

**City of Greater Sudbury**

## **Parks, Open Space & Leisure Master Plan Review**

June 2014



## Section 4. Public Engagement Program

Community input is critical to identify the issues, trends, and future priorities related to parks, open space, and leisure in the City of Greater Sudbury. In order to obtain this input, a number of internal and external engagement efforts were undertaken, including:

- online public survey (hard copies also available) to solicit information on participation and gaps in provision;
- a series of six public open houses to identify issues and receive input on key topics of interest;
- small group workshops with key City staff;
- interviews with individual members of City Council to solicit input areas of need and focus within the scope of the Master Plan; and
- presentations to the City's Community Services Committee to present project information and request approval of the final report.

Each consultation technique was structured to engage a different target audience and each had a unique purpose, whether to create awareness, gather information, identify issues, generate ideas, or gauge community support. A summary of the input received through the public engagement program is provided below; input from individual members of Council has not been summarized unless part of the public record.

### 4.1 Online Survey

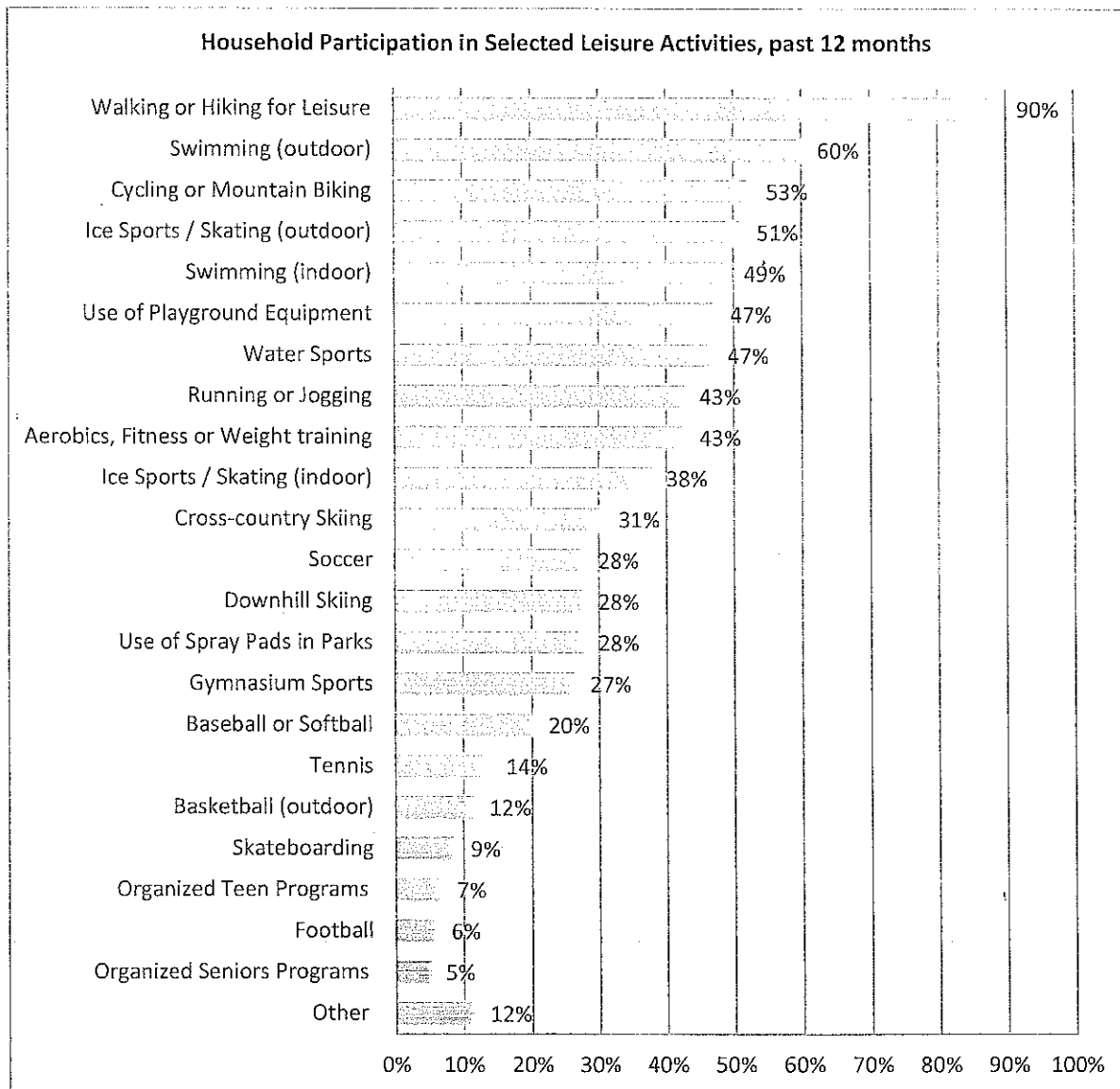
An online survey was created and posted on the City's website in April 2014 for a period of approximately one month. The purpose of the survey was to identify leisure participation levels and barriers, as well as opinions on park and facility needs. The survey was publicized through a range of means, including posters, email correspondence, local media, etc. A link to the survey was also prominently displayed on the City's website. Hard copies were also made available at key municipal locations. Identical English and French versions of the survey were available.

