Parrs Park Visitor Survey 2015

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Parrs Park Visitor Survey 2015

Dr Jesse Allpress

Economic and Social Research and Evaluation Research and Evaluation Unit Auckland Council

Executive summary

An intercept survey of Parrs Park visitors was conducted in April-May 2015, in order to improve Auckland Council's Local and Sports Parks (LSP) understanding of the experience of visitors within the park.

The survey results indicate that Parrs Park is a popular park with local residents living in West Auckland. The vast majority (85%) of visitors drive to get to the park, with the remainder walking.

The park serves as a space for visitors to play and watch sport, to walk, for children to play, as well as a space for people to exercise their dogs. When asked what one thing they liked most about the park, visitors most frequently reported liking the children's playground, the sports fields, the open space, and the walking / running paths.

More than half of all visitors (59%) used the park at least once a week over the last 12 months, indicating that for many visitors, Parrs Park plays an important role in their day-to-day lives.

The level of overall satisfaction with the park is high, with 96 per cent of visitors reporting that they are somewhat or very satisfied with the park. Most visitors (84%) also rate the park as being important to their sense of well-being.

Visitors provided mixed reactions to the possibility of making the park rubbish-free (removing rubbish bins and encouraging visitors to recycle their rubbish at home), with roughly equal numbers stating that this change would have a positive compared to a negative impact on their experience. Many visitors expressed concern that other users would not take notice of such rules and therefore the amount of litter in the park would increase.

Although levels of overall satisfaction with the park are high, visitors' responses indicate a number of possible areas for service improvement, including:

- Providing more shade and shelter options to provide protection from the sun in summer and rain in winter
- Better rubbish / waste management and enforcement of non-compliance
- Improved toilet cleaning
- Provision of more seats and tables
- Improved night-time safety / lighting within the park.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to all park visitors who took the time to complete this survey. Thanks also to Sinead Brimacombe, Ashley White and Sophie Dobson who performed the surveying for this project, and Sinead Brimacombe who conducted the data entry.

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1.0 Background

Auckland Council's Local and Sports Parks (LSP) is seeking to improve its understanding of the experience of visitors to its parks. LSP have identified the need to improve their understanding of who, when and why people use specific parks across the region.

At a high level, parks customer information is currently collected for Long-Term Plan monitoring purposes via an annual telephone survey. The aim of the present research is to supplement the high-level information already collected by LSP by providing park-specific information that can improve local service provision and planning.

This report presents the results of a survey of Parrs Park visitors. The purpose of the survey was to provide insights into:

- The demographic characteristics of park visitors
- How visitors travel to the park
- Where visitors are travelling from
- How frequently visitors use the park
- Why visitors are using the park
- How important different characteristics of the park are to visitors
- How satisfied visitors are with the above characteristics
- How satisfied visitors are with the park overall
- How important the park is to visitors' well-being
- What visitors like most about the park
- How visitors think the park could be improved
- How visitors feel about potential changes in the provision of rubbish collection in the park

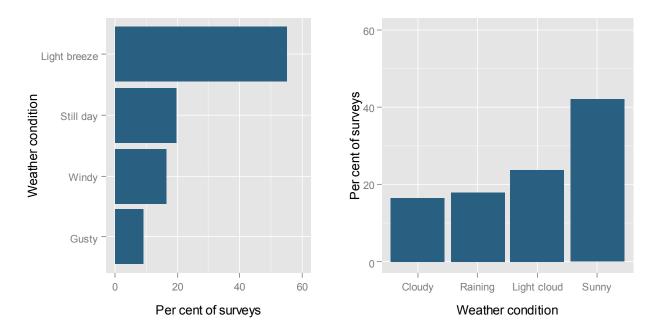
This report provides a summary of the overall findings from the survey, along with some key recommendations for improving services provision in the park.

Additional summaries comparing frequent with infrequent park users, and male with female visitors are provided in Appendix B and Appendix C, respectively.

2.0 How surveying was conducted

An intercept survey of 354 Parrs Park visitors was conducted in autumn 2015, between 15 April and 16 May.

Surveying was conducted on Wednesday-Sunday over a four week period, providing a balance between weekend and weekday use¹. Surveying was completed by three female research assistants, who worked in pairs over five-hour shifts, either in the morning (8am-1pm) or afternoon (1pm-6pm). Due to the nature of completing a paper survey in an open park, data collection was not attempted during very poor weather. Figure 1 shows the weather conditions under which surveys were collected.





Surveying was scheduled so as to strike a balance between mornings, afternoons, week days and weekends. Where possible, all visitors at the survey locations were asked if they would be willing to complete the survey (see Figure 2 for survey locations). Anecdotal reports from the research assistants indicated that some groups may have been slightly less likely to agree to complete the survey: parents/caregivers who were actively supervising children, some users of the swimming facilities, those with limited English abilities, and runners and cyclists.

Figure 3 provides an overview of data collection by day and time. Note, that surveying started at 8am and finished at 6pm, and therefore did not capture early morning or late evening park usage.

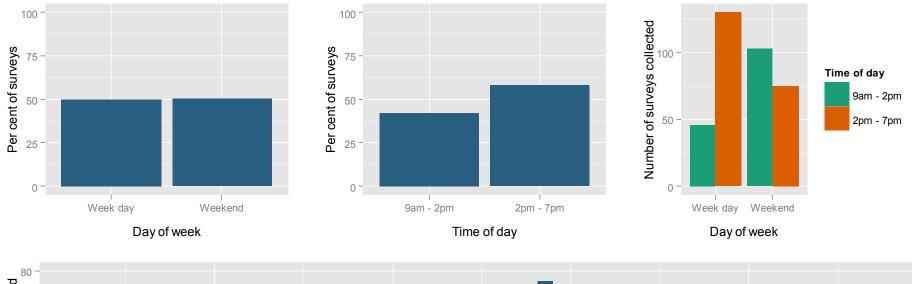
¹ Note, because surveying was not conducted on Monday or Tuesday, the survey results will not have captured any unique park use that occurred on these days.

