



CITY OF DEWITT

DEWITT CITY HALL · 414 EAST MAIN STREET · DEWITT, MICHIGAN 48820

**CITY OF DEWITT
DEWITT CITY HALL
414 EAST MAIN STREET DEWITT MI 48820
Parks, Rec, Cemetery & Tree Commission Meeting Agenda
Wednesday, October 14, 2026 6:00 P.M.**

Call to Order

Approval of Agenda

Approval of Minutes August 12, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Public Comments

New Business

1.) Discussion of Recreation Master Plan Survey Summary

Recommended Action: Discussion

2.) Review Recreation Master Plan Open House Boards

Recommended Action: Discussion

Adjournment

Official minutes of the Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Commission Meetings are available for public inspection at the Clerk's Office, 414 East Main Street, DeWitt, Michigan 48820. The City of DeWitt will provide to individuals with disabilities, reasonable auxiliary aids and services which are needed to fully participate in any meeting provided a 72-hour notice is received by phone or in writing. Contact the City Clerk at 414 East Main Street, DeWitt, Michigan 48820 or by calling (517) 669-2441.

POSTED: OCTOBER 9, 2026

City of DeWitt
Parks, Recreation, Cemetery and Tree Commission
DeWitt City Hall 414 East Main Street
Wednesday, August 12, 2026
6:00 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Donohue called the August 12, 2026, Parks, Recreation, Cemetery and Tree Commission Meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Chair Donohue, Commissioners Costigan, Lenneman

Absent: Ladd, Landgraf

Staff: Daniel Coss, City Administrator

AUDIENCE: None

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Motion by Commissioner Lenneman, supported by Commissioner Costigan to approve the agenda for August 12, 2026. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion by Commissioner Costigan, supported by Commissioner Lenneman to approve the meeting minutes for February 11, 2026. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS

1.) Discussion of Five-Year Recreation Master Plan

The commission discussed the current plan and the process for the updating the Five-Year Plan. The update schedule is to have the documents submitted to the MIDNR by December 2026.

2.) Discussion of Triangle Park

The commission discussed the location and boundaries of Triangle Park on South DeWitt Road.

Meeting adjourned at 6:40 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,
Daniel Coss, Recording Secretary

Staff Report for
Parks, Recreation, Cemetery & Tree Commission

Agenda Item: NB #1
Meeting Date: October 14, 2026

TO: Parks, Recreation, Cemetery and Tree Commissioners

FROM: Dan Coss, City Administrator

DATE: October 9, 2026

SUBJECT: Recreation Master Plan Survey Summary

FACTS: Attached for your review is a summary breakdown of the community survey the consultant completed for the Master Plan update.

The survey received 232 responses, with 62% of the respondents indicating they were City of DeWitt residents.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Discussion

Survey Summary

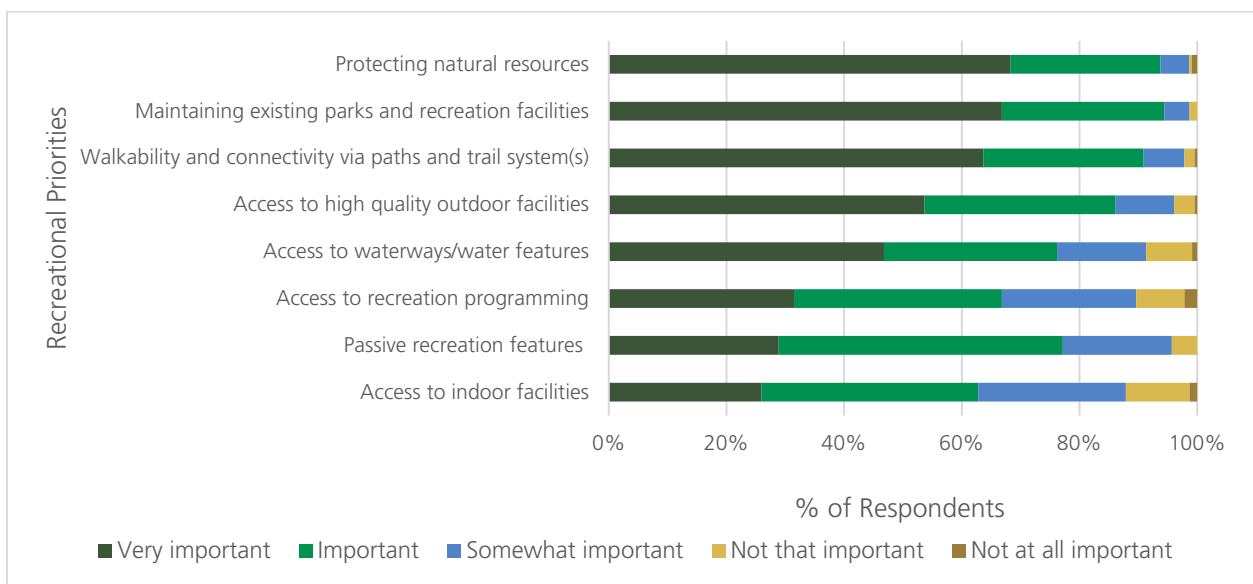
The DeWitt Area Parks and Recreation Community survey was made available to City and Township residents from August 26 to September 30, 2026. The online survey was shared across the websites and social media channels of the City of DeWitt, DeWitt Charter Township, and DARA, and hard copies of the survey were also made available at each physical location.

The survey received a total of 232 responses. Of these respondents, 61.4% stated that they are a resident of the City, 35.2% are a resident of the Township, and 3.4% stated that they live in a neighboring municipality, predominantly Watertown Township. Further, approximately 60% of respondents indicated that they have participated in a recreational program offered by DARA.

PARKS AND RECREATION SYSTEM

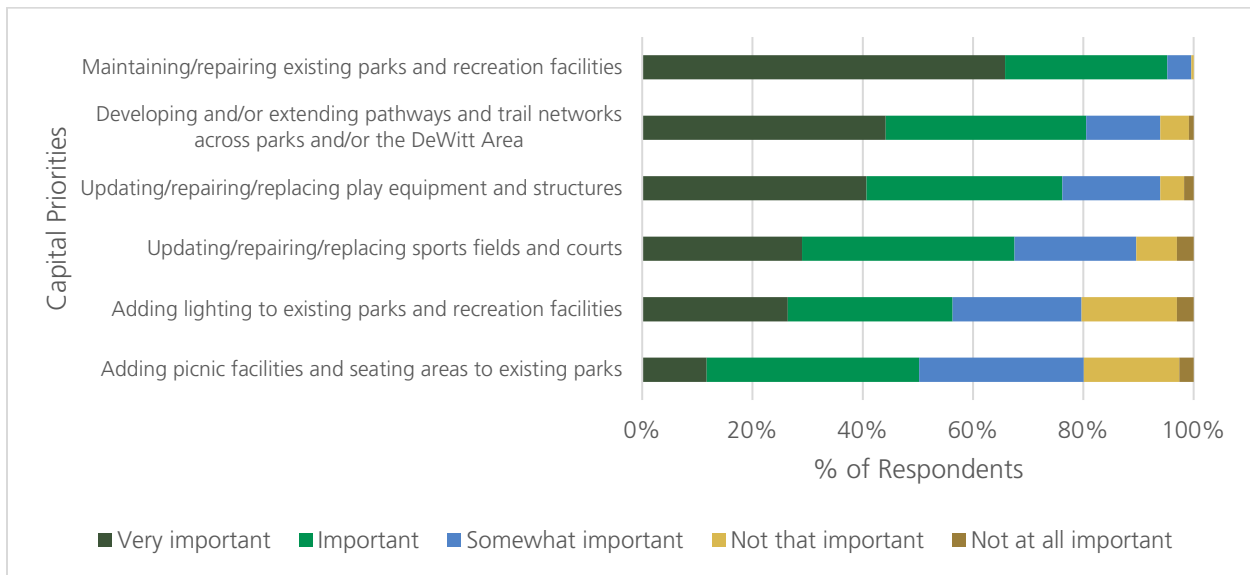
For all presented priorities, at least 60% of respondents regarded each as “important” or “very important.” Protecting natural resources, maintaining existing facilities, and promoting greater walkability and trail connections emerged as the highest rated priorities.

Figure XX: Parks Priorities



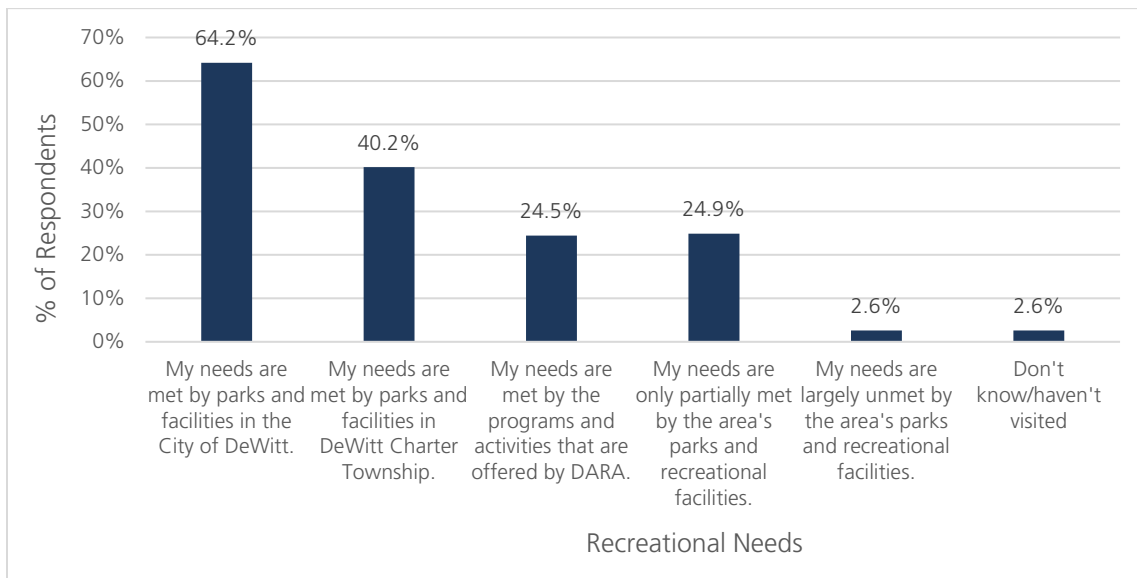
Respondents noted the maintenance and/or repair of existing parks and recreation facilities as the highest capital priority to focus on with 95% of respondents noting this priority as “very important” or “important.”

Figure XX: Capital Priorities



Respondents generally regard the recreational facilities provided across the DeWitt area as fulfilling the needs of their households. Discrepancies between needs met by the City, Township, and DARA align with the distribution of respondents and where they reside in the DeWitt area and/or whether they have participated in DARA’s recreational offerings.

Figure XX: Recreational Needs in DeWitt Area

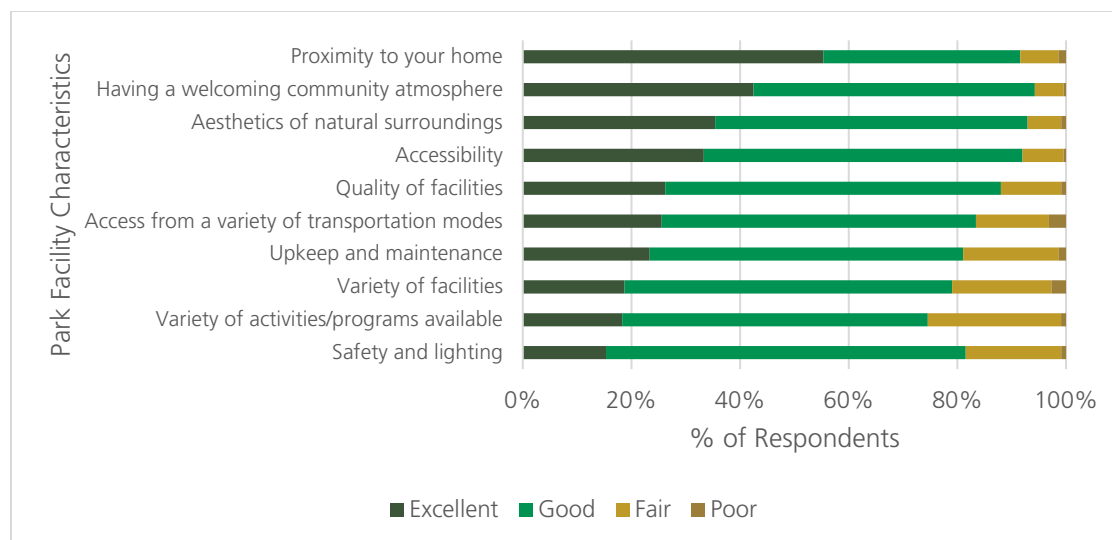


PARK FACILITIES AND AMENITIES

When asked to evaluate DeWitt Area park and recreational offerings across a series of characteristics, each element received notably high ratings. For all but two characteristics, over 80% of respondents stated that their provision within the area was “excellent” or “good” with proximity, welcoming atmosphere, and the aesthetics of natural surroundings receiving the highest

ratings overall. The level of variety provided by the area’s facilities and activities/programs alike received slightly lower ratings, though 79% and 74% of respondents respectively rated these as “excellent” or “good” as well.

