

CITY OF MISSOULA PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE, AND TRAILS 2040 MASTER PLAN



Photo courtesy of Five Valleys Land Trust

Executive Summary





What is a PROST Plan?

The Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails (PROST) Master Plan is an overarching, 15-year plan that will guide the Parks and Recreation Department in meeting community-driven needs. The document has been developed with community input throughout and in coordination with the Our Missoula 2045 Land Use Plan, which was adopted in Winter 2024. Other important plans, including the Long-Range Transportation Plan, Transit Services Plan, and the Community Health Improvement Plan informed the plan.

While the PROST Plan will serve as the high-level guiding document for the department, it does not take the place of more focused plans for the department including the Conservation Lands Management Plan, Urban Forest Master Plan, the Parks Asset Management Plan, the Missoula Urban Area Open Space Plan, and other similar plans. Those plans will go through a separate update process in the future as needed.

Achieving the Community's Vision Through Planning

Through meaningful community engagement, we have gathered insights into what residents value most. The goals outlined in these plans—such as housing, walkability, sustainability, clean air and water, connectivity, and access to affordable programs and amenities—reflect our shared vision for the future. These goals can be achieved through a series of related actions that bring the plans to life.

Implementing these goals is crucial for realizing our community vision: “Missoula is an inclusive city where all people can live and celebrate meaningful, purposeful, and fulfilling lives, while enjoying unparalleled recreational, cultural, and entrepreneurial opportunities.” By working collaboratively, we can effectively implement this vision over time.

Decision-Making Lenses

In 2023 and updated in 2024, the City of Missoula adopted a Strategic Plan that includes three decision lenses to help guide the implementation of its strategic goals: Climate Sustainability, Adaptation, and Resilience; Equity in Opportunity and Access to Local Government Resources and Lands; and Housing Attainability at all Levels with a Focus on Workforce and Affordability. The PROST Plan embraces these three decision lenses and integrates specific strategies, principles, and concepts to support and advance each area.

Climate Sustainability, Adaptation, and Resilience

The City considers climate and resiliency impacts in all its decisions specifically guided by adopted plans that address:

- 100 percent Clean Electricity
- Carbon Neutral in City Operations
- Carbon Neutral in Community
- Zero Waste
- Building a Resilient Community

Equity in Opportunity and Access to Local Government Resources and Lands

The City addresses holistic, interconnected factors that help build resilient futures while also building an inclusive environment.

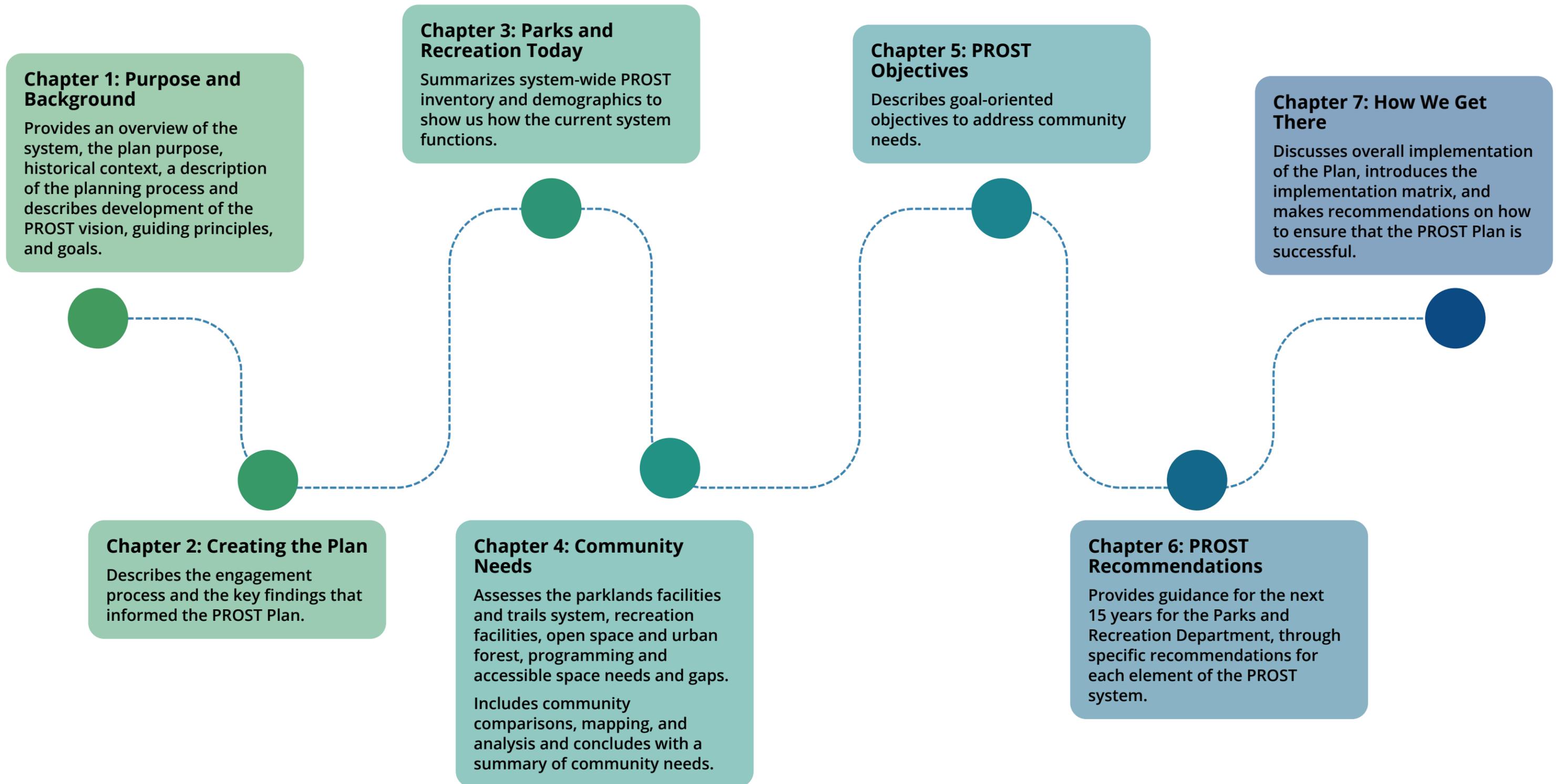
Housing Attainability at all Levels with a Focus on Workforce and Affordability

The City considers opportunities to further its housing goals in all its decisions as articulated in the city's housing policy “A Place to Call Home”.



How to Read the PROST Plan

The following graphic outlines the chapters within the Plan and a summary of the key takeaways in each chapter.





The Public Engagement Process

The PROST planning process took place between Fall 2023 and Spring 2025. A central element of the PROST planning process was the extensive and consistent community engagement that informed the plan at every stage. This process involved three major rounds of engagement, using multiple methods to gather feedback from residents, technical experts, and key stakeholders. Ultimately, this outreach reached over 5,000 residents through various approaches. Additionally, the effort included:

- Community Working Groups
- 2024 Missoula Parks and Recreation Survey
- Online Community Survey
- Artist-Led Engagement and Historically Underserved Communities Engagement
- Mobile Listening Sessions

- Key Informant Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Community Open Houses
- Online Interactive Map

These inputs, among others, helped to inform findings that steered the PROST plan and its recommendations and policies.

Key Findings

Elevating Quality of Life

Parks and Recreation lands and services are key components of Missoulians' quality of life and part of what makes Missoula a great place to live. Residents highlighted the need for a more equitable and comprehensive park system, ensuring that all have access to a nearby park that has quality facilities and accessible recreation programs.

Inclusive Community Building

Parks and Recreation lands and services contribute to inclusive community building, including around arts and culture, and there

is a further desire to see more opportunities for community-building spaces, events, and programs. Outreach to underrepresented community members suggested ways that parks and recreation services could work better for their needs, such as providing more spaces for large gatherings, using native plants, using specialty play equipment and public art to represent area culture and history, and incorporating Indigenous place names.

Connecting Neighborhoods and Services

Residents would like to see an increased focus on providing a connected system with trails and greenways moving people to and through parks and recreation opportunities as well as connecting neighborhoods with schools and areas of business via connections to the community and regional trail system. Additionally, the Community Working Group highlighted the rivers running through the valley as a key component of community scale multi-modal transit, opportunities to protect sensitive lands through land management practices, as well as providing increased access to nature.

Having a Year-Round Facility

There is a need for a year-round facility for programming and gathering, especially during the winter, summer, and other times when recreating outside is limited.

Maintaining What We Have

Residents reflected appreciation for high-quality parks, with an emphasis on maintaining existing parks, trails, and open space. While there is a desire for new facilities, there is a clear emphasis on maintaining and upgrading smaller neighborhood parks.

Supporting Climate Action

Residents expressed support for climate-related strategies and projects, such as strategies to mitigate extreme weather and to increase ecosystem services.

Improving Safety

Some residents expressed a concern for safety when visiting local parks or walking or riding on trails, especially after dark. Implementing strategies that promote a sense of community and a feeling of safety, like improved lighting, clear sightlines, strategic landscaping, activation through programming improved amenities as well defining boundaries can be done through physical upgrades and programming.

Increasing Program Variety

There is a desire for a greater variety of programming focusing on teens, middle-aged adults, and older adults, while the City's childcare and after-school programs remain popular.

Areas of Divided Opinion

There are areas of divided opinion, such as around where e-bikes should be allowed and how to manage dogs in parks and on trails, that will need creative solutions.

PROST VISION STATEMENT

The PROST vision to support the department and meet community needs emerged during a two-year planning process, which included more than 5,000 community connection points, meetings with the community working group and a public engagement committee, and input from technical advisors and staff.

By 2040, Missoula's parks, recreation, open space, trails, trees, and services are more resilient and accessible to our current and growing community while advancing and promoting public health and well-being, contributing to healthy and resilient environments, and fostering a sense of belonging.

Guiding Principles

The community working group, formed of 16 Missoulians who were selected through an open application process and represent a diversity of voices and perspectives guided the plan development and created a set of guiding principles early in the process based on public input as well as the city's vision and decision lenses. The guiding principles were used throughout the process to ensure outcomes maintained the community's core values and intentions.

We believe the PROST Plan will serve the greater Missoula community in the following ways...

Prepare for and welcome people of all ages and abilities with varied programs and facilities year-round, incorporating universal design principles.

Foster a sense of belonging and honor our community by highlighting Missoula's unique natural, historical, social, and cultural features.

Promote mental and physical wellness and social connections through parkland, trails, open space, programs, and facilities.

Ensure access to parks and recreation resources for all, and that they are inclusive, inspiring, safe, and affordable.

Demonstrate and inspire climate action and regenerative sustainability throughout all parks, facilities, open space and trails design, construction, management, and operations.

Support integrated affordable housing, walkable and green streetscapes, and healthy and purposeful green spaces in new and existing developments.

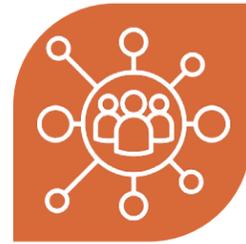
Foster a healthy urban forest and robust natural lands for quality of life, climate resiliency, and wildlife habitat.

Build relationships that continue to advance stewardship and expand services through shared ownership and vision.

PLAN GOALS

PROST goals are informed by the guiding principles and lead to the PROST vision. These seven identified goals reflect and distill the guiding principles into actionable statements and inform development of the department goal-based objectives and recommendations described in Chapter 5 and 6. Two of the goals focus on organizational processes while the other five goals support the community's vision for the PROST system and services. These goals were developed through an extensive community outreach process, which is described in more detail in Chapter 2.

Organizational Process Goals



Be Forward-Thinking & Adaptable

Anticipate the needs of Missoula's growing and changing community by creating adaptable and innovative parks, facilities, trails, landscapes, and programs that benefit the community environmentally, socially, culturally, and economically.



Build & Sustain Partnerships

Expand and sustain community partnerships, and work with other departments, agencies, organizations, businesses, and individuals to advance the PROST and greater community vision.

Outcome-Oriented Goals



Elevate Quality of Life

Ensure Missoula's parks, recreation facilities, open spaces, trails, trees, and services continue to contribute to and reflect Missoula's identity with a thriving, equitable, and well-rounded park system.



Support Healthy People

Promote overall wellbeing with increased opportunities for health and wellness, physical fitness, enjoyment of social connections, and increased safety through programs and services.



Foster a Healthy Natural Environment

Strategically protect, maintain, design, and improve a cohesive system of parklands and open spaces that help to mitigate the effects of climate change and provide respite for residents from the urban environment.



Improve Connections & Connectivity

Connect people to each other, to community, to public places, and to the natural environment while ensuring connected ecological systems.



Enhance Maintenance

Provide stewardship of Missoula's parks, open spaces, trails, urban forest, and recreation assets through innovative, regenerative, and effective design combined with maintenance and operations best practices.

Highlighted Recommendations

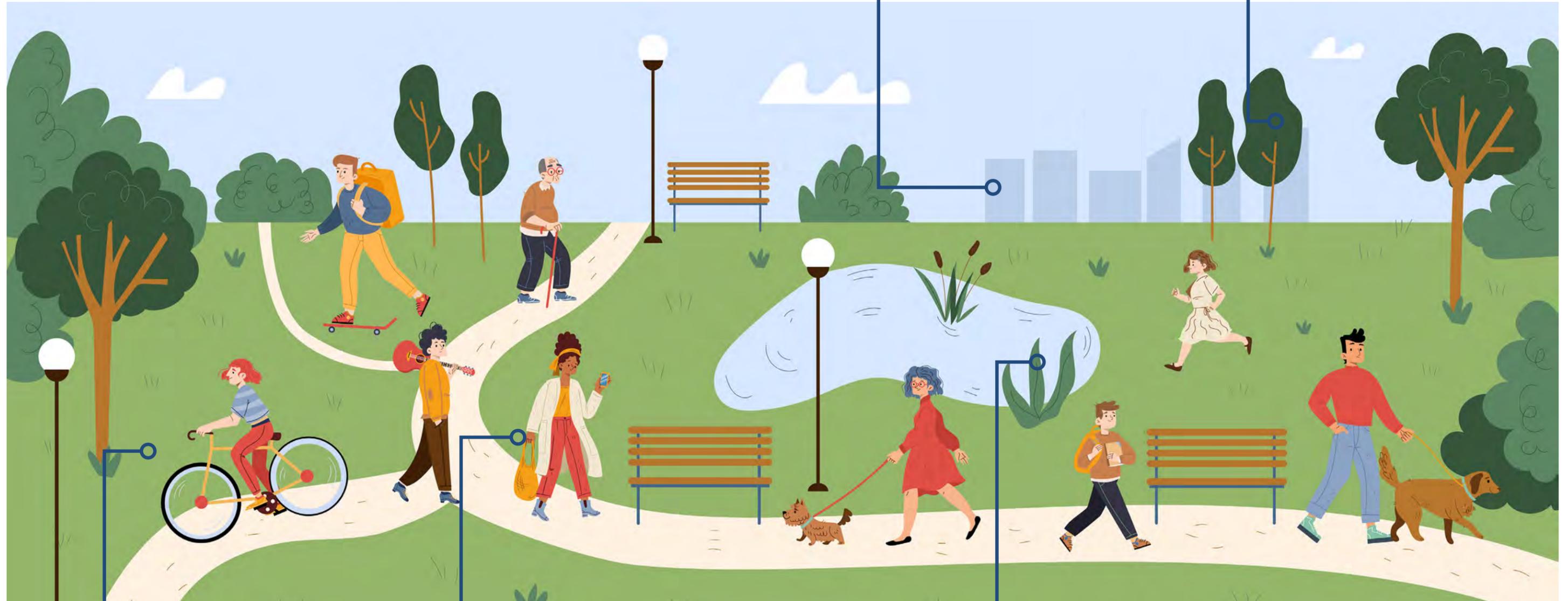
The following is a “snapshot” of the community’s gaps and needs that are outlined in Chapter 4 and inform the recommendations laid out in Chapter 6.

Urban Park Innovation

New models are needed for higher-density areas with compact, amenity-rich parks accessible to all residents—supporting both housing density and equity goals.

Support for the City’s Urban Forest

Updating the urban tree inventory, diversifying plantings, and strengthening development codes will protect this vital climate infrastructure.



A Walkable and Rollable System

Everyone should be within a 10 minute walk or roll of a park, with a safe route to get there.

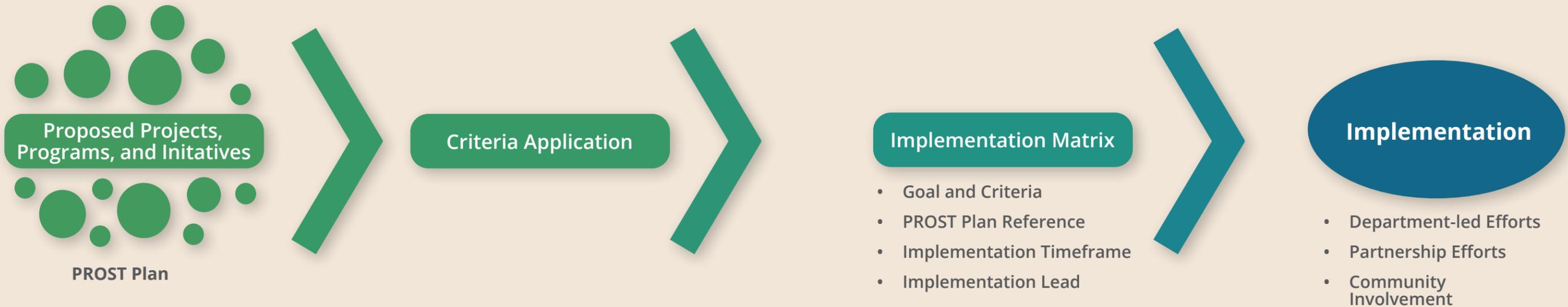
Inclusive Programming

Recreation services need to extend beyond youth to serve adults, seniors, and underserved neighborhoods through diverse, mobile offerings.

A Connected Green Network

Developing an integrated system of parks, open spaces and conservation lands, particularly along river corridors, addresses climate resilience while providing equitable nature access.

Implementation Process



Where will we be in 15 years?

The Missoula community has provided direction on priorities and this PROST Master Plan identifies the vision, goals, guiding principles, goals and elements to create a healthy, accessible, equitable, and walkable city. Now it is time to set the plan in motion. The Plan provides information on how to operationalize the plan over time.

The diagram above shows how staff will implement recommendations from the PROST Master Plan and breaks them down into workable steps, using the general criteria and proposed implementation matrix presented in Chapter 7.

This is an iterative process, looking out in increments of five years and then making periodic adjustments to consider changing circumstances and conditions. Every recommendation in the PROST Master Plan may not be included in the first five years of implementation, but all should be addressed over the life of the plan.

Evaluating New Ideas

The pace of innovation and change is unpredictable. Over the next 10 to 15 years, new ideas and concepts will come up that were not specifically called out in this Plan. For example, unexpected trends in recreation may generate requests for facilities or programs; scientific breakthroughs might change approaches to managing land; or a major fire or flood might affect city parks, trails, facilities, or site amenities.

This Master Plan anticipates new ideas, whether proposed by staff, partners, or members of the community. Each new idea should be evaluated for consistency with the PROST Master Plan using the following questions:

- Is the proposal consistent with the PROST vision and goals? *Briefly describe.*
- Which goals and/or objectives does the proposal implement? *Identify.*
- Does the proposal support one or more of the City's decision lenses? *Briefly describe which one(s) and why.*

Supporting Appendices

Additional information is in the plan appendices.

Appendix A: Parklands Inventory

Appendix B: Facility Asset Quality Evaluations

Appendix C: Park Development Guidelines

Appendix D: GIS Needs Assessment Methodology

Appendix E: Public Engagement Summary

Appendix F: Implementation Tools

Appendix G: Trails Typology

Appendix H: Urban Area Open Space Plan (under separate cover)

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Acknowledgments

Thank you to all the Missoulians and local organizations who participated in this planning process, sharing their time, insights and love of parks and recreation. Without your voices, we could not have developed this plan.

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

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PROST Community Working Group

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City of Missoula Parks and Recreation Department

The entire Parks and Recreation Department was critical to this planning effort.

Project Management Team: Donna Gaukler, Ryan Applegate, Zac Covington, Haley Erickson, Ashley Brittner Wells, Becky Goodrich, Lori Hart

Senior Project Leadership Team: Donna Gaukler, Ryan Applegate, David Selvage, Nathan Mcleod, Betsy Willett, Danielle Beaudin, Morgan Valliant, Lincoln Lake, and Zac Covington

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City of Missoula Partners

The Parks and Recreation Department thanks all the City staff who contributed to PROST and acknowledges several City departments who were key partners in the development of the PROST.

Community Planning, Development & Innovation Department
GIS Services Department
Public Works and Mobility Department
Missoula Redevelopment Agency

Agency Partners

Special thanks to the agency partners who participated and provided guidance throughout the planning process, including the University of Montana, Missoula County, members of the Front Country Recreation Collaborative, Mountain Line, Missoula Public Health, the Missoula Metropolitan Planning Organization, Destination Missoula, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes Tribal Council, Arts Missoula, Climate Smart Missoula, Summit Independent Living, Missoula County Public Schools, and the Missoula Public Library for hosting meetings and our public open houses.

Missoula Community Members

Special thanks to the 5,000 plus community members that interacted with this plan throughout the two-year process. This plan seeks to represent the current and future needs of the Missoula community, and your continued engagement, support and direction continue to be invaluable to the process.

Consultants

BluePoint Planning
Digital Mapping Services
Bureau of Business and Economic Research, University of Montana
W.A. Franke College of Forestry and Conservation, University of Montana

Dear Reader,

We are honored to introduce the PROST (Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails) Plan, a community-driven initiative designed to enrich the quality of life in Missoula by increasing recreational opportunities, preserving natural spaces, and fostering a deeper connection with the local environment. Through this process we have gained a renewed appreciation for the community we live in and the incredible dedication of our Missoula Parks and Recreation staff.

This initiative would not have been possible without the hard work and commitment of the PROST Community Working Group composed of dedicated residents, local leaders and experts who, across two years, contributed their time, ideas, and expertise. Together with Missoula Parks and Recreation staff we hosted community workshops, conducted surveys, and gathered feedback in order to reflect, to the greatest extent possible, the values and priorities of those who call Missoula home.

This plan is not the end of the process, but rather the beginning. We strongly encourage every Missoulian to play a role in bringing this plan to life. By working together, staying involved, and holding ourselves accountable, we can transform this vision into a reality that benefits everyone in our community.

Thank you for your interest and support in shaping the future of Missoula.

Sincerely,

The PROST Community Working Group

Dana Kingfisher	Sherene Ricci
Rebekah Fields	Sue Furey
Adeline Schnick	Sam Duncan
Rosalie Sheehy Cates	Darcy Caron
Mickey Navidomskis	Charlie Tillinghast
Steven Gaskill	Derek Kanwischer
Michael Sweet	Kristen Newman
Karen Slobod	Ria Overholt





Letter from the Mayor

Along with the leadership and staff at the City of Missoula, I am excited to introduce the Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails (PROST) Master Plan for the City of Missoula Parks and Recreation. The Master Plan is an overarching, 15-year plan that will guide the Parks and Recreation Department in managing Missoula's public outdoors in ways that reflect our community's values.

Missoula residents love our parks, open space and trails, and we express that love time and

time again in surveys and public conversations. Missoula's strong sense of place starts with our outdoor spaces and the programs they inspire. And they help inform all we do. In all our planning efforts, we look to coordinate all our long-range plans. The Parks plan works with planning for transportation, land use, public health and other areas that support and improve a healthy and prosperous city.

Missoula does this work best when community and local government work together, and this plan is no exception. It represents thousands of hours of conversation and informed decision-making among community members, City staff and our partner agencies.

This Master Plan will guide Parks and Recreation's work during the next 15 years, and the conversation does not stop here. We look forward to continuing work with the community to see this vision through.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrea Davis". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Andrea Davis
Mayor



Glossary

10-Minute Walk: The average distance most people are willing to walk, or roll in a mobility device, from their home, without needing to cross a major barrier (river, rail, busy street) to reach a parkland or trail. This is equal to approximately a half-mile distance for most able-bodied people (10minutewalk.org).

Access: Residents experience the same level of service across all user groups.

Accessible: In the context of this plan, ensuring the built environment and physical spaces are barrier free, and facilities, programs and activities are readily available and usable for residents with and without disabilities.

Activation: Creating opportunities for more frequent use and activity in public spaces, to increase sense of community, improve safety, drive tourism and economic development, provide educational opportunities, and other similar benefits.

Adaptable: The ability to adjust to changing environmental conditions, community needs, and other factors.

Common Area: Common areas may be developed or undeveloped spaces owned and operated by a Homeowners Association or private landholder. Some common areas allow public access and others limit access.

Community Natural Area: Community Natural Areas are a classification of Conservation Lands that are usually greater than 10 acres in size. These properties serve to protect natural values and ecosystem functions. These properties may include areas of significant vegetation, important habitats, stormwater management, green infrastructure, scenic areas, or areas that contribute to the urban shaping and

buffering goals of the community, including wildland urban interface buffers and riparian areas. Community Natural Areas provide opportunities for nature oriented outdoor recreation and emphasizes resource protection with appropriate public access provided. The level of development is commensurate with level of public use so long as resource values are preserved.

Community Park: Community parks are designed to serve multiple neighborhoods, drawing visitors from several neighborhoods or across Missoula for their features, facilities or programs. These parks serve a broad range of activities and users, support group gatherings, provide space for programs and events and often include specialized recreation facilities. Community parks are generally designed to also serve as neighborhood parks for those living nearby.

Conservation Lands: Conservation lands protect land with natural habitats and ecosystems and significant visual, historic, cultural or archaeological resources. They provide opportunities for interaction with nature and may include recreation facilities such as trails and picnic areas. Conservation lands are further classified as Park Preserves, Community Natural Areas and Neighborhood Natural Areas. All or a portion of conservation lands of all types may be closed to public access seasonally or year-round depending on resource protection needs.

Green Infrastructure: The use of landscape as infrastructure that preserves and integrates the natural processes of nature into the built environment for the benefits of improved air quality, water quality, wildlife habitat and overall social and economic well-being. When designed and maintained

appropriately, they may serve as a natural area.

Greenway: A corridor of open space, varying greatly in scale, and incorporating or linking diverse natural, cultural, and scenic resources. Some greenways are recreational corridors or scenic byways accommodating pedestrian and non-motorized vehicle traffic on both land and water; while others function almost exclusively for environmental protection and are not designed for human passage (americantrails.org).

Gray Infrastructure: Gray infrastructure refers to engineered systems and structures that support urban development. Including: streets, sidewalks, utilities, and traditional stormwater infrastructure such as pipes, sumps and retention basins.

Habitat: The environment that supports plants and wildlife by providing food, water, shelter, and space. High-quality habitat includes diverse, functional native plant communities that meet the structural and nutritional needs of wildlife. Throughout the city, in urban and rural areas, maintaining native vegetation and ecological connectivity is essential to sustaining biodiversity and ecosystem health.

High Use Site Overlay: The High Use Outdoor Site Overlay identifies areas within conservation lands that are developed to support public access to outdoor recreation and may include appropriate recreational facilities. These areas are located outside of sensitive resource zones. High use areas may be closed seasonally for management reasons.

Inclusive: Creating an environment and system where all residents feel welcome, safe, and comfortable to participate and experience a sense of belonging free of physical and social barriers.

Lands With Special Resources: Public parklands across the community that contain natural resources that add value to the overall community, have environmental benefits, provide the community with opportunities to engage with nature, or include unique cultural or historical resources. In the 2040 PROST this designation changes parklands that were designated “Lands With Special Resources” to Community and Neighborhood Natural Parks, however it is recognized that most public parklands contain numerous special resources.

Linear Park: Linear parks are longer than they are wide and typically include trails. These parks may follow linear corridors such as creeks, rail lines and utility corridors or they may simply provide connections between parks or to other destinations. Linear parks may be developed or natural in character, depending on the corridor. If the corridor is wide enough, linear parks may include park amenities, recreation facilities, or community natural areas.

Nature-based Recreation: Nature-based recreation is defined as outdoor leisure activities in natural settings or otherwise involving in some direct way elements of nature—terrain, plants, wildlife, water bodies.

Nature-based Solutions: Nature-based solutions are sometimes called green or blue infrastructure, low-impact development, bioengineering, natural engineering, or engineering with nature. Examples of nature-based solutions that mitigate hazards include things like rain gardens to manage stormwater, using wetland areas to store flood waters, etc.

Neighborhood Park: Neighborhood parks provide close-to-home public spaces that meet recreation and social needs for nearby residents to walk, play, exercise and be outdoors. Park users typically live

within walking and bicycling distance. Some neighborhood parks incorporate natural areas, such as wooded areas, adding to their overall size. Neighborhood parks are typically surrounded by public streets or trails.

Neighborhood Natural Area: Smaller sites that provide habitat patches, protect natural resources or provide ecosystem functions. Level of development is generally low since the sites are small.

Non-conforming Land: Non-conforming lands are publicly owned parklands that do not meet City guidelines for delivery of park services to the neighborhood or community

Open Space: A broad term intended to interpret the definition found in 76-6-104(3), MCA, generally including parks, trail corridors, greenbelts or greenways, conservation lands, riparian areas, and agricultural lands that are provided or preserved for public benefit (Missoula Municipal Code 12.56.015).

Park: A publicly owned and maintained area of land designated for public recreation, leisure, and enjoyment.

Parkland: Lands dedicated for public park and recreational use.

Park Amenity: Park amenities are improvements that contribute to the use of park land such as benches, play structures, picnic tables, shelters, sports facilities, trails, etc.

Park Preserve: Generally greater than 100 acres. These properties protect large areas with natural resource values of community-wide or regional significance. They may provide opportunities for nature-oriented outdoor recreation. Management priority is on preserving and improving native habitats and achieving an appropriate balance between resource protection and public use. Preserves typically have natural surface trails

with associated signage. Some preserves also have single-lane dirt road systems established prior to City's acquisition of the property. Areas are largely undeveloped except in designated High Use Outdoor Site areas or at lower use access points where user amenities (e.g., trash)

Planning Study: A stand-alone special study, such as a feasibility study, a large site master plan, or update to an existing guiding plan (e.g., Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan, Urban Forestry Master Plan, Asset Management Plan, PROST Update, etc.). Planning studies typically include community engagement.

Pocket Park: Pocket parks, sometimes called mini-parks, are small parks that may serve a portion of the surrounding neighborhood. Pocket parks may function as small neighborhood parks or simply provide urban green space. Pocket parks can be essential in serving densely populated portions of the city where neighborhood park level of service cannot be met due to lack of available lands.

Rain Garden: Rain gardens are shallow, constructed depressions that are planted with deep-rooted native plants and grasses, and are strategically located to capture runoff from hard surfaces such as a driveway, parking area, sidewalk or streets. Rain gardens conserve water, reduce the need for irrigation, and can help filter out pollutants in runoff and provide food and shelter for butterflies, songbirds and other wildlife (epa.gov).

Recreation Facility: A public recreation facility is a purpose built building, outdoor improvement or specially maintained park area dedicated and programmed for recreation purposes to serve the recreation needs of community residents.

Regional Park: Regional parks are unique large parks that provide regional attractions or protect cultural, historic, or natural resources of regional significance. These parks serve the greatest geographical area, attracting visitors from across the city and the greater region who tend to visit for longer durations. Regional parks typically include a variety of specialized facilities and large group gathering areas.

Renewable Energy Infrastructure: Renewable energy infrastructure includes solar and wind energy production infrastructure and associated facilities.

Special Use Park: Special use parks are typically focused on a specific recreation facility or use, though they may include supporting features and amenities. Examples are urban plazas, gardens or arboreta, bike parks, stand-alone indoor facilities, stand-alone boat ramps, bike parks, etc.

Trail: A path, route or track generally designed for walking, running, biking, rolling, horseback riding or similar activities. Trails may be separated from vehicular traffic, which connect people to their homes, neighborhoods, parks, places of employment, commercial centers, regional destinations, open space, and other important places.

Universal Access: Intentional design that builds upon this Plan's definition of accessible and strives to provide equitable opportunity for participation to the greatest extent possible by all users regardless of socioeconomic status, age, ability, disability, or any other demographic, with or without the need for adaptation or accommodation. This is achieved through the application of evolving best practices, community feedback, innovation and Universal Design principles.

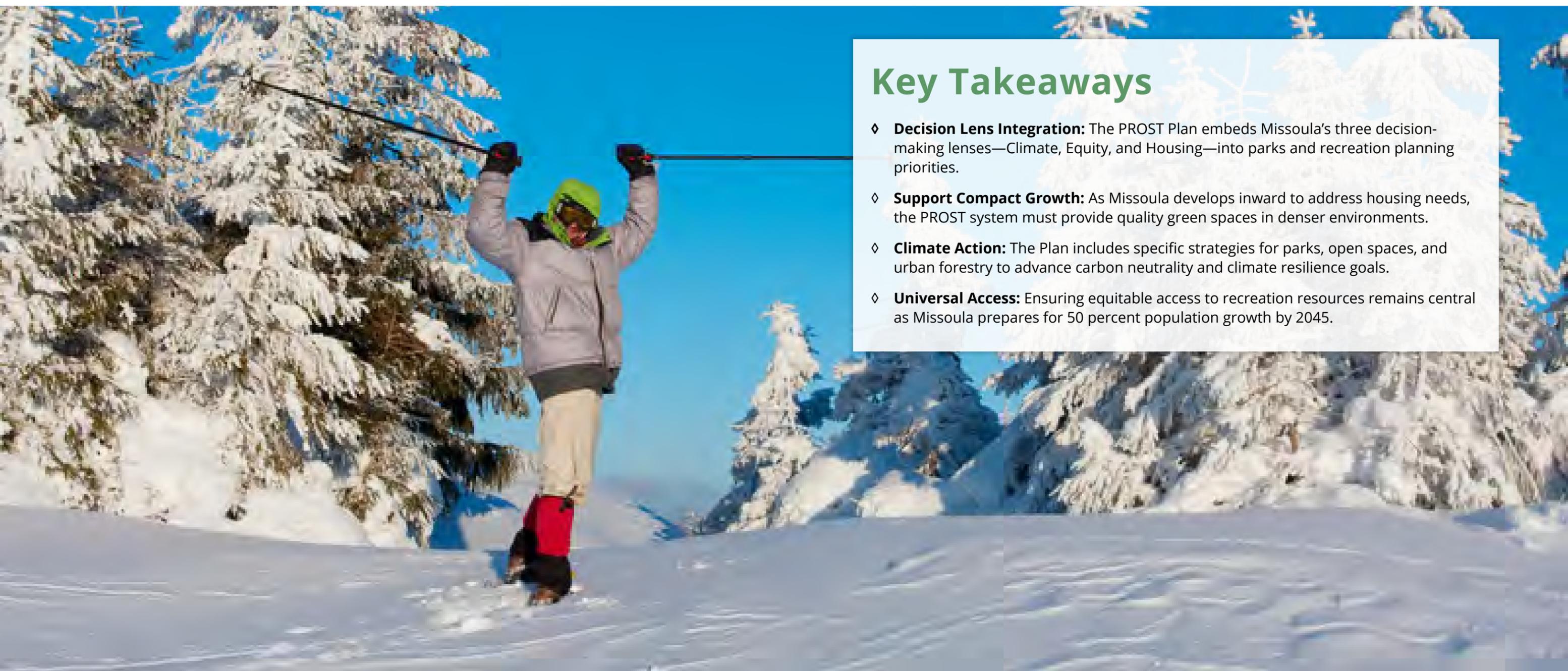
Urban Forest: The urban forest includes the public trees in parks, conservation lands, river corridors, public rights-of-ways. Urban Tree Canopy, can also include trees on private property.

CHAPTER 1

Purpose and Background

Key Takeaways

- ◆ **Decision Lens Integration:** The PROST Plan embeds Missoula's three decision-making lenses—Climate, Equity, and Housing—into parks and recreation planning priorities.
- ◆ **Support Compact Growth:** As Missoula develops inward to address housing needs, the PROST system must provide quality green spaces in denser environments.
- ◆ **Climate Action:** The Plan includes specific strategies for parks, open spaces, and urban forestry to advance carbon neutrality and climate resilience goals.
- ◆ **Universal Access:** Ensuring equitable access to recreation resources remains central as Missoula prepares for 50 percent population growth by 2045.





Why Plan?

The 1970 City/County of Missoula “Policy Guide for Urban Growth” in the section entitled Environment states:

“The natural environment has shaped the development of the County in the past and has provided resources for economic development and recreation that makes the area unique. How the natural environment is managed in the future will determine how the County will develop and whether the natural amenities cherished by all will continue to add to the quality of life for people living in Missoula.”

Though the population of the City of Missoula has grown from just under 30,000 in 1970 to almost 77,000 today the statement remains succinct.

The City of Missoula takes pride in serving the community by providing quality recreation programs, maintained parks and trails, and open spaces for everyone to enjoy. Missoula Parks and Recreation has collaborated with organizations and residents to create a new Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails

2040 Master Plan (PROST Plan) for the greater Missoula Valley.

This new, integrated plan builds upon and replaces the 2004 Master Parks and Recreation Plan and will stand as a blueprint for the next 10-15 years for parks, recreation, open space, trails, trees, and services to residents.

What is a PROST Plan?

The Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails (PROST) Master Plan is an overarching, 15-year plan that will guide the Parks and Recreation Department in meeting community-driven needs. The document has been developed with community input throughout and in coordination with the Our Missoula 2045 Land Use Plan, which was adopted in Winter 2024. Other important plans, including the Long-Range Transportation Plan, Transit Services Plan, and the Community Health Improvement Plan informed the plan.

While the PROST Plan will serve as the high-level guiding document for the department, it does not take the place of more focused plans for the department including the Conservation Lands Management Plan, Urban Forest Master Plan, the Parks Asset Management Plan, the Missoula Urban Area Open Space Plan, and other similar plans. Those plans will go through a separate update process in the future as needed.

The PROST Framework

The PROST framework, shown on the following pages, outlines the guiding principles and overarching strategic goals. This framework was informed by public outreach and led to the PROST vision for realizing community needs for the future of public lands, programs, services, and features that fall under the purview of the Parks and Recreation Department. The framework reflects community values and guides the Department in achieving the greatest outcomes for a healthy community and environment.

This framework was developed based on community input and then vetted through a community working group, Park and Recreation Board, and community events.



PROST VISION STATEMENT

The PROST vision to support the department and meet community needs emerged during a two-year planning process, which included more than 5,000 community connection points, meetings with the community working group and a public engagement committee, and input from technical advisors and staff.

By 2040, Missoula's parks, recreation, open space, trails, trees, and services are more resilient and accessible to our current and growing community while advancing and promoting public health and well-being, contributing to healthy and resilient environments, and fostering a sense of belonging.

Guiding Principles

The community working group, formed of 16 Missoulians who were selected through an open application process and represent a diversity of voices and perspectives guided the plan development and created a set of guiding principles early in the process based on public input as well as the city's vision and decision lenses. The guiding principles were used throughout the process to ensure outcomes maintained the community's core values and intentions.

We believe the PROST Plan will serve the greater Missoula community in the following ways...

Prepare for and welcome people of all ages and abilities with varied programs and facilities year-round, incorporating universal design principles.

Foster a sense of belonging and honor our community by highlighting Missoula's unique natural, historical, social, and cultural features.

Promote mental and physical wellness and social connections through parkland, trails, open space, programs, and facilities.

Ensure access to parks and recreation resources for all, and that they are inclusive, inspiring, safe, and affordable.

Demonstrate and inspire climate action and regenerative sustainability throughout all parks, facilities, open space and trails design, construction, management, and operations.

Support integrated affordable housing, walkable and green streetscapes, and healthy and purposeful green spaces in new and existing developments.

Foster a healthy urban forest and robust natural lands for quality of life, climate resiliency, and wildlife habitat.

Build relationships that continue to advance stewardship and expand services through shared ownership and vision.

PLAN GOALS

PROST goals are informed by the guiding principles and lead to the PROST vision. These seven identified goals reflect and distill the guiding principles into actionable statements and inform development of the department goal-based objectives and recommendations described in Chapter 5 and 6. Two of the goals focus on organizational processes while the other five goals support the community's vision for the PROST system and services. These goals were developed through an extensive community outreach process, which is described in more detail in Chapter 2.

Organizational Process Goals



Be Forward-Thinking & Adaptable

Anticipate the needs of Missoula's growing and changing community by creating adaptable and innovative parks, facilities, trails, landscapes, and programs that benefit the community environmentally, socially, culturally, and economically.



Build & Sustain Partnerships

Expand and sustain community partnerships, and work with other departments, agencies, organizations, businesses, and individuals to advance the PROST and greater community vision.

Outcome-Oriented Goals



Elevate Quality of Life

Ensure Missoula's parks, recreation facilities, open spaces, trails, trees, and services continue to contribute to and reflect Missoula's identity with a thriving, equitable, and well-rounded park system.



Support Healthy People

Promote overall wellbeing with increased opportunities for health and wellness, physical fitness, enjoyment of social connections, and increased safety through programs and services.



Foster a Healthy Natural Environment

Strategically protect, maintain, design, and improve a cohesive system of parklands and open spaces that help to mitigate the effects of climate change and provide respite for residents from the urban environment.



Improve Connections & Connectivity

Connect people to each other, to community, to public places, and to the natural environment while ensuring connected ecological systems.



Enhance Maintenance

Provide stewardship of Missoula's parks, open spaces, trails, urban forest, and recreation assets through innovative, regenerative, and effective design combined with maintenance and operations best practices.



Photo courtesy of Five Valleys Land Trust

Plan Organization

This Plan is organized into the following sections:

Chapter 1: Purpose and Background

Provides an overview of the system, the plan purpose, historical context, a description of the planning process and describes development of the PROST vision, guiding principles, and goals.

Chapter 2: Creating the Plan

Describes the engagement process and the key findings that informed the PROST Plan.

Chapter 3: Parks and Recreation Today

Summarizes system-wide PROST inventory and demographics to show us how the current system functions.

Chapter 4: Community Needs

Assesses the parklands facilities and trails system, recreation facilities, open space and urban forest, programming and accessible space needs and gaps. This chapter includes community comparisons, mapping, and analysis and concludes with a summary of community needs determined by the public engagement process as well as the gap analysis.

Chapter 5: PROST Objectives

Describes goal-oriented objectives to address community needs.

Chapter 6: PROST Recommendations

Provides guidance for the next 15 years for the Parks and Recreation Department, through specific recommendations for each element of the PROST system.

Chapter 7: How We Get There

Discusses overall implementation of the Plan, introduces the implementation matrix, and makes recommendations on how to ensure that the PROST Plan is successful.

Indigenous Land Use and Dispossession in What is Now Called the Missoula Valley

The Our Missoula Equity in Land Use report, prepared by the City's Community Planning, Development & Innovation Department, provides detailed information and context about Missoula's history for the last 13,000 years. Per the Equity in Land Use report:

Since the beginning of human history, the area now known as the Missoula valley has been a place of great significance for the Séliš (pronounced SEH-leesh, anglicized as "Salish") and Q̓íspé (pronounced Kah-lee-SPEH, also known as "Kalispel" or "Pend d'Oreille") nations. Oral traditions and both Indigenous and non-Indigenous archeologists have documented a tribal presence in this region that reaches back to the last Ice Age – roughly 13,000 years ago. The period since the Lewis and Clark expedition in 1805 — often misunderstood by non-Indigenous people to signify the beginning of history in Montana and adjoining places — accounts for about 2% of human history in the area.

The aboriginal lands of the Séliš encompassed a vast portion of what is known today as the state of Montana on both sides of the Continental Divide. The Séliš were originally organized in at least six large bands that were based in the areas that included places known in English as Butte, Three Forks, the Jefferson Valley, the Big Hole Valley, and Helena. Tribal territory also encompassed the Bitterroot Valley, where in recent centuries, the Séliš population was concentrated; hence they are commonly referred to as the "Bitterroot Salish."

The Q̓íspé were originally organized in at least twenty-seven bands based at locations throughout the drainage systems of the Flathead, Middle and Lower Clark Fork, and Pend Oreille Rivers across what is now western Montana, northern Idaho, and eastern Washington.

Background and PROST History

Missoula, located in the Rocky Mountains of western Montana, is a city of significant geographical importance. It is positioned near the confluence of five valleys—the Hellgate, Blackfoot, Missoula, Flathead-Jocko, and Bitterroot valleys—and three rivers: the Clark Fork, Blackfoot, and Bitterroot rivers. Surrounded by millions of acres of national forest and wilderness, Missoula boasts a rich natural environment, reflecting the city's commitment to preserving nature, open spaces, and recreational opportunities.

Situated between Glacier and Yellowstone national parks, Missoula attracts tourism while increasing demand for local resources. The city is closely linked geographically, culturally, recreationally, ecologically, and economically to the Clark Fork, Blackfoot, and Bitterroot rivers, as well as Rattlesnake Creek, which flow through the Missoula Valley. These rivers not only serve as significant attractions for residents and visitors but also function as essential ecological assets and natural corridors encompassing sensitive lands within the PROST planning area.

According to the 2020 Census, Missoula is the second-largest city in Montana, with nearly 75,000 residents. It serves as a regional hub for western Montana and has seen steady growth, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Our Missoula 2045 Land Use Plan projects a population of approximately 128,345 in the Land Use Plan area by 2045, necessitating planning for a 50 percent increase in the next 20 years.

City leaders have chosen to focus on inward growth rather than outward expansion. This approach is evident in the adopted Land Use Plan, stating that Missoula "has embraced a



City of Missoula Mission:

Reflecting the needs and values of our residents, the City of Missoula commits to enhancing opportunity and quality of life through effective delivery of City services and fiscal stewardship while maintaining and creating a harmonious natural and built environment.

City of Missoula Vision:

Missoula is an inclusive city where all people can live and celebrate meaningful, purposeful and fulfilling lives in a community offering unparalleled recreational, cultural and entrepreneurial opportunities.

‘Focus Inward’ growth strategy, prioritizing compact, sustainable growth within its urban areas.” The strategy aims to minimize urban sprawl, preserve sensitive lands, and enhance social equity by improving access to amenities and public services.

This commitment to sustainable growth underscores the city’s dedication to its residents and the environment. Recognizing the need for a compact, walkable city has prompted updates to Missoula’s PROST system. Emphasizing the significance of parks, recreational opportunities, trail connectivity, a healthy urban forest, and access to open space is critical as the city continues to grow. This dedication is reflected in the City of Missoula’s mission and vision.

Economy

Missoula is a regional hub for supplies and services like retail, healthcare, banking, and commerce. These are major economic draws for the city and provide employment opportunities. The city is also home to the University of Montana, a public research university, drawing thousands of students and faculty to the area. Missoula Economic Partnership’s 2021 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) identifies Missoula’s quality of life as one of three main factors contributing to the advancement of the city’s economy.

Due to workforce changes, population growth, and economic and housing challenges, the community’s needs have shifted. This PROST Plan has been developed to react to those changes, identify future trends, and provide a flexible and adaptable framework.

Decision-Making Lenses

In 2023 and updated in 2024, the City of Missoula adopted a Strategic Plan that includes three decision lenses to help guide the implementation of its strategic goals: Climate Sustainability, Adaptation, and Resilience; Equity in Opportunity and Access to Local Government Resources and Lands; and Housing Attainability at all Levels with a Focus on Workforce and Affordability. The PROST Plan embraces these three decision lenses and integrates specific strategies, principles, and concepts to support and advance each area.

Climate Sustainability, Adaptation, and Resilience

The City considers climate and resiliency impacts in all its decisions specifically guided by adopted plans that address:

- 100 percent Clean Electricity
- Carbon Neutral in City Operations
- Carbon Neutral in Community
- Zero Waste
- Building a Resilient Community

Equity in Opportunity and Access to Local Government Resources and Lands

The City addresses holistic, interconnected factors that help build resilient futures while also building an inclusive environment.

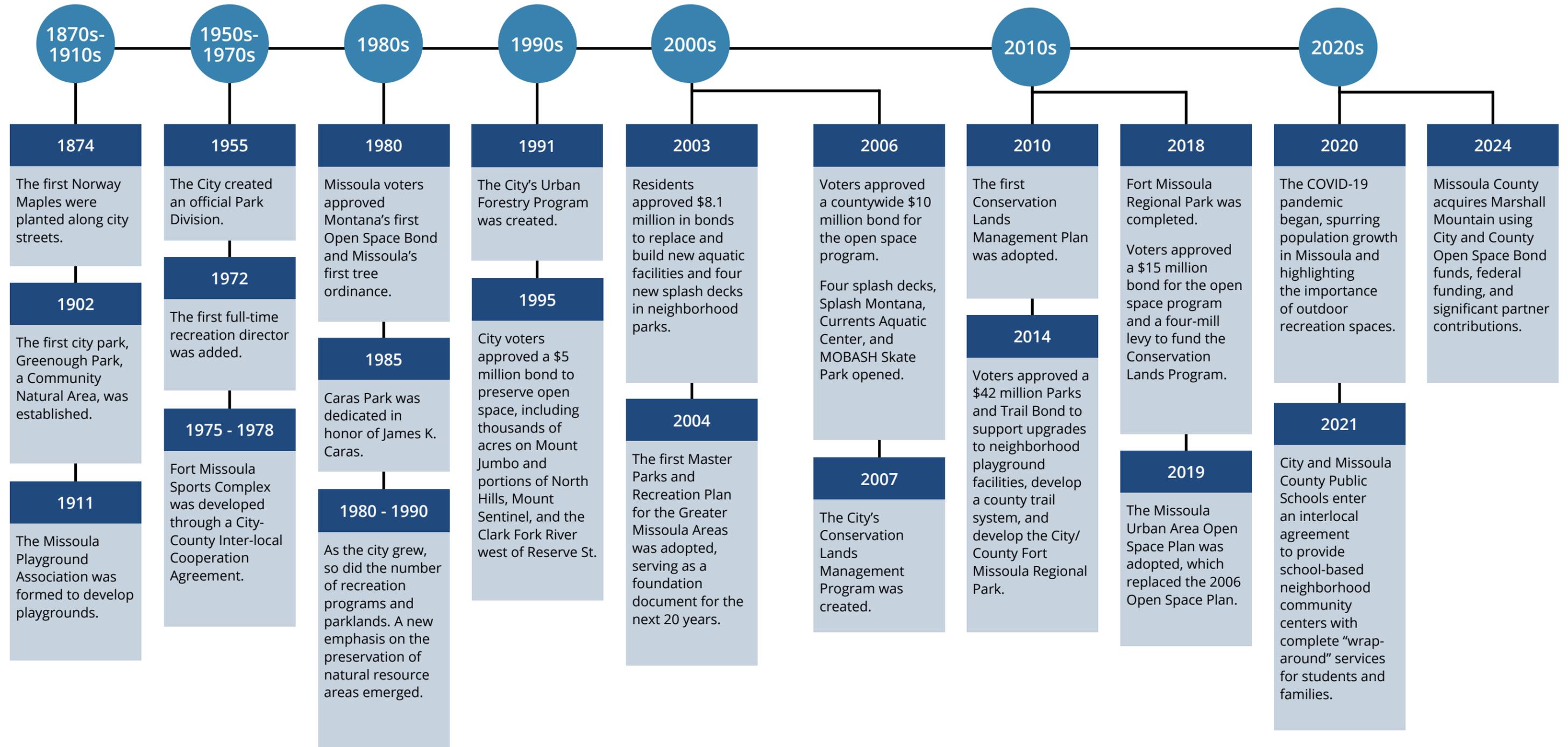
Housing Attainability at all Levels with a Focus on Workforce and Affordability

The City considers opportunities to further its housing goals in all its decisions as articulated in the city’s housing policy “A Place to Call Home”.



Missoula Parks and Recreation Timeline

The City of Missoula has long appreciated the importance of public parks.



CHAPTER 2

Creating the Plan

Key Takeaways

- ◇ **Inclusive Engagement:** The process reached 5,000+ residents through diverse methods, with targeted outreach to historically underserved communities.
- ◇ **Climate Action Support:** Over 85 percent of residents strongly support environmental strategies, including protecting water resources, preserving habitat, and expanding urban tree canopy.
- ◇ **Walkable Development:** As Missoula grows inward, residents prioritize walkable neighborhoods (90 percent support) and connected trails, linking housing density with accessible recreation.
- ◇ **Integrated Planning:** PROST was coordinated with the concurrent local planning processes, including the City's Land Use Plan, and the countywide Community Health Improvement and Long-Range Transportation plans, creating alignment across housing, mobility, health, and recreation systems.



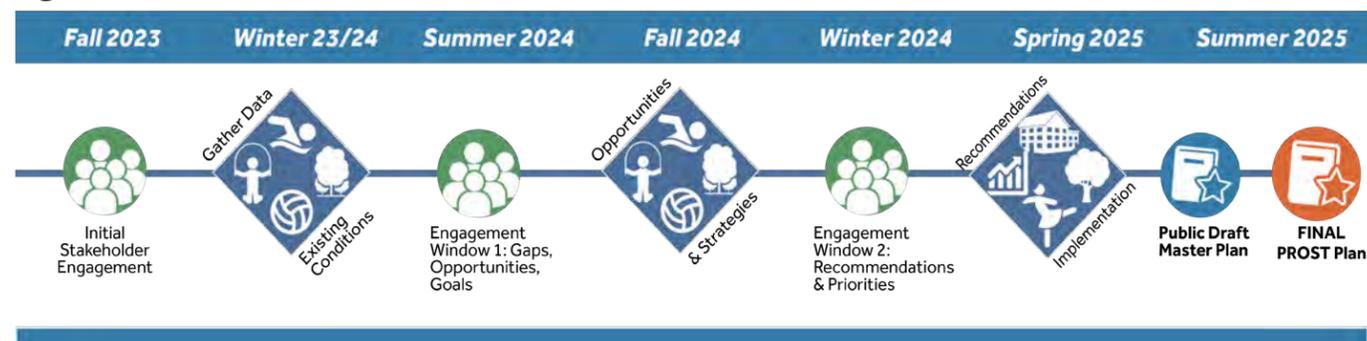
PROST Planning Process

The PROST planning process took place between Fall 2023 and Spring 2025. The Plan was developed over three major phases: Inventory and Analysis of Existing Conditions, Defining Gaps, and Development of Goal-Based Objectives to drive Recommendations and Implementation strategies. Each phase included extensive engagement with the Community Working Group (CWG), technical advisors, and the wider community as well as collaboration with staff and partners to help guide plan development.

The Community Working Group played a vital role in developing the PROST Plan. This group comprised 16 Missoula residents, representing a diverse range of voices and perspectives. Their responsibilities included meeting multiple times during the planning process, ensuring Parks and Recreation addressed community needs, providing input and direction, acting as ambassadors for the plan, and supporting recommendations for approval by the Missoula Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, Planning Board and City Council.

Alongside the CWG, staff from the University of Montana, City Parks and Recreation, County Parks, Trails and Open Lands, and

Figure 1: Process Overview



All Nations Health Center formed the Public Engagement Committee to guide community engagement efforts. This offered numerous opportunities for Missoulians to share comments and influence the PROST Plan.

Additionally, the City's Geographic Information System (GIS) Department significantly updated inventory data for parks, conservation lands, and trails, resulting in accurate PROST GIS data.

At the project's outset, the City launched the Engage Missoula website as a centralized information hub during the planning process. This site includes online engagement activities and a library of project reports and documents. The final plan, along with related materials and tools will be available on the City's website.

The planning process followed simplified steps to create the PROST Plan:

What does Parks and Recreation look like today?

Documentation of Existing Conditions
The initial phase of the PROST Plan development was to create a comprehensive overview of the current system, based on findings from community engagement, system assessment and inventory, and planning context.

How is Parks and Recreation working?

Determining Opportunities
After establishing Existing Conditions, the next phase was to identify key gaps and needs for the system and then develop objectives and recommendations for addressing those gaps and needs. These ideas were then vetted with the community, staff and key stakeholders. During this phase, the Plan's vision, guiding principles, and goals were developed through the CWG, reflecting community input.

What does the community need?

Identifying gaps and needs and Creating Objectives and Recommendations and Implementation Resources

This phase involved finalizing recommendations and developing tools to help the City implement the Plan. Community members were first asked to vet the Plan's big ideas and then were given an opportunity to provide public comment on the draft. Additionally, the CWG reviewed and commented on the draft PROST Plan before it was released to the public.

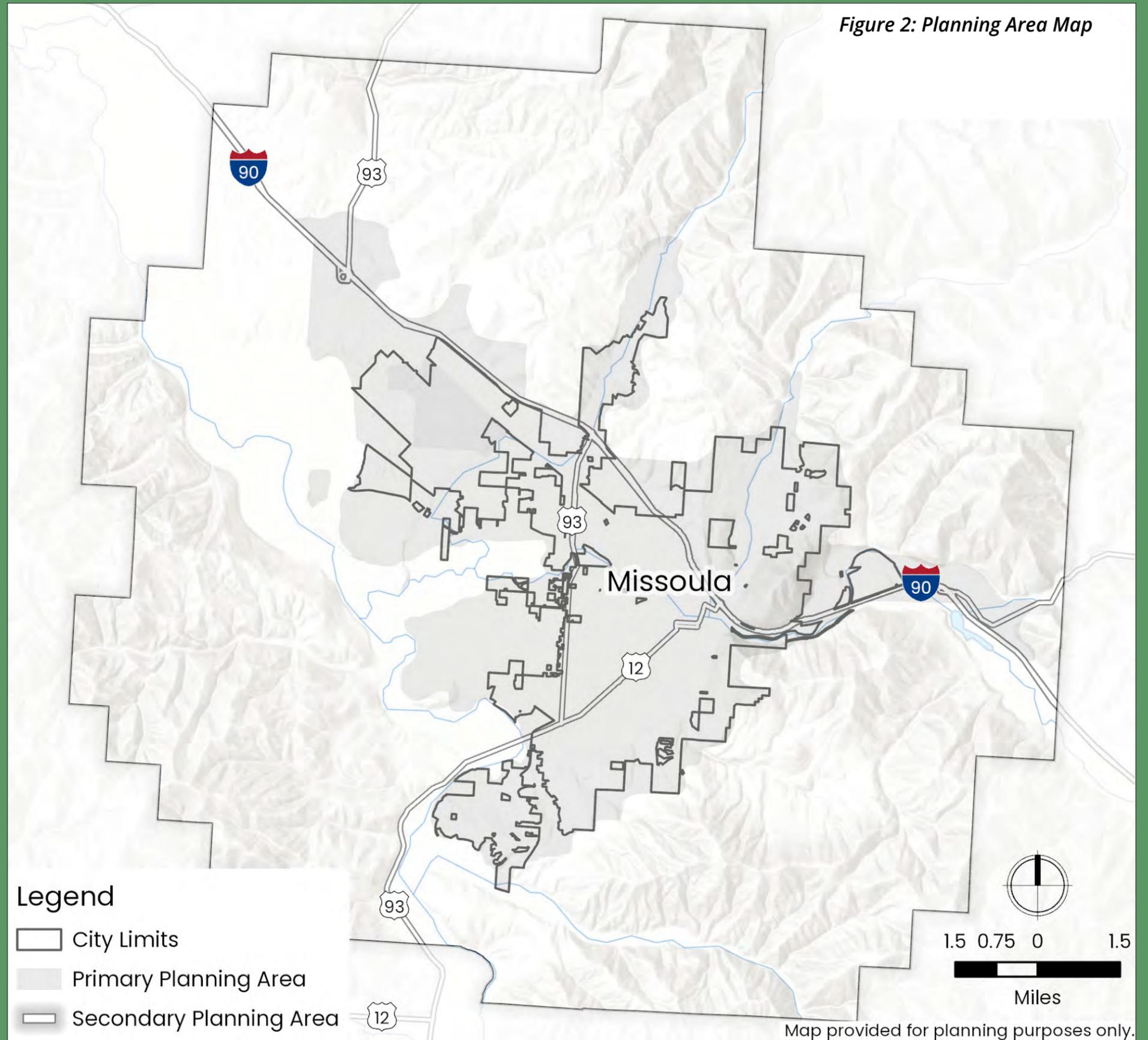
Project One Pager

Planning Area

The planning area for the PROST process extends beyond current city limits, as shown in Figure 2. It consists of both primary and secondary planning areas. The primary area aligns with the Our Missoula Land Use Plan boundary, focusing on land uses and policies within or near the city. The secondary area follows the 2019 Missoula Urban Area Open Space Plan boundary, considering more system users, including those outside the city, to address larger community and regional connectivity needs like trails and ecosystems.

A market assessment report for Splash Montana, the City's 50-meter outdoor pool and water park, indicates that most users live within a 50-mile radius. This report, along with data from recreation program registrations and park usage at Fort Missoula Regional Park, shows that residents outside city limits actively utilize Missoula's parks, trails, and open spaces, and participate in recreation programs.¹

Furthermore, significant conservation lands and recreational facilities are within this larger planning area, including those owned by various government agencies, non-profits, and private organizations. Thus, the PROST plan must address needs in this broader area, emphasizing collaboration with Missoula County, federal and state agencies, and non-governmental partners to meet future growth and public park and recreation needs.



¹ Missoula Splash Montana Market Assessment Report

City-wide Planning Efforts

During the PROST planning process, several other related planning processes occurred, including the Long-Range Transportation Plan Update (LRTP), the Our Missoula 2045 Land Use Plan, and the beginning process for the development of the City's Unified Development Code.

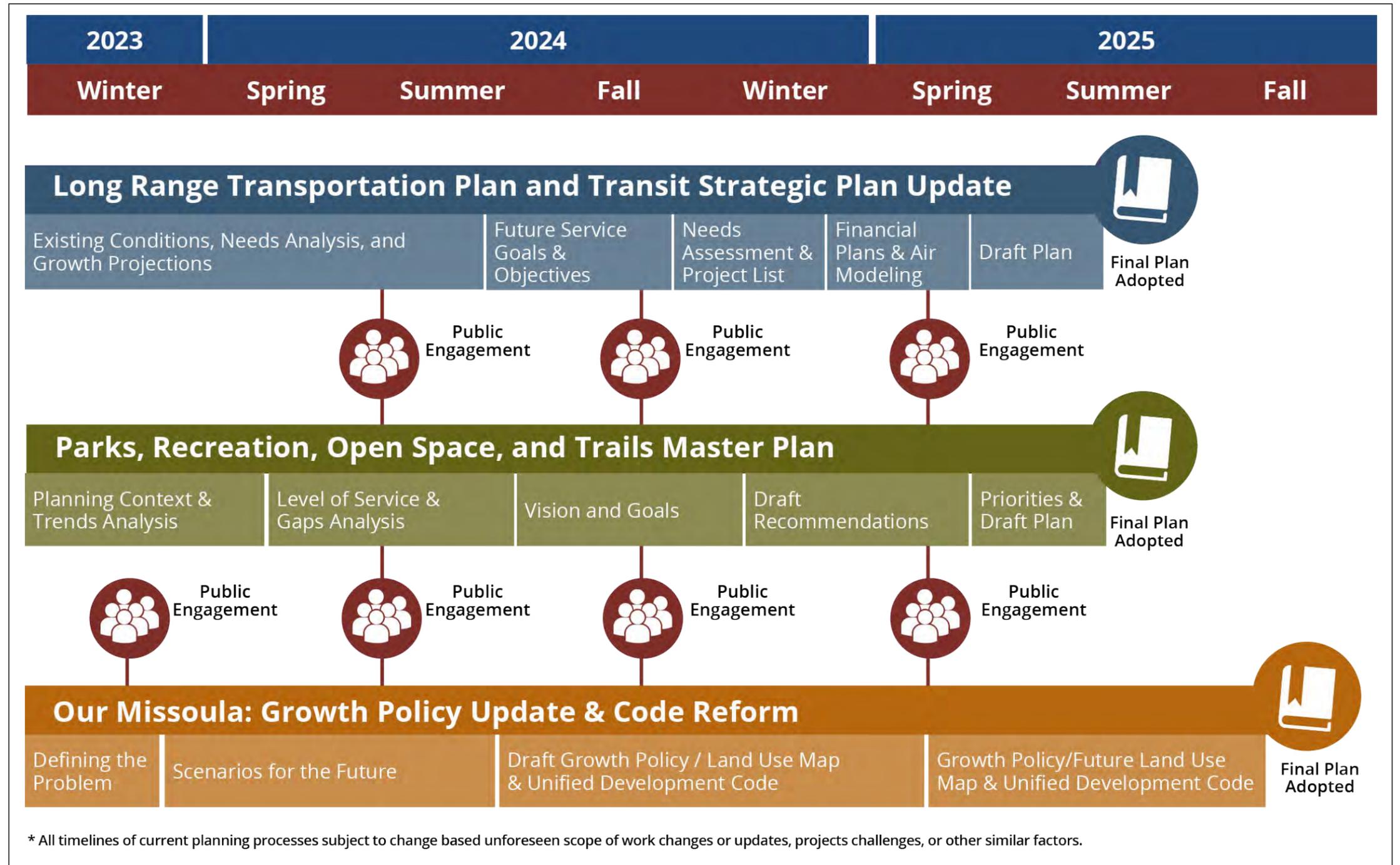
The PROST Plan was strategically aligned with both the LRTP and the Land Use Plan. This intentional interweaving of the plans, which includes recommendations for ordinance updates and requirements for new development related to parklands, trails, and trees, creates a unified vision for these critical elements of community growth and development moving forward.

The PROST planning team took a comprehensive approach, working with various partners and organizations around transportation, transit, land use, public health, climate and resilience, and more to ensure the topics of housing and land use, active transportation, access to employment, goods and services, public health, and more are addressed in concurrence with these other planning processes.

As shown in Figure 3, although different city departments completed these plans, the three major plans overlap in scope and timeline.

During the PROST planning process, several pivotal initiatives were simultaneously shaping the future of the Missoula area. One of the key projects was the county-wide Community Health Assessment (CHA), facilitated by Missoula Public Health. This detailed analysis goes beyond mere statistics; it dives deep into the local public

Figure 3: Concurrent Planning Processes



health landscape, identifying pressing issues and critical needs that directly affect our community's well-being.

In tandem, Missoula Public Health took significant strides in refining the county-wide Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). This collaborative plan is not just a response to the CHA findings; it is a bold action plan aimed at fostering a healthier, more vibrant community.

Moreover, the regional offices of the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management have also engaged in the essential task of updating their guiding plans. These updates are crucial for sustainable land management and environmental stewardship in our region.

Discussions surrounding these extensive planning efforts converged within the Front Country Recreation Collaborative, a diverse multi-agency group dedicated to ensuring that PROST aligns seamlessly with these other major initiatives. Their collaboration creates cohesive recommendations and strategies that enhance both public health and environmental management in Missoula Valley and beyond, setting a powerful precedent for future planning endeavors.

Figure 4: Additional Concurrent Planning Processes

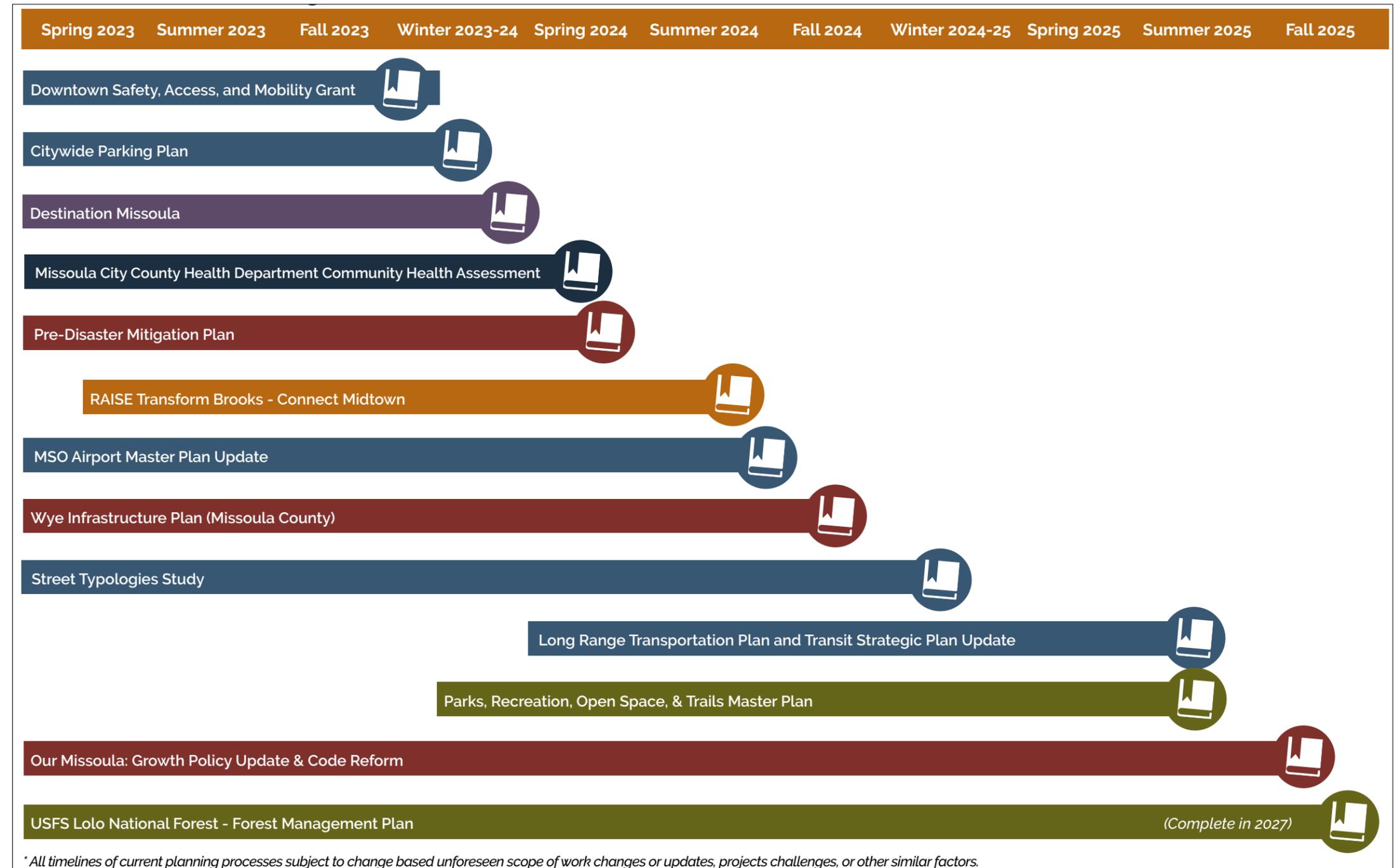


Figure 5: Achieving the Community's Vision Through Planning



Achieving the Community's Vision Through Planning

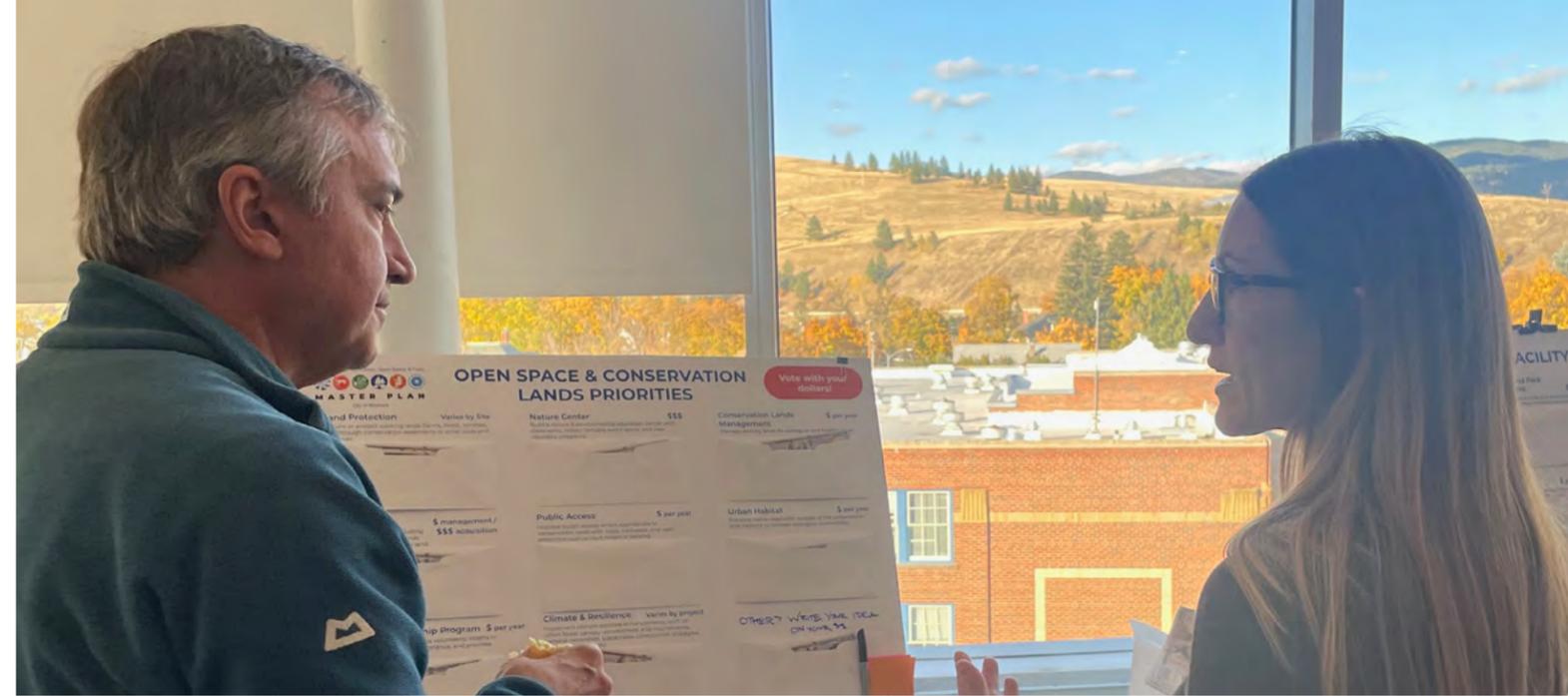
Through meaningful community engagement, we have gathered insights into what residents value most. The goals outlined in these plans—such as housing, walkability, sustainability, clean air and water, connectivity, and access to affordable programs and amenities—reflect our shared vision for the future. These goals can be achieved through a series of related actions that bring the plans to life.

Implementing these goals is crucial for realizing our community vision: “Missoula is an inclusive city where all people can live and celebrate meaningful, purposeful, and fulfilling lives, while enjoying unparalleled recreational, cultural, and entrepreneurial opportunities.” By working collaboratively, we can effectively implement this vision over time.

Updating the Plan

This plan will be updated as needed, with a comprehensive review occurring every 15 years or whenever significant changes require an update. Additionally, the PROST Plan will be reviewed every 5 years for minor updates to ensure alignment with the Land Use Plan, Long Range Transportation Plan, and Missoula Public Health’s Community Health Improvement Plan.

Reasons for updating the plan may include substantial changes in the community’s population or demographic makeup, shifts in resident priorities, significant changes in funding or service prioritization, or other factors. The plan will also undergo an annual review to assess its implementation success and to establish priorities for the year ahead. The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board can approve minor updates based on the plan’s implementation, while significant changes may require a public process and approval from the Missoula City Council.



Your Input - The Public Engagement Process

Overview

A central element of the PROST planning process was the extensive and consistent community engagement that informed the plan. This process involved three major rounds of engagement, using multiple methods to gather feedback from residents, technical experts, and key stakeholders. Ultimately, this outreach reached over 5,000 residents through various approaches. Additionally, the effort included a statistically valid representative survey and considered similar findings from the Community Health Assessment and the National Cities (Polco) Survey.

The community engagement process was tailored to ensure broad participation from a diverse range of stakeholders. Special

attention was given to include underserved community members in engagement activities. The process was designed to assess general community needs while fostering connections and building relationships with populations that may not be represented in a statistically representative survey or have unique needs and experiences.

Engagement activities included representation on the Community Working Group, key informant interviews, mobile listening sessions, artist-led initiatives, focus groups, and various meetings.

The City collaborated with key partners to enhance outreach, allowing for a deeper community reach. This heightened level of engagement was made possible with the guidance and support of the University of Montana’s WA Franke College of Forestry and Conservation, the Institute of Tourism and Recreation Research, the Bureau for Business and Economic Research, the Co-Lab for Civic Imagination, Arts Missoula, Missoula Public Health, and All Nations Health Center.

Community Working Group

A Community Working Group was formed to provide input throughout the planning process. This group, formed of 16 Missoulians who were selected through an open application process, represented a diversity of voices and perspectives. The goals of the group were to ensure that the PROST Plan addresses the needs of the community, provide input and direction throughout the planning process, shape recommendations in the PROST Plan, and serve as ambassadors for the PROST Plan.

Community Input Activities

Key Informant Interviews. To kick off the PROST Plan, Parks and Recreation staff conducted 13 one-on-one interviews with key stakeholders. These interviews helped to gather and frame some of the key issues to be explored during the PROST planning process. These interviews gathered information from stakeholders on their experience with Missoula Parks and Recreation as well as the greatest challenges and opportunities.

Focus Groups. At the outset of the project, project partners from the University of Montana facilitated six focus groups that included 45 participants, with each group covering a theme. The six themes were current program users, frequency users, youth and family services, business and community leaders, equity/community access, and climate resiliency and conservation (see Appendix E for full report).

2024 Missoula Parks and Recreation Survey (BBER Survey). The University of Montana's Bureaus of Business and Economic Research (BBER) administered a statistically representative survey within the larger Plan boundaries. This survey was built on the 2018

statistically valid survey and received 544 completed questionnaires (see Appendix E for a summary of BBER survey results).

Online Community Survey. An online survey was distributed via social media, in-person events, email blasts, and word-of-mouth to gather input on the gaps and needs of the PROST system, as well as to establish how well the current system was working for residents. The online survey received 1,478 responses and was open from March to July 2024 (see Appendix E for a summary of the online community survey results).

Artist-led Engagement and Historically Underserved Communities Engagement. In order to get input from communities that are historically underserved, the project connected with local artists to hold outreach events. Parks and Recreation staff also provided opportunities for additional engagement. These artist-led outreach opportunities were focused on the following communities: Adults 55+, Indigenous, LGBTQ+, and the Hmong community.

Mobile Listening Sessions. Project team members and Community Working Group members held 38 mobile listening sessions at existing events and locations throughout Missoula. Over 900 participants provided feedback.

Community Open Houses. Parks and Recreation hosted a series of community open houses at the Missoula Public Library in partnership with Community Working Group members. These open houses attracted more than 400 participants who engaged in a series of interactive activities.

Online Interactive Map. Located on the Engage Missoula website, residents had the opportunity to put pins on an online interactive map. Respondents could put comments on a specific map location,



categorizing their comments under “I like it!,” “New idea/proposed project,” and “Needs improvement.” In total, the online interactive map had 693 comments.

Online Community Activities. Paired with each community open house was an online activity that mirrored the open house’s interactive activity. This allowed those who could not attend the in-person event to share their feedback.

See Appendix E. Engagement Summary for more information.

Elected and Appointed Bodies

The project team provided updates to the Parks and Recreation Board, the Open Space Advisory Committee, the Conservation Lands Advisory Committee, and the Missoula City Council throughout the planning process.

Technical Experts

To gather technical input across a variety of topics, the project team had a series of meetings with City of Missoula departments, Missoula County staff, and stakeholders representing transit and transportation, business and tourism, planning and development, front country recreation land managers and partners, Missoula County Public Schools, recreation user groups, climate and resilience, open space and conservation, access and equity, health, disability, and more.

Public Engagement Overview

Throughout the planning process, the planning team reviewed and integrated data and feedback from other surveys and planning processes. These outside inputs provided additional data points that informed the PROST plan. For example, the National Community Survey from Polco, found that the City’s parks and recreation opportunities are highly valued by residents, and Missoula’s recreational opportunities, fitness opportunities, and availability of paths and walking trails rank higher than the national average.

As another example, Missoula County recently completed the Community Health Assessment, which included an extensive survey and process to determine social determinants of health. This survey found that green spaces, like public parks, were considered a major strength for Missoula area residents as a social determinant of health.

These inputs, among others, helped to inform findings that steered the PROST Plan and its recommendations and policies.

Figure 6: Community Engagement in Numbers





Key Findings

The following are the key themes from the three rounds of community engagement. For more information on the extensive public engagement process used for the creation of this plan, please refer to Public Engagement and Key Findings in Appendix E. While specific comments made by residents are not featured in this overview, these comments have been integrated into the overall summary of feedback and inform the plan and its implementation.

Elevating Quality of Life

Parks and Recreation lands and services are key components of Missoulians' quality of life and part of what makes Missoula a great place to live. Residents highlighted the need for a more equitable and comprehensive park system, ensuring that all have access to a nearby park that has quality facilities and accessible recreation programs.

- 77% of residents strongly or somewhat strongly support ensuring neighborhood parks are near their home (BBER Survey).

- 98% of respondents say parks, recreation, and open space are very important to the quality of life in Missoula (Online Community Survey).

Inclusive Community Building

Parks and Recreation lands and services contribute to inclusive community building, including around arts and culture, and there is a further desire to see more opportunities for community-building spaces, events, and programs. Outreach to underrepresented community members suggested ways that parks and recreation services could work better for their needs, such as providing more spaces for large gatherings, using native plants, using specialty play equipment and public art to represent area culture and history, and incorporating Indigenous place names.

- 85% of residents strongly support or somewhat support ensuring that parks, trails, and natural areas are accessible to people with disabilities (BBER Survey).

- Mobile Listening Sessions found 3 out of the top 5 reasons for using parks are social, including playgrounds, gathering with friends or family, and events in parks.
- Several Key Informant Interviews highlighted the need to focus on equity – including the location and quality of parks – as Missoula grows.

Connecting Neighborhoods and Services

Residents would like to see an increased focus on providing a connected system with trails and greenways moving people to and through parks and recreation opportunities as well as connecting neighborhoods with schools and areas of business via connections to the community and regional trail system. Additionally, the Community Working Group highlighted the rivers running through the valley as a key component of community scale multi-modal transit, opportunities to protect sensitive lands through land management practices, as well as providing increased access to nature.

- 90% of residents strongly support or somewhat support ensuring neighborhoods are walkable, while 73% strongly or somewhat support ensuring neighborhoods are bikeable (BBER Survey).
- At the community open houses, many comments mentioned connectivity as a top area of improvement.
- “Walking, running, biking, or horseback riding on local trails” was the most popular activity that residents participate in when using the PROST system (Online Community Survey).



Missoula Parks, Recreation, Open Space, & Trails

MASTER PLAN

**Join us for a
Community Open House!**

March 5th, 2024
5:00 - 7:15 pm
Missoula Public Library

All ages welcome!
Light refreshments
will be served.



Having a Year-Round Facility

There is a need for a year-round facility for programming and gathering, especially during the winter, summer, and other times when recreating outside is limited.

- 61% of residents somewhat or strongly support providing indoor spaces for recreation and fitness (BBER Survey).
- During the stakeholder focus groups, participants mentioned identifying indoor recreational options during adverse weather or during year-round youth programming as a major challenge.

Maintaining What We Have

Residents reflected appreciation for high-quality parks, with an emphasis on maintaining existing parks, trails, and open space. While there is a desire for new facilities, there is a clear emphasis on maintaining and upgrading smaller neighborhood parks.

- 81% of residents identified maintaining restrooms as a very high or somewhat high priority (BBER Survey).
- 79% of residents identified maintaining the cleanliness of parks as a very high or somewhat high priority (BBER Survey).

Supporting Climate Action

Residents expressed support for climate-related strategies and projects, such as strategies to mitigate extreme weather and to increase ecosystem services.

- 87% of residents strongly or somewhat support strategies to maintain clean air and water (BBER Survey).
- 90% of residents strongly or somewhat support protecting land for wildlife habitat and environmental reasons (BBER Survey).

- 92% of residents strongly or somewhat support protecting river corridors (BBER Survey).
- 84% of residents strongly or somewhat support improving the urban canopy (street and park trees and native forests).

Improving Safety

Some residents expressed a concern for safety when visiting local parks or walking or riding on trails, especially after dark. Implementing strategies that promote a sense of community and a feeling of safety, like improved lighting, clear sightlines, strategic landscaping, activation through programming improved amenities as well defining boundaries can be done through physical upgrades and programming.

- 91% of residents strongly or somewhat support ensuring that parks are safe, while 27% of households contained at least one person who identifies not feeling safe as a barrier to using parks, trails, open space, or recreational facilities (BBER Survey).

Increasing Program Variety

There is a desire for a greater variety of programming focusing on teens, middle-aged adults, and older adults, while the City's childcare and after-school programs remain popular.

- 78% of adults and older adults indicated that they were slightly likely to very likely to use fitness and wellness programs in the upcoming year, compared to only 61% in 2018 (BBER).
- 80% of residents strongly or somewhat support ensuring that families with children have access to out-of-school, after school, and summer programming (BBER Survey).

Areas of Divided Opinion

There are areas of divided opinion, such as around where e-bikes should be allowed and how to manage dogs in parks and on trails, that will need creative solutions.

- During community open houses, the use of e-bikes was identified as both a challenge and an opportunity for trail use.
- In the open response section of the online community survey, many residents highlighted the need and support for more off-leash and on-leash dog parks, while residents also report off-leash and aggressive dogs as a reason they feel unsafe at local parks.



CHAPTER 3

Parks and Recreation Today

Key Takeaways

- ◆ **Population Growth and Park Needs:** Missoula's projected population growth (to 115,950 by 2045) requires approximately 367 additional acres of parkland to maintain current service levels.
- ◆ **Indoor Recreation Facility Gap:** Unlike peer cities, Missoula lacks indoor recreation centers, a significant service gap given local climate conditions that impacts year-round recreation access.
- ◆ **Urban Forest Challenges:** The urban tree canopy faces decline with removals outpacing plantings by nearly 2:1, threatening a critical climate resilience resource that provides heat reduction, improved air quality, and stormwater management.
- ◆ **Recreation Programming Access:** While offering robust youth programming with \$120,000 in annual scholarships and reduced fees, facility limitations restrict program expansion to fully serve all demographics.



Population and Demographics

Understanding current and anticipated demographics, along with community needs, is essential for determining how to maintain and develop parks, recreation areas, open spaces, trees, and trails. The demographics from the Our Missoula 2045 Land Use Plan (LUP) highlight the need for new parklands, as well as PROST facilities and services over the next 15 years.

Unique Characteristics

The following are key points related to current demographics in Missoula and their potential implications for PROST recommendations. Missoula's projected population growth over the next twenty years will require additional capacity and increased facilities and recreation services simply to keep pace with growth.

- Between 2010 and 2022, there was an average yearly growth of 1.11 percent,

with the highest growth area in the Swtptqyen Area.

- By 2045, the projected population in the Land Use Plan Area is 128,345, with a projected 1.39 percent growth each year.
- Missoula's Land Use Plan area has a median age of 35.2 years old, making it a younger population than the state as whole which has a median age of 40.1. This is partially driven by a high percentage of young adults, aged 20 – 29, nearly 20%.
- While Missoula has a large population of younger adults, it also has a high percentage of older adults, aged 65+. Currently making up about 17 percent of the population, this age group is projected to increase to roughly 20 percent of the population within 20 years.
- This population has been steadily increasing. In 2000, older adults were only 10 percent of the population.

Figure 7: Projected 2045 Population Growth (Source: LUP Community Profile)

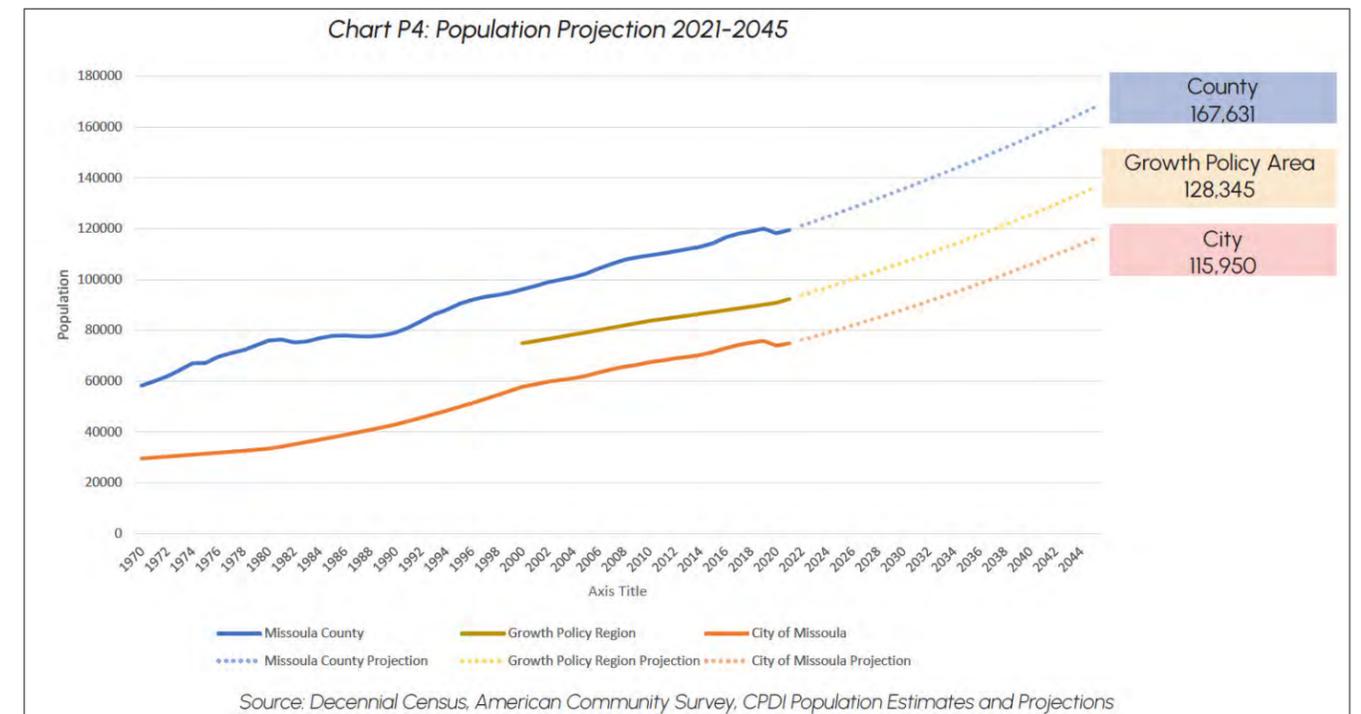
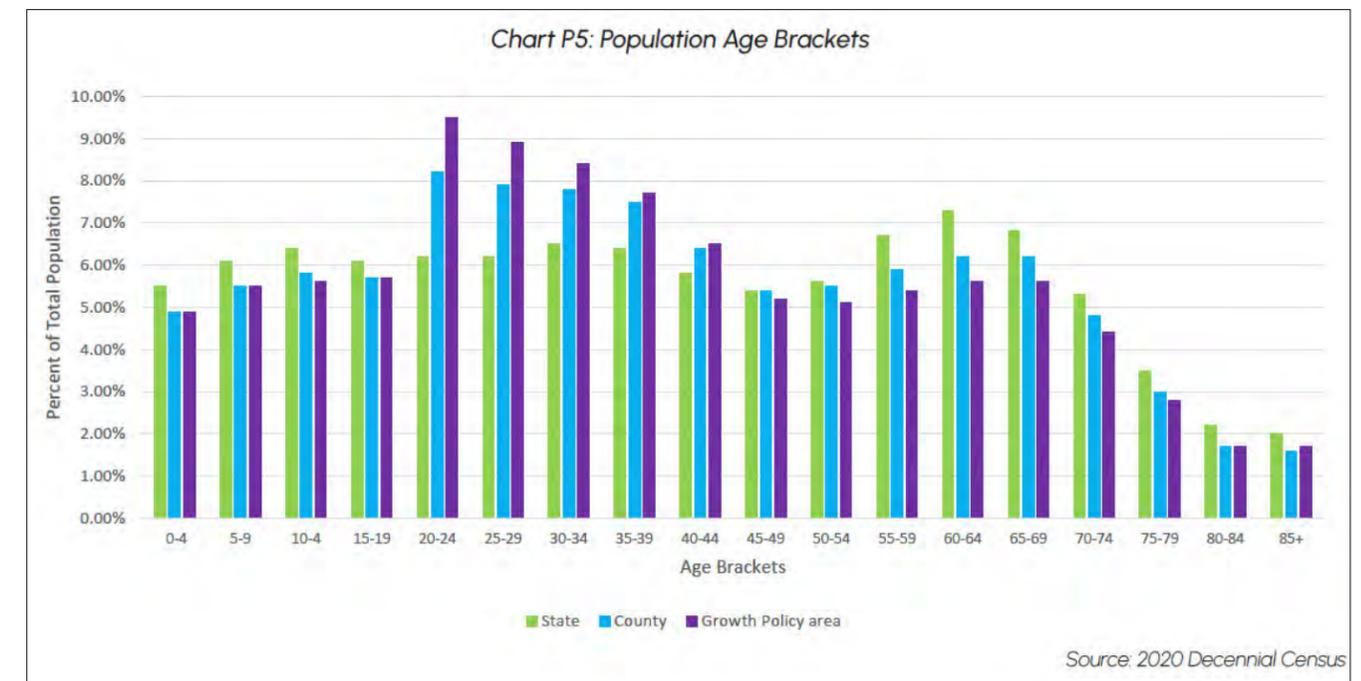


Figure 8: Missoula 2021 Age Brackets (Source: LUP Community Profile)



- Currently, 10 – 12 percent of the population lives with a disability, including 8.8 percent of those under 65. As the population ages, it is likely that this number will rise. The LUP recognizes many of Missoula existing facilities and public spaces do not adequately promote wellness and social connection, leading to social isolation and increased vulnerability for individuals with disabilities and the elderly.
- The overall population of school-age youth is declining, although variations will be seen in individual neighborhoods. Schools that are expected to experience enrollment increases are situated in areas with greater socioeconomic diversity and a range of low to moderate-income housing options.

Equity Analysis

The following maps from the Our Missoula Land Use Plan show where underserved communities live within the City and highlight the importance of employing an equity lens. These maps are used in Chapter 4 to help pinpoint gaps in park service.

Demographics

76,955

City of Missoula's current population estimate

93,926

Land Use Plan area current population estimate

99,289

Open Space Plan Boundary current population estimate

115,950

City of Missoula's 2045 projected population of (50% increase over current population)

128,345

2045 Land Use Plan Area projected population (37% increase over current population)



Photo courtesy of Five Valleys Land Trust

Figure 9: Median Household Income, 2020
 (Source: Our Missoula Equity in Land Use Report)

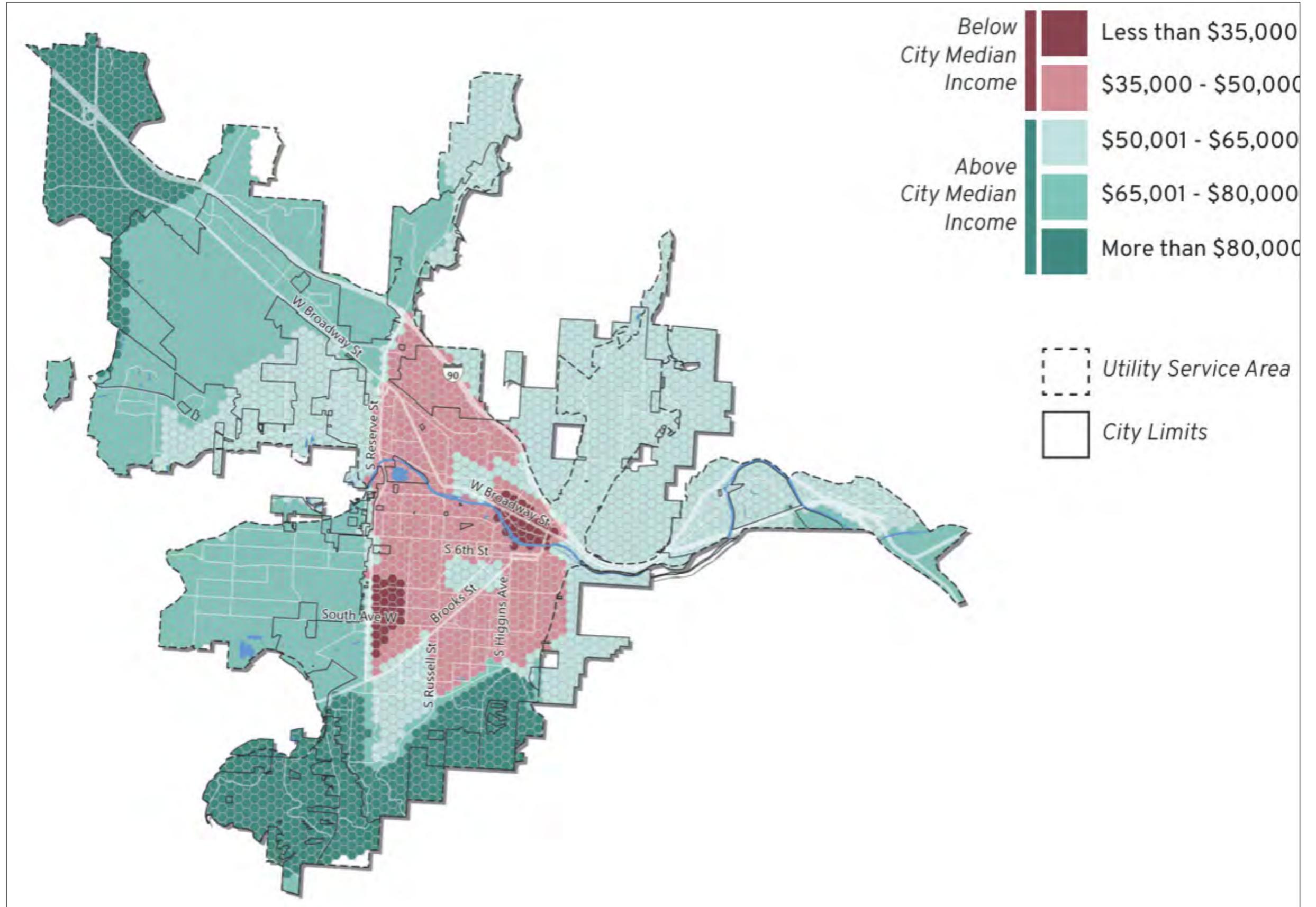


Figure 10: Communities of Color as a Percent of Total Population, 2020 (Source: Our Missoula Equity in Land Use Report)

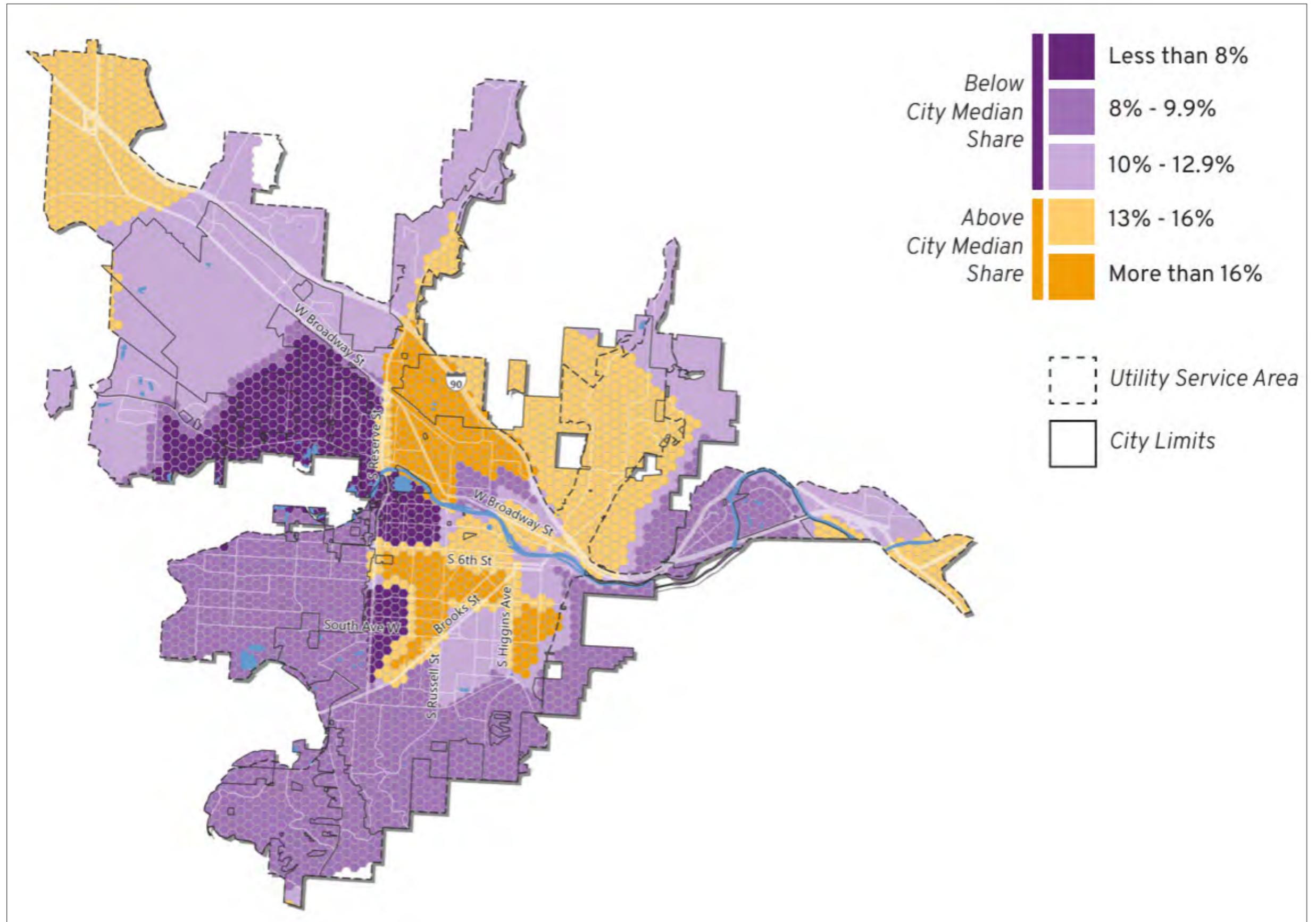
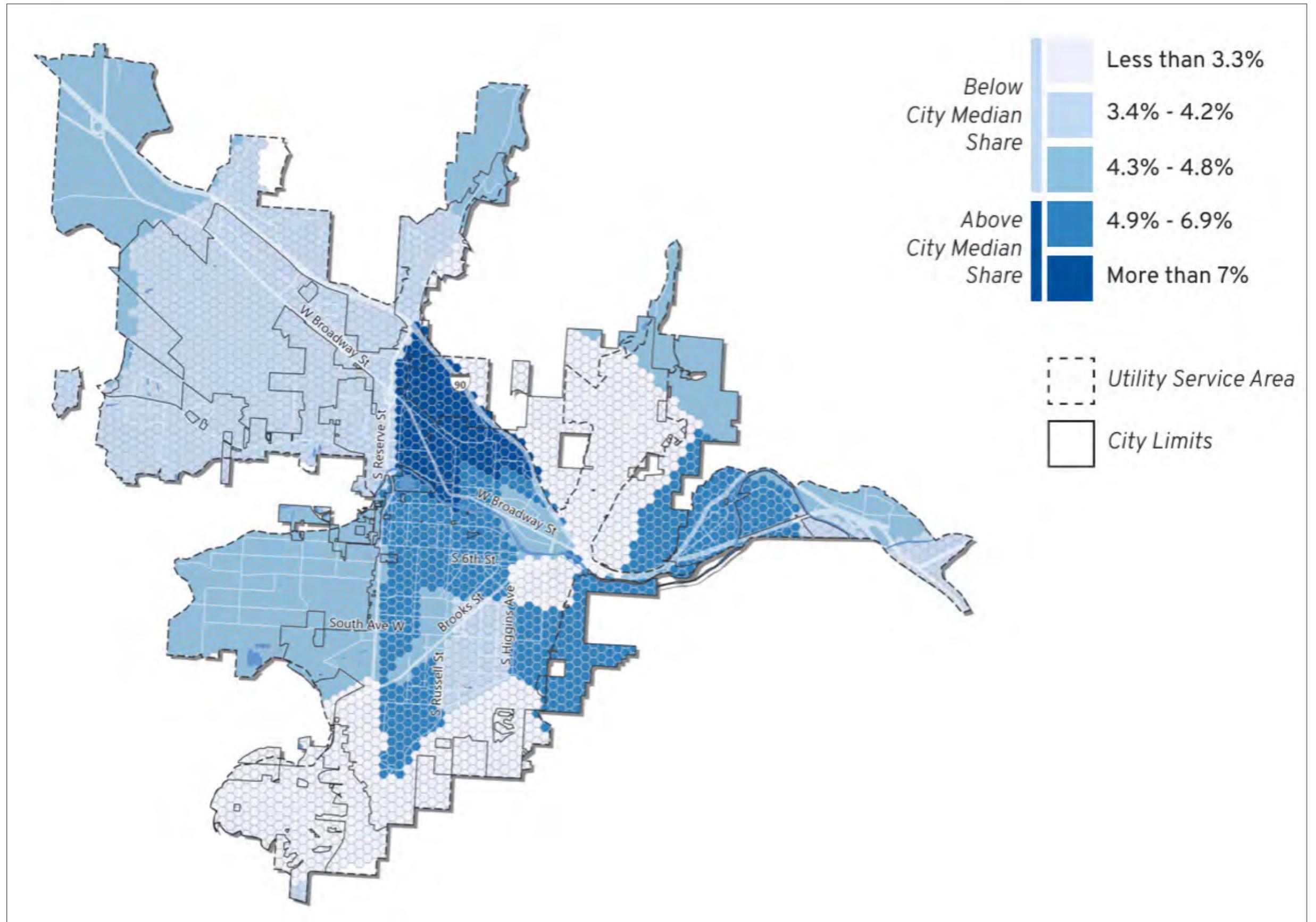


Figure 11: American Indian or Alaska Native as a Percent of Total Population, 2020 (Source: Our Missoula Equity in Land Use Report)





Highlighting the Current System

Since the adoption of the 2004 Master Parks and Recreation Plan for the Greater Missoula Area, Missoula has developed several notable recreation facilities, including Splash Montana, Currents Aquatic Center, and Fort Missoula Regional Park. This plan has also facilitated the acquisition and improvement of neighborhood parks, the development of miles of paved and natural surface trails, and the creation of new recreational programs for the community.



As of 2025, the system includes just over 500 acres of developed parks, nearly 5,000 acres of conservation lands (such as park preserves, public natural areas, and urban parkland), over 90 miles of trails, and tens of thousands of trees in the urban forest. The system encompasses a variety of settings, ranging from highly developed urban parks to traditional grassy neighborhood parks and expansive natural preserves. It features a diverse trail network that includes miles of paved shared-use paths, as well as natural surface hiking and mountain biking trails.



Many features, facilities, and park amenities within the system are well-designed and generally meet Missoula's recreational needs. However, some components require renovation, replacement, or expansion to address the needs of current and future residents.

Operations and Administration

Staffing and Funding of Services

In the 2024 NRPA Agency Performance Review, the City of Missoula is recognized for providing all the services tracked, unlike a "typical" agency that may offer only a selection of these services.

Compared to typical agencies serving populations between 100,000 and 250,000, Missoula's staffing levels are 14 percent below the median. Additionally, the Department's staffing is 47 percent below the upper quartile, which is a better representation of full-service agencies. The Department's per capita budget is also lower than the national median for agencies serving a similar population size.

The Missoula Parks and Recreation Department offers significant recreational services through its facilities and programming. In 2024, fees from these services comprised 20 percent of the department's revenue. These facilities and programs strive to keep access affordable while maintaining a robust scholarship and sliding fee program, along with ongoing discussions around cost recovery goals.

Furthermore, according to Missoula Childcare Advantage, the city only meets 47 percent of the demand for childcare. The Department plays a vital role in filling this gap by providing after-school and out-of-school programming services for school-aged children.

Due to its small size and distance from commercial centers, Missoula faces higher costs for materials and services. To offset

this, the Department has in-sourced certain functions, such as milling wood from local sources, to reduce costs and ensure quality.

Additionally, the Department employs landscape architects and planners who can manage planning and design tasks. This includes staff with legal training or relevant certifications. The Department can design many small and medium-sized parks and trail projects in-house, allowing for more extensive community engagement at a lower cost than hiring outside consultants.

According to data analysis, the Department operates effectively and efficiently with its existing resources, budget, and staffing. It has successfully secured alternative funding, leveraged existing financing, and excelled in fee-for-service initiatives.

The PROST Plan outlines the community's priorities for existing funds while positioning the Department for future funding opportunities as they become available.

Lands, Facilities, and Trails

Parklands

Missoula has just over 500 acres of developed park land, spread throughout the valley in 68 parks. These parks range from small pocket parks that serve a portion of a neighborhood to a large regional park that serves the entire community and regional visitors. Missoula’s parks provide a variety of park amenities, including social areas like picnic pavilions, athletic fields, sport courts, dog off leash parks, trails, playgrounds, natural areas, and more.

Table 3, on the next page, provides the various existing park classifications and some of their characteristics, including the definition, size, and service area. The full list of parklands can be found in Appendix A, and the Park Development Guidelines document can be found in Appendix C.

Parkland Comparisons

The City of Missoula currently has 10.68 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, slightly above the median for similar-sized agencies, according to the NRPA 2024 Agency Performance Review (See Table 1). This includes developed parks and selected non-park preserves for comparability. To consistently align with park metrics data, the inventory includes developed parks, conservation lands categorized as urban parkland, and public natural areas. Conservation easements and park preserves are not included.

