

**APPENDIX F**

**THE RESULTS OF  
CONSULTATIONS AND  
SURVEYS**

**PARKS, RECREATION AND  
CULTURE MASTER PLAN**

District of Saanich, BC.

July 2012

## The Results from Consultations and Surveys

The Master Planning process provides an excellent opportunity for the municipality to consult extensively on ‘the bigger issues’ concerning parks and recreation – those higher level issues which often do not get discussed during the planning for particular parks, or only get aired when there is a concern or complaint regarding recreation facilities or programming.

Listening to stakeholders and the general public, and discussions with partners in other municipal departments and other agencies were key parts of the process and are reported in detail in Working Papers 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9, and are summarized in this section of the Master Plan.

The surveys also asked people to comment on the parks and recreation systems in their own words, and over 1,000 people chose to do so. This section also includes verbatim quotes from those people, chosen to reflect the general issues noted and the insight and caring that Saanich residents show for their park and recreation system.

### Consultations with Stakeholders

Throughout Saanich, there are community interest groups that focus either on a neighbourhood, a park or a geographic feature. Other groups are more broadly engaged with a specific focus such as community gardens or environmental education.

**Community and neighbourhood groups** noted the following issues:

- Need a broader definition of and approach to ‘community sustainability’.
- Balancing pressures on community parkland for active recreation and keeping the parks ‘natural’.
- Conflicts arise now that trails are part of the transportation system – this includes both travel to work and school, but also travel to the recreation centre.
- Parks can play a greater role as community hubs, such as through special events, farmers markets, and summer festivals.
- Walkable communities must link the trail system with sidewalks and on-road walking.

*I just love music in the park - re summer. People with no cars get something. Delightful - especially cater to apartment families*

*I've recently discovered how interconnected many Saanich streets are, with pedestrian walkways passing between blocks, and I'm always finding new ones.*

Issues for ‘**friends**’ of parks included:

- Strengthening support for biodiversity – all parks need to be planned as parts of larger ecosystems, and all parks need to have ecosystem inventories.
- Stewardship groups require additional support to be effective partners.
- If natural areas are to be protected, space for other activities needs to be provided eg mountain biking.
- Protection of some natural areas requires other designations eg conservation area.

*Educate local residents to become better stewards to their local parks - specifically what each park requires*

*Saanich and CRD are doing a great job of trails for commuters and recreational riders on paved trails/paths, but please do not forget about us mountain bikers.*

- Need to strengthen partnerships between schools and parks – more use of school lands for recreation will reduce pressures on sensitive ecosystems.
- There is an inherent imbalance in the system - a lack of funds to maintain the land base that exists, while DCCs fund more parkland.
- Social issues in parks are becoming a major issue, with a variety of negative consequences.

**Food security organizations** noted the following issues:

- Food security is an issue which is growing in the public consciousness.
- Many local not-for-profit groups are interested in starting community gardens.
- There are also various opportunities, already being piloted by Saanich Parks, to increase the food production in parks, such as through planting fruit trees and inter-planting with vegetables in the flower gardens.

*Community gardens - not satisfactory - more and more people want to be self-sufficient in growing their own food.*

Discussions with **Swan Lake Nature Centre** staff noted:

- Parental fear, and the fear of litigation has resulted in no risk taking in most programs for children. These insurance issues must be resolved if progress is to be made in encouraging outdoor play and environmental education. This is critical as these attitudes are now inbred in teenagers.
- The beaches in Saanich are perfect play environments for children and young people.

*Swan Lake programs are excellent and should be maintained as best possible.*

*We desperately need more places for families to congregate and children to engage in safe, physical outdoor play.*

- The municipality should support organizations like Scouts and Guides which promote and deliver programs focused on nature and the outdoors.
- The municipality should promote a more natural approach to playgrounds, and should provide more wild spaces in parks, should ensure that there are staff trained in outdoor programming.

*I would like to see more education on our rare ecosystems, i.e., the importance of Garry Oak habitat. I find most people I talk to don't know what Camass is!!*

Saanich works closely with seniors organizations, providing facilities and some financial support. **Seniors organizations** noted the following issues

- The majority of seniors do not use seniors centres. Many still recreate and exercise in the ways they always did, be it the gym or golf. The community centres are the best places to offer a range of remedial health programming for stroke, cardio, Alzheimer's, etc
- Seniors centres serve the over 75 year age group, and as such need to focus on social recreation, including food, and health issues.
- Partnerships with VIHA need to be expanded.
- *Age friendly* is a good concept but needs to be more widely implemented.
- Efforts to reach out to the increasing population of Asian seniors must be made.
- A new seniors/community centre is required in the Shelbourne corridor. This could be linked to seniors housing.

*I do not go to the activity centres except the Goward House where I do Tai Chi twice a week, have taken an exercise class there and I volunteer as librarian along with a friend. We put in approximately 3 or 4 hours a month. I think places like Goward are fantastic - great staff and volunteers.*

Saanich has a wide variety of indoor sport organizations. **Ice users**, including Minor Hockey and Figure Skating, noted:

- The lack of ice and ice time, with only two municipal arenas for a population of over 100,000.
- Ice time is absorbed by municipal programming, which reduces time available to not-for-profit groups.
- There is little time available during the day, with more adults, shift workers, school academies, etc. This reduces the time for casual and high performance skating
- There is a need for a leisure ice format addition.
- The aging facilities pose problems.
- Not only does the lack of ice time bring challenges of finding time for tournaments, but there is a lack of recognition of the economic values these bring.
- All high performance sports noted the lack of off-ice training spaces, especially since the Pearkes fieldhouse has been renovated.

*I realize this is Victoria but there is still a lot of hockey being played here. I work 9:00 to 5:00 and find it extremely hard to find a good drop-in hockey program.*

*Please build another arena. We are a hockey and figure skating family and ice time is very difficult to get.*

**Aquatic groups** noted:

- Problems with the physical space for high performance swimmers as other recreation uses have taken predominance in Saanich Commonwealth Place – change rooms, lack of dryland training area, limited access to the weight room, and lack of space during events
- The funding agreement for high performance use of Commonwealth Pool expires in 2019, or before if the funding runs out earlier.

**Indoor sport groups (gym users)** noted:

- A general lack of space/facility availability.
- The reliance is on school facilities but they are becoming more and more difficult to access, although access to the middle school gyms which Saanich has part-funded has added significantly to the capacity of the region.
- Cost of rental of facilities was also a barrier for sport groups.
- Volleyball's growth is limited due to inadequate outdoor facilities (sand courts).
- Cedar Hill Squash Club is coming to the end of its lease agreement with Saanich. The various racquet groups are investigating the development of a private racquets club.
- A broader issue is the lack of PE teachers at the middle schools and elementary schools, and the consequent lack of skill development in these age groups.
- Better communication between groups could be fostered by the municipality.
- There should be better linkage of the LIFE program to sport groups.

*Activity options for teens throughout neighbourhoods (eg., basketball hoops, lacrosse boxes, ice time for all levels of teen hockey, etc.). Overall benefit to community when their energy is directed to positive activity*

**Outdoor sport user groups** noted:

- Sport clubs feel 'disconnected' from the municipality and its staff. They are taking on more responsibilities than they feel is appropriate, and more than in the past. Yet in most cases, their only documentation is an annual permit.
- An Outdoor Sport Coordinator position is needed.
- There is a need for more collaboration across sport groups eg a Gordon Head Sports Association.

*Too often in the winter months, kids aren't allowed on school fields as the grass is closed. Installing turf fields allow play to happen year round and can be used for sports activities by community groups after hours.*

- Soccer is very dominant – other sports feel ‘frozen out’, unable to access the artificial turf fields, even though there was municipal money invested.
- The ‘one permit holder’ model works well for both that permit holder and for Saanich...but not for other groups.
- Maintenance levels at parks and fields is declining, and it is the sport groups who must pick up the slack.
- Many sports feel that they need more/better quality fields/facilities in order to remain healthy organizationally, and to attract and develop young players.
- Tournaments are not hosted due primarily to inadequate high level facilities.
- Other sports, such as mountain biking, noted a need for more local facilities.

