



RIVER VALLEY WILDERNESS PARK

SURVEY

RESULTS

June 12, 2025 – July 3, 2025

Love the Park?

Help shape its path forward!

413
Responses

The Town of Fort Macleod is continuing to work with the Pathway Master Plan and Parks Bylaw 1775 on a long-term plan for the River Valley Wilderness Park. As part of this process, we're asking residents to share how they use the park and what improvements would make it more enjoyable and accessible for everyone.

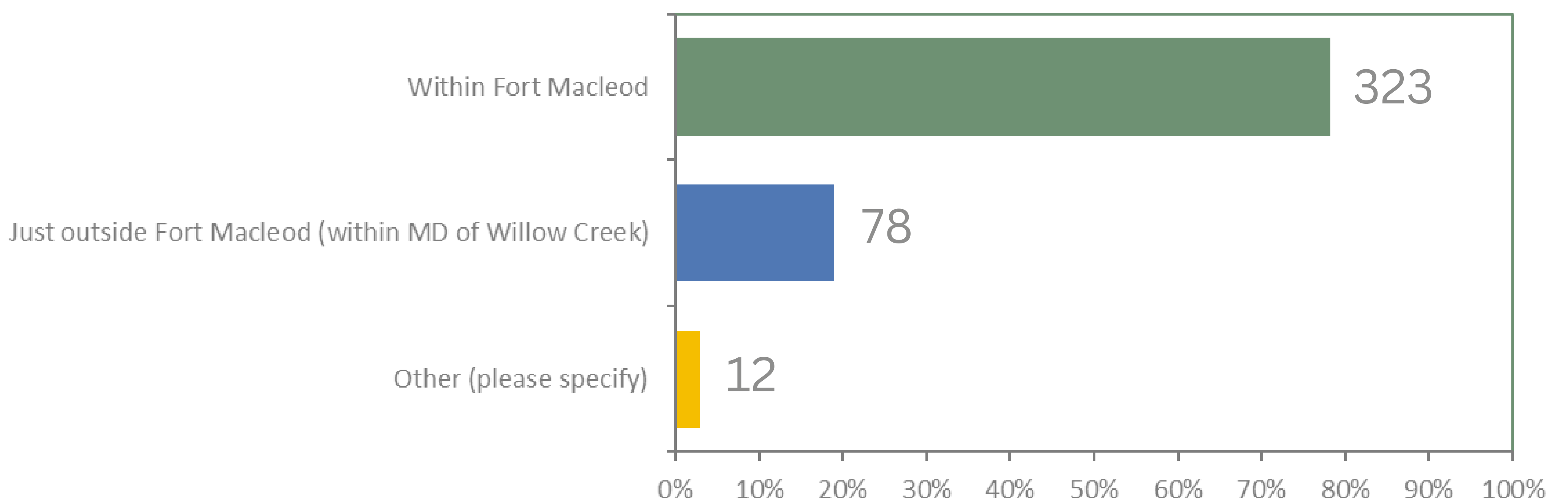
This survey also comes at a time when the Town has received a generous proposal from Scougall Motors as part of their celebration of 100 years in business, to donate funds to pave the parking lot and one existing trail loop within the park.

Your input will help us understand how to best move forward with a decision. The park's natural setting will continue to be protected.

This survey aims to understand how we can improve the River Valley Wilderness Park's usability while preserving its character. Your feedback matters.



Q1: Where do you live?



Other: 1x Lethbridge County, 4x Lethbridge, 1x Camrose, 1x Calgary, 1x Pincher Creek, 1x Blood Reserve, 2x Alberta, 1x New Brunswick.

