



2021

Montour Trail Council User Survey



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Compiled by: John Dorman
April 2021 v2

Cover Photo: Montour Trail near the Westland Branch by Joe Holden

1 About the Montour Trail and Montour Trail Council

The Montour Trail is the longest suburban non-motorized rail-trail in the United States, with main line and branches extending 63 miles. Running through communities west and south of Pittsburgh, the trail follows the abandoned rights-of-way of the Montour Railroad and the Pennsylvania Railroad, Peters Creek branch. The trail is paved with a smooth surface of crushed limestone, which makes it ideal for all forms of non-motorized use: bicycling, walking, running, cross-country skiing, and nature appreciation.

The trail connects Pittsburgh International Airport to the Great Allegheny Passage (GAP), a trail system that stretches over 330 miles from Pittsburgh to Washington, DC. A portion of the trail within Peters Township is called The Arrowhead Trail and is owned and maintained by the Township. The Montour Trail connects in McDonald, PA to the Panhandle Trail that stretches 29 miles between Carnegie, PA, and Weirton, WV.

Founded in 1989, the Montour Trail Council (MTC) is the 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that oversees construction and maintenance of the Montour Trail. The MTC is a volunteer-based organization that receives no regular tax-based financial support for trail maintenance. The MTC conducts construction projects, public relations efforts, fundraising, and managing a growing volunteer base. Since its founding MTC leadership has responded to the need to manage the tremendous amount of activity by creating a formal structure with a Board of Directors, by-laws and standing committees. Maintenance is conducted by seven Friends Groups that solicit volunteers and raise funds supporting the maintenance of their assigned sections of the trail.

Learn more about the MTC and the Trail by visiting www.MontourTrail.org.

2 Message from the President

Welcome to the triennial Montour Trail Council's User Survey. This year's survey was conducted mid-pandemic, in January and February 2021, and includes responses from over 1,000 users. We thank all of you who responded, providing us with valuable data we can use to make the Montour Trail better than ever. This information will, among other things, form much of the basis for the update of our Strategic Plan update this year.

We also extend our sincere thanks to John Dorman, who conducted the survey and crunched the numbers, now for the third time. This report is the fruit of his fine efforts.

There are lots of ways to slice and dice the information, telling us about our various user groups, how they use the trail, and how they think. Perhaps the most interesting finding is presented in Section 6.9. Over 90% of the respondents say that they themselves 'almost always' follow the trail rules, but that only 34% of other users do the same. This may tell us more about human psychology than about trail use. Trail rules and etiquette are important to maintaining good relations between our user groups - primarily cyclists, walkers, and runners. Etiquette rules don't just exist to make sure we have a trail full of Emily Posts. Etiquette rules ARE safety rules. The practices that show respect and consideration for others also help prevent accidents.

The survey also shows our newsletter, the Montour Trail-Letter, is an important and valued source of information about the Trail. To make sure that you get the newsletter, please keep your MTC membership up to date!

We can also see clearly the things that matter most to our users: clear signage, year-round toilets, ample parking, maintenance, and scenery. These things, and continuing to complete the trail, will remain as priorities for the organization.

Deb Thompson, President
Montour Trail Council
April 2021

3 Executive Summary

At the request of the MTC Board, trail user input was gathered by means of an on-line survey offered through the “Survey Monkey” website (www.surveymonkey.com) between 19Jan21 – 10Feb21. This was the third survey of this type and was conducted in 2021 to align with and support the three-year strategic planning cycle of the MTC Board.

Thirty-three questions covering demographics, trail use, trail etiquette, trail comparisons, improvement priorities, trail-related spending, communications, membership (financial support of the trail), and optional contact information were included in the survey. The survey was publicized through the MontourTrail.org web page & Montour Trail Enthusiasts Facebook page and was announced through a series of emails from the MTC general email. It was also promoted in the electronic and hardcopy Montour Newsletter issued at the end of January.

Responses were analyzed and summarized for review and compared to the prior results where appropriate. In March 2021, key findings were shared with the MTC Board and volunteers through a pair of on-line presentations. Action items were identified and initiated to address opportunities, and additional action is contemplated as part of the 2021 tri-annual MTC Strategic Planning Process.

The survey was open for a total of 23 days during which 1043 responses were received. Of these, 1015 were essentially complete. Email notifications drove most of the traffic – 75% of responses were received within three days of the two email notices.

Respondent Zip Codes are distributed across 133 codes in 13 states, although 97% of the respondents are PA residents. Most are clustered in the region, with the top 20 ZIP codes accounting for 75% of the respondents, and the top five codes cover nearly 40% of the respondents.

Of the respondents providing age and gender information, 95.6% are over the age of 35 and 85.5% are over 45 – both higher than prior surveys. The fraction of respondents under 35 continues to drop. Gender mix is essentially unchanged with just over 60% male respondents.

The largest fraction of respondents selected Biking as their primary activity, followed by Walking / Hiking and Jogging / Running. The same order of preference applied by gender as well. By age group, however, the order varied somewhat, with a higher percentage of younger (<45) respondents selecting Jogging / Running as their primary activity. Considering both Primary and Secondary activities, Biking remains the most common trail activity with nearly 90% of respondents selecting it. Walking is the second most mentioned activity, and Jogging and Dog Walking are distant third and fourth place. Almost 85% of respondents indicated that they use the trail for two or more activities. The fractions of respondents mentioning Biking and Dog Walking are essentially steady over the three surveys. Walking is increasing while Jogging is declining.

A ‘typical’ user (generally over 50% of respondents) is on the trail one or more times per week, lives within five miles of the trail, uses the trail 1-2 hours per visit and visits both weekdays and weekends. These use patterns hold for all primary activities with the minor exception that bikers travel a little further to get to the trail. The overall pattern of distance from the trail, frequency, duration of use, and days of use has changed relatively little over the three surveys.

Given the ongoing Pandemic, a question was added to the survey to explore whether trail use increased, decreased, or was unchanged in this past, most unusual, year. Usage by frequent users (one or more times per week) was more likely to be unchanged or increase due to Covid. Usage by infrequent users (less than weekly) was more likely to be unchanged or decrease due to Covid. Trail use by respondents increased somewhat compared to the prior 12 months.

Regardless of activity, age, or gender, 90% of respondents use the trail alone or with one / few adults (spouse, etc.) Joggers are more likely to use the trail alone.

Respondents were asked to indicate their frequency of use of seven trail segments. Peters and Airport have the highest number of frequent users (Very Often), followed by Cecil and Bethel. Cecil has the highest number of Regular Users (Very Often + Sometimes), followed by Peters, Ft Cherry and Airport. The Westland Branch has the lowest number of Frequent, Regular and Total users. Considering Primary Activity by trail segment, Dog Walkers are about twice as common in Peters, Bethel and South Park compared to the other segments. Bikers are more common in Ft Cherry and Westland. Joggers are least likely to be found in the Ft Cherry and Westland segments.

To follow up on the 2018 survey, several questions on Trail Etiquette were included. Over 90% of users indicate that they personally 'almost always' follow the rules with most of the balance indicating that they 'usually' follow the rules. However, only 34% of users indicate that OTHERS 'almost always' follow the rules, and another 39% indicate that many others follow the rules. The most common suggestion to improve etiquette is additional signage.

Maintenance scored very high with 62% of respondents rating it Excellent and almost 98% of respondents rating it Excellent or Good. The rating was fairly consistent across primary activities and is up slightly compared to prior surveys. Comments indicate that surface condition in the Airport segment remains an improvement opportunity.

Overall evaluation of Safety & Security increased somewhat for the trail as a whole after being flat for the prior two surveys. The fraction of respondent Fair and Poor ratings dropped from over 9% in the prior surveys to under 7% in the current wave – with unfavorable ratings highest among Walkers in the Airport segment.

Respondents were asked to indicate their overall impression of the Montour Trail compared eight other regional rail-trails that they may have used in the past 12 months. The Montour scored higher (i.e., was rated between “About the Same” and “Somewhat Better”) than all other trails with an overall average of 3.35 – down slightly from the prior survey. Respondents were also asked WHY they assigned the rating that they did. Maintenance is the issue most often mentioned as the differentiator among trails - with Montour being presented in a generally favorable light. Paving and Surface are the next most frequent issues.

Respondents were asked about trail-related purchases in the past 12 months. About 58% reported making at least some trail-related purchases. Bikers and Joggers are most likely to spend money on trail-related items. Bikers spent an estimated average of \$127 per user, with Joggers second at \$121. The fraction of users reporting purchases increased vs. the 2018 survey, and the increase was across all activities. Estimated spending per user is up over 75% compared to 2018 (\$114 vs. \$64).

The top three improvement priorities based on total votes and weighted points are Trailhead Signage, Year-round PortaPots, and More / Better Parking. These are the highest scoring options regardless of trail segment and for all activities except Dog Walkers (who prefer Picnic / Seating over PortaPots). While the top three do not change by segment, their position does change with parking being #2 in Peters & Bethel vs. a distant #3 in Airport. Surface Condition, Pavement, Trail Extension / Completion, Fountains, Etiquette Signs, and Waste Cans were the top 'Other' issues.

Approximately 60% of respondents indicated that they plan to participate in one or more MTC activities in 2021. Tour the Montour and Twilight Trail Walk are the two most 'popular' events, followed by National Tunnel 10K and Volunteer Work.

Respondents were asked to indicate the various sources of information that they used to stay informed about the trail and MTC activities. Most respondents indicate that they rely on the electronic version of the Newsletter for trail information. Facebook, the MontourTrail.org website, and Word of Mouth are the next three most mentioned media. Nearly 71% of respondents are 'very satisfied' with the Newsletter. Another 20% are Somewhat Satisfied. No respondents indicated that they were dissatisfied. Suggested content enhancements included construction updates (planned, in progress and completed), history articles, user photos & stories, safety & etiquette, and planned and completed trail maintenance.

Nearly three quarters of respondents indicated that they had made a financial contribution to establish or maintain "membership" in the trail, up significantly over the prior survey totals. Rates are up for nearly all age groups and activities. Lack of awareness of the MTC and allowing a membership to expire are the most common explanations given by non-members.

A total of 477 respondents submitted nearly 900 comments regarding priorities, trail use, condition, suggestions and support. These were aggregated along with key demographic and attribute data for separate review and action.

Ten percent of respondents provided basic contact information either to follow up on their survey responses or to volunteer in some capacity with the MTC– with virtually all of them offering to volunteer. The contact information and follow-up topics have been provided to the MTC for action.

4 Methodology

At the request of the MTC Board, trail user input was gathered by means of an on-line survey offered through the “Survey Monkey” website (www.surveymonkey.com) between 19Jan21 – 10Feb21. This was the third survey of this type; the prior surveys were completed in 2016 and 2018. The survey was conducted in 2021 to align with and support the three-year strategic planning cycle of the MTC Board.

The questions were drafted by a team composed of MTC Board members and volunteers. Thirty-three questions covering demographics, trail use, trail etiquette, trail comparisons, improvement priorities, trail-related spending, communications, membership (financial support of the trail), and optional contact information were included in the survey (see Section 5). Branching logic was provided to explore purchases, newsletter feedback, and reasons why respondents indicated that they do not contribute to support the trail when appropriate. Most questions were ‘multiple choice’ with an option to provide ‘other’ responses. Several open-ended questions were provided to allow respondents to elaborate on their responses or provide additional general comments.

The survey was publicized through the MontourTrail.org web page & Montour Trail Enthusiasts Facebook page and was announced through a series of emails from the MTC general email list to of approximately 1200 addresses. It was also promoted in the electronic and hardcopy Montour Newsletter issued at the end of January.

Responses were analyzed and summarized for review. Note that some respondents did not answer all survey questions, and in those cases, totals were calculated based on the number of complete responses for the applicable questions. This approach sometimes resulted in minor differences in totals and other calculated values between tables.

In March 2021, key findings were shared with the MTC Board and volunteers through a pair of on-line presentations. Action items were identified and initiated to address opportunities, and additional action is contemplated as part of the upcoming MTC Strategic Planning Process. It is anticipated that a follow-up survey will be conducted in about 2-3 years based on the planning needs of the Board.

Note: It is recognized that the survey responses may not fully represent “trail users” since survey respondents are self-selected from those aware of, and with access to, the survey. Many trail users may have been unaware of the survey, aware but not able to access the survey, or unwilling to respond to the survey. That said, the data collected does provide some insight into a broad cross section of users, and provides meaningful quantitative and qualitative feedback on perceptions and opportunities for use in the Montour Trail planning process.

5 Survey Questionnaire

We are conducting this survey to update the feedback on how we are doing and to gather your input for our ongoing planning process.

First, please provide a little information about yourself:

1. What is your ZIP code? _____
2. What is your gender?
 - ☐ Male
 - ☐ Female
3. What is your age group?

<input type="radio"/> 15 and younger	<input type="radio"/> 46 – 55
<input type="radio"/> 16 – 25	<input type="radio"/> 56 – 65
<input type="radio"/> 26 – 35	<input type="radio"/> 66 or older
<input type="radio"/> 36 – 45	

Considering your use of the Montour Trail in the past 12 months:

4. What was your primary activity on the Trail? (*Pick 1*)

<input type="radio"/> Walking/ hiking	<input type="radio"/> Biking
<input type="radio"/> Dog walking	<input type="radio"/> Commuting to work or school
<input type="radio"/> Jogging/ running	<input type="radio"/> Fishing
<input type="radio"/> Other: _____	
5. In addition to your primary activity (from Question 4 above,) what other activities have you enjoyed on the Trail? (*Select all that apply*)

<input type="checkbox"/> Walking/ hiking	<input type="checkbox"/> Biking
<input type="checkbox"/> Dog walking	<input type="checkbox"/> Commuting to work or school
<input type="checkbox"/> Jogging/ running	<input type="checkbox"/> Fishing
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	
6. How often, on average, did you use the Trail? (*Pick 1*)
 - ☐ Daily
 - ☐ Two or more times per week
 - ☐ Weekly
 - ☐ Once a month
 - ☐ A few times a year
7. Generally, when did you use the Trail? (*Pick 1*)
 - ☐ Weekdays
 - ☐ Weekends
 - ☐ Both

8. How much time did you generally spend on the Trail each visit? *(Pick 1)*

- ☐ 1 hour or less
- ☐ 1 to 2 hours
- ☐ 2 to 4 hours
- ☐ More than 4 hours

9. How has the Covid-19 outbreak affected your Trail use?

- ☐ I used the Trail much less this year than I have in prior years
- ☐ I used the Trail a bit less this year than I have in prior years
- ☐ It hasn't made much difference
- ☐ I used the Trail a bit more than in prior years
- ☐ I used the Trail much more than in prior years

10. Did you typically use the Trail with anyone else? *(Pick 1)*

- ☐ I typically used the Trail alone
- ☐ I was typically with children / grandchildren, etc.
- ☐ I was typically with one or a few adults (spouse, friends, etc.)
- ☐ I typically participated in group activities or sponsored events
- ☐ Other: _____

11. Approximately how far did you typically travel to get to the Trail? *(Pick 1)*

- ☐ I live adjacent to the Trail
- ☐ Less than 1 mile
- ☐ Between 1 and 5 miles
- ☐ Between 5 and 10 miles
- ☐ Between 10 and 20 miles
- ☐ More than 20 miles

12. How much did you use each section of the Trail?

	I used this section very often	I sometimes used this section	I rarely used this section	I never used this section
Airport Area from Coraopolis to Washington County line including the Airport Connector (MP 0 to 12.4)				
Ft. Cherry Area from the Washington County line to the bridge over Rt. 50, including the Panhandle Connector (MP 12.4 to 22)				
Westland Branch from Gilmore Junction to Westland (W 0 – W 4.1)				
Cecil Area from the bridge over Rt. 50 to Tandem Connection (MP 22 to 27)				
Peters Area from Tandem Connection to Library Viaduct over Rt. 88 (MP 27 to 35.5)				
Bethel Branch, from the horse farm at Library Junction to Logan Rd.				
South Park Township and points east, including the Library Viaduct over Rt. 88 to end of Trail at Clairton (MP 35.5 to 46.5)				

Montour Trail social media generates a steady exchange of comments about Trail etiquette that the MTC has endeavored to address through etiquette signage at Trailheads and mileposts, and through ongoing publications and communications. The questions below are intended to help us evaluate progress.

13. When using the Trail, do **YOU** typically follow the posted etiquette rules (keep right, announce when passing, keep pets on 6ft leash, etc.)? *(Pick 1)*

- a. I almost always follow the rules
- b. I usually follow the rules
- c. I sometimes follow the rules
- d. I was unaware that there are etiquette rules
- e. I don't follow the rules

14. When using the Trail, do **OTHER USERS** typically follow the posted etiquette rules (keep right, announce when passing, keep pets on 6ft leash, etc.)? *(Pick 1)*

- a. There are exceptions, but the vast majority of other users follow the rules
- b. Many other users follow the rules
- c. Few other users follow the rules
- d. I typically don't notice what others are doing

15. What suggestions do you have to help improve etiquette on the Trail?

Considering your experience on the Montour Trail over the past 12 months:

16. The maintenance of the Trail is: *(Pick 1)*

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor

17. Safety and security along the Trail is: *(Pick 1)*

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Poor

Considering the Montour Trail and any other Trails that you have used in the past 12 months:

18. Rate how the Montour Trail compares with other Trails in the region. For each trail, indicate if the Montour Trail is:

	Much Better	Somewhat Better	About the Same	Somewhat Worse	Much Worse	N/A – I haven't used this Trail
Panhandle Trail						
Three River Heritage Trail						
Steel Valley Trail (between Homestead & McKeesport)						
Great Allegheny Passage (GAP- between McKeesport and Cumberland MD)						
Allegheny River, Oil Creek & Samuel Justus Trails						
Butler- Freeport Trail						
Ghost Town Trail						
Armstrong Trail						

19. If you rated the Montour Trail "Much Better" or "Much Worse" than any of the trails above, why?

The Montour Trail is a valuable community resource that brings people into and through the various Trail communities.

20. Did you purchase anything in support of, or related to, your use of the Trail this year?

- ☐ No, I didn't make any significant purchases (Go to Q 22)
- ☐ Yes, I made minor purchases for such things as food, souvenirs, clothing, supplies, etc.
- ☐ Yes, I made significant purchases such as a bicycle, jogging stroller, Trailer or other equipment, etc.

21. Approximately how much did you spend on these types of items in support of your use of the Montour Trail in the past 12 months? (*Pick 1*)

- a. Less than \$100 total
- b. \$100 - \$300 total
- c. More than \$300 total

The Montour Trail Council (MTC) is the 100% volunteer organization that manages the Trail.

22. Please RANK the top 3 most important Trail improvements that you would like to see (1 = most important, 2 = 2nd most important, etc. Please use each number only once.)

Trail Improvement	RANK 1-3
Signage at Trailheads showing amenities and nearby businesses	
Facilitate more informal group events (scheduled rides / walks, etc.)	
More seating / picnic areas	
More seasonal portajohns	
More year-round portajohns	
More / Better parking	
Other:	

23. Please add any comments regarding your priority choices above, i.e., what types of events would you suggest, where you would like to see additional seating / parking, etc.

24. What do you think the MTC could be doing better? What would make you use or enjoy the Trail more?

25. The Covid-19 outbreak has resulted in the elimination of most organized / in-person activities in 2020. Looking ahead, what MTC-sponsored events are you planning to participate in during 2021? (*Select all that apply*)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> I do not plan to participate in any | <input type="checkbox"/> J. R. Taylor 5K race and walk |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tour the Montour | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer Trail Work Party |
| <input type="checkbox"/> National Tunnel 10K run/ 2 mile walk | <input type="checkbox"/> Annual member's dinner |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Twilight Trail Walk | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | |

26. How do you keep in touch with events on the Montour Trail? (*Select all that apply*)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Montour.org Web site (Go to Q29) | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter (Hard copy sent by US Mail) (Go to Q27) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Montour Trail Enthusiasts Facebook group (Go to Q29) | <input type="checkbox"/> Word of mouth (Go to Q29) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter (Emailed or downloaded) (Go to Q27) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

27. How satisfied are you with the Newsletters' overall content?

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| a. Very Satisfied | <input type="radio"/> Somewhat Satisfied | <input type="radio"/> Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied |
| b. Somewhat dissatisfied | <input type="radio"/> Very Dissatisfied | |

28. What information or news, if any, could strengthen the newsletter to better serve your interests?

29. In the past year did you make a financial contribution to join or maintain membership in the MTC?

- ☐ Yes (Go to Q31)
- ☐ No (Go to Q 30)

30. If not a member, Why not? *(Pick 1)*

- ☐ I didn't know about the MTC
- ☐ I don't know where the money goes
- ☐ I used to be, but let it expire
- ☐ Other: _____

31. Is there anything else you'd like to say regarding the Trail, your favorite sections or the Montour Trail Council?

32. If you would you like us to contact you regarding your comments on this survey or volunteer opportunities for the Trail, please provide your contact information:

Name: _____

Email _____

Phone _____

☐ Mobile ☐ Home

33. And tell us what you would like to discuss: *(Select all that apply)*

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss comments I've made on this survey | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteering: membership drives |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteering: trail maintenance | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteering: event planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteering: trail management | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteering: event support |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteering: trail building | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteering: fund raising | |

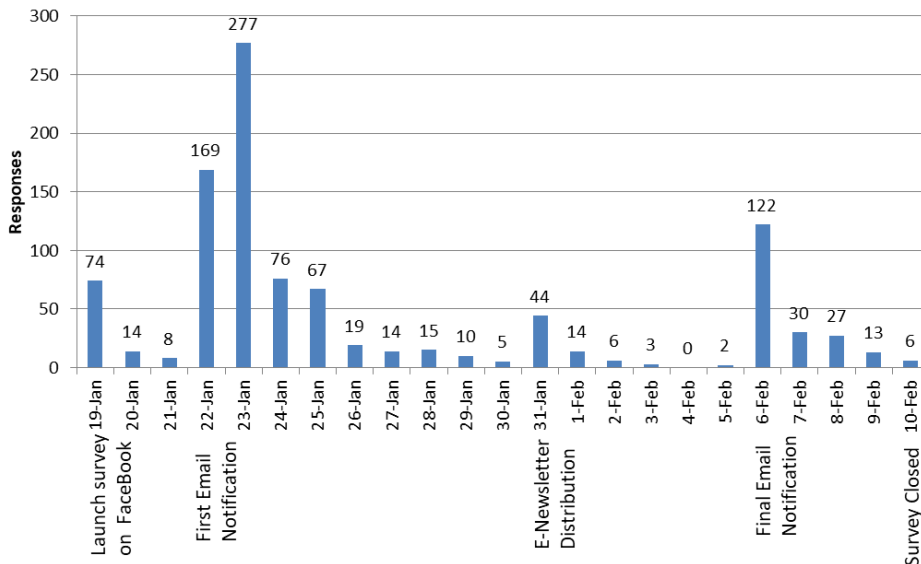
Thank you for completing the survey!

6 Responses & Analysis

6.1 Response Timeline

The survey was open for a total of 23 days during which 1043 responses were received. Of these, 1015 were essentially complete. The other respondents either abandoned the survey very early in the questionnaire or initiated the survey multiple times. Duplicate records were identified by reviewing those with identical key demographic and response data. In most cases, it was evident that the response was initiated, abandoned, and resumed later. These duplicate and abandoned records were removed from the dataset.

Email notifications drove most of the traffic – 75% of responses were received within three days of the two email notices. Smaller spikes in the response rate corresponded to the launch of the survey on Facebook and the publication of the MTC Newsletter.



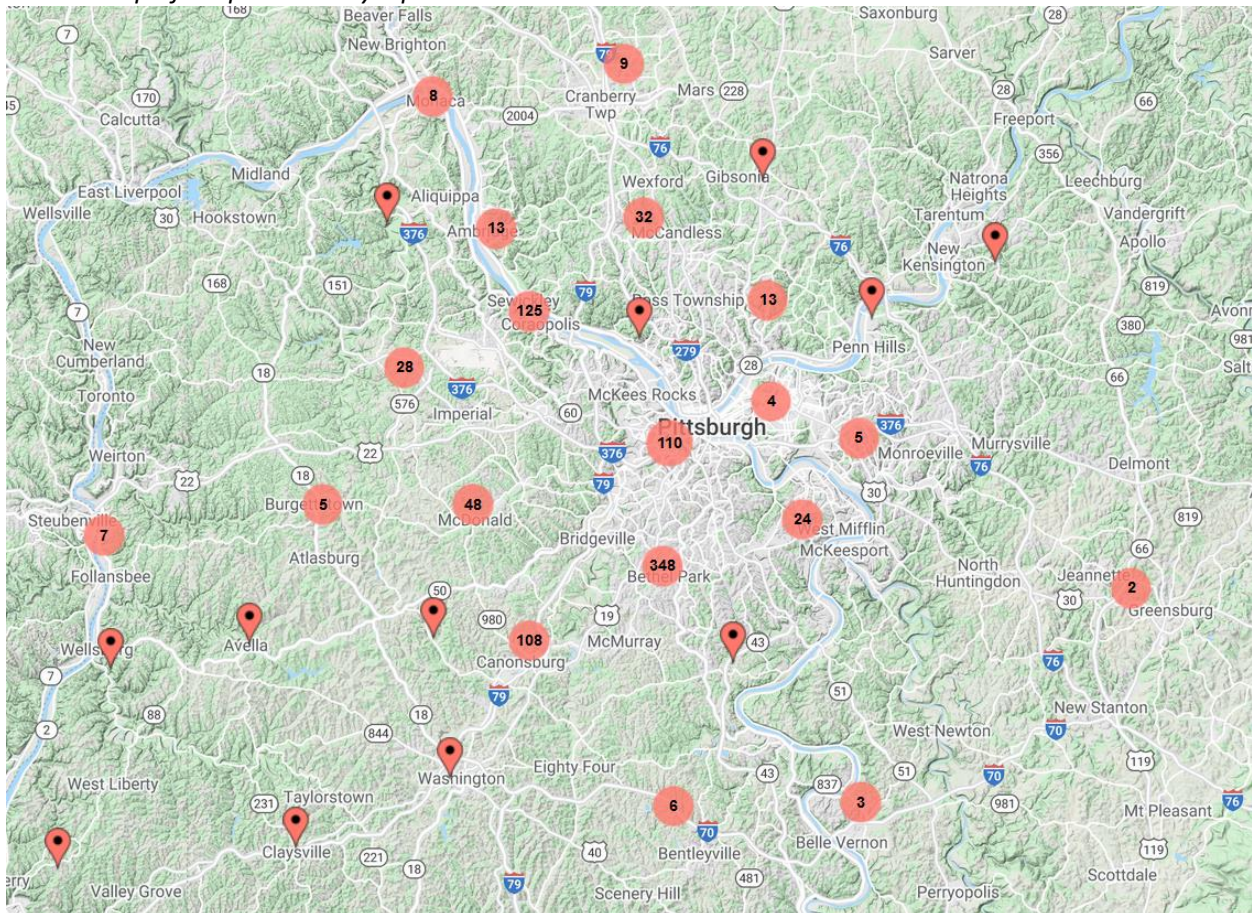
6.2 Respondent Zip Codes (Q.1)

Zip codes were provided by 1006 respondents. They are distributed across 133 codes in 13 states, although 97% of the respondents are PA residents. Most are clustered in the region, with the top 20 ZIP codes accounting for 75% of the respondents, and the top five codes cover nearly 40% of the respondents. The concentration of respondents in the top 20 is similar to the prior two surveys. Twenty-three Zip codes contain the top 20 codes for all three surveys, and the top five codes are unchanged. Most of the top Zip Codes are for communities to the West and South of Pittsburgh along the trail route.

Zip	Tot Resp	City (per Post Office)	2020 Rank	2018 Rank	2016 Rank
15108	100	Coraopolis, PA	1	1	1
15317	98	Canonsburg, PA	2	2	2
15102	89	Bethel Park, PA	3	3	3
15241	64	Pittsburgh, PA	4	4	4
15136	41	Mc Kees Rocks, PA	5	5	5

15017	39	Bridgeville, PA	6	9	12
15228	36	Pittsburgh, PA	7	6	7
15367	32	Venetia, PA	8	10	10
15057	30	Mc Donald, PA	9	8	8
15129	28	South Park, PA	10	12	9
15243	26	Pittsburgh, PA	11	15	13
15143	25	Sewickley, PA	12	18	16
15126	25	Imperial, PA	13	11	17
15301	24	Washington, PA	14	7	6
15236	19	Pittsburgh, PA	15	-	20
15071	16	Oakdale, PA	16	16	19
15237	16	Pittsburgh, PA	17	14	18
15234	15	Pittsburgh, PA	18	-	-
15205	14	Pittsburgh, PA	19	13	11
15090	13	Wexford, PA	20	-	-
15106	12	Carnegie, PA	21	17	14
15216	12	Pittsburgh, PA	22	19	-
15001	11	Aliquippa, PA	23	20	15

