



Parks and Trails Master Plan

What We Heard

April 15, 2024



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank all the District of Central Saanich residents, WSÁNEĆ community members, school staff and students, local groups, community organizations and staff for taking the time to share your experiences and wisdom throughout the first phase of the Parks and Trails Master Plan.

Special thanks to the Saanich Peninsula Accessibility Advisory Committee, Peninsula Recreation Commission, Peninsula Streams, PEPÁKEN HÁUTW, Habitat Acquisition Trust, Girl Guides, CO-PAC, CRD DOGG Society, Central Saanich Equestrian and Horse Community, Elk Beaver Lake Equestrian Society, local sports organizations, community partners and others who participated in workshops.

Central Saanich and its parks, trail and beaches are located on the traditional territories of the WSÁNEĆ peoples. The District of Central Saanich is committed to celebrating and respecting the knowledge and practices of the Tsartlip and Tsawout First Nations, and working with the WSÁNEĆ peoples to protect our environment and ensure their perspectives, wisdom and wishes are reflected in the District's management of local parks, trails and beaches.



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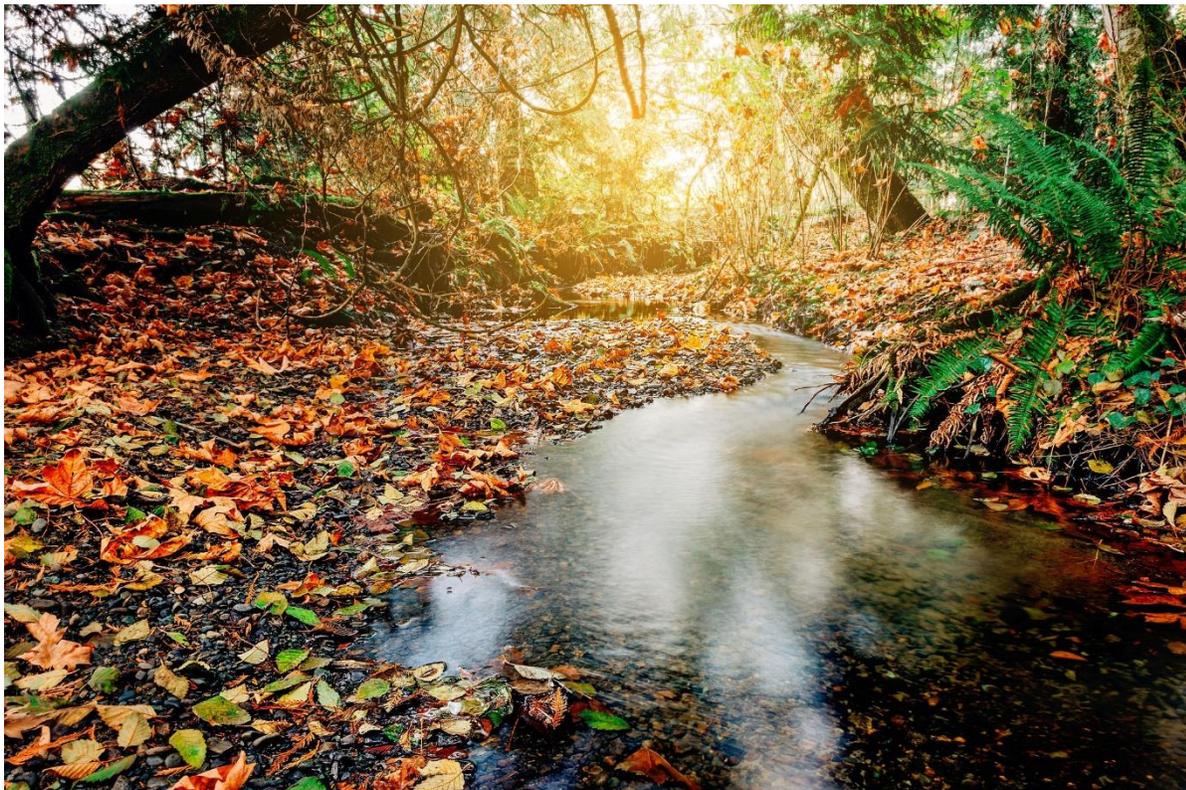
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Parks and Master Plan Overview

We love our parks, trails, and beach accesses in the District of Central Saanich (District). They are places where we can enjoy nature, exercise, relax, and have fun with our family and friends. But we also know that some of these facilities need attention and improvement to serve our community better, both now and in the future. That's why we are working on a new Parks and Trails Master Plan to update our vision and priorities for these valuable public spaces.

The new plan will involve listening to you, the residents, and visitors of the district, to find out your needs and wants from your parks and trails. We will also assess the current condition and use of our facilities and identify their natural and physical features. We will look at how our parks and trails connect with each other and with other important places in the district, such as schools, shops, and community centres. We will also consider how our parks and trails can support our goals for environmental protection, health and wellness, accessibility, and social inclusion.

The result will be a new Parks and Trails Master Plan to help guide our decisions and actions for the next 10 to 20 years. The plan will build on the work we have already done through the Official Community Plan review, the Active Transportation Plan, the Saanichton Village Design Plan, the Age-Friendly Community Plan, the Accessibility Plan, and others. The new Parks and Trails Master Plan will help us make our parks and trails more attractive, functional, and sustainable for everyone to enjoy.



Engagement Overview

Public engagement is a critical part of updating the Central Saanich Parks and Trails Master Plan to capture and reflect how you and your family use parks, trails and beaches in the District. In September 2023, we launched the first phase of engagement to gather feedback from impacted parties, residents, visitors, user groups, community organizations, and District departments. Two more phases will follow.

The purpose of this initial phase of engagement was to provide opportunities to gather input on the strengths, needs, and opportunities for the development of the new Parks and Trails Master Plan. The insights collected are part of the overall assessment and analysis of parks, trails, and beaches.

As part of the engagement activities, the District held community conversations with residents, community partners, schools and students, recreation users, environmental groups, First Nations, and District Staff.

Participants were asked:

- How often, when, and where do you use Central Saanich Parks, trails, and beaches?
- What are your favourite activities in Central Saanich parks, trails, and beaches?
- What improvements would you like for Central Saanich parks, trails, and beaches?
- What challenges do you have in using Central Saanich parks, trails, and beaches?
- What environmental priorities should be included in the Parks and Trails Master Plan?
- What should be the key priorities for the Parks and Trails Master Plan?



Round 1 Engagement Opportunities

Pop-up Events

- Peninsula Country Market, Oct 7, 2023 (70 participants)
- Saanichton Green Park, Oct 20, 2023 (3 participants)
- Panorama Recreation Centre, Oct 20, 2023 (10 participants)
- Rom Knott Park, Oct 26, 2023 (40 participants)
- Centennial Park, Nov 25, 2023 (25 participants)

Community Open House

- Multicultural Centre Nov 18, 2024 (60 participants)

Survey

- Public Survey, Oct 19, 2023 – Dec 15, 2023 (267 participants)

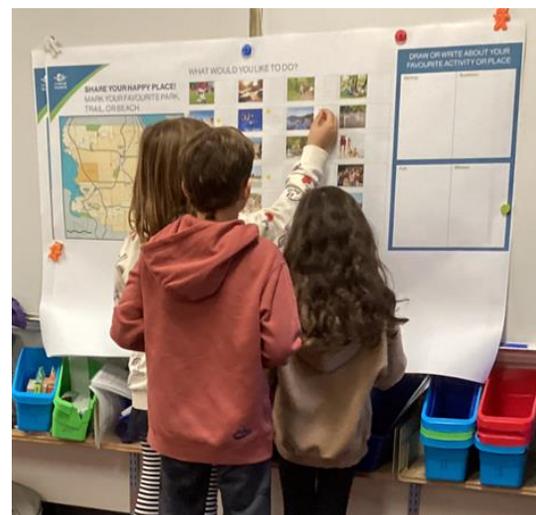
Workshops

- Environmental Group, Dec 5, 2023 (6 participants)
- Community Partners, Dec 10, 2023 (3 participants)
- Dog User Group, Dec 10, 2023 (3 participants)
- Equestrian User Group, Dec 11, 2023 (6 participants)
- Vulnerable User Group, February 1, 2026 (3 participants)
- Saanich Peninsula Accessibility Advisory Committee (SPAAC), January 25, 2023
- PEPAKƏŃ HÁUTW Foundation, W̱SÁNEĆ based restoration and education organization, Feb 2, 2024 (6 participants)
- Parks & Environment Committee, April 4, 2024

- Recreation User Group, March 27, 2024 (survey and open house)

School Workshops

- Grade 2, 3 & 5, Nov 24, 2023 (45 students)
- Grade 12, Dec 12, 2023 (22 students)



Staff Focus Groups

- Roads staff, Dec 7, 2023 (12 participants)
- Enforcement / Emergency staff, Nov 15, 2023 (3 participants)
- Parks staff, Nov 23, 2023 (9 participants)
- General staff, Nov 17, 2023 (30 participants)

Partner Meetings

- Local municipalities
- Panorama Recreation Commission
- Tsartlip First Nation – May 2024
- Tsawout First Nation – Phase 2
- School District 63 – Phase 2

Engagement at a Glance



626 PEOPLE PARTICIPATED BY PROVIDING FEEDBACK



352 people participated in-person activities



60 attended an open house



148 people attended pop up events



267 completed a survey



78 people participated in workshops



7 provided feedback through email



67 students participated in school presentations



LET'S TALK, CENTRAL SAANICH - ONLINE ENGAGEMENT



1,030 people visited the Online project webpage (total)



51 downloaded a document



245 connected via Centralsaanich.ca



132 connected via Facebook



101 connected via Google

What We Heard: User Groups and Partners

The project team met with many groups who use, care and support parks, trails and beaches in Central Saanich. Internal workshops were also held for Central Saanich Staff who support parks, trails and beaches to share their feedback; staff input complemented and expanded on community feedback.

The following summarizes insights shared by each of these groups.

Elementary School

We want to thank teachers and grade 2, 3 & 5 students from Keating Elementary School

Elementary school students enjoy a variety of outdoor activities, such as sports, bike riding and climbing. There was an overwhelming consensus from all classes that children would like to have more opportunities to explore nature, more natural areas to play and climbing areas and treehouses similar to Wild Play. In addition, some of the key themes were more outdoor pool and water activities, food trucks or places to buy food in parks, horse trails, picnic spots, water access for kayaking and paddleboarding. Their suggestions for improving the playgrounds included adding enclosed slides, taller monkey bars (for ages 10+), shared sports equipment and improved surfaces. The teachers at Keating would appreciate access to currently unused parkland with a creek in Copper Ridge, which they would like to use for outdoor education activities.



Secondary School

We want to thank the teachers and grade 12 students from Stelly's Secondary School

High School students shared they would like more beach and water access including sand areas for volleyball and hanging out, as well as boat ramps. They also care about restoration, volunteer opportunities and wildlife viewing.

Participants did not have as much interest in organized sports or skate park amenities, and preferred places to hang out with food trucks and basic facilities such as washrooms, water fountains and sheltered areas.

PEPAKEN HÁUTW Foundation First Nations

We want to thank the PEPÁKEN HÁUTW Foundation, a local Indigenous environmental group for sharing their knowledge as local leaders in invasive removal, restoration and education.

