

Royal Gorge Area Recreation/ Aquatics Center – Survey Results

May 2020



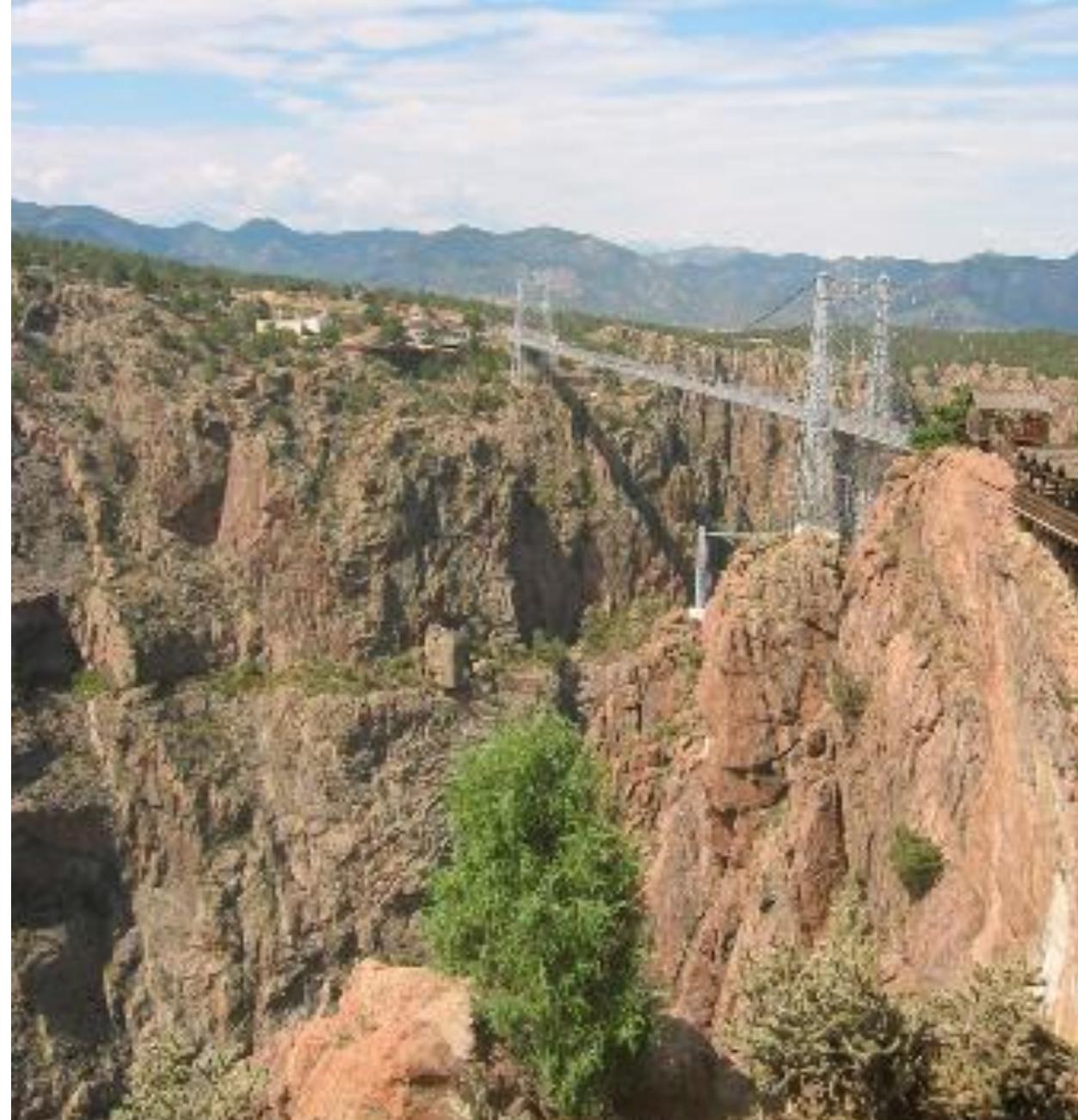


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Introduction

- The purpose of this study was to assess the level of support residents of the Cañon City Recreation and Park District have for a potential Recreation/Aquatics Center to be developed.
 - District residents live both inside and outside the city limits of Cañon City.
- The study assessed a variety of topics among District residents including:
 - Demographics / resident characteristics
 - Voting behavior and voting likelihood
 - Level of support for property tax and sales tax initiatives to fund the center
 - Preferences for a recreation/aquatics center



Introduction

- Residents of the District were randomly selected and mailed a survey. Randomly selected residents are referred to as the “Invite sample” throughout the report.
- The survey could be completed multiple ways
 - Completed via paper and mailed back using a postage-paid envelope
 - Completed online using a 1-time use password.
- **The Invite/Random survey results are statistically-valid and are focused on in-text.**
 - Crosstabulations only include Invite respondent data.
- Two weeks after the mailed survey, an online version was opened to everyone who did not receive an Invite survey. These results are kept separate and presented by themselves.
 - **Open Link survey results are not statistically-valid.**



Methodology

Primary methods:

1 = Statistically Valid (Invite Survey)

Mailed survey with an option to complete online via a password-protected website

2 = Open Link Survey

Online survey available to all residents 2-weeks after the mailed survey

Approximately 6,284 Surveys Mailed

1,568
Completed Surveys
+/- 2.4%
Margin of Error



1,568 - Invite Surveys Completed



608 - Open Link Surveys Completed

Weighting the Data



1

The underlying data for the Invite Survey are weighted by age, homeownership status, and political party affiliation. These three aspects are influential in potential ballot measures. Weighting by these topics would best represent the entire District.

2

Data was weighted using population estimates of the city and county from U.S. Census data, State of Colorado voting data, and American Community Survey data.

Key Findings



Respondents are **generally supportive** of property tax increases to support a recreation / aquatics center in the District (**over 60% support**). **But, there are segments of the community that are less supportive.**



A **warm water activity pool** is the top priority for a large portion of respondents. A multi-activity gym and a competitive lap pool round out the top three priorities.



Over 70% see developing a Recreation / Aquatics center as “somewhat” or “very” important..



There appears to be **some flexibility between sales tax and property tax** to fund the construction of a center. However, it's unclear whether support would significantly change if substituted.

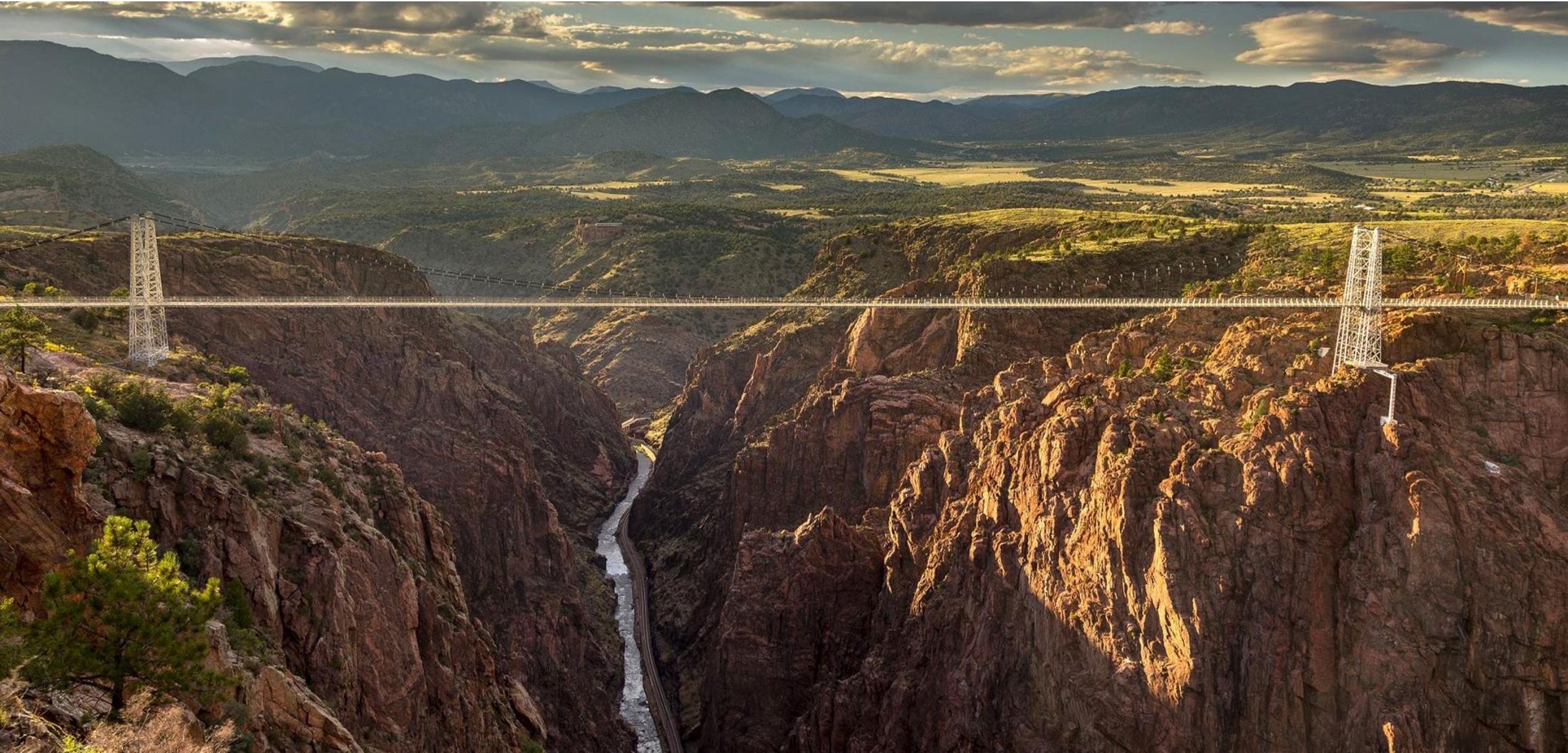


Respondents with children at home are more likely to support the center and support all potential funding options. Households without kids at home are still supportive, but not to the same degree.



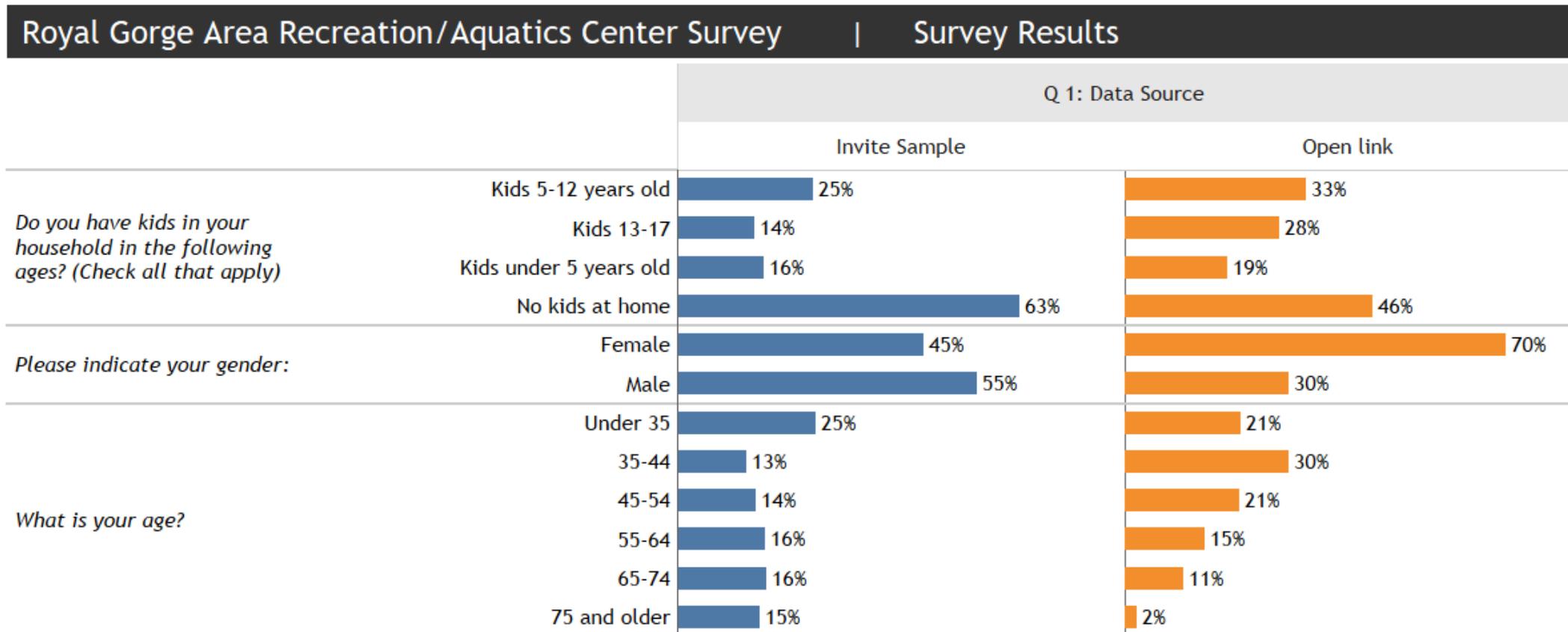
Nearly half of respondent households use private/other District-owned facilities currently.

Demographics and Resident Characteristics



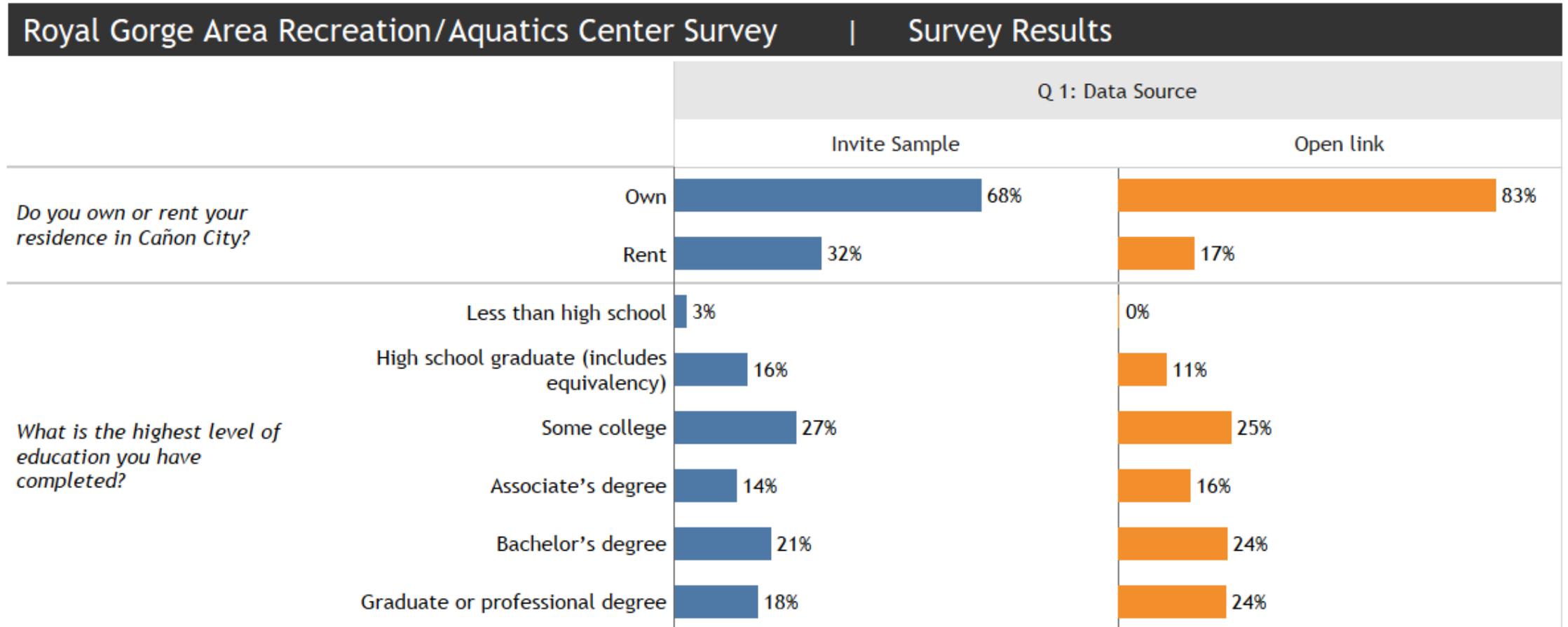
Demographics

- Most Invite respondents do not have children at home (63%), are more likely to be male (55%), and are well-distributed across all age ranges. Age, a weighted variable, best represents the actual age distribution of the area. Open Link results lean more towards a family demographic and higher female participation.



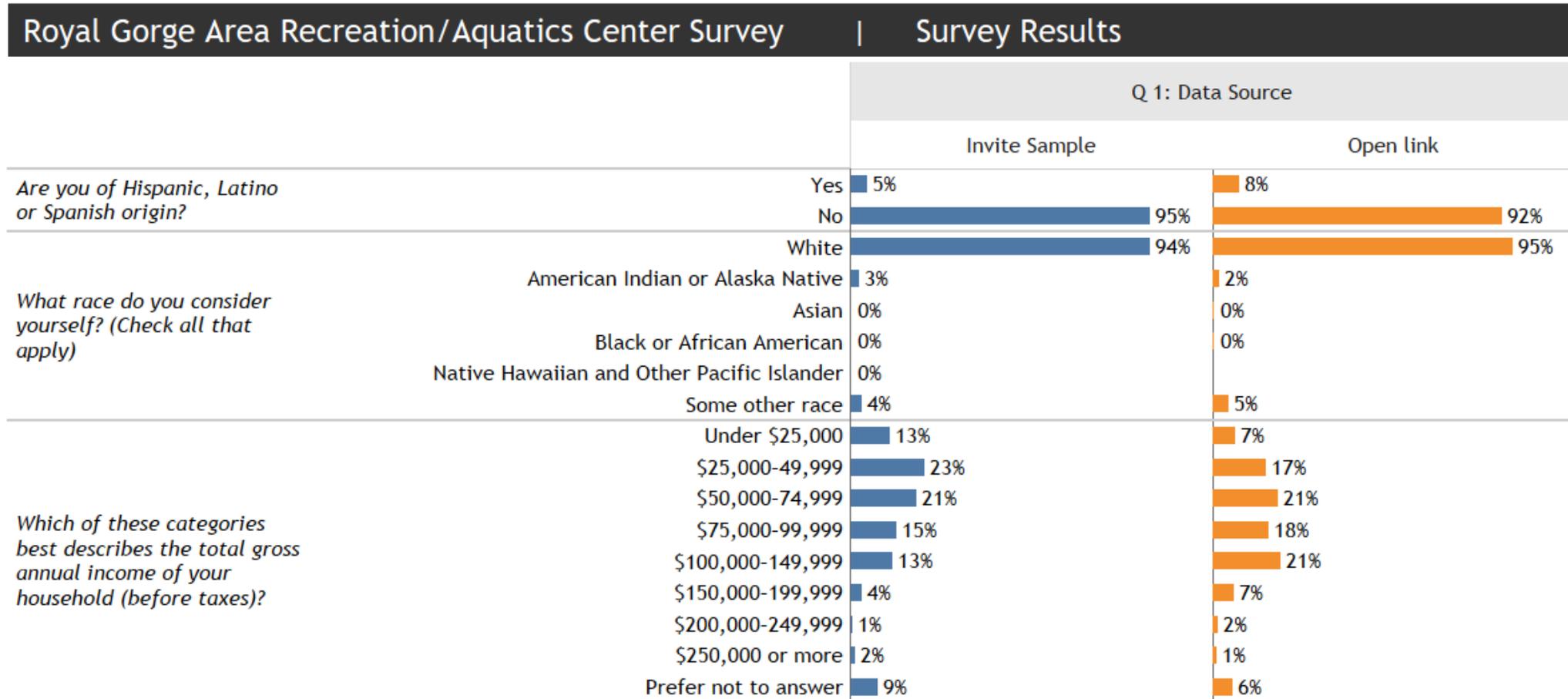
Demographics

- Approximately 68% of respondents own their home with 32% renting. Educational attainment is spread across the gamut with 39% earning at least a 4-year degree, 14% obtaining an Associate's degree, and 27% completing some college.



