Community Satisfaction Survey Report

Draft Report





We know Canadians



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BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVES

Background and Objectives



Background

The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) is one of 27 regional district in British Columbia. It is comprised of nine electoral areas and four municipalities in the southern part of Vancouver Island. The CVRD has a population of more than 80,000 residents.

The Regional District provides services to both the electoral areas and the municipalities in the region. These services include garbage/recycling management, emergency planning, economic development, regional parks, recreation, land use planning, bylaw enforcement, fire protection, and water and sewer systems. Some of these services are available to all residents of the region, while others are offered only to non-municipal residents. It was identified that gathering feedback on the delivery of services was important.

Leger was commissioned by the Cowichan Valley Regional District to conduct a Community Satisfaction Survey among local residents from November 20th to December 19th, 2019.

Objectives

The intent of this survey is to provide the CVRD with information regarding the awareness, use, and satisfaction with current service levels, as well as information regarding perceptions of potential future directions.

The specific objectives of the Community Satisfaction Survey were to:

- ✓ Identify the most important local issues to residents of the Cowichan Valley Regional District;
- ✓ Gauge satisfaction with overall quality of life, overall level and quality of services provided by the CVRD, and specific services offered by the CVRD;
- ✓ Understand use of, and satisfaction with, parks and trails;
- ✓ Understand use of, and satisfaction with, public transit;
- ✓ Identify satisfaction and preferences of residents regarding communication and engagement with the CVRD; and,
- Measure levels of support or opposition to potential future directions for the Regional District.

Another objective of the survey, in partnership with Island Health and Our Cowichan Community Health Network, was to understand sources of information, experiences with emergency health care, and perceived benefits of replacing the Cowichan District Hospital. Results related to this section will be shared under separate cover.



METHODOLOGY

Methodology



Approach

Leger conducted two distinct versions of the Community Satisfaction Survey, along with a supplemental section on Health Care only available online.

The first version of the survey was intended as a scientific study to aid CVRD leadership in understanding the perceptions and opinions of a randomly-selected sample of CVRD residents. In this version of the survey, residents were contacted by telephone, using random digit dialing. Residents were given the option to complete the survey by telephone or by a secure online survey. Those opting for phone were given the option of a callback at a time of their choosing if they were unable to participate at the time of the initial call; those opting for the online version were asked for their email address and were sent a unique link to the online survey by email within minutes of the phone call.

The second version of the survey was a non-scientific engagement survey, allowing residents not selected for the scientific study to share their thoughts with the CVRD. This option was provided as an open online link and was available during the same field period as the scientific survey. This link was posted on the CVRD website, advertised in local media, and shared on social media. Results to the open link survey will be provided under separate cover.

A section of questions relating to the health care objectives was included as an optional component to each study. Those completing the scientific study by phone could opt to have the health care questions sent to them via an emailed link to the relevant questions online, while those completing either online version could opt in to this section while completing the main portion of the survey.

The telephone and online questionnaires, shown in the Appendices, were developed by Leger in consultation with the Cowichan Valley Regional District. Where appropriate, wording from an earlier version of the Community Satisfaction Survey (conducted in 2016) was used in order to facilitate comparisons.

Methodology



Data Collection (Scientific Study)

Leger used random digit dialing to obtain a random sample of the population within the CVRD, including both landline and cellular telephone numbers known to be based within the area. As previously noted, residents were then given the option to complete the survey by telephone or online. This method of contact allowed Leger to invite a broad cross-section of the population to participate, and avoided common sources of sample bias.

Interviewing began on November 20 with a telephone pre-test. Following this pre-test, Leger researchers reviewed the results to ensure that the survey was programmed and interpreted as intended. Upon confirmation that the survey was working correctly, interviewing continued until December 19, 2019.

Potential participants were deemed ineligible for the study if they did not reside in the CVRD. As well, any household with a household member working for the CVRD was not eligible to participate. Quotas were set by population distribution across the region, including for the four municipalities within the regional district, as well as by age and gender according to proportions from the most recent census results available.

Following data collection, the results from the telephone version of the scientific survey (408 completed surveys) were combined with the results for those who were contacted by telephone for the scientific study but opted to complete the survey online (261 completed surveys), for a total of 669 respondents. Based on the total population and sample size, the maximum margin of error for this total sample is ±3.8%, 19 times out of 20.

Methodology



Analysis and Interpretation (Scientific Study)

This report contains results for the scientific study, inclusive of both telephone and online-invite completions. Results for the open link online consultation version of the survey will be presented under separate cover, as will results of the optional section on health care.

The results in this report were weighted by age, gender, and sub-region to represent the population of the CVRD as per the 2016 StatsCan census.

The responses to certain open-ended questions in the survey were categorized and coded, with the responses provided in data tables. These are included in this report where appropriate.

Most questions are reported as overall scores. To evaluate differences or similarities in responses between subgroups of the public, the results for each question of the survey have been cross-tabulated by key demographic questions, including age, gender, education, region, work location, home ownership, number of years lived in the CVRD, and income. Statistically significant differences in responses between these subgroups are discussed as appropriate in the body of this report. Throughout the report, \downarrow denotes a significant decrease from the 2016 survey result and \uparrow denotes a significant increase from the 2016 survey.



KEY FINDINGS



Key Findings

Top-of-Mind Key Issues

- CVRD residents feel their overall quality of life in their local area is high. Almost all (94%) of residents rate the overall quality of life as either good (46%) or very good (48%).
- That said, there are issues facing the Cowichan Valley. The top issue residents feel should receive the greatest attention is homelessness (15%). This issue has risen significantly in importance versus 2016 (4%), and is the dominant issue for those in the East/Central District (24%). Affordability has risen as a top concern (to 11% versus 5% in 2016) as has climate change (to 6% from 1% in 2016), while drinking water has declined as a concern (to 4% from 11%).