The group discussed the need for standardized practices and resources for disposing of invasive species, such as using a mobile incinerator. They also suggested restoring native plant systems, such as by spending less time on horticulture and more on native plants, which are more tolerant to drought and lower maintenance as well as be providing cultural and medicinal benefits.

Other feedback included partnering with W̱SÁNEĆ organizations to add educational signage to parks, pursuing SENĆOŦEN revitalization opportunities, and providing safe access to harvest areas for W̱SÁNEĆ people by clearly delineating areas with signage during harvest.

Additional suggestions included public education on the cultural, spiritual and medicinal importance of the plants, creating seed libraries and bird and bat boxes could promote environmental stewardship in parks. They also suggested working with local Indigenous groups to identify and restore areas of significance and seeking W̱SÁNEĆ people to be involved in and work on restoration.

Environmental Groups

We want to thank environmental partners including Peninsula Streams, HAT (Land Protection management) and local Girl Guide leader / invasives / restoration.

The Environmental group talked about how protecting the environment can help threatened ecosystems. They mentioned the value of open spaces, nature parks, and connectivity for recreation, conservation, and health.

They identified challenges and opportunities for improving the parks and trails system and gave suggestions for enhancing natural assets and amenities, and creating more park areas. They stressed the need to increase awareness and engagement with local communities including Tsartlip and Tsawout First Nations on the effect of users on parks, and conservation measures.

They underlined the significance of connectivity, the need to safeguard ecosystems, and resolving shared-use issues. Special areas of interest include strengthening resilience in parks and wetlands, the importance of flood control, and the support of regional planning.



Community Partners

Thank you to community partners including Parents Advisory Council, Disc Golf Society, and Lions Club

Community partners highlighted the need for planned improvements such as signage, safety, accessibility, and enhancements in the Active Transportation Plan. They also talked about how to deal with increased growth and densification by creating multi-use spaces and sports fields, community gardens, and providing outdoor exercise opportunities. They emphasized the need for more unstructured spaces for children to be creative, as well as shore access and parking improvements.

They highlighted activities such as disc golf as a green, low-cost, and inclusive sport anyone can play, regardless of their age or background; discussion about the popularity of the sport in the region and the busy course at Bayside Middle School. They suggested possible locations such as Adam Kerr Park, Centennial Park, and Saanich Fairgrounds to provide more unstructured sports activities for all ages.

Dog User Group

We want to thank the RD Dogg Society, CRD DOGGS and DRAFP for participating

The group emphasized the importance of keeping trail space for dogs while ensuring safety for all by providing fenced areas for training and clearly identifying environmentally sensitive areas. They stressed the need for effective communication and signage and responsible dog ownership with a preference for leashing to be a last resort. In addition to sharing some people with accessibility are unable to use a leash. They would like to see clear definitions and including “under control” bylaws for dogs and identified terminology has changed from off leash to leash optional.

They identified Centennial Park as a great place to walk dogs and noted the take a bag, leave a bag is not ideal and would prefer to see bag dispensers and more garbage cans. Additionally, they would like to see any policy changes be developed based on facts and sharing information to build understanding and awareness with dog and non-dog users. Key issues they raised include education for park and trail users, clearly marking environmentally sensitive areas and identification when people are entering a leash-optional area.

Equestrian User Groups

We want to thank equestrian users, the Central Saanich Equestrian and Horse Community Facebook owner, and the Elk Beaver Lake Equestrian Society

Equestrian user groups highlighted the need for better signage especially for non-equestrians to understand how to share the trail with horses. Trail etiquette is important to reduce conflicts between off-leash dogs and horses, and between bikes and horses. There is a need for wider multi-use paths, amenities such as washrooms, mounting blocks, and tie-up places, and for volunteers to help with education and input on signage.

They highlighted the need to include equestrian access and use in plans and communication material within the master plan and in other district planning activities. Equestrians are a large part of the

economy in Central Saanich, and safe connectivity is needed. Access to parks is challenging due to the lack of easements or bridal paths, and some roads are unsafe for horses.

Some ideas shared by the group include having wider riding trails throughout the community, improving the safety of the Elk Lake to Mount Newton connection, and organizing cross-over events between food production farms, wineries, and horse farms. There is also a need for more parking for horse trailers, and for municipal/community-supported riding rings.

Equestrian users have no central stakeholder body, so it is important to make sure they are not forgotten. Greenhawk Vancouver Island and Victoria Saddlery are the primary hubs for equestrians in the district, and a good place to share information. They also identified the need for a horse count/census.

Recreation User Group

We want to thank the many local groups that provided feedback about their experiences running programs in our parks.

Groups noted that overall they are pleased with the facilities and their maintenance as well as the booking system. Some would like to see additional washrooms, shaded areas and water dispensers installed at the Centennial tennis courts, more ball diamonds. Some accessibility improvements would be beneficial, such as wider, accessibly serviced access points to key amenities from parking lots and transit stops. For example, sidewalks and pathways from Wallace Drive onto Hovey Road towards the playground and picnic shelters at Centennial Park.

Vulnerable Populations

We want to thank Pacifica Housing for participating

Vulnerable people use parks and trails in Central Saanich for tenting, sheltering, and socializing. Parks with more tenting are typically close to amenities, food, and places to go for warmth. Larger parks are preferred for privacy and separation from other park users. Safety is also a concern, with some preferring to walk at night and sleep in the park during the day.

There is a preference for central locations, well-lit areas, and access to public washrooms and water, especially when it is cold. Regular contact with unhoused, referrals to outreach, and bylaw enforcement needs to come from a place of compassion. Conflict may occur and education for other park users and adjacent residents may help reduce incidents.

Other key issues to consider for vulnerable populations include bathroom and shower access, hot water availability, drainage in parks, and recognition of increase in the average age of people experiencing homelessness and related health issues related to mobility.

Accessibility User Group

We want to thank the participants from the Saanich Peninsula Accessibility Advisory Committee (SPAAC)

The group identified improving accessibility in parks in Central Saanich includes adopting standardized practices and resources for accessibility, such as gravel surfacing and compacting and the addition of picnic tables with cutouts for wheelchairs.

They also shared the importance of partnering with local organizations and following best practices to improve accessibility in parks and trails. Ideas such as maps, trail ratings, accessibility ratings, and the use of technology to provide information on parks or adding virtual tours to see the area before visiting.

They also identified the importance of the tree canopy for shade and regulating temperatures and accessing beaches and the water with beach mats. They emphasized the importance of considering the needs of all users, including those with mobility challenges, and the value of a coordinated approach to improving accessibility in parks and recreation.

Highlights from Central Saanich Staff

Central Saanich staff are committed to the community as staff and residents. They were asked to provide comments and insight based their experiences. The comments received from staff closely reflect what we also heard in the community.

The top priorities identified by staff include the removal of invasive species, maintaining the tree canopy, reducing surface fuels and following FireSmart best practices for maintenance, providing convenient and safe alternatives to travelling by car, improving GIS, protecting rare habitats such as Oak Haven/Gore, incorporating climate resilience into park design, and showing a balance between FireSmart principles and good environmental management. They also identified being a steward for FireSmart practices and risk reduction.

To improve parks, consider adding trail signs in Centennial Park, coordinating volunteer activities for park clean-up, adding a small dog off-leash fenced area, increasing the number of off-leash dog-friendly areas, adding shade for playgrounds, increasing the number of washrooms, adding bike racks at parks, adding drinking water, and acquiring more parkland south of Island View on the coast.

Trails improvements identified include signage, access, parking, connections, mapping, expansion, maintenance, lighting, and natural covering. There is also a need for improved connectivity, relations with First Nations to connect trails and parks, and consideration for multi-use access.

Beach areas and access improvements include adding boat launches, particularly on the east side of the district and in the peninsula, improving GIS, increasing public parking for kayak launches, and improving the accessibility of beach accesses. Other areas mentioned include improving path connectivity, adding programs to learn about the environment, improving Newman Farm and Newman Park Beach, adding picnic benches, and improving Transfer Beach Park.

Other key areas to focus on in their Parks and Trails Master Plan, including managing conflicts, creating trails, addressing parking violations, improving GIS, adding boat launches, promoting parks, using SENĆOŦEN names and creating partnerships with First Nations, setting aside funds for park acquisition, maintenance, and improvement, making beach accesses more accessible, resolving trail conflicts, making cycling more accessible, taking Fire Smart actions, controlling off-leash dogs, providing space for a First Nations Cultural Centre, updating safety classifications, creating a consistent plan for transportation and infrastructure, and organizing events in the parks.

Parks & Environment Committee

The District's Parks and Environment Committee is comprised of appointed Councillors and members of the public involved in local environmental groups.

The Committee feedback included the topic of land acquisition, such as encouraging property donations, partnering with Tsartlip and Tsawout First Nation, and ensuring there is access to Cooperridge Park and underscoring the importance of access to parkland for Keating Elementary, which is across the road from Cooperridge (echoed by Keating Elementary staff). Also, the need to apply a gender lens to future data to understand how different genders use parks, trail and beaches and whether there are different needs. As the plan develops gauging the community's appetite for future funding was also suggested. Committee members noted a need for more volunteerism in the parks, possibly a formal Friends of Central Saanich Parks group, and suggested a volunteer coordinator to mobilize the work. Diverting beautification to invasive removals, raised by other groups, was also echoed from the committee. The group discussed dogs in parks and the impact on environmental efforts and need for a fenced dog park, with Adam Kerr Park suggested.

Priorities and Values for the Parks & Trails Master Plan

Top Priorities

Participants in the survey, user groups and at events shared the top priority areas for the Parks and Trails Master Plan. The priorities were consistent across parks, trails and beaches, highlighting the need to ensure all areas are accessible and safe for all users by improving connectivity, signage and infrastructure while maintaining a natural feel of the rural Central Saanich area.



Accessibility for all users to access beaches, trails, and parks in all weather.

- Improve trail width, surfaces, and signage ratings for accessibility.
- Ensure beach / water access including mats and boat launches are cleared and maintained.
- Ensure paved areas for wheelchair and stroller access.
- Expand accessible washrooms, parking, and use of curb cut outs.



Connectivity between communities, neighbourhoods, and link to other networks.

- Provide better bike trails connecting Central Saanich such as Lochside.
- Connect trails in residential areas to and from rural areas and to schools.
- Ensure continuous connectivity of trail systems.



Dog Friendly Initiatives including responsible dog ownership.

- Provide off-leash dog areas to enjoy nature and trails with dogs.
- Ways for dogs to remain under control for the safety of people and sensitive natural areas, whether it be on-leash requirements, animal-free areas, or enforcement.



Environment Protection of the natural areas, wildlife, and natural ecosystems.

- Keep the parks as natural as possible and maintain green spaces.
- Remove invasive species and plant of native species.
- Maintain and expand forest canopy.



Infrastructure improvements including maintenance and expanding facilities.

- Expand availability of washrooms, parking, and boat launches.
- Update playgrounds with more natural feature (trees, boulders) and places to climb; also add zipline features
- Add desired youth amenities including pump tracks/bike parks and pool/splash parks.
- Ensure funding is available for maintenance and improvements.
- Expand designated trails and access to parks for horses including designated spaces for parking.



