

NICOMEKL RIVERFRONT PARK

PHASE 1 DESIGN HADDEN MILL & OXBOW ZONES

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT Summary Report

August 2023



Surrey Parks



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

From June 14 to July 14, 2023, Surrey Parks hosted the final phase of engagement to receive feedback from the public on the draft concept plan for Nicomekl Riverfront Park.

We interacted with over 3,000 people through a public open house and online survey. Participants provided responses and ideas that will inform park concept design revisions, detailed design and delivery.

Residents were notified about the public engagement through multiple print and digital means, including newspaper , transit shelter ads, postcard mailouts, posters, lawn signs, social media, email, and a media release.

Separate to the public engagement process, ongoing conversations with the Semiahmoo, Kwantlen and Katzie First Nations to discuss the park and its concept design are continuing.

This report is what we heard and learned from the public during engagement for the design development of Phase 1 of Nicomekl Riverfront Park.



In summary, the results from this round of public engagement largely indicate enthusiasm and support for the concept design.

A majority of surveyed individuals expressed support for the project principles and draft concept plan.

WHO WE REACHED

3,000+ survey responses
received and reviewed



11,200 visitors
to the project webpage
surrey.ca/nicomeklpark



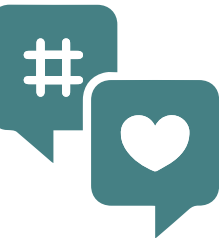
200+ people
connected with at the
Public Open House



900+ subscribers
to Nicomekl Riverfront Park
Project updates

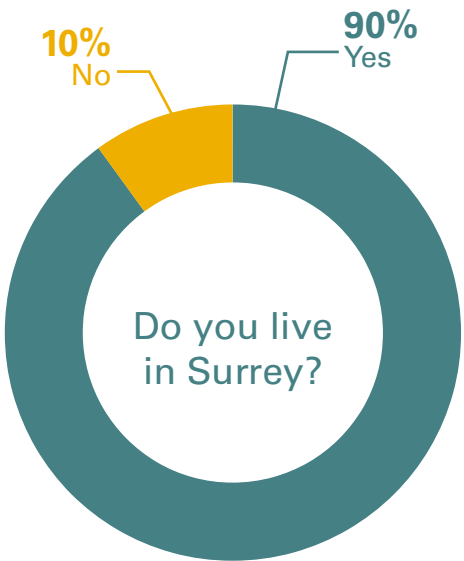


7,400+ interactions
on social media (including clicks,
reactions, comments and shares)



The online public survey received 3,018 responses between June 14th and July 14th, 2023.

The following infographics describe who we heard from (in response to questions asked in the survey).

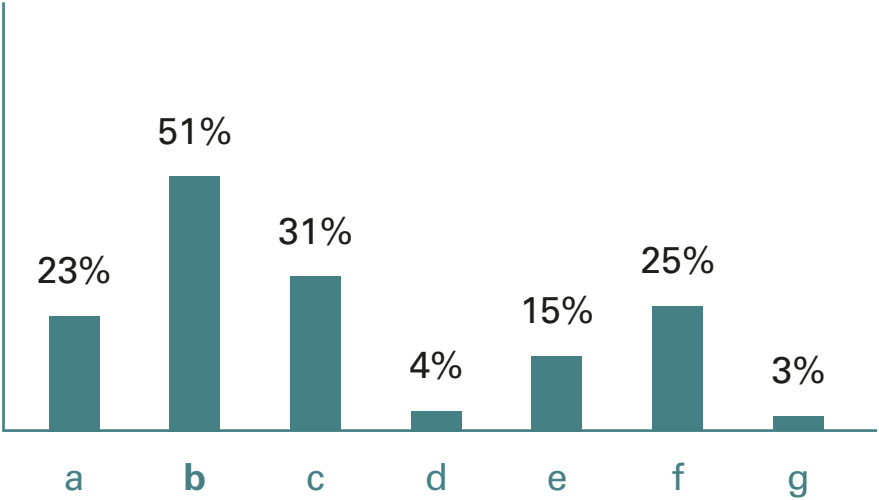


We mainly heard from people who live in Surrey, particularly in the South Surrey community.

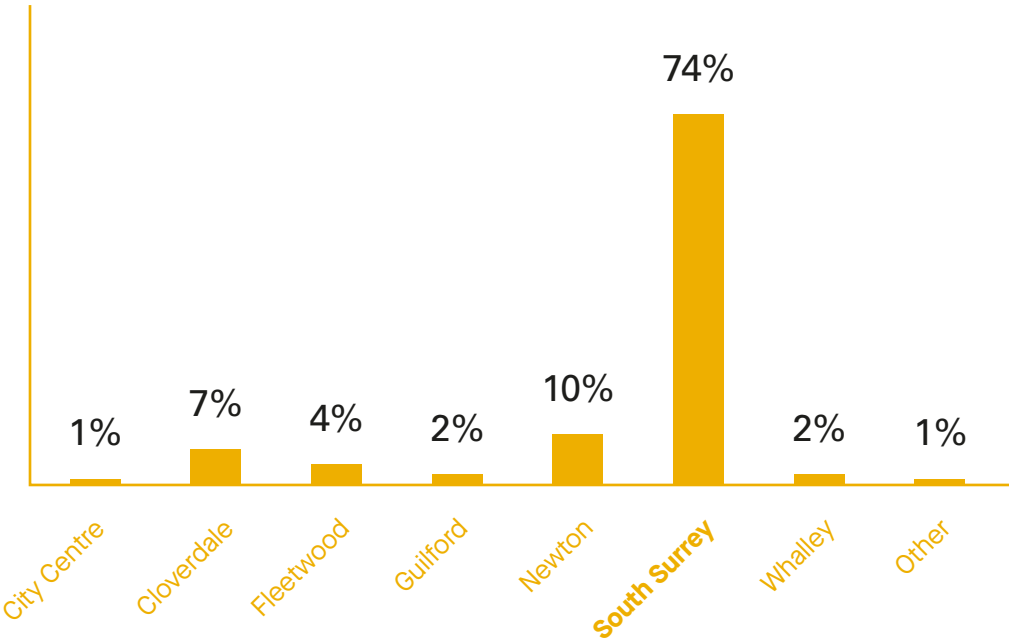
Respondents who said they do not live in Surrey reported living in White Rock (47%), Vancouver (16%), Langley (14%) and Delta (15%).

