

# Lee's Summit

*Greenway & Trails Master Plan*

**UPDATE**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





# Acknowledgments

This master plan update owes a special thanks to the following groups and individuals:

## **Lee's Summit Parks & Recreation Board**

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Mindy Aulenbach, Vice President  
Lawrence Bivins, Treasurer  
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Marly McMillen  
Samantha Shepard  
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## **Lee's Summit Parks & Recreation Board Staff**

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## **City of Lee's Summit Staff**

Mark Dunning, Asst. City Manager, Development Services  
Ryan Elam, Director of Development Services  
Josh Johnson, Asst. Director of Planning Services  
Michael Park, City Traffic Engineer  
Jennifer Thompson, Senior Planner



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This summary and the accompanying master plan update were prepared by Vireo Landscape Architecture & Planning on behalf of Lee's Summit Parks & Recreation.

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The original comprehensive study of greenways and trails in Lee's Summit was completed in 1998. The first update to the plan was completed in 2006. A little more than a decade later, Jackson County's implementation of the Rock Island Trail corridor - in addition to several other contributing factors - have created the impetus for another update to the master plan. The updated master plan will be incorporated in the city's forthcoming effort to update the comprehensive plan.

This version of the plan retains many of the key principles from the last two master plans, including a planned 40-mile greenway loop around the city. It also incorporates a number of new elements in response to ongoing changes in the community. In addition to the recent opening of the Rock Island Trail, factors that contributed to the need for an updated master plan include:

- Progress made on the implementation of the greenway and trail network
- The need to plan for connections between downtown Lee's Summit and the Rock Island
- Continued growth in the community
- Continued, strong community interest in expanding dedicated trail facilities and sidepaths
- Forthcoming development of Property Reserve land holdings and other developing areas
- Maintaining a marketable master plan document that can be used to attract potential funding partners

Through the planned pedestrian and bicycle improvements, the Lee's Summit Greenway and Trails Master Plan brings together the principles of resource preservation, greenway development, and connectivity - both at the local and regional level.

In addition to the central concept of a 40-mile greenway loop, the updated master plan highlights regional trail connections to Independence, Kansas City, Grandview/Belton, and the Katy Trail (by way of Pleasant Hill). A network of approximately 120 miles of trails, sidepaths, and bike routes will provide linkages between Lee's Summit neighborhoods, parks, schools, and community destinations.

*Figure 1 (opposite page): The recently-completed Hartman Park Trailhead, with direct access to the Rock Island Trail.*

Photo by Ashley Shmalberg.

# The Engagement Process

Lee's Summit Parks & Recreation, in collaboration with Vireo Landscape Architecture & Planning, facilitated three focus group meetings and a public open house on June 17th, 2019 to seek input related to the update of the Greenway & Trails Master Plan. Input received from the focus group meetings and public open house provided guidance as the project team identified the necessary updates to the Master Plan. Below is a brief summary of feedback received during each of the focus group meetings, the public open house, and from the online survey.

## Focus Group #1: City Staff

### *Attendees*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Company</b>
Steve Rhoades	Facilitator	Vireo
Ben Wagner	Facilitator	Vireo
Steve Casey	Facilitator	LSPR
Joe Snook	Facilitator	LSPR
Steve Thomas	Facilitator	LSPR
Ryan Elam	Invitee	Development Services
Mark Dunning	Invitee	Assistant City Manager
Jennifer Thompson	Invitee	Planning
Josh Johnson	Invitee	Development Services

### *Priorities*

- Establish a safe connection between Downtown Lee's Summit and the Rock Island Trail
- Position 3rd Street to emerge as the primary "destination" corridor
- Focus on building dedicated trails away from roadway corridors
- Identify opportunities to collaborate with other city departments to maintain momentum and secure small victories

### *Opportunities*

- O'Brien Rd provides the safest crossing point over Hwy 50
- Paragon Star will eventually emerge as a major node in the community, particularly given the intersection of the Rock Island and the Little Blue Trace Trail
- Trail-oriented development along the Rock Island could provide economic development and tourism opportunities

# The Engagement Process

## Challenges

- Every Hwy 50 crossing is difficult to navigate as a pedestrian/bicyclist
- Hwy 291 is a significant barrier
- Hwy 150 between Greenwood and Pleasant Hill is a barrier
- 3rd St east of Hwy 50 is deteriorating

## Focus Group #2: Public Agencies & Adjacent Municipalities

### Attendees

Name	Role	Company
Steve Rhoades	Facilitator	Vireo
Ben Wagner	Facilitator	Vireo
Steve Casey	Facilitator	LSPR
Joe Snook	Facilitator	LSPR
Steve Thomas	Facilitator	LSPR
Michael Park	Invitee	City Traffic Engineer
Alex Rotenberry	Invitee	MARC
Matt Davis	Invitee	Jackson County Parks
Bruce Wilke	Invitee	Jackson County Parks

### Priorities

- Close the Greenwood Gap; connect to the Katy Trail
- Connect the Little Blue Trace Trail to the Rock Island Trail
- Connect to community centers

### Opportunities

- Explore a partnership with Jackson Co to close the Little Blue/Rock Island gap

### Challenges

- Identifying funding for trails is a hurdle. Property acquisition issues can also hinder progress
- Identifying a shared vision for trails among multiple jurisdictions

