



Online Questionnaire Summary

Introduction

In August 2020, the City of Monroe began updating its Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan (the Plan) to identify community priorities, funding options, tourism impacts, and recommendations to improve and enhance parks, recreation facilities, trails, programs, events, and related services. As part of the planning process, an online survey was conducted, inviting community members to provide input on the state of parks and recreation, current needs, funding priorities, and funding mechanisms. The input received will help shape the goals and strategies of the Plan. This document summarizes the questionnaire methodology and key findings.

QUESTIONNAIRE METHODOLOGY

The online questionnaire ran from December 16, 2020 to January 19, 2021. It included 21 questions related to parks and recreation and six questions related to demographics (Appendix A). It also included the option to be entered in to a prize drawing. A number of questions related to how respondents used the park system, their satisfaction with it, and what they would like to see more of. The second half focused on priority projects, funding, and bond measures as a funding mechanism.

A link to the questionnaire was posted on the City's website and distributed via email, social media, press releases, School District information and other outreach methods. The online survey is open to anyone who wants a voice in the planning process. While survey results should not be interpreted as statistically representative, the results help identify common and shared themes, concerns, and priorities. When combined with other outreach findings and cross-checked through a technical analysis of the park system, these findings inform the planning process.

A total of 1,131 responses were received. As a standard practice, results of the online questionnaire were reviewed for completeness and potential duplicate or fake responses. Between January 1 and 11, some responses were submitted by an automated web-based program. These results were screened out due to suspicious IP addresses and inconsistencies in contact information provided for the prize drawing. After filtering out these automated responses, the validity of 996 responses were confirmed. The survey summary is based on these 996 responses.

Several questions allowed respondents to write in responses. Write-in responses are included in Appendix B.

Key Takeaways

The Monroe Parks and Recreation Questionnaire provided some clear insights about community priorities and needs.

- **Trails and Paths.** There is an overall desire for more trails and paths for walking and biking, with 51% of respondents saying that *building more trails and paths* should be the top funding priority. While the community would like to see more off-street trails and connections, respondents also answered they were satisfied with their current ability to walk or bike to destinations.
- **Key Connections.** Respondents thought a connection to the Centennial Trail (69%) was the most important connection for the City to develop, with a "Riverwalk" trail (50%) and extension of the Snoqualmie Valley Trail (46%) as other top choices.
- **System Satisfaction.** Overall respondents are highly satisfied with general park maintenance and generally satisfied with the variety of park opportunities. However, respondents are less satisfied with the current access to the Skykomish River. On average respondents were satisfied with the mix/availability of special events and recreation programming, but there is a desire for more special events and activities that would bring people downtown.
- **Play.** Respondents would like to see unique play features and challenge elements in more parks. Swimming and water play was an activity that respondents would like to see expanded.
- **Specific Site Improvements.** Most respondents answered that they were very excited for Lake Tye and Cadman Site improvements as well as the idea of a linked riverfront. At a new park in the North Hill area, respondents thought the most important features to include were restrooms, a playground, nature play elements, a viewpoint, picnic area, and open turf area for play.
- **Top Funding Priorities:** Based on the percentage of respondents that selected priorities from a list of options, the City's top five park funding priorities emerged (see figure).

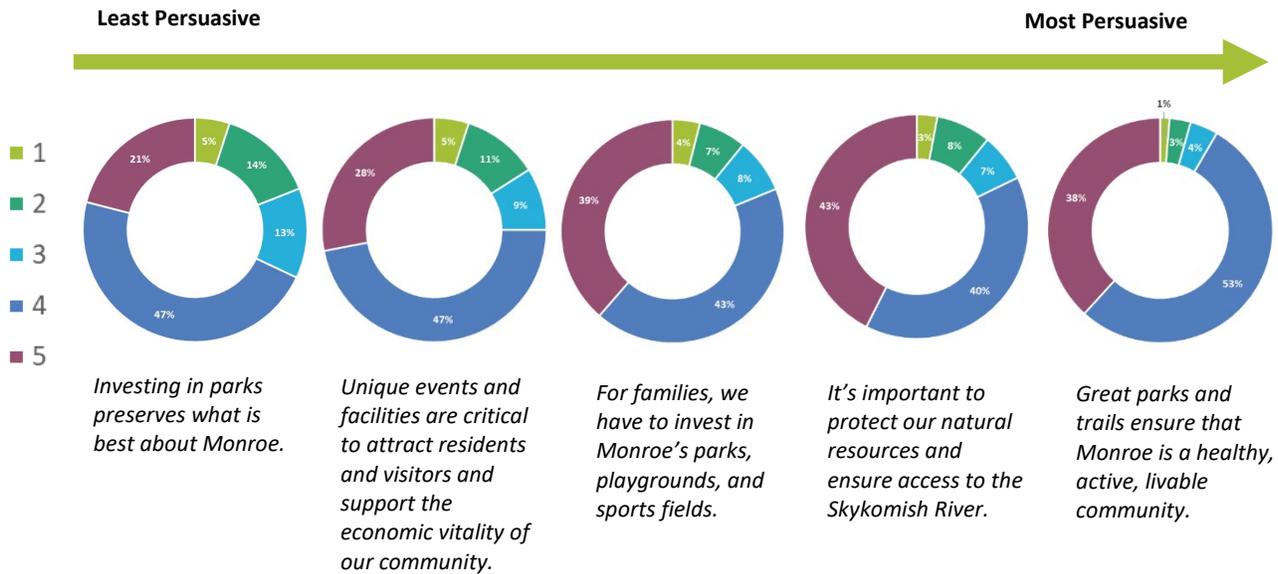
If the City had more money to invest in parks and recreation, which of the following should be our top priorities? Check your top 3.



- Funding Mechanisms.** A little over half of respondents (52%) indicated that they would support a bond measure, and three quarters believe that parks funding should increase. Based on a home with a \$500,000 value, approximately 80% of respondents indicated that they would support or strongly support a bond measure that increases property taxes between \$50 to \$75.
- Increasing Funding Support for Parks:** COVID-19 appears to have affected respondents' value of parks in the last year, with 52% saying it had increased somewhat or greatly. A majority (76%) thought that funding should increase to reflect this great value of parks.
- Reasons to Increase Funding:** On a scale from 1 (Least Persuasive) to 5 (Most Persuasive), respondents rated reasons for continuing to invest in the future of Monroe's parks.

Post COVID, should parks funding change?

- 26%** Increase greatly
- 50%** Increase somewhat
- 20%** Stay the same
- 3%** Decrease



Park Use and Activities

Respondents indicated they visit a variety of parks and recreation facilities, including those close to home, across town, or other county and regional parks. A high number of respondents also reported using City trails and paths. While few respondents visit City parks every day, most visit them at least once a week or a few times a month.

