

Westbrook WATER TALK

public engagement series



Water Talk Public Engagement Process

Meeting One	August 15	Where We Are Now
Meeting Two	August 28	What Do You Think?
Survey	Aug 28 – Sep 29	What Do You Think?
Meeting Three	November 14	Survey Findings & Decision Criteria

Agenda

6:00	Opening
6:15pm	Survey Findings
7:25pm	Questions & Clarifications
7:55pm	Closing Comments
8:00pm	Adjourn

Public Engagement Guidelines

We want to hear all questions and all views.

Please be recognized before speaking and honor the process.

Let's assume best intentions and demonstrate respect.

You're allowed to change your mind.

Neutral facilitation and notes.

Survey Findings

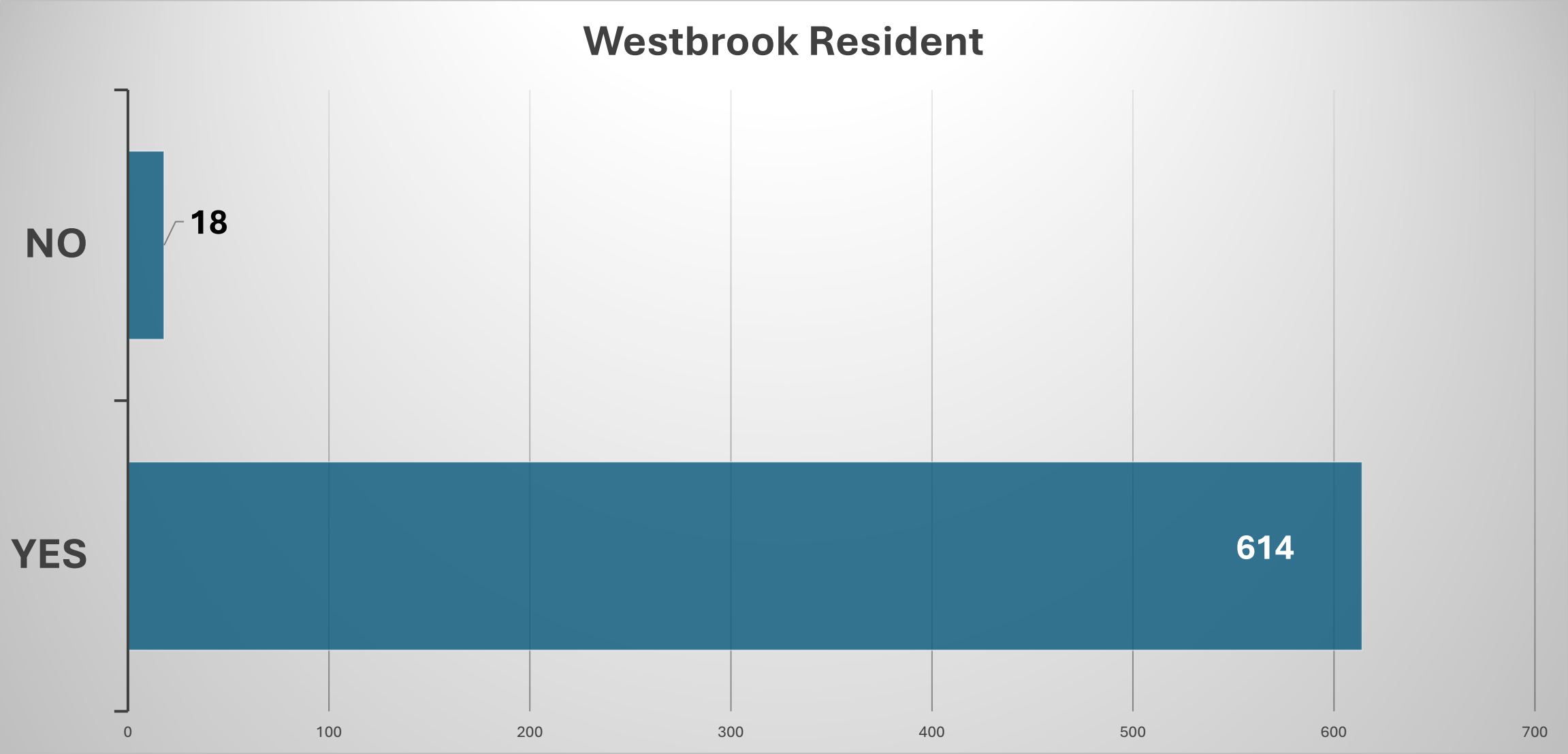


Demographics

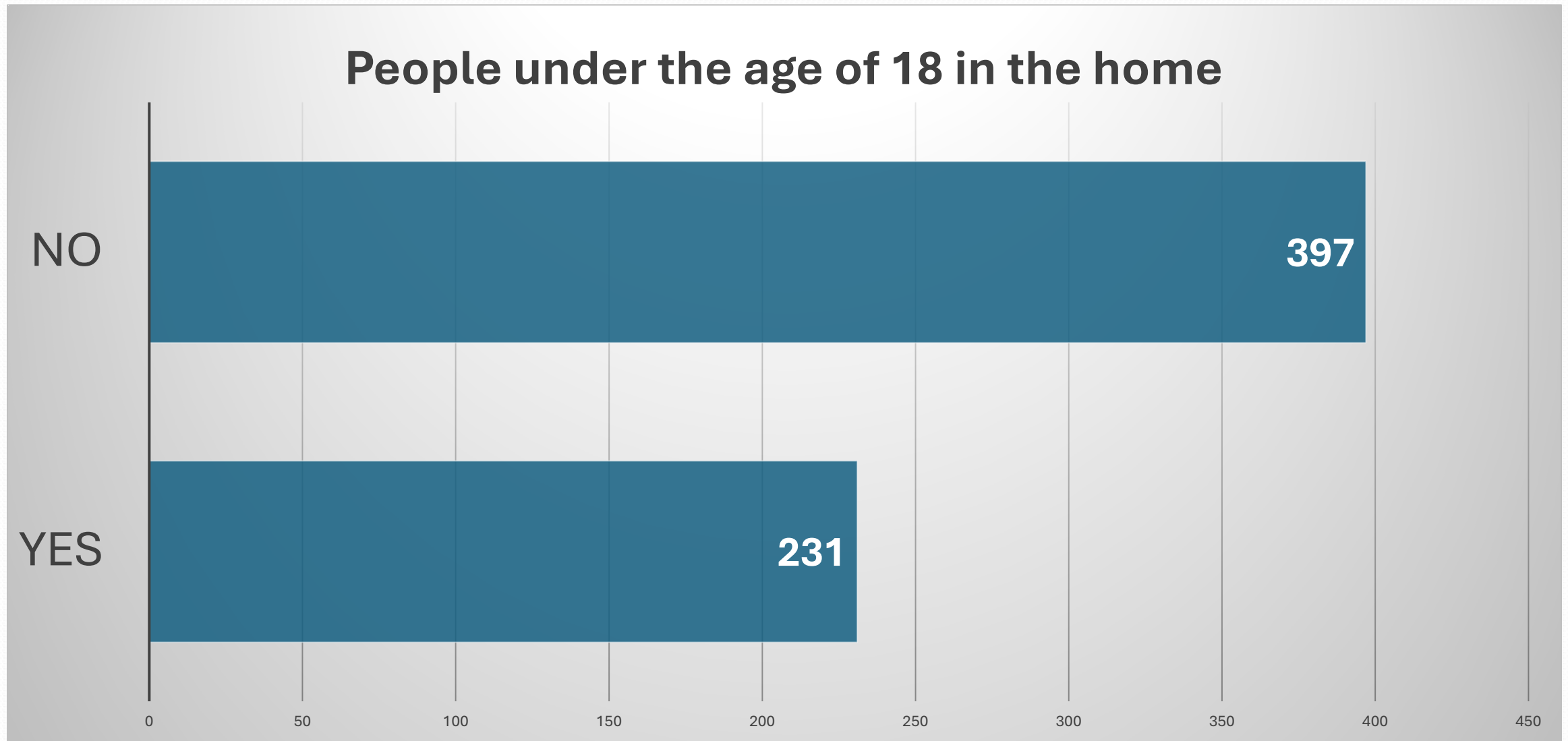
Demographics

- **Why did we ask these questions?**
 - To learn more about who was taking the survey
 - What respondents identify as the problem
 - How intense the problem is perceived and who is affected by it