Safety for all users including signage, interaction, connectivity, and lighting.

- Address multi-user trail safety (dogs, pedestrians, bikes, horses) such as dog incidents, and e-bike usage.
- Provide safe connections for walkers and cyclists using bike lanes, trails, and sidewalks.
- Improve lighting at parks, commuter trails, and crosswalks for evening/winter use.



Trail marking & signage to identify activities, wayfinding signage, and education.

- Provide educational signage about flora, fauna, and Indigenous significance including SENLOTEN names.
- Add education and wayfinding through signage, maps, GIS, and information on trails.
- Take a regional partnership approach to maps, guides, icons on trails.



Environmental Priorities

Participants in the survey, user groups and at events shared their environmental priorities highlighting the importance of preservation and restoration of habitat, species, and plants. Environmental groups highlighted the value of connecting parks and trails, honouring the natural and cultural values of the land, and offering multi-use and accessible spaces for people and wildlife. They complimented the District for its stewardship of some parks, such as Centennial and Oak Haven. They identified issues and possibilities for the parks and trails system, such as dog management, invasive species, climate action, ecosystem services, watershed management, stormwater management, tree canopy protection, and rare and sensitive species conservation.

Protecting native species: including the preservation of and restoration of natural habitat, protection of native species and plants.

- Trail mulching for root protection of trees in trails and parks.
- Protect native plants, trees, and plants with fencing from humans and dogs.
- Conserve and restore tree canopies in parks and trails.
- Preserve Garry Oak meadows and plant native species.

Protect sensitive ecosystems including wildlife, shorelines and stream corridors, parks, trails, and meadows.

- Protect stream corridors within parks and shorelines from invasive gardens.
- Provide identification and educational signage and signage for pathways.
- Provide a protected areas for Brant Geese, Sandpipers, and other shorebirds at Island View.
- Improve facilities adding garbage bins, fencing to protect sensitive, areas and promote responsible dog ownership with on leash requirements in sensitive areas.

Invasive species and management including the removal of Ivy, Cyclamen, Broom, Daphne.

- Create volunteer opportunities for management of invasive species.
- Create parks classifications (potential classifications could include conservation, nature, recreation, shoreline).
- Zoning to protect intertidal zone 300 m from high water mark into water.

Incorporate climate resilience into design through zoning, protection, and promotion of active transportation.

- Provide zoning for conservation areas including a plan to buy back natural park areas including wetlands and riparian areas.
- Irrigation for new plantings and plant choice to replace species affected by climate change.
- Promote active transportation in new developments.

Incorporate green space into developments while maintaining agricultural areas.

- Designing new developments to capture stormwater management and green space as part of the design (e.g., as part of the Butler Pit redevelopment).

Most Valued about Parks, Trails and Beaches

When asked what the most valued aspects of Central Saanich’s parks, trails, and beaches area, survey results were similar to feedback gathered during events and through user groups highlighting the opportunity to get outside and exercise, connectivity within the community, ease of access and suitability for all ages. They also recognized the importance of protecting natural areas and wildlife corridors.



80% Opportunities to exercise



64% Trail connectivity within the community



60% Ease to access



59% Suitable for all ages



58% Environmental protection (natural areas)

Top five answers % of respondents (able to select all that apply)

What We Heard: Parks, Trails & Beaches

The following section summarizes the key feedback collected from Pop Up Events, the Open House and community survey for parks, trails and beach access including survey data outlining usage, activities, accessibility, highlights and areas to improve.

Parks in Central Saanich

The feedback gathered for Parks in Central Saanich during events and the survey was consistent with the insights from the user groups and partner workshops highlighting additional amenities, accessibility, signage, concern for the environment and climate change and challenges with infrastructure and planning.

The community shared options for adding **amenities** for different age groups and interests including natural parks and play areas that foster outdoor adventures and creativity. Other popular suggestions included zip lines and ninja courses, outdoor pools and spray parks, giant slides, pump tracks/bike parks, covered spaces, accessible playgrounds, and benches.

Accessibility for walkers and those using mobility devices in parks can be improved by creating smooth and wide pathways, ramps, and railings. Additional wayfinding signage, maps, and improvements to cell service was also identified to improve information sharing.



The community cares about addressing **invasive species** and **preserving green spaces**. They suggest supporting volunteer participation, reserving conservation zones, protecting natural wetlands and wildlife habitats, completing FireSmart assessments, and planning for climate resilience.

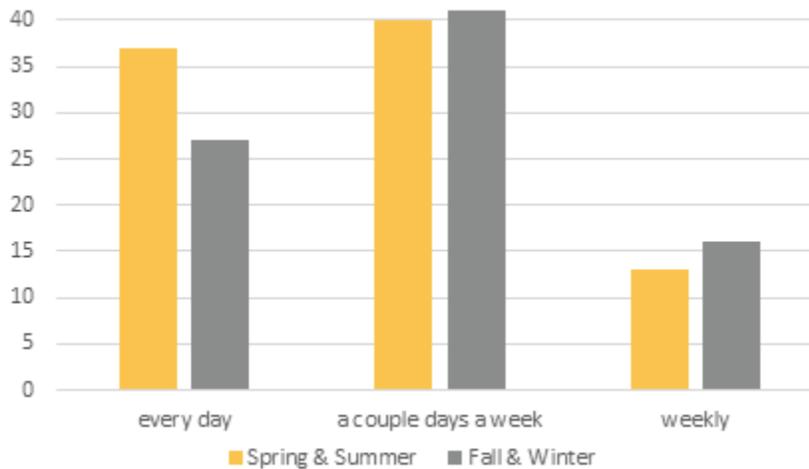
The community notes issues with the existing **infrastructure**, such as poor lighting, unsafe parking and traffic, aging roads, and tree root impacts.

They express the need for **responsible dog ownership** and planning ahead and **funding to accommodate the growing population**.

Survey Results - Parks

This following survey results provide an overview of park usage throughout the year, popular parks, uses, barriers and key ways to increase park usage.

The survey respondents are not a representative sample of the population, and in particular youth participated in in-person engagement activities. Their usage of playgrounds does drop during the colder and wetter weather.



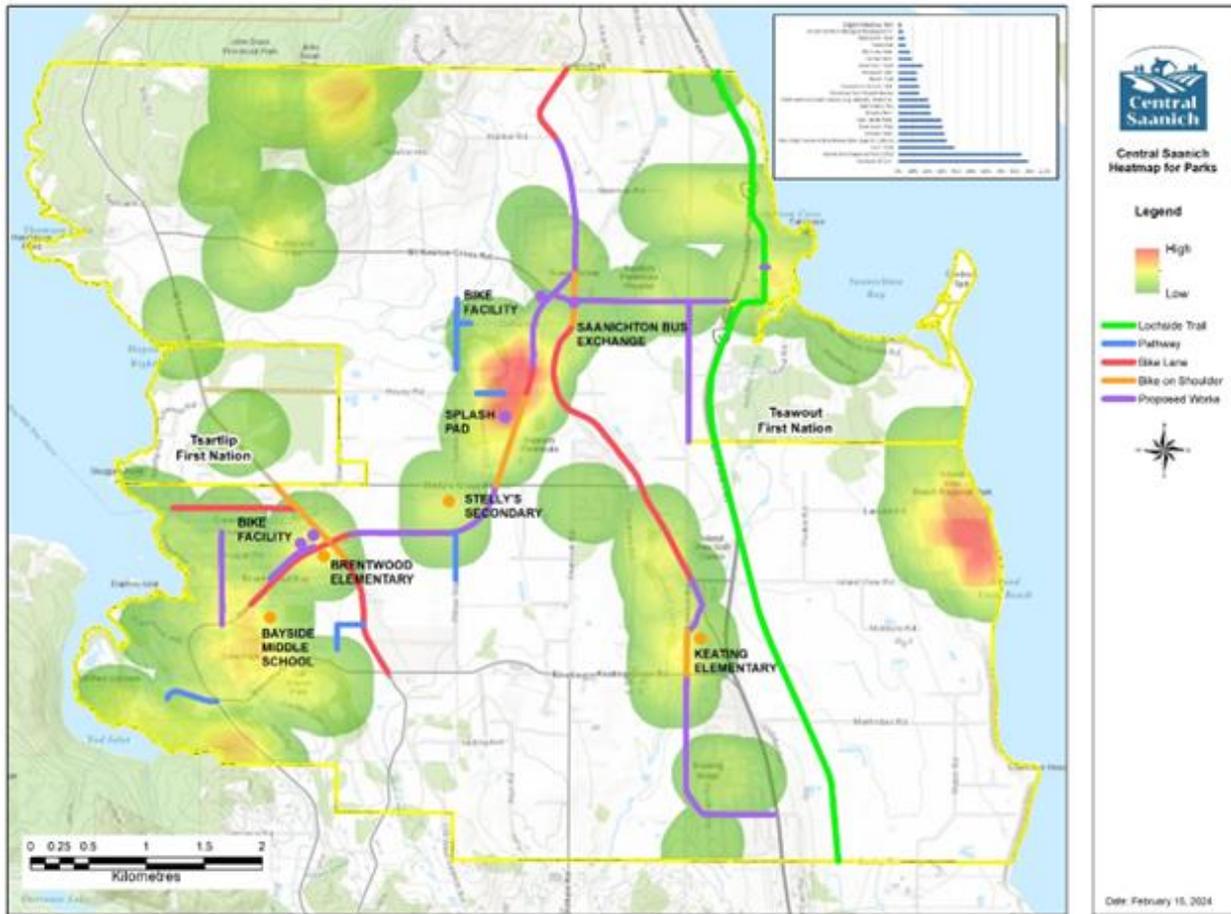
How often do you visit Parks in Central Saanich?

Of survey respondents, there is a small decline in their use of parks throughout the seasons. In the Spring and Summer, 37% of survey respondents visit Central Saanich parks every day, 40% visit a couple of days a week and 13% visit weekly. During the Fall and Winter, the number of survey respondents who visit Central Saanich parks every day decreases to 27%, 41% visit a couple of days a week and 16% visit weekly.



What parks do you use in Central Saanich?

Centennial Park and Island view Park are the most visited parks in Central Saanich with over 80% of survey respondents indicating they visit these parks. Oak Haven, Rom Knott, Verdier, HEL, HELIC, and Gore Parks are visited by over 30% of the respondents.

