

Pathways to Play: Community Survey Results

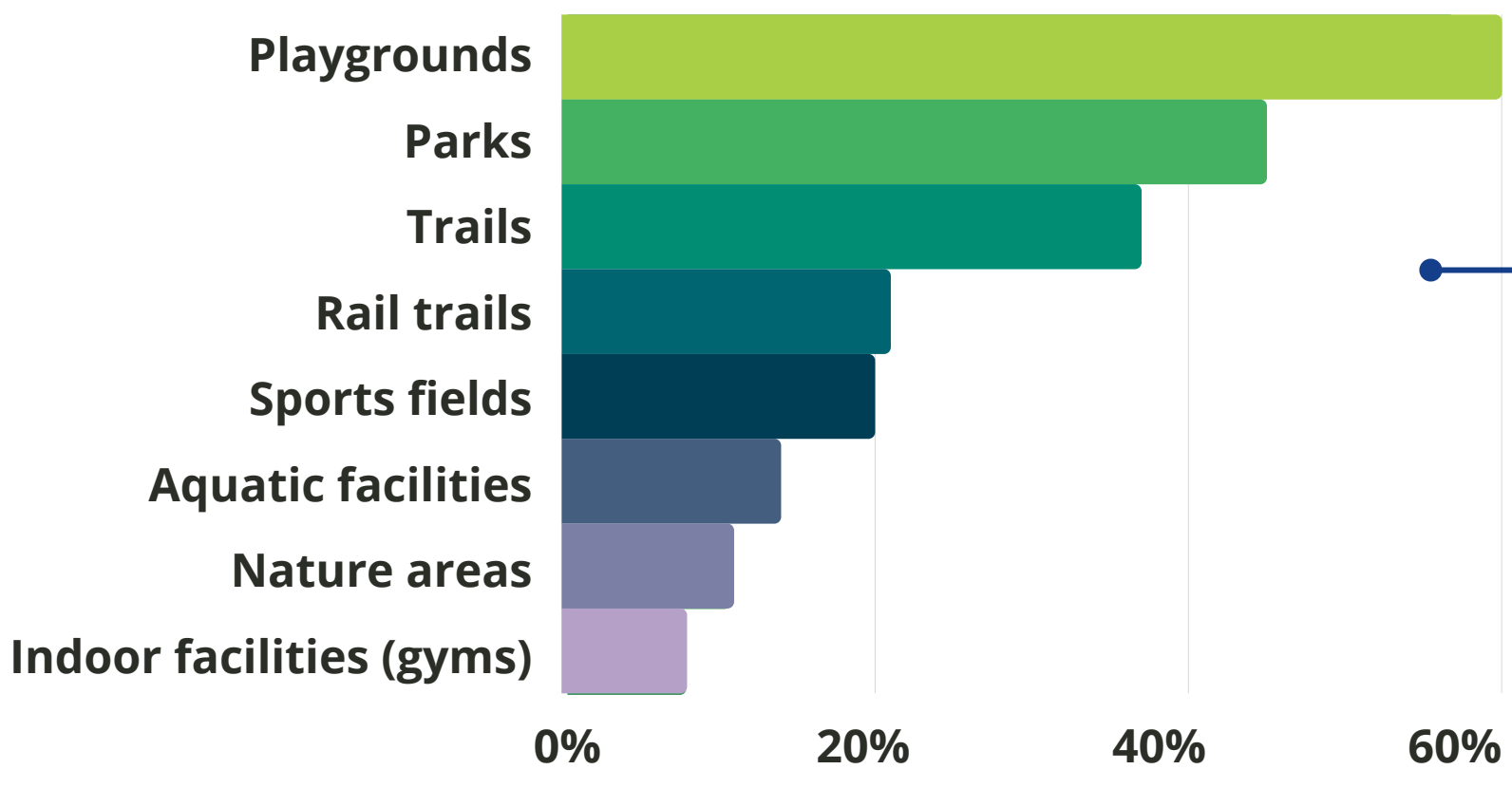
Play is essential to children's well-being. Encouraging more activity among families, and especially young children ages 0-5, can help reduce obesity and set the stage for a lifetime of healthy habits. With funding from the NH Children's Health Foundation, the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission (SNHPC) is leading Pathways to Play, an initiative to enhance connections to recreation spaces throughout the region.

In 2022, the Pathways to Play Stakeholder Group and SNHPC staff developed and fielded a community survey to learn how people use and access children's play spaces. Online and in-person outreach was facilitated by city and town staff, local recreational organizations like Granite YMCA, and regional events such as Downtown Derry Derby Day and PARK(ing) Day in Manchester. This handout summarizes some of the key insights and learnings from the survey.

