

Strathcona Regional District

Electoral Area D Parks and Trails Plan

Engagement Summary – Round One

LEFS
ASSOCIATES

Strathcona Regional District
Round 1 Engagement Summary

September 2025

LEFS
ASSOCIATES

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS + PLANNERS

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Strathcona Regional District (SRD) is developing a Parks and Trails Plan for Electoral Area D to provide strategic guidance in managing the region’s park, trail, and active transportation network over the next 10 years. The planning process involved assessing existing parks, trails, and active transportation infrastructure, reviewing past and current planning initiatives, and collecting community input in order to determine outdoor recreation needs and identify gaps.

Building on these elements, the Parks and Trails Plan outlines a vision, goals, and recommendations to guide the management of park, trail and active transportation and support informed decision-making in the Draft Parks and Trails Plan and Active Transportation Plan. This “What We Heard” Report summarizes input from the community collected during the first round of engagement during Phase 2 of the project (see the overall planning process in Figure 1).

The purpose of the first round of community engagement was to find out how people currently use parks, trails, and active transportation in Electoral Area D and to understand the community’s values and vision for the future. This included understanding which parks, trails, and amenities they use, identifying gaps and opportunities for development and improvements, and learning about what is working well and what is not. The engagement results inform the vision, goals, and recommendations in the Draft Parks and Trails Plan and the Active Transportation Plan.

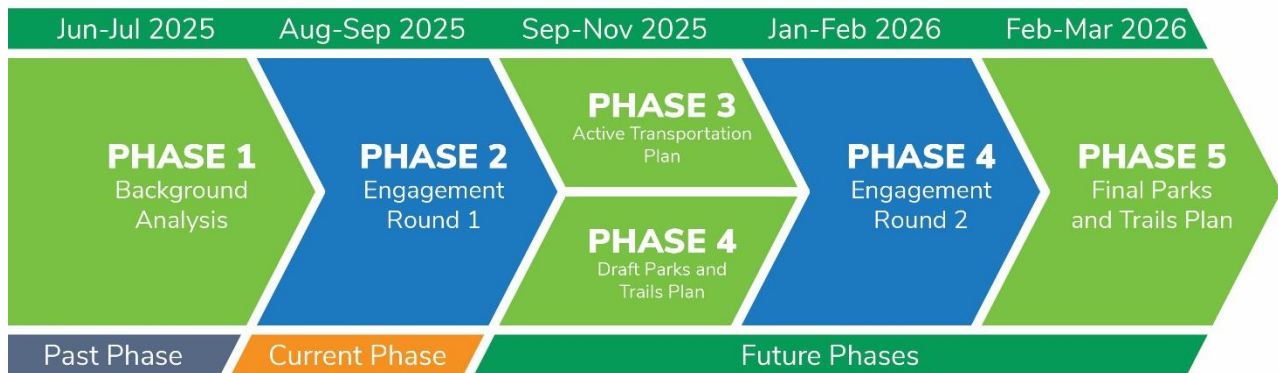


Figure 1 Project timeline for the SRD Electoral Area D Parks and Trails Plan

1.1 OUTREACH AND PARTICIPATION

Outreach to the community was done in the two weeks before and during engagement activities. Information about the project’s goals, schedule, and opportunities to get involved was shared widely with residents.

Opportunities to participate were advertised through:

- The SRD’s website
- Posts on the SRD’s social media accounts
- Posters at parks and popular community locations
- Direct emails to community members and organizations
- A pop-up event at Discovery Foods in Oyster River

1.2 ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

Community engagement included an in-person community open house, a community pop-up event, workshops and interviews with interest-holders, and an online public survey. Participants were also given the opportunity to provide written input. All engagement formats included information about the project as well as information about other means of providing input.

1.2.1 COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE

A community open house was held at Oyster Bay Resort in Oyster River on August 26, 2025. The event provided opportunities to learn about the project and discuss issues and opportunities with the consulting team and SRD Staff. Attendees at the event were asked about their current park, trail, and active transportation use habits as well as their ideas for improving Electoral Area D’s network in the future.

1.2.2 COMMUNITY POP-UP EVENT

A community pop-up event was held at Discovery Foods in Oyster River on September 13, 2025. Display boards provided information about the project purpose and timeline. The event provided a venue for spontaneous discussions about Electoral Area D’s park, trail, and active transportation network while collecting community input and promoting participation in the online survey.

Engagement by the Numbers

22 community open house attendees

1 community pop-up event

14 online workshop participants

180 participants in the online survey

7 input emails from individuals and community organizations

1.2.3 INTEREST-HOLDER WORKSHOPS

Five workshops were held with interest-holders, including representatives from regional and provincial and government bodies, and local community organizations. Participants were asked about the strengths and weaknesses of Electoral Area D’s existing parks, trails, and active transportation infrastructure, as well as about opportunities to collaborate in improving the network.

1.2.4 ONLINE SURVEY

An online survey was hosted on SurveyMonkey for a one-month period in August-September 2025. The survey asked participants about how they use Electoral Area D’s existing parks, trails, and active transportation infrastructure.

1.2.5 WRITTEN INPUT

Participants were given the opportunity to provide written input on the project. Emails to SRD staff and comment forms were received from individuals and community organizations.

2 ENGAGEMENT OUTCOMES

2.1 COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE

Open House attendees noted that they primarily use Electoral Area D parks and trails to go for walks or bike rides, and to spend time with friends and family. Attendees tended to visit Electoral Area D's naturalized parks like Oyster Bay Shoreline Protection Park, Oyster River Trails Park, and Oyster River Nature Park most often, though Hagel Park was also well visited. A few attendees noted attending events hosted in Hagel Park, like yoga and dog-training classes.

When asked what they valued most about Electoral Area D parks and trails, the most common theme was access to nature. Attendees valued experiences associated with natural areas such as natural scenery, shoreline access, and wildlife viewing opportunities. A few attendees valued having parks nearby and having a variety of amenities in parks.

In improving Electoral Area D's network of parks and trails, attendees focused primarily on improving the region's trail network. Opportunities raised included:

- Extending Storie Creek trails to Seawave Park/Leeming Road;
- Adding off-highway trail connections to Campbell River;
- Formalizing neighbourhood connections to Hagel Park;
- Formalizing the Glenmore Road Trail Network;
- Improving connections from York Road to Cranberry Lane;
- Limiting ATV traffic on Electoral Area D trails, and
- Connecting to the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) One Spot Trail.

Some attendees raised concerns about the loss of natural areas to new development in the region and wanted to see more done to protect greenspaces. A few attendees raised restricting off-leash dogs in some parks and trails as an opportunity. Establishing a park on the north side of the Oyster River west of Highway 19A was raised as an opportunity by some attendees.

When asked if attendees faced any barriers in accessing and using parks and trails, the most common response was a lack of trail connections in Electoral Area D. Other responses included a lack of public transit options to access parks, conflicts with motorized trail users and off-leash dogs, and inadequate surfacing on pathways and in parking areas.

Attendees tended to either walk or cycle as their primary forms of active transportation. The most popular Electoral Area D designations among attendees were Oyster River Trails Park and Oyster River Nature Park, though destinations across the region were well visited. When asked what types of active transportation improvements they would like to see in Electoral Area D, the most popular choices among attendees were gravel regional trails, trail surface improvements, and more crossings. In open-ended responses about active transportation, attendees raised a number of opportunities, including:

- Lowering the speed limit on sections or the entirety of Highway 19A through the Electoral Area;
- Connections to the CVRD's One Spot Trail off York Road;
- Better highway crossings;
- Improving the Watermain Trail;
- Improving active mode safety on Deerfield, and York Roads, as well as Macaulay Road within the CVRD, and
- Improving connectivity between neighbourhoods.