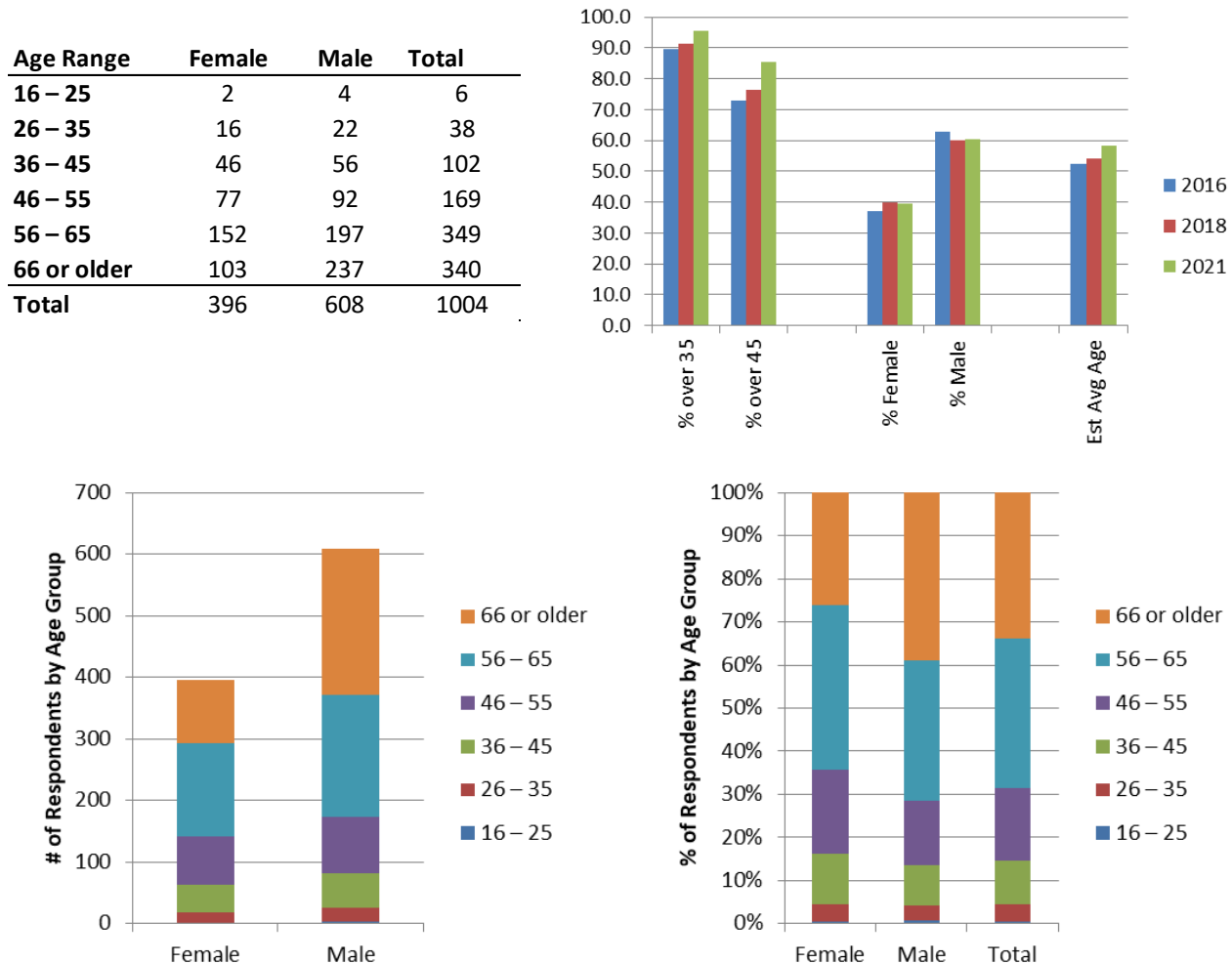
Cluster Map of Respondents by Zip Code



6.3 Gender & Age (Q.2 & 3)

A total of 1004 respondents answered one or both of the questions regarding age and gender. Of those, 95.6% are over the age of 35 and 85.5% are over 45 – both higher than prior surveys. The fraction of respondents under 35 continues to drop. Using the ‘midpoint’ of each age band (70 for the ‘66 & Older’ band) the overall average age of respondents was estimated and found to be about 4 years higher than the prior survey (58.3 in 2021 vs. 54.2 in 2018 and 52.5 in 2016).

Gender mix is essentially unchanged with just over 60% male respondents. On average, the female respondents appear to be younger based on their higher proportion in the lower age brackets

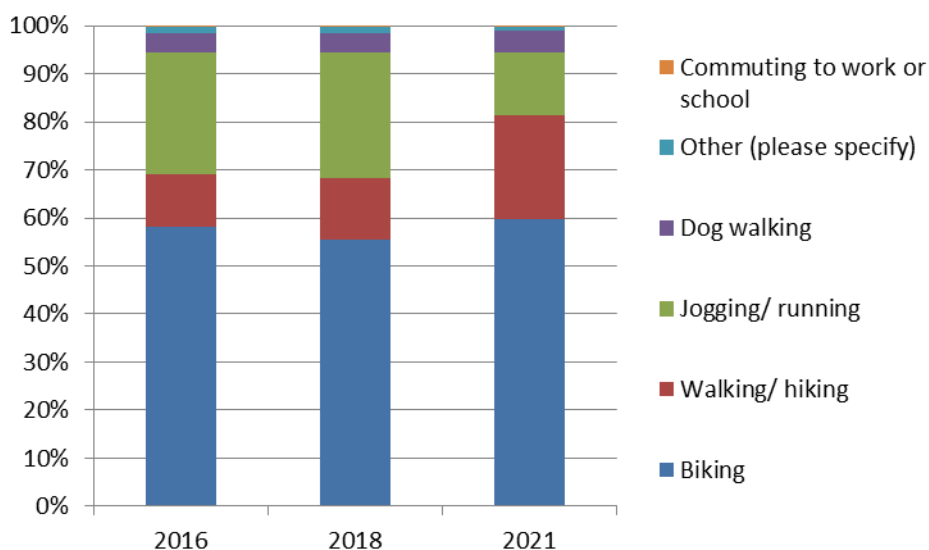
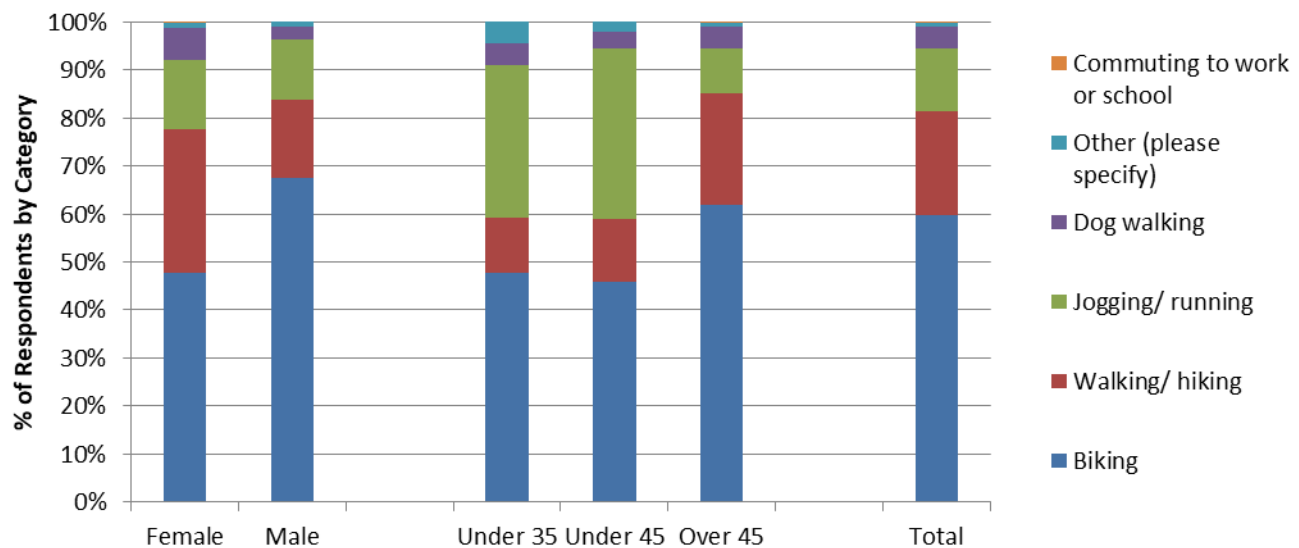


6.4 Primary & Secondary Trail Activities (Q.4 & 5)

Respondents were asked to identify a single “Primary Activity” on the trail and could also indicate one or more “Secondary Activities”. The largest fraction of respondents selected Biking, followed by Walking / Hiking and Jogging / Running as their primary activity. The same order of preference applied by gender as well. By age group, however, the order varied somewhat, with a higher percentage of younger (<45) respondents selecting Jogging / Running as their primary activity.

While the fraction identifying Biking as their primary activity has remained relatively constant, Walking is up substantially, and Jogging is down a corresponding amount compared to prior surveys- correlated with the changing age mix of the respondents.

	16 – 25	26 – 35	36 – 45	46 – 55	56 – 65	66 or older	Total	Under 35	Under 45	Over 45
Biking	4	17	46	84	237	212	600	21	67	533
Walking/ hiking	0	5	14	35	69	95	218	5	19	199
Jogging/ running	1	13	38	40	23	18	133	14	52	81
Dog walking	0	2	3	10	19	10	44	2	5	39
Other (please specify)	1	1	1	1	1	5	10	2	3	7
Commuting to work or school	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1
	6	38	102	170	350	340	1006	44	146	860

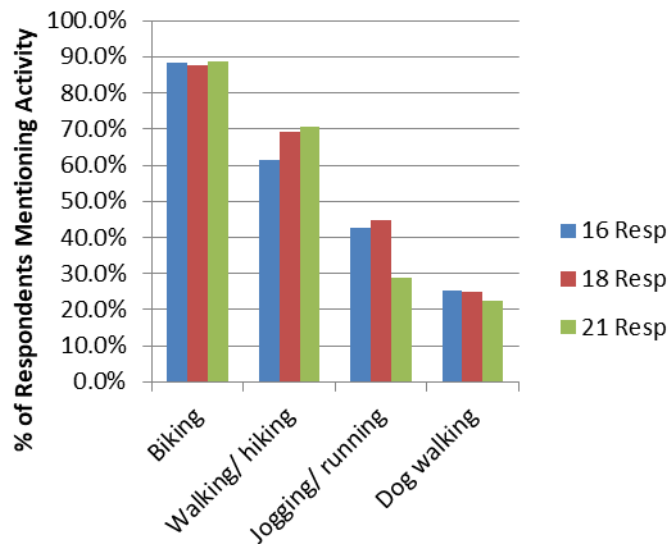
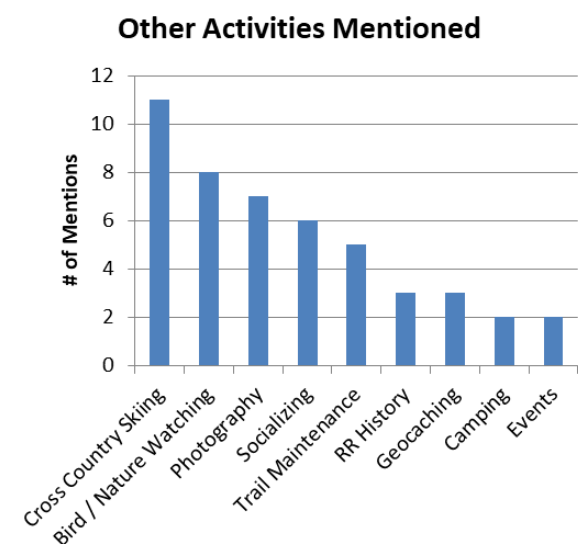


Considering both Primary and Secondary activities, Biking remains the most common trail activity with nearly 90% of respondents selecting it. Walking is the second most mentioned activity (Primary + Secondary) with 70% of respondents mentioning it, and Jogging and Dog Walking are distant third and fourth place.

Nearly 180 respondents reported no secondary activities (no activity selected or "none" listed under 'Other'). The remaining 836 respondents listed 1216 activities - an average of almost 1.5 additional activities per respondent. Cross Country Skiing, Bird/Nature Watching and Photography are the top three mentioned "Other" activities, but each has 11 or fewer mentions.

The fractions of respondents mentioning Biking and Dog Walking are essentially steady over the three surveys. Walking is increasing while Jogging is declining.

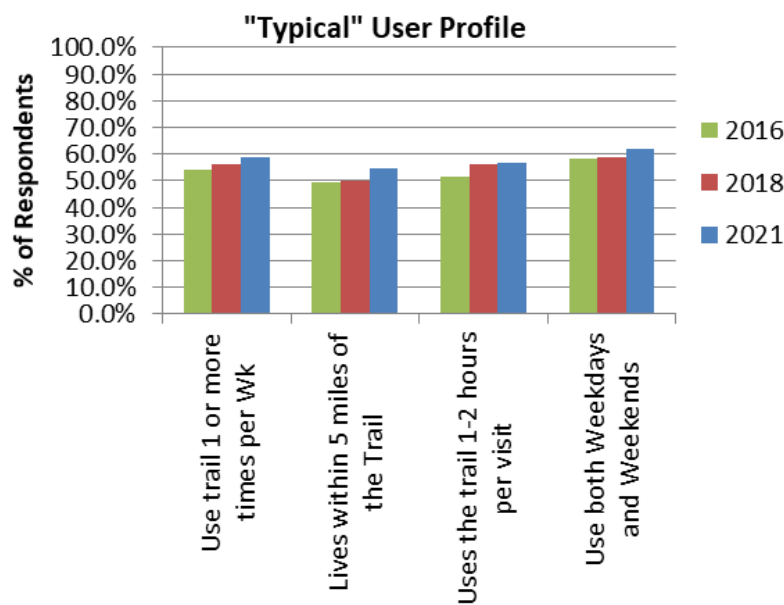
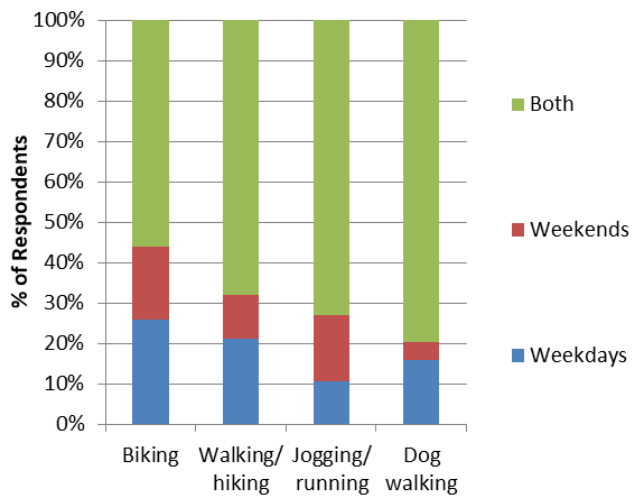
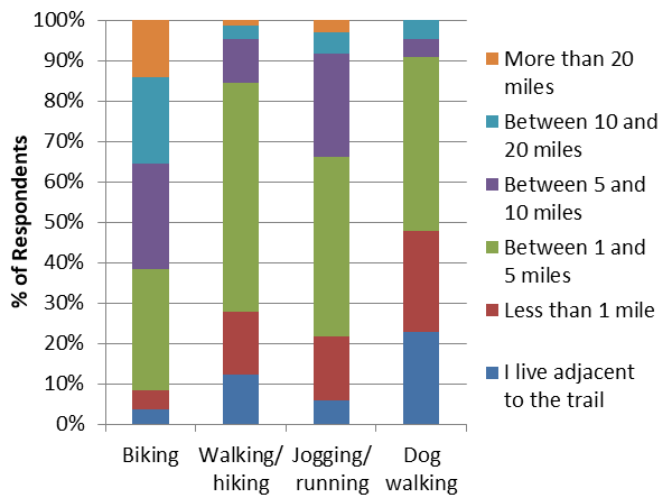
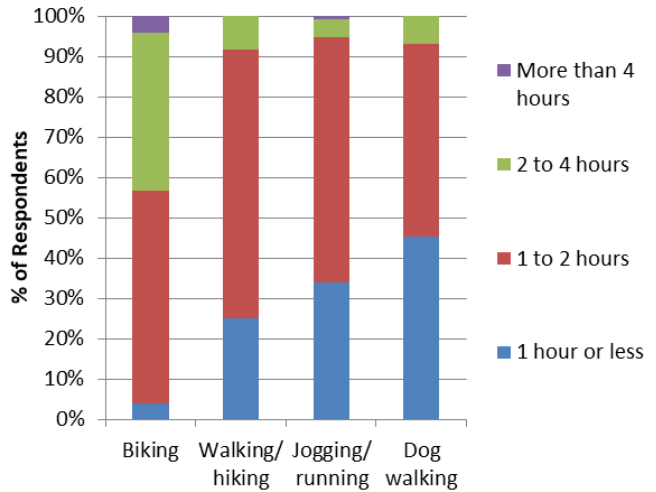
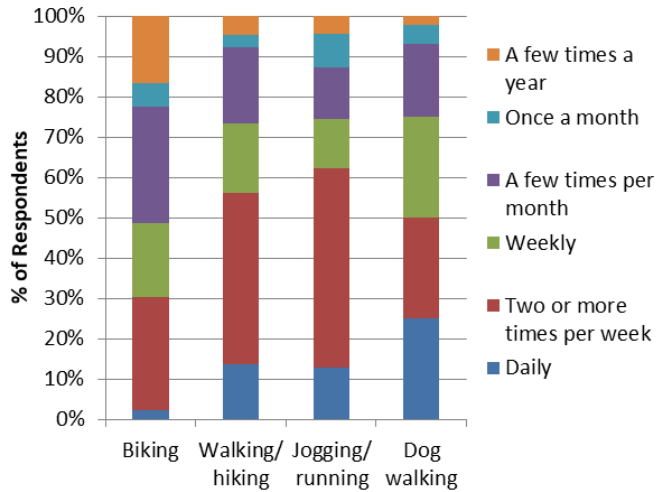
	Primary	Secondary	Total	% of Resp
Biking	605	294	899	88.8%
Walking/ hiking	219	496	715	70.7%
Jogging/ running	133	159	292	28.9%
Dog walking	44	183	227	22.4%
Other (please specify)	10	47	57	5.6%
Fishing	0	24	24	2.4%
Commuting to work or school	1	13	14	1.4%
Total	1012	1216	2228	



