

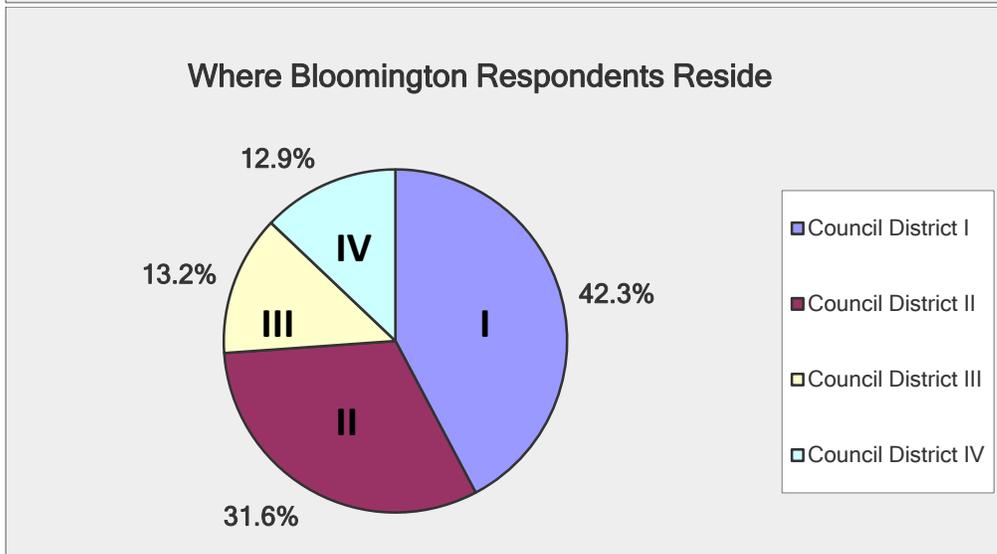
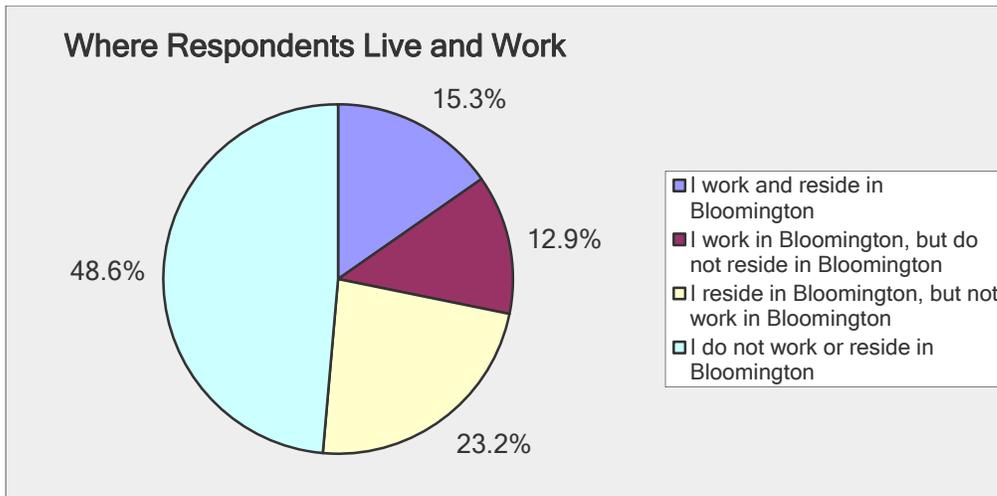
Minnesota River Valley Master Plan – Summary of On-Line Survey Results

General:

- The survey was available on-line (City website) from 06/26/14 through 08/15/14.
- The survey consisted of 14 questions.
- Not a scientific or statistically relevant survey; purpose was to get a sense of how people use of the River Valley.