# The Engagement Process

## Focus Group #3: Livable Streets Committee Members

### *Attendees*

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Company</b>
Steve Rhoades	Facilitator	Vireo
Ben Wagner	Facilitator	Vireo
Steve Casey	Facilitator	LSPR
Joe Snook	Facilitator	LSPR
Steve Thomas	Facilitator	LSPR
Michael Park	Invitee	City Traffic Engineer
Molly Wichman	Invitee	Livable Streets Committee
Eric Kratz	Invitee	Livable Streets Committee

### *Priorities*

- Access to downtown from the Rock Island Trail
- Complete the Mouse Creek corridor portion of the greenway loop
- Add signage and increase educational outreach to promote the Lee's Summit trail system

### *Opportunities*

- Oldham Pkwy gap between Church St and Blackwell Rd could be an opportunity for a temporary trail until the road can be constructed
- Existing bike lanes on Hwy 7 could be leveraged as part of a 14 mi. loop around Lake Jacomo

### *Challenges*

- 3rd St and Chipman Rd beneath Hwy 50 lacks pedestrian/bicyclist accommodations

## Public Open House

### *Priorities*

- Link to Little Blue Trace Trail
- Connect Rock Island to downtown
- Resolve safety issues at crossings along Hwy 50
- Close Greenwood gap/reach Pleasant Hill

# The Engagement Process

## Online Survey

A brief online survey administered to the general public during the summer of 2019 asked respondents to provide input related to their use of and priorities for the greenway and trails system in Lee's Summit. In total, more than 250 people responded to the survey. The survey results indicated that a majority of respondents were both familiar with and made use of the greenway & trails system semi-regularly - primarily for recreation and/or fitness purposes.

A majority of respondents indicated that each of the following connections is very important:

- Rock Island Trail to Downtown Lee's Summit
- Rock Island Trail - Greenwood to Pleasant Hill (Katy Trail Connector)
- Little Blue Trace Trail to Rock Island Trail
- Connections from neighborhoods to Lee's Summit parks, community centers, and facilities
- Connections from neighborhoods to schools

Connections from neighborhoods to shopping and restaurants were regarded as being of medium importance.

A majority of respondents also agreed that Hwy 50, Hwy 291, I-470, and Hwy 150 represent very significant barriers in the community. Railroads and streams corridors were not regarded as significant barriers.

The full results from the online survey are included in Appendix A of this summary.



## Trail Types



*Figure 2: The greenway trail in Eagle Creek Park will eventually become part of the 40-mile greenway loop around Lee's Summit.*

Photo courtesy of Lee's Summit Parks and Recreation.



*Figure 3: There are a number of sidepaths already in place throughout Lee's Summit, including this one along Ward Rd.*

Photo courtesy of Google Maps.



*Figure 4: Share-the-Road signs along Longview Blvd indicate a preferred route for bicyclists.*

Photo courtesy of Google Maps.

It is intended that all planned trails will adhere to general trail standards for slope, layout, and safety requirements as provided by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities (available at: <https://store.transportation.org/Item/CollectionDetail?ID=116>) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (found at: <https://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/recreation-facilities/outdoor-developed-areas/background/committee-report/trails>).

One of the goals of this Master Plan Update was to consolidate the number of trail definitions that apply to the Lee's Summit system. A brief description of each of the trail types referenced in the Master Plan Update follows:

- **Trail** (see Figure 2) – A hard or soft-surface trail, usually 10-foot in width, following a natural green corridor or streamway corridor, utility easement, or located within a park. These trails are open to all users except those on horseback or using motorized vehicles. Local policy ordinances may dictate use of these trails. Local policies may be found on the Lee's Summit Parks & Recreation website at: <https://cityofls.net/parks>.
- **Sidepath** (see Figure 3) – A hard-surface, 10-foot wide trail located adjacent to a collector or arterial street. These trails are open to all users except those on horseback or using motorized vehicles. Note that it is common for experienced cyclists to be on-street within these corridors because they are traveling at higher speeds and are not using the corridor for recreational purposes.
- **Bicycle Route** (see Figure 4) – A Bicycle Route is a dedicated bike lane or share-the-road (wide vehicle lanes with bike signage) facility. These are intended for on-street cyclists only. Pedestrians will use the adjacent sidewalk in these cases.

## Trailheads

As the first point of contact for trail users, trailheads are quite literally the gateways to a successful greenway and trail system. The City of Lee's Summit recently completed a new trailhead at Hartman Park that gives trail users direct access to the Rock Island Trail. Although Hartman Park is the only existing, formal access point to the Rock Island, the forthcoming Paragon Star development - at the intersection of I-470 and View High Drive - will include a new trailhead with access to the Little Blue Trace Trail and the Rock Island.

# The Plan

## Barriers

Highway and Interstate crossings throughout Lee's Summit continue to represent barriers to pedestrians and bicyclists. Despite some progress in addressing these barriers since the previous master plan, a number of these challenging crossings remain. The following are the most significant barriers to a safe, connected greenway & trail network in Lee's Summit.