6.5 Frequency, Duration, Proximity & Days of Trail Use (Q.6, 7, 8 & 11)

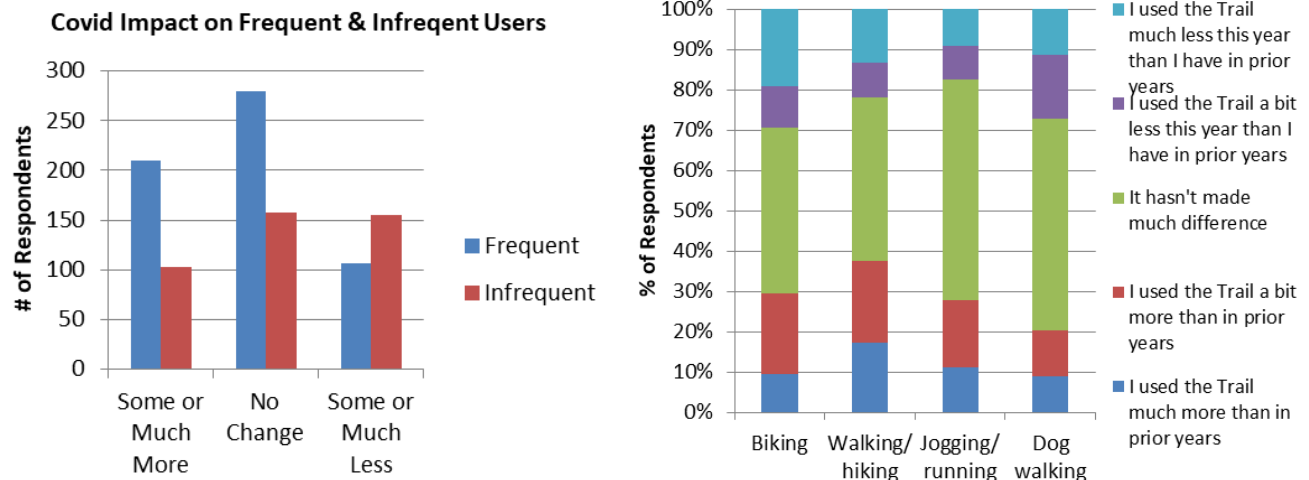
A 'typical' user (generally over 50% of respondents) is on the trail one or more times per week, lives within five miles of the trail, uses the trail 1-2 hours per visit and visits both weekdays and weekends. These use patterns hold for all primary activities with the minor exception that bikers travel a little further to get to the trail (only 40% live five miles or less from the trail.)

The overall pattern of distance from the trail, frequency, duration of use, and days of use has changed relatively little over the three surveys.



6.6 Covid-19 Pandemic Impact (Q.9)

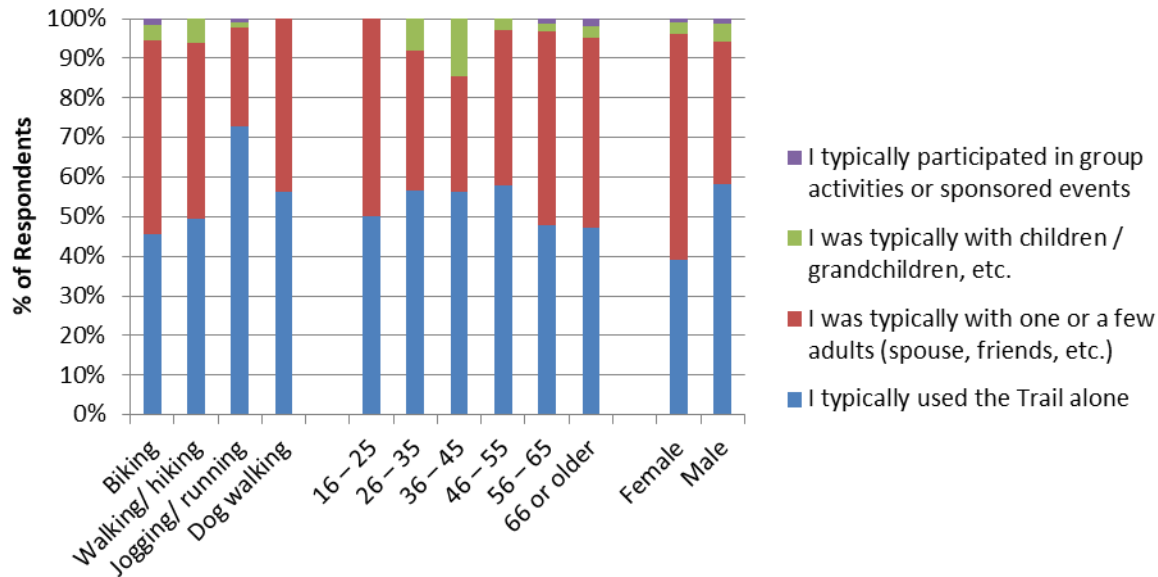
Given the ongoing Pandemic, a question was added to the survey to explore whether trail use increased, decreased, or was unchanged in this past, most unusual, year. Usage by frequent users (1 or more times per week) was more likely to be unchanged or increase due to Covid. Usage by infrequent users (less than weekly) was more likely to be unchanged or decrease due to Covid. Except for Biking, most Primary activities had a largely symmetrical distribution of increase / decrease due to Covid. Bikers had a significantly larger number of respondents reduce their usage of the trail due to Covid (20% indicated that they used the trail ‘much less’ vs. only 10% indicating that they used it ‘much more’) resulting in a net decline of bikers.



Assuming respondents are 'typical' users, the net impact in trail volume is about the equivalent of an additional 19-20 users per 1000 (2% increase in trail visits). This estimate was derived using the survey responses for current year visits and stated change in usage. A range of assumed increases and decreases for the terms “much more/less” and “a bit more/less” were used to estimate the prior year visit total. From these two numbers, the net change was calculated and the net change in visits was divided by the average visits per user to determine the overall impact. This calculation was repeated for a range of assumed increases / decreases and the net change was found to be relatively stable over a fairly wide range of assumed values for ‘much’ and ‘a bit’. Of course, this is simply an estimate based on survey respondents. There may be additional ‘new’ users making trail visits that did not respond to the survey, just as there may be ‘former’ users that no longer visit the trail and did not respond to the survey.

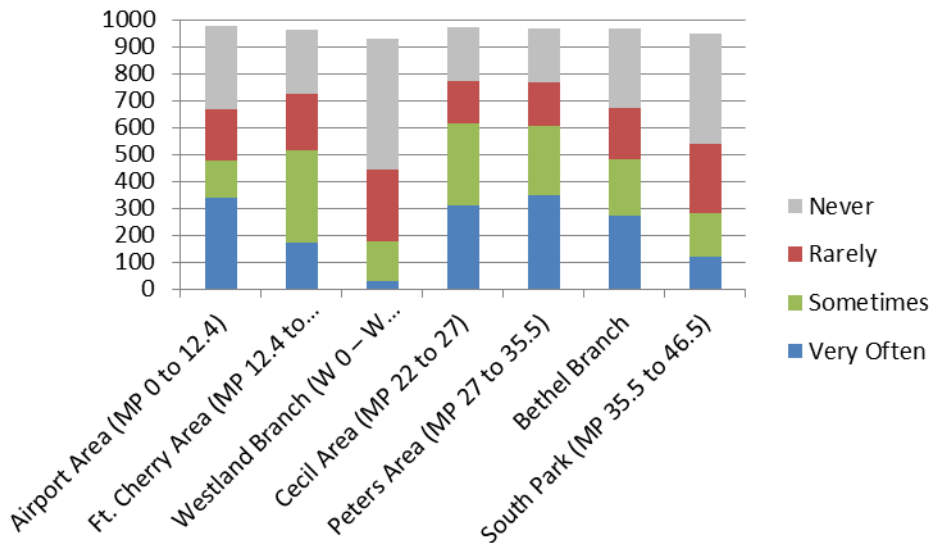
6.7 Alone or Together (Q.10)

Regardless of activity, age, or gender, 90% of respondents use the trail alone or with one / few adults (spouse, etc.) Joggers are more likely to use the trail alone (70% vs. 40-55% for other activities). Few respondents (39, less than 4%) indicated that they typically use the trail with children or grandchildren. Children are most likely to be accompanied by 26-45 year old users. Ten to 15% of users in this age range indicated that they are typically with children or grandchildren while other groups are well under 5%. Children are also most likely to be accompanied by male users (4.6% vs. 3.1% for females.)



6.8 Trail Segments Used (Q.12)

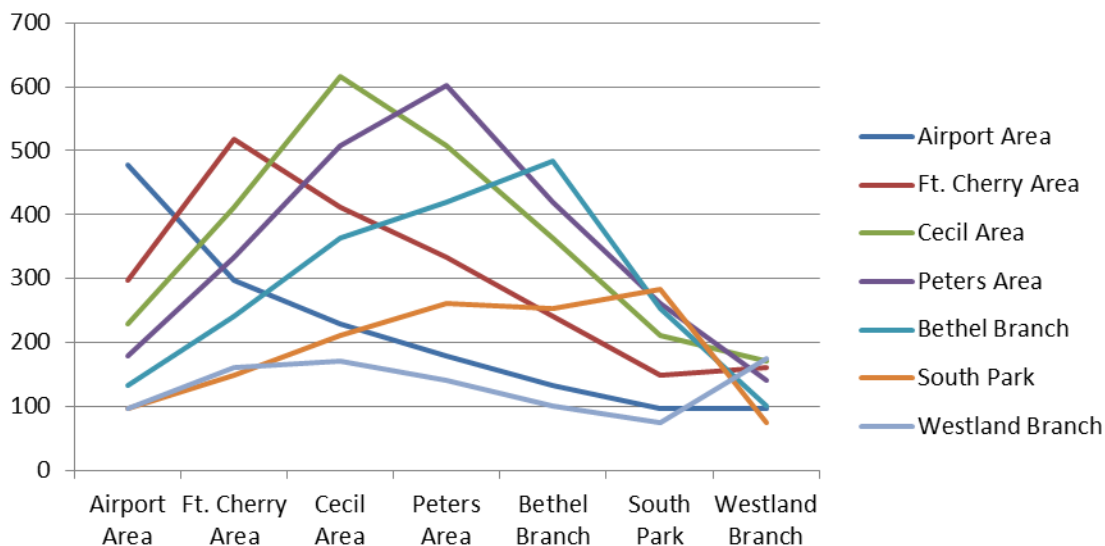
Respondents were asked to indicate their frequency of use (Very Often, Sometimes, Rarely or Never) of seven trail segments - corresponding to the seven Friends Groups that maintain the trail. Peters and Airport have the highest number of frequent users (348 and 338 Very Often), followed by Cecil (308) and Bethel (273). Cecil has the highest number of Regular Users (617 Very Often + Sometimes), followed by Peters (603), Ft. Cherry (517) and Airport (478). The Westland Branch has the lowest number of Frequent, Regular and Total users (31, 176, and 442 respectively). South Park is next in all three categories.



Given that the trail is continuous and users move freely among segments, a chart of the respondents that indicated that they were 'Regular (Very Often or Sometimes) users of multiple segments was developed. For example, the first point of the Airport graph (blue) shows how many people regularly use the Airport segment

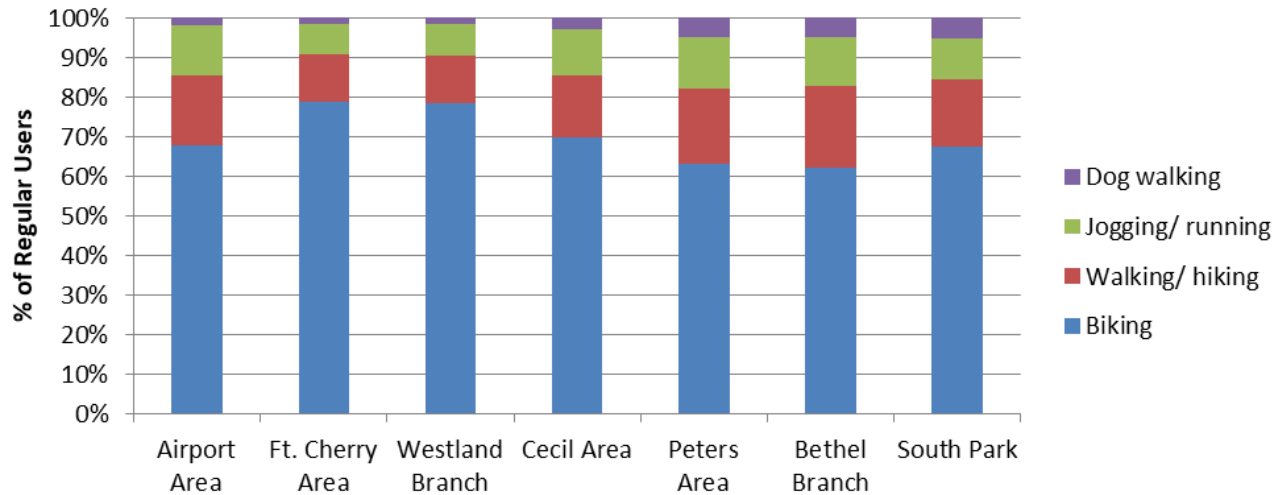
(478). Of those 478, 298 are also regular users of Ft Cherry, 230 regularly use Cecil and so on down to 97 of the 478 are regular users of South Park. As expected, usage increases as you move to the center sections of the trail (indicated by the rising peaks to Cecil and Peters) and drops at the ends and as you get further from the users' home section and onto the Westland Branch. One user - a Male Biker over 66 - indicated that he is a frequent user (Very Often) of all 7 segments and 39 users indicated that they are regular (Very Often or Sometimes) users of all 7 trail segments.

