

## VIII. Consultant Observations and Considerations

GreenPlay has been in the parks, recreation, and open space management consulting business since 1999, and is staffed with a team of professionals boasting over 160 years of combined experience in the field. We have worked with over 300 communities on various plans, using these tools and methodologies, yet treat each one as unique, providing customized community-specific results.

The GreenPlay Project Manager for both the DRD Strategic and Master Plans was one of the first to become a Certified Parks and Recreation Executive, the new advanced certification administered by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA). Karon Badalamenti, a Principal with GreenPlay, brings over 25 years in Parks and Recreation administration, and senior management experience.

It is from this perspective, as well as considerable planning experience with DRD and within the Coachella Valley, and extensive national expertise, that the consultant team provides the following observations and suggestions which are offered for DRD consideration.

### A. Strategic Plan Considerations

The following best practices and strategies were suggested in the 2012 Strategic Plan to enhance the operations and management of the District and have been addressed through this master planning process:

- Barrier-Free Access
- Collaborative Service Provision Strategies
- Communication and Return on Investment

#### **Barrier-Free Access**

**Suggestions include:** conduct equity reviews to ensure that all citizens have equal opportunity to participate in sport and physical recreation programs regardless of sex, age, race, income level, or ability; take extra steps to ensure that vulnerable populations have access to the same choices and opportunities for recreation and active living as the population at large; and ensure that those that have limited means or ability to pay issues have funded support systems for barrier-free access including a scholarship or financial assistance program.



**Additionally:** support sport, active living, and cultural organizations and partner with them in programs that aim to build social cohesion while increasing opportunities for recreation and physical activity; support the development of a comprehensive campaign to promote recreation that involves all municipalities and unincorporated areas within the District, and many industries and businesses in multiple interventions; sponsor and encourage special events that involve recreation and physical activity and engage all social groups; celebrate multiculturalism and diversity; identify and work with various cultures and religions in the community to promote physical recreation and active living opportunities and to find the best solutions for overcoming common barriers.



### **Collaborative Service Provision Strategies**

**Strategies include:** avoid duplication of services and market saturation; over extending or expanding services, or trying to be all things to all people often results in mediocre or low-quality service so instead, focus on delivering higher-quality service in a more focused (and perhaps limited) way; consider selectively expanding services through partnerships in the Sphere of Influence (SOI) and abutting areas with healthcare providers, overlapping municipalities, and pursuing cross-marketing or complementary service development strategies; focus on areas where there is an unmet need for health and wellness and after school activities; coordinate services with public transportation, greenways, and trail systems; continue to further facilitate the valley-wide parks and recreation needs assessment and discussion through the DRD Master Plan development process; consider a community-wide, statistically-valid unmet needs and satisfaction survey and seek other municipalities/agencies to financially partner in this process in exchange for their applicable results; provide target market information by mapping survey responses and demographic overlays; consider additional web-based options and target survey options to reach selected groups like teens.

In addition to these considerations from the Strategic Plan, additional collaborative considerations and concepts should include:

- “Strategic Abandonment” – “Peter Drucker called this systematic abandonment, the deliberate process of letting go of familiar products in favor of the new or as yet unknown.”  
<http://www.heinzmarketing.com/2007/06/strategic-abandonment/>
- “Collective Impact” – “Large-scale social change requires broad cross-sector coordination, not the isolated intervention of individual organizations.”  
[http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective\\_impact](http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective_impact)
- Which agency is the right one to provide specific service where – niche
- Negotiate and trade lands, operation and management, development, etc.

### **Communication and Return on Investments**

**Suggestions include:** improve transparent communication with the public; demonstrate where and how public funds and taxpayer investments are used; use graphics to help explain the value/cost of providing desired and necessary services; communicate the connection of services to the community issues by discussing the outcomes, benefits, and results from what the District does, not just the numbers of participants; engage the community and the municipalities within the SOI in the planning process.



**Additionally:** evaluate the Return on Investment (ROI) of the “free” or major special events as these are a huge financial commitment, and while “sexy” or public relations friendly, they are a labor drain; visitor and tourism attraction is more closely aligned as a function of municipalities and the County, rather than a special district whose focus is parks and recreation services for residents of the District; perhaps place less emphasis here in the future, and reallocate resources elsewhere.



## B. Entrepreneurial Considerations

The following regional enterprise ventures could provide revenue positive funding sources to assist DRD in improving local level of service in the more sparsely populated, rural, and unincorporated county areas that the District is also tasked with serving. The ability to pass a district-wide taxation measure to fund these necessary local improvements in areas with the greatest socio-economic challenges seems highly unlikely. Adding revenue positive entrepreneurial endeavors, pursuing collaborative opportunities, and leveraging resources must all be a part of the development campaign which may include a parcel taxation question for operating and development.

### Sports Tournament Venues

Athletic field availability throughout the Coachella Valley is at a premium according to youth and adult sports organizations, and District and City recreation staff across the valley. In addition, sports programs are in high demand, boasting a lot of participants. Many cities find their local fields at capacity and used by many non-city residents.

Currently there is neither a *public* multi-field softball/baseball sports complex, nor a *public* soccer/football sports complex in the Valley appropriate for tournaments. Big League Dreams, a private entity in Cathedral City, provides five baseball/softball fields, three soccer/football fields, sand volleyball courts, and an indoor pavilion. Use of the facility seems to be focused around competitive youth baseball and softball leagues and tournaments, along with adult recreational and competitive sports leagues and tournaments. There is a cost to field a team in a league and an additional entrance fee to get into the facility.

Several high profile or regional agencies across the nation have considered for the future, or currently offer, sports tournament venues including:

- The City of Palm Springs (potential collaborative venture as this was explored in its Master Plan)
- Charleston County Park and Recreation Commission in South Carolina (considering a soccer collaboration with the Charleston Battery)
- Cary, North Carolina (currently has the USA Baseball National Training Complex, Wakemed Soccer Park, Cary Tennis Park)
- Commerce City, Colorado (Dick's Sporting Goods Soccer Park - The city of Commerce City owns the stadium and Kroenke Sports and Entertainment operates the venue for the Colorado Rapids)

Please refer to **Appendix E** for details on these agencies' future considerations and current services.

### Action Sports Park – BMX/Pump Training Track

To be located at the **Desert Regional Park location (in North Valley)**, this action sports park could include a BMX park and training facility with private non-profit group and include a mountain bike pump track. The City of Fresno created such a park at Woodward Regional Park.



## OHV Park

The Riverside County Parks and Open Space District (RivCoParks) is actively collaborating with partners to locate, plan, and implement an Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) park within the County. A demonstrated need (based upon the OHVR Business Plan completed in 2012) has been identified for an OHVR park within Riverside County. RivCoParks has been identified as a logical leader for development of such a park given the alignment of the type of park with the District's vision and mission. There may be interest in collaborations with DRD on this venture.

## C. Funding Considerations

DRD uses the following funding mechanisms to fund the current level of service:

- Percent of the dedicated 1% property tax (without inflationary measures)
- Benefit Assessment Districts (for example: \$54/year in Indio; a Light District in Thousand Palms for operations and maintenance of the community center and medians, etc.)
- Fees for service through IGAs (for example: with the City of Palm Desert)
- School Board funding (for example: for the ASES program)
- Fees and charges for participation
- Alternative Funding Sources (grants, sponsorships, in-kind and monetary donations, volunteers, etc.)

DRD should consider a joint parcel taxation measure to fund a capital development and operational funding package which includes something for everyone that may or may not be owned, operated, or managed by DRD. The taxation measure should include an inflation/escalation factor consistent with CPI. The package could include funding used by DRD as well as a development and operating measure divided between DRD as a valley-wide service provider, cities for local service provision, and another agency for acquisition and land holdings.

For instance, a portion could be distributed on a per capita basis to cities for their local service provision. Funds passed through to others could be for services:

- To the various cities for:
  - Operating and maintenance funding for municipal portions of a valley-wide trail system
  - Funding to improve or enhance the provision of park and recreation within the cities whether contracted back to DRD or others, or provided in-house
- To other providers for:
  - Transportation funding for a "REC" Route to existing services to Sunline or the school districts

There is current consideration for a legislative measure that would decrease the voter threshold from a super majority to a simple majority on parcel tax measures. This could be beneficial for the passage of a major district-wide or valley-wide taxpayer investment question.

Additional items for further exploration, consideration, and development include:

- Other tax funding considerations:
  - TOT tax implications, especially on a regional venue which might attract tourism.
  - License Plate funding (for example: "Save the Sea" for the Salton Sea)



- Other funding mechanisms to leverage:
  - California Endowment (Maria Shriver) for the East Valley
  - Currently \$50M raised for the Whitewater Trail project (of the \$80M project)
- Additional cost recovery issues to address through the resource allocation and cost recovery project:
  - Understand the per person tax computation.
  - Understand the per household tax computation.
  - Allocation of a percent off the top for infrastructure re-investment.
  - Allocation of a percent off the top for low income initiatives throughout the valley.
  - Pro-rata share of tax investment to cities for a percentage of operating services for the potential initiative share previously described.

## **D. District Boundary Considerations**

Several cities have asked about either expansion of the DRD service area boundaries to include more or all of their municipality, or contracting for DRD to provide services on their behalf. Inclusion into the District will necessitate additional tax funding or a proportional operational commitment to add services to the complement of existing DRD parks, facilities, programs, and services.

## **E. Staffing Considerations**

DRD cannot pursue the regional venue growth through development, contract/agreement, collaborations, etc. without additional resources. Through the Strategic Plan implementation and re-organization, DRD has actualized and will be freeing up between \$800,000 and \$1,000,000 annually in operating funds. This fiscal year – 2013/14 – DRD elected to use these funds for smaller-scale capital projects and deferred maintenance needs.

Next fiscal year (2014/15), it is recommended that DRD focus on creating and filling staffing key positions to accommodate this Master Plan and the future development and taxation growth recommendation. These positions include (not in priority order):

- Finance Director to better monitor investments, internal accounting, and budget development and manage the resource allocation and cost recovery project scheduled.
- Programming staff for service expansion as this occurs.
- Special skills or consultants for: bond structuring and strategy, political advisement, legal and contract negotiations, etc.
- Engineers, Planners, and Project Managers, as well as potential marketing assistance.
- A focused liaison (in succession plan) to further develop the efforts of the Foundation to expand its purview to capital campaigns and major District fundraising (above and beyond their current successful efforts of \$300,000 for the First Tee program).



# IX. Recommendations and Analysis of Potential and Suggested Projects (to be fully developed and finalized by DRD)

## A. Programmatic Priorities

The following programs are identified for expansion and development:

- Summer and afterschool programs for those who do not qualify for ASES elementary school age program, and ASSETS for teens
- Fitness and Wellness programs
- Cultural arts, environmental, and sports are high priorities in the Eastern Coachella Valley area
- Transportation for a valley-wide youth “REC” Route to existing recreation, education, and cultural services using Sunline, the school districts, or an alternative provider

## B. Capital Component Priorities

The following four **Opportunities Maps 1-4 (Figures 29-32)** detail what a potential district-wide investment package might include. Maps 2- 4 include concepts which have had some preliminary discussion and interest, while Map 1 includes projects currently in planning.

The final components to include in the capital campaign need to be vetted, development, and operating costs identified, and participants secured. However, in addition to expanding programming, expanding the District boundaries through inclusion or by service contract, the following ideas should be explored:

- Sports Tournament Venue – baseball/softball and/or soccer/football
- Adventure Sports Park – BMX and mountain bike pump track and training facility
- At least minimal development to create structured use at Coral Mountain Discovery Park
- Full funding for all currently planned projects
- Expansion and replacement of Pawley Pool Family Aquatics Center with a leisure play pool
- Valley-wide trail system providing operation, security, and maintenance; CVAG is currently coordinating the development and will most likely continue to do so through construction

## C. Conclusions

Many steps need to be put into place for DRD to pursue the lofty goal of implementing any of the Capital Component Priorities outlined in the Opportunity Maps, including finalizing the development package, structuring the collaborations and partnerships, and creating the finance package to secure leveraged funding and taxpayer investment. In addition, surveying on the final package and investment threshold tolerance, developing the ultimate taxation question, creating the factual concept information for public education, and securing advisement on the political process, legal requirements, and agency constraints should begin soon.



It is recommended that the DRD Board of Directors authorize the General Manager to begin this exploration and fact finding process in earnest, securing the participants, engaging the councilors, and negotiating the campaign. The soonest that DRD could pursue the taxation measure would be November 2014, and it may take a couple of times for the right package to be confirmed and pass a public vote.

## D. Opportunities Perspective 1 – Currently in Planning

In addition to a complete inventory and assessment of currently owned and managed sites and facilities, a second round of site visits concentrated on identified or possible opportunities for future expansion or enhancement of recreation by the District either as a sole provider or as a partner with an existing agency. **Figure 29** represents those projects or possible projects that are currently in some level of planning. The figure gives a brief overview of each opportunity and the locations are indicated on the map. Further discussion based on site visits and staff input follow.

Figure 29: Opportunity Map 1 – Project Currently in Planning



### Coral Mountain Discovery Park (625 Acres)

Development of this site would provide a unique recreation and education opportunity not currently provided by the District or other providers.

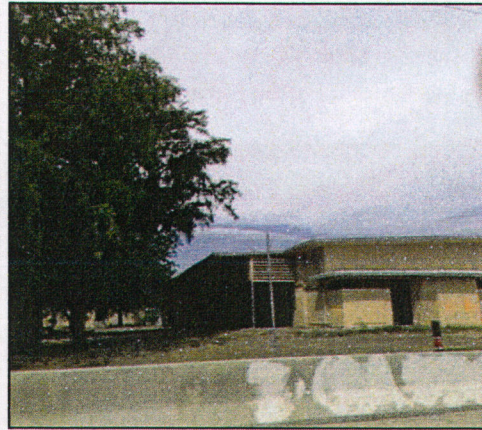
- The current developed concept plan presents the site as a more passive and interpretive site.
- This project is not yet funded – the probable construction cost in 2007 was \$8.5 million, but the final design and construction project needs to be revisited.
- Explore collaborations with Lake Calheta (Riverside County Open Space District) or alternative operational models.
- Revise concept plan to add camping.



### Oasis School and Community Center

Opportunities to develop this site would provide neighborhood or local recreation opportunities to an area currently lacking service in the rural service area in the southern portion of the District.

- DRD has funds for a Phase 1 only.
- Need a plan and CIP budget for additional phases, and a budget for operating and maintaining.



#### Site visit notes:

- This site is in process of acquisition – 15 acres.
- This is an old-school site that is currently being demolished.
- The fields and grounds are overgrown.
- Lots of cleanup to do here.



### **Thermal Senior Center (Olive and Church) – temporary operating arrangement**

Development of this opportunity would provide a long term solution and provision of recreation opportunities to an underserved area of the rural service area. The primary focus of this site would be the short term construction of a new multi-generation community center. Additional provision could also include development of a community park on an adjacent five acre parcel.

- Building to be demolished in two years.
- Need a 5-acre site for replacement.
- Develop into a Multi-Generation Recreation Center and Community Park.
- Need a plan and CIP budget for replacement.



#### Site visit notes:

- The existing facilities are rough and outdated.
- Existing adjacent schools are mostly portable buildings that are in desperate need of upgrade to permanent structures.



### **Christian School of the Desert site**

Development of this site as a community park and recreation facility is a good opportunity and would provide important additional recreation services in Bermuda Dunes. Even though this area is currently at threshold for level of service due to Freedom Park, further development would be a welcome opportunity. The site currently has a small pool, gym, portable buildings, a football/softball field, and a baseball field.

- The site could become the Bermuda Dunes Community Park.
- Need a plan and CIP budget for re-purposing, and a budget for operating and maintaining.



#### Site visit notes:

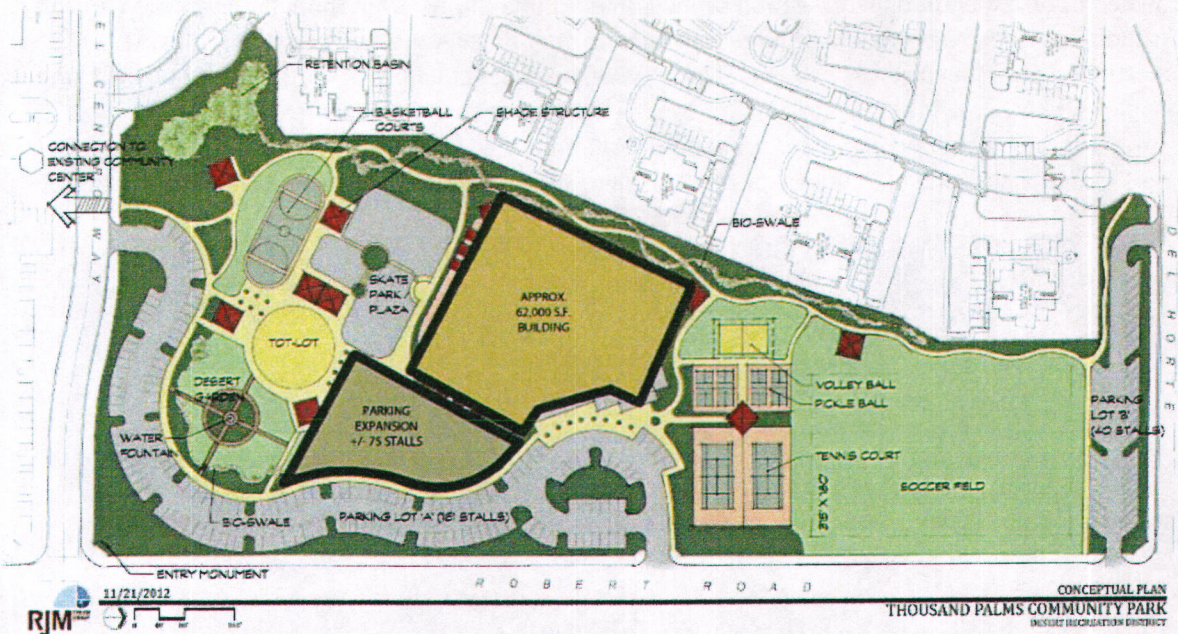
- Potential location for a community park in Bermuda Dunes.
- This is on a fairly quiet street and site is well hidden with vegetation and buildings.

### **Thousand Palms Legacy Park property**

Development of this site would expand on the level of service provided by Thousand Palms Community Park and Community Center. This area currently is served by this existing park and community center.

- This would be a great site for a joint venture with Desert Health District.
- DRD has a concept plan.
- Not funded – the approximate construction cost is \$15 million with the pool as originally designed, but the final design and construction project needs to be revisited. DRD removed the pool and added space for large community building to potentially share with Desert Health District. The original concept plan as designed by the community is below.





Site visit notes:

- Concept plan for this park needs to be completed.
- Data has been entered into the database according to that plan, but it is not finalized.
- Current conditions are a basic desert vacant lot.
- Large apartment complex on the east side and affordable housing on the west side.
- This park would be a north extension of Thousand Palms Community Park which is currently in the inventory, in addition to the Thousand Palms Community Center

**Mecca Park and Community Center**

Enhancement of level of service provided by this facility is warranted based on the current condition of many of the amenities in this rural recreation service area. The recent addition of the Boys and Girls Club and several municipal buildings have raised the standards in the immediate area and the park currently falls well short of these standards.

- Coordination with Boys and Girls Club of Coachella Valley to avoid duplication of service and create collaborative programs is warranted.
- Phase 1 park improvements (including additional shade and tables to shelter, renovations of park restrooms and pool locker rooms, and replacing turf with paspalum turf) and a skatepark addition are in process.
- To be funded through a tribal grant application for an Indian Community Development Block Grant (ICDBG) on behalf of DRD.

Site Visit Notes:

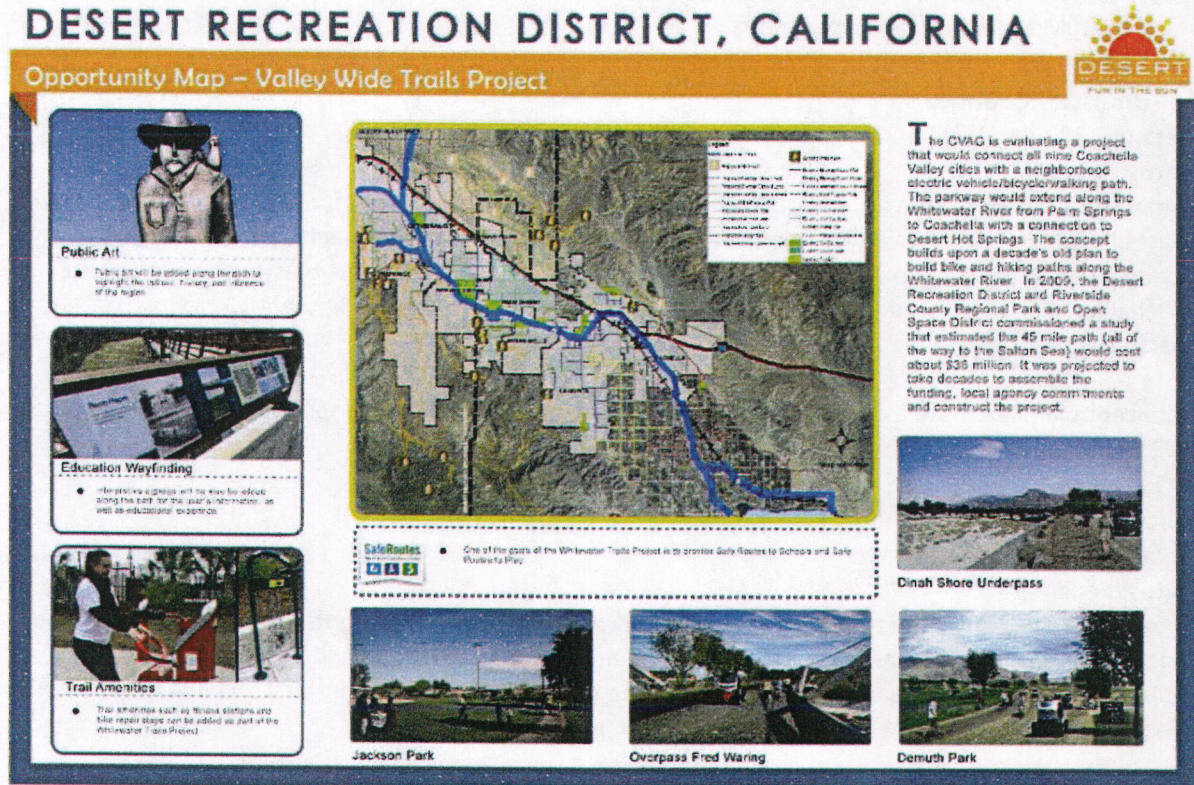
- Appears that the South field renovation is complete.



## E. Opportunities Perspective #2 - Trails

The District should continue to work with the municipalities and county agencies for the development of a county wide trails plan. Development of the Whitewater River Trail (**Figure 30**) is a major endeavor that is currently partially funded in the amount of approximately \$50 million. The District should strengthen this partnership and also participate in developing spurs or linkages to the proposed main spine trail.

Figure 30: Opportunity Map 2: Valley-Wide Trails Project



The following discussions include three major trail projects currently in planning in the Valley. These three major trailsheds will not only serve as recreational trails and linear parks, but also as alternative multi-modal transportation corridors and emergency service provision or evacuation corridors.

In addition, the final linear park through Indian Wells exists currently and can be further developed to provide enhanced service.



### **Whitewater River Trail – \$80M Development Project**

**Distance:** 35 mile

**Status:** Phased Design Development

**Comments:** Development of dual track backbone trail connecting the San Bernardino at the head waters of the Whitewater River following the river channel through the many of the cities in the Coachella Valley to the Salton Sea in southeastern Riverside County. The trail will be one of three proposed backbone trails for future trail network expansion in the Coachella Valley.

**Funding:** CVAG has raised almost \$50 M to date for the White Water Trails Project:

\$20M

\$17M Air Quality Management (AQM)

\$10M Desert Health Care District

### **All American Channel**

**Distance:** 38 mile

**Status:** Pending

**Comments:** The trail is the second of three proposed backbone trails to support the trail network in the Coachella Valley. It is proposed as the development of dual track trail connecting the Riverside County Regional Park and Open Space District's Lake Cahuilla Recreation Area in the western portion of the Coachella Valley to the undeveloped portions of the eastern valley following the All American or Coachella Canal.

A concept plan, and both a capital and operating budget needs to be developed for All American Canal Trail from Coachella to La Quinta.

### **Dillon Road Corridor**

**Distance:** 7 mile

**Status:** Pending

**Comments:** The trail is the third of three proposed backbone trails to support the trail network in the Coachella Valley. This trail as proposed is a combination of Class I, Class II and expanded Class I (to accommodate alternated energy source vehicles) in the northern portion of the Coachella Valley. It will also serve to support future trail system expansion in the Coachella Valley.

A concept plan, and both a capital and operating budget needs to be developed for Dillon Road Trail at Hwy 62 to Coachella/Indio.

### **Highway 111 6-mile Indian Wells Corridor**

Add to the six mile stretch of Indian Wells-controlled Hwy 111 (four are resort frontage), exercise equipment stations, educational wayfinding, historic and cultural education, and public art to further develop this linear park.

A concept plan, and both a capital and operating budget needs to be developed for this 6-mile stretch along Highway 111 in Indian Wells.

### **Valley-wide trails project – Programmatic and Operational Considerations**

Coordination, management, and security patrol using DRD policing authority could be managed by DRD through implementing a ranger program. The magnitude and operating budget will need to be determined.



**Funding:** Tie in Safe Routes to Schools, and Safe Routes to Play

**Safe Routes To Play**  
*A Child-Centered Transportation Initiative*

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*What if all children had the opportunity to safely bicycle, ski, skate, scoot, or walk to their play destinations?*

**Safe Routes To Play Objectives**

- Community Assessment Tool - determine a community's level of 'active access'
- Funding Mechanisms - implement Safe Routes To Play initiatives
- Promote Awareness - the value of a child-centered active transportation model
- Accepted Planning Practices - for transportation, community, and trails planners
- Partnerships - with key government, academic, non-profit and business entities

**GP2RED**  
Governing, Planning, and Promoting Recreation

[www.SafeRoutesToPlay.org](http://www.SafeRoutesToPlay.org)  
For more information, contact  
Cindy Heath, [cindyh@gpred.org](mailto:cindyh@gpred.org), 303-443-8300

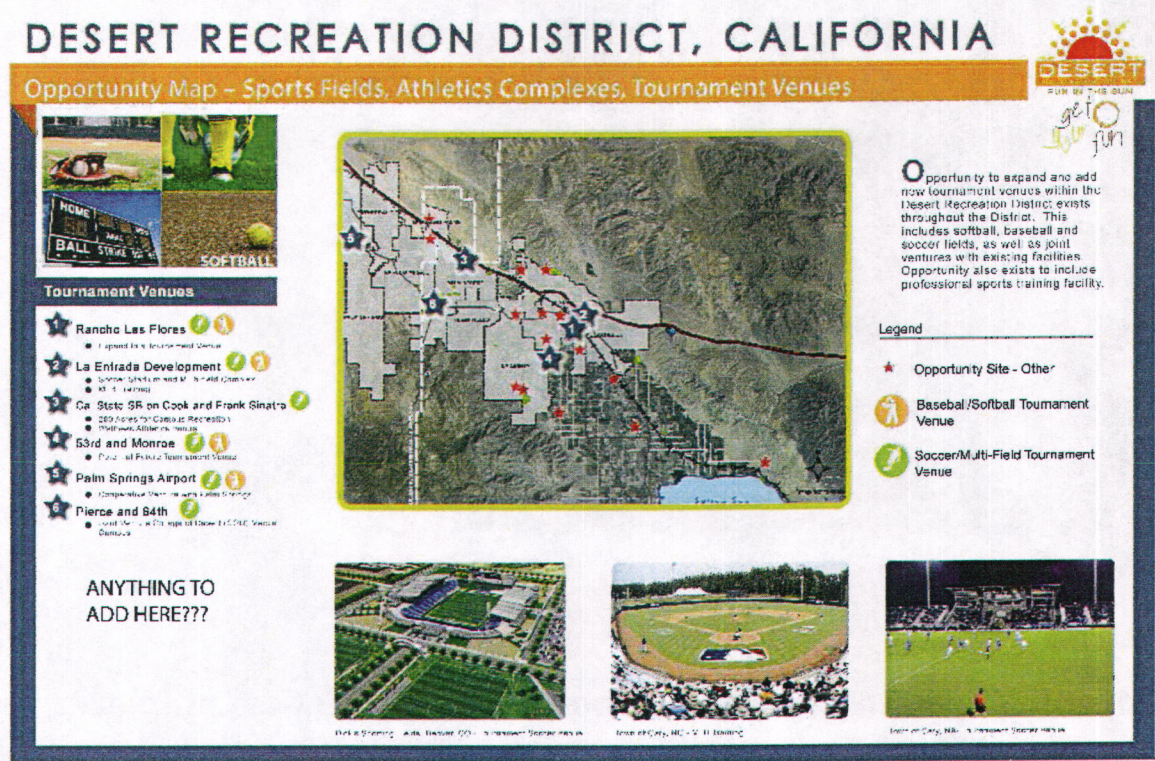
## F. Opportunities Perspective #3 – Sports Fields, Athletics Complexes, Tournament Venues

There is an identified need for local fields across the valley as well as an untapped opportunity for tournament venues as enterprising ventures (**Figure 31**). This increasing demand for local field usage across the valley would suggest a feasibility study to determine the costs, operational impacts, and community benefits of building and operating dedicated sports complexes. An in-depth discussion regarding sports complexes trends and feasibility studies, as well as four case studies are outlined in **Appendix E**. In addition, DRD should explore a major league baseball (MLB) spring training site (like Phoenix, Arizona) or a major league soccer (MLS) venue (like Commerce City, Colorado, has with the Colorado Rapids).

