

ATTACHMENT A

ASPHALT LEVELS OF SERVICE

WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

CITY OF NANAIMO

October 14, 2022

URBAN
S Y S T E M S

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INTRODUCTION

There are nearly 570 kilometres of paved roads in Nanaimo and maintaining the condition of the roads is one of the many important services provided by the City. This includes patching potholes, repairing rutting, sealing cracks, maintaining road shoulders, rehabilitating and resurfacing roads, and more.

The City of Nanaimo is facing challenges in achieving sustainable funding levels to maintain the current overall pavement condition of its roadway assets and to meet public and Council expectations. To address this challenge, the City engaged Urban Systems Ltd. to conduct public engagement to better understand residents' expectations for road surface conditions, and how much they're willing to pay for the services required to maintain them.

As part of this consultation, the City and Urban Systems conducted four focus groups to engage in dialogue with the community about asphalt levels of service. Focus groups were selected as the method of engagement because they allow for two-way conversation and deliberation about levels of service and willingness to pay.

The input and feedback received during the engagement process will help influence the City's decisions about road investments and guide the City in how to make the best use of the allotted funding to meet the community's expectations and needs.

Engagement Objectives

The primary engagement objectives were to:

- Inform residents of the trade-offs associated with asphalt levels of service (LOS) to equip them to provide valuable input on desired LOS.
- Gather residents' input on desired LOS for asphalt to inform City Council decisions on target LOS and funding levels.
- Gather input from a representative sample of residents and focus on the driving experience as the primary customers of the asphalt surface.

WHO WE HEARD FROM

32

PARTICIPANTS

A total of **four virtual focus groups** were held on May 11th and 12th, 2022. The goal of the focus groups was to collect resident feedback on key elements related to the study.

Hosted on Zoom, the four focus groups were identical in format, content, and discussion topics, but scheduled on different days and at different hours to allow participants the flexibility to attend the session that worked best for them. Each event lasted approximately two hours in length.

The first half of the focus group included an overview presentation of the Asphalt Levels of Service Study to provide the public with the information required to contribute knowledgeable feedback. The second half of the session captured in-depth feedback on key topics and allowed participants to ask subject matter experts specific questions.

PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT

R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. was engaged to recruit a diverse sample of participants for the focus groups. The sample was drawn from a known telephone service provider (Malatest uses ASDE Survey Sampler Inc.).

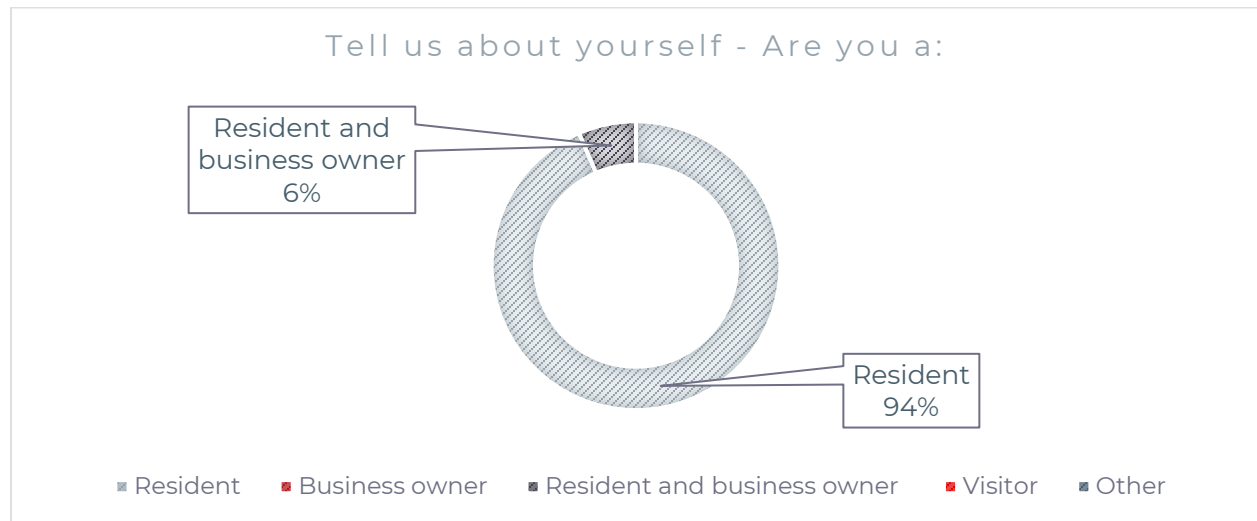
Participants were selected at random and screened to ensure they met a number of specific criteria, including residence within City boundaries. The composition of participants in each group was balanced across age, gender, and neighbourhoods of residence. As it is customary, focus group participants were provided with an honorarium incentive to encourage them to attend the focus groups, and to thank them for their time and their opinions.

