

VILLAGE OF PARK FOREST

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Jonathan Vanderbilt  
Board of Trustees

FROM: Thomas K. Mick,  
Village Manager

DATE: September 22, 2021

RE: 2021 Community Survey

**Background**

As part of the Village Board’s work toward strategic planning, several stakeholder assessments were undertaken. One such component was development of a community survey to gauge resident opinion and awareness of Village services and programs. The survey (attached) included a cover memo from the Board stressing the importance of citizen feedback. A community map was included, which served two purposes. First as an educational piece alerting residents to the various parks and Village venues in Park Forest. The second purpose was to provide insights on the different neighborhoods of the community.

The survey was administered in two different capacities. It was mailed to every address in the community via the US postal service. An electronic version of the survey was also created. To further spur public awareness and resident response rates, several steps were taken including:

- A raffle incentive was developed wherein all respondents could be entered into a drawing for \$50 or \$100 water billing credits in addition to a grand prize of a 65” television.
- A display table was set up in the lobby of Village Hall and similar displays were used at Main Street Nights and a pop-up event in Eastgate.
- Regular announcements were made at Village Board Meetings, a reminder was included in a water billing insert, and notice of the survey was on the Orchard Drive overpass LED sign for about 60 days.
- Details on the electronic version of the survey were posted on the Village website with several outreaches being made through social media.

A total of 1,447 survey responses were received; 1,204 were submitted by paper response in addition to 241 electronic survey responses. The response level at 1,447 represents one of the best response rates ever for a Park Forest community survey. For some perspective, details on response rates to previous community surveys include the following:

<b>2012: focus groups/no survey</b>	*2011: 295	*2009: 131	*2008: 100
2007: 625	2006: 852	2005: 762	2003: 981
*2002: 107	2000: 728	1999: 955	

For the years that are asterisked, community surveys were administered in a more targeted

fashion. For example, one year the surveys were administered for residents walking into Village Hall, Walgreens or CVS. In another year, the Village sent out 500 surveys specifically targeting residents who were believed to be residents for less than 5 years based on water billing data. Keeping the details of the above chart in mind, 1,447 survey responses represents a response rate of just under 15% assuming 9,800 addresses.

### **Survey Data Points of Interest**

Response data is provided in the attached report for each of the 30 questions in the survey. Some interesting points of note include the following:

1. More than 83% of survey responses were sent in by paper copy.
2. A breakdown of age group response rates:
  - 1) More than 30 years: 36%
  - 2) More than 20 years: 20%
  - 3) More than 10 years: 16%

Cumulatively, 72% of all responses came from residents who have lived in Park Forest for at least 10 years.

3. The largest responding age groups were 66 – 85 (39%) and 46 – 65 (39%). The smallest responding age ranges were under 25 (1%), over 85 (5%). A total of 5% of responses came from residents in the age range of 26 – 45.
4. Regarding ownership or rentals, 90% of responses came from homeowners (65%) or cooperative owners (25%) while 10% of survey respondents reside in rental units.
5. The largest areas of respondents to the survey are as follows:
  - 1) Cook County multi-family/Cooperative area (327)
  - 2) “W” Streets (136)
  - 3) East/West Lincolnwood (99)
  - 4) Will County single-family (74)
  - 5) “M” Streets (71)
6. The top reasons for why respondents live in Park Forest include 1) housing affordability followed by 2) to be near family and friends, 3) housing variety and 4) safety.
7. The top things that respondents value about Park Forest are 1) parks/open space, 2) library, and 3) cultural arts.
8. More than 85% of respondents believe that Park Forest is an affordable community.
9. Nearly 70% of respondents rated the community appearance as good or better.

10. In assessing resident ratings of departments, approval ratings (defined as good or better) are as follows:

1) Admin & Finance:	80.52%
2) Community Development:	69.61%
3) Economic Development & Planning:	64.6%
4) Fire:	97.15%
5) Police:	93.94%
6) Public Works:	79.66%
7) Recreation, Parks & Community Health:	84.58%

11. Just over 53% of respondents believe the Village solves citizens' problems and meet their expectations. This topic had more than 25% of responders noting "unknown" with 6.2% noting that the Village does a poor job.

12. On the topic of resident safety, nearly 70% of respondents feel safe in Park Forest compared to just over 13% not feeling safe (17% were neutral).

13. In questions specifically related to the Police Department:

- 1) 76% of respondents feel confident that they are treated equally. Nearly 20% are neutral, 3% somewhat disagree and 1% strongly disagree.
- 2) 70% believe the department is highly engaged with the community. Over 25% are neutral, 3% somewhat disagree and 2% strongly disagree.
- 3) 86% believe the department will help if they have a problem while only 4% of responses fall into the categories of disagreement.

14. The Village's top forms of communication with residents are:

- 1) Direct mail
- 2) Water billing inserts
- 3) Website
- 4) CodeRed
- 5) Social media

15. Residents believe that the Village's top priorities should be 1) crime/public safety, 2) improving infrastructure, 3) attracting more retail businesses, and 4) attracting job-producing businesses.

16. Top amenities in the Village include:

- 1) Farmers' Market
- 2) Aqua Center
- 3) Main Street Nights
- 4) Freedom Hall

As a follow up to this topic, a small fraction of respondents offered feedback on amenities they believe are no longer needed in Park Forest including:

- 1) Tennis & Health Club: 85 (5.8%)
- 2) Aqua Center: 41 (2.8%)

- 3) Freedom Hall: 37 (2.5%)
- 4) Main Street Nights: 36 (2.5%)

17. Top recreational amenities include

- 1) Village Parks
- 2) Freedom Hall
- 3) Aqua Center
- 4) Central Park Wetlands
- 5) Old Plank Road Trail
- 6) Village Green

18. Top areas of focus for Public Works should be:

- 1) Roads
- 2) Sewers
- 3) Sidewalks
- 4) Water quality

19. Slightly more than half of respondents said they would pay slightly higher for purchases made in Park Forest rather than going elsewhere.

20. More than 91% respondents do not use, or know of anyone who uses, the Jolly Trolley.

21. Top sustainability topics that residents would like more information on include 1) energy efficiency programs, 2) recycling options, and 3) solar options.

22. On the question of would a resident pay extra fees/taxes for a specific public infrastructure need, 25% of respondents said NO. The other 75% of respondents noted YES for such things as roadways, water mains and sewer lines.



www.villageofparkforest.com

**Mayor**

Jonathan Vanderbilt

**Village Trustees**

Tiffani Graham  
Maya Hardy  
Candyce Herron  
Theresa M. Settles  
Erin I. Slone  
Joseph A. Woods

**Village Clerk**

Sheila McGann

**Village Manager**

Thomas Mick

**Village Hall**

350 Victory Drive  
Park Forest, IL 60466  
(708) 748-1112

**DownTown  
Management Office**

226 Forest Blvd.  
(708) 503-8153

**Fire Department**

156 Indianwood Blvd.  
(708) 748-5605

**Freedom Hall**

410 Lakewood Blvd.  
(708) 747-0580

**Police Department**

200 Lakewood Blvd.  
(708) 748-4700

**Recreation and  
Parks Department**

350 Victory Drive  
(708) 748-2005

April 29, 2021

Dear Park Forest Resident:

The Village of Park Forest is beginning a strategic planning process. This work will assist in developing goals to guide allocation of Village resources and services for the next 3 to 5 years. As part of this work, input is being sought by residents. The Village asks that you please complete the enclosed survey. Your insights are critical in gaining community input. A strong survey response provides officials with great insights and your assistance is respectfully encouraged. The survey can be completed anonymously with your name/address being optional. Though, to be entered into a raffle for more than a dozen prizes, be sure to include your name/address where noted.

**The response deadline is June 15, 2021.** Included is a map which notes the various neighborhoods of Park Forest in addition to Village parks, recreational venues and municipal facilities. If sending the survey response back anonymously, please consider placing an X on the map to indicate the neighborhood of Park Forest in which you live.

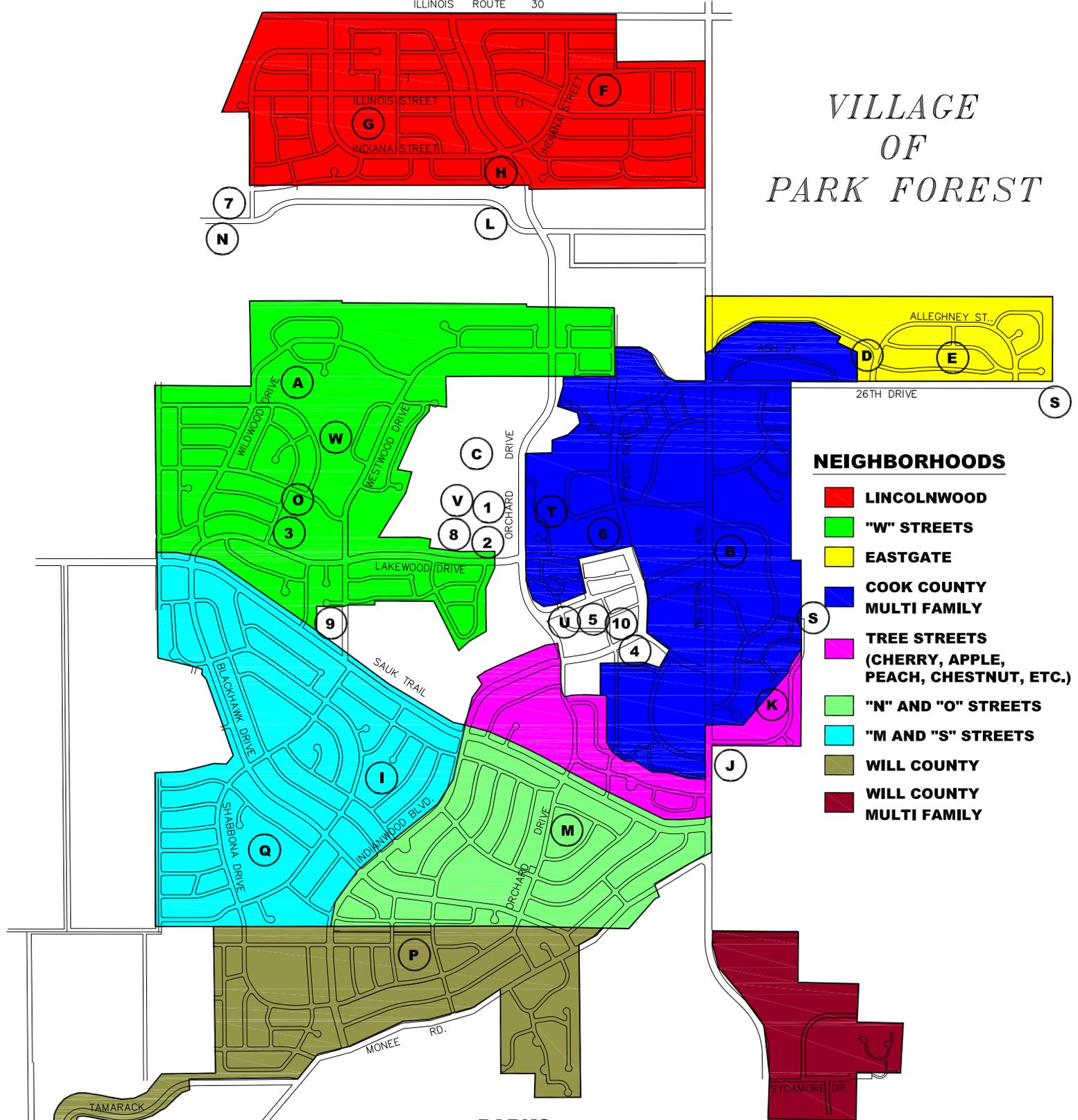
The enclosed envelope (no postage necessary) has been provided for mailing the survey back to Village Hall. Questions about this survey can be directed to Village Manager Tom Mick ([tmick@vopf.com](mailto:tmick@vopf.com) or 708-748-1129).

Los residents de Park Forest que quieran obtener una copia de la encuesta en español pueden ponerse en contacto con la Oficina del Gerente de Park Forest Village Hall

Sincerely,

Mayor Jonathan Vanderbilt  
& the Village of Park Forest Board of Trustees

# VILLAGE OF PARK FOREST



## NEIGHBORHOODS

- LINCOLNWOOD
- "W" STREETS
- EASTGATE
- COOK COUNTY MULTI FAMILY
- TREE STREETS (CHERRY, APPLE, PEACH, CHESTNUT, ETC.)
- "N" AND "O" STREETS
- "M AND "S" STREETS
- WILL COUNTY
- WILL COUNTY MULTI FAMILY

## PARKS

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. BARK DISTRICT (DOG PARK)</li> <li>B. CEDAR PARK</li> <li>C. CENTRAL PARK</li> <li>D. EASTGATE PARK</li> <li>E. EASTGATE TOT LOT</li> <li>F. ILLINOIS PARK SCHOOL</li> <li>G. INDIANA PARK SCHOOL</li> <li>H. LOGAN PARK</li> <li>I. MARQUETTE PARK</li> <li>J. MEMORIAL PARK</li> <li>K. MURPHY PARK</li> <li>L. OLD PLANK TRAIL</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>M. ONARGA PARK</li> <li>N. RAIL FAN PARK</li> <li>O. SKATE PARK</li> <li>P. SHABBONA PARK</li> <li>Q. SOMONAUK PARK</li> <li>R. THORN CREEK NATURE CENTER AND TRAILS</li> <li>S. THORN CREEK TRAIL HEADS</li> <li>T. VETERANS PARK</li> <li>U. VILLAGE GREEN</li> <li>V. WETLAND DISCOVERY CENTER</li> <li>W. WINNEBAGO PARK</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

## FACILITIES

- 1. AQUA CENTER
- 2. LIBRARY
- 3. RECREATION CENTER
- 4. POST OFFICE
- 5. VILLAGE HALL
- 6. POLICE DEPARTMENT
- 7. COMMUTER PARKING LOT
- 8. FREEDOM HALL
- 9. TENNIS AND HEALTH CLUB
- 10. FIRE DEPARTMENT

## Park Forest Community Survey

1. How long have you lived in Park Forest (please circle one)?

Less than 1 year                      1 to 5 years                      5 to 10 Years  
 More than 10 Years                      More than 20 Years                      More than 30 Years

2. What is your age group? \_\_\_\_\_ Under 25    \_\_\_\_\_ 26 – 45    \_\_\_\_\_ 46 – 65    \_\_\_\_\_ 66 – 85    \_\_\_\_\_ Over 85

3. Why do you choose to live in Park Forest (please check all that apply)?

- Lifelong resident                       Type of housing                       Schools (K-12)  
 Friends and family nearby     Leisure amenities/recreation options                       Safety  
 Proximity to Governors State University, Prairie State College, etc.                       Housing Affordability

4. What do you value about Park Forest (please check all that apply)?

- Schools                       Library                       Parks/Open Space     Cultural Arts  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_                       Other: \_\_\_\_\_                       Other: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Based on your current financial status, would you consider Park Forest an affordable community for your family?

Yes                      No

6. For your primary residence in Park Forest, do you:

Own    Cooperative    Rent

7. How would you rate the overall look/appearance of the Village neighborhoods?

Excellent                      Very Good                      Good    Fair                      Poor                      Unknown

8. Please rate the overall effectiveness of the following Village Departments (Please circle your choice):

Police	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Unknown
Fire	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Unknown
Admin/ Finance	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Unknown
Community Dev. Economic Dev. & Planning	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Unknown
Public Works	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Unknown
Recreation, Parks & Community Health	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Unknown

9. How well does the Village of Park Forest solve the citizens' problems and meet their expectations?

Excellent                      Very Good                      Good    Fair                      Poor                      Unknown

10. I feel safe in the Village of Park Forest.

Strongly Agree    Somewhat Agree    Neutral    Somewhat Disagree    Strongly Disagree

11. I am confident that the Park Forest Police Department treats people with whom they interact equally, regardless of race, sex, sexual orientation, disability, ethnicity, religious beliefs, socioeconomic status, or immigration status.

Strongly Agree    Somewhat Agree    Neutral    Somewhat Disagree    Strongly Disagree

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Resident Name (optional\*)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Address (optional\*)**

**\*Info needed to be included in raffle/drawing**

12. The Park Forest Police Department is highly engaged with the community.  
Strongly Agree   Somewhat Agree   Neutral   Somewhat Disagree   Strongly Disagree

13. If I have a problem, I trust the Park Forest Police Department to help.  
Strongly Agree   Somewhat Agree   Neutral   Somewhat Disagree   Strongly Disagree

14. What methods of communication does the Village of Park Forest use effectively to provide information to the public (please check all that apply)?

- Direct Mail
- Cable Access Channels
- Village Website
- Other (please note) \_\_\_\_\_
- Social media (Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter)
- Village Board Meetings
- CodeRed
- E-mail
- Discover Magazine
- Water Billing Insert

15. Please rank the following items (1 through 6, with 1 being the highest priority) where you think Village should devote the most attention and resources:

- Crime/Public Safety
- Infrastructure (roads, sewer, water mains, sidewalks)
- Attracting more retail stores into the Village
- Attracting job producing businesses
- Recreational services (parks and programs)
- Neighborhood stabilization (housing quality, code enforcement, etc.)

16. Which Village resources or amenities you have used and like having in the Village (please check all that apply)?

- Aqua Center
- Main Street Nights
- Community Relations Events (House Music Night, Resident Appreciation, etc.)
- Tennis and Health Club
- Farmers' Market

17. Of the items listed in question #16/above are there any that you feel the Village does NOT need?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

18. What recreational facilities do you visit most often (please check all that apply)?

- Park Forest Aqua Center
- Rail Fan Park
- Village Green
- Village Hall Lower Level
- Village Parks – Please indicate which ones
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Central Park Wetlands
- Old Plank Road Trail
- Freedom Hall/Nathan Manilow Theatre
- Recreation Center at Michelle Obama School
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Park Forest Tennis & Health Club
- Bark District Dog Park
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

19. What programs would you like to see continue to be offered (please check all that apply)?

- Dance
- Trips
- Sports (basketball, cheer, martial arts, softball/baseball, volleyball, gymnastics, pickelball, tennis, football, soccer, etc.)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Arts & Crafts
- Teen Programs
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Health & Fitness
- Preschool Programs
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Summer Camps
- 55 & Older Programs

20. How would you like to receive information on programs offered by Recreation, Parks & Community Health (please check all that apply)?