2.2 COMMUNITY POP-UP EVENT

Attendees at the pop-up event included Oyster River residents, Black Creek (CVRD) residents, cyclists travelling through the Oyster River area, and tourists staying at nearby resorts and campgrounds. Some of the key themes heard from attendees included:

- The existing trails are a great asset but some attendees noted it would be nice to have some dedicated off-leash dog trails and others noted the need for more trails in key areas.
- Completing trail connections between Maple Park and Hagel Park is needed as the roads are getting busy.
- Continuous, safe bicycle routes from Oyster Bay to Campbell River are needed, both for recreational cyclists as well as for those commuting to Campbell River. Better pedestrian and cycling connections are needed across the Oyster River.
- Completing the remaining sections of the One Spot Trail in CVRD as well as connecting it north of the Oyster River should be a priority.
- More bathrooms are needed in strategic locations. Some felt that the port-a-potty at Stories Beach should be replaced with a permanent structure as it often blows over in the wind.

2.3 ONLINE COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

2.3.1 MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT

Representatives from the BC Ministry of Transportation and Transit (MOTT) noted that they are currently conducting a study on the Highway 19A corridor and expressed interest in collaborating with the SRD to share data, which may be beneficial to both the corridor study and the Electoral Area D Parks and Trails Plan. The study is anticipated to be completed in March 2026.

MOTT noted that crossings of Highway 19A may or may not be included in the scope of their study. They noted that the public often requests marked crossings on Highway 19A through Electoral Area D. MOTT expressed willingness to explore installing crossings along the highway if the locations demonstrate adequate demand.

MOTT noted that they are exploring frontage roads as an opportunity to consolidate access points to 19A and expressed willingness to consider active transportation improvements along frontage roads.

MOTT noted that reduced-speed zones are being explored in some sections of Highway 19A, but restated the need to balance safety with transportation efficiency along a numbered highway.

When discussing preferred strategies for active transportation planning in highway corridors, MOTT discouraged active transportation improvements on highway shoulders that required specialized maintenance equipment, noting that flexible barriers can be an effective tool if used sparingly. MOTT noted that all objects within the highway clear zone must be engineered. MOTT noted that they do not accept maintenance responsibilities for active transportation improvements in the highway right-of-way, except when the improvement occurs on the highway shoulder.

MOTT noted they are currently exploring measures to discourage overnight use of the Oyster Bay Rest Stop and expressed interest in collaborating with the SRD to improve the rest area and its connection to Oyster Bay Shoreline Protection Park. MOTT expressed that they may be open to the SRD playing a larger role in managing the Stories Beach Pull Out if desired.

2.3.2 COMOX VALLEY REGIONAL DISTRICT

A representative from the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) noted their willingness to collaborate with SRD in improving parks, trails, and active transportation in Electoral Area D, adding that CVRD residents in Saratoga Beach and Miracle Beach were regular users of amenities in and around Oyster River. The CVRD noted the Oyster River as a key conservation area and is working to conserve parkland along its corridor.

The CVRD noted that active transportation connections between the two regional districts were limited, with crossings on the Oyster River raised as a key bottleneck. The CVRD raised that construction of the One Spot Trail, a regional trail extending north from Courtenay, is approaching the Oyster River, and that they are looking to work with the SRD to both determine an appropriate crossing location and connect the trail to Campbell River. The CVRD raised that opening connections for emergency management may create opportunities to improve active transportation infrastructure.

2.3.3 OTHER COMMUNITY GROUPS

The following summarizes the key points raised by community group representatives in the community workshops.

Value of Parks and Trails

Workshop participants valued having access to parks and trails close to home. Participants appreciated Electoral Area D parks that brought them closer to nature.

Active Transportation

Workshop participants across sessions expressed the desire for better active transportation connections throughout Electoral Area D. These primarily involved adding neighbourhood connections to allow for travel between subdivisions without using Highway 19A. New and improved road crossings were seen as a gap across the region, especially on busy roadways such as Highway 19A and Jubilee Parkway. Some participants raised opportunities to promote cyclist safety on Highway 19A, like reducing speed limits and widening shoulders. Participants noted that trail surfacing in the region did not always accommodate active transportation of all modes and abilities. Some participants advocated for cycling literacy programming in Electoral Area D to encourage more residents to cycle. One participant raised e-bike charging infrastructure in parks as an opportunity.

Accessibility and Access

Participants advocated for accessibility information on Electoral Area D parks to be posted online to allow those with mobility concerns to make informed decisions. One participant recommended that the SRD develop Electoral Area D parks with accessibility standards in mind, such as those developed by the Rick Hansen Foundation.

One participant noted that gravel parking areas were unsuitable for those with mobility concerns and requested better accessible connections from parking areas to park amenities. Some participants advocated for more accessible trails in Area D. One participant advocated for more seating along pathways to provide opportunities for those with mobility concerns to rest.

One participant commended the SRD for recently constructed accessible pathways in Electoral Area D.

One participant noted that Electoral Area D parks were poorly served by public transit, limiting access to those without personal vehicles. One participant advocated for better cycling connections to parks.

Park Amenities

Participants recognized a lack of outdoor recreation amenities for older children and youth as a gap in Electoral Area D’s park amenities. Participants wanted to see more covered areas in Electoral Area D to provide shade and accommodate gatherings. One participant raised that there may be more demand for additional community garden plots and noted opportunities to fund new plots with community food grants. Amenities participants wanted to see across SRD parks included shade structures and accessible washrooms.

Trails and Trail Amenities

Some participants noted that trailhead amenities at SRD parks were often limited. Participants wanted to see bike racks, trailhead maps, and washrooms made available at more trailheads. One participant advocated for the wider use of fencing along pathways to keep users on the trails. Some participants raised concerns about maintaining access to well-used trails that crossed private land. Some participants voiced concerns over rogue trails in Electoral Area D.

Signage and Wayfinding

One participant requested better wildlife safety information in Electoral Area D parks and recommended collaborating with Wildwise to develop informational signage. Some participants advocated for better Electoral Area D trail maps.

Programming

One participant raised programming in park spaces as an existing gap, adding that scheduled activities in parks promote opportunities to socialize and make parks more welcoming spaces.

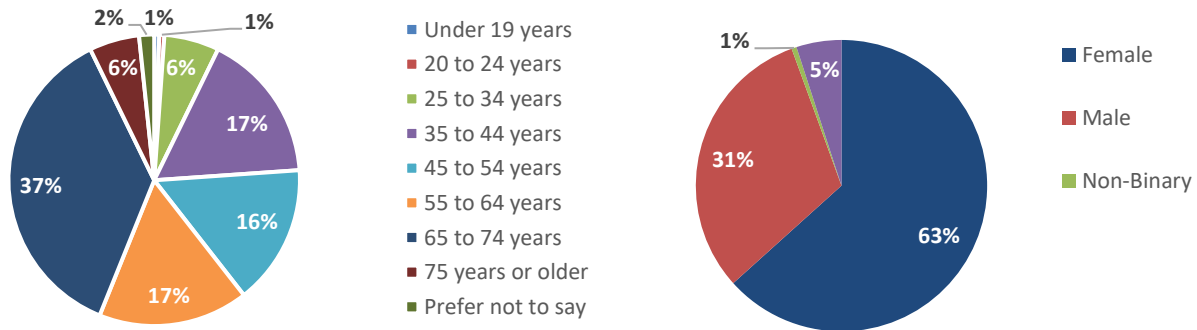
Community Organizations

Some participants expressed uncertainty about the future of their respective organizations, noting declines in volunteer participation, especially among younger demographics.

