

ALR 101: An Overview of Leisure Studies and Recreation and Park Research related to Active Living

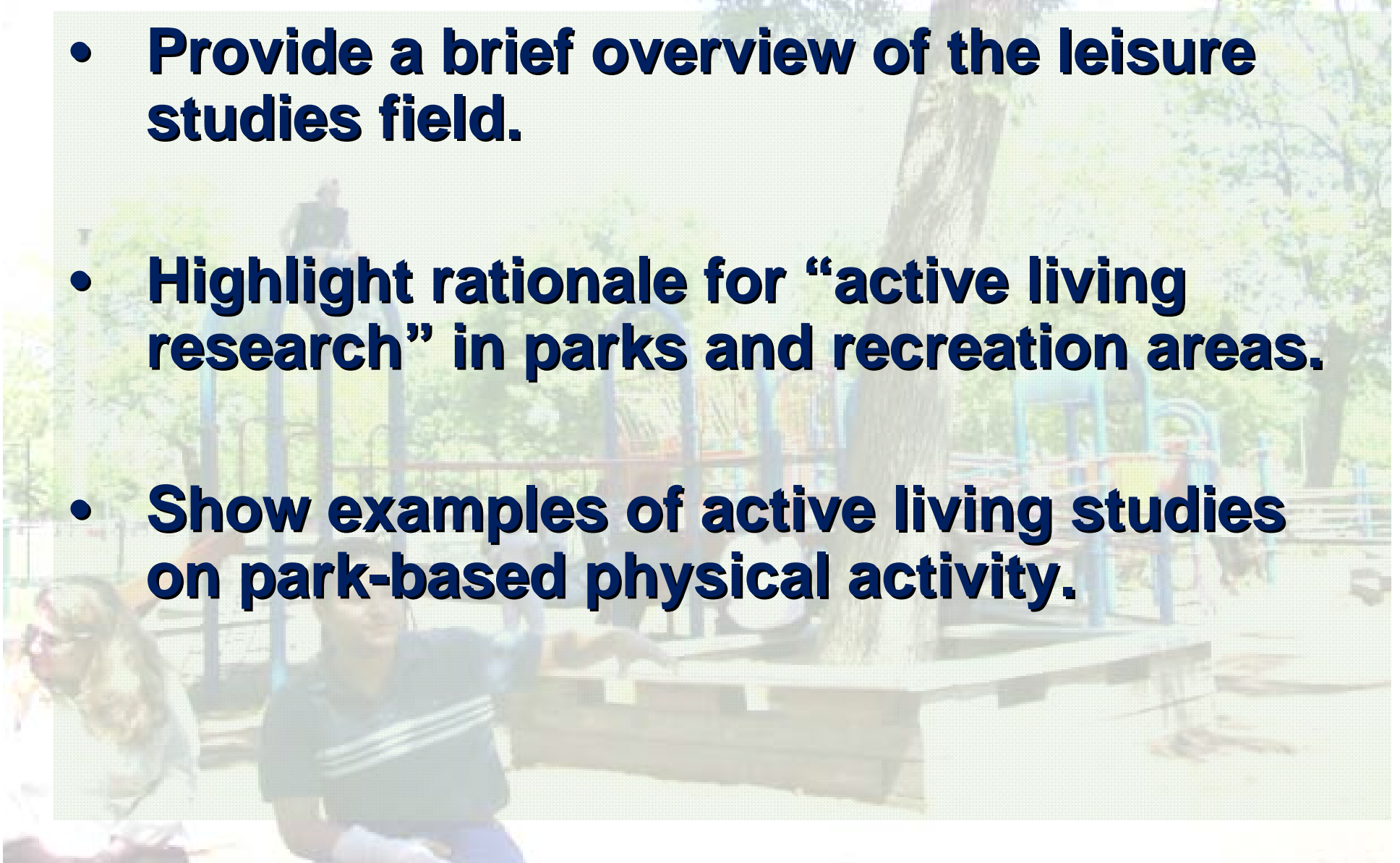
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Management**



Sixth Active Living Research Annual Conference
Active Communities for Youth and Families: Creating Momentum for Change
San Diego, CA
February 18, 2009

Outline

- **Provide a brief overview of the leisure studies field.**
- **Highlight rationale for “active living research” in parks and recreation areas.**
- **Show examples of active living studies on park-based physical activity.**



Leisure studies is an interdisciplinary field.

Major Foci:

- Activity/behavior patterns
- Experience/benefits
- Use of leisure environments
- Constraints to leisure
- Leisure contributions to quality of life (e.g., health)



Leisure studies is an interdisciplinary field.

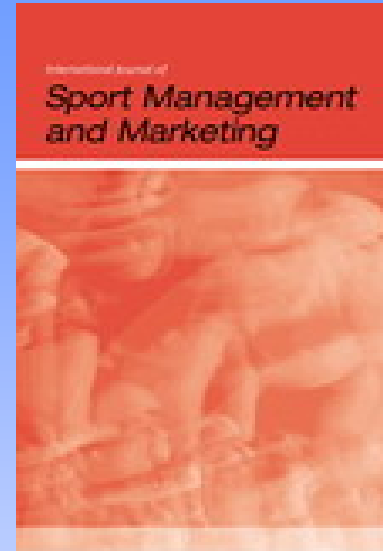
Perspectives:

- Psychology (e.g., motivations)
- Sociology (e.g., structure & organization)
- Geography (e.g., place meaning, & impacts)
- Anthropology (e.g., culture & meaning)
- Economics (e.g., valuation & impact)

Provides social science evidence-base for managing parks and recreation areas.



Examples of Leisure Studies Journals



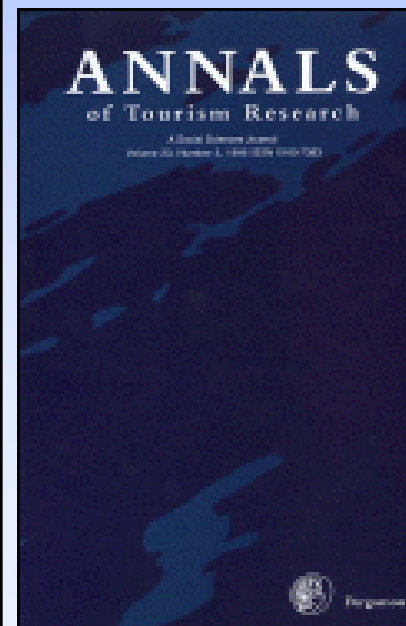
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<p>Growing and Satisfaction Among Visitors to Built Desert Attractions</p> <p>Predicting Motivation and Attitudes of Users of a Multi-use Suburban Trail</p> <p>An Analysis of Lighting Safety Policies and Procedures in Florida's Municipal Recreation and Park Agencies</p>	<p>Assessing the Relationship Between Demand Expectations and Support for Management Actions at Yellowstone National Park Using Multiple Methods</p> <p>Reaching Out / Reaching In: The Long Term Challenges and Issues of Outreach Programs</p> <p>The Time for Kids: Initiatives in Portland, Oregon: Challenges of Effective Multipurpose and</p>
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Parks and recreation areas are viable spaces for promoting physical activity.

- **Recreation services exist at all levels of government and in special park districts (Godbey et al., 2005).**
- **70% of adults live within walking distance of an urban park; 80% use them (Godbey et al. 1992).**
- **75% of American households are within 2 miles of a park system (ICMA & NaCO, 2006).**



There is consistent evidence: availability of parks increase opportunities for physical activity.

- **Across 20 studies in the health literature, access to *recreation facilities, programs, and aesthetics* were associated with higher PA (Humpel et al. 2002).**
- **14 of 20 studies show positive associations between access to parks and PA (Kaczynski & Henderson, 2007).**
- **Other reviews concur (e.g., Sallis & Kerr, 2006; Mowen et al., 2008) but less evidence for children and youth (Kaczynski & Henderson, 2007).**

Opportunities for physical activity in parks can be shaped by management and policy tools.

- **Programming/Facility Design**
- **Use policies (active vs. passive parks)**
- **Regulations**
- **Programming**
- **Pricing**
- **Marketing**
- **Safety/risk management**
- **Law enforcement**
- **Maintenance (built & natural environment)**
- **Hours of operation**



Research Issues

- **What factors contribute to physical activity in parks in ethnically diverse communities?**
- **What specific facilities and amenities contribute to physical activity in parks?**
- **What is an optimal configuration of park design, management, and programs to promote physical activity?**

Current Projects

A Study of Leisure-time Physical Activity in Diverse Communities Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Active Living Research (#526489)

Co-Investigators:

Myron Floyd, PhD (NC State University): leisure studies; race/ethnicity.

J.O. Spengler, PhD, JD (University of Florida): leisure studies; legal issues

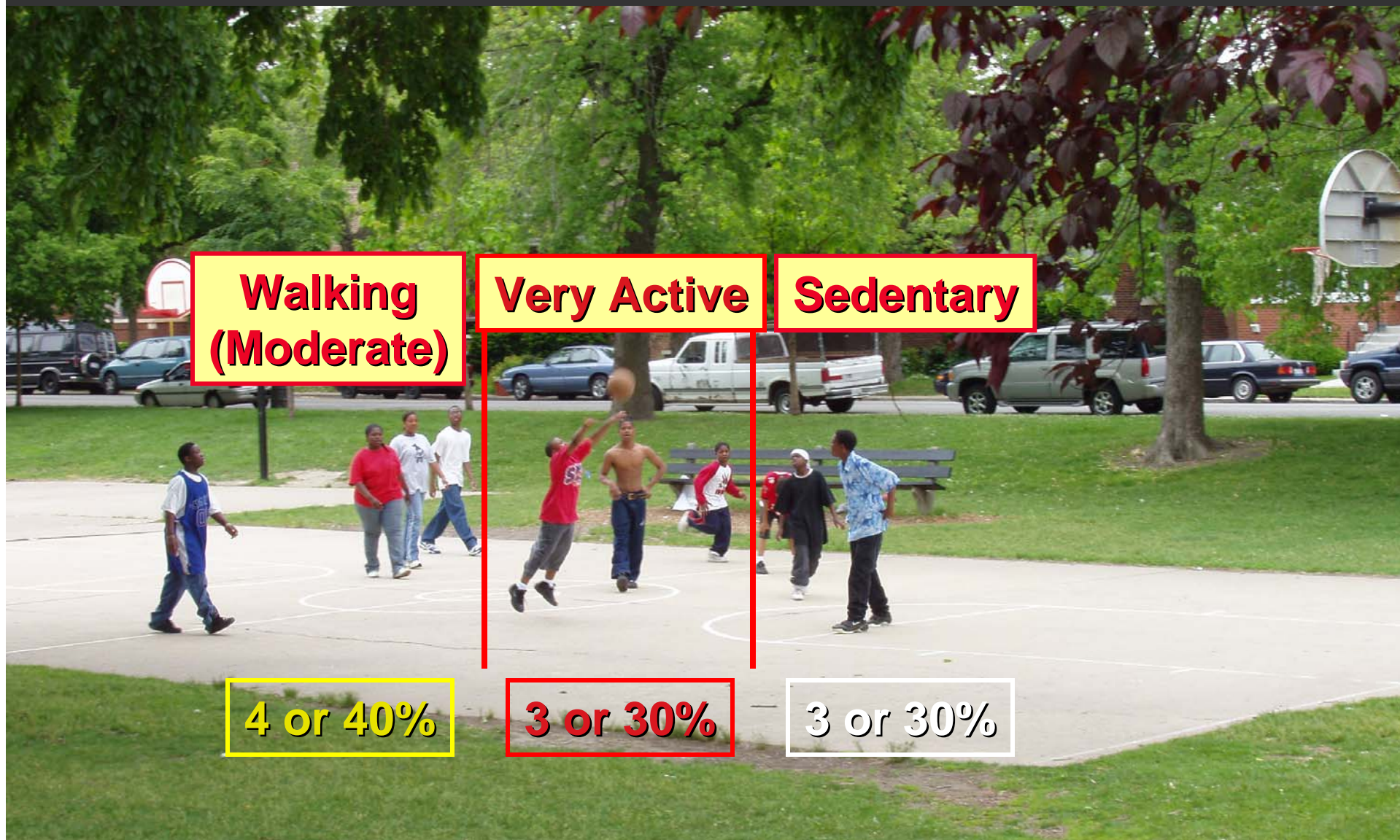
Jay Maddock (University of Hawaii): public health sciences

