

Trails Inside and Out: The Indiana Trails Study

Results of the Indiana Trails Study 2000



Eppley Institute for Parks & Public Lands

Indiana University Bloomington

Center for Urban Policy & the Environment

Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis

The purpose of the Indiana Trails Study was to complete a reconnaissance level study of the use levels, user characteristics, management practices, economic factors, and impacts to adjacent properties for the selected trails.

Funding Agencies

Indiana Department of Transportation

Indiana Department of Natural Resources

National Park Service

Partner Agencies

Fort Wayne Parks & Recreation

Greenfield Parks & Recreation

Goshen Parks & Recreation

Indianapolis Parks & Greenways

Cardinal Greenway, Muncie, Indiana

Portage Parks & Recreation

A Trail Study in Indiana?

- ✓ Trail projects seen as controversial by citizens
- ✓ Absence of trail facts and studies in Indiana
- ✓ Three study trail sites originally proposed
- ✓ Expanded to six trail sites by NPS, IDNR and INDOT
- ✓ Indiana Trail Study Group formed to advise
- ✓ Trail selection criteria:
 - ✓ Operating 1 year minimum
 - ✓ Cooperating agency
 - ✓ Geographic distribution?
 - ✓ Paved surface
 - ✓ 3 miles or longer
 - ✓ Rail trail?



**Prairie Duneland Trail
Portage**

**Maple City
Greenway Goshen**

**Monon Trail
Indianapolis**

**River Greenway Trail
Ft. Wayne**

**Cardinal Greenway
Muncie**

**Pennsy Rail-Trail
Greenfield**



Trail Characteristics

Trail	Length (miles)	Surface	Year Opened	Management
Ft. Wayne	±15	asphalt	1984	Public-city
Goshen	10	varies	1996	Public-city
Greenfield	3.1	12' asphalt	1998	Public-city
Monon	7.6	10-12' asphalt	1995	Greenways/ Parks Dept.
Muncie	10	12' asphalt	1998	Non-profit organization
Portage	8.9	12' asphalt	1996	Public-city

Areas of Study

- ✓ Trail User Counts (Infrared Trail Monitors)
- ✓ Trail User Intercept Survey
- ✓ Trail User Follow-up (Mail) Survey
- ✓ Trail Neighbor Survey
- ✓ Realtor Conversations

Trail User Counts: Infrared Trail Monitors

- ✓ How many will come?
- ✓ When will they come?



Trail Use Patterns

- ✓ Estimates of:
 - ✓ **Monthly traffic**
 - ✓ **Daily traffic (mean, peak, low)**
 - ✓ **Hourly traffic (mean, peak, low)**
- ✓ Users past a point, not different users
- ✓ Counts likely do not represent total traffic on any trail because users use different sections
- ✓ Related Study by students at IUPUI for error rate
 - ✓ **Found approximate undercount of 15% for trail counters**
 - ✓ **Continuing additional study for trail counters**

Traffic Counts, Fall 2000

Chart 1: Total Traffic Count For Study Cities in September/October 2000

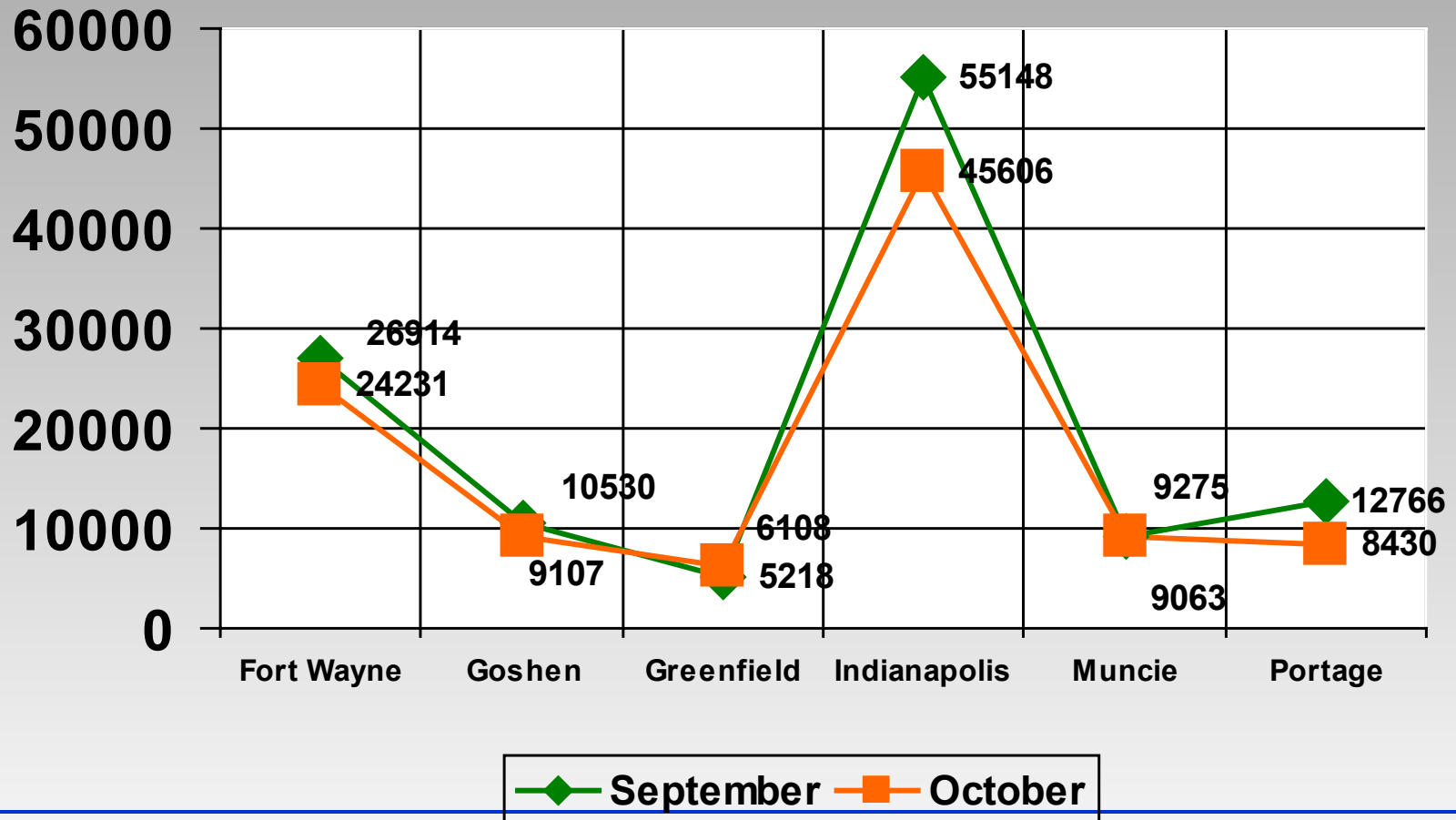


Chart 2: Average Weekday Traffic Count For Study Cities in September/October 2000

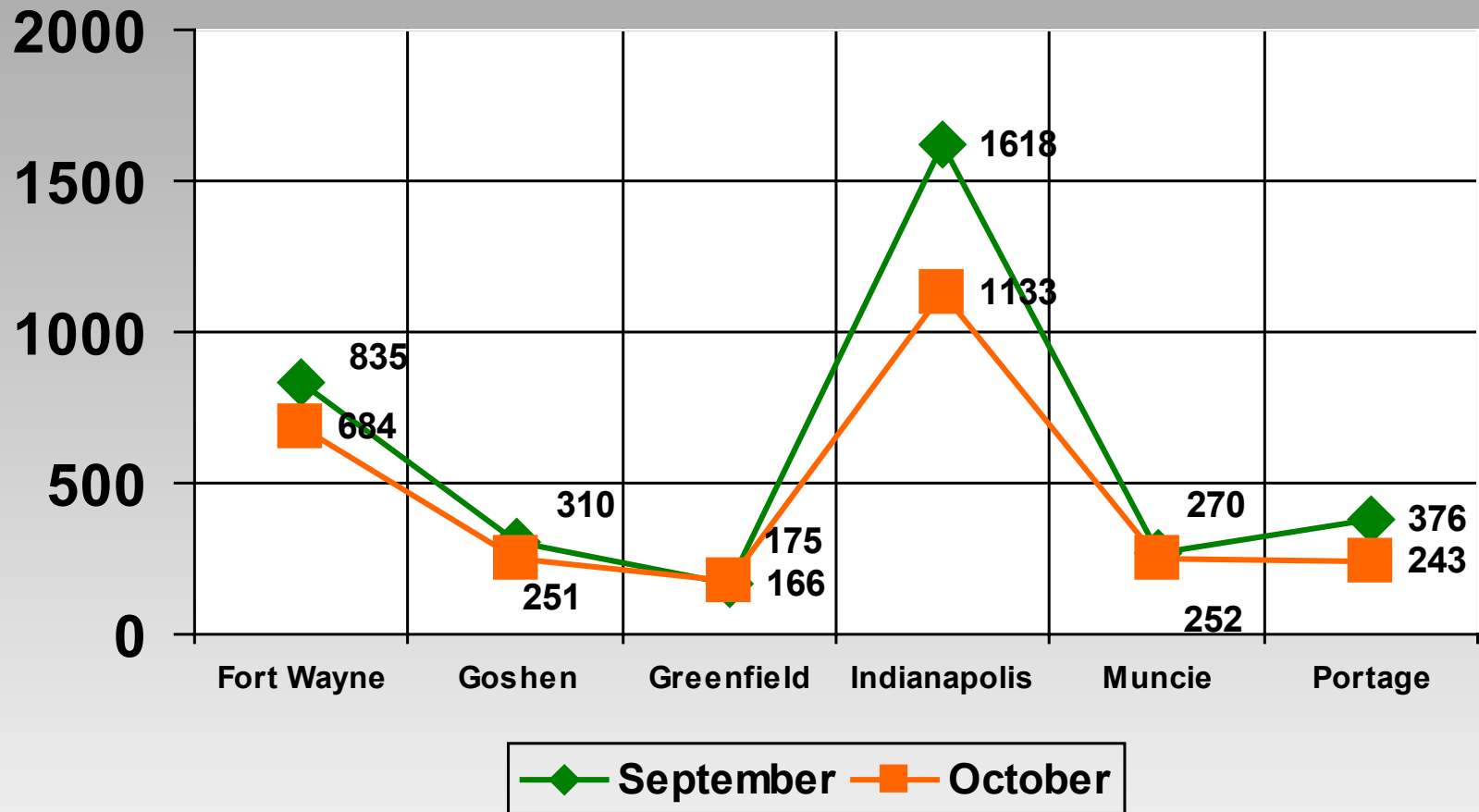


Chart 3: Average Weekend Traffic Count For Study Cities in September/October 2000