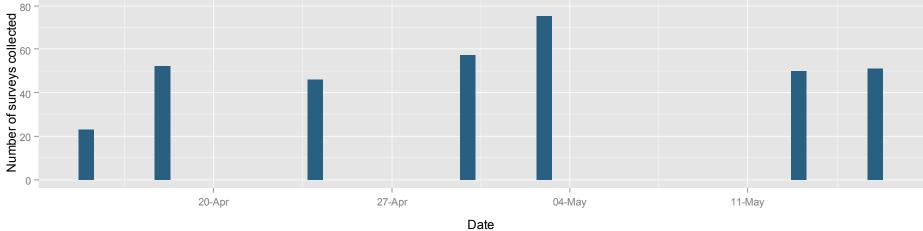
Figure 2. Data collection locations.



Note. Surveying was conducted at three broad locations in the park: at sites 1, 2 and 3 listed on the map above.

Figure 3. Data collection information.





3.0 Who is visiting the park?

This section describes who is visiting the park and the nature of their visit.

3.1 Visitor demographics

Visitors were primarily younger adults, with 62 per cent of respondents under the age of 45 (note, only visitors aged 16+ were asked to complete the survey, so these figures do not include use of the park by children). The larger group of 35 to 44 year olds likely reflects the number of parents / caregivers supervising children and watching sport. The majority of visitors were New Zealand European / Pākehā (73%), while the remainder identified with a range of ethnicities, including Māori (12%), Indian (6%), Samoan (5%) and Chinese (3%).

A reasonable balance between women (54%) and men (46%) was observed.

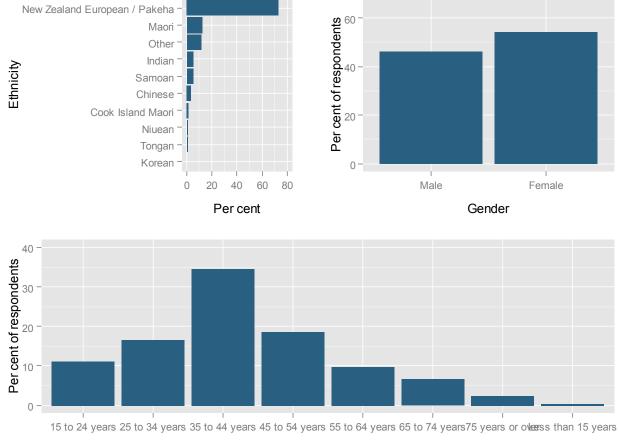
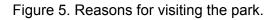


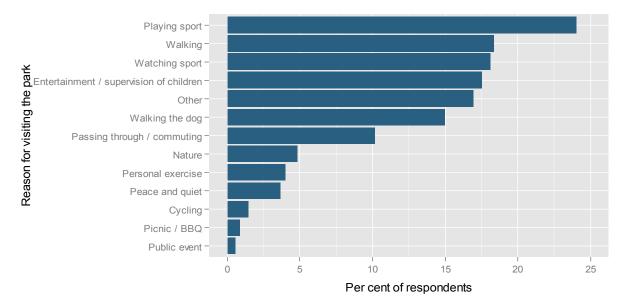
Figure 4. Visitor demographics.

Age

3.2 Reason for visit

Visitors reported a range of reasons for using the park (Figure 5), such as playing sport (24%), walking (18%), watching sport (18%), entertaining / supervising children (18%), dog walking (15%), and just passing through (10%).





3.3 Frequency of park use

Survey respondents reported a range of visit frequencies (as seen in Figure 6). Over half of all respondents (59%) visited the park at least once a week over the last 12 months. The remaining visitors used the park occasionally throughout the year.

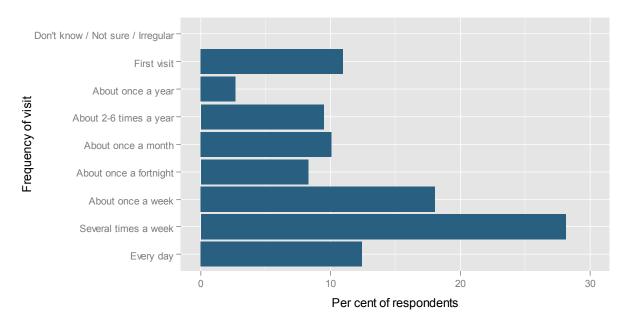
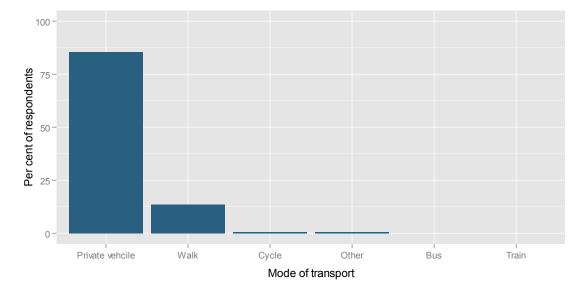
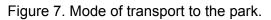


Figure 6. Frequency of park use.

3.4 Transport

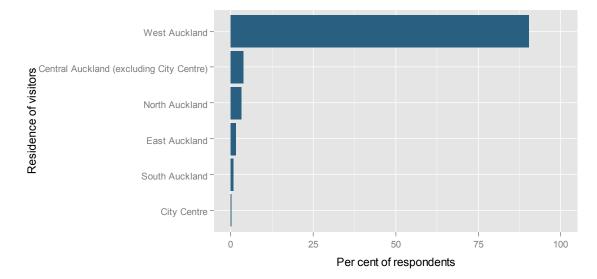
The majority (85%) of visitors got to the park on the day of their visit by private vehicle, with the remainder walking (14%). A very small number of visitors cycled (1%) or got to the park by some other means (1%). No one reported using the train or bus to access the park on the day of their visit.





The vast majority of visitors (99%) lived in Auckland, with a minority living either somewhere else in New Zealand (<1%) or outside New Zealand (<1%). Looking at those who lived in Auckland shows that the parks visitors were primarily local, with most coming from west Auckland (90%), and only a minority coming from central Auckland (excluding the city centre; 4%), north Auckland (3%), east Auckland (1%), south Auckland (1%) and the city centre (<1%).