*The municipality has shown leadership in working with community groups, and various levels of government and sport organizations to create high performance facilities such as Saanich Commonwealth Place, PISE, and the Elk Lake Rowing facility. A need have been identified within the Capital Region for an outdoor stadium for field sports such as soccer, rugby and football. Such a stadium would have a seated capacity of 5000 and could be expanded with temporary seating to 10 to 12,000.*

The arts is an area where the distinctions between private and not-for-profit sectors is particularly confused.

Many visual artists sell their works, but few could live off this aspect of their earnings. And the distinction between not-for-profit and private dance schools is non-existent. **Community arts groups** noted:

- A sense of a lack of respect and credibility for the arts within Saanich.
- Lack of display space for visual artists, and general lack of space for most other groups. The traditional spaces of community meeting, such as church halls and school gyms are becoming more difficult to find.
- Need/desire for an Arts Centre, although the addition to Cedar Hill Recreation Centre will add vital space.
- Additional support for studio tours, and perhaps more coordination.
- Concern that the municipal contribution to CRD Arts goes almost exclusively to the large theatre and music groups, not to supporting the grass roots of Saanich arts.

*If sports fields are free when booked, it would be appropriate for recreational artist groups to have space that is free also. Rooms for meeting and creating art works*

*I'm excited for the new pottery studio at Cedar Hill Rec Centre, and hope more classes can be offered (but also hope there isn't a big increase in cost - please!).*

#### **Community Serving Organizations** noted:

- The recreation needs of those challenged by income, disability, ill health or culture/ethnicity are met and supported by a range of organizations.
- Generally, these groups felt supported by the Department, but feel marginalized.
- Recent efforts to identify gaps for those with physical challenges, through the *Measuring Up* funding program, have yet to be fully actioned.
- While a regional approach to these issues is notionally in place, it needs to be extended, such as with a regional approach to accessible playgrounds.
- The municipality should also be manifesting its commitment through its hiring policies; This would involve becoming more proactive, building in additional staff training especially for front-line staff

*Staff are always welcoming. Cedar Hill does a wonderful service with their program for disabled and physically challenged of all ages. It is a treat to work out beside individuals needing support*

## Consultations with Key Informants

In addition to consulting with user groups, discussions were also held with senior staff in other agencies, and with internal Saanich groups such as members of the Saanich Advisory Committees, senior managers and staff in both the parks and recreation divisions. The key points made specifically by key informants, organized around topic headings, are summarized as follows:

### Parks—noted issues included:

- Linking parks with climate change, urban design, and urban agriculture. Emphasizing the idea that the Parks and Recreation are part of the core municipal operation, and perhaps focusing by creating an Urban Environment Department.
- Establishing a budget for maintenance of facilities and parks, and recommending a realistic figure to Council.
- Promoting the parks system as a low-cost health alternative.
- Addressing competing interests and views about parks and what they should be.
- Complementing the regional parks system whose role is to ensure that large areas of natural ecosystems are available for public recreation.
- Most major communities/cities are taking a metro view and see the major parks in the region as linking nature with the people.
- Parks can play a greater role as community hubs.
- There are very few parks outside the urban containment boundary.
- Various publics often have different visions and expectations about the kind of natural area park that should be provided.
- The new integrated pest management approach is posing problems for staff and public - everyone has to become used to a more natural and slightly less perfect park system.
- The balancing point between management and safety needs to be adjusted in order to be somewhat less risk averse than at present.
- There could be greater use made of school playfields. However fields at elementary schools are really extensions of the playground as opposed to being of an appropriate quality for competitive sport.
- School grounds are counted as green space in the municipal OCP and they need to be secured in the long-term if this calculation is to be meaningful.

*I believe the volunteers that help clear out woods of invasive species and encourage more natural parks are heroes and are saving our planet for the future.*

*Natural area management - encourage neighbourhoods to participate in management by use of incentives.*

*I am 16 years old, enrolled in the 11th grade, and it would disappoint me greatly if there were to be natural spaces lost to development here in Saanich. I feel preserving Saanich's identity by having a lot of green space is very important. Not only that, but Saanich can be a pioneer and preserve more of what it already has.*

**Trails** – noted issues included:

- The main municipal and regional trails are designed for multiple use but with the recognition that they are primarily used for cycling. These arterials serve a transportation function and a recreation function at different times of the day and week.
- The more local trails are well used and have become a prime form of active recreation for many adults, although increased use for journey to school needs to be promoted.
- The regional district is also seeking to establish a regional pathway system.

*More focus on outdoor recreation in the way of greenways and trails/natural areas open spaces than focusing on recreation that requires buildings that have a consequence in the way of a costly carbon foot print behind it.*

**Cedar Hill Golf Course**– noted issues included:

- The most significant issue facing the golf course is a lack of financial resources. There has been a lack of capital investment over the last years.
- With significant investment the course could be substantially improved. Drainage is a major issue with the course, limiting winter play. The vision for the golf course includes year round playability -- especially spring and late fall.
- It would also be in keeping with the municipal role to rebrand the golf course to focus on entry level players, teaching and early play.

*I am a member at Cedar Hill Golf Course. A recent consultant's report has made some positive changes but by and large, the course suffers from lack of maintenance - especially in areas where drainage is concerned*

**Programming** –noted issues included:

- There has been considerable growth over the past decade in the capacity of the Department to deliver recreation programs. However the function has become business oriented as opposed to community development oriented.
- There are now a variety of sports academies at Saanich high schools which serve the needs of both aspiring athletes, their parents, and provide talent identification for the sports concerned.
- The issue of physical literacy and the continuing deficit of physical education and daily physical activity at schools is of concern.
- The municipality needs to put in place policies, programs, and partnerships which address the increasing trends of obesity especially in childhood, and finding ways to reinforce physical activity in school and after school.
- Currently there is a poor definition of roles all across the recreation to high-performance spectrum, with municipalities, College and the University providing very similar options and essentially competing against each other for limited public participation.
- The University would also be keen to be a partner in assisting schools with after-school sports programming, likely through the provision of university students as coaches or assistant coaches.

*I regularly use Saanich Commonwealth Place (although G. R. Pearkes is closer to my home) and I am very impressed with all the facility has to offer. It is also accessed by all ages*

*We need neighbourhood recreation programs for children of all ages (i.e., tennis, hockey, baseball, gymnastics, swimming, etc.).*

- There is huge potential to link the field development at Layritz Park with the capacity of PISE to run training camps and competitions. In particular there is potential to add one more artificial turf field. In addition it would be sensible to provide seating around the current PISE field, for about 2,000 spectators.
- There is no sport strategy of the Greater Victoria region and this is required.
- Sports participation by youth is changing. For some youth the focus on one sport begins to get very intense around age 13. Streaming at around this stage in most sports also tends to exclude many youth who are not at the top level.

**Environmental Education, Play and Risk** –noted issues included:

- The linkage between play and physical literacy needs to be developed. There are many reasons why children play less today than 50 years ago such as the growth of the two income family, increased traffic, etc.
- There is a lack of a strong community education role about parks and recreation. Environmental education is an area where there is currently no overall plan.

*Focus on educating and getting the public back out into nature with green facilities and it might help in achieving the Climate Action Plan goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 33% by 2020. It will also in reducing health costs. They are also free to use.*

**Early Childhood Development** –noted issues included:

- Affordability is the biggest issue for young parents seeking programs for their children.
- The StrongStart model works very well and there would be support from parents to run a program at a recreation centre.
- The challenge of programming is greatest with younger children. This is true for all programming, but especially for full-day care.
- Places like Saanich Neighbourhood Place, with its multiple programming, awareness of income issues, is a wonderful resource for many parents, especially those with limited incomes.
- ECE providers such as family day cares would like better linkage with the recreation centres so that they can augment their programming.
- There would be strong support for more 'play in the park' programs.
- Required park enhancements include more water parks, more washrooms (and those that exist should be open in winter) and more benches around the play areas.

