

REPORT FOR

City of Cambridge Community Development

Kendall Square Open Space Survey

BY



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Methodology

A telephone survey was conducted among those who live within a half-mile of Kendall Square in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Interviews were conducted from July 19 to August 9, 2012. A total of 234 interviews were completed with those who live within a half-mile of Kendall Square. Street listings used to comprise the sample were provided to Opinion Dynamics by the City of Cambridge. Opinion Dynamics then conducted reverse look-ups of telephone numbers associated with those listings for the telephone sample.

When looking at the results from the total number of completed surveys (n=234), the margin of error is $\pm 6.4\%$ at the mid-range of the 95% confidence interval. That is, when conducting 100 similar surveys, 95 of them will yield results that fall—at worst—6.4 points on either side of a given percentage.

Executive Summary

The results from this survey indicate that people living in the Kendall Square area enjoy a wide array of open space opportunities, but seem to have a particular attraction to open spaces that involve water. For example, when asked to name their favorite overall open space, the Charles River tops the list. When asked to specify a favorite open space around Kendall Square, area residents most often mention the *walkway or canal* between Binney Street and Broadway. When we asked respondents to tell us why they enjoyed those open spaces, *proximity to water* appears among the top three responses, in addition to attributes like *large spaces* and *clean, beautiful, well-maintained*. The most cited reason for liking Kendall Square open spaces is *restaurant and food options* around favorite spots.

With regard to usage, we find that almost four in ten respondents (39%) use some type of open space more than once a week. About one in five (18%) are even more frequent users, at more than three times per week. It should be noted, however, that a majority of respondents (58%) use open spaces in Kendall Square three times a month or *less*. Clearly, there is an opportunity to enhance that level of participation among a substantial proportion of the Kendall Square area population.

We asked respondents to rate the importance of a whole host of outdoor open space activities. In a general sense, *walking, sitting or relaxing, and socializing* are the top activities, each garnering importance levels in excess of 60% (with *walking* at 83% importance). We then isolated those who gave a rating of *very or somewhat important* to a particular activity and asked if they wanted more opportunities for that activity in Kendall Square. When looking at these rankings, *play opportunities for teens* ranks highly, followed by *outdoor performances*, and *more opportunities for sitting and relaxing*. In an effort to normalize these ratings, we include a composite Importance and Desire table that reflects the *adjusted* percentage of those who would like more opportunities for an activity in Kendall Square. The adjusted percentage is based on the total sample size of 234 in order to get an overview of the proportion of those who are both interested in **and** would like more options for each activity. When using this methodology, we find that *outdoor performances* tops the list of desirability, followed by *sitting and relaxing, walking, informal socializing and outdoor dining*.

When asked about the primary benefits of open spaces, a plurality (32%) cite environmental benefits, such as *trees, shade, and water*. When pressed to name something that would make them more likely to use Kendall Square open space more frequently, *more parks, trees, shade, and green spaces* tops the list. This is followed by *more community, social, and other outdoor activities and events*.

All in all, the survey shows that residents around the Kendall Square area have a strong desire to have more and greater opportunities to enjoy open spaces. They seem to gravitate toward spaces that feature water, and want more opportunities centered on outdoor performances, as well as simple sitting, relaxing, and socializing. While there is already substantial usage of open spaces in the area, this survey indicates that a concerted effort by the city could substantially increase that usage. Almost six in ten residents utilize open space around Kendall Square three times a month or less; given the desire on the part of residents, this number can be substantially increased.

Summary of Findings

Seventeen percent consider *the Charles River* their favorite outdoor space in the city, while 9% prefer *North Point Park*. Seven percent mention *parks* in general, and another 7% favor *Harvard Square*. Six percent like *Boston Common* the best, 6% like *Fresh Pond*, and 5% like the *parks along Memorial Drive*. Four percent like the *Lechmere Canal Park* or *Cambridgeside Galleria*.

Each of the following parks are favored by 3% of area residents: *Donnelly Field*; *Danehy Park*; *Public library*; *Costa Lopez Park* or *small parks in East Cambridge*; *other Cambridge-specific areas*; *Central Square*; *Kendall Square*; and *Area Four* or *MIT area*. Two percent like the *Roof Garden in Kendall Square* the best, 1% mention *playgrounds*, 1% *Lafayette Park in Central Square*, and 1% *GoldStar Mother's Park*. Eight percent mention some other park, and 9% don't know or don't have a favorite outdoor space in the city.

What is your favorite public or private outdoor space in the city?

The Charles River (not Cambridge-specific)	17%
North Point Park	9
The park(s) (general)	7
Harvard Square	7
Boston Common/Garden	6
Fresh Pond	6
Parks along Memorial Drive	5
Lechmere Canal Park/Cambridgeside Galleria	4
Donnelly Field/Park	3
Danehy Park	3
Public library/libraries	3
Costa Lopez Park/small parks in East Cambridge	3
Other Cambridge-specific areas	3
Central Square	3
Kendall Square	3
Area Four/MIT area	3
Roof Garden (Kendall Square)	2
Playgrounds (general)	1
Lafayette Park (Central Square)	1
Gold Star Mother's Park	1
(Other)	8
(Don't know/Don't have one)	9

Those with a favorite outdoor space (n=212) were then asked to describe what they like most about the space. Nineteen percent mention that it is a *large, open space or [has] fresh air*, and another 19% say it is *clean or beautiful or nice landscaping or well-maintained*. Eighteen percent like their space's *proximity to water*, and 17% like the *trees or grass or nature*. Thirteen percent describe their spot as *quiet, relaxing, or peaceful*, and 13% like that it is *accessible or convenient*. Eleven percent like the *urban energy or activities* of their space, and 11% like *walking paths or area for pedestrians and bikers or exercise*.