The survey received a total of 491 responses (461 English and 30 French). While the response rate for the questionnaire is excellent, due to self-selected and non-random nature of the survey, it cannot be considered statistically significant, meaning that it may not be representative of the entire population. Furthermore, participants were able to cease participation at any time and to skip questions, so the number of responses to each question varies; percentages are calculated based on the number of responses to each question. Detailed data tables can be found in [Appendix A](#).

## Participation

Q1. In the past 12 months, which of the following activities have you or anyone in your household participated in? By participation, we mean situations where you or a member of your household actively participate (which does not include attending an event or watching others), either at home or in public. (select all that may apply)

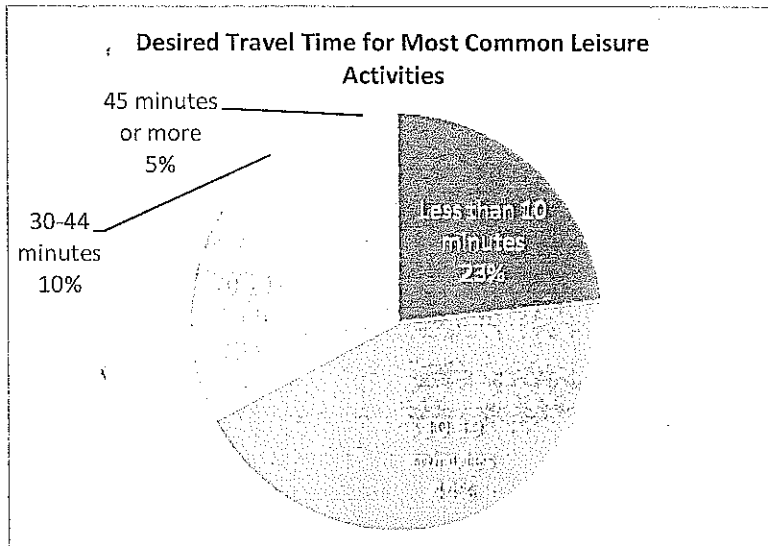
The leisure activities participated in by the majority of Greater Sudbury households are walking/hiking (90%), outdoor swimming (60%), cycling/biking (53%), and outdoor ice sports/skating (51%). Eight of the top ten responses are predominantly unorganized / self-scheduled activities.



n = 483

Q2. What is a reasonable length of time for you to travel for the leisure activities that your household does the most? (multiple responses permitted)

When asked what a reasonable length of travel would be for the leisure activities that households participate in the most, the most common response was 10 to 19 minutes (44%). Beyond this amount of time (20+ minutes), the number of responses generally decreases proportionately. Location of residence and activity type are likely to have an impact on the response to this question.

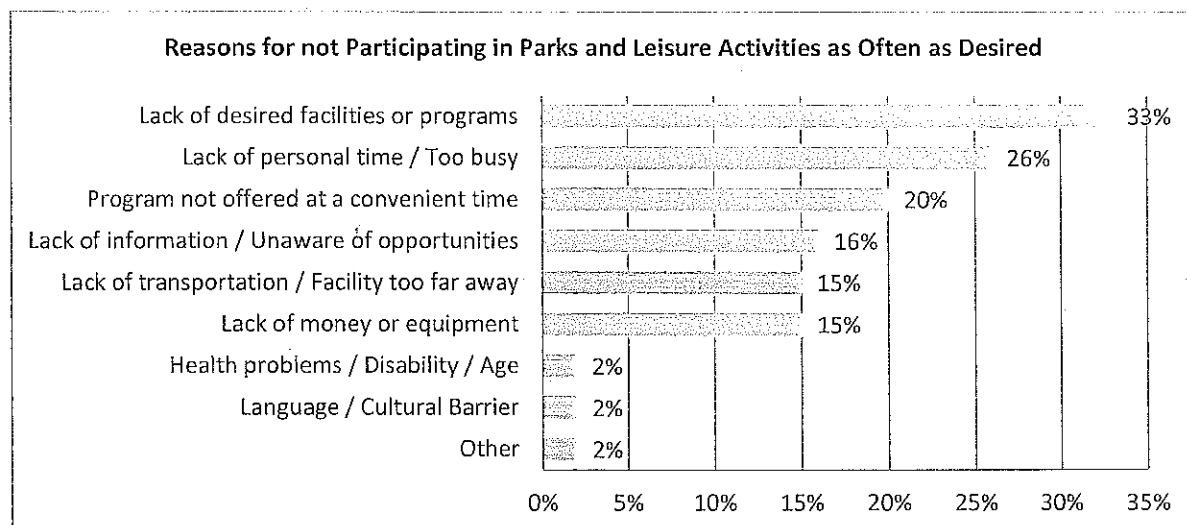


n = 477

Totals may not add due to rounding

Q3. Are you and members of your household able to participate in parks and leisure activities as often as you would like? (n=487)

Q4. Why are you and members of your household not able to participate in parks and leisure activities as often as you would like? (multiple responses permitted)



n = 286

Totals may not add due to rounding

55% of survey respondents indicated that their households were not able to participate in parks and leisure activities as often as desired. This subset was then asked for reasons why this was the case. The most common barrier identified was a lack of desired facilities or programs (33% of entire sample), followed by a lack of personal time (26% of entire sample). Lack of time is frequently the most common response in statistically significant surveys; the self-selected nature of this survey may have been a factor in the elevated response rate for lack of facilities/programs.

### Program Activities & Gaps

Q5. *Are there any parks or leisure activities that you or members of your household would like to see offered in the City of Greater Sudbury that are not currently available?*

Q6. *What new or additional parks and leisure activities would you like to see offered? n = 239*

51% of respondents indicated that there are additional parks or leisure activities that they would like to see offered in Greater Sudbury; 22% said there were not and 28% were unsure. Many of the open-ended responses to this question focused on facility types rather than activities. Further, due to the large geographic size of the City, many responses referred to activities/facilities that are not available within the respondent's immediate community, despite being available elsewhere in the City.

The most common requests for additional parks and leisure activities were as follows:

- Trails (27)
- Bike paths (27)
- Bike lanes (22)
- Swimming / pool (21)
- Splash pads (12)
- Dog parks (9)
- Cricket (6)
- Green space (6)
- Indoor playground (6)
- Outdoor basketball courts (6)
- Water slide park (5)

### Importance & Satisfaction

Q7. *In general, how important are the following items to your household? Please use a scale that ranges from "not at all important" to "very important".*

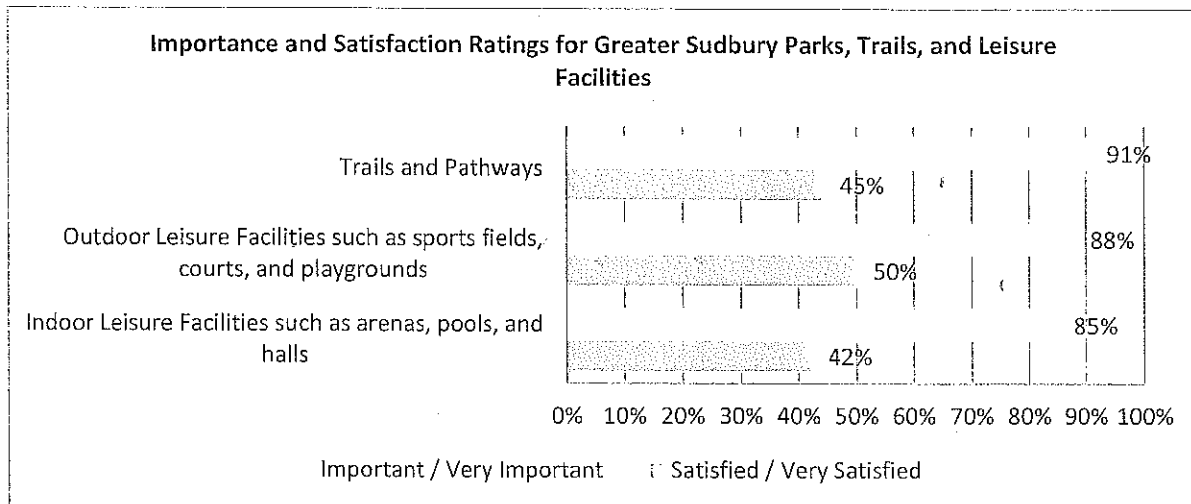
Q8. *Thinking about those facilities that currently exist in the City of Greater Sudbury, what is your level of satisfaction with the following? Please use a scale that ranges from "not at all satisfied" to "very satisfied".*