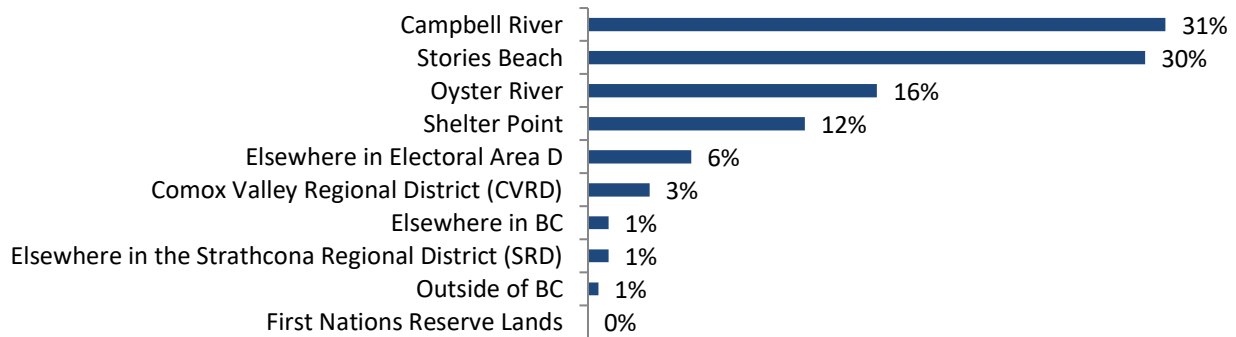
2.4 ONLINE SURVEY

Who Responded?

A total of 180 of responses were received on the online survey. More than 40% of respondents were 65 years of age or older. Nearly two-thirds of respondents (63%) identified as female.

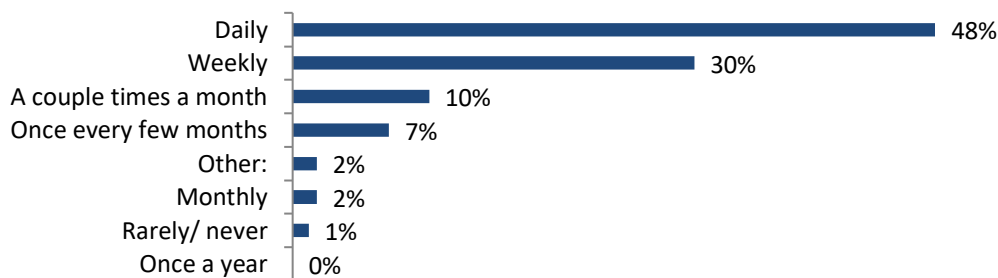


Communities represented by more than 10% of respondents in survey responses included Campbell River (31%), Stories Beach (30%), Oyster River (16%), and Shelter Point (12%).

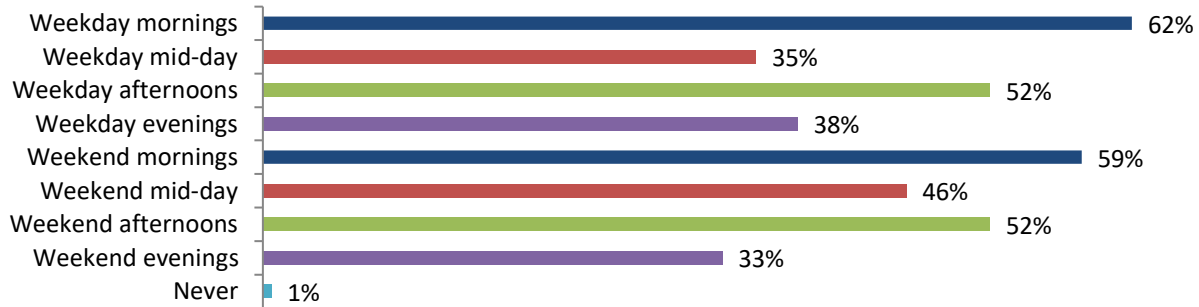


Park and Trail Use

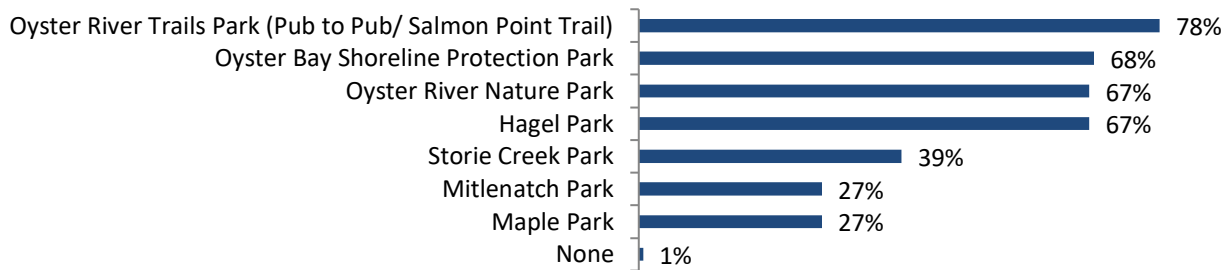
Nearly half of the respondents (48%) said they use Electoral Area D parks and trails daily, and 31% said they visited parks and trails weekly.



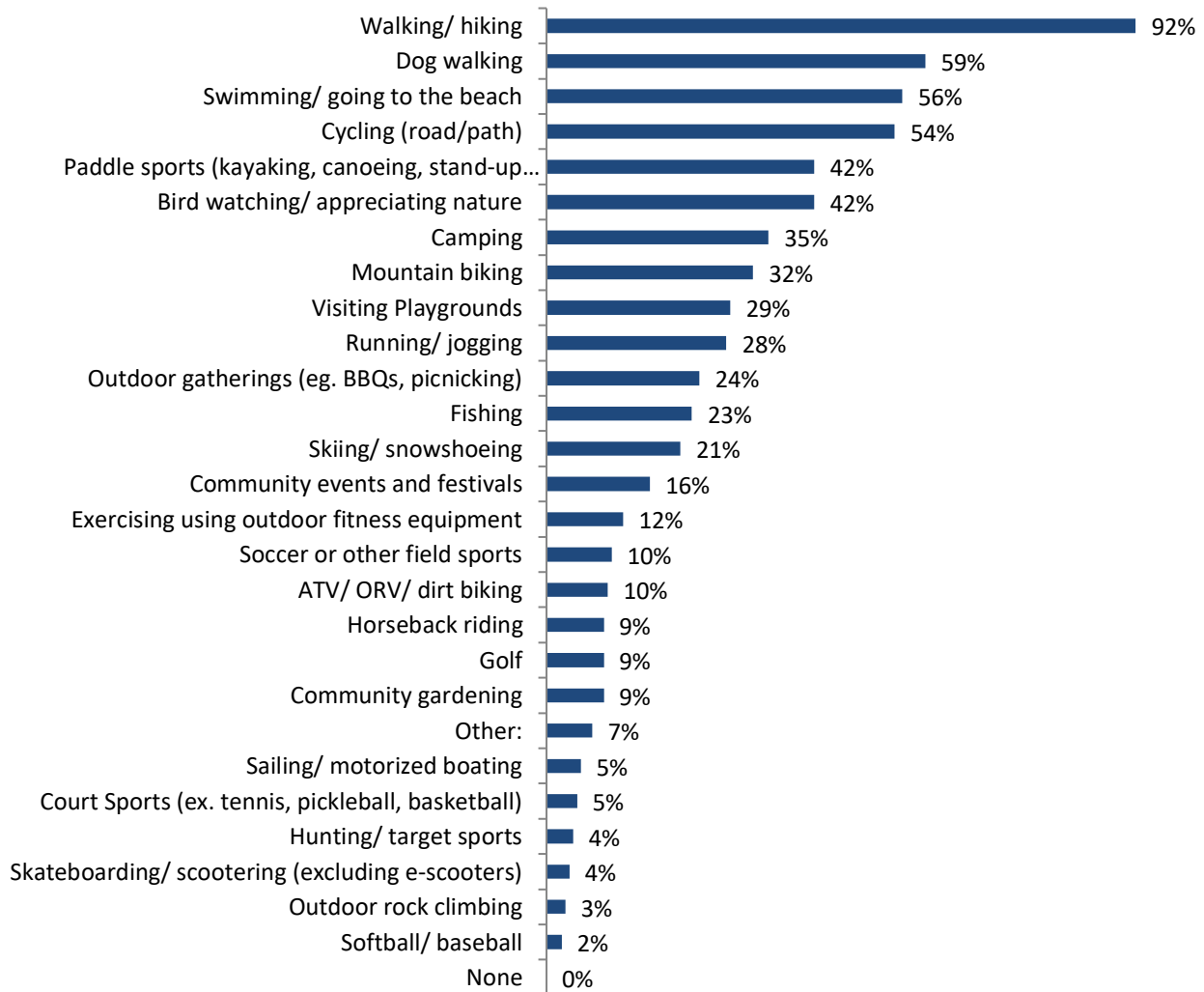
Respondents visited parks and trails most often in the morning on weekdays and weekends, followed by in the afternoon on weekdays and weekends.