*Make all facilities financially accessible to all income levels. The Greater Victoria area is an expensive place to live and it is difficult for families and seniors to afford the "extras" yet they are very important to a healthy and vibrant community*

**Administration** –noted issues included:

- Staff training is important. Overall it was felt that the municipality does not adequately invest in training and that its training budget needed to be increased.
- Front counter staff need to have better training and provision for learning all the different aspects of the recreation and parks system that they are required to provide information about everything from tennis bookings to children's hockey programs.
- It is important that staff are trained and assisted to obtain the necessary licenses and tickets so that when specific staff retire, the municipality has a trained staff person to replace them.

### Financial Planning –noted issues included:

- In recent years, the budgeting has moved from 70/30 to 30/70 in terms of new/replacement capital projects. The priority within the capital budget has been and will continue to be replacing existing infrastructure, hopefully reaching sustainable lifecycle costing by 2019.
- Partnering with not-for-profit groups, such as soccer organizations, has increased the Department's capacity to raise capital funds and initiate capital projects.
- There is an increasing move to contract out services, as well as towards sponsorship of programs.

*Saanich has a wealth of Park and Recreational facilities (indoor and outdoor). It is important to maintain what exists today. No one wants to pay more in taxes. We need to ensure that the current budget is used most effectively and long-term plans are in place to ensure that all facilities receive a refresh once every 3-5 years.*

### Partnerships – noted issues included:

- There is a realization within the Community Services Department that many community organizations need a high level of support from the municipality if they are to be successful in such activities as marketing and fundraising.
- Building a collaborative model for recreation involves playing to our strengths in particular our knowledge of the community.

*Diabetes is increasing in our community. Thousands of people are pre-diabetic. 50+ and seniors should get cheaper packages for recreation (monthly pass or annual pass) so the lower income families can take these benefits*

- Plans for the new University sports and recreation facility are well underway and once it is completed, it will impact the community in a number of ways. The University will have the capacity with its new facilities to provide enhanced and attractive servicing for a variety of age groups.
- There are currently 14 ice rinks in the region, serving 350,000 people. While this may seem to be low by national standards, the two rinks in Saanich ownership plus the one rink at the University, are probably adequate for Saanich. However the eventual closure of the University of Victoria ice rink will significantly reduce available ice time.

*The Cedar Hill Squash Club is an example of a public/private partnership that adds new facilities at no cost or risk to the municipality. This kind of partnership should be promoted to encourage new proposals for the municipality.*

- The recently adopted library facilities plan recommends that libraries be developed in conjunction with community centres, with priority on the two community centres which currently do not have integral libraries.
- The Ministry of Education's Neighborhoods of Learning program provides 15% extra space at schools for community use. This is primarily done when a new school is constructed but there may be potential when a school is significantly upgraded for seismic reasons. In particular, the Claremont School enrollment is declining, and there is potential for additional use in particular with regard to the theatre which, with minor alterations, can be made totally separate from the rest of the school.

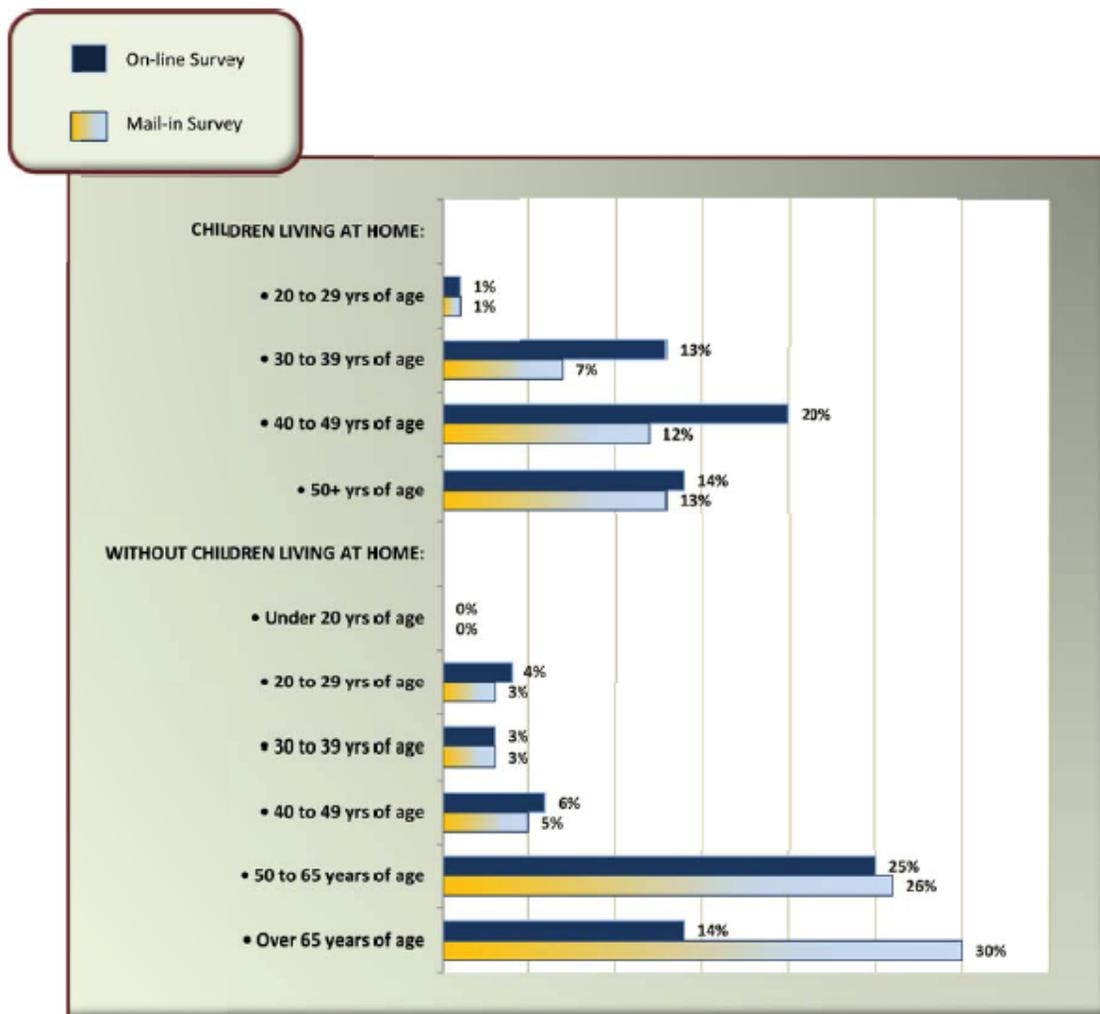
*Schools should be used after hours. However, the equipment in the school should not be used as school budgets are small enough already and replacement and repair incurred through public use cannot be funded on a school's budget*

## What the Public Told Us

As part of the process of gathering information from the public, two surveys were conducted, one using a mail out/mail back format, and one online. The same set of questions was used for both surveys.

The mail out/mail back survey was used to gain a statistically valid picture of the interaction of Saanich residents with the parks and recreation system. The survey was mailed out to over 10,000 residents in mid-January 2011. By the due date of February 15, 2011, 1,568 surveys had been returned; this provides a validity of +/-2.5%, 19 times out of 20. The online survey provided an opportunity for all Saanich residents to have an input to the planning process; 700 responses were received, with 590 being from Saanich residents. The full results of the two surveys can be found in Working Papers #8 and 9.

The surveys were answered by slightly different demographic populations. The mail out/mail back survey response population was slightly older, and less likely to have children living at home, than that of the online survey. However it should be noted that for almost every question, the responses were similarly ranked. Respondents, no matter what demographic profile, generally agreed about the broad elements of parks and recreation planning in Saanich.