Ten percent like that is *kid or family-friendly or has a playground*, 9% like *socializing or people watching*, 8% like the *recreational or sport facilities*, and 8% think it is *scenic or like the view or weather*. Seven percent prefer a spot that is *dog-friendly*, 6% like their spot because it is *safe, comfortable, or familiar*, and 6% like *places to sit or picnic tables*. Four percent say what they like most about their spot is *no cars, traffic, congestion, or crowds*, 4% like *restaurants or food options*, 3% like *store or retail options*, and 3% like the *shade*. Two percent like *outdoor music or entertainment*, and 6% like some other aspect.

(If mention a space, n=212)

What do you like most about that space?

Large/open space/fresh air	19%
Clean/beautiful/nice landscaping/well maintained	19
Proximity to water	18
Trees/grass/nature	17
Quiet/relaxing/peaceful	13
Accessible/available/convenient (i.e. close to home, off the T, etc)	13
Activities/lots going on/urban energy	11
Walking paths/areas for pedestrians and bikers/exercise	11
Kid/family friendly/has a playground	10
Socializing/people watching	9
Recreational/sport facilities (i.e. pool, basketball court, baseball field)	8
Scenic/the view/weather	8
Dog friendly	7
Safe/comfortable/familiar	6
Places to sit/picnic tables	6
No cars, traffic, congestion, crowds	4
Restaurant/food options	4
Store/retail options	3
Shade	3
Outdoor music/entertainment	2
(Other)	6

When asked for a favorite public or private outdoor space in Kendall Square, 39% don't know. Nine percent like the *walkway or canal between Binney Street and Broadway*, while another 9% like the *Rooftop Garden*. Eight percent like *Cambridge Center*, 7% the *Charles River waterfront or Cambridge parkway*, and 7% like *One Kendall Square*.

Six percent mention general *restaurant or retail choices*, 5% the *Galleria or Canal Park or East Cambridge*, 4% *MIT or Killian Court or Memorial Drive*, and 4% mention the *skating rink*. Three percent mention *canoe, kayak, or boat facilities*, 3% like *Longfellow Bridge* the best, and 3% like *Area Four*. Each of the following is mentioned by 1%: *North Point Park*; *Kendall Square Movie Theater*; *all of Kendall Square*; and *Farmer's market*.

What is your favorite public or private outdoor space in the Kendall Square area?

Walkway/Canal between Binney St and Broadway	9%
Rooftop Garden	9
Cambridge Center	8
Charles River waterfront/Cambridge parkway	7
One Kendall Square	7
Restaurant/retail choices (general)	6
Galleria/Canal Park/East Cambridge	5
MIT/Killian Court/Memorial Drive	4
Skating Rink	4
Canoe, kayak, boat facilities	3
Longfellow Bridge	3
Area Four	3
North Point Park	1
Kendall Square Movie Theatre	1
Farmer's Market	1
All of it (no specific place)	1
(Don't know)	39

Those with a favorite space in Kendall Square (n=148) were then asked what they like most about the space. Twenty percent like the *restaurant or food options* in the area, 17% think it is *clean, beautiful, has nice landscaping, or is well-maintained*, and 16% like the *proximity to water*. Thirteen percent say their spot is a *large, open space or [has] fresh air*. Eleven percent like the *trees, grass, or nature*, 11% like the *urban energy or activities*, and 11% say their space is *quiet, relaxing, or peaceful*.

Nine percent think it is *scenic, [like] the view, or weather*, 7% like the *places to sit or picnic tables*, and 7% like *socializing or people-watching*. Six percent like how *accessible or convenient* their space is, while 6% like the *outdoor dining options* available. Five percent like the *walking paths or areas for pedestrians, bikers, or exercise*, 4% like that it is *kid or family-friendly or has a playground*, 3% like the *lack of traffic, cars, or congestion*, and 3% like the *recreational or sport facilities*. Two percent like that their space is *dog-friendly*, 2% like the *movie theater*, 1% the *shade*, and 1% *outdoor music or entertainment*. Nine percent like some other aspect about their space the most.