What is your interest in the Nicomekl Riverfront Park?

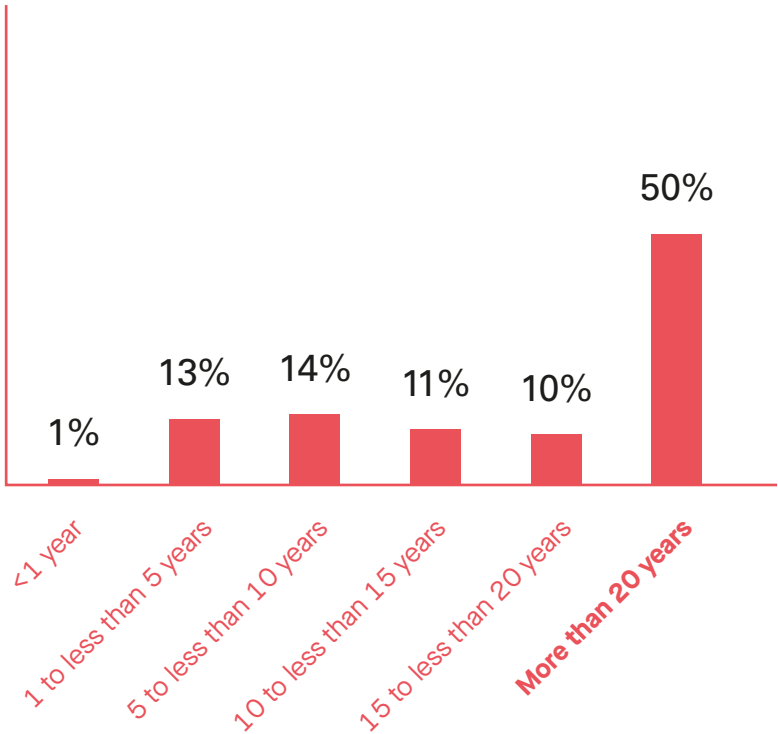
- a. I live within a few blocks of the park
- b. I live in South Surrey (including White Rock)**
- c. I visit the area
- d. I work in the area
- e. I have friends and family in the area
- f. General interest
- g. Other

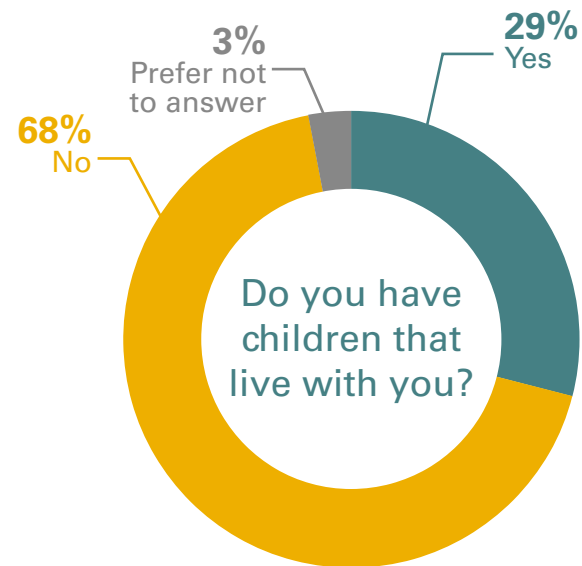
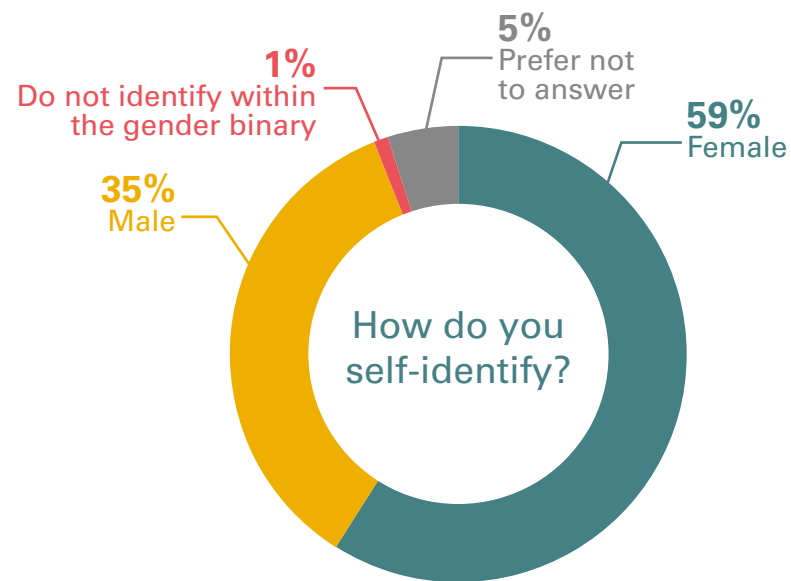
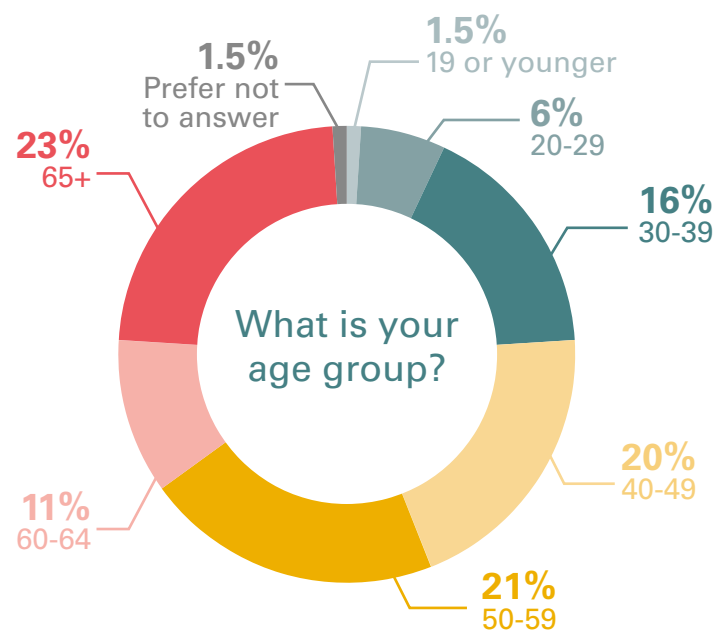


In which Surrey community do you live?