The surveys asked Saanich residents about their use of parks and recreation facilities and any perceived barriers to that use; about their satisfaction with those services and their priorities for enhancing or improving services; about information sources; and about how the system should be financed. The results can be summarized as follows:

**Parks and Trails**

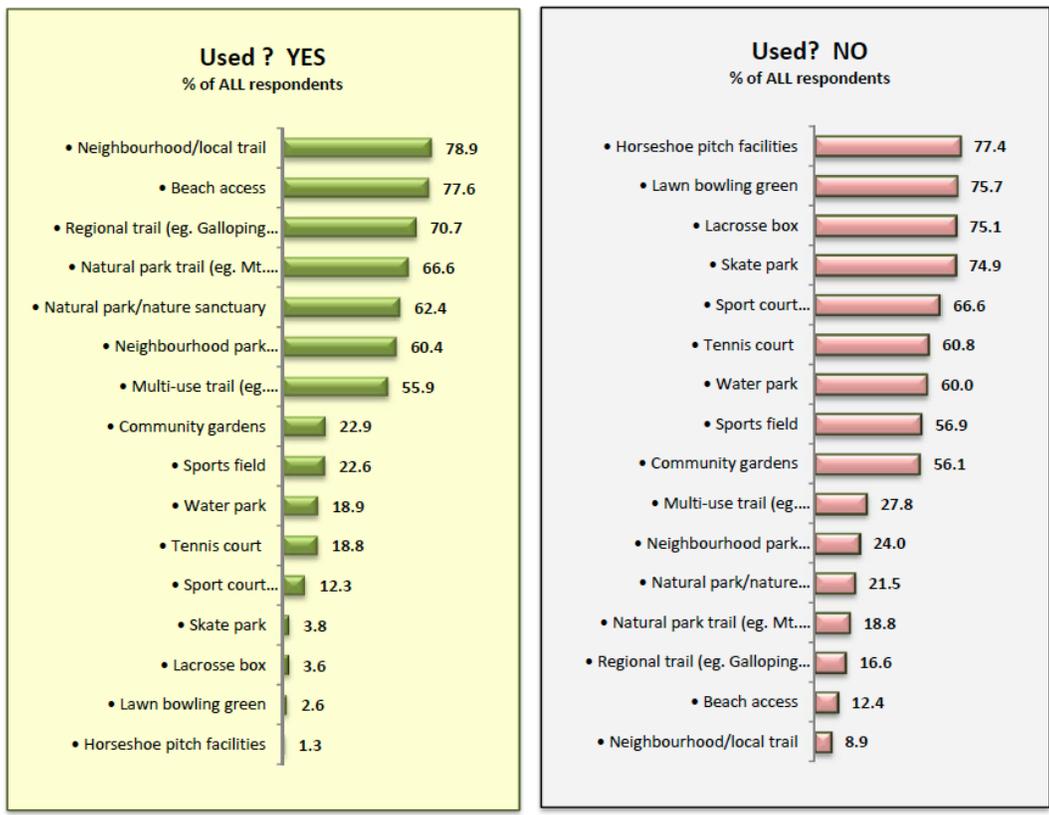
*Use and Barriers to Use*

Saanich residents are clearly users of their trail system. Well over 50% of respondents noted that in the last year they had used a neighborhood or local trail, a regional trail such as the Galloping Goose, a natural park trail such as the ones in Mount Douglas Park, or a multiuse trail such as the Centennial Trail or Colquitz River Trail. The only other park/trails that received this level of community support and use were beach accesses and natural parks/nature sanctuaries.

**3) Park and Trail Use**

**Which of the following parks and trails, in Saanich and elsewhere in the region, has a member of your household/family USED AT LEAST ONCE in the last year?**

**ALL Respondents (n = 1568)**



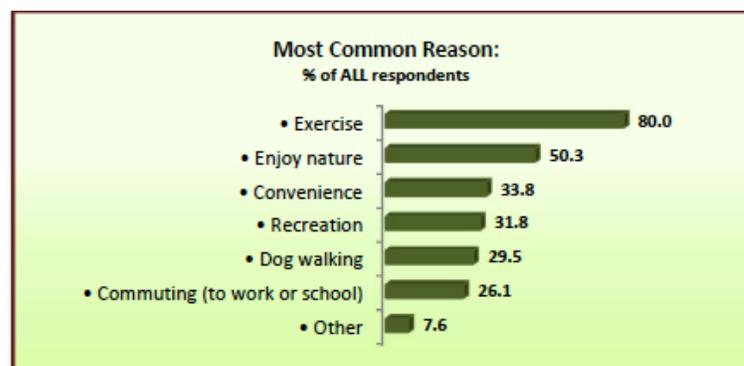
All other types of parks and related facilities received significantly lower levels of use. In many cases this is because they appeal to a much smaller percentage of the population. Thus community gardens, sports fields, waterpark and tennis courts had been visited by approximately one in five survey respondents in the last year. Other facilities -- skate parks, lacrosse boxes, bowling greens, and horseshoe pitch facilities -- all received little use by respondents.

Some facilities are also highly seasonal -- many people have visited the waterpark, but the majority of them only visited a few times a year, most likely in the summer.

Almost 75% of respondents indicated that they had used neighborhood and local trails at least once in the last year, 81% indicated that they had used sidewalks and 68% that they had used walkways between streets. This clearly indicates a very high level of local walking activity. In addition the regional trail system such as the Galloping Goose and the Lochside Trail, also received extensive use by well over 50% of respondents. A slightly smaller percentage, but still impressive, used the Cedar Hill Golf Course Trail, the Colquitz River Trail, and the Centennial Trail.

A slightly different picture appears when the frequency with which respondents noted using the various trails is considered. When daily use and weekly use are combined, the pattern shows that 80% of respondents use the local sidewalks and streets for walking, 50% of respondents venture onto the neighborhood and local trails and 30% use the regional trail system.

Respondents were also asked what were the most common reasons for using the trail systems. They could select as many of the responses as applied to them -- most selected two or three reasons. 80% of respondents noted that one of these reasons was exercise, and over 50% use the trail system in order to enjoy nature. About one in four respondents used the trail system to commute to school or work, and almost one in three to walk the dog. Convenience was noted by about one third of respondents -- presumably it was easier and quicker -- and better exercise - to walk to the local store for instance as opposed to taking the car.



With parks and trails, three items were noted as a barrier for respondents: Lack of facilities such as washrooms; Lack of programs and information about programs; Concerns about safety.