More than 250 people responded

While the majority of respondents (**78%**) were parents of children ages 5 and under, survey participants included grandparents, teachers, caregivers, and more.

 = 10 respondents



Where do kids play?

Respondents take advantage of a wide variety of children's recreation spaces in their communities, with the most commonly noted being playgrounds (60%), parks (45%), and trails (37%).

How do they get to play spaces?

Respondents most often reported that they drive (93%) to local recreation spaces. Walking (25%) and biking (11%) are other common modes of transportation. When traveling farther to visit to recreation spaces in neighboring communities, driving rates increase and walking and biking rates drop to 4% and 5%, respectively.



A key opportunity: Public transit



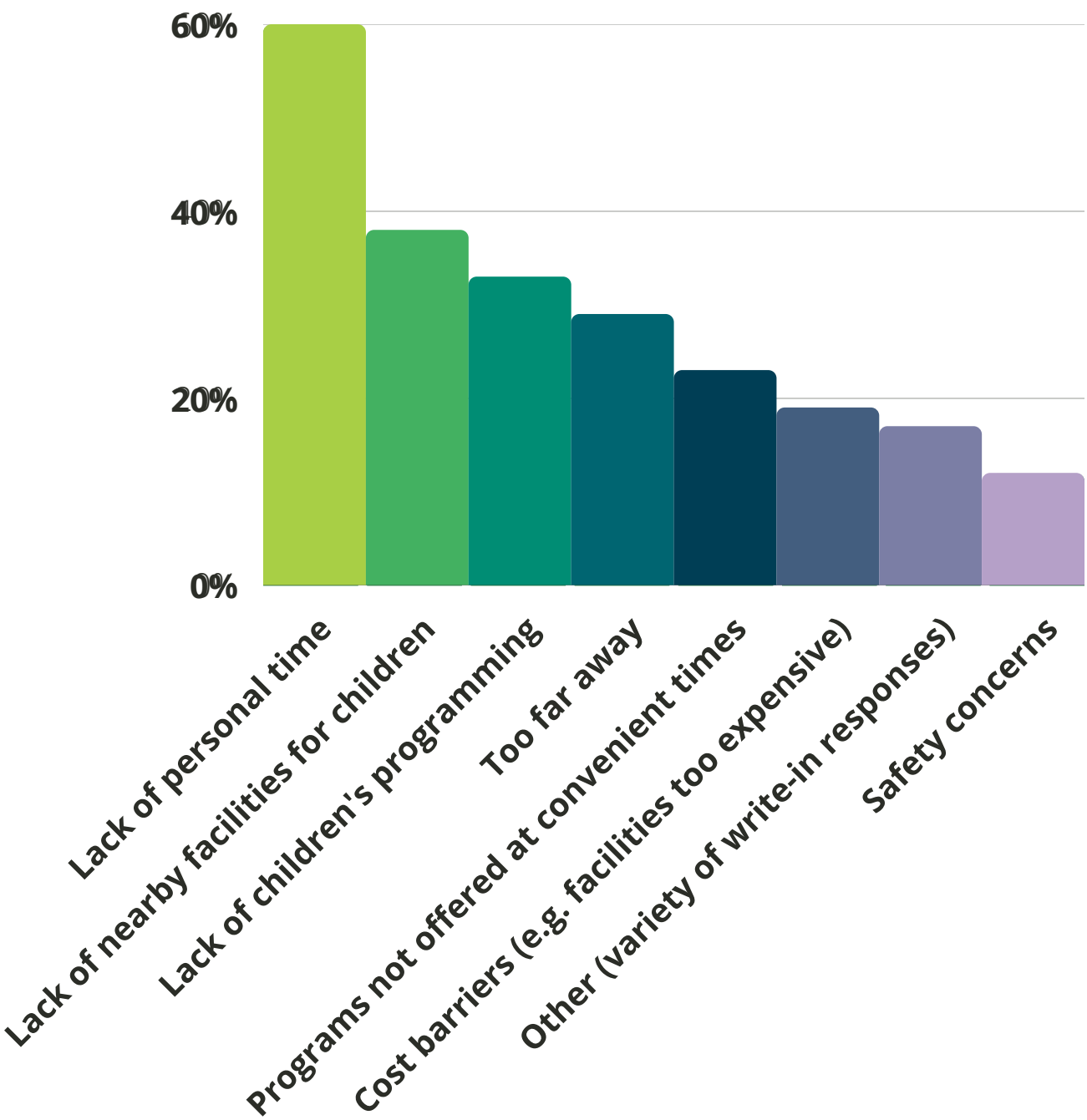
While none of the survey respondents reported using transit to access recreation spaces, **15% expressed an interest in trying transit.** Public transit services are available in the City of Manchester, as well as the towns of Chester, Derry, Londonderry, Goffstown, Hooksett, and New Boston.