Figure 1: Types of Parks and Facilities Visited

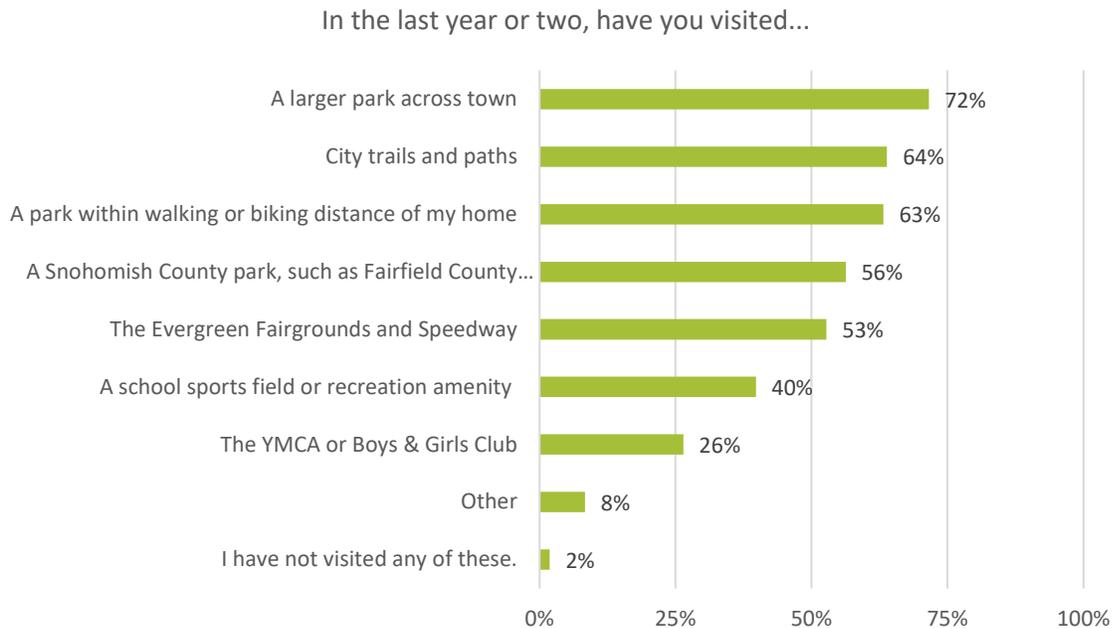
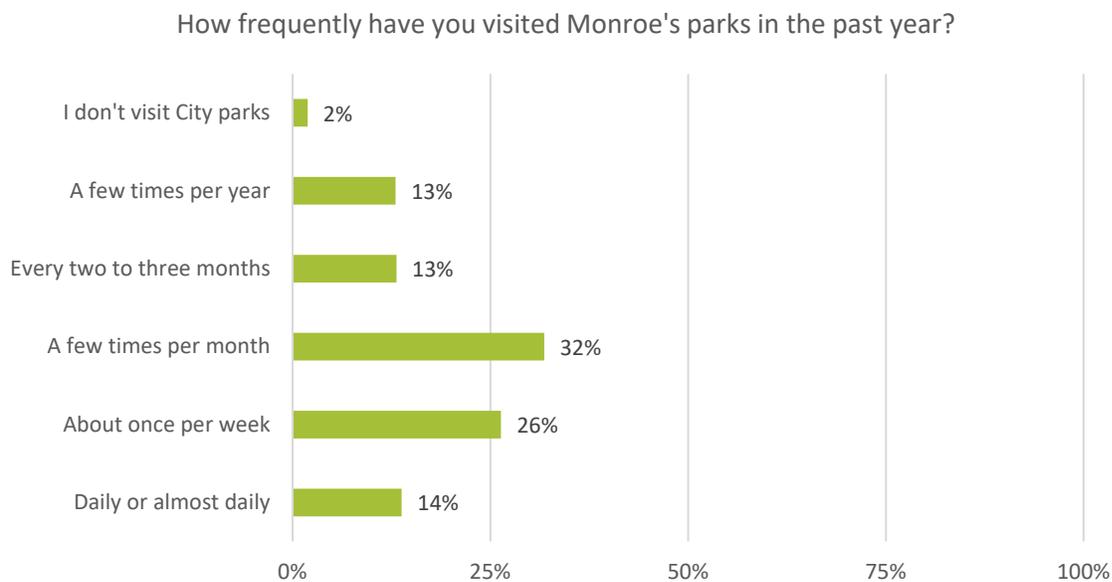


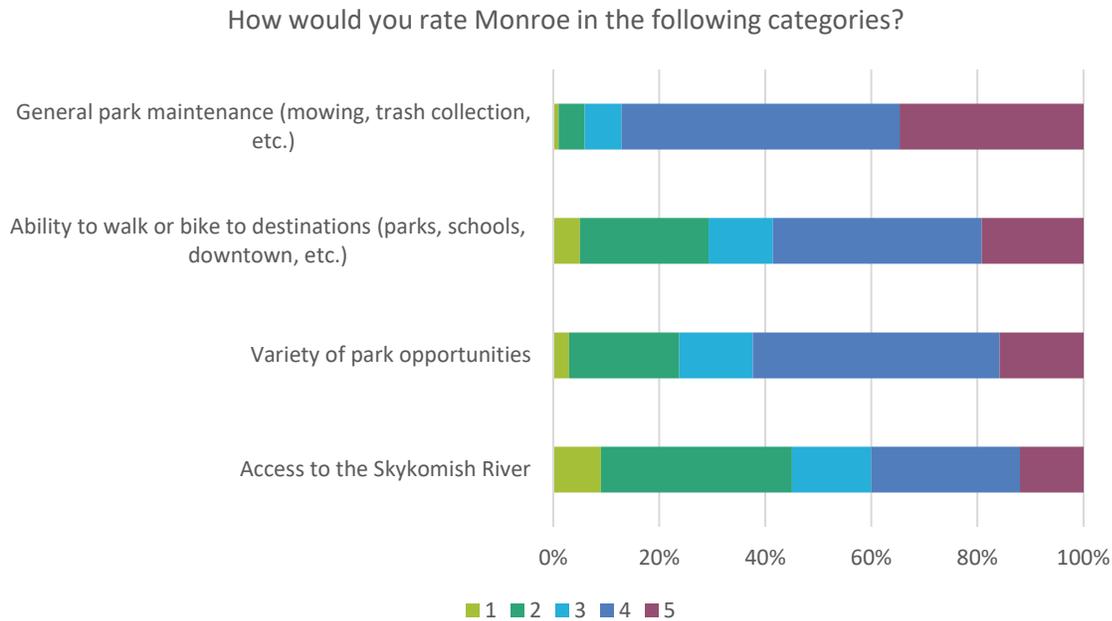
Figure 2: Frequency of Park Use



System Satisfaction

Participants were asked to rate their satisfaction with certain components of the Monroe parks system on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very unsatisfied and 5 being very satisfied. Respondents indicated that they were very satisfied with general park maintenance, with an average rating of 4.16. Compared to the ability to walk or bike to destinations and the variety of park opportunities, respondents were a little less satisfied although both received an average rating of around 3.5. Access to the Skykomish River was rated the lowest, with an average of 2.97, with the highest number of respondents (45%) giving 1s and 2s.

Figure 3: System Satisfaction



Mix of Activities and Features

In terms of activities, respondents would like to see more walking and biking as well as swimming or water play. Artistic or cultural expression, playing, and river activities were other top responses. Respondents would also like to see unique play features and challenge elements incorporated into more parks. Similar to how they would like to see more walking and biking in the overall parks system, respondents also desire more off-street trails connections to parks and other destinations.