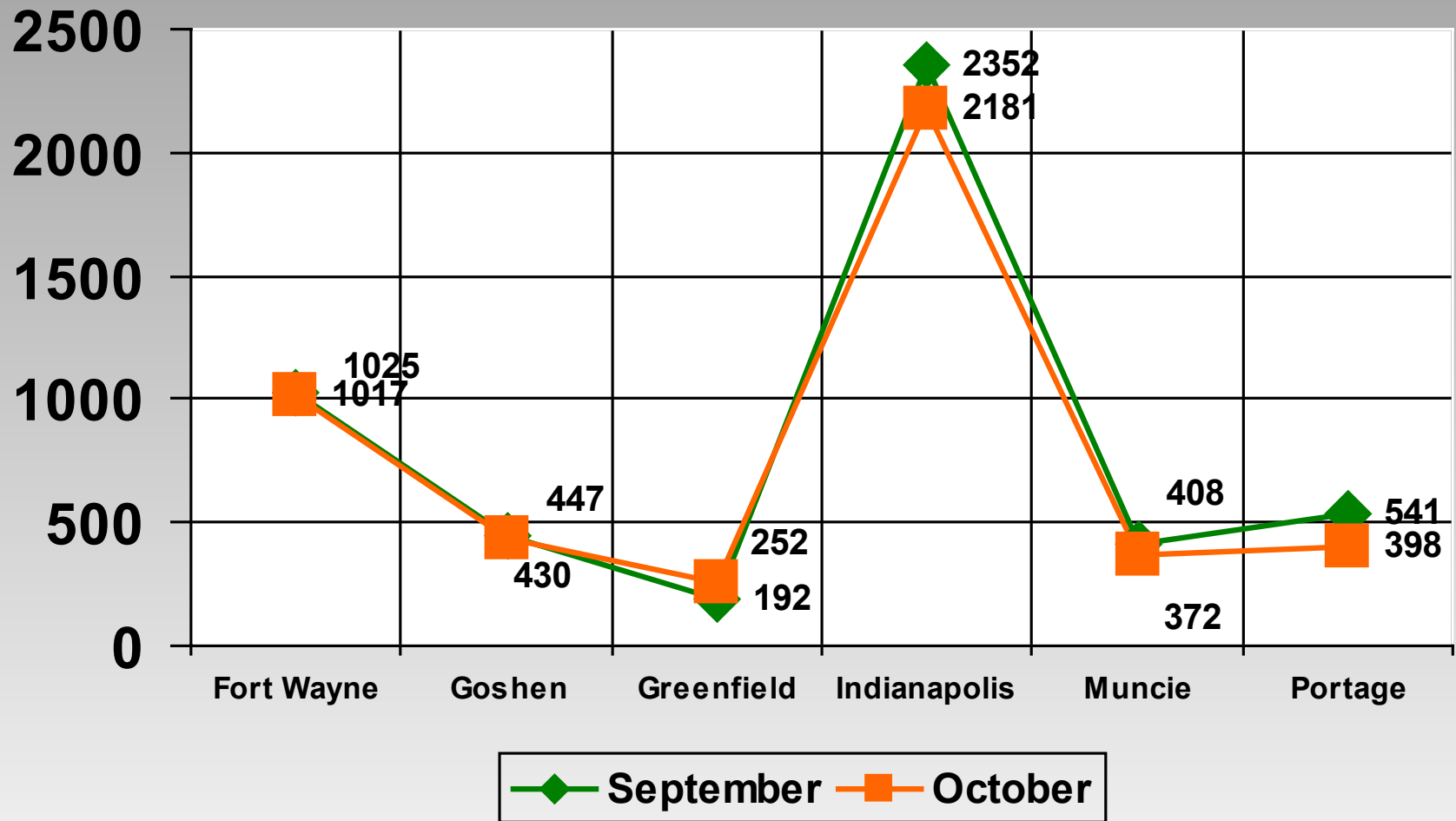
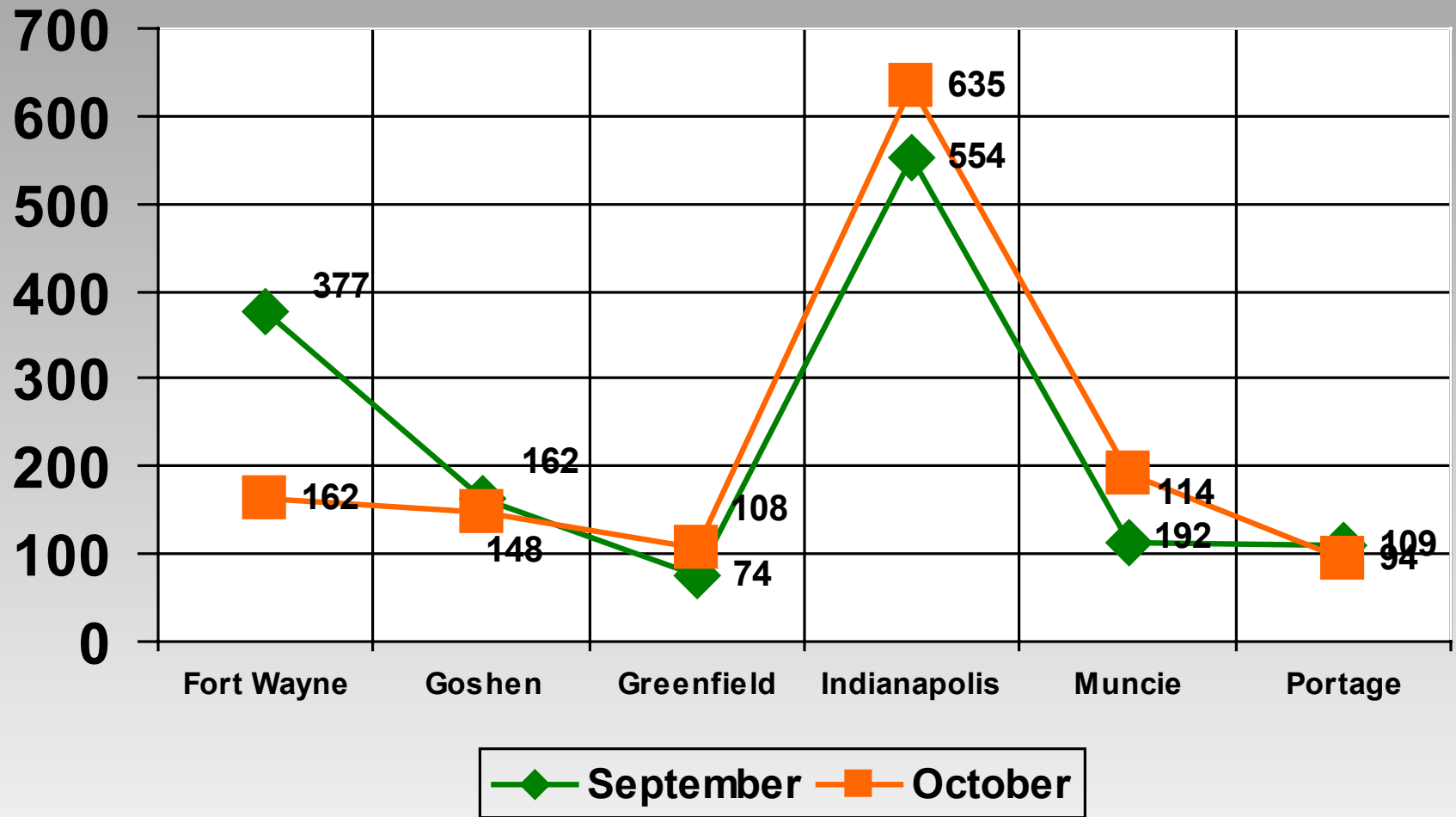


Chart 4: Highest Single Hour Count For Study Cities in September/October 2000



Summary Traffic Counts

- ✓ Users counted every day in sampling period on every trail monthly traffic: 5,200 - 55,000 users past a point
- ✓ Average daily traffic: 96 - 2545 (by day of week)
- ✓ Highest hourly traffic: 74 - 635 (1/49 to 1/6 sec.)
- ✓ Average weekend daily use exceeds average weekday use (by 37% in September)
- ✓ Peak daily use
 - ✓ **Weekdays: 5:00 or 6:00 p.m; earlier in October**
 - ✓ **Weekends: varies in afternoon; earlier in October**
- ✓ Peak hour use is 11%-14% of weekday- weekend use

User Intercept Survey & User Follow-up (Mail) Survey

- ✓ Who will come?
- ✓ Why will they come?
- ✓ How will they get there?
- ✓ How long will they stay?
- ✓ Do they participate more because of the trail?
- ✓ Where will they come from?
- ✓ How long will they stay?
- ✓ What will they think of their visit?