Paul Gobster (US Forest Service): leisure studies; landscape and urban planning

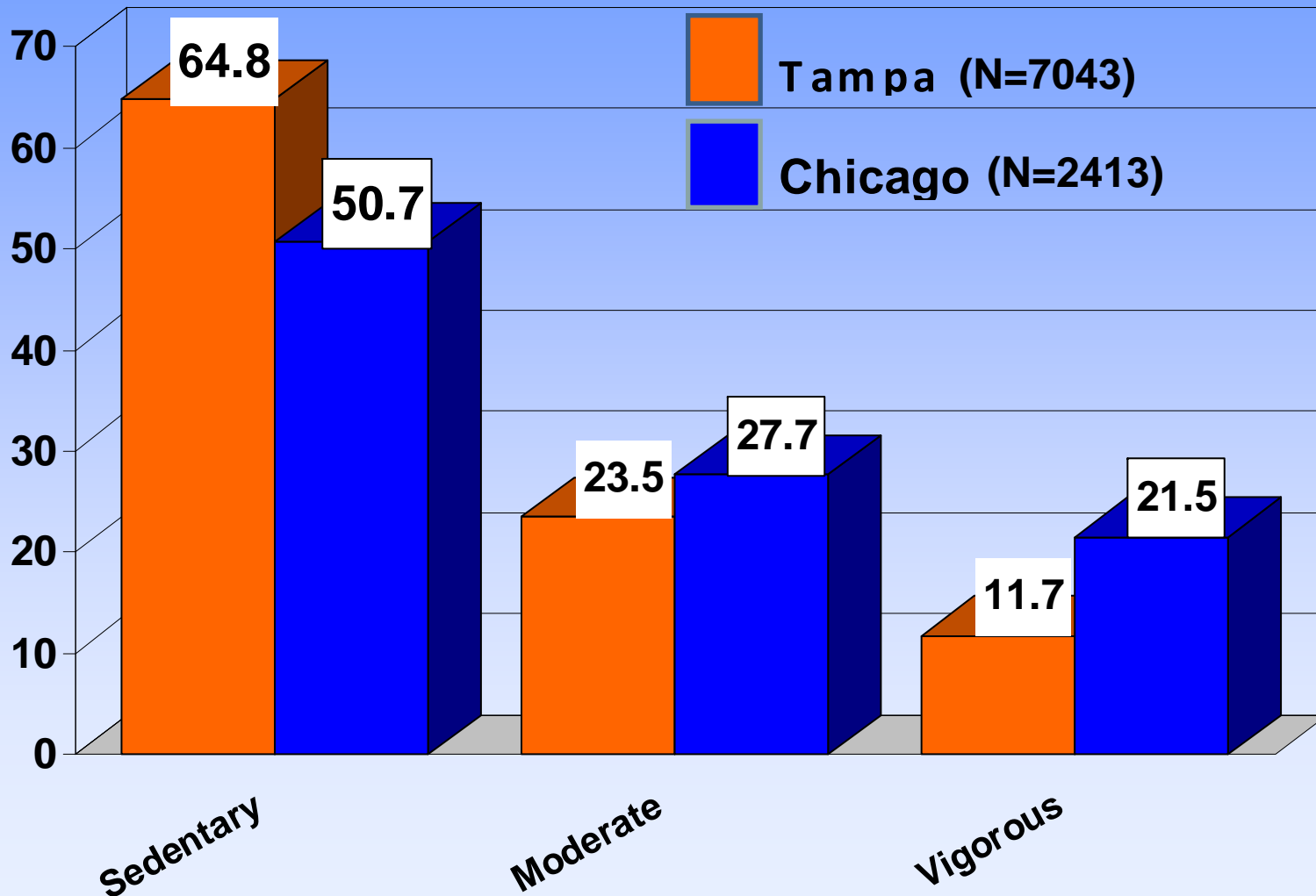
Project Aim:

Examine neighborhood and environmental influences on physical activity in parks.