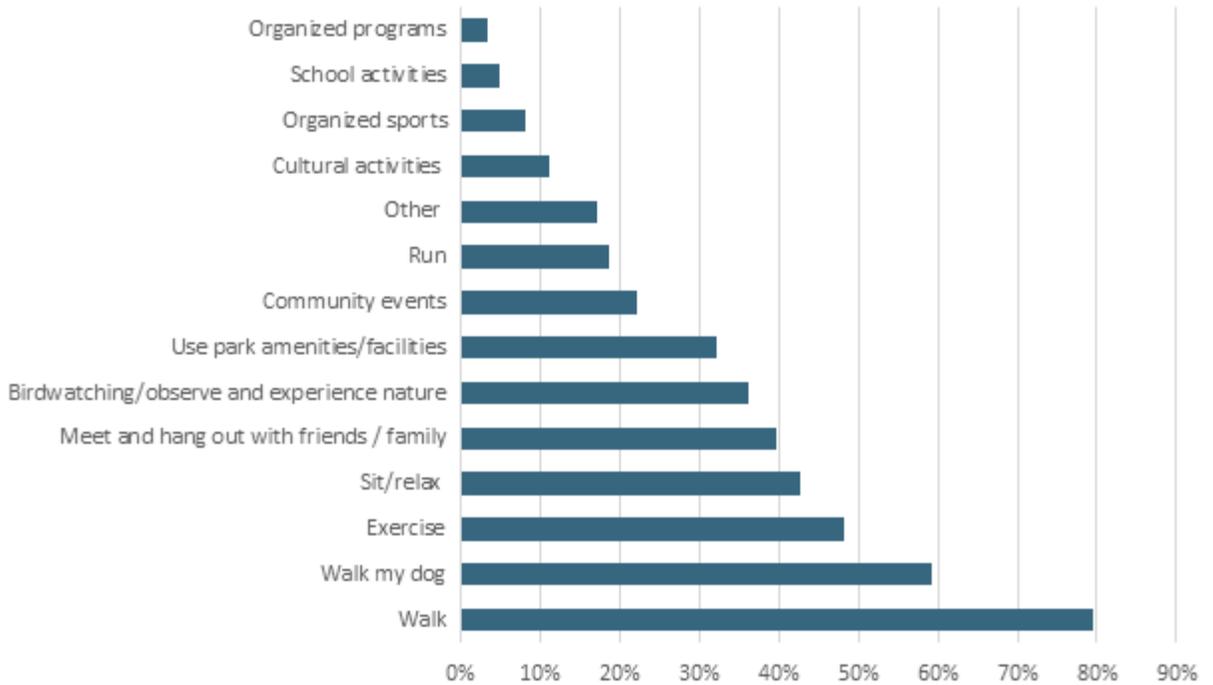


Map based on which parks survey respondents visit (1,345 responses - participants could select more than one option). Overlaid with 2024-2027 active transportation infrastructure plan.

What types of activities do you do in Central Saanich Parks?

The top five activities of survey respondents in local parks include

1. walking,
2. walking their dog,
3. exercising,
4. relaxing, and
5. hanging out with friends and families.



1131 Responses (participants could select more than one option)

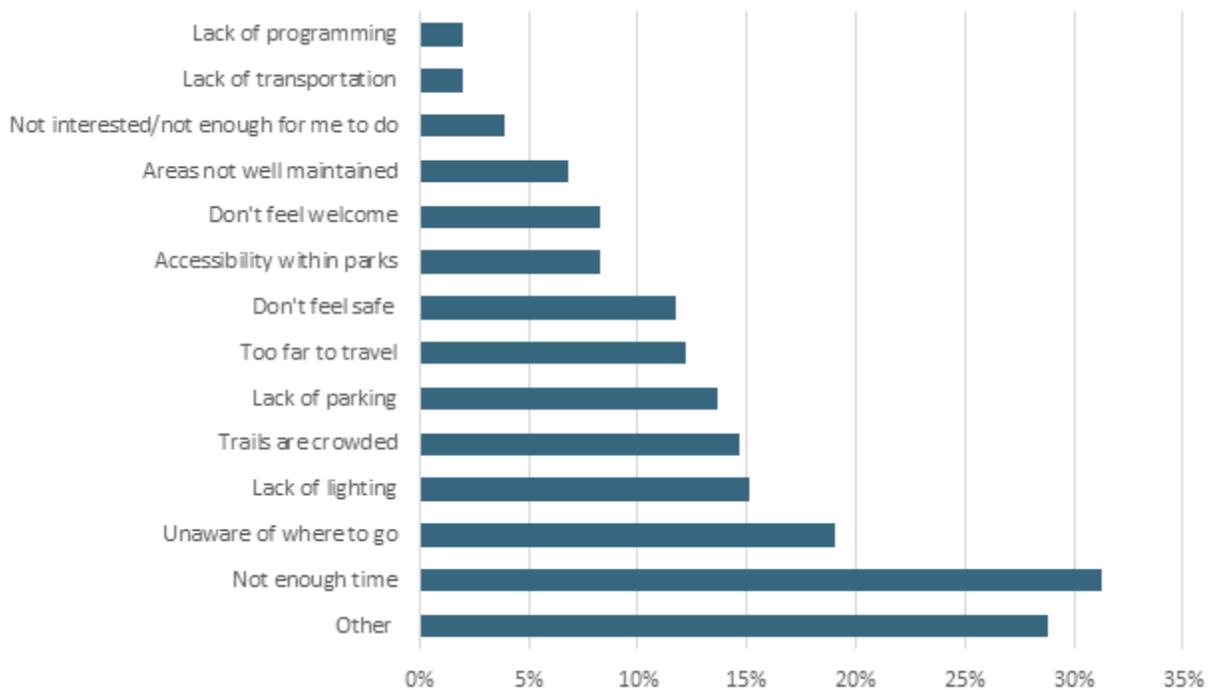
What barriers prevent you from using Central Saanich Parks

According to the survey results, a lack of time was the primary barrier to visiting parks. Barriers more within the District’s control include:

- **unsure of where to go** - highlighting the need for improved signage and wayfinding to better connect trails and neighbourhoods to parks
- **lack of lighting** - better lighting in parks and playgrounds during the fall and winter months was also identified as an area for improvement
- **trails are crowded**

Other barriers

- **Parking facilities** – highlighting need for sufficient safe parking, places that accommodate horse trailers, and options to increase bike access.
- **Accessibility** - emphasized the need for accessible washrooms and improving access to beaches.
- **Feeling unsafe** - 12% of survey respondents cited feeling unsafe as a barrier. Safety concerns were due to off-leash dogs and suggested wider pathways and dedicated off leash areas. Other safety issues mentioned included access to flush toilets, handwashing stations and safe bike routes to get to parks.



364 Responses (participants could select more than one option)

What would encourage you to use parks more often or year-round?

Respondents were asked to highlight items that would encourage them to use parks year-round. The responses highlighted five key areas:



Responsible Dog Ownership:

- Designated areas for leashed and off-leash dogs with fencing and adequate drainage, where dogs could play and exercise freely.
- Concerns about safety with unleashed or aggressive dogs and the need for more trails or areas where dogs could access nature and water, or where they could avoid conflicts with other users.



Connectivity:

- Connecting trails to parks with safe crossings and wider multi-use paths for walking, biking, and horse riding such as Tanner Ridge/Keating to Lochside Trail, and from Chatterton Park to Benvenuto.
- Safer pedestrian crossings and sidewalks on roads, such as Cultra Ave., Hovey Rd. and Wallace Drive.
- More walk-through paths that inter-connect various roads, trails, cul-de-sacs, and beach areas.



Accessibility:

- Easier access to the beach, especially at Newman Park and Oceanside RV resort.
- Safe bike route from Tanner Ridge/Keating to Lochside Trail.
- Improved horse access to some parks and trails, including parking for horse trailers and clear accessible paths and washrooms.



Safety:

- Improved signage, maps, and information boards.
- Lighting in dog parks, playgrounds, and lighting on paths during the fall and winter,
- Cooling areas and ensuring emergency access (identified by Emergency Management and Enforcement staff)



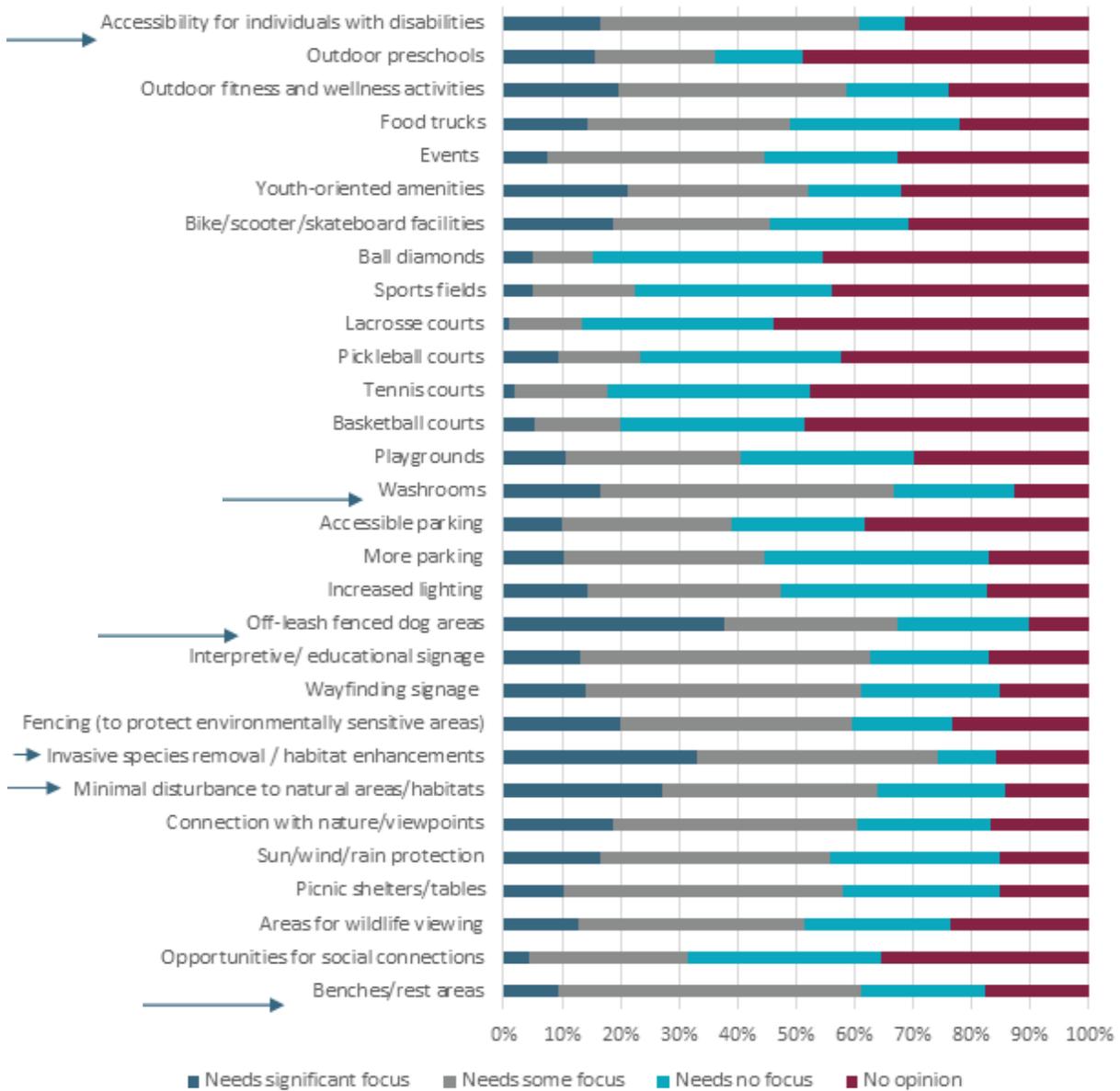
Amenities and Facilities:

- Covered areas including playgrounds, picnic areas and benches to shelter from the elements such as rain and sun.
- Washrooms, parking, parks for older kids such as bike track/park, skate park, and garbage bins for dog waste.

