

Proposed Regional Park at **Cape Roger Curtis** on Bowen Island

Phase 2 Public Engagement Summary

Acknowledgements

Thank you to everyone who provided input on the second phase of public engagement for the proposed regional park at Cape Roger Curtis on Bowen Island. Metro Vancouver embraces collaboration and innovation to provide sustainable regional services, contributing to a livable and resilient region and a healthy natural environment for current and future generations. We appreciate your time as well as the insights and comments you shared with us in the second phase.

About Metro Vancouver

Metro Vancouver is a diverse organization that plans for and delivers regional utility services, including water, sewers and wastewater treatment, and solid waste management. It also regulates air quality, plans for urban growth, manages a regional parks system, provides affordable housing, and serves as a regional federation. The organization is a federation of 21 municipalities, one electoral area, and one treaty First Nation located in the region of the same name. The organization is governed by a Board of Directors of elected officials from each member jurisdiction.

Cover photo:
View to West from Cape Roger Curtis on Bowen Island

This summary report is prepared by staff with support from MODUS consulting for reporting to Metro Vancouver Regional Parks Committee and Board, September 2023.

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View along shore to east at Cape Roger Curtis on Bowen Island

1. About the Proposed Regional Park at Cape Roger Curtis on Bowen Island

Metro Vancouver is growing the regional parks system into a connected network of parks and greenways that protect regionally important natural areas and connect them to residents. The proposed park at Cape Roger Curtis presents a unique opportunity to protect valuable habitat, and connect with nature through trails, education, stewardship, ocean viewing, and the opportunity to spend the night in nature — an experience that is increasingly difficult for residents to get.

In May 2023, Metro Vancouver finalized the purchase of 24 parcels of land at Cape Roger Curtis on Bowen Island. At this time, there is no public access to the site, for either day or overnight use (no camping is permitted), other than for use of existing municipal trails which remain open and available for public use. Metro Vancouver will continue to work closely with Bowen Island Municipality on the park planning and municipal rezoning process before opening the park to public access.

A preliminary program for the proposed 97-hectare park consists of day and overnight uses, with opportunities for tent camping, picnic areas, trails, viewpoints, and waterfront access. The proposed park would preserve a large area of ecologically important and sensitive dry coastal bluff ecosystem and provide opportunities for residents of the region and the Bowen Island community to connect with nature.

Cape Roger Curtis is eight kilometres from Snug Cove on Bowen Island. The property encompasses a large ecologically diverse dry coastal bluff waterfront, a landscape that is rare in the Metro Vancouver region and which makes up less than one per cent of BC's land base. It contains 15 plant communities listed as provincially threatened or endangered. The land encompasses about 900 metres of waterfront ranging from high bluffs to low bank and access to water's edge. Along the shore, the coastal bluff plant communities are dominated by arbutus, shore pine, Douglas fir, and some 400-year-old maritime juniper. The park would be adjacent to Crown land that includes the headwaters of Huszar Creek and Fairy Fen Nature Reserve, and the Wild Coast Nature Refuge. The park lies within the Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

Metro Vancouver has started the park planning process for the proposed regional park at Cape Roger Curtis. The development of a concept plan for the park is running concurrently with an application to Bowen Island Municipality to rezone the properties and amend the Official Community Plan to allow for supervised overnight tent camping.



2. Executive Summary

Through the second phase of public engagement, Metro Vancouver residents, including community members on Bowen Island and across the region, were asked to provide feedback on a draft vision, guiding principles, and concept to ensure the park's design and implementation align with community needs and values. During this phase, the largest response rate was from residents of Bowen Island.

Engagement opportunities included two online webinars (60 attendees), two in-person open houses (140 attendees), and an online feedback form (1,100+ respondents). Over 50 emails were also received via the project email address.

Overall, participants shared support for the proposed park's draft vision and guiding principles. However, feedback on the draft park concept was mixed, with the same number of participants expressing support as those who did not (46%). The level of support for the proposed regional park concept varied between Bowen Island residents (25% in support) and residents from the rest of the region (68% in support.)

Key themes respondents noted through the second phase of engagement included:

- **Overnight use** – including both support and opposition to the proposal for overnight camping and suggestions for specific overnight uses.
- **Planning process** – particularly related to community engagement, First Nations collaboration, and plan feasibility and implementation.
- **Transportation** – concerns about the impact of park visitors on the ferry system and traffic, as well as opportunities and challenges related to sustainable transportation options.
- **Infrastructure and services** – concerns and questions about the impact and plans for emergency services, water, and waste management.
- **Environmental stewardship** – its importance and ideas for protecting biodiversity, building climate resilience, and establishing a conserved area.

3. First Nations Engagement

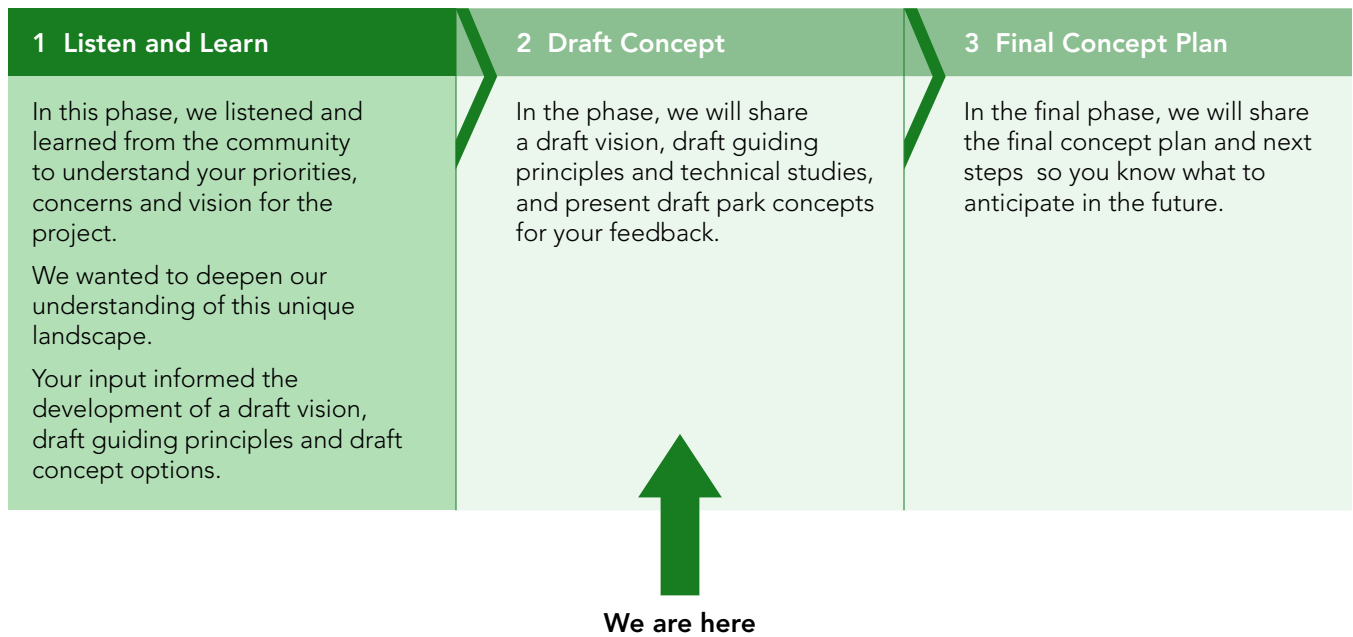
The proposed regional park at Cape Roger Curtis on Bowen Island is within the territories of the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw/Squamish Nation, xʷməθkʷəy̓əm/Musqueam Indian Band and səlilwətaʔtʰ/Tsleil-Waututh Nation. We respectfully acknowledge the significance of Bowen Island and the Howe Sound for all three Nations, particularly the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw/Squamish Nation.