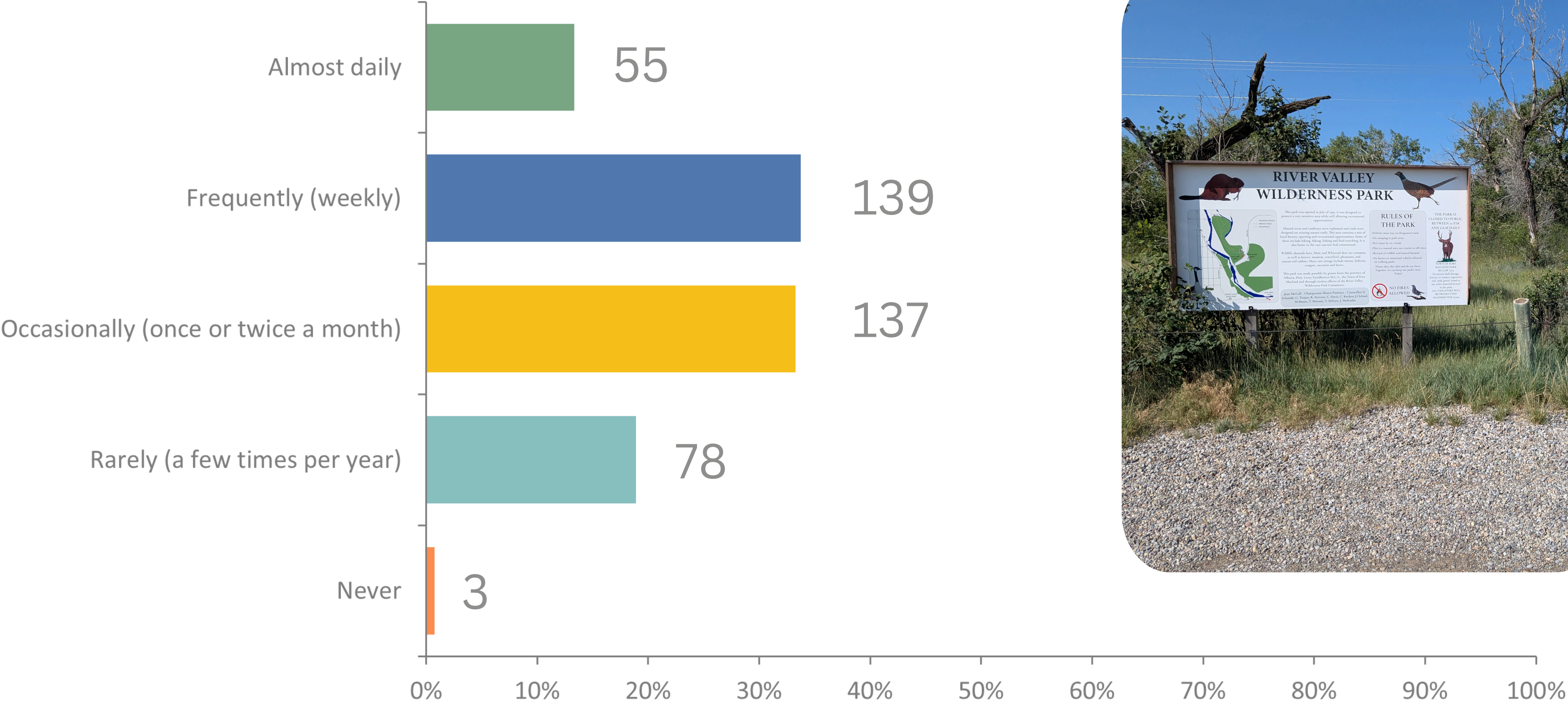
RIVER VALLEY WILDERNESS PARK

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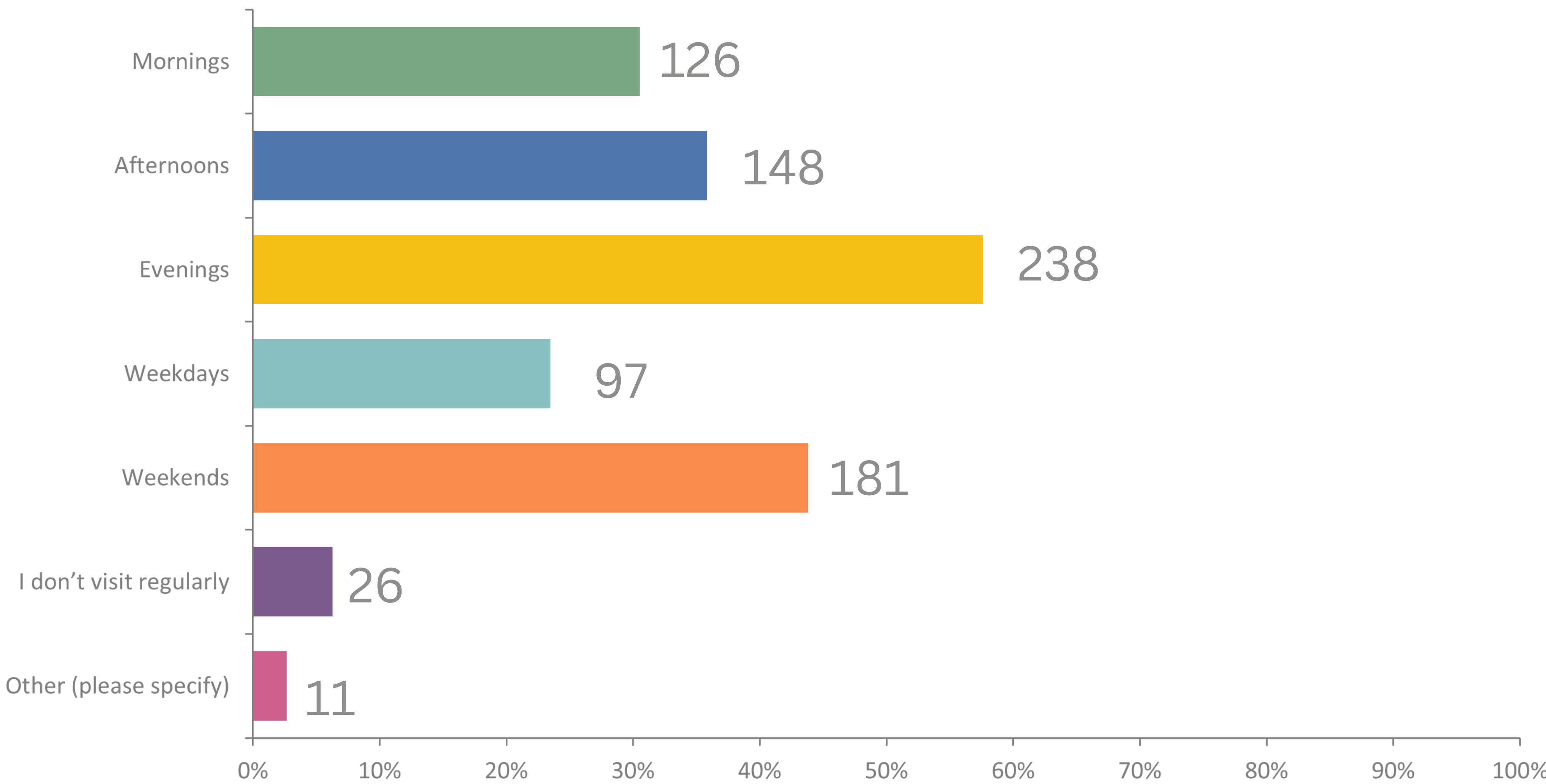
RESULTS



Q2: How often do you visit the River Valley Wilderness Park?



Q3: When do you typically visit the River Valley Wilderness Park?