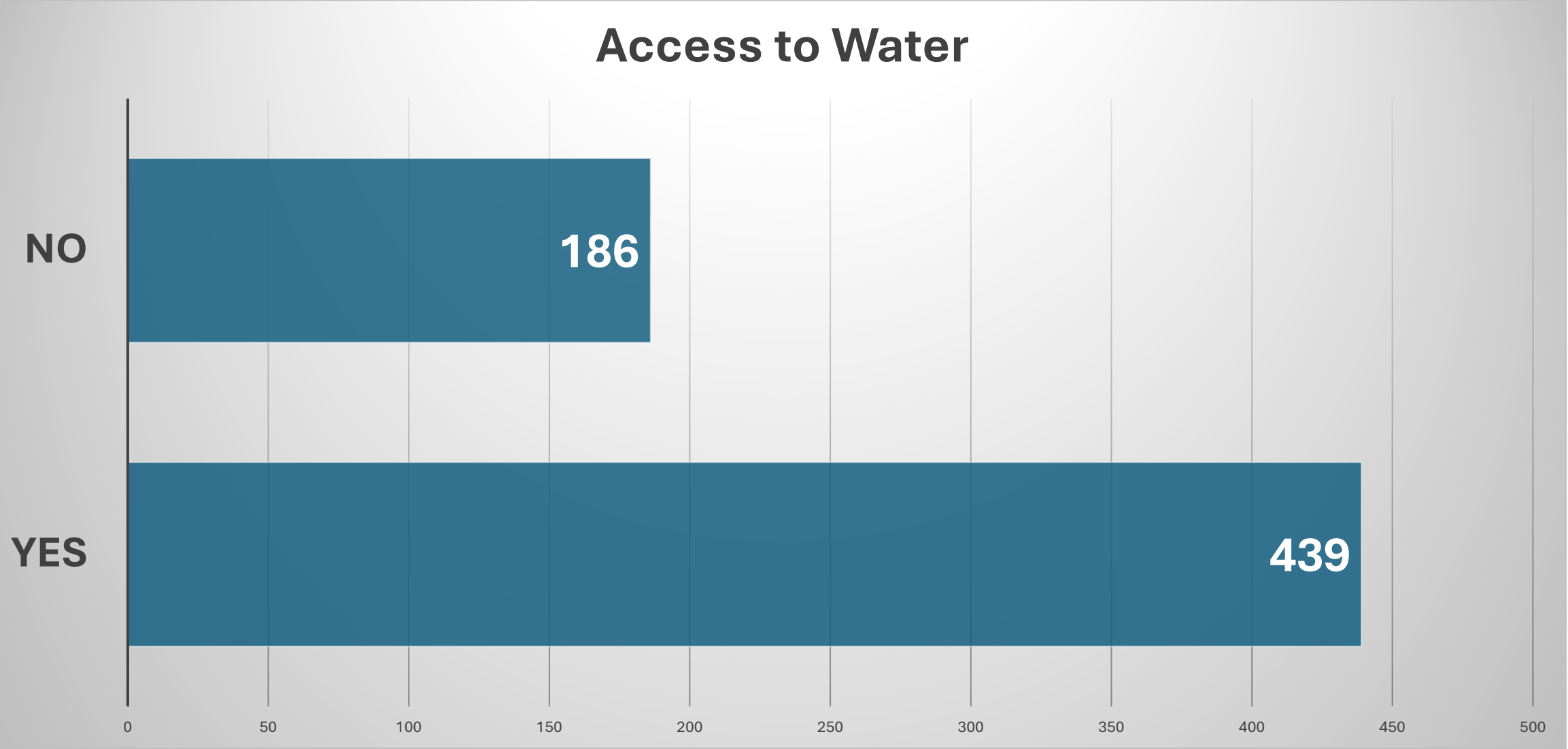
Q1 – Westbrook Resident



Q2 – Under 18 in Household

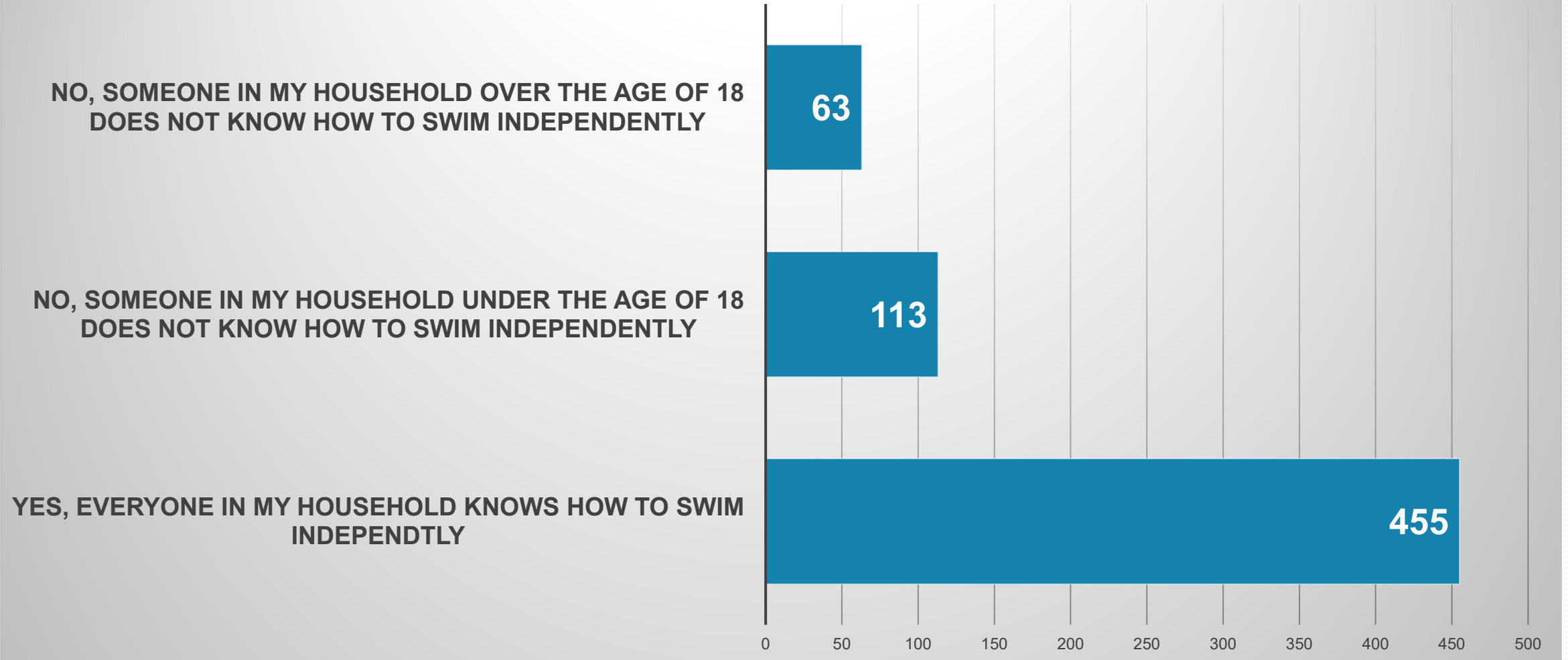


Q4 – Access to Water Amenity



Q6 – Independent Swim

Swim Independently



Demographics - Summary

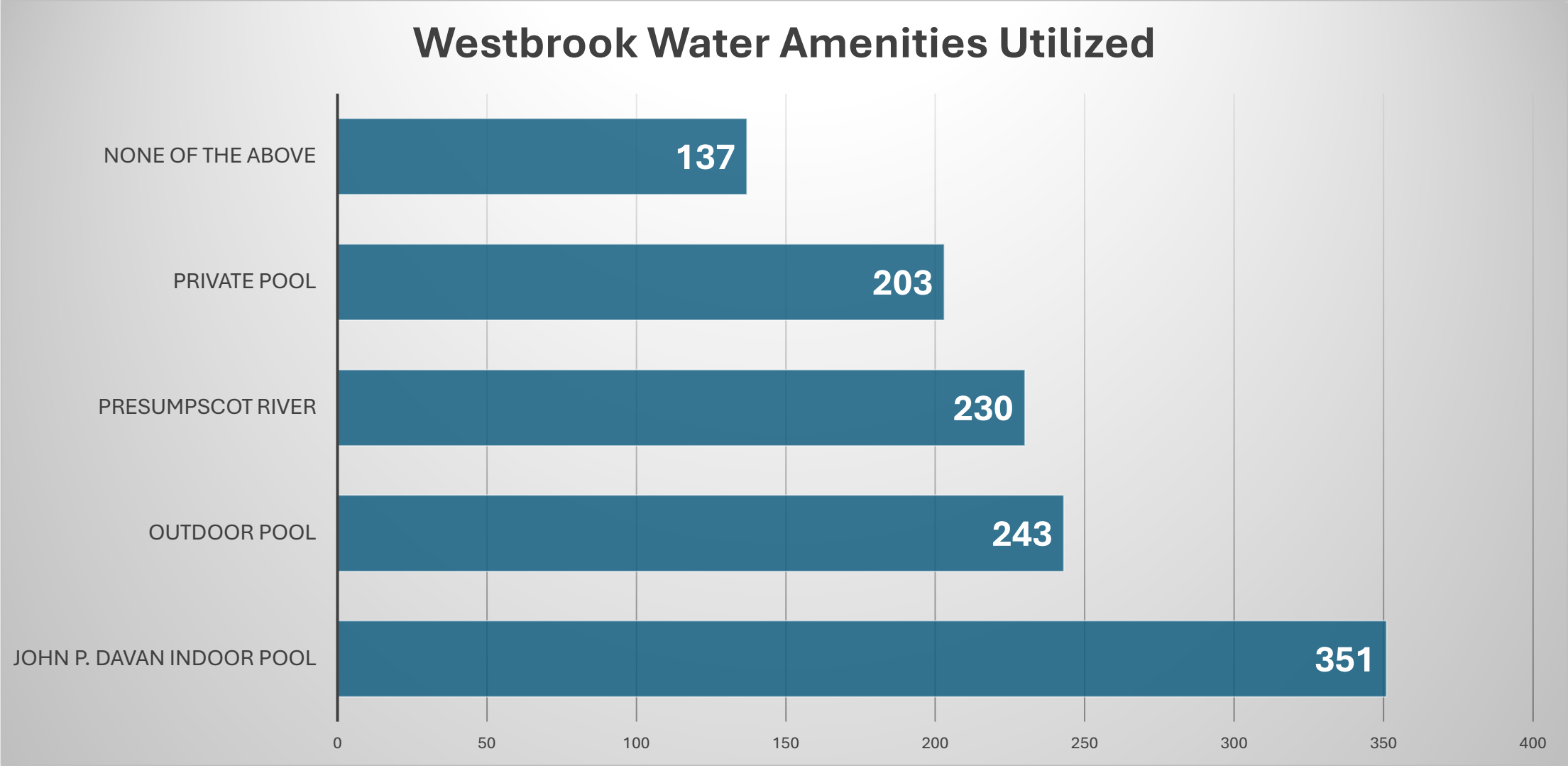
- **What do these answers tell us?**
 - Not everyone has access to water.
 - A need is represented for water safety
 - This is not a child-focused issue
- **What *don't* these answers tell us?**
 - We don't know why some respondents did not have access to water amenities.

Preferences

Preferences

- **Why did we ask these questions?**
 - To understand preferences given the existing amenities
 - To understand preferences regarding interaction with water amenities

Q3 – Westbrook Amenities Used

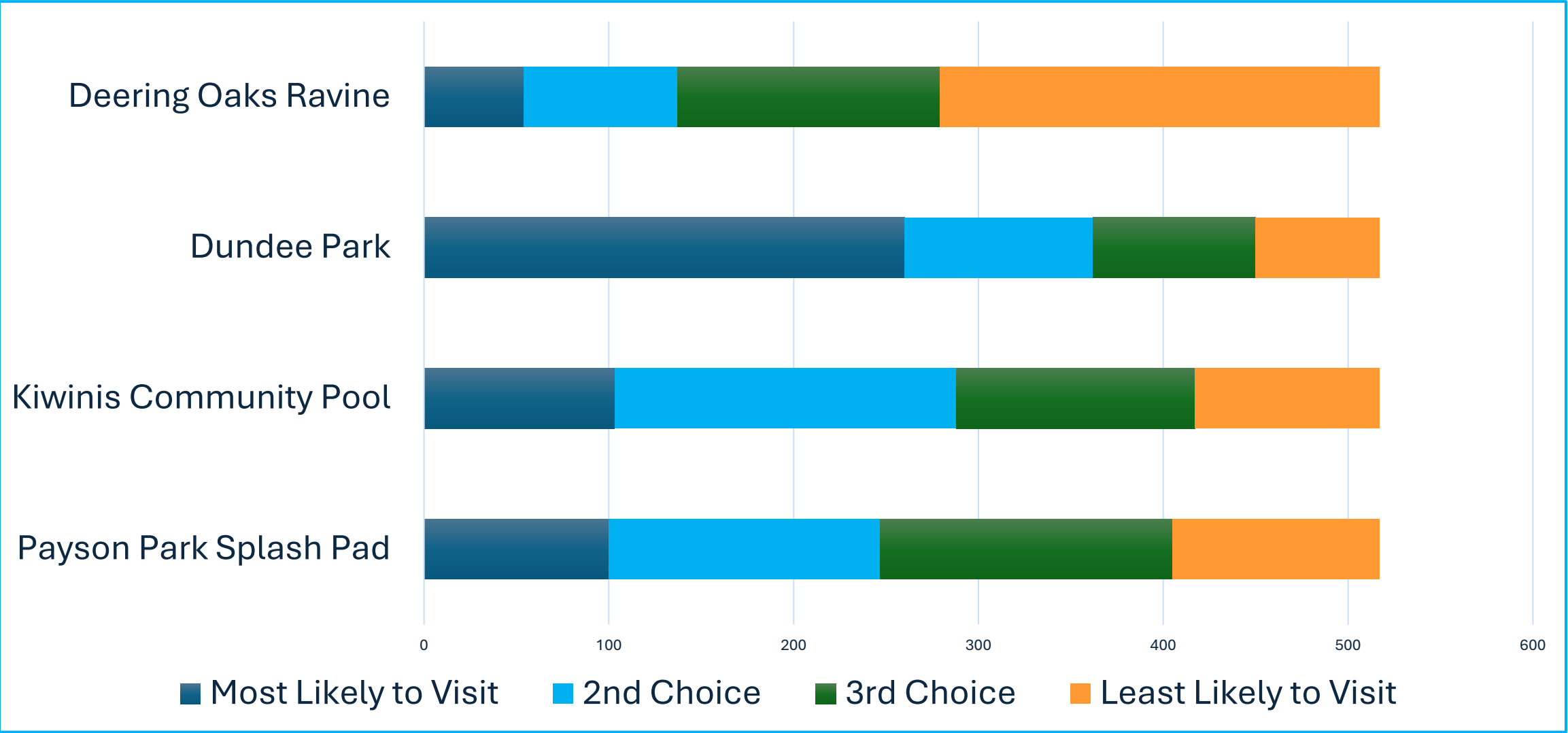


Q5 – Where did you go?