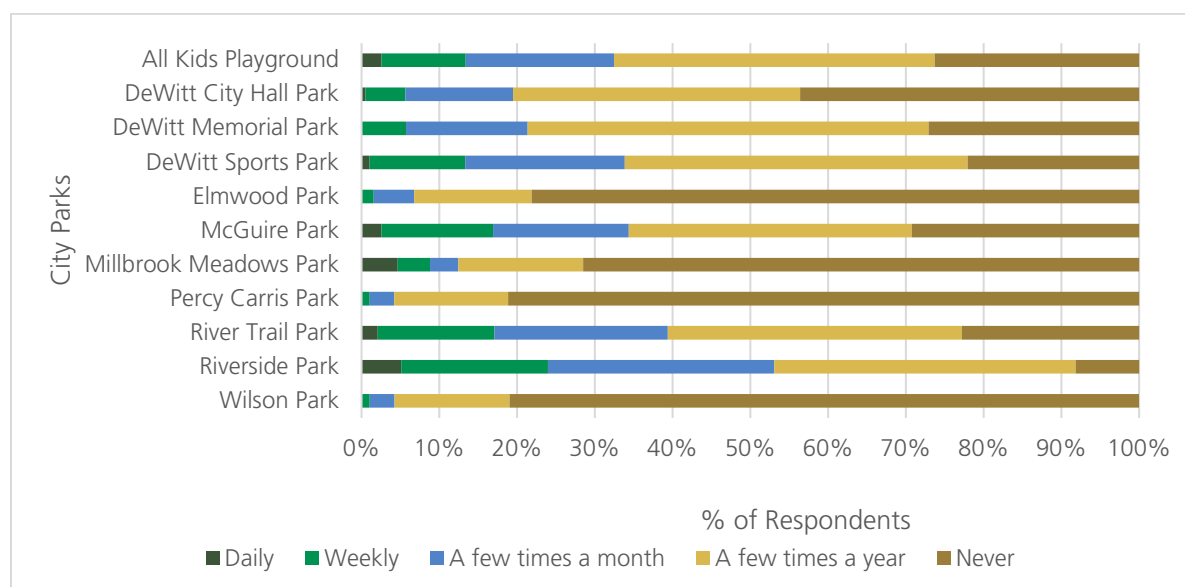
Figure XX: Characteristics of DeWitt Area Parks Facilities



In the City of DeWitt, the frequency of visits to area parks varies greatly. In general, City residents would realistically frequent the parks closest to their homes most often, while other parks may be familiar to them though visited less often. Township residents also have the option to indicate the frequency with which they visit certain City parks, including parks that they have never visited.

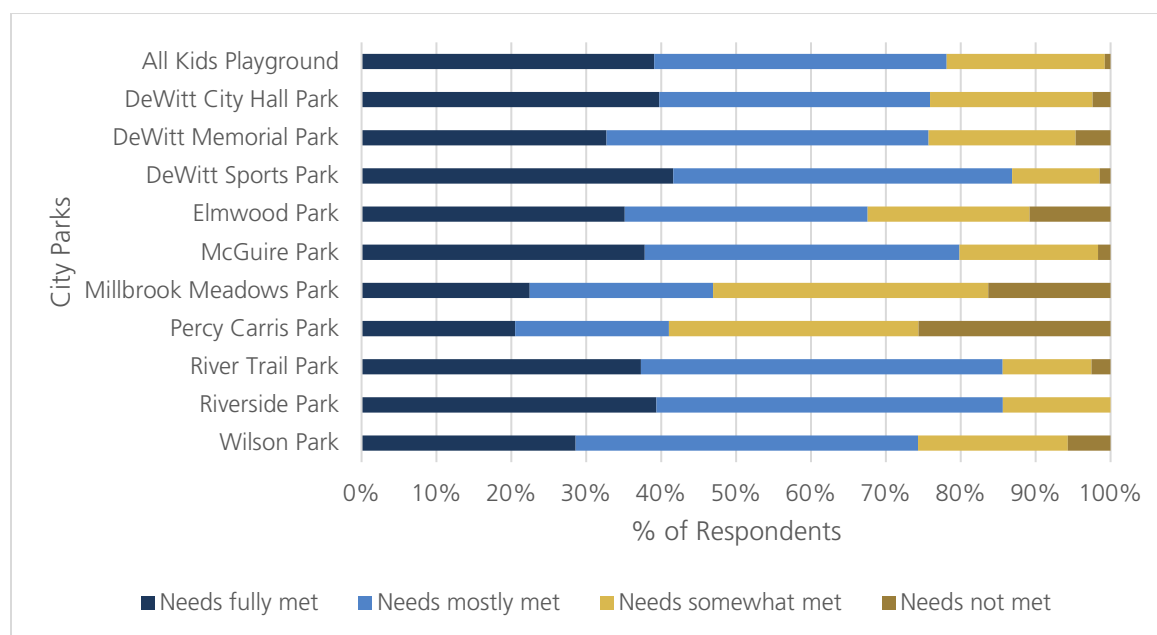
The most popular City parks based on any number of visits over the course of a year include Riverside Park, River Trail Park, DeWitt Sports Park, and All Kids Playground. Percy Carris Park, Wilson Park, and Elmwood Park comprise the City’s least visited parks.

Figure XX: Frequency of Visits to City of DeWitt Parks



Survey respondents were also asked to indicate the extent to which the City of DeWitt’s park properties fulfill the recreational needs of their household. The results for this question were analyzed without “unknown/not applicable” responses to capture the sentiments of respondents who are familiar with the individual park property. For all but two parks, at least 65% of respondents indicated that their needs were “fully met” or “mostly met”, and for all but three parks, approximately 75% of respondents have their needs “fully” or “mostly” met. DeWitt Sports Park, River Trail Park, and Riverside Park had the largest levels of satisfaction with about 85% of respondents having most of their needs met, overlapping with the City parks that receive the most frequent visitors.

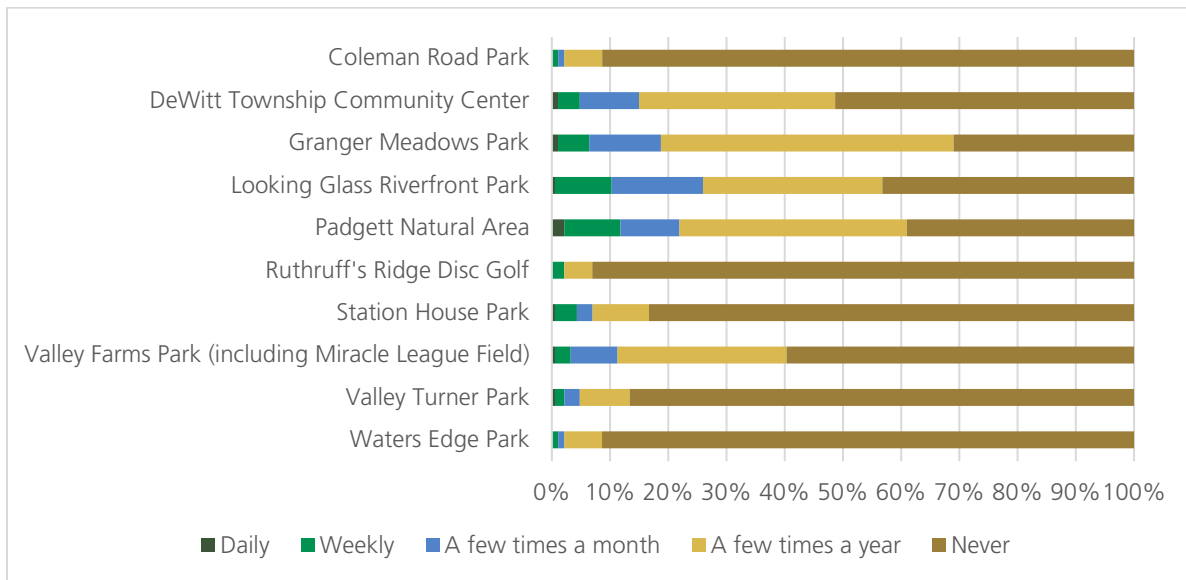
Figure XX: City Parks and Household Recreational Needs



In DeWitt Charter Township, the frequency of visits to area parks varies greatly. In general, Township residents would realistically frequent the parks closest to their homes most often, while other parks may be familiar to them though visited less often. City residents also have the option to indicate the frequency with which they visit certain Township parks, including parks that they have never visited.

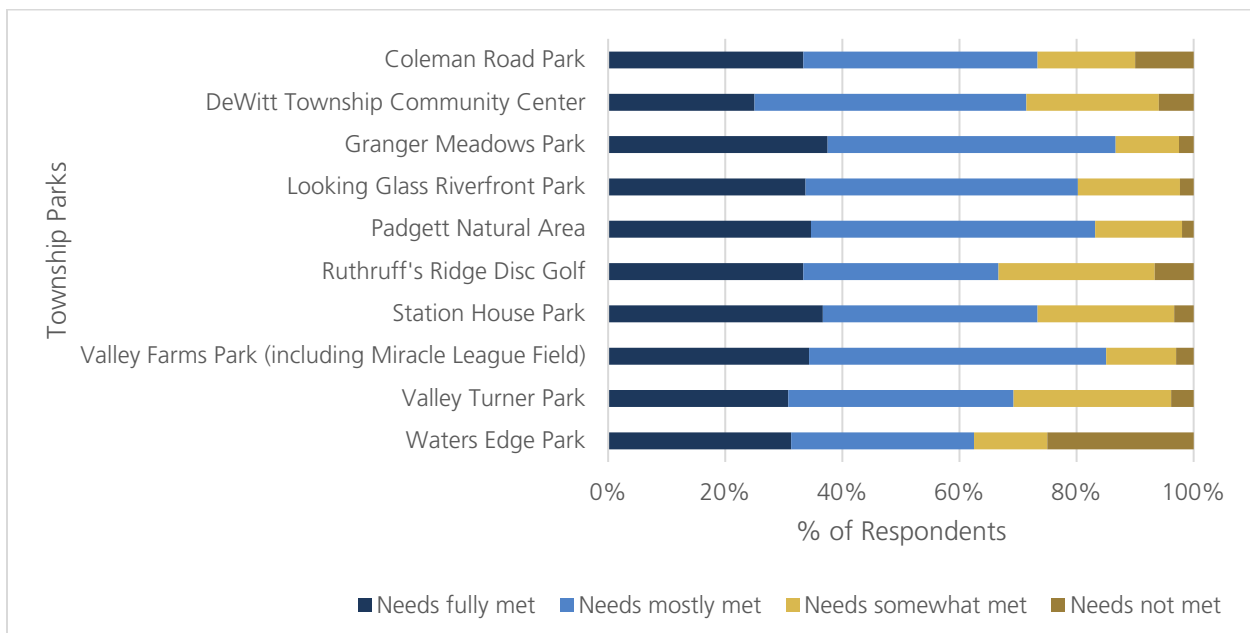
The most popular Township parks based on any number of visits over the course of a year include Granger Meadows Park, Padgett Natural Area, and Looking Glass Riverfront Park. Ruthruff’s Ridge Disc Golf, Coleman Road Park, and Waters Edge Park comprise the Township’s least visited parks.

Figure XX: Frequency of Visits to DeWitt Charter Township Parks



Survey respondents were also asked to indicate the extent to which DeWitt Charter Township's park properties fulfill the recreational needs of their household. The results for this question were analyzed without "unknown/not applicable" responses to capture the sentiments of respondents who are familiar with the individual park property. Virtually all Township parks had at least 60% of respondents indicate that their needs were "fully met" or "mostly met." At least 80% of respondents stated that their needs were "fully" or "mostly" met by Granger Meadows Park, Looking Glass Riverfront Park, Padgett Natural Area, and Valley Farms Park, largely aligning with overlapping with the Township parks that receive the most frequent visitors.