**Chart 5: Trail Users Entering and Exiting
at Same Location**

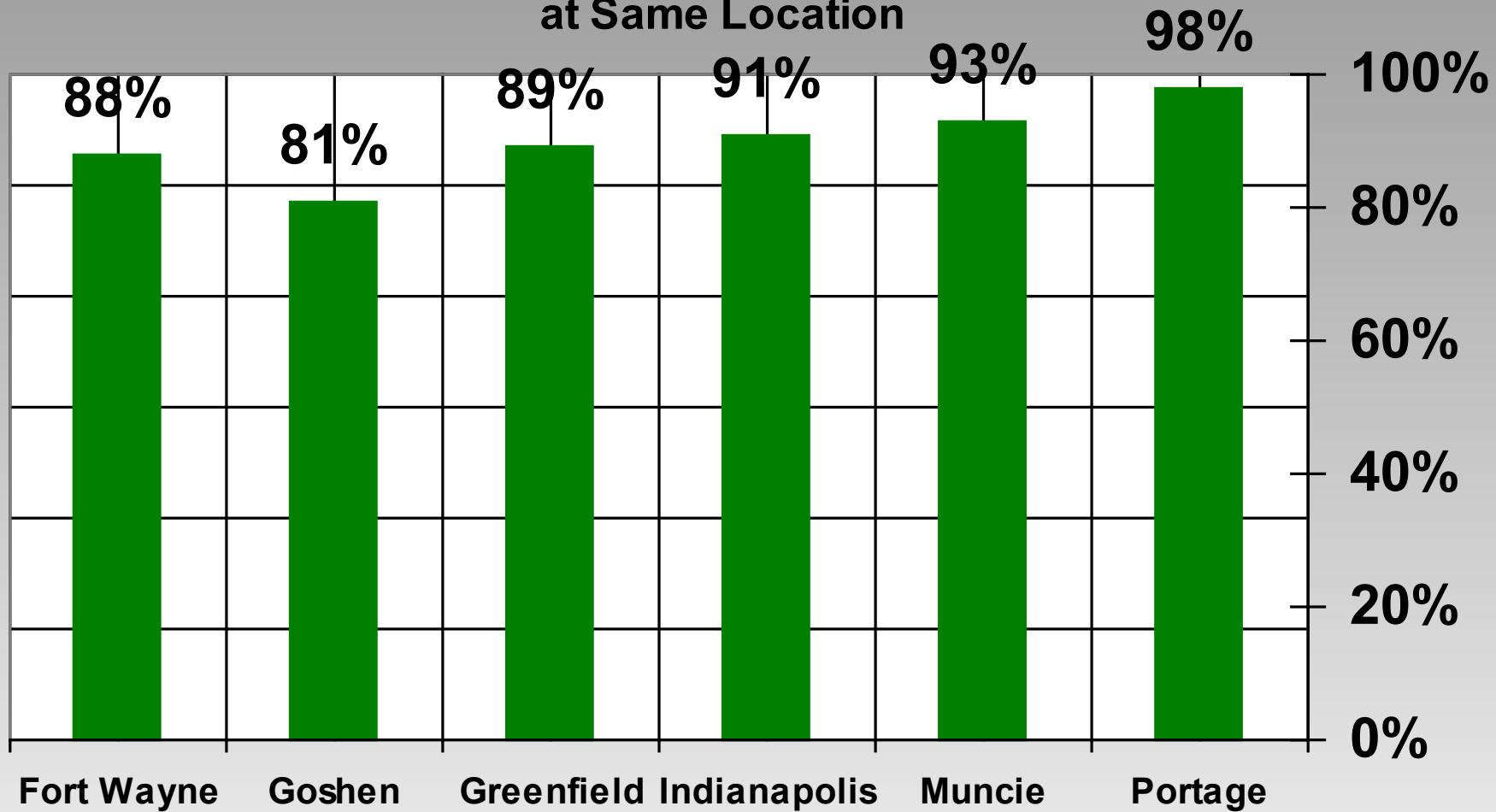


Chart 6: Trail User Method of Travel To/From The Trail

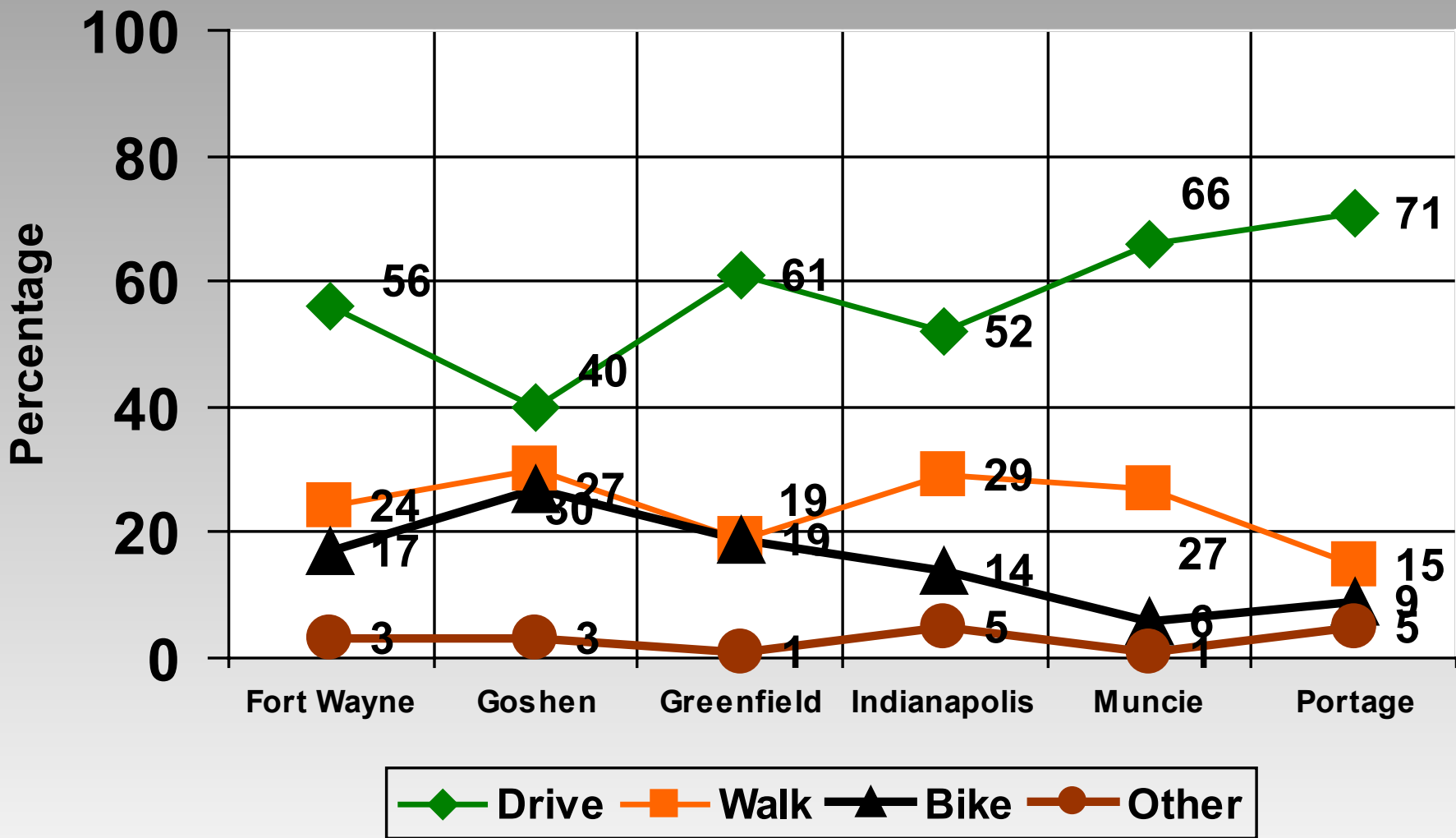
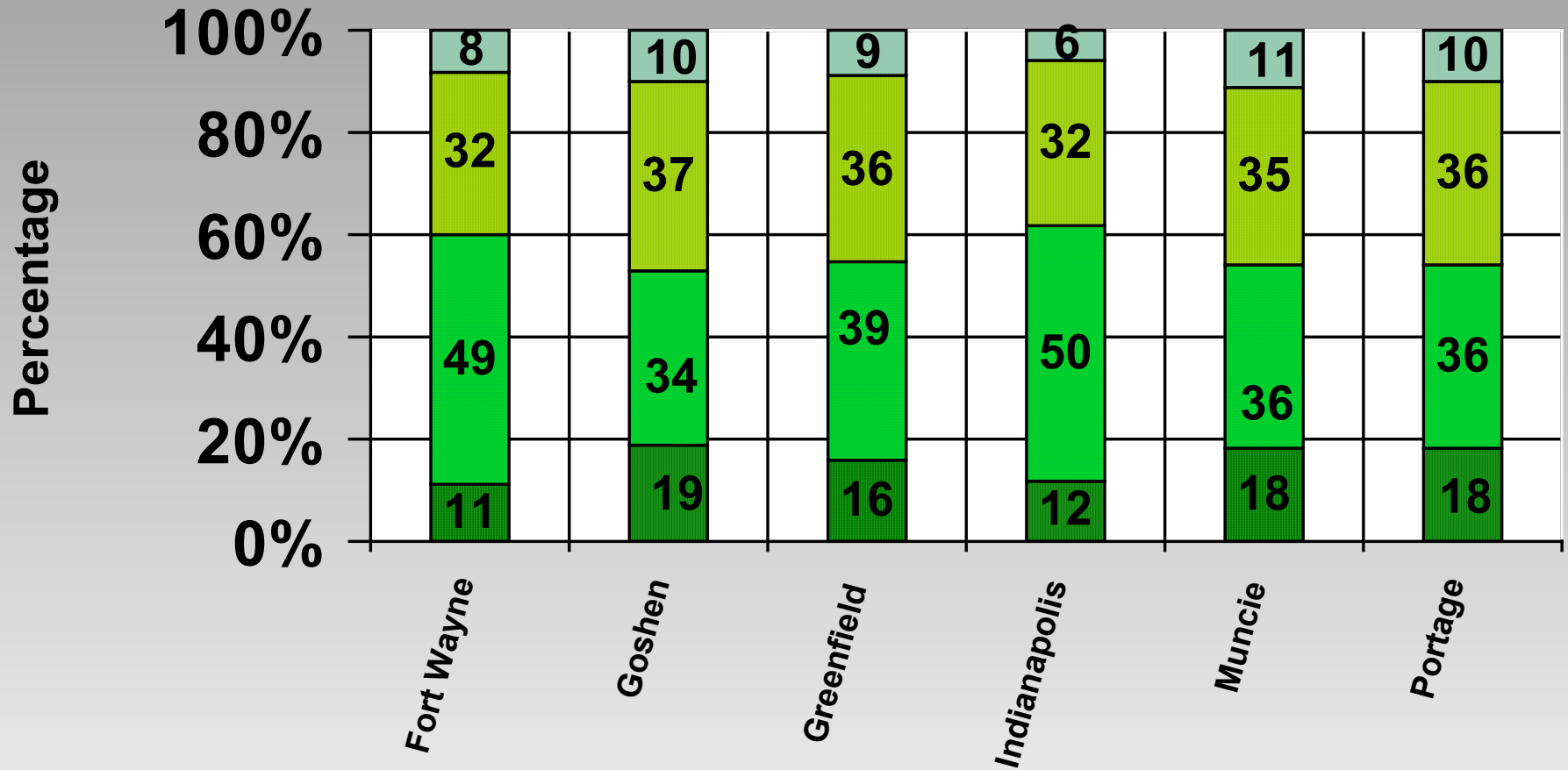


Chart 7: Age Distribution Percentages of Trail Users



■ Under 26 years ■ 26-45 years ■ 46-65 years ■ over 65 years



Chart 8: Distribution of Trail User Activities

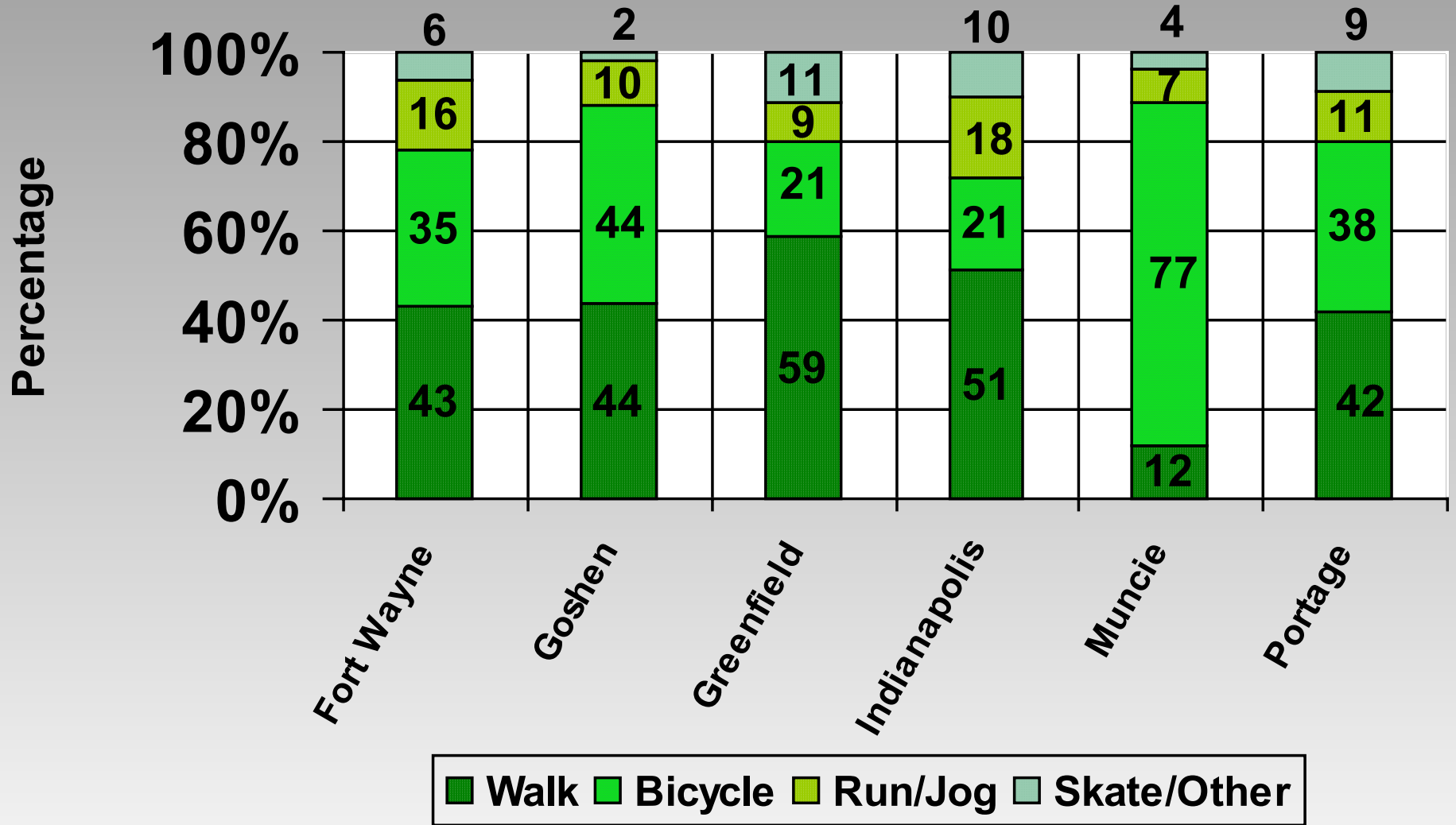


Chart 9: Trail User Primary Reason For Visiting Trail

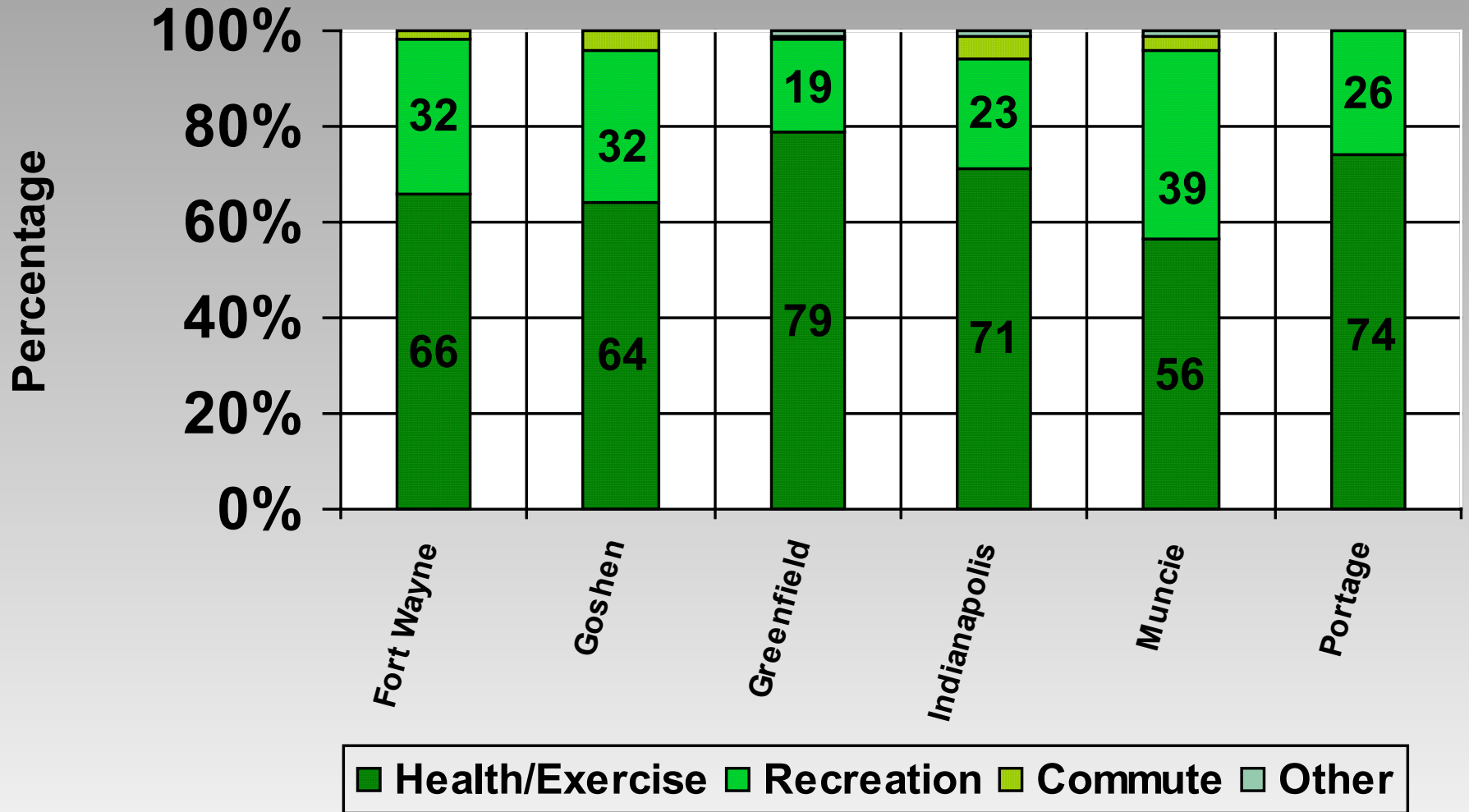


Chart 10: Percentage of Trail Users Combining Trail Use With Other Activities/Places