Barriers and opportunities for accessing recreation

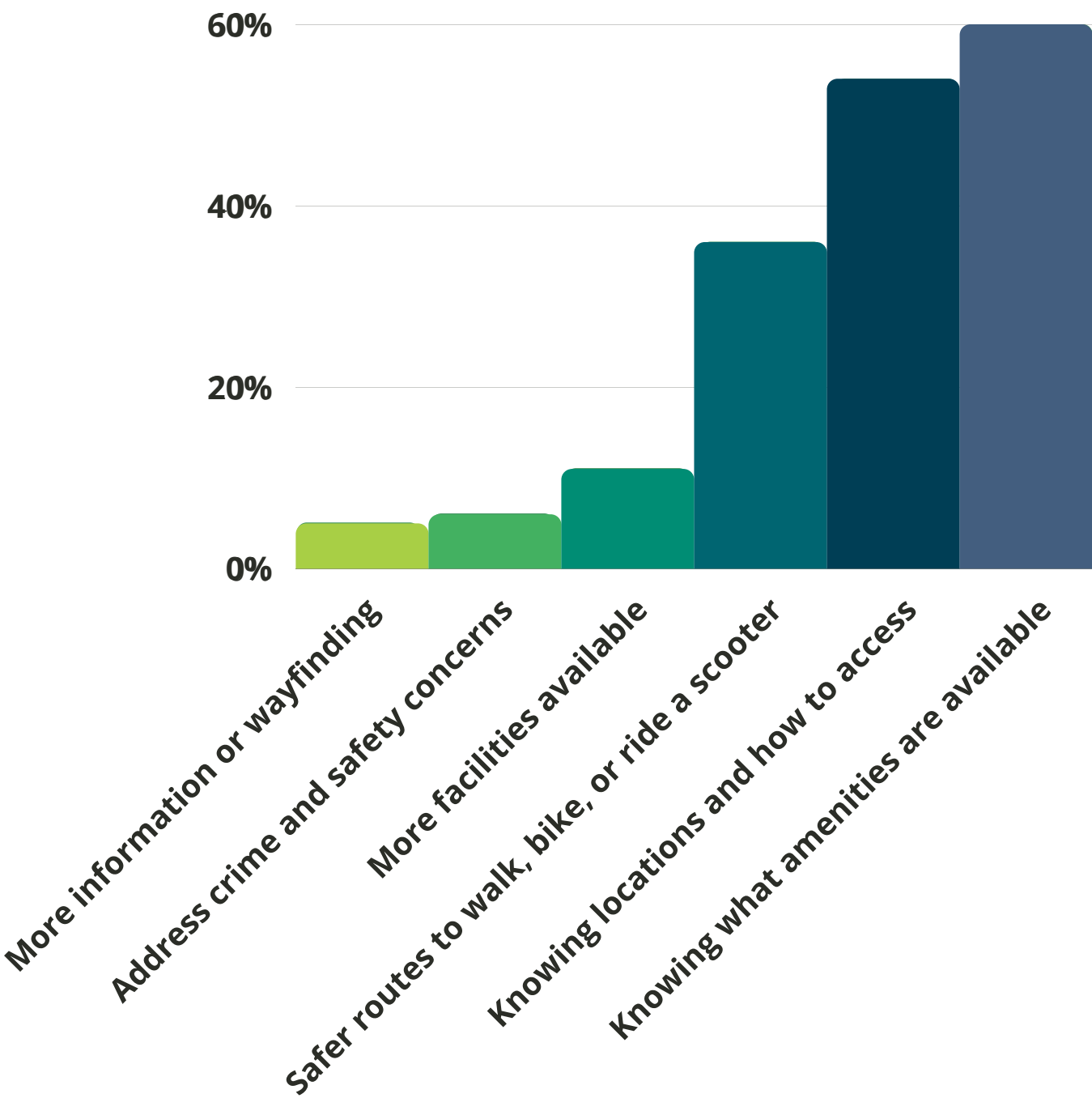
A little more than half of respondents (54%) said they are able to participate in active recreation opportunities as often as they would like. The remainder noted several barriers to access, most notably lack of personal time (60%), lack of nearby facilities of interest to children (38%), and lack of desired children’s programming (33%).