Figure 8. Residence of visitors within Auckland.



4.0 How do visitors feel about the park?

The following section covers how visitors feel about the park, including: the importance they place on different features of the park and how satisfied they are with those features, their overall satisfaction with the park, how important the park is for their well-being, and what they rate as their 'favourite thing' about the park.

4.1 Importance of and satisfaction with park facilities

Visitors were presented with a list of facilities within the park and were asked to rate both how important they thought these facilities were and how satisfied they were with these facilities, specifically with regard to Parrs Park. Figure 9 and Figure 10 provide a summary of importance and satisfaction ratings, respectively, and Figure 11 plots the discrepancy between the two measures.

Visitors rated a number of aspects of the park as highly important: toilets (93%), cleanliness (93%), paths and tracks (92%), grass maintenance (91%), security (90%), and children's playground (90%). Signs were seen as least important (63%).

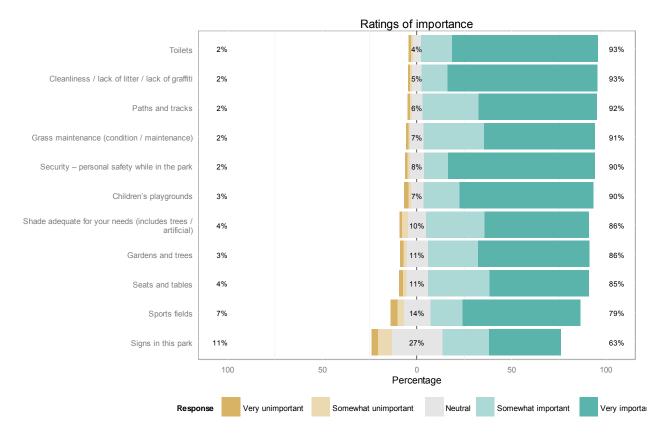


Figure 9. Ratings of importance.

Visitors were most satisfied with the paths and tracks in the park, with 93 per cent stating they were somewhat satisfied or very satisfied. The greatest level of active dissatisfaction was reported for shade (18% dissatisfied) and toilets (10%).

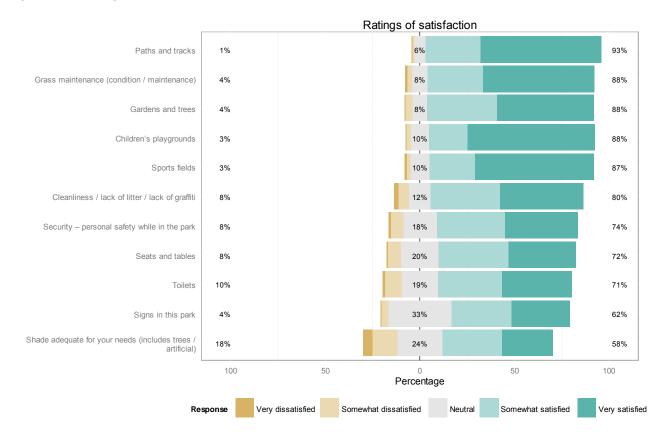


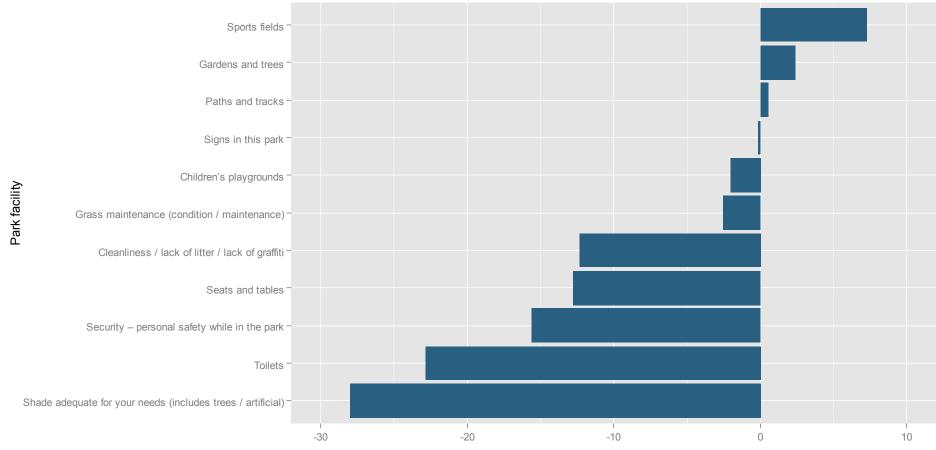
Figure 10. Ratings of satisfaction.

Figure 11 compares ratings of importance and satisfaction and therefore provides valuable insights into where the park is or is not meeting visitors' expectations. The greatest negative discrepancy between satisfaction and importance is seen for shade, with a -28 point discrepancy between those who rated shade as somewhat or very important and those who were somewhat or very satisfied with the shade provision. A negative discrepancy was also found for toilets (-23% difference), security (-16% difference), seats and tables (-13% difference), and cleanliness / lack of litter / lack of graffiti (-12% difference).

These discrepancies reflect facilities within the park that are not meeting visitors' expectations, and are therefore areas where improvements might be considered.

In contrast, a positive discrepancy was observed for sports fields (+7%), gardens and trees (+2%) and paths and tracks (1%), indicating that the park is meeting or exceeding visitors' expectations with regard to these facilities.

Figure 11. Comparison of importance and satisfaction.

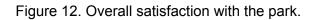


Net percentage point difference between ratings of satisfaction and importance (satisfaction minus importance)

Note. Values are calculated by subtracting the percentage of visitors rating a given park facility as 'somewhat important' or 'very important' from the percentage stating they were 'somewhat satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the same facility. Positive scores thus indicate that the park facility is meeting or exceeding visitors' expectations, whereas negative scores indicate that the park facility is not meeting visitors' expectations.

4.2 Overall satisfaction

Visitors overall were highly satisfied with the park, with 96 per cent stating they were somewhat or very satisfied with the park overall. Less than one per cent of visitors were somewhat or very dissatisfied with the park overall.

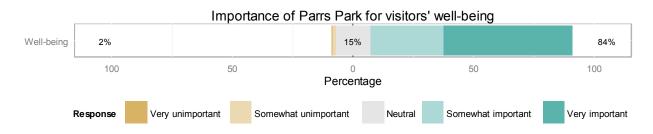


			Overall sa	tisfaction with	Parrs Park		
Satisfaction	0%			3%			96%
	100		50	0 Percentage	50		100
		Response	Somewhat dissatisfied	Neutral	Somewhat satisfied	Very satisfied	

4.3 Impact on well-being

Visitors were asked how important the park was to their sense of well-being. The majority (84%) rated it as somewhat or very important, with the remainder responding neutrally (15%) or stating that it was not important (2%).

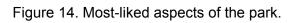
Figure 13. Importance of the park for visitors' well-being.

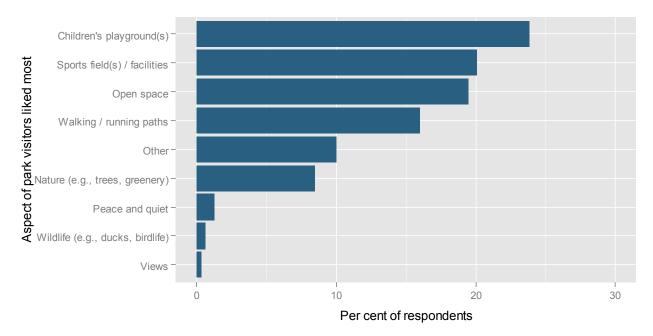


4.4 What do visitors like most about the park?

Visitors were asked to indicate what one aspect of the park they liked most.

The most liked aspects of the park were children's playgrounds, with 24 per cent of respondents selecting this option. Sports fields (20%), open spaces (19%), and walking / running paths (16%) were also mentioned by a reasonable number of visitors.





5.0 How can the park be improved?

This section reports on suggestions for improvement offered by visitors, as well as reactions to the possibility of adopting a rubbish-free approach within the park.

5.1 Suggestions for improvement

Visitors were asked if there was one change they could make to the park, what it would be. Their open-ended comments were then coded into themes. The coded responses can be seen in Figure 15.

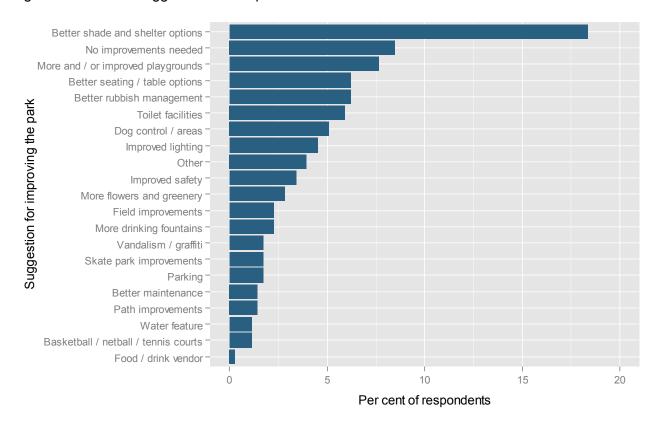


Figure 15. Visitors' suggestions for improvement.

The most common suggestion related to improving the provision of shelter from the elements, with close to one-in-five visitors providing this suggestion (18%). Most of the comments focused on the need to provide more shade during summer, although some visitors did mention the need for shelter from rain in the winter – particularly for sport spectators.

Shade to sit under in summer supervising children

More shade cover on existing exposed paths and playground

Shade cover needed at the playground

Shelter for winter spectators

Shade when watching sport/summer/winter

Issues related to waste were also mentioned by a number of visitors, both in relation to rubbish being dropped / dumped in the park (6%) and dog waste not being picked up by dog owners (with 5% of visitors making some form of dog-related comment).

Rubbish/bottles etc. left by late night visitors

have more rubbish bins around

More regular rubbish pickups / bins overflowing at times

Have a public campaign for dealing with people dumping household rubbish

People pick up their dog litter

More policing of people picking up their dog poo

Despite some negative sentiment about the amount of dog poo in the area, some of the suggestions relating to dogs focused on the desire to improve the off-leash area of the park. Longer walking track for dogs off lead

Improve the off lead dog area (behind sports fields)

Eight per cent of visitors provided suggestions on how to improve the playground. Many of these suggestions were ways to make the playground even better, rather than suggestions to address issues or problems with the current playground.

More play equipment in the playground for toddlers and babies

Sign at the top of the slide warning people to not go down tummy (stomach) first

More fountains to run through like at Potters Park

The small slide, kids seem to hit their heads going around the last corner

Maybe something like (I think) Potters Park in Balmoral, water place for kids to play around especially during summer when it is hot

Seating and picnic facilities were also mentioned by six per cent of visitors, often in conjunction with a desire for more shade.

Seating closer to the playground e.g. around the edge where concrete kerb is and next to water spiral

Adding extra seating and picnic tables especially around playground

Tables encourage families together, BBQ?

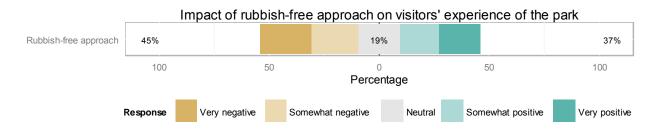
The cleanliness and quality of the toilet facilities was also mentioned by six per cent of visitors.

5.2 Reactions towards adopting a rubbish-free approach

Visitors were told that Auckland Council was investigating a rubbish-free park approach, involving the removal of rubbish bins and encouraging visitors to take their rubbish home with them. Respondents were asked to indicate what impact this approach would have on their experience of the park.

Responses to this question were roughly evenly balanced between negative (45%), neutral (19%) and positive (37%). A number of respondents wrote unprompted messages next to this question stating they did not think others would take their rubbish home.

Figure 16. Impact of adopting a rubbish-free approach.