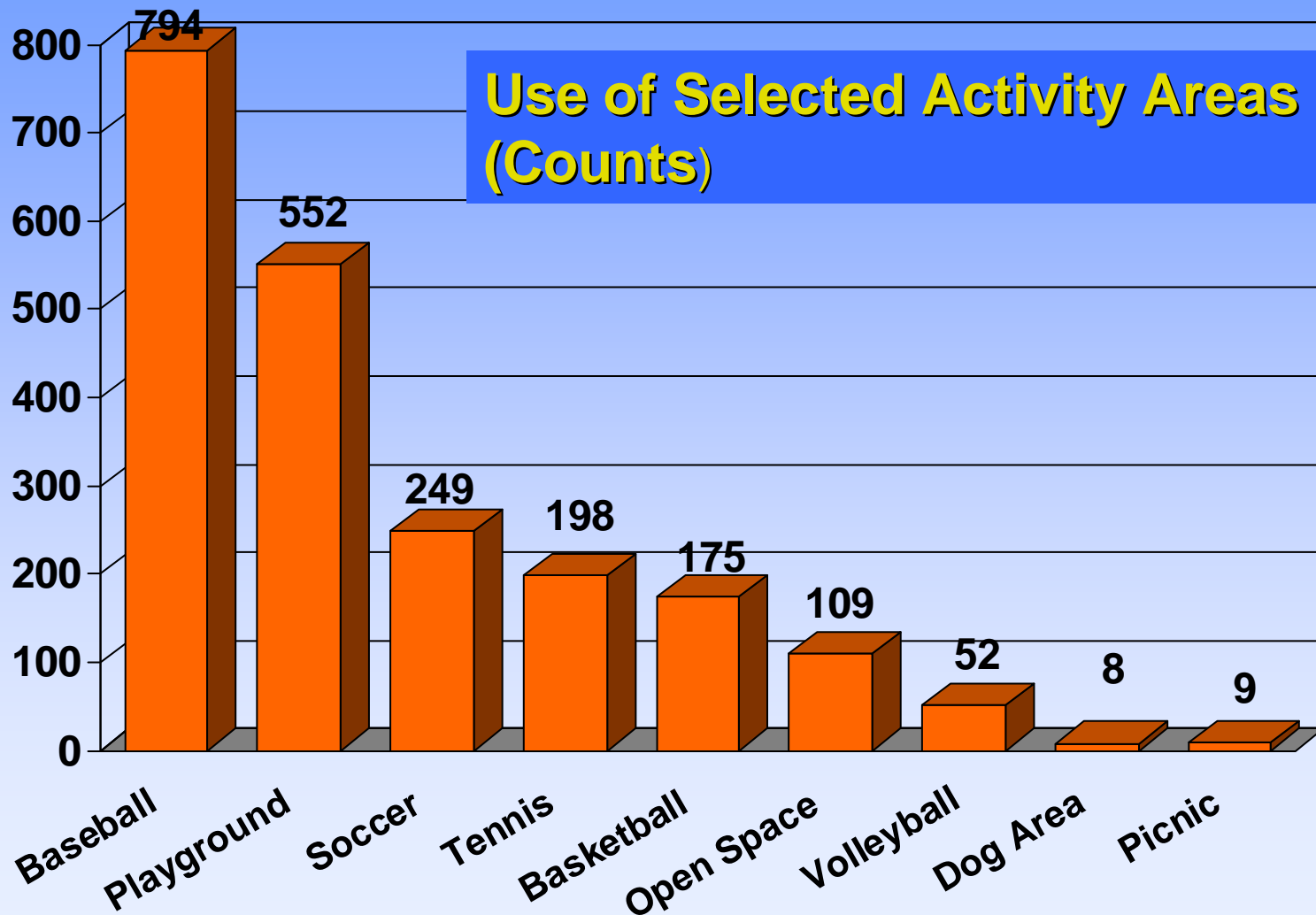
Measuring Physical Activity in Parks using The System for Observing Play and Leisure Among Youth (SOPLAY) (McKenzie, 2002).



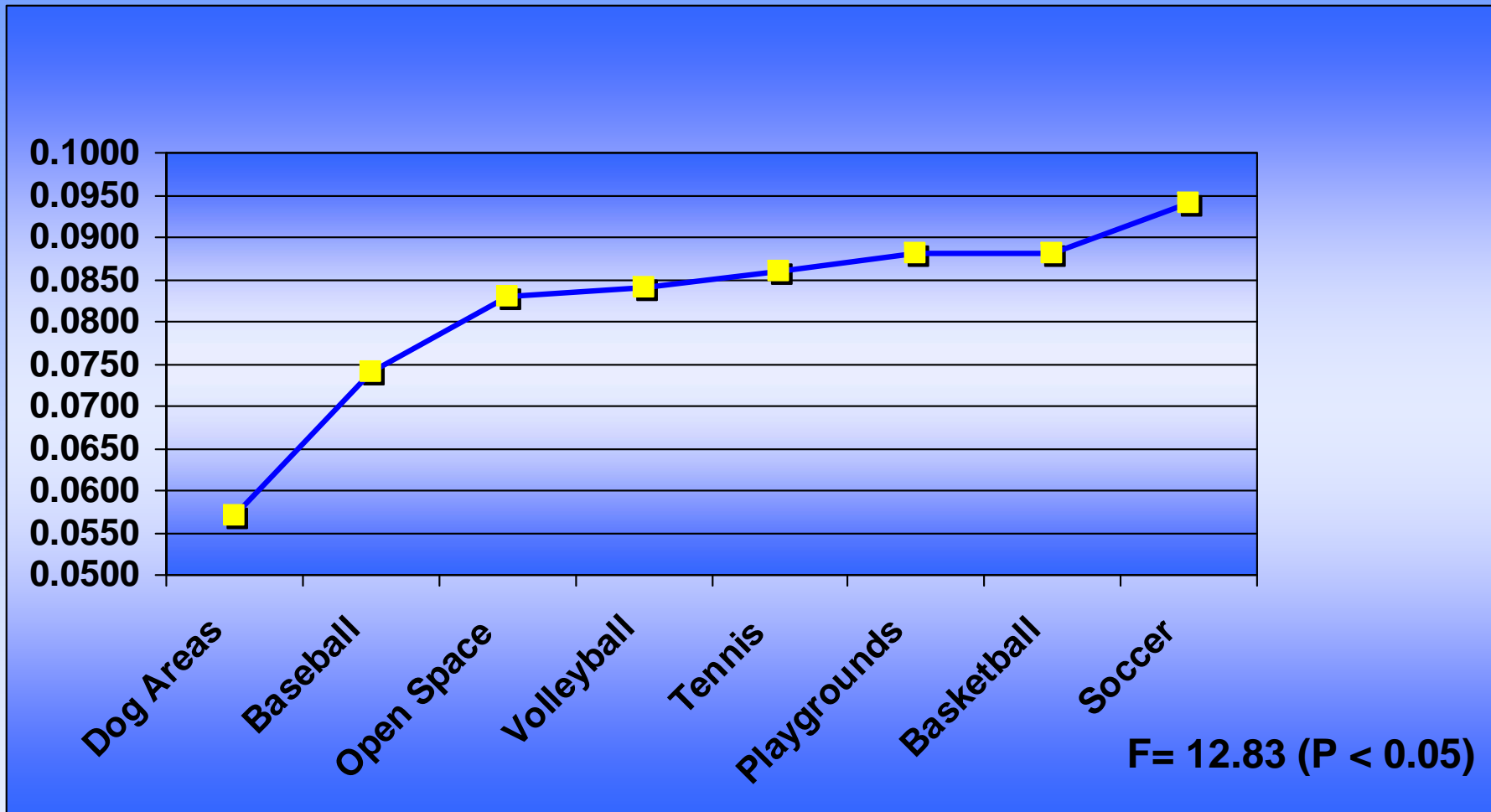
Levels of Physical Activity in Tampa and Chicago Parks



