
GABRIOLA LAND AND TRAILS TRUST ACCESSIBILITY SURVEY REPORT

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Prepared for:
Gabriola Land and Trails Trust



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There are many long-time residents who are now dealing with the problems of old age, so I, as one of them, thank you for trying to help us still use the outdoors.

Survey Respondent

In the spring of 2019, the Gabriola Land and Trails Trust (GaLTT) developed an accessibility survey for Gabriola residents and visitors. Two hundred and eighty-four (284) people completed the survey, resulting in a confidence level of 95% that the responses to the survey are reflective of the Gabriola community as a whole with a margin of error of plus or minus 6%. The survey included demographic and mobility questions, as well as questions about use, and barriers to use, in Gabriola's parks and trails. The initial purpose was to provide information on provincial park access, in particular Gabriola Sands Provincial Park (Twin Beaches), to complement a BC Parks funded project assessing the accessibility of Gabriola Sands and suggesting potential improvements. GaLTT used this opportunity to gather accessibility information on all the parks and trail systems on the island. The results are organized in two sections: 1) shore front parks, and 2) trails.

Shorefront Parks

Respondents indicated regular use of shoreline parks, in particular Neighbourhood Community parks, Drumbeg Provincial Park and Gabriola Sands (Twin Beaches). Natural beauty was the most important draw for the majority of people who use shorefront parks (90%). Convenience, opportunities for recreational or other activities, and accessibility in relation to mobility restrictions, were experienced as very important by 40 - 50% of respondents. Enjoying nature, wildlife watching, and beachcombing were the top uses of shorefront parks.

While many respondents did not experience any barriers to visiting shorefront parks, 46% of the respondents experienced a fear of falling, and/or some experienced insufficient accessibility for family or friends (41%). Thirty-three percent experienced insufficient accessibility due to their mobility restrictions. Priorities for improvements identified by the general population were: 1) access to beach area, 2) access to water (for wading or swimming), 3) railings on slopes and/or stairs, 4) smooth and hard trail surfaces, 5) flat or low-incline trails, and 6) accessible parking. People with mobility restrictions had similar priorities but rated railings and flat or low-incline trails before access to water. The top parks identified for improvements were Gabriola Sands (Twin Beaches) and Joyce Lockwood Community Park.

For Gabriola Sands (Twin Beaches) 48% of the respondents felt that improving access to both sides of the park was equally important. Thirty-four percent (34%) of respondents felt that it was more important to improve access to the Taylor Bay beach access relative to the 17% that felt Pilot Bay access should have priority.

Trails

In responding to questions about Gabriola trails, people indicated that trails in 707 Community Park, Drumbeg Provincial Park, and Elder Cedar Nature Reserve were the most frequently used

on Gabriola. The most common reasons to use the trails were to 1) enjoy nature, 2) watch wildlife, and 3) avoid walking on the road. Between 10% and 13% reported the following as major barriers: a) fear of falling, b) lack of short loop trails, and c) insufficient accessibility due to their mobility restrictions. First choice for a wheelchair accessible trail was Drumbeg. For moderate improvements (not wheelchair accessible) the top four choices were Drumbeg Provincial Park, Elder Cedar Nature Reserve, 707 Community Park, and Descanso Bay Regional Park. Priorities for trail improvements were: 1) boardwalk over wet or rough areas, 2) short trail routes/loops or accessible sections of longer trails, 3) accessible outhouses, 4) railings, edgings, and low incline ramps or boardwalks, and 5) accessible parking.

Throughout the survey there were thoughtful comments regarding balancing the desire to keep the parks and trails natural and wild, with the desire to ensure that all residents, including those with mobility restrictions, are able to access the ocean, parks and trails.

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RESPONDENTS

The Gabriola Land and Trails Trust Accessibility Survey was available from March 5 to April 26, 2019. There were 284 people who filled out the 29-question survey. Based on 3733 Gabriola residents, the 2016 census population for Gabriola residents over 15 years of age, the survey results indicate a confidence level of 95% that the responses to the survey questions are reflective of the community as a whole with a margin of error of plus or minus 6%. The number of respondents for each question (n) is noted in each graph.

Age

The age of the respondents was primarily in the 35 to 84-year-old age group. The following table indicates the comparison between age groupings from the Gabriola Census data (for those 15 and older) and those of the survey respondents. The 65 to 84-year-old age group has a higher representation than in the general population; not surprising, given the survey topic.

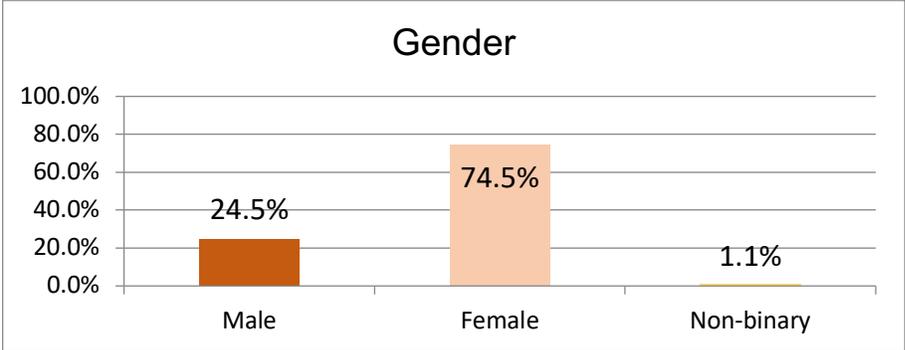
Table 1: Age of Respondents

Answer Choices	Age of Respondents	
	Gabriola pop 2016 %	Survey Responses
13 – 18	3%*	0.36% 1
19 – 34	6%*	3.91% 11
35 – 64	50%	45.20% 127
65 – 84	38%	48.40% 136
85+	2.5%	2.14% 6

*The census age group is slightly different than the survey age groupings. The percentages with asterisk are census data for 15 to 19 years (3%) rather than 13 – 18 yrs., and 20 – 34 years (6%) rather than 19 - 34 years.

Gender

There were more females responding to this survey (74.5%) relative to their percentage in the general population (52%). In response, the questions regarding priorities for improvement were



analyzed from a gender response perspective. If there were gender differences, we weighted the responses to reflect Gabriola’s gender balance. (See Appendix A: Methodology)

Figure 1: Gender of Respondents

Residence

Gabriola is a community with both full time residents, as well as part time residents who live on Gabriola during the summer and holidays. The majority of people filling out the survey were full time residents (86.5%), compared to 12.5% part time or seasonal residents and 0.7% visitors. We analyzed differences in these groupings when reviewing the responses regarding potential improvements. There was no significant difference in the responses.

Mobility Restrictions

Some of those filling out the survey also completed it on behalf of others who had given them permission. The following charts outline the mobility restrictions of the respondents, as well as those some respondents represented. The first chart describes the mobility restrictions of the person filling in the survey (because people checked all that applied, rather than just choosing one, the percentages are over 100%). Two hundred seventy-two people responded to this question:

Table 2: Mobility restrictions of respondents

Mobility Restrictions	%	#
<i>No mobility restrictions</i>	82%	224
<i>Mobility restrictions (anything that prevents any activities or accessing any locations, even if minor)</i>	20%	55
<i>Use assistive devices (includes strollers)</i>	10%	28

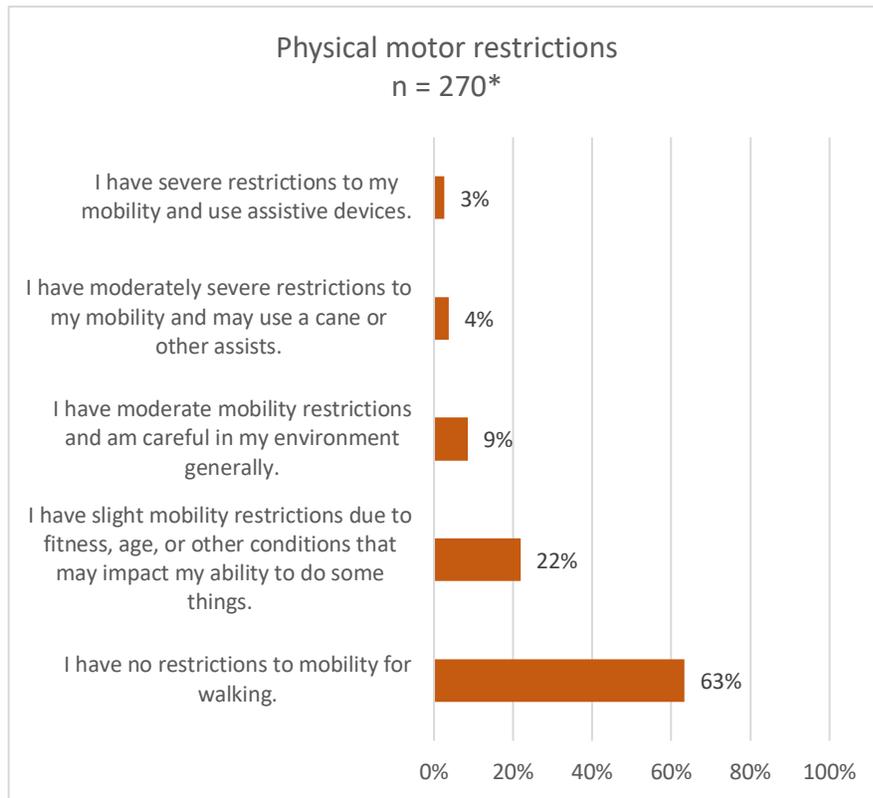
Some people filled out the survey on behalf of family members, friends or someone they provided care to (with permission). The following chart provides the numbers represented.

Table 3: Survey filled out on behalf of others

Mobility Restrictions	Child	Family member	Person I am caregiver for
<i>No mobility restrictions</i>	0	3	1
<i>Mobility restrictions (anything that prevents any activities or accessing any locations, even if minor)</i>	2	6	2
<i>Use assistive devices (includes strollers)</i>	0	7	1

Based on these numbers the survey results reflect the responses of 228 people with no mobility restrictions, 65 people with some mobility restrictions, and 36 people who use assistive devices (there is overlap between these last two responses).

The following graph indicates the extent to which physical motor restrictions affects the



respondents' mobility. While 63% (100 respondents) had no mobility restrictions for walking, the other 37% had restrictions that required assistive devices including a cane or other assistive devices (7%), moderate mobility restrictions (9%), and slight mobility restrictions (22%).

Respondents were also asked whether or not they had sensory restrictions that affected their mobility. Over 96% responded 'no' and 2% responded 'yes'.

* n= the number of respondents for the specific question. The 'n' will be noted for each graph.
 Figure 2: Physical motor restrictions

For those with mobility restrictions the majority were permanent.

Approximately 1/3 were variable and under 10% were temporary (See Table 4). This table has been adjusted to indicate the responses by gender.

Table 4: Permanence of mobility restrictions

Your mobility restrictions are?