6.0 Recommendations for service improvement

Comparisons between importance and satisfaction ratings, as well as visitors' open-ended responses indicate a number of areas where the park may be improved. When planning for park improvements, LSP may wish to further investigate the following:

- Providing more shade and shelter options to provide protection from the sun in summer and rain in winter.
- Better rubbish management, with some visitors noting insufficient or overflowing rubbish bins, as well as occasional issues with dumping of household rubbish and dog owners not picking up dog waste.
- Improved toilet cleaning.
- Provision of more seats and tables, particularly around the playground area.
- Improved night-time safety / lighting within the park.

As noted in the previous section, visitors provided mixed reactions to the possibility of making the park rubbish-free. Given the large number of visitors stating that such a change would have a negative impact on their experience of the park, it is recommended that if LSP wishes to implement this proposal that further research be conducted on ways to mitigate potential issues.

7.0 Additional analyses by visit frequency and gender

Further analyses have been conducted, comparing frequent and infrequent park visitors, as well as comparing male and female visitors. The output from these analyses can be seen in Appendix B and Appendix C, respectively. No commentary is provided in relation to these analyses.

Appendix A Parrs Park visitor intercept survey

Parrs Park Visitor Survey

Auckland Council is looking to better understand what users think of this park and how we can improve it. Thank you for helping us by filling out this **3-5 minute** survey.

Your responses will remain anonymous, and will be combined with the responses of other visitors. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you are free to skip any questions you feel uncomfortable answering or to stop the survey at any point.

Thank you for your help!

The first few questions are about your visit today...

- 1. Why have you visited this park today? (select all that apply)
 - Passing through / commuting
 - D Walking
 - Walking the dog
 - Peace and quiet
 - □ Nature
 - □ Entertainment / supervision of children
 - D Picnic / BBQ
 - Playing sport
 - □ Other exercise
 - Watching sport
 - Public event
 - □ Cycling
 - Beach activity
 - Other (please specify: _____)
- 2. How did you get to this park today? (select all that apply)
 - Private vehicle
 - □ Walk
 - □ Cycle
 - □ Bus
 - D Train
 - Other (please specify: _____)

- 3. In the last year, how often have you visited this park?
 - □ Every day
 - □ Several times a week
 - □ About once a week
 - □ About once a fortnight
 - □ About once a month
 - □ About 2-6 times a year
 - □ About once a year
 - □ First visit
 - Not sure / don't know / irregular

The next few questions are about what you think of the park...

4. Using the scale below, how IMPORTANT to you are the following facilities in this park?

Facility	Very important	Somewhat important	Neutral	Somewhat unimportant	Very unimportant	Not applicable
Gardens and trees						
Children's playgrounds						
Seats and tables						
Toilets						
Signs in this park						
Cleanliness / lack of litter / lack of graffiti						
Grass maintenance (condition / maintenance)						
Paths and tracks						
Shade adequate for your needs (includes trees / artificial)						
Sports fields						
Security – personal safety while in the park						

5. Using the scale below, how SATISFIED are you with the condition and quality of the following facilities in this park?

Facility	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not applicable
Gardens and trees						
Children's playgrounds						
Seats and tables						
Toilets						
Signs in this park						
Cleanliness / lack of litter / lack of graffiti						
Grass maintenance (condition / maintenance)						
Paths and tracks						
Shade adequate for your needs (includes trees / artificial)						
Sports fields						
Security – personal safety while in the park						

6. OVERALL, how satisfied are you with this park?

Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied

7. How important is this park to your sense of well-being?

Very important	Somewhat important	Neutral	Somewhat unimportant	Very unimportant

8. What ONE THING do you like most about this park? (select only one option)

- □ Nature (e.g., trees, greenery)
- □ Open space
- □ Wildlife (e.g., ducks, birdlife)
- Walking / running paths
- Sports field(s) / facilities
- Children's playground(s)
- Beach / water
- Views
- Peace and quiet
- □ Water sports
- Other (please specify: _____)
- 9. If there was ONE change you could make to this park, what would it be?

10. Auckland Council is re-evaluating how it collects rubbish in some of its parks. We are investigating a rubbish-free park approach which means we'd remove rubbish bins and ask people to take rubbish home and recycle it. This already happens in all regional parks. What impact would this rubbish-free approach have on your experience of the park?

Very positive	Somewhat positive	Neutral	Somewhat negative	Very negative

And finally, a few questions about you...

- 11. What age group do you fit into?
 - □ Less than 15 years
 - □ 15 to 24 years
 - □ 25 to 34 years
 - \square 35 to 44 years
 - □ 45 to 54 years
 - $\hfill\square$ 55 to 64 years
 - □ 65 to 74 years
 - □ 75 years or over
- 12. What is your gender?
 - Male
 - Female
- 13. What ethnic group(s) do you identify with? (select all that apply)
 - NZ European / Pākehā
 - □ Māori
 - Samoan
 - Cook Islands Māori
 - D Tongan
 - Niuean
 - \Box Chinese
 - Indian
 - Korean

14. Where do you live?

- In Auckland
- □ Somewhere else in New Zealand (please specify: _____)
- Outside New Zealand (please specify: _____)

15. If you live in Auckland, in which part of Auckland do you live?

- □ City Centre
- □ Central Auckland (excluding City Centre)
- West Auckland
- East Auckland
- South Auckland
- North Auckland
- □ Not applicable

Thank you for completing the survey. The results of this study will help Auckland Council to make this park a more enjoyable place for you to visit in the future.

Please hand the survey back to the researcher.