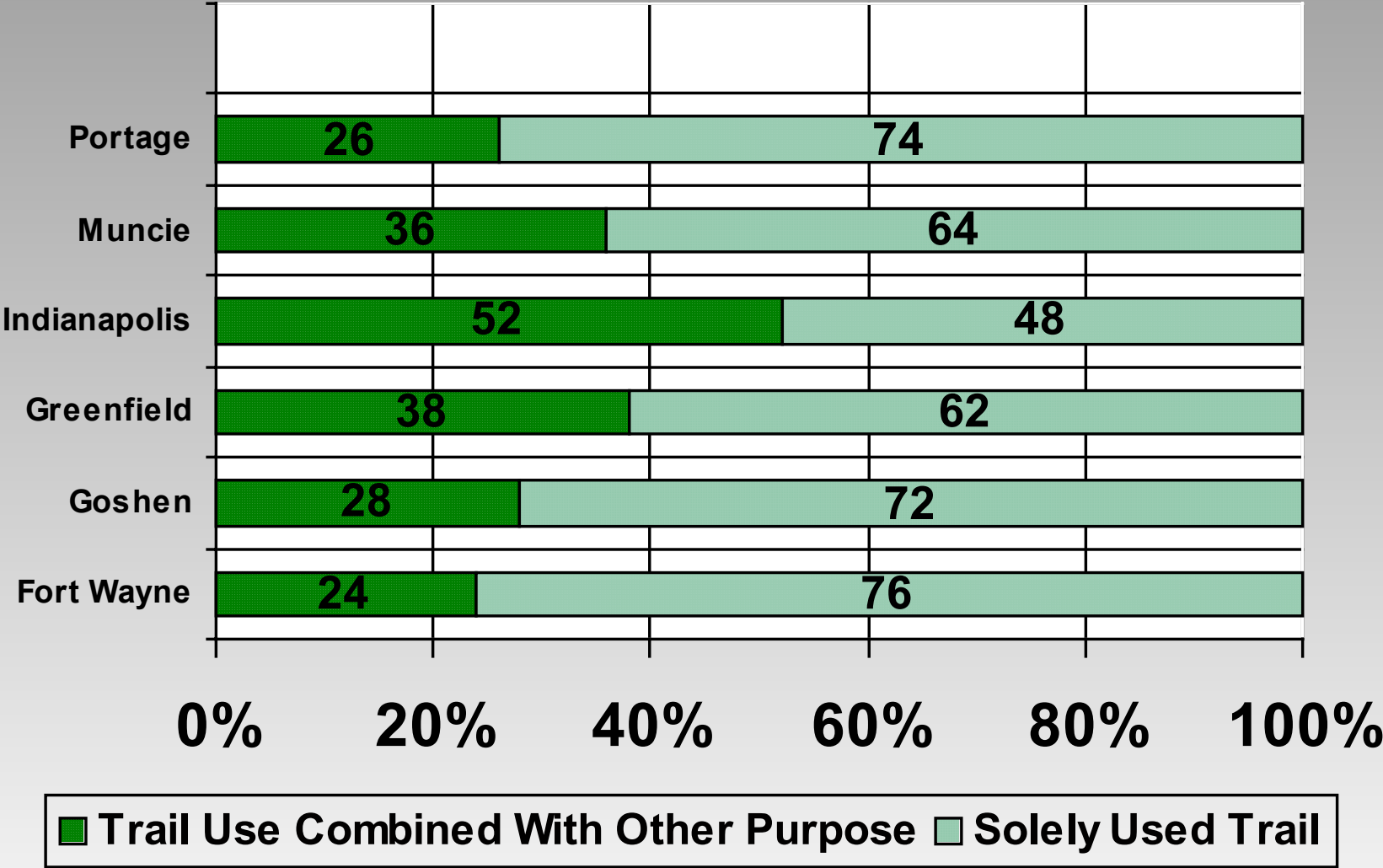


Chart 11: Percentage of Trail Users Indicating More Participation Due To Trail

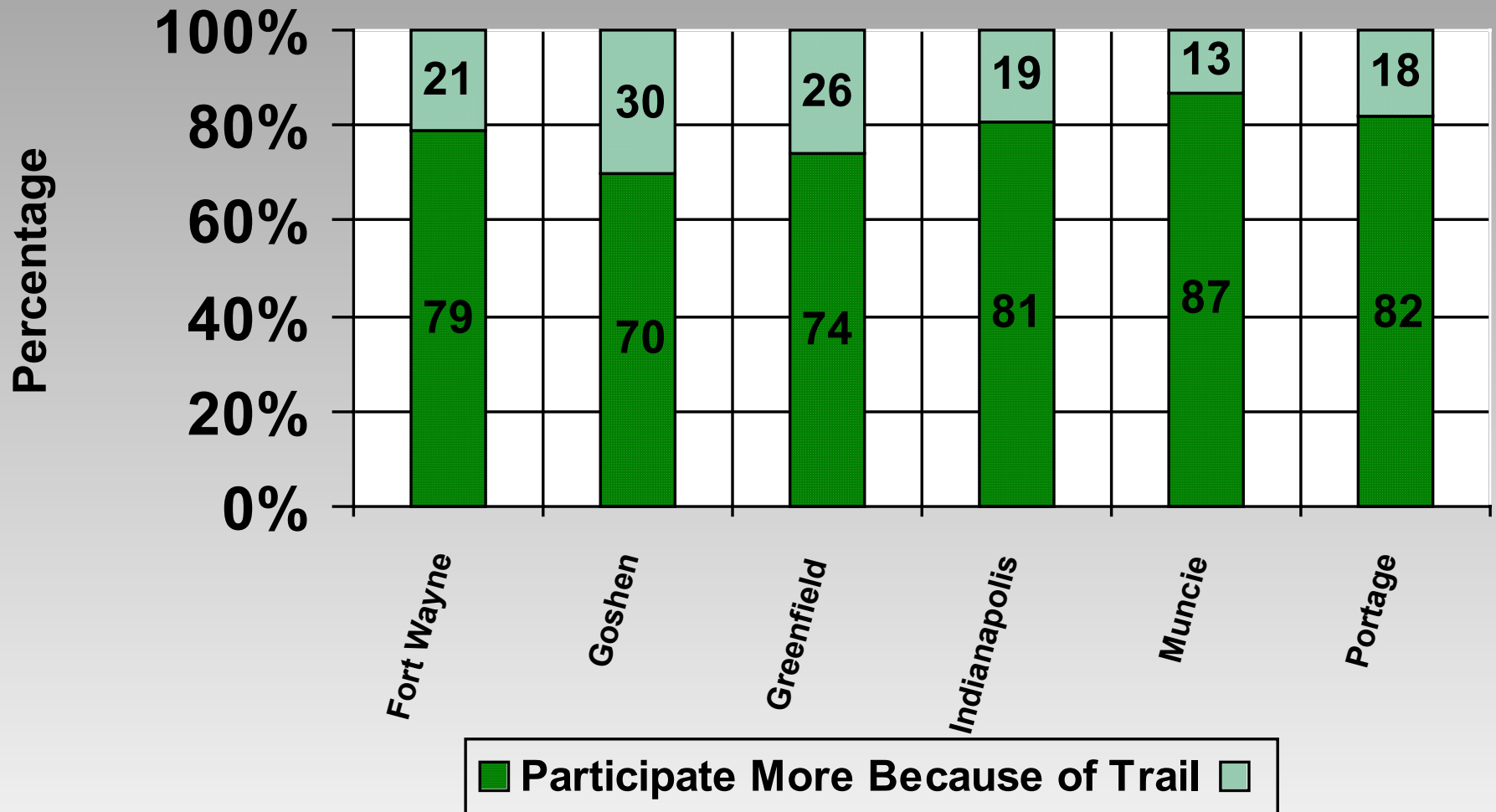


Chart 12: Amount of Time Users Spent Weekly on Trail

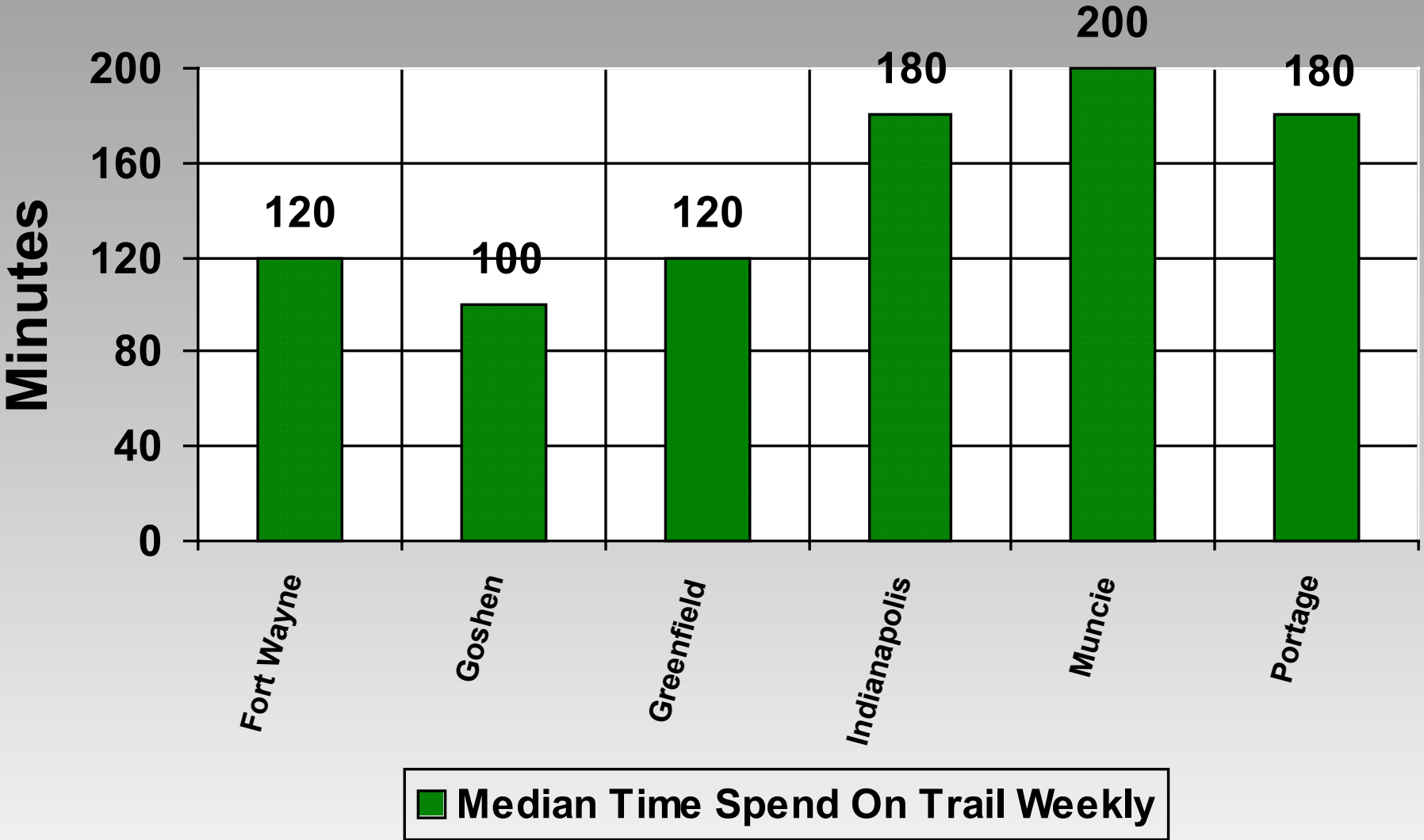


Chart 13: Most Common Problems Reported By Trail Users

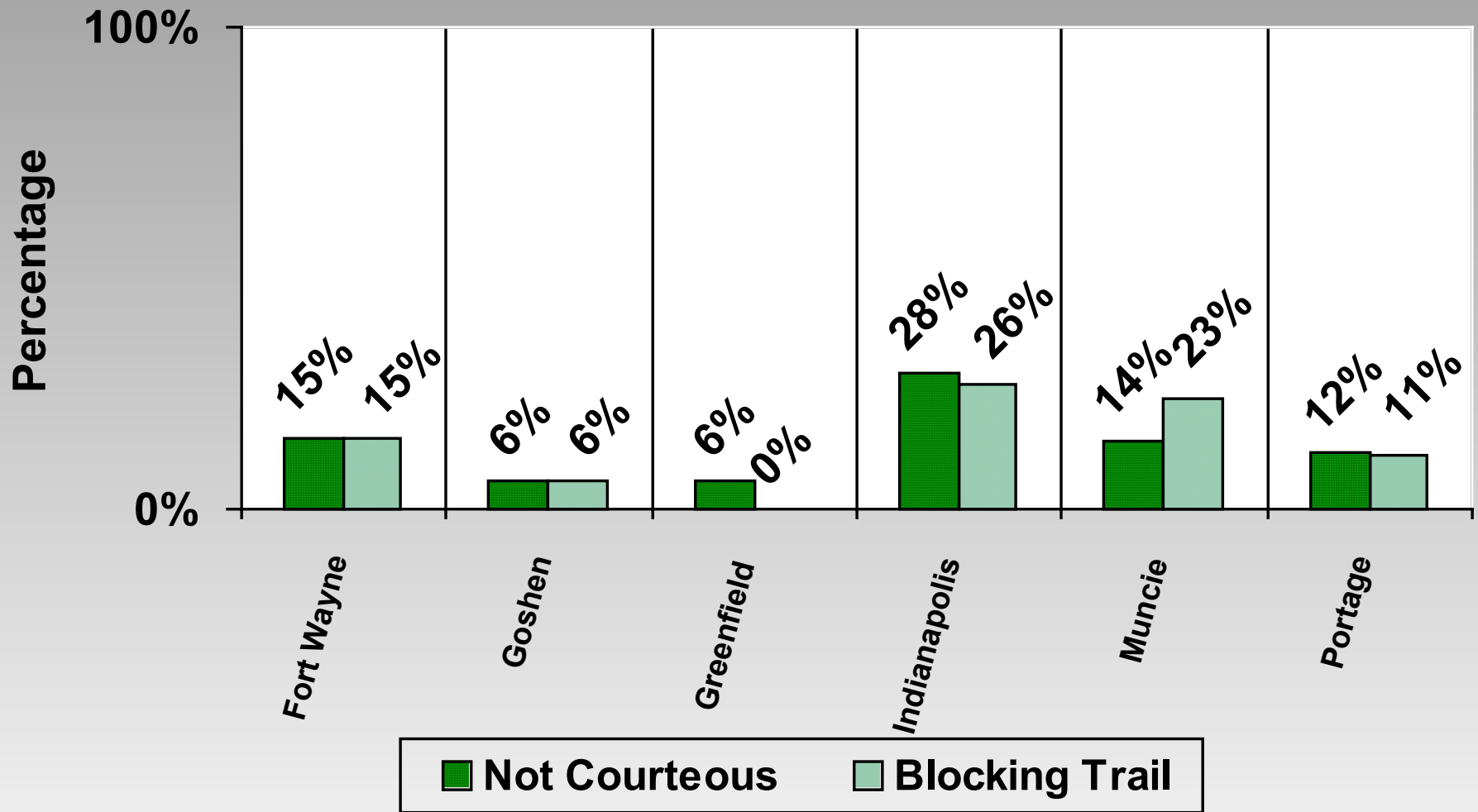


Chart 14: Percentage of Trail Users Viewing Trail As Safe and City As More Favorable Due to Trail

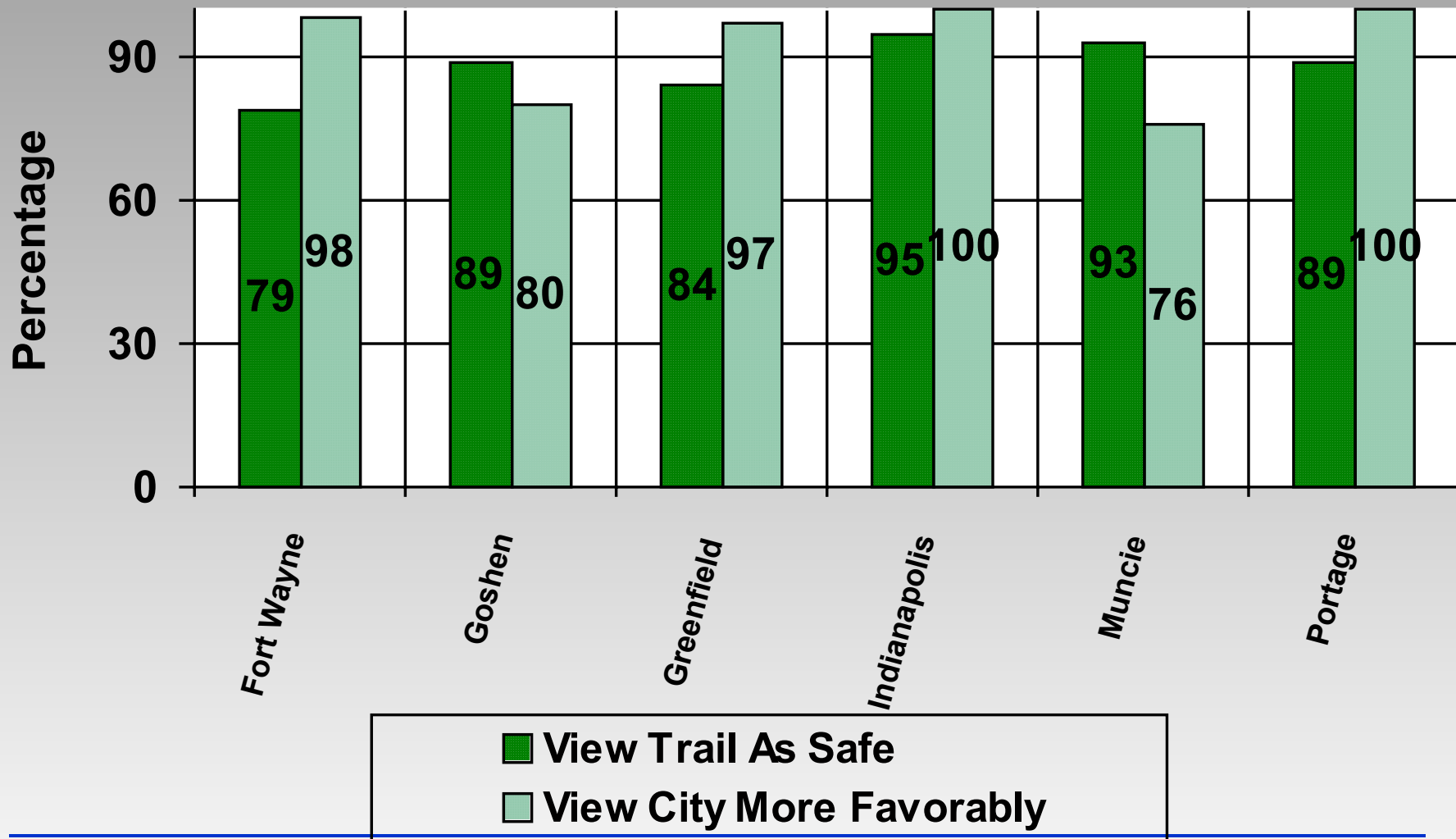


Chart 15: Percentage of Trail Users Indicating Willingness To Pay User Fee

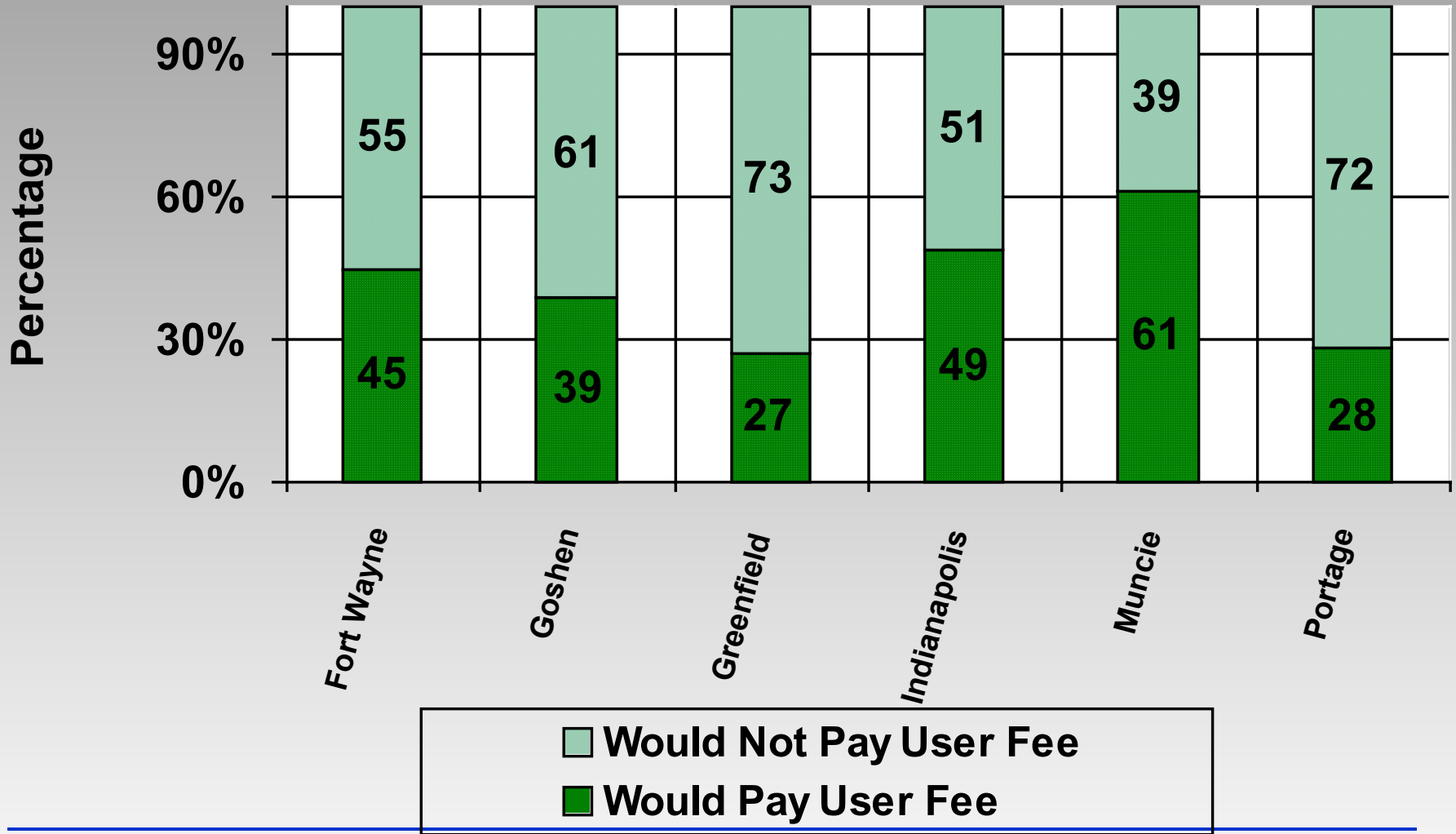
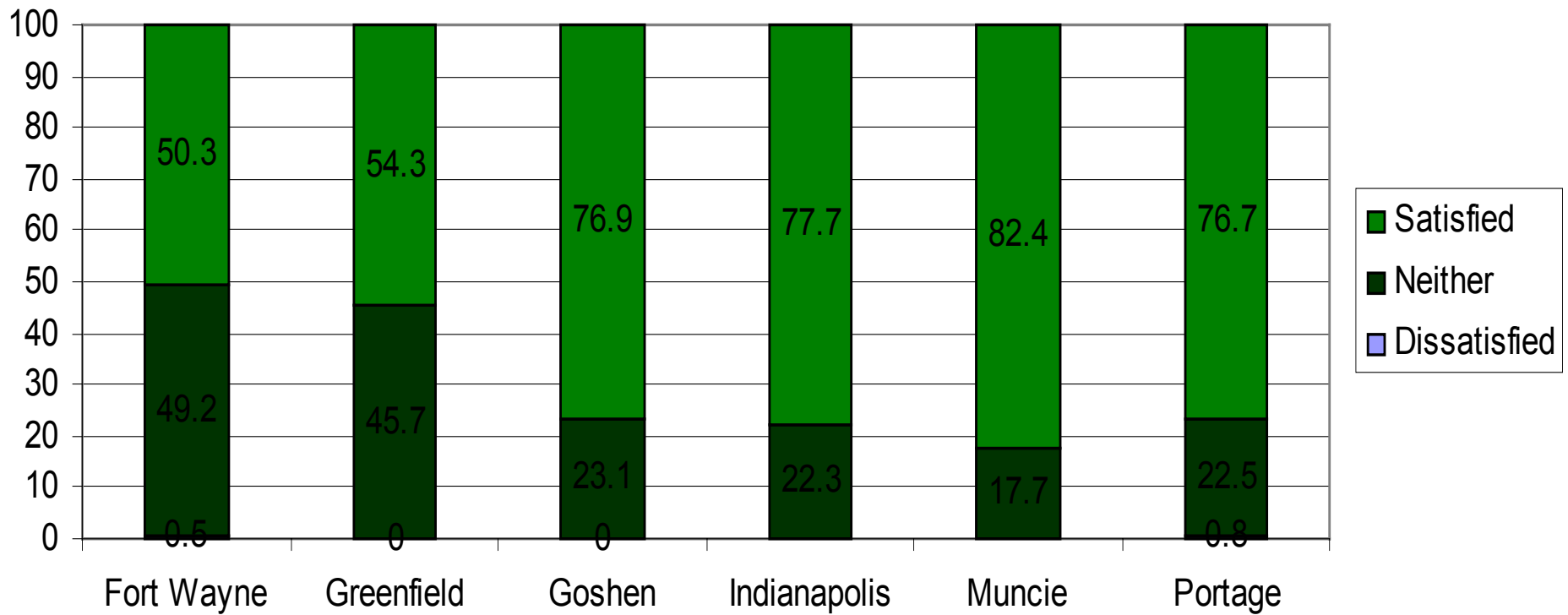


Chart 15b: Trail Users Overall Satisfaction With Trail



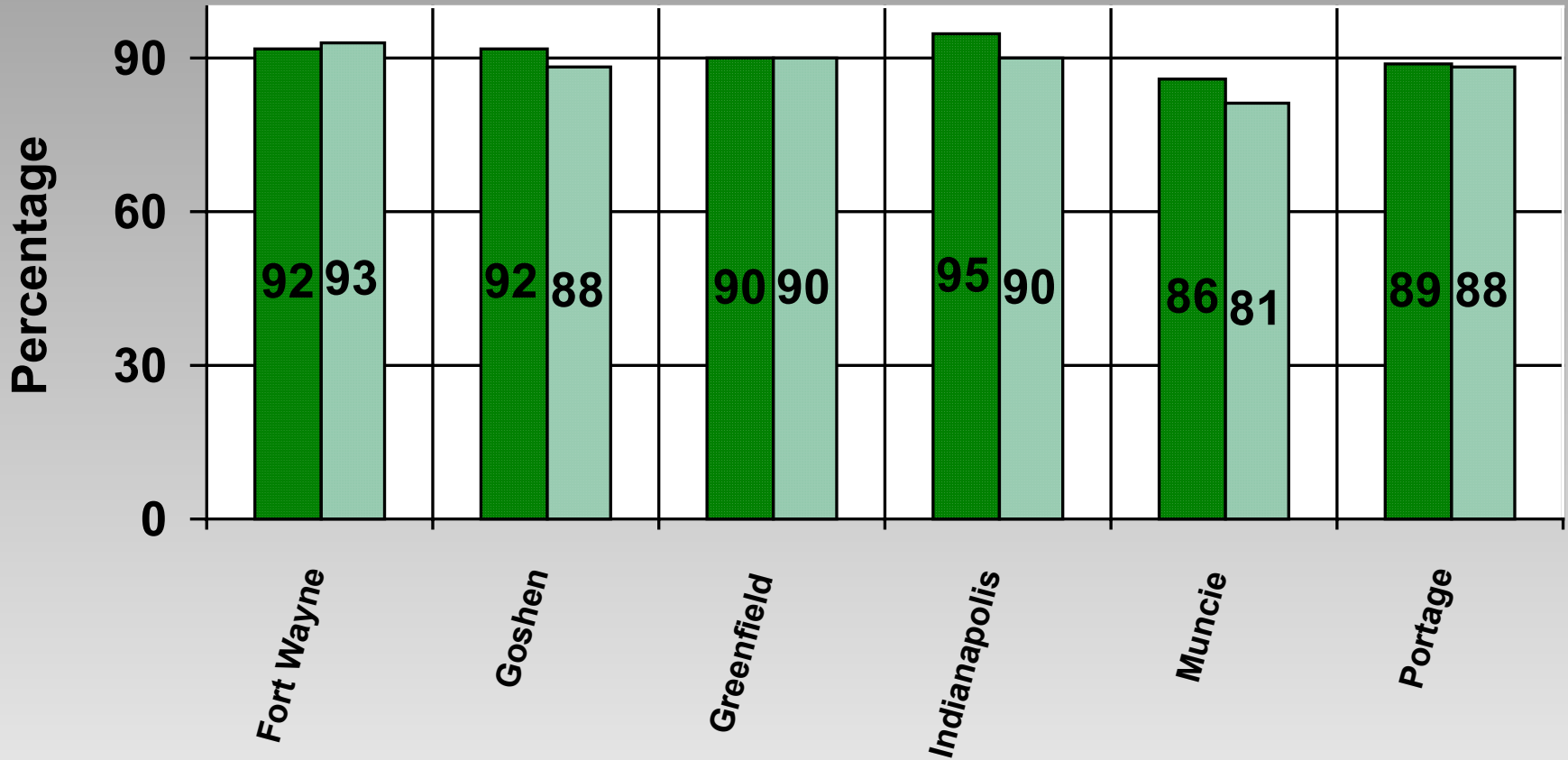
Other Summary Findings on Trail Users

- ✓ Trail users view these trails as safe
- ✓ Trail users tend to be white
- ✓ Trail users are mostly upper-middle class
- ✓ Trail users are largely college educated

Trail Neighbor Survey

- ✓ Who is a trail neighbor?
- ✓ Are neighbors satisfied with the trail?
- ✓ How does the trail manager perform?
- ✓ Does the trail have impact property value?
- ✓ Are the users “good neighbors?”
- ✓ Do trail neighbors use the trail?