Other: Late morning to mid afternoon, whenever available, it varies, Mostly spring and fall, No specific time, Randomly but frequently. Only on occasion to walk my dogs but usually on the water treatment side, random times, Due too recent events I won't be going there much anymore.

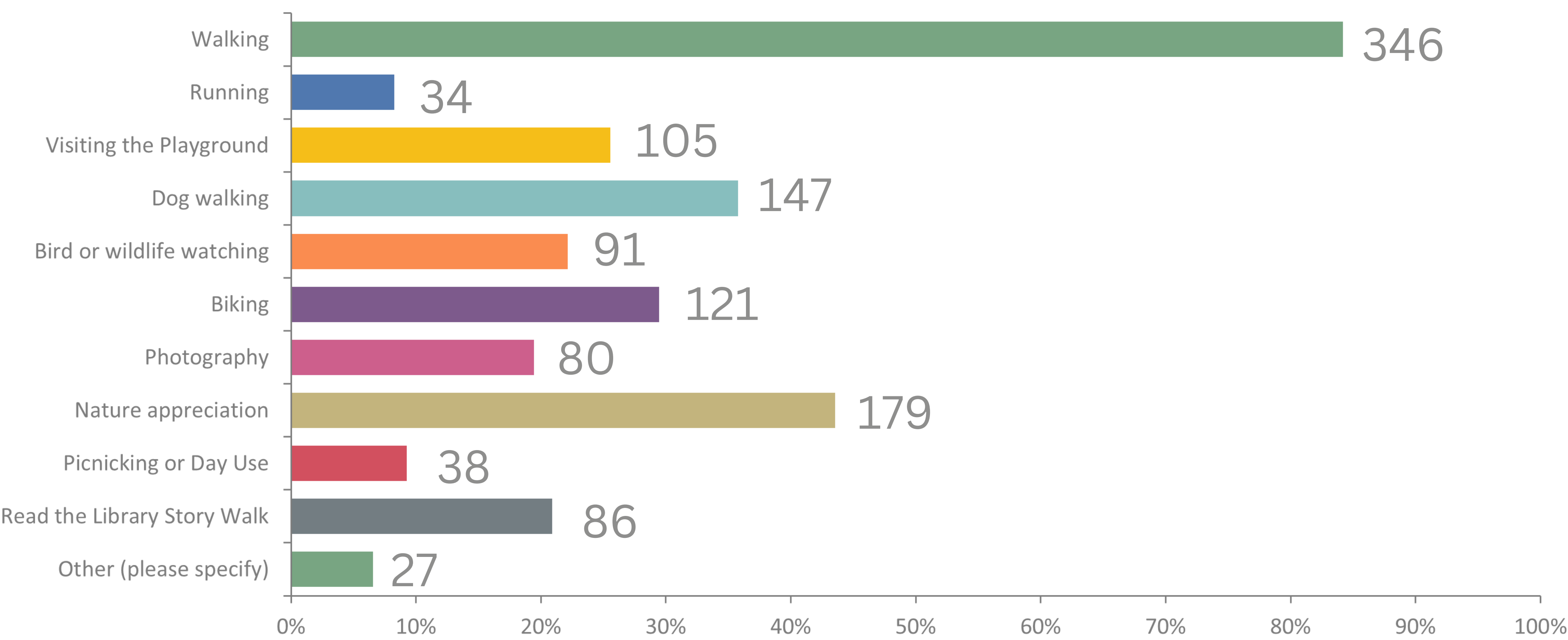
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SURVEY

