

Parks and Recreation Citizen Survey

Executive Summary of Citizen Survey Results

Overview of the Methodology

Arlington County conducted a community attitude and interest survey from March to June of 2002 to help determine citizen usage, satisfaction, needs, and priorities for the parks and recreation system. The survey was designed to obtain statistically valid results from households throughout Arlington County.

LeisureVision/ETC Institute worked extensively with Arlington County officials in the development of the survey questionnaire. This work allowed the survey to be tailored to issues of strategic importance to effectively plan the future system.

The goal was to obtain at least 800 completed surveys. This goal was far exceeded and 955 surveys were completed. The results of the random sample of 955 households have a 95% level of confidence with a precision of at least +/-3.2 %.

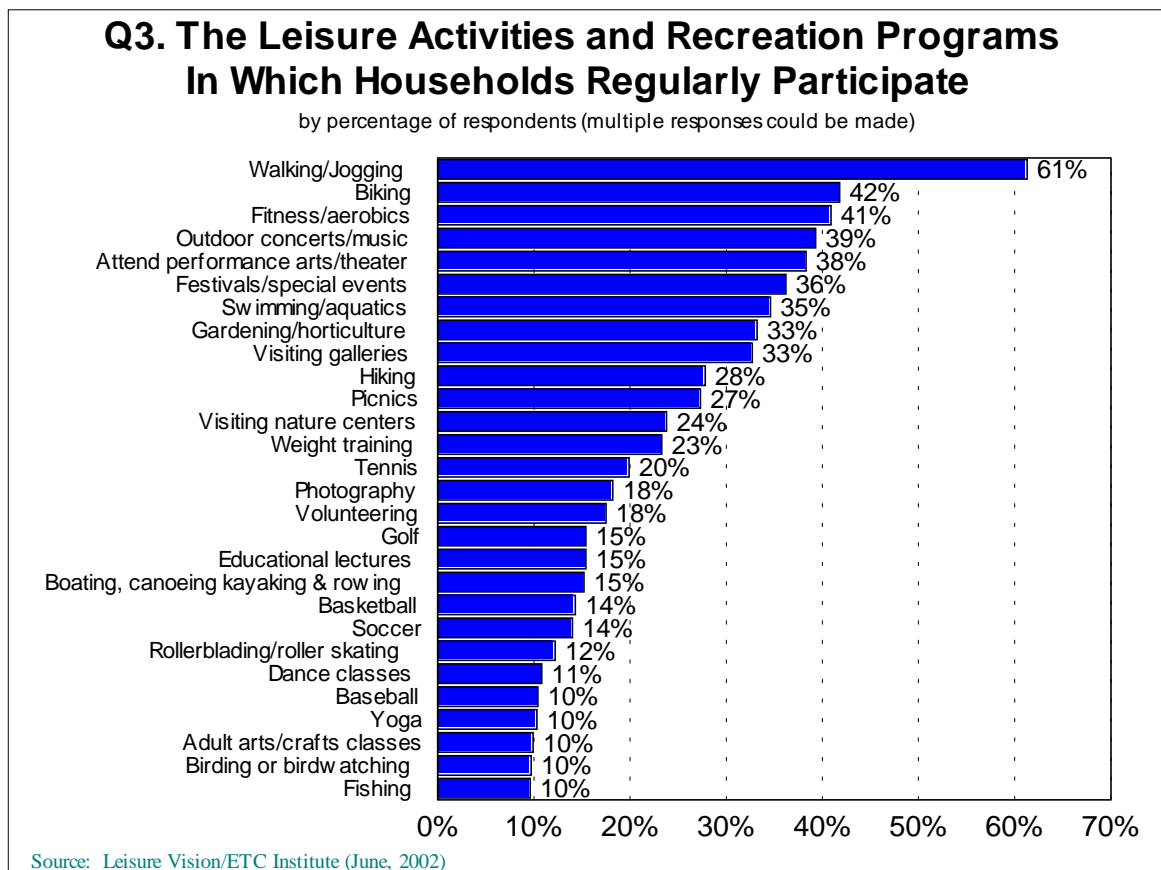
This report contains: 1) an executive summary; 2) cross tabular analysis for survey findings by gender, age of respondent, and area of residence; 3) cross tabular analysis by race and health conditions; 4) comparisons of survey results to national benchmarks; and 5) a copy of the survey document.

The following pages summarize major survey findings:

Participation in Leisure Activities and Recreation Programs

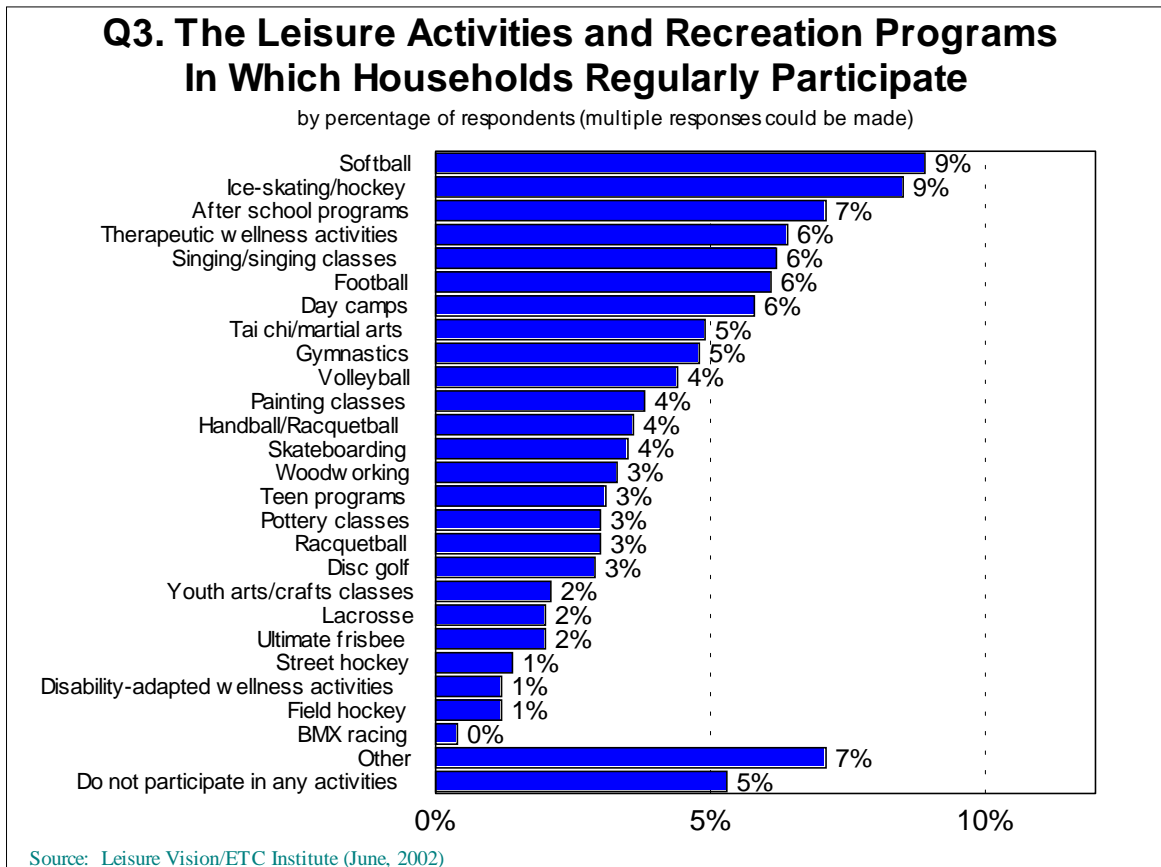
From a list of 54 various leisure activities and recreation programs, respondent households were asked to indicate which ones they or members of their household participate in regularly. The following summarizes key findings:

- # Walking/jogging (61%) is the leisure activity/recreation program that the highest percentage of respondent households participate in regularly. Other activities and programs that a high percentage of respondent households participate in regularly include: biking (42%); fitness/aerobics (41%); outdoor concerts/music (39%) and attend performance arts/theater (38%).



Participation in Leisure Activities and Recreation Programs

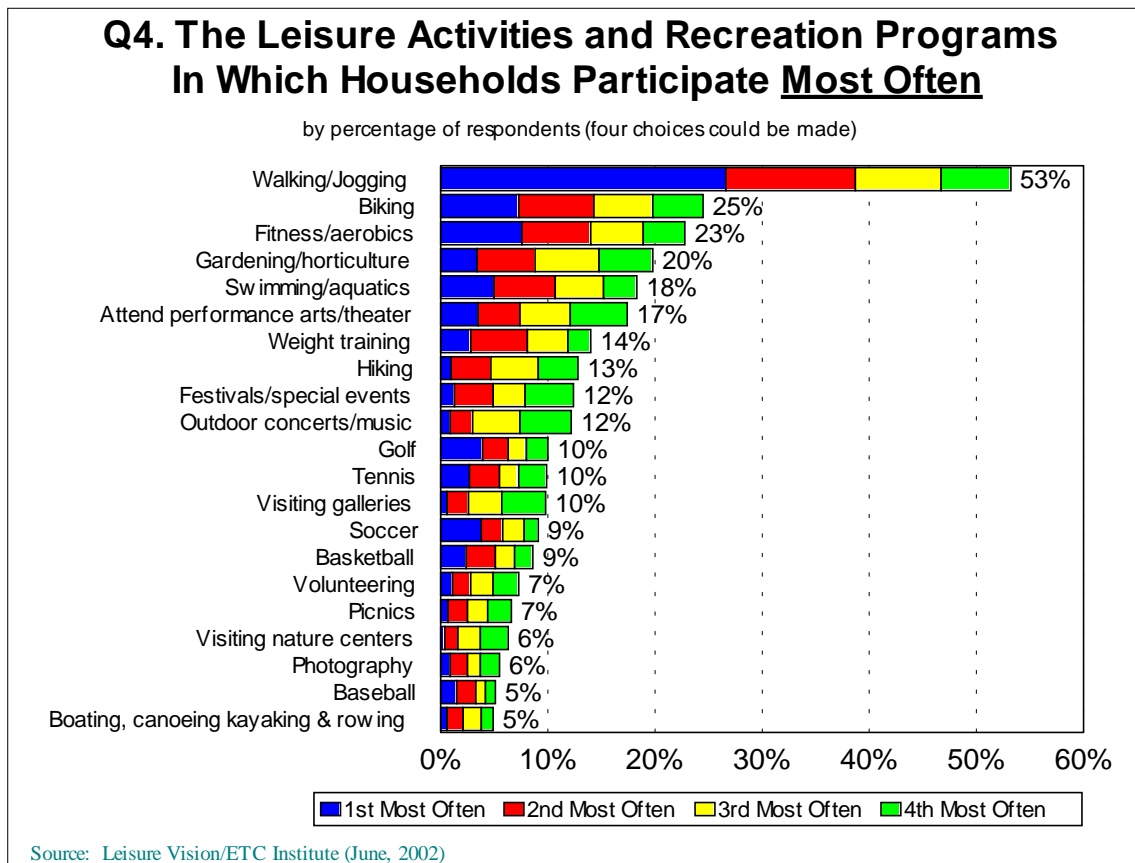
From the list of 54 various leisure activities and recreation programs, listed below is a graph of those activities and programs that less than 10% of respondent households participate in regularly.



Leisure Activities and Recreation Programs Participated in Most Often

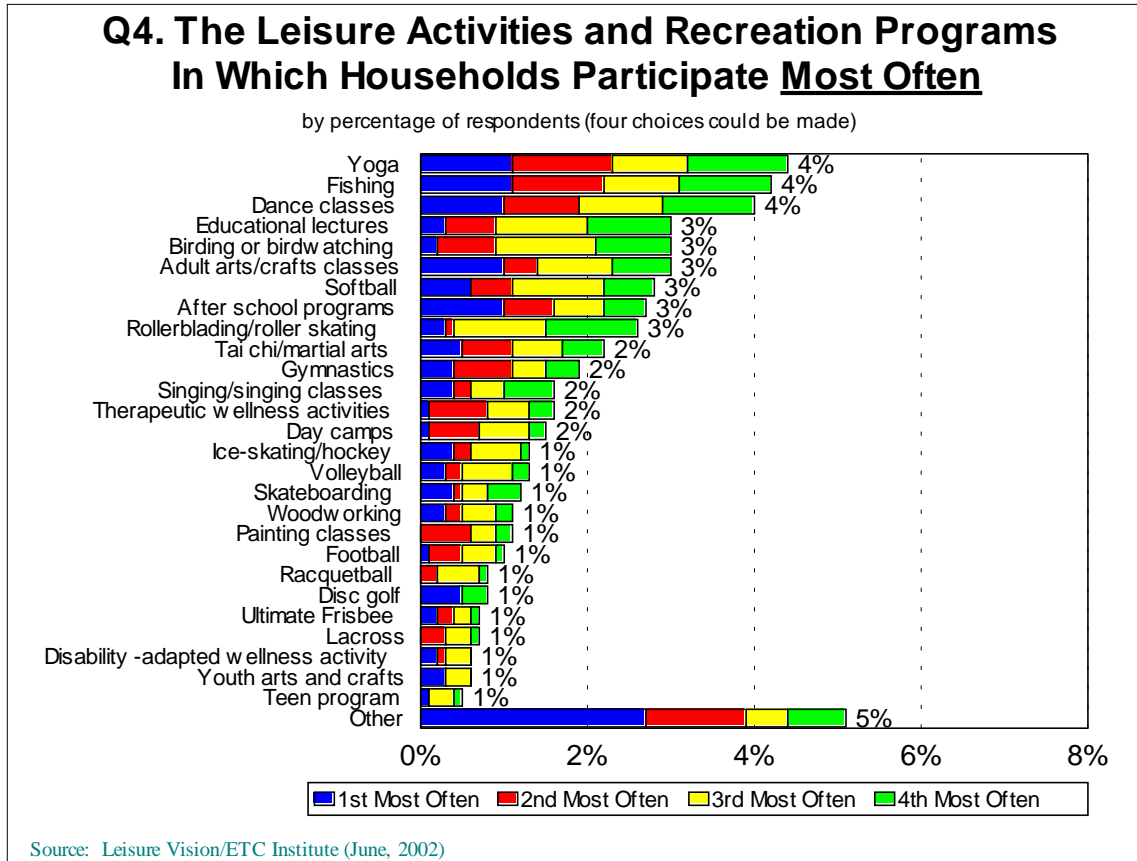
From the list of 54 leisure activities and recreation programs, respondents were asked to indicate the four that they or members of their household participate in most often. The following summarizes key findings:

- # **Walking/jogging (53%) is the leisure activity/recreation program that the highest percentage of respondent households indicated as one of the top four they participate in most often.** Other activities/programs that a high percentage of respondent households participate in most often include: biking (25%); fitness/aerobics (23%); gardening/horticulture (20%); swimming/aquatics (18%); and attending performance arts/theater (17%). It should also be noted that walking/jogging received by a wide margin the most first choices as the activity/program participated in most often.