In addition to parks, schools across Missoula’s six school districts and County-managed facilities and parkland play a complementary

role in providing access to green spaces. Many of these areas support recreation programming and social gatherings.

To maintain the current level of service of 10.68 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, the city needs to acquire an additional 367 acres of parkland and non-preserve conservation lands by 2045, as projected in the City’s Land Use Plan. These new lands will primarily consist of developed parks and non-preserve conservation areas, focusing on filling gaps in community and neighborhood parks to serve new growth. The goal is to ensure that local residents have access to these parks within a 10-minute walk or roll. The new acreage may include additional developed parks to create connections, expand existing sites, or provide space for recreational facilities.

Table 2 shows an overview of the current City parklands, highlighting the number of parks in each park type and the total acreage. The full park inventory is located in Appendix A.

Table 1: Acres of Parkland per 1,000 Residents, NRPA

	Agencies Serving 50,000 to 99,999 people	Agencies Serving 100,000 to 250,000 people
Lower Quartile	4.80	4.40
Median	10.20	7.00
Upper Quartile	17.40	15.50
Missoula Parkland	10.68	

Table 2: Parkland Inventory Overview

Park Type	Number of Parks	Total Acreage
Neighborhood Parks	33	134
Community Parks	4	151
Pocket Parks	16	20
Regional Parks	1	142
Special Use Parks	9	41
Linear Parks	5	23
Total	68	511



Community Voices

76% of respondents strongly or somewhat strongly support ensuring new housing or commercial development provides adequate access to parks, trails, and green spaces (BBER).

90% of residents somewhat support or strongly support ensuring that our neighborhoods are walkable (BBER Survey).

77% of respondents strongly or somewhat strongly support ensuring neighborhood parks are near home (BBER Survey).

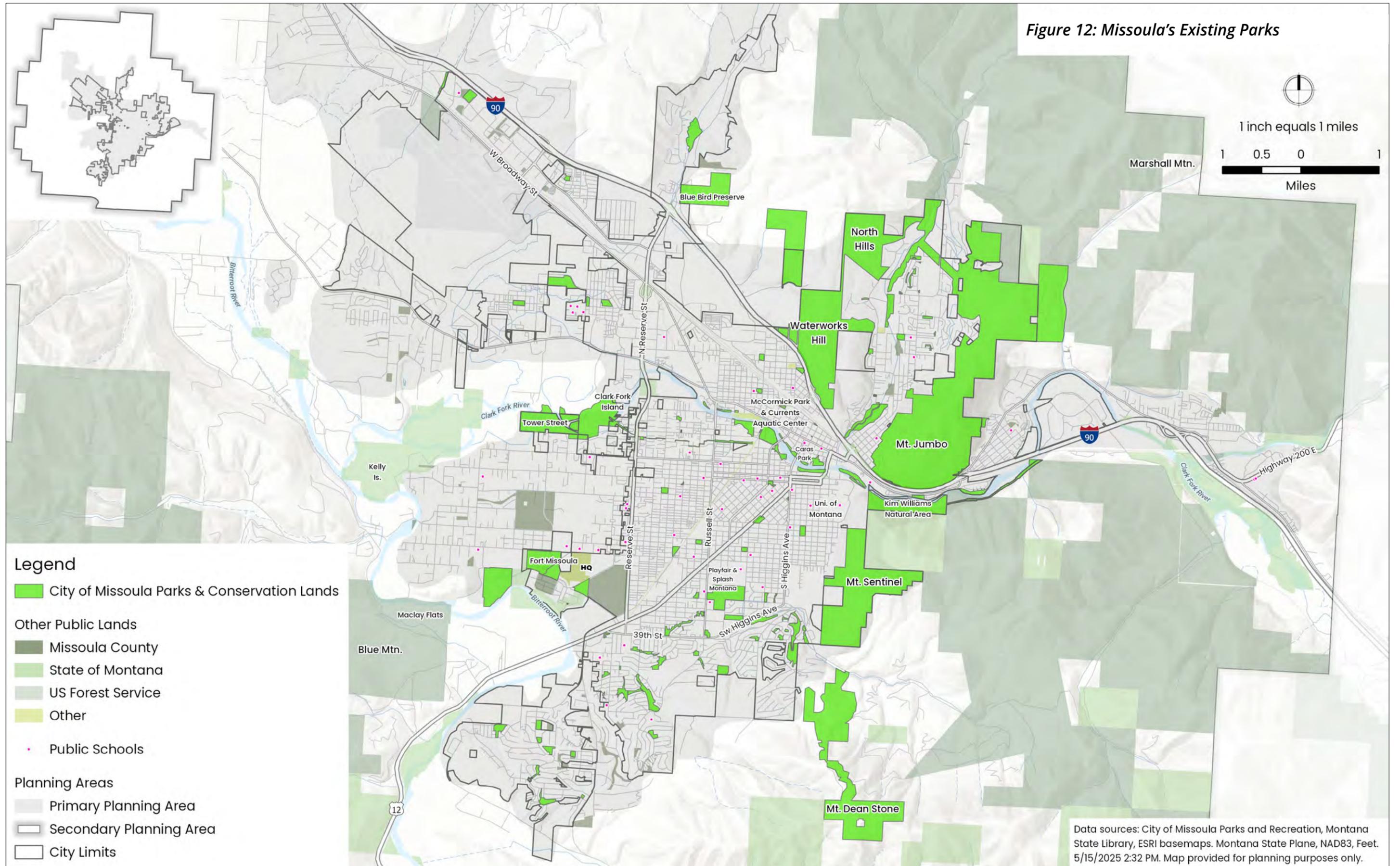
85% of respondents strongly or somewhat strongly support ensuring that parks, trails, and natural areas are accessible to people with disabilities (BBER Survey).

Table 3: Park Classification Overview

Park Type	Definition	Size	Service Area
Neighborhood Parks	Neighborhood parks provide close-to-home public spaces to meet recreation and social needs for nearby residents to walk, play, exercise and be outdoors. Park users typically live within walking and bicycling distance. Some neighborhood parks incorporate natural areas, such as wooded areas, adding to their overall size. Neighborhood parks are typically surrounded by public streets or trails.	Desired size is 5 acres. In the highest density residential areas, at least 2 acres should be provided.	½-mile in medium density residential areas and ¼-mile in the highest density residential areas
Pocket Parks	Pocket parks, sometimes called mini-parks, are small parks that may serve a portion of the surrounding neighborhood. Pocket parks may function as small neighborhood parks or simply provide urban green space. Pocket parks can be essential in serving densely populated portions of the city where neighborhood park level of service cannot be met due to lack of available lands. In these situations, development of pocket parks with neighborhood park amenities should be considered.	Typically less than 2 acres. When developed appropriately, pocket parks can serve as neighborhood parks.	¼ to ½ mile.
Community Parks	Community parks are designed to serve multiple neighborhoods, drawing visitors from several neighborhoods or across Missoula for their features, facilities or programs. These parks serve a broad range of activities and users, support group gatherings, provide space for programs and events and often include specialized recreation facilities. Community parks are generally designed to also serve as neighborhood parks for those living nearby.	Desired minimum size is 25 acres.	1 ½ mile. Community parks may also serve as neighborhood parks to residents within ½ mile.

Park Type	Definition	Size	Service Area
Regional Parks	Regional parks are unique large parks that provide regional attractions or protect cultural, historic, or natural resources of regional significance. These parks serve the greatest geographical area, attracting visitors from across the city and the greater region who tend to visit for longer durations. Regional parks typically include a variety of specialized facilities and large group gathering areas.	Desired minimum size is 100 acres, with 200+ preferable.	1 ½ miles. Regional parks may also serve as community parks to residents within 1 ½ miles and neighborhood parks to residents within ½ mile.
Special Use Parks	Special use parks are typically focused on a specific recreation facility or use, though they may include supporting features and amenities. Examples are urban plazas, gardens or arboreta, bike parks, stand-alone indoor facilities, stand-alone boat ramps, etc.	Depends on the special use. Site should be adequate to accommodate the desired special use and associated support facilities.	Citywide
Linear Parks	Linear parks are longer than they are wide and typically include trails. These parks may follow linear corridors such as creeks, rail lines and utility corridors or they may simply provide connections between parks or to other destinations. Linear parks may be developed or natural in character, depending on the corridor. If the corridor is wide enough, linear parks may include park amenities and recreation facilities.	Varies, depends on corridor type, as well as width and available length.	Citywide

Figure 12: Missoula's Existing Parks



Open Space

Open Space in Missoula, in accordance with definitions found in Montana Code Annotated (MCA 76-6-104(3)), generally includes parks, trail corridors, greenbelts or greenways, conservation lands, riparian areas, and agricultural lands that are provided or preserved for public benefit (Missoula Municipal Code 12.56.015). The City protects open space through the use of multiple funding sources, including open space bond funds.

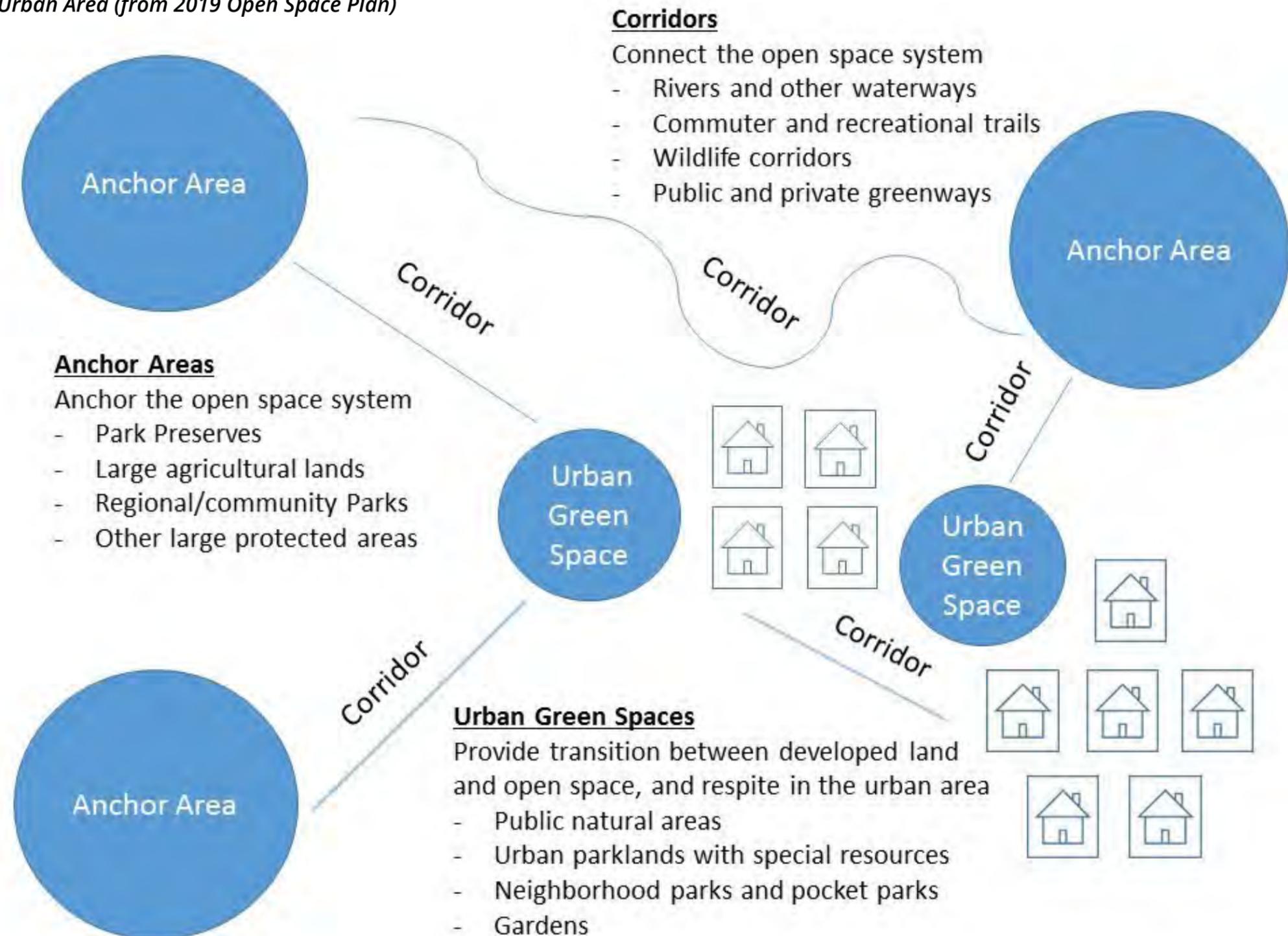
Since 1995, Missoula has followed an open space plan to guide protection efforts. In 2019, the City and County jointly updated and adopted the Missoula Urban Area Open Space Plan. This plan addresses the protection of open space, trails, and certain parklands, and serves as a guiding document for the PROST plan, particularly for actions related to Open Space Bond funding.

The 2019 Open Space Plan guides the Open Space Advisory Committee and City Council in prioritizing the preservation and acquisition of open space in the Missoula urban planning area. Open space bond funds can protect and improve designated lands, while the Conservation and Stewardship Mill Levy (passed with the 2018 Open Space Bond) supports improvements to existing open spaces.

The document establishes a protection model including: anchor areas (large core protection zones), urban green spaces (transitions between developed land and open space), and corridors (connections for wildlife and human use). The Plan identifies “cornerstones” representing the highest conservation priorities in the greater Missoula area. (Figure 13 and 14).

As a recent plan, the recommendations in the 2019 Plan will carry forward into this PROST Plan.

Figure 13: Model of Open Space in Missoula Urban Area (from 2019 Open Space Plan)





Community Voices

92% of residents somewhat support or strongly support protecting river corridors and ensuring natural areas are available to visit and recreate in (BBER).

90% of residents somewhat support or strongly support protecting land for wildlife habitat and environmental reasons (BBER).

87% of residents somewhat support or strongly support protecting working lands, such as farms, forests, and agricultural lands (BBER).

98% of respondents said parks, recreation, and open space are very important or important to the quality of life in Missoula (Online Survey).

The Conservation Lands Program within the Ecosystem Services Division manages existing natural habitats and ecosystems, as well as significant visual, historic, cultural, or archaeological resources within the city and surrounding areas. While most of these lands are owned by the City, the program also manages some land owned by other entities for various public uses and benefits, including parks and riparian areas along the Clark Fork and Bitterroot rivers, as well as Rattlesnake Creek. These lands provide opportunities for interaction with nature and cultural experiences, and may include recreation facilities such as trails, trailheads, and picnic areas. Together, these important lands create the city's conservation lands system. (Figure 15).

Table 4 shows an overview of the current City Conservation Lands, highlighting the number of parklands in each type and the total acreage. This is utilizing the classifications used previous to the adoption of this plan.

Table 4: Conservation Lands Inventory Overview

Type	Number	Total Acreage
Park Preserves	9	4,429
Public Natural Areas	14	101
Urban Parkland with Special Resources	19	185
Conservation Easements	8	680
Total	50	5,405

The following table shows the updated Conservation Land types and definitions, and includes some of their characteristics, size, and service area. The full parkland inventory as of adoption of this plan is located in Appendix A and includes these new designations.

Table 5: Conservation Lands Classification Overview

Parkland Type	Definition	Size	Service Area
Park Preserves	Park Preserves are natural areas generally exceeding 100 acres that protect significant community or regional natural resources. These areas offer nature-oriented recreation while prioritizing habitat preservation and balancing resource protection with public use. Preserves typically feature natural surface trails with signage, and some include preexisting single-lane dirt roads established before City acquisition. They remain largely undeveloped except at designated High Use Outdoor Sites or access points, which may include basic amenities such as parking, signage, trash receptacles, and vault toilets.	100+ acres	Citywide/Regional
Community Natural Areas	Community Natural Areas protect ecosystem functions and natural values, including significant vegetation, important habitats, scenic areas, and zones that contribute to urban shaping and buffering. These areas provide stormwater management, wildland-urban interface buffers, and opportunities for nature-oriented recreation and education. Management emphasizes resource protection with appropriate public access, with development levels matching public use intensity while preserving key resource values.	10+ acres	1 ½ miles and can serve as a community park to residents within 1 ½ miles if developed as a high use site with context sensitive amenities that support recreation and conservation.
Neighborhood Natural Areas	Smaller sites that provide habitat patches, protect natural resources or provide ecosystem functions. Level of development is generally low since the sites are small.	Typically less than 10 acres	½ mile and can serve as a community park to residents within 1 ½ miles if developed as a high use site with context sensitive amenities that support recreation and conservation.
High Use Site Overlay	The High Use Outdoor Site Overlay identifies areas within conservation lands that are developed to support public access to outdoor recreation and may include appropriate recreational facilities. These areas are located outside of sensitive resource zones. High use areas may be closed seasonally for management reasons.		

Figure 14: Open Space Cornerstones per the 2019 Missoula Urban Area Open Space Plan

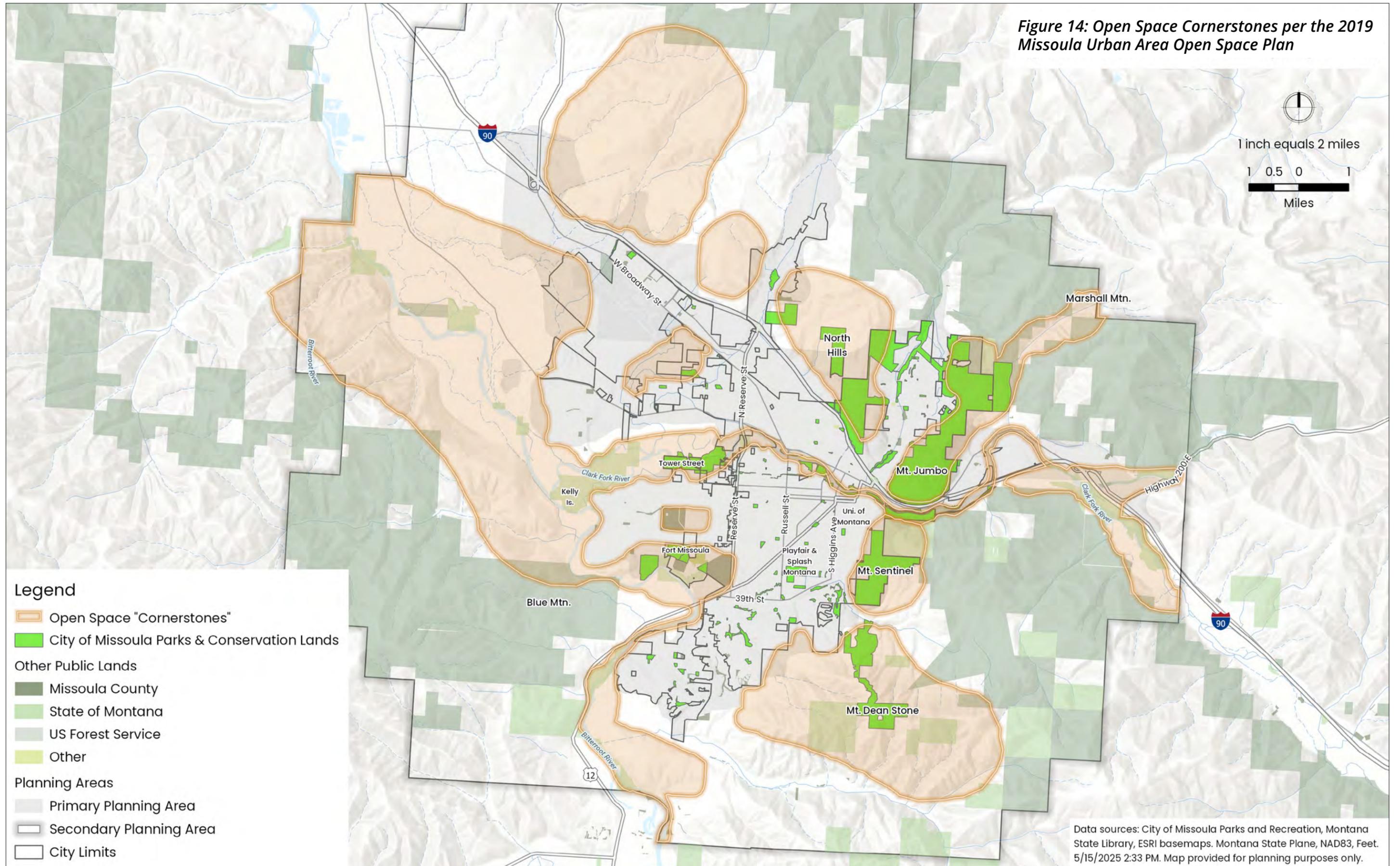
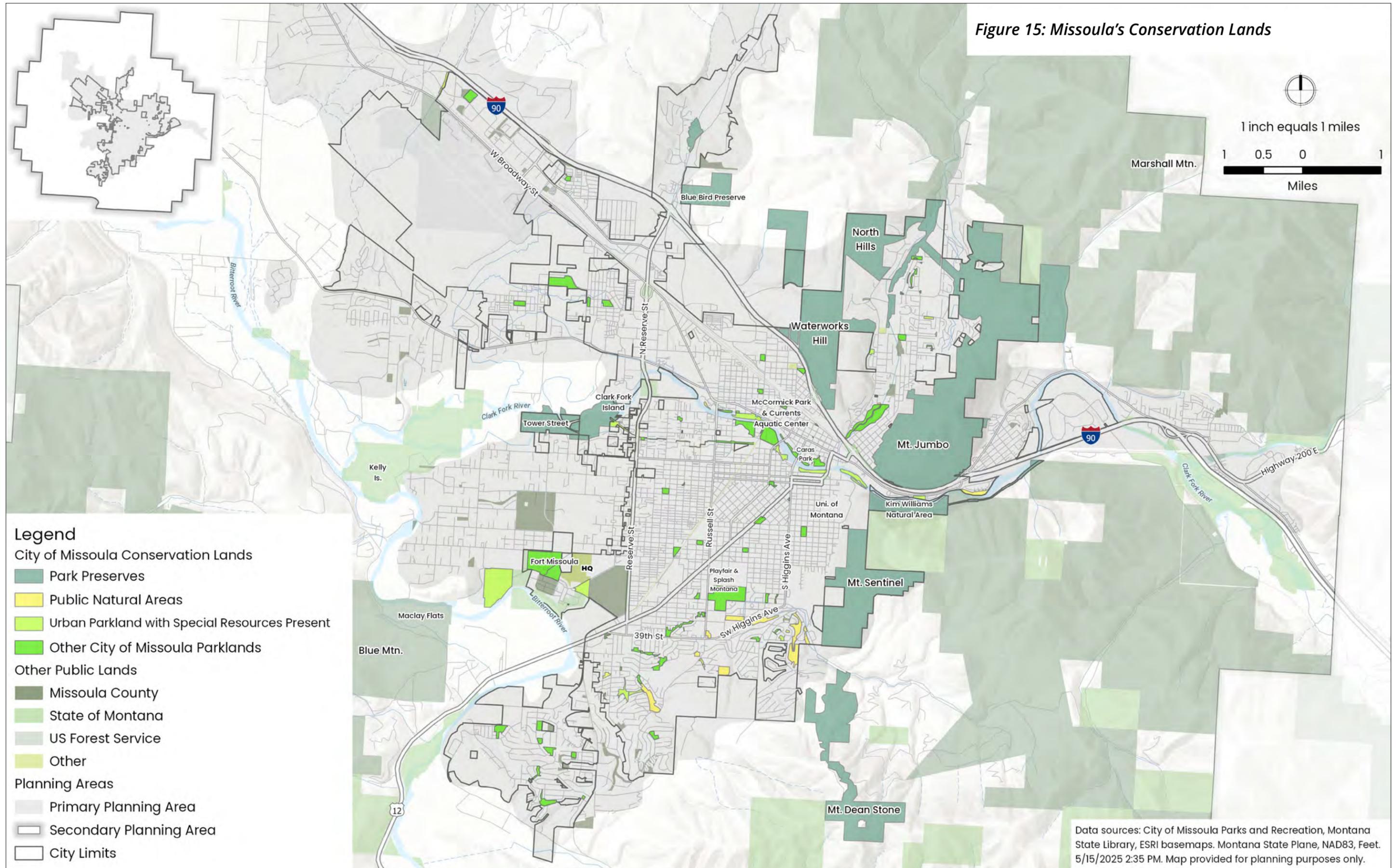


Figure 15: Missoula's Conservation Lands



Data sources: City of Missoula Parks and Recreation, Montana State Library, ESRI basemaps. Montana State Plane, NAD83, Feet. 5/15/2025 2:35 PM. Map provided for planning purposes only.



Community Voices

82% of respondents strongly or somewhat support improving the urban canopy (BBER).

Members of the Focus Groups and Informant Interviews also mentioned the urban forest as one of the most valuable resources in the city.

Urban Forest

The Urban Forestry Program within the Ecosystem Services Division manages Missoula's public trees in parks, conservation lands, river corridors, streets, and boulevards. The program works with private developers to plan street trees in rights-of-way, parks, and common areas. Currently, Urban Forestry maintains 35,000+ public trees (likely an underestimate based on incomplete inventory) and partners with Trees for Missoula (a Climate Smart Missoula program) to advocate for urban forestry initiatives.

Missoula's urban forest faces critical challenges: limited species diversity, aging tree population, and removal rates outpacing plantings by nearly 2:1. This trend poses an immediate citywide concern.

The tree canopy is essential to Missoula's climate resilience strategy, providing heat mitigation, improved air quality, stormwater management, and carbon sequestration. Trees promote shade equity during increasingly hot summers and contribute to the city's character. Additional benefits include reduced cooling costs, decreased pollution, improved mental health, and lower crime rates. The 2015 Urban Forest Management Plan guides these efforts.

Trees deliver multiple benefits beyond oxygen production, according to Arbor Day Foundation:

- **Ecological:** supporting biodiversity, wildlife habitat, improved watersheds, and climate resilience.
- **Social:** creating more livable neighborhoods, reducing stress, improving physical and mental health.
- **Economic:** increasing property values, lowering energy costs, and generating \$2-5 return for every dollar invested in tree planting and care.

Trails

Trails and pathways are highly valued components in Missoula's PROST system, serving both recreational purposes and providing transportation access to parks, facilities, neighborhoods, workplaces, schools, community hubs, programs, and events.

These trails benefit the community by offering convenient, active transportation options throughout the Missoula Valley. They reduce vehicular traffic and improve air quality by enabling car-free travel. Trails also function as wildlife conservation and historical preservation corridors, stimulate local economies, provide safe routes for commuting, and promote active lifestyles for all ages.

The trail system presents opportunities to attract tourism through various connections, from multi-day backpacking loops to urban cycling routes. Throughout the system, there are a variety of trail types, defined in Table 6 on the next page.

These include nearly 20 miles of regional trails that connect key regional destinations; 5 miles of community trails that connect the broader trail network and community destinations; 5 miles of neighborhood trails that are usually located within a neighborhood; connector trails that connect to other forms of transportation or trail systems; and 63 miles of recreation trails that are typically located within parks, conservation lands, and open space.

Tables 7-9 provide information on the current inventory of trails publicly owned and maintained by the Parks and Recreation Department. The map that follows depicts the system. Note that this inventory does not include onsite pedestrian circulation systems and paths of travel, nor does it include on-street bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

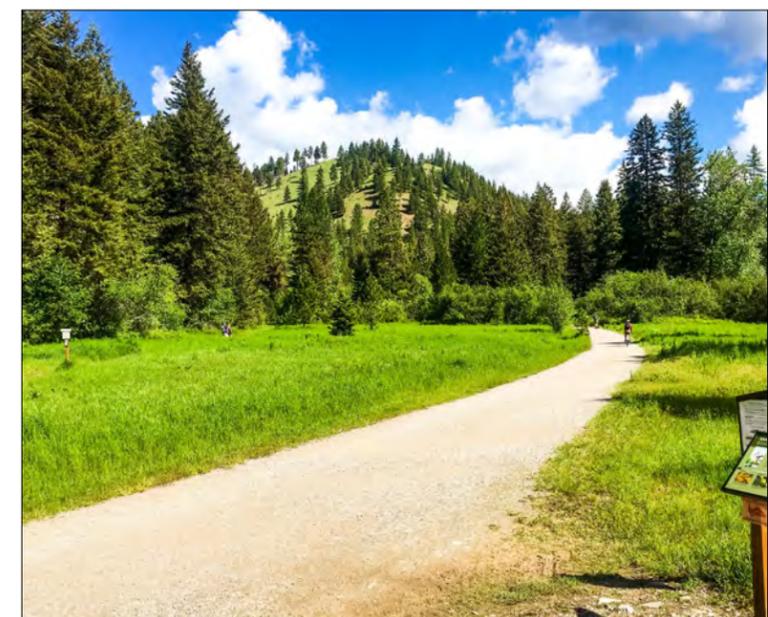


Photo courtesy of Five Valleys Land Trust

Table 6: Trail Typology

Type	Characteristics
Regional Trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spans across multiple place types and neighborhoods Connects to multiple regional destinations Planned route extends beyond the Missoula planning area boundaries Managed and designed for year-round commuting
Community Trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Typically spans multiple neighborhoods or place types Connects to the broader trail network and community destinations Typically more than ½-mile long Managed and designed for year-round commuting
Neighborhood Trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Located within a distinct neighborhood or place types May or may not connect to the broader trail network Typically more than ¼-mile long Often performs as a safe route to school or park
Connector Trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Located within a distinct neighborhood or place Type May connect another active transportation facility (trail, transit, sidewalk etc.) May be public or HOA owned with public access allowed Typically short segments, less than ¼ mile long
Recreational Trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Typically located within parks, conservation lands and other open space properties May be shared or single use

Also of considerable importance is the way the trail system currently connects to, and is complimented by, the city's extensive on-street bike facility and sidewalk network. While these important routes may not be part of a traditional trail system, they are a critical piece of the multi-modal puzzle and provide safe, human-powered routes through and across the city.

Regional and Community (Commuter) Trails

Several major trails run through Missoula, both extending beyond city limits and connecting different parts of the city. The Milwaukee Trail serves as a cross-town commuting and recreation corridor that follows the Clark Fork River through central Missoula. This trail connects to other key routes including the Bitterroot Trail and Ron's River Trail, while linking neighborhoods, downtown, the University of Montana, and numerous parks.

The Milwaukee Trail is also a segment of the national Great American Rail-Trail, which will eventually span more than 3,700 miles from Washington D.C. to Washington State by connecting over 125 existing trails. Several gaps within the PROST planning boundaries remain priorities for completion.

The Bitterroot Trail extends from northern Missoula to over 50 miles south of Hamilton, generally following the historic Bitterroot Branch railroad and Highway 93 South. This trail connects multiple Bitterroot Valley communities to Missoula.



Community Voices

73% of respondents were very or somewhat satisfied with the quality of trails in the Missoula valley (BBER).

84% of respondents strongly or somewhat support ensuring that recreational trails are near home (BBER).

Table 7: Missoula PROST Trail and Trailhead Classifications and Inventory

Trail	Miles	Trailhead	Number
Regional	19.91	Primary	13
Community	4.17	Secondary	22
Neighborhood	4.85	Local Access	114
Connector	4.00	Other	1
Recreational	63.23		
Other Trail	0.10		
Total	96.25	Total	150

Of this inventory, 2.35 miles are lighted and 11.97 miles have intermittent lighting

Table 8: Missoula Trail Surface Type

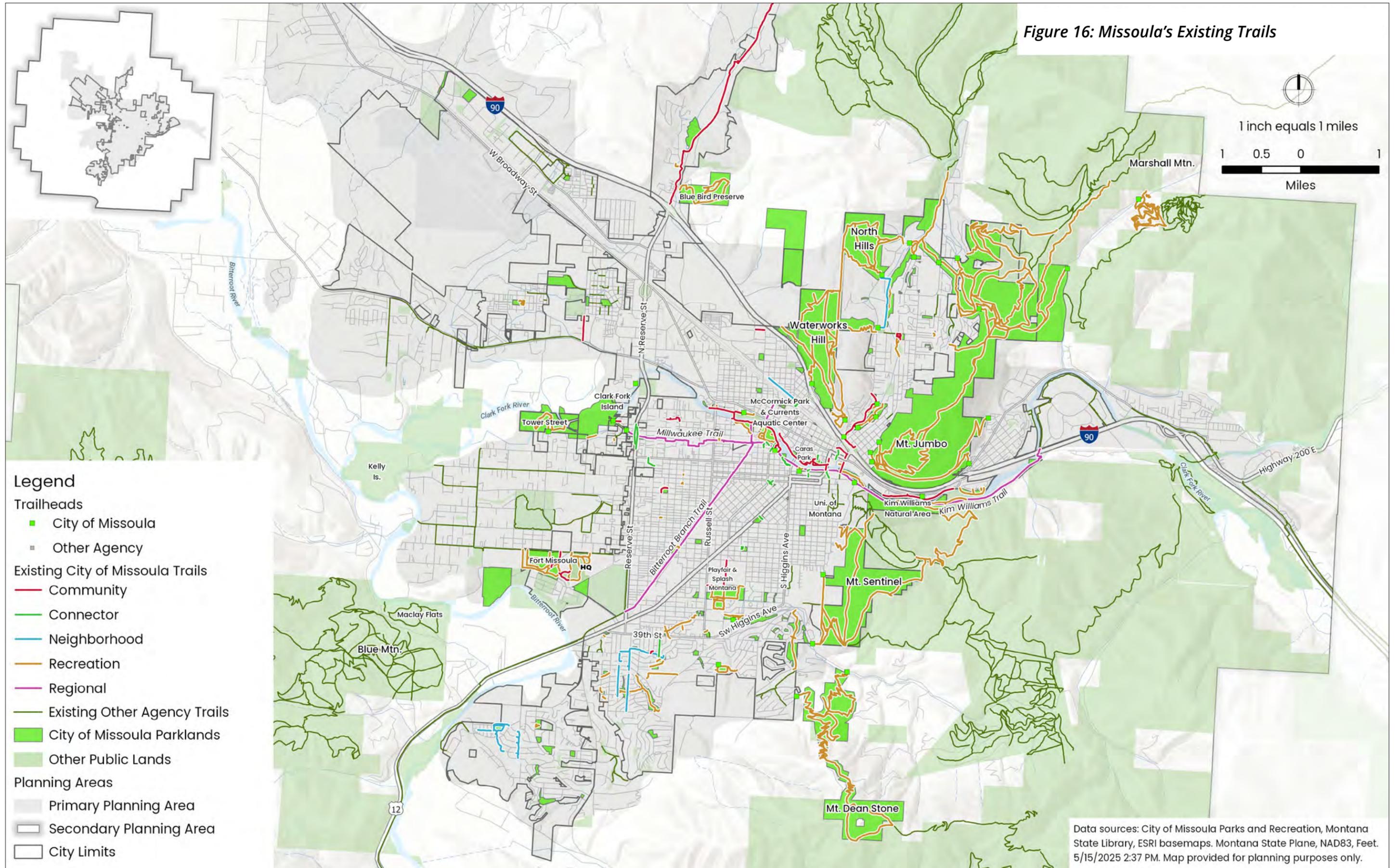
Surface Type	Miles
Paved	22.03
Gravel	13.00
Natural	61.17
Other	0.06
Total	96.25

Table 9: Missoula PROST Allowed Trail Use by Miles

Use Type	Yes	No	Yes % of Total
Bike	60.73	35.52	63%
Equestrian	48.01	48.24	50%
Pedestrian	94.17	2.08	98%



Figure 16: Missoula's Existing Trails



- Legend**
- Trailheads
 - City of Missoula
 - Other Agency
 - Existing City of Missoula Trails
 - Community
 - Connector
 - Neighborhood
 - Recreation
 - Regional
 - Existing Other Agency Trails
 - Existing Other Agency Trails
 - City of Missoula Parklands
 - City of Missoula Parklands
 - Other Public Lands
 - Planning Areas
 - Primary Planning Area
 - Secondary Planning Area
 - City Limits

Data sources: City of Missoula Parks and Recreation, Montana State Library, ESRI basemaps. Montana State Plane, NAD83, Feet. 5/15/2025 2:37 PM. Map provided for planning purposes only.

Recreation Programs and Facilities

Recreation programming activates parks and public spaces while promoting community cohesion, health, wellness, and personal growth. It also provides essential after-school and out-of-school childcare for school-age children. The Parks and Recreation Department facilitates recreation through multiple approaches: directly offering programs, collaborating with partners to host events, and providing facilities for outside organizations such as sports leagues and community gatherings.

The Parks and Recreation Department offers programming in the following areas, shown in Table 10.

Table 10: Recreation Programming Areas

Adult/ Teen Recreation Programming	Youth Recreation Programming	Outdoor Recreation Programming	Runs & Special Events
Active Adults	Afterschool/ School's Out	All-Abilities Inclusive Programming	Montana Senior Olympics
Coffee Walks	Community Schools	Yoga in the Parks	Bill Phelps Kids' Fishing Day
Adult/ Teen Sports	Preschool	Ropes Course	Little Dipper Kids' Trail Run
Teen Workreation	Youth Sports	Folf in the Parks	Run for the Trees
Aquatics	Zootown Derailleurs Cycling	Adventure-Based Programs	Fall Family Fest
	Summer Camps	Backpacking and River Based	Volunteer Events
	Swim Lessons		Drop In Programs

Outdoor Recreation Amenities

According to NRPA Performance Review benchmarks, Missoula has adequate coverage for dog parks, playgrounds, tennis courts, basketball courts, volleyball courts, splash pads, leisure pools, and pickleball courts when compared to median residents-per-facility ratios for similar-sized agencies. However, Missoula falls below comparable agencies in soccer/multi-use rectangular fields and skate parks.

While these national comparisons provide useful context, they don't account for Missoula's unique character, local participation rates, or amenities offered by other providers such as Missoula County Public Schools. County facilities within the planning area contribute an additional 19 diamond fields, significantly increasing overall

inventory, though they add fewer rectangular fields. Importantly, the condition of amenities must also be considered.

A detailed assessment of City-managed facilities is available in Appendix A. Additionally, the City of Missoula also maintains 36 picnic shelters/pavilions

throughout the developed park system. These facilities range in size and function and support smaller gatherings up to large city-wide events. Location and current condition data for these facilities can also be found in Appendix A.

Table 11: NRPA Outdoor Amenities compared to Existing Missoula's Amenities (Population estimate for Missoula is consistent with Open Space Plan Boundary)

Outdoor Park Amenity	% of agencies that have amenity	Median # of Residents per Amenity	# in Missoula	# in Missoula Parks Planning area (County lands)	Missoula # of Residents per amenity (City Lands)	Missoula # of Residents per amenity (City and County Lands)
Pickleball Courts	42%	17240.00	12.00		8,274	8,274
Volleyball Courts	23%	26,612	10.00		9,929	9,929
Outdoor Full Basketball Courts	84%	26,612	15.00	1.00	6,619	6,206
Tennis Courts	72%	10,605	30.00		3,310	3,310
Baseball/ Softball Diamond Field	85%	3,675	25.00	19.00	3,972	2,257
Multi-Use Rectangular	83%	4,070	15.00	2.00	6,619	5,841
Skate Parks	46%	60,904	1.00		99,289	99,289
Dog Parks	68%	55,135	5.00		19,858	19,858
Playgrounds	93%	3,707	42.00	4.00	2,364	2,158
Splash Pads	23%	54,100	6.00		16,548	16,548
Disc Golf Courses	20%	58,603	1.00	1.00	99,289	49,645

Recreation Facilities

Table 12 below provides comparisons for major recreational facility types.

The Parks and Recreation Department manages several major recreation facilities:

- **Currents Aquatic Center:** An accessible indoor facility in McCormick Park serving over 80,000 swims annually. Features include a children’s water playground, fitness pool, two water slides, spa, event rooms, and locker facilities.
- **Splash Montana:** An accessible outdoor water park in Playfair Park operating June through early September with 80,000+ annual visits. Includes three-story waterslides, zero-depth entry pool, lazy river with wild river branch, spray ground, 50-meter pool, concessions, lounging areas, rental cabanas, and locker rooms.
- **Fort Missoula Regional Park:** A regional park within a historic landscape featuring extensive sports facilities: 10 full-sized multi-sport grass fields, a lighted synthetic turf field, softball complexes (5-plex and 2-plex), eight tennis courts,
- **Caras Park:** Located in Downtown Missoula with Caras Park Pavilion, bandshell stage, carousel, Brennan’s Wave, playground, park spaces, river access, and Ron’s River Trail promenade.

and six pickleball courts. Additional amenities include The Commons, Mac’s Playground, The Greens, Sgt. Bozo Dog Park, CCC Path and Prairie, historic interpretive facilities, and 2.5+ miles of trails. This is Montana’s first Silver SITES certified park.

For additional programming space, Parks and Recreation collaborates with Missoula County Public Schools and other providers to offer activities near population centers. The department temporarily uses the “Base Camp” facility (former City/County Library) for indoor programming, though this inadequately designed space is slated for redevelopment and is not a permanent solution.

Table 12: NRPA Metrics - Recreation Facilities compared to Missoula Current Facilities

	% of All Agencies	Median # of Residents per Facility	Number in Missoula	Missoula # of Residents per Facility
Recreation Centers (gymnasium)	62%	39,886	0	N/A
Community Centers (no gym)	59%	31,569	0	N/A
Nature Centers	34%	133,773	0	N/A
Aquatic Centers (indoor only)	30%	58,496	1	93,926

Peer City Comparisons

Beyond national comparisons, the PROST needs analysis evaluated five similar peer cities: Bozeman, Billings, Boise, Spokane, and St. George. These cities share key characteristics with Missoula, including similar populations, university presence, comparable geographic size, Western U.S. location, outdoor recreation orientation, four-season climate, and status as regional centers. Several additional cities were examined to identify emerging trends.

Notable findings from this analysis include:

- River engagement is increasingly popular, with cities like Boise, Bend, Eugene, and Spokane offering programming, events, educational resources, equipment rentals, and other elements that enhance community and tourist access to their rivers.
- Boise excels in providing innovative dog parks, featuring 11 seasonal or designated-hours off-leash areas with amenities such as swim zones, “shy dog” spaces, and shade canopies.
- Eugene, Oregon stands out for its comprehensive adaptive recreation program serving children, teens, and adults with disabilities, including all-terrain and beach wheelchairs and adaptive bikes.
- Many cities, including Missoula, offer extensive teen and youth summer camps focused on nature and outdoor activities.



Bend, OR: Whitewater Park



Boise, ID: Dog Swim Zone



Eugene, OR: Adaptive Recreation

Table 13 below highlights the indoor recreation facilities for each community.

These tables demonstrate that Missoula significantly lags behind both national norms and comparable cities in indoor recreation facilities. NRPA data shows nearly 2/3 of similar-sized agencies nationwide have city-owned recreation centers with gymnasiums, and 3/5 have community centers. Based on median figures for agencies in Missoula's population class, the city should currently have 2-3 recreation or community centers.

When compared to peer cities, Missoula's lack of indoor facilities is striking. All five comparable cities offer recreation or community centers, with three providing nature centers that complement their outdoor recreation identities. Like Missoula, all five cities offer aquatic centers, either indoor or outdoor.

Given Missoula's cold winters and increasingly hot, smoky summers, indoor recreation facilities represent a critical unmet need—particularly flexible programming space for activities ranging from older adult fitness classes to accessible children's programs.



Community Voices

61% of respondents were strongly or somewhat strongly supportive of providing indoor spaces for recreation and fitness (BBER).

At the community open house, a desire for indoor recreation space was one of the top themes.

Throughout engagement, there was a strong support for youth after and out of school programming as well as summer camp offerings to support working households.

Table 13: Comparable Cities - Recreation Facilities

	Missoula	Bozeman	Billings	Boise	Spokane	St. George
Population (2022)	93,926	56,123	119,960	236,389	232,315	102,519
Recreation Center	0	1	1	4	1	1
Community Center	0	1	1	1	5	0
Nature Center	0	1	0	1	0	1
Aquatic Center	2	2	2	3	6	2

Recreation Programming and Services

The Department provides a broad array of program opportunities, especially youth out-of-school programs. Yet, there is much more demand. Appendix C includes the assessment of recreation programs, which looks at current programming, NRPA data,

demographic trends, and community input to identify needs and opportunities for recreation programming. The table below shows a snapshot of types of program offerings, and the percentage of agencies that offer them.

Table 14: NPRA Metrics: Program Offerings, red indicating Missoula comparison.

Percent of agencies with these programs:	Jurisdiction Population					
	All Agencies	Less than 20,000	20,000 to 49,999	50,000 to 99,999	100,000 to 250,000	Over 250,000
Themed Special Events	89%	83%	89%	96%	90%	91%
Social Recreation Events	88%	82%	91%	94%	92%	86%
Team Sports	86%	81%	90%	93%	89%	80%
Fitness Classes	82%	69%	84%	91%	85%	82%
Health & Wellness Classes	80%	64%	78%	91%	86%	85%
Individual Sports	76%	66%	73%	85%	81%	79%
Racquet Sports	73%	64%	71%	84%	77%	73%
Safety Training	70%	57%	63%	82%	77%	78%
Natural & Cultural History	66%	36%	60%	76%	75%	89%
Aquatics	68%	52%	62%	77%	78%	76%
Cultural Crafts	63%	43%	57%	74%	71%	75%
Visual Arts	63%	45%	58%	78%	67%	71%
Performing Arts	62%	39%	63%	79%	68%	70%
Trips and Tours	62%	42%	64%	73%	64%	73%
Martial Arts	56%	36%	61%	67%	65%	58%
Running/Cycling Races	53%	42%	44%	61%	55%	67%
Golf	49%	22%	42%	57%	63%	70%
eSports/eGaming	26%	14%	22%	32%	30%	33%

In most cases, the Department directly provides recreation programming by planning programs, securing facilities, and hiring/training staff or contracting with instructors. The Department directly operates most programs in Missoula parks and facilities, except for youth and adult field sports. In FY 23, there were 160,000 visits to Currents and Splash Montana, 7,500 participant days in Missoula's after school/out of school programs, and 12,713 participant days in summer camp programs.

The Department collaborates with Missoula County Public Schools to provide affordable afterschool programming at three area schools

through facility use agreements and specific grants and community donations. These partnerships support wrap-around youth programming until 5:30 pm. The Department also administers a scholarship program offering over \$80,000 in assistance to individuals and households, plus a sliding fee scale for afterschool programs that reduced fees by over \$40,000 in FY24.

In other cases, the Department serves as a partner (e.g., disc golf with Garden City Flyers, community gardening with Garden City Harvest) or as a facility provider for other organizations' programming.

While NRPA categorizes recreation program areas differently from Missoula, NRPA Park Metrics allow for a high-level review of what park agencies nationwide offer for recreation programming. Table 10 shows NRPA programming categories, identifies the percentage of agencies offering that type of program, documents if Missoula Parks and Recreation is a program or facility provider, and lists other major providers.

According to NRPA metrics and Missoula's recreation program offerings, the City of Missoula provides many popular programs, but several programming gaps exist. While some gaps result from limited indoor space (fitness classes, gymnasium sports, arts, and performing arts), others don't necessarily require indoor facilities. These include natural and cultural historical activities, cultural crafts, and trips/tours. Additional opportunities exist to expand current offerings for older adults, people with disabilities, and non-competitive sports.

Table 15: Missoula Recreation Program Areas and Populations Served

		Program Area										
Populations Served		Active	After School and School's Out	Aquatics	Camps	Community Schools Programs	Preschool Programs	Special Events/ Drop-in Programs	Sports (Adult/ Teen)	Sports (Youth)	Teen	Facility Rentals
Demographic Segment	Preschool			X	X		X	X				
	K-8		X	X	X	X		X		X		
	Teens			X				X		X	X	
	Young Adults			X				X	X			
	Adults			X				X	X			
	Older Adults	X		X				X				
	People			X	X			X				
	Communities of Color			X								
Program Audience	Beginner/Introductory		X	X	X	X						
	Moderate			X	X				X	X		X
	Expert								X			X
	Drop-in	X				X		X				
	Multi-Generational			X		X		X				

Community Voices



Providing opportunities for all, including aging adults, was a key theme in the informant interviews, focus groups, and artist-led engagement.

80% of respondents strongly or somewhat support ensuring that families with children have access to out-of-school, after school, and summer programming.

Appreciate existing partnerships that Missoula has, but could expand them (Key Informant Interviews)

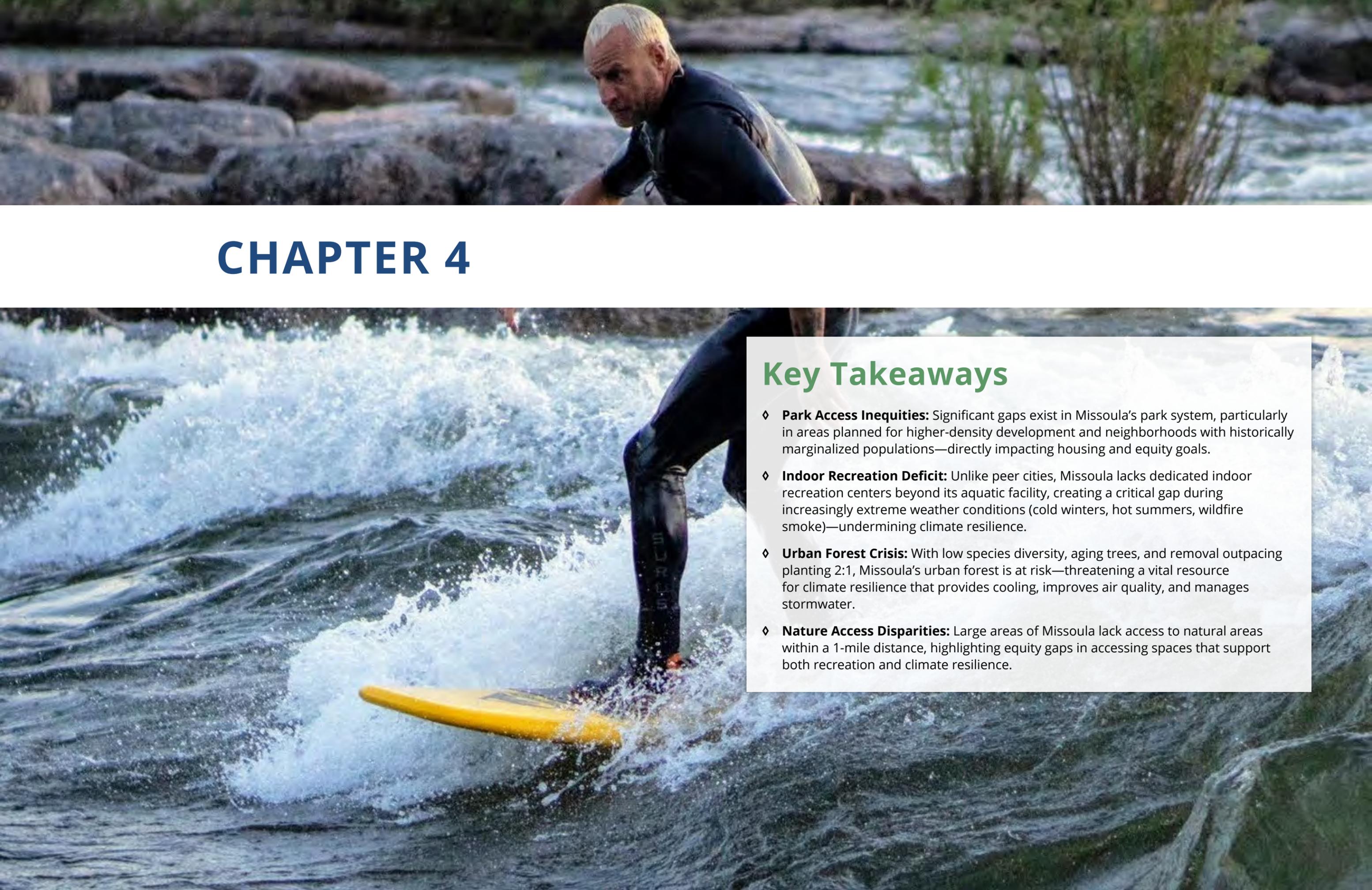
Need more programming: (March 2024 Community Open House – Mobile Listening Sessions)

- Events and festivals
- Arts and culture
- Aquatics/swimming
- Adults Classes
- Summer and After School Kids Programs

Table 16: NRPA Programming Categories and Missoula Offerings

NRPA Programming	% NRPA	Parks and Recreation Dept.	Other Major Missoula
After School Programs	52%	Program Provider	YMCA, Boys & Girls Club, Campfire
Aquatics	68%	Program Provider, Facility Provider	YMCA, University of Montana, PEAK
Cultural Crafts	63%	-	Missoula Public Library, Zootown Arts Community Center
E-Sports	26%	-	University of Montana
Fitness Enhancement Classes	82%	Program Provider	YMCA, private fitness facilities
Golf	49%	-	Missoula County, University of Montana, private golf facilities
Health and Wellness Education	80%	Program Provider	YMCA, private fitness facilities
Individual Sports	76%	Program Provider, Facility Provider	Sports organizations, private businesses
Martial Arts	56%	-	Private fitness facilities
Natural and Cultural History Activities	66%	Facility Provider	Missoula Art Museum, Missoula Public Library, Montana Natural History Center
Performing Arts	62%	-	Zootown Arts Community Center, Missoula Children's Theater
Preschool Programs	34%	Program Provider	YMCA, Missoula County Public Schools, Private preschools
Programs for People with	63%	Program Provider	Summit Independent Living Center MARS program
Racquet Sports	73%	Program Provider, Facility Provider	YMCA, University of Montana
Running/Cycling Races	53%	Program Provider, Facility Provider	Run Wild Missoula, private businesses, MTB, MTCX
Science, Technology,	58%	-	Missoula Public Library, ASUM, University of Montana
Social Recreation Events	88%	Facility Provider	Missoula Downtown Association
Specific Senior Programs	77%	Program Provider	Missoula Senior Center, All Nations Health, Missoula Aging Services
Specific Teen Programs	65%	Program Provider	YMCA, All Nations Health, Summit Independent Living, YWCA

NRPA Programming	% NRPA	Parks and Recreation Dept.	Other Major Missoula
Summer Camp	82%	Program Provider	YMCA, Boys & Girls Club, private camps
Team Sports	86%	Program Provider,	Sports organizations, private businesses
Themed Special Events	89%	Program Provider	Nonprofits
Trips and Tours	62%	-	-
Visual Arts	63%	-	Zootown Arts Community Center, Missoula Arts Museum



CHAPTER 4

Key Takeaways

- ◆ **Park Access Inequities:** Significant gaps exist in Missoula's park system, particularly in areas planned for higher-density development and neighborhoods with historically marginalized populations—directly impacting housing and equity goals.
- ◆ **Indoor Recreation Deficit:** Unlike peer cities, Missoula lacks dedicated indoor recreation centers beyond its aquatic facility, creating a critical gap during increasingly extreme weather conditions (cold winters, hot summers, wildfire smoke)—undermining climate resilience.
- ◆ **Urban Forest Crisis:** With low species diversity, aging trees, and removal outpacing planting 2:1, Missoula's urban forest is at risk—threatening a vital resource for climate resilience that provides cooling, improves air quality, and manages stormwater.
- ◆ **Nature Access Disparities:** Large areas of Missoula lack access to natural areas within a 1-mile distance, highlighting equity gaps in accessing spaces that support both recreation and climate resilience.



How is the System Working?

To effectively establish objectives and recommendations and realize the PROST vision, a deeper understanding of current and future community needs is essential. This analysis considers both quantitative and qualitative elements. The analyses and processes were used to help identify key gaps in Missoula’s parklands and facilities including Parks, trails, the urban forest, open space and recreation programs.

This chapter details and then summarizes the following needs and gaps in the PROST system and is organized by:

- **City Decision Lenses**
- **Lands, Facilities and Trails**

Taking a Modern Approach

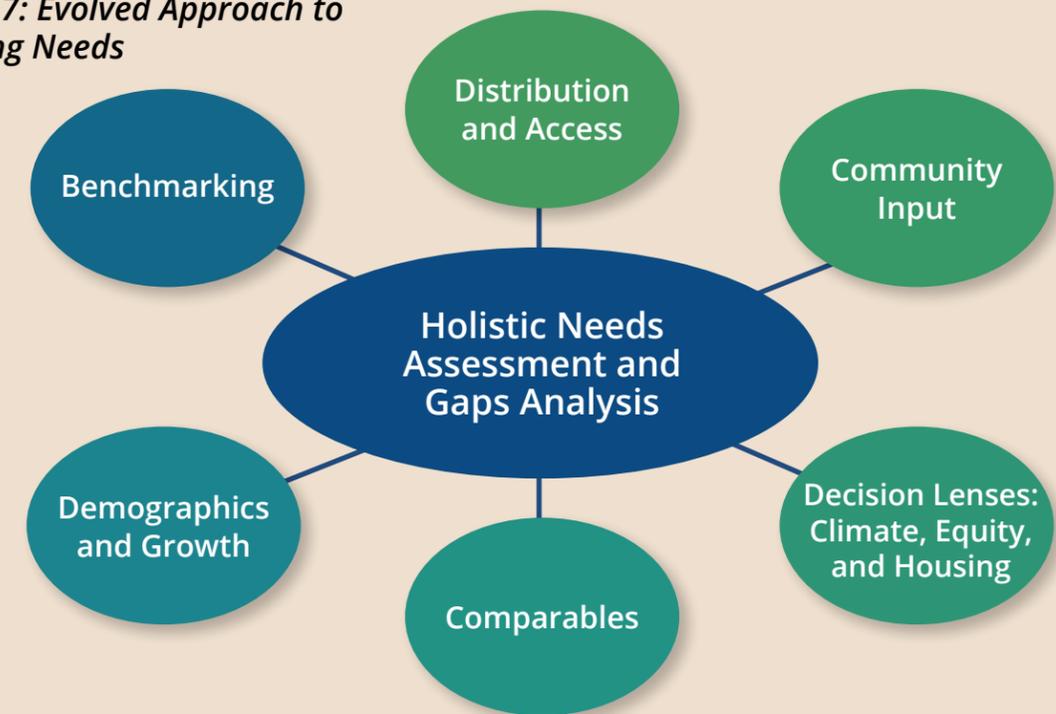
Since the adoption of the 2004 Master Parks and Recreation Plan for the Greater Missoula Area, standards for parks and recreation planning have evolved, including how needs are assessed and quantified. In 2017, the 10-Minute Walk Campaign was launched by the Trust for Public Land (TPL), Urban Land Institute (ULI), and National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA).

Across the US, 300+ mayors – including Missoula’s – committed to the vision that everyone in U.S. cities should have access to a quality park within a 10-minute walk of their home, focusing on quality and distribution rather than simply the quantity or acres of parkland.

National Recreation and Parks Association, (NRPA) publishes Park Metrics as a benchmarking tool to allow comparisons to other agencies, with the guidance that agencies should tailor their offerings and standards to their specific community.

The Public Engagement Key Findings discussed in Chapter 2 inform the approach to assessing needs in Missoula in 2025. These

Figure 17: Evolved Approach to Assessing Needs



key findings informed the six analysis criteria, as shown in Figure 17. This systems approach considers multiple elements – both qualitative and quantitative – that together serve as the City’s Park Performance Standards. This approach provides a deeper understanding of high priority community needs and lays the foundation for goal-oriented objectives and specific recommendations that are outlined in Chapter 5 and 6 of this document.

This chapter provides a summary of findings from key areas of analysis:

Community Input: The extensive engagement process provided rich data about needs, priorities, and gaps supporting the PROST vision and goals in Chapter 2. This data appears throughout this section as applicable.

Community Profile: Understanding the current and future users of the City’s PROST system is critical for planning. The project team utilized data from the Equity in Land

Use Report and population projections from the Our Missoula 2045 Land Use Plan.

Distribution Analysis: After updating the Parks and Recreation Department’s inventory, planners used GIS tools (including ArcGIS Network Analyst) to evaluate park distribution, walkability, bikeability, equity factors, and planned land use.

Benchmarking: Using the NRPA’s 2024 Agency Performance Review and statistics from comparable cities, planners benchmarked Missoula’s Park Performance Standards against trends and best practices, as detailed in the Trends and Comparables section.

Decision Lenses: The gaps and needs analysis specifically examined the City’s three decision lenses—climate, equity, and housing.

City Decision Lenses

Equity Lens

Understanding Missoula's diverse needs requires incorporating equity considerations from the Our Missoula 2045 Land Use Plan and the Equity in Land Use Report (August 2023) into the Parks gaps analysis.

Key demographic groups requiring special attention include the growing populations

of seniors, younger adults, and people with disabilities.

Proximity of parks and trails to historically underserved areas impacts residents' access to employment, services, exercise opportunities, social spaces, play areas, urban respite, non-motorized transportation options, and overall quality of life.

Figure 18: Racial and Ethnic Population compared to Regional Average (Source: LUP Community Profile)

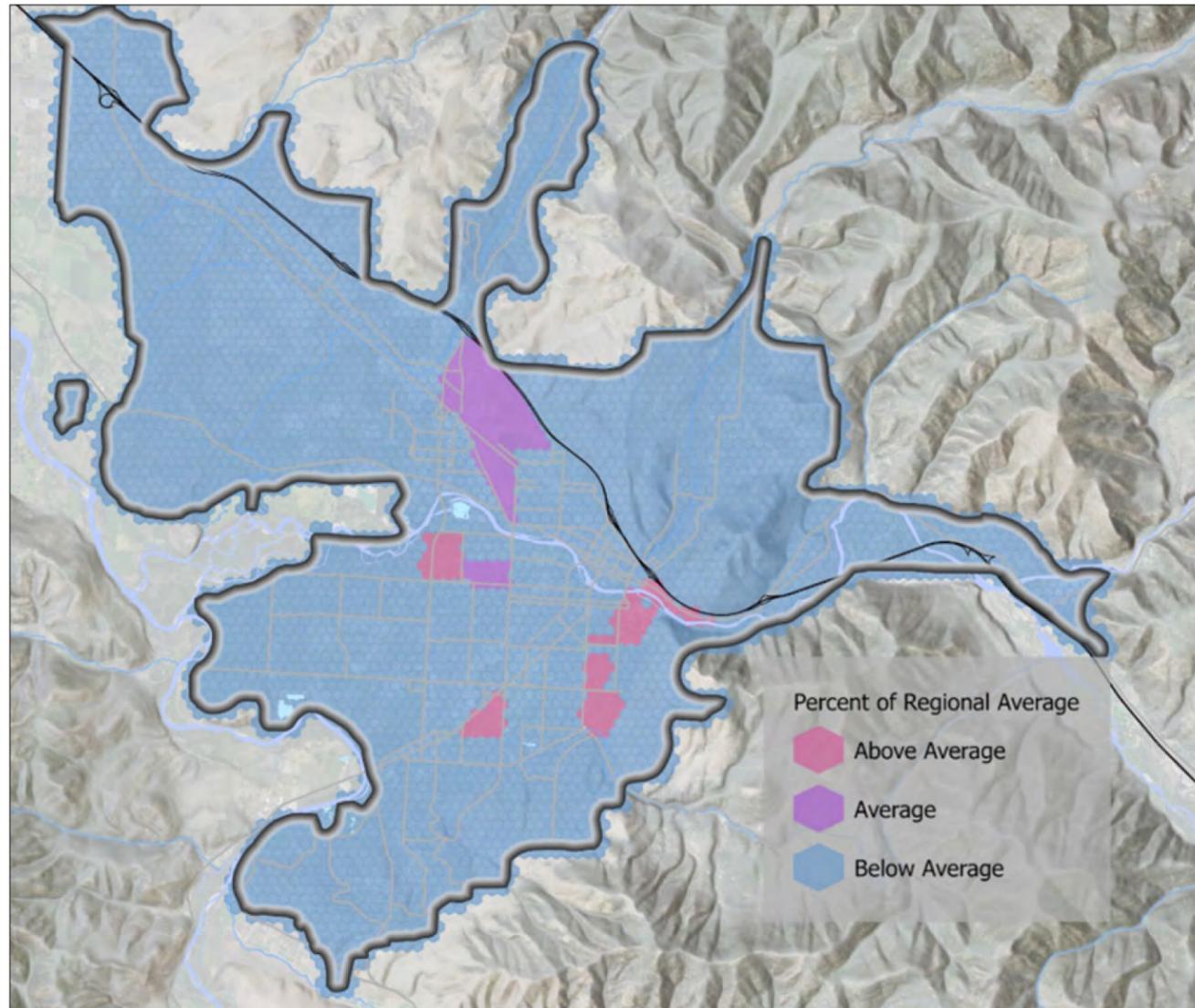
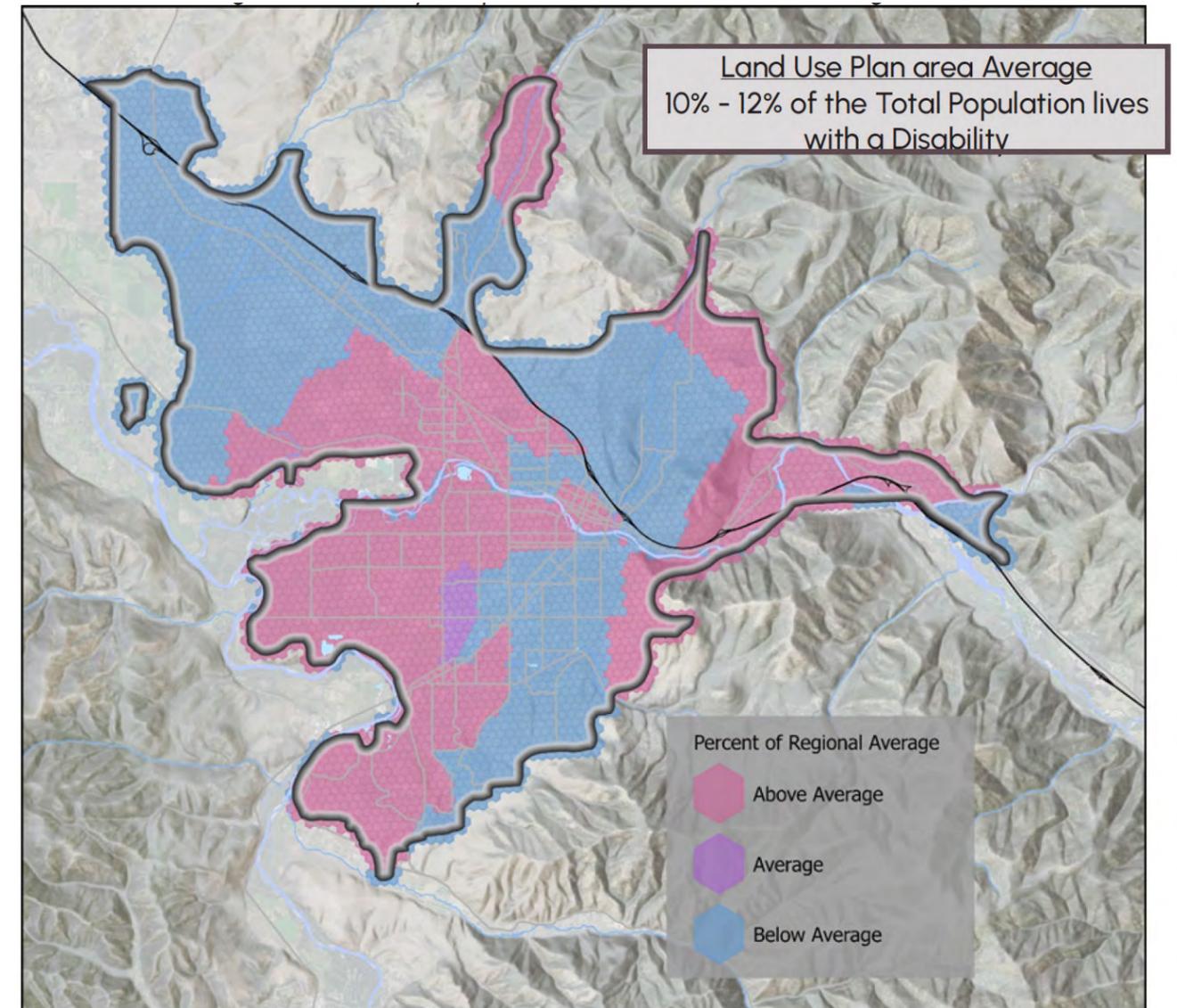


Figure 19: Disability Compared to LUP area Average (Source: LUP Community Profile)





Housing Lens

To have a parks and trails system that contributes to livability, the number and types of parks and recreation needs will be linked to the numbers and locations of residences. The PROST Planning process occurred on the heels of significant efforts to plan for Missoula's future growth.

The Our Missoula 2045 Land Use Plan (LUP), a growth planning document adopted in 2024, provides a detailed analysis of projected population changes and the anticipated housing, infrastructure, and other services needed to serve a larger population. The LUP uses the concept of Place Types to help guide growth and development. Place Types describe geographic areas using a combination of defining characteristics: land use, built form, mobility, intensity, and constraints. Each Place Type summary includes a brief description of the public parks and open space within each type, summarized in Table 17.

Implementation Action B12 of the LUP also directs the PROST Plan to define park level of service in each of the twelve Place Types.

Table 17: Summary of public parks and open space by Place Type in the Our Missoula 2045 Land Use Plan (LUP)

Place Type	Place Type Characteristics as defined in the LUP		
	Primary Land Use includes Residential Housing	Primary Land Use includes Parks and Open Space	Parks Service Area
Urban Residential High	Yes	Yes	Parks within walking distance of all residents.
Urban Residential Low			
Limited Urban Residential			
Downtown			
Urban Mixed Use High			
Urban Mixed Use Low			
Limited Urban Mixed Use	No		Parks may not be within walking distance of all residents.
Rural Residential			
Parks and Conservation Lands			
Civic			
Open and Resource	No	No	Not Applicable. Residential housing is not a primary use of the Place Type.
Industrial and Employment			



Climate Lens

Heat and drought affect lands and recreation programming. August is routinely hot and smoky. Alternatives such as indoor spaces with controlled air are increasingly necessary to meet community and program needs.

Changing winter weather and snow elevations require creativity and demand resilient solutions. The need to secure more indoor facilities for both hot smoky months and the long winter months has increasingly become critical.

Besides being places to enjoy nature, exercise, socialize or relax, the City's parks and open space can address and be designed to better alleviate climate risks and protect green infrastructure assets. Nature-based solutions, often paired with human-made solutions, can mitigate climate hazards while providing co-benefits to the community. "Nature-based solutions" refers to policies or actions that use natural features and processes to tackle socio-environmental challenges.

According to Climate Ready Missoula Plan and the LUP, the City of Missoula will likely experience longer wildfire and wildfire smoke

seasons, extreme summer heat, prolonged drought, more spring flooding, and greater variability. The City has adopted a Municipal Climate Action Plan with a target of Carbon Neutral by 2050 and has set climate as one of its three decision lenses.

Key Climate Impacts

Wildfires and Wildfire Smoke

As Missoula's climate warms with decreased summer rainfall, wildfires are expected to increase in size and frequency, with longer fire seasons and more days of unhealthy air. As the region expands, more people may move into the Wildland-Urban Interface, increasing wildfire risk.

The PROST system's parks and conservation lands provide potential buffers and demonstration sites for wildfire mitigation strategies such as using trails as firebreaks, strategic fuels reduction, and emergency planning areas. The Department must address smoke hazards for workforce and visitors and identify strategies for recreation programming during smoke periods.

Precipitation Change

Average annual precipitation is expected to increase, occurring mainly in winter and spring as rain instead of snow, while summers become drier. This pattern increases flooding likelihood.

Green infrastructure across the city, especially in parks and recreation facilities, can help manage stormwater runoff and extreme rain events. Creating areas to slow and absorb runoff can reduce negative impacts of extreme weather. The PROST system offers many opportunities to protect and enhance sensitive riparian areas.

Extreme Heat

Both annual average temperatures and days above 90 degrees are expected to increase. The 2024 Community Health Assessment found residents reported hotter summers and increased wildfires as the most significant climate shifts noticed.

Impacts include increased utility costs, stress and anxiety related to heat impacts, and loss of outdoor recreation affecting wellbeing. Native species will be increasingly at risk, and water conservation planning is needed.

Parks and conservation lands offer respite from urban heat island effects, particularly when designed with heat mitigation in mind. Infill development will likely increase heat islands in certain neighborhoods. Parks and residential development can be enhanced by adding trees, creating no-mow areas, improving soil health through regenerative practices, and using materials with lower heat retention.

The Department is already experimenting with adaptive plant palettes and has many opportunities to continue to experiment within the park system to ensure that trees and vegetation can thrive and provide cooling despite the effects of climate change.



Community Voices

87% of respondents strongly or somewhat support strategies to maintain clean air and water (BBER).

76% of respondents strongly or somewhat support strategies to reduce the effects of heat and smoke in summer and fall (BBER).

92% of respondents strongly or somewhat support strategies to protect river corridors (BBER).

87% of respondents strongly or somewhat support strategies to protect land for wildlife habitat and environmental reasons (BBER).



Photo courtesy of Five Valleys Land Trust

Lands, Facilities, and Trails

This section describes the needs and gaps based on the analyses summarized in the previous chapter. Gaps include geographic, systematic, community access, or similar and are the basis for the objectives and recommendations described in chapters 5 and 6 of the plan to create a more inclusive, connected, comprehensive, and resilient system. For further detail on existing conditions and GIS methodology please refer to Chapter 3 and Appendix D, respectively.

Parklands

As Missoula is growing, it is critical residents do not lose access to parklands and acres of parkland available to residents does not stagnate. One measure of a resident's access to parks is to determine the ratio of residents to park acreage.

The City will strive to maintain 10.68 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, as well as ensure it meets the diverse and changing needs of the growing community through new park standards that are aligned with the Land Use Plan Place Types and take into consideration the more nuanced approach to park performance levels than the 2004 approach.

A Walkable and Rollable System

Missoula has committed to the principle that everyone should be within a 10-minute walk/roll of a park, and public engagement confirms that community members want a walkable, rollable, bikeable park close to home and a safe route to get there. A series of analyses evaluate whether there are gaps in access for residential neighborhoods, including considering future and current growth, Place Types, and assessing how the equity screening overlays interact with gaps. These analyses recognize that developed parklands of all types can serve as a neighborhood park facility, if they are designed to do so.

Figures 20-25 illustrate the results of these analyses, identifying key gap areas where additional developed parks and natural areas are needed, and/or where there is no or limited connectivity via the existing trails and road networks.

Park Access Analysis

Missoula's parks are well distributed around the city and are relatively well-connected when considering trail and street networks. Some parks may not be adequately accessible due to poor sidewalk conditions that are not mapped. However, the maps show several prominent gap areas.

Several of these gaps are in areas that, according to the Land Use Plan, are expected to become more urban as they grow and evolve or are areas that have a higher percentage of historically marginalized populations. Therefore, providing quality parks and access to nature in these gap areas is a critical need for the Department. There is also some overlap between areas with higher-than-average percentage of disabilities that should be considered in development plans.



Photo courtesy of Five Valleys Land Trust





In urban areas, parks may need to look and function differently than they do now, fitting into smaller footprints, increasing recreational value capacity, leveraging streets, and incorporating innovative ideas. To fill the nature gap within the city, consideration for adding natural elements, more native plantings, nature-based solutions, and less turf are identified as key objectives and recommendations in Chapters 5 and 6.

Following are maps showing gaps in the service areas for parks in Missoula, as well as planned parks and potential future park locations. The gap areas are based on 10-minute walk and access to nature analyses, while the planned park locations are based on current development or City projects that are already integrating parks. The potential park sites are undeveloped locations that may make sense for future development. However, potential park sites are not official in any way and would only be completed if they have high community support and if it is possible to acquire the land and fund development.

Land Use and Underserved Population Map Overlays

In addition to looking at overall distribution of parks and gaps in the current system, it is also important to consider how those gaps potentially effect the community as a whole, as well as areas with residents of lower incomes, minority populations and other groups. On the next pages are several maps showing gaps in the system and how those overlap with various demographic groups in Missoula.

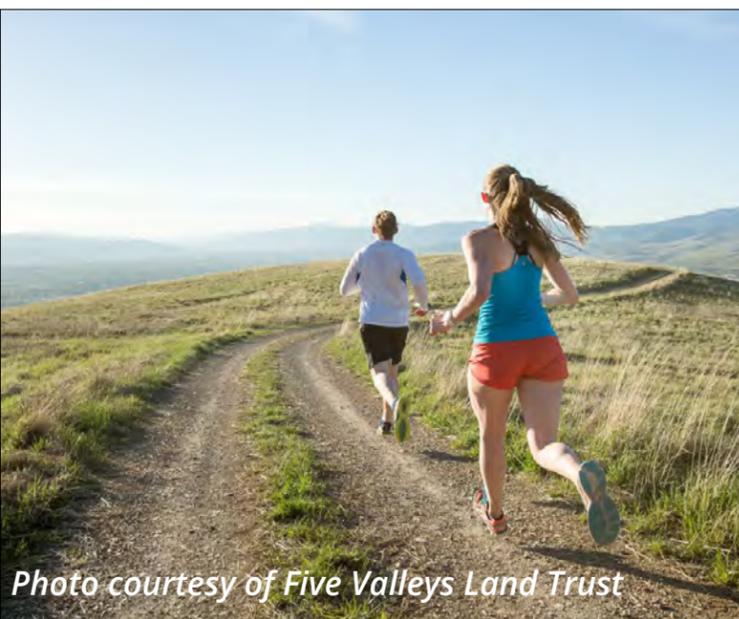


Photo courtesy of Five Valleys Land Trust



Photo courtesy of Five Valleys Land Trust

Figure 20: City Developed Parks Within a 10-Minute Walk or Roll

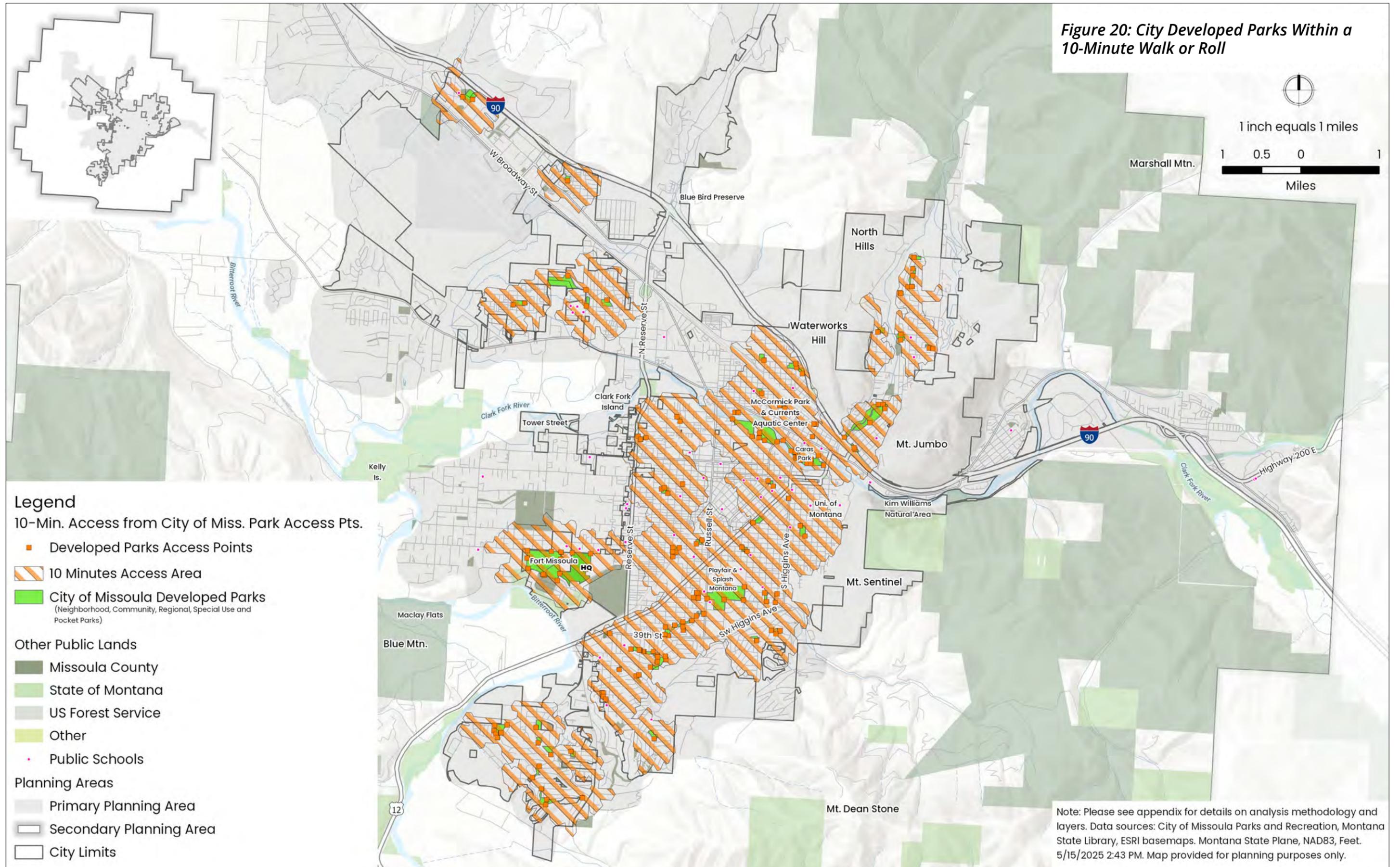


Figure 21: 10-Minute park Access and Median Household Income

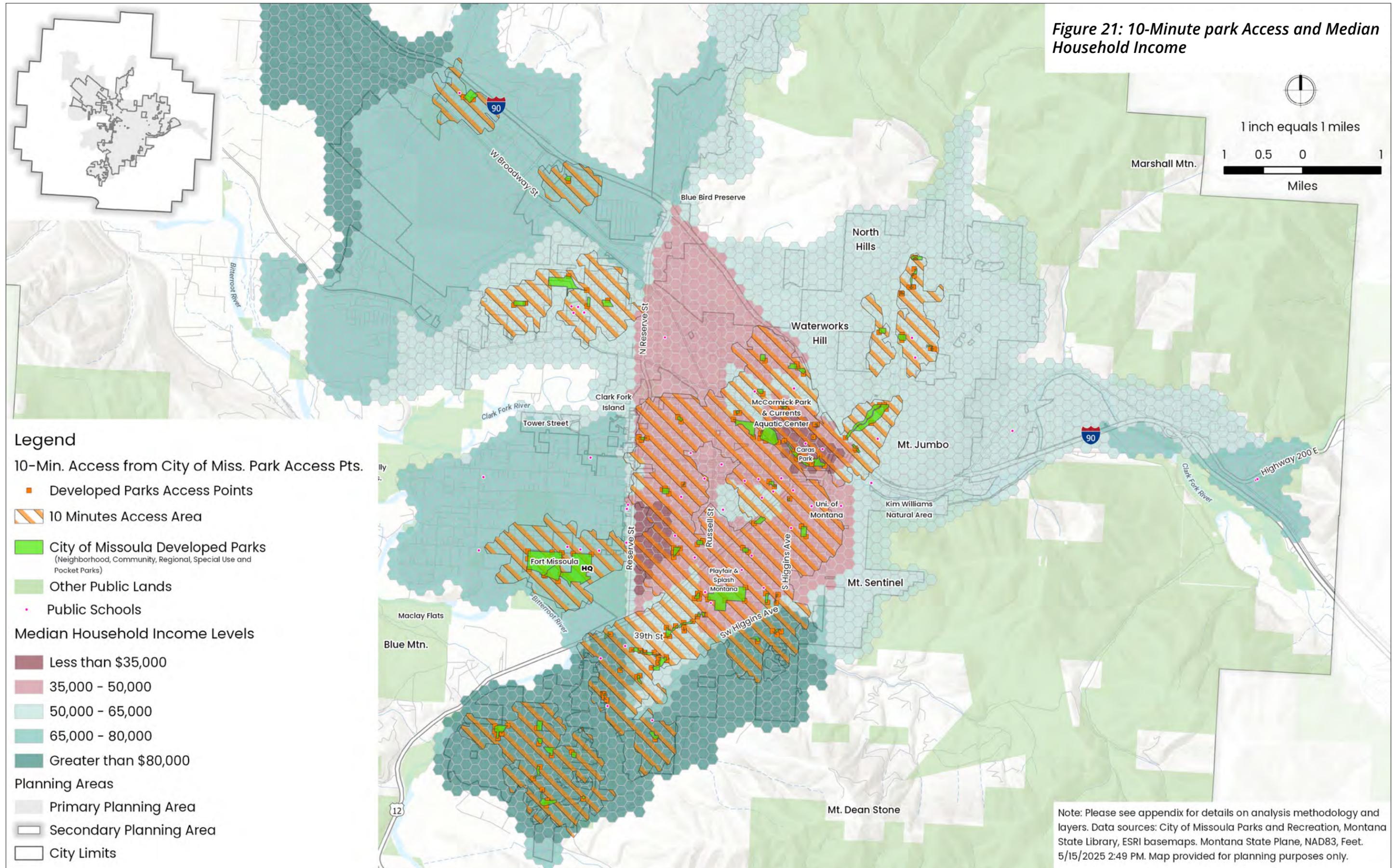


Figure 22: 10-Minute Park Access and Communities of Color

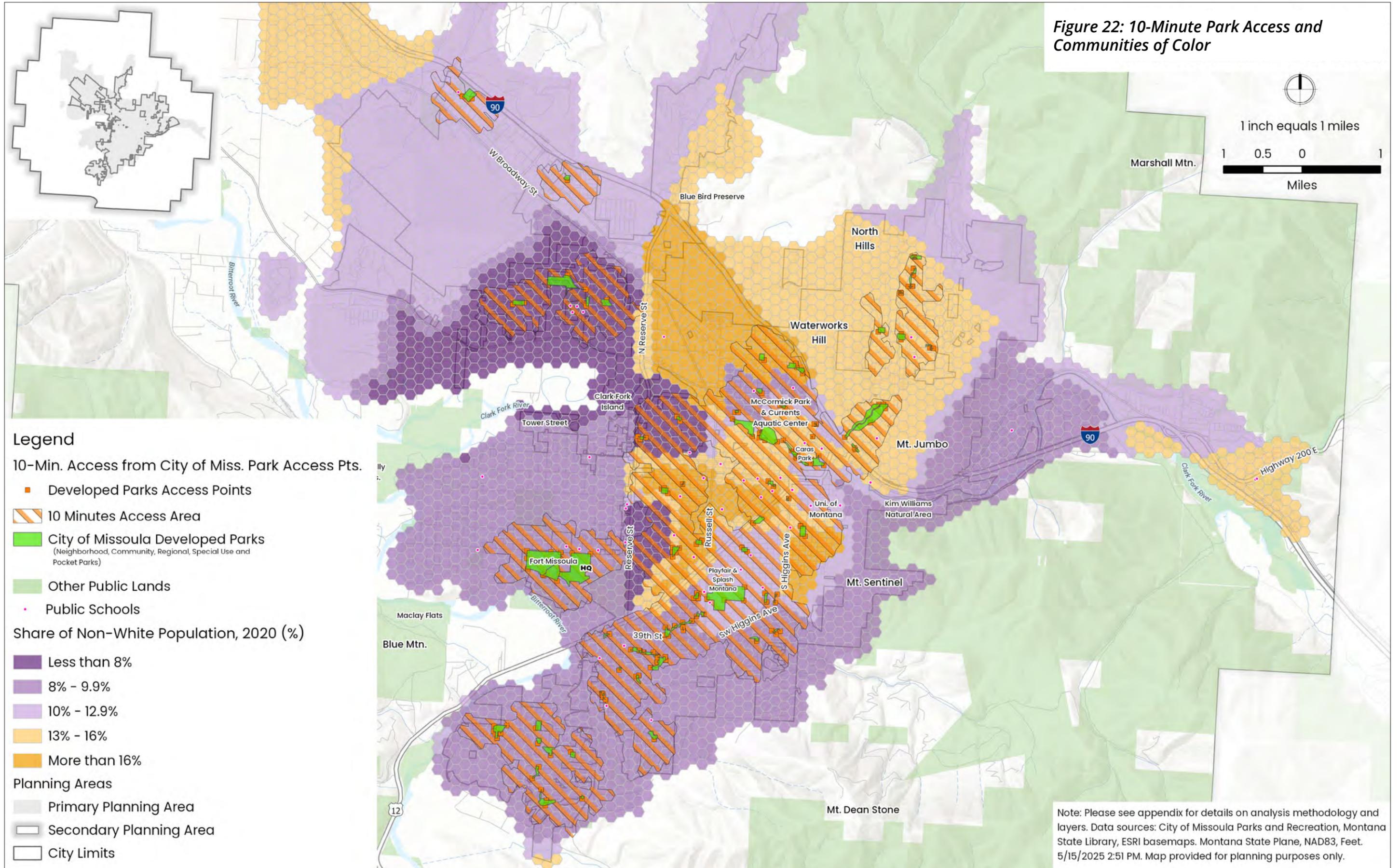
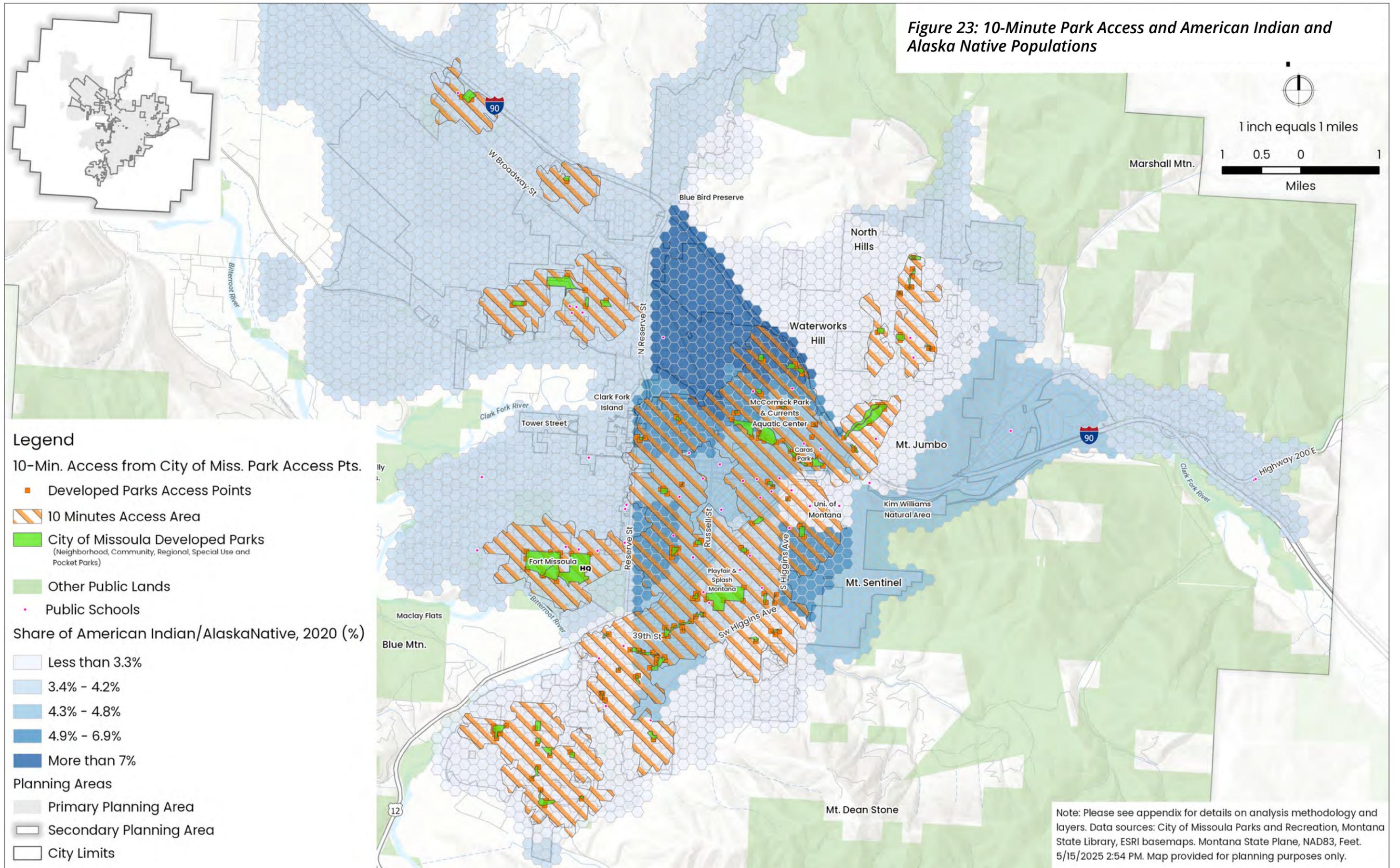


Figure 23: 10-Minute Park Access and American Indian and Alaska Native Populations



Serving Higher Density Residential Areas

Missoula has committed to growing inward rather than outward. The Land Use Plan includes areas that will be more compact and walkable, featuring a more urban character than previously found outside the downtown core.

The Urban Residential High Place Type represents the highest-density residential designation. They consist of small lots, lots with multiple units, and reduced private greenspace. These neighborhoods are Missoula's most complete, compact, and walkable areas, designed for people to live, play, and easily access nearby amenities, whether on foot, by bike, or by car. Residents have a variety of housing options available, including both ownership and rental opportunities. Small businesses provide neighborhood-scale commercial services to local residents and visitors. This Place Type encompasses various housing types, ranging from single-family homes (potentially with accessory dwelling units) to large-scale apartment complexes, all connected by a well-designed street network.

Higher-density residential areas have specific needs. With more residents per acre than other residential zones, the demand for parks increases. Given the limited private yard space, accessible public parks with a variety of recreational amenities, and a connected trail network will become essential for maintaining the quality of life for Missoulians.

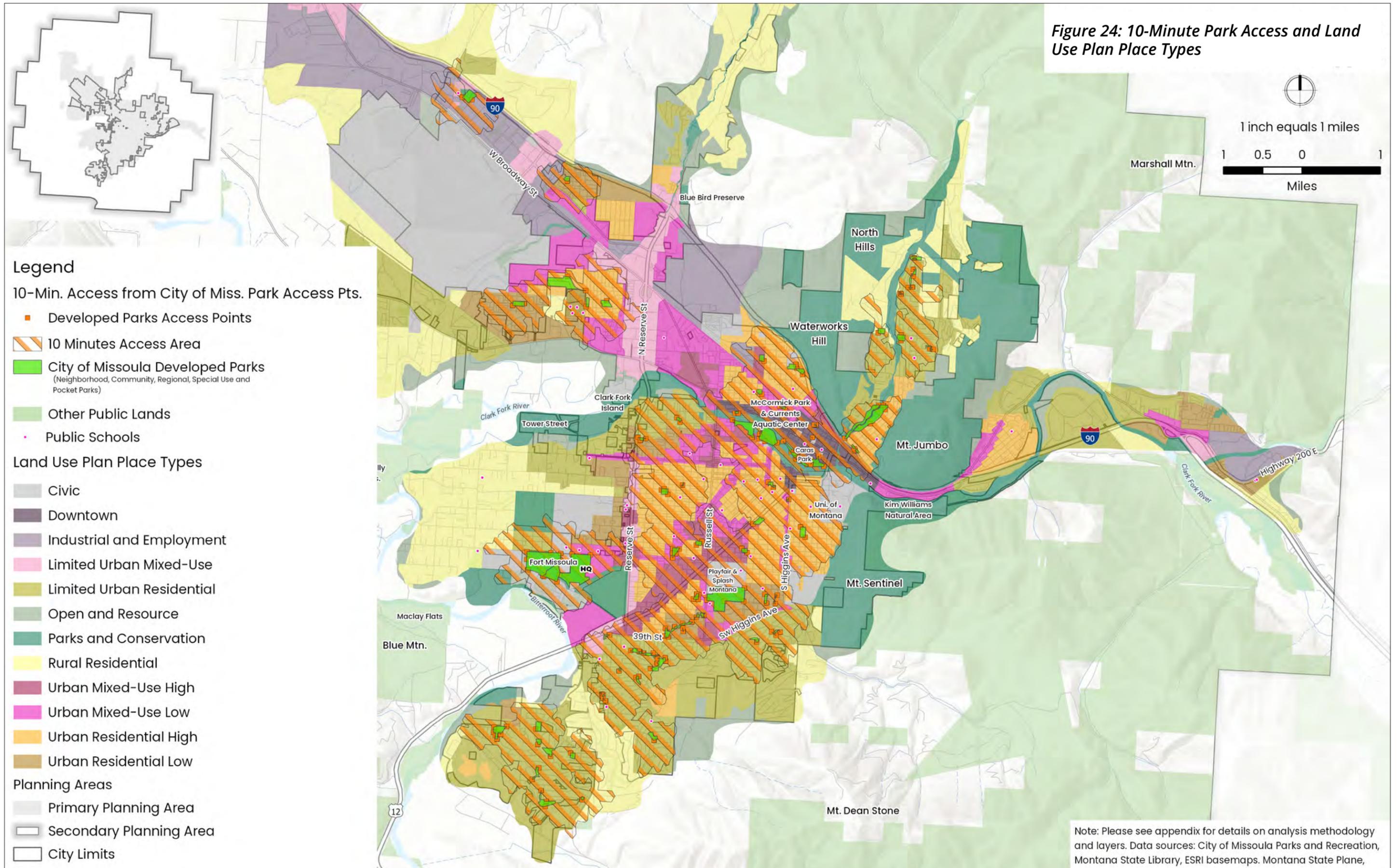
As growth occurs, demographics may shift unexpectedly, necessitating more flexibility in design, construction, and partnerships. Additionally, securing large sites for parks may become more challenging, highlighting the need for urban-style park development

that incorporates more amenities and uses within smaller spaces. It is also important to preserve green corridors and sensitive areas, design green streetscapes, and increase tree planting to foster a more resilient future.

Figure 24 shows how park gap areas overlap with the various Place Types in the City's adopted Land Use Plan.



Figure 24: 10-Minute Park Access and Land Use Plan Place Types





Open Space

The Connected Ecosystem

The 2019 Urban Area Open Space Plan provides guidance for Missoula's open spaces and conservation lands. The PROST Plan carries forward the Open Space Plan as a guiding document and component of the PROST, with the intent of achieving the open space vision adopted by City of Missoula and Missoula County and largely funded by Open Space bond funds.

The **open space vision** is to conserve, protect, and connect Missoula's system of open space lands to achieve a coherent and connected open space system, with access to a park, trail, open space land, natural area, or recreation area available in every neighborhood. This integrated system includes lands protected for wildlife habitat and natural resources, park lands, lands protected for historic and scenic values, agricultural lands, and trails.²

As outlined in the Urban Area Open Space Plan, the connected ecosystem is created by large anchor areas, smaller urban green spaces, and corridors that connect them all.

Public engagement results confirm that the Missoula community continues to strongly support the open space vision. The PROST acknowledges and confirms that the open space cornerstones are priority areas for ecosystem conservation and potential land acquisition. According to public engagement data highlighted in this plan, there is still a high preference among local residents for protecting river corridors, views and vistas, and agricultural lands, which could include gardens, working lands and Indigenous lands and landscapes.

Other considerations which are not substantially discussed in the open space plan, but could be integrated as part of a future open space plan update, could include topics like ecosystem corridor and connectivity planning, Indigenous lands and cultural integration, open space needs as part of a more urbanizing community, and other similar open space topics.

Access to Nature

In addition to protecting land for ecosystem values, Missoula residents also want access to nature near their homes. Missoula's robust natural landscape is a key component of the community and why residents live there. To add another layer to the open space vision, the planning team evaluated access to nature, looking at Missoula's conservation lands, including park preserves, community natural areas and neighborhood natural areas.

While access to developed parks is based on a 10-minute walk, this analysis is based on a 1-mile distance. This is because the city currently has larger natural areas that serve a larger area of the community, similar to the role that a regional park plays. While the Department should also consider ways to provide nature for recreation closer to home, residents should be able to access a natural area within a mile. Figure 25 shows the results of the analysis.

This map illustrates the lack of access to City-owned natural areas in multiple locations. Some of the gap areas near the city's edges are adjacent to lands owned by the County or federal agencies, which could help fill the gaps in access to nature.

However, a significant portion, particularly in the Franklin to the Fort and Southside neighborhoods, as well as the North Reserve Street area, lacks access to nature within a 1-mile radius. Much of this region also does not have 10-minute access to a developed park. There are no nature or conservation lands owned by other agencies within this urbanized area. As development continues in the western and eastern parts of Missoula, the need for access to nature in these areas will grow. Protecting open space and incorporating natural landscapes into

developed parks will be crucial for meeting this need.

Based on the plan analysis and public outreach, Missoula should explore alternative methods for providing access to nature in these urbanized areas and enhancing amenities in high-use conservation lands. Addressing the existing nature gaps in high-density areas and the mobility challenges on conservation lands will enable Missoula to better serve community needs by developing policies to support broader access to nature.

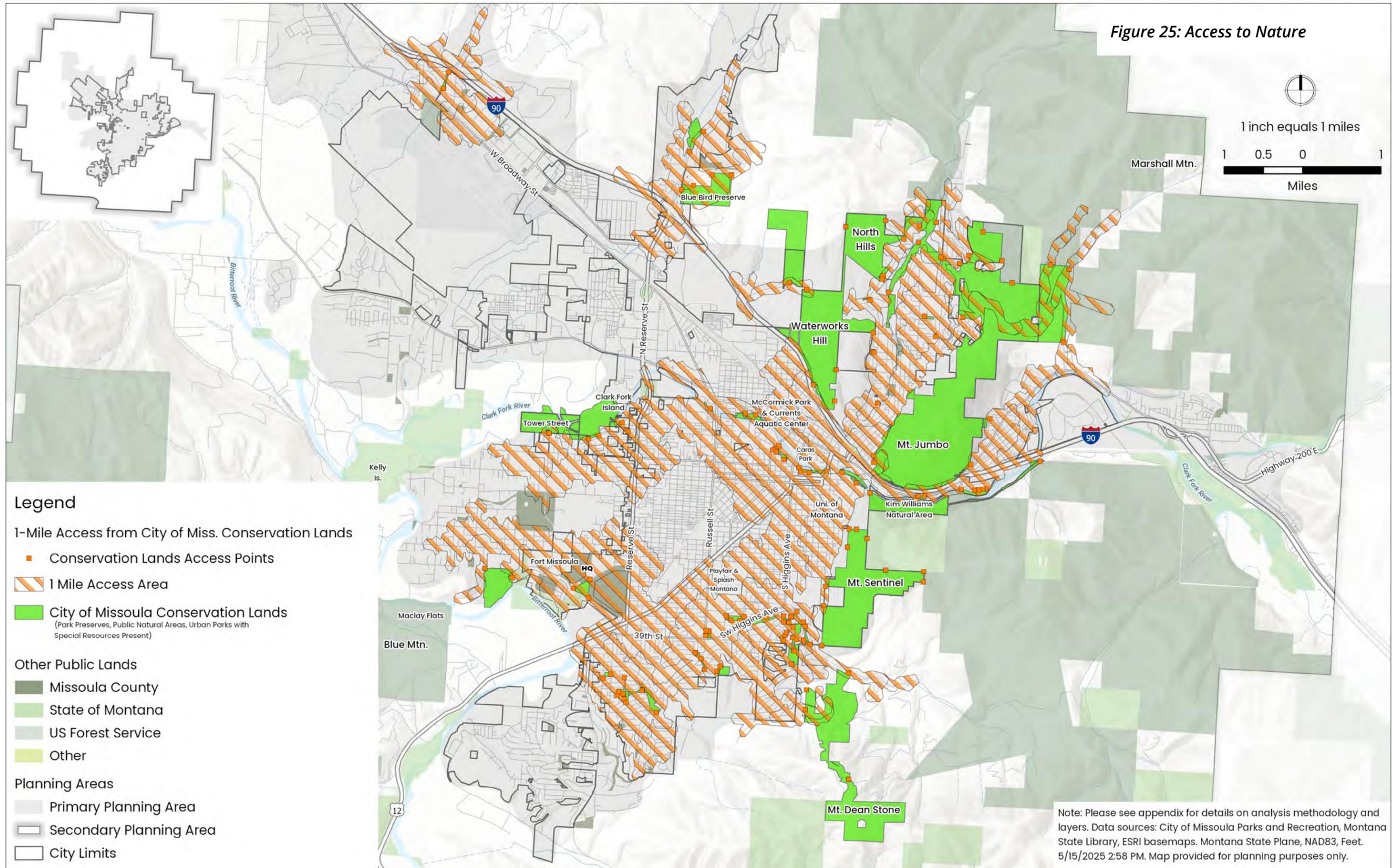
Additionally, neighborhood, community and regional trails can improve connections to conservation lands from nature park gap areas. Strategies may include adding habitat patches in developed parks or converting portions of developed parks to native plantings.

Management and Restoration

While there were overall positive comments about the city conservation lands according to the BBER survey (65 percent satisfaction with current quality of open spaces), there was an ongoing request for a continuation of management and restoration, or an increase in certain areas. For example, noxious weeds - weeds that are harmful to agriculture, natural crops, or ecosystems - were mentioned as an area of particular concern for Missoula residents.

² *Urban Area Open Space Plan, p 3*

Figure 25: Access to Nature



Legend

1-Mile Access from City of Miss. Conservation Lands

- Conservation Lands Access Points
- ▨ 1 Mile Access Area

■ City of Missoula Conservation Lands
(Park Preserves, Public Natural Areas, Urban Parks with Special Resources Present)

Other Public Lands

- Missoula County
- State of Montana
- US Forest Service
- Other

Planning Areas

- ▭ Primary Planning Area
- ▭ Secondary Planning Area
- ▭ City Limits

Note: Please see appendix for details on analysis methodology and layers. Data sources: City of Missoula Parks and Recreation, Montana State Library, ESRI basemaps. Montana State Plane, NAD83, Feet. 5/15/2025 2:58 PM. Map provided for planning purposes only.

Urban Forestry

Missoula's urban forest is vital for the city's quality of life and aesthetic appeal. It plays a significant role in mitigating climate change by enhancing air quality, managing stormwater, improving public health, and sequestering carbon. The urban forest fulfills important social, economic, and ecological needs for our community. According to the BBER survey, 84 percent of residents either somewhat or strongly support efforts to improve the urban canopy.

Data Needs

While the Department has a GIS-based inventory of over 31,000 trees in its urban forest, including data on genus and in many cases on species and cultivar, this inventory is not complete and needs to be updated. Having an up-to-date inventory of the urban forest will allow the Department to more effectively properly manage and fund the urban forestry program.

Species Diversity

Based on staff input throughout the planning process and the existing (though incomplete) tree inventory data, Missoula's urban forest canopy lacks diversity, particularly regarding native trees, and faces potential failure.

Currently, more than 31 percent of the inventoried trees belong to the genus *Acer* (maple), while over 11% are from the genus *Fraxinus* (ash). Many of these trees were planted during similar time periods. The severe tree mortality experienced during the windstorm in the summer of 2024, which resulted in the loss of over 600

trees, highlights the impending crisis facing Missoula's urban forest.

Issues such as the high rate of hazardous tree removals and insufficient funding for pruning and planting may not be immediately apparent to the community but are equally critical. Furthermore, development, redevelopment, and the installation of communication infrastructure have negatively impacted street trees.

Urban Forest Management Plan

The Department also needs to update its comprehensive urban forest management plan. This plan must incorporate updated inventory data and address climate impacts and development challenges while considering how new developments may affect the urban forest. It should include strategies for canopy replacement and expansion, especially in areas with tree inequities and where urban heat mitigation is necessary. The plan should also focus on operational sustainability, which includes securing increased funding and staffing. Additionally, it should address the adequate soil volume required for planting future urban trees.





Recreation

Sport and Outdoor Recreation Facilities

While Missoula has adequate quantities of most facility types compared to peers (except for skate parks, disc golf courses, rectangular fields), the distribution and mix of park amenities is low in neighborhood parks and the condition of current amenities is variable across the system (See Table 11, Chapter 3).

Existing inventory shows diamond fields have a much higher level of service than rectangular fields and additional work to determine appropriate level of service for both diamond and rectangular fields should be completed to support development and/or redevelopment of these facilities to best meet community need. Residents expressed interest in ensuring existing amenities are maintained and for more variety across the park system.

Missoula also should consider adding emerging amenities, such as natural play areas, fitness equipment, art and culture

installations, with a focus on diversifying the types of amenities and creating more multi-use spaces.

Park Amenities

Community engagement feedback highlighted the need to provide more social spaces, programs, and activities not related to sports. Current parks, while well distributed, tend to have fewer amenities to support cultural programming or social activities than desired. Overall, integrating art, culture, and historic elements into parks, as well as incorporating more dynamic and diverse amenities is needed.

This type of enhancement could include more destination play areas designed to be artful as well as playful, natural play areas, integration of natural, cultural, topography, and other elements to better engage and reflect Missoula's unique character.

Indoor Recreation Facilities

During the snowy winter season, hot summers, and wildfire season, there is a growing demand for more opportunities and facilities for indoor recreation.

Currently, the Department operates one indoor facility: Currents Aquatic Center. This center features a children's water playground, water slides, a fitness pool for lap swimming and water aerobics, and a small community room. The Department has also been temporarily using the Base Camp facility located in the former City/County Library building for indoor programming. However, this facility is scheduled for redevelopment and is not a permanent solution.

Through an interlocal agreement, the Department uses Missoula County Public Schools (MCPS) buildings to offer afterschool programming, as well as certain areas of Lowell Elementary School as a neighborhood community center. While these facilities are not owned by the city, they are critical and allow the department to offer various types of programming to youth and households near their homes. These programming services are highly valued by the community and support households in Missoula.