With most sports becoming year round, the number of public and privately operated sports facilities is becoming big business opportunities for economic impact through tournament venues that fill hotel rooms, restaurants, and shopping districts. The local benefit beyond the economic impact dollars of these sports complexes is the addition of several game fields and courts for community use on Mondays through Thursdays. Many times existing fields and courts become much needed practice facilities in addition to league games as necessary.



Figure 31: Opportunity Perspective 3: Sports Fields, Athletics Complexes, and Tournament Venues



### Rancho Las Flores

Coachella has a 6-month old soccer park at 48 and Van Burren.

- Can this expand to a tournament venue?







Site Visit notes:

- A 6-month old lighted multipurpose field complex.
- Site also has two basketball courts.
- One field is equipped with football goalposts and covered spectator seating.
- There are three group shelters on the east end.
- There are three group shelters on the north side of the fields.
- There are five group shelters in the main plaza.
- There is a destination playground with covered shade structure.
- There is a fitness track or loop walk with stations around the exterior.
- The site also has four full-size fields, drinking fountains, water mister cooling stations, security lighting, concessions, restrooms, and picnic tables.
- It is a well-maintained park that is well landscaped.
- It appears this park has room to expand to six, or even eight, fields to the east and possibly to the north.
- There is decent access to freeway.

**La Entrada Development – in the “v” of Hwy 111 and 86**

Two hundred (200) acres may be available for a possible public/private/developer joint venture project for soccer stadium and multi-field complex. There appears to be some preliminary interest in this cooperative development project from the developer.



- Wherever the rectangle fields are, soccer, volleyball, football, La Crosse, and rugby can have a home.







Site visit notes:

- Site, as part of a future development, has great freeway access and existing infrastructure.
- Really has a feeling of “if you build it they will come.”
- Great potential here.

**California State San Bernardino – on Cook and Frank Sinatra**

- Possible health concern was mentioned over the PM10s for outdoor venues; however, this may be a perception issue only.
- Baseball is ok with the wind – it is a windy site.



Site visit notes:

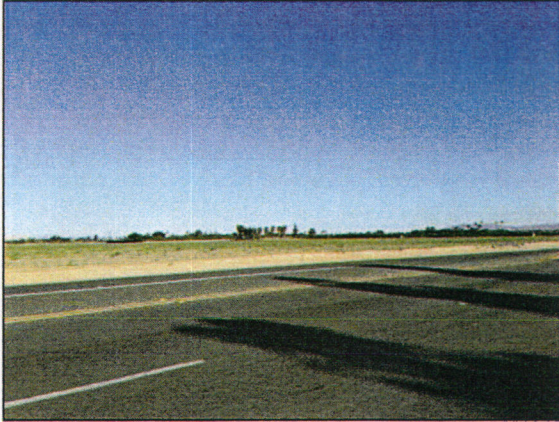
- 100 acres for campus recreation and wellness athletics venue.
- Property reviewed by the consultants, just north and east of the main buildings, seems relatively undeveloped and has lots of parking.
- Property is relatively close to commercial development to the west.
- This property also has easy access to the interstate within about a mile.



### Vista Santa Rosa – 53 and Monroe

This property is in the unincorporated area of DRD and could serve as a regional sports tournament venue in the south where service is lacking.

- Could be soccer or baseball/softball, or both.



Site visit notes:

- This is currently a vacant lot on the south east corner of 53<sup>rd</sup> and Monroe.
- Unknown the acreage or size of this lot.
- It is across street from golf course/country club.
- Appears to be a relatively undeveloped section with a little commercial within reasonable distance.
- The street begins to narrow down around 52<sup>nd</sup>.

### Cooperative Venture with the City of Palm Springs

This could be an opportunity for a baseball/softball tournament venue – perhaps using property around the airport.

- Should check on limitations of lighted fields near the airport.

### Pierce and 64

Possible joint venture for fields (currently 2 portable school building on the site) with the College of the Desert (COD) Mecca Campus.







Site Visit notes:

- The site is basically an overgrown lot.
- Does appear to have a few structures on the property but otherwise limited infrastructure.



## G. Opportunities Perspective 4 – Potential Additions, Developments, Partnerships, and Collaborations

Through the master plan development process, several additional opportunities were identified for additional collaborative projects (*Figure 32*).

Figure 32: Opportunity Perspective #4 – Potential Additions, Developments, Partnerships, and Collaborations



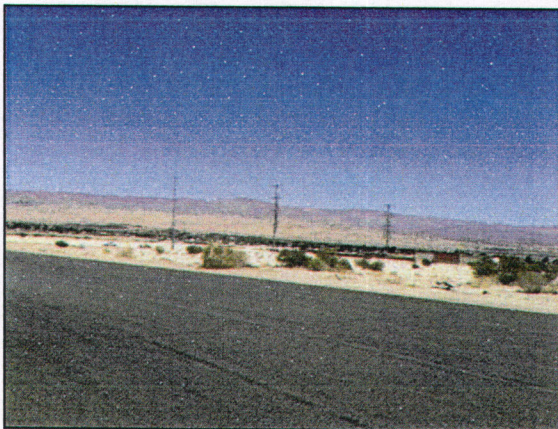
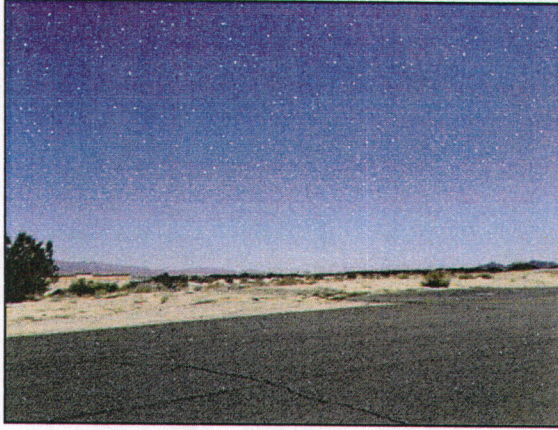
### Pawley Pool Family Aquatic Complex

- This pool should be replaced with an updated, energy efficient leisure play pool and amenities.
- Replace with a water park concept.
- May require footprint expansion into the S. Jackson Park (Indio).
- Need a plan and CIP budget for new water park, and a budget for operating and maintaining.

### City of Rancho Mirage

Apparently, Rancho Mirage has the property by the Palm Desert Home Depot (near Dinah Shore and Key Largo). This property was being held for the YMCA development (which never materialized). Perhaps the City might consider a wellness/fitness/warm water therapy pool development with the medical community as an additional partner with DRD.





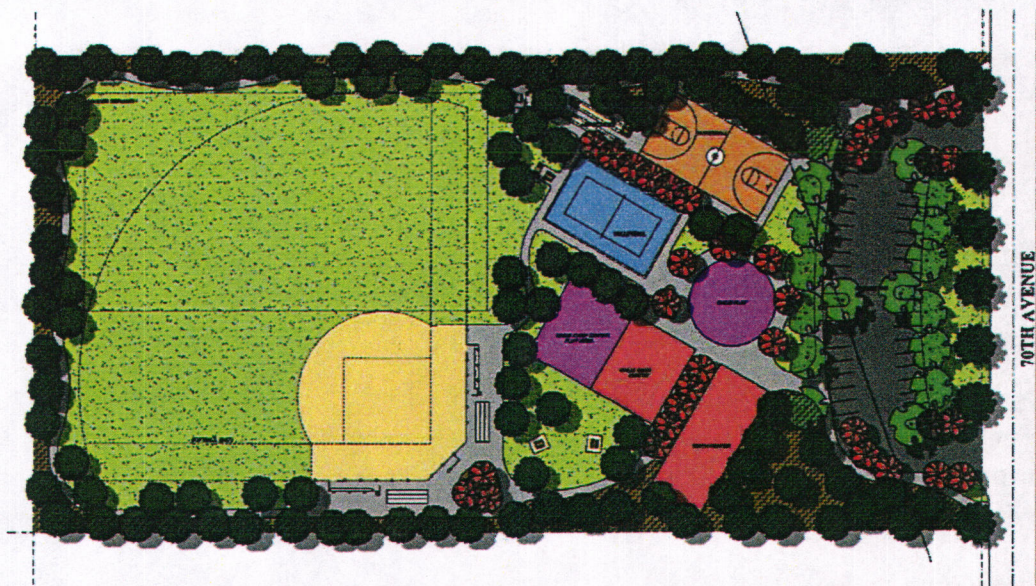
Site visit notes:

- Property visited is on the southeast corner of Dinah Shore and Key Largo.
- The property is currently undeveloped.
- It sits between a commercial development and a residential development.

**North Shore (South Valley)**

Desert Alliance for Community Empowerment (DACE) owns a five acre property and has potential funding with California Endowment (North of Ave 70 and Seaview). Conceptually, this project may include a baseball/softball field, basketball and volleyball courts, community center, and child care and camp program space with playground.





**PRELIMINARY MASTER PLAN**  
**NORTHSHORE PARK**  
 DESERT COMMUNITIES EMPOWERMENT ZONE  
 COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE



Site visit notes:

- The site is basically an undeveloped lot in a slowly developing neighborhood.



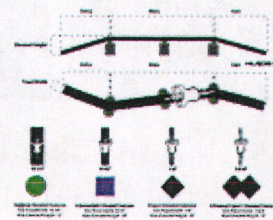
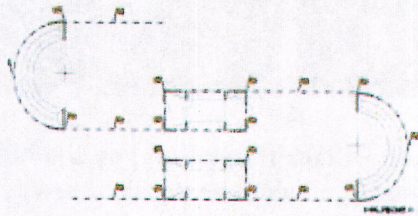
### Desert Regional Park location (North Valley)

There may be a potential site for a BMX park and training facility collaborative with a private non-profit group. The Action Sports Park could include a mountain bike pump track.

- See City of Fresno – Woodward Regional Park (as an example).

<http://www.woodwardmtbpark.com/Woodward.html>

Hilride - Progression Development Group is one company that incorporates cutting edge concepts in mountain bike park design with on the ground experience working, riding, and filming in more than 750 riding destinations in 46 States, 9 Canadian Provinces, and 15 different countries. Every element in the park is inspired by real trails, bike parks, features, and destination riding areas. More information can be found by visiting its website: [www.hilride.com](http://www.hilride.com).







**North La Quinta area (Dune Palm and Washington – Black Hawk Way) by the high school**  
There may be an opportunity to partner on a future, new community center that the City of La Quinta may want DRD to operate.





Site visit notes:

- This site is on the Southeast corner of Dune Palms and Blackhawk Way.
- The parcel is currently vacant.

**Desert Sands Unified School District and Coachella Valley Unified School District**

Additional school use for summer camps and non-ASES afterschool programs is an unmet need across the valley. This is a potential joint venture development opportunities for the Shadow Hills High School and Middle School site up north.





Site visit notes:

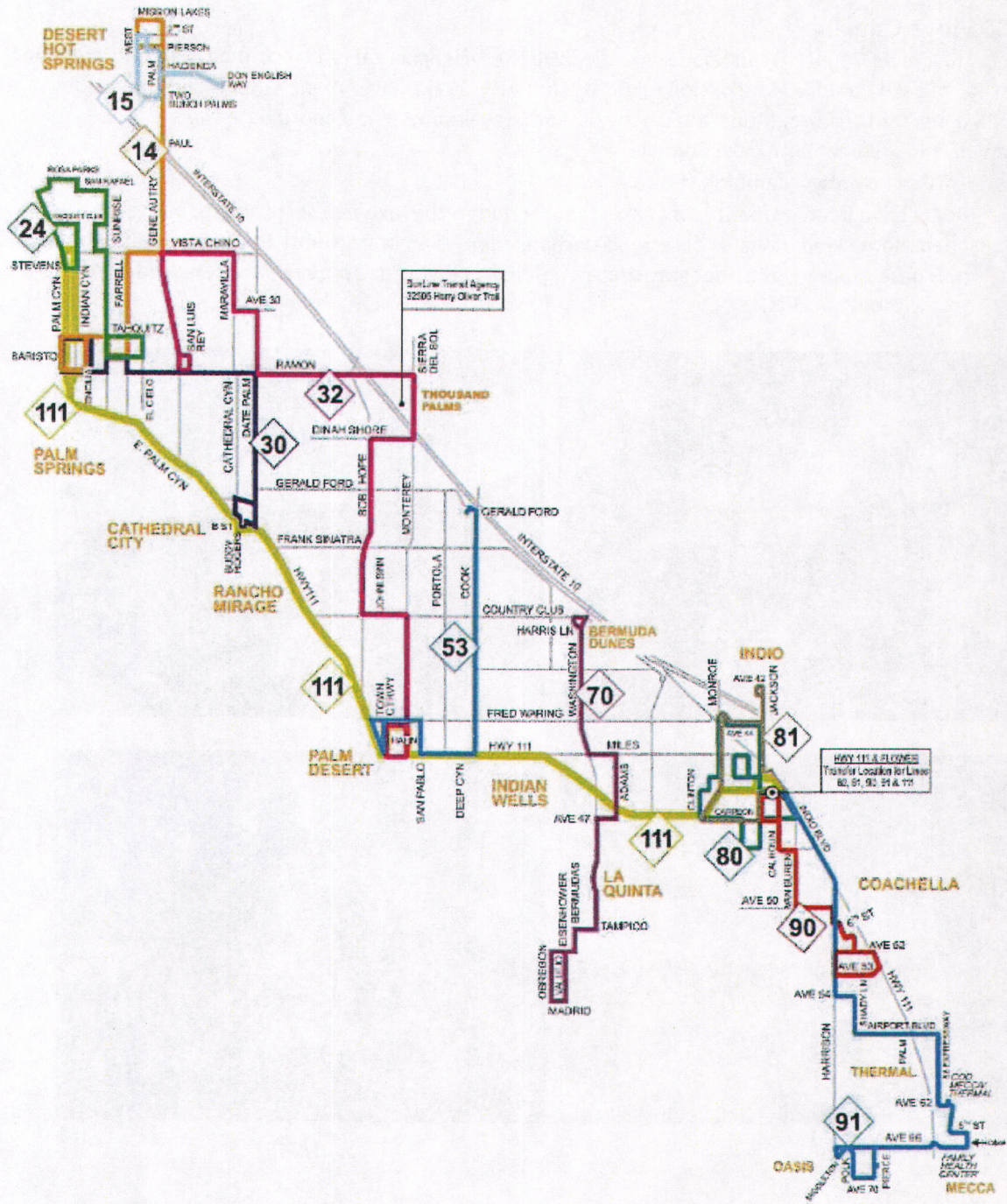
- Site is at Jefferson and Avenue 39.
- Shadow Hills High School and Desert Ridge Academy are on this site; beautiful new schools.
- These two new schools might lend themselves to some joint venture development opportunities with Desert Sands Unified School District
- It looks like they also have a Performing Arts Center associated with this school.

**Add REC Route (recreation, education, culture)**

This project could be a joint funding cooperative venture with SunLine (or with a school district or alternative provider) for dedicated public transportation stops to recreation, education, and cultural venues.

- Sunline recently announced a new southern route from North Shore.
- Need to develop the magnitude of this program and an operating budget.







### **RIVCOS Lake Cahuilla**

Perhaps Riverside County Open Space would consider efficiencies gained by co-management strategies with DRD of Lake Cahuilla. One option might be that RivCO takes over management and operations of the 625 acres for the Coral Mountain Discovery Park development and coordinate the entrance/management with Lake Cahuilla.

- This is currently a camping venue only.
- Boats have been prohibited on Lake Cahuilla due to the lake mussel problem, but the public needs some kind of water access; so perhaps there is an opportunity to negotiate the potential purchase of new boats that stay there. Apparently RivCO has previously attempted to negotiate this without success.





## H. Program and Service Expansions

### Afterschool Programming

- Provide additional afterschool programming:
  - This program would be for youth who do not qualify for ASES.
  - The cost for the ASES program per student per school year is \$692.11, and DRD currently operates 12 sites serving 100 students per site for a total of 1,200 students.
- Explore ASETS program/funding:
  - For a complimentary teen program (potential Boys and Girls Club program too).

### Acquisitions – Land Banking for the Future

- 62 and Jackson area







Site visit notes:

- This property has had some development.
- It appears to be an old equestrian space with several fenced areas.
- There are a couple of old houses in various states of disrepair.
- The areas that are fenced off are relatively flat, and could be good for multipurpose field use.
- The center of this property appears to have more terrain.
- This property is also fairly far south and probably has limited infrastructure.
- The street narrows down quite a bit. The ability of this facility to handle large crowds with the existing infrastructure is questionable.

**RDA Surplus/Auction Property List**

At the time of this report, the process for the transfer or sale of public lands from dissolving redevelopment agencies has not been determined. This may be an opportunity for the DRD to acquire additional properties for future park and recreation development.



## I. Funding Recommendations

### **Park Development/Land Dedication Funds**

The park dedication requirements are set forth in the *Quimby Act*, which states that all residential subdivisions of land, with some exemptions, are to provide for parks by either dedicating land, paying an in-lieu fee, or a combination of the two. The requirement formula is three acres of land per one thousand people calculated by multiplying the number of dwelling units times the average density per dwelling unit in each municipal boundary according to the latest U.S. Census. In-lieu fees are based on the fair market value of land within a subdivision. Development impact fees are one-time charges imposed on development projects to recover capital costs for public facilities needed to serve those new developments and the additional residents, employees, and visitors they bring to the community. California law, with a few minor exceptions, prohibits the use of impact fees for ongoing maintenance or operations costs.

***DRD should adopt the 5 acres per 1,000 standard working in collaboration with other municipal providers.***

The consultant team believes that DRD is currently somewhere around five acres per 1,000 population for the district as a whole. However, DRD should confirm accurate acres by municipality, and determine what is included in the acreage to be consistent across the system. It appears that the ordinance applies to municipalities and not to the District. Therefore, because DRD plays multiple roles in the provision of service (i.e. local in lieu of a municipality in the unincorporated county; local by contract, annexation, or agreement in lieu of the municipality in the incorporated portions of the District; and as a regional provider across the DRD SOI), the five acres per 1,000 population calculation should be applied to each specific municipality within the District, and separately in the unincorporated areas. Where DRD is the sole provider, they would take on the responsibility of providing adequate park acres to population ratio per the ordinance. Where they are more of an alternative provider or partner, for instance in La Quinta, they would work with the municipality to reach this ratio. Finally it appears that the ratio is not simply an acre to population ratio but a more complicated formula that factors in dwelling units and average density.

***DRD should attempt to gather more accurate GIS data for its own parcels as well as other municipal and county providers within the district boundary.***

Parcels used in this study were either digitized, hand drawn, or used “as is” from available data, and often this found to be inaccurate.

***DRD should also further clarify what qualifies for “Park and Recreation” lands in the ordinance.***

DRD should facilitate a discussion among providers that addresses and clarify questions like:

- Is open space that has trail access considered a park?
- Is parkland that is undeveloped without public access considered a park?
- If parkland is gated and fenced-off from public use, and sub-leased to another user, is this considered a public park?



*Further, we recommend that DRD use this improved GIS data and the calculation of multiplying the number of dwelling units times the average density per dwelling unit in each municipal boundary according to the latest U.S. Census for each city and across the system, and look at the same standard applied within each municipal boundary with GIS combined, but only for that municipal boundary. This way, DRD will know how much park land DRD and/or the municipality needs to add/maintain based on the ordinance 460.*

### **Other Funding Considerations**

- Fund a capital campaign with a valley-wide parcel tax initiative that would share the funding between entities. For example: 50% for DRD to develop and maintain new regional infrastructure; 35% for cities to help with park, recreation, and trails maintenance costs; 10% for open space for land acquisition and land banking for future development; and 5% for SunLine for REC Route.
- Explore and negotiate authority to obtain transient occupancy tax (TOT) for an operational funding source as a pass through share from cities generated from overnight visits actualized as a result of a regional sports venue's programs and tournaments operated by DRD.
- Palm Springs might consider a joint venture for the sports tournament venue effort
- Explore additional alternative funding sources or collaborations for programming
  - Safe Routes to Schools
  - NFL Play 60
  - Land and Water Conservation Funding (LWCF) – requires 50% match and not a current federal funding source
  - Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)
  - Indian Community Development Block Grant (ICDBG) – through Tribal Councils

## **J. Inventory and GIS Recommendations**

### **Ongoing Review of GIS Data**

GIS boundaries for individual sites and facilities should be reviewed and updated to address inaccuracies and/or to include new sites as they are added or improved.

### **Complete Inventory and Updated LOS Analysis.**

A great deal of effort and resources were committed to the current process. Plans should be made to continue to update GIS inventory of all assets. In addition, the District should attempt to coordinate an overall database of all recreation facilities and amenities within the District boundary.

## **K. Low Functioning Components Recommendations**

### **Address Low-Functioning Components**

The inventory process for the master plan included rating components throughout the system on their functionality. Components whose functionality is below expectations were identified and scored with a "one." A list of these can easily be extracted from the inventory dataset. In general items should be fixed, upgraded, or repurposed based on the following comments in the chart (**Table 3**).



**Table 3: List of Inventory Components that scored a “1” or Fell below Expectation for Intended Function**

LOCATION	COMPONENT	COMMENTS	Action	Estimate of Probable Cost
Cahuilla Hills Park	Picnic Grounds	Lacking	Provide picnic facilities and shelter at this park.	\$100,000
Canal Regional Park	Natural Area	Under-utilized resource	Explore plans to develop hiking trails and passive recreation opportunities.	\$50,000- \$75,000
Desert Regional Park	Shelter	Building	Upgrade facilities to make this a more attractive facility.	\$300,000
Freedom Park	Aqua Feat, Spray	Water misters at playground boat	Not really a true spray ground but explore opportunities to add spray ground in the system. Freedom Park might be a good location.	\$75,000 (\$250,000 for destination type facility)
Freedom Park	Complex, Ballfield	Only 3 fields	Typically a complex requires 4 fields. A new or additional complex should require enough land for a minimum of 4 fields.	NA*
Indio Community Center Park and Lot	Open Turf	Shared with event space as lower priority	There is a lot happening at this park at times. Perhaps additional event space at a new location could relieve some of the pressure to make this park more that it really is size wise.	NA*
Indio Hills Community Center Park	Shelter	Aging structure	Upgrade or replace this shelter and tables.	\$25,000
Indio Hills Community Center Park	Backstop, Practice	Field and backstop not really useable in current condition	Limited use may minimize the need for a true ballfield, but the backstop and field area should be maintained for use by residents.	\$15,000
Mecca Community Park and Pool	MP Field, Large		It appeared these fields were in the process of renovation at the time of inventory.	NA*
Mecca Community Park and Pool	Shelter, Group	Could use more tables	Add tables to shelter.	\$10,000
Olsen Field	Ballfield	Great asset, poor condition.	Continue to look for ways to upgrade this facility.	NA*
Thousand Palms Community Center & Park	Fitness Course	Missing instructional signs; equipment needs replacement parts	Upgrade and maintain existing equipment.	\$10,000
Thousand Palms Community Center & Park	MP Field, Large	The field is shared with ballfields	Development of Legacy Park could include standalone MP field.	NA*
<p><b>\$650,000</b> Estimate of probable costs is based on information available at this time. Conditions and needs may vary greatly at time of actual development.                      * NA means not advisable as a first priority project; much information yet to be obtained.</p>				



By raising the score of a component, you are also raising the Level of Service in your community. Pursue a strategy for addressing the repair/refurbishment/replacement or re-purposing of low-functioning components. This should be done for each individual component in the inventory that is not functioning up to expectations.

## **L. Other Existing DRD Park or Facility Improvements (not yet planned or funded)**

### **Outdoor Urban Core Facilities – Large Parks**

#### **Thousand Palms Community Center Park**

- Upgrade playground to destination playground to enhance functionality for older age group.
- Add shade to basketball.
- Refresh fitness course.

### **Outdoor Urban Core Facilities – Smaller Parks (including Lighting and Landscape Maintenance District funded parks)**

#### **Indio Community Center Park**

- Add shelter and restroom to playground to make it really a destination playground.
- Add bike racks to park area on back side of community center.

#### **Placitas de la Paz (Coachella)**

- Divest from these three small neighborhood parks (when it is feasible, as they are poor investments unless the City or Community takes control of the sites).
- Community has to take back these park sites from the bad elements.

### **Aquatics Centers**

#### **Mecca Community Center and Pool**

- Renovate the facility and bathhouse to service the pool.
- Coordinate weekday after-hours usage with the Boys and Girls Club recently opened up next door for adult programs and weekends for adult and youth programming and services.
- Focus this facility on bathhouse operations or potentially repurpose to a fitness center and/or senior center to compliment the recently opened Boys and Girls Club building nearby.

### **Outdoor Rural Facilities – Local Parks**

#### **Mecca Community Center Park**

- Add shade to serve basketball court.
- Add additional tables to group shelter.

### **Indoor Facilities - Community Centers (large/multi-function)**

#### **Indio Community Center**

- Move forward with plans to renovate building and add gymnasium space; in need of renovation.
- Expand the gym for dedicated gymnastics space for potential \$100K gain in revenue.
- Renovate area behind concessions/adjacent to Board room as planned.



### **La Quinta Community Fitness Center**

- Convert storage to fitness space for programs such as spinning, TRX, etc.
- Consider converting kitchen to office use and flip entrance, although parking would not be as accessible.
- Consider turning this over to La Quinta to operate, as well as the park. Facility is more neighborhood in nature as opposed to regional

### **Palm Desert Community Center & Gymnasium**

- Expand the weight room and add more fitness/wellness space.
- Consider relocating the preschool as it may be a better fit in the rear of the building.
- Upgrade tables and chairs.
- Provide the facility with a much needed facelift.

### **Indoor Facilities - Community Centers (small/meeting rooms)**

#### **Bermuda Dunes Community Center**

- Remove parking fencing and gate if safety not compromised.
- Replace carpeting in at least one room with multi-use floor.
- Maintain partnership with County of Riverside to operate the facility.

#### **Indio Hills Community Center**

- Add a few more tables for community events.
- Explore more programming opportunities or lease vacant office space to have people in building more often.
- Maintain partnership with County of Riverside.
- Add interpretive signage to highlight solar array.

#### **Portola Community Center**

- Consider replacing full-time staff if not needed for a non-profit meeting space.
- Highlight historic aspect of building, add interpretive signage to explain that first library in City of Palm Desert.
- Refresh facility.

#### **Thousand Palms Community Center**

- Add stove to kitchen for greater functionality.

### **Indoor Special Use Facilities**

#### **First Tee Golf Course (DRD course, operated by a non-profit)**

- Replace First Tee Clubhouse (slated to be a trailer due to soil conditions) and possibly move it with parking re-location to grow the program.
- Work with other golf courses in area for extra space.
- Reduce the course operations subsidy (approximately \$250,000 annually):
  - Cut expenditures where possible.
  - Contract with the College of the Desert for their Agronomy Courses to use First Tee.
  - Expand the driving range.
  - Pursue annual sponsorships for each hole with private businesses.



#### **North Shore Beach and Yacht Club**

- Explore options for greater variety of community uses.
- Maintain partnership with County of Riverside, however, explore programs that are more regional in nature
- Consider a possible partnership with private sector for building.

### **M. Pursue Future Cooperative Management Discussions to Existing Properties**

#### **District Boundary Expansion**

- Pursue discussions with Desert Hot Springs to how annexation of entire city into DRD and DRD would operate the pool and community building as long as funding sources are secured.
- Pursue LAFCO redistricting SOI changes – Desert Hot Springs to be included in DRD's SOI.
- Cathedral City is looking at annexing Thousand Palms; discuss DRD providing services and funding. This would create another partially funded portion of a city (because Thousand Palms is currently in DRD taxation boundaries, while Cathedral City is not) like Rancho Mirage.
- Discuss options for Rancho Mirage to consider annexation of entire city into DRD.

### **N. General Recommendations and Considerations**

- Identify and fund Planned Lifecycle Repair/Replacement program (DRD has freed up \$1M annually to fund this sinking fund).
- Identify and address technology needs.
- Re-purposing opportunities for golf:
  - Valley-wide consideration should be given to re-purposing some golf courses for other uses.
- Consider offering some sort of matching grant program for the cities within it to keep its presence felt (especially if divesting any local service), but not being a provider (Jeffco Open Space model – Colorado).



## X. Suggested Capital Campaign and Goals

This chapter summarizes the consultant team's recommended project priorities and suggests a taxation package with big picture costs associated with a 3-tiered approach. It is a challenge to develop the final capital campaign strategy/program when there is still so much for DRD to negotiate between potential players to see which of the projects rise to the level of achievable.