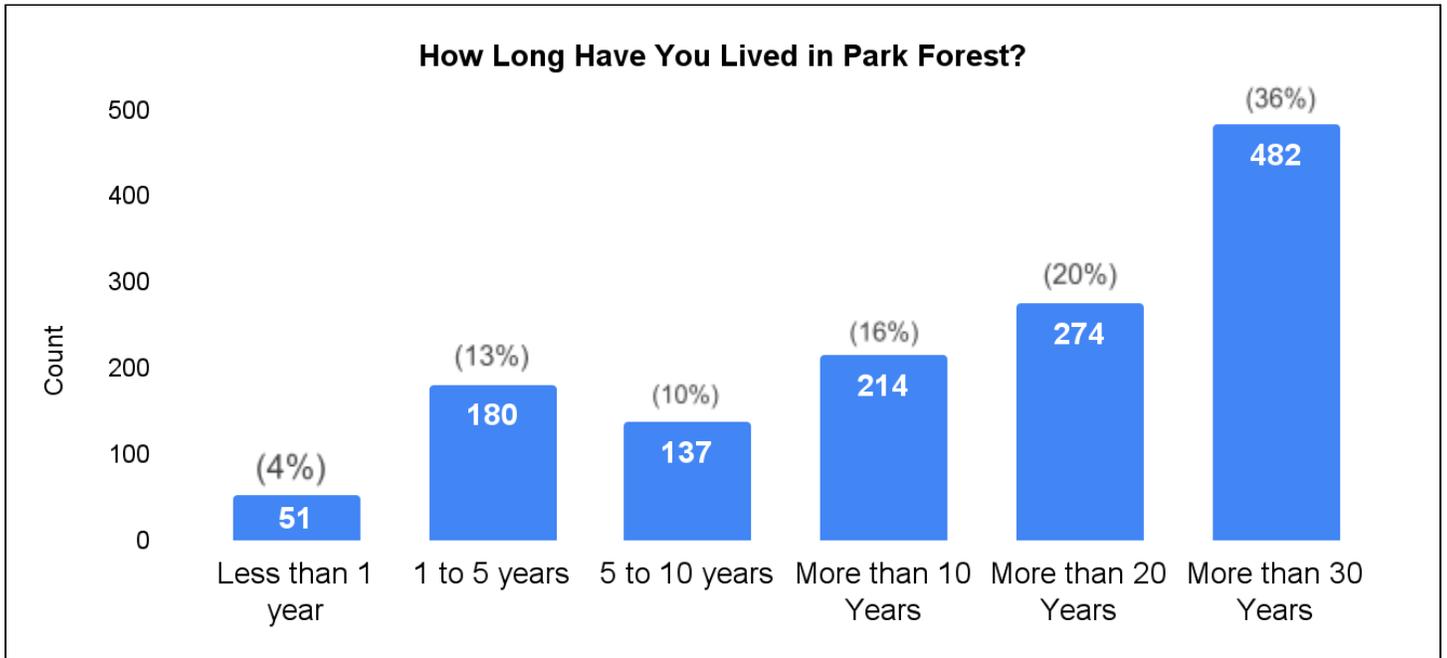
- Direct Mail
- E-Mail
- Other (please note) \_\_\_\_\_
- Cable Access Channels
- Water Billing Inserts
- Social Media – Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter
- Village of Park Forest Website

21. What benefits do you feel Recreation, Parks & Community Health provide to residents (Check all that apply)?
- Provides outdoor spaces/opportunities for recreation
  - Provides activities for teens
  - Promotes an awareness of healthy lifestyle choices
  - Promotes health & wellness
  - Offers a range of recreational programs and classes
  - Sponsors events that strengthen community
  - Promotes environmental awareness and understanding
22. What community events and programs would you like to see offered more (Please check all that apply)?
- Community Garden Program
  - Main Street Nights summer concert series
  - Holiday Events/Programs
  - Events that promote local businesses
  - Neighborhood block parties
  - Events to promote sustainable living (Recycle Fest)
23. What 3 areas would you like to see Public Works improve in the next 5-10 years (Please check all that apply)?
- Road maintenance
  - Sewer maintenance
  - Snow & ice removal
  - Water quality
  - Street light replacement
  - Storm water management
  - Sidewalk maintenance
24. Are you willing to pay a slightly higher cost for the same products you usually purchase (like groceries, for example) for the convenience of having them available in Park Forest?  Yes  No
25. The Village offers a dial-a-ride service called Jolly Trolley. Do you or someone who lives with you use the Jolly Trolley bus service?
- Yes – How often? \_\_\_\_\_
  - No
26. What are your thoughts about the current single-family home garbage collection contract, what would you want to see changed, added, etc.?
- Nothing – I like the garbage pickup service as-is
  - I would like to see more electronic pick up service
  - I would like to see composting services offered
  - I would like to be able to buy lawn waste bags anywhere and not have to buy separate stickers
  - I would like to be given a yard waste bin and do away with bags and stickers.
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_
27. Check the topics listed if you would like more information about them (Please check all that apply).
- Energy efficiency programs
  - Recycling options
  - Community gardening
  - Rain gardens
  - Solar options
  - Composting
  - Use of public transportation
28. If you could determine how much of your tax dollars were to be divided into the follow maintenance categories, please indicate percentage (must add up to 100%).
- Replacing roadways \_\_\_\_\_
  - Addressing flooding/backups \_\_\_\_\_
  - Replacing water mains \_\_\_\_\_
  - Replacing sewer mains \_\_\_\_\_
  - Replacing street lights \_\_\_\_\_
  - Replacing sidewalks \_\_\_\_\_
29. Would you be willing to pay extra fees/taxes knowing that those fees would go strictly to particular infrastructure improvements? (i.e. \$3 extra fee/tax to go strictly into a road replacement fund, street light replacement program, etc.)
- No
  - Yes – for a roadway replacement fund
  - Yes – water main replacement
  - Yes – sewer main replacement
  - Yes – for a street light replacement fund
  - Yes – Other \_\_\_\_\_
30. Do you realize that the Village offers electronic payment for the following Village services?
- Water Billing
  - Vehicle Sticker
  - Animal Licenses
  - Program Registration
  - Others: \_\_\_\_\_