The Missoula community offers a range of recreational activities through different program providers. However, Parks and Recreation specifically provides affordable classes and programs accessible to everyone, allowing residents to develop baseline skills in many areas of interest. In many cities, Parks and Recreation departments offer adult fitness programs that complement private offerings, which are often more expensive, cater to experienced fitness participants, and may be less welcoming to the general population.



Many of Missoula’s afterschool programs, summer camps, and other recreational activities depend on indoor spaces. Without additional indoor facilities, the capacity to provide quality, affordable programs for all will remain limited. While partnerships with local schools offer one solution, non-city-owned buildings present challenges, including fees, time restrictions, and uncertainty about future arrangements.

Aquatics Facilities

Aquatic facilities encompass swimming pools, spray decks, and pool complexes, which can be indoor or outdoor. Outdoor aquatics facilities are usually only open during the summer season, while indoor aquatic centers are open year-round.

Public aquatic facilities typically provide a range of programs and offer scheduled open swim times, except for splash decks that are available to the public at no charge. These facilities are essential to the community in meeting public health and safety goals as well as providing inclusive recreational opportunities to both the Missoula community and the area’s larger regional market area.

Missoula’s indoor and outdoor aquatics centers include multiple pools and provide a variety of aquatics experiences and programming opportunities. Missoula’s existing aquatics facilities are highly used for both recreational swim and learn to swim programs averaging over 160,000 swims per season between both facilities. Attendance numbers are generally holding steady and attendance at learn to swim programs are limited by the amount of instructors the department has. The pool facilities are now nearly 19 years old. Continued reinvestment into facility infrastructure will ensure pool facilities meet current demand for services.

Additionally, the recently completed 2024 Splash facility study has identified improvements at Splash Montana that will improve attendance and create additional revenue. Missoula is similar to the five comparable cities, which all offer indoor or outdoor aquatic centers. More aquatics space is desirable but is a lesser need than non-aquatics indoor space for recreation programming.

Recreation Programs and Services

Recreation programs serve as a vital connection between a community’s residents and its physical spaces. They promote health, livability, and vibrancy while providing essential services such as socialization and childcare.

The Department receives grant funding through Missoula County Public Schools at Franklin and CS Porter schools to offer no-cost afterschool programming. Additionally, Parks and Recreation provides afterschool programming at seven other public and private elementary schools through a sliding fee scale.

These programs significantly support households in Missoula. Moreover, they play a crucial role in activating parks and serving the broader community. Programs must remain adaptable to the community’s evolving needs and interests for maximum effectiveness.

While Missoula offers a wide range of programs, they often face limited space, permits, funding, equipment, and staffing constraints. Addressing these service gaps requires innovation beyond traditional approaches—rethinking not just program timing and location but also delivery methods and target audiences. Success will depend on continuous learning, evaluation, and adaptation.





Trails

Trails and pathways are highly valued components in Missoula's PROST system, for trail-oriented recreation and for transportation and access to/from parks, facilities, and programs as well as areas of commerce, academics, and work. During the PROST Planning process, the Parks and Recreation worked closely with other City departments and agency partners to update and clarify the trail typology in Missoula.

The trail typologies were adapted to be more consistent with other agencies and to align with the Street Typologies from the Our Missoula Growth Policy. According to the BBER survey, 74 percent of residents are satisfied with the quality of trails in Missoula, and the majority of residents prefer to have trails near their home.

Completing the Network

Public engagement results strongly emphasized the importance of trails and connections, resulting in a specific goal to improve connections and connectivity.

Missoula has planned for a comprehensive trail network, as Figure 26 illustrates. There is a need to build out the trail system as planned, as well as a need to improve and enhance existing trails, to increase capacity, accessibility, and reduce conflicts in the existing system. The Trail Typology document (included in Appendix G) provides additional detail on the desired trail widths and surfaces.

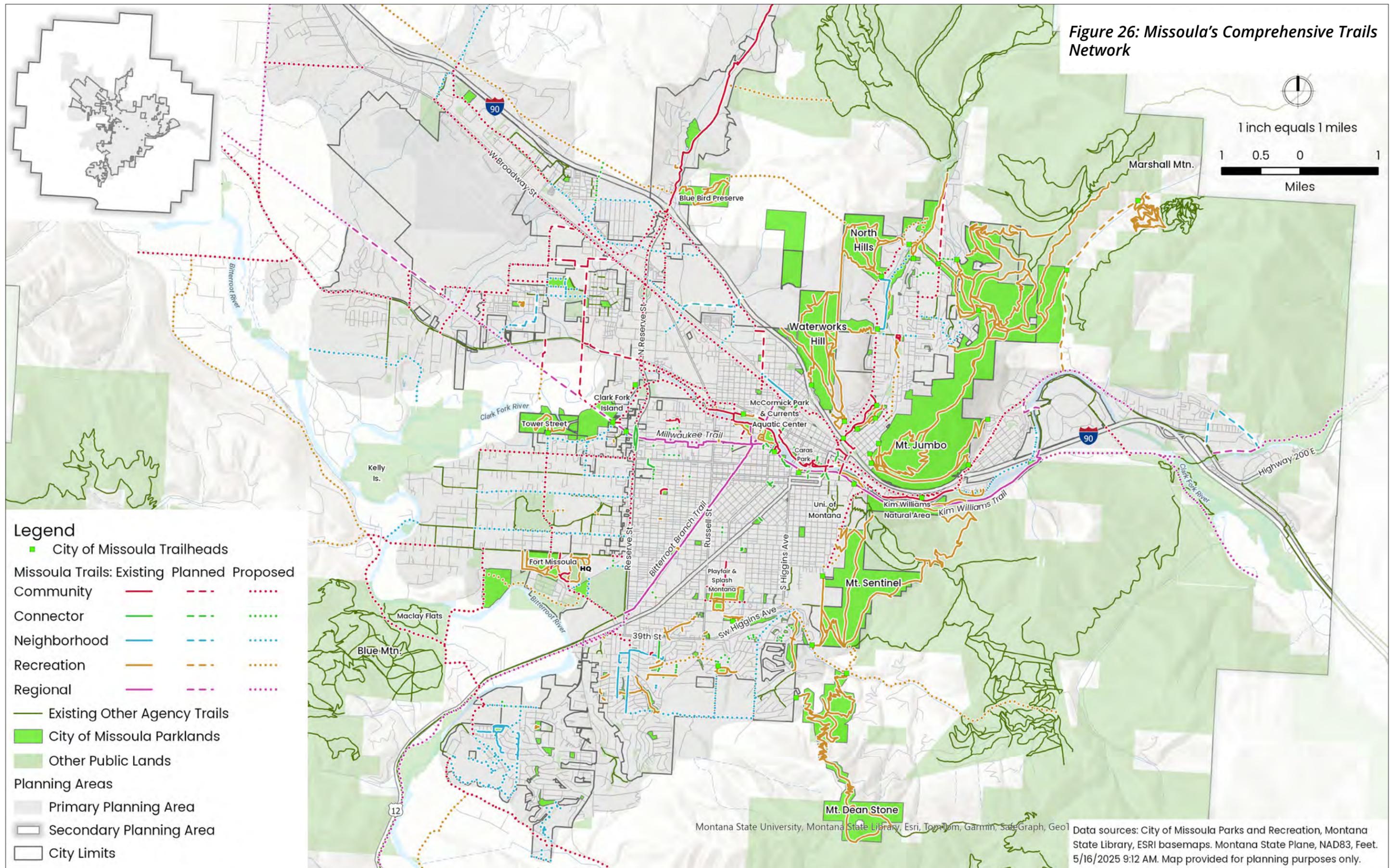
Safe Routes to Parks and Schools

Missoula's pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure is inconsistent and discontinuous. This infrastructure includes trails, sidewalks, bike lanes, greenways (shared-use streets), and shared lane markings, all of which are part of the city's overall transportation system. However, the responsibility for these elements is divided among several agencies and departments, including the Missoula Public Works & Mobility Department, the Missoula Public Metropolitan Planning Organization, and Missoula Parks and Recreation.

There is a critical need to prioritize improvements throughout both the on-street and off-street networks to maximize the potential of existing parks, enhance the safety of the entire system, and encourage greater use of these parks and trails. Implementing these strategies is especially important within a ½-mile radius of parks to ensure that safe routes are available to all parks.



Figure 26: Missoula's Comprehensive Trails Network



- Legend**
- City of Missoula Trailheads
 - Missoula Trails: Existing Planned Proposed
 - Community ——— — - - - - - ·····
 - Connector ——— — - - - - ·····
 - Neighborhood ——— — - - - - ·····
 - Recreation ——— — - - - - ·····
 - Regional ——— — - - - - ·····
 - Existing Other Agency Trails
 - City of Missoula Parklands
 - Other Public Lands
 - Planning Areas
 - Primary Planning Area
 - Secondary Planning Area
 - City Limits

Montana State University, Montana State Library, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, Sage Graph, Geo Data sources: City of Missoula Parks and Recreation, Montana State Library, ESRI basemaps. Montana State Plane, NAD83, Feet. 5/16/2025 9:12 AM. Map provided for planning purposes only.



Community Needs Summary

Key Takeaways

- **Urban Park Innovation:** New models are needed for higher-density areas with compact, amenity-rich parks accessible to all residents—supporting both housing density and equity goals.
- **Connected Green Network:** Developing an integrated system of parks, open spaces and conservation lands, particularly along river corridors, addresses climate resilience while providing equitable nature access.
- **Climate-Responsive Facilities:** Indoor recreation options must expand to counter extreme weather conditions (heat, smoke, winter) through new facilities and school partnerships.

- **Urban Forest Renewal:** Updating the urban tree inventory, diversifying plantings, and strengthening development codes will protect this vital climate infrastructure.
- **Inclusive Programming:** Recreation services need to extend beyond youth to serve adults, seniors, and underserved neighborhoods through diverse, mobile offerings.

This “snapshot” of gaps and needs is used to determine recommendations in Chapter 6: Meeting Community Needs.

Public engagement and input throughout the planning process, as documented in Chapter 2, is key to understanding how residents want parks, recreation, open spaces, and trails to function in and around Missoula in the future. Below is a summary of the needs determined throughout the PROST planning process grouped by lands, facilities and trails, programs and services, and the city decision lenses.

Lands, Facilities, and Trails

Serving Higher Density Residential Areas

- A walkable, rollable system that provides access to a quality park for all community members.
- Continued land acquisition, park development, and partnerships to serve gap areas and new growth areas.
- New models to serve higher density residential areas, including a shift to more urban parks that include more amenities and uses in a smaller space.
- Innovative activation of existing public spaces, parks, with potential to activate streets for play.

Integrating and Updating our Open Space System

- Continued development of a connected, cohesive system of developed parks, open space and conservation lands.
- Integrate open/natural spaces within the city and expand access to nature, including along the Clark Fork and Bitterroot River corridors.
- Continue collaboration with County and Open Space Partners to proactively identify potential land acquisitions
- Use the asset management system to focus on maintenance and upkeep of the existing park system and planned maintenance as the park system grows.
- Continue development of deferred maintenance funding and assets management plan for all parklands and amenities.



Photo courtesy of Five Valleys Land Trust



- Develop a coordinated management plan for the Clark Fork and Bitterroot River corridors through town that increases access to parks and trails for residents and visitors and provides access to nature and respite from the urban environment.
- Create a process to identify and implement increased amenities on conservation lands and increased nature in developed parks to meet community demand, along with equity in access and climate goals.

Connecting our Trails

- Improve trail connections and connectivity by creating the planned trail system.
- Expand safe routes to parks and schools through better connected on and off-street facilities including trails, sidewalks, bike lanes, greenways, shared lane markings, etc.
- Adopt standards based on trail typologies to inform growth and create a connected and intuitive trail network
- Work with other departments, agencies, and private developers to build and connect the trail system
 - Great American Rail Trail (Milwaukee Road Trail)
 - Bitterroot Trail
 - Provide for loop, purpose built, and local/tourist destination trails
 - Increase and where appropriate provide universal trails with accessible maps and wayfinding.

Investing in Urban Forestry

- Up-to-date tree inventory data.

- A more diverse urban forest that reflects Missoula’s changing climate.
- An update to the Urban Forest Management Plan to provide focused actions and resources for the urban forest.
- Diversify urban forestry funding sources for better maintenance and new plantings.
- Develop predictable, consistent codes and standards to guide development that align with the City’s goals and ensure the integrity and renewal of the urban forest.

Diversifying our Outdoor Recreation Facilities, Park Amenities, and Indoor Recreation and Aquatic Facilities

- Diversity of park amenities that serve the community as the population grows and changes.
- Implement new amenity recommendation findings of 2024 Aquatic Expansion Feasibility study.
- Continued aquatic services and exploration of options for additional or expansion of aquatic space.
- Continue to invest in existing aquatics facility to ensure regional significance in program offerings
- Continue to develop interlocal agreements with MCPS and others to understand further opportunities for indoor space for recreation programming.
- Diversify options for indoor facility types that can be used by the community year-round and throughout the day, including evening hours.

- Utilize or create spaces for arts and culture, as well as multi-generational and social spaces.

Programs and Services

- Continued investment in core program areas especially aquatics, school’s out programs, and summer camps. These programs are extremely popular, essential and community identified as core areas.
- Continue to explore and expand recreation programs as a source of essential childcare for working families in the community and expand upon our relationship with businesses and organizations who support this work.
- Expanded opportunities for adult and older adult programs of all types including but not limited to
 - Environmental / Nature and Outdoor Recreation
 - Arts and Culture
 - Games and specialty clubs
 - Volunteer related programs geared towards the interests of aging adults specifically that link them to younger populations
- Exploration of alternative program formats, multigenerational short duration, and community-building/ cultural events.
- Increase of mobile program offerings to take low or no cost programming to underserved areas of community
- Programming for older youth and teens
- Continued work in developing and

maintaining our partnership with Missoula County Public Schools by providing wrap-around programming for students and the immediate neighborhood of schools.

City Decision Lenses

- Demonstration of climate-friendly practices, including energy and water efficiency, in parks, facilities, and conservation lands.
- Continued public education and communications regarding stewardship of the land, trash management, conservation, clean air, public health impacts of extreme heat and wildfire/ drought response.
- Planned parks and facilities for emergency response system.
- Code updates to encourage green infrastructure
- Creating new or enhancing existing indoor and outdoor spaces for improved climate controls and mitigations.
- As much as possible, prepare for increased climate variability and extreme weather events (such as the windstorm of 2024).

CHAPTER 5

Objectives to Meet Community Needs

Key Takeaways

- ◇ **Multi-Function Facilities:** Parks should be designed for flexible, multiple uses rather than single purposes, with community parks like Playfair Park being reimagined to serve more diverse needs year-round.
- ◇ **Nature Integration:** The future park system should incorporate natural elements throughout all park types, creating “hybrid parklands” that blend developed recreational areas with native habitat patches.
- ◇ **Expanded Partnership Network:** Building and sustaining robust partnerships with schools, nonprofits, businesses, and other agencies is essential for expanding access, funding, and programming.
- ◇ **All-Season Recreation Initiative:** Strategic investments in climate-controlled spaces, covered facilities, and winter programming are needed to ensure year-round access to recreation despite extreme weather conditions.
- ◇ **River Corridor Management:** A comprehensive, cross-jurisdictional approach to river corridor management will balance responsible recreational development, habitat protection, and educational campaigns.

Goal-Oriented Objectives

This chapter identifies objectives that will guide the Department's decision-making, approach and actions regarding system operations, design and development, capital investments, lands and facilities, and programs and services, for the long term.

The objectives are organized by the goal areas, recognizing that many individual objectives may support multiple goals. Each is given a letter and number code for easy reference. Following this chapter, Chapter 6 includes more specific project, program and initiative recommendations to guide the Department toward achieving the outlined objectives. Chapter 7 includes an implementation process that connects these goal-based objectives to the recommendations and provides tools for determining priorities moving forward.

Organizational Process Goals



Be Forward-Thinking & Adaptable

Anticipate the needs of Missoula's growing and changing community by creating adaptable and innovative parks, facilities, trails, landscapes, and programs that benefit the community environmentally, socially, culturally, and economically.



Build & Sustain Partnerships

Expand and sustain community partnerships, and work with other departments, agencies, organizations, businesses, and individuals to advance the PROST and greater community vision.

Outcome-Oriented Goals



Elevate Quality of Life

Ensure Missoula's parks, recreation facilities, open spaces, trails, trees, and services continue to contribute to and reflect Missoula's identity with a thriving, equitable, and well-rounded park system.



Support Healthy People

Promote overall wellbeing with increased opportunities for health and wellness, physical fitness, enjoyment of social connections, and increased safety through programs and services.



Foster a Healthy Natural Environment

Strategically protect, maintain, design, and improve a cohesive system of parklands and open spaces that help to mitigate the effects of climate change and provide respite for residents from the urban environment.



Improve Connections & Connectivity

Connect people to each other, to community, to public places, and to the natural environment while ensuring connected ecological systems.



Enhance Maintenance

Provide stewardship of Missoula's parks, open spaces, trails, urban forest, and recreation assets through innovative, regenerative, and effective design combined with maintenance and operations best practices.



A. Be Forward-Thinking and Adaptable

Anticipate the needs of Missoula’s growing and changing community by creating adaptable and innovative parks, facilities, trails, landscapes, and programs that benefit the community environmentally, socially, culturally, and economically.

The following objectives are focused specifically on ensuring the Department can adapt, evolve, and be flexible in its provision of services and parks over the next 10 to 15 years.

Funding the Future

- A.1 **To accommodate population growth, adhere to park standards, and respond to the expansion of municipal boundaries**, ensure the alignment and security of funding and staffing for both current and future park and recreation services.
- A.2 **Implement advance planning to be “shovel ready”** with several projects, initiatives, and programs in preparation for grant, foundation, and donation opportunities.
- A.3 **Prioritize capital reinvestments** and budget enhancements that reduce operating costs through innovative design, reduced water use, decreased energy costs, increased durability, and labor savings.
- A.4 **Increase sustainable revenue streams** to provide longevity to current program initiatives while exploring sources for growth.
- A.5 **Advocate and seek funding for trail projects**, “safe routes to parks,” and “safe routes to schools.”
- A.6 **Increase funding to address the growing deferred maintenance** needs and fully implement the asset management program, which regularly and proactively reinvests in the park system to sustain its quality and services to the community.

Adapting Planning and Design of Facilities and Amenities

- A.6 **Leverage professional expertise of staff** to take a leading role in the development of existing and future parks, trail systems, and/or recreation complexes to better serve the community as a whole and ensure the project is aligned with PROST guidelines and follows city standards.
- A.7 **Ensure that event and core public spaces have adequate infrastructure** and facilities, such as electrical services and adaptable use spaces, to support and adapt to a variety of events and activities.
- A.8 **Design and construct neighborhood and community parks for flexible uses.** Avoid the development of single-use parks and amenities to ensure a diversity of users and activities is optimized, allowing enhancements that are consistent with the PROST Plan.
- A.9 **Prioritize multipurpose fields and courts** with configurations and designs that support a broad range of activities when designing new or retrofitting existing sports facilities.
- A.10 **Locate and design new parks and park amenities in collaboration with residents**, neighborhood groups, homeowners’ associations, and other partners to best meet community needs.
- A.11 **Work to ensure universal access** of programming, places, and services, including the application of Universal Design principles.

Assessing Use and Operations

- A.12 **Assess and adapt Parks and Recreation use policies**, fees, and operational policies are as needed to adjust to changing needs.
- A.13 **Continue to collect and analyze community needs** through routine user surveys and engagement, in concert with capital improvement plans, the Community Experience Program, and recreation program planning to ensure relevance and to support a culture of continuous process improvements.
- A.14 **Continue to conduct financial feasibility studies** when considering the addition of any major facilities with high operating costs, such as indoor recreation centers, aquatic facilities, and event facilities. structure, and should be consistent with City’s most recent strategic plan.

Updating Climate Policies and Practices

- A.15 **Incorporate climate change considerations** into park and recreation planning and design efforts, adjusting practices, policies, and projects to be more resilient to changing climate and to reduce overall department-related emissions.
- A.16 **Demonstrate leadership in sustainable park management** by implementing best practices and providing educational opportunities for the community. Prioritize low-impact development, green building techniques, and nature-based solutions when revitalizing, developing, and maintaining parks, trails, open spaces, and recreational facilities. These strategies can serve as exemplary models for other organizations.



B. Build and Sustain Partnerships

Expand and sustain community partnerships and work with other departments, agencies, organizations, businesses, and individuals to advance the PROST and greater community vision.

The following policies highlight the need to work closely with a wide range of partners to implement the PROST Plan.

Building and Maintaining Shared-use Agreements

- B.1 **Explore alternative service approaches** to fill gaps in service and provide recreation opportunities in parks or programmable spaces, leveraging the strengths and facilities of other organizations.
- B.2 **Strategically conserve open space**, protect and enhance the ecological function of local natural resources, project local agricultural lands and food sources, and improve recreational access with a focus on underserved areas of the community in collaboration with other departments and partners.
- B.3 **Increase educational opportunities, fund projects**, and increase awareness, availability, and accessibility of recreation resources by collaborating with partners.
- B.4 **Continue to coordinate and strengthen partnerships** with Front Country Recreation Cooperative, Five Valleys Land Trust, Three Rivers Collaborative, and federal, state, and local agencies, land owners and other organizations to effectively manage and support community access, and recreational and conservation functions of public lands.
- B.5 **Continue to pursue formalized nonprofit and agency partnerships** with structured criteria, greater definition of responsibilities and financial commitments, and more detailed agreements.

Identifying and Expanding Robust City Partnerships

- B.6 **Streamline and align development and management activities** to ensure cost-effective, high-quality services for Missoulians in concert with the City and other agencies.
- B.7 **Increase coordination and collaboration with the business community**, including the Downtown Missoula Partnership, Missoula Midtown Association, Destination Missoula, Missoula Economic Partnership, Chamber of Commerce, and other similar groups to increase capacity for project development, programming and event management, public outreach, and park maintenance.
- B.8 **Maximize the public's access to PROST opportunities** and leverage resources while advancing climate, housing, and equity goals through internal coordination and collaboration between city departments.
- B.9 **Build upon current public/private partnerships and vendor agreements** that bring additional amenities and opportunities into the park system.
- B.10 **Advocate and retain quality of life, neighborhood integrity, 10-minute access, and climate goals** through development while increasing housing availability by fostering a positive working relationship with the community.
- B.11 **Work closely with partner agencies and departments to support shared strategies and goals** in the Long-Range Transportation, Land Use, Community Health Improvement, Destination Missoula Stewardship, Urban Renewal District, Downtown and Midtown Master, and other area plans.
- B.12 **Support the local economy, workforce, and related systems** from Parks and Recreation initiatives, projects, and programs, including childcare, local jobs, tax impacts, etc., avoiding negative impacts on the community and community members.
- B.13 **Integrate innovative planning and design principles, such as smart growth, 10-minute walk/roll standards, and other PROST strategies**, into new development and redevelopment projects and through code alignment and engagement with agencies, City departments, and partners.

Embracing Ongoing Community Engagement

- B.14 **Continue to engage the entire Missoula community** to ensure departmental improvements and investments reflect evolving public needs.
- B.15 **Incorporate more education about Indigenous places and peoples** in current or future programming, places, and services.
- B.16 **Include unique user groups** in the design of programming, places, and services.
- B.17 **Engage in community events to build and foster relationships**, particularly with populations in the community that may not already be engaged in programs or regularly use parklands.



C. Elevate Quality of Life

Ensure Missoula's parks, recreation facilities, open spaces, trails, and trees continue to contribute to and reflect Missoula's identity with a thriving, equitable, and well-rounded park system.

The following objectives are designed to inform the development of an integrated PROST system through its physical assets.

Meeting Park Standards

- C.1 **Provide high-quality parks to meet the needs of local neighborhoods and within a 10-minute walk** of every resident in Missoula's Urban, Downtown, and Limited Urban Place Types per the City's adopted Land Use Plan, and park standards.
- C.2 **Provide high-quality parks within 1 mile of every resident** in Missoula's Rural Place Type per the City's adopted Land Use Plan.
- C.3 **Apply the PROST Park Development Guidelines** to help with the prioritization of renovating parks and developing new ones (see Appendix B), ensuring a focus on areas that lack access per the park equity gaps map (page X).
- C.4 **Explore alternatives to traditional park locations** and sizes In developed areas where land acquisition is challenging, Consider implementing park improvements in underutilized right-of-way areas and other City lands. Develop partnerships for joint use of green spaces owned by private landowners and other organizations. Additionally, implement improvements that increase the capacity of existing city parks.
- C.5 **Advance the goal of 10.68 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents**, recognizing that acreage alone does not ensure the desired level of service. Prioritize quality amenities, features, and access while maintaining the 2004 goal and existing standard.
- C.6 **Consider divesting, trading, or changing the use of sites that duplicate services**, are

underutilized, or don't meet development guidelines and apply the revenue generated from this divestment to fund improvements and maintenance of nearby or community parklands.

Adopting Safe, Inclusive, and Sustainable Design

- C.7 **Follow universal design¹, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED),** holistic land management practices, and climate resilience principles in the design of parks, facilities, and trails to achieve more welcoming, inclusive, safe, and sustainable public spaces. Consult the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design for the most up-to-date universal design principles and practices.
- C.8 **Create unifying design elements for parks, trails, and open space** that create a sense of identity for the entire system, such as consistent signage, wayfinding, and furnishings, acknowledging that some parks will have unique themes or stories.
- C.9 **Design parks, trails, trailheads, facilities, and amenities to encourage positive behaviors**, promote safety, and accommodate a diverse range of users. Ensure flexibility in design to serve as many people as possible, incorporating key features in facilities like restrooms, shelters, and courts.
- C.10 **Incorporate lighting where appropriate**, ensuring it complies with Dark Skies principles, to improve safety, increase year-round public use, and support various activities and events.

¹ <https://universaldesign.ie/about-universal-design/the-7-principles>



D. Support Healthy People

Promote overall well-being with increased opportunities for health and wellness, physical fitness, enjoyment of social connections, and increased safety through programs and services.

The following objectives are focused specifically on providing programs and services to promote a healthy Missoula community.

Increasing Programs for All

- D.1 **Ensure programs are accessible** to all Missoula residents.
- D.2 **Expand programs for active and aging adults to foster social connection**, enhance personal health and well-being, strengthen community and environmental stewardship, encourage learning and exploration, support volunteerism, and accommodate diverse recreation interests and cultural traditions. (See Chapter 6 for specific program recommendations.)
- D.3 **Collaborate with Missoula County Public Schools to share facilities** and align goals, advancing long-term objectives through strategic partnership.
- D.4 **Further develop age 0-5 programming** to introduce these children to our parks system as early as possible.
- D.5 **Work with local tribes** to determine historical uses of culturally significant lands and incorporate, wherever feasible, interpretation, education, plantings, and conservation practices that celebrate and protect the historical uses and cultural significance of the land.
- D.6 **Improve equitable access** to park facilities and programs by increasing information and communication about programs, facilities, trails, and amenities through multiple channels.

Supporting Program Innovations

- D.7 **Explore a variety of programming options**, including piloting programs to test new programming areas and options, such as multigenerational activities, programs for active older adults, and alternative formats that require less time commitment (e.g., one-time, short-term, or drop-in options).
- D.8 **Expand the availability of winter recreation programming**, activities, amenities, trail routes, and other related opportunities.
- D.9 **Expand self-directed health and fitness participation** by promoting benefits and opportunities via social media marketing campaigns, encouraging meet-up walking and running groups (in developed parks or where carrying capacity supports larger groups), or offering mobile programming.
- D.10 **Create and expand program opportunities** through enhanced partnerships and volunteerism that enhance quality and quantity, where and when missions align, and when there is a net benefit to residents.
- D.11 **Promote nature-based recreation and exploration** throughout Missoula's park and conservation lands system using both formal and self-guided activities, through increased and/or improved programming, outreach, planning, site design, and other appropriate means.



E. Foster a Healthy Natural Environment

Strategically protect, maintain, design, and improve a coherent system of parklands and open spaces that help mitigate the effects of climate change and provide respite for residents from the urban environment.

The following objectives strive to protect, steward, and expand access to nature in Missoula's park system.

Protecting and Stewarding Lands

- E.1 **Plan for and protect sensitive lands** in and around Missoula to protect and support public health, safety and welfare through planning, programming, and processes acquiring property where appropriate, and working with stakeholders and partners to reduce impacts from wildfire, severe weather, flooding, and other natural disasters, as well as the protection of wildlife habitat, wetlands, river corridors and riparian areas, agricultural lands, and other sensitive lands.
- E.2 **Foster healthy stream and river corridors** by working with partners to protect water quality, reduce flooding, provide wildlife habitat, and connect people to nature. Improve the quality of riparian areas and waterways in urbanized areas of Missoula—including the Clark Fork River, Bitterroot River, Rattlesnake Creek, Pattee Creek, Grant Creek, and Bancroft Ponds—while strategically managing public use.
- E.3 **Connect urban green spaces and anchor areas** through corridors and connect areas of development with open spaces.³
- E.4 **Protect and enhance the biodiversity, habitat value, and ecological function** of Missoula's urban parks, natural areas, and other conservation lands.

Expanding and Increasing Access to Nature in the City

- E.5 **Expand the availability of natural areas in developed parks** in a sensible, cost-effective, and context-sensitive way to promote human physical and mental health, biodiversity, and improved and/or expanded and connected wildlife habitat.
- E.6 **Diversify developed park landscapes**, increasing the number of large canopy trees and clusters of trees, including native species.
- E.7 **Incorporate stormwater infrastructure** into parks by establishing clear standards for integration. Ensure compatible stormwater facilities enhance park amenities, such as bioswales and rain gardens with diverse vegetation or retention basins designed to hold water and support wildlife habitat. Discourage the use of traditional detention and retention basins in parklands.
- E.8 **Incorporate regenerative and nature-based design** principles and best practices in parking areas, streets, and hardscapes to minimize long-term maintenance needs and to reduce water use and overall expenses.
- E.9 **Maximize ecosystem services** by designing and managing natural areas and green infrastructure within developed parks. Ensure benefits such as stormwater management, air quality improvement, aquifer recharge, carbon sequestration, and wildlife habitat remain compatible with human enjoyment.
- E.10 **Reduce maintenance requirements and increase biodiversity** by incorporating more natural areas along edges, riparian areas, and in other low use areas through strategic park design and maintenance practices.
- E.11 **Provide opportunities for Indigenous cultural horticulture, land management, and foraging practices** in Missoula's parks and conservation lands, collaborating with partners to support and implement these efforts.
- E.12 **Showcase innovative, successful and sustainable practices** and strategies to the larger community as practical.

Supporting and Enhancing the Urban Forest

- E.13 **Restore, maintain, expand, and fund the urban forest** to benefit all residents.
- E.14 **Complete and update the Missoula public tree inventory**, allocating resources to ensure comprehensive data collection and maintenance.
- E.15 **Demonstrate the benefits of a healthy urban forest** in meeting City strategic goals and positive impacts on public health, safety, welfare and the City's climate goals.



F. Improve Connections & Connectivity

Connect people to each other, to community, to public places, and to the natural environment, while ensuring connected ecological systems.

The following objectives serve to ensure PROST lands, facilities, and programs are connected to places and people, are easily accessed, and encourage one's connection with place.

Creating and Improving Safe Routes to Parks and Schools and a Connected Multi-Modal System

- F.1 **Provide “safe routes to parks” and “safe routes to schools”** by working to improve the City’s trail network in and through town, including regional, community, and neighborhood trail corridors. Prioritize improvements with universally designed upgrades, enhanced crossings, and strategically connected neighborhood greenways and on-street facilities.
- F.2 **Implement the planned network of off-street trails and pathways**, in coordination with the on-street pedestrian, bicycle, and greenway network, to increase community mobility and support climate goals.
- F.3 **Ensure a commuter trail, trailhead, transit stop, or neighborhood greenway is within a 10-minute walk** of all residents by developing a connected and accessible network.
- F.4 **Provide a high-quality trail experience** that serves all abilities, encourages active recreation and multi-modal transportation, and creates corridors of natural space.
- F.5 **Embrace and celebrate the Clark Fork River** within Missoula in long-term planning and design, creating a coordinated and connected system of river access points within parkland, along trails, and in natural areas that are accessible to the public and protect water quality, habitat, and riparian vegetation.
- F.6 **Expand Missoula’s multi-modal trail network** to enhance capacity, experience, and connectivity. Collaborate with the Public Works & Mobility Department, the Metropolitan

Planning Organization, and other partners to improve on-street pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities.

- F.7 **Extend, expand, connect, design, repair, and widen regional and community trail networks and corridors** throughout the greater Missoula area in alignment with the trail typologies framework in Appendix G.
- E.8 **Coordinate e-bike usage and connectivity** from city trails to other trail systems by working with other city departments, local and regional trail organizations, and public land managers.

Promoting Social Connectivity through Arts and Culture

- E.9 **Develop an arts and culture plan** that considers how access to arts and culture significantly contributes to enhancing quality of life. The plan should consider the defined objectives below as well as create additional objectives and recommendations through a public planning process.
- E.10 **Expand programming in arts and culture, nature education, and social events** while increasing opportunities for partner-led initiatives in these areas.
- E.11 **Integrate cultural, historic, and place-based art and interpretation**, including locally relevant indigenous culture and history, throughout the park system to enliven parks, celebrate neighborhood and cultural identity, and interpret the natural and cultural environment unique to Missoula.
- E.12 **Expand the number and variety of social gathering spaces** in Missoula’s park system, celebrating history, culture, and place.

Creating Consistent and Effective Wayfinding and Signage

- E.13 **Implement a consistent system of physical and digital wayfinding and signage** (following applicable City of Missoula’s wayfinding plans) to help users navigate the parks, recreation, open space, and trails system.
- E.14 **Include Universal Design principles** and apply culturally appropriate languages throughout trail systems.



G. Enhance Maintenance

Provide stewardship of Missoula's parks, open spaces, trails, urban forest, and recreation assets through innovative, regenerative, and effective design combined with maintenance and operations best practices.

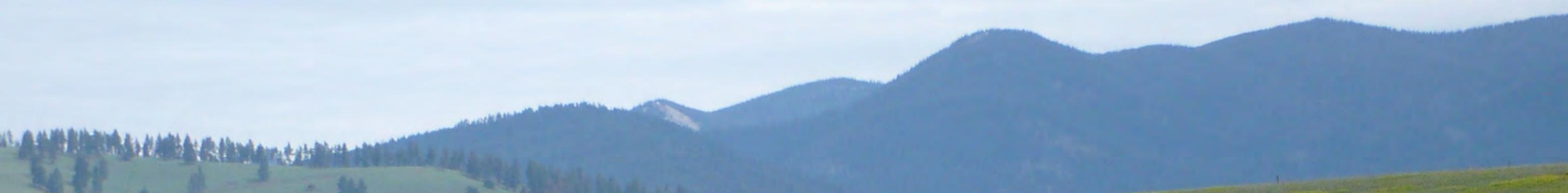
The following objectives focus on the importance of supporting quality maintenance and staff capacity.

Expanding Operations & Maintenance Funding

- G.1 **Evolve and adequately fund Missoula's operational approaches** for parks, conservation lands, programming, and facilities to deliver high-quality maintenance and excellent long-term value for the entire community.
- G.2 **Include necessary management and staffing resources** to properly address maintenance needs when planning capital projects and creating new programs.
- G.3 **Explore new or expanded funding sources** for operations, asset management, capital improvements, and project planning. Create new staff positions or expand existing roles dedicated to researching, acquiring, and managing external funding, including grants. Consider developing partnerships to support these funding initiatives.
- G.4 **Locate and provide appropriate centralized and satellite operations** facilities to meet system needs while gaining efficiencies.
- G.5 **Emphasize long-term and life cycle costs** when designing and constructing new parks, trails, and facilities, ensuring functionality, safety, and adaptable uses. Incorporate green infrastructure in rights-of-way to enhance sustainability and resilience.

Investing in Staff Development and Growth

- G.6 **Continue to build and support staff professional development** to ensure there are capacity and skills to implement the PROST Plan and effectively adapt to changing conditions, opportunities, or challenges.
- G.7 Foster innovative, culturally relevant, and dynamic thinking for recreation programming so that Parks and Recreation can continue to offer relevant, in-demand, high-quality classes, events, and activities for all.
- G.8 **Continuously train, evaluate, and celebrate** our work and each other.
- G.9 **Work cross-functionally and collaboratively with other City departments** to support staff and employees as business processes and systems evolve.



CHAPTER 6

PROST Recommendations

Key Takeaways

- ◇ **Park Access Initiative:** The 10-minute walk/roll initiative addresses the fundamental need for convenient park access for all residents, reflecting the core community value of equitable recreation opportunities close to home.
- ◇ **All-Season Recreation:** Given Montana's climate challenges, the ability to enjoy outdoor recreation year-round despite seasonal limitations, extreme weather, and poor air quality appears to be a high priority for maintaining quality of life throughout the year.
- ◇ **River Corridor Management:** The Clark Fork and other waterways are vital ecological, economic, and recreational resources, highlighting the central importance of rivers to Missoula's identity, quality of life, and tourism economy.
- ◇ **Urban Forest Investment:** The plan emphasizes the urgent need to address failing urban forest canopy, reflecting the community's strong valuation of trees for shade, aesthetics, and environmental benefits in the urban landscape.
- ◇ **Nature Integration Strategy:** While related to park access, the specific focus on integrating natural elements throughout the system addresses residents' expressed desire for connecting with nature near their homes.
- ◇ **Equity-Focused Implementation:** The plan prioritizes underserved neighborhoods through equity screens for improvement decisions, expanded scholarship programs, partnerships with underrepresented communities, universal access improvements, and inclusive programming designed for diverse community segments including preschoolers, teens, older adults, and people with disabilities.
- ◇ **Climate Resilience:** The plan embeds climate strategies throughout operations, focusing on water and energy efficiency, transportation-related carbon reduction, waste minimization, habitat restoration, and resilient landscape practices that advance Missoula's broader environmental goals while creating more sustainable park spaces.



The PROST recommendations in this chapter directly address the identified needs for parks, programs, recreation facilities, and trails, as well as systemwide big ideas.

The illustrative map on the following page depicts Missoula’s conceptual future park system, which is intended to increase quality of life, promote well-being, foster a healthy environment, and connect people and places.

Systemwide Big Ideas

The systemwide recommendations described below are big ideas that will help Missoula achieve the PROST vision. These ideas grew from community engagement and an inventory of the current system, and they serve to catalyze multi-benefit opportunities for the City. These recommendations affect multiple sites throughout the system and will require cross-divisional, interdepartmental, and interagency collaboration and coordination.

Achieving the 10-Minute Walk or Roll

Missoula will implement park and facility improvements to fill gaps in 10-minute walk access throughout the system, with a focus on areas identified by the equity screens (see Chapter 4). As a reminder, the 10-minute walk initiative focuses on all future Place Types that are more urban and may not be realistic for more rural development types (see Chapter 3 for detailed Place Type descriptions). To achieve this initiative, the Department would need to:

Park Expansion and Development

Add facilities and amenities to existing parks of all classifications to ensure everyone has access to a quality park that is close to home.

Develop smaller, more urban parks and plazas in urban areas to provide green space, community gathering spaces, and flexible programming areas.

Acquire and develop new parks in existing neighborhoods and new residential developments to fill service gaps.

Implement creative park solutions such as linear parks along trails, temporary street closures for activities, and other non-traditional park spaces.

Partnerships and Collaboration

Build strategic partnerships with public agencies (including schools), nonprofits, and homeowners’ associations to protect land prior to development, enhance public access to lands in gap areas, and jointly fund park improvements.

Coordinate transportation and park access with City Public Works and Mobility and Missoula County to prioritize right-of-way improvements that create safe routes to parks while mitigating barriers to achieving 10-minute walk/roll access standards.

Planning and Access Standards

Integrate comprehensive planning principles including smart growth, environmental protection, accessibility standards, and other PROST strategies into development projects through partnerships with agencies, City departments, and code alignment that address barriers to the 10-minute walk/roll standard.



Figure 27: PROST Future PROST System

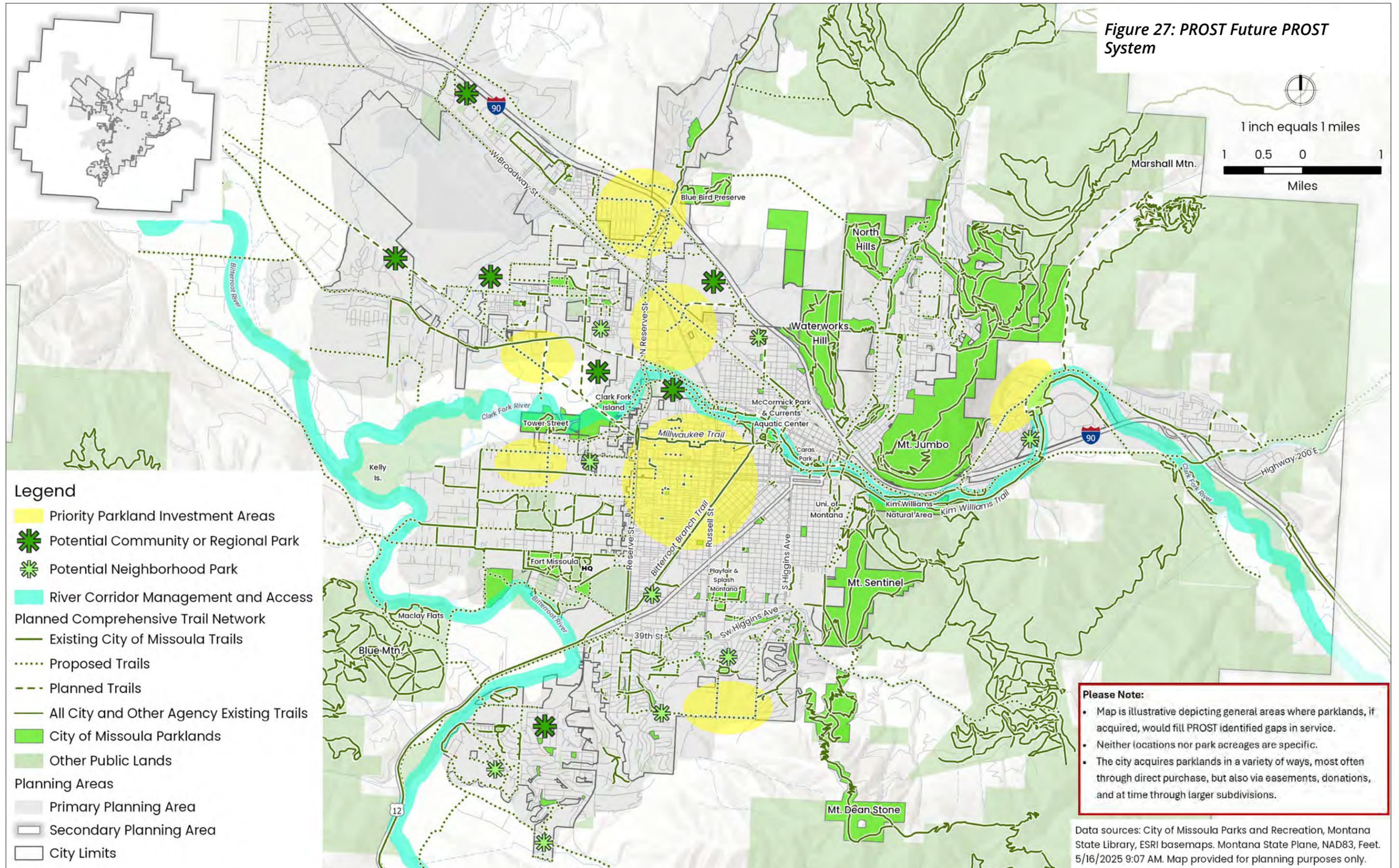
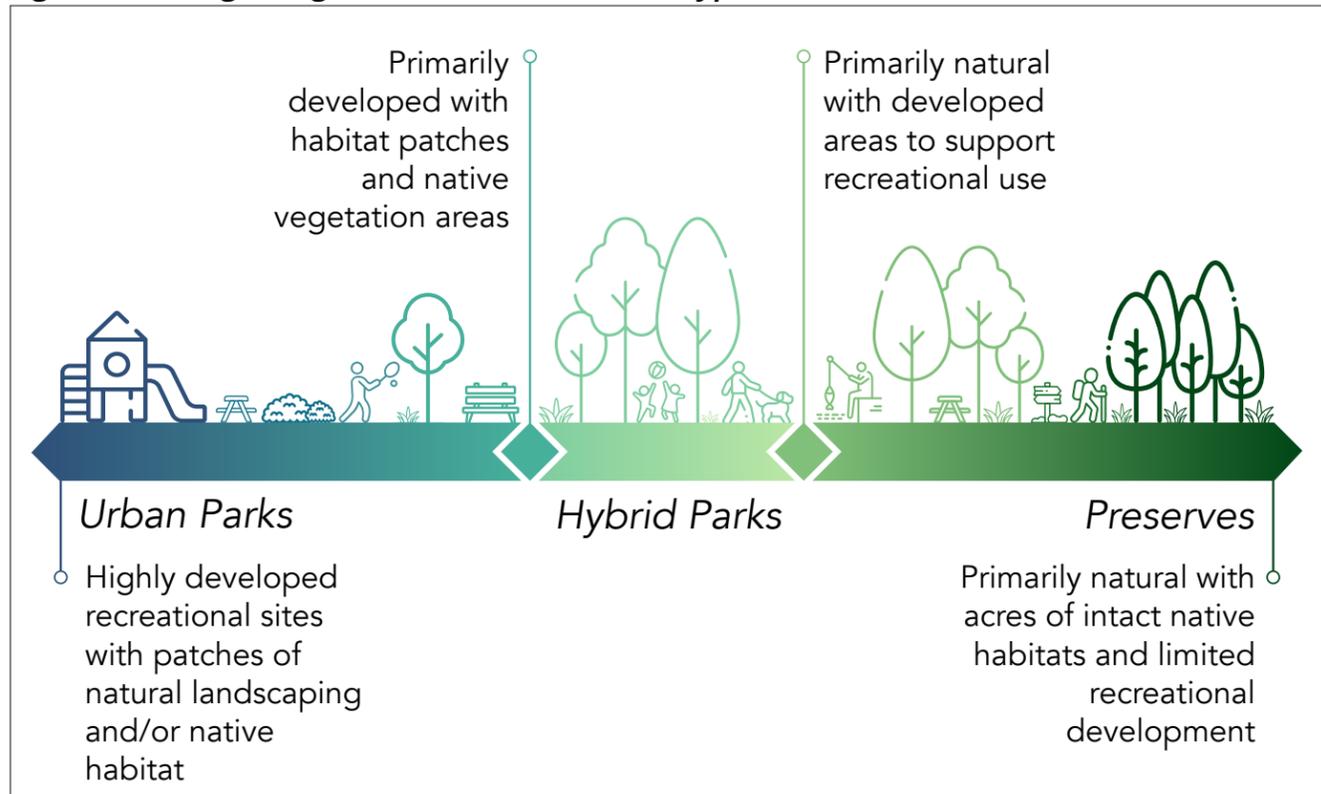


Figure 28: Integrating Nature Across All Park Types



Strategically Integrating Nature Throughout the System

The future park system should integrate nature into all facilities, ensuring community members have access to natural spaces and respite from the urban landscape. Enhancing and effectively managing the urban forest is critical for integrating nature into parks and the community, providing additional benefits of shade, cooling, and aesthetic value.

To achieve this initiative, the Department would need to:

Complete a natural resource inventory across all parklands.

Incorporate native, non-invasive, pollinator-friendly, and climate-adapted plants throughout the system in a responsible and strategic manner.

Create corridors or patches of natural habitat throughout the city to increase biodiversity and provide wildlife habitats.

Ensure all residents can connect with nature near their homes, creating educational opportunities, enhancing well-being, and fostering respect for and stewardship of the natural environment

Develop hybrid parklands that blend natural and recreational elements by transforming existing facilities through strategic capital improvements, staff professional development, specialized maintenance teams, and innovative land management approaches.

Figure 28 shows the spectrum of park landscapes in Missoula, ranging from highly developed urban parks to natural ecosystems in the Park Preserves. Many of Missoula's parks already feature both developed and natural landscapes within the same

boundaries. These “hybrid parklands” will likely increase in quantity and distribution to meet evolving resident and departmental needs. Currently, parkland maintenance operates under two distinct divisions: one manages large intact native habitats and natural surface recreation trails in conservation lands, while a separate division maintains lawns, ornamental plantings, and high-use commuter trails in developed urban parks.

All-Season Recreation Initiative

To expand use of the current park system and better serve community needs, the Department will implement programs and facilities that promote year-round activities. This initiative directs the Department to invest in both existing sites and new programs that increase usage during shoulder seasons, winter months, and extreme weather conditions. Achieving these goals will require capital improvements, operational enhancements, partnerships, and recreational programming.

Facilities

- **Develop climate-controlled spaces** usable during cold weather, extreme heat events, and poor air quality periods.
- **Develop covered field and court facilities** for year-round sports such as futsal, pickleball, and roller hockey.
- **Adapt outdoor spaces for multi-season use** by adding synthetic turf fields, lighting for trails and picnic areas, winter-focused amenities, and implementing year-round trail construction standards.
- **Add maintenance staff for expanded snow removal** on recreational trail loops throughout the city.

Recreation Programming and Partnerships

- **Develop the City-County partnership at Marshall Mountain** Regional Mountain Park as a hub for year-round, mountain-based recreational activities.
- **Create non-snow-dependent winter programming** through partner collaborations, including community events, arts and cultural activities, and nature-based experiences.
- **Implement temporary pop-up facilities** to activate parks year-round, similar to the winter disc golf course at Fort Missoula.
- **Establish partnerships with local organizations** like schools, the County, and the University for shared facility use to maximize available recreation spaces in all seasons.

River Corridor Management and Access Plan

Missoula's river corridors and tributaries—including the Clark Fork and Bitterroot Rivers and Rattlesnake Creek—are vital ecological, economic, and recreational resources. Many parks and conservation areas border these waterways, with formal access points such as Brennan's Wave, a whitewater feature on the Clark Fork near Caras Park. Historically, these rivers were primarily used for industrial purposes rather than recreation, resulting in roadways and development encroaching on riverbanks and limiting community access.

The Department is committed to ongoing collaboration with the Three Rivers Collaborative and other partners to enhance cross-jurisdictional management. These partnerships focus on promoting



responsible recreational development, protecting riparian habitats, and supporting public education campaigns. Through this continued collaboration, the Department will contribute to existing efforts like the Clark Fork Restoration and Access Plan and West Broadway River Corridor Plan while recognizing that comprehensive river planning requires multi-agency coordination and appropriate resources.

This collaboration will inform a comprehensive plan for Missoula’s river corridors that:

- **Considers both public and private lands.**
- **Identifies locations for public access** for river recreation.
- **Leverages the rivers’ natural transportation corridors** for trails and linear parks.
- **Establishes areas for conservation and restoration.**
- **Highlights the river for ongoing support of tourism** and economic development.

The Clark Fork River Restoration and Access Project has been under development for several years and is now at the 100% design phase of development. This initiative builds on years of collaborative community efforts to create and improve designated public access sites while mitigating the impacts of human-made access points along the river. Additionally, the City is working to finalize the master plan for the West Broadway River Corridor Project and plans to prioritize its implementation when the Clark Fork River Access and Restoration Project is completed

Land Acquisition Program

Suitable parkland is becoming more costly and difficult to acquire. This initiative focuses on proactive land and trail easement acquisition, which will secure sites in areas slated for development or redevelopment well before development proposals are underway. The Parks and Recreation Department will:

- **Work with partners to acquire parkland** and conservation lands in advance of development. Partners

could include Missoula County, Five Valleys Land Trust, the City’s Community Planning, Development and Innovation (CPDI) Department and Missoula Community Planning program, Missoula Redevelopment Agency (MRA), and other partners.

- **Update development standards** to provide clarity and predictability for parkland dedication in subdivisions.
- **Create a park mitigation fee** that applies to all residential developments and replaces multi-family activity area requirements and park impact fees in alignment with City goals and PROST priorities.

Cultivating Volunteers and Fostering Partnerships

The following recommendations build on the cultivation and management of both volunteers and partnerships to elevate services, manage workflows, improve consistency and institutional memory, and simplify procedures for future volunteers and partners.

- **Develop a centralized volunteer hub** offering diverse opportunities to individuals, groups, and families. Options could range from DIY projects to one-time and long-term commitments. The program should be managed by a Volunteer Program Manager and Coordinator through an online portal.
- **Establish and maintain long-term relationships** with Missoula County, local school districts, public land managers, homeowners’ associations, and other organizations to formalize shared stewardship and land management agreements to reach

level-of-service goals for parks and park amenities.

- **Leverage partnerships with other organizations** to enhance volunteer programming. Develop and implement partnership criteria with an evaluation process and tool that works for various scales of partnership and develop agreements to document roles and responsibilities.
- **In partnership with Trees for Missoula and others**, establish a community awareness and communications program that shares the benefits of and the community’s and City’s roles in managing the urban forest, including establishing community workdays and fun events to promote a healthy urban forest, open space, and parklands.
- **Build partnerships with underrepresented communities** by actively engaging user groups not currently reflected in the parks system and forming community working groups as needed to establish and maintain these relationships.
- **Continue to develop partnerships with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.** Work to provide more opportunities for tribal partnership, participation, involvement, and consultation on departmental projects, programs, and services.
- **Promote and expand “Adopt a Park, Conservation Land or Trail” and park ambassador programs** to activate parks and enhance the sense of safety and belonging in parks, enhance the sense of public ownership of the parks, and help supplement operational funding.



Operations and Administration

Key System-Wide Recommendations

In addition to the PROST big ideas, the following operational recommendations will make the Department stronger and more effective:

- **Align departmental planning efforts** by creating a citywide initiative to prioritize and coordinate multiple plans supporting PROST, including the Conservation Lands Management Plan, Open Space Plan, Urban Forestry Plan, Park Asset Management Plan, Turf Maintenance Plan, and neighborhood park plans.
- **Establish visitor use monitoring** across all City parklands with robust, repeatable data collection methods tracking use levels, behaviors, and visitor perceptions to inform management decisions, planning, and service delivery.

- **Update the Park Asset Management Plan (PAM)** for Developed Parks and Trails, integrating it with the City's GIS system to guide maintenance of existing infrastructure—a community priority. The plan will address both cyclical and deferred maintenance, supporting asset reinvestment projects.
- **Complete the urban forest inventory** as a critical tool for risk management, climate resiliency planning, budget development, and proactive management of this citywide asset.
- **Create a GIS-based Conservation Lands asset inventory** as the foundation for developing management plans, priorities, and capital improvement projects. Completion of this system-wide, GIS-based inventory should be prioritized.

Over the next 12-18 months, the City of Missoula, its partners, and the community at large will help envision the future of arts and culture in our city through the creation of an Arts and Culture Plan. This will be our community's first Arts and Culture Plan in over 30 years and will serve as the roadmap

for the future of the arts and culture in Missoula. It will tell us where we are now, what our community values most, what we need to do next, and who we need to support.

The Arts and Culture Plan will give artists a clearer picture of where opportunities exist; will give the community a voice in shaping a thriving, inclusive, creative future; and will give local government and funders a strong foundation for making decisions that invest wisely and fairly in Missoula's cultural landscape.

Following completion of the Arts and Culture Plan, it will be adopted as a PROST implementation plan similar to the Conservation Lands Management Plan, Urban Forest Comprehensive Plan, and other similar plans.

Advancing Business and Communication Practices and Approaches

Missoula employs a sophisticated approach to funding parks and recreation services, utilizing a variety of tools and mechanisms to ensure high-quality service delivery. The Department has excellent financial management strategies and continues to refine them to enhance operations.

Becoming a Certified Accredited Parks and Recreation Agency (CAPRA) through the National Recreation and Parks Association offers significant benefits. This accreditation process fosters the adoption of industry best practices while also strengthening staff development through ongoing investment in research and implementation of these standards.

The accreditation process will also support the following recommendations:

- **Review and refine event permitting procedures** to enhance access, participation, and promotion of community events within the park system.
- **Improve information management** with consistent protocols across the Department and additional staffing to support implementation.
- **Align community feedback efforts** with updates to the PROST Plan, establishing a timeline of five years or less for systemwide data collection.
- **Enhance accessibility through improved communication tools**, including signage, maps, web resources, and collaborative design processes.
- **Provide regular updates via an annual community report** and other timely communications through multiple channels.
- **Increase transparency on existing trails and facilities**, ensuring residents of all abilities can assess accessibility before visiting.
- **Designate a specific position to write and update maintenance protocols**, particularly for hybrid landscapes, with dedicated time allocated to this responsibility.

Data Management

Coordinate and unify data management and maintenance for parks, conservation lands, and trails. During the PROST planning process, Parks and Recreation and the City's GIS Services Department dedicated significant staff time to developing an authoritative parks layer within Missoula's enterprise GIS database. This

effort involved gathering data from multiple sources across the Department, verifying accuracy, and establishing comprehensive data dictionaries.

To maintain and expand on the authoritative parks data established during the PROST process, the Department should continue to collaborate with GIS Services. Strengthening this partnership will enhance data reliability and streamline staff efforts when compiling critical park system information, such as tree counts; the location, type, and quantity of assets; the age and condition of infrastructure; acreage categorized by park type; and other essential system metrics.

To further improve and expand the unified, single system for all PROST resources, the Department should consider the following:

- **Clearly define roles and standards for PROST asset data** collection, management, and ongoing maintenance.
- **Integrate data management tasks into staff work plans** to ensure consistent and sustainable practices.
- **Prevent siloed data** by avoiding the creation of one-off datasets within individual divisions or workgroups.
- **Systematically retire and archive outdated or redundant datasets** to enhance efficiency and data accuracy.
- **Assess and incorporate Customer Experience data** to inform management decisions and operational strategies.

Standardize program participation and participant data.

Data can help convey the impact of the community's investment in recreation. The Department should:

- **Standardize and streamline**

recreation program data reporting across all directly provided programs, covering registration, participation, attendance, scholarship usage, and satisfaction surveys. Future contract program providers should align their reporting methods with Department standards.

- **Collect and analyze participant demographics** where possible to enhance equitable access to programming.
- **Utilize user input from annual program analyses**, surveys, and other feedback sources to ensure programs and events remain responsive to community priorities and emerging trends.
- **Establish outcome-based indicators** linked to identified objectives to demonstrate how participation data supports overall program goals.

Support Staff Development and Retention

The following staffing recommendations aim to support the Department in maintaining its cost-effective delivery of high-quality services while adapting to evolving economic conditions.

- **Increase organizational capacity** to align resources with priorities.
- **Embed program support staff positions within each division** (safety/training, public relations, volunteer coordination, GIS/maps, and data) while coordinating with centralized business team positions.
- **Create a dedicated role to manage partnerships, grants, and agreements,**

ensuring seamless coordination of complex collaborations.

- **Expand and diversify staff** to improve and sustain efficient maintenance of natural areas within developed parks.
- **Implement cross-training** to ensure communications, engagement, and experience expertise are available in each division. Department branding, communication guidance, and templates should be coordinated by the communications specialist within the business team.
- **Equip employees with necessary resources**, including technology, equipment, tools, and training to support success.
- **Enhance after-hours park patrols** by adding park rangers or increasing contracting authority. These positions should focus on public education with some enforcement capability and support volunteer ambassador programs.
- **Expand maintenance staffing** to meet or exceed NRPA metrics and ensure continued staff additions based on maintenance impact statements for newly acquired parcels, assets, and responsibilities.
- **Strengthen program support and professional staff** to create additional capacity for technical teams.
- **Strategically bring services in-house** by adding contract, construction management, and engineering services as needed.

Retain and develop the Department's human capital.

- **Invest in professional development** to ensure staff remain technically proficient.
- **Implement cross-training** to build transferable skills and support organizational objectives.
- **Maintain a balanced workforce** by aligning personnel, administrative, project management, communication, and data management professionals to meet frontline and service-oriented demands.
- **Establish career ladders** that encourage staff retention and professional growth within the City.
- **Support employee well-being** through innovative measures such as wellness hours and industry-leading paid leave accrual policies, especially as tenure increases.
- **Explore cost-of-living solutions** by working with City leadership and other departments to assess options such as workforce housing development, designated seasonal staff housing or camps, and salary adjustments.

Bring on additional staff as the system and services grow.

As the population and PROST system grows, the Department's staffing should be increased commensurate with growth. All divisions, including Recreation and Urban Forestry, require additional support, along with key functions such as community experience, communications and marketing, engagement and access, and other related areas.

Management staff should reallocate and prioritize assignments to allow time for top priorities for each staff member. Total annual staff hours should be treated as a budget of time by which the Department can deliver the outcomes the community values the most.

- Parks and Recreation will **work with City leadership** to ensure that the budget is commensurate with the growth of City revenue.

Refine Existing and Develop Additional Funding Resources

Implementing recommendations to support goals and positive health outcomes takes resources to accomplish. The following recommendations consider further exploration of funding ideas:

Revenue Generation and Program Accessibility

- **Explore opportunities to generate revenue** through service fees and product sales, such as public plant sales from City-grown nursery stock and repurposing waste wood products.
- **Expand tourism revenue** by collaborating with the Tourism and Business Improvement District (TBID) to increase bed tax allocation specifically for parks and recreation purposes.
- **Investigate local option tax possibilities**, potentially beginning with marijuana sales revenue, to support parks and recreation.

- **Implement environmental fees** like a tree mitigation fee to fund plantings when developments cannot meet tree requirements or assess utility easement fees on parklands to generate additional revenue.
- **Enhance accessibility** by increasing sustainable revenue streams to expand scholarship programs and implement sliding fee scales, reducing financial barriers for community members of all ages and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Development and Infrastructure

- **Update parkland dedication and cash-in-lieu policies** to mitigate park impacts from population growth to increase capacity of parks, and encourage amenity development. Expand parkland dedication across all residential development types.
- **Require adherence to park infrastructure standards**, especially those affecting life cycle costs or benefits, and establish adequate City funding to offset costs related to infrastructure project reviews by Parks and Recreation staff.
- **Invest in destination facilities:** Secure funding for continued enhancement of high-value recreation facilities including Fort Missoula Regional Park, aquatic centers, Marshall Mountain Park, and significant trail systems.

Partnerships and Grants

- Enhance utility partnerships: Explore partnerships with Missoula Water for municipal well placement on parkland to offset irrigation well development costs

and seek discounts on stormwater fees for parks with green infrastructure.

- Strengthen community partnerships: Build relationships with Friends of Missoula Parks and other organizations to identify potential donors and increase resource sharing agreements with public and nonprofit entities.
- Pursue larger, more strategic grants that include project management funding to support departmental initiatives.

Enhancing Operational Practices

The foundation of the PROST system is the neighborhood and community lands and facilities that support the people who live and work in Missoula. The following recommendations consider the operational practices that directly support lands and facilities:

Headquarters and Maintenance Facilities

- **Relocate Operations headquarters** and yard to a central location with expanded recreation and administrative office space.
- **Establish maintenance satellite facilities** in the Midtown, River Road, and Sxwtpqyen/Mullan areas to support recreation fleet and equipment needs, potentially in partnership with other departments or agencies.
- **Develop a long-range plan for the native plant nursery**, including evaluation of space needs, assessment of current and alternative locations, and creation of an operations plan that identifies specific staffing requirements.

In the short term, address immediate staffing needs.

Planning and Management

- **Update Department management plans** like the City's Urban Forestry Plan, Conservation Lands Management Plan, Park Asset Management Plan, Turf Management Plan, and other related plans to realize the vision and implement the goals of the PROST Plan.
- **Explore alternative options for right-of-way maintenance**, particularly medians and lands without recreation value.
- **Implement maintenance impact statements** to address the increased staffing and maintenance funding needed to keep pace as new facilities, street trees and medians, and lands are added to the system.

Staffing and Coordination

- **Increase urban forestry staffing** to adequately address current and future workload.
- **Train hybrid maintenance crews** who are qualified to maintain developed park landscapes and native plants in urban areas and developed features on conservation lands.
- **Enhance climate coordination** with the City's Climate Team and consider creating a climate team within the Department.

Park Development Guidelines

Park development guidelines for each classification establish a clear framework for improvements, ensuring renovations and new developments align with the park's intended function and that investments are distributed equitably. These are detailed in Appendix C.

Capital Project Types

To assist in allocating resources, eight categories of capital projects are needed to address needs, gaps, and opportunities identified during the planning process:

- **Asset Reinvestment:** Capital replacement of assets to ensure that the park and facilities remain in good condition.
- **Universal Access/Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Improvement:** Specific universal access or ADA improvements completed outside of a park renovation project, such as curb cuts, improved paths of travel, upgraded ADA-compliant parking or seating, and signage (see Glossary for more information on Universal Access).
- **Green Infrastructure/Climate Infrastructure:** Climate-positive upgrades or resilience measures, such as green infrastructure, replacement of turfgrass with drought tolerant lawn alternatives, wildfire vegetation management, and decarbonization projects, including solar panels.
- **Ecosystem Protection and Restoration:** Projects that enhance ecosystem function and biodiversity, from stabilization to restoration.
- **Trail Development:** Improvements to existing trails of all types and development of additional trail connections, trailheads, and loop options.
- **Minor Park Renovation:** Smaller scale upgrades and additions to existing parks, such as pathways, facility replacements/capacity improvements (e.g., replacing a restroom or play structure), and upgrading or expanding one or two existing facilities or adding a new facility (e.g., a shelter, dog park, or sports court). This type of renovation may not require a master plan or extended community engagement process. Renovations should align with an adopted master plan, if one exists for the park.
- **Major Park Renovation:** More extensive upgrades and additions to existing parks and high use outdoor areas on conservation lands. This scale of project may require a master plan and a formal community engagement process.
- **Development/Redevelopment:** Ground-up development of all or a portion of a new site from vacant land or the complete redevelopment of all or a large portion of an existing park. This scale of project typically requires a master plan and the most extensive community engagement process. Neighborhood parks,

in particular, require extensive neighborhood engagement throughout the design process to ensure residents are heard and important design elements are integrated, as is reasonable and within budgetary restrictions.

Meeting Level of Service in Parklands

Beyond capital projects, Missoula must acquire parkland and conduct planning studies to support project implementation. When land acquisition is recommended, it typically involves fee-simple purchases for new parks or expansions of existing ones. However, when fee-simple acquisition is not feasible, alternative long-term interests—such as leases, options, or easements—should be considered to secure parkland access.

Parkland Dedication Through Subdivision

In accordance with state law, the City of Missoula requires subdivisions to dedicate parkland. The required amount is determined by land area and density, with specific criteria—such as location, slope, and public street frontage—governing what qualifies. Parkland dedication is a vital tool in ensuring residents of new subdivisions have access to nearby parks.

Currently, Missoula mandates less parkland dedication than permitted by state law and less than some other major Montana cities. The City should explore opportunities to increase required parkland and clarify standards for qualifying dedication. Parkland dedication requirements should be aligned with Appendix C, Park Development Guidelines.

Fee-in-Lieu of Land Dedication

Subdivisions have the option to provide a cash donation to the Parks and Recreation Department instead of dedicating land. When a subdivision is located within a 10-minute walk of an existing city park, cash contributions are preferred to avoid duplication of park services and improve maintenance efficiency.

The City should also explore alternatives such as “improvements in lieu” of full land dedication, allowing park amenities to be constructed during development. Currently, dedicated parkland often remains underdeveloped for years due to funding limitations.

Mitigation Fee

The City of Missoula currently collects park impact fees on all residential developments. However, Montana cities are expected to lose the ability to collect these fees in the near future. Infill developments contribute to increased population density, which leads to greater use of existing parks, additional wear and tear, and the need for expanded park capacity. To address these impacts, the City should develop a mechanism for collecting fees from residential infill projects to support park system sustainability.

Transportation Impact Fees

Transportation impact fees will continue to be collected and allocated toward transportation systems, including regional, community, and connector trails used for travel.

Dedications and Exactions

To help accommodate population growth, the City relies on dedications and exactions—mechanisms that require developers to contribute land, funding, or improvements to support public infrastructure and services.

Nonconforming Park Land

Missoula has publicly owned lands that do not meet the requirements for public parks due to their size, location, or other characteristics. These properties, often acquired through subdivision and annexation, are typically small and lack significant park or natural resource value. The PROST Plan advises against accepting additional nonconforming parkland. For existing sites that do not meet park standards, the Department should evaluate options for disposal, repurposing, or transitioning them to other allowable uses.

The following is a partial list of non-conforming parks should be evaluated:

- **Ozyia and Penland Park both lack clear public access** and only serve neighbors who border the park. Both have limited recreational or natural resource value.
- **Stanley Park is a 0.42-acre vacant lot** at the end of Stanley Court. It provides a very limited low-use neighborhood trail connection but very few other recreational or natural resource value.
- **Tiortis Park has no legal public access** and limited recreational or natural resource value.
- **Cattail Corner is primarily an engineered stormwater** retention basin and wetland, with 90 percent of the site serving this purpose. While this site does provide important habitat, it is primarily managed by the City's Stormwater Utility. Parks and Recreation has little authority and/or responsibility for the site.





PROST Parklands Classification and Recommendations

These classifications and recommendations describe classification changes as well as opportunities to support goal-based objectives. The section is organized by parkland classification and capital project types described on pages 6.16-6.18. Recommendations are consistent with the Park Development Guidelines.

Regional Parks and Park Preserves

Regional parklands serve as major destinations, offering significant value to both community members and visitors. Typically exceeding 100 acres, these parks feature a range of amenities, including highly developed recreational event spaces, tournament-level sports facilities, and natural landscapes. Park preserves, on the other hand, safeguard large, intact native

habitats and key community viewsheds while providing extensive natural surface trail systems for recreation. By acreage, these parklands are the largest in the system.

Fort Missoula Regional Park is Missoula's only regional park and Montana's only Sustainable SITES-certified park, constructed using nationally recognized safety and environmental sustainability standards. Spanning both City and County lands, its funding and operations are governed by a City-County interlocal agreement, with both entities contributing to a cyclical maintenance fund—serving as a model for developing regional facilities.

Operating as its own cost center, the park is a signature destination, attracting local, regional, national, and international events. As a joint facility, local governments should continue investing in its upkeep and site refinements, especially in areas such as green infrastructure, energy and water efficiency, and improved wayfinding.

Park Enhancements and Planning Initiatives

- **Develop a master site plan for Fort Ponds** to expand the regional park,

incorporating water-based recreation, trails, habitat protection/restoration, and wildlife viewing opportunities.

- **Assess cultural and historic resources** at the 17-acre triangular parcel west of Larchmont Golf Course and develop a master plan for its best use.
- **Continue collaboration with adjacent land management agencies**, particularly the University of Montana, to ensure cohesive planning.
- **Reinvigorate engagement with the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes** to enhance cultural interpretation and natural resource management.

Infrastructure and Operations Improvements

- **Enhance transportation planning** by analyzing traffic patterns, parking usage, and travel modes to support alternative transportation initiatives for tournaments and events—reducing parking congestion and aligning with climate goals.
- **Ensure continued availability of the west parking area** by extending the agreement with the University of Montana for use of its lands.
- **Install field lighting on softball fields 6 and 7** to expand playtime capabilities.

Community Engagement and User Experience

- **Support and improve the teen area** to maintain relevance for local high school students.
- **Consider adding user-friendly amenities**, such as meet-up and parking apps, along with dedicated spaces for arts, culture, and health-focused events.
- **Strengthen collaboration with user groups** to advance shared goals.



Park Preserves

Missoula's park preserves protect large, intact native habitats with extensive recreational trail systems, providing significant ecosystem services to the community. These areas account for the majority of land managed by the City's Conservation Lands program (4,349 of 4,883 acres, or 89 percent). Many park preserves serve as regional outdoor recreation destinations, offering front-country trail connections to larger state and federally managed landscapes. While the Conservation Lands Management Plan sets broad management priorities, many individual preserves lack parcel-specific natural and recreation resource plans.

Habitat Management and Ecosystem Restoration

- **Create resource-specific management plans** by habitat type (e.g., coniferous forests, riparian areas, grasslands) to define community priorities, strategies, and success metrics.
- **Conduct habitat condition assessments** and resource inventories across all park preserves to guide ecosystem protection and restoration projects.
- **Ensure conservation goals are met** by following adopted best practices and management plans.

Trail System Planning and Improvements

- **Develop recreational trail plans** for preserves without existing plans (North Hills, Mt. Sentinel, portions of Mt. Jumbo).
- **Invest in trail improvements** to enhance accessibility, user experience, and environmental sustainability.

- **Upgrade natural surface trails** to align with adopted trail typologies and standards.
- **Prioritize universal access/ADA improvements** where feasible, following the guidance of the U.S. Access Board's Chapter 10: Outdoor Developed Areas.
- **Redesign and repair iconic trails**—Waterworks Ridge (North Hills), Backbone (Mt. Jumbo), and Pengelly Trail (Mt. Sentinel)—to address erosion, trail braiding, and endangered species impacts.

Site-Specific Planning and Enhancements

- **Prioritize restoration of the Moon-Randolph Homestead barn and Randolph Cabin** to prevent further structural deterioration, and complete other major site improvements as prescribed in the 2015 Moon-Randolph Homestead strategic plan. Assess the need for a plan update after restoration projects are finished to establish new priorities.
- **Assess and improve interpretive signage** across Missoula's Conservation Lands, especially at primary and secondary trailheads, where current updates do not meet community expectations.
- **Develop trail maps and content** for the empty kiosks recently installed at preserve trailheads.
- **Support investments to develop Marshall Mountain Park** in collaboration with the County and other partners.





Community Parks and Natural Areas

These parklands offer important community connections and gathering spaces and protect valuable natural resources. They serve multiple neighborhoods and are typically managed to provide community-level (versus regional or neighborhood level) services. Community parks are typically over 20 acres. Community natural areas are typically over 10 acres and have development restrictions to protect on-site natural resources.

Greenough Park

Greenough Park is a heavily used community natural area centered around Rattlesnake Creek, offering opportunities to experience nature, education, and cultural interpretation. As Missoula's first park, it has a well-documented but under-shared cultural history. Community members value its character, which blends natural areas with developed park facilities. To sustain Greenough Park as a nature-focused community space, minor renovations—including trail improvements, vegetation management, riparian protections, and restroom additions—should continue.

- **Develop a master plan** to guide historic preservation, cultural interpretation, design aesthetics, recreational improvements, and maintenance priorities.
- **Align new or replaced facilities** with the park's natural and historic character—such as considering a nature play area when replacing playground equipment.
- **Restore the 0.52-acre Alvina parcel** as part of the Greenough Community Natural Area, implementing habitat restoration strategies.

Kestrel Park (currently designated special use)

Kestrel Park currently has diamond sports fields but few other amenities and is designated as a special use park. It is adjacent to DeSmet School. Today, the area surrounding the park is largely for industrial and commercial use. The future land use map designates the immediate area as the Industrial & Commercial Place Type and designates the area to the north of Interstate 90 as Rural Residential.

- **Reinvest in the existing assets.**
- **Plan for park renovations** over the long term, including the addition of community park facilities and renovations to replace the diamond fields with multi-use, rectangular sports fields. Reclassify it as a community park when that occurs.

McCormick Park

McCormick Park is Missoula's signature community park, centrally located and home to Currents Aquatic Center, the planned Currents Center for Recreation and Creativity (CCRC), and a variety of key outdoor facilities, including MOBASH Skate Park, Silver Summit All Abilities Playground, Silver Lagoon, and a high and low ropes course.

Reinvestment in McCormick Park should remain a priority to sustain its role as a premier recreation destination. The park also offers opportunities for vegetation projects to reduce mowed turf and incorporate habitat patches, enhancing its natural elements.

Ecosystem Protection and Restoration Priorities

- **Expand and establish riparian buffers** along the Clark Fork River to protect water quality and habitat.
- **Enhance Silver Lagoon** with improvements that increase water quantity and quality.
- **Develop a hardened river access site** for walk-in use to reduce environmental impacts.
- **Replace aging trees** to maintain a healthy and sustainable park landscape.
- **Actively engage in Orchard Homes irrigation ditch projects** to ensure continued water supply for Silver Lagoon

and the River Road Farm, recognizing the City's significant water rights in the system.

Reinvestments and Renovations in Alignment with the McCormick Park Master Plan

- **Construct a large picnic shelter** to provide additional gathering spaces.
- **Upgrade the river trail and lighting** to improve safety and accessibility.
- **Relocate Park Operations**, recreation storage, and Climate Smart Missoula to free up space for expanded park development.
- **Improve the existing 2-diamond complex** by incorporating additional rectangular field options and replacing the field lighting system.
- **Strengthen connections between McCormick Park and the Bitterroot Trail** to enhance accessibility and regional connectivity.
- **Explore the feasibility of a pedestrian bridge** across the Clark Fork River to improve access.
- **Advance development of the CCRC facility** when funding becomes available, solidifying its role as Missoula's first public community center and a major expansion of Currents Aquatic Center.

Playfair Park

At 62+ acres, Playfair Park is Missoula's largest community park, featuring Splash Montana, various sports fields, and recreation facilities. It sits adjacent to several important sites, including Missoula County Fairgrounds and Glacier Ice Arena, the Butterfly House and Insectarium, Sentinel High School, Russell Elementary School, and Missoula Family

YMCA, forming a superblock in the heart of the city.

While the park has received capital investments—such as the development of Splash Montana and the recent rebuild of the 12-block tennis facility—aging diamond fields are seasonally used and underutilized. Given its central location and large footprint, Playfair Park presents a major redevelopment opportunity.

Strategic Planning and Redevelopment

- **Develop a master plan for Playfair Park** in coordination with Missoula County, Missoula County Public Schools, YMCA, the Midtown Association, and other community partners. Ensure the master plan aligns with the Park Development Guidelines for community parks.
- **Reimagine, reconfigure, or relocate sports fields** to increase year-round use, incorporating multiple sports in rectangular field spaces.
- **Expand multi-use opportunities** by adding covered amenities and additional community-scale facilities to support all-season recreation.

Accessibility and Connectivity Enhancements

- **Improve pedestrian and wayfinding connections** between Playfair Park, Splash Montana, Missoula County Fairgrounds, Missoula County Public Schools, and YMCA.
- **Upgrade street and bike connections**, specifically across Brooks Street and linking to the Bitterroot Trail.
- **Integrate looped pathways with lighting** to support year-round walking and running.

Playground and Green Space Improvements

- **Revitalize playgrounds and play environments** to reflect the significance of this centrally located community park.
- **Increase shade coverage** by planting additional trees where appropriate.
- **Add native plantings and habitat areas** to enhance urban nature and address stormwater management.
- **Incorporate neighborhood park amenities** to better serve surrounding residents.

Infrastructure, Stormwater, and Maintenance Investments

- **Enhance park functionality** with innovative stormwater infrastructure, such as below-ground infiltration and storage under sports fields, and implement nature-based solutions.
- **Upgrade utilities and infrastructure**, including irrigation system replacement.
- **Add satellite maintenance facilities** to support park operations, potentially as a joint City/County facility.

West End Farm Park

West End Farm Park, now under City ownership, was planned as part of a proposed housing subdivision and includes an adopted master plan developed in collaboration with the land developer. Development should proceed in phases as funding becomes available, with a focus on implementing amenities that meet PROST standards for a community park.

Additional Community Natural Areas Recommendations

Missoula’s community natural areas protect critical natural values and ecosystem functions, shaping the urban landscape while providing important habitat, scenic beauty, and buffer spaces within developed neighborhoods on the Missoula Valley floor. Due to their topography and accessibility, these areas offer some of the best opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to connect with nature.

Management of community natural areas prioritizes resource protection while allowing appropriate public access. Development is limited and balanced with conservation goals, ensuring that natural values are preserved.

Habitat and Ecosystem Protection

- **Complete habitat condition assessments** and resource inventories across all community natural areas.
- **Utilize inventories to guide conservation efforts**, informing and implementing ecosystem protection and restoration projects based on the Conservation Lands Management Plan, resource-specific management plans, and best practices.
- **Remove outdated playground equipment** at the Ben Hughes Community Natural Area, which protects riparian resources along the Clark Fork River.
- **Enhance riparian habitat** at Ben Hughes by adding or improving nature-based park amenities to better serve nearby neighborhoods.

Trail System and Access Improvements

- **Invest in trail improvements** across community natural areas.
- **Prioritize universal access/ADA upgrades** where practical, following the U.S. Access Board’s Chapter 10: Outdoor Developed Areas.
- **Upgrade trailheads with better wayfinding**, maps, and interpretive signage.

Public Education and Park Identity

- **Expand interpretive and educational signage** where appropriate, highlighting natural resource values and conservation practices.
- **Consider combining and renaming** Peery & Meadowlark Acres and Highland & Hemayagan Parks, as they are adjacent and managed together despite separate names.

Table 18: Park Reclassification

Park Property	Current Classification	Reclassification
Jacob’s Island	Urban Parkland with Special Resources Present	Community Natural Area
West Broadway Island	Urban Parkland with Special Resources Present	Community Natural Area
Peery & Meadowlark Acres Park	Urban Parkland with Special Resources Present	Community Natural Area

**Community Parkland
Reclassifications**

Reclassify the following properties listed as “Urban Parklands with Special Resources Present” in the 2010 Conservation Lands Management Plan as Community Natural Areas:

In addition:

- **Reclassify John Toole Park**, which is listed as “Urban Parklands with Special Resources Present” in the 2010 Conservation Lands Management Plan as a Community Park.
- **Reclassify the 26.96-acre Charlotte Marbut Preserve** as a Community Natural area based on its size even though deed restrictions on the property prohibit any public access or development.
- **Recognize the three natural areas** at Fort Missoula as integral parts of the Regional Park, including the 16.03-acre Fort Missoula Triangle adjacent to Larchmont Golf Course, the 13-acre CCC Prairie, and the 89.32-acre Fort Missoula Ponds parcel. Although these areas function as community natural spaces and may have parcel-specific management plans, they are not standalone parklands. Instead, they are embedded within Fort Missoula Regional Park, enhancing its ecological diversity and expanding recreational opportunities.

Missoula’s designated community natural areas now include the following sites:

- Bancroft Ponds
- Ben Hughes
- Charlotte Marbut
- Clark Fork Natural Area

- Greenough Park
- High Park (with adjacent trail easement)
- Highland/Hemayagan
- Jacob’s Island
- Moose Can Gully
- Peery/Meadowlark Acres
- West Broadway Island

Neighborhood Park and Natural Areas

Missoula’s neighborhood parks are the backbone of the developed park system, providing close-to-home recreation opportunities in urban residential neighborhoods. While not as prevalent as developed neighborhood parks, neighborhood natural areas provide unique recreational experiences and important pockets of habitat in the most urban areas of the city. As noted in Chapters 3 and 4, there are some overlaps in service areas and some notable gaps. Neighborhood parks are intended for walkable access, and as noted, are not intended for Rural Residential and Industrial & Commercial Place Types. The following recommendations apply to neighborhood parks and natural areas.

Ensure each Neighborhood Park provides a complete park experience.

Each neighborhood park should offer amenities that support recreation in four key categories:

- **Social/Cultural** – Picnic areas, cultural interpretation sites, community gardens
- **Active Recreation** – Sports courts, fitness equipment, bike skills courses,

walking/running loops

- **Play Experience** – Playgrounds, splash decks, nature play areas
- **Nature** – Nature trails, rain gardens, habitat patches

Currently, few neighborhood parks provide amenities across all categories. The Department should prioritize projects in underserved areas and ensure all parks offer a complete experience. Community input should guide specific design and amenity decisions. Improvements may range from minor upgrades to major renovations, depending on the scope of need.

Ensure each Neighborhood Natural Area provides for unique nature-based experiences and/or habitat protections.

Neighborhood natural areas provide small, quiet respites within Missoula’s urban

landscape. Some already feature trails, educational signage, benches, and gathering spaces, but opportunities for improvement vary. In some areas, access may be limited due to steep terrain, constrained parcel geometry, or wetlands. To improve and protect these spaces, the Department should:

- **Conduct habitat condition assessments and resource inventories** to guide ecosystem protection and restoration efforts, following the Conservation Lands Management Plan and best practices.
- **Evaluate physical characteristics of natural areas** without designated trails or amenities to determine suitability for recreational development. Prioritize planning for feasible projects and document areas where development is impractical.

Table 19: Park Reclassification

Park Property	Current Classification	Reclassification
Butler Creek Natural Area	Urban Parkland with Special Resources Present	Neighborhood Natural Area
Clark Fork Natural Area	Urban Parkland with Special Resources Present	Neighborhood Natural Area
Hamilton	Urban Parkland with Special Resources Present	
Hellgate	Urban Parkland with Special Resources Present	Neighborhood Natural Area
Koly	Urban Parkland with Special Resources Present	
Woodbine	Urban Parkland with Special Resources Present	Neighborhood Natural Area
Ninkpata	Urban Parkland with Special Resources Present	Neighborhood Natural Area
John Toole	Urban Parkland with Special Resources Present	Neighborhood Natural Area

- **Invest in trail improvements** where practical, prioritizing universal access/ADA enhancements. Focus on neighborhood natural areas that could serve as connectors between sites or integrate with community and regional trail networks, following U.S. Access Board guidelines.

Neighborhood Parkland Reclassifications

Reclassify the following properties listed as “Urban Parklands with Special Resources Present” in the 2010 Conservation Lands Management Plan per table below.

Missoula’s designated neighborhood natural areas now include the following sites:

- Bancroft Ponds
- Butler Creek Natural Area
- Clark Fork Natural Area
- Clark Fork Natural Area
- Cohosset
- Floral
- Hamilton
- Hellgate
- Koly
- Northview
- Papoose
- Riverside
- Takima-Kokaski
- West Broadway Island
- Woodbine

Develop and reclassify larger pocket parks located in or near gap areas and areas planned for higher density place types as neighborhood parks or natural areas.

Where level of service standards cannot be met with existing neighborhood parks, nearby pocket parks should be developed with park amenities and reclassified as neighborhood parks to achieve the targeted level of service. Examples include Bentley, Elms, and Little McCormick parks.

Ensure that all neighborhood parks contribute to implementing equity and climate goals throughout the park system.

Every neighborhood park should receive investments to increase universal access, safety, ecosystem function, and climate resiliency. The following project types apply to every neighborhood park:

- **Universal Access/ADA and CPTED** guidelines,
- **Green Infrastructure/Climate** Resiliency, and
- **Ecosystem Protection/Restoration.**

Acquire new neighborhood parks in gap areas and new development areas, following the park development guidelines.

Missoula must acquire additional neighborhood parks in new development areas to address gaps in 10-minute park service. The number of parks needed will depend on location, street and trail networks, and park size and amenities.

Assuming a 5-acre park size, Missoula will need 8 to 10 new neighborhood parks over the next 10–15 years. If a 5-acre park is not

feasible, the city could establish two or three smaller, connected sites that collectively provide a high-quality neighborhood park experience.

Each new park will require land acquisition, planning and design, and development or redevelopment. Before accepting ownership, ensure the site has the appropriate soils, turf mix (grasses), irrigation, and woody vegetation and has met the performance standards for quality assurance.

Pocket Parks

Pocket parks are small, neighborhood-embedded sites with minimal amenities or facilities. While they offer a retreat from the urban environment, their recreation value is generally limited due to their size and lack of features. As noted, three larger pocket parks (Bentley, Elms, Little McCormick) are recommended for reclassification as neighborhood parks.

Considerations when acquiring pocket parks.

Pocket parks can be a tool for increasing level of service in dense urban areas with limited potential for larger neighborhood parks. However their size significantly limits their recreational value, and they are inefficient to maintain. Acquisition of new pocket parks should be limited to areas where larger neighborhood park acquisition is not feasible.

Consider existing pocket parks for alternative uses.

Some pocket parks may be suitable for alternative recreation uses, such as dog parks, urban forests, a specific recreation facility, secured maintenance facility or equipment/material storage, or community gardens. Where additional parkland is not needed,

pocket parks, with the support of residents, could be repurposed for housing or other purposes with proceeds used to improve nearby parks.

Transition pocket parks.

Missoula’s pocket parks generally have **few amenities and mostly consist of** turf grass that requires regular mowing by maintenance crews. Pocket parks should be considered for possible sale using the proceeds to improve other parklands or alternative uses as described above. A few pocket parks have manufactured playground equipment. When these assets reach the end of their life, they should be removed and not replaced if they are duplicating amenities in the service area of a neighborhood park. However, the Department will work with local neighborhoods to determine community needs and provide flexibility where needed.

Green/Climate Infrastructure

Potential Sites

- 8th Street
- Anderson
- Brooke Lynn (HOA maintained)
- Flynn
- Invermere Park (HOA maintained)
- Khanabad
- Lester
- Lincolnwood Creek Crossing

- River Pine
- White Tail
- Willow Wood

Special-Use Parks

These parks offer unique recreation experiences or provide a location for specialized facilities.

Acquire special-use parks when

context or facility needs warrant.

Special-use parks may be needed to provide a location for future stand-alone recreation facilities, such as a multipurpose recreation center not located in a community park. This type of park may also be needed to provide urban park space in urban centers as well as additional downtown parks or to meet demands for sports, arts, or festival sites.

Implement master plans (or create master plans as needed) and make park improvements at special-use

Table 20: Park Reclassification

Park	Recommendation
BN Plaza	Asset Reinvestment, Universal Access/ADA Improvement
Caras, East Caras, and Bess Reed	Implement adopted plan that addresses these three sites as a linked riverfront park network. Asset Reinvestment, Green/Climate Infrastructure at all three sites Trail Development and Minor Park Renovation at East Caras and Bess Reed to widen trail and add amenities
Duncan Field	Asset Reinvestment, Universal Access/ADA Improvement
Memorial Rose Garden	Asset Reinvestment, Universal Access/ADA Improvement Minor Park Renovation
Missoula Art Park	Asset Reinvestment
Silver Park	Consider a destination play area or other community-scale recreation facility to encourage regular use. Asset Reinvestment, Universal Access/ADA Improvement Trail Development, including addressing erosion on riverside trail Minor Park Renovation
Syringa Park	Implement Phase 3 of master plan Incorporate recreational features into the Park Asset Management Plan Develop and fund a maintenance impact statement
Poplar Farm (in process of acquiring)	Study for repurpose to athletic and event facility as well as eco-education Develop based on results of study

parks.

Table 20 identifies the recommendations and recommended capital project types for each special-use park (See Table A.1 for master plan status).

Linear Parks

Linear parks are primarily corridors for trail segments in Missoula. This type of park could also be used to protect other linear features, such as a river or creek corridor, or enhance community or regional trail networks. (See the trails section for recommendations on trails.)

Acquire linear parks when connectivity needs require public ownership.

Missoula provides trail connections in public rights-of-way, across developed parks and conservation lands, and through easements on land owned by others. When needed for connectivity, or to enhance the character of the connection, consider adding additional linear park acreage.

Explore adding neighborhood park amenities to linear parks to meet 10-minute park service.

Some existing and proposed linear park corridors pass through gap areas. These parks can offer opportunities to add neighborhood park amenities and fill gaps in service. Neighborhood park amenities, such as playgrounds, picnic shelters, and recreation facilities, like sports courts or outdoor exercise equipment, should be prioritized in gap areas.

Implement improvements at linear parks.

In addition to developing trails and improving existing trails, Missoula should

make improvements to increase ADA and universal access to trails, implement green infrastructure and climate infrastructure enhancements, and make capital reinvestments.

Relevant Sites

- Bellcrest to Cypress Connector
- Bitterroot Trail (MRL rail corridor through Missoula and south to Sula)
- Ron's River Trail – improvements and missing connections
- Milwaukee Trail/Great American Rail Trail – acquisitions, connections, and improvements across Missoula County
- Creekside Trail
- Grant Creek Trail-General updates and expansion from I-90 south to the Milwaukee Trail



Open Space & Conservation Lands

This section addresses recommendations related to the 2019 Urban Area Open Space Plan and Missoula’s conservation lands and natural areas.

Implement the Missoula Urban Area Open Space Plan.

The PROST Plan affirms and advances the guiding direction of the Open Space Plan, including future amendments or updates. Public engagement confirmed strong support for protecting open space, agricultural and working lands, clean air and water, trail connectivity, and access to parks and trails near residences.

Strategic Protection & Collaboration

- **Preserve open space in the cornerstones** identified in the 2019 Open Space Plan.
- **Work with partners**—including Missoula County, Five Valleys Land Trust, the

Conservation District, and Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks—to safeguard natural, agricultural, and scenic systems through development incentives, land stewardship, conservation easements, and other tools.

- **Protect open space collaboratively**, including agricultural and working lands, parks, conservation lands, and other key areas.

Access & Connectivity

- **Enhance residential areas** with nearby open spaces, parks, and trails through acquisition and development, including provision of quality open space, parks and trails for urban or urbanizing areas of the community.
- **Expand regional trail networks** by securing corridors and constructing trails.
- **Enhance public access to open spaces** through community-driven planning and alignment with state and local regulations.

Environmental & Climate Resilience

- **Protect river corridors, agricultural lands, wildlife habitat**, and other ecologically valuable areas.

- **Safeguard open space** to ensure clean water and air benefits and strengthen climate resilience.
- **Guide development** away from environmentally sensitive areas.

Implementation & Systemwide Integration

- **Execute the recommendations** outlined in this PROST Plan and currently adopted Open Space Plan.
- **Integrate nature throughout the system**, prioritizing neighborhoods with limited natural access.

Update the Conservation Lands Plan, including adding the following recommendations:

- **Reclassify conservation lands** as Park Preserves, Community Natural Areas, and Neighborhood Natural Areas. Address “Parks with Special Assets” as needed.
- **Update the park type field** in the authoritative parks GIS dataset to replace “public natural area” with “community natural area” and add “neighborhood natural area.”
- **Add a High Use Site Overlay** to designate areas within conservation lands developed for outdoor recreation access. Refer to Park Development Guidelines (Appendix B) for details.
- **Update maps and GIS layers** with new classifications and related data from the PROST planning process.

Systemwide Integration & Accessibility

- **Implement PROST recommendations** to integrate nature throughout the system, prioritizing neighborhoods lacking access.
- **Incorporate universal access guidelines** and consider amenities such as art, interpretation, signage, and

benches.

- **Improve services and public access** while balancing recreational use with protection of sensitive natural resources.

Continue to apply management strategies that address climate and increase resilience.

Missoula has established itself as a leader in open space management and should continue advancing climate-focused strategies. The conservation lands program should serve as the City’s center of excellence in nature-based approaches, integrating these strategies into developed parks where feasible.

Wildfire Risk Reduction

- **Use prescribed burns** to enhance vegetation management on conservation lands, collaborating with City departments, the County, and regional partners.
- **Implement nature-based solutions**, such as native plantings and alternative vegetation management (e.g., goats), to mitigate wildfire risks and create buffers between urban areas and open space.

Land Stewardship & Sustainable Development

- **Establish native planting buffer areas** along streams and riverbanks, including in developed parks, to reduce pollution and runoff.
- **Manage weeds and invasive species** to protect ecological integrity.
- **Develop sensitive lands layers and protocols** for integration into the Unified Development Code in collaboration with City, state, federal, and non-profit organizations.



Urban Forest

Recommendations

Maintain the city's role as manager of the urban forest.

Missoula's Urban Forestry Division oversees the maintenance of all street and park trees. As certified arborists, its staff are uniquely qualified to manage the urban forest as a living resource with broad community benefits. Managing all public trees, regardless of location, ensures more consistent and efficient forest stewardship. Providing Urban Forestry with adequate resources is essential to meeting the city's climate resiliency, equity, and livability goals.

Budget to prioritize preservation of canopy coverage.

A significant increase in the Urban Forestry annual budget is needed to sustain the urban forest and prevent canopy loss. Additional funding is needed to:

- **Increase pruning** to meet industry standards for cyclical maintenance.
- **Replant rights-of-way and parklands** where canopy is failing.
- **Add new trees**, prioritizing areas lacking shade for equity and climate reasons. (see Landscape Architecture Foundation 2024 research on urban heat.)

Parks and Recreation will collaborate with the Public Works and Mobility Department and other City departments to quantify the benefits of trees for stormwater retention and biofiltration, advocating for increased funding to support urban forestry efforts.

Update the urban forest master plan.

The 2015 Missoula Urban Forestry Master Plan needs revision to align with newly adopted citywide strategic goals. This update should be informed by a completed public tree inventory and establish specific timelines for improved tree management. The updated plan will help guide realistic decisions for setting a citywide tree canopy coverage goal and climate resiliency strategies.

Complete the city's tree inventory.

The current tree inventory is incomplete, with over 90% of the dataset collected in 2013. A fully updated inventory is essential for establishing Urban Forestry Program staffing and funding priorities.

Update codes and design manual to include urban forestry initiatives

Urban forestry initiatives should be integrated into city codes and the standards and specifications manual, including:

- **Ensure redevelopment does not reduce** or negatively impact urban forest health.
- **Address preservation**, species selection, planting, care, soil quality, location, and hardship exceptions.
- **Update the unified development code and design standards** to improve tree planting in rights-of-way and urban streets and ensure new streets include appropriately spaced trees. Ensure standards are clear, predictable, and flexible while aligning with industry best practices to support a thriving urban forest.

Plan and implement an aggressive canopy replacement initiative.

Missoula's urban forest is facing large-scale decline due to failing even-aged monoculture. Sustained removal and replanting must occur at a more aggressive pace than current resources allow. To implement a robust canopy replacement strategy, the city must:

- **Clarify tree planting requirements** for private development projects.
- **Leverage existing funding** to increase tree planting.
- **Explore additional funding sources**, such as stormwater utility fees, tree mitigation fees, grants, and partnerships.

- **Develop a timeline to reach preventative maintenance** industry standards for cyclical tree pruning.
- **Prioritize class 2 and 3 trees** in the right-of-way for all development, including street renovations.

Implement proactive risk management.

Regular tree risk assessments, proactive pruning, and tree risk management plans are necessary to prevent failures and reduce liabilities. Increased staffing will be required to support these efforts.

Establish stable and increased funding to ensure a healthy urban forest

Missoula needs consistent and increased funding for urban forest management. New funding mechanisms should reflect trees' contributions to green infrastructure, including potential sources such as stormwater fees or a utility user fee. The updated Urban Forest Master Plan should evaluate these options and assess their feasibility.

Increase education and community involvement in managing, maintaining, and supporting the urban forest.

As confirmed through community engagement, Missoulians value their urban forest. Expanding volunteer programs and coordinating with Trees for Missoula and Climate Smart Missoula will enhance engagement opportunities. Developing educational initiatives—such as tree walks and pruning workshops—will further encourage community participation in urban forest stewardship.



Trails

Implement the updated trail typology as described in Appendix F.

Incorporate the updated trail typology and associated standards into design guidelines to enhance access, walkability, safety, and long-term maintenance. See Appendix F for details.

- **Integrate the existing and future trail system** with Street Typologies from the City’s adopted Land Use Plan.
- **Update the City standards and specifications** manual to align with the trail typologies framework and PROST Plan.
- **Revise the Unified Development Code** to clarify when trail connections are required and what standards must be met.
- **Define regulations on electric assist vehicles** (e.g., e-bikes and e-scooters) to ensure compliance with the trail typologies framework. Use outreach and education to inform the public on proper etiquette, rules, and regulations.

- **Improve safety and reduce conflicts** on multi-modal trails through signage, outreach, and public education.
- **Collaborate with planners, developers, businesses, and landowners** to build a seamless, well-connected trail network.
- **Expand and enhance recreational trails** in parks and conservation lands, focusing on loops, wayfinding, and reducing user conflicts.

Work with partner agencies and Destination Missoula to designate a multi-day regional hiking loop.

Designate and market the “Glacial Lake Missoula Shoreline Trail,” a multi-day loop highlighting the region’s geologic history. This trail would connect existing city, county, state, and federal trails, serving as an economic driver for tourism and recreation. Consider developing hike, bike, and equestrian options.

Develop the Bitterroot Trail Linear Park.

Advance efforts to acquire the Bitterroot Branch Railway corridor for use as a linear

park and trail while maintaining the existing trail along Highway 93.

- **Identify opportunities for play areas, picnics, shade, loop trails, and other neighborhood amenities.**
- **Work with partners to eventually connect the trail** from Sula to the Flathead Valley via the People’s Way trail corridor along Highway 93 North.
- **Collaborate with multi-state partners** to link Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks.

Implement the Great American Rail Trail through Missoula.

Missoula’s portion of the Great American Rail Trail follows the Milwaukee Railroad corridor and connects to the first cross-country multiuse trail spanning over 3,700 miles.

- **Advance the federally funded partnership project** initiated in late 2024/early 2025.
- **Work to realign sections of the Milwaukee Trail** along historic rail corridors where possible.

Assess and re-envision the South Hills Trail System.

Missoula’s South Hills Trail System connects neighborhoods but lacks adequate wayfinding and consistent connectivity. Recent land acquisitions and development projects present opportunities for improvement.

- **Inventory and assess the South Hills Trail System** using updated trail typologies and standards.
- **Collaborate with neighborhoods** to redesign and enhance connectivity within the system.
- **Expand and enhance the network** of regional and community trails.

Develop new trails and enhance existing trails to improve connectivity and accessibility.

- **Fill network gaps and improve existing trails** (e.g., widening, lighting, realignment in high-use areas) by partnering with developers, Public Works & Mobility, the MPO, Missoula County, and other agencies.
- **Create tree-lined, separated trail systems** to ensure safe commuting and recreation.
- **Connect trails** across streets, rivers, railroads, and other physical barriers to form a seamless regional network.

Increase safety and capacity of the trail network

- **Enhance pedestrian and cyclist safety** by prioritizing key crossings and improvements.
- **Develop grade-separated crossings** for high-use regional and community trails that intersect major streets.
- **Increase trail capacity and safety** through resurfacing, widening, striping, and separating bicycle and pedestrian traffic where needed.
- **Expand lighting** on community and regional trails to improve accessibility and meet climate and equity goals.

Expand the network of neighborhood and connector trails.

Neighborhood and connector trails strengthen mobility and link communities with the broader trail system.

- **Fill gaps** in neighborhood and connector trails systems in collaboration with developers, Public Works & Mobility, the MPO, and other agencies.

- **Prioritize Safe Routes to Parks and Safe Routes to Schools** connections to enhance accessibility.
- **Improve existing trailheads** and develop additional ones.

Increase accessibility, capacity, and amenities within Missoula's trailhead network.

- **Enhance existing trailheads** with improved wayfinding, maps, and accessibility features and expand trailhead capacity.
- **Consider adding more trailheads** to increase access and distribute visitors.

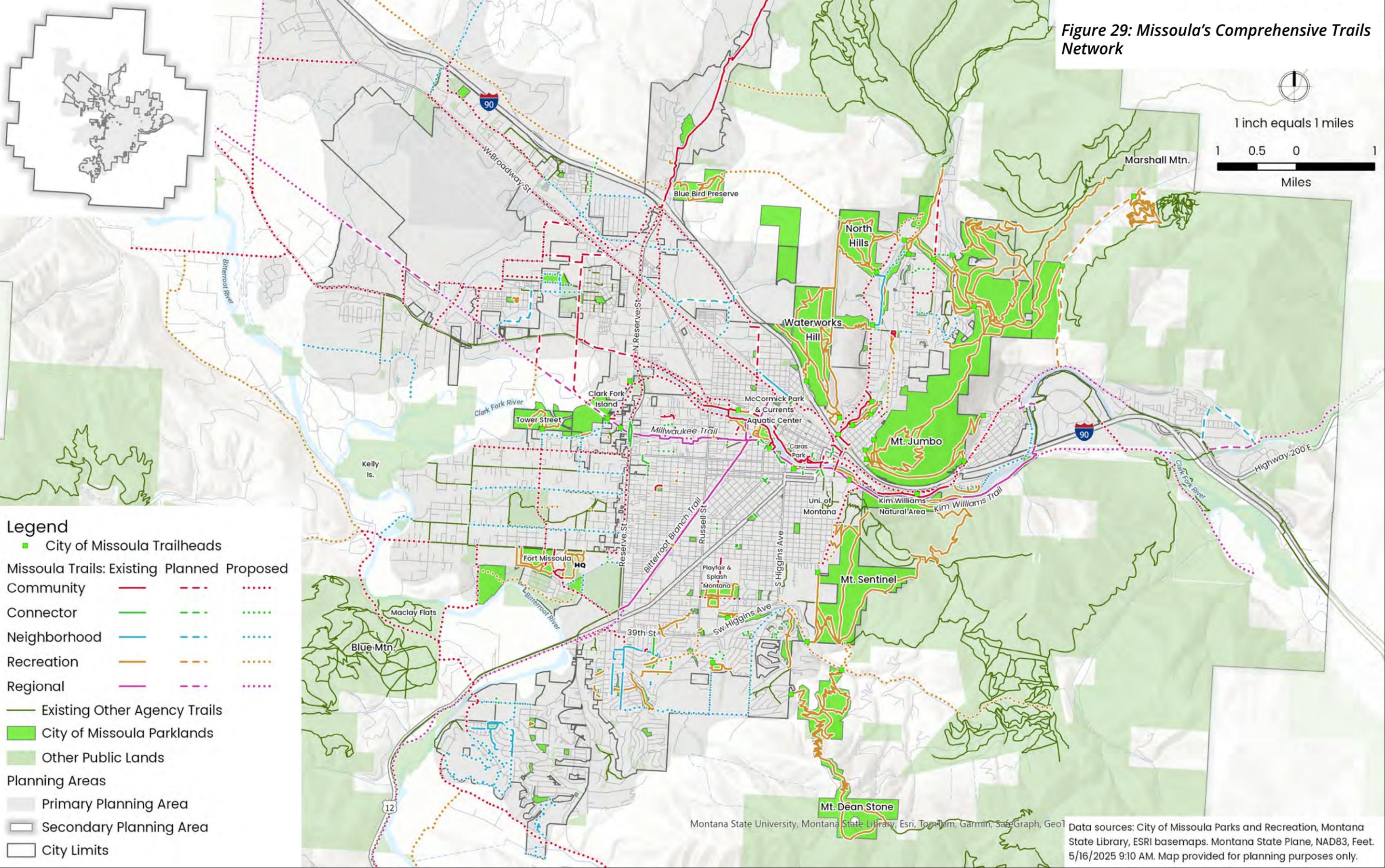
Mapping recommendations

- **Create an accessible public-facing trail map** or adopt a widely used third-party system to improve trail information, usage guidance, and seasonal closures in collaboration with the Front Country Recreation Collaborative.
 - Include an online user map with downloadable route maps connecting homes to parks and conservation lands.
 - Update the printed version of the public trails map to include parks, amenities, and facilities for residents and visitors.
 - Expand wthe map's coverage area to create a regional trails guide.



Photo courtesy of Five Valleys Land Trust

Figure 29: Missoula's Comprehensive Trails Network





Recreation Facilities

When new parks are developed or existing parks are redeveloped or receive major renovation, recreation facilities will be refreshed and added. This section discusses additional recreation facility recommendations.

Sports Fields and Facilities

Add more recreation facilities as Missoula adds new parks.

Sports and recreation facilities play a vital role in a park system, but as demographics shift and interests evolve, it is essential to carefully assess new investments. In Missoula, these facilities serve diverse community needs and provide high-quality recreation opportunities.

As new parks are developed or existing parks are updated, the Parks and Recreation Department should add recreation facilities that align with the Park Development Guidelines and reflect community interests.

These may include sports courts, pump tracks, skate parks, sports fields, and disc golf.

When selecting sports facilities for a park, Missoula should:

- **Maintain a variety of recreation options**, considering changing demographics, trends, and community input to ensure equitable distribution across the park system.
- **Avoid allowing any single sports facility type to dominate** the system or a site that is not designated as a special-use park.
- **Design sports facilities to support flexible use**, accommodate varying skill levels, and serve diverse interests.

Develop a rectangular field complex.

Missoula currently has fewer rectangular fields than industry standards while exceeding standards for diamond fields. To address this imbalance and meet the growing demand, the City should develop a rectangular field sports complex north of the Clark Fork River. This facility would support soccer, lacrosse, football, Ultimate frisbee, and other rectangular field sports.

At least 20 acres of relatively level, developable land is required for such a complex, with the facility's size guided by a comprehensive athletic field and facility strategy. Potential locations include areas near Mullan Road, Reserve Street, or the northside of town near I-90.

- **Site selection** – Locate new rectangular fields within a community park or as stand-alone, special-use facilities.
- **Field quantity and design** – Include at least eight full-size, multi-use rectangular fields, each marked for smaller field sizes and multiple sports.
- **Amenities and infrastructure** – Ensure fields are lighted and equipped with parking, restrooms, Wi-Fi, storage, and essential support facilities, such as concessions, a tournament hub, office space, and an operations facility.

Evaluate the overall inventory of Missoula-area athletic fields and facilities in collaboration with Missoula County and other partners.

The City, County, and MCPS are key providers of athletic fields and facilities within and near Missoula city limits. **These agencies should collaborate on a comprehensive study** to assess the overall inventory, identify demand for new or upgraded facilities, coordinate investments, and ensure consistent field access. The study should:

- **Establish a coordinated approach to field management** – Balance use requests, schedule maintenance, and preserve access for informal community play.
- **Optimize field provision and policies** – Standardize use and allocation guidelines to maximize public resources.