The proposed regional park presents an opportunity to advance collaboration and reconciliation with First Nations. Metro Vancouver is engaging local First Nations to explore opportunities to work collaboratively on this project.

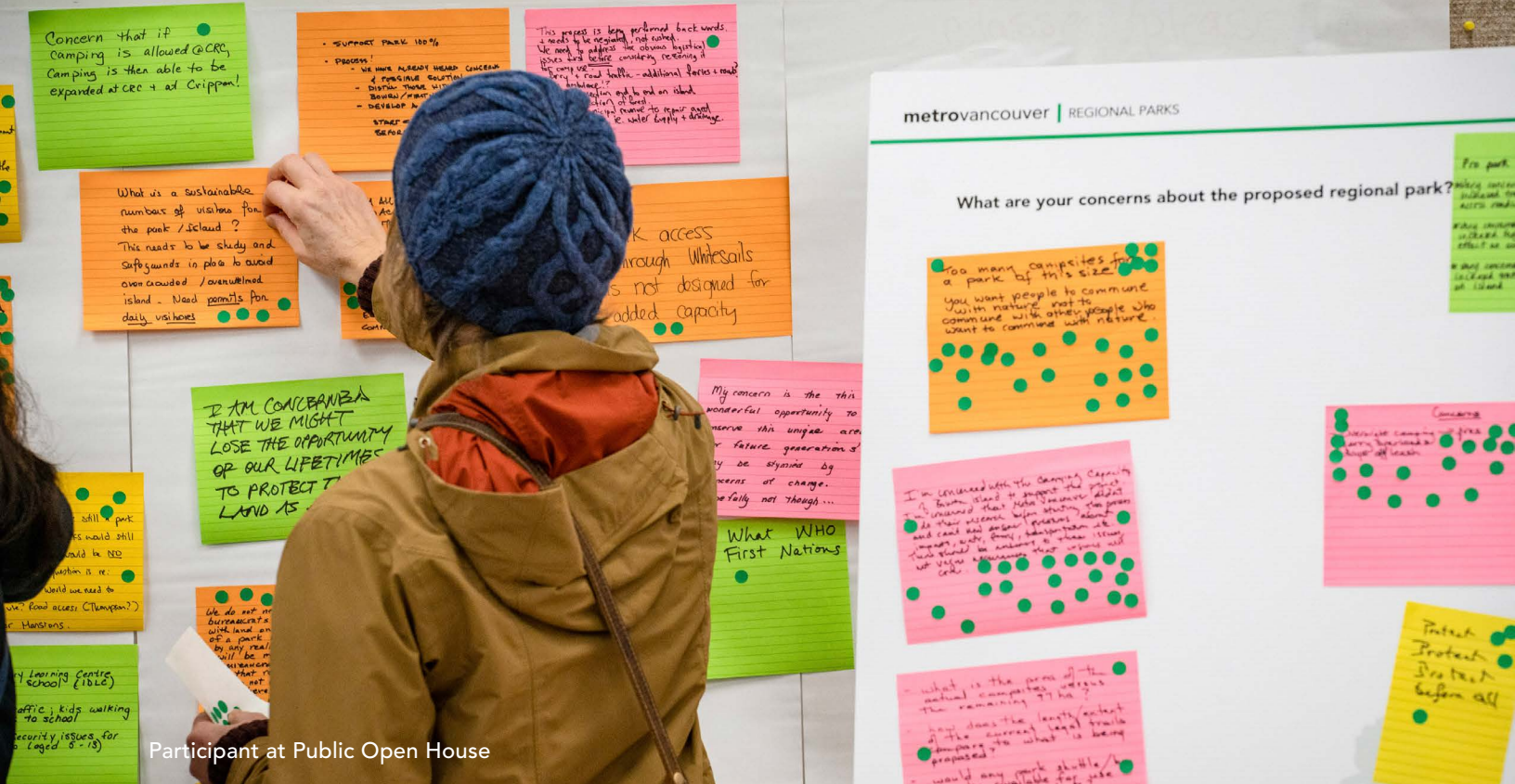
4. What We Did and Who Participated

Engagement

The park planning process includes background research, inventory and analysis, along with engagement. Engagement is taking place over three proposed project phases and each phase will include engagement with First Nations, the public, stakeholders, and government agencies.



The first phase of engagement took place in spring 2023 and informed a draft vision, draft guiding principles, and draft concept options for the proposed regional park. During the second phase of engagement, from July 29 to August 16, staff gathered input on those items through a public feedback form, four public events (in-person and online), and email correspondence. This engagement summary provides an overview of what staff did and heard during the second phase.



Participant at Public Open House

Public Open Houses

The in-person public open house events were held in the morning on Saturday, July 29 and evening of Wednesday, August 2 at Cates Hill Chapel. Participants were welcome to learn about the technical studies conducted to date and to discuss topics and questions with the project team. Over the two events, staff engaged with over 140 participants.

Virtual Webinars

The virtual webinars were held in the morning on Tuesday, August 1 and in the evening Thursday, August 10. The webinars included an overview presentation and Q&A with a small staff panel. The events were open to the public and widely promoted to draw more regional participation. In total, approximately 60 participants attended the virtual webinars.