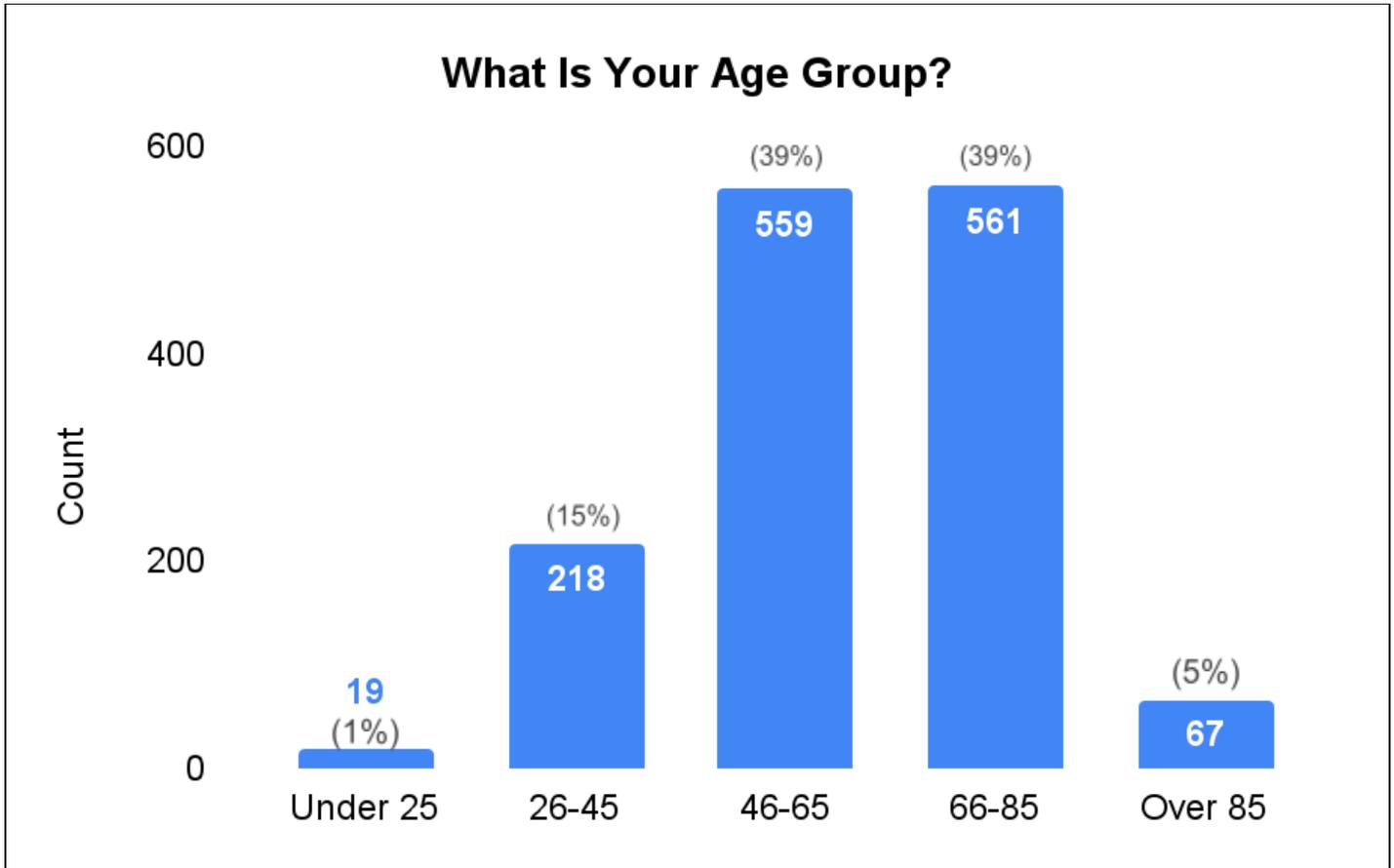


# Village of Park Forest Community Survey Analysis Results - 2021

## 1. How Long Have You Lived in Park Forest?



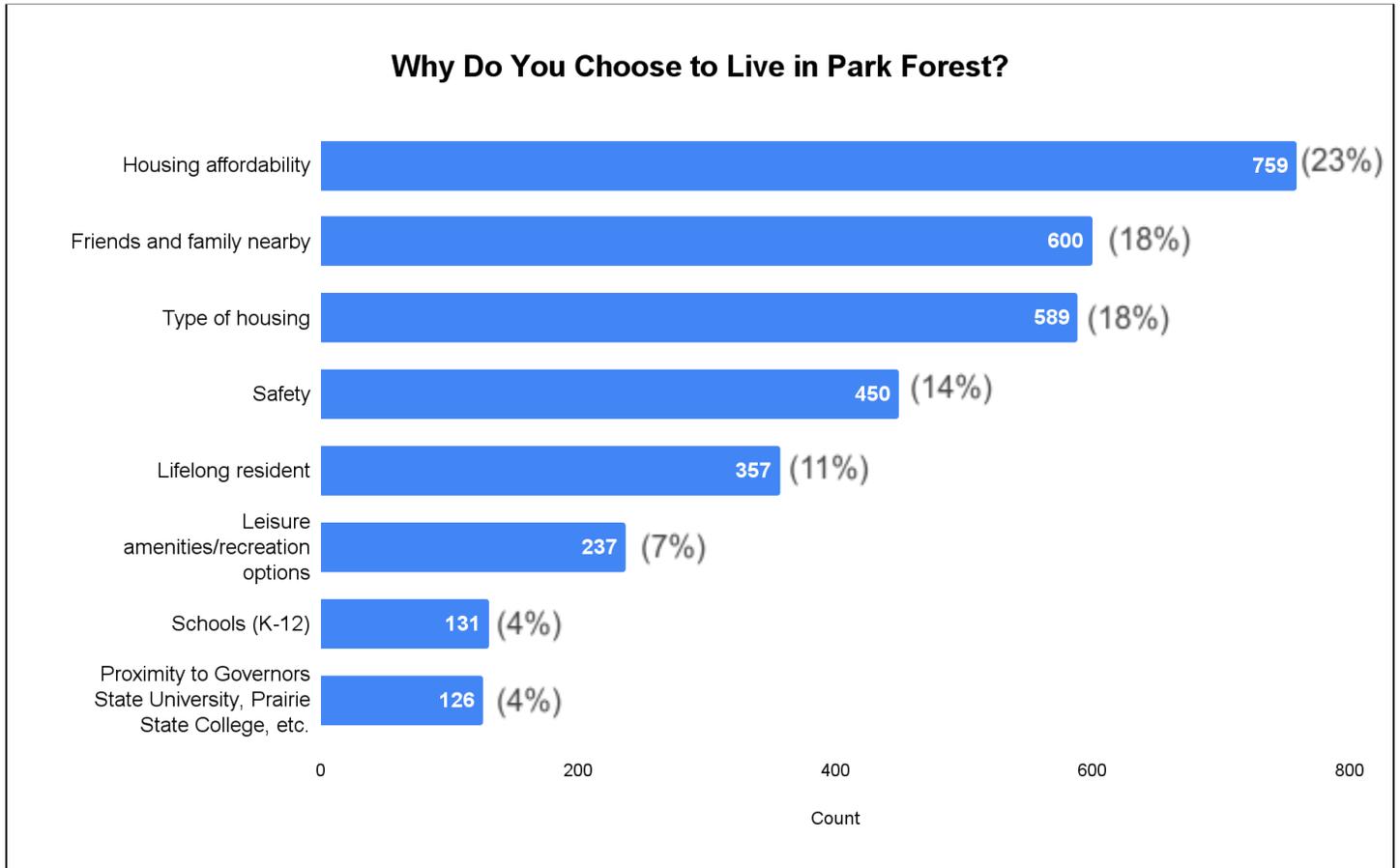
**2. What is Your Age Group?**



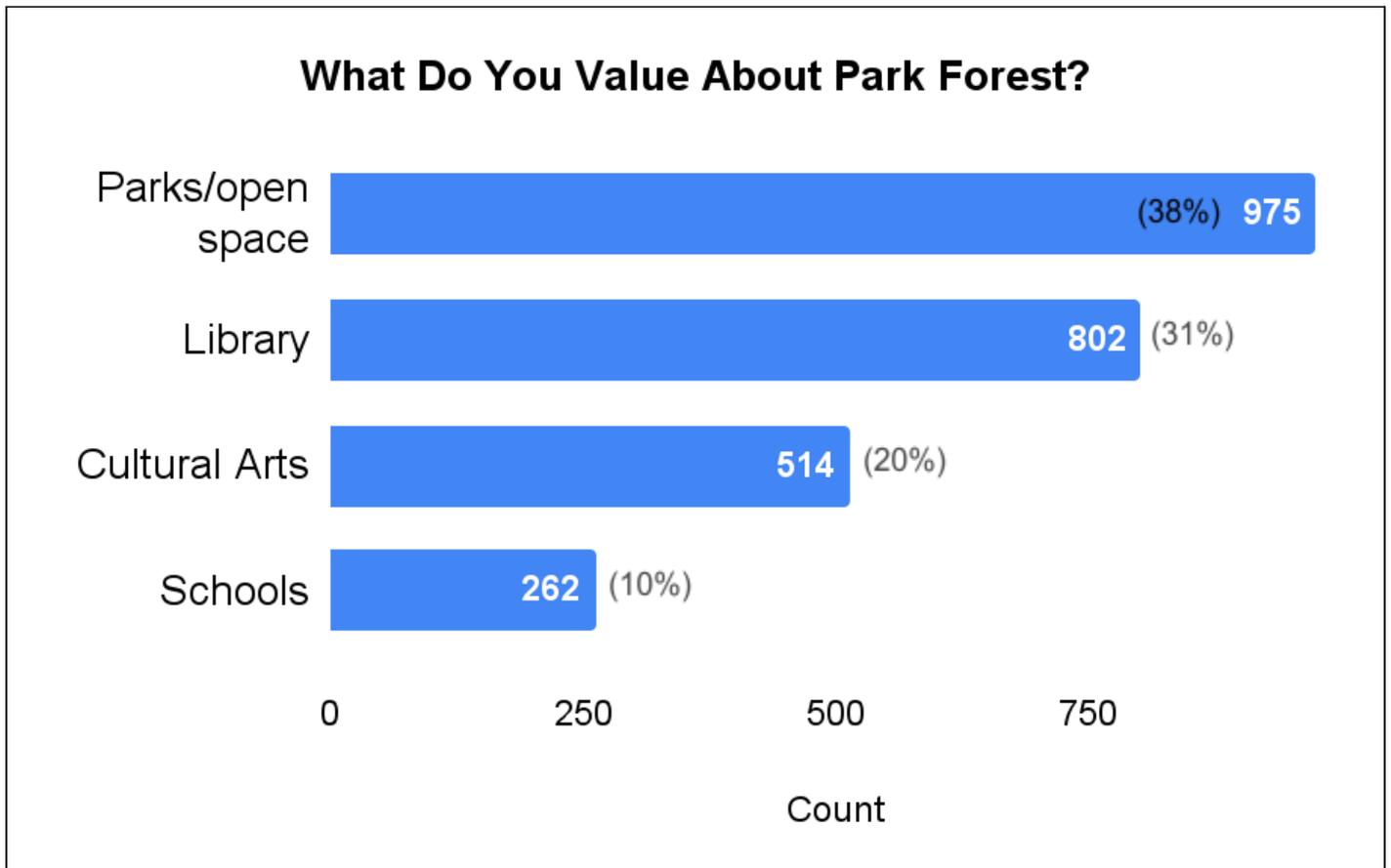


## Village of Park Forest Community Survey Analysis Results - 2021

### 3. Why Do You Choose to Live in Park Forest? (check all that apply)

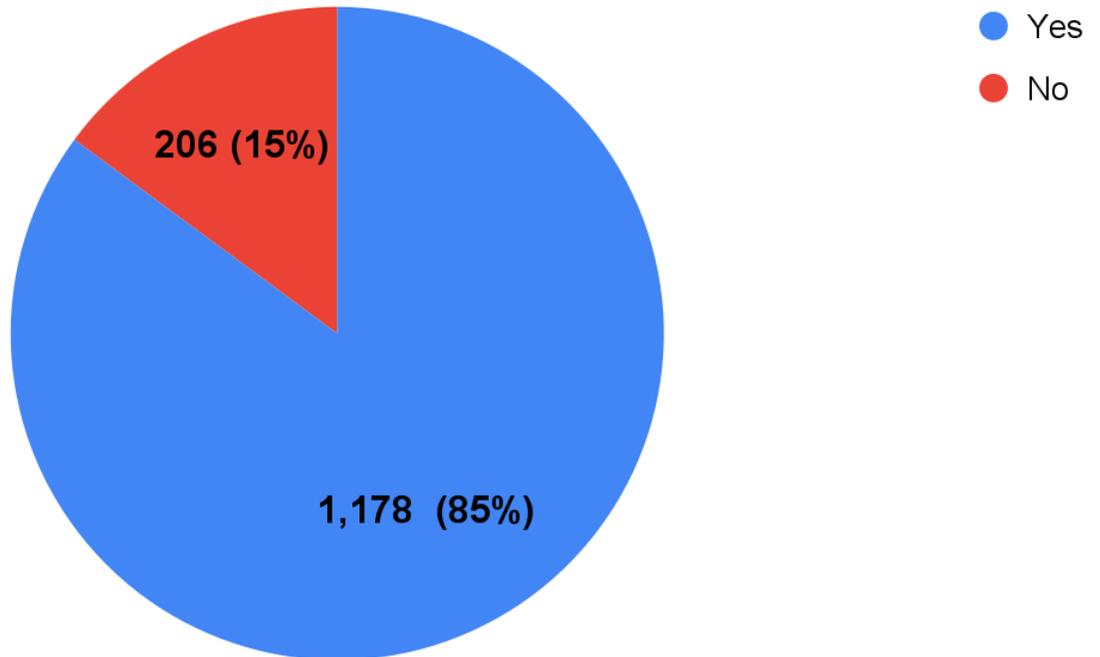


**4. What Do You Value About Park Forest? (check all that apply)**

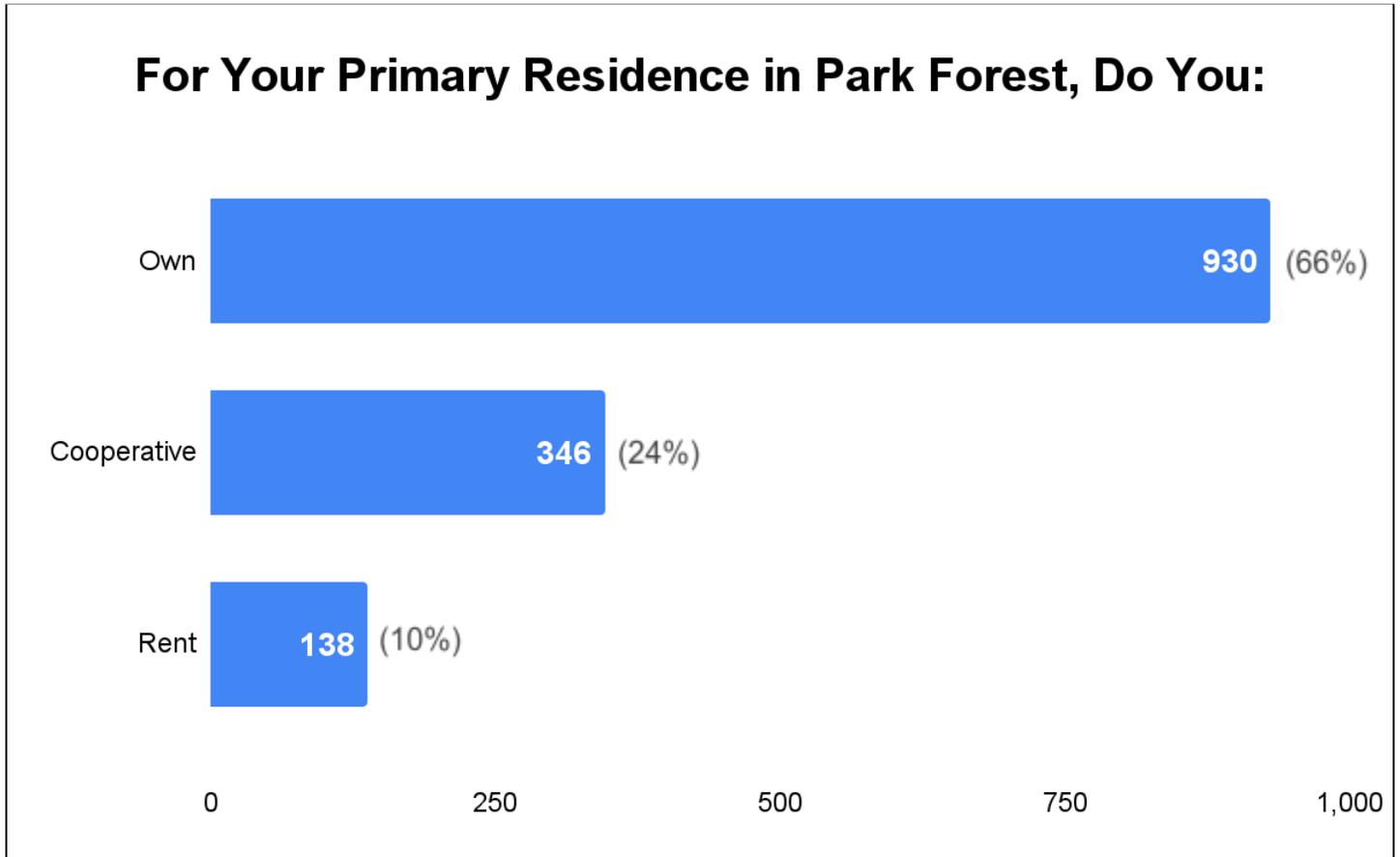


**5. Based on Your Current Financial Status, Would You Consider Park Forest an Affordable Community for Your Family?**

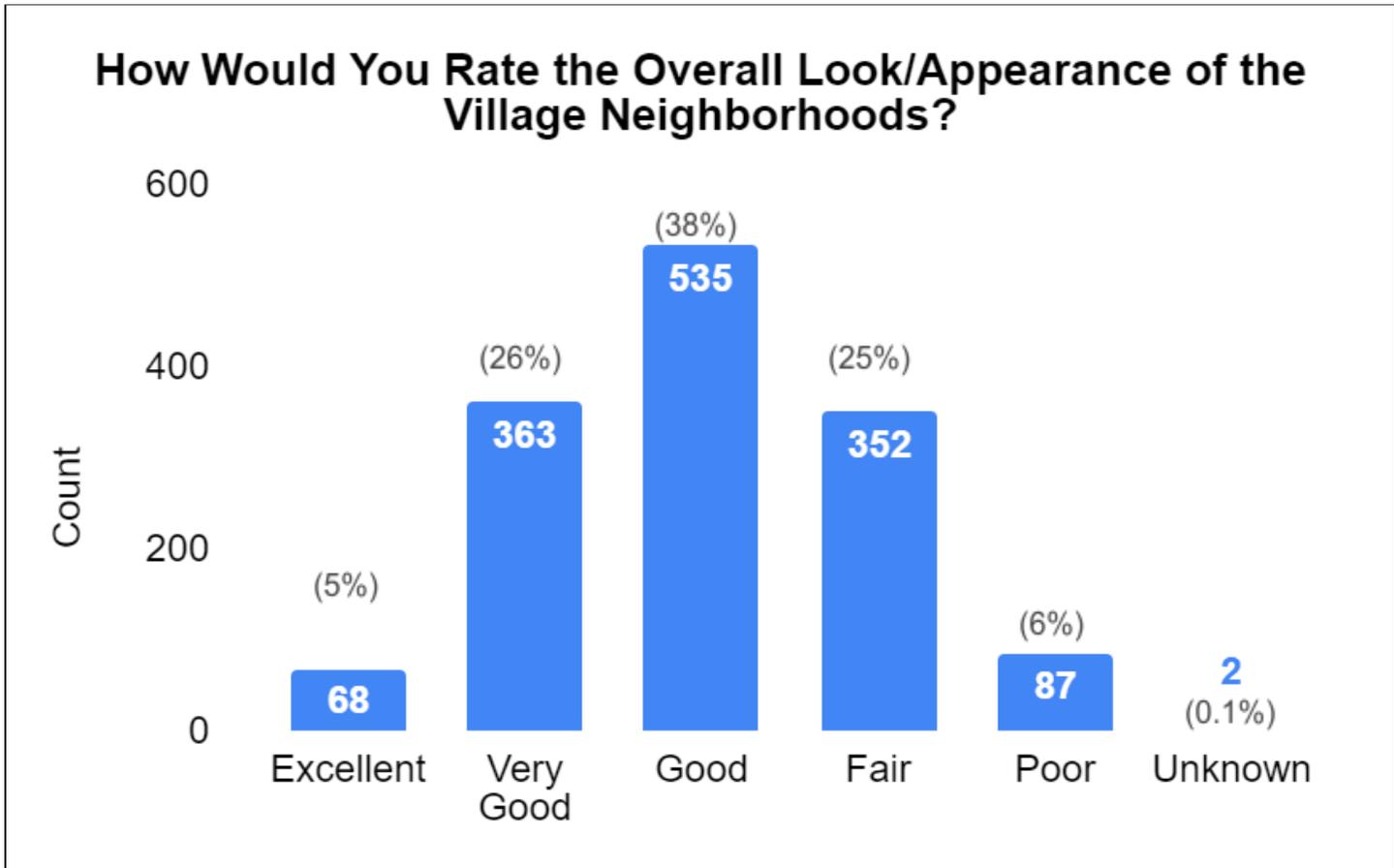
**Would You Consider Park Forest an Affordable Community for Your Family?**



**6. For Your Primary Residence in Park Forest, Do You:**



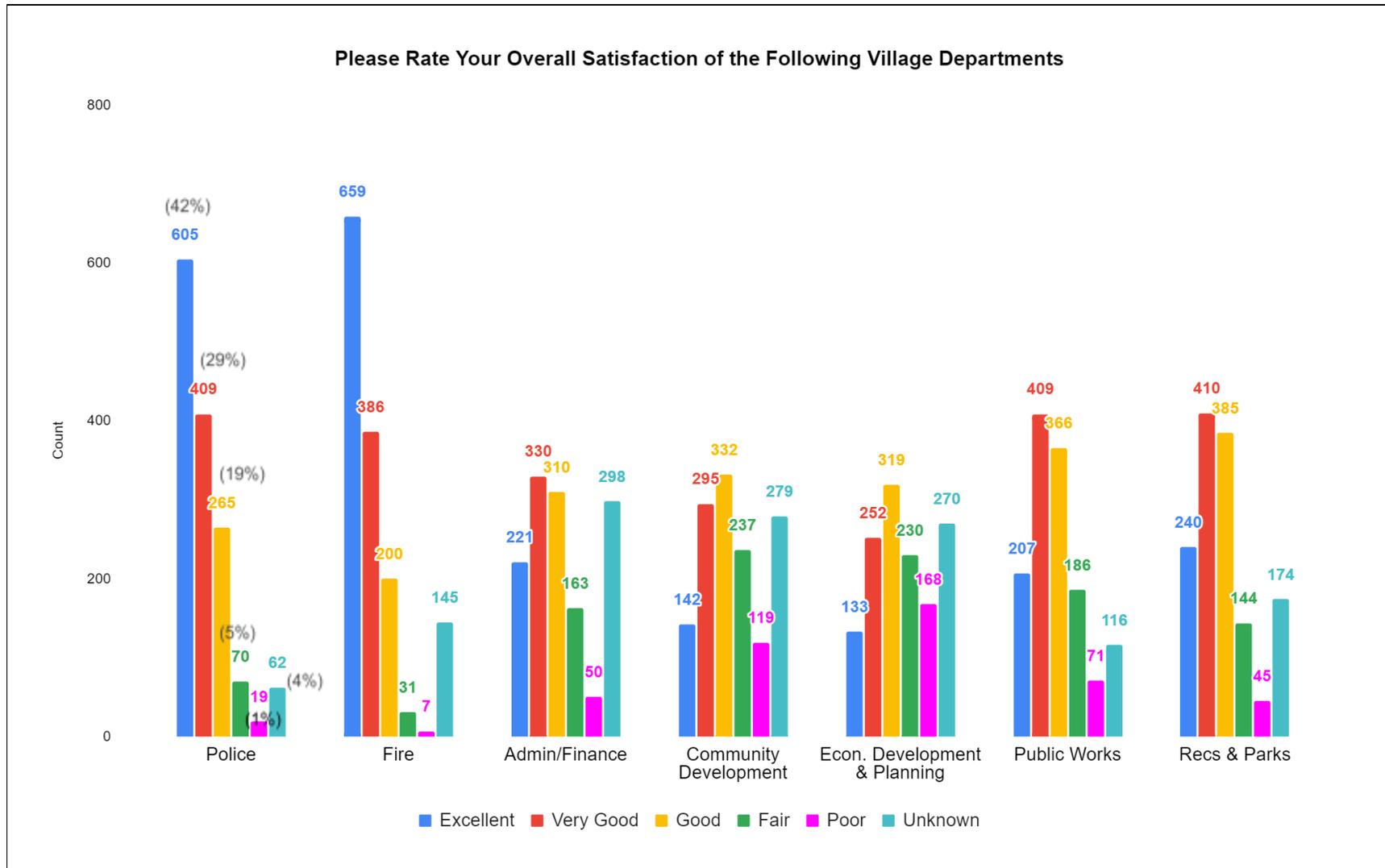
**7. How Would You Rate the Overall Look/Appearance of the Village Neighborhoods?**



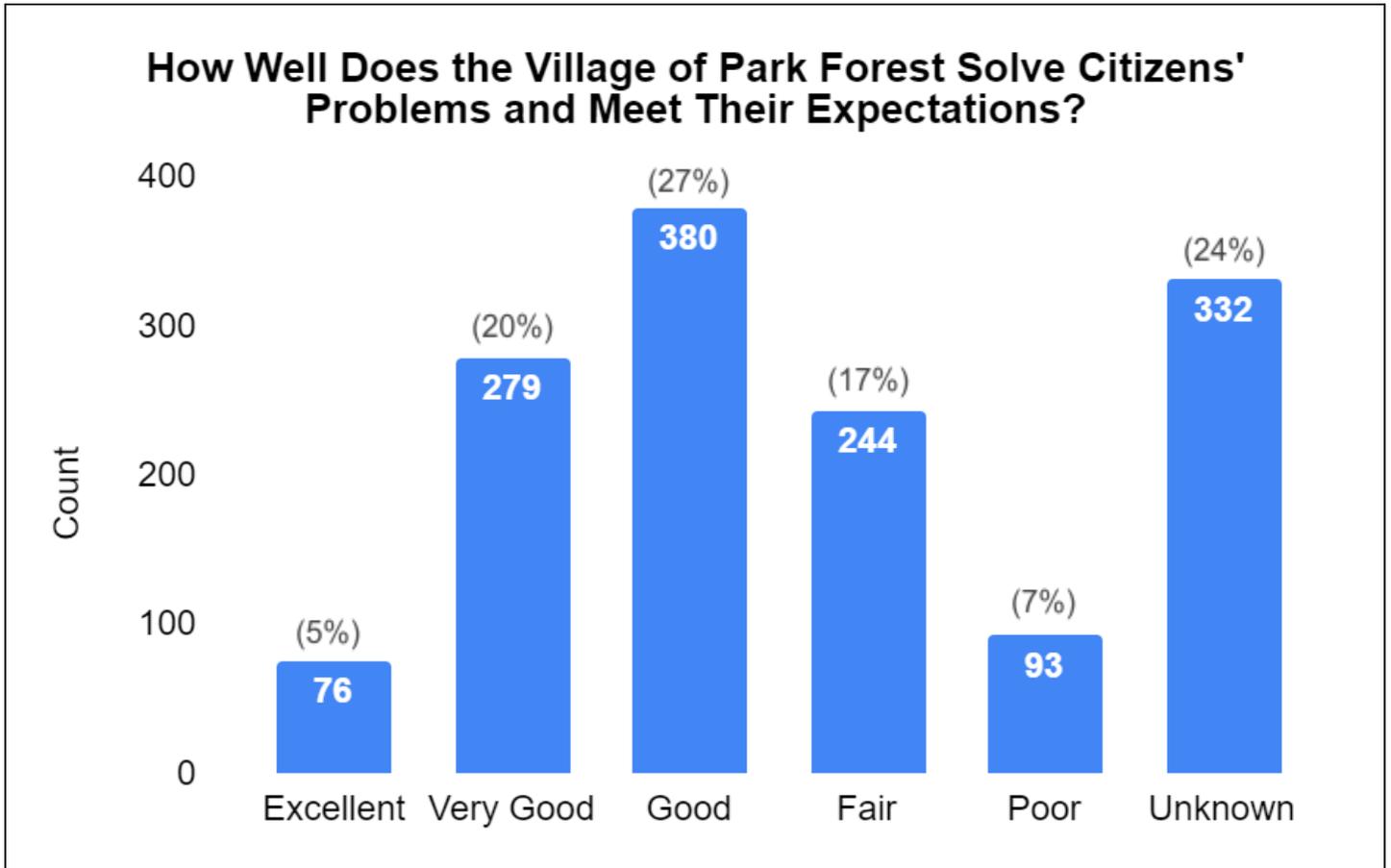


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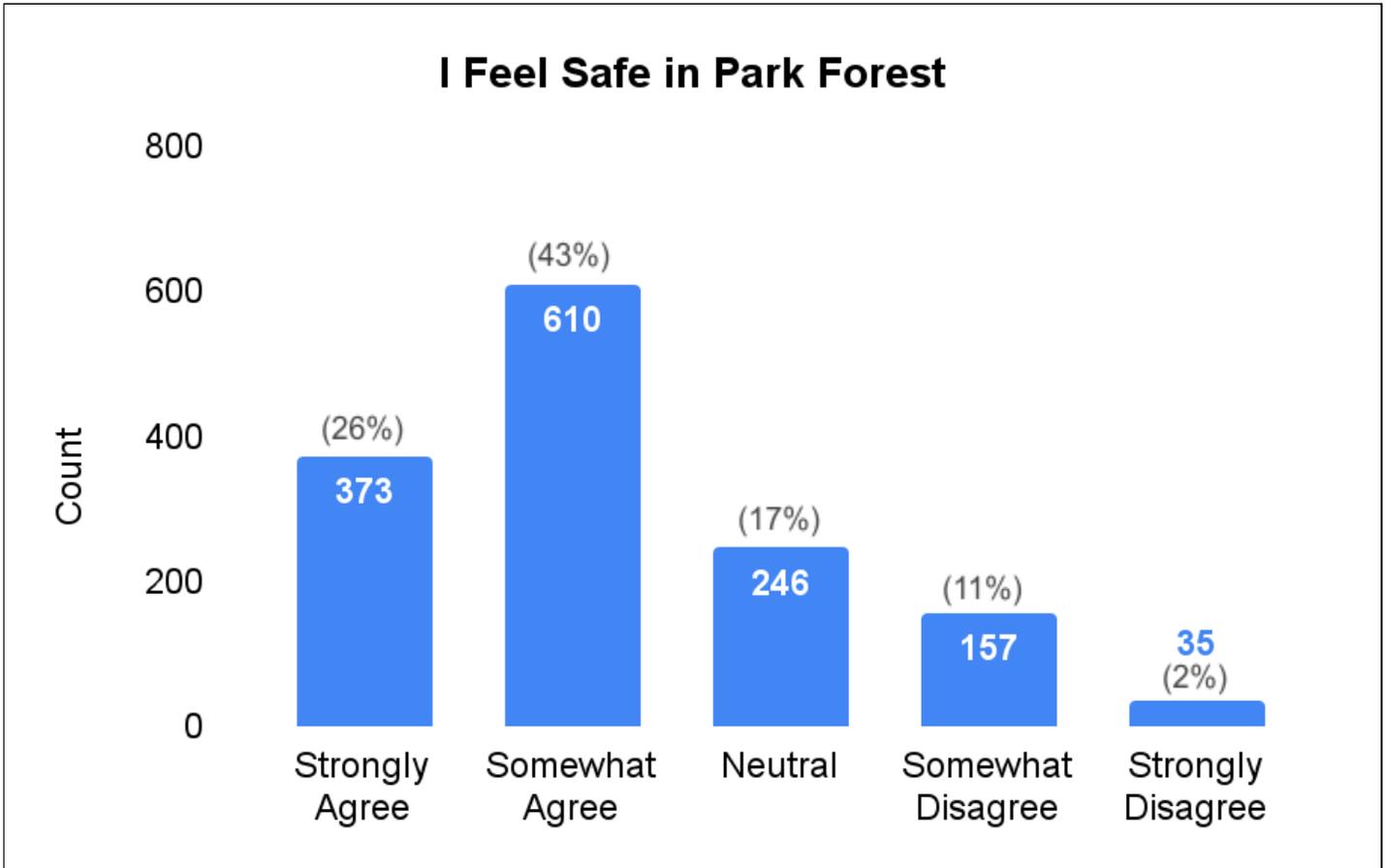
### 8. Please Rate Your Overall Satisfaction of the Following Village Departments:



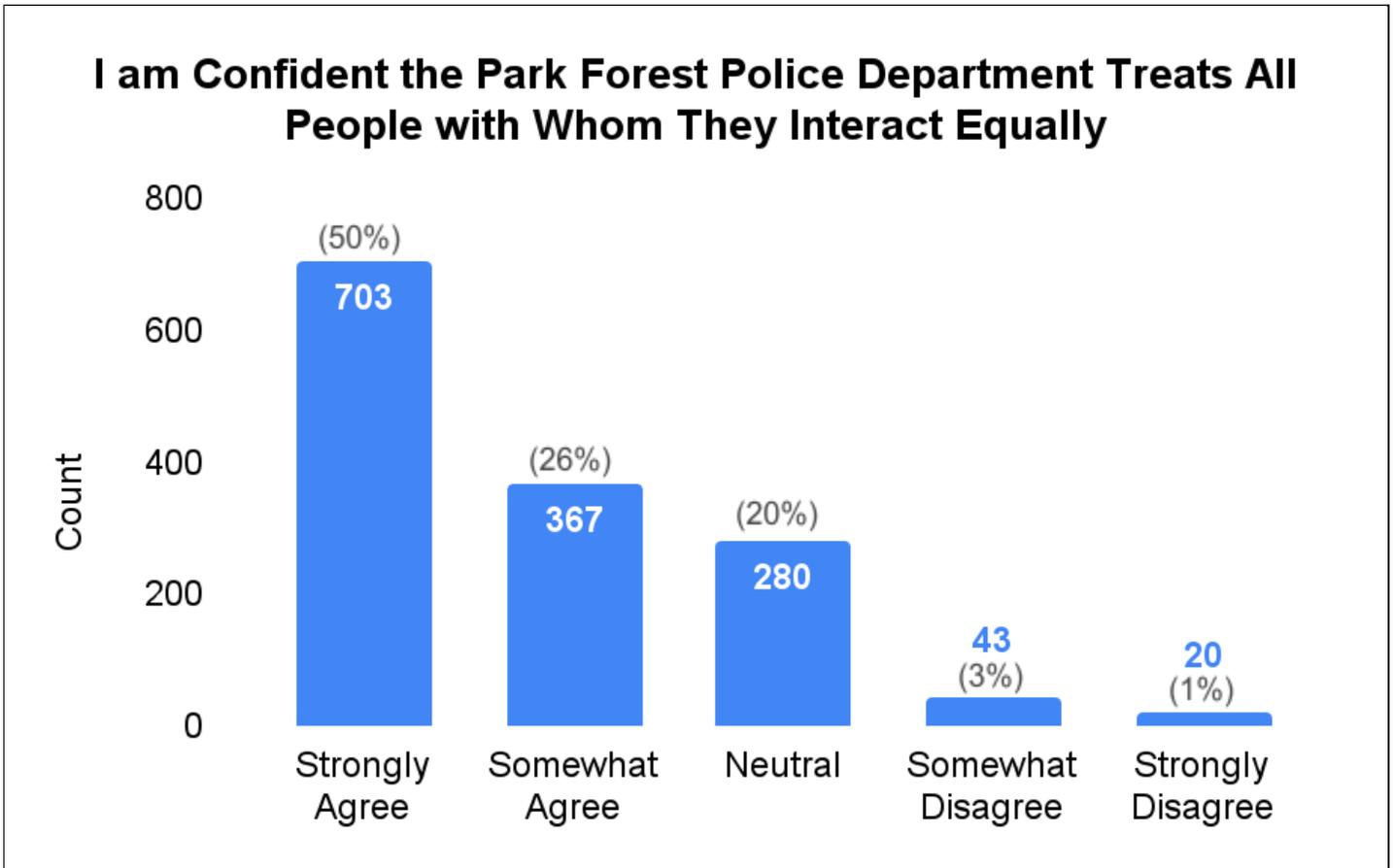
**9. How Well Does the Village of Park Forest Solve Citizens' Problems and Meet Their Expectations?**



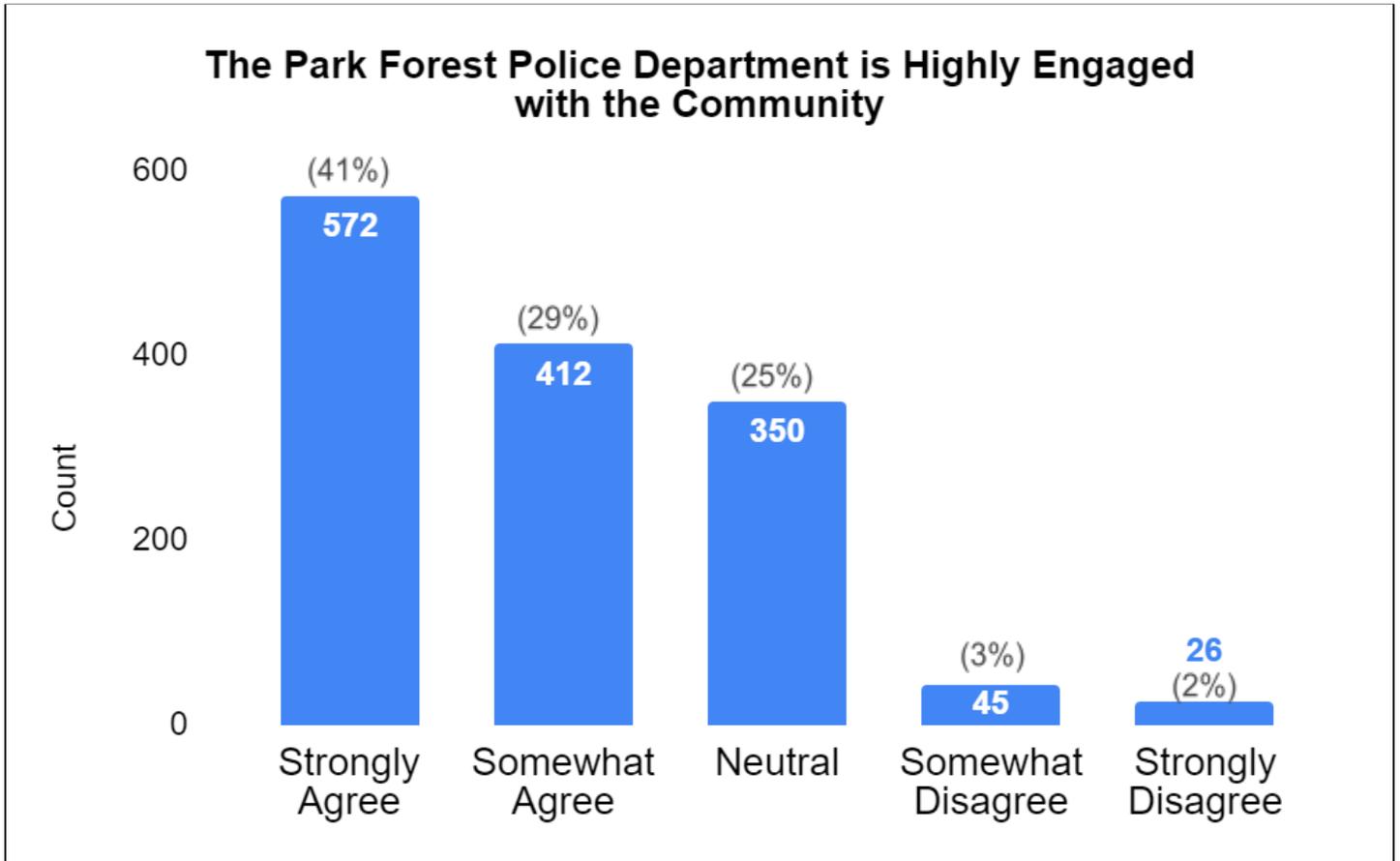
**10. I Feel Safe in Park Forest.**



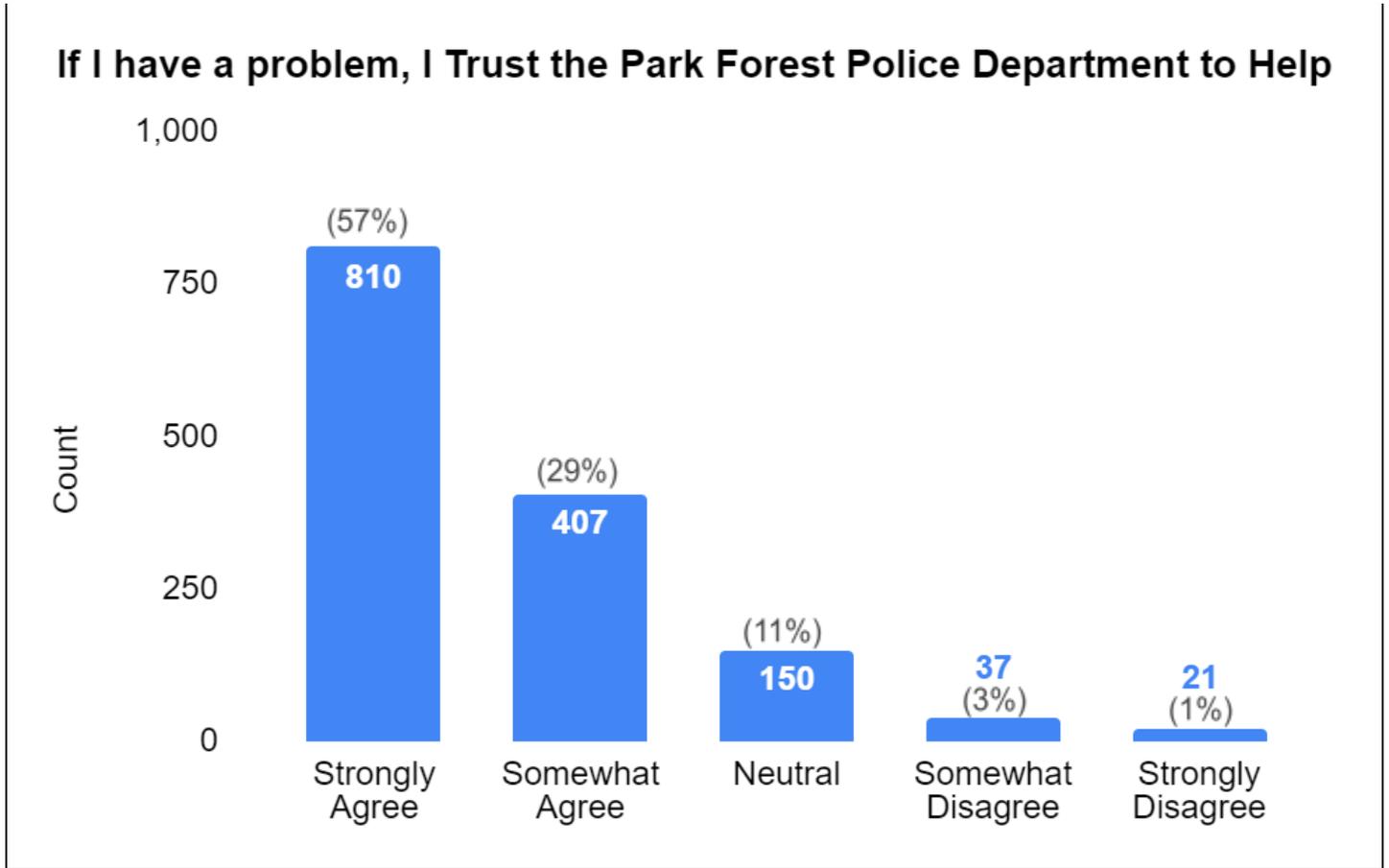
**11. I am Confident the Park Forest Police Department Treats All People with Whom They Interact Equally Regardless of Race, Sex, Sexual Orientation, Disability, Ethnicity, Religious Beliefs, Socioeconomic Status, or Immigration Status.**



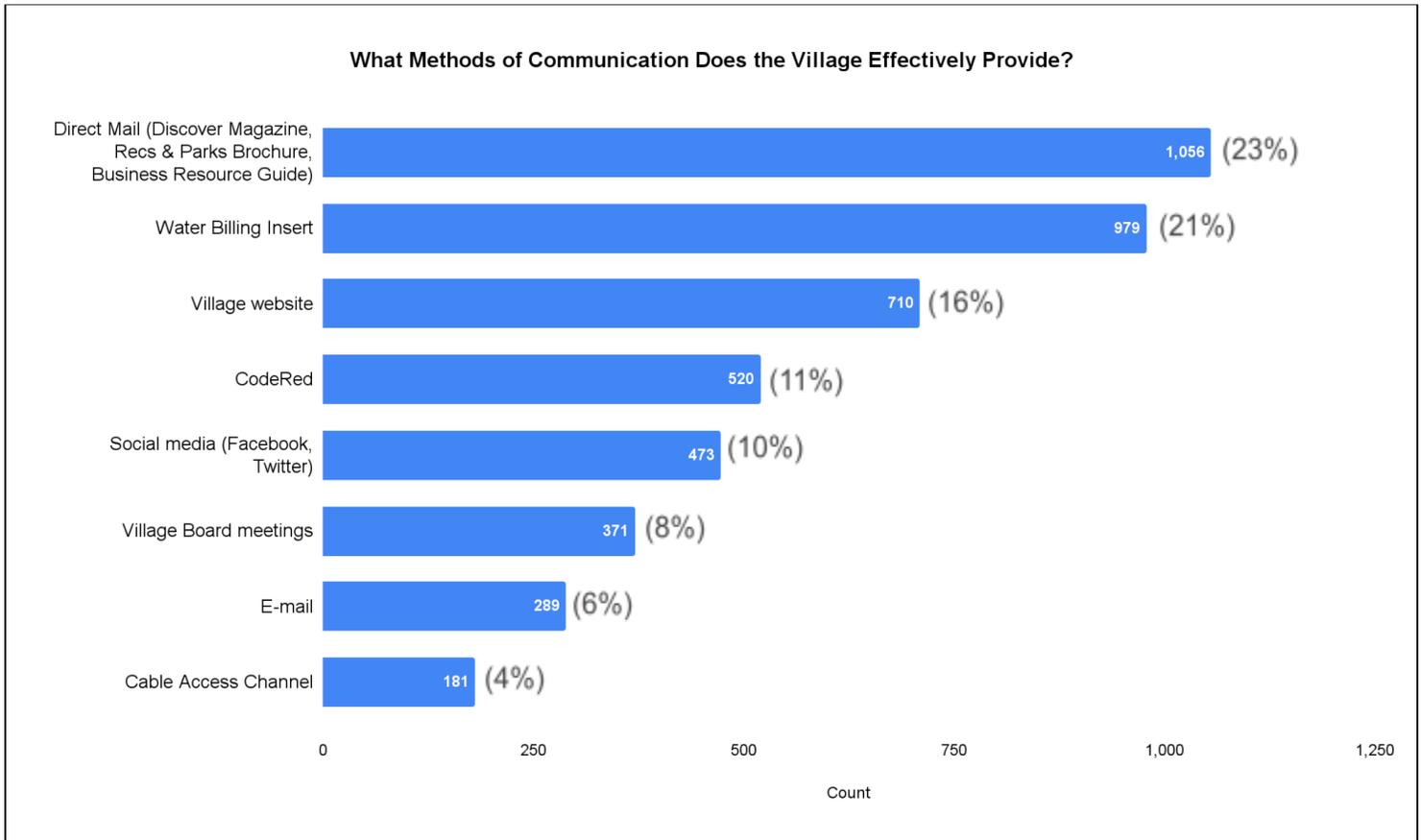
**12. The Park Forest Police Department is Highly Engaged with the Community.**