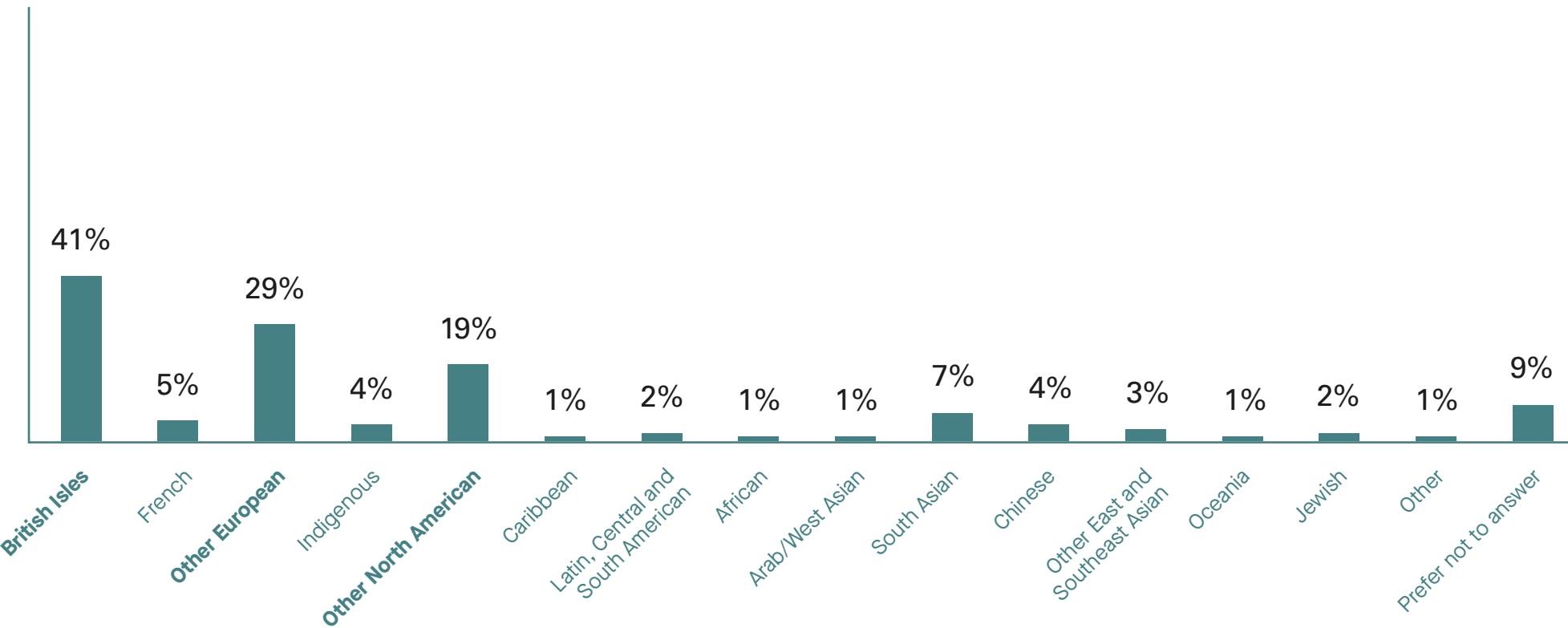


How long have you lived in Surrey?

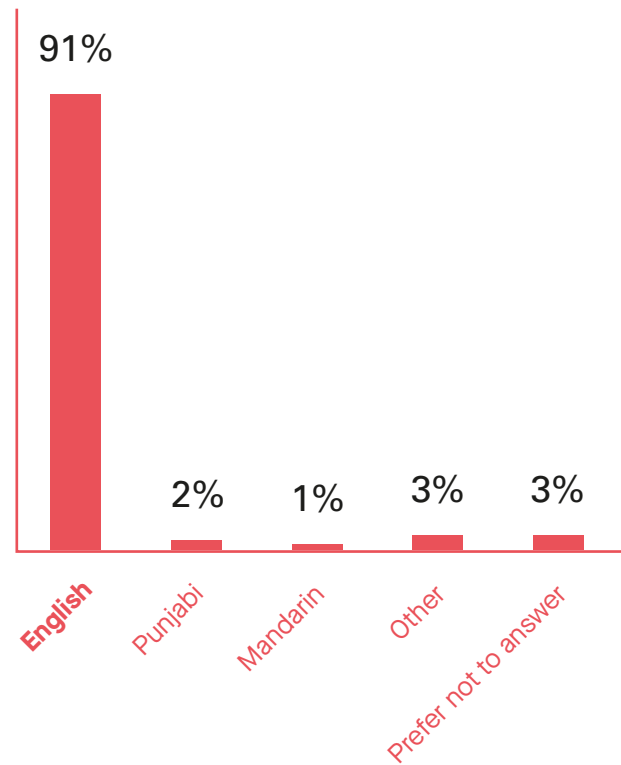




Which ethnic or cultural group do you most closely associate yourself with? (Select all that apply)



What language do you speak most often at home?



WHAT WE HEARD

PLANNING PRINCIPLES

Since 2021, we have focused on the Hadden Mill and Oxbow zones, inventorying and analyzing the park and its elements (hydrology, topography, trees, species).

