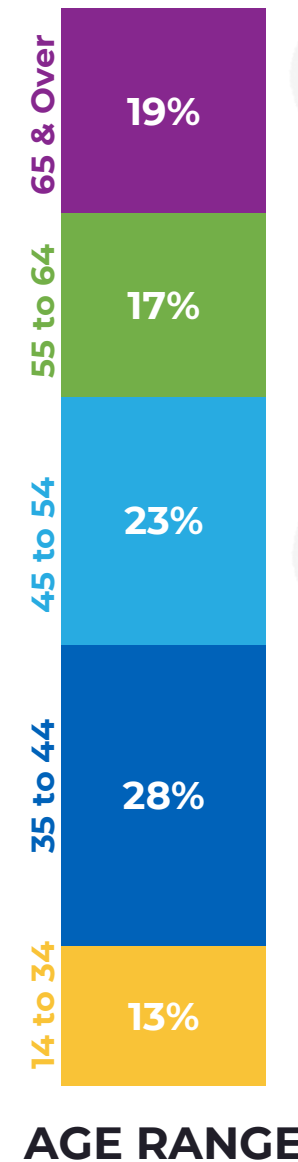
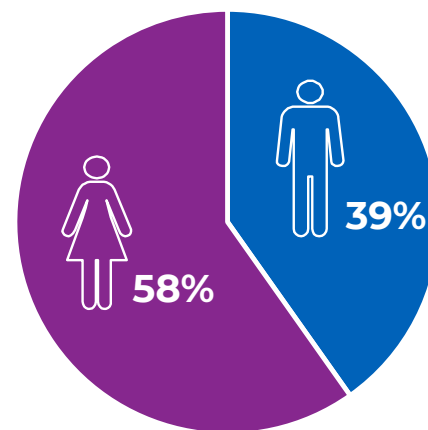
Panel members were required to be Warren County residents, but WCPD list members represented natural fallout. Soft quotas were set to monitor completes by age to track with county representation.

92%

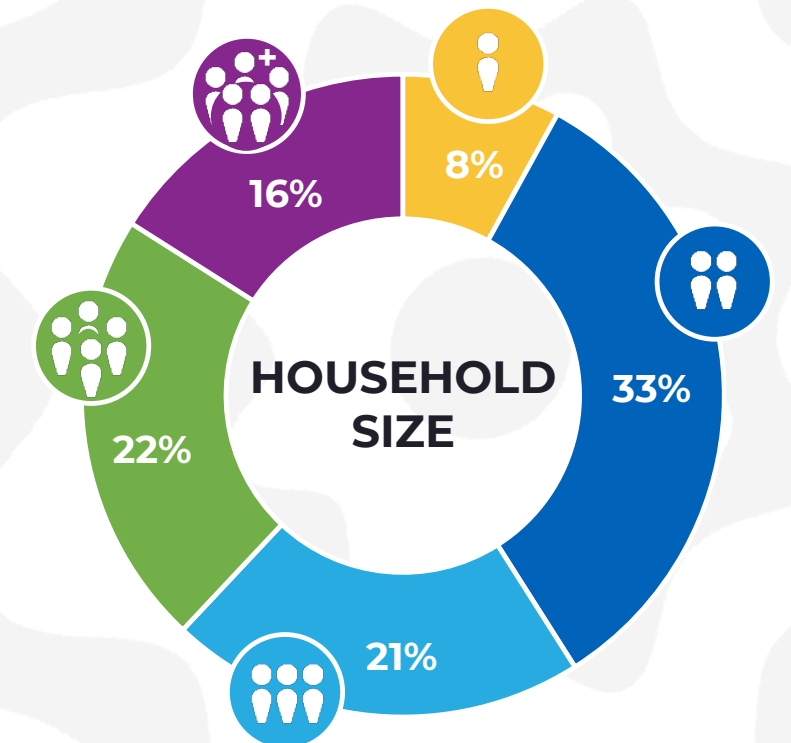
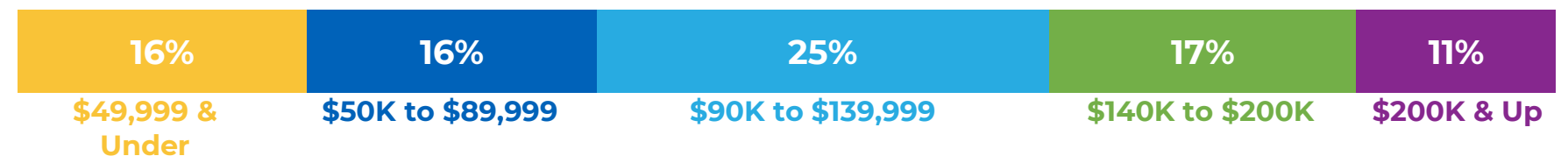
WARREN COUNTY, OH
RESIDENTS