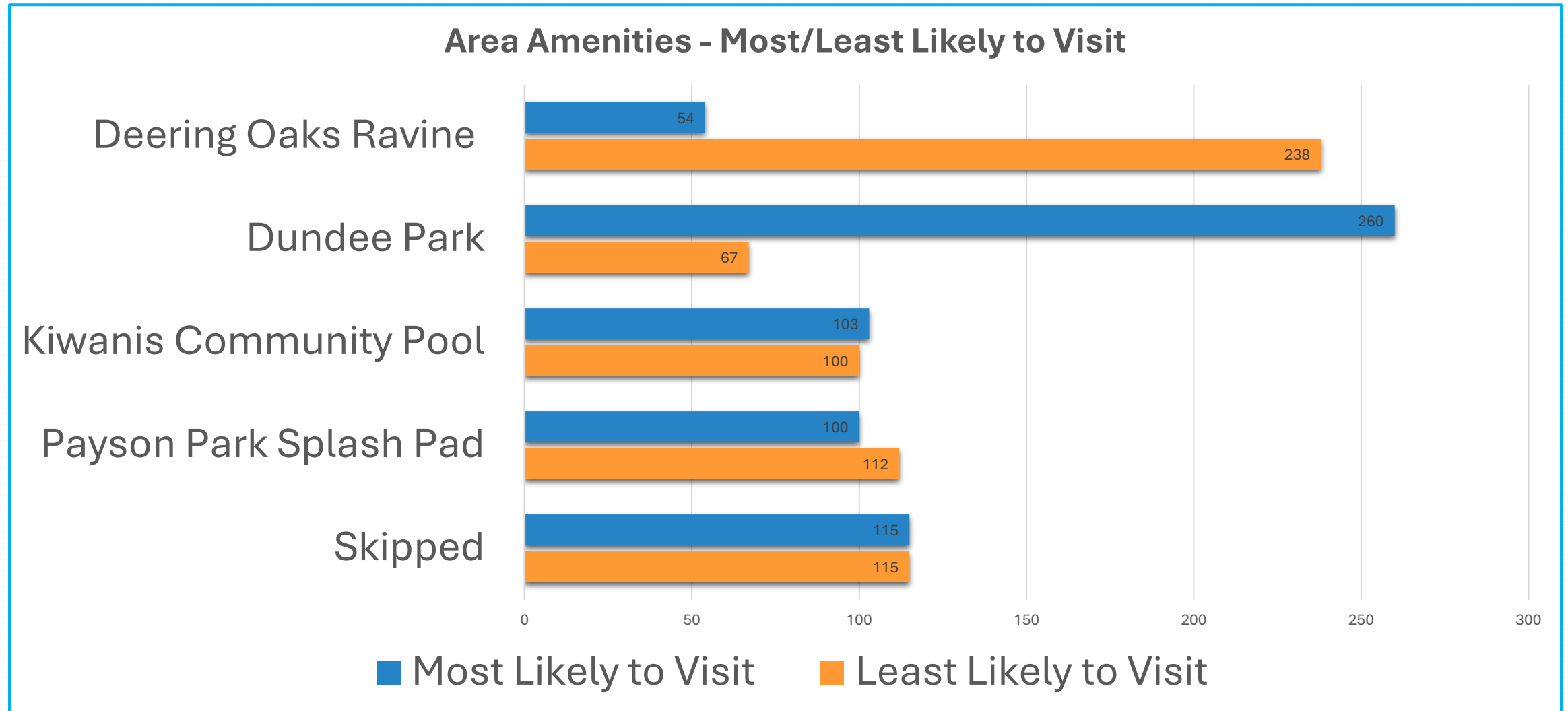
Responses:

- Public pools
 - Private pools
 - Natural waterbodies (rivers, lakes, creeks, pond, ocean)
 - Public/private water parks
-
- Differing opinions on availability/proximity of water amenities available in region.

Q8 – Rank Regional Amenities



Q8 – Most/Least Likely



Preferences – Summary

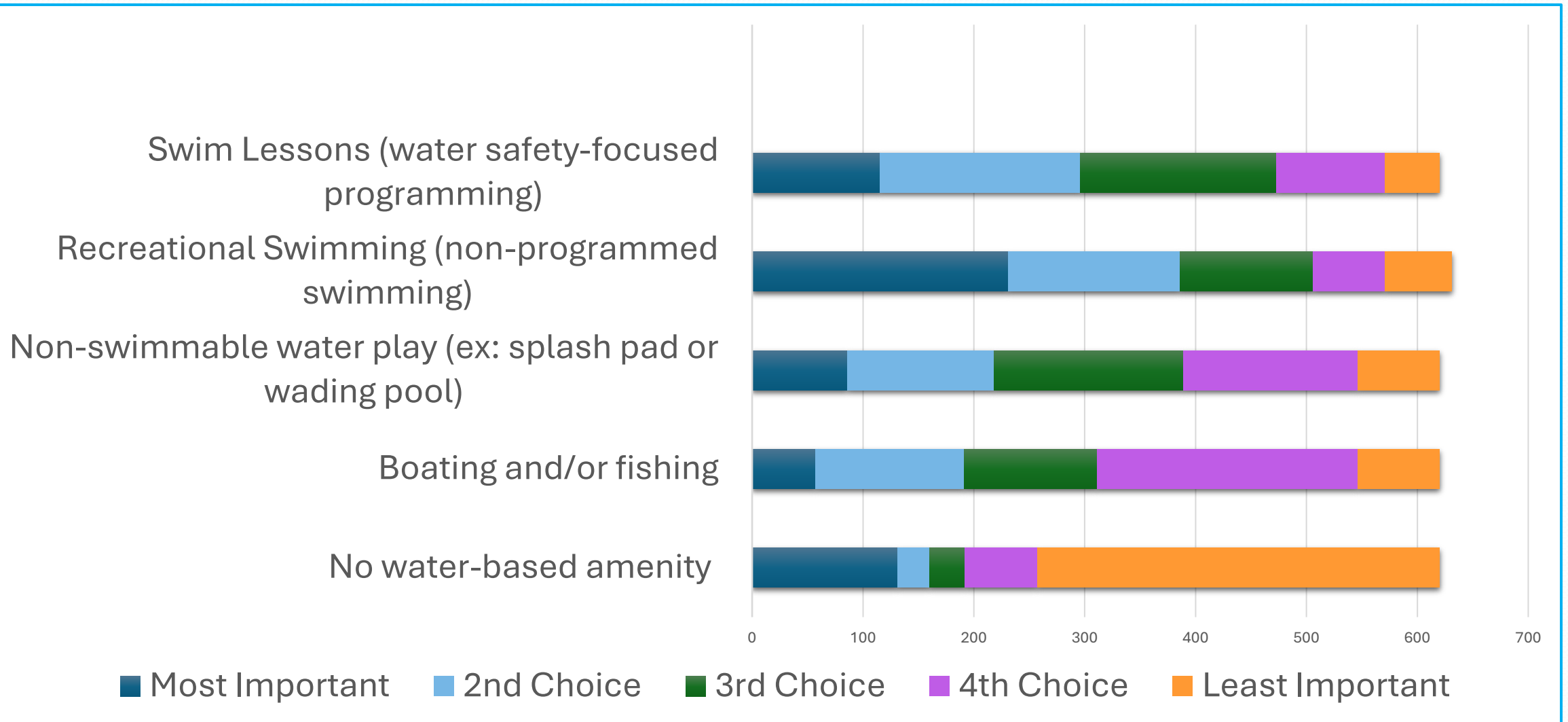
- **What do these answers tell us?**
 - Interacting with natural water bodies in the region is strongly valued
 - Swimming is the preferred interaction with water
 - A small wading pool is not a preferred way to interact with water
- **What *don't* these answers tell us?**
 - Why certain locations were (or weren't) preferred
 - Answers may also be influenced by other factors.

Priorities

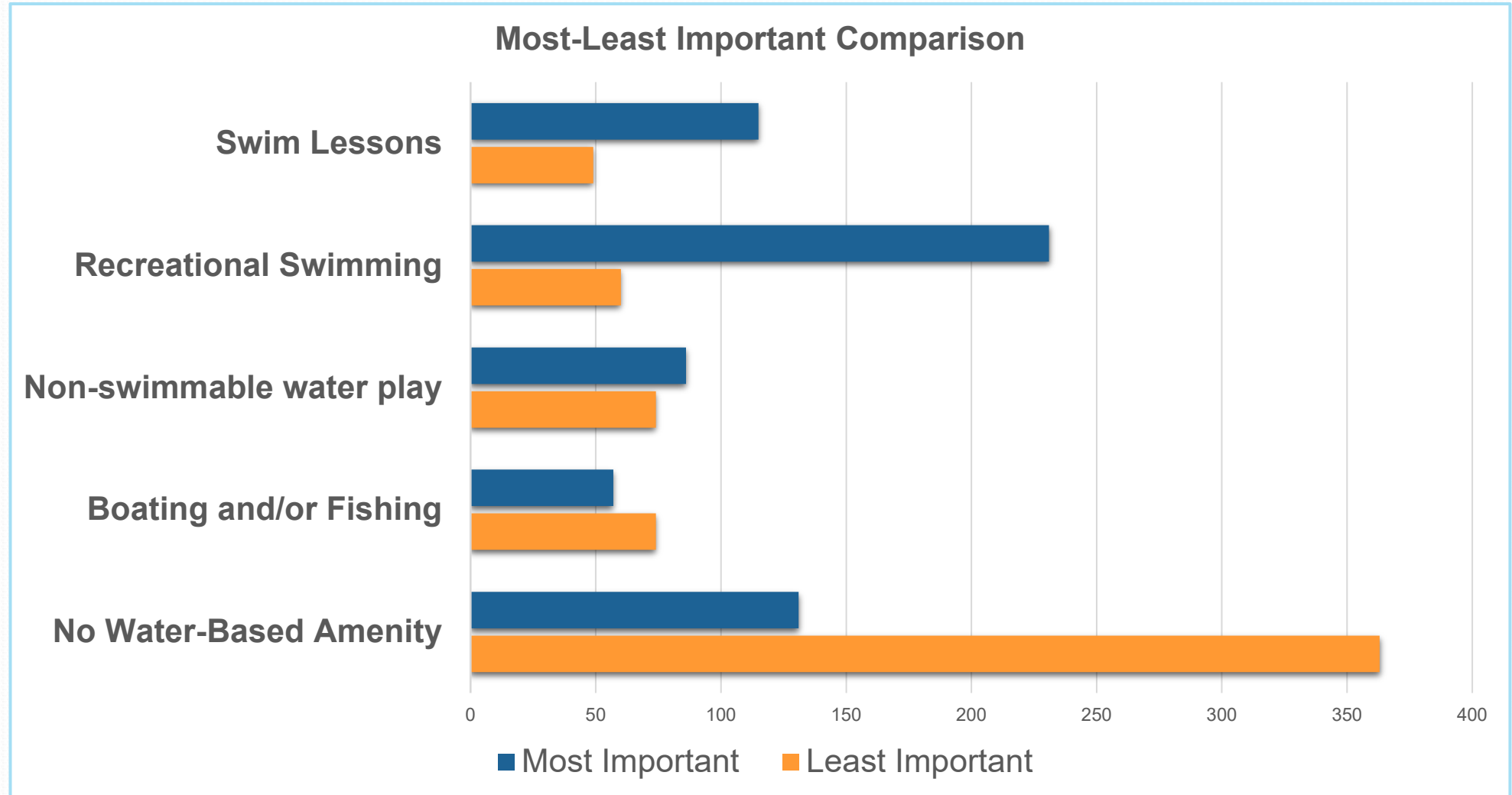
Priorities

- **Why did we ask this question?**
 - Given a limited number of ways to interact with water, how does the community want to use a water amenity

