

# SNAPSHOT: New Haven Parks Survey Data Summary

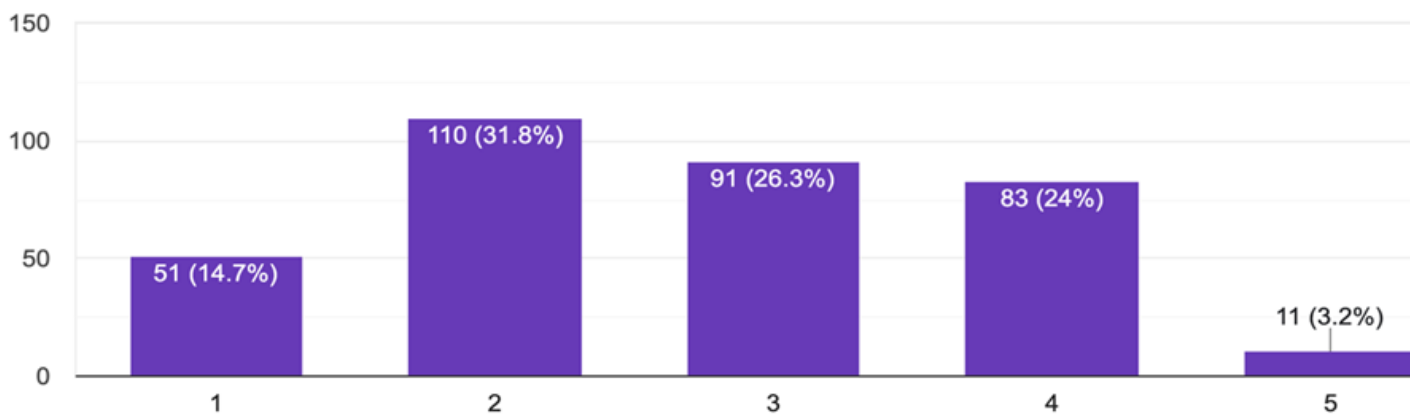
## Gathering Ideas for Re-envisioning New Haven Parks Listening Phase | Community Survey

The survey gathered input from 353 residents. The data represents a broad sample of residents from over 20 neighborhoods. 63% of the respondents have lived in New Haven for over 10 years.

### Maintenance Condition: (1=poor; 5=pristine)

How well do you think the parks are maintained (mowing, trails/paths, litter, natural areas and waterways)?

346 responses



### Maintenance Priorities

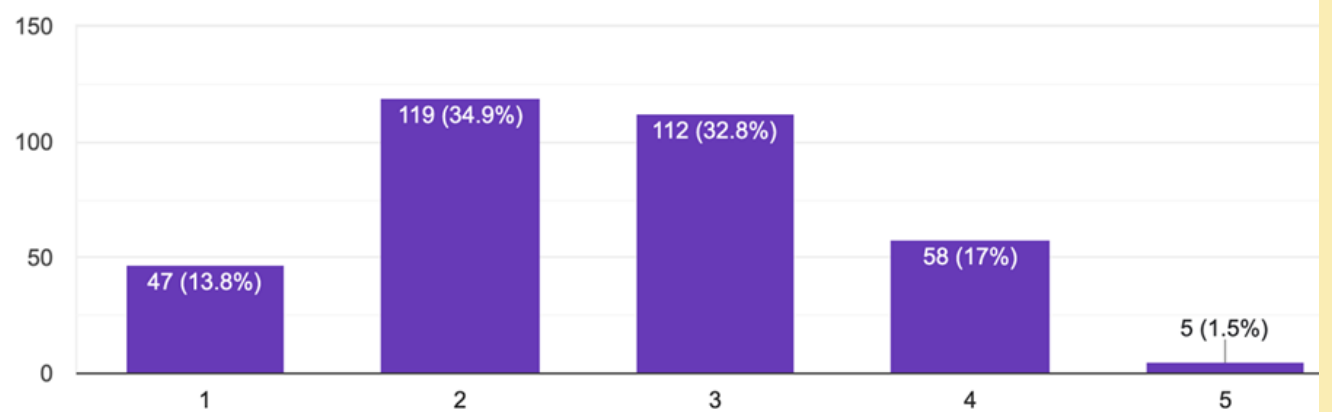
(from 252 responses)

- **Litter 193**
- Trails/paths 76
- Mowing 58
- Natural areas 44
- Waterways 30
- Bathroom access and maintenance

### Facilities Condition: (1=bad; 5=excellent)

How would you rank the condition of park equipment (benches, bathrooms, grills, picnic tables, pavilions, lighting, trash cans, signs, playground, dog parks, etc.)?