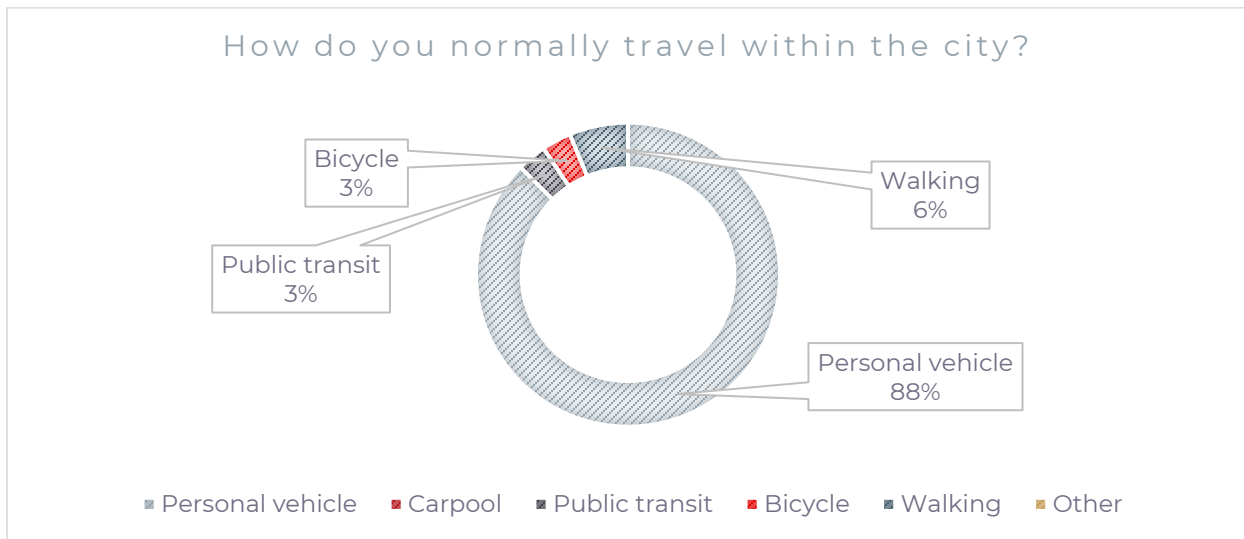
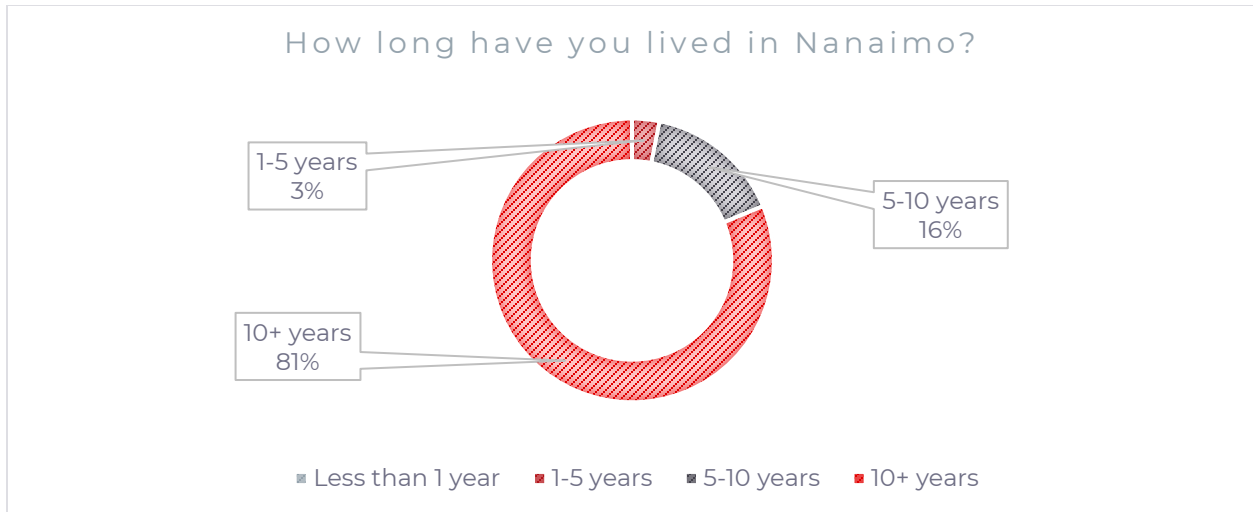
DEMOGRAPHIC POLLING

Each focus group consisted of six to nine participants, for a total of 32 participants overall. At the start of the workshop, participants were asked three demographic polling questions for staff to gain a better understanding of who was participating. Participants were asked:

- How long have you lived in Nanaimo? (Options: Less than 1 year, 1-5 years, 5-10 years, 10+ years)
- Tell us about yourself – are you a: (Options: Resident, Business Owner, Resident and Business Owner or Other)
- How do you normally travel within the City? (Options: Personal Vehicle, Carpool, Public transit, Bicycle, Walking, Other)

The majority of participants were residents (100%), who have lived in the City for more than 10 years (81%) and travel via personal vehicle (88%). See results below.





WHAT WE HEARD

Following the polling questions and the presentation of the Asphalt Levels of Service Study, participants were asked to provide input on questions related to driving experience and road conditions, priorities for road maintenance, and willingness to pay. Feedback was captured by staff note-takers using Mural, a virtual whiteboarding platform.

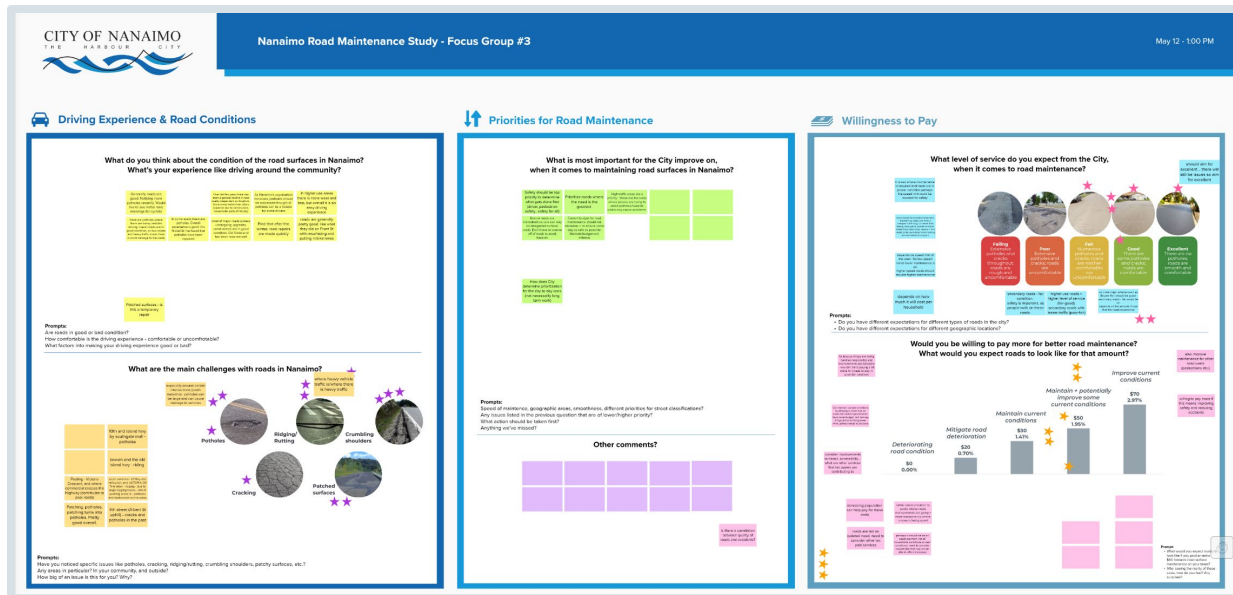


Figure 1. Example of focus group #3 Mural board

KEY THEMES

Overall, participants commonly noted that their driving experience and road conditions varied depending on where they were driving in Nanaimo. The key themes that emerged during the focus groups are summarized in the table below.