- **Evaluate existing inventory** – Analyze the supply and condition of athletic fields and major facilities, including school district fields if possible.
- **Develop use and allocation policies** – Establish clear guidelines on field use, scheduling, and pricing.
- **Account for varied needs** – Consider differences between agencies and gather input from sports user groups.
- **Include indoor and synthetic turf options** – Assess opportunities for indoor spaces and lighted synthetic turf fields to expand year-round access.

Add a permanent disc golf course and increase seasonal course capacity.

Identify a location for an 18-hole disc golf course, and at a minimum:

- **Work with the local disc golf community** to plan and implement.
- **Add a seasonal course** to increase capacity and relieve use of Fort Missoula’s seasonal disc golf course.

Indoor Facilities

Work with Community Partners to develop the Currents Center for Recreation and Creativity.

Expanding Currents Aquatic Center into a full-service recreation center is a long-planned and much-needed project. The Department should continue to advocate for funding and collaborate with the Converge Foundation and other partners to secure financial support for the Currents Center for Recreation and Creativity (CCRC). Once funding is available, the expansion should be implemented at McCormick Park.

The new facility must include sufficient staffing space to support robust programming and meet the community’s needs effectively.

Seek indoor/covered facilities of all types throughout Missoula.

Indoor space is one of Missoula’s most pressing needs. The Parks and Recreation Department should explore all options for adding or securing indoor facilities for public use.

Facility Development & Expansion

- **Replace BASE Camp** – Identify a new facility and develop programming as additional spaces become available.
- **Build flexible-use structures** – Develop multi-use buildings or pavilions in existing or new parks.
- **Lease space** – Consider leasing facilities downtown or in redevelopment areas.
- **Add event facilities** – Establish a community park or special-use area capable of hosting programming and revenue-generating events (e.g., weddings, corporate functions).
- **Enhance indoor sports facilities** – Support efforts to establish ice skating, curling, an indoor 25-yard pool, indoor turf, and additional gyms to meet demand across youth, high school, college, and adult sports.

School Partnerships & Joint-Use Agreements

- **Expand access to school facilities** – Work with Missoula County School District to create joint-use agreements at more schools, supporting extended programming and care services for working households.

- **Utilize gymnasiums and programming space** – Secure access to existing school gyms and programming spaces outside school hours.
- **Explore feasibility of shared gym space** – Assess after-hours gym use or consider constructing additional gymnasiums for public use.
- **Leverage successful models** – Cities like Poway and San Diego have expanded joint-use agreements to maximize school facilities for public recreation. See San Diego’s Play All Program for details.

Plan for the replacement of Basecamp.

The Parks and Recreation Department has been using the former library as Basecamp, a central hub for youth out-of-school programming. This facility plays a key role in service provision, but with redevelopment planned for the site, a new centrally located indoor facility is needed as a replacement.

Ideally, the new facility would also accommodate other programming in the evenings and before school dismissal. If the Currents Center for Recreation and Creativity (CCRC) moves forward quickly, it could potentially meet this need.

Aquatics Facilities

Reinvest in existing aquatics facilities.

Missoula should continue reinvesting in Currents Aquatics Center, Splash Montana, and splash deck locations to maintain their value and recreation capacity. Regularly assess the need for upgrades, improvements, or additions to ensure these facilities effectively serve the community, including underserved populations.

Implement findings from the 2024 Splash Amenities and Needs Assessment and Expansion Feasibility Study by:

- **Updating spray and family slide** features and adding new slide features.
- **Expanding party rental areas.**

Incorporate splash decks and interactive fountains into parks.

Missoula has splash decks at several parks, and additional water play features should be considered for new and existing sites where feasible and beneficial to residents. Parks such as West End Farms and other suitable locations could accommodate splash decks, which should be distributed across neighborhood and community parks citywide.

Interactive fountains, being more customized and having higher-capacity features, should be designated as community-wide amenities. They are best suited for regional, community, and special-use parks, as well as parks within the Downtown place type.

Add another indoor aquatic center in the long term.

Looking further ahead, the Department should plan for a second indoor aquatic center, potentially as part of a larger multipurpose recreation center. This facility would require a feasibility study and business plan and should:

- **Include a 25-yard or 25-meter pool** and a leisure pool to maximize flexibility.
- **Consider partnerships** with other entities.

Work with the physical therapy and medical communities to explore the need for, and feasibility of, adding a warm water therapy pool at Currents or another location.

A therapy pool would increase the aquatic programming capacity and allow for a greater diversity of programming, including programming for older adults.

Other Recreation Facilities

Based on recreation trends and community feedback, the Parks and Recreation Department should consider the following:

Family and community gathering spaces

- **Develop picnic areas, shelters, play areas, and facilities** that foster interaction, such as community gardens, orchards, off-leash dog areas, disc golf courses, performance spaces, arts and culture amenities, and seating areas.
- **Support neighborhood events and social gatherings** by offering reservable and open use gathering spaces, including year-round indoor facilities and community meeting areas.
- **Integrate cultural, historic, and place-based art and interpretation** throughout the park system, highlighting Indigenous culture, local history, and unique environmental features.
- **Include dedicated and pop-up locations for arts and culture** activities.

Recreational access

- **Construct an asphalt bicycle pump track** that is centrally located and open year-round.

- **Include street-style skateboarding** features along trail corridors.
- **Develop a parkour gym/park.**
- **Enhance recreational opportunities for tween and teenage children** by providing additional features and amenities tailored to their interests.
- **Provide environmental education and outdoor recreation facilities** to enhance learning and engagement.

Nature and wildlife experiences

- **Build bird blinds** and wildlife viewing facilities.
- **Provide permanent boating access points** to improve non-motorized river access.

Essential park amenities

- **Consider additional dog parks**, especially in urban residential areas.
- **Foster community gardens** in partnership with Garden City Harvest or other organizations, prioritizing urban residential areas.
- **Add picnic shelters and restrooms** at high-use sites.





Recreation Programs and Facilities

Recreation Programming

Missoula’s Recreation Division must remain flexible and responsive to evolving trends and demographics, making the most of available facilities and collaborating with partners to deliver services. Accordingly, recommendations for recreation programming are comprehensive and strategic, building upon the policy directions outlined in Chapter 5.

Overall Recommendations

When considering new or expanded recreation programming, the Department should continue to work with multiple entities, build on existing partnerships, and develop new programs to meet growing needs. Parks can play three major roles in this context:

- **Direct Provider:** Plans programs, secures facilities, hires and trains staff, or contracts instructors.
- **Partner:** Shares costs and responsibilities with another entity to provide programs or events, varying in scale.
- **Facility Provider:** Manages and maintains reservable facilities for sports leagues, events, nonprofits, and community groups.

Continue to invest in core program areas.

Core program areas have wide demographic appeal, are high priorities for the community, and address a public need. The Department is best suited to serve that need. There are facilities and sites to support core program areas, but they require continued investment. As noted earlier in this plan, Missoula’s Core Program Areas as of 2025 are After School and School’s Out Programs, including Community Schools Programs and Camps, Aquatics, and Sports (both adult and youth).

Missoula may add more core program areas in the future based on input. Possible areas

for expanding programs include programs for aging adults and people with disabilities, arts and culture programming, nature-oriented programming, and others. For each existing and potential new core program area, the Department should:

- **Maintain full-time staff** to support adequate staffing ratios in programs.
- **Ensure proper facilities** to support the program.
- **Offer entry-level options**, tiered skill development, varied price points, and a range of offerings.

Use pilot efforts to test new programming approaches.

The Department should develop an overall approach and evaluation protocol for pilot programs. The overall concept is experimentation and evaluation so that the Department can test out new programs, approaches, and formats. The pilot approach allows the Recreation Division to try out new ideas or do them in new ways to establish what works best and make adjustments. Recommendations include:

- **Work with the City Office of Neighborhoods** to support strong neighborhood programs, events, and initiatives.
- **Collaborate with City departments** to expand recreation services beyond parks (e.g., streets, plazas, civic spaces).
- **Use portable equipment and furnishings** for pop-up park experiences in underserved areas.

Recommendations for Existing Core Program Areas

Continue Afterschool and School’s Out programs, including Community Schools programs and camps.

These programs have high community support and high value in supporting Missoula households. Recommendations include:

- **Continue core programming** at the Base Camp site while identifying a replacement location.
- **Collaborate with school districts** to expand wrap-around services at low or no cost.
- **Keep Afterschool, Camps, and Community Schools** as a separate cost center for tracking.
- **Seek new funding mechanisms** to ensure access, affordability, and quality.
- **Increase program offerings** at all Community Schools sites, expanding indoor options for multi-generational participation.

Aquatics Programs

Aquatics recreational swimming and related programming are highly supported and have many community benefits. Recommendations include:

- **Adjust aquatics programming** to meet diverse community interests.
- **Expand aquatics fitness offerings** (e.g., HIIT, water yoga, water jogging).
- **Maximize facility use** (e.g., adding bulkheads for flexible lane configurations).

- **Coordinate with Learn to Swim providers** to ensure universal access.
- **Develop sensory-specific and culturally appropriate programming** for inclusivity.

Sports Programs

- **Combine adult and youth sports** into one program area.
- **Continue roles in facility provision** and direct sports programming.
- **Expand “learn to play” programs**, including adult leagues and middle/high school intramurals.
- **Monitor emerging trends** and adjust programming accordingly.

Additional Programming Recommendation

Age-Specific Programming

- **Offer preschool-age programming** across all program areas (e.g., Sports, Aquatics, Camps).
- **Ensure teen programming**, including high school-age options, in areas such as Sports, Aquatics, Arts and Culture, Outdoor/Nature, and Early Mentoring Programs.
- **Emphasize employment-focused** programs for teens.
- **Develop pilot programs for older adults**, leveraging existing park resources (e.g., walks, outdoor fitness, boot camp-style classes).
- **Explore alternative funding sources** to improve programming access, such as the Missoula County Best Beginnings Scholarship program and federally supported programs like Silver Sneakers.

- **Actively program underutilized parks and conservation lands** to increase use, disperse activity, enhance perceptions of safety, and encourage positive public engagement.

Adult programs

- **Expand adult recreation programming**, starting with activities utilizing existing infrastructure (e.g., walks, outdoor fitness) before broadening offerings for active older adults in sports, dance, and arts.
- **Collaborate with senior service providers** like Missoula Aging Services, Missoula Senior Center, All Nations Health, and MOLLI to coordinate programming and provider roles.

Adaptive Recreation

- **Continue partnership with the Montana Rural Institute** to provide adaptive equipment for community recreation needs.
- **Develop new adaptive recreation partnerships**, programs, and offerings across core program areas.
- **Collaborate with local providers like Summit Independent Living (SIL)**, Missoula Adaptive Recreation and Sports (MARS) to expand access to adaptive recreation.

Arts and Culture

- **Develop an arts and culture plan** in partnership with the Missoula community to define coordination between Parks and Recreation, arts organizations, nonprofits, and local artists.
- **Expand historic preservation**, tours, and local history programming, utilizing resources like the Moon Randolph Homestead.

Environmental Education and Nature Programs

- **Expand Citizen Science** and other educational opportunities in the PROST system by collaborating with partners.
- **Develop a wetland and river education program**, incorporating water safety for rivers and ponds.
- **Offer regular guided walks** featuring staff experts and volunteers (e.g., urban forestry tours, park preserve hikes).
- **Build community knowledge on climate best practices**, resource conservation, native plantings, and sustainability.
- **Strengthen resident and visitor engagement** in climate-smart initiatives across parks and facilities.
- **Continue volunteer opportunities** for ongoing environmental stewardship like planting and revegetation.

Outdoor Recreation

- **Pilot “learn to” outdoor recreation programs** for adults and older adults.
- **Expand drop-in hikes and bike rides** in Conservation Lands in partnership with recreation groups and the Front Country Recreation Collaborative.
- **Promote responsible recreation values.**
- **Provide access to remote conservation lands** for individuals with mobility, disability, socioeconomic, or other barriers.

- **Address access and cost recovery concerns:**

- **Review existing policies** for unintended barriers (e.g., forms, costs, insurance requirements).
- **Conduct annual cost recovery assessments**, balancing taxpayer subsidies, fees, and philanthropy.
- **Improve transportation access** to programs and events by collaborating with Missoula MPO, public transit, City Public Works and Mobility and Parking Commission.
- **Expand free/low-fee recreation options** to increase accessibility and promote community participation.



Climate and Resilience Initiatives

These initiatives serve as climate strategies, complementing the policies and projects outlined elsewhere in this plan. Each area presents a set of potential strategies as a foundation for further action. Over time, approaches, technologies, and specific strategies will evolve to support Missoula's climate goals.

Develop metrics for tracking successful implementation of climate and resilience initiatives.

These metrics should build upon the baseline established by the Plan's goals and objectives.

Increase water efficiency.

- **Adopt regenerative landscape management practices** to improve soil health, sequester carbon, reduce irrigation requirements, and increase overall plant resilience.

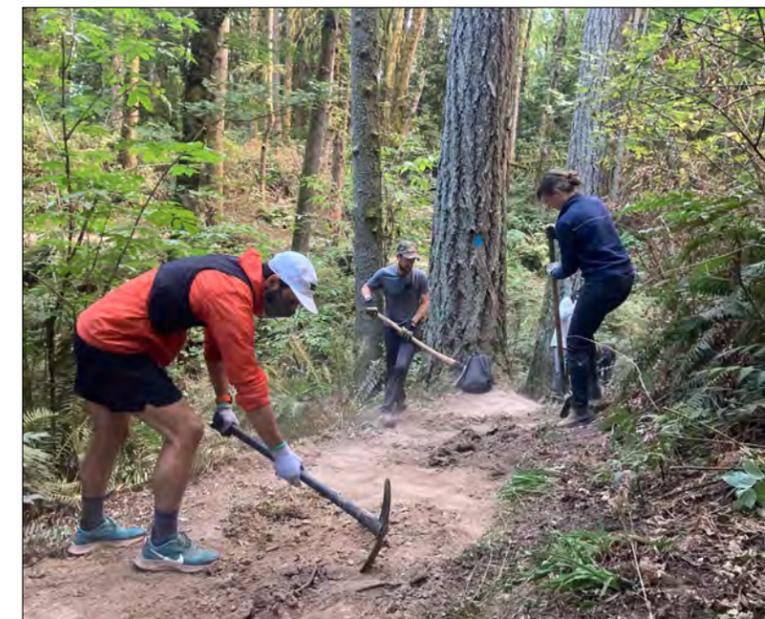
- **Install water efficiency measures** within all buildings and facilities, especially for showers, pools, and high irrigation areas such as fields.
- **Explore using grey water** and, when possible, black water systems for park and recreation facilities.
- **Monitor and replace aging park irrigation systems.**
- **Utilize stormwater runoff** as a resource to help reduce irrigation requirements in certain areas.
- **Develop climate-conscious parking solutions**, including permeable paving, solar canopies, and dedicated spaces for electric and shared vehicles to enhance accessibility while aligning with environmental goals.
- **Replace low use (non-athletic field) turf areas with alternatives**, such as dryland grass mixes, that may include native and climate adapted pollinator plantings where appropriate.
- **Reduce turf and water needs** where applicable without impacting

programming or usable active turf or trees.

- **Consider no-mow or limited-mow areas** and management and maintenance activities that reduce carbon emissions.
- **Explore strategies to reduce runoff** in impervious park areas by identifying locations with high runoff potential and implementing green infrastructure best practices to manage water flow.
- **Identify seasonal lowland flooding**, and plant with native/climate adopted vegetation.
- **Elevate active turf areas with bioswales** on the edge to promote infiltration.
- **Increase water efficiency education and signage** on the why, where, when, and how.
- **Identify parks with the most significant impact on the urban heat island effect**, flood protection, and water quality, while ensuring they offer both passive and active recreation opportunities.

Increase energy efficiency.

- **Promote weatherization, electrification, and energy efficiency** through retro-commissioning of facilities and equipment.
- **Continue the transition to LED outdoor and park lighting** while using light zones to reduce unnecessary usage. Design new parks and facilities to be all electric or electric-ready, depending on renewable availability.
- **Implement solar and battery systems** for park buildings, recreation facilities



(e.g., pools), and parking lots.

Reduce transportation-related carbon emissions.

- **Establish shuttles for special events** and tournaments partnership with Mountain Line and other entities.
- **Incentivize park visitors to use alternative transportation** like transit, biking, or walking, alongside a reduction in free parking and large parking lots.
- **Support the City's Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program**, offering incentives for bike and transit use while establishing car share and carpool programs for employees.
- **Prioritize smaller, lower-carbon vehicles** where feasible (e.g., gators, cargo bikes, bikes).
- **Provide bikes for staff use** for short trips between facilities.
- **Upgrade EV charging stations** for internal fleet use and explore community park facilities as potential recharge areas.
- **Transition to electric and low-carbon practices** at Parks Operations, Urban Forestry, and maintenance services to achieve net-zero carbon emissions.

Reduce food & organic waste.

- **Limit waste** from events, programs, and operations through recycling, strategic product choices, and partnerships with sustainability-focused organizations.
- **Implement a Zero Waste & Zero Plastics policy** for all events.
- **Reduce food waste and support composting** and second-chance food distribution by collaborating with

concessionaires.

- **Maintain a comprehensive compost and recycling program** to divert organic and recyclable materials from landfills.
- **Expand the zero-wood waste program** by repurposing urban wood for park projects and composting all remaining wood matter.
- **Compost all organic waste** from turf, weed, and vegetation management activities.
- **Strengthen Leave No Trace policies**, improving community education and signage to reduce park trash.
- **Explore instituting a "pack in, pack out" approach** by removing trash receptacles in select parks.
- **Minimize the use of plastic water bottles and single-use plastics** at events, offices, rental facilities, and across all park operations.
- **Install and maintain water stations** throughout the park system.
- **Encourage sustainable practices** by offering incentives for event participants to bring reusable cups, reducing reliance on single-use plastics and minimizing waste.

Habitat restoration and forestry management.

- **Support and expand habitat restoration initiatives** on preserves and natural areas affected by past practices (e.g., overgrazing, deforestation, wetland and riparian area loss).
- **Develop sustainable wildland forestry management programs**, including goals and certifications.

- **Expand plant propagation programs** to grow locally adapted species and reduce costs.
- **Encourage climate-adapted street tree species** and enhance long-term tree success by revising right-of-way tree planting standards.

Resilient, regenerative landscape practices.

- **Explore options for using reclaimed water** from the water treatment plant to irrigate a regional sports field complex at the current poplar farm site.
- **Apply nature-based solutions** in all parklands to address stormwater, drought, extreme storms, wildfire risk, flooding, and other climate hazards.
- **Implement regenerative and holistic soil management practices** to improve soil quality and protect water sources from synthetic contaminants.
- **Quantify carbon storage and sequestration** for parks, natural areas, forested rights-of-way, facilities, and operations to support long-term climate planning.

CHAPTER 7

How We Get There

Key Takeaways

- ◇ **Strategic Implementation Process** – A potential process to systematically prioritize and sequence improvements over 15 years based on funding availability, staff capacity, and seven specific evaluation criteria.
- ◇ **Equity-Focused Evaluation** - Projects will be prioritized when they address service gaps in underserved communities, including neighborhoods with higher percentages of people below median income, communities of color, Indigenous people, seniors, and people with disabilities.
- ◇ **Climate Resilience Integration** - The implementation matrix template helps to track how each project connects to the City's climate lens, with special priority for projects that improve ecosystem function and increase resilience to extreme weather events.
- ◇ **Budget Reality Framework** - The City's budgeting process is the final authority for determining Parks and Recreation funding, with strong consideration given to projects that align with specific criteria, including leveraging partnerships and meeting neighborhood needs.



Where will we be in 15 years?

The Missoula community has provided direction on priorities and this PROST Master Plan identifies the vision, goals, guiding principles, goals and elements to create a healthy, accessible, equitable, and walkable city. Now it is time to set the plan in motion. Which projects, initiatives and programs will come first? How will we operationalize the plan? How does the PROST system in Missoula evolve over time?

Introduction to Implementation

The PROST Master Plan is a policy-level document that provides guidance for the Department, focusing on the overarching vision, goals, and objectives of PROST. It does not offer specific designs for sites, operational procedures, or detailed recreation programs. Instead, it serves as a guiding framework for division-level decisions and more specific planning processes in the future, such as updates to the Conservation Lands

Management Plan, Urban Forest Master Plan, Asset Management Plan, and site-specific master plans. These other plans will include detailed actions and recommendations, such as priority locations for tree replacement or planting and specifics of recreation program delivery.

As a long-range plan covering various systems and services, the PROST Master Plan includes a range of objectives, projects, programs, and initiatives. Each aligns with the vision, goals and objectives of the Plan, or multiple goals and objectives, and informs departmental decision-making. However, implementing these recommendations must be sequenced and prioritized over time due to funding constraints, staff capacity, and logistics.

Some projects may be low-cost and easy to implement, while others may be complex or expensive, requiring a phased approach. The pace of these initiatives will depend on factors like public support and the availability of resources—both capital and operational—as well as staff workload.

The City's budget and Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) determine funding for Parks and Recreation, influencing work plans and

the prioritization of projects. The City has a park district that serves as the primary funding source for Parks and Recreation operations. General funds do not support the Department's services.

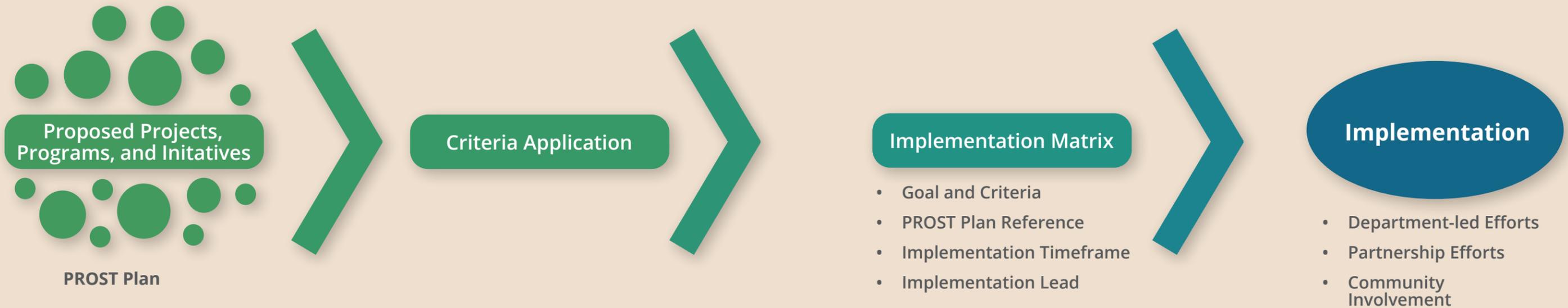
When evaluating project budgets, Missoula Parks and Recreation considers citywide needs, legal requirements, safety concerns, potential funding sources (including grants and fee increases), neighborhood priorities, and alignment with current City initiatives.

Although the Department offers a broader range of services, programs, and facilities than many similar-sized U.S. cities, it operates with a budget that is below the median per capita. The Department effectively maximizes existing resources through alternative funding, strategic partnerships, and fee-for-service models, showcasing its efficiency when compared to national and state standards.

The PROST Plan outlines the community's priorities for existing funds while positioning the Department for the future as funding opportunities become available



Figure 30: Implementation Process



Implementation Process

The diagram above shows how staff will implement recommendations from the PROST Master Plan and breaks them down into workable steps, using the general criteria and proposed implementation matrix presented in this chapter.

Evaluating New Ideas

The pace of innovation and change is unpredictable. Over the next 10 to 15 years, new ideas and concepts will come up that were not specifically called out in this Plan. For example, unexpected trends in recreation may generate requests for facilities or programs; scientific breakthroughs might change approaches to managing land; or a

major fire or flood might affect city parks, trails, facilities, or site amenities.

This Master Plan anticipates new ideas, whether proposed by staff, partners, or members of the community. Each new idea should be evaluated for consistency with the PROST Master Plan using the following questions:

- Is the proposal consistent with the PROST vision and goals? *Briefly describe.*
- Which goals and/or objectives does the proposal implement? *Identify.*
- Does the proposal support one or more of the City's strategic lenses? *Briefly describe which one(s) and why.*

A staff review team will evaluate the proposal. If the team determines the proposal is consistent with the PROST Master Plan, the proposal can be added to the implementation matrix, or similar decision-making matrix, for sequencing.

Implementation Matrix Overview and Template

The implementation matrix is a potential tool designed to track the execution of the plan and ensure that both staff and financial resources are used effectively to further the plan's goals (see Appendix F). This initial version covers the first five years of the plan, focusing on near-term implementation. As the plan progresses, this tool may be modified or replaced to meet emerging needs.

This section outlines each of the columns in the implementation matrix template provided in Appendix E.

Projects, Programs, and Initiatives: These elements are derived from the specific recommendations of the Master Plan.

PROST Master Plan Reference: For tracking purposes, the related goal will be identified for each project, program, or initiative. Where applicable, staff should include the specific objective reference or page number.

City Decision Lenses: These columns help track whether a project, program, or initiative is related to one or more of the City's decision lenses: Climate sustainability, adaptation, and resilience; Equity in opportunity and access to local government resources and lands; and Housing attainability at all levels, with a focus on workforce and affordability. While not every action will connect directly to these lenses, most parks and recreation functions typically overlap with at least one of them.

Evaluation Criteria: The evaluation criteria and rating system are outlined below. These criteria ensure that implementation occurs across all goal areas, in accordance with the available resources.

Implementation Timeframe: The projects, programs, and initiatives in the PROST Master Plan vary in complexity and ease of implementation. Three defined timeframes help balance workload and demonstrate progress.

Applicable Parks and Recreation Functional Work Teams: This section

identifies which functional work teams will participate in and lead each initiative.

See an example implementation matrix in Appendix F.

Evaluation Criteria

The seven evaluation criteria will guide Missoula in prioritizing projects, programs, and initiatives in the implementation matrix while enhancing community benefits. Each will impact at least one criterion and may affect others. Key questions define each criterion to help staff assess performance, using a uniform rating scale for all.

Rating Scale

For ease of use, a high-level rating scale is used. The rating scale is:

- **+ (positive).** The project, program or initiative will have a positive effect on the criterion.
- **0 (neutral).** The project, program or initiative does not relate to the criterion.
- **- (negative).** Generally, if a project, program or initiative will have a negative effect on a particular criterion, the action should be retooled to reduce or eliminate the negative effect.

Evaluation Criteria and Key Questions

Each criterion is defined below with the applicable key questions. The term “Existing Resource” refers to an existing site, facility, asset, program, system or staff position.

Take Care of What We Have

Missoula residents highly value the existing PROST system and its services. Projects, programs, and initiatives in the PROST Master Plan that address liabilities, deferred maintenance, and maximize community

benefits from existing resources demonstrate stewardship of these resources.

Key Questions

- Does the project, program or initiative address an existing safety or maintenance concern?
- Does the project or initiative extend the usable lifespan of an existing resource?
- Does the project or initiative maintain an existing resource’s use and/or capacity?
- Will the project, program or initiative improve the visitor experience in the existing PROST system?

Address Gaps

The PROST vision and guiding principles emphasize equity. The planning process involved analyzing service gaps, inequities, and needs of underserved communities alongside projected gaps due to planned residential growth and development. Projects, programs, and initiatives can help increase equity and improve access for all.

Key Questions

- Does the effort increase recreation opportunities for currently or historically underserved populations or for neighborhoods where there are higher percentages of people below median income, communities of color, Indigenous people, seniors, or people with disabilities?
- Does the project or initiative fill gaps identified in the PROST Master Plan?
- Will the project improve access for user groups not currently involved in the parks system?
- Does the project, program or initiative address needs in planned growth areas?

- Will the project or initiative help Missoula serve a demographically representative cross-section of the population?
- Will the project or initiative add year-round opportunities for use during poor air quality?

Support Activation

Activation increases regular activity in the park system through programs, events, design interventions, and staffing and volunteer initiatives. This leads to more visitors, improved safety, and transformed spaces into vibrant social interaction and activity hubs.

Key Questions

- Does the project, program or initiative target sites with limited or no programming?
- Will the project, program or initiative increase the regular use of the site or extend the seasons of use?
- Will the project, program or initiative increase the opportunity for people to engage with nature?
- Will the project, program or initiative ensure a regular physical presence by staff or volunteers at the site?
- Does the project, program or initiative allow residents to engage with nature?

Improve Ecosystem Function

These projects, programs, and initiatives aim to enhance Missoula’s natural systems. Healthy ecosystems are crucial for the community in developed parks, on conservation lands or as part of the regional open space system. This includes efforts to increase Missoula’s resilience against extreme weather.

Key Questions

- Does the project or initiative reduce invasive species or increase native species biodiversity?
- Does the project stabilize a degrading site and/or remove site contamination?
- Does the project or initiative improve or expand wildlife habitat?
- Does the project or initiative protect or rehabilitate existing public land?
- Does the project protect water and/or air quality?

Align with Other Projects

Some projects, programs, or initiatives can align with or enhance the effectiveness of other efforts, whether from the City of Missoula, another public agency, or a partner organization.

Key Questions

- Can the timing of this project, program, or initiative be coordinated with another project in progress?
- Is the project, program, or initiative aligned with recommendations in other adopted City plans (such as the Long-Range Transportation Plan, Land Use Plan, Midtown Master Plan, or other similar plan)?
- Is there a related project that would benefit (or benefit from) this action?
- Is the project, program or initiative leveraging, but not duplicating, the efforts of partner organizations in the immediate area?

Increase Fiscal Sustainability and Capacity

Fiscal sustainability and capacity can be enhanced through efficiencies, cost

reductions, and/or revenue increases. Various projects, programs, and initiatives can improve effectiveness or lower costs in several ways, including reduced utility bills, decreased maintenance time, lower material costs, streamlined processes that require less staff time, and shared use or partnership agreements that leverage resources to provide mutual benefits.

Increased revenue can be generated from user fees, higher program registration, grants and donations, or contracts with other organizations. These efforts help the department maximize its organizational resources.

Key Questions

- Does the project or initiative tap into new funding streams or cost-sharing partnerships?
- Does the project increase revenue generation through user fees, fees for service, or strategic partnerships?
- Will the project reduce operating costs?
- How does the cost of the project or initiative compare to alternatives?
- Can the project, program or initiative be completed with existing resources, including staff capacity?
- Does the partnership enhance the department's ability to meet the goals outlined in the PROST Master Plan?

Provide balanced investment

As a public agency, the department serves all Missoulians and visitors with diverse interests and priorities within a geographically expansive city. The seven goals of the PROST Master Plan address different components of the community's vision for parks, recreation,

open space, and trails (PROST). To effectively prioritize projects, programs, and initiatives while considering the entire system, the department must balance its limited staff time and financial resources across the PROST system as a whole.

Key Questions

- Is the project, program, or initiative located in a geographic area or at a site without recent investment?
- Will the project, program, or initiative help implement a goal that has been less frequently addressed compared to other PROST goals?
- Which recreational interests will the project, program, or initiative address? Are there other projects or initiatives focused on those interests within the same timeframe?
- Will the program, project or initiative address an aspect of the PROST system (e.g., a developed park type, a recreation program area, a trail type, operations, or urban forestry) that requires more attention?
- Will the program, project, or initiative enhance the PROST system, support its goals, and avoid unintended environmental consequences or negative impacts on the local community?

Implementation Timeframes

As previously noted, the projects and initiatives in the PROST Master Plan vary in their complexity and ease of implementation. The Department will need to include a mix of implementation timeframes to demonstrate results regularly, take steps forward on longer term efforts, and make effective use of staff

time. There are three general implementation timeframes:

- **Quick wins.** These can be completed within one year or less, and they typically are lower cost, less complex and draw less staff time than more complicated projects.
- **Medium term.** These projects or initiatives may take up to three to five years to implement and will generally require a staff team and potentially an outside consultant.
- **Ongoing.** Some efforts, once initiated, are intended to continue on an ongoing basis. An example of this is the expansion of the volunteer program.

Evaluation and Celebration

With each effort it is important for the Department, City, and community to evaluate progress, understand new challenges, and celebrate successes. An annual PROST update should be provided to the Park Board, City Council and community to ensure the PROST plan advances.



The current PROST system managed by the City of Missoula Parks and Recreation Department has evolved over time in concert with changes in Missoula. Continuing to work toward the PROST vision will not happen overnight; but it can happen.

As the Community Working Group stated in the foreword of this plan:

This plan is not the end of the process, but rather the beginning. We strongly encourage every Missoulian to play a role in bringing this plan to life. By working together, staying involved, and holding ourselves accountable, we can transform this vision into a reality that benefits everyone in our community.

And, from the Missoula Parks and Recreation Advisory Board:

As Missoula continues to grow and evolve, so too must our vision for parks, recreation, open space, and trails. These cherished community assets are more than amenities—they are essential to the health, happiness, and sustainability of our city. They provide places for play, connection, celebration, and restoration—for all Missoulians, in every season of life.

The Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails (PROST) Master Plan represents a shared vision that emerged from deep community engagement, thoughtful research, and collaborative planning. We are proud of the work that went into this plan and excited about what it will help us achieve in the years ahead.

We extend our deepest gratitude to the many individuals and groups who gave their time, energy, and insight to this effort. In particular, we thank the Community Working Group, a committed and diverse team of 16 members representing various sectors of our community, including arts and culture, education, health, conservation, persons with disabilities, and more. Their insights and commitment have been instrumental in shaping a plan that is inclusive and forward-thinking.

We also acknowledge the contributions of Missoula Parks and Recreation staff, City leadership, consultants, volunteers, and the many residents who participated in workshops, responded to surveys, and offered public comments. Special thanks go to our partners at the University of Montana, whose academic expertise and community leadership continue to be a valuable resource in planning for a vibrant, equitable future.

Your voices made this plan stronger—and a truer reflection of Missoula's values.

Together, we've built more than a strategic plan; we've reaffirmed our community's commitment to equity, access, stewardship, and joy in the outdoors. We look forward to working together to bring this vision to life.



APPENDIX A

Parklands Inventory



Table A.1: Parks and Facilities Inventory

As of adoption of the PROST plan (Summer 2025)

Park Name & 2024 Classification	Recommended 2040 Park Type	Adopted Site Master Plan	Total City-Owned Acres	Diamond Softball/Baseball * Backstop Only	Multi-use /Active	Rectangular - Competitive	Basketball	Pickleball * Bring your own net	Tennis	Volleyball	Futsal	Seasonal	Year Round/Permanent *Seasonal Closure	Regional/Community	Recreational	Neighborhood/Connector	Playground * Accessible surface	Dedicated Parking	Picnic or Shade Shelter	Splash Deck	Access to River/Stream/ Waterbody	Community Garden	Intepretive Features/ Public Art	Concessions	Greenhouse	Offices	Pumphouse	Shops	Storage	Additional Recreation Facilities/Amenities	
				Fields	Sport Courts			Restrooms	Trails	Other					Operations																
Regional Parks																															
Fort Missoula Regional Park (FMRP)	Regional	x	123.75	7	Y	11	2	6	8	2		2	5	Y	Y		4*	Y	4					1		1	2	1	1	Seasonal (winter) disc golf course (18 holes), Dog Off Leash (x2), Intepretive CCC era	
Fort Missoula Regional Park CCC Prairie	Regional		17.92												Y			Y												Intepretive loop	
Fort Missoula Ponds	Regional	underway	-																		Y									Internal Park Ponds and Bitterroot river	
Regional Park Total			141.67																												
Park Preserves																															
Blue Bird	Park Preserve	x	124.25												Y		Y														
Clark Fork Islands	Park Preserve	x	233.10												Y		Y				Y										Recognized Birding Area
Kim Williams Natural Area	Park Preserve		121.79											Y	Y						Y										
Mount Dean Stone	Park Preserve	x	534.67												Y		Y				Y										
Mt. Jumbo	Park Preserve	x	1,856.24												Y		Y														
Mt. Sentinel	Park Preserve		507.44												Y																
North Hills (includes Moon Randolph Homestead)	Park Preserve	x	914.61												Y		Y					Y									
Rattlesnake Green Belt	Park Preserve		120.34												Y		Y				Y	Y									
Ray Tipp Nature Park	Park Preserve		16.40											Y	Y						Y										
Park Preserve Total			4,428.84																												
Community Parks																															
Greenough	Community NA		38.45		Y							1		Y	Y		1	Y	Y		Y										Rattlesnake Creek, Intepretive Features/Public Art
McCormick	Community	x	22.61	2	Y		1					1	2	Y	Y		1*	Y	1		Y					1	1	1	1	Currents Aquatics Center, Intepretive Features/Public Art, recreational fishing pond	
Playfair	Community		62.88	13	Y	3	8	4	12	4		1	2	Y	Y		1	Y	1				1				1			Splash Montana (Pool), Dog Off Leash Area	
West End Farms (future development)	Community	x	26.68																												
Community Park Total			150.62																												
Community Natural Areas																															
Ben Hughes	Community NA		10.47												Y		1				Y										
Charlotte Marbut Nature Preserve	Community NA	x	26.96											Y							N										No public access
Highland/Hemayagan	Community NA		31.18												Y																
High (w/ adjacent trail easement)	Community NA	x	9.86												Y																
Jacobs Island	Community NA		12.67											Y	Y						Y										Clark Fork River, Dog Off Leash Area, Intepretive, Memorial
Perry/Meadowlark	Community NA		10.91												Y																
Moose Can Gully	Community NA		17.47												Y																
West Broadway Island	Community NA	underway	13.57											Y	Y			Y			Y										Clark Fork River, Seasonal Closure for wildlife/flood
Community Natural Area Total			133.08																												
Neighborhood Parks																															
44 Ranch	Neighborhood	x	5.72	1											Y		1		1												
Bellevue	Neighborhood		7.87											Y	Y																Wildlife/native plants
Bonner	Neighborhood		5.75	1	Y		0.5		2	1			*1		Y		1		1	1								1			Bandshell
Boyd	Neighborhood		2.08		Y		1			1					Y		1														
Downtown Lions	Neighborhood	x	0.70		Y									Y				Y			Y										River adjacent with riparian area
Franklin	Neighborhood		3.67	1	Y		1				1		*1		Y		1		1	1								1			Irrigation ditch offers connection to Nature. Memorials. Restored Turtle Art, Horseshoes

Park Name & 2024 Classification	Recommended 2040 Park Type	Adopted Site Master Plan	Total City-Owned Acres	Diamond Softball/Baseball * Backstop Only	Multi-use /Active	Rectangular - Competitive	Basketball	Pickleball * Bring your own net	Tennis	Volleyball	Futsal	Seasonal	Year Round/Permanent *Seasonal Closure	Regional/Community	Recreational	Neighborhood/Connector	Playground * Accessible surface	Dedicated Parking	Picnic or Shade Shelter	Splash Deck	Access to River/Stream/ Waterbody	Community Garden	Intepretive Features/ Public Art	Concessions	Greenhouse	Offices	Pumphouse	Shops	Storage	Additional Recreation Facilities/Amenities											
Park on N. 1st Street (NS Ped. Bridge)	Pocket		-		Y																																				
Penland Park	Non-Conforming		1.03																																						
Pheasant Run	Pocket		0.53		Y										Y		1																								
River Pine	Pocket		0.76												Y		1																								
Whitetail	Pocket		2.25		Y																																				
Willow Wood	Pocket		1.26																																						
Pocket Park Total			19.67																																						
Non-Conforming Parks																																									
Cattail Corner	Non-Conforming	x	3.01																																						
Oziya	Non-Conforming		1.05																																						
Stanley	Non-Conforming		0.42																																						
Tiortis	Non-Conforming		0.78																																						
Non-Conforming Parks Total			5.26																																						
Other Public Lands: Rights-of-Way (ROW)																																									
Lincolnwood Entrance	ROW		0.28																																						
Lincolnwood Orchard Road	ROW		0.11																																						
Lincolnwood Timberlane	ROW		0.58																																						
Right of Way (ROW) Total			0.96																																						
City-Held Conservation Easements																																									
Applegrove HOA	Conservation Easement		1.99																																						
Cox - Sentinel	Conservation Easement		547.54												Y																										
Garden City Harvest	Conservation Easement		3.34																																						
Greene - Beau Gest	Conservation Easement		0.62																																						
Huff	Conservation Easement		20.38																																						
O'Keefe	Conservation Easement		6.06																																						
Stahl	Conservation Easement		78.93																																						
Ten Spoon	Conservation Easement		21.49																																						
City-Held Conservation Easements Total			680.35																																						

NOTE: For planning purposes only. May be updated by the Missoula Department of Parks and Recreation on an as-needed basis.

APPENDIX B

Facility Asset Quality Evaluations



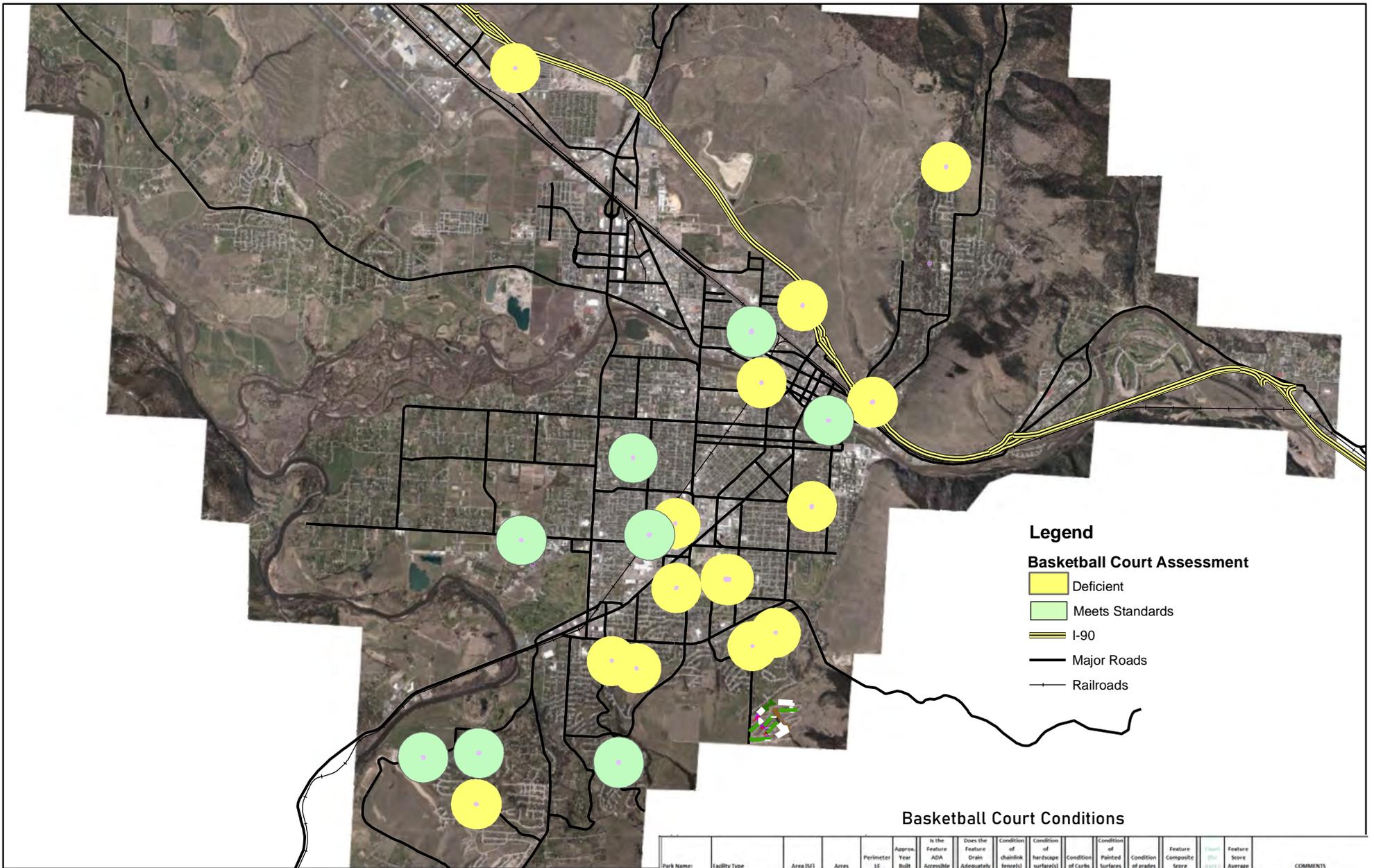
City Managed Athletic Fields - quality assessment

Park Name	Facility Type	Acres	Approx. Year Built	Is the Feature ADA Accessible	Does the Feature Drain Adequately	Condition of chainlink fence(s)	Condition of hardscape surface(s)	Condition of grades
Playfair	Athletic Fields 3	2.18	1990	2	1			3
Playfair	Athletic Fields 1	2.69	1990	1	1			3
Playfair	Athletic Fields 2	3.12	1990	1	1			3
Toole	Athletic Fields	2.30	1990	2	2	1		1
Duncan	Athletic Fields	2.14	2012	2	1			1
PMRP Bulla Vista Synthetic Field	Athletic Fields	2.57	2018	1	1	1	1	1
PMRP Bowd Fields 5-9	Athletic Fields	12.00	2018	1	1			1
PMRP Green Girdon Fields 1-4	Athletic Fields	9.24	2018	1	1			1
PMRP Pitch	Athletic Fields	4.32	2018	1	1			1

Legend

-  Railroad
-  I 90
-  Rivers
-  Major Roads
- Athletic Field Condition**
-  Good
-  Fair
-  Poor





Legend

Basketball Court Assessment

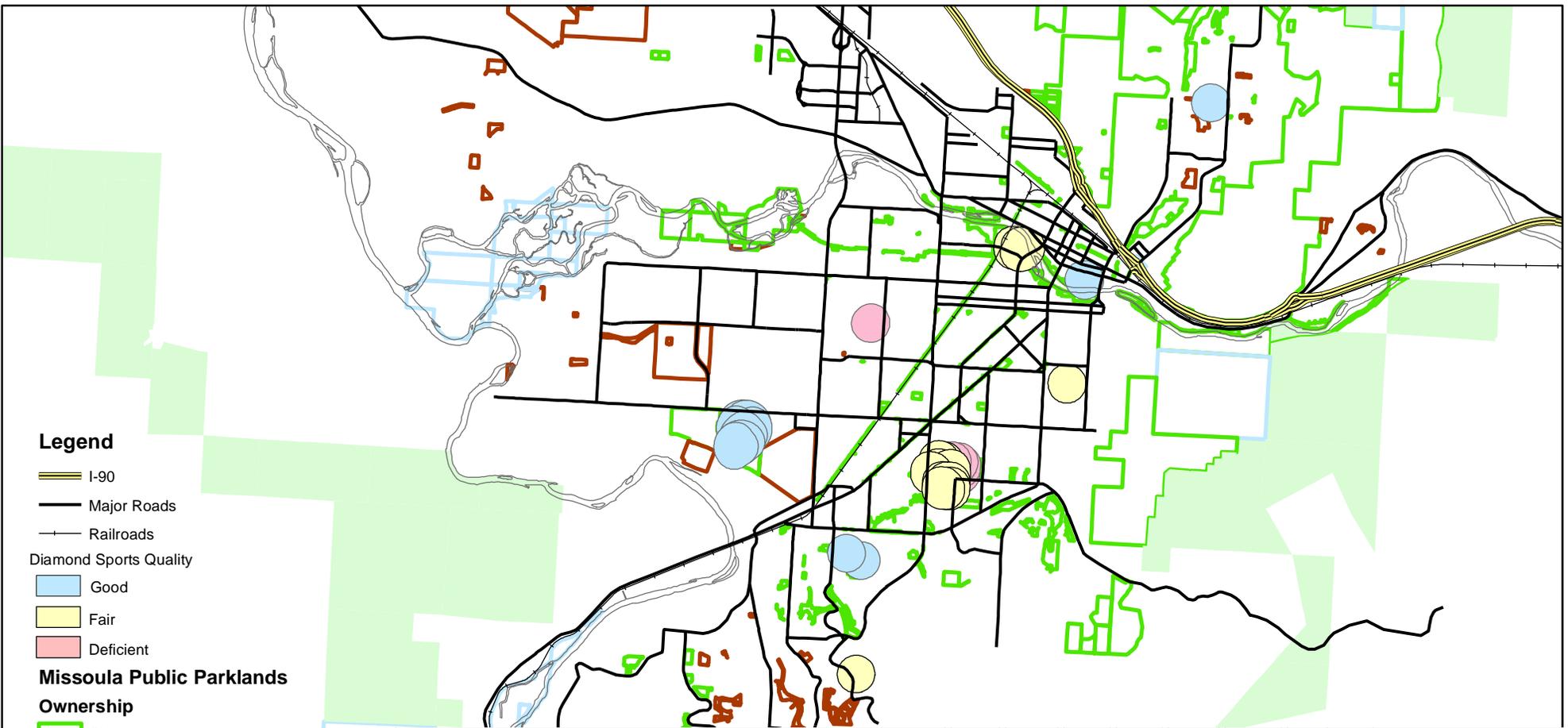
- Deficient
- Meets Standards
- I-90
- Major Roads
- Railroads

Basketball Court Conditions

Park Name	Facility Type	Area (sq)	Acres	Perimeter (ft)	Aspcon Year Built	Is the Feature ADA Accessible	Does the Feature Drain Adequately	Condition of chainlink fence(s)	Condition of hardscape surface(s)	Condition of Curbs	Condition of Painted Surfaces	Condition of graders	Feature Composite Score	Health of the Court	Feature Score	COMMENTS
Whitaker	Basketball Courts	514.7	93.4	1990	2	3	3	3	3	2	13	2.60	1/4 court, Liquid Asphalt 2023			
Honeyuckle	Basketball Courts	900.0	120.0	1990	2	2	3	3	3	2	12	2.40	1/2 court, crack fill and seal 2023			
Milcock	Basketball Courts	1,876.0	190.1	1990	2	1	3	3	3	2	11	2.20	1/2 court, crack fill and seal 2023			
Boyd	Basketball Courts	1,741.3	176.2	1990	2	1	2	3	3	2	8	2.00	1/2 court			
Marilyn	Basketball Courts	3,859.5	256.1	1990	1	1	1	3	3	3	12	2.00	existing court in poor condition. New bball			
Penland	Basketball	1,454.8	154.2	1990	2	1	3	3	3	1	10	2.00	1/2 court			
Regfern	Basketball	2,922.7	177.4	1990	2	1	3	3	3	1	10	2.00	1/2 court			
Northside	Basketball Courts	4,347.0	287.5	1970	2	1	2	2	3	1	11	1.83	Crack fill and seal 2023			
Nicole	Basketball Courts	3,001.9	330.0	1990	2	1	1	1	3	1	7	1.75	converted former tennis court			
Playfair	Basketball Courts	22,320.0	645.2	1990	2	1	2	2	2	2	7	1.75	4 courts, crack fill and seal 2023			
Bonner	Basketball Courts	3,530.0	256.5	1990	1	1	3	3	3	3	10	1.67	1/2 court, crack fill and seal 2023			
LW North	Basketball Courts	2,050.2	199.4	1970	2	2	2	2	1	1	8	1.60	concrete			
Kiwaniis	Basketball Courts	3,491.0	258.1	1960	1	1	3	3	1	1	7	1.40				
Maloney Ranch	Basketball Courts	3,991.3	264.0	1990	1	1	1	1	2	1	5	1.35				
McCormick	Basketball Courts	3,206.9	299.3	2015	2	1	1	1	1	1	6	1.30	needs hardscape path			
Franklin	Basketball Futsal Court	3,707.0	246.0	2023	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	1.00	multi-purpose court			
Gregory	Basketball Courts	-	-	1995	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1.00	2 shared court/Use tennis court 6/27			
Montana Rail Link	Basketball Courts	-	-	2019	1	1	1	1	1	1	5	1.00				
Pineview	Basketball Courts	-	-	27,626.7	1990	1	1	1	1	1	6	1.00	2 shared courts/Use tennis court 5/16			
Skyview	Basketball Futsal Court	5,500.0	907.0	2024	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	1.00	Reconstruction Spring 2024/Com 2024			
Westside	Basketball Futsal Courts	7,057.0	236.0	2022	1	1	1	1	1	1	7	1.00	Updated with park reconstruction			

City Managed Picnic Shelters - quality assessment





Legend

- I-90
- Major Roads
- Railroads
- Diamond Sports Quality**
- Good
- Fair
- Deficient

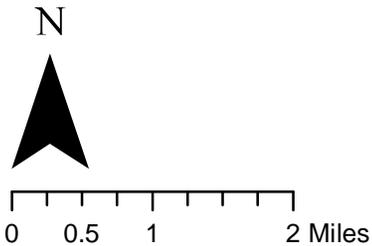
Missoula Public Parklands

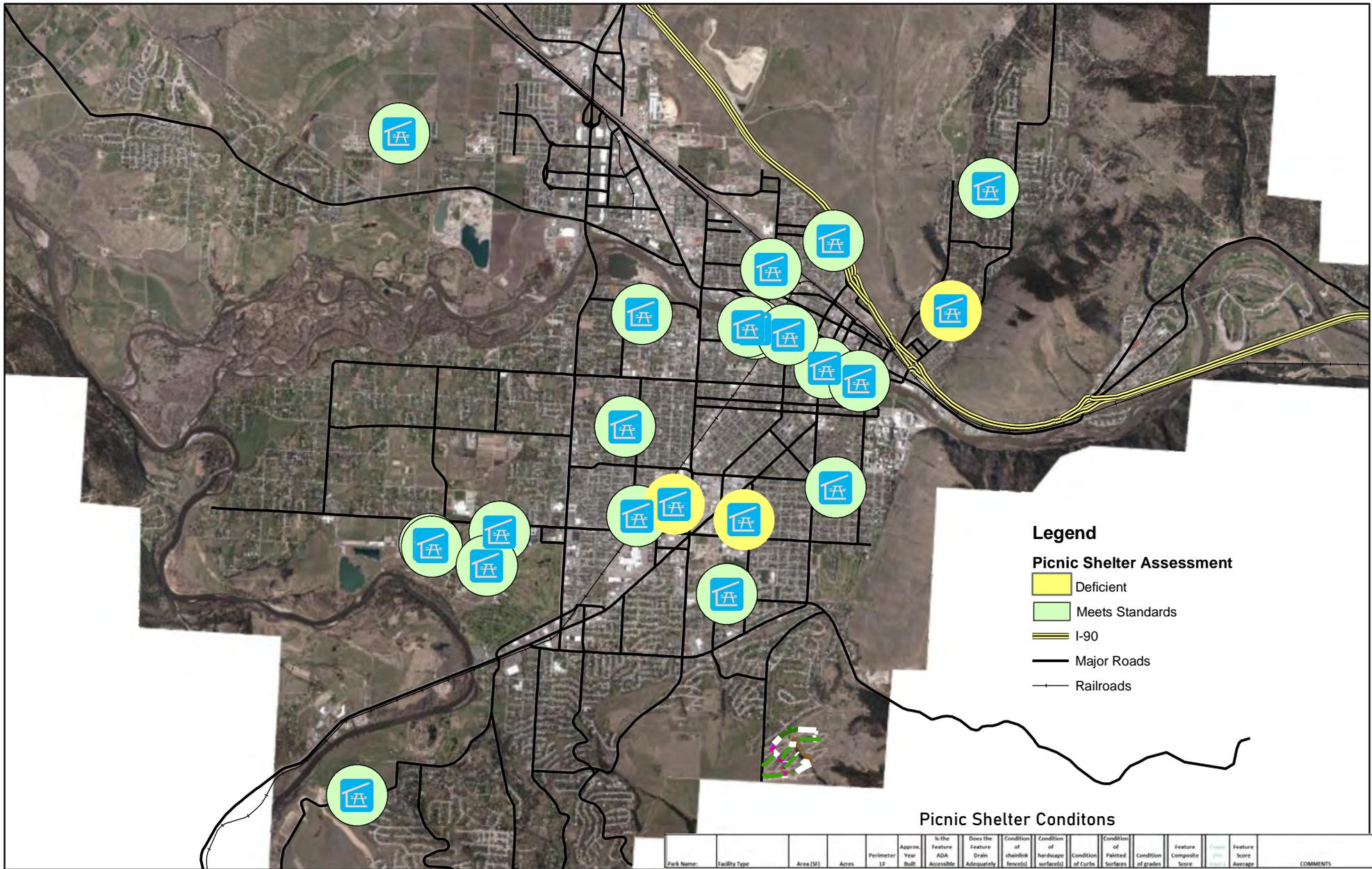
Ownership

- City
- County
- Federal
- State

Park Name:	Facility Type	Area (SF)	Acres	Perimeter LF	Approx. Year Built	Is the Feature ADA Accessible	Does the Feature Drain Adequately	Condition of chainlink fence(s)	Condition of hardscape surface(s)	Condition of Curbs	Condition of Painted Surfaces	Condition of grades	Feature Composite Score	Count (for Aver.)	Feature Score Average	COMMENTS
Franklin	Ball Field	6,534.0	0.15	915.1	1990	2	2	3				2	9	4	2.25	Deficient
Playfair	Ball Field East LL 2	47,044.8	1.08	871.6	1990	2	1	2			3	2	10	5	2.00	Deficient
Playfair	Ball Field East LL 3	47,916.0	1.10	858.6	1990	2	1	2			3	2	10	5	2.00	Deficient
Playfair	Ball Field East LL 4	48,351.6	1.11	864.7	1990	2	1	2			3	2	10	5	2.00	Deficient
Playfair	Ball Field West LL 5	48,351.6	1.11	866.1	1990	1	1	3			3	2	10	5	2.00	Deficient
McCormick	Ball Field1	83,635.2	1.92	1,142.1	1990	1	2	2	2		2	2	11	6	1.83	softball - lighted - Fair condition
McCormick	Ball Field2	84,942.0	1.95	1,115.5	1990	1	2	2	2		2	2	11	6	1.83	softball - lighted
Playfair	Ball Field South LL 1	40,946.4	0.94	796.0	1990	2	1	2			2	2	9	5	1.80	Fair condition
Playfair	Ball Field South LL 2	41,817.6	0.96	806.8	1990	2	1	2			2	2	9	5	1.80	Fair condition
Playfair	Ball Field South LL 3	41,817.6	0.96	798.5	1990	2	1	2			2	2	9	5	1.80	Fair condition
Playfair	Ball Field South LL 4	43,124.4	0.99	822.8	1990	2	1	2			2	2	9	5	1.80	Fair condition
Playfair	Ball Field East LL 1	44,866.8	1.03	820.6	1990	1	1	2			3	2	9	5	1.80	Fair condition
Playfair	Ball Field Senior 2	91,476.0	2.10	1,191.2	1990	2	1	2			2	2	9	5	1.80	Fair condition
Playfair	Ball Field Senior 3	92,347.2	2.12	1,174.7	1990	2	1	2			2	2	9	5	1.80	Fair condition
Playfair	Ball Field Senior 4	101,059.2	2.32	1,212.1	1990	2	1	2			2	2	9	5	1.80	Fair condition
Skyview	Ball Field	-	-	-	1990	2	1	3				1	7	4	1.75	Practice backstop - Fair
LW North	Ball Field	-	-	-	1970	2	1					2	5	3	1.67	Practice backstop - Fair
Bonner	Ball Field	6,534.0	0.15	286.8	1990	2	1	2			1	2	8	5	1.60	Fair condition
Playfair	Ball Field Senior 1	89,733.6	2.06	1,181.0	1990	1	1	2			2	2	8	5	1.60	Fair condition
Honeysuckle	Ball Field	-	-	-	1990	2	1	2				1	6	4	1.50	Practice Backstop - Good
Wapikia	Ball Field	-	-	-	1990	2	1	2				1	6	4	1.50	Practice Backstop - Good
Kiwanis	Ball Field	-	-	-	2017	2	1	1				1	5	4	1.25	Practice Backstop - Good
Maloney Ranch	Ball Field	-	-	-	1990	2	1	1				1	5	4	1.25	Practice Backstop - Good
Pineview	Ball Field	-	-	-	1990	2	1	1				1	5	4	1.25	Practice Backstop - Good
Fort Missoula	Ball field 1 (5-plex)	87,063.2	2.00	1,171.0	2018	1	1	1	1		1	1	6	6	1.00	softball - lighted - good condition
Fort Missoula	Ball field 2 (5-plex)	87,038.0	2.00	1,166.9	2018	1	1	1	1		1	1	6	6	1.00	softball - lighted - good condition
Fort Missoula	Ball field 3 (5-plex)	88,557.6	2.03	1,178.4	2018	1	1	1	1		1	1	6	6	1.00	softball - lighted - good condition
Fort Missoula	Ball field 4 (5-plex)	87,249.6	2.00	1,172.9	2018	1	1	1	1		1	1	6	6	1.00	softball - lighted - good condition
Fort Missoula	Ball field 5 (5-plex)	87,783.3	2.02	1,168.9	2018	1	1	1	1		1	1	6	6	1.00	softball - lighted - good condition
Fort Missoula	Ball field 6	90,454.5	2.08	1,178.9	2018	1	1	1	1		1	1	6	6	1.00	softball - good
Fort Missoula	Ball field 7	88,672.1	2.04	1,174.7	2018	1	1	1	1		1	1	6	6	1.00	softball

Diamond Sports Quality





Legend

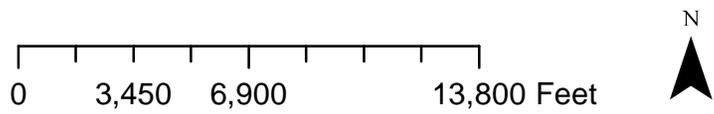
Picnic Shelter Assessment

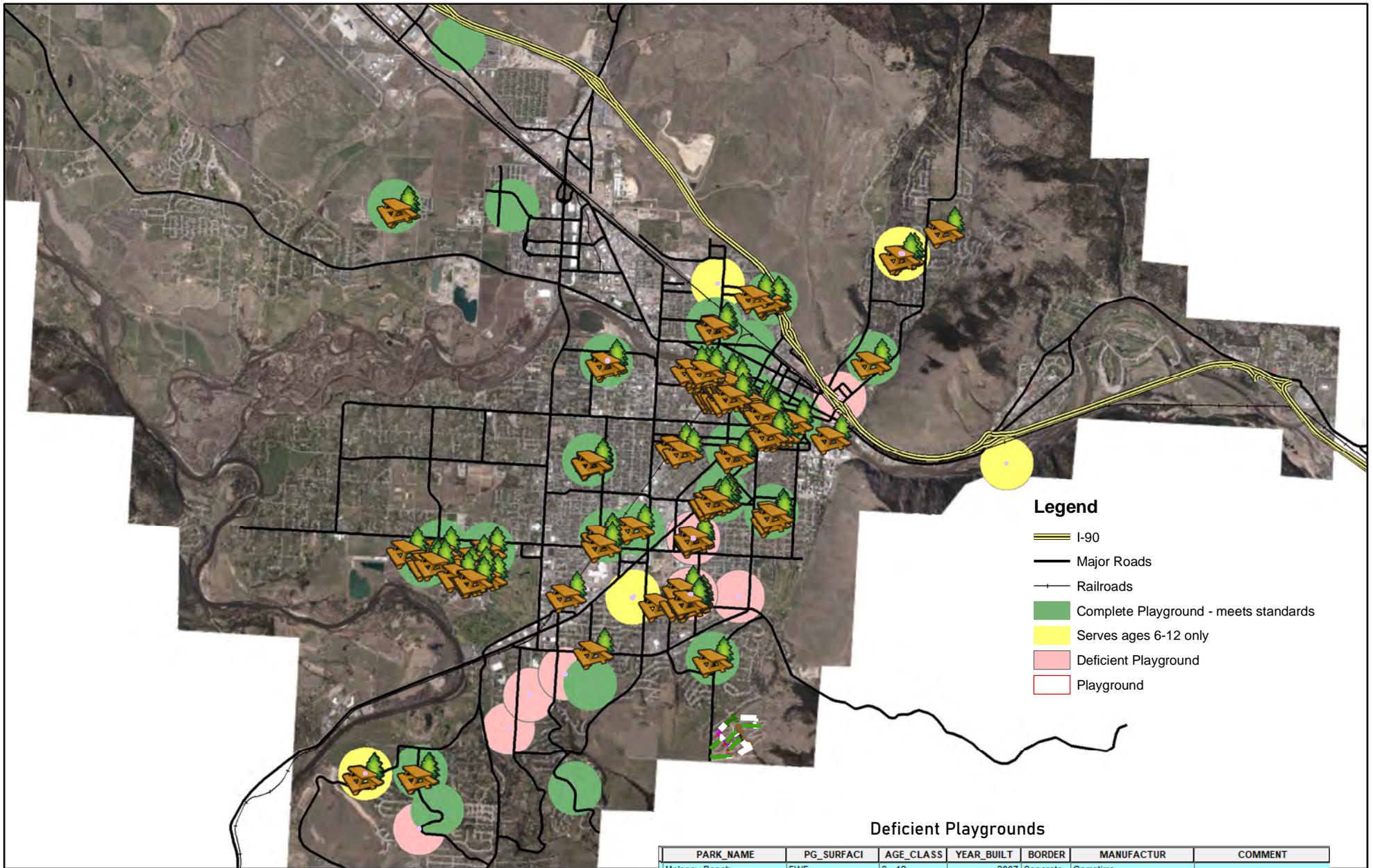
- Deficient
- Meets Standards
- I-90
- Major Roads
- Railroads

Picnic Shelter Conditions

Park Name	Facility Type	Area [sq]	Acres	Perimeter LF	Approx. Year Built	Is the Feature ADA Accessible	Does the Feature Drain Adequately	Condition of chainlink fences	Condition of hardscape surfaces	Condition of Curbs	Condition of Painted Surfaces	Condition of grades	Feature Composite Score	Pass/Fail	Feature Score Average	COMMENTS
Southside Lions	Shelter Picnic	1,155.0			1990	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	31		2.75	
McLeod	Shelter Picnic	410.0			1990	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	8		2.00	
Bonner	Shelter Picnic	504.0			1990	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	7		1.75	
Franklin	Shelter Picnic	690.0			1990	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	6		1.50	
Cares	Shelter Picnic - Pavilion	7,364.0			1990	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	5		1.25	Large capacity event shelter
Greenough	Shelter Picnic	1,334.0			1940	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	5		1.25	Roof replaced 2015
McCormick	Shelter Picnic	85.0			2006	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	5		1.25	Silver Lagoon
44 Ranch	Shelter Picnic	630.0			2011	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4		1.00	Custom
Caras	Shelter Picnic	1,246.0			2010	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4		1.00	AKA Bandshell shelter
FMRP City	Shelter Picnic - Overlook				2016	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4		1.00	Custom
FMRP City	Shelter Picnic - Pavilion				2016	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4		1.00	Custom
FMRP County	Shelter Picnic - Greens				2017	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4		1.00	Custom
FMRP County	Shelter Picnic - Meadowlark				2017	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4		1.00	Custom
Kuavis	Shelter Picnic	1,368.0			2017	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4		1.00	Polygon
Maloney Ranch	Shelter Picnic	500.0			2011	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4		1.00	Custom
Montana Rail Link	Shelter Picnic				2019	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4		1.00	Polygon
Northside	Shelter Picnic	616.0			2015	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4		1.00	Custom
Pinecreek	Shelter Picnic	1,225.0			2011	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4		1.00	Custom
Playfair	Shelter Picnic	1,312.0			1960	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4		1.00	Custom
Silver	Shelter Picnic	215.0			2010	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4		1.00	Custom
Silver	Shelter Picnic - Pavilion	198.0			2010	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4		1.00	Custom
Westside	Shelter Picnic	620.0			2020	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3		1.00	cloth roof

City Managed Picnic Shelters - quality assessment



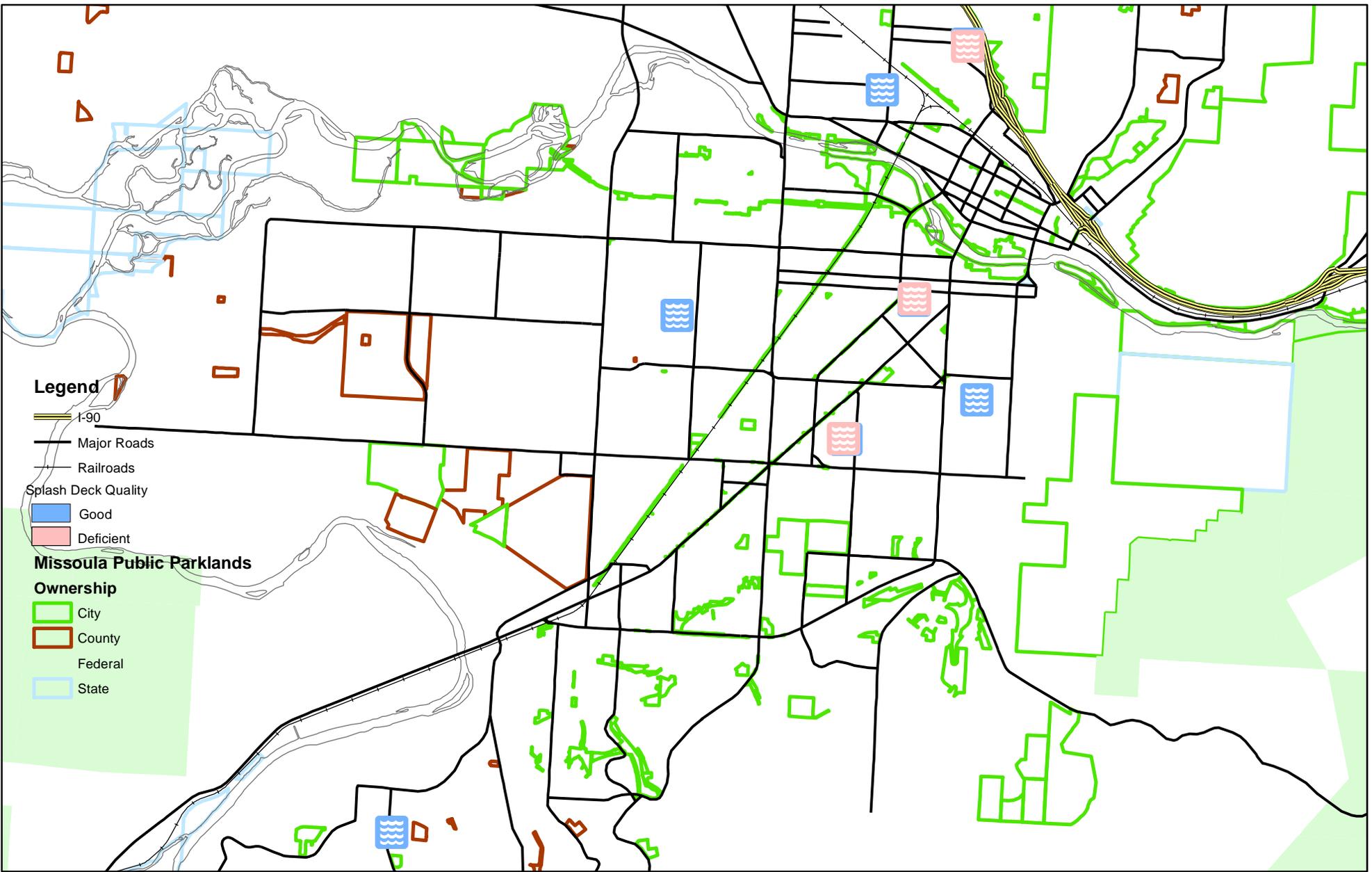


City Managed Playgrounds - quality assessment



Deficient Playgrounds

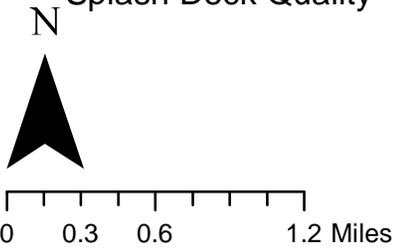
PARK_NAME	PG_SURFACI	AGE_CLASS	YEAR_BUILT	BORDER	MANUFACTUR	COMMENT
Maloney Ranch	EWf	6 - 12	2007	Concrete	Gametime	
Boyd	EWf	6 - 12	2010	Concrete	Landscape Structures	
LaFray	EWf	6 - 12	2012	Concrete	Playworld	
Pineview	EWf	6 - 12	2010	Concrete	Kompan	
Ben Hughes	EWf	6 - 12	2013	HDPE	Miracle	renovated 2013
White Pine	EWf	6-12	2010	Concrete	Landscape Structures	
Nicole	Sand	6 - 12	0	None	Miracle	
River Pine	Sand	6 - 12	2000	Concrete	Playsense	
Pheasant Run	Sand	6 - 12	1996	None	Gametime	Mixed equip
Honeysuckle	Sand	6 - 12	1998	Timber	Gametime	
Lester	Sand	6 - 12	1999	None	Gametime	Mixed equip
Playfair	Sand	6 - 12	1998	None	Gametime	Mixed equip
Southside Lions	Sand	6 - 12	1992	Concrete	Gametime	Swings V. Poor
Gregory	Sand	6 - 12	2000	Concrete	Gametime	



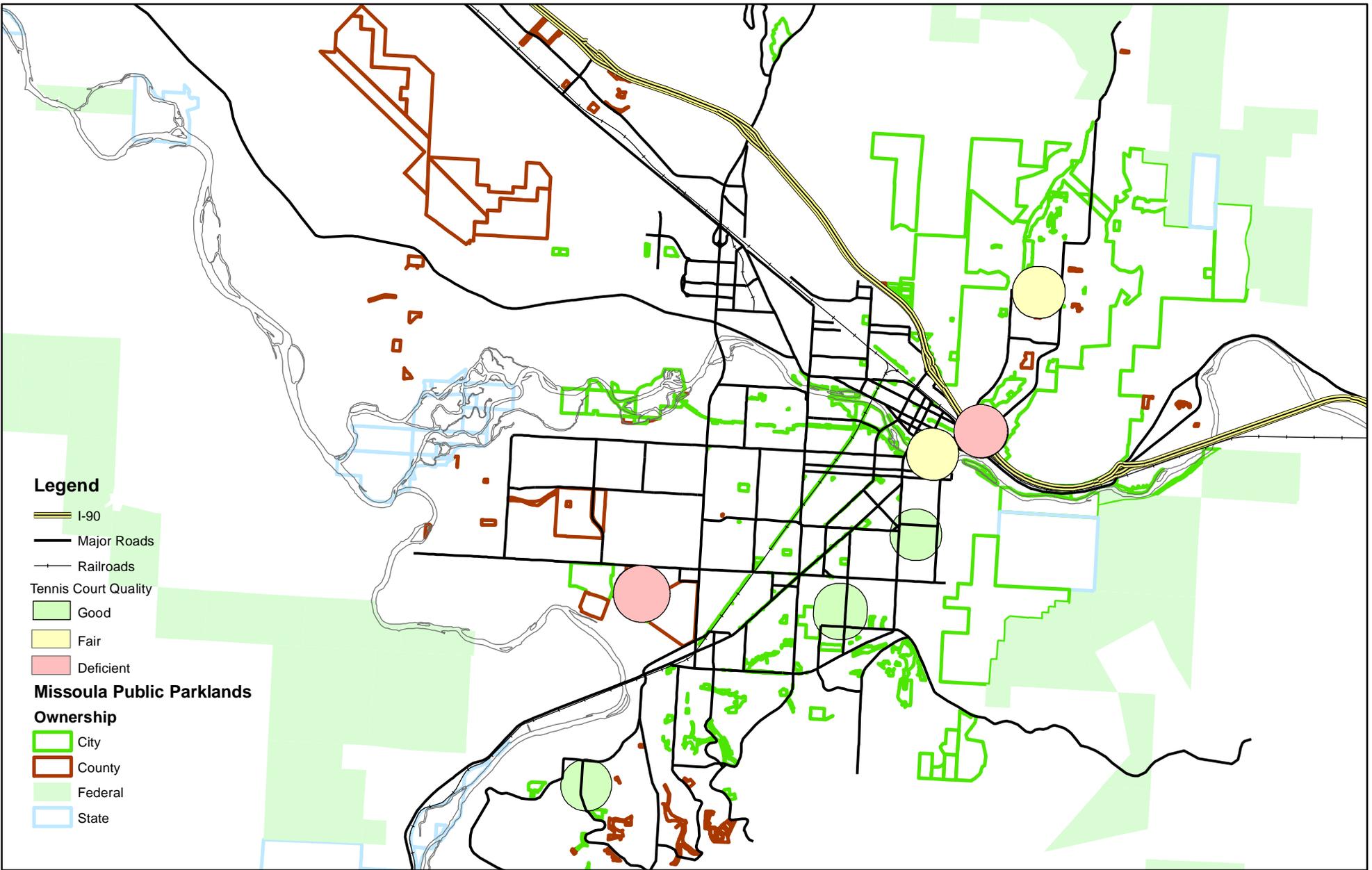
- Legend**
- I-90
 - Major Roads
 - Railroads
- Splash Deck Quality**
- Good
 - Deficient

- Missoula Public Parklands**
- Ownership**
- City
 - County
 - Federal
 - State

Splash Deck Quality

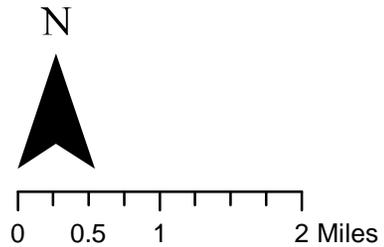


Park Name	Facility Type	Area (SF)	Acres	Perimeter LF	Approx. Year Built	Is the Feature ADA Accessible	Does the Feature Drain Adequately	Condition of chainlink fence(s)	Condition of hardscape surface(s)	Condition of Curbs	Condition of Painted Surfaces	Condition of grades	Feature Composite Score	Count (for Aver.)	Feature Score Average	COMMENTS
Northside	Spray/Splash Decks	5,693.5		267.5	1940	1	2		3	3	3		12	5	2.40	Scheduled for Demo
Southside Lions	Spray/Splash Decks	3,048.0		195.0	1990	1	3		1		3		8	4	2.00	
Sacajawea	Spray/Splash Decks	4,735.0		244.0	1990	2	3		1	1	2		9	5	1.80	
Franklin	Spray/Splash Decks	2,317.0		170.0	2000	1	1	1	1	1	2		7	6	1.17	
Bonner	Spray/Splash Decks	3,188.0		200.0	1990	1	1		1		1		4	4	1.00	
Marilyn	Spray/Splash Decks	3,005.0		204.0	1990	1	1		1	1	1		5	5	1.00	
Westside	Spray/Splash Decks	2,209.0		167.0	2005	1	1	1	1		1		5	5	1.00	



Tennis Court Quality

Park Name:	Facility Type	Area (SF)	Acres	Perimeter LF	Approx. Year Built	Is the Feature ADA Accessible	Does the Feature Drain Adequately	Condition of chainlink fence(s)	Condition of hardscape surface(s)	Condition of Curbs	Condition of Painted Surfaces	Condition of grades	Feature Composite Score	Count (for Aver.)	Feature Score Average	COMMENTS
FMRP - County	Tennis Courts	53,646.0	1.2		1980	1	2	2	3		2	2	12	6	2.00	8 Tennis Courts, Color coat in 2017
Kiwanis	Tennis Courts	14,515.2	2.0	482.4	1960	1	1	1	2		2	1	8	6	1.33	2 Tennis Courts
Gregory	Tennis Courts	15,675.1	2.0	500.8	1995	2	1	1	1		1	1	7	6	1.17	2 Tennis courts - 2 duel use b-ball
Bonner	Tennis Courts	14,023.7	1.0	458.1	1990	1	1	1	1		1		5	5	1.00	2 Tennis Courts - 2 duel use p-ball
Pineview	Tennis Courts	53,404.7	3.0	599.0	1990	1	1	1	1		1	1	6	6	1.00	3 Tennis Courts, 1 shared B-ball
Playfair	Tennis Courts	75,258.0	1.7	1,177.0	2022	1	1	1	1		1	1	6	6	1.00	12 Tennis Courts
Marilyn	Tennis, PB, BB Court	8,345.0	0.2	390.0	2023	1	1	1	1		1		5	5	1.00	1 Tennis Court - shared b-ball and P-ball



APPENDIX C

Park Development Guidelines



DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

INTENT

These guidelines provide direction for the development and modification of City of Missoula parks and conservation lands.

The intent of the guidelines is to:

- Protect and enhance the City's quality of life and community identity;
- Provide consistency with Our Missoula Growth Plan and align with adopted Long Range Transportation Plan, and Missoula County Community Health Improvement Plan;
- Encourage functional, safe and economically feasible yo maintain and compatible with the surrounding environment; and
- Ensure the distribution of park facilities and experiences are consistent with the Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails Plan.

The Parks & Recreation Department recognizes that park development must comply with local, state and federal regulations. These guidelines are not intended to supersede existing regulatory requirements. In addition, some parks and facilities that are currently owned and managed by the City may not meet these new design guidelines. Parks and facilities that do not meet these guidelines have been classified based on their intended function.

ORGANIZATION

The guidelines are organized as follows:

- Guidelines for All Parks
- Guidelines by Classification
- High Use Area Overlay Guidelines
- Guidelines for Infrastructure in Parks

GUIDELINES FOR ALL PARKS

Each park and conservation land in the system should be identifiable as part of the City of Missoula park system and have the following recommended facilities.

RECOMMENDED FACILITIES, AMENITY, FURNISHINGS, IMPROVEMENTS, OR FEATURES

All parks should be developed to a base level that supports desired activities and corresponds with the park classification.

- Park identification sign and rules or alternative identification such as a park gateway.
- Site furnishings (e.g, picnic tables, benches, seating, waste receptacles, and lighting, if applicable) appropriate for the scale of use and character of the park and following Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles.
- Bicycle parking, located at arrival and use points. At heavily used locations, options such as bicycle lockers and covered bike storage should be considered in addition to racks.
- Trees, appropriate for landscape shade in Developed Parks and Trails or on Conservation Lands, unless incompatible with natural resource management goals for the site.
- Waste management plan, with waste facilities as outlined in the master plan, site design or management plan for the site.

- Grading to support the desired activity and to support maintenance, appropriate soils to support desired vegetation, Irrigation as needed to support desired vegetation.
- Pedestrian circulation and connections, Internal recreational loop trails and connections should be included where appropriate, and should connect to the broader multi-modal transportation network (sidewalk or trail).

GUIDELINES BY CLASSIFICATION

In this section, guidelines are provided for each park classification and for conservation lands. For each classification, there are five topics or factors considered:

- **Definition:** The definition of the classification, describing its function within the park system.
- **Size and Characteristics:** The size and characteristics of a park, particularly the developable area and site access, determine the type of parklands or public lands and uses possible at the site. Access addresses the frontages, preferred modes of transportation and entrances to the site.
- **Recommended Facilities:** This is a typical set of facilities to meet the desired function of the park, drawn from park agency norms and community feedback. These facilities are intended to be the standard baseline for the given park classification.
- **Potential Additional Facilities:** The facilities listed under this sub-heading are compatible for the classification. These may be considered if site size, conditions, neighborhood interest and available funding allows.
- **Incompatible Facilities:** In some cases, there are park resources that conflict with the purpose and character of a particular classification.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

DEFINITION

Neighborhood parks provide close-to-home public spaces that meet recreation and social needs for nearby residents to walk, play, exercise and be outdoors. Park users typically live within walking and bicycling distance. Some neighborhood parks incorporate natural areas, such as wooded areas, adding to their overall size. Neighborhood parks are typically surrounded by public streets or trails.

COMPLETE PARK EXPERIENCE

Every neighborhood park should include elements that provide a complete park experience, which means each park should include at least one amenity that supports recreation opportunities in each of the following categories:

- Social/cultural
- Active recreation
- Play experience
- Nature

SIZE AND CHARACTERISTICS

- **Size:** Desired size is 5 acres. In the highest density residential areas, at least 2 developable acres should be provided in order to provide enough space for a complete park experience.
- **Location:** Site should be centrally located in the neighborhood it serves.

Where possible, the park should be located adjacent to a public school.

- **Access:** Since visitors are intended to arrive on foot or by bike, the site should be accessed by a local street. At least 50% of the park should be adjacent to a public street to provide easy public access, visual surveillance and opportunities for on-street parking. Connection to the off-street trail system is desirable.
- **Configuration:** At least 50% of the site should be generally flat to support facility development. Large existing trees should be preserved as feasible, and geologic features should be incorporated into the site design.
- **Service Distance:** ½-mile in medium density residential areas and ¼-mile in the highest density residential areas.

RECOMMENDED FACILITIES

- Play area. May include structured elements, manufactured equipment or natural play elements, or a combination of these.
- At least one social space, which could be a picnic shelter, community garden or off-leash dog area, or similar facility that provides space for social interaction.
- At least one neighborhood-scale active recreation facility (e.g, sports court, exercise stations, skate park, multi-use playing field, climbing wall, recreational trails).
- Internal pathway system.

- Lawn area suitable for gathering or informal games.

POTENTIAL ADDITIONAL FACILITIES

- Exercise stations
- Small-footprint games (e.g, ping pong tables, cornhole, horseshoes, etc.)
- Splashpad/water play area
- Community garden
- Dog park
- Dedicated ADA parking if site or facilities demand
- Sport courts: basketball court or half court, multi-use sports court, pickleball (pair), etc.
- Sports fields: rectangular or diamond, unlighted. Sized for practice and informal play
- Picnic area or shelter, medium (capacity approximately 25 people)
- River Access
- Natural areas
- Restrooms, permanent or temporary
- Pedestrian-scale lighting, Dark Sky compliant
- Drinking water fountain including standard and ADA stations, water bottle filling station, and dog bowl filling
- Electrical utilities to support small neighborhood and family events
- Small bicycle skill features such as pump track

INCOMPATIBLE FACILITIES

- Destination facilities or facilities with community wide draw
- Sport field lighting
- Sport field complexes
- Full-service recreation centers
- Swimming pools (indoor or outdoor)
- Display gardens such as rose gardens or botanical gardens
- Off-street parking

POCKET PARKS

DEFINITION

Pocket parks, sometimes called mini-parks, are small parks that may serve a portion of the surrounding neighborhood. Pocket parks may function as small neighborhood parks or simply provide urban green space. Pocket parks can be essential in serving densely populated portions of the city where neighborhood park level of service cannot be met due to lack of available lands.

SIZE AND CHARACTERISTICS

If a small neighborhood is not possible, Missoula may acquire additional pocket parks. These should meet the location, access, and service distance guidelines for neighborhood parks.

RECOMMENDED FACILITIES

Since pocket parks are intended to serve the neighborhood park function, each pocket park or cluster of pocket parks should provide complete park experience. See neighborhood park guidelines for recommended and additional facilities, which should be selected to consider the small size of pocket parks.

Existing pocket parks may be renovated to use less resources by modifying turf type to ecolawn or no-mow lawns to be more drought resistant.

INCOMPATIBLE FACILITIES

All of the facilities incompatible with neighborhood parks are also incompatible with pocket parks. In addition, pocket parks should be designed to minimize maintenance requirements.

COMMUNITY PARKS

DEFINITION

Community parks are designed to serve multiple neighborhoods, drawing visitors from several neighborhoods or across Missoula for their features, facilities or programs. These parks serve a broad range of activities and users, support group gatherings, provide space for programs and events and often include specialized recreation facilities. Community parks are generally designed to also serve as neighborhood parks for those living nearby.

SIZE AND CHARACTERISTICS

- **Size:** Desired minimum size is 25 acres, with at least 50% developable.
- **Location:** Site should be located to support access by all modes. When feasible, natural areas should be included in the community park.
- **Access:** There should be access from a higher order public street on at least one side for the main park entry, which should front a street with a bicycle route and a transit route when possible. Connection to the off-street trail system is desirable.
- **Configuration:** Community and Regional parks are intended to support a variety of uses, including both self-directed activities and organized programs. Therefore, no more than 50% of the site should be dedicated to sports facilities or indoor recreation facilities. Large existing trees should be preserved as feasible, and geologic

features should be incorporated into the site design.

- **Service Distance:** Every area of Missoula should have a community park within 1½ mile. Regional Parks serve as community parks for those within 1½ miles.

RECOMMENDED FACILITIES

Each community park should have a distinct theme based on the site's characteristics and mix of amenities. Features and facilities within the park should support the park's identity and character.

- Medium to large play area. May include structured elements, manufactured equipment or natural play elements, or a combination of these. A custom-designed destination play area may be provided.
- At least one medium-sized picnic area with shade structure (approximately 25-person capacity)
- Measured distance looped walking path and/or trailhead access to Missoula's trail network.
- At least three community-scale amenities (e.g., multiple sports fields, multiple sports courts, indoor facility, environmental education facility, ropes course, skate park, specialty garden, disc golf course, large picnic shelter (25+ capacity), historic structure, large off-leash area, Missoula Currents Center for Recreation and Creativity). Lighting may be provided.
- Permanent restrooms.

- Lawn area suitable for gathering or informal games.
- Internal pathway system.
- Natural area or habitat patch.

POTENTIAL ADDITIONAL FACILITIES

- Sport courts: basketball court (at least a full court, tennis court (at least a pair), pickleball (at least a pair), etc.
- Sports fields: rectangular or diamond. If fields are included, there should be multiple fields to support league play. Sports complexes may be included in community parks. Fields may be lighted and may include concessions facilities.
- Other sports or exercise facilities (bike skills course, disc golf course, pump track, skatepark, climbing wall, ropes course, etc)
- Community-scale indoor facilities (e.g., full-service recreation center, community center, nature center, field house)
- Swimming pools (indoor or outdoor)
- Community gardens or urban farm
- Dog park (large)
- Exercise stations
- Small-footprint games (e.g, ping pong tables, cornhole, horseshoes, etc.)
- Splashpad/ water play area
- Outdoor performance space (e.g, amphitheater, bandstand, outdoor stage)
- River access

- Display gardens
- Public art
- Natural areas
- Pedestrian-scale lighting, Dark Sky compliant
- Water fountain
- Electrical utility service sized for community-scale events and City programming
- Off-street parking
- Trailheads
- Maintenance facility

INCOMPATIBLE FACILITIES

Facilities that would detract from the community park's identity or do not support PROST Vision, Guiding Principles, and Goals or are better suited for regional parks.

REGIONAL PARKS

DEFINITION

Regional parks are unique large parks that provide regional attractions or protect cultural, historic, or natural resources of regional significance. These parks serve the greatest geographical area, attracting visitors from across the city and the greater region who tend to visit for longer durations. Regional parks typically include a variety of specialized facilities and large group gathering areas.

SIZE AND CHARACTERISTICS

- **Size:** Desired minimum size is 100 acres, with 200+ preferable.
- **Location:** If the park contains regional attractions, site should be located to support the market study for the facility. Location may also be based on the presence of cultural, historic, or natural resources.
- **Access:** There should be direct access from an arterial public street on at least one side for the main park entry. Additional entry points should be provided for nearby residents. Connection to the off-street trail system is desirable.
- **Configuration:** Site should include level areas for development of recreational facilities. Large existing trees should be preserved as feasible, and geologic features should be incorporated into the site design.
- **Service Distance:** City to Regional

Service District

- **Multiple Services Need:** Regional parks may serve as community parks for those within 1 ½ miles. They may also serve as neighborhood parks for those living nearby, if the regional park is designed to locate neighborhood park amenities near residential areas and provide walkable access.

RECOMMENDED FACILITIES

- Each regional park should have a unique identity based on the site's characteristics and the regional facilities at the park. Features and facilities within the park should support the park's identity and character.
- The park should include multiple regional-scale or top tier facilities (e.g., indoor/outdoor sports complex, event pavilion, amphitheater/concert venue, other types of revenue-generating facility, large group picnic area).
- The park should have supporting facilities for casual or self-directed use, such as playgrounds, seating areas, dog parks, open lawn areas, games such as ping pong or bocce, etc.
- Permanent restrooms, and likely multiple facilities, located near each use area.
- The park should have a looped internal pathway system that can be used for exercise and recreational walking, in addition to site circulation.
- The park should include natural areas and features.

POTENTIAL ADDITIONAL FACILITIES

- Sport courts: complexes or for drop-in and rental/tournament use. If a court complex, the number of courts should be determined by the market study or business and operations plan and may include concessions facilities. If for drop-in use: basketball court (at least a full court, tennis court (at least a pair), pickleball (at least a pair), etc.
- Sports fields: rectangular and/or diamond. These should include multiple fields and be designed for competition and tournaments. Fields may be lighted and may include concessions facilities.
- Other sports or exercise facilities (bike skills course, disc golf course, pump track, skatepark, climbing wall, ropes course, etc)
- Play area, and usually multiple play areas. May include structured elements, manufactured equipment or natural play elements, or a combination of these. A custom-designed destination play area may be provided.
- Regional or community-scale indoor facilities
- Aquatic center/swimming pools (indoor or outdoor)
- Community gardens or urban farm
- Off-leash dog area (large)
- Exercise stations
- Small-footprint games (e.g. ping pong tables, cornhole, horseshoes, etc.)

- Splashpad
- Multiple picnic areas or shelter, medium (capacity approximately 25 people)
- Large group picnic area (capacity 100+)
- Large open lawn for events, sitting, and informal play
- Outdoor performance space (e.g, amphitheater, bandstand, outdoor stage)
- Boat ramp or water access
- Display gardens
- Public art
- Natural areas
- Restrooms, permanent
- Pedestrian-scale lighting, Dark Sky compliant
- Water fountain
- Electrical utility service sized for regional-scale events and City programming
- Off-street parking
- Transit or shuttle stops
- Trailheads
- Satellite maintenance facility

INCOMPATIBLE FACILITIES

Facilities that would detract from the community park's identity or do not support PROST Vision, Guiding Principles, and Goals.

SPECIAL USE PARKS

DEFINITION

Special use parks are typically focused on a specific recreation facility or use, though they may include supporting features and amenities. Examples are urban plazas, gardens or arboreta, bike parks, stand-alone indoor facilities, stand-alone boat ramps, or community scaled event space.

SIZE AND CHARACTERISTICS

- **Size:** Depends on the special use. Site should be adequate to accommodate the desired special use and associated support facilities.
- **Location:** Depends on the special use. If a feasibility or market study is conducted for the special use facility, the study may provide additional locational criteria.
- **Access:** There should be direct access from a public street on at least one side for the main park entry. Connection to the off-street trail system is desirable.
- **Configuration:** Large existing trees should be preserved as feasible, and geologic features should be incorporated into the site design as feasible.
- **Service Distance:** Citywide

RECOMMENDED FACILITIES

- At least one special use facility.
- Internal pathway system

POTENTIAL ADDITIONAL FACILITIES

- Regional or community-scale indoor facilities
- River access
- Natural areas
- Restrooms, permanent or temporary
- Pedestrian-scale lighting, Dark Sky compliant
- Water fountain
- Electrical utility service sized for community-scale events
- Any neighborhood park or community park facilities may be added to the special use site.

INCOMPATIBLE FACILITIES

Any facility that would conflict with the intended special use of the site.

LINEAR PARKS

DEFINITION

Linear parks are longer than they are wide and typically include trails. These parks may follow linear corridors such as creeks, rail lines and utility corridors or they may simply provide connections between parks or to other destinations. Linear parks may be developed or natural in character, depending on the corridor. If the corridor is wide enough, linear parks may include park amenities and recreation facilities.

SIZE AND CHARACTERISTICS

- **Size:** Varies, depends on corridor type, as well as width and available length.
- **Location:** Follows a linear corridor.
- **Access:** There should be direct access from a public street or public park on at least one side, and preferably at least two direct accesses. For longer linear parks, additional access points from public streets or parks are desired.
- **Configuration:** Large existing trees should be preserved as feasible, and geologic features should be incorporated into the site design.
- **Service Distance:** Citywide

RECOMMENDED FACILITIES

- Trail (typically Regional or Community)

POTENTIAL ADDITIONAL FACILITIES

- Trailhead
- Parking
- Natural areas – riparian, river, arboretum, orchard
- Restrooms, permanent or temporary
- Picnic shelter
- Pedestrian-scale lighting, Dark Sky compliant
- Water fountain
- Any neighborhood park facilities may be located in the linear park, but should be sited near a public access point.

INCOMPATIBLE FACILITIES

Any facility that would conflict with the intended linkage.

CONSERVATION LANDS

DEFINITIONS

Conservation Lands protect land with natural habitats and ecosystems and significant visual, historic, cultural or archaeological resources. They provide opportunities for interaction with nature and may include recreation facilities such as trails and picnic areas. Conservation lands are further classified as Park Preserves, Community Natural Areas and Neighborhood Natural Areas. All or a portion of conservation lands of all types may be closed to public access seasonally or year round depending on resource protection needs. In addition, a High Use Outdoor Site overlay identifies areas within conservation lands of various types that are developed to support public access to outdoor recreation.

Park Preserves are generally greater than 100 acres. These properties protect large areas with natural resource values of community-wide or regional significance. They may provide opportunities for nature-oriented outdoor recreation. Management priority is on preserving and improving native habitats and achieving an appropriate balance between resource protection and public use. Preserves typically have natural surface trails with associated signage. Some preserves also have single-lane dirt road systems established prior to City's acquisition of the property. Areas are largely undeveloped except in designated High Use Outdoor Site areas or at lower use access points where user amenities (e.g., trash receptacles, parking, signage, vault toilets) may exist.

Community Natural Areas are usually no less than 10 acres in size. These properties serve to protect natural values and ecosystem functions. These properties may include areas of significant vegetation, important habitats, scenic areas, or areas that contribute to the urban shaping and buffering goals of the community. They provide storm water management or wildland urban interface buffer. They provide opportunities for nature oriented outdoor recreation. Management emphasis is on resource protection with appropriate public access provided. Level of development is commensurate with level of public use so long as resource values are preserved.

Neighborhood Natural Areas are smaller sites that provide habitat patches, protect natural resources or provide ecosystem functions. Level of development is generally low since the sites are small.

SIZE AND CHARACTERISTICS

	Park Preserve	Community Natural Area	Neighborhood Natural Area
Size	100+ acres	10+ acres	Varies, typically less than 10 acres
Location	Resource dependent	Resource dependent	Resource dependent
Access	Resource dependent	Typically provided	Typically provided
Configuration	Resource dependent	Resource dependent	Resource dependent
Service Distance	Citywide/Regional	1-mile	¼-½ mile

RECOMMENDED FACILITIES

- Trail (typically Recreational, may be shared use or single use)

POTENTIAL ADDITIONAL FACILITIES

- Viewing blinds
- Trailhead
- Parking
- Picnic shelter
- High use outdoor site facilities as defined on page XX
- Naturalized storm water facilities
- Interpretation
- Fishing or birding ponds

INCOMPATIBLE FACILITIES

- Any facility that would conflict with the natural resource values of the site.
- Lighting, except at trailhead parking
- If available, refer to the relevant management plan for the site for additional guidance on the appropriate character and uses.

HIGH USE SITE OVERLAY GUIDELINES

DEFINITION

The High Use Outdoor Site Overlay identifies areas within conservation lands that are developed to support public access to outdoor recreation and may include appropriate recreational facilities. These areas are located outside of sensitive resource zones. High use areas may be closed seasonally for management reasons.

POTENTIAL FACILITIES

- Regional, community, recreational, neighborhood or connector trail
- Nature or interpretive center
- Outdoor classroom
- Wildlife viewing blinds
- Boat launch
- Fishing pier
- Restrooms, permanent or temporary
- Picnic shelter
- Large group picnic area
- Indoor event space
- Warming hut
- Bike skills course (pump track, BMX course, etc.)
- Mountain bike park
- Disc golf course
- Archery range

- Climbing or bouldering wall
- Equipment rental facilities
- Temporary facilities to support events (e.g., races, walks, nature festivals)

GUIDELINES FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

The desired result is reducing the amount of land reserved for the exclusive use of infrastructure and maximizing recreational value by combining community benefits of infrastructure investment with the recreational benefits of park land.

DEFINITIONS

Grey Infrastructure: Grey infrastructure refers to engineered systems and structures that support urban development. Including: streets, sidewalks, utilities, and traditional stormwater infrastructure such as pipes, sumps, and retention basins.

Green (Stormwater) Infrastructure: Green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) is the term for stormwater management features that use permeable pavement or natural materials like plants and soil to remove pollutants, allow stormwater to soak back into the ground, prevent flooding, and reduce the amount of polluted water that reaches water bodies.

Renewable Energy Infrastructure: Renewable energy infrastructure includes solar and wind energy production infrastructure and associated facilities.

INFRASTRUCTURE IN PARKS

The following considerations are critical to understanding how infrastructure can be integrated into park sites and conservation lands:

- Infrastructure designed and scaled to serve the park's on site stormwater management needs should be allowed. Green stormwater infrastructure is the preferred solution.
- Consider green infrastructure that substitutes for standard elements (such as previous paving or alternatives to traditional paving for traditional parking lot paving).
- In general, infrastructure to manage stormwater from offsite should not be included in the park unless designed as an amenity to the park (i.e. bancroft ponds)
- Renewable energy infrastructure may be located in developed parks of all types and may produce more energy than is required for the site's operation (e.g., solar panels covering a parking area).
- Scenic impacts of renewable energy infrastructure should be considered particularly if such infrastructure is considered for inclusion in conservation lands. Habitat also, particularly in Park Preserves.
- Incorporate any additional maintenance requirements for infrastructure, to be paid for by the appropriate utility fund, into the project budget impacts.

If facilities such as pump stations are included, they should be designed to

add to the park experience (such as by incorporating public art or interpretation) or by including needed features such as shade structures.

In conservation lands, consult the relevant management plan, if any, for more specifics about compatible infrastructure uses.

Avoid any infrastructure that interferes with the primary purpose or character of a park site.

Carefully locate vaults, towers or other structures that could impact park user safety, impact view sheds, displace existing park amenities (unless adequately replaced) or interfere with planned expansion of a park.

PARK FACILITIES IN INFRASTRUCTURE SITES

Recreation and natural features can be added to existing and new sites that are primarily intended for infrastructure. If there is adequate developable area meeting the appropriate design guidelines, infrastructure sites can serve as neighborhood or community parks. Infrastructure sites of any size can be considered natural area parks if they contribute to protecting a natural resource or provide an opportunity to interact with nature:

- New utility and stormwater infrastructure should be designed to incorporate nature (such as wildlife habitat and appropriate vegetation) and/or recreational uses where possible
- Re-design of existing infrastructure

sites (such as detention basins) or utility easements to create recreational opportunities, habitat patches or trail connections should be explored in areas where access to parks or nature is below level of service standard.

- Where possible, especially in areas below park level of service standards consider building underground stormwater storage and infiltration facilities that are designed to accommodate active recreation, and other park uses on the surface.



APPENDIX D

GIS Needs Assessment Methodology





GIS Assessment Methodology

The Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Analyses provided a spatial assessment of gaps as part of the PROST Master Plan needs and gaps assessment. The Missoula authoritative parks GIS layer and inventory was the basis for land classifications.

Network Analysis

Many of the analyses the ArcGIS Network Analyst extension to evaluate how people move through Missoula to access parks and conservation lands.

The steps to create the network analysis maps are as follows:

- Identify access points to parks and conservation lands.
- Establish distance or travel time thresholds for each analysis.
- Analyze real-world travel paths along the street and trail network to determine the catchment area for each park included in the analysis.
- Consider barriers. Natural barriers such as rivers, creeks, railroads and Interstate 90 only where there are bridges, overcrossings, or undercrossings. Therefore, Network Analyst factors these barriers in.
- Add Brooks Street/Highway 93S and portions of West Broadway as additional barriers that pedestrians and bicyclists are assumed not to cross due to the auto orientation of these streets.
- Depict the "park sheds," the service area for each site included in the analysis.
- Show other publicly owned park land parcels (County, state, federal) for reference.
- Identify school sites for reference.

Placetypes and Street Types

Since the 10-minute walk analyses are focused on walkability for residents, the 10-minute walk maps were overlaid on Missoula's proposed future land use map and future street type maps, as of November 2024.

Equity Mapping

Completed as part of the Our Missoula Growth Policy Update, the *Equity in Land Use Report* (August 2023) included specific map-based equity analyses developed specifically for Missoula. For the PROST Plan's equity analysis, these same maps are used as overlays to assess whether there are equity gaps for consistency in planning.

- **Income.** The income map, Figure 10 from the *Equity in Land Use Report*, uses 2020 ACS 5-year data to show Missoula's median household income by census tract. Income levels are grouped into

quintiles, with two quintiles depicting areas where median household income (MHI) is below Missoula's MHI and three where MHI is above the citywide MHI.

- **Communities of Color.** Figure 12 from the *Equity in Land Use Report* shows the percentage of the population in each Census tract that identifies as a community of color (households classified by the US Census as African American, Hispanic, and Latino (non-white), Asian American/Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaska Native). This map depicts five quintiles, three where the percentage of communities of color is less than the City's median percentage and two where the percentage is higher than the City's median percentage.
- **American Indian/Alaska Native.** Figure 14 showing Missoula's population share of those that identify as American Indian/Alaska Native. Like the communities of color map, this map depicts five quintiles, three where the percentage of American Indian/Alaska Native is less than the City's median percentage and two where the percentage is higher than the City's median percentage.

There are other demographics of concern when considering equity, including as people with disabilities or specific age groups. These groups are considered in other analyses.

Using GIS to Evaluate 10-Minute Walk Access

The 10-Minute Walk Campaign was launched in 2017 by the Trust for Public Land (TPL), Urban Land Institute and National Recreation and Park Association. Across the US, 300+ mayors – including Missoula's – have committed to the vision that everyone in U.S. cities should have access to a quality park within a 10-minute walk of their home. The 10-minute walk has become a nationally accepted metric for close-to-home park access.

The PROST Master Plan adopts the 10-minute walk/roll as a performance metric. During the PROST planning process, two methods were considered: by time and by distance. A series of time-based maps used GIS capabilities to estimate how far a typical person can walk in 10 minutes. A series of distance-based maps used distance to approximate the 10-minute walk. TPL uses ½-mile to approximate the 10-minute walk, and ¼ mile approximates a 5-minute walk and is used by some cities as the service standard for higher density areas.

During the planning process, Missoula moved forward with the time-based approach. This is the approach adopted in the PROST Plan.

The analyses completed are summarized below.

- The **Walkable Access by Time** map shows areas within a 10-minute walk of a community, neighborhood, pocket, regional or special use park. These are the developed park classifications that should contain neighborhood-serving park amenities. Linear parks are not considered in this analysis because they typically contain a trail but no other amenities in Missoula's current inventory.
- The **Walkable Access by Time with Proposed Land Use** overlays the service areas on the land use map.

Using GIS to Evaluate Access to Nature

Network Analyst was also used to evaluate access to nature.

- The **Nature Access** analysis looked at 1-mile access to nature parks, which includes Conservation Lands classifications Park Preserves, Public Natural Areas and Urban Parkland with Special Resources Present. The analysis factors in the same barriers as the 10-minute walk analysis.
- The Conservation Lands classifications are updated in the PROST Master Plan. In the future, this analysis should look at Park Preserves, Community Natural Areas and Neighborhood Natural Areas.



Documentation of Layers and Processes Used

Scenario	Road Network Used	Parks Used	Park Access Points Used	What to Solve For	Direction	Distance/ Time Parameters	Out Parameters	Notes
Nature Parks Only Access	County base	City Only	"Select for 'Nature' only In database ParkType = 'Public Natural Area', 'Park Preserve', 'Urban w/SRP'"	Driving Distance	Towards parks	1 mile (1.6 km)	Standard Precision Dissolve Rings	The driving distance network service areas shown on this map were solved for access points for all City owned Park Types (ParkType attribute) tagged as Public Natural Area, Park Preserve, and Urban w/SRP . Driving distance towards the park access points were solved for 0.5 and 1 miles only. Additional barriers included in this analysis: Highway 93S/Brooks Street and West Broadway.
Walkable Access (by time)	County base	City Only	Selected parks only In database ParkType = 'Community', 'Neighborhood', 'Pocket', 'Special Use', 'Regional'	Walking Time	Towards parks	10 minutes by foot	Standard Precision Dissolve Rings	The walking time network service areas shown on this map were solved for access points for all city owned Part Types (ParkType attribute) tagged as Community, Neighborhood, Pocket, Special Use, and Regional . Walking time towards the park access points were solved for 10 minutes only. Additional barriers included in this analysis: Highway 93S/Brooks Street and West Broadway.

APPENDIX E

Public Engagement Summary



Missoula Parks, Recreation, Open Space, & Trails



M A S T E R P L A N

Engagement Summary

Engagement Overview



Outreach Principles

- Educational and meaningful
- Consistent and transparent
- Accessible and engaging
- Relevant in focus and purpose
- Inclusive, both culturally and geographically
- Coordinated

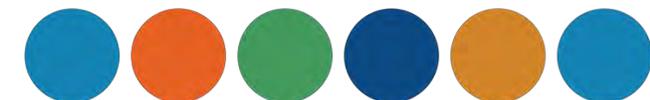


Engagement Methods

- Statistically Valid Survey
- Artist-led Engagement and Historically Underserved Communities Engagement
- Online Community Survey
- Mobile Listening Sessions
- Community Open Houses
- Online Interactive Map
- Online Community Activities
- Key Informant Interviews
- Focus Groups



Public Engagement in Numbers



Key Themes



Connectivity

- There should be an increased focus on how community members can move throughout Missoula, getting to and around parks.
- There is a desire for more trails throughout Missoula, for a variety of uses, including biking, walking, and running.



Year-Round Facility

- There is a desire for increased opportunities for indoor recreation, especially during the winter and during times when recreating outside is limited (fires, extreme heat).
- There are many ideas for what should be within an indoor facility, including
 - running/walking track
 - gym space
 - sports courts
 - space for mature adults
 - dance/performance space



Safety

- Some residents do not feel safe visiting local parks or walking or riding on trails, especially after dark.
- There are concerns around aggressive behavior, drug use and paraphernalia, and antisocial behavior.