Leisure Activities and Recreation Programs Participated in Most Often

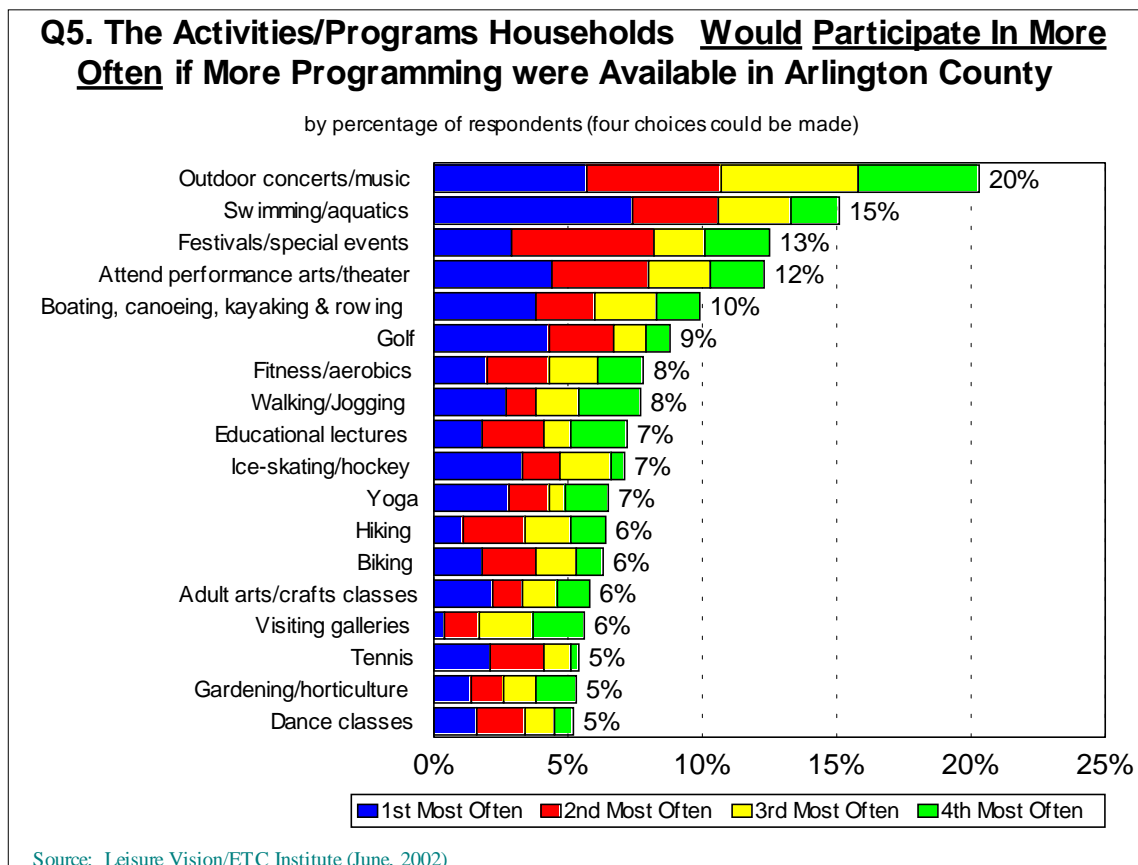
From the list of 54 leisure activities and recreation programs, listed below is a graph of the activities and programs that less than 5% of respondent households rated as one of the four that they participate in most often.



Leisure Activities and Recreation Programs that Respondent Households Would Participate in More Often

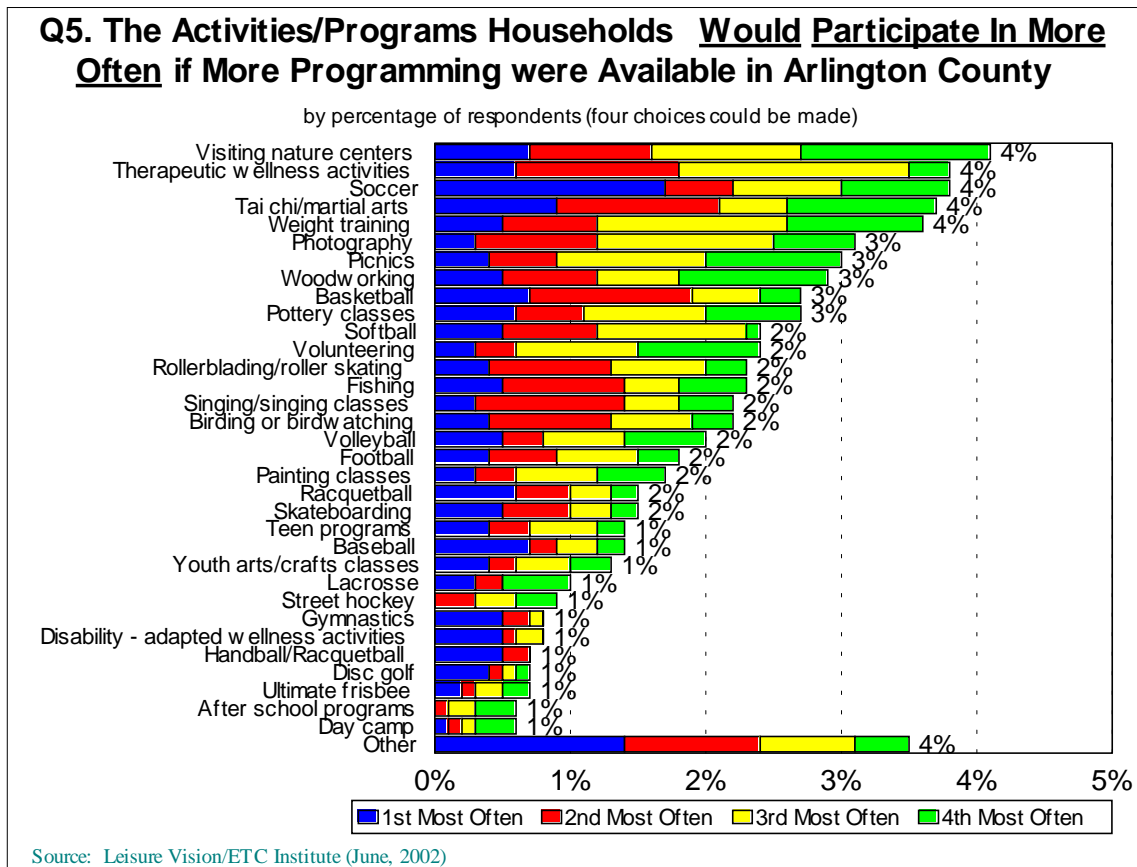
From the list of 54 leisure activities and recreation programs, respondents were asked to indicate the four that they or members of their household would participate in more often if more programming was available in Arlington County. The following summarizes key findings:

- # **Outdoor concerts/music (20%) is the leisure activity/recreation program that the highest percentage of respondent households indicated as one of the four they would participate in more often if more programming space were available.** Other activities/programs that a high percentage of respondent households would participate in more often include: swimming/aquatics (15%); festivals/special events (13%) and attend performance arts/theater (12%). It should also be noted that swimming/aquatics received the most first choices as the activity/program that respondent households would participate in more often.



Leisure Activities and Recreation Programs that Respondent Households Would Participate in More Often

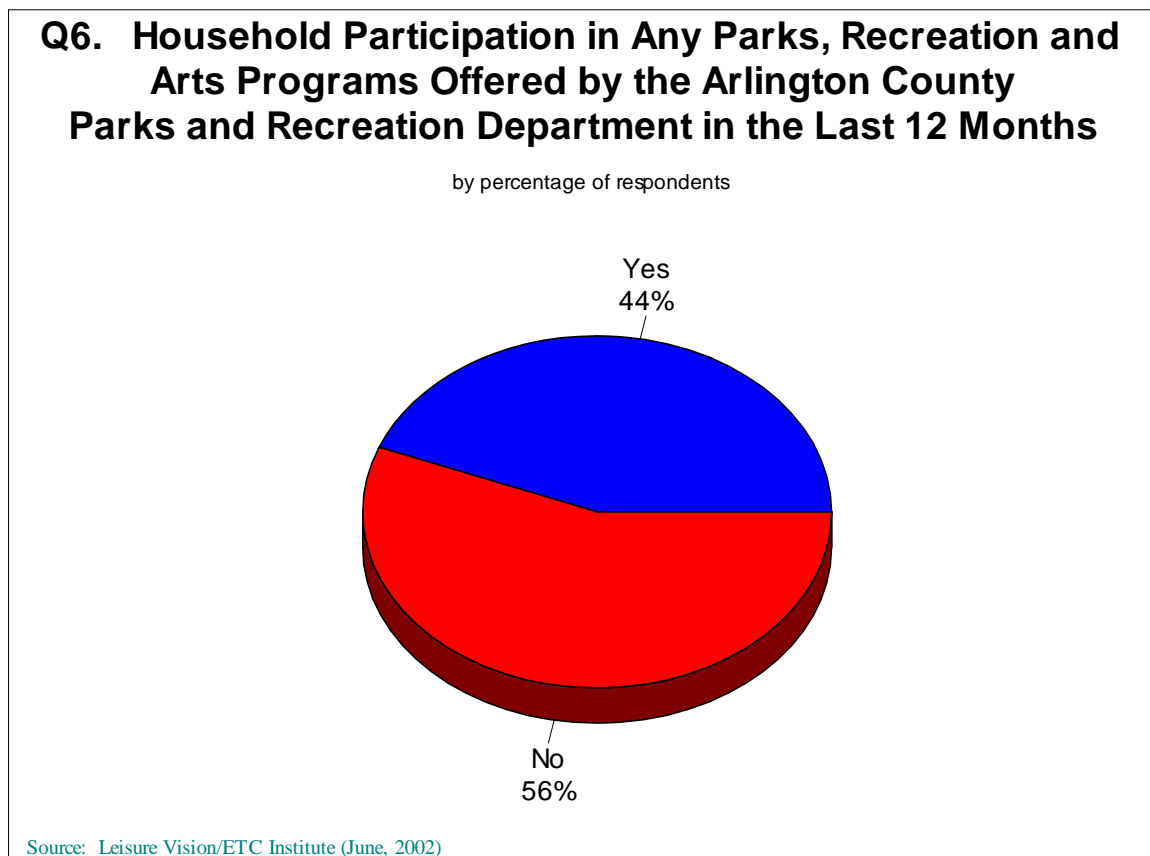
From the list of 54 leisure activities and recreation programs, listed below is a graph of the activities and programs that less than 5% of respondent households rated as one of the four that they would participate in more often if more programming was available in Arlington County.



Participation in Parks, Recreation and Arts Programs

Respondents were asked if they or members of their household had participated in any parks, recreation and arts programs offered by the Arlington County Parks and Recreation Department during the past 12 months. The following summarizes key findings:

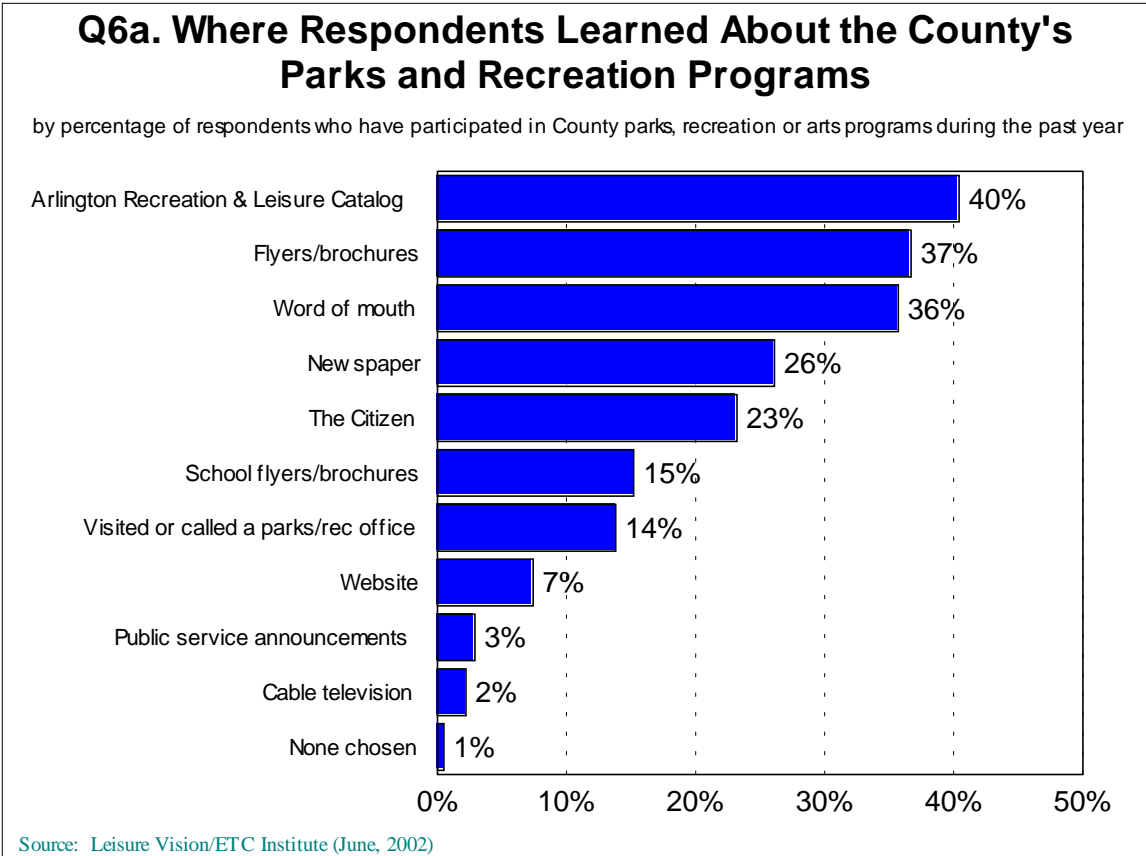
- # **44% of respondent households indicated they had participated in parks, recreation and arts programs offered by Arlington County during the past 12 months, and the other 56% had not participated.**