### Tier 1 Priorities – \$4.4 million over 5 years

Minimally, DRD should fund the following **Tier 1 priorities**. These are the critical improvements that DRD must do to maintain its assets and improve level of service (LOS), especially in the underserved areas.

- Complete list of priority low scoring amenities and components for a capital investment of \$650,000 (DRD can bring up LOS by addressing these deficiencies).
- Complete the bathhouse renovation at Mecca – \$750,000 (DRD can bring up LOS by addressing this deficiency, and this improvement has potential positive revenue implications).
- Re-do of Pawley Pool – \$3 million (DRD can bring up LOS by addressing this deficiency, and this improvement has positive revenue implications).
- Fill the recommended staffing positions.
- Available funding should be leveraged as possible and projects phased over the next five years.
- DRD to negotiate projects and potential partners to see which of the following **Tier 2 and 3** suggested priorities may become achievable.
- DRD to vet the final project list and develop the tax question with **Tier 1 and/or 2 and/or 3** suggested projects will be included.
- An independent support group should lead the campaign with the help of your elected officials and foundation members.

### Tier 2 Priorities – \$57.5-58.2 million

- Pursue other existing DRD park or facility improvements outlined in **Chapter IX – Recommendations and Analysis of Potential and Suggested Projects** (to be fully developed and finalized by DRD) – cost TBD.
- Fund, build, and manage the Thousand Palms Legacy Park property – guesstimate \$10 million plus operational funding TBD.
- Fund, build, and manage the Whitewater Trail – \$30 million capital development match plus operational funding TBD.
- Fund and build the Coral Mountain Discover Park – guesstimate \$10 million plus operational funding TBD; discuss cooperative operational strategy with RivCo.
- Fund, build, and manage the North Shore Park (South Valley) – guesstimate \$7 million plus operational funding TBD.
- Expand afterschool program by \$500-700,000 for an additional 10 sites of up to 100 children each at a sliding scale rate based on income.



**Tier 3 Priorities – \$55-75,000 studies plus capital and operating costs  
TBD**

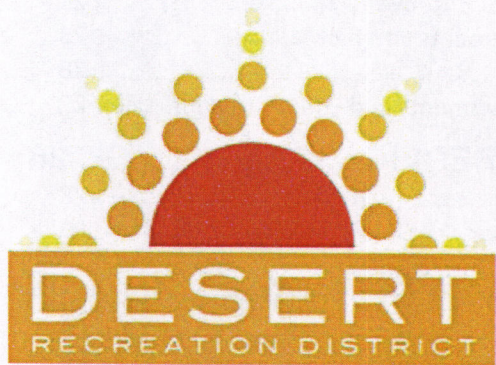
- Explore the Desert Regional Park location (North Valley) – conduct a feasibility study to determine extent of Action Sports Park project - \$25-35,000.
- Explore a Baseball/Softball Tournament Venue or a Soccer/Multi-field Tournament Venue – conduct a feasibility study to determine which type and location is optimal – \$30-40,000.
- Add REC Route – cost to be determined.



# Appendix A: District-wide Survey Results



# Desert Recreation District Master Plan Survey 2012



**February 2013**

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## METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to gather public feedback on how well the Desert Recreation District (DRD) is meeting the needs of the community with respect to trails, parks, recreation, programs, facilities, services and other community investments provided by the District. This feedback and subsequent analysis was designed to assist the Desert Recreation District in the creation of a *Master Plan* for existing and possible future enhancements, facilities, and services.

The survey was conducted using three methods: 1) a mail-back survey, 2) an online invitation only survey, and 3) an open link online survey for members of the public who did not receive a randomly selected survey in the mail. Unless stated otherwise, the analysis herein focuses primarily on surveys received via the first two methods.

The primary list source used for the mailing was a third party list purchased from Crown Printers San Bernardino, a list provider and printer who has supplied the Desert Recreation District with mailing sources exclusively.

A total of 10,000 surveys were mailed to a random sample of Desert Recreation District residents in November 2012, with approximately 9,500 being delivered after subtracting undeliverable mail. A total of 10,000 follow-up, reminder postcards were also sent after the initial survey had been mailed to further encourage residents to participate in the survey. The final sample size for this statistically valid survey was 361, resulting in a margin of error of approximately +/- 5.2 percent calculated for questions at 50% response<sup>1</sup>. Results from the open link survey generated an additional 186 responses.

The underlying data for the random sample responses were weighted by age, ethnicity, and ZIP code to ensure appropriate representation of Desert Recreation District residents across different demographic and geographic cohorts in the sample.

Based on current 2011 ESRI data for Desert Recreation District, the age, race and ethnicity profile of residents is distributed as follows: Age: under 35 (25 percent), 35 - 44 (21 percent), 45 - 54 (23 percent), 55 - 64 (18 percent), 65 - 74 (7 percent), 75 and older (6 percent); Race: White (65 percent), African American (2 percent), Asian (2 percent), Native American (1 percent), Other (31 percent); and Ethnicity: Hispanic Ethnicity (58 percent). Based on the American Community Survey 5-year estimates for 2011, the population geographic profile is distributed as follows: ZIP 92201 (18 percent), ZIP 92253 (18 percent), ZIP 92260 (16 percent), ZIP 92211 (15 percent), ZIP 92236 (9 percent), ZIP 92210 (3 percent), ZIP 92270 (3 percent), ZIP 92274 (3 percent), ZIP 92276 (3 percent), ZIP 92241 (1 percent), ZIP 92254 (1 percent). These

<sup>1</sup> For the total sample size of 361, margin of error is +/- 5.16 percent calculated for questions at 50% response (if the response for a particular question is "50%"—the standard way to generalize margin of error is to state the larger margin, which occurs for responses at 50%). Note that the margin of error is different for every single question response on the survey depending on the resultant sample sizes, proportion of responses, and number of answer categories for each question. Comparison of differences in the data between various segments, therefore, should take into consideration these factors. As a general comment, it is sometimes more appropriate to focus attention on the general trends and patterns in the data rather than on the individual percentages.



proportions were the basis for weighting of the survey data so that the resulting analysis reflects the conclusions and opinions of the underlying population.

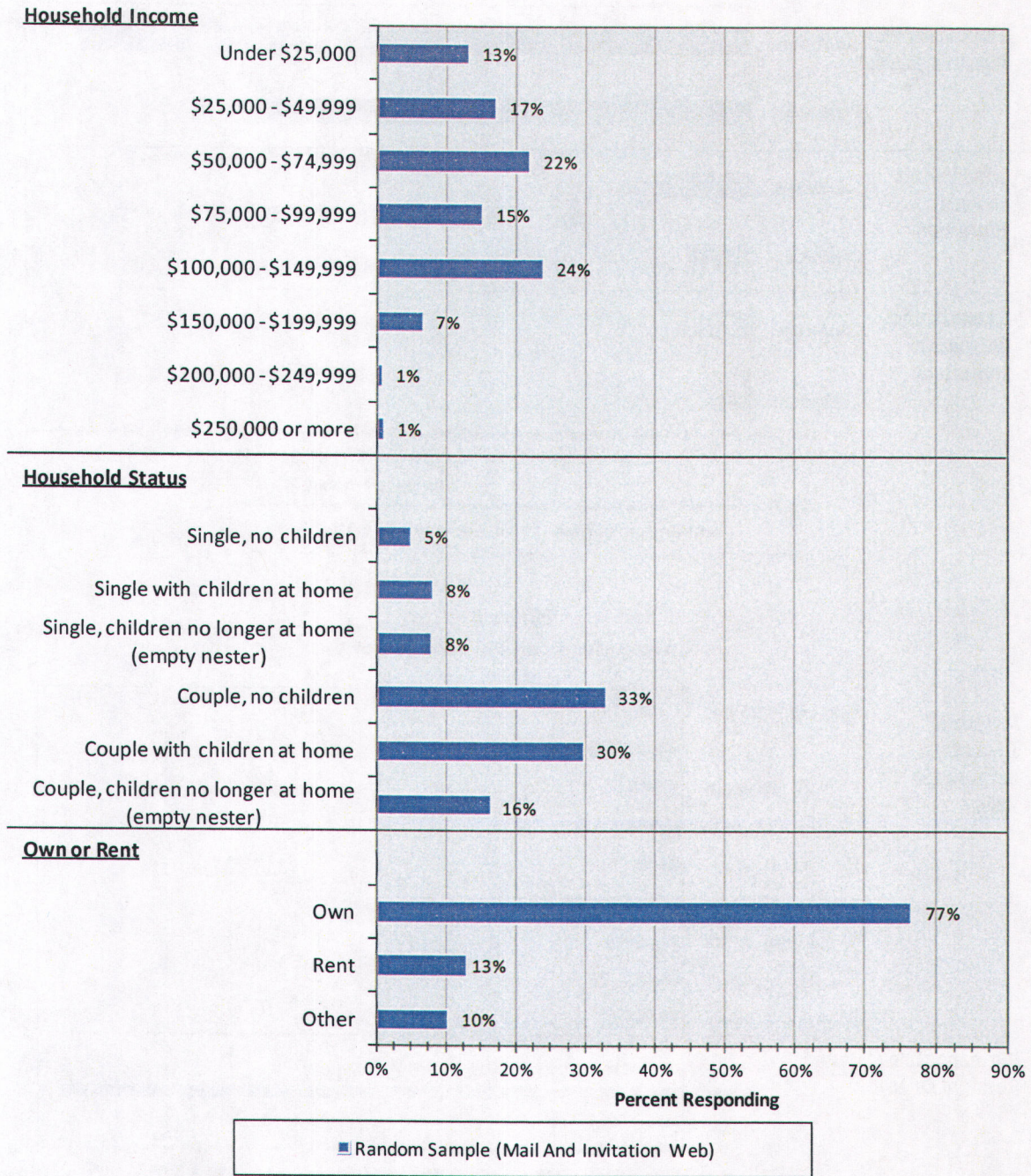
## RESPONDENT PROFILE

### Household Characteristics

- The majority of households (61%) earn an annual income between \$50,000 and \$150,000. Roughly 1/3 earned less than \$50,000 and another 10% earn more than \$150,000.
- Thirty-eight percent of respondents are households with children living at home; 24% are empty nesters (children grown and no longer at home); 33% are couples without children, and 5% are singles without children.
- Residents have lived in the Coachella Valley for 20.5 years on average (median is 17 years). Twenty-three percent have lived in the Coachella Valley less than 5 years, 12% 6 to 10 years; 12% 11 to 15 years; 8% 16 to 20 years, 19% 21 to 30 years, and 26% 31 or more years.

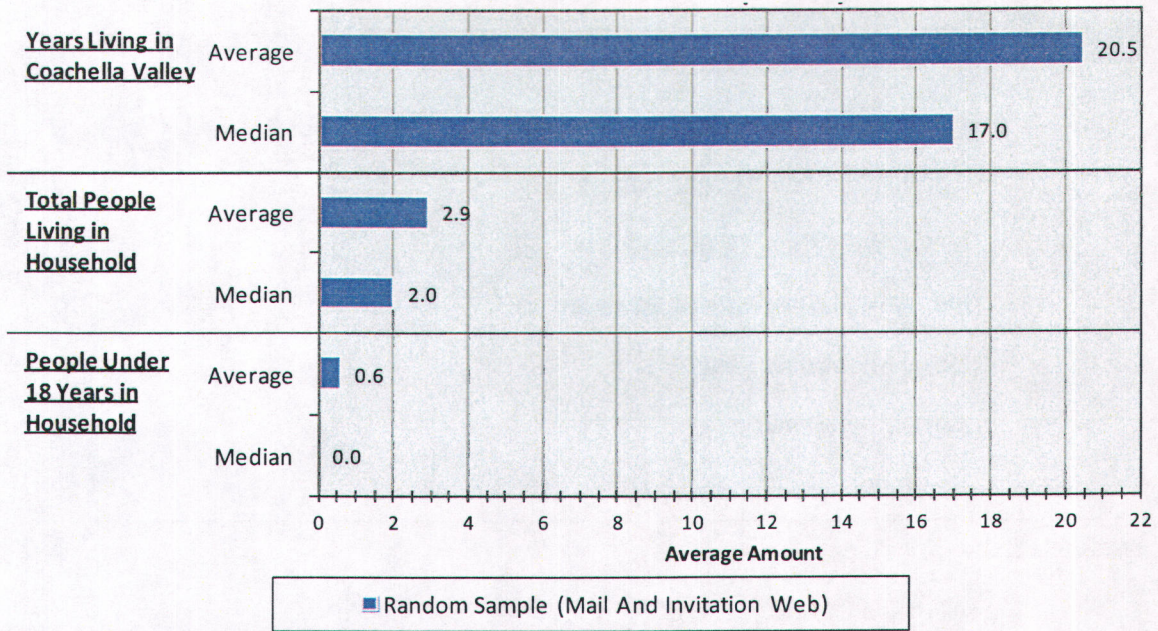


**Figure 1**  
**Household Characteristics (Part 1)**

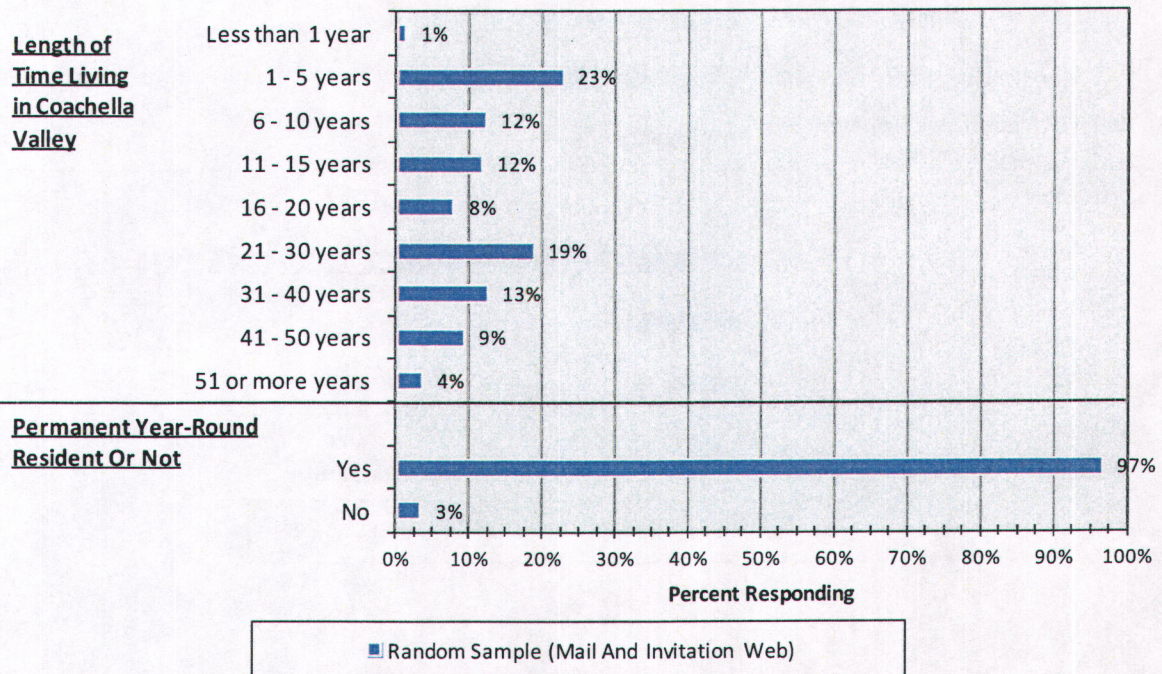




**Figure 2**  
**Household Characteristics (Part 2)**



**Figure 3**  
**Years Living in Coachella Valley**



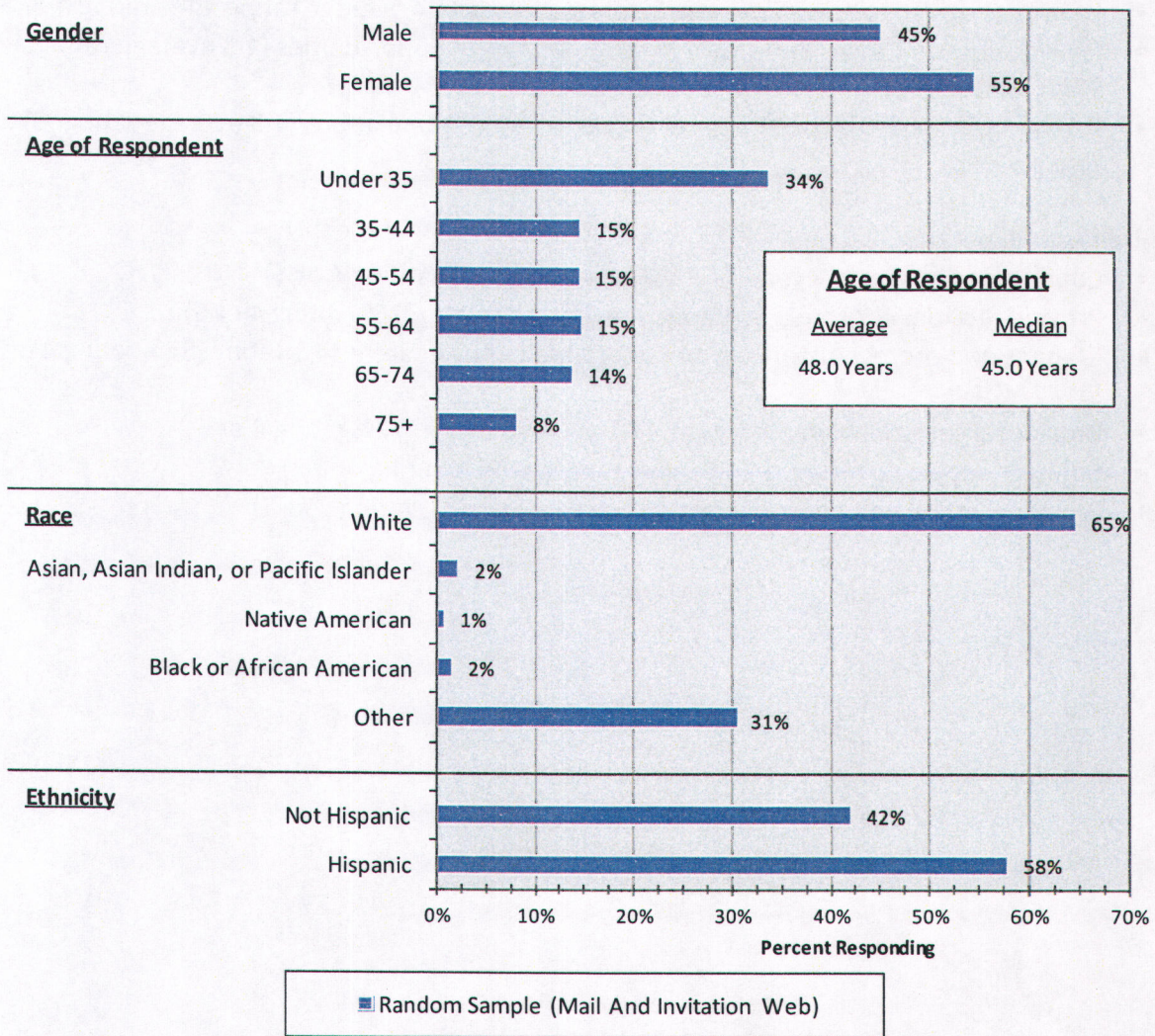


**Respondent Characteristics**

- At 65%, white is the most frequently reported race
- Many respondents, however, indicate either some other race or two or more races (31%)
- Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin ethnicity makes up 58% of the total population within DRD
- 55% of respondents were female; 45% were male
- Average age of respondents was 48.0 years

[NOTE: The data has been weighted by age, race/ethnicity, and geographic ZIP code to accurately reflect the underlying population.]

**Figure 4**  
**Respondent Characteristics**





## FUTURE PARK AND RECREATION FUNCTIONS

### Important DRD Functions to Provide

Asked what park and recreation functions are important for DRD to provide, residents ranked the following functions as most important (using a scale from 1 to 5, where 1=Not at All Important and 5=Very Important):

- Provide positive activities for youth (4.6 average rating; 95% rating 4 or 5)
- Promote healthy active lifestyles (4.6 average rating; 92% rating 4 or 5)
- Operate and maintain existing park facilities (4.6 average rating; 90% rating 4 or 5)
- Provide recreation programs and services for all age groups (4.5 average rating; 92% rating 4 or 5)

### Second tier of functions:

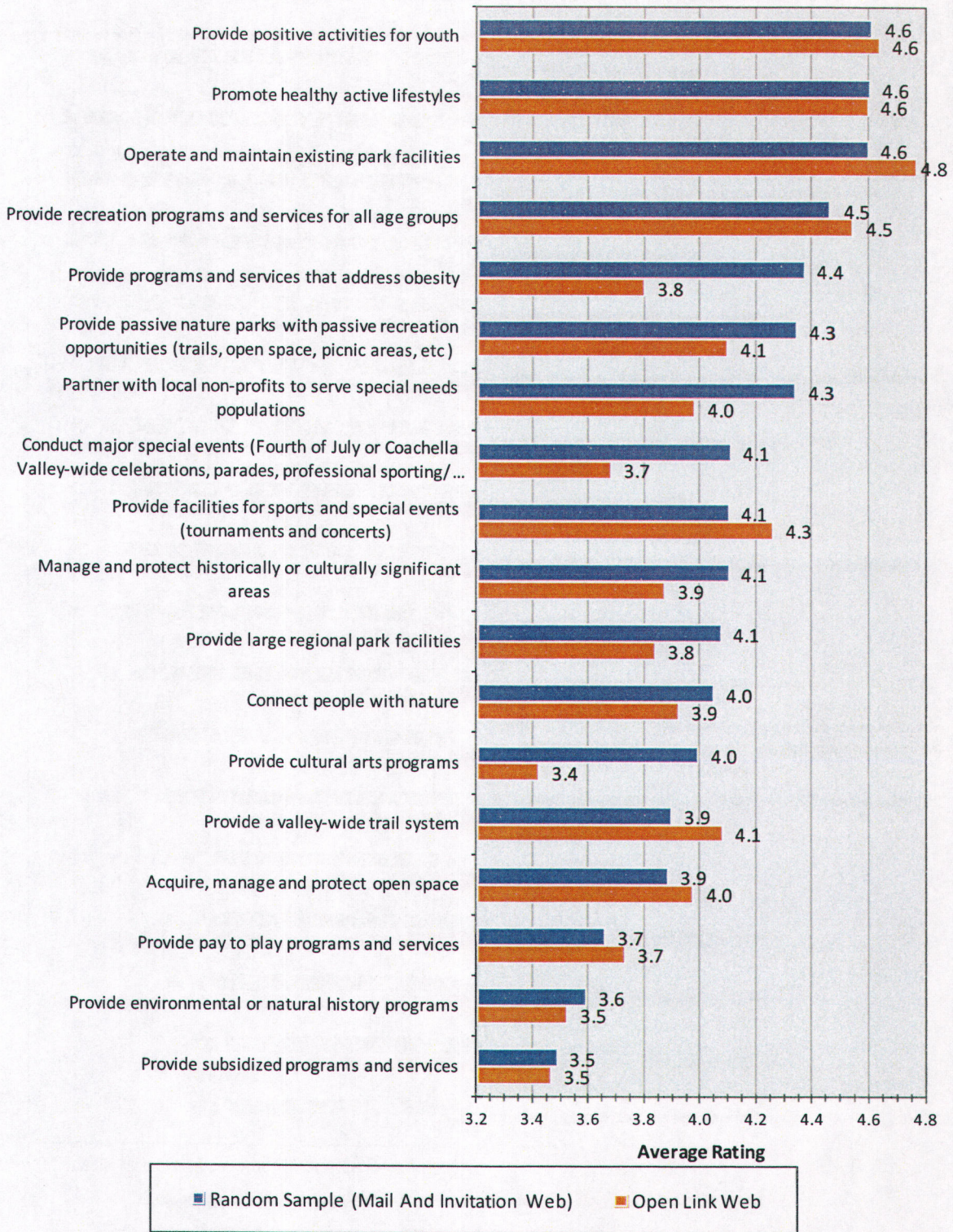
- Provide programs and services that address obesity (4.4 average rating, 84% rating 4 or 5)
- Provide passive nature parks with passive recreation opportunities (4.3 average rating; 92% rating 4 or 5)
- Partner with local non-profits to serve special needs populations (4.3 average rating; 87% rating 4 or 5)

### Third tier of functions:

- Conduct major special events (4.1 average rating, 77% rating 4 or 5)
- Provide facilities for sports and special events (4.0 average rating; 75% rating 4 or 5)
- Manage and protect historically or culturally significant areas (4.1 average rating; 82% rating 4 or 5)
- Provide large regional park facilities (4.1 average rating, 77% rating 4 or 5)
- Connect people with nature (4.0 average rating; 82% rating 4 or 5)
- Provide cultural arts programs (4.0 average rating; 73% rating 4 or 5)



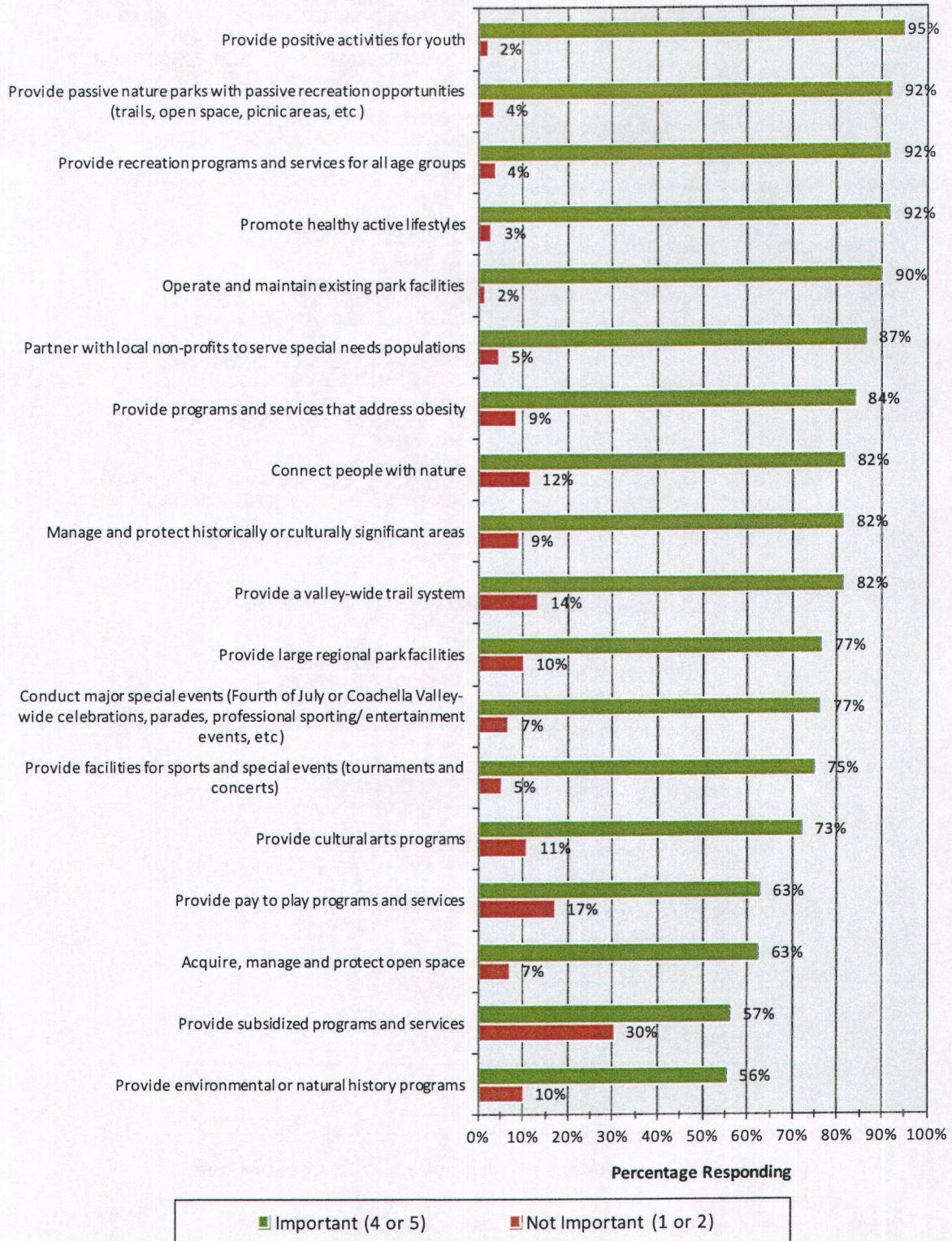
**Figure 5**  
**Park and Recreation Functions Important for DRD to Provide – Average Rating**



\*\* Sorted in descending order by Random Sample (Mail and Invitation Web)



**Figure 6**  
**Park and Recreation Functions Important for DRD to Provide –**  
**Percentage of Very Important vs. Not at All Important – Random Sample**





## CURRENT SERVICES AND FACILITIES

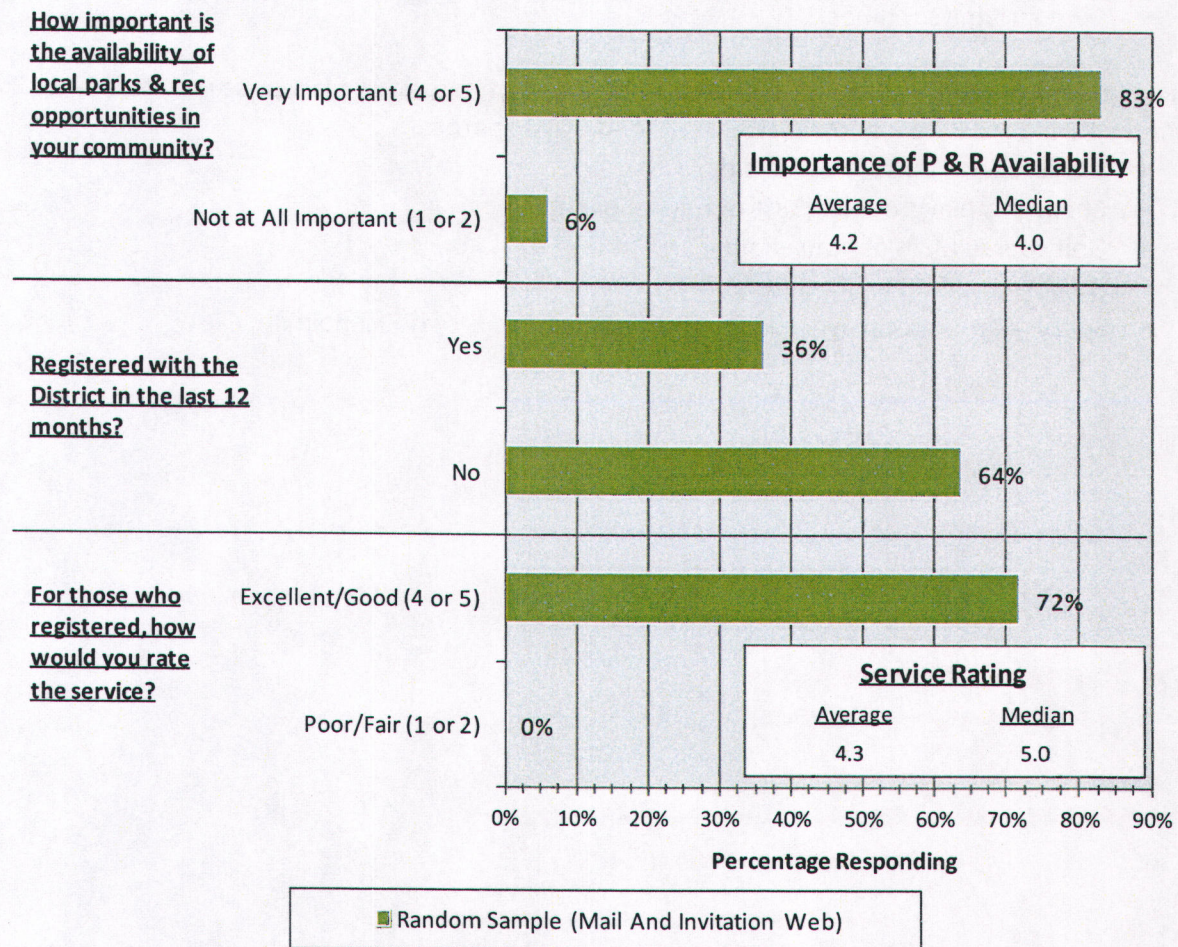
### Importance of Parks and Recreation Opportunities

Eighty-three percent indicated a 4 or 5 rating on how important the availability of local parks and recreation opportunities are to their household. Average score was 4.2.