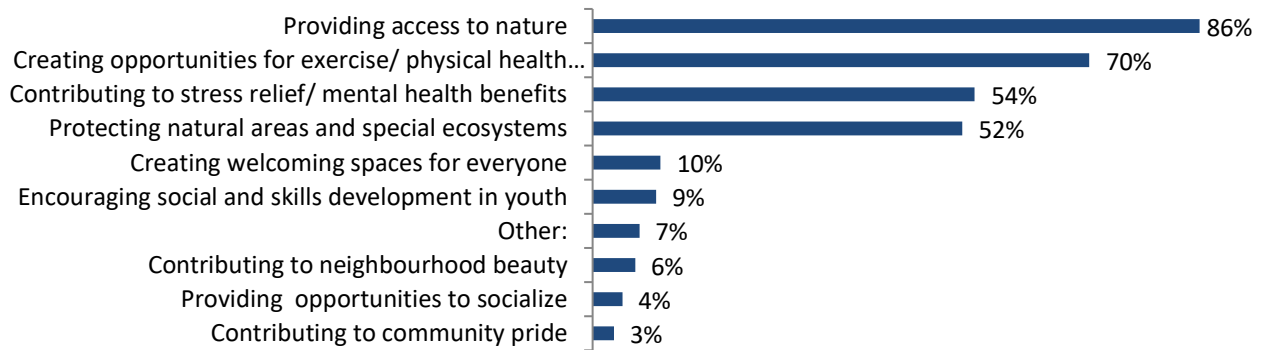
The most-visited Electoral Area D parks among survey respondents were Oyster River Trails Park (78%), Hagel Park (68%), Oyster Bay Shoreline Protection Park (68%), and Oyster River Nature Park (68%).



Walking/hiking was the most popular park and trail activity among respondents, with 92% reporting a member of their family participating in the activity. Other popular activities among respondents included dog walking (59%), swimming/going to the beach (56%), cycling (54%, paddle sports (42%), bird watching/appreciating nature (42%), and camping (35%).



When asked what respondents valued most about parks and trails in Electoral Area D, the most common answers were ‘Providing access to nature’ (86%), ‘Creating opportunities for exercise/health benefits’ (70%), ‘Contributing to stress relief/mental health benefits’ (54%), and ‘Protecting natural areas and special features’ (52%). Responses that replied ‘other’ highlighted activities like dog walking, birdwatching and spending time alone.

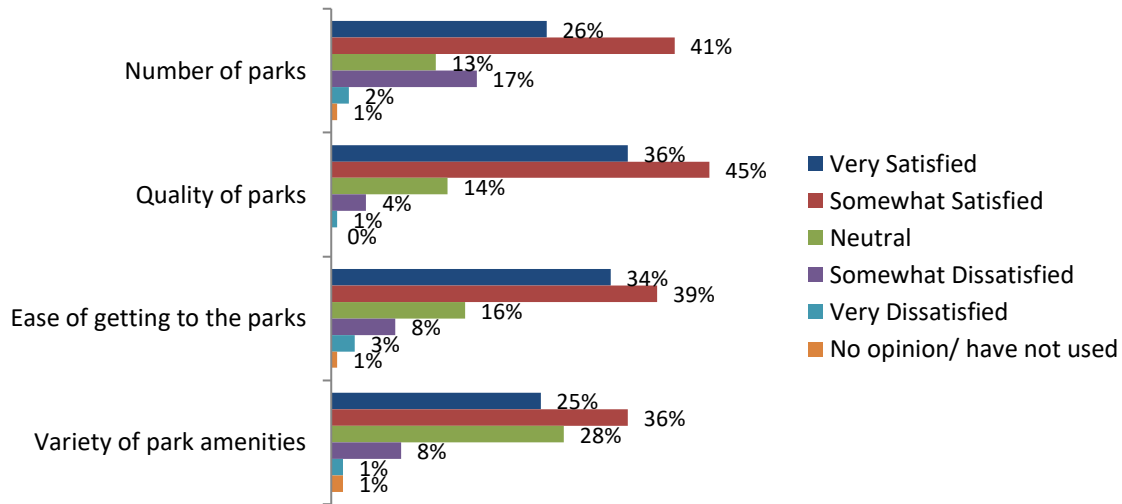


When asked if anything prevented them or their family from using parks and trails more often, the most common responses among respondents were ‘I’m too busy’ (12%), ‘I feel unsafe’ (12%), ‘Poor maintenance conditions’ (11%), ‘It’s too crowded’ (10%), ‘There’s a lack of information about parks and trails’ (10%). Those reporting no barriers to using parks and trails accounted for 41% of respondents.