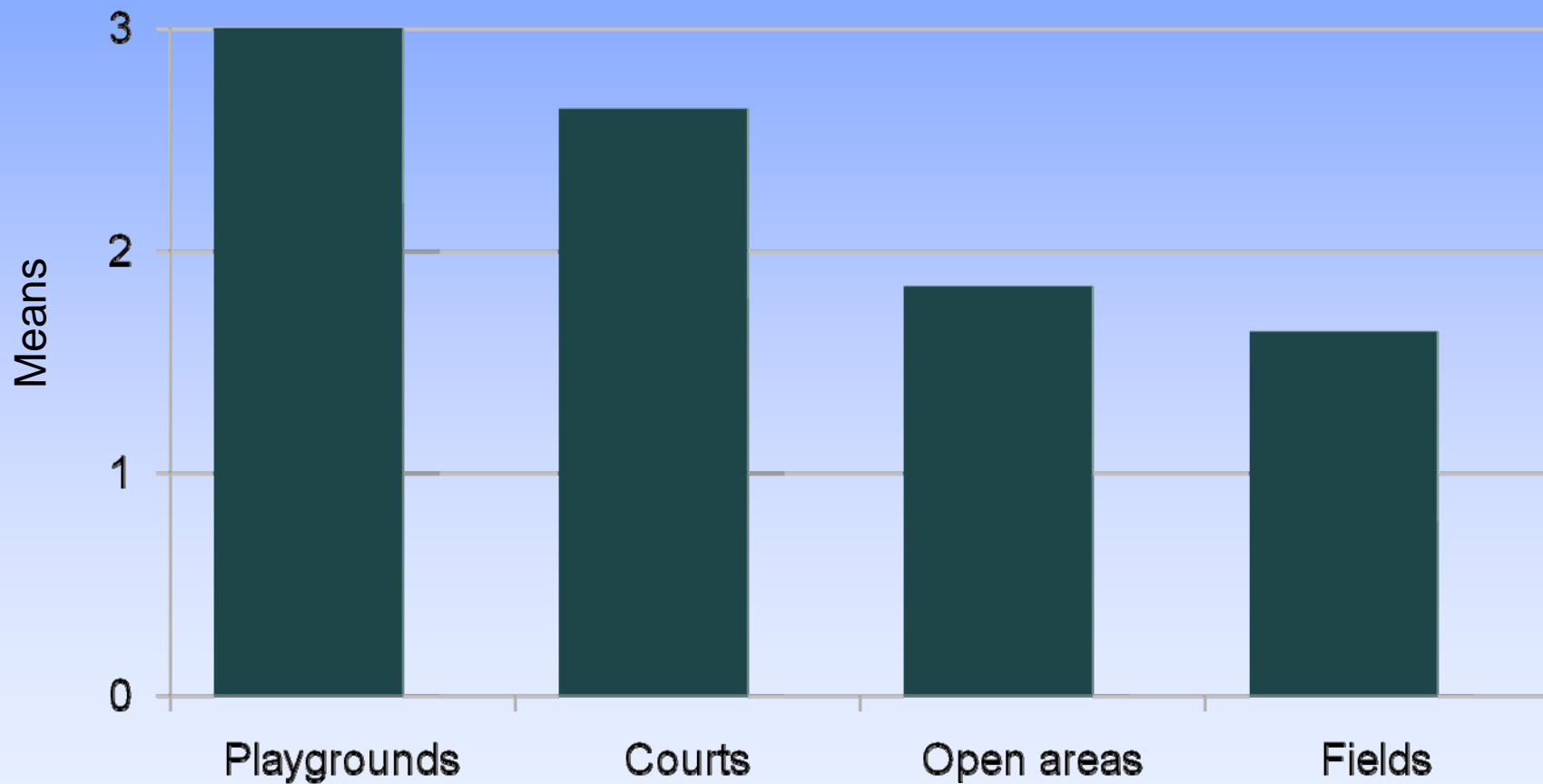
Use of Activity Areas in 18 Chicago Parks



Mean Energy Expenditure Per Person in Parks by Activity Zones (Chicago Example)