Where Respondents Learned About the County's Parks and Programs

Household respondents who had participated in Arlington County Parks and Recreation Department parks, recreation and arts programs during the past 12 months were asked where they learned about the County's parks and programs. The following summarizes key findings:

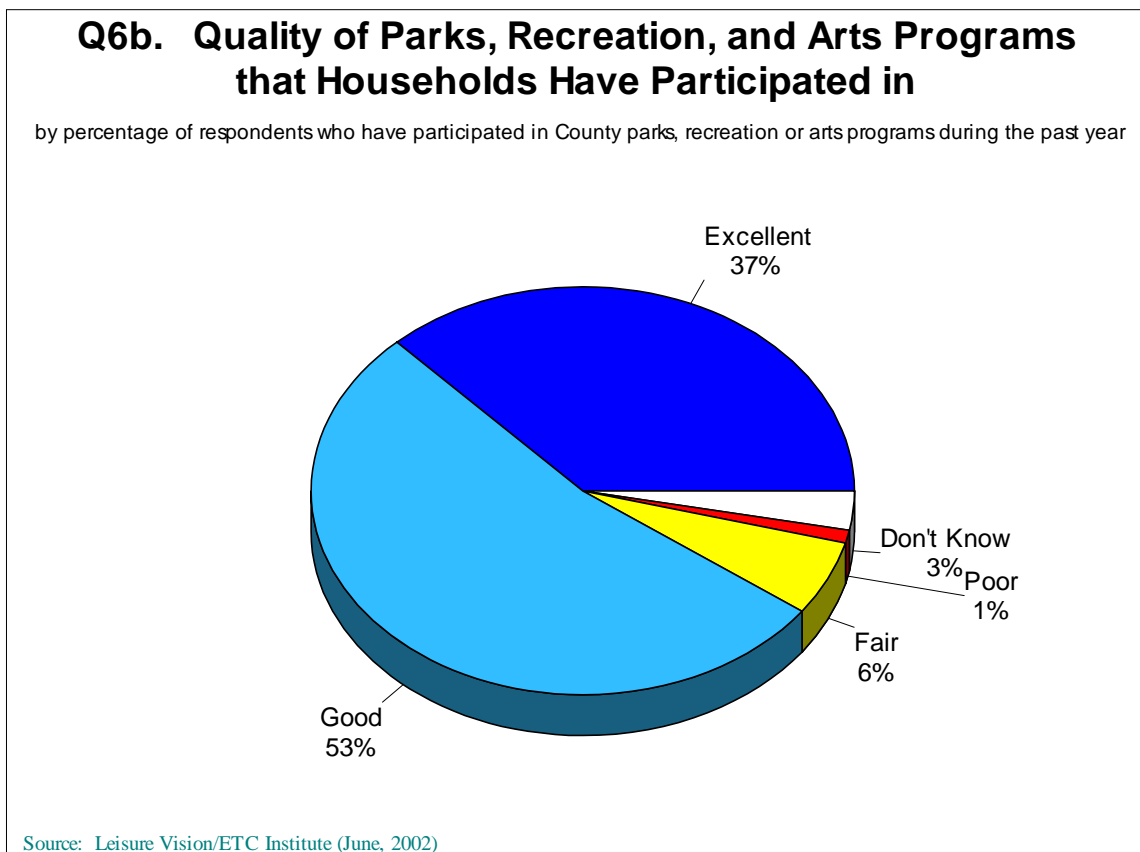
- # **The Arlington Recreation & Leisure Catalog (40%) was the most frequent way that respondents learned about the County's parks and programs.** Other frequently mentioned methods of learning about parks and programs included flyers/brochures (37%) and word of mouth (36%).



Quality of Parks, Recreation and Arts Programs

Household respondents who had participated in Arlington County Parks and Recreation Department parks, recreation and arts programs during the past 12 months were asked how they would rate the quality of the County parks and programs they had participated in. The following summarizes key findings:

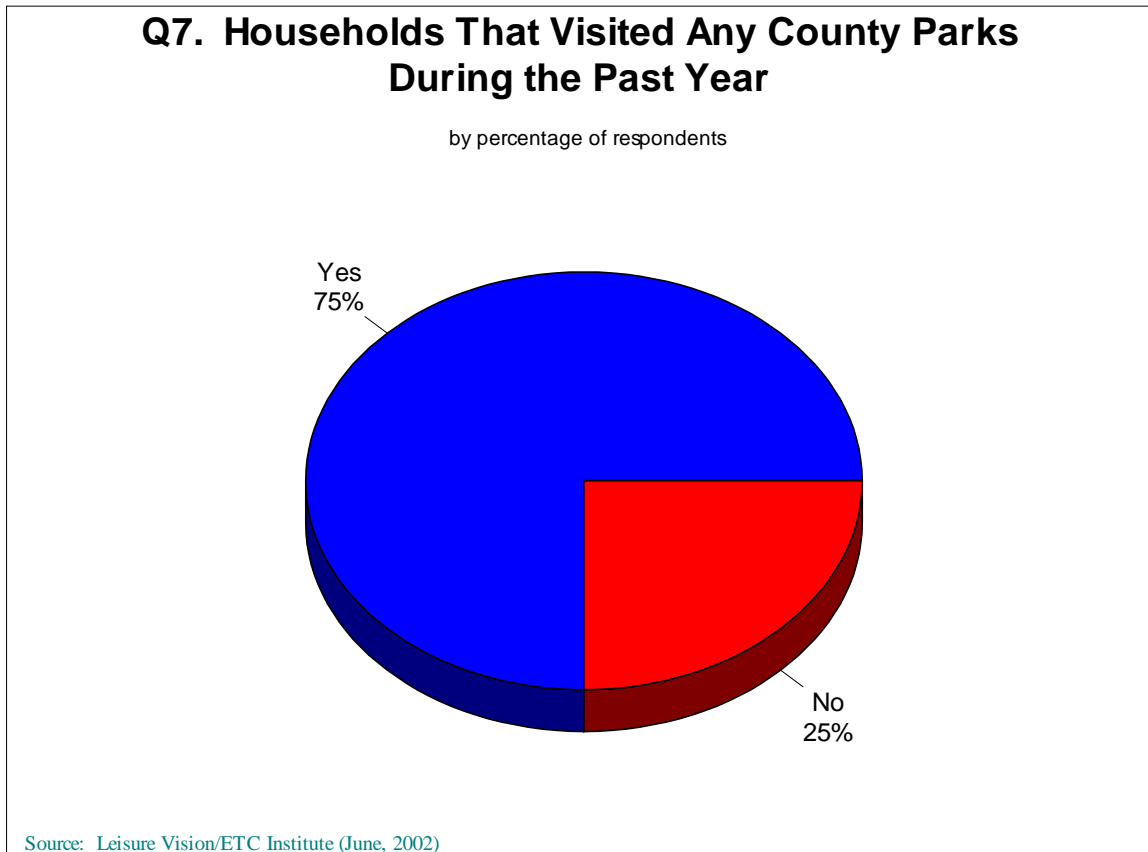
- # **90% of respondents rated the programs as either excellent (37%) or good (53%).** 6% of respondents rated the programs as fair, and just 1% rated them as poor. The remaining 3% indicated “don’t know”.



Visitation of Parks in Arlington County

Respondents were asked if they or members of their household had visited any parks in Arlington County during the past year. The following summarizes key findings:

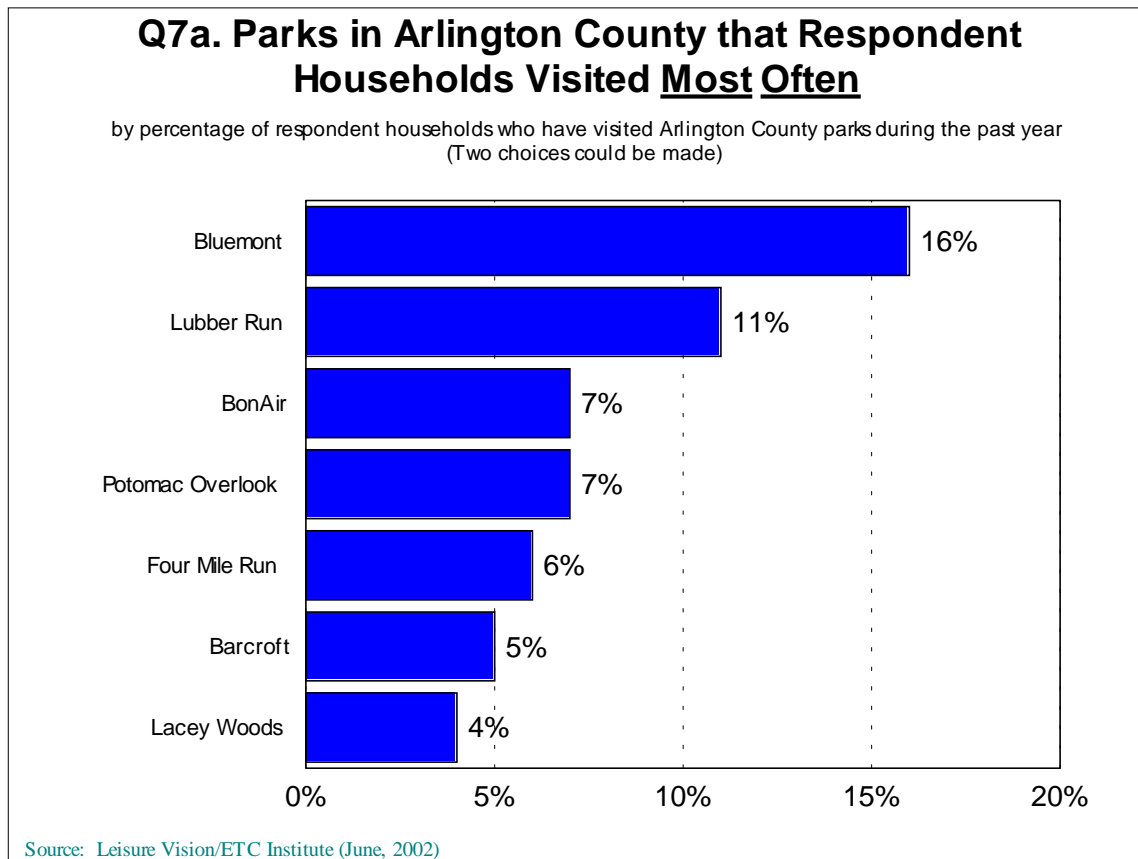
- # **Three-fourths (75%) of household respondents indicated they had visited a park in Arlington County during the past year, and the remaining 25% indicated they had not.**



Parks in Arlington County Visited Most Often

Respondents who had visited an Arlington County park during the past year were asked to indicate which two parks in Arlington County they had visited most often. The following summarizes key findings:

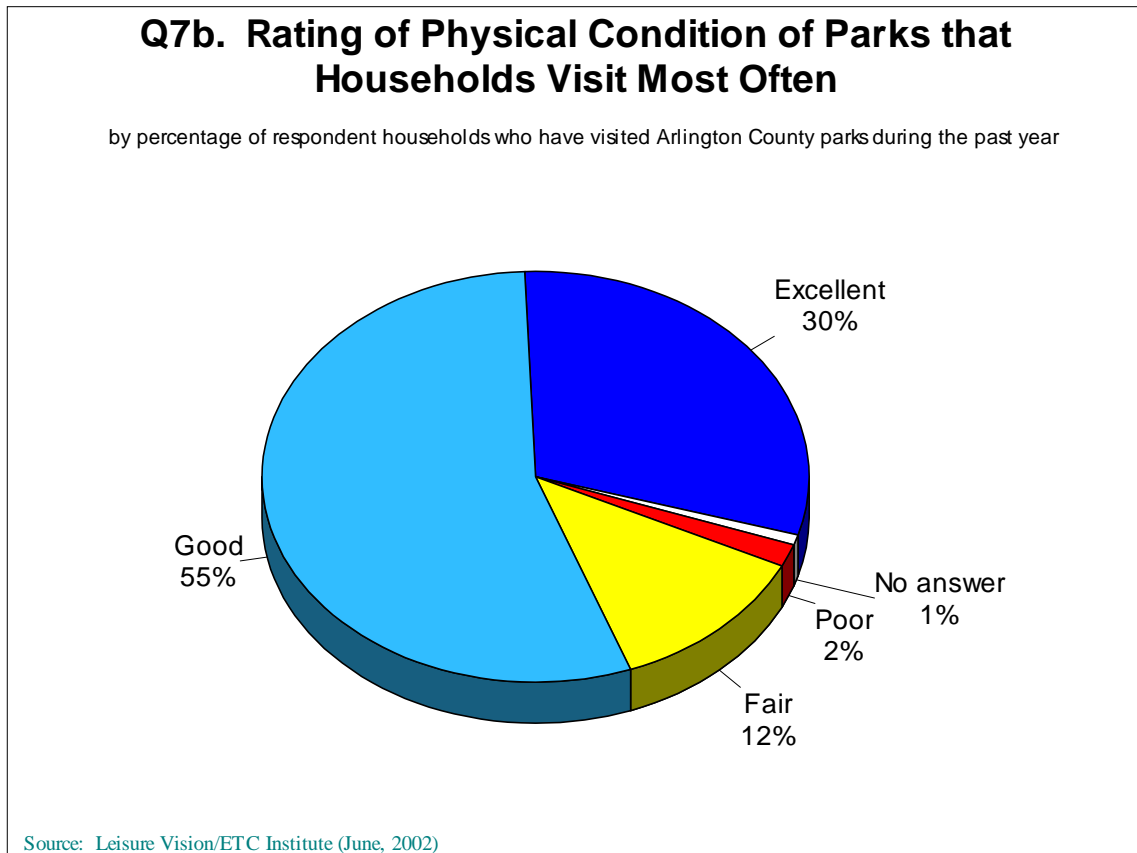
- # **Bluemont (16%)** was the park that the highest percentage of respondents indicated they had visited during the past year. Lubber Run (11%) was the other park that over 10% of respondents indicated they had visited during the past year.



