



Strategic Plan

Recreation Commission

(Adopted 2024)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Strategic Master Plan 2024 was made possible by the contributions, insight, and support of the Colchester community. While there are many people who saw the need and advocated for developing a plan to identify and address the community's recreational needs, the list below acknowledges persons who participated in the adoption process.

Recreation Department Staff

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of a strategic master plan is to examine the expectations and goals that the community has for recreation and leisure needs and devise plan(s) to meet those expectations. The plan will supplement the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD).

It is the intent of this report to provide a road map for the future and establish priorities. It is a tool for the Town of Colchester, providing a guide for the management of Parks and Recreation programs, facilities, and services. It is a living document, presenting findings which are best evaluated, validated and/or modified periodically as the town responds to future opportunities and constraints, as well as changing community demographics and needs.

VISION, MISSION, CORE VALUES

VISION

Promote the health, well-being, and quality of life for individuals, families, and communities, while preserving and enhancing natural resources for future generations.

MISSION

To enhance the physical, social, and cultural fabric of our community by providing a diverse range of high-quality parks, programs, facilities, and services that foster recreation, enjoyment, and lifelong learning for people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. We are committed to preserving and sustaining our natural and cultural resources, promoting healthy lifestyles, and building a strong sense of community through collaboration, innovation, and excellence in everything we do.

CORE VALUES

- Foster a sense of community
- Offer activities for all abilities, ages, and interests
- Promote healthy leisure and lifestyle activities
- Collaborate with community members, organizations, and businesses
- Use resources efficiently

STRATEGIC MASTER PLAN

Plan Purpose

The Colchester Parks and Recreation department has the potential to have a positive impact on all community members. Our priority is to effectively and efficiently operate the department to maximize these positive impacts.

The purpose of this plan is to determine the Town of Colchester's needs and desires for park facilities and recreational services. A strategic master plan is an opportunity to align the goals of the Department with those of the town's growing and changing needs.

Approach and Methodology

The strategic master plan includes recommendations based on information collected from Parks and Recreation department data, demographics, input from stakeholders, feedback from the public, a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis, and a community survey.

Data Collection

The Parks and Recreation department utilized data to develop the recommendations and goals. Data was collected through:

A. Public Input

The planning process provided opportunities for stakeholders to discuss their expectations and needs. These stakeholders included: Town of Colchester department heads and staff, residents, sports league representatives, business owners, as well as the general public.

B. Community Survey

In January of 2023, the Colchester Parks and Recreation department invited residents to participate in a community survey. The survey asked them about their experiences, perceptions, priorities, and preferences about their recreational and leisure needs. The community survey was completed by 525 town residents.

(See Appendix for 2023 survey results)

C. SWOT Analysis:

A SWOT analysis was conducted with multiple stakeholder groups. The following represents a snapshot of those discussions:

<p><u>Strengths</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Spaces • Programs and opportunities for all age groups • Commission members work well together • Commission represents a wide range of community interests • Interdepartmental cooperation • Department accomplishes a lot with limited resources • Strong staff leadership • ARPA funding utilized for facility improvements 	<p><u>Weaknesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of indoor program space • Field conditions • Misconception that programming/events are funded by tax dollars • Lack of resources to obtain donations/sponsorships • Publicity/marketing and public communication • Public misunderstanding of recreation department roles and responsibilities vs. public works, other town departments, and leagues
<p><u>Opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote health awareness • Grow pride in recreation programs and facilities • Community education • Building community relationships • Increase publicity/marketing and public communication • Seek grants and funding for growth and improvements • Create partnerships to increase the town's access to indoor space • Continue strong collaboration with public works to maintain present and future facilities and parks • Increasing public feedback (e.g. increased survey respondents; frequency) 	<p><u>Threats</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation affected by reduced availability of leisure time and competing priorities (national trend) • Increase in unhealthy lifestyles (national trend) • Competing options from private organizations • Social media • Apathy • Expectation of instant gratification (national trend) • Perception that "The grass is always greener"

Expected Outcomes

By implementing recommendations contained within this strategic master plan, we expect outcomes will include:

- An increased sense of community
- Healthier and more active residents
- Sustainable recreational resources
- Ensuring that Colchester Parks and Recreation department has economic viability
- An inclusive and diverse range of programs and activities

Updates to this Plan

The Colchester Parks and Recreation department and the Colchester Recreation Commission review and update the strategic master plan every six (6) years based on changing town needs and priorities. The Parks and Recreation department will utilize the following sources of information in those updates:

- Town survey every two (2) years
- Review of programs / offerings every one (1) year
- Ongoing review of program participants' feedback
- Community input meeting every two (2) years (alternating with survey years)
- Comprehensive annual review of goals, recommendations and action plans contained within the strategic master plan. (February Recreation Commission meeting)
 - Include new recommendations, goals and action plans as needed (or modify existing)
- Report on status of goals, recommendations and action plans contained within the strategic master plan at Recreation Commission meetings.

RECOMMENDATIONS, GOALS AND ACTION PLANS

The Parks and Recreation department and the Recreation Commission have established recommendations based on the data collected about the community's needs and priorities.

- Recommendations have been organized into two (2) categories:
 - A. Recreation Programs, Events, Activities & Services
 - B. Parks & Facilities
- Goals have been created for each recommendation.
- Action plans have been created that include the steps needed to successfully achieve the desired goals. Measurement of outcomes will be included in each action plan

A. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RECREATION PROGRAMS, EVENTS, ACTIVITIES & SERVICES (PEAS)

Recommendation 1: Compare the current Programs, Events, Activities and Services (PEAS) to the community feedback and implement changes if necessary.