- **Interstate 470** - A future crossing at Bowlin Rd (see Figure 5) will require reconfiguration of the existing I-470 overpass to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists. A crossing at Woods Chapel Rd will require reconfiguration or replacement of the existing bridge.
- **Highway 291** - Hwy 291 presents challenges at the intersections of Tudor Rd (see Figure 6) and Langsford Rd, where crossing distances are long and unprotected by refuge islands. Additionally, a future crossing north of the Hwy 150 intersection will require improvements to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists.
- **Highway 50** - Despite recent improvements at the intersection of Jefferson St, Hwy 50 remains a challenging crossing for pedestrians and bicyclists, particularly at the intersections of 3rd St (see Figure 7) and Chipman Rd.
- **Railroad** - The proposed greenway loop south of Bailey Farm will have to cross the existing railroad as well as Big Creek. Both of these elements could pose as barriers to future trail connectivity in this area.

## Significant Elements

- **Greenway Loop** - The planned 40-mile greenway loop around the city remains a defining element of the updated plan. However, the updated plan utilizes Todd George Pkwy to complete the loop on the west side of Lake Jacomo, as opposed to the previously-planned greenway trail along the east side of the lake, outside of Lee's Summit jurisdiction. The planned loop trail connects major parks, lakes, and streamways in and around Lee's Summit while ensuring the preservation of more than 300 acres of natural resource area. At the same time, it provides a critical recreational and transportation resource for the residents of Lee's Summit and neighboring communities.



*Figure 5: The existing I-470 overpass at Bowlin Rd does not include space to incorporate a sidewalk or sidepath.*

Photo courtesy of Google Maps.



*Figure 6: Long crossing distances across Hwy 291 at the intersection of Tudor Rd.*

Photo courtesy of Google Maps.



*Figure 7: 3rd Street at Hwy 50 is virtually impassable on foot.*

Photo courtesy of Google Maps.



*Figure 8: The Vale Tunnel on the recently-completed Rock Island Trail.*

Photo courtesy of BikeWalkKC.

- **Regional Connections** - The most significant regional connection highlighted in the plan is the Rock Island Trail (see Figure 8). This regional corridor will eventually link Kansas City, Raytown, and Lee's Summit to Missouri's famous Katy Trail by way of the MOPAC trail through Pleasant Hill. Additional regional trails along Hwy 150, Liggett Rd, and the Little Blue River will provide additional regional connectivity.
- **Destination Corridor** - The 3rd Street corridor between the Rock Island Trail and downtown Lee's Summit is identified in the updated master plan as a future destination corridor. 3rd Street is uniquely positioned to emerge as a key, multi-modal corridor in Lee's Summit.
- **Community Connectors** - The community connectors are the building blocks of a successful greenway system. Critically, these sidepaths, trails, and bicycle routes connect the neighborhoods, parks, and schools in Lee's Summit to the larger greenway network and regional corridors. In addition to their essential connectivity function, some of these routes also provide a valuable recreational resource for residents, such as the loop routes around the various lakes throughout Lee's Summit.
- **Connections to Downtown** - Throughout the engagement process, stakeholders and members of the public expressed a strong desire to strengthen multi-modal connections to downtown Lee's Summit. In addition to the identified future 3rd St destination corridor, there are a handful of additional planned connections to downtown. O'Brien Rd, which is bicycle and pedestrian-friendly already and is considered the safest crossing point over Hwy 50, is identified as a planned bicycle route, with a connection along Market St leading to Harris Park. A planned sidepath along Douglas St and 2nd St/ Langsford Rd will provide connectivity to the north and east from downtown. The new interchange at Jefferson St and Hwy 50 includes multi-modal accommodations and provides a link for bicyclists and pedestrians from the south into downtown.



## *Greenway Loop*

- 1 The Little Blue Trace Trail currently makes up 3 miles of the planned 40-mile greenway loop. The built portion of the Little Blue Trace Trail currently terminates a little less than 1 mile southwest of where it crosses under Lee's Summit Rd. When complete, the Little Blue Trace Trail will comprise more than 12 miles of the planned greenway loop.
- 2 Todd George Pkwy currently includes a wide shoulder between Colbern Rd and Woods Chapel Rd that is navigable for bicyclists. However, a sidepath facility that is planned to come online once the area develops will provide a safer greenway connection that should appeal to a broader range of potential users.
- 3 The existing sidepath along Blackwell Rd gives trail users access to a secondary trail loop inside Legacy Park.
- 4 The Mouse Creek greenway corridor, which connects several existing and planned neighborhoods, including a handful of schools, has been identified as a priority for the Parks department.
- 5 The existing bicycle route (wide shoulder) along Raytown Rd completes the greenway loop around Longview Lake.

## *Community Connector*

- 1 The existing bicycle route on Lake Dr - also called the Lakewood Loop - is part of the annual Lee's Summit Tour de Lakes ride, drawing hundreds of participants each year.
- 2 A soft-surface trail on the north side of the Lake Jacomo dam and a sidepath along Liggett Rd provide a connection from the greenway loop to the bike lanes on Hwy 7.
- 3 Although 3rd St is identified in the master plan as the future destination corridor leading from the Rock Island Trail to downtown, O'Brien Rd provides the safest connection for bicyclists in the interim.