	Female	Male	Non-binary	Total #	Total %
Permanent	53%	60%	67%	55	49.60%
Temporary	8%	10%	0	8	7.20%
Variable	39%	30%	37%	37	33.30%

We asked respondents to indicate any assistive devices they used on a regular basis. Of the 75 responses 73% used a cane or walking stick. Twelve percent used a wheelchair, walker or scooter, and 10.7% used wheeled carts to carry things. Almost 7% of those responding to this question used a stroller on a regular basis. These percentages are depicted in the following graph:

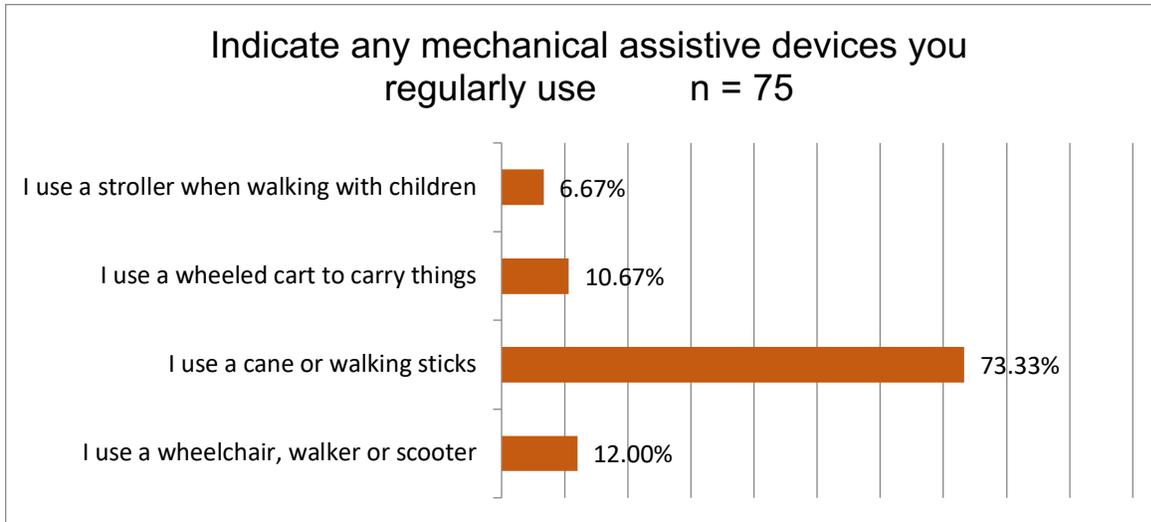


Figure 3: Mechanical assistive devices used regularly

This section provided us with insight into the age, gender, and mobility restrictions of those responding to the survey. These factors were considered during the analysis of accessibility needs for Gabriola’s shorefront parks and trails.

SHOREFRONT PARK USE

In this section we describe which shorefront parks respondents use, how often, what draws them there and what they do while they are there. We asked for information about the following shorefront parks: Neighbourhood Community Parks, Joyce Lockwood Community Park, Descanso Bay Regional Park (campground), Sandwell Provincial Park, Drumbeg Provincial Park, and Gabriola Sands Provincial Park (Twin Beaches).

Shorefront Park Use and Frequency

The following chart outlines the frequency with which people used the five shorefront parks listed, as well as neighbourhood community parks:

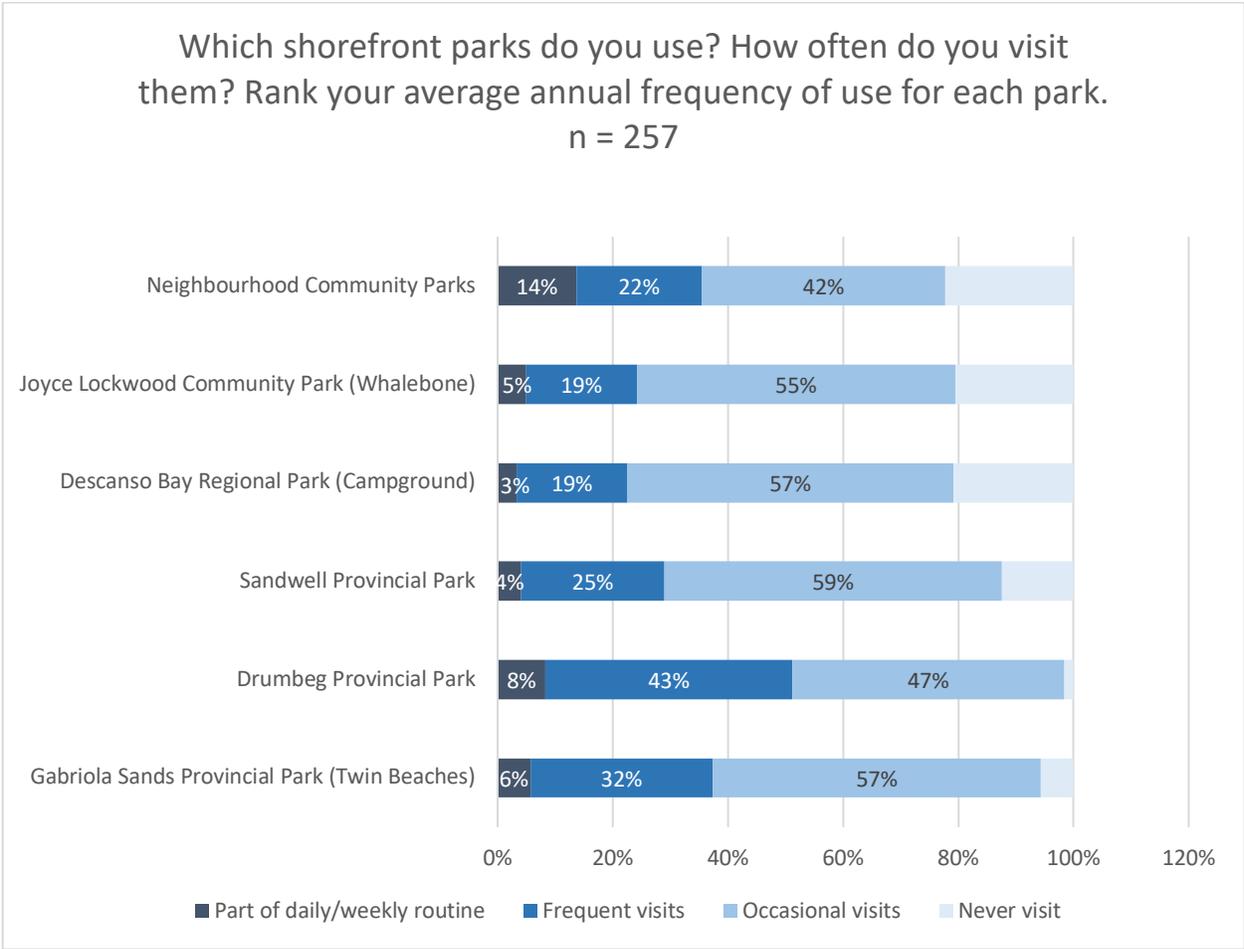


Figure 4: Shorefront park use

Their responses indicate that:

- Neighbourhood Community parks were used most often by respondents as part of a daily or weekly routine.

- Drumbeg Park received frequent visits by 43% of respondents, with Gabriola Sands Provincial Park next at 32%. The other parks listed were used frequently by 19% - 25% of respondents.
- When combining the daily/weekly use and the frequent use the results indicate that the parks used most often are: Drumbeg (51%), Neighbourhood parks (36%), and Gabriola Sands (38%).
- Four of the parks received occasional visits by 55% to 59% of respondents: Sandwell Provincial Park (59%), Descanso Bay Regional Park (57%), Gabriola Sands Provincial Park (57%), and Joyce Lockwood Community Park (55%)

What draws you to shorefront parks?

We then asked what draws people to shorefront parks. We gave people four potential responses and asked them to rank them from very important to not important. As evidenced by the chart below, natural beauty is the most important draw for the majority of people who use shorefront parks. Convenience, opportunities for recreational or other activities, and accessibility in relation to mobility restrictions, were experienced as very important by 47%, 45%, and 43%, respectively.

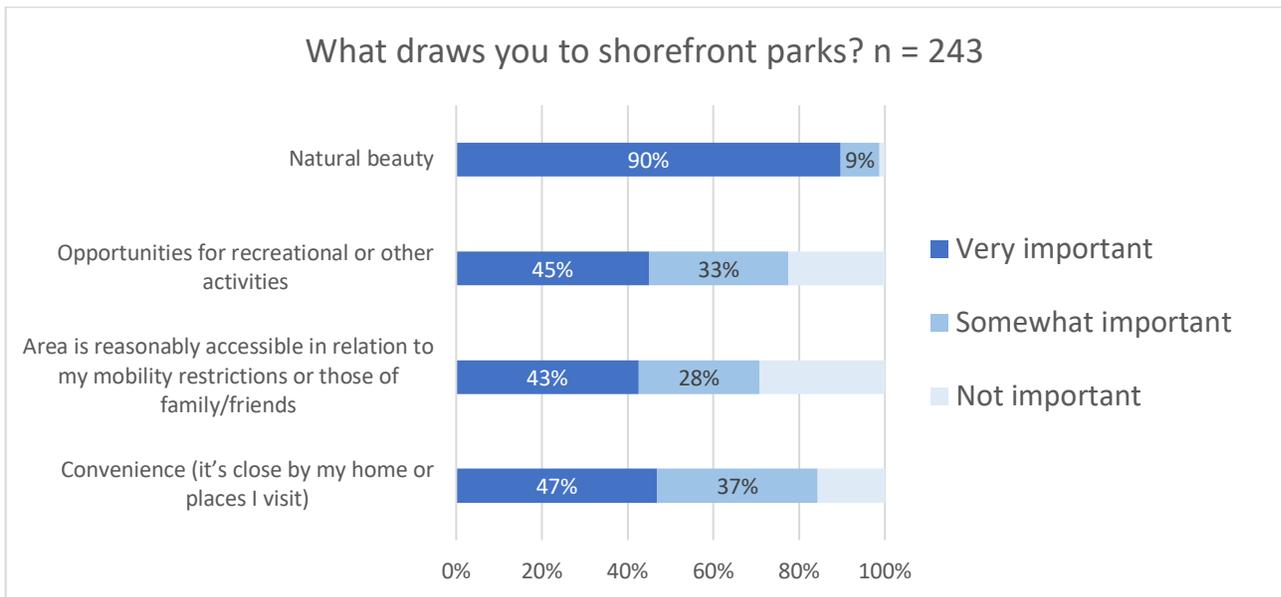


Figure 5: What draws you to shorefront parks?

Respondents also mentioned the draw of the water/ocean (2 comments), the capacity to launch a kayak or dinghy (4), swimming (2), the opportunity to gather with friends and family (2), benches (1), dog friendly (2), and dog free (1). Six people mentioned that they couldn't access the trails due to the current condition of those trails.

What do you do at Shorefront Parks?

Corresponding to the draw of natural beauty mentioned in the preceding question, there was a high proportion (95%) of respondents that chose ‘enjoying nature’ as a very important shorefront park activity. Wildlife watching (including bird watching) received a ‘very important’ rating by 68% of the respondents. The following chart provides a breakdown of the various activities and their importance to the respondents.