Respondents were asked to rate the level of importance and satisfaction with three broad facility types to evaluate levels of service. Typically, where importance exceeds satisfaction, the level of service is perceived to be inadequate, whereas where satisfaction exceeds importance, the level of service is perceived to be adequate or excessive.

In all three areas probed, respondents indicated a substantial gap between satisfaction and importance, indicating that current levels of service are inadequate. Self-selected surveys tend to attract respondents that have strong opinions and/or that may be dissatisfied with certain services, which is a factor that may contribute to the large gap between satisfaction and importance.

- 91% of respondents indicated that trails/pathways are important to their household, but only 45% indicated that they were satisfied with the trails/pathways available in Greater Sudbury.
- Similarly, 88% of respondents indicated that outdoor leisure facilities are important to their household, but only 50% indicated that they were satisfied with the outdoor leisure facilities available in Greater Sudbury.

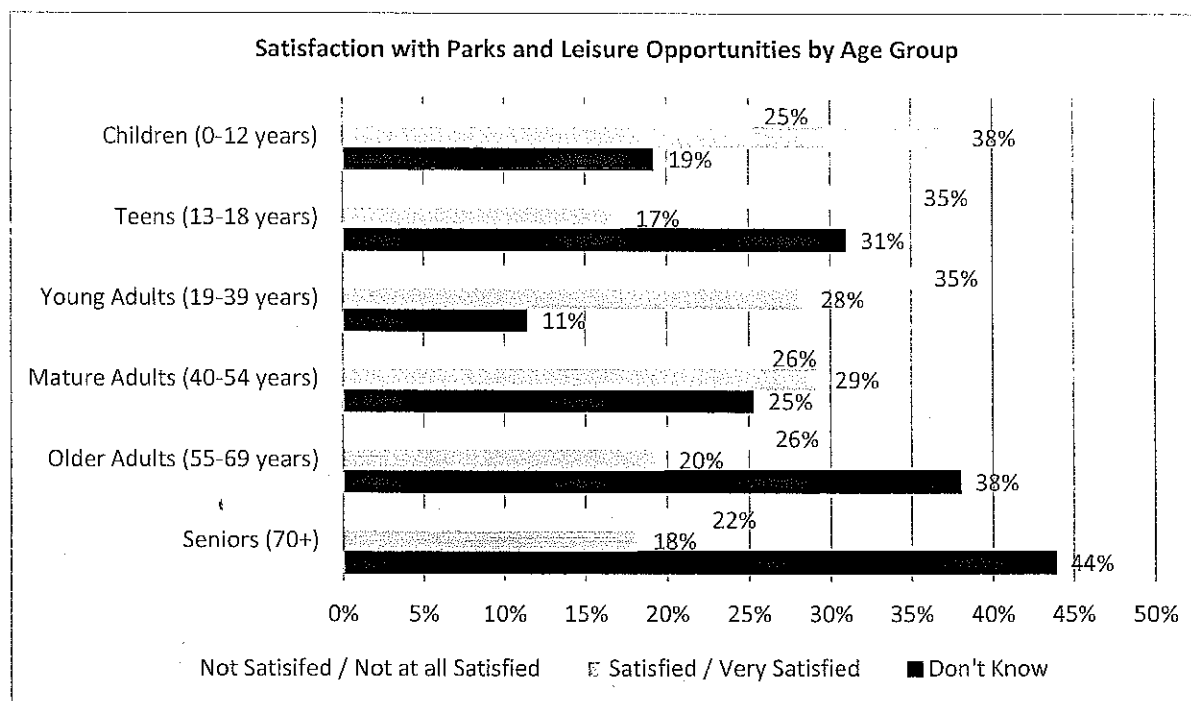
- Lastly, 85% of respondents indicated that indoor leisure facilities are important to their household, but only 42% indicated that they were satisfied with the indoor leisure facilities available in Greater Sudbury.