Q7 – Ranking Priorities



Q7 – Most/Least Important



	1 st Round	2 nd Round	3 rd Round
Swim Lessons	19%	20%	25%
Recreational Swimming	37%	41%	49%
Non-Swimmable Water Play	14%	16%	---
Boating/Fishing	9%	---	---
No Water Amenity	21%	23%	25%

Priorities – Summary

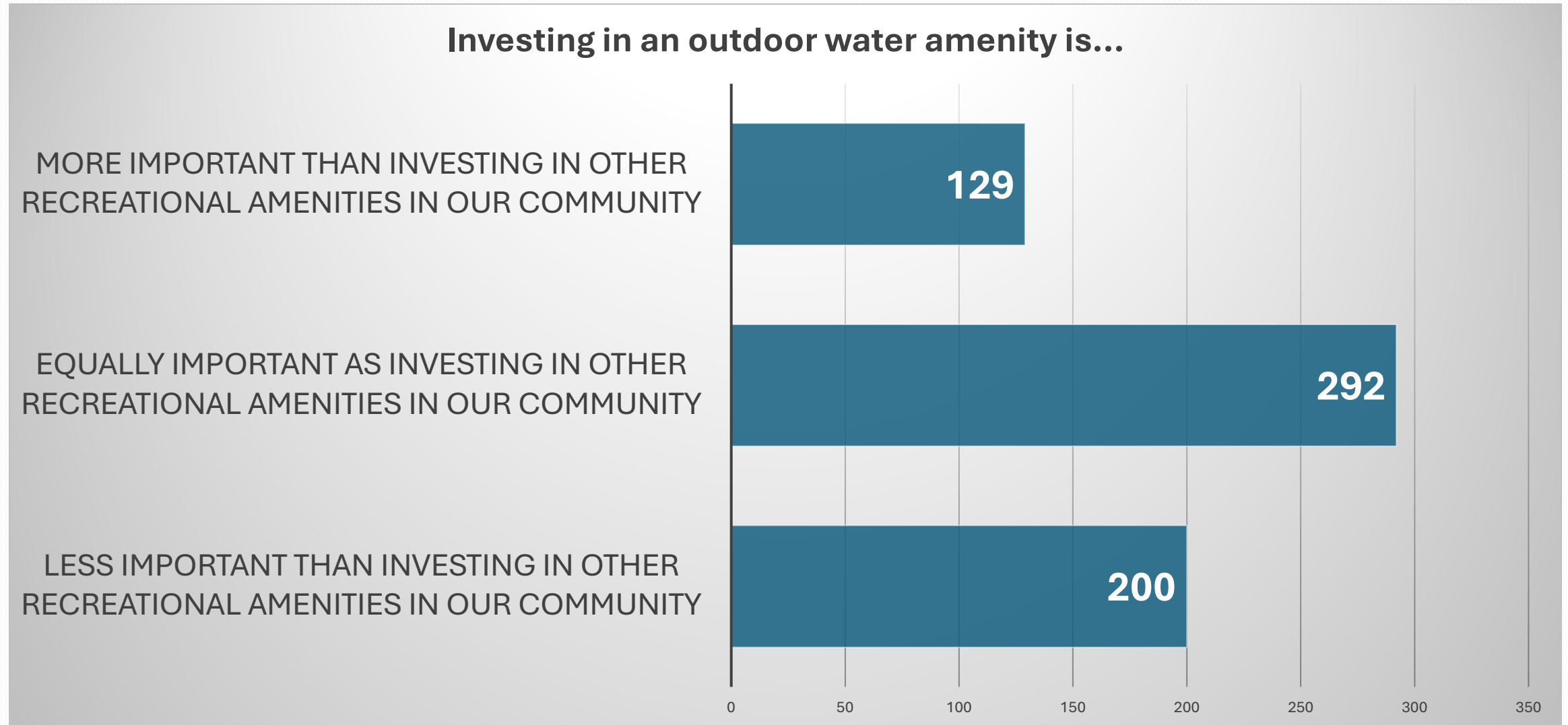
- **What do these answers tell us?**
 - Respondents enjoy interacting with water
 - The community wants to swim
 - Non-programmed recreational swimming (“open swim”) is preferred over water safety focused swim lessons.

Importance

Importance

- **Why did we ask these questions?**
 - To determine whether investing in a water-specific amenity is more, less, or equally important in relation to investments in other recreational amenities.

Q9 – Comparative Importance



Q10 – Identify Most Important

Alternative priority recreational amenities (not ranked):

- Walking trails
- Expansion of activities at the Community Center
- Other City services (non-recreational)
- Maintenance & improvements to existing amenities (water or otherwise)
- New athletic fields/sports courts (pickleball, volleyball, etc.)
- Parks, playgrounds and open space
- Nothing (concern about tax impact)
- Riverwalk North
- Non-seasonal amenities

Importance - Summary

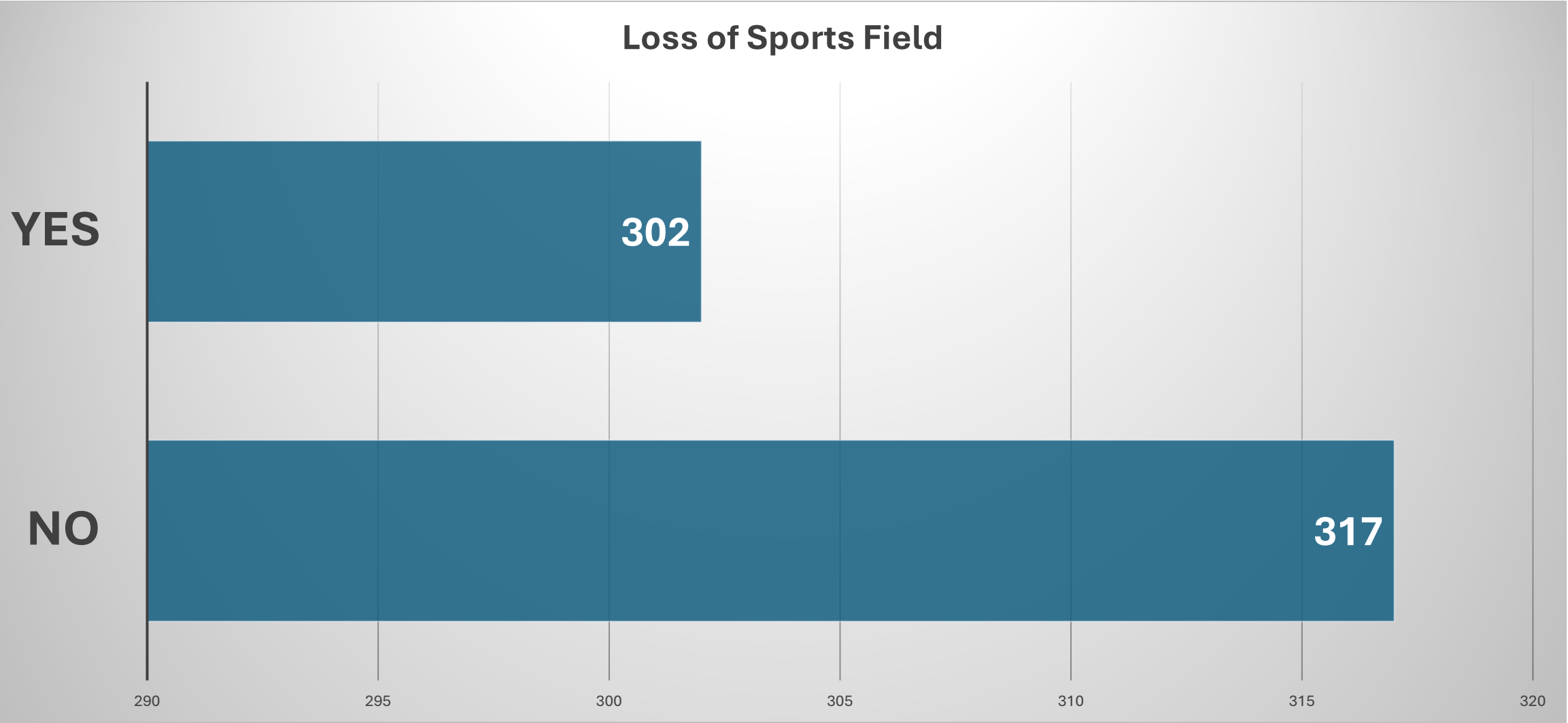
- **What do these answers tell us?**
 - There are numerous competing recreational priorities within the community.
 - There is concern with adding more to the plate and not caring for past investments.
- **What don't these answers tell us?**
 - These answers do not inform us of a single leading priority or focus

Trade Offs

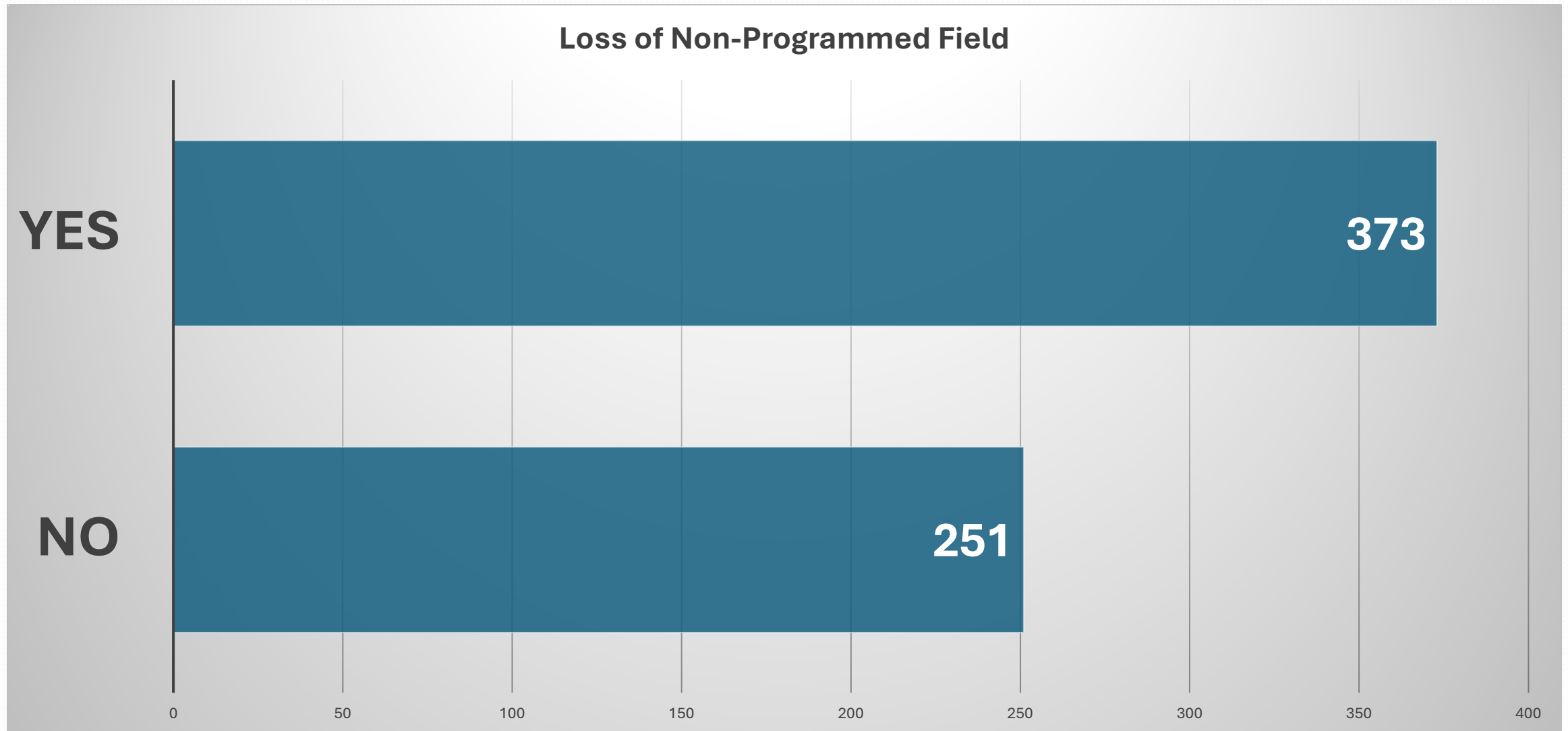
Trade Offs

- **Why did we ask these questions?**
 - To determine the willingness of respondents in prioritizing a water amenity if it meant the loss of other recreational space.