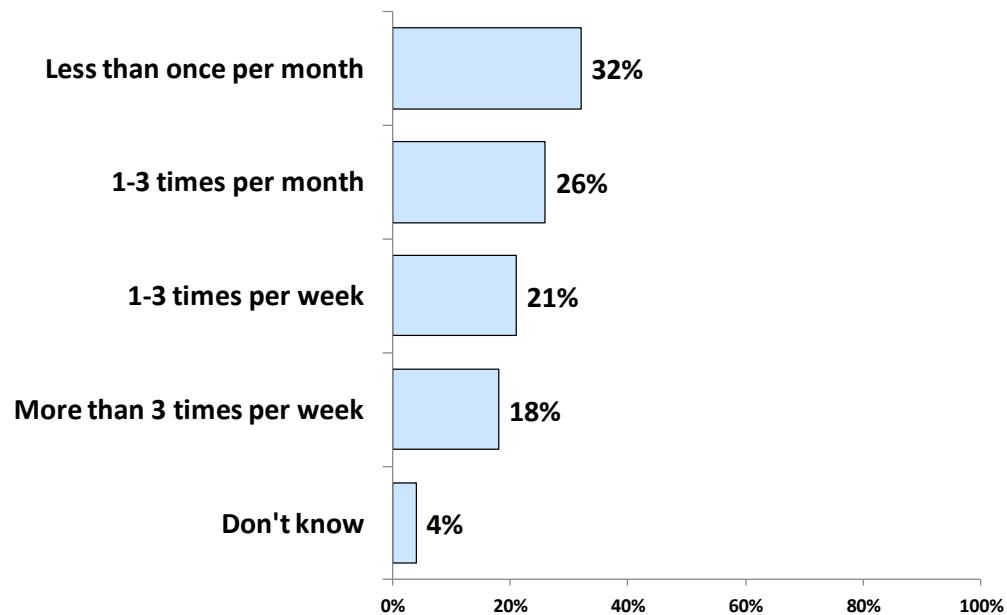
(If mention a space, n=148)

What do you like most about that space?

Restaurant/food options	20%
Clean/beautiful/nice landscaping/well maintained	17
Proximity to water	16
Large/open space/fresh air	13
Trees/grass/nature	11
Activities/lots going on/urban energy	11
Quiet/relaxing/peaceful	11
Scenic/the view/weather	9
Places to sit/picnic tables	7
Safe/comfortable/familiar	7
Socializing/people watching	7
Accessible/available/convenient (i.e. close to home, off the T, etc)	6
Outdoor dining options	6
Walking paths/areas for pedestrians and bikers/exercise	5
Kid/family friendly/has a playground	4
No cars, traffic, congestion, crowds	3
Recreational/sport facilities (i.e. pool, basketball court, baseball field)	3
Dog friendly	2
Movie theatre	2
Shade	1
Outdoor music/entertainment	1
(Other)	9
(Don't know)	4

Almost four in ten respondents (39%) visit an outdoor space in Kendall Square more than once a week, with about one in five (18%) visiting more than three times per week. However, over half (58%) visit an outdoor space in Kendall Square 3 times a month or *less*.

On average, how often do you or members of your household visit an outdoor space in Kendall Square?



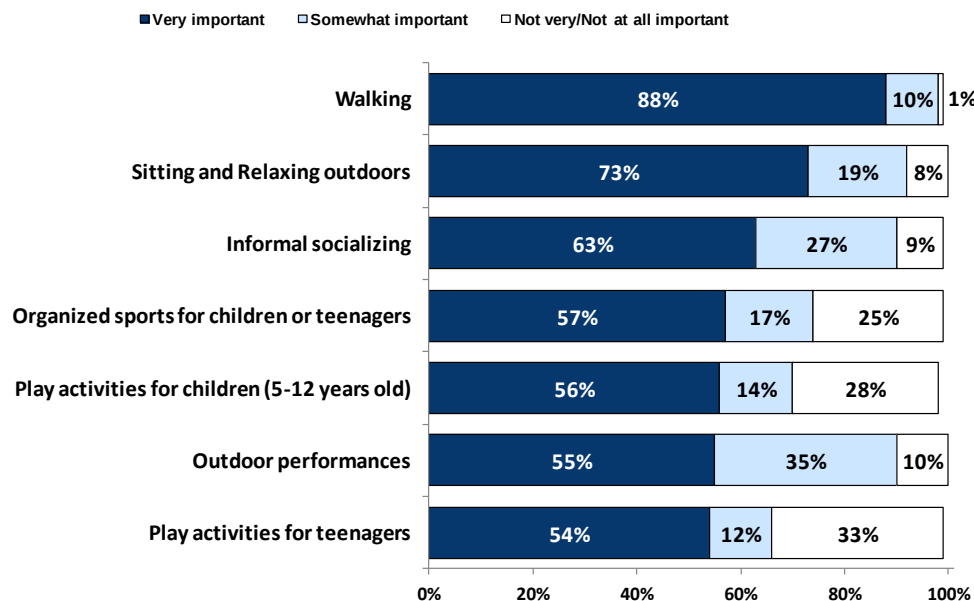
- Twenty-five percent of those with a full or part-time job visit outdoor spaces in Kendall Square more than three times per month, compared with 10% of those who are unemployed.

Local residents were then read a series of outdoor activities and asked to rate how important each one is to them personally.

Eighty-eight percent say **walking** is *very important*, 10% say it is *somewhat important*, and 1% say it is *not very or not at all important*. Seventy-three percent consider **sitting and relaxing outdoors** to be *very important*, 19% consider it to be *somewhat important*, and 8% think it is *not very or not at all important*. Sixty-three percent think **informal socializing** is *very important*, 27% think it is *somewhat important*, and 9% think it is *not very or not at all important*.