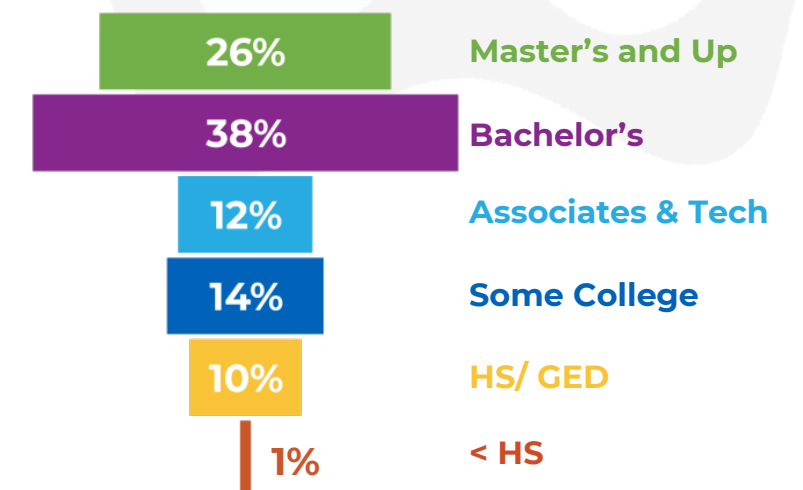
GENDER



HOUSEHOLD INCOME



EDUCATION LEVEL



Most respondents used/ visited many park and outdoor features widely available throughout the Warren County Park District system.

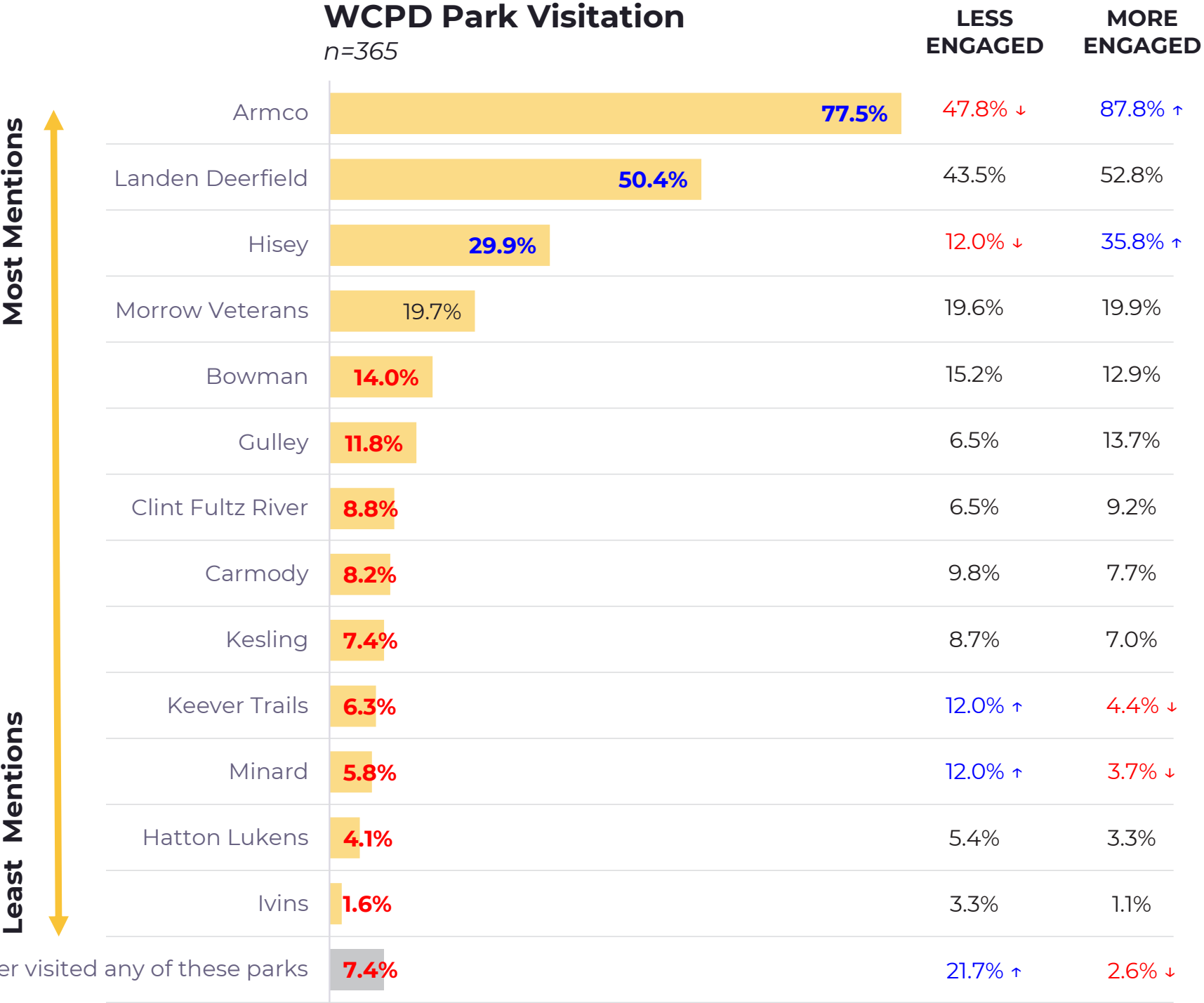
Those less engaged with the WCPD visited ‘dog parks’ and ‘camping areas’ more. These respondents also were less likely to have used/ visited some of the most popular activities overall.