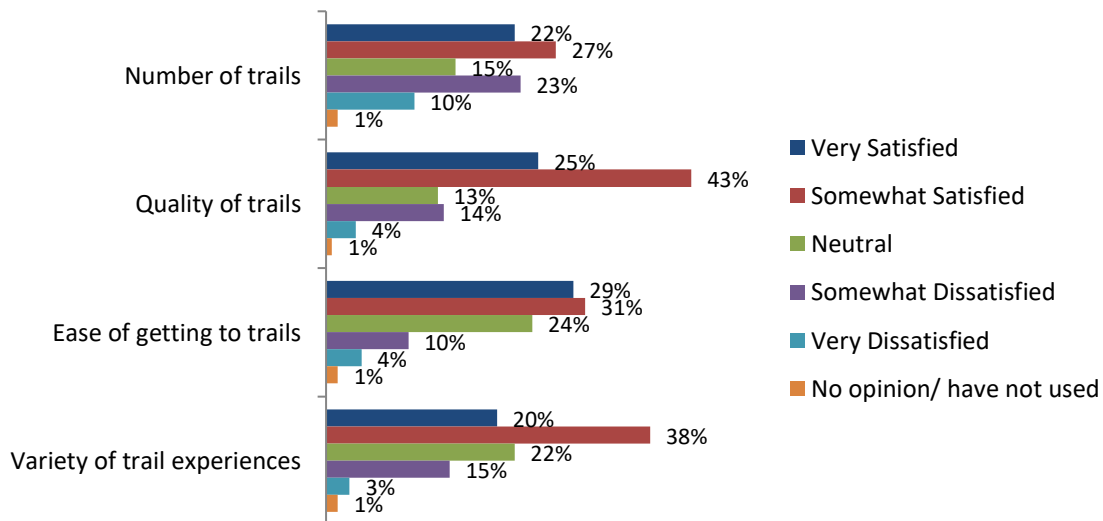


Park and Trail User Satisfaction

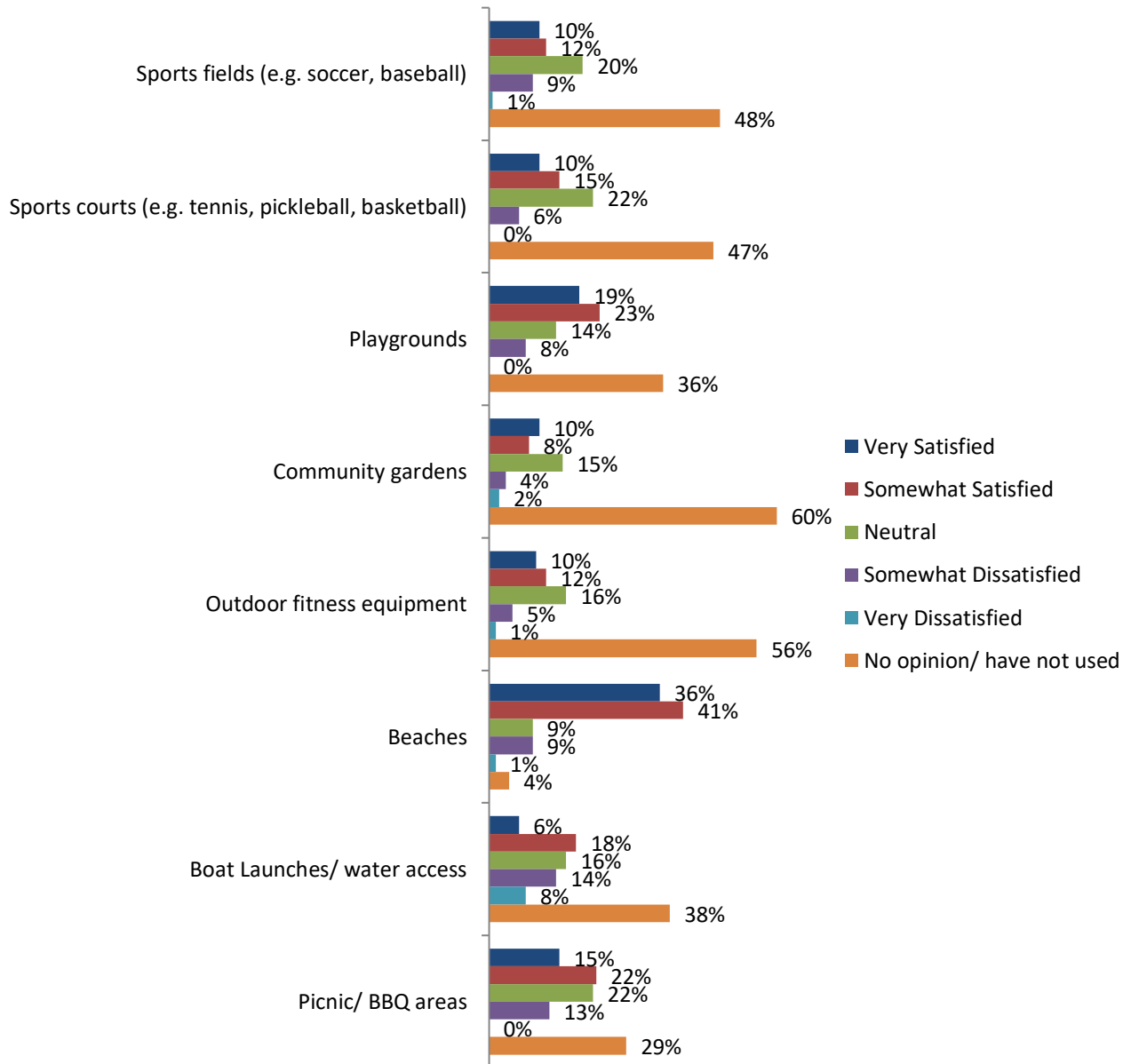
With at least 60% of respondents selecting ‘Very satisfied’ or ‘Satisfied’ for each criterion, respondents were generally content with the number of parks (67%), the quality of parks (81%), the ease of accessing parks (73%), and the variety of park amenities (61%) in Electoral Area D. Respondents expressed the greatest levels of dissatisfaction with the number of parks, with 20% responding ‘Dissatisfied’ or ‘Very dissatisfied’.

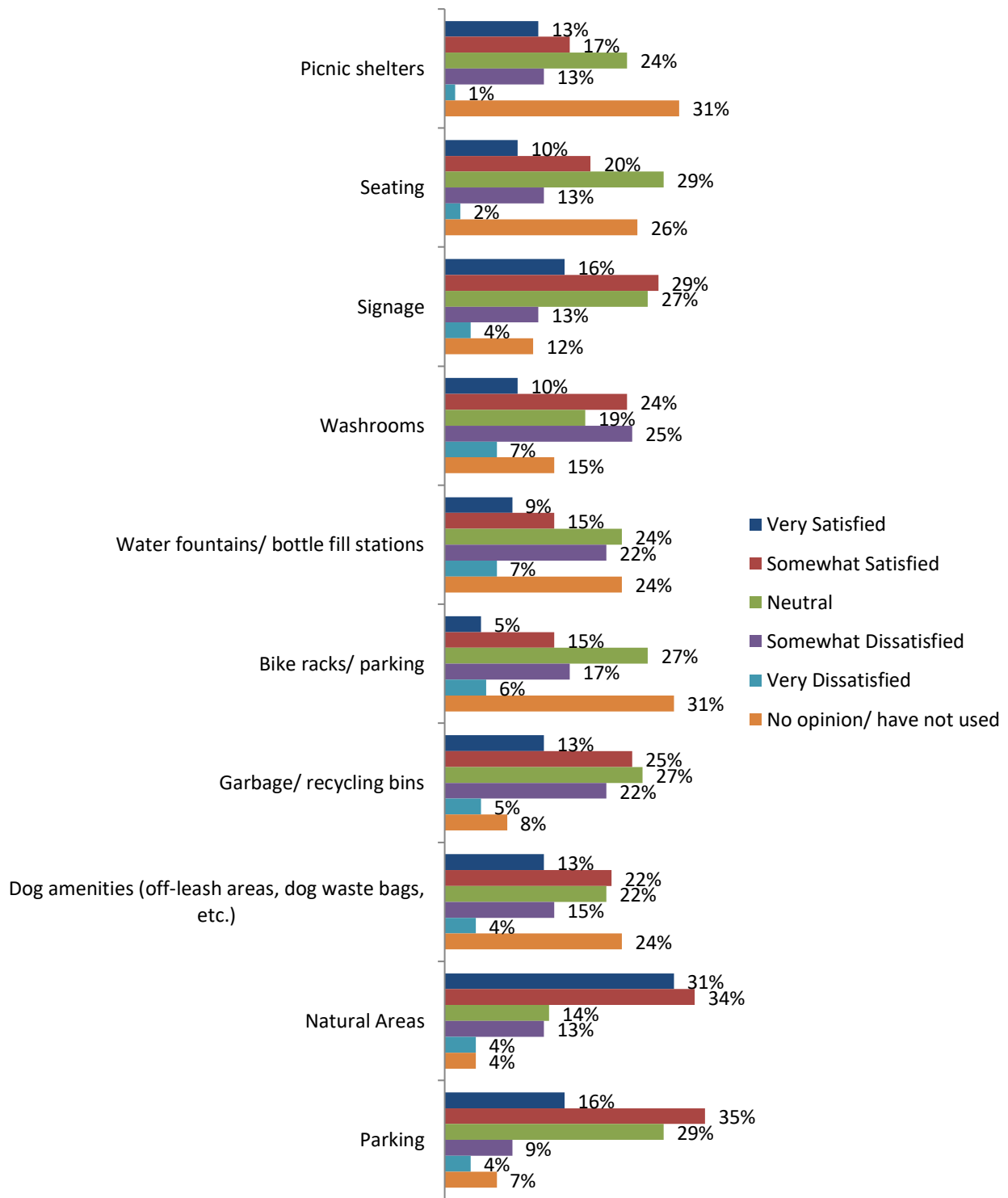


Respondents were less satisfied with Electoral Area D’s trails. Still, at least 50% of respondents reported being ‘Very satisfied’ or ‘Satisfied’ with the quality of trails (68%), ease of getting to trails (60%), and variety of trail experiences (59%). Respondents expressed the greatest levels of dissatisfaction with the number of trails in Electoral Area D, with 34% answering ‘Dissatisfied’ or ‘Very Dissatisfied’.