When rating the importance of **organized sports for children or teenagers**, 57% think it is *very important*, 17% *somewhat important*, and 25% think it is *not very or not at all important*. Fifty-five percent say **outdoor performances** are *very important*, 35% say they are *somewhat important*, and 10% say they are *not very or not at all important*. **Play activities for teenagers** are rated *very important* by 54%, *somewhat important* by 12%, and *not very or not at all important* by 33%.

I'm going to read you a list of some typical outdoor activities. For each one, please tell me whether the activity is very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important to you.



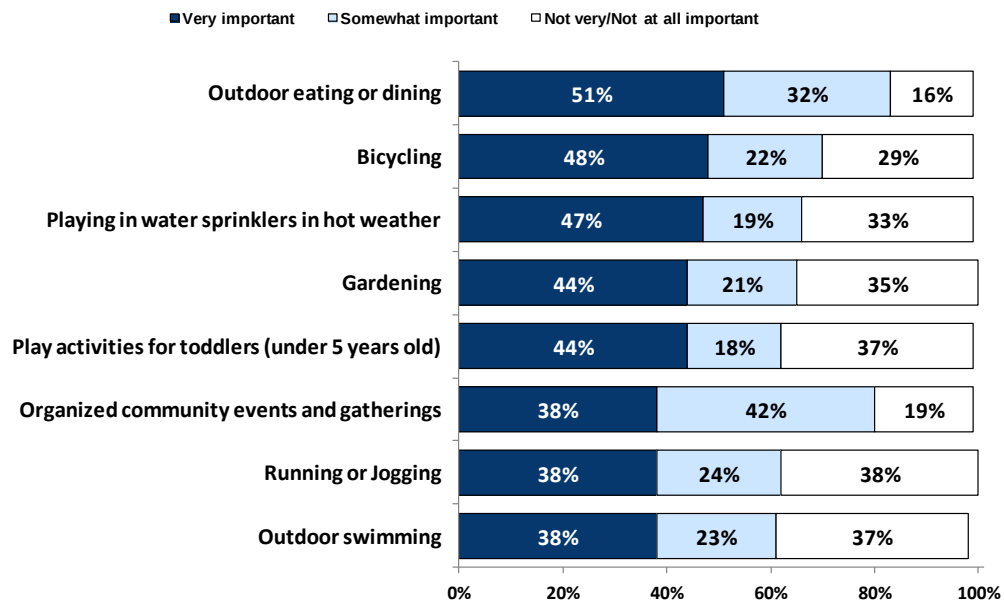
- Ninety-three percent of those with a full or part-time job say **walking** is *very important*, compared with 81% of those who are unemployed.
- Sixty-six percent of Renters say **organized sports for children or teenagers** are *very important*, compared with 52% of Homeowners.
- Renters (64%) are more likely than Homeowners (50%) to say **play activities for teenagers** are *very important*.

Fifty-one percent say **outdoor eating or dining** is *very important*, 32% *somewhat important*, and 16% say it is *not very or not at all important*. Forty-eight percent think **bicycling** is *very important*, 22% *somewhat important*, and 29% think it is *not very or not at all important*.

When evaluating **playing in water sprinklers in hot weather**, 47% say this is *very important*, 19% *somewhat important*, and 33% *not very or not at all important*. **Gardening** is considered to be *very important* by 44%, *somewhat important* by 21%, and *not very or not at all important* by 35%. Forty-four percent say **play activities for toddlers** are *very important*, 18% say they are *somewhat important*, and 37% say they are *not very or not at all important*.

Thirty-eight percent think **organized community events and gatherings** are *very important*, 42% *somewhat important*, and 19% think they are *not very or not at all important*. Thirty-eight percent say **running or jogging** is *very important*, 24% *somewhat important*, and 38% *not very or not at all important*. Another 38% say **outdoor swimming** is *very important*, 23% *somewhat important*, and 37% *not very or not at all important*.

I'm going to read you a list of some typical outdoor activities. For each one, please tell me whether the activity is very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important to you.