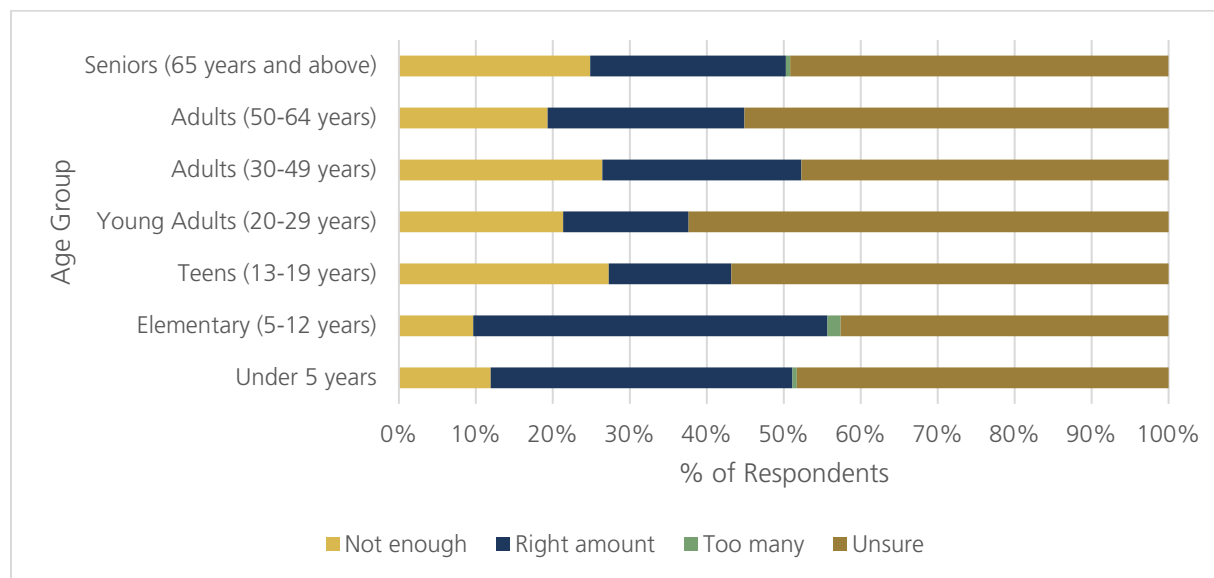
Figure XX: Township Parks and Household Recreational Needs



RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING

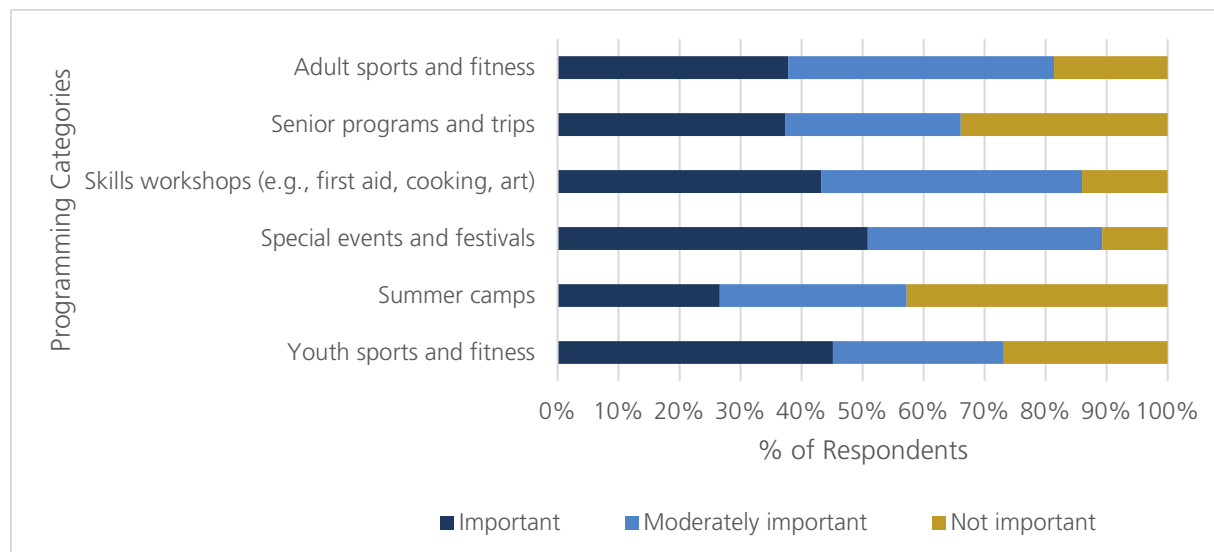
Recreational programs offered in the DeWitt Area were evaluated by age. While young children (under 5 years old and elementary school age) were deemed to have the right amount of recreational activities offered to them, teenagers, adults aged 30 to 49 years, and seniors were perceived to have the greatest need for programs targeted to their demographic group.

Figure XX: Availability of Recreational Programming by Age



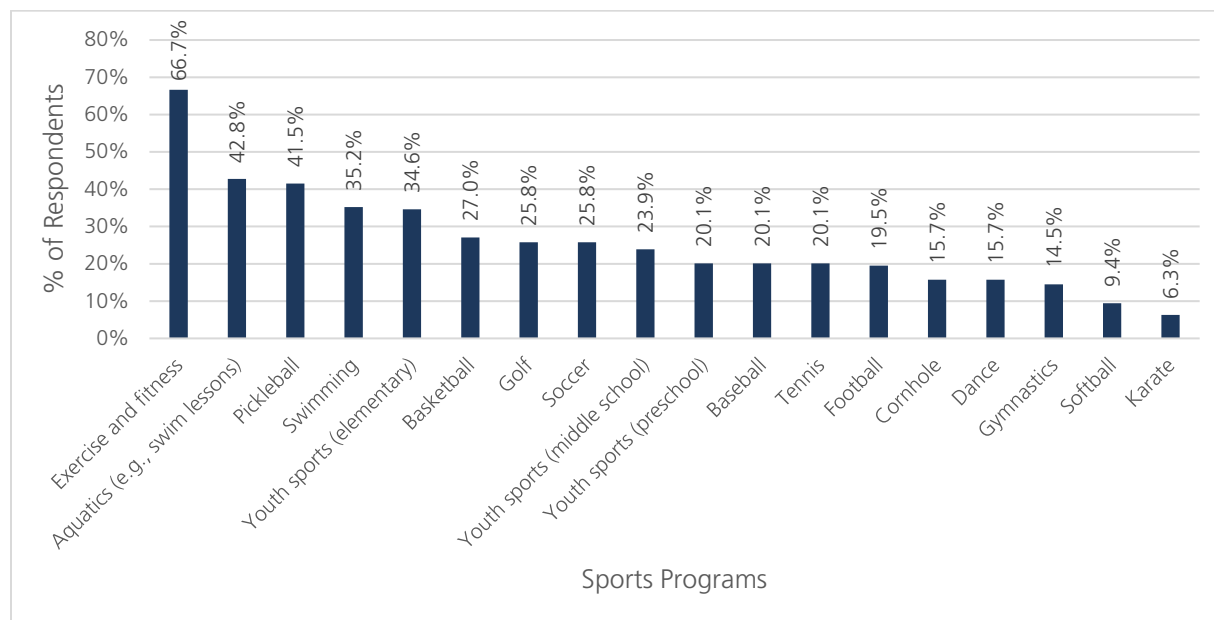
In evaluating the current availability of programming in the DeWitt area, special events and festivals, youth sports and fitness, and skills workshops were deemed “important” by 51%, 45%, and 43%, respectively, of survey respondents.

Figure XX: Availability of Programming Options



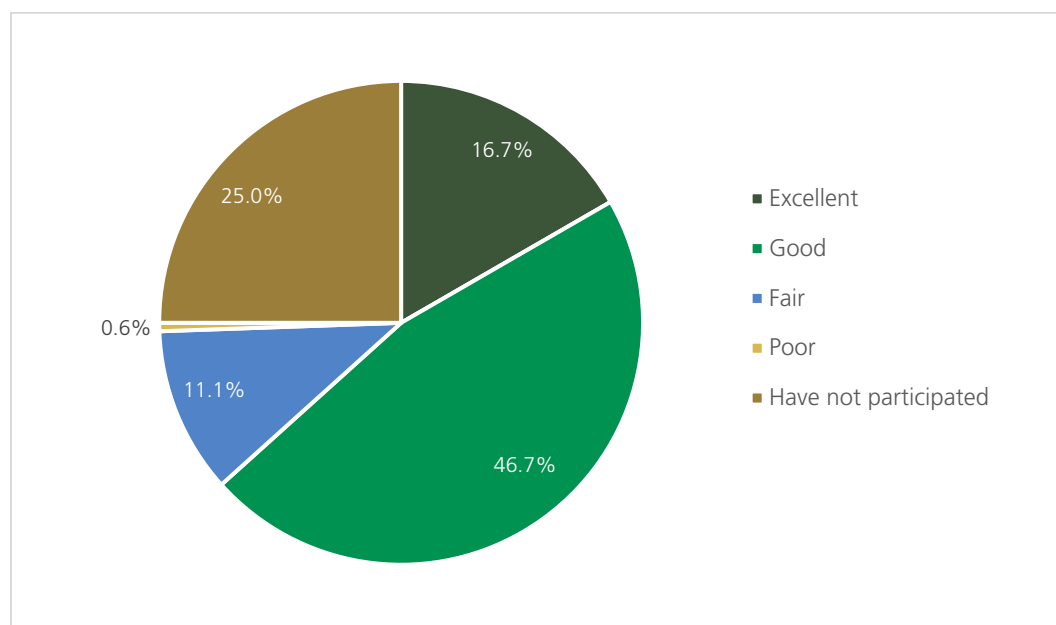
Exercise and fitness programs, aquatics, and pickleball were noted as the most desirable sports programs to be offered for the DeWitt area.

Figure XX: Desired Sports Programs



Respondents rated the quality of existing local sports programs in the DeWitt area largely positively. While 25% of respondents have not participated in these programs, 63% of respondents deemed them as “excellent” or “good.”

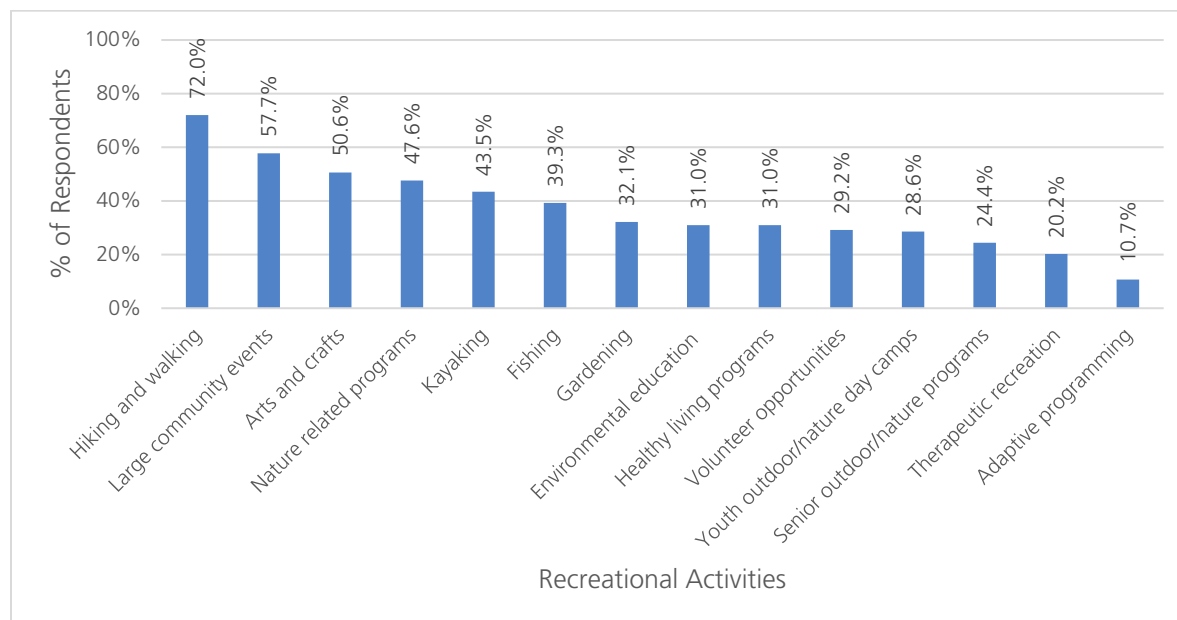
Figure XX: Quality of Local Sports Programs



Respondents highlighted a range of desirable recreational activities and engagement programs to be provided in the DeWitt area. Hiking and walking programs were the most popular activity choice

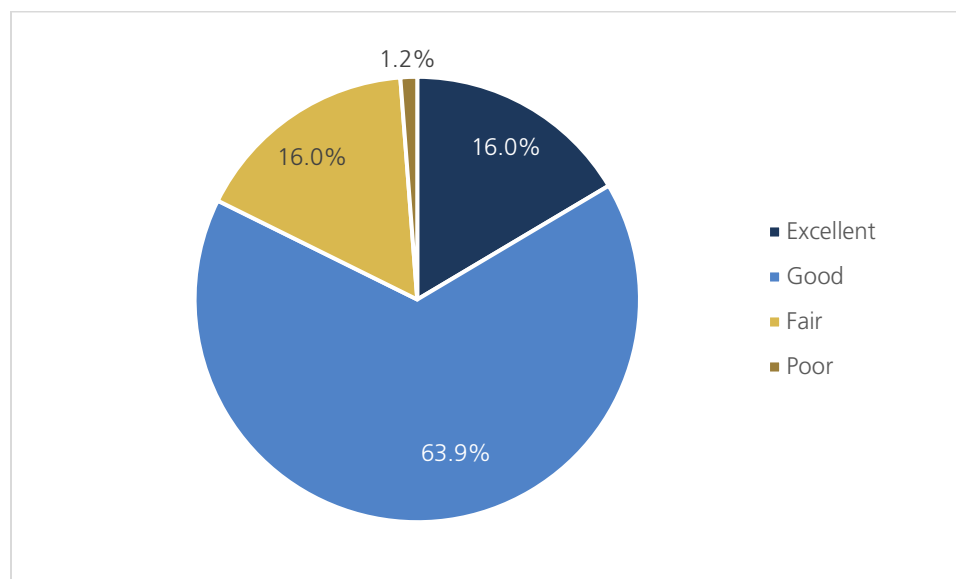
with support from 72% of respondents. Large community events again emerged as a priority along with arts and crafts.

