

# DEPARTURE BAY

WATERFRONT WALK, CYCLE, BEACH  
& ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS



# Public Engagement Summary

Summer 2021



### Land Acknowledgment

We acknowledge and recognize that we are on the traditional territory of the Snuneymuxw First Nation people.

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## APPENDICES (SEPARATE DOCUMENT)

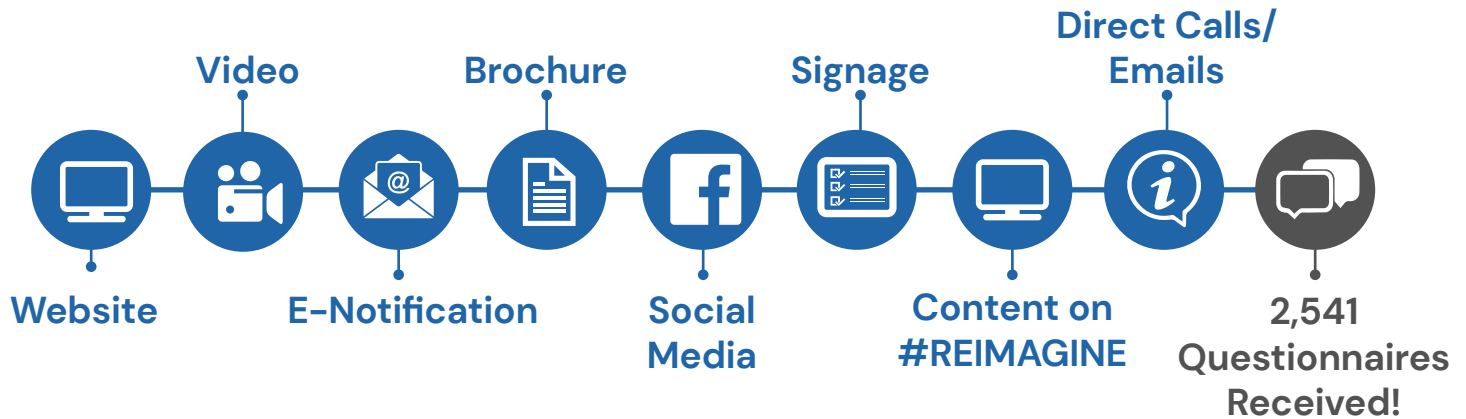
**Appendix A:** Public Questionnaire Verbatim Comments

**Appendix B:** Written Submissions



# THE HIGHLIGHTS

## HOW WE ENGAGED THE PUBLIC



## ABOUT PARTICIPANTS

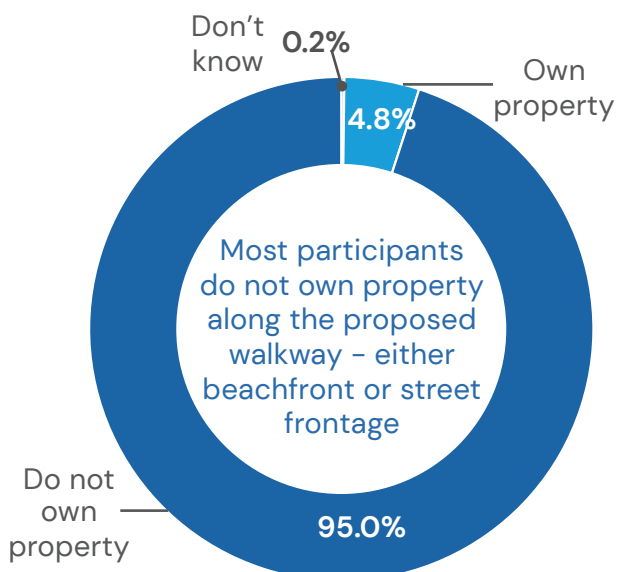
### Area of Residence

- ▶ Departure Bay / Mid-Town District: **40.4%**
- ▶ Downtown University District: **22.5%**
- ▶ North Slope District: **17.0%**
- ▶ North Town District: **3.0%**
- ▶ South Nanaimo & Other: **3.0%**
- ▶ Elsewhere in the RDN: **4.0%**
- ▶ Elsewhere on Vancouver Island: **0.7%**



### Top 3 things activities people might do on walkway

- 1 Exercise – 76.2%
- 2 Access the beach / waterfront areas – 72.2%
- 3 Appreciate nature or the environment – 69.7%



80%

Either support or strongly support the waterfront walkway (rounded)

15%

Either don't support or strongly don't support the waterfront walkway



## PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS



### Top 3 most important features for the walkway

- 1 Access to waterfront or beach areas
- 2 Greenery (trees, plantings and protection of treed slopes)
- 3 Separation of cycling and walking users



### Top things participants are most concerned about

- 1 Environmental protection
- 2 Operation and maintenance
- 3 Consideration for anticipated climate change impacts

## FUNDING



- ▶ Strong support for a combination of funding models including exploration of grant funding opportunities, City reserve funds, or supporting City council to go to a borrowing referendum or Alternate Approvals Process (AAP)
- ▶ Many people support moving the project from the planning stages to implementation as long as thorough investigation of life cycle funding and contingencies are determined and costs are carefully managed to mitigate cost overruns

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS



### WALKWAY PRECEDENTS

Look to precedents in other waterfront cities with a successful waterfront walkways.



### PUBLIC ACCESS

Access to the public waterfront and beach areas is very important – consider public parking, transit options, and mobility. Others are concerned about negative community and private property impacts with access.



### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Protect existing natural areas – some want to keep the natural feel of the area. Mitigating impacts to marine, wildlife, bird, environmental habitats is important.



### DEVELOPMENT, COSTS & OPERATION

Implement carefully and manage long-term operations and maintenance to avoid cost overruns and public debt. Others believe public funding is best allocated towards other pressing civic needs or even other walkway segments. Developing the walkway incrementally over time can manage cost.



### WALKWAY DESIGN

Some people support a functional yet simpler walkway with more natural materials. Others prefer more amenities to enhance user experience. Environmental impacts and sea level rise considerations should be taken into account as well destination end points.



### FIRST NATIONS COLLABORATION

It is important to involve Snuneymuxw First Nations due to land right considerations and ancestral burial grounds. Consider educational opportunities along the walkway.



### PUBLIC SAFETY & ENJOYMENT

Results indicated that support increased public security and safety enhancements along the walkway will help people feel comfortable. Better enforcement around dogs, littering, noise, and negative social behavior is strongly encouraged.



### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

People support economic development opportunities along the walkway for tourism, employment, and community improvement.



Concept for Departure Bay  
Waterfront Walkway

# 1 OVERVIEW

The City of Nanaimo's Departure Bay waterfront walkway, cycle, beach, and environmental improvements project envisions linking the existing trail behind the BC Ferries Terminal to the existing walkway near the Kin Hut at Kinsmen Park.

This section provides an introduction to the project and what we asked people to engage on.





# 1.1 ABOUT THE PROJECT

## Departure Bay Waterfront Walkway

The City of Nanaimo's waterfront walkway is a much-valued community asset. The [Nanaimo Waterfront Walkway Implementation Plan](#) envisions a 13 km-long accessible pathway from Departure Bay to the Nanaimo River Estuary. The plan identifies the Departure Bay segment as a top priority based on public feedback. Upgrades will link the existing trail behind the BC Ferries Terminal to the existing walkway near the Kin Hut at Kinsmen Park. Upgrades would provide a continuous, accessible pathway with improved connectivity to make it easier to walk and bike around the City.

In June 2021, the City of Nanaimo welcomed public feedback on the proposed improvements for improved walking, cycling, beach access, and shoreline habitat and on funding options for the Departure Bay segment.

### WALKWAY DEVELOPMENT



Three sections of the Departure Bay walkway would be constructed in one phase:

- ▶ South Segment: from the existing BC Ferries trail across Northfield Creek
- ▶ Central Segment: Below Cilaire Bluffs (from White Eagle Terrace to Battersea Road)
- ▶ North Segment: along Battersea and Randle Roads to connect to the Kin Hut area

The Departure Bay segment (S1 in the map) between Departure Bay and the BC Ferries Terminal has been identified as a high priority based on public feedback and is the focus of this project.

## KEY IMPROVEMENTS

Recommended improvements to the waterfront walkway have also been noted in multiple existing policy documents including the 2016–2019 Strategic Plan Update, the Official Community Plan, and the Transportation Master Plan. Implementation of the overall walkway would be developed in phases with anticipated completion of the 13 km-long segment around 2027.