Overall Physical Condition of Parks Visited Most Often

Household respondents who had visited a park in Arlington County during the past year were asked how they would rate the physical condition of the County parks they visit most often. The following summarizes key findings:

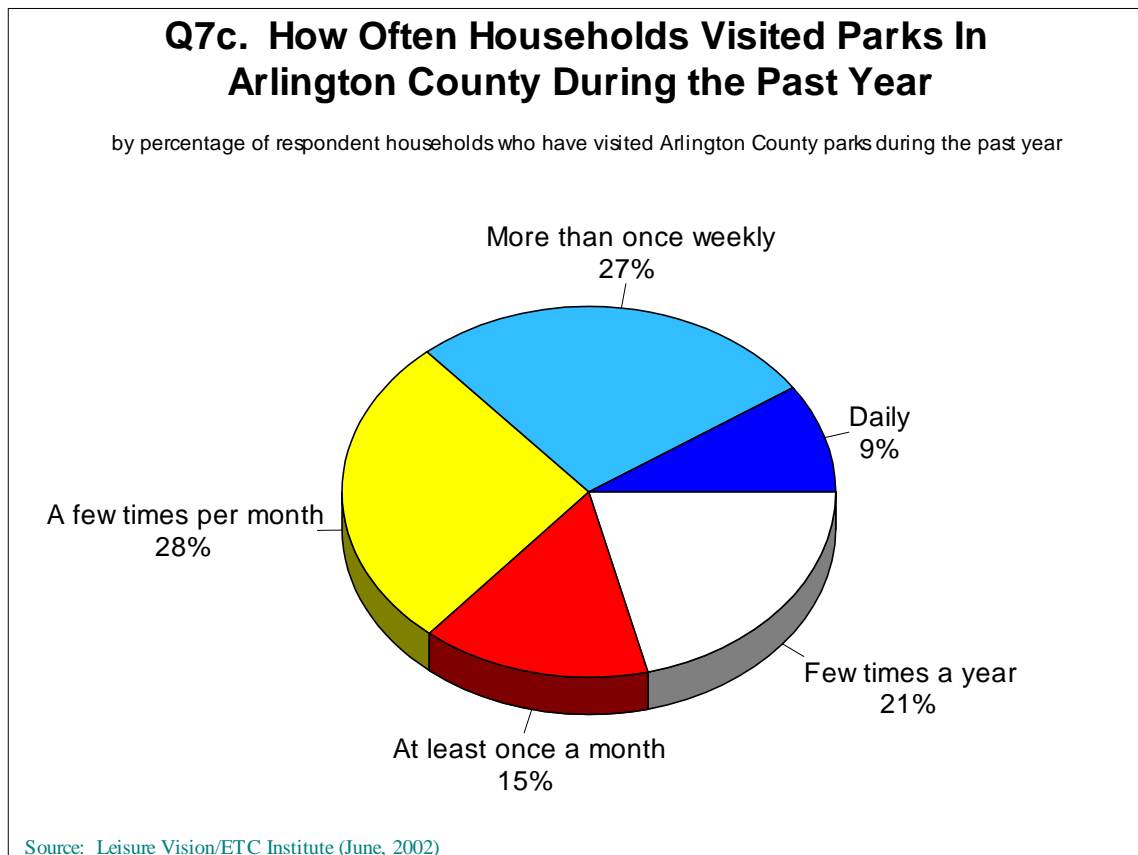
- # **Over 80% of respondents rated the physical condition of parks they had visit most often in Arlington County as either excellent (30%) or good (55%).** 12% of respondents rated the parks as fair, and just 2% rated them as poor. The remaining 1% did not give an answer.



Frequency of Visits to Arlington County Parks

Household respondents who had visited a park in Arlington County during the past year were asked approximately how often they visited County parks during the past year. The following summarizes key findings:

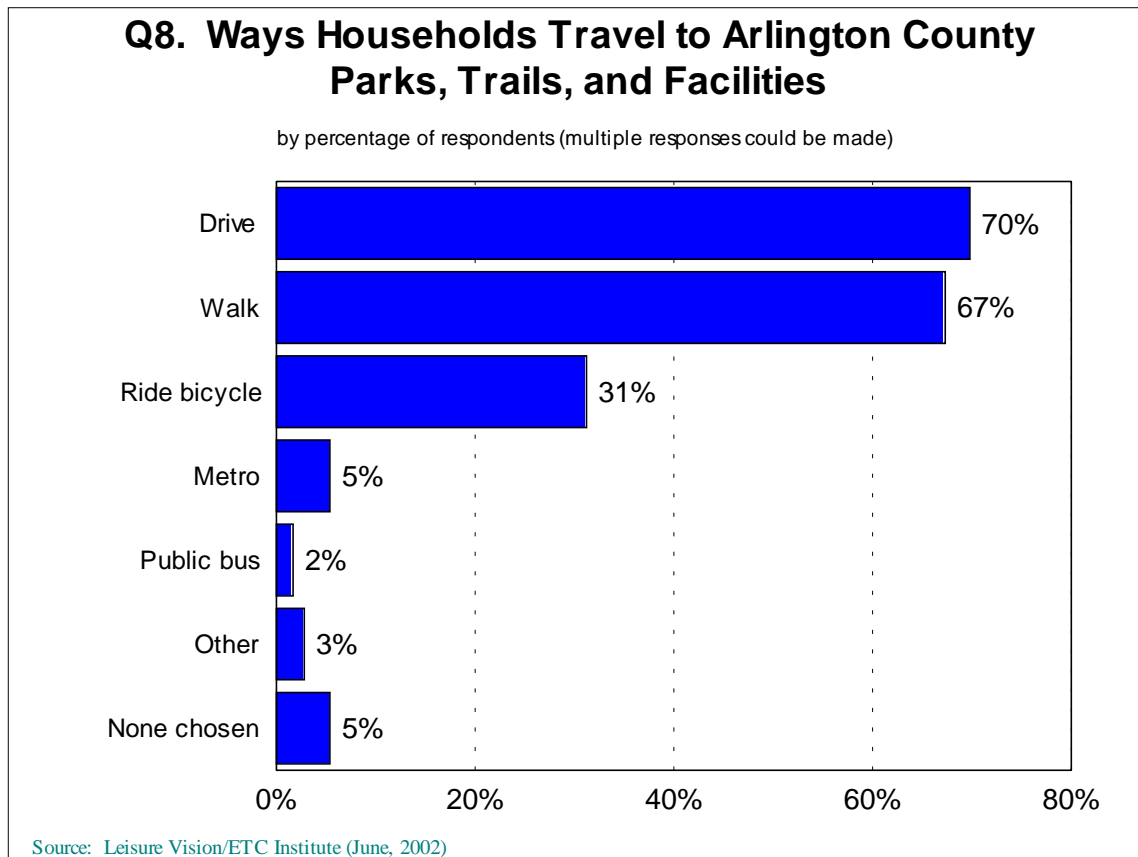
- # **Over half of respondent households indicated that in the past year they had visited parks in Arlington County either daily (9%), more than once weekly (27%), or a few times per month (28%).** An additional 15% indicated they visited parks at least once month, and 21% had visited a park a few times in the past year.



Ways Household Travel to Arlington County Parks, Trails, and Facilities

From a list of six choices, respondents were asked to indicate all of the ways that they and members of their household travel to Arlington County parks, trails, and facilities. The following summarizes key findings:

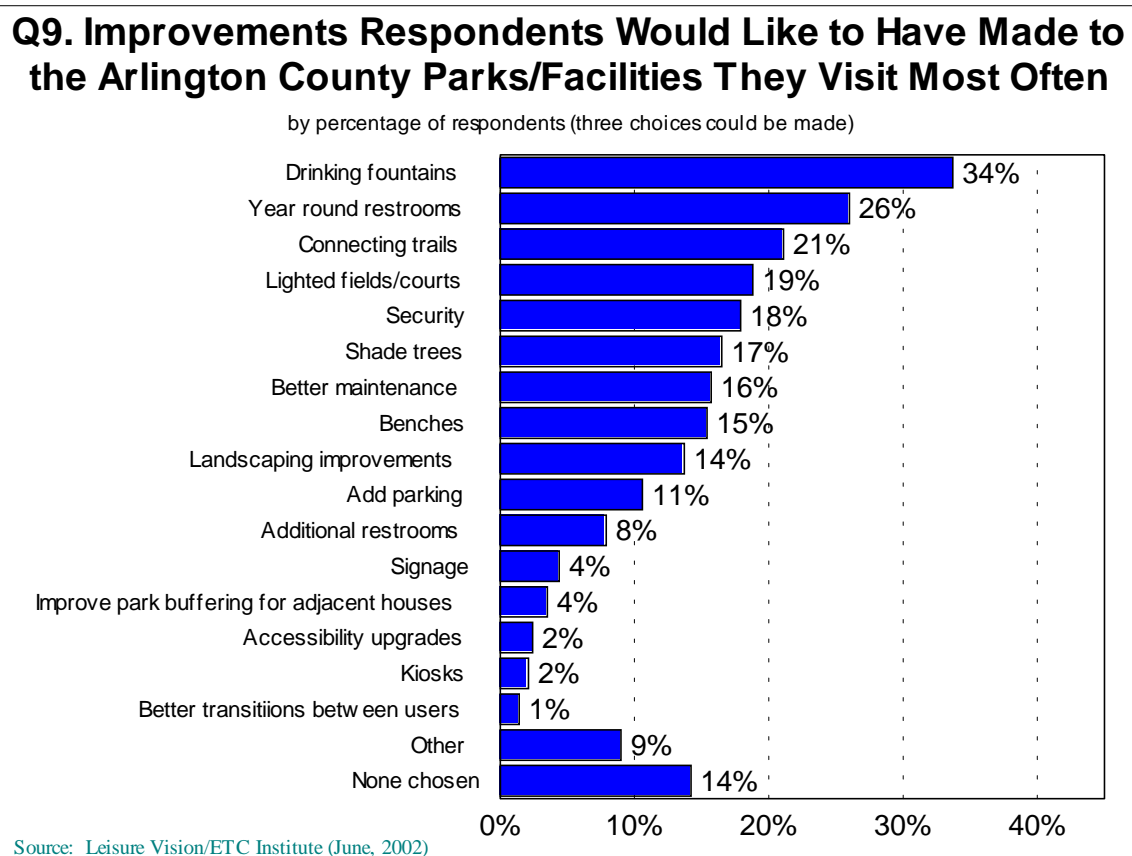
- # **Driving (70) had the highest percentage of respondent households indicate it as one of the ways they travel to County parks, trails, and facilities.** 67% indicated they travel by walking, and 31% indicated by riding a bicycle.



Potential Improvements to Parks and Facilities

Based on a list of 17 potential improvements that could be made to parks/facilities in Arlington County, respondents were asked which three improvements they would most like to have made to the parks/facilities they use most often. The following summarizes key findings:

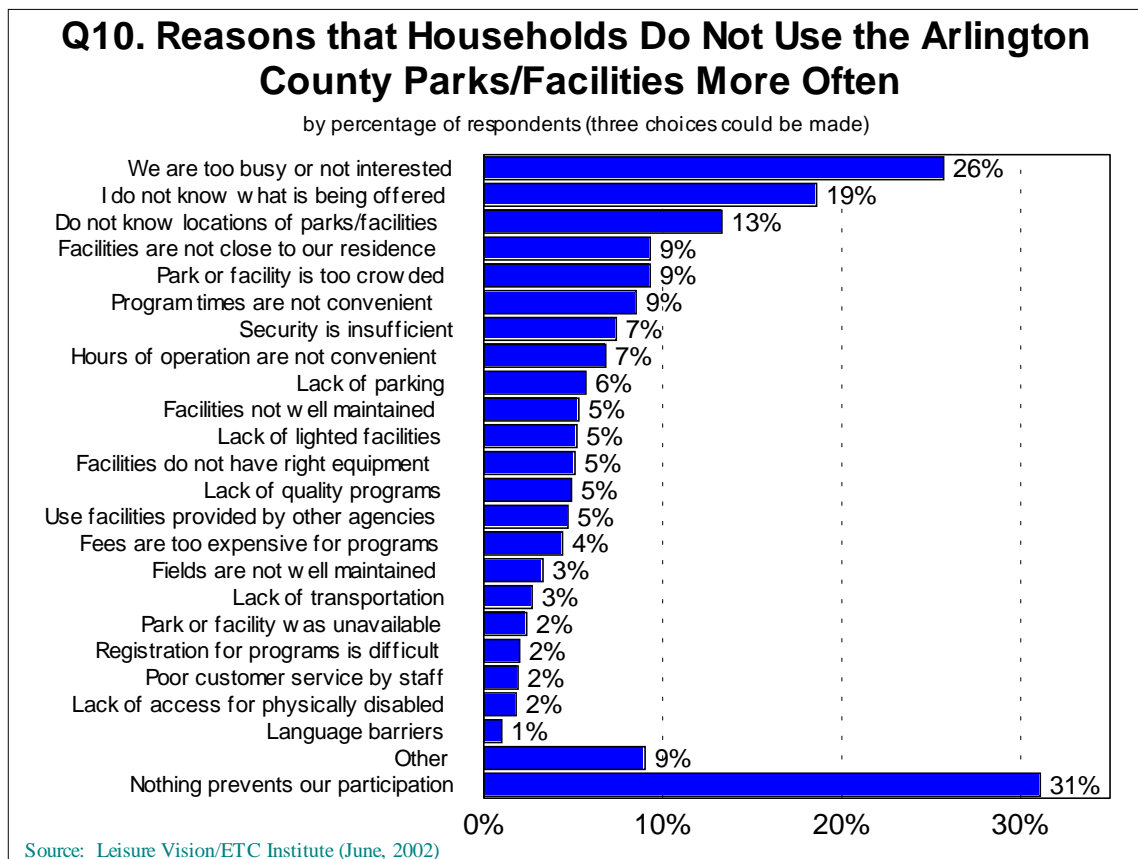
- # **Drinking fountains (34%) had the highest percentage of respondents indicate it as one of the top three improvements they would like to have made to the parks/facilities they use most often.** Other improvements that a high percentage respondents indicated as one of the three they would like to have made include year round restrooms (26%), connecting trails (21%), and lighted fields/courts (19%).