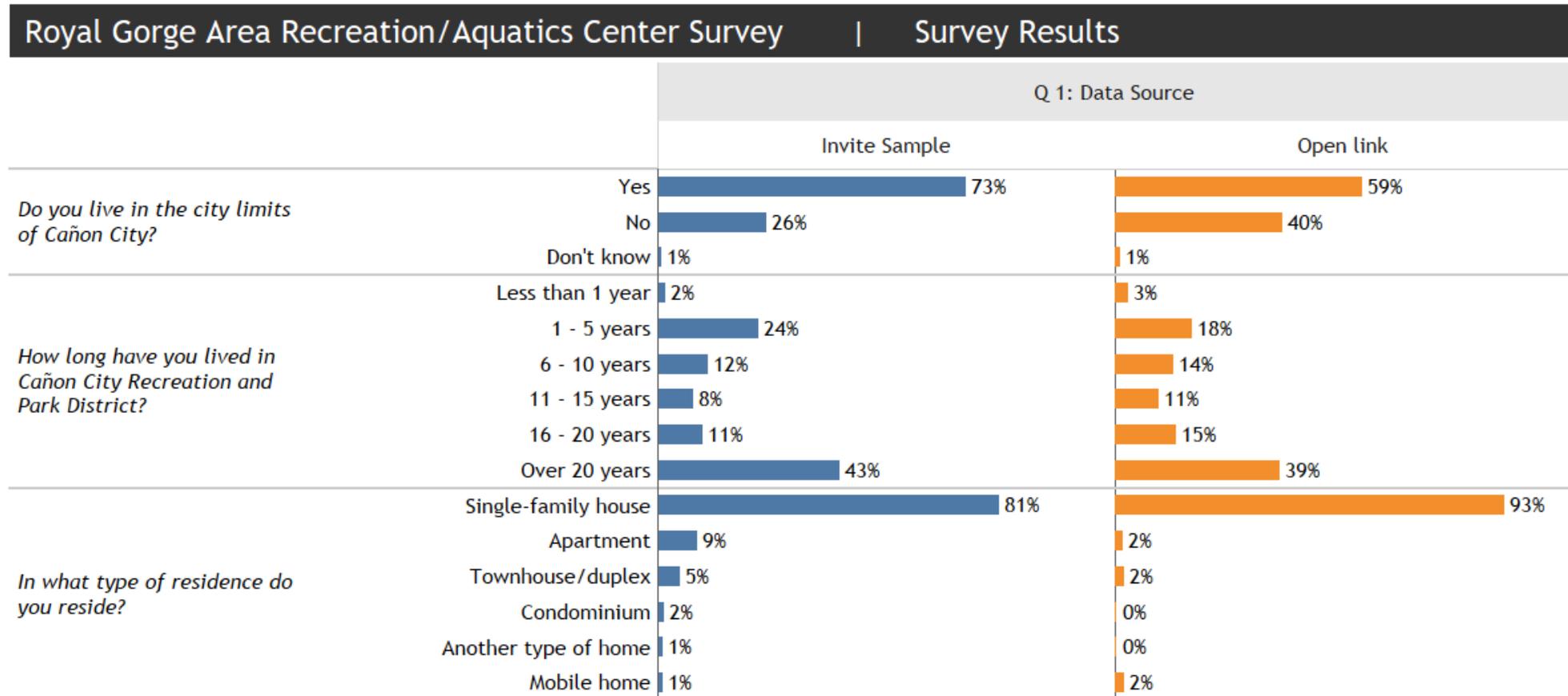
Demographics

- Most Invite respondents (94%) identify as White with 3% identifying as American Indian or Alaska Native and 4% some other race. Approximately 5% identify as Hispanic / Latino / Spanish Origin. Lastly, most Invite respondents earn under \$75k (57%). Similar results are found in the Open Link.



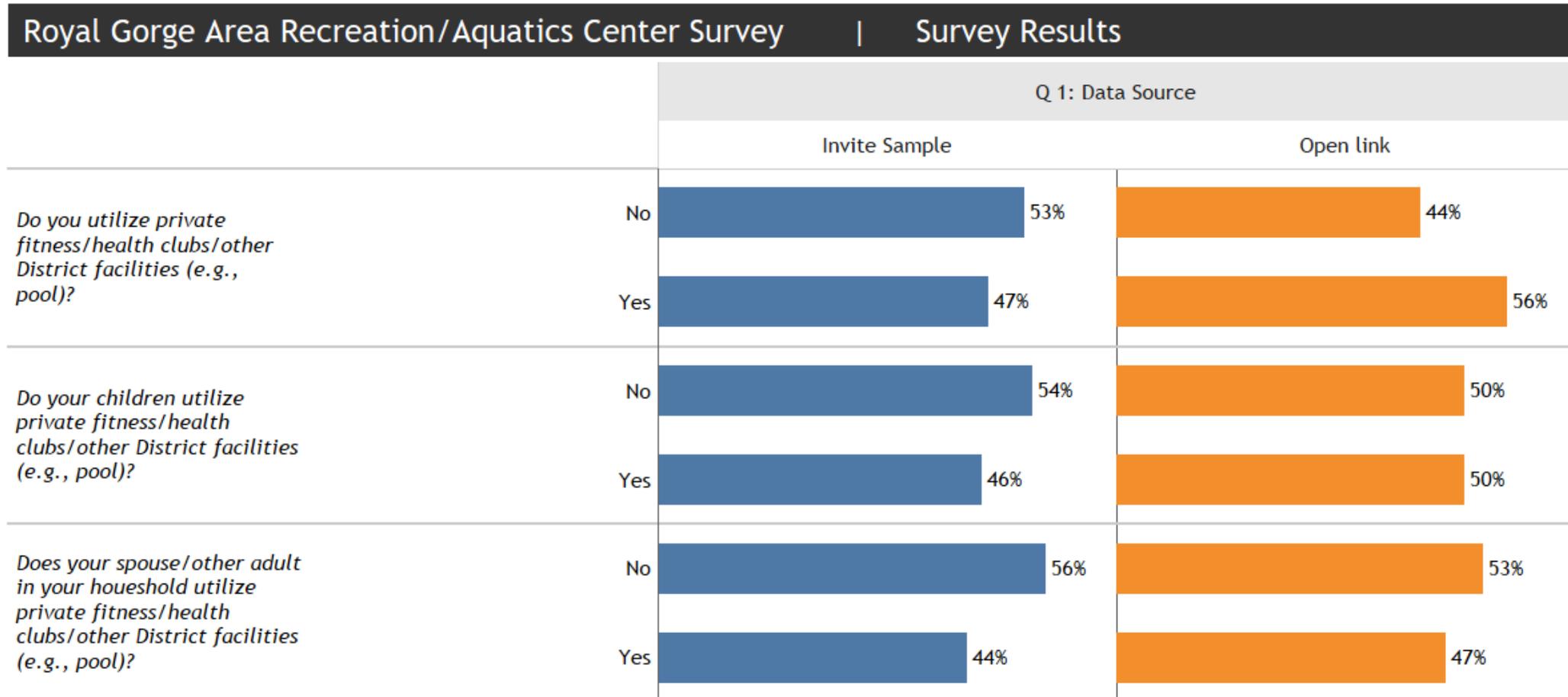
Resident Characteristics

- Nearly 3/4th of Invite respondents live within the city limits with 26% living outside of the City. About 26% of respondents have lived in the District for 5 years or less with 43% living more than 20 years in the District. In total, 81% of Invite respondents live in a single-family house with 9% in an apartment, and 4% in other types of residences.



Resident Characteristics

- Just under half of respondents (47%), their spouses (46%), and children (44%) utilize other fitness/wellness options in the area. Thus, there are several households that do not utilize any alternative options at the moment. On the contrary, Open Link respondents are more likely to utilize these facilities/options.

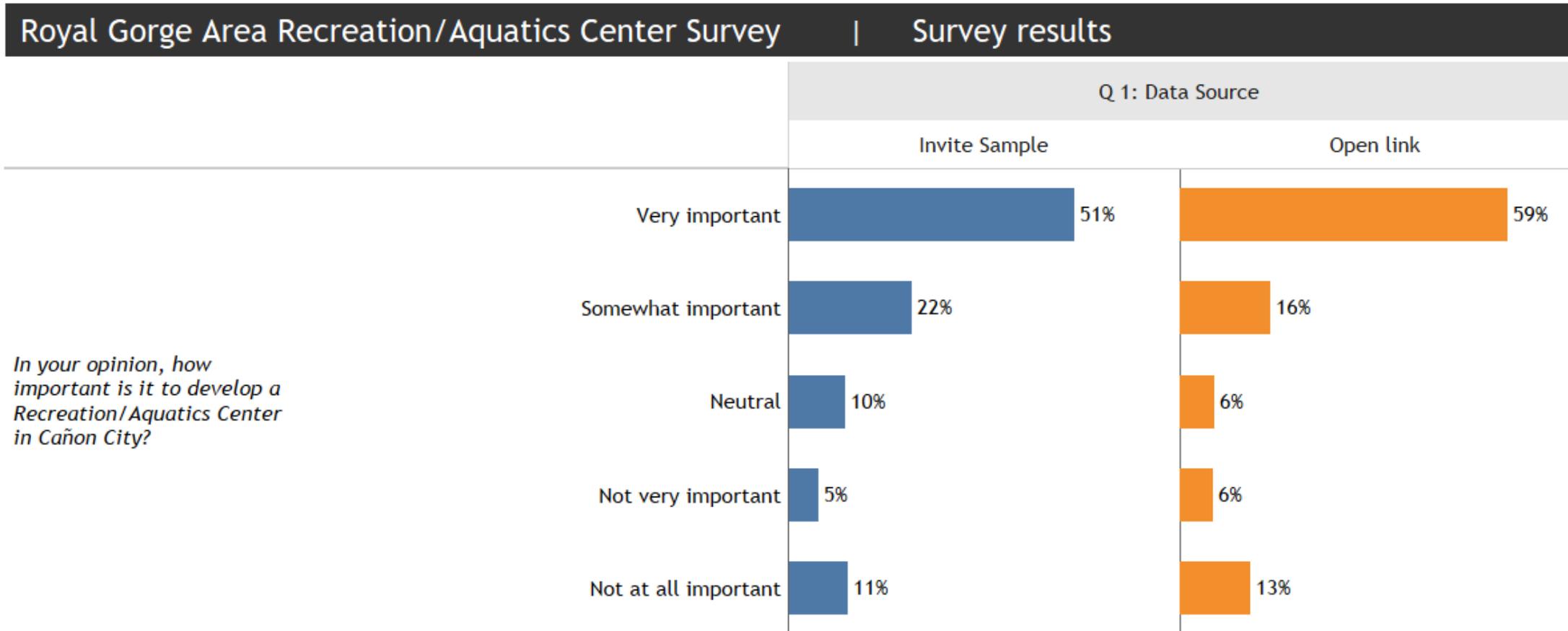


Preferences for Potential Recreation / Aquatics Center



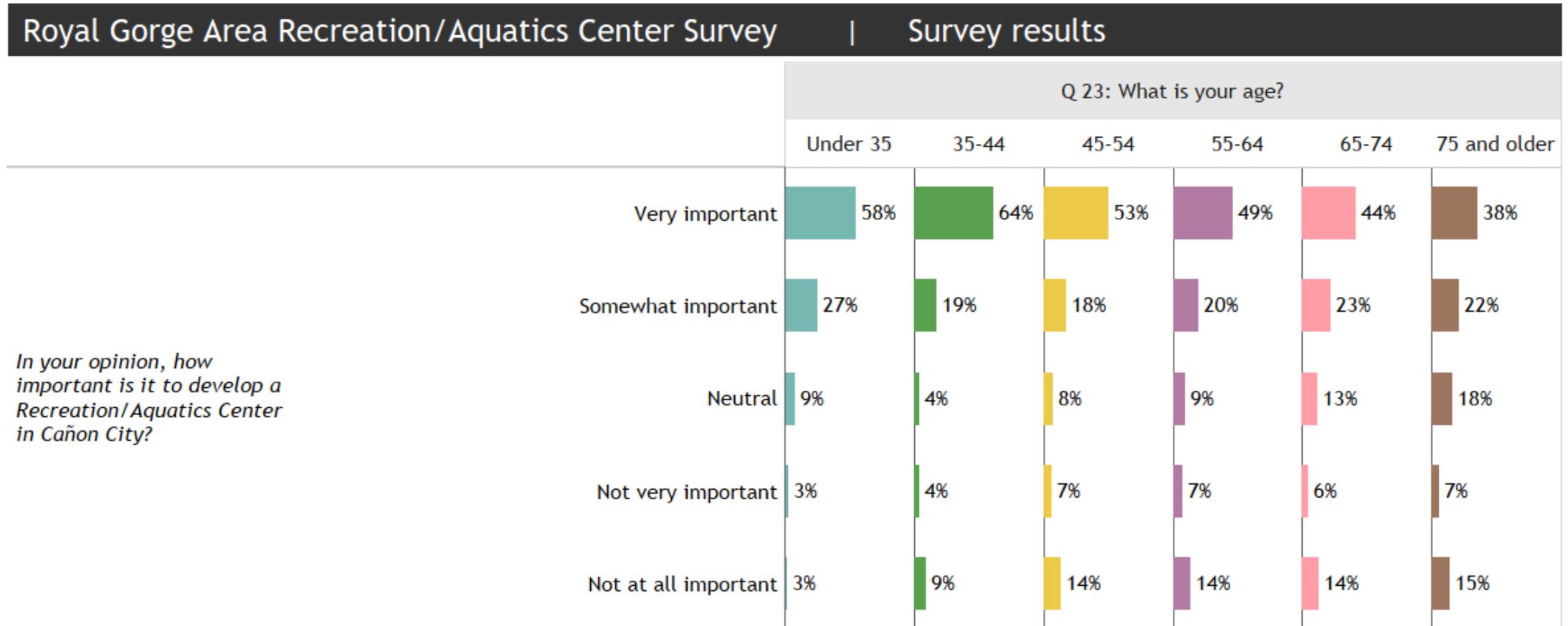
Importance to Develop Center

- Over 50% of respondents say that developing a recreation/aquatics center is “very important.” An additional 22% say it’s “somewhat important.” Of Invite respondents, only 16% say it’s either “not very” or “not at all important.” Thus, it appears there is a relative understanding among respondents that developing a center is valuable for the community.



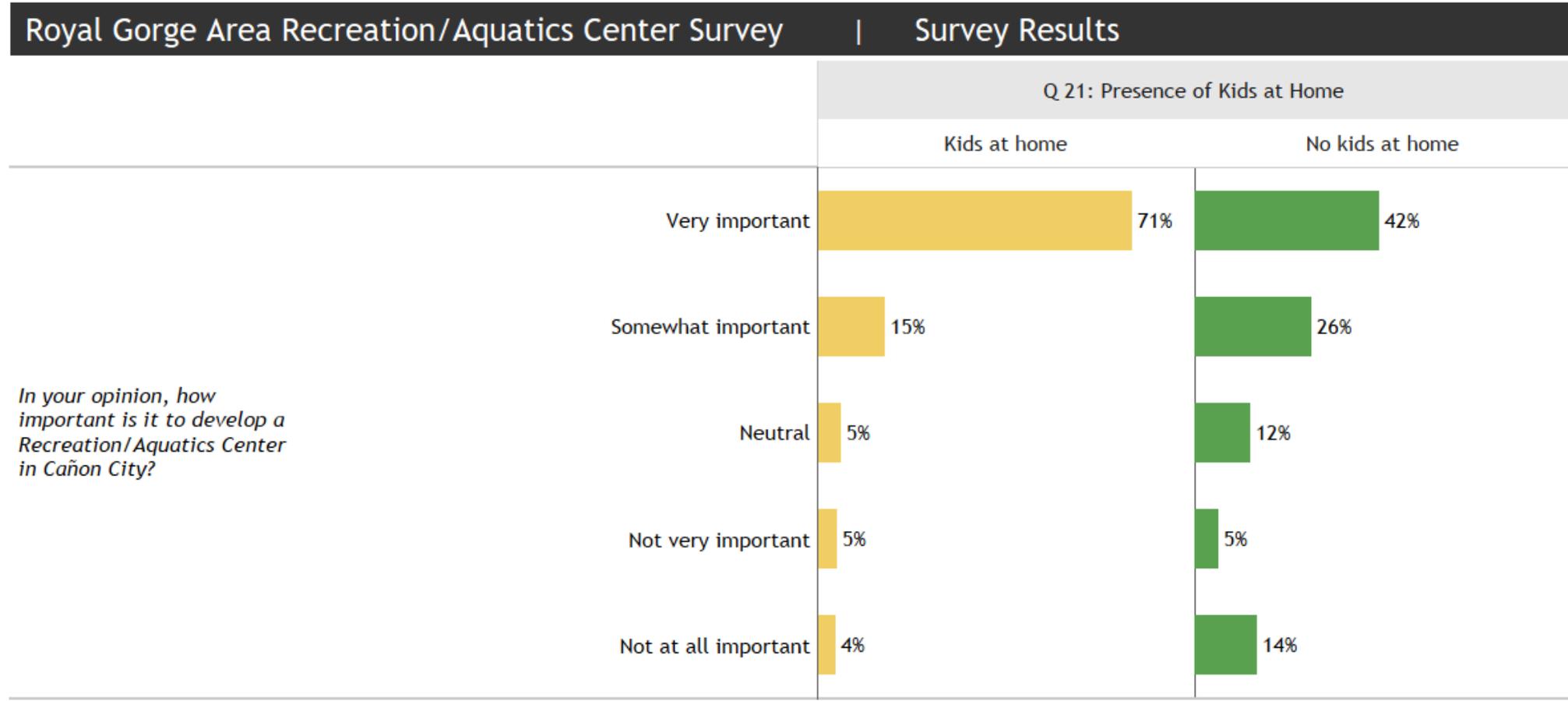
Importance to Develop – By Age (Invite only)

- By age, the level of importance to develop a center correlates strongly with age. Younger respondents are much more willing to say it's important than older respondents. In fact, 85% of those under 35 say it's "very" or "somewhat important" compared to 60% of those 75 and older.