- ▶ Better public access to beaches in key areas
- ▶ Improved access for all ages and abilities
- ▶ Separated cycle path and waterfront walkway in key areas
- ▶ Increased connectivity to existing cycling and pedestrian networks including a bridge over Northfield Creek
- ▶ Improved amenities such as seating, picnic areas, rest areas, cycle parking, and low grade lighting
- ▶ Coastal restoration that protects and enhances shoreline areas for improved sustainability and considers anticipated sea level rise impacts
- ▶ Habitat improvements to the Northfield estuary including protection of existing environmentally sensitive areas
- ▶ Re-vegetation and protection of existing treed slopes in areas
- ▶ Interpretive elements for cultural learning and nature appreciation
- ▶ Traffic calming, “local vehicle only” areas, and parking restrictions on Battersea and Randle Roads to enhance pedestrian and cyclist safety



Expansion of the walkway will require continued technical development as well as continued coordination with local stakeholders, local First Nations, interest groups, and the community.





Concept for pedestrian and cycling routes along Departure Bay with signage, picnic areas, and beach access

## 2 ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The Departure Bay waterfront walkway, cycle, beach, and environmental improvements project was an online process during June 2021.

This section provides an overview about how we engaged people including outreach tools, engagement activities, and how we collected input.





## 2.1 OVERVIEW

### WHY DID WE ENGAGE?

Engaging with the community was important to help understand public support for the project and concept design as well as considerations for the design if the project moves forward for further design development and council approval and funding. Key goals of the engagement process were to:

- ▶ Raise awareness about the proposed waterfront walkway, cycle, beach and environmental improvements project, its process, objectives, and anticipated outcomes;
- ▶ Encourage participation in the process to understand public perspectives;
- ▶ Seek input from a diverse range of participants using an online format;
- ▶ Share back to participants what was heard during the engagement process and outline the next steps in the process; and
- ▶ Facilitate an open and transparent engagement that provides information to allow the public to understand the project and provide meaningful feedback to help inform civic decision-making.

### WHO DID WE ENGAGE?

Engagement focused on obtaining input from people across Nanaimo – residents from all Nanaimo neighbourhoods, including those who live in the Departure Bay area.

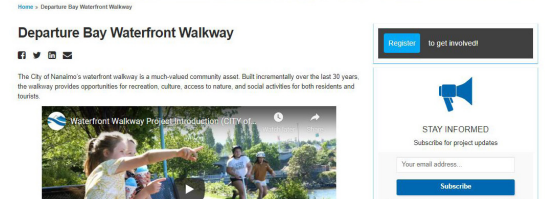
### WHAT WAS THE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS?

The engagement process was integrated within the overall technical process to develop conceptual options for the waterfront walkway. For the project, one phase of public engagement occurred in June 2021 and prior to subsequent steps for detailed design, permitting, and construction pending council approval.

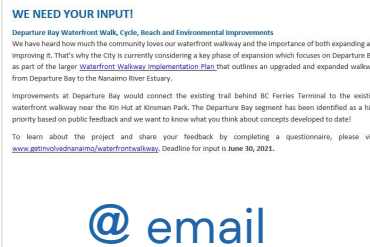
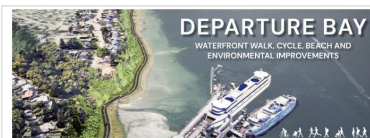


# 2.2 OUTREACH

## HOW WAS THE PUBLIC ENGAGED?



### WEBSITE CONTENT



### E-NOTIFICATIONS

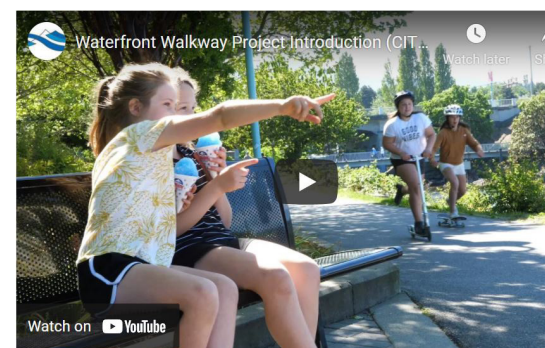


## ENGAGEMENT DURING COVID-19

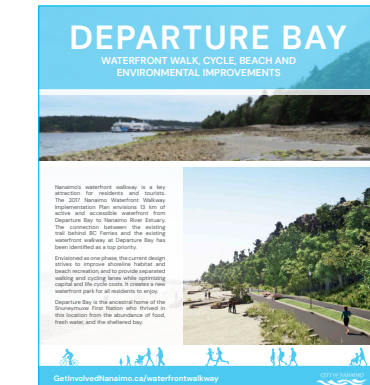
Public engagement for the project was online to adhere to physical distancing guidelines in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout engagement, a key consideration has been to develop an approach that continues to meet engagement goals, even though activities have been modified to follow current health guidelines.



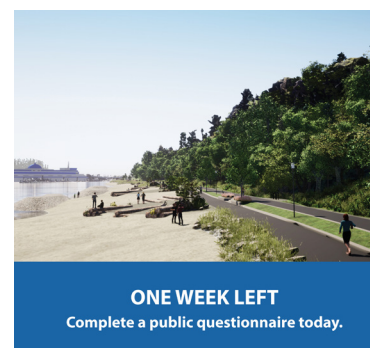
### TEMPORARY SIGNAGE



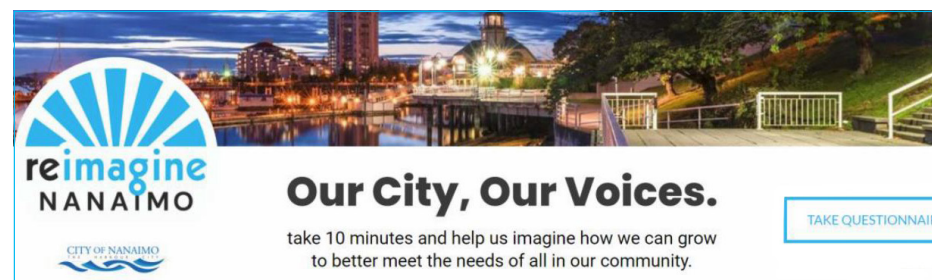
### PROJECT VIDEO



### PROJECT BROCHURE



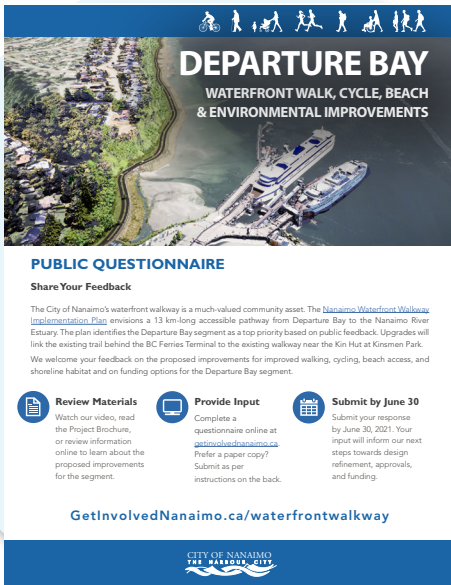
### SOCIAL MEDIA



### CONTENT ON #REIMAGINE NANAIMO TO LINK TO PAGE

## 2.3 ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

### HOW WAS INPUT RECEIVED?



#### PUBLIC QUESTIONNAIRE (ONLINE)

A public questionnaire was provided on the project webpage through Get Involved Nanaimo for participants to provide their input on the proposed project.

The questionnaire featured four main sections including: About You, Proposed Improvements, Funding Considerations, and General Comments. A printable PDF of the questionnaire was available online for download and participants could also request a copy from the City paper format. The questionnaire was open to all participants.

#### WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS & PHONE CALLS

The project webpage provided a contact phone number and email for participants to contact the City if they had specific questions about the proposed Departure Bay walkway, cycle, beach, and environmental improvements project. The City provided response to inquiries and documented these contacts and responses.

## 2.4 BY THE NUMBERS

This page summarizes what we heard during the engagement period which was open between **June 7** to **June 30**, 2021 through Get Involved Nanaimo.



This means downloaded documents, site visits to the Frequently Asked Questions, reviews of online tools, and participation in the public questionnaire.



Participants provided input using the online public questionnaire including completion of the questions and providing comments.



Thousands of participants visited the project website – over 400 people per day to learn more about the project and to provide input.



Participants provided thousands of comments about the proposed walkway indicating great interest in the project.