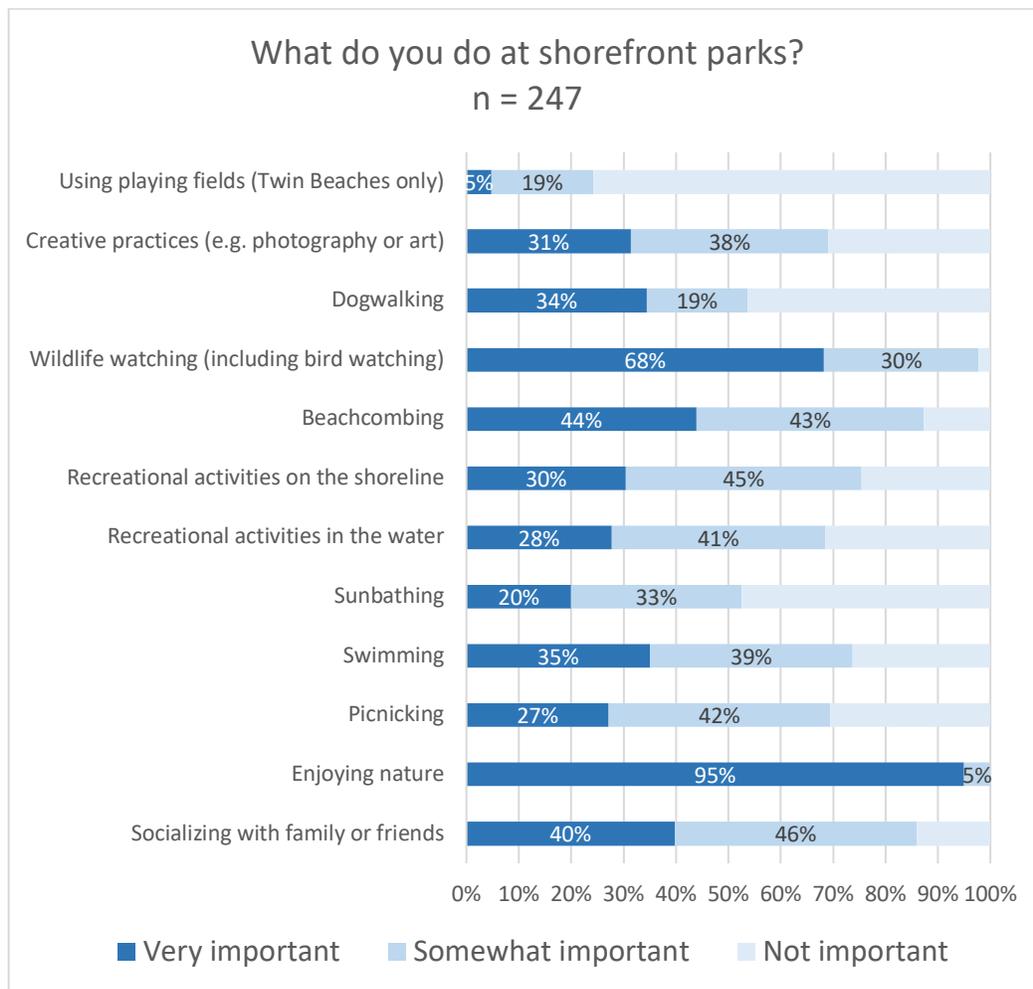


Figure 6: What do you do at shorefront parks?

In addition to the preceding, people identified the following specific activities (some fall within the categories above):

- Launching boats: 6 (3 expressed concerns that there were few places to launch kayaks/boats)
- Shore Walking: 4
- Citizen science, forage fish sampling, help with eel grass assessments: 1
- Reading: 1
- Mountain bike riding: 1

BARRIERS AND PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

In this next section we take a look at what prevents people from accessing shorefront parks and what types of improvements would ensure improved access.

What prevents you from visiting shorefront parks?

While many respondents did not experience any barriers to visiting shorefront parks 46% of the respondents (100) did experience a fear of falling, and/or insufficient accessibility for family or friends (41%). Thirty-three percent experienced barriers due to insufficient accessibility due to their mobility restrictions. Other accessibility issues included: stairs (removed or needing repair), car parking, difficult to launch kayaks, signage, mud and slippery conditions, steep slopes, and fallen beached logs. In addition, there were comments about the impact of freighter traffic on the enjoyment of the park. The following chart provides an overview of what prevents people from visiting Gabriola’s shorefront parks.

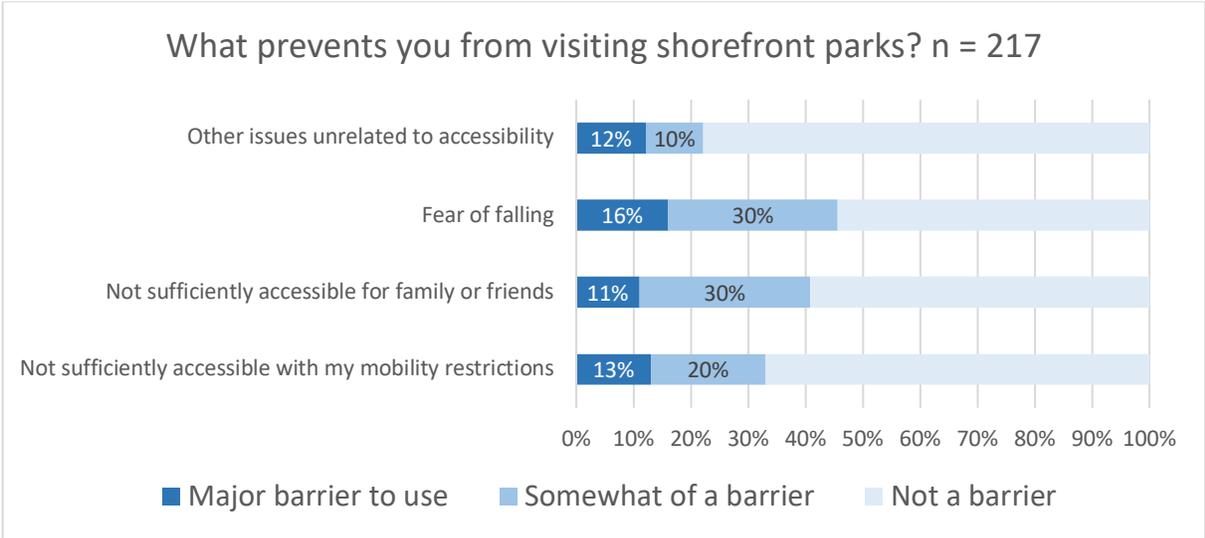


Figure 7: What prevents you from visiting shorefront parks?

Would you use shorefront parks more if access was improved?

As the Figure 8 chart depicts, approximately half of the respondents would use shorefront parks more often if access was improved and 22% might use them more.

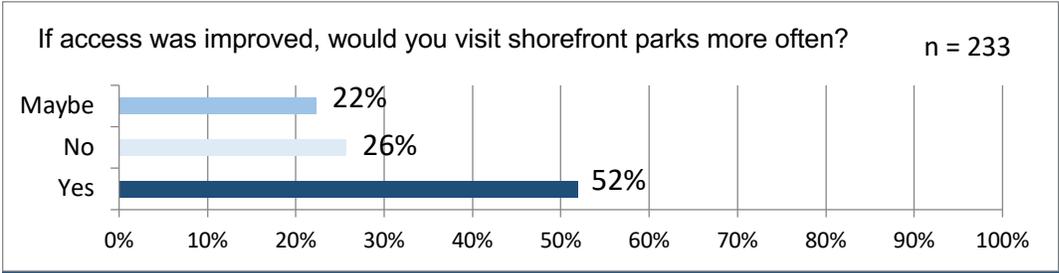


Figure 8: Would you use shorefront parks if access was improved?

Priorities for improvements

We asked people to rate various types of improvements as ‘very important’, ‘somewhat important’ or ‘not important’. As the following chart suggests the priority areas are:

- 70% Access to beach area
- 50% Access to water (for wading or swimming)
- 44% Railings on slopes and/or stairs
- 35% Smooth and hard trail surfaces
- 33% Flat or low-incline trails
- 33% Accessible Parking

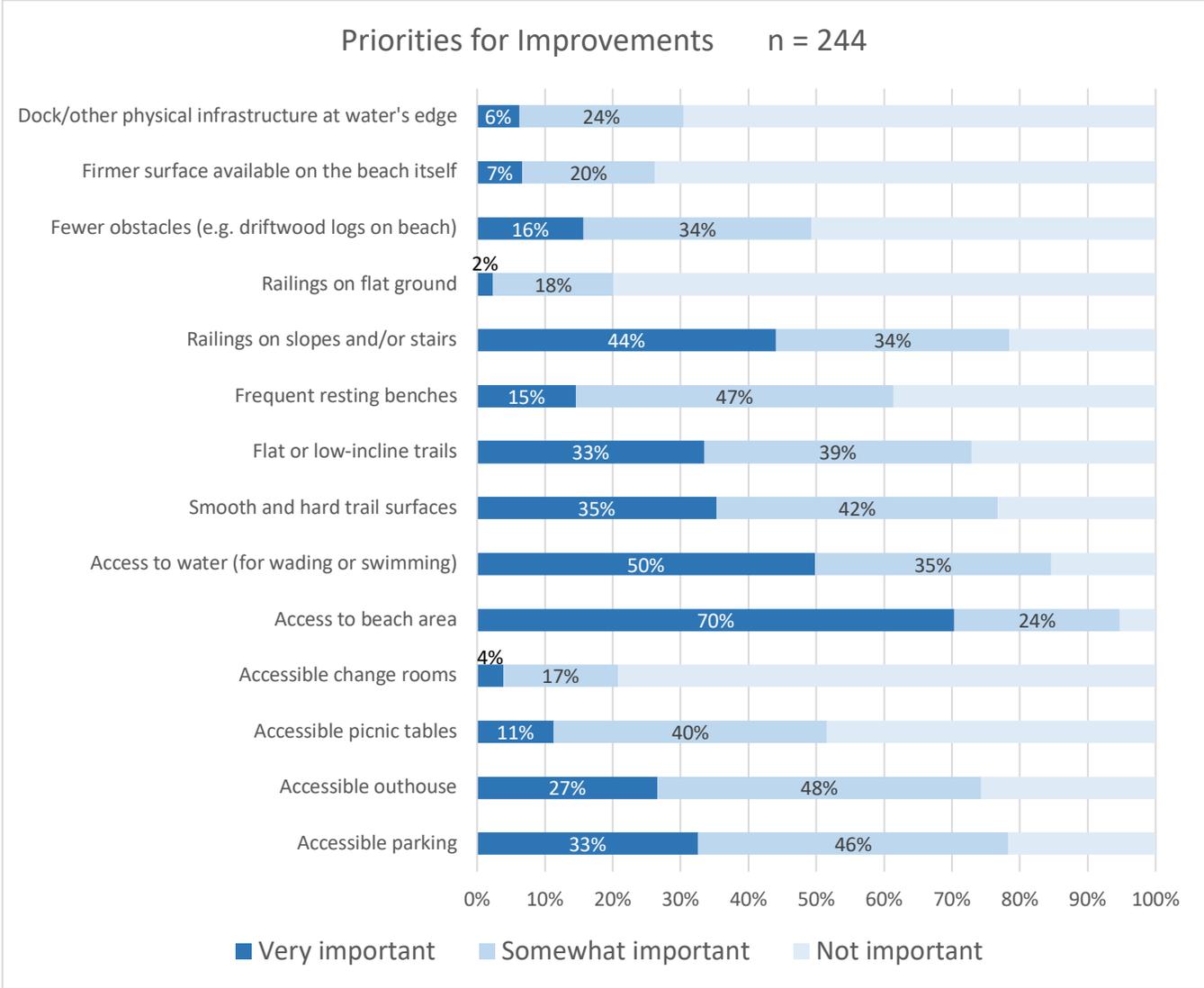


Figure 9: Priorities for improvement

In the accompanying comments there were suggested infrastructure changes, together with a desire to keep things as they were. One comment provides insight into the balancing act:

This is very tricky. For myself, I vastly prefer a natural beach. I do not like the idea of e.g. driftwood logs being removed or artificial surfaces being introduced on paths, not at all. However, when my mother-in-law, who uses a walker, visits, there are many places she cannot go. Would I be willing to sacrifice the natural state of these areas so she and others like her can enjoy them? How selfish do I get to be? Is there some compromise possible (e.g. making one or two beaches more accessible, leaving the others alone)?

The table below provides comments relevant to each priority option provided. The additional options arising from the comment section are noted at the end of the table.