Goal: Ensure list of programs and services align with town needs and desires

Action	Result	Team	Timing
Audit current PEAS offerings and identify new	List of new programs, activities, events		
Prioritize new PEAS identified above	Rank in order of feasibility		
Develop plans to bring new PEAS to Parks and Recreation offerings	Plans to bring about new programs		
Implement plans	New programs offered to residents		

Recommendation 2: Develop and implement a comprehensive marketing plan to promote PEAS.

Goal: Increase publicity/marketing and public communication of Parks and Recreation PEAS

Action	Result	Team	Timing
Develop a marketing strategy (define audience, set objective against each and determine the best way to reach them)	Marketing strategic document		
Develop annual marketing calendar	Marketing calendar		
Create communications /collateral for each audience / time period.	Communication materials		
Implement marketing campaigns	Posting materials		

Recommendation 3: Develop and implement a formal volunteer program.

Goal 1: Create a volunteer program structure.

Action	Result	Team	Timing
Define volunteer roles and responsibilities	Volunteer “job description”		
List out the specific needs for volunteers / when, where etc.	Calendar of volunteer opportunities		
Create volunteer application process (including documentation)	Clear process for adding new volunteers		
Develop volunteer training program	Training program		
Develop volunteer evaluation process	Evaluation process		

Goal 2: Manage volunteer program.

Action	Result	Team	Timing
Build database of volunteers	Volunteer database		
Approval of volunteers (paperwork / vetting)	Volunteers approved		
Train Volunteers	Volunteers trained		
Communicate with volunteers	Volunteers contacted		
Volunteers provide service	Volunteers utilized		
Post service evaluation of volunteers	Volunteers evaluated		

B. RECOMENDATIONS FOR PARKS AND FACILITIES

Recommendation: Look into community desired facilities and spaces

Goal: Prioritize community needs for facilities / spaces

Action	Result	Team	Timing
Align with <u>Recreation Needs and Coordination Ad-hoc Committee</u> on how we move forward	Defined roles / action plan		
Communication and coordination with Public Works	Defined roles / action plan		
Evaluate next steps for Parks and Recreation department	TBD		

APPENDIX 1

List of Parks and Facilities

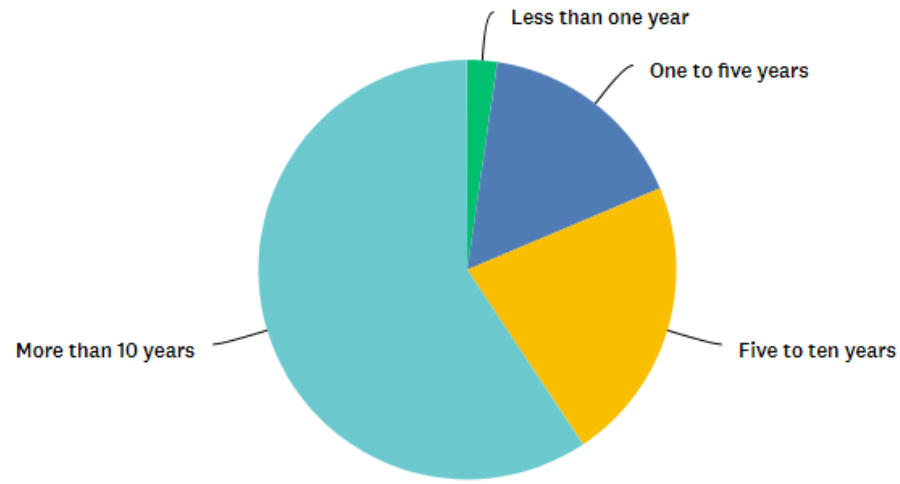
- Ruby & Elizabeth Cohen Woodlands: 111 acres (15 acres of active use)
- Airline Trail: 5 miles
- Colchester Railroad Spur 4 miles of trail
- Lighted Little League Field (R1) 1.1 acres
- Lighted Baseball Field (R2) 2.2 acres
- Lighted Softball Field (R3) 1.81 acres
- Lighted Football Field (RS) 1.83 acres
- Practice Little League Field (R4) .97 acres
- Softball Fields (R5 & R6) 5.05 acres
- Soccer Field (R7) 1.83 acres
- 3 Lighted Tennis Courts
- 1 Lighted Basketball Court
- 3 Pickle Ball Courts

APPENDIX 2

Community Survey Results

How long have you lived in Colchester?

Answered: 391 Skipped: 134

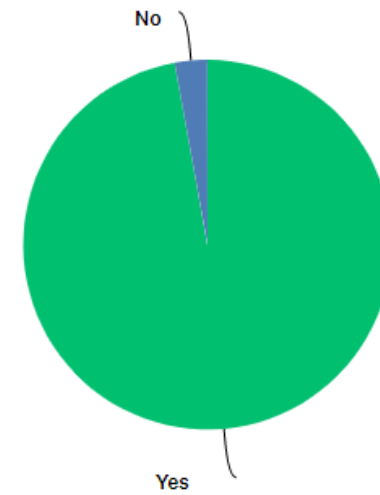


2023 Colchester Parks & Recreation Strategic Plan Survey

🔍 (0)

Are you a resident of Colchester?

Answered: 525 Skipped: 0

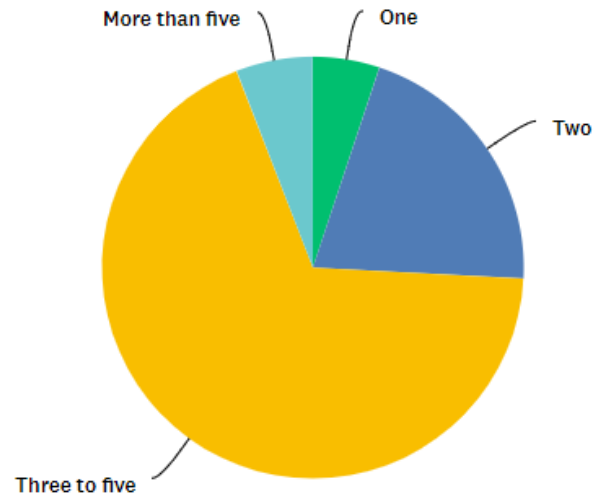


2023 Colchester Parks & Recreation Strategic Plan Survey

🔍 (0)

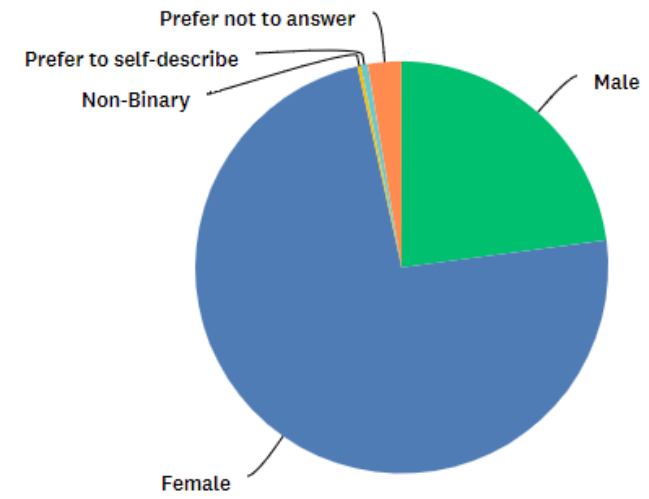
How many people live in your household?

Answered: 391 Skipped: 134



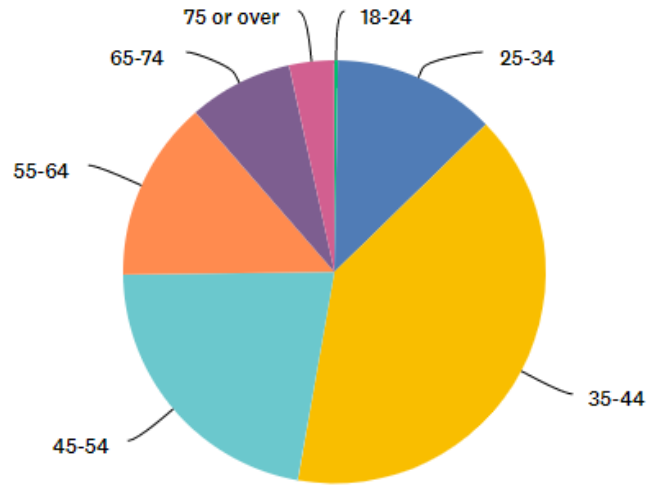
What is your gender?

Answered:



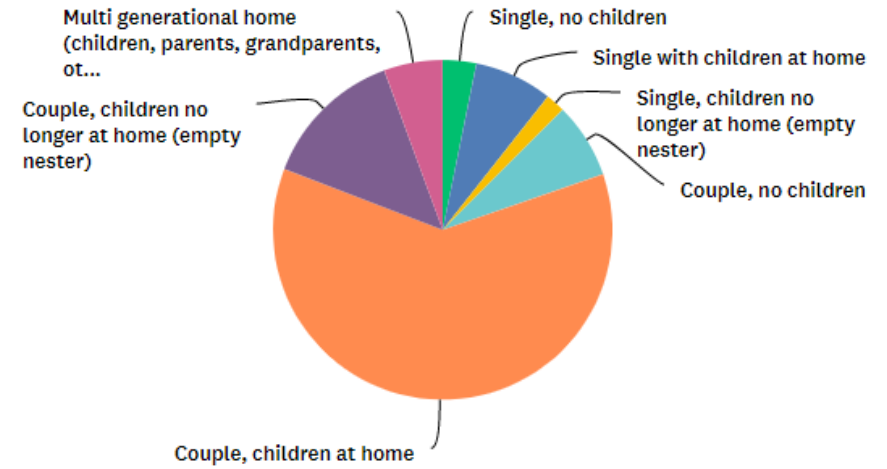
What is your age?