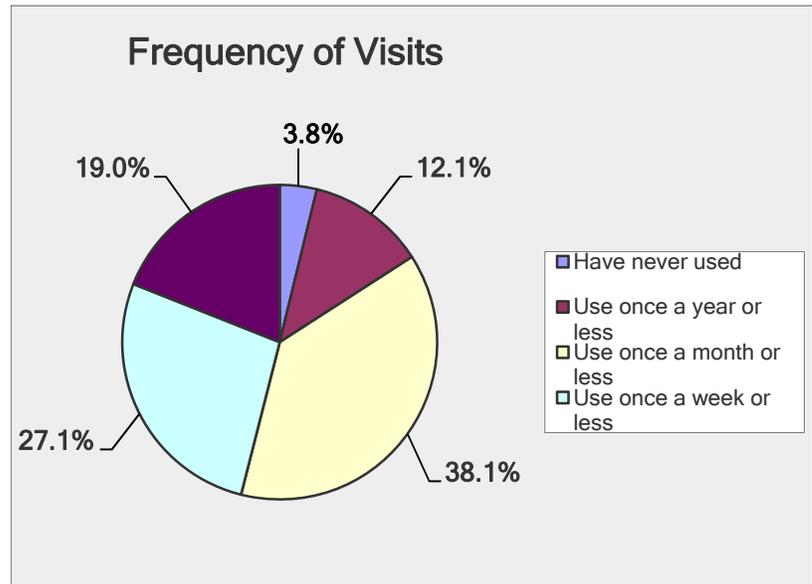
Who responded?

- A total of 989 people participated to the survey (38.5% are Bloomington residents).
- Not all respondents completed all 14 questions.
- A majority of respondents who are Bloomington residents live in areas that abut the City owned portions of the River Valley (Council districts I and II)
- A majority of respondents indicated some connection to bicycling organizations.



Q. How often do members of your household visit the Minnesota River Valley in Bloomington?

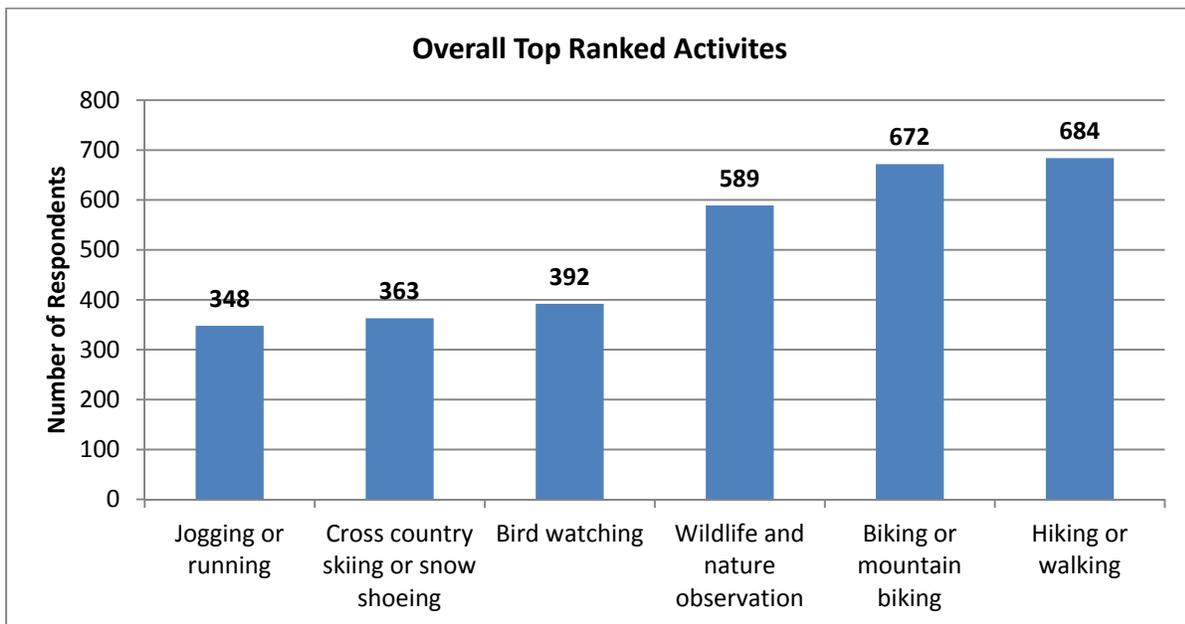
- All 986 persons participating in the on-line survey responded to this question.
- Overall, more than 84% visit the Minnesota River Valley more than once per year.
- About 46% of respondents stated they visit more than once per month.



