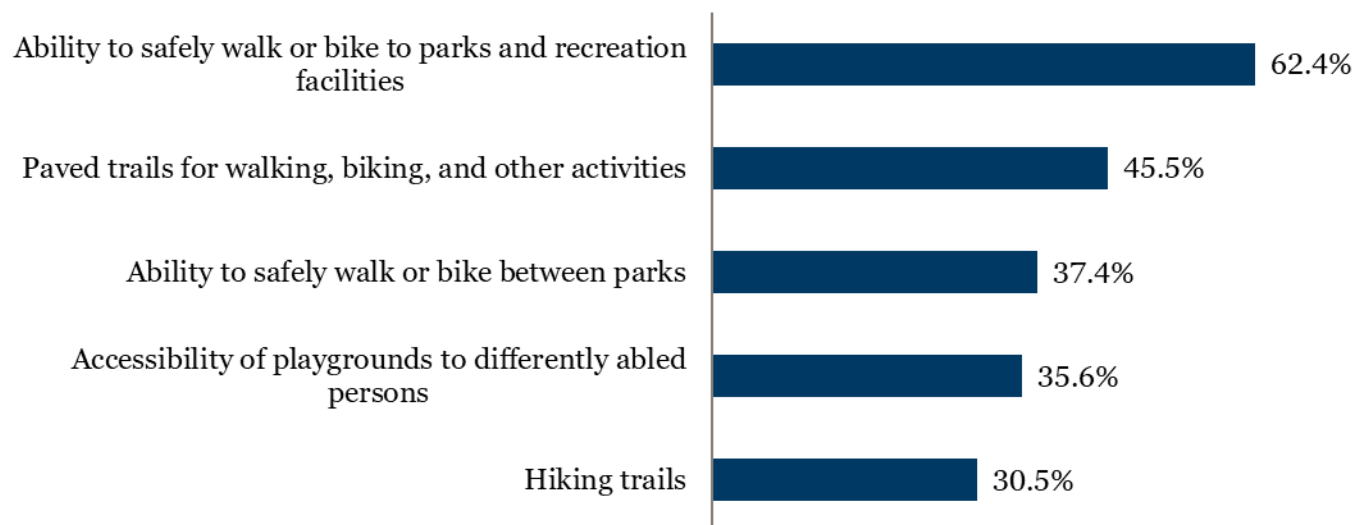


With funding from the Community Foundation of Southern Indiana, the IU Southeast Applied Research and Education Center held community listening sessions and surveyed Clark and Floyd county residents, nonprofit, business, and local government leaders, and the Foundation's fund holders to identify priorities, assets, aspirations, and opportunities for growth and improvement to support thriving communities. Findings will be used to guide the Foundation's grant making to support the community's *Priorities for Progress*.

*Quality of Place* is a concept used in planning, community and economic development, and public policy focusing on factors in the external environment that contribute to quality of life. Recreational, physical, and social amenities, all part of quality of place, encourage an active lifestyle, which has become a major factor in attracting an educated workforce to the region.

Local respondents didn't reach a consensus when discussing the recreational aspects of Quality of Place. This, in part, is a reflection of the different experiences of access and importance of these amenities. Those who are struggling to fulfill basic needs or do not have time or transportation for recreational activities may consider these amenities to be unnecessary. The one item chosen as a priority by more than 60 percent of respondents was "Ability to safely walk or bike to parks and recreation facilities".

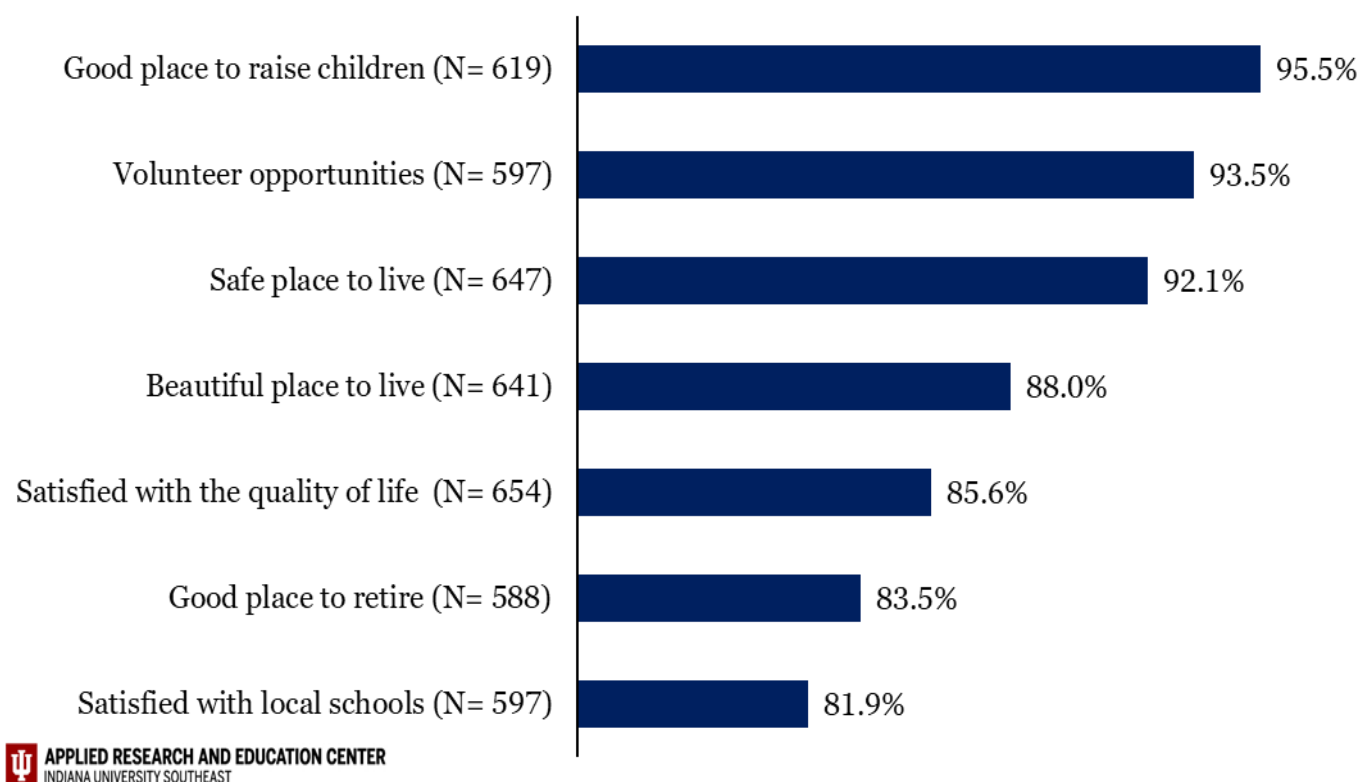
**Figure 1. Quality of Place priorities in Clark and Floyd counties (N=492)**



Low-income respondents are concerned with safe access to the freely available amenities that don't necessarily require additional equipment. The lower income respondents were more likely to prioritize indoor athletic facilities, accessibility of parks and paved trails to differently abled persons, access to fishing, outdoor athletic facilities, and transportation to parks. In comparison, high-income respondents were more likely to prioritize paved trails for walking, biking, and other activities, hiking trails, bike lanes, and all-terrain vehicle (ATV) trails.

Activities that could attract recreational tourism and revenue to the area were some of the less frequently selected priorities by respondents. Those activities include natural water sports, access to hunting, mountain biking trails, and horse trails. There is clear opportunity for the region to leverage natural assets for economic and community development.

**Figure 2. Quality of Life and Place in Clark and Floyd counties.**



## Priorities for Progress

- Develop a regional plan to improve safety of foot and bicycle access to area trails, parks, and recreational facilities, and coordinate public and private resources to implement the plan. Include attention to connectivity between facilities and trails as part of the plan.
- Identify priority locations for improving playground accessibility and make investments in appropriate playground equipment. Public entities may need to make changes to infrastructure such as curbs, sidewalks, and railings, and private philanthropy and grants can support accessible playground equipment.
- Collaborate across sectors to build additional miles of paved trails. Private investments can enhance and supplement Rails-to-Trails grant funds to improve usability and support community development around such projects.
- Support small business and community efforts to use the developing trails system as part of broader strategies for economic development.
- Provide resources to organizations to use trails, parks, and recreational facilities to deliver programs to low-income youth that encourage active lifestyles, engagement with the arts, and safe, healthy youth development.
- Provide resources to organizations to use trails, parks, and recreational facilities to deliver programs to senior citizens that encourage active lifestyles, cross-generational interaction, and social engagement.