Answered: 377 Skipped: 148



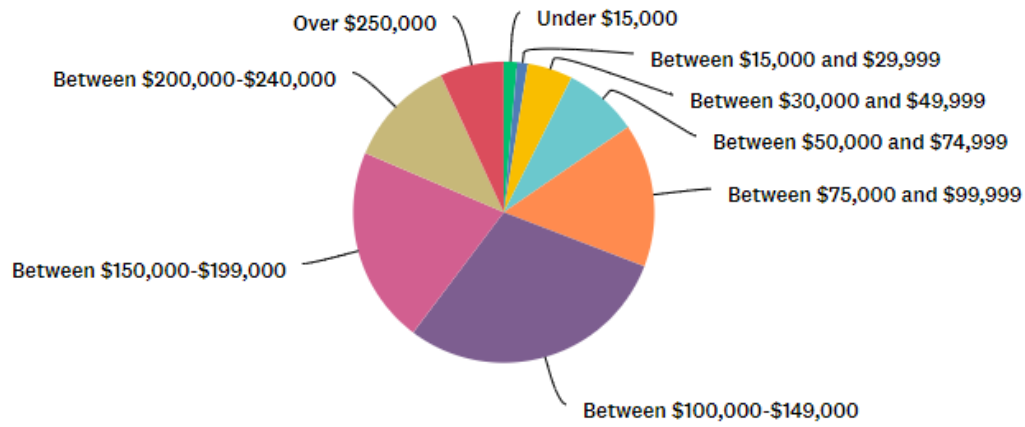
Which category best describes your household?

Answered: 376 Skipped: 149



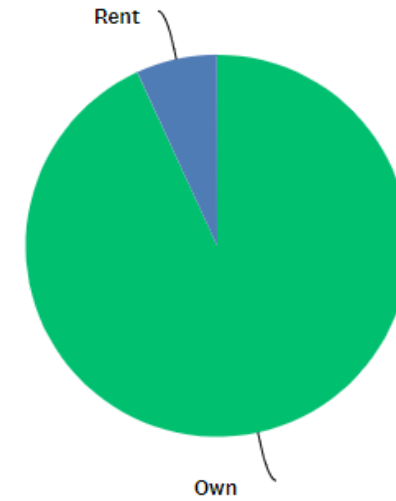
Which answer best describes you total gross annual income?

Answered: 350 Skipped: 175



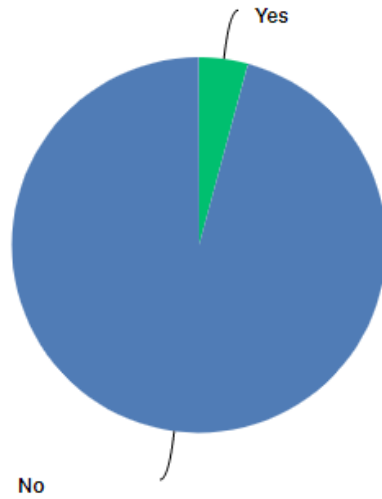
Do you own or rent in Colchester?

Answered: 380 Skipped: 145



Does your household need ADA accessible facilities and/or services?

Answered: 379 Skipped: 146

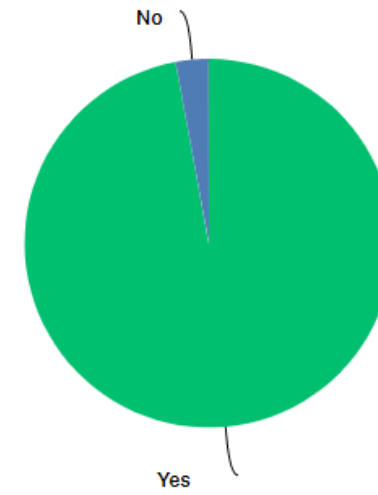


2023 Colchester Parks & Recreation Strategic Plan Survey

🔍 (0)

Are you a registered voter in Colchester?

Answered: 380 Skipped: 145

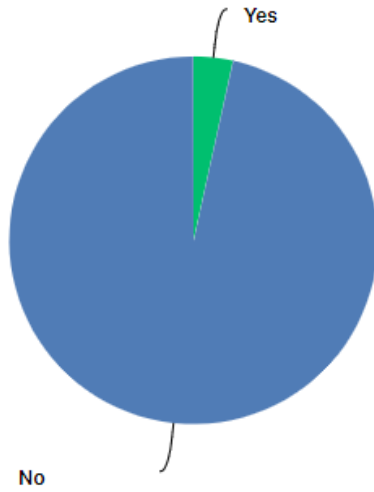


2023 Colchester Parks & Recreation Strategic Plan Survey

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Are you of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin?

Answered: 377 Skipped: 148

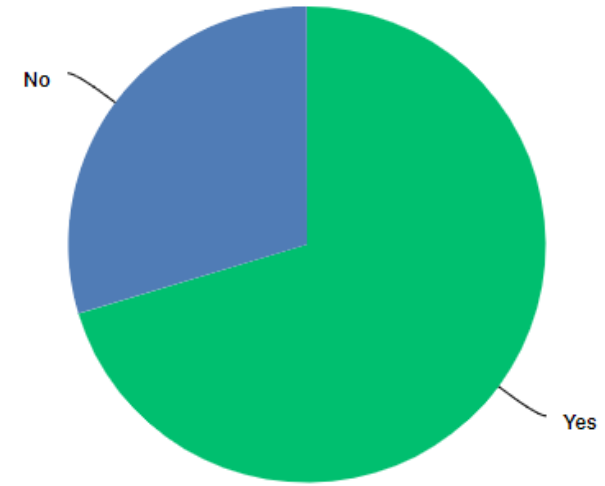


2023 Colchester Parks & Recreation Strategic Plan Survey

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Does anyone in your household participate in P&R programs, camps, ...

Answered: 391 Skipped: 134

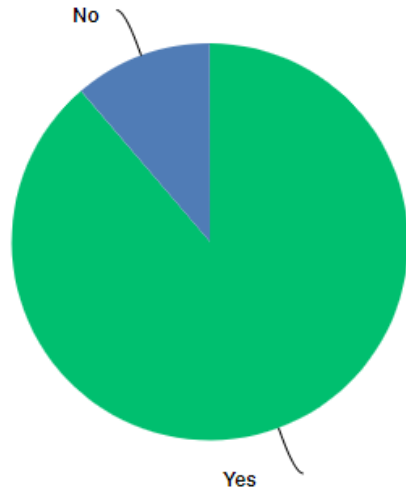


2023 Colchester Parks & Recreation Strategic Plan Survey

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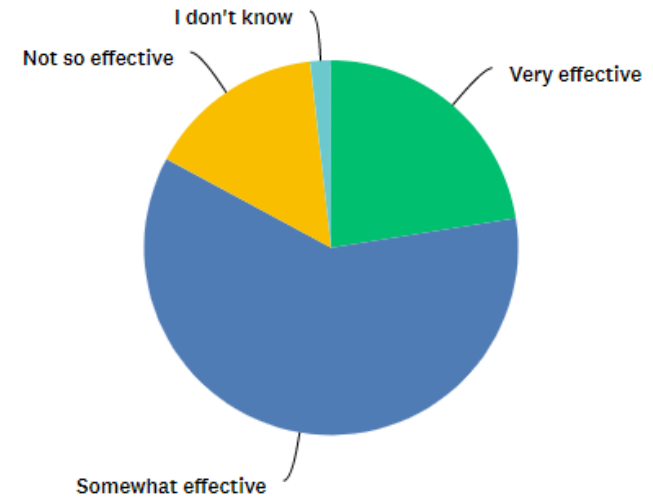
Does anyone in your household use parks or facilities

Answered: 391 Skipped: 134



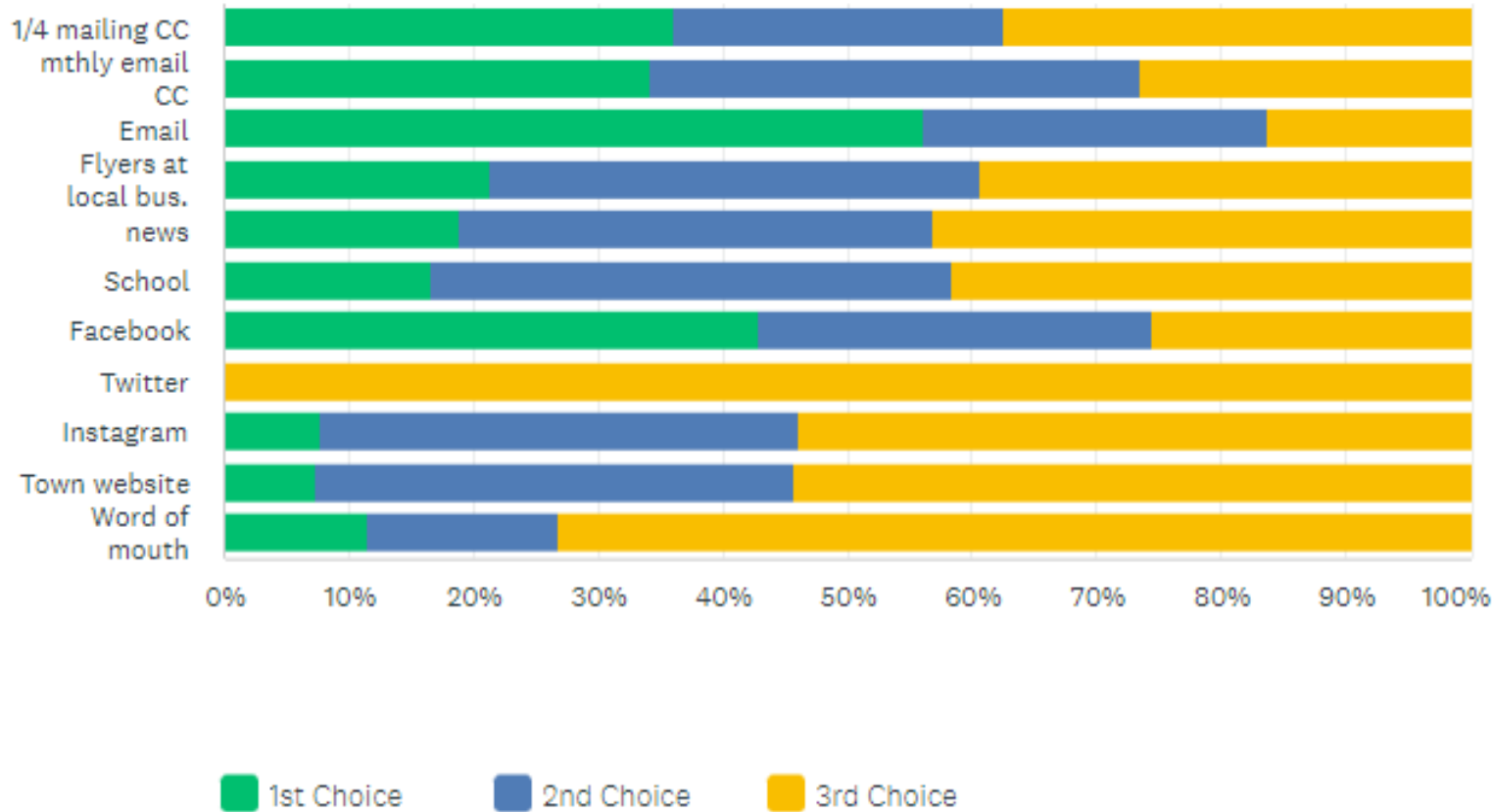
How effective is P&R at reaching you with information?