Q. In which activities have you or members of your household participated within the Minnesota River Valley during the past three years? Check all that apply.

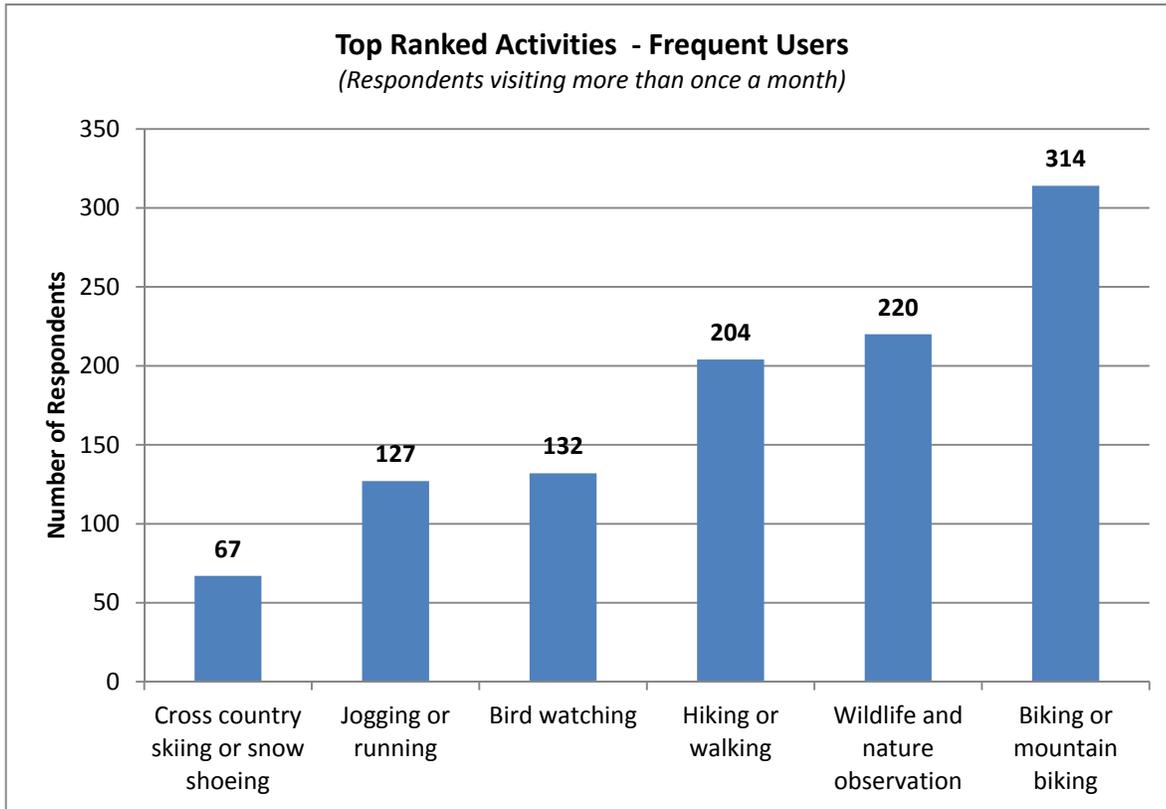
The activities receiving the most responses include:

1. Hiking or walking (77%)
2. Biking or mountain biking (75.8%)
3. Wildlife and nature observation (66.4%)
4. Bird watching (44.4%)
5. Cross country skiing or snowshoeing (40.9%); and
6. Jogging or running (39.2%)



The top five activities by respondents who visit more than once per month include:

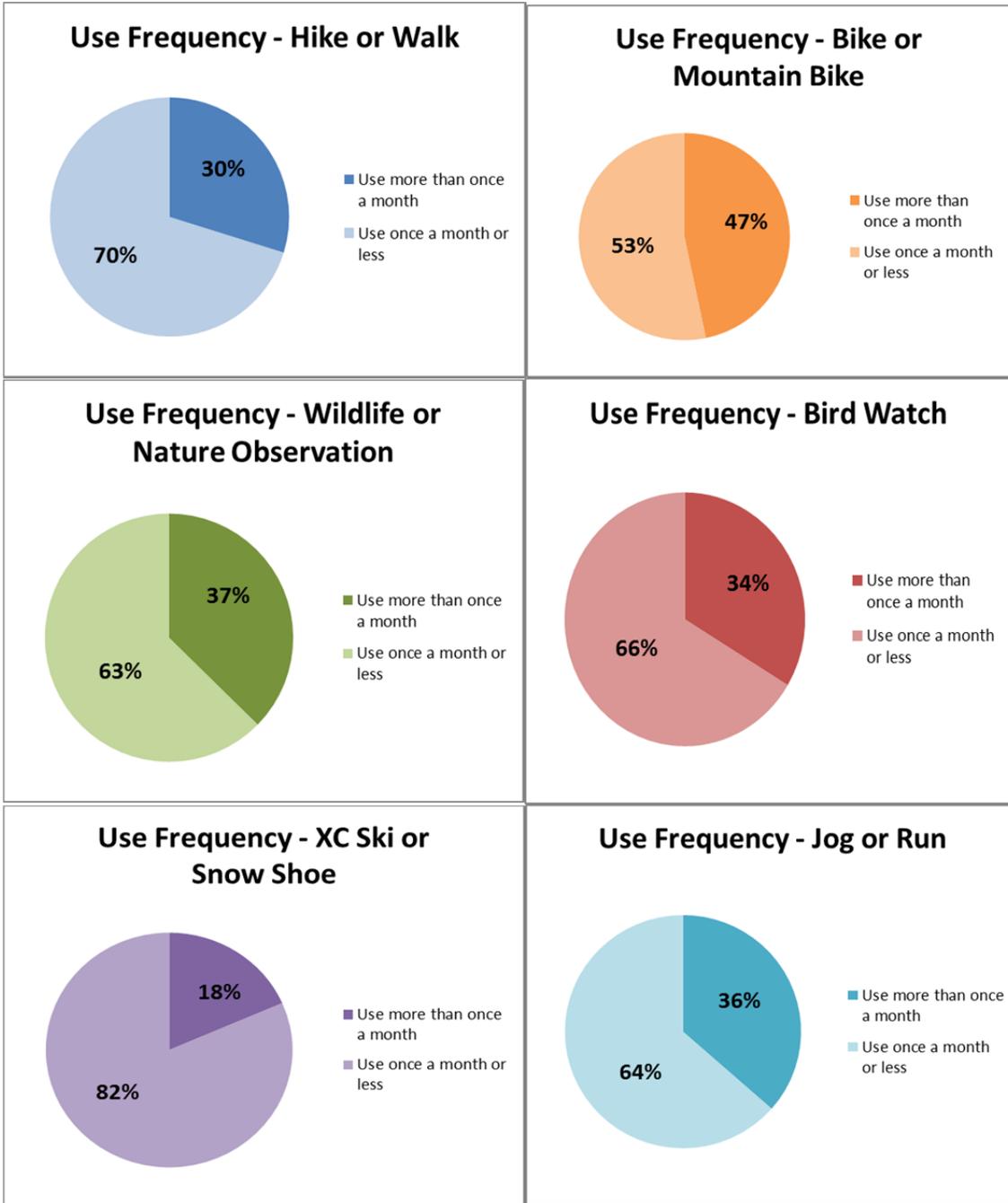
1. Biking or mountain biking
2. Wildlife and nature observation
3. Hiking and walking
4. Bird watching; and
5. Jogging or running



The top five activities by respondents who visit less than once a month include:

1. Hiking and walking
2. Wildlife and nature observation
3. Biking and mountain biking
4. Cross country skiing and snowshoeing
5. Bird watching

This “infrequent use” category seems to reflect that some activities are weather dependent and/or seasonal, which may limit participation through the year. It is noted that three activities (1. hike/walk, 2. bike/mountain bike, 3. wildlife observation) were ranked highly in both “frequent” and “infrequent” user categories, which indicates the universal popularity of these activities. The graphs on the following page illustrate the frequency respondents participate in these six most popular activities.



The activities most cited by respondents as “do not use” include:

1. Fishing
2. Picnicking
3. Cultural or historical interpretation

Fishing and cultural/historical activities may be considered “niche” activities, which could explain the low number of responses.