Figure XX: Desired Recreational Activities and Engagement Programs



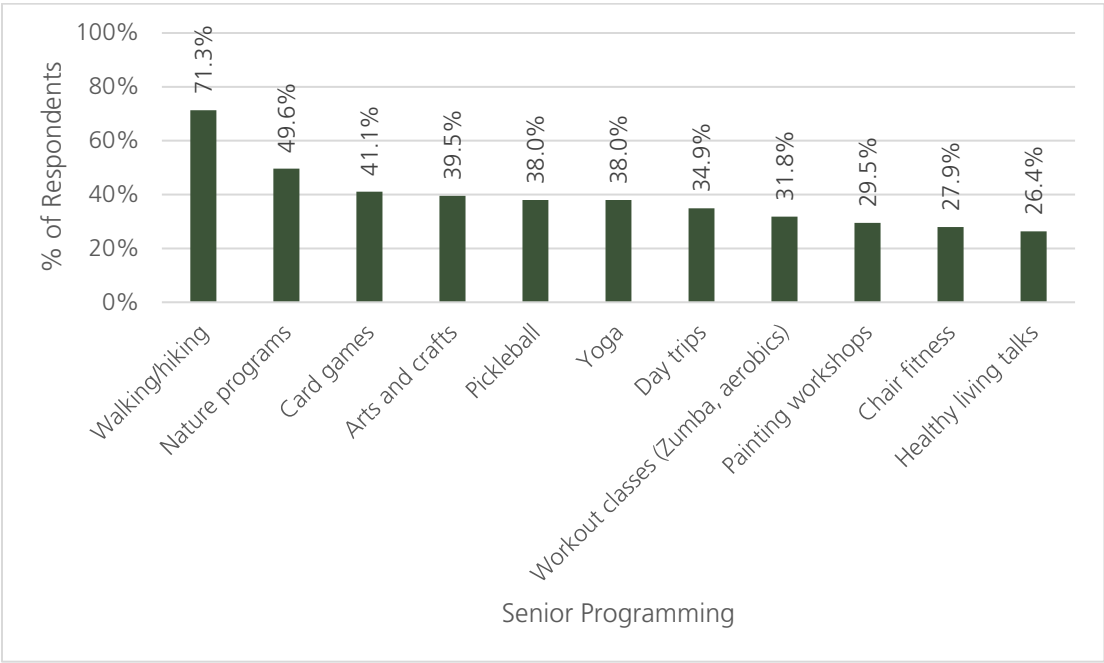
Respondents shared overwhelmingly positive sentiments for existing local recreational activities and engagement programs with 80% of respondents deeming them “excellent” or “good.”

Figure XX: Quality of Local Recreational Activities and Engagement Programs



The most desirable senior programs and activities similarly span a variety of activity types and include walking and hiking, nature programs, and card games.

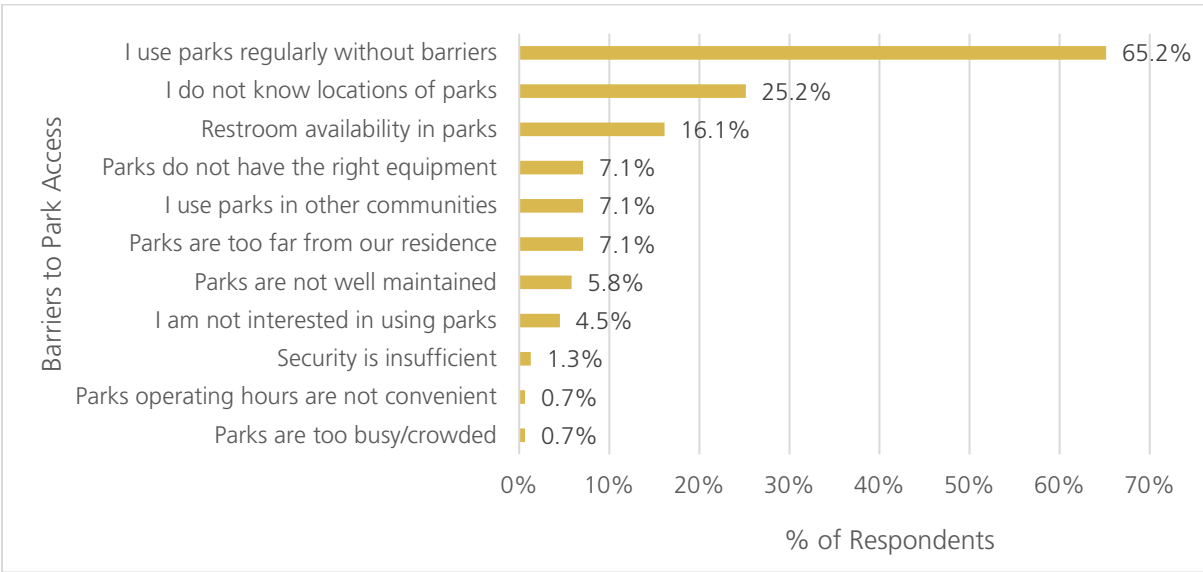
Figure XX: Desired Senior Programs and Activities



ACCESS AND FREQUENCY OF USE

While most respondents (65%) indicated that they do not encounter barriers to accessing parks in the area, one quarter of survey takers stated that not knowing the location of parks can act as a barrier to accessing the DeWitt area’s existing amenities. Restroom availability also emerged as a barrier for 16% of respondents.

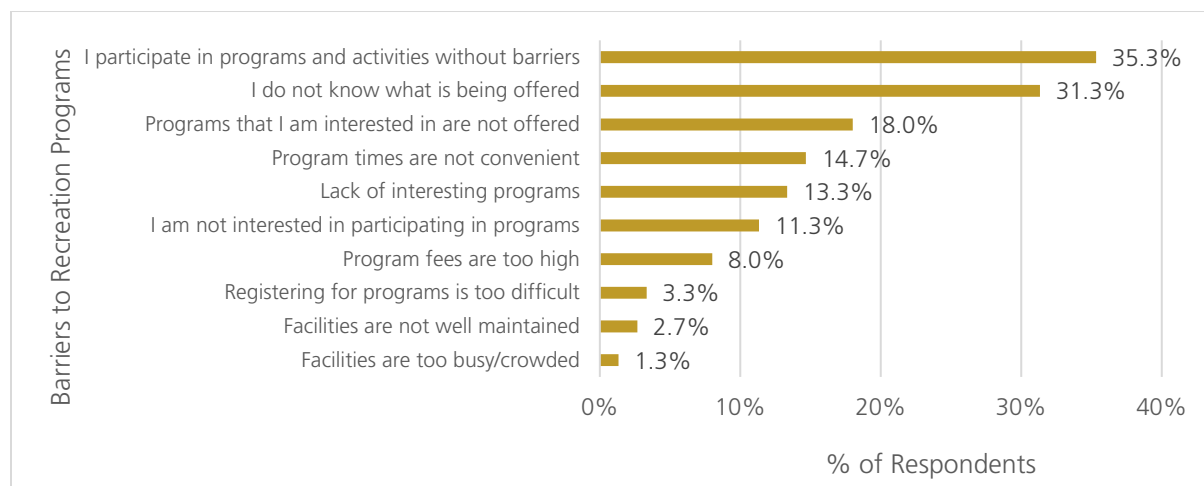
Figure XX: Barriers to Park Access



Just over 35% of respondents stated that they participate in recreational programs and activities without encountering barriers. However, the most common barrier to participation for 31% of

respondents included limited knowledge about the programs and activities that are offered across DeWitt while 18% stated that existing programs do not include topics or activities that interest them.

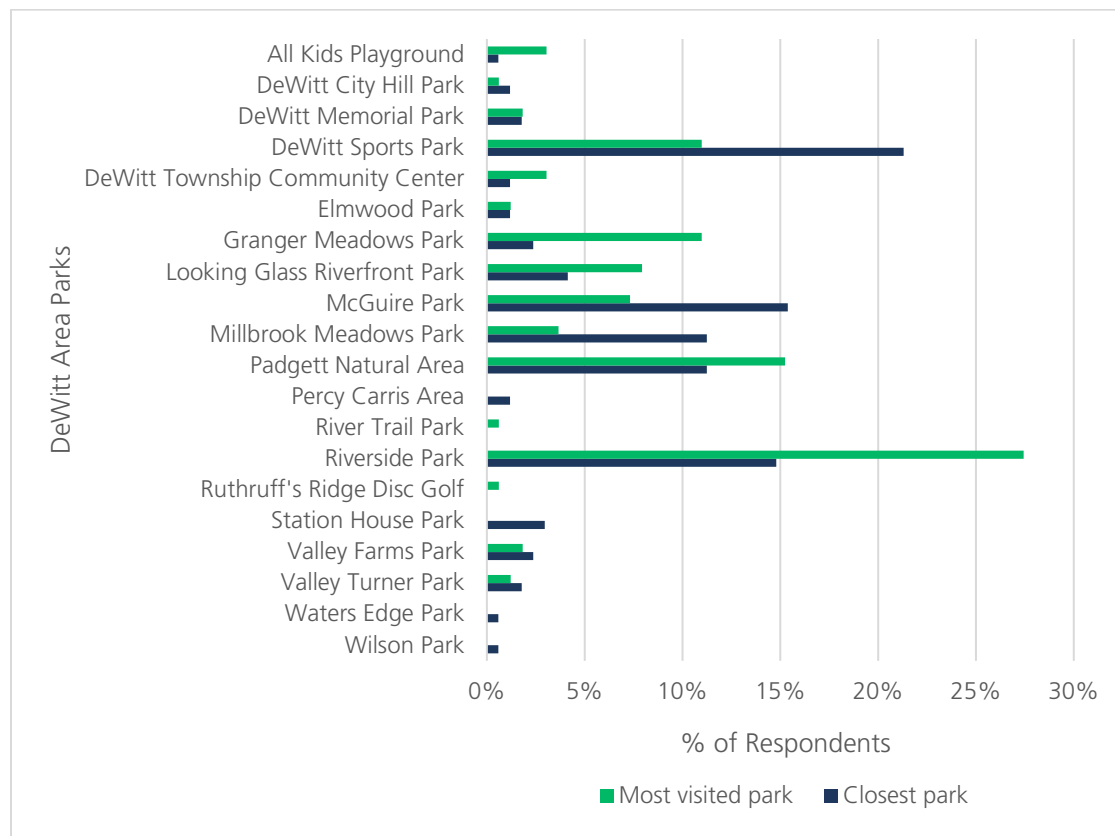
Figure XX: Barriers to Recreation Programs



Respondents were asked to identify the park that they live closest to and the park that they visit most frequently to uncover existing discrepancies across the DeWitt area. Coleman Road Park is not included as it was neither the closest nor most visited park for any survey taker. The greatest discrepancies for parks that are close to a large portion of survey takers but not visited at the same rate include DeWitt Sports Park, McGuire Park, and Millbrook Meadows Park. Conversely, the parks that have the high rate of regular visitors align closely with the most popular parks identified early in the survey and include All Kids Playground, DeWitt Township Community Center, Granger Meadows Park, Looking Glass Riverfront, Padgett Natural Area, and Riverside Park.

The primary reasons for these discrepancies include the availability and quality of playground equipment, presence of walking trails and pathways, provision of pickleball courts, overall maintenance of park equipment, presence of nature and proximity to the river, and dog-friendly areas and pathways.