Reasons For Not Using Parks and Recreation Facilities/Programs More Often

From a list of 23 options, respondents were asked to indicate all of the reasons that keep them or members of their household from using parks and recreation facilities/programs in Arlington County more often. The following summarizes key findings:

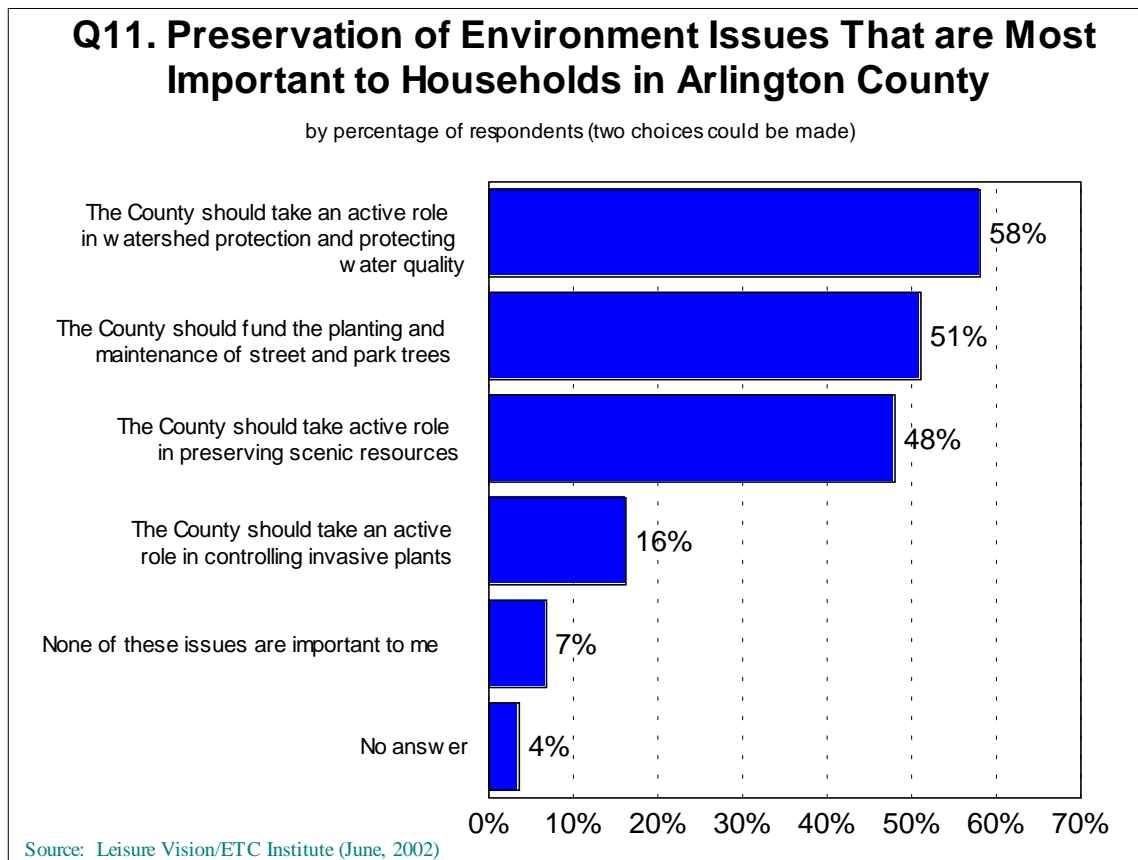
- # **The most common reason that kept respondent households from using parks and recreation facilities/programs more often was “We are too busy or not interested” (26%).** Other reasons that kept a high percentage of respondent households from using parks and recreation facilities/programs more often included: “I do not know what is being offered” (19%); and “do not know locations of parks/facilities” (13%). It should also be noted that 31% of respondents indicated “nothing prevents our participation”. Also, only 2% indicated “poor customer service by staff” and 4% indicated “fees are too expensive for programs”.



Most Important Preservation Issues in Arlington County

From the list of 5 various issues relating to the preservation and protection of the natural environment in Arlington County, respondents were asked to indicate which two were most important to them and members of their household. The following summarizes key findings:

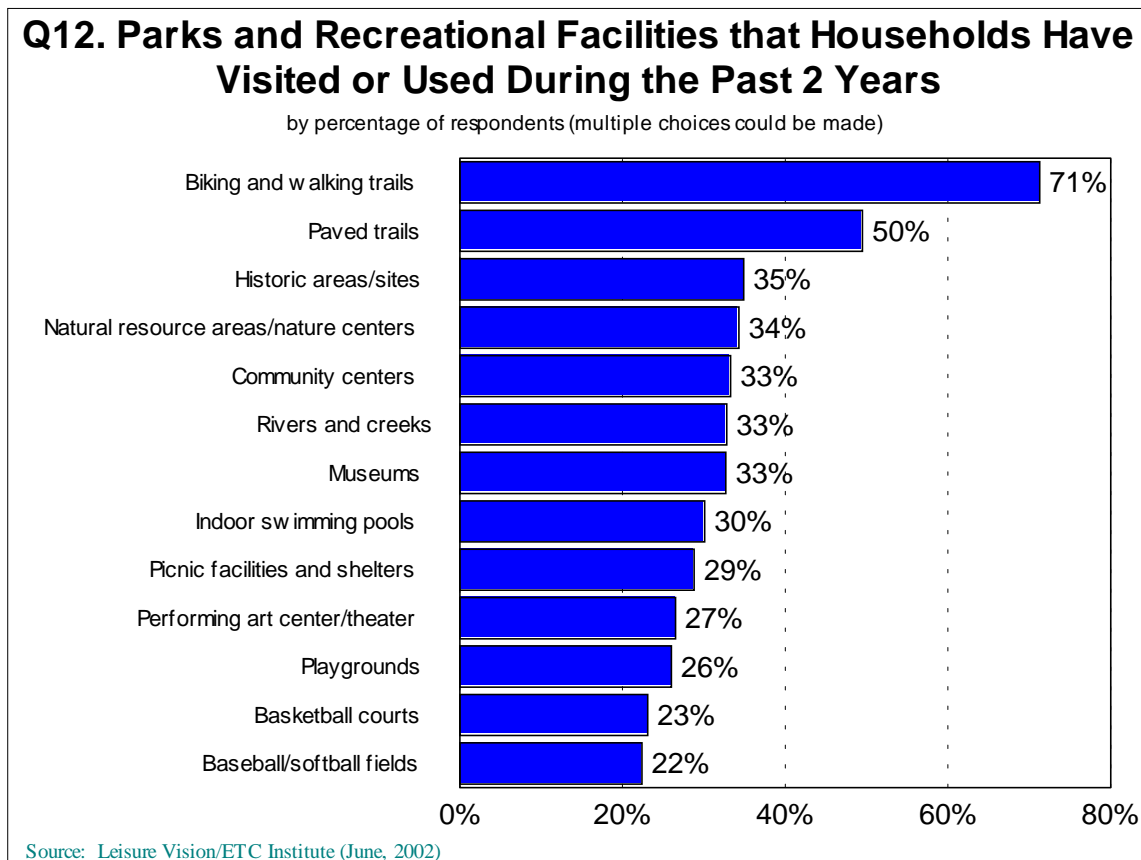
- # **“The County should take an active role in watershed protection and protecting water quality” (58%) was the issue that the highest percentage of respondent households rated as one of the two most important issues.** 51% of respondent households rated “the County should fund the planting and maintenance of street and park trees” as one of the most important, and 48% indicated “the county should take an active role in preserving scenic resources”.



Visitation/Use of Various Parks and Recreation Facilities

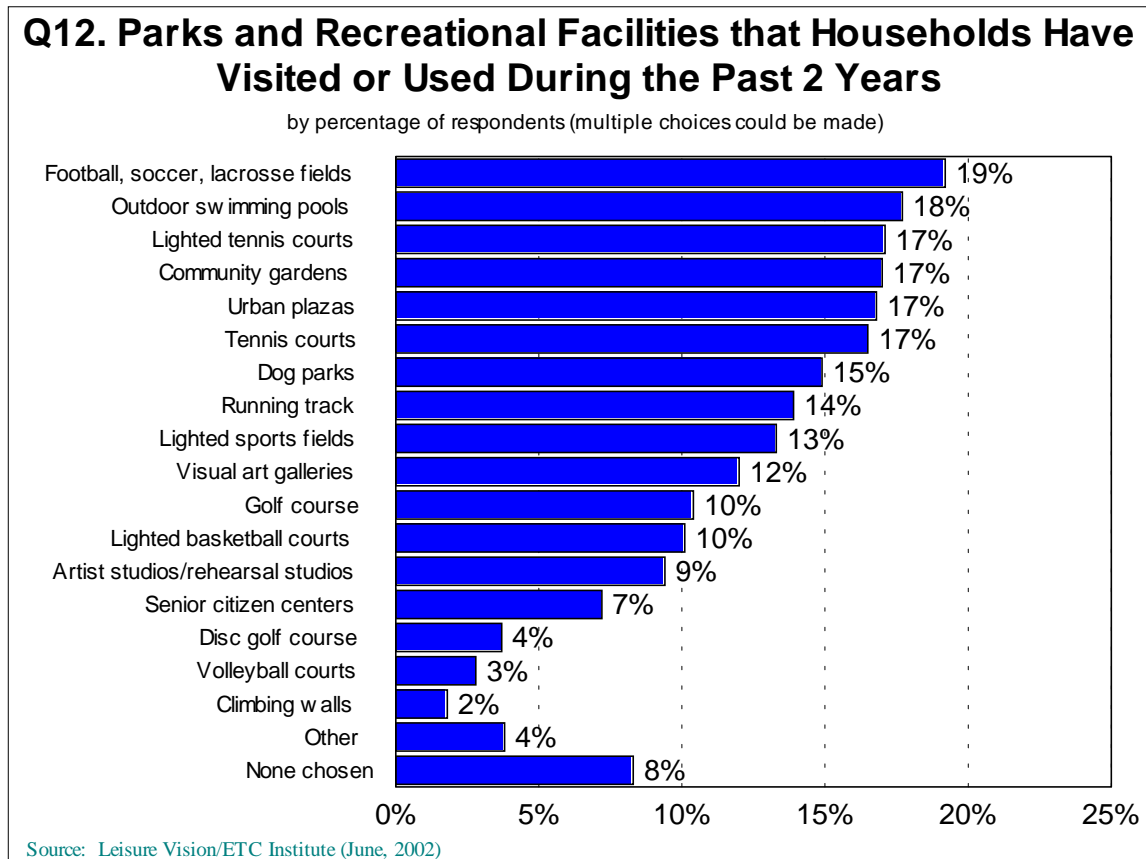
From a list of 31 various parks and recreation facilities, respondents were asked to indicate which ones they or members of their household had visited or used during the past two years. The following summarizes key findings:

- # **Biking and walking trails (71%) had by a wide margin the highest percentage of household respondents indicate they had visited or used it during the past two years.** Other parks/facilities that had a high percentage of respondents indicated they had visited or used include: paved trails (50%); historic areas/sites (35%); natural resource areas/nature centers (34%); community centers (33%); rivers and creeks (33%) and museums (33%).



Visitation/Use of Various Parks and Recreation Facilities

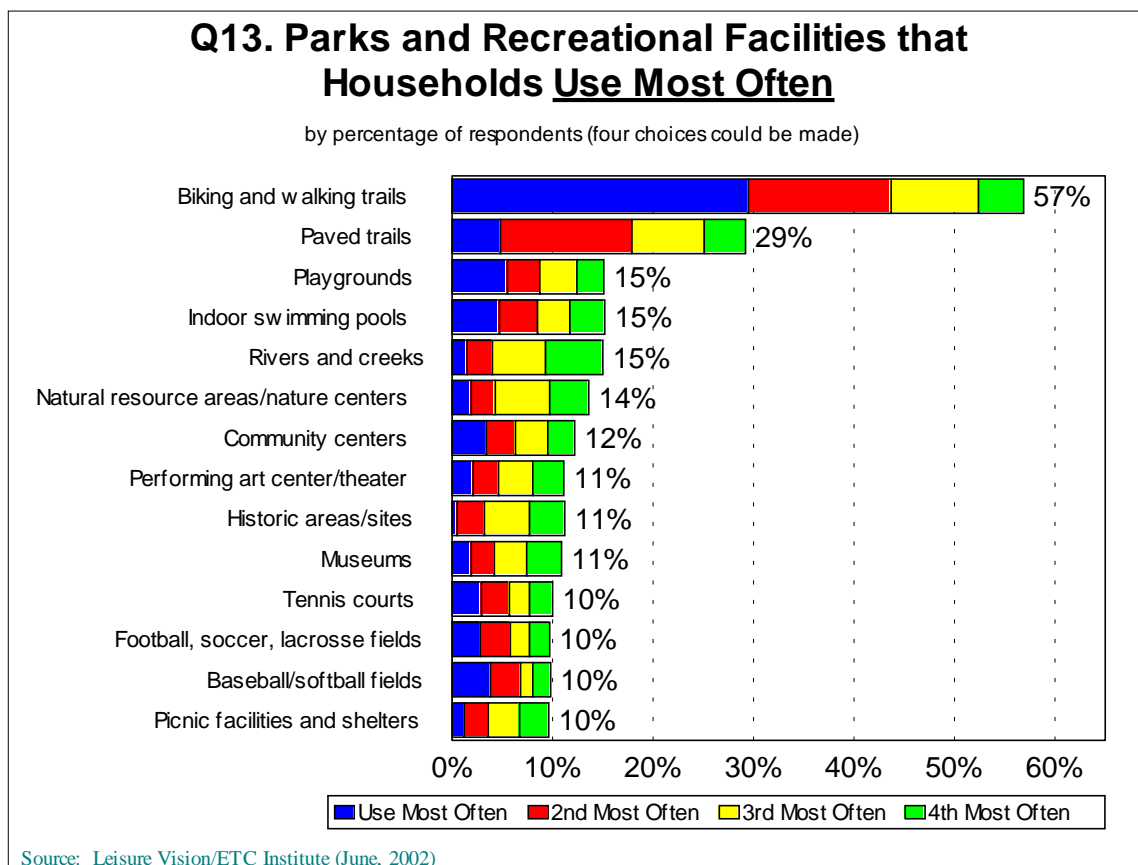
From the list of 31 various parks and recreation facilities, listed below is a graph of those parks/facilities that less than 20% of respondent households indicated they had visited or used during the past two years.