Park & Outdoor Activities n=365		LESS ENGAGED	MORE ENGAGED
Shelters and picnic areas	66.8%	60.9%	68.6%
Hiking / nature trails	66.6%	48.9% ↓	72.7% ↑
Paved biking / walking trails	65.2%	46.7% ↓	71.6% ↑
Natural features (Woods, meadows, prairies, etc.)	63.0%	52.2% ↓	66.8% ↑
Playgrounds	55.6%	52.2%	56.5%
Sports fields / courts	43.6%	41.3%	43.9%
Outdoor community event spaces	42.7%	44.6%	42.1%
Fishing / boating	34.8%	42.4%	32.1%
Canoeing / kayaking	31.8%	27.2%	33.2%
Indoor community event spaces	28.5%	28.3%	28.4%
Splash pad / water play	26.3%	28.3%	25.5%
Golf course	25.8%	29.3%	24.4%
Dog park	24.1%	37.0% ↑	19.9% ↓
Camping areas	23.8%	34.8% ↑	20.3% ↓
Mountain bike trails	14.5%	12.0%	15.1%
Disc golf	13.4%	12.0%	14.0%
Equestrian / horse trails	3.6%	7.6% ↑	2.2% ↓

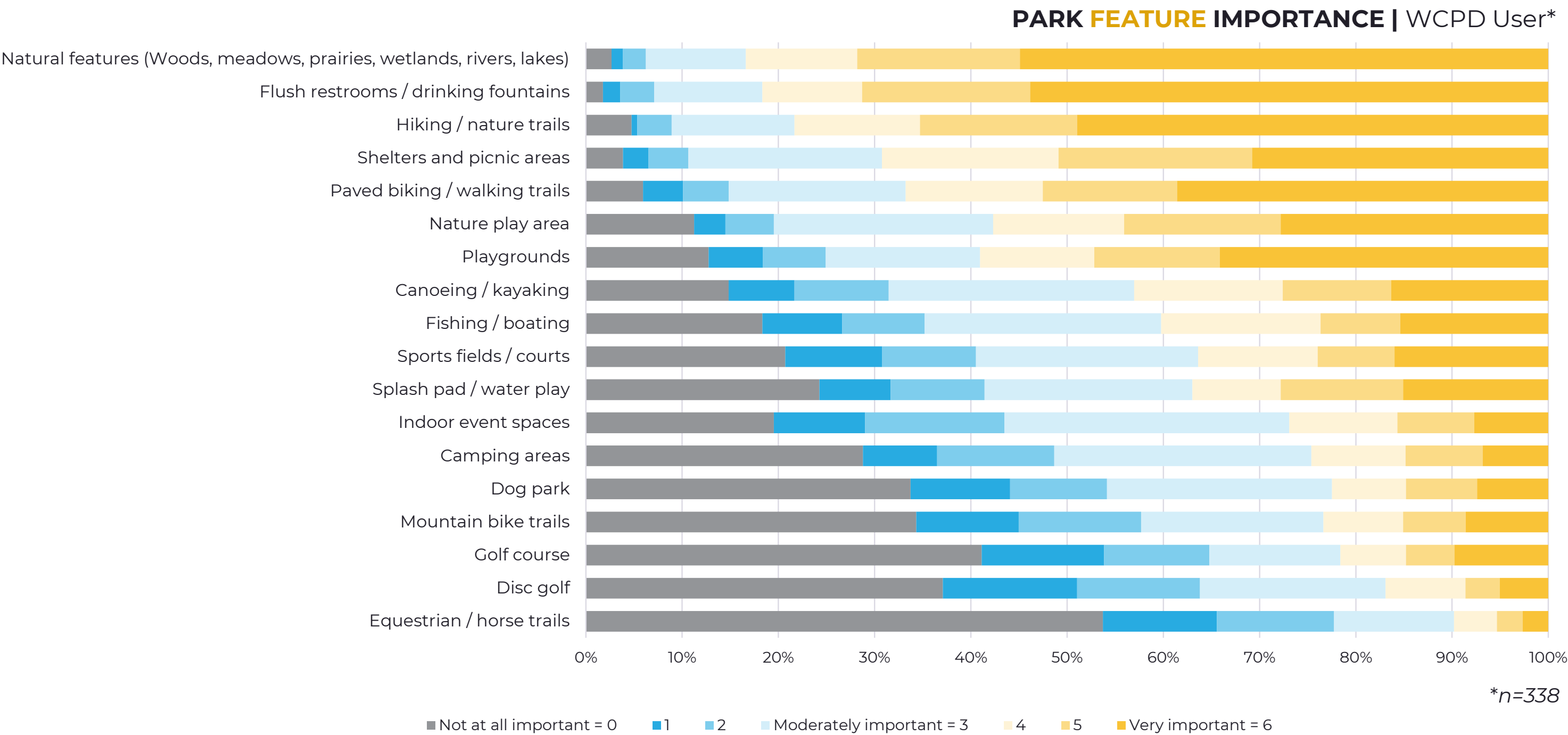
Far and away, Armco and Landen Deerfield lead the pack; Armco especially so among our more engaged respondents.

Keeper Trails and Minard have significantly more mentions by our less engaged respondents.

Further investigation is warranted to understand what those parks offer these visitors specifically. Is it location? Features? Use/situational? Exploration may expose motivations that can assist with planning, marketing and communication development.