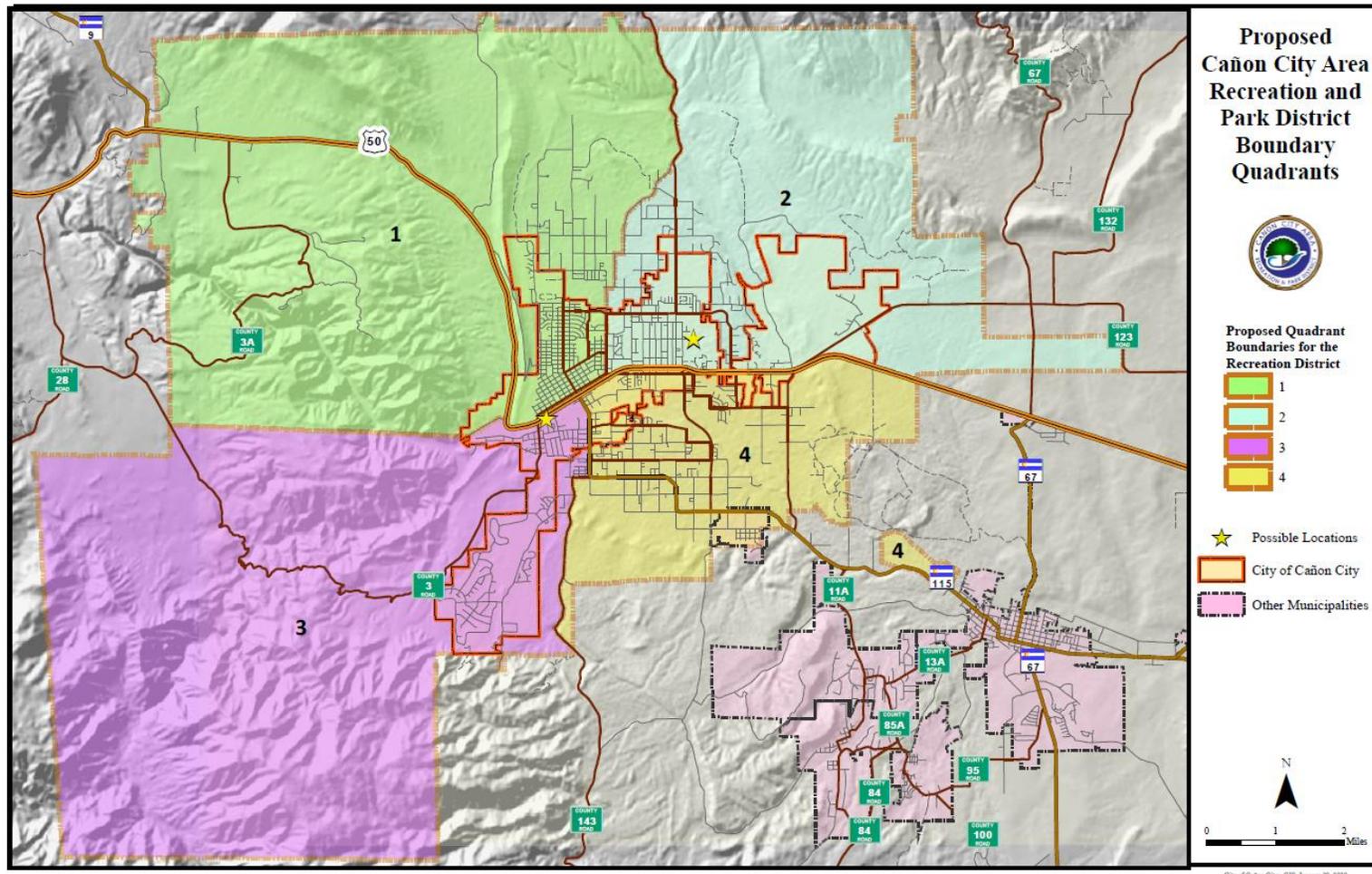
Importance to Develop – By Kids at Home (Invite Only)

- Households with kids at home place a much higher importance on a Recreation / Aquatics Center. About 86% of those with kids at home either see development as “somewhat” or “very” important compared to 72% of respondents without kids at home. But, both groups see development as quite important.



Quadrant Map

- Respondents were provided with the map below to gauge which area they would prefer a center to be built. The yellow stars represent specific sites that were asked for response to their preferences for the Center.



Quadrant Preferred For Center

- When asked which quadrant of town respondents preferred the Center to be built, quadrant #2 (Northeast corner) and quadrant #4 (Southeast corner) were most preferred among respondents. Approximately 14% of Invite respondents stated they don't support the Center being built at all.

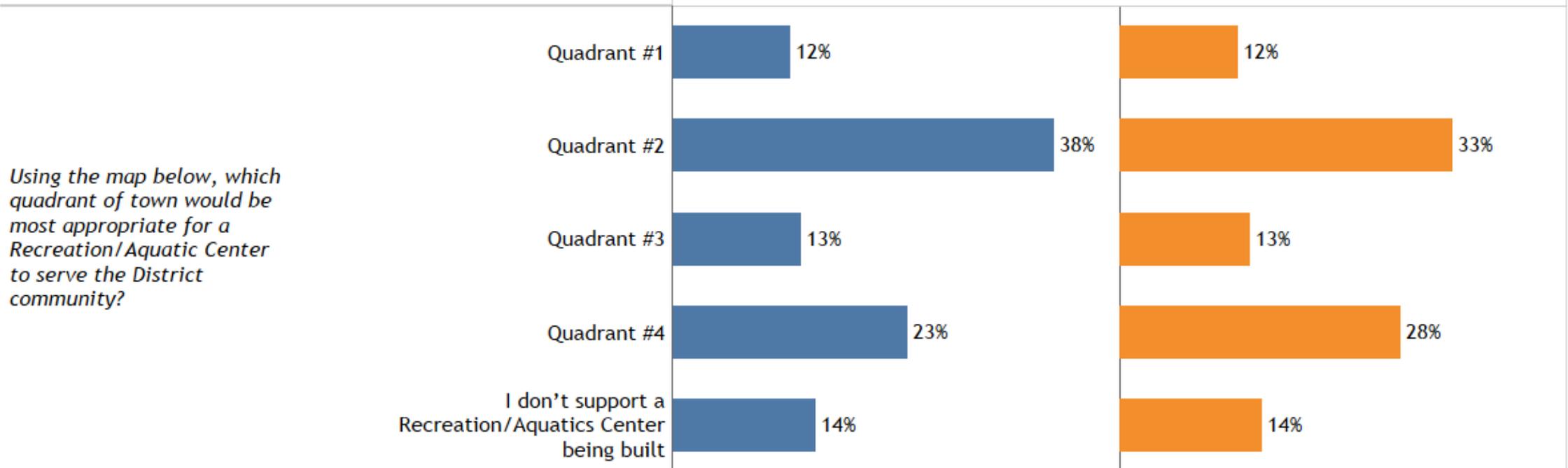
Royal Gorge Area Recreation/Aquatics Center Survey

Survey results

Q 1: Data Source

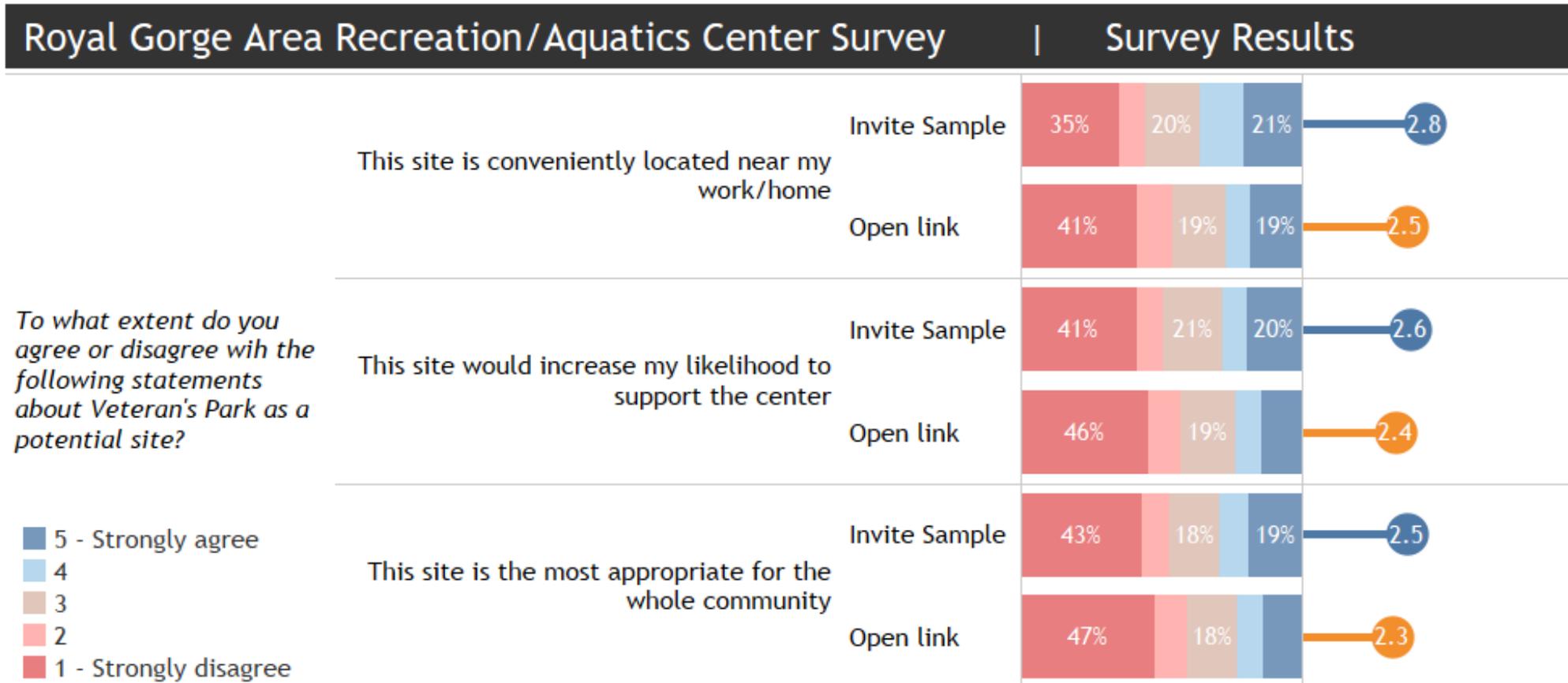
Invite Sample

Open link



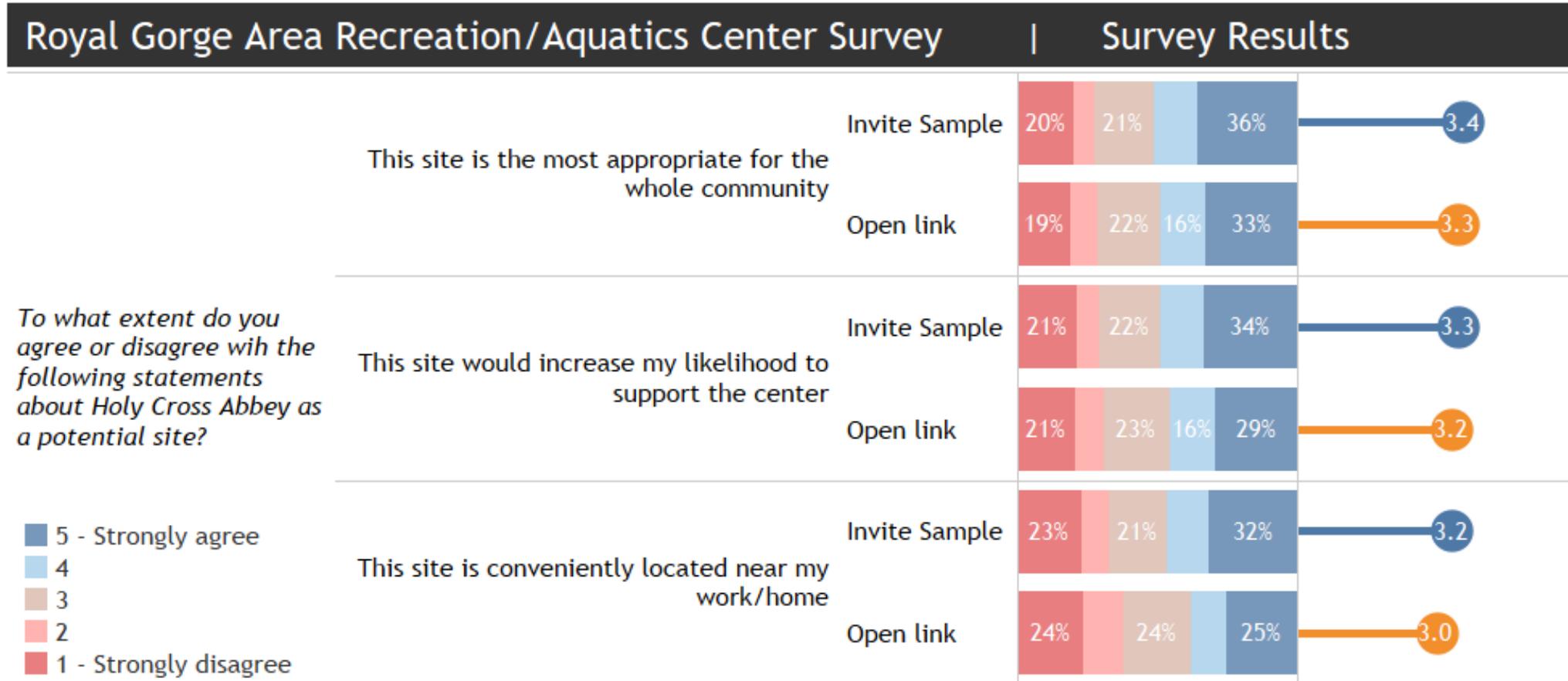
Potential Site Ratings – Veteran’s Park

- Respondents were asked to rate their agreement with statements about potential sites for the Center. Veteran’s Park saw a mostly negative response as a potential site. Almost all statements received a majority negative response. Respondents had comments about too much traffic, preserving the park as is, and not being convenient for their household.



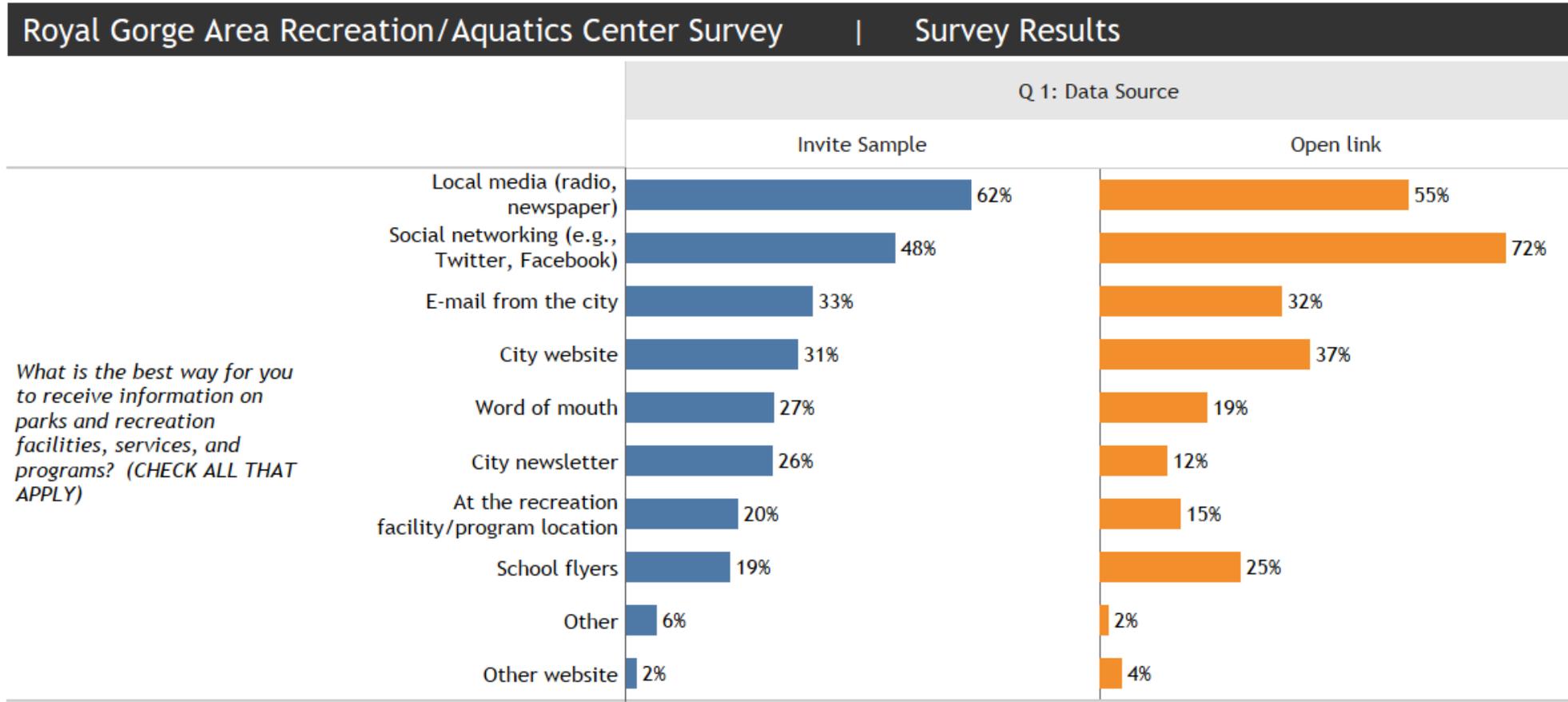
Potential Site Ratings – Holy Cross Abbey

- Holy Cross Abbey is another potential site and was rated by respondents. Respondents were more supportive of the Abbey for a potential recreation / aquatics center. There are still over 30% of respondents who did not agree with each of the statements, but it was more positive than Veteran’s Park.



