

City of Meridian Parks & Recreation Master Plan Survey Final Results

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Prepared for:

City of Meridian

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INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to gather public feedback on City of Meridian parks and recreation facilities, services, and programs. This survey research effort and subsequent analysis were designed to assist the City of Meridian in the creation of a master plan for existing and possibly future enhancements, facilities, and services.

The survey was conducted using three primary methods: 1) a mail-back survey, 2) an online, invitation-only web survey to further encourage response from those residents already within the defined invitation sample, and 3) an open-link online survey for members of the public who were not part of the invitation sample. The analysis herein primarily focuses on responses from the invitation sample. However, open link responses are additionally analyzed and discussed, particularly when they differ from the invitation sample.

The primary list source used for the mailing was a third party list purchased from Melissa Data Corp., a leading provider of data with emphasis on U.S., Canadian, and international address and phone verification as well as postal software. Use of the Melissa Data list also includes renters in the sample who are frequently missed in other list sources such as utility billing lists.

A total of 3,500 surveys were mailed to a random sample of Meridian residents in March 2015. The final sample size for this statistically valid survey was 731, resulting in a margin of error of approximately +/- 3.6 percentage points calculated for questions at 50% response¹. The open link survey received an additional 661 responses.

The underlying data were weighted by age, ethnicity, and area of impact by neighborhood to ensure appropriate representation of Meridian residents across different demographic cohorts in the sample. Using the ESRI Demographic and Income Profile, which generates a 2014 population profile using 2010 Census data, the age distribution and ethnicity distribution within the respondent sample was matched to the 2014 demographic profile of the City of Meridian. In addition, the neighborhood distribution within the respondent sample was matched to the 2015 area of impact by region as provided by the City.

Due to variable response rates by some segments of the population, the underlying results, while weighted to best match the overall demographics of residents, may not be completely representative of some sub-groups of the population.

¹ For the total invitation sample size of 731, margin of error is +/- 3.6 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.

DEMOGRAPHICS

This section of the report details the respondent and household demographics of the invitation and open link samples. By understanding how the characteristics of these two sample groups differ, we are in a better position to understand contrasting response patterns for various questions on the survey.

- Gender. Invitation sample respondents are predominantly female (76 percent), while roughly a quarter (24 percent) are male. Open link respondents also skewed female, though to a lesser degree (63 percent).
- Age. Almost half (47 percent) of invitation respondents are under age 45, compared to a slightly higher proportion of open link respondents (54 percent). Invitation respondents were generally older, with 18 percent age 65 or older (10 percent open link). Consistent with these findings, the average age of an invitation sample respondent was 49.9 and the average age of an open link sample respondent was slightly younger at 45.9.
- Household Profile. Most invitation respondents (61 percent) identify themselves as residents of family households, followed by empty nesters (25 percent), singles without children (7 percent), and couples without children (6 percent). Similarly, the open link sample was dominated by respondents with children at home (68 percent) and empty nesters (17 percent).

A majority of both invitation respondents (82 percent) and open link respondents (86 percent) reported being in a couple.

- Household Income. Seventy-three percent of invitation sample households earn an annual income of less than \$100,000, while only 60 percent of open link households fall within this income bracket. In a similar finding, eight percent of invitation respondents reported earnings of greater than \$150,000 per year, while 14 percent of open link respondents reported incomes in this range, indicative of a more affluent open link sample. Open link households also reported a higher average annual income (\$100,217) than invitation households (\$79,496).
- Ethnicity/Race. Eight percent of invitation respondents and 3 percent of open link respondents consider themselves to be of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin. Diverse representation by race was limited, with 97 percent of invitation respondents and 95 percent of open link respondents identifying themselves as white. One percent of invitation respondents consider themselves to be Native American, 1 percent consider themselves to be African American, and 1 percent identify themselves as some other race.
- Own or Rent. A majority of both invitation respondents (87 percent) and open link respondents (85 percent) indicated that they own their residence.

- Voter Registration. Most respondents in both samples are registered voters in the City of Meridian (91 percent invitation, 83 percent open link).
- Years in the Meridian Area. Invitation sample respondents have lived in the Meridian area for an average of 16.5 years, somewhat longer than open link respondents (average 12.0 years). Most invitation respondents have been in the area for a considerable period of time, with 67 percent having lived there for over 10 years. Only 46 percent of open link respondents have lived in Meridian for more than 10 years. Few respondents in either sample are new residents of the area, with 0 percent of invitation and 7 percent of open link respondents having lived in the area for under a year.
- Area of Residence. Roughly a third (32 percent) of invitation respondents live in the Northwest area of the City (west of Meridian Rd. and north of Cherry Lane). An additional twenty-five percent live in the South area (south of I-84), followed by twenty-two percent each in the Central area (between I-84 and Cherry Lane/Fairview Ave.) and the Northeast (east of Meridian Rd. and north of Fairview Ave.). Similarly, the largest share of open link respondents live in the Northwest section (32 percent), followed by the Northeast (23 percent), South (20 percent), Central (11 percent), and other areas (14 percent).

Figure 1: Demographic Profile

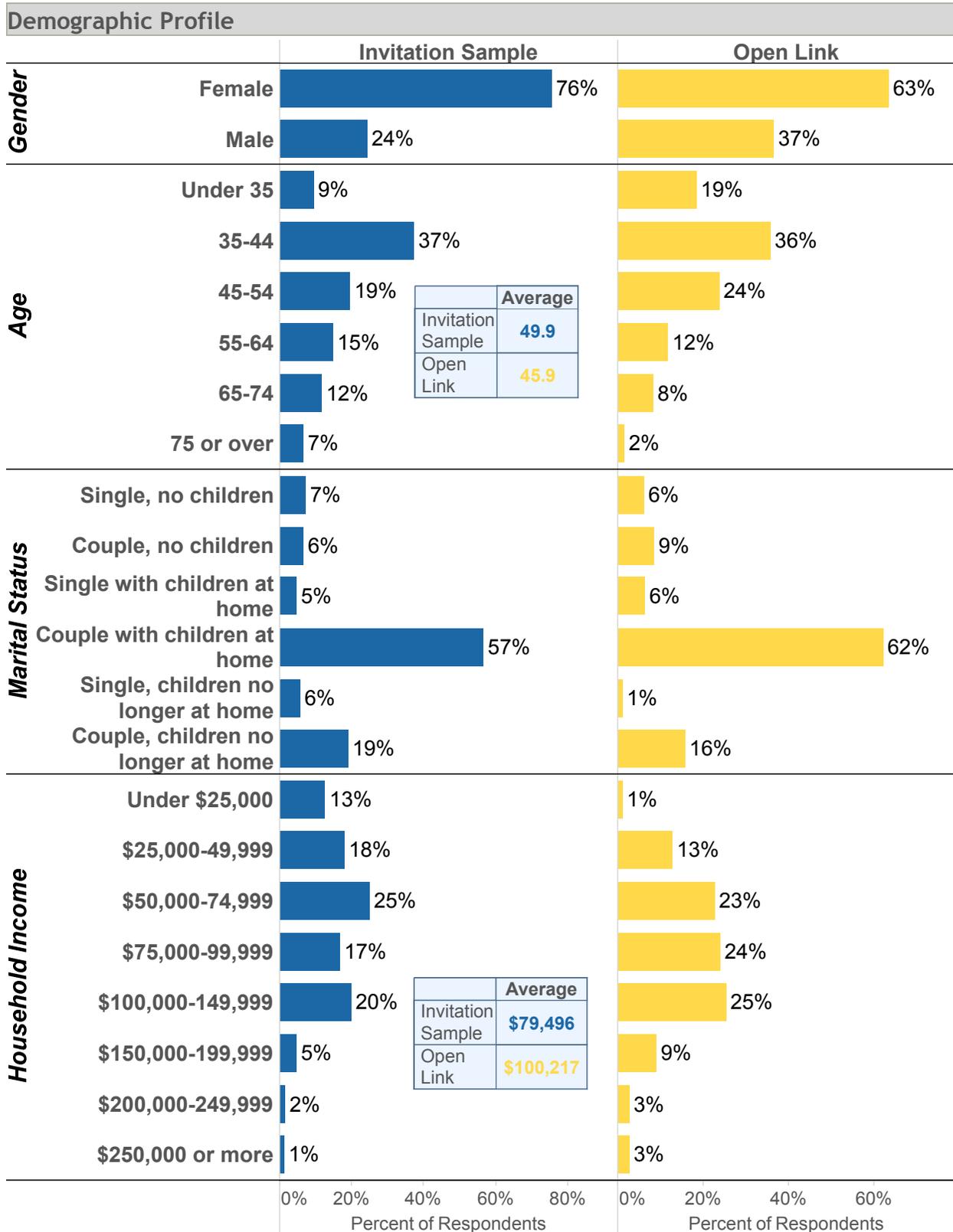
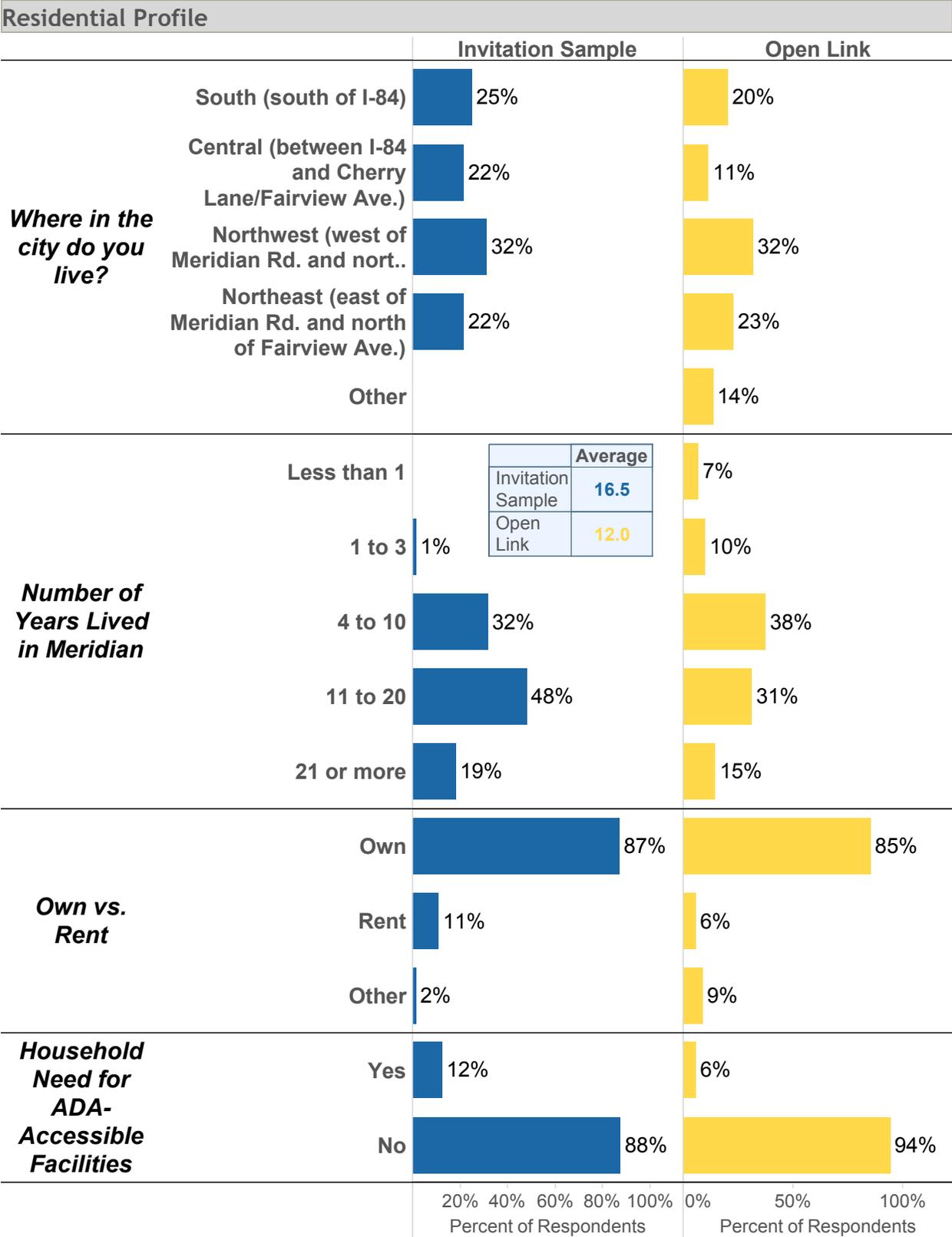


Figure 2: Residential Profile



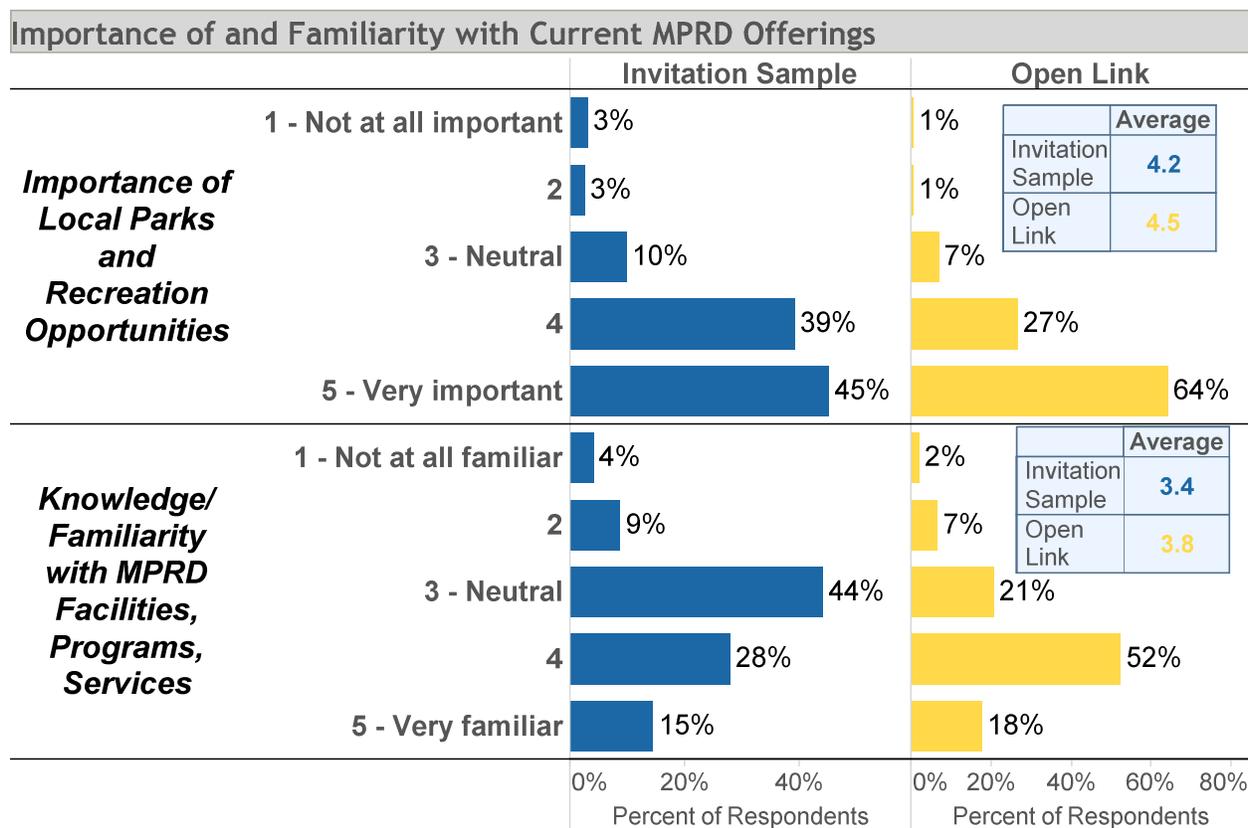
CURRENT FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS

Importance and Ratings of Parks and Recreation Opportunities

Importance of Local Recreation Opportunities. Respondents were asked to indicate the importance of the availability of local parks and recreation opportunities to their household on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 meaning “not at all important” and 5 meaning “very important.” Respondents generally indicated that local recreation opportunities are very important to their household, with 84 percent of invitation respondents and 91 percent of open link respondents providing a 4 or 5 rating. Average importance ratings were similarly high in both the invitation (4.2) and open link (4.5) samples.

Knowledge/Familiarity with Current MPRD Offerings. Respondents were also asked to rate their level of familiarity with current Meridian parks and recreation facilities, programs, and services on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means “not at all familiar” and 5 means “very familiar”. Ratings of familiarity were not as high as ratings of importance, particularly among invitation respondents. Forty-three percent of invitation respondents provided a 4 or 5 rating (average rating 3.4), compared to 70 percent of open link respondents (average 3.8).

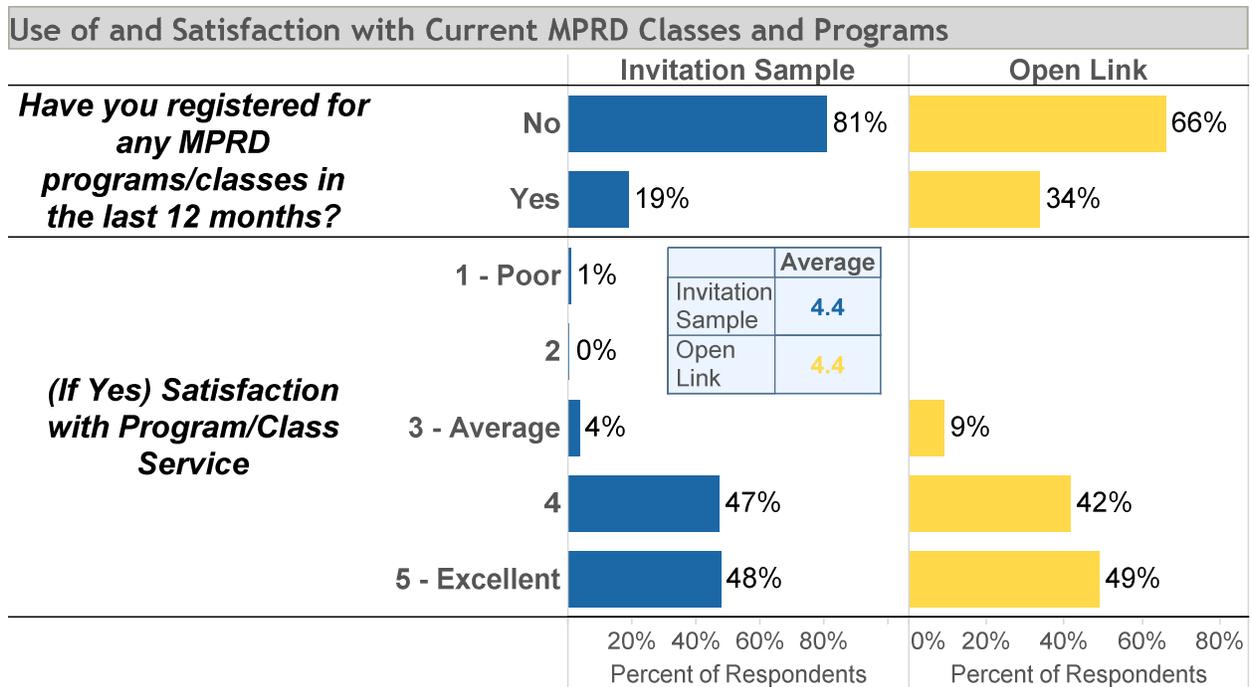
Figure 3: Importance of and Familiarity with Local Recreation Opportunities



Participation in Meridian Parks and Recreation Classes and Programs. Nineteen percent of invitation respondents and 34 percent of open link respondents indicated that they have registered for a MPRD program or class during the past year.

Ratings of Service Received. Respondents who indicated they had registered for classes or programs in the past year were asked to rate the service they received on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 meaning “poor” and 5 meaning “excellent.” Satisfaction with their program or class was very high, with 95 percent of invitation respondents and 91 percent of open link respondents providing a 4 or 5 rating and an average satisfaction rating of 4.4 for both samples.

Figure 4: Use of and Satisfaction with Classes and Programs



Most Used Facilities and Parks

Respondents were provided a list of 18 facilities and parks operated by the City of Meridian. They were then prompted to indicate the three facilities they use most often:

Use by Sample. Figure 5 explores the top three most used facilities and parks by survey sample. The following facilities were used most commonly by invitation respondents: Settlers Park (70 percent), Storey Park (53 percent), Julius M. Kleiner Memorial Park (46 percent), Tully Park (39 percent), and Bear Creek Park (17 percent). Open link respondents also most frequently used Settlers Park (80 percent), followed by Julius M. Kleiner Memorial Park (58 percent), Tully Park (28 percent), Storey Park (26 percent), and Bear Creek Park (17 percent).