Evaluation of Services

- CVRD residents are fairly satisfied with many of the individual services offered. Three-quarters of residents (75%) are satisfied with parks and trails, 67% are satisfied with recycling and garbage drop-off depots, and 63% are satisfied with the recreation facilities and programming.
- There are areas for improvement regarding CVRD services provision. There is far lower satisfaction with land use planning & development (16% rating it as a 1 or 2 on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is 'not satisfied at all'), economic development (23%), and public transit (25%) where about as many are not satisfied as are satisfied with each of these services.
 - Among non-municipal respondents, land use planning & development services are considered the single most important service offered by the CVRD, along with parks and trails.
- **Residents are satisfied with their curb-side collection services.** Of those residents who receive curb-side recycling collection, eight in ten (82%) are satisfied with the service, which is a significant increase from 2016 (70%). Residents who receive curb-side garbage collection have the same level of satisfaction (83%).

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Key Findings

Parks and Trails

- Some parks and trails are well-used, while many other are used less frequently. The Cowichan Valley Trail and Historic Kinsol Trestle are the most used regional parks or trails in the past six months, with close to half of residents using them (47% and 44% respectively). One-quarter (25%) of residents say they have not used any of the main regional parks or trails evaluated, although older residents (55+ years old) are twice as likely (33%) to say they do not use any of the listed parks or trails than 18-54 years old (17%).
- Among residents that have used any CVRD parks and trails in the past six months, most use them at least monthly and satisfaction is high. Four in ten (40%) say they use these parks and trails at least weekly, while another one-quarter (24%) use them at least monthly. Among users, over eight in ten (84%) are satisfied with the parks and trails they access.
- There are two aspects that would most enhance enjoyment of the regional parks and trails. In terms of activities that the CVRD could do to enhance enjoyment, protecting species and the natural environment is the top priority (81% rating it 4 or 5 on a scale of 1 to 5 where 5 is 'high priority'), followed by repairing and maintaining the existing facilities (74% selecting).
- More than one-half (54%) of residents support continuing the Regional Parkland Acquisition Fund. One-quarter (24%) of residents are neutral while 15% do not support this fund.

Public Transit

- Most residents (82%) have not used any of the local public transit services in the past six months. The local bus is the most commonly used transit service with 14% using it within the past six months, followed by the weekday commuter service to Victoria (4%).
 - Almost one-half (48%) are satisfied with the local bus service; however, one-quarter (25%) are not satisfied.
 - The main reason for not using public transit in the past six months is because people have their own vehicle.
- Two in ten residents (20%) would consider using a new transit service to key destinations in Nanaimo. However, two-thirds (66%) say they would not likely consider using this type of service.
 - If a new transit service to Nanaimo is implemented, the primary destination for this service would be to BC Ferries terminals (35% selecting), followed by the Nanaimo airport (17%), and to go shopping (16%).

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Key Findings

Communications and Community Engagement

- There is opportunity for improving residents' perceptions of communication from the CVRD, despite the higher ratings compared to 2016. Residents are generally unlikely to give positive ratings of '4' or '5-Excellent' to current communications. The highest positive rating is garnered by 'informing residents of important information and decisions' (30%), followed by 'consulting the public about topics and decisions' (23%) and 'responding to residents feedback on topics and decisions' (20%). Ratings for the latter two aspects are significantly better than in 2016.
- Communications about specific services/topics also show opportunity for improvement. Communications regarding household services is the highest-rated topic (46% rate 4 or 5-excellent), which is a significant improvement from 2016 (37%). This is followed by regional services (30%) and environmental and climate-related issues (28%). Positive ratings are lowest for administration and finance (e.g., budget and taxation, public processes, etc.) at 18% rating 4 or 5.
- Residents tend to be fairly engaged with the CVRD. Two-thirds (68%) of residents have engaged with the CVRD through some method within the past year. Participating in a telephone or online survey (44% mentioning) is the most common means of engaging with the CVRD, followed by attending community or town hall meetings (23%). Calling the CVRD (20%) or contacting an elected representative (17%) are the next most common ways of engaging, although both these channels are mentioned less often than in 2016 (30% and 22% respectively).
- When it comes to seeking further information or updates from the CVRD, residents generally prefer online communication. If they were to seek out information, the majority of residents would go directly to the CVRD website (61%) and 34% would conduct an internet search. Calling to speak with a staff member (28%) is the next most common source of information, and has increased versus 2016 (22%) as has emailing the CVRD (to 11% from 3%).
- The preferred method to receive information from the Regional District is by email. Four in ten (41%) residents prefer to receive information from the Regional District via email, which is a significant increase from 2016 (35%). The next most preferred means of receiving information is by direct mail, selecting by two in ten (20%) residents. The most preferred method to share feedback with the CVRD is via email (59%).



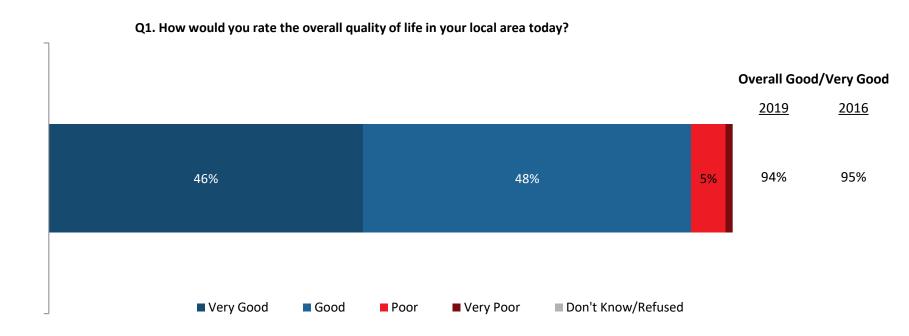
RESULTS

Top of Mind Key Issues

Quality of Life



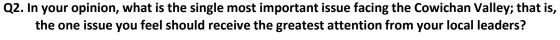
- Almost all residents of the Cowichan Valley Regional District (94%) rate the overall quality of life in their local area as good or very good.
- Overall satisfaction is on par with 2016 (95%) although there are fewer rating very good this year (46% versus 53% in 2016) and more rating good instead (48% versus 42% in 2016).