## 3 WHAT WE HEARD

This section summarizes what we heard from the public about the Departure Bay waterfront walkway, beach, cycle, and environmental improvements project including participant demographics, feedback on the proposed improvements and funding considerations, and general comments.

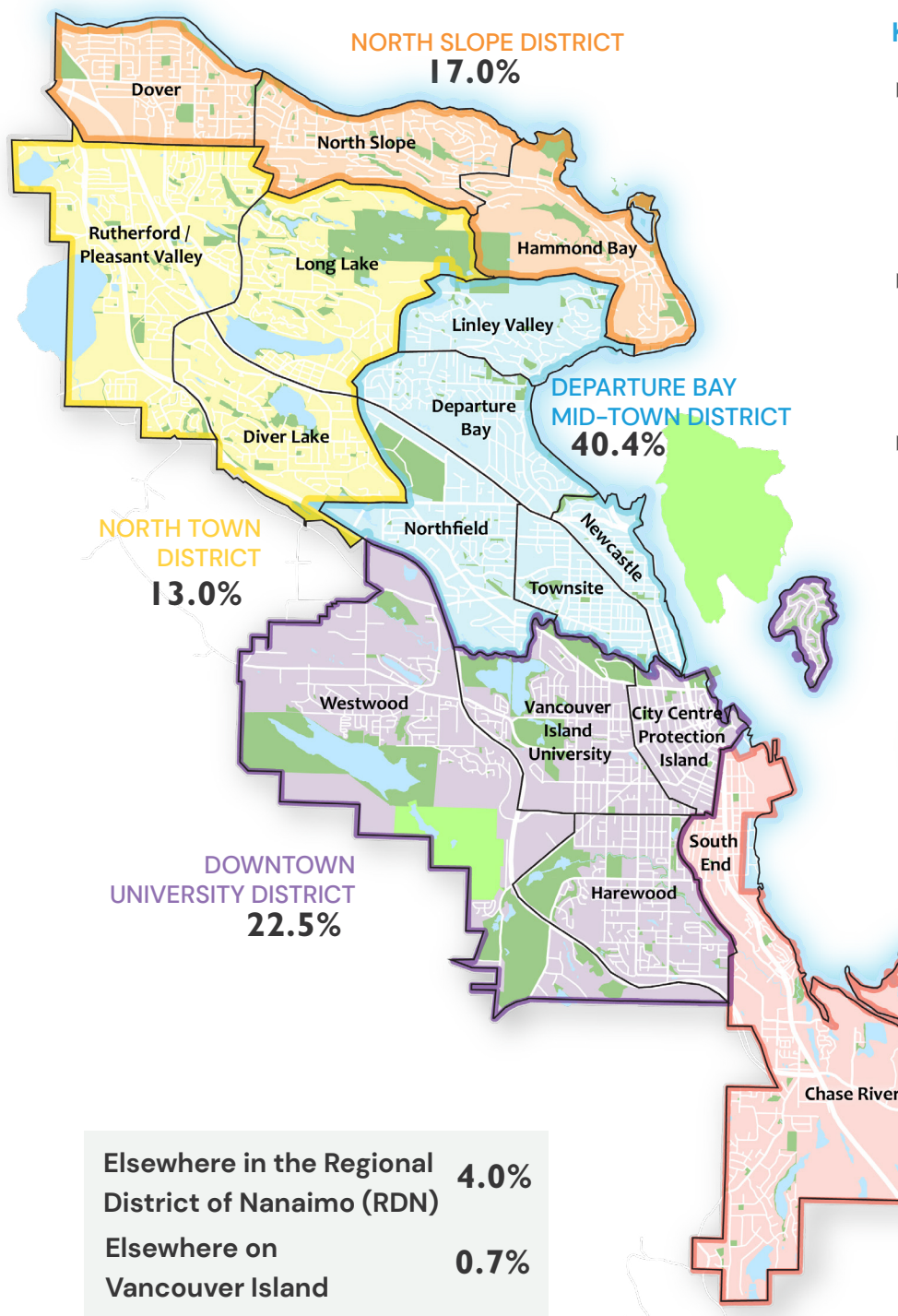




# 3.1 WHO PARTICIPATED?



## WHERE PEOPLE LIVE



### KEY FINDINGS

- ▶ Geographical representation indicated higher participation from the Departure Bay / Mid-Town District (**40.4%**) and Downtown University District (**22.5%**)
- ▶ There was slightly lower participation from the North Slope District (**17.0%**), North Town District (**13.0%**), and South Nanaimo (**3.0%**)
- ▶ 'Other' areas noted included:
  - » South Nanaimo (including Chase River,)
  - » Cedar
  - » Cinnabar Valley
  - » Gabriola Island
  - » Nanoose Bay
  - » Lower Mainland - Vancouver, White Rock



### NANAIMO DISTRICTS & NEIGHBOURHOODS MAP

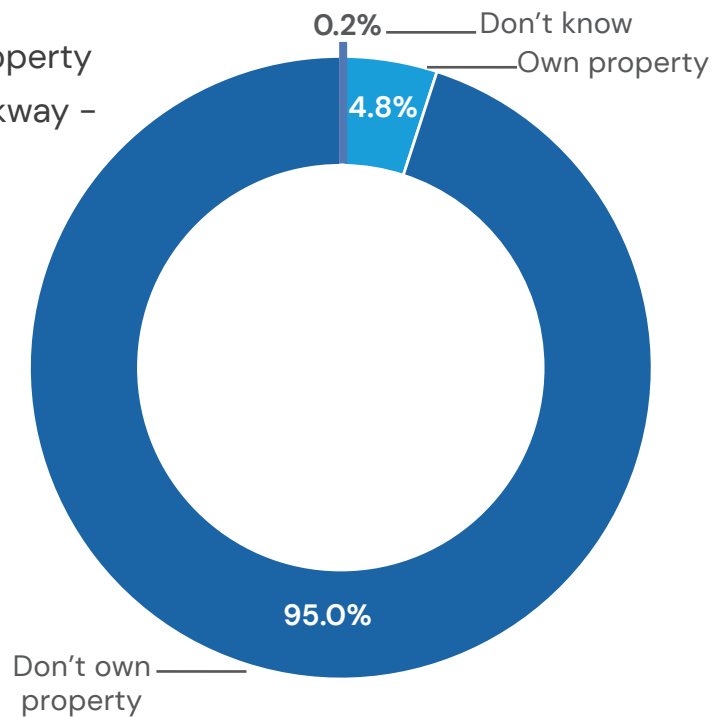


## PROPERTY OWNERSHIP

Participants were asked if they own property along the proposed Departure Bay walkway – either beachfront or street frontage.

### KEY FINDINGS

- ▶ The majority of participants who responded to the questionnaire (**95%**) do not own property along the proposed Departure Bay walkway
- ▶ Only **4.8%** of participants who responded to the questionnaire own property either along the beachfront or street frontage

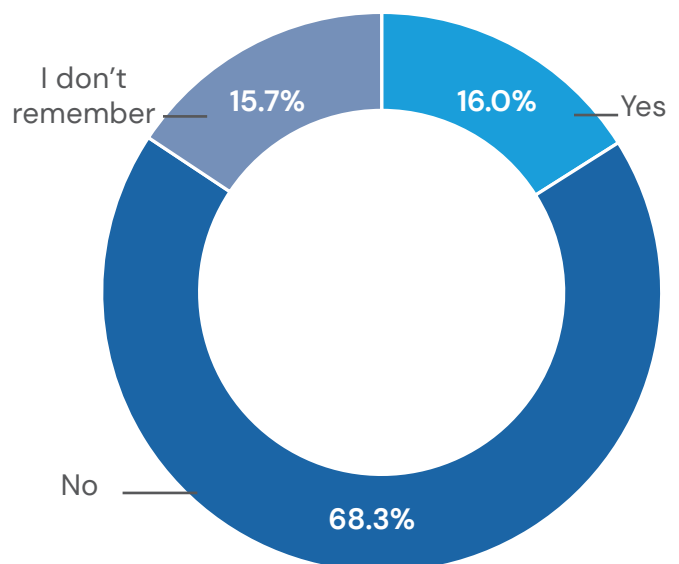


## PARTICIPATION IN PREVIOUS PROCESS

Participants were asked if they participated in the 2017 engagement process for the Nanaimo Waterfront Walkway Implementation Plan:

### KEY FINDINGS

- ▶ Most people did not participate in the previous process although **16%** were involved in 2017.