Answered: 391 Skipped: 134



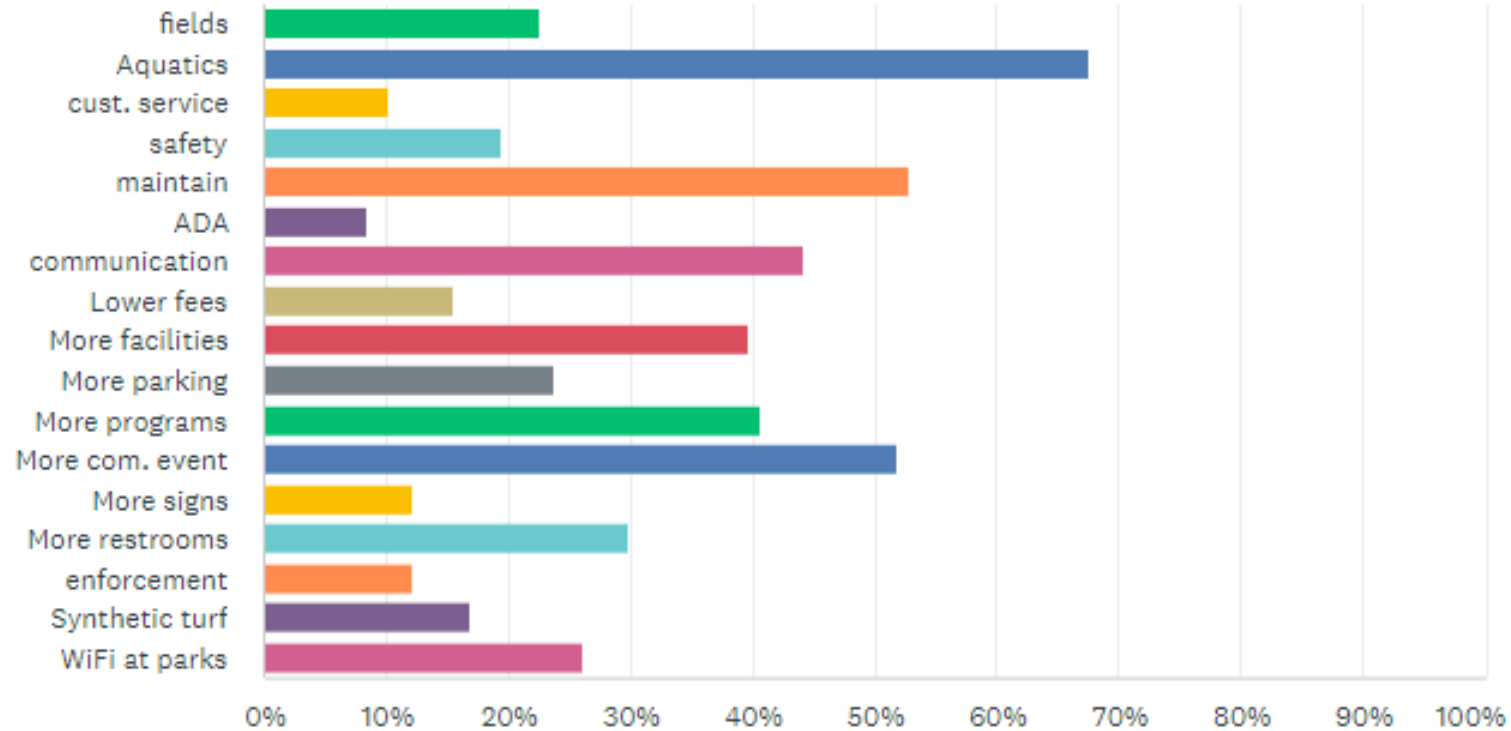
What is the best way for you to receive information? Please rank your ...