### Registering with DRD and Service Rating

Approximately one-third of respondents (36%) had registered with the District within the past 12 months. Among those who had registered, the service for the program or event attended averaged 4.3 with 72% indicating a rating of 4 or 5 (good or excellent service).

**Figure 7**  
**Current Services and Facilities – Importance of Park and Rec. Opportunities / Percentage of Registered Households / Service Rating**





### Usage Frequency

Of all amenities within park facilities provided by DRD, residents have most often used trails and walking paths and weight and cardio rooms most frequently over the past year (at least 12 times over the past 12 months, or about once per month). However, there is a large disparity between the percentages of households who use these facilities. Fifty six percent of all DRD households have used trails and walking paths, whereas, only 22% have used weight and cardio fitness rooms. This shows that while fewer households use cardio fitness rooms, comparatively, those who do use them do so very often.

Besides trails and walking paths and weight and cardio fitness rooms, the following facilities were used most frequently on average:

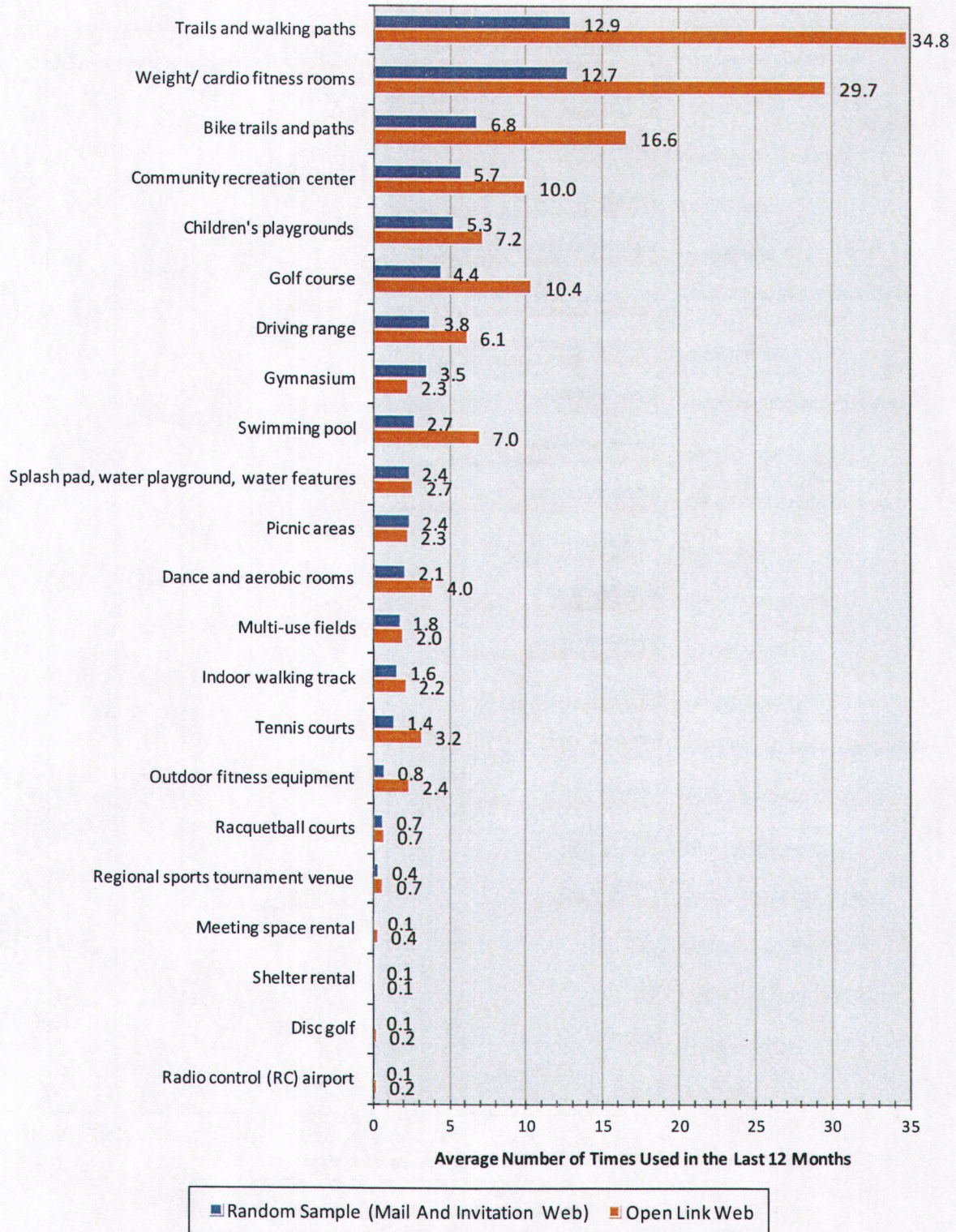
- Bike trails and paths (6.8 times on average over the past 12 months)
- Community recreation center (5.7 times)
- Children's playgrounds (5.3 times)
- Golf course (4.4 times)
- Driving range (3.8 times)
- Gymnasium (3.5 times)

As a percentage of households, the following facilities were used at least once over the past 12 months by the most households (after trails and walking areas):

- Picnic areas (49% of households)
- Children's playgrounds (38% of households)
- Golf course (33% of households)
- Driving range (29% of households)
- Splash pad, water playground, water features (29% of households)



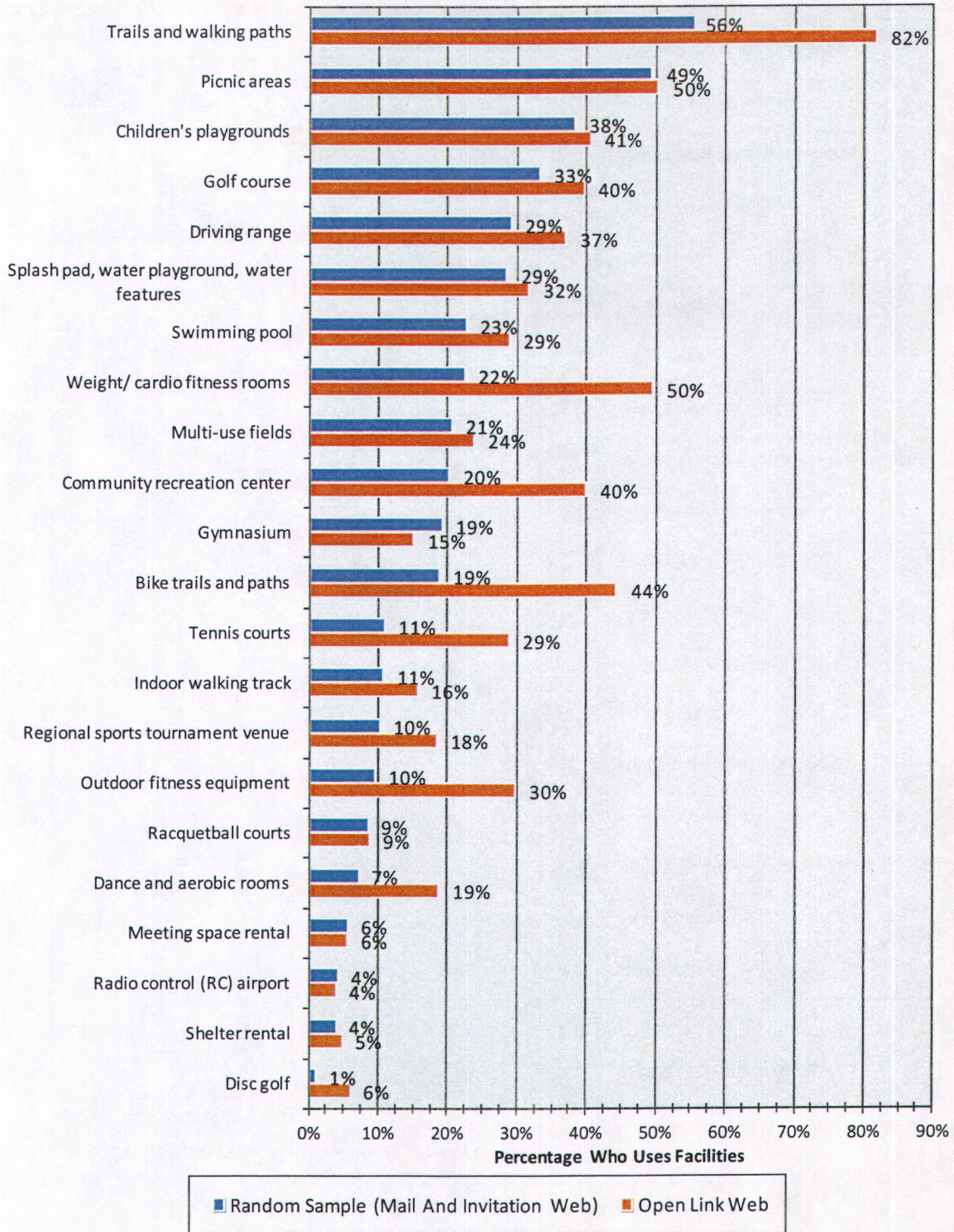
**Figure 8**  
**Current Services and Facilities - Frequency of Use over Past 12 Months**



\*\* Sorted in descending order by Random Sample (Mail and Invitation Web)



**Figure 9**  
**Current Services and Facilities – Percentage of Households Who Used Amenities and Facilities in Past 12 Months**



\*\* Sorted in descending order by Random Sample (Mail and Invitation Web)



### Importance of Current Services and Facilities

Respondents indicated the importance of current facilities to their household on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1=Not at All Important, 3=Neutral, and 5=Very Important.

The following facilities rated the highest averages and the most frequently reported 4 or 5 ratings:

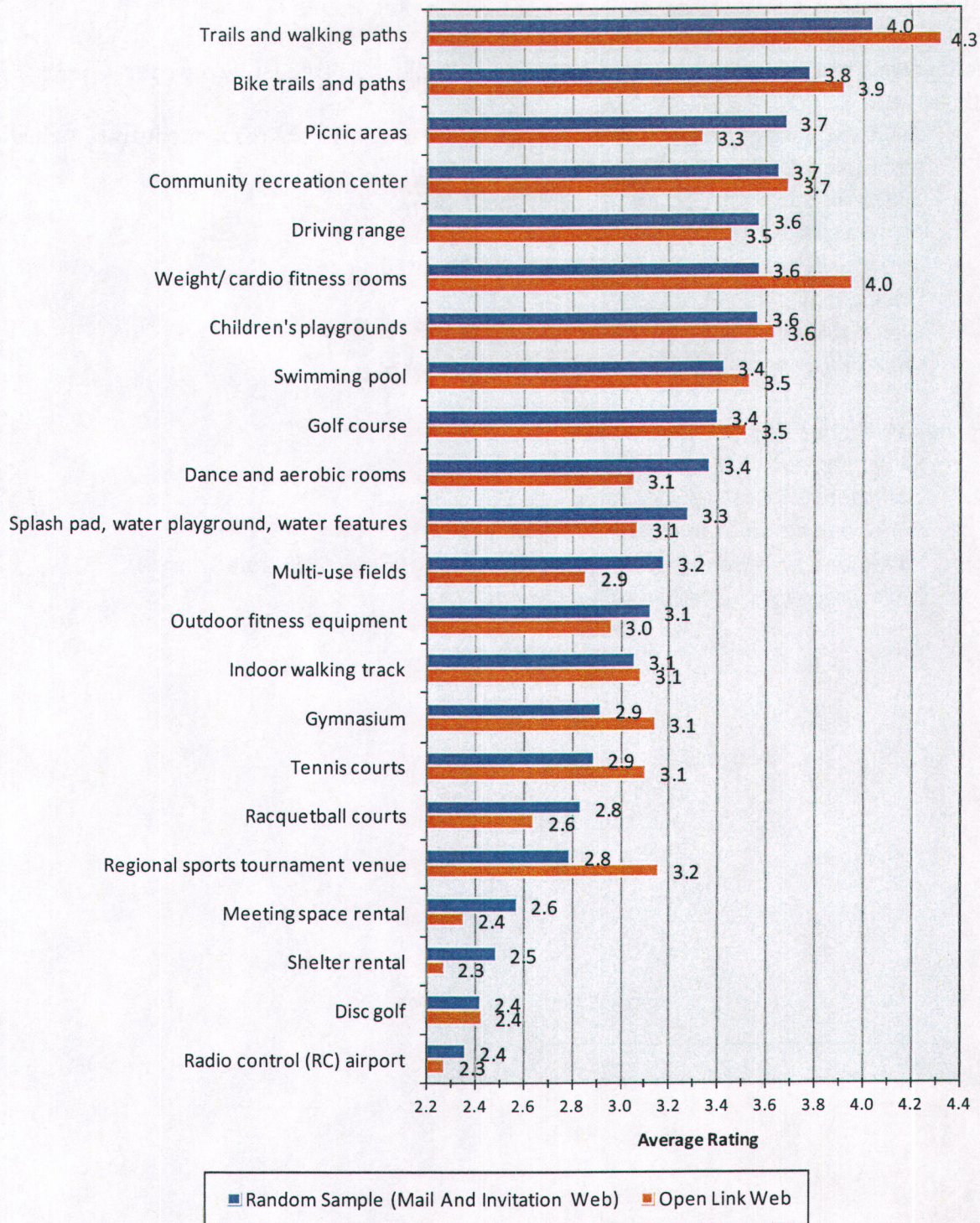
- Trails and walking paths (with an average rating of 4.0, 71% of respondents rated trails and walking paths a 4 or 5)
- Bike trails and paths (3.8 rating; 67% rated 4 or 5)
- Picnic areas (3.7 rating; 63% rated 4 or 5)
- Community recreation center (3.7 rating; 58% rated 4 or 5)
- Driving range (3.6 rating; 53% rated 4 or 5)
- Weight/cardio fitness rooms (3.6 rating; 58% rated 4 or 5)
- Children's playgrounds (3.6 rating; 61% rated 4 or 5)

Second tier of important facilities include:

- Swimming pool (3.4 rating; 55% rated 4 or 5)
- Golf course (3.4 rating; 49% rated 4 or 5)
- Dance and aerobic rooms (3.4 rating; 52% rated 4 or 5)
- Splash pad, water playground, water features (3.3 rating; 51% rated 4 or 5)
- Multi-use fields (3.2 rating; 42% rated 4 or 5)



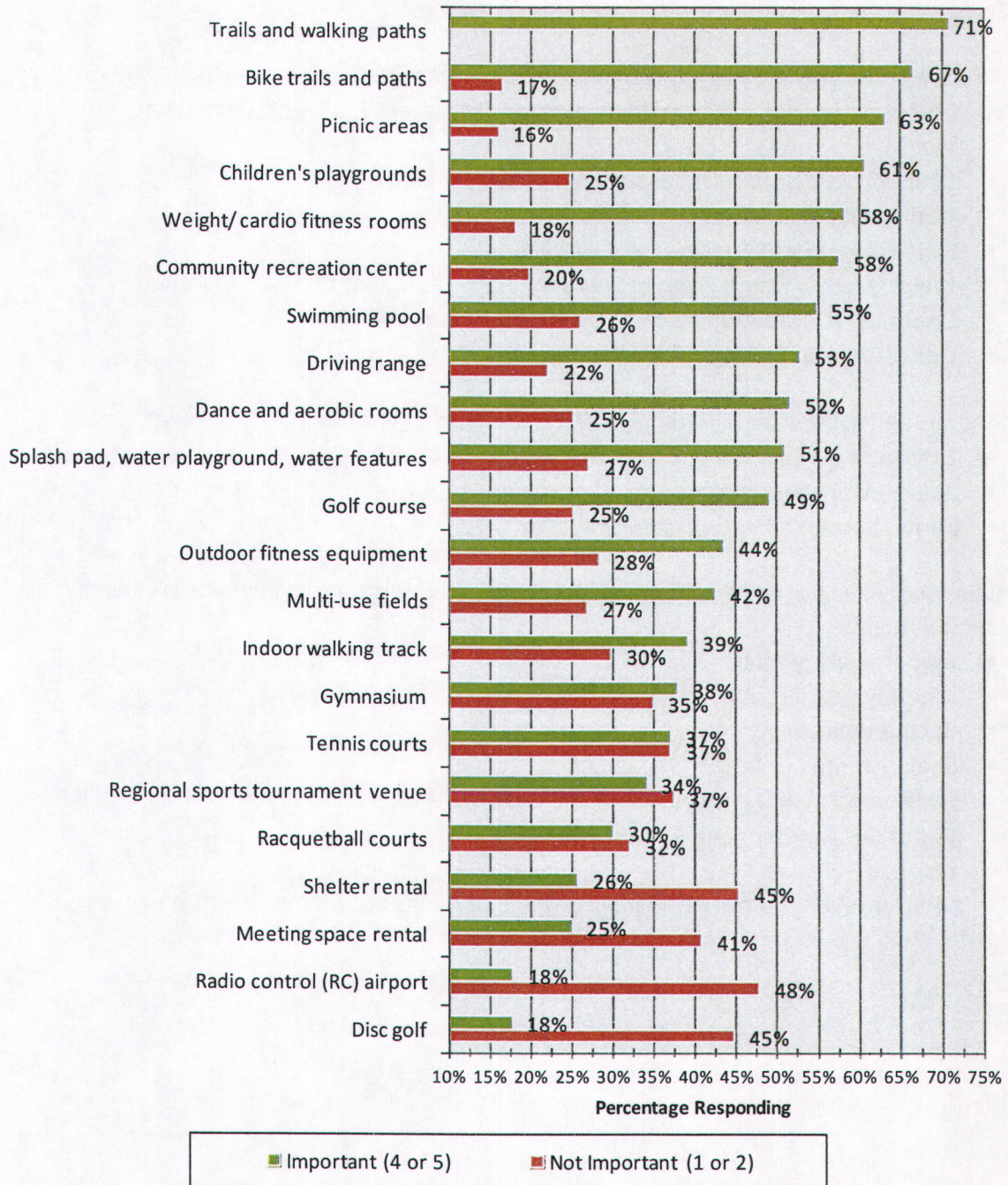
**Figure 10**  
**Current Services and Facilities – Importance to Household – Average Rating**



\*\* Sorted in descending order by Random Sample (Mail and Invitation Web)



**Figure 11**  
**Current Services and Facilities – Importance to Household –Percentage of Very Important vs. Not at All Important – Random Sample**





### Degree to which Current Services and Facilities are Meeting Household Needs

Respondents were then asked to rate the same list of current facilities according to how well they are meeting the needs of their household. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1=Not at All Met and 5=Completely Met, respondents indicated the following:

Facilities with the highest degree of needs being met include:

- Trails and walking paths (with an average rating of 3.7, 50% of respondents rated trails a 4 or 5)
- Children's playgrounds (3.6 rating; 58% rated 4 or 5)
- Picnic areas (3.6 rating; 59% rated 4 or 5)
- Swimming pool (3.5 rating; 54% rated 4 or 5)
- Weight/cardio fitness rooms (3.5 rating; 57% rated 4 or 5)
- Community recreation center (3.5 rating; 58% rated 4 or 5)
- Golf course (3.5 rating; 63% rated 4 or 5)

Second tier of facilities that are meeting household needs include:

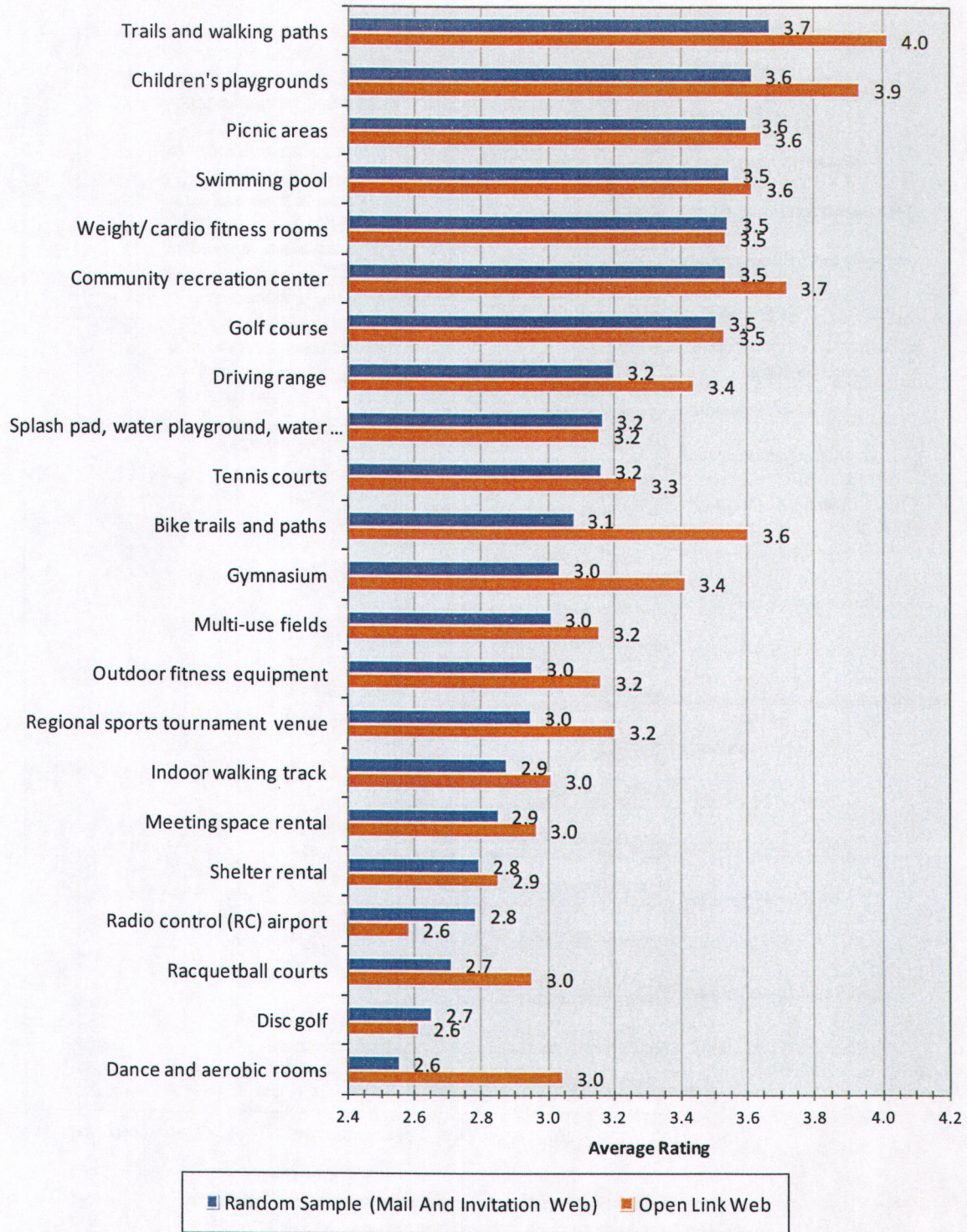
- Driving range (3.2 rating; 51% rated 4 or 5)
- Splash pad, water playground, water features (3.2 rating; 52% rated 4 or 5)
- Tennis courts (3.2 rating; 44% rated 4 or 5)

Facilities that have a greater percentage of households indicating than needs are being met, include the following:

- Indoor walking track
- Meeting space rental
- Racquetball courts
- Shelter rental
- Radio control (RC) airport
- Dance and aerobic rooms
- Disc golf
- Multi-use fields (almost equal percentage of needs not met vs. needs met)



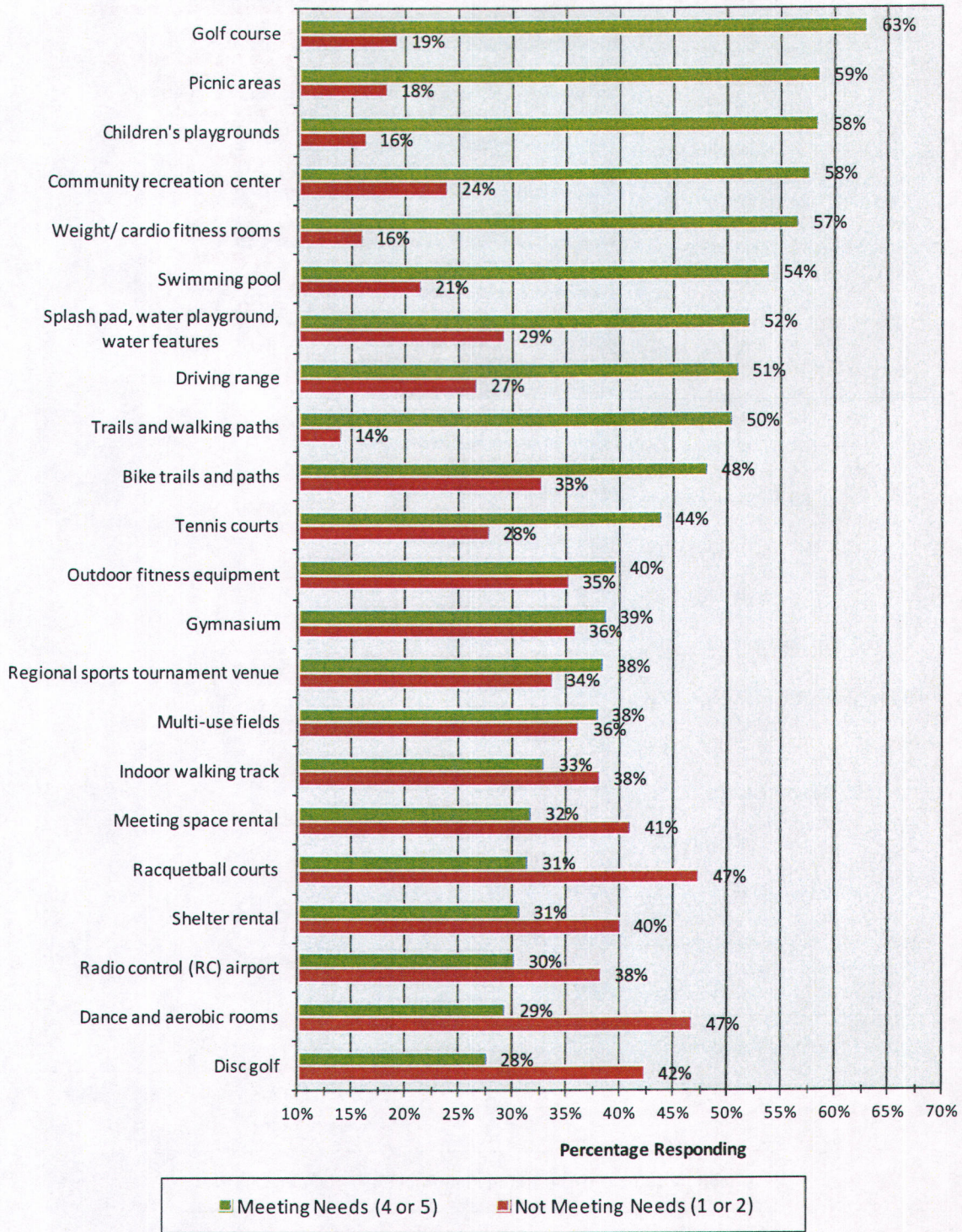
**Figure 12**  
**Current Services and Facilities – Degree to Which Needs are Being Met – Average Rating**



\*\* Sorted in descending order by Random Sample (Mail and Invitation Web)



**Figure 13**  
**Current Services and Facilities – Degree to Which Needs are Being Met – Percentage of Needs Met vs. Needs Not Met – Random Sample**





### Importance vs. Needs-met Matrix – Current Services and Facilities

It is instructive to compare and plot the importance scores against the needs met scores in an “importance vs. needs-met” matrix. As illustrated below, performance scores (i.e. Needs-Met and Importance) are displayed in a matrix using the mid-point rating of both questions to divide into 4 quadrants (ex. importance scale midpoint was 3.0; needs-met midpoint was 3.1). This allows us to determine a detailed positioning of each location in comparison to each other.