### *Satisfaction*

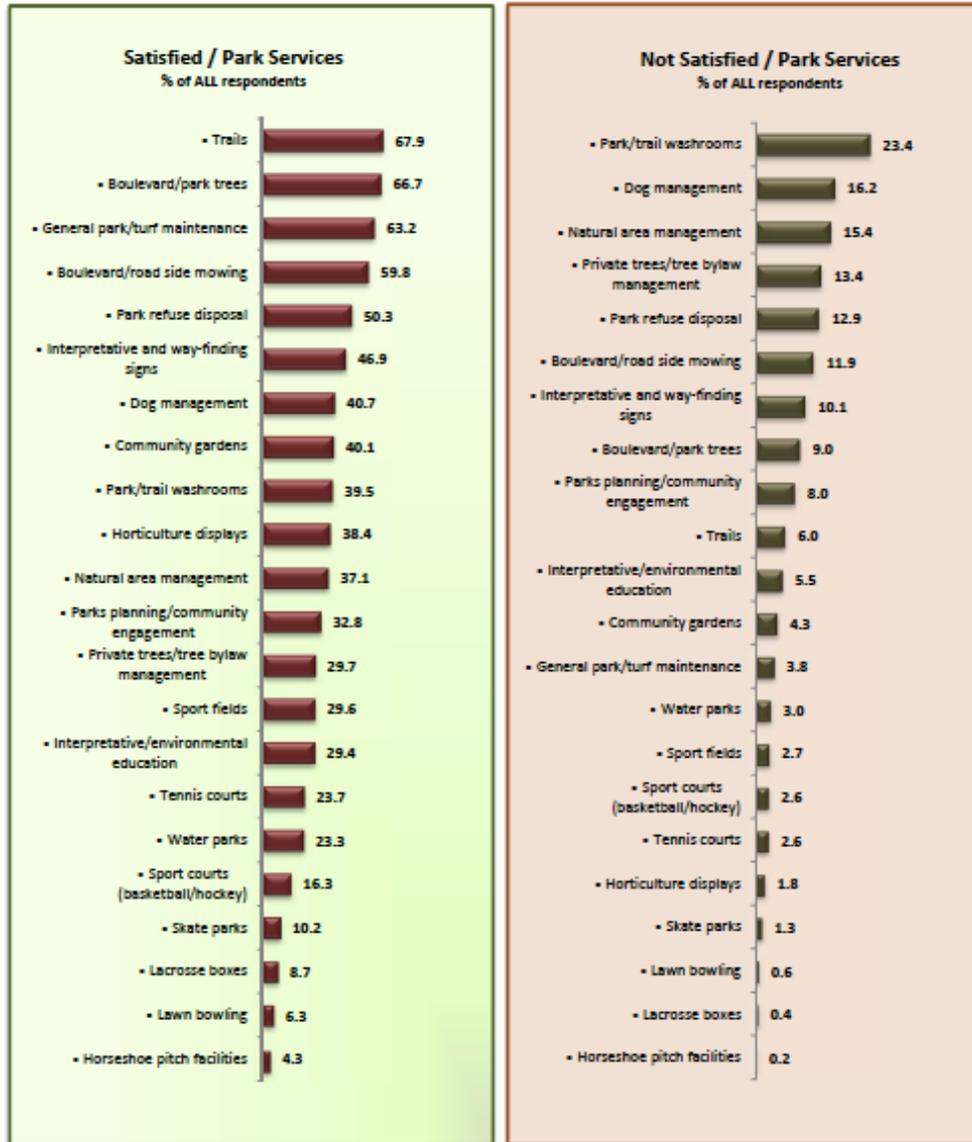
Over 60% of respondents noted that they were satisfied with trails, boulevard and park trees, and general park and turf maintenance. Only slightly lower levels of satisfaction, and again over 50% of all respondents, noted that they were satisfied with boulevard and roadside mowing, and park refuse disposal.

Most other park services received levels of satisfaction which were far above the levels of dissatisfaction for the same service.

6) Satisfaction with Current Services - PARK SERVICES

HOW SATISFIED are you with the current PARK SERVICES in Saanich?

ALL Respondents (n = 1568)



Priorities

With parks and trails, high priority ratings for improving/enhancing included:

- Trails
- Park refuse disposal
- Natural area management
- Park/trail washrooms
- Planning and community engagement

## Recreation Facilities

### Use and Barriers to Use

Saanich Commonwealth Place is by far the most frequently visited of the Saanich recreation centres. Almost 60% of respondents noted that someone in their family has visited Saanich Commonwealth Place in the previous year. This was almost twice as many as had visited any of the other community centres. Pearkes Recreation Centre has been visited by about one in three respondents, and Gordon Head Recreation Centre slightly fewer than that at 29%. Only a few over one in five respondents had actually visited Cedar Hill Recreation Centre.

Over one in five respondents had visited the Cedar Hill Golf Course. Of these, far more had visited the restaurant or lounge, than the actual golf course. However one in eight respondents had played golf while they were there.

### 5) Recreation Facility Use - Saanich Municipality Managed Facilities

Which of the following Saanich Municipality Managed Facilities has a member of your household/family USED AT LEAST ONCE in the last year?

ALL Respondents (n = 1568)

Saanich Municipality Managed Facilities Used in the last year?	Yes		No		no resp. provided	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
• Cedar Hill Golf Course – for food and beverage	347	22.1	863	55.0	358	22.8
• Cedar Hill Golf Course – to golf	196	12.5	958	61.1	414	26.4
• Cedar Hill Recreation Centre	334	21.3	824	52.6	410	26.1
• G.R. Pearkes Recreation Centre	497	31.7	656	41.8	415	26.5
• Gordon Head Recreation Centre	450	28.7	729	46.5	389	24.8
• Saanich Commonwealth Place	928	59.2	370	23.6	270	17.2



In terms of frequency of use, only a small percentage of those who use the facility visited on a daily basis. However it is noteworthy that there were twice as many daily visitors to Saanich Commonwealth Place, as to any of the other recreation centres. Weekly use of the recreation centres was made by between one in three and one in four respondents. Again, a higher

percentage of respondents noted using Saanich Commonwealth Place on a weekly basis than for any of the other recreation centres.

The majority of golfers using Cedar Hill Golf Course visited only a few times each year, although 15% of respondents did indicate that they use the golf course on a weekly basis. And of the 22% who had visited the golf course for food and beverage in the last year, 80% had only done so a few times.

Respondents were also asked about the use of other recreation centres, both those managed by other municipalities, education institutions, and those operated on an arms length basis from the municipality. About one in four respondents noted that they had used the recreation facilities owned by other municipalities in the last year. In addition, 14% had used private not-for-profit recreation facilities such as the YMCA or the Boys and Girls Club. And 17% had used recreation facilities owned by one of the education institutions such as the University of Victoria or Camosun College.

For recreation facilities, the main barriers were:

- Inconvenient times
- Affordability/cost
- Too crowded
- No programs of interest.

What were not barriers were:

- Lack of facilities
- Distance to facilities
- Lack of transportation to facilities
- Concerns re safety.

### *Satisfaction*

In terms of satisfaction, approximately 4 times as many respondents noted that they were satisfied with services than those who indicated that they were dissatisfied.

In terms of the number of respondents indicating satisfaction, aquatics services were at the top of the list. Almost 50% of all respondents noted that they were satisfied and only 7% that they were dissatisfied. Building maintenance in recreation facilities was also a service that respondents were very satisfied with -- 45% of total respondents noted satisfaction, while only 4% noted dissatisfaction.

In the next group in terms of satisfaction, about one in three respondents noted that they were satisfied with fitness, weight rooms and the aerobics programs, change room improvements, and programs for adults. However for these three services, there was also a significant level of dissatisfaction noted by other respondents -- the highest being 12% of respondents who were dissatisfied with change room improvements.