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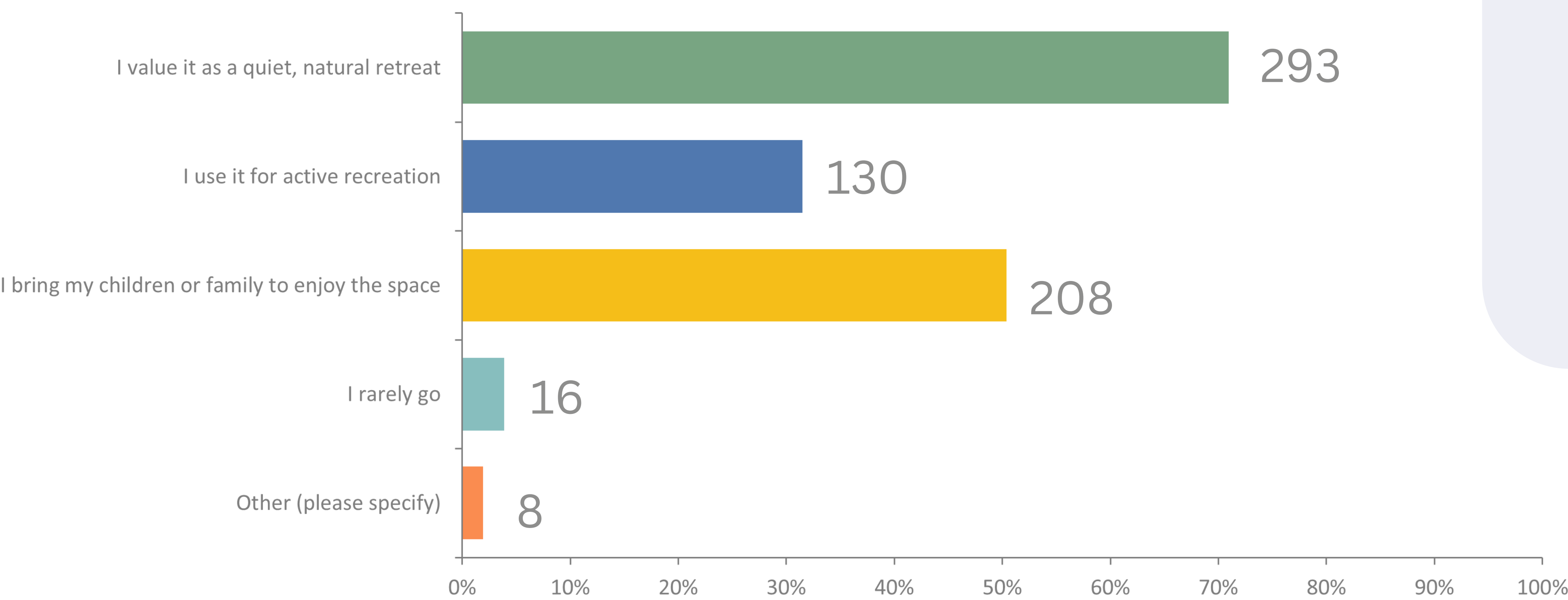