Many of the top programs and facilities listed previously as meeting household needs are also considered the most important to DRD households. Maintaining these important assets is an indispensable function for the Desert Recreation District. The following are facilities that are highly important and are meeting the household needs of the District.

- Trails and walking paths
- Picnic areas
- Children’s playgrounds
- Community recreation center
- Weight/cardio fitness rooms
- Swimming pool
- Golf course
- Driving range
- Splash pad, water playground, water feature

Facilities located left of the needs-met midpoint and above the importance midpoint, indicate facilities that are important to households yet not meeting needs fully. These facilities include:

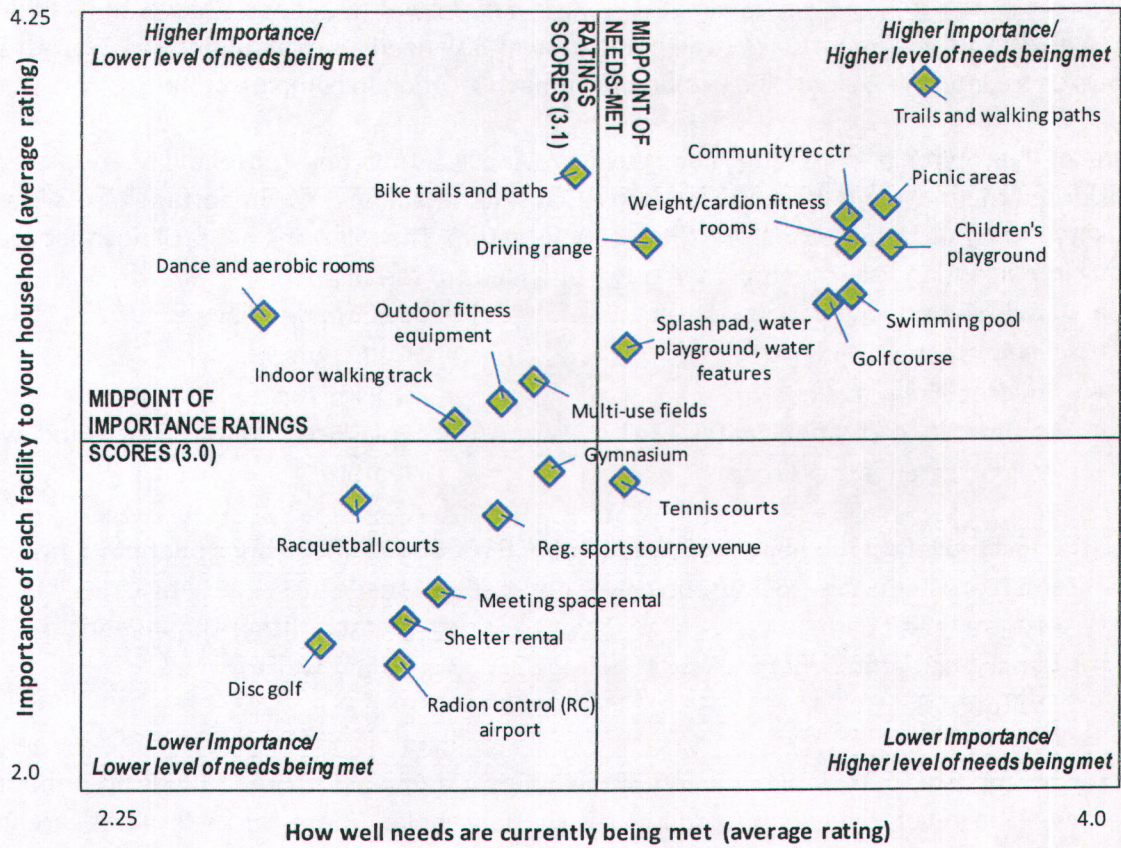
- Bike trails and paths
- Dance and aerobic rooms
- Multi-use fields
- Outdoor fitness equipment
- Indoor walking track

Below the importance midpoint and left of the needs-met midpoint, are facilities not meeting needs well, however, they are important to fewer households. These “niche facilities” are used by a small but passionate following; therefore, there is merit to measuring participation and planning for potential future enhancements accordingly.

- Disc golf
- Radio control (RC) airport
- Shelter rental
- Meeting space rental
- Racquetball courts
- Regional sports tournament venue
- Gymnasium



**Figure 14**  
**Current Services and Facilities – Importance vs. Needs-Met Matrix -**  
**Random Sample**





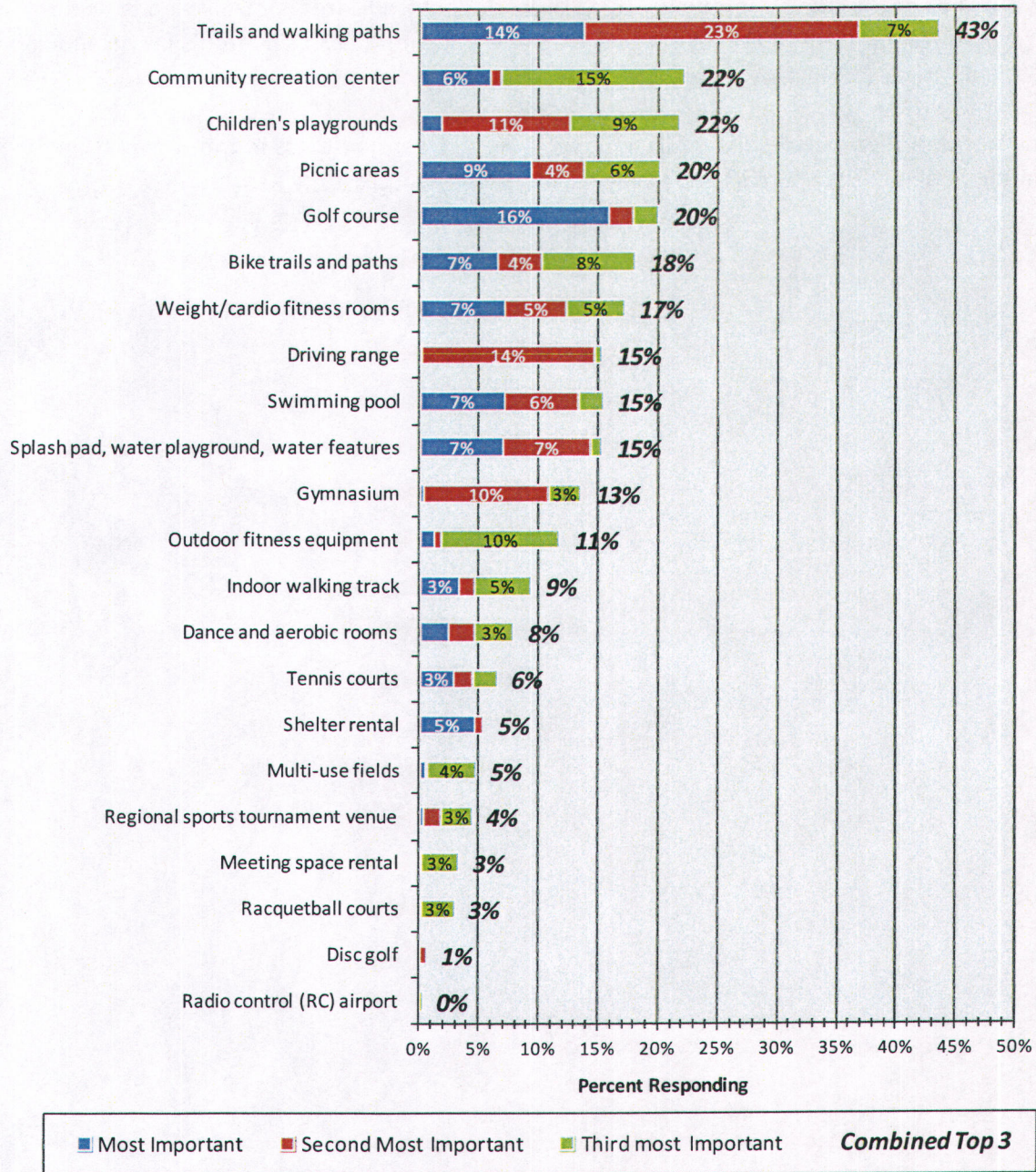
**Top Three Current Services and Facilities to Add, Expand, or Improve**

When asked to rank the top three facilities that are important to their household to add, expand, or improve in their community, by far, respondents indicate that trails and walking paths are most important (43%). Community recreation center (22%), children's playgrounds (22%), picnic areas (20%), and golf course (20%) follow.

Second tier priorities include bike trails and paths, weight/cardio fitness rooms, driving range, swimming pool, and splash pad/water playground/water features.



**Figure 15**  
**Current Services and Facilities –Top 3 Facilities to Add, Expand, or Improve – Random Sample**





### **Why Programs and Facilities are Not Used/Where Improvements Can be Made**

Respondents were asked why they do not use DRD programs or facilities. They were also asked whether if they do use these amenities, where they felt improvements could be made.

The main reasons for not using DRD programs or facilities were:

- Not aware of programs or facilities (34% of households)
- Programs not offered at the times I want (33% of households)
- No time/other personal issues (24% of households)

Second tier of reasons for not using programs or facilities:

- Price/user fees (14% of households)
- Accessibility (13% of households)

Where the most respondents felt improvements can be made included the following:

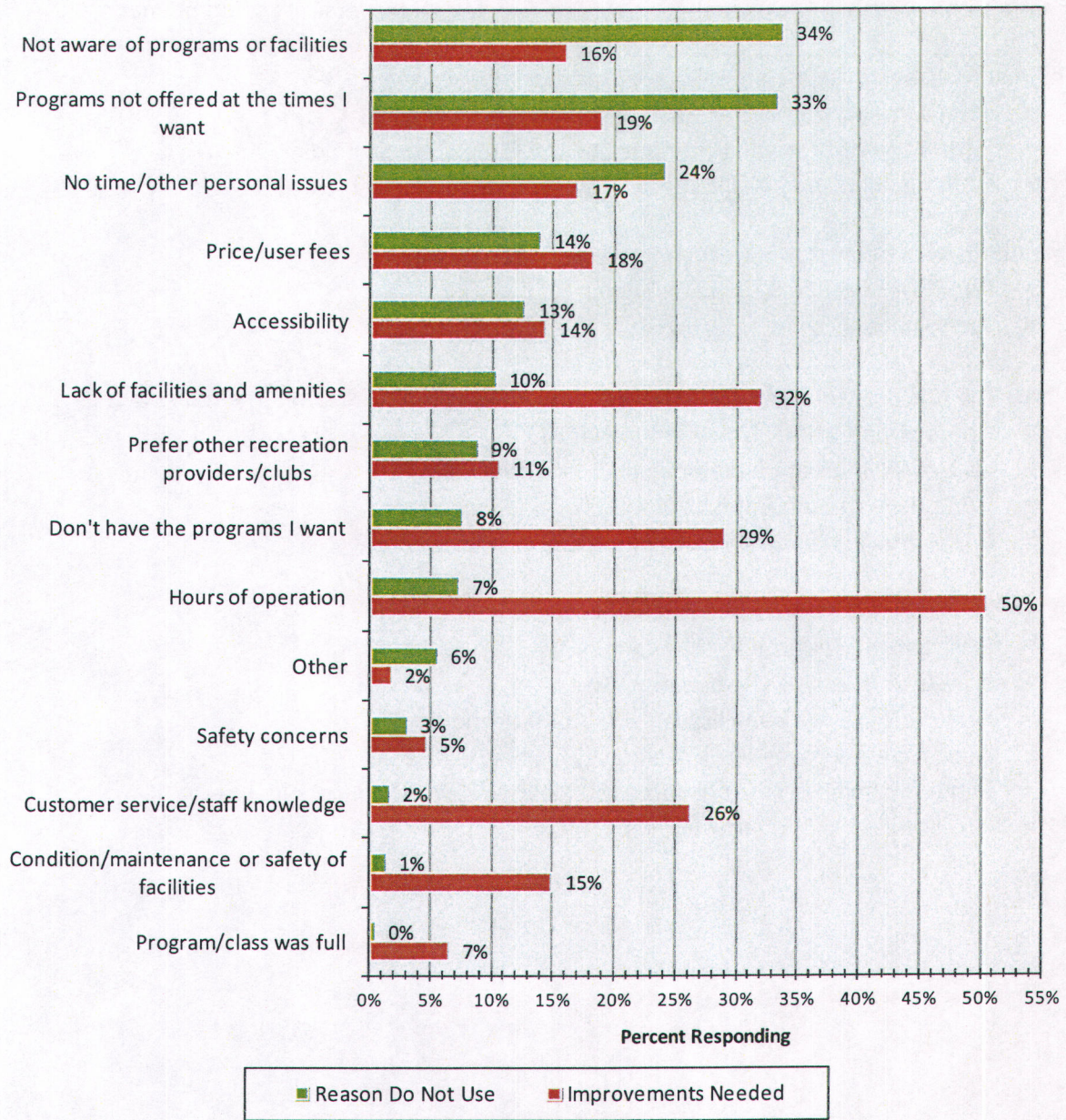
- Hours of operation (50% of households)
- Lack of facilities and amenities (32% of households)
- Don't have the programs I want (29% of households)
- Customer service/staff knowledge (26% of households)

Second tier of where improvements can be made:

- Programs not offered at the times I want (19% of households)
- Price/user fees (18% of households)
- No time/other personal issues (17% of households)
- Not aware of programs or facilities (16% of households)
- Condition/maintenance or safety of facilities (15% of households)
- Accessibility (14% of households)

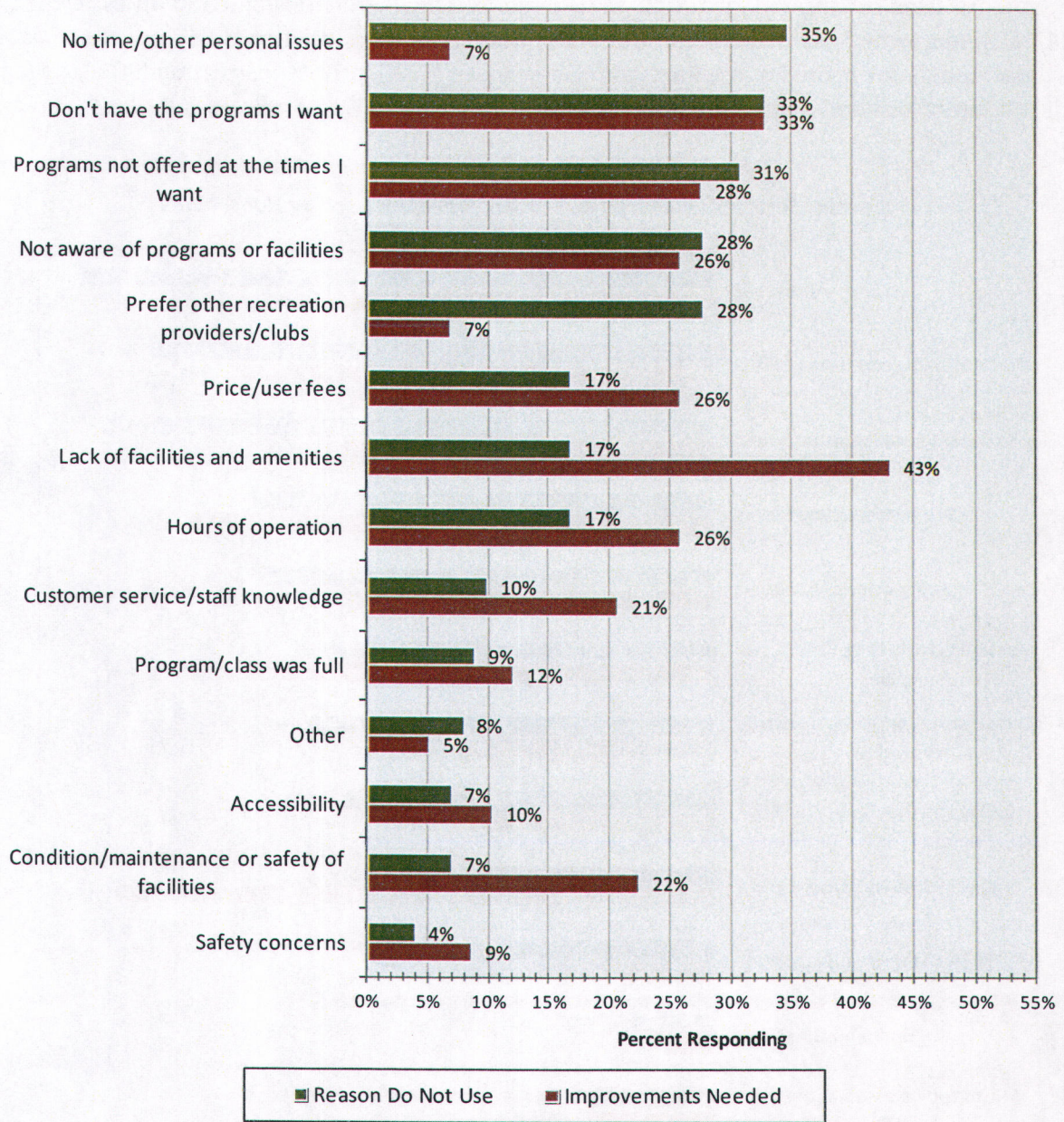


**Figure 16**  
**Current Services and Facilities - Reasons Do Not Use/Improvements Needed – Random Sample**





**Figure 17**  
**Current Services and Facilities - Reasons Do Not Use/Improvements Needed – Open Link**

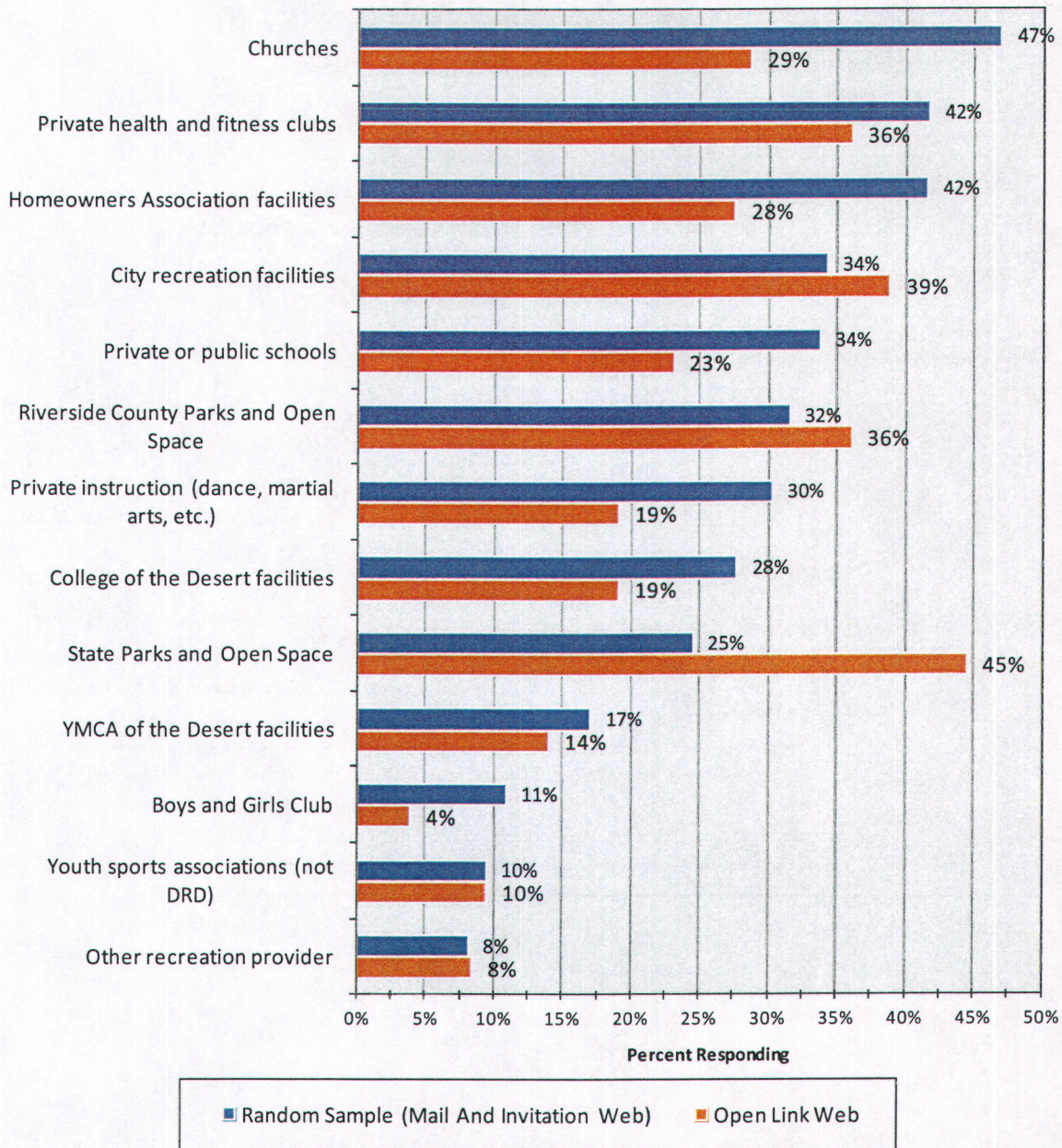




**Other Facilities and Providers Used by DRD Households**

When asked of other service providers, DRD households indicated Churches as the most frequently used other provider/facility (47% of households). Private health and fitness clubs (42%), homeowner’s association facilities (42%), city recreation facilities (34%), private or public schools (34%), Riverside County Parks and Open Space (32%), private instruction (30%), College of the Desert facilities (28%), and State Parks and Open Space (25%) followed.

**Figure 18**  
**Current Services and Facilities – Other Providers Used by Households**



\*\* Sorted in descending order by Random Sample (Mail and Invitation Web)



**Open Ended Comments: Reason Do Not Use/Needs Improvements and Other Providers Used**

Respondents were given the opportunity to write in additional information for the “reasons they do not use/needs improvement” question. Examples of responses are given below:

Don't have the Programs I want, such as...

- *Jazzercise - Need more dance/aerobics in LQ - Yoga tai chi - Swimming lesson for kids - Fit after 50 - Zumba, Yoga.*

Lack of facilities and amenities, such as...

- *Bike Trails, Motocross - Hiking trails in our area - Racquetball, Free weights - Swimming pools - Water Pads - Covered year-round pool.*

Programs not offered at the times I want...

- *Adults evenings and Saturday - AFTER 6 PM - Early morning - I work until 6-7 pm - Gymnastics / 6-7pm - More classes offered after 6pm - Open in the summer months - Swimming in winter - Weekend rec. center hours.*

Condition/maintenance or safety of facilities...

- *Bagdouma Pool - Dog parks/playgrounds - Filthy playgrounds.*

Accessibility, explain...

- *I'd like some of the classes that are only in Indio to be offered in Palm Desert as well - Not by house - Nothing close enough in Indio - I live in Indio and best biking is in Palm Springs - Programs are lacking in my city.*

Program/class was full...

- *By the time I'm out from work there is less space available - PARKING WAS FULL - The cardio equipment.*

Prefer other recreation providers/clubs...

- *24 hour fitness - World Gym - Clubhouse - Gold and fitness available at spouse's work - Golf courses - HOA Facilities - Homeowner's facilities - P.D. Aquatic Center - Private club - The Living Desert HOA - Use my church, senior center.*

Other...

- *Classes cancelled due to low enrollment - Distance - Don't support DRD as entity except in regional activities/events and 1st Tee - I don't drive and I am unable to do many things - Most things are geared towards visiting seniors - My senior center provides it all. - No need or interest.*



## FUTURE FACILITIES, AMENITIES, AND SERVICES

### Indoor Facilities to be Added, Expanded, or Improved Over Next 5 to 10 Years

Respondents were informed of the following statement:

*“The Desert Recreation District funds parks, recreation, open space, and trail operations and maintenance with user fees and tax dollars. As you answer the following questions, please keep in mind that while user fees, grants, and donations offset some costs, additional funds would be required for the building, operations, and maintenance of new parks, recreation, open space, and trail facilities.”*

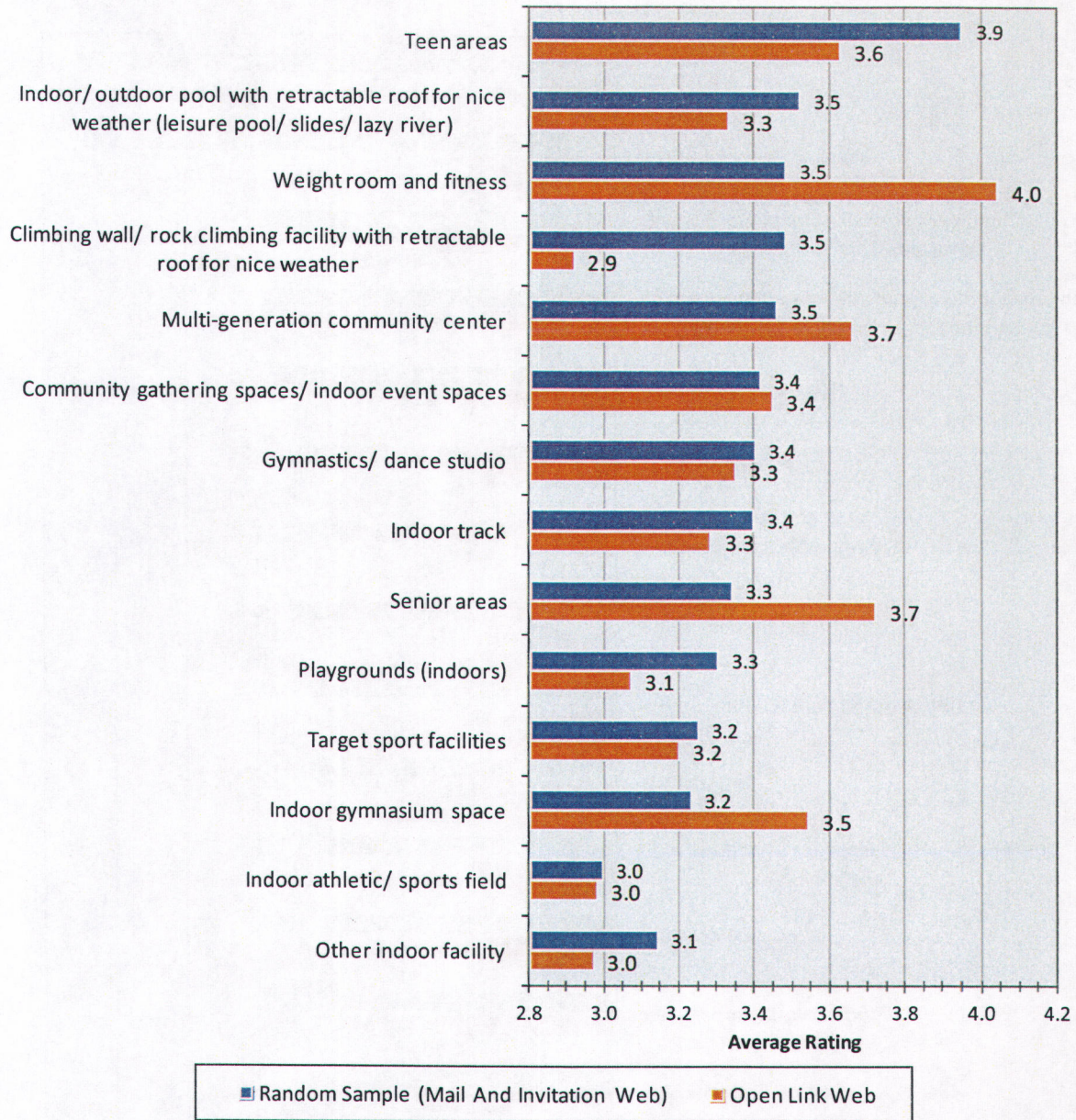
Based on this information respondents rated the greatest indoor and outdoor needs of the district over the next 5 to 10 years using a 5 point scale, where 1=Not at All Important and 5=Very Important.