## *Jackson Co. Regional Corridor*

- 1 The built portion of Jackson County's Rock Island Trail extends a little more than 6 miles between Brickyard Rd and Jefferson St. Its construction has led to renewed excitement for trail development in Lee's Summit.
- 2 The proposed extension of the Rock Island will eventually connect to the Truman Sports Complex in Kansas City, MO.
- 3 Jackson County's proposed alignment to close the "Greenwood Gap" utilizes a combination of on-street bicycle routes and trails to reach the terminus of the MOPAC trail in Pleasant Hill. The MOPAC trail connects to the Rock Island Spur of Missouri's famous Katy Trail.



**Building Momentum** - Jackson County's implementation of the Rock Island Trail has brought renewed attention to the Lee's Summit trail system and has generated excitement among residents for renewed progress on the greenway and trail network. Lee's Summit would be well served to capitalize on this excitement and continue to build momentum for the Lee's Summit greenway and trail system.

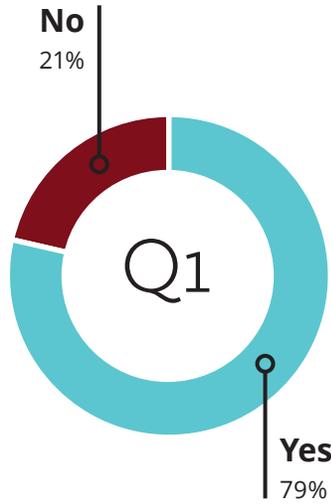
**Small Victories** - Although hurdles remain for a safe, connected greenway and trail network, Lee's Summit can ensure progress and continued success by exploring partnerships with outside agencies and/or identifying opportunities for "small victories," such as developing and implementing a comprehensive greenway and trail wayfinding/identification signage system.

**Priorities** - The updated master plan does not explicitly identify priority corridors; however, the engagement process revealed a number of priorities for stakeholders and community members, as this summary has outlined. Establishing a strong, multi-modal connection between the Rock Island Trail and downtown Lee's Summit is a top priority. Beyond that, the Parks department should look to prioritize the development of corridors that connect to parks and schools. Corridors in undeveloped areas should be considered a low priority, unless they are in the service of regional linkages.

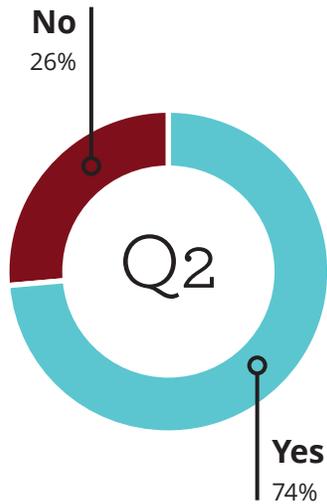
**Funding/Partnerships** - To make continued progress on the trail and greenway system, Lee's Summit Parks & Recreation will likely need to pursue multiple avenues of funding. One approach to strengthen funding would be a city-wide park sales tax to fund greenway and trail improvements. A dedicated 1/8 cent park sales tax could generate roughly \$1.7M in annual revenue, per 2012 Census data. A multi-jurisdictional or county-wide trail tax could be another way to expand funding for important, regional trail corridors. The State of Missouri has made possible through legislation, a 1/10 cent sales tax imposed across a newly-created parks, trails, and greenways district that could generate additional funds for trail construction, operation and maintenance in the county. The revenue generated could be divided as follows: 45% for the district, 15% for the county, and 40% for the cities in proportion to each city's local sales tax contribution. Such a district would be governed by a 7-member board, with one member chosen by the presiding commissioner or elected county executive, two members appointed by the mayor of the largest city, and four members appointed on a rotating basis by the mayors of the next five most populous cities in the county. Additionally, the trail system in Lee's Summit already benefits from ongoing efforts within Lee's Summit Public Works to expand the network of sidepaths along important corridors throughout the community. Moving forward, establishing a partnership with Jackson County Parks could benefit both parties and result in an expansion of important trail corridors around Lee's Summit, such as the Little Blue Trace Trail.