Q. If you or members of your household don't use the Minnesota River Valley, what are the reasons? Please check all that apply.

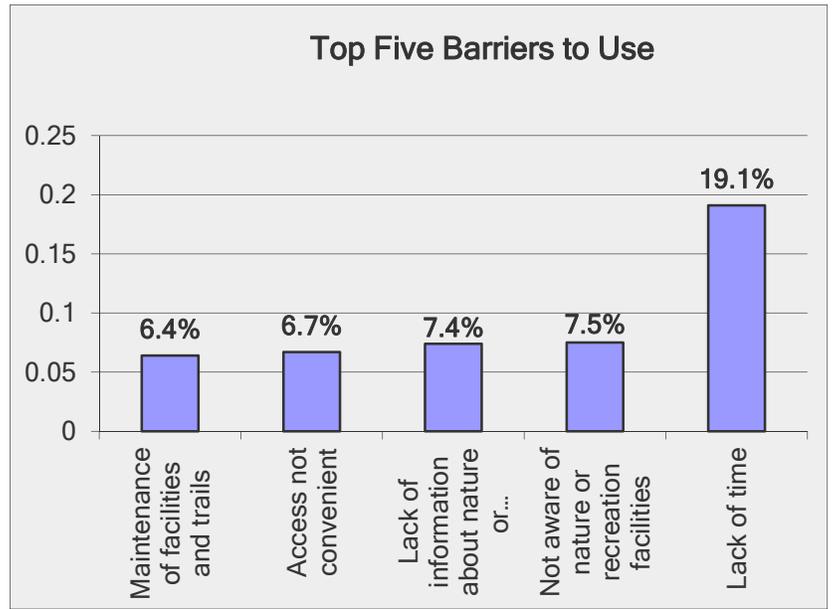
This question was intended to identify the primary barriers to use of the River Valley. Of the 865 people responding to this question, 61% indicated there were barriers to their use of the River Valley. By far, the most cited barrier to use was **lack of time**.

All of the other noted barriers relate to key goals of the *Minnesota River Valley Master Plan*, namely:

- Enhance Access
- Increase Awareness

Other barriers noted:

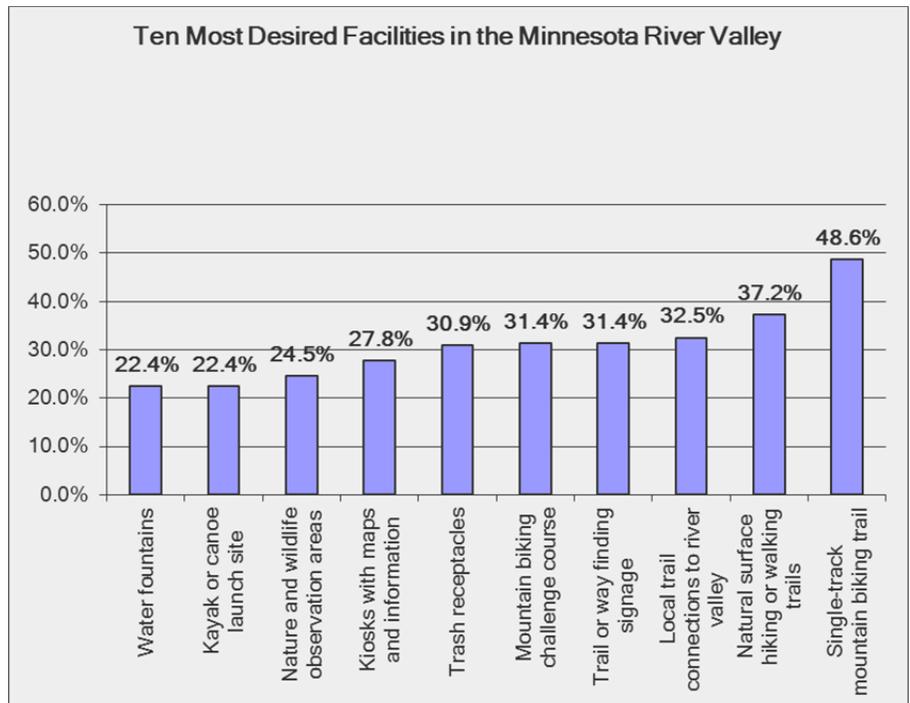
- Weather (cold, flooding)
- Bugs



Q. What type of facilities to you feel should be provided or improved in the Minnesota River Valley?

Responses to this question indicate a strong preference for trail related facilities and improvements. This may reflect the predominance of respondents who indicated an affiliation with a bicycle group or organization.