**13. If I have a problem, I Trust the Park Forest Police Department to Help**



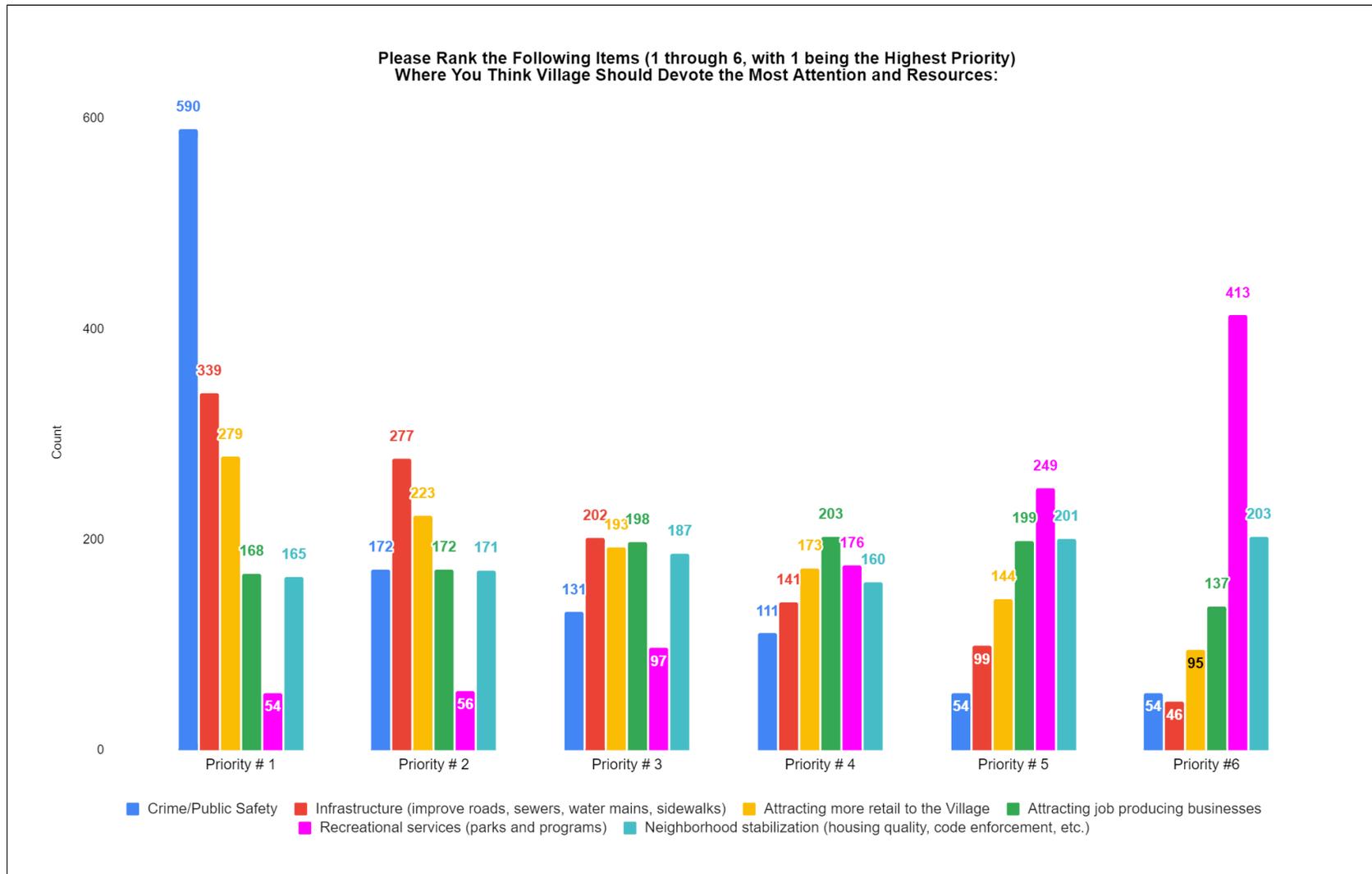
**14. What Methods of Communication Does the Village Effectively Provide?  
(check all that apply)**



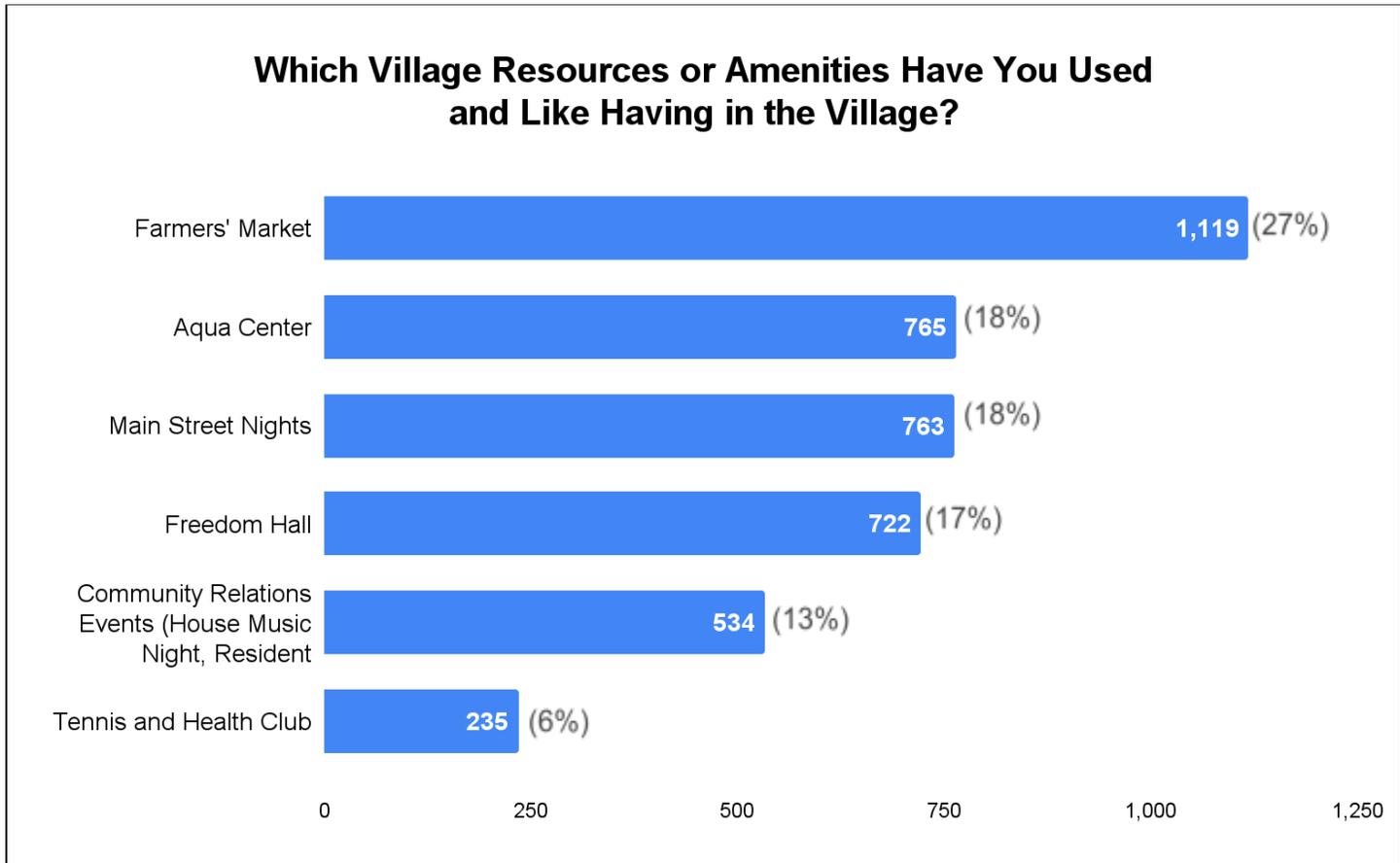


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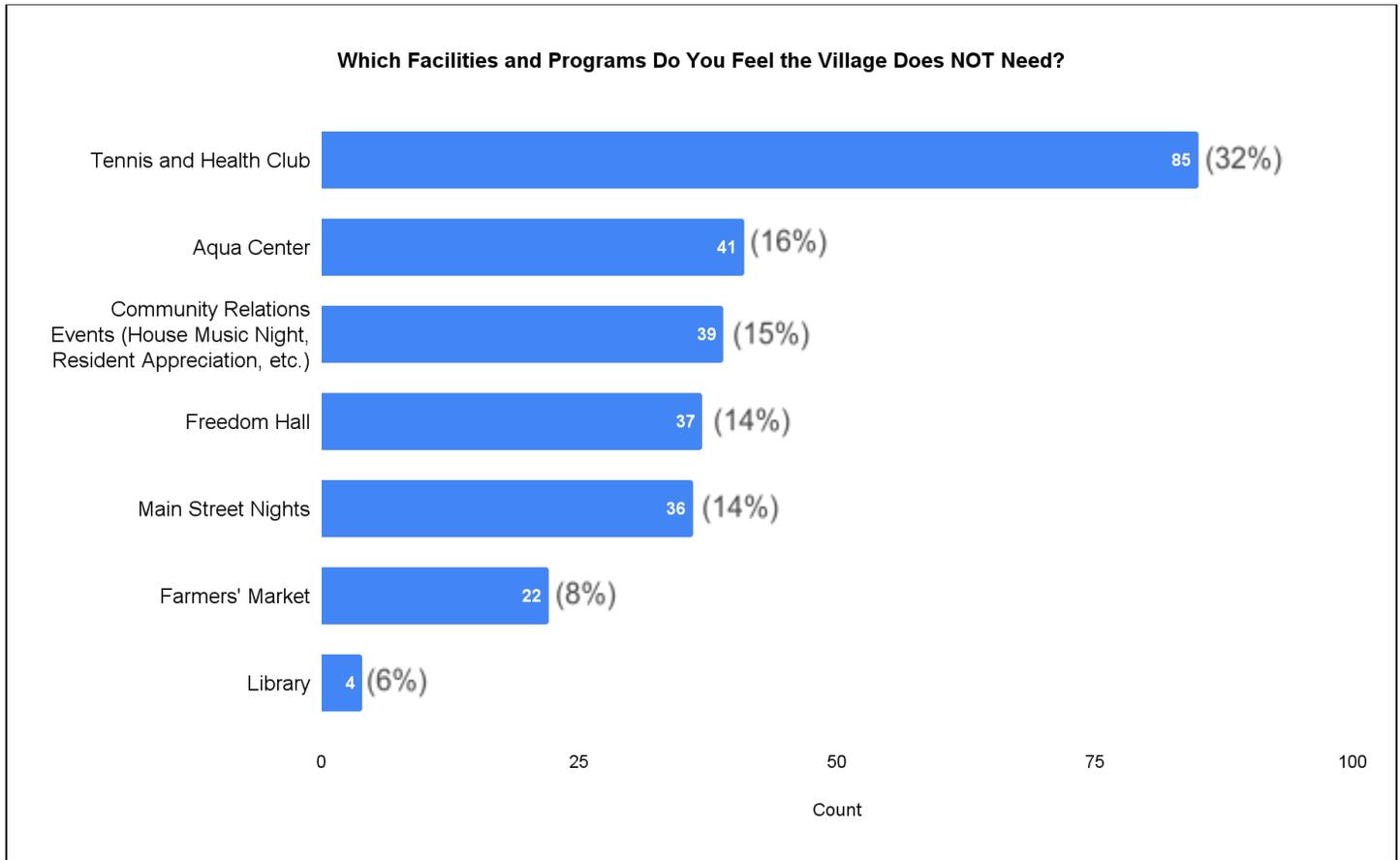
### 15. Please Rank the Following Items (1 through 6, with 1 being the Highest Priority) Where You Think Village Should Devote the Most Attention and Resources:



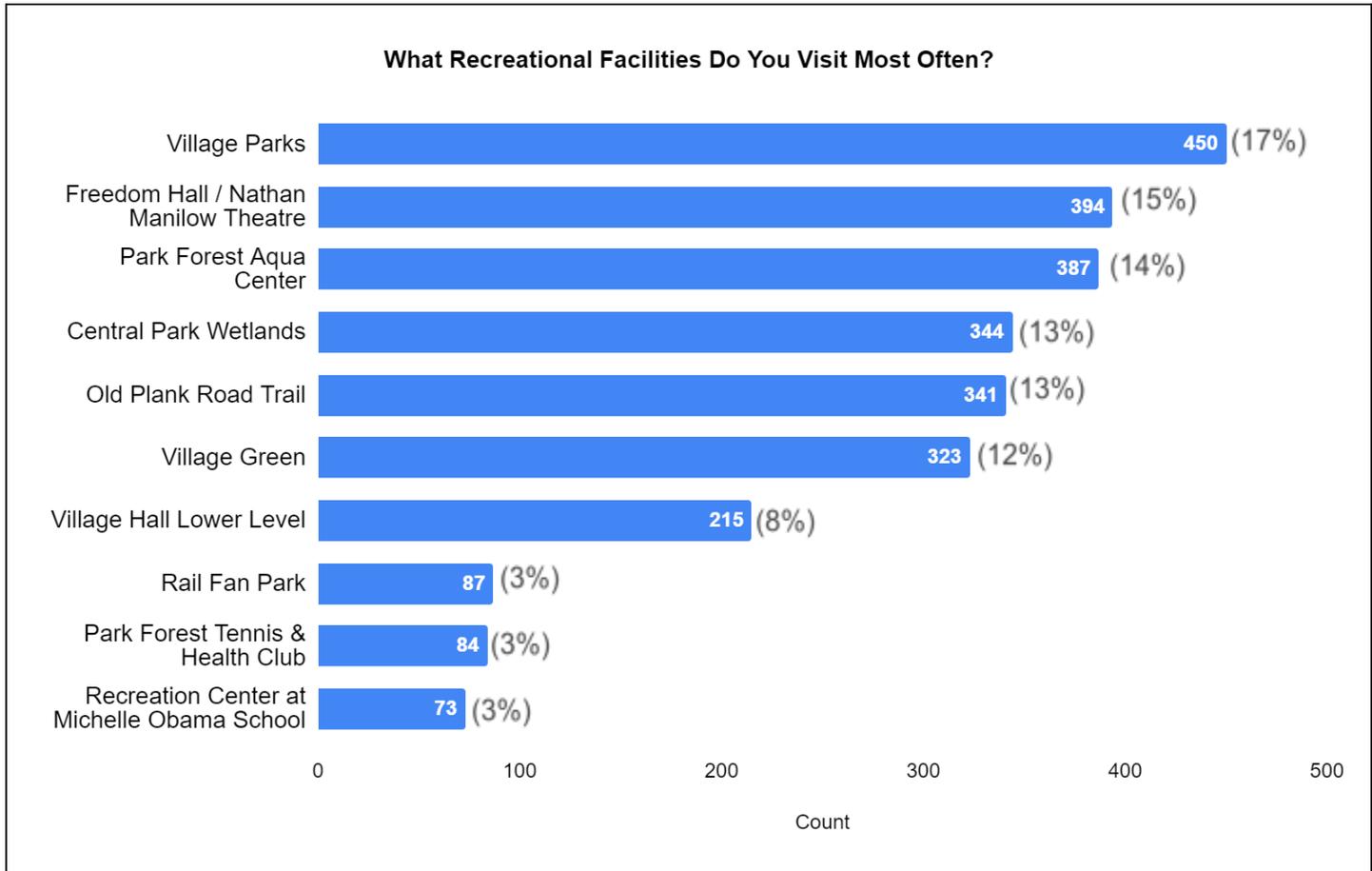
**16. Which Village Resources or Amenities Have You Used and Like Having in the Village? (check all that apply)**



**17. Which Facilities and Programs Do You Feel the Village Does NOT Need?  
Please check any that apply.**



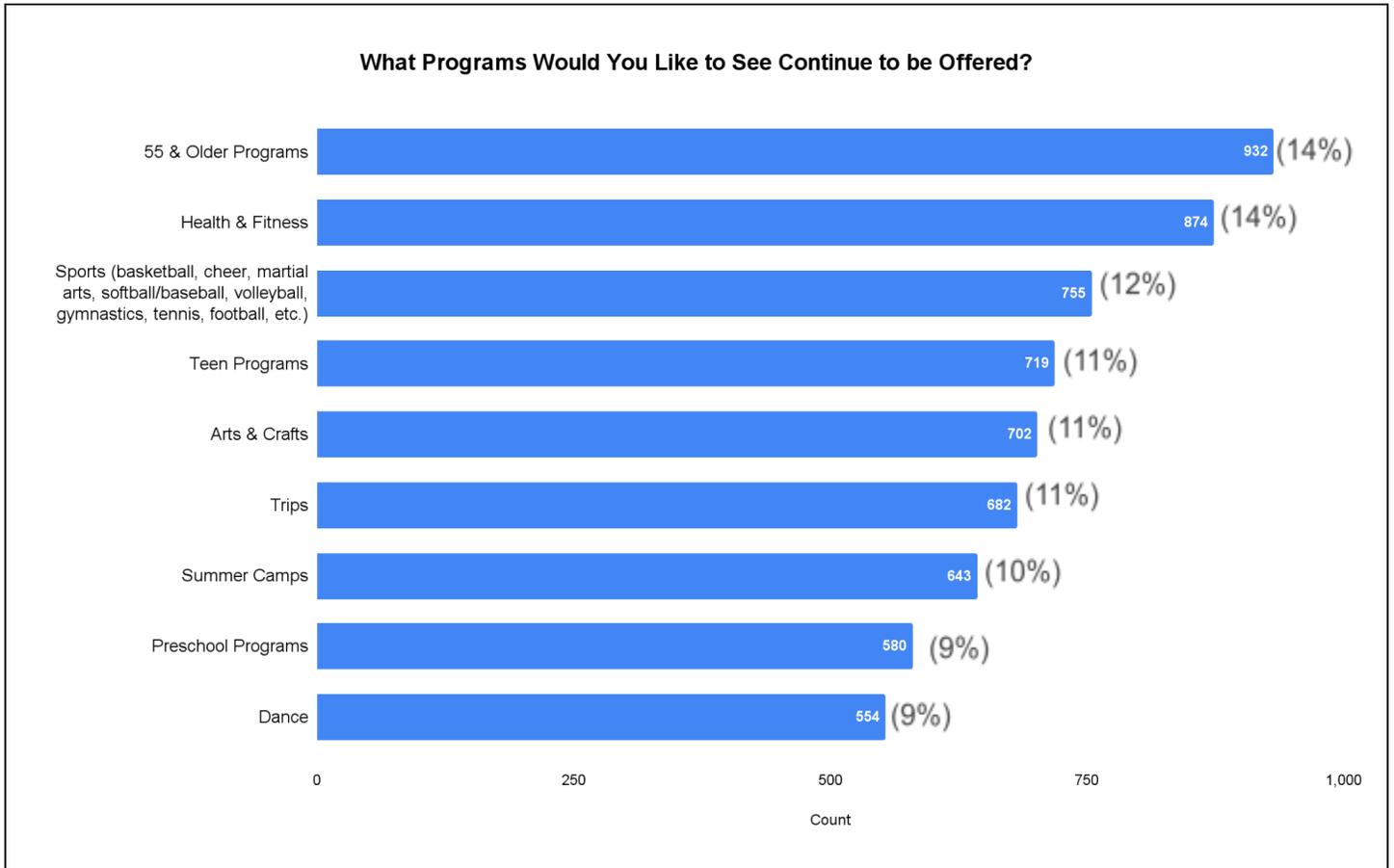
**18. What Recreational Facilities Do You Visit Most Often? (please check all that apply)**