Regular Users (Very Often or Sometimes) by Segment	Airport Area	Ft. Cherry Area	Cecil Area	Peters Area	Bethel Branch	South Park	Westland Branch
Airport Area	478	298	230	180	133	96	97
Ft. Cherry Area	298	517	411	334	242	149	161
Cecil Area	230	411	617	508	364	212	171
Peters Area	180	334	508	603	419	261	142
Bethel Branch	133	242	364	419	483	253	100
South Park	96	149	212	261	253	283	75
Westland Branch	97	161	171	142	100	75	176



Considering Primary Activity by trail segment, Dog Walkers are about twice as common in Peters, Bethel and South Park (5% vs. 2-3% in the other segments). Bikers are 15 to 25 percent more common in Ft Cherry and Westland (78-79% vs. 62-68% for the other segments). Joggers are least likely to be found in the Ft Cherry and Westland segments.

Regular User Primary Activity by Segment	Airport Area	Ft. Cherry Area	Westland Branch	Cecil Area	Peters Area	Bethel Branch	South Park
Biking	321	404	137	426	376	295	189
Walking/ hiking	84	62	21	95	114	99	47
Jogging/ running	60	40	14	71	77	58	29
Dog walking	9	8	3	19	30	24	15
Total Regular Users	474	514	175	611	597	476	280



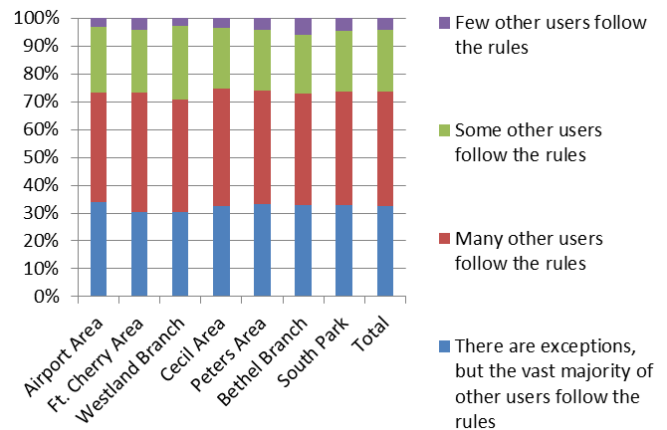
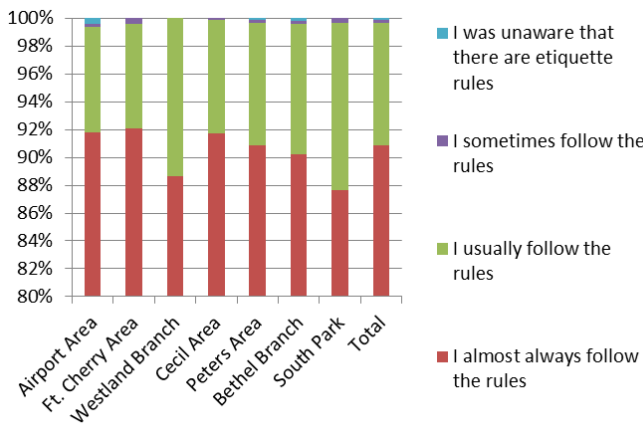
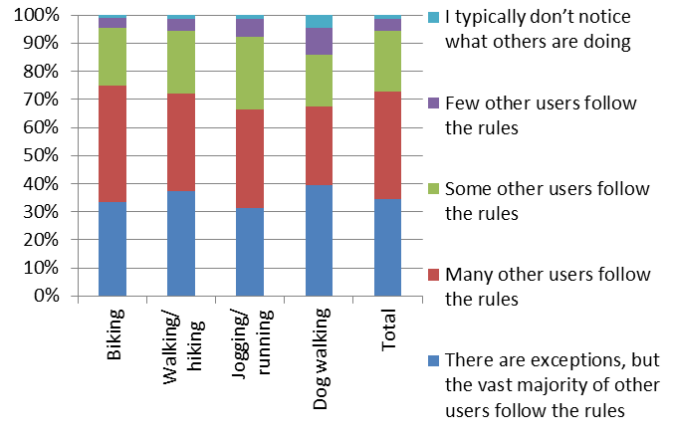
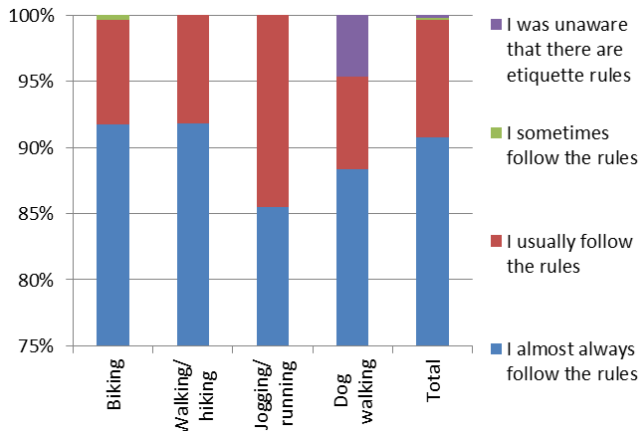
6.9 Trail Etiquette (Q.13, 14 & 15)

The topic of Trail Etiquette continues to be the focus of great deal of attention in the MTC Social Media venues so to follow up on the 2018 survey, several questions on the subject were included. Over 90% of users indicate that they personally 'almost always' follow the rules with most of the balance indicating that they 'usually' follow the rules. However, only 34% of users indicate that OTHERS 'almost always' follow the rules, and another 39% indicate that many others follow the rules. No respondents indicated that they do not follow the rules. Three respondents indicated that they were unaware of rules.

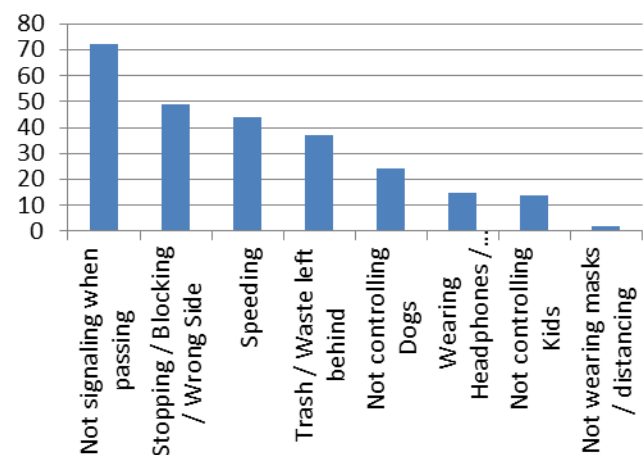
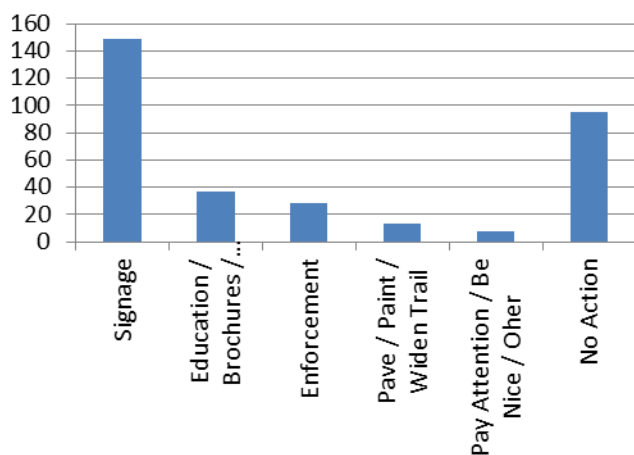
<i>Personal Compliance vs Observed Compliance</i>	I almost always follow the rules	I usually follow the rules	I sometimes follow the rules	I was unaware that there are etiquette rules	Total	% of Total
There are exceptions, but the vast majority of other users follow the rules	327	20	0	0	347	34%
Many other users follow the rules	342	45	1	1	389	39%
Some other users follow the rules	195	20	1	0	216	21%
Few other users follow the rules	40	3	0	0	43	4%
I typically don't notice what others are doing	11	2	0	2	15	1%
TOTAL	915	90	2	3	1010	100%
% of Total	91%	9%	0%	0%	100%	

Looking at etiquette vs. primary activity, Joggers have the lowest percentage of respondents claiming to always follow the rules (85%), followed by dog walkers. Joggers and Dog Walkers have the highest percentage of respondents indicating that 'Few' others follow the rules (6 & 9% respectively vs. an overall average of 4%).

Personal compliance with etiquette rules is essentially the same across all trail segments – 88-92% of respondent claim to 'almost always' follow the rules. Observed compliance varies a little more with Bethel having the highest fraction of respondents indicating that few others follow the rules (5.9% vs. 3.8% for the rest of the trail segments – a 55% increase.)



When asked what can be done to improve etiquette on the trail, 455 respondents provided comments. Nearly 150 suggested additional signs at trailheads or along the trail despite the fact that there are already etiquette reminders on every milepost. Some suggested that the signs should be more graphical (fewer words) or bigger. Other suggestions include education events, brochures and on-line posting of rules, enforcement of existing rules, paving the trail, making it wider, marking two lanes, and developing a slogan. Nearly 100 respondents stated that nothing additional should be done - it is either not necessary or would not be effective.



Many comments also listed behaviors by users that should be addressed, including:

- Not signaling when passing (bikers, joggers)
- Stopping in the trail (walkers, dog walkers)
- More than 2 abreast (walkers)
- Not keeping right (walkers, dog walkers, joggers)
- Speeding (bikers)
- Dog waste left along the trail (dog walkers)
- Kids and dogs not in control (walkers, dog walkers), and
- Being unaware of other users due to headphones / earbuds (joggers)

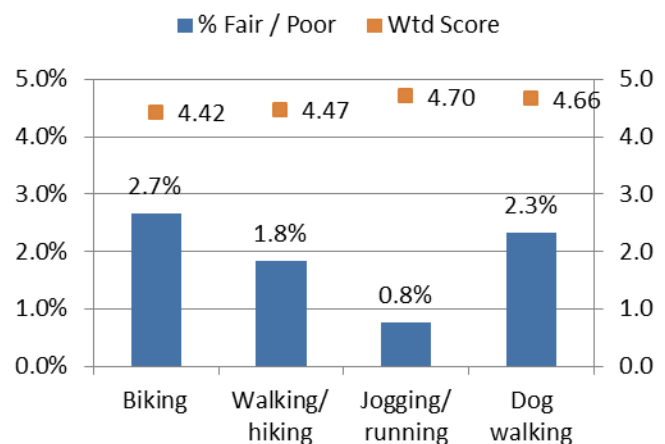
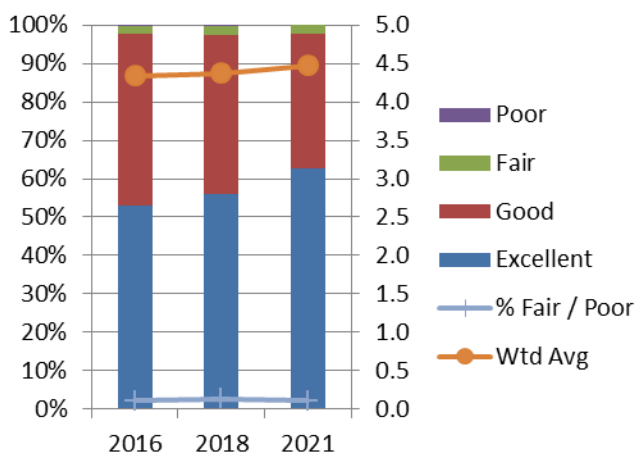
Surprisingly in the current pandemic, there were very few comments about users not practicing social distancing or wearing masks.

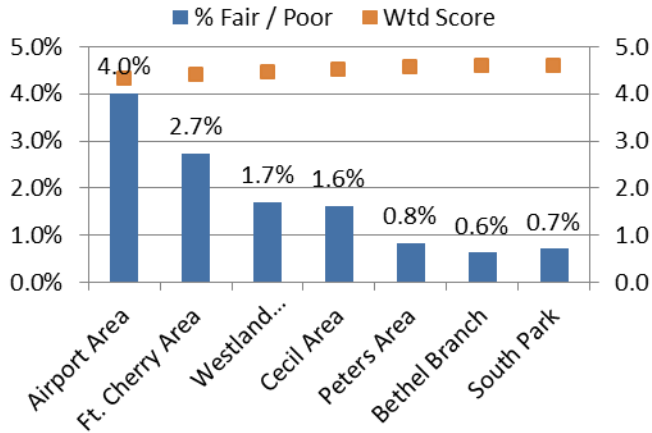
6.10 Trail Maintenance (Q.16)

The responses for trail maintenance were arrayed on a scale from Excellent = 5 to Poor = 1. Maintenance scored very high (up slightly to 4.47) with 62% of respondents rating it Excellent and almost 98% of respondents rating it Excellent or Good. Looking at the low ratings (Dissatisfaction), the overall percent Fair / Poor remained steady.

Maintenance rating was fairly consistent across primary activities. Joggers give the highest maintenance rating and have the lowest percent Fair / Poor. Bikers give the lowest rating and have the highest percent Fair / Poor. The differences are not large, however, and the user preferences for surface material (asphalt paved or not) may be a key factor in this difference.

While the weighted scores vs. trail section vary little, the percent Fair Poor in the Airport Area is 4% - more than twice the average for the trail as a whole. Ft Cherry is second at 2.7%. Bethel is lowest at 0.6%. Comments indicate that surface condition (washouts, etc.) in the Airport area, particularly between Imperial and Boggs may be a driver of this rating.