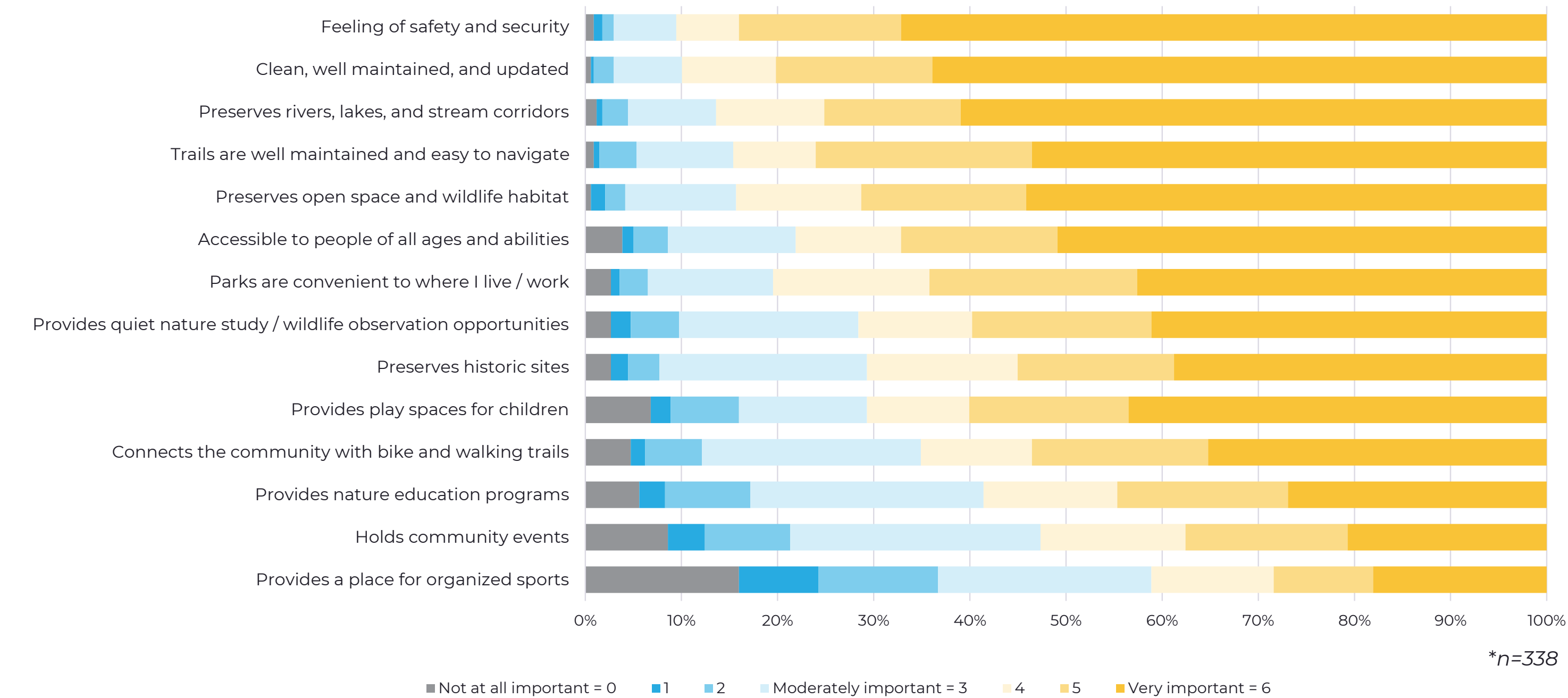
The natural/ ecological and convenience features rate most important with respondents.



Ranked by AVG Total Score

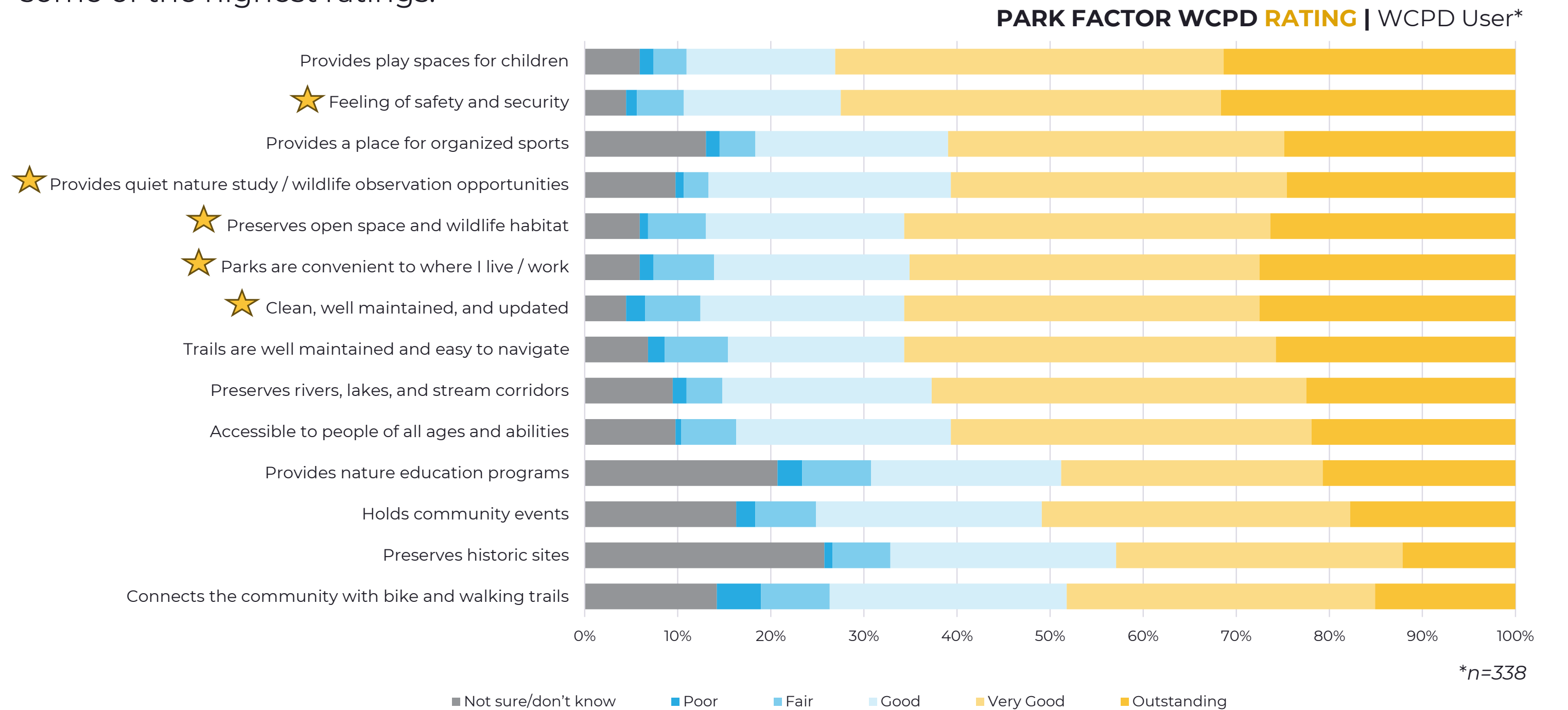
Safety and cleanliness, along with preservation, maintenance and habitat rank among the most important factors for park guests.