# Appendix A - Online Survey Results



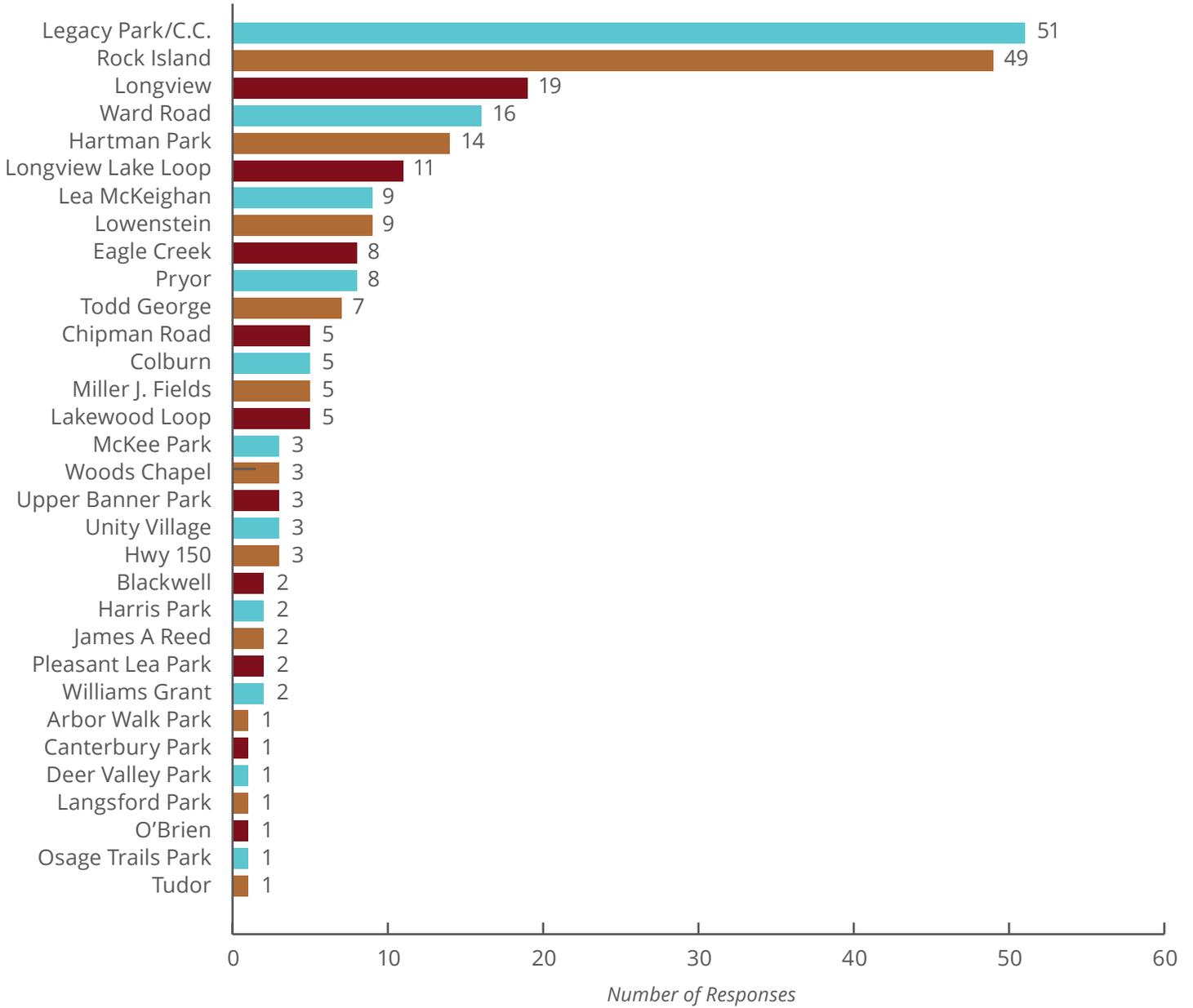
Are you aware that there is a planned and built network of trails and greenways in Lee's Summit?



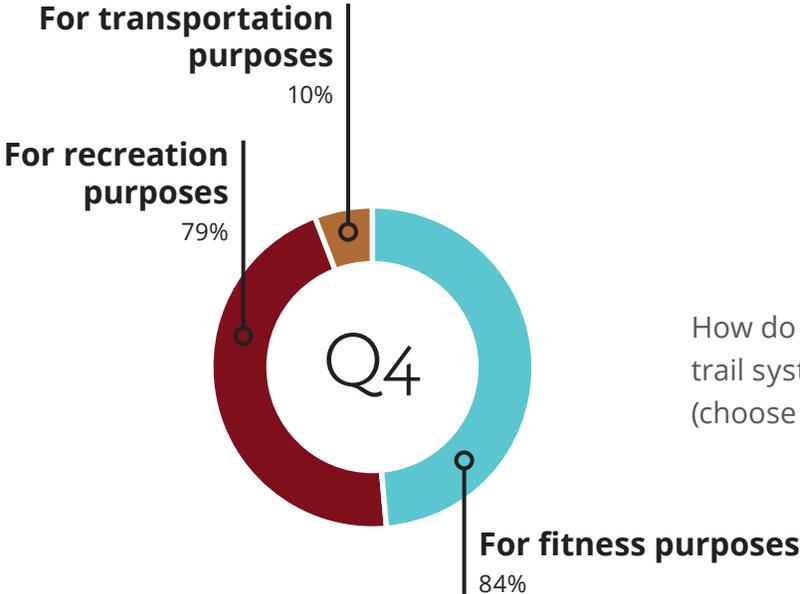
Do you use the greenway and trail system in Lee's Summit?

# Q3

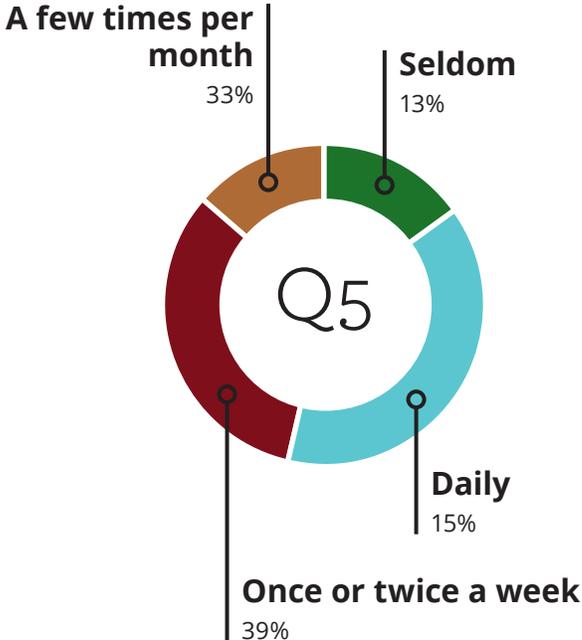
Where in Lee's Summit to you use the greenway and trails system?



# Appendix A - Online Survey Results



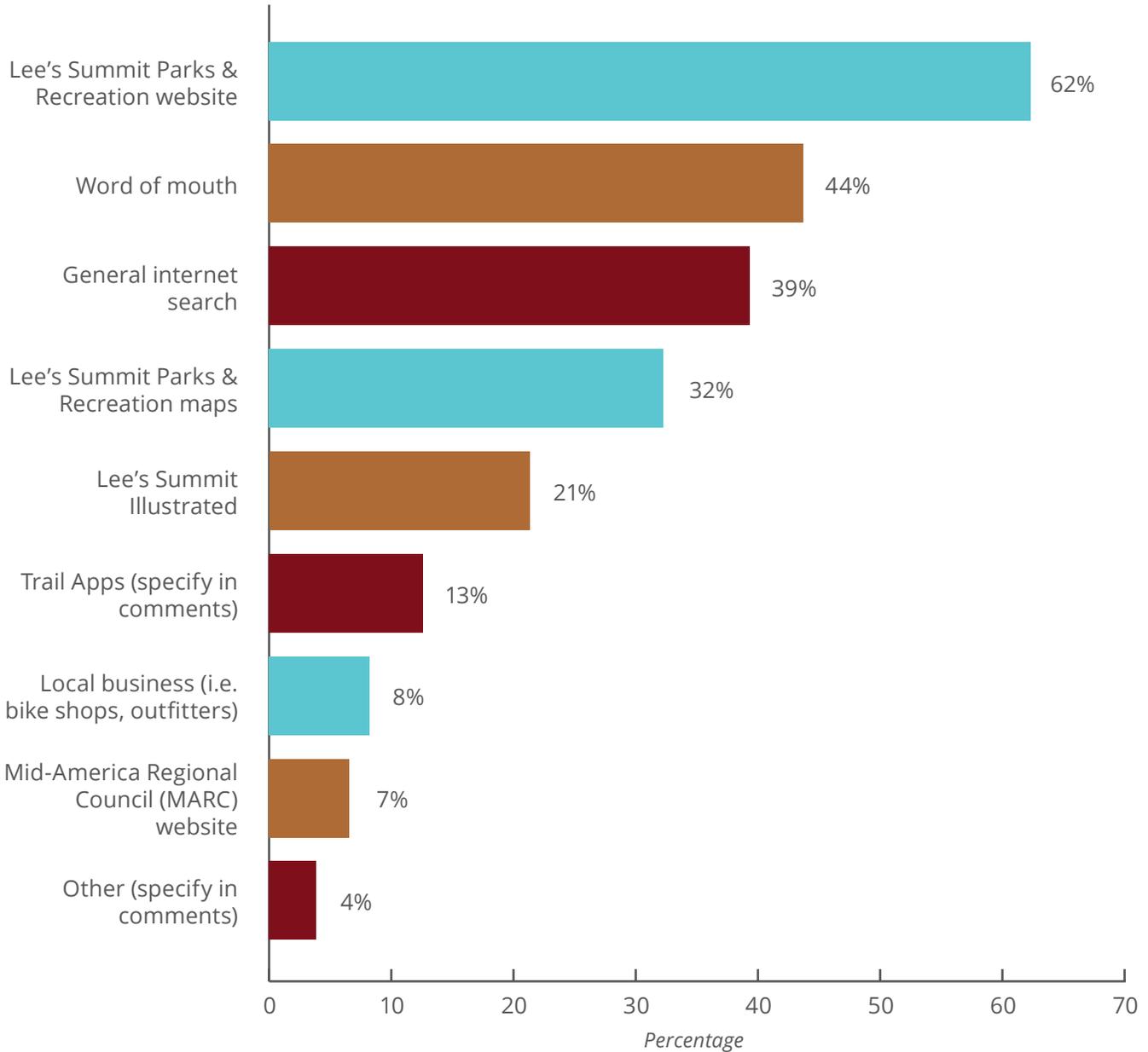
How do you use the greenway and trail system in Lee’s Summit?  
(choose all that apply)



How often do you use the greenway and trail system in Lee’s Summit?

# Q6

How do you search for information about local and regional trails?  
(choose all that apply)