Maintenance and Upkeep

- Feedback received reflected high-quality parks, with an emphasis on maintaining the parks, trails, and open space that the City already has.
- While there is a desire for new facilities, there is also a clear emphasis on maintaining and upgrading smaller neighborhood parks.



Competing Priorities

- Several areas received comments with differing opinions and will need creative solutions.
- Some of these areas included:
 - where E-bikes should be allowed
 - bike/scooter speeds on trails
 - how to manage dogs in parks and on trails



Programming

- Many people view City recreation programs as a “kids only” activity.
- Many people who indicated that they do not use recreation programs cited that they do not have kids, or that their kids have grown out of the programs.
- There is a desire for increased programming focused on teens, middle-aged adults, and older adults.



Access and Quality of Life

- Many people believe that parks, trails, and open space are great places for community-building and that they increase the quality of life.
- Many residents explicitly called out PROST services as a key element that make Missoula a great place to live.
- Residents highlighted the need for a more equitable and comprehensive parks system, ensuring that all have access to a nearby park that has quality facilities and that there are free and accessible recreation programs.



Community

- There is a desire for community-building spaces, events, and programs.
- Drawn from outreach to under-represented community members, suggested ways that parks and recreation services could work better for their needs include:
 - Providing more spaces for gatherings,
 - Using native plantings and incorporating place names in Salish and Kootenai



Statistically Valid Survey

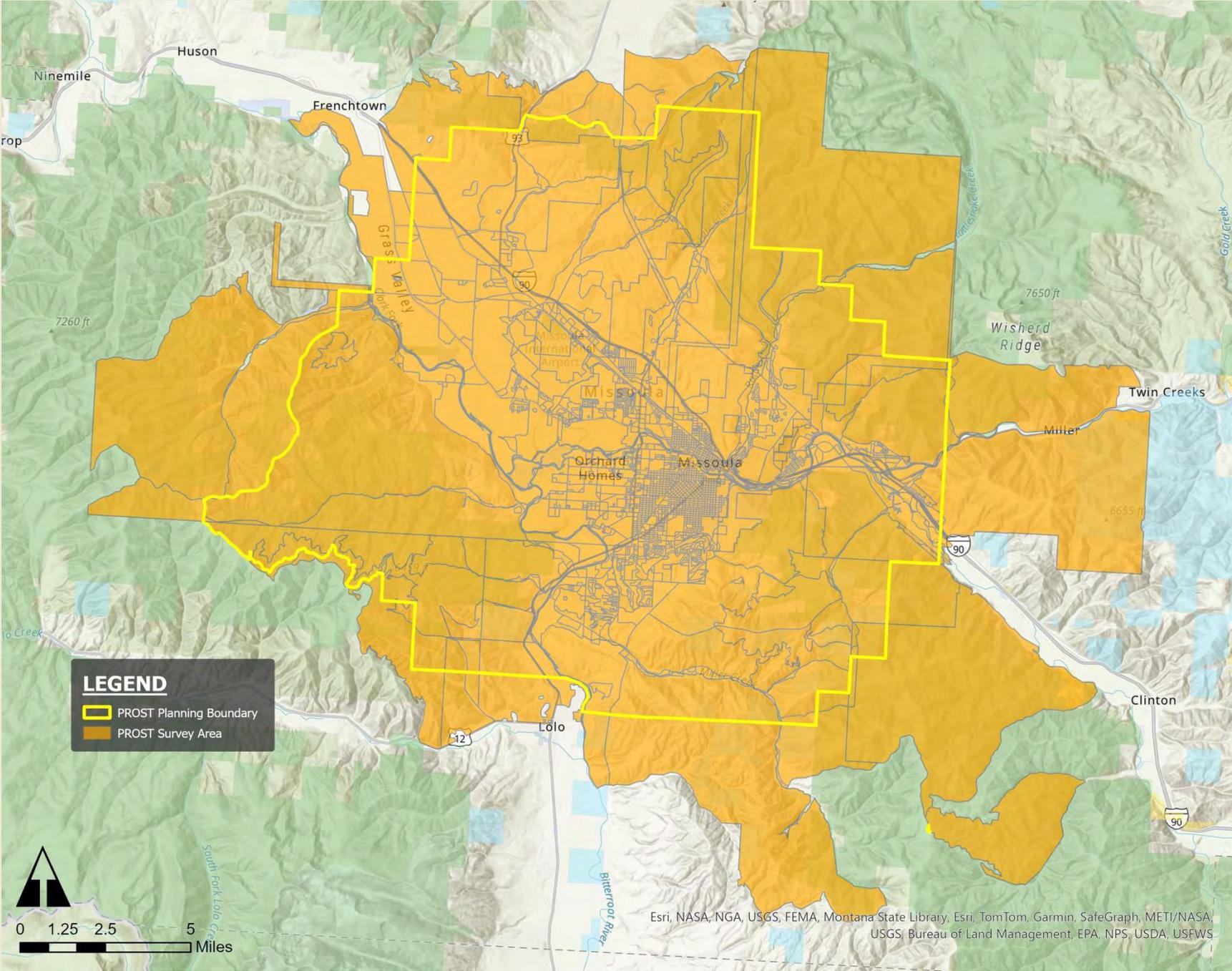


2024 Missoula Parks and Recreation Survey

- Purpose: provide information that may be used to update the Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Master Plan
- Sponsor: Missoula Parks and Recreation Department
- Administered by: UM BBER with UM College of Forestry and Conservation
- Method: mailed a self-administered questionnaire (or a link to a web questionnaire) to a random sample of occupied, residential addresses
 - Up to 4 mail contacts
- Study population: persons age 18+ who lived within the FY 2023 Parks and Recreation programs generalized service area
- Study period: May – July 2024
- 544 completions
- 39% response rate
- 90% sampling error rate: households +/- 4%, adults +/- 5%
 - Surveys can also have other types of error
- Weighting: weighted by 2022 U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey

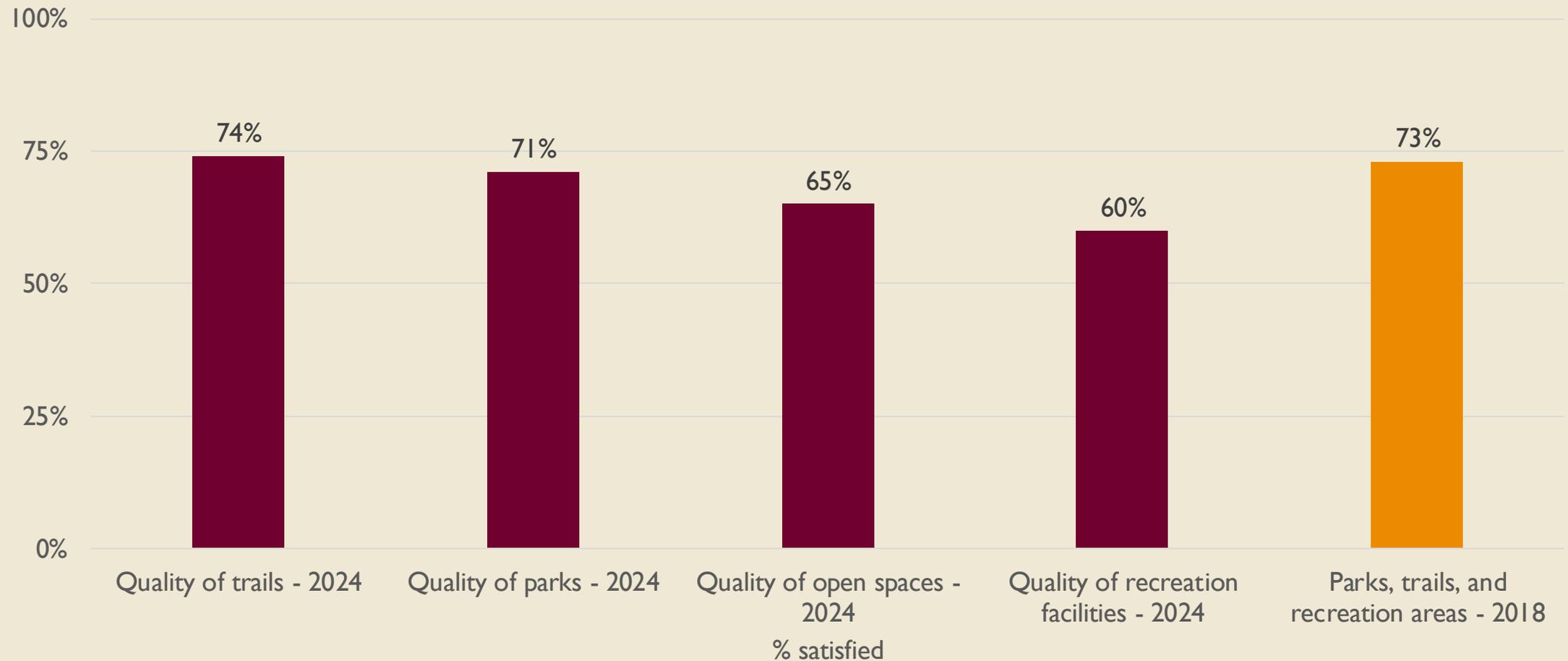
Study area

- Shaded orange on the map
- FY 2023 Parks and Recreation programs generalized service area



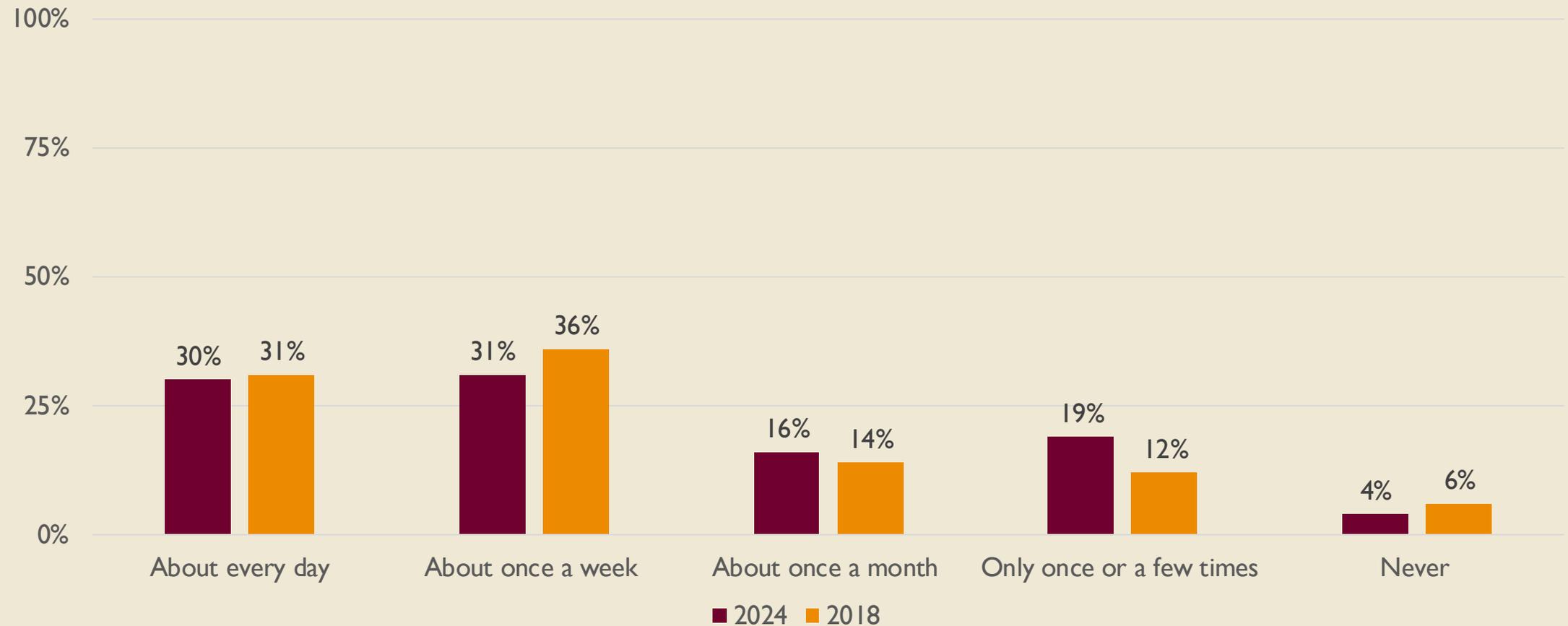
I. Satisfaction with the quality of parks, trails, open spaces, or recreation facilities in the Missoula valley

Resident satisfaction with the quality of parks, trails, open spaces, or recreation facilities in the Missoula valley

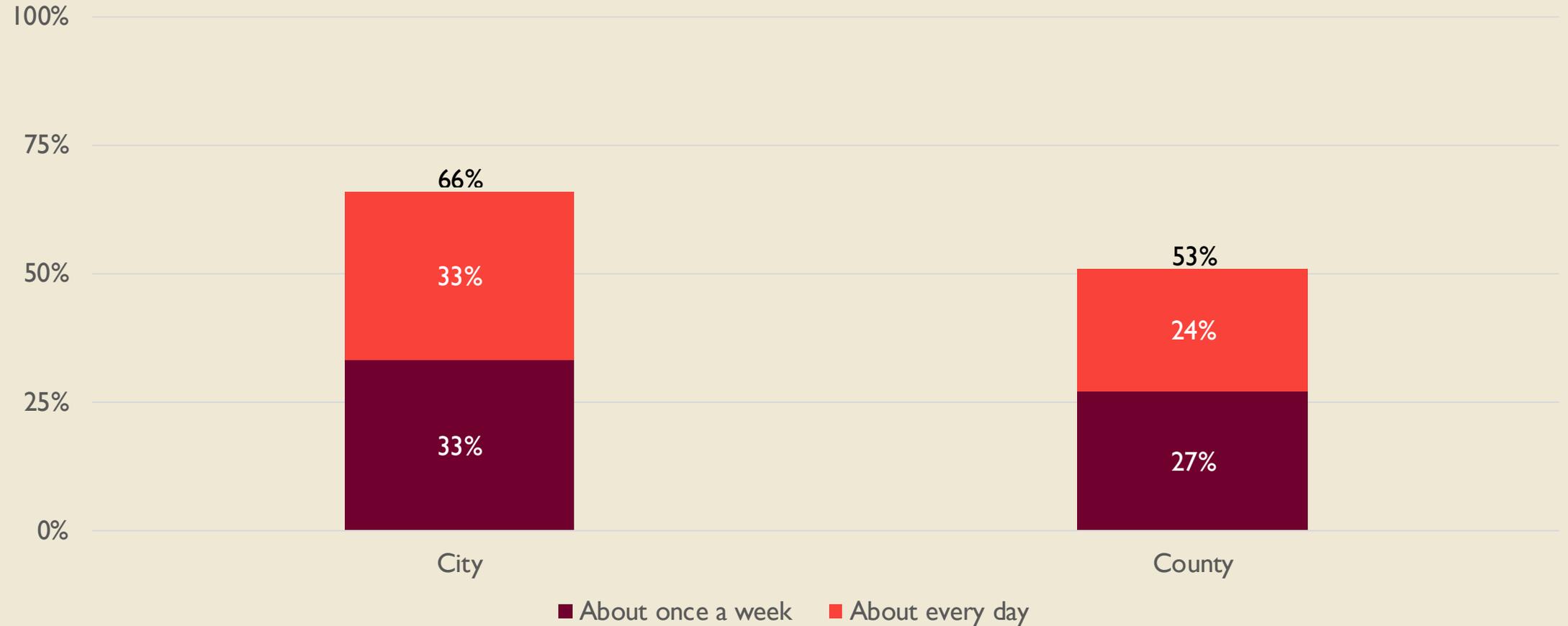


Source: Corona Insights. (2018). Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Space Needs Assessment: Results from a Survey of Househdds, 2018. Denver, Colorado: Corona Insights.

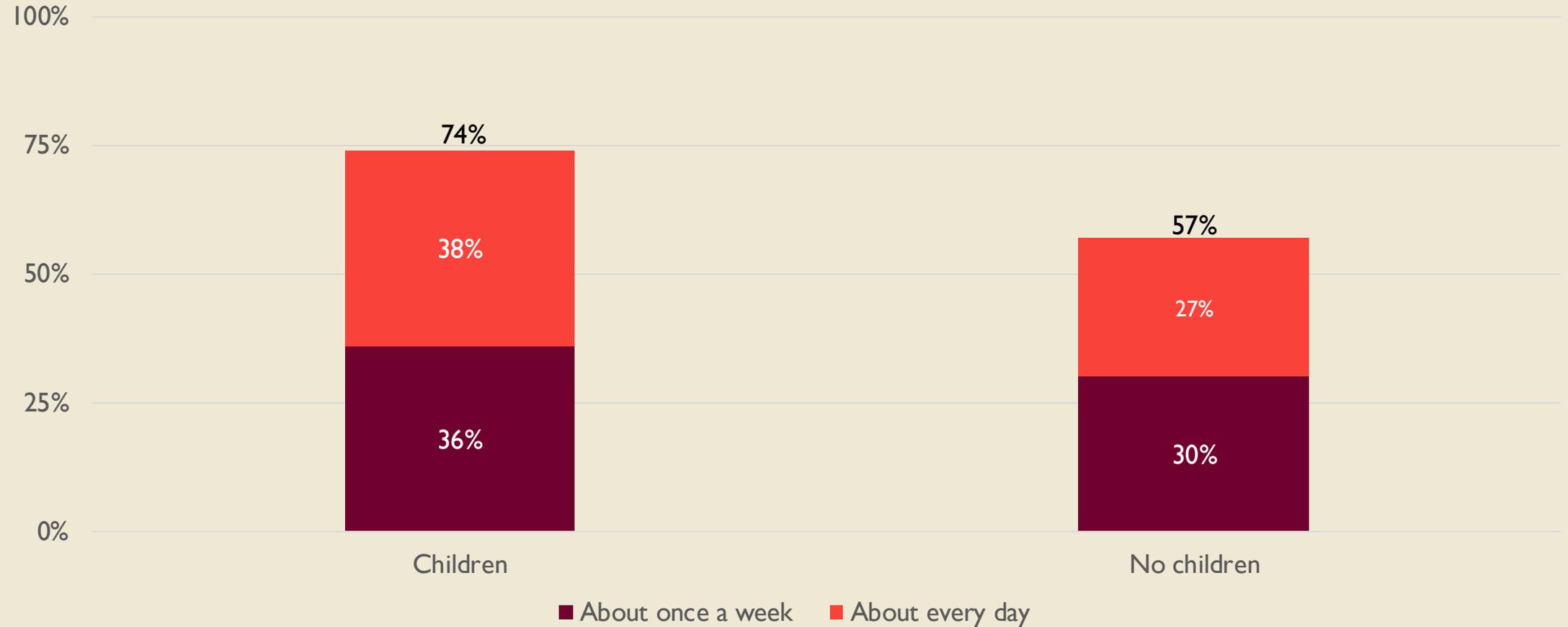
Household frequency of past year park, trail, open space, or recreation facility visitation



Household frequency of past year park, trail, open space, or recreation facility visitation by place of residence

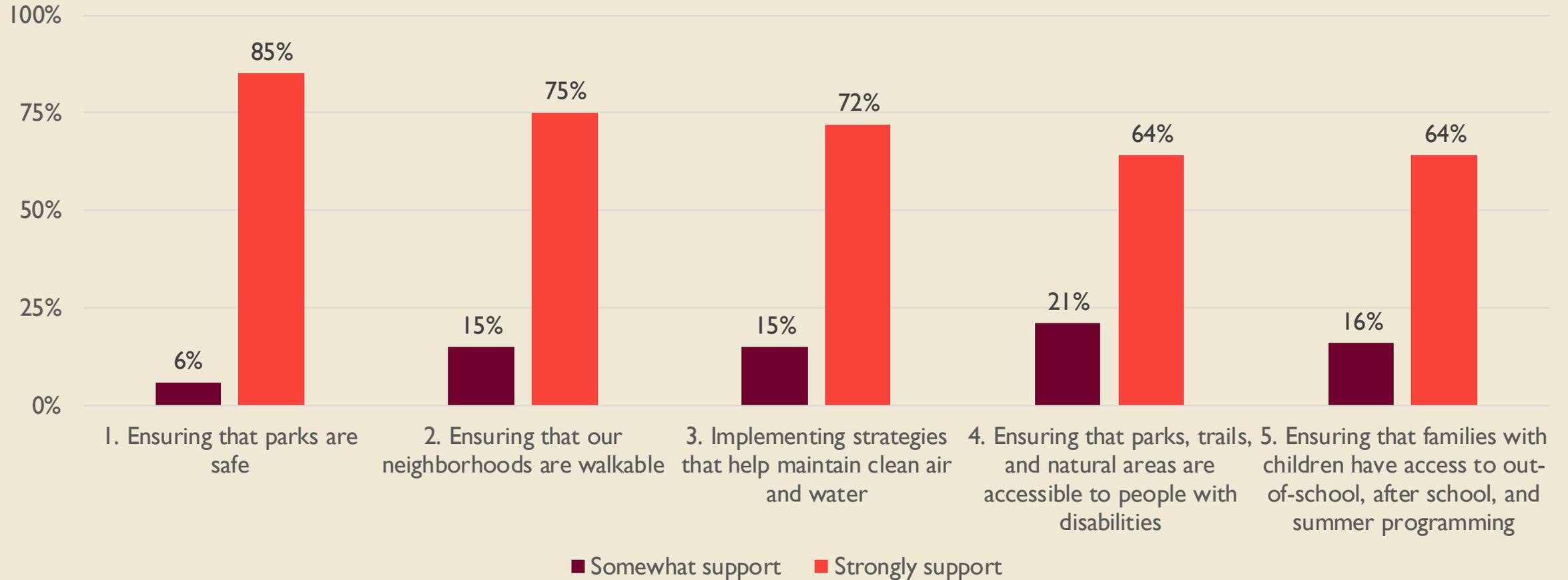


Household frequency of past year park, trail, open space, or recreation facility visitation by children in the household

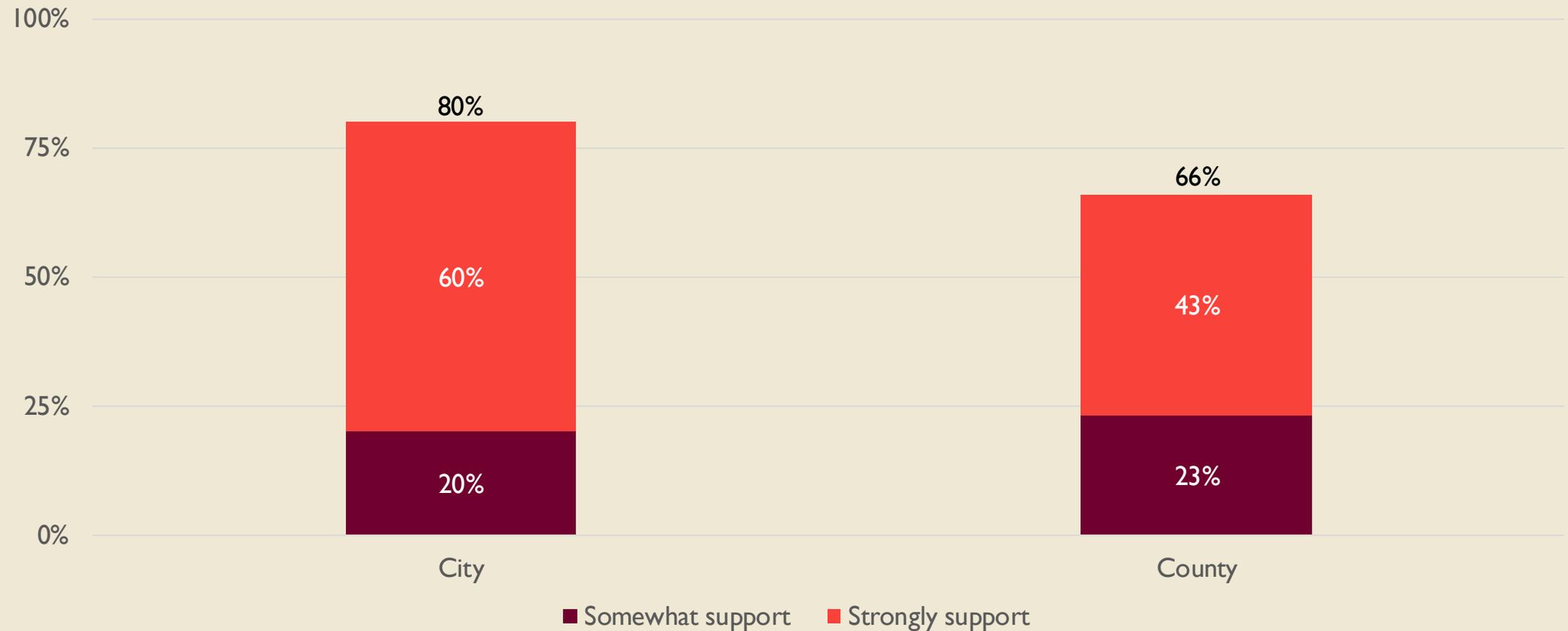


2. Parks and recreation-related policy preferences

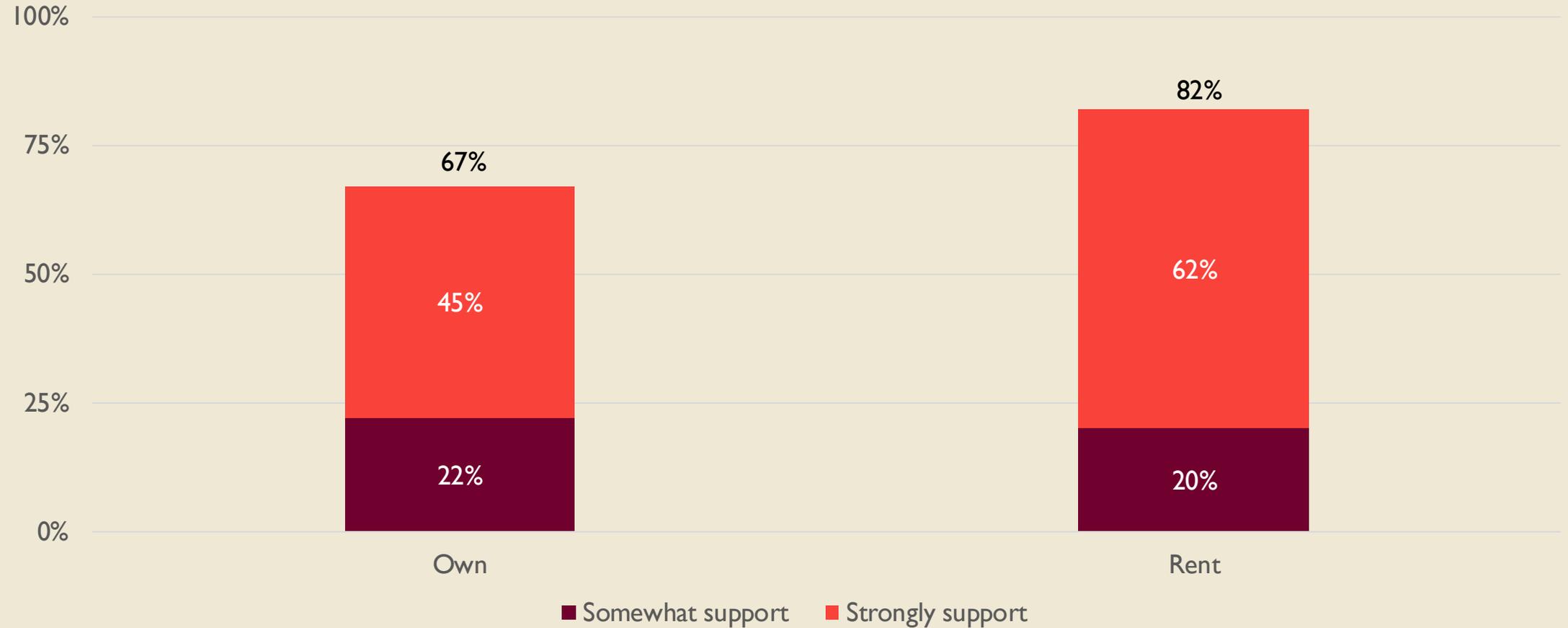
General policies – top 5 resident support



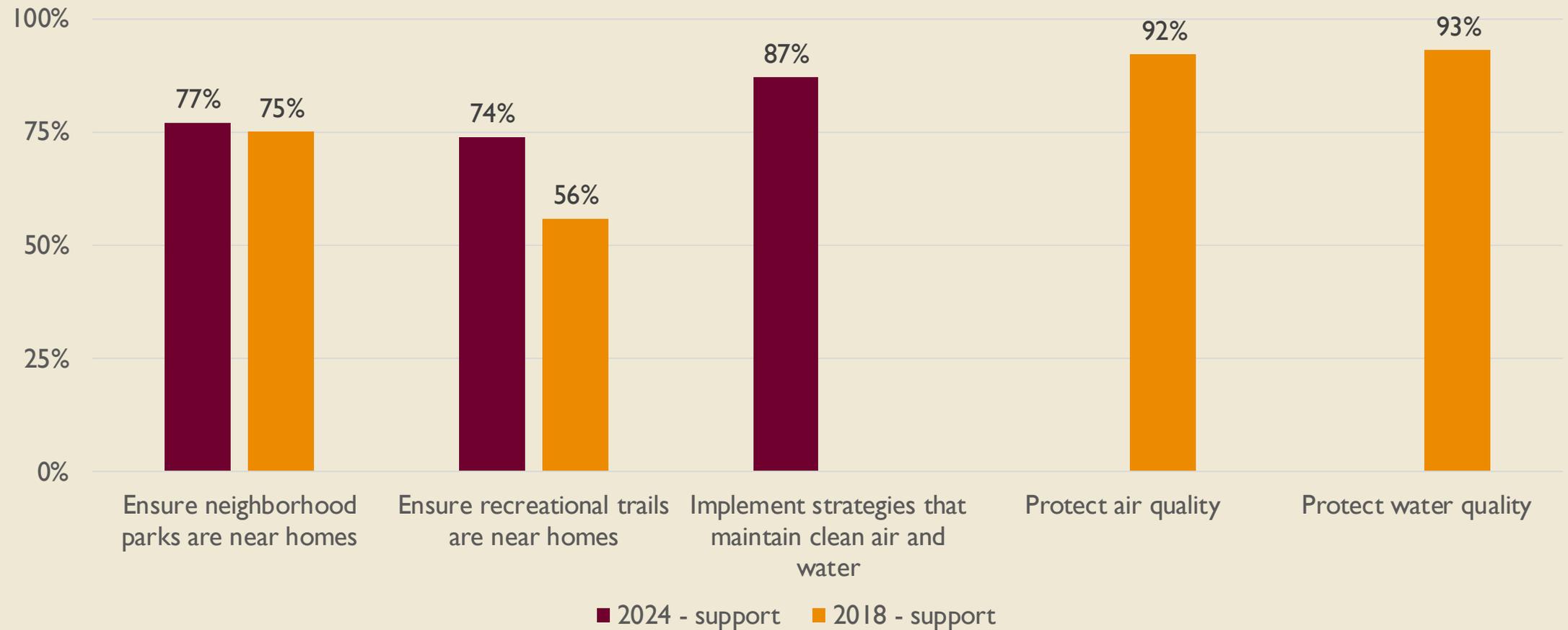
Support for ensuring that new housing or commercial development provides adequate access to parks, trails, and green spaces, by place of residence



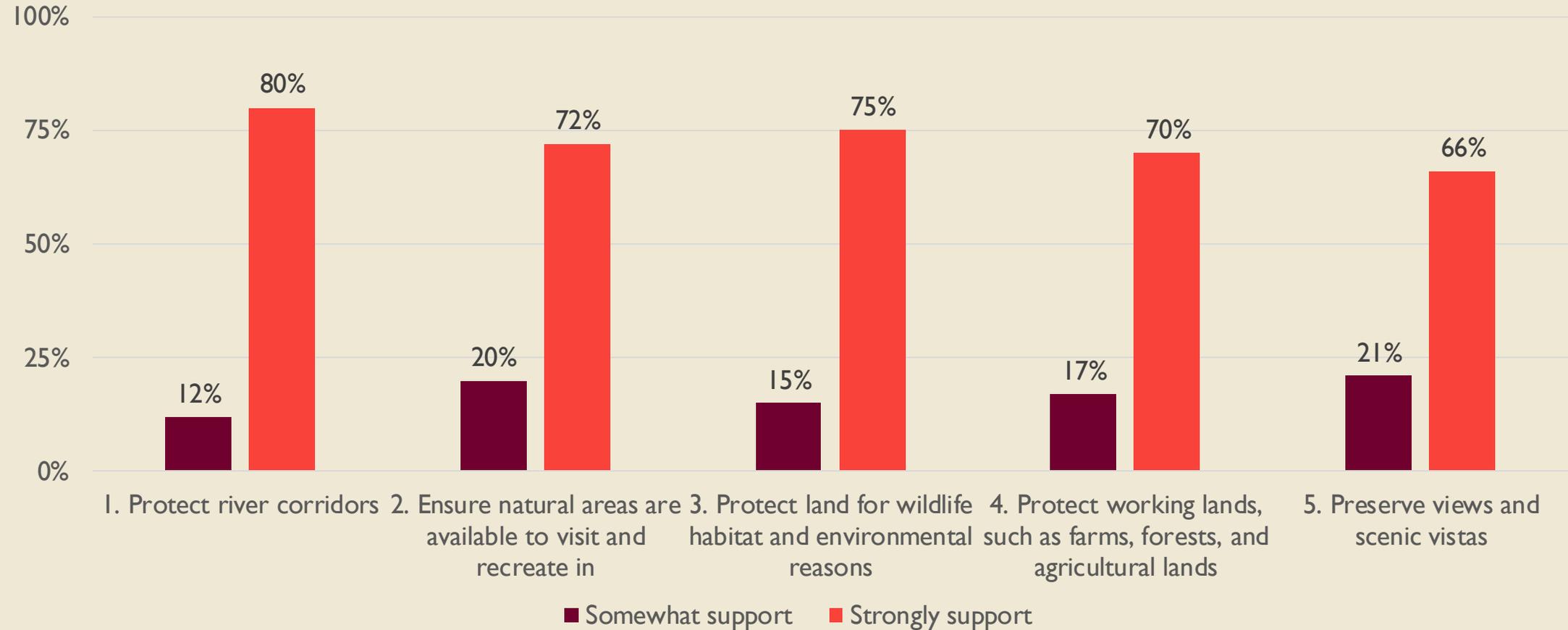
Support for ensuring recreational trails are near your homes, by home ownership



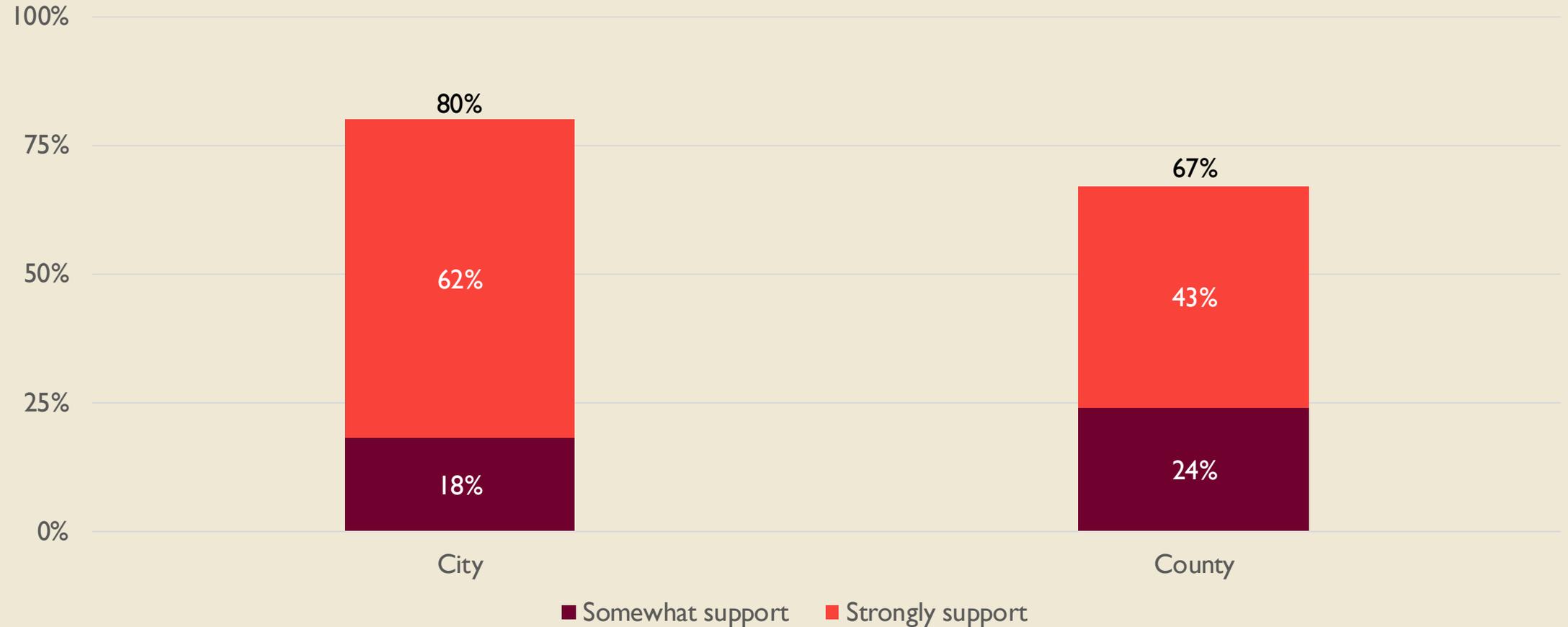
General policies – trends in resident support



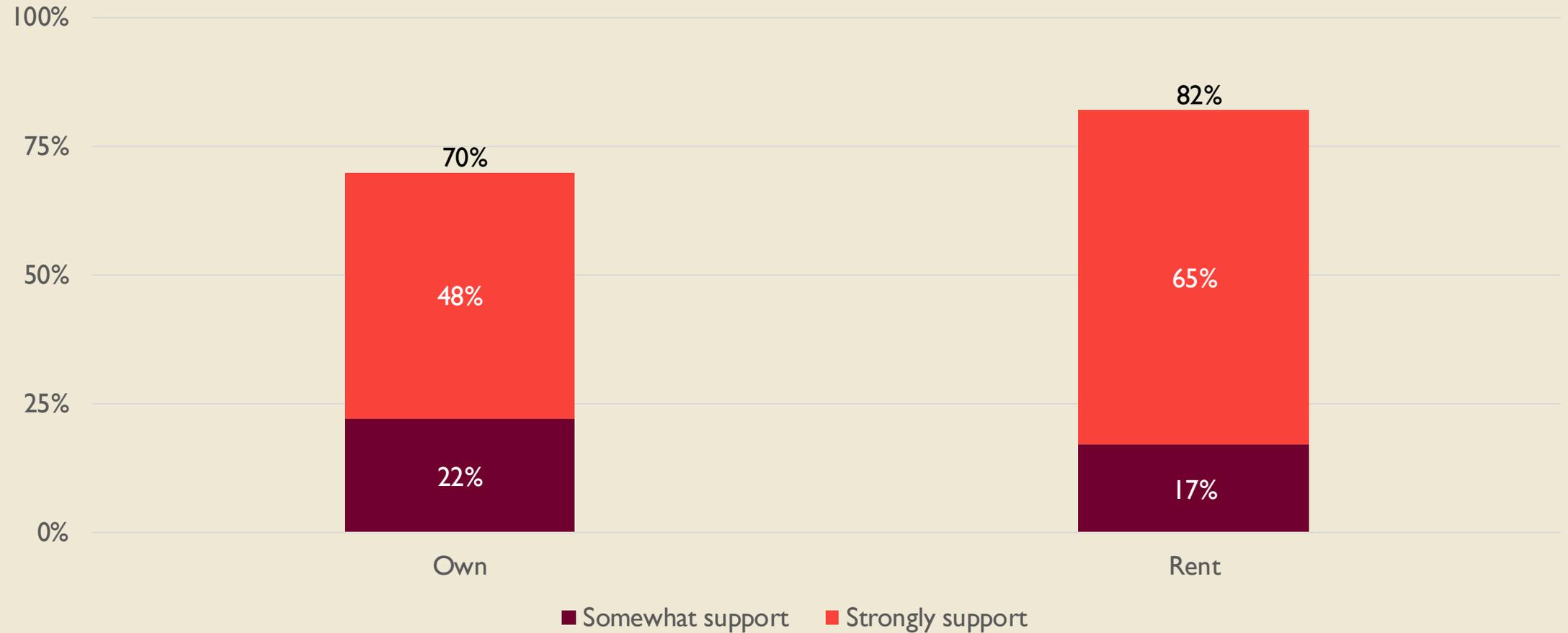
Ecologically focused policies – top 5 resident support



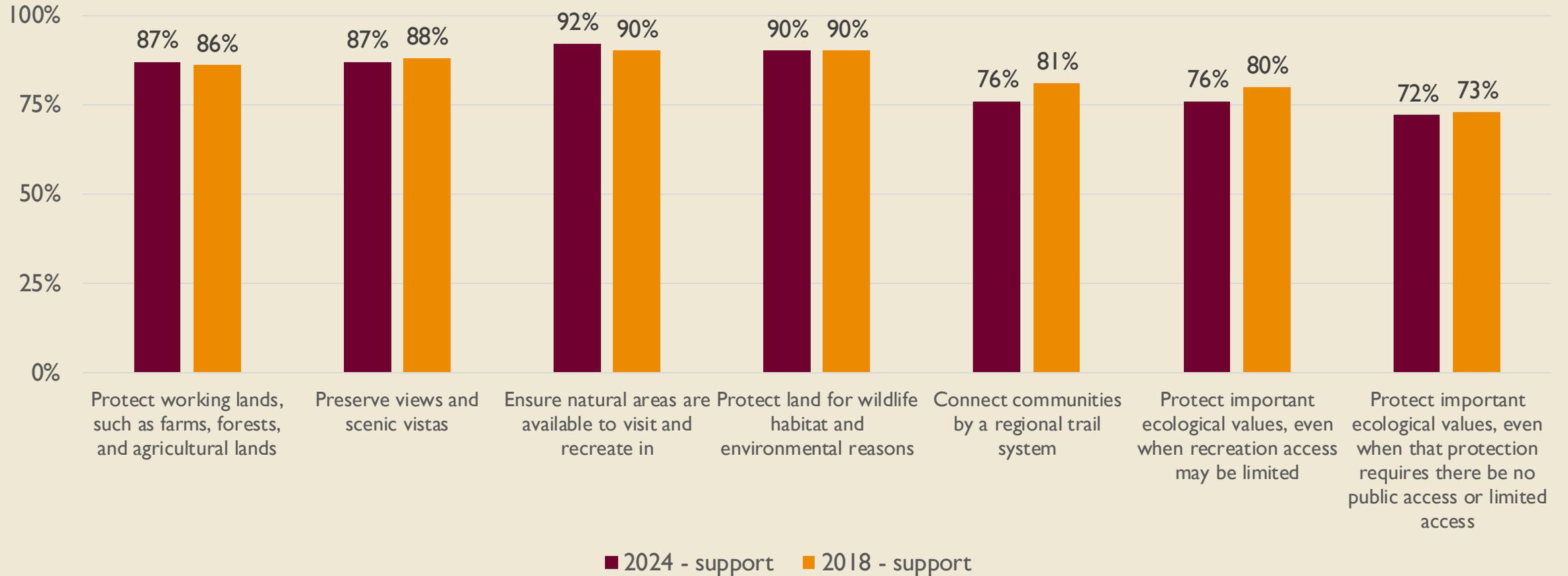
Support for connecting communities by a regional trail system, by place of residence



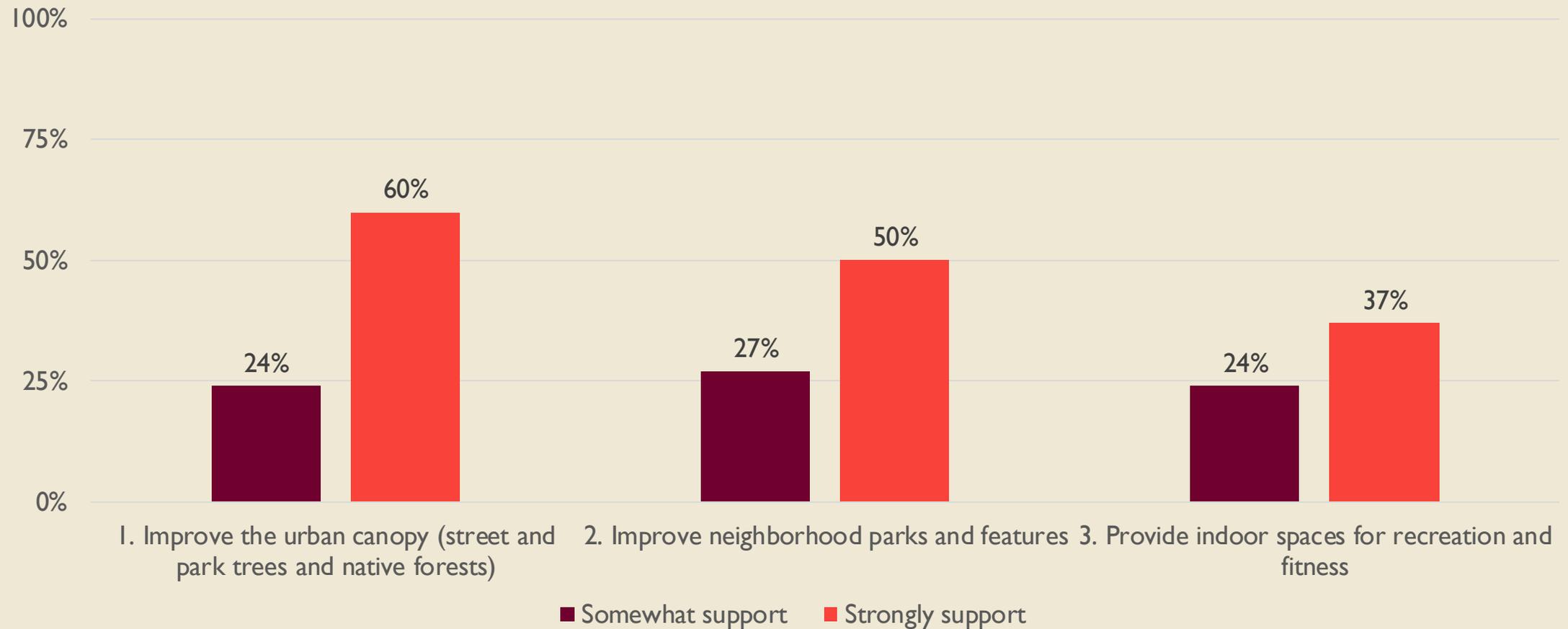
Support for connecting communities by a regional trail system, by home ownership



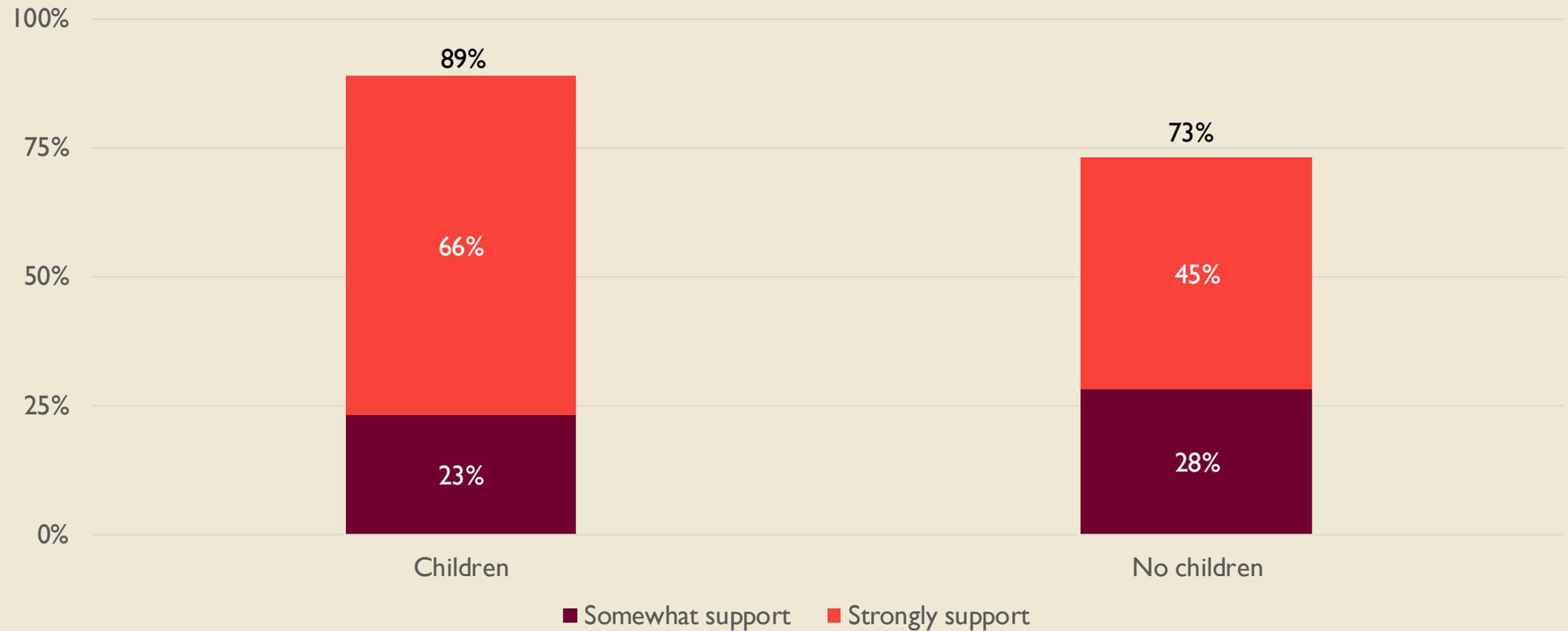
Ecologically focused policies – trends in resident support



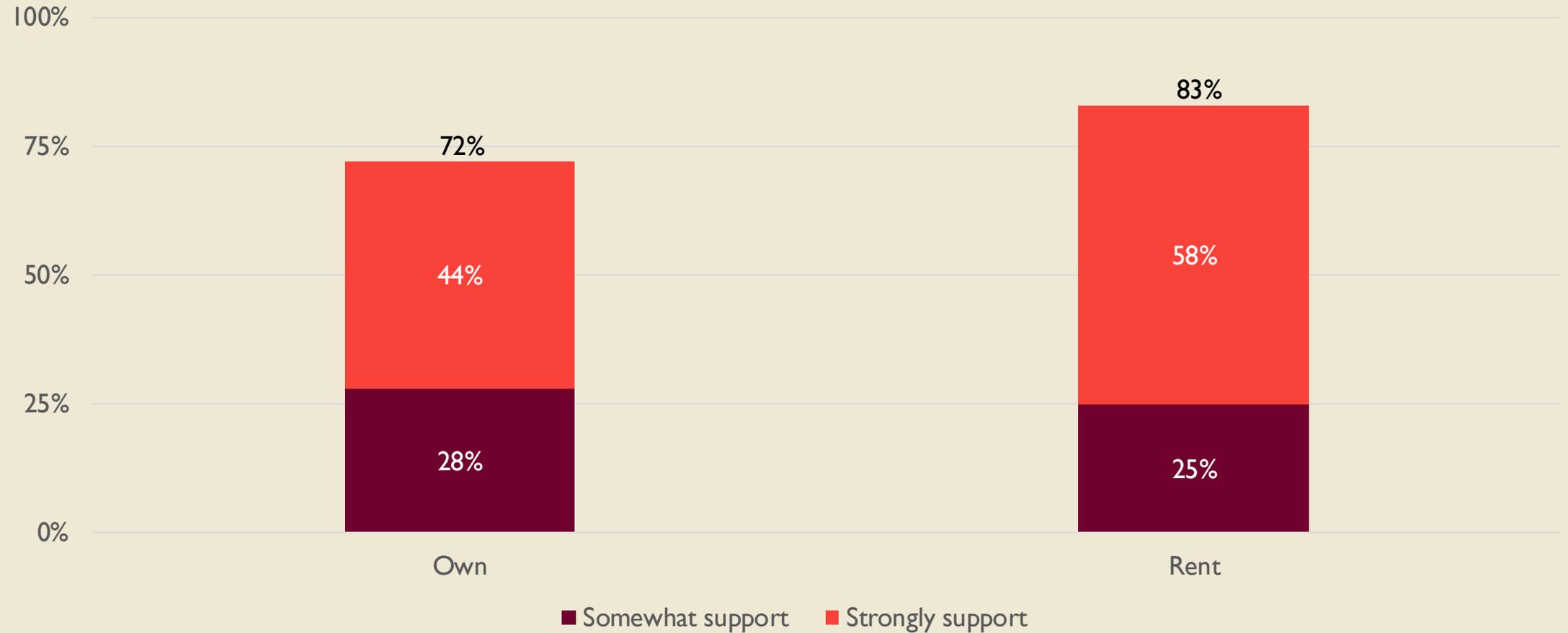
Possible Parks and Recreation Department actions – resident support



Support for improve neighborhood parks and features, by children in the household

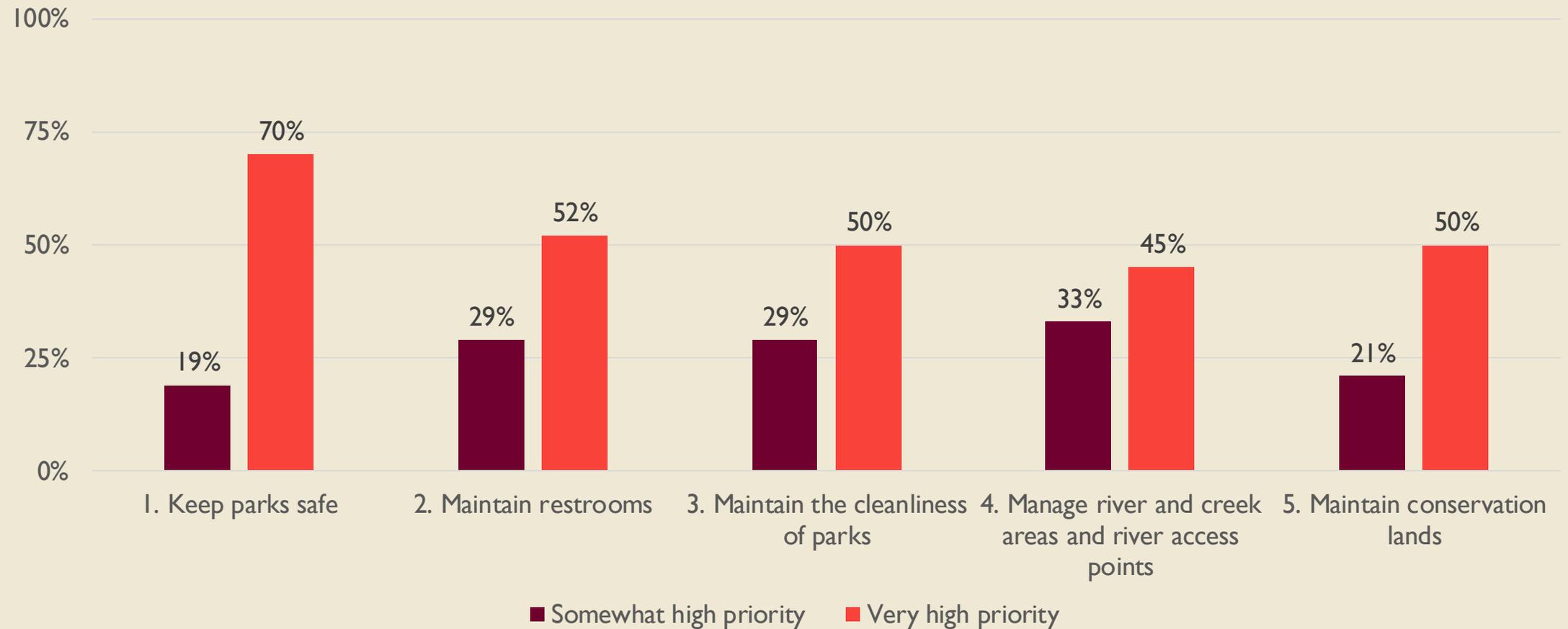


Support for improve neighborhood parks and features, by home ownership

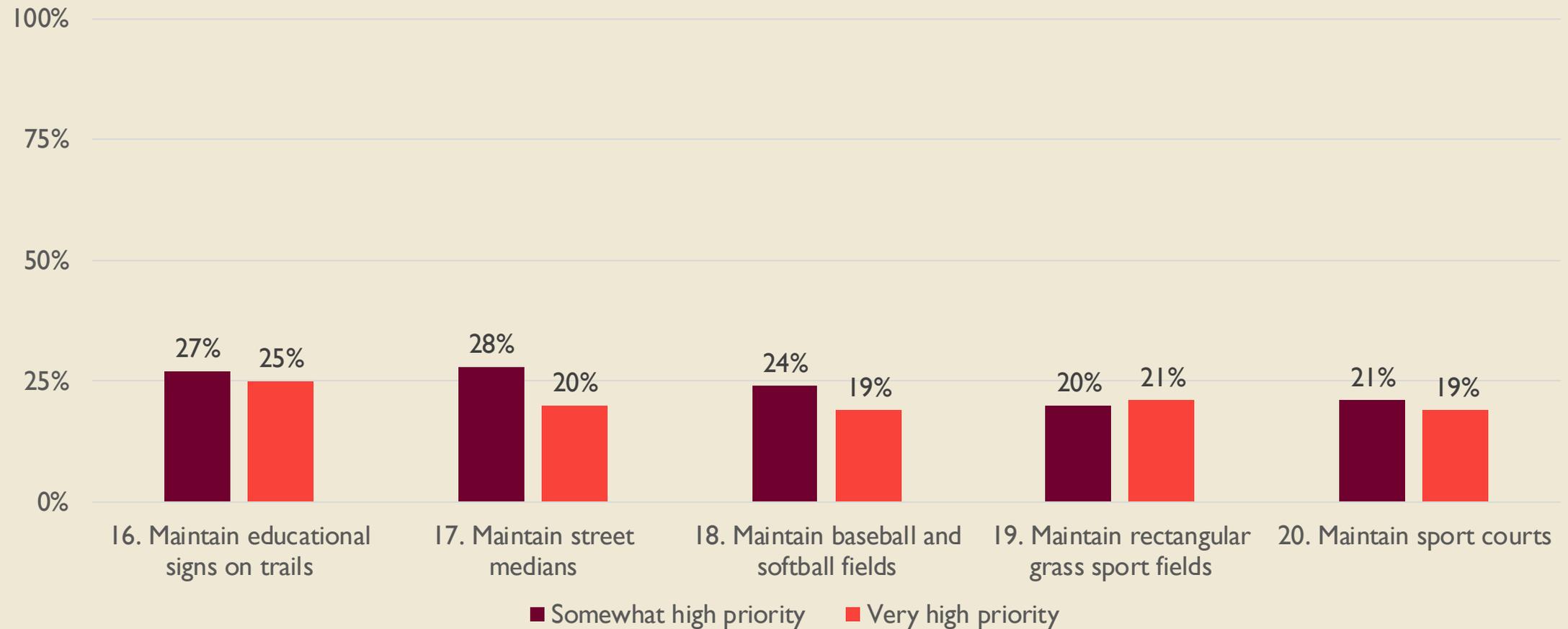


3. Parks and recreation-related maintenance priorities

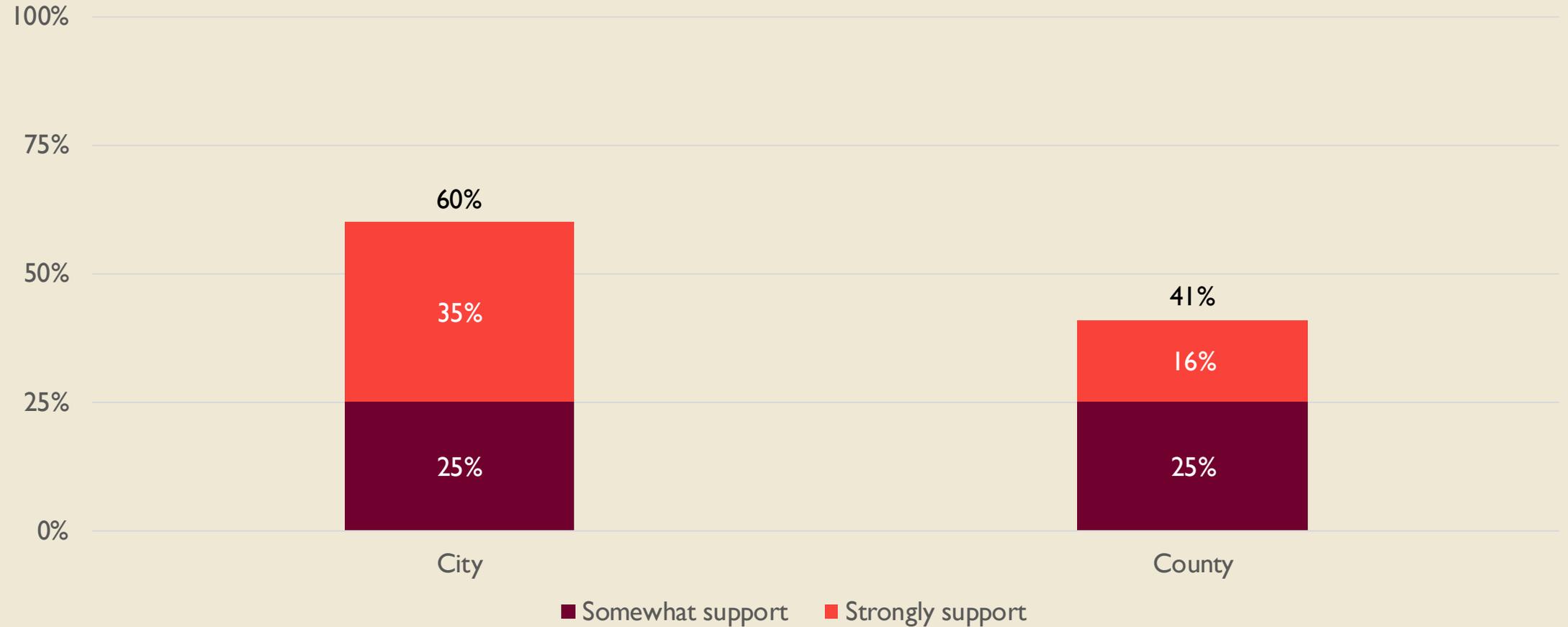
Maintenance priorities – top 5 resident priorities



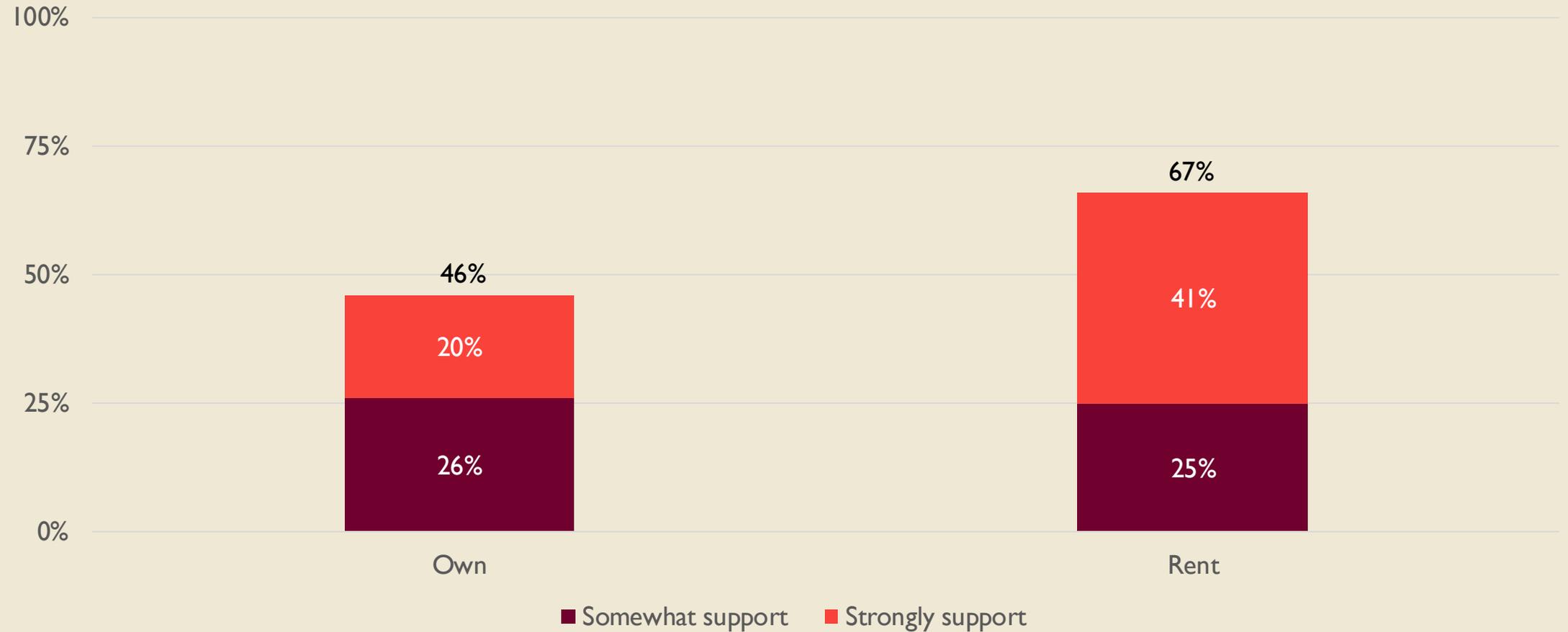
Maintenance priorities – bottom 5 resident priorities



Snow and ice removal on paved trails, by place of residence



Snow and ice removal on paved trails, by home ownership

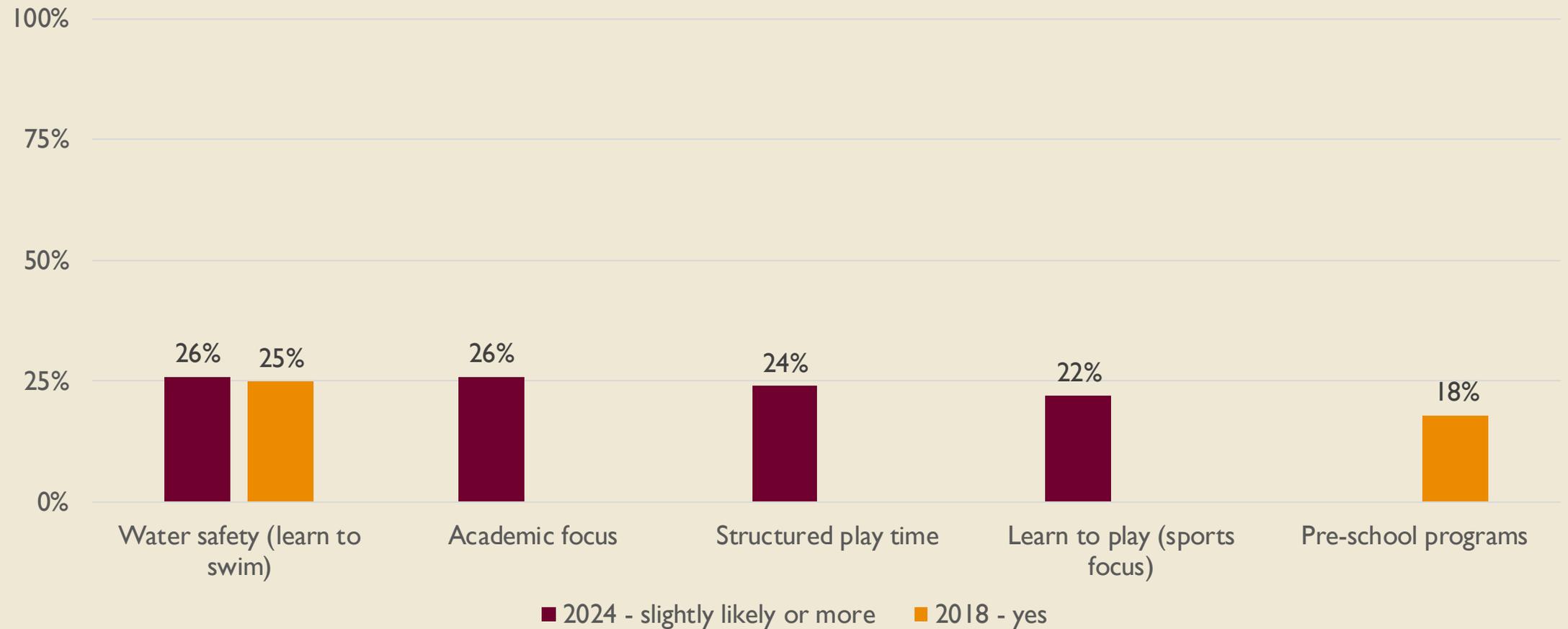


Maintenance priorities – resident trends

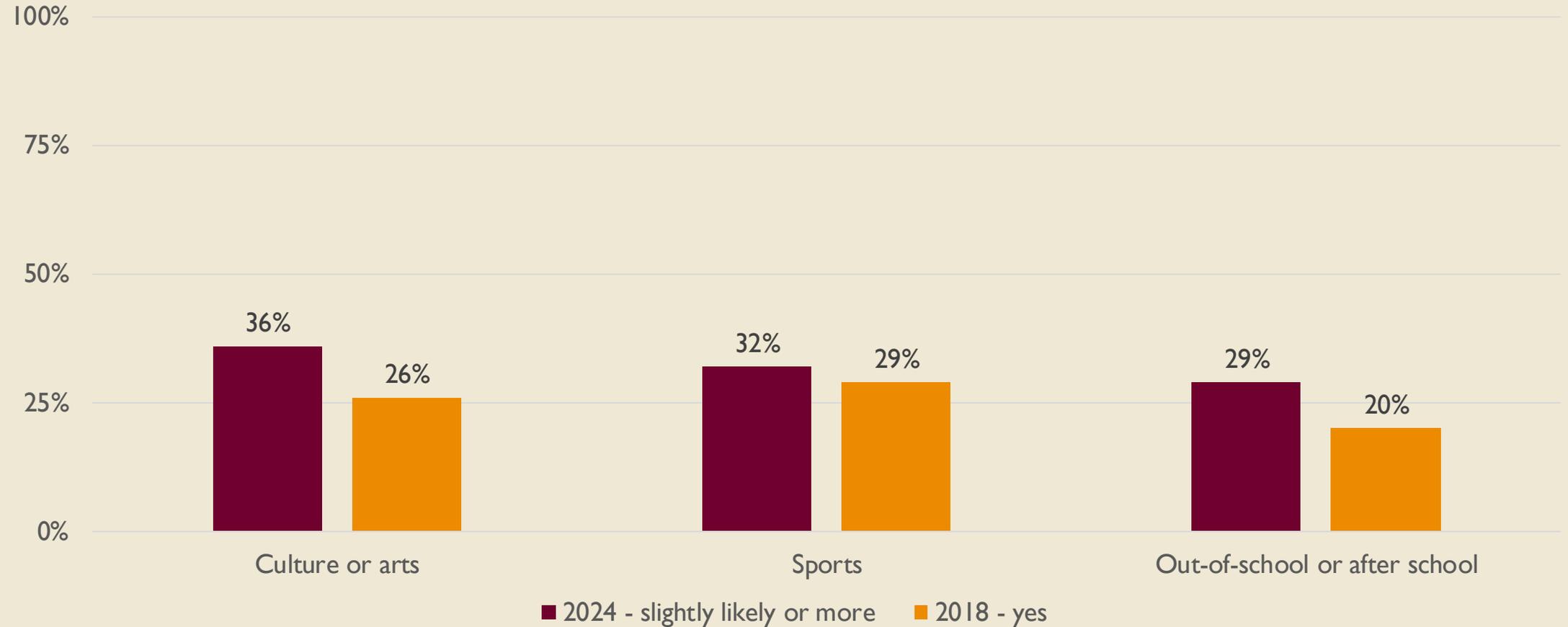
- 14 comparable types of maintenance between 2018 and 2024
- Maintenance priority questions changed in 2024 from 2018
- Ability to compare is limited
- Maintain open space trailheads increased three places in priority rank from 2018 to 2024
- Manage invasive weeds on public lands decreased three places in priority rank from 2018 to 2024

4. Potential parks and recreation program use

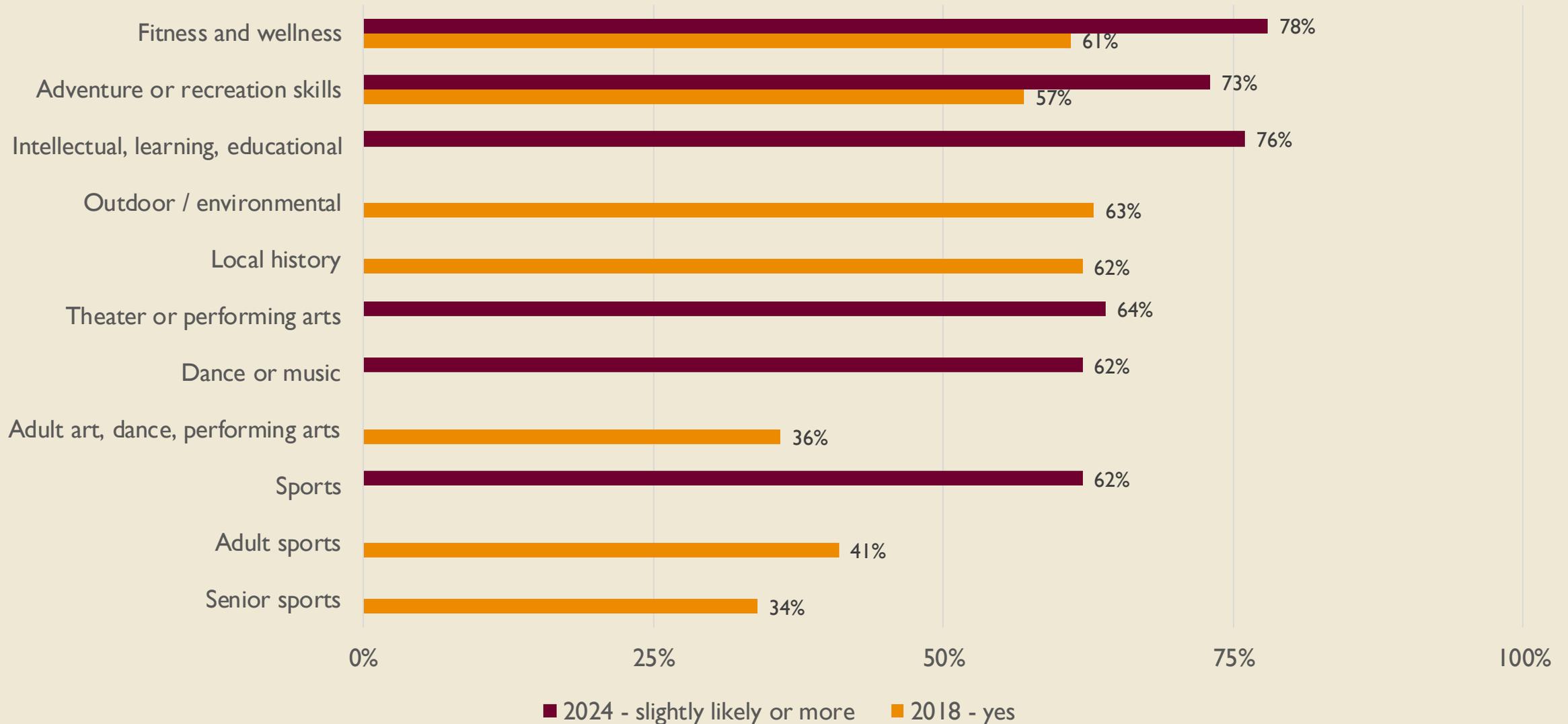
Household likelihood of pre-kindergarten program use



Household likelihood of youth or teen program use

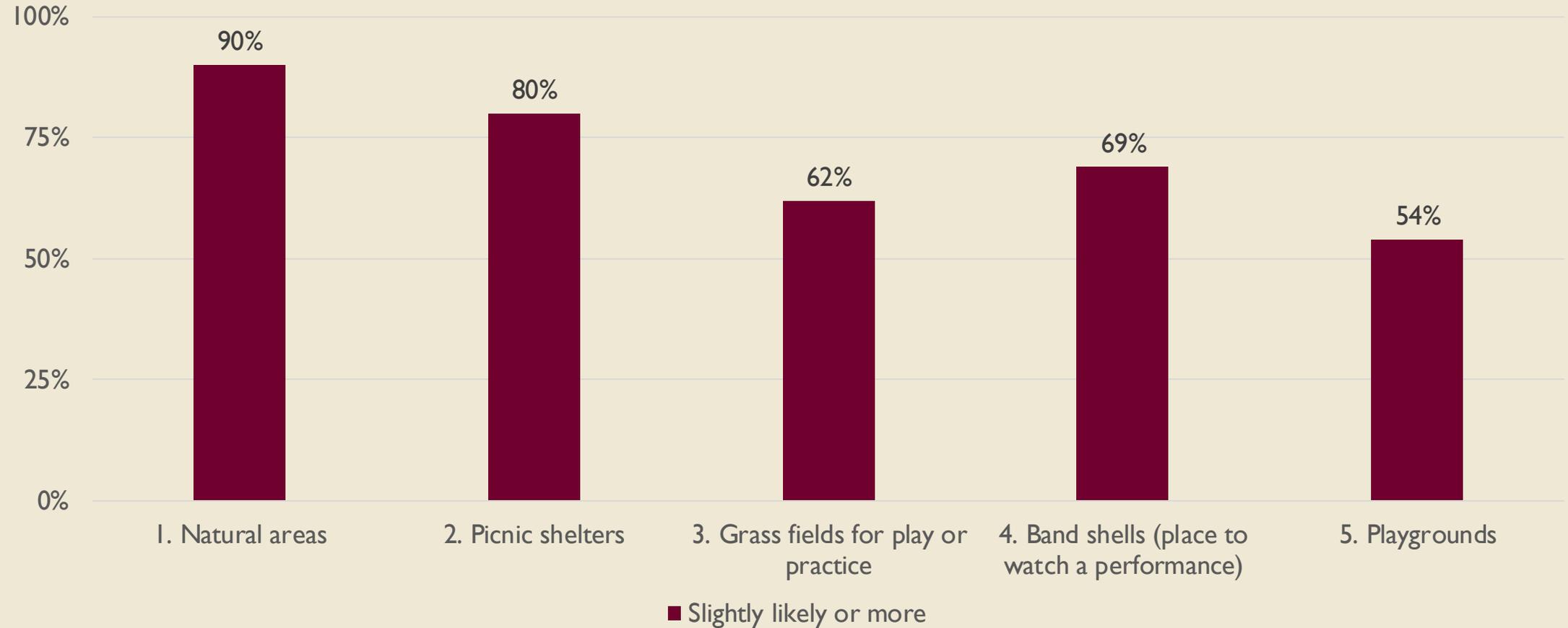


Household likelihood of adult or older adult program use

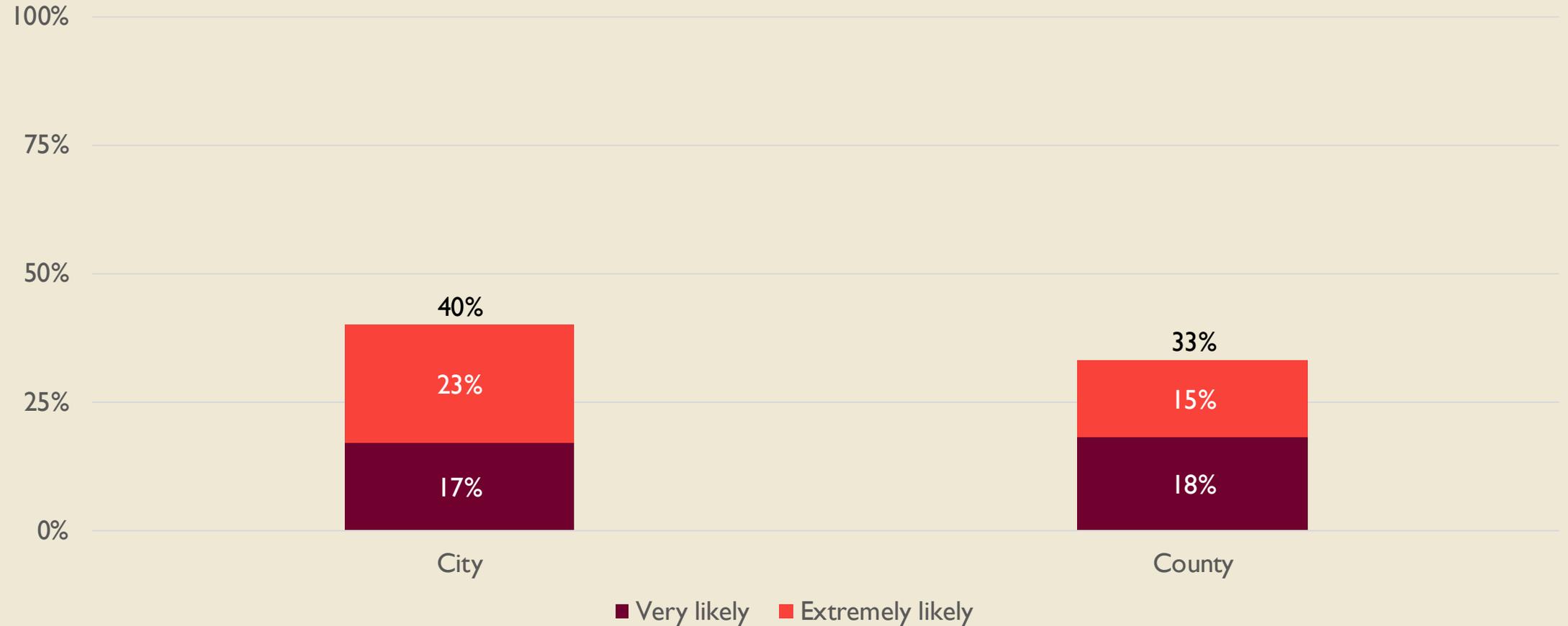


5. Potential parks and recreation
facility or feature use

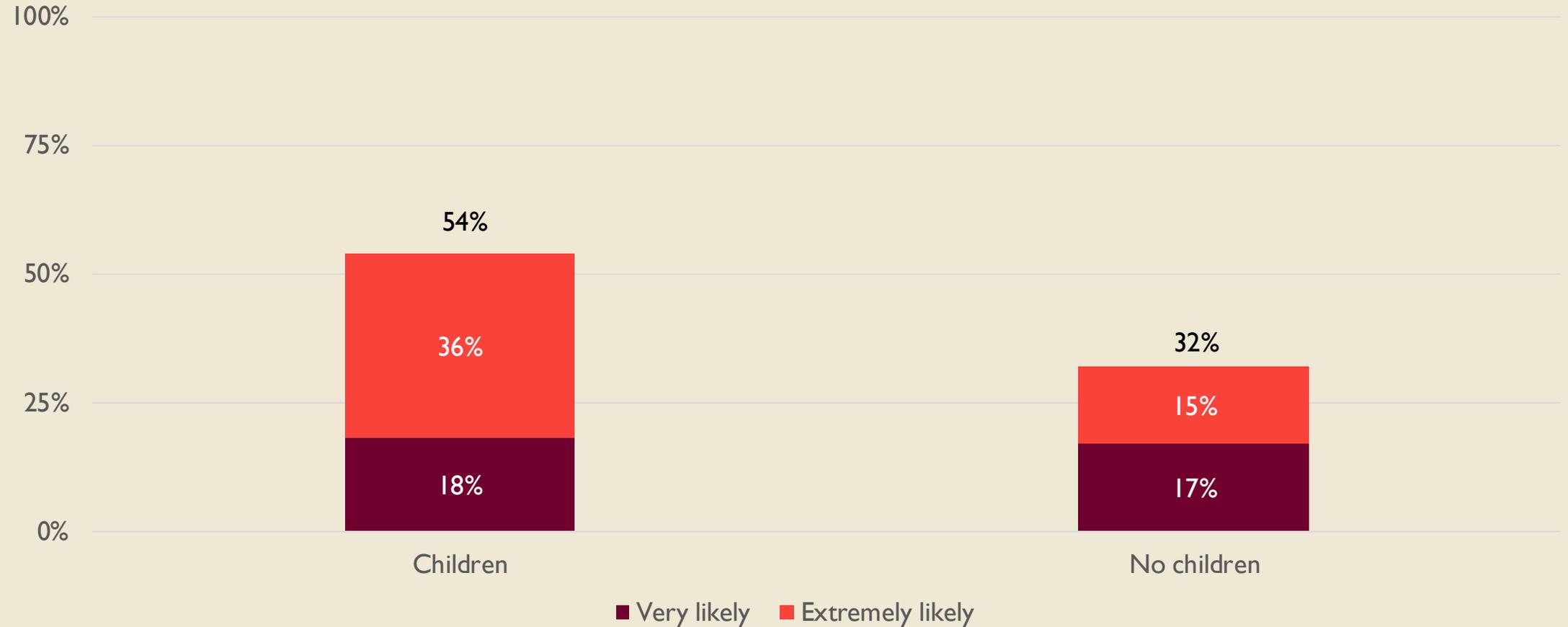
Household likelihood of local (neighborhood) park feature use – top 5



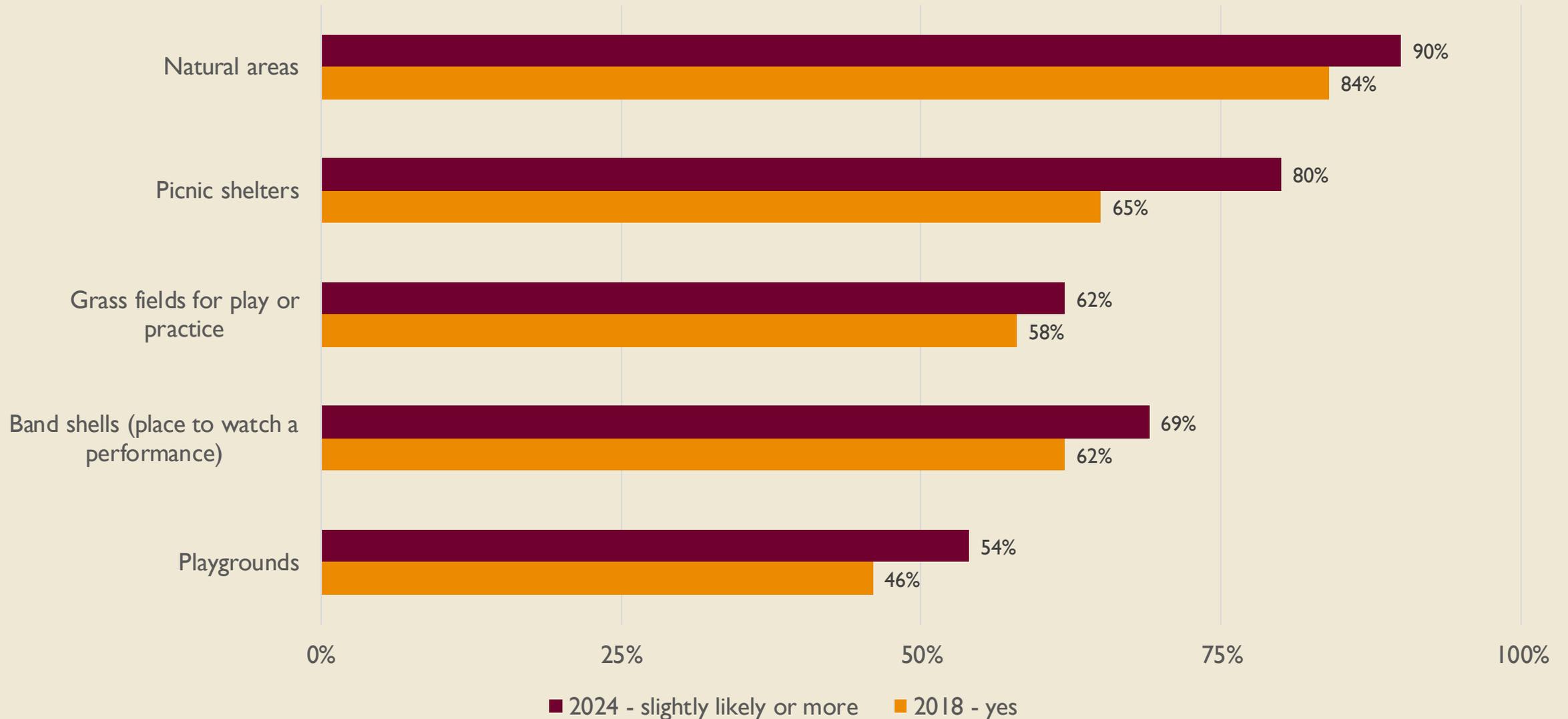
Household likelihood of picnic shelter use, by place of residence



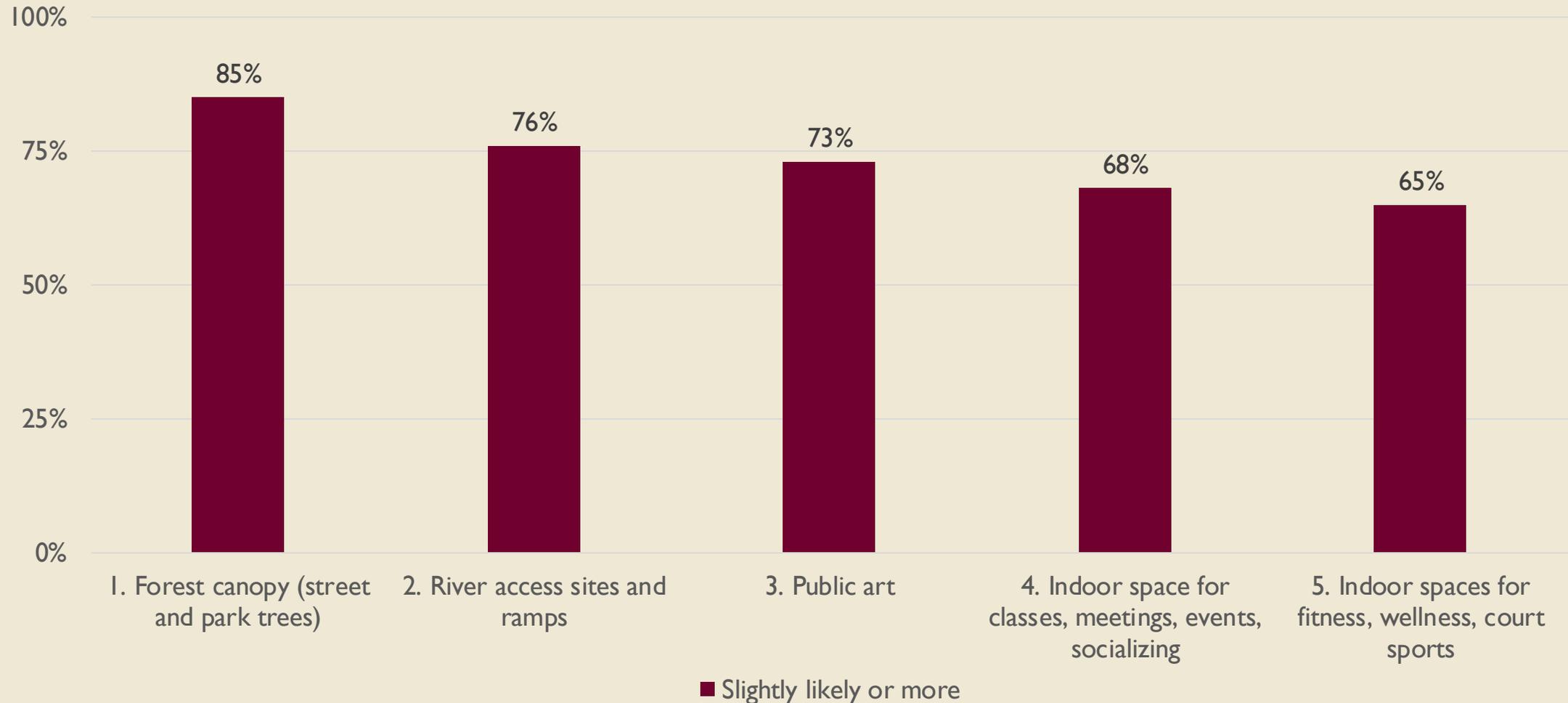
Household likelihood of picnic shelter use, by children in the household



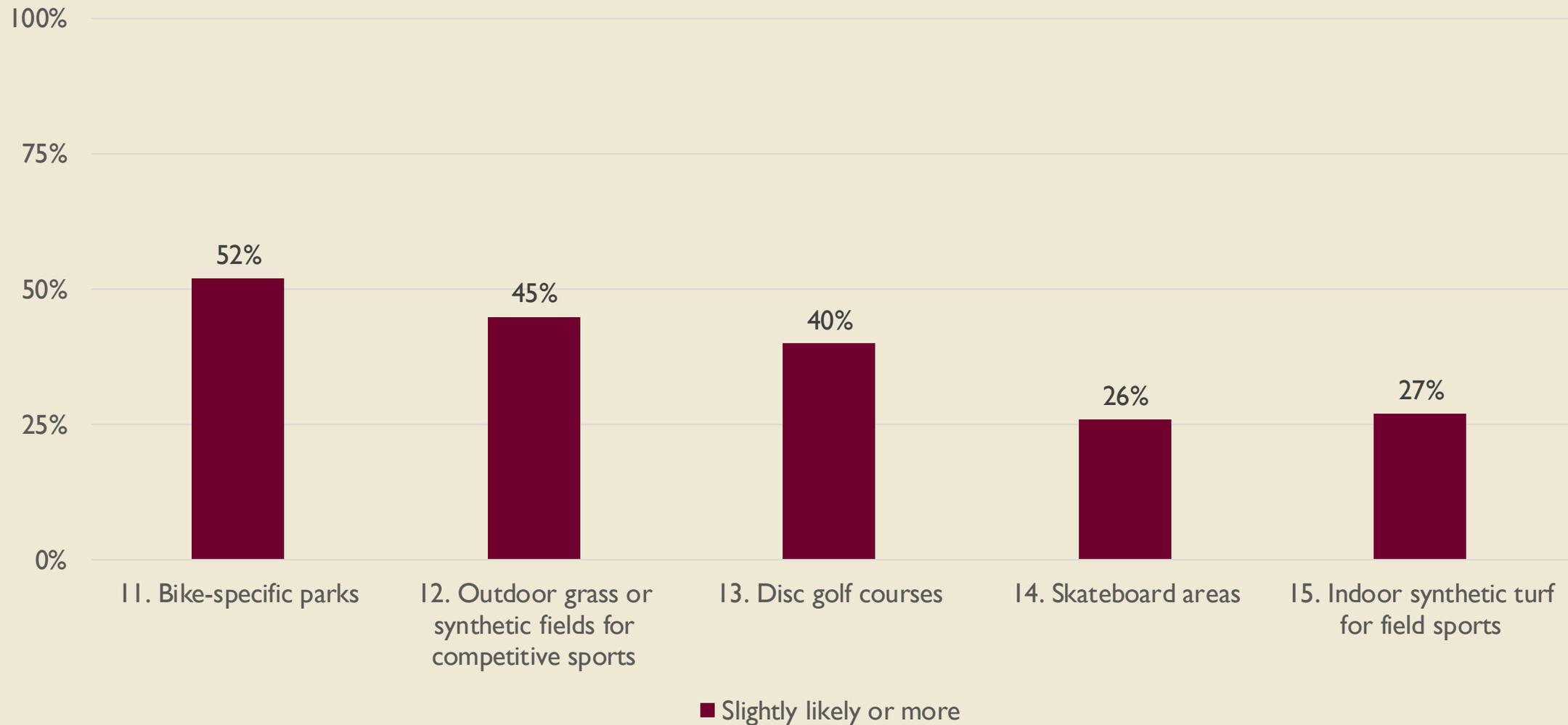
Household likelihood of local (neighborhood) park feature use - trends



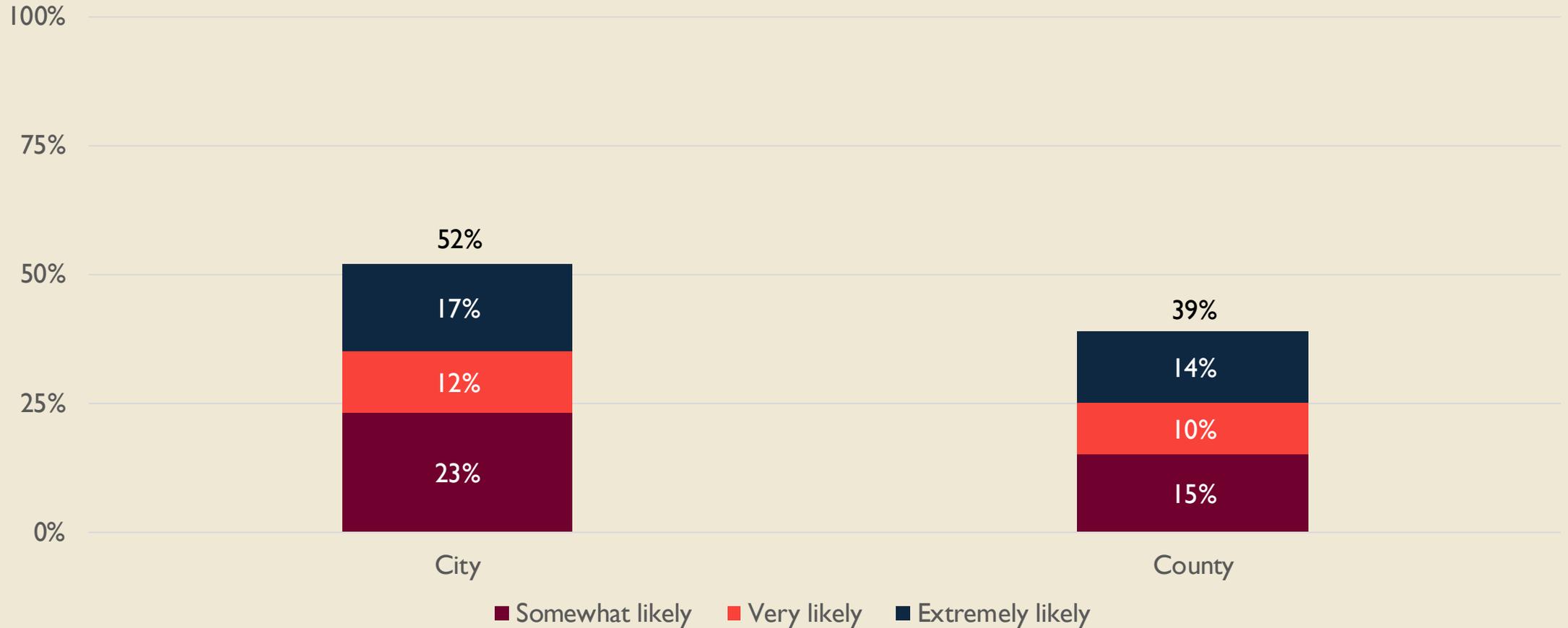
Household likelihood of community or regional park feature use – top 5



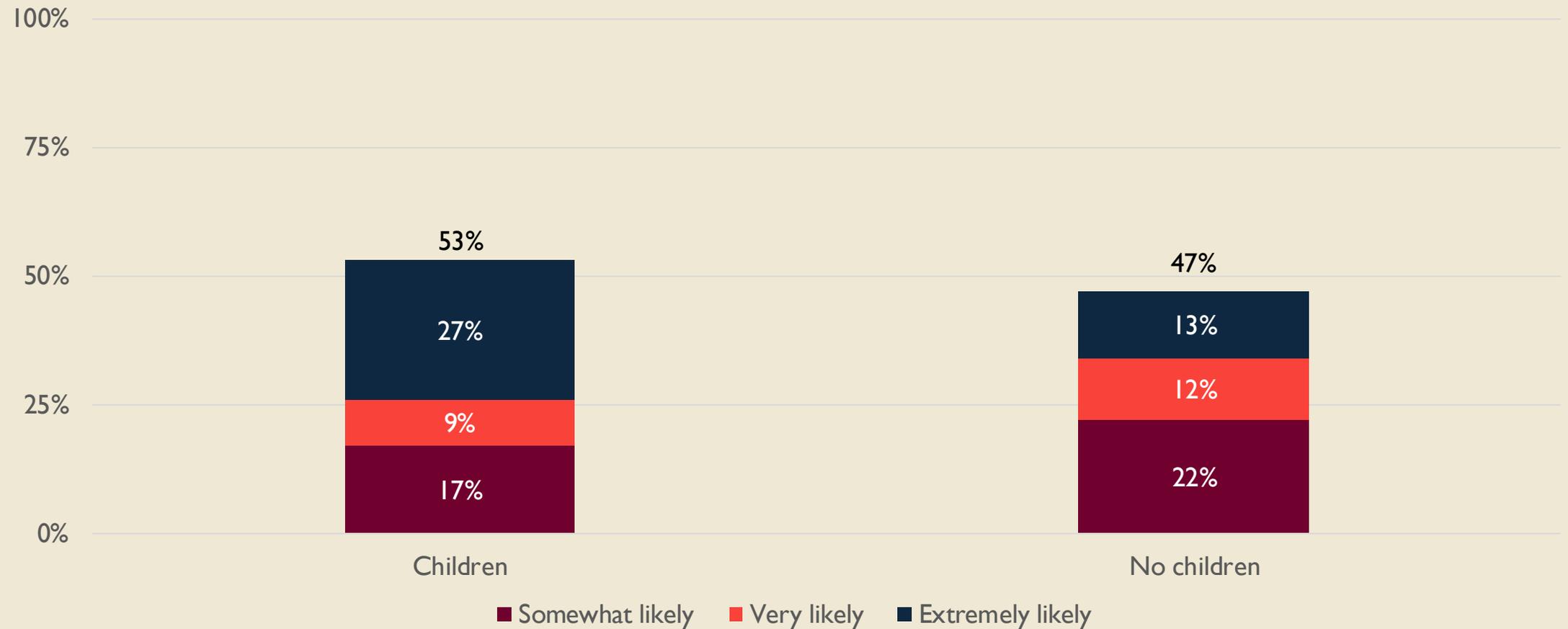
Household likelihood of community or regional park feature use – bottom 5



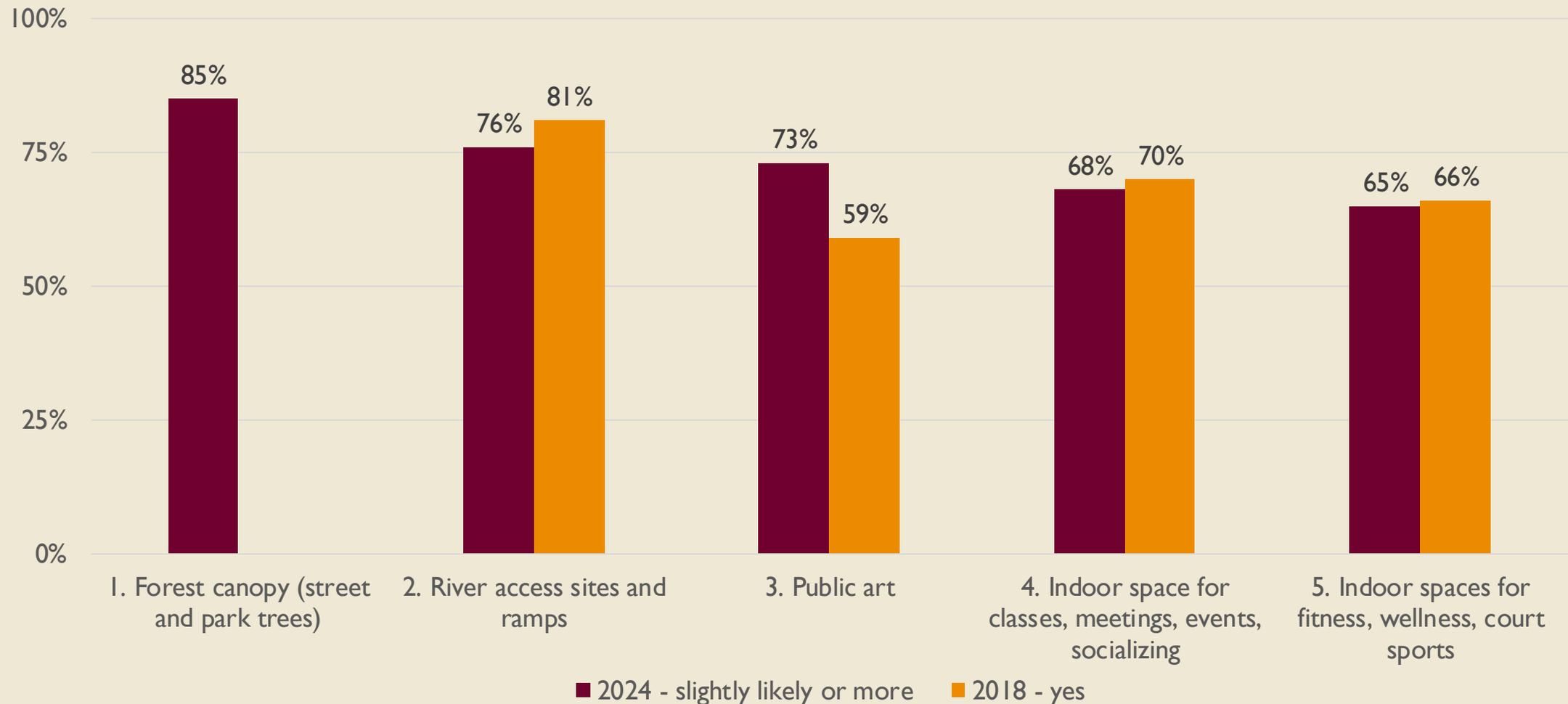
Household likelihood of use of indoor spaces for fitness, wellness, court sports, by place of residence



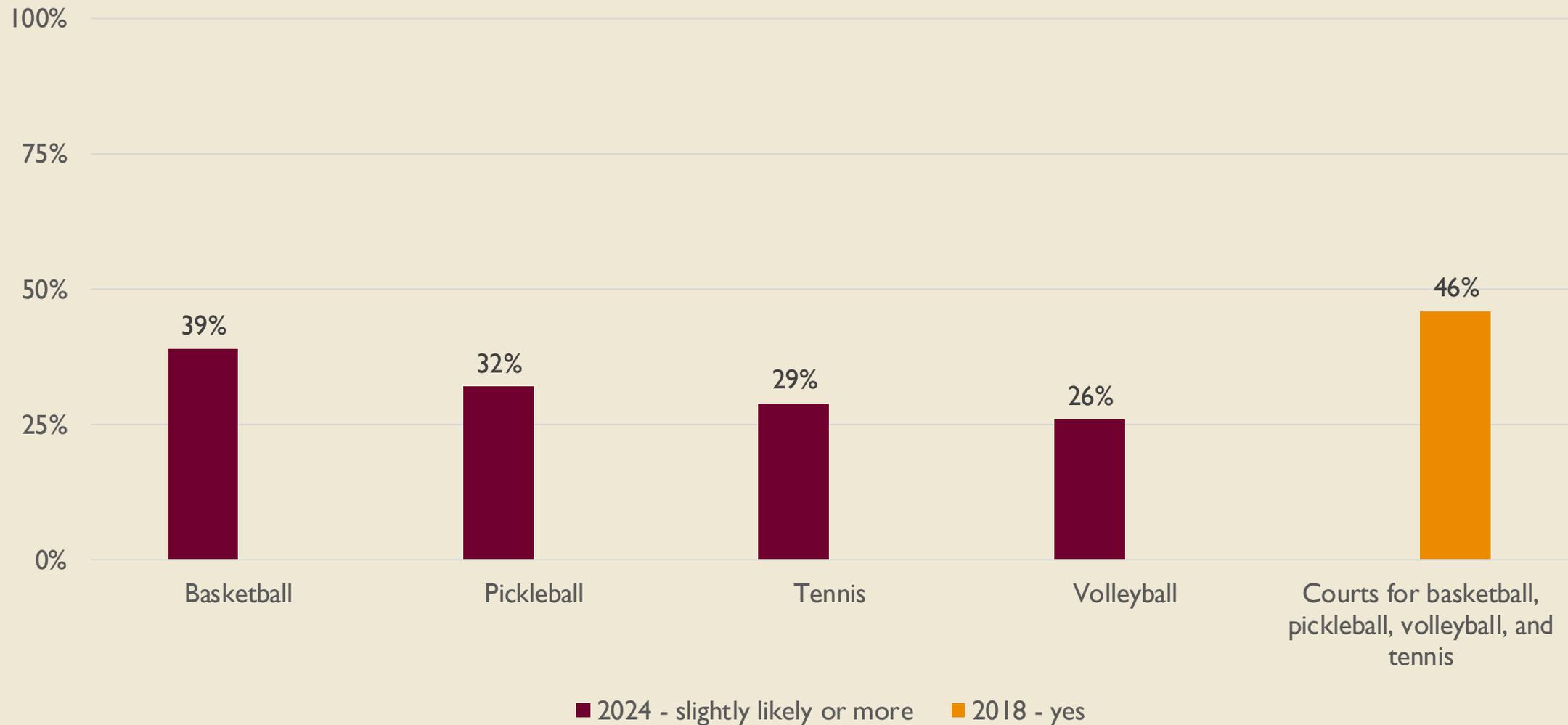
Household likelihood of use of indoor spaces for fitness, wellness, court sports, by children in the household