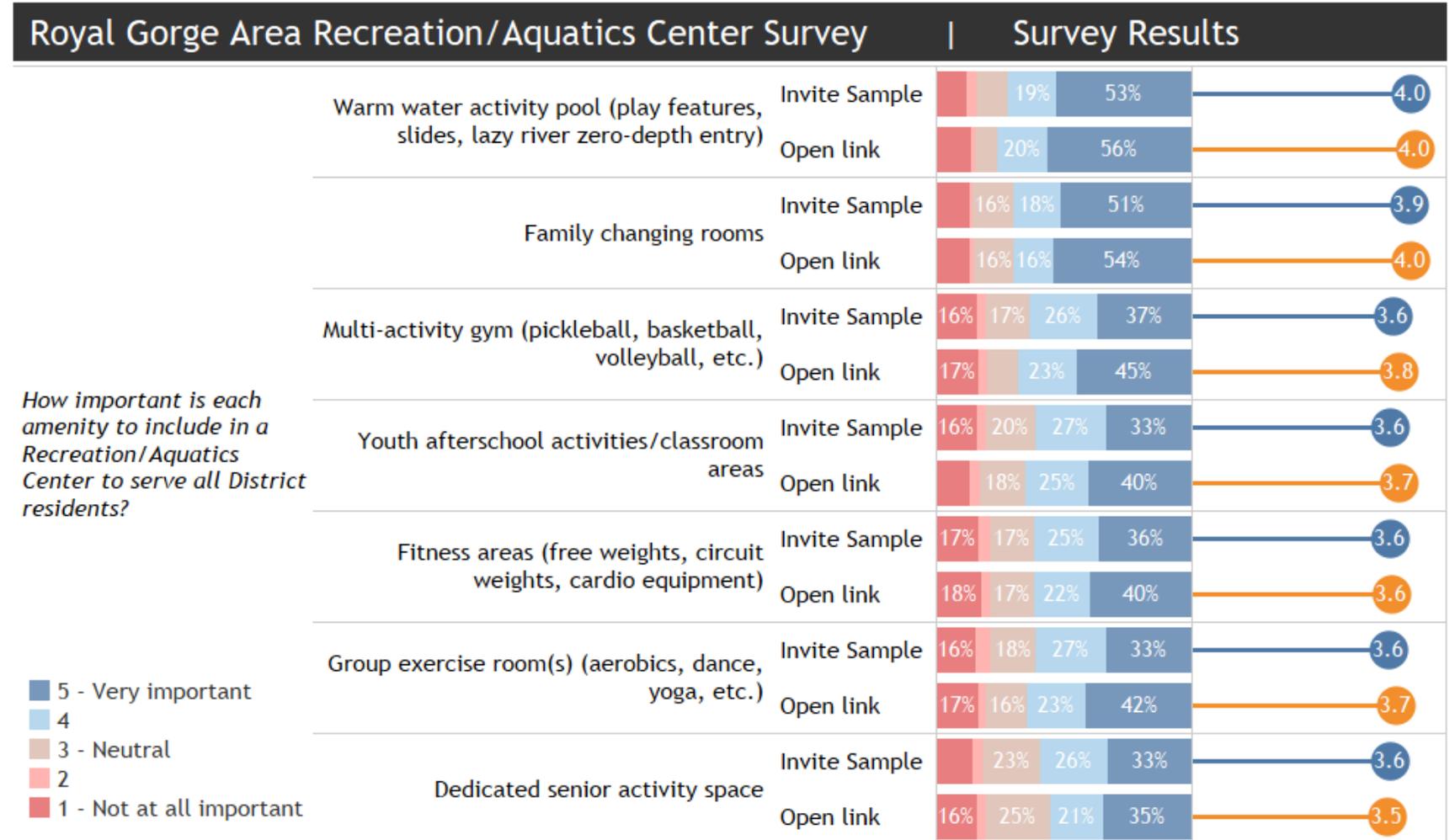
Communication Methods

- Communication is important to understand if looking to promote or engage the community further. Local media (62%), social networks (48%), and emails (33%) are the most preferred options for Invite respondents. Open Link lean more towards social networks but still prefer a diversity of options.



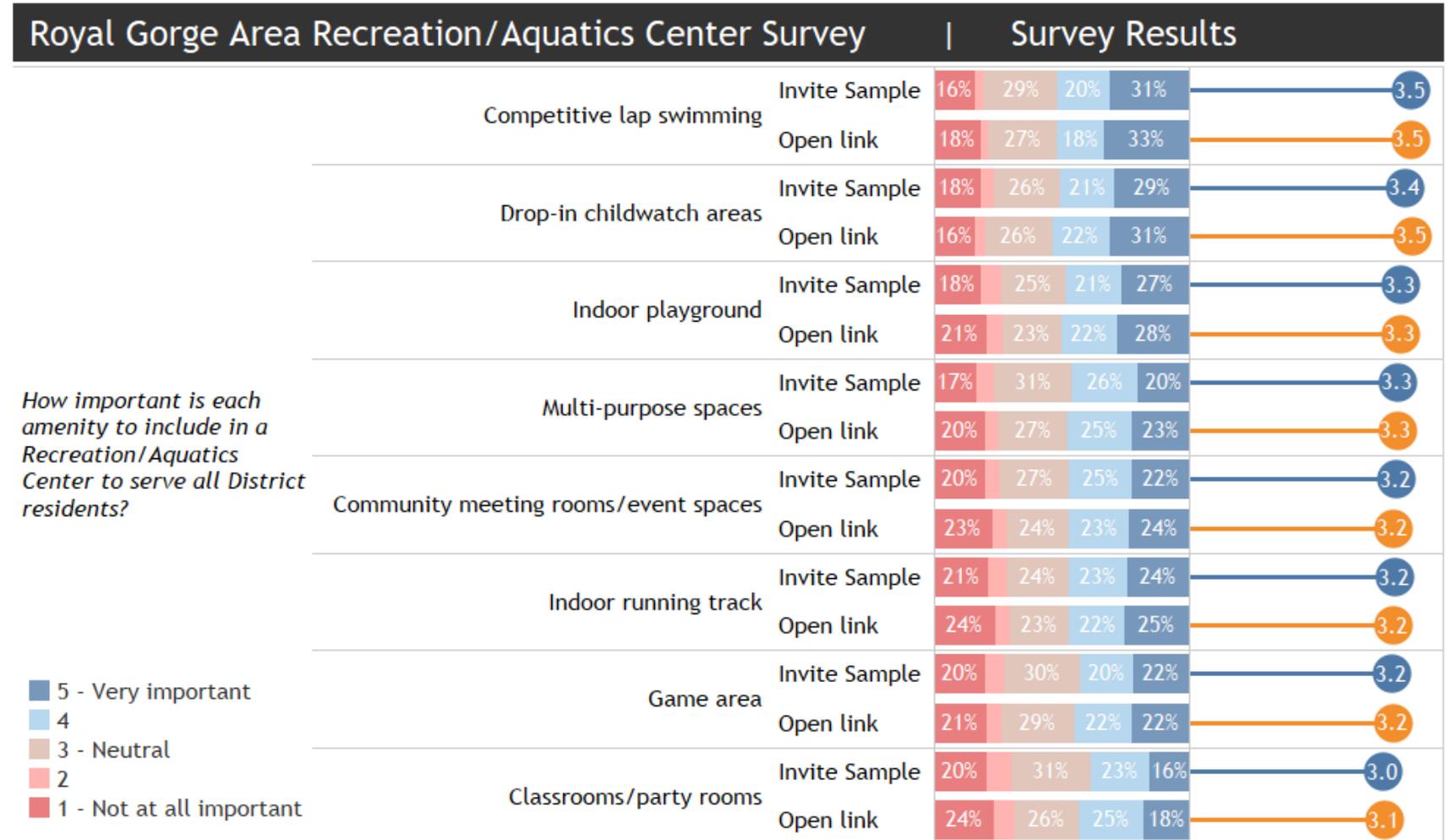
Amenity Ratings

- Respondents were asked to rate how important several amenities are to include in the Center.
- Invite respondents rated a warm water activity pool (4.0), family changing rooms (3.9), a multi-activity gym (3.6), youth after school activities/class area (3.6), fitness area (3.6), group exercise rooms (3.6), and dedicated senior activity space (3.6) as relatively important.



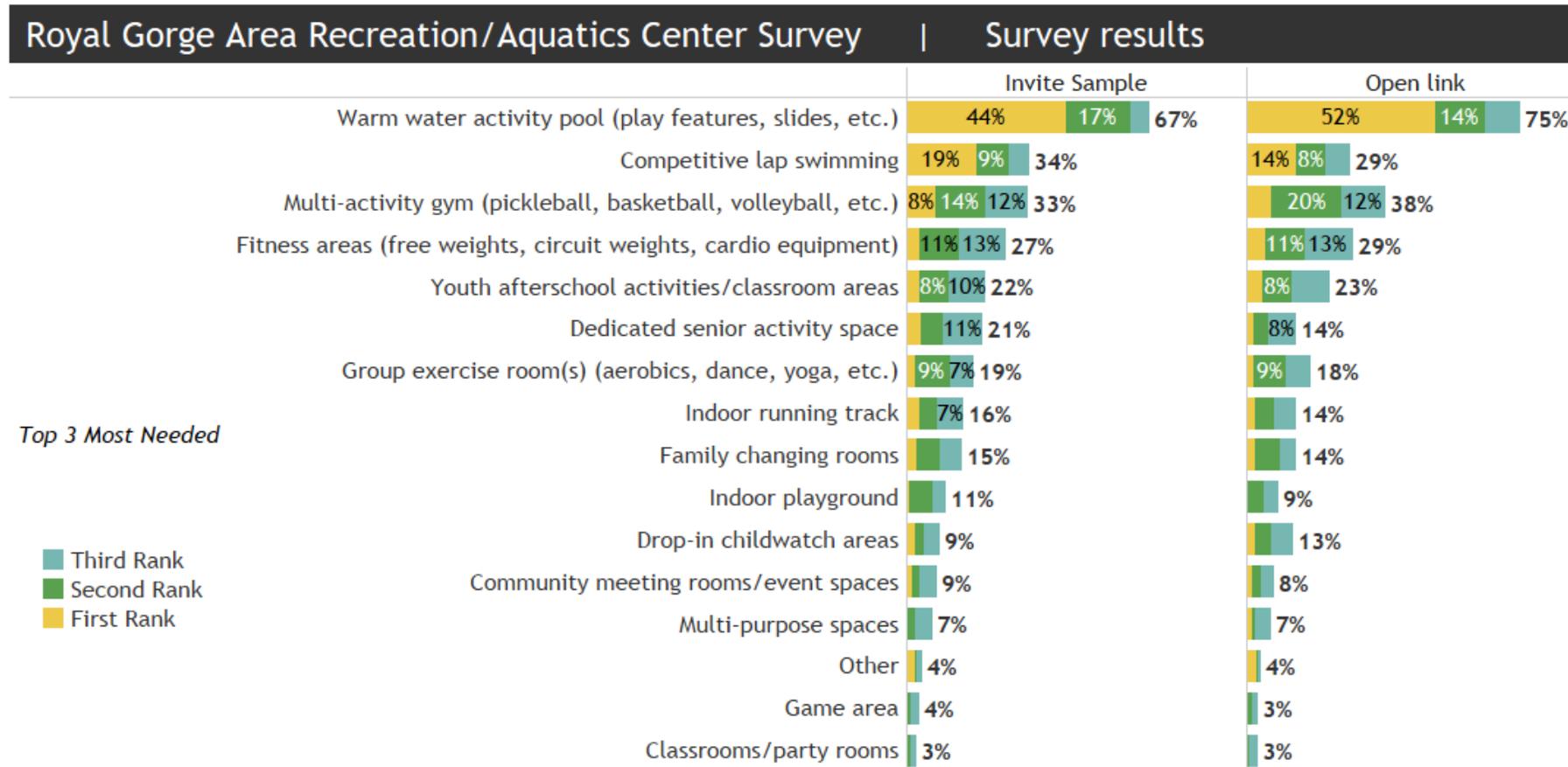
Amenity Ratings

- Although these facilities are near the middle-to-bottom of the list, there is little variation between the means.
- For instance, a competitive lap swimming pool (3.5) is only 0.1 point from all the amenities tied for third most important. Least important are classrooms/party rooms, game area, and an indoor running track.



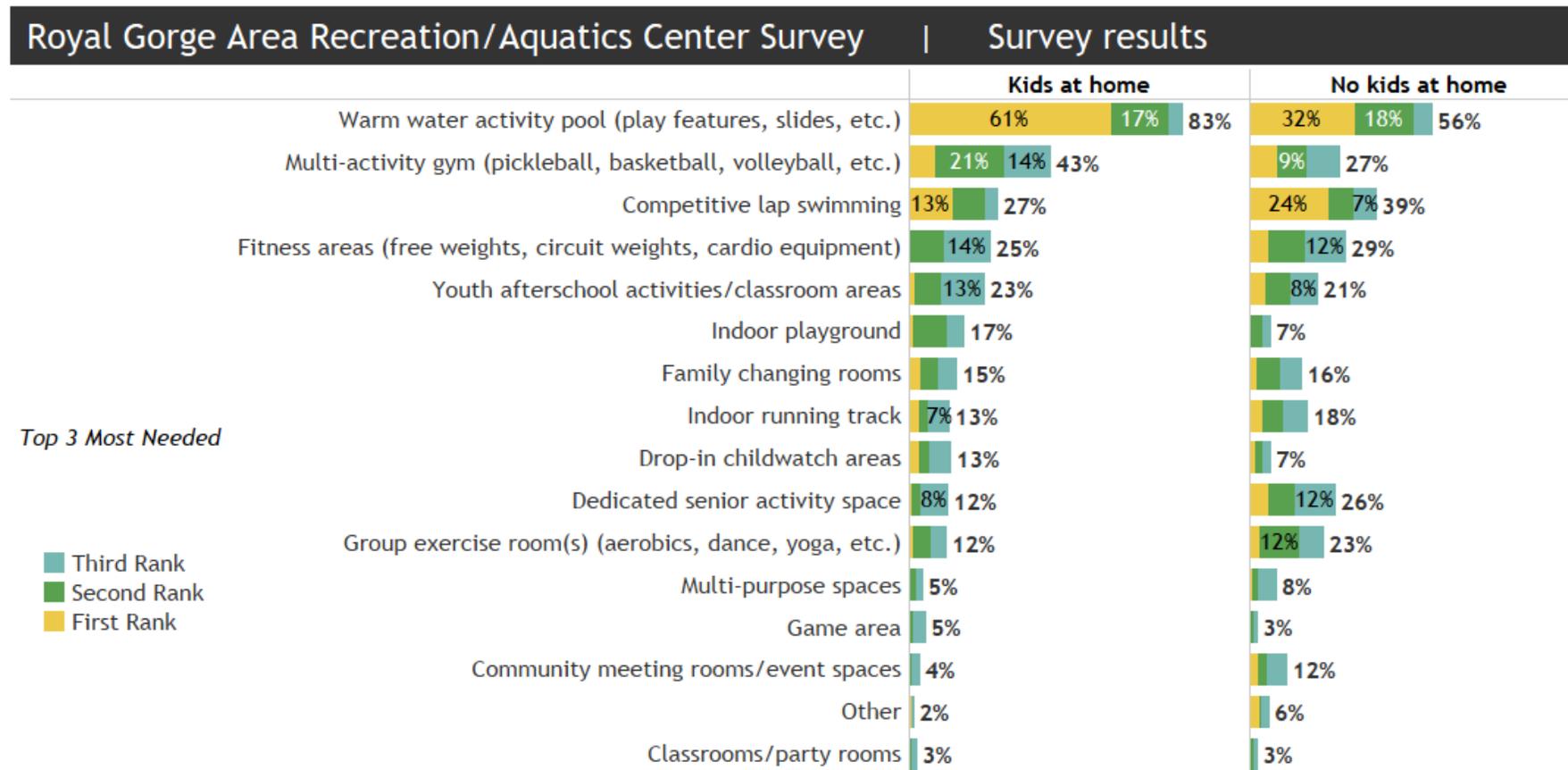
Top Three Most Needed Amenities

- When asked to prioritize their top three most important priorities, the warm water activity pool (67%) stands out from all other choices. Following in a second tier of priority is a competitive lap swimming pool (34%), a multi-activity gym (33%), and fitness area (27%).



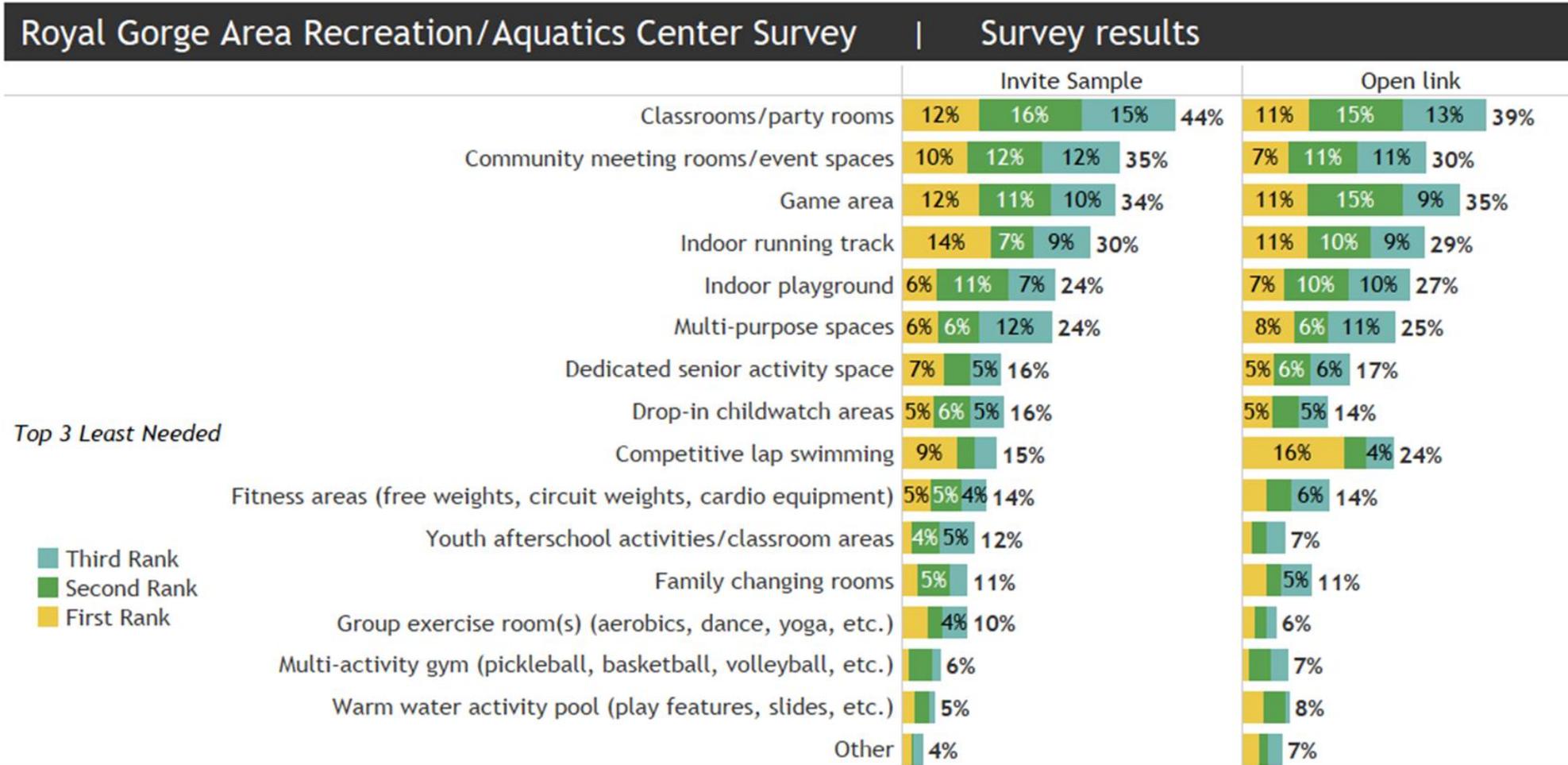
Top Three Most Needed Amenities (Invite Only)

- For households with kids at home, the warm water activity pool becomes an even higher priority (83%). Those who don't have kids at home placed more importance on a competitive lap pool (39%), dedicated senior space (26%), and group exercise rooms (23%).