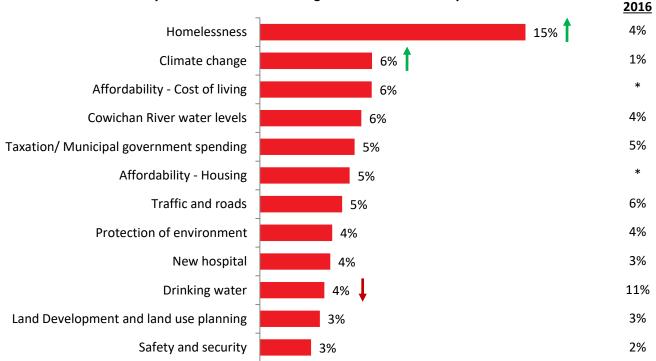


Single Issues Facing CVRD



- When asked to name the single most important issue facing the CVRD, homelessness is the concern residents feel should receive the greatest attention (15%). This issue has risen significantly in importance compared to 2016 (4%). This is the top issue due to its dominance in importance to those in the East/Central District (24%).
- Climate change has increased in importance since 2016 (to 6% from 1%), and is a more important issue to those in the North and West (11% each) than homelessness.
- Affordability has risen as a top concern (to 11% when cost of living and housing affordability components are combined) compared to 5% mentioning affordability in general in 2016.
- Far fewer select drinking water as the most important issue facing the CVRD this year (4% versus 11% in 2016).





^{*} Was recorded as Affordability (5%) overall in 2016, not split into Cost of living and Housing component as done in 2019.

Base: All respondents (2019 n=669; 2016 n=612)

Note: Only those mentioned by >2% shown.





RESULTS

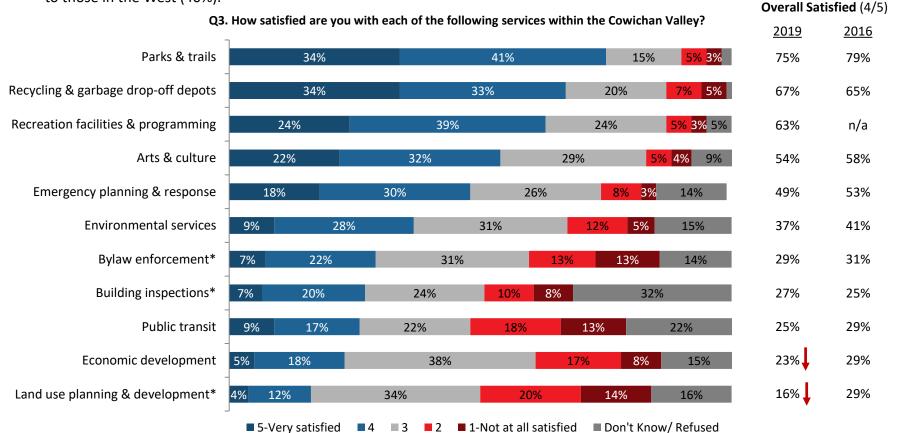
Evaluation of Services

Satisfaction with Cowichan Valley Services



- Parks and trails have the highest satisfaction rating among the Cowichan Valley services evaluated, with three-quarters (75%) of respondents satisfied or very satisfied.
- > Around two-thirds of residents are satisfied with the recycling and garbage drop-off depots (67%) and the recreation facilities and programming (63%).
- > There is low satisfaction with land use planning & development. Fewer than one in five (16%) of non-municipal respondents are satisfied with this service, which is a significant decline from 2016 (29%).

Those living in the North or South are less likely to be satisfied with public transit (16% and 18% respectively), especially compared to those in the West (40%).



Base: All respondents (2019 n=669; 2016 n=612).

*Base: Non-municipal respondents in 2019 (2019 n=283; 2016 n=254).

Note: Numbers may not equal 100% due to rounding

Why Not Satisfied – Services With Highest Dissatisfaction



Public transit

(n=141)

You indicated that you are not satisfied with public transit in the Cowichan Valley. Could you please explain what would make this service better for you?

More frequent service/ more buses	42%
Need service available in my area	25%
More routes to outlying regions	17%
More routes to local destinations	16%
Need rail system	6%

Economic development

(n=111)

You indicated that you are not satisfied with economic development in the Cowichan Valley. Could you please explain what would make this service better for you?

	Focus on small or local business	20%
\triangleright	More jobs available	14%
\triangleright	Less red tape	10%
\triangleright	Better city planning/ focus on growth	6%
\triangleright	Economic planning	6%

Environmental services

(n=72)

You indicated that you are not satisfied with environmental services in the Cowichan Valley. Could you please explain what would make this service better for you?

>	Environmental awareness/ more concern	17%
	Solid waste management (garbage, recycling & compost)	15%
	Improve air quality/ strict control of burning waste	11%
	Protecting forests and plant life	9%
	Better planning	9%
	Protecting water supply	6%

Land use planning and development* (n=67)

You indicated that you are not satisfied with land use planning and development services in the Cowichan Valley. Could you please explain what would make this service better for you?

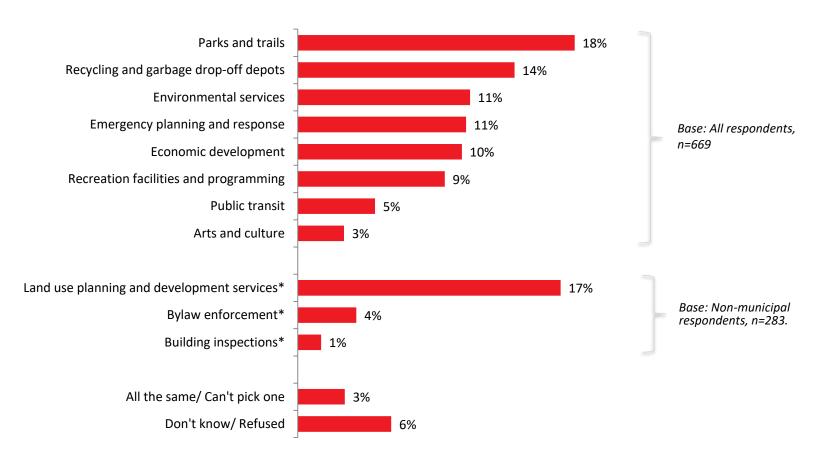
Sustainable development/ better planning	30%
Less bureaucracy/ red tape	21%
Protect water resources	9%
Managing race track development	6%

Most Important CVRD Services



- Parks and trails are considered the single most important service offered by the Cowichan Valley Regional District. This is followed by recycling and garbage drop-off depots among all respondents.
- Among non-municipal residents, land use planning and development is considered the most important service offered by the CVRD.

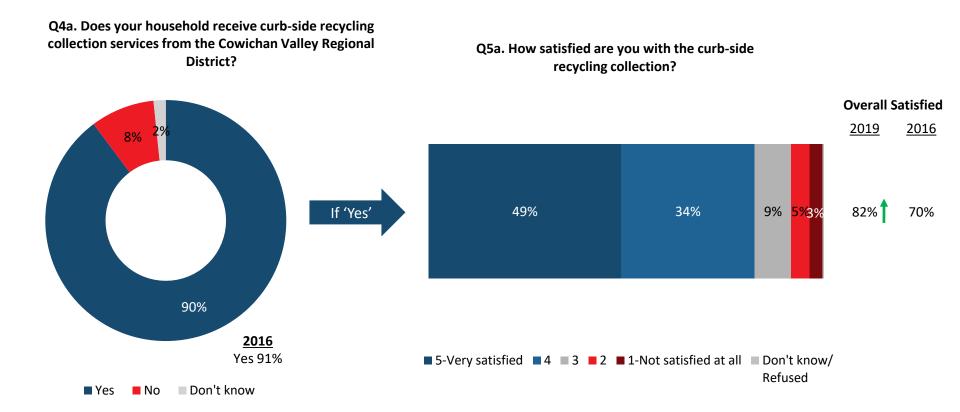
Q3R. From the same list of services, which is the MOST important to you?



Curb-Side Recycling



- Nine in ten non-municipal residents (90%) receive curb-side recycling collection services the CVRD.
- Among those that receive curb side recycling, eight in ten (82%) are satisfied with the service. Satisfaction has increased compared to 2016 (70%).



Curb-Side Garbage Collection



- > Just over one-half (52%) of non-municipal residents receive curb-side garbage collection services from the CVRD.
- Of these residents, more than eight in ten (83%) are satisfied with the garbage collection service.

Q4b. Does your household receive curb-side garbage Q5b. How satisfied are you with the curb-side collection services from the Cowichan Valley Regional garbage collection? **District? Overall Satisfied** 2019 2016 55% 28% 9% 83% 78% 46% 52% 2016 Yes 57% ■ 5-Very satisfied ■ 4 ■ 3 ■ 2 ■ 1-Not satisfied at all ■ Don't know/ ■ Don't know No

Refused



RESULTS

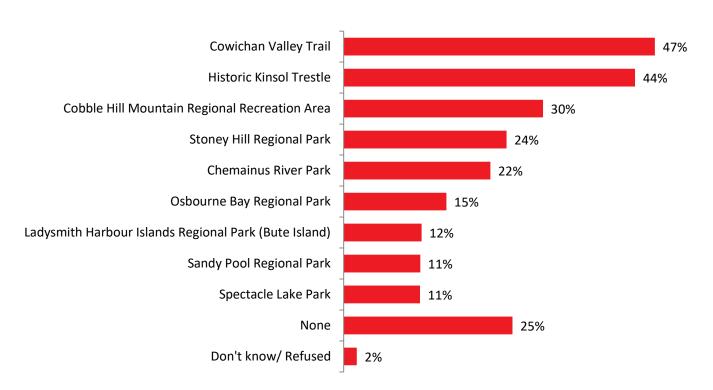
Parks and Trails

Parks and Trails Usage



- The Cowichan Valley Trail and Historic Kinsol Trestle are the most used regional parks or trails in the past six months, with close to half of residents using these trails (47% and 44% respectively).
- Older residents (55+ years old) are generally less likely to have used these regional parks or trails within the past six months. Twice as many residents 55 or older (33%) say they do not use any of the listed parks or trails, compared to residents 18-54 years old (17%).

Q6. Which of the following regional parks and trails have you used in the past six months?