Q11 – Loss of Sports Field



Q12 – Loss of Green Space/Field



Trade Offs – Summary

- **What do these answers tell us?**
 - A water amenity is important to the community, although there is less support to take away another recreational amenity.
 - The majority of respondents would prefer the use of non-programmed space when considering options for a new water amenity.

Financials

Financials

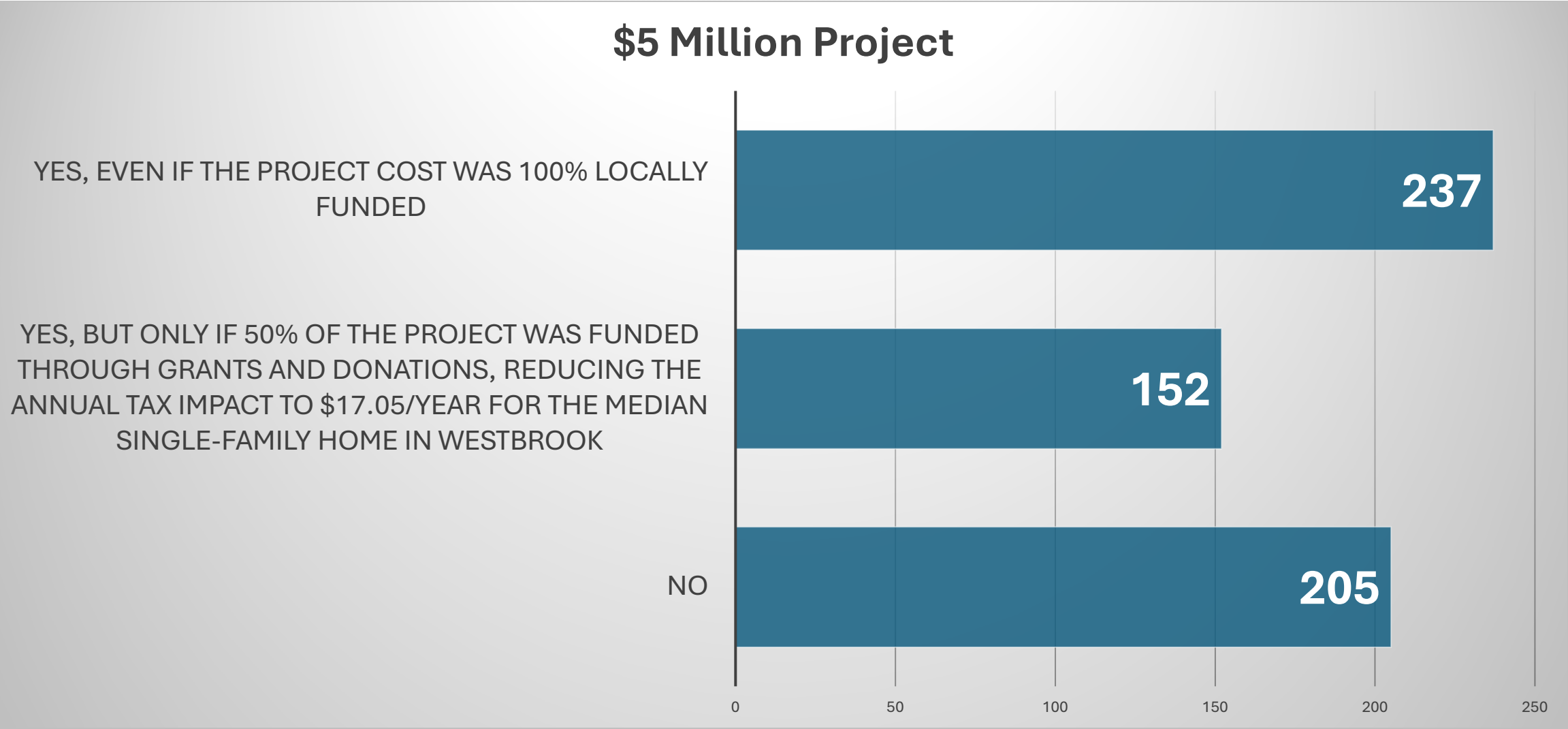
- **Why did we ask this question?**
 - The responses to these questions will indicate our community's willingness to make certain levels of investment, whether 100% tax covered, or 50% tax covered.
 - As noted in second meeting, very rough figures here, based upon general cost estimates previously received.
 - Given a certain scenario, what range would people be willing to pay?

Disclaimer

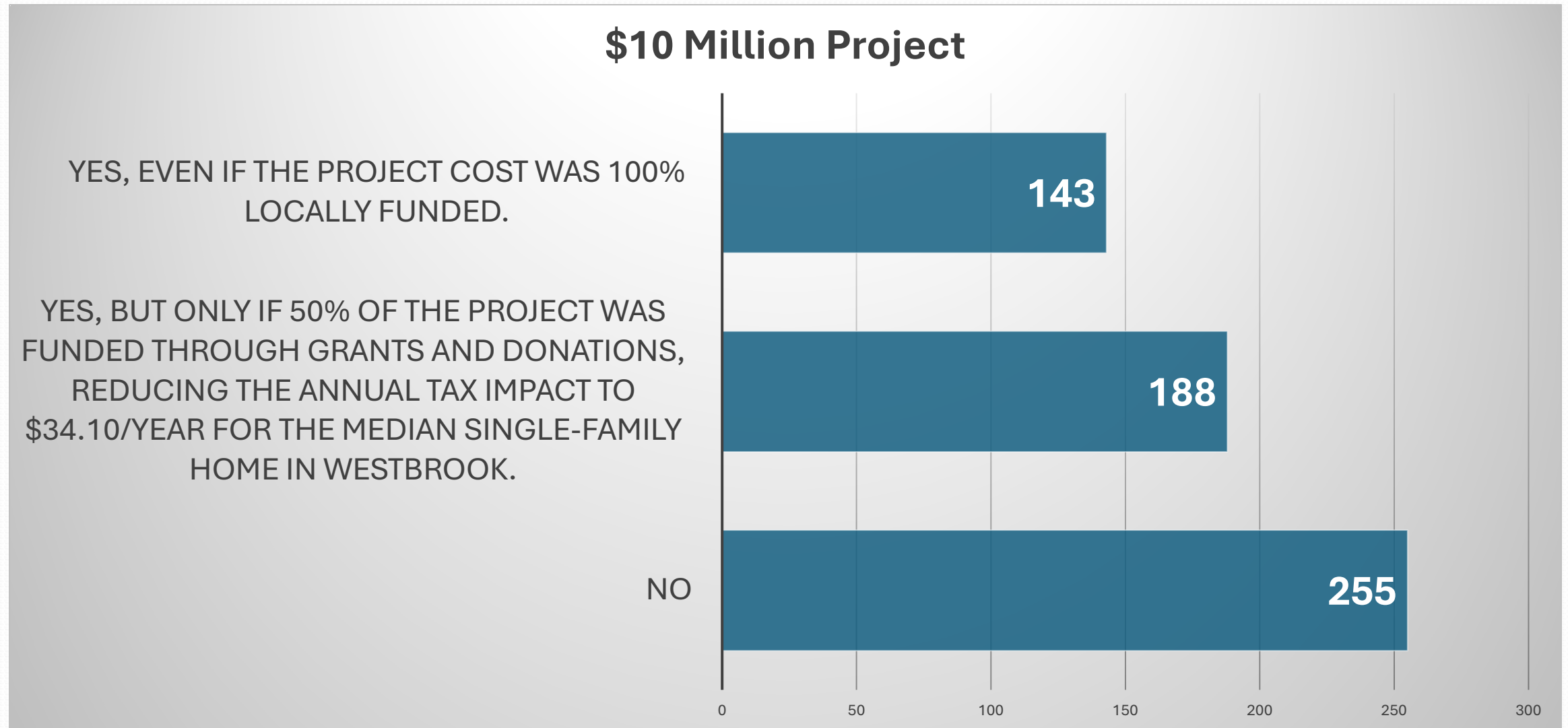
- **PLEASE NOTE:**

- This is not a measurement of actual water amenity costs
- The cost estimates were received for different configurations of a pool concept at a specific location given specific conditions
- Actual costs of any new water amenity will vary
- This is a tool – an indicator of “willingness to pay” ranges

Q15 - \$5 Million (additional \$34.10/annually)

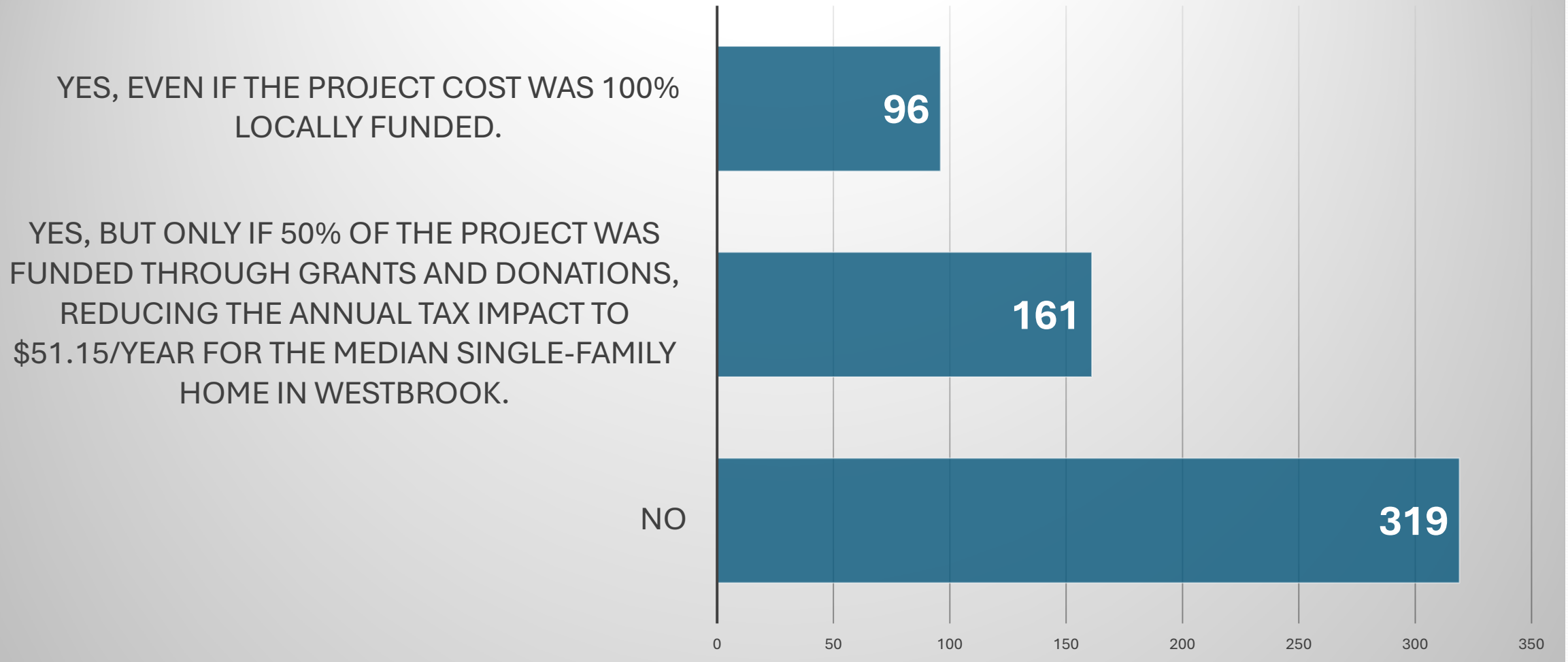


Q16 - \$10 Million (additional \$68.20/annually)