341 responses



### Top Priorities

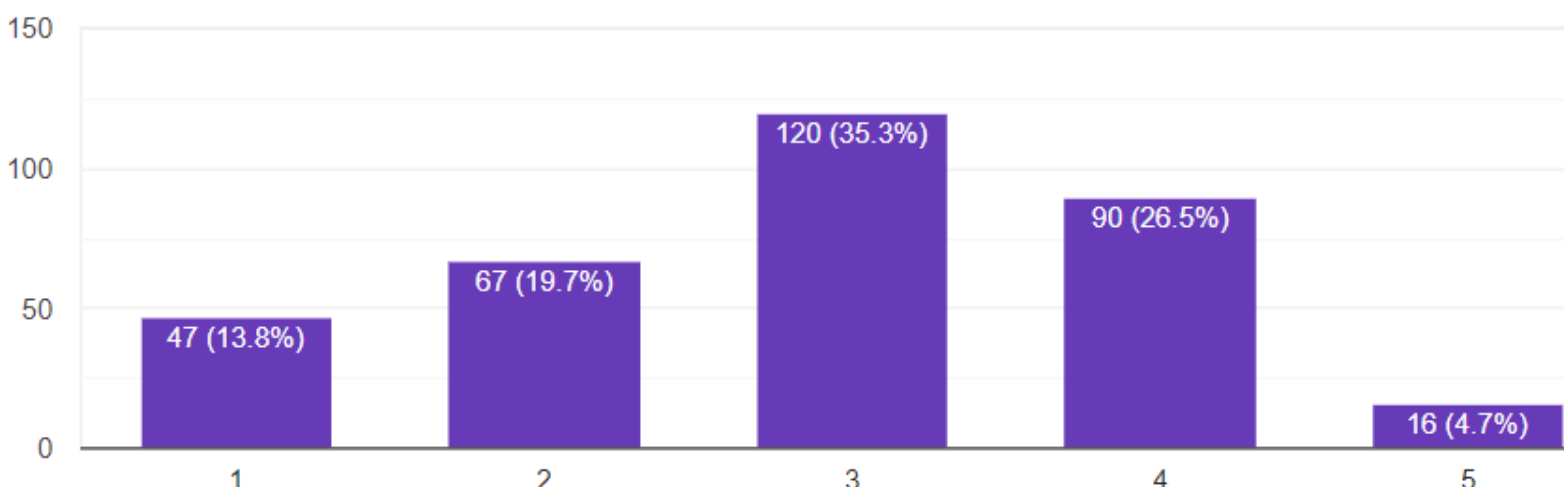
(from 238 responses)

<b>Bathrooms</b>	<b>126</b>
<b>Trash cans</b>	<b>112</b>
Playgrounds	65
Lighting	63
Benches	61

### Maintenance of Trees:

Please rank how well you think trees in parks and along streets are maintained (pruning, hazardous/dead standing, stumps)?