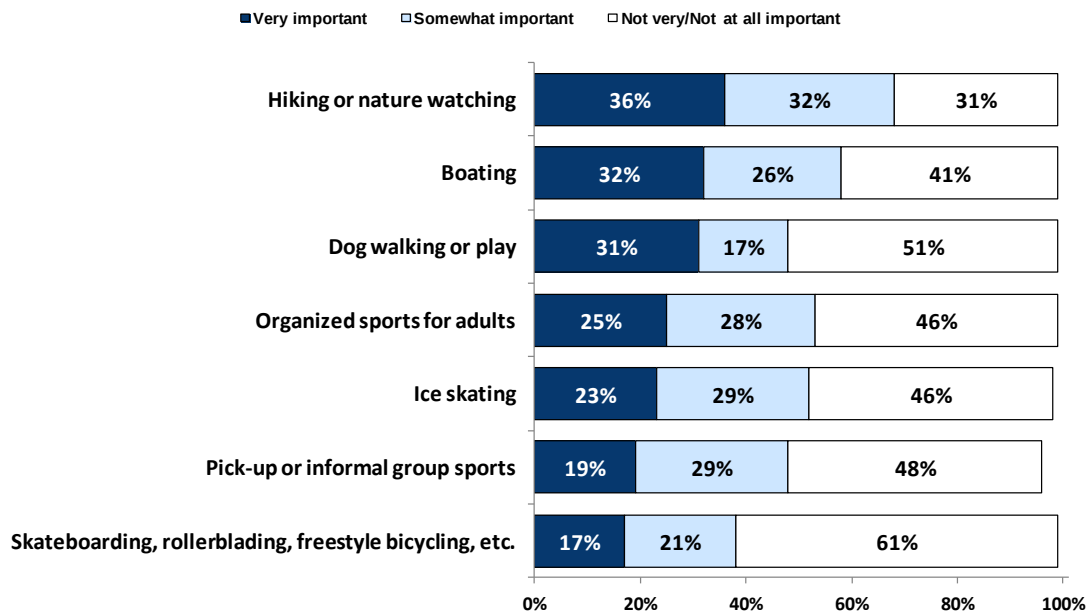
- Fifty-five percent of Renters say **playing in sprinklers** is *very important*, compared with 41% of Homeowners.
- Fifty-six percent of those who live in single family homes say **gardening** is *very important*, compared with 40% of those who live in multi-family homes.
- Renters (47%) are more likely than Homeowners (33%) to say **swimming** is *very important*.

Thirty-six percent think **hiking or nature watching** is *very important*, 32% *somewhat important*, and 31% *not very or not at all important*. Thirty-two percent say **boating** is *very important*, 26% *somewhat important*, and 41% say it is *not very or not at all important*. When rating the importance of **dog walking or play**, 31% think it is *very important*, 17% *somewhat important*, and 51% think it is *not very or not at all important*.

One-quarter think **organized sports for adults** are *very important*, 28% *somewhat important*, and 46% think they are *not very or not at all important*. Twenty-three percent consider **ice-skating** to be *very important*, 29% *somewhat important*, and 46% *not very or not at all important*.

Nineteen percent think **pick-up or informal group sports** are *very important*, 29% *somewhat important*, and 48% think they are *not very or not at all important*. **Skateboarding, rollerblading, freestyle biking, etc.** receive the lowest importance ratings: 17% *very important*; 21% *somewhat important*; and 61% *not very or not at all important*.

I'm going to read you a list of some typical outdoor activities. For each one, please tell me whether the activity is very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important to you.

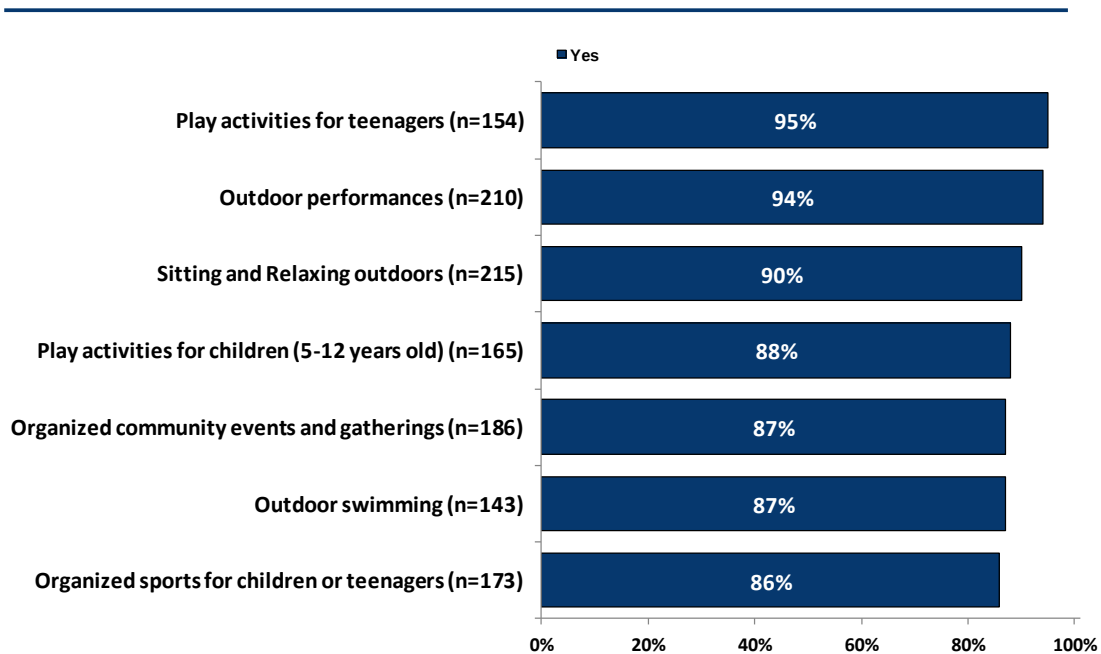


- Renters (34%) are more likely than Homeowners (21%) to say **organized sports for adults** are *very important*.
- Twenty-three percent of those who live in a multi-family dwelling say **informal group sports** are *very important*, compared with 8% of those who live in single-family dwellings.