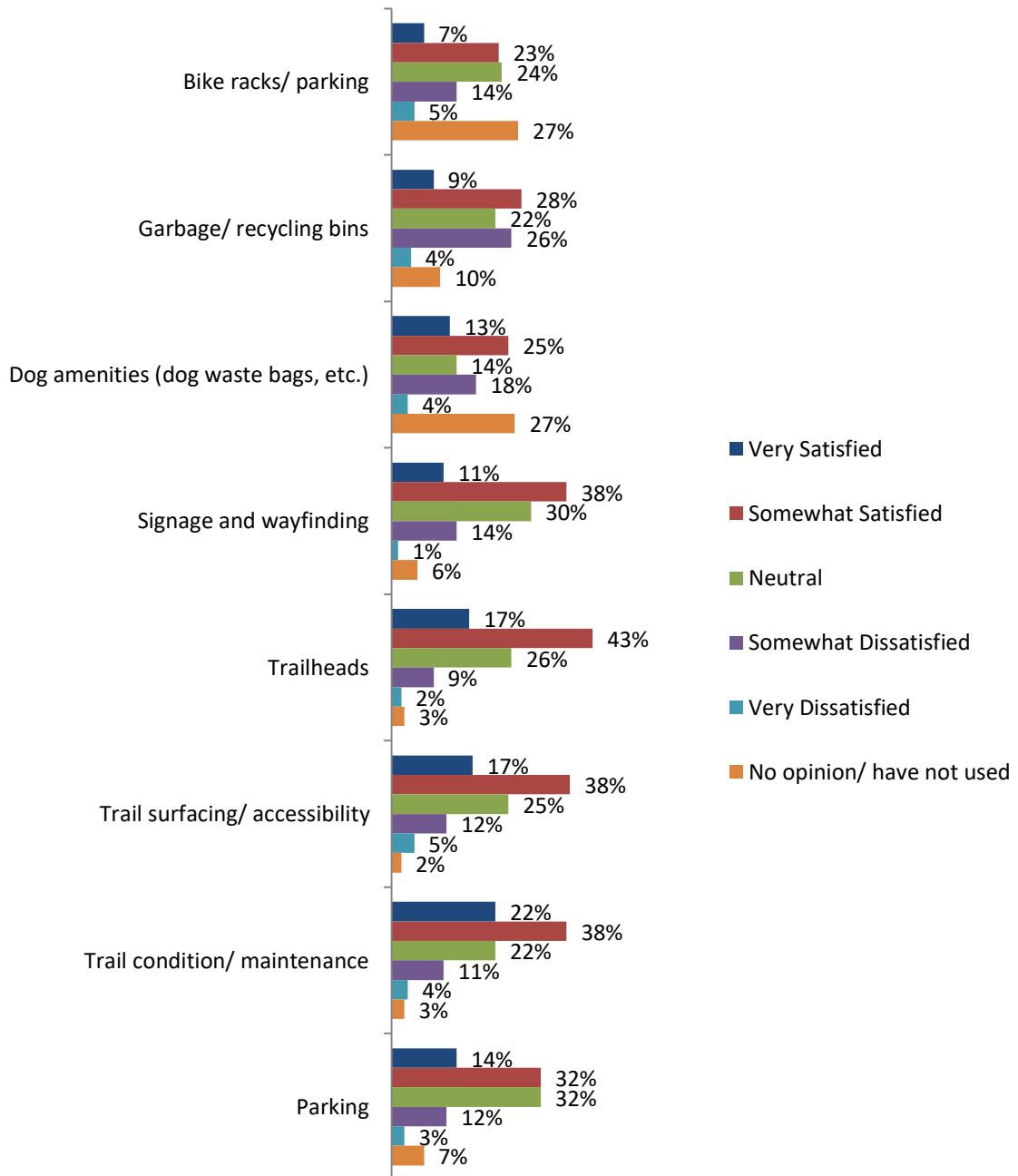


When asked about park amenities, respondents expressed the greatest levels of satisfaction with Electoral Area D’s beaches (76% responding ‘Very Satisfied’ or ‘Satisfied’), natural areas (61%), playgrounds (41%), signage (45%), and parking (41%). Respondents expressed the greatest levels of dissatisfaction with Electoral Area D’s washrooms (32% responding ‘Dissatisfied’ or ‘Very dissatisfied’), water fountains/bottle fill stations (29%), garbage/recycling bins (27%), bike racks (23%), and boat launches/water access points (22%).





When asked about trail amenities, respondents expressed the greatest levels of satisfaction with Electoral Area D’s trail surfacing/accessibility (60%), trail condition/maintenance (60%), trailheads (56%), and parking (45%). Respondents expressed the greatest levels of dissatisfaction with Electoral Area D’s garbage/recycling bins (30% responding ‘Dissatisfied’ or ‘Very dissatisfied’), dog amenities (22%), trail surfacing/accessibility (16%), and signage/wayfinding elements (15%).

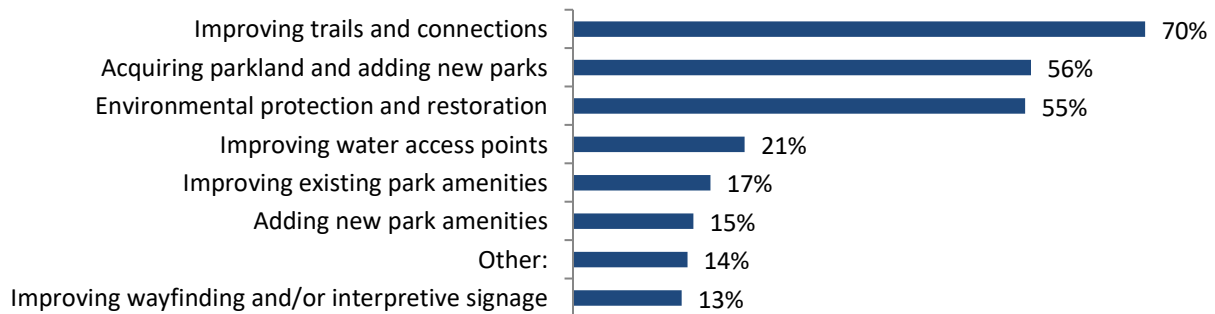


Opportunities for Improvement

In open-ended responses, survey respondents provided several suggestions for improving Electoral Area D’s park and trail network, including:

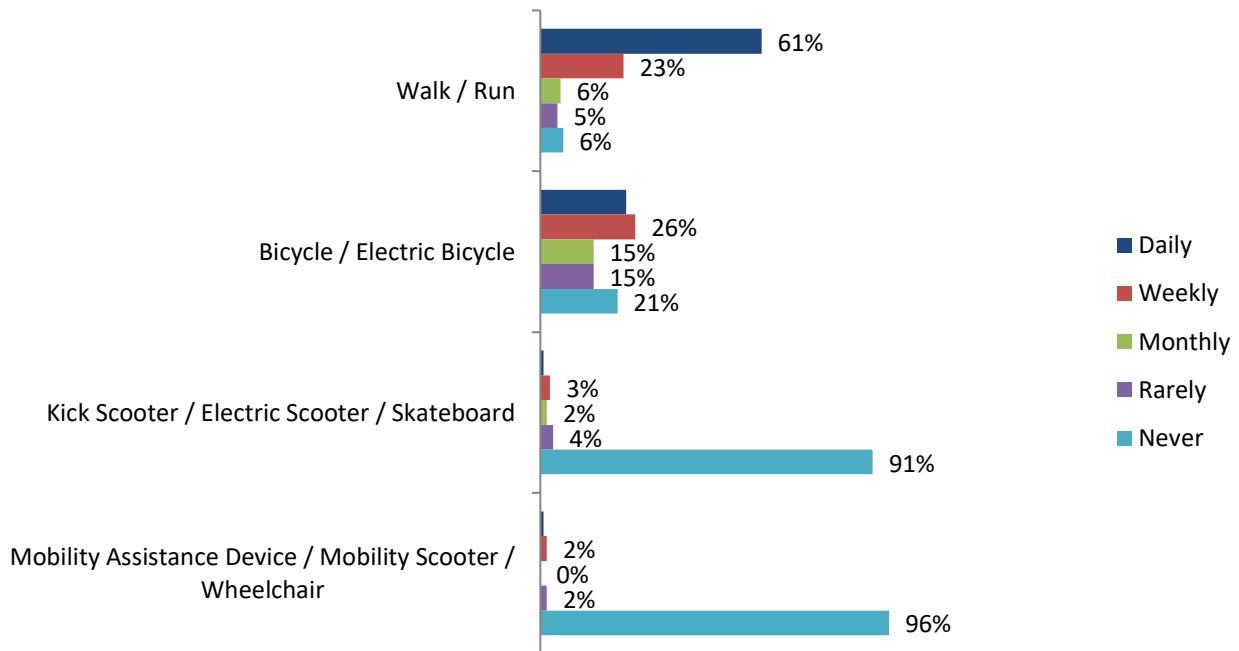
- Adding trail connections between neighbourhoods
- Formalizing existing trails/trail networks
 - Woods Creek area
 - Waterline Trail
 - Stories Creek trails
- Adding new trails
- Improving trail surfacing for accessibility
- Improving park and trail signage
- Updating and making park and trail maps available
- Designating areas and trails for off-leash dogs
- Tighter regulations prohibiting off-leash dogs
- Adding benches, picnic tables, washrooms, shelters, and garbage/recycling bins
- Adding new parks
- Adding amenities to Maple Park
- Adding mountain bike trails and a bike park
- Improving access points at Stories Beach
- Protecting forest lands and maintaining ecologically sensitive areas
- Clearly defining beach access points
- Adding paddle sport facilities
- Ensuring the Pub to Pub Trail remains open for public use
- Developing parks and trails to attract tourism
- Managing large gatherings at Hagel Park