n = 421-426

Totals do not add to 100% ("neither satisfied/important or dissatisfied/not important" and "don't know" not shown)

Q9. What is your level of satisfaction with the parks and leisure opportunities in the City of Greater Sudbury for the following age groups? Please use a scale that ranges from "not at all satisfied" to "very satisfied".



n = 358-391

Totals do not add to 100% ("neither satisfied or dissatisfied" not shown)

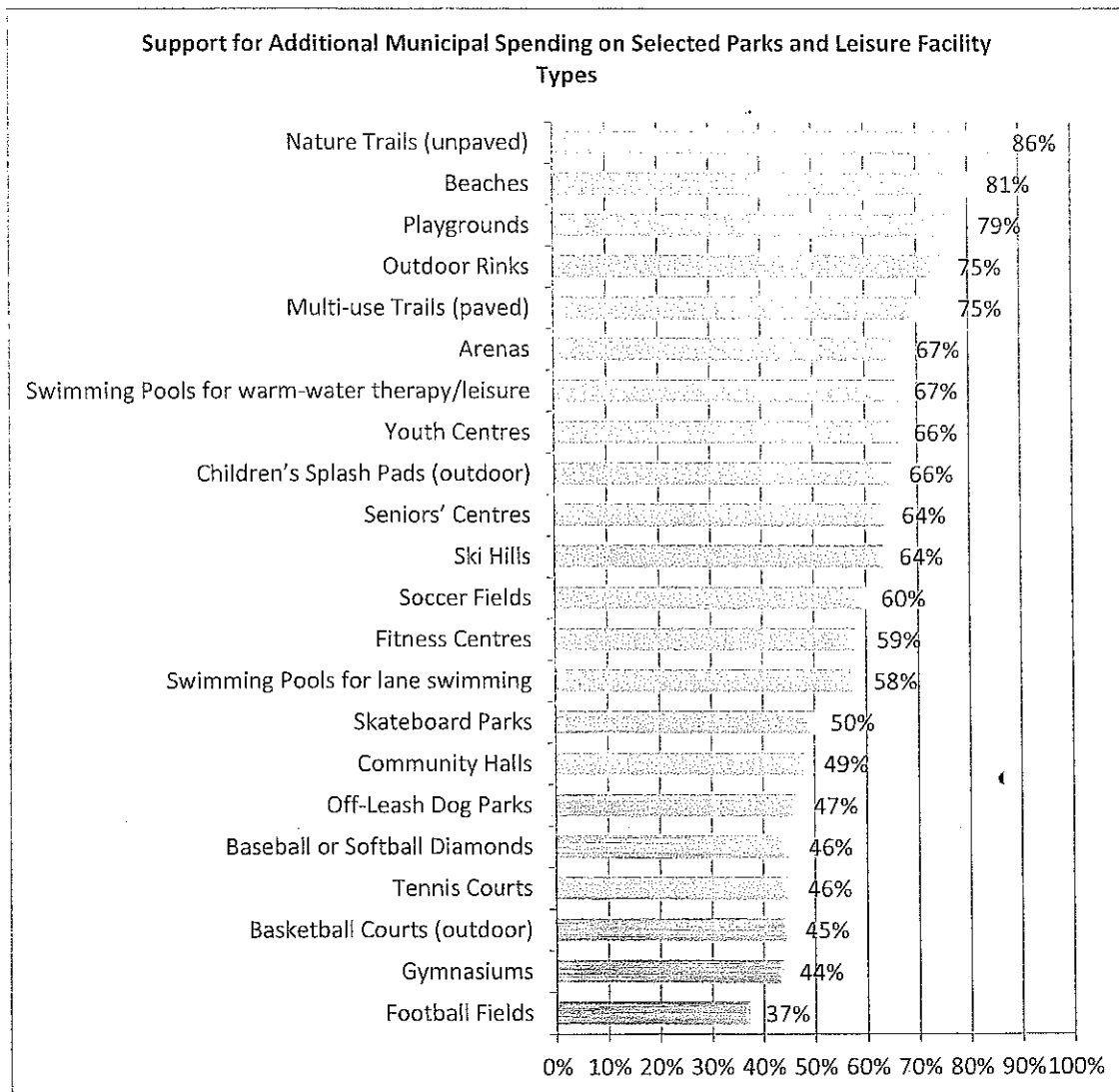
Similarly, respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction levels with parks and leisure opportunities available to various age groups within Greater Sudbury. There was a higher degree of non-response