Mean of “incivilities index” in Chicago parks by activity areas

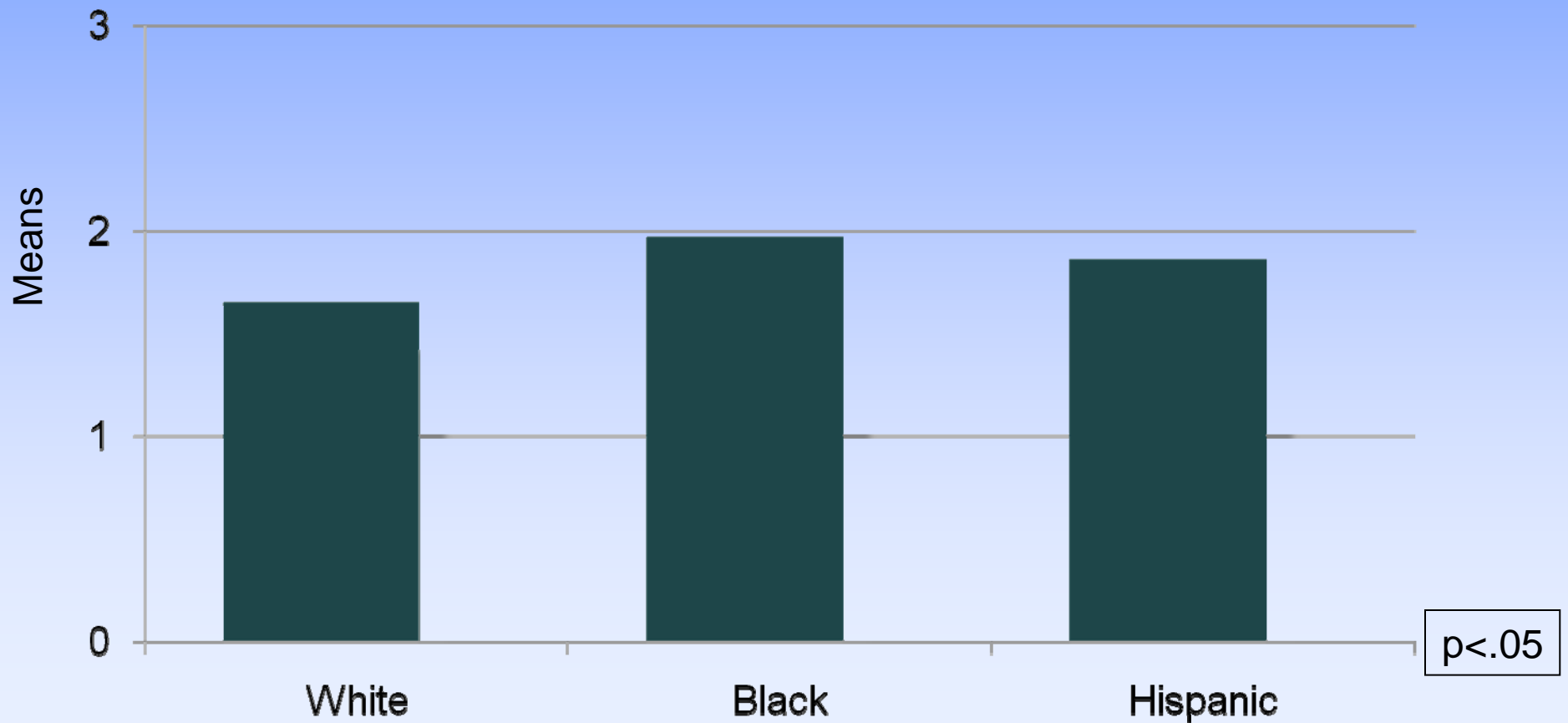


Associations between “incivilities” and park-based physical activity

Activity Areas	Odds Ratios
Playgrounds	1.24
Courts	NS
Open Space	1.45
Fields	.87

Sedentary (ref) vs Moderate-to-Vigorous Activity

Mean of “incivilities index” in Chicago parks by neighborhood race/ethnic composition



Current Projects

***I-PARK: Investigating Places for Active Recreation for Kids
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Active Living
Research (#526489)***

Co-Investigators:

Robin Moore (NC State University): landscape architecture; park design

Myron Floyd (NC State University): leisure studies; race/ethnicity

Perver Baran (NC State University): GIS; urban planning

Jason Bocarro (NC State University): leisure studies; youth development

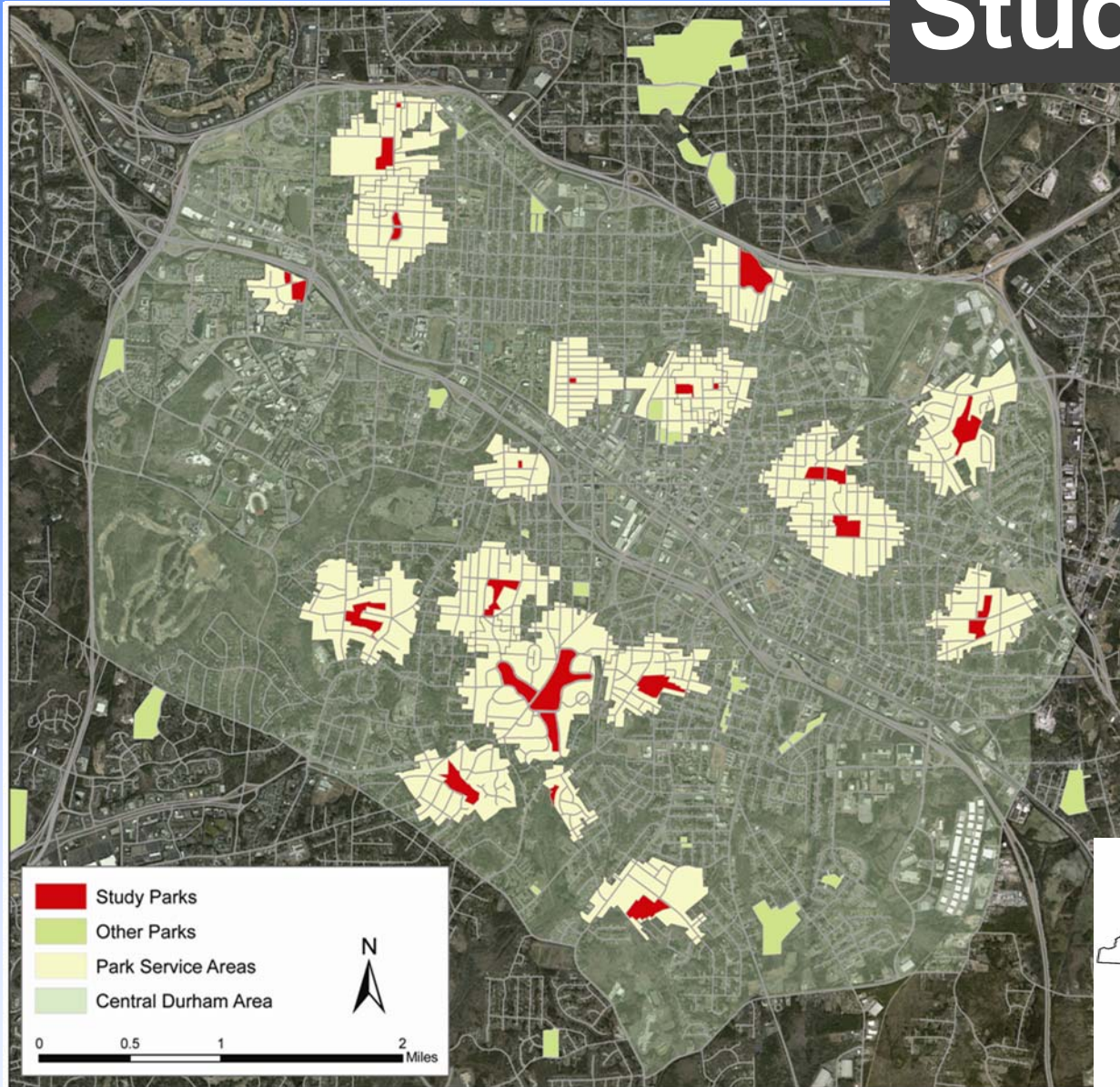
Nilda Cosco (NC State University): education; childhood development