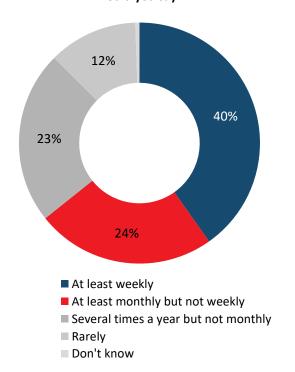
23

Parks and Trails Usage

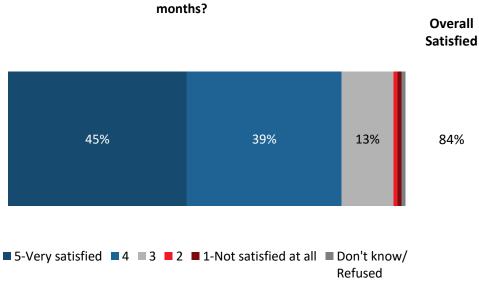


- Of those who have used any CVRD parks or trails in the past six months, 40% have used them at least weekly, and one-quarter (24%) have used them at least monthly.
- Overall satisfaction with the CVRD parks and trails is high, with 84% of users satisfied.

Q7. How often do you use CVRD parks and trails? Would you say...



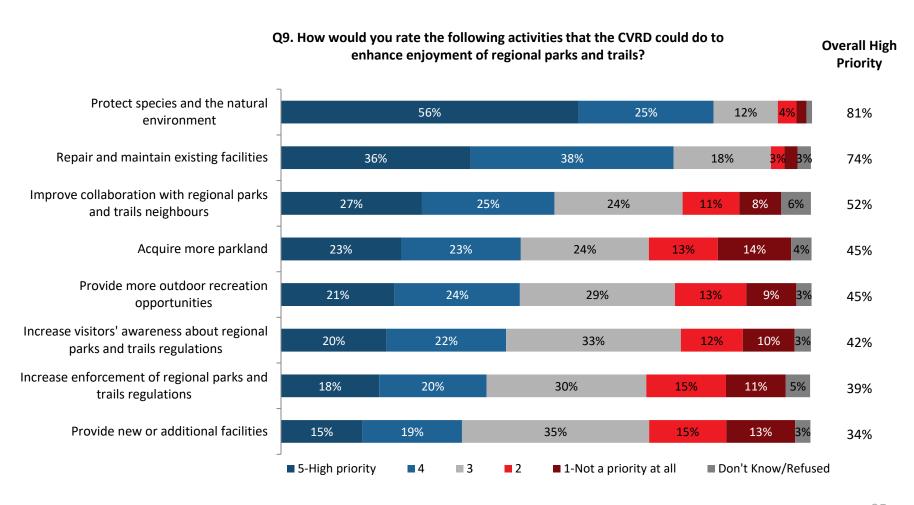
Q8. How would you rate your overall satisfaction with the CVRD parks and trails you have used in the past 6



Priority of Parks and Trails Features



- Protecting species and the natural environment is the top priority for the CVRD to enhance enjoyment of the regional parks and trails, with eight in ten (81%) rating this as a high priority.
- Repairing and maintaining existing facilities is seen as the next highest priority to enhance enjoyment of the regional parks and trails, with three-quarters (74%) of residents rating this aspect a priority.

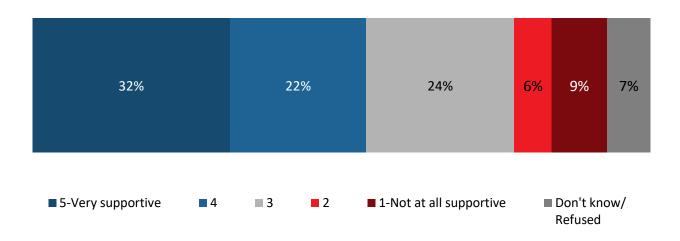


Support for the Regional Parkland Acquisition Fund



More than one-half (54%) of residents support continuing the Regional Parkland Acquisition Fund, while another one-quarter (24%) are neutral. Only 15% of respondents do not support this fund.

Q10. The CVRD acquires land for regional parks through a dedicated property tax – the Regional Parkland Acquisition Fund – which was approved through a public referendum in 2008. How supportive are you of continuing this fund?





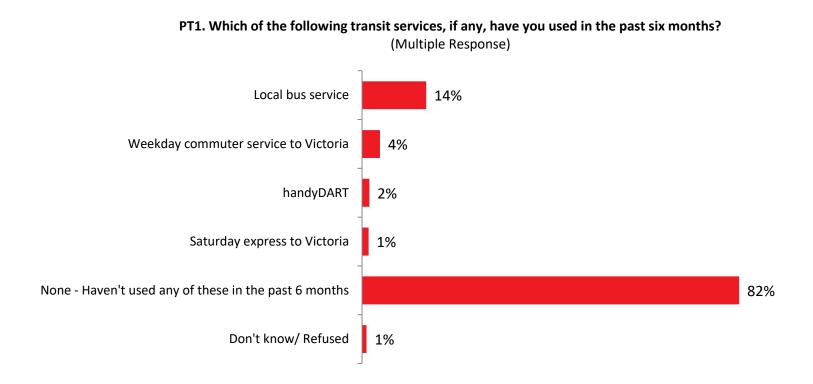
RESULTS

Public Transit

Usage of Transit Services



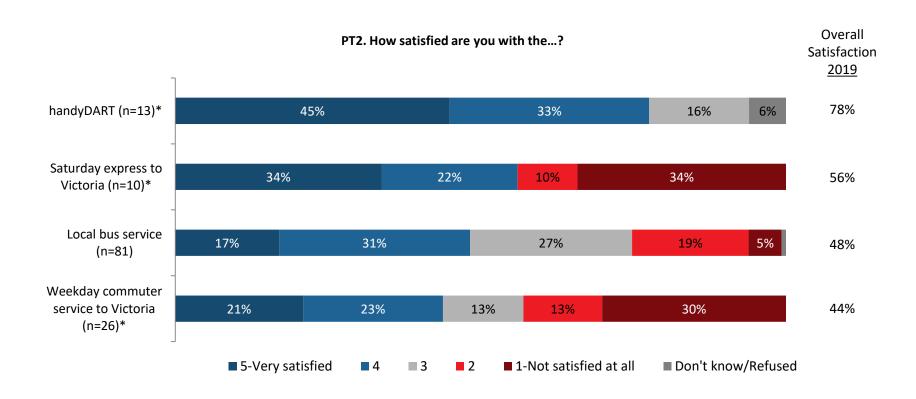
- Most respondents (82%) have not used any of these transit services in the past six months.
- The local bus is the most commonly used transit service with 14% using this service within the past six months.