PARK FACTOR IMPORTANCE | WCPD User*



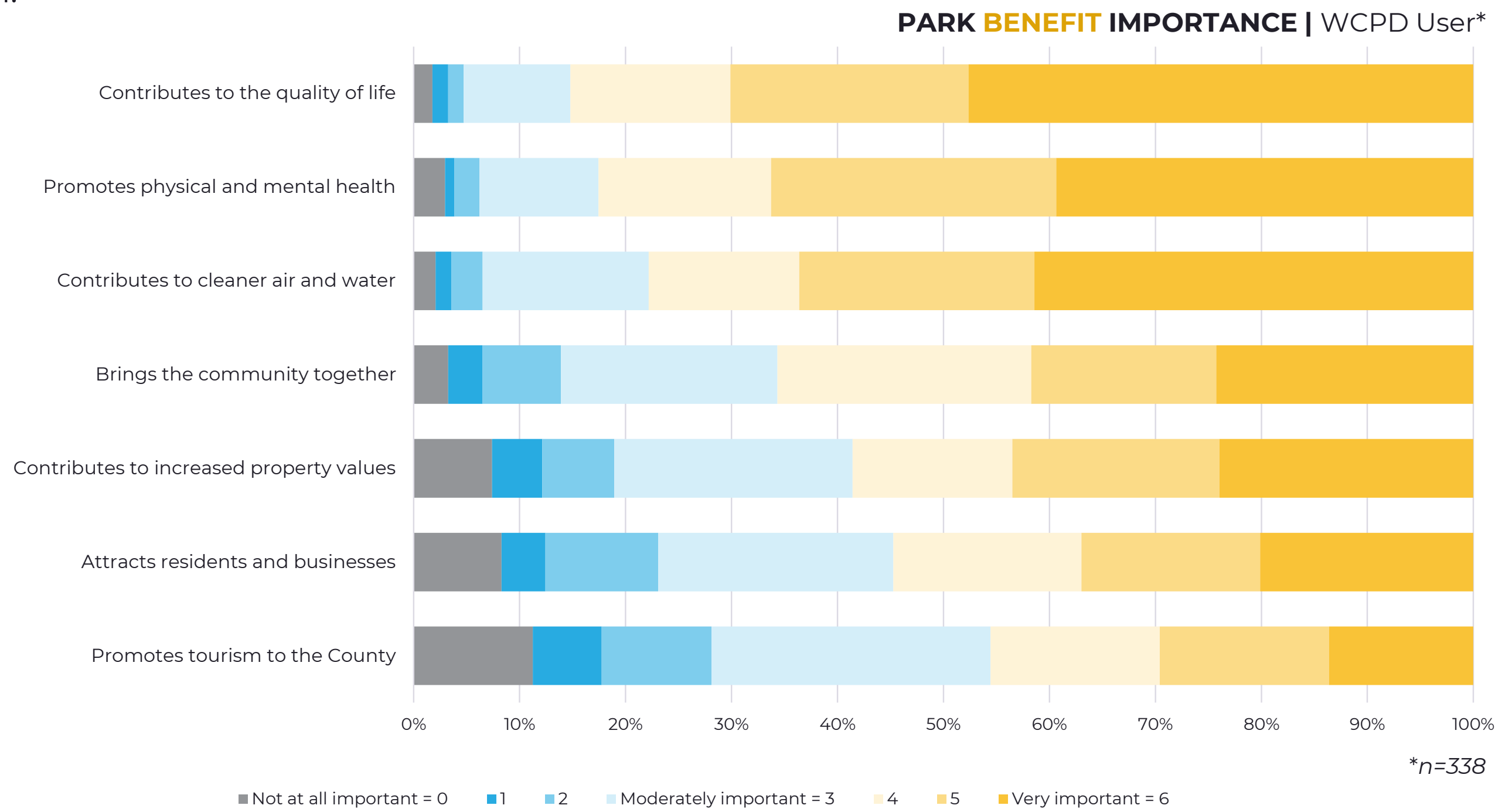
Ranked by AVG Total Score

WCPD received relatively high marks across the board. Some of the most important factors also have some of the highest ratings.