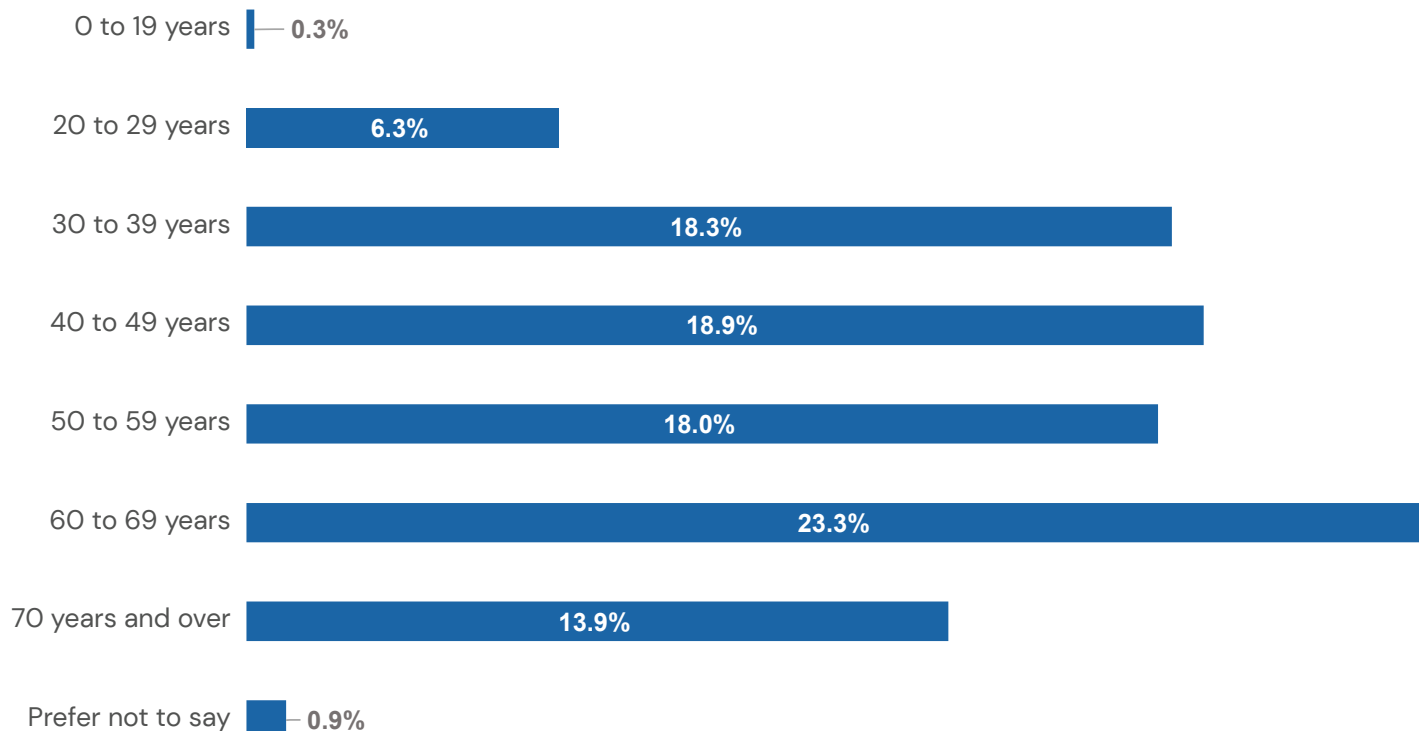




# WHO PARTICIPATED?



## AGE RANGE

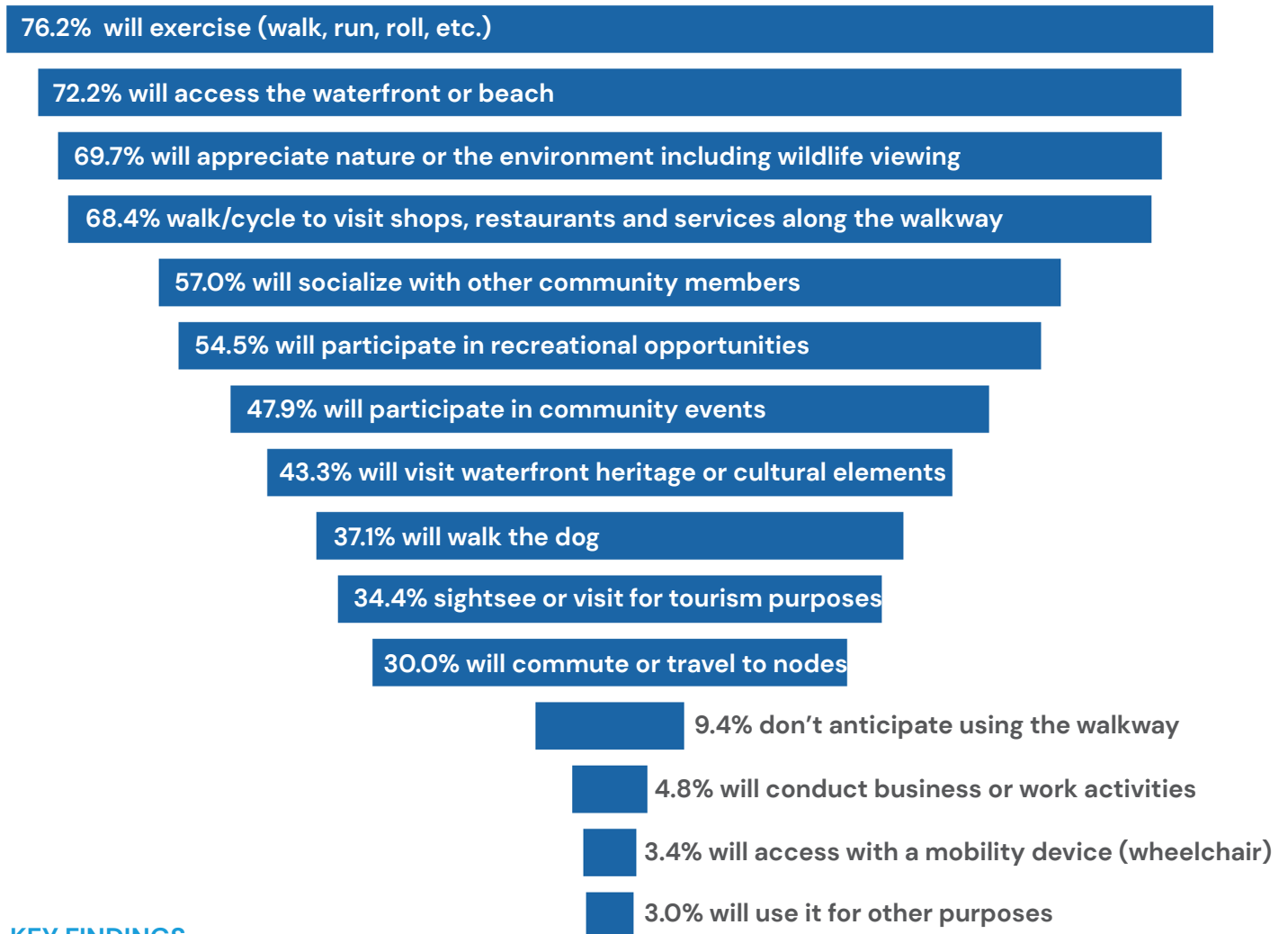


## KEY FINDINGS

- ▶ Participants represented a wide range of age groups
- ▶ Participants in the 60 to 69 age range provided the most responses at **23.3%**
- ▶ Participants in the 30 to 39, 40 to 49, and 50 to 59 age ranges were generally evenly distributed between **18.0%** and **18.9%**
- ▶ There were limited responses for the under 29 age range at **6.3%** which is typical due to differences in lifestyle, neighbourhood demographics, or property ownership for example



## HOW PEOPLE WILL LIKELY USE THE WALKWAY



### KEY FINDINGS

- ▶ The results indicated that the majority of people will use the walkway in some way with only **9.4%** anticipating that they would not use it
- ▶ The most common activities were exercise, accessing the beach or waterfront areas, or nature appreciation
- ▶ Responses also indicate that many people will use the walkway for active transportation purposes whether exercising, traveling to other areas in the city including other travel nodes, and to visit amenities along the waterfront
- ▶ For those who did not anticipate using the walkway, reasons included:
  - » wanting the area kept as is or as natural as possible
  - » concerns about the increase in public littering, dogs, parking issues, and lack of emergency access
  - » concerns about safety and security
  - » concerns about drug use, illegal camping, noise
  - » preference to use funds for other civic priorities
  - » concerns about access from other areas in Nanaimo