Figure 4: New Activities

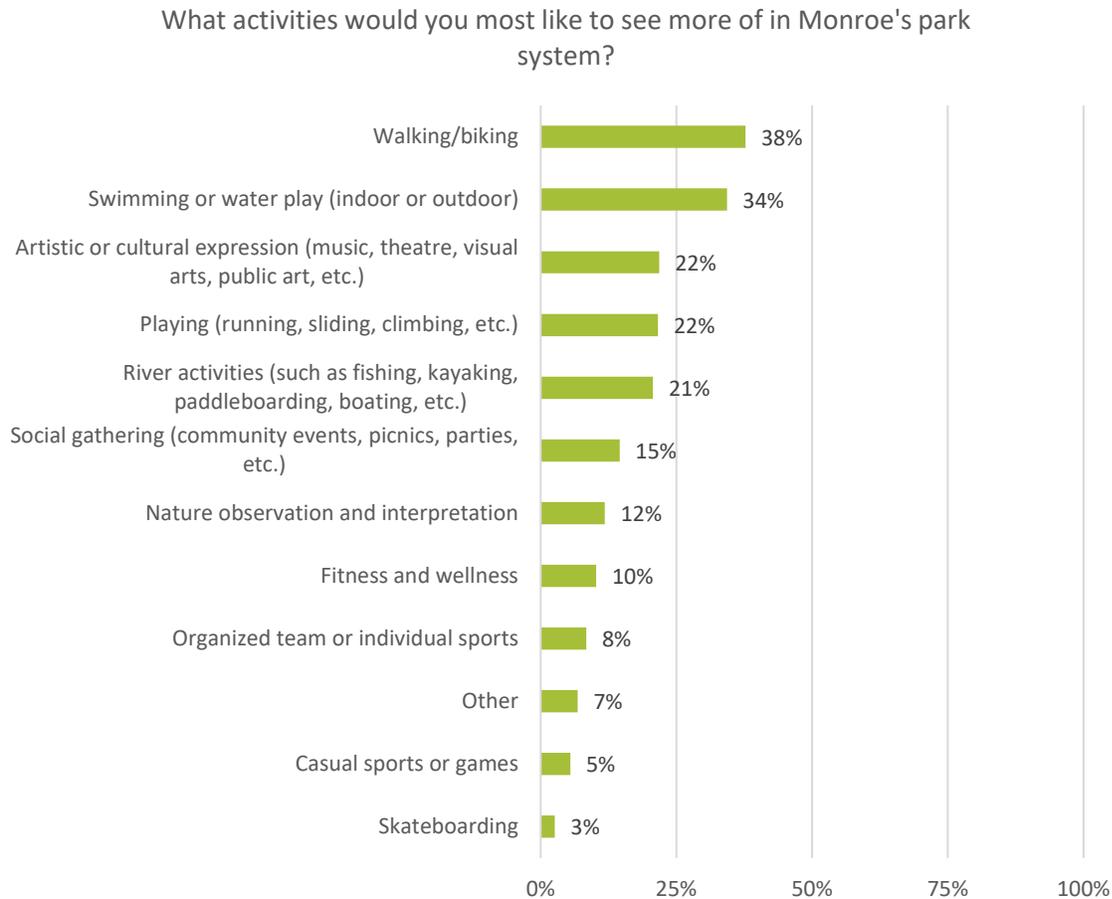
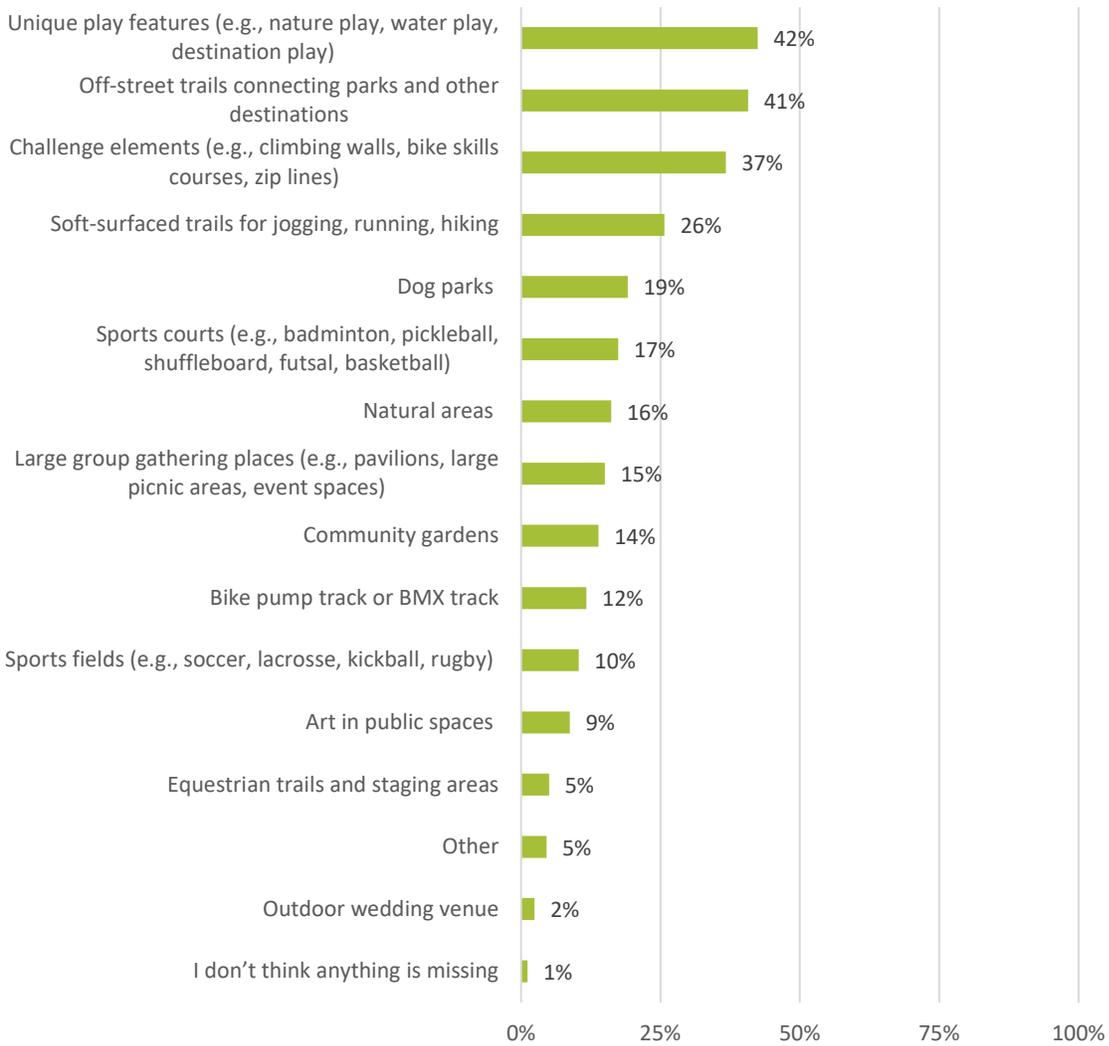


Figure 5: New Features or Facilities

What features or facilities would you like to see more of in Monroe's parks?



COMMUNITY IDENTITY

Respondents were also asked what the most important aspects of Monroe's identity were that should be incorporated into parks. While respondents were allowed to pick their top two, half of them chose 'A community that supports kids and families.' The next top aspects that respondents chose were a close tie and related to the community's connection to nature and the outdoors.

Figure 6: Most Important Aspects of Monroe's Identity

- 50%** A community that supports kids and families.
- 36%** A place with abundant outdoor recreation opportunities.
- 35%** A place surrounded by and connected to nature's beauty.
- 23%** A city with a strong economy and thriving small businesses.
- 19%** A strong community where we know our neighbors.
- 7%** An exciting place to live.

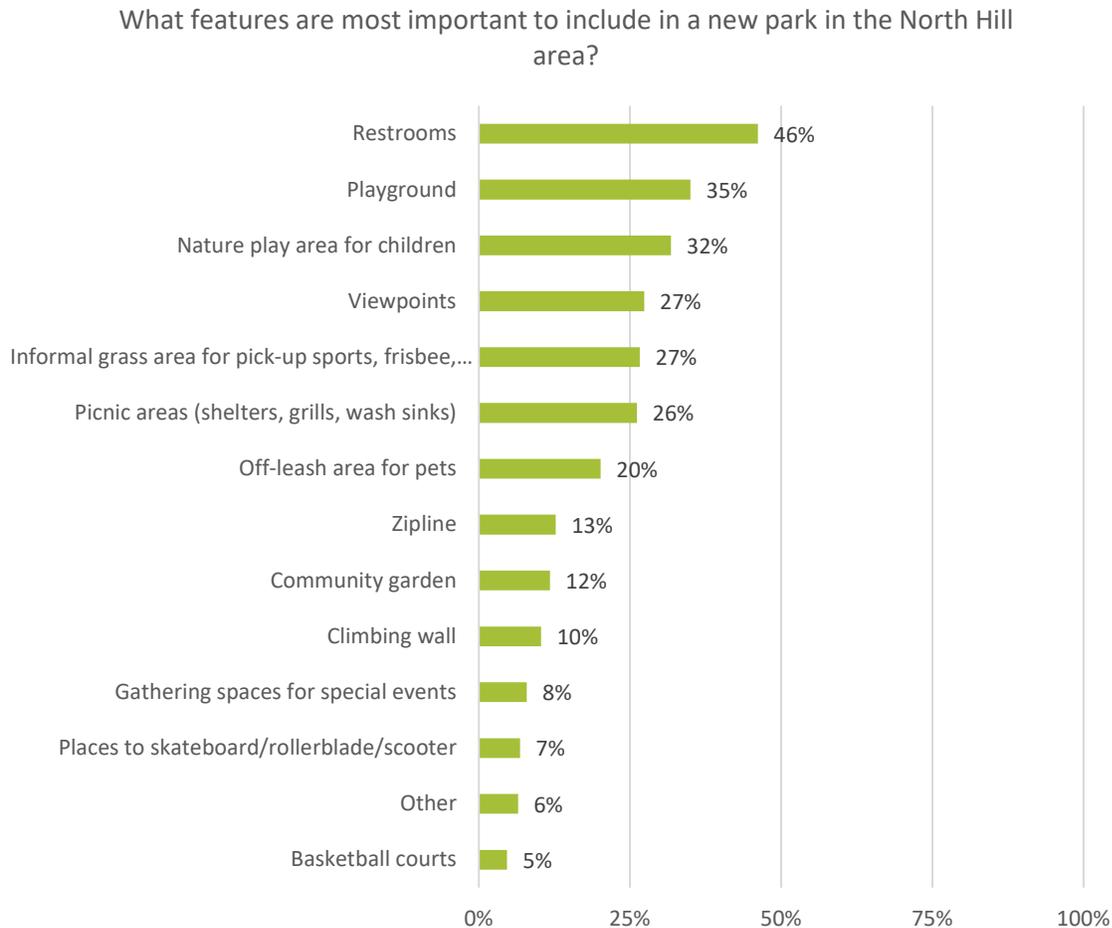
Specific Site Improvements

The online questionnaire also provided insights into improvements at specific park sites.