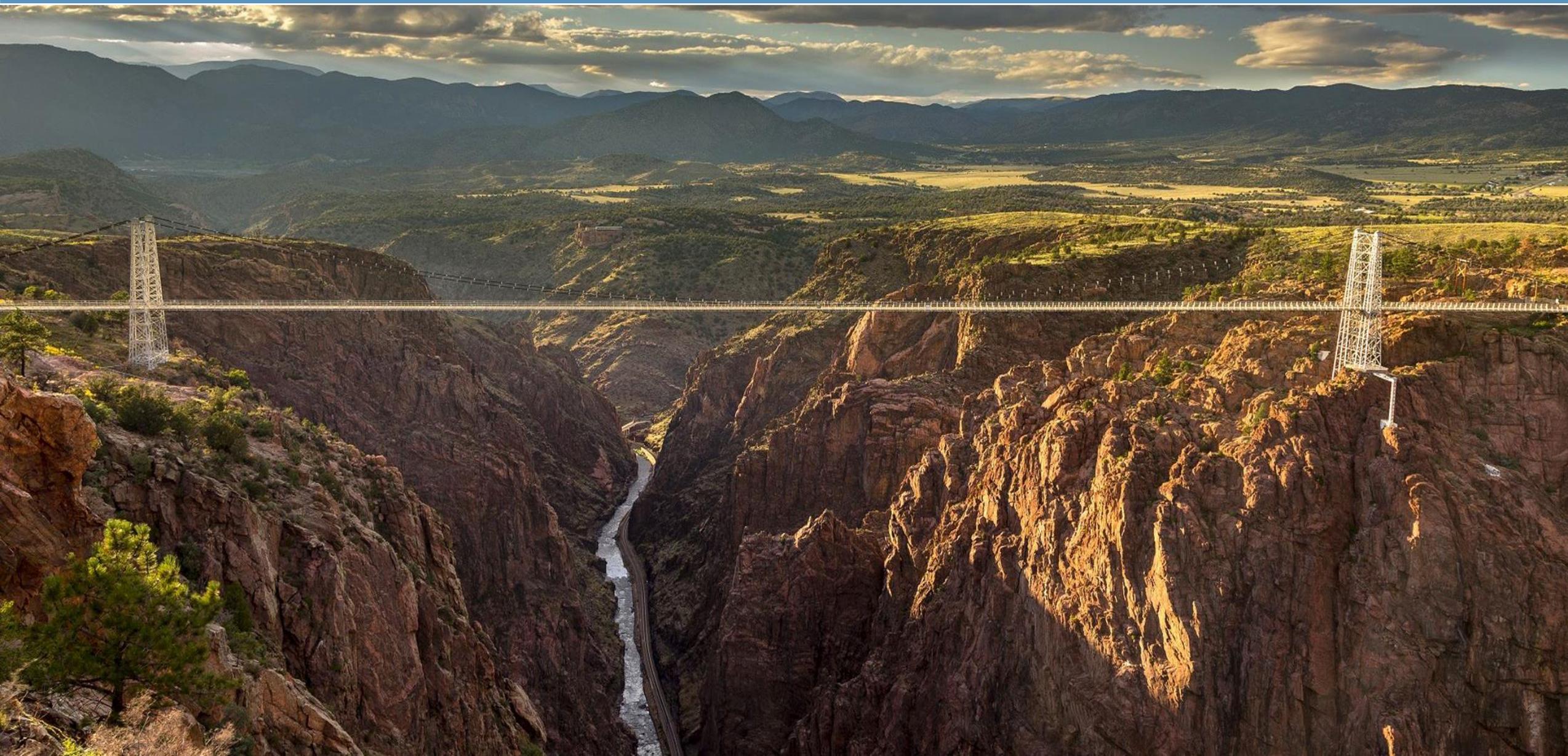


Top Three Least Needed Amenities

- The top three least needed amenities among Invite respondents include classrooms/party rooms (44%), community meeting rooms/event spaces (35%), a game area (34%), and an indoor running track (30%).

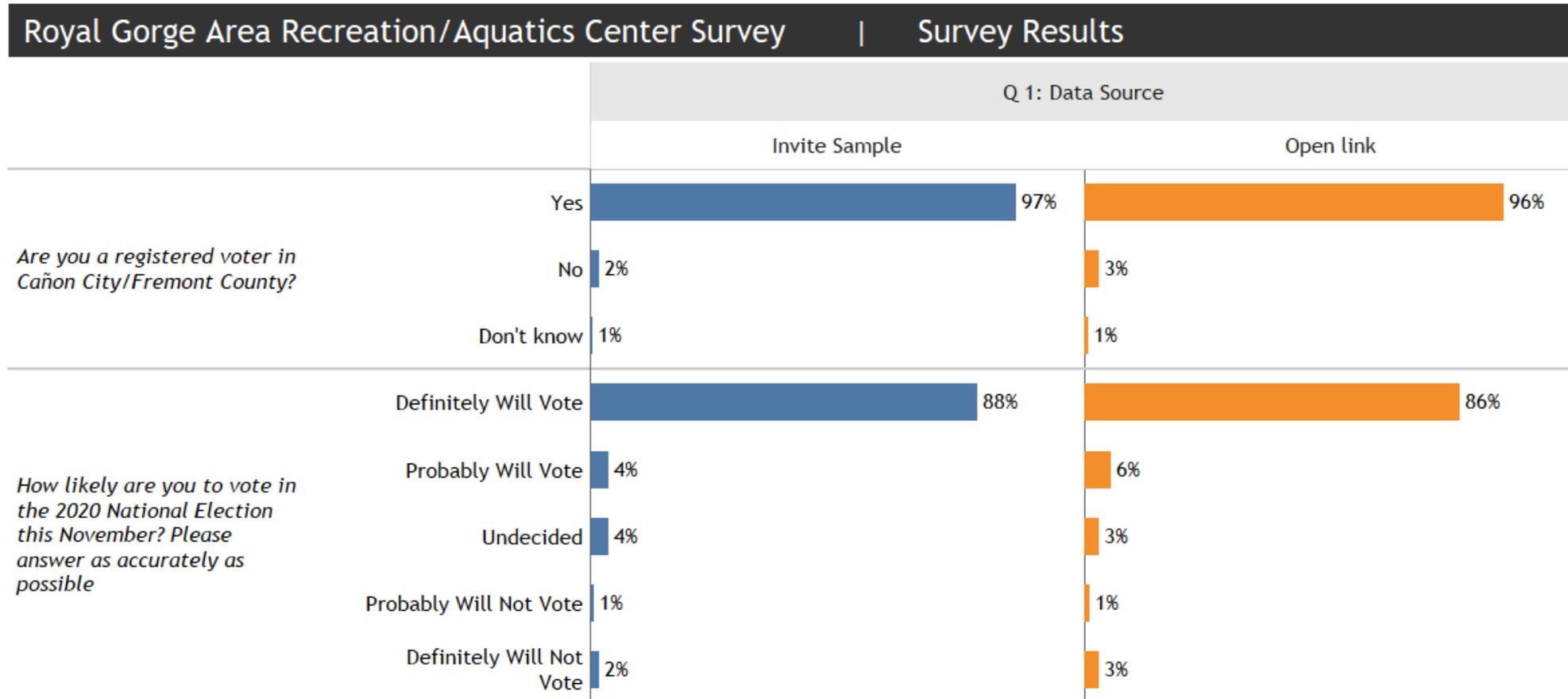


Voting Characteristics



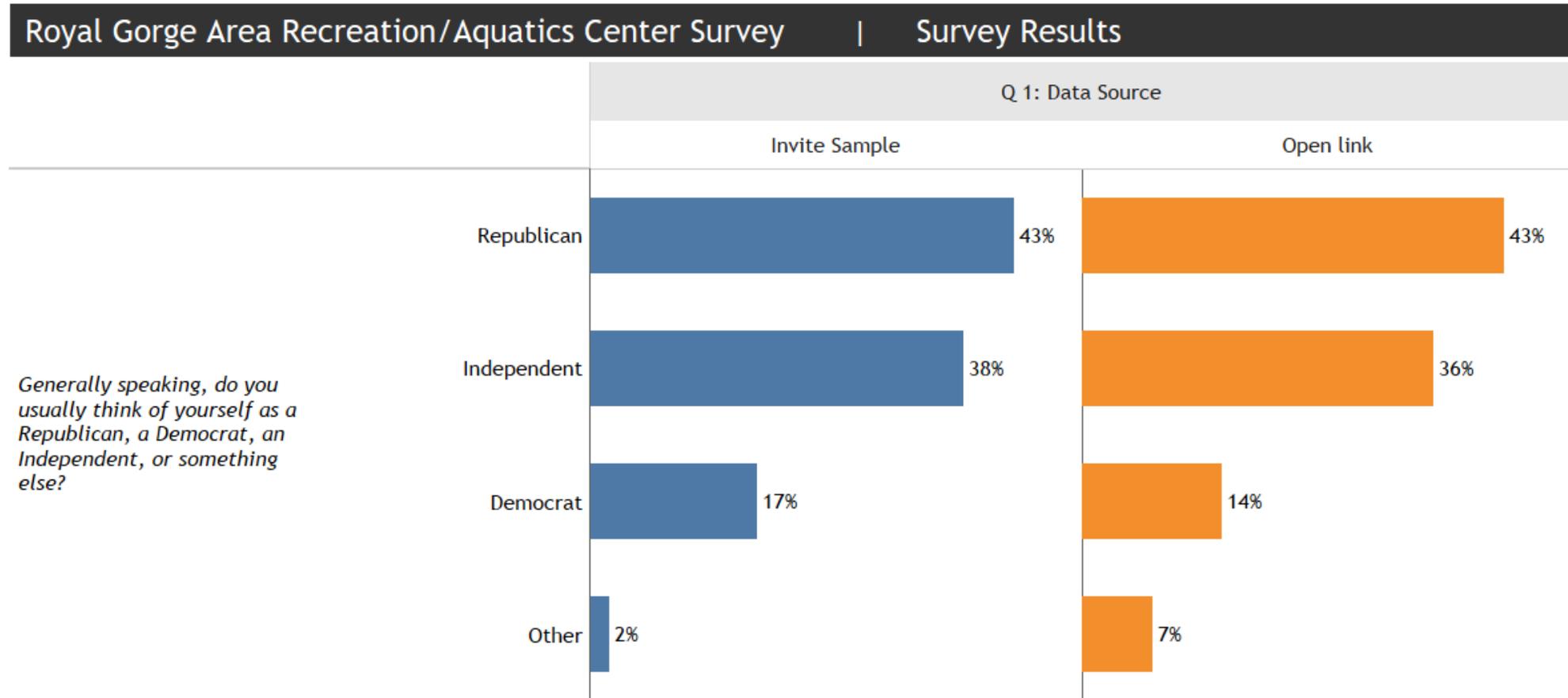
Voting Behavior

- Almost all (97%) of the Invite respondents are registered to vote (97%) in the area. Furthermore, 88% will “definitely” vote, and 4% will “probably” vote in November 2020’s upcoming election. Only 3% will “probably” or “definitely” not vote.



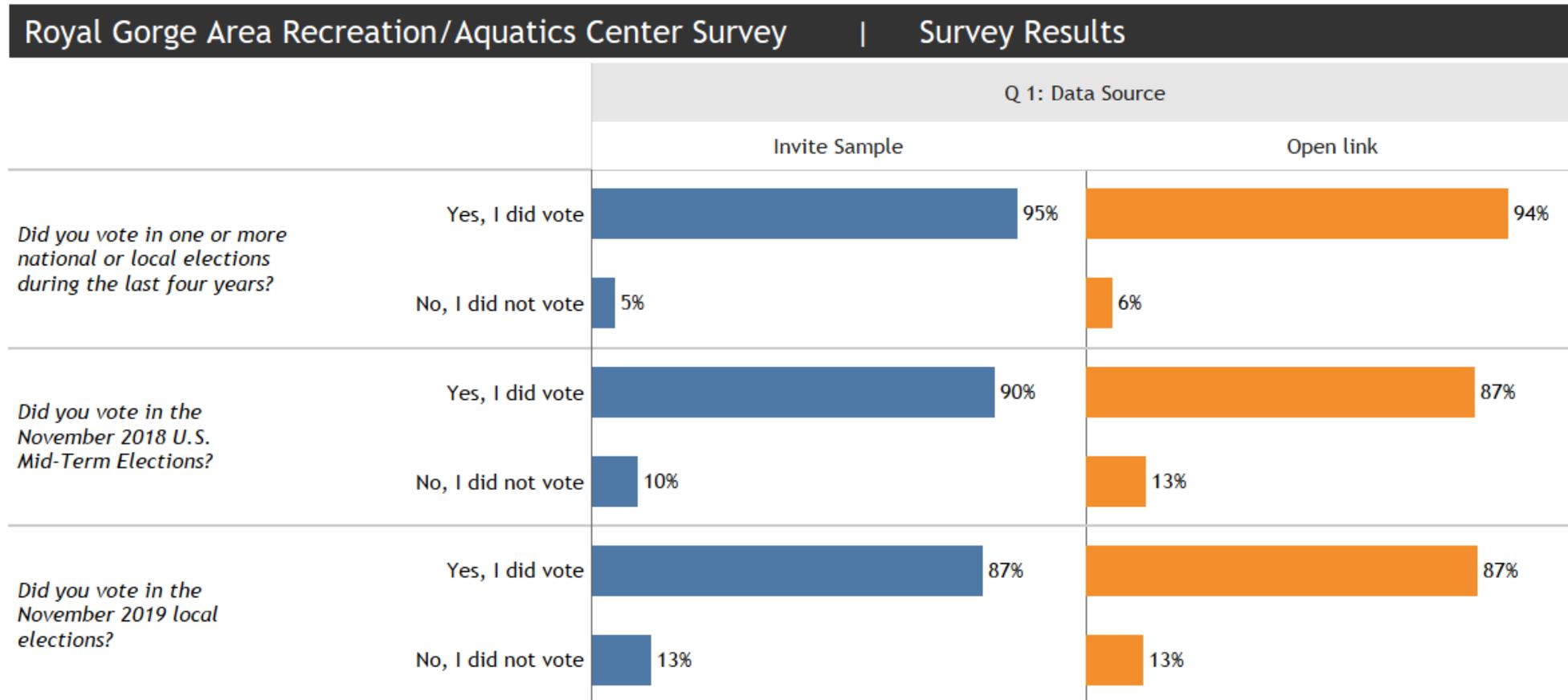
Party Affiliation

- Party affiliation is a weighted variable using State of Colorado's voter data. Republican voters (43%) represent the largest share of respondents, followed by Independents (38%), Democrat (17%), and some other affiliation (2%). Open Link results are very similar overall.

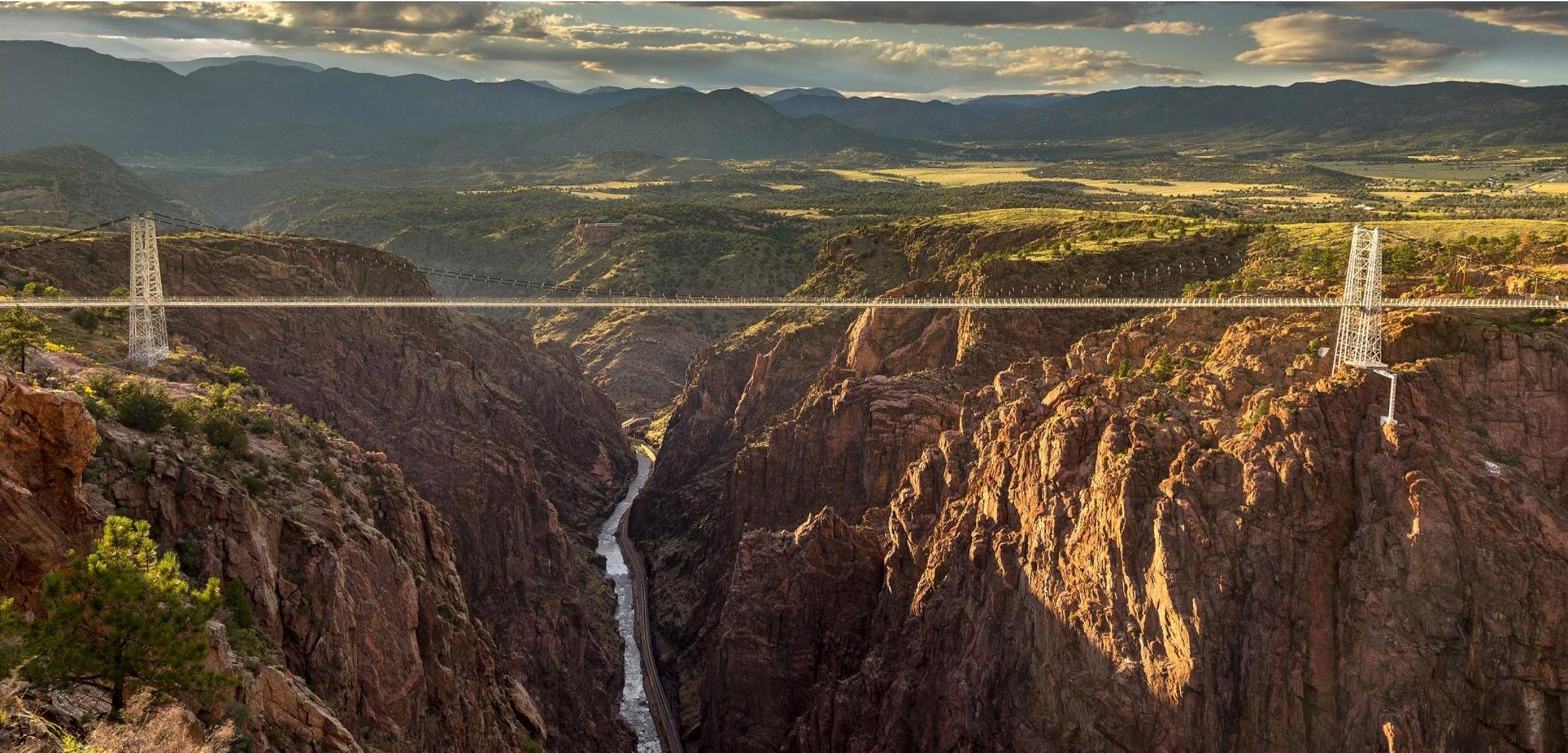


Voting Behavior

- Previous voting behavior further indicates how likely respondents are to vote this year. About 95% have voted in an election over the past four years. This figure drops to 90% for the 2018 elections, and 87% for 2019 elections. This isn't uncommon as non-presidential and mid-term years have lower participation.