340 responses

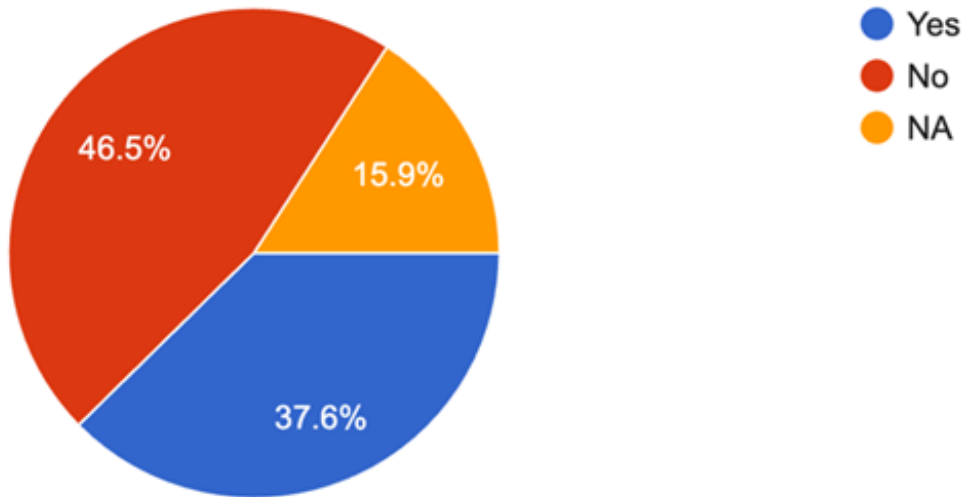


## Gathering Ideas for Re-envisioning New Haven Parks Listening Phase | Community Survey

### Communication Youth & Recreation (YARD)

Are you aware of the programs offered by Youth and Recreation (YARD)? (crafts, summer camps, movie nights, swimming, etc)?

340 responses



### Best Ways to Reach Respondents

(from 332 responses)

- Email 269
- Website 89
- Social media 66
- Text 61

*"I'd like to learn about YARD. I have a 13 year old."*

### Priority Improvements for Sports Facilities:

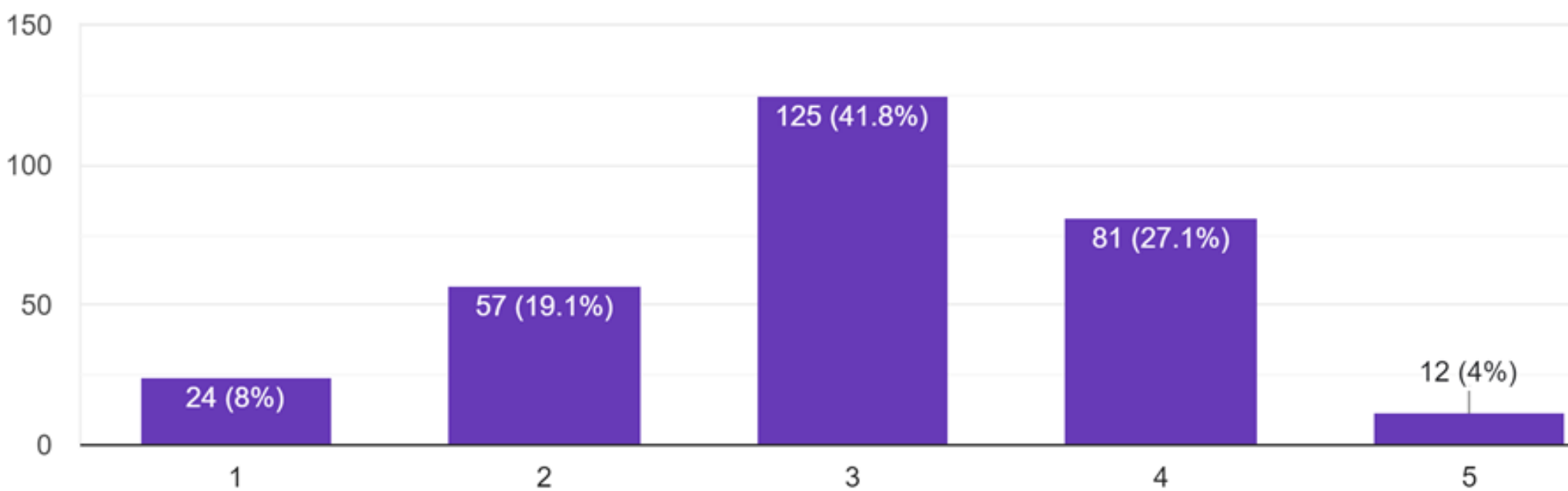
- Farmington Canal
- Basketball courts
- Soccer fields
- Baseball fields

### 14.9% responded that they engage in YARD programs.

*"I wish YARD would do less organized programming and start doing things like run a snack bar at the Coogan Pavilion. Few kids sign up for organized programming but lots of kids use the skatepark. Add to what is already working. A snack bar would also be a good source of employment for teens. Teens need safe places for unstructured hanging out, not more organized activities."*

How well do you think the sports/recreation facilities are maintained (Farmington Canal, basketball courts, tennis courts, pickleball courts, bocci courts, ... fields, ice rink, rugby fields, cricket pitches, etc)?