The indoor facilities that had the highest average rating of importance, and the highest percentage of households indicating a 4 or 5, included:

- Teen areas (With an average rating of 3.9, 76% of respondents rated this indoor facility a 4 or 5)
- Indoor/outdoor pool with retractable roof for nice weather (3.5 rating; 50% rated 4 or 5)
- Weight room and fitness (3.5 rating; 67% rated 4 or 5)
- Climbing wall/rock climbing facility with retractable roof for nice weather (3.5 rating; 56% rated 4 or 5)
- Multi-generational community center (3.5 rating; 43% rated 4 or 5)
- Community gathering spaces/indoor event spaces (3.4 rating; 41% rated 4 or 5)
- Gymnastics studio (3.4 rating; 47% rated 4 or 5)
- Indoor track (3.4 rating; 47% rated 4 or 5)
- Senior areas (3.3 rating; 43% rated 4 or 5)
- Indoor playgrounds (3.3 rating; 48% rated 4 or 5)
- Target sport facilities (3.2 rating; 41% rated 4 or 5)
- Indoor gymnasium space (3.2 rating; 46% rated 4 or 5)



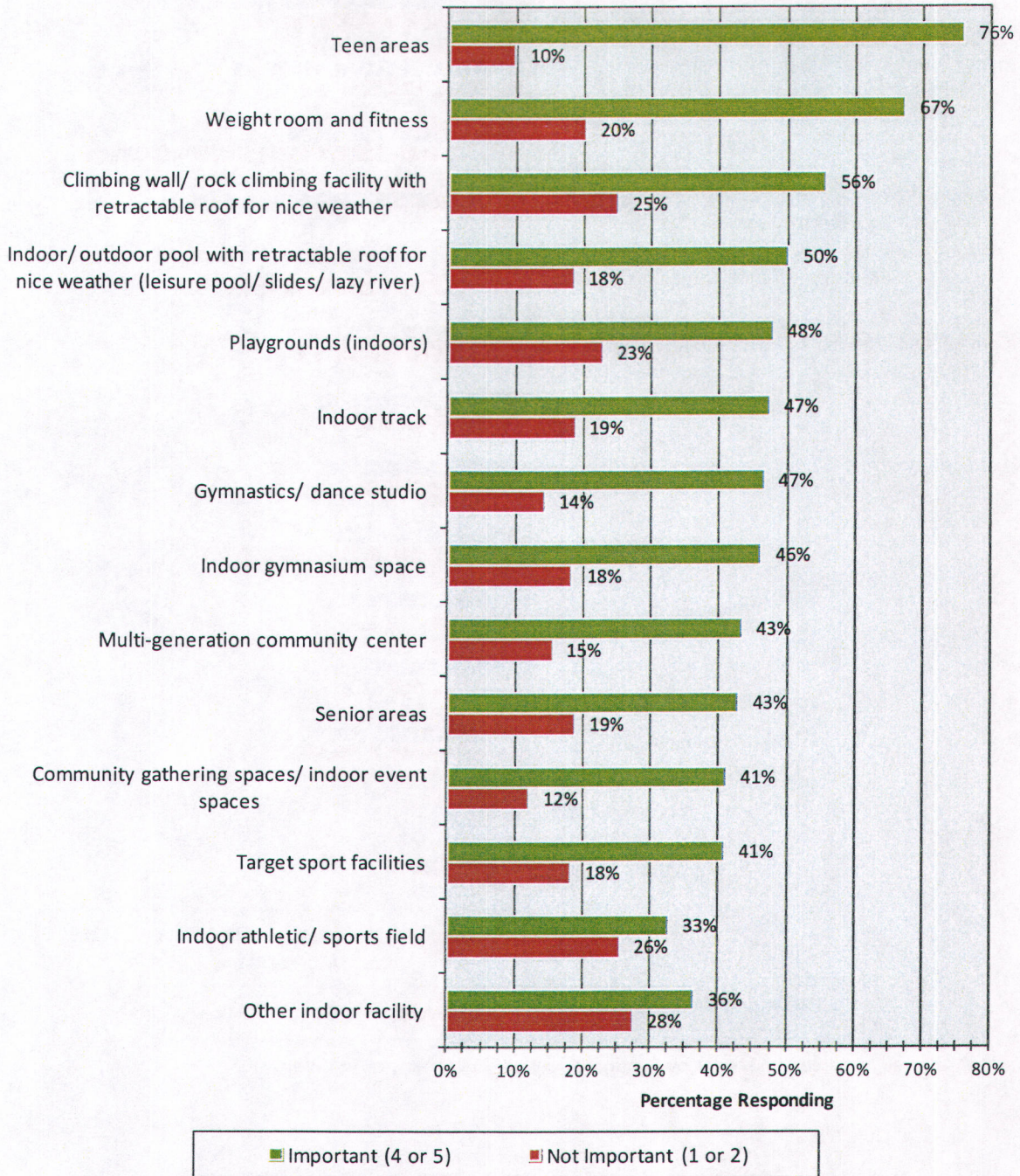
**Figure 19**  
**Indoor Facilities - Greatest Needs Over Next 5 to 10 Years – Average Rating**



\*\* Sorted in descending order by Random Sample (Mail and Invitation Web)



**Figure 20**  
**Indoor Facilities - Greatest Needs Over Next 5 to 10 Years –**  
**Percentage of Very Important vs. Not at All Important – Random Sample**





By combining the top three ranked indoor facilities in order of highest priority, the following were the indoor facilities respondents indicated as most important:

- Teen areas (43% of households reported this indoor facility as one of the top three indoor facilities to be added, expanded, or improved)
- Weight room and fitness (39% of households)

Second tier of most important indoor facilities to be added, expanded, or improved included:

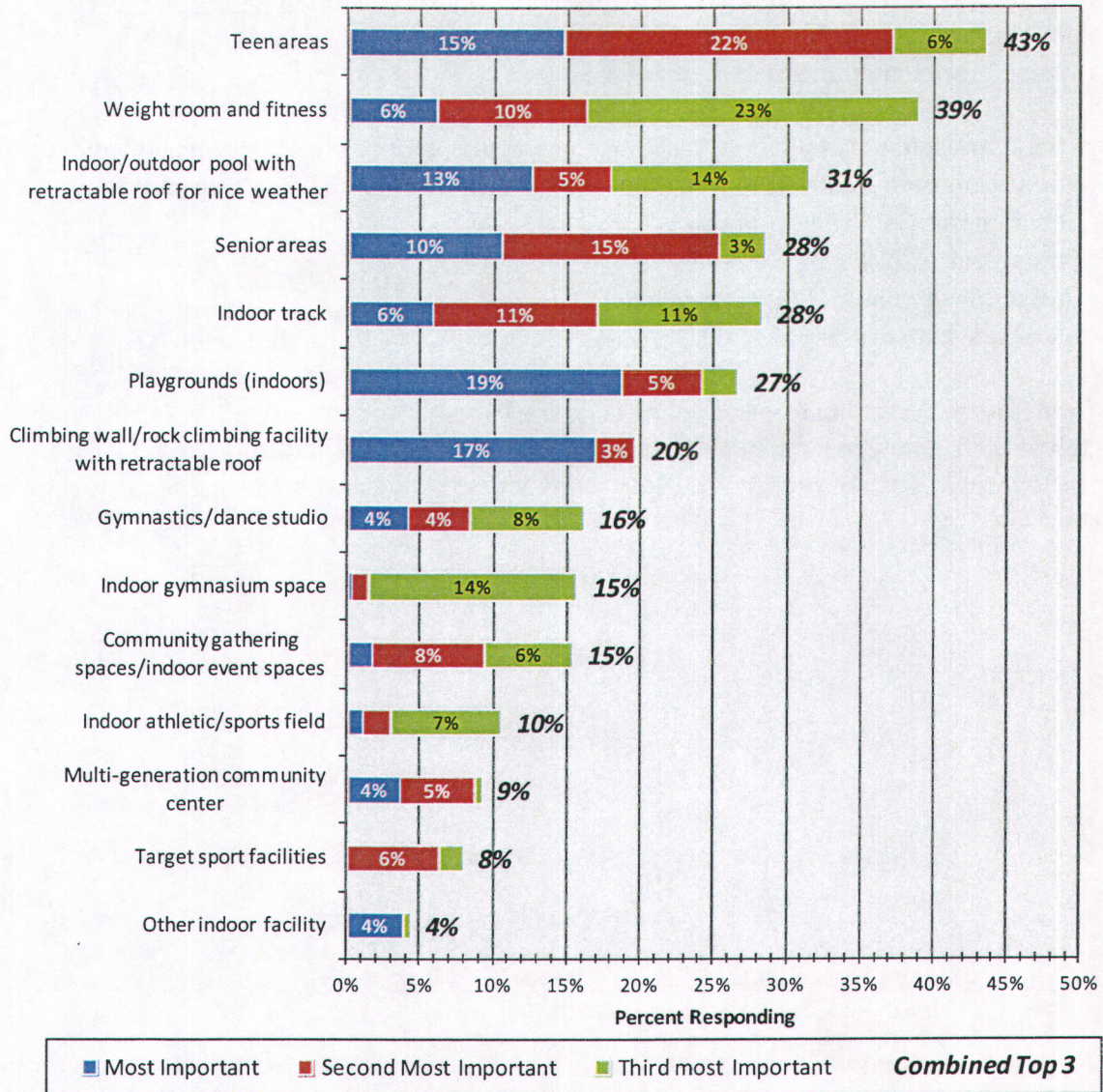
- Indoor/outdoor pool with retractable roof for nice weather (31% of households)
- Senior areas (28% of households)
- Indoor track (28% of households)
- Indoor playgrounds (27% of households)
- Climbing wall/rock climbing facility with retractable roof (20% of households)

Note from Figure 20 that indoor playgrounds and the climbing wall/rock climbing facility with retractable roof actually had the largest percentage of respondents indicating these facilities as their single most important priority (17-19%). Teen areas followed with 15% for single most important.



Figure 21

Indoor Facilities - Highest Ranked Priorities to be Added, Expanded, or Improved – Random Sample





**Outdoor Facilities to be Added, Expanded, or Improved Over Next 5 to 10 Years**

Respondents were then asked about the importance of outdoor facility needs over the next 5 to 10 years.

The following were the highest rated outdoor facilities:

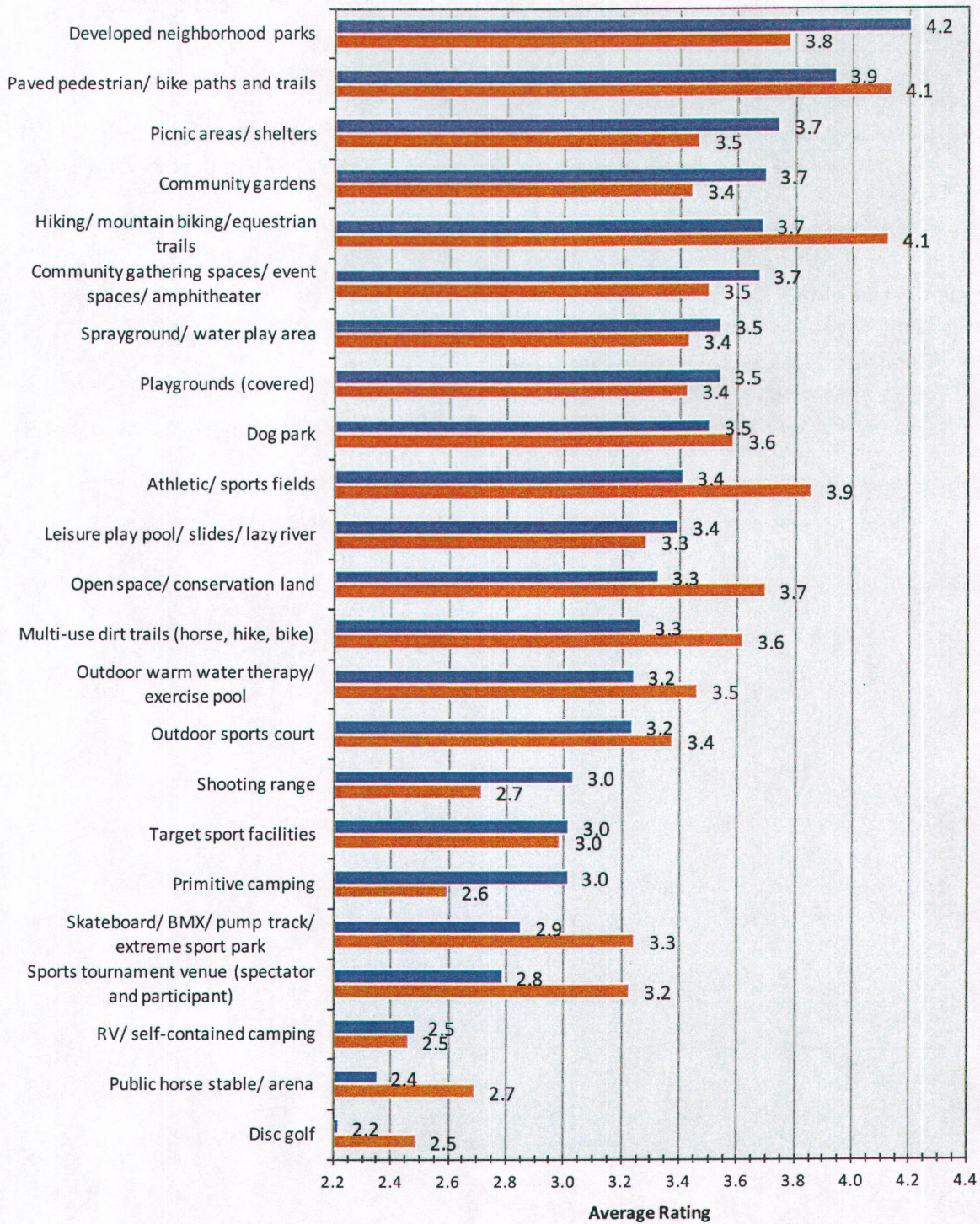
- Developed neighborhood parks (with an average rating of 4.2, 81% of respondents rated this outdoor facility a 4 or 5 on a 5 point scale where 1=Not at All Important and 5=Very Important)
- Paved pedestrian/bike paths and trails (3.9 rating; 78% rated 4 or 5)

Second tier of outdoor facility importance consisted of the following:

- Picnic areas/shelters(3.7 rating; 68% rated 4 or 5)
- Community gardens (3.7; 65% rated 4 or 5)
- Hiking/mountain biking/equestrian trails (3.7 rating; 62% rated 4 or 5)
- Community gathering spaces/event spaces/amphitheater (3.7 rating; 64% rated 4 or 5)



**Figure 22**  
**Outdoor Facilities - Greatest Needs Over Next 5 to 10 Years – Average Rating**

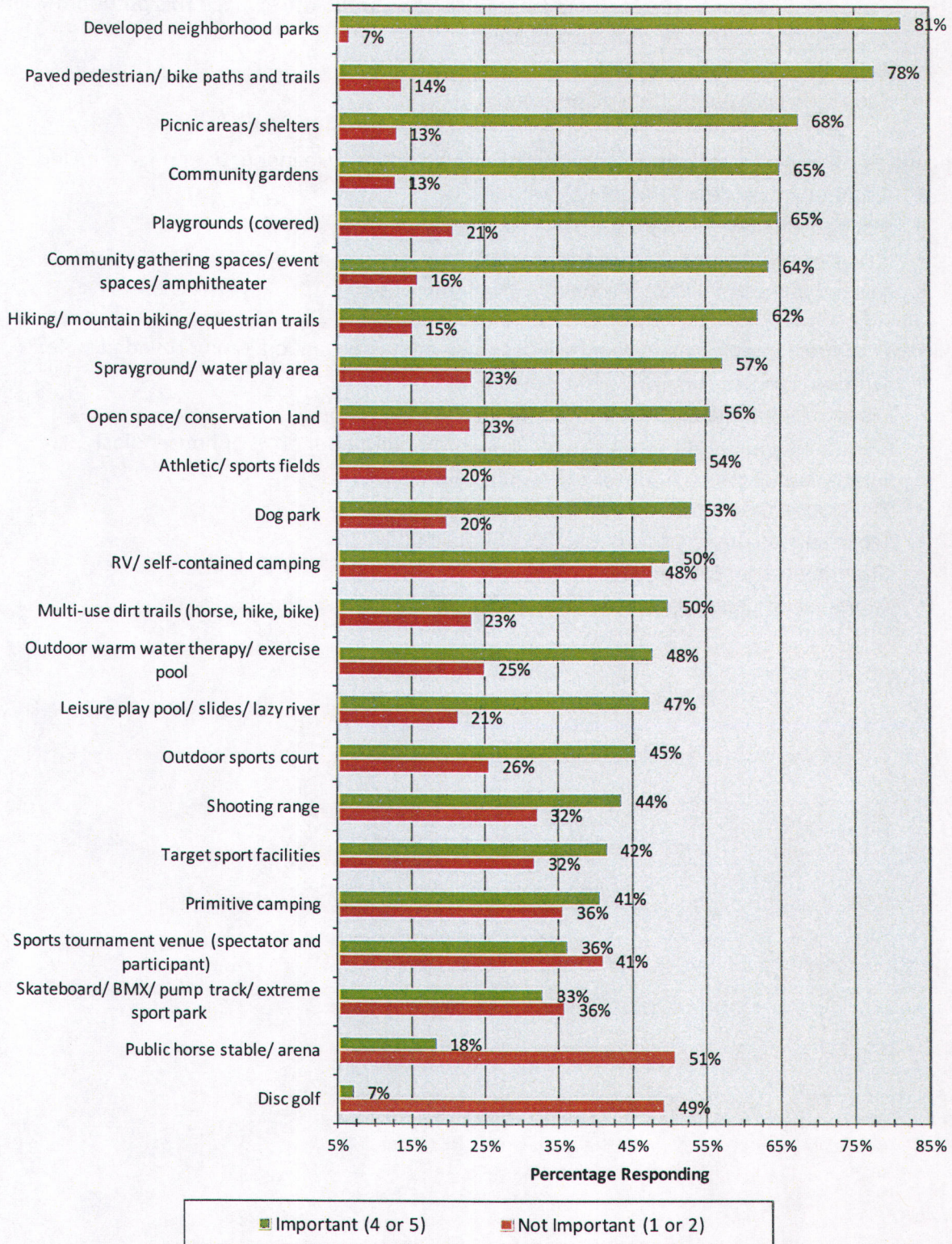


■ Random Sample (Mail And Invitation Web) ■ Open Link Web

\*\* Sorted in descending order by Random Sample (Mail and Invitation Web)



**Figure 23**  
**Outdoor Facilities - Needs Over Next 5 to 10 Years – Percentage Important vs. Not Important – Random Sample**





After combining the most, second most, and third most important rankings, the following were the outdoor facilities indicated as most important to DRD households to add, expand, or improve over the next 5 to 10 years:

- Paved pedestrian/bike paths and trails (32% of households reported this outdoor facility as one of the top three outdoor facilities)
- Dog park (28% of households)
- Covered playgrounds (26% of households)

Second tier of most important outdoor facilities to be added, expanded, or improved include:

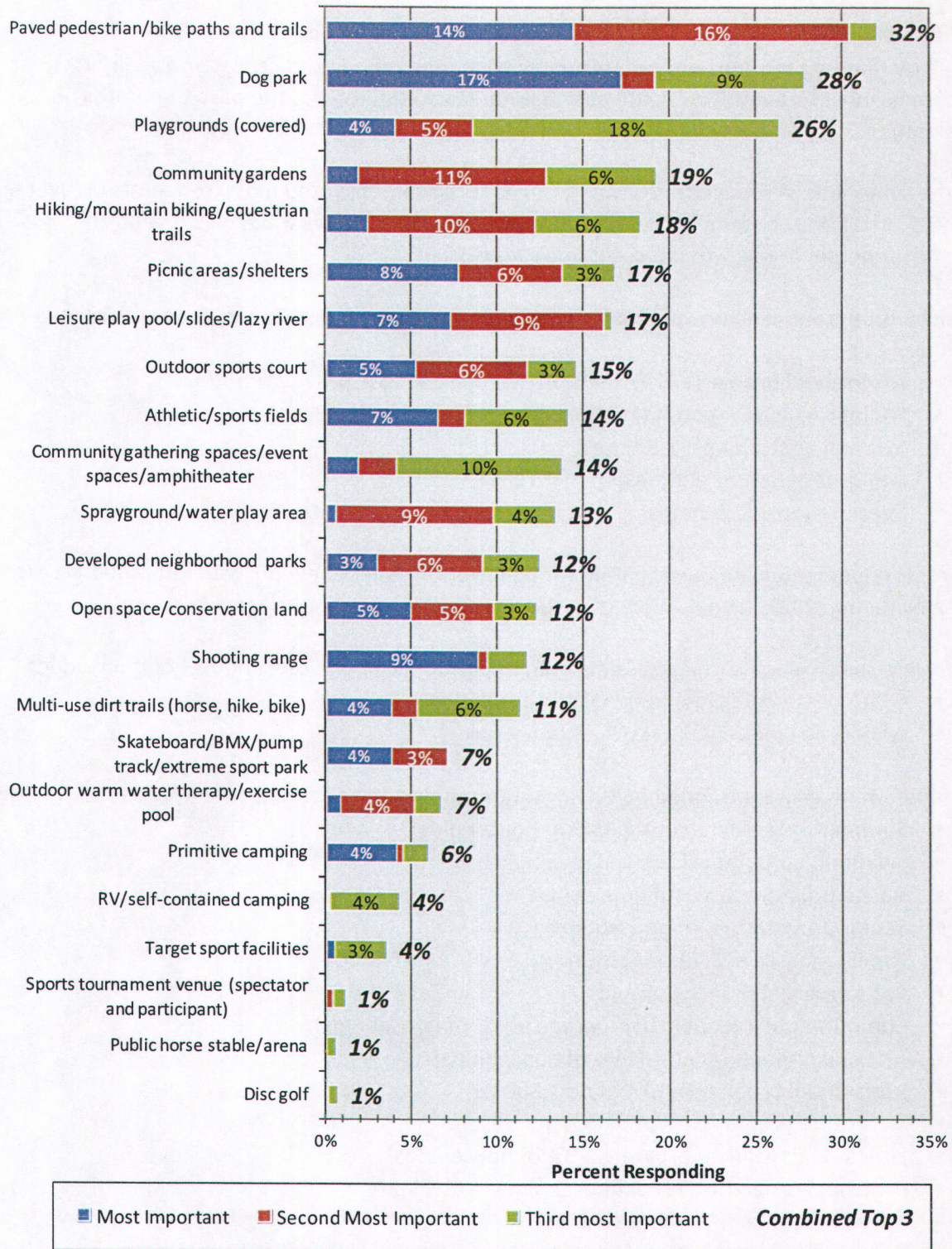
- Community gardens (19% of households)
- Hiking/mountain biking/equestrian trails (18% of households)
- Picnic areas/shelters (17% of households)
- Leisure play pool/slides/lazy river (17% of households)

Third tier of most important outdoor facilities to be added, expanded, or improved include:

- Outdoor sports court (15% of households)
- Athletic/sports fields (14% of households)
- Community gathering spaces/event spaces/amphitheater (14% of households)
- Sprayground/water play area (13% of households)
- Developed neighborhood parks (12% of households)
- Open space/conservation land (12% of households)
- Shooting range (12% of households)
- Multi-use dirt trails for horse, hike, and bike (11% of households)



**Figure 24**  
**Outdoor Facilities - Highest Ranked Priorities to be Added, Expanded, or Improved – Random Sample**





## PROGRAMS, ACTIVITIES, AND SPECIAL EVENTS

### Usage Frequency

Of all recreation programs offered, residents have most often used fitness and wellness programs most frequently over the past year (at least 4 times over the past 12 months on average).

At the same time, although fitness and wellness programs are used most frequently on average, only 8% of all DRD households had used this program. This shows that while few households use this program, those who do use it do so very often.

Besides fitness and wellness programs, other programs used most frequently on average include:

- Afterschool programs (1.9 times on average over the past 12 months)
- Athletic leagues – youth (1.7 times)
- Swimming programs (1.3 times)
- Senior programs (1.3 times)
- Special events (1.0 times)

In terms of percentage of participation (or penetration), special events were attended at least once by the most households (33% of households).

Following special events, the programs used at least once by the most households included:

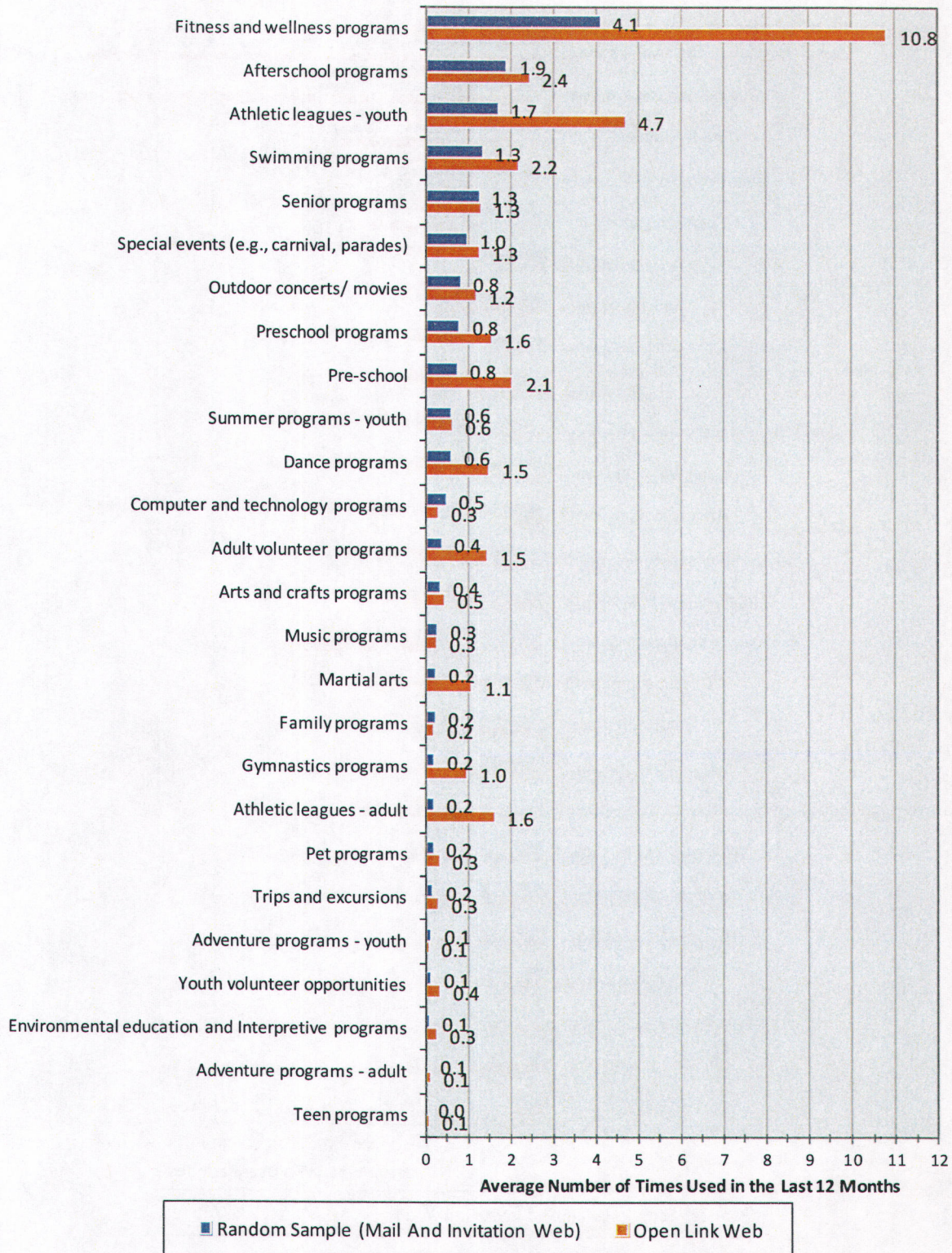
- Outdoor concerts/movies (21% of households)
- Athletic leagues – youth (19% of households)

Third tier of programs attended by the most households at least once:

- Summer programs – youth (15% of households)
- Swimming programs (12% of households)
- Dance programs (12% of households)
- Senior programs (% of households)
- Family programs (11% of households)
- Pre-school (11% of households)
- Computer and technology programs (11% of households)
- Arts and crafts programs (11% of households)
- Afterschool programs (10% of households)
- Adventure programs – youth (9% of households)
- Fitness and wellness programs (8% of households)
- Preschool programs (7% of households)
- Music programs (7% of households)
- Trips and excursions (6% of households)



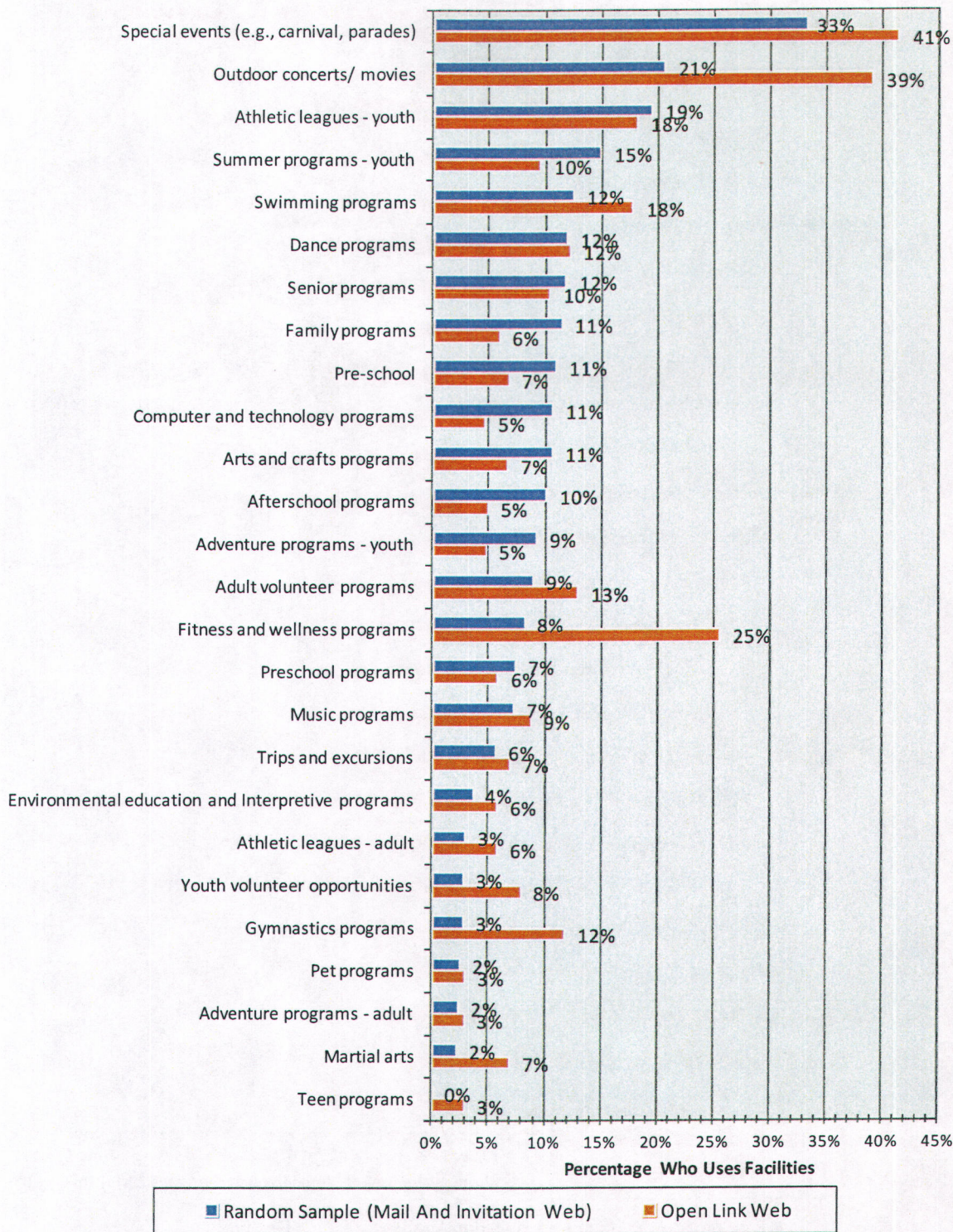
**Figure 25**  
**Programs, Activities, and Special Events - Frequency of Use of Past 12 Months**



\*\* Sorted in descending order by Random Sample (Mail and Invitation Web)



**Figure 26**  
**Programs, Activities, and Special Events -**  
**Percentage of Households Who Used Amenities and Facilities in Past 12 Months**



\*\* Sorted in descending order by Random Sample (Mail and Invitation Web)



### Importance of Programs, Activities, and Special Events

Respondents indicated the importance of current programs using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1=Not at All Important, 3=Neutral, and 5=Very Important.