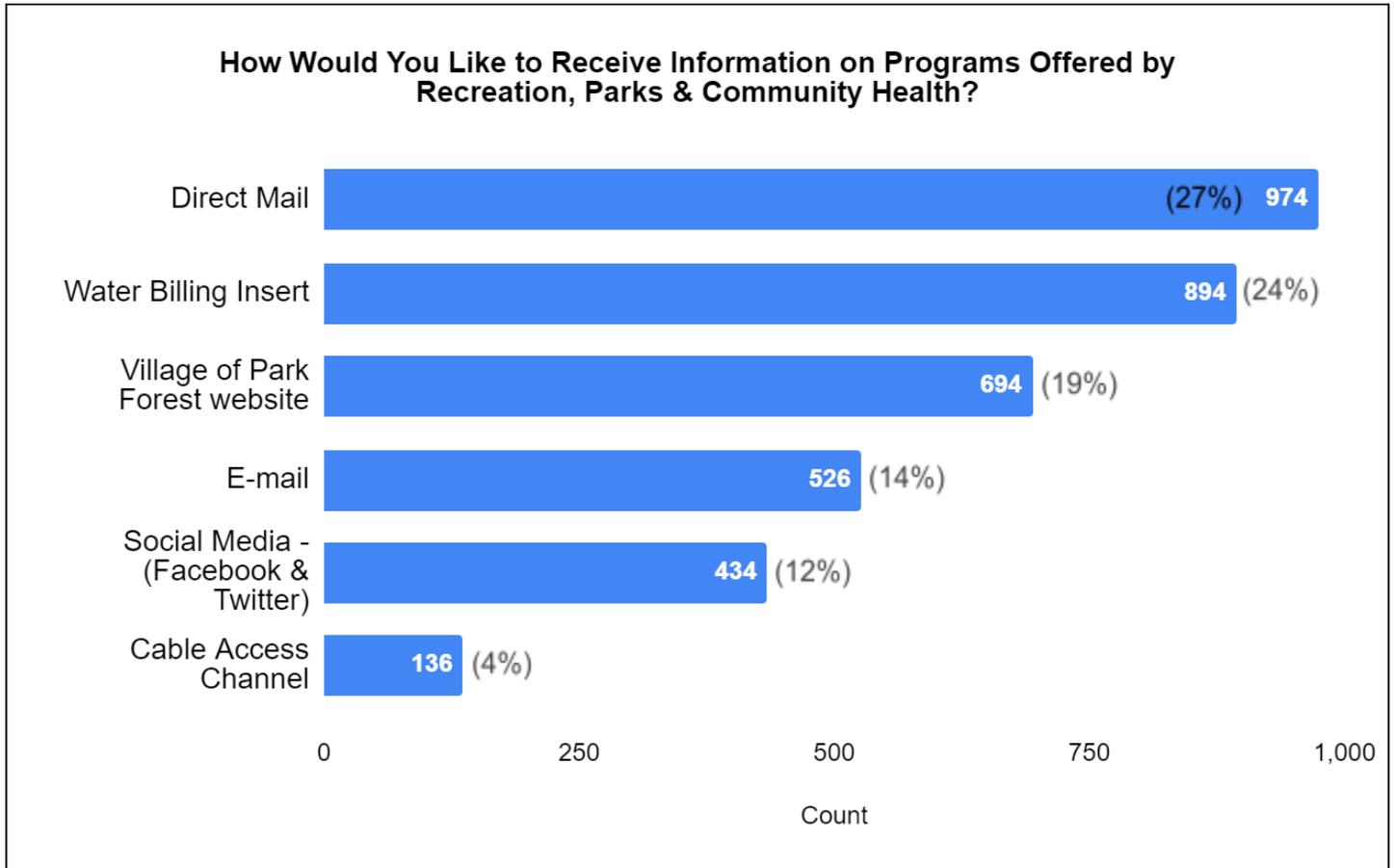


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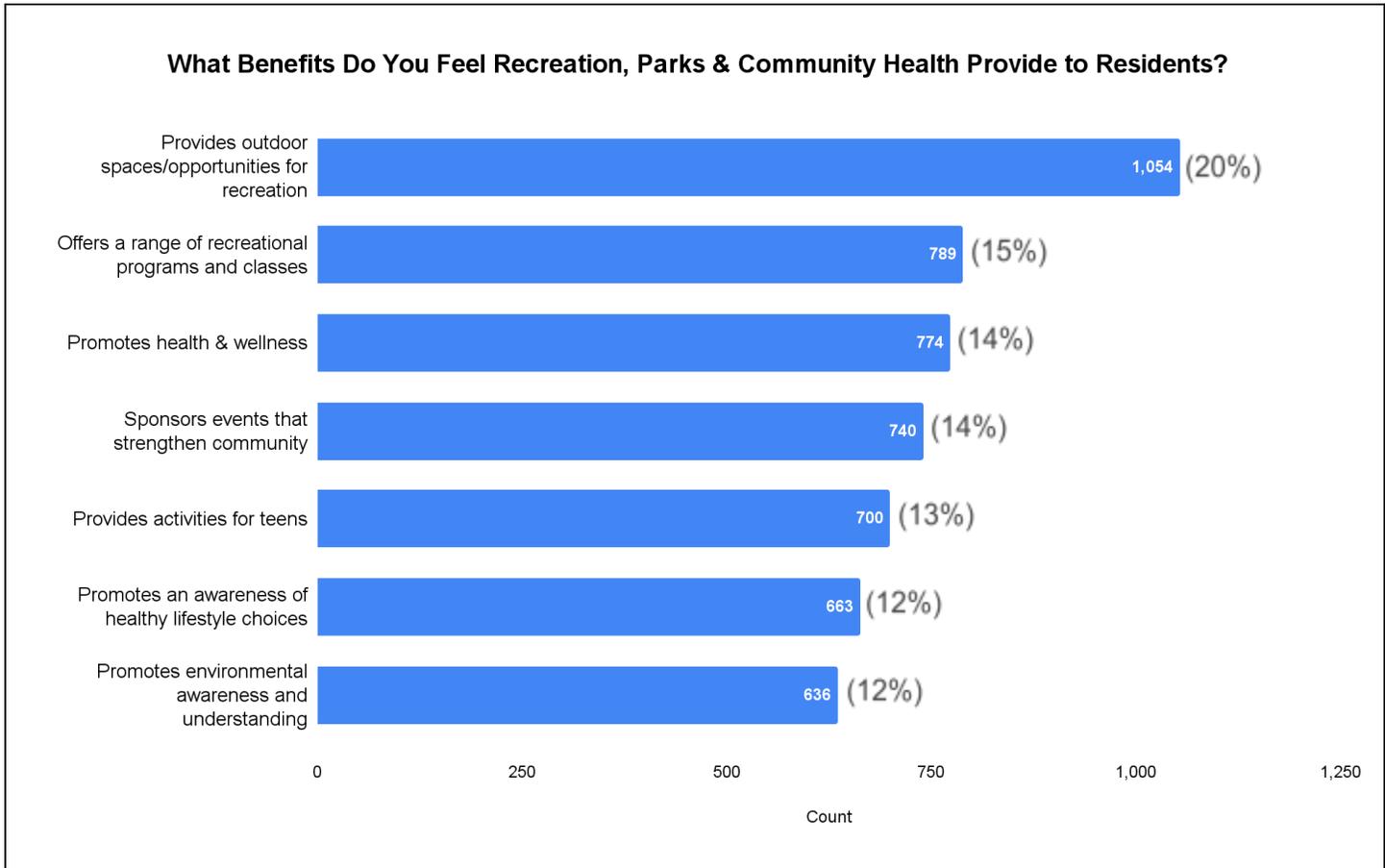
### 19. What Programs Would You Like to See Continue to be Offered? (check all that apply)



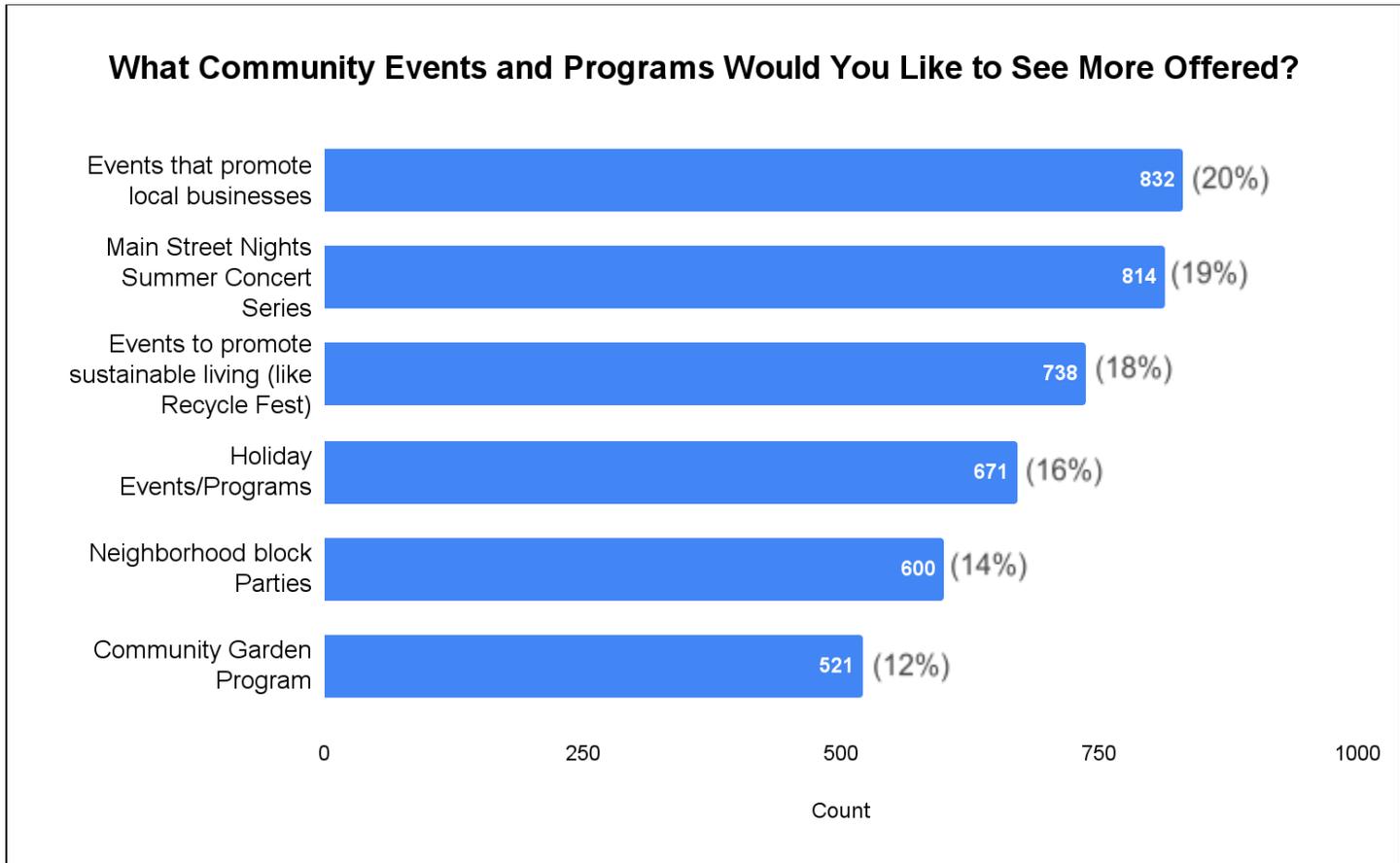
**20. How Would You Like to Receive Information on Programs Offered by Recreation, Parks & Community Health? (check all that apply)**



**21. What Benefits Do You Feel Recreation, Parks & Community Health Provide to Residents? (check all that apply)**



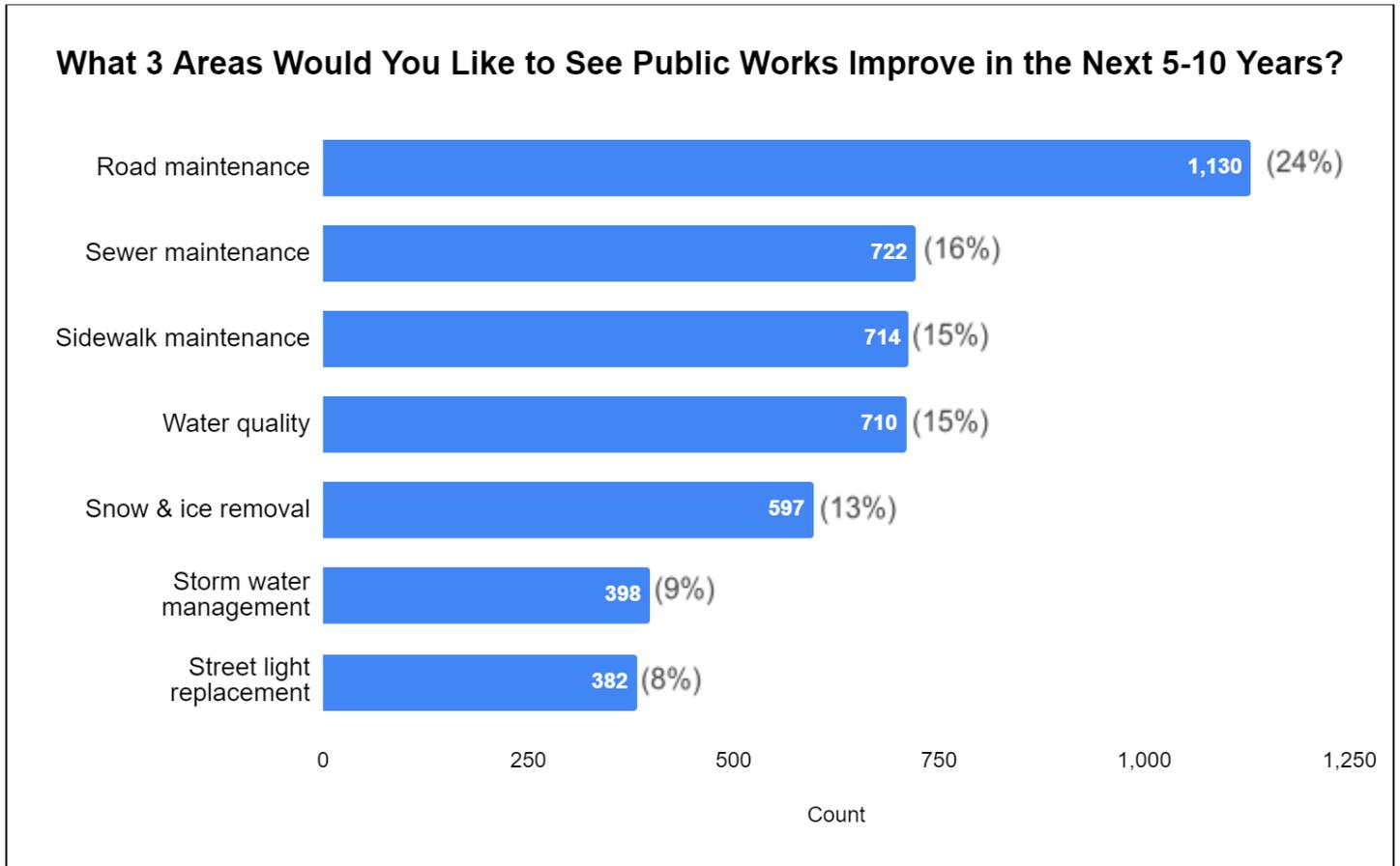
**22. What Community Events and Programs Would You Like to See More Offered? (check all that apply)**