Table 1. Summary of key themes

Conditions & Driving Experience	Challenges & Opportunities	Expectations Around Level of Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Majority of participants expressed either neutral or positive views regarding the roads in Nanaimo Driving experience and quality of roads varies depending on the location in the city Safety of all road users, including pedestrians and cyclists, is a top priority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certain areas have higher road degradation Areas of high use are a priority for maintenance Overall, potholes are noted as the most disruptive form of road degradation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fair to good roads was the most common level of expectation Maintaining the current road conditions is the minimum expectation from the majority of participants Participants expressed concerns regarding increased costs to maintain roads and would like to see transparency in how funds are used
Sample of responses:		
<p><i>"Generally, my experience driving in the city is fair-good. Don't see many potholes, issues are more around cracking,</i></p>	<p><i>"Busy roads = potholes and ridging"</i></p>	<p><i>"Fair to Excellent - prioritize based on amount of traffic and the speed of traffic. Highly trafficked areas and areas where people are accessing the</i></p>

edge degradation - but does not look neglected"

"In higher use areas there is more wear and tear, but overall it is an easy driving experience"

"Most of the major roads (unless undergoing upgrades or construction) are in good condition. Old Victoria Road has been repaired well"

"Depends on where you're driving. Some places are okay, others not as much"

"Potholes - speed of repair. especially on major roadways"

"High traffic areas are a priority- these are the areas where I see people are trying to avoid potholes/hazards"

"Prioritize roads where the need is the greatest"

"For the main - well traveled roads: good to fair. side streets: fairish. Areas where there is the most traffic should be a priority - work within budget constraints"

highway are most important to me"

"Main arterial roads in good condition. Small/ lower traffic roads in fair condition"

"How will the \$70 be used? There needs to be flexibility in the plans to respond to all the issues facing Nanaimo. Lower the priority on some roads if needed"

"As long as things are being handled responsibly and improvements are noticeable - I wouldn't mind paying a bit more for roads to stay in good-fair condition"

DETAILED FINDINGS

The following section dives into greater detail about the key themes that surfaced in all four focus groups.

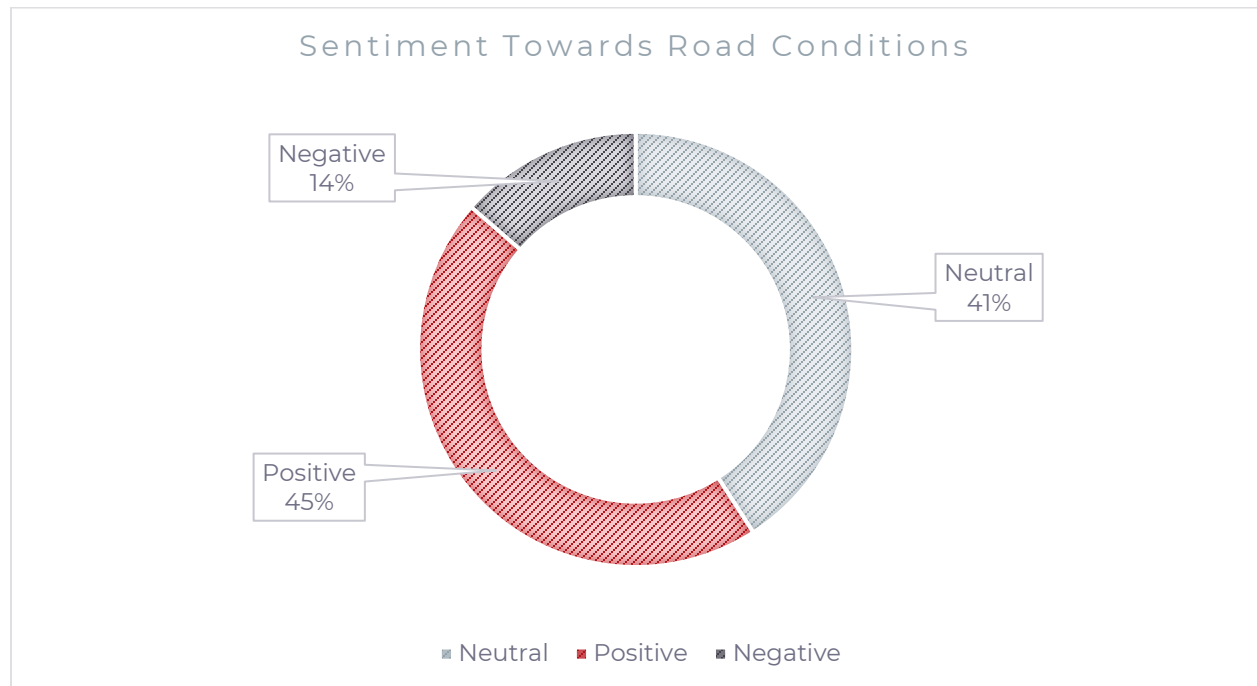
Conditions & Driving Experience

Participants were asked what they think about the condition of the road surfaces in Nanaimo, and what their experience is like driving around the community.

ROAD CONDITIONS

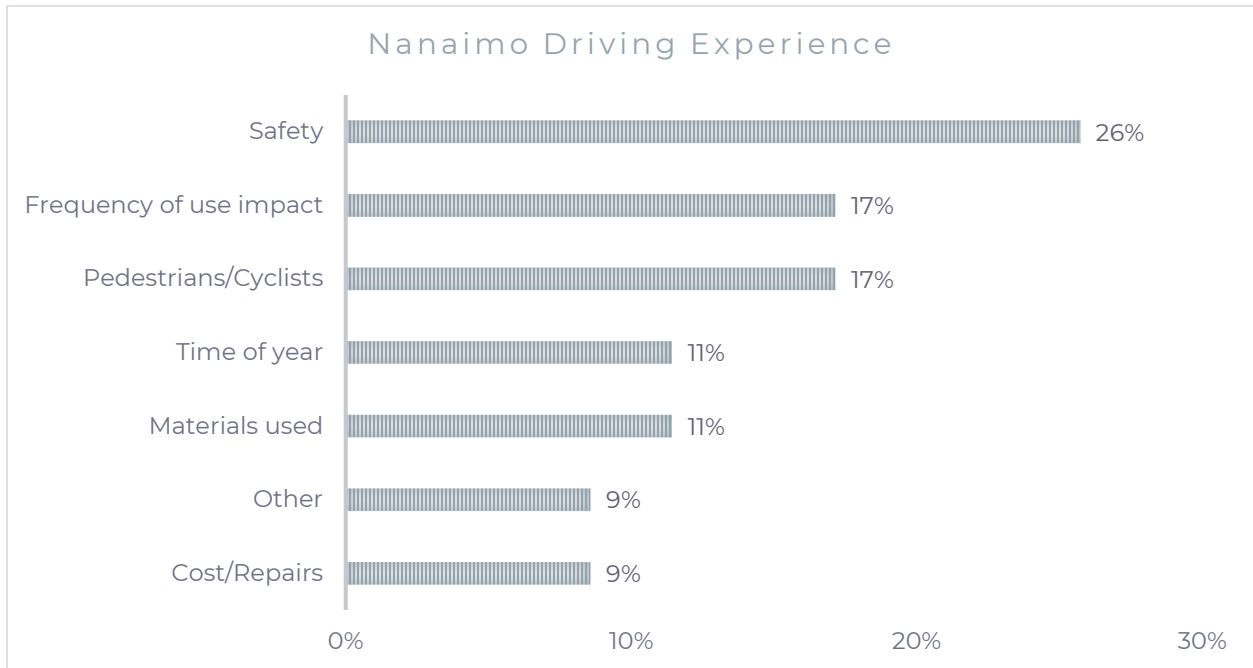
Overall, **road conditions are generally viewed as positive or neutral** (86%), with nearly half of all participants (45%) indicating that conditions are positive, and 41% selecting neutral.