Satisfaction with Transit Services



- Overall, HandyDART users appear to be the most satisfied among these public transit services evaluated, although this must be interpreted as directional only due to the very small base of users assessing this performance.
- Almost one-half (48%) are satisfied with the local bus service; however, one-quarter (25%) are not satisfied.
- As many users are satisfied (44%) as are not satisfied (43%) with the weekday commuter service to Victoria.



Transit Trip Purposes



Among those who have used transit in the past six months, the most common trip purpose is commuting to work (24%), followed by personal business, shopping, and social or entertainment purposes.

PT4. What type of trip purposes do you most often use transit for? (Single Mention) Commuting to work 24% Personal business (including errands other than shopping) 20% Shopping 18% Social or entertainment 18% School 8% Recreation 7% Other 2% Don't know/ Refused

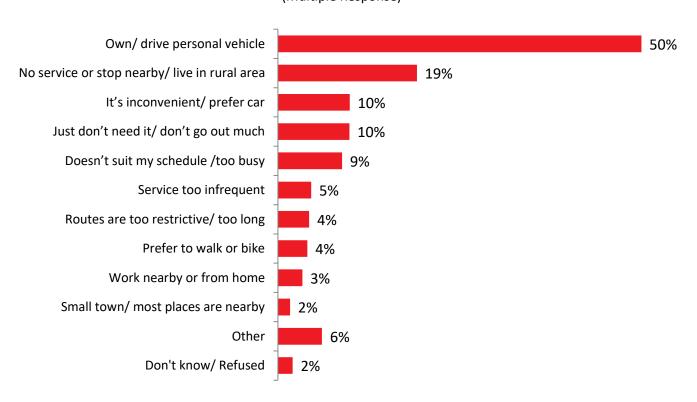
Main Reasons for Not Using Transit



One-half of those who have **not** used transit in the past six months say the main reason for not using it is because they have their own vehicle.

PT3. What would you say is the main reason that you have not of used any transit services in the CVRD in the past six months? Are there any other reasons?

(Multiple Response)

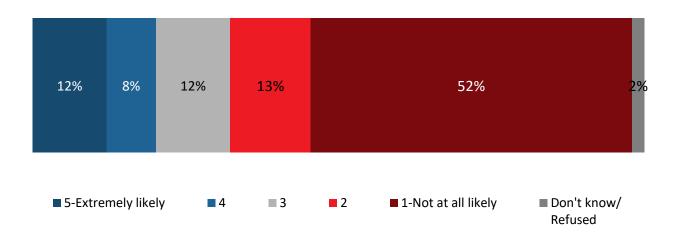


Likelihood of Using New Transit Service



- One in five residents (20%) would consider using a new transit service to key destinations in Nanaimo. However, two-thirds say they would not consider using this type of service.
- Residents in the North are much more likely (33%) to consider using a new transit service to Nanaimo.

PT5. The CVRD wants to know whether residents support the creation of a new transit service to key destinations in Nanaimo. How likely are you to consider using transit to travel north to Nanaimo?

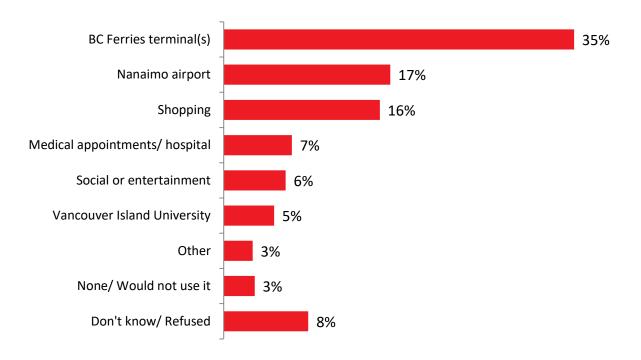


Primary Destination/Trip Purpose to Nanaimo



- If a new transit service to key destinations in Nanaimo is implemented, the primary destination for this service would be the BC Ferries terminal(s), with one-third (35%) selecting this end point.
- > The Nanaimo airport and to go shopping are the next most common destination and purpose of trip.

PT6. If such a service would be implemented to Nanaimo, what would be your primary destination or trip purpose for using transit to Nanaimo?