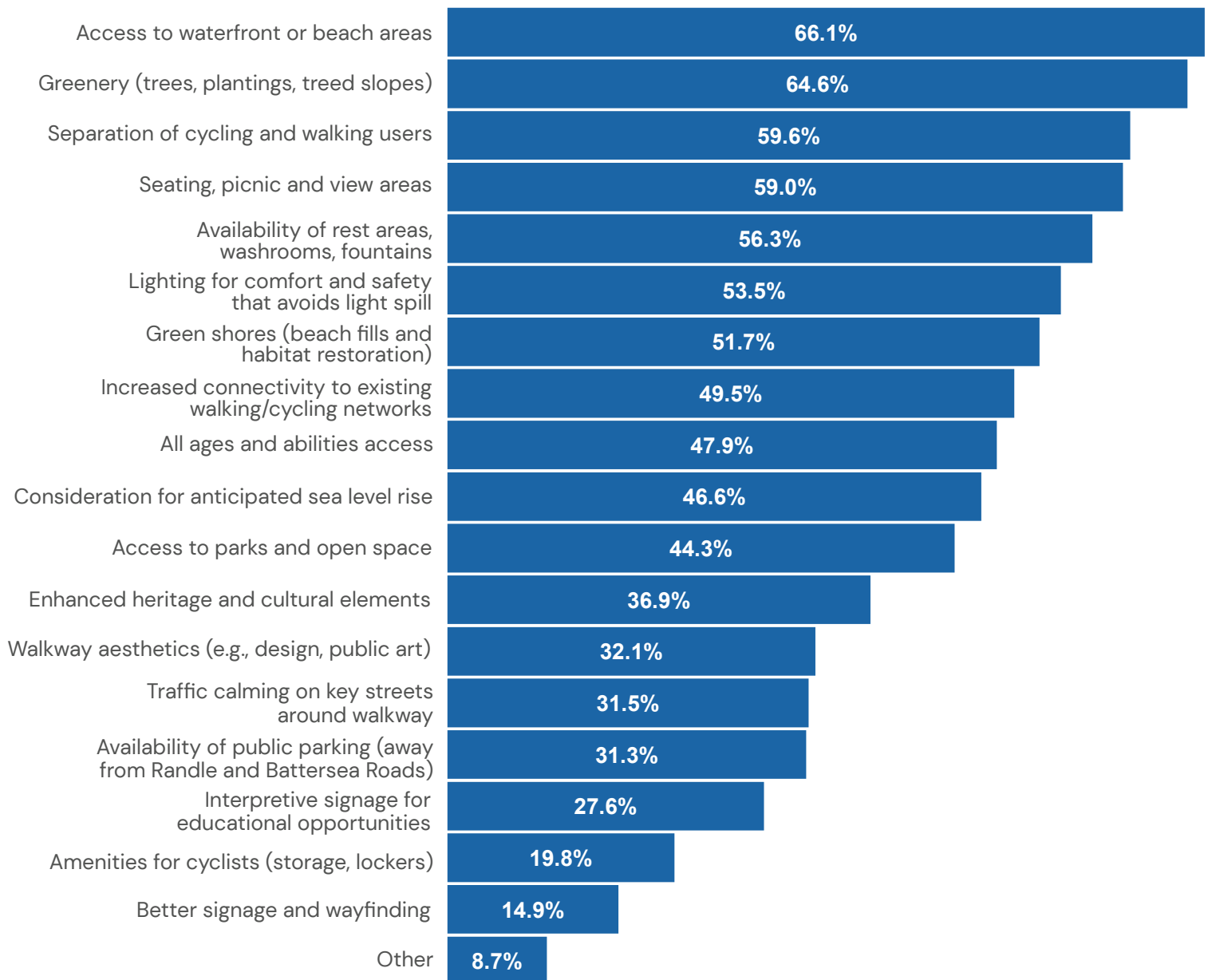


## 3.2 PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS



### MOST IMPORTANT POTENTIAL FEATURES

Participants were asked what features were most important to them if the walkway was further developed in terms of design.





## KEY FINDINGS

Smooth paths for skateboarding and scootering. Different colour paths for walking and cycling so that it's clear for pedestrians to not walk on cycle paths. Great lighting for night time.



### Top 3 most important features for the walkway

- 1 Access to waterfront or beach areas
- 2 Greenery (trees, plantings and protection of treed slopes)
- 3 Separation of cycling and walking users

- ▶ The results indicated that many people support amenities along the waterfront walkway including seating, picnic areas, viewing areas, rest areas, washrooms, water fountains, and lighting as long as it does not impact nearby properties or the environment
- ▶ Participants were less concerned about cycling amenities, signage and wayfinding, and interpretive signage for educational purposes

### Other important considerations:

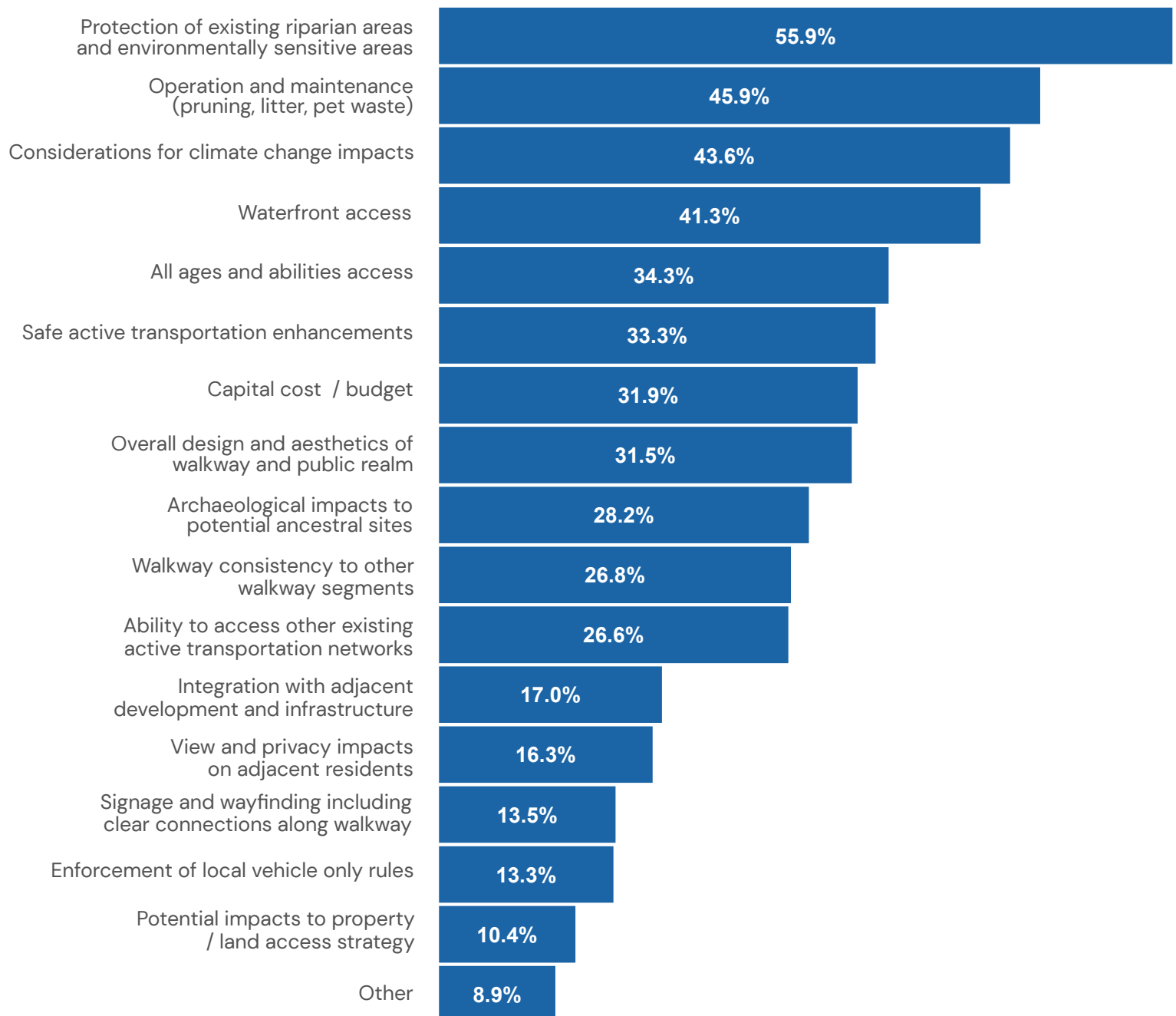
- ▶ Strong environmental considerations for:
  - » Marine, wildlife, and bird habitats
  - » Retention of tidal pools
  - » Mitigating potential littering, waste, pollution, and runoff to current natural areas
  - » Mitigating light pollution
  - » Managing impacts a potential structure could have on the shoreline
- ▶ Maintaining the peaceful ambience of the area
- ▶ Walkway design – low maintenance, natural materials, and located away from shoreline
- ▶ Adding amenities such as fishing piers for fishing and crabbing
- ▶ Manage short and long-term maintenance costs
- ▶ Neighbouring properties including privacy, noise, beach access, and safety and security
- ▶ Enhanced family friendly activities such as parks, playgrounds, and picnic areas
- ▶ Shelter spaces for business, work, writing, art and community meet-up activities
- ▶ Boat launch areas for non-motorized boats
- ▶ Dog management
- ▶ Erosion control at Cilaire Bluffs
- ▶ Enhanced safety and security including potential bike police and enforcement
- ▶ Potential small businesses or pop-up cafes, ice cream shops, food trucks, vendors, etc.
- ▶ 'Destination' points at either end
- ▶ Collaboration with Snuneymuxw First Nation



# PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS



## WHAT PEOPLE ARE MOST CONCERNED ABOUT



## KEY FINDINGS



### Top things participants are most concerned about

- 1 Environmental protection
- 2 Operation and maintenance
- 3 Consideration for anticipated climate change impacts

- ▶ The results indicated that protection of existing natural areas was very important – many want to keep the natural feel of the area and to mitigate any impacts to marine, wildlife, bird, and environmental habitat in balance with enhanced waterfront access for users
- ▶ Long-term operations and maintenance was also a key consideration as well as overall cost management and spending priorities
- ▶ Overall participants were less concerned about potential impact to neighbouring areas as well as signage and wayfinding along the walkway; however, local homeowners expressed concerns about safety, privacy, erosion, parking issues, security, light pollution, access, and property value

### Other concerns:

- ▶ Managing the cost of the walkway with a simpler, less costly design or continue to develop incrementally over time to manage costs, operations, and maintenance
- ▶ Disturbance of Snuneymuxw First Nations burial sites, land / treaty considerations, and consent of Snuneymuxw First Nations
- ▶ Concern about spending limited tax payer funds on a community asset when there are other more pressing issues such as housing affordability, current road/sidewalk maintenance, homelessness, opioid crisis, and crime enforcement
- ▶ Concern about potential public safety issues
- ▶ Preference that other walkway segments should be completed first or that existing segments are better maintained
- ▶ Concerns with proposed design as a raised walkway, as a double lane path, as a paved path etc.
- ▶ Concerns about increased traffic to the area and lack of available parking or transit



*Besides the impact to the “south” foreshore, loss of habitat and wildlife, I am concerned about the loss of community and safety in my own residential neighbourhood. I will no longer be able to chat on a weekend afternoon from my yard with my neighbours while we work in our gardens. My children will not be able to “play in our neighbourhood”. Our narrow road will become a large divided “busy highway” with a steady stream of strangers transiting through...*

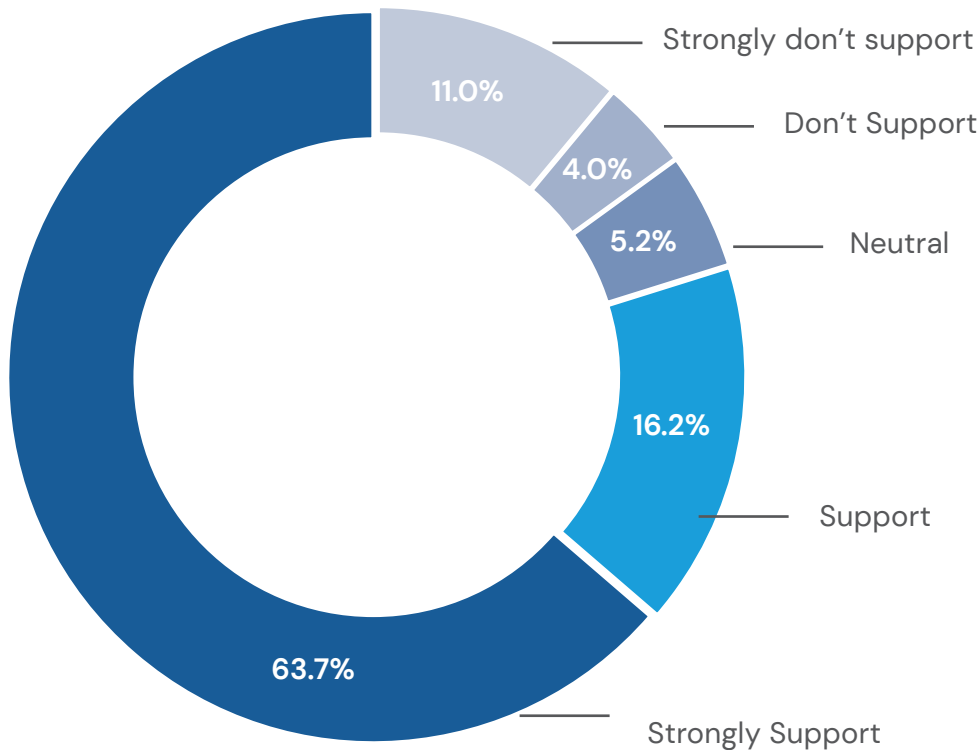




# PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS



## DO PEOPLE SUPPORT THE WALKWAY?



- ▶ A total of **79.9%** of participants either support or strongly support the walkway
- ▶ Many believe that it is a good investment for the City's future, will be well-used, and will provide multiple benefits.
- ▶ Many expressed excitement for the project to be completed as soon as possible
- ▶ A total of **15%** of participants do not support or strongly do not support the walkway with 5.2% remaining neutral
- ▶ Reasons concerned maintaining the current natural state, cost, civic spending priorities, access, and concerns about traffic, litter, negative social behaviour in neighbouring communities



*Quality of life doesn't have to be at the expense of other areas of opportunity. This walkway and other recreational, tourist and entertainment activities are in dire need. It doesn't mean we shouldn't address other issues but we shouldn't inhibit these... Bring on the full walkway, all the way to the cruise ship terminal. Let's do life stuff. Let's live! Let's go!*





## WHY PEOPLE SUPPORT

### LONG-TERM COMMUNITY BENEFITS

- ▶ Visionary idea that provides a community asset (livability, enhanced quality of life)
- ▶ Provides City beautification
- ▶ Embraces Nanaimo's title of a 'harbour city' that celebrates its location on the coastline – waterfront is currently underutilized
- ▶ Inspires community pride and feeling of Nanaimo as a 'world class' city
- ▶ Provides opportunities for learning about environment and climate, heritage, and culture including Snuneymuxw First Nations
- ▶ May mitigate current social issues along the waterfront and clean up industrial areas

### PROMOTES ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION & COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY

- ▶ Provides a safer, flatter route to access Stewart Avenue to downtown without walking/cycling down Departure Bay Road hill
- ▶ Improves walking, cycling, and commuting connections that lend to a sustainable and productive city
- ▶ Bridges the gap between North and South Nanaimo, connecting them in a usable and enjoyable route
- ▶ Plans for the City's anticipated growth for more public spaces to meet projected population

### SUCCESSFUL PRECEDENTS FOR WATERFRONT DESTINATIONS

- ▶ Precedents that had initial pushback and are now successful (e.g., Vancouver bike lanes)
- ▶ Develops the waterfront as a destination area similar to other waterfront cities around the world (Victoria, Vancouver, Copenhagen, Sydney, Parksville, Kelowna, Portland, Calgary, etc.)
- ▶ Improves access to BC Ferries and provides an area to relax while waiting for the ferries

### PROVIDES SOCIAL, HEALTH, & RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

- ▶ Provides access to nature and wildlife viewing
- ▶ Provides physical and mental health benefits for all ages and abilities and through all seasons
- ▶ Provides a safe activity for people of all ages and abilities to enjoy (i.e., current rocks can be an issue for those with mobility challenges)
- ▶ Potential for more parks, sandy beaches, etc.
- ▶ Provides all residents more public access to Nanaimo's waterfront to enjoy scenic views
- ▶ Encourages social interaction and outdoor gathering spaces to connect with others
- ▶ Enhances recreational opportunities along the waterfront (swimming, boating, biking, picnics)
- ▶ Educational opportunities – to learn about nature, climate change, culture, heritage, arts, etc.