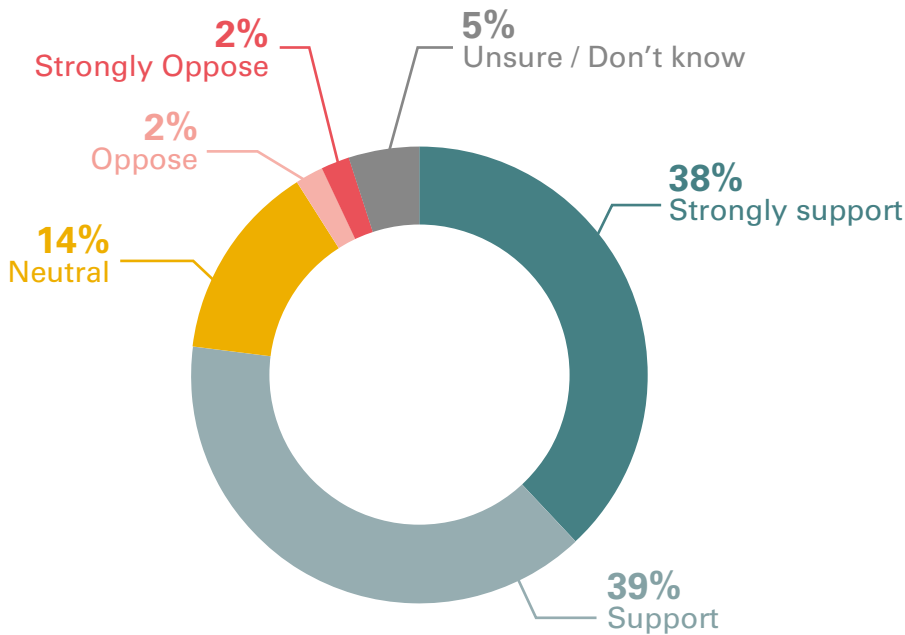
With a keen understanding of the land and its systems and inhabitants (plants, trees, wildlife, water), we undertook design discussions and revised the original planning principles based on the new information and knowledge.

Revised Planning Principles

- Centering Semiahmoo, Kwantlen, and Katzie values, ways of doing and knowing
- Reconnecting with land and water
- Celebrating the river
- Learning and cultural exchange
- Sustaining all forms of life
- Adapting to a changing climate

Do you support or oppose the revised planning principles?

77% of respondents strongly support or support the revised planning principles.



What do you like about the revised planning principles?

"I like that the revised planning principles take into account all forms of life."

"I am pleased that adaptation to a changing climate has been included in the planning process so that the park has longevity."

"I like that they focus on the people learning more about the land and its history..."

"Including Indigenous values."

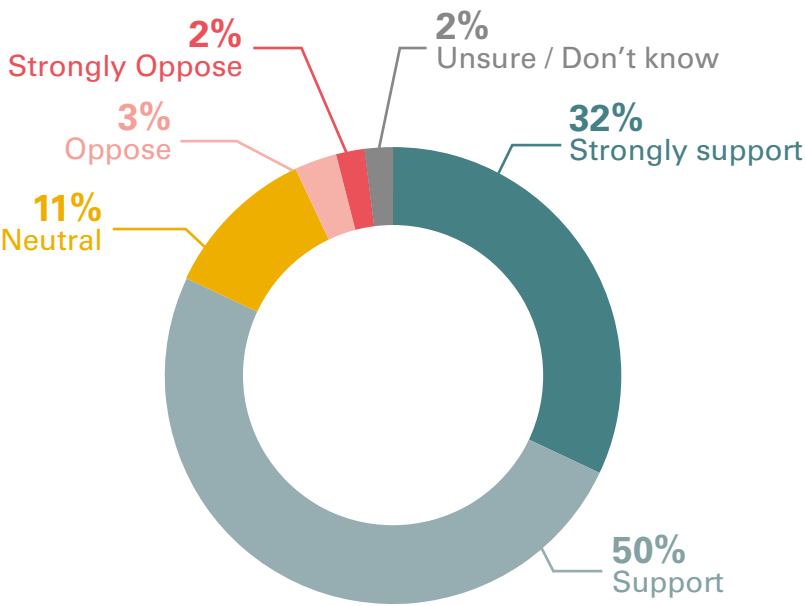
"Promotes respect for the land and river. Creates a space for families to walk and enjoy together."

"Consulting First Nations, adapting to climate change and giving people access to our waterways."

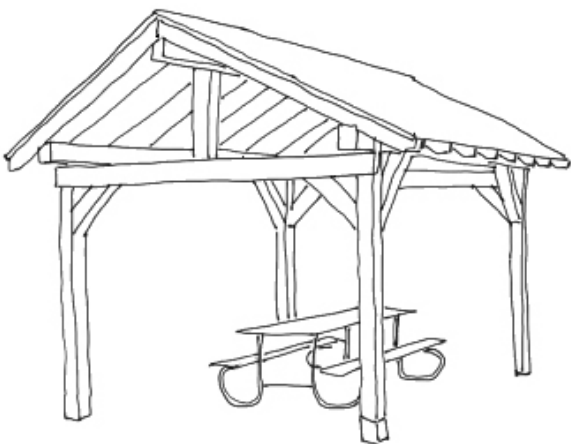
WHAT WE HEARD

PARK SPACES

Do you support or oppose the proposed park spaces and where they are located?



82% of respondents strongly support or support the proposed park spaces and their location.



What do you like about the park spaces and where they are located?

The key aspects that respondents liked were:

- **Preservation of nature** with the “light touch” approach to park development
- **Variety activities** for different interests and age groups
- **Accessibility** of spaces to individuals of all abilities
- **River access** including kayak and canoe launches
- **Integration with the natural environment**
- **Community gathering spaces** including picnic areas
- **Family and all-age friendly** spaces
- **Spaces for rest and tranquillity**
- **Inclusion of Indigenous** perspectives and cultural references

“I like the kayak/canoe stopovers because I see many on the water in the summer and I am sure they would enjoy this.”

“There is a variety of spaces, so you can choose where to sit and relax or play or be active.”

“I like the low impact touch, the focus on trails, kayak/canoe, and both pedestrian/cycle friendly access as well as limited parking for cars.”

What can be improved about the park spaces and where they are located?

The main themes mentioned by respondents were:

- **Preservation of natural spaces** and limiting development in natural areas
- **Location of amenities**, such as picnic areas, closer to parking spaces
- **Accessibility** including more parking spaces, wheelchair-friendly paths and safer crossings on busy roads
- **Concerns about noise** associated with social gathering spaces, like the amphitheatre
- **Play areas for children:** providing more, while ensuring they do not cause disturbance
- **Infrastructure design** of Oxbow social space and amphitheatre being too obtrusive
- **Environmental concerns** including the risk of flooding in some areas, the loss of mature trees and the impact of construction on sensitive ecosystems
- **Inclusion of dog-friendly** spaces

“Excited for the new amenities but very concerned about the lack of parking.”

“More picnic and free-play areas, especially for children and families.”

“There should be less structures and more natural area.”