Property and Sales Tax Questions



Property Tax Initiatives

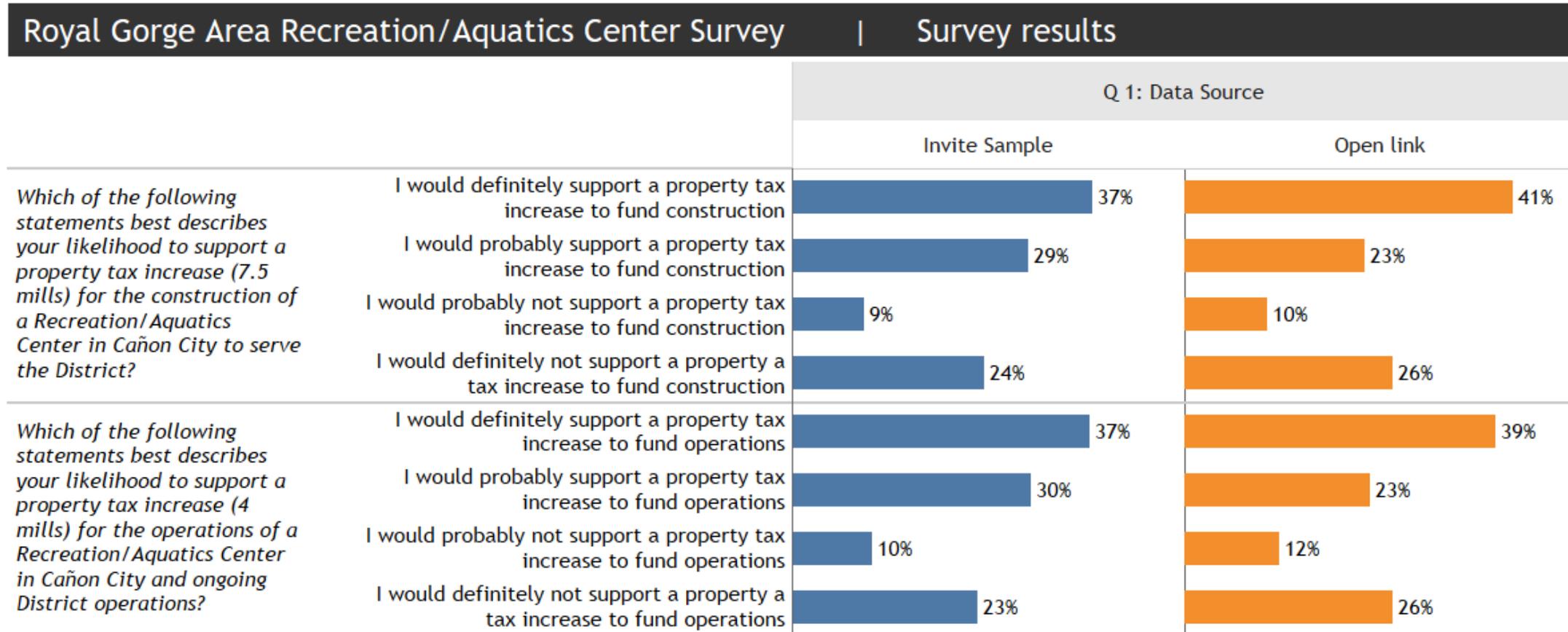
- Throughout the focus group and study design process, it was identified that property tax ballot initiatives may be the most appropriate to explore support among the community. Therefore, respondents were asked how likely they would be to support the following initiatives:
 - 7.5 mills property tax to fund the **construction of the Recreation/Aquatics Center.**
 - 4 mills property tax to fund the **operations of the Center and ongoing District operations.**
- Respondents were given four choices for both tax options:
 - I would **definitely** support
 - I would **probably** support
 - I would **probably not** support
 - I would **definitely not** support
- As highlighted earlier, all crosstabulations include only Invite respondent data.

Sales Tax Question

- Although the primary questions to fund the Center were focused on a possible property tax, there was interest in gauging whether a sales tax could be a viable alternative to fund the construction of the Center. Thus, respondents were asked which option they preferred (sales or property tax), either option, or neither option.
- While sales tax could be a source of funding for construction, a property tax would still be required to fund operations. This information was communicated to respondents prior to answering the question.
- Responses are displayed through a variety of crosstabulations.

Property Tax Questions - Overall

- The two primary property tax questions are presented below split out by the two samples. In general, Invite respondents are likely to support the Center with 37% “definitely supporting” and 29% “probably supporting” a property tax increase. For the operations, 37% would “definitely support” and 30% would “probably support.” Open link respondents are similar.



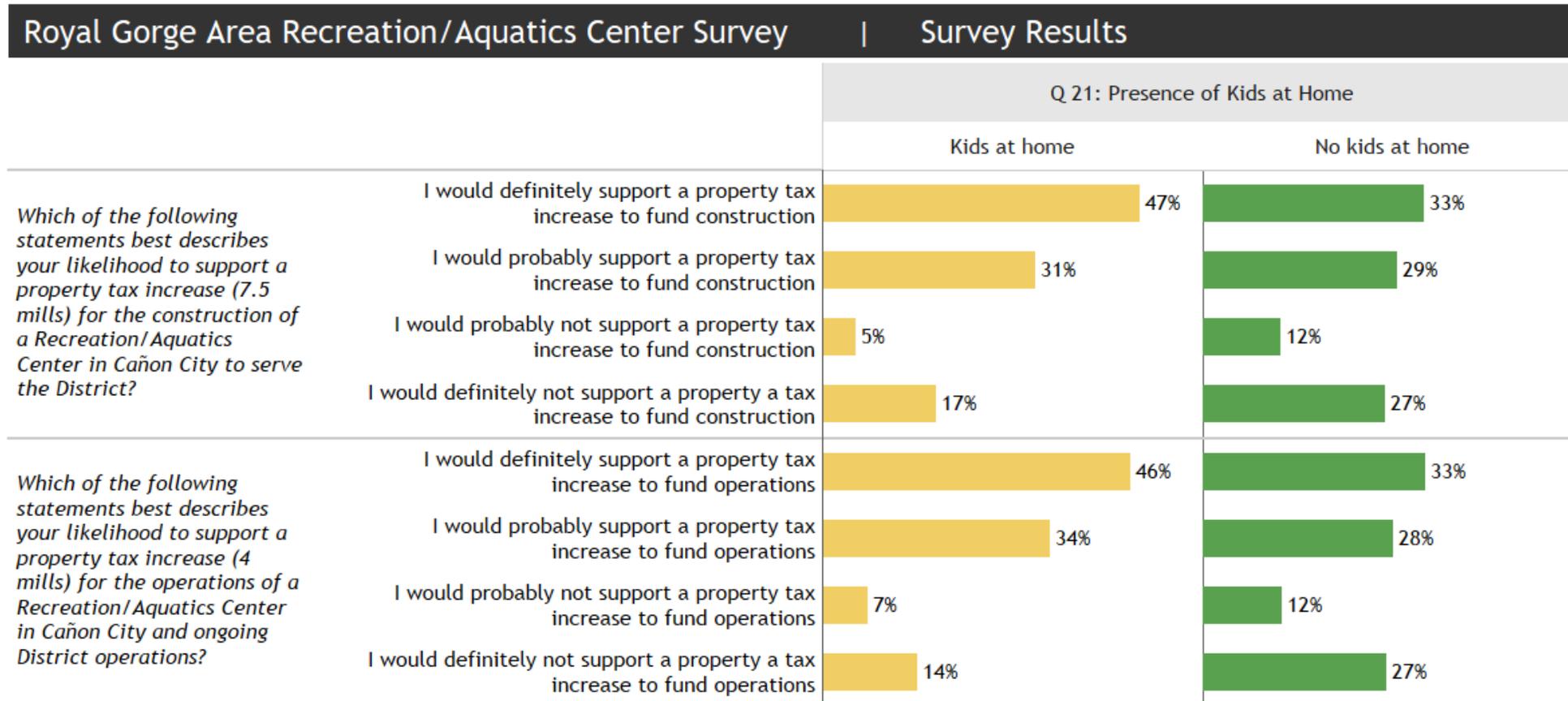
Property Tax Questions – By Age (Invite only)

- One of the more telling crosstabulations is by age among Invite respondents. Those under 35 are much more likely to support these tax initiatives than those 75 and older. In fact, as age increases among respondents, the level of support decreases.

Royal Gorge Area Recreation/Aquatics Center Survey		Survey results					
		Q 23: What is your age?					
		Under 35	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 and older
Which of the following statements best describes your likelihood to support a property tax increase (7.5 mills) for the construction of a Recreation/Aquatics Center in Cañon City to serve the District?	I would definitely support a property tax increase to fund construction	47%	52%	39%	33%	26%	23%
	I would probably support a property tax increase to fund construction	38%	25%	28%	25%	33%	20%
	I would probably not support a property tax increase to fund construction	2%	3%	11%	9%	11%	24%
	I would definitely not support a property a tax increase to fund construction	14%	19%	22%	32%	30%	33%
Which of the following statements best describes your likelihood to support a property tax increase (4 mills) for the operations of a Recreation/Aquatics Center in Cañon City and ongoing District operations?	I would definitely support a property tax increase to fund operations	46%	49%	39%	33%	27%	23%
	I would probably support a property tax increase to fund operations	38%	29%	28%	24%	30%	22%
	I would probably not support a property tax increase to fund operations	5%	4%	10%	10%	13%	21%
	I would definitely not support a property a tax increase to fund operations	10%	18%	23%	33%	30%	34%

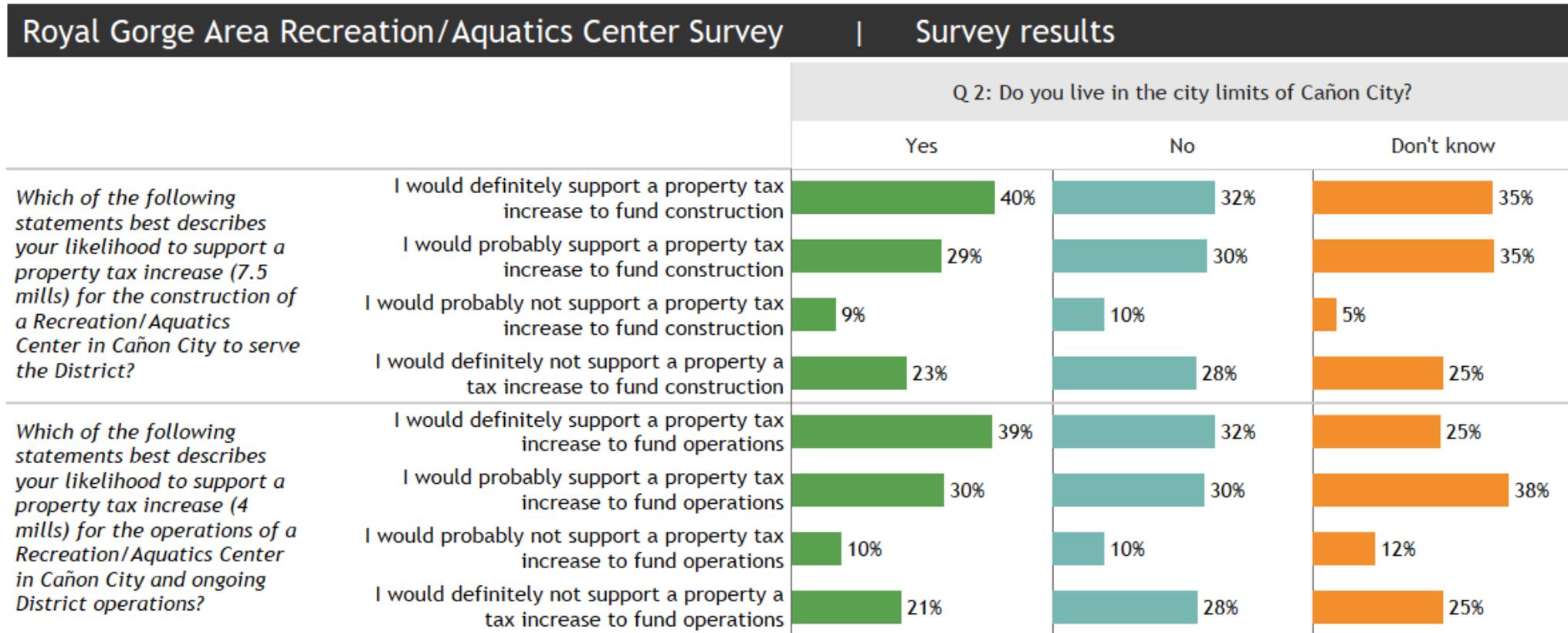
Property Tax Questions – By Kids at Home (Invite only)

- Those with children at home are more likely to support the Center too where 78% of respondents with kids at home support the tax to fund the construction compared to 62% of those without kids at home. While both groups support the Center, there is a difference between households.



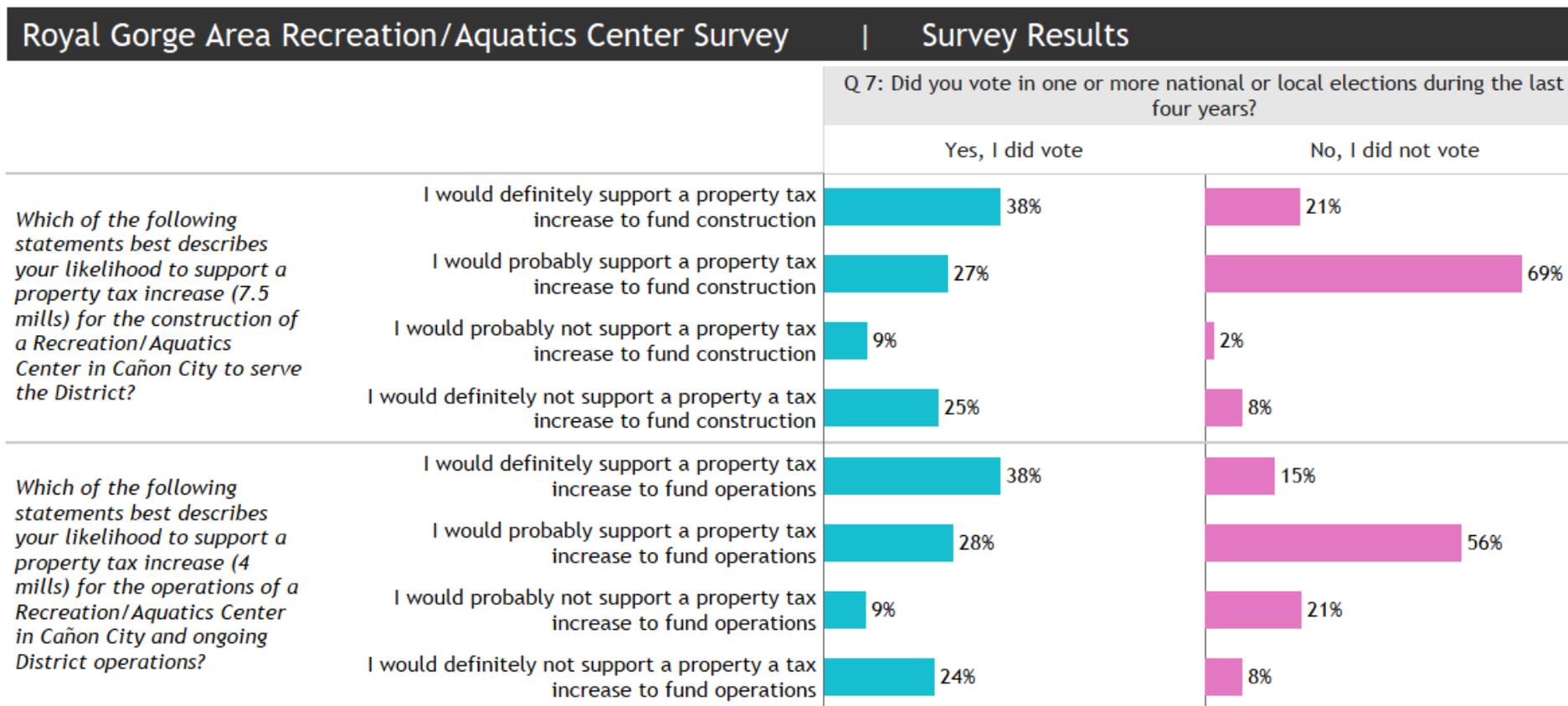
Property Tax Questions – By City Limits (Invite Only)

- Respondents inside city limits have a slightly higher level of support (69%) than those outside of city limits (62%). This may be due to those living inside the city having an easier time accessing a facility within the area. Overall, both groups would still be paying the property tax as it would be a District-wide tax.