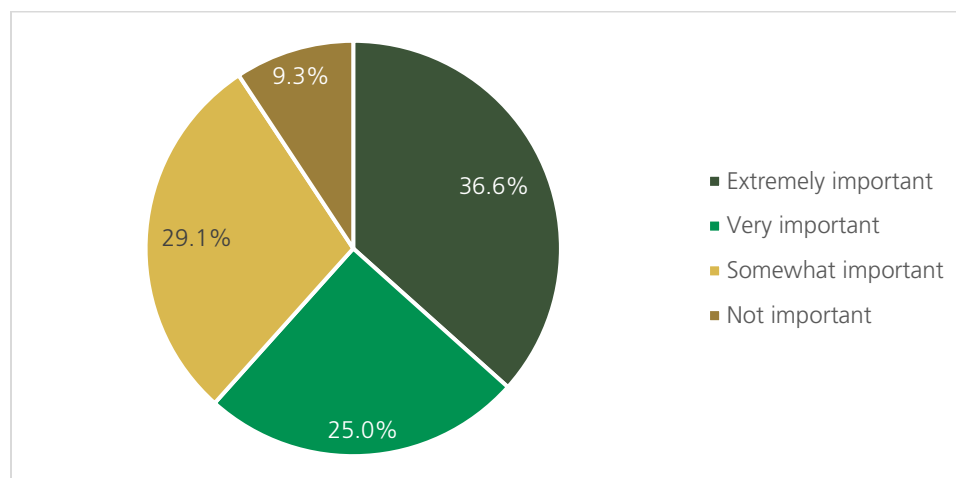
Figure XX: Closest vs. Most Visited Park



PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

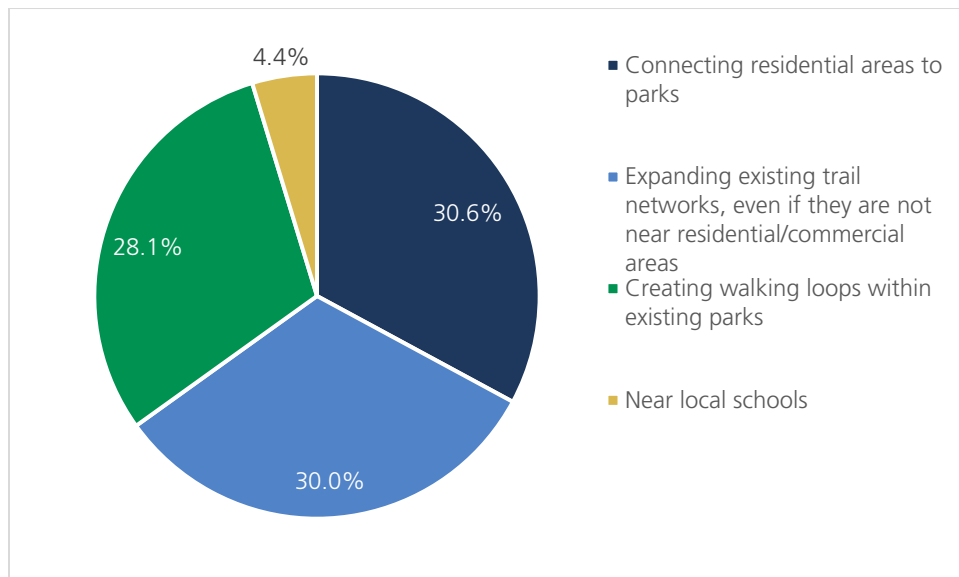
Over half of all respondents stated that expanding DeWitt's trail system is "extremely" or "very" important. Noting this as a priority aligns with previous feedback from respondents related to seeking more walking and hiking opportunities, encounters with nature, and valuing existing trails and pathways across the parks system.

Figure XX: Importance of Expanding DeWitt's Trail System



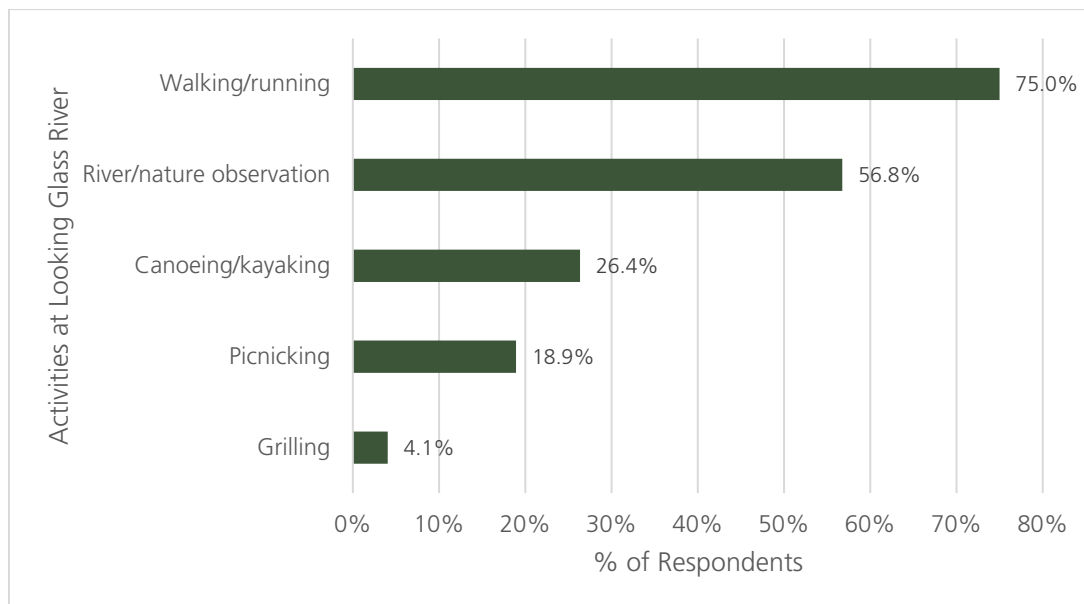
When asked to identify where expanded trail connections would benefit the area, respondents almost equally prioritized connections between residential areas and parks, expanding the existing trail network, and adding walking loops within existing parks.

Figure XX: Desired Places to Expand DeWitt's Trail Connections



When asked to describe how they currently engage with the Looking Glass River, most respondents (75%) shared a routine of walking and running, and more than half (57%) enjoy observations of nature.

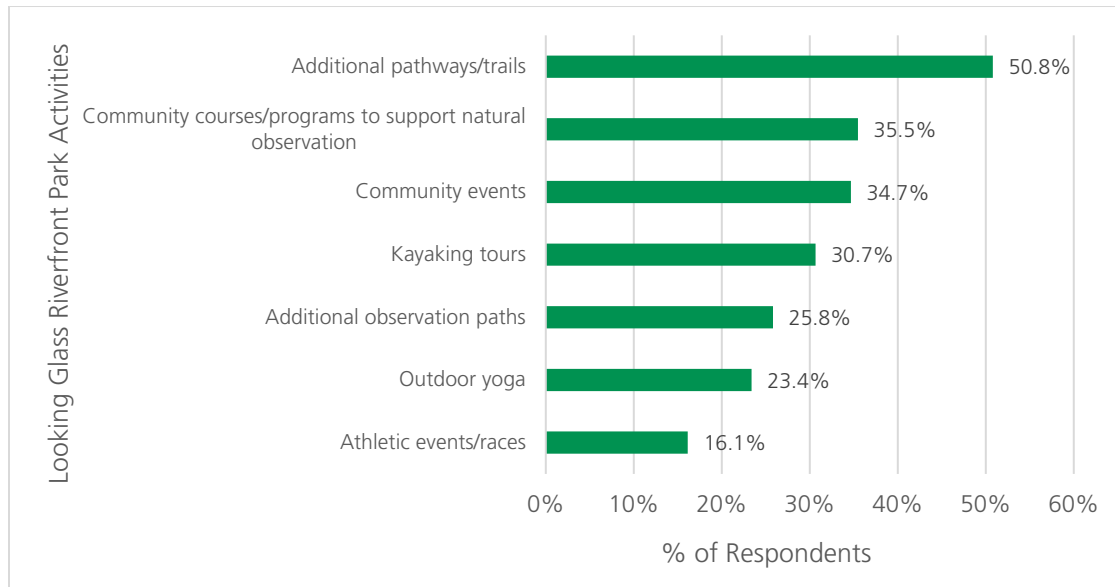
Figure XX: Activities at Looking Glass River



Aligning with the current range of activities along Looking Glass River, just over half of all respondents expressed an interest in having additional pathways and trails within Looking Glass

Riverfront Park to support their walking and running. Courses and programs to guide natural observation further align with existing river interests, and added community events align with survey feedback regarding an appetite for additional events across the DeWitt area.

Figure XX: Desired Features to Add to Looking Glass Riverfront Park



Staff Report for
Parks, Recreation, Cemetery & Tree Commission

Agenda Item: NB #2
Meeting Date: October 14, 2026

TO: Parks, Recreation, Cemetery and Tree Commissioners

FROM: Dan Coss, City Administrator

DATE: October 9, 2026

SUBJECT: Recreation Master Plan Open House Presentation Materials

FACTS: The Open House was held on Monday, October 12 from 5-7 pm. The attached slides are the materials that were available for participants to submit feedback on.

This staff report is being delivered prior to the Open House being held. If the consultant can provide some form of summary of the comments gathered at the Open House, those will be presented to the Commission at the meeting.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Discussion

Welcome!

DeWitt Area Parks & Recreation Plan Open House

The DeWitt Area (City of DeWitt, DeWitt Charter Township, and DARA) is updating its Parks & Recreation Plan. Thank you for attending and for providing valuable insight into the future of the area's parks and recreational facilities!

What is a Parks & Recreation Plan?

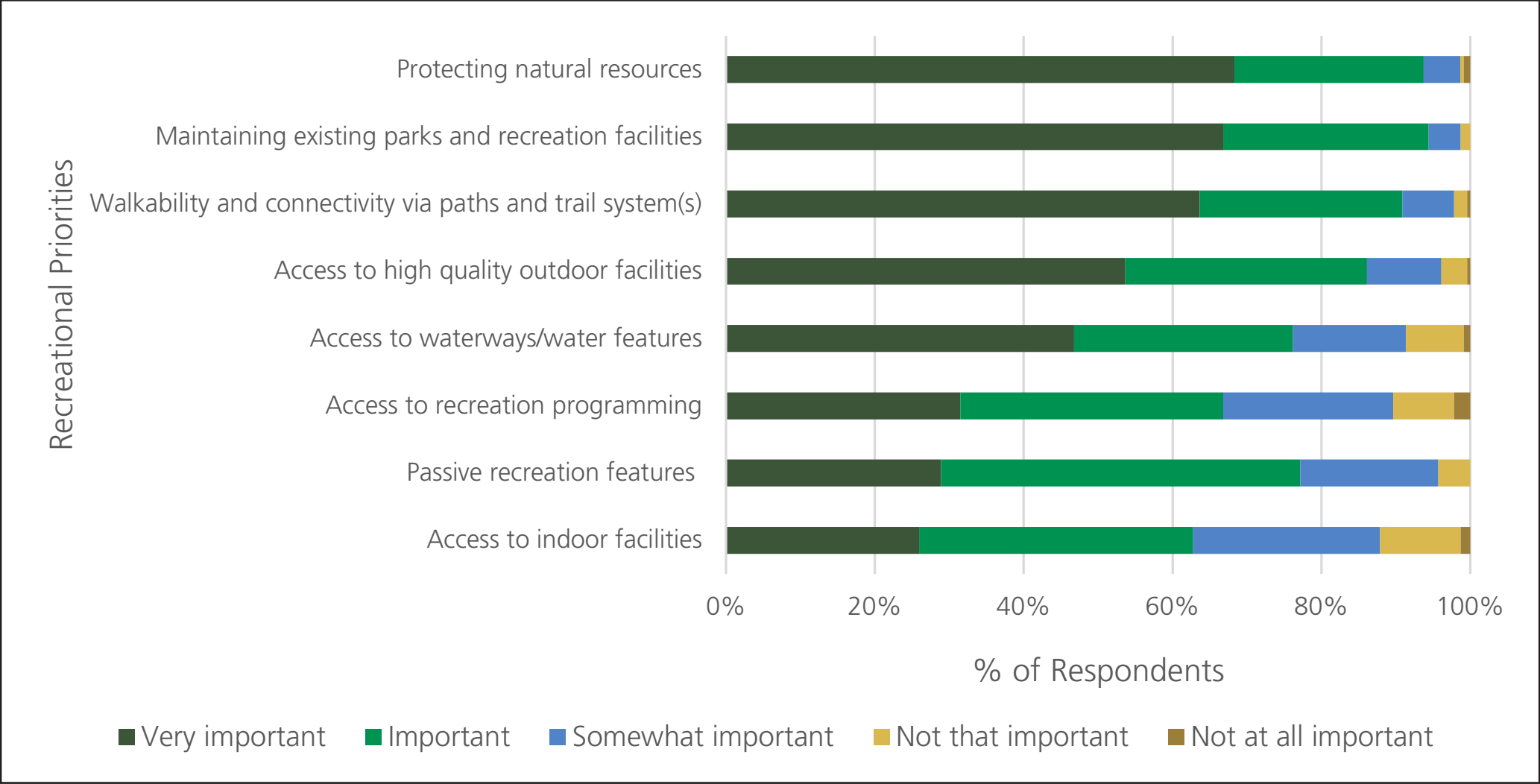
The Parks & Recreation Plan is a planning document that provides a decision-making framework for the effective development of the DeWitt Area's parks, recreational offerings, and open space resources over the next five years. The Parks & Recreation Plan must be updated regularly to account for any modifications to the area's recreational landscape and, most importantly, to accurately reflect changing community preferences.

The plan will be developed in compliance with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources guidelines, and it is an important tool for ensuring that the DeWitt Area is eligible to apply for grants. Residents' perspectives and priorities related to the area's recreation resources are the guiding element for the final plan.