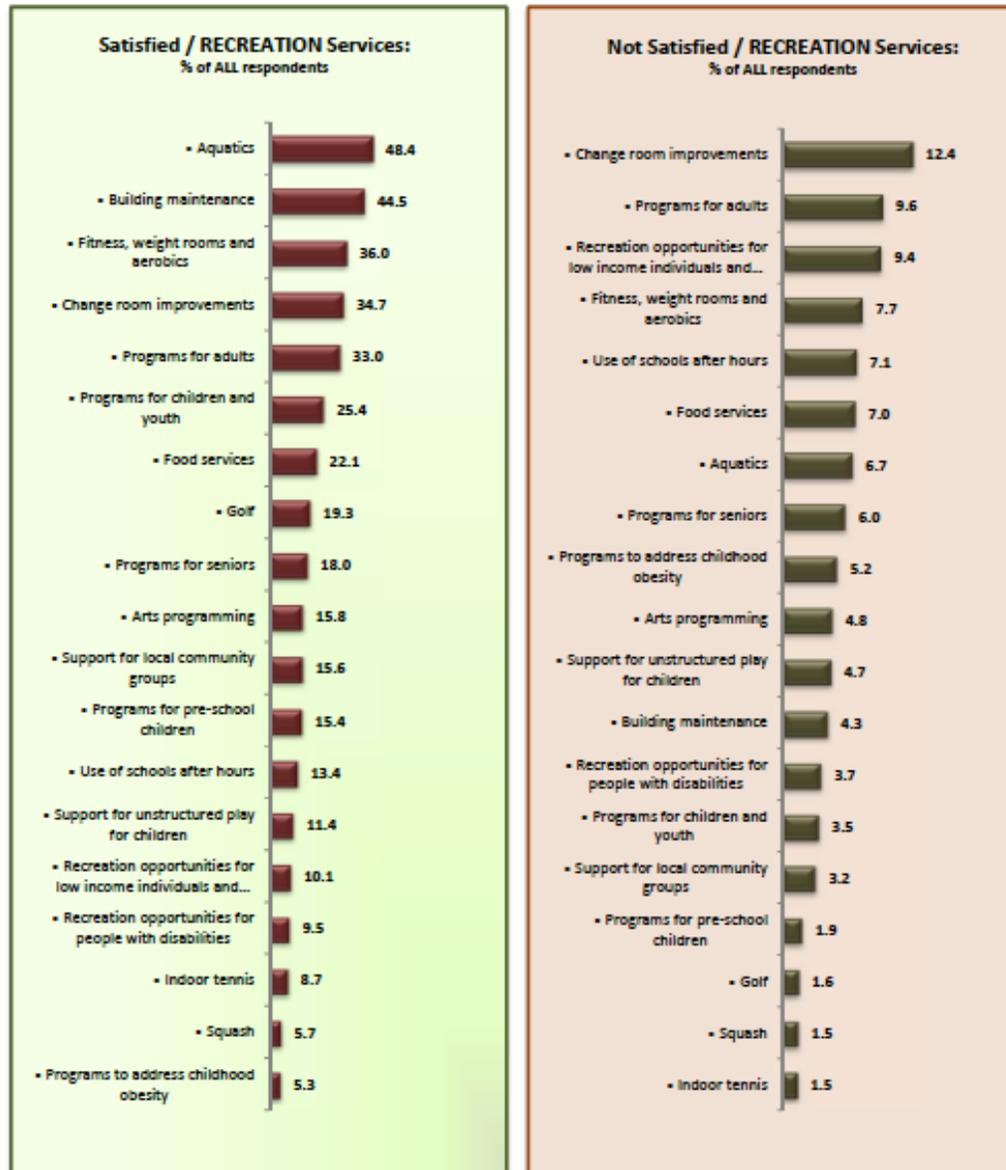
While for all services, the number of respondents noting satisfaction exceeded those indicating dissatisfaction, in terms of the ratio of respondents noting satisfaction versus dissatisfaction, the following can be discerned:

- The greatest apparent satisfaction was with golf, building maintenance, programs for preschoolers, children and youth, and for aquatics.
- The areas where respondents felt that improvements should be considered were: programs to address childhood obesity, recreation opportunities for low income individuals and families, and those with disabilities, use of schools after hours, and support for unstructured play.

## 6) Satisfaction with Current Services - RECREATION FACILITIES

HOW SATISFIED are you with the current PARKS and RECREATION FACILITIES in Saanich?

ALL Respondents (n = 1568)

**Priorities**

With recreation facilities, a high priority for improving/enhancing:

- Opportunities for low income families
- Programs for children and youth
- Programming to address childhood obesity.

But most items got a high priority rating...Saanich residents think recreation, parks and culture are important!

### Information Sources

The Active Living Guide is the source most frequently used by families to find out about the parks and recreation services. It is used by almost 6 out of 10 survey respondents.

Local newspapers are also a primary source with 50% of respondents noting that they use the local Saanich News and about 3 out of 10 respondents use the Victoria Times Colonist.

Just over one third of respondents used the Saanich municipal website, and one third also relied on word of mouth from family and friends.

The other published document from the Department that was frequently used (by about 25% of respondents) was the Parks Map And Trails Guide.

Another 25% discovered programs while taking other activities at the recreation centre.

Most of the other sources noted did not seem to be used to any great extent by respondents. This included social media which only had a very small following among mail out/mail back survey respondents, although higher among the slightly younger responders to the online survey.

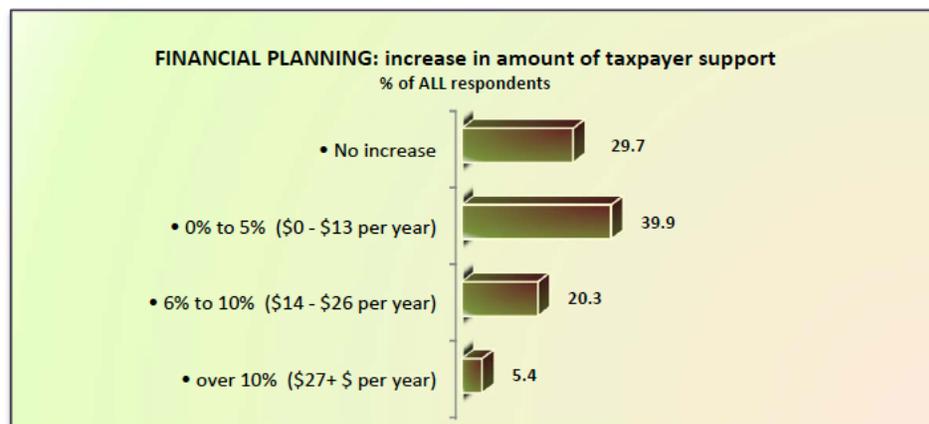
## Financing the System

Respondents were asked to consider what if any increase in taxpayer support for parks and recreation services they would consider reasonable, given the priorities that they had assigned in previous questions.

### 7) Financial Planning

**What, if any, increase in the amount of taxpayer support for parks and recreation services would you consider reasonable given the priorities that you have noted in your answers to previous questions?**

ALL Respondents (n = 1568)	n	%
• No increase	466	29.7
• 0% to 5% (\$0 - \$13 per year)	625	39.9
• 6% to 10% (\$14 - \$26 per year)	318	20.3
• over 10% (\$27+ \$ per year)	85	5.4
• no response provided	74	4.7



While it is generally assumed that taxpayers are adverse to tax increases, only 30% of respondents in the survey indicated that there should be no increase in taxation to pay for increased services. That is to say almost 70% of respondents indicated that some tax increase would be acceptable. 40% of respondents opted for the lowest level of increase mainly between zero and 5% per year which would add a maximum of \$13 per year to the amount of tax paid by the average Saanich property owner. Just over 20% of respondents indicated that the increase of between 6% and 10% would be acceptable, while 5% of respondents were prepared to see an increase of over 10% per year.

Online respondents were more prepared to pay for higher service levels: only 17% said 'no increase' versus 30% in the mail back survey; and those selecting an increase over 6% (ie top two increase levels) numbered 43%, versus 25% of mail back respondents.

Respondents were asked whether they would support any alternative methods of raising funding for parks and recreation services. They were offered eight different ways in which revenue could be increased.

Respondents were generally supportive of encouraging private donations and seeking corporate sponsorship. The former was supported by almost 80% of respondents, while seeking corporate sponsorship received a slightly lower level of 67% support. These were the only two approaches which were supported by over 50% of respondents.

Respondents were clearly more hesitant with some of the other approaches:

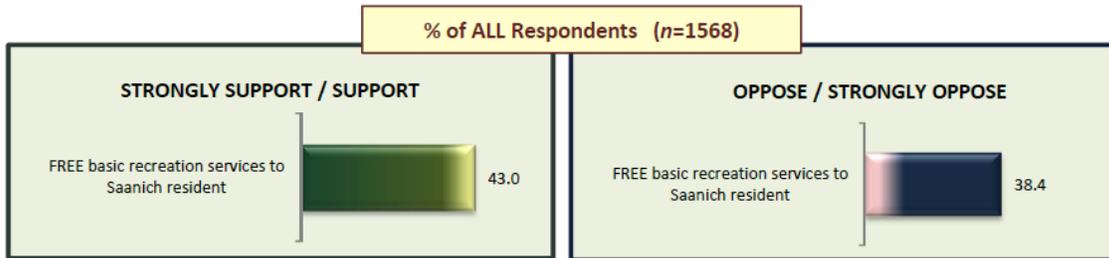
- Encouraging commercial advertizing -- was supported by 47% of respondents.
- User fees for sports fields -- received support from 35% of respondents.
- Increasing rental fees -- received support from 26% of respondents.

Support for the other three approaches all received little or no support from respondents -- increasing admission fees, reducing hours of facility operation, and installing pay parking at major parks and recreation centres -- all these got the proverbial "thumbs down" from respondents.