Feedback Forms

A public feedback form was made available online and in-person from July 29 to August 16. The form sought feedback on the draft concept plan for the proposed park. Overall, more than 1,100 respondents provided feedback through the online form.

Email Correspondence

Throughout the engagement period, the project team received letters to the project email (bowenlandparkplanning@metrovancover.org). Over 50 letters were received.

Outreach Events

To raise awareness of the project and reach Metro Vancouver residents from across the region, staff facilitated outreach tables in regional parks and community destinations to inform residents of the draft concept and ways to get involved. Locations included Lynn Headwaters and Campbell Valley Regional Parks and Vancouver West End Farmers Market.

Outreach and Promotion

The public engagement opportunities were promoted both regionally and to several local news media outlets on Bowen Island. Communications for this phase focused on encouraging the target audience to participate in the engagement events and feedback form. Tactics and interactions included:

- Google search ads with nearly 7,500 impressions
- Social media posts reaching nearly 200,000 and gaining over 1,000 likes, comments, and shares
- 6 email newsletters
- 2 postcard mail outs
- 2 print ads in the Bowen Island Undercurrent
- Community posters and signage
- 1 media release

Website

Two web pages were used during the engagement promotion: a dedicated project page that highlighted information about the proposed regional park, and an engagement page with detailed information about the engagement approach and process, and how to provide feedback.

Social Media

Social media posts on the public engagement opportunities were shared on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. In addition to organic social media posts, paid advertisements were also promoted on Facebook and Instagram.

Metro Vancouver E-newsletters

Six newsletters were sent to the project email list and three to the Regional Parks subscribers list. Since April, the number of subscribers to the project has continued to climb to 807. The engagement opportunities were also included in the Metro Vancouver Update and Chair Update newsletters.

Project Email List

Date	Subject	Delivered
Wed July 19	Advance Notification of Phase Two Engagement and Project Updates – Proposed Regional Park at Cape Roger Curtis	772
Thu July 27	Opening Soon! Phase Two Public Engagement – Proposed Regional Park at Cape Roger Curtis	783
Sat July 29	Now Open! Phase Two Public Engagement for the Proposed Regional Park at Cape Roger Curtis	791
Mon July 31	Upcoming Open House and Webinar Dates – Proposed Regional Park at Cape Roger Curtis on Bowen Island	795
Fri August 11	Share Your Feedback by August 16 – Phase Two Public Engagement for the Proposed Regional Park at Cape Roger Curtis	801
Mon August 21	Thank You for Your Feedback! - Phase Two Public Engagement for the Proposed Regional Park at Cape Roger Curtis	807



Regional Parks Email List

Date	Subject	Delivered
Sat July 29	Proposed Regional Park on Bowen Island – Share Your Feedback	791
Tue August 8	Share Your Feedback by August 16! Proposed Regional Park on Bowen Island	4,879
Mon August 21	Thank You for Your Feedback! - Phase Two Public Engagement for the Proposed Regional Park on Bowen Island	4,881

Mailouts

Two postcards were sent to the addresses of all Bowen Island residents during the week of July 17 and July 24, 2023.

Print Ads

Two print ads ran in the Bowen Island Undercurrent before the engagement period opened, on July 20 and July 27.

Signage

Posters were put up in Bowen Island community hubs and Metro Vancouver Regional Parks.

Earned Media

A media release was issued on July 29, the day before the engagement opened. The Bowen Island Undercurrent published an article in their print edition on July 27.

Paddle boarder on the west side of Cape Roger Curtis on Bowen Island

5. Engagement Participation

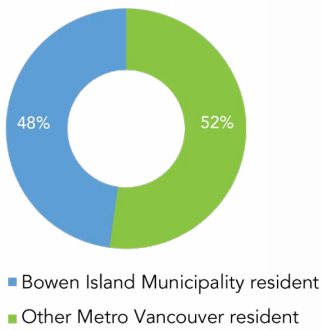
The public were invited to provide feedback by completing a feedback form that was available online and in hard copy format. During the online engagement period, 1,100 participants provided feedback.

Metro Vancouver uses ZenCity for online engagement, providing opportunities for qualitative and quantitative input through preference-ranking open-ended and direct questions. While online engagement is an important component of a

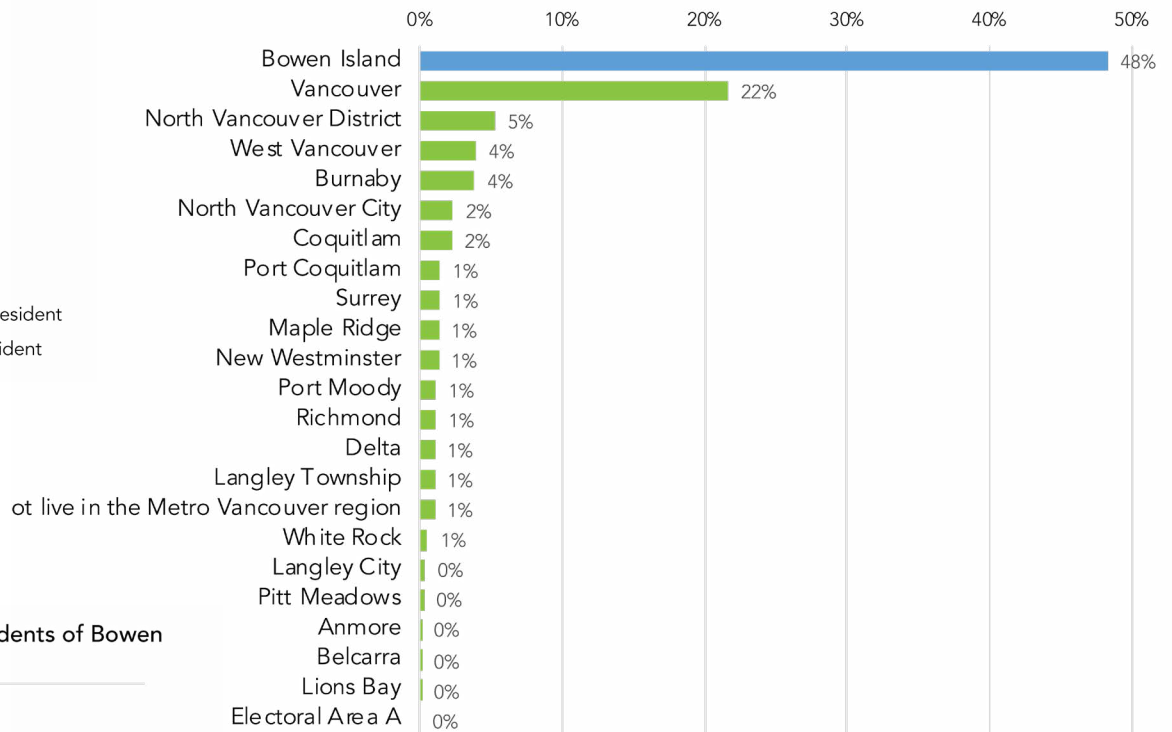
comprehensive engagement strategy, it does not provide statistically relevant data.