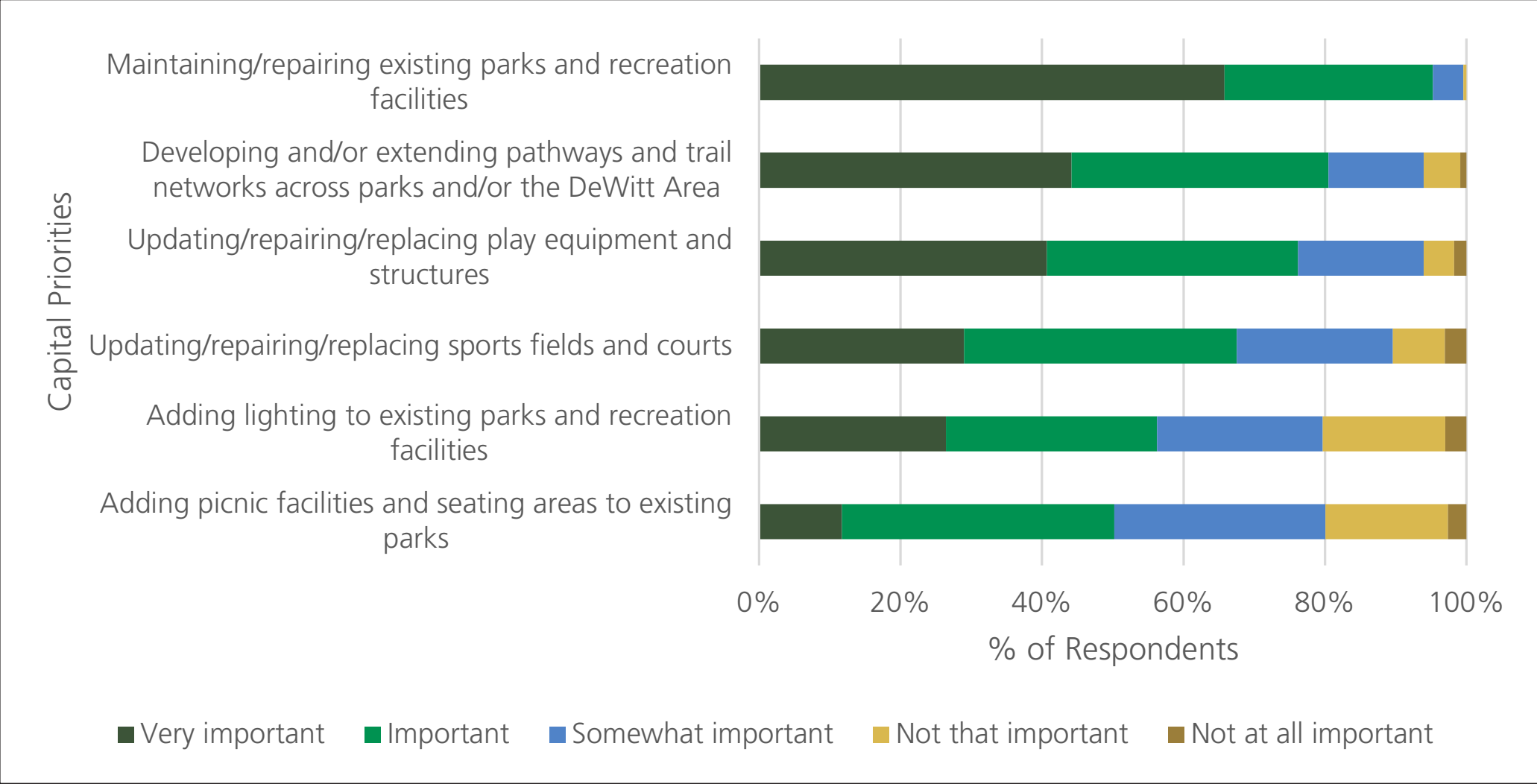
DeWitt Area Parks & Recreation Plan

Survey Results Snapshot

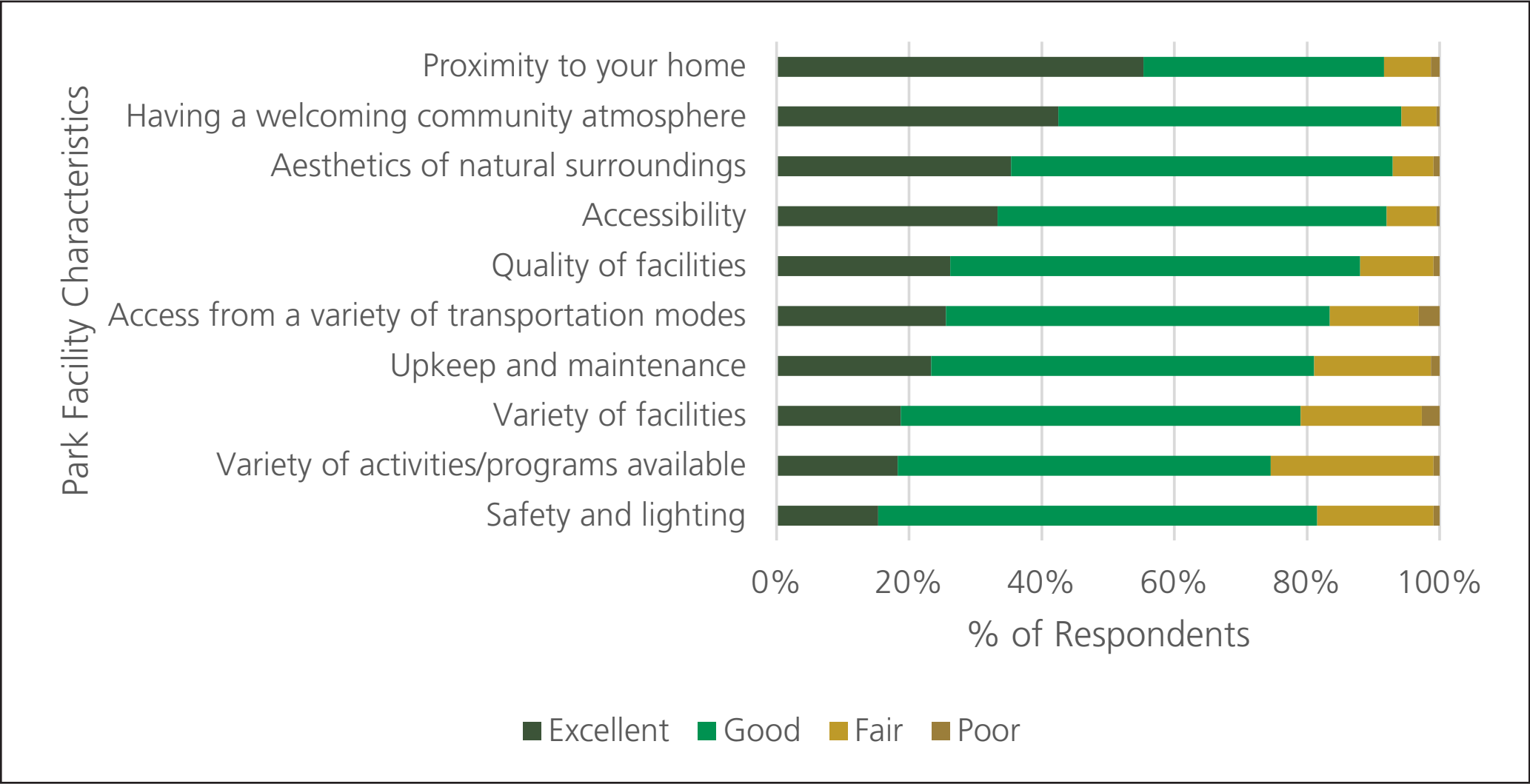
How important are each of the following recreational priorities?



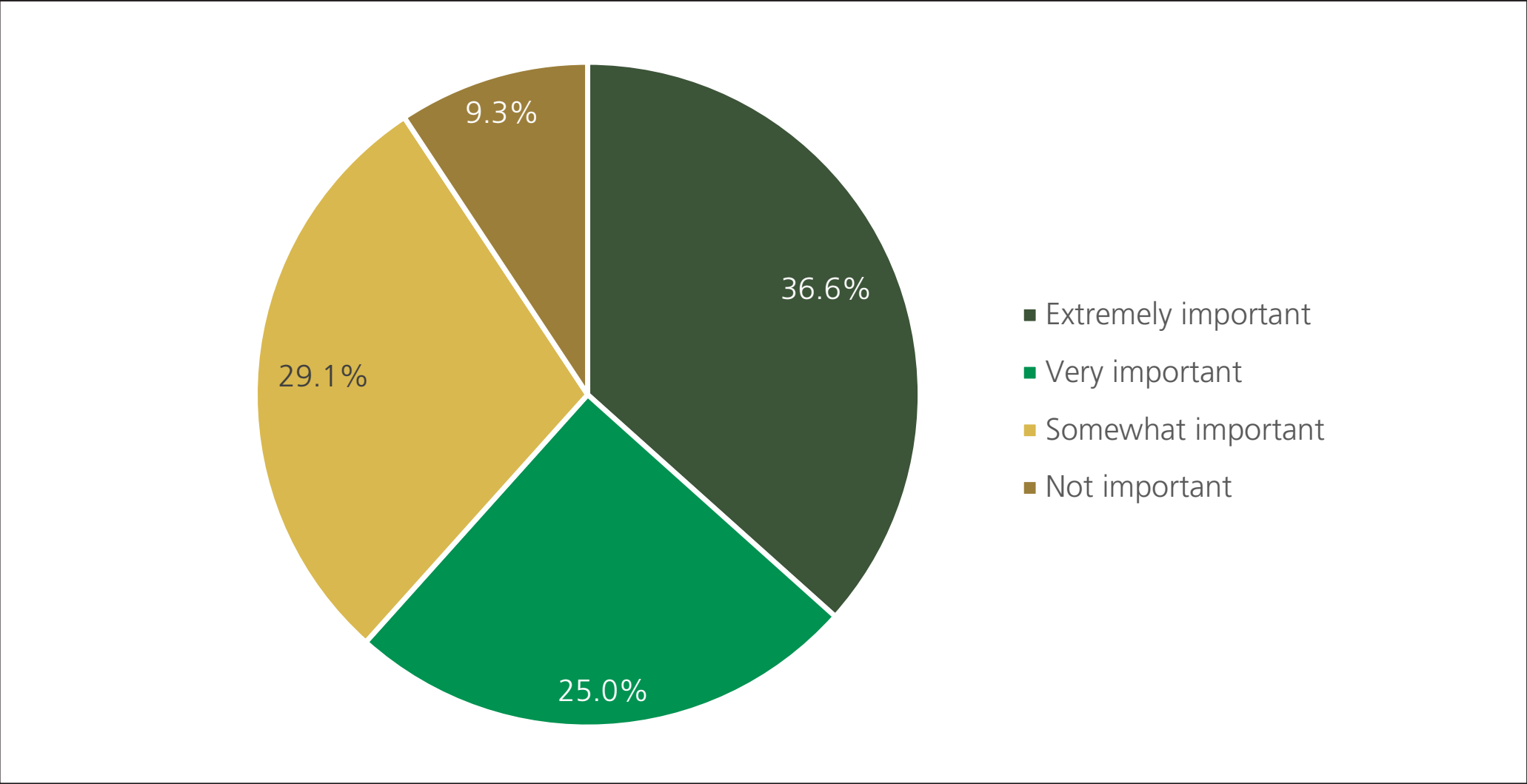
What is the importance of each improvement, repair, and/or development priority?



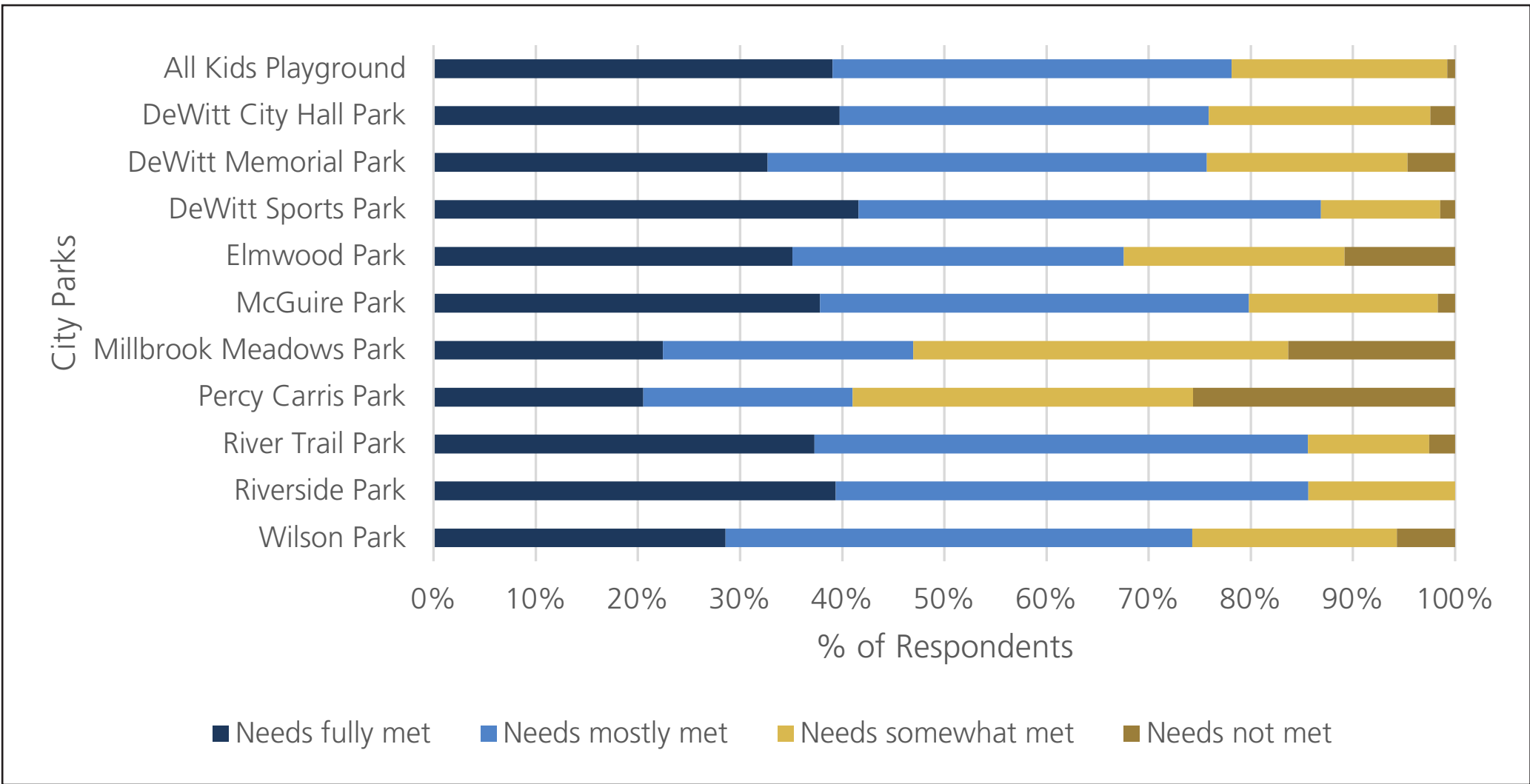
Please rate DeWitt’s park facilities for each of the following characteristics.