Invitation respondents are more likely to use Storey Park and Tully Park on a regular basis, while open link respondents have a higher likelihood of utilizing Settlers Park, Julius M. Kleiner Memorial Park, Heroes Park, and the Heritage Middle School Ball Fields.

Invitation responses were also analyzed by area of residence (Figure 6) and household profile (Figure 7):

Use by Area of Residence. Invitation respondents in Northeast Meridian reported that they are particularly likely to use the Julius M. Kleiner Memorial Park, Jabil Fields, and Community Center. Respondents living in the Northwest section of the City most frequently use Settlers Park, Tully Park, and Chateau Park; finally, respondents located in the South area most often use Bear Creek Park, Renaissance Park, Gordon Harris Park, and Heroes Park. Respondents from each neighborhood reported higher usage of parks and facilities located within their respective neighborhoods, which is logical given the close vicinity of residents to these amenities.

Use by Household Status. Settlers Park, Tully Park, Renaissance Park, Jabil Fields, Chateau Park, and Heroes Park are used more often by invitation respondents living with children at home than those in non-family households. Respondents living without children are more likely to use Julius M. Kleiner Memorial Park, City Hall Plaza, and Generations Plaza on a regular basis.

Figure 5: Most Used Facilities/Parks

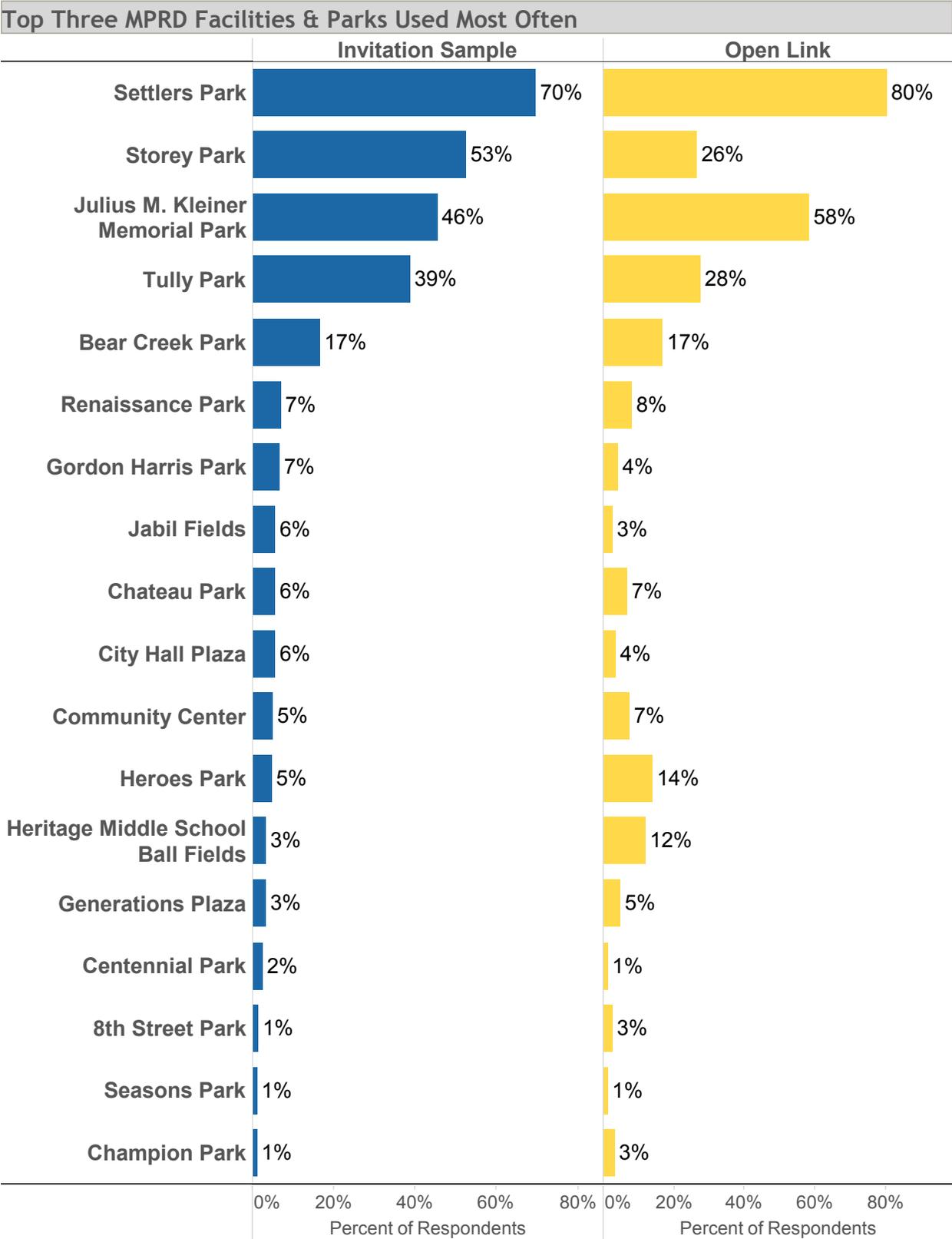


Figure 6: Most Used Facilities/Parks by Area of Residence
Invitation Sample Only

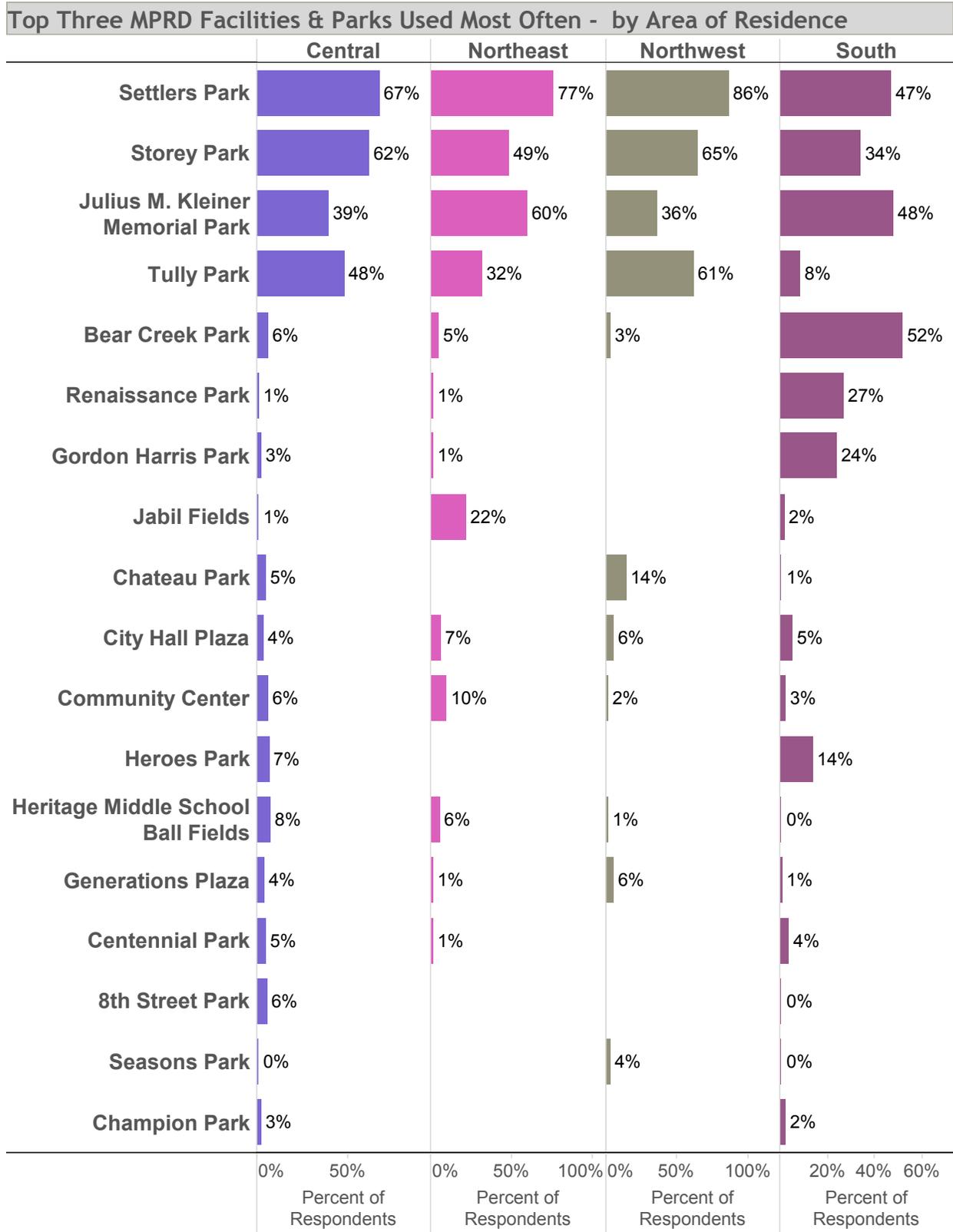
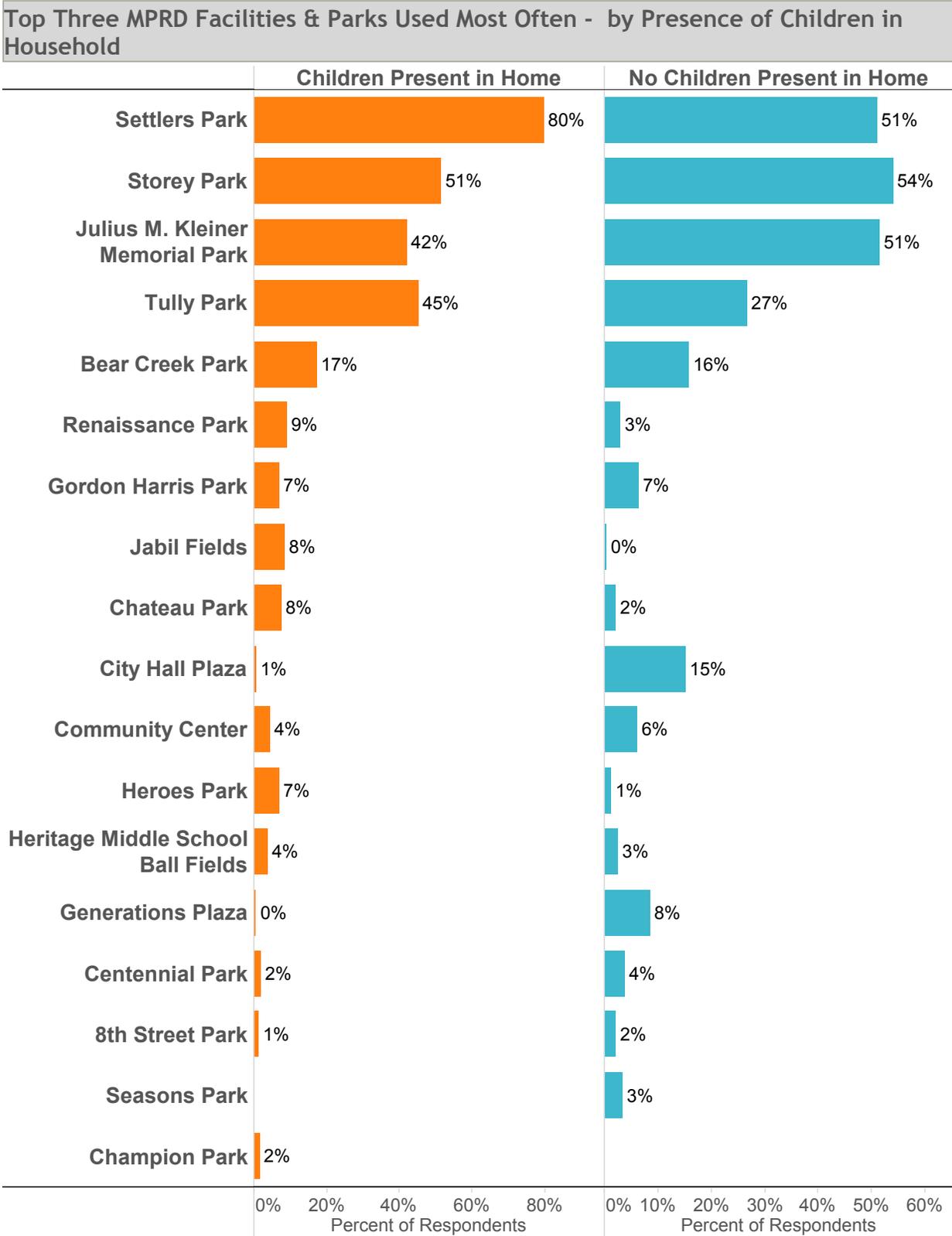


Figure 7: Most Used Facilities/Parks by Household Status
Invitation Sample Only



Respondents were provided a list of current Meridian Parks and Recreation facilities and programs and asked to rate the importance of each amenity to their household as well as identify the degree to which each amenity meets their household's needs. The results from each of these questions are discussed in turn below.

Importance of Facilities to Household

On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is "not at all important" and 5 is "very important", respondents rated the importance of Meridian Parks and Recreation facilities to their households. Figure 8 to follow illustrates the percentage of "4" and "5" responses (indicating that the respondent feels the facility is important) versus the percentage of "1" and "2" responses (indicating that the respondent feels the facility is not important) among invitation respondents. Figure 9 depicts the average importance rating provided by invitation respondents for each facility. The highest average ratings and largest shares of "4" and "5" responses were given for the following facilities:

- Pathways/trails (average rating 4.2; 82 percent provided a 4 or 5 rating)
- Playgrounds (4.1 average; 77 percent rated 4 or 5)
- Picnic shelters (3.8 average; 69 percent rated 4 or 5)
- Swimming pools/aquatic facilities (3.7 average; 56 percent rated 4 or 5)
- Community/recreation center (3.6 average; 56 percent rated 4 or 5)
- Indoor gym space (3.3 average; 49 percent rated 4 or 5)
- Splash pads (3.3 average; 48 percent rated 4 or 5)
- Athletic fields (3.3 average; 43 percent rated 4 or 5)
- Outdoor basketball courts (3.1 average; 43 percent rated 4 or 5)

Facilities that received considerably lower ratings include ball fields (2.9 average), tennis courts (2.9), dog parks (2.9), and rodeo grounds (2.2). Dog parks and rodeo grounds also received a higher share of respondents providing a "1" or "2" rating than the share of those providing a "4" or "5" rating, indicating that the majority of respondents feel that these facilities are unimportant.

Figure 9 compares average importance ratings between invitation respondents and open link respondents. Ratings were generally fairly similar among the two samples, though open link respondents rated several items higher in importance on average, including athletic fields, ball fields, picnic shelters, pathways/trails, community/recreation center, dog parks, and indoor gym space.

Figure 8: Importance of Facilities Operated by MPRD – Percent Important vs. Not Important Invitation Sample Only

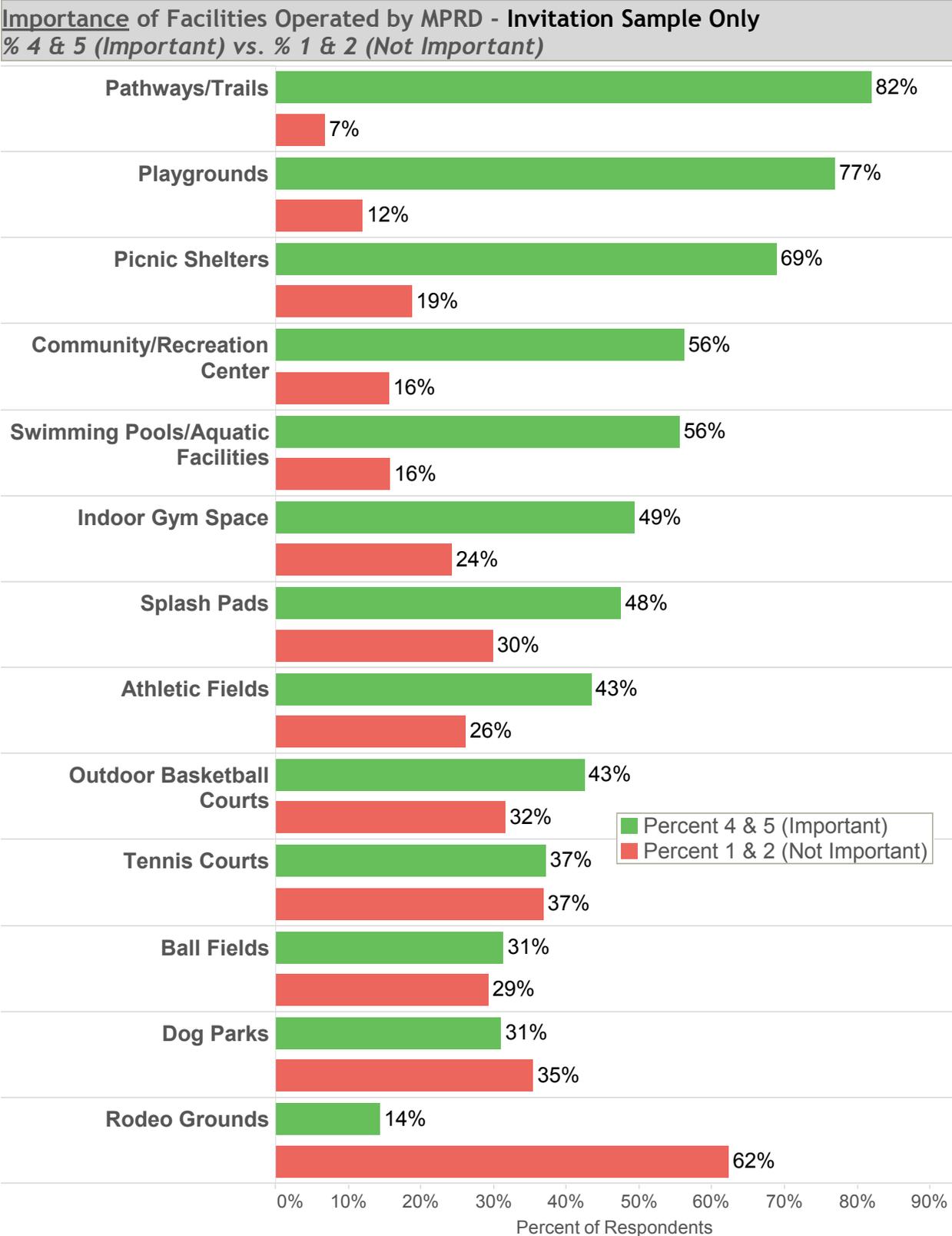
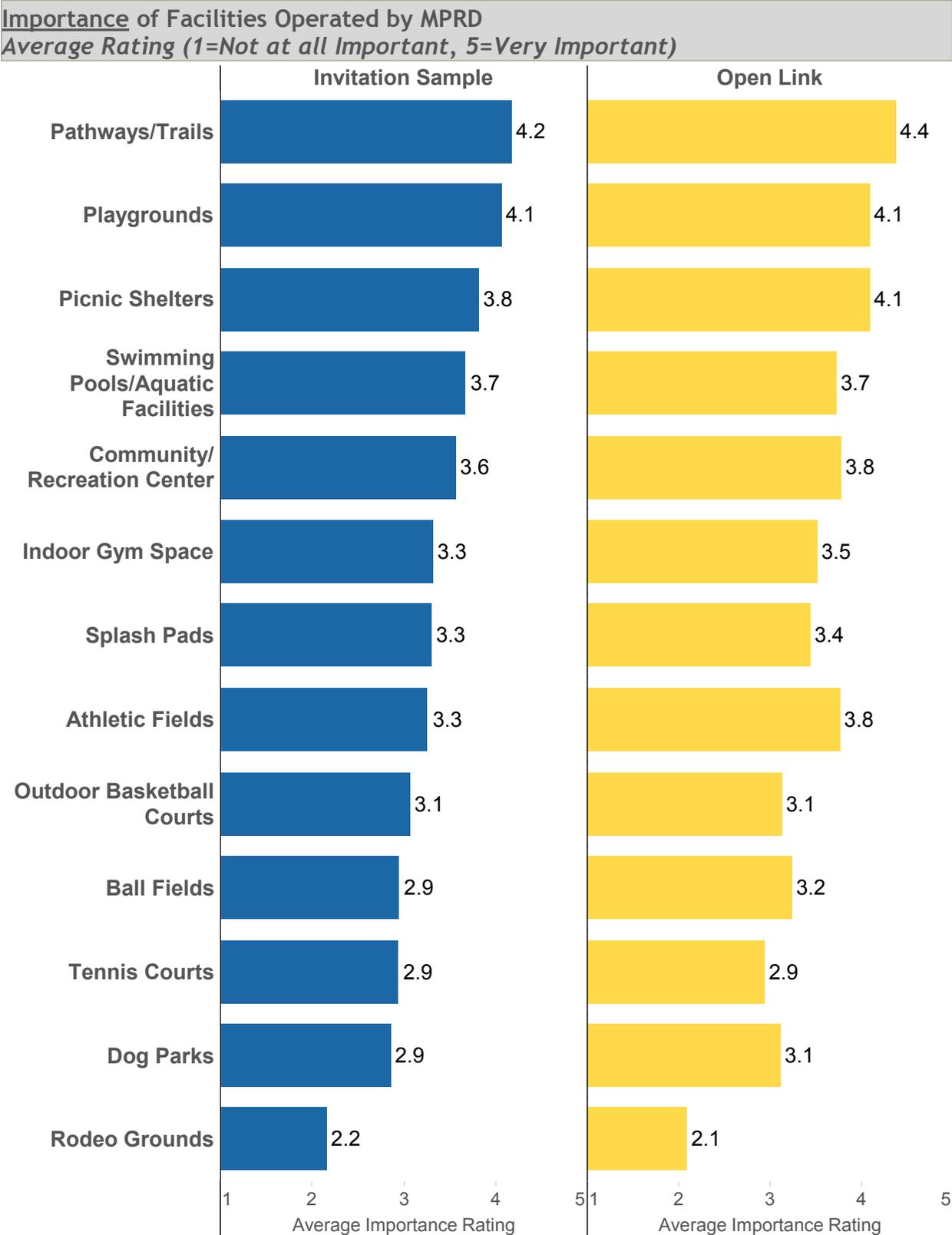