Q4: What do you usually do when you visit the River Valley Wilderness Park? (Select all that apply)



Other: 3x Driving alongside the river, 3x Swimming, 5x Horseback riding, 4x Fishing, Really appreciate stroller friendly paths, Our favorite spot to visit with my granddaughter is the small beach by the river and the turtle pondi, Pick up litter and deposit in garbage cans where possible, Saskatoon picking, Enjoy water/banks in summer, Mental Health, Just to sit and listen to the river run, Grandkids love catching crayfish and having my hatch open to eat lunch down by the river, There's a playground?, Probably run for my life, Check the pond for turtles, otters, ducks.

Q5: How do you see yourself in the park environment?



Other: Safe bicycle riding, View wildlife, I am a graphic designer and I value the photos I am able to take down there. It's also inspiration for a lot of my paintings, A treasured place to protect as native preservation area for enviro education, No specific use or purpose, My 3 dogs are my children, Enjoy nature and the beauty it presents before it is destroyed, Have never been.



Q7: What are your priorities in the River Valley Wilderness Park?

276 responses

Below are the main themes emerging from what residents value and prioritize in the River Valley Wilderness Park:

Preserving the Natural Environment

This was the strongest theme. Many people want the park to remain wild and undeveloped, emphasizing:

- Keeping it natural, quiet, and peaceful
- Protecting wildlife and native plants
- Avoiding too much infrastructure or pavement



Cleanliness & Ongoing Maintenance

A lot of responses focused on upkeep, with specific mentions of:

- Garbage collection and litter control
- Weed removal and trail clearing
- Repairing washrooms, benches, and fences



Improved Trails & Accessibility



Many users appreciate the park but want it to be easier and safer to use:

- Requests for paved or smoothed trails, especially for strollers, wheelchairs, and bikes
- Better access from town (particularly safer crossing of the bridge or Highway 811)
- Clear signage and maps of trail routes

Safety & Comfort



Several comments reflected concerns about:

- Speeding vehicles and motorized users on trails
- General safety for families and solo visitors
- Visibility and patrols to discourage unwanted activity

Peace, Mental Health & Nature Connection

A significant number of comments highlighted:

- Using the park to decompress, reflect, and unwind
- Prioritizing quiet walks, fresh air, and a break from town life
- The value of this space for mental and emotional wellbeing

Family Friendly Amenities



People want to spend more time here as a family, and suggested:

- Better picnic areas, benches, and shelters
- A clean, well-maintained playground
- Space for kids to explore and play

Wildlife & Environmental Education

Several responses tied nature appreciation with learning and awareness:

- Signage, storyboards, or plant ID markers
- Respecting the environment and encouraging others to do the same
- Protecting habitat from disruption



RIVER VALLEY WILDERNESS PARK

SURVEY

RESULTS



Q6: What would make you visit the River Valley Wilderness Park more often?

271 responses

Trails and Pathways

- Paved pathways/trails: Over 80 comments mentioned a preference for paved paths for accessibility (wheelchairs, strollers, bikes).
- Longer trail system: Many want extended loops or additional trail routes.
- Trail maintenance: Requests for weed control, debris removal, and fixing existing paths.
- Keep trails natural: A small number of comments (under 5) strongly opposed paving, wishing to preserve the natural feel.
- Parking: Paved or expanded parking areas requested.



Access & Connectivity

- Easier access from town (without driving): Desire for walkable/bikeable connection from Fort Macleod.

Activities & Special Features

- Dog access: Divided feedback—some want expanded off-leash access, others request stricter leash rules.
- Events & programming: Some would like to see special events, interactive signs, or family activities added.
- Horseback & biking trails: Requests for designated trails for equestrian or cycling use.
- Nature additions: Wildflowers, mountain biking courses, and native plantings suggested.
- Unique ideas: A few suggested things like a dock for floating access, perennials for planting, or even a small concession.