As part of the feedback form, respondents were asked where they lived. 48% indicated they lived on Bowen Island, 22% indicated they live in the City of Vancouver, and 5% indicated they live in the District of North Vancouver. Of Bowen Island residents who provided feedback through the feedback form, most (90%) were full-time residents.

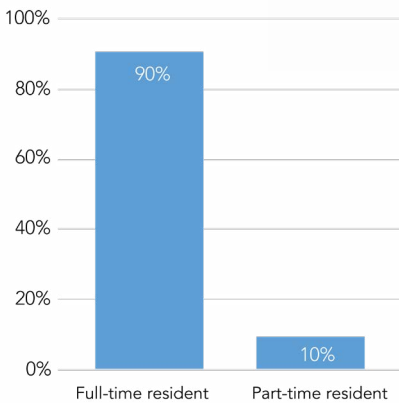
Proportion of Respondents Living on Bowen Island



Place of Residence



Full- and Part-time Residents of Bowen



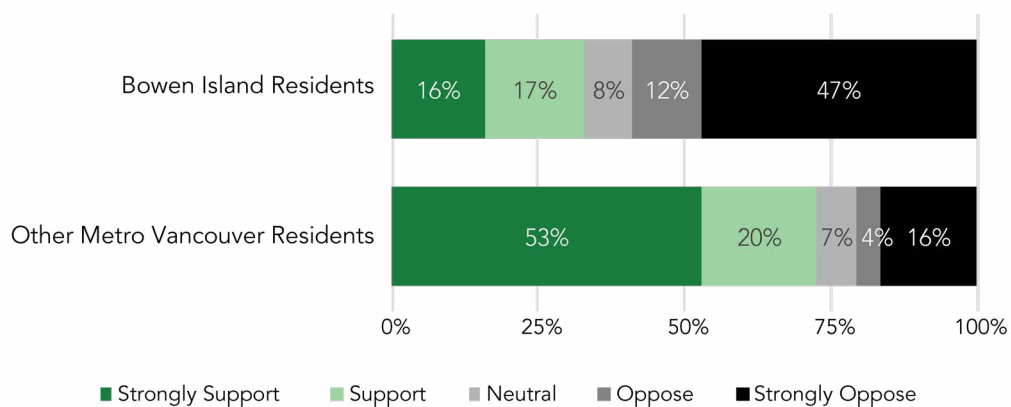
6. What we heard

Through the online feedback form and public open house events, participants were asked for feedback on the draft vision statement, draft guiding principles and a draft park concept. The feedback on the engagement questions is described below, followed by a more fulsome description of the themes that emerged through the open questions, activities, emails, and discussions.

Draft Vision

Draft Park Vision: The regional park at Cape Roger Curtis will protect a unique and sensitive dry coastal bluff ecosystem in perpetuity. By adopting responsible and sustainable practices, the park will provide exceptional and inclusive nature experiences for generations to come.

Question: Please indicate your level of support for the following draft vision statement for the proposed regional park.



Overall, varying perspectives about the draft vision statement were shared, with just over half (53%) of participants in support and over a third (39%) in opposition. Support for the vision was notably higher off-island at 73% compared with Bowen Island respondents at 33%.

Participants provided suggested revisions to the draft vision statement. Some of these included adding reference to equity, accountability, and accessibility, as well as local stewardship and involvement in the planning process and the park's importance for future generations.

Draft Guiding Principles

The draft guiding principles reflected input gathered in phase one engagement and described values and aspirations to help steer the proposed regional park's planning, design, implementation and operation.

Question: Do you support these principles?

Connected Natural Areas: protect and enhance sensitive natural areas and strengthen ecological connectivity and resilience.

Equitable Access: ensure inclusive park access, enjoyment and participation in the park, including opportunities for day and overnight use

Low Impact: support sustainable transportation options and minimize impacts on local infrastructure

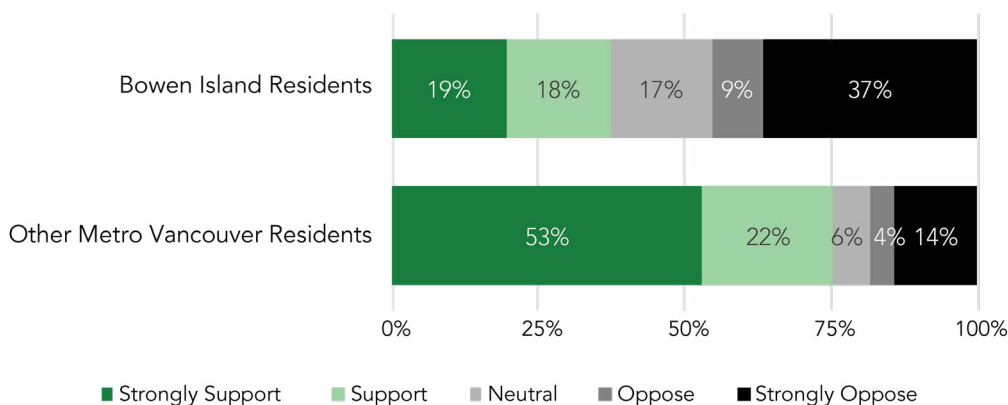
Relationships with First Nations: foster meaningful opportunities for participation during planning, Design, operation and programming

Risk Reduction: incorporate public safety in all aspects of park planning, design and management practices

Continuous Learning: create opportunities for learning and knowledge sharing through research, stewardship, programming and interpretation

Integrated Design: integrate park design with the natural landscape, focus active uses on disturbed areas and establish buffers to neighbouring land uses