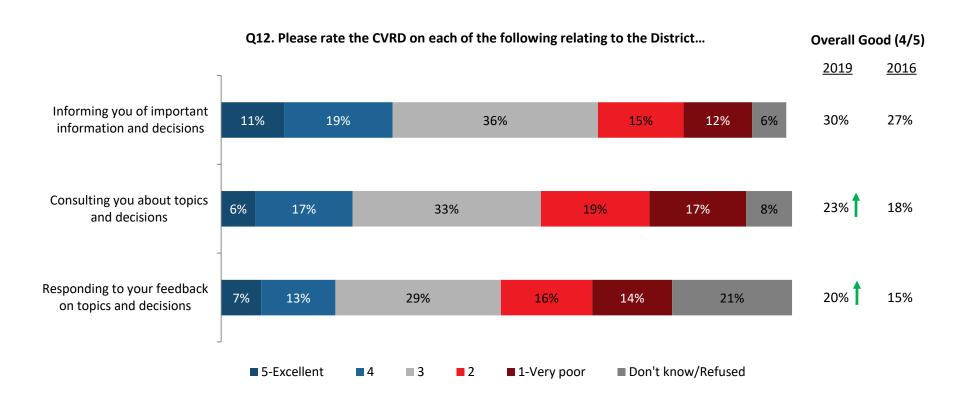
RESULTS

Communications and Community Engagement

CVRD Communications



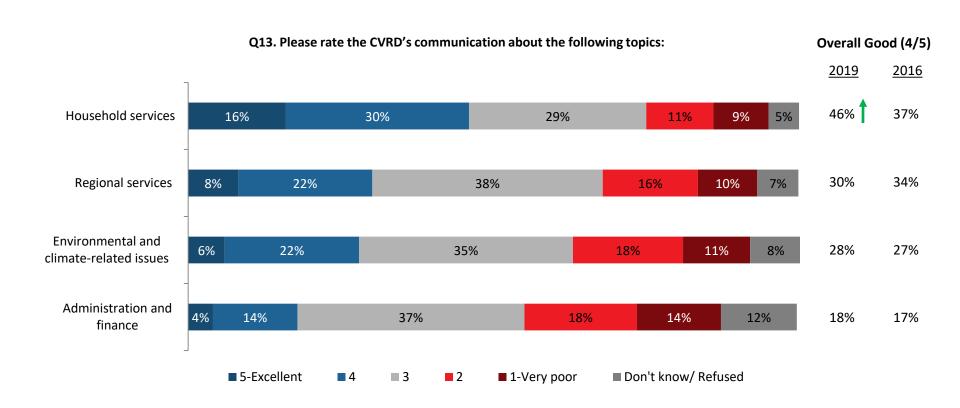
- Three in ten residents (30%) rate the CVRD as 4 or 5 (on a scale where 5 is excellent) for informing residents of important information and decisions relating to the District.
- Fewer rate the CVRD as 4 or 5 for consulting them about topics and decisions (23%) and responding to their feedback on topics and decisions (20%), although rating for both of these aspects have improved significantly from 2016.



CVRD Communications – By Topic



- Residents feel that the CVRD has fairly good communication when it comes to household services, with close to one-half (46%) rating this topic a 4 or a 5. This is a significant improvement from 2016 (37%).
- However, administration and finance is not felt to be communicated well by the CVRD, with fewer than two in ten (18%) giving a rating of 4 or 5. One-third (32%) of residents feel the CVRD communication about this topic is poor.

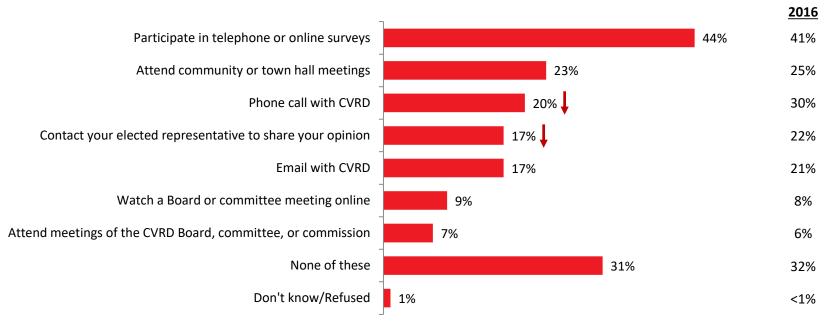


Engagement with the CVRD in Past Year



- Participating in a telephone or online survey (44%) was the most mentioned means of engaging with the CVRD in the past, followed by attending community or town hall meetings (23%).
- Calling the CVRD or contacting their elected representative are the next most common ways of engaging with the CVRD, although both these channels are mentioned less often than in 2016.

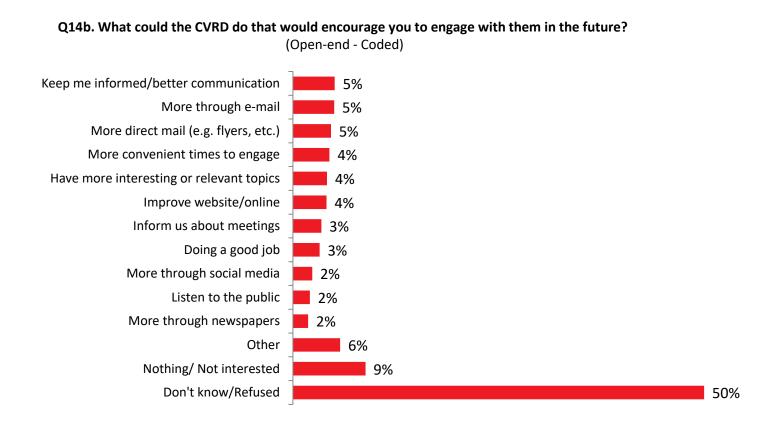
Q14. Have you participated in any of the following ways to engage with the CVRD in the past year? (Multiple Response)



Encourage Engagement with CVRD



- There were a variety of responses provided when those who have not engaged with the CVRD in the past year were asked what the District could do to encourage residents to engage with them in the future.
- The most mentioned factors mentioned are to keep residents informed/better communication and more communication through e-mail or direct mail.