Facilities that ranked lower all involve man-made structures and/or more active forms of recreation (e.g., marina, restrooms). Some of the lower ranked facilities also coincide with activities that ranked lowest in use by respondents (e.g., fishing).



The responses are consistent with messages the City has received generally, and at the open house and stakeholder meetings. The primary message is that respondents want to keep things “as is”, preserve the natural character of the area, and do not want a significant amount of new “development” (i.e., structures, pavement).

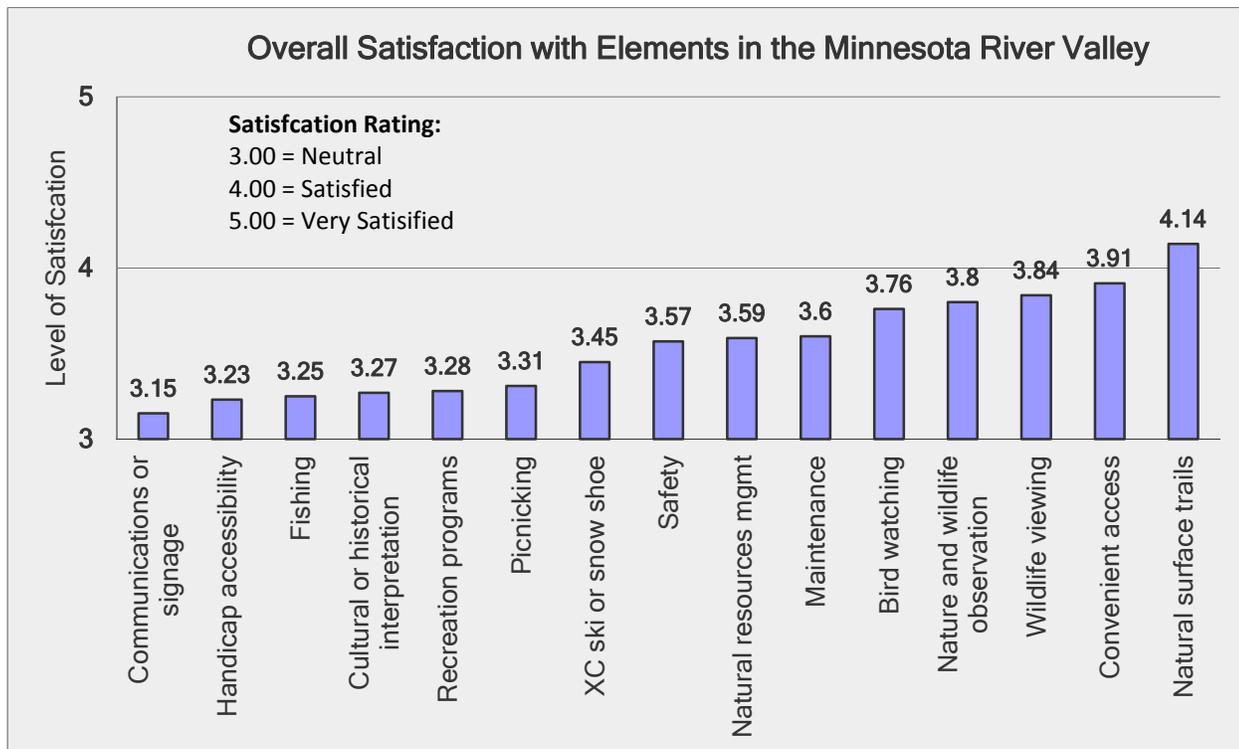
Q. How satisfied are you with the following elements of the Minnesota River Valley?