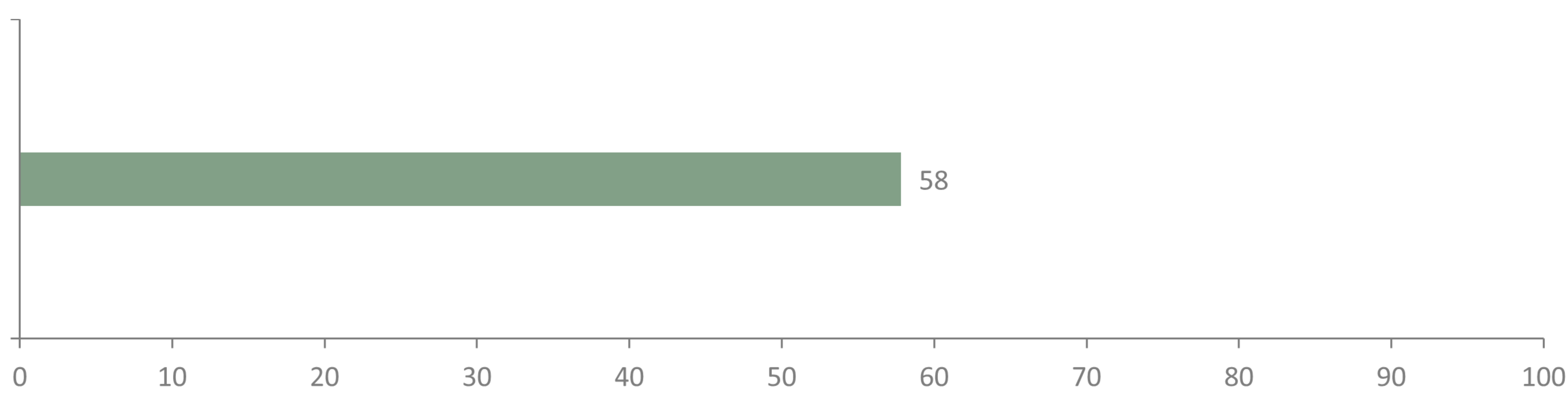
Park Facilities & Amenities

- Washrooms: Calls for better, cleaner, or additional facilities.
- Picnic areas & benches: Many want shaded, spaced-out tables and more resting areas
- Playground improvements: Several noted the current playground is small or outdated
- Waste management: More garbage cans and dog waste stations requested
- Better signage & maps: Wayfinding signs, trail maps, and clearer dog rules were suggested.
- Water access: Easier or safer ways to reach sandy or swimming areas were frequently mentioned.
- Security & monitoring: Some users reported safety concerns (wildlife, drug use, squatters) and asked for more oversight or patrols

Barriers to Use

- Lack of time: Multiple respondents simply cited their personal schedule as the main barrier.
- Safety concerns: Wildlife, traffic, and undesirable activity deter some from visiting.
- Vehicle traffic in the park: Concerns about drivers speeding or creating dust/conflict with walkers.

Q8: How important is improved accessibility at the River Valley Wilderness Park, such as a section of paved trail and parking lot?