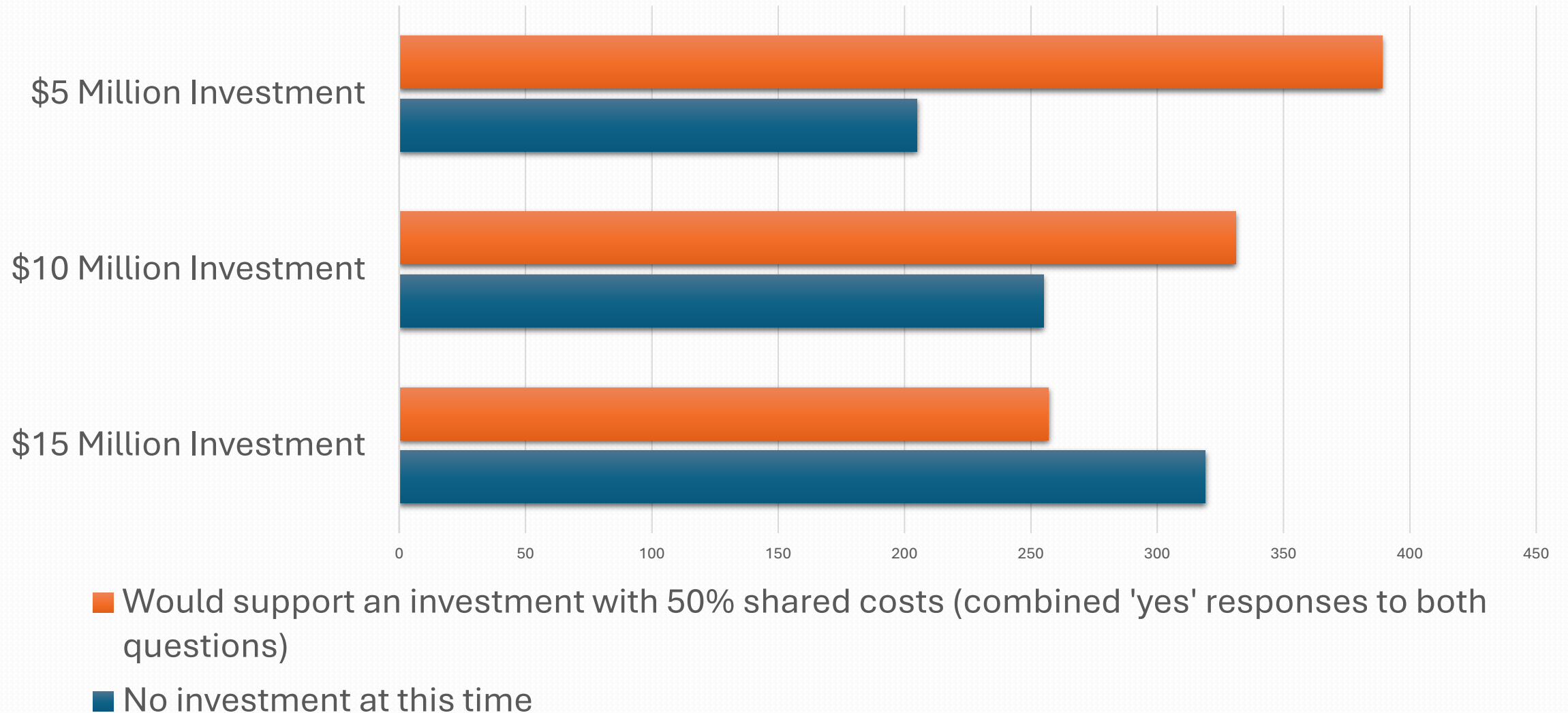


Q17 - \$15 Million (additional \$102.30/annually)

\$15 Million Project



“Combined Yes at 50%” v. “No”



Comments

- **Comments from respondents who said “no investment”:**
 - Lack of support for any investment that would have an impact on property taxes
 - There are other priorities in the City where funds would be more appropriately allocated
 - Concern for ongoing maintenance costs and/or investment of this magnitude for a seasonal-use amenity

Financials – Summary

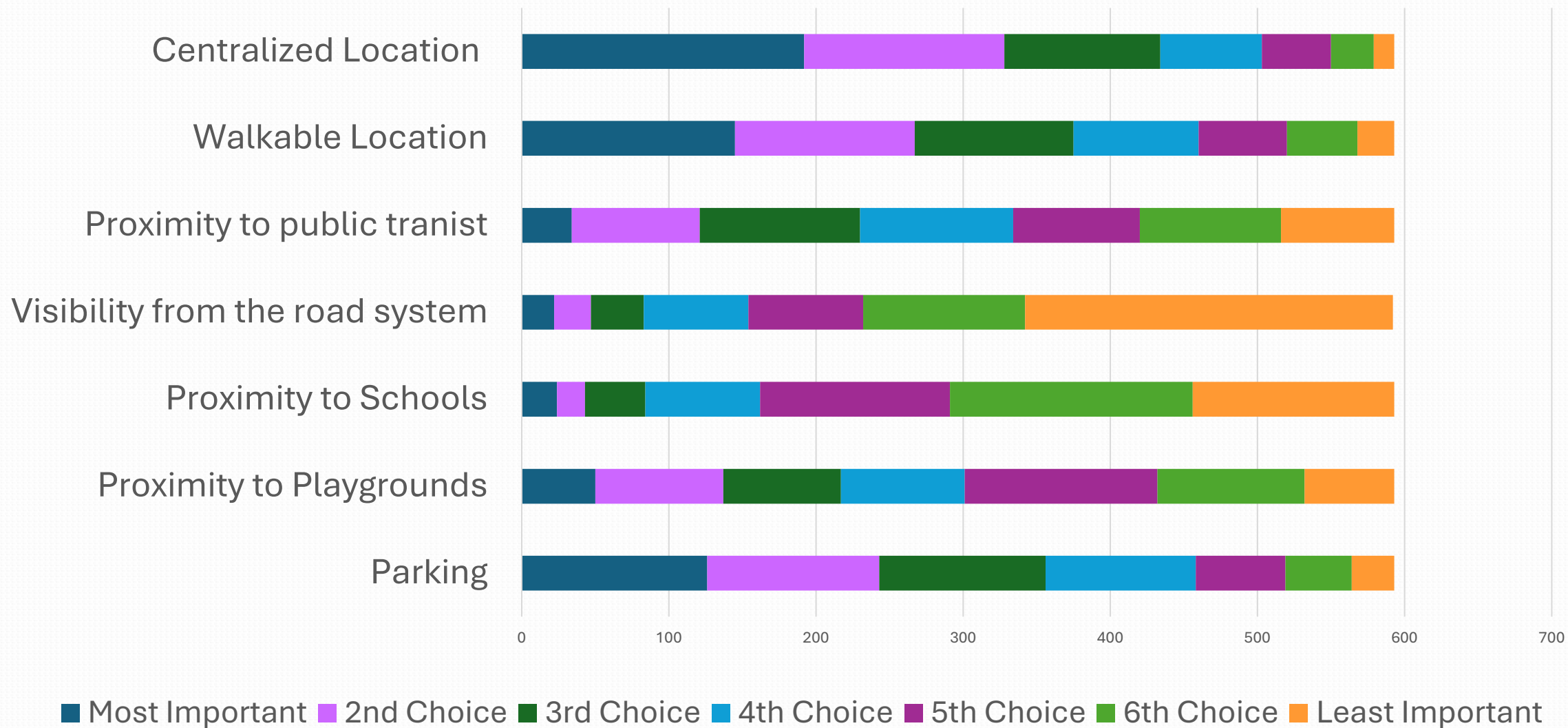
- **What do these answers tell us?**
 - A majority of respondents indicate a willingness to invest in a water amenity within the \$5 - \$10 million price range, provided that at least 50% is shared through grants/donations.
 - Majority of respondents indicate no support of investment above \$10 million at this time.
- **What *don't* these answers tell us?**
 - What a water amenity would actually cost

Amenity Attributes

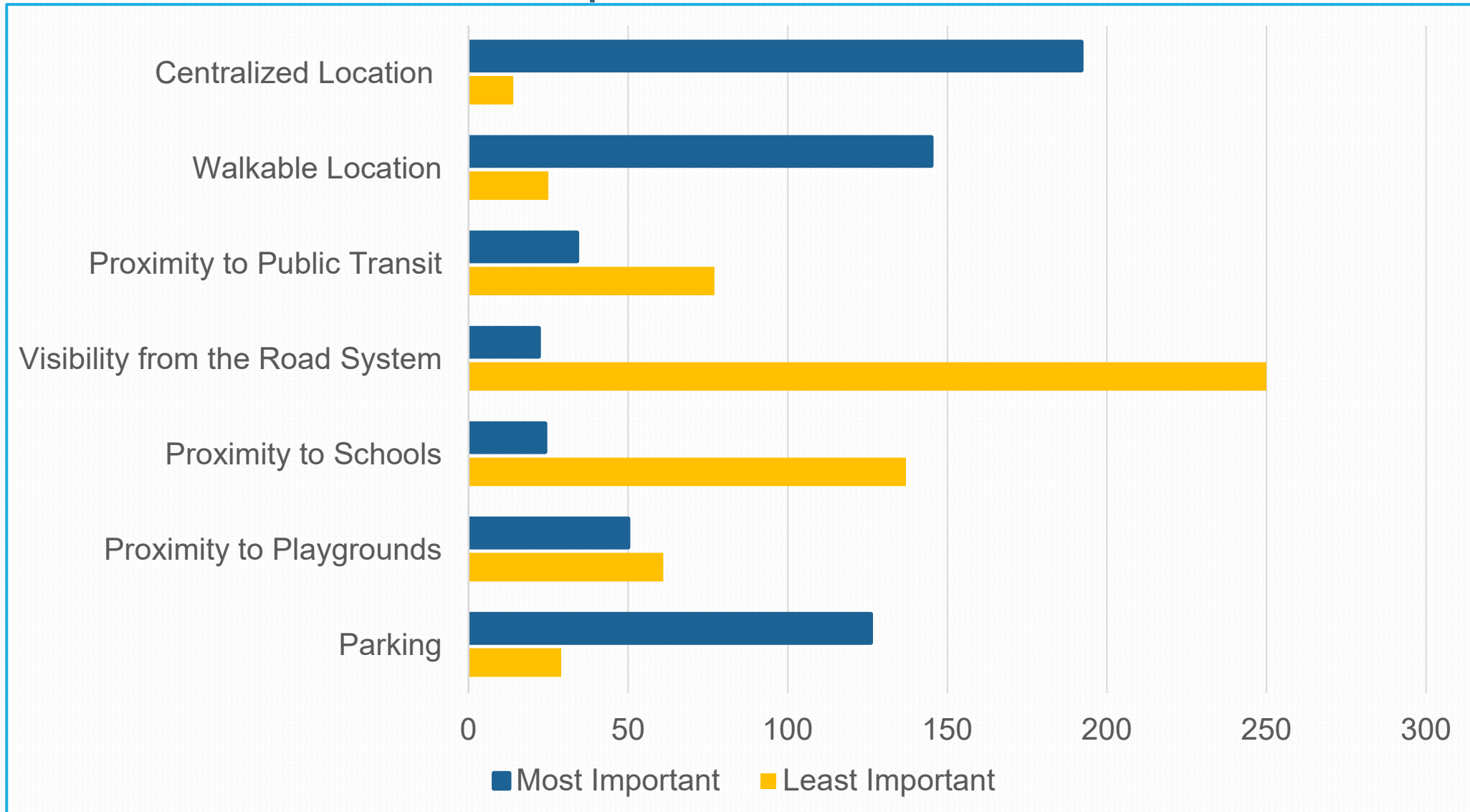
Amenity Attributes

- **Why did we ask these questions?**
 - We want have an idea of where an amenity should be located
 - Of the options considered thus far, what is most preferred?