NORTH HILL AREA

Respondents felt that restrooms were the most important feature to provide at a new park in the North Hill area. A playground and nature play area for children were also desired.

Figure 7: North Hill Area Park Improvements

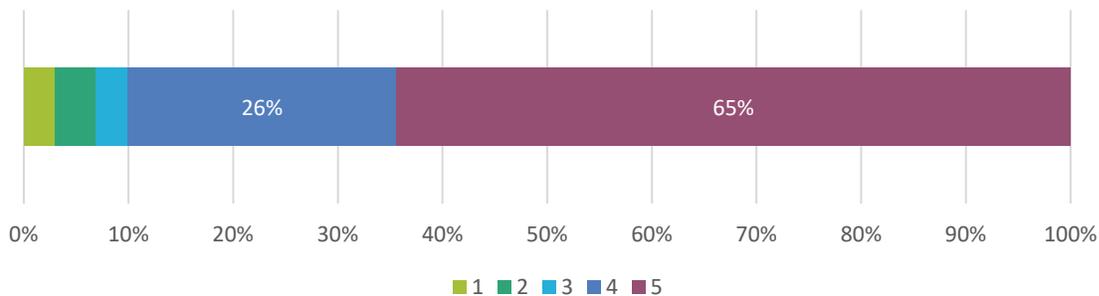


LAKE TYE, CADMAN SITE, AND THE RIVERFRONT

For the following three figures, respondents were asked to rate how exciting certain improvements and ideas were to them on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being 'Not Very Exciting' and 5 being 'Exciting!'.

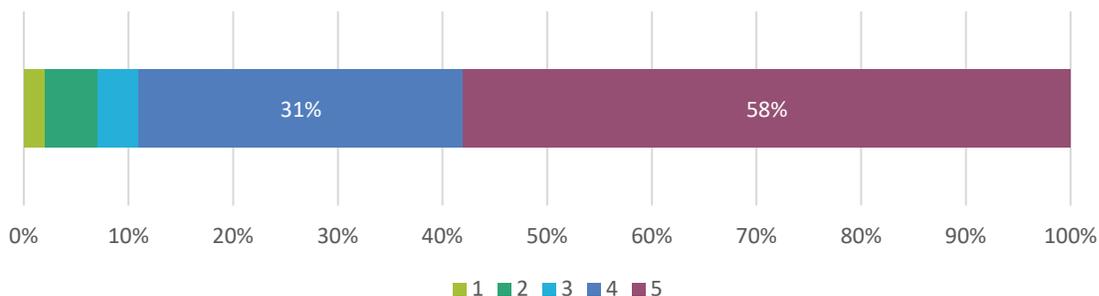
An existing city park, Lake Tye underwent a master planning process in 2018. Improvements identified under the plan included a splash pad/water play area, picnic plaza, accessible beach, as well as a loop trail with boardwalk, fishing stops and lake edge access. Respondents indicated that they still found these improvements to be exciting with around 91% giving 4's and 5's and an average rating of 4.46.

Figure 8: How exciting are the planned improvements for Lake Tye Park?



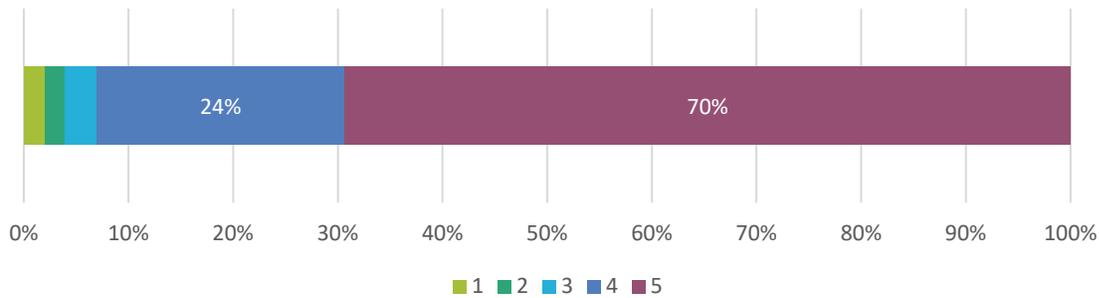
Similar to Lake Tye, Cadman Site, a future city park, also underwent a master planning process in 2018. Improvements for the Cadman Site include a camping area, hand-carry boat launch, loop trails, boardwalk and a climbing/zipline or ropes area. Respondents also reported still finding these previously identified improvements exciting with around 89% giving 4's and 5's and an average rating of 4.39.

Figure 9: How exciting are the planned improvements for Cadman Site?



While no specific improvements or master planning efforts have been completed for this, respondents were also asked how exciting a linked riverfront would be. Overall respondents found this idea very exciting, with 94% giving 4's and 5's and an average rating of 4.58.

Figure 10: How exciting would a linked “riverfront” be?

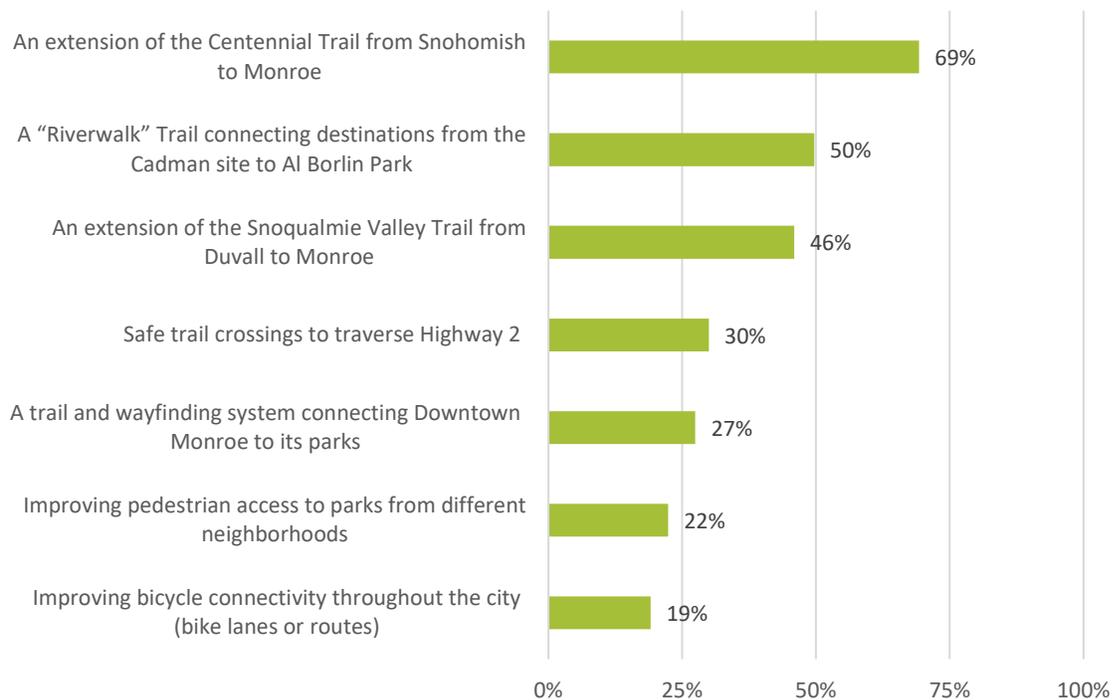


Trail Connections

With the understanding that the City can work with partners to develop various trails in or near the City, a large portion of respondents felt that an extension of the Centennial Trail from Snohomish to Monroe was the most important trail connection. Respondents also chose a “Riverwalk” Trail connecting destinations from the Cadman site to Al Borlin Park and an extension of the Snoqualmie Valley Trail from Duvall to Monroe.