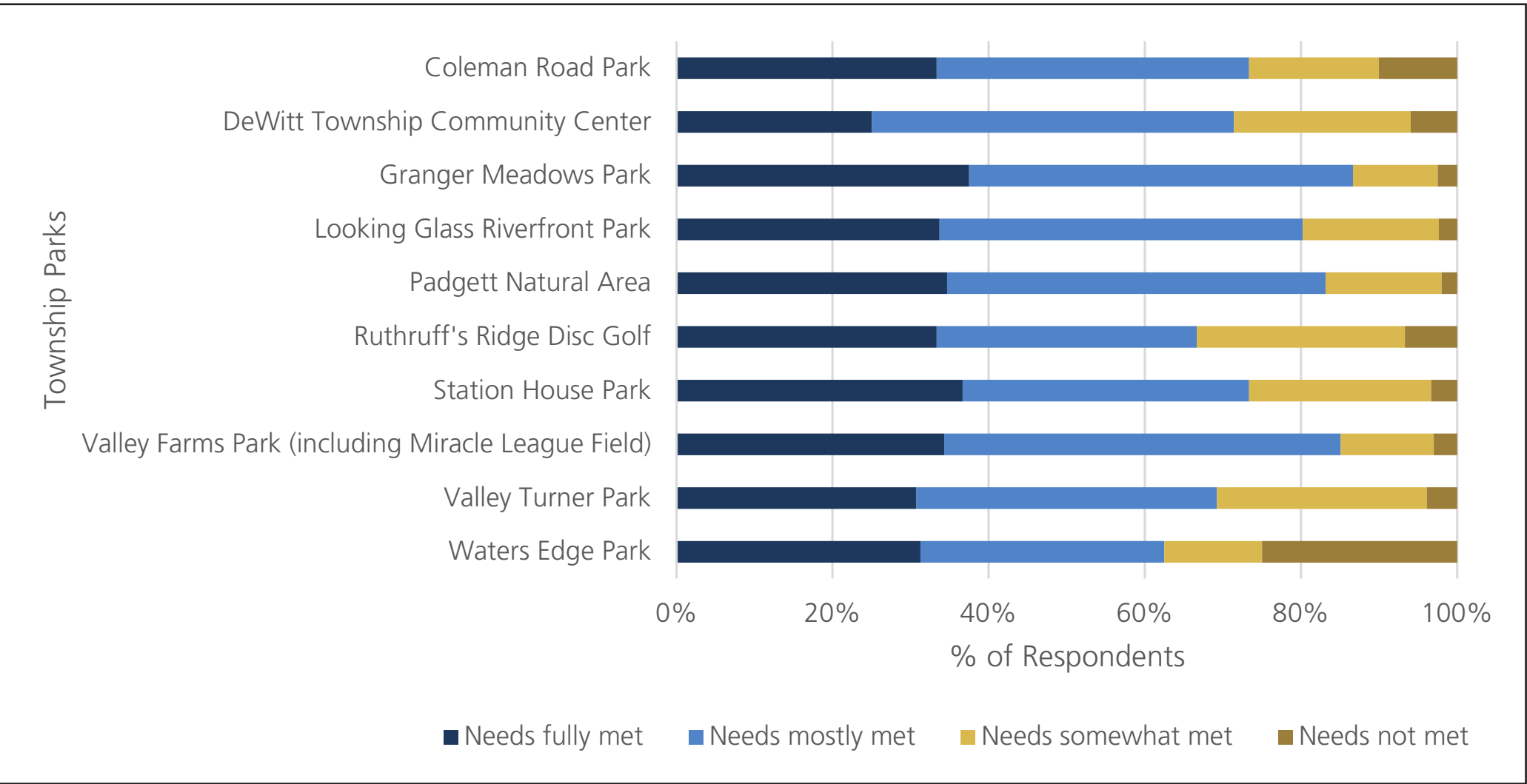
How important is expanding DeWitt’s trail system to you?



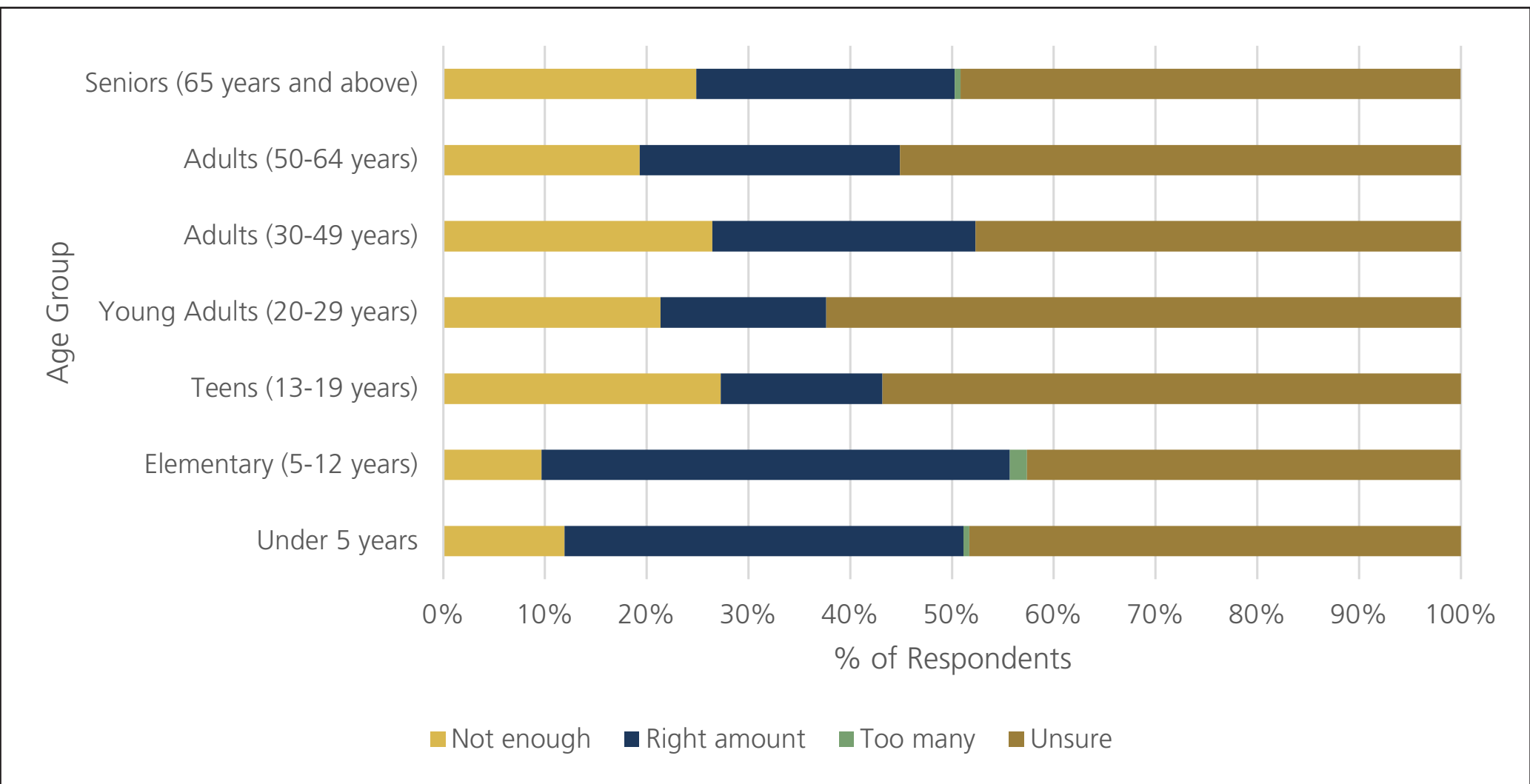
Recreational Needs Fulfilled by City of DeWitt Parks



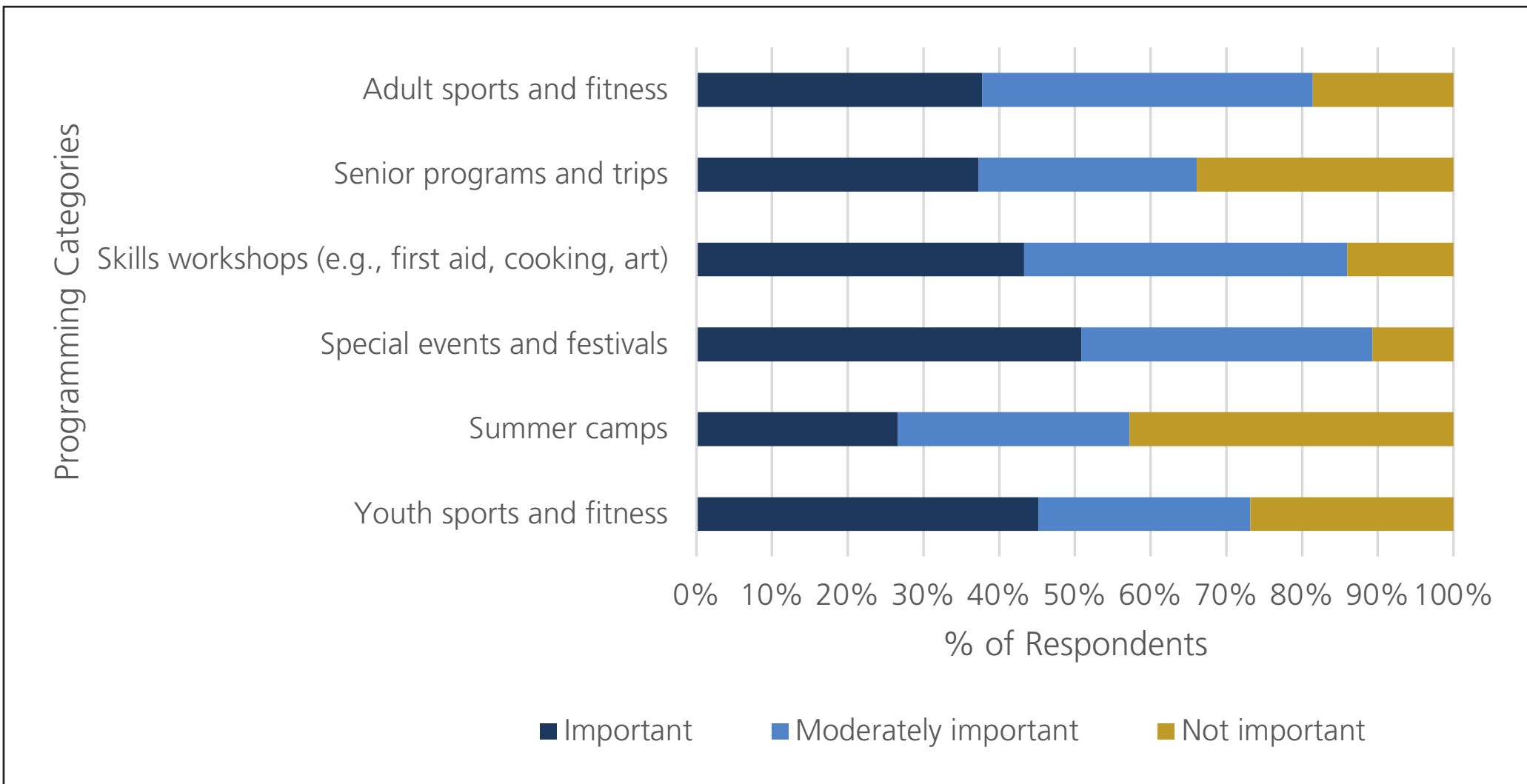
Recreational Needs Fulfilled by DeWitt Charter Township Parks