Those who rated an activity as *very or somewhat important* were then asked if they would like more opportunities for that activity in the Kendall Square area. The number of people who rated each particular activity as *very or somewhat important* (n) is listed next to each activity.

Ninety-five percent would like more **play activities for teenagers**, while 94% would like more **outdoor performances**. Ninety percent would like more **sitting and relaxing outdoors**, 88% would like more **play activities for children**, and 87% would like more **organized community events and gatherings**. Another 87% would like more **outdoor swimming**, and 86% would like more **organized sports for children or teenagers**.

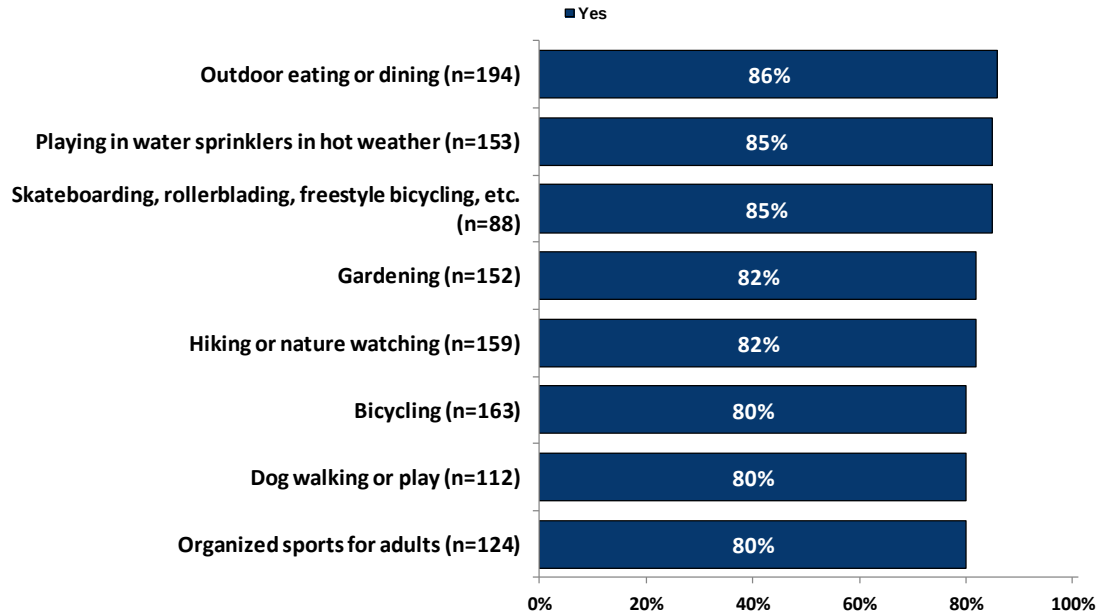
(Asked of those who rated an activity *very or somewhat important*)
Would you like to have more opportunities for that activity in the Kendall Square area?



Eighty-six percent of those who think **outdoor eating or dining** is *very or somewhat important* would like more in the Kendall Square area. Eighty-five percent would like more **playing in water sprinklers in hot weather**, and 85% would like more **skateboarding, rollerblading, freestyle biking, etc.**

Eighty-two percent would like more opportunities for **gardening**, and 82% would like more **hiking or nature watching**. Eight percent of those who think **bicycling** is *very or somewhat important* would like more opportunities, and 80% of those who think **dog walking or play** is *very or somewhat important* would like more opportunities for that activity. Another 80% would like more opportunities for **organized sports for adults**.

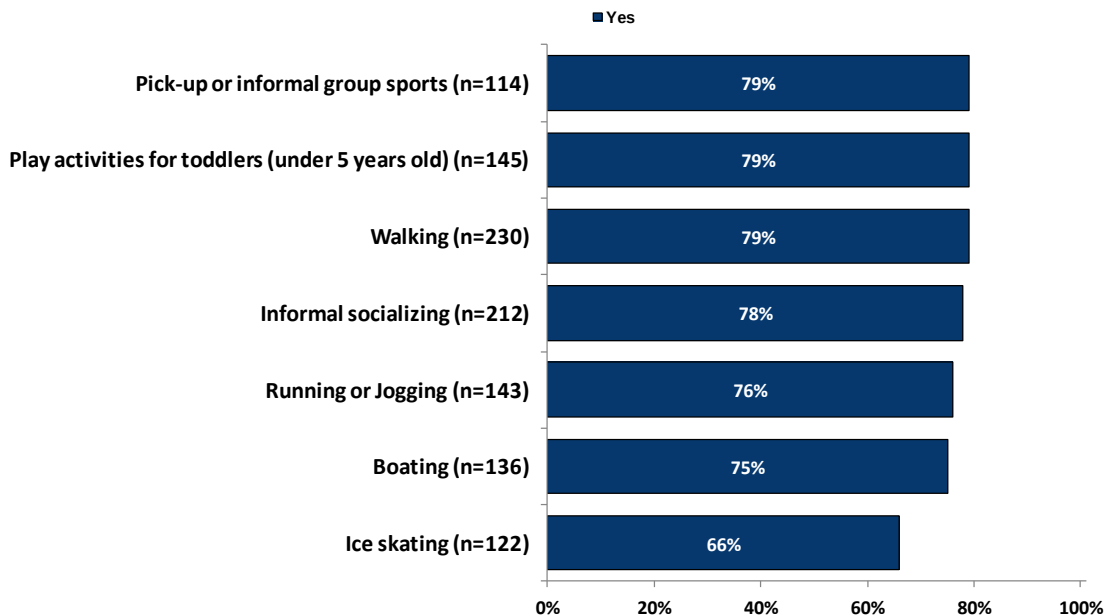
(Asked of those who rated an activity *very or somewhat important*)
Would you like to have more opportunities for that activity in the Kendall Square area?