THE FO	OLLOWING SECTION	IS FOR THE RESEAR	CHER TO COMPLE
what zone / area v	was this survey conduct	ted?	
	t 1		
	t 2		
	t 3		
	survey conducted? survey conducted?		
	nen this survey was con	ducted?	
	nen this survey was con Light breeze	ducted? Windy	Gusty
ow windy was it wh		1	Gusty
ow windy was it wh Still day	Light breeze	Windy	

Appendix B Differences between frequent and infrequent visitors

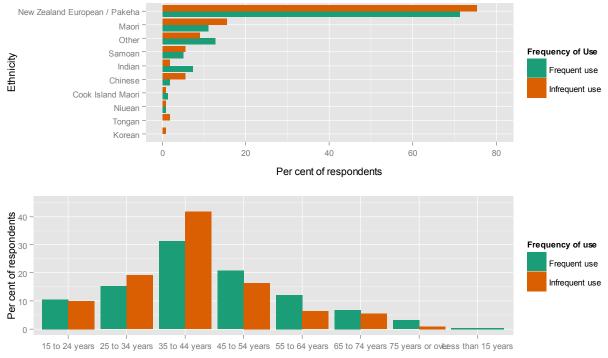
The following sections present differences between frequent and infrequent park visitors. Frequent use is defined as using the park fortnightly or more frequently; infrequent use is defined as using the park monthly or less frequently.

No commentary is provided in relation to these graphs.

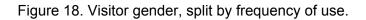
Who is visiting the park?

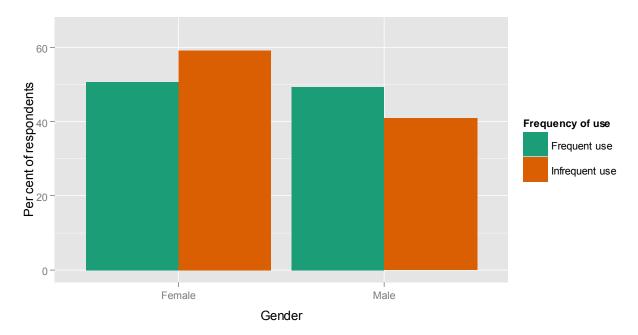
Visitor demographics

Figure 17. Visitor ethnicity and age, split by frequency of use.

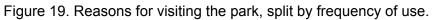


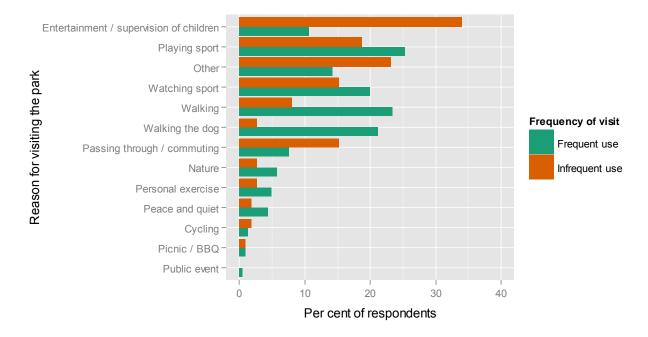
Age





Reason for visit





Transport

Figure 20. Mode of transport to the park, split by frequency of use.

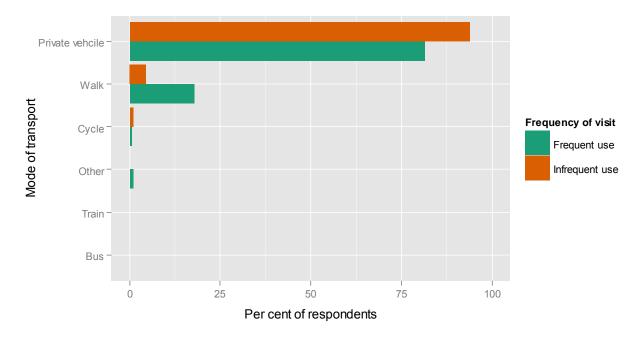
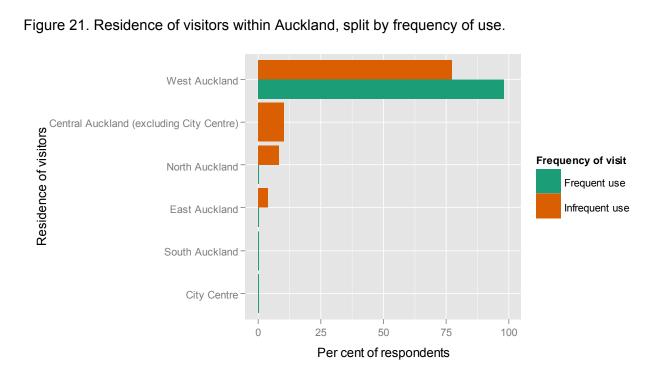


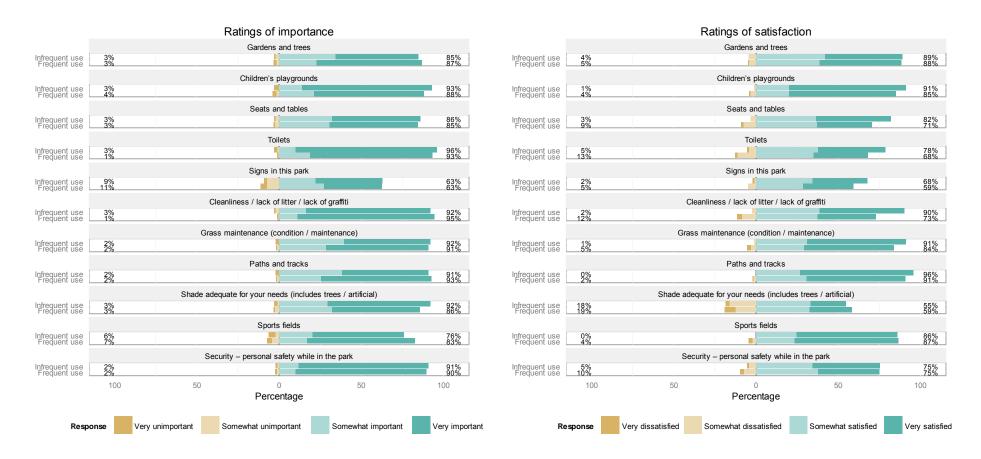
Figure 21. Residence of visitors within Auckland, split by frequency of use.



How do visitors feel about the park?

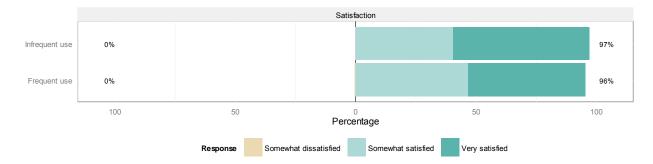
Importance of and satisfaction with park facilities

Figure 22. Comparison of importance and satisfaction ratings, split by frequency of use.