### ENCOURAGES ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- ▶ Encourages tourism for visitors, cruise ship passengers, etc. which can offset taxes
- ▶ Benefits the local economy with opportunities for young entrepreneurs, small businesses, restaurants, cafes, ice cream stands, food trucks, bike rentals, watersports, etc. Some comments noted Nanaimo's untapped potential for development and that the walkway could kick-start positive change.
- ▶ Will attract new residents as a desirable place to live, contributing to economic growth and investment

### FOSTERS SUSTAINABILITY GOALS

- ▶ Helps meet climate goals for lower emissions which is essential for City's future resiliency
- ▶ Will restore beach and provide environmental enhancements to the shoreline





# PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS



## WHY PEOPLE DON'T SUPPORT

### COST & FUNDING PRIORITIES

- ▶ Potential increase to property taxes
- ▶ Concern about significant expense for potential use
- ▶ Belief that civic funding should be prioritized for improving existing waterfront segments (i.e., around Port Place where there is more parking and visitors; from Departure Bay to downtown, Cypress-Brechin; boat yards; South Nanaimo)
- ▶ Opinion that civic funding should be utilized for other priorities such as other infrastructure, maintenance, downtown revitalization, and basic needs (housing, environment, health)
- ▶ Concerns the walkway will only benefit people in the Departure Bay neighbourhood and not the wider community

### PREFER EXISTING CONDITIONS

- ▶ Preference for a more natural beach area that is not hardscaped or developed – left as is especially pocket beaches below Cilaire
- ▶ Do not feel it is needed and / or satisfaction with existing waterfront walkway, trails, parks

### NEIGHBOURHOOD IMPACTS

- ▶ Increase in public use may bring litter, overnight camping, more dog waste, noise, pollution etc.
- ▶ Potential loss of privacy for residences along proposed waterfront walkway and light impacts
- ▶ Potential parking issues in the neighbouring communities and increased traffic due to people accessing the area by car as current parking options and transit are limited
- ▶ Concerns about negative impacts to property values due to perceived loss of beach access and quiet enjoyment
- ▶ Concern that walkway will attract negative social behaviour to neighbouring communities (e.g., crime, safety, social issues)
- ▶ Concerns if the walkway will be safe to use at night especially for women, seniors



*School students, University students and citizen scientist use the beach for study. A natural beach in the middle of a growing City is a gem to be protected. Leave it alone.*



### ENVIRONMENTAL OR CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS

- ▶ Potential environmental impacts to shoreline, marine, and wildlife habitats and corridors
- ▶ Concerns that walkway implementation will not restore the beach but do the opposite
- ▶ Concern that capital investment will be wasted due to climate change vulnerability of the walkway to rising sea levels – some understanding of scenarios is desired for publicly-owned infrastructure
- ▶ Concerns about carbon footprint and the resources required to develop the walkway
- ▶ Concerns about erosion issues at Cilaire bluffs
- ▶ Concerns about light pollution impacting sensitive ecosystems
- ▶ Concern that the natural shoreline may be impacted by walkway due to alteration of the wave energy patterns along the tidal areas, risking damage to a thriving, sensitive ecological area which includes a series of zones with different species, especially eelgrass, important to migrating birds, and juvenile fish and recovering sea star populations

### CULTURAL IMPACTS

- ▶ Potential impacts to Snunemuxw burial ground and perceived invasiveness of a settler footprint on a sacred, natural area – and at a great cost



## WHAT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED DURING FURTHER DESIGN DEVELOPMENT



### WALKWAY DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT

- ▶ Develop a simpler, less costly walkway – low maintenance, durable, functional or narrower walkway (one-path only) to manage costs
- ▶ Provide destination points at either end of the walkway (e.g., public market)
- ▶ Use low impact development (e.g., permeable pavers) or more natural walkway materials / design for the walkway
- ▶ Use dark sky principles and practices to reduce light pollution and reduce costs
- ▶ Consider of global warming and rising sea levels by using pilings and an elevated walkway
- ▶ Ensure public washrooms are both safe and accessible
- ▶ Retain some peacefulness and privacy in some beach areas
- ▶ Allow beach improvements that would provide areas for public swimming



### WALKWAY ACCESS

- ▶ Ensure universal accessibility
- ▶ Consider public parking areas for waterfront access (Battersea and undeveloped properties for parking access)
- ▶ Ensure the public walkway remain publicly accessible



### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

- ▶ Strong environmental protection and enhancement to maintain shoreline integrity
- ▶ Consider threading the trail behind the riparian zone with designated water view points at various points to preserve the riparian forest



### COLLABORATION WITH LOCAL FIRST NATIONS

- ▶ Involve Snuneymuxw First Nation and confirm support of the project; consider an interpretive centre for First Nations culture



### FACTOR IN OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE

- ▶ Maintain completed walkway to ensure it is safe, clean, attractive for it to be used including grounds maintenance, litter disposal, dog waste management, tree pruning, etc.
- ▶ Enhance enforcement for public safety and security (e.g., police on bikes)
- ▶ Provide dog amenities and management to allow some off-leash areas while keeping other areas dog-free with strong enforcement and public education to mitigate conflicts

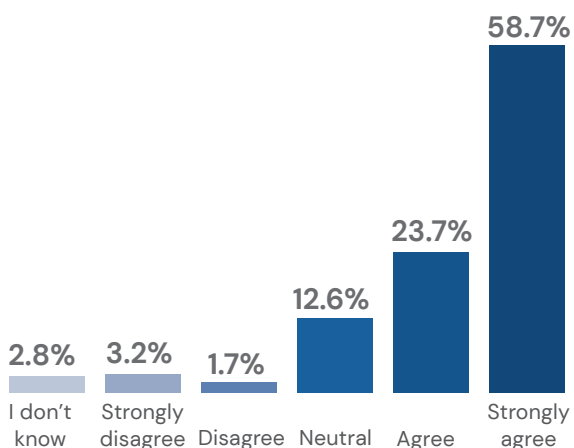


## 3.3 FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS



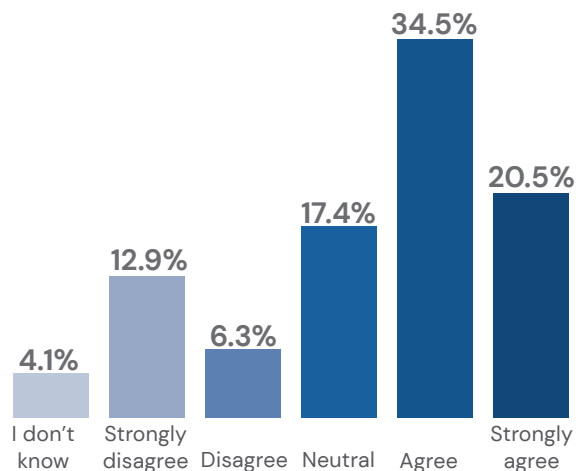
### POTENTIAL FUNDING MODELS

Participants were asked for feedback on potential funding models in terms of their general agreement and if they had any other suggestions for the City to consider.



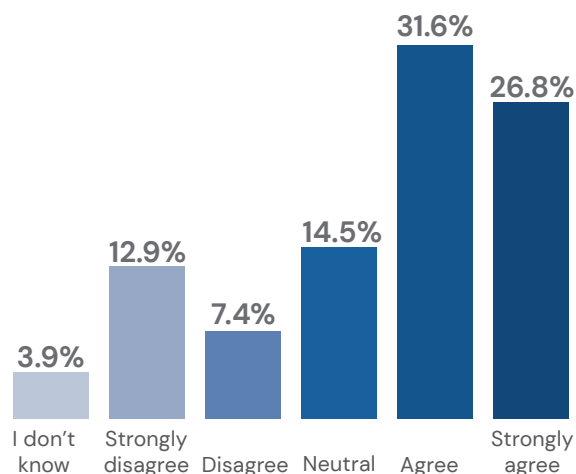
#### EXPLORING GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

Through senior levels of government to fund a portion of the cost with a focus on both walk/cycle programs and disaster mitigation (e.g., sea level rise adjustments)



#### CITY RESERVE FUNDS

Recognizing that other projects compete for funding.