Adaptive management: continually improve and adapt park management and policies



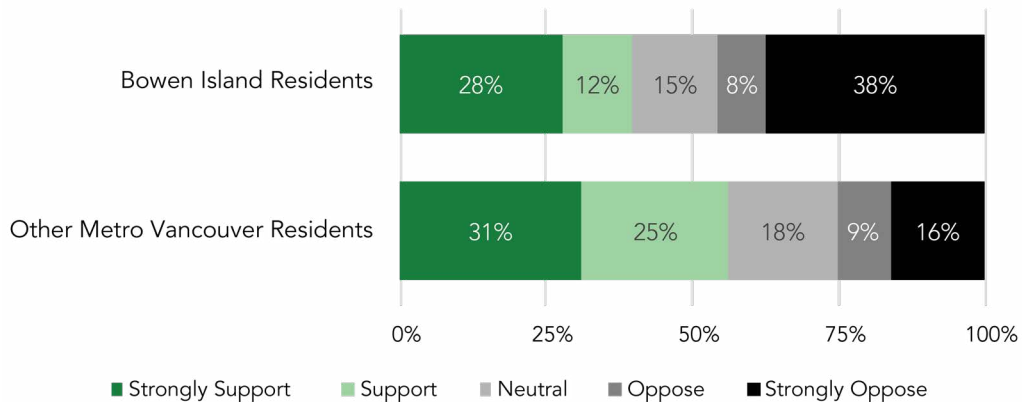
Overall, 57% supported the draft guiding principles compared with approximately a third (31%) of participants in opposition, with neutral responses making up the difference. Support for the guiding principles was 37% of Bowen Island respondents, with more support from the rest of the region at 75%.

Participants suggested clarifying how the guiding principles will be achieved. Suggestions were offered to strengthen the approaches to truth and reconciliation and to include references to biodiversity, community involvement, and connection. There were some concerns that the principles conflicted with the draft concept.

Day Use Parking Reservations

Metro Vancouver is exploring different ways to limit impacts on the local community, local roads, and the ferry system, including limited car access.

Question: Do you support implementing day-use parking reservations during peak periods, for example, during summer and or weekends?

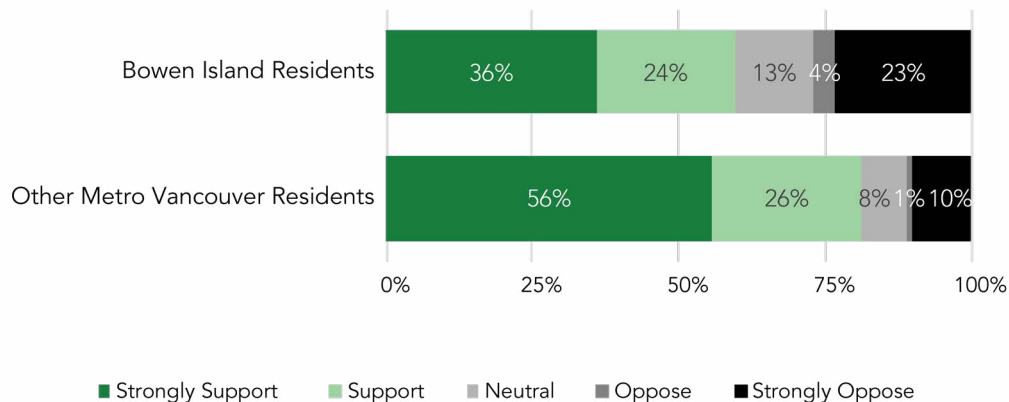


Nearly half (48%) of all participants supported implementing day-use parking reservations during peak periods, while just over a third (36%) were opposed and 17% were neutral. The most noticeable difference between responses received by Bowen Island and the rest of the region was opposition to day-use parking reservations, which was more significant on Bowen Island 46% than the rest of the region 25%. The high proportion of Bowen Island residents who do not support day-use parking reservations during peak periods may reflect some residents strong opposition to any park development and not specifically the concept of reserved parking during peak periods.

Ecosystem Protection & Restoration

Context: The concept includes actions to protect and restore sensitive ecosystems. Actions include improving ecological connections, ensuring long-term resilience or ability to adapt to change, managing invasive species, maintaining plant communities and water conditions, and establishing exclusion zones for people and pets.

Question: Do you support the plan's provisions to protect and restore ecosystems?



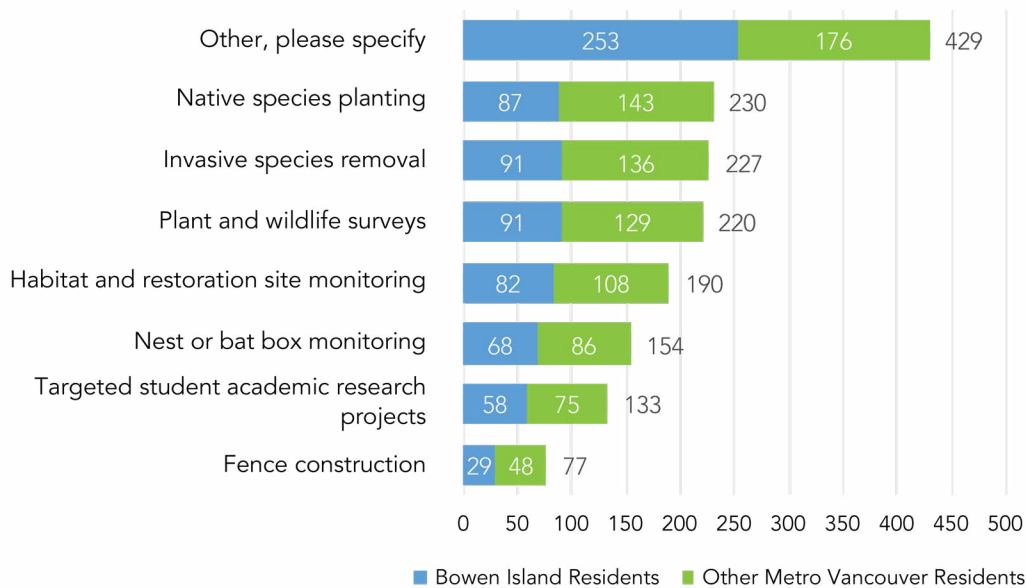
Nearly three-quarters (71%) of participants supported the plan's provisions to protect and restore ecosystems, while 18% opposed them.



Allium ampletens

Stewardship Activities

Question: Would you be interested in participating in habitat stewardship and/or monitoring activities? Please check any activities you may be interested in.



Participants were more often interested in native species planting, invasive species removal, plant and wildlife surveys, and habitat and restoration site monitoring.