Participants expressed a variety of opinions regarding the roads in Nanaimo, commenting that **conditions vary depending on location**. However, many expressed that they view the **road conditions in Nanaimo as being generally good**, or they have a neutral opinion. It was noted that perspectives on what makes a “good road” is subjective to each participant.



DRIVING EXPERIENCE

When discussing the driving experience in Nanaimo, the following key themes were discussed by participants:



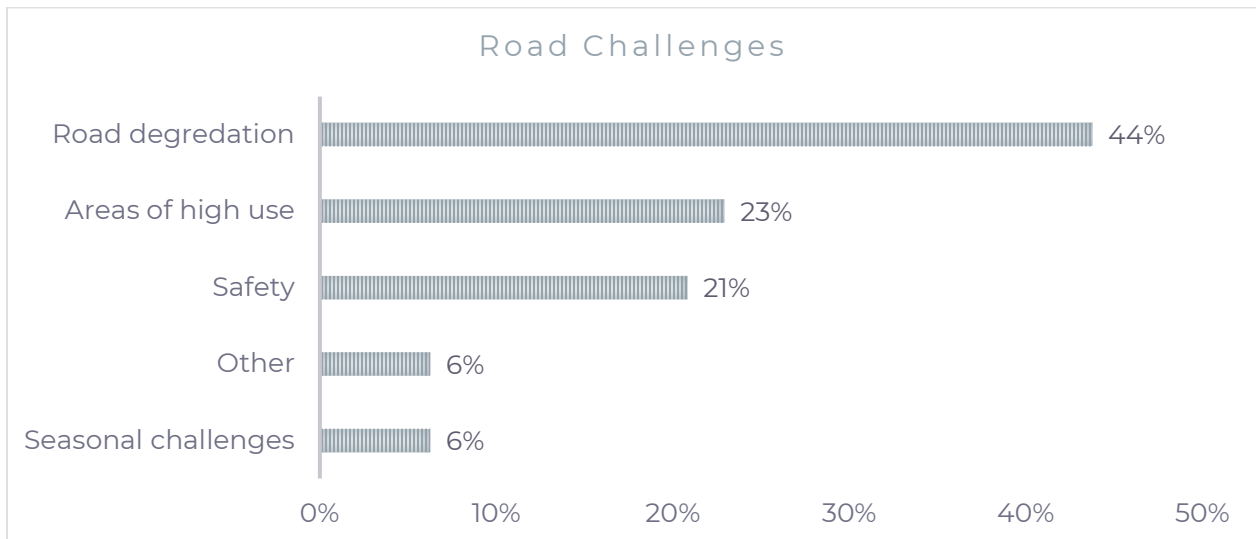
Overall, **safety of the roads** is a high priority for all users, including pedestrians and cyclists. Many participants expressed concerns regarding **unsafe road conditions**, noting hazards such as potholes, deteriorating shoulders, and high-speed vehicle traffic. The connection between areas of **high use and road conditions** was observed, with participants commenting on how poor road conditions are typically most noticeable in areas that experience higher traffic and heavier vehicle use.

Challenges & Opportunities

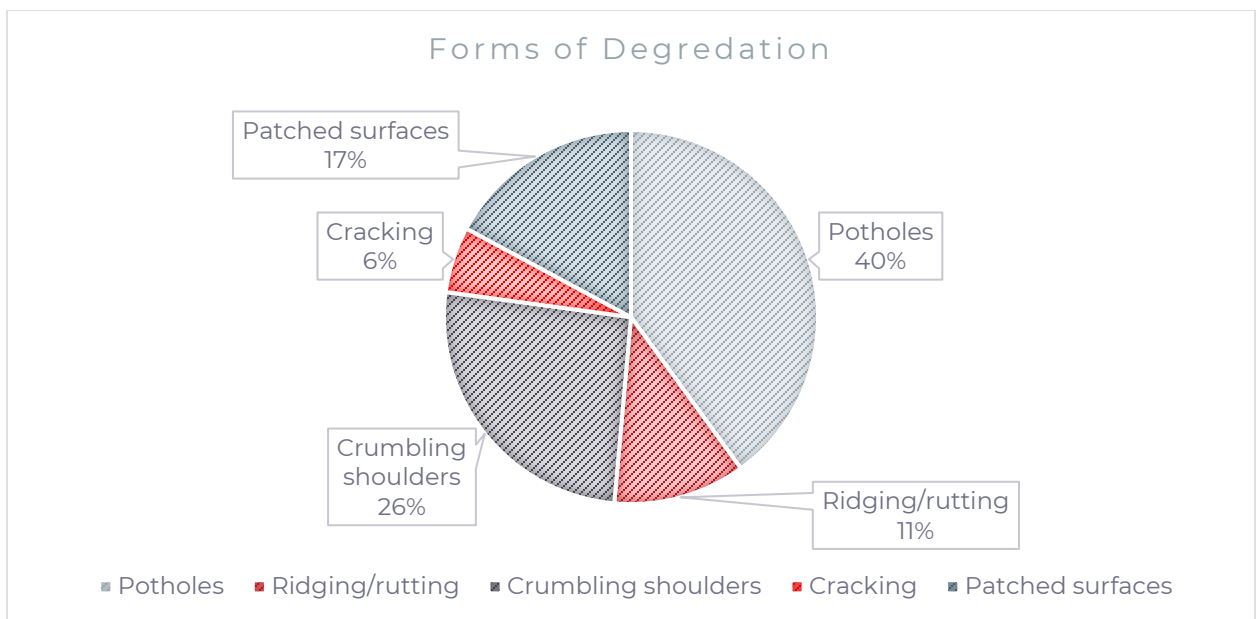
Participants were asked what the main challenges with roads in Nanaimo are, and what is most important for the City to improve on when it comes to maintaining road surfaces in Nanaimo.