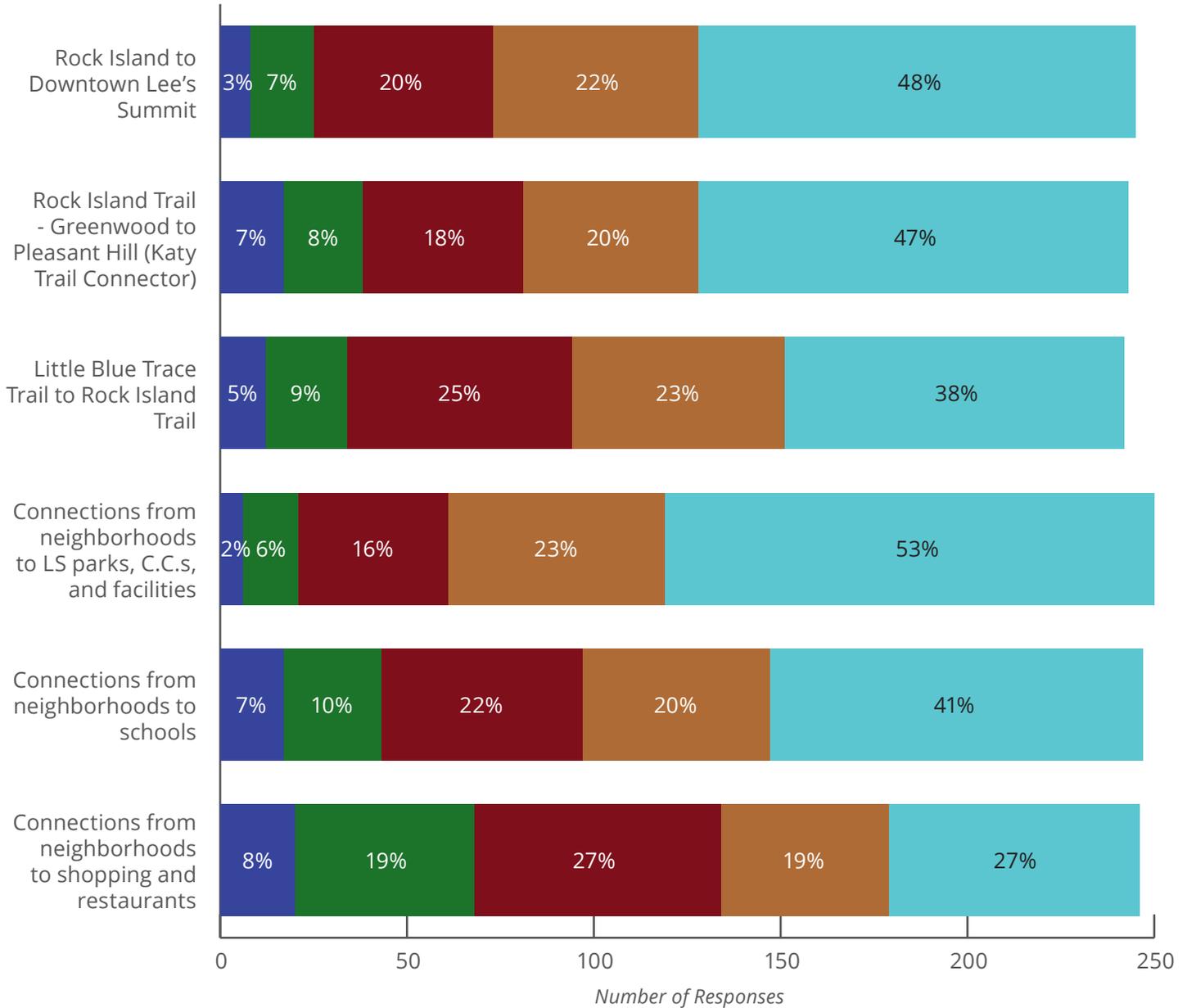
## Comments:

- All Trails app (7)
- I don't search (6)
- Facebook (5)
- On my own/exploring (4)
- Word of mouth (2)
- Rails to Trails (2)
- Strava (2)
- County trails map (1)
- MO bike federation (1)
- Trail Finder (1)
- Internet search (1)