Figure 9: Importance of Facilities Operated by MPRD – Average Rating



Degree to Which Household Needs are Met by Facilities

Using the same list of facilities, respondents also rated the degree to which they feel their household's needs are met by current Meridian Parks and Recreation facilities on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "completely." Figure 10 shows the percentage of "4" and "5" invitation responses (indicating that the respondent feels their household's needs are met) relative to the percentage of "1" and "2" invitation responses (indicating that the respondent feels their household's needs are unmet). Figure 11 immediately following depicts average ratings. Overall, respondents indicated that their needs are generally well met by current facilities. The following facilities received the highest average ratings and the highest proportions of "4" and "5" ratings among invitation respondents:

- Playgrounds (average rating 4.3; 84 percent provided a 4 or 5 rating)
- Picnic shelters (4.0 average; 67 percent rated 4 or 5)
- Athletic fields (3.8 average; 73 percent rated 4 or 5)
- Ball fields (3.8 average; 69 percent rated 4 or 5)
- Splash pads (3.6 average; 59 percent rated 4 or 5)
- Outdoor basketball courts (3.5 average; 57 percent rated 4 or 5)
- Tennis courts (3.4 average; 38 percent rated 4 or 5)
- Pathways/trails (3.4 average; 50 percent rated 4 or 5)
- Community/recreation center (3.3 average; 55 percent rated 4 or 5)
- Dog parks (3.1 average; 41 percent rated 4 or 5)
- Swimming pools/aquatic facilities (3.1 average; 44 percent rated 4 or 5)
- Rodeo grounds (3.1 average; 38 percent rated 4 or 5)

Only one facility, indoor gym space, did not receive a relatively high needs met rating. Forty-seven percent of respondents provided a "1" or "2" rating, while only 25 percent provided a "4" or "5" rating for this item. The average rating was 2.6, indicating that indoor gym space is a facility that, for a majority of respondents, is not meeting the needs of their households and therefore should be considered in future facility improvements.

Figure 11 also illustrates the average ratings given by open link respondents for each listed facility. Invitation respondents gave higher ratings on average to playgrounds, dog parks, and rodeo grounds. Meanwhile, open link respondents provided higher needs met ratings for tennis courts and indoor gym space.

**Figure 10: Degree to Which Household Needs are Met by Facilities Operated by MPRD – Percent Needs Met vs. Needs Unmet
Invitation Sample Only**

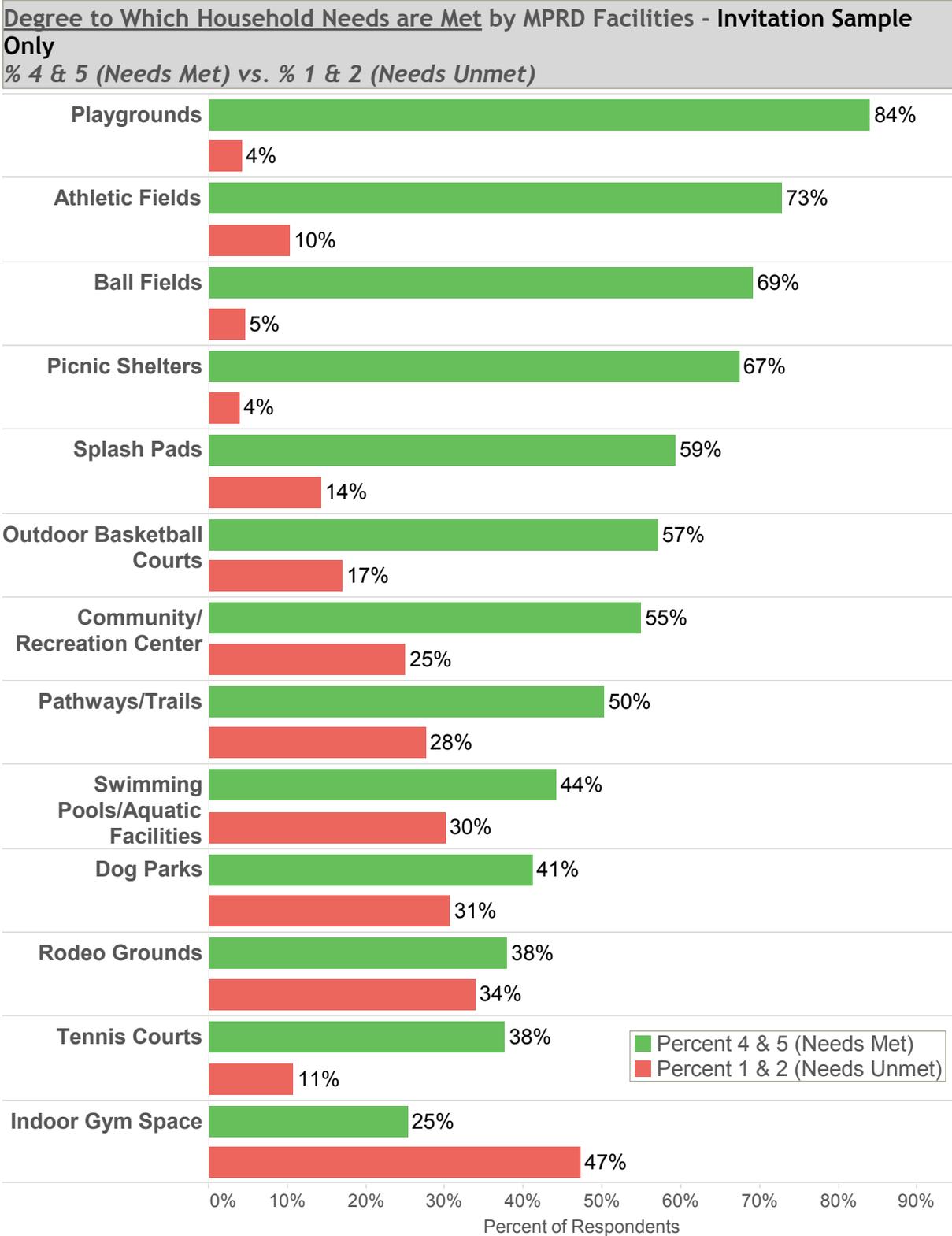
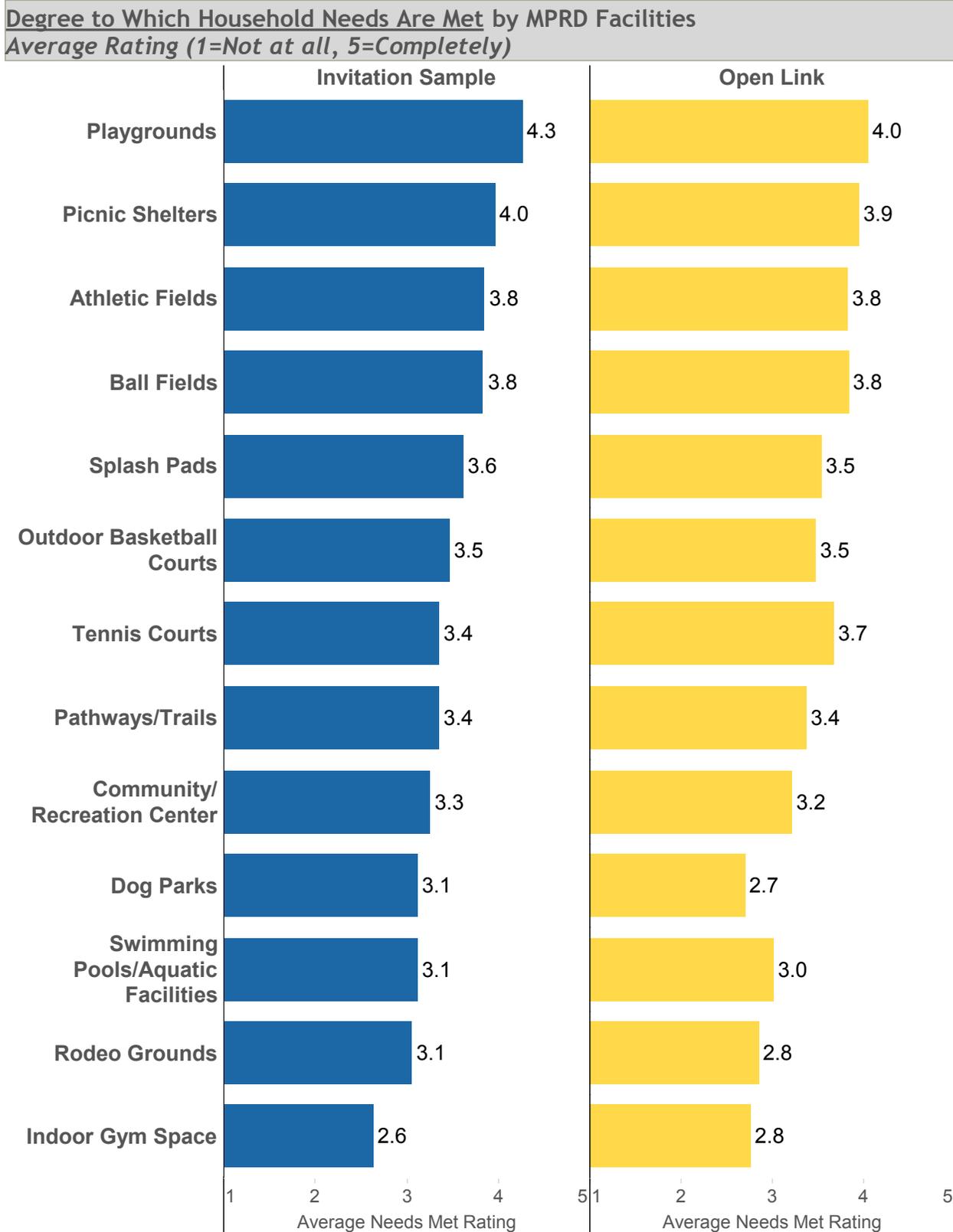


Figure 11: Degree to Which Household Needs are Met by Facilities Operated by MPRD – Average Rating



Importance vs. Needs-Met Matrix – Current Facilities

It is informative to plot and compare the facility scores for level of importance and degree to which needs are being met by these facilities using an “Importance vs. Needs-Met” matrix. Scores are displayed in this matrix using the mid-points for both questions to divide into four quadrants. The Importance scale midpoint was 3.3 (the median importance rating across all facilities); the Needs-Met midpoint was 3.4.

The upper right quadrant shows the facilities that have a high average rating of importance as well as a high level of needs being met. These amenities are less of a priority for improvement since needs are currently being met, but are important to maintain in the future as they are perceived to be important by respondents:

- Playgrounds
- Picnic shelters
- Splash pads (on the cusp of low importance)

Facilities located in the upper left quadrant have relatively high importance but a lower level of needs being met, which suggests that these facilities could be improved. Improving these facilities would positively impact the degree to which household needs are being met overall:

- Pathways/trails
- Swimming pools/aquatic facilities
- Community/recreation center
- Indoor gym space (on the cusp of low importance)

The lower right quadrant shows facilities that are not important to many households, yet are meeting their needs very well. It may be beneficial in the future to evaluate whether the parks and recreation resources supporting these facilities outweigh the benefits:

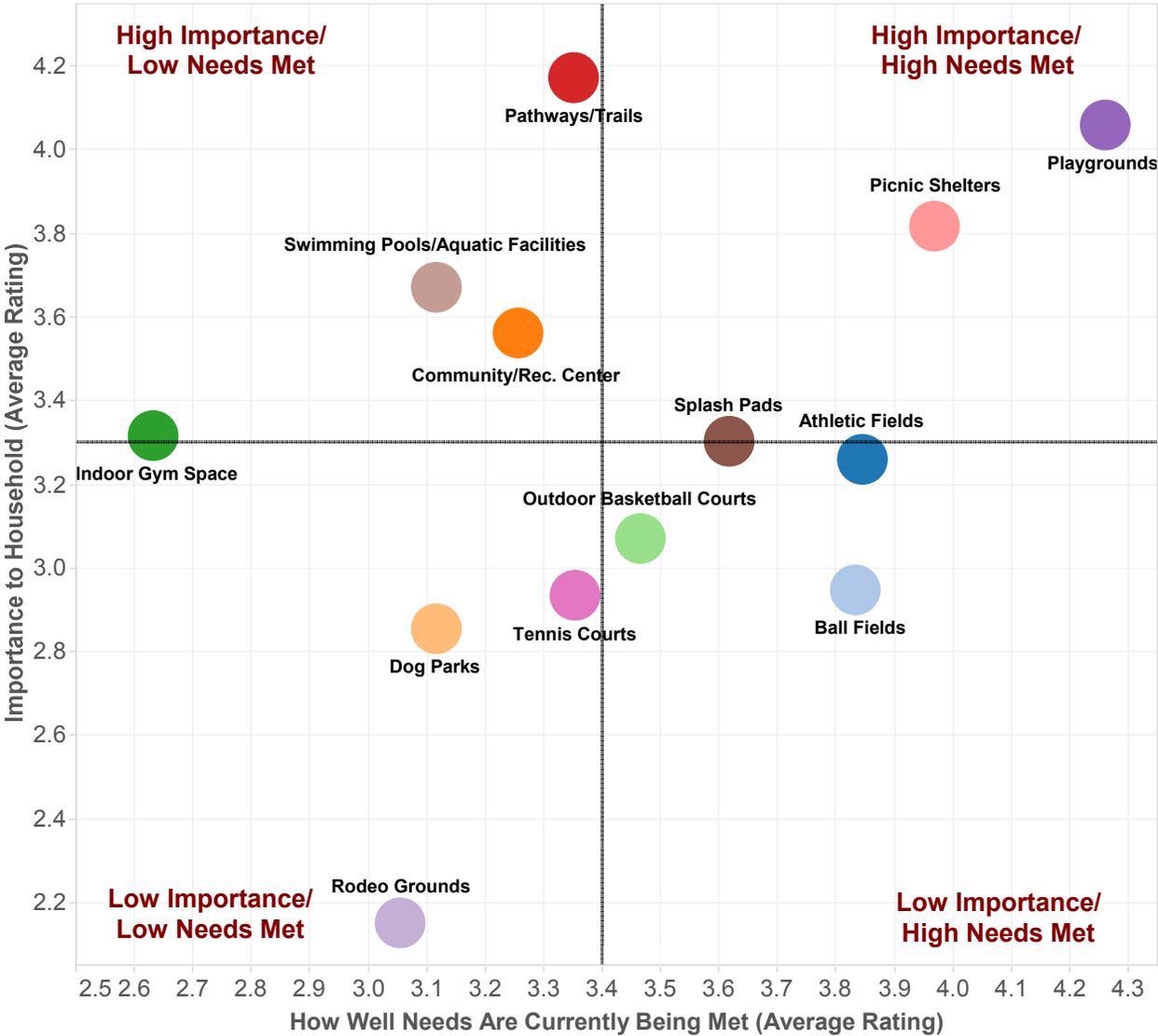
- Athletic fields
- Outdoor basketball courts
- Ball fields

Finally, facilities in the lower left quadrant are not meeting needs adequately; however, they are important to a smaller group of community members. These “niche” facilities may have a small but passionate following; therefore, there may be merit in measuring participation and planning for future improvements accordingly:

- Tennis courts
- Dog parks
- Rodeo grounds

Figure 12: Current Facilities – Importance vs. Needs Met Matrix
Invitation Sample Only

Level of Importance vs. Needs Met for Current MPRD Facilities - Invitation Sample Only



Importance of Programs to Household

Similarly, on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 is “not at all important” and 5 is “very important”, respondents rated the importance of Meridian Parks and Recreation programs to their households. Figure 13 to follow depicts the percentage of invitation respondents providing a “4” or “5” rating (indicating that they feel the program is important to their household) compared to the percentage providing a “1” or “2” rating (indicating they feel the program is unimportant to their household). Figure 14 shows average importance ratings for each program. The programs that received the highest average ratings and greatest proportion of “4” and “5” ratings from invitation respondents include:

- Youth sports (average rating 3.7; 64 percent provided a 4 or 5 rating)
- Family programs (3.7 average; 69 percent rated 4 or 5)
- Outdoor adventure programs (3.5 average; 50 percent rated 4 or 5)
- Youth programs (3.5 average; 57 percent rated 4 or 5)
- Senior programs (3.3 average; 50 percent rated 4 or 5)
- Adult programs (3.2 average; 36 percent rated 4 or 5)
- Youth camps (3.2 average; 41 percent rated 4 or 5)
- Teen programs (3.1 average; 40 percent rated 4 or 5)

Adult sports were rated slightly lower in importance, with an average rating of 2.9. In addition, the number of respondents identifying the program as unimportant (34 percent) outnumbered those identifying the program as important (31 percent), indicative of a lower priority for program offerings.

Overall, open link respondents generally placed a higher importance on programs than invitation respondents did. They were particularly likely to give higher importance ratings on average to youth sports, youth programs, teen programs, and adult sports.