The following facilities rated the highest averages and the most frequently reported 4 or 5 ratings:

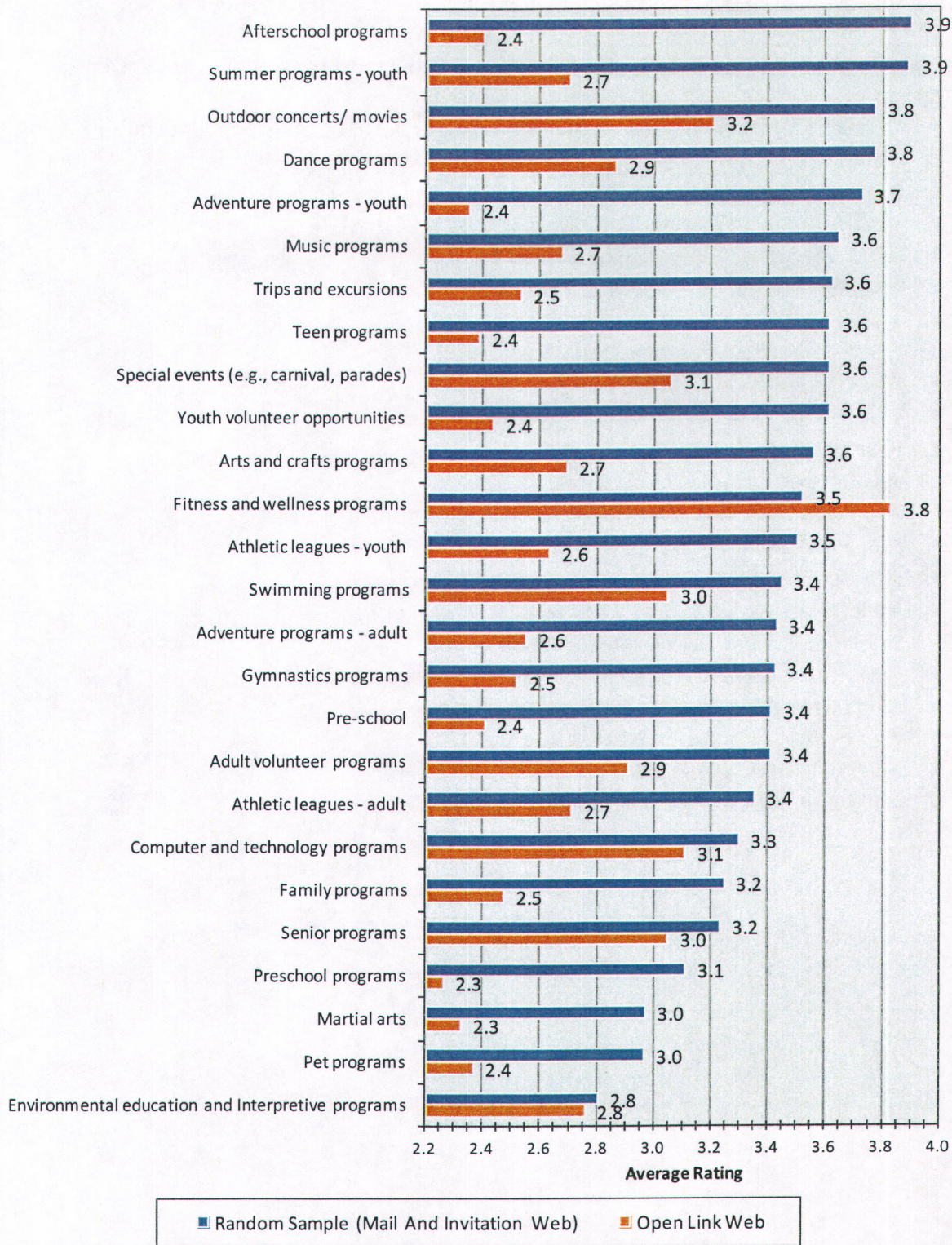
- Afterschool programs (with an average rating of 3.9, 65% of respondents rated afterschool programs a 4 or 5)
- Summer programs – youth (3.9 rating; 65% rated 4 or 5)
- Outdoor concerts/movies (3.8 rating; 63% rated 4 or 5)
- Dance programs (3.8 rating; 62% rated 4 or 5)
- Adventure programs – youth (3.7 rating; 56% rated 4 or 5)

Second tier of important programs include:

- Music programs (3.6 rating; 60% rated 4 or 5)
- Trips and excursions (3.6 rating; 51% rated 4 or 5)
- Teen programs (3.6 rating; 58% rated 4 or 5)
- Special events (3.6 rating; 56% rated 4 or 5)
- Youth volunteer opportunities (3.6 rating; 52% rated 4 or 5)
- Arts and crafts programs (3.6 rating; 57% rated 4 or 5)
- Fitness and wellness programs (3.5 rating; 59% rated 4 or 5)
- Athletic leagues – youth (3.5 rating; 52% rated 4 or 5)
- Swimming programs (3.4 rating; 58% rated 4 or 5)
- Adventure programs – adult (3.4 rating; 48% rated 4 or 5)
- Gymnastics programs (3.4 rating; 54% rated 4 or 5)
- Pre-school (3.4 rating; 47% rated 4 or 5)
- Adult volunteer opportunities (3.4 rating; 44% rated 4 or 5)
- Athletic leagues – adult (3.4 rating; 46% rated 4 or 5)



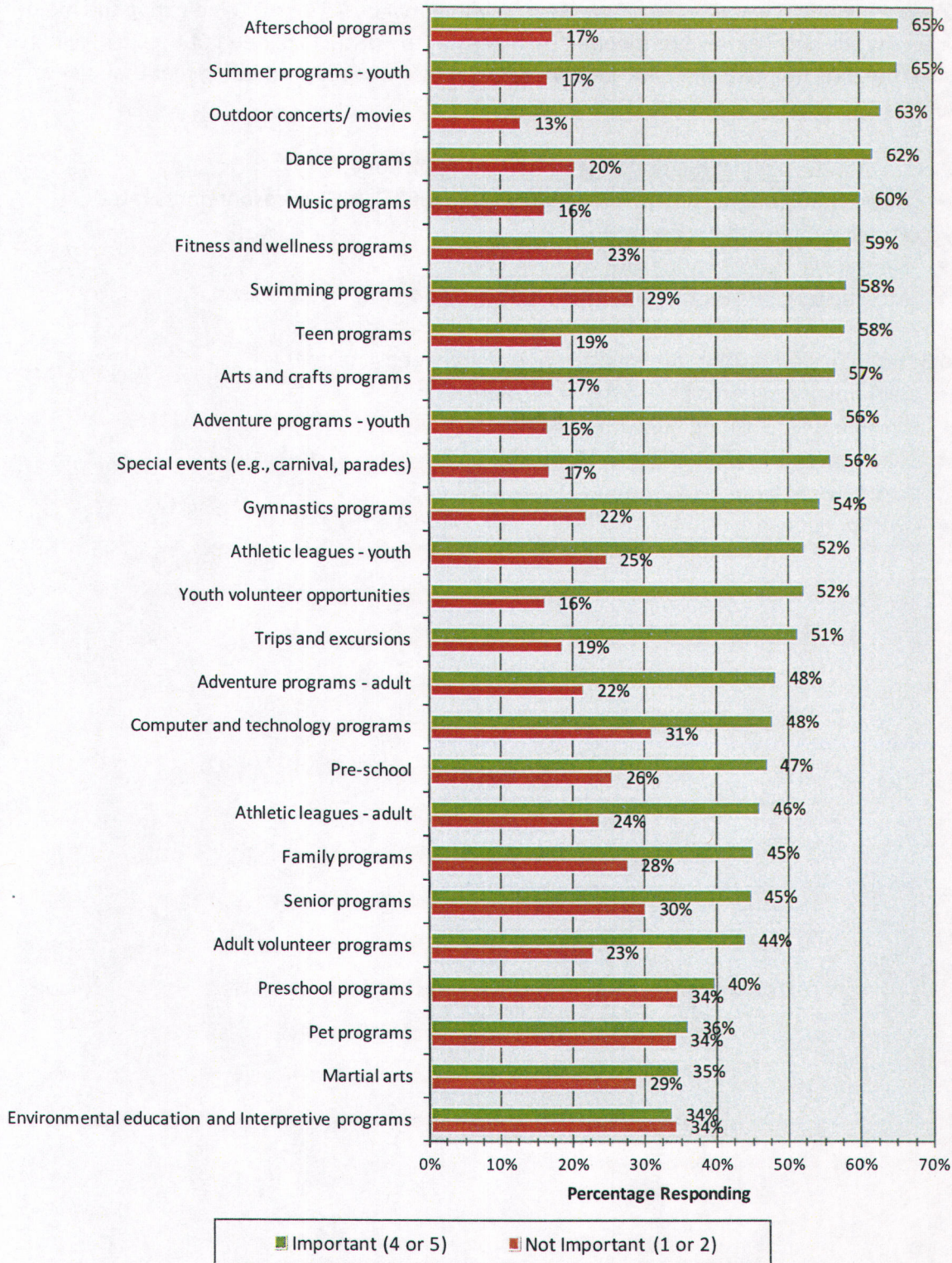
**Figure 27**  
**Programs, Activities, and Special Events – Importance to Household – Average Rating**



\*\* Sorted in descending order by Random Sample (Mail and Invitation Web)



**Figure 28**  
**Programs, Activities, and Special Events – Importance to Household –**  
**Percentage Important vs. Not Important – Random Sample**





**Degree to Which Programs, Activities, and Special Events are Meeting Household Needs**

As with facilities, respondents were asked to rate how well their needs are being met by DRD programs using a similar 5 point scale, where 1=Not at All Met, 3=Somewhat Met, and 5=Completely Met. Overall, program ratings ranged between 2.7 and 3.3 indicating the majority of programs are only somewhat meeting the needs of the district. Sixteen of the 26 programs listed in the question had a greater percentage response of needs not being met than needs being met.

Programs with the highest degree of needs being met include:

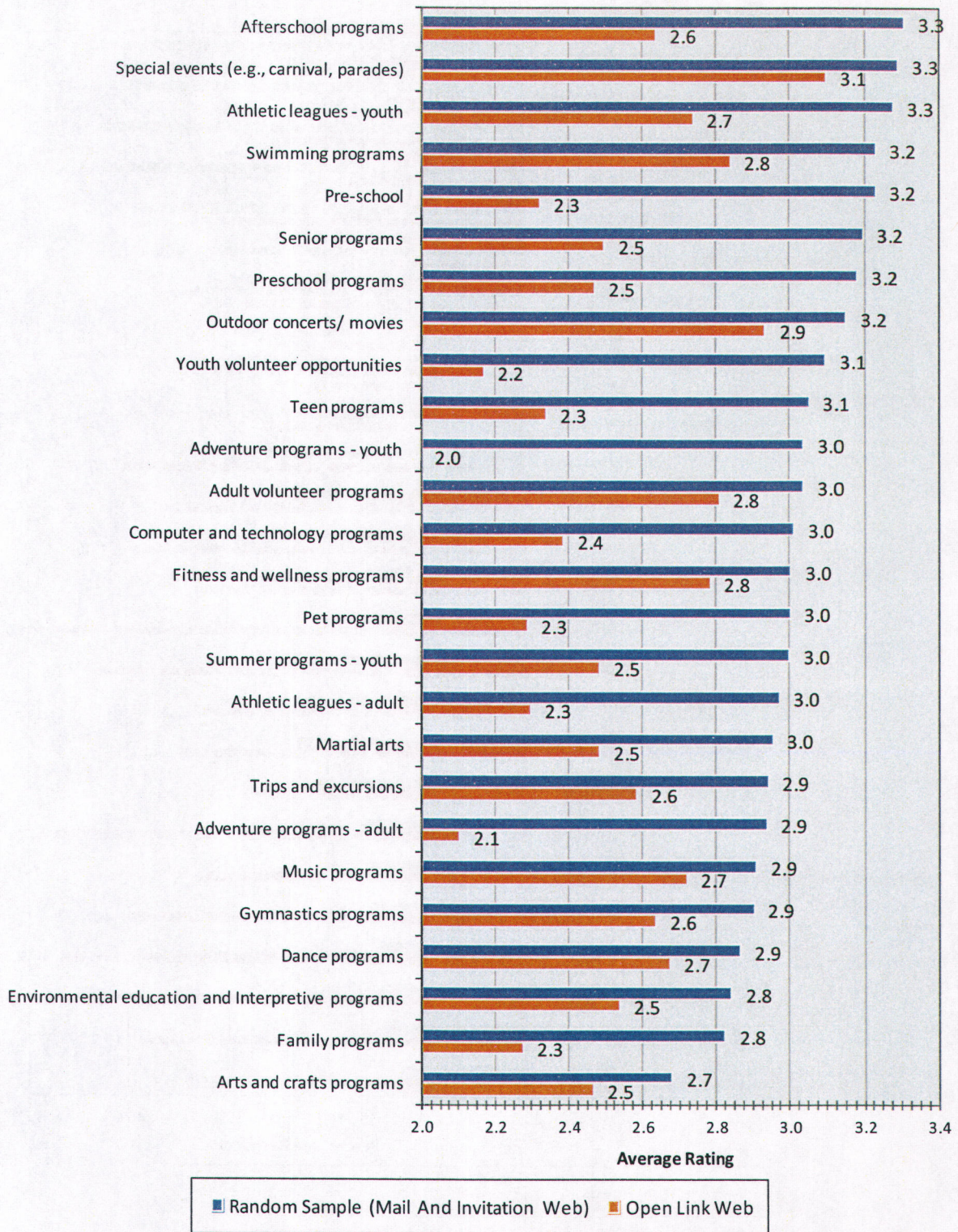
- Afterschool programs (with an average rating of 3.3, 42% of respondents rated afterschool programs a 4 or 5)
- Special events (3.3 rating; 36% rated 4 or 5)
- Athletic leagues – youth (3.3 rating; 42% rated 4 or 5)

Second tier of programs that are meeting household needs include:

- Swimming programs (3.2 rating; 40% rated 4 or 5)
- Pre-school (3.2 rating; 35% rated 4 or 5)
- Senior programs (3.2 rating; 34% rated 4 or 5)
- Preschool programs (3.2 rating; 35% rated 4 or 5)
- Outdoor concerts/movies (3.2 rating; 42% rated 4 or 5)



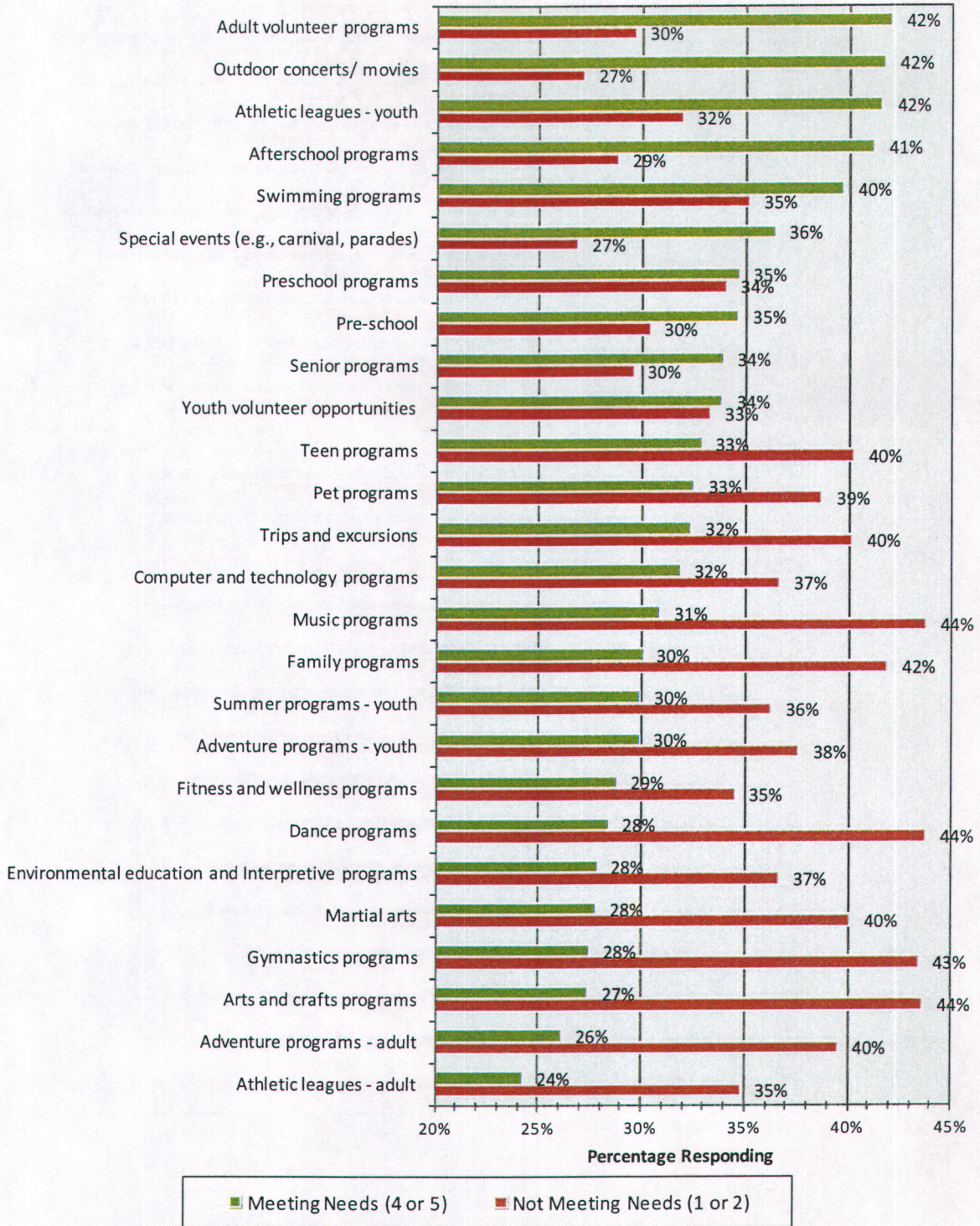
**Figure 29**  
**Programs, Activities, and Special Events– Degree to Which Needs are Being Met – Average Rating**



\*\* Sorted in descending order by Random Sample (Mail and Invitation Web)



**Figure 30**  
**Programs, Activities, and Special Events– Degree to Which Needs are Being Met –**  
**Percentage Needs Met vs. Needs Not Met – Random Sample**





### Top Three Programs to Add, Expand, or Improve

When asked to rank the most, second most, and third most important programs to add, expand, or improve, respondents most often indicated youth summer programs (27% of households) and swimming programs (24% of households) as the most important. Fitness and wellness programs followed with 22% of households.

The second tier of programs, activities, and special events most important to add, expand, or improve include:

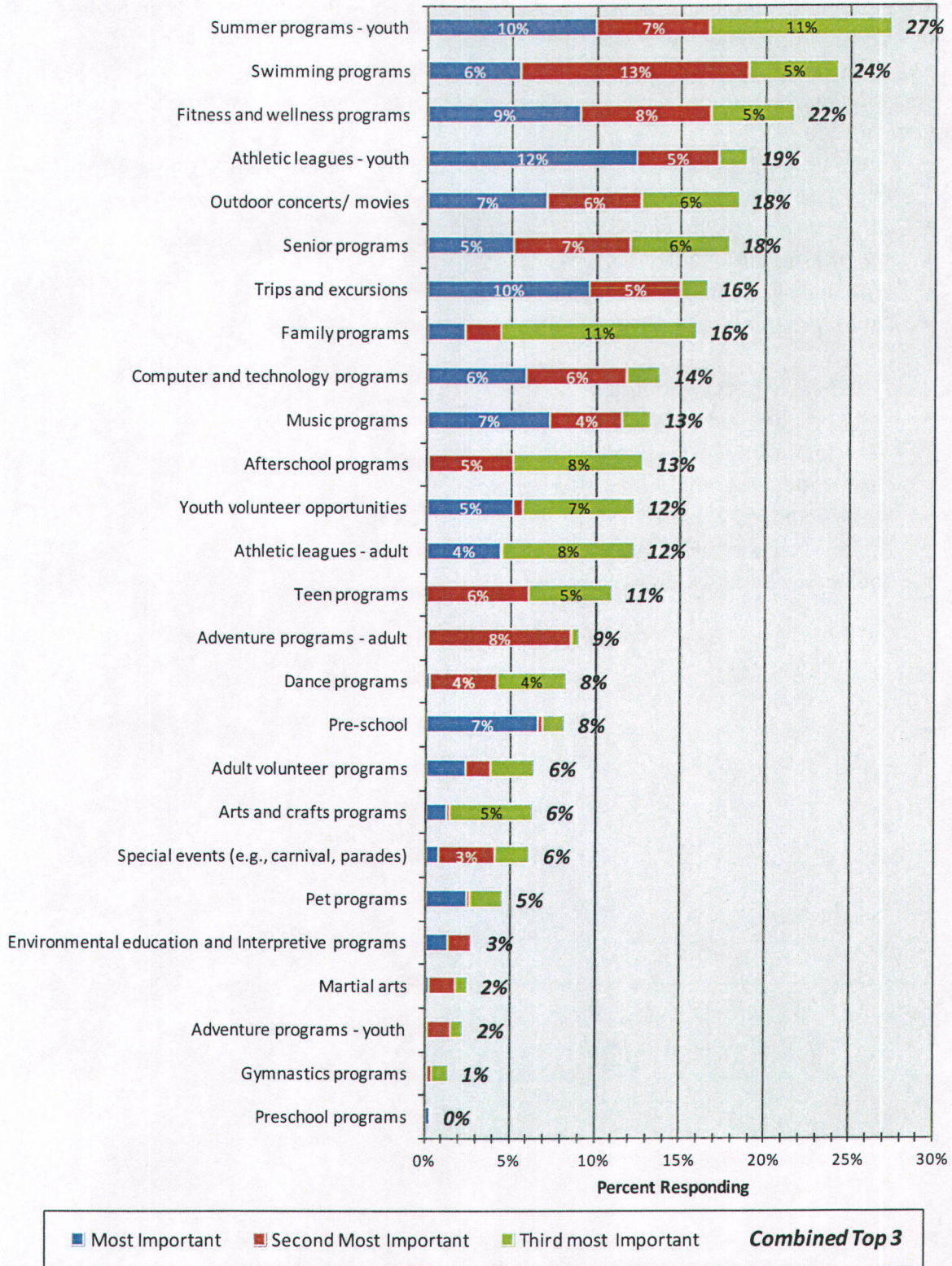
- Youth athletic leagues (19% of households reported this program as one of the top three important to their household)
- Outdoor concerts/movies (18% of households)
- Senior programs (18% of households)
- Trips and excursions (16% of households)
- Family programs (16% of households)

Third tier of most important programs:

- Computer and technology programs (14% of households)
- Music programs (13% of households)
- Afterschool programs (13% of households)
- Youth volunteer opportunities (12% of households)
- Athletic leagues – adult (12% of households)
- Teen programs (11% of households)



**Figure 31**  
**Programs, Activities, and Special Events – Most Important to Add, Expand, or Improve –**  
**Random Sample**





### Importance vs. Needs-met Matrix – Current Programs/Activities/Events

As with current facilities, it is informative to plot and compare the importance and needs met scores using a similar importance vs. needs met matrix. As with the previous matrix, scores are displayed using the mid-points for both questions to divide into four quadrants (the Importance scale midpoint was 3.5; Needs-Met midpoint was 3.0). A positioning of each program's location in comparison to each other is detailed in Figure 31.

The upper right quadrant shows the programs that have a high level of importance and a high level of needs being met. These programs are integral in maintaining and improving to satisfy the needs DRD households.

- Afterschool programs
- Outdoor concerts/movies
- Special events
- Youth adventure programs
- Youth volunteer opportunities
- Youth athletic leagues

Programs located in the upper left quadrant are programs with relatively high importance but are not meeting needs as well. Improving these programs would have a strong impact on the degree to which needs are being met overall. These programs include:

- Youth summer programs
- Dance programs
- Music programs
- Trips and excursions
- Arts and crafts programs

Programs found in the lower left quadrant, further below the importance midpoint and left of the needs-met midpoint, are programs not meeting needs well; however, they are important to fewer members of the community. These "niche programs" have a small but passionate following; therefore, there is merit to measuring participation and planning for potential future enhancements accordingly.