# Appendix A - Online Survey Results

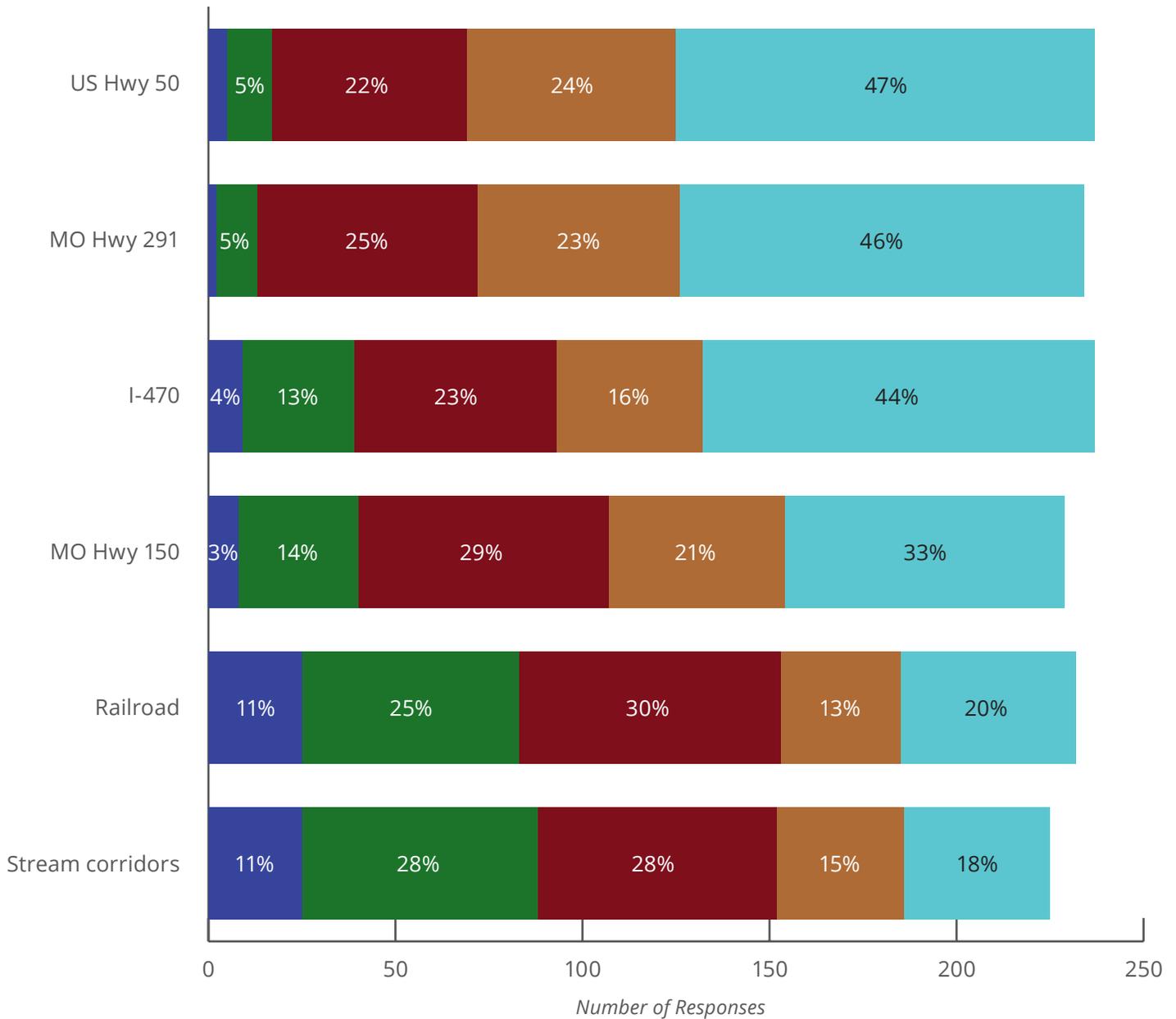
Q7

Rate the importance of each of the following connections for future trail development.



# Q8

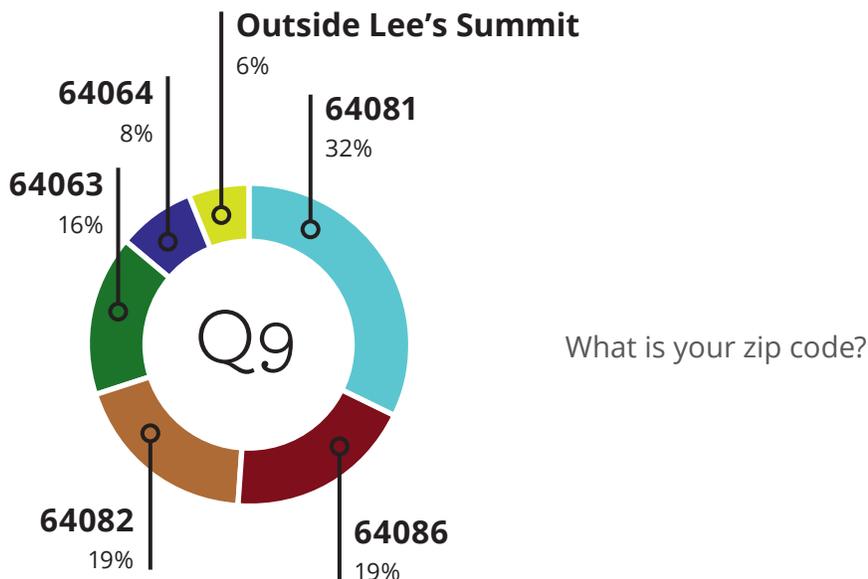
Rate how significant the following barriers are to a safe, connected greenway and trail network.



**Comments:**

- Hwy 50 is the worst barrier
- Safety is important
- Unacceptable and dangerous to pedestrians and cyclists
- Don't understand the question
- Streams and railroads should be an opportunity
- Poor design is biggest barrier to safe trails
- Crosswalks in parks can also be a safety issue
- Heavy traffic going at fast speeds right next to sidewalks

## Appendix A - Online Survey Results



Q8

If you have any other comments about the greenway and trail system in Lee's Summit, please provide them below.

### Comments:

- Appreciate what the City is doing, one of the best in the Midwest, excited, great work, love the trails, please keep growing (24)
- Provide trail maps at the parks, trailheads, and along trails, how do we get more information on the trail system (7)
- Need better maintenance on trails, repair cracks, trim trees, pick up limbs and branches, etc (5)
- Please hurry and connect the trail to the Katy Trail in Greenwood/Pleasant Hill (5)
- Provide connections from trails to downtown (4)
- Provide safe passage across bridges and to highway intersections (4)
- Need to connect them, please connect them all (4)
- Provide connections from neighborhood to neighborhood (4)
- Need more protected infrastructure like protected bike lanes and off-street trails, trails too close to the highway (3)
- Connect parks through the City (2)
- Extend trail to James A. Reed (2)
- Provide more asphalt trails, no concrete (2)
- I would love to see some water fountains along the way
- Shade and access to water should be a critical component
- The proposed improvement to the trails sounds quite expensive
- Would like to see trail length posted
- NE Lee's Summit needs more investment