Availability of Recreational Activities



Importance of Recreational Activities and Programs



Parks & Recreation Goals

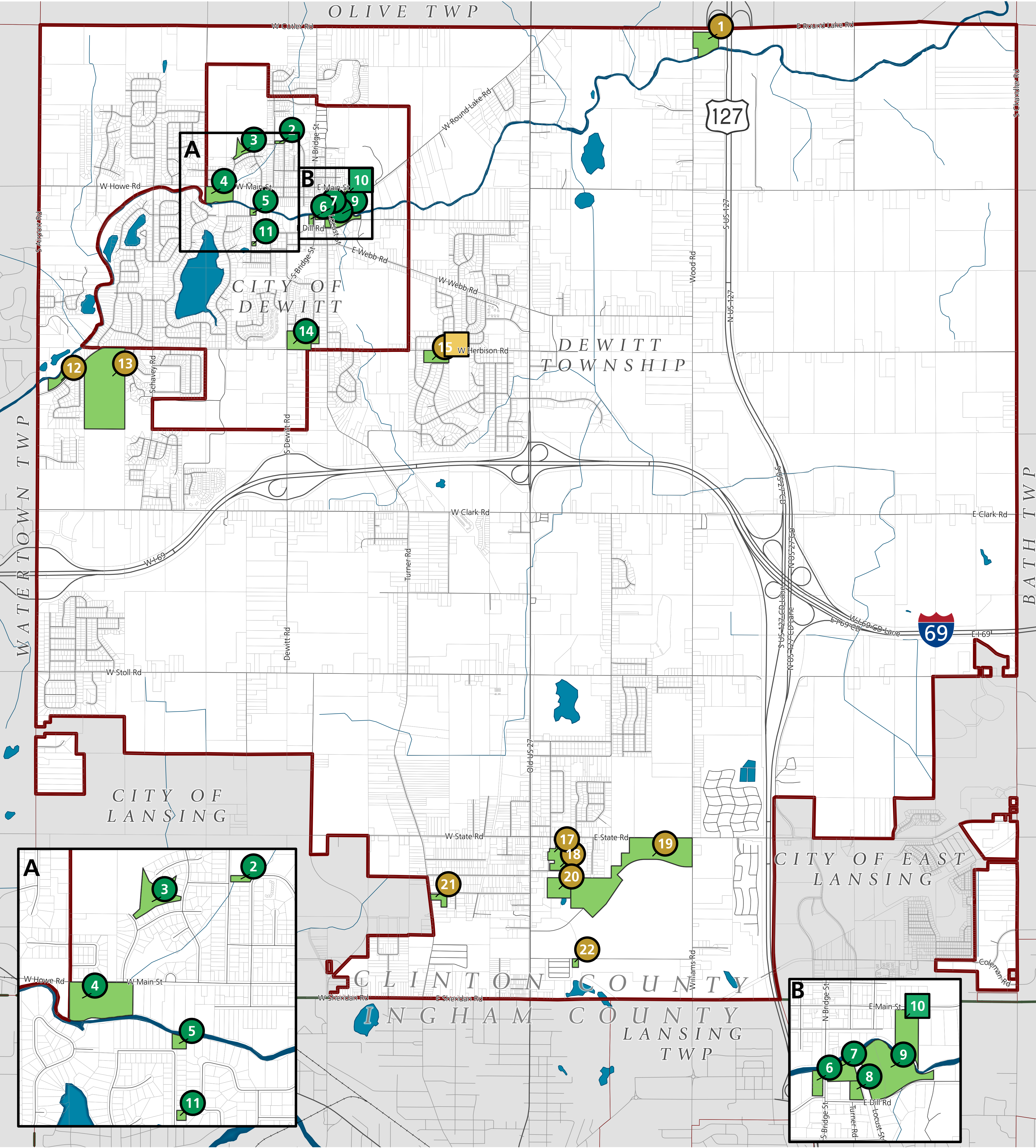
The following seven goals were created during the last Parks & Recreation Plan update.

- » Goal 1: Provide quality leisure time activities with special consideration given to improving health and fitness.
- » Goal 2: Provide safe, broad community-based recreation opportunities that improve the overall quality-of-life for all DeWitt area residents.
- » Goal 3: Provide non-motorized pathways for recreational and transportation use.
- » Goal 4: Develop recreation opportunities that focus upon and take advantage of DeWitt area water resources.
- » Goal 5: Acquire and retain public land for future generations.
- » Goal 6: Create community awareness of DeWitt area recreational opportunities and promote them to citizens and visitors.
- » Goal 7: Continue to embrace and enhance regional collaboration for recreational programs and facilities.

Is anything missing, or should any of these goals be updated? Please leave a sticky note with comments on the goals/priorities that you would like to emphasize during this planning process.

DeWitt Area

Parks & Recreation Plan



Parks & Recreational Facilities

Sources: Michigan GIS Open Data, City of DeWitt, DeWitt Charter Township

- Municipal Boundary
- Recreation Property
- Facility Type**
- Park or Recreation Facility**
- City-Owned
- Township-Owned
- Government Hall**
- City Hall
- Township Hall

Facility

- 1 Waters Edge Park
- 2 Wilson Park
- 3 Millbrook Meadows Park
- 4 McGuire Park
- 5 Elmwood Park
- 6 Memorial Park
- 7 Riverside Park
- 8 All Kids Playground
- 9 River Trail Park
- 10 DeWitt City Hall
- 11 Percy Carris Park
- 12 Looking Glass Riverfront Park
- 13 Padgett Park Natural Area
- 14 Sports Park
- 15 Station House Park
- 16 DeWitt Township Hall

- 17 DeWitt Township Community Center
- 18 Valley Farms Park
- 19 Granger Meadows Park
- 20 Ruthruff Disc Golf Course
- 21 Valley-Turner Park
- 22 Coleman Road Park

0.5 Miles

Beckett & Raeder, Inc.

Map Date: 09/29/2026

City Parks Prioritization

What parks do you think the City should prioritize for future investment? Please use sticky dots to select your **TOP THREE** choices.

All Kids Playground	
DeWitt City Hall Park	
DeWitt Memorial Park	
DeWitt Sports Park	
Elmwood Park	
McGuire Park	
Millbrook Meadows Park	
Percy Carris Park	
Riverside Park	
River Trail Park	
Wilson Park	

Please leave specific park ideas and/or suggestions on a sticky note in the space below.

Township Parks Prioritization

What parks do you think the Township should prioritize for future investment? Please use sticky dots to select your **TOP THREE** choices.

Coleman Road Park	
DeWitt Township Community Center	
Granger Meadows Park	
Looking Glass Riverfront Park	
Padgett Natural Area	
Ruthruff’s Ridge Disc Golf	
Station House Park	
Valley Farms Park (including Miracle League Field)	
Valley Turner Park	
Waters Edge Park	

Please leave specific park ideas and/or suggestions on a sticky note in the space below.

Community Center Future Scenarios

The DeWitt Charter Township Community Center is the home of the DeWitt Area Recreation Authority (DARA) office and hosts many of DARA’s indoor recreation programs. The Community Center also offers meeting and activity rooms, a gymnasium, and kitchen facilities that are available for rent.

In imagining the Community Center’s future, which of the following upgrades, additions, and/or improvements would you most support? Please select your **TOP THREE** scenarios with sticky dots in the space below.

Upgrade internal equipment (e.g., tables, chairs, sporting equipment, etc.)	
Update internal features (e.g., fresh paint, community mural, energy-efficient/warm-tone lighting, etc.)	
Prioritize green/energy efficient building updates (e.g., smart LED lighting, sustainable materials, green roof installation, water-saving systems, etc.)	
Update building façade	
Update indoor sports courts (e.g., basketball, volleyball)	
Add indoor sport courts (e.g., tennis, pickleball, squash)	
Expand parking	
Perform general maintenance (e.g., roof, windows, HVAC system)	
Large additions and/or improvements are not necessary	

Comments:

Southern Tier Parks Priorities

The following parks are concentrated in the southern portion of DeWitt Township:

- » DeWitt Charter Township Community Center
- » Valley Turner Park
- » Valley Farms Park
- » Miracle Fields
- » Soccer fields, bathrooms, concessions
- » Ruthroff’s Disc Golf Course
- » Granger Meadows Park

Where should the Township focus its efforts to create a prominent, accessible network of recreation for this section of the DeWitt Area? Please use sticky dots to identify your **TOP THREE** choices.

Trail connections between parks	
Dog trails/dog-friendly trails	
Wayfinding and clear signage to denote each park	
Parking and transit access	
Complimentary amenities and experiences across each park	
Accessibility for visitors of all ages and abilities	
Demand and crowd management	
Maintenance and upkeep	
Safety, security, and lighting	
Environmental features and preservation efforts	
Tree coverage/shading	

City of DeWitt Downtown Parks

The following parks are concentrated near the City of DeWitt’s Downtown:

- » All Kids Playground
- » Memorial Park
- » Riverside Park
- » River Trail Park

Where should the City focus its efforts to create a prominent, accessible network of recreation for this section of the DeWitt Area? Please use sticky dots to identify your **TOP THREE** choices.

Trail connections between parks	
Dog trails/dog-friendly trails	
Wayfinding and clear signage to denote each park	
Parking and transit access	
Complimentary amenities and experiences across each park	
Accessibility for visitors of all ages and abilities	
Demand and crowd management	
Maintenance and upkeep	
Safety, security, and lighting	
Environmental features and preservation efforts	
Tree coverage/shading	
Social district encompassing Downtown parks	

Parks & Recreation System Priorities

Which of the following elements related to parks & recreational facilities and spaces do you believe the DeWitt Area should prioritize and address first? Please use sticky dots to select your **TOP THREE** choices.

ADA Accessibility Features/Design	
Additional community events	
Aquatic Facility (splash pad/community pool)	
Dog-friendly areas/dog parks	
Green space acquisition/promotion	
Natural preservation	
Park maintenance	
Passive recreation features (benches)	
Playground maintenance	
Restroom improvements/upgrades	
Shade features and tree planting	
Special events led by DARA and the Township	
Sport court/field maintenance/development	
Strategic promotional efforts to advertise all area parks and programs	
Trail and path expansion/maintenance	
Undeveloped park parcels development	

Miniature sports fields and ball diamonds can use municipal land more efficiently while expanding sporting opportunities for kids of all ages, especially younger children.

Would you support efforts by DARA, the City, and/or the Township to develop and program mini sports fields?

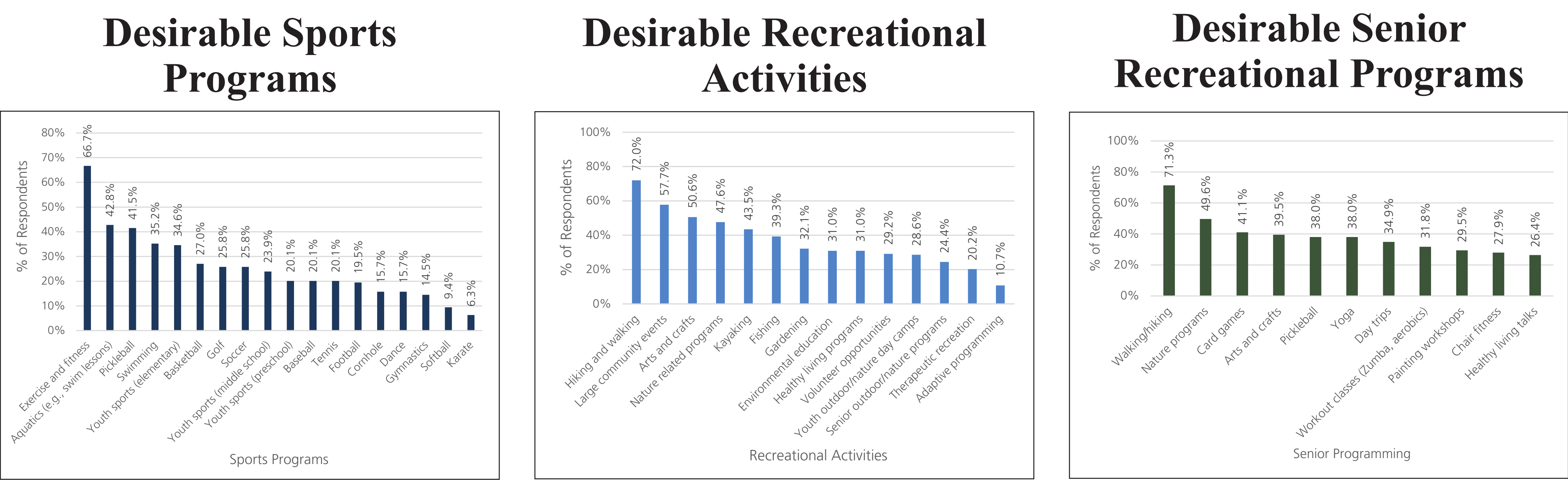
Yes

No

Comments:

Recreational Programming

Survey responses highlighted the following sports, recreational programs, and senior activities as priorities for DeWitt Area residents:



Please share ideas and/or preferences regarding the recreational programs, classes, and/or activities that you would like to see offered in the DeWitt Area. Consider any of the following factors when providing your suggestions for additional programming opportunities:

- » **WHO** would you like to see participate in recreational programming?
- » **WHAT** should the program’s focus be?
- » **WHAT** do the DeWitt Area’s recreation programs need to be successful?
- » **WHEN** and **WHERE** should these opportunities be offered?

Please note your responses on a sticky note and post them here.