When offering other suggestions, participants expressed that environmental protection and stewardship should be a priority; however, many see that establishing a park and overnight use is not necessary to achieving environmental protection. Other suggestions included habitat monitoring specific to marine life, general education about the site and strategic planning. Several respondents suggested that stewardship should be the responsibility of Metro Vancouver. In contrast, other respondents stated they would volunteer their time when specific details of these opportunities are released; some said they could not support these activities due to physical abilities.

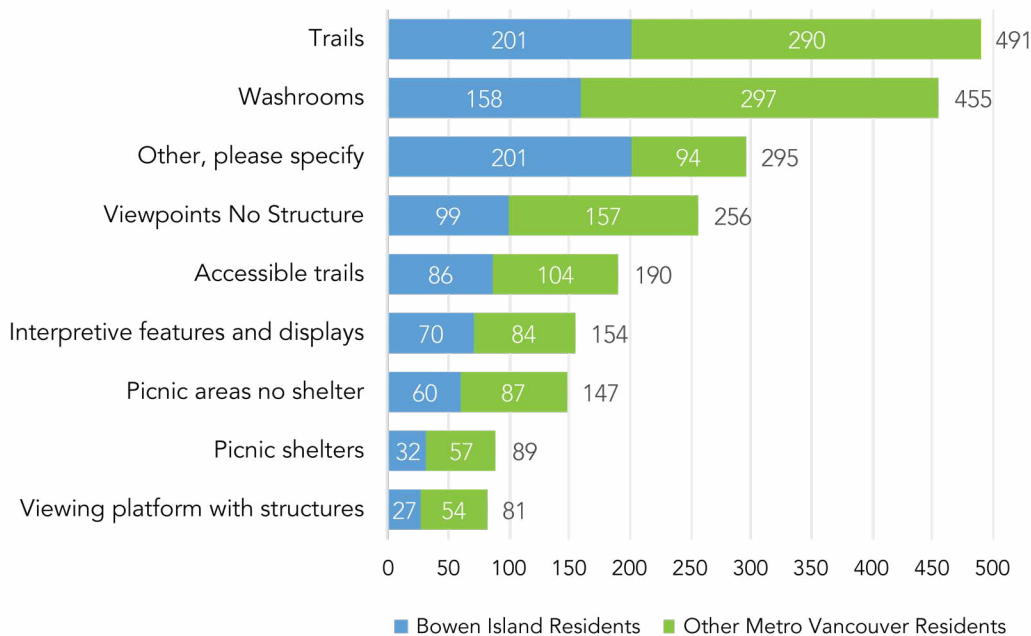


Second growth Douglas-fir forest

Day-Use Priorities

Context: The concept presents a range of day-use facilities that will provide exceptional and inclusive nature experiences.

Question: What do you think are the priorities? Select your top three priorities.



Participants most often selected trails and washrooms as day-use facilities to prioritize.

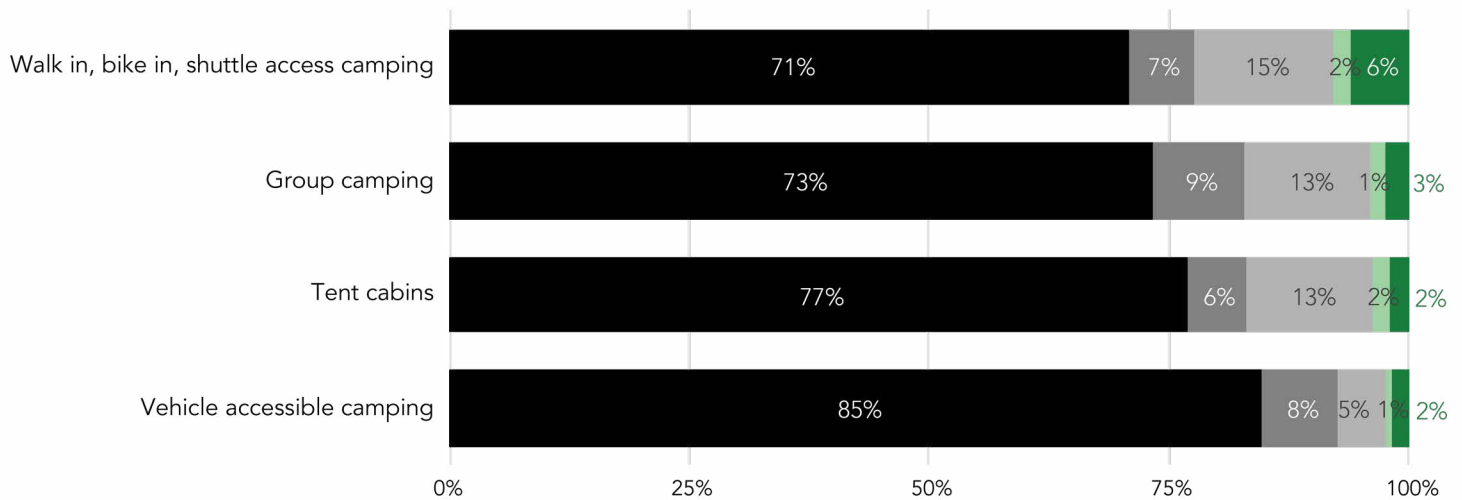
Most of the participants who provided additional comments expressed that they were opposed to day-use activities at Cape Roger Curtis, suggesting that adding structures and programming will have a negative impact on the environment. Some expressed concern that these facilities would strain Bowen Island resources and infrastructure, such as water, increase fire risk, and burden emergency services. If toilets are included, some preferred pit toilets to minimize water use.