Figure 11: Important Trail Connections

How important are each of these trail connections to you?



Programming

Respondents were asked how satisfied they were with the mix and availability of both special events and organized recreation programming in Monroe on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being very unsatisfied and 5 very satisfied. Respondents are slightly more satisfied with the availability and mix of special events such as music in the park, annual fishing derby, and fun runs, which received an average score of 3.65. Respondents felt similarly about organized recreation programs, activities, leagues, camps, and classes, which received a slightly smaller average score of 3.35.

Figure 12: Special Events

Special events such as music in the park, annual fishing derby, and fun runs

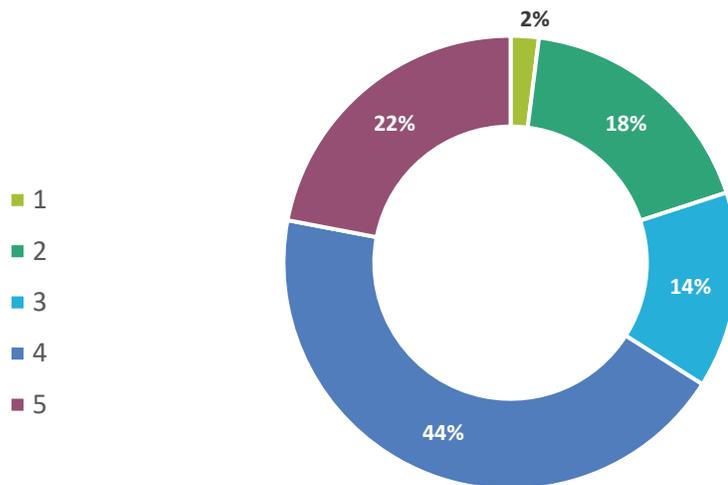
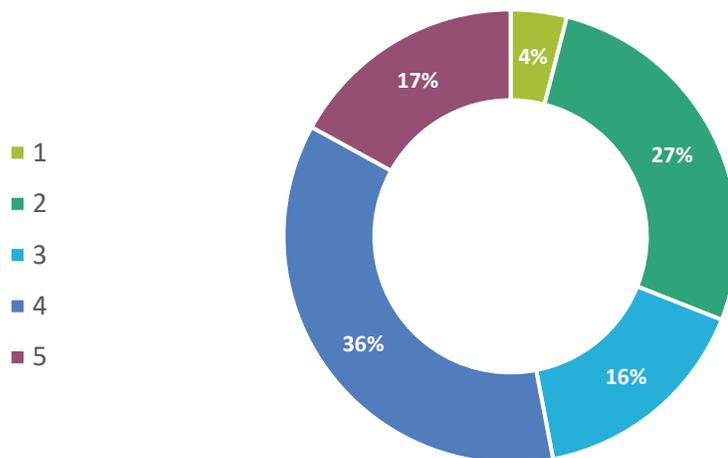


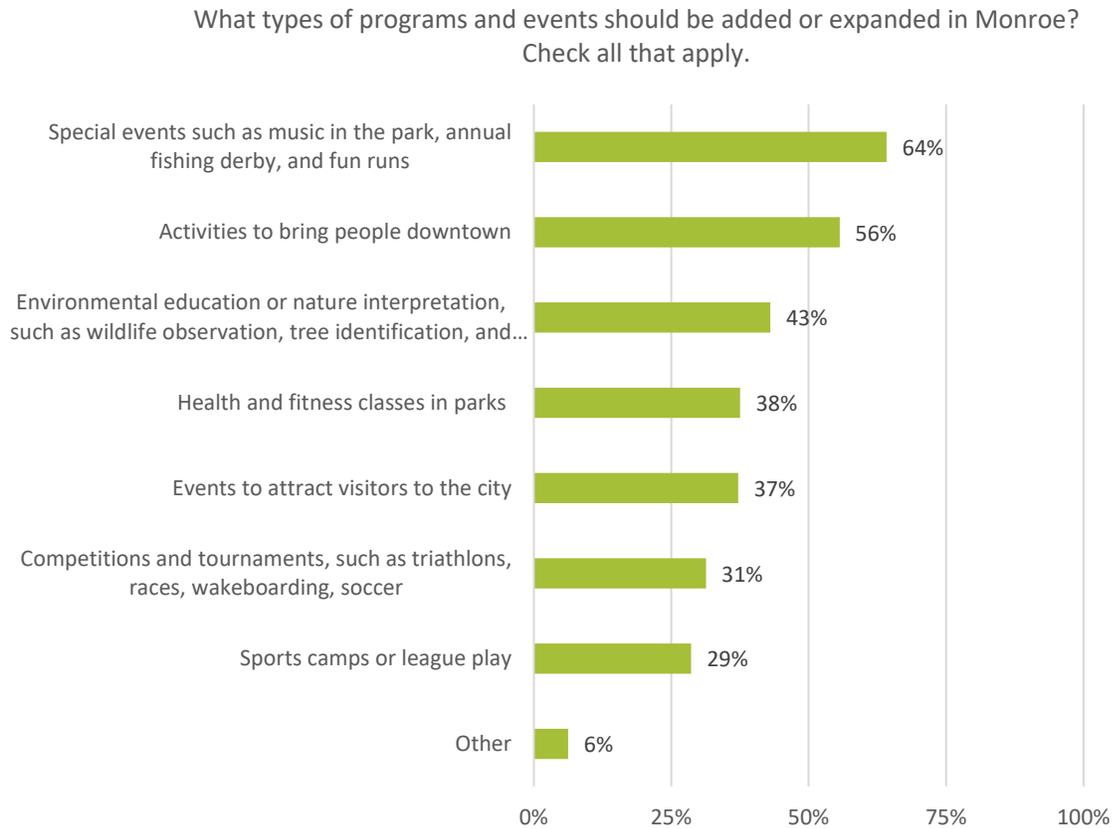
Figure 13: Organized Recreation Programming

Organized recreation programs, activities, leagues, camps, and classes



Respondents strongly supported expanding special events in Monroe as well as activities that would bring people downtown.

Figure 14: New or Expanded Programming and Events



Funding

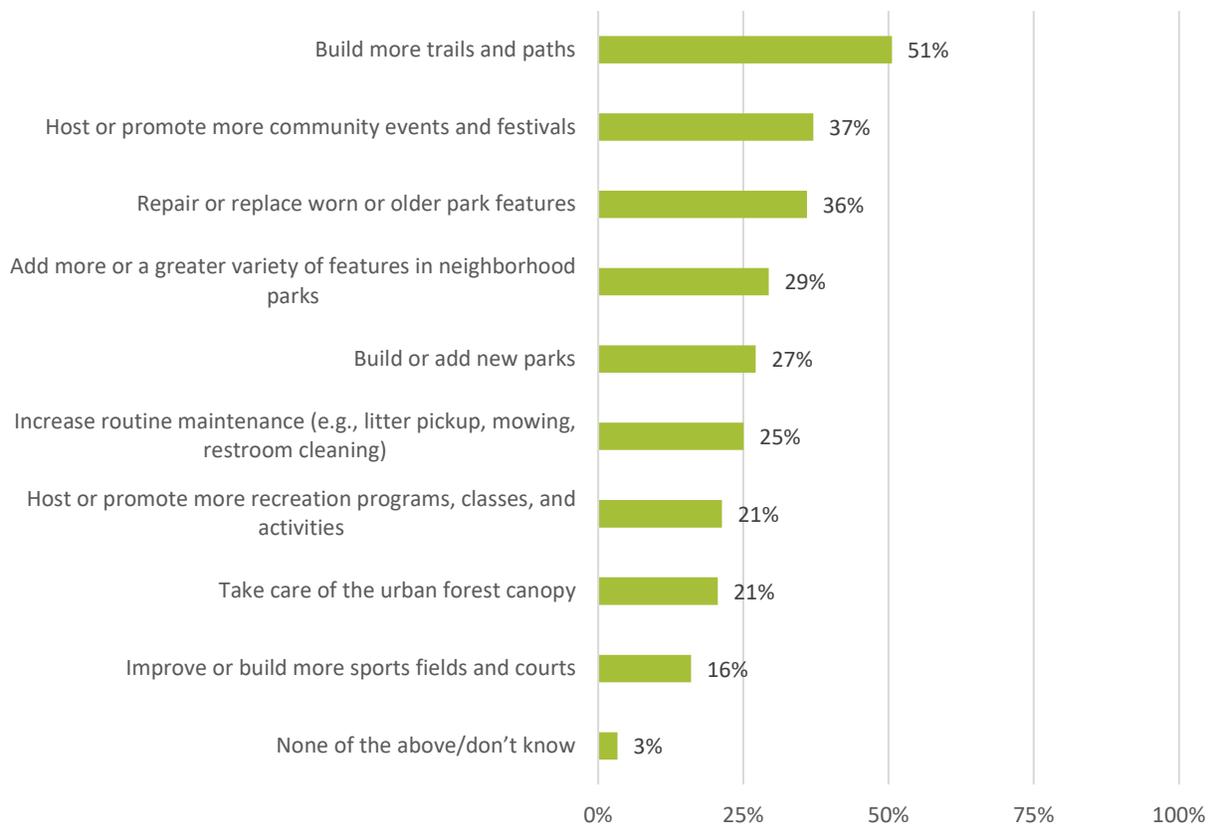
Several questions focused on funding, asking what the top funding priorities should be, whether the level of funding should change, and the use of a bond measure as a potential funding mechanism.