299 responses



# SNAPSHOT: Senior Staff Focus Groups

## Gathering Ideas for Re-envisioning New Haven Parks Listening Phase | Stakeholder Focus Group

Senior staff from the YARD, Maintenance and Tree Divisions shared their ideas during two staff meetings. Further input was shared through a staff survey.

### Strengths:

- Community relationships
- Programming
- More redundancy on administrative functions
- Administrative staff communications
- **Collaborative team structure has great potential** upside when maximized. Interface within Parks Public Works is improving; responsiveness is getting better.
- Recent **cross-departmental field meetings** have significantly **helped communication** about scheduling and improving athletic fields.

### Weaknesses:

- Unclear delineation on merger
- **Permit process conflict** b/w Maintenance/YARD.
- Limited staff, equipment, training
- **Communication** within departments and with other departments
- Community partners need to know the appropriate points of contact.
- **Buildings and fields are not well maintained.**
- **Playground safety.**
- Caretaker job descriptions include too many responsibilities.

### Challenges:

- Phone lines are not connected to the proper staff; **some staff do not answer emails or phone calls** in other departments which leads to irate residents.
- Staff work in **different locations** (720 Edgewood; City Hall; 180 Park Road).
- **Lack of clarity on who is responsible** for trail maintenance.
- Lack of budget/clear division allocations.
- **Lack of personnel leads to lack of bandwidth.**
- **Lack training** for irrigation.
- Consideration of maintenance implications with capital improvements.
- Public Works makes **decisions without clear input/process** with Parks staff.

### Suggested Outcomes:

- **Rebranding Campaign** when restructuring new logo, website, clothing, etc.
- Clarify roles and responsibilities with how to contact.
- Job specific descriptions, such as “Field crews that only do fields”.
- Four **foreman could be responsible for inspections in their areas w/daily checklist** for playground maintenance.
- Permits connected to staff calendars with all tasks associated with the permit.
- **Improve technology** to improve digital processes including key card access and public interface.
- Technology with before and after photos could help supervisors and **improve accountability.**
- **Clear budget, staffing, equipment plans** to achieve baseline standards for all parks.
- More administration specific to Parks and better equipped staff to address parks equitably across the city.
- Being reactive is an issue for both equity and efficiency. **Proactive approach gives equal distribution of services.** Tree safety is priority, but proactive approach can also address that concern.





## Gathering Ideas for Re-envisioning New Haven Parks Listening Phase | Stakeholder Focus Group

The focus group included five Park Commissioners and the Deputy CAO/Acting Director DPPW.

### **Priorities:**

1. Equity
2. Budget Transparency
3. Improved Supervision and Accountability

### **Weaknesses:**

- Hard for the public to reach the Parks Department via phone or email.
- Communication through word of mouth
- Disparity in terms of treatment of parks
- Many tree stumps not removed
- Trash in the park
- Areas being mowed over mistakenly

### **Challenges:**

- **Lack of capacity:** personnel and equipment
- **Difficult to understand budget:** which money is for parks and which is for public works.
- **Lack of clarity** on responsibilities, point of contact, and scheduled (maintenance, trash, mowing)
- Cut budget when larger budgetary issues
- We have an enormous number of parks and we have ineffective division of responsibility
- Community perception around parks being dangerous and bringing crime
- Equity issue with parks in the city: Parks qualitatively better in certain neighborhoods and quantitatively better in other parks; so much more park space in wealthier, whiter neighborhoods than poorer communities of color.

### **Suggested Outcomes:**

- **Transparency and communication about the budget** so that people know what resources are available and so that it's not so complicated
- **External communication:** Need an external service or staff to answer phones; Use social media and buy communication equipment
- **Invest in the community outreach and engagement** to ensure that the parks are enjoyed
- The community/neighborhood has to get behind the park so that they have a voice in the park
- **Community informed programming and events**, involved in decisions about **physical infrastructure**
- Community has to feel some **sense of ownership, pride, and belonging** to that space; Foster shared responsibility
- Need to be more open and **service-oriented to the public**
- **Need better, more modern equipment** (leaf blowers, grass cutting equipment) and **training**
- Add more **senior-level supervision** and then **divide into regions** (clear geography where they work)



# SNAPSHOT: Nonprofit Focus Group

## Gathering Ideas for Re-envisioning New Haven Parks Listening Phase | Stakeholder Focus Group

During the focus group we heard from CitySeed, Save the Sound, LEAP for Kids, Monk Youth Jazz and STEAM Collective, Common Ground, Audubon CT, Sierra Club's Inspiring Connections Outdoors (ICO)



### Strengths:

- **Proximity** – Always a park nearby
- **Collaboration** with nonprofits working in ranger station is working well.