Overnight Use

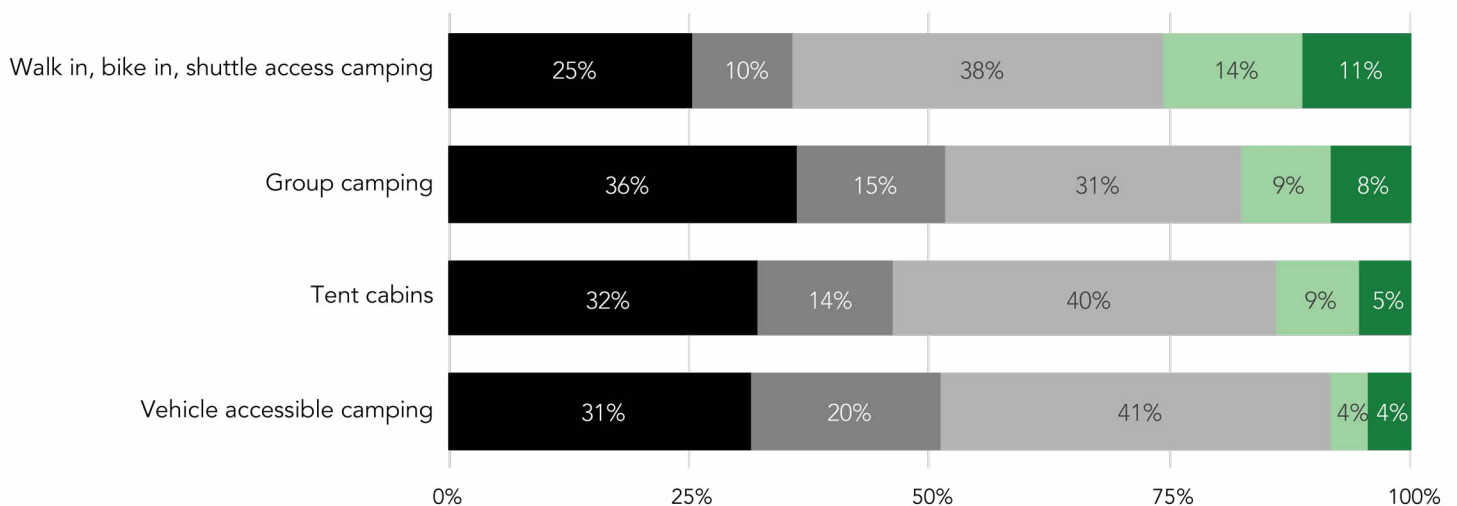
Context: The concept plan presents a range of camping options which aim to provide users with an exceptional and accessible nature experience while protecting the site.

Question: Do you think there is too much or too little of the following camping types:

Camping Mix Feedback by Bowen Island Residents



Camping Mix Feedback by Other Metro Vancouver Residents



■ Much more than I would like ■ Slightly more than I would like ■ About right ■ Slightly less than I would like ■ Much less than I would like

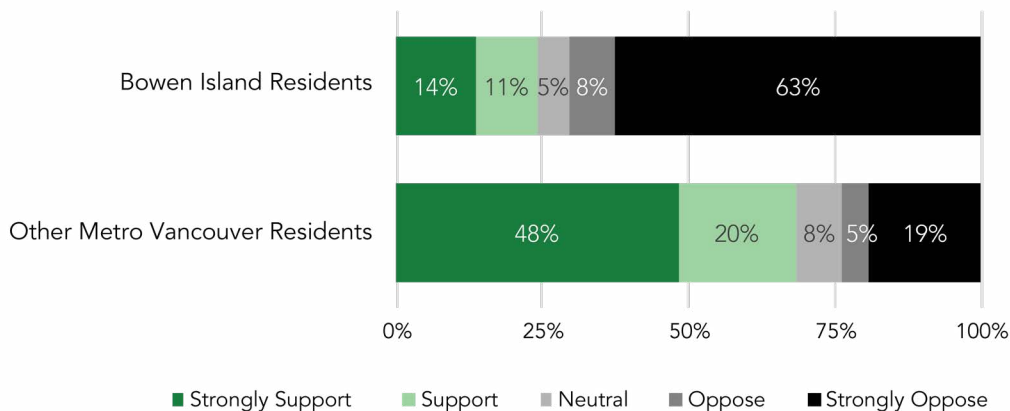
Most (78 – 93%) Bowen Island residents indicated there was more sites for each type of camping than they would like. About a third to half (35 – 51%) of other Metro Vancouver residents felt similarly. Another third or more (31 – 41%) of Metro Vancouver residents indicated the number of sites for each type was about right.

Fewer participants overall suggested there was less sites for each type of camping than they would like (6 - 10%), except for walk in, bike in, or shuttle access camping (17%).

Draft Concept

Context: The draft park concept includes actions to protect and restore sensitive ecosystems as well as the development of day use and overnight facilities.

Question: Please share your level of support for this proposal.



While the overall support for the draft park concept was evenly distributed, with 46% of respondents supporting and 46% not supporting it. However, more selected 'strongly oppose' (40%) than 'strongly support' (31%). Again, there were notable variations between regional and Bowen Island residents. Specifically, 68% of participants from the rest of the region expressed support for the draft concept. However, among those identifying as Bowen Island residents, 25% indicated support, with 71% expressing non-support for the draft concept.

Participants supporting and opposing the park concept offered specific feedback.

Those who support the concept expressed that having access to a park and/or camping near the Lower Mainland is a great opportunity to access nature and provide environmental education. There is acknowledgement that further technical studies on transportation, infrastructure, and habitats should be conducted prior to implementing the park and/or campground. Additionally, there is suggestion to include direct passenger ferry and water access to the cape to minimize strain on the ferry and local roads.

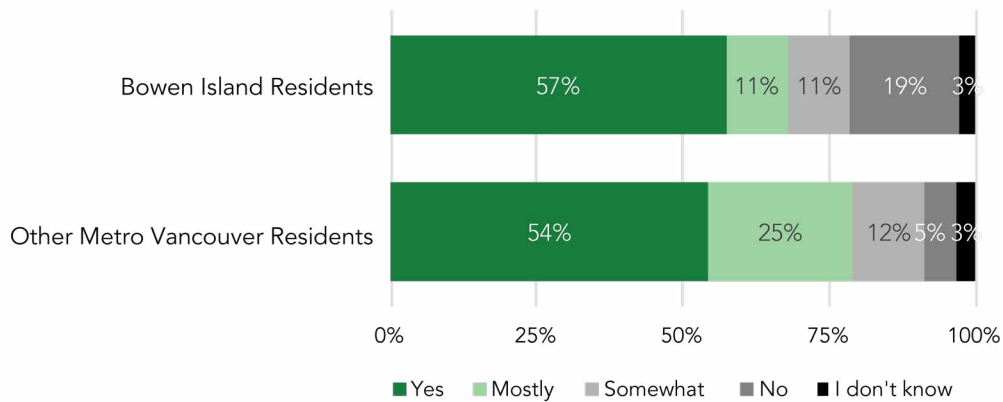
Participants opposing this concept expressed that it does not align with protecting and restoring the environment, citing issues with the question as they supported protecting and restoring the environment but opposed overnight site use. There was broad concern about the feasibility of the concept as current infrastructure (e.g., water supply, emergency services), and transportation (ferry access, road access) cannot support park or overnight use.