Figure 13: Importance of Programs Operated by MPRD – Percent Important vs. Not Important Invitation Sample Only

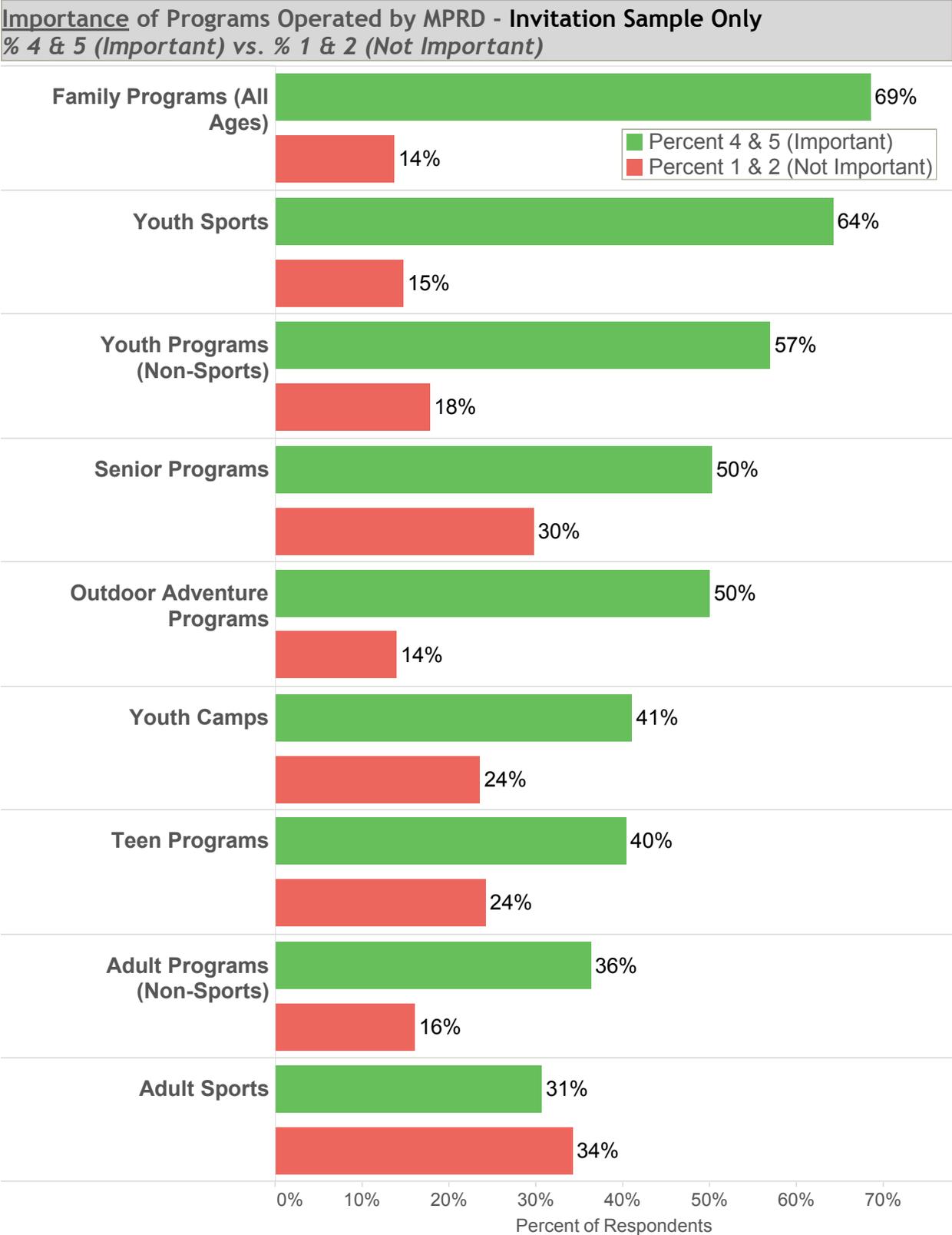
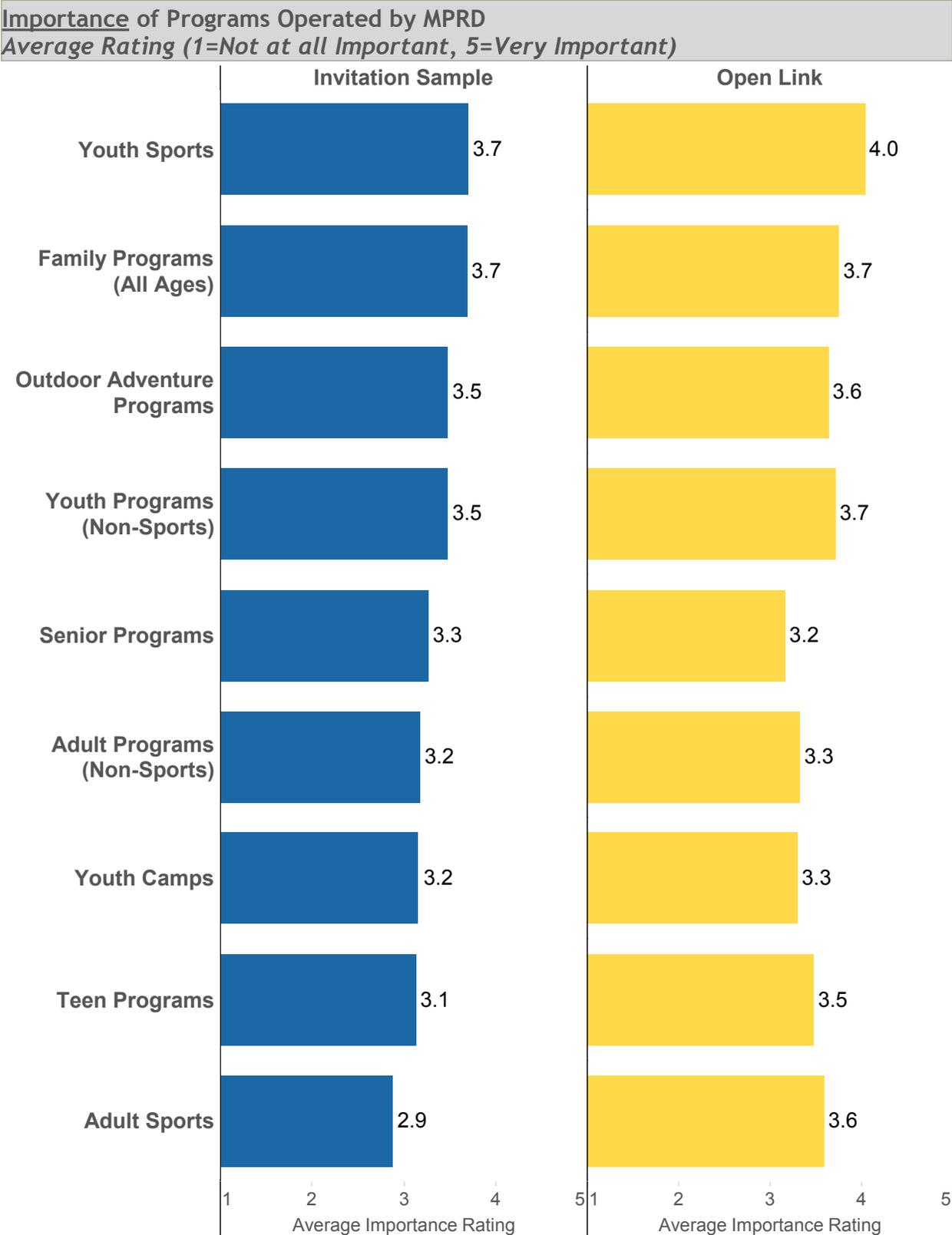


Figure 14: Importance of Programs Operated by MPRD – Average Rating



Degree to Which Household Needs are Met by Programs

Using the same list, respondents also rated the degree to which they feel their household's needs are met by current Meridian Parks and Recreation programs on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means "not at all" and 5 means "completely." Figure 15 illustrates the percentage of "4" and "5" ratings from invitation respondents (meaning that the respondent feels their household's needs are met) versus the percentage of "1" and "2" ratings (meaning the respondent does not feel their household's needs are met) and Figure 16 shows average ratings. Overall, respondents perceived their needs to be well met by all MPRD program offerings. All programs received the high average ratings and large shares of "4" or "5" responses from invitation respondents, including:

- Youth programs (average rating 3.7; 63 percent provided a 4 or 5 rating)
- Youth sports (3.7 average; 60 percent rated 4 or 5)
- Senior programs (3.7 average; 65 percent rated 4 or 5)
- Adult sports (3.7 average; 62 percent rated 4 or 5)
- Teen programs (3.6 average; 60 percent rated 4 or 5)
- Youth camps (3.6 average; 51 percent rated 4 or 5)
- Adult programs (3.6 average; 54 percent rated 4 or 5)
- Family programs (3.6 average; 57 percent rated 4 or 5)
- Outdoor adventure programs (3.4 average; 50 percent rated 4 or 5)

Invitation respondents were more likely to feel that their household needs are met than open link respondents for all of the listed programs. Notable differences between the invitation and open link samples occurred for youth programs, senior programs, adult sports, teen programs, youth camps, adult programs, family programs, and outdoor adventure programs, which all received considerably higher average ratings from invitation respondents.

Figure 15: Degree to Which Household Needs are Met by MPRD Programs – Percent Needs Met vs. Needs Unmet
 Invitation Sample Only

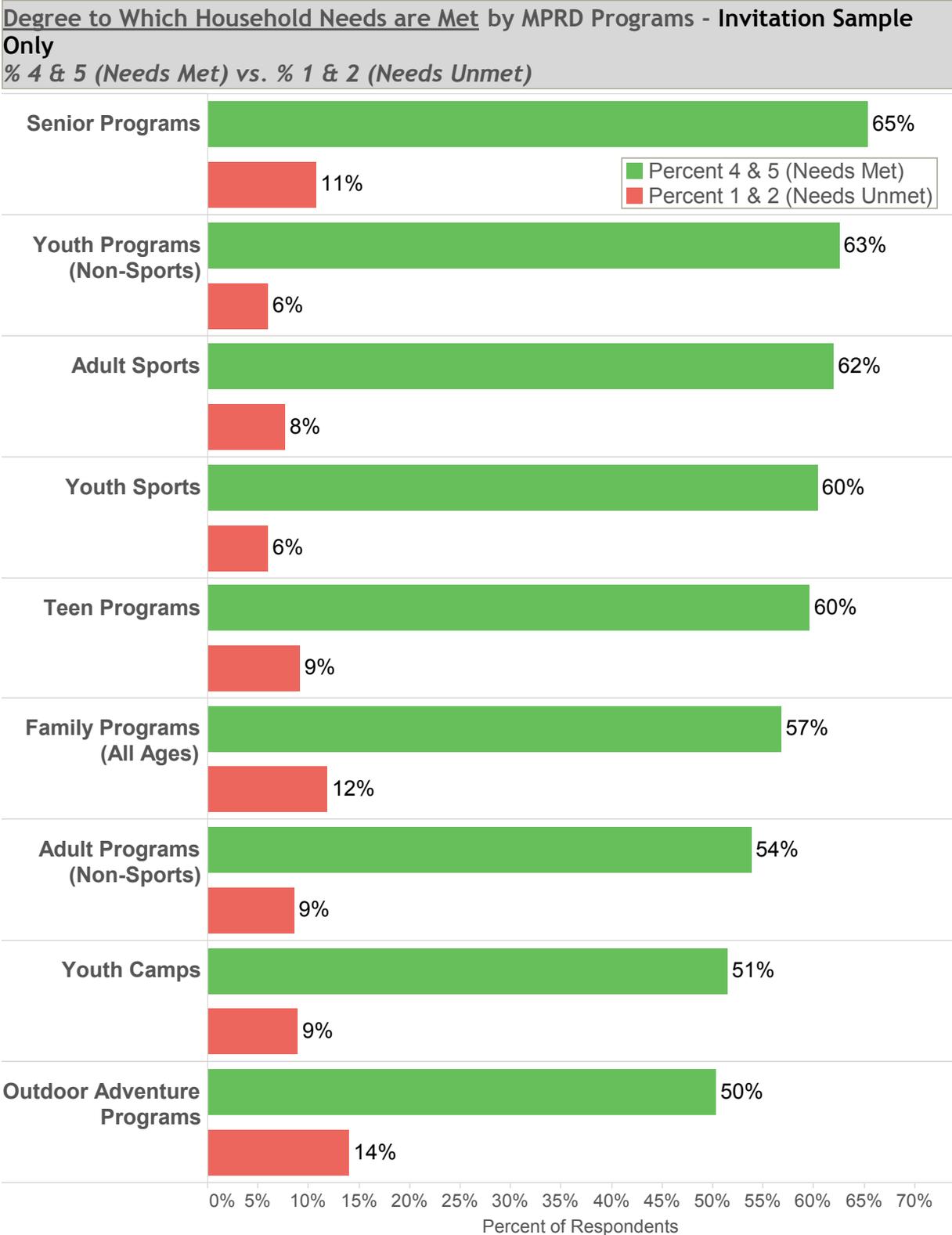
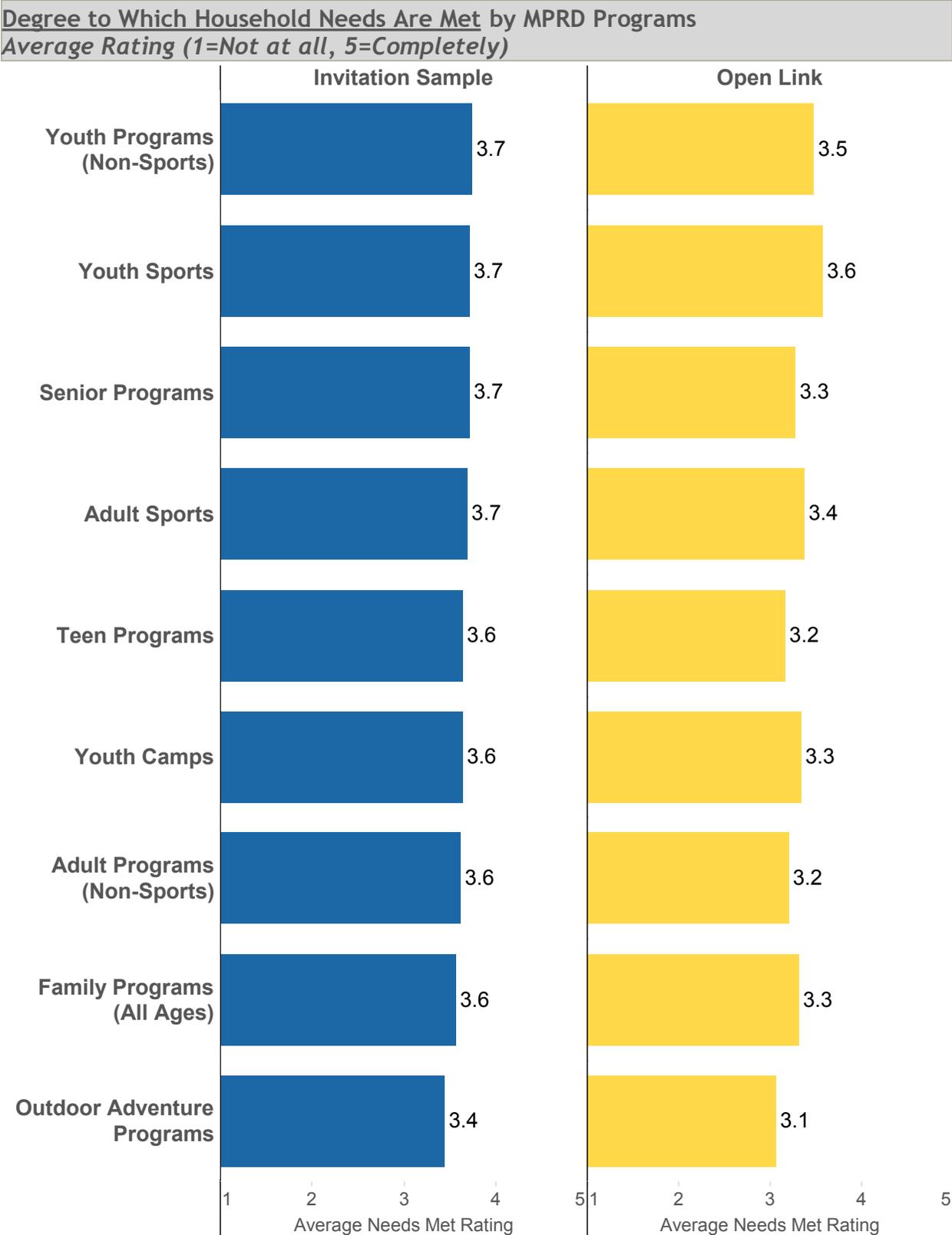


Figure 16: Degree to Which Household Needs are Met by MPRD Programs – Average Rating



Importance vs. Needs-Met Matrix – Current Programs

Another “Importance vs. Needs-Met” matrix allows a comparison of programs based on level of importance and degree to which household needs are being met. Scores are depicted in this matrix by using the mid-points for both questions to divide into four quadrants. The Importance scale midpoint was 3.3 (the median rating for importance across all programs); the Needs-Met midpoint was 3.6.

Programs in the upper right quadrant are considered to be highly important and are also adequately meeting the needs of respondent households. Though it is less critical to consider future enhancements for these programs, it is necessary to maintain them to keep community satisfaction high:

- Youth sports
- Youth programs

The upper left quadrant displays programs that are perceived as important but have a lower level of needs being met. Therefore, improvements to and monitoring of these programs may boost the degree to which community members feel their household needs are being met:

- Family programs
- Outdoor adventure programs

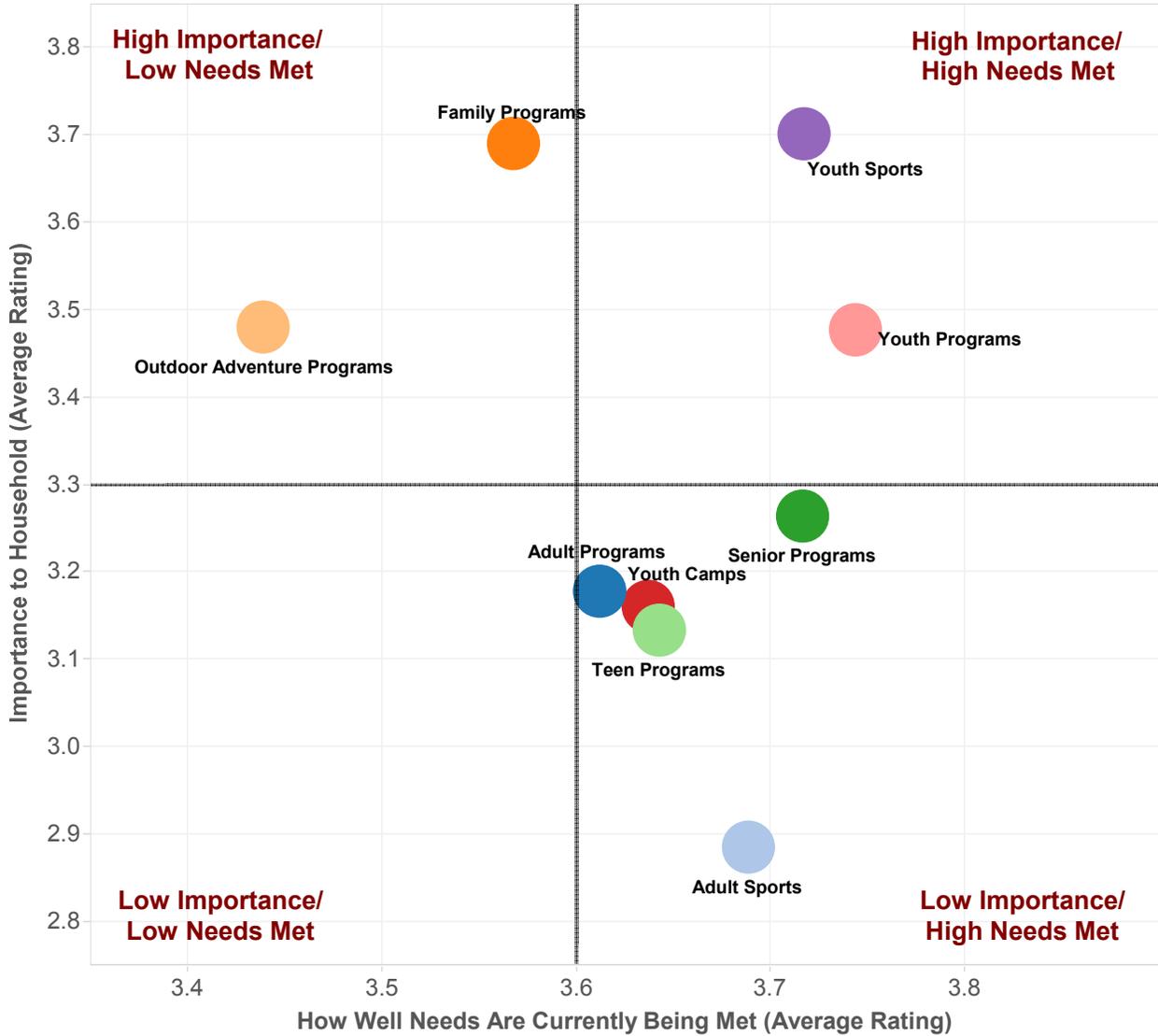
The programs located in the lower right quadrant are less important to households, but are currently meeting their needs well. Allocation of funding towards these programs may need to be reconsidered, as funds could potentially be better spent elsewhere:

- Senior programs
- Adult programs
- Youth camps
- Teen programs
- Adult sports

Finally, programs found in the lower left quadrant are amenities that are not meeting needs well, though they are not important to the majority of households in Meridian. These programs are considered “niche” amenities, as they are important to fewer members of the community. None of the programs evaluated by respondents fell into this category, which may make future planning and of parks and recreation resources easier.