Table 5: Comments on priorities for improvements

<i>Priorities for Improvement</i>	<i>Comments</i>
<i>Dock/other physical infrastructure at water's edge</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need two accesses - one for beach and swimming and one for boat launch • Would like kayak ramp at end of Spring Beach public access. This is a very important location so as to avoid very strong currents at both Gabriola Passage and False Narrows • We badly need boat launch ramps on this island. Bells landing could easily be upgraded for example. • Kayak launch spots, ramps. • Gabriola really needs a dock at Gray Road including dredging and expanded parking. • Refer to Bulcock Beach Espanade in Caloundra, Qld, Australia. Wonderful Boardwalk. where there is no land for easy walking then the boardwalk is built out over the water or uneven terrain. Would so enjoy a walk that is 2km such as this. Would mean 4km round trip.
<i>Firmer surface available on the beach itself</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We kayak and would love to have some clear/close access for kayak launching at Drumbeg. • Having a safe place to launch kayaks is very important to me!
<i>Fewer obstacles (eg. Driftwood, logs on beach)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logs don't need to be removed just cut back to give access. • Clearing driftwood at beach trail at end of Stalker Road would allow access • Water's edge moves regularly. Logs-moved in taken out by tides. • Fewer obstacles will become an issue for me as my balance deteriorates
<i>Railing on slopes and/or stairs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Railing on slopes and stairs, please. • Stairs with railing is easier for me to get down or up stairs. • Railings are most important

	Comments cont'd
<i>Frequent resting benches</i>	A resting bench at the bottom of the slope with the rope on the Shaw Road Access would be lovely.
<i>Flat or low-incline trails</i>	Flat and low incline trails make it easier for me to walk
<i>Smooth and hard trail surfaces</i>	Smooth trails can be tricky for my canes, if the surface is slippery. Boardwalks are tricky if it is wet because I slip with my canes.
<i>Access to water (for wading or swimming)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need two accesses one for beach and swimming and one for boat launch • Storms have a way of disturbing our swimming beaches. We manage but it gets harder as we age!
<i>Accessible picnic tables</i>	Drumbeg Park, picnic tables great
<i>Accessible outhouse</i>	Drumbeg Park, the bathroom was great
<i>Accessible Parking</i>	parking in a foot of mud isn't accessibility when you're in a wheelchair.
<i>Keep it natural</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personally, I like our parks and beaches just the way they are • Only access is required. If an invalid is incapable - they need to find a beach with flat surface access. • You cannot please everyone • Nature changes as it does, I don't think changing the natural setting is desirable (e.g. Railing). • The more natural the better • There should be good safe access to the beach but the beach itself should be left natural.
<i>Stairs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stairs down to beaches. • Steep hill at far end of Sandwell with no stairs for safety. Previous stairs are non-functional • Stairs or steps for incline
<i>Other comments</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joyce Lockwood, Twin Beaches, Descanso Bay and perhaps other shore, require sand bagging to prevent unnecessary bank and tree loss. • Bike paths – very important • Basic access that is wheelchair friendly to the parks. • Better bus service to parks – very important

We analyzed the priorities of different groups of respondents to ensure all voices were being heard. The same six priority areas came up when analyzed for gender, for residency, and for mobility restrictions. The key difference was the order of the priorities for those with mobility restrictions. The order of their priorities was: 1) Access to beach area, 2) Railings on slopes and/or stairs, 3) Flat or low-incline trails, 4) Access to water for wading or swimming, 5) Smooth and hard trail surfaces, and 6) Accessible parking.

Which shorefront parks should be improved?

When asked which shorefront parks should be improved the range for ‘very important’ for the six parks listed was 23% to 47%. When assigning 3 points to ‘very important’ and 2 points to ‘somewhat important’ and weighting for gender, the following priorities are the result:

- 1. Joyce Lockwood
- 2. Gabriola Sands (Twin Beaches)
- 3. Neighbourhood Community Parks
- 4. Drumbeg Provincial Park
- 5. Sandwell Provincial Park
- 6. Descanso Bay Regional Park

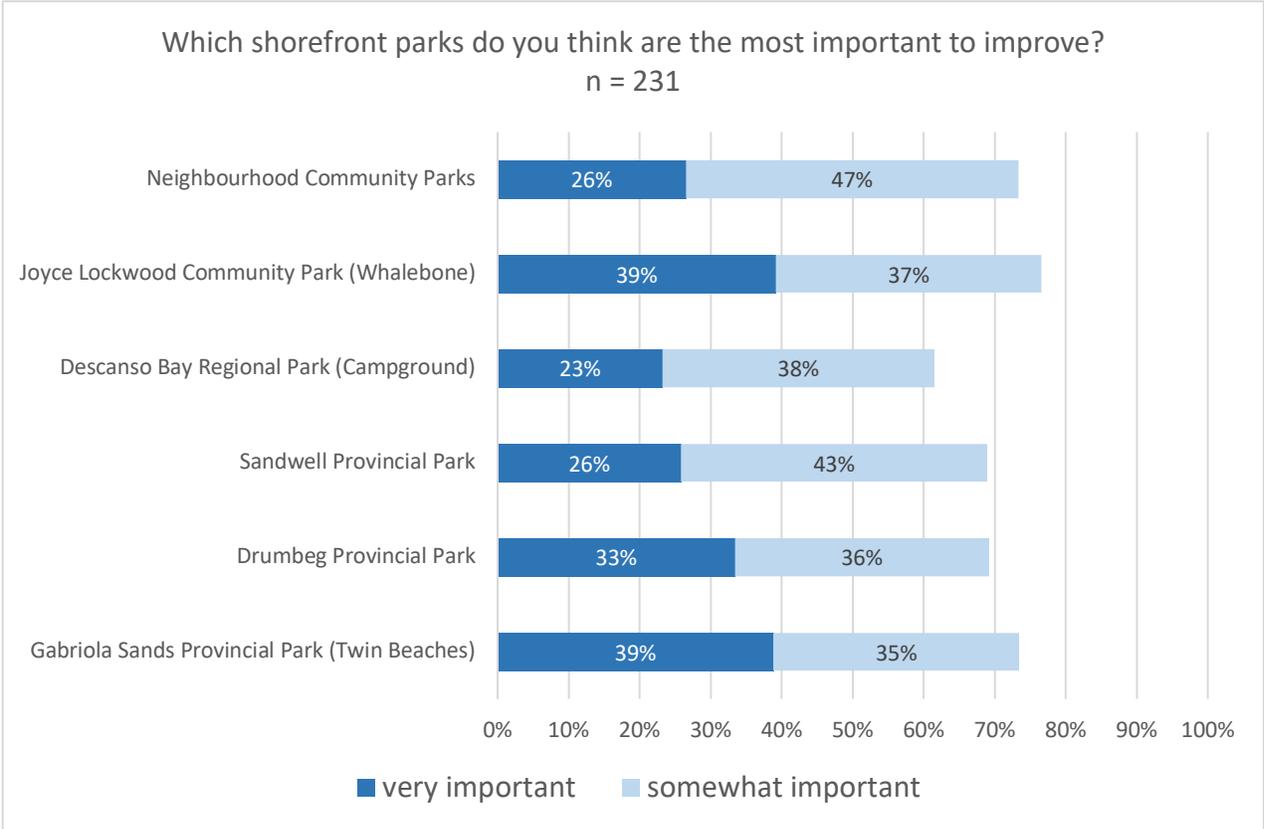


Figure 10: Which shorefront parks should be improved?

There were some differences between the priorities expressed by all respondents and those expressed by people with physical or sensory mobility restrictions. As Figure 11 indicates, those with mobility restrictions had similar top rankings. However, when using a weight of ‘3’ for very important and ‘2’ for somewhat important, they ranked Sandwell and Drumbeg ahead of Neighbourhood Community Parks.

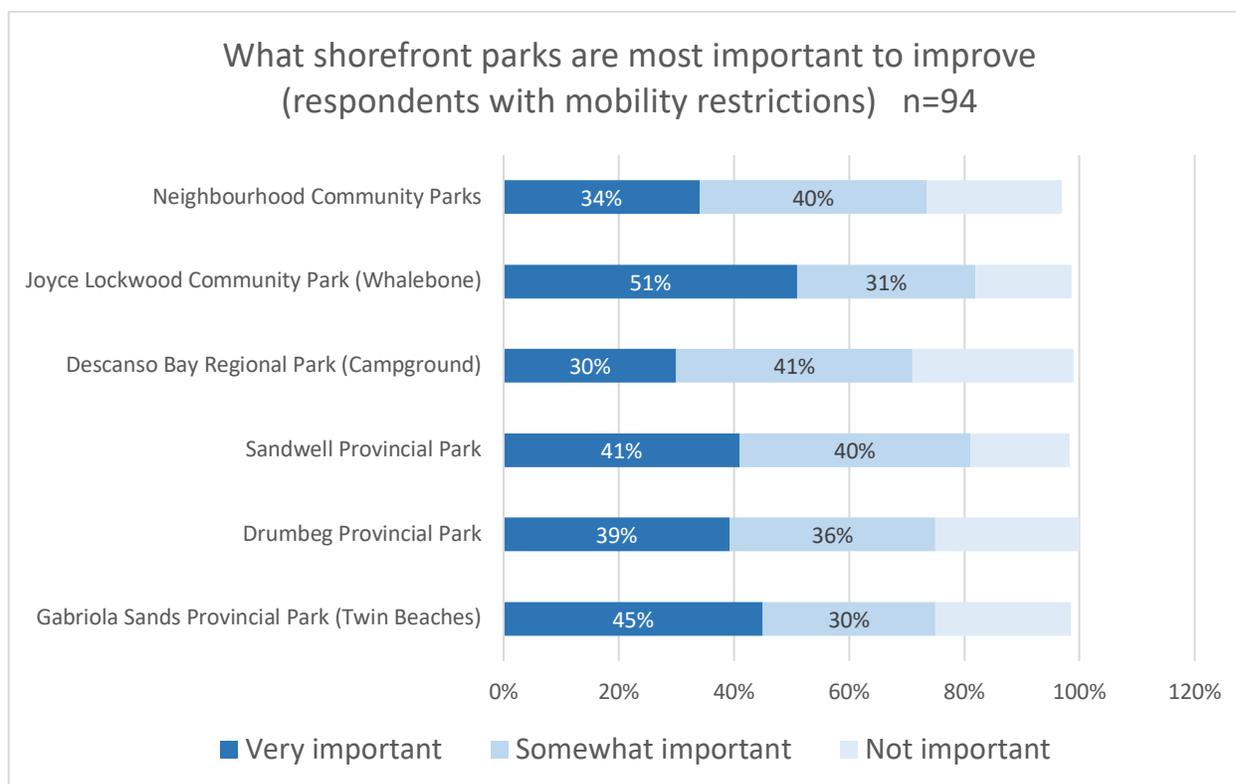


Figure 11: Shorefront park improvements for those with mobility restrictions

Table 6 outlines suggestions made regarding park improvements. Details for Gabriola Sands Provincial Park are in the next section and Spring Beach has been added to Table 6.

Table 6: Suggestions for improvements

Park	Suggestions for Improvements
<i>General comments</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave them as they are (4 comments) • All parks should be accessible to everyone (4 comments) • Improve some and leave some wild (4) • Stairs and ramps for all the beach accesses (2) • Improvements should be done to prevent environmental degradation by shortcuts (1)
<i>Gabriola Sands Provincial Park (Twin Beaches)</i>	See next section
<i>Drumbeg Provincial Park</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The road to Drumbeg is in poor condition (3 comments) • Parking problems • Could use easier water access • Would help to have gentler slope access to beach (uses walker)
<i>Sandwell Provincial Park</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easier access to shore/water needed • Stairs and/or slope with railings

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could use picnic tables • Not a good use of resources to make Sandwell, which has a challenging trail, accessible. • Beautiful beach so would be great if it was accessible for those that are mobility challenged. • Is it possible to build a lower less hilly access trail?
<i>Descanso Bay Regional Park</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads into the park are bad • Paths/trails are good • Easier grade to waterfront would help • Railing on the trail from campground to McConvey
<i>Joyce Lockwood Community Park</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need stairs again (6 comments) • Need year-round easy beach access
<i>Neighbourhood community parks</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need year-round access (most lose their stairs in the winter – need the stairs year-round) • Better access to beach
<i>Spring Beach</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring Beach access needs to be prioritized (6 comments)

Gabriola Sands Provincial Park (Twin Beaches)

Survey respondents were asked whether they felt that Pilot Bay access, or Taylor Bay access was a higher priority for them, or whether they felt they were equally important. Forty-eight percent indicated they felt they were equal in importance (53% with mobility restrictions) while 34% believed that the access at Taylor Bay should be improved relative to 17% for Pilot Bay.