TOTAL RESPONSES	AVERAGE NUMBER	TOTAL NUMBER
413	58	23 784

Sliding scale



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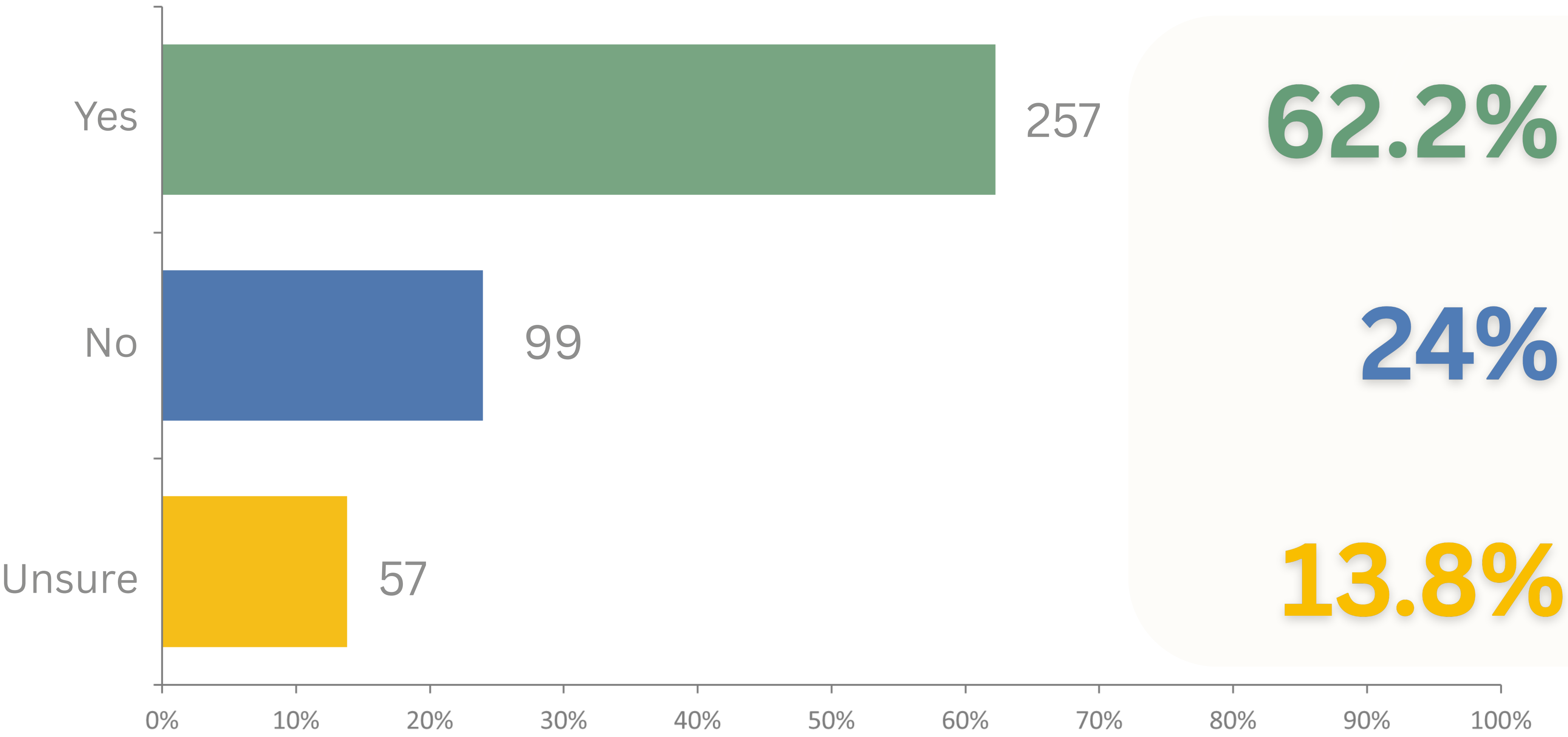
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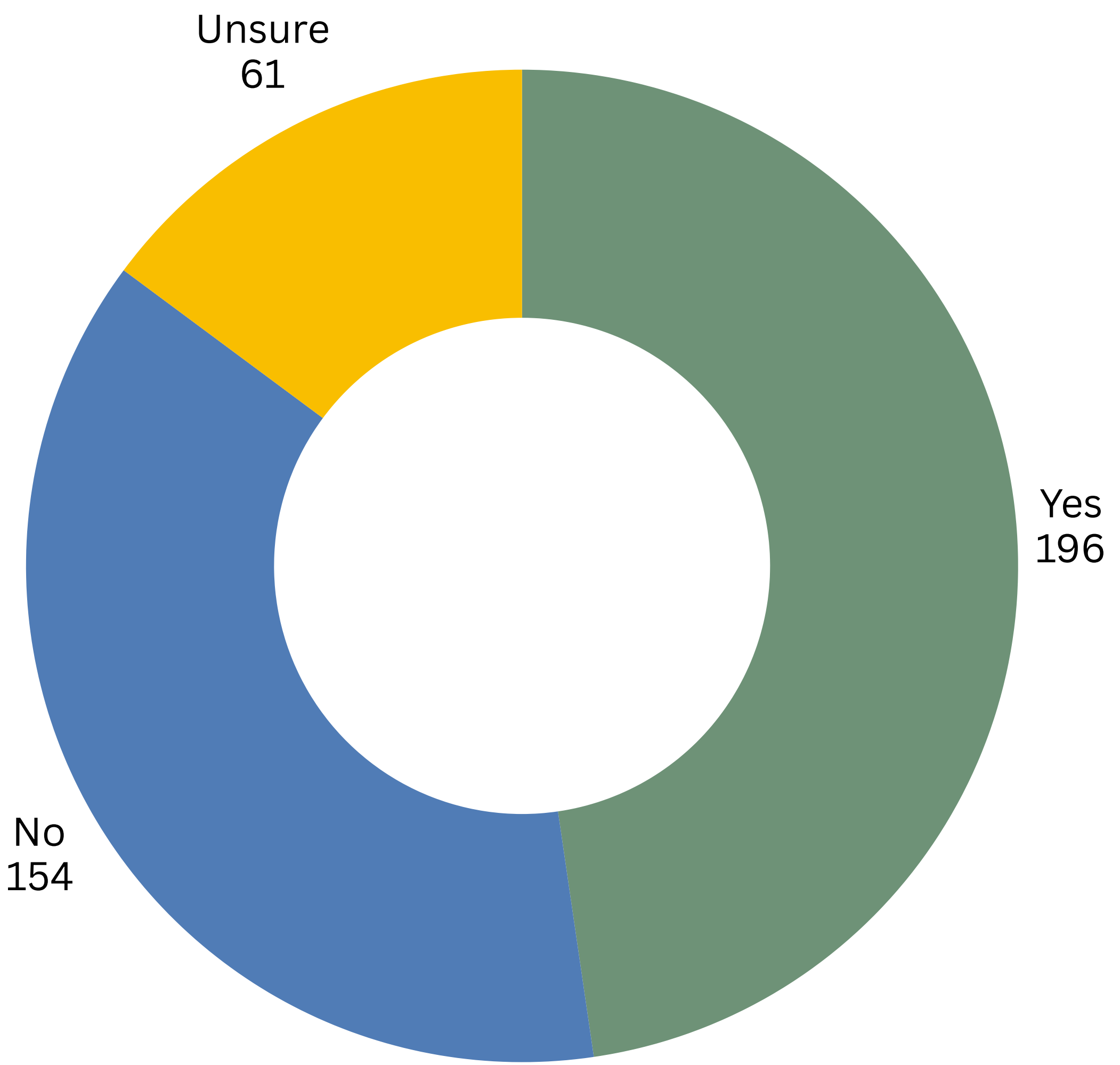