Household likelihood of community or regional park feature use – top 5 trends

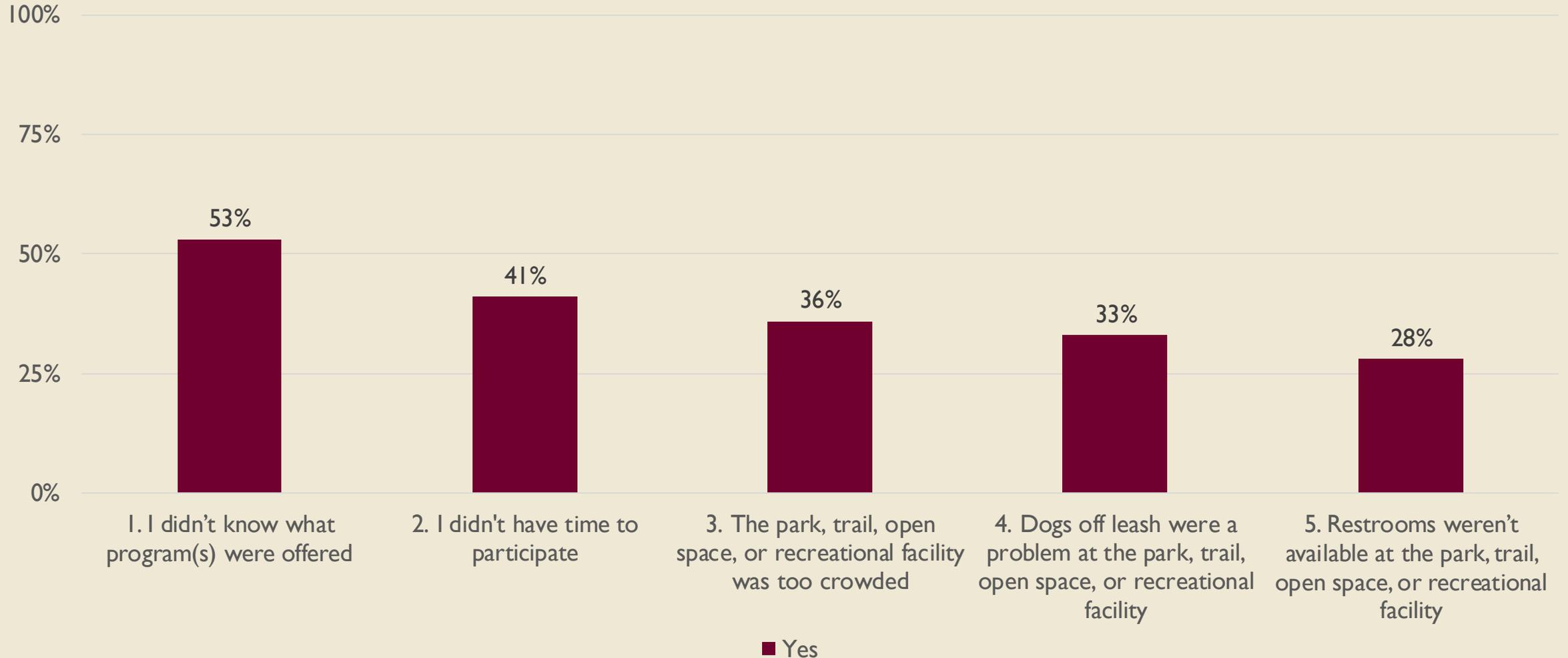


Household likelihood of outdoor sport court use

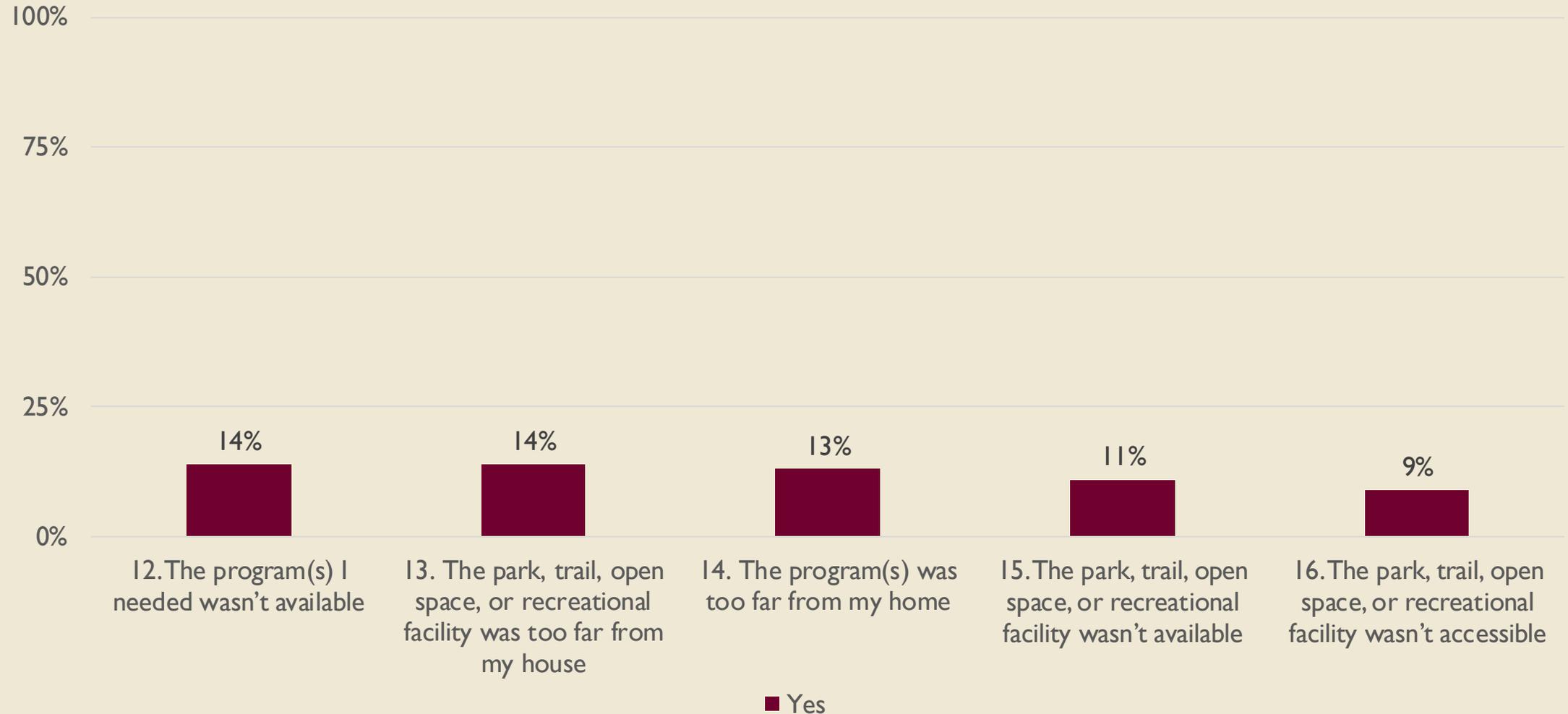


6. Barriers to program or facility use

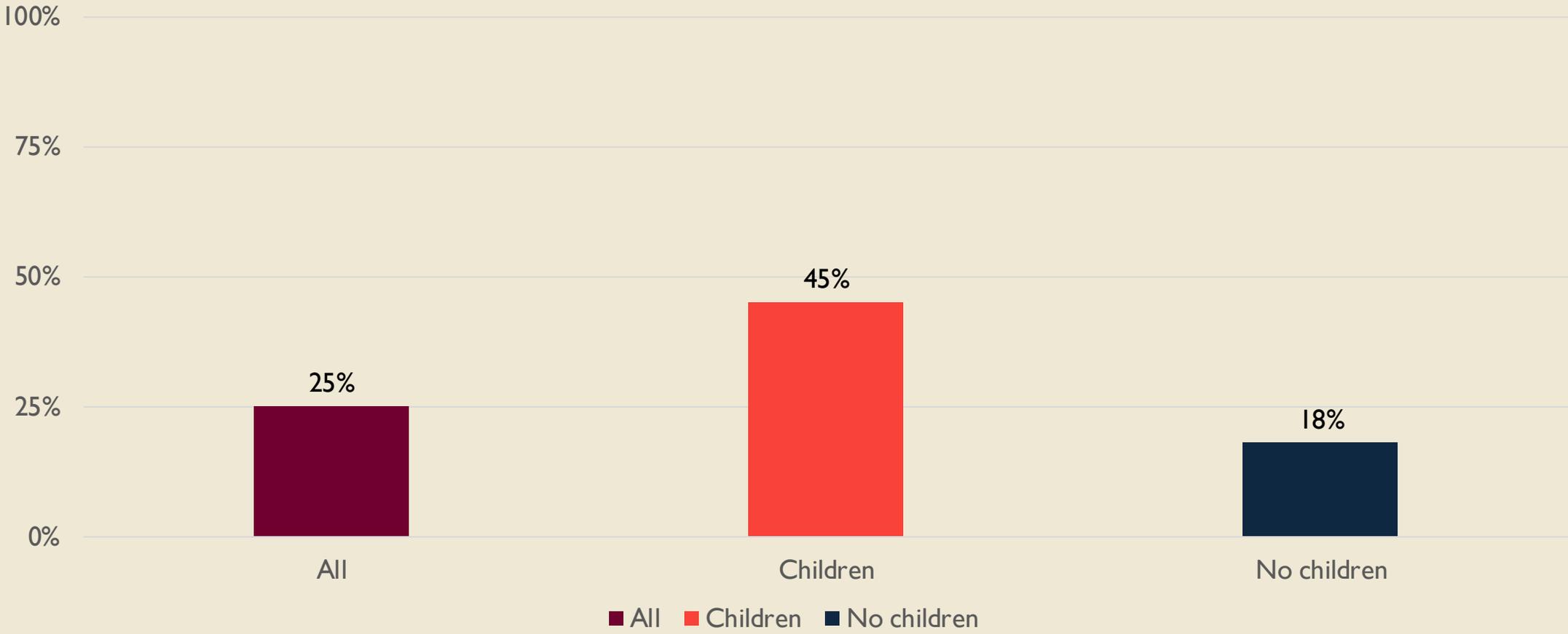
Barriers to a household's use of a City of Missoula program – top 5



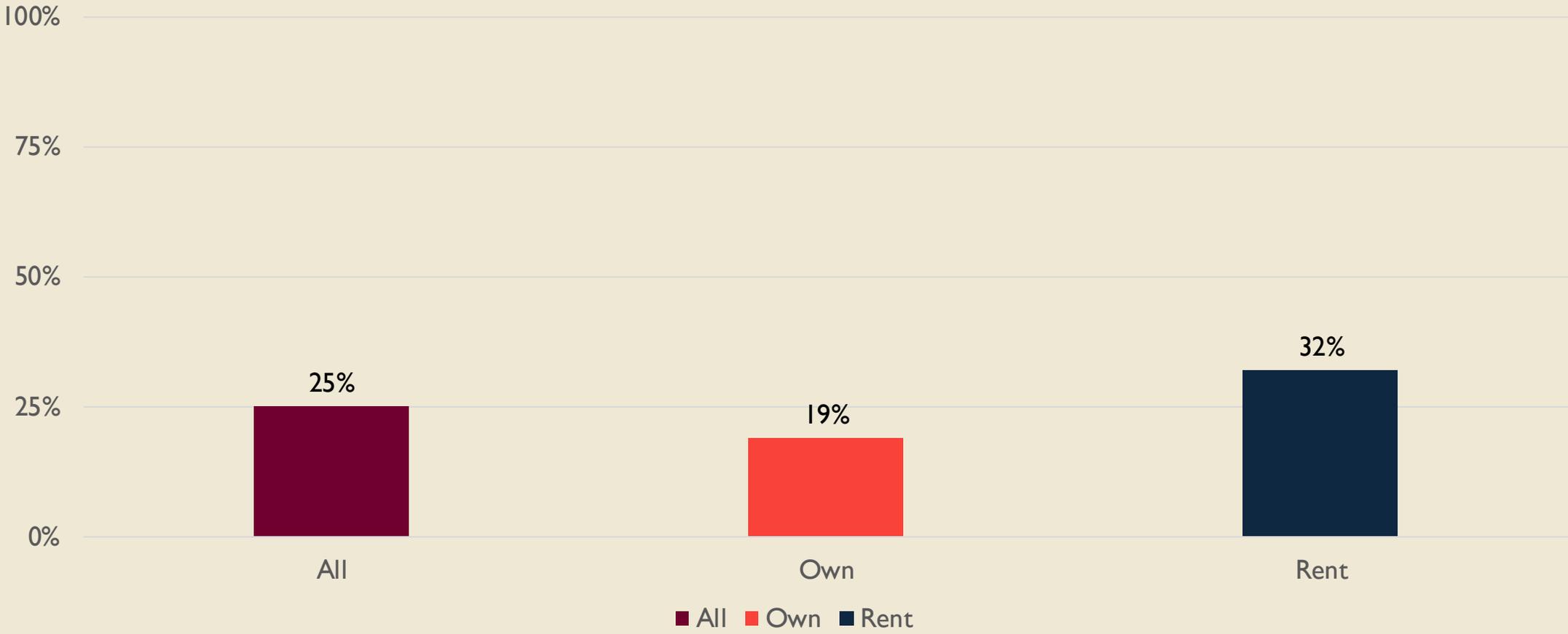
Barriers to a household's use of a City of Missoula program – bottom 5



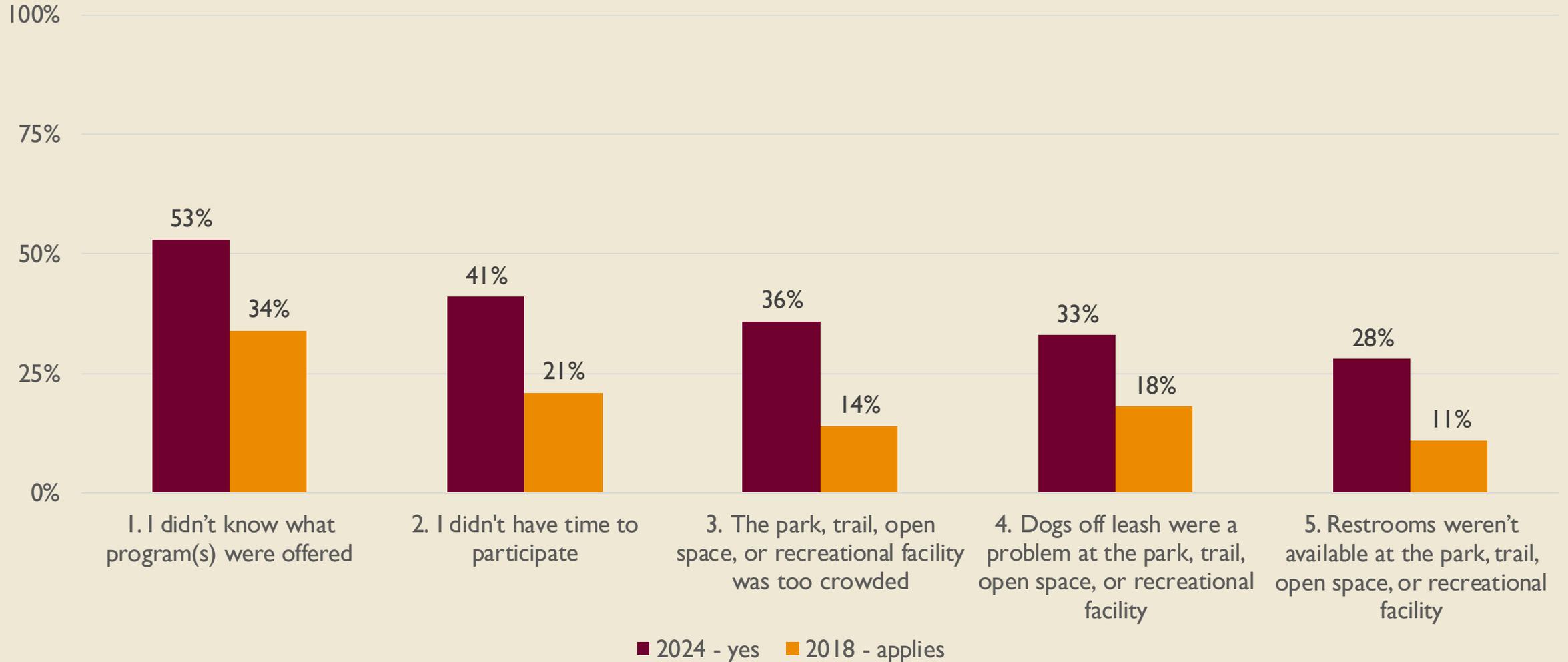
The program I (we) needed was too expensive, by children in the household



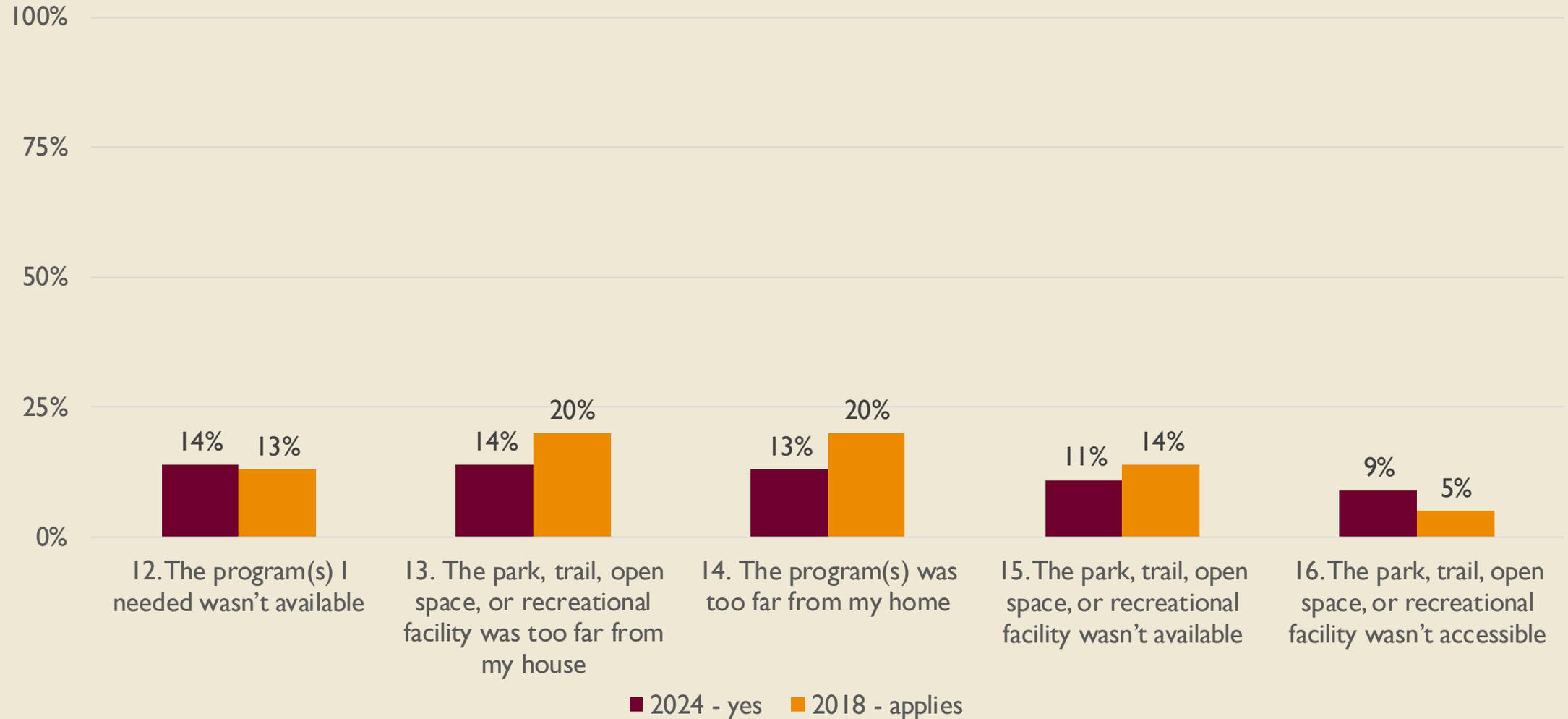
The program I (we) needed was too expensive, by home ownership



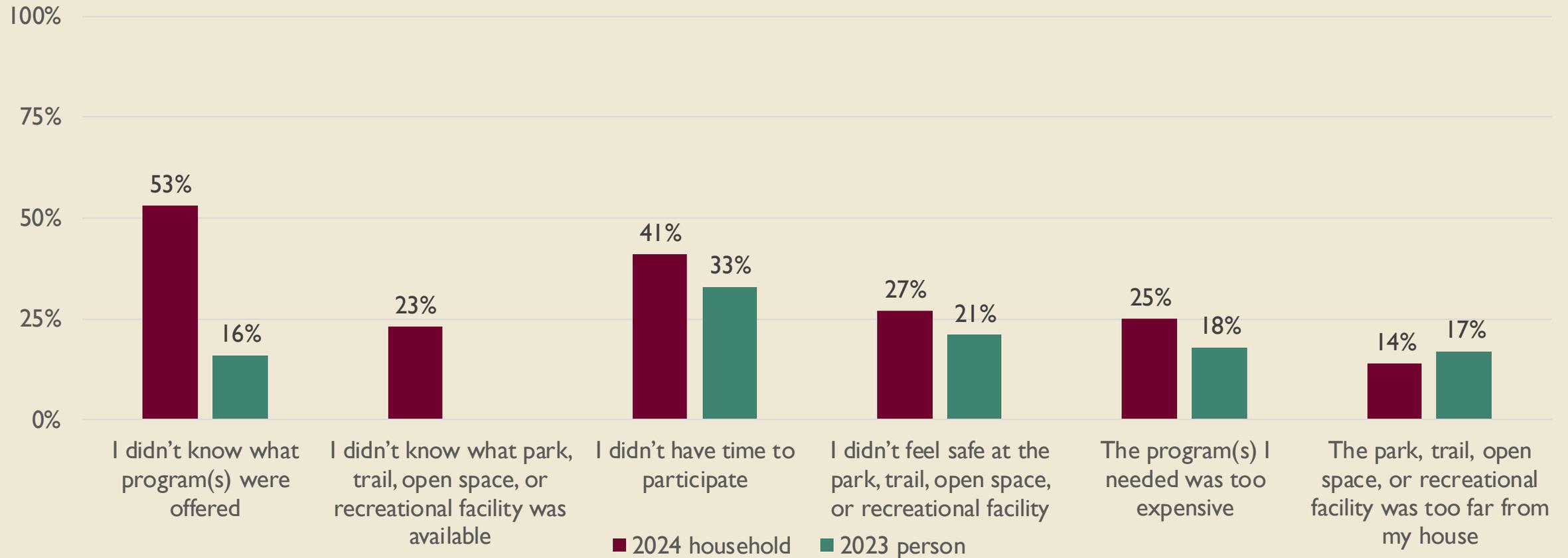
Barriers to a household's use of a City of Missoula program – top 5 trends



Barriers to a household's use of a City of Missoula program – bottom 5 trends



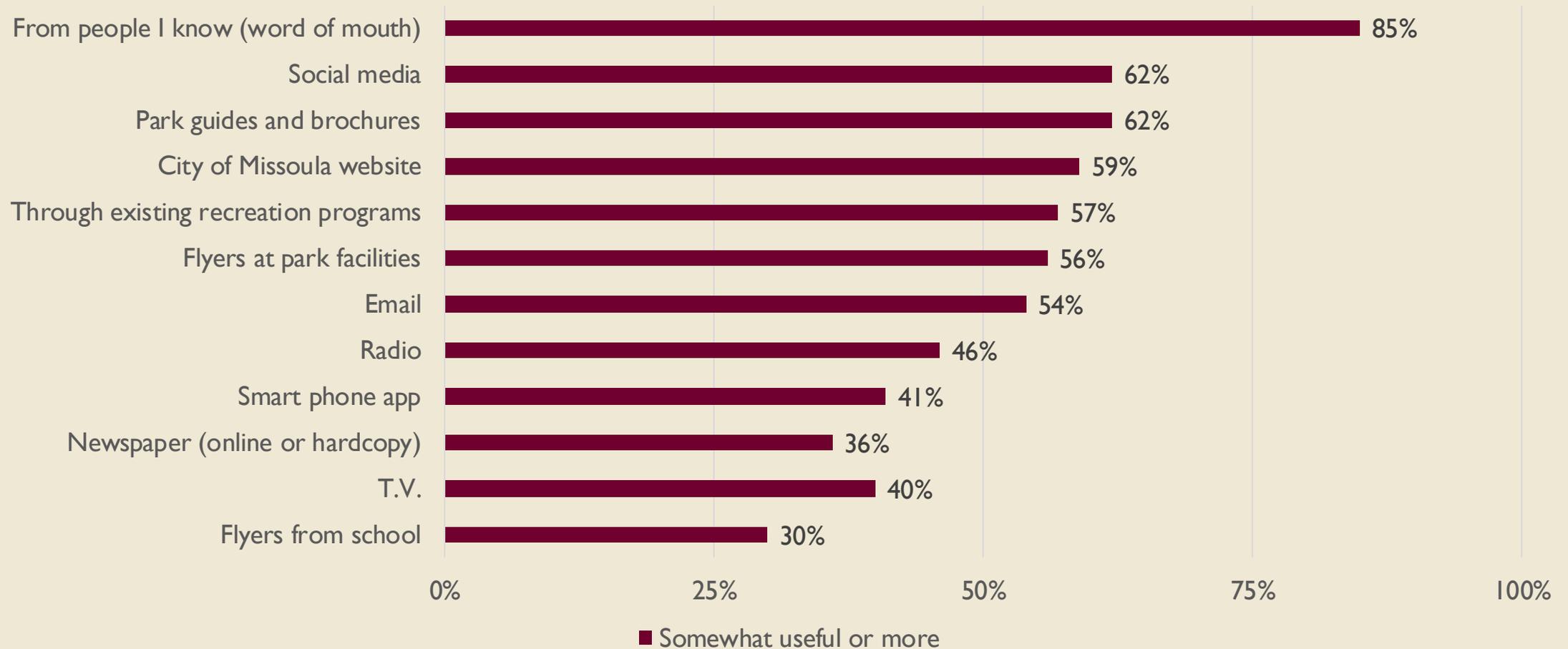
2024 Missoula-area experiences with barriers compared to 2023 United States experiences with barriers



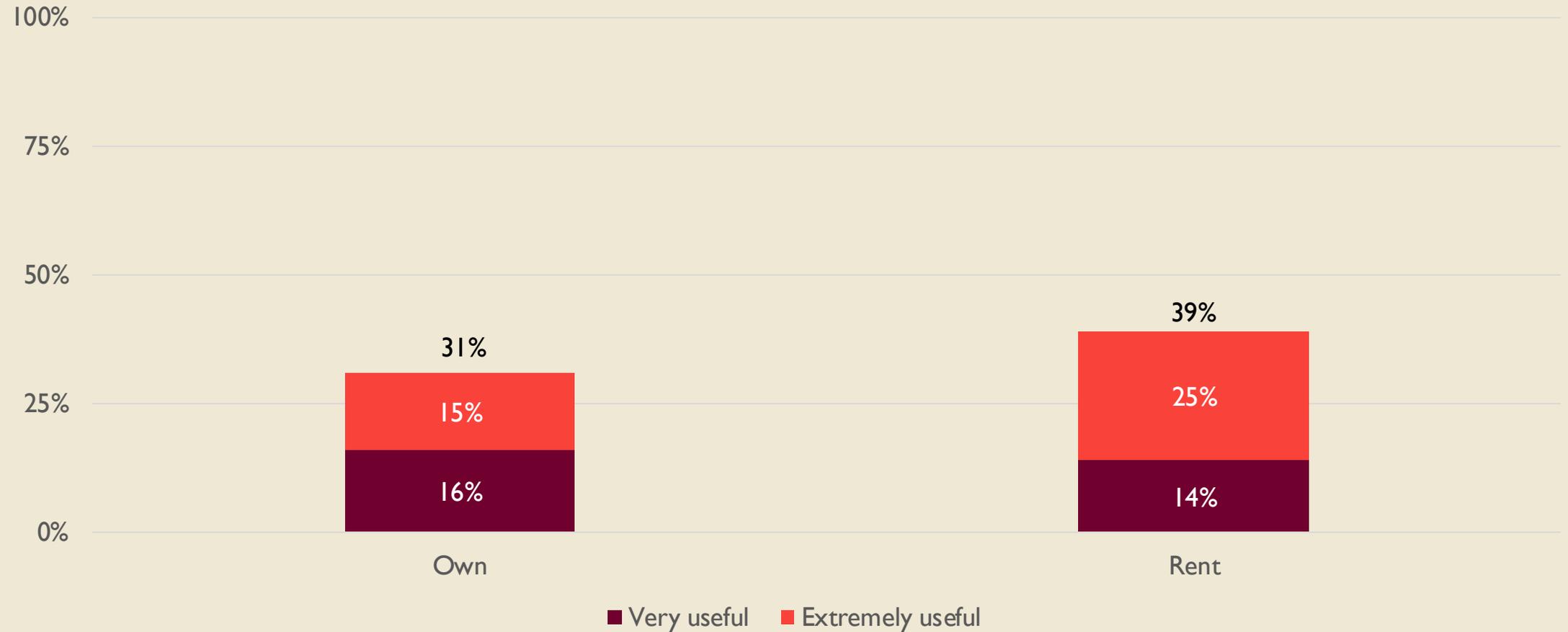
Source: National Recreation and Park Association. (2023). 2023 Engagement with Parks Report. Ashburn, VA: National Recreation and Park Association.

7. Communication channel usefulness

Usefulness of communication channels to a household



Usefulness of social media, by home ownership



Usefulness of communication channels – household trends

- 11 comparable types of communication channel between 2018 and 2024
- Communication channel questions changed in 2024 from 2018
- Ability to compare is limited
- Social media increased three places in rank from 2018 to 2024
- Flyers at park facilities increased three places in rank from 2018 to 2024
- Newspapers decreased five places in rank from 2018 to 2024
- Email decreased three places in rank from 2018 to 2024

8. Additional items emphasized

Additional items emphasized by residents

	Emphasized (% Missoula-area adults)
Enjoys parks or open spaces	4%
Enjoys trails	4%
Other positive or complimentary statement	11%
Neutral statement	1%
Maintenance or cleanliness improvements needed	15%
Homeless individuals/challenges and perceptions	13%
Improve safety, improve law, or rule enforcement	8%
Open or natural spaces improvements needed	8%
Programs or activities improvements needed	6%
Trail improvements needed	4%
Tax concerns	3%
Parking or traffic improvements needed	1%
Other improvements needed	10%

Additional items emphasized – resident trends

50 most used words in 2024



50 most used words in 2018



Artist-Led Engagement



Adults 55+

- Important to be able to stay active all year round, including during the winter
- Need for more restroom facilities and for restrooms to be open year round
- Would like more volunteer opportunities and would like to be involved in community
- Need a place nearby to get out and enjoy nature
- More covered places for picnics, gathering spaces, etc.
- Little spaces, like pocket parks, are important

Indigenous

- Want to see Indigenous cultures represented in Missoula
 - Plantings, like Bitterroot
 - Place names in Salish and Kootenai
- Work with Elders on important decisions
- Tell Indigenous stories through place
- Ensure that indigenous community members do not feel like visitors
- Resiliency and climate change is important

LGBTQIA+

- Need for more adult-focused recreation
 - Adult recreation sports leagues
 - Adult focused aquatic times
 - Adult mixer events

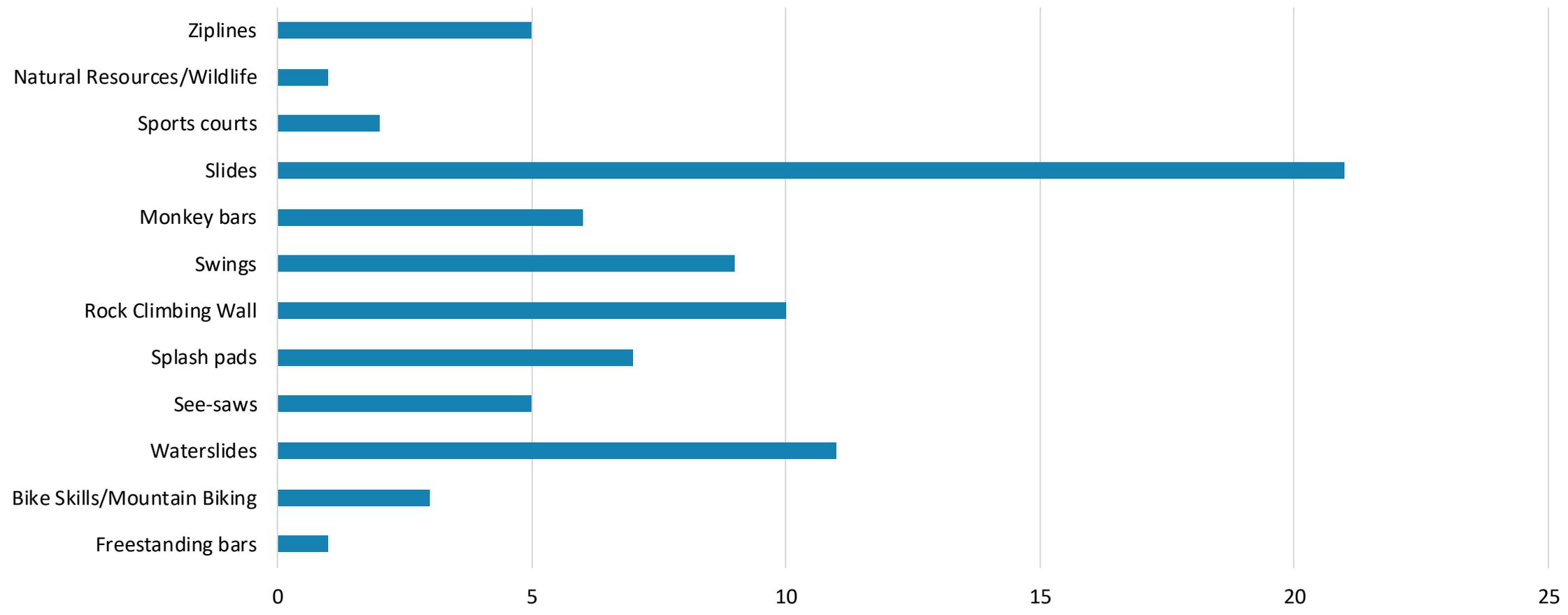


LGBTQIA+

- Barriers around knowing what is happening
 - Parks and Rec website can be hard to navigate
 - Insurance requirements can present a barrier
 - Too many restrictions on rentals and cost is high



Youth



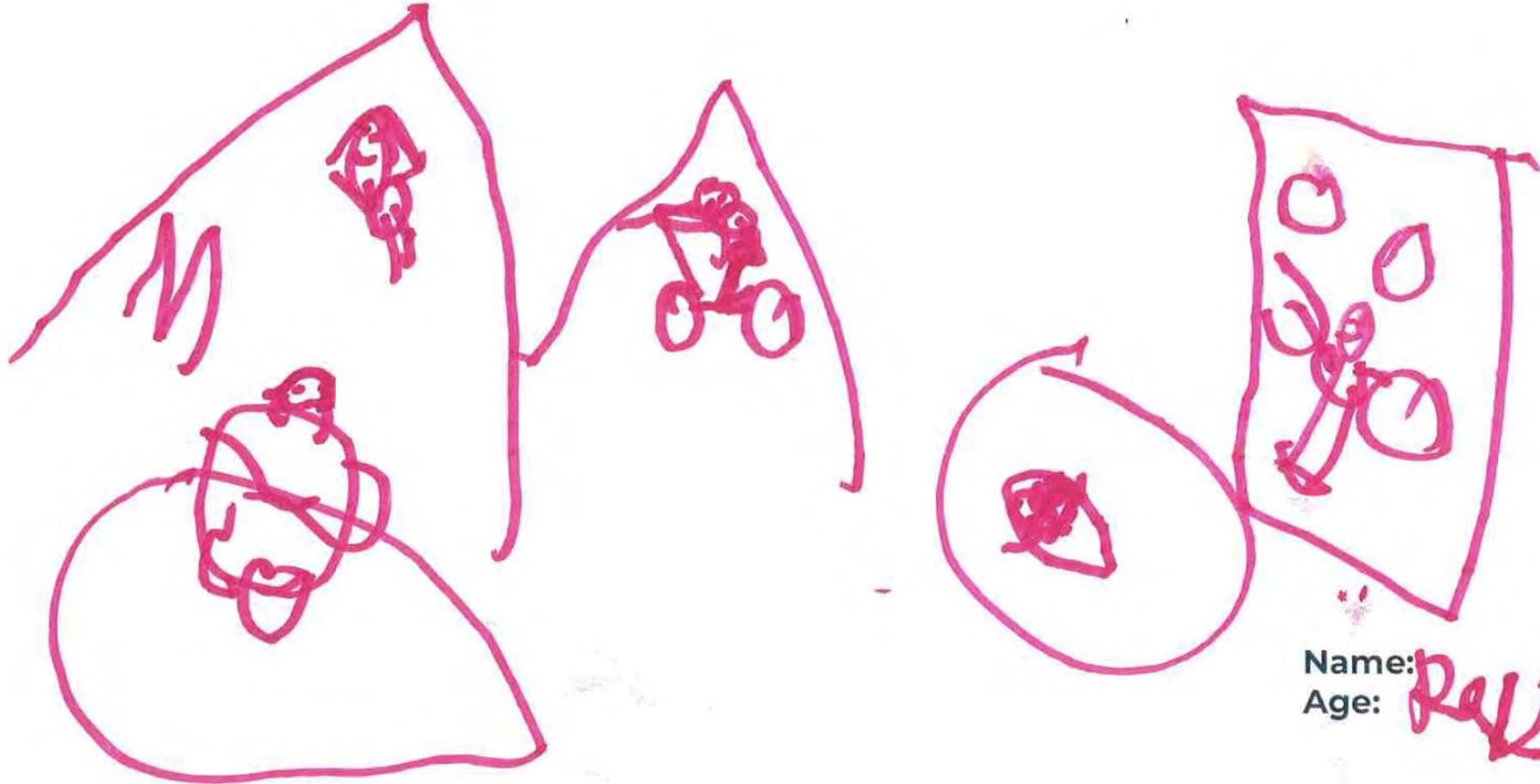
Genova, 8

hill to
roll down

picnic
table



I Missoula Parks because...



Name: *Rachel*
Age: *4*



MASTER PLAN

City of Missoula



Missoula Parks because...

I like going
on slides/seesaws
and I like
eavesdropping
on teen's
conversations!



Oh my Blah blah
Blah blah Blah!



Name: Lita
Age: 11

Missoula Parks, Recreation, Open Space, & Trails



MASTER PLAN

City of Missoula

I Missoula Parks because...



Name: **Alexis**
Age: **8**

Missoula Parks, Recreation, Open Space, & Trails



MASTER PLAN

City of Missoula

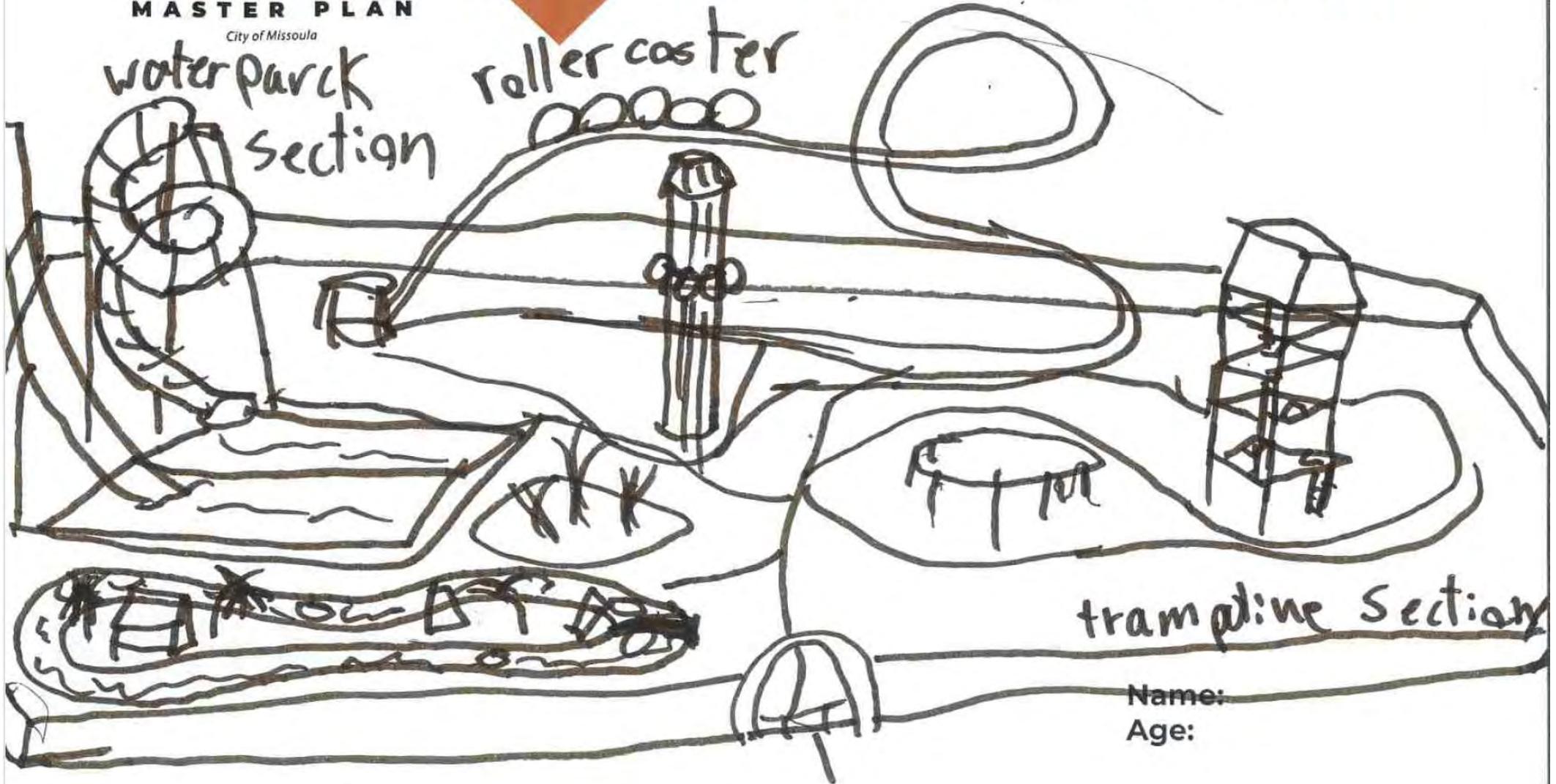
Estella



I  Missoula Parks because...

water park section

roller coaster



trampoline section

Name:

Age:

Online Interactive Map



Online Interactive Map

- Online from February 2024 to January 2025
- Received 693 responses
- Respondents could put a point on the map and categorize it under one of the following categories:
 - I like it!
 - Needs improvement
 - New idea/proposed project



PROST INTERACTIVE MAP COMMENTS (Mar. '24-Dec. '24)

Comment	Feedback Type	Comment	Feedback Type	Comment	Feedback Type
I love taking my kids to Bonner Park amenities are great and the spray deck is awesome	I like it!	trail needs maintenance, almost unridable	Needs improvement	Build an indoor neighborhood community center with plaza and incubator small business spaces.	New idea / proposed project
Love using this trail and appreciate maintenance on it (like weed removal)	I like it!	there needs to be a straight shot through this intersection and an actual trail connection to Clements. going through the school parking lot is unsafe and feels like trespassing	Needs improvement	Build an indoor neighborhood community center with plaza and incubator small business spaces.	New idea / proposed project
A big hug to the person who decided to place a playground under the Higgins Bridge. What a simple yet fantastic idea to make the area more pleasant. Keep up the good work!	I like it!	widen and enhance this crossing	Needs improvement	Build an indoor neighborhood community center with plaza and incubator small business spaces.	New idea / proposed project
Oh man, words can't express how much I love this elevated crosswalk. It's the only place in Missoula where I feel safe from the threat of being hit by a car. Keep up the good work!	I like it!	maintain this trail as a commuter path and create a defined connection back out to 39th through wapikiya	Needs improvement	Build an indoor neighborhood community center with plaza and incubator small business spaces.	New idea / proposed project
This portion of Pine Street exemplifies how all downtown area streets should look.	I like it!	create safe, obvious and intuitive connection between L&C trail and Gerald	Needs improvement	Build an indoor neighborhood community center with plaza and incubator small business spaces.	New idea / proposed project
thanks for the underpass!	I like it!	Add curb cut in parking lot or even better, bring trail all the way to Benton	Needs improvement	Build an indoor neighborhood community center with plaza and incubator small business spaces.	New idea / proposed project
the new Westside park playground is great!	I like it!	enhance crosswalk and add wayfinding to L&C trail	Needs improvement	Build an indoor neighborhood community center with plaza and incubator small business spaces.	New idea / proposed project
The riverfront trail offers a fantastic route for walking from downtown to campus. It's a shame we don't have an equivalent pathway connecting other neighborhoods to downtown.	I like it!	trail intersection and street access is awful. widen and place curb cuts where people actually want to travel	Needs improvement	Build an indoor neighborhood community center with plaza and incubator small business spaces.	New idea / proposed project
nothing like an indoor pool for winter fun.	I like it!	prohibit parking on west side of street - too many people crossing and people flying down Linda Vista is a recipe for a crash	Needs improvement	irrigated evergreen trees along I-90 to mitigate impact of noise and VOC pollution on Northside residents	New idea / proposed project
I adore these trails. I just wish that walking here from the Northside was a more pleasant experience.	I like it!	move trail access to line up with crosswalk to school	Needs improvement	Move park/trail entrance east and bring trail along Vine to the west, add wide raised crosswalk into park	New idea / proposed project
I LOVE THIS BRIDGE! Biking and walking over from the Rattlesnake is a delight when I don't have to compete with cars! I feel peaceful, dignified, and connected using pedestrian bridges to cross the river and would love to see more like this!	I like it!	trail through here need to be widened and clearly defined, with curb ramps that serve people, and an enhanced crossing of Russell St at Ernest	Needs improvement	Create a ramp like a highway interchange to get up to the bridge. Existing route around bathrooms and up 4th is a little long/not intuitive	New idea / proposed project
The greenery around the creek by the park is great for the health of the creek!	I like it!	street intersection is overly wide and dangerous right next to a park that sees a lot of kids	Needs improvement	widen this area - it's a hang out spot - and add art, bike racks, seating, etc	New idea / proposed project
Great access trail to R'snake creek and federal public lands.	I like it!	more and better bike parking. updated curb ramps and parking enforcement (people block crosswalks regularly)	Needs improvement	widen and enhance this area	New idea / proposed project
Great access trail to Forest Service public lands.	I like it!	Connection from Front to trail is dangerous and not intuitive. widen trail and create continuous path from street to park	Needs improvement	if the main route next to the parking lot can't be improved, this section should be paved	New idea / proposed project
Great access trail to Forest Service public lands.	I like it!	connection from street to park is challenging for bikes	Needs improvement	redo irrigation to not spray over the trail (comment is for the entire Milwaukee and Silver Park sections)	New idea / proposed project
Great access trail to Forest Service public lands.	I like it!	widen and raise crosswalk. widen sidewalk to trail standards	Needs improvement	address this crossing with Russell project, make sure trail crossing is both safe for trail users AND accessible to people coming from/going to Russell St. A tunnel or bridge may be attractive, but also may signal to drivers that you can just speed through here	New idea / proposed project
Great access trail to Forest Service public lands.	I like it!	prohibit parking near trail and cars from driving on trail	Needs improvement	create a safe crossing here, widen sidewalk to trail width along Splash and complete trail to Russell/Ernest intersection	New idea / proposed project
Great access trail to Forest Service public lands.	I like it!	widen and smooth	Needs improvement	connect bridge to trail with a SUP	New idea / proposed project
Great access trail - local rec and bike commuter connection..	I like it!	too steep	Needs improvement	Connect N 1st out to N 2nd behind buildings to avoid narrow section of street	New idea / proposed project
Great access trail - local rec and bike commuter connection.	I like it!	improve this access point: widen, open sight lines	Needs improvement	eliminate the sidewalk and SB bike lane along Van Buren. move the right turn lane further east to create more separation from trail users. add protected intersection features and prohibit right turns on red. this is the single most dangerous location on the entire trail system	New idea / proposed project

PROST INTERACTIVE MAP COMMENTS (Mar. '24-Dec. '24)

Comment	Feedback Type	Comment	Feedback Type	Comment	Feedback Type
Probably the most important path/trail in the city!	I like it!	don't allow Double Tree to use this for loading, continue the trail that was started with the Madison project all the way to the underbridge	Needs improvement	I heard Parks is working on connecting the Milwaukee up this way. make sure it connects to both Mary Jane and George Elmer to serve these neighborhoods	New idea / proposed project
Very important trail/pathway footbridge connection for many users.	I like it!	widen landing, remove hostile architecture. accept that this is a hang out spot and make it nice	Needs improvement	new trail along base of I-90 to connect northside to Grant Creek	New idea / proposed project
Great Trail!	I like it!	no 2 people use this the same way. make the desired movements safer and more intuitive (make an actual trail, not a wide sidewalk	Needs improvement	Bring trail all the way to this intersection	New idea / proposed project
Great single-track mtb trail system!	I like it!	widen the landing here to support trail users	Needs improvement	bring Lewis and Clark trail all the way to Benton, add enhanced crosswalk	New idea / proposed project
Great single-track mtb trail system!	I like it!	widen this pathway connection	Needs improvement	Create direct, safe, intuitive, attractive routes between regional parks (McCormick, Playfair, Ft Missoula)	New idea / proposed project
Great connection to USFS lands!	I like it!	needs maintenance and ideally greater separation from roadway	Needs improvement	create distinct trails and beach areas. as it is there are too many hiding spots to actually encourage "desirable" behavior	New idea / proposed project
Great trail system / connection!	I like it!	needs a safe way to get to Grant Creek trail	Needs improvement	Connect trail here out to Mullan (probably not room to stay along river past Mountain Supply)	New idea / proposed project
Great trail system!	I like it!	this trail is unusable. too narrow and too bumpy	Needs improvement	use slope to build a tunnel here	New idea / proposed project
Great trail!	I like it!	Either pave this all the way to golf course, or, if that is not feasible, at least redo it in decomposed granite. it is hard to bike or use a stroller	Needs improvement	add trail along Wilke St	New idea / proposed project
Great trail system!	I like it!	this parking lot requires people to back across traffic. redesign	Needs improvement	build a trail tunnel to connect potter park and grant creek	New idea / proposed project
Great trail system!	I like it!	widen and expand visibility at trail/california st intersection	Needs improvement	extend Grant Creek Trail, tunnel under RR tracks and connect to Mary Jane signal	New idea / proposed project
Great trail system!	I like it!	widen the little bridge here to accommodate commuter traffic	Needs improvement	Develop this golf course into high density housing serving multiple income levels with a mixture of supporting other businesses and services. too many golf courses already, not enough homes. the trail goes right to it, and the community is considering BRT along Brooks and that needs somewhere to end. This is the perfect spot. The original developer even offered to swap and build a replacement golf course. Make this happen!	New idea / proposed project
Great Trail!	I like it!	Reconsider how Mullan Rd works for people biking and walking. painted bike lanes and curbside sidewalks along 35mph+ traffic is not it. Consider the needs of people at Valor House, the prerelease, and other nearby multifamily developments, as well as people traveling between Swtqpqyen and downtown	Needs improvement	build trail to connect Bitterroot to Blue Mtn, South Ave	New idea / proposed project
Great double track access trail!	I like it!	widen and maintain this trail connection - it is important for people who want to avoid N 5th St	Needs improvement	Would be great to have this trail linked up to the saddle	New idea / proposed project
Great double track access trail!	I like it!	close some of these driveways and improve remaining ones to make the trail more visible	Needs improvement	Be more proactive when encampments start cropping up along the river. We can do better at providing services to people in need. Services would include social work and medical outreach, trash receptacles, sharps receptacles, and portable restrooms and handwashing stations-at a minimum. My guess is this approach could save the city money in the long run compared to the strategy of letting camps fester then doing constant, expensive, repetitive eviction and cleanup efforts. They are here to stay.	New idea / proposed project
Great access trail!	I like it!	this trail is nice, but what purpose does it serve? not even sure how it can connect better, but it should	Needs improvement	Provide services for people in need. Medical and social work outreach and treatment, trash and sharps receptacles, portable toilets and handwashing stations-at a minimum. Bludgeoning vulnerable people with "rules" and "enforcement" isn't what solves this problem.	New idea / proposed project
Great bike/ped bridge / connection!	I like it!	Give the trail it's own signal phase. people drive like idiots here, and the Blue Mtn phase is way too short, so people gun it.	Needs improvement	More native planting and natural surface forested planting at silver park.	New idea / proposed project
Great trail system!	I like it!	Formalize this trail connection - it's the best way to get to Hawthorne school	Needs improvement	Highway 90 needs a wildlife bridge to connect the species to river and expand habitat.	New idea / proposed project

PROST INTERACTIVE MAP COMMENTS (Mar. '24-Dec. '24)

Comment	Feedback Type	Comment	Feedback Type	Comment	Feedback Type
Nice and practical trail connection.	I like it!	Tunnel is awful for pedestrians	Needs improvement	North side needs a Dog Park!!! This space is used like that but it is not completely in closed and was created as a baseball field. This should be converted to a dog park.	New idea / proposed project
City Drive: Wonderful shared use living street for all users.	I like it!	Bike lanes and better pedestrian access is very needed here.	Needs improvement	I LOVE the idea of making this area a groomed all-season (especially early & late season) ski trail. What a creative, forward-thinking, and sustainable way to make snow using treated water AND ensure recreation in the face of increasingly uncertain winter snow!	New idea / proposed project
A wonderful trail!	I like it!	Better native planting, trees, small trails and design for this park. It gets a lot of use and this will only increase with more development. It would be great if this was as well thought out and designed as westside park (for example) .	Needs improvement	Construct natural looking barriers so off leash dogs can't disturb wildlife as easily.	New idea / proposed project
nice and wide through here - make the rest of the trail at least this wide	I like it!	There should be 90 degree corners on a trail - this isn't how people bike and walk. Design trails for efficient non-motorized travel	Needs improvement	So many irresponsible dog owners. Is there a way to increase enforcement?	New idea / proposed project
ROAD XING markings help. use them elsewhere	I like it!	Worst part of my commute. Very dangerous crossing.	Needs improvement	There is a critical gap from Alvina to Lolo for safe walking and biking between the Upper Rattlesnake and Downtown. We need a safe multi-use trail along Greenough preferably from Lolo to Spruce, but in the interim from Alvian to Lolo. It's only a matter of time til someone is killed walking or biking on the shoulder/bike gutter of Duncan Drive.	New idea / proposed project
this crossing is excellent and seems like it has more green time lately. would be great if it was on its own phase and not coinciding with the left turns	I like it!	Getting across Broadway by foot or bike is incredibly unsafe.	Needs improvement	Need a bike-ped bridge at Creek Crossing to link Lincoln Hills to the North Hills and facilitate nonmotorized communication between east and west side neighborhoods.	New idea / proposed project
the little curb cut to access McDonald and then Dore is great!	I like it!	needs a curb cut to helps bikes coming from/going to Jackson St	Needs improvement	Need to acquire a little bit of ROW/easement here so that people can (legally) go from Lincoln Hills to Fox Hollow Road. This is how kids from the tree streets neighborhood get to Rattlesnake Elementary.	New idea / proposed project
this connection from Holly to Missoula Ave is great	I like it!	The intersection at Phillips & Scott is horrible. Even minor improvements like repainting the crosswalk or adding a flashing crossing light would DRAMATICALLY help with traffic awareness of pedestrians.	Needs improvement	We need a better pedestrian connection between the Northside and the North Hills. Neighborhood residents are forced to go to either Coal Mine Road or to navigate the dangerous and car-centric Orange Street goat rodeo in order to access this great resource.	New idea / proposed project
this crosswalk is wide and the receiving trail on Agnes is nice. Would be great if Bridge kept it clear	I like it!	It is sketchy to walk down this road/trail with vehicles and bikes zooming by	Needs improvement	At grade bike-ped crossing between Northside and Downtown.	New idea / proposed project
New parking lot is incredible! wish there was a crosswalk across Greenough to get to it	I like it!	Dangerous bike/ped crossing with poor visibility	Needs improvement	Remove parking on the South side of the street and install a protected bike lane with a curb or plastic pylons to separate cars from bikes from pedestrians. This space is maybe 300' and would make the primary trail connection serving the neighborhood safe for a very low cost.	New idea / proposed project
great trail! can you add a crosswalk across Grant Creek to get to it?	I like it!	Dangerous bike/ped crossing with poor visibility	Needs improvement	Lighting, repairing the chain link fence, and extending barricades further up the sidewalks on the inclines to create a safer experience, murals to beautify, etc. would all be helpful. The bare minimum would be sweeping and power washing these spaces bi-annually.	New idea / proposed project
I love the grafiti at the California st bridge	I like it!	Dangerous bike/ped area	Needs improvement	Create a marked, painted, crosswalk that connects the park spaces. Make it bright, colorful, artistic. Please include speed bumps to force drivers to slow down.	New idea / proposed project
I love all the community activities here	I like it!	Spruce street needs separated bike lane. Could easily just divide street in half with a boulevard/parkway, have one side be narrow two way road, the other side bike/ped.	Needs improvement	Build two full sized sport courts. This basketball court is full during summer weather and additional hoops with some kid height rims would help this neighborhood a ton.	New idea / proposed project
Running on the river trail is so fun.	I like it!	Traffic calming needed!!	Needs improvement	Sound wall like the RS. The next time improves are made to the Orange Street ramps please provide this to the NS like the lower RS as a means of mitigating the noise of the interstate. The neighborhood will be far more livable and welcoming to increased density with better amenities.	New idea / proposed project

PROST INTERACTIVE MAP COMMENTS (Mar. '24-Dec. '24)

Comment	Feedback Type	Comment	Feedback Type	Comment	Feedback Type
I love picnicking here!	I like it!	More trees needed	Needs improvement	Holmes is the longest N-S connection that touches the far north end, the park, and the greenway trail which leads to the bridge and downtown. It has been identified as a bike greenway but only has one roundabout. Please make this a high functioning bike corridor. Investing in infrastructure (low cost roundabouts, striping, signage) on this one street would ensure the majority of Northside residents are within 3-4 blocks of a safe greenway. That connection through the NH and to the city is huge.	New idea / proposed project
The updated play equipment is very nice	I like it!	Trail narrow and in disrepair	Needs improvement	Could this park be a gateway between the community and the greenway? This is a sad space that could be a real wonderful connection point to the only NS Greenway.	New idea / proposed project
Love this trail! Though I'm worried about off leash dogs I've seen disturbing wildlife.	I like it!	Dangerous intersection	Needs improvement	Could a path be built that would allow pedestrians and cyclists to have separation from the road? Traffic routinely hits 35-40 given the landscape/environment. This connection to the RS and Greenough is critical for green space access.	New idea / proposed project
There are possibilities for a great winter sledding park here if accommodation for the runout could be worked out.	I like it!	Incredibly dangerous intersection	Needs improvement	The intersection between Van Buren street and Front street should be closed permanently to cars, and turned into a dedicated & protected bike/ped path. The press box parking lot access from Van Buren should also be closed.	New idea / proposed project
This part of the trail is safe and pretty	I like it!	Better pedestrian/trail access. Currently you have to go all the way up the long gross paved driveway next to cars... why can't there be a beautiful separate walking trail?	Needs improvement	Bike/ped bridge over Broadway!	New idea / proposed project
Excellent example of continuous sidewalk/raised crosswalk providing natural traffic calming and ped/bike safety	I like it!	Dog waste issues. Dog waste bin should be 100-200m up trail so that when dogs go poop (which they tend to do within the first 100-200m of a walk), owners have a place to put it rather than being expected to carry for their entire walk.	Needs improvement	Bike/ped underpass beneath roadway (along the creek)	New idea / proposed project
Great as a dog friendly area	I like it!	Dog waste issues. Dog waste bin should be 100-200m up trail so that when dogs go poop (which they tend to do within the first 100-200m of a walk), owners have a place to put it rather than being expected to carry for their entire walk.	Needs improvement	Bike/ped trail beneath the railroad - ideally would follow the creek starting at south end of Greenough and connect all the way to the Clark Fork with no road crossings required	New idea / proposed project
Great neighborhood park	I like it!	Clearer signage regarding no bikes on trails	Needs improvement	Continuous sidewalk (or elevated crosswalk) for better bike/ped protection	New idea / proposed project
Awesome trail for commuting and enjoying the park!	I like it!	Clearer signage throughout Greenough (and city) about no off-leash dogs except where explicitly permitted	Needs improvement	Make the bike/ped crossing here! and create a continuous path from here under the interstate	New idea / proposed project
Beautiful trail	I like it!	Sketchy bike/ped intersection	Needs improvement	Bike/ped path that connects city land to north and south so users don't have to go up to Duncan Drive	New idea / proposed project
These kinds of trails are why I live in Missoula	I like it!	Bike/ped lane on bridge is "wavy" and poorly installed	Needs improvement	Traffic reroute/protected bike/ped option here	New idea / proposed project
Quast Ditch forever!! The Quast Ditch Boys provide mowing and brushing.	I like it!	It feels like only a matter of time before a person or pet gets run over here. Drivers on Cooley go SO fast and with the gardens right there and no crosswalk...yikes!	Needs improvement	Connection from Jackson to Missoula Ave (please work with property owners or use eminent domain to achieve this)	New idea / proposed project
What's the deal with this parcel?????	I like it!	Addition of MRL Park is much appreciated but F2F still needs much more green space per capita! Consider pocket parks and investing in benches, trees, planters, etc. along Neighborways/greenways as a cost-effective way to increase public spaces.	Needs improvement	Perfect location for a completely raised/elevated intersection (ie, like elevated crosswalk but the whole intersection)	New idea / proposed project
I love the development of this new park, but I would like to see the plan emphasize native grasses as opposed to turf fields to preserve bird habitat.	I like it!	Signage and amenities (benches, picnic table, etc.) are needed for people to know that this is public, not private land.	Needs improvement	Make there be an official interesting trail down through here	New idea / proposed project
The push-button lights flash crosswalk here is excellent; It easily helps pedestrians cross while not limiting traffic too much.	I like it!	Let the kids build their jumps.	Needs improvement	Elevated crosswalk/continuous sidewalk	New idea / proposed project
I really appreciate the flashing Ped crossing lights here!	I like it!	This is a very scary intersection for pedestrians because it is obstructed by vegetation and offset from the stop sign to Mullan. Vehicles can't see pedestrians and stop 100' past the pedestrian intersection.	Needs improvement	Elevated crosswalk/continuous sidewalk	New idea / proposed project

PROST INTERACTIVE MAP COMMENTS (Mar. '24-Dec. '24)

Comment	Feedback Type	Comment	Feedback Type	Comment	Feedback Type
Preserved native prairie is refreshing! Paths are well maintained even in winter.	I like it!	often see illegal bike tracks; please continue to keep some places for peds only	Needs improvement	Elevated crosswalk/continuous sidewalk	New idea / proposed project
well maintained turf and recreation areas, and milwaukee path	I like it!	City's fence along Rattlesnake Drive on city conservation lands is down and needs repair.	Needs improvement	Elevated crosswalk/continuous sidewalk	New idea / proposed project
well maintained turf and recreation areas and milwaukee path	I like it!	Obscene parcel!! Please change.	Needs improvement	Elevated crosswalk/continuous sidewalk	New idea / proposed project
Beautiful public park with green areas, river access, downtown access, walking bridge access, playground, community events like music and farmers markets, and paved trails!	I like it!	There is a growing tent camp here with an expected growing impact on the small area with a few remaining trees. This area cannot support this form of impact and will be destroyed quite quickly. No public bathrooms nearby means our trail system becomes the bathroom. I watched a man poop here a few days ago.	Needs improvement	Elevated crosswalk/continuous sidewalk	New idea / proposed project
Great foresty nature area with walking paths and native wildlife	I like it!	I would love to have one of the crossings with flashing lights here, and to have the crosswalk painted better	Needs improvement	Elevated crosswalk/continuous sidewalk	New idea / proposed project
great educational and sustainable garden with native plants	I like it!	Please add flashing lights for the crossing here	Needs improvement	Bike ramps (those little grooves on the stairs to help a bike go up & down)	New idea / proposed project
several interconnecting paths for scenic options and variation for regular trail users	I like it!	Dog Park needs serious maintenance, adding wood chips throughout the park. Presently most the the wood chip surface has disintegrated into mud when it's raining, and dust when it's dry. It's been several years since any wood chips were added.	Needs improvement	Bike ramps (those little grooves on the stairs to help a bike go up & down)	New idea / proposed project
Beautiful native flora and trails; very peaceful	I like it!	Please add a bench to the inside of the large dog park at the west entrance. There is already seating at the east entrance. Those of us who are older would like to be able to sit inside the park to watch our dogs at this end of the park.	Needs improvement	Continuous sidewalk/elevated crosswalk	New idea / proposed project
bike/ped bridge great way to bypass busy unsafe reserve St! A little steep for biking up; something to consider for future bridges.	I like it!	Can this park PLEASE have a splash pad and some shade options? PLEASE?!	Needs improvement	Continuous sidewalk/elevated crosswalk	New idea / proposed project
I like Jeffery Park just the way it is. It's a well-used park, and I love its openness. I would not want to see it developed and filled up with courts and other things as are on its master plan. It's surrounded by natural beauty, so keep it natural as it is.	I like it!	This intersection is hard to get through by bike or on foot, making access to the riverside trails	Needs improvement	Continuous sidewalk/elevated crosswalk	New idea / proposed project
8th street pocket park is awesome!	I like it!	Need some kind of connection between the gravel trails and the paved parking space behind Officer's Row for bike commutes	Needs improvement	Continuous sidewalk/elevated crosswalk	New idea / proposed project
Bonner is a fantastic park. Love the variety of activities from the bandshell to playground and sports courts and splash deck. The playground needs more shade, though! Nearly impossible for kids to play mid-day most of the summer.	I like it!	green space dead zone	Needs improvement	Continuous sidewalk/elevated crosswalk	New idea / proposed project
So thankful for the Poverello Pier. Now I can finally shoot up and defecate in peace.	I like it!	so-called "greenway" is just as ignored as any other street in this neighborhood. Actually make it a safe desirable route for biking etc. and actually more "green" (via plants, clear bike signage, safe crossing across South, etc.)	Needs improvement	Continuous sidewalk/elevated crosswalk	New idea / proposed project
There is a trail here that comes up from Wapikia park, I like it, but never sure if it should be changed in a way to reduce erosion	I like it!	green space dead zone	Needs improvement	Continuous sidewalk/elevated crosswalk	New idea / proposed project
This is an amazing trail, worry about erosion	I like it!	Extend/connect this trail to be a length usable by trail runners; feels like an isolated trail from nowhere to nowhere	Needs improvement	Continuous sidewalk/elevated crosswalk	New idea / proposed project
I love bringing my dog to this park, I think a small sign would note that it is a park	I like it!	paved trail suddenly ends, making it difficult for bicyclists to connect to elsewhere or even reach the intersection safely (lots of car traffic merging in this area)	Needs improvement	Continuous sidewalk/elevated crosswalk	New idea / proposed project
I run this every week and see multiple people use this trail.	I like it!	lots of potholes/cracks/uneven surfaces that bike line runs right through	Needs improvement	I think turning this intersection into a 4-way stop could cheaply and effectively improve the safety of this area.	New idea / proposed project
I'm so grateful for this connector. However a bin for dog poop would be a huge improvement.	I like it!	bike lane vanishes and cars are not prepared to share space with them	Needs improvement	Acquire - adjacent to Franklin Park - property for an indoor neighborhood community center with plaza and incubator small business spaces.	New idea / proposed project
This is the most awesome trail and I'm so grateful it was built and serves the Missoula Community.	I like it!	bike lane is used as a spot for roadwork and warning signs when companies are doing work (eg. recent road or ditch projects)	Needs improvement	Acquire - adjacent to MRL Park - property for an indoor neighborhood community center with plaza and incubator small business spaces.	New idea / proposed project

PROST INTERACTIVE MAP COMMENTS (Mar. '24-Dec. '24)

Comment	Feedback Type	Comment	Feedback Type	Comment	Feedback Type
This is a great trail that I run all the time when I'm near the University.	I like it!	Improve and enlarge playground and institute traffic calming/buffer along Stephens/Orange	Needs improvement	Add separated bike trail to connect between Flynn and Reserve. Biking on the shoulder - either east or west bound - is miserable and dangerous.	New idea / proposed project
I love Pineview Park ice skating rink! But its entirely volunteer-led which is exhausting! Glad it receives funds from the City for maintenance...Meanwhile, would be great to have another rink somewhere that is slightly higher in elevation like Pineview and is similarly shaded, somewhere else in town, to spread out the demand!	I like it!	Create buffer/traffic calming at stephens to provide safety and separation to west side of the park.	Needs improvement	Transitioning from the sidewalk to the marked bike lane on the southside of Mullan needs improvement. It is currently terrifying to do at 7 am!	New idea / proposed project
Looking forward to when this is opened to the public? When will that be?	I like it!	Natural barrier between park & Stephens for safety	Needs improvement	It would be soo cool to see this converted to a pedestrian/bike path to connect to Deschamps Lane!	New idea / proposed project
I love the Bancroft Ponds natural area. I'm wondering if there is any plan to replace some of the cottonwoods we're losing in this area as that seems like it would be native to this location.	I like it!	Natural barrier between splash pad and neighbor's residence	Needs improvement	We need some sort of pedestrian crossing/trail to connect Flynn to Expressway	New idea / proposed project
Love the connector trail here!	I like it!	Expanded play areas for our neighborhood kids of all ages	Needs improvement	Shopping for this area. Grocery in particular	New idea / proposed project
Love having a parallel path up Greenough Dr that's away from traffic and feels less steep.	I like it!	Create a buffer between park and road	Needs improvement	Bike /Ped bridge connecting to Red Fox creating a Bike loop and alternative route into Missoula via Lower Miller Creek / Bronco	New idea / proposed project
Despite global warming, Missoula has a really long winter. Building out a facility at Currents that would include cultural dance and performance spaces and gyms would be assets to the people of Missoula.	I like it!	expand playground, more benches/places to just hang out	Needs improvement	Bike /Ped bridge connecting to Red Fox creating a Bike loop and alternative route into Missoula via Lower Miller Creek / Bronco	New idea / proposed project
love this park. the kids needed this place for decades. can we do more of them?	I like it!	improve and enlarge playground	Needs improvement	Bike /Ped bridge connecting to Red Fox creating a Bike loop and alternative route into Missoula via Lower Miller Creek / Bronco	New idea / proposed project
More trails up here> these are great! keep it up!!	I like it!	create buffer between park and Orange/Stephens	Needs improvement	Bike /Ped bridge connecting to Red Fox creating a Bike loop and alternative route into Missoula via Lower Miller Creek / Bronco	New idea / proposed project
We love the pavilion and all of the little shelters at Silver Park. Would really like to see more events held here.	I like it!	some kind of safety barrier to provide more separation from cars and park users	Needs improvement	Bike /Ped bridge connecting to Red Fox creating a Bike loop and alternative route into Missoula via Lower Miller Creek / Bronco	New idea / proposed project
Really love the trailhead parking and naturalized landscaping improvements. As a dog owner, I also appreciated the signs for leashing dogs and using extra caution when the more fragile native plants are in bloom.	I like it!	better and safer surface of spray deck so children don't instantly hurt themselves falling; improved features to the spray deck but keep the turtles; safer barrier or way to cross between Sacajawea main play area and spray deck to keep cars from speeding down Chestnut.	Needs improvement	Bike /Ped bridge connecting to Red Fox creating a Bike loop and alternative route into Missoula via Lower Miller Creek / Bronco	New idea / proposed project
I hope this continues being as well maintained as it has been. It's a great place for a meditative walk, impromptu XC skiing in winter, and one of the few on leash walks outside of city parks.	I like it!	updated play area including more accessible swings. Current swings are way too high and flimsy, could cause instant injury for kids 6 and under; could expand the swingset as well	Needs improvement	Bike /Ped bridge connecting to Red Fox creating a Bike loop and alternative route into Missoula via Lower Miller Creek / Bronco	New idea / proposed project
I appreciate that this is a bike-free area.	I like it!	would love to see a natural area for littles 0-5 to practice biking; like a smaller pump track maybe? The open space is great, but without safety precautions, it's not widely used by anyone with littles or dogs.	Needs improvement	Bike /Ped bridge connecting to Red Fox creating a Bike loop and alternative route into Missoula via Lower Miller Creek / Bronco	New idea / proposed project
Love love love the russell underpass!	I like it!	better facilities for encouraging picnicking. covered area as when it heats up, there is NO SHADE	Needs improvement	Bike /Ped bridge connecting to Red Fox creating a Bike loop and alternative route into Missoula via Lower Miller Creek / Bronco	New idea / proposed project
I love Bonner Park! I do wish the playground had more shade!	I like it!	Widen this curb cut and trail to get bikes off Orange St	Needs improvement	Bike /Ped bridge connecting to Red Fox creating a Bike loop and alternative route into Missoula via Lower Miller Creek / Bronco	New idea / proposed project
The elevated crosswalk here is fantastic. I feel so safe using it on my bicycle. Can every crosswalk in the city look like this please? Contrast this with the crossing of 5th/6th streets on Gerald's "neighborhood greenway"	I like it!	This crossing needs flashers immediately. It is unsafe.	Needs improvement	Bike /Ped bridge connecting to Red Fox creating a Bike loop and alternative route into Missoula via Lower Miller Creek / Bronco	New idea / proposed project
I love splash montana, I do wish that there was some established capacity rules. It feels somewhat dangerous sometimes with the number of people in the pool	I like it!	please install a slide that younger kids can use. The ladder slide prevents kids from using it	Needs improvement	Bike /Ped bridge connecting to Red Fox creating a Bike loop and alternative route into Missoula via Lower Miller Creek / Bronco	New idea / proposed project
This undeveloped 2.5-acre parcel desperately needs infrastructure for the growing number of young children in the neighborhood. Adjacent residents have been working to build a park here for more than 7 years. It is nothing more than a field of noxious weeds at the moment.	Needs improvement	The Lewis & Clark Trail connects people from downtown to Splash Montana via Gerald Ave and needs to be better highlighted. This includes a clear and accessible entrance from South Ave, widening and separation from the parking lot (and not being used for porta potties during events at Dornblaser), and clear accessible connections to Higgins/Benton.	Needs improvement	Bike /Ped bridge connecting to Red Fox creating a Bike loop and alternative route into Missoula via Lower Miller Creek / Bronco	New idea / proposed project
Need a better and safer bicycle and pedestrian connector between Fairgrounds and Bitterroot trail.	Needs improvement	Why is this trail here?	Needs improvement	Bike /Ped bridge connecting to Red Fox creating a Bike loop and alternative route into Missoula via Lower Miller Creek / Bronco	New idea / proposed project

PROST INTERACTIVE MAP COMMENTS (Mar. '24-Dec. '24)

Comment	Feedback Type	Comment	Feedback Type	Comment	Feedback Type
Better utilization of Bitterroot Trail. More connectors needed. Safer than adding bike lane capacity to Brooks.	Needs improvement	There needs to be direct route, maintained to the highest level, from Post Siding Rd to the NW corner of Ft Missoula	Needs improvement	Bike /Ped bridge connecting to Red Fox creating a Bike loop and alternative route into Missoula via Lower Miller Creek / Bronco	New idea / proposed project
Improved river access for recreation that does not destroy river banks or native vegetation.	Needs improvement	tree roots creating dangerous trail conditions at this spot	Needs improvement	Bike /Ped bridge connecting to Red Fox creating a Bike loop and alternative route into Missoula via Lower Miller Creek / Bronco	New idea / proposed project
I think some signage at the south end of this trail would help keep people off private lands.	Needs improvement	No real green space by this new development	Needs improvement	Bike /Ped bridge connecting to Red Fox creating a Bike loop and alternative route into Missoula via Lower Miller Creek	New idea / proposed project
While I very much enjoy this trail I wish it would connect to a larger trail system. Might be able to connect to University Greenhouses?	Needs improvement	Reserve is a huge barrier to bicycle commuting. need more safe crossings in convenient locations	Needs improvement	Bike /Ped bridge connecting to Red Fox creating a Bike loop and alternative route into Missoula via Lower Miller Creek / Bronco	New idea / proposed project
Social trails are a big issue in this area, please rehabilitate and close unauthorized trails.	Needs improvement	connect Ron's River Trail	Needs improvement	Bike /Ped bridge connecting to Red Fox creating a Bike loop and alternative route into Missoula via Lower Miller Creek	New idea / proposed project
Lighting please! It's always a little scary to bike home in the dark along this section of trail.	Needs improvement	connect Ron's River Trail along the river	Needs improvement	Bike /Ped bridge connecting to Red Fox creating a Bike loop and alternative route into Missoula via Lower Miller Creek / Bronco	New idea / proposed project
Bike lanes for commuters would allow people to feel safe biking on Higgins.	Needs improvement	connect Ron's River Trail	Needs improvement	Bike /Ped bridge connecting to Red Fox creating a Bike loop and alternative route into Missoula via Lower Miller Creek / Bronco	New idea / proposed project
Suggest having pedestrian button and flashing lighted signs here, seems dangerous at times to cross busy Russell St.	Needs improvement	extend Ron's River Trail to East Missoula	Needs improvement	Use rail bridge to create a Bike / Ped extension of Kim Williams into Bonner — for commuting and safe bike route to and from Missoula. Suggest paving one side of the trail to delineate and make useful one side for bikes and using decomposed granite (DG) for ped use.	New idea / proposed project
This park is completely undeveloped and I never see anyone in it. It would be great to understand from neighbors what development, if any, would be desirable. I have love kids and would love a nearby playground.	Needs improvement	Re-Route the "backbone" trail to a sustainable and comfortable grade	Needs improvement	Use rail bridge to create a Bike / Ped extension of Kim Williams into Bonner — for commuting and safe bike route to and from Missoula. Suggest paving one side of the trail to delineate and make useful one side for bikes and using decomposed granite (DG) for ped use.	New idea / proposed project
I have walked by here many times and never realized access to a park was this way. It looks like a private road.	Needs improvement	Plan future trail connection from Grant Creek to Rattlesnake that allows Bicycles	Needs improvement	Use rail bridge to create a Bike / Ped extension of Kim Williams into Bonner — for commuting and safe bike route to and from Missoula. Suggest paving one side of the trail to delineate and make useful one side for bikes and using decomposed granite (DG) for ped use.	New idea / proposed project
This part if the trail is often overgrown so additional maintenance would be great	Needs improvement	Extend Grant Creek Trail	Needs improvement	Use rail bridge to create a Bike / Ped extension of Kim Williams into Bonner — for commuting and safe bike route to and from Missoula. Suggest paving one side of the trail to delineate and make useful one side for bikes and using decomposed granite (DG) for ped use.	New idea / proposed project
It took me months to realize this gated area was public. A sign would be great!	Needs improvement	Trail too narrow here with curve and limited site line	Needs improvement	Use rail bridge to create a Bike / Ped extension of Kim Williams into Bonner — for commuting and safe bike route to and from Missoula. Suggest paving one side of the trail to delineate and make useful one side for bikes and using decomposed granite (DG) for ped use.	New idea / proposed project
There is an informal, HOA managed trail here that connects to neighborhood to Mtn View Drive and then on to the school. This is a very, very important connection for school routes and neighborhood connectivity. It is hard for the public to interact with the neighbors on what is essentially private land. The City should obtain a trail easement here and manage this important connection.	Needs improvement	Remove turf grass between trail and riverbank. Restore riparian zone with native plants, and leave the turf grass for the larger areas to the south of the trail. Less maintenance and more biodiversity!	Needs improvement	Use rail bridge to create a Bike / Ped extension of Kim Williams into Bonner — for commuting and safe bike route to and from Missoula. Suggest paving one side of the trail to delineate and make useful one side for bikes and using decomposed granite (DG) for ped use.	New idea / proposed project
Greenough Park, so close to the Northside, yet walking there is one of the worst experiences ever. One has to cross a road with fast-moving cars coming from four different directions.	Needs improvement	Please fill in the old ditch and add trees! The trail feels exposed, and very obviously feels like a flood berm and unnatural.	Needs improvement	Use rail bridge to create a Bike / Ped extension of Kim Williams into Bonner — for commuting and safe bike route to and from Missoula. Suggest paving one side of the trail to delineate and make useful one side for bikes and using decomposed granite (DG) for ped use.	New idea / proposed project
Walking from the Northside to Westside Park via Scott Bridge is an experience I wouldn't recommend, especially if you have small children. It's astonishing that we allow fast-moving cars so close to parks and schools.	Needs improvement	Shmautz Park is currently designated to have Disc Golf amenities. I propose creating a youth/beginner focused DG course at Shmautz. There is adequate space in this park to serve this purpose. We need a beginner focused DG amenity accessible to folks in town.	Needs improvement	separate bikeway on Broadway with landscaping for safety and beautifying the route that is a gateway to Missoula	New idea / proposed project

PROST INTERACTIVE MAP COMMENTS (Mar. '24-Dec. '24)

Comment	Feedback Type	Comment	Feedback Type	Comment	Feedback Type
This is the saddest park I've ever seen, always empty. I guess its proximity to the dreadful Scott Street has its impact.	Needs improvement	Winter Disc Golf Course needs improvement. Design of the course was to utilize the existing paths to throw from but the basket placements should be roughly perpendicular to those paths so that there is less user conflict than the current course layout provides. There are a lot of parallel-to-path throws that could be altered to improve the experience for DG users and non DG users alike.	Needs improvement	Let's finally connect the river trail on the north side of the river all the way from Orange St to California! Having a safe walking and biking route here would really make it possible to get safely through the core of town while avoiding busy roads.	New idea / proposed project
Having a highway—sorry, I meant a street—like Cooley next to parks and community gardens should be considered a crime.	Needs improvement	The tunnel is a huge barrier to moving to/from the North side. The sidewalk is far too narrow for people, much less for bikes and people (and biking on the road through the tunnel is often NOT a safe option). Lighting is abysmally insufficient and it is frequently dark and dank with a leaky spot in the middle of the sidewalk.	Needs improvement	Multi use path	New idea / proposed project
Post Siding road would be a good candidate for a multi use path. Plenty of space and a connector for the bitterroot trail to the fort Missoula area and the neighborhood west of reserve	Needs improvement	steep and icy in the winter	Needs improvement	Multi use trail	New idea / proposed project
A traffic light, PLEASE! Crossing here is a nightmare, yet it's the route from the riverfront trail to the pedestrian bridge.	Needs improvement	Signage perhaps could help curb the number of cyclists who come off the bridge and stay on their bikes on this busy pedestrian filled sidewalk	Needs improvement	Multi use trail	New idea / proposed project
Why do we need a road with the width and curvature of an F1/NASCAR circuit? Biking from the pedestrian bridge to the bike path is extremely dangerous here, as the fast-moving cars coming towards you are not visible	Needs improvement	For 10 years, the neighborhood leadership team has tried to develop this park. There is a plan design on file, which was created through two all neighborhood planning sessions and then approved by the city's parks board. The only thing missing is any kind of interest from the Ward reps or city officials to actually fund the \$1 million it would supposedly cost to build this park. For now, it's a field of noxious weeds and sick bike jumps. Thanks Donna, et al.	Needs improvement	Family park	New idea / proposed project
What is the point of having a bike lane if cars are going to park on it all the time?	Needs improvement	The city irrigates this and mows the grass yet there is no signage indicating that this is a public space. The neighborhood leadership team has tried for years to get parks and conservation lands to post access signs at the easements, yet they refused. Love you, too, guys!	Needs improvement	Family park	New idea / proposed project
A highway through downtown—what a great idea to make Missoula more walkable!	Needs improvement	What a waste of space. This could be such a great park, and guess what? It already has a neighborhood approved design that doesn't include the old repeater tower double as a raccoon brothel. Maybe the city could let some of those tax dollars trickle down to us peasants?	Needs improvement	Complete trail to border	New idea / proposed project
If all this parking were removed, Caras Park would be much greater. All the parked cars really detract from the park's beauty!	Needs improvement	Bridge across seasonal creek is broken	Needs improvement	Open the rail bridge to pedestrians & cyclists, and integrate it in with a river trail that connects all the way to California St. on the north side of the river.	New idea / proposed project
Another useless park, always empty. It makes sense, considering the only thing next to it is an ugly parking lot.	Needs improvement	Private tree overhangs the access to this trail, encourages travelers to be on that persons private property to avoid hanging branches	Needs improvement	Opening access to this area via bridge / extension of Milwaukee Trail would be so nice!	New idea / proposed project
Zero benches along our main downtown street! I suppose if our elderly get tired, they're expected to sit on the ground.	Needs improvement	Wallmart has trees hanging low over this sidewalk pushing walkers/runners into the road	Needs improvement	Connector Trail from Larch Camp trails to Barmeyer/HWH Trails - this would allow amazing rim hikes.	New idea / proposed project
Why on earth are cars allowed to drive through this trail?	Needs improvement	accident waiting to happen with so many vehicles turning left hear, as a shortcut into miller creak	Needs improvement	Would it be possible to paint the road way here in some way to indicate to drivers that this is a pedestrian & bike crossing?	New idea / proposed project
another useless park.	Needs improvement	This is an amazing trail, but could be better, especially around this tight corner	Needs improvement	Would a roundabout be possible here, or is the intersection too small? Maybe even a light is needed.	New idea / proposed project
This entire shopping area is incredibly unwelcoming to cyclists and bus riders. Walking from one shop to another is a dreadful experience. Everything is designed for cars—no crosswalks, no traffic lights, nothing!	Needs improvement	Love the bridge used to have de-icers and a couple broke, then all turned off and now it is an issue for a lot more of the bridge	Needs improvement	A better way to cross on bikes, perhaps an elevated bridge or a bike signal	New idea / proposed project
Turn-on-red should be banned, at least in the downtown area. I've lost count of the number of times I've almost been hit by a car while crossing a crosswalk	Needs improvement	This is a tricky intersection. a roundabout would be awesome here. it would help with the blind spots for bikers, runners and cars.	Needs improvement	Safer bike crossing	New idea / proposed project
I'd rather play Russian roulette than cross this crosswalk. The foolish turn-on-red rule means drivers almost never pay attention to bikers or pedestrians.	Needs improvement	Would be great to get a second sand volleyball court, but don't ruin the one that's already there	Needs improvement	Lincoln Hills DG Course	New idea / proposed project

PROST INTERACTIVE MAP COMMENTS (Mar. '24-Dec. '24)

Comment	Feedback Type	Comment	Feedback Type	Comment	Feedback Type
I detest biking through this crosswalk. Drivers exiting the roundabout rarely ever signal, and they consistently fail to pay attention to bikers or pedestrians.	Needs improvement	It is understood that there isn't enough funding for sidewalks on every street, but it would be helpful to take out obstructions that force pedestrians out into in the street. There is a trash bin, doggie bag station, trail crossing sign, wooden fence, parking barrier, and a pedestrian crossing sign all clustered where people would otherwise be walking. It makes a place that already isn't ideal for pedestrians even less safe.	Needs improvement	Marshall Mountain Base Disc Golf Course	New idea / proposed project
add a roundabout, PLEASE!	Needs improvement	Agree that there needs to be better lines here to show cars that peds/bikers are connecting from the road into the trail, so they're not always blocking the trail with their waiting car.	Needs improvement	9 Hole Disc Golf course connecting multiple nearby parks. Wapikia to Honeysuckle	New idea / proposed project
I despise how Orange Street divides the Northside into two nearly disconnected sections.	Needs improvement	The trail around Playfair has several low spots/holes that hold water. These can be big hazards in the winter when they freeze creating areas of ice. Some of these areas span the width of the trail. I notice that some holes on the trail near the Sentinel track have been filled. Looking forward to seeing how well it's working after rain and snow freeze/thaw periods.	Needs improvement	New permanent Disc Golf Course	New idea / proposed project
When it snows, the bike lane completely disappears, forcing you to bike alongside impatient cars!	Needs improvement	Difficult to transition from the river trail onto Madison St to reach Greenough. Possible to avoid this tricky intersection using the spur trail or RUX trail, but both feel out of the way.	Needs improvement	Splash pad and shaded areas	New idea / proposed project
Having protected bike lanes along Scott Street would be a game-changer for bikers and pedestrians—finally, some real space between us and those huge, fast-moving cars!	Needs improvement	Allow mountain bike access so we don't have to bike on the road...could consider a dismount zone like bahrmeyer	Needs improvement	Add a bike jump park or ice rink or green space here	New idea / proposed project
There's no better way to witness the atrocious design of our streets than by walking with an energetic 5-year-old. Absolutely nothing shields you from those fast-moving tanks (I mean... cars!). For heaven's sake, add some bollards or something, PLEASE!	Needs improvement	Find access above or alongside the road for bikers	Needs improvement	Better connections needed between Bitterroot Trail and fairgrounds - a pedestrian bridge would be amazing.	New idea / proposed project
Implement traffic calming measures here! For goodness' sake, there's a school and a park nearby!	Needs improvement	The muddy grasslands feel unintentional and forgotten. It would be great to weather really lean into native-scaping more, or as proper grass and a sprinkler system. The current approach of mowing weeds and dirt is a weird in-between zone.	Needs improvement	Neighborways path - protected path for pedestrians, bicyclists, strollers, rollerskaters, wheelchair users, etc. year round	New idea / proposed project
Nothing screams "to heck with pedestrians!" louder than slip lanes. If we prioritized safety over speed, slip lanes would never exist.	Needs improvement	Mullan Rd needs better bike lanes in both directions - separate from traffic	Needs improvement	additional river access sites along the bitterroot between 93 and MacClay flats	New idea / proposed project
How am I supposed to cross Russell Street? There are absolutely no crosswalks or traffic lights for miles!	Needs improvement	This approach to Blue Mountain is heavily used by cyclists commuting to the Blue Mountain trails. Better bike lanes are needed in both directions to protect communiting cyclists	Needs improvement	Mcclay bridge should be retained for pedestrians even if new south ave bridge is constructed	New idea / proposed project
Add protected bike lanes for those of us who prefer to do our shopping by bike or on foot.	Needs improvement	Bike lanes needed in both directions -- Blue Mountain Road is heavily used by cyclists as a recreational route and for access trails on Blue Mountain, O'Brien Creek, Big Flat Rd, and the gravel roads off Southside road all the way to Petty Creek Rd.	Needs improvement	room in ROW here for a pocket park here like on 8th st	New idea / proposed project
How am I supposed to cross Scott Street when I'm old and slow? There are no traffic lights or crosswalks.	Needs improvement	Improve light timing. Getting across Toole and Broadway to the California St bridge as a pedestrian is a nightmare.	Needs improvement	River road should be a complete street	New idea / proposed project
Another glaring sign of our poorly designed streets: nice sidewalks and bike lanes, almost always empty. Why? Because there are FIVE freaking car lanes right next to you.	Needs improvement	I like this path but the path would be much better if one didn't have to do this double crossing. Would cagers (people in cars) put up with this?	Needs improvement	enhance entire Milwaukee corridor to create a usable linear park	New idea / proposed project
Walking to Southgate Mall ought to be pleasant and safe, but no, everything is outrageously designed just for cars!	Needs improvement	I ride this frequently and have been wondering how to get on this path from the Clements trail. The concrete barriers make it seem like there's no entry to this end of the path. Better signage at least. But with this out of the way bend this portion of the path is more amusement than transportation.	Needs improvement	This is such a long stretch without shade. Could we add trees or shade shelter?	New idea / proposed project
Once I had to walk along Broadway's sidewalk. Man, I seriously thought I was going to meet my maker that day. A street like this shouldn't even exist!	Needs improvement	Need bike lanes, safer mobility for cyclists on Blue Mountain and Big Flat Roads	Needs improvement	New trail north on west side of Rattlesnake Crk going up to new dam	New idea / proposed project
Once I had to walk along Broadway's sidewalk. Man, I seriously thought I was going to meet my maker that day. A street like this shouldn't even exist!	Needs improvement	PLEASE TAKE ACTION: Crossing Hazard, cars race through here during rush hour. There have been numerous near misses with pedestrians and small children crossing here.	Needs improvement	North Ave should be a neighborhood greenway with traffic calming	New idea / proposed project

PROST INTERACTIVE MAP COMMENTS (Mar. '24-Dec. '24)

Comment	Feedback Type	Comment	Feedback Type	Comment	Feedback Type
Please, add a median or something! Crossing this road is dreadful when going from the riverfront trail to the Northside.	Needs improvement	PROTECTED BIKE LANES. Riding between the barriers and motorized traffic is hazardous, they need to be shifted in or another set of barriers added. The motorized traffic here is extremely dangerous for bikes.	Needs improvement	ditch crossing here to facilitate biking/walking to 27th and Mount Ave	New idea / proposed project
Benches facing the parked cars? Come on, Missoula, we can definitely do better than this!	Needs improvement	ICING ISSUES on the new pedestrian surface here. Chip Seal or other porous wear surfaces may alleviate this.	Needs improvement	Walk in river access here	New idea / proposed project
A terrible intersection for those of us who bike with our families to Pattee Canyon.	Needs improvement	Trail is suddenly narrow here. Multiple bike accidents have occurred here because of this.	Needs improvement	PHASE 1: Install 1-3 disc golf baskets as a practice space for putting.	New idea / proposed project
Let's waste this wonderful space next to the Kim Williams Trail with useless parking.	Needs improvement	The trailhead is very steep here, with risk of erosion, and is treacherous in winter.	Needs improvement	Extend Milwaukee to Mullan!	New idea / proposed project
more useless parking	Needs improvement	Trail ends on basketball court	Needs improvement	Use reclaimed water for a recreational park and wetland/wildlife area, Win Win!	New idea / proposed project
Does our little natural history museum really need this much parking? What a waste of valuable space.	Needs improvement	blind corner	Needs improvement	Designate Big Sky Park as Open Space and protect as public parkland	New idea / proposed project
It's frustrating how the abandoned railroad splits the neighborhood into two disconnected parts.	Needs improvement	Trail exits park onto a one way road and does not connect to any other trail or bike path	Needs improvement	Work towards acquiring property/easement to straighten and continue the milwaukee as an OFF STREET trail. Also widening is needed in many locations	New idea / proposed project
Need more than just grass and a few climbing toys. See approved park master plan.	Needs improvement	Path/cement is breaking up, seems like something to remove or improve and connect to a cross walk at Adams St.	Needs improvement	PHASE 2 - Practice and Par 3 Course. Expand the 1-3 practice baskets into a full 9 hole course. Easy to play and simple to see obstacles. Intended to be a great beginner space	New idea / proposed project
This gets used primarily for sledding in the winter. Suggest adding a permanent wetland feature.	Needs improvement	Fountain is not functional	Needs improvement	PHASE 3 - Technical Course. Add additional 7 baskets (reusing #9 as #18, and #5 as #15). Larger course design, extending to the northside of McCormick Park. Intended to be a challenge for intermediate players.	New idea / proposed project
Need to be able to access the area north of the river from the neighborhoods north of the river.	Needs improvement	This roundabout is too fast, its not a good place to cross on a bike or as a pedestrian. Narrower exits with more angle and a widened inner circle could help?	Needs improvement	Lower Miller Creek Disc Golf course. This open area on the south hills offer rolling meadows that could suitably fit a 9 hole DG course. Paired with a "pitch and putt" course in Maloney ranch it would offer a great amenity to the adjacent neighborhoods as a low cost recreation opportunity for youth, adults, and elderly.	New idea / proposed project
Need to add a splash pad for the kids living west of Reserve Street.	Needs improvement	I saw young kids trying to fish here, only to get scared off by encampment dwellers having an episode. We need to end subsidizing of the encampment issue, with our community's access to accessible natural spaces.	Needs improvement	Maloney Ranch Disc Golf, given the proximity to the Rankin Elementary school, a youth focused DG course in the Maloney Ranch park would offer the surrounding neighbors a very low barrier to entry recreation opportunity in this location. Focused on youth means very short, (~100ft) holes that would cater to youth and elderly alike!	New idea / proposed project
Fast-moving cars turn crossing Worden Avenue into a nightmare, making the two sections of the park feel disconnected.	Needs improvement	We are paying for the homeless epidemic with our access to natural spaces.	Needs improvement	Big Sky Community Park Disc Golf Course. With ample space along the perimeter of the park and other interstitial areas the park could serve a community that is under represented by the County and the City of Missoula. The disc golf community is vibrant and active within Missoula and has representation of over 30 people a week during the Garden City Flyer weekly league meetup. This is only represents a small fraction of the total users of these amenities. Designate this park to have Disc Golf.	New idea / proposed project
I wish the engineer who designed this intersection had to cross it on foot every day to experience firsthand how unsafe and dangerous it is for pedestrians.	Needs improvement	This beach is a really neat spot, I wish there weren't always encampments here so that my kids could enjoy it.	Needs improvement	Permanent Disc Golf Course added to this park	New idea / proposed project
Why on earth do we permit cars to drive so fast here?	Needs improvement	Another neat river spot that always has encampments, preventing everyone else from safely enjoying this space.	Needs improvement	River Ramble Disc Golf course. Adding 2-3 DG baskets/holes per park along the bike path could create the "river ramble" DG amenity. DG is a very underserved community by the City and having a DG amenity within biking distance of downtown can serve a large population of users without cars. Currently DG amenities all but require a car to get to because the city has not provided a reasonable permanent DG solution in town.	New idea / proposed project

PROST INTERACTIVE MAP COMMENTS (Mar. '24-Dec. '24)

Comment	Feedback Type	Comment	Feedback Type	Comment	Feedback Type
People are constantly manipulating the natural setting ' creating pools in the creekbed, , adding more trails (there's one every 10 feet of the main trail, and more recently in summer it has become a camping spote for the unhoused and there are no outhouse facilities near the picnic area	Needs improvement	As others have stated, a safe bike route/path needs to be included from Flynn to Reserve	Needs improvement	This parking lot adjacent to Russell Elementary should be properly paved and continue through to the parking lot that is accessible from Stephens Ave. It would make drop offs for students safer and easier for parents who don't need to travel north all the way to Brooks. It would alleviate much traffic on Russel during school pick up and drop offs as well as give people utilizing the fields around the South Loop more accessible parking.	New idea / proposed project
This intersection is so dangerous for pedestrians, especially those trying to cross Orange St on the north side of the intersection	Needs improvement	Diversion dam needs to be removed or a safe poprtage created. This could lessen the congestion of river floaters on the Clark Fork above town and potentially save people from injury or death.	Needs improvement	Completely agree that this defacto private land needs to be sold and the revenue should be used in the neighborhood to develop Ninkpata Park.	New idea / proposed project
No one pays attention to the young trees planted on this path and half of them die every summer due to lack of water. The irrigation is constantly broken but none of you know it so they just bake to death by July. Already a bunch have died and had to be cut down, how much is that costing taxpayers? Pay attention to something if you plant it.	Needs improvement	Diversion dam needs to be removed or a safe poprtage created. This could lessen the congestion of river floaters on the Clark Fork above town and potentially save people from injury or death.	Needs improvement	Both of the new roundabouts on Mullan are terrible for biking. Adda bike lane/path south of Mullan, which can bypass both roundabouts on the south. Neither roundabout has a spoke going south.	New idea / proposed project
The water fountain by this ballfield is always broken and wastes a ton of water.	Needs improvement	Improvements needed at the boat ramp to make it safer	Needs improvement	Create a seperate bike path all the way to Reserve. Bike commuting on Mullan is getting scary. With the population growth, more people want to be able to ride to town, but it's getting more difficult.	New idea / proposed project
The water spigot is always broken and wastes water.	Needs improvement	Install flasing pedestrian light system at every intersection on Reserve St. It is very scary to be a walker in this high traffic corridor!	Needs improvement	This is wasted space, maybe a garden, or rearrange the road to allow this space to connect with Moose Can Gully	New idea / proposed project
This water fountain is also always broken and wastes water. Just shut them off if people keep breaking them.	Needs improvement	Create a left turn lane coming from Flynn on to Mullan Rd. This intersection has been a problem for years!	Needs improvement	connecting this bike path to the one on south would be awesome	New idea / proposed project
Would be nice if there were still big trees here. Now there's no cover, it gets super dry in the summer, the wildlife are gone, and the kids have nowhere to play here anymore. Thanks for ruining this park.	Needs improvement	Clear out old deer fencing from City's previous planting efforts. Those old fences have sat there for years.	Needs improvement	Please consider covering the pool so the community can swim in a competitive pool year round	New idea / proposed project
The area around the trailhead and initial access is primarily weeds & non-native plants and not a pleasant start to this trail access. More native plants and less weeds, please!	Needs improvement	Widen bike lane around this curve. It is a very narrow, dangerous section of road.	Needs improvement	The Fort Missoula Ponds (aka "The Gravel Quarry") provide a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create a world-class habitat for birds and other wildlife in Missoula. For all its many great features, Missoula lacks an excellent wetlands suitable for both migrating and resident birds. I would love to see the ponds contoured to provide plenty of shallows for feeding shorebirds as well as deeper areas for ducks and other water birds. Rec activities should be limited to people on foot.	New idea / proposed project
More trees, shrubs and some native plants would provide much-needed shade, aesthetics, and natural value. Maybe a pollinator-friendly lawn?	Needs improvement	The person that built the ridiculous house here drives aggressively on the Mount Jumbo Saddle Road. Make them use Marshall Canyon for primary access instead of Lincoln Hills Trailhead. Their behavior is dangerous for hikers and walkers.	Needs improvement	Great park, but needs much more native vegetation to support our declining songbirds. These should be shrubs such as buffaloberry, golden currant, and others that provide plenty of fruit and insects.	New idea / proposed project
Frequently muddy in this area, especially in shoulder seasons. Adding some gravel or other material could help?	Needs improvement	Bike trail under bridge ends abruptly into curving two way traffic. Lots of kids live on river road and use river and this underpass. Need safe pedestrian and bike passage here	Needs improvement	Add bus service (with a bike rack) to the Blue Mountain parkling lot and to the Kona Bridge fishing access. These routes would be used by cyclists to access rural trails at Blue Mountain, O'Brien Creek, and Southside road. This would avoid dangerous cycling conditions on Mulan road and on Blue moutain and Big Flat roads.	New idea / proposed project
Connecting this trail to the trails uphill would make this a more useful trail and spread people out more.	Needs improvement	This park is amazing, but it need a crosswalk installed from the parking lot and possibly trails or side walks to adjacent neighborhoods. This would make accessing the park much safer for young children. Thanks!	Needs improvement	Add bus service (with bike racks) to the Kona bridge fishing access. This would create a safer way for cyclists to access gravel rides on southside road. It would be safer than commuting on Mulan Rd.	New idea / proposed project
Would LOVE to see continued access here either through or around the Moon Randolph Homestead.	Needs improvement	Narrow, steep, blind intersection that's becoming more and more dangerous as the Miller Creek area grows. See illustration for detailed comments.	Needs improvement	Maclay bridge should be retained as a pedestrian and cyclist bridge.	New idea / proposed project
Access here, please!!	Needs improvement	the trail entrance here should be emphasized - made wider, brought out into the street, separated from parking, and a crosswalk painted to Schilling	Needs improvement	Create a new East-West multi-use trail that can be part of the Great American rail trail.	New idea / proposed project

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Comment	Feedback Type	Comment	Feedback Type	Comment	Feedback Type
The section of road between the cemetery and Stockyard is frequently used by road bikers and commuters but is terribly un-friendly for bikes or pedestrians. I think it would be used more if	Needs improvement	this street often has cars parked in it, visibility is poor at intersection. if this is primary commuter route you should be able to go fast on it	Needs improvement	Add bike lanes (in both directions) on Mulan road from Reserve to/from Frenchtown. Mulan road is heavily used by cyclists and bike lanes would improve safety and encourage more bike commuting (particularly as ebikes are becoming more popular)	New idea / proposed project
The north-Northside desperately needs street trees	Needs improvement	Extend this trail west under Scott St bridge to connect more fluidly the Westside.	Needs improvement	Allow ebike use on the gravel roads from Butler creek to Snow Bowl (and the point 6 road)	New idea / proposed project
These trails are really difficult to follow, but I love that they are there. Signage needed.	Needs improvement	Love this little park and the updates. A focus on its eastside tree improvement would help. (more trees)	Needs improvement	If a new bike trail to Bonner is added, make sure that it is extended to Milltown State Park and the concert venues (Kettlehouse) to facilitate bike commuting and create a nice destination (picnic spot) for recreational cyclists	New idea / proposed project
I'd love if this park had better maintenance in the snow. It's the main connector for Vine street to Van Buren and often iced over/bare dirt/buckling pavement.	Needs improvement	More defined trail along the River. (Additional housing for house less population-another issue)	Needs improvement	Add multi-use trails (both directions) along lower Miller Creek Rd to the current end of pavement. This route is heavily used by cyclists and will experience a large increase in car traffic with all of the new development in lower Miller Creek.	New idea / proposed project
The length of the green bike signal is way too short! I am an avid cyclist and it usually turns yellow before I can make it across. Kids, families, and older folks will definitely need more time. It would also be nice to have a button for pedestrians to request a green crossing. The "wait here" for bikes does not pick up human presence.	Needs improvement	Convert railroad bridge to trail over river. Great loop for Westsiders and those on south side of river.	Needs improvement	Consider adding a bus route (with bike racks) near the current end of pavement. This would allow cyclists to take the bus to the popular biking areas along the Miller Creek road (avoiding the dangerous commute on busy city streets).	New idea / proposed project
This crosswalk needs better lighting and have button activated flashing lights for pedestrians. It is very hard to see pedestrians after dark.	Needs improvement	The crossing of 5th & 6th at Gerald is a dangerous intersection for bicycles and pedestrians due to poor intersection daylighting and high traffic speeds. The pedestrian rapid flashing beacon is only accessible to pedestrians and not anyone riding a bicycle. Speed humps, a bicycle access button and better daylighting would go a long way to improve this crossing.	Needs improvement	Put the Milwaukee bike trail on the unused stripe of land which is the original routing of the Milwaukee trail and runs straight from Justus Lane to Catlin, thus avoiding all car traffic and crossings as OFF STREET trail. Use TIF funds to acquire the land and the last easement needed and to build the trail. Do it soon since URD 2 sunsets in 2031.	New idea / proposed project
I second the need for a pedestrian crossing button and lights--this is a dangerous intersection to cross	Needs improvement	The Gerald Neighborhood Greenway is kind of a joke, honestly. I use it every day because bicycling on Higgins is a nightmare. The crossing with 5th/6th streets is a huge safety issue on a bicycle due to traffic speeds on those streets. There are so many stop signs on Gerald that it makes it not a great neighborhood greenway.	Needs improvement	Create a loop (Miller Creek Rd -> Trails End -> Bronco Dr. This would facilitate bike commuting and provide a new route for recreational cycling).	New idea / proposed project
There are sections of trail here that need some TLC--the tread is severely sloped in parts.	Needs improvement	This intersection is terrifying to navigate as a pedestrian or bicycle. The bicycle lane ends very abruptly. It's too bad there's no way to safely access Fort Missoula on a bike coming from the East side of town	Needs improvement	I know that this is controversial, but... Ebiking continues to grow as a popular recreational sport. There need to be more trails in natural areas where class 1 ebikes are allowed. They do not have to be allowed on every trail, but there should be some to provide recreational opportunities for cyclists to enjoy Missoula natural areas.	New idea / proposed project
Restrict or armor creek banks (access use erosion).	Needs improvement	trail feels dangerous, especially riding west, since drivers (13 plates esp) aren't looking for people	Needs improvement	Please work with other agencies (USFS) to designate some trails/routes for class 1 ebikes. This is a popular and growing recreational sport that has no more impact than mountain biking.	New idea / proposed project
Flashing crosswalk lights need to be motion sensor activated or push-buttons moved to more appropriate spots.	Needs improvement	Protected bike lanes would make this much safer throughout all of Higgins.	Needs improvement	The Bitterroot trail is too narrow for its multi-use purpose. In particular, the increasing popularity of class 1 ebikes will increase demand for off-street cycling routes. The Bitterroot path should be widened, lighting should be added, and side-street crossings should be better controlled (under/over passes or signal controlled).	New idea / proposed project
Flashing crosswalk lights need to be motion sensor activated or push-buttons moved to more appropriate spots.	Needs improvement	Missoula needs much improvement in becoming a walkable city. I recommend banning all cars in the downtown corridor and becoming a car free city like this one: https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2018/sep/18/paradise-life-spanish-city-banned-cars-pontevedra	Needs improvement	Improve signage for the neighborhood greenway system -- Large painting of a greenway symbol on the street would increase use and improve safety.	New idea / proposed project

PROST INTERACTIVE MAP COMMENTS (Mar. '24-Dec. '24)