Parks and Recreation Facilities Used Most Often

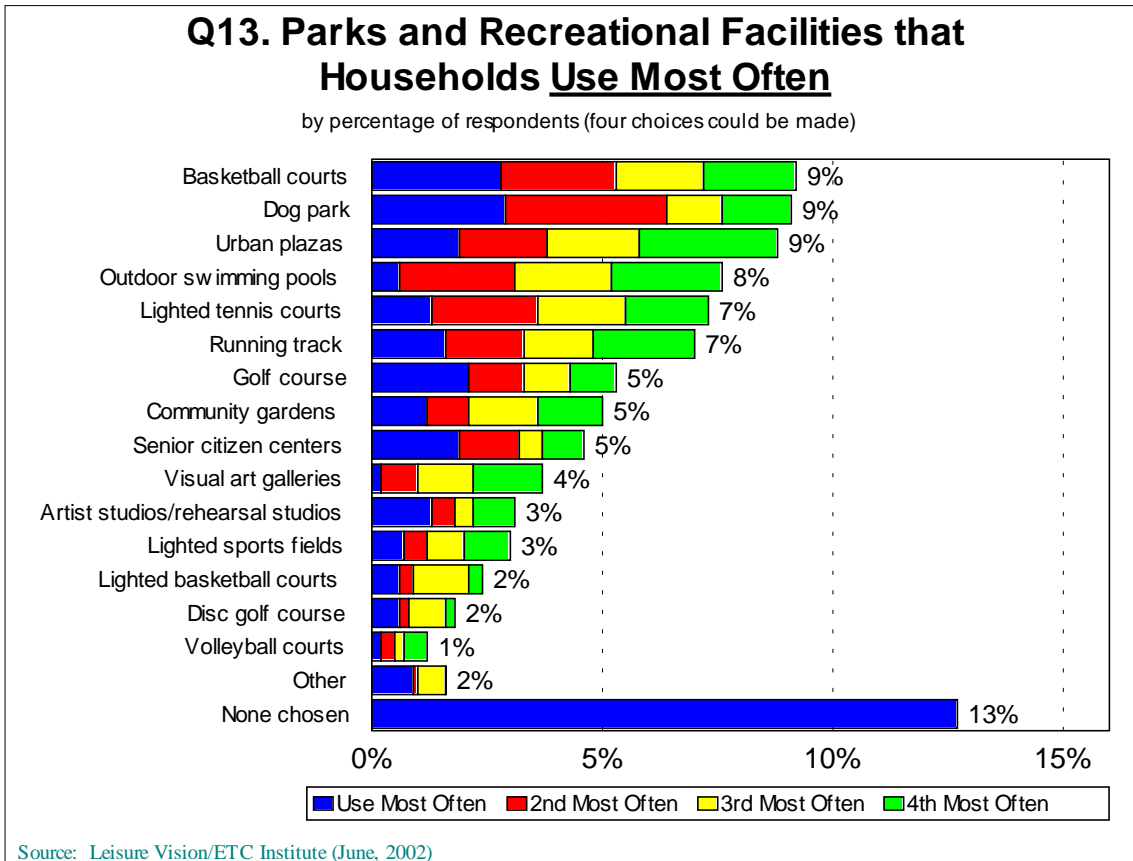
From the list of 31 various parks and recreation facilities, respondents were asked to indicate the four that they and members of their household use most often. The following summarizes key findings:

- # **Biking and walking trails (57%) had by a wide margin the highest percentage of household respondents rate it as one of the four parks and recreation facilities that they use most often.** Other parks/facilities that a high percentage of respondent households rated as one of the four they use most often included paved trails (29%), playgrounds (15%) indoor swimming pools (15%); and rivers and creeks (15%). It should also be noted that biking and walking trails received by a wide margin the most first choices as the most used park/facility.



Parks and Recreation Facilities Used Most Often

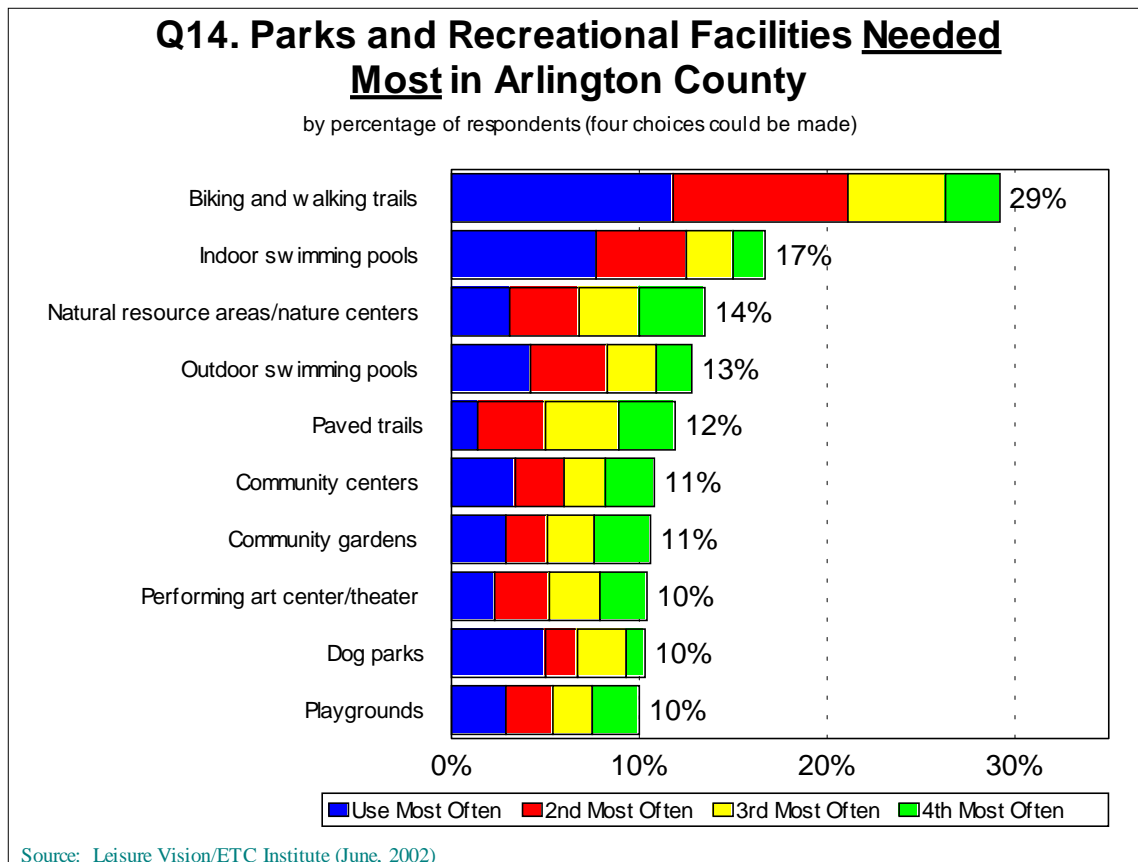
From the list of 31 various parks and recreation facilities, listed below is a graph of those parks/facilities that less than 10% of respondent households indicated as one of the four they use most often.



Parks and Recreation Facilities Needed Most

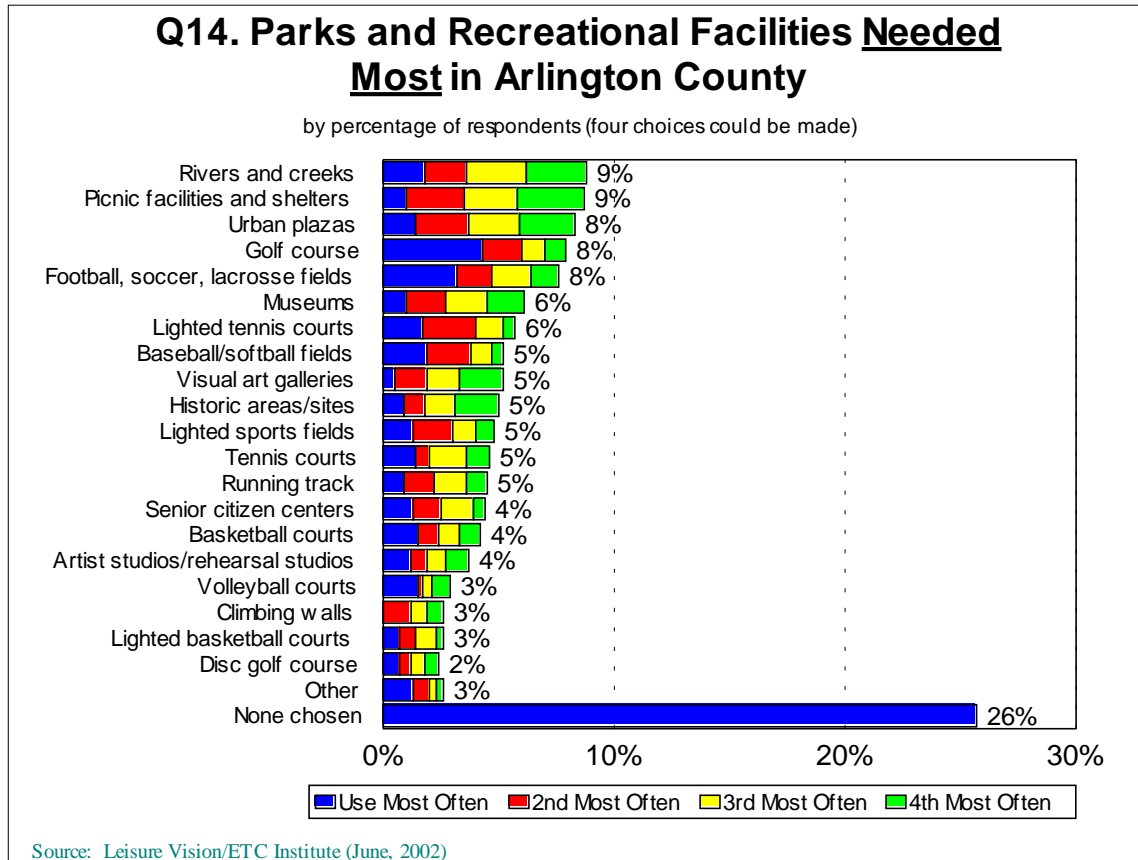
From the list of 31 various parks and recreation facilities, respondents were asked to indicate the four that are needed most in Arlington County. The following summarizes key findings:

- # **Biking and walking trails (29%) had highest percentage of household respondents rate it as one of the four parks and recreation facilities needed most in Arlington County.** Other parks/facilities that a high percentage of respondents indicated as one of the four needed most included indoor swimming pools (17%) and natural resource areas/nature centers (14%). It should also be noted that biking and walking trails received the most first choices as the park/facility needed most.



Parks and Recreation Facilities Needed Most

From the list of 31 various parks and recreation facilities, listed below is a graph of those parks/facilities that less than 10% of respondent households indicated as one of the four needed most in Arlington County.

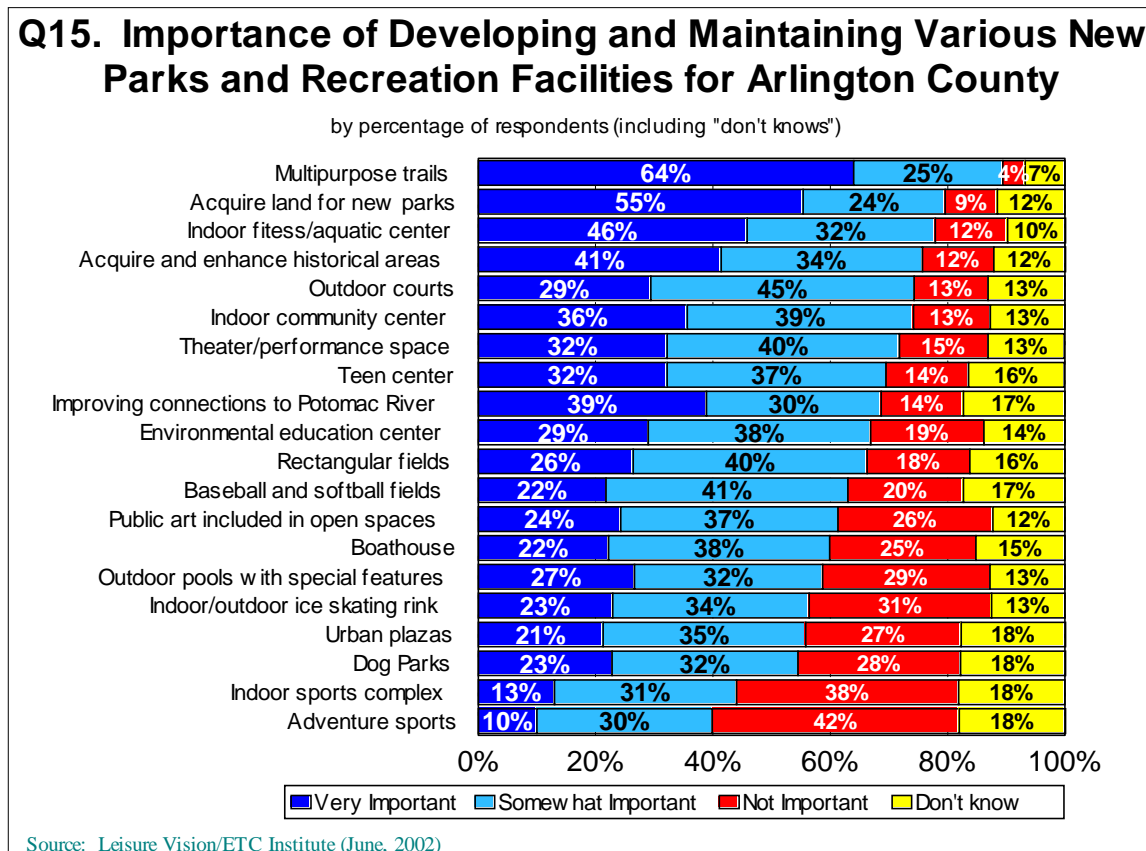


Importance of Developing New Parks and Recreation Facilities

Based on a list of 21 new parks and recreation facilities that Arlington County could develop and maintain, respondents were asked to rate how important it is for the County to develop each one. The following summarizes key findings:

- # **Multipurpose trails had the highest percentage of respondents rate it as being either very important (64%) or somewhat important (25%) to develop and maintain.** Some other new parks and facilities that a high percentage of respondents indicated were either very important or somewhat important to develop and maintain include: acquiring land for new parks (79%); indoor fitness/aquatic center (78%); acquire and enhance historical areas (75%); and outdoor courts (74%).