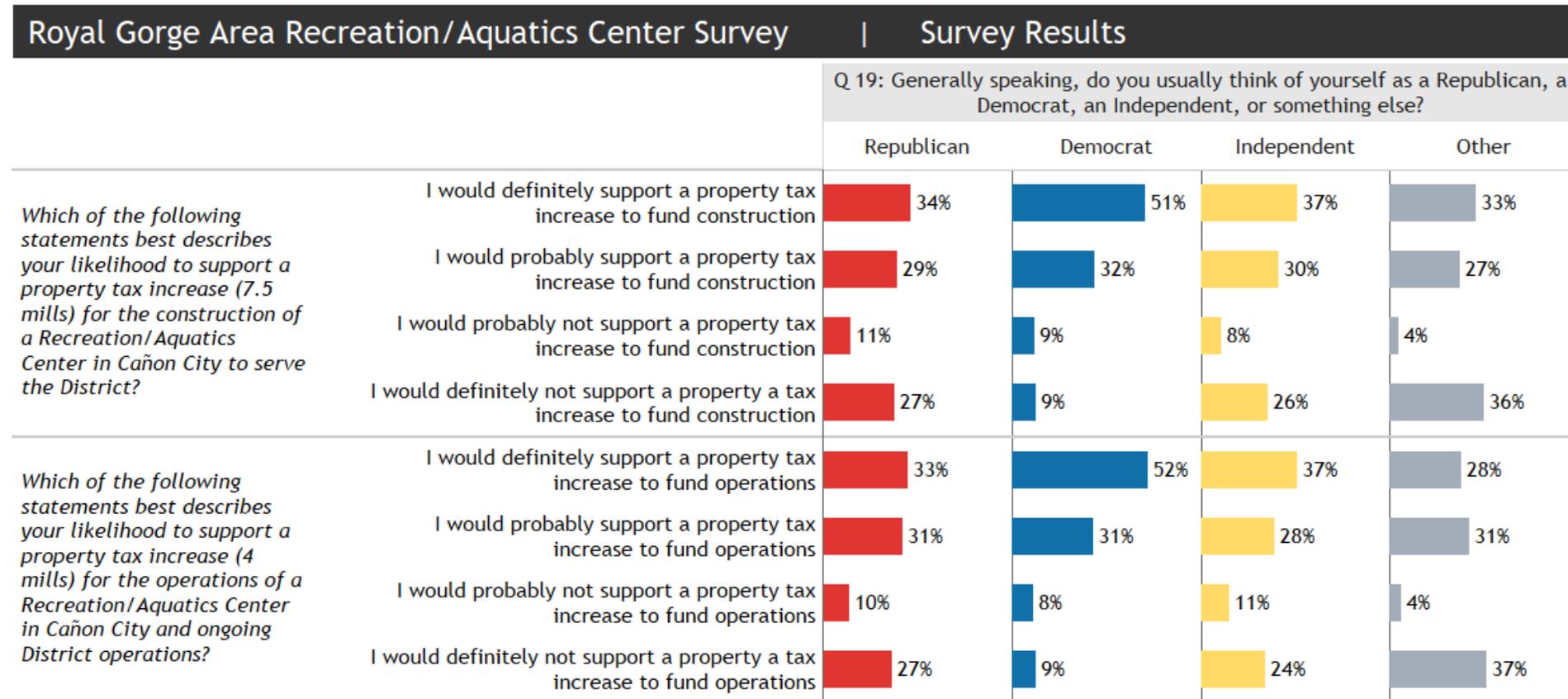
Property Tax Questions – By Previous Voters (Invite only)

- Although there are few that have not voted in the past four years, those who did not vote (and are likely younger) still have very strong support (although more in “probably support” category). Those who voted resemble the overall breakdown closely and represent a large portion of the sample.



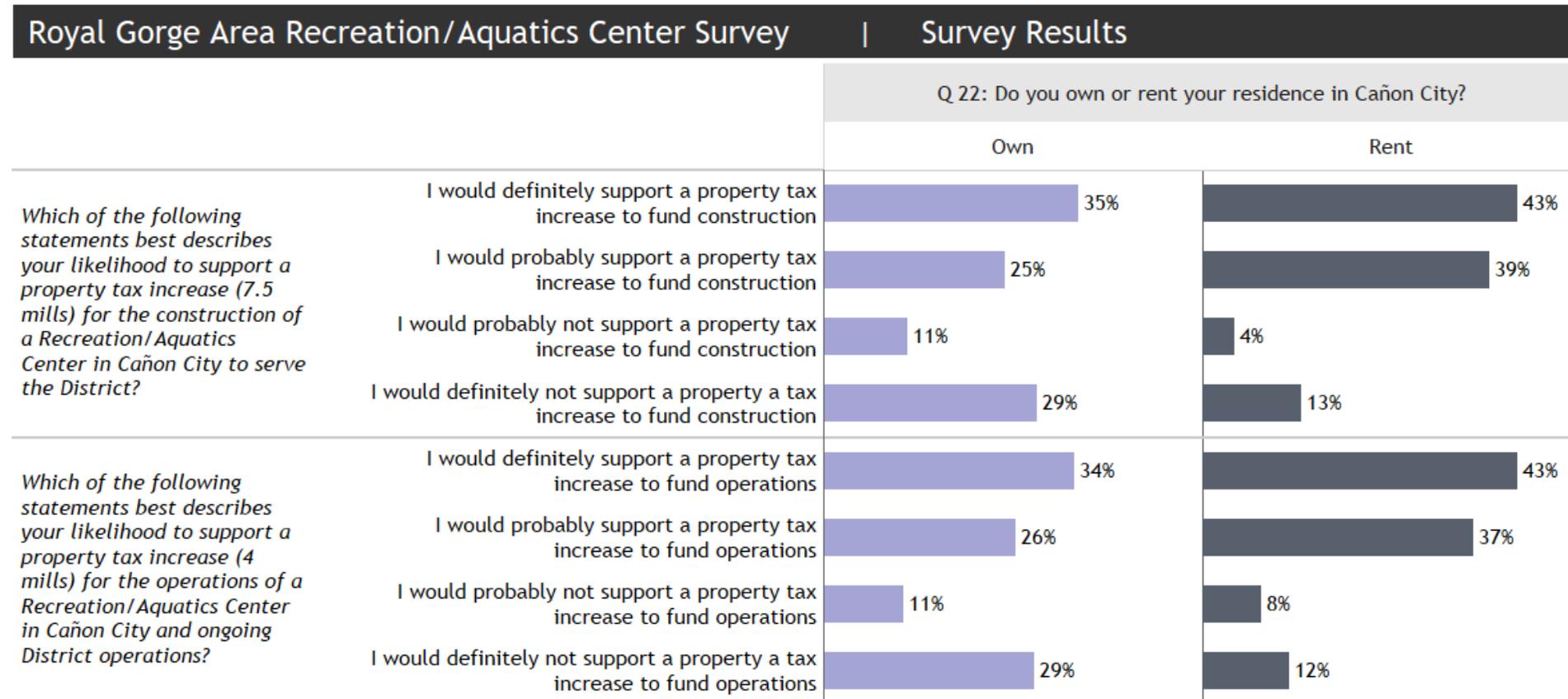
Property Tax Questions – By Party Affiliation (Invite Only)

- Party affiliation is a topic that may influence voting behavior on issues such as tax increases. Republicans are not as likely to support the property tax to construct the Center (63%) compared to Democrats (83%) and Independents (67%). However, there is still a majority of Republicans who do support the Center. Thus, there are partisan differences but not to a major degree.



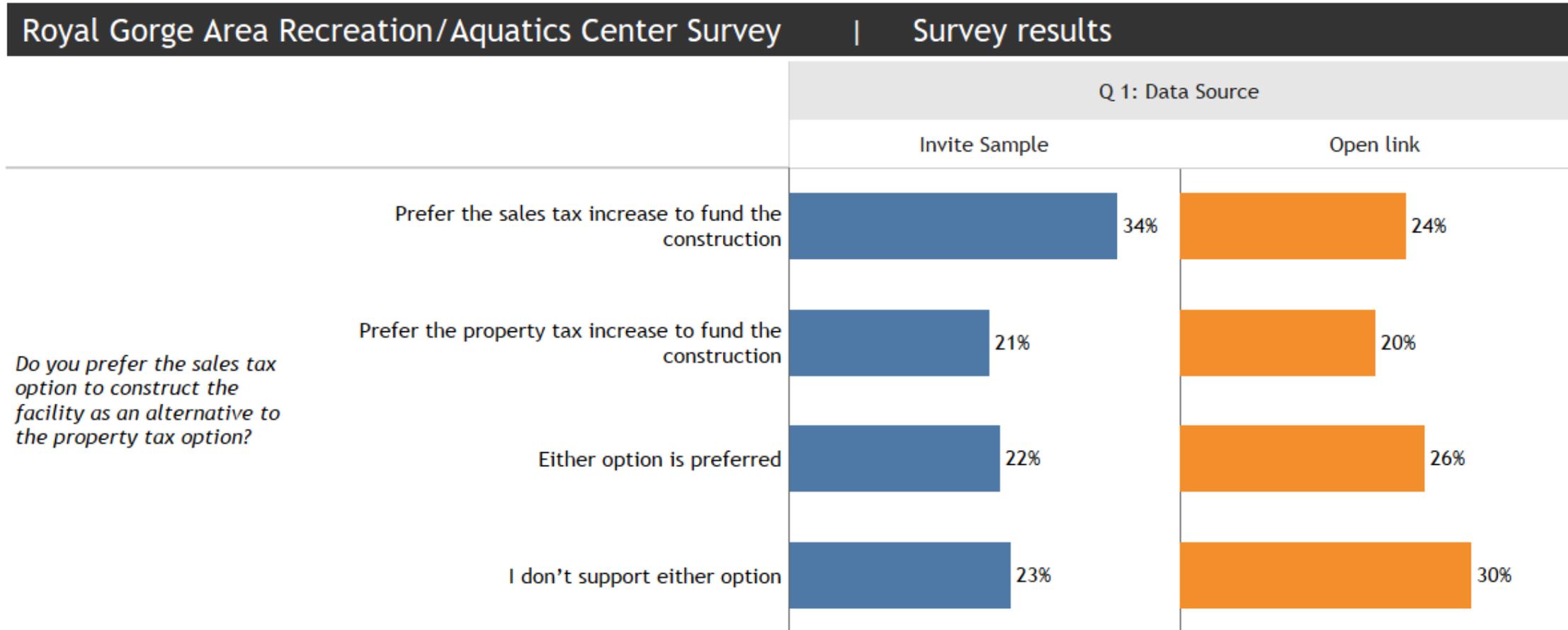
Property Tax Questions – By Homeownership Status (Invite only)

- Probably not surprisingly, renters are more likely to support the Center (82% support tax to fund construction) compared to homeowners (60%). Again, there is still a large portion of respondents who support the idea, but they are less likely if it directly impacts them financially.



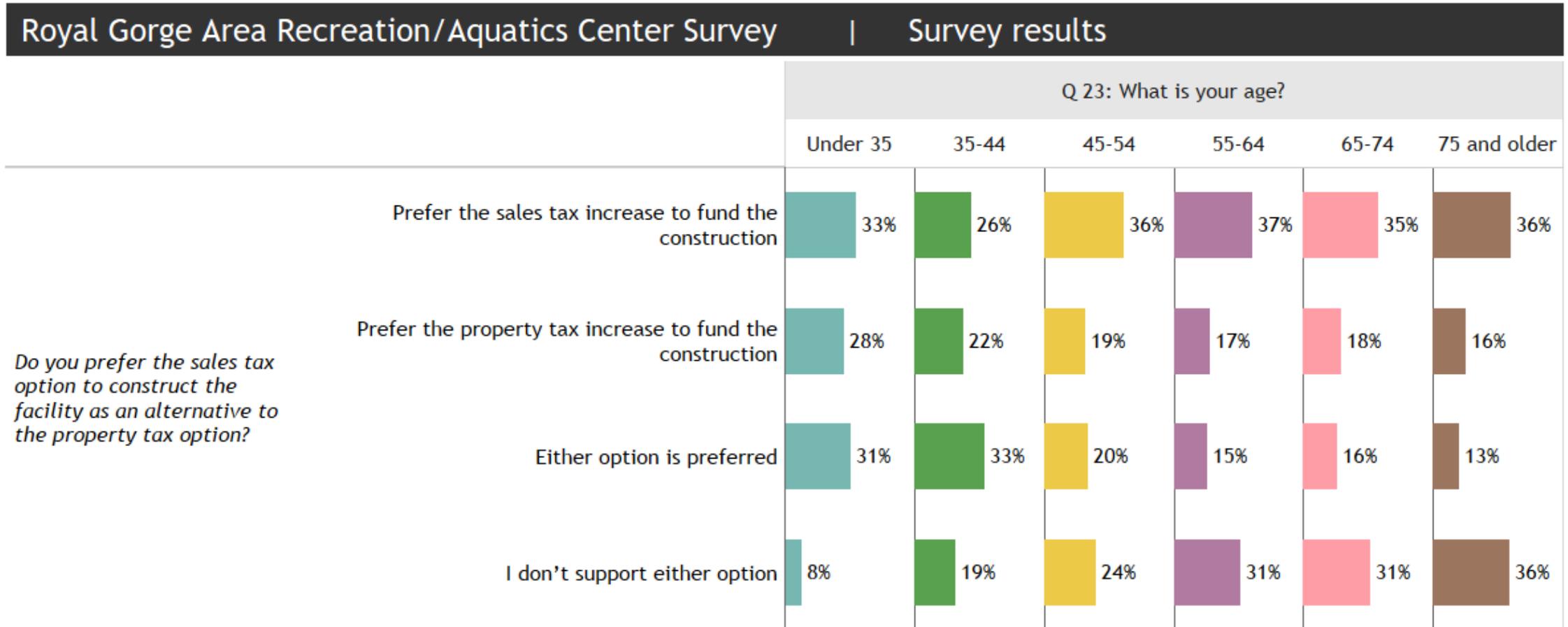
Sales tax Question - Overall

- When presented with the sales tax alternative, 34% of Invite respondents prefer the sales tax option. About 21% prefer the property tax option while 22% prefer either option. Further, 23% don't support either option. Thus, there appears to be some flexibility between both tax options.



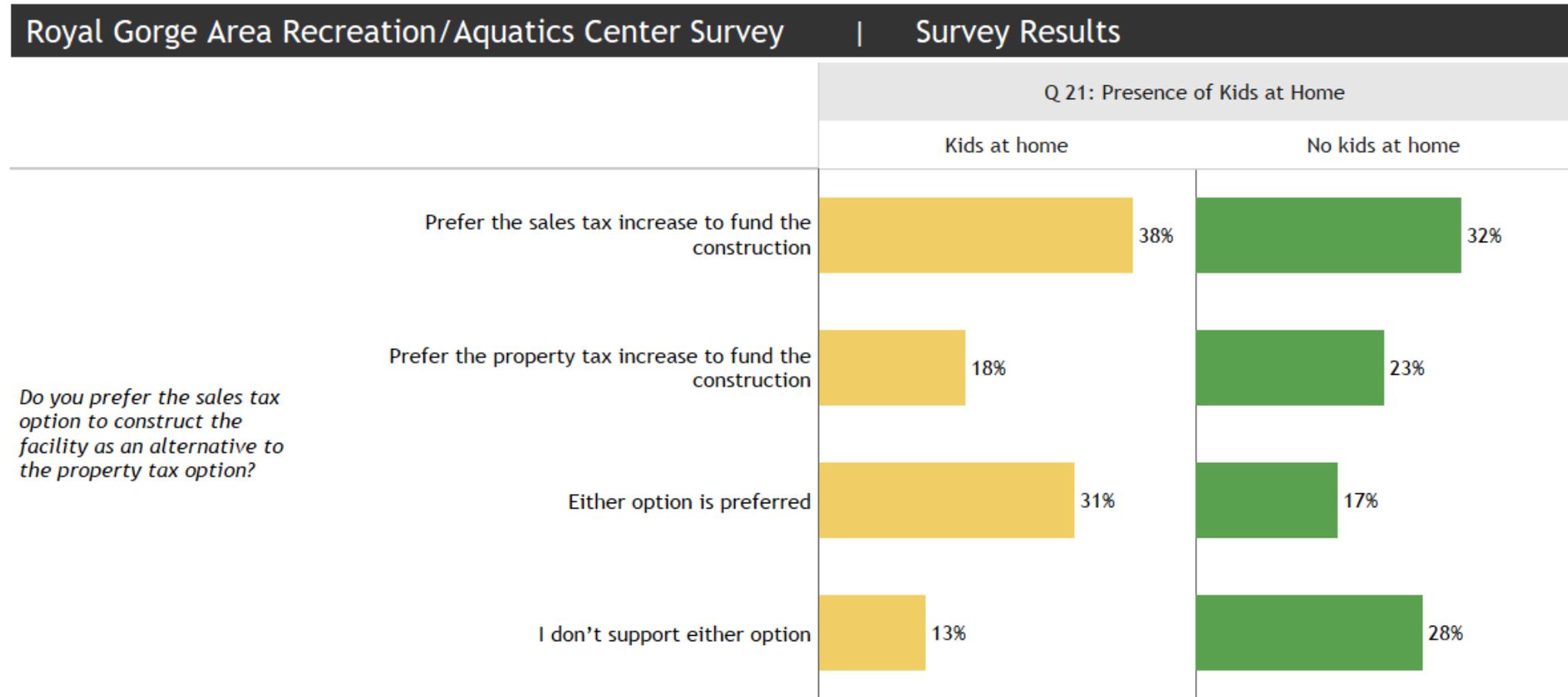
Sales tax Question – By Age (Invite only)

- By age, results are somewhat similar for the proportion of those that prefer the sales tax option. However, the proportion of those who prefer either option has a high of 33% from those 35-44, down to 13% from those 75 and older. Furthermore, those that don't support either option grows from 8% to 36% as age increases.