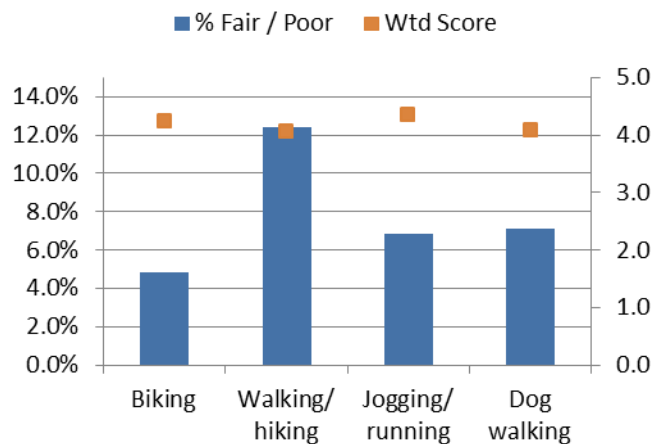
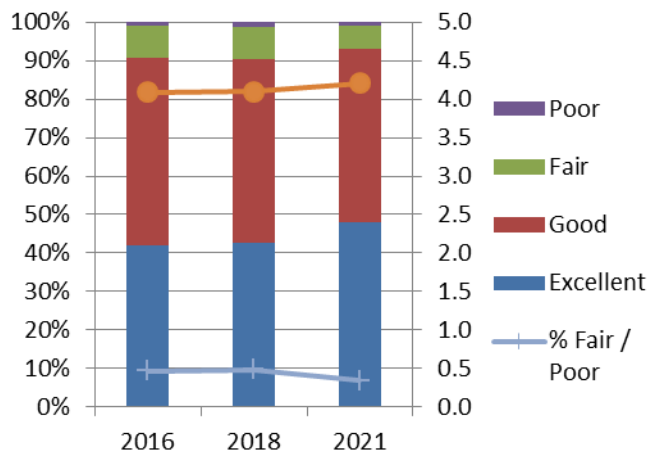


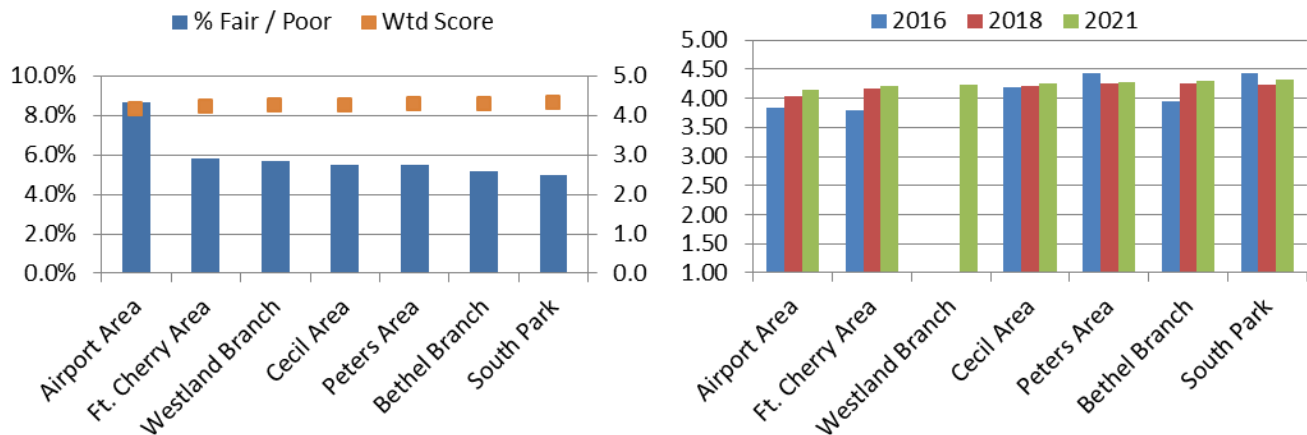


6.11 Trail Safety and Security (Q.17)

A weighted average Safety & Security score was determined based on a scale of: Excellent=5 through Poor=1. Overall evaluation of Safety & Security increased somewhat for the trail as a whole after being flat for the prior two surveys (from 4.09 in '16 & '18 to 4.20 in '21). The fraction of respondent Fair and Poor ratings dropped from over 9% in the prior surveys to under 7% in the current wave.

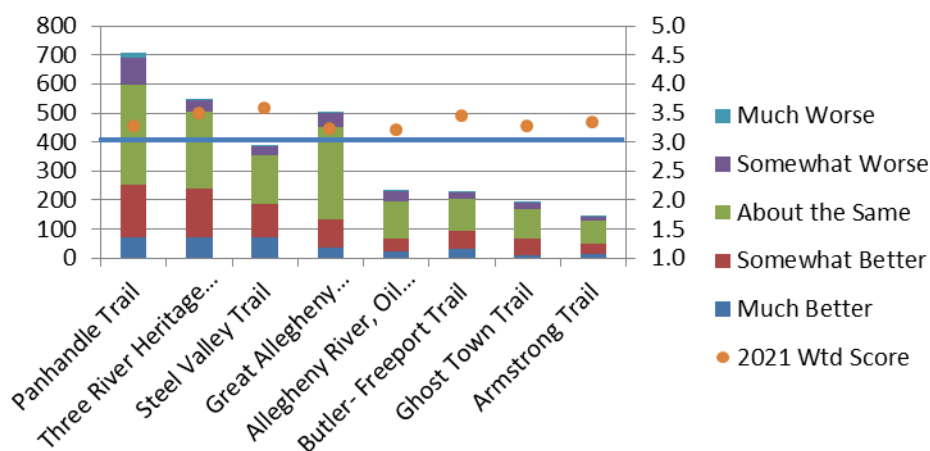
Walker / Hikers have the highest fraction giving ratings of Fair or Poor (12.4%) vs. an overall average of 6.9% across all activities. While the weighted score is essentially the same across all trail sections, the % Fair / Poor is highest (most unfavorable) in the Airport area at 8.7% vs. less than 6% for all other sections - driven primarily by unfavorable ratings by Walkers and Dog Walkers. Airport, Ft Cherry, Cecil and Bethel have each shown slight but steady improvement from survey to survey. Peters and South Park have shown mixed performance.



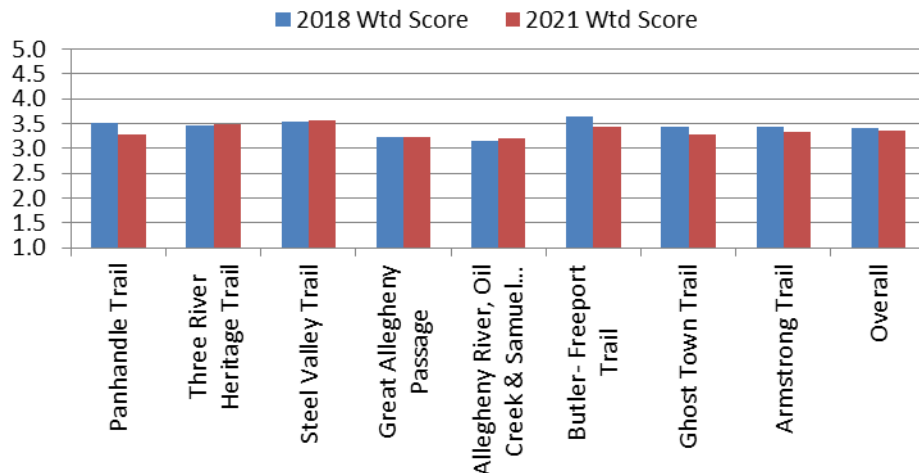


6.12 Trail Comparisons (Q.18 & 19)

Respondents were asked to indicate their overall impression of the Montour Trail compared eight other regional rail-trails that they may have used in the past 12 months. Over 960 respondents provided ratings for one or more of the listed trails, ranging from over 700 comparisons with the Panhandle Trail down to 144 comparisons with the Armstrong Trail. An overall rating for the Montour Trail relative to each other trail was calculated based on the weighted average of responses where ‘Much Better’ was given 5 points, ‘Somewhat Better’ was 4 points and so on. Using this approach, an average score of 3 would indicate that the Montour was equal to the other trail under consideration. The Montour scored higher (i.e., was rated between “About the Same” and “Somewhat Better”) than all other trails with an overall average of 3.35. The most favorable rating was relative the Steel Valley Trail (MTC received a 3.57 average score) and lowest favorable rating was relative to the Allegheny River Trail (MTC average score was 3.21).



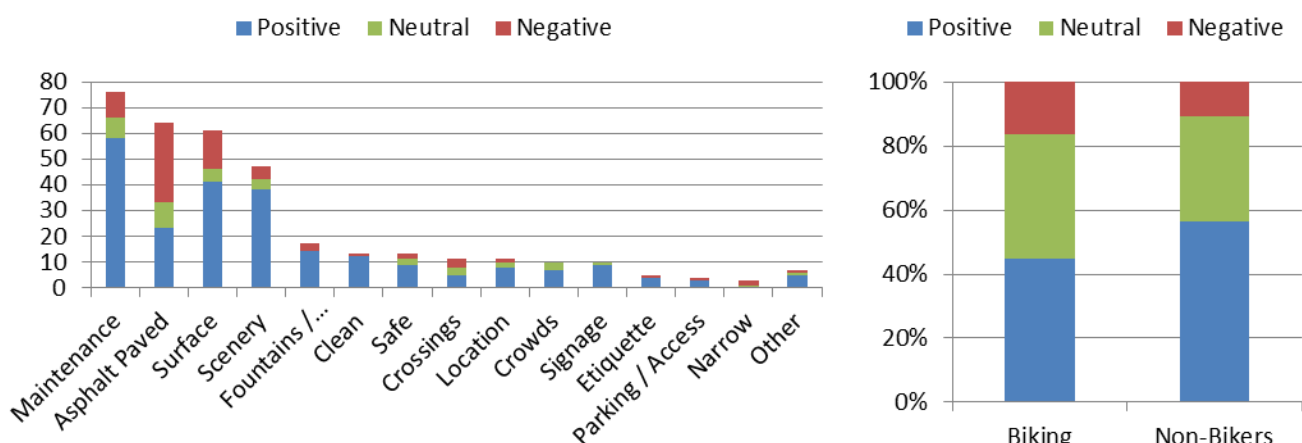
Compared to the prior survey, weighted Score of the trail increased slightly compared to 3, declined compared to 4 and was unchanged relative to 1. Most changes were small. The largest decline from the last survey was for the Panhandle Trail - which got credit for largely being asphalt paved. Nearly 20% of Bikers found the Montour Trail to be worse or much worse than the Panhandle with a similar result for the Allegheny River trail - both asphalt paved non-urban trails.



Respondents were also asked WHY they assigned the rating that they did. These comments were reviewed and broadly categorized and then tabulated against the Comparison Ratings. Maintenance is the issue most often mentioned as the differentiator among trails - with Montour being presented in a generally favorable light. Paving and Surface are the next most frequent issues. Bikers generally indicate asphalt paving is an advantage and crushed surface is a disadvantage. Other users generally respond the opposite.

Scenery is often mentioned as a favorable attribute of the trail - shared with other rural trails and missing in urban trails. The trail is credited with being generally clean, safe, and relatively uncrowded. Fountains and PortaPots are mentioned as advantages. Bikers with comments are more likely to have a preference for other trails (more likely to consider MT the same or worse than other trails) - generally due to paved surfaces.

Although etiquette is the subject of many sharp comments earlier in the survey, etiquette on the Montour Trail is not mentioned often and is generally presented in a favorable light compared to other trails.

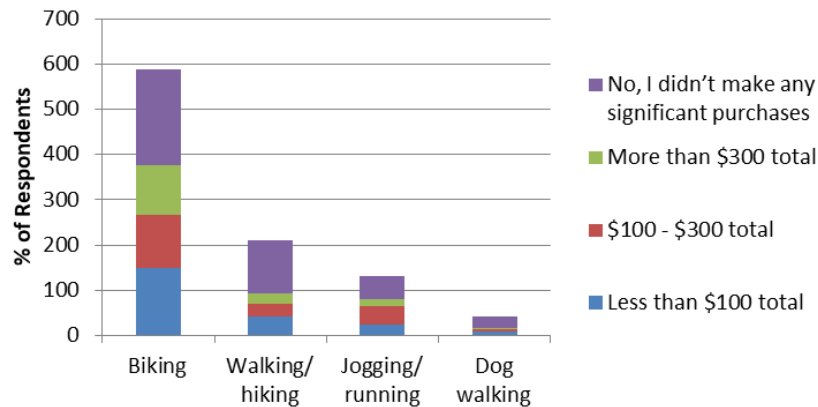


6.13 Trail-Related Spending (Q.20 & 21)

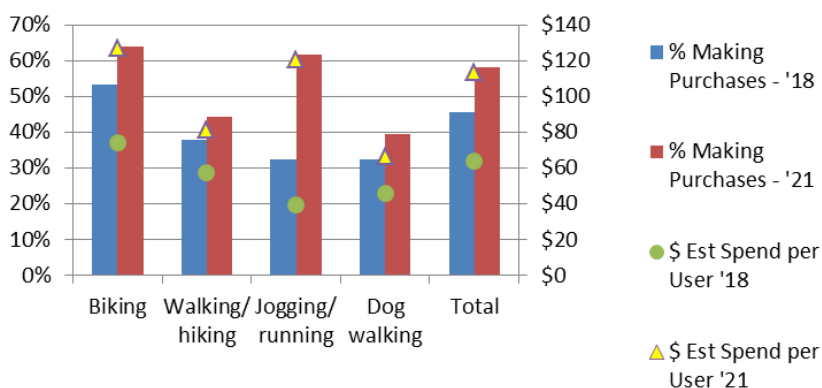
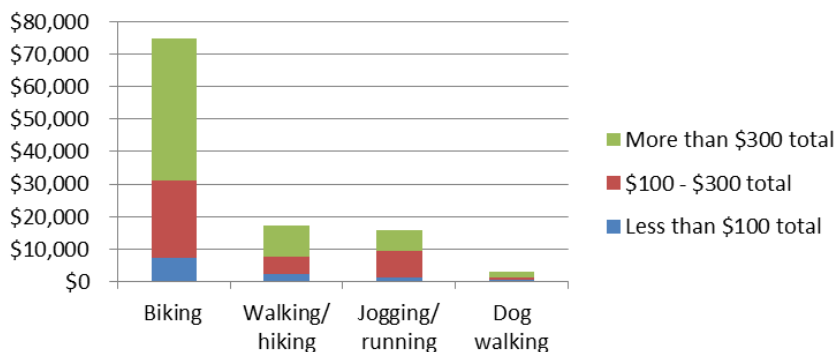
In an effort to estimate the economic impact of the Trail on the surrounding communities, respondents were asked a pair of questions about trail-related purchases in the past 12 months. Overall, 585 respondents (58%) reported making at least some trail-related purchases. Bikers (64%) and Joggers (62%) are most likely to spend money on trail-related items. Assuming middle of the range spending for each band, Bikers spent an average of

\$127 per user, with Joggers second at \$121 (based on estimated spend and primary activity). Given their larger numbers and higher per-user spending, bikers have the highest cumulative spending and represent about 64% of reported spend - similar to the 2018 total of 65%.

The fraction of users reporting purchases increased vs. the 2018 survey (58% vs. 46%), and the increase was across all activities. Average spending per user is up over 75% compared to 2018 (\$114 vs. \$64). Increased spending may be Covid related as people invest in outdoor activities, one of the few activities that have been available for the past 12 months.