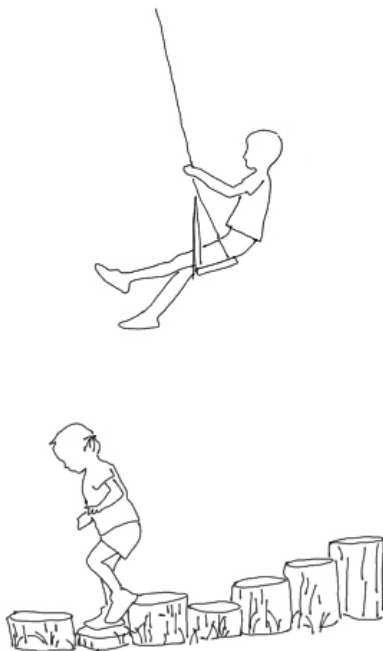
“Please consider winter space.”

What would you like to see in the play area?



The main elements that respondents would like in the play area are:

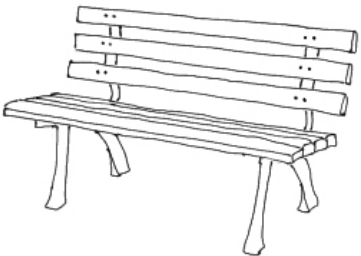
- **Nature-based** play with **natural materials**
- **Accessibility** and **inclusion** for all ages and abilities
- **Swings, climbing structures** and **slides**
- **Water** play features
- **Seating** for parents to supervise children
- **Amenities** including washrooms, water fountains, bike racks, garbage and recycling bins, and shaded areas
- **Educational** and **interactive** play elements
- Play areas for a **range of ages** including toddlers and teens
- **Safe, durable** and **low-maintenance** play equipment



Do you have any recommendations for the gathering areas, social spaces and lookouts?

The main recommendations we heard as important were:

- **Wheelchair accessibility** in all areas
- **Adequate rest and seating** in both sun and shade
- **Washrooms and hydration** near gathering spaces
- **Weather protection** from sun and rain
- **Natural look** and minimal environmental disruption
- **Dog-friendly spaces** including an off-leash area
- **Garbage disposal and recycling**
- **Parking availability** including accessible spaces
- **Picnic areas** for communal meals and gathering
- **Educational signage** about nature, wildlife, history and Indigenous culture



"Make sure that everyone
can use the spaces."

“Lots of picnic tables for family and friends to gather for special occasions and benches so people can go and sit quietly and read or just take in the scenery.”

“...I think the gathering areas/social spaces should generally be compact and well-incorporated into nature... It is crucial to preserve the riverfront ecosystems with low-impact trails and viewpoints...”

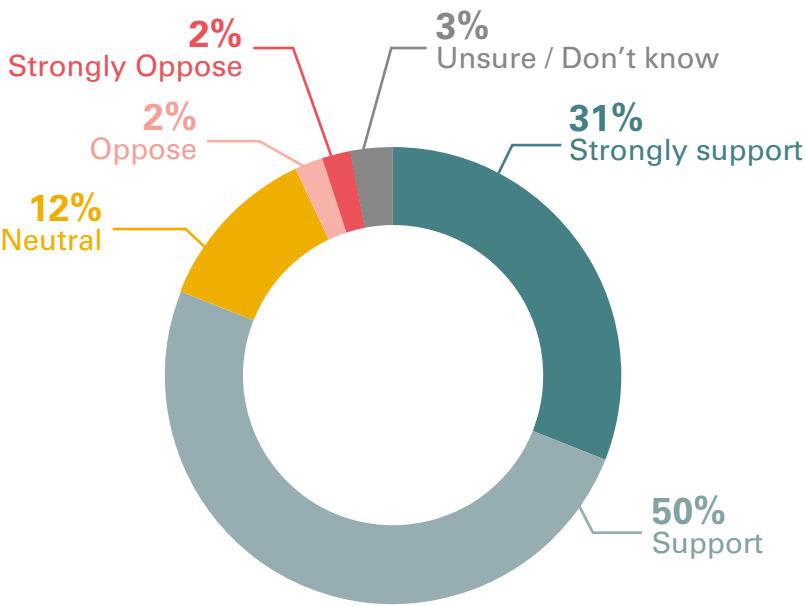
“..some signs with history/
stories about the land and
indigenous communities who
took care of the land.”

"Given the amount of rain we have, sheltered areas would be helpful."

WHAT WE HEARD

TRAILS AND ENTRANCES

Do you support or oppose the trails and entrances and where they are located?



81% of respondents strongly support or support the proposed trails and entrances and their locations.



What do you like about the trails and entrances and where they are located?

The key aspects that respondents liked were:

- **Accessibility** of the trails and entrances for wheelchair users, pedestrians and cyclists
- **Multiple entrances** allowing for a variety of routes and reducing congestion
- **Integration with nature** and low impact design
- **Variety of trails** allowing for different experiences
- **Water access** including docks and launches
- **Boardwalks** in wetland areas to preserve natural features
- **Parking** located outside of sensitive habitats
- **Ease of access** by foot, car or public transit and connections to existing trail networks

"I like that there is a lot of variety and accessibility, as well as the ability to have longer or shorter walks."

"I really like the elevated boardwalks, they improve accessibility and minimize human/dog damage to the environment."

"I like the variety and potential to enter and exit at different locations."

What can be improved about the trails and entrances and where they are located?

Some of the main concerns of respondents were:

- **Parking** location and availability on south side of park
- **Accessibility for all users** including those with disabilities, strollers and seniors
- **Protection of nature and wildlife** during trail construction and use
- **Bike-friendly infrastructure**
- **Noise and pollution** from roads and highways
- **Trail design and location** such as making trails more direct, wider, scenic and integrated with nature
- **Additional amenities** including drop-off spaces, resting spots and garbage bins along trails

"Would recommend more wheelchair/stroller access for those with disabilities or with young children."