The graph below is based on the percentage of all respondents, including those who indicated “don’t know” as their answer.

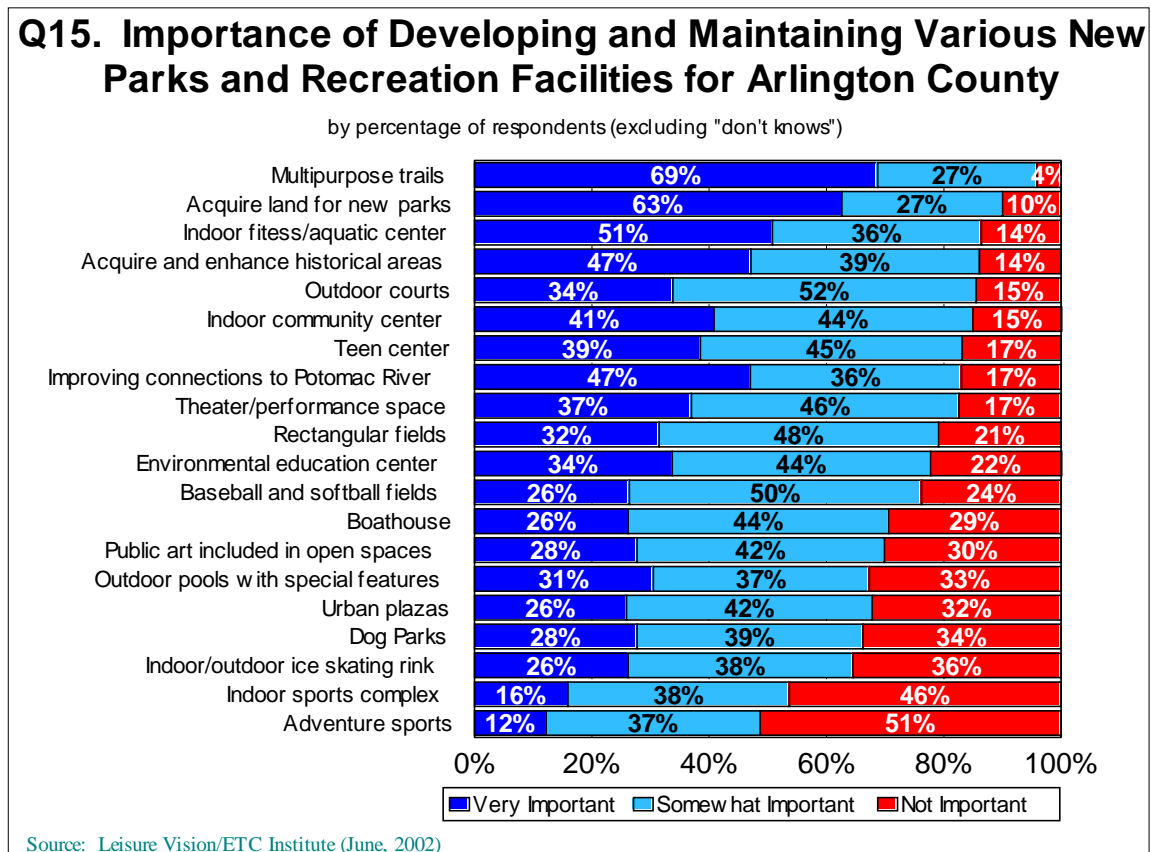


Importance of Developing New Parks and Recreation Facilities

Based on a list of 21 new parks and recreation facilities that Arlington County could develop and maintain, respondents were asked to rate how important it is for the County to develop each one. The following summarizes key findings:

- # **Multipurpose trails had the highest percentage of respondents rate it as being either very important (69%) or somewhat important (27%) to develop and maintain.** Some other new parks and facilities that a high percentage of respondents indicated were either very important or somewhat important to develop and maintain include: acquiring land for new parks (90%); indoor fitness/aquatic center (87%); acquire and enhance historical areas (86%); outdoor courts (86%); and indoor community center (85%).

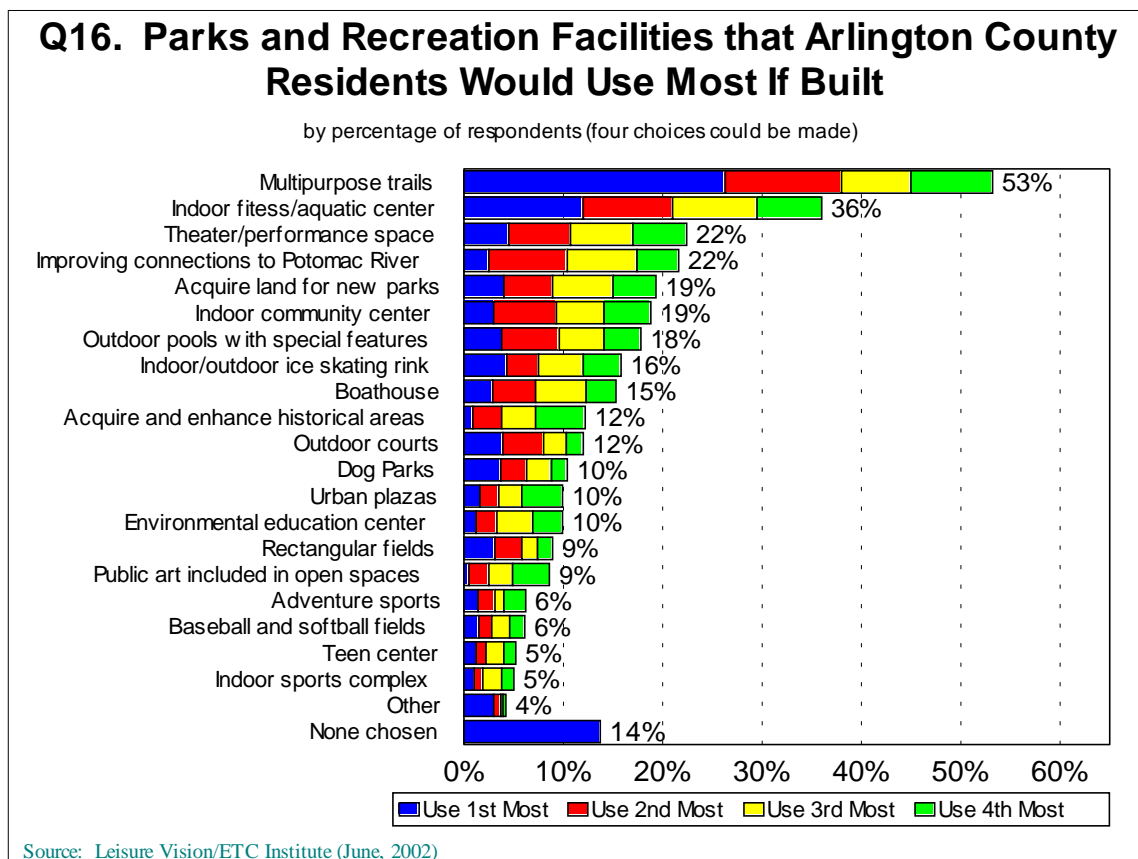
The graph below is based on the percentage of all respondents except those who indicated “don’t know” as their answer.



New Parks and Facilities Households Would Use Most

Based on the list of 21 various new parks and recreation facilities that Arlington County could develop and maintain, household respondents were asked to indicate which four they would use the most. The following summarizes key findings:

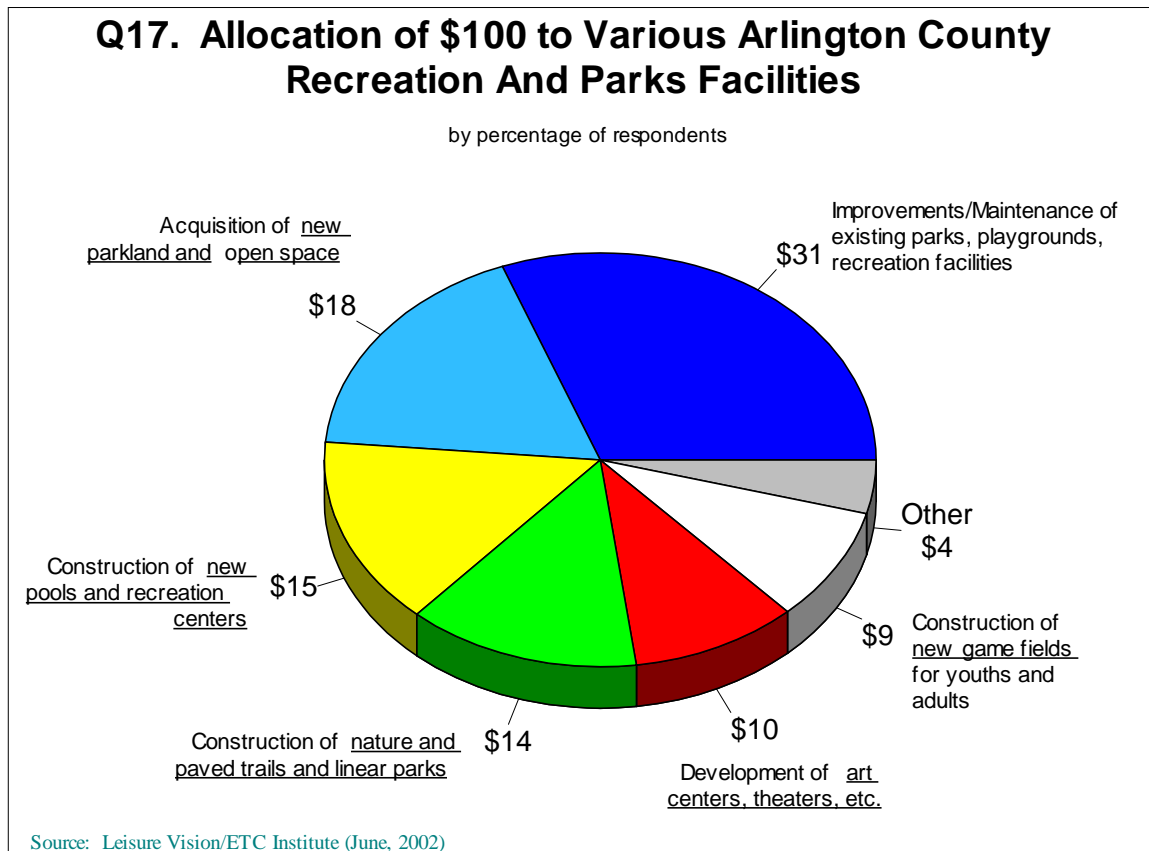
- # **Multipurpose trails (53%) had the highest percentage of respondents indicate it as one of the four new parks/facilities they would use the most.** There were four other new parks/facilities that at least 19% of respondents indicated they would use most. They are: indoor fitness/aquatic center (36%); theater/performance space (22%); improving connections to Potomac River (22%); acquire land for new parks (19%) and indoor community center (19%). It should also be noted that multipurpose trails received by a wide margin the most first choices as the park/facility that respondents would use most.



Allocation of \$100 Among Various Recreation and Parks Facilities

Respondents were asked how they would allocate \$100 among seven various recreation and parks facilities. The following summarizes key findings:

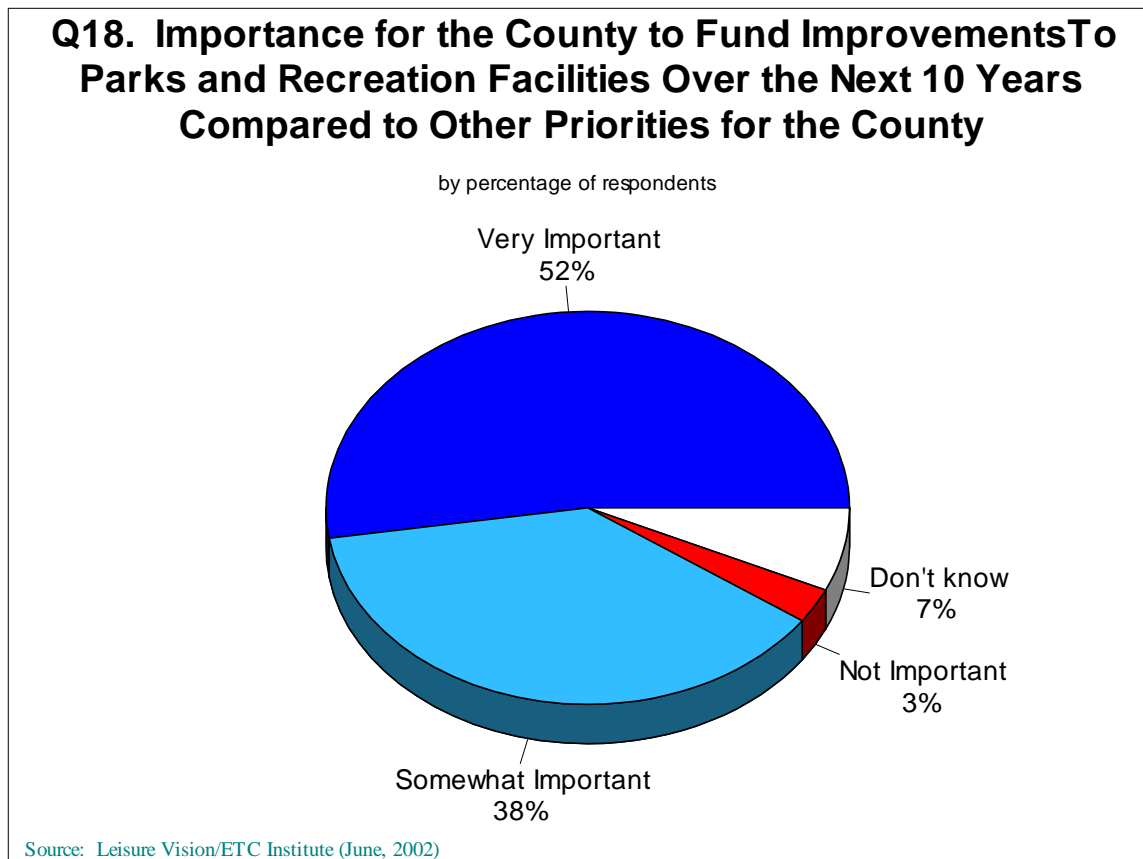
- # **Improvements/maintenance of existing parks, playgrounds, and recreation facilities (\$31) had the largest amount of money allocated to it.** Next highest were: acquisition of new parkland and open space (\$18); construction of new pools and recreation centers (\$15); construction of nature and paved trails and linear parks (\$14); development of art centers, theaters, etc. (\$10); and construction of new game fields for youths and adults (\$9). The remaining \$4 was allocated to “other”.