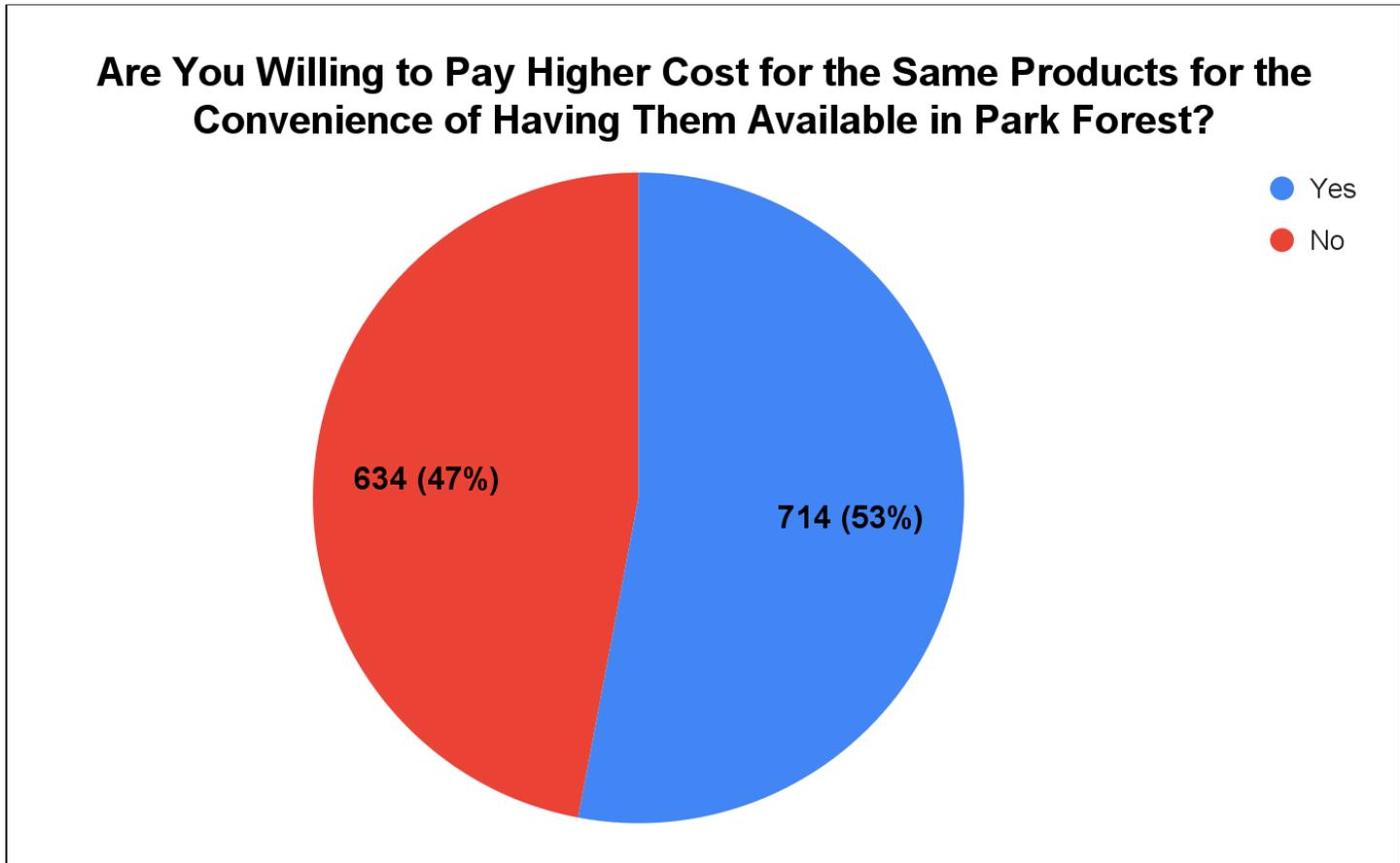


## Village of Park Forest Community Survey Analysis Results - 2021

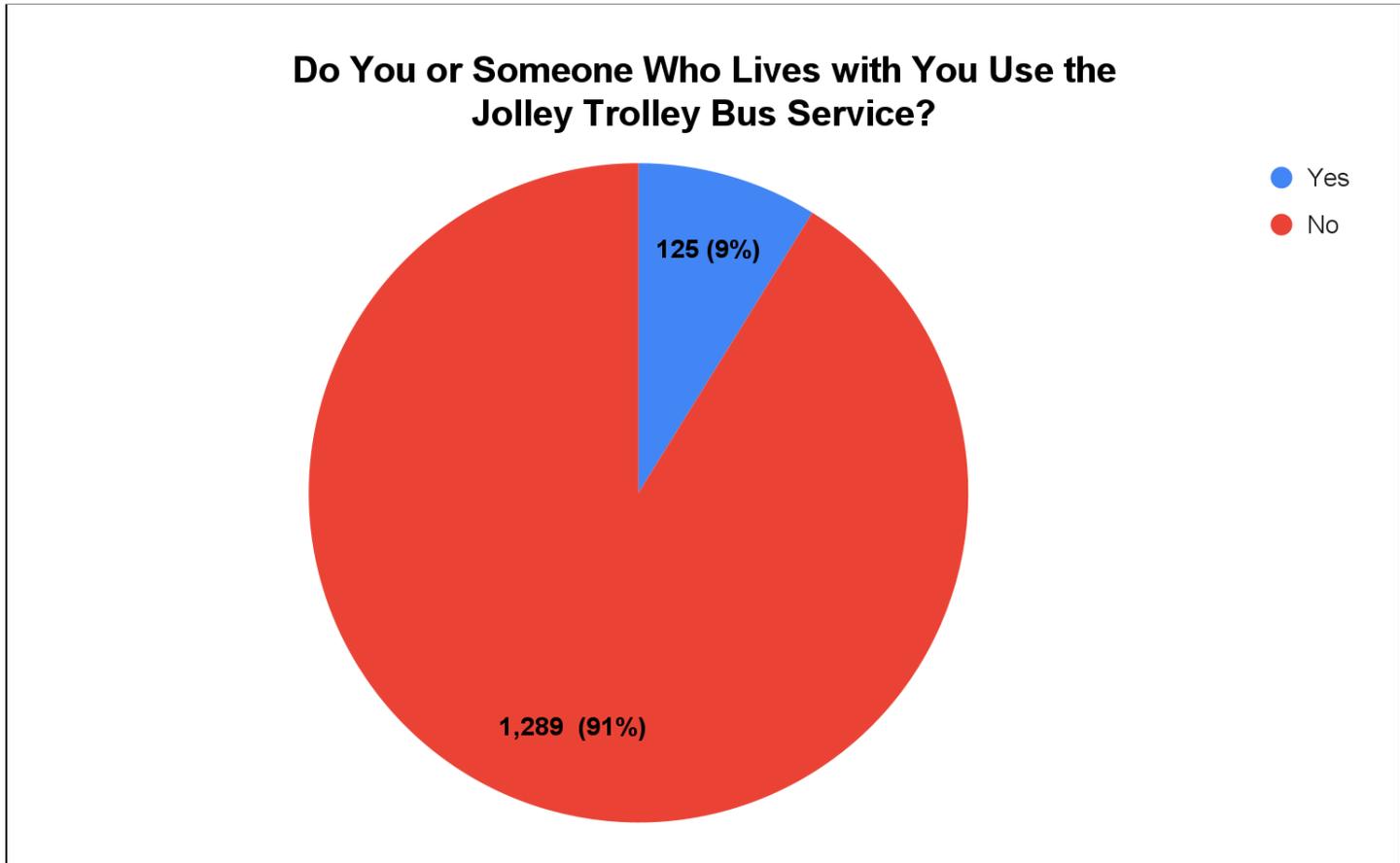
### 23. What 3 Areas Would You Like to See Public Works Improve in the Next 5-10 Years? (check all that apply)



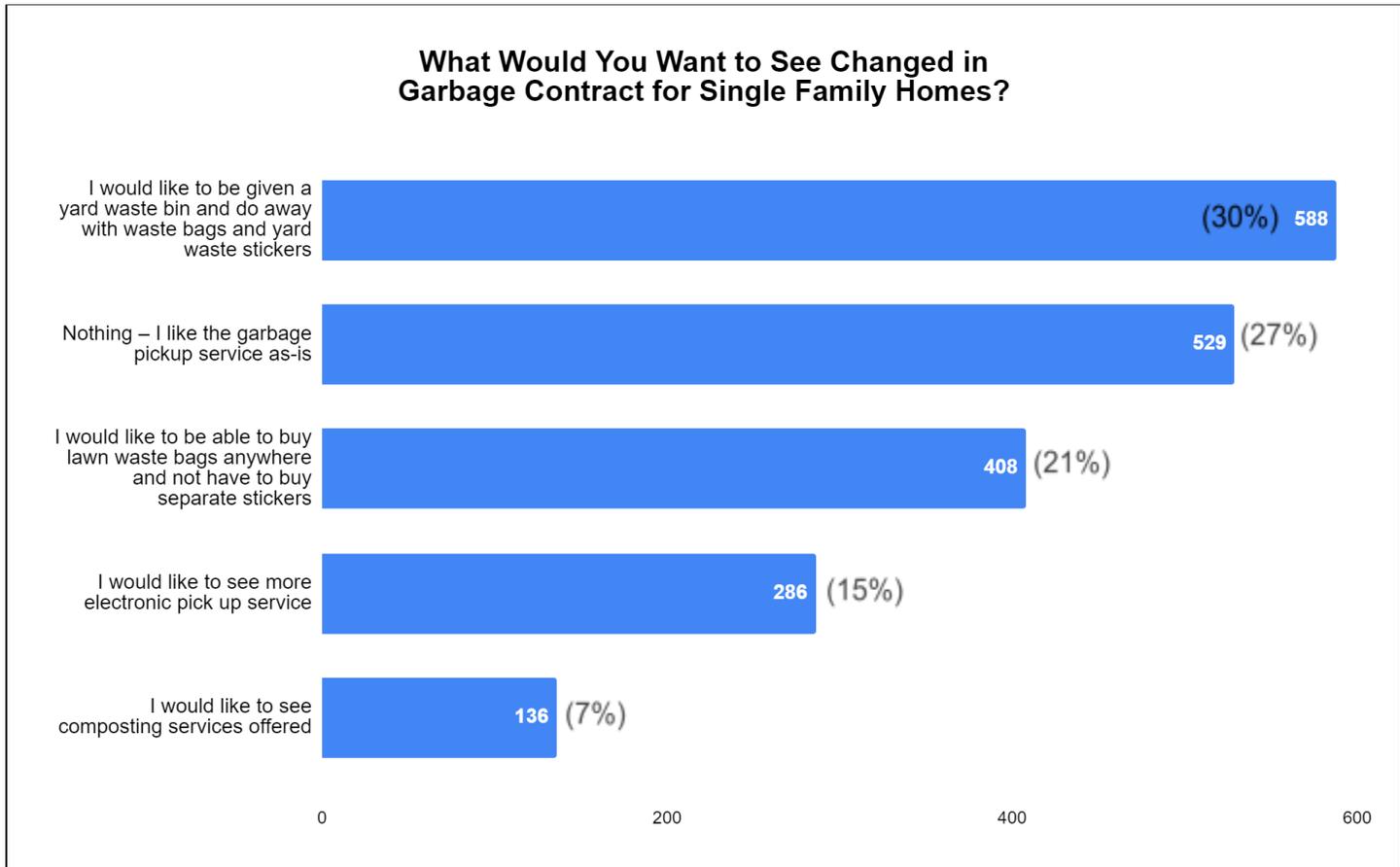
**24. Are You Willing to Pay Higher Cost for the Same Products for the Convenience of Having Them Available in Park Forest?**



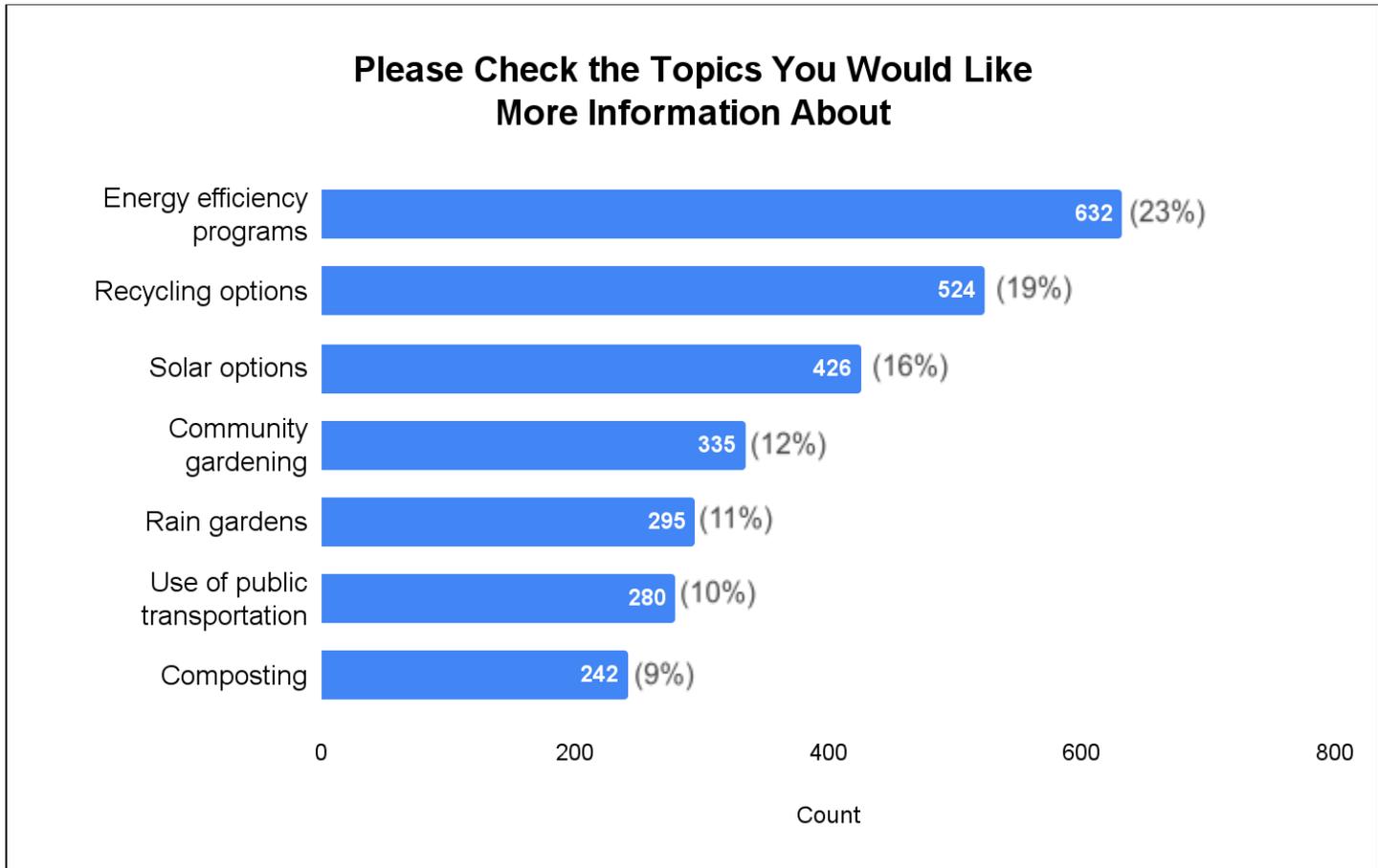
**25. Do You or Someone Who Lives with You Use the Jolley Trolley Bus Service?**



**26. What are your thoughts about the current single-family home garbage collection contract, what would you want to see changed, added, etc.?**



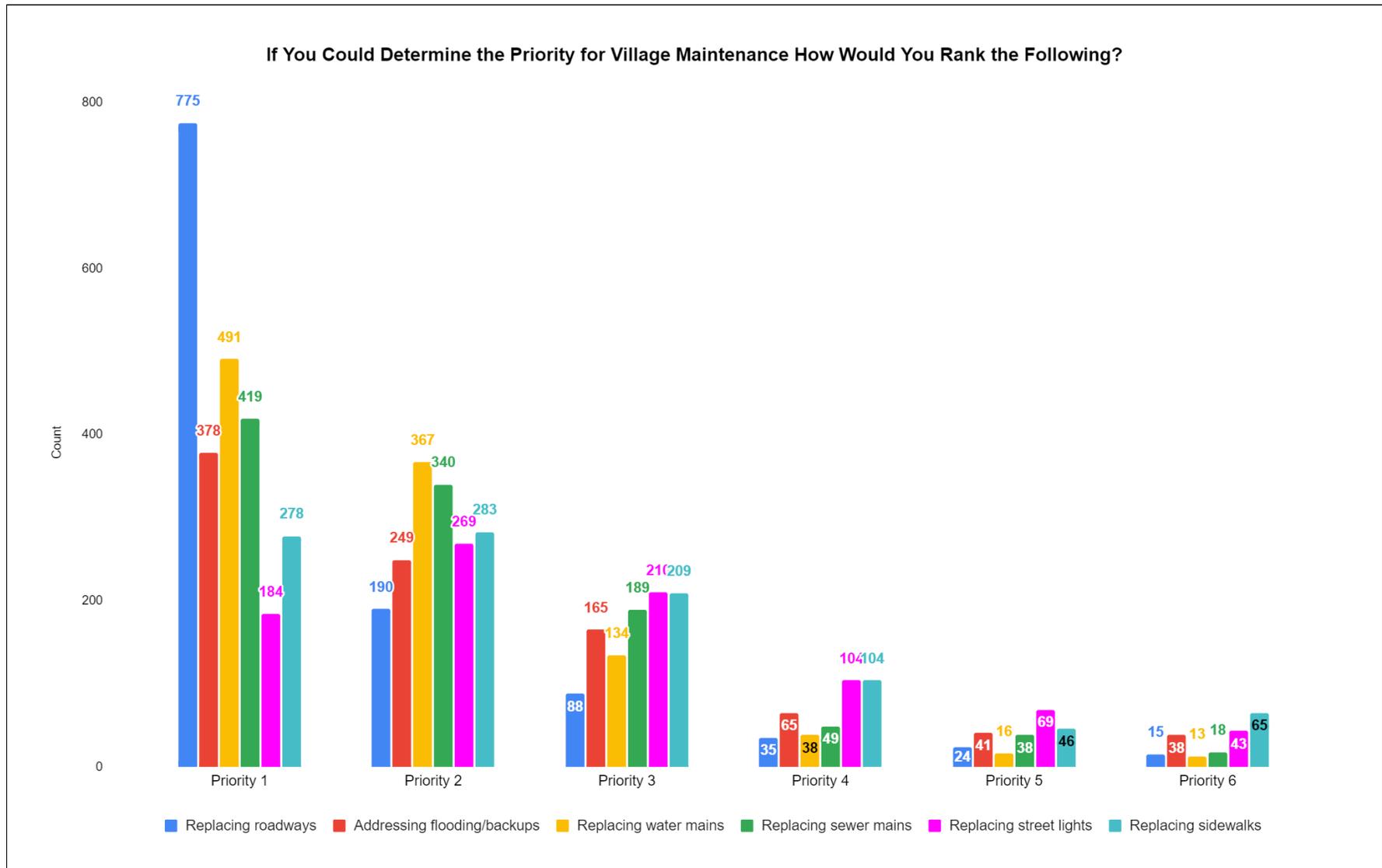
**27. Please Check the Topics You Would Like More Information about (Please Check All that Apply)**