Comment	Feedback Type	Comment	Feedback Type	Comment	Feedback Type
Barmeyer too steep at bottom.	Needs improvement	A traffic light or a rapid flashing beacon and clear pedestrian signal here would enhance the connection from the river trail to important destinations like St Pat's, PHC and other points on this side of downtown, including the entire North Side. Crossing here is hard and dangerous due to traffic speeds	Needs improvement	We need a bridge from west side over creek to get to trailhead and north bridge to go north without hiking on Duncan Ave with traffic. Dangerous with traffic and especially with snow on road / no shoulder. Prefer trail on west side of creek to old dam site but bridge here or at Creek Crossing is next best thing. Thank you.	New idea / proposed project
Need more enclosure features to preclude illegal trail building / trail formation through riparian area.	Needs improvement	Improve connection between the orange street bridge and the river trail on the east side of the bridge, there is only a staircase otherwise you have to go a bit out of the way on front street	Needs improvement	We should have trails through this city land. There is so much hiking pressure in the Rattlesnake, why not make use of this public land? Instead of houses on Fox Farm road getting to use it as their private back yard?? Connect trails from Lincoln Wood trail head to west side of the creek please!!! At very least just make a loop down through public Rattlesnake Natural Area from trailhead and back up until the bridge can me built. Thanks!	New idea / proposed project
Need more enclosure features to preclude illegal trail building / trail formation through riparian area.	Needs improvement	Either build a protected bike lane on both sides of the bridge or allow bicycles to use the pedestrian sidewalk. Traffic speeds are too high on Orange to safely use the bicycle lane	Needs improvement	OPEN SPACE PARK. This neighborhood is lacking in public parks and has a high density of people that would benefit on a daily basis living here.	New idea / proposed project
Conservation first! - Area beginning to feel dangerous. Enforce no camping rule. Citations for illegal tree cutting and trash piles.	Needs improvement	Improved bicycle infrastructure in the Hip Strip would allow bicycles to feel safe riding not on the sidewalk. This will do more to get bicycles off the sidewalk than "improved signage"	Needs improvement	Elevated crosswalk to protect Milwaukee trail users	New idea / proposed project
Conservation first! - Area beginning to feel dangerous. Enforce no camping rule. Citations for illegal tree cutting and trash piles.	Needs improvement	Remove some parking in front of the playground and put in a more protected sidewalk. This parking lot is very dangerous and used by a lot of small children	Needs improvement	Crossing lights for pedestrians and bicycle commuters. This corridor is tough to cross, often relying on cars to decide yield	New idea / proposed project
Conservation first! - Area beginning to feel dangerous. Enforce no camping rule. Citations for illegal tree cutting and trash piles.	Needs improvement	I have been nearly hit by a car multiple times walking through this intersection	Needs improvement	Crossing lights for pedestrians and bicycle commuters. This corridor is tough to cross, often relying on cars to decide yield	New idea / proposed project
Conservation first! - Area beginning to feel dangerous. Enforce no camping rule. Citations for illegal tree cutting and trash piles.	Needs improvement	Agree with whoever said that the connection from the trail to the park is awkward. Also whoever said to get rid of the parking is spot on. The parking lot is bigger than the park itself! This is prime real estate, why are we using it for people to store their private property.	Needs improvement	BIKE LANE: Many bike commuters use this corridor daily to connect to milwaukee trail after crossing 3rd at the light. Rush hour can be particularly hazardous along this stretch of road.	New idea / proposed project
Conservation first! -Enforce no camping rule. Citations for illegal fence cutting, tree cutting and trash piles.	Needs improvement	Wish the crossing here was elevated, lighted and with a flashing beacon like the crossing of the river trail & campus drive	Needs improvement	RAIL TRAIL	New idea / proposed project
with repaving and trees removed, bike path too hot for dogs to walk in summer	Needs improvement	I like the pedestrian crossing here and on hastings but they both need improvement. Neither crosswalk is lighted or elevated nor is there a flashing beacon. Using the crosswalk itself as a bicycle is illegal and logistically impossible, even though it is the safest way to cross. A multi-modal crosswalk here would be ideal.	Needs improvement	RAIL TRAIL	New idea / proposed project
Add lights!!! So hard to see people crossing at night	Needs improvement	I like the pedestrian crossing here and on Beverly but they both need improvement. Neither crosswalk is lighted or elevated nor is there a flashing beacon. Using the crosswalk itself as a bicycle is illegal and logistically impossible, even though it is the safest way to cross. A multi-modal crosswalk here would be ideal.	Needs improvement	EXTEND NORTH SIDE RIVER TRAIL SYSTEM	New idea / proposed project
I saw a pedestrian get hit and killed here. There are no safe crosswalks and the lighting is AWFUL! I don't ride my bike down this section of Russell because it feels very unsafe.	Needs improvement	This whole stretch of Higgins lacks a designated pedestrian crossing between Beverly/Strand and South Ave. Traffic speeds make crossing difficult and dangerous on foot or bicycle	Needs improvement	Continue River trail	New idea / proposed project
Walking/biking the Orange St tunnel is scary (dark, isolated, damp, frequently littered, too narrow for bikes and bike trailers to safely share the space)	Needs improvement	Walking or bicycling here is awkward and dangerous	Needs improvement	Great trail here, it should be recognized as an official trail, its been in use for decades by many regular users.	New idea / proposed project
A flashing pedestrian crossing light here (sensor or push-button) would help alert drivers turning onto I-90 E. They are often accelerating and not expecting pedestrians.	Needs improvement	This serves as the connection between the river trail and the library but is poorly maintained and awkward to navigate	Needs improvement	A path roundabout would be great here. I did see a guy on a onewheel nearly hit a small child	New idea / proposed project
Needs a crosswalk - should've been built with the trailhead improvements	Needs improvement	This park is entirely surrounded by private land with no public access. The city should consider selling it and use the money to develop nearby Ninkpata Park.	New idea / proposed project	this riverbank is used by many tubers, paddlers, and rafters. I think it would be a good area to improve the bank for ease of access and to minimize erosion. Its also a neat place to play music because of the harmonics of the bridge.	New idea / proposed project

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Comment	Feedback Type	Comment	Feedback Type	Comment	Feedback Type
remove speedbumps, add lighting, widen trail connection	Needs improvement	Bolster indicating access requested years ago. Still nothing.	New idea / proposed project	a formal river path access point to reduce erosion and improve ease of access.	New idea / proposed project
this section feels like a parking lot (because it is) when it should be a main gateway to campus. widen trail, open up sight lines at intersection, stop traffic	Needs improvement	Sign needed indicating access	New idea / proposed project	Would a path roundabout at the bridge help traffic flow here?	New idea / proposed project
this access point is inaccessible for cargo bikes, trailers, strollers, wheelchairs, etc. open it up, add wayfinding	Needs improvement	Sign needed indicating access	New idea / proposed project	Another opportunity to improve bike/ped connectivity in our parks would be to find a way to connect Greenhough Park to Bugbee Park. There is currently no safe way to bike from Greenough Park to Missoula Ave and no efficient way to walk between these two locations.	New idea / proposed project
pave and maintain this section	Needs improvement	Sign needed indicating access	New idea / proposed project	This parcel owned by Missoula Irrigation District could be a new local park in a neighborhood that is currently 20+ minute walk from the nearest park. Should include play equipemnt with the number of kids in the neighborhood. It could also include ped access to S 2nd St on the other side of the irrigation district, connecting the neighborhood and increasing access to the park.	New idea / proposed project
widen significantly (double?)	Needs improvement	Time to remove the asbestos inn and develop Ninkpata	New idea / proposed project	New All Purpose Stadium	New idea / proposed project
widen and raise crosswalk	Needs improvement	The gravel put area is a prime area for a park with river frontage and ponds within it.	New idea / proposed project	Continue the PEAS Farm path along the river to Duncan Drive Trailhead. This base map here does not show the path of Rattlesnake Creek accurately, as this path is only on the west side of the creek.	New idea / proposed project
this is a majpr commuting route that acts more as a sidewalk and vehicle loading zone. make this an actual trail all the way from the river to Wyoming	Needs improvement	The wastewater poplar grove would be a grat area to have XC ski trails in the winter - maybe with snowmaking using the treated water whcih would use water during the winter.	New idea / proposed project	Add a simple signal that shows if the MRL train guards are down or not. This will cut down on vehicles backing up at the train crossing. Tie the signal into same signal that tells emergency vehicles if a train is passing.	New idea / proposed project
too sharp a turn for a bike trail with grade changes. round it out and widen	Needs improvement	Add cross country skiing with snowmaking.	New idea / proposed project	Add speed bumps to Duncan Drive. People race up and down this straight, flat stretch of road. Given the number of runners and bikers that use this to access Water Works and Duncan Trailhead, someone is going get killed by the outrageous speeders on Duncan.	New idea / proposed project
widen to 16' (two bike lanes plus a sidewalk)	Needs improvement	So many opportunities to use the stretch of abandoned railroad for park and recreation... and better/safer commuting.	New idea / proposed project	Add speed bumps and traffic calming islands to Duncan Drive. People race on Duncan and it's dangerous.	New idea / proposed project
widen and raise crosswalk, open up sight lines, calm traffic	Needs improvement	Complete the community center at McCormick Park. Long overdue.	New idea / proposed project	Lafray park and it's bike corridor should be connected to Milwaukee trail along this road	New idea / proposed project
fix the raised crossing to be more raised	Needs improvement	This park is undeveloped and therefore underutilized. Would love to see a neighborhood survey conducted to determine best use of the space.	New idea / proposed project	There should be a protected pedestrian/bike path from Lafray park to the Milwaukee trail through here	New idea / proposed project
add trail access to/from the street - many people use the trail to get to/from the GFS, T&C, and other points on 3rd St	Needs improvement	Make another play wave besides Brennans	New idea / proposed project	It would be really great to have a bike path along Rattlesnake drive that connects the Hellgate soccer fields to the power line trail. Children and families frequently use this stretch to commute to school and recreation. Thanks for considering!	New idea / proposed project
widen and enhance crossing - open up sight lines, move sign poles out of the way, soften the corners. the trail should be the primary direction	Needs improvement	The trail along the river is really nice, but it lacks any amenities—no food trucks, bars, coffee shops, etc., along its path.	New idea / proposed project	new bridge connecting McCormick Park/Sawmill district to Fox Theater site	New idea / proposed project
pave and maintain this trail - it is part of the Schilling Greenway. widen the bridge	Needs improvement	There's ample space between the sidewalk and the road to plant trees. These trees could provide a safer, more shielded feeling for the sidewalks and community gardens from the fast-moving cars along Cooley.	New idea / proposed project	bring trail up to Broadway	New idea / proposed project
fix this bridge access to work better for bikes and other wheeled transport	Needs improvement	Would be nice if the City could refrain from cutting down the rest of the big trees in this park.	New idea / proposed project	needs something on the north side of the street. even if the trail continues to Reserve, how would you get to it?	New idea / proposed project
widen and smooth out the route along Grant to facilitate better biking/stroller/wheelchair access	Needs improvement	Could Blue Bird be connected to the rest of the North Hills? Increased trail connectivity would be amazing for folks who live closest to the BB trailhead.	New idea / proposed project	continue the trail to the new bridge at South Ave	New idea / proposed project
widen and pave connection	Needs improvement	More trail connectivity here? Connection to Blue Bird would create great rec opportunities.	New idea / proposed project	I second whoever proposed a separated bike/ped path from the river trail/Van Buren Footbridge to Greenough park is a genius. Getting from the River trail to Greenough park is a frightening and inconvenient journey on a bicycle, which is furstrating because the distance is SO SHORT, just a few short blocks!	New idea / proposed project

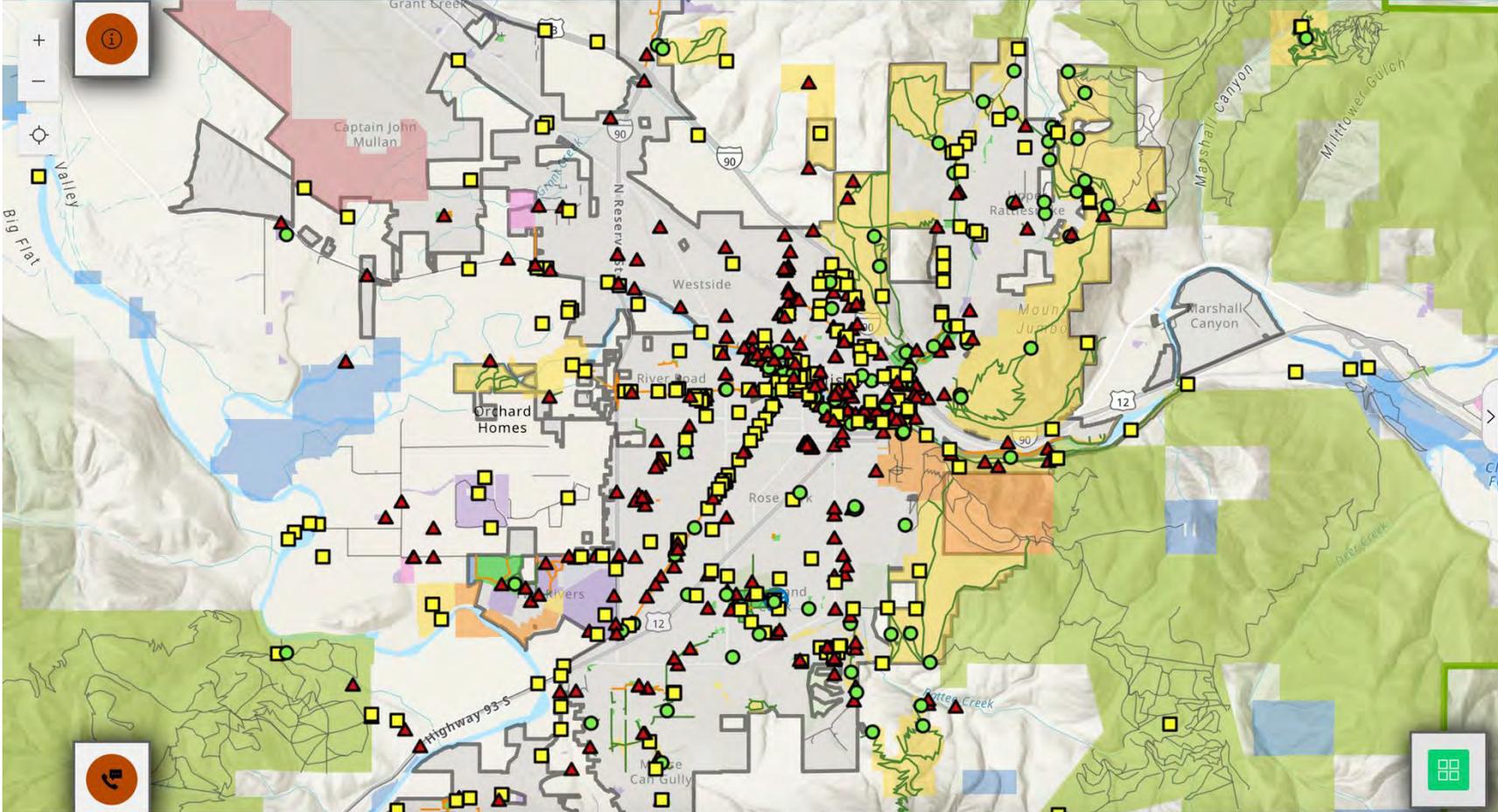
PROST INTERACTIVE MAP COMMENTS (Mar. '24-Dec. '24)

Comment	Feedback Type	Comment	Feedback Type	Comment	Feedback Type
raise and widen crossing, open up sight lines	Needs improvement	It's difficult to navigate the harsh turn before elevation getting on the bridge. I tend to lose all momentum heading onto the bridge making this turn. I would love if there was a rounded turn/roundabout easing the flow of traffic.	New idea / proposed project	Maurice trailhead needs a toilet	New idea / proposed project
widen trail and separate from parked vehicles, improve the curb ramps to access the streets by widening and lining up with where sidewalk will go on the other side	Needs improvement	USFS privacy fence along with trashy homeless encampments makes trail feel dangerous. Ask USFS to remove privacy slats from chainlink. And impose a no-camping rule within 1/2 mile of N/J street shelter.	New idea / proposed project	A small bike path here that connects to Pattee Canyon Drive from the golf course (with a roundabout as someone else suggested) would help create a connection between the University and Pattee canyon for bikes, and would help bikes avoid a dangerous left turn from Higgins onto Pattee Canyon Drive	New idea / proposed project
deeply rutted	Needs improvement	Curb-cut ramp / crosswalk aligned with Washburn St.	New idea / proposed project	toilet	New idea / proposed project
widen the diagonal connection from Stephens to Chestnut so people on bikes can easily avoid Orange St. add wayfinding	Needs improvement	Better N'hood Connectivity - build a West Addison Street bike/ped RR Track crossing.	New idea / proposed project	Bike path to Bonner & the Kettlehouse! This would decrease intoxicated driving after concerts and reduce parking issues and congestion in Bonner. It would be a win/win	New idea / proposed project
crowd of the road is too steep. rebuild and widen the trail, open up sight lines	Needs improvement	Dogs on-leash only, to comport with adjacent USFS area rule. No dogs Dec 1 to Feb 28, to comport with adjacent USFS area rule.	New idea / proposed project	Separated and protected bike lane to East Missoula	New idea / proposed project
add curb ramp and crosswalk here	Needs improvement	Add MW Trail river bridge and extend trail to Mullan area.	New idea / proposed project	as the other person said, a separated, protected multi-use trail to the upper rattlesnake would be a major safety improvement	New idea / proposed project
trail has no curb cut or crossing of Russell St. add and enhance	Needs improvement	safety issue: Improve this intersection of streets and trail access. improve motor vehicle site-lines.	New idea / proposed project	The intersection of Vine/Greenough Dr and the bike trail in the park is awkward and dangerous. A single-lane roundabout with well designed bicycle and pedestrian facilities would make this much safer	New idea / proposed project
each of these spurs needs to be redone with bicyclists and desired paths of travel in mind. widen and facilitate smooth connections to Schilling Greenway	Needs improvement	Add trail / pathway parallel to N 2nd St.	New idea / proposed project	Second the suggestion for a separated protected bike facility here. Could also serve pedestrians as there is no sidewalk.	New idea / proposed project
all of these access points need to be improved, but Schilling is probably the most important	Needs improvement	Land swap with USFS -- turn the KWNA into USFS Pattee Rec Area for consistent management regimes and responsibility.	New idea / proposed project	Agree spruce street needs a separated protected bicycle facility. It is definitely wide enough for one	New idea / proposed project
McDonald should be stopped also	Needs improvement	Acquire - adjacent to Franklin Park - property for an indoor neighborhood community center with plaza and incubator small business spaces.	New idea / proposed project	Need some kind of improved crossing to connect the river trail with the public library here	New idea / proposed project
There needs to be clear, safe, direct, intuitive route from Post Siding to Green Guidon. Navigating a series of speed bumps, especially at night, is a hazard and liability waiting to happen	Needs improvement	AcqBuild an indoor neighborhood community center with plaza and incubator small business spaces.	New idea / proposed project	change this to raised bike lanes and sidewalks in each direction. drivers entering and leaving the hospital are not looking both ways for people on the "trail"	New idea / proposed project

Online Interactive Map

With your help, the City of Missoula Parks and Recreation team is updating the Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails (PROST) Comprehensive Master Plan for the next 10-15 years. We are no longer taking comments on the PROST online interactive map. If you would like to provide additional input on the plan update, please visit the PROST Engage Missoula page. Thank you!

PROST 2024 PUBLIC FEEDBACK MAP



LEGEND

- Natural, Gravel
- Paved

Other Trails

Aquatic Facilities

Land Management

- City Conservation Lands
- City Developed Parks
- Missoula County
- Private Open Space
- School
- State of Montana
- University of Montana
- US Forest Service

Proposed Plan Boundary

-  Needs improvement
-  New idea/ Proposed project
-  I like this!

Mobile Listening Sessions



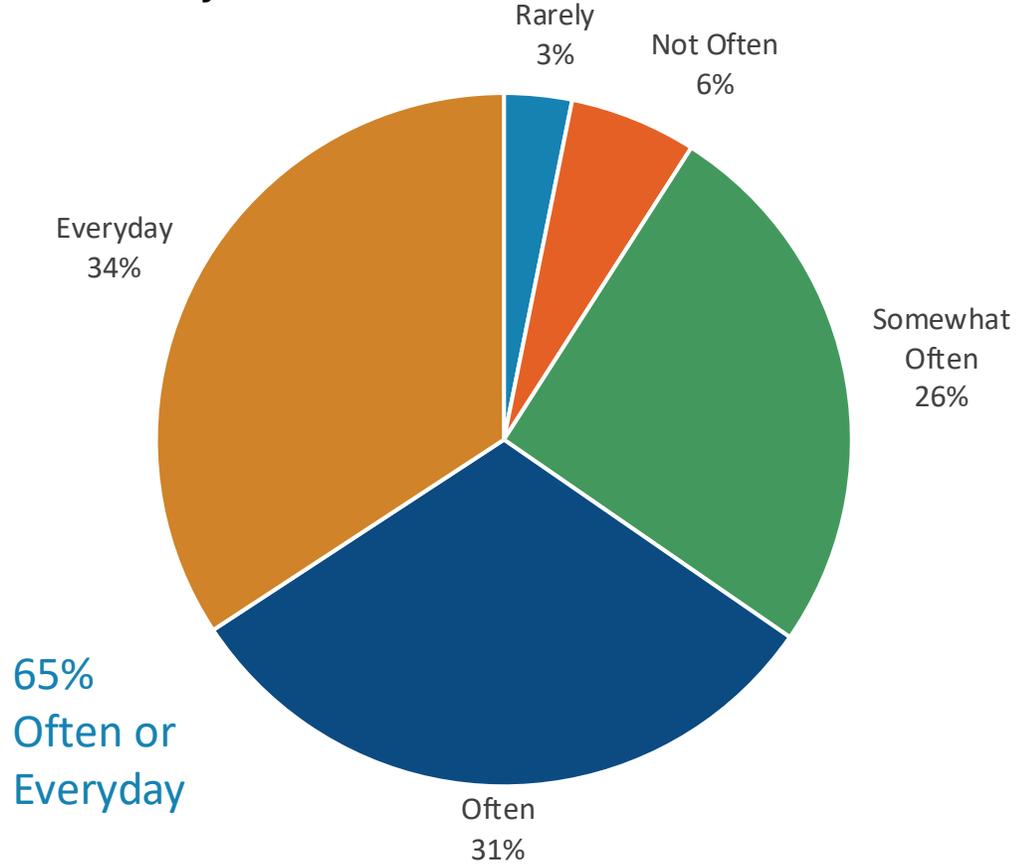
Mobile Listening Sessions



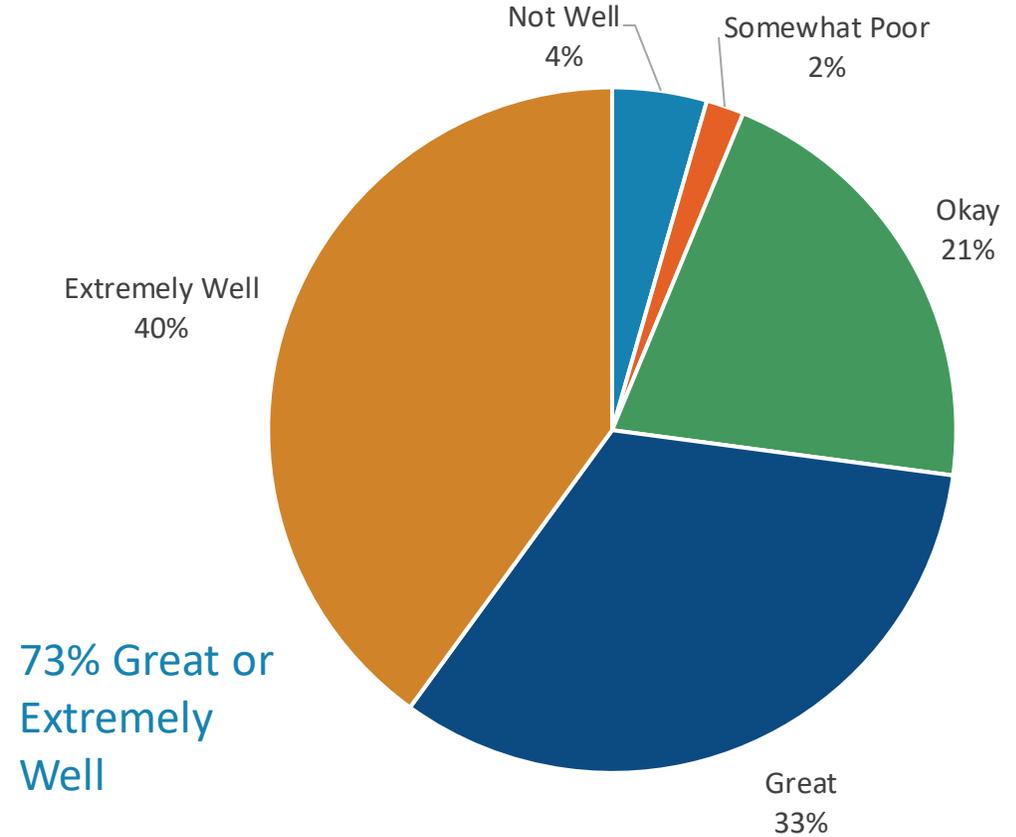
- 31 Listening Sessions
- Held at existing events and popular locations around Missoula
- 900+ Participants reached
- Co-hosted with CWG members

Parks

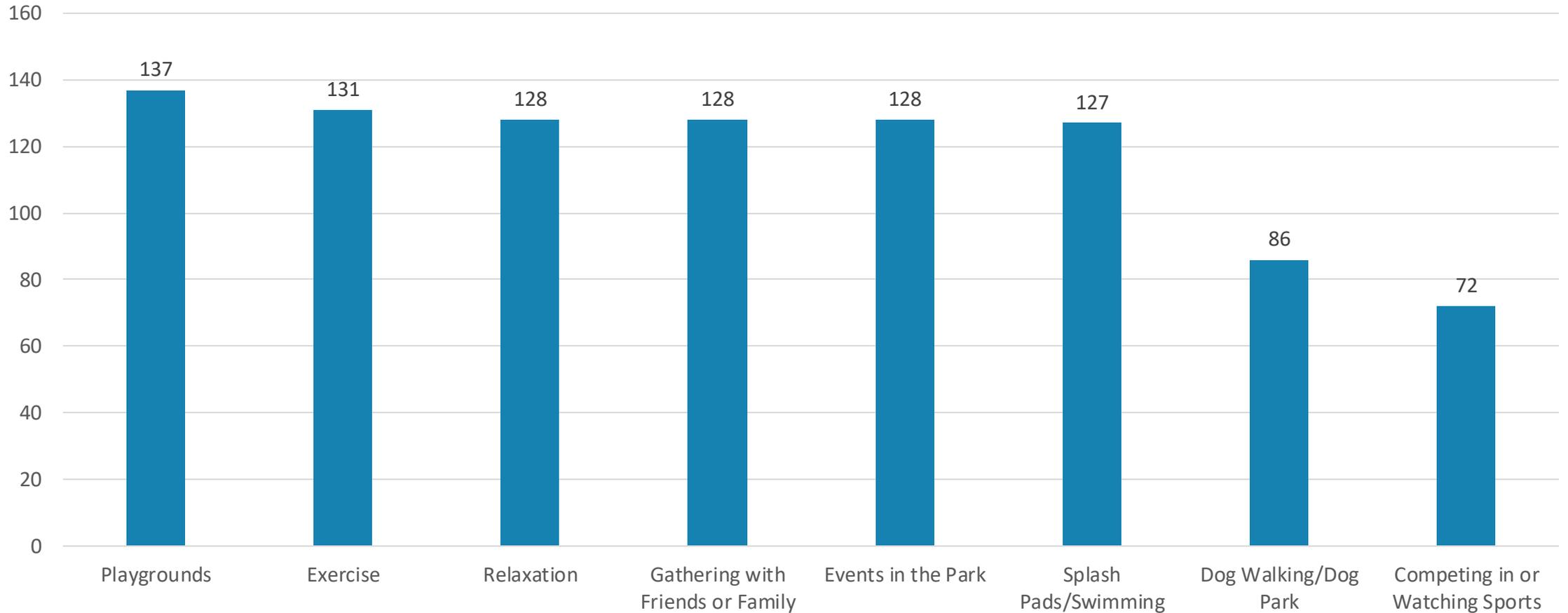
How often do you or your family/household visit Missoula Parks?



How well do Missoula parks meet your and your family/households needs?

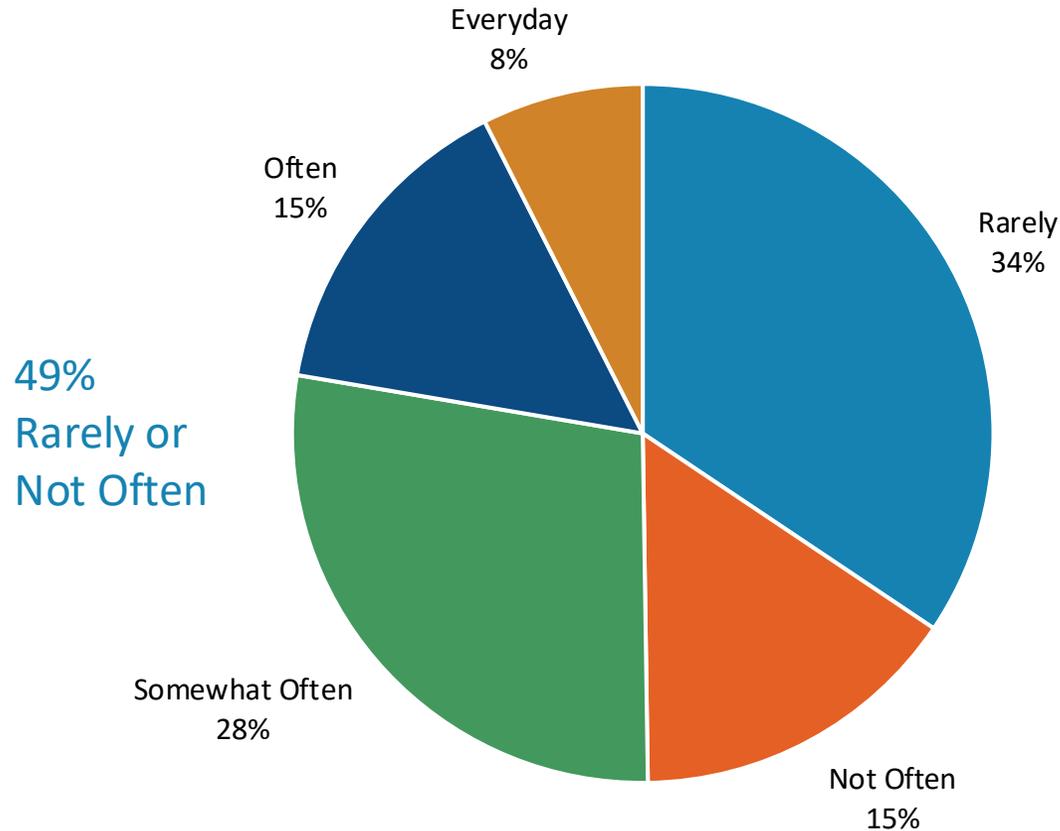


Why do you visit parks?

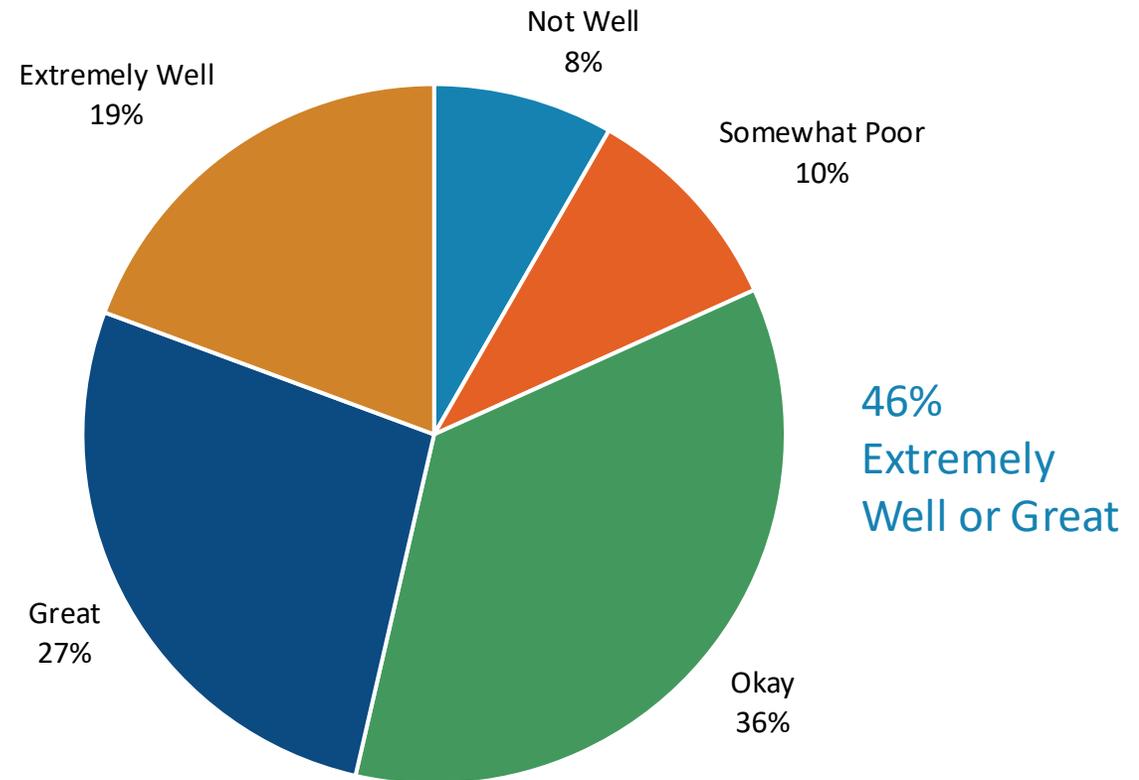


Recreation Programs

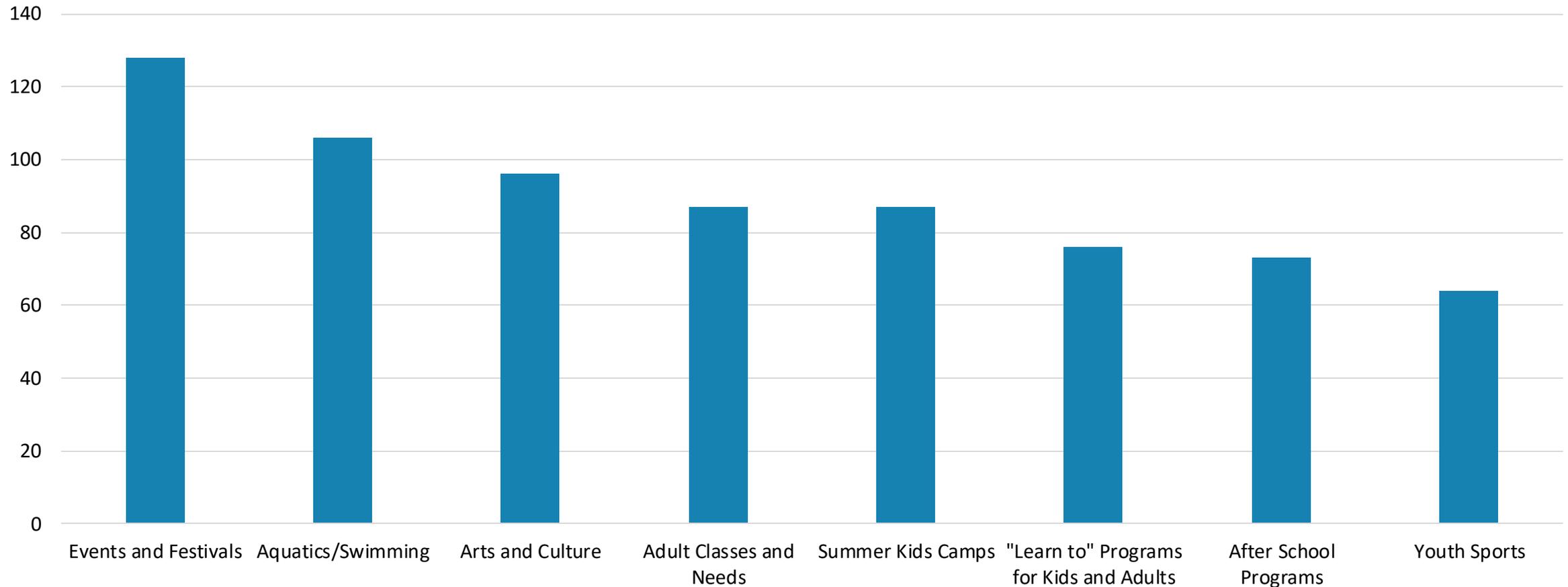
How often do you or your family/household participate in Missoula recreation programming?



How well do Missoula recreation programs meet your and your family/households needs?

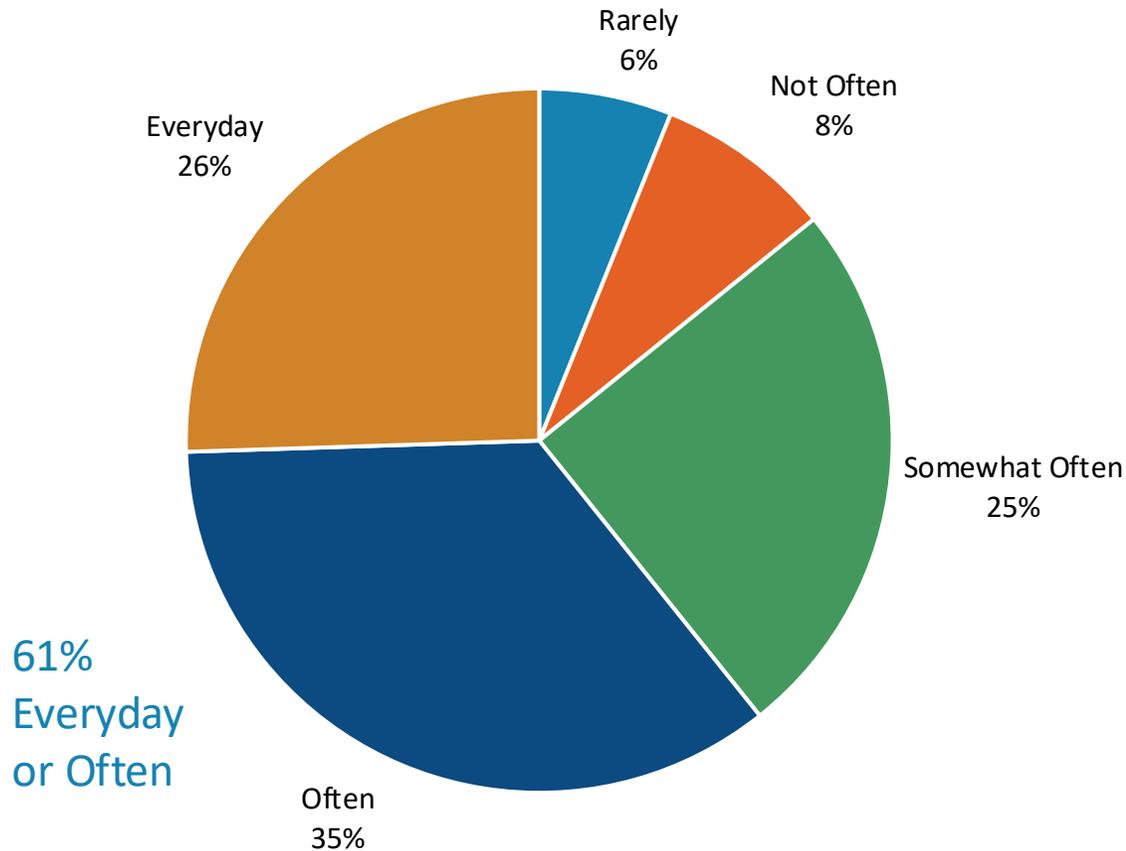


What programs does Missoula need more of?

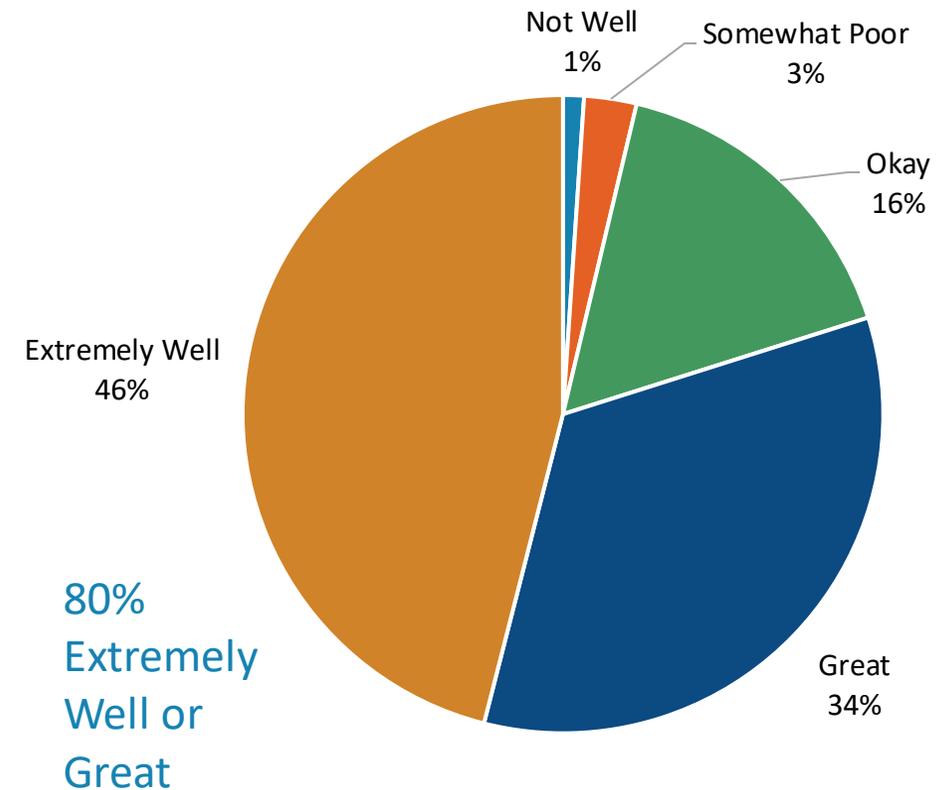


Open Space

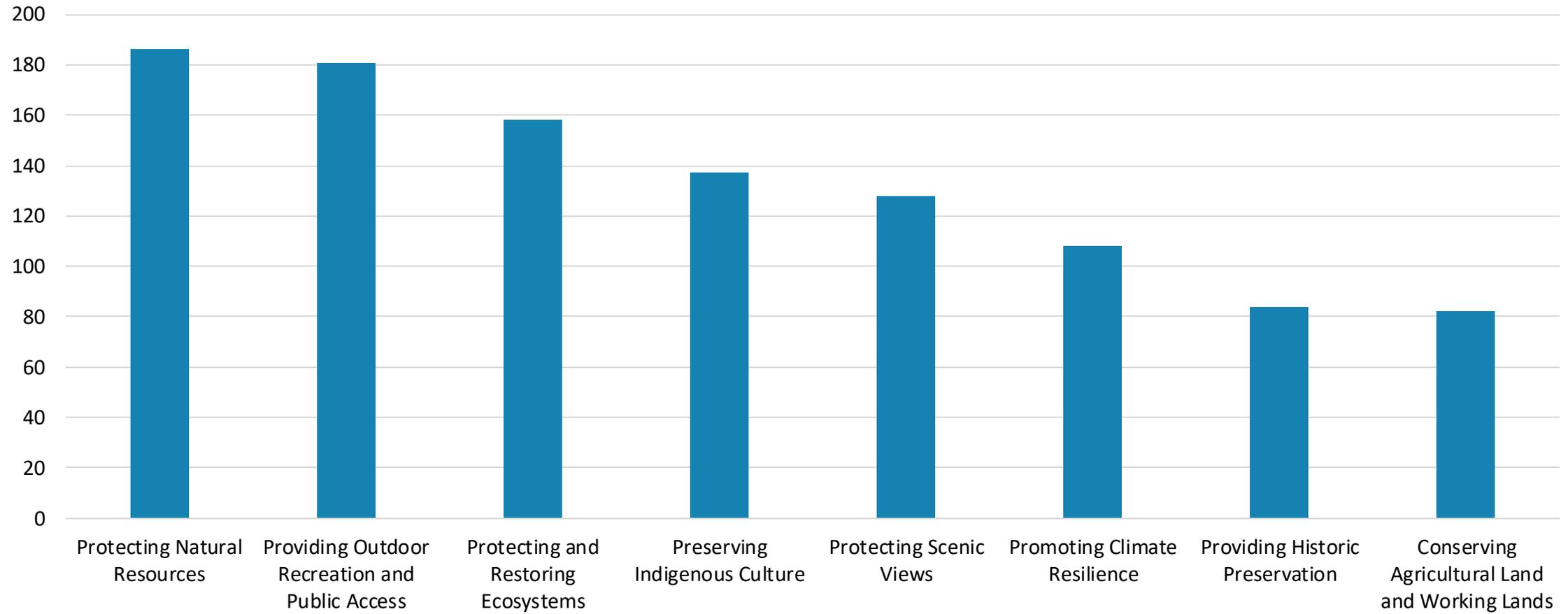
How often do you or your family/household visit Missoula open space?



How well do Missoula open space areas meet your and your family/households needs?

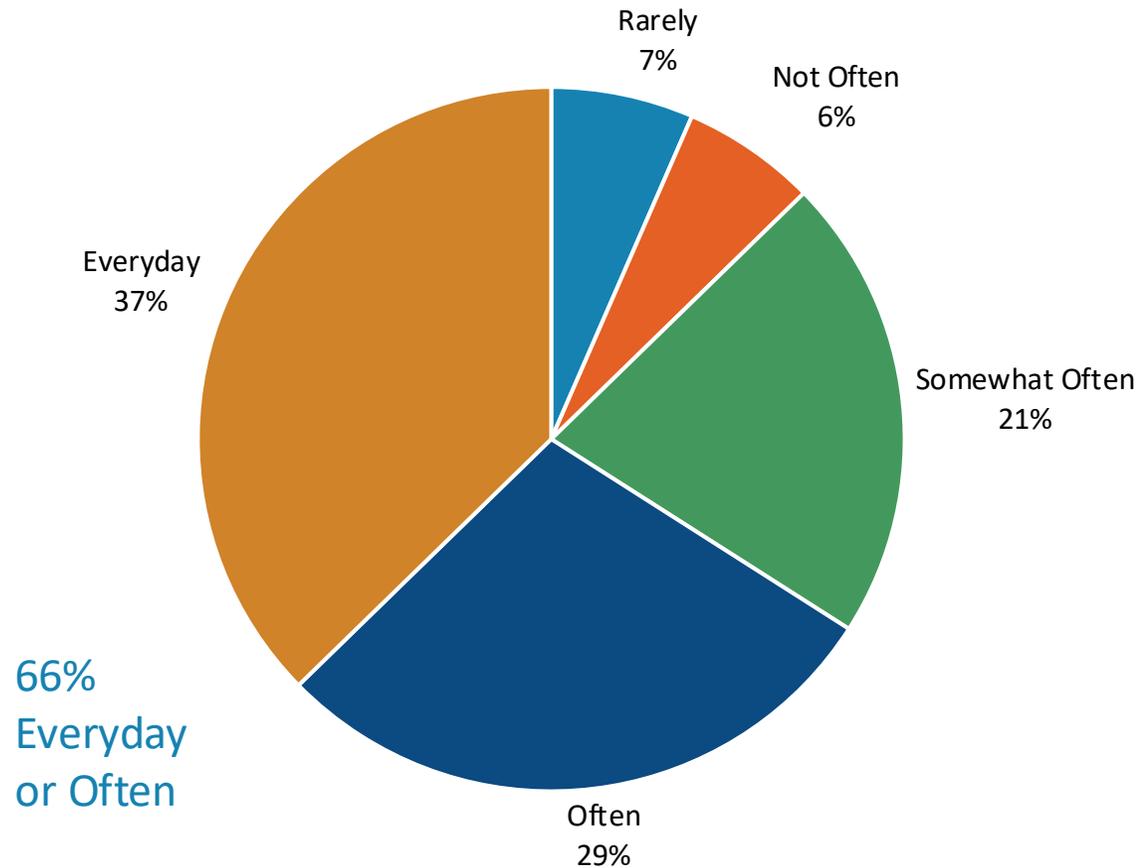


What is the most important reason to protect open space?

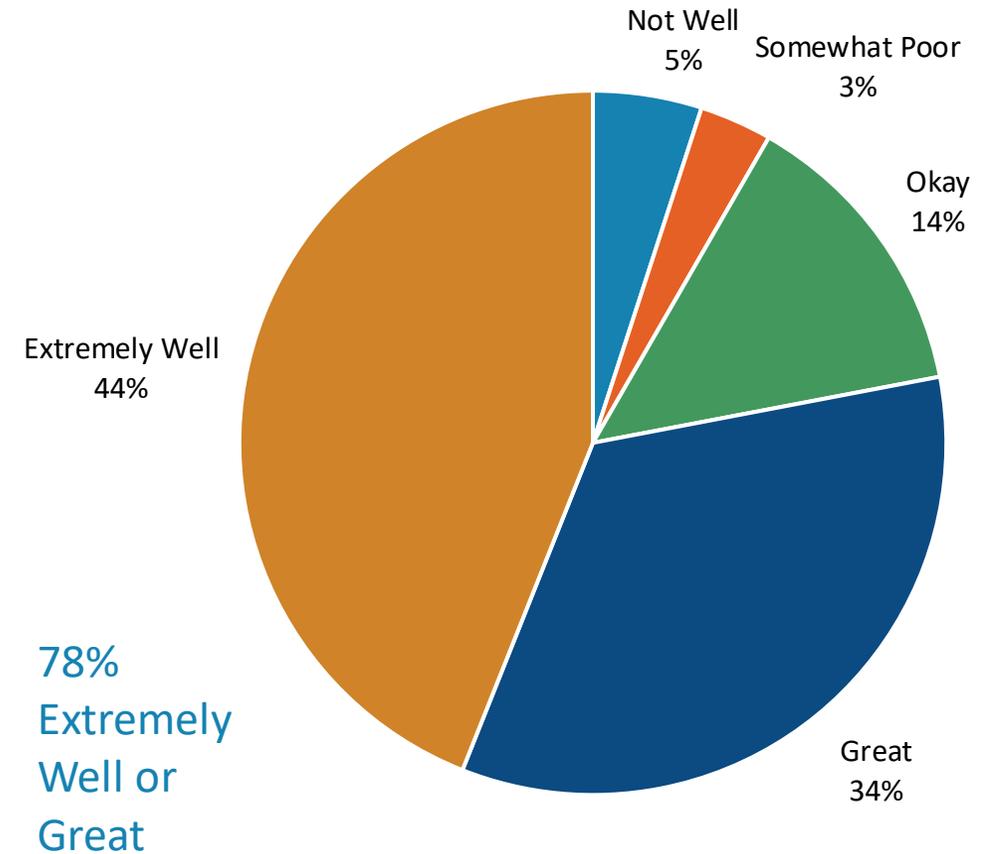


Trails

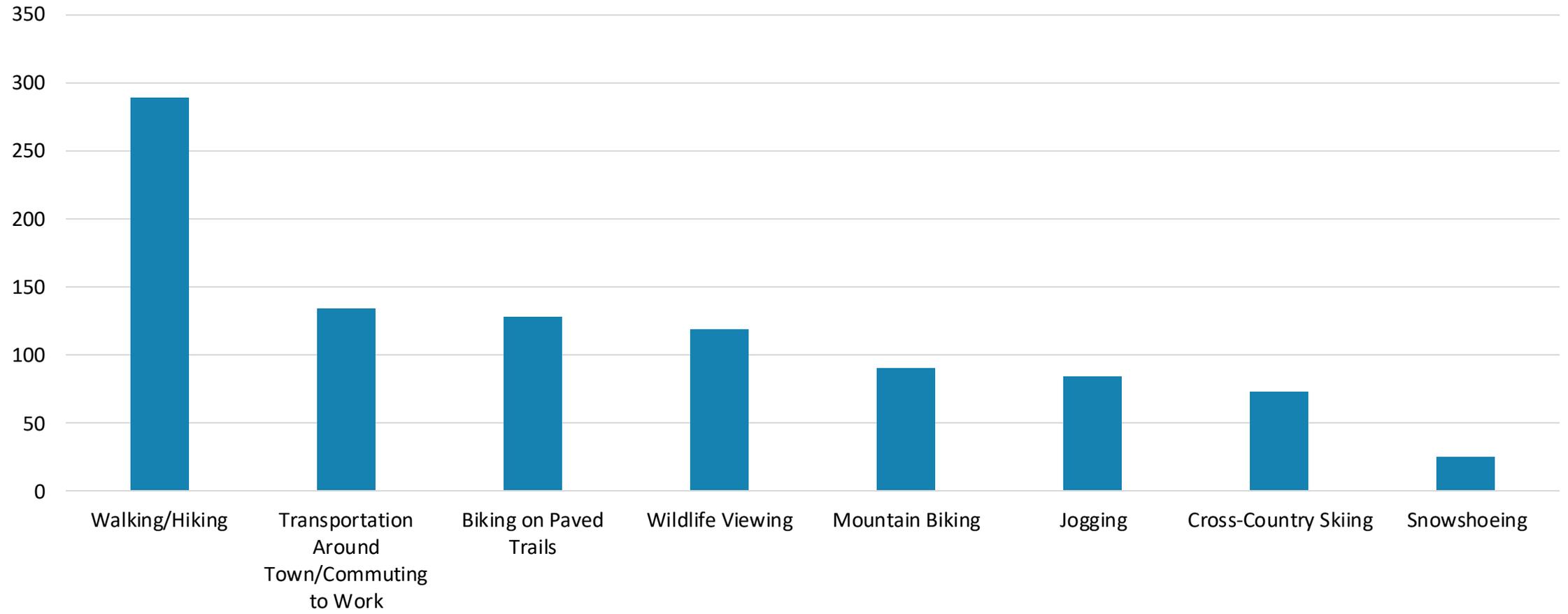
How often do you or your family/household visit Missoula trails?



How well do Missoula trails meet your and your family/households needs?



What do you use trails most frequently for?



What is working well?

My husband and I love being able to walk or bike from our home in Slants streets to open, natural areas with dirt trails where we can birdwatch and observe plants and insects. Keeping open spaces natural and encouraging wildlife is very important to us.

I appreciate the Parks and Rec youth programs. My daughter's grown now but we utilized them when she was little.

They are FREE FUN! They are all different and a vibrant part of our community.

Hiking all over the place - the more open the better, "even just small little pieces here and there."

What could be improved?

I would like to see more outdoor exercise equipment in the parks.

Parks need shade where you can still have eyes on park equipment

We need more community space for events!

More accessible maps with trailheads, parking and types of trails.

Bathrooms open all year!

Online Community Survey



Online Community Survey

- 1,476 Responses
- Open from March to July 2024
- Advertised via social media, PROST project website, at events, through CWG members, posters throughout the community, flyers, other Parks and Recreation committees and project partners

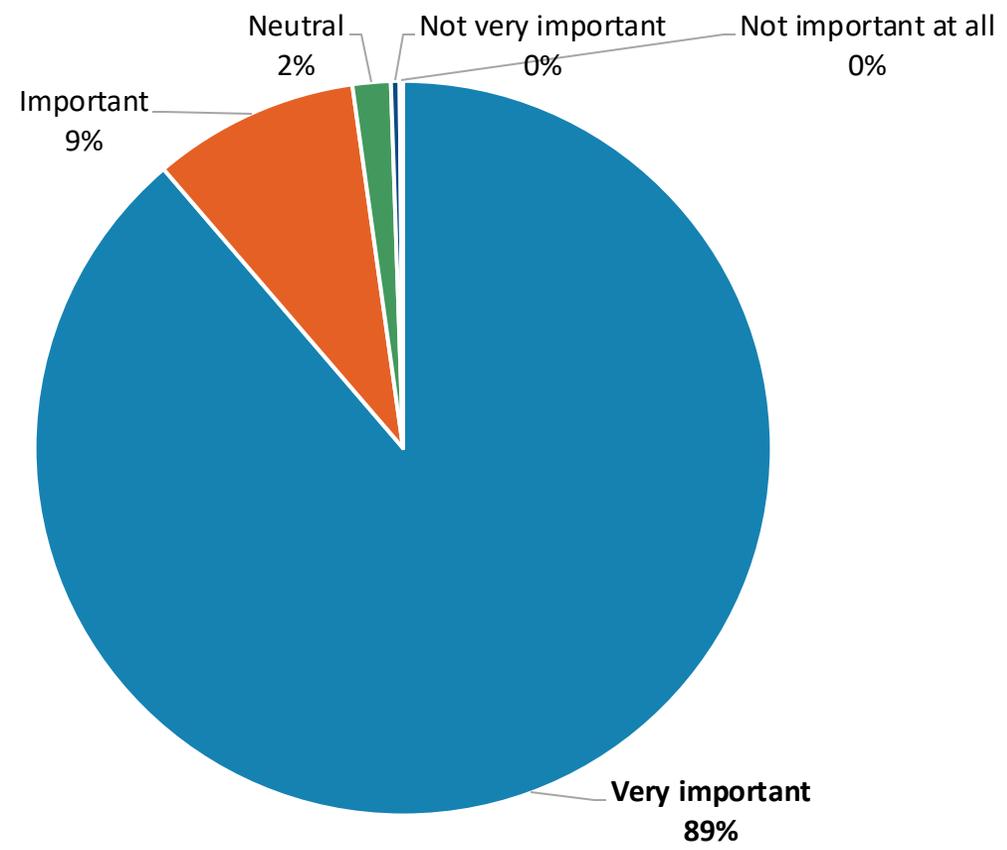


Survey Results

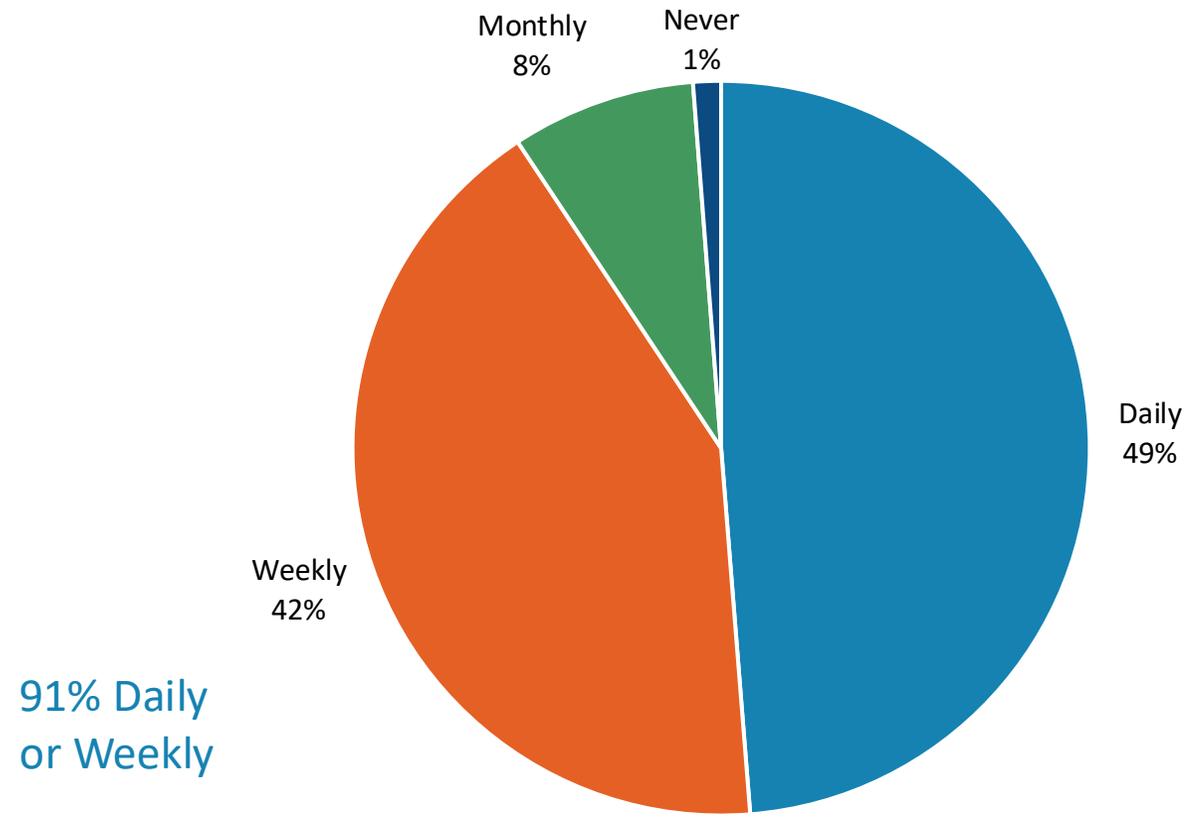
- These are graphic depictions of the topline results of the Qualtrics data
- Full data is available in an Excel file
- This is not an analysis of findings, but a record of results



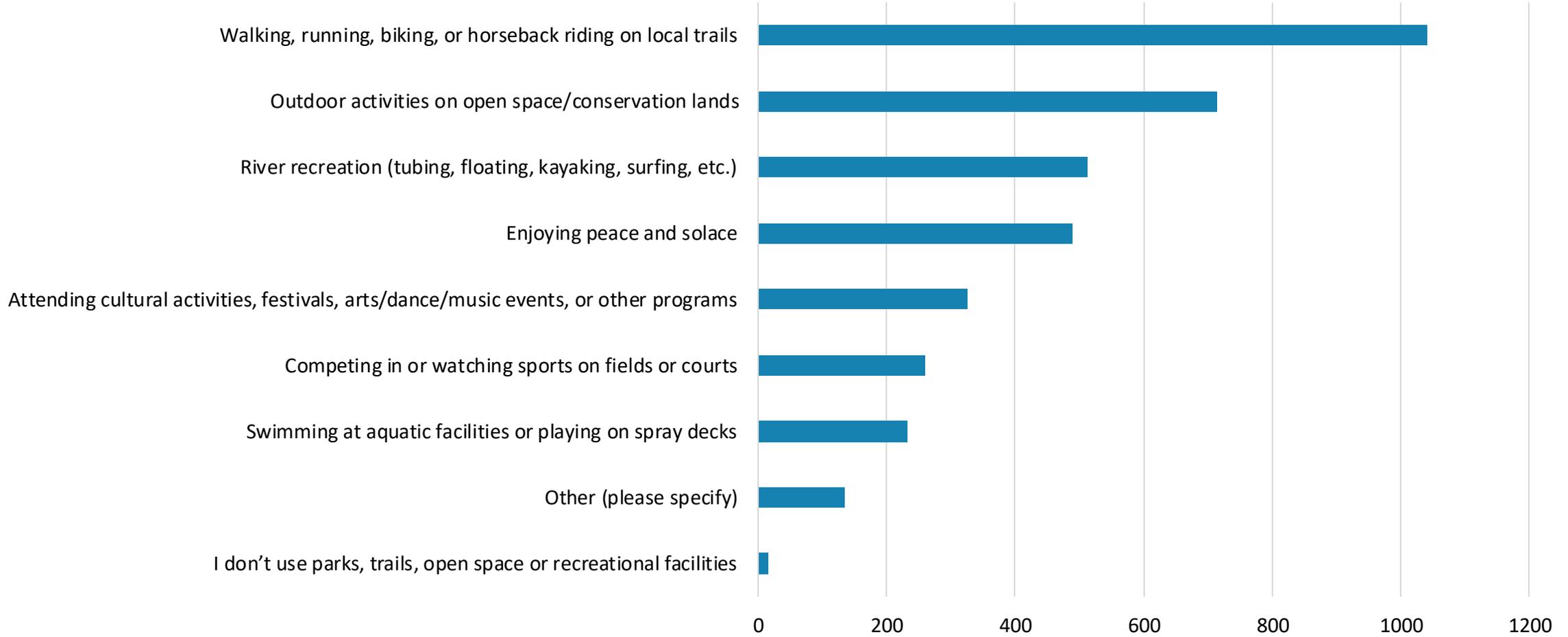
1. How important are parks, recreation programs, facilities, open spaces, and trails in making Missoula a great place to live, work, and play?



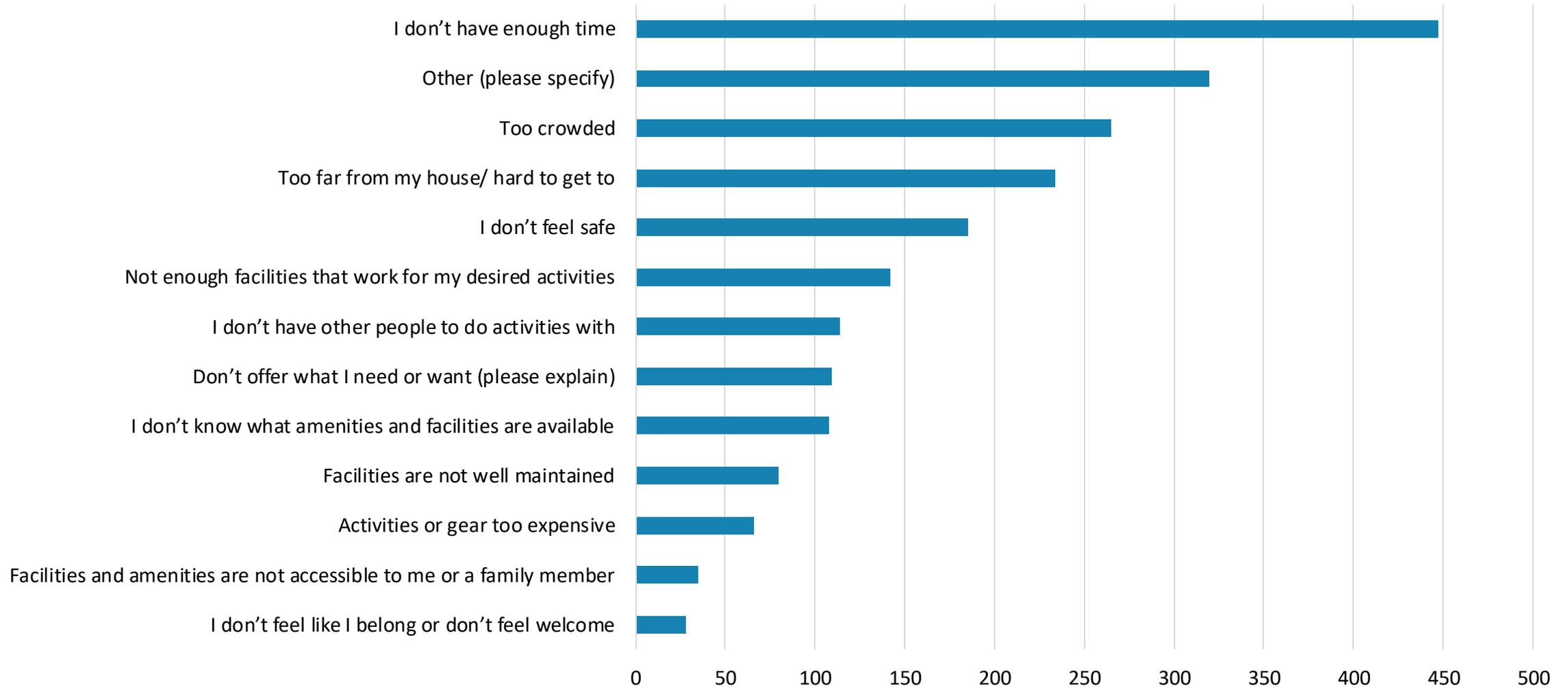
2. How often do you visit a park, trail, open space, or recreational facility in Missoula?



3. What activities do you participate in when using Missoula's parks, trails, open spaces, or recreational facilities? (Select your top 3)



4. What prevents you from using Missoula parks, trails, open spaces, and recreational facilities more frequently? (Select your top 3)



4. What prevents you from using Missoula parks, trails, open spaces, and recreational facilities more frequently (sample of open responses)?

More dog friendly spaced both ON and off leash.

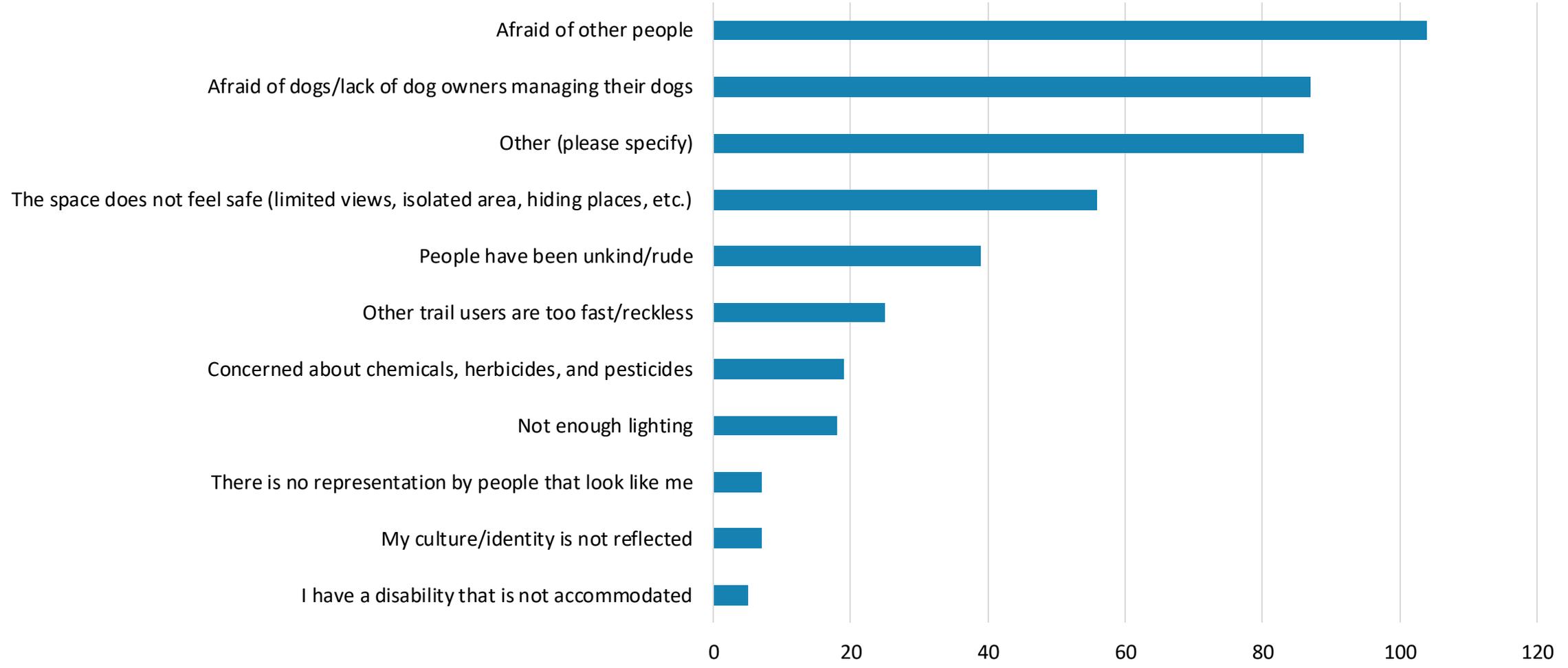
There are no good parks for where young adults/adults can workout, jump, swing and play. Everything is mostly geared towards young children. I would like to see more fitness features and also accommodate parkour.

Concerns about the use of toxic pesticides/herbicides

Could use more indoor options for the cold or smokey weather for kids and adults to enjoy. Places that offer activities for young and older children and adults.

Renting facilities is hard and they are often closed to the public, for example the Pavilion at Fort Missoula.

5. Why do you feel unsafe, unwelcome, or that you don't belong at Missoula parks, trails, open spaces, or recreational facilities? (Select top 3)



5. Why do you feel unsafe, unwelcome, or that you don't belong at Missoula parks, trails, open spaces, or recreational facilities (sample of open responses)?

Activities that I see in the parks and fear my children will pick up sharps and other paraphernalia

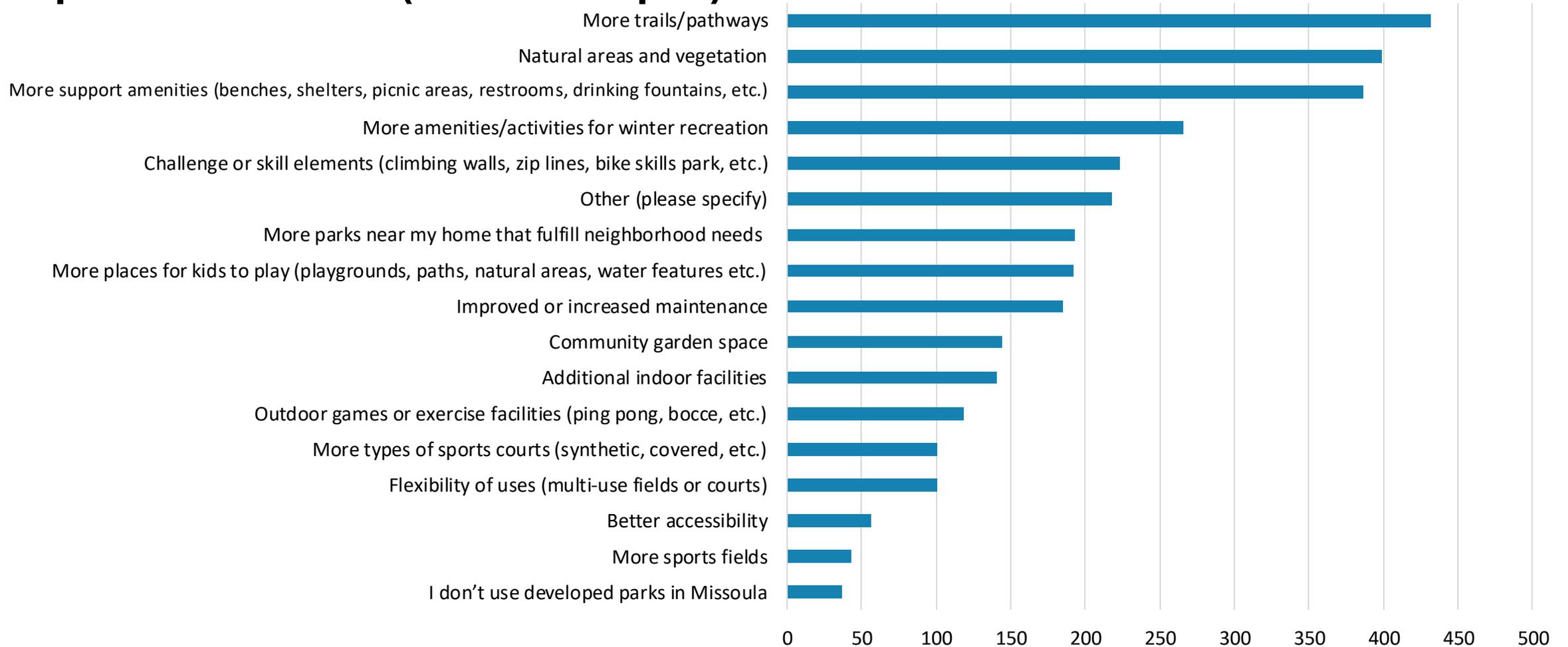
Nudity, homeless tent encampments, drug paraphernalia with other littering

The urban campers can make me feel unnerved, especially after daylight.

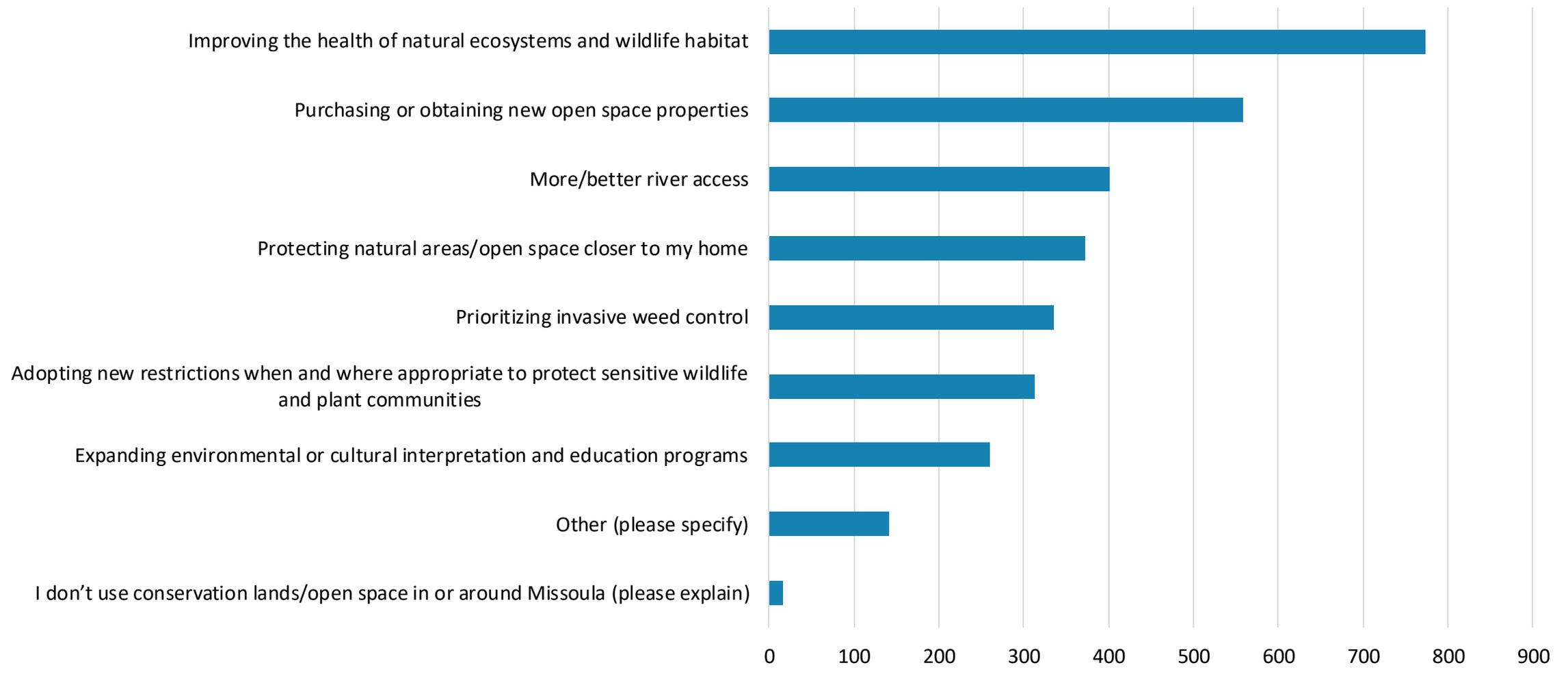
As I senior citizen I would like to see more benches to sit, rest and enjoy views

On the trails, more and more pedestrians are running dogs off-leash and/or wearing earbuds so they can't hear other users coming

6. Developed parks contain amenities such as playgrounds, sports fields or courts, picnic shelters or restrooms. In your opinion, what would make developed parks better? (Select top 3)



7. In your opinion, what would make conservation lands/open spaces better? (Select top 3)



7. In your opinion, what would make conservation lands/open spaces better (sample of open responses)?

Better bike and pedestrian linkages between different open spaces.

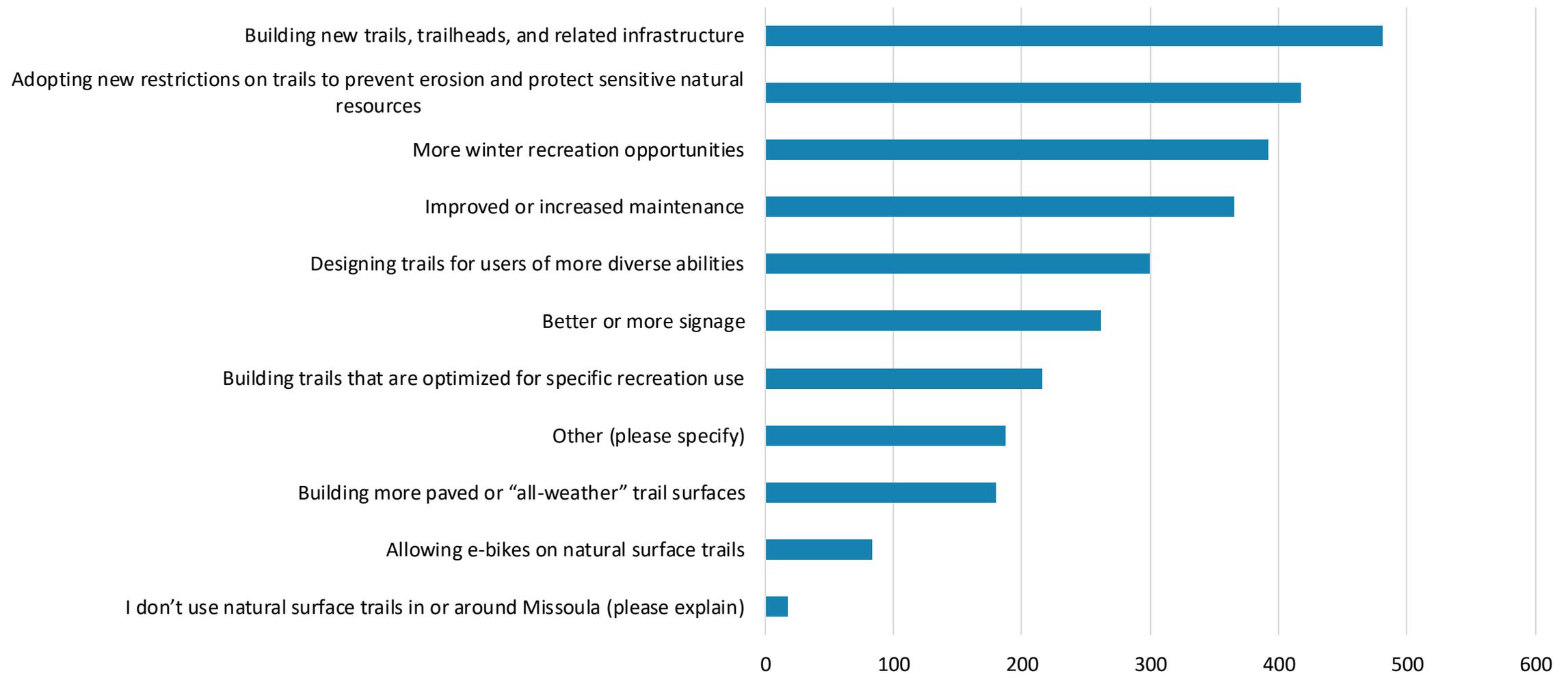
Better communication (brochures, web) showing where conservation lands are located. A color-coded map would be nice showing what activities are allowed as well as the hours of operation.

Maintain what is currently owned rather than expanding and not having adequate funds to maintain

Enforcement of rules (leash laws, public camping, etc.) and managing user conflicts

Protection, education, enforcement of public land use -- preventing erosion, off trail biking, hiking, poor dog behavior, bandit trails, clarification and updates to seasonal land closures which appear outdated and inadequately communicated to public.

8. In your opinion, what would make natural surface trails and trailheads better? (Select top 3)



8. In your opinion, what would make natural surface trails and trailheads better (sample of open responses)?

As an aging active person, we need access to single track trails using E bikes

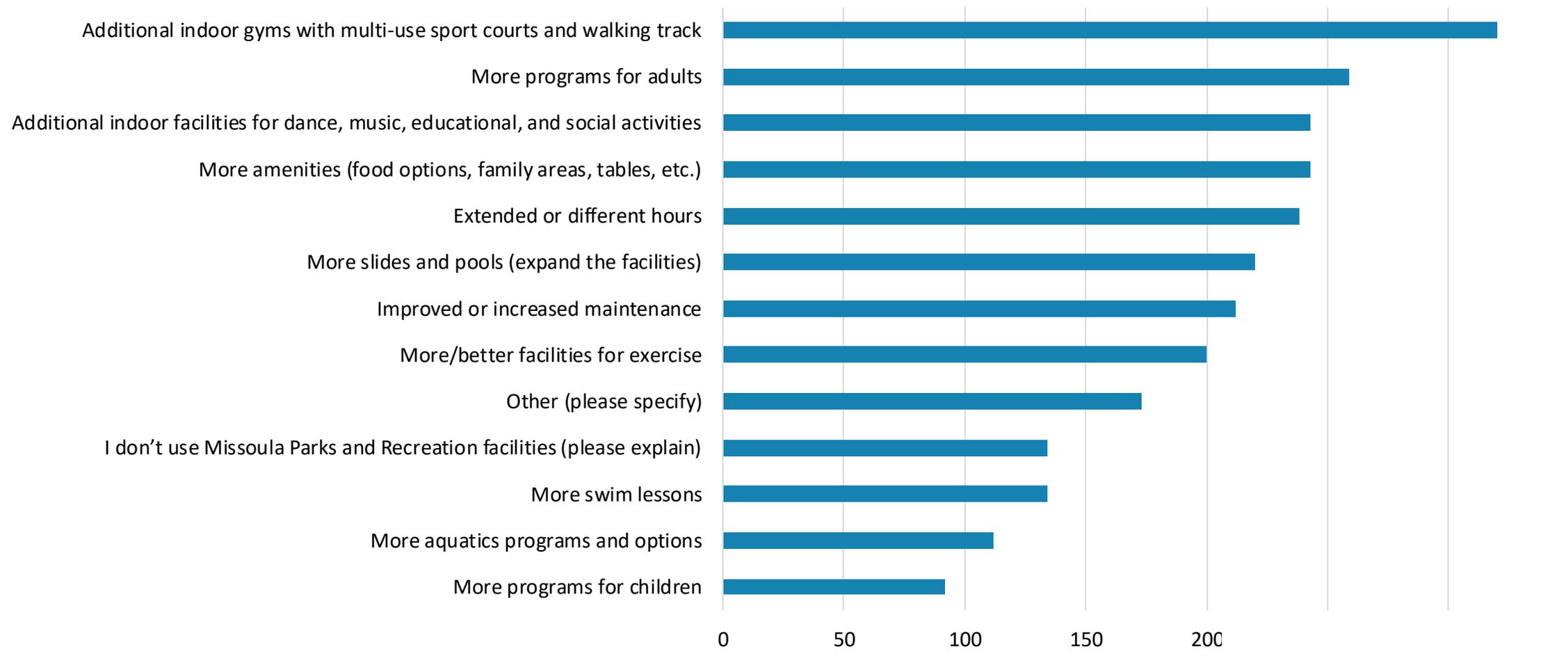
NO e-bikes on natural trails. Please. As a hiker, it makes me feel unsafe.

Greater connectivity via bicycle or pedestrian way

Implementing trailhead ambassador program during high use times to monitor use and impacts

Just make sure everything is accessible. Maybe more dog bag stations so people pick up after their dogs better.

9. In your opinion, what would make recreation facilities better? (Select top 3)



9. In your opinion, what would make recreation facilities better (sample of open responses)?

Allow food trucks, let people use the fields when games are not happening! Stop locking the fields so the real owners can't use them!

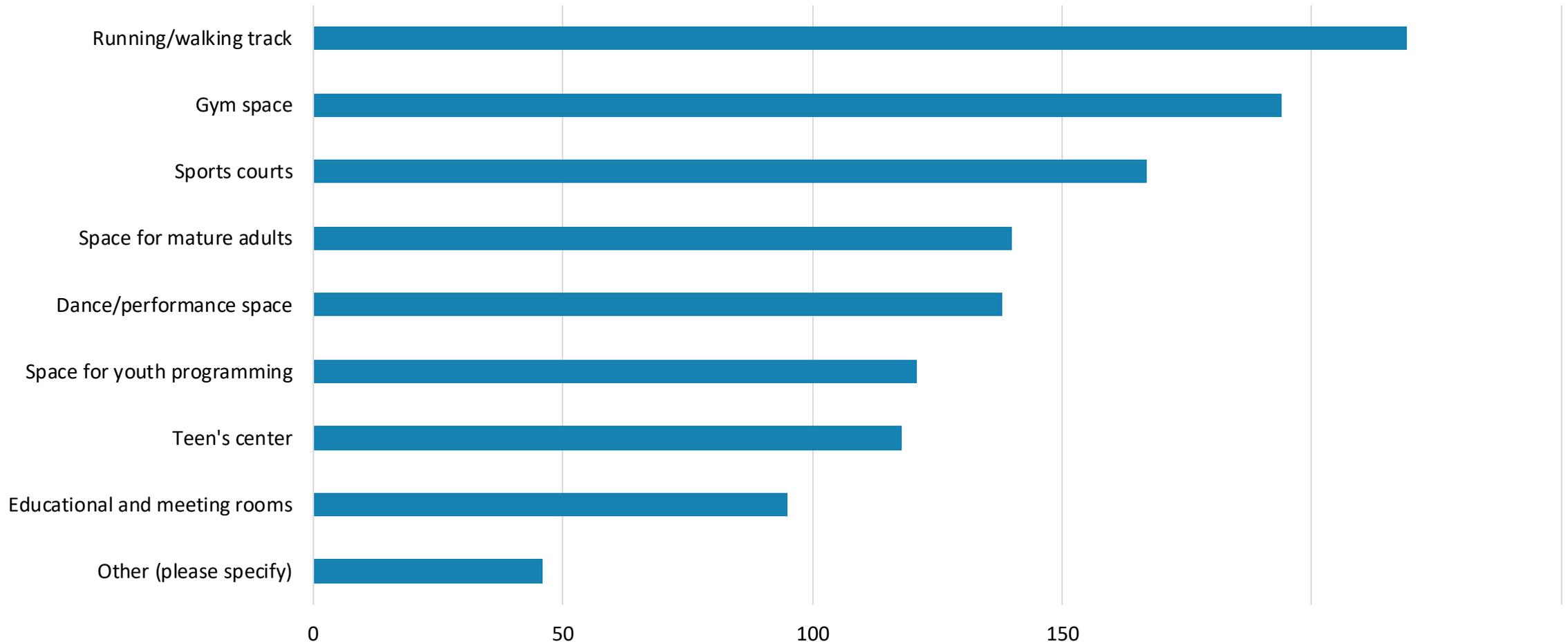
We already have "better." Please take care of what has already been built/provided with tax dollars.

Cheaper user fees and easier online signup system

Wheelchair access, wheelchair changing areas

I would like to have more options to swim year round. Currents is in a good location for me but feels too small and crowded.

10. What things would you like to see in an indoor recreation facility? (Select top 3)



10. What things would you like to see in an indoor recreation facility (sample of open responses)?

Indoor skate park or roller-skating rink

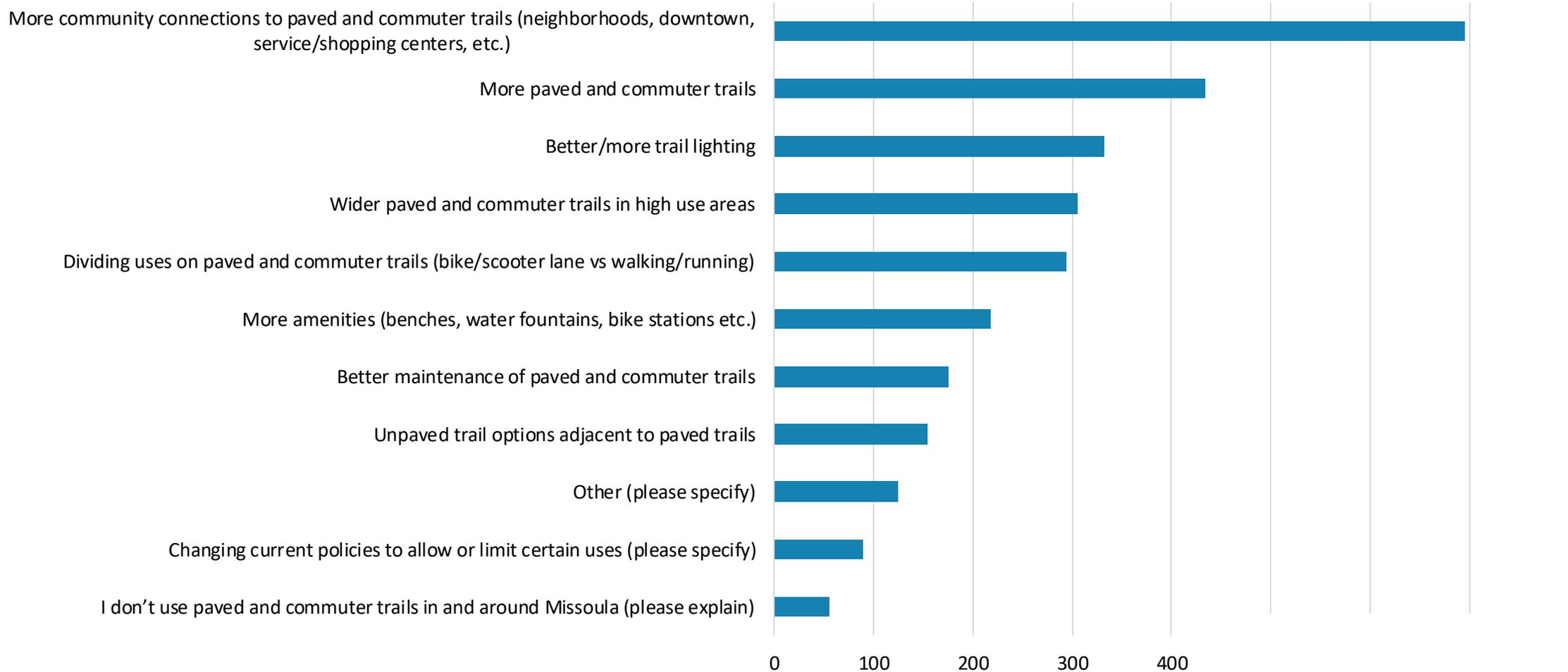
Weights, sauna, and steam room

Turf field

Low-cost yoga, HIIT, and dance classes

Parkour/fitness, balance and climbing challenges, climbing wall

11. In your opinion, what would make paved and commuter trails better? (Select top 3)



11. In your opinion, what would make paved and commuter trails better (sample of open responses)?

Enforce existing trail speed limits evenly regardless of vehicle type (bike, e-bike, scooter, electric skateboard). and leash laws

Allow personal electronic devices such as electric unicycles, onewheels and e-bikes

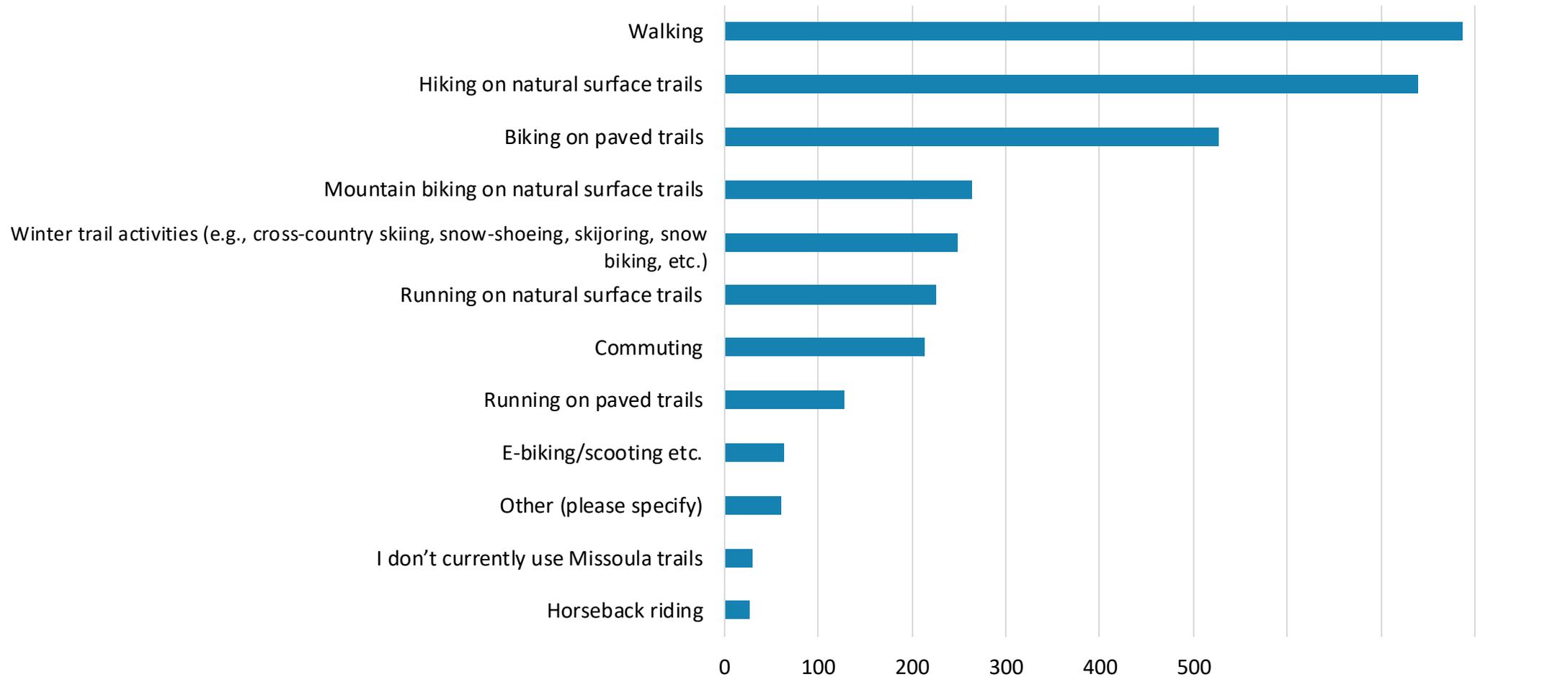
Not allowing urban camping on or close to trails

I am increasingly concerned about the use of e-bikes and other higher speed devices on shared trails given the lack of courtesy of users. I don't think allowing expanded uses is compatible until this is addressed.

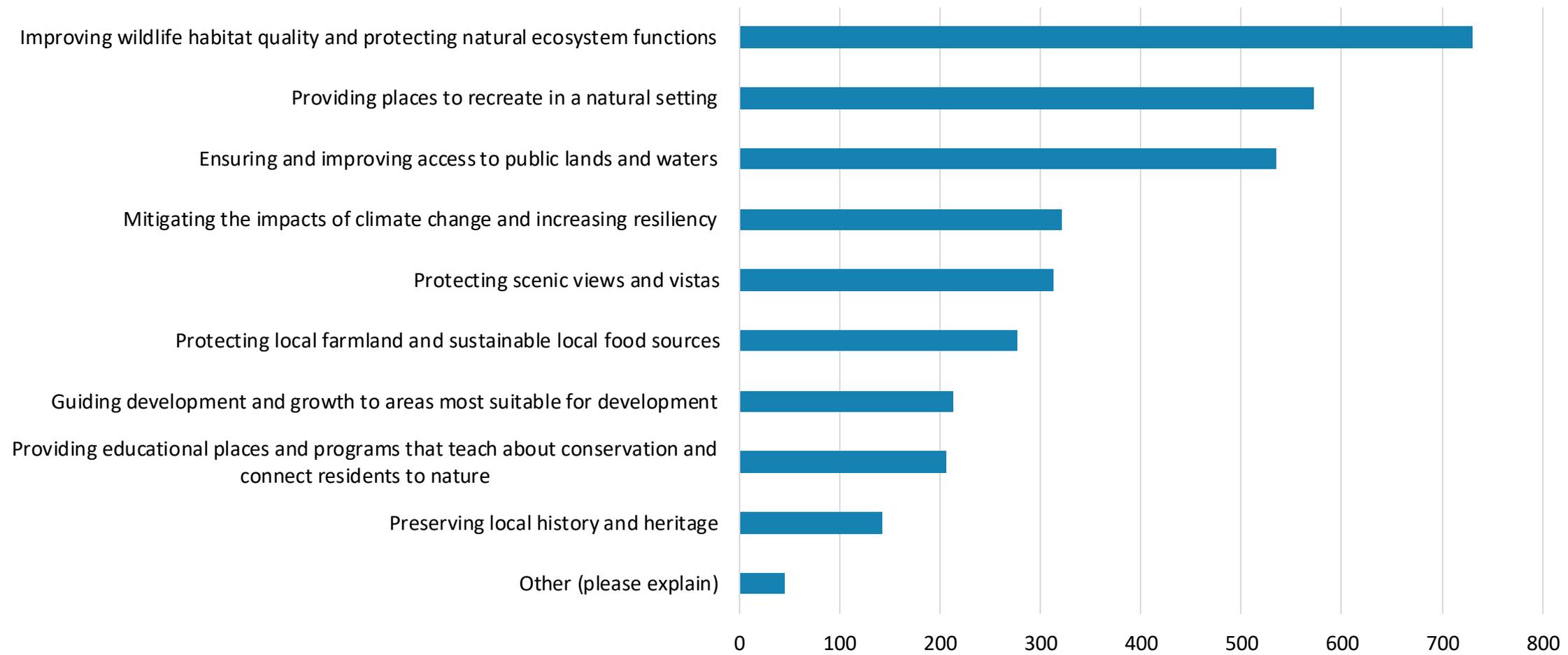
Better protected bike lanes/trails throughout the city, a bridge or underpass across Broadway.

Public restroom facilities along trails

12. When using trails in and around Missoula, what are your top 3 trail-based activities that you like to do?



13. In my opinion, the most important reasons for protecting open space in or near the Missoula area are: (Select top 3)



13. Other Open Responses

Ample opportunity for outdoor recreation without it constantly feeling crowded. More opportunities for disc golf.

Protecting and providing places near the City so we can access them without driving, thus aiding street safety and mitigating climate change while creating community as people move through neighborhoods in a low-impact way that supports knowing each other as humans.

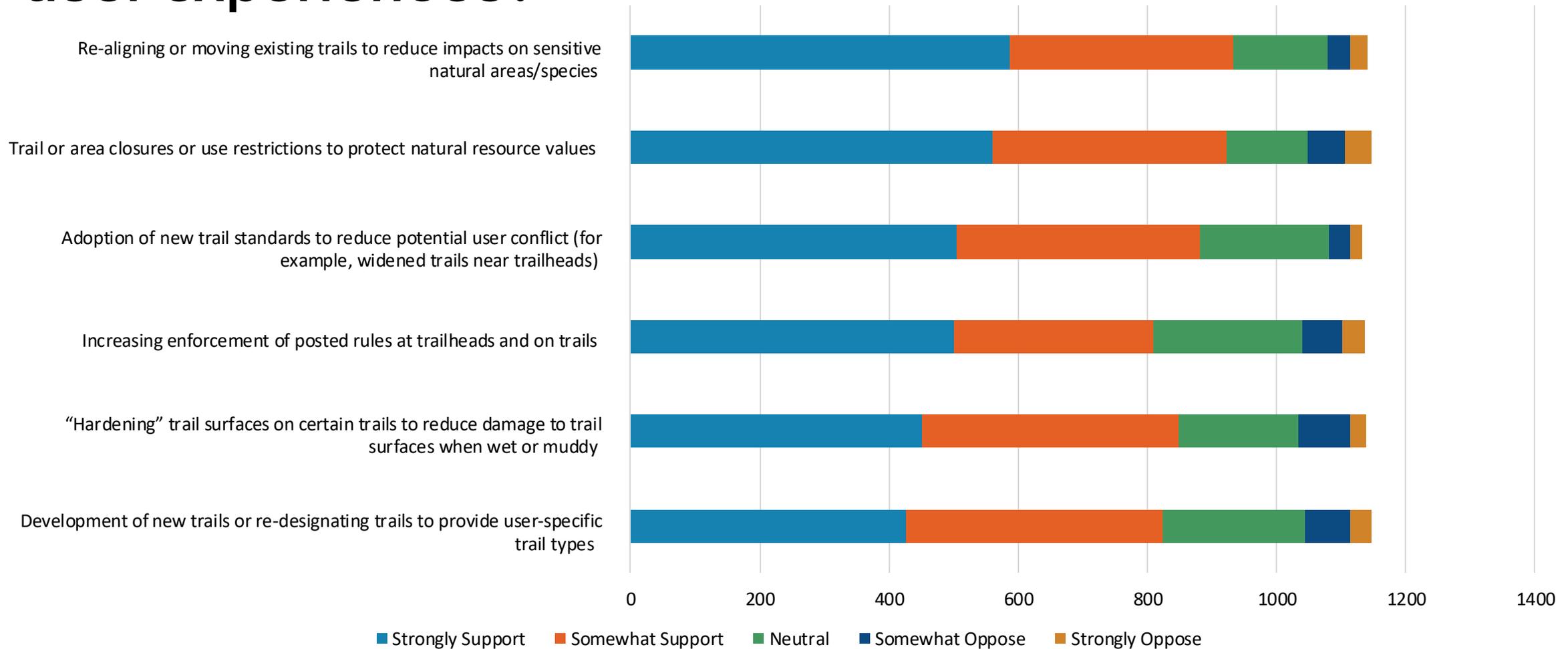
Linking more open spaces together with trails

Stick with the current program, don't stretch resources thinly by constantly taking on more land and maintenance.

Creating a buffer for wildland/urban interface for wildfire

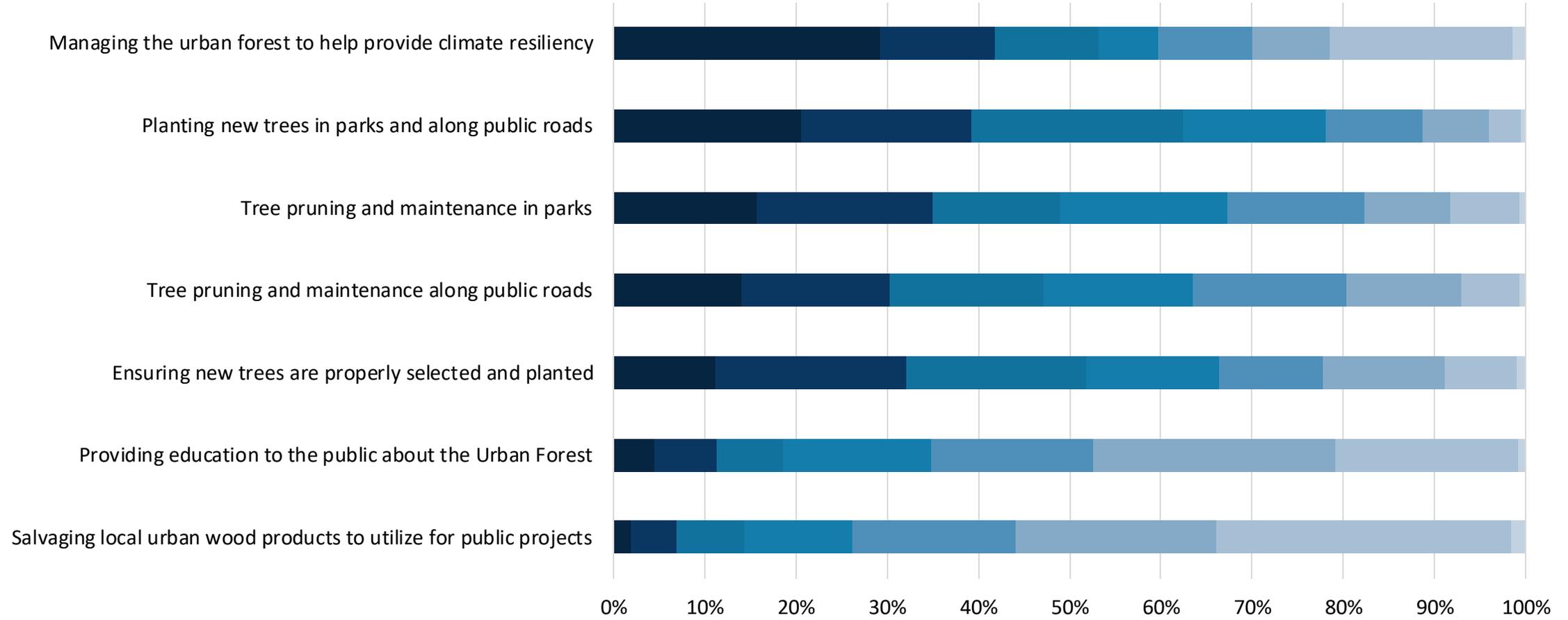
Having a small place where you can see and feel nature even though you are surrounded by city.