Participants at Public Open House

Informed & Meaningful Participation

Do you have enough information to participate in a meaningful way?



Over half (56%) of participants indicated they had enough information to participate meaningfully, while nearly a third (30%) indicated they mostly or somewhat did.

7. Themes

Across public events, the online feedback form, and email communication, several cross-cutting themes emerged. Below is a high-level summary of those key themes.

Overnight Use

Staff heard comments that expressed both support and opposition to the proposal for overnight camping and suggestions for specific overnight uses.

Participants who shared support for the proposed overnight use referenced the site mix and locations and a need to expand regional park access. There were suggestions to support overnight uses with camping equipment rentals, paddle-in access, an improved reservation system, and indoor camp facilities.

Some participants expressed support for camping under specific conditions. Staff heard suggestions to reduce the number of sites, cluster site locations and/or move sites from the water's edge, provide car-free sites only (i.e., walk, cycle, marine access), tent sites only, and overnight use for schools only.

Participants who shared opposition to any camping in the park often expressed concerns about the impact of 100 campsites on Bowen's existing transportation, infrastructure, services, and the natural environment.

"I have lived on Bowen for 12 years and my family and I are totally in favour of this vision for a campsite to make nature more accessible to those who live in the city."

"Bowen infrastructure can in no way support overnight camping. Shortlist includes ferries, roads, water, gas, police, fire, on island services and much more."

Planning Process

Participants shared questions and feedback about the park planning process, particularly related to community engagement, First Nations collaboration, and plan feasibility and implementation.

Positive and negative feedback from survey and open house participants about the community engagement process was heard.

Staff also heard about the need to balance diverse perspectives across the region, and to engage with a range of future park users like youth and those with mobility challenges. There was support for the engagement opportunities provided, as well as suggestions to host site tours and events across the Metro Vancouver region.

Participants raised questions about how First Nations have been involved in the planning process. Including suggestions to incorporate Indigenous design and place names and to work in partnership with Squamish Nation in particular through the planning process.

People expressed concerns about whether the existing technical studies adequately reflect the proposed plan's impact on the local community and environment. Staff also heard concerns about the process timeline and cost of plan implementation and associated infrastructure upgrades.

Participants provided support for a phased implementation approach and adaptive management. Some suggested Metro Vancouver better communicates economic opportunities presented by the park, such as employment or municipal income.

Transportation

Participants often commented on transportation, including the impact of park visitors on the ferry system and traffic, as well as opportunities and challenges related to sustainable transportation options.

Staff heard that Bowen residents rely on BC Ferries to get to and from medical appointments, work, school, and more. There are concerns that the system is already at capacity, with ferries often late, canceled, or overloaded. Some participants suggested Metro Vancouver work with BC Ferries to address these concerns and to plan for additional capacity, particularly in the summer months.

Staff also heard concerns the park may contribute to increased vehicle traffic. Particularly, participants identified challenges related to parking, emergency access, and access through the residential neighbourhood. Participants suggested planning alternative and/or additional routes to the park, as well as providing traffic calming measures.

There were mixed opinions about promoting sustainable transportation. Staff heard support for reducing car access, and suggestions to ensure safe, reliable, and accessible access for all abilities. Staff heard some concerns about shuttle feasibility, as well as challenges with the existing public transport options, and the topography for bike connections.

Suggestions to consider water access to the park, including paddle-in sites and mooring buoys were also received.

“Prioritize car-free options! Bowen is so close and accessible via transit from Vancouver, so providing more walk-in and transit-accessed sites is a unique opportunity.”

Infrastructure & Services

Staff heard comments related to the park’s impact on Bowen’s infrastructure and services. These comments often included concerns about emergency services, water, and waste management.

Participants noted a lack of medical services on the island, and volunteer emergency services. Concerns that expanding tourism may place a strain on these existing services were also heard.

Staff heard questions about plans for water on site, including water treatment, showers, and fire suppression. There were concerns about Bowen’s existing water supply, with suggestions to conduct additional water studies and to develop a water management plan that includes water catchment for fires.

Participants also shared concerns and questions about waste management in the park, including plans for garbage, recycling, and pit toilets.

View looking south at Cape Roger Curtis on Bowen Island





Environmental Stewardship

Participants frequently referenced the importance of environmental stewardship of the land and water. There were many suggestions about how this may be achieved, including protecting biodiversity, building climate resilience, and establishing a conserved area.

Staff heard it is important to protect native species, mature trees, and biodiversity. Staff also heard the park represents an opportunity for climate change mitigation and adaptation. Participants expressed support for the proposed restoration efforts and to further promote environmental education and/or research on site. There were concerns about species at risk, marine life, and the environmental sensitivity of the area, with suggestions to leave the area as a nature reserve and to conduct additional impact studies.

While participants expressed that there must be efforts made to protect and restore the environment, Staff heard that this should be the responsibility of Metro Vancouver and not community members if a park and/or campgrounds are established. Some participants expressed that they might offer their time once specific details are released.

"This park will help mitigate against climate change by promoting public ownership over private ownership."

"Leave Bowen Island Forests undeveloped and continue to manage the environment as a natural undeveloped green space."

Noise & Safety

Participants shared concerns about, and suggestions to reduce, noise and safety impacts.

Concerns were heard that camping may increase wildfire risk, particularly near the dry coastal bluffs and if barbeques are permitted. Participants emphasized the need for an emergency preparedness plan and to consider closing the park during times of high or extreme fire risk.

Participants were provided thorough information about wildfire prevention and response through conversations with staff, email, a website update and a news bulletin to the email list

There were also some concerns about the park contributing to noise pollution. Specifically, group camping and music in the park and its impact on nearby residents.

Participants provided suggestions to promote public safety in the park. These included considering a no-alcohol policy, installing camera monitoring, and increasing staff presence on site. There were some concerns about user conflicts in the park, between pet and non-pet owners, cyclists and pedestrians, and visitors and residents.

"Have concerns about camping and fire risk."

"As long as things are run safely, I remain in support."

Park Day Use

Participants who were supportive of park day use provided suggestions for amenities like picnic tables, seating, washrooms, a boat launch, and meeting space. Staff also heard a desire for walking and mountain biking trails, rock climbing, as well as environmental education programming.

Some respondents expressed that they do not want to see any added parking and structures and were concerned that these would negatively impact the environment.

"I like the idea of the park, but I think it should be day use only."

"... just a day park with washrooms and tables and trails, overnight camping should not be allowed."