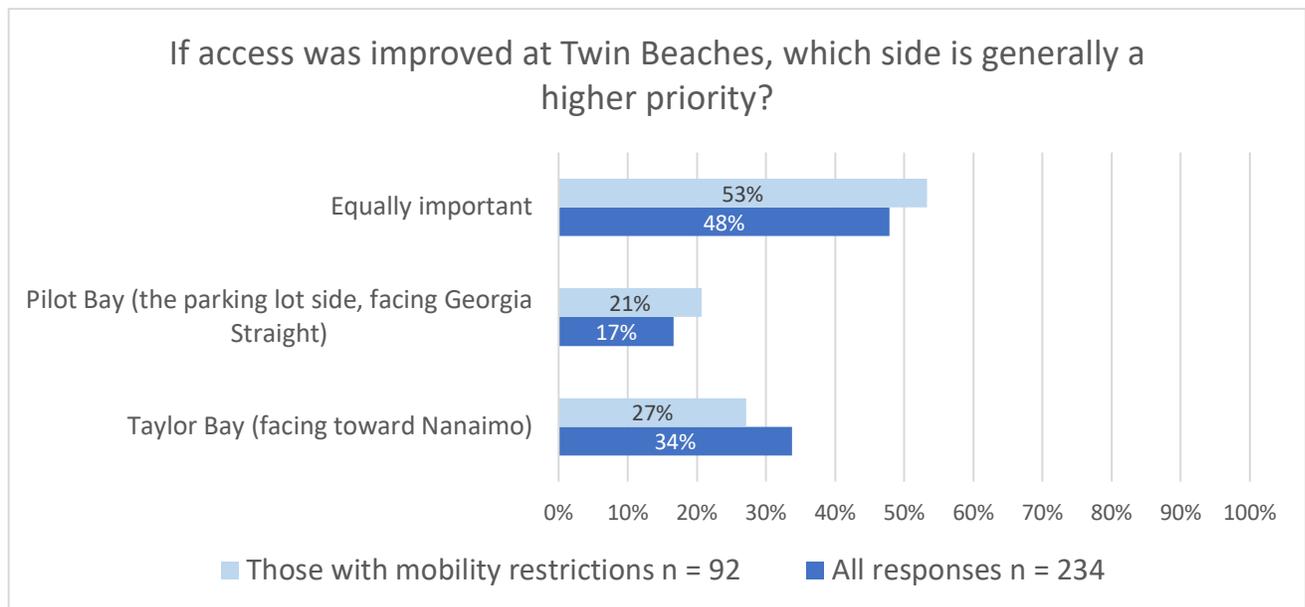


Figure 12: Access at Twin Beaches

There were a range of comments justifying the rationale for choosing one side over the other. There were also comments suggesting that no changes were needed and others suggesting both sides needed improved access.

Table 7: Rationale for improvements at Twin Beaches

Gabriola Sands	Comments
<i>General</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access from parking to actual beach for strollers, wheelchairs, walkers, canes, etc. People with mobility issues can't reach the sand. • No changes needed • If anything is changed make the accommodations as few as possible and as natural as possible • Both sides are heavily used by children with grandparents • Parking lot needs grading and not enough spots for summer use
<i>Taylor Bay</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger/safe path to foreshore so accessible to all • Distance from car park is far for those with mobility issues. Use of road on side for closer handicapped parking • Good access already • More picnic tables • Change rooms, toilets and garbage pick up • Parking difficult in high season • Under water or very muddy for large part of the year • Great place for families and safe swimming • More potential uses for Taylor Bay, Sunnier and beach is larger • Culvert from Taylor Bay side is plugged so field floods when it rains • Muddy in the rain, uneven with tall grass • Need garbage containers for dog poop
<i>Pilot Bay</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobility access paths would be more costly • Access to water through all the driftwood • Leave Pilot Bay wilder and more natural • Access off the shore is unsafe • Concrete support under table is being undercut

In this section we reviewed the use of shorefront parks, barriers preventing use, and suggested improvements. In the next section we review the accessibility challenges and potential improvements for Gabriola trails and parks.

TRAIL USE

In this section we describe the trails respondents reported using, why they use the trails and what they do on the trails. We will then take a look at accessibility challenges and potential improvements in the final section.

Preferences and frequency of use of Gabriola trails

The first question in this section was about the specific trails that respondents used and the frequency with which they used them. The following graphs indicate:

- The 707 Community Park was used as part of daily/weekly routines by 18% of the respondents. Drumbeg Provincial Park was next at 13%.
- Drumbeg Provincial Park received the highest number of frequent visits at 42% of respondents. Elder Cedar Nature Reserve was second at 33%.
- Descanso Bay Regional Park received the highest percentage of occasional visits at 57% with Elder Cedar close behind at 55%.
- Drumbeg was visited by 99% of respondents, Elder Cedar was next at 93%.
- The three areas with the lowest overall use were Kensington Crown Lands, North Degnen Crown Lands, and Coats Marsh Regional Park.

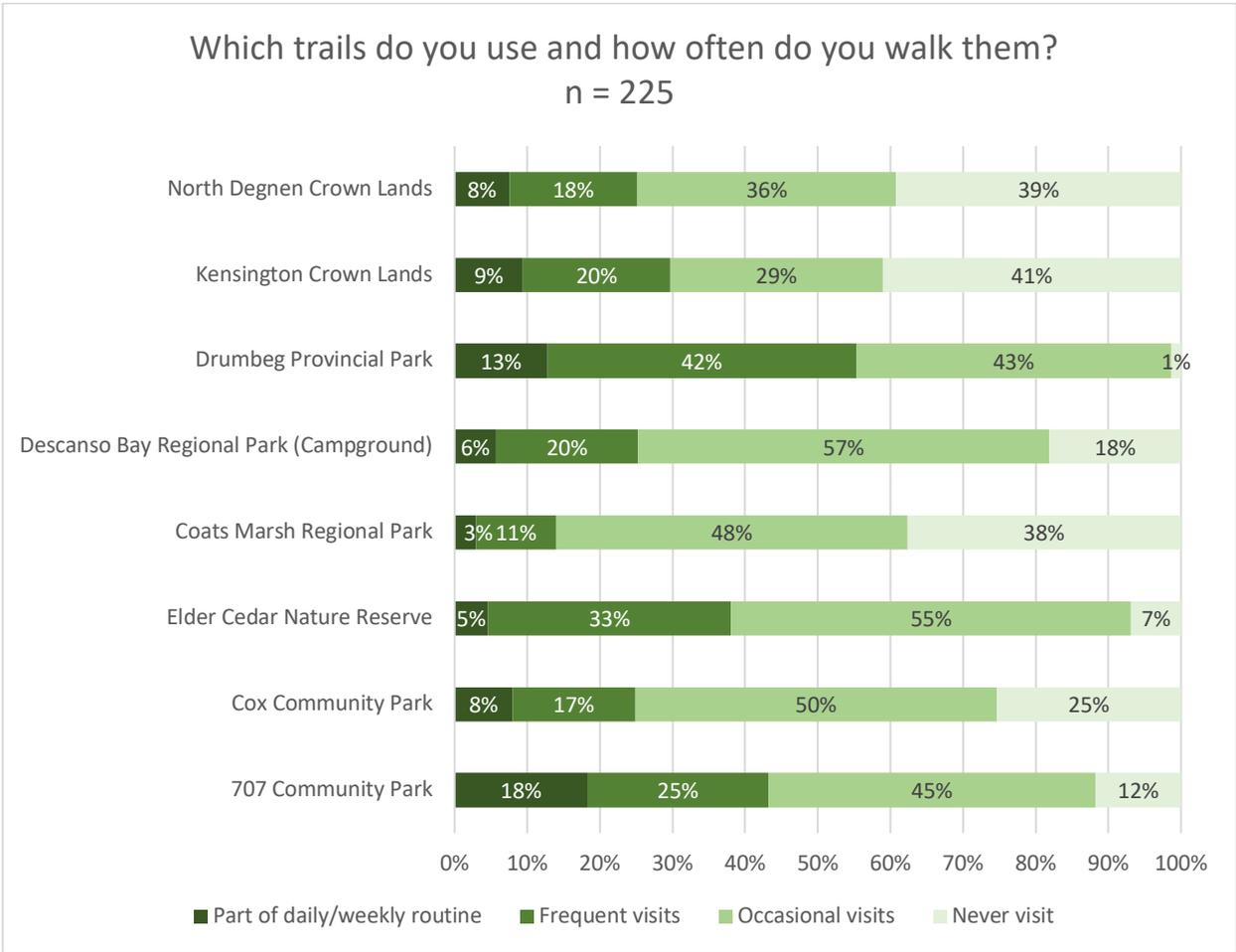


Figure 13: Which trails do you use and frequency of use?

We also analyzed what trails were used by those with physical or sensory mobility restrictions. As can be seen in the following graph Drumbeg and 707 Community Park were used most often on a daily or weekly basis, and Drumbeg, Elder Cedar, and Kensington Crown Lands, were used most often on a frequent basis.

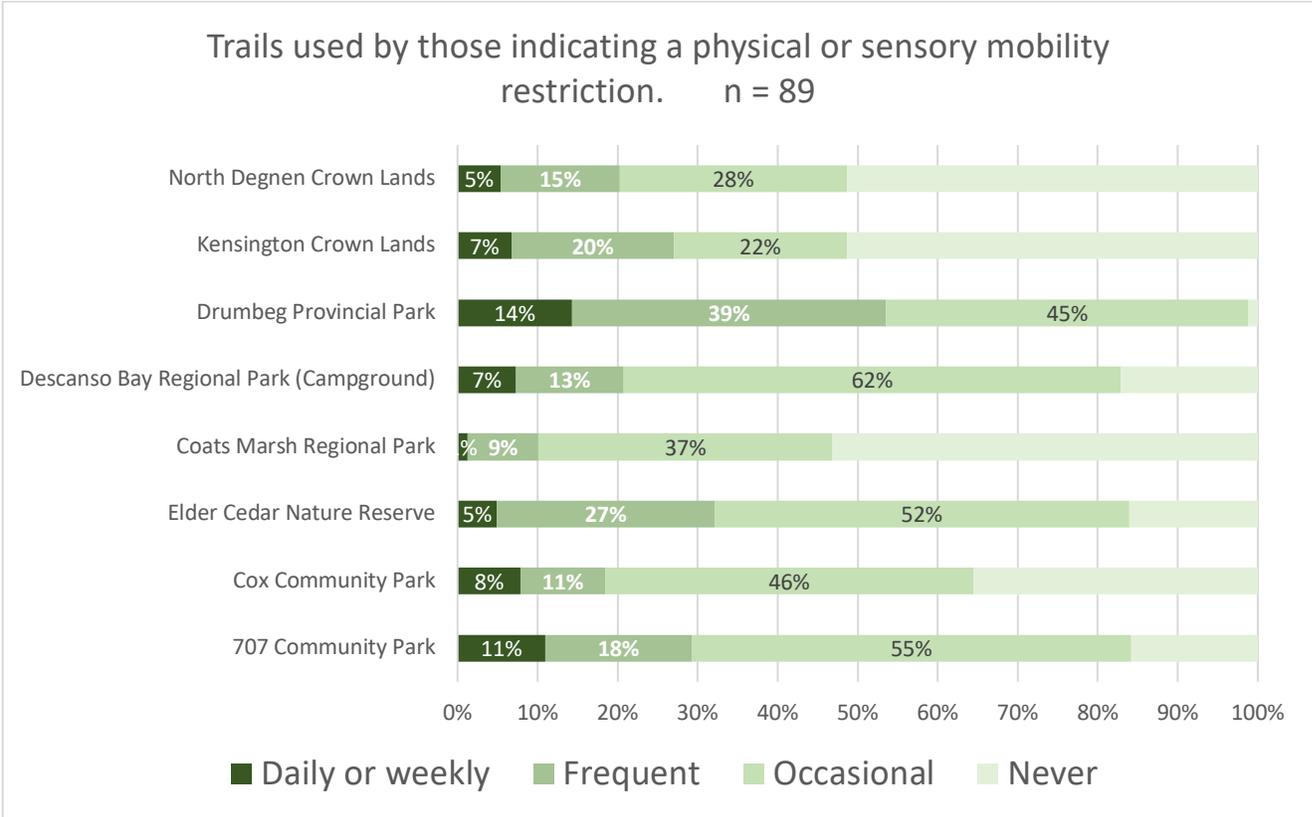


Figure 14: What trails to improve (mobility restriction lens)

What do you do when on trails?