William Smith (NC State University): sociology/crime

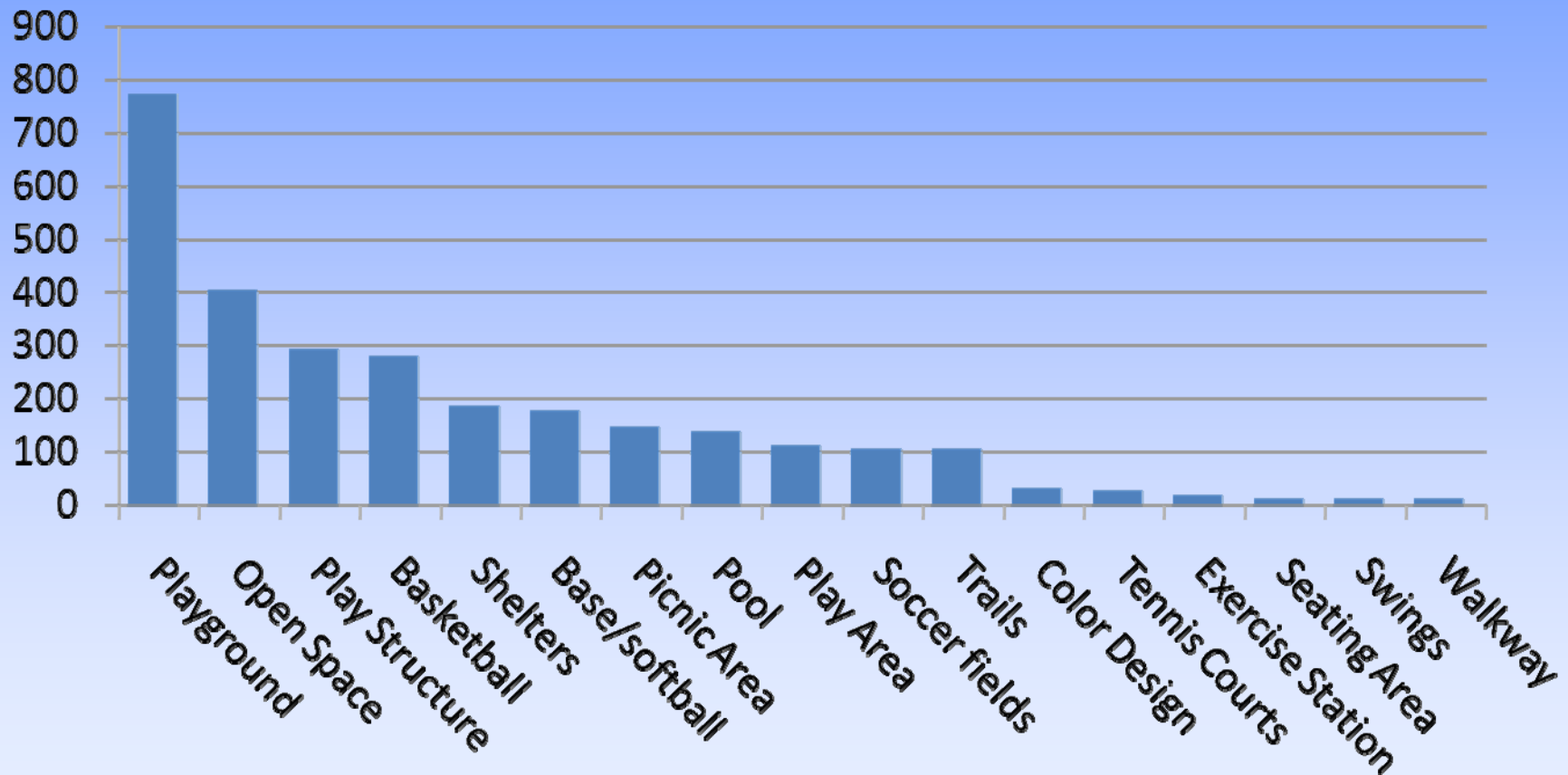
Project Aim:

Examine how the neighborhood and park environment influence children's park use and physical activity.