Chart 16: Percentage of Trail Neighbors Viewing Trail As Having Increased or Positive Effect on Property



■ Trail Increased or No Effect on Property Value
■ Trail Has No Effect or Makes It Easier To Sell Property



Chart 17: Percentage of Trail Neighbors Viewing Trail As Improving Neighborhood or As Better Neighbor

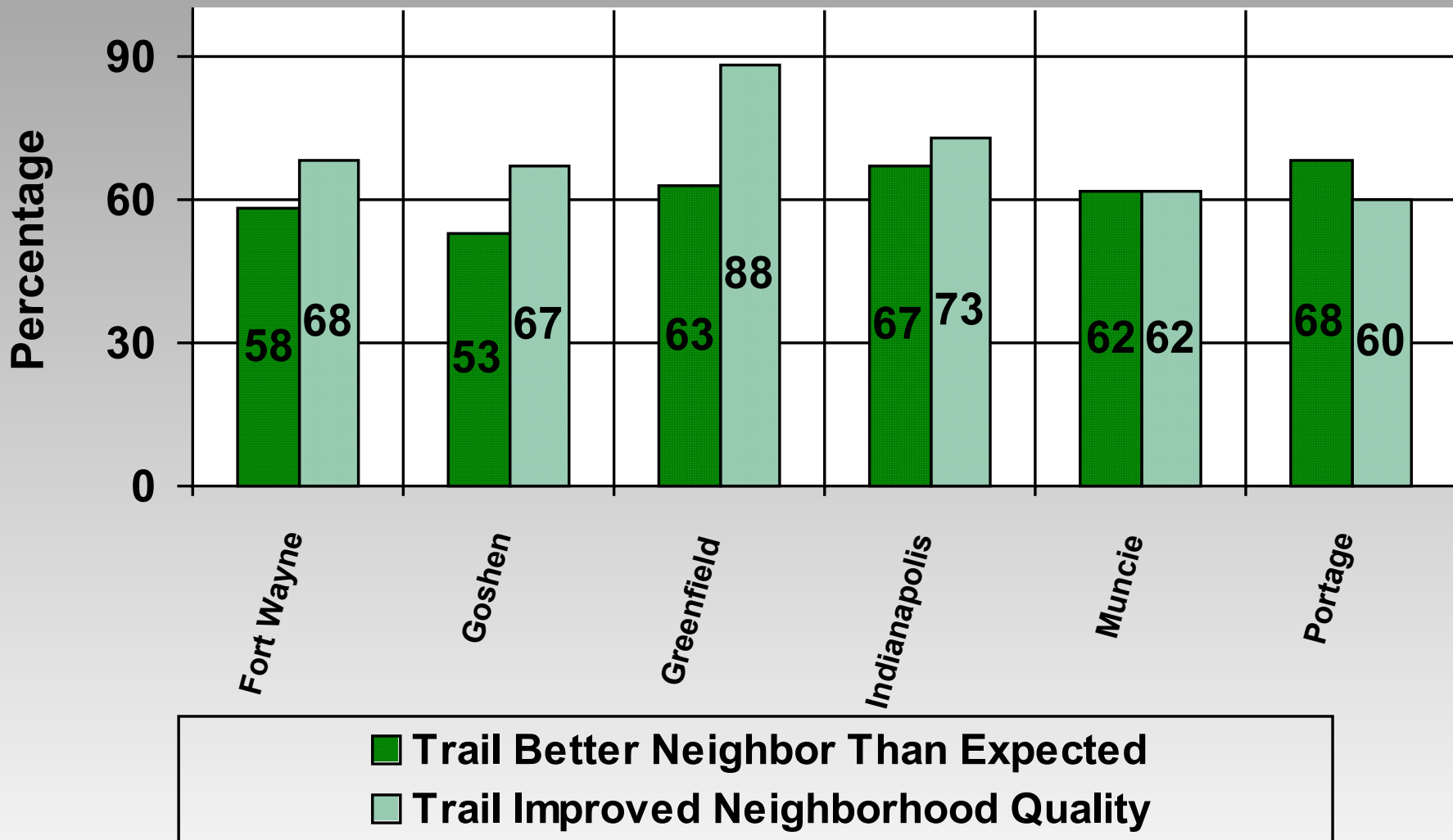


Chart 18: Average Trail Neighbor Use of Trail By Season

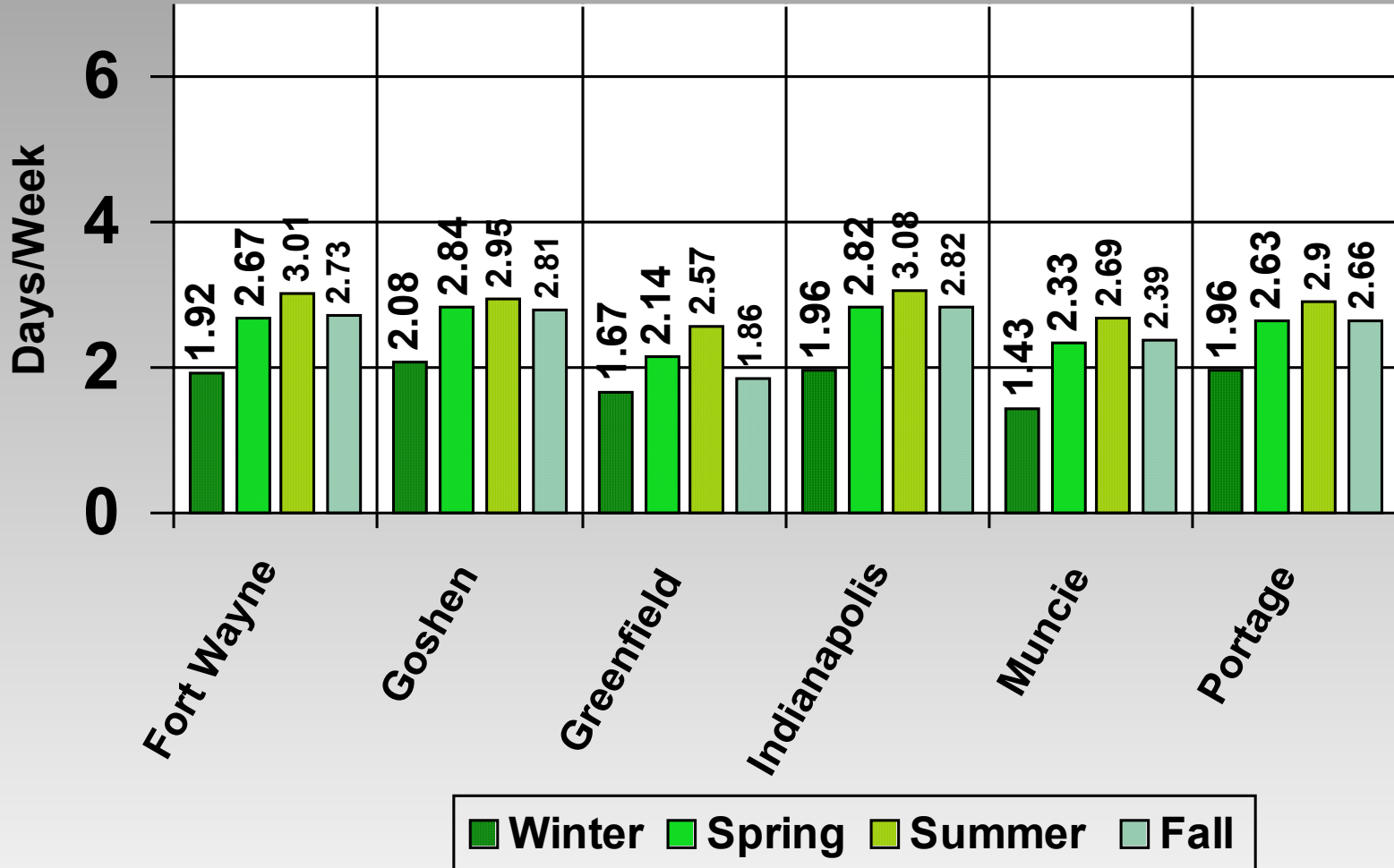


Chart 19: Percentage of Trail Neighbors Using Trail in Past 12 Months

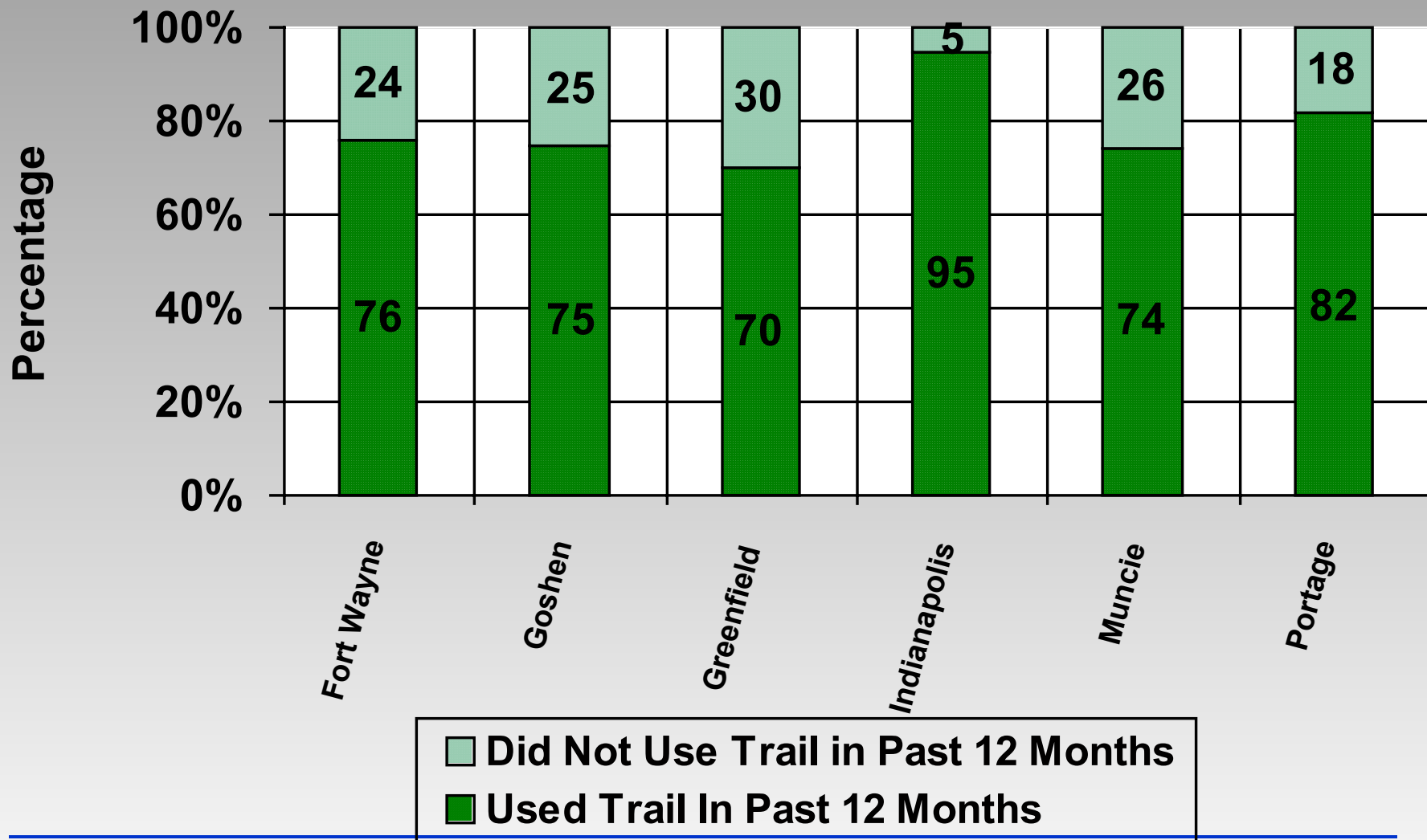


Chart 20: Factors Leading To Dissatisfaction of Trail Neighbors

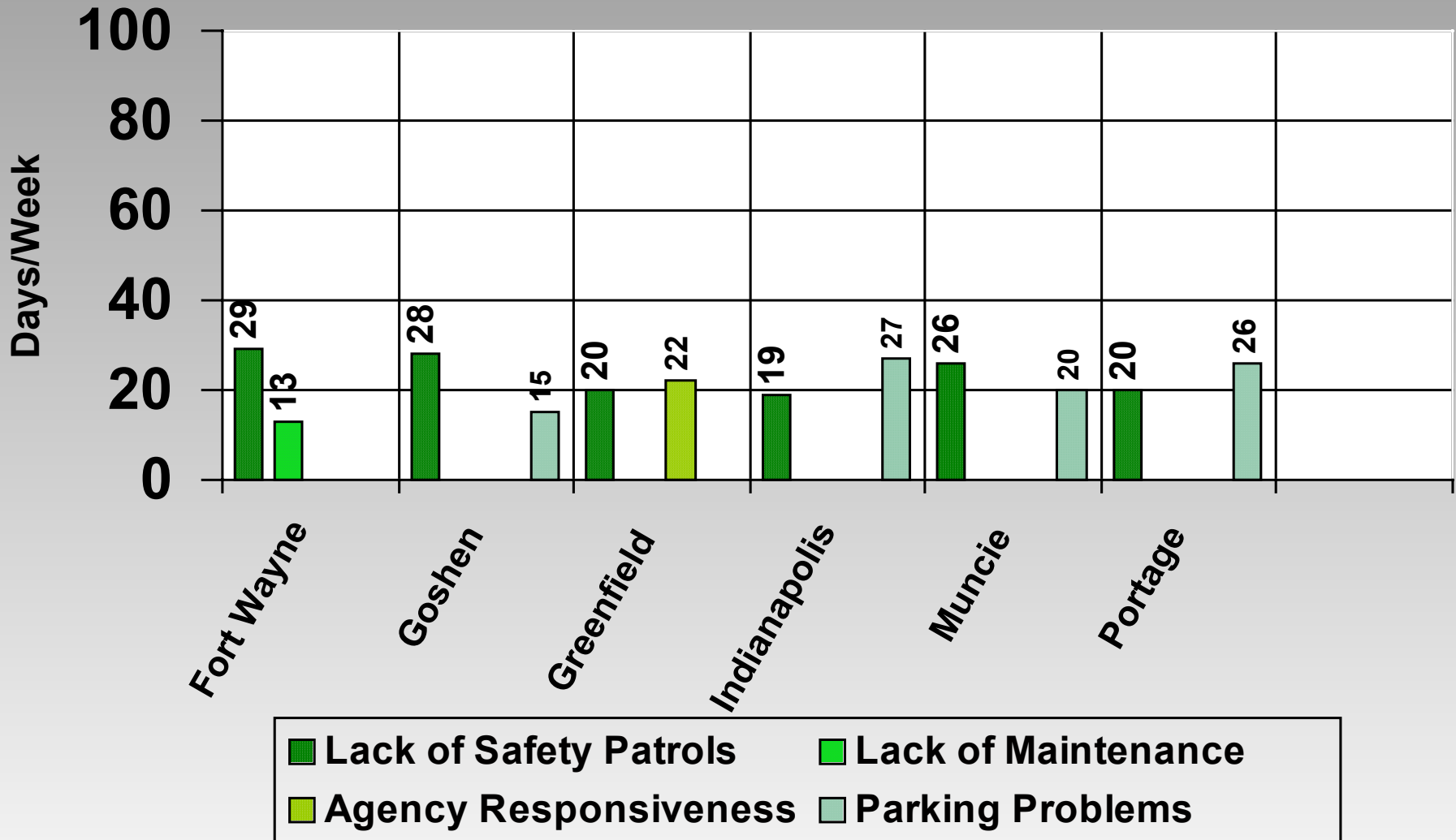
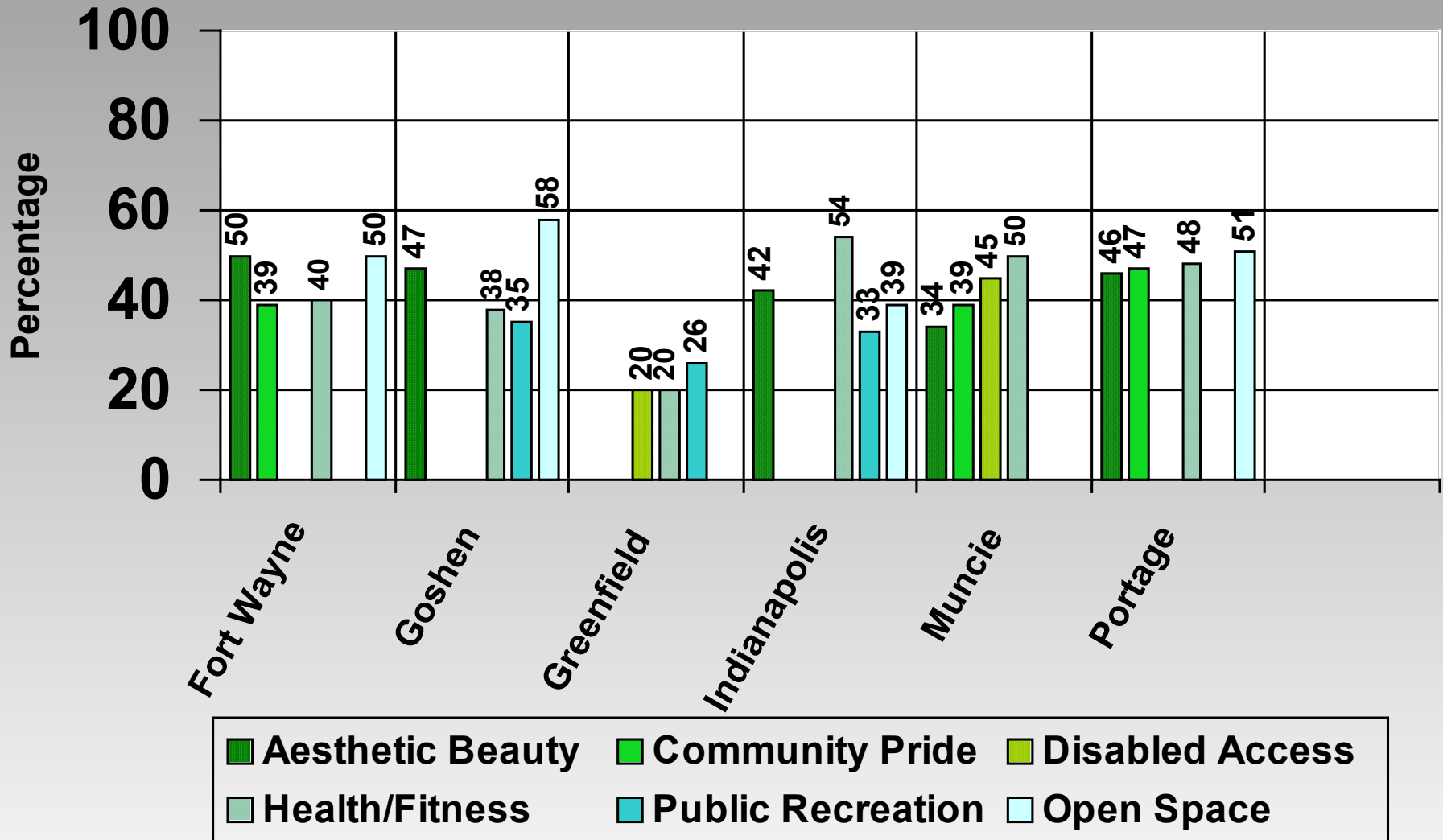


Chart 21: Trail Neighbor Ratings For Extremely Important Public Benefits of Trail



Other Summary Findings on Trail Neighbors

- ✓ Trail neighbors are residential uses
- ✓ Trail neighbors are either satisfied or neutral in their level of satisfaction with the trail!
- ✓ Trail neighbors found the trail had no negative effect on purchase & property appeal
- ✓ Trail neighbors purchasing property after trail opened are largely supportive of the trail

Realtor Conversations

- ✓ Biggest advantages:
 - ✓ Easy access to recreational facilities for families with children
 - ✓ Place close to home for recreation
- ✓ Biggest disadvantages:
 - ✓ Decrease in amount of privacy
 - ✓ Increase in foot traffic by the homeowners' yards

Trails Inside & Out: Summing It Up

- ✓ **Trail Users will...**
 - ✓ **come after work & during the weekend ...**
 - ✓ **come for fitness and exercise for an hour or more ...**
 - ✓ **walk, bike, run, and skate ...**
 - ✓ **mostly be upper-middle class and between 26 and 55...**
 - ✓ **mostly drive to the trails...**
 - ✓ **be satisfied ...**

Trails Inside & Out: Summing It Up

- ✓ **Trail Users will...**
 - ✓ use the trails ...
 - ✓ be satisfied or neutral with the trail ...
 - ✓ think the trail has no effect or a positive impact on property values ...
 - ✓ be more concerned with privacy than litter or maintenance ...

Conclusions

- ✓ Key constituencies are users and neighbors
- ✓ Essential to document use and address concerns
- ✓ Infrared counters and surveys provide useful information
- ✓ Trails similar but unique: be careful about assuming patterns fit other sites