### Challenges:

- Concern for the **ecological functioning** of the vast set of parks, lack of park ecological management plan
- **Litter and pet waste**
- There is more demand for **nature-based programming** than non-profits can meet.
- **Limited ability of the rangers** and nature-based programming.
- **Lack of leadership and vision for parks**
- Parks in **BIPOC neighborhoods neglected**

### Suggested Outcomes:

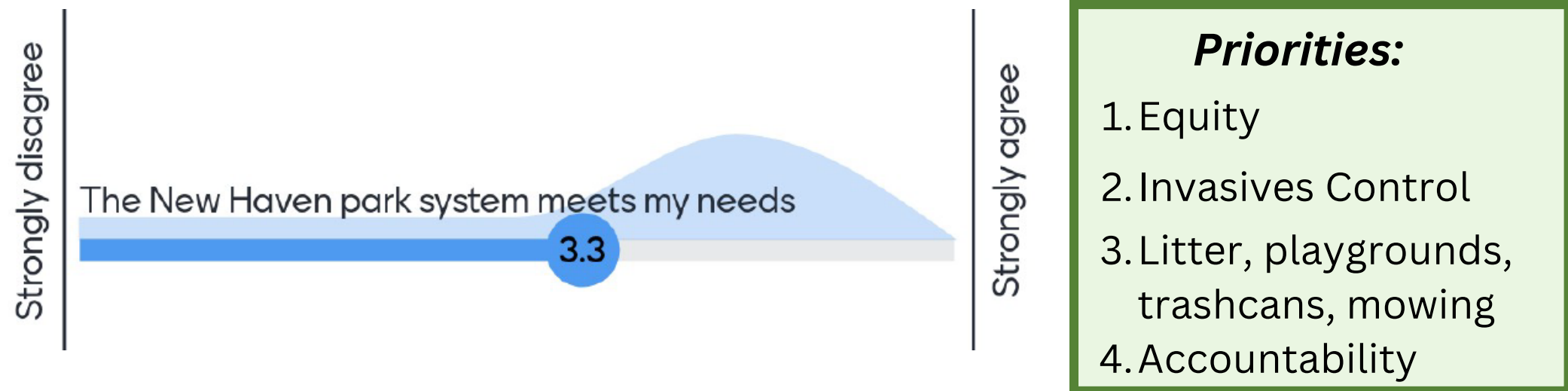
- Provide **pet waste bags**
- Develop an **ecological management plan** that includes rotational (less) mowing, leaving the leaves where possible to create more habitat and water filtration, promote biodiversity and ecological function.
- Increase attention to **maintenance in BIPOC neighborhoods**
- Would like to see a concrete **DEI/BIPOC centered initiative**.
- Need **rangers who reflect the community** and have expertise.
- Create **signage** for ecological restoration to increase transparency and accountability
- Create resources that **help people know how to access parks** and park programming
- **Engage nonprofits** in providing more programs.



# SNAPSHOT: Park Friends Focus Group

## Gathering Ideas for Re-envisioning New Haven Parks Listening Phase | Stakeholder Focus Group

During the Park Friends focus group we heard from 29 people representing 20 parks.



### Strengths:

- **Beauty, trees, trails, nature and community involvement**
- Strong parks friends volunteers serve valuable functions
- ERP's road closure has dramatically decreased the litter.