Importance of Funding Improvements to Parks and Recreation Facilities Compared to Other Priorities for Arlington County

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of funding improvements to parks and recreation facilities compared to other priorities in Arlington County over the next 10 years. The following summarizes key findings:

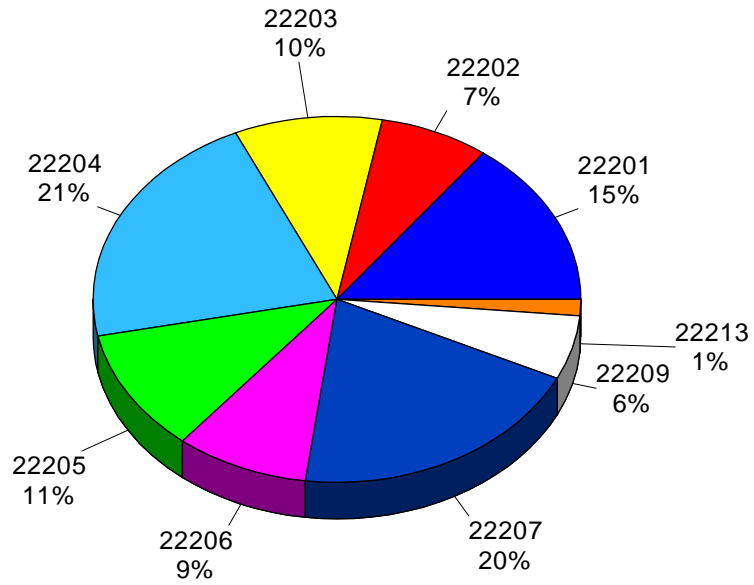
- # **90% of respondents indicated it was either very important (52%) or somewhat important (38%) to fund improvements to parks and recreation facilities compared to other priorities.** Only 3% indicated it was not important, and the remaining 7% indicated “don’t know”.



Demographics

Q19. Demographics: Zip Code

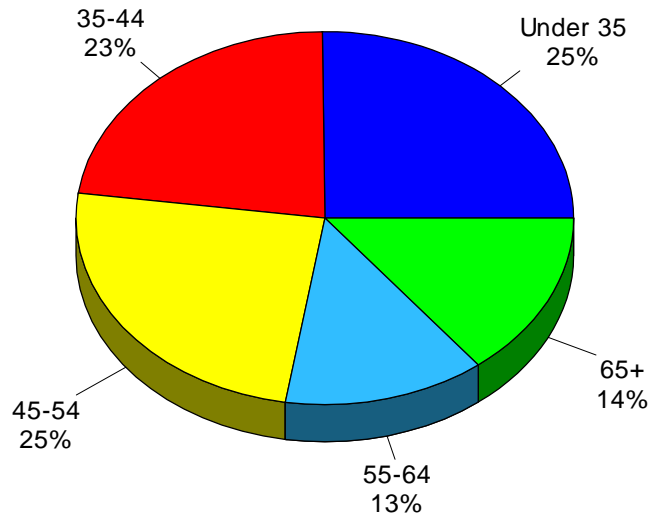
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (June, 2002)

Q21. Demographics: Ages of Respondents

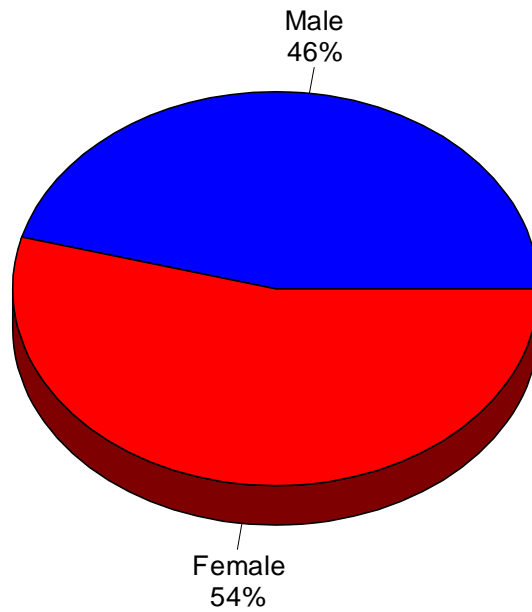
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (June, 2002)

Q22. Demographics: Gender

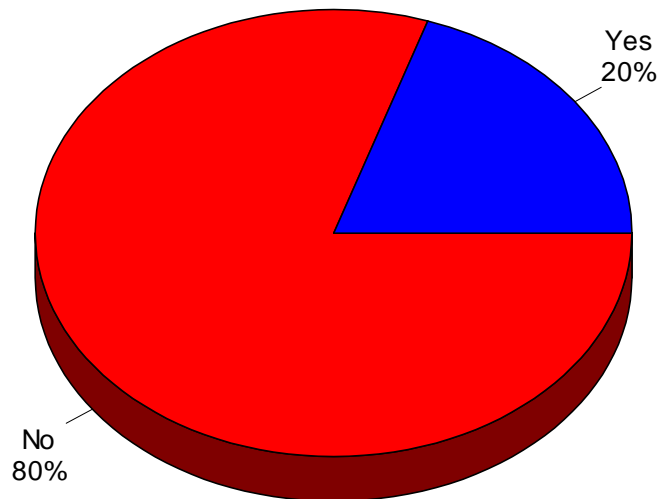
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (June, 2002)

Q24. Demographics: Households That Own a Dog

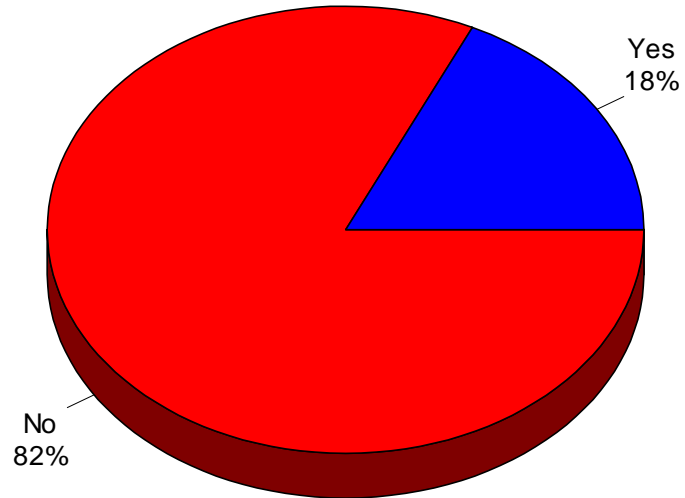
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (June, 2002)

Q25. Demographics: Households with Hispanic, Latino or Other Spanish Ancestry

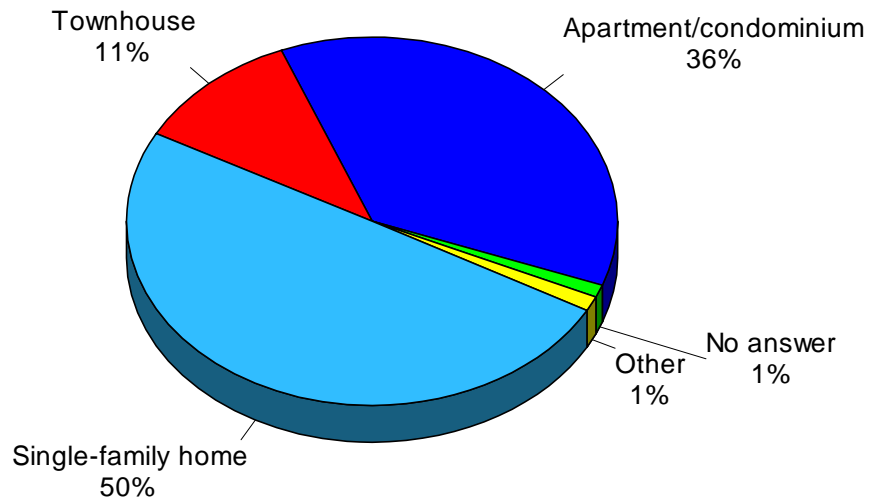
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (June, 2002)

Q26. Demographics: Types of Housing

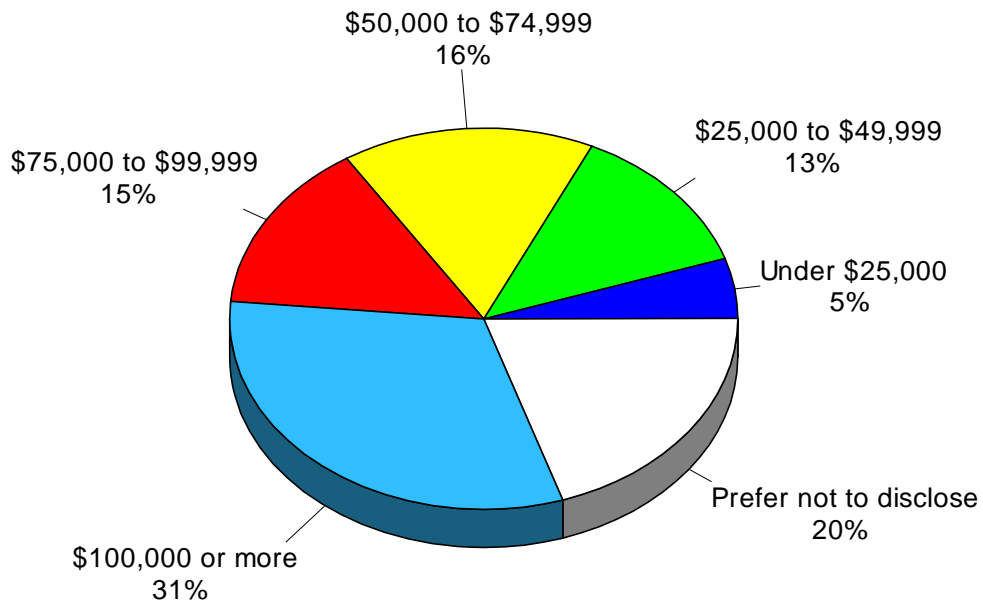
by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (June, 2002)

Q27. Demographics: Total Annual Household Income

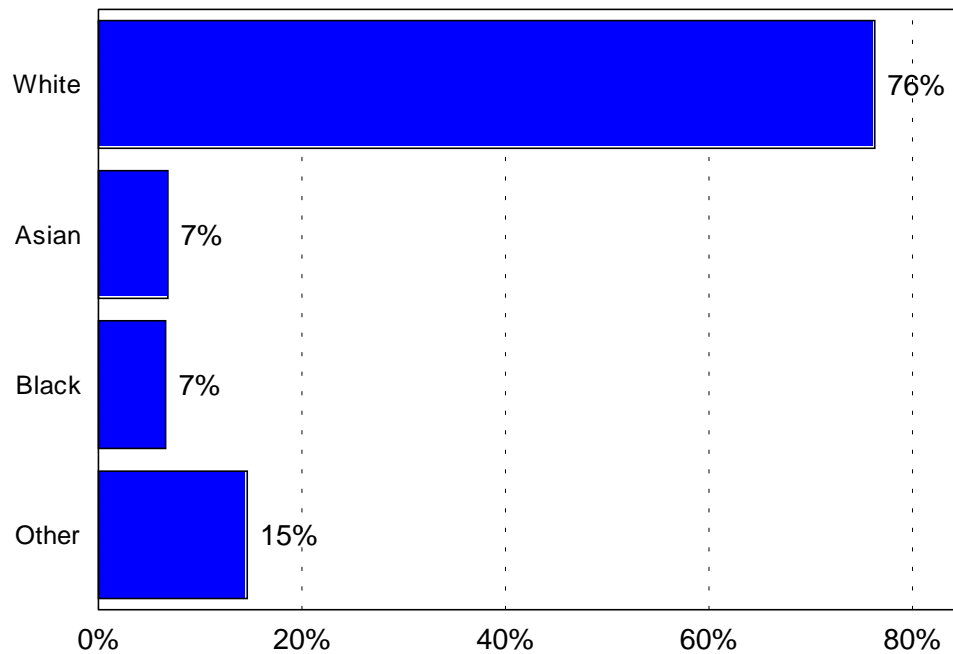
by percentage of household occupants



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (June, 2002)

Q28. Demographics: Race/Ethnicity

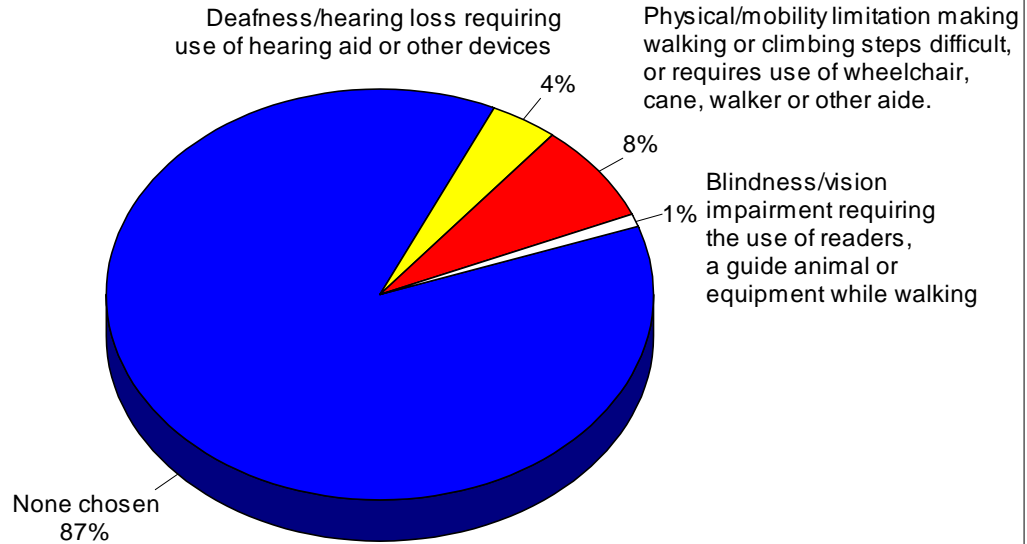
by percentage of respondents (multiple responses could be made)



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (June, 2002)

Q29. Demographics: Households with Certain Health Conditions

by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute (June, 2002)