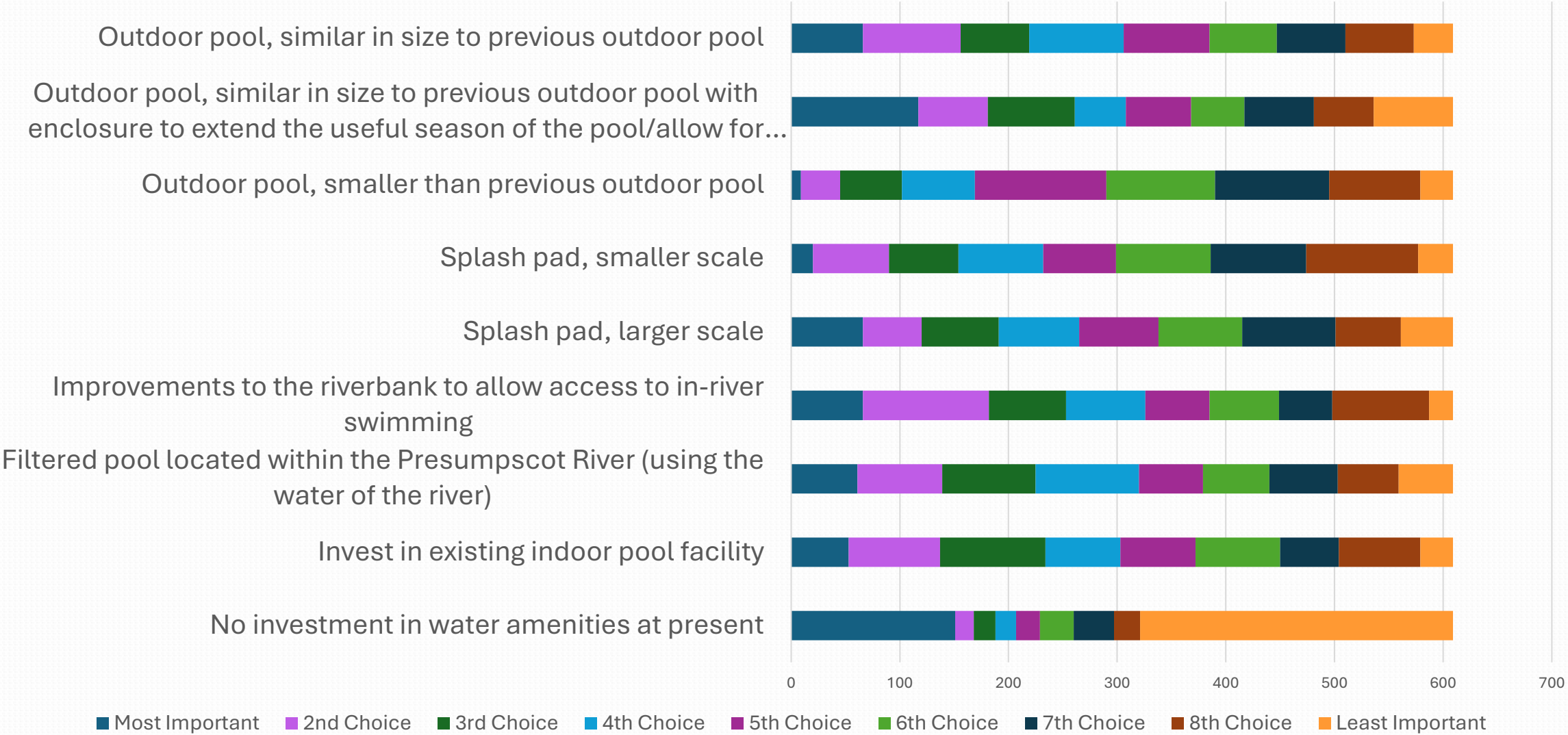
Q13 – Prioritizing Attributes



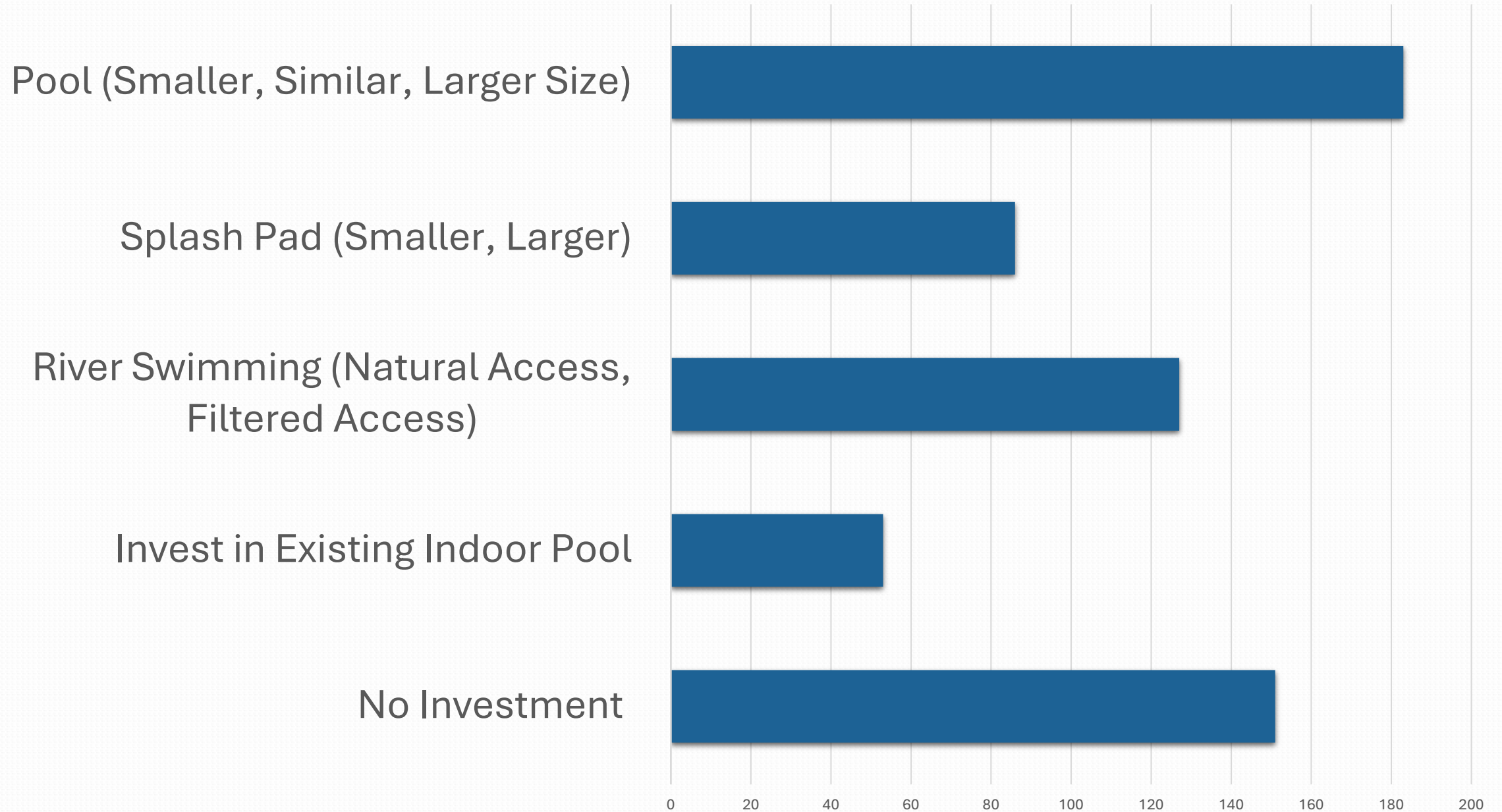
Q13 – Most/Least Important



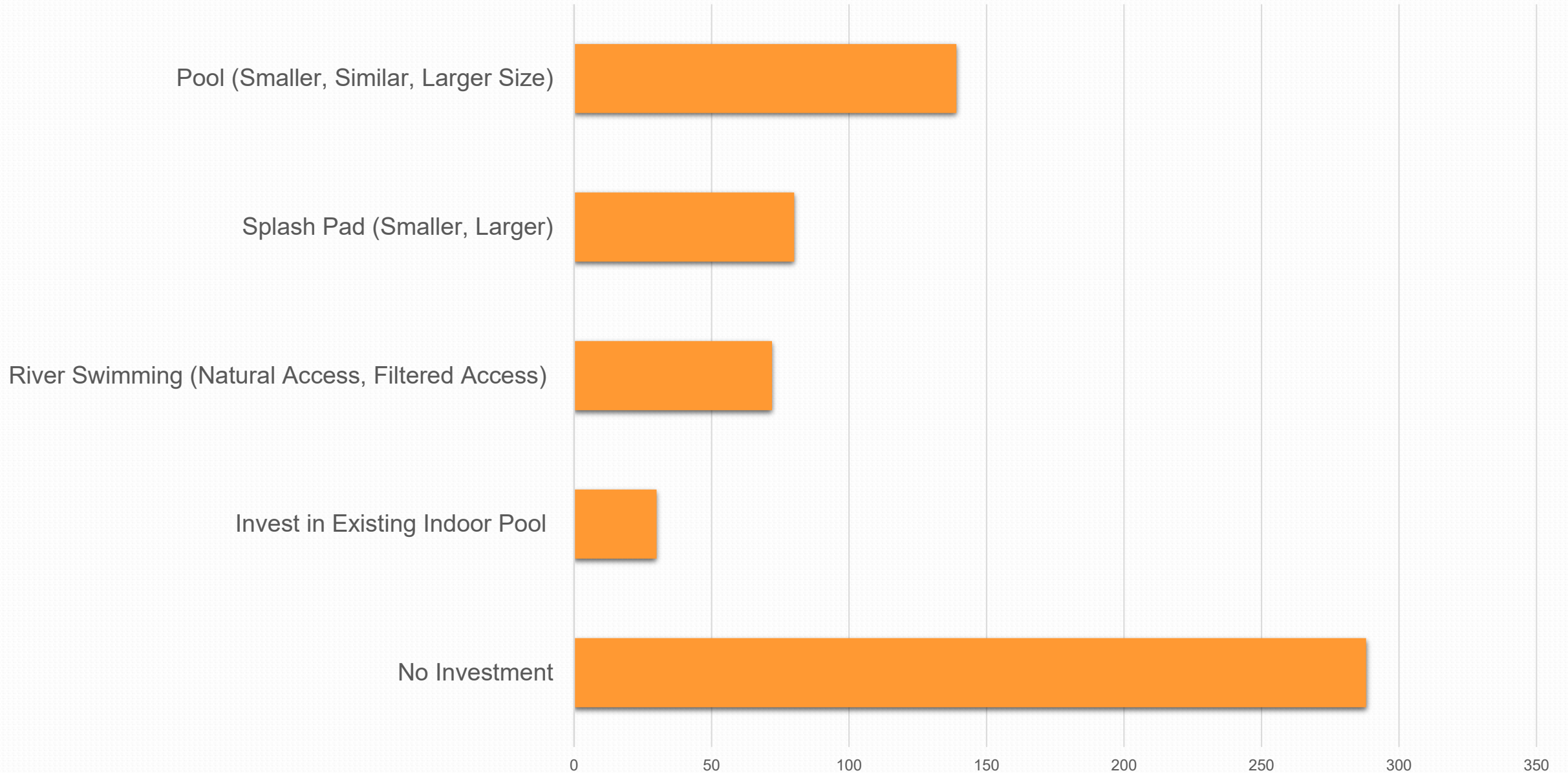
Q14 – Prioritizing Known Options



Most Important (Choice 1)