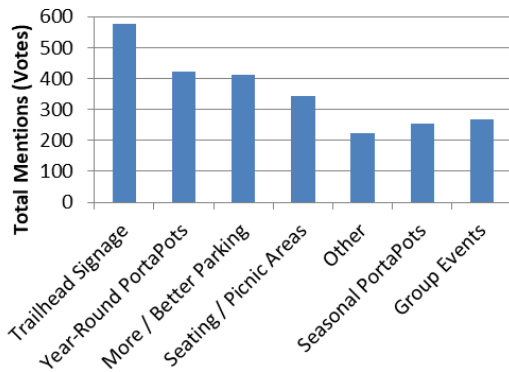


Estimated Total Spend (per 1000 Users)



6.14 Improvement Priorities (Q.22)

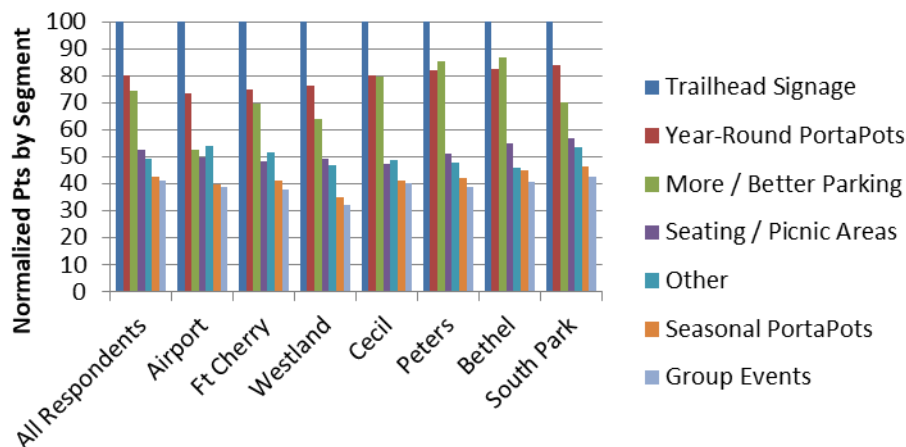
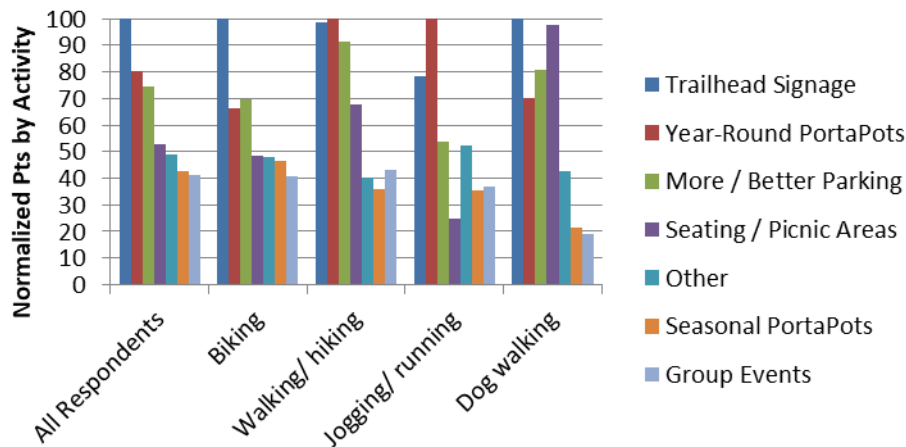
Respondents were asked to rank their top three improvement priorities from a list of options (plus “Other”). A weighted score for each option was then calculated by assigning 3 points to the top (#1) option, 2 points to the



next (#2) option and so on. The options were then sorted in descending order of weighted score. The top three options based on total votes and weighted points are Trailhead Signage, Year-round PortaPots, and More / Better Parking.

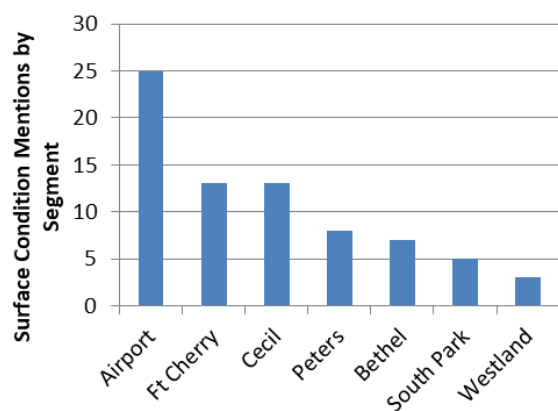
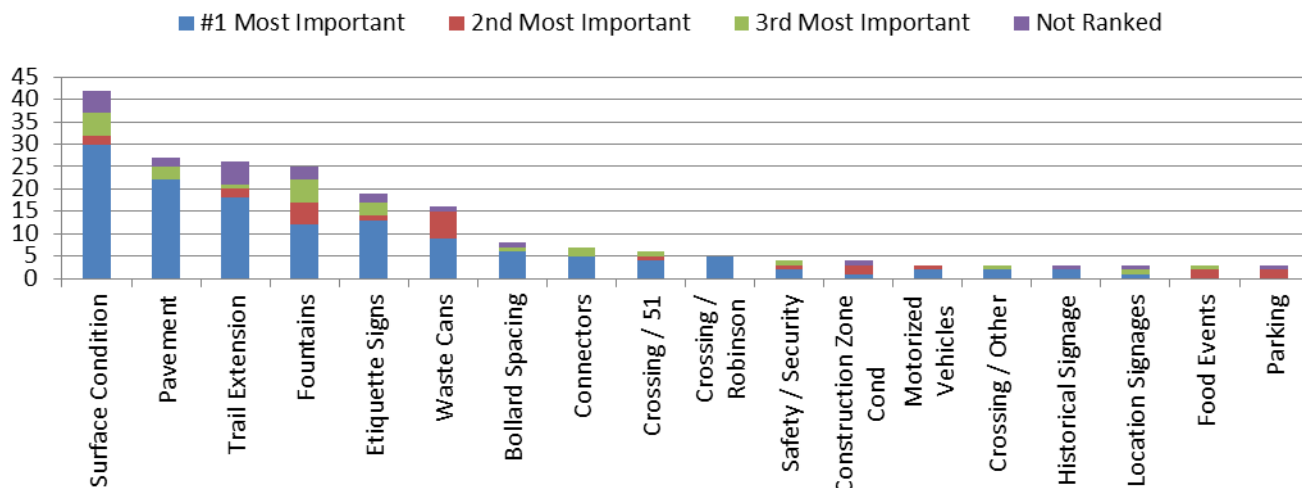
These are the highest scoring options regardless of trail segment and for all activities except Dog Walkers (who prefer Picnic / Seating over PortaPots). While the top 3 don't change by segment, their position does change with parking being #2 in Peters & Bethel vs. a distant #3 in Airport.

Note: for the charts below, the weighted scores were ‘normalized’ by dividing the total weighted points by the max points within each subgroup and multiplying by 100.



There were approximately 250 comments proposing 'Other' priorities and they fell into 49 categories – 18 of which had 3 or more mentions. Surface Condition (42), Pavement (27), Trail Extension / Completion (26),

Fountains (25), Etiquette Signs (19) and Waste Cans (16) were the top 'Other' issues. Road crossings – in particular the crossing at Robinson (6), Rt 51 (6) and in general (3) would be the next highest priority. While each of these items was mentioned multiple times, none of them approached the number of mentions or weighted score of the listed items addressed above (i.e., none of these would displace the top items listed above.)

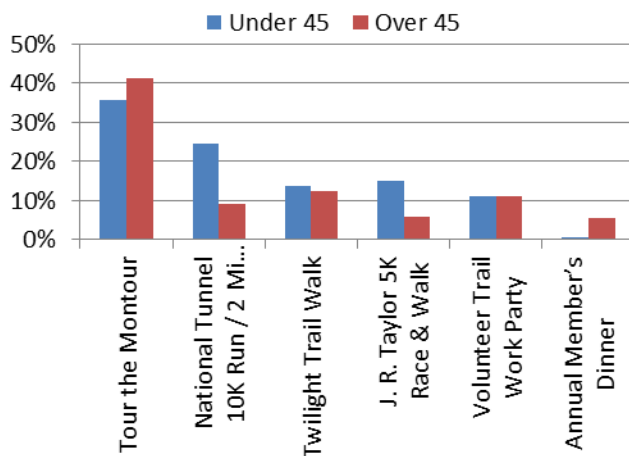
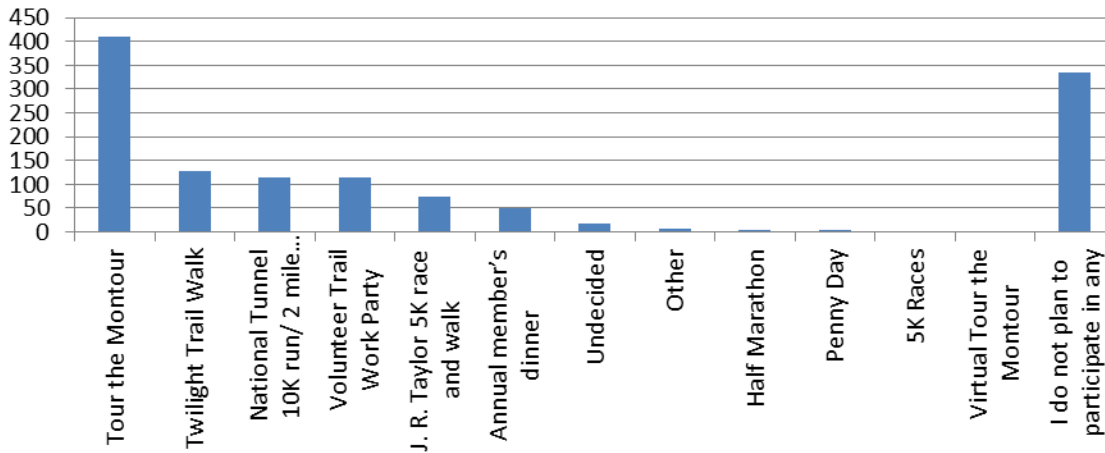


Mentions of Fountains referenced more of them, available for more of the year and inclusion of bottle fill stations. Surface condition was mentioned most by Airport frequent users (25) followed by Ft Cherry and Cecil (13 each). Bollard Spacing was mentioned 8 times - 6 as a #1 priority. Handicap accessible facilities were mentioned 2 times, both as a #1 priority.

6.15 MTC Planned Event Participation (Q.25)

Respondents were asked to identify what MTC-sponsored events that they plan to participate in during the next 12 months. Of 897 respondents answering, 334 indicated that they do not plan to participate in any MTC events in 2021 and 18 are undecided. The remaining 545 respondents (approximately 60%) indicated that they plan to participate in one or more activities. In the 2018 survey, 30% of respondents indicated that they had participated in one or more MTC activities in the past 12 months.

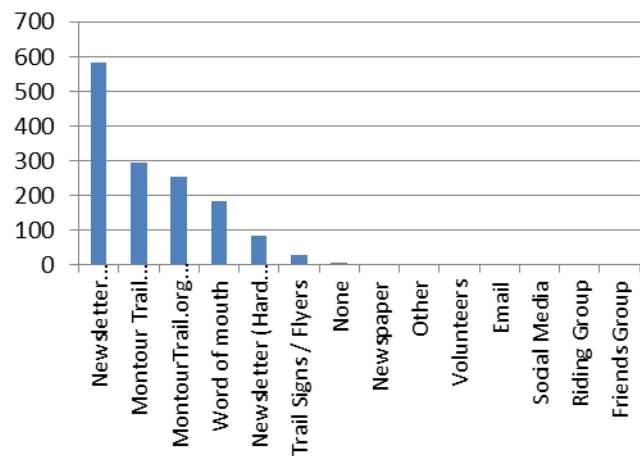
Tour the Montour (409) and Twilight Trail Walk (128) are the two most 'popular' events, followed by National Tunnel 10K and Volunteer Work (115 each). A few mentioned that they would like to maintain the Virtual Tour the Montour ride and restore the Half Marathon.



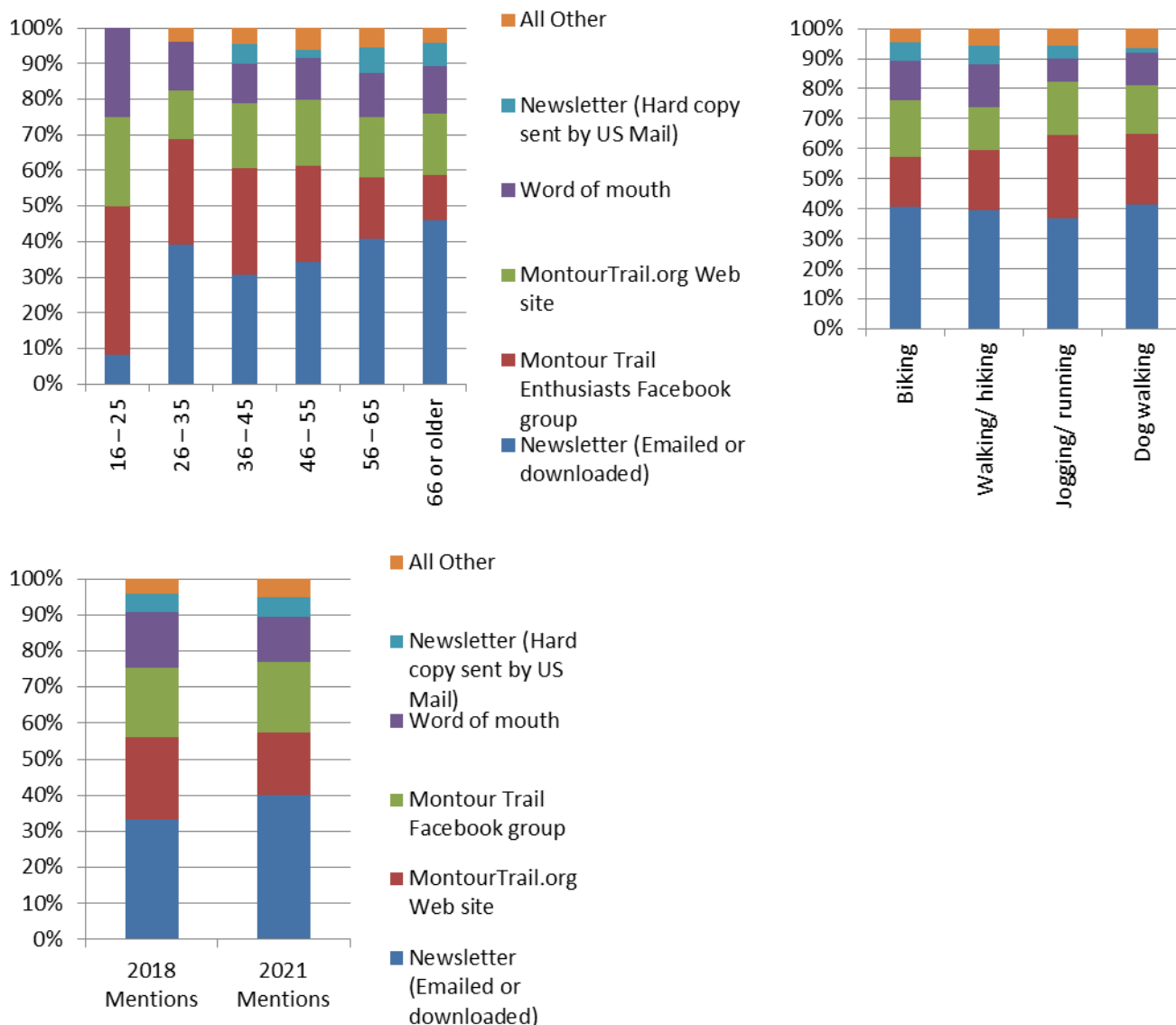
Considering the age of respondents that indicated an interest in each listed activity, Tour the Montour and the Member's Dinner are skewed toward over-45 respondents. That is, 41% of the respondents 45 and over indicated that they intended to participate in the TTM compared to 36% of those 45 and under. The National Tunnel and JR Taylor events are skewed toward under-45 respondents. Others are reasonably balanced by age.