FUNDING PRIORITIES

In keeping with the desire for more trails and paths seen in other question results, respondents felt that building more trails and paths should be the City's top priority. Respondents also identified hosting or promoting more community events and festivals and repairing or replacing worn/old park features as other funding priorities.

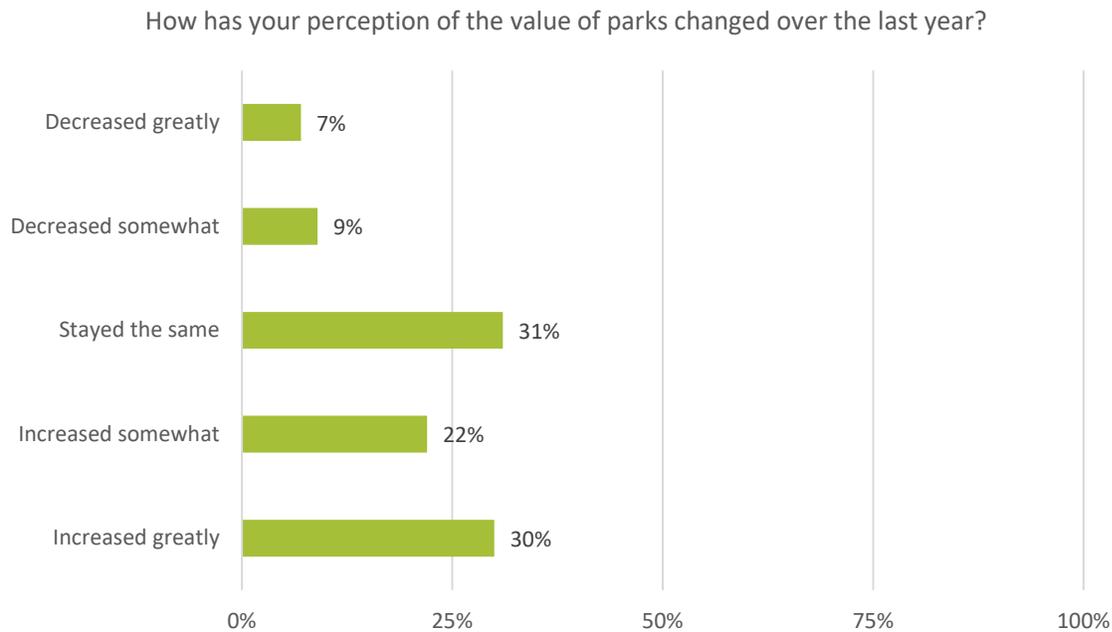
Figure 15: Top Funding Priorities

If the City had more money to invest in parks and recreation, which of the following should be our top priorities? Check your top 3.



COVID-19 appears to have affected respondents' value of parks in the last year. While a third of respondents reported that their value of parks had stayed the same, over half felt that it had increased on some level.

Figure 16: Perception of Park Value



As a follow-up question to how their perception may have changed, respondents were also asked whether funding should change. A majority (76%) thought that funding should increase, although most felt that funding should increase somewhat, compared to increasing greatly. Few respondents reported that funding should decrease.

Figure 17: Should parks funding change to reflect your value of parks?

26% Increase greatly.

50% Increase somewhat.

20% Stay the same.

2% Decrease somewhat.

1% Decrease greatly.

FUNDING MECHANISMS

Slightly more than half of respondents indicated that they would be willing to support a bond measure to improve the parks system in the future and about a fifth said that they did not know or were unsure whether they would support it (Figure 18). In a follow-up question, respondents were asked how likely they were to support a bond measure with certain property tax increases based on the rate for a home with a \$500,000 assessed value (Figure 19). Respondents most strongly supported a \$50 increase, with \$75 still receiving a significant amount of support. As the amount increased to \$100, respondents were more divided in their support with around the same number responding, 'Strongly Oppose' as did 'Strongly Support'. At \$150, a third of respondents answered, 'Strongly Oppose'.

Figure 18: Bond Measure Support

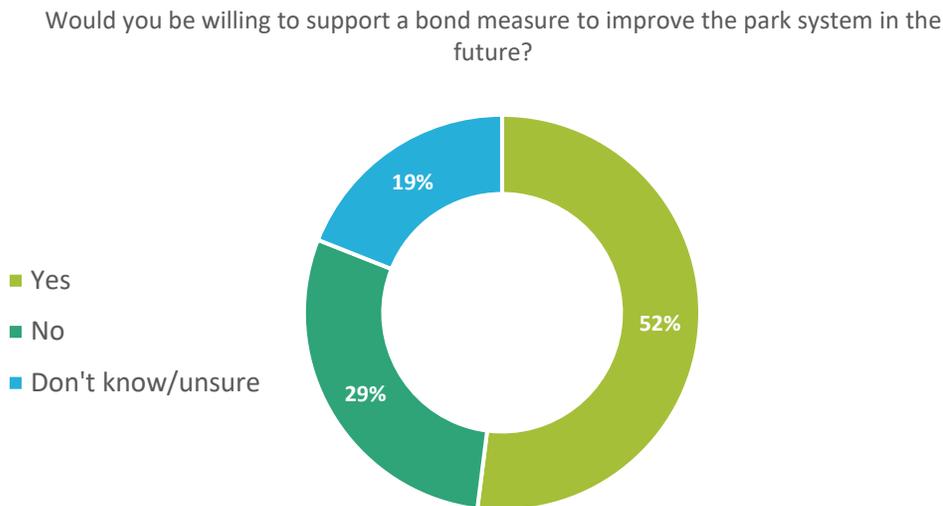
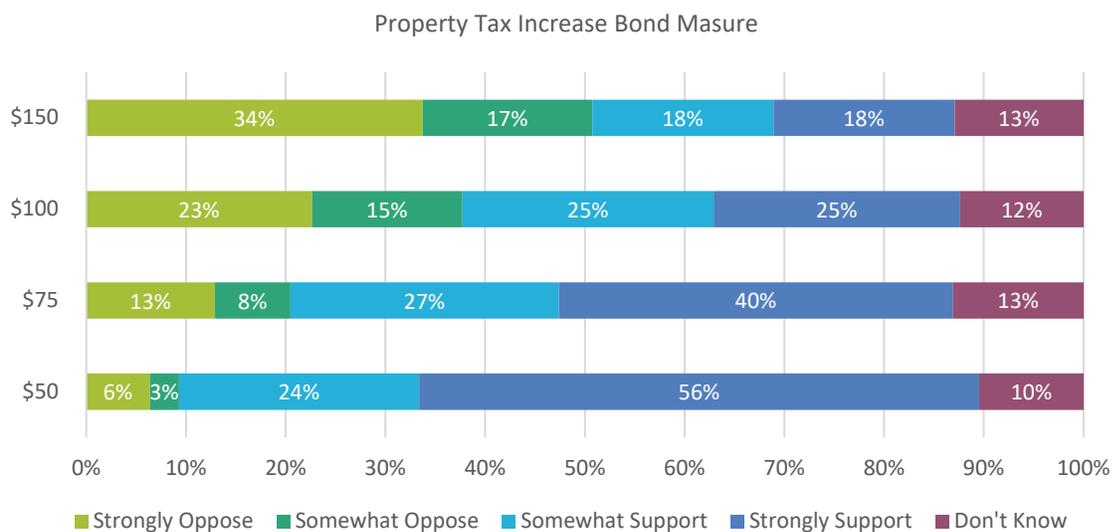