Least Important (Choice 9)



	7 th Round
Outdoor pool, similar in size to previous outdoor pool with enclosure to extend the useful season of the pool/allow for use during weather events	43%
Improvements to the riverbank to allow access to in-river swimming	29%
No investment in water amenities at present	28%

Amenity Attributes – Summary

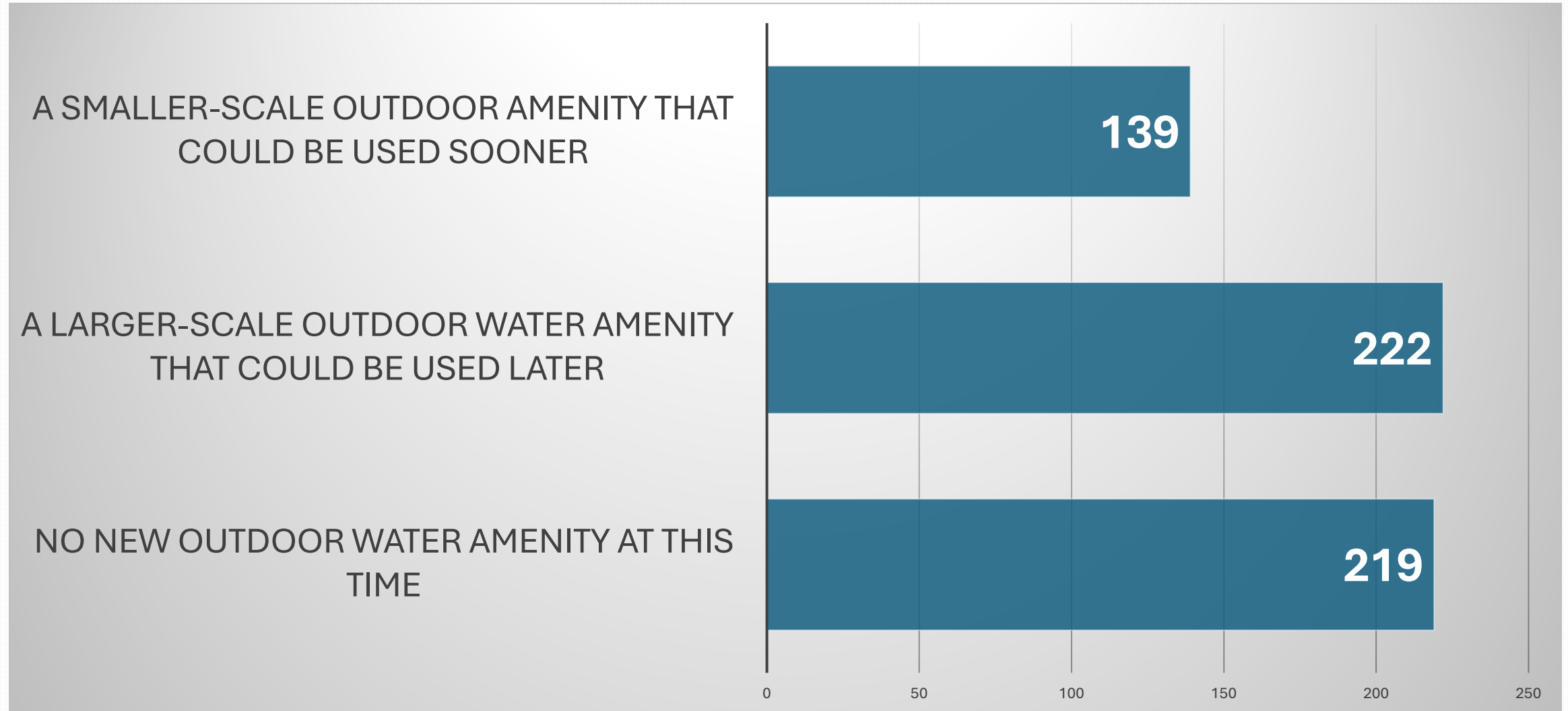
- **What do these answers tell us?**
 - Most important location attributes – centralized, walkable, adequate parking
 - Most preferred type of amenity - outdoor pool similar in size to previous outdoor pool with enclosure to extend useful season
 - Majority prefer moving forward with some kind of amenity rather than nothing.

Timeline

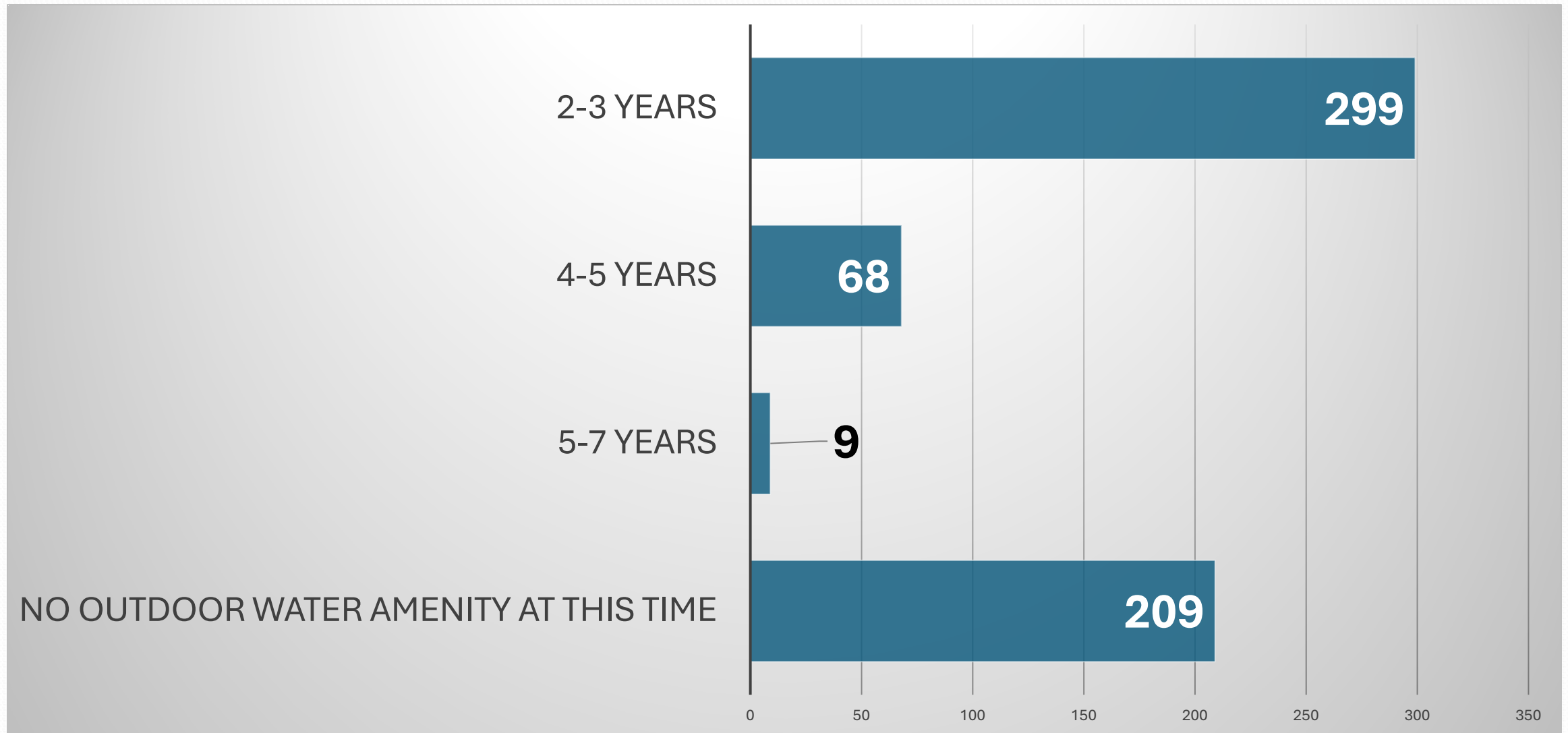
Timeline

- **Why did we ask these questions?**
 - To get an idea of what expectations our community has in terms of timing for any kind of new water-project.
 - Given the values and attributes identified, what should the scale be based upon time expectations.
 - As another way to gauge the intensity of the problem/need.
 - The answers to these questions will indicate when the next steps should be taken.

Q18 – Project Scale v. Time



Q19 – Timeline



Timeline – Summary

- **What do these answers tell us?**
 - Highly conflicting information
 - Majority of respondents prefer a larger-scale project in the more distant future yet feel the near future (2-3 years) is an appropriate time to create a new water amenity
 - While not a majority, a significant number of respondents prefer no new water amenity at present time
- **What don't these answers tell us?**
 - Where the middle ground is

Decision Criteria & Recommendations

Survey Takeaways	Decision Criteria & Recommendations
A water amenity is desired, at some point.	<p>A water amenity should be included in any future plan for Westbrook and should increase access to swimmable water, particularly recreational (“open swim”) opportunities.</p> <p>A water amenity should provide opportunities for all age groups.</p>
Swimming is a valued skill and activity in our community	
Swimmable water is preferred over non-swimmable water	
Opportunities for recreational swimming (“open swim”) are more important than programmed swimming (swim lessons)	
A water amenity is not a child-focused issue	

Survey Takeaways	Decision Criteria & Recommendations
<p>An investment of more than \$10 million is too large of an investment in a water amenity for the community at this time.</p>	<p>Priority should be given to a project that can be phased to allow for some investment now with a potentially greater allocation thereafter.</p> <p>A new amenity should not cost more than \$5m - \$10m, with no more than 50% covered through City taxpayer funds, with the remainder covered through grants/donations.</p> <p>Priority should be given to projects that are less costly while achieving other goals/values identified in this report.</p>
<p>There is an immediate desire for an amenity, but a strong concern for the financial implications associated with an investment.</p>	
<p>The tax increases over the past two years have felt significant.</p>	

Survey Takeaways	Decision Criteria & Recommendations
The limited seasonal use of an outdoor pool is a concern	Priority should be made for a project that provides an extended useful season.
The existing pool does not meet the current demand for swim opportunities	Review existing indoor pool usage & policies to determine if swim opportunities can be expanded.
A water amenity should be located in a centralized, walkable location where adequate parking is provided.	Priority should be made for a project with these attributes
Interaction with natural water is important	Explore opportunities for increased access and utilization of natural water bodies.

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