CHALLENGES

Road degradation is viewed as the largest challenge with roads in Nanaimo (44%), followed by **areas of high use** (23%), and **safety** (21%).

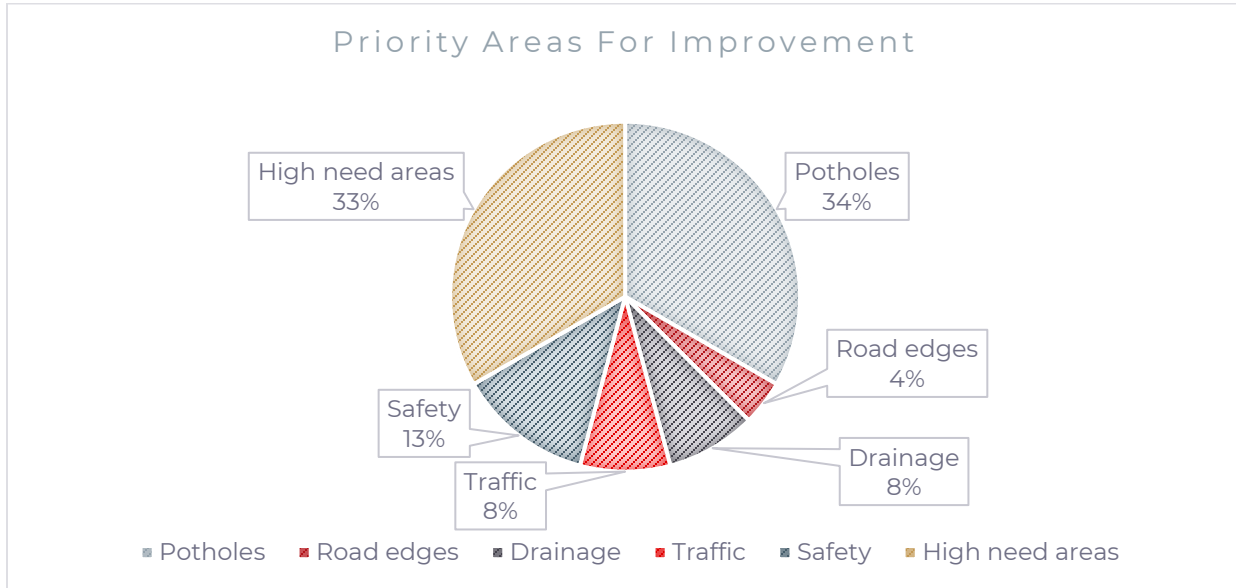


When asked to specify which forms of road degradation were most challenging or impactful, **potholes** were cited as the leading issue that should be prioritized by the City (40%), followed by **crumbling shoulders** (26%), and **patched surfaces** (17%).



OPPORTUNITIES

Participants expressed that **potholes were the top area for improvement** (34%). However, focusing on the **areas of the highest use by the community**, regardless of the form of road degradation, is also considered a high priority for the City by participants (23%).

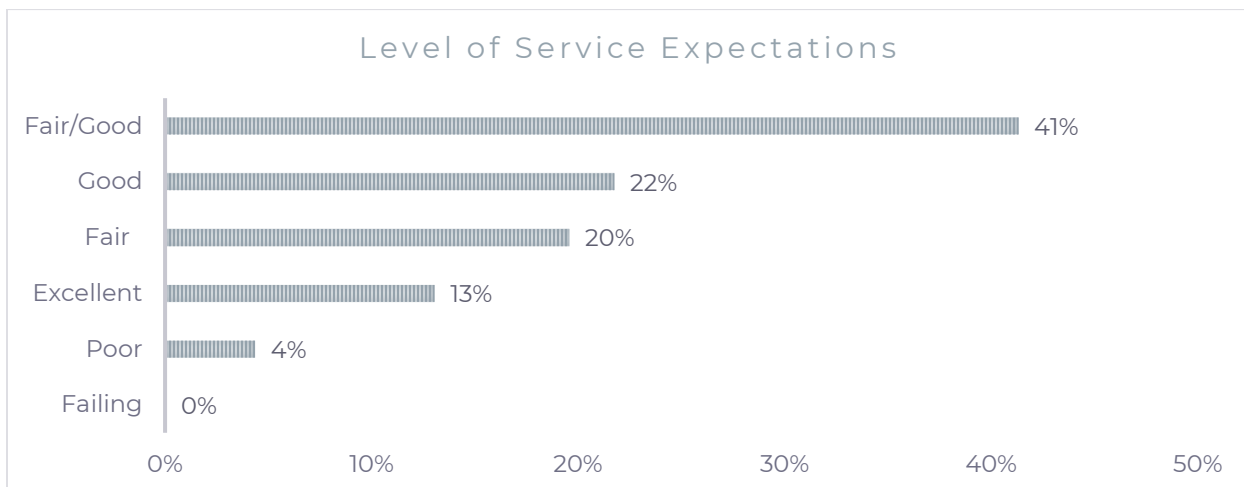


Expectations Around Level of Service

Participants were asked what level of service they expect from the City when it comes to road maintenance, and if they would be willing to pay more for better road maintenance, and what they would expect roads to look like for that amount.

LEVEL OF SERVICE

Generally, participants expect a **fair to good** level of service (41%), with higher expectations of service in areas that experience high use or heavy traffic.



WILLINGNESS TO PAY

When asked if they would be willing to pay more for better road maintenance, many participants expressed that ideally, they would want road conditions to fall somewhere between “**maintain current conditions**”, and “**maintain and potentially improve road conditions**”, at an approximate \$40 annual tax increase.

Overall, many expressed a desire for **transparency** from the City about where funds are being allocated and the management of tax dollars.