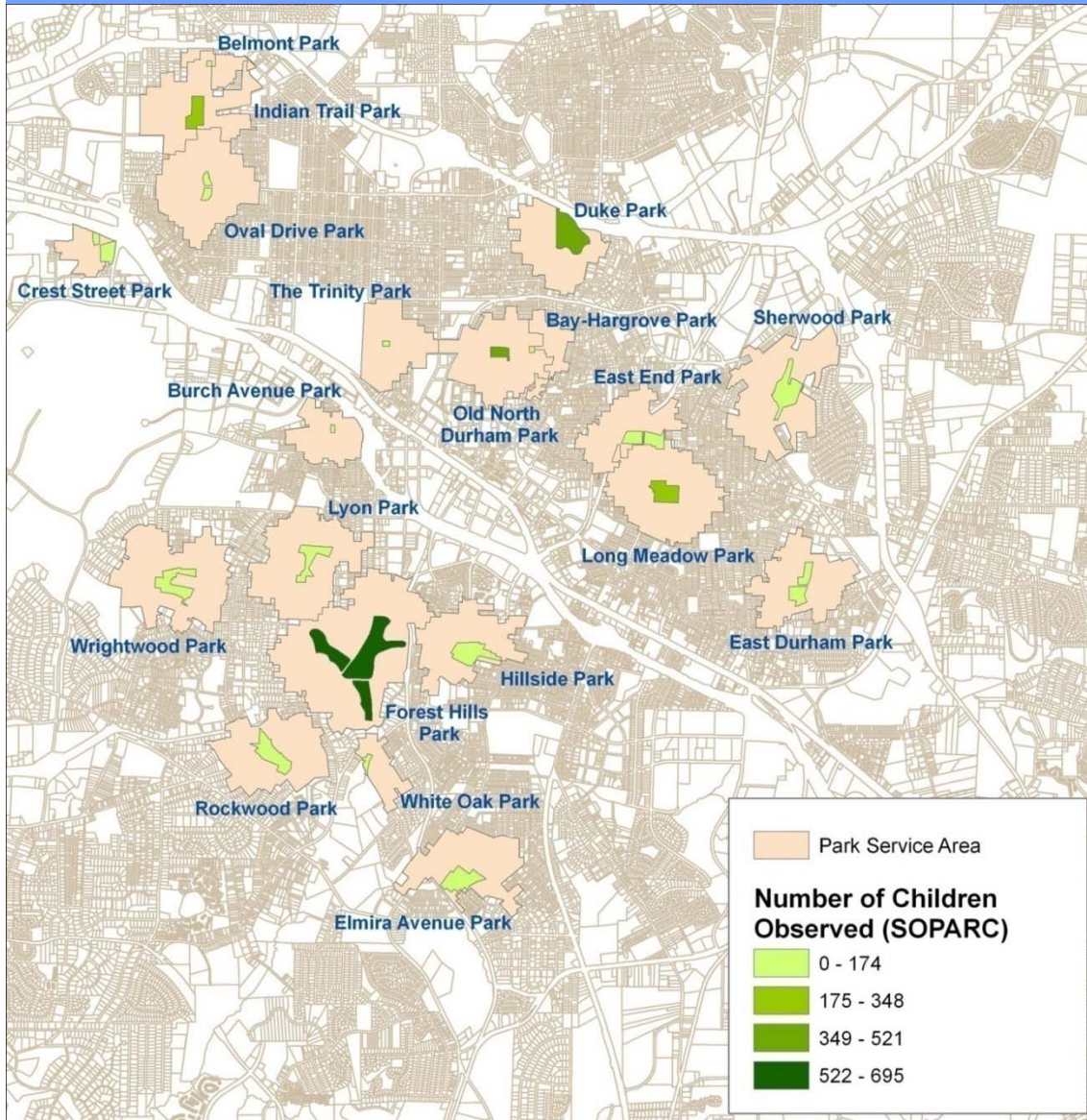
Study Parks



Frequency of Children in Different Park Zones (n=2847)



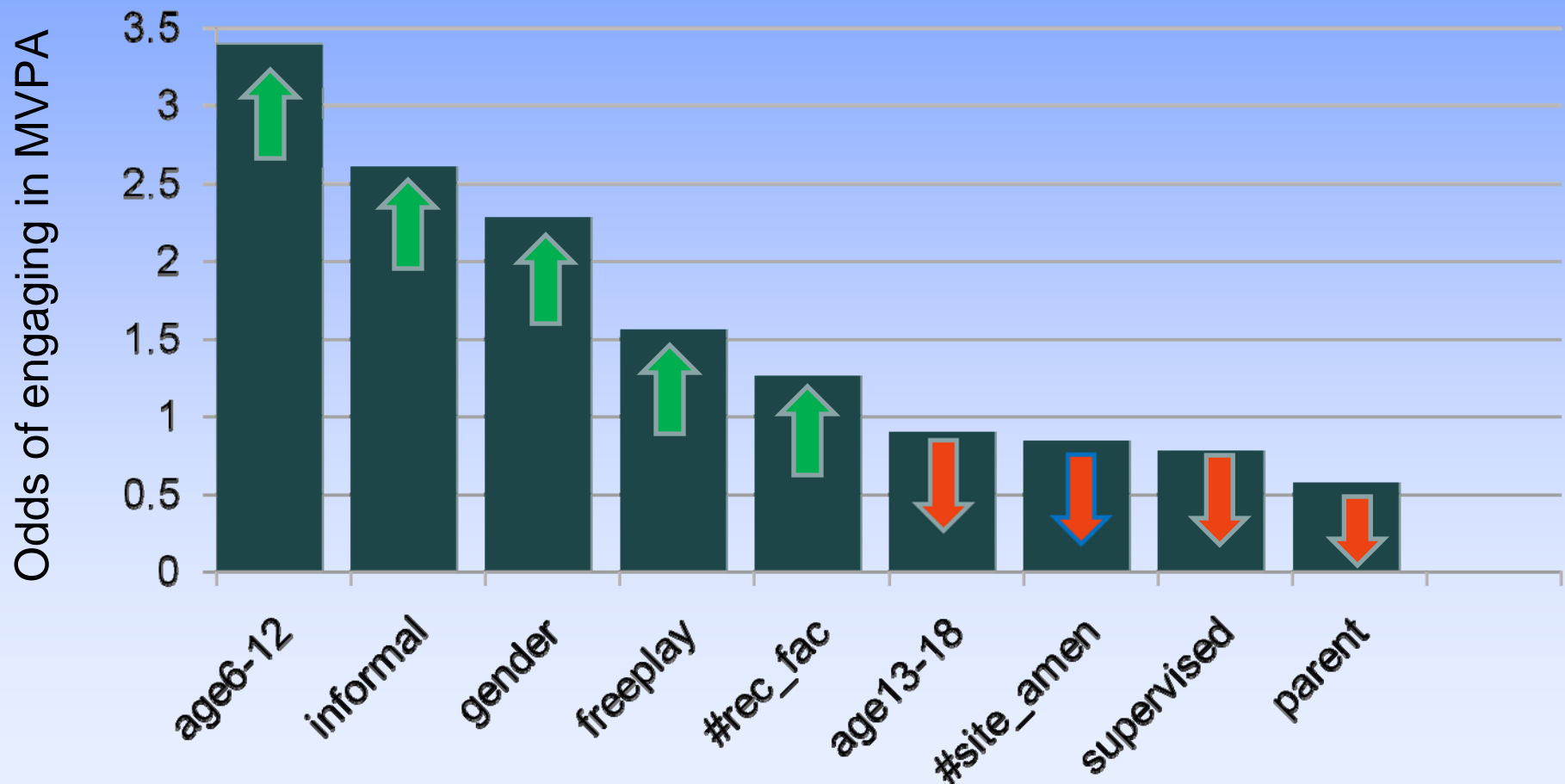
Distribution of Children Observed in 20 Durham, NC Parks



Ongoing Analyses

1. Effect of park characteristics on use and activity.
2. Effect of “walkability” on park use.
3. Effect of crime on park use.

Correlates of park-based physical activity among children in Durham (NC) parks



Summary

- **Parks and recreation environments can promote physical activity in communities.**
- **Research is needed on specific environmental factors in relation to park use and activity.**
- **Evidence is needed to guide changes in park management and policies to support active living in communities.**

Questions

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