"I have some concerns about the size of the parking and demand for the park; it would be good to have signage early if the parking lot is full"

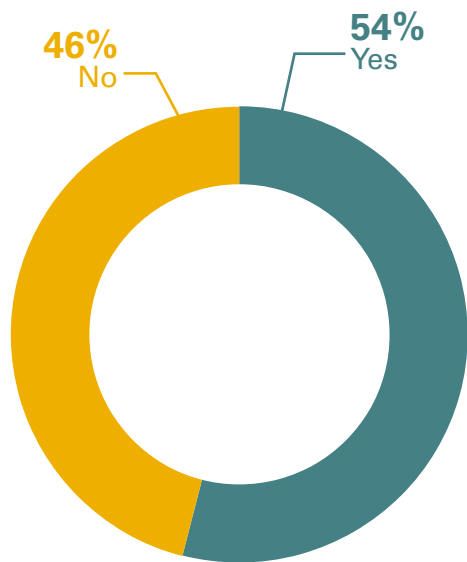
"Do not want easy access to this part of the world. Leave it for our limited nature."

WHAT WE HEARD

TRAILS AND ENTRANCES

Do you canoe kayak or stand-up paddle board?

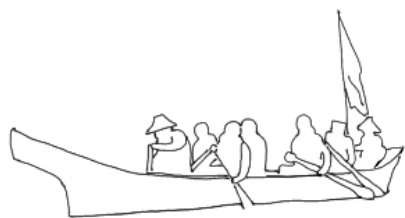
Just over half of respondents said they canoe, kayak or stand-up paddle board.



Do you have any recommendations for the canoe, kayak, stand-up paddleboard accessible docks and stop-overs and/or their locations?

The top recommendations we heard as important were:

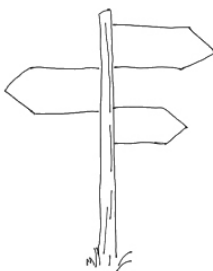
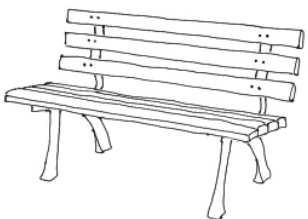
- **Parking** near docking and launch areas
- **Accessible design**, including low-profile docks that make it easy to get in and out of watercrafts, non-slip surfaces and handrails
- **Sufficient space** for launching and docking, including a grassy or sandy shoreline area for launching watercrafts
- **Amenities** including rinsing stations for watercrafts and tie-ups and racks to secure equipment
- **Rental opportunities** for canoes, kayaks and paddleboards
- **Respect for the environment**, including restrictions on motorized boats and regular maintenance



Do you have any recommendations to increase universal accessibility in the park?

The top recommendations we heard as important were:

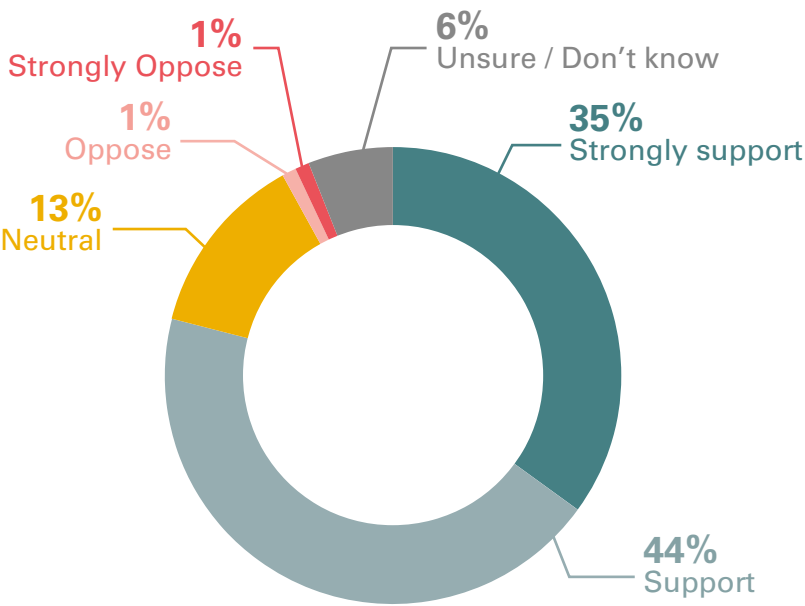
- **Wheelchair accessibility** along trails, boardwalks and in washrooms, including smooth surfaces and gradual slopes
- **Parking** that is close to key facilities, accessible and has enough spaces at peak times
- **Signage and wayfinding** that is clear, high-contrast, and possibly multi-lingual and tactile
- **Inclusive facilities** that are designed for people of all ages and abilities, including those who are blind, deaf or have mobility issues
- **Seating areas** for seniors and those with mobility challenges.
- **Connection** to public transit and cycling paths
- **Washroom** availability
- **Shade, water** and places to escape weather
- **Consultation** with accessibility experts and people with disabilities



WHAT WE HEARD

FLOODABLE SPACES

Do you support or oppose the floodable spaces and where they are located?



79% of respondents strongly support or support the floodable spaces and their locations.

What do you like about the floodable spaces and where they are located?

The key aspects that respondents liked about the floodable spaces were:

- **Respect for natural flooding processes**
- The potential for these spaces to **restore natural habitats, support wildlife and encourage biodiversity**
- **Climate change adaptation** and foresight in planning for rising water levels
- **Access and usability** during flood events thanks to features such as raised boardwalks
- **Educational value** of these spaces, helping people understand natural processes and increasing awareness of climate change and its impacts
- **Aesthetic and recreational value** of walking through different environments and observing changes in the landscape brought about by flooding
- **Sustainability and resilience** of this approach to managing water

“I like that nature will be allowed to take its course, but the area can still be enjoyed any season.”

“It helps sustain birds, fish, amphibians & all those who depend on the water to survive.”

What can be improved about the floodable spaces and where they are located?