Additionally, participants voiced concerns regarding the **overall cost of living** and an **increase in household costs**, noting that they were worried about how additional tax increases would impact community members.

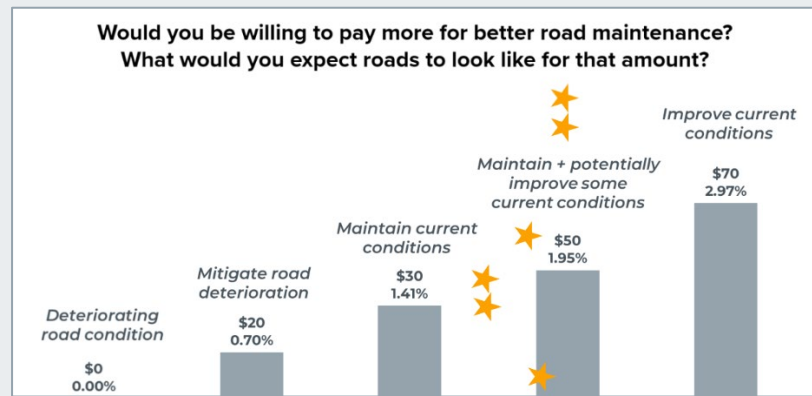
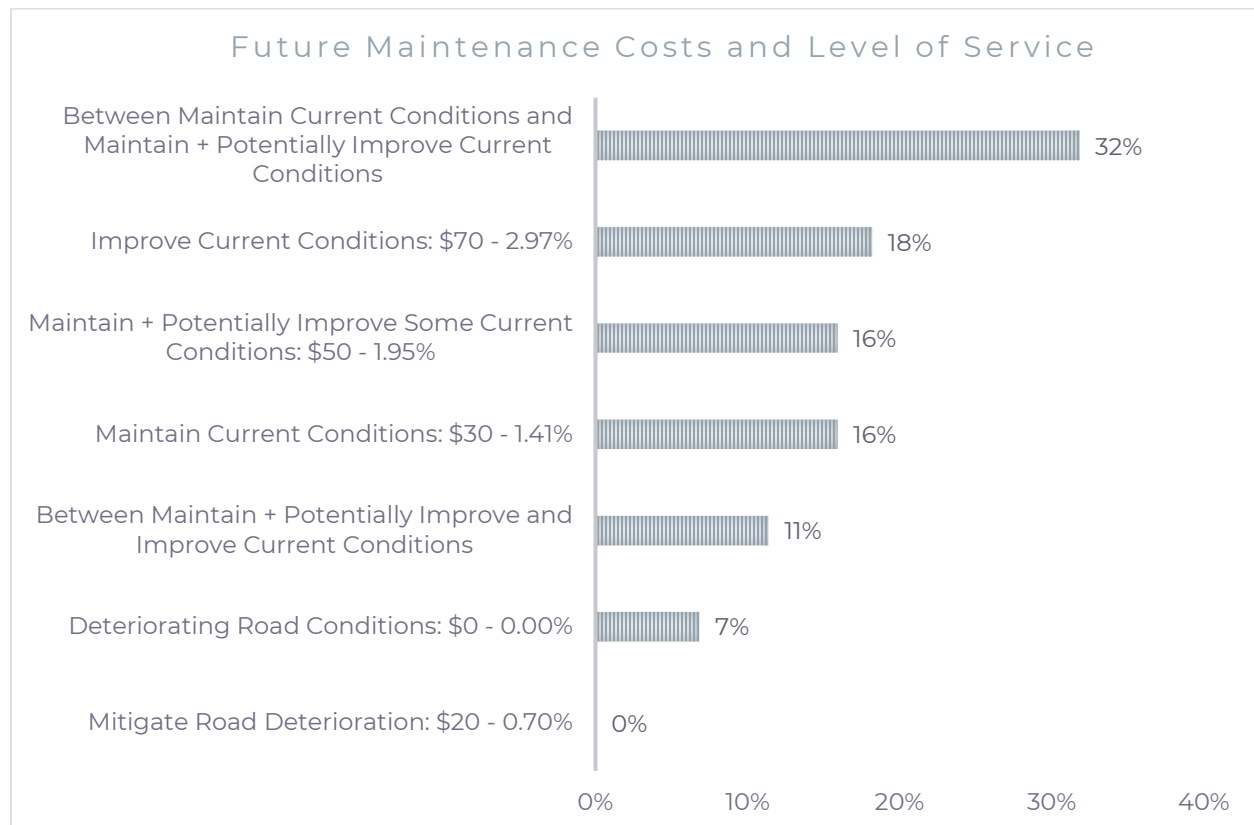


Figure 2. Participants' responses in focus group #2

Participants were shown the scale above and asked to indicate how much they would be willing to pay to improve road conditions. The numerical values represent the annual tax increase associated with the level of maintenance. Participants' responses were recorded using gold stars.



APPENDIX A: FOCUS GROUP PRESENTATION



ASPHALT LEVELS OF SERVICE FOCUS GROUP

CITY OF NANAIMO

MAY 2022

CITY OF NANAIMO
THE HARBOUR CITY

URBAN
SYSTEMS

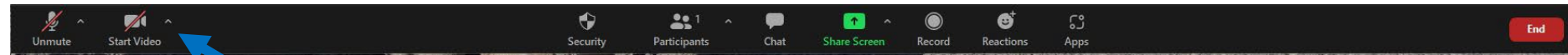
AGENDA

1. Purpose of today's session
2. Zoom tools and best practices
3. Demographic polling
4. Overview presentation of Asphalt Levels of Service
5. Feedback sessions
6. Final questions and feedback
7. Next steps and closing

PURPOSE OF TODAY'S SESSION

1. Develop a common language about road surface conditions
2. Gather input on your driving experience in the City of Nanaimo
3. Gather input on your expectations for road surface conditions and what you're willing to pay for them

ZOOM TOOLS AND BEST PRACTICES

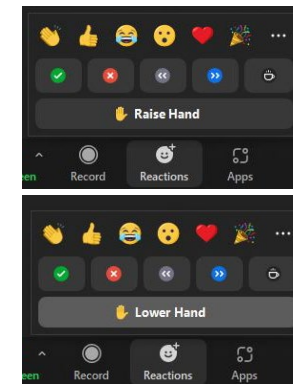


Mute/Unmute

Video on/off

Click here to
open 'Chat'
function

Click here to
raise or lower
hand



A photograph of a road paving operation. In the center, a large asphalt paver truck is moving forward, depositing a thick layer of dark asphalt. Several construction workers in high-visibility orange and yellow safety vests are positioned around the paver, using long-handled tools to guide and smooth the material. The scene is set on a clear, sunny day with a blue sky and some light clouds. In the background, there are residential houses, a white pickup truck, and a chain-link fence. A single orange traffic cone is visible on the right side of the road. The overall atmosphere is one of active construction work.