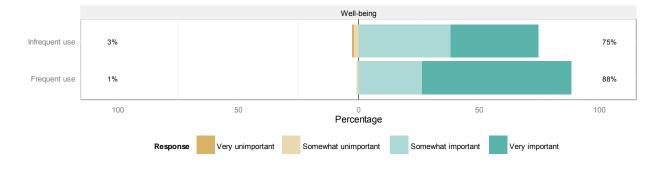
Overall satisfaction

Figure 23. Overall satisfaction with the park, split by frequency of use.



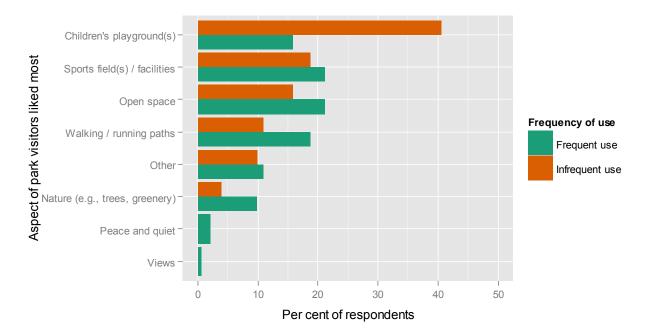
Impact on well-being

Figure 24. Importance of the park for visitors' well-being, split by frequency of use.



What do visitors like most about the park?

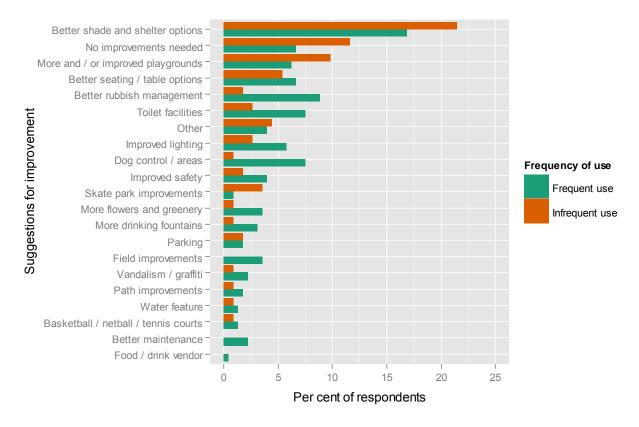
Figure 25. Most-liked aspects of the park, split by frequency of use.



How can the park be improved?

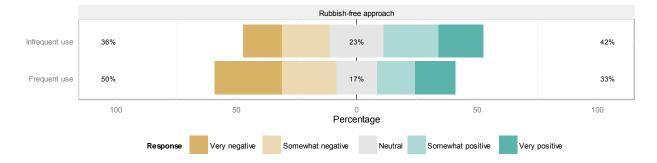
Suggestions for improvement

Figure 26. Visitors' suggestions for improvement, split by frequency of use.



Reactions towards adopting a rubbish-free approach

Figure 27. Impact of adopting a rubbish-free approach, split by frequency of use.



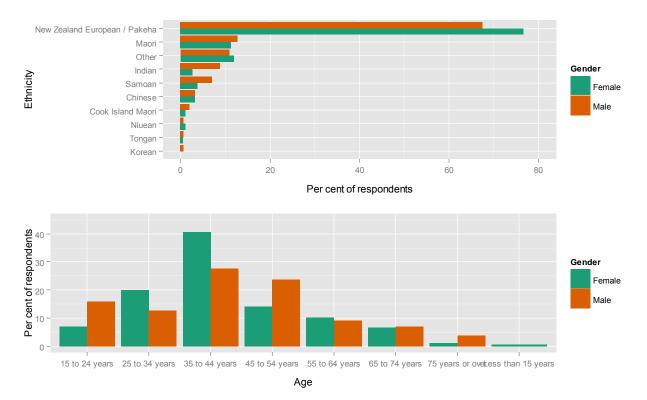
Appendix C Differences between male and female visitors

The following sections present differences between male and female park visitors. No commentary is provided in relation to these graphs.

Who is visiting the park?

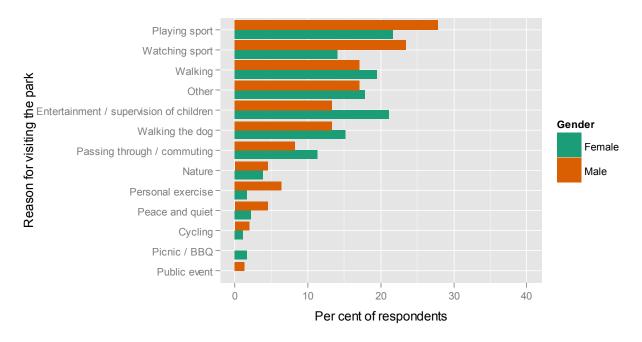
Visitor demographics

Figure 28. Visitor demographics, split by gender.



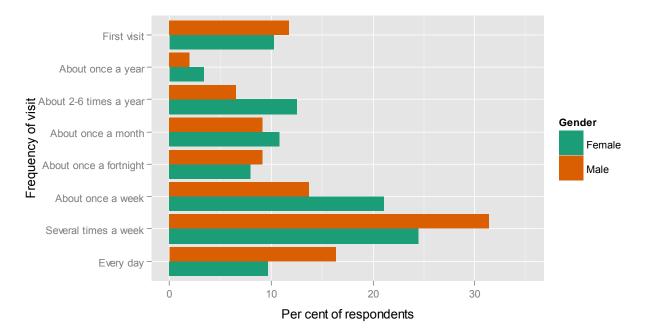
Reason for visit

Figure 29. Reasons for visiting the park, split by gender.



Frequency of park use

Figure 30. Frequency of park use, split by gender.



Transport

Figure 31. Mode of transport to the park, split by gender.