The top concerns of respondents about floodable spaces were:

- **Safety concerns** including the need for guardrails on boardwalks for fall prevention
- **Impact on recreation** due to some areas becoming unusable during flooding
- **Ecological impact** including disturbing wildlife habitat
- **Impact on nearby residential areas** and concerns about property damage
- **Maintenance long-term planning** including the cost and feasibility of maintaining floodable spaces, managing silt and planning for future flood scenarios
- **Accessibility** of floodable areas, particularly for those with mobility issues
- **Mosquitoes, invasive species** and **pollutants** in the waterways

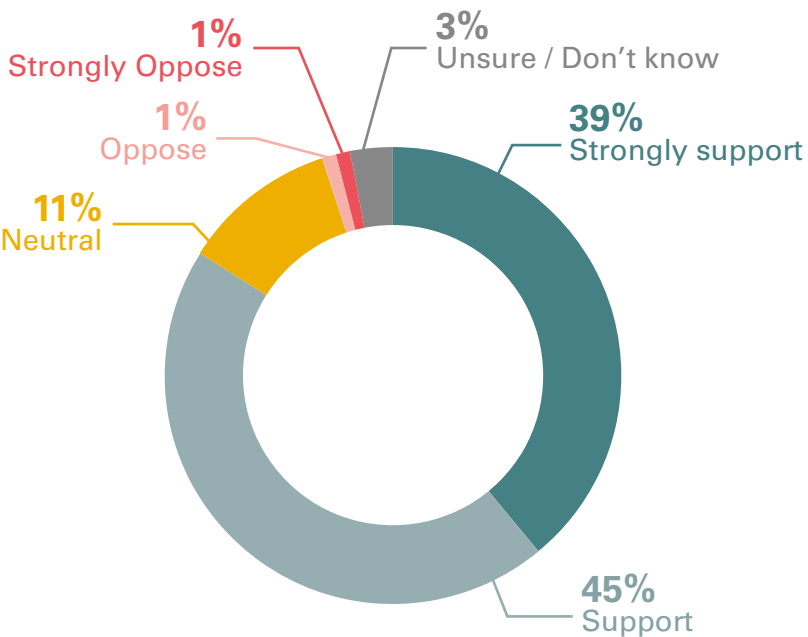
“Handrails to keep children or adults from falling into the flooded areas”

“It will limit use of the site if it is floodable. Wet grounds aren’t much fun to picnic on!”

WHAT WE HEARD

NATURE-BASED INFRASTRUCTURE

Do you support or oppose the nature-based infrastructure elements and where they are located?



84% of respondents strongly support or support the nature-based infrastructure elements and their locations.

What do you like about the the nature-based infrastructure elements and where they are located?

The key aspects that respondents liked about the nature-based infrastructure elements were:

- **Working with nature** rather than against it
- **Flood mitigation** and acknowledgement of flooding as a natural part of the ecosystem
- **Preservation and enhancement** of natural habitats
- **Permeable paving**
- **Natural aesthetics** of infrastructure elements and how they are designed to blend with surrounding area
- **Wildlife and biodiversity** support and habitat provision
- **Educational value** of innovative approaches to infrastructure and potential use of them as demonstration areas for new techniques

“Acknowledges flooding as a natural part of the ecosystem”

“Likely to be less intrusive and longer lasting, perhaps leading to better functionality and longevity.”

“Parks can be demonstration areas of new approaches and techniques”

Do you have any concerns about the nature-based infrastructure elements and where they are located?

The top concerns of respondents regarding the nature-based infrastructure elements were:

- **Preserving and minimizing impact** on natural ecosystem and wildlife habitats
- **Cost concerns** and whether funds could be better allocated
- **Maintenance and durability** of permeable paving and other proposed elements
- **Flooding concerns** as a result of dike notching, particularly near residential areas
- **Increased mosquitoes** with more standing water present in the area
- **Impacts of human access and construction** on wildlife and natural landscape

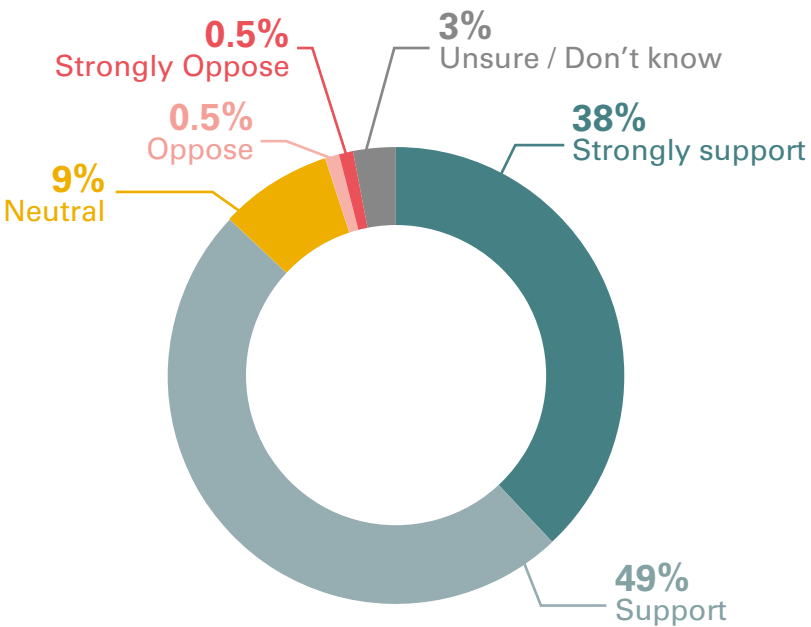
“These areas are very sensitive for wildlife and should be left as untouched as possible”

“The permeable [paving] parking lot is not a good idea... we can’t clean it to maintain it as permeable.”

WHAT WE HEARD

HABITAT TYPES

Do you support or oppose the habitat types and where they are located?



87% of respondents strongly support or support the habitat types and their locations.

What do you like about the habitat types and where they are located?

The key aspects that respondents liked about the habitat types were:

- **Preservation and conservation of existing natural habitats** and emphasis on maintaining what already exists rather than creating new environments
- **Variety and diversity of habitats** to provide different experiences and support a range of flora and fauna
- **Minimal human intervention** and allowing nature to take its course, including a preference for less mowed grass and natural, unmanicured spaces
- **Opportunities for education and awareness** about local ecosystems, biodiversity and conservation efforts
- **Habitat restoration and enhancement** and use of **native plants**
- **Location and placement** of habitats seen as appropriate and well thought out
- **Aesthetic appeal** of habitats

What can be improved about the habitat types and where they are located?

The top concerns of respondents regarding the habitat types were:

- **Preserving natural habitats** and minimizing unnecessary human interference
- Having enough **usable open spaces** for public activities
- **Retaining more trees** for shade and aesthetic purposes
- Ensuring **native plants** are used
- Managing **invasive species**, with suggestions for a long-term plan to manage them

“Love the natural, unmanicured and native habitat type choices.”

“I think it is great to preserve the natural habitat for all wildlife that live in the area.”