What park features or experiences need more focus and improvement?

The top park features and experiences identified by survey respondents as needing more focus and improvement included:

1. invasive species removal and habitat enhancements/minimal disturbance to natural areas and habitat,
2. washrooms,
3. off-leash fenced dog areas,
4. rest areas/benches, and
5. accessibility.



5,498 Responses (participants could select more than one option)

How well are parks accessible and serve the needs of the following groups?

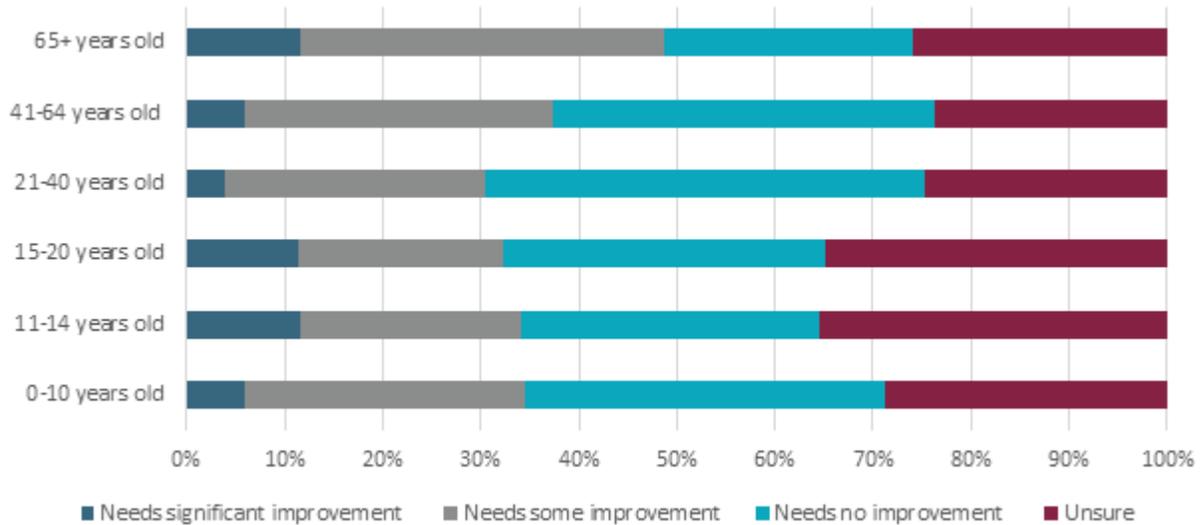
The areas identified by survey respondents as needing significant improvement were for people who are 11-20 years old and over 65 years old. Some improvement is required for parks for those 41 years and older and those under 10 years old.

11-20 year olds

Elementary students shared they would like to see opportunities for natural play areas such as climbing courses, tree houses, and activities similar to Wildplay.

65+

Conversations reveals washrooms, rest areas, covered areas and increased seating a would better serve older adults.



1180 Responses (participants could select more than one option)

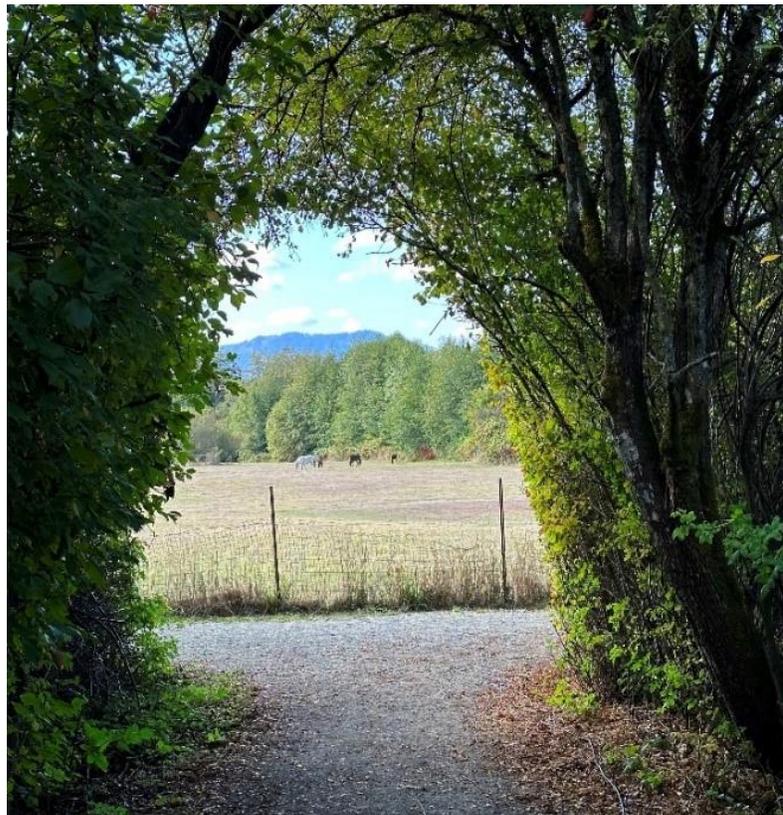
Trails in Central Saanich

The feedback gathered for Trails in Central Saanich during events and the survey was consistent with the insights from the user groups and partner workshops including valuable feedback on how to improve local trails and outdoor spaces, accessibility, connectivity safety, infrastructure, and environmental issues. Accessibility improvements included: parking, bathrooms, covered areas, creating accessible paths, clearly identifying and providing maps.

Connectivity was also identified including trail connections between parks and neighborhoods, as well as urban and rural areas. Multi-use paths and the creation of new trails, such as loop trails, and maintaining and connecting to active transportation networks. Increasing information on trails, including interpretive and wayfinding signage.

Safety is another important consideration, with requests for better signage, including adding horse trail icons on maps, and lighting on trails. Multi-use trail safety for all users, such as bicyclists, walkers, runners, horse riders, and dog walkers including horse-friendly trails with improved connections to active transportation corridors, including bike lanes, sidewalks, and crosswalks.

Infrastructure, amenities, and maintenance are also important, with requests for addressing aging infrastructure, improving trail maintenance with mulching, fire-smart assessments, and providing amenities like bike racks, benches, rest areas, washroom facilities, dog waste disposal, and designated parking areas.



Similar to parks and beaches, environmental protection of trails is also a concern, with requests for educational programs to teach residents about invasive species removal and protecting native species, conserving the tree canopy to protect tree roots, preserving green space and maintaining the natural features of trails, preserving biodiversity and wildlife habitats, and protecting the environment.

Community priorities for trails in Central Saanich:



Accessibility is a key factor, with requests for:

- Identifying and creating accessible paths (rough versus paved)
- Bathroom access, warm water, and more parks with tents/cover in central locations
- Accessible parking



Connectivity

- Trail connections between parks, neighbourhoods, urban and rural areas
- Multi-use paths and creating new trails such as loop trails
- Providing information on trails and wayfinding signage on trails
- Maintaining and connecting Active Transportation networks
- Providing safe and horse-friendly trails
- Improving connections to active transportation corridors including bike lanes, sidewalks, and crosswalks



Safety

- Better signage including adding horse trails icons on maps
- Lighting on trails
- Multi-use trail safety for all users, such as bicyclists, walkers, runners, horse riders, and dog walkers
- Education for other park users/adjacent residents to support unhoused populations using parks



Infrastructure, amenities, and maintenance including:

- Addressing aging infrastructure
- Improving trail maintenance with mulching and fire-smart assessments
- Amenities like bike racks, benches, rest areas, washroom facilities, dog waste disposal and designated parking areas



Environmental protection

- Concerns about invasive species and requests for educational programs to teach residents about invasive species removal and protecting native species,
- Conserving the tree canopy to protect tree roots
- Preserving green space and maintaining the natural features of trails, preserving biodiversity and wildlife habitats, and protecting the environment
- Adding interpretive signage on nature trails for education



Responsible Dog ownership

- Off-leash dogs and a call for responsible dog ownership and education on off-leash etiquette

Survey Results - Trails

The survey results show trail usage is similar to park usage, with more frequent use in the summer and spring and less in the fall and winter.

The most **popular trails** are Island View and Centennial, and people use the trails for activities such as walking, exercising, birdwatching, biking, and spending time with friends and family.

Barriers to trail usage include not knowing where to go, poor lighting, crowded trails, accessibility issues, and lack of connectivity to other areas within the district.

Suggested improvements include adding off-leash dog areas, bike trails, invasive species removal and habitat enhancements, and on-leash dog areas.

Commonly mentioned locations

- Cut-through paths in residential areas
- Access to cut through private property (farms)
 - Access from Brentwood to Saanichton in particular
- Cooperridge parkland (forest access, walking trail)
- Brentwood Drive
- Mt Newton Pathway safety improvements
- Access to other regional trails (mostly access to Lochside from Tanner and Brentwood)

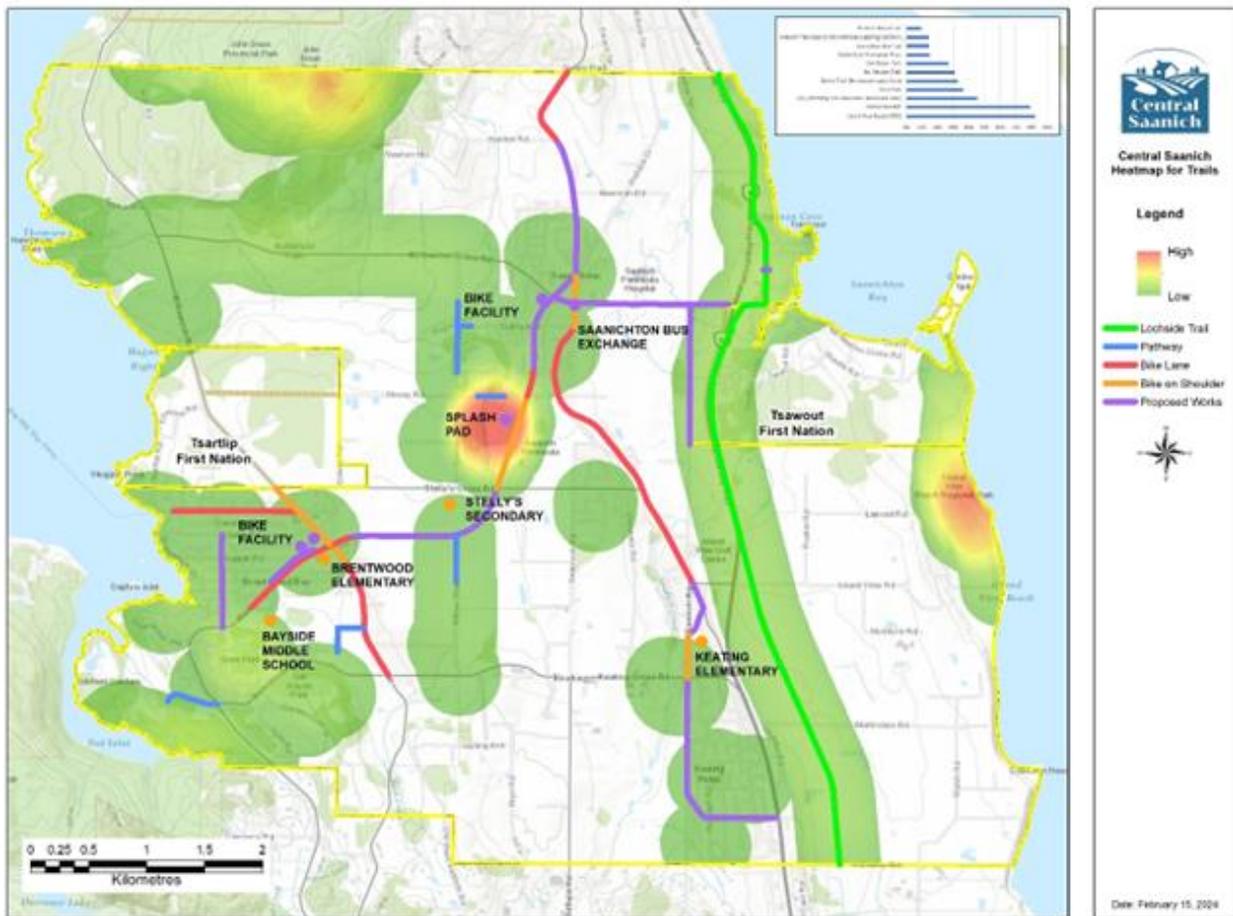


How often do you visit trails in Central Saanich?