We asked people what they did when on Gabriola trails. As expected, we received a high percentage that indicated they walked on the trails (93%). Ninety-one percent were there to enjoy nature and 59% were there to watch wildlife (including birdwatching).

Of the 223 respondents 51% indicated that they walked on the trails to avoid walking on the road. Respondents also identified dog walking (43%), socializing with family or friends (35%), and travel from one place to another (22%), as trail activities.

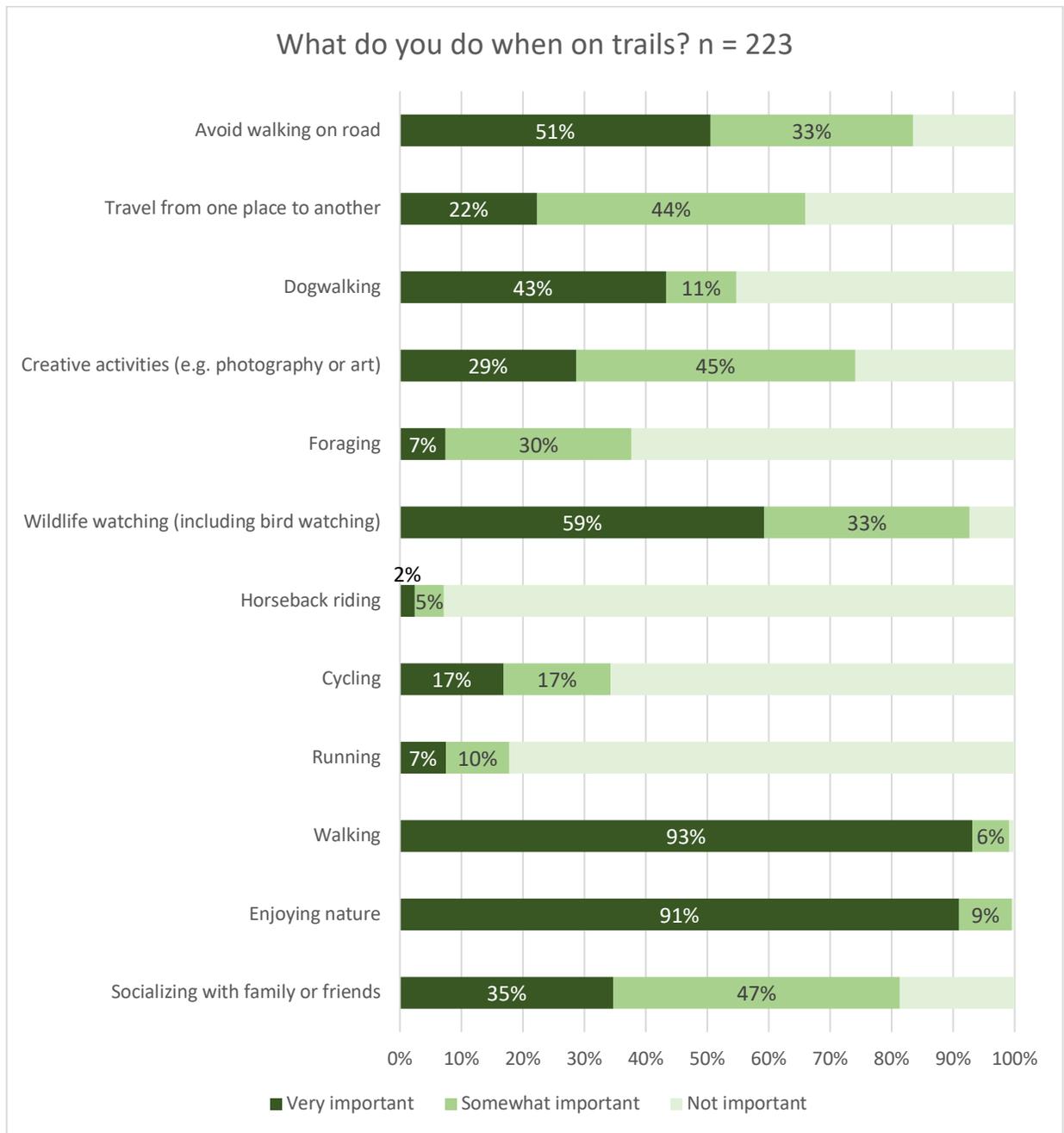


Figure 15: What do you do when on trails?

BARRIERS AND PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

What prevents you from using trails?

When people were asked what prevents them from using trails the majority of respondents indicated that there were no major barriers. However, there were barriers to use for some of the respondents.

Between 10% and 13% reported the following as major barriers: a) fear of falling, b) lack of short loop trails, and c) insufficient accessibility due to their mobility restrictions.

Between 14% and 24% indicated the following were somewhat of a barrier: a) lack of short loop trails, b) lack of parking, c) potential problems with other trail users, d) fear of falling, e) not accessible for family or friends, and f) not accessible due to their mobility restrictions.

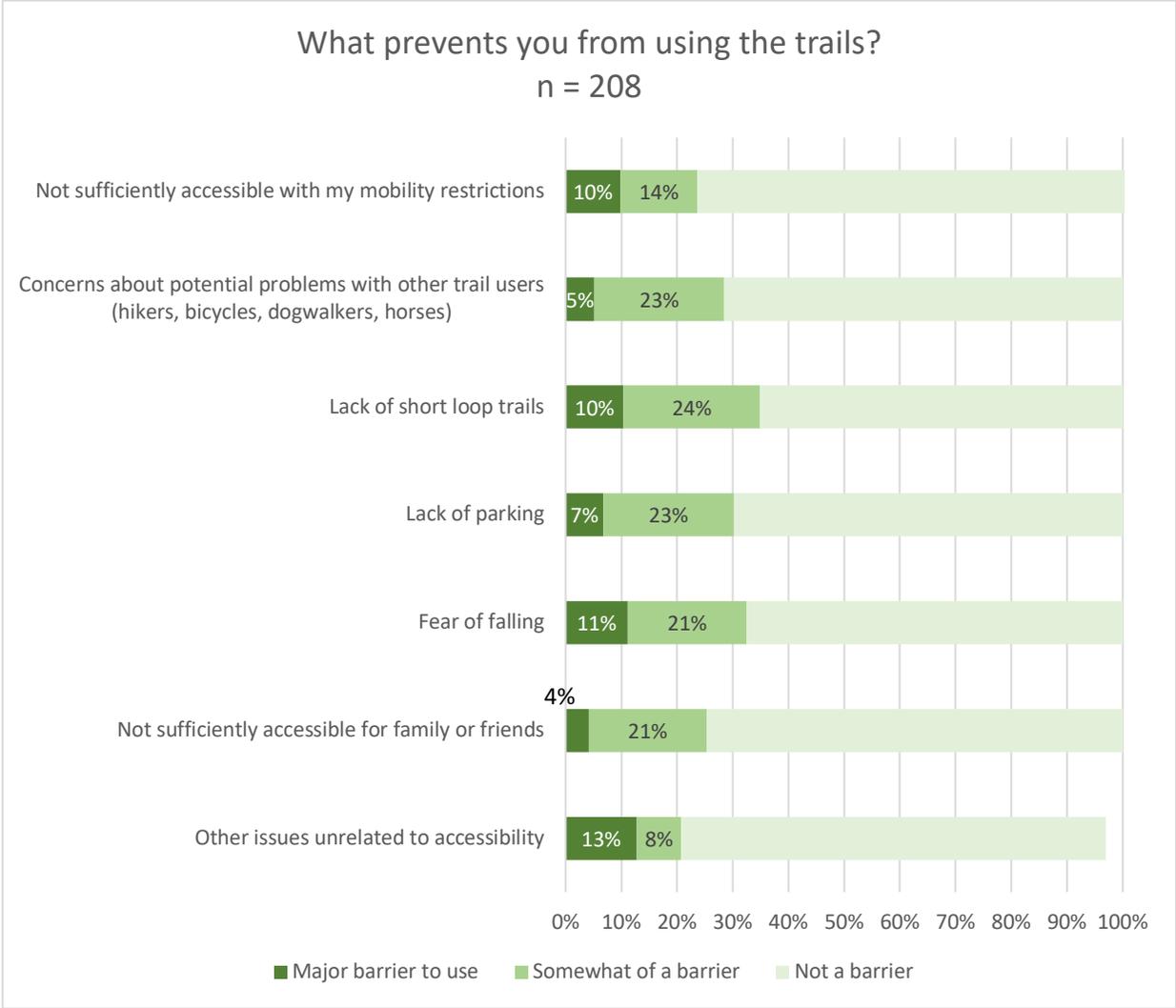


Figure 16: What prevents you from using the trails?

We analyzed the preceding question from the perspective of those with physical mobility restrictions. As the chart below indicates the top three challenges were:

- 1) fear of falling,
- 2) not sufficiently accessible with my mobility restrictions, and
- 3) lack of short loop trails.

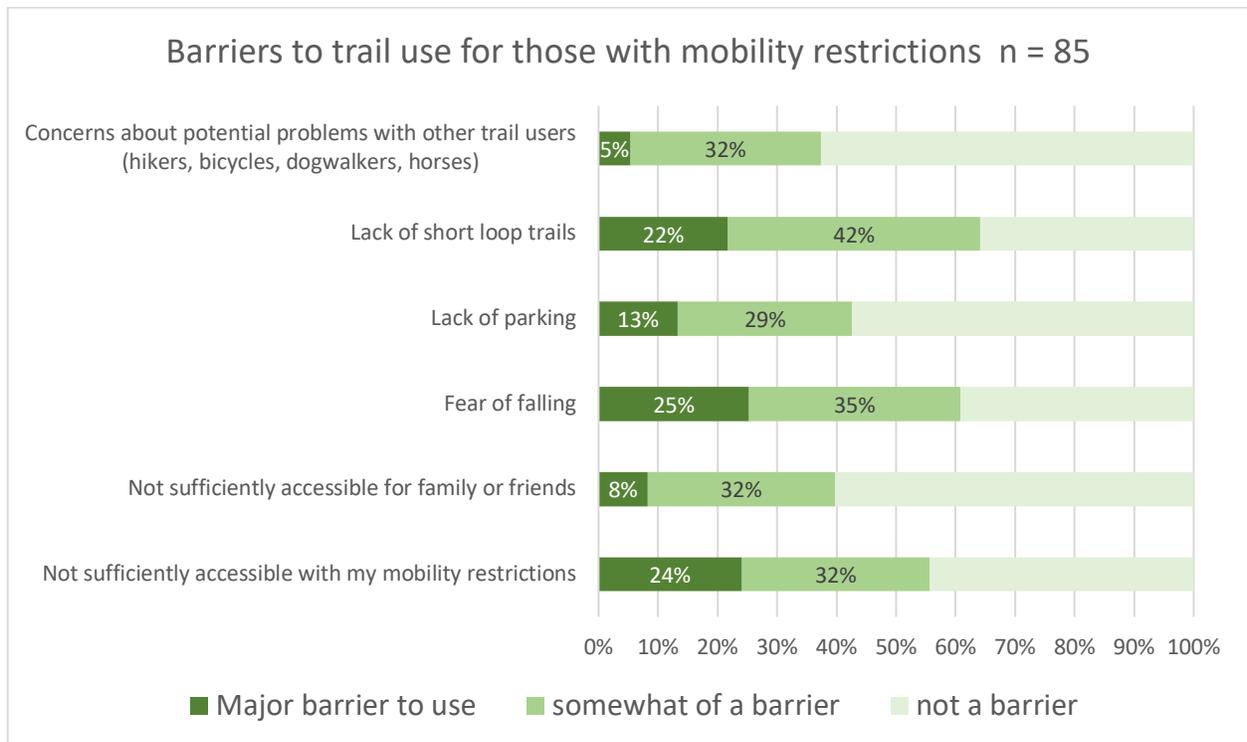


Figure 17: Barriers to trail use for those with mobility restrictions

We then analyzed the question about barriers from the perspective of sensory mobility restricted respondents (two respondents), with the following results:

Major barriers: fear of falling (2), not sufficiently accessible with my mobility restrictions (2)
not sufficiently accessible for family or friends (1), lack of parking (1)

Somewhat of a barrier: lack of short loop trails (2)
lack of parking (1), concerns about other trail users (1)

There were also a number of barriers unrelated to accessibility mentioned. These are listed in Table 8.