DEMOGRAPHIC POLLING

A photograph showing a road construction site. In the center, a large asphalt paver machine is moving along the road, spreading a fresh layer of dark asphalt. Several workers in high-visibility orange and yellow safety vests are positioned around the machine, some using long-handled tools to guide the paving process. To the right, a worker in a wide-brimmed hat and safety vest is kneeling on the newly laid asphalt, possibly inspecting or smoothing it. An orange traffic cone is placed on the road surface to the right. In the background, a white pickup truck is parked, and residential houses are visible under a clear blue sky. The overall scene depicts a professional asphalt paving operation.

ASPHALT LEVELS OF SERVICE PRESENTATION

WHAT IS ASPHALT IN THE CONTEXT OF THIS STUDY?

We are talking about...

the black material used for constructing and maintaining the surface of the road that vehicles drive on



We are not talking about...

- *sidewalks*
- *bike lanes*
- *crosswalks*
- *traffic lights*
- *bypasses*
- *major highways*

These were covered in the recent Nanaimo Transportation Master Plan, which included community engagement

WHY ARE WE TALKING ABOUT ASPHALT?

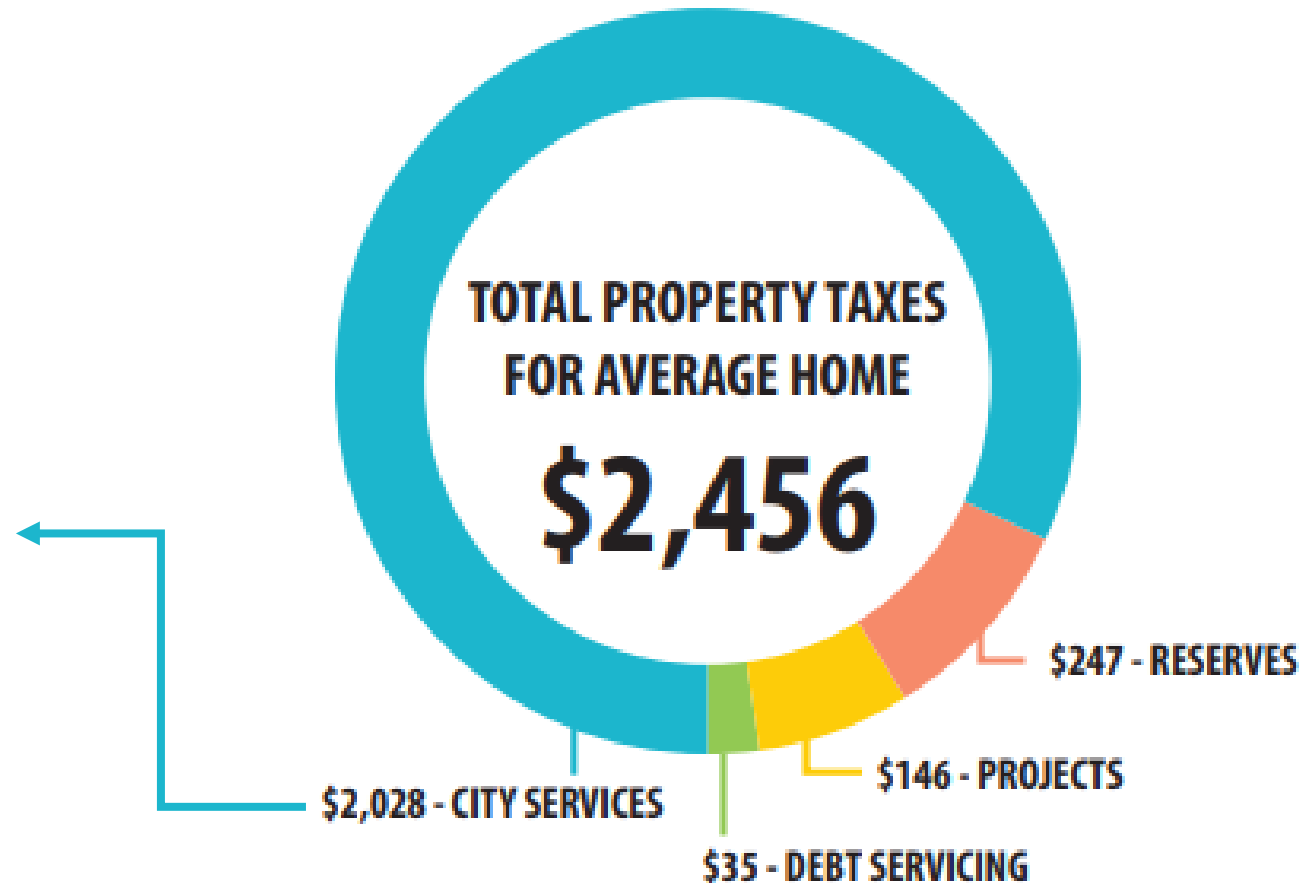
- Asphalt is expensive and there are different options of road surface conditions that the City could provide
- The City hears some complaints from time to time, but wants to make sure that decisions about allocating money are informed by the opinions of the community as a whole

WHAT'S INVOLVED IN MAINTAINING ASPHALT?

- Repaving the surface of the road
- Repairing potholes
- Crack seal programs
- Road shoulder maintenance
- Etc.

HOW DO WE PAY FOR ROAD MAINTENANCE?

- \$545 – RCMP
- \$383 – PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURE
- \$313 – NANAIMO FIRE RESCUE & 911
- \$249 – CORPORATE SERVICES
- \$236 – ENGINEERING & PUBLIC WORKS**
- \$117 – DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
- \$111 – CITY ADMINISTRATION
- \$43 – CORPORATE AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
- \$20 – PORT OF NANAIMO CENTRE
- \$11 – CORPORATE FACILITIES



HOW MUCH ARE WE SPENDING ON ROAD MAINTENANCE?