Respondents were also asked to comment on one specific question:

*should basic recreation services such as drop-in swimming and skating with their inherent health and social benefits be funded by the taxpayer in the way that other services such as police, fire, and parks, are funded, with admission being free to Saanich residents?*

Firstly, no opinion on this question was expressed by almost 20% of respondents. Of the remaining 80% who did answer the question, 43% were supportive, and 38% opposed the concept.



## The Youth Consultation

Note: See Working Paper #7 for a more complete review.

Youth are our citizens of tomorrow; but they are also citizens of today. While they tend not to attend open houses or complete mail-out surveys, they have views which can and must be gathered through other means. A process led by the Saanich Youth Council consulted with youth and gathered the following information related to their views:

- While all youth include social networking (internet, Facebook, TV watching, etc) in their recreation time, other activities are also important for many youth. Most youth are physically active with drop-in fitness, running and walking being the preference for most youth. Youth are also engaged in creative activities, especially music, both playing and listening, and dance (primarily for females).
- Saanich recreation facilities are used on an infrequent basis by most youth, although between 10 and 20% indicated weekly use. Athletic parks are used by 20% of youth on a weekly or more frequent basis, but neighbourhood parks are places youth go to 'just hang out' with friends or for pick-up games of soccer or Frisbee. The Gordon Head skate park has a core of about 6% of youth users, but 24% of youth noted occasional visiting.
- Youth noted a lack of free time and difficulty accessing recreation centres as the primary barriers to increased participation. Affordability was not a barrier for most youth, and most youth noted simply 'no barriers'.
- Youth would like to see a number of recreation programming areas strengthened:
  - There is clear support from youth for more challenging activities, both indoor, such as rock climbing and outdoor such as hiking and camping, and watersports such as rowing and kayaking.
  - Lots of youth engage in fitness activities but there is support for increasing access to these kinds of activities.
  - Some more minority activities, such as skateboarding and mountain biking appeal primarily to males, but should be considered.
  - The same is true for volunteer and community engagement opportunities, which appeal more to females.

## Public Review of Recommendations

A further survey was conducted after the draft report had been prepared and reviewed by various Saanich Committees and at two public open houses. This survey was completed by 330 members of the public and 35 stakeholder groups. The public were invited to comment through two means:

- An email with a link to the online survey was sent to all the people who had in the first survey process indicated that they would be prepared to comment on the recommendations.
- Through postings on the District and Departmental websites.

Stakeholders were invited to comment through an email with online survey link.

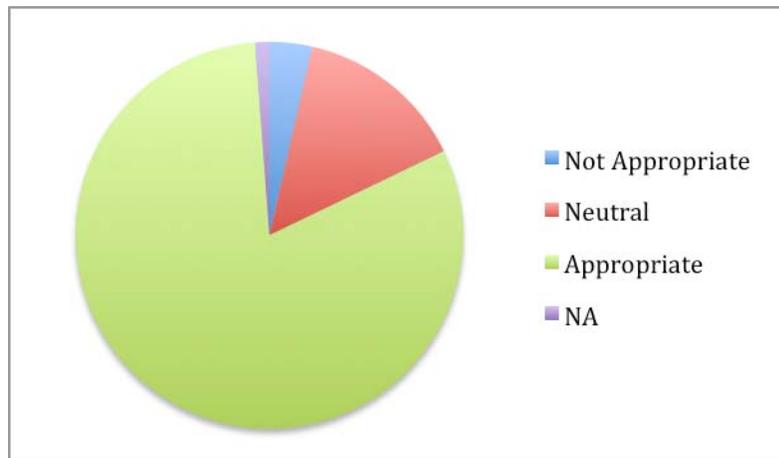
For each key strategic objective, respondents were asked about their support or otherwise. This was on a five-point scale. They could also provide written comments on each of the four sections of the Master Plan, and on the vision and mission statements.

The response from all respondents was positive:

### Vision and Mission

When asked *Are the mission and visions, which will guide the department over the next five to seven years, appropriate?*, over 80% indicated that they were appropriate.

Only 12 respondents thought them not appropriate.