In the Spring and Summer, 28% of the survey respondents visit Central Saanich trails every day, 47% visit a least once a week, and 10% visit weekly. The number who visit Central Saanich trails every day decreases to 22% in the fall and winter months, decreases slightly to 43% a few days a week, and 12% visit weekly.

What trails do you use in Central Saanich?

The highest used trails of survey respondents include Island View and Centennial Park followed closely by LAU, WELNEW/John Dean Park Provincial Park and Gore Park.



Map based on which parks survey respondents visit (1,032 responses - participants could select more than one option). Overlaid with 2024-2027 active transportation infrastructure plan.

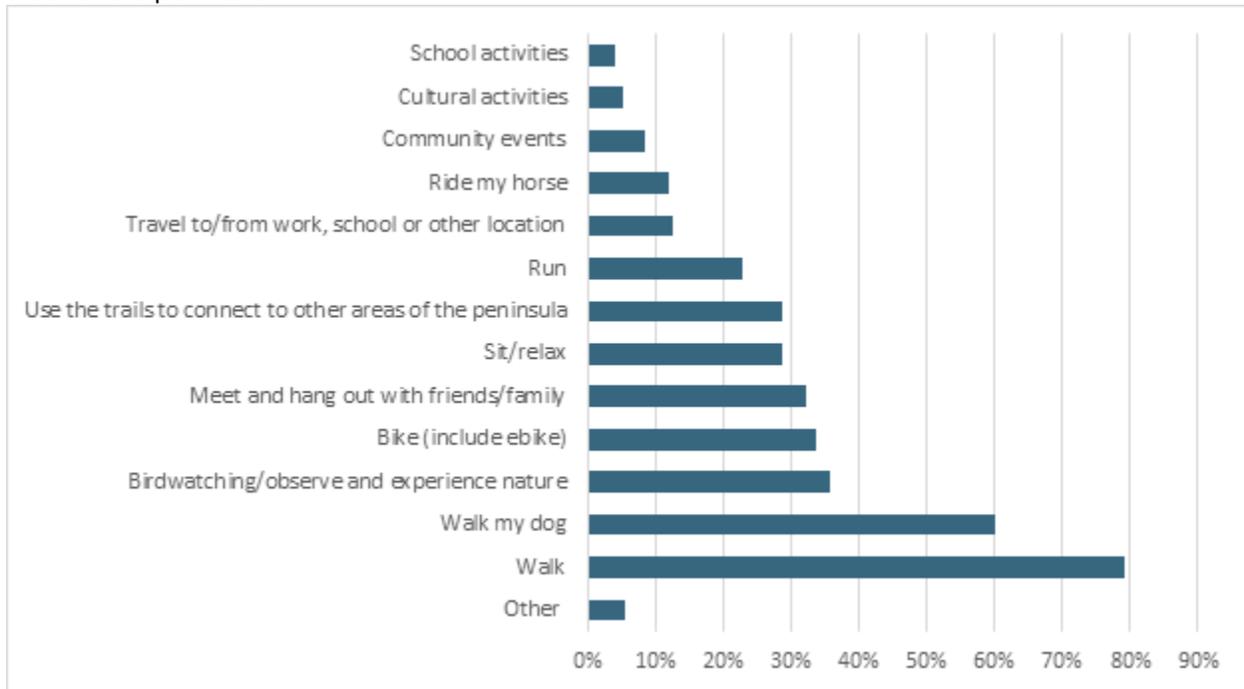
What types of activities do you do along Central Saanich trails?

The top five activities survey respondents participate in along Central Saanich trails include

1. walking,
2. walking their dog,
3. birdwatching and experiencing nature,
4. biking, and
5. hanging out with friends and family.



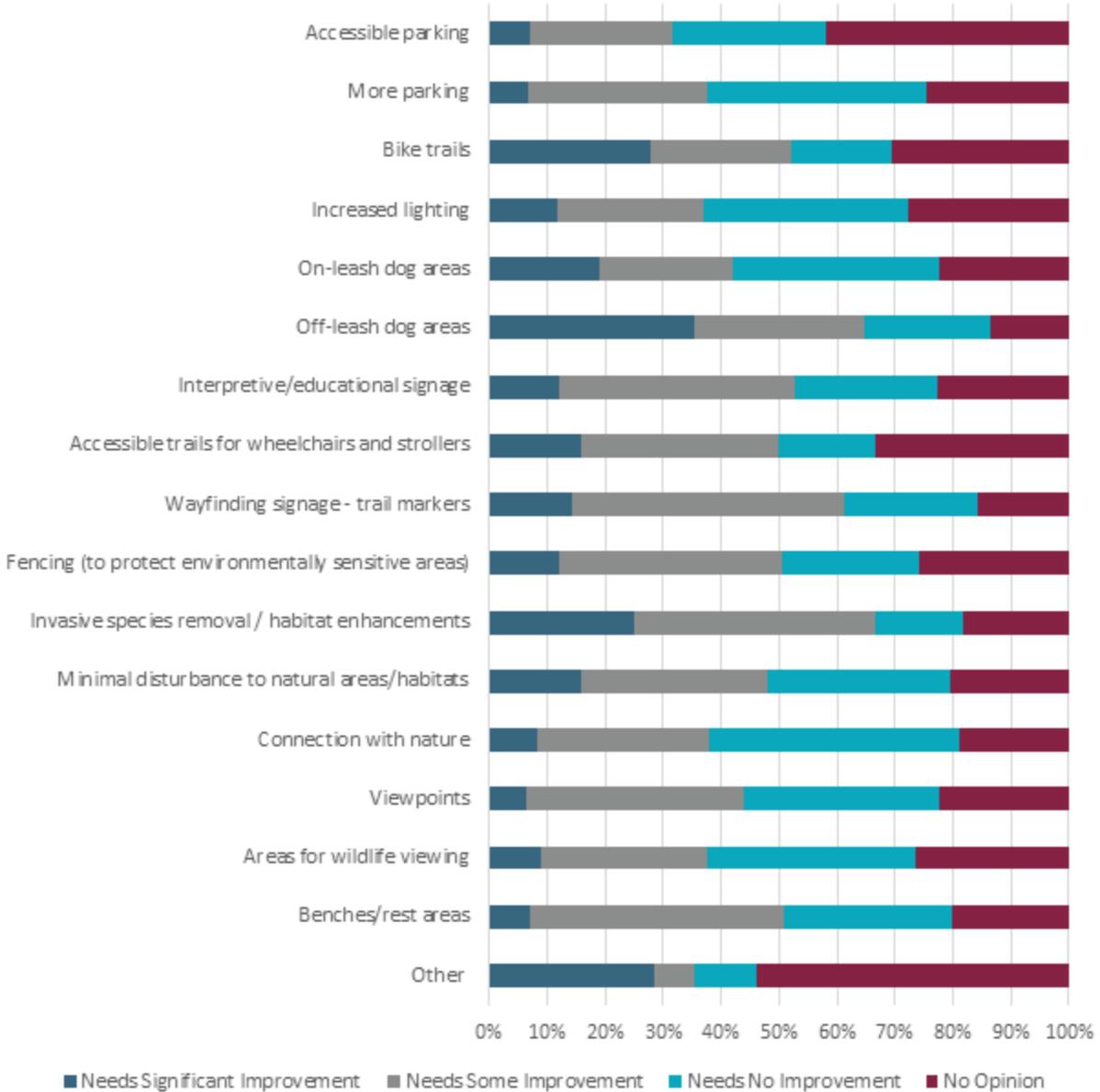
Additional activities include relaxing and connecting to other areas of the peninsula.



975 Responses (participants could select more than one option)

What trail features do you feel need more focus and improvement?

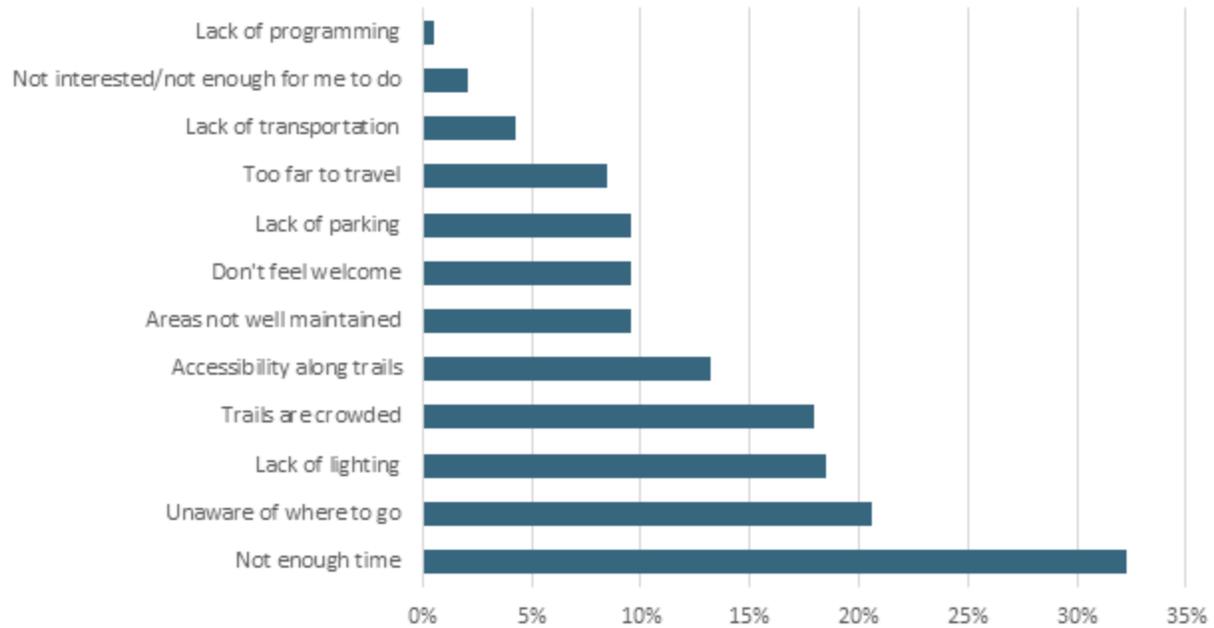
The top features that respondents indicated needed significant improvements included off-leash dog areas, bike trails, invasive species removal/habitat enhancements, and on-leash dog areas.