Figure 19: Support for Specific Measures



The questionnaire also asked respondents what reason for continuing to invest in the future of Monroe’s parks resonated the most with them. Respondents rated each reason on a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being ‘Least Persuasive’ and 5 being ‘Most Persuasive’. Overall respondents felt that ‘Great parks and trails ensure that Monroe is a healthy, active, livable community’ the most persuasive reason. Respondents indicated that ‘Investing in parks preserved what is best about Monroe’ was the least persuasive reason, with the other reasons falling somewhere in between the two.

Figure 20: Investing in parks preserves what is best about Monroe.

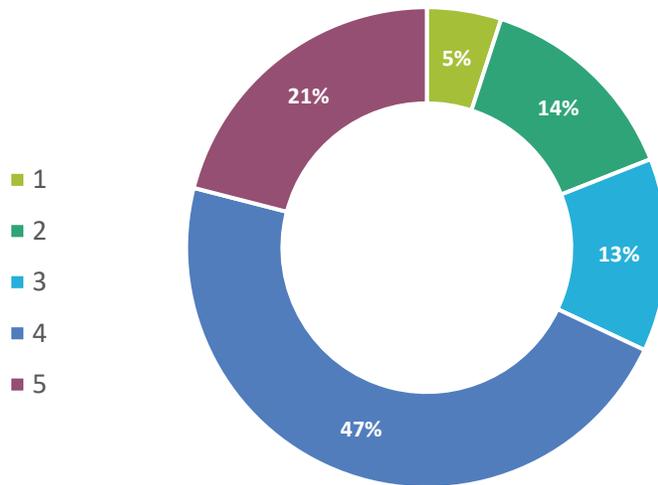


Figure 21: Great parks and trails ensure that Monroe is a healthy, active, livable community.

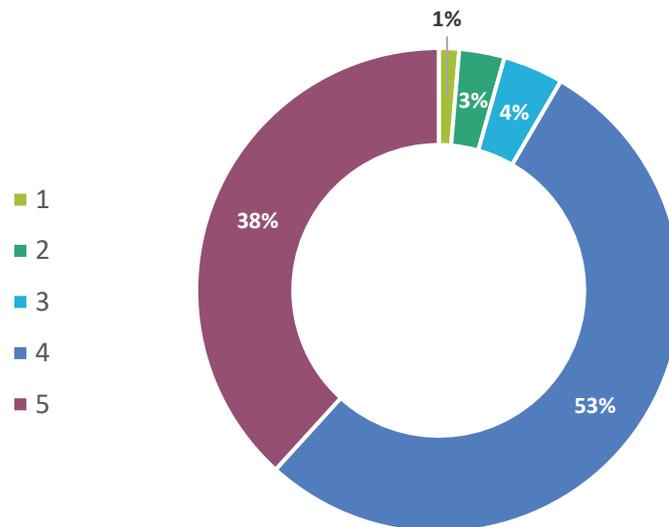


Figure 22: For families, we have to invest in Monroe’s parks, playgrounds, and sports fields.

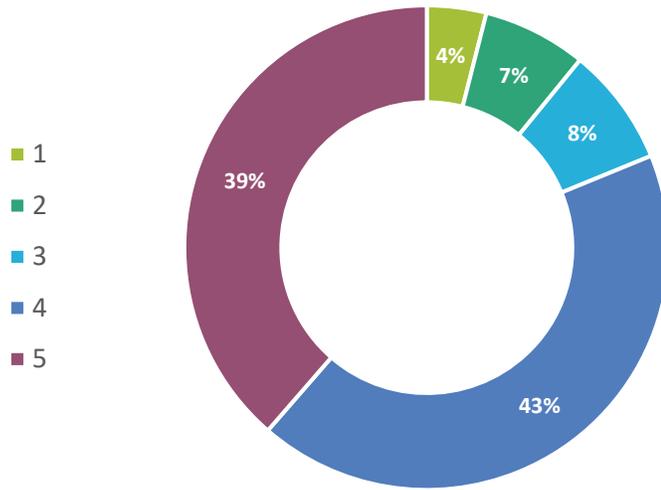


Figure 23: It’s important to protect our natural resources and ensure access to the Skykomish River.

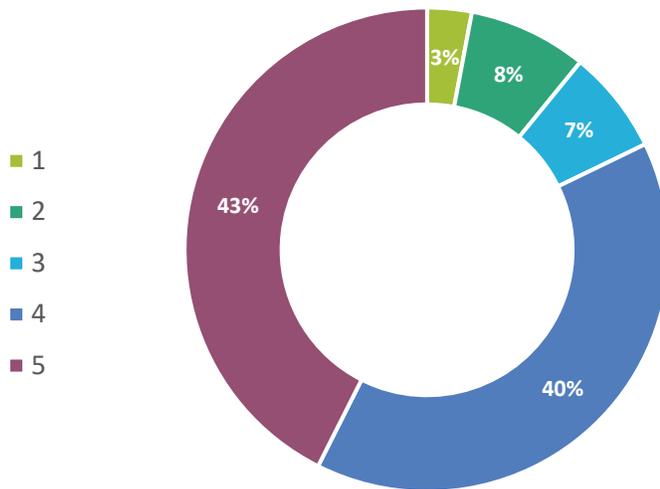
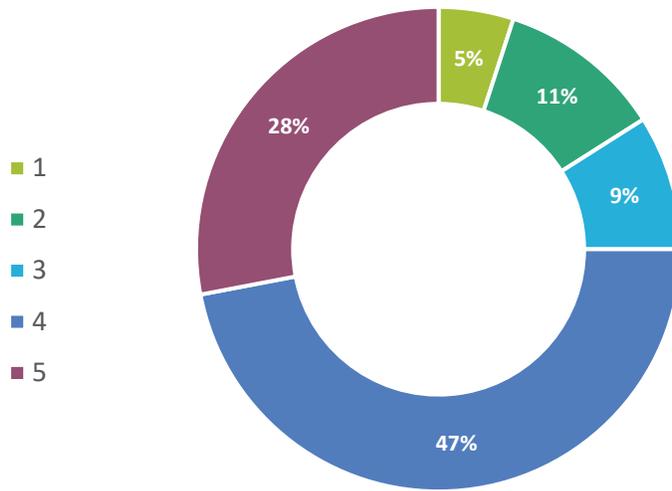


Figure 24: Unique events and facilities are critical to attract residents and visitors and support the economic vitality of our community.



Other Input

Several questions allowed people to write-in responses. All write-in comments are included as Appendix B. Many write-in comments related to safety and security concerns in parks, particularly Al Borlin. Other comments requested low fencing around playgrounds, a dog park, equestrian trails, a bike pump track, more accessible parks and recreation facilities, and other elements and amenities.

Demographics

The following questions were optional. Most respondents to the Survey were Monroe residents with a zip code of 98272. Those surveyed were predominately people aged 35-54 who identify as Caucasian/White. More women responded to the questionnaire than men and respondents were roughly equal in numbers of those who had children under the age of 18 living in their household versus those that did not.