6.16 Communications (Q.26, 27 & 28)

Respondents were asked to indicate the various sources of information that they used to stay informed about the trail and MTC activities. A total of 943 respondents selected 1454 communications channels, an average of 1.5 per respondent. (72 did not respond.) Most respondents (582 or 62%) indicate that they rely on the electronic version of the Newsletter for trail information. Facebook (295, 31%), the MontourTrail.org website (254, 27%) and Word of Mouth (183, 19%) are the next three most mentioned media. Of those listing 'Other' means, Trail Signs / Flyers are most often mentioned (28, 3%).



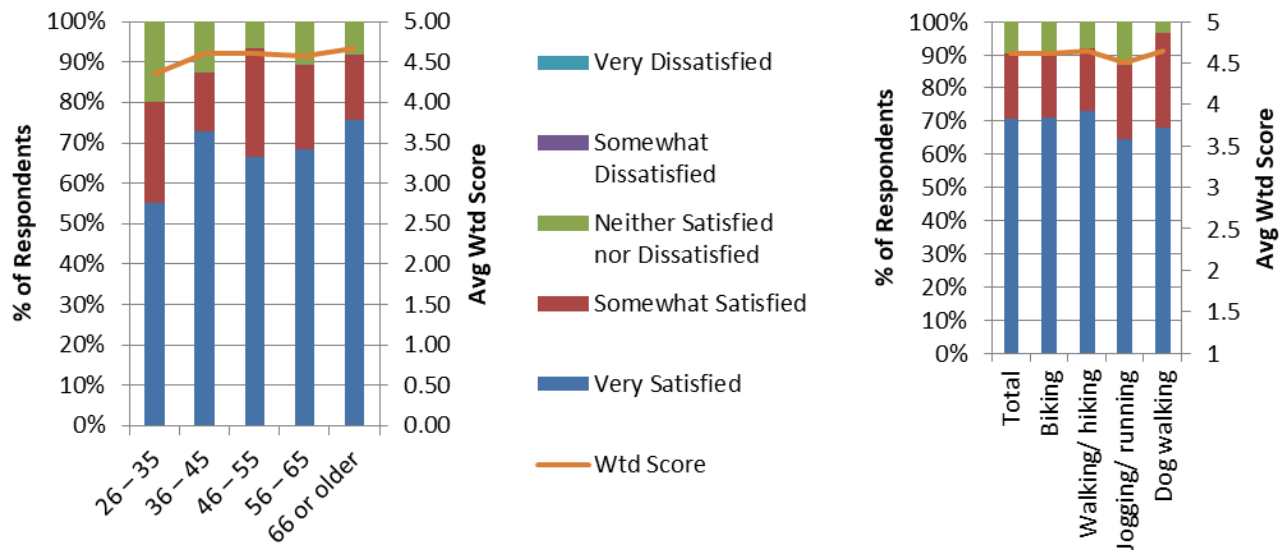
Facebook and Word of Mouth decline with age group and are replaced predominantly by the electronic and hard copy Newsletter. Communications media do not vary significantly with most activities, although Joggers have a slightly higher fraction of Facebook users – which may be correlated with the age-related shift in media mentioned above.



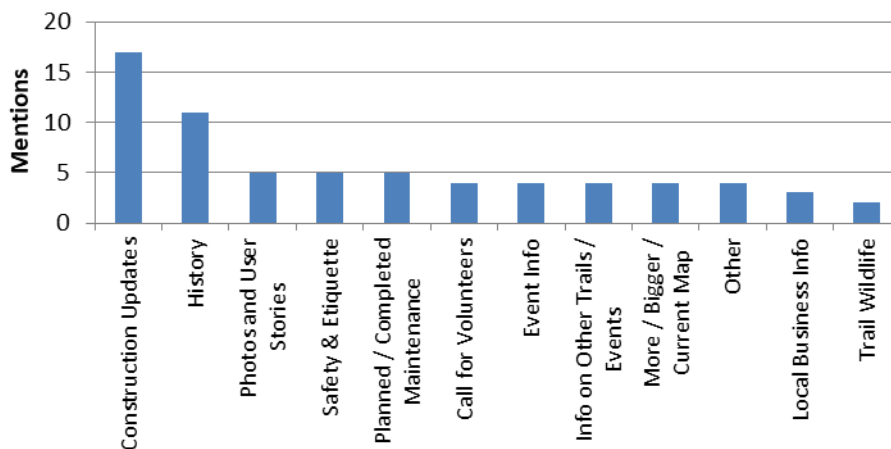
Compared to the '18 survey, Newsletter usage is up 7 points and all other media are up 1 point. MontourTrail.org and Word of Mouth are down 5 and 3 points respectively.

Respondents were then asked to rate their satisfaction with the Newsletter. Nearly 71% of respondents are 'very satisfied' with the Newsletter (464 out of 656 providing a rating). Another 20% are Somewhat Satisfied. No respondents indicated that they were dissatisfied (zero for both 'Somewhat-' or 'Very Dissatisfied').

Satisfaction generally increases with age group. The relative ratings do not change significantly with primary activity, although satisfaction by Joggers is marginally lower (4.51 average vs. just over 4.6 for the other activities). Once again, this may be related to the age related drift in satisfaction mentioned above.

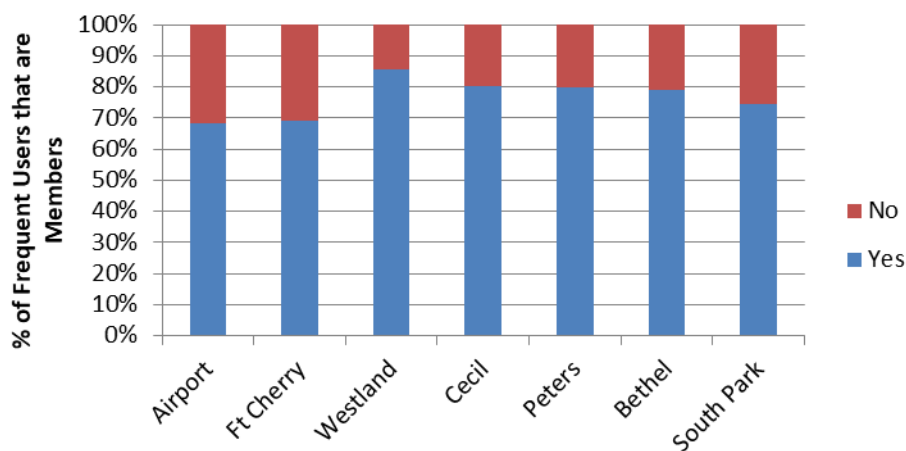
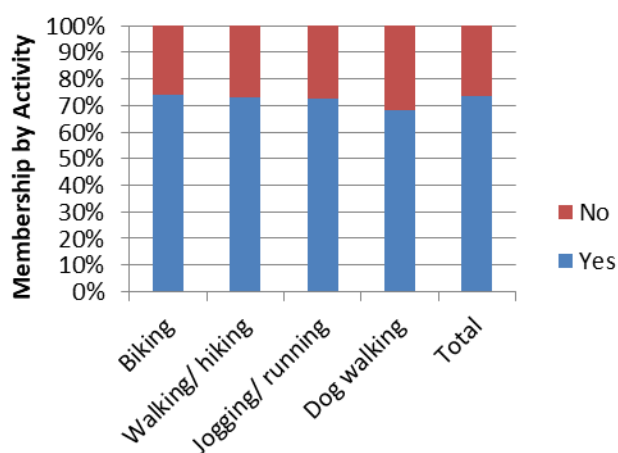
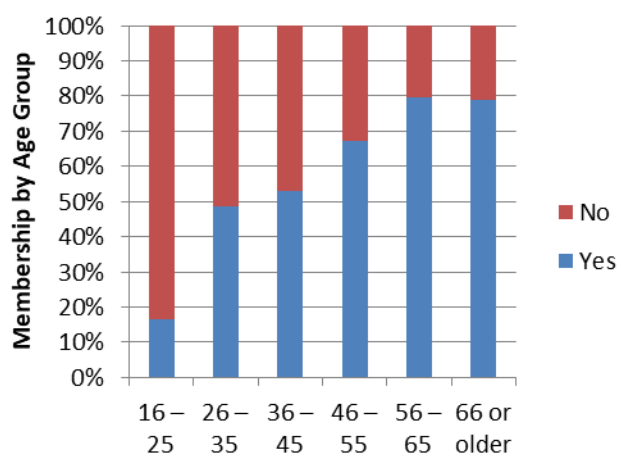
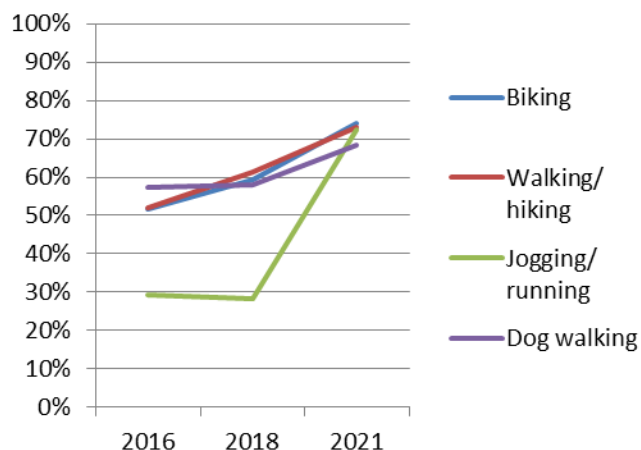
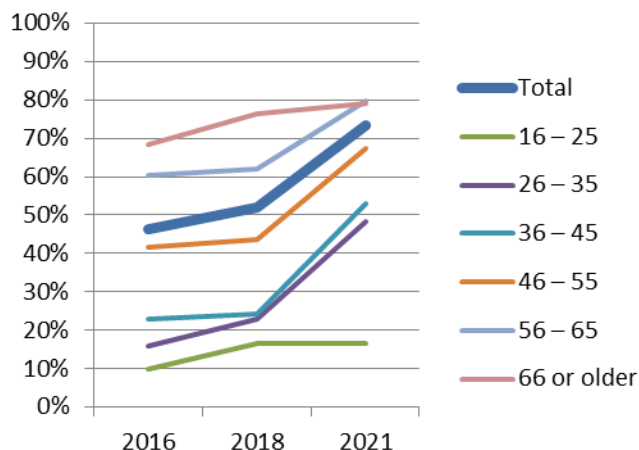


Finally, respondents were asked for any content suggestions to improve the Newsletter. Comments were received from 122 respondents, of which 43 indicated that they had no suggestions. Twelve topic areas received multiple mentions and 11 more received a single mention. Construction Updates (planned, in progress and completed) were mentioned most often (17), followed by History articles (11). User Photos & Stories, Safety & Etiquette, and Planned and Completed Trail Maintenance were each mentioned 5 times.



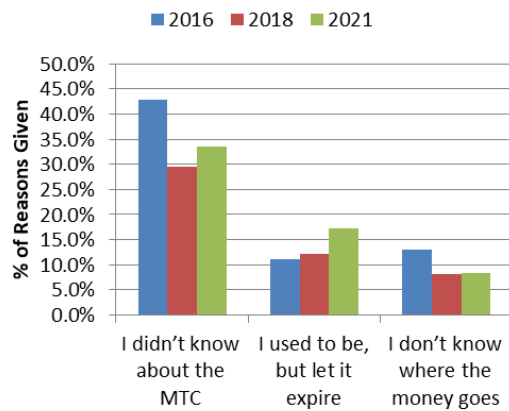
6.17 MTC Financial Participation (Q.29 & 30)

Nearly three quarters (698 out of 953 or 73%) of respondents indicated that they had made a financial contribution to establish or maintain “membership” in the trail, up from 52% in 2018 and 46% in 2016. Membership increased significantly across all activities and age groups (except 16-25) compared to the prior two surveys. Membership varies slightly with primary activity - with Dog Walkers (68%) falling below the other primary activities (72-74%). Membership increases significantly with age. It is a low of 17% in the under 25 group, rising to 79-80% in the over 56 groups. Looking at frequent users, Airport and Ft Cherry have the lowest membership (68% & 69%) and Westland has the highest (86%). The other segments fall between 75 & 80%.



The number of non-members indicating that they did not know about the MTC increased slightly from 30% in the '18 survey to 33.5%. In addition, 17.2% indicated that they were prior members and let it expire - up from 11 and 12% in the prior surveys. Finally, 8.4% indicated that they don't know where the money goes - down from 13% in the '16 survey and essentially unchanged from '18. Financial constraints and Non-active users were the two most common 'other' reasons given at 7.0 and 6.5% respectively. Ten non-members (4.7%) indicated that

they were planning to join because of this survey. Five users cited specific trail management decisions or actions that caused them to not join or drop membership (i.e., focus on construction vs. maintenance, lack of female sizes for trail clothing, cancelation of in-person events, etc.).



	Reasons for No Membership	Mentions	% of Tot
Named Reasons	I didn't know about the MTC	72	33.5%
	I used to be, but let it expire	37	17.2%
	I don't know where the money goes	18	8.4%
Other Reasons	Finances	15	7.0%
	Not Active User	14	6.5%
	Planning to	10	4.7%
	Just No	10	4.7%
	Other	9	4.2%
	Donated Elsewhere	8	3.7%
	Trail Mgt Decisions	5	2.3%
	Support Events	4	1.9%
	Time	4	1.9%
	Tell Me How	2	0.9%
	Forgot	2	0.9%
	Prior Member	1	0.5%
	MTC Has Enough	1	0.5%
	Didn't Know	1	0.5%
	Member	1	0.5%
	Not Invited	1	0.5%
		215	100.0%

6.18 Additional Comments (Q. 23, 24 & 31)

A total of 477 Respondents provided one or more open-ended comments related to their Priority Choices (Q.23), what the MTC could do better (Q.24) or any other issues they wish to address (Q.31) - 867 comments in all. These comments were not analyzed, but have been provided to the MTC along with Respondent ID, Zip & City, and Primary Activity for evaluation by the appropriate committees of the Trail Council.

6.19 Contact Information & Follow-up (Q.32 & 33)

Respondents were given the opportunity to provide basic contact information to either follow up on their survey responses or volunteer in some capacity with the MTC. Over 10% of respondents (109) provided contact information. Most wish to discuss volunteering in some capacity with Trail Maintenance being most often mentioned. The contact information and follow-up topics have been provided to the MTC for action.