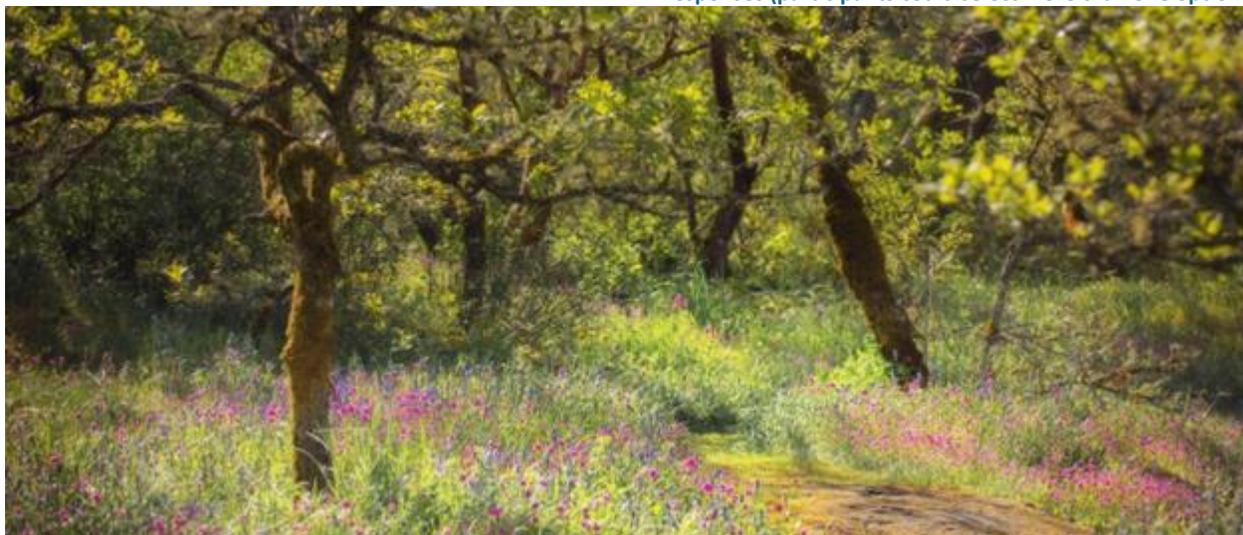
3,445 Responses (participants could select more than one option)

What barriers prevent you from using the current trails in Central Saanich?

Of respondents who participated in the survey, 32% indicated they didn't have enough time to visit trails. Other barriers included a lack of awareness of where to go, lack of lighting, trails are crowded, and challenges with accessibility along trails. A key theme we heard during engagement activities was the need for trails and active transportation connections.



277 Responses (participants could select more than one option)



Beach Accesses, Docks, and Boat Launches

The feedback gathered for Beach Accesses, Docks and Boat Launches in Central Saanich during events and the survey had similar themes around accessibility, infrastructure, and environmental as in Parks and Trails, it focused more on accessing the shoreline and waterfront.

Overall, they expressed they would like improved beach access including easier access for paddleboards, kayaks, small watercraft, shared sand areas for volleyball or spike ball and more boat launches on both sides of the district and concerns about the state of existing ones.

More amenities at beaches, such as outdoor showers, picnic benches, washrooms, and boardwalks, as well as better accessibility through fixing ramps, improving stairs, and adding accessibility mats. Parking problems at beach access points was also highlighted including unclear parking spots, the need for clear lines and better signs, especially at Hagan Bight-KENNES Viewpoint and Island View Regional Park.



The community would like to see beachfront parks developed and education on beach-related programs, with areas to acquire including parkland south of Island View to improve access to the waterfront. They also shared ideas for creating a continuous boardwalk along Brentwood Drive for waterfront access.

Finally, there is a request for GIS and mapping to locate and label beach accesses and water access points, as well as using buoys to mark access points from the water for kayakers and beach walkers. The community also emphasized the importance of keeping beaches clean through beach cleanups and responsible dog ownership.

Community priorities for Beach Accesses, Docks and Boat Launches:



Accessibility

- Challenges in accessing beaches due to steep access points and stairs
- Improve accessibility to beaches such as access mats
- Concern for access due to private docks



Boat Launches

- Additional boat launches, both on the east and west sides of the district
- Concerns about the condition of existing boat launches, such as at Island View, are raised, along with a call for proper maintenance and repair
- Launch for kayakers, paddle boards and smaller boats



Infrastructure and parking

- Adding amenities like playgrounds, washrooms, picnic benches, and outdoor showers
- Unclear parking, the need for painted parking lines, and better signage
- Beach access markings from the water and GIS mapping



Environmental protection

- Protect sensitive ecosystems and zoning to protect intertidal space
- Involve community involvement, including beach clean-ups, educational programs



Survey Results – Beaches, Docks and Boat Launches

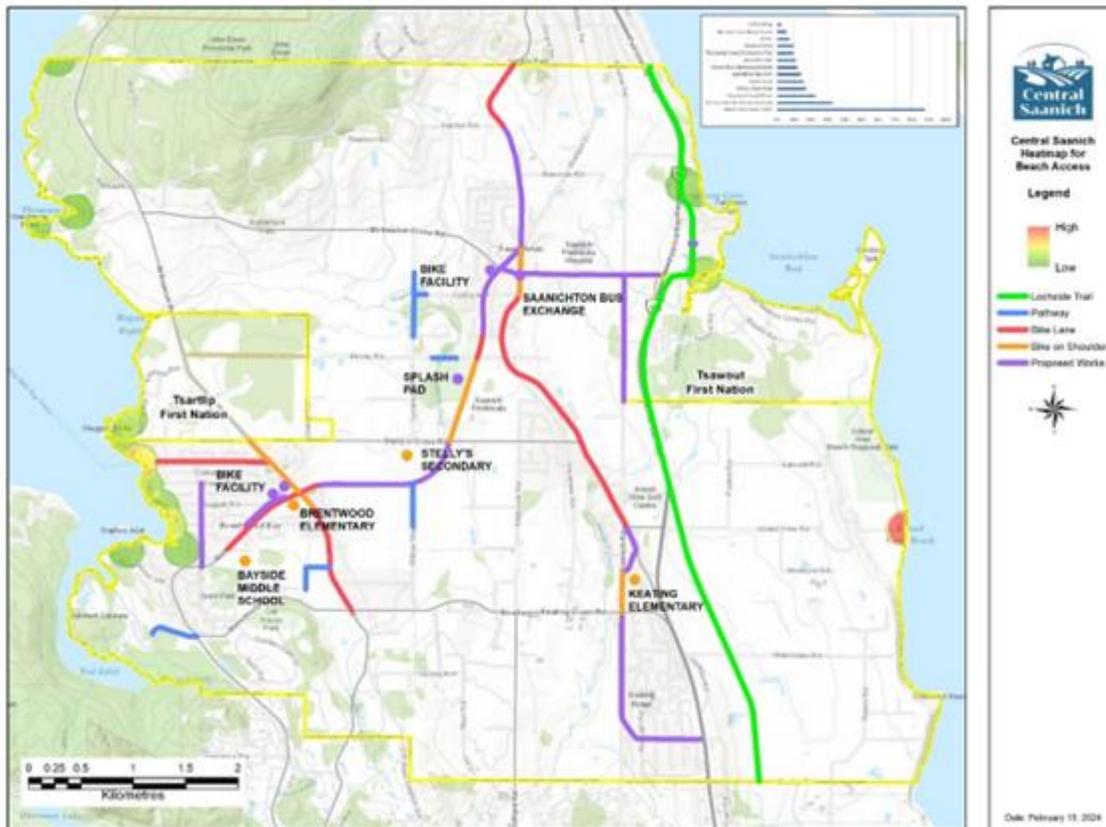
How often do you visit beaches in Central Saanich?

As expected, survey respondents indicated that they frequent local beaches most in the Spring and Summer with 27% visiting a few days a week and only 6% noted they rarely visit.

For respondents who visit in the Winter and Fall, they generally visit monthly (21%) or once a week (19%) and 13% rarely visit beaches in the winter.

What beach access do you use most often?

Over 90% of respondents indicated they visit Island View Beach most often followed by 34% of respondents who visit Verdier Park in Brentwood Bay, and 24% who visit Marchant Road / Wharf.



Map based on which parks survey respondents visit (665 responses - participants could select more than one option). Overlaid with 2024-2027 active transportation infrastructure plan.

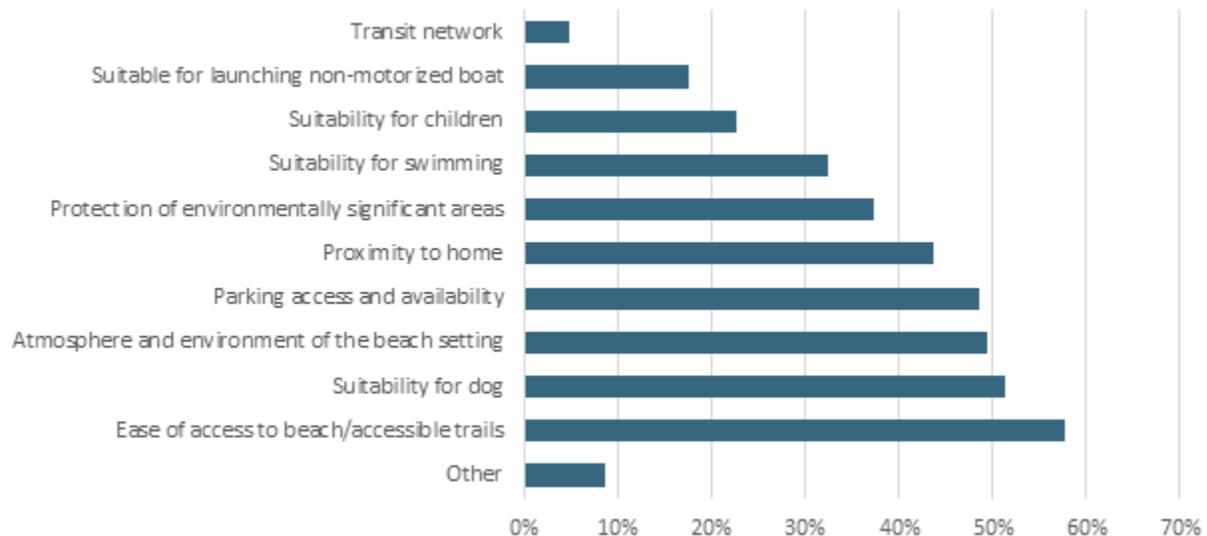
What activities do you do when you visit a beach access?

The top activities the public told us they participate in while accessing beaches in Central Saanich is walking/walking their dog, relaxing and socializing and using non-motorized boats.

What is most important to you about beach access?

Close to 60% of the survey respondents highlighted ease of access to beaches and accessible trails as the most important to accessing beaches.

51% of respondents indicated beaches suitable for dogs followed by 49% indicating the importance of the atmosphere and environment in the beach setting and the availability and access to parking at beaches as important. This data was also highlighted throughout the engagement activities with requests for connectivity to trails and active transportation networks, parking improvements, and improving boat launches, and the ability to launch paddle boats. In addition to increased signage and mapping to identify water access points.