("don't know") to these questions as responses often depended on the composition of each household. Overall, the highest levels of satisfaction were expressed for children's activities, while activities for teens and young adults received the lowest levels of satisfaction.

### Facility Priorities

Q10. To what degree do you oppose or support spending additional public funds on the following facilities – either to improve existing facilities or build new ones? Please use a scale that ranges from "strongly oppose" to "strongly support".

Respondents were presented with 22 distinct types of parks and leisure facilities and asked to rate their willingness to support additional public spending to either improve existing facilities or build new ones. There was a high degree of support for most facility types, with 15 of 22 receiving majority support, the highest being for nature trails (86%), beaches (81%), playgrounds (79%), outdoor rinks (75%), and multi-use trails (75%) – all of these facilities are generally used in an unorganized, self-scheduled manner.

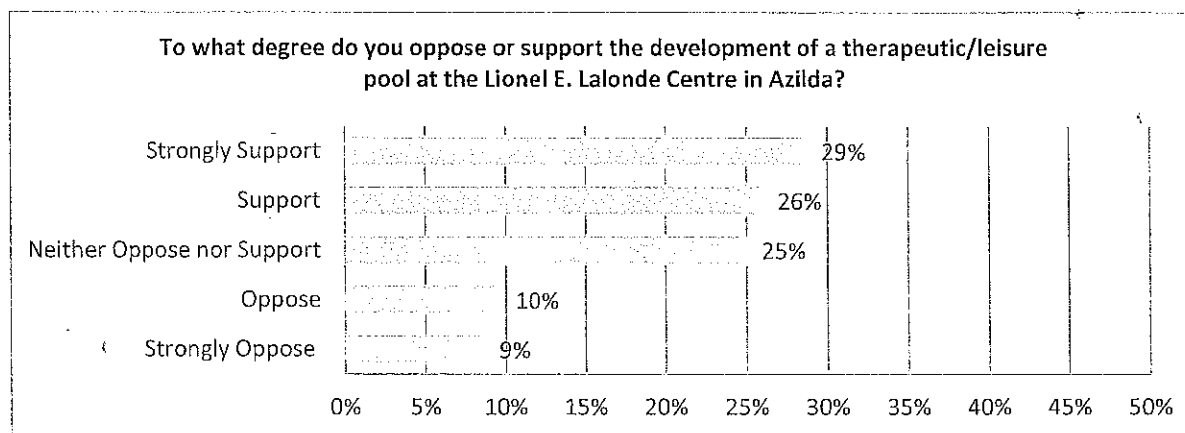


n = 385-400

### Therapeutic / Leisure Pool Proposal

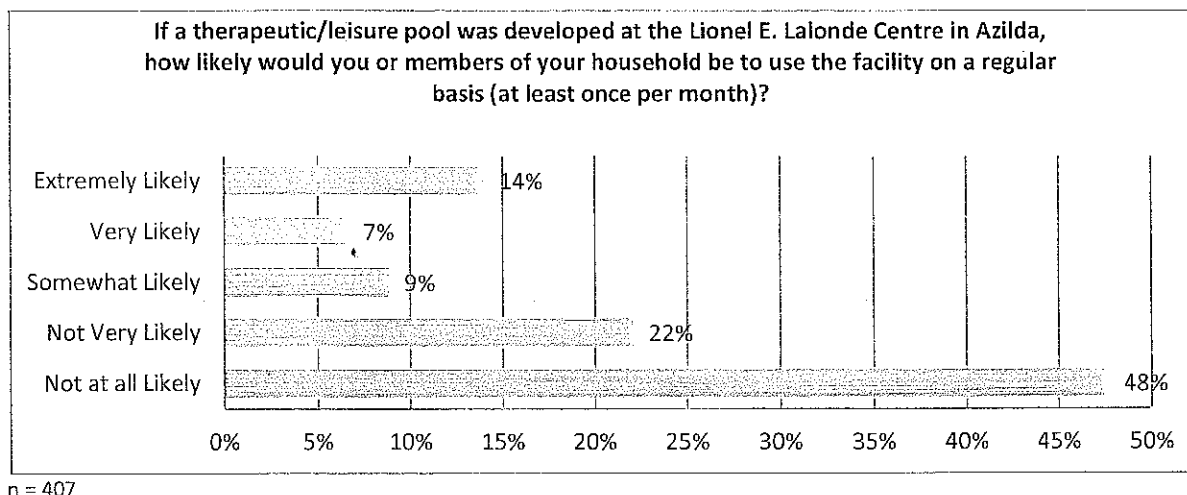
Q11. To what degree do you oppose or support the development of a therapeutic/leisure pool at the Lionel E. Lalonde Centre in Azilda? Please use a scale that ranges from "strongly oppose" to "strongly support".

As requested by City Council, questions specific to develop a therapeutic/leisure pool at the Lionel E. Lalonde Centre in Azilda were included in the online survey. 55% of respondents support this proposal, while 19% oppose it.



Q12. If a therapeutic/leisure pool was developed at the Lionel E. Lalonde Centre in Azilda, how likely would you or members of your household be to use the facility on a regular basis (at least once per month)?

Reflecting the high degree of support for the therapeutic/leisure pool proposal, 30% of respondents felt that they would be somewhat, very, or extremely likely to use the facility on a regular basis. Given the facility's proposed market and programming, this is a favourable finding that supports the project's usage targets.





## Increasing Utilization

Q13. *What would encourage you or members of your household to make greater use of Greater Sudbury's indoor or outdoor Leisure Facilities? n=307*

Q14. *What would encourage you or members of your household to make greater use of Greater Sudbury's Parks and Trails? n=298*

Open-ended comments were received from approximately 62% of survey respondents. Primary responses related to the following (in order of most to least):

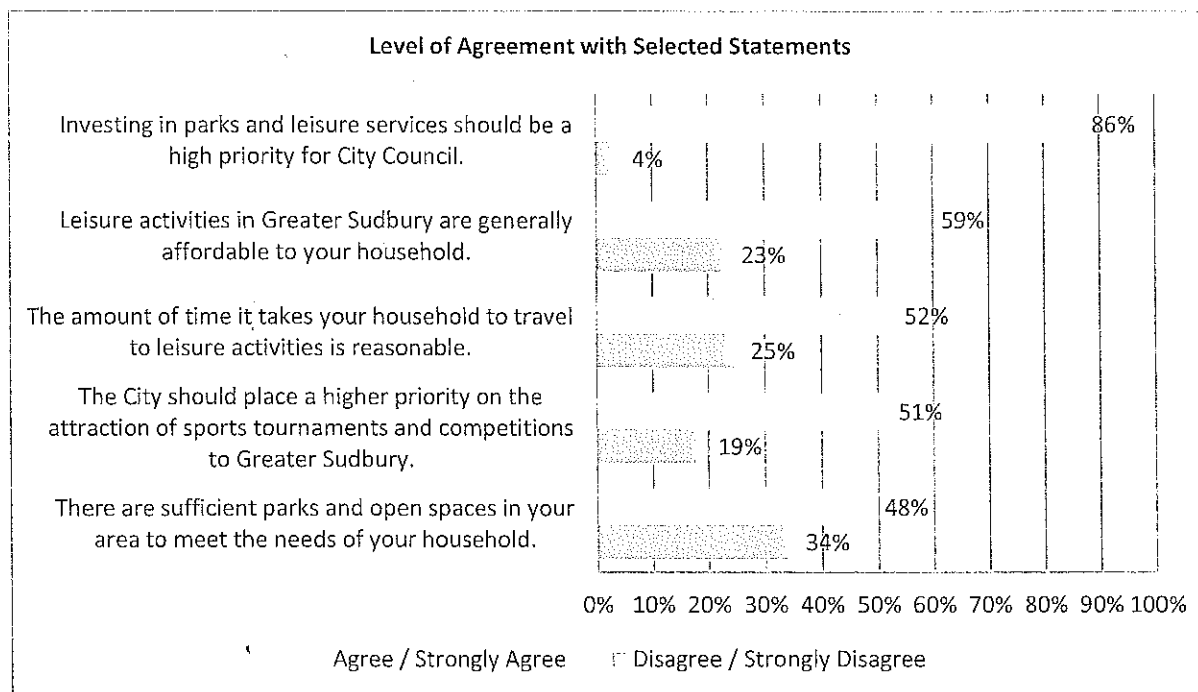
- providing activities, parks, and facilities that are close to one's home
- extending and connecting the system of trails and bike paths (and providing marked signage)
- improving the maintenance and cleanliness of parks, trails, and facilities
- greater promotion and advertisement of activities and assets (including online mapping of trails)
- lowering the costs of programs and facility rentals
- offering leisure programs at different times and/or extended facility hours
- upgrading leisure facilities
- providing safe bike lanes
- improving accessibility in general
- enforcement of the leash and poop & scoop by-laws

## Statements

Q15. *Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements. Please use a scale that ranges from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree".*

Respondents were asked to identify their level of agreement with five scripted statements.

- 86% agree that "Investing in parks and leisure services should be a high priority for City Council."
- 59% agree that "Leisure activities in Greater Sudbury are generally affordable to your household."
- 52% agree that "The amount of time it takes your household to travel to leisure activities is reasonable."
- 51% agree that "The City should place a higher priority on the attraction of sports tournaments and competitions to Greater Sudbury."
- 48% agree that "There are sufficient parks and open spaces in your area to meet the needs of your household."



n = 391-393

Totals do not add to 100% ("neither agree or disagree" and "don't know" not shown)

### Additional Comments

Q16. Please provide any additional comments you may have regarding parks and leisure services in the City of Greater Sudbury. n=193

Open-ended comments were received from 39% of survey respondents. Detailed comments are contained in [Appendix A](#).

### Demographic Profile

The following summarizes the socio-demographic profile of those responding to the online survey:

#### Household Composition

- The average household size of respondents was 3.3, larger than the 2.4 persons per household reported in the 2011 Census
- 63% reported having one or more children/teens living within their household, larger than the approximately 40% that reported this in the 2011 Census

#### Age

- The average age of survey respondents was 41 years
- The following table illustrates the age composition of those living within responding households, compared against City-wide estimates; the online survey shows greater representation from residents below the age of 40, and lower representation from those age 55 and over

	Age Composition of Responding Households	Estimated City-wide Age Composition
Children (0-12 years)	21%	13%
Teens (13-18 years)	11%	7%
Young Adults (19-39 years)	34%	27%
Mature Adults (40-54 years)	22%	23%
Older Adults (55-69 years)	10%	18%
Seniors (70+)	2%	11%

#### Income

- 22% of respondents indicated an annual household income of less than \$60,000, 21% between \$60,000 and \$90,000, 23% between \$90,000 and \$120,000, and 34% above \$120,000

#### Residency

- 97% of respondents identified themselves as residents of the City of Greater Sudbury
- Data was not collected on community of residence due to a survey coding error

## **4.2 Public Open Houses**

A series of six (6) public open houses were held in May 2014 to gather input pertaining to this Master Plan from residents and organizations. The open houses were advertised through local media, municipal websites, municipal facilities, and email correspondence to various stakeholders.

Specifically, the Parks, Open Space & Leisure Master Plan Review was introduced through the following public open houses:

- May 12, 2014 from 4pm to 7pm at Lionel E. Lalonde Centre, Azilda
- May 12, 2014 from 4pm to 7pm at Walden Citizen Service Centre/Library, Lively
- May 13, 2014 from 4pm to 7pm at Garson Citizen Service Centre/Library, Garson
- May 13, 2014 from 4pm to 7pm at Howard Armstrong Recreation Centre, Hanmer
- May 14, 2014 from 4pm to 7pm at Tom Davies Square, Sudbury
- May 14, 2014 from 4pm to 7pm at Dowling Civic Leisure Centre, Dowling

These open houses were structured as drop-in sessions where citizens could learn more about the scope and preliminary findings of the Draft Plan and provide comments on needs and strategies. Verbal and written input received through the public open houses has been considered as part of the Plan's development (see [Appendix B](#)).