Answered: 391 Skipped: 134



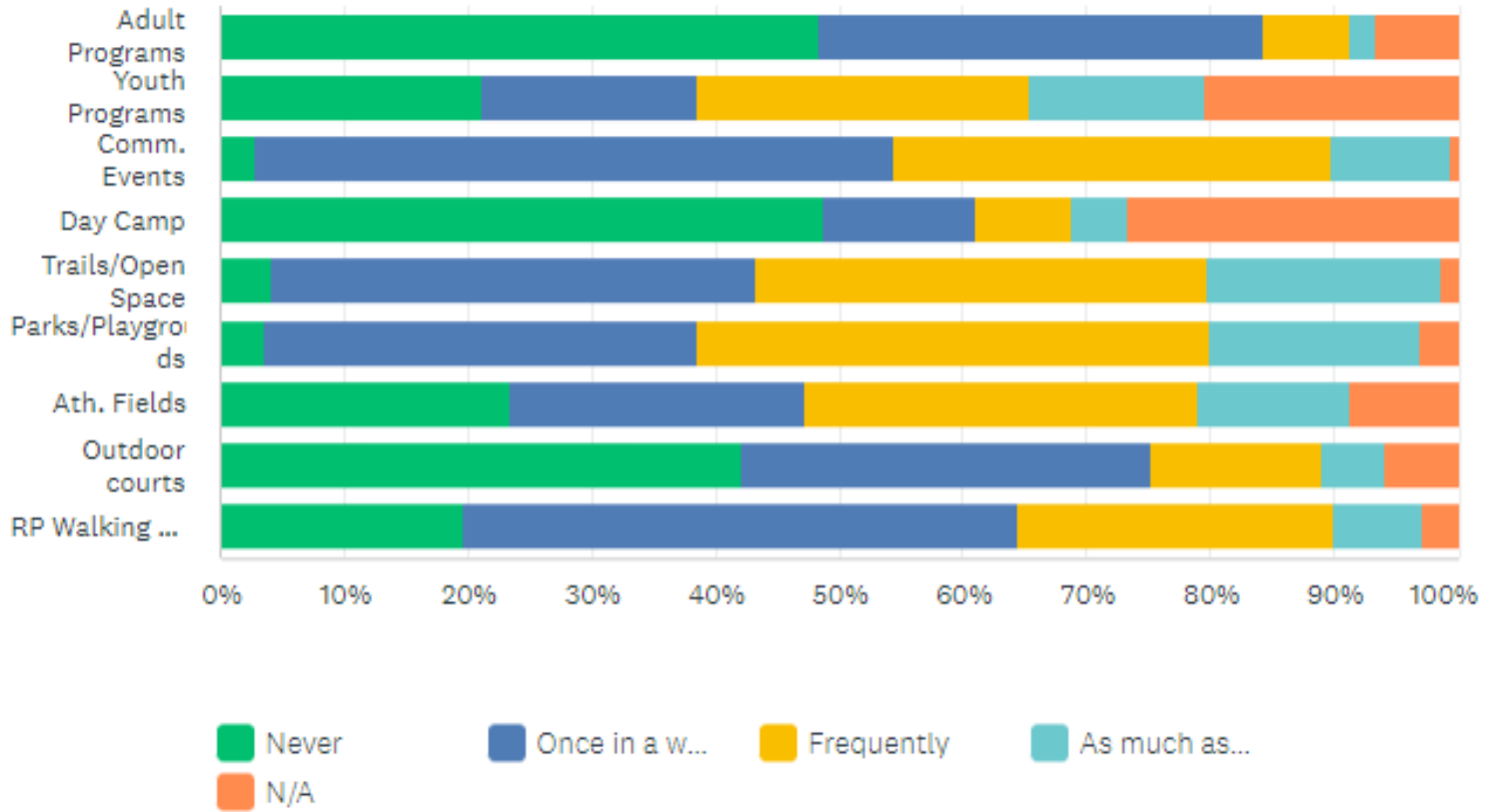
What would increase your participation? Please check all that apply.

Answered: 391 Skipped: 134



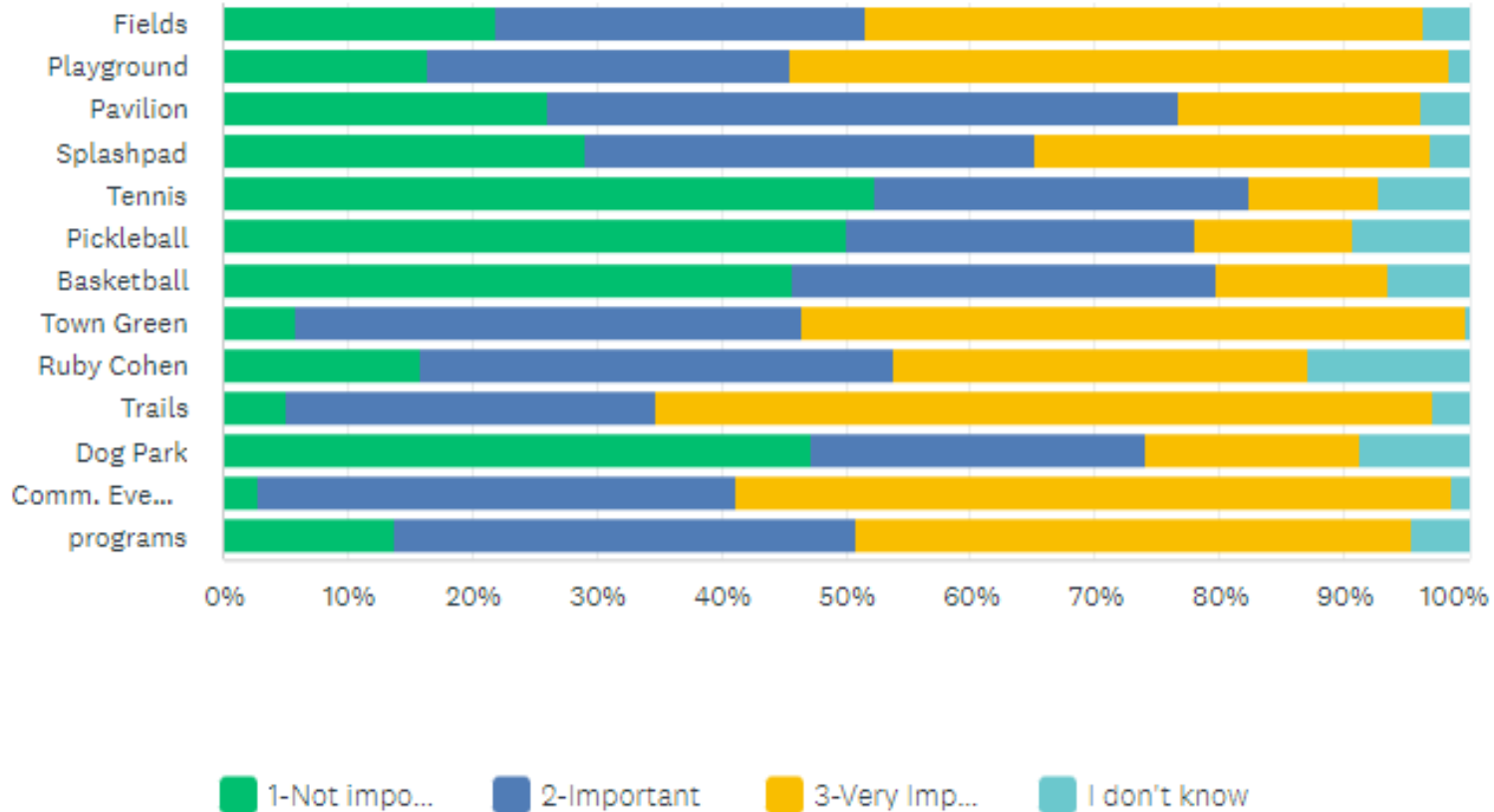
How frequently do you use or participate in:

Answered: 391 Skipped: 134



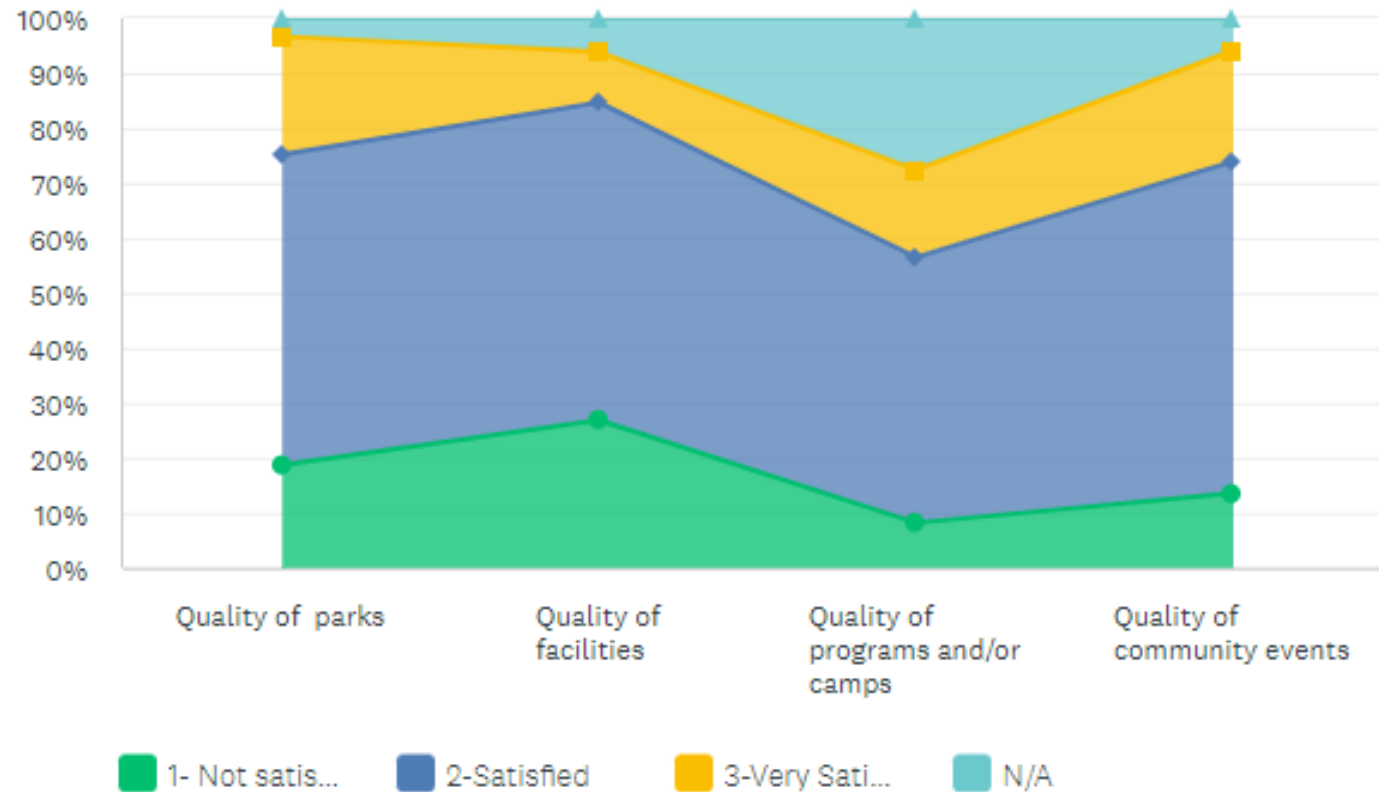
Please tell us how important these are:

Answered: 391 Skipped: 134



Overall, how satisfied are you with the following:

Answered: 391 Skipped: 134



Would you support the use of tax dollars to fund:

Answered: 391 Skipped: 134