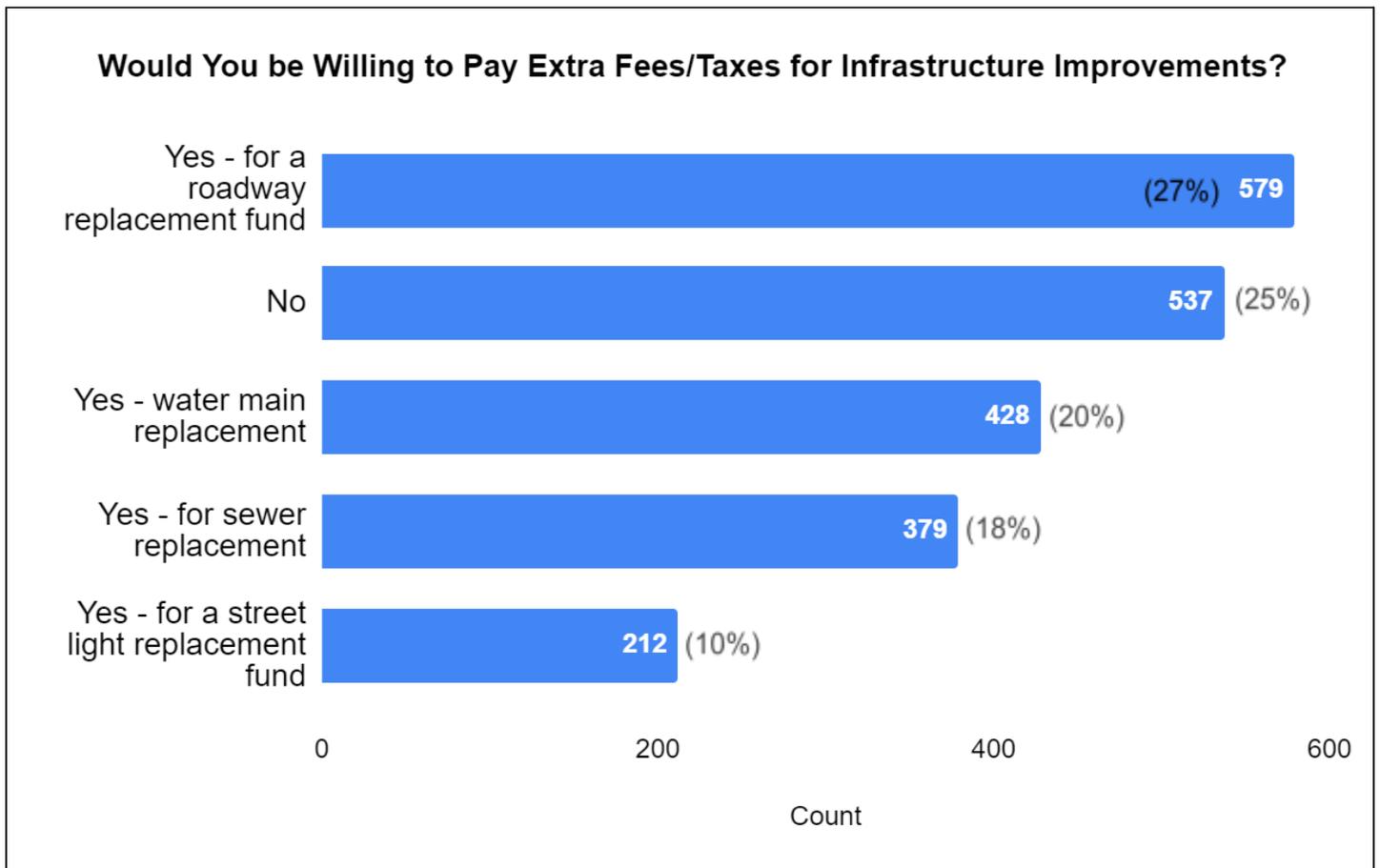


## Village of Park Forest Community Survey Analysis Results - 2021

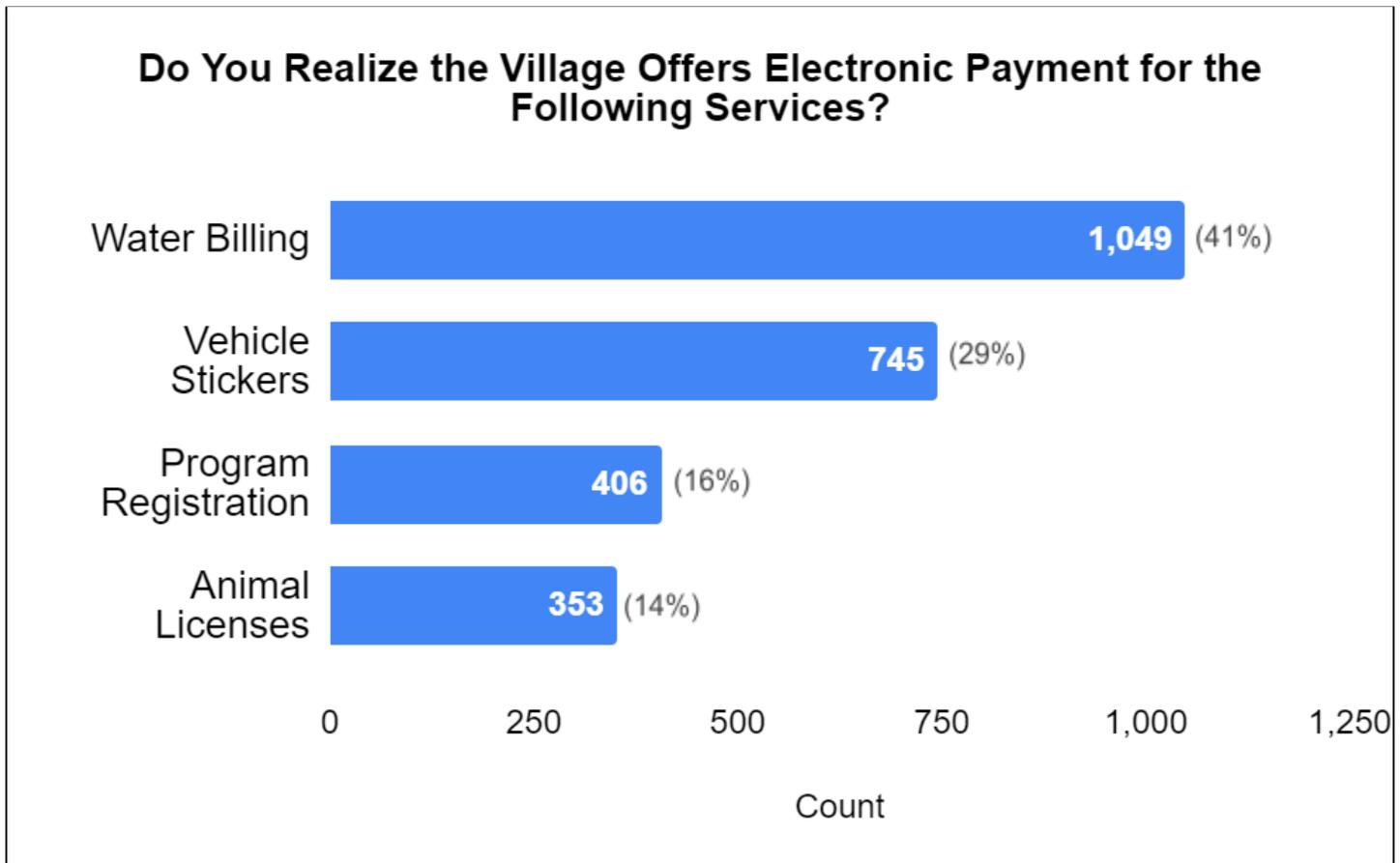
### 28. If You Could Determine the Priority for Village Maintenance How Would You Rank the Following?



**29. Would you be willing to pay extra fees/taxes knowing that those fees would go strictly to particular infrastructure improvements? (i.e. \$3 extra fee/tax to go strictly into a road replacement fund, street light replacement program, etc.)**



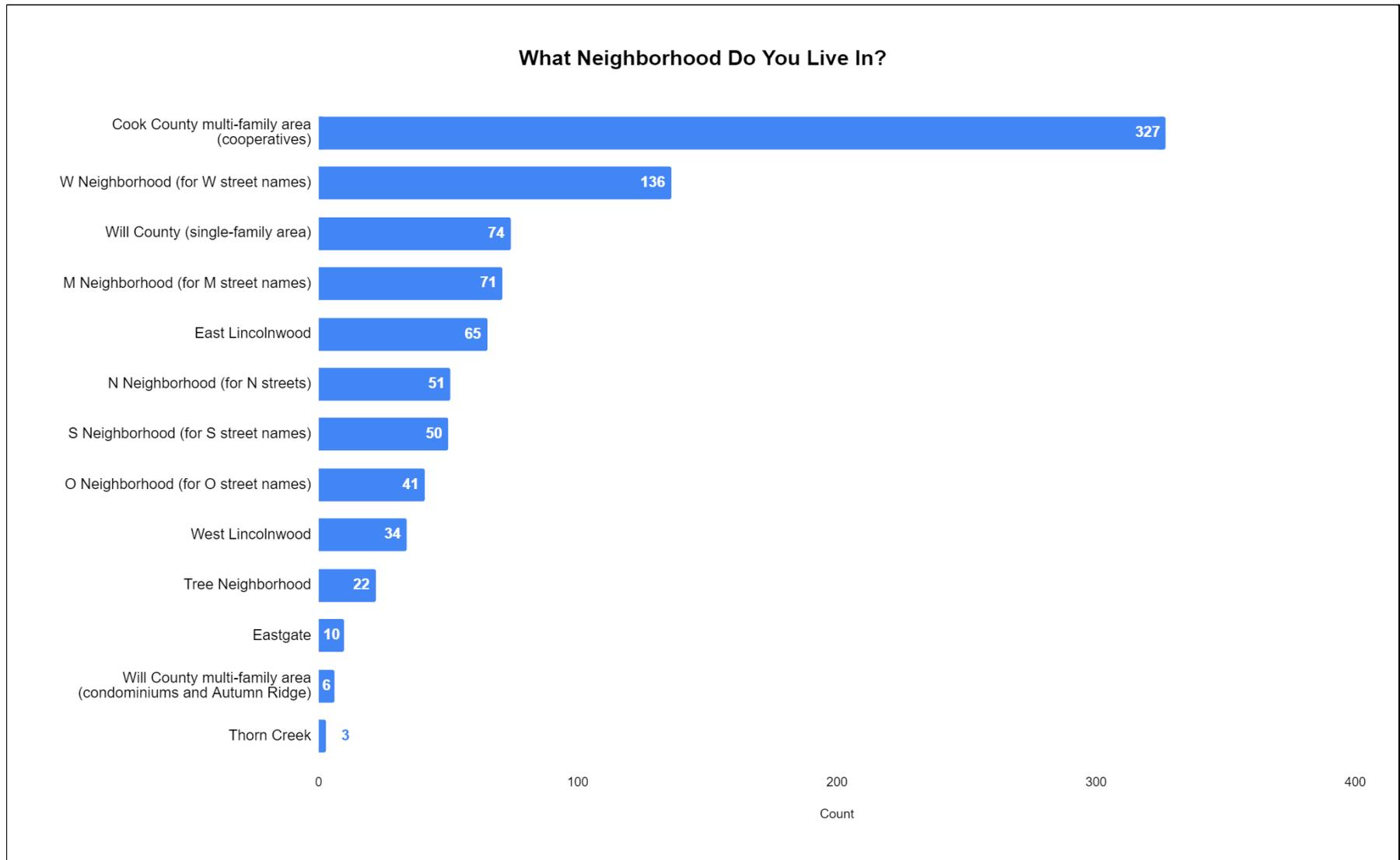
**30. Do You Realize the Village Offers Electronic Payment for the Following Services?**





## Village of Park Forest Community Survey Analysis Results - 2021

### 31. What Neighborhood Do You Live In?



## 2021 Shopping and Services Guide Village Survey

The 2021 Shopping and Services Guide was mailed to all addresses in the Village in June 2021. The Guide included a tear-out sheet with a short survey designed to obtain input from Village residents on business-focused issues. Survey responses were received from 80 residents. This memo describes the results of this survey.

For the following questions, each respondent was asked to choose up to three types of business (retail, service, employment). Each list is in order of most votes to fewest votes.

What type of **retail** businesses would you like to see in Park Forest?

- Dine-In Restaurant - 48
- Groceries – 48
- Movie Theater – 46
- Health Food Store - 24
- Clothing - 21
- Books - 19
- Hardware Store - 19
- Coffee Shop - 15
- Gas Station - 14
- Second Hand Clothing - 14
- Specialty Stores - 13
- Cocktail Lounge - 8
- Appliances - 5
- Bar - 4
- Pizza, Bakery, Catering - 1 each

What type of **service** businesses would you like to see in Park Forest?

- Bank - 42
- Dentist - 38
- Doctor - 29
- Optometrist - 20
- Physical Therapist - 14
- Locksmith - 11
- Home Inspector - 8
- Roofing Contractor - 7
- Private Detective, Interior Designer -  
2 each
- Day Spa, Architect, Attorney, Appliance Repair –  
1 each

What type of **employment** businesses would you like to see in Park Forest?

- Manufacturing - 25
- Retail - 22
- Service - 13

- Staff Services - 13

Respondents were asked **how often** they use the Guide. While the answers to this question varied, they general fell into the following categories –

- Very often (also noted as frequently, daily, weekly, 2x/month) - 35
- Not often (also noted as periodically, rarely) - 26
- For the first time - 3
- Don't use it at all - 4

Respondents were asked **how** they use the Guide, and 64 people provided an answer that generally falls into the category of looking for a business, a specific phone number, and to shop local. The other respondents did not complete this question.

The last question in the survey asked how many **new businesses** the respondent found out about by using the Guide. These answers ranged from 0 to 127 new businesses. More specifically, the responses were as follows –

- From 1 to 10 new businesses - 31
- From 10 to 44 new businesses - 6
- Other answers (repeated multiple times) – A lot, many, several, quite a few, amazed!

## Aging in a Changing Region Public Workshops

### September 2, Afternoon

Those present (37 in attendance) have lived in the VOPF from 7 to 67 years.

#### Question: What did you like about Park Forest when you first moved here?

- Moved to PF in 1973 and lived in the Arbor Trail Apartments, which provided subsidies for moderate income families. PF was diverse, liked the parks, Aqua Center, and Library.
- Moved to Cedarwood Cooperatives in 1971.
- Moved here in 1977, was a student at GSU. Liked that PF had many educators living here, forward thinking, progressive.
- Everyone was from some place else. Everyone could be an individual and you were supported. All voices were heard. Strong local government and public engagement.
- Activities for young people – teen and children, as well as cultural amenities.

#### Question: What have you come to appreciate now?

- Sustainability mission. Bring back art movies for adults.
- Main Street Nights – brings together all people, it's a great community activity
- Rich Township Senior Center
- PF had the first elementary school in Illinois to voluntarily integrate.
- Lot of information about what to do in the water bill insert.
- It's a walkable community with the parks, DownTown, and the Forest Preserves
- Security. Not afraid to live here.

#### Question: Are there things that concern you about living in PF?

- Lived here for 18 years, older residents can't keep their sidewalks clean, including snow removal
- Property maintenance
- Vacant lot behind here is not being mowed properly. Landscape median in Sauk Court not being properly maintained by Village.
- Not suitable housing for aging adults because cooperatives and single family homes have stairs (someone else pointed out how many small ranch-style homes there are in PF).
- No first floor bathrooms in many houses. Seniors who have surgery can't get to the bathroom. Should be a cooperative of contractors to help senior retrofit their homes.
  - How many live in 1 story homes? – about 10 raised hands
  - How many live in 2 story homes? – about 10 raised hands

#### Question: Will you be able to age well in your current home?

- About 10-15 said "yes".

#### Question: Will you need to move or make significant changes to your home to age well in PF?

- Four said "yes".

**Question: Will you find a place that meets your needs in PF today?**

- Not sure – several answers
- Will need a subsidy to modify my home.
- It will depend on whether I can continue to maintain my home and yard.
- Property taxes too high even with senior discounts.
- It would be helpful to have a consultant advise on how to make my property less high maintenance, both inside the house and in the yard.
- Not enough parking spaces in the cooperative housing areas.

**Getting Around – Transportation**

**Question: How to you typically get around Park Forest?**

- Their personal vehicle – almost all present
- Walking – 5-7
- Someone else's vehicle – 1-2
- Public transportation – 0

**Question: Would public transportation be an option for you?**

- One person noted that she used the Jolly Trolley after surgery when she couldn't drive, but only then
- [Note that the PACE bus system is very limited in PF, and the Jolly Trolley only stays within Rich Township and has limited hours.]
- Most agreed that it is easy to get around PF, except for the winding streets make it easy to get lost.

Non-vehicular transportation –

- Bike paths in parks are bumpy and covered with grass – several people agreed with this comment.
- Sidewalks are in good shape and located on most streets.
- Need to re-stripe designated bike lanes.
- No one noted places that are particularly easy to walk.
- Places that are particularly difficult to walk –
  - Park walkways
  - Pedestrian cut-throughs can get overgrown (all have been cleared this summer)
  - The pedestrian cut-through from Peach Street to 21<sup>st</sup> Century School is in bad shape.
  - There is no sidewalk or ADA sidewalk ramp along the frontage of the Fire Station (Lester Drive and Indianwood Blvd), across from the US Post Office at the corner.
  - It should be PF's responsibility to maintain sidewalks when tree roots crack them.

**Safety Concerns**

- Speeding on Orchard Dr, Sauk Tr, Western Av, and even on side streets.
- The movie theater property in DownTown property scares her to walk by it.

**Question: What Else is needed for the Village to be more supportive of Aging in the Community?**

- Schools need to lower their portion of the property taxes.
- The Rich East school property could become a one-story senior housing development.
- Invest in something major for the youth in the Village (11-16 years old).
- There has been a general erosion of things that communities have – banks, grocery store, high school. If this doesn't turn around it will become a problem.
- It is a problem that there is no more Health Department.
- There is no longer a coach bus service that goes to the airport.

**Question: How many attendees have family living near?**

- About half those present said “yes”.

## Aging in a Changing Region Public Workshops

### September 2, Evening

Those present (11 in attendance) have lived in the VOPF from 3 to 45 years.

#### Question: What did you like about Park Forest when you first moved here?

- His “mixed” family was accepted here. He explained that his family was racially “mixed”.
- Was retiring and looking for affordable housing.
- Loved the bike trails.

#### Question: What have you come to appreciate now?

- Open government. It is easy to find answers to questions.
- Accepting of all. Every department is receptive to sharing what they do. Glad that the community felt it was important to give this information to the residents.
- Parks, bike trails, my house.
- How many live in a 1-story home? 3
- How many live in a 2-story home? 4
- No one lives in an apartment
- How many live in a townhome? 2

#### Question: Does your current housing meet your current needs?

- All said “yes”.
- One attendee said her home is small for her needs only because she is working at home and there is not enough storage.

#### Question: Will you need to move or make significant changes to your home to age well in PF?

- One attendee said she is already doing this by adding a bathroom to the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of her home.
- Another said she does have to make modifications, but they are do-able.
- Home is already sufficient for her.
- Has already modified her home
- Lives in a cooperative unit and concerned about aging there because of stairs and bathroom on 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.
- There may be residents who need financial assistance to make improvements to their homes.

#### Question: Will you find a place that meets your needs in PF today?

- Older homes in PF are suitable for seniors. She noted that she could move to a single family, single story home.
- Don’t know if those homes exist in PF, or if she will have to funds to move to a more amenable home.

### Getting Around – Transportation

- Everyone said their primary means of transportation is their personal vehicle.
- When she had surgery and needed assistance with transportation, her neighbor helped.
- A couple of people said they have used the Jolly Trolley, PACE, private transit
- Three people said they could do their typical errands using local public transit.

Non-vehicular transportation

- This is extremely easy. The pedestrian cut-throughs are very helpful.
- The pedestrian crosswalk signs that are on Main Street in the DownTown should be in more places, including “senior crossing” signs.

The easiest part of the Village to get around is the DownTown.

The most difficult parts of the Village to get around –

- Westwood Drive
- Outside Dining on the Green the ADA parking space doesn't have an accessible ramp.
- Dogwood Street has sinkholes
- She always calls DPW when she sees a crack or a trip hazard and it gets fixed.
- Bike-share would be a great thing (trike-share for seniors!).

### **Comments on public spaces and public facilities**

- PF needs more places to shop
- The library and staff are excellent
- Freedom Hall is wonderful
- Miss the Health Department and the ability to borrow medical equipment (Margaret noted that the medical equipment loan closet is still active).

### **Question: Do you feel safe in PF?**

- About half the attendees said “generally yes”.
- Don't feel comfortable at the Shell gas station on Sauk Trail. One attendee said this has gotten much better.
- It is unsafe around Juniper Towers.
- Concerned to go anywhere at night.
- The Eastgate neighborhood is not safe, but many residents take pride in the neighborhood so getting better.

### **Municipal Services**

Communication

- We get a lot of information that tells us what is going on.
- Code Red is good
- Social media has information.

Services that support seniors

- Library lectures
- Rich Township Senior Center

Wish List for additional services to support seniors

- Dependable handyman service
- Meals on Wheels – Rich Township and Catholic Charities provides this.
- Service to help move clutter to recycling

- Help with snow shoveling.
  - Safer Foundation – used in Chicago to clear sidewalks
  - Homewood has a small truck that clears sidewalks