This question asked respondents to rate numerous facilities and characteristics present in the Minnesota River Valley today. Level of satisfaction was rated on a scale of 1 to 5 as follows:

- 1 = Very Unsatisfied
- 2 = Unsatisfied
- 3 = Neutral
- 4 = Satisfied
- 5 = Very Satisfied

All elements received at least a Neutral rating, while only one element – natural surface trails – received a rating of Satisfied or higher. This suggests that there is no significant dissatisfaction with elements or conditions in the River Valley and is consistent with the message “keep as is”.

The elements rated lowest correspond with items noted as barriers to use (lack of information, convenient access) as well as facilities ranked lowest in terms of use (fishing, cultural/historic interpretation, picnicking). Again, two key goals of the Master Plan are to identify strategies to enhance access and increase awareness of the River Valley in general, but also with regard to its cultural and historic significance.



Q. What priority does each element hold for your household in the future?

This question attempts to get a sense of what elements or facilities users feel are most important to retain to ensure their continued and future use of the River Valley. Level of priority was rated on a scale of 1 to 5 as follows:

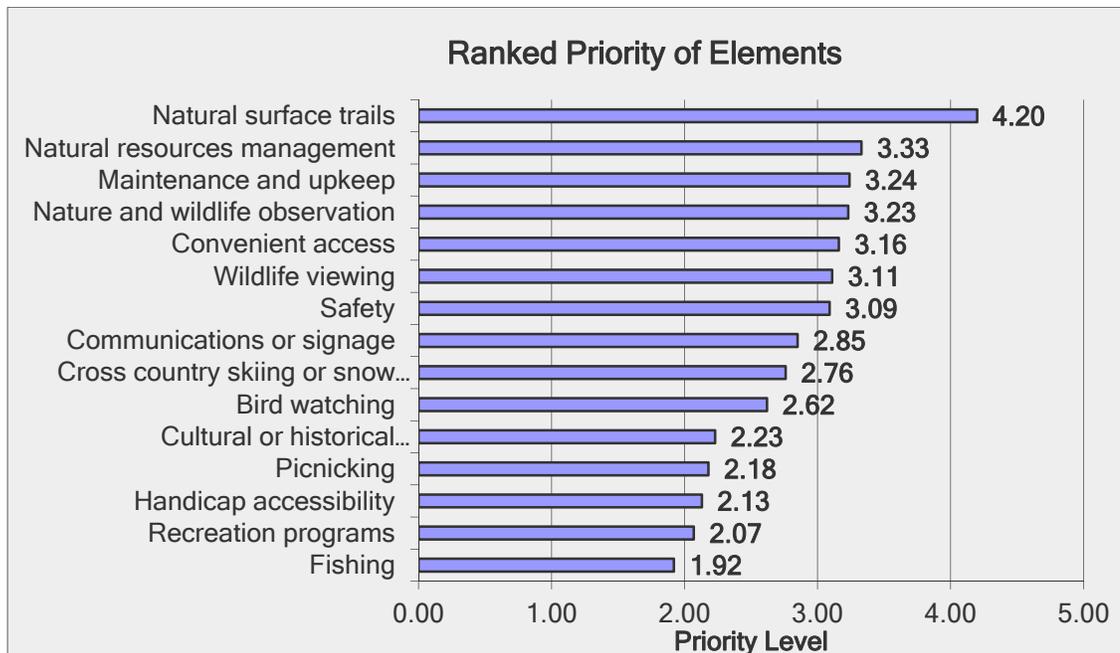
- 1 = Lowest Priority
- 2 = Low Priority
- 3 = Medium Priority
- 4 = High Priority
- 5 = Highest Priority

Elements rated at least a medium priority include, in rank order from high to low:

1. Natural surface trails
2. Natural resources management
3. Maintenance and upkeep
4. Nature and wildlife observation
5. Convenient access
6. Wildlife viewing [not sure how this differs from #4 above]
7. Safety

Natural surface trails was the only element that rated High Priority. This likely reflects the high number of respondents who indicated they are mountain bikers and/or hikers. It also may reflect current mobilization within the mountain biking community around the design of the Minnesota Valley State Trail with both a paved trail and a natural surface trail. The top ranked elements are also consistent with the primary message to keep the River Valley as natural and undeveloped as possible.