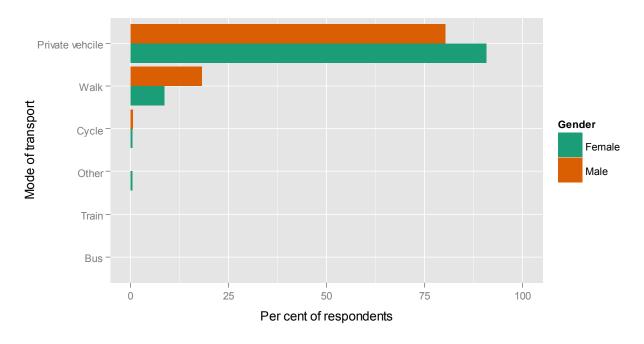
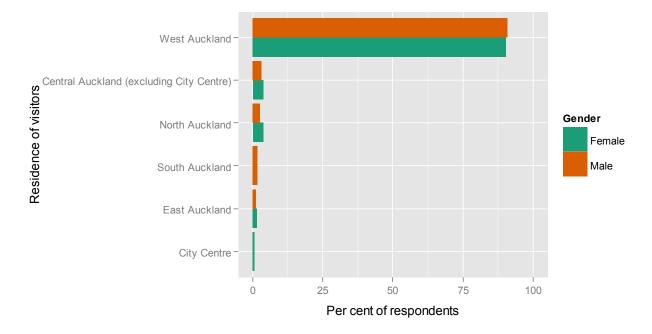


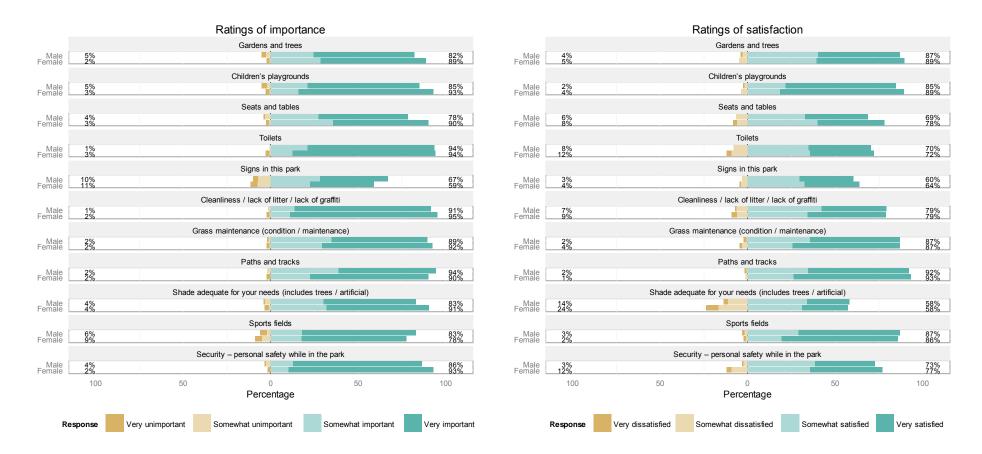
Figure 32. Residence of visitors within Auckland, split by gender.



How do visitors feel about the park?

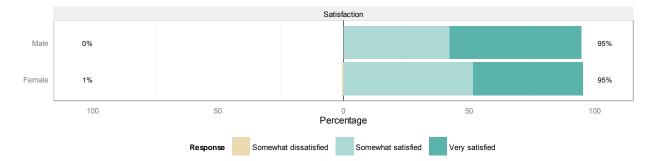
Importance of and satisfaction with park facilities

Figure 33. Comparison of importance and satisfaction ratings, split by gender.



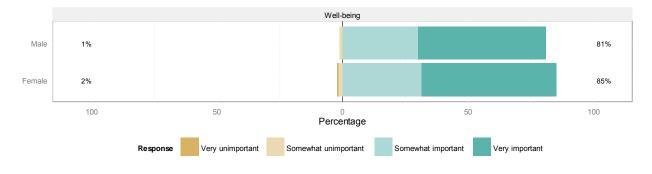
Overall satisfaction

Figure 34. Overall satisfaction with the park, split by gender.



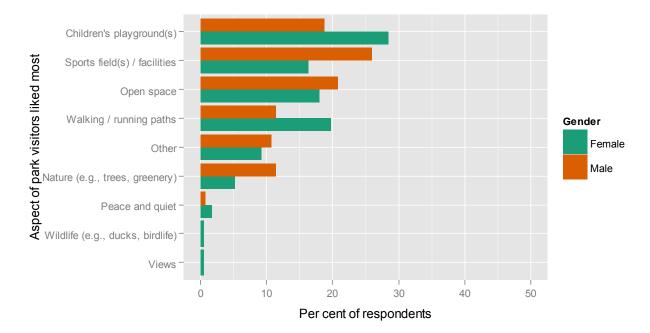
Impact on well-being

Figure 35. Importance of the park for visitors' well-being, split by gender.



What do visitors like most about the park?

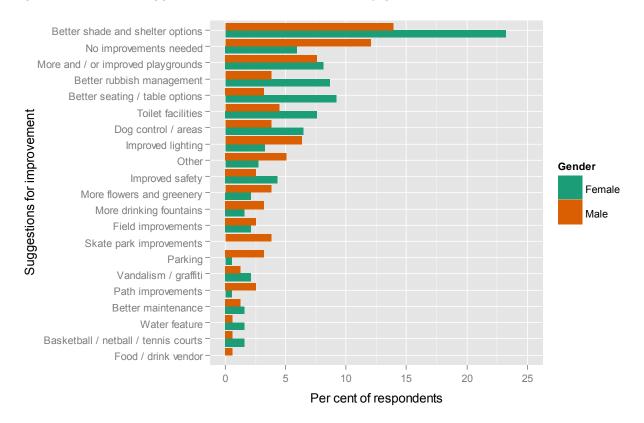
Figure 36. Most-liked aspects of the park, split by gender.



How can the park be improved?

Suggestions for improvement

Figure 37. Visitors' suggestions for improvement, split by gender.



Reactions towards adopting a rubbish-free approach

Figure 38. Impact of adopting a rubbish-free approach, split by gender.