Ranked by AVG Total Score

Most believe the most important park benefits are contributions to quality of life and physical and mental health.



WHAT WE HEARD (KEY TAKEAWAYS / THEMES)

What makes us **UNIQUE & SPECIAL?**

- **Natural assets** and conservation
- Community **collaboration**
- **Diverse recreational offerings** for all ages and abilities
- Strategic **location** of county
- **Financial responsibility**
- **Educational Opportunities**
- **River corridors and trails**

WHAT WE HEARD (KEY TAKEAWAYS / THEMES)

What can we learn from our **PEERS**?

- **Sustainable funding models**
- Effective **communication, marketing, and outreach**
- Diverse and innovative **programming**
- Land **conservation / preservation** strategies
- **Collaboration and partnerships**

WHAT WE HEARD (KEY TAKEAWAYS / THEMES)

How do we **PARTNER** with neighbors to **CONNECT** our assets?

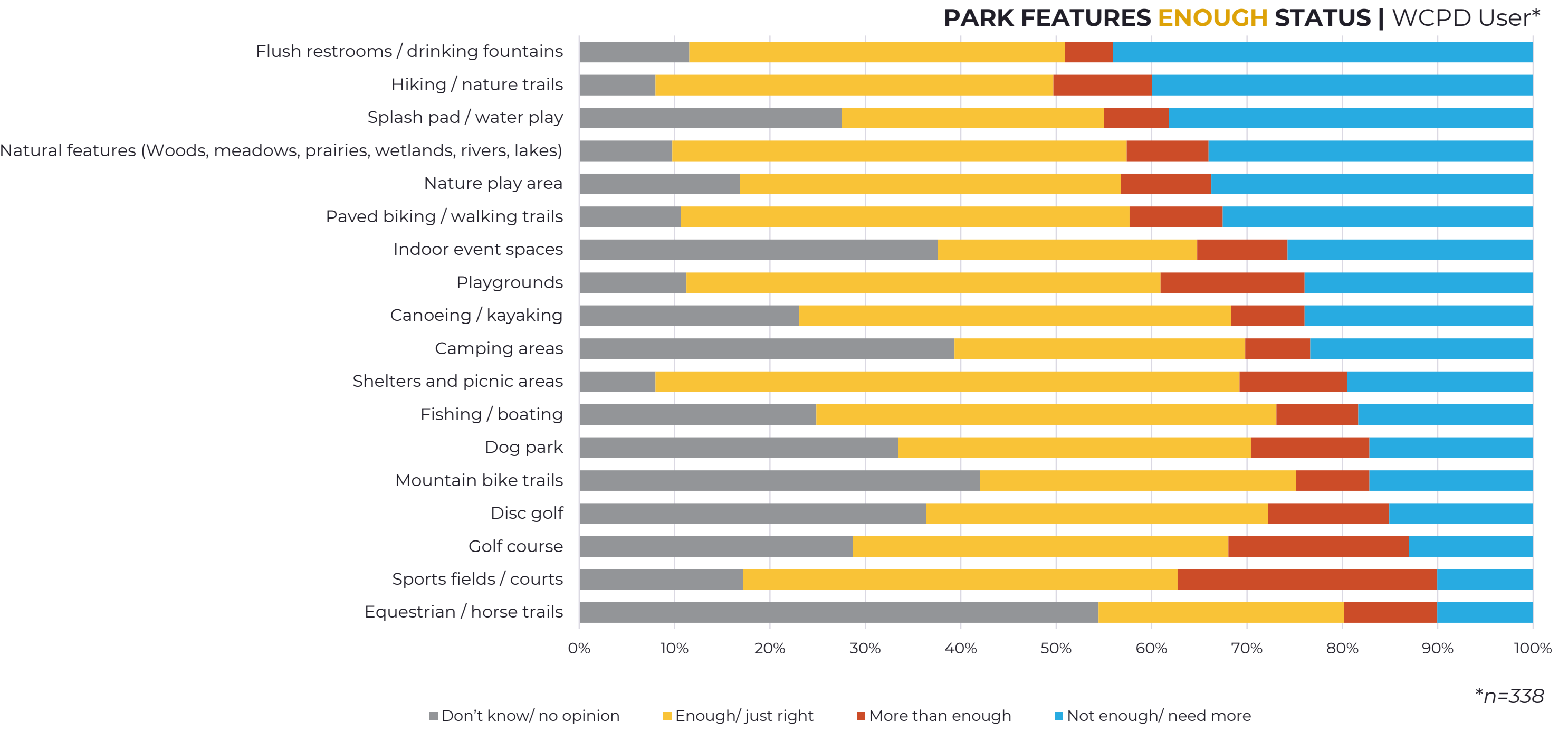
- **Regional Connectivity** – physical (i.e., trails) and organizational
- Cross-jurisdictional **collaboration** (planning, engagement, funding)
- Collaborative **programming**
- Regular **communication / interaction**

WHAT WE HEARD (KEY TAKEAWAYS / THEMES)

What's **MISSING** from our parks?