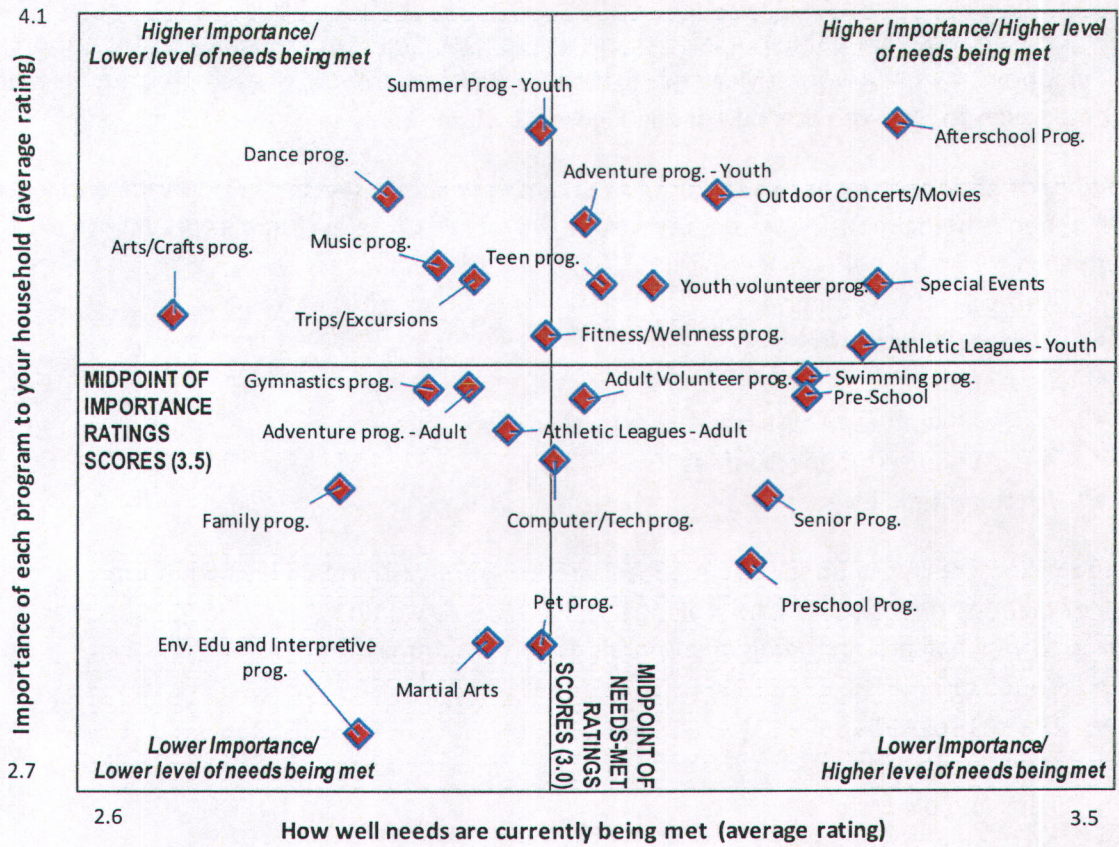
- Environmental education and interpretive programs
- Martial arts
- Family programs

The lower right quadrant shows programs that are not important to many households, yet are meeting their needs very well.

- Preschool programs
- Senior programs



**Figure 32**  
**Programs, Activities, and Special Events – In-Need vs. Needs-met Matrix - Random Sample**





## COMMUNICATION

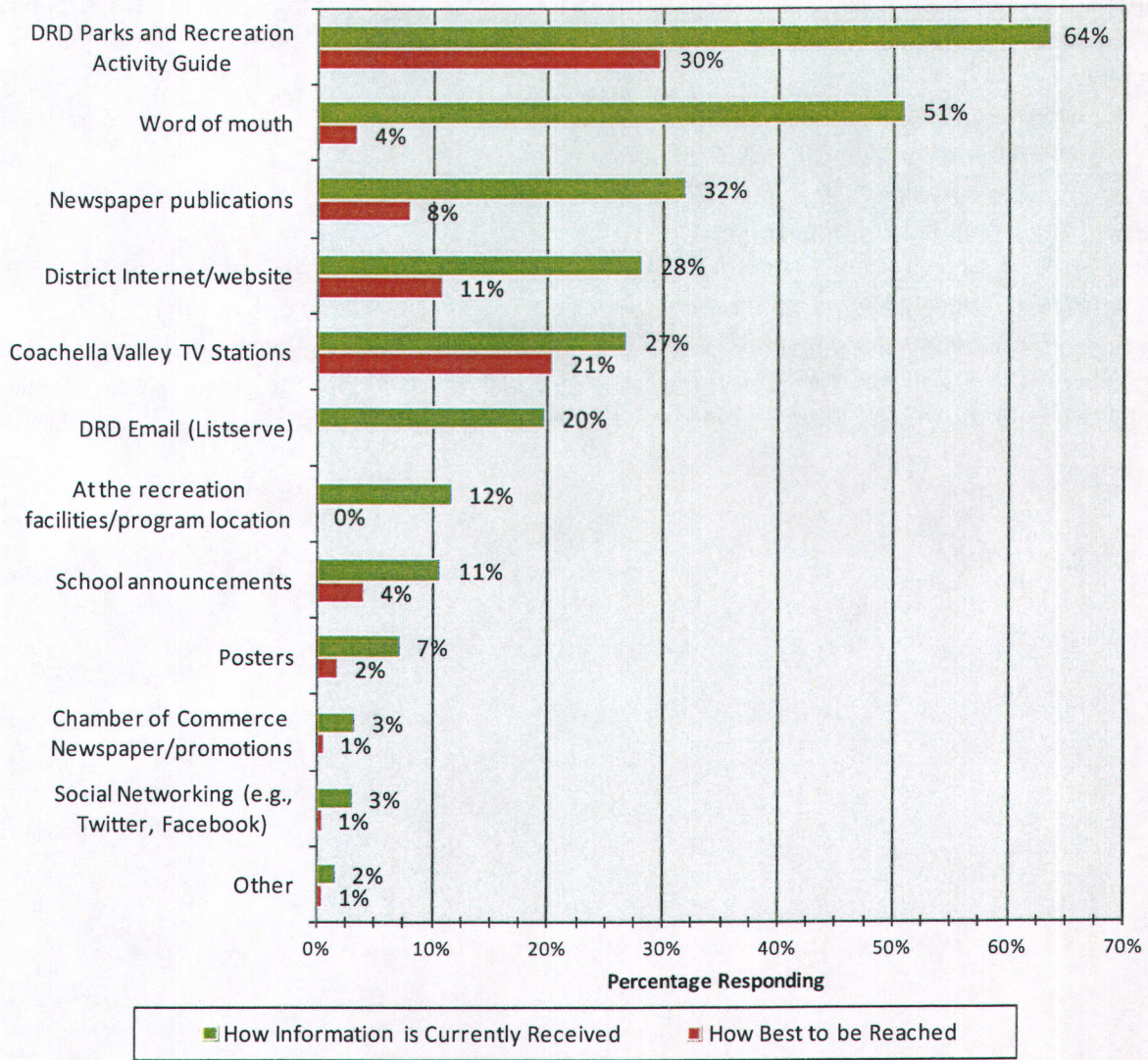
The DRD Parks and Recreation Activity Guide is the most common method of receiving information about park, recreation facilities, services, and programs offered by the District (64% of households). Word of mouth followed with 51% of households. The methods that follow include:

- Newspaper publications (32% of households)
- District Internet/website (28% of households)
- Coachella Valley TV Stations (27% of households)
- DRD Email (20% of households)

Encouragingly, the DRD Parks and Recreation Activity Guide is not only one of the most common methods of receiving information but it is also considered the best method of reaching DRD households. Other best methods for reaching DRD households are the Coachella Valley TV stations, District internet/website, and newspaper publications.

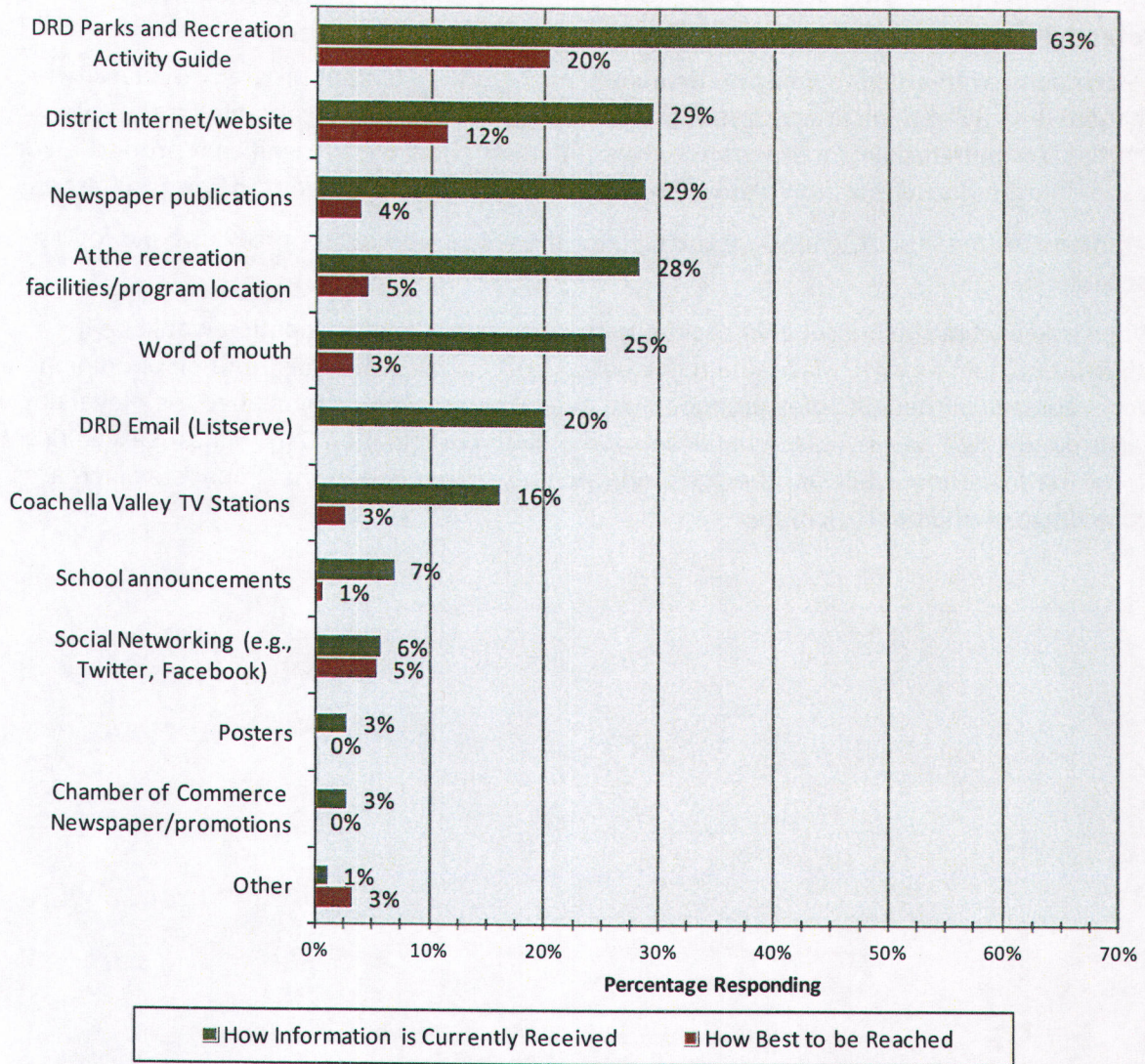


**Figure 33**  
**Communication – How Park, Recreation Facilities, Services, and Program Information is Currently Being Received/Best Method to Be Reached – Random Sample**





**Figure 34**  
**Communication – How Park, Recreation Facilities, Services, and Program Information is Currently Being Received/Best Method to Be Reached – Open Link**





## FINANCIAL CHOICES

### **Opinions on Current Program and Facility Fees Directly Charged to Households / Potential Impact on Current Level of Participation if Fees Were to Increase**

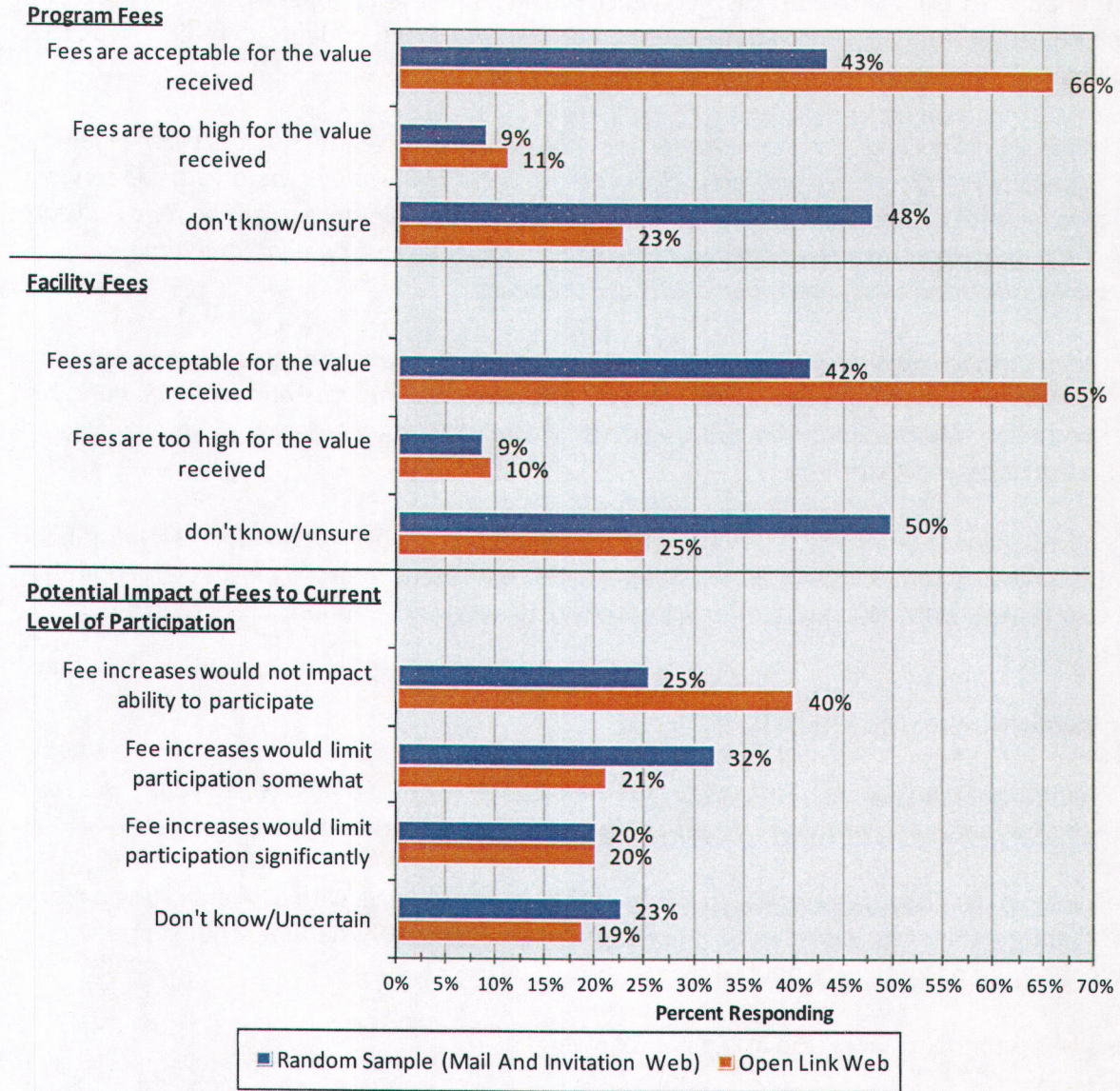
Respondents were asked to indicate their opinions regarding current program and facility fees charged directly to them. Many respondents feel that the fees are acceptable for the value received for both facility and program charges (42-43%). However, a significant proportion of respondents indicate they don't know/are unsure of how they feel about the direct charges.

Less than 10% feel that the fees are too high for the value received for programs and for facilities.

When asked what the potential impact on their current level of participation would be if adjustments to fees were made due to increasing costs, a fairly even distribution of opinions were reported in that 25% of respondents say fee increases would not change their level of participation, 32% say increases would somewhat limit participation, 20% indicate a significant limit in participation, while another 23% indicate they do not know what impact fee increases would have on their participation.



**Figure 35**  
**Financial Choices - Opinions Concerning Current Program and Facility Fees Directly Charged and Potential Impact on Participation if Fees Were to Increase**





### Level of Support for Creating Benefit District and/or Valley-Wide Sales Tax Additional Amount Willing to Pay in Property Tax

Respondents were then asked their opinion regarding their level of support for the creation of a benefit district (similar to a fire district) which would help develop, operate and maintain parks and recreation functions through the use of a property tax. Respondents were first given the following information:

*Typically parks and recreation services are not viewed as essential services when cities and agencies are faced with making budget cuts. In order to sustain or improve those services we'd like to get a feel for what your potential and future tolerance might be for a dedicated funding source supporting parks and recreational facility development, maintenance, programs for all ages, and events for district residents.*

*What would be your level of support for the creation of a benefit district (similar to a fire district) supported by a dedicated property tax to develop, operate and maintain parks and recreation facilities, programs and services? (Note: DRD boundaries may extend beyond your community/city limits.)*

Using a 5 point scale where 1=Definitely Not Support, 2=Probably Not Support, 3=Neutral, 4=Probably Support, and 5=Definitely Support, 49% indicated a 4 or a 5 (probably/definitely support) while only 28% rated a 1 or 2 (probably/definitely not support). Nineteen percent were neutral.

Respondents were then asked the following:

*What would be your level of support for the establishment of a joint valley-wide sales tax to support parks and recreation facilities, operations, programs and services?*

Response to this issue was similar to the benefit district proposal, with 51% indicating a 4 or 5 (probably/definitely support) and 27% indicating 1 or 2 (probably/definitely not support). Twenty-three percent were neutral.

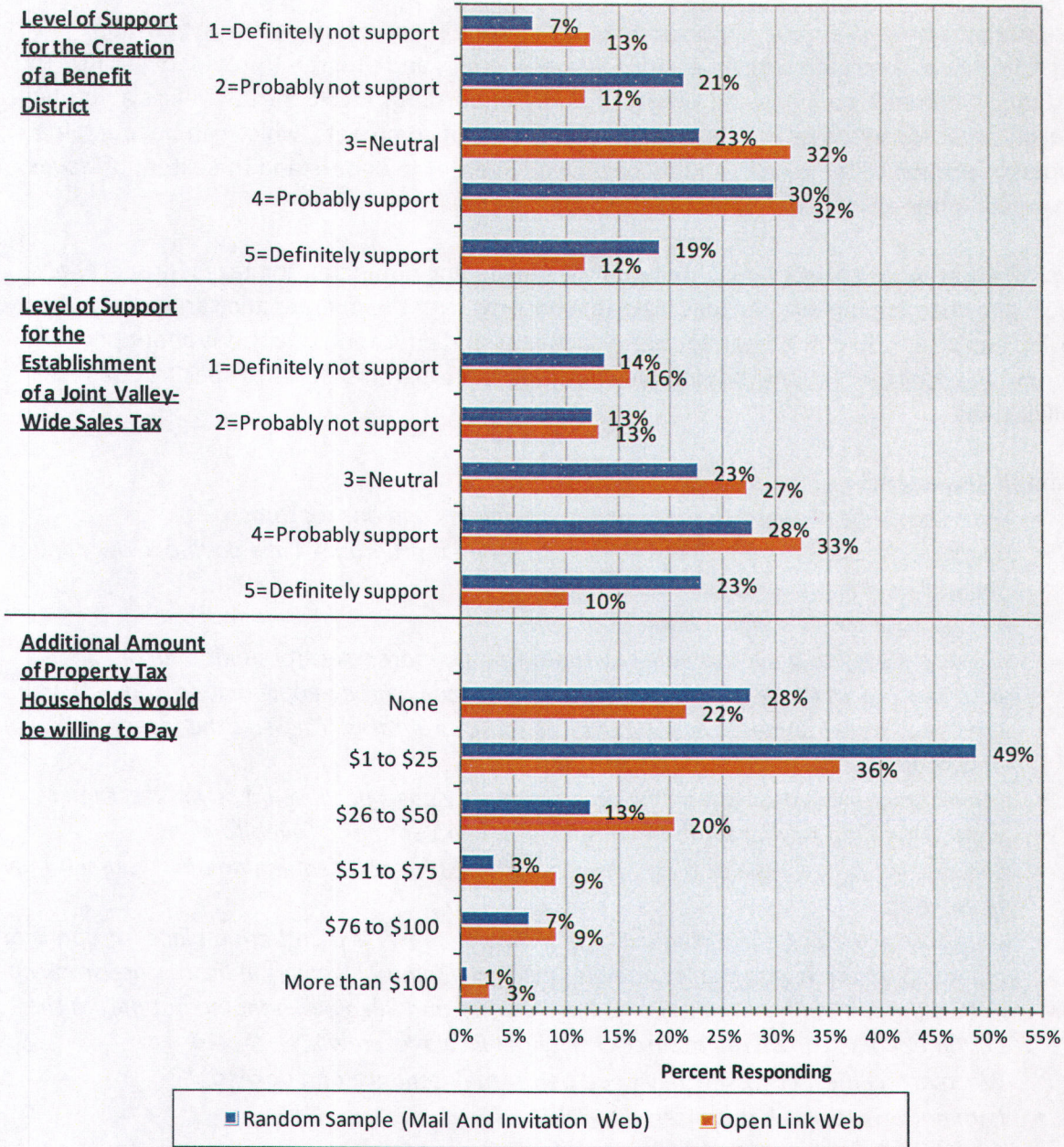
Finally, respondents were also asked the following:

*Quality recreation facilities and programs cost money to provide and maintain. How much additional property tax would you be willing to pay annually to increase recreational opportunities in your community?*

Most of the respondents (49%) indicated a \$1 to \$25 increase to this question. No increase followed with 28% of respondents. Thirteen percent of respondents indicated they would be willing to pay an additional \$26 to \$50 and about 10% combined indicated \$51 to \$100. Only 1% reported willing to pay more than \$100.



**Figure 36**  
**Financial Choices – Level of Support for Creating Benefit District and/or Valley Wide Sales Tax –**  
**Additional Amount Willing to Pay in Property Tax**





## SUGGESTIONS / OPEN ENDED COMMENTS

Respondents were given the opportunity to list any additional comments or suggestions regarding parks, recreation facilities, natural areas, trails, and programs provided by DRD. The resulting comments cover a wide variety of issues important to residents as well as a number of specific areas for potential improvements. The full set of comments, which can be found in Appendix section of the report, should be viewed in order to understand the extent of issues covered and the specific types and location of these issues.

Overall, there were some themes that emerged, including not increasing taxes (property or sales) and charging higher user fees instead; concerns over the maintenance and safety of parks during and after hours; the need for better publicity and education of citizens about park and recreation opportunities; and adding new facilities and programs closer to specific Coachella Valley cities.

### Example Comments

- *Fees should be charged to those who use facilities and or programs.*
- *I don't want to pay more to provide supplemented programs. I like paying a low annual fee and paying extra for services I choose.*
- *It is outrageous to suggest additional taxes.*
- *There is plenty to do in this valley without ripping more taxes for additional or existing activities - all of these programs should be financed by the people (young and old) who use them. It also seems as if you have too many programs. This isn't the responsibility of government.*
- *I think any tax increase should be on a city by city basis because if I pay taxes, then I want what I am paying for to be in Indio, not Palm Springs or even further.*
- *Security can be an issue at times. Also, some fines for not cleaning up after yourself may be helpful.*
- *Vagrants in the parks sleeping over night. Senior center is a gathering place for gangs at night. Lights out in parking lot and behind the building - juveniles in bushes are smoking 420. Gang-jumpings at night. Parks have graffiti and (illegible) hanging out during the daytime. Parks can be maintained by city public works crews.*
- *We love facilities; however they need better maintenance and upkeep.*
- *I am not aware of what is offered by DRD.*
- *I didn't know about DRD until I received this survey. Public awareness needs to be a top priority! A website would be the most cost effective communication.*
- *We have never seen any ads or information on your services.*
- *More pools in Indio - Coachella - lower valley.*
- *Would like to see swim club for 8-15 year olds at Dawley Pool.*
- *Would benefit to expand Indio Recreational Center.*



## COMPARISON BETWEEN RANDOM SAMPLE AND OPEN LINK RESULTS

### Respondent Profile Comparison

The underlying demographics and resident profile comparing the random sample (RS) and open link (OL) web survey respondents are significantly different from each other. As mentioned previously, the RS data has been weighted based on the underlying age, race/ethnicity, and geographic ZIP Code profile gathered from the Desert Recreation District Strategic Plan and the American Community Survey 5-year estimates for 2011. Some of the most notable differences are highlighted below:

- OL respondents are much older than RS respondents—about 58 years of age on average vs. 48 years in the random sample.
- 13% of the OL sample represented Hispanic ethnicity vs. 58% of the weighted random sample.
- Consistent with the older profile, OL respondents are more likely to be empty nesters (41% vs. 24% random sample).

### Importance of Park and Recreation Functions

Despite the demographic differences, the top perceived values of park and recreation functions are the same between the two samples, including:

- Provide positive activities for youth (both samples 4.6 average rating)
- Promote healthy active lifestyles (both samples 4.6 average rating)
- Operate and maintain existing park facilities (4.6 RS vs. 4.8 OL)
- Provide recreation programs and services for all age groups (both samples 4.5 average rating)

### Current Usage of Facilities

- The average use of trails and walking paths, weight/cardio fitness rooms, bike trails and paths, golf course, and swimming pool was much higher for OL respondents than the RS.

### Importance of Facilities and Meeting Needs

The importance and degree to which facilities are meeting needs also had a few differences.

The most notable differences are as follows:

- Following the indications of frequency of use, trails and walking paths (4.3 OL vs. 4.0 RS) and weight/cardio fitness rooms (4.0 OL vs. 3.6 RS) were of higher importance to the OL respondents than the RS.

Several facilities were also meeting the needs of the OL respondents better than the needs of the RS, including:

- Trails and walking paths (4.0 OL vs. 3.7 RS), children's playgrounds (3.9 OL vs. 3.6 RS), bike trails and paths (3.6 OL vs. 3.1 RS), and gymnasium space (3.4 OL vs. 3.0 RS).
- Weight/cardio fitness space was rated the same with respect to meeting needs comparing the two samples (both 3.5).



### Top Three Current Services and Facilities to Add, Expand, or Improve

When asked to rank the top three facilities that are important to their household to add, expand, or improve in their community, similar to RS respondents, OL respondents indicate that trails and walking paths are most important by far (47%). OL respondents then list weight/cardio fitness space (35%), bike trails and paths (27%), and golf course (26%).

### Why Facilities Are Not Used / Where Improvements Can Be Made

Some of the most significant differences in the results were apparent with respect to reasons why facilities are not used and where improvements are needed.

- “Don’t have the programs I want” was a much greater issue for not using DRD facilities for OL respondents than it was for RS respondents (33% vs. 8%).
- RS respondents, more often than OL respondents, feel that the hours of operation and customer service/staff knowledge are in need of improvement.
- OL respondents feel that improvements in lack of facilities and amenities (43% vs. 32%), programs not offered at the times I want (28% vs. 19%), condition/maintenance or safety of facilities (22% vs. 15%), and price/user fees (26% vs. 18%) are more important.

### Future Indoor Facilities

Among top three priorities for future indoor facilities:

- Weight room and fitness (51%), indoor/outdoor pool (32%), and senior areas (28%) are most important to OL respondents.
- RS respondents listed teen areas first (43%), then weight room and fitness (39%) and indoor/outdoor pool (31%).

### Future Outdoor Facilities

Among top three priorities for future outdoor facilities:

- Paved pedestrian/bike paths and trails were mentioned most frequently by both samples as the top priority (39% OL vs. 32% RS).
- OL respondents then listed hiking/mountain biking/equestrian trails (34%), dog park (17%), and developed neighborhood parks (17%).
- After pedestrian/bike paths and trails, RS respondents mentioned dog park (28%) and covered playgrounds (26%) as priorities.

### Current Programs, Activities, and Special Events Usage

- Special events, outdoor concerts/movies, and fitness and wellness programs were used by a greater percentage of OL households compared to RS.
- Similar percentages of both OL and RS use youth athletic leagues, although OL respondents do so with much greater frequency (4.7 times on average over the last 12 months vs. 1.7 times RS).



**Importance of Programs and Meeting Program Needs / Top Three Programs to Add, Expand, or Improve**

- Fitness and wellness programs were the only programs that were more important to OL respondents than RS.
- All other programs were more important to the random sample.
- The level of needs being met reflected this trend in that every program (including fitness and wellness programs) were meeting the needs of the RS respondents better than the needs of the OL respondents.
- Similarly, OL respondents indicated fitness and wellness programs as the most important to add, expand, or improve (37% vs. 22% RS).
- RS respondents indicated youth summer programs (27%) and swimming programs (24%) as top priorities, followed by fitness and wellness programs (22%).

**Financial Choices and Fees**

In regards to financial choices and fees:

- OL respondents reported less uncertainty regarding the value of program and facility fees charged directly to them. In both cases, more OL respondents indicated fees are acceptable for the value received (65-66% vs. 42-43% RS).
- If fees were to increase, a greater proportion of OL respondents reported that this increase would not impact their ability to participate (40% vs. 25% RS).
- At the same time, there was a lower level of support among the OL respondents for the creation of a benefit district (44% vs. 49% RS) and for the establishment of a joint valley-wide sales tax (43% vs. 51% RS).
- Just slightly more OL respondents, however, indicated a willingness to pay more in property taxes (78% vs. 72% RS).



## **Appendix B: GRASP® Perspectives**