Q9: Would you like to see the parking lot and one existing trail loop paved at the River Valley Wilderness Park?

413 Responses



Q10: Would you use the River Valley Wilderness Park more if the parking lot and a portion of the existing trail were paved?



411 Responses



Q11: Do you have any other comments or suggestions specifically for the River Valley Wilderness Park?

WHAT WE HEARD: 193 responses

MOST REQUESTED IMPROVEMENTS

Trail & Access Upgrades

- Safer way to walk or bike from town
- Add new loops and trail extensions
- Improve trail surfaces

More Amenities

- Garbage cans: more locations needed
- Improvement to Public washrooms
- Benches, picnic areas, and shelters

TOP CONCERNS

Protect the Park’s Natural Character

- Ensuring the natural beauty of the park is preserved
- Concerns about paving increasing the traffic and the speed of bikes and motorized vehicles on the pathways

Vehicle Misuse & Vandalism

- Off-roading, fence cutting, and damage
- Requests for barriers, cameras, and patrols



OTHER IDEAS

- Add beach or safe water access
- Preserve horse-friendly and wildlife areas
- Improve playground and add more family seating
- Better signage and clear maps
- No motorized traffic on trails
- Educational signage (plants, wildlife, Blackfoot language)



PAVING: MIXED FEEDBACK

PROS

- **Improved Accessibility**
 - Easier for wheelchairs, walkers, and strollers
 - More seniors and families could enjoy the park
- **Smoother Surface**
 - Better for biking, rollerblading, and mobility
 - Fewer bumps and ruts compared to gravel
- **More Use in All Seasons**
 - Safer and cleaner in wet or icy conditions
- **Positive Comparisons**
 - Other communities (like Lethbridge) have paved trails in nature areas without losing the natural feel

CONS

- **Loss of Natural Character**
 - Many feel paving goes against the “wilderness” concept
 - It could encourage more traffic and disturb wildlife
- **Environmental Impact**
 - Carbon footprint of asphalt
 - Concerns about flooding and long-term maintenance
- **Increased Speed & Conflict**
 - E-bikes and scooters are already speeding on existing paved paths
 - Safety concerns for walkers
- **Other Priorities**
 - Some prefer spending funds on more trails, better access or basic maintenance

“Paving would help my dad walk the park again.”
“Great for kids learning to bike or seniors using walkers.”
“Paved paths can still be beautiful and respectful of nature.”

“Keep it natural – we already have paved trails elsewhere.”
“Gravel is safer in winter and easier on joints.”
“Paving invites misuse. It’s peaceful now – let’s keep it that way.”

THANK YOU!

We appreciate your feedback. Your ideas are helping shape the future of the River Valley Wilderness Park.