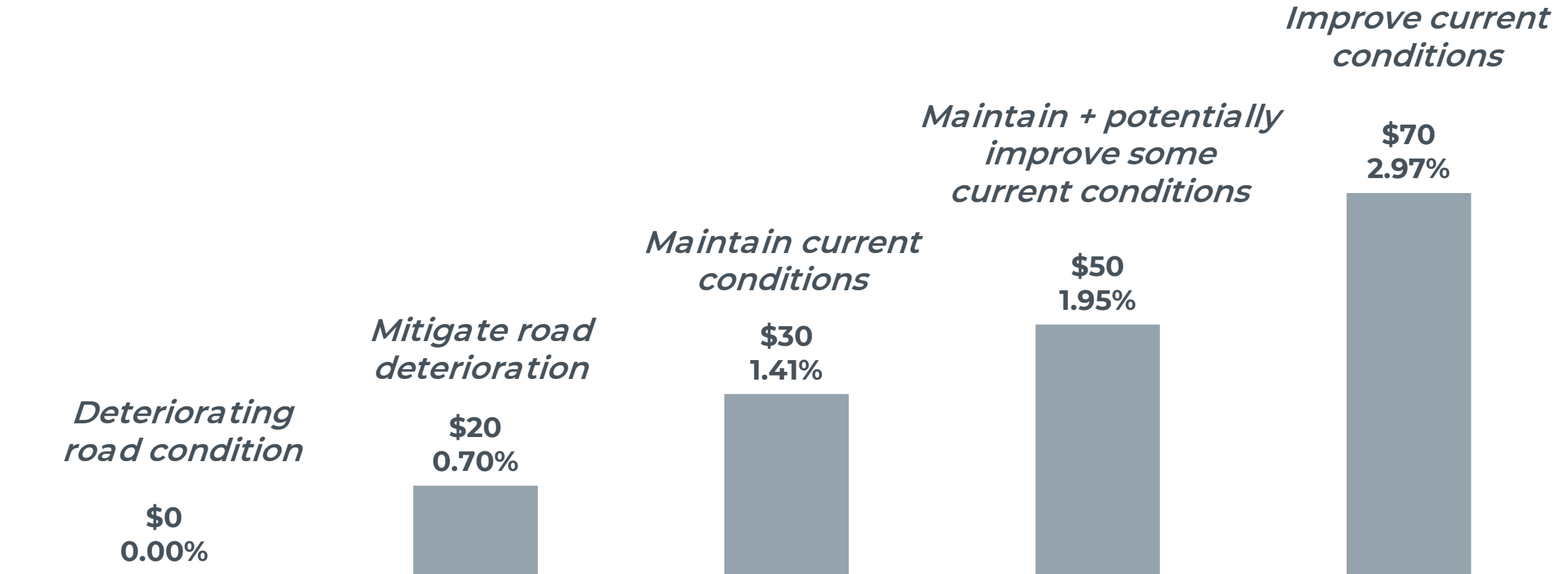
- The current annual funding for maintaining and replacing roads is \$3.2M
- If the current funding for road maintenance remains the same, the condition of roads will degrade
- This could look like potholes, cracking, ridging/rutting, crumbling shoulders, etc.

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT...

- When considering costs for road maintenance, it might be helpful to think about it like you would your vehicle maintenance
- Consistently paying a little bit more now (on oil changes, regular maintenance, etc.) can help prevent costly repairs later on for major problems.



HOW MUCH SHOULD WE SPEND ON MAINTAINING ROADS?



Note: does not consider inflation

COMMON ISSUES

Potholes



**Ridging/
Rutting**



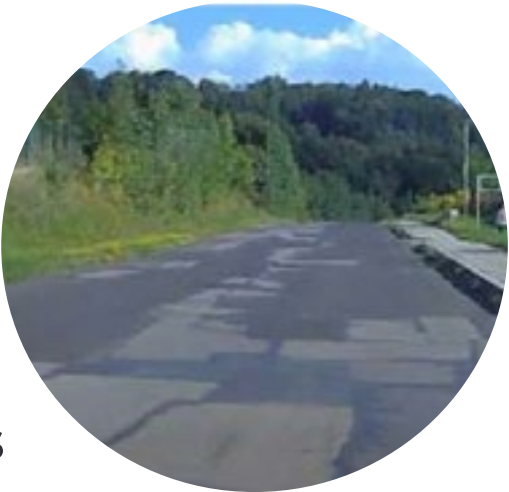
**Crumbling
shoulders**



Cracking



**Patched
surfaces**



TYPES OF ROAD CONDITIONS



Failing

Extensive potholes and cracks throughout; roads are rough and uncomfortable



Poor

Extensive potholes and cracks; roads are uncomfortable



Fair

Numerous potholes and cracks; roads are neither comfortable nor uncomfortable



Good

There are some potholes and cracks; roads are comfortable



Excellent

There are no potholes; roads are smooth and comfortable

A photograph of a road paving operation. In the center, a large asphalt paver truck is moving forward, spreading a thick layer of dark asphalt. Several construction workers in high-visibility orange and yellow safety vests and hard hats are positioned around the truck, using long-handled tools to guide and smooth the fresh pavement. The scene is set on a clear, sunny day with a blue sky and some light clouds. In the background, there are residential houses, a white pickup truck, and a chain-link fence. A single orange traffic cone is visible on the right side of the road. The overall atmosphere is one of active construction work.

FEEDBACK SESSIONS

A photograph of a road paving operation. In the center, a large asphalt paver machine is moving along a road, depositing a thick layer of dark asphalt. Several construction workers in high-visibility orange and yellow safety vests are working around the machine, using long-handled tools to guide and level the fresh pavement. To the right, a white pickup truck is parked on the shoulder, and an orange traffic cone is visible. The background shows a clear blue sky, some trees, and residential buildings. The text "FINAL Q&A AND FEEDBACK" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font across the middle of the image.

FINAL Q&A AND FEEDBACK

NEXT STEPS

1. Review and analyze all feedback
2. Incorporate feedback and comments from this session
3. Develop our final report to present to City of Nanaimo

A photograph of a road paving operation. In the center, a large asphalt paver truck is moving from left to right, depositing a thick layer of dark asphalt. Several construction workers in high-visibility orange and yellow safety vests and hard hats are positioned along the road, using long-handled tools to guide and smooth the fresh asphalt. The scene is set on a clear, sunny day with a blue sky and some light clouds. In the background, there are residential houses, a white pickup truck, and a chain-link fence. A single orange traffic cone is visible on the right side of the road. The overall atmosphere is one of active construction work.

THANK YOU