Figure 17: Current Programs – Importance vs. Needs Met Matrix
Invitation Sample Only

Level of Importance vs. Needs Met for Current MPRD Programs - Invitation Sample Only



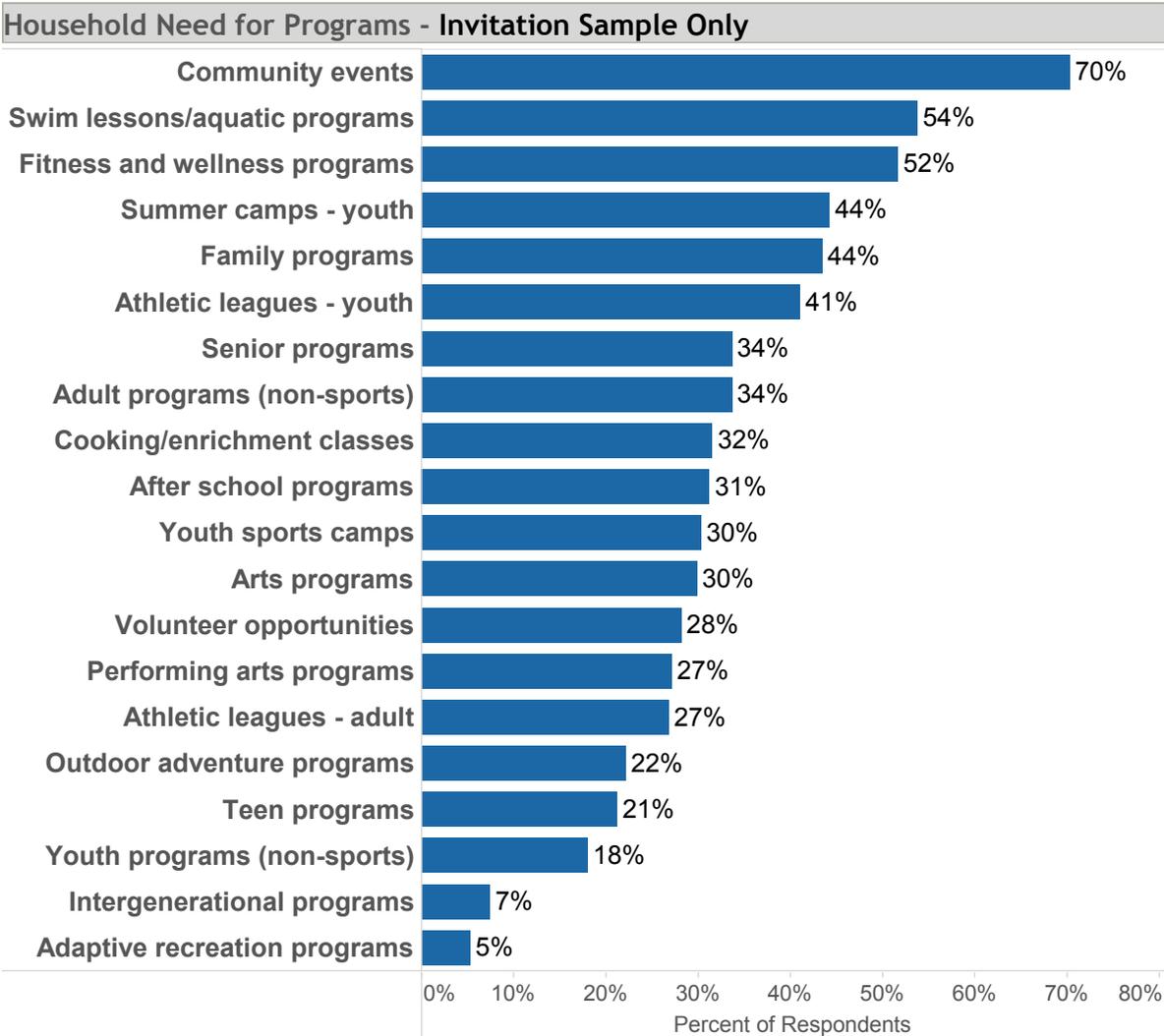
PROGRAMS, ACTIVITIES, AND SPECIAL EVENTS

A series of questions was asked on the survey regarding parks and recreation programs and special events. From a list of twenty programs, respondents were asked to indicate the programs for which their household had a need. Then from the list of choices, they were asked to select up to three choices as top priorities to be added, expanded, or improved in Meridian.

Household Need for Programs

Seven in 10 invitation respondents reported a need for community events, by far the most important program need for households. Over half of invitation respondents also indicated a need for swim lessons/aquatic programs (54 percent) and fitness and wellness programs (52 percent).

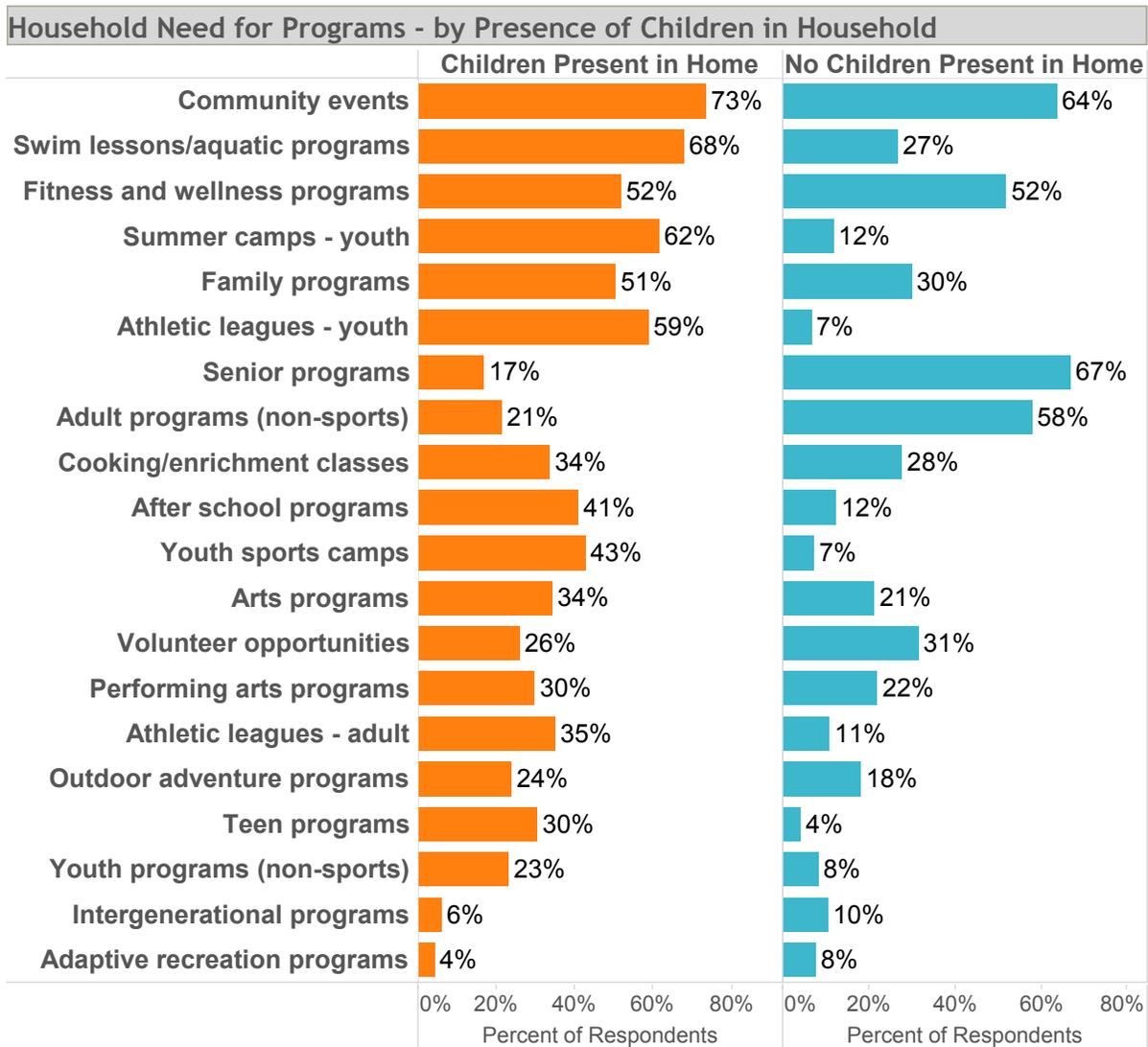
Figure 18: Household Need for Programs
Invitation Sample Only



Invitation responses were also analyzed by household profile (Figure 19 below):

Program Needs by Area. As might be expected, respondents with children at home were especially likely to indicate a need for community events, swim lessons/aquatic programs, youth summer camps, family programs, youth athletic leagues, cooking/enrichment classes, after school programs, youth sports camps, arts programs, performing arts programs, adult athletic leagues, outdoor adventure programs, teen programs, and youth programs. On the other hand, invitation respondents without children at home felt that their households had a greater need for senior programs, adult programs, and volunteer opportunities.

**Figure 19: Household Need for Programs by Household Status
Invitation Sample Only**



Most Important Program to Household

Using the same list of programs, respondents chose their first, second, and third priorities to be added, expanded, or improved in Meridian. Figure 20 illustrates the percentage of invitation respondents who selected each facility as their first, second, and third priority, ranked by the combined total to show prioritization of the program overall. As shown, the top program is community events, with 42 percent of invitation respondents selecting this as one of their top three priorities. Community events also received the highest share of respondents choosing it as their single most important priority (21 percent). Other top program priorities include fitness and wellness programs (31 percent), family programs (31 percent), swim lessons/aquatic programs (28 percent), youth athletic leagues (26 percent), and senior programs (19 percent).

Figure 20: Top Three Most Important Programs to Add, Expand, or Improve Invitation Sample Only

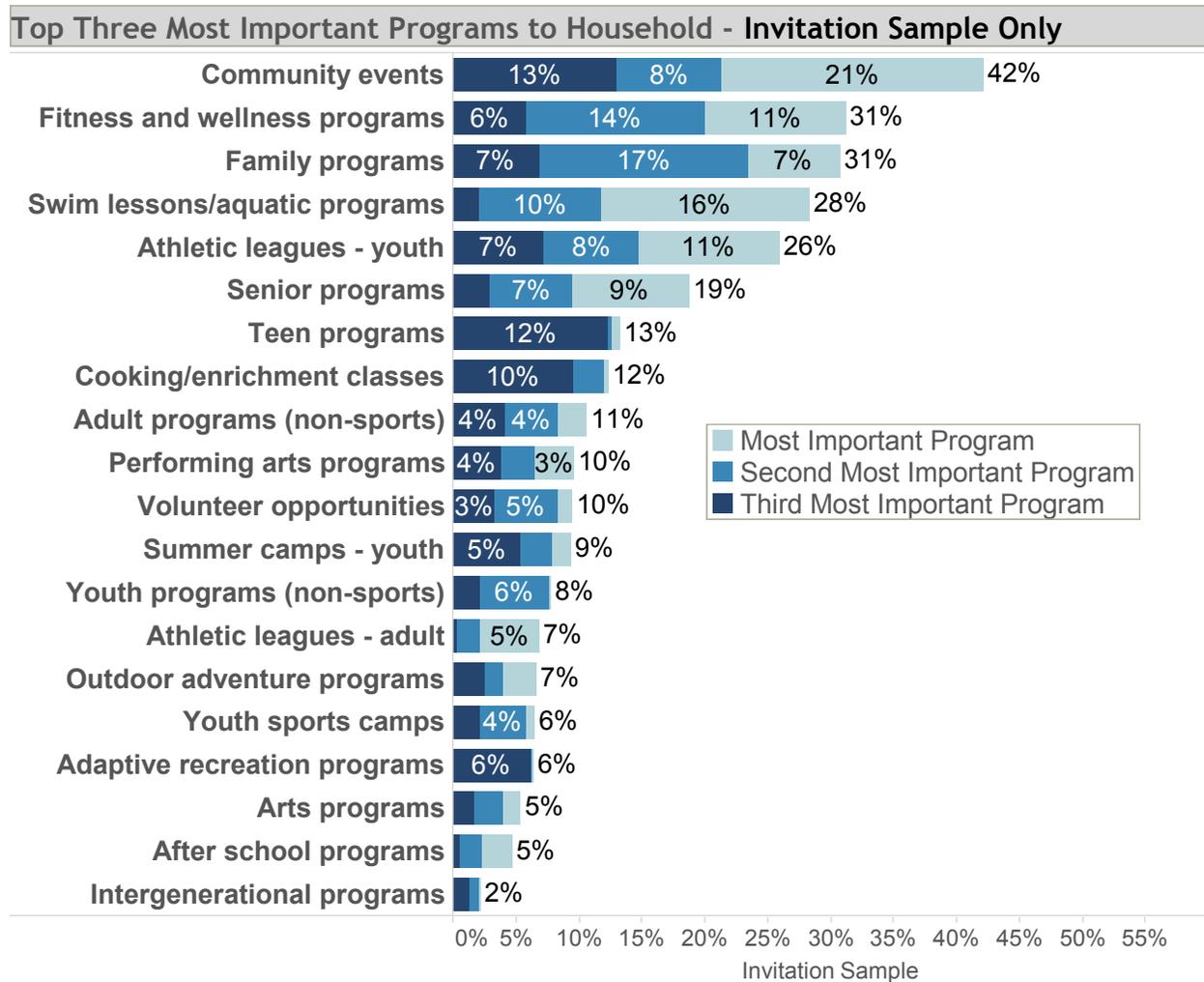
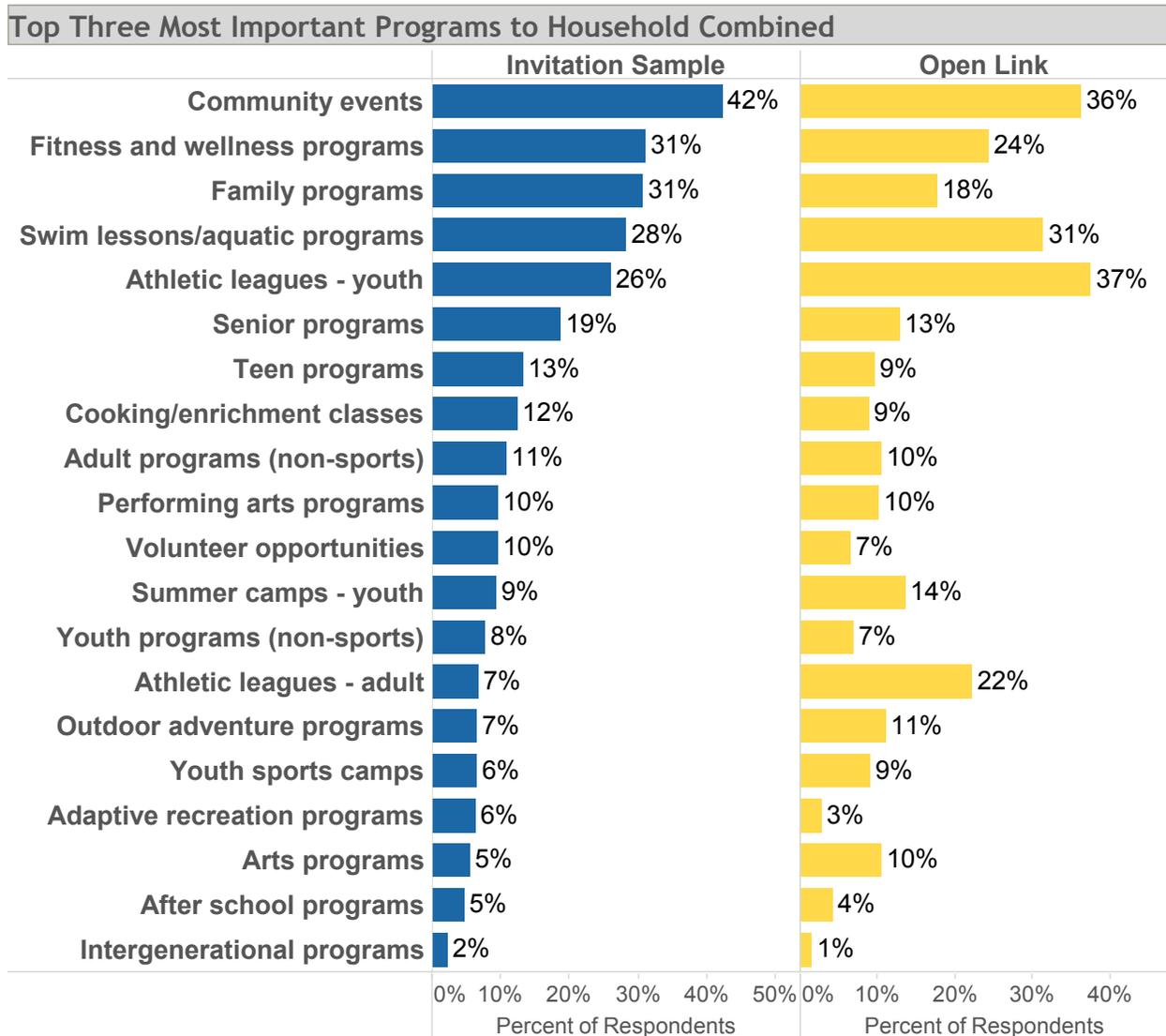


Figure 21 below shows the percentage of respondents who indicated the program was a first, second, or third priority overall, by survey sample. Program priorities vary somewhat between the invitation respondents and open link respondents. Invitation respondents were more likely to prioritize community events, fitness and wellness programs, family programs, and senior programs. Open link respondents placed higher priority on youth athletic leagues, youth summer camps, adult athletic leagues, and arts programs.

Figure 21: Top Three Most Important Programs to Add, Expand, or Improve Combined



VALUES AND VISION

Top Areas Parks & Recreation Should Focus on Improving

Respondents were asked to identify three community issues that Meridian Parks and Recreation should focus on improving from a list of potential areas. From the list, respondents indicated their number one priority, number two priority, and number three priority. Figure 22 on the following page depicts the share of respondents who chose each of the items as their top, second, or third priority. Priorities are sorted by the total share of invitation respondents who chose each issue as one of their top three choices. As is shown below, invitation respondents indicated that the top community issue is pathway connectivity (44 percent selected this as one of their top three priorities). Pathway connectivity also had the highest percentage of respondents identifying it as their number one priority (33 percent). Other important community issues include promoting healthy/active lifestyles (33 percent), family-oriented activities (30 percent), maintenance of parks and facilities (25 percent), safety and security (25 percent), community-wide special events (25 percent), and aquatic facilities/programming (24 percent).

Figure 23 illustrates the share of respondents that selected each issue as their first, second, or third priority in aggregate, segmented by sample type. Prioritization of the listed community issues is somewhat different between the invitation and open link samples. Invitation respondents had a higher likelihood of prioritizing promoting healthy/active lifestyles, safety and security, and community-wide special events. Open link respondents more frequently prioritized pathway connectivity, developing new parks in under-served areas, and a balance of organized sports and passive park facilities.

Invitation responses to this question were also analyzed by area of residence (Figure 24) and household profile (Figure 25):

Top Three Community Issues by Area. Respondents living in Northeast Meridian were most likely to suggest as community issues promoting healthy/active lifestyles and safety and security, reflective of the older average respondent age in this area compared to other areas of the City. Northwest residents encouraged expanded classes/programs most frequently, while respondents located in the South area placed higher importance on maintenance of parks and facilities and developing new parks in under-served areas. These findings are consistent with the open-ended comments, from which emerge a number of respondents requesting additional parks and recreation facilities in the Southern part of Meridian.

Top Three Community Issues by Household Status. Respondents living in family households were more likely than those without children at home to promote pathway connectivity, promoting healthy/active lifestyles, family-oriented activities, and aquatic facilities/programming. Invitation respondents in non-family households saw a greater need for safety and security, land preservation/acquisition, accessibility, and public art and landscaped areas.