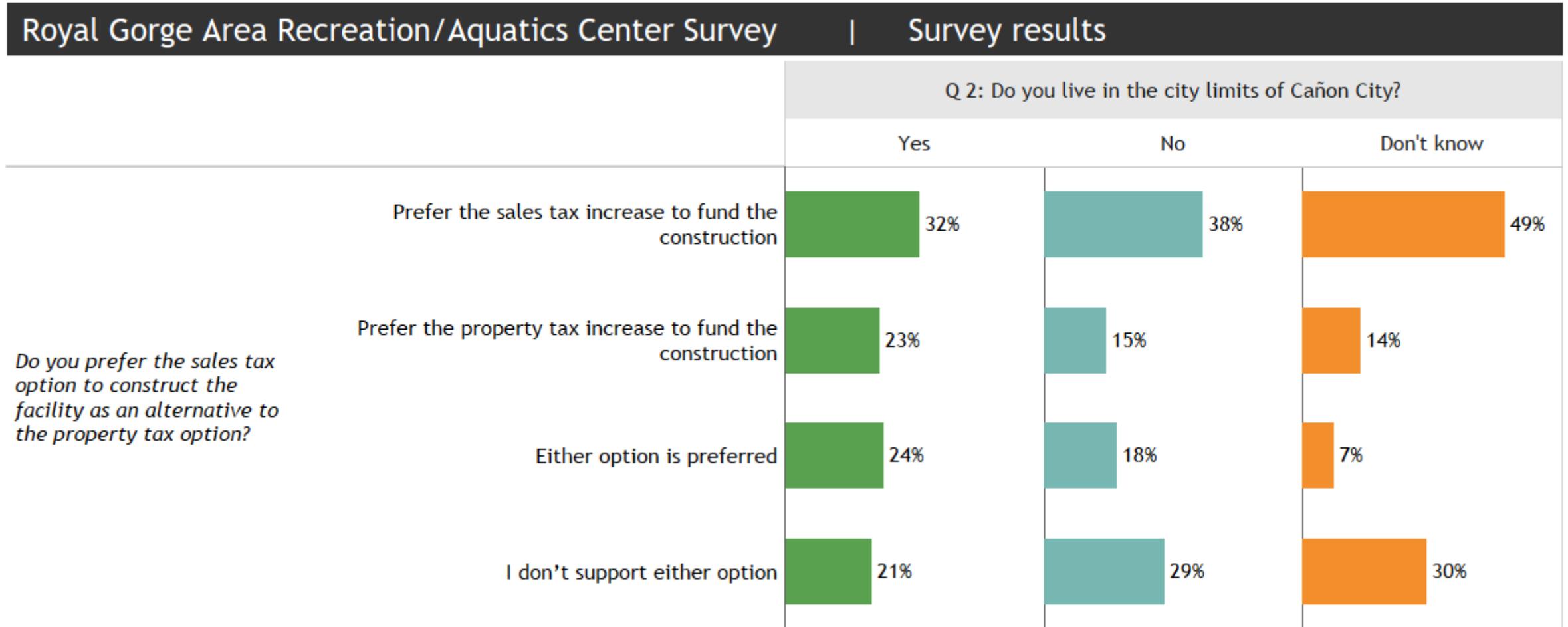
Sales tax Question – By Kids at Home (Invite only)

- Those who have kids at home are much more likely to suggest either option is preferred (31%). Further, those without kids at home are much more likely to not prefer either option (28% vs. 13% for kids at home). These two groups do see the issue differently, but both show support for the sales tax or property tax option.



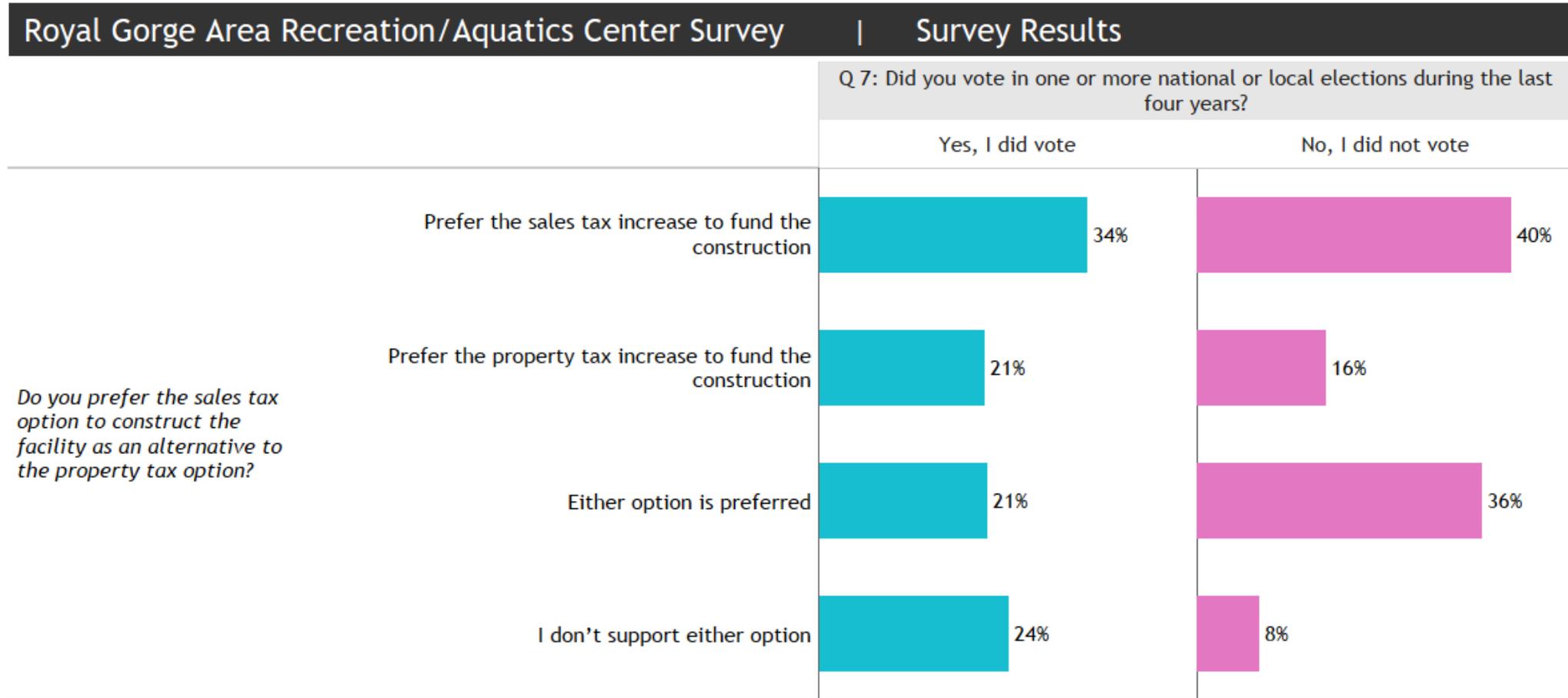
Sales tax Question – By City Limits (Invite only)

- Probably not surprisingly, those who live outside city limits prefer the sales tax (38%) more than those who live in the city (32%). However, the results are mostly similar except that there's a higher proportion of those who live outside the city who don't support either option (29% vs. 21%).



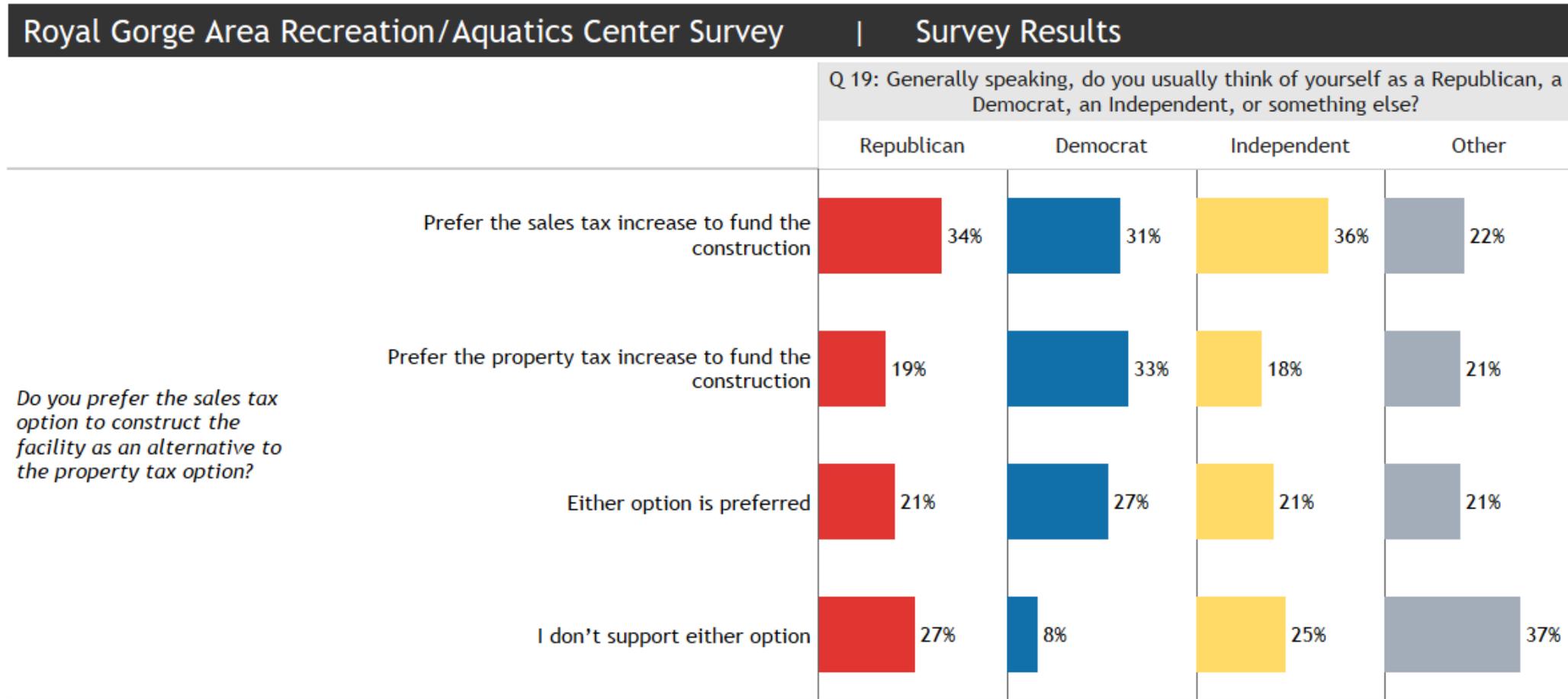
Sales tax Question – By Previous Voters (Invite only)

- Those that did vote in the past four years resemble the overall sample well with more preferring the sales tax and approximately 24% not supporting either option. Those that have not voted are much more likely to support either option (36%) and less likely to not support any option (8%).



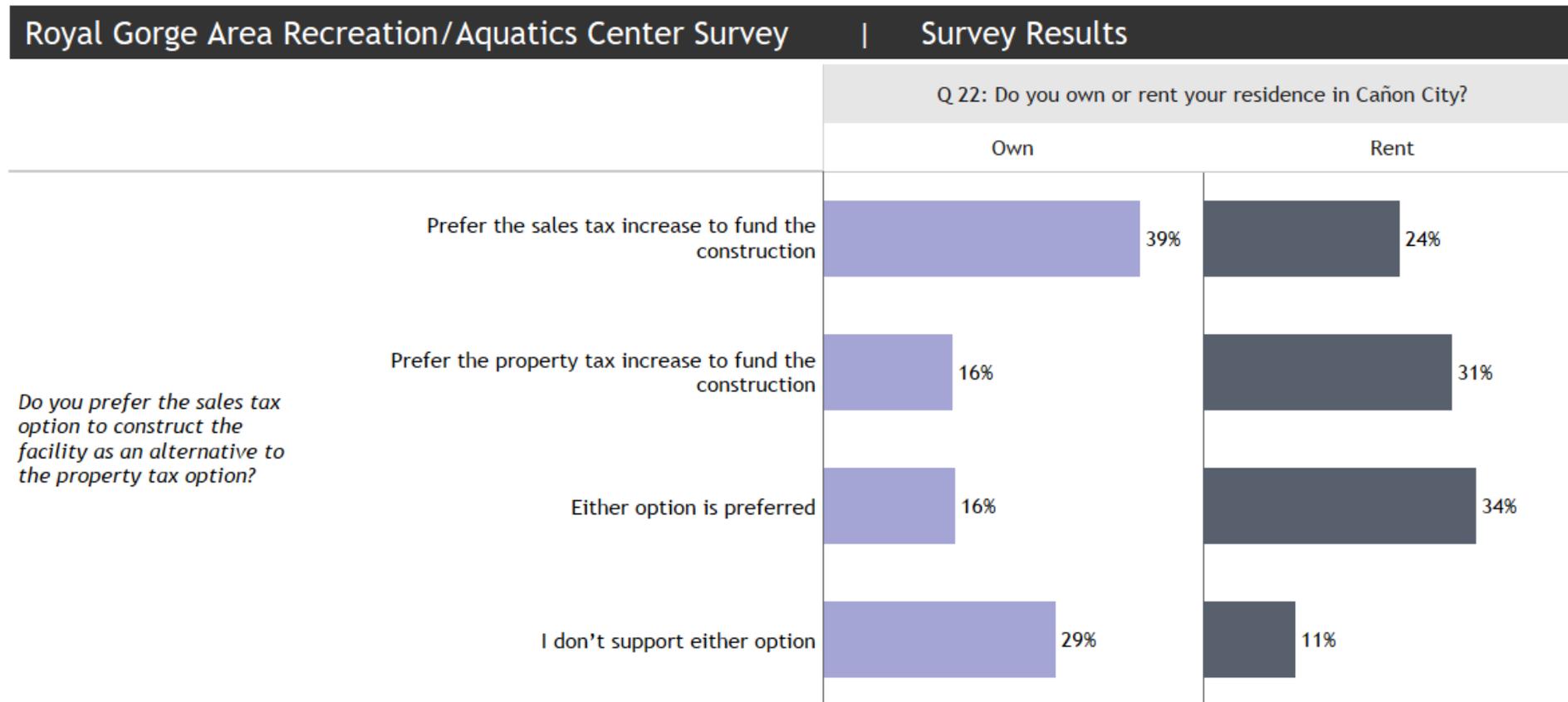
Sales tax Question – By Party Affiliation (Invite only)

- Republican and Independent voters resemble the overall trend well. Democrat respondents are much more likely to support any option, especially the property tax (33% vs. 18-21%). “Other” affiliated voters are much less supportive of either option (37% don’t support).



Sales tax Question – By Homeownership Status (Invite only)

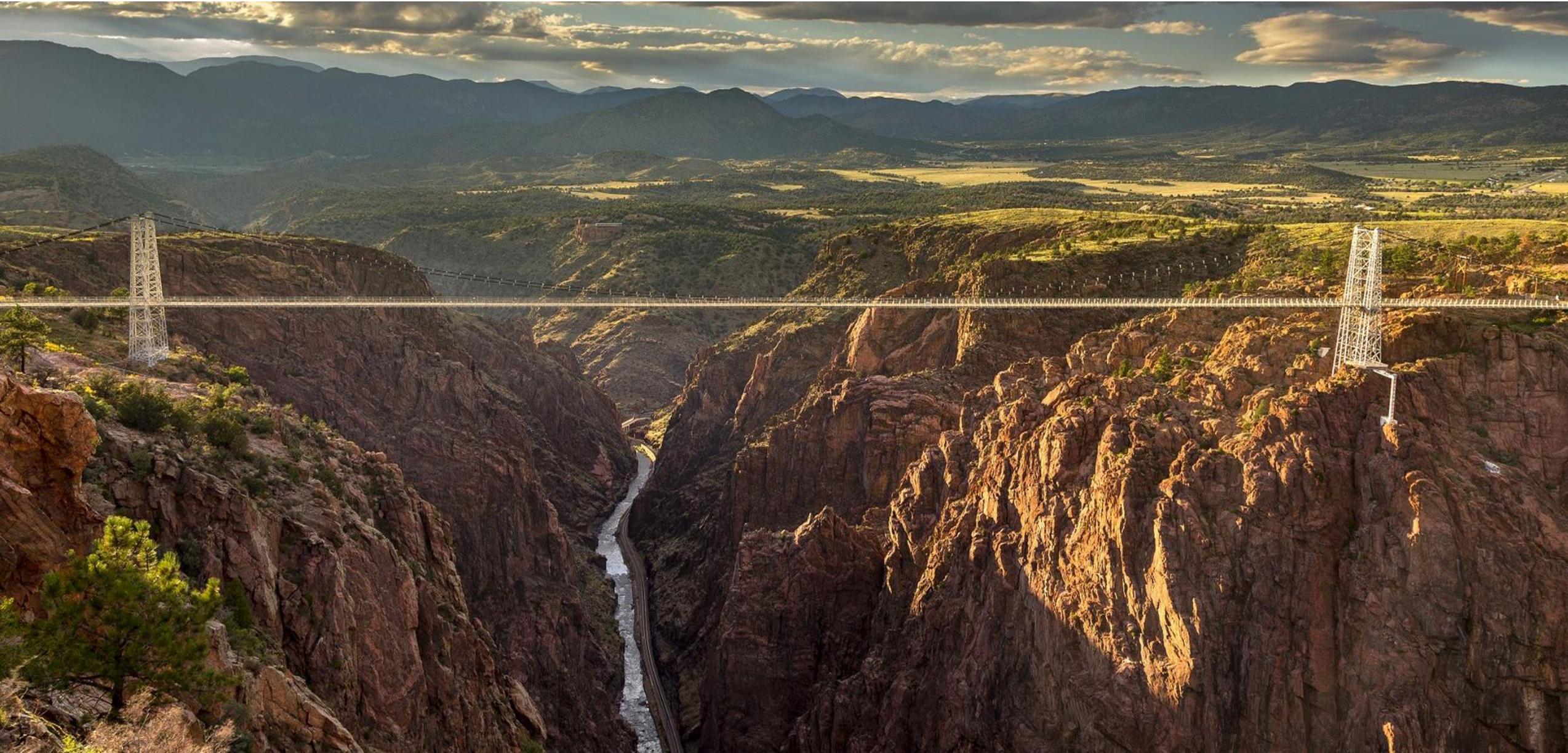
- Homeownership status plays a major role in which option is preferred. Approximately 39% of homeowners prefer the sales tax compared to 24% of renters. In addition, 31% of renters prefer the property tax compared to 16% of homeowners. Lastly, 34% of renters prefer either option compared to 16% of homeowners. It's not surprising that renters prefer the property tax option as they currently would not need to pay for initial funding.



Open-Ended Comments



Conclusions



Conclusions

- **Overall, there appears to be a relatively high level of support among District residents.** Over 60% of Invite respondents are likely to support property tax increases to fund the center. Age and whether kids are in the home play a large role in predicting support.
- **However, these results are largely based on ensuring those that show up to vote on the initiatives best resemble the community at large.** If there is a major difference between those that show up to the polls, the level of support may change.
- **Homeowners are less supportive than renters.** Logically, this makes sense as those who are property owners carry the burden of funding the Center while those who rent would only support through fees and memberships.
- **There appears to be some flexibility between a property tax increase and sales tax increase to fund construction.** Over 1/3rd of respondents said they prefer a sales tax increase while 21% prefer the property tax increase. An additional 22% prefer either option.





Thank You

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