Figure 25: Age

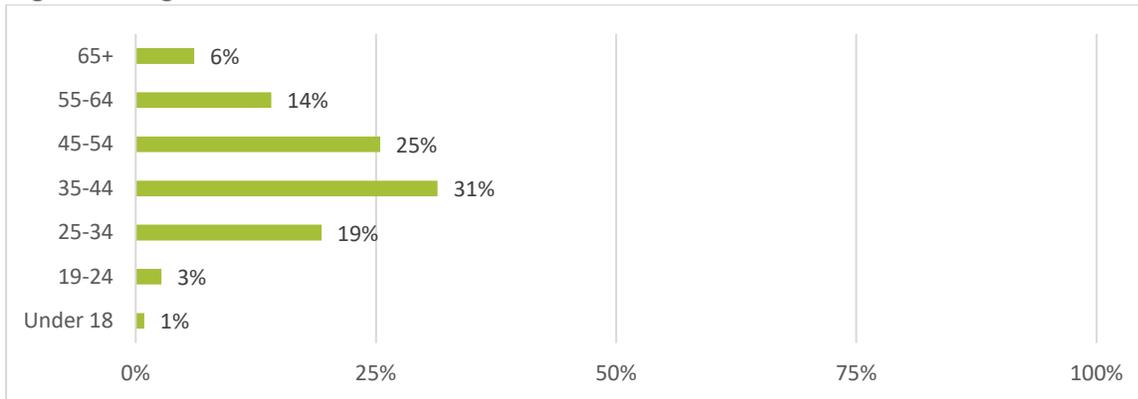


Figure 26: Ethnic Identity

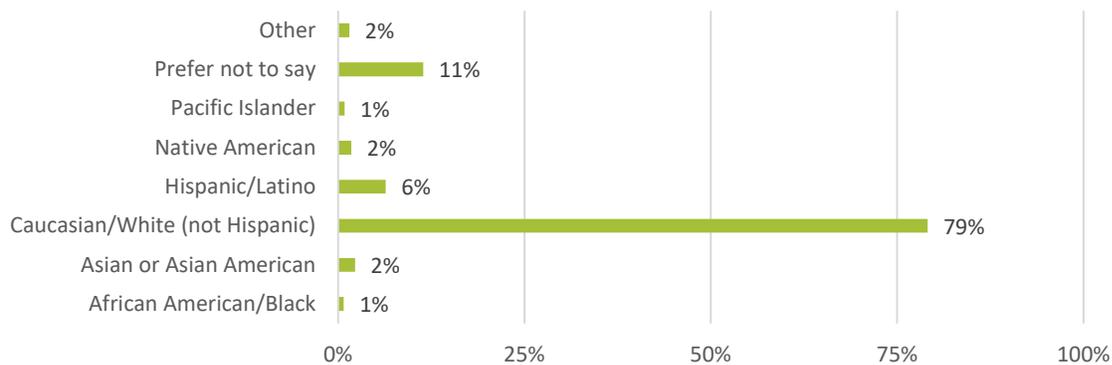


Figure 27: Gender Identity

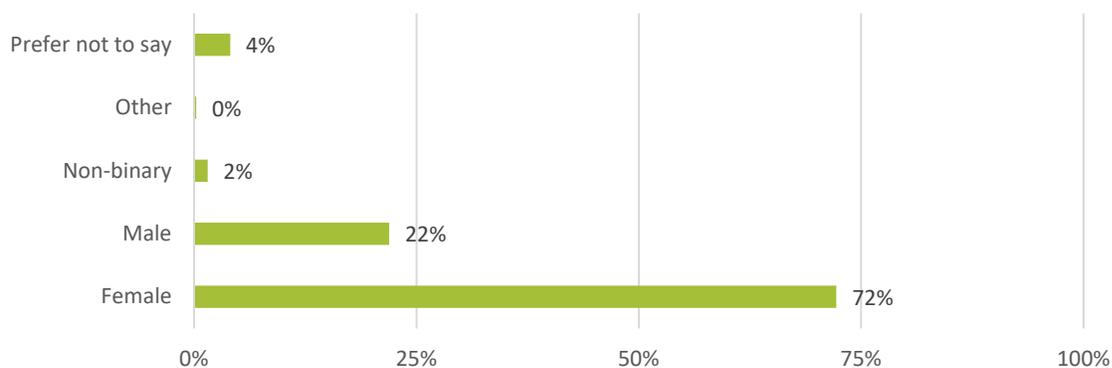


Figure 28: Children in the Household

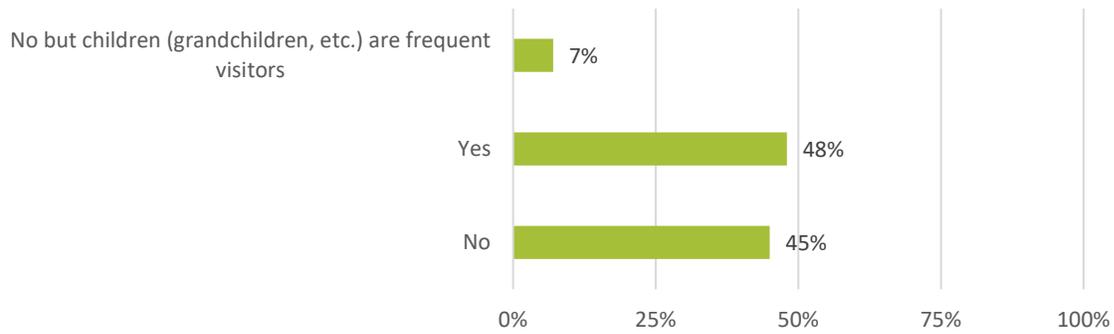


Figure 29: Relationship to Monroe

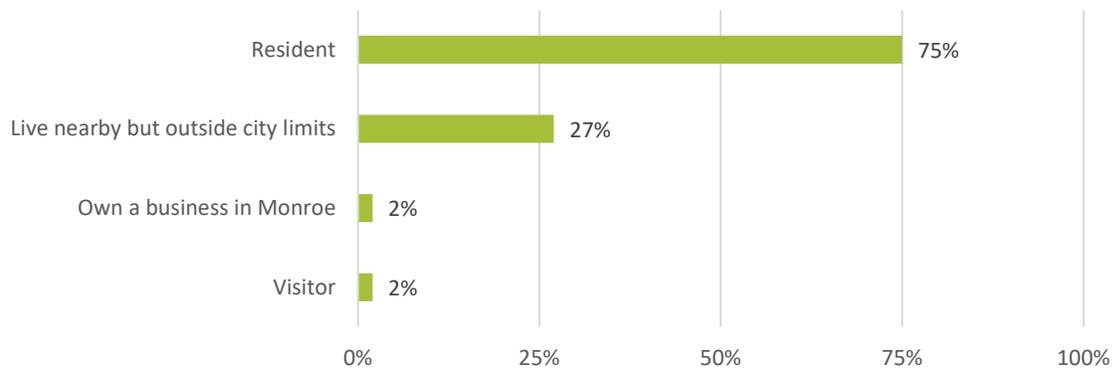
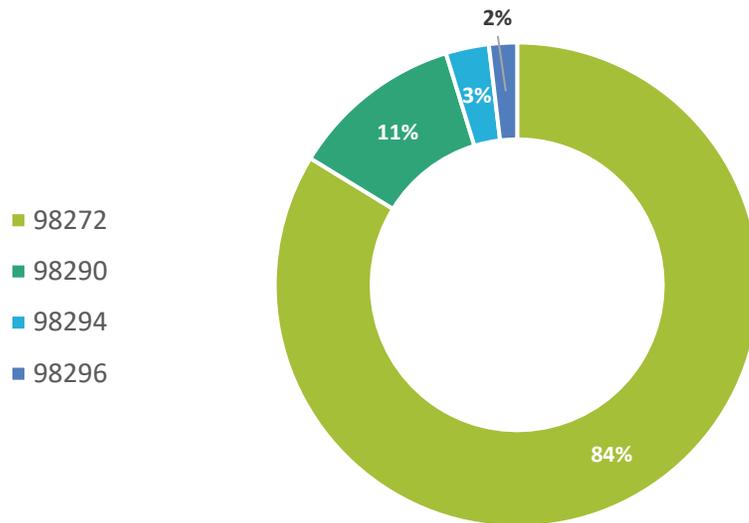


Figure 30: Top 5 Respondent Zip Codes



Appendices

Appendix A: Survey Questions

Appendix B: Open Ended Responses