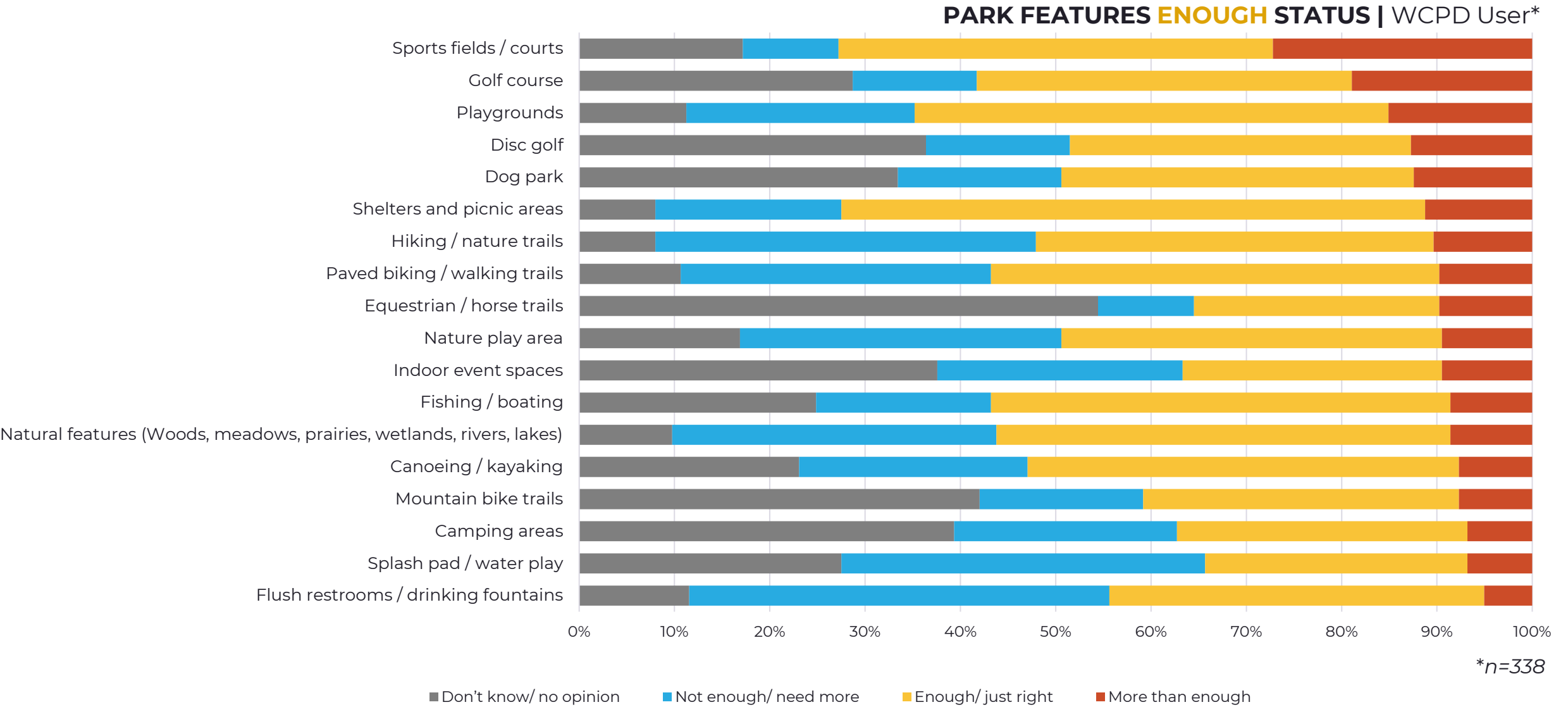
- **Funding** and resource limitations
- **Facility upgrades** and **new amenities**
- Improved **marketing** and community **awareness**
- **Connectivity** to link all major assets
- **Conservation** efforts
- Expanded environmental **education**
- **Diverse amenities and programming**
- **Staffing and operational challenges**
- **Facilities in South Eastern** portion of county

WCPD visitors would most like more ‘flush restrooms / drinking fountains’ and ‘hiking / nature trails’.



Ranked by 'Not enough/ need more'

‘Sports fields / courts’ and ‘Golf course’ were the two highest rated ‘More than enough’ park features.



Ranked by ‘More than Enough’

STRENGTHS

Elements that Warren County & Warren County Park District excel at, benefit residents, or make the area unique and special.

Leadership & Stakeholder Feedback

- Financial management
- Natural resources / assets
- Diverse recreational offerings
- Strong community partnerships
- Dedicated personnel

WCPD Survey Feedback

- Safety & security
- Play spaces for children
- Spaces for organized sports
- Quiet nature / wildlife observation opportunities
- Open space & wildlife habitat preservation

WEAKNESSES

Elements that prevent the County and District from being its best version or that need improvement.

Leadership & Stakeholder Feedback

- Financial limitations
- Geographic gaps in park coverage
- Facility & infrastructure improvements
- Public awareness
- Staffing and resource limitations
- Marketing & branding deficiencies

WCPD Survey Feedback

- Connecting community with bike & walking trails
- Preserving historic sites
- Holding community events
- Providing nature education programs
- Accessibility for people of all ages and abilities

OPPORTUNITIES

Elements that can be improved, have untapped potential, or need more investment.

Leadership & Stakeholder Feedback

- Funding diversification
- Land activation and development
- Diverse programming
- Partnership development
- Brand development
- Enhanced connectivity

WCPD Survey Feedback

- Nature and outdoor features and programs that serve the public good
- Language, communication & marketing targeted toward sentimentality in 'pride of place' & 'our parks' may help build familiarity and increase visitation.

THREATS

Elements that cause negative impacts to the area, prevent improvements, or are barriers for residents/visitors.