The lowest ranked elements correspond to items ranked lowest in terms of use (e.g., fishing, picnicking, cultural/historical interpretation).

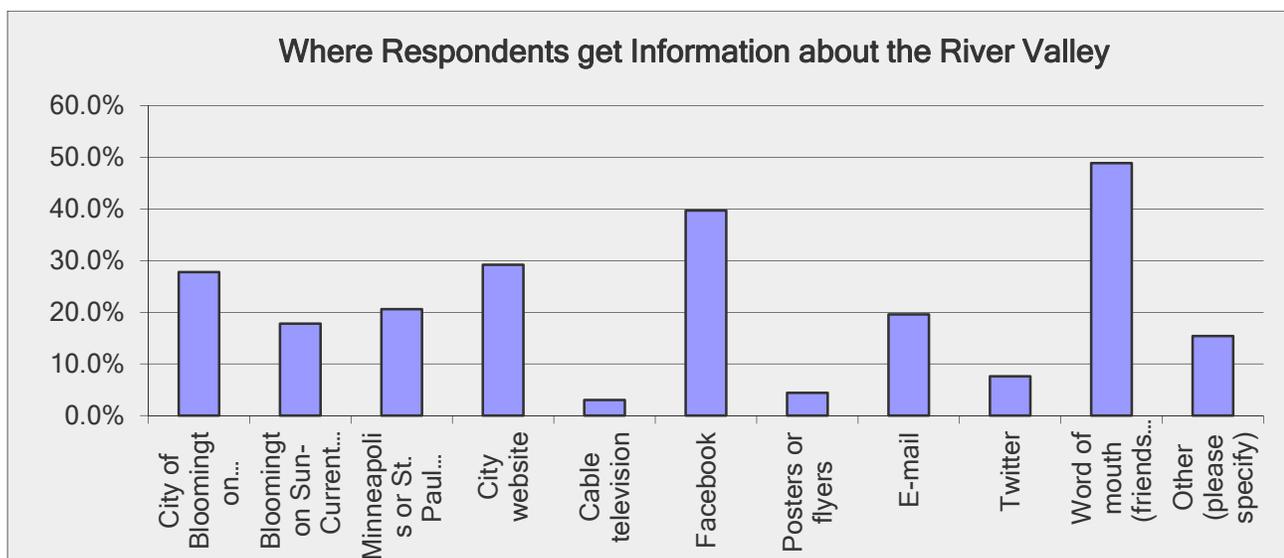


Q. Where people get information about the River Valley

A question was asked about where respondents get information about the River Valley and/or the City's Minnesota River Valley Master Plan. Respondents were able to identify multiple sources. The most common source of information was "word of mouth", with about 49% of respondents indicating this as an information source. This was followed by Facebook (40%). The City's primary information sources – CityWeb and the Briefing, ranked third (29%) and fourth (28%), respectively. This suggests that the City's information sources are well used.

Written comments received with this question indicate that many respondents get information from websites and blogs affiliated with trail and bicycle-related organizations, retail businesses, and advocacy groups.

Another question served as a means for respondents to sign up for the City's email list to get updates on the Minnesota River Valley Master Plan. A total of 303 respondents requested their email be added to the list. It's likely that some of the 633 respondents who skipped this question are already on the City's email list.



Conclusions

- This survey provides one snapshot of the preferences and priorities of a limited sample of users. It is clear that a majority of respondents were affiliated with bicycle advocacy groups, particularly mountain biking. It is likely that many of these respondents were motivated by concerns regarding the Minnesota State Trail design.
- Responses underscore comments the City has received previously, with the key message being that respondents want the River Valley to remain as natural as possible with limited new "development".
- It is unclear from responses whether items ranked low in terms of use and priority are due to the current absence of these items (signage, picnic facilities) or pure lack of interest. It is also possible that these items are viewed as additional "development".
- Responses provided some mixed messages. In particular, two of the cited barriers to use – lack of convenient access and lack of information – were also ranked lower in terms of priority. Again, it's unclear if they were ranked low priority due to their absence (so nothing to compare with) or because respondents didn't feel they are necessary elements, despite acknowledging the lack of these items as a barrier to use.