Seventy-nine percent would like more opportunities for **pick-up or informal group sports**, 79% would like more **play activities for toddlers**, and 79% would like more **walking** opportunities. Seventy-eight percent of those who consider **informal socializing** to be at least *somewhat important* would like more in the Kendall Square area, while 76% of those who think **running or jogging** is at least *somewhat important* would like more opportunity for that activity.

Seventy-five percent of those who consider **boating** to be *very or somewhat important* would like more opportunities for it in the Kendall Square area. Sixty-six percent of those who think **ice skating** is at least *somewhat important* would like more options for it in the local area.

(Asked of those who rated an activity *very or somewhat important*)
Would you like to have more opportunities for that activity in the Kendall Square area?



The first column in the following table shows the percentage of area residents who think each activity is *very or somewhat important*.

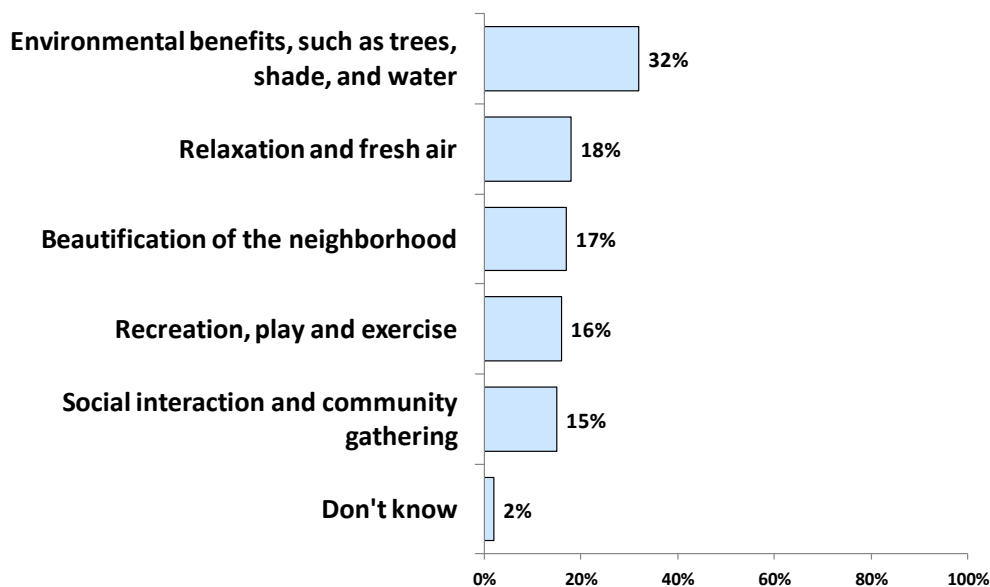
Those who rate a particular activity as *very or somewhat important* were then asked if they would like more opportunities for this activity in the Kendall Square area. The second column contains the *adjusted* percentage of those who would like more opportunities for an activity in Kendall Square. The adjusted percentage is based on the total sample size of 234 in order to get a view of each activity's importance to area residents, and the proportion of those who would like more options for each activity. The following chart rank orders the opportunities by the "adjusted" percentages.

Importance and Desire for More Opportunities

	Very/Somewhat important	Yes, would like more opportunities ADJUSTED
Outdoor performances	90%	85%
Sitting and Relaxing outdoors	92%	82%
Walking	98%	77%
Informal socializing	90%	71%
Outdoor eating or dining	83%	71%
Organized community events and gatherings	80%	69%
Organized sports for children or teenagers	74%	64%
Play activities for teenagers	66%	63%
Play activities for children (5-12 years old)	70%	62%
Bicycling	70%	56%
Hiking or nature watching	68%	56%
Playing in water sprinklers in hot weather	66%	56%
Gardening	65%	53%
Outdoor swimming	61%	53%
Play activities for toddlers (under 5 years old)	62%	49%
Running or Jogging	62%	46%
Boating	58%	44%
Organized sports for adults	53%	42%
Pick-up or informal group sports	48%	38%
Dog walking or play	48%	38%
Ice skating	52%	34%
Skateboarding, rollerblading, freestyle bicycling, etc.	38%	32%

Thirty-two percent say **environmental benefits** are the most important of those offered by outdoor spaces, while 18% choose **relaxation and fresh air**. Seventeen percent consider **beautification of the neighborhood** to be the most important, and 16% opt for **recreation, play, and exercise**. Fifteen percent think **social interaction and community gathering** is most important.

Please listen to the following list of benefits provided by outdoor space, and tell me which ONE you think is the MOST important to members of your household.