- Financial instability
- Development pressures
- Infrastructure deterioration & maintenance challenges
- Safety and security
- Competition for attention & resources
- Public awareness challenges

MISSION AND VISION



MISSION STATEMENT

A brief, concise statement that defines the Park District's purpose and values.

VISION

Defines long-term aspirations and the direction to take in the future. Serves as the foundation for goals and objectives.

GOALS

Represent overarching, desired outcomes that align with the themes identified in the vision statement.

Steering Committee Meeting #3

OBJECTIVES

Policies, or recommended actions that are specific and measurable and aimed at achieving goals and fulfilling the vision.

MISSION

Warren County Park District enhances our community's well-being by preserving quality natural spaces where all are invited to discover and experience the great outdoors.

VISION

Warren County Park District aspires to be a leader in natural resource conservation, outdoor recreation, and nature education by building partnerships and working toward a connected network of green space and trails that enhance our community's quality of life.



GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS (Final Draft)

Strategic Plan Goal Topics

- Conservation
- Recreation
- Education
- Connectivity
- Community
- Operations



Conservation

Goal: Become a recognized leader in the conservation and stewardship of Warren County's natural and scenic resources

- Land acquisition
- Improving ecological/habitat value
- Volunteer engagement in conservation
- Focus on headwater streams and wetlands
- Coordinate with partners



Recreation

Goal: Provide a variety of opportunities for relaxation and recreation in the great outdoors

- Variety of experiences
- Improve access
- Something for all ages and abilities
- Improve public safety



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Education

Goal: Increase understanding and appreciation of the county's parks and natural resources

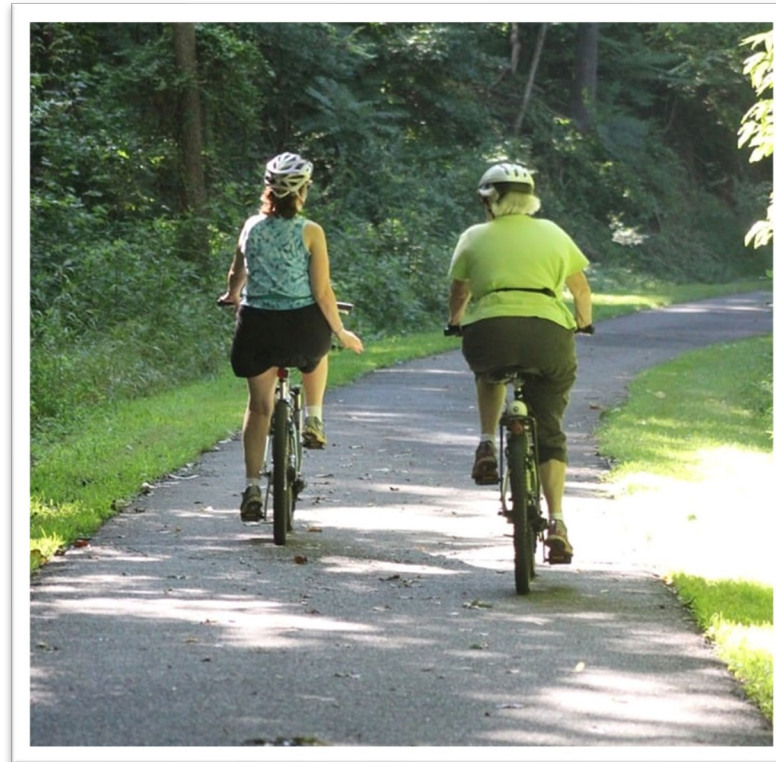
- Expand nature education to parks and areas not currently served
- Partner with libraries for indoor education in winter
- Partner with local communities
- Outdoor adventure programming
- Coordinate and cross-market with partners



Connectivity

Goal: Develop a connected network of green space and non-motorized trails, including land-based trails, water trails, and habitat corridors

- Access to WCPD green space, trails, or program within 10-minute drive of every resident
- Connect regional trail networks
- Improve mapping, signage, and wayfinding
- Quantify economic benefit
- Collaborate with regional partners for planning & marketing



Community

Goal: Bring people and organizations together to build community and achieve common goals

- Facilitate collaboration and partnership across jurisdictions
- Provide a welcoming environment for building community and combating social isolation
- Build partnerships to expand program offerings
- Focus on mental and physical health and wellness
- Promote volunteerism
- Increase awareness



Operations

Goal: Build an exceptional organization to ensure positive park experiences for all guests

- Consistently high maintenance standard
- Adapt to changing community needs
- Drive efficiency and sustainability
- Be a great place to work
- Create a diverse and sustainable funding strategy



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Next Steps

- Open Houses (March)
 - Exact date/time/locations still TBD
 - Springboro/Franklin
 - Waynesville
 - Lebanon
 - Morrow
 - Mason/Deerfield
 - Online
- Final Steering Committee Meeting (April/May)
- Board Adoption (June)



Friends Strategic Plan 2023

Mission: FWCPD is a non-profit 501c3 charitable organization formed to support the Warren County Park District. The mission of this group is to improve, promote, and preserve the Warren County Park District and to engage the community through education and experiences.

Goal Topics:

- Communication
- Continuity
- Visitor Experience
- Nature Ed & Outdoor Experience

Questions for the Friends

- In what ways are the goals of the Friends and those of the Park District aligned?
- Where do the Friends want to focus their energies to help us achieve common goals?
- What actions are needed for the Friends to build their capacity to enable us to accomplish big things together?

Contact Info

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- **THANK YOU!**