Figure 22: Top Three Areas MPRD Should Focus on Improving
Invitation Sample Only

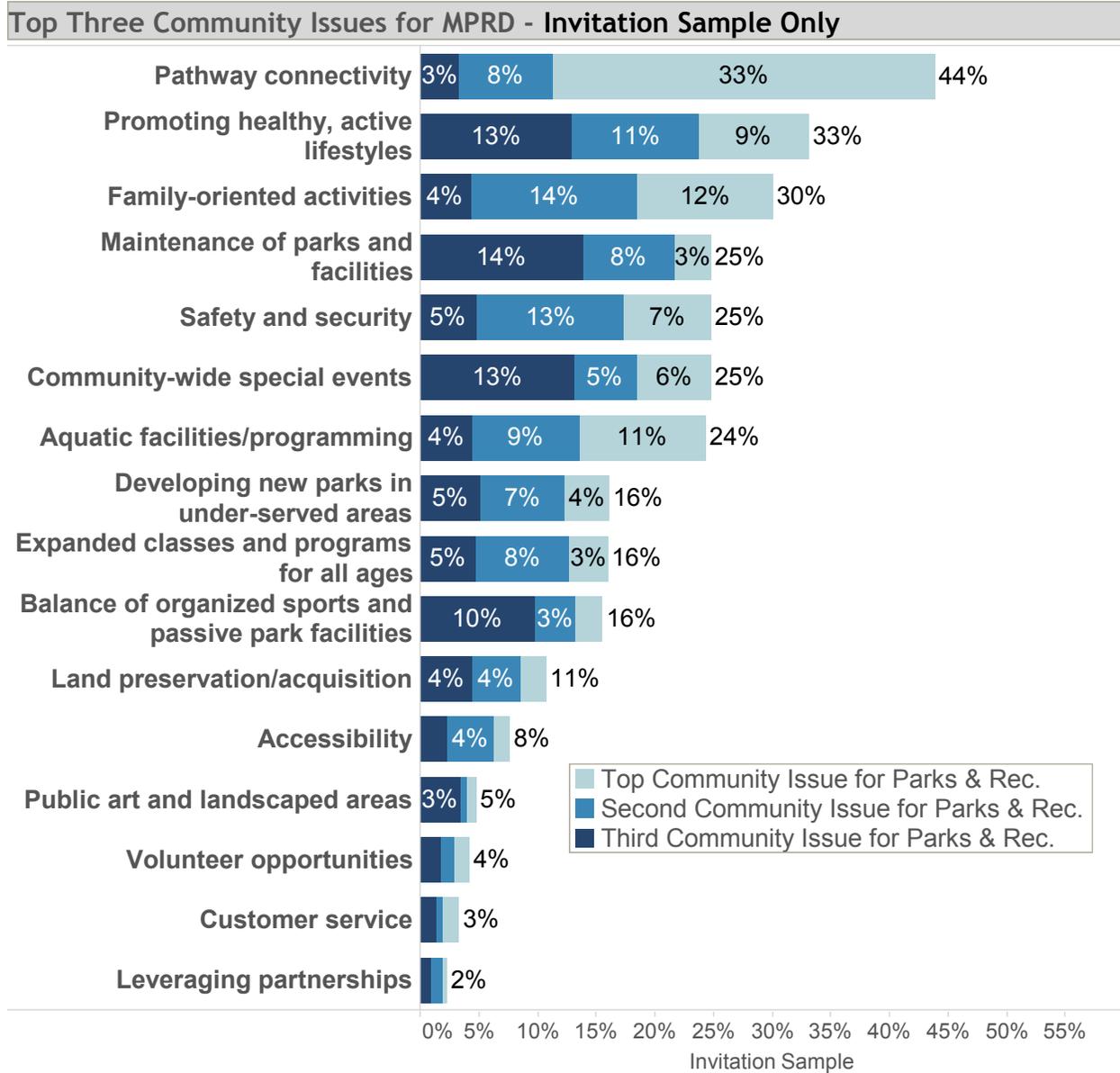


Figure 23: Top Three Areas MPRD Should Focus on Improving Combined Invitation Sample Only

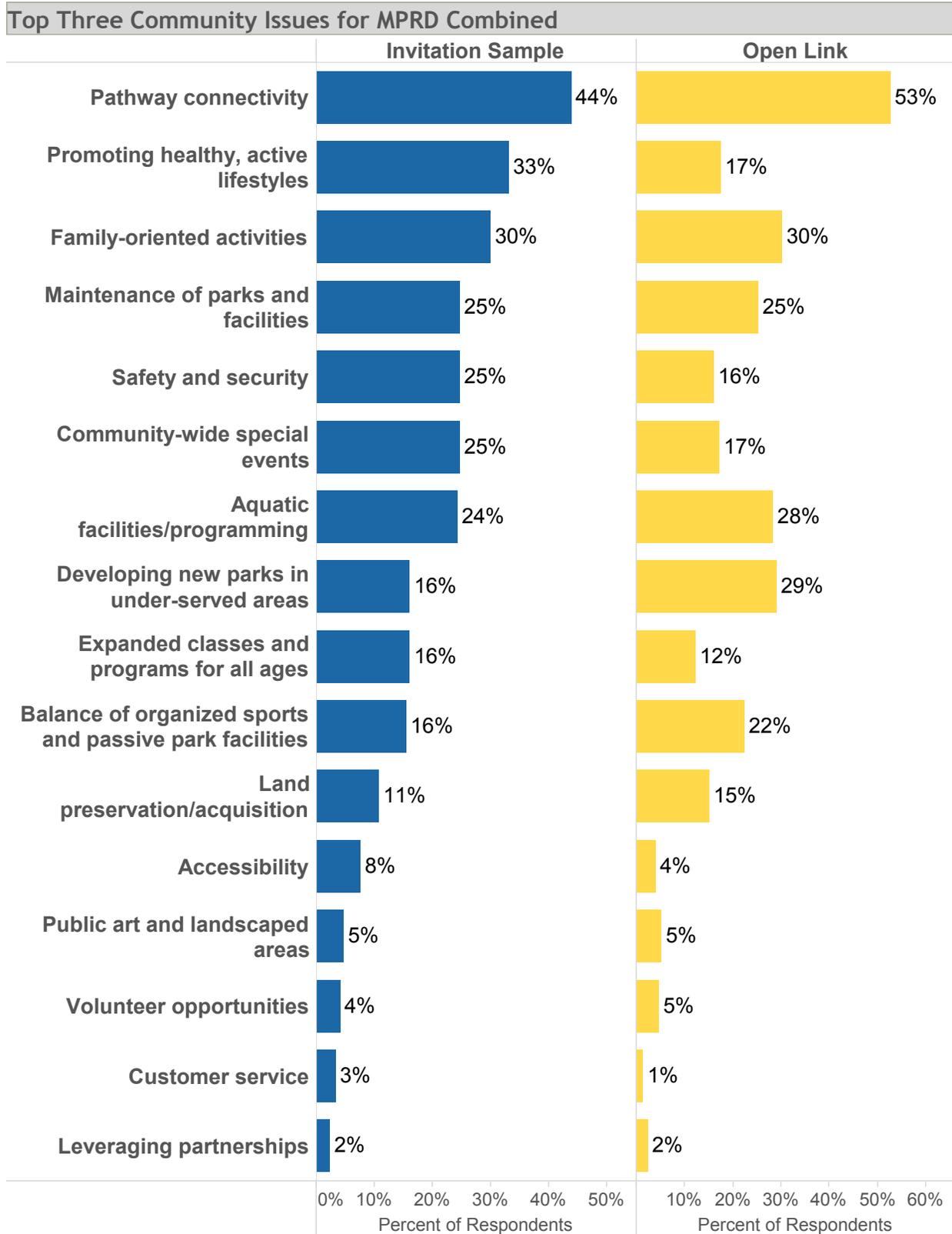


Figure 24: Top Three Areas MPRD Should Focus on Improving Combined by Area of Residence Invitation Sample Only

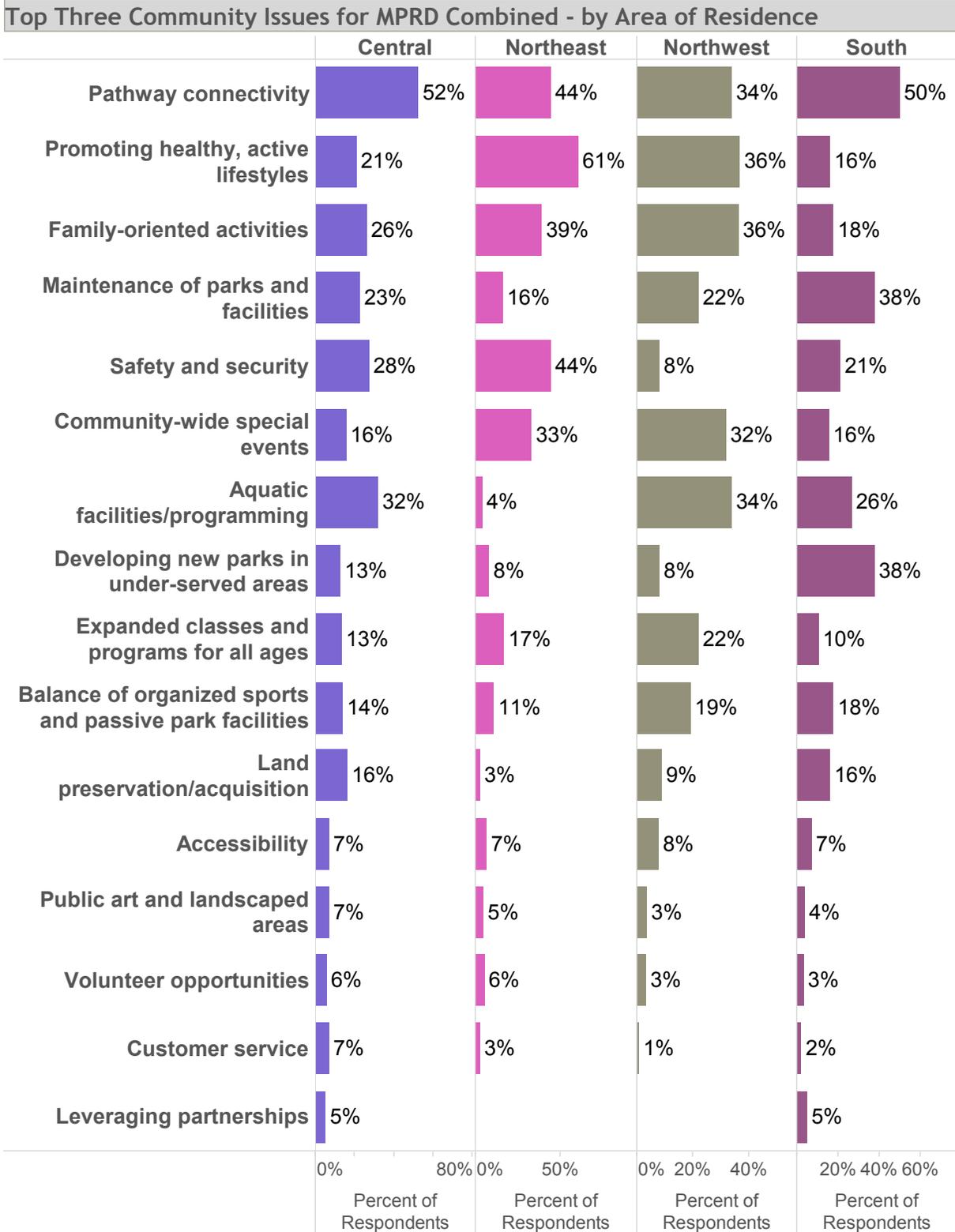
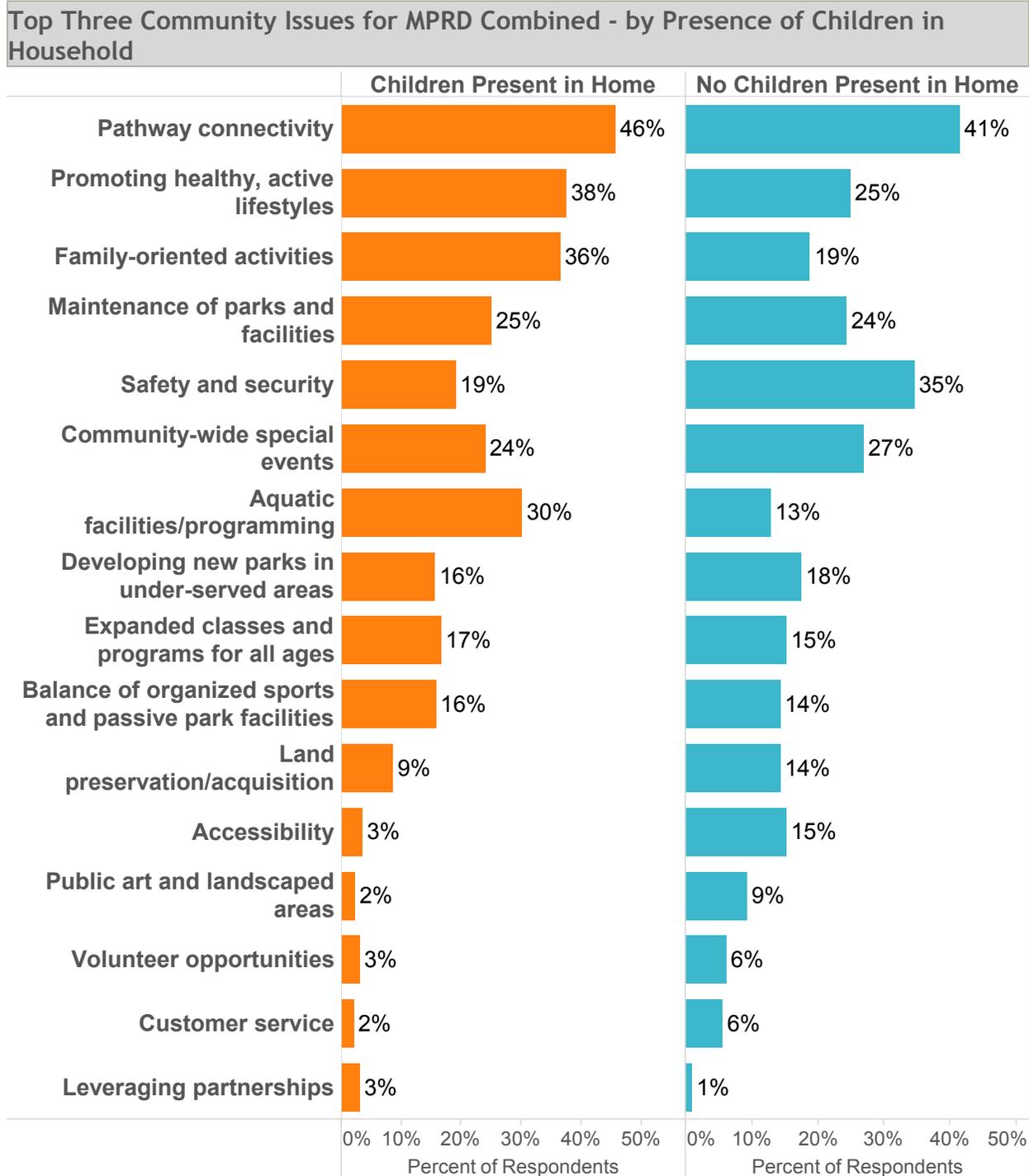


Figure 25: Top Three Areas MPRD Should Focus on Improving Combined by Household Status Invitation Sample Only

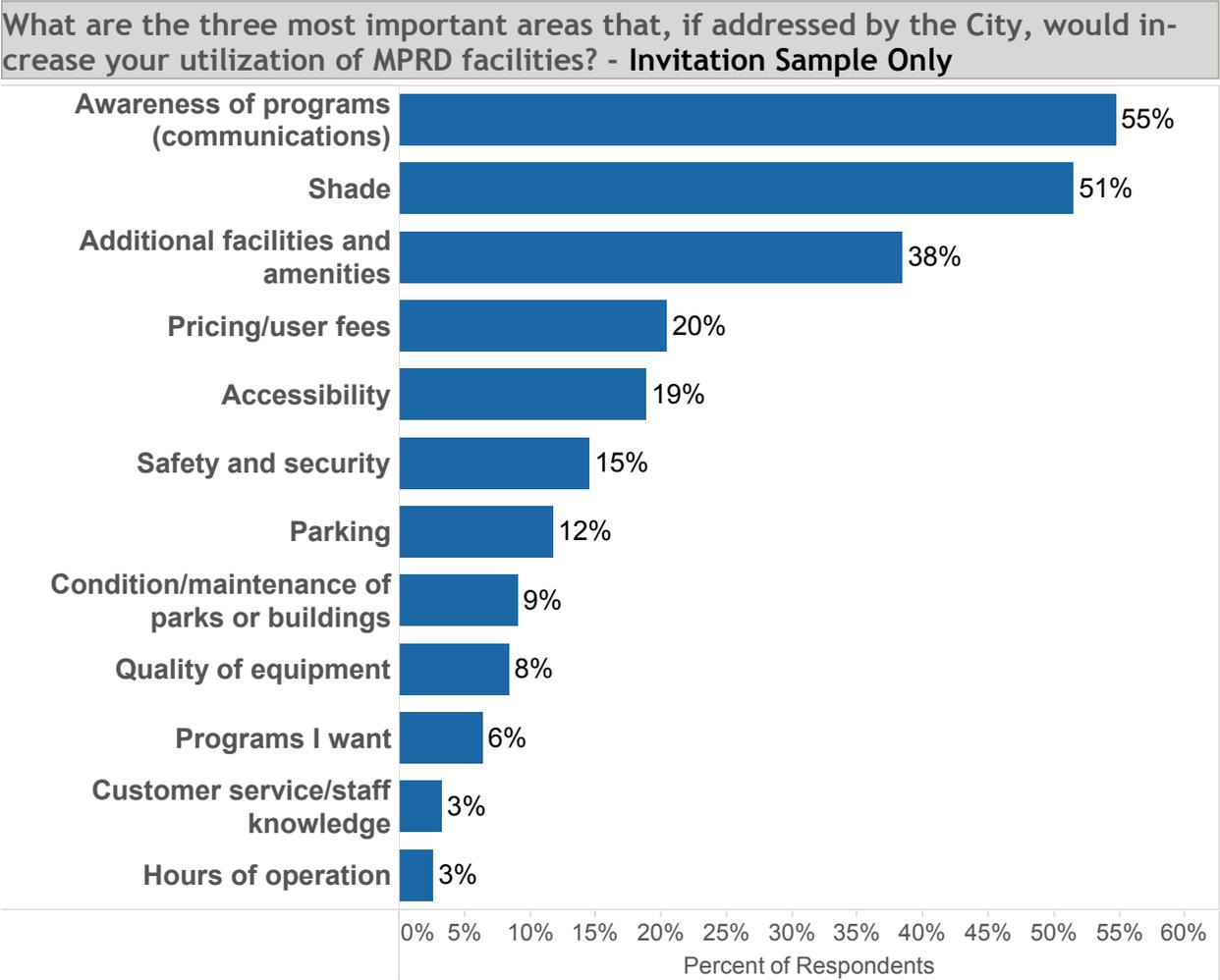


FUTURE FACILITIES, AMENITIES, AND SERVICES

Most Important Factors that Would Increase Use of Facilities

Respondents selected the three most important factors that, if addressed by the City of Meridian, would increase their use of parks and recreation facilities. Figure 26 below illustrates the invitation responses for this question. The top two areas were awareness of programs (55 percent) and shade (51 percent), followed by additional facilities and amenities (38 percent), pricing/user fees (20 percent), and accessibility (19 percent). Areas that drew only marginal support include customer service/staff knowledge and hours of operation (each 3 percent), indicating that these areas are lower priorities.

Figure 26: Three Areas that, if Addressed, Would Increase Your Use of MPRD Facilities
Invitation Sample Only



Respondents were provided a list of 26 potential future indoor and outdoor facilities and asked to rate the importance of each proposed facility as well as to select their top three priorities to be added, expanded, or improved in Meridian. This section discusses the findings from these two questions.

Importance of Adding/Expanding/Improving Future Facilities

On a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means “not at all important” and 5 means “very important,” respondents rated the importance of the 26 potential future facilities. Figure 27 to follow depicts the percentage of respondents providing a “4” or “5” rating for each amenity (indicating they think the item is important) versus the percentage providing a “1” or “2” rating (indicating they do not think the item is important). The average importance rating for each item is shown in Figure 28. In general, most facilities were rated as highly important. The facilities that received the highest average ratings and largest share of respondents providing 4 or 5 ratings include:

- Indoor facilities
 - Indoor aquatics facility (average rating 3.8; 62 percent provided a 4 or 5 rating)
 - Community/recreation center (3.7 average; 62 percent rated 4 or 5)
 - Fieldhouse/gymnasium space (3.2 average; 38 percent rated 4 or 5)
 - Performing arts center (3.2 average; 36 percent rated 4 or 5)
 - Ice rink (3.0 average; 41 percent rated 4 or 5)
- Outdoor facilities
 - Pathways and trails (4.1 average; 78 percent rated 4 or 5)
 - Shade structures in parks (4.0 average; 78 percent rated 4 or 5)
 - Improved park amenities (3.8 average; 70 percent rated 4 or 5)
 - Playgrounds (3.7 average; 65 percent rated 4 or 5)
 - Lights for outdoor athletic facilities (3.4 average; 49 percent rated 4 or 5)
 - New parks (3.2 average; 33 percent rated 4 or 5)
 - Exercise stations along trails in parks (3.2 average; 39 percent rated 4 or 5)
 - Splash pads (3.1 average; 40 percent rated 4 or 5)
 - Outdoor athletic fields/courts (3.1 average; 31 percent rated 4 or 5)
 - Public art in the parks (3.1 average; 40 percent rated 4 or 5)
 - Fishing ponds (3.1 average; 42 percent rated 4 or 5)
 - Parking at recreational facilities (3.1 average; 28 percent rated 4 or 5)
 - Dog parks (3.0 average; 39 percent rated 4 or 5)

Items that received somewhat lower importance ratings include disc golf (average 2.6), pickleball courts (2.3), and a rodeo/equestrian facility (2.2). For each of these facilities, the percentage of respondents identifying the item as unimportant was greater than the percentage identifying it as important, indicating a substantially lesser need for these priorities.

Figure 28 examines the differences in average importance ratings between the two survey samples. Respondents in the invitation sample were more likely to prioritize an ice rink and fishing ponds. By contrast, open link respondents prioritized to a greater degree fieldhouse/gymnasium space, pathways and trails, lights for outdoor athletic facilities, new parks,

splash pads, outdoor athletic fields/courts, parking at recreational facilities, disc golf, and pickleball courts.