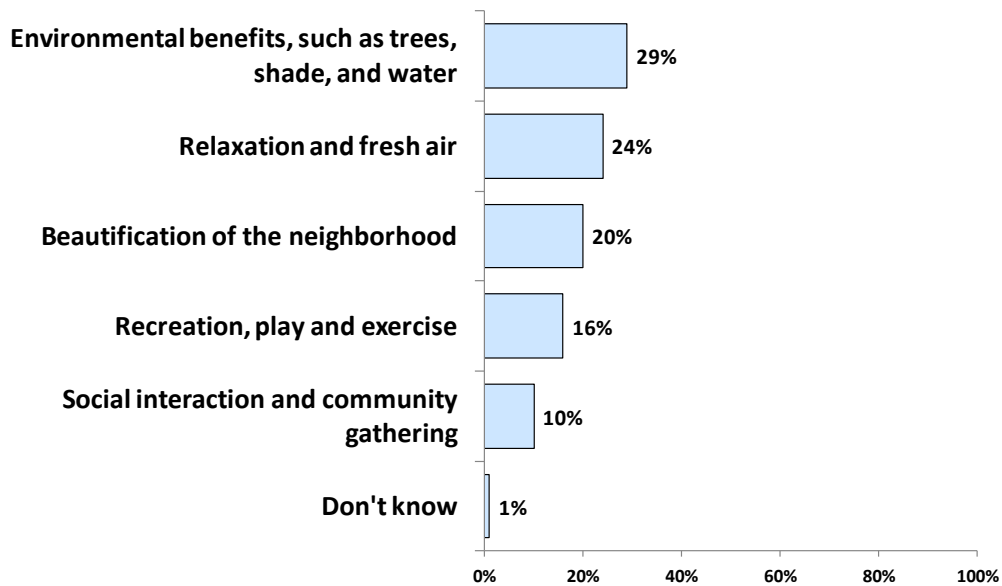


- Homeowners (36%) are more likely than Renters (23%) to say **environmental benefits** are most important.

When asked for the second most important benefit, 29% choose **environmental benefits**, 24% **relaxation and fresh air**, and 20% **beautification of the neighborhood**. Sixteen percent choose **recreation, play, and exercise**, while 10% choose **social interaction and community gathering**.

(Skip if don't know to previous question, n=229)

Of that same list, which you think is the second most important to members of your household?



When asked what would make them more likely to visit outdoor spaces in Kendall Square more frequently, 26% would like *more parks, trees, shade, or green spaces*, while 14% would like *more community, social, or outdoor activities and events*. Twelve percent would like spaces that are *more beautiful, clean, aesthetic, or less polluted*, 8% *more pedestrian and biker-friendly*, and 7% would like *better or more restaurants*.

Six percent would like *less traffic, congestion, or cars*, 6% would like *more accessibility*, 6% *more benches or places to sit*, and 6% would like *more music, concerts, or theaters*. Five percent complain that it *feels industrial* and would like *fewer offices or corporate buildings*, 5% would like *more options for outdoor [dining]*, 5% *more recreational facilities or sports*, 5% would like to *feel more safe or comfortable*, and 5% would like spaces that are *more quiet and relaxing*.

Each of the following is mentioned by 4%: *more kid or family-friendly areas; more water facilities, amenities, or access to the river; more shopping or retail stores; and more dog-friendly areas*. Two percent need *more free time*, 2% *more parking*, 2% *better weather*, and 1% *better public transportation*. Three percent say there is *nothing* that would make them more likely to visit outdoor spaces in Kendall Square, and 3% give some other response.

What would make you more likely to visit outdoor spaces in Kendall Square more frequently?

More parks/trees/shade/green spaces	26%
More community/social/outdoor activities and events	14
More beautiful/clean/aesthetic/less polluted	12
More pedestrian and biker friendly	8
Better/more restaurants	7
Less traffic/congestion/cars	6
Accessibility (general)	6
More benches/places to sit	6
More music/concerts/theaters	6
Less offices/corporate buildings/feels industrial	5
More options for outdoor eating	5
More recreational facilities/sports	5
Feel more safe/comfortable	5
More quiet and relaxing places/environment	5
More kid/family friendly areas	4
More water facilities/amenities/access to the River	4
More shopping/retail stores	4
More dog friendly areas	4
More free time	2
More parking/more accessible by car	2
Better weather	2
Better public transportation	1
(Nothing)	3
(Other)	3
(Don't know)	10

The following table shows demographic information for the respondents to the survey.

Demographics

Live in walking distance of Kendall Square:		Are there people of this age group in your household? (Yes shown)		
Yes	93%			
No/Refused	7	4 or younger	8%	
		5 to 12 years old	15%	
Own	60%	13 to 17 years old	12%	
Rent	37	18 to 24 years old	12%	
Refused	3	25 to 44 years old	33%	
		45 to 64 years old	51%	
Building type: Single family	21%	65 or older	33%	
2-4 units	32			
5 or more units	45			
Refused	2			
Work (n=122) in walking distance of Kendall Square:				
Yes	52%			
No	48			
School (n=16) in walking distance of Kendall Square:				
Yes	44%			
No	56			