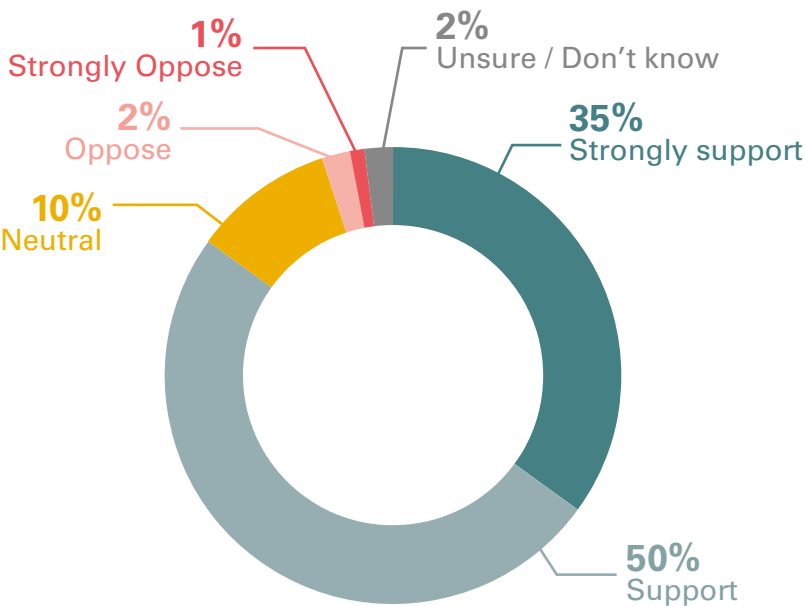
“I hope the Oxbow side will retain trees for shade”

“Leave nature alone! Don’t try to improve it.”

WHAT WE HEARD

PARK LOOK AND FEEL

Do you support or oppose the look and feel of the park?



What do you like about the look and feel of the park?

The top themes respondents reported liking about the look and feel of the park were:

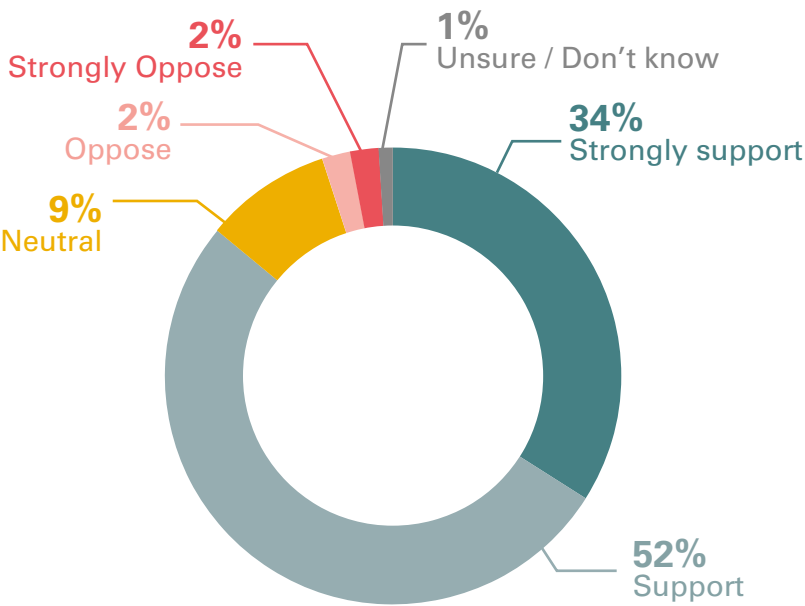
- **Natural look and feel** of the design
- **Preservation of existing habitats** and minimizing impact on nature
- **Variety of amenities** catering to a wide range of interests, ages and activities
- **Variety of walking trails** to explore different areas of the park
- **Beautiful, inviting and appealing** design
- **Open and spacious feel** of the design
- **Peaceful and serene** place to relax
- **Trees and vegetation**, especially mature trees
- **Educational opportunities** for learning about local ecosystem, habitats and wildlife
- **Respect for wildlife**, providing habitats and corridors and limiting disturbance

What can be improved about the look and feel of the park?

The top suggestions for improvement are areas of concern were:

- **Keep the area natural**, with minimal human intervention, infrastructure and grooming
- **Ensure accessibility and inclusivity** for all park users, including people with disabilities, seniors, and cyclists
- **Preserve natural areas**, especially trees
- **Fewer structures and less development**
- **Provide more amenities**, such as benches, washrooms and garbage bins
- **Minimize impact on wildlife** and their habitats
- **Get more input** from local residents and park users
- **Safety concerns**, especially in relation to the park's proximity to busy roads
- **Cost concerns** regarding how taxpayer money is used

Do you support or oppose the draft concept plan?



What do you like about the draft concept plan?

The key aspects that respondents liked were:

- **Respect for nature** with the preservation of existing habitats and minimal development
- **Inclusivity and accessibility** with features that cater to a wide range of interests, age groups and abilities
- **Recreational opportunities** such as walking paths, cycling trails, and areas for kayaking and canoeing
- **Park aesthetics** including the naturalistic design, and the beautiful, peaceful and inviting look of the park
- **Focus on sustainability** and climate change considerations
- **Thoughtful planning** that is well-thought-out, comprehensive and detailed
- **User-friendly amenities** such as boardwalks, picnic areas, social spaces and nature-play areas
- **Indigenous involvement** in the planning process and inclusion of Indigenous history and culture

What can be improved about the draft concept plan?

The top concerns of respondents were:

- **Parking availability** particularly on the south side of the river
- **Preservation of natural spaces** and potential harm to wildlife and local flora due to development
- **Accessibility and inclusivity** to all people, including seniors and those with disabilities, wheelchairs and strollers
- **Maintenance and costs** required to keep park operational
- **Need for additional facilities** including washrooms, benches, drinking fountains and garbage bins
- Having a **balanced representation of all cultures**
- **Noise and disturbance** for park elements such as amphitheatre and play area
- **Traffic congestion** and noise
- Public safety and security

WHAT'S NEXT?

With public feedback received, we will revise and finalize the concept plan, create construction drawings and get permits.

Construction is anticipated to begin in summer 2024 and the park is expected to open in 2025.

Stay connected to the project!

- **Visit** the project webpage: surrey.ca/nicomeklpark
- **Subscribe** for project updates (green button, right side of project page)
- **Email** us with any questions nicomeklpark@surrey.ca