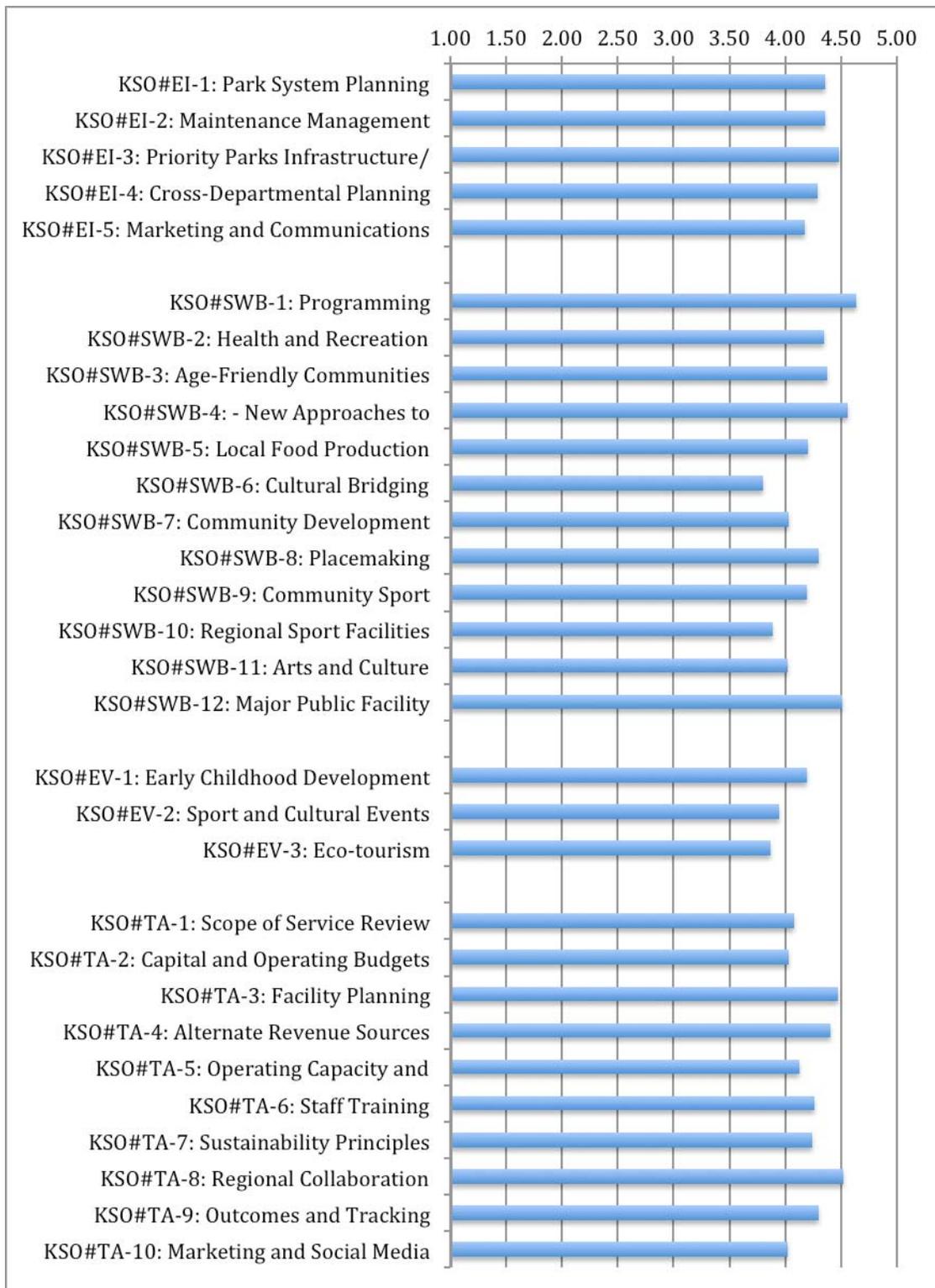


### Feedback on Recommendations

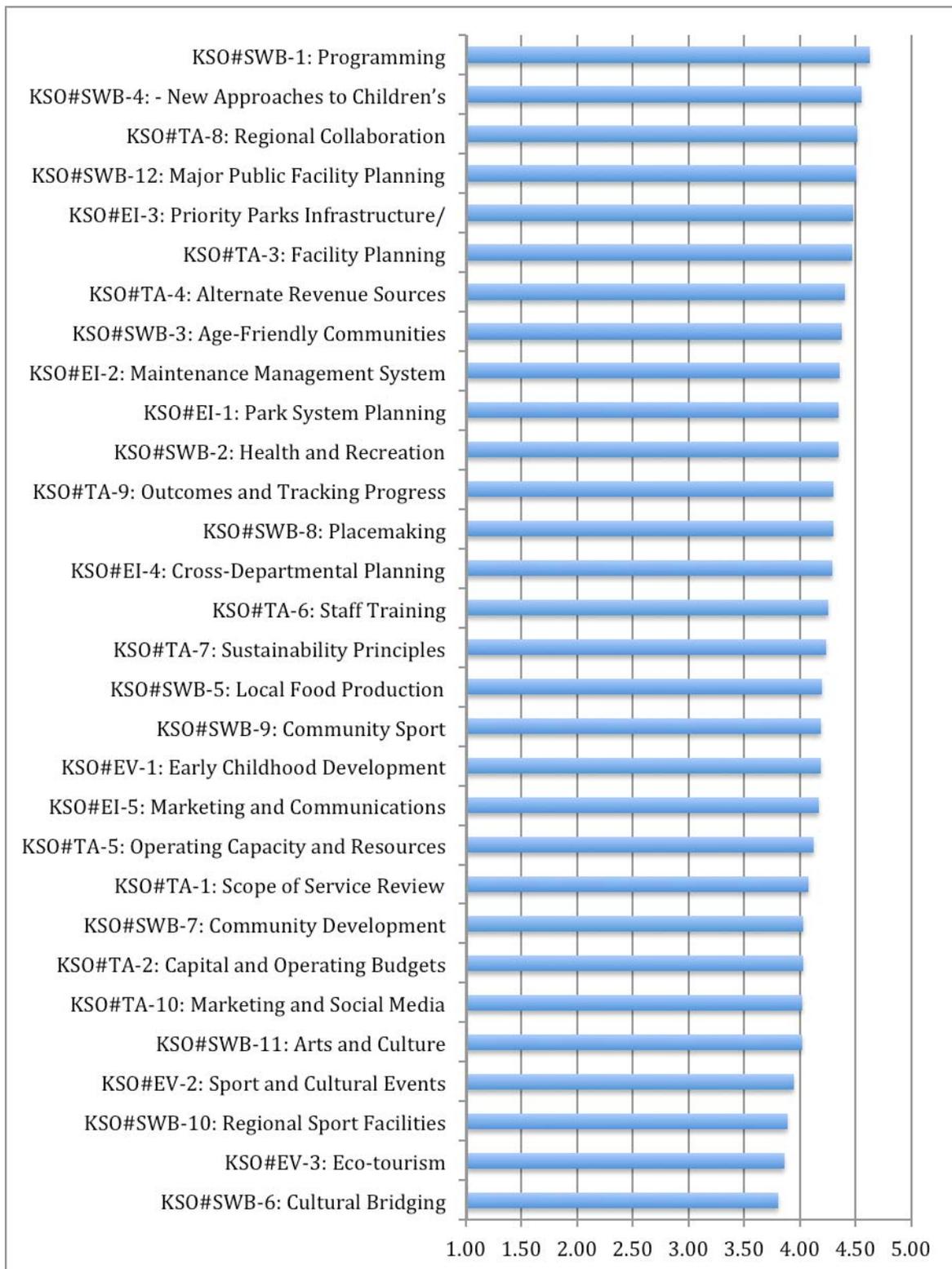
Respondents were able to comment on a five point scale, where *strongly support* scored 5.0 and *strongly oppose* scored 1.0, with a score of 3.0 allocated to *neutral*.

The average scores for the individual key strategic objectives ranged from a high of 4.63 to a low of 3.80. Thus all scores were well above the neutral level of 3.0.

The scores for each KSO are presented as follows:



Note - KSO #SWB-12 was combined with SWB-10 in final drafts  
 - EV KSOs were re-ordered in final drafts



The top five areas of public support were as follows:

- Programming – to continue to offer great programs for every sector of society.
- Support for new approaches to programming for children and youth, stressing play, linking children with nature, etc.
- Greater regional collaboration – working across the region to deliver innovative cost effective services.
- Support for major public facility planning which stressed linking with libraries, universities and the school districts, recognizing that maintaining and upgrading Saanich municipal facilities was also critically important.
- Improving Saanich parks through park specific planning, more opportunities for youth recreation, planning proactively for parks and trails in the new centres and villages, and additional park amenities such as park washrooms and a second children’s water park.

It is hard to summarize the written comments that were made, recognizing that the 330 people who commented are likely among the most publicly committed and thoughtful of residents, and the ones who are most supportive of, and likely constructively critical about, Saanich’s future. However with that caveat, their comments can be summarized as follows: about 60% of the individual comments, across the whole survey, focused on four points:

- Firstly, many people thought it was a great planning document and that the process by which it had been developed was excellent.
- Secondly, many people were guardedly supportive, often commenting that there was too much writing, too heavy a focus on planning, as opposed to just getting on and doing it. Many of these comments focused on the vision and mission and the environmental integrity KSOs. Similar comments were often made about the Taking Action and Tracking Progress section, where the comment was why do we even need these internal issues in the Master Plan.
- Thirdly, there were many comments about the cost of implementation. Concerns about taxation levels and affordability for the taxpayers. Often these were tempered with a request either to do your best with the money you have, or a recognition that Saanich’s parks and recreation opportunities are great to have but please go easy on the budgets as you continue to improve them.
- Fourthly, there were concerns about the implementation of the Master Plan. Concerns that there was too much being proposed (with links back to the cost), that there were no priorities noted (everything is not of equal importance), and there without stated priorities, it was possible that nothing would get done.

Beyond those broad responses, which made up about 60% of the comments, the principal specific comments on each section can be very briefly summarized as follows:

- Environmental Integrity
  - More collaboration is needed, both between Saanich departments and between municipalities.
  - Dog management issues – generally support for the role of dogs in keeping people healthy.
  - More sidewalks and trails.

- Social Well-Being
  - Strong support for taking action on local food issues as proposed in the Master Plan.
  - Concern that support for sport at the municipal level should be for broader participation not for sport excellence.
  - Support for, but also concern about, children's programming, especially about the role schools are playing or not playing.
  - Support for recreation services for seniors, and an affordability concern for low income seniors.
  - Strong support for increasing the linkage between recreation and the health system, but concern that recreation should not be paying for services which are really about preventive health and health promotion.
  - Support for programs such as LIFE and support for low income families.
- Economic Vibrancy
  - The general concern was that none of these objectives were really the function of the Parks and Recreation Department, although many people supported the initiatives proposed for early childhood.
  - There was less support for supporting sport events, and concern about the impacts both sport events and eco-tourism would have on the park and recreation systems.
- Taking Action and Tracking Progress
  - Support for the idea of finding revenue sources apart from taxation, but one or two concerns about the role that this might engender for the private sector.
  - A number of people stressed the importance of volunteers in parks as a way of increasing capacity.
  - Strong support for the idea of strengthening the regional connections and the centrality of Saanich within the region, but many comments about Uptown, none of them very positive or polite.

However once again it must be stressed that the overwhelming theme coming back from this survey was supportive of the proposed KSOs and recommended initiatives.

The overall support indicated that only minor adjustments needed to be made to the KSOs as the process moved from draft to final report, with the comments of this survey and the consultations prior to it (Saanich Committees and Open Houses) directing that fine tuning.