Table 8: Barriers unrelated to accessibility

<i>Issue</i>	Major barrier	Somewhat of a barrier
<i>Finding the way, signage</i>	8	4
<i>Unleashed dogs</i>	2	5
<i>Hard to access without driving</i>	2	2
<i>Steep inclines along trails</i>	2	
<i>Muddy trails</i>		3
<i>Poor bike access</i>		1

As Figure 18 depicts, 41% of the respondents would visit park trails or forest trails more often if access was improved and 32% might use them more.

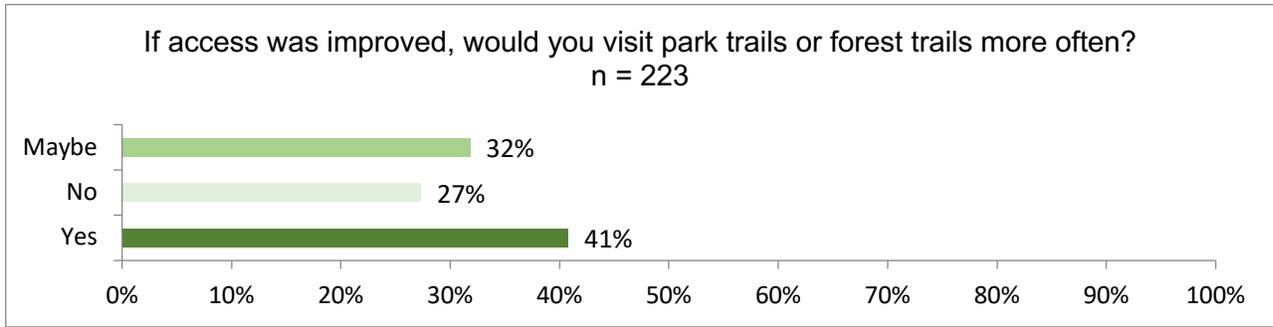


Figure 18: If access was improved, would you use trails more often?

Wheelchair accessible trails

Our next question was about wheelchair accessible trails. We asked people “If there was an opportunity to develop a fully wheelchair accessible trail, where would you want it to be? (Realistically this would be a short trail or a segment of a trail.)”

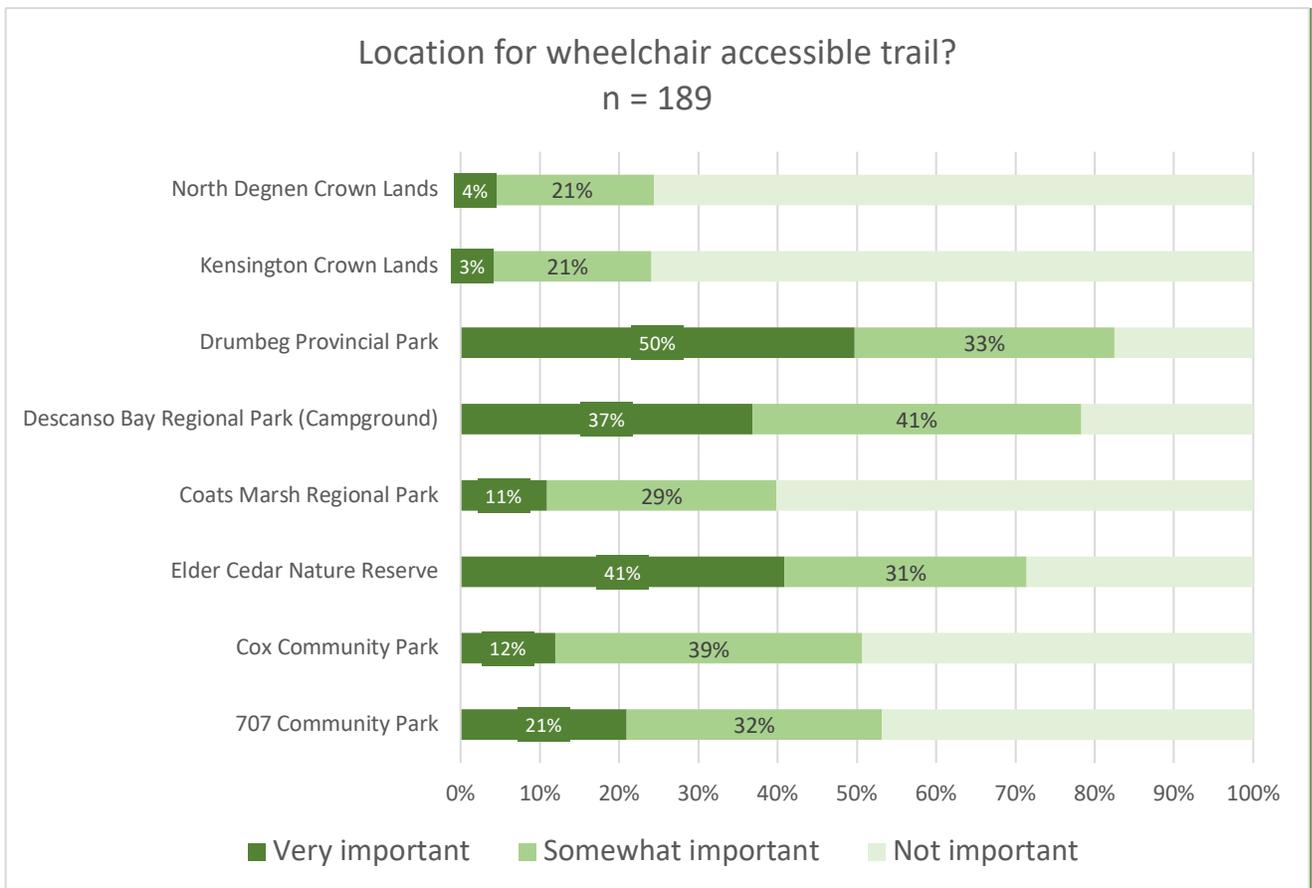


Figure 19: Preferred locations for wheelchair accessible trail

As depicted in Figure 19, the respondents’ first choice for a wheelchair accessible trail was Drumbeq Provincial Park, with 50% choosing Drumbeq as very important, and 33% choosing it

as somewhat important. Descanso Bay Regional Park (37% very important, and 41% somewhat important) received a slightly higher percentage, when weighted, relative to Elder Cedar Nature Reserve (41% very important and 31% somewhat important).

For those with mobility restrictions their priority locations for a wheelchair accessible trail were:

1. Drumbeg Provincial Park
2. Elder Cedar Nature Reserve
3. Descanso Bay Regional Park

Where do you want trails improved?

The following parks received priority in response to the question “Where do you want trails moderately improved (not wheelchair accessible)?” The following graph (Figure 20) and priority list incorporate gender weighting to reflect Gabriola’s gender balance.

1. Drumbeg Provincial park
2. Elder Cedar Nature Reserve
3. 707 Community Park
4. Descanso Bay Regional Park

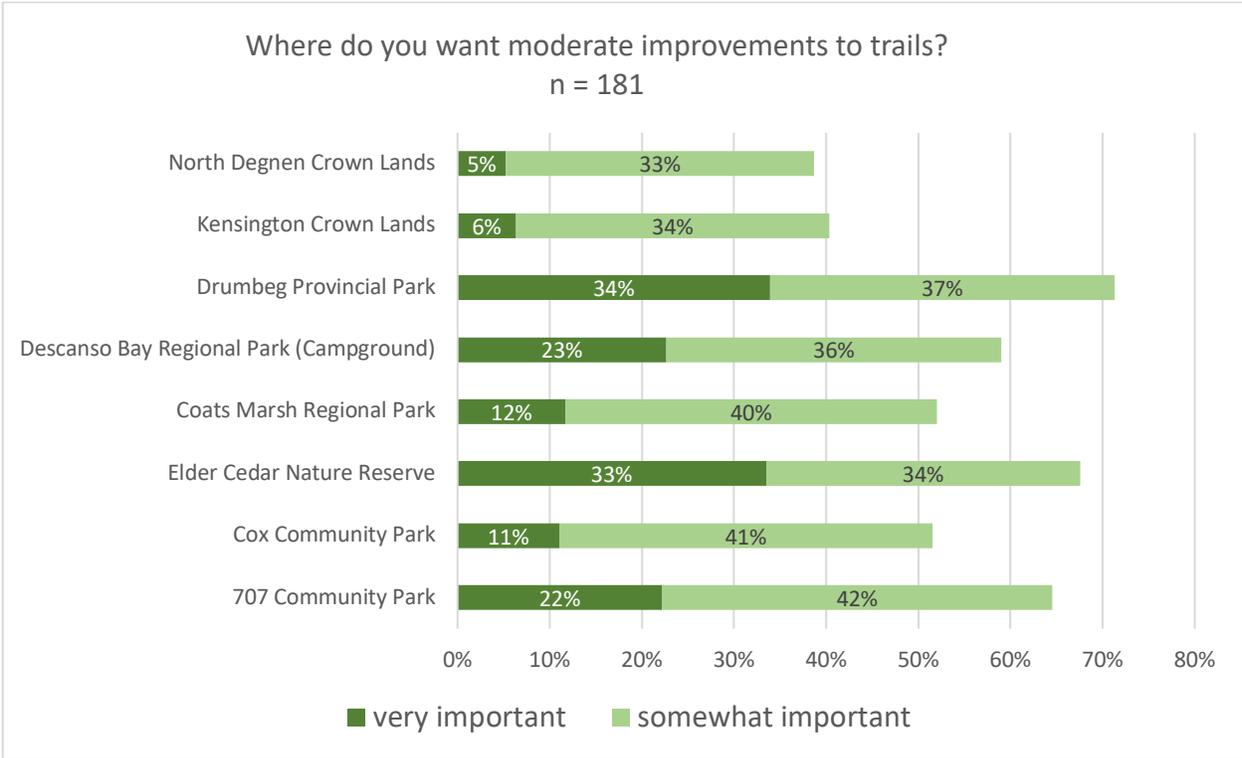


Figure 20: Moderate improvements to trails

The graph on the following page describes the priorities for trail improvement when analyzed from the perspective of those with physical or sensory mobility restrictions: 1) Drumbeg (43% very important), 2) Elder Cedar (39% very important), 3) 707 Community Park (27%), and 4)

Descanso Bay Regional Park (26%). These were the same rankings given by the population at large, however, the percentage noting ‘very important’ was higher than in the general population.

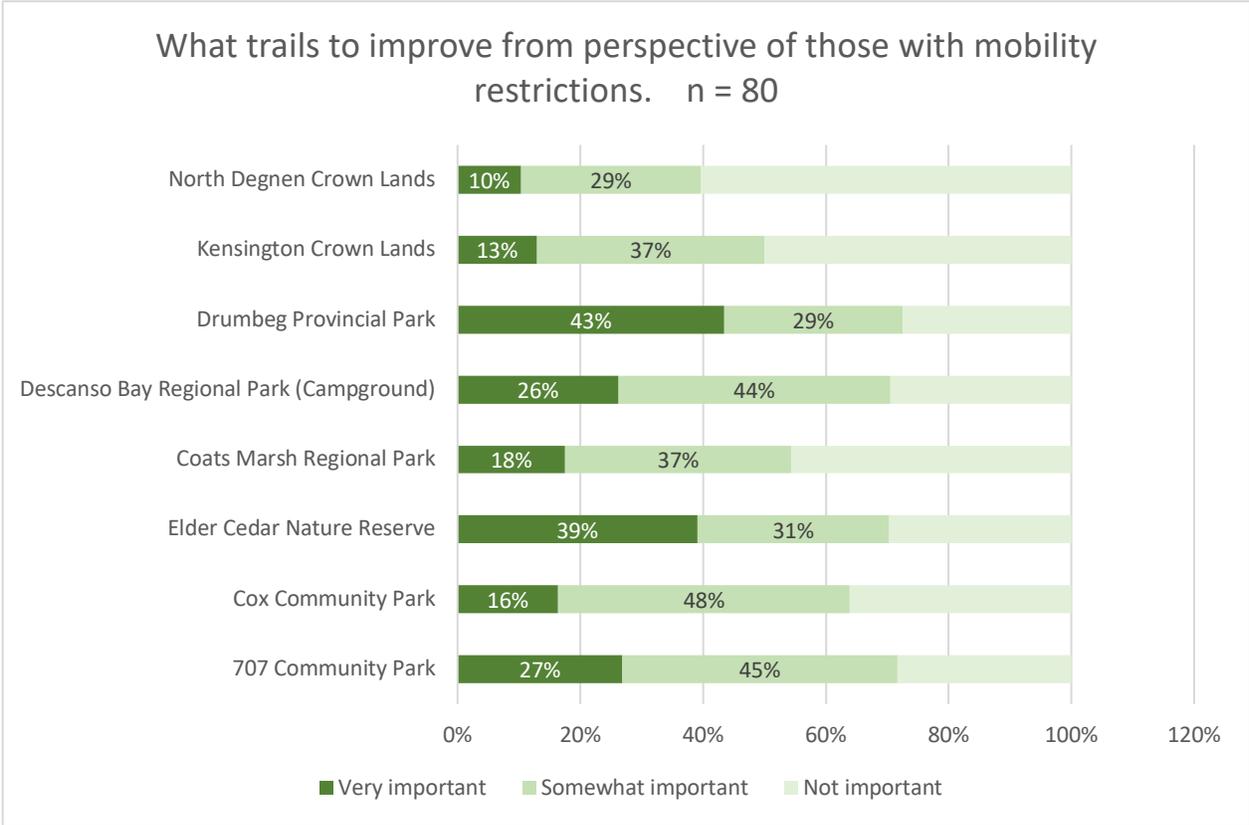


Figure 21: What trails to improve (mobility restriction lens)

Priorities for trail improvements

Our final question asked respondents what their priorities were for improvements on Gabriola trails. When weighting very important as ‘3’ and somewhat important as ‘2’ the priorities were:

Table 9: Priorities for trail improvements

Priority	All Responses n = 219	Responses from those with mobility restrictions n = 94
1	Boardwalk over wet or rough areas	Boardwalk over wet or rough areas
2	Short trail routes/loops or accessible sections of longer trails	Short trail routes/loops or accessible sections of longer trails
3	Accessible outhouses	Flat or low incline trails
4	Railings, edgings, and low incline ramps on boardwalks	Railings, edgings, and low incline ramps on boardwalks
5	Accessible parking	Smooth and hard trail surfaces

The following graph represents the trail improvement priorities designations of ‘very important’ and ‘somewhat important’ by respondents.

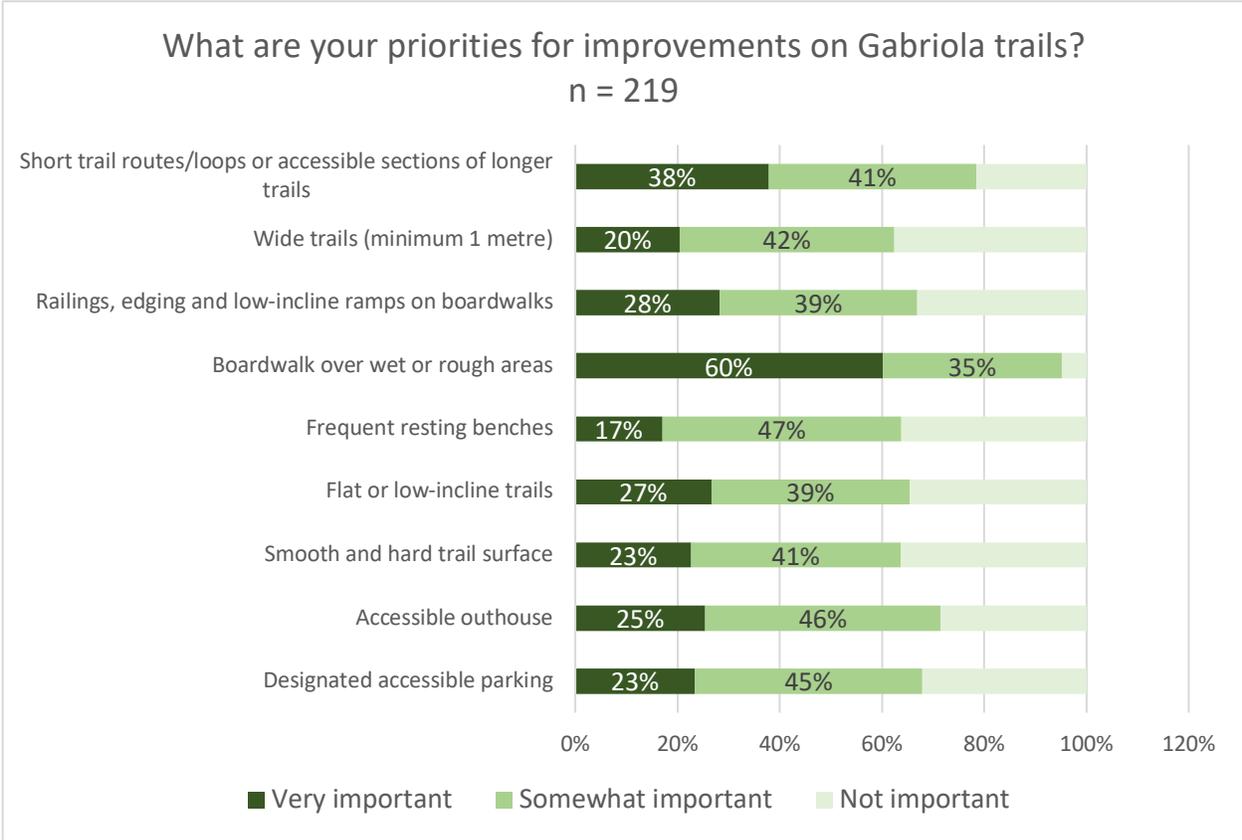


Figure 22: Priorities for improvements on trails

Final Comments

We then asked if anyone had any final comments they wanted to make. People responded with appreciative comments as well as various suggestions.

	#	Consolidated comments
Appreciation	12	Many thanks to GALTT for the great work they do and appreciation for working on the accessibility issues.
Additional areas needing improvement	4	Wheelchair access and viewpoint at Strand; access to beach at Shaw Road needs improvement.
Specific suggestions	6	People need to become trail smart; mark trails well with simple maps at trail heads/park entrances; tree roots are a challenge; I like narrow trails; trailmarkers; trail along waterfront; public access to sea whenever possible.

APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

Context and objectives of survey

GaLTT received a grant in 2018 from BC Parks to conduct research on improving accessibility at Gabriola Sands Provincial Park. To complement this project, GaLTT decided to conduct a public survey on the subject.

As the information gathered would be very useful for planning purposes, GaLTT made a decision to expand the parameters of the survey to include (1) all of Gabriola's shorefront parks and (2) commonly used trails on lands held by various government agencies.¹ A GaLTT accessibility sub-committee was formed and worked on this project over several months.

The purpose of gathering this information was to provide data and insights that would help GaLTT plan and prioritize future projects. This includes identifying opportunities for partnerships and opportunities for lobbying appropriate agencies for actions that would benefit the community, in order to make Gabriola's recreational areas more inclusive and welcoming to people of all abilities.

The specific goals of the survey were to gather information on:

- current usage of beaches/parks/trails
- existing impediments to using beaches/parks/trails (including but not limited to information relating to different ability levels in relation to the physical environment)
- the priorities of Gabriola residents with regard to improving accessibility.

The survey was divided into five sections:

- Demographics
- Restrictions to Mobility
- General Shorefront Park Usage and Accessibility
- Gabriola Sands Provincial Park (Twin Beaches)
- Major Park and Forest Trails Usage and Accessibility

Dissemination of survey

The survey was live from March 5th until April 26th, 2019. It was made available online through SurveyMonkey. One hundred printed copies were distributed to the Gabriola Professional Centre, Gabriola Medical Clinic, Gabriola Library, Rollo Centre, and Islands Trust Office, which also acted as collection centres.

The survey was promoted through the GaLTT website, ads in the *Sounder* newspaper, posters, handouts, and social media. The *Sounder* also ran an article submitted by GaLTT about the survey.

Fourteen printed surveys were completed and submitted. At the survey closing, all content from the printed surveys, including comments, was manually entered into SurveyMonkey so that the data could be compiled using its filters and tools.

¹ As part of the intent was to determine the community's existing usage of beaches, parks and trails, trails on Crown Lands were included. These lands are being held for the Snuneymuxw First Nation, and it is recognized that any development or improvement of trails on those lands would require their consent.

Two hundred and eighty-four (284) people completed the survey, resulting in a confidence level of 95% that the responses to the survey are reflective of the Gabriola community as a whole with a margin of error of plus or minus 6%. While the survey was available to the general population, those choosing to respond to the survey are more likely to be users of the shorefront parks and trails and/or have mobility restrictions, than those found in Gabriola's general population. We recognize this limitation and acknowledge that the results are more likely to be reflective of those who use the trails and those with mobility restrictions than found in the general population.

Survey analysis

The analysis of the survey results was aimed at responding to the objectives of the research. The analysis took into account considerations regarding 1) survey respondent demographic comparison with the general population using 2016 Census data, 2) ensuring the perspectives of those with mobility and sensory restrictions were understood relative to the general population, and 3) respondent context and values as captured through qualitative content.

The analysis of the demographics compared the age and gender characteristics of the respondents with Gabriola's adult population according to the census data. Weighting was used to respond to demographic differences. As indicated in the body of this report, there was a female to male ratio of 74.5 to 24.5 (plus 1.1% non-binary) relative to the Gabriola gender ratio of 52 (female) to 48 (male). The process for weighting the results for gender balance was: 1) Adding the total number of females, males and non-binary combined, 2) dividing that total by two (the percentage in the general Gabriola population is female 52% to male 48% (there is no 2016 Census category for non-binary), and 3) applying those results to the data. The results of this weighting were identified as gender balanced results.

The difference in the age categories of respondents relative to the age categories for Gabriola found in the 2016 census data was small. There was a comparison done for the priority location questions to determine if there were differences and none was found. Therefore, there was no weighting for age in the results.

The responses specific to those with mobility restrictions were pulled out of the data, since one of the key objectives of the study was to understand accessibility challenges for those with physical and sensory restrictions. This data was analyzed to identify the priorities for those with mobility restrictions and the results were compared with responses from the general population.

Both the large data set as well as individual question data sets were downloaded from the SurveyMonkey website onto Excel spreadsheets in order to carry out the analysis and weighting. The responses specific to those with mobility restrictions (both physical and sensory), gender differences, residency, and age were filtered on the SurveyMonkey site and the data downloaded and then analyzed.