Respondents also pointed to a range of opportunities for facilitating greater access to recreation – especially for first time visitors. These include: enhancing access to information about facility amenities (60%), increasing awareness of facility locations and travel routes (e.g. directions, wayfinding, etc.), and having safe routes to access the site via active transportation modes, including walking, biking, and scooters (36%).

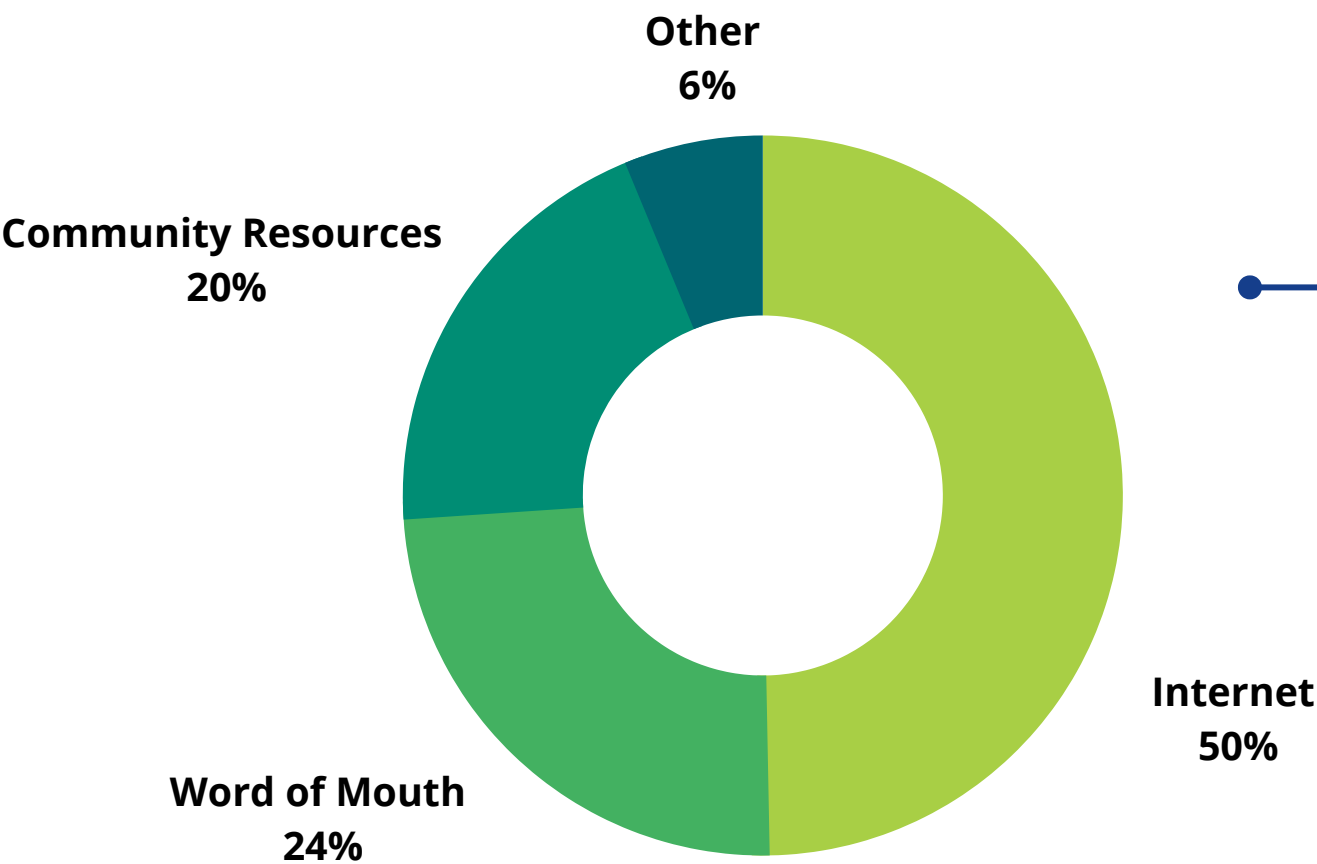
Recreation barriers



Recreation opportunities



"As a working parent we often can only access places on weekends."



Learning about recreation opportunities

Regarding how they learn about parks or recreation programs, respondents most commonly mentioned internet resources such as websites and social media (50%), word of mouth (24%), and community resources such as schools and other community organizations (20%).

Walking: A healthy habit



65% of survey respondents desire sidewalks, walking paths, and bicycle facilities in their neighborhood. Active transportation is one way to incorporate physical activity into a busy day and establish healthy habits early in life.