### Challenges:

- While all parks are underfunded, the parks in **BIPOC neighborhoods are especially neglected.**
- Some parks have no **trash cans**. Some trash cans are not getting emptied.
- **The big and little parks have different needs.**
- Accountability is lacking.
- Funding is a barrier and we need more of a **vision** around what parks could be.
- **Staff lack expertise in natural areas management.**

### Suggested Outcomes:

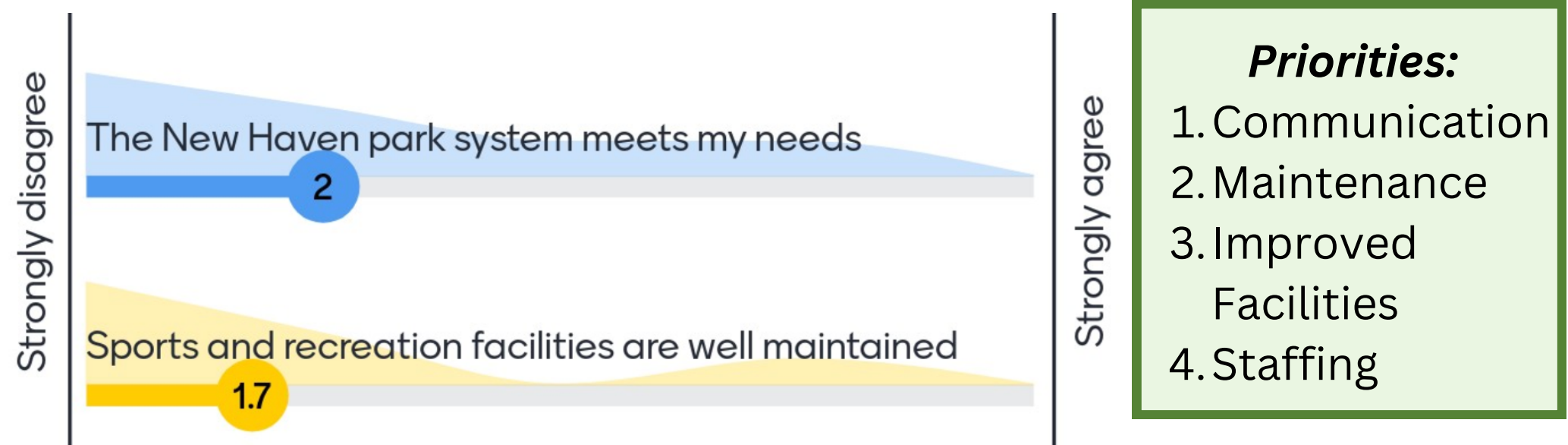
- **Post a clear schedule for mowing and trash pick-ups in the parks.**
- Use data on usage to help determine maintenance plans.
- **Communicate a single point of contact for issues of trash and natural areas maintenance.**
- Create an **anti-litter campaign** focused on children, including signage.
- Increase training and supervision of mowing staff.
- Hire more **rangers** for more parks.
- **Nature and ecology programming.**
- Triage for trails maintenance and a long-term maintenance plan.
- Increase **accessibility for playgrounds** and accountability for maintenance of them.
- **Listen to community needs.**
- Increase **transparency on funding** for parks.





## Gathering Ideas for Re-envisioning New Haven Parks Listening Phase | Stakeholder Focus Group

During the focus group we heard from 11 athletic league organizers including baseball (Westville, City Angels and Cross High, Walter Pop Smith), adult kickball (WAKA), tennis, (USTA), soccer (NHYS), runners (NHRR), football (NH Pop Warner) and rugby.



### Strengths:

- **Recent improvements:** New track at Cross; New baseball fields
- Some positive interactions and support from staff for soccer and WAKA
- Trails in parks and closed road in East Rock great for runners

### Challenges:

- Field and court quality & maintenance
- **Athletes leaving NHV for programs with better facilities, some leagues considering leaving**
- Working bathrooms, lighting, drinking fountains needed
- **Safety concerns** (lack of lighting, wild animals, bees, drug dealing, traffic, batting cages, motorcycles in parks, homelessness)
- Lack of storage for equipment
- Staff not easy to contact or work with
- Tons of challenges and staff is not responsive.

### Suggested Outcomes:

- **Pride in sports fields and facilities leads to pride in city**
- **Clarify processes:** Put all important contacts on the City's website.
- **Maintain fields | Improve bathrooms | Add bleachers and storage facilities.**
- **Lighting:** Increase # of facilities and fields with lighting for evening and morning activities
- **Provide security**