#### SUPPORTING CITY COUNCIL TO GO TO A BORROWING REFERENDUM OR ALTERNATE APPROVAL PROCESS

On the basis that improvements will benefit existing and future residents and to share in the capital and debt servicing costs

## SUMMARY

- ▶ Strong support for a combination of funding models
- ▶ Grant funding should be explored thoroughly with **58.7%** of participants indicating strong agreement for potential grants for active transportation, infrastructure, climate change adaptation, COVID-19 recovery, economic development, tourism, and heritage and culture
- ▶ Many people support moving the project from the planning stages to implementation as long as thorough investigation of funding is determined and costs are carefully managed to mitigate cost over-runs
- ▶ The project should also consider the full life cycle cost of infrastructure that includes long-term operations and maintenance
- ▶ Responses indicated that the City could consider a functional but simpler design (i.e., natural materials, one pathway instead of two) developed incrementally over time to save costs and not overspend initially– details can be added over time
- ▶ There was mixed support about a potential referendum – some people felt a referendum is necessary for a project of this scale while others believe the cost for a referendum would be too great and would risk the project moving forward
- ▶ If a referendum was held, suggestions included ensuring that a strong public communication campaign clearly outlines the costs and benefits, and it should be held during an election for both participation and cost
- ▶ Some comments indicated that the public trusts council to make the decision on behalf of the community



*I support the project but I am concerned about funding and putting a further burden on tax payers when we have seen a sharp increase in city taxes over the past few years especially as we are on a pension that doesn't increase at the same rate as our taxes and basic living expenses.*



*I am retired the last 10 years, love where I live, and want to have a lovely (but safe) and interesting place to live out my last days on this earth. Because of my mobility issues I am daily on my balcony and have great joy watching people swim in the water, paddleboard, sail, fish, etc. Your design gives great interest to all, includes First Nations recognition/history, plus adds "joie de vivre" in this community by including more people to visit. This destination beach is also visible from any travelling ferry passengers, including cyclists, and is an attractant to visit here and spend valuable tourist dollars even for a short visit of a couple of hours. I hope somehow this project is passed.*





# FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS

## FUNDING OPPOSITION



- ▶ **Funding Priorities** – funding should be used for other civic priorities (e.g. opioid crisis, mental health support, housing affordability, downtown revitalization, indigenous reconciliation, environmental protection, climate change, health, playgrounds, emergency preparedness)
- ▶ **Maintain existing assets first** – such as current park, trail, sidewalks, infrastructure, basic needs
- ▶ **Prioritize other walkway segments** – (e.g., south Nanaimo, near Edgewater condos, BC Ferries to downtown, boat basin, Port Place)
- ▶ **Annual household costs** – Concerns about the estimated of \$37 per household for 20 years being too much for personal annual use
- ▶ **Potential tax increase** – Concerns about tax increases especially on lower income households and inflation
- ▶ **Timing** – concern about timing for investment in the project during COVID-19 recovery until the full impacts are realized
- ▶ **Cost management** – concerns about cost overruns and funding mismanagement if the project proceeds
- ▶ **Public debt** – Concerns about borrowing and civic debt and long-term impacts to the community. Concerns the City does not currently have the funding to proceed with a project of this scale and perception that funding would be wasteful with limited resources available
- ▶ **Contingency** – concerns estimates do not factor in necessary contingency and interest rate changes at this level of project design and uncertainty. Potential additional costs associated with:
  - » Legal arguments put forward by owners for riparian property expropriations which could vary
  - » Potential environmental /fisheries issues requiring legal process,
  - » Potential geotechnical/slope stability costs
  - » Concerns about ongoing operations and maintenance costs including safety, enforcement, pruning, litter

## FUNDING SUPPORT



- ▶ **Long-term investment** – will benefit future generations by enhancing community livability and indirect benefits
- ▶ **Property value increases** – may increase property values for neighbourhoods along the walkway due to home desirability
- ▶ **Economic development** – beneficial for tourism including ferry passengers, employment opportunities for businesses along the waterfront, potential opportunities for pop-ups, cafes, restaurants, bike rentals, beach areas etc.
- ▶ **Cost planning** – Proceed as costs will continue to rise in the future
- ▶ **Annual household costs** – estimated annual cost per household is manageable (e.g., coffee for a week) and reasonable for a significant community asset that will benefit both residents and the community
- ▶ **Climate change impacts** – will encourage more sustainable modes of transportation to travel within the city and to other transportation nodes which will save costs on potential environmental impacts
- ▶ **Tax base** – Attracts development, encouraging development, will increase the tax base
- ▶ **Provides a significant community asset** – a positive investment in the community for taxpaying residents to see results of contributions





## IDEAS FOR FUNDING THE WATERFRONT WALKWAY

- ▶ Commercial Fees – funding through port fees for foreign cargo ships, BC Ferries to contribute in lieu of neighbourhood impacts and passenger benefits as well as anticipated passengers
- ▶ Use community support – grassroots involvement, solicit donations that offer deduction on property taxes, sell plaques or bricks with donator's name
- ▶ Business development – kiosks that provide revenue for maintenance, provide employment opportunities, and enhance pedestrian experience
- ▶ Property tax structures – consider lower income payment plans for lower income households
- ▶ Temporary user fees – for walkway access, bike tax
- ▶ Parking fees – for lots within the vicinity to fund the walkway
- ▶ Provide information about reserve funds – to understand project prioritization
- ▶ Review development/building permitting processes – including rezoning, developer cost levies, community amenity contributions, density bonuses, sell City land to developers to fund portions of the walkway etc.
- ▶ Partnerships – including Public-Private Partnerships (P3), partnering with the Nanaimo Land Trust, partnering with Snuneymuxw First Nation
- ▶ Undertake an economic study – to understand specifics about how project could economically benefit the community to generate income
- ▶ More technical investigation e.g., environmental, geotechnical to understand potential costs
- ▶ Understand precedents – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XfQUOHIAocY> – how bankrupt American cities stay alive



## 3.4 GENERAL COMMENTS

Participants were asked for any general comments. Comments summarized below are ideas not reflected in previous sections.

### POTENTIAL AMENITIES

- ▶ 100-ft fishing dock at the waterfront and docking station on either end or in the middle and a small boat ramp at Departure Bay
- ▶ Add and update play spaces, including unique play spaces along the walkway. Consider renovating others such as Kinsmen Park in Departure Bay
- ▶ A water park at Maffeo Sutton Park
- ▶ Wifi charging areas for business, especially with for people coming off ferry and potentially conducting meetings
- ▶ Add rentable bikes and scooters along the walkway
- ▶ Separate pedestrians and any form of wheeled traffic to enhance public safety and avoid conflicts including
  - » Clear signage
  - » Guidelines for people who use skateboards and longboards to participate in the trail usage (rather than relegating skateboards and longboards into cycling & pedestrian only signage).
  - » Considerations for potential future use of electric vehicles

### ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- ▶ More information on the inter-tidal and saltmarsh habitat design and these are difficult habitats to create
- ▶ Consider seasonal bird migration within an environmental impact assessment as many bird species use the beach seasonally

### PUBLIC ACCESS

- ▶ Access to the walkway via an improved transit system

### COMMUNITY

- ▶ Walkway could be used as a top running-event location to attract major events
- ▶ Enhanced public communication to share updates about the process and its benefits

**FOR A COMPLETE COMMENT SUMMARY** (SEE PART 2: VERBATIM COMMENTS)





Sunset in Departure Bay

## 4 NEXT STEPS

This section summarizes the next steps in the process following public engagement, and how input will be considered during further design and development of the Departure Bay waterfront walkway, beach, cycle, and environmental improvements.





# WHAT'S NEXT?

JUNE 2021



**PUBLIC  
ENGAGEMENT**

Public feedback was welcomed in June 2021 during an online engagement process.

**COMPLETE!**

SUMMER 2021



**WHAT WE  
HEARD**

This summer, we are sharing back what we heard from the public about the proposed waterfront walkway. Input will be considered by Council for project decision making and in potential further design phases.

TO BE DETERMINED



**DESIGN  
DEVELOPMENT**

The project is a conceptual study that has not yet been approved. Detailed design, permitting, and construction are pending Council review and approval.

*This project is also subject to funding and partnership approvals as marine waterfronts are administered by shared jurisdictions.*



**THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST IN THIS  
PROJECT AND FOR YOUR FEEDBACK!**









City of Nanaimo  
455 Wallace Street  
Nanaimo, BC V9R 5J6

E | [waterfrontwalkway@nanaimo.ca](mailto:waterfrontwalkway@nanaimo.ca)  
T | 250-755-4476



[GetInvolvedNanaimo.ca/waterfrontwalkway](http://GetInvolvedNanaimo.ca/waterfrontwalkway)