When asked where the SRD should focus its spending on Electoral Area D parks and trails over the next 10 years, the most popular answers were ‘Improving trails and connections’ (70%), ‘Acquiring parkland and adding new parks’ (56%), and ‘Environmental protection and restoration’ (55%).

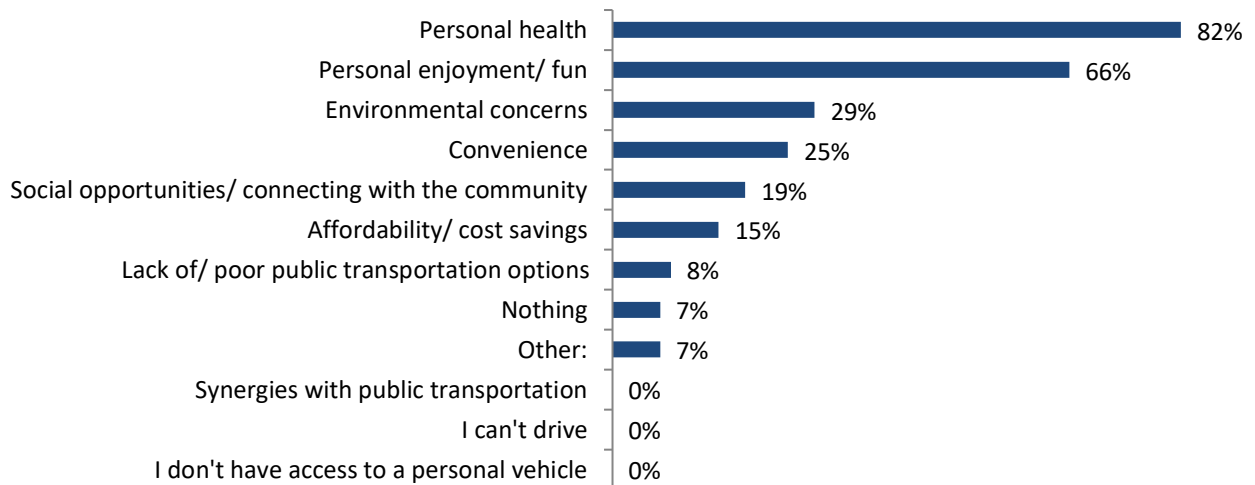


Active Transportation

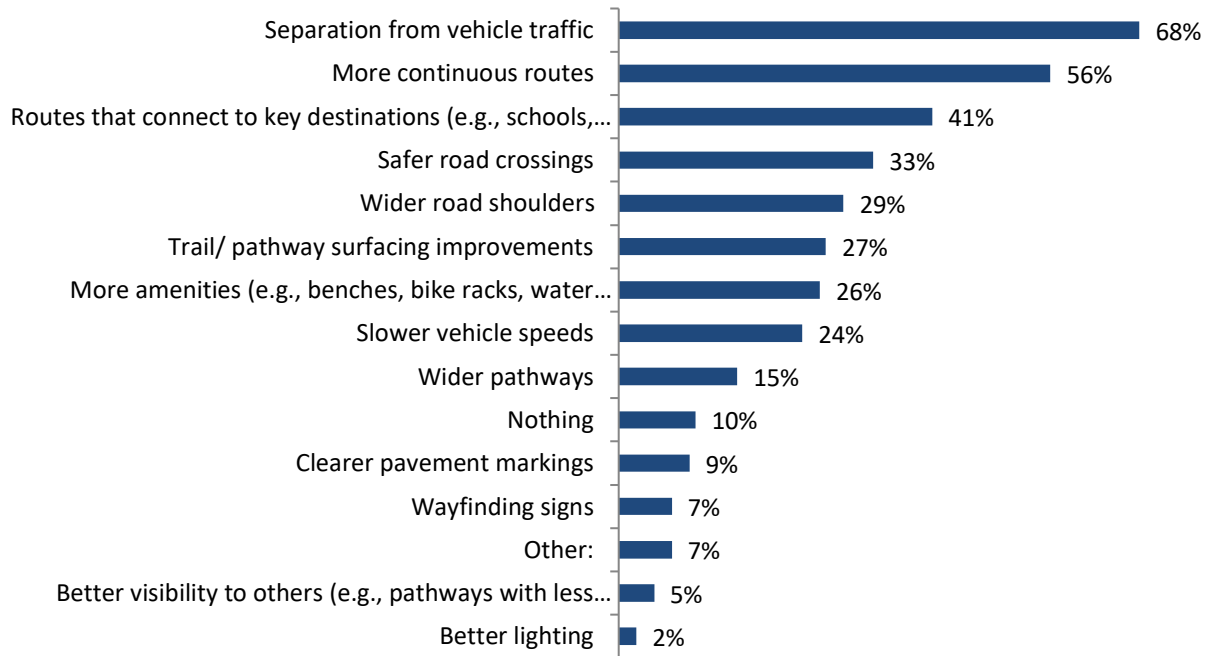
Respondents favoured walking and cycling as their primary modes of active transportation, with 60% of respondents walking daily and 50% cycling on a daily or weekly basis. Active transportation modes raised by those responding ‘other’ included roller skating, kayaking, and using a stroller.



When asked about their primary motivations for participating in active transportation, the most common responses were personal health (82%), personal enjoyment (66%), environmental concerns (29%), and convenience (25%).



When asked what active transportation improvements would encourage them to choose active transportation more frequently, the most common responses among respondents were separation from vehicle traffic (68%), more continuous routes (56%), routes that connect key destinations (41%), and safer road crossings (33%).



When asked about the most important destinations in Electoral Area D, nearly all neighbourhoods in the region were mentioned. Other common responses included:

- Campbell River
- Saratoga and Miracle Beach
- Courtenay
- Willow Point commercial centre
- Oyster River commercial centre
- Beaches and the waterfront
- Ocean Grove Elementary School
- Trailheads
- Hagel Park
- Parks generally

When asked which connections were missing from Electoral Area D’s active transportation network, common answers included:

- Connections to Campbell River
- Connections across Jubilee Parkway
- Connections to the One Spot Trail
- Connections to Saratoga and Miracle Beach
- Adding trail connections between neighbourhoods
- McGimpsey Road to Redonda Way
- Meriwood Road to Searidge Place
- Wavecrest Road across Woods Creek
- Safe connections to Ocean Grove Elementary School

In open-ended responses about how to improve Electoral Area D’s active transportation network, answers included:

- Reducing speed limits on Highway 19A
- Adding separated bike lanes to Highway 19A through Electoral Area D
- Adding crosswalks at all bus stops
- Adding more highway crossings, including signalled crossings
- More continuous trails and cycling routes
- Lighting on active transportation routes
- Adding a controlled intersection at Crawford Road and Highway 19A
- Off-highway active transportation routes
- Adding a Highway 19A frontage road
- Formalizing the Waterline Trail
- Better maintenance of bike lanes and highway shoulders
- Better/available trail/active transportation
- Buffering active transportation routes from traffic with trees and vegetation
- Trail widening and surface improvements
- Formalizing the Tree to Sea bikepacking route through Electoral Area D

2.5 WRITTEN INPUT

2.5.1 RIVER CITY CYCLE CLUB

Representatives from the River City Cycle Club (RCCC) noted that few students at Ocean Grove Elementary School travelled to school on foot or by bike, despite living near the school, demonstrating that Electoral Area D’s existing active transportation network is not seen as suitable for children.