Figure 27: Importance of Adding/Expanding/Improving MPRD Facilities – Percent Important vs. Not Important Invitation Sample Only

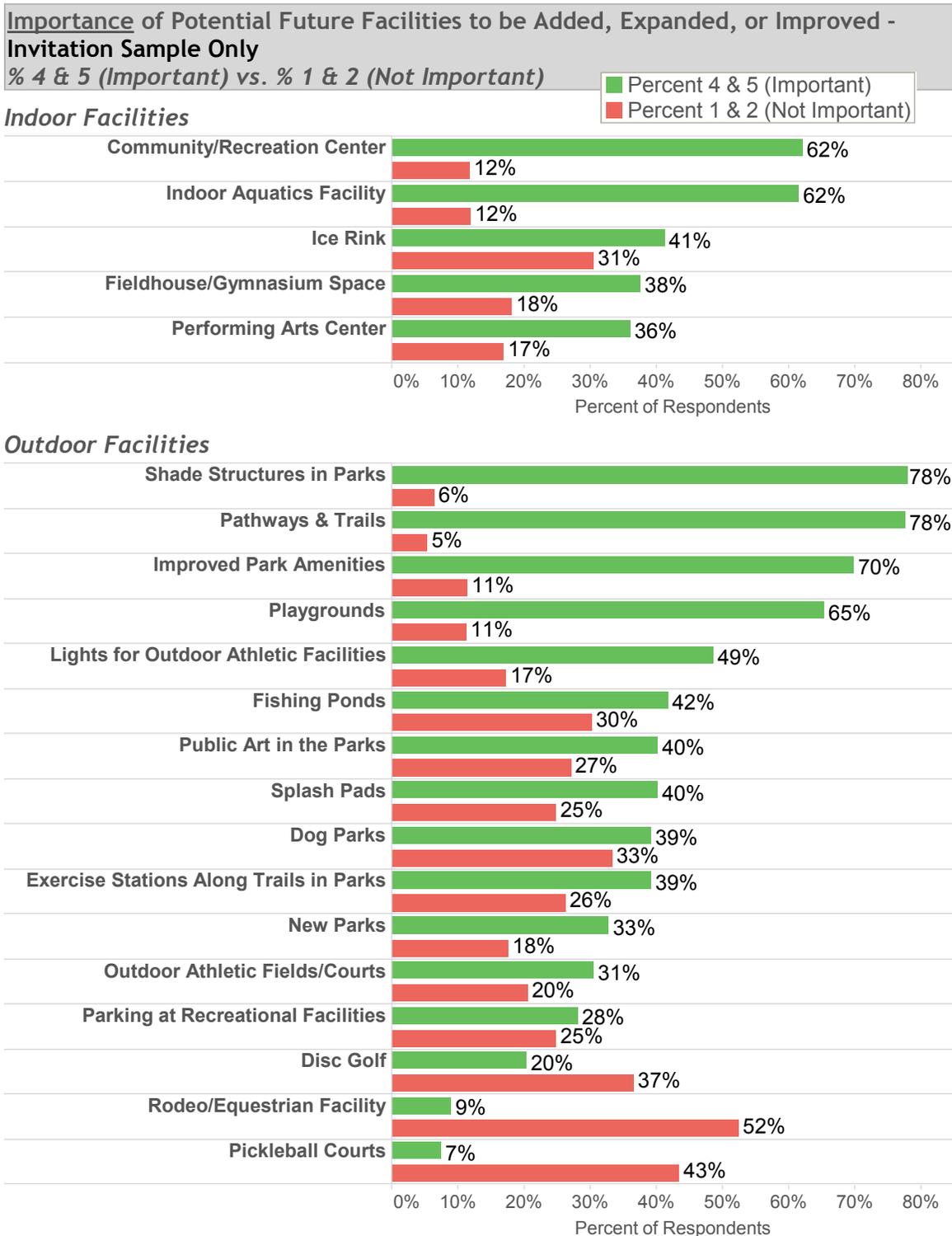
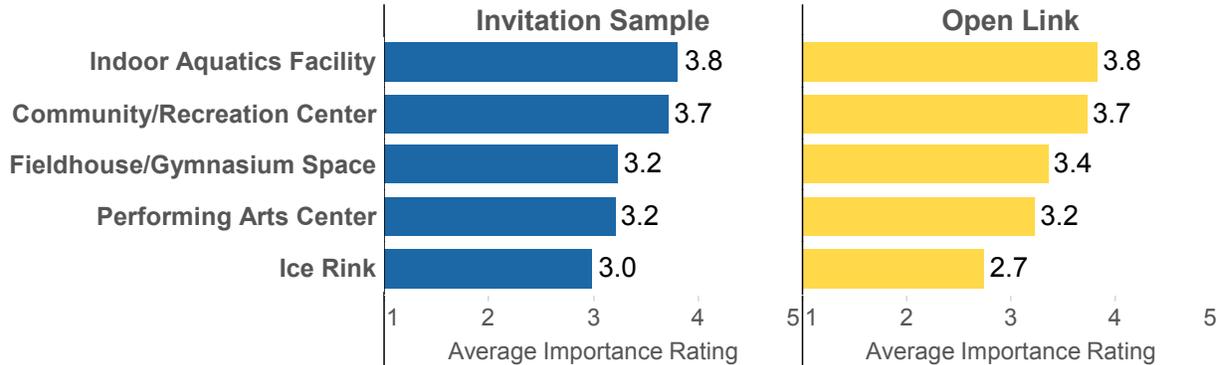


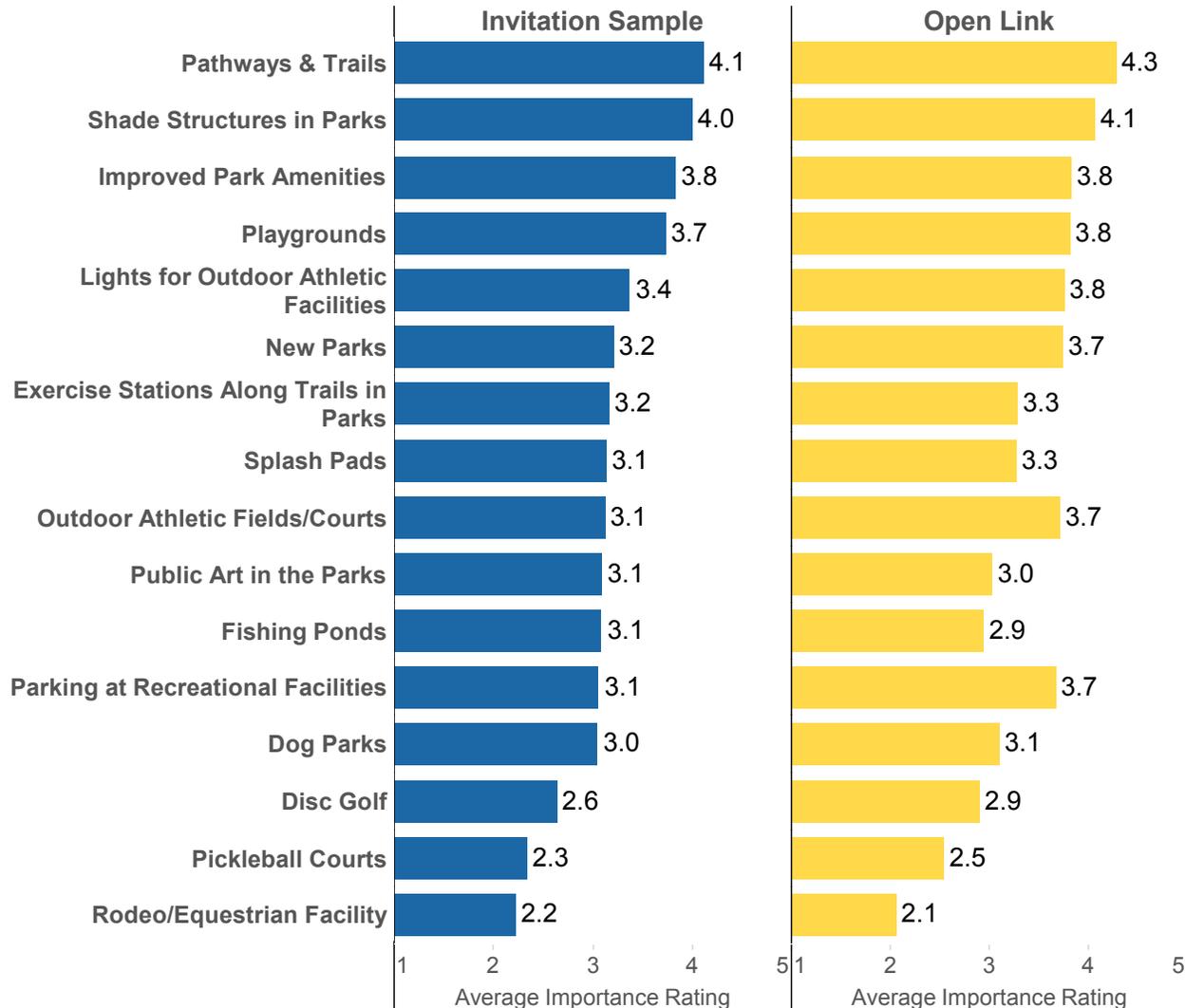
Figure 28: Importance of Adding/Expanding/Improving MPRD Facilities – Average Rating
Invitation Sample Only

Importance of Potential Future Facilities to be Added, Expanded, or Improved
Average Rating (1=Not at all Important, 5=Very Important)

Indoor



Outdoor



Top Priorities to Add, Expand, or Improve

Using the same list of facilities, respondents chose their priorities for most important future facilities to their households. Figure 29 illustrates the percentage of invitation respondents who selected each facility as their first, second, and third priority, ranked by the combined total to show prioritization of the potential facility overall. As displayed, pathways/trails is the top priority by far (49 percent of invitation respondents included this in their top three priorities). The facility with the highest percentage of respondents selecting it as their first most important priority is a community/recreation center (16 percent). Other top priorities include an indoor aquatics facility (33 percent), community/recreation center (26 percent), improved park amenities (22 percent), and shade structures in parks (22 percent).

Figure 29: Top Three Most Important Facilities to Add, Expand, or Improve Invitation Sample Only

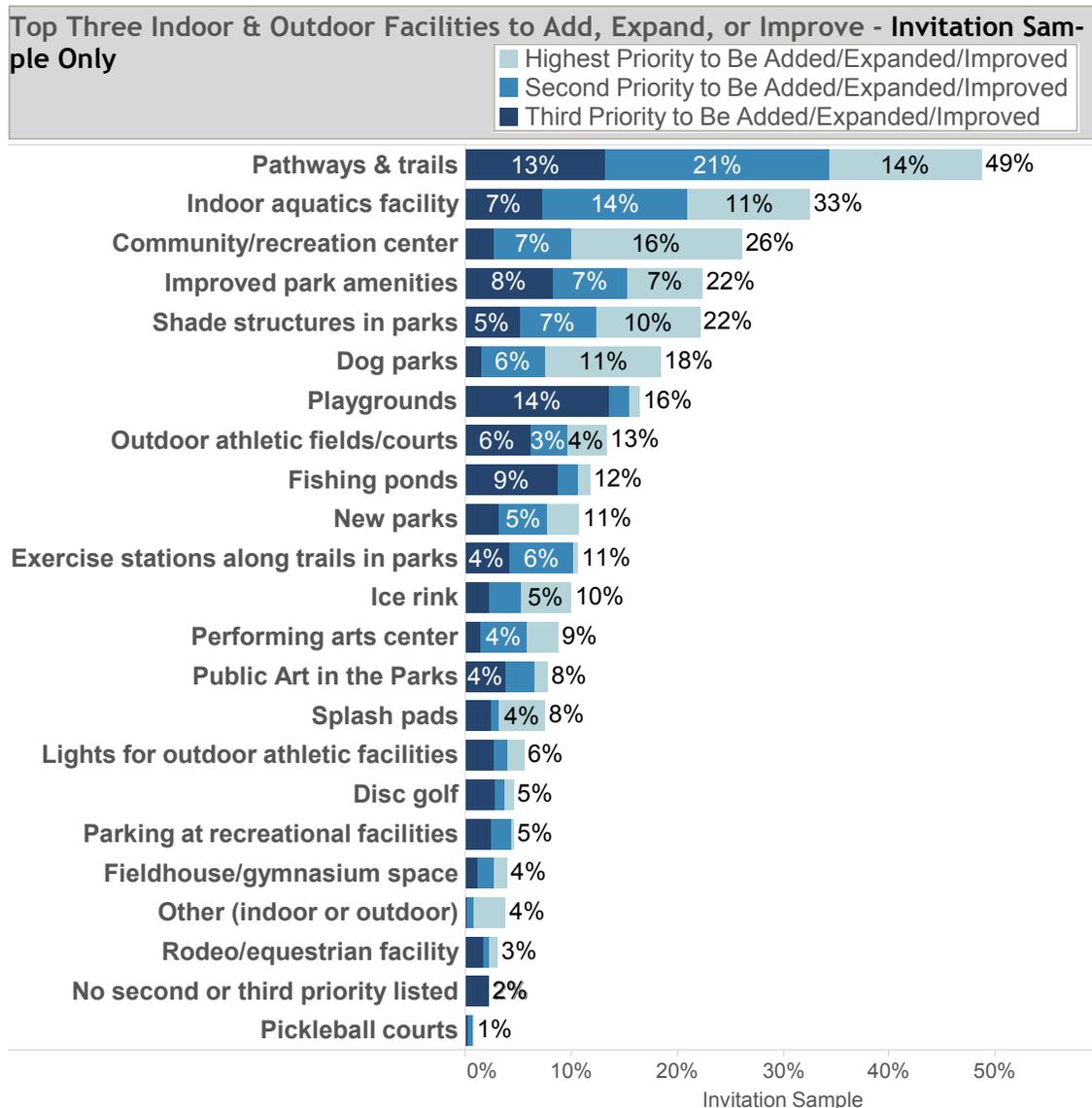
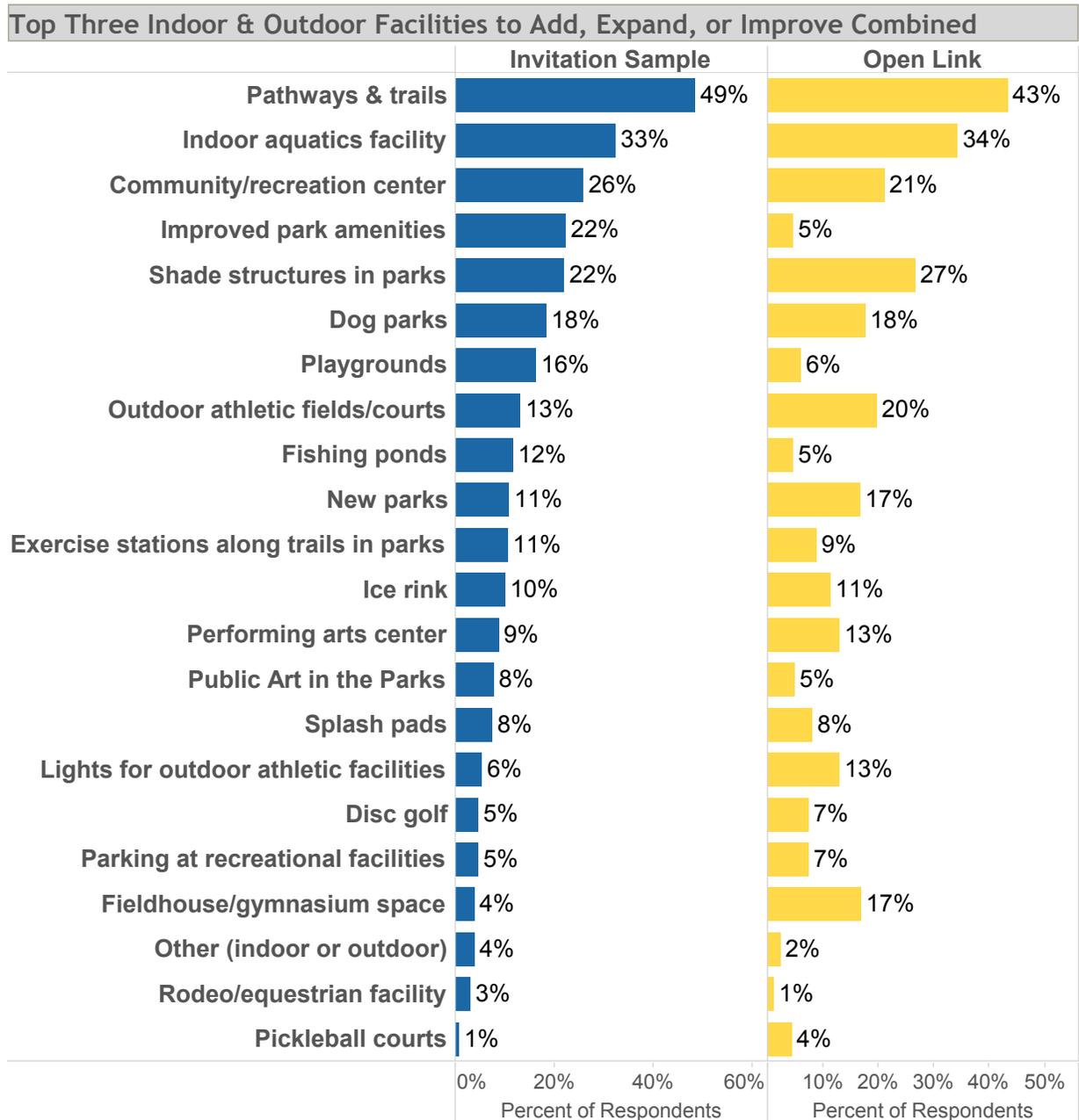


Figure 30 depicts the percentage of respondents who indicated the facility was a first, second, or third priority overall, by survey sample. Future priorities vary between each sample. Invitation respondents showed greater preference for prioritizing pathways/trails, a community/recreation center, improved park amenities, playgrounds, and fishing ponds; open link respondents were more likely to prioritize shade structures in parks, outdoor athletic fields/courts, new parks, lights for outdoor athletic facilities, and fieldhouse/gymnasium space.

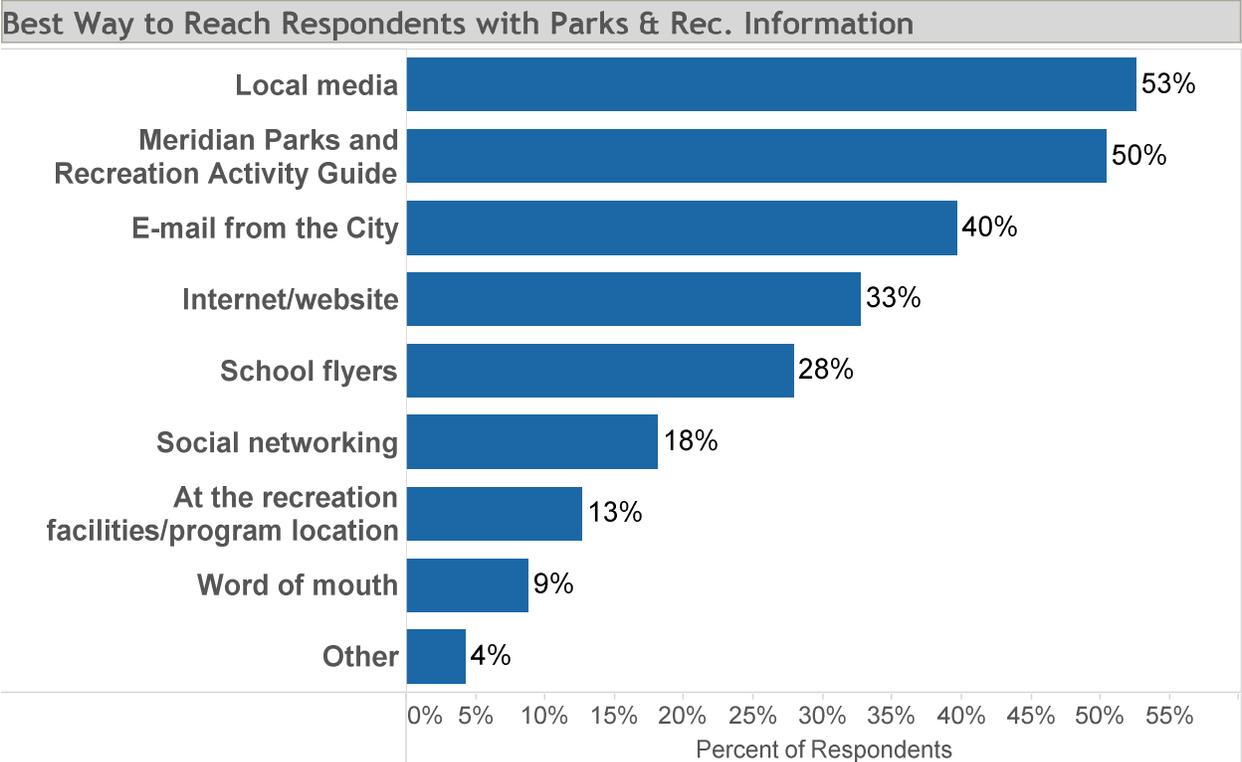
Figure 30: Top Three Most Important Facilities to Add, Expand, or Improve Combined



COMMUNICATION

A section of the survey had respondents indicate the best methods for reaching them with parks and recreation information. Roughly half of invitation respondents preferred to receive information via local media (53 percent) or the Meridian Parks and Recreation Activity Guide (50 percent). Smaller shares would like information through email from the City (40 percent), the website (33 percent), school flyers (28 percent), social networks (18 percent), at the recreation facilities or program location (13 percent), or via word of mouth (9 percent).