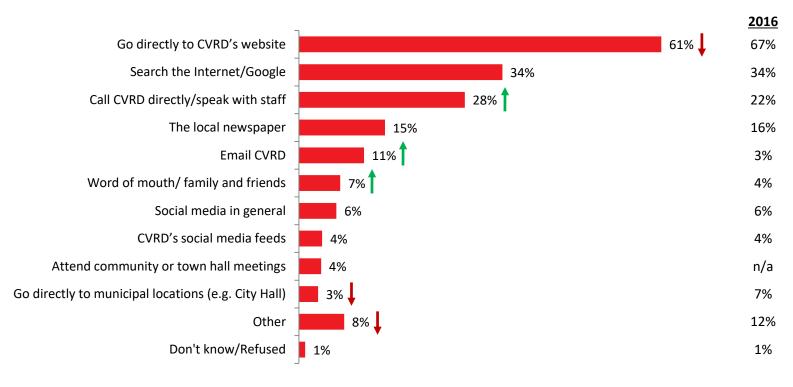


Obtaining Information about CVRD



- When looking for information on the CVRD, six in ten (61%) residents would go directly to the CVRD's website. Fewer mention this as the leading source compared to 2016 (67%).
- The next most common means of looking for information on the CVRD is searching the internet (34%) and calling to speak with a staff member (28%), with the latter mentioned more often this year than in 2016 (22%).

Q15. If you were looking for information on the Cowichan Valley Regional District, what sources would you use to find this information? (Multiple Response)

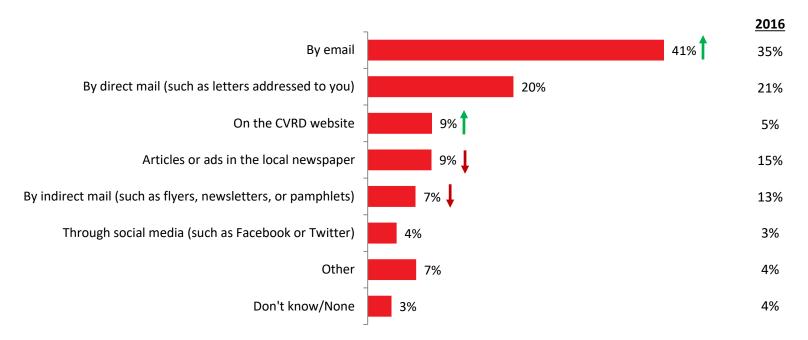


Preferred Method of Receiving Information



- The preferred method to receive information from the Regional District is by email, with four in ten (41%) residents selecting this channel, which is a significant increase from 2016 (35%).
- The next most preferred means of receiving information is by direct mail, with two in ten (20%) selecting this avenue.

Q16. What is your preferred method to receive information from the Regional District?



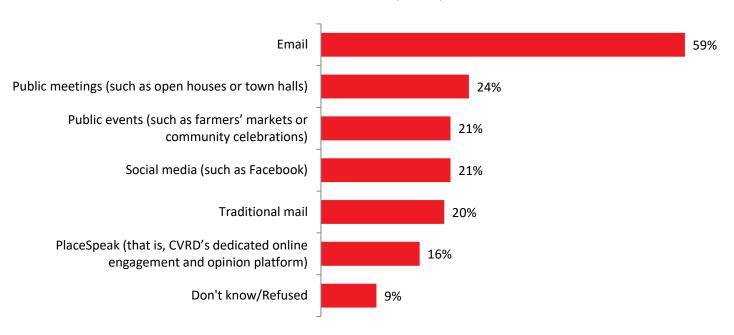


Preferred Method to Share Feedback



- Similar to receiving information, the most preferred method to share feedback with the CVRD is via email (59%).
- Other channels such as public meetings, public events, social media, traditional mail, and PlaceSpeak are chosen far less frequently.

Q17. What is your preferred method(s) for sharing your input or feedback with the CVRD? (Multiple Response)





RESULTS

Respondent Profile

Demographics



	Total
Region	
Central/East	56%
South	22%
North	14%
West	9%
Municipality	
Municipality of North Cowichan	32%
City of Duncan	12%
Town of Ladysmith	8%
Town of Lake Cowichan	3%
Non-municipal area	44%

	Total
Age	
18-34	7%
35-54	22%
55+	71%
Refused	1%
Gender	
Male	46%
Female	53%
Other	<1%
Prefer not to answer	<1%

	Total
Home Ownership	
Own	83%
Rent	15%
Other	2%
Prefer not to answer	<1%
Type of Dwelling	
Single detached house	77%
Apartment	5%
Townhouse or rowhouse	5%
Duplex, triplex, or semi- detached house	4%
Mobile home	4%
Secondary suite	3%
Rooming house	<1%
Prefer not to answer	2%

Demographics



	Total
Years Lived in CVRD	23%
Less than 10 years	28%
10 to less than 20 years	17%
20 to less than 30 years	31%
30 years and over	2%
Don't know/ Prefer not to answer	9%
Where Moved to CVRD From	(n=90)
Other Vancouver Island (excluding Victoria and area)	20%
Other BC mainland (excluding Metro Vancouver)	20%
Alberta	18%
Victoria and area	14%
Metro Vancouver	13%
Other province	4%
International location	3%
Other/ Prefer not to answer	1%

	Total
Employment	
Retired	45%
Work inside the district	38%
Not currently working	5%
Work in Victoria and area	4%
Work elsewhere outside the district	7%
Refused	2%
Education	
Some high school	8%
Graduated high school	15%
Some college or university	23%
Graduated college or university	39%
Post-graduate	13%
Don't know/ Refused	2%

	Total
Household Income	
Under \$40,000	19%
\$40,000 to under \$60,000	17%
\$60,000 to under \$80,000	13%
\$80,000 to under \$100,000	11%
\$100,000 to under \$120,000	9%
\$120,000 to under \$160,000	5%
\$160,000 or more	6%
Don't know/Refused	20%