The RCCC raised that better data collection on active transportation use in the region could help to inform active transportation decision-making in Electoral Area D.

The RCCC raised the importance of Highway 19A as a route for local cyclists and tourists, and recommended measures to improve safety and user experience on the route, including reducing speed limits, repairing damaged paving, and widening the shoulder.

The RCCC raised several opportunities to improve active transportation connections in Electoral Area D, including:

- Connections from Redonda Way to McGimpsey Road via pathways extending from Engles and Mitlenatch Drive;
- Connecting the north and south segments of Wavecrest Road;
- Formalizing the Waterline Trail and adjacent connections to local roads;
- Formalizing cycling routes on York and Craig Road, and their connection north to the Waterline Trail and Wavecrest Road;
- Extending paving of the Jubilee Trail along Jubilee Parkway to Highway 19A in Campbell River;
- Adding a signalled crossing of Jubilee Parkway to connect with Bier Road, and
- Connecting York Road to the CVRD’s One Spot Trail through the Macaulay Road Neighbourhood.

2.5.2 MACAULAY ROAD AND AREA NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION

The Macaulay Road and Area Neighbourhood Association shared information on potential routes that were being considered to bring the One Spot Trail to the Macaulay Road Neighbourhood and to York Road across the Oyster River. These include crossing alignments at Sarmma and Gleadle Roads and potential right-of-way dedications elsewhere in the CVRD.

2.5.3 OTHER INPUT

Some community members wrote in advocating for better trails and active transportation connections throughout Electoral Area D, highlighting potential actions such as:

- Formalizing the Waterline Trail;
- Creating a connection from Searidge Road to Marina Drive;
- Formalizing key forestry roads as active transportation connections;
- Establishing trails along riparian corridors, and
- Formalizing well-used unsanctioned recreational trail networks.

Community members expressed the desire for more sanctioned trails in Electoral Area D. Some noted instances of trails being lost when large, previously forested parcels were developed without adequate public rights-of-way assignments. Some community members were concerned that the new Nenagwas development may further interrupt trail connections in the region.

Community members advocated for expanding Electoral Area D's park network through new parkland acquisition, especially around significant natural features and areas of ecological importance such as shorelines and the Oyster River. Some community members voiced concerns over invasive plants in Electoral Area D parks.

Some community members used the engagement opportunity to advocate for park and trail improvements elsewhere in the SRD.

2.6 ENGAGEMENT KEY THEMES

The following summarizes key themes raised by participants in the first round of engagement for the Electoral Area D Parks and Trails Plan and Active Transportation Network Plan.

Participants Enjoy Electoral Area D Parks and Trails

Roughly half of engagement participants used parks and trails daily in Electoral Area D. Participants generally expressed satisfaction with the quality, number, and ease of accessing Electoral Area D parks. Participants regularly visited SRD Parks in the region, especially Oyster River Trails Park, Hagel Park, Oyster Bay Shoreline Protection Park, and Oyster River Nature Park. Participants valued that Electoral Area D parks were located close to where they live and provided opportunities to be in nature.

Barriers and Accessibility

Though most participants said they do not face barriers in using and accessing Electoral Area D parks and trails, opportunities to improve accessibility in SRD parks and trails were raised across engagement activities. These included improving trail and parking lot surfacing, providing more frequent seating opportunities, and making accessibility information available on the SRD's website. Some participants recommended adopting accessibility standards to guide the management of Electoral Area D parks and trails, such as those developed by the Rick Hansen Foundation. Some participants wanted to see Electoral Area D parks better served by active and public transportation routes.

Park and Trail Amenities

Participants saw outdoor recreation amenities for older children and youth as a gap in Electoral Area D's park network. Some participants wanted to see more amenities developed at Maple Park. Several participants requested park amenities like washrooms, picnic/shade shelters, garbage/recycling receptacles, water fountains/bottle fill stations, benches, and bike racks across the Electoral Area D park system. Some participants wanted to see more navigational and regulatory signage in parks and trails.

Parkland Acquisition

After improving trails and connections, acquiring parkland and establishing new parks were seen as the most important priorities in improving Electoral Area D's park and trail network. Priority areas raised by participants included lands along the Oyster River west of Highway 19A, Stories Beach, and the Woods Creek trails.

Dog Use of Parks and Trails

Dog walking was the second most popular activity among survey respondents and a major driver of park and trail use in Electoral Area D. Some engagement participants wanted to see regulations loosened to allow for off-leash walking in more areas, while others wanted stronger enforcement of dog bylaws in parks and trails.

Protection of Natural Areas

Participants across engagement activities voiced appreciation for Electoral Area D’s abundance of accessible natural areas. The loss of forest lands to development was front-of-mind for several participants, who voiced concerns over broken trail connections and habitat loss. Several participants voiced a desire to see more done to protect natural areas in Electoral Area D, such as mitigating trail erosion, keeping dogs on leash, and managing invasive plants.

Formalizing Existing Trails

Many participants noted regularly using informal trails and expressed a desire to see these trails formalized to enable maintenance and long-term planning. Participants voice concerns about the future of these trails, given that many of them were built on private lands, such as those managed by Mosaic. Some participants voiced concerns about conflicts with other trail user groups in these networks, such as ORV riders, mountain bikers, and off-leash dog walkers, and saw formalization as an opportunity to implement a more robust trail designation system to mitigate these issues.

Active Transportation

Participants regularly use active modes to get around their community, with roughly four in five walking and half cycling on a weekly or more frequent basis.

Across engagement activities, the lack of a formal active transportation network was seen as the largest gap in Electoral Area D’s park and trail service. Participants wanted to see more continuous routes to connect neighbourhoods and accommodate recreation, clear links to parks, schools, and commercial hubs, the formalization of existing informal routes (forestry roads, unsanctioned trails, utility rights-of-ways, etc.), and safer alternatives to travelling along Highway 19A.

Regional Connections

Participants wanted Electoral Area D’s active transportation and trail network integrated with those of neighbouring jurisdictions. This included creating legible, continuous routes into Campbell River, improving crossing safety across Jubilee Parkway, and continuing the Comox Valley Regional District’s (CVRD) One Spot Trail through Electoral Area D. The CVRD expressed interest in working with the SRD to extend the One Spot Trail to Campbell River and reinforce connections between Oyster River and neighbouring CVRD communities.

Highway 19A Active Transportation Improvements

Participants wanted to see safety improvements along Highway 19A through Electoral Area D to better accommodate people travelling by active modes. These included shoulder improvements, adding crossings and controlled intersections at key locations, exploring the implementation of frontage roads, and reducing highway travel speeds. The Ministry of Transportation and Transit (MOTT) expressed interest in working with the SRD to improve active transportation along the Highway 19A corridor.

3 CONCLUSION

Based on the input received from other levels of government, community stakeholders, and the public, parks and trails in Electoral Area D of the Strathcona Regional District are well-used and appreciated, and they play an important role in providing outdoor recreation opportunities to residents and visitors alike. The first round of engagement underscores the community's desire for a vibrant, welcoming, and amenity-rich park and trail system. Residents value the region's natural areas and want to see them protected and developed responsibly to support recreation. There is also a significant need for the SRD to develop a robust active transportation system to join neighbourhoods, link to key community amenities, and promote the safety of active mode users. Experience, inclusivity, and convenience are key drivers that will shape the future of parks and trails in Electoral Area D.