960 Responses (participants could select more than one option)

Concerns from residents who live near beach access points.

Residents who live in near beach access points identified concerns about parking, specifically at Marchant in Brentwood Bay and Stelly’s Cross Road Beach access for visitors, kayakers and paddleboarders. They also identified the impact of liveaboards on the environment, including the disposal of sewage and garbage, and the need for designated parking for dinghies and bike racks. Saanichton Bay Park could benefit from improved access, more picnic tables, and the removal of abandoned boats and garbage. Additionally, there is a desire for facilities such as toilets at Island View to be open year-round.

Next Steps

Thank you to everyone for taking the time to share your experiences and insights with us! These responses will provide guidance in developing Central Saanich's Parks and Trails Master Plan. More opportunities to engage on the draft Parks and Trails Master Plan will be coming up in spring 2024.

To stay informed, please visit letstalkcentralsaanich.ca/parksandtrails.

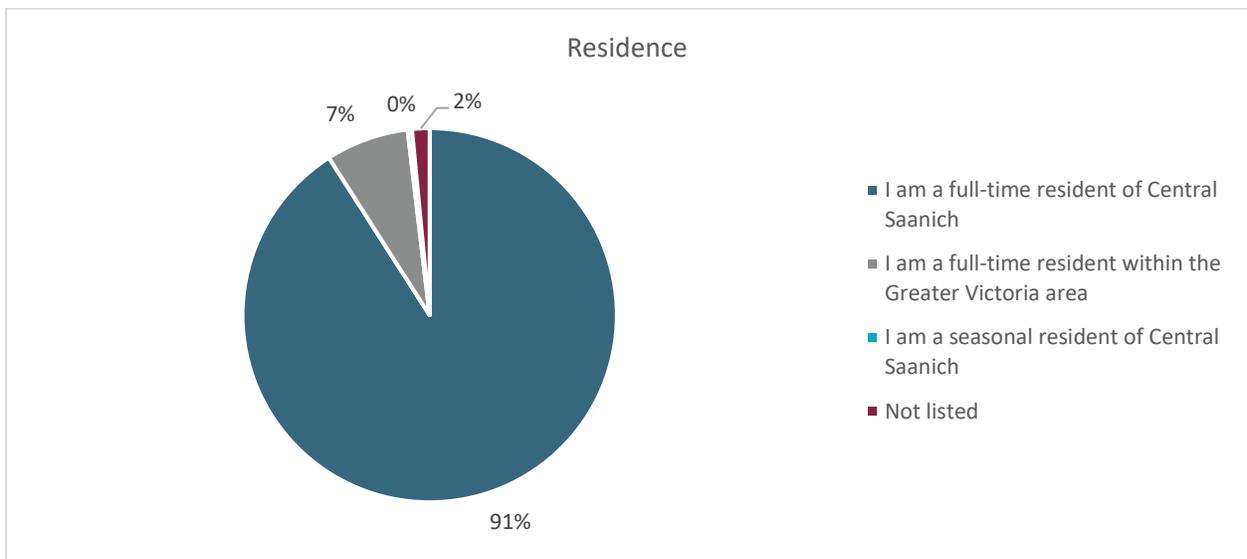


Appendix 1

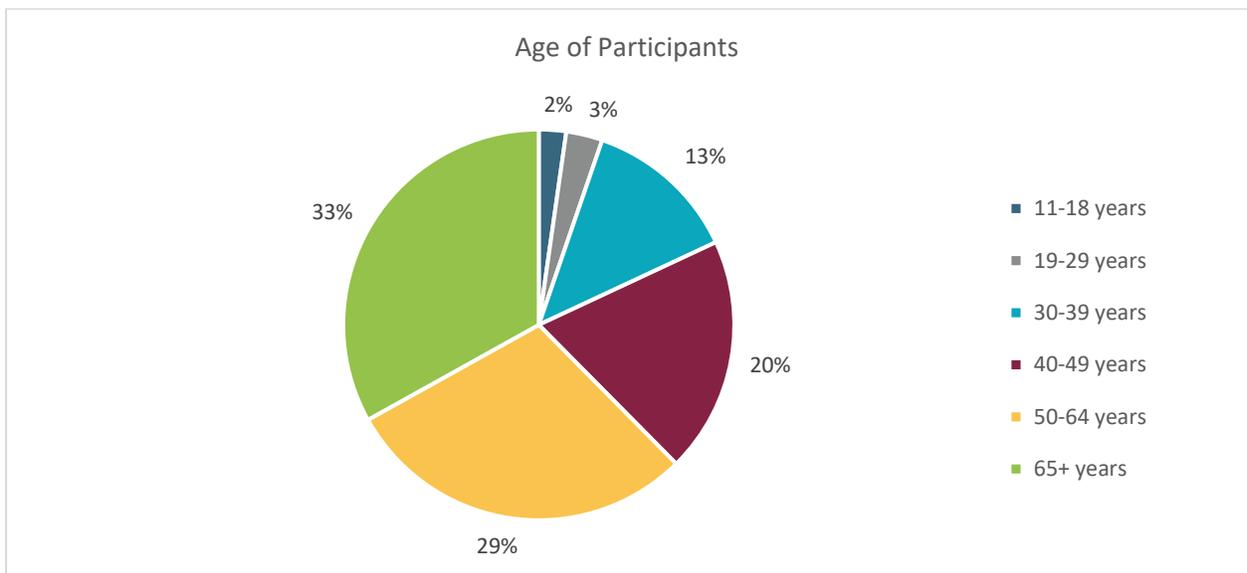
Who We Heard From

To date, we have heard from approximately 980 people through the first round of engagement for the Parks and Trails Master Plan.

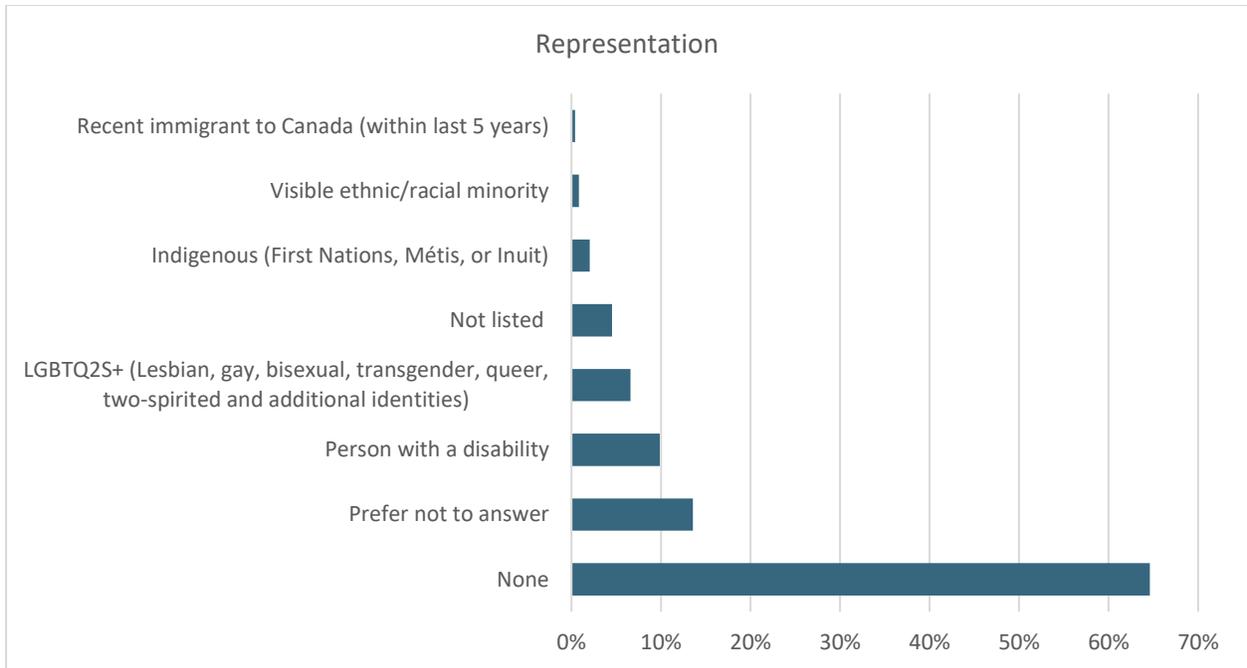
Of the 267 people who completed the survey, we have heard from the following demographics:



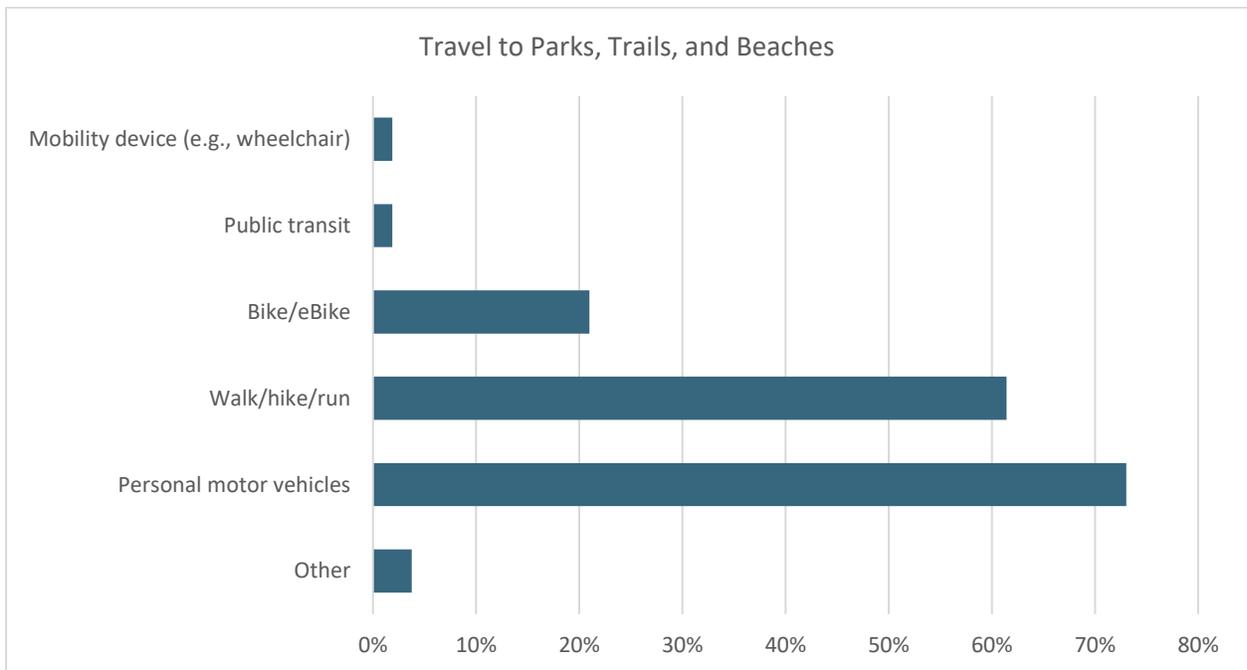
265 responses



266 responses



243 Responses



435 Responses (participants could select more than one option)