Figure 31: Current Methods of Receiving Information and Best Method for Reaching You
Invitation Sample Only



FINANCIAL CHOICES/FEES

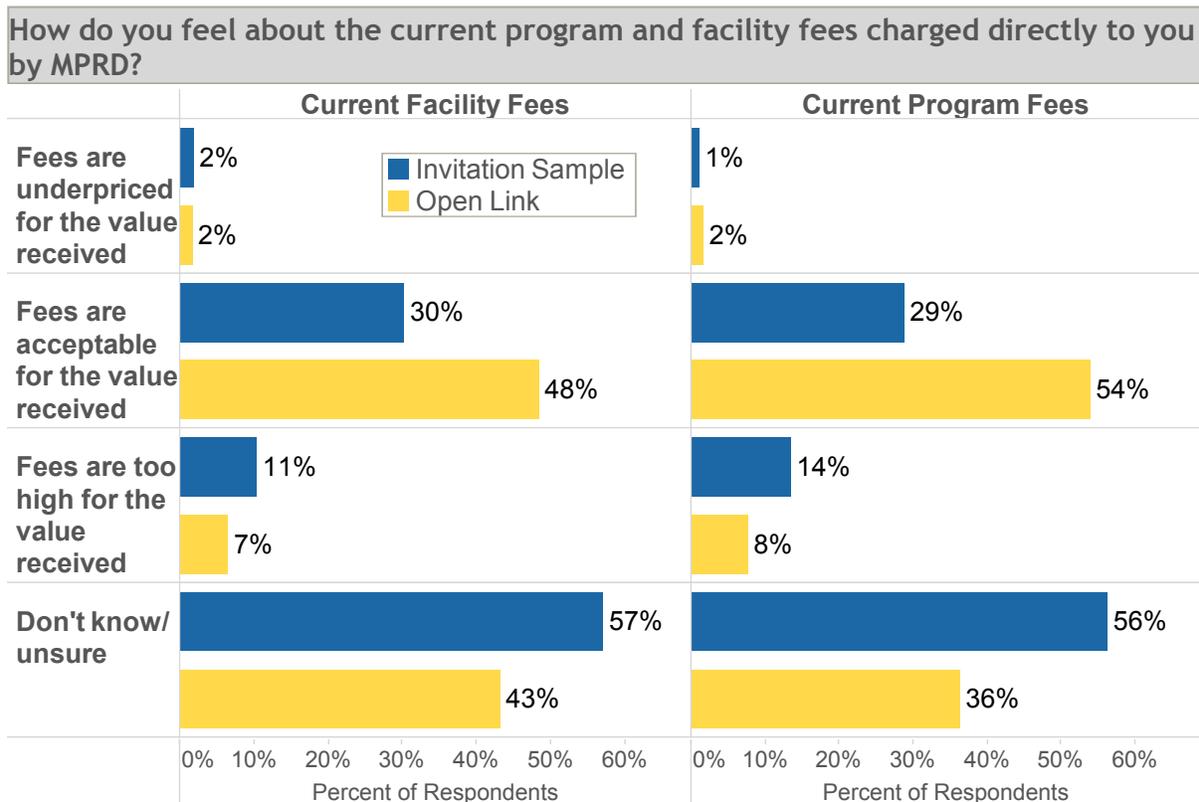
In a final section of the survey, respondents answered questions about their opinions on the financial aspects of their relationship with Meridian Parks and Recreation. These questions include an evaluation of current program and facility fees, the impact of potential fee increases on level of participation, and an allocation of future funding towards various amenities. The results from each of these questions are detailed below.

Current Fees

Facility Fees. Respondents were generally likely to indicate that current facility fees are reasonable, with 30 percent of invitation respondents and 48 percent of open link respondents feeling that fees are acceptable for the value received. Eleven percent of invitation respondents feel fees are too high, and only 2 percent said fees were underpriced. Fifty-seven percent were unsure.

Program Fees. Similarly, 29 percent of invitation respondents and 54 percent of open link respondents believe current program fees are reasonable. Fourteen percent of invitation sample respondents indicated that fees are too expensive and one percent said they are underpriced. Fifty-six percent didn't know.

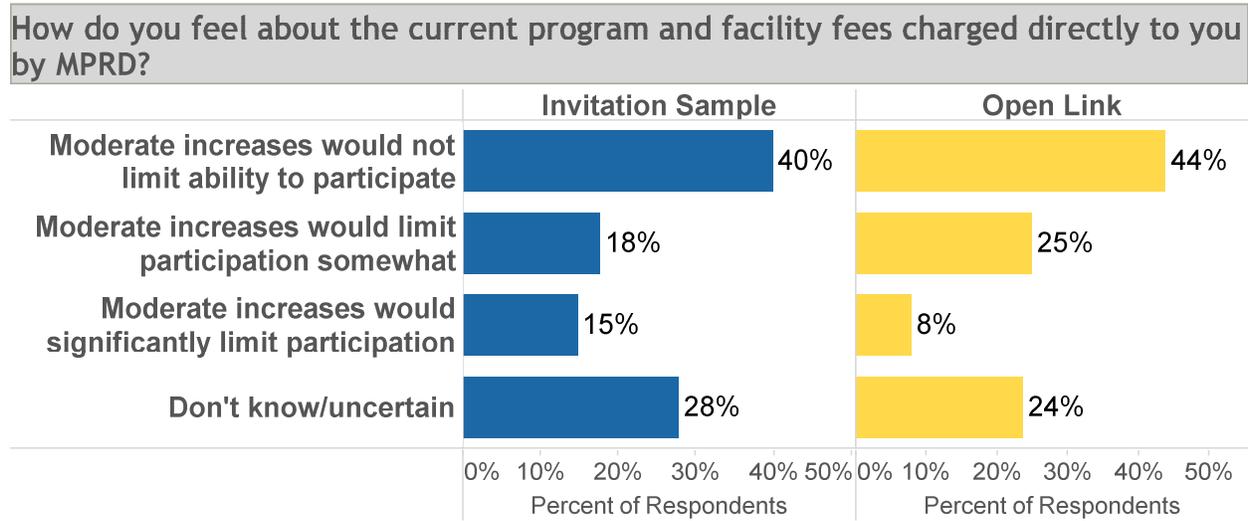
Figure 32: How do you feel about the current program and facility fees charged by MPRD?



Impact of Fee Increases

Respondents were asked what impact, if any, fee increases would have on their current level of participation in programs, services, or use of facilities. Among invitation respondents who did not answer “don’t know/uncertain”, most believed that moderate fee increases would not limit their ability to participate (40 percent). Similarly, among open link respondents who expressed an opinion on this question, 44 percent reported that increases would not limit their participation. Overall, these results indicate that moderate fee increases would not significantly limit current participation levels.

Figure 33: Potential Impact of Fee Increases on Current Level of Participation

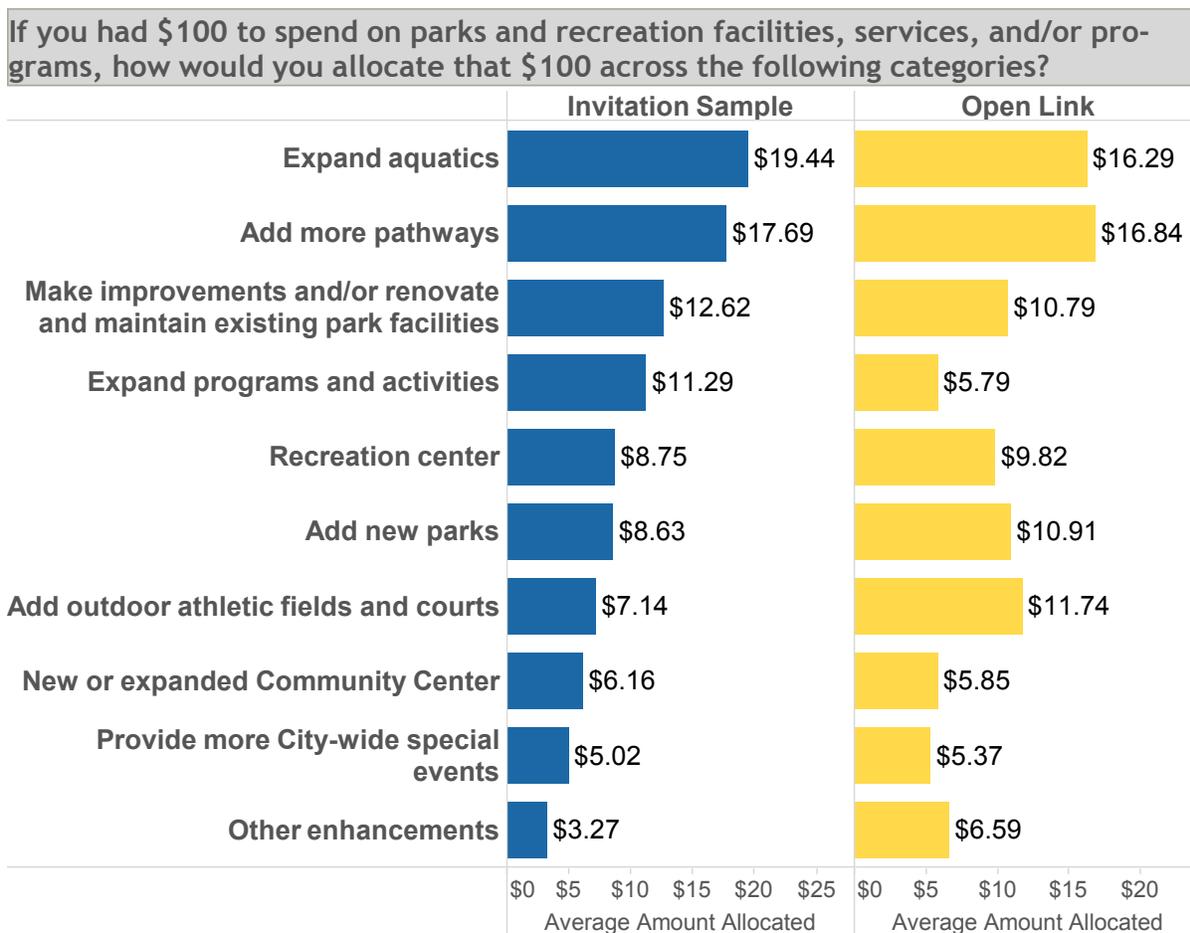


Allocation of Funding

Lastly, respondents were asked, “If you had \$100 to spend on parks and recreation facilities, services, and/or programs, how would you allocate that \$100 across the following categories?” and were provided with a list of nine potential categories for funding. Figure 34 to follow depicts the average amount allocated to each item by sample type. As shown, invitation respondents allocated funding most towards expanding aquatics (\$19.44 on average) and adding more pathways (\$17.69), followed by making improvements and/or renovating/maintaining existing park facilities (\$12.62) and expanding programs/activities (\$11.29). Items that received little funding include providing more City-wide special events (\$5.02) and a new or expanded Community Center (\$6.16).

When compared to open link respondents, invitation respondents on average designated more towards expanding aquatics and expanding programs/activities. Higher funding for adding new parks and adding outdoor athletic fields and courts was more common among open link respondents.

Figure 34: Allocation of Funding Towards Facilities/Services/Programs – Average Allocation Amount



ADDITIONAL OPEN-ENDED COMMENTS

At the end of the survey, respondents were offered an opportunity to provide any additional comments or suggestions to help Meridian Parks and Recreation better serve the needs of their household and of the community. Comments are provided under separate cover and should be read in entirety in order to grasp the full depth of respondents' opinions, but some common themes emerge from the responses:

Increase the availability and connectivity of pathways, trails, and bike lanes.

- *A bike path system would be nice*
- *Add a bike path along 10 Mile Creek. The city needs more bike trails that are off roads and away from traffic.*
- *Add more pedestrian walkways throughout the city that connect a neighborhood to the parks.*
- *Bike lanes are severely needed in our area of Meridian. My husband was trying to bike to work from our home. It only took 3 months and he was hit by a car in Meridian. Thankfully he only had minor injuries but I would love to see Meridian become more bike friendly.*
- *Connect pathways, improve bicycling paths/roadways*
- *I moved to this part of the world because of Boise greenbelt. I wish Meridian had some kind of connected bike path to allow bike travel.*
- *I would like to see the bike/walking paths connected together so you can ride from one part of the city to another and not have to ride on the streets*
- *I would love to have a greenbelt type of pathway that would allow me to bike or walk for miles without worrying about being hit by a car.*
- *I would love to see expanded pathways that would make going to the park a fun and healthy family activity. There are limited options for safe bike travel out of Central Meridian to these parks.*
- *It would be really nice to have more trail (paved/nonpaved) opportunities in Meridian for hiking/running/biking to avoid having to drive to the foothills.*
- *Pathways need to connect so there is at least 5 miles. I would like to have a pathway south of I-84. Some of the pathways (3 miles or more) need to be dirt or gravel so it is easier on the knees. Trails like the foothills or like at Lake Lowell would be great.*
- *Trails and connections to the main greenbelt would be good*

Build a new recreation or community center.

- *A full service YMCA would be great to have in South Meridian*
- *An all-inclusive recreation facility would be great. Something that is centrally located. We need a recreation center with the class/meeting rooms, but also the gym space.*
- *I think building a community recreation center should be top priority. This facility could be used not only for fitness and recreational but also community events and educational programs. Walking and bike trails could begin and end at this center.*
- *I really like the recreation facility Nampa built. We should follow suit. I like how Nampa offers PE classes and swim classes for homeschoolers. Meridian should as well.*
- *My family would love a rec center with a pool and gym so we could use it year around. I currently drive to Caldwell to use their rec center for art classes and swim classes!*
- *Really need a facility for adult indoor activities, for volleyball, basketball. After all we adults pay the money in taxes etc. for all these things.*
- *We have the saddest Community Center! This should be the number one priority. The a/c and furnace are a mess, it is too small, and is falling apart. We NEED a new Community Center- there are wonderful classes being offered. It is a waste to take them at a run down center!*
- *We need a recreation center, one that is central in Meridian.*

Expand aquatic facilities and swim program offerings.

- *Build a larger community pool more towards the west end of Meridian.*
- *It would be great to get a pool out in South Meridian. We have a few small neighborhood parks - some that are Meridian Parks run, but not enough.*
- *Meridian city Parks and Rec should be in charge of the swim team. More pools need to be built to accommodate swimmers.*
- *More aquatics by schools because they'd be in populated areas and all age groups could use them.*
- *Please consider another pool. There is only 1 outdoor pool for the whole of Meridian and it is in need of serious updates.*
- *The City of Meridian really needs more pools that are capable of having swim teams. The community pool is not capable of allowing all who would like to swim on teams swim in Meridian, many must swim in Nampa or Boise if they want swim team opportunities. The City also just needs more pools because the city is growing and not all people live in subdivision with pools.*

- *The Meridian pool is overcrowded. Their swim team is at capacity and even if you live a mile from the pool, there is not room on the Summer Recreational Swim Team. Meridian needs another outdoor pool. Families are driving to Fairmont, Borah and Hillcrest pool in the summer time. Though many neighborhoods have pools, they are not large enough for lap swimming or diving boards.*
- *We need more public swimming pools.*
- *We really need a pool on the west side of Meridian. The Y on Chinden is so far for this side. The Meridian pool has not been very accommodating for a swim team so the team has to turn away almost 100 swimmers/year. If you build another one even in addition to the Y, it would get used.*

Expand program offerings and times.

- *Add more culturally diverse programs. Add linguistic programs, i.e. Italian lessons, Spanish lessons, French lessons etc.*
- *Art and other non-athletic programs offered for adults needs to drastically be expanded.*
- *I love how Boise Aquatic League provides opportunities for swim lessons, swim team for anyone who needs/wants it. Meridian is so limited in aquatics - 1 team and it's always full. Lessons are a nightmare to sign up for - hours of waiting and poor management.*
- *I'd like to see more classes for people in a wider array of subjects. But I know people have to volunteer to teach and this takes time.*
- *My son went through Meridian schools and athletic activities. I coached several teams during that period. It was frustrating to have limited, restricted times available, in Boise, to teach kids soccer, swimming, baseball, running. Kids need structure, but also a sense of freedom and the space to explore and relate to their environment.*
- *Please add pottery classes for teens and adults!!*
- *Summertime activities for seniors*
- *We live in Meridian, but we find we use many more Boise City Rec programs. Maybe you could see what they're doing and 'partner' on some programs to benefit both communities.*

Open a dog park.

- *Dog park with pond*
- *Off-leash dog park*
- *PLEASE have new dog parks be mostly grassy areas with designated walking paths near perimeters. Large grassy area in middle so dogs can play fetch. Please don't use wood/bark as the material where dogs and/or people run/walk. Boise's wood/bark dog parks sucks. We need at least one dog park, preferably more. 1 south of I-84 would be great! Thanks!*
- *The dog park by Meridian PD is closed and no other is close by. My animals are family and socialization is just as important for them.*
- *Was disappointed to see the dog park close. City has been too long without one.*
- *We are an animal community, we need to have more dog parks. Look at Bend, OR, as an example of being a dog friendly community, and how it increases health & wellness.*
- *We don't have children. We don't use the parks. We would use a good dog park - we go to the Nampa dog park regularly.*
- *Would really love to see a fenced in off leash dog park in Meridian.*

Preserve and acquire more green space, while limiting development and setting impact fees.

- *I would like to see land NOT developed. Open, green, space - no houses/apartments, but open space, maybe walking paths/sort of like Albertson Park? I am willing to work on this. :)*
- *Natural areas are critical! Adding more pavement and structure is not helpful, and there needs to be an alternative to simply adding more parking at facilities - carpool, etc.*
- *Need more natural areas*
- *One concept that may be worth exploring is a naturalized park that could be treated more like an open spaces/natural trail/minimally resourced park area. It may be fun to have a natural reserve wherein the city focuses on using native grasses and plants that require less irrigation and management. Manmade ponds and/or hills could potentially make the area more welcoming, but I think having a natural focus in one park may be kind of a fun new idea to implement out here.*
- *Require new development to set aside and develop public parks. Either by land donations, fees or both.*
- *We need open space....land for animal use....to add peace and quiet to all areas....*

Keep up the good work.

- *Excellent work!*
- *I feel that the parks you have now are beautiful, well kept, and inviting for families for their children to play*
- *I think overall Meridian does a great job in this*
- *I really appreciate our beautiful parks and trails!! I look forward to using the Meridian Activity Guide to help plan summer activities. Please keep up the good work and thanks for all you do!*
- *Keep doing a good job!*
- *Keep up the good work!*
- *Loved the disc golf fall classic at Kleiner Park. Your web page shows many future bike routes which is excellent. Love movie night in Meridian.*
- *Overall, I think the parks that Meridian has are fantastic! I love that we don't have to go to Boise as much to enjoy outdoor activities, festivals, concerts, etc. The greenbelt is the main thing that takes us to Boise now. Good job!*
- *Parks and Recreation is the jewel to our City's crown. I hope that we can demonstrate our attention to sustainability throughout our development of facilities, amenities and operational practices.*
- *Thank you for all you provide!*
- *The city is doing a great job providing services to the community. We appreciate your efforts to continuing to improve.*
- *The parks are generally very nice*
- *We appreciate the parks we use for our family and grandchildren. There are clean bathrooms, great grass to sit on and close to home! We thank the maintenance crew for keeping trash picked up and containers availability. We are grateful to be living in Meridian. Thank you.*
- *We feel Meridian parks are A-1. Meridian Parks and Recreation is doing an outstanding job. We use the parks on average 2 times a week year round.*
- *We love living and playing in Meridian. Thank you for all that you do!*
- *We love Meridian and enjoy the park facilities.*
- *You are doing wonderful, we have a beautiful city*
- *You are making nice improvements, keep it going! Thanks.*
- *You have/are doing a great job. Thank you for the opportunity of having our input!*