14. Which strategies would you support to help mitigate negative impacts to natural resources or user experiences?

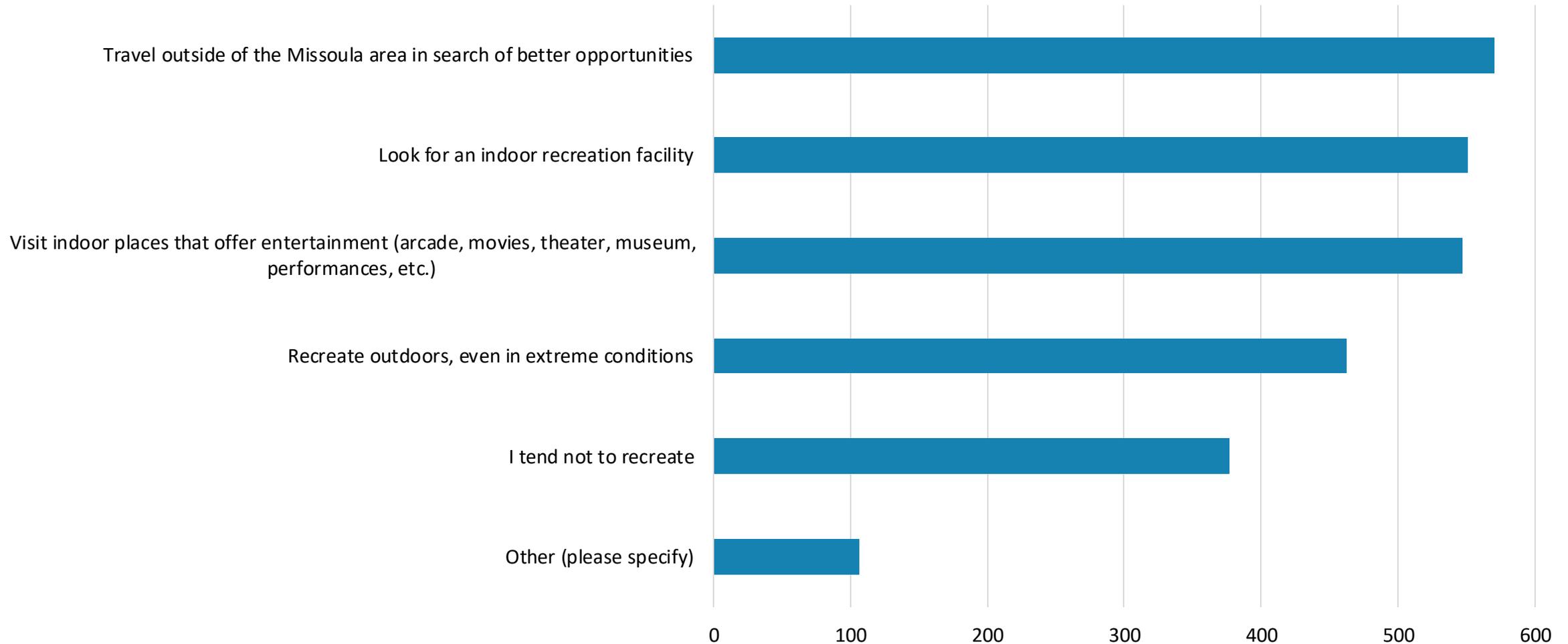


15. Rank the following services currently provided by the Urban Forestry division.

 Most important
 
 Least important



16. When conditions prevent me from recreating outdoors (such as extreme heat, cold or poor air quality due to smoke), I generally prefer to: (Select top 3)



16. When conditions prevent me from recreating outdoors (such as extreme heat, cold or poor air quality due to smoke), I generally prefer to (sample of open responses):

Workout or exercise at home.

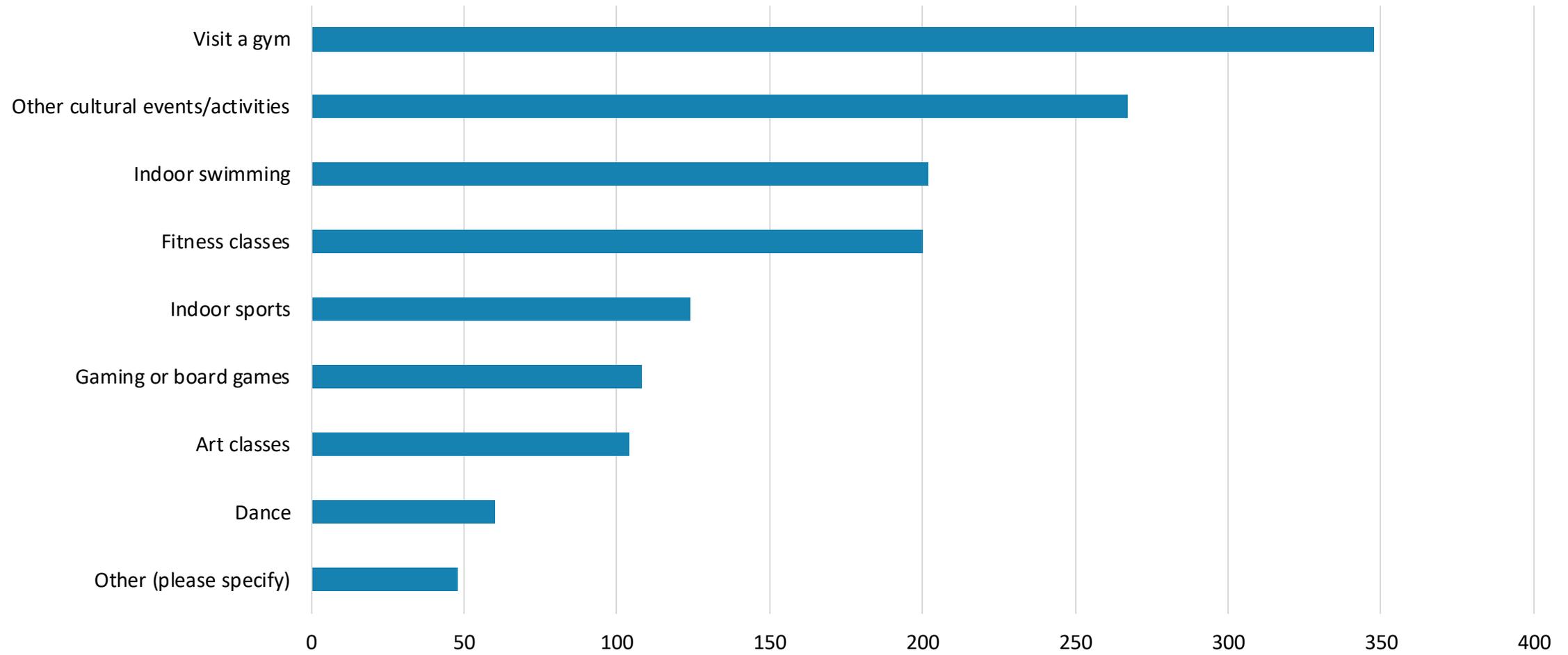
Recreate outside with a mask on.

Limit my outdoor recreation.

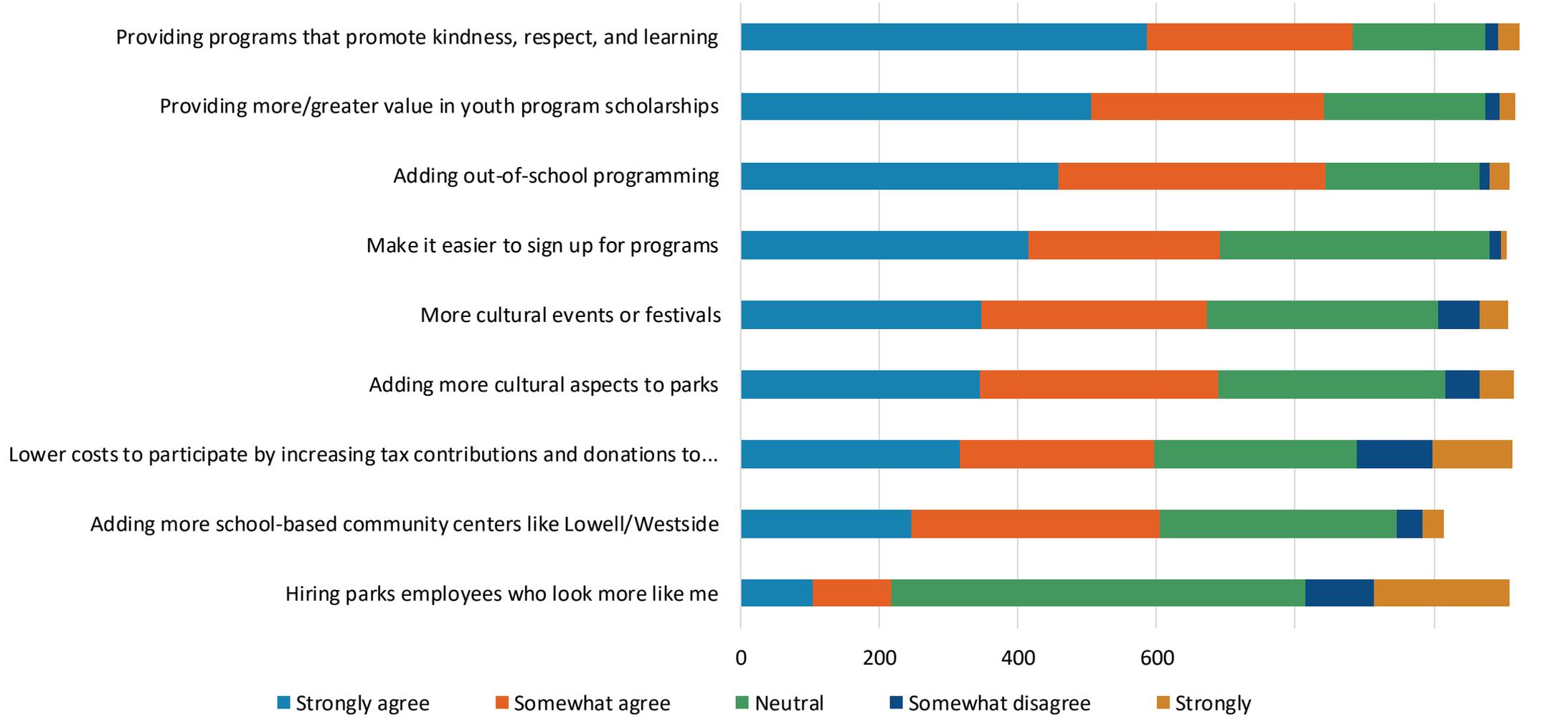
There are already a significant number of facilities that offer recreation in "extreme conditions"

I use a private fitness center

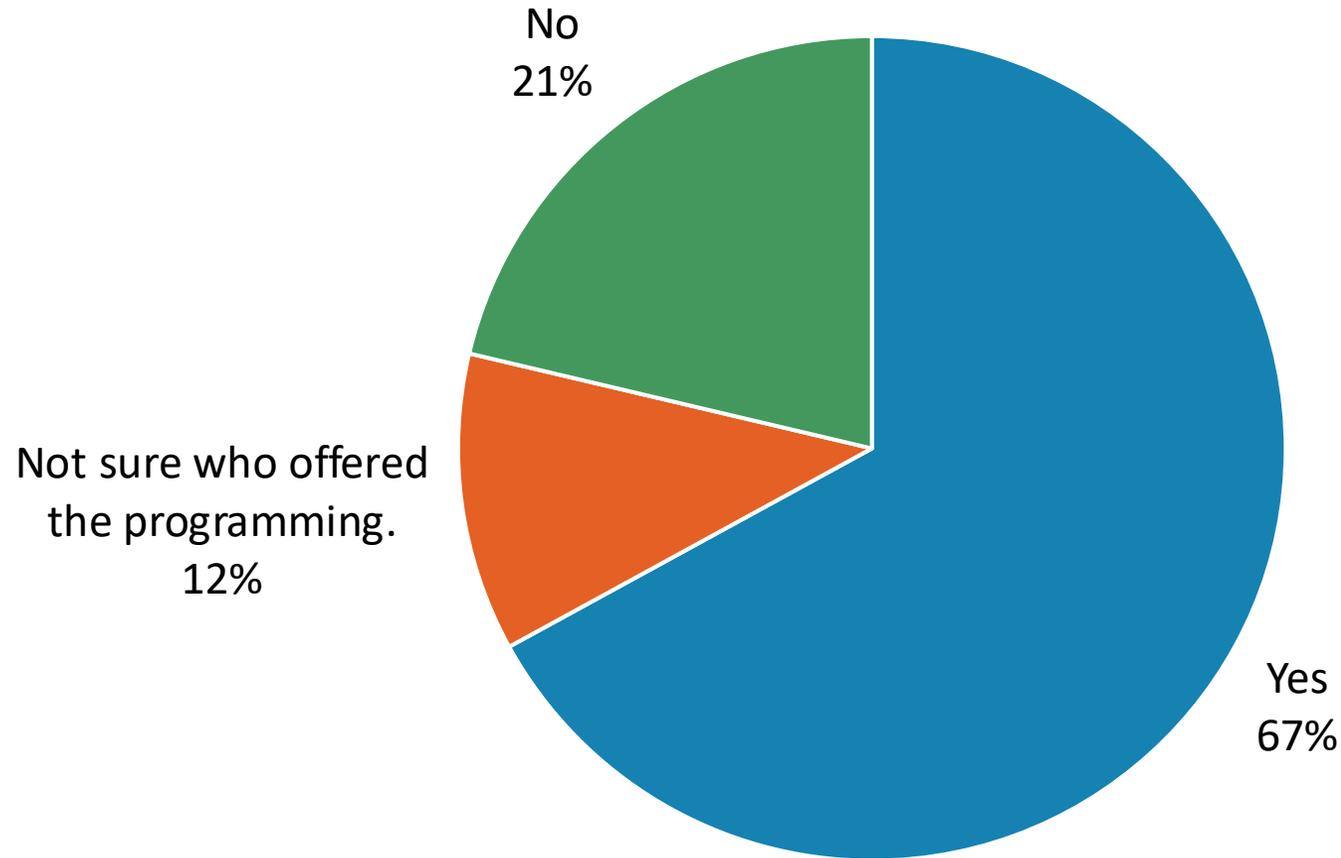
17. What type of indoor activities do you participate in? (Select top 3)



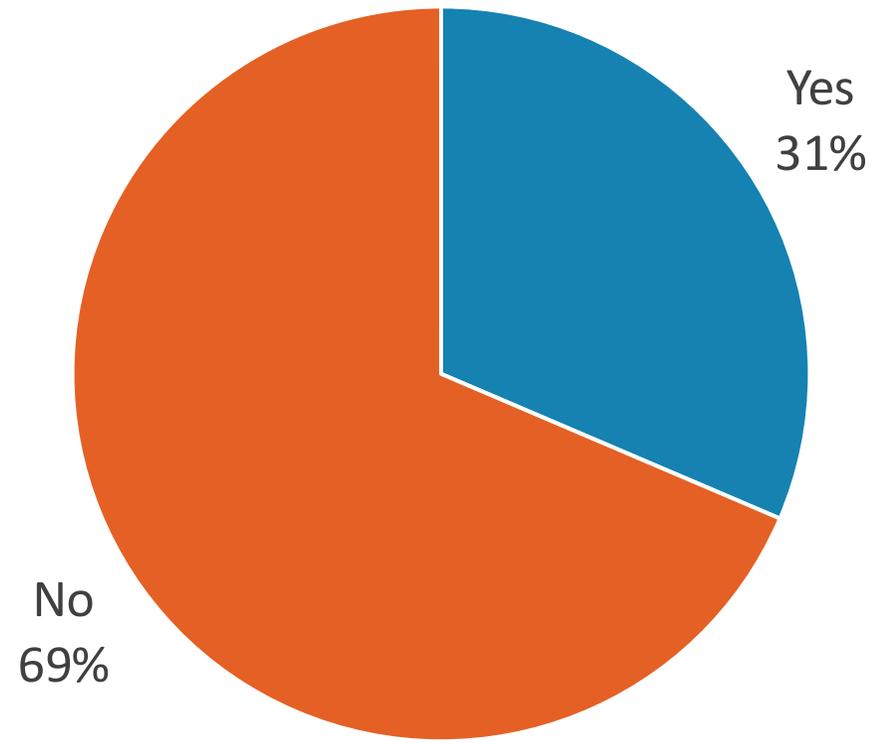
18. Regarding social equity, inclusion, and access for all Missoula residents, strategies that I support most are: (Select top 3)



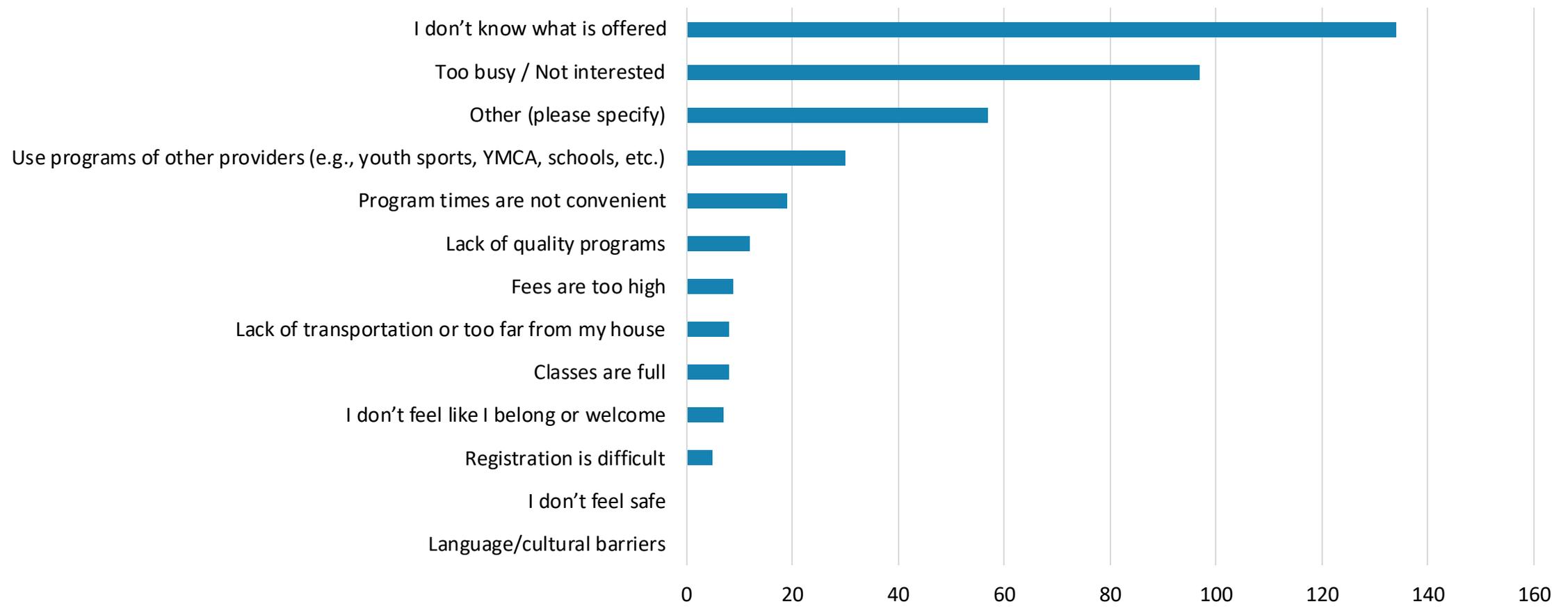
19. Have you or your family participated in a City of Missoula Parks and Recreation programs?



20. Have you at any time utilized a City of Missoula Parks and Recreation program for your child(ren) to serve as a form of childcare?



20. If your household has not participated in any City of Missoula Parks and Recreation programs during the last 2 years, please indicate any of the following reasons why you have not participated. (Select top 3)



20. If your household has not participated in any City of Missoula Parks and Recreation programs during the last 2 years, please indicate any of the following reasons why you have not participated (sample of open responses).

College age student, are there programs for young adults?

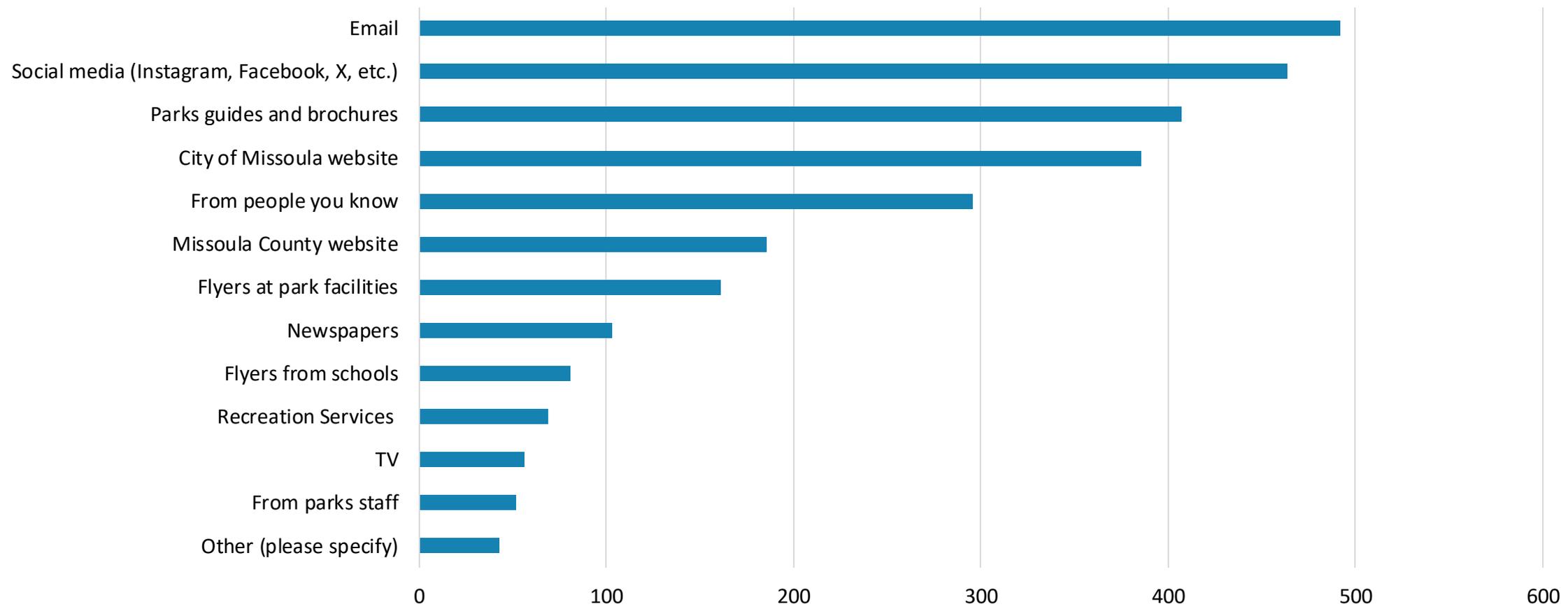
Most that I know about are geared towards children

Senior offerings

We are older, long-time residents and able to find our own opportunities for outdoor recreation.

I don't have kids. The adult programs seem very specific and for sporty/athlete types

21. How do you prefer to learn about park and recreation activities and programs? (Select top 3)



21. How do you prefer to learn about park and recreation activities and programs (sample of open responses)?

Websites – but they need an update

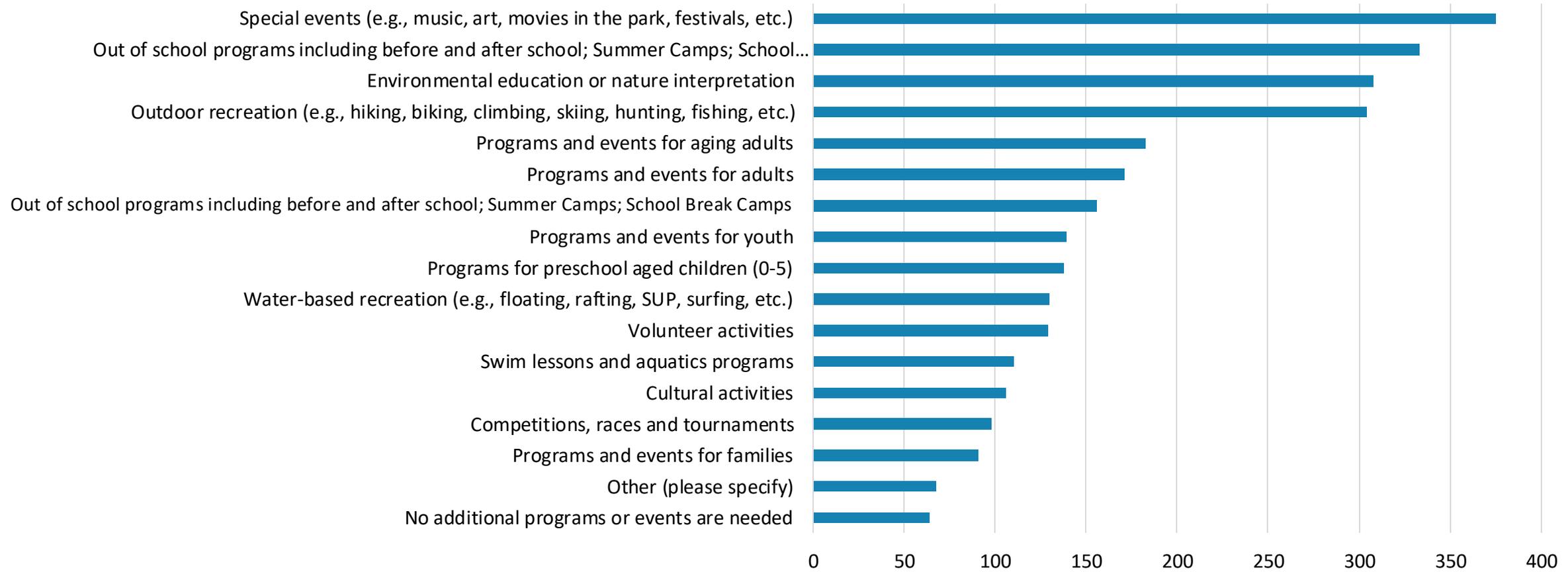
Missoulaevents.net

Radio

Mailers

Signs at parks

22. What types of programs and events offered by City of Missoula Parks & Recreation should be added or expanded? (Select top 3)



22. What types of programs and events offered by City of Missoula Parks & Recreation should be added or expanded (sample of open responses)?

Disc golf tournaments, additional courses, clinics, and leagues

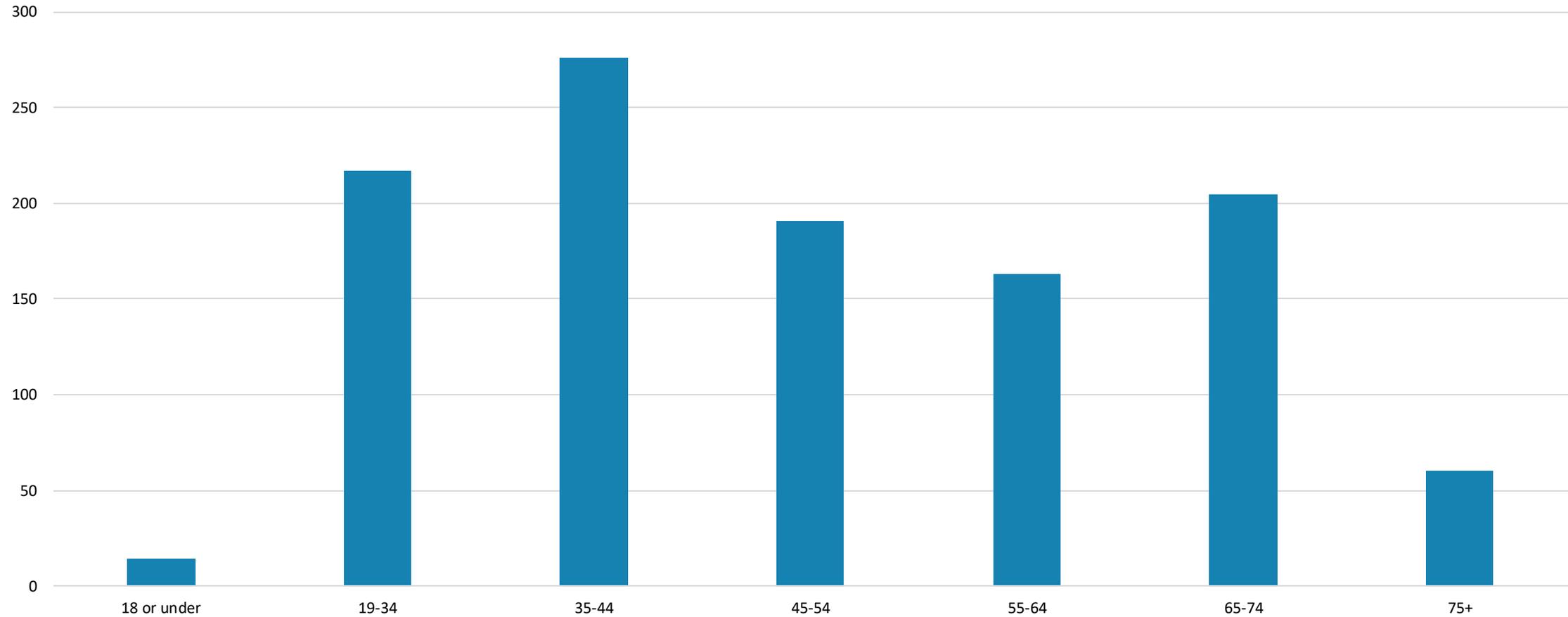
Exercise events for seniors. Include morning exercise in the parks

More programs for kids and adults with disabilities

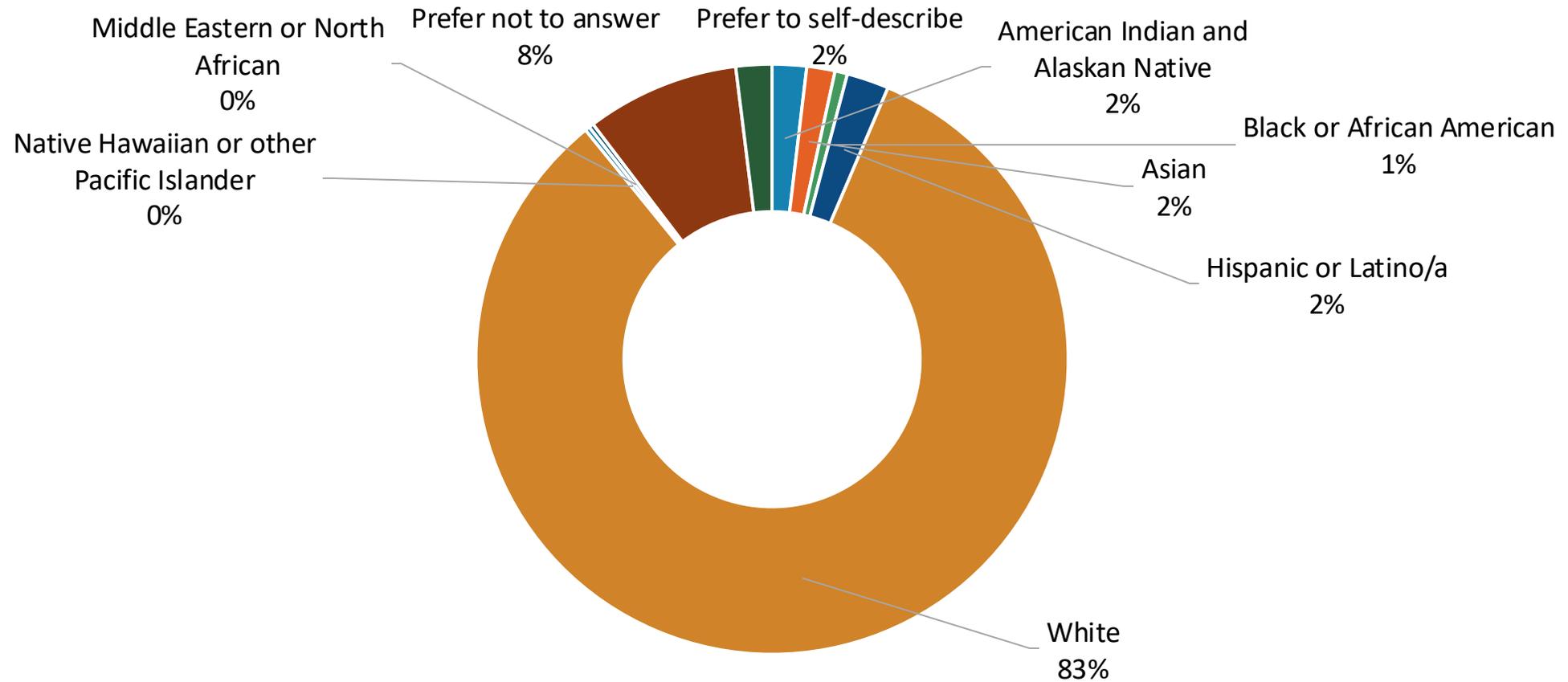
Free activities, especially for youth. Summer camp offerings are not accessible to most families.

Indoor recreation (walking, pickleball, dance/art classes)

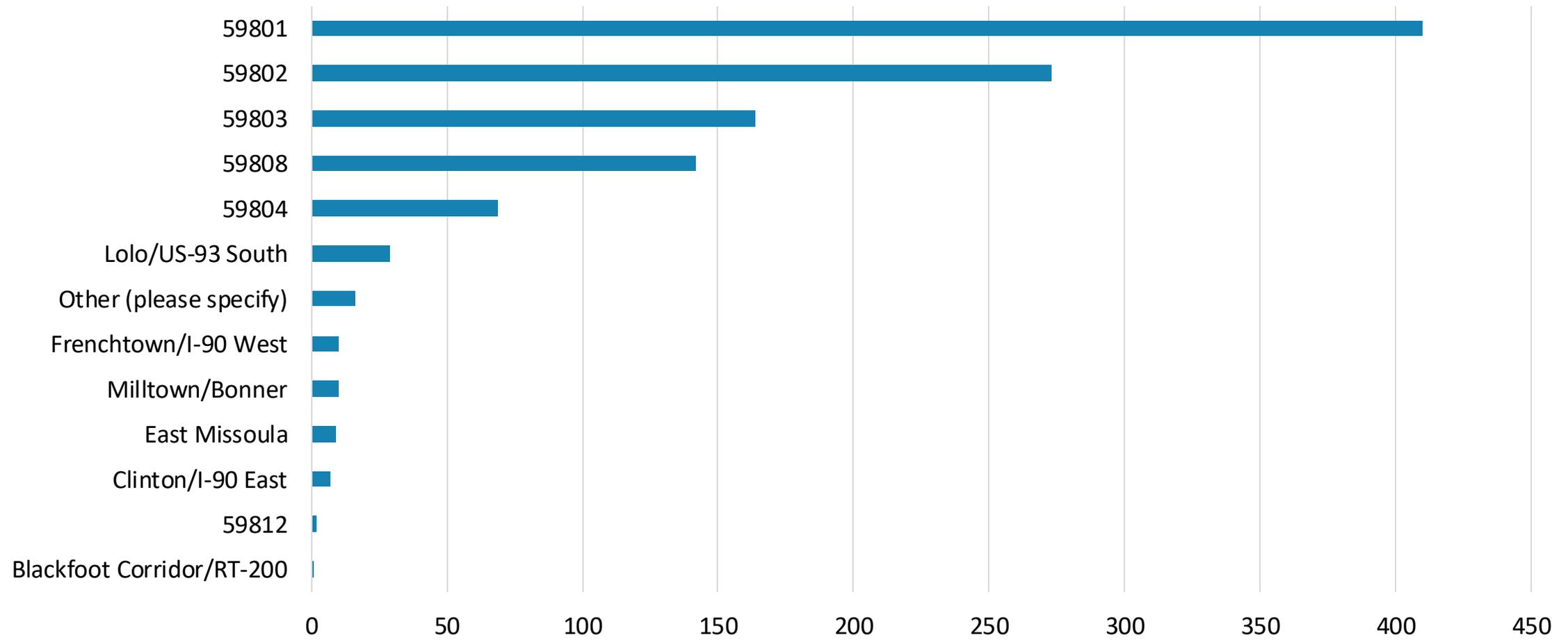
23. What is your age?



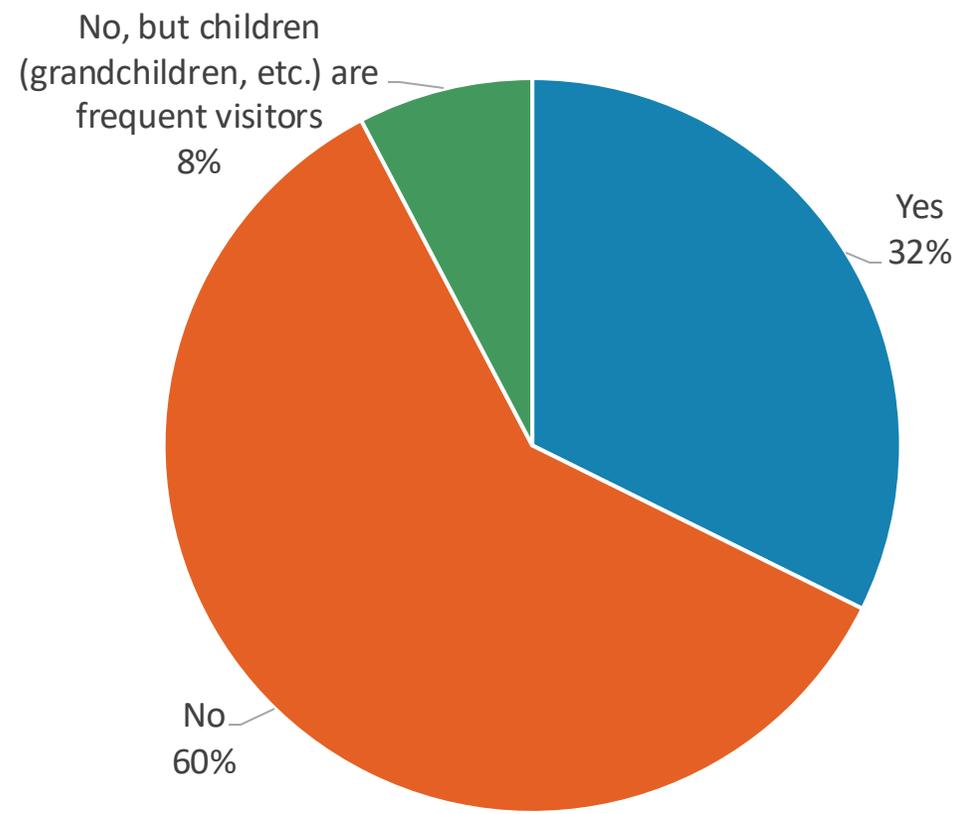
24. What is your ethnicity?



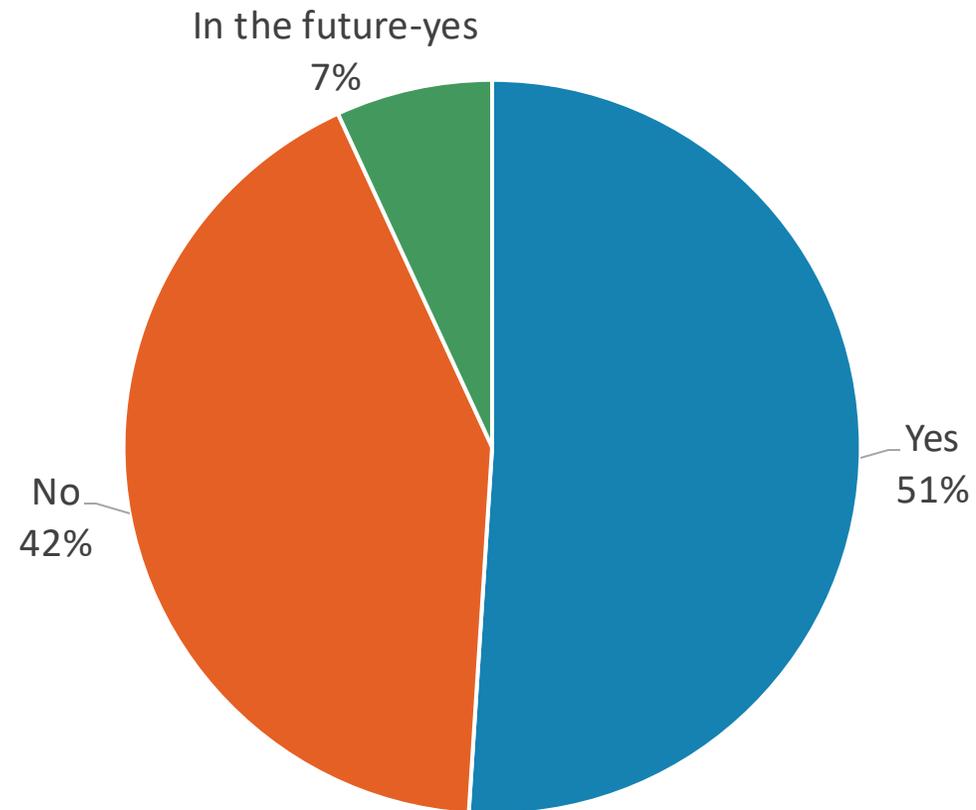
25. What community do you live in?



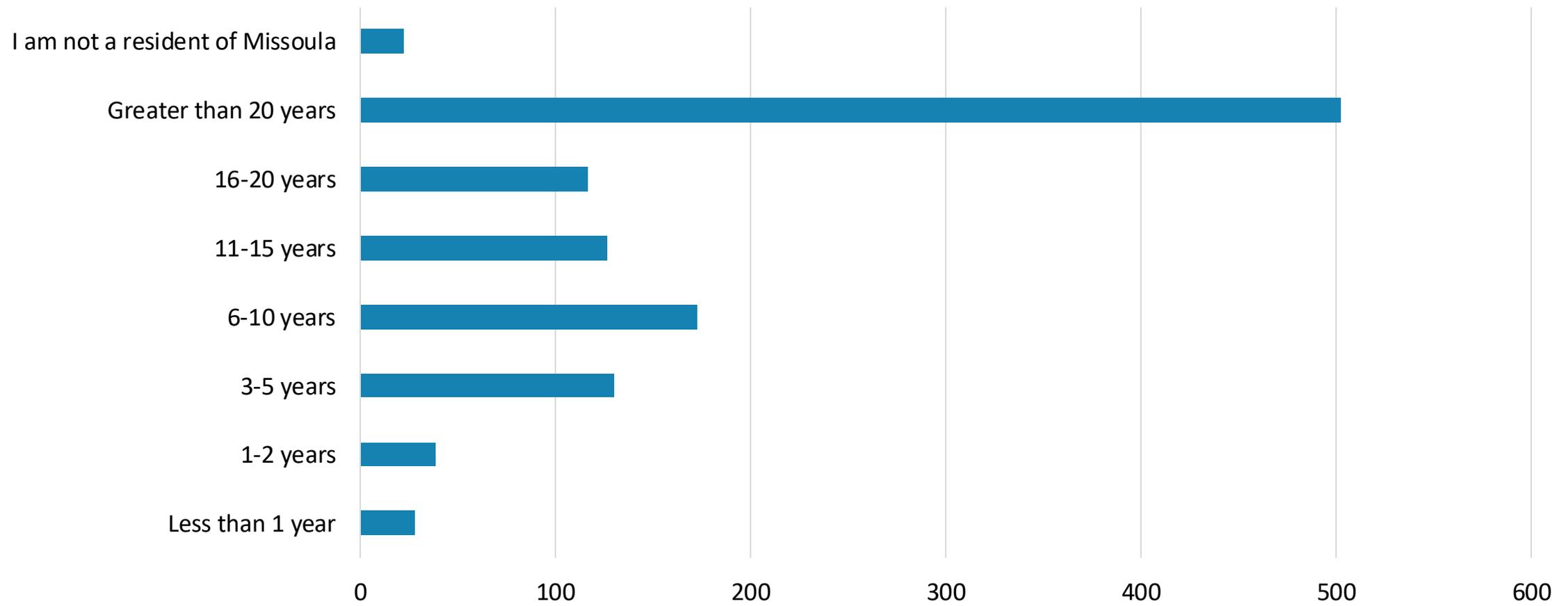
26. Do you have children under the age of 18 living in your household?



27. Are you a dog owner?



28. How long have you lived in Missoula?



Focus Groups



Focus Group Sessions

Date	Focus Group Sample Theme	Number of participants
11/6/2023	Current program users	9
11/8/2023	Users who rent or have permits	11
11/13/2023	Youth and family programs	5
11/13/2023	Diversity, equity, and inclusion	2
11/15/2023	Business development	8
11/15/2023	Climate resiliency and conservation	10

Greatest Opportunities

- New additions: Marshall Mountain and the potential for an indoor facility
- Continued support and investment in youth programming, especially afterschool, days off, and summer camps
- Desire for investment in long-term maintenance of existing facilities, particularly neighborhood parks
- Support for sliding scale fees



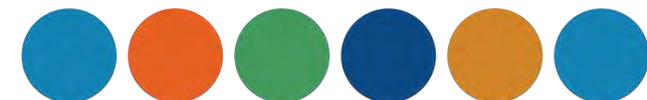
Greatest Opportunities

- Support for interpretive signage in Salish/Kootenai and interpretation about Indigenous culture
- Discussion on how green spaces in Missoula can mitigate climate impacts
- Maintain and increase partnerships to help solve complex challenges around climate, equity, and housing



Greatest Challenges

- Communication and information dissemination are hampered by staff turnover, strict rule enforcement, and website
- Enhancing accessibility and connectivity for all Missoulians through
 - improved public transit to major parks
 - development of centrally located facilities
 - inclusive all-abilities access
 - better integration of trails and neighborhood parks to bolster community cohesion and recreational opportunities



Greatest Challenges

- Maintaining park quality and community enjoyment is intensified by encampments and misuse
- Consistent, adequate maintenance within budgetary constraints for both existing parks and new developments.
- Utilizing parks to support biodiversity, manage flood risks, provide indoor recreational options during adverse weather, and integrate green space into increasingly urban environment



Community Open Houses



Community Open Houses

- 3 Open Houses held in total
- 300+ residents attended
- Held at the Missoula Public Library



Community Open House #1



- Held on March 5, 2024 from 5:30 - 7:00 pm
- Approximately 150+ attendees
- 5 PROST-specific boards for participants to interact with, as well as 1 board for general comments

Parks

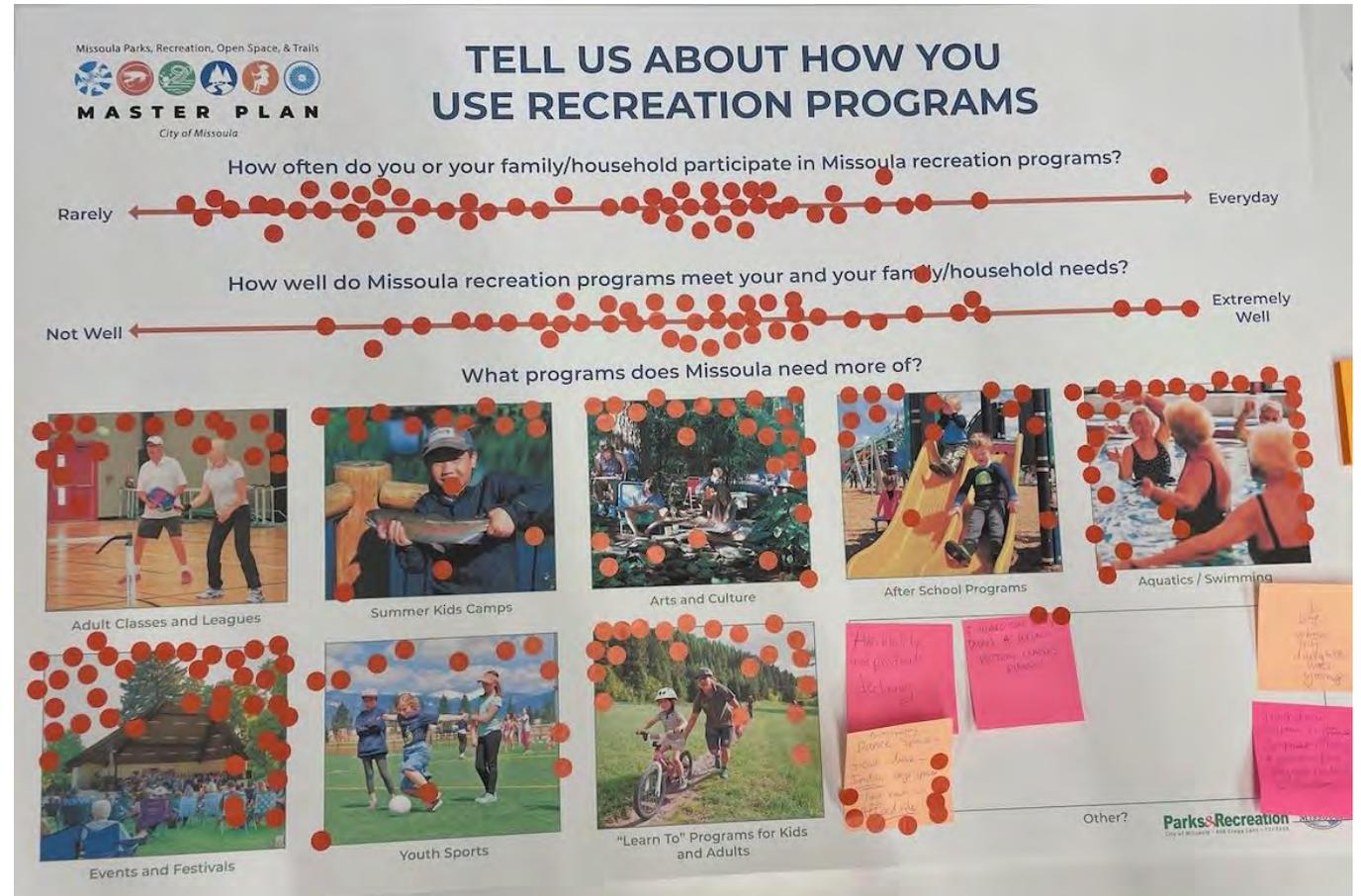
- Overall, parks are meeting community needs
- Maintenance and safety were two areas for improvements
- Main reasons for visiting:
 - Exercise
 - Events in the Park
 - Dog Walking/ Dog Park



Partial Data from Open House

Recreation

- A smaller % participate in programming than visit parks
- Need more of:
 - Events and festivals
 - Arts and culture
 - Aquatics/swimming



Partial Data from Open House

Open Space

- Overall, very satisfied
- Most important reasons to protect:
 - Protecting and restoring ecosystems
 - Providing outdoor recreation and public access
 - Protecting natural resources



Partial Data from Open House

Community Open House #2



- Held on October 22, 2024 from 5:30 - 7:00 pm
- Consisted of:
 - Overview PPT with Round 1 engagement results
 - Attendees were given “Parks Bucks” to distribute across a series of Boards that listed strategy areas
 - Map of PROST planning area to collect comments
 - Vision and Guiding Principles Boards

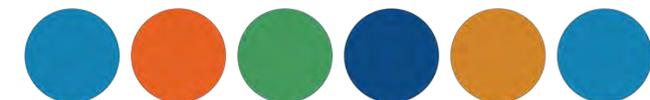
Open House Summary

- Of the 3 vision statements, there was no clear winner, each had elements people valued
- The guiding principles had positive reviews, but some ranked higher than others



Priorities – Parks and Facility

Strategy Area	General Cost	Parks Bucks
New Indoor Recreation Facility	\$\$\$\$	107
Maintenance, Cleanliness, and Safety	\$ per year	57
Additional Recreation Facilities	\$ per facility	44
Neighborhood Park Improvements	\$\$ per park	32
Adding Nature & Habitat	\$ per site	29
New Parks in Gap Areas	\$\$\$ per park	26
River Access	\$ per access point	23
Playfair Park Enhancement	\$\$\$\$	14
Sports Fields Upgrades	\$\$ per field	10



Priorities – Trail & Connectivity

Strategy Area	General Cost	Parks Bucks
Bike & Pedestrian Access	\$\$ per mile	79
Commuter Connector Trails Network	\$\$ per mile of trail	52
New Natural Trails	\$ per mile of trail	37
Trail Maintenance Program	\$ per year	35
Trailhead Upgrades	\$\$ per trailhead	21
Wayfinding Program	\$	15
User Amenities	\$ per site	11
Fitness and Special Use Trails	\$ per mile of trail	8



Priorities – Programming

Strategy Area	General Cost	Parks Bucks
Adult & Older Adult Programs	\$ per year	40
Environmental Education	\$ per year	26
Special Events	\$ per year	22
Fitness, Health & Wellness Programs	\$\$ per year	18
Arts & Culture Programs	\$ per year	17
Outdoor Recreation	\$ per year	16
Volunteer Program	\$ per year	15
Expanded Camp and School's Out Capacity	\$ per site	13
Mobile Programs	\$ per mile of trail	4



Priorities – Open Space & Conservation Lands

Strategy Area	General Cost	Parks Bucks
Climate & Resilience	Varies	44
River Corridors	\$ management/ \$\$\$ acquisition	44
Land Protection	Varies	34
Public Access	\$ per year	33
Conservation Lands Management	\$ per year	29
Volunteer Stewardship Program	\$ per year	16
Urban Habitat	\$ per year	7
Nature Center	\$\$\$	5



Community Open House #3



- Held on February 26, 2025 from 5:30 - 7:00 pm
- Consisted of:
 - Overview of PROST Framework – Vision, Guiding Principles, and Goals
 - For each goal, there was a board that had example policies and recommendations, or “Big Ideas” for attendees to comment on

Framework Feedback

- Vision, Guiding Principles, and Goals were all generally received well
- Specific comments included:
 - More mention of trees in vision statement
 - A focus on native plants and regenerative



Example Recommendations and Policies

- Lots of focus on implementation and being realistic with funding opportunities
- Focus on maintenance and upkeep of existing system
- Residents value nature in the system
- More trail connections and trail sections are desired



Key Informant Interviews



Key Informant Interviews

- 13 one-on-one interviews held by Missoula Parks and Recreation staff
- Focused on stakeholder's experience with Parks and Recreation, as well as the greatest challenges and opportunities facing the Department



Summary Themes

- Appreciate existing partnerships that Missoula P&R has, but could expand them
- There is a feeling of burn-out from the community on tax measures, but understanding that P&R has limited funding
- As Missoula grows, there needs to be a focus on equity - location and quality of parks
- Need to ensure that there are opportunities for all – including older adults
- Ensure that there is outreach and partnerships with Indigenous communities



APPENDIX F

Implementation Tools



Pineview*								
Pleasant View*								
Rainbow								
Redfern*								
Russell Park West								
Sacajawea								
Sgt. Gregory								
Skyview								
Southside Lions								
Wapikia								
Westside*								
Whitaker								
White Pine (to be replaced by Park on N. Scott St.)								
Bentley								
Elms								
Little McCormick								
Penland								
Pheasant Run								

APPENDIX G

Trail Typology



TRAIL TYPOLOGIES 2025

A framework for the network of active multi-modal trails within the Missoula valley



Missoula Parks, Recreation, Open Space, & Trails



M A S T E R P L A N

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Overview, Purpose & Acknowledgements

Page 3-5

Missoula's network of trails and shared use pathways function as a system of connected active multi-modal transportation corridors

Values & Goals

Page 6-7

To provide a consistent framework for the network of active multi-modal trails within the Missoula valley

Missoula's Trail Network

Page 8-15

Missoula's network of trails and shared use pathways function as a system of connected active multi-modal transportation corridors

Trail Classifications

Page 16-27

A hierarchy of trail classifications create an intuitive and connected active transportation system

Trail Design Guide

Page 28-43

High level guidance for key components of a successful trail design

Definitions

Page 44-45

Commonly used terms related to trail typologies

OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

This document is supplementary to the 2025 Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails Plan (PROST), and provides a framework for the design of multi-modal trails in the greater Missoula area.

Trails connect people to their homes, to their places of employment, to their neighbors, to parks, to commercial centers to regional destinations, and beyond. They encourage active transportation, promote healthy lifestyles, provide corridors for recreation and build community. Trails that are safe, connected, convenient and separate from vehicle traffic are important for meeting the city's climate goals, protecting the environment, encouraging healthy lifestyles and are integral to the multi-modal transportation system. Trails in and around Missoula help to improve public health and wellness, provide respite from the urban environment, and contribute to regional economic development and tourism.

PURPOSE

This document is intended to create high level guidelines for trails in Missoula, it does not include detailed specifications. Those specifications can be found in the City of Missoula Public Infrastructure Manual.

- Establish a hierarchy of trail types that is intuitive, functional, safe, user friendly, and maintainable
- Provide a consistent framework for the network of active off street multi-modal trails within the Missoula valley
- Establish trail design standards based on best practices for different trail types
- Integrate trail types and design standards with the surrounding land use context, street types and other adopted plans
- Clarify trail development requirements for various development projects

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



This plan was prepared by City of Missoula Parks and Recreation department staff with significant support and guidance from the following organizations:

City of Missoula Public Works and Mobility Department
City of Missoula Community Planning Development and Innovation Department
Missoula Metropolitan Planning Organization
Missoula County Lands Culture and Recreation Department
City of Missoula Parks and Recreation Board
Missoula City Council
PROST Community Working Group

CONNECTION TO PLANS AND POLICIES

The Trail Typologies Framework is a component of the Parks Recreation Open Space Trails (PROST), and builds upon a variety of City and County Plans including:

Our Missoula 2045 Land Use Plan

Missoula Street Types

Activate Missoula 2045: Long Range Transportation Plan

2018 Pedestrian Facilities Master Plan, Missoula MT

2017 Bicycle Facilities Master Plan, Missoula MT

2022 Missoula County Pathways and Trails Plan

Missoula's Downtown Master Plan, Midtown Master Plan, North Reserve-Scott Street Master Plan, Sxwtpqyen Master Plan, Envision West Broadway Community Master Plan

RESOURCES

Elements of this plan build upon the following standards and guidelines:

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials Manual (AASHTO)

The National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO)

Rails To Trails Foundation

Trails for All People: Guidance for Accessibility and inclusive Design

ADA Standards for Accessible Design

Montana Public Works Standards and Specifications Manual (MPWSS)

City of Missoula Public Infrastructure Manual

VALUES & GOALS



VALUES

The Trail Typologies framework is built on a foundation of shared values from the Parks Recreation Open Space and Trails (PROST) plan, Our Missoula 2045 Land Use Plan, Activate Missoula 2045: Long Range Transportation Plan, and other guiding documents.

The core values of the Trail Typologies Plan is:

- The City of Missoula's active trail network is the backbone of the City's multi-modal transportation system. The trail system will prioritize active transportation and recreation users, be intuitive, accessible, efficient, attractive, and safe.
- Trails prioritize people and encourage healthy lifestyles and active transportation.
- A connected, off-street trail system is aligned with Missoula's strategic decision making lenses around Climate, Equity, and Housing.

GOALS



Create a system of active trails that are intuitive, safe, accessible, and comfortable for trail users of all ages and abilities



Design trails considering long-term maintenance needs and implications



Provide trail connections across the city and beyond to connect neighborhoods, commercial centers, and regional destinations



Create a seamless system of trails which connect to, compliment and enhance on-street active transportation facilities such as bike lanes, sidewalks, and neighborhood greenways



Provide active transportation and recreational opportunities that are separate from automobile traffic to increase person mobility and improve public health



Support a thriving local and regional economy by encouraging active transportation and outdoor recreation



Reduce dependence on single occupancy vehicles by creating a connected and efficient year-round active transportation trail network



Provide appropriate amenities that support trail users such as trees, benches, wayfinding, and drinking fountains.

MISSOULA'S TRAIL NETWORK



76% OF MISSOULIANS SUPPORT CONNECTING COMMUNITIES BY A REGIONAL TRAIL SYSTEM
(2024 PROST STATISTICALLY VALID SURVEY)

Missoula's network of trails and shared use pathways function as a system of connected active multi-modal transportation corridors. These trails provide efficient and safe connections between neighborhoods, commercial centers, and regional destinations. They also function as linear park corridors and are used by residents and visitors for walking, running, biking and other recreational uses. In addition to trail infrastructure these corridors often contain trees, landscaping, pedestrian lighting, green infrastructure, wayfinding, as well as other amenities such as benches and drinking fountains.

Sidewalks and bike lanes are an integral component of the multi-modal transportation network. While these on street facilities are not considered trails in this plan, there are instances where a multi-use trail is located within a street right-of-way, and serves as that streets sidewalk and bike lane.

The 5 classifications of trails are: **regional, community, neighborhood, connector, and recreational.**

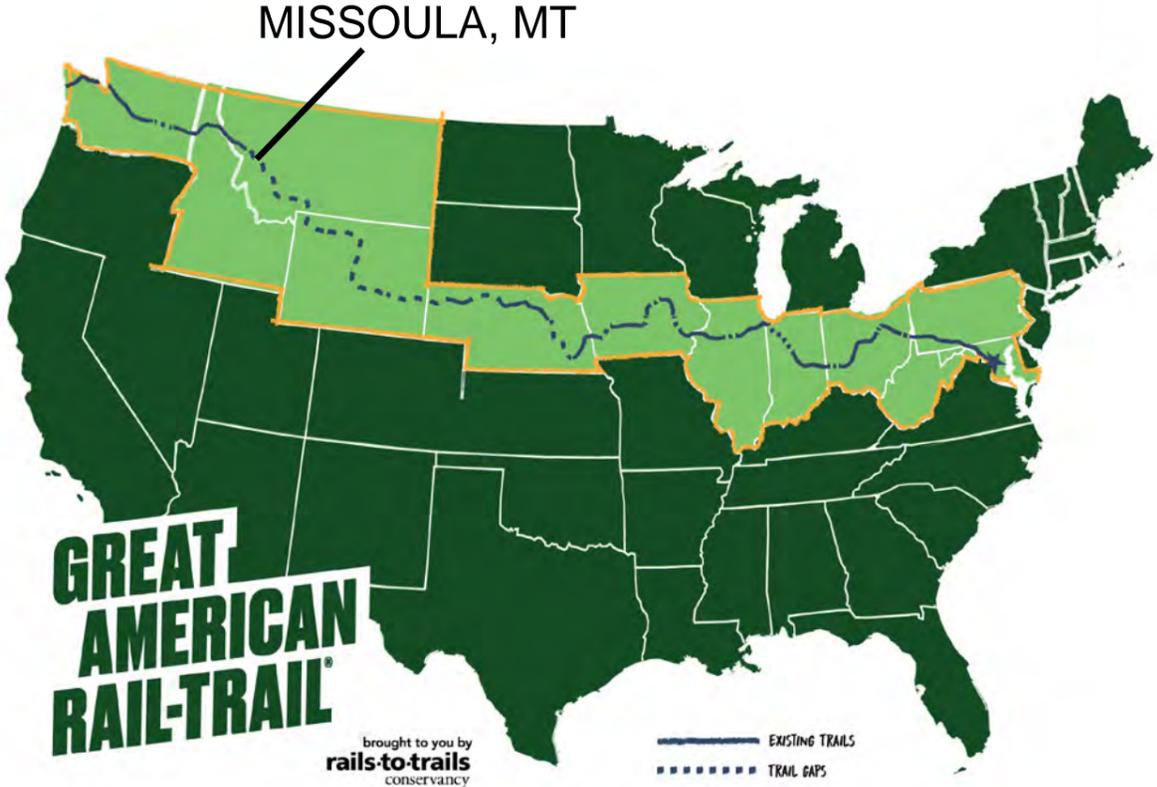
Each trail type is organized by its primary function within the trail network, and the design criteria is established to support that primary function (as well as other functions). For example, regional and community trails connect through multiple neighborhoods and destinations. Regional trails are designed to facilitate active transportation and commuting across longer distances with heavy use, however these trails must still support recreational and other more localized uses. Recreational trails however are not designed with active commuting as the priority function, and instead are intended to be used primarily for recreation, therefore the design standards reflect that function.



MISSOULA'S TRAIL NETWORK

GREAT AMERICAN RAIL TRAIL

The Milwaukee Trail is the preferred route of the Great American Rail Trail (GRT) which stretches more than 3,700 miles between Washington, D.C., and Washington State. Eventually this trail will bring people through Missoula on cross country journeys and is a unique feature of Missoula's trail network.



	Allowed Use				
					
	Human Powered Transportation	Class 1 & 2	Class 3	Motorized Scooters Motorcycles Automobiles	Motorized ADA Mobility Device
Regional	✓	✓	Not Currently	✗	✓
Community	✓	Varies	Not Currently	✗	✓
Neighborhood	✓	Varies	Not Currently	✗	✓
Connector	✓	Varies	Not Currently	✗	✓
Recreational	✓	Varies	Not Currently	✗	✓

WHAT IS A "MOTORIZED" VEHICLE?

Currently the City does not manage any trails where traditional "motorized" vehicles (4-wheelers, motorcycles or other vehicles with internal combustion engines) are allowed. However, this plan does address electric "motorized" vehicles such as e-bikes.

On many of Missoula's trails Class 1 or 2 motorized electric assist bicycles, scooters and skateboards are allowed. Because these are considered motorized vehicles the term "non-motorized" is not appropriate for many of Missoula's trails. Instead, the term "active transportation" is used in this document, which encompasses a broader range of transportation modes. See the definitions section of this document for more specific information on what is considered a motorized or non-motorized vehicle.



- Class 1 e-bikes:** motor assists while pedalling up to 20 mph, no throttle
- Class 2 e-bikes:** motor assists while pedalling up to 20 mph, also has a throttle
- Class 3 e-bikes:** motor assists while pedalling up to 28 mph

MISSOULA'S TRAIL NETWORK



MISSOULA'S TRAIL NETWORK IS PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE, AND TRAILS ARE LOCATED ON LANDS OWNED BY PUBLIC ENTITIES, WITHIN THE PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY, OR ON PRIVATE LANDS WITHIN PUBLIC ACCESS EASEMENTS OR OTHER LONG-TERM USE AGREEMENTS.

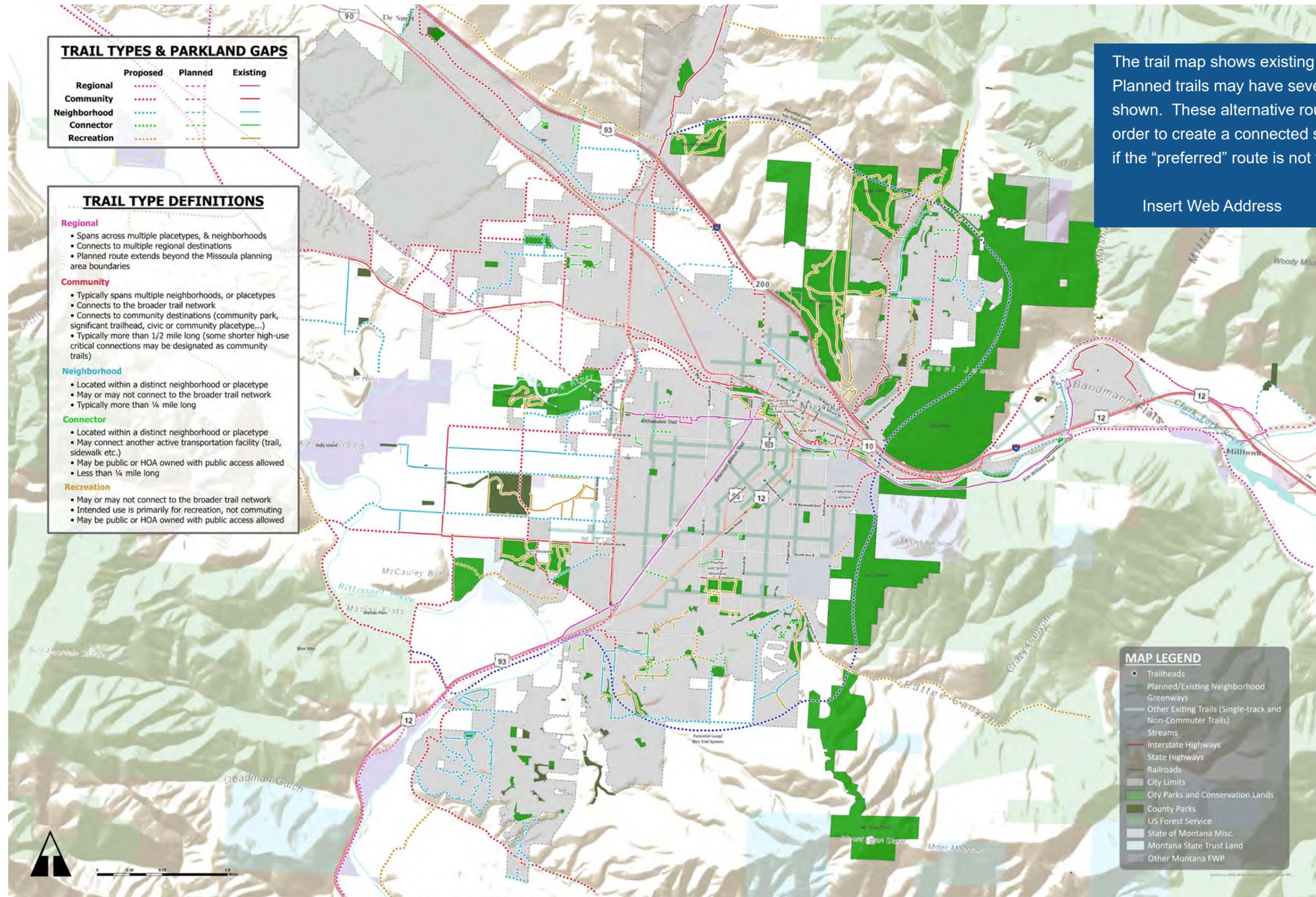
The Trail Typologies framework applies to new development and reconstruction of existing infrastructure and will therefore be implemented by government agencies and the private sector. The City's development code specifies when trails must be implemented. The City of Missoula Public Infrastructure Manual provides guidance on design and construction requirements for trails. This document, by laying out goals and objectives for the entire network and each trail within, sets the foundation from which the code and Public Infrastructure Manual are built.

ACQUIRING TRAIL CONNECTIONS

Land acquisition for trails can come in several forms, fee simple acquisition or public access easements can be donated by the landowner or purchased by the city.

- When a private property develops, the city has several tools towards requiring trail connections be created.
- If a property subdivides there is typically a parkland dedication requirement, trails and the corridors they are within can be used to meet the parkland dedication requirement.
- Trails are part of the transportation system, and are required in a new subdivision, just as roads and sidewalks are required.
- When a new utility connection or annexation is requested, the city can condition that a trail easement or connection be made.
- "Activity Area" is required in Multi-Family projects over 10 units. Trails and trail connections can count towards this requirement.
- Finally, condemnation (imminent domain) may be an option, however the city of Missoula has not, and does not intend to use this as a tool for trail acquisition.

MISSOULA'S TRAIL NETWORK



TRAIL TYPES & PARKLAND GAPS

	Proposed	Planned	Existing
Regional	-----	————
Community	-----	————
Neighborhood	-----	————
Connector	-----	————
Recreation	-----	————

- TRAIL TYPE DEFINITIONS**
- Regional**
- Spans across multiple placetypes, & neighborhoods
 - Connects to multiple regional destinations
 - Planned route extends beyond the Missoula planning area boundaries
- Community**
- Typically spans multiple neighborhoods, or placetypes
 - Connects to the broader trail network
 - Connects to community destinations (community park, significant trailhead, civic or community placetype...)
 - Typically more than 1/2 mile long (some shorter high-use critical connections may be designated as community trails)
- Neighborhood**
- Located within a distinct neighborhood or placetype
 - May or may not connect to the broader trail network
 - Typically more than 1/4 mile long
- Connector**
- Located within a distinct neighborhood or placetype
 - May connect another active transportation facility (trail, sidewalk etc.)
 - May be public or HOA owned with public access allowed
 - Less than 1/4 mile long
- Recreation**
- May or may not connect to the broader trail network
 - Intended use is primarily for recreation, not commuting
 - May be public or HOA owned with public access allowed

The trail map shows existing and proposed trails. Planned trails may have several potential routes shown. These alternative routes are identified in order to create a connected system of trails, even if the "preferred" route is not feasible.

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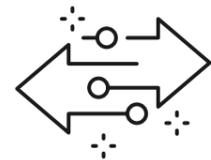
MAP LEGEND

- Trailheads
- Planned/Existing Neighborhood
- Greenways
- Other Existing Trails (Single-track and Non-Commuter Trails)
- Streams
- Interstate Highways
- State Highways
- Railroads
- City Limits
- City Parks and Conservation Lands
- County Parks
- US Forest Service
- State of Montana Misc.
- Montana State Trust Land
- Other Montana FWP

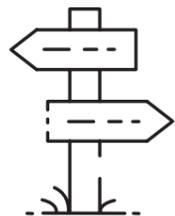
TRAIL CLASSIFICATIONS

The following is a hierarchy of trail classifications. The standards exist in order to support the desired function; however, each trail classification must be flexible in order to create a trail network that is connected, maintainable, feasible to construct, and adaptable.

TRAILS MAY LOOK DIFFERENT IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE COMMUNITY, AND SUPPORT DIFFERENT INTENSITY OF USE. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE FOR LONGER TRAILS THAT RUN FROM MORE RURAL AREAS OUTSIDE THE CITY, INTO THE CITY CENTER. FOR EXAMPLE, TREAD WIDTH MAY NEED TO BE 12' IN RURAL PLACETYPES, 14' IN LIMITED OR SUBURBAN PLACETYPES, AND 16' IN URBAN PLACETYPES.



A trail may change classifications over time, for example a trail that is designated “neighborhood” today, may one day be more connected across the city, and be re-classified as a “community” trail. When planning and acquiring new trails, the corridor width should be wide enough to allow for future trail tread widening, and/or separation of uses as population and trail use increases.



Sometimes existing street rights-of-way are the only available location for trails. When trails are located adjacent to a street, trails should be separated from vehicle traffic by the maximum distance that is feasible. While this distance is often dictated by the existing right-of-way width, the minimum is determined by AASHTO standards.



	Corridor Width	Shoulder	Tread Width ⁽¹⁾	Shoulder
Regional	30'-50'	2'	14'-20'	2'
Community	30'-40'	2'	10'-14'	2'
Neighborhood	10' min	2'	8'-12'	2'
Connector	10' min	Varies	6'+	Varies
Recreational ⁽²⁾	10' min	Varies	Varies	Varies

(1) Separated bike and walking lanes may require additional tread width

(2) See the recreational design guide for more details

REGIONAL TRAILS

- Spans across multiple placetypes, & neighborhoods
- Connects to multiple regional destinations
- Planned route extends beyond the Missoula planning area boundaries

Regional trails connect across multiple neighborhoods and regional destinations within the city and beyond. Regional trails are the “spine” or arterial of the trail system and typically experience the highest use of any trail within the system. Regional trails are designed to be safe and efficient, with trail widths determined by frequency of use. Regional trails are separated from automobile traffic by the greatest extent possible to provide a safe and comfortable experience for trail users. Regional trail users typically have the right-of-way at road crossings, and significant investment is made at crossings to improve safety, visibility, and uninterrupted flow on the trail. Regional trails are typically paved, are open 24 hours a day year-round and include trail lighting, intuitive signage and other amenities to support heavy use.



Trails in larger cities often have directional lanes, or separate pedestrian and bicycle lanes. As Missoula’s population grows and trail use increases similar improvements may be warranted.

CORRIDOR WIDTH: 30’- 50’

TREAD WIDTH: Desired tread width is 14’ but may be wider or narrower depending on need and use. Very high use areas may need additional tread width and separate “lanes” for cyclists and pedestrians.

TREAD SURFACE: Typically Paved: Asphalt or Concrete. Regional Trails in rural or limited placetypes near the fringe of the city may be packed gravel or another natural surface

STRIPING: Paved sections typically include 4” solid white stripe along trail edges. High use or constrained sections of trail may include separate lanes for use type, or center stripe to designate direction of travel

SHOULDERS: Stabilized shoulders (compacted sub-grade) 2’ minimum clear zone

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS: Construction specifications and methods can be found in the Public Infrastructure Manual

CROSSINGS: Special treatment of trail at roadway crossings such as raised Table Crossings. Separated grade crossings (tunnel or bridge) at Regional roadways. Trail users typically have priority (vehicles stop) *see crossings section for more details

LIGHTING: Designed for year round, 24/7 use. Specifications found in the Missoula Public Infrastructure Manual

SIGNAGE: Trail bollards every .1 miles wayfinding at intersections and beginning/ending points. Specifications found in the Missoula Public Infrastructure Manual

DESIGN SPEED: 18mph (AASHTO), may be lower in congested or constrained areas

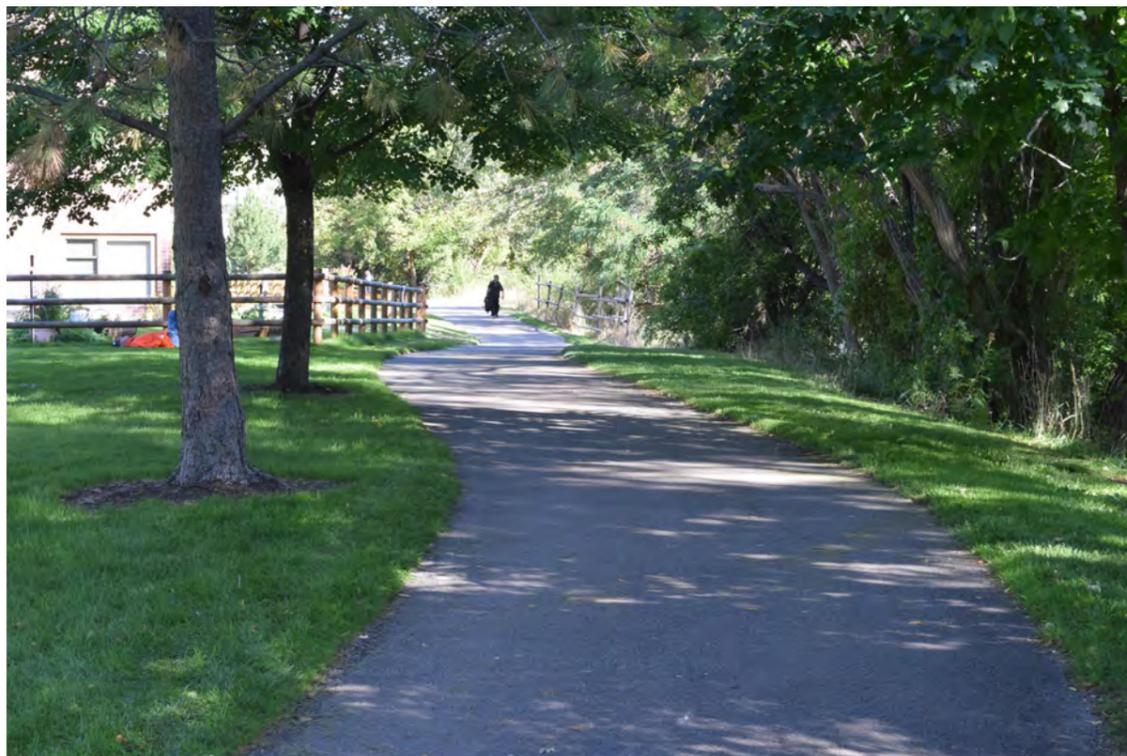
TREES & LANDSCAPING: Trees, turf and landscaping should be included along community trails to reduce urban heat, and create a more pleasant experience for trail users

AMENITIES: Amenities such as benches, water fountains, rest stops etc. are important components in creating a trail network that works for people.

COMMUNITY TRAILS

- Typically spans multiple neighborhoods, or placetypes
- Connects to the broader trail network
- Connects to community destinations (community park, significant trailhead, civic or community placetype...)
- Typically more than 1/2 mile long (some shorter high-use critical connections may be designated as community trails)

Community Trails feed into the regional trail network. They are the “tributaries” of the regional routes, connecting users from individual neighborhoods into the larger regional trail network. Trail crossings are designed to improve safety, visibility, and flow of trail users, however trail flow may be slowed at these crossings. Community trails are typically paved, may include trail lighting, signage and other amenities to support trail use. As trail use increases community trails may need to be widened, or even re-classified as a regional trail, anticipating this transition is important when acquiring lands/easements and initial trail routing.



CORRIDOR WIDTH: 30'-40'

TREAD WIDTH: Desired tread width is 10-14' but may vary by placetype and use.

TREAD SURFACE: Asphalt, concrete, or natural surface

STRIPING: May include striping in high use or constrained areas

SHOULDERS: Stabilized shoulders (compacted sub-grade) 2' minimum clear zone

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS: Construction specifications and methods can be found in the Public Infrastructure Manual

CROSSINGS: Trail users typically have priority (vehicles stop), specialized crossings may be warranted on high use trails *see crossings section for more details

LIGHTING: Designed for year round, 24/7 use. Specifications found in the Missoula Public Infrastructure Manual

SIGNAGE: Wayfinding at trailheads, beginning/ending points

DESIGN SPEED: 18mph (AASHTO), may be lower in congested or constrained areas

TREES & LANDSCAPING: Trees, turf and landscaping should be included along community trails to reduce urban heat, and create a more pleasant experience for trail users

AMENITIES: Amenities such as benches, water fountains, rest stops etc. are important components in creating a trail network that works for people.

NEIGHBORHOOD TRAILS

- Located within a distinct neighborhood or placetype
- May or may not connect to the broader trail network
- Typically more than ¼ mile long

Neighborhood trails typically connect within or between individual neighborhoods. Neighborhood trails can be, but are not always connected to the broader community and regional trail network. Users are primarily residents of the neighborhood, or nearby neighborhoods, in which the trail is contained, and they are used mostly for local commuting and recreation. Neighborhood trails may be within their own trail corridor, a park, or a street right of way. Road crossings are designed to improve safety and visibility however trail users should yield to vehicles.



CORRIDOR WIDTH: Varies, 10' minimum

TREAD WIDTH: Typically 8'-12'

TREAD SURFACE: Asphalt, concrete, or natural surface

STRIPING: Typically N/A

SHOULDERS: Varies, 2' clear zone

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS: Construction specifications and methods can be found in the Public Infrastructure Manual

CROSSINGS: Trail users yield to vehicle traffic, specialized crossings may be warranted on high use trails *see crossings section for more details

LIGHTING: May be required on certain high-use sections or sections with significant public safety concerns

SIGNAGE: Wayfinding at trailheads, beginning/ending points

DESIGN SPEED: Varies, follows AASHTO design guidelines

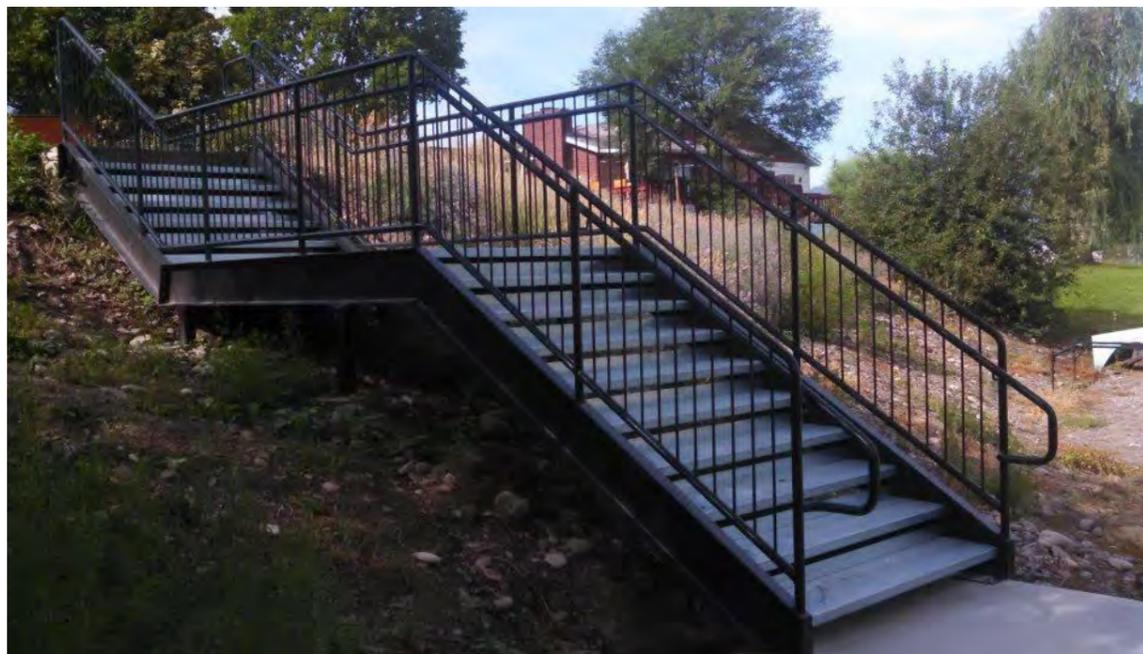
TREES & LANDSCAPING: Trees, turf and landscaping should be included along community trails to reduce urban heat, and create a more pleasant experience for trail users

AMENITIES: Amenities such as benches, water fountains, rest stops etc. are important components in creating a trail network that works for people.

CONNECTOR TRAILS

- Typically very short sections of trail between sidewalks, trails, streets, parks etc.
- Located within a distinct neighborhood or placetype
- May connect another active transportation facility (trail, sidewalk etc.)
- May be public or privately owned (ex: HOA) with public access allowed
- Less than ¼ mile long

Connector trails are very short trail segments of trail that allow for better pedestrian circulation within a neighborhood, between blocks, or to other trails and public facilities. Often these connectors are used to offset long block lengths or to provide better pedestrian connectivity in neighborhoods with cul-de-sacs. Connector trails are sometimes owned and maintained by the subdivision's homeowners association but include public access. Some connector trails are short segments of trail that provide a connection to other larger community or regional trails. In some circumstances, high use connector trails may be a priority for maintenance and snow removal.



CORRIDOR WIDTH: Varies

TREAD WIDTH: Varies

TREAD SURFACE: Asphalt, concrete, or natural surface

STRIPING: Varies

SHOULDERS: Varies

CONSTRUCTION DETAILS: Construction specifications and methods can be found in the Public Infrastructure Manual

CROSSINGS: Varies, typically trail users yield to vehicle traffic *see crossings section for more details

LIGHTING: May be required on certain high-use sections or sections with significant public safety concerns

SIGNAGE: May include signage, typically wayfinding at trailheads, beginning/ending points

DESIGN SPEED: Varies, follows AASHTO design guidelines

TREES & LANDSCAPING: Depending on the corridor width Trees, turf and landscaping may be included to reduce urban heat, and create a more pleasant experience for trail users

AMENITIES: Connector trails typically do not include other amenities

RECREATIONAL TRAILS

- May or may not connect to the broader trail network
- Intended use is primarily for recreation, not commuting
- May be public or privately owned (ex: HOA) with public access allowed

Recreational trails are typically located within developed parks, conservation lands, common areas, or other open space properties, but can be distinct trails located within or adjacent to road rights of way. Recreational trails often connect to state, federal, and other non-City trail networks. Recreational trails are intended to be used for walking, skating, running, horseback riding, biking or other recreational purposes. Trail design is based on designation, intended use and site characteristics. Currently all city maintained recreational trails are designated “non-motorized” meaning no electric motors allowed (e-bikes), however in the future this may change. Trail use restrictions may be utilized in order to create a trail system that reduces user conflict and protects natural resources. A difficulty rating may be applied to trails within certain areas to help aid users in assessing their ability related to the trail difficulty. Difficulty ratings typically relate to topography and obstacles/features on the trail.



RECREATIONAL-SHARED USE



Shared use recreational trails are designed to provide for a variety of activities such as hiking and running, mountain biking, and horseback riding. Trail design is based on the intended use and site characteristics. Shared use trails may have restrictions such as directional use (for example bicycle uphill only) and may be closed to certain uses or have other restrictions.

RECREATIONAL-SINGLE USE

Single use recreational trails are restricted to a single mode of transport, for example bike only, or pedestrian only. These trail restrictions are intended to reduce user conflicts, preserve the trail character, protect natural resources, or for other reasons such as legal restrictions, corridor width, tread width or topography.



BIKE ONLY: Bike only trails are designed to reduce user conflict by creating routes for cyclists only. Trail design is based on intended use and site characteristics. Bike only trails may be directional, and contain features to enhance the experience for biking. Bike only trails can be designed for mountain biking, or more casual biking.



PEDESTRIAN ONLY: Pedestrian only trails are designed to provide for foot traffic only, this designation could be determined to reduce user conflicts, improve safety, adhere to land restrictions, or to protect environmental site conditions. Trail design is based on intended use and site characteristics.

**Design standards for Recreational Trails can be found on pages 38-43
“Recreational Trails Design Guide”**

TRAIL DESIGN GUIDE

This design guide is intended to provide high level guidance for key components of a successful trail design. Additional details and specifications can be found in the City of Missoula public infrastructure manual.

TREAD SURFACE

The trail surface material (asphalt, concrete, or natural surface) has a significant impact on long term maintenance, as well as user experience and expectations. While up front costs are typically higher, concrete has a significantly longer lifespan with less cyclical maintenance than asphalt. Maintenance, intended use, and budget are important considerations in trail tread surface material selection.

“NATURAL SURFACE” TRAILS CAN CREATE A MORE LEISURELY EXPERIENCE, ARE LESS COSTLY TO INSTALL THAN PAVEMENT, AND MAY BE PREFERRED FOR RECREATIONAL TRAILS IN NATURAL SETTINGS. HOWEVER, SNOW CANNOT BE CLEARED FROM NATURAL SURFACE TRAILS AS READILY AS PAVED TRAILS, THEREFORE THEY MAY NOT BE APPROPRIATE FOR TRAILS USED HEAVILY YEAR ROUND.



Priority for snow removal is based on several factors including: location, level of use, connectedness, budget etc. and is not linked to classification. Snow removal is managed by the Parks and Recreation maintenance division and outlined in management policies.

TRAIL CORRIDORS

Many trail corridors are classified in the PROST plan as “Linear Parks”. How the space adjacent to the trail tread is designed is important for creating a trail that is pleasant to travel along. Trees, landscaping, and other park like amenities should be included along trails. While corridor widths vary by trail classification, generally wider trail corridors are safer and more enjoyable for trail users.

SEPARATION BETWEEN TRAILS AND STREETS IS CRITICAL FOR THE SAFETY AND COMFORT OF TRAIL USERS. TRAILS THAT SHARE THE RIGHT-OF-WAY WITH STREETS SHOULD BE DESIGNED WITH THE MOST SEPARATION FROM AUTOMOBILES AS IS POSSIBLE.



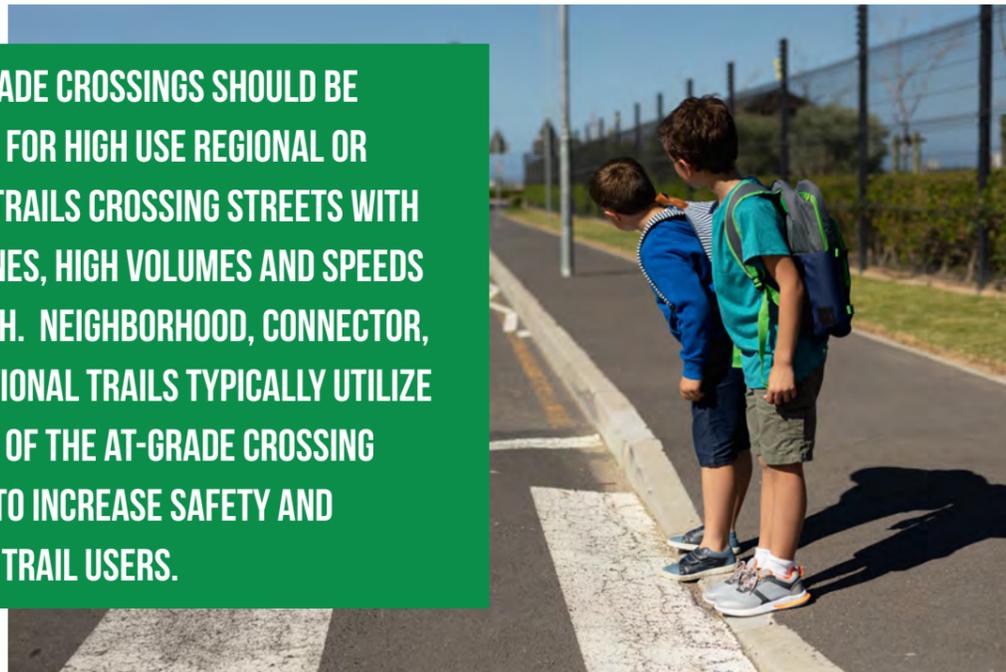
The South Ave trail next to Fort Missoula Regional Park has ample separation from South Ave that it feels more like it's in the park rather than next to a street

TRAIL DESIGN GUIDE

TRAIL CROSSINGS

Although safety of trail users is an important consideration at all locations along a trail, users are especially vulnerable at crossings of roadways.

SEPARATE GRADE CROSSINGS SHOULD BE THE PRIORITY FOR HIGH USE REGIONAL OR COMMUNITY TRAILS CROSSING STREETS WITH MULTIPLE LANES, HIGH VOLUMES AND SPEEDS ABOVE 30 MPH. NEIGHBORHOOD, CONNECTOR, AND RECREATIONAL TRAILS TYPICALLY UTILIZE ONE OR MORE OF THE AT-GRADE CROSSING TECHNIQUES TO INCREASE SAFETY AND VISIBILITY OF TRAIL USERS.



The following are several options for increasing safety and visibility of trail users at roadway crossings. Not all of these options are appropriate at every intersection and factors such as trail classification, crossing distance, street volume and speed must be considered when designing intersections. Organizations such as AASHTO or NACTO publish guidelines for trail and roadway design, but there is no one size fits all approach to roadway crossings.

SEPARATE GRADE CROSSINGS

Separate Grade Crossings are preferred for regional trails, and high use community trails at multi lane, high volume streets with speeds above 25 mph.



Russell Street Underpass

SEPARATE GRADE CROSSINGS ARE THE SAFEST CROSSING TYPE AVAILABLE, BUT COME WITH THE TRADE OFF OF BEING THE MOST COSTLY.

Separate grade crossings keep trail users and motorists completely separate, increasing safety and allowing continuous flow of traffic on the trail and roadway.

Examples of Separate Grade crossings along the Milwaukee Trail are the tunnels under Reserve, Russell and Orange streets. The Bitterroot Trail crosses over Reserve Street on the South Reserve Pedestrian Bridge.

Trails and streets are long term (50+ year) improvements. Predicted future conditions must be considered when planning trail routes and road crossings.

TRAIL DESIGN GUIDE

AT-GRADE CROSSINGS

At-grade roadway crossings present a variety of safety concerns to trail users and proper design and control of trail crossings is essential to user safety and experience.



Painted Crossings can be used on lower volume, and slower speed roadways.



Raised Table Crossings can increase safety for pedestrians because most drivers feel they have to slow down for these type of features. Raised crossings have a flat top which is usually level with the trail, and tactile paving is used at each end of the crossing.



Pedestrian Refuge Islands are medians with a refuge area that is intended to help protect pedestrians who are crossing a multi-lane road. The presence of a pedestrian refuge island at a mid-block location or intersection allows pedestrians to focus on one direction of traffic at a time as they cross, and gives them a place to wait for oncoming traffic before finishing the second phase of a crossing.



Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) is a pedestrian-activated device that uses flashing lights to warn drivers of pedestrians in crosswalks. RRFB's may be used at any of the at grade crossings to increase safety and visibility of trail users. There are other signalized crossing options such as the Bitterroot trail at South Ave, or the signalized crossing of Reserve Street at CS Porter Middle School.



Signalized Crossings can be automated such as the Bitterroot Trail crossing at South ave which is equipped with bicycle triggered inductive loops under the pavement, and bicycle signal heads. Or the signalized crossing of Reserve Street at CS Porter Middle School which is user activated.

TRAIL DESIGN GUIDE

TRAILHEADS:



Trailheads are an integral part of the trail network. Design of trailheads vary from simply a trail sign at the beginning of a trail, to a large off-street parking lot with toilets, lighting, signage and gathering areas. Trailheads are often the first opportunity to notify users of rules, trail etiquette, closures etc. Trailheads also require a high level of maintenance in order to service trash cans, toilets etc. and should be designed with this in mind.

LIGHTING:



Trail lighting is an important consideration to ensure user safety, and accessibility. Many trails are intended for year round, 24 hour use. The Public Infrastructure Manual includes standards and specifications for trail lighting.

TO INCREASE PUBLIC SAFETY AND COMFORT, TRAILS SHOULD FOLLOW CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN (CPTED) GUIDELINES.

AMENITIES:

A trail is not complete without amenities that enhance the experience of trail users. Benches, landscaping, trash receptacles, water fountains etc. are important components of a complete trail system. The City of Missoula has standards for various amenities, these standards are found in the Public Infrastructure Manual.



TRAIL DESIGN GUIDE

SIGNAGE:

Signs are important components of a properly designed trail system. They make trails more interactive, convey important information, create safer environments, and help users find their way.

There are three primary types of signs:

Identification

Wayfinding

Interpretive

IDENTIFICATION SIGNS:

Regional and high use community trails contain identification bollards every .1 miles. These bollards identify the trail name, mile marker and include 911 safety code for emergencies.

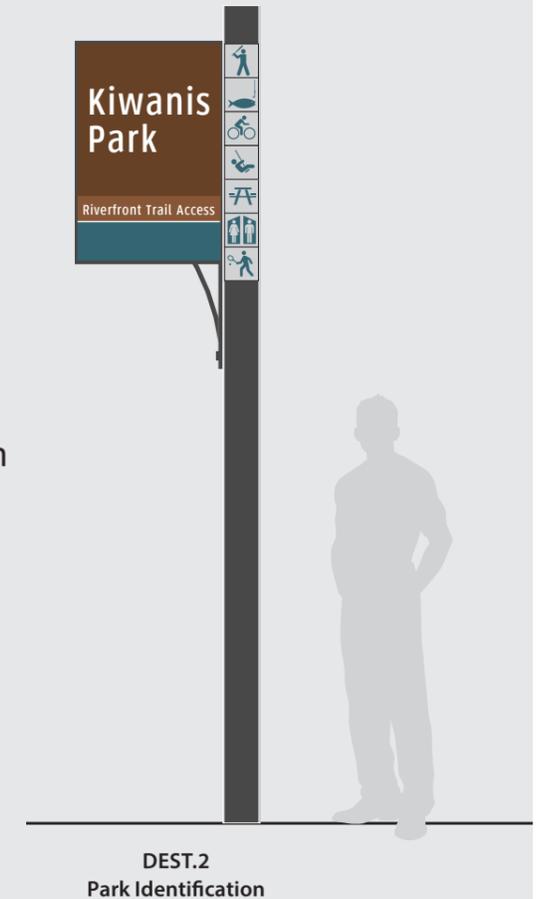
Trail identification bollards or other signs should also be located at informal trailheads, intersections or other locations where trail identification may be important.



WAYFINDING SIGNS:

Wayfinding signs are intended to help users navigate and find their way around. Kiosks at trailheads typically include trail maps, and wayfinding along the way is important.

Missoula has an adopted wayfinding sign plan which provides guidance on wayfinding sign styles for different users and locations.



INTERPRETIVE SIGNS:

Good interpretive signs can open peoples eyes to things they may not have known before, making visitors excited about something new. They typically relate directly to the surrounding and encourages visitors to look more closely. Interpretive signs follow a variety of themes and educational topics. Where

applicable, Interpretive signs should follow adopted plans in order to be consistent with themes styles and locations.



RECREATIONAL TRAIL DESIGN GUIDE

Recreational trails take many forms, they can be re-purposed dirt or gravel double track roads, single track hiker and mountain biking trails, compacted gravel trails with varying width, or may be paved with concrete or asphalt. Many of the current system trails were inherited from user made trails or roads and often do not meet the standards found in this design guide. New trails or retrofits to existing trails should follow the standards found in this design guide.

Trail surfacing is an important consideration as not all native soils can support year-round trail use. As the climate changes and the freeze thaw season (“mud season”) lengthens, trail surfacing material becomes a more important consideration. Some critical, high use recreational trails may need to be surfaced with an “all-weather” surfacing material in order to support year round use and reduce damage to the landscape by users walking adjacent to muddy and slippery trail treads.



Recreational trails on sensitive lands may be seasonally closed for resource protection.

THE FOLLOWING OUTLINES SOME OF THE MOST COMMON WAYS TO BUILD RECREATIONAL TRAILS WITHIN MISSOULA:



NARROW SINGLE TRACK:

TREAD WIDTH: 18"-36"

TREAD SURFACE: natural surface using existing on-site soils

DESIRED AVERAGE SLOPE: 0-10% depending on desired use

MAX SLOPE: 25%

CROSS SLOPE: 2-4%

SIGNAGE: Wayfinding at trailheads and major intersections

CONSTRUCTION SPECS: See the Public Infrastructure Manual



WIDE SINGLE TRACK:

TREAD WIDTH: 36"-72"

TREAD SURFACE: packed gravel or on-site soils, occasionally paved

DESIRED AVERAGE SLOPE: 0-10% depending on desired use

MAX SLOPE: 20%

CROSS SLOPE: 2-4%

SIGNAGE: Wayfinding at trailheads and major intersections

CONSTRUCTION SPECS: See the Public Infrastructure Manual

RECREATIONAL TRAIL DESIGN GUIDE



PRIMITIVE DOUBLE TRACK:

TREAD WIDTH: 6'-14'

TREAD SURFACE: packed gravel or on-site soils

DESIRED AVERAGE SLOPE: 0-10% depending on desired use

MAX SLOPE: 15%

CROSS SLOPE: 2-4%

SIGNAGE: Wayfinding at trailheads and major intersections

CONSTRUCTION SPECS: see the Public Infrastructure Manual



IMPROVED DOUBLE TRACK OR DIRT ROAD:

TREAD WIDTH: 6'-14'

TREAD SURFACE: packed gravel or on-site soils, occasionally paved

DESIRED AVERAGE SLOPE: 0-10% depending on desired use

MAX SLOPE: 15%

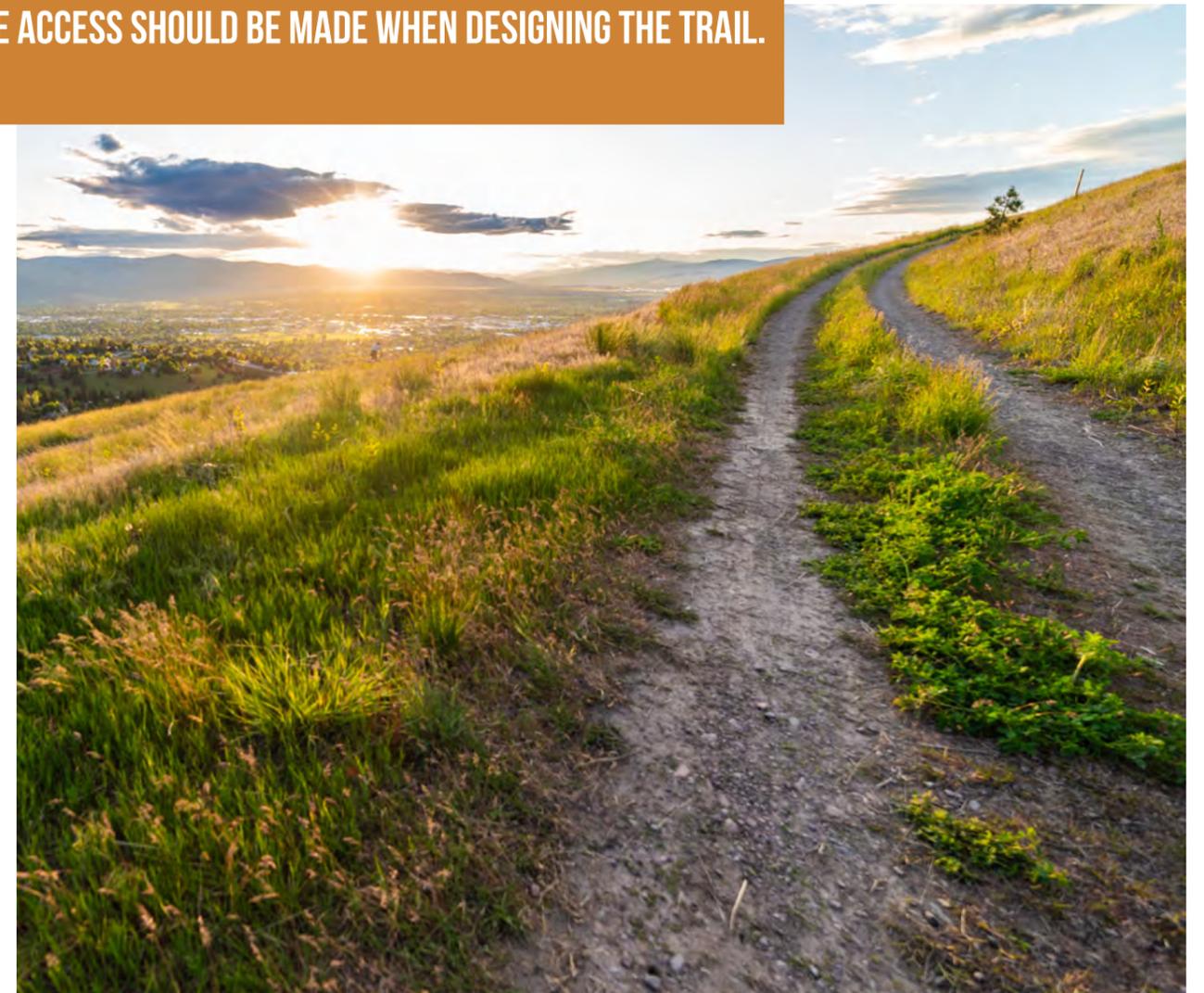
CROSS SLOPE: 2-4%

SIGNAGE: Wayfinding at trailheads and major intersections

CONSTRUCTION SPECS: see the Public Infrastructure Manual

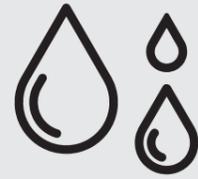


DOUBLE TRACK TRAILS OFTEN MUST ACCOMMODATE MAINTENANCE AND EMERGENCY VEHICLES. CONSIDERATION FOR VEHICLE ACCESS SHOULD BE MADE WHEN DESIGNING THE TRAIL.



Many trails within the Missoula Valley are re-purposed access roads. The Term “double track” refers to the two tracks created by the wheels of automobiles.

RECREATIONAL TRAIL DESIGN GUIDE



FOR ALL NATURAL SURFACE TRAILS DRAINAGE IS AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION. UTILIZING GRADE REVERSALS IS PREFERRED OVER WATER BARS, HOWEVER SITE CONSTRAINTS WILL DICTATE THE BEST APPROACH.

SPECIALTY TRAILS:

Specialty trails are designed to accommodate specific uses, abilities, or experiences. Specialty trails may not meet the typical standards found within this design guide.

For example mountain bike optimized trails often require steeper cross slopes at corners, and include specialized features built into the trail to add a challenge or enhance the experience of biking.

Universal access trails are another example where a separate set of design guidelines should be followed for ease of access by the widest range of people and abilities.

Specialty trails should be designed according to industry best practices. See the “resources” section for some examples of guidelines for some specialty trails.



CONSERVATION LANDS MANAGEMENT PLAN

This guide pertains to trails managed by the City of Missoula Parks and Recreation Department, most of these trails are on city owned conservation lands. The Conservation Lands Management Plan outlines how these lands are managed, including trails and trailheads

DEFINITIONS

Accessible Trail: ADA accessible trails are paths that are designed to be accessible to people with all abilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provides guidelines and requirements for making outdoor spaces accessible.

Active Transportation: Human-powered mobility, such as biking, walking, skating etc. Typically, active transportation is via non-motorized means, however electric assist vehicles (e-assist) are considered active transportation as they still require human power to move.

All-weather trail surface: A special topsoil/gravel mix that helps prevent mud and damage from wet weather

Commuter Trail: A commuter trail is a shared use path used for active transportation (walking, biking etc.) such as commuting to work or running errands. Commuter trails can also be used for recreation, exercise, and other activities.

Motorized Vehicle: Any vehicle that is self-propelled that is not a wheelchair or mobility device. Electrically-powered bicycles (E-Bikes) and other powered wheeled vehicles are considered motorized vehicles. E-bikes and other electric assist vehicles are allowed on certain Missoula trails.

Multi-Modal Transportation: Is an approach to transport that incorporates all modes people use to get around. These may include: Automobiles, Commuter railways, Buses, Bicycles, Walking, Micro-mobility modes such as e-bikes and scooters. A fully multi-modal transportation system features not only roadways that can support a variety of transport methods, but also a well-integrated shared use paths, sidewalks, bike lanes, and transit systems.

Non-Motorized Transportation: Any form of transportation that does not rely on an engine or motor to move, meaning it is powered solely by human or animal power such as walking, cycling, or skating.

Recreational Use: the use of a trail for activities such as walking, biking, skating, socializing, exercising etc.

Shared Use Path: A trail or pathway physically separated from roads with automobile traffic. Shared Use Paths are designed for travel by a variety active transportation users, including bicyclists, pedestrians, skaters, joggers, wheelchair users, and others. Shared use paths may be strictly non-motorized, or allow for electric vehicles such as e-bikes, e-scooters etc. Shared Use Path's can be paved or be a natural surface and the width varies depending on the location, amount of traffic, and other considerations. Shoulder:

Trail: as defined by the National Recreation Trails Program: A trail is a travel way established either through construction or use and is passable by at least one or more of the following, including but not limited to: foot traffic, stock, watercraft, bicycles, in-line skates, wheelchairs, cross-country skis, off-road recreation vehicles such as motorcycles, snowmobiles, ATVs and 4-wheel drive vehicles.

Trail Corridor: a zone that includes the trail tread and the area above and to the sides of it. Trail corridors often include landscaping, benches, lighting and other amenities that support trail users. Trail corridors can be contained within the public street Right-of-Way, or public access easement across private property, or be owned by a public agency.

Trail Tread: The part of a trail where a person's foot or shoe makes contact with the ground. Trail treads can be paved (typically concrete or asphalt), or be a natural surface (packed gravel, decomposed granite, or soil)

Trailhead: The place where a trail begins. Trailheads can be improved with a variety of amenities such as parking, toilets, lighting, signage and gathering areas, or may simply be a trail with a sign.

Universal Trail: A universal trail is a trail that is designed to be accessible to all people to the greatest extent possible. Universal trail guidelines differ from ADA regulations and can be found in the publication: Trails for All People: Guidance for Accessibility and inclusive Design



THANK
YOU



APPENDIX H

**Urban Area
Open Space Plan**

Missoula Urban Area Open Space Plan 2019

As part of the Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails (PROST) Plan



September 2019