

Making Life Better: Parks, Recreation and Culture Plan

Phase 2 Visioning What We Heard Report
Summer 2025 | Draft



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How we informed

A wide range of marketing and communications tools were used to raise awareness of the project among Burnaby residents and highlight opportunities for them to participate in this initial stage of engagement.

This page provides an overview of the tools used and the number of residents that engaged.



200 posters and lawn signs placed at City facilities

Signage included printed posters, overpass banners, display boards, sandwich boards, signage in parks and digital displays.



22,911 views on Your Voice and 1,368 QR code scans

Project information was available on the City web page (burnaby.ca). Engagement was hosted on Your Voice, the City's online engagement platform.



20,138 organic post impressions and 10,538 clicks on paid ads

Social media posts were shared on the City's main Instagram, Facebook, X and LinkedIn accounts and cross promoted on other relevant PRC accounts. Paid digital ads were shared on Meta, Google and Reddit.



30,259 email newsletter sent

Email campaigns were shared through City eNews.



130,000 project postcards sent to Burnaby residential addresses

Current snapshot of Parks, Recreation and Culture

83%

of respondents are satisfied with Burnaby's parks, recreation and culture *

Satisfaction

Overall, residents are satisfied with parks, recreation and culture services.

- **Variety and quality:** Services offer high-quality experiences and a variety of options to explore.
- **Inclusivity:** Facilities and programs are seen as safe and welcoming places to access services.
- **Community building:** Spaces and programs act as important gathering places for the community.

Over half of Burnaby residents were not born in Canada. These areas of satisfaction may indicate a desire to continue to provide services and access to meet the unique needs and interests of a diverse range of residents.

Improvements

Residents feel there is room for improvement to services.

- **Lack of capacity:** Some spaces and programs are at capacity or seeing increased busyness.
- **Aging infrastructure:** Spaces and amenities are aging or not up-to-date.
- **Misalignment with interests:** Spaces do not have the amenities or services that match people's interests.

Burnaby is currently growing in population through intensification. These areas of improvement may indicate a desire to ensure services can adapt to increased and evolving demand.

The majority of respondents think they are getting **good value from parks, recreation and culture** and are satisfied with the current levels of funding.



General questions

Question: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the City of Burnaby's parks, recreation and culture system in general?

The survey indicates that residents are generally satisfied with parks, recreation and culture in Burnaby, which is a positive result. Despite this, there is room for improvement, given the share of only somewhat satisfied and not satisfied.

While satisfaction is high in both surveys, it is lower in the online survey. Given the online survey has a larger share of existing users, this may indicate those who use the system are more likely to have concerns.

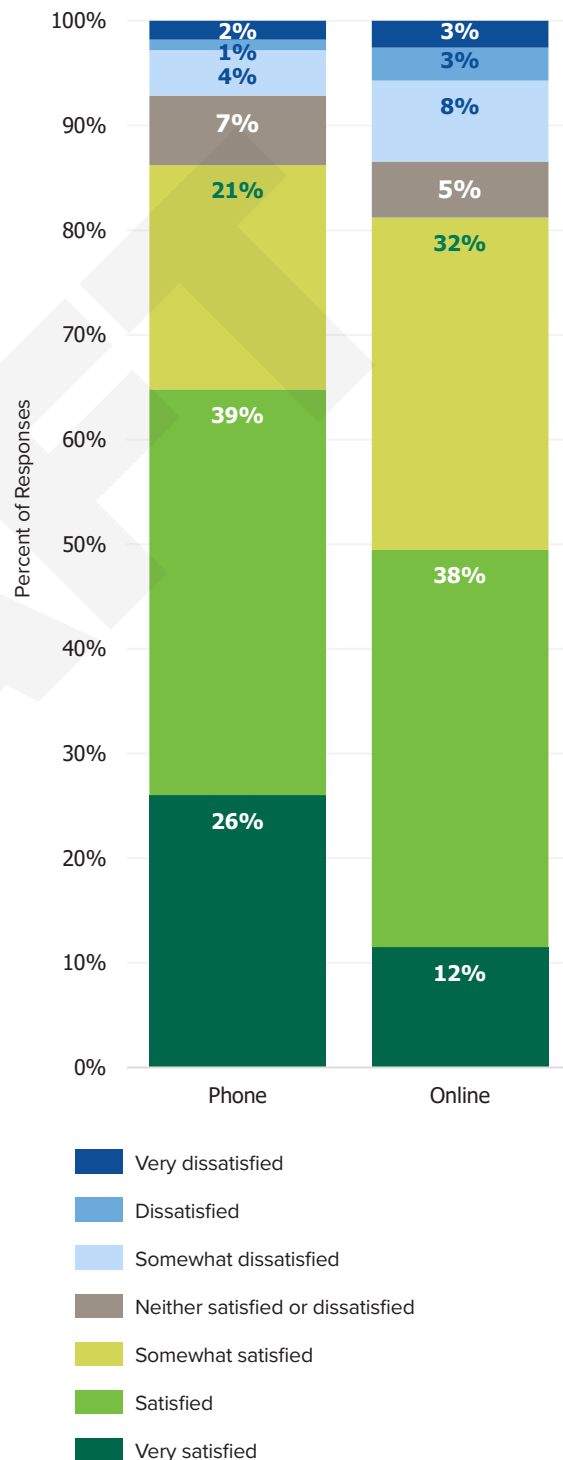
Demographic insight

Those reporting higher levels of satisfaction include respondents who are new to Burnaby, younger and rent their homes and live in higher density areas.

Those reporting lower levels of satisfaction include households with higher incomes than the median in Burnaby and those who own their home.



83% of phone survey respondents are very satisfied, satisfied or somewhat satisfied with parks, recreation and culture, indicating strong support among the public.



Our approach



How we informed

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How we engaged

Public engagement occurred from **July 28 to August 24, 2025*** through a wide range of online and in-person tactics at locations across the city.

Parks, recreation and culture are important services for all residents of Burnaby. To serve a diverse population, it was necessary to have a range of activities and ways for people to share their experiences and thoughts. By using a combination of in-person discussions and self-guided tools with varying levels of time required to participate, the public had the ability to engage in a format that was most convenient for them.

Efforts were also made to engage with both parks, recreation and culture users and non-users as well as harder-to-reach groups. This included sending postcards to every residence in Burnaby, attending in-person events outside of parks, recreation and culture spaces and providing translation services through the online survey.

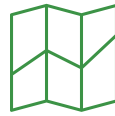
The mix of approaches created a comprehensive picture of what residents value, what gaps exist and how ultimately parks, recreation and culture can support making lives better.

* One event was held on July, 1 2025 (Canada Day).



837 people participated in the online survey

An online survey was hosted on the City of Burnaby's online engagement platform, Your Voice. The survey allowed respondents to answer questions specific to what they care about most—parks, recreation, culture—or all three if they wished.



1,053 comments on the interactive map

An online interactive map on the Your Voice platform was available alongside the online survey. Respondents could drop a pin on the map and leave comments about specific locations.



400 people participated in the phone survey

A statistically valid phone survey was conducted to capture responses from a representative sample of Burnaby residents. Used alongside the online survey, this approach helped ensure perspectives from across the community (age groups, gender, etc.) were reflected. See Appendix for details.



48 submissions from user groups

A short survey was shared with parks, recreation and culture user groups (e.g., organizations that book or use City spaces and facilities) to identify trends, challenges and opportunities related to usage and participation. Their results and written submissions helped validate current state assessments and provided deeper insights into the opportunities and challenges facing users.





1,364 people participated across 13 pop-up events

The project team set up activities at a number of community events and public spaces throughout the engagement period. Respondents could chat with the team, ask questions, share their experiences and “drop a marble in a jar” to indicate their priorities.

These events reached people in locations they already visit and engaged people who might not participate in online activities.



Written referrals to Host Nations

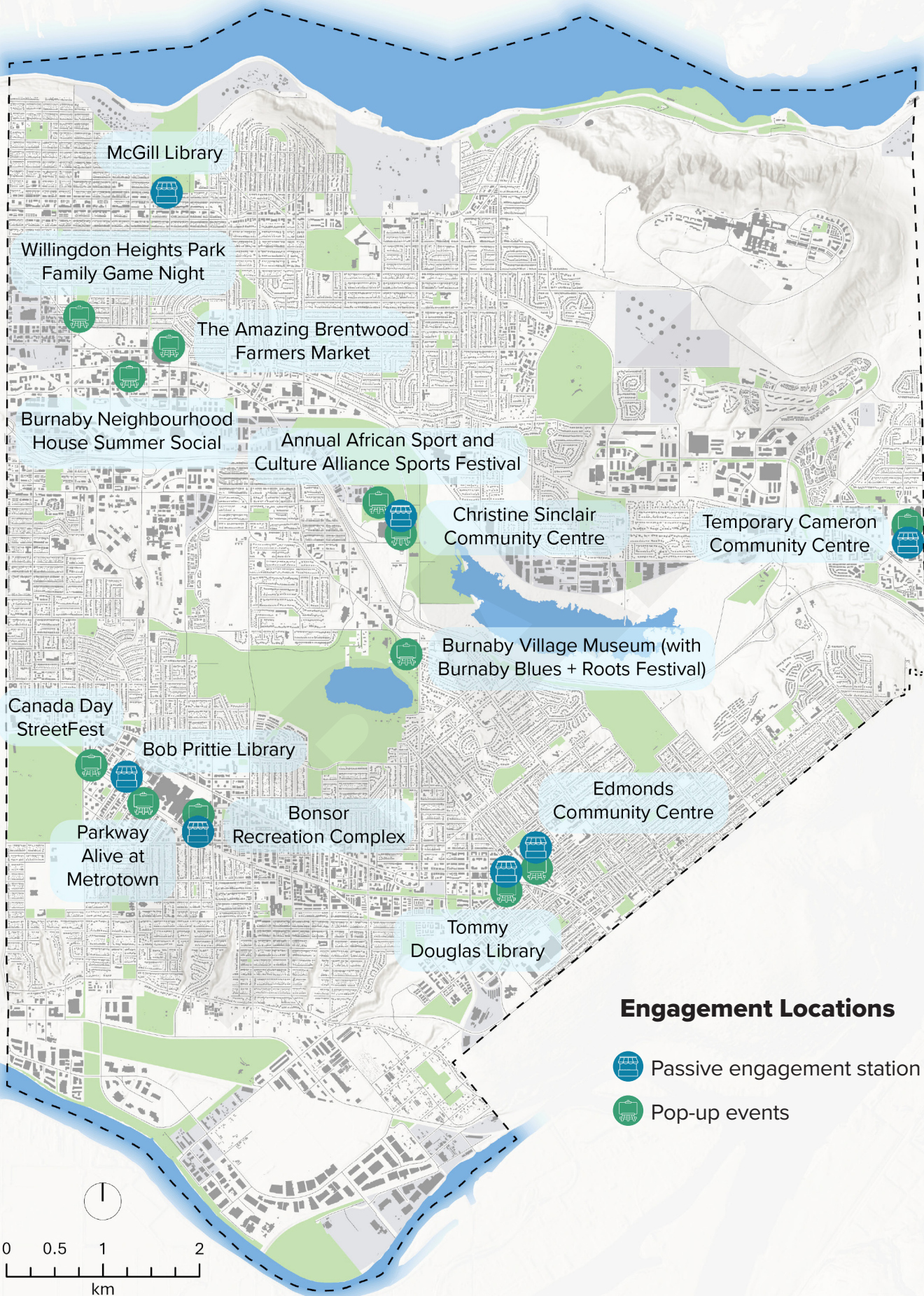
The City of Burnaby is located on the unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh), and kʷikʷəłəm (Kwikwetlem) Peoples. Host Nations were invited to discuss Making Life Better through a written referrals process.



1,251 submission across 7 passive engagement stations

Between July 28 and August 24, self-guided engagement boards were located in high-traffic areas at City facilities. These boards allowed respondents to learn about the project and share feedback on their own time.





Who participated

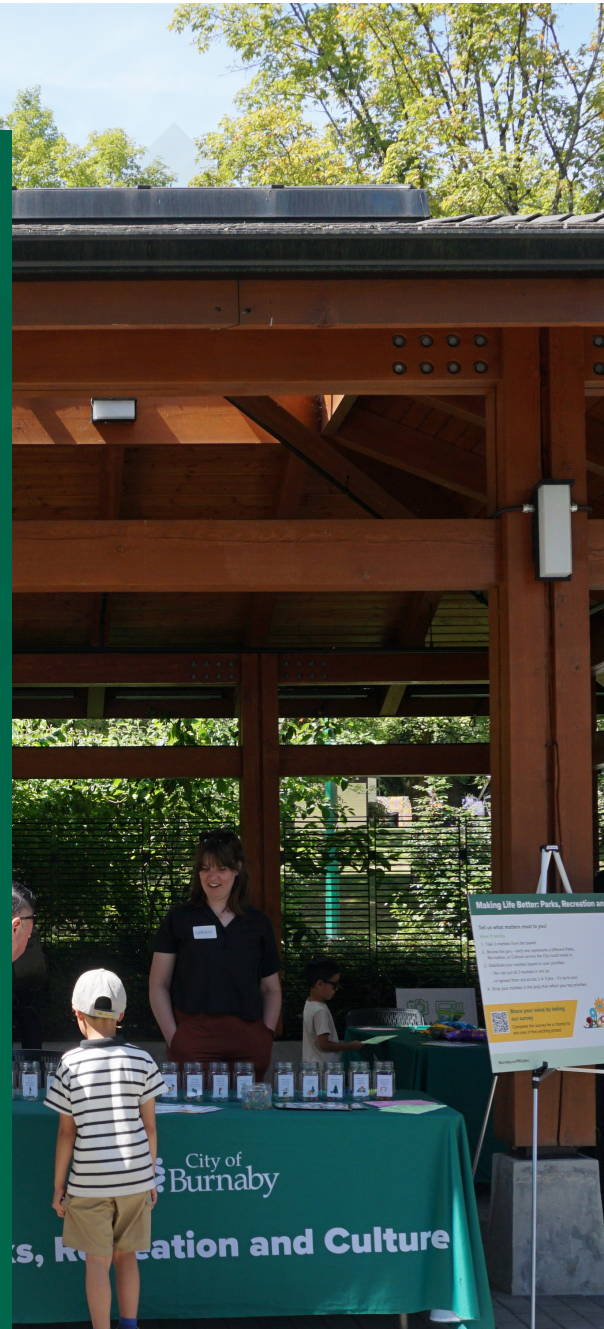
The City of Burnaby is committed to involving a broad cross-section of the community in this project. More than 3,000 people participated in this phase of the engagement.

In-person, we reached a diverse range of residents by connecting with people out in the community at a wide range of events and venues across the city. We heard from people representing many core Burnaby demographics, including youth, newcomers, people from a range of incomes, BIPOC residents, members of the 2SLGBTQA+ community and more.

The online and phone surveys provided a distinct opportunity to collect demographic data to confirm that the engagement included a wide range of residents. The phone survey specifically focused on reaching a statistically representative sample of Burnaby, aligned closely with the 2021 census.

When representation was not met, the phone survey data was weighted to offset any underrepresentation. This is best practice to ensure truly representative data and allows for an accurate comparison between the two survey streams and census data. See Appendix for details on the demographics reached through the online and phone surveys.

The What We Heard Report often notes the quantitative responses from the phone survey over the online survey when they are different, as it provides a more representative sample of Burnaby. The differences are also compared for additional insight.



What can we do better?

This initial phase of engagement focused on gathering insights about current use and expectations of Burnaby residents.

Burnaby's services were organized into the following categories:

- **Parks:** parks focused on trails and picnic areas, parks with natural areas, parks focused on outdoor sports, parks focused on activities like playgrounds and dog off-leash areas and parks with planting beds and other specialty landscaping.
- **Recreation:** indoor and outdoor pools, fitness centres and gymnasiums, community spaces, arenas, golf courses or City-owned restaurants, cafes and concessions.
- **Culture:** the art gallery, museum and theatre, festivals and special events, public art, culture-based classes like arts and dance and filming on City lands.

Level of satisfaction

Respondents were asked about their general satisfaction with Burnaby's parks, recreation and culture services, to better understand their priorities.

Funding

Respondents were asked whether they, as Burnaby residents, are willing to pay more for services.

Awareness

Respondents were asked how they learn about Burnaby's parks, recreation and culture services.

Current assessment

Respondents were asked about their current use of services, including the locations they visit, how well the services achieve key outcomes such as accessibility and whether they perceive the services as providing good value.

Level of service

Respondents were asked if each service area should be enhanced, scaled back, or is fine as-is. Key discussions focused on identifying what they feel is currently working and what needs improvement.

Demographics

Respondents could share demographics about themselves to help the project team understand who was reached through this engagement. This information also provided insights into how Parks, Recreation and Culture offerings can connect better for different populations. Questions included:

- Age
- Gender and other identities: being a visible minority or a member of a Black, Indigenous, or Person of Colour (BIPOC) community; equity-seeking groups, such as newcomers to Burnaby
- Housing: housing structure (i.e., single detached); homeowner/renter
- Household income
- Location: first 3 digits of postal code

What we learned



General questions

Question: How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the City of Burnaby's parks, recreation and culture system in general?

The survey indicates that residents are generally satisfied with parks, recreation and culture in Burnaby, which is a positive result. Despite this, there is room for improvement, given the share of only somewhat satisfied and not satisfied.

While satisfaction is high in both surveys, it is lower in the online survey. Given the online survey has a larger share of existing users, this may indicate those who use the system are more likely to have concerns.

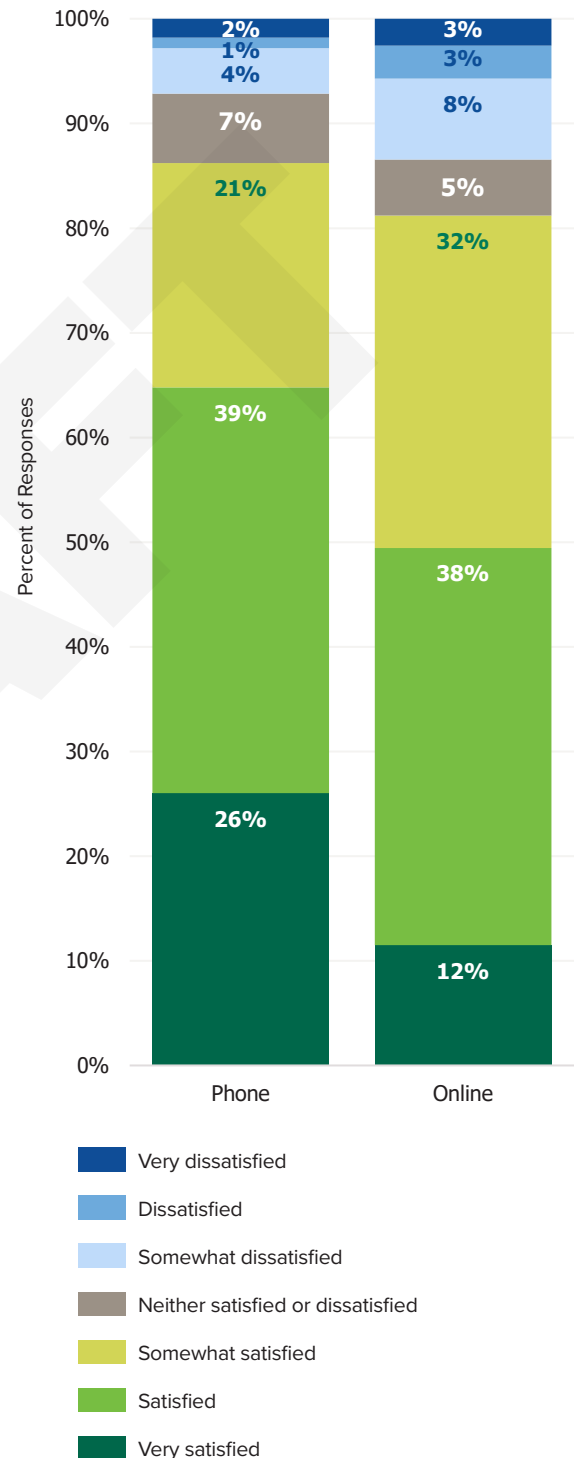
Demographic insight

Those reporting higher levels of satisfaction include respondents who are new to Burnaby, younger and rent their homes and live in higher density areas.

Those reporting lower levels of satisfaction include households with higher incomes than the median in Burnaby and those who own their home.



83% of phone survey respondents are very satisfied, satisfied or somewhat satisfied with parks, recreation and culture, indicating strong support among the public.



Question: Please explain the reasons behind the rating you assigned.

Respondents expressed a wide range of reasons driving level of satisfaction. There are very positive reasons such as how much people appreciate what is available but also concerns relating to increasing uses, maintenance and providing more services.

Question: If you could choose one word to describe the current Burnaby parks, recreation and culture system, what would that word be?

Most respondents (73%) provided a word with a positive sentiment. Common descriptions include words like **EXCELLENT** and **GOOD**.

The responses also complement the themes around what drives satisfaction. Common examples are grouped with the themes to the right.

"We visit many parks in Burnaby frequently, which we enjoy with many beautiful trees and lakes and nice walking trails."

"The facilities of Eileen Daily swimming pool [are] good, however, now it is too crowded with [the] speed[y] growth of population."

Online survey respondents

Beauty and appearance

Respondents describe the positive appearance of places as reasons for their positive satisfaction.

BEAUTIFUL | GREEN

Safety and cleanliness

Respondents with higher satisfaction describe parks, recreation and culture as safe and clean.

CLEAN | INCLUSIVE

Keeping up with maintenance

Respondents with higher satisfaction describe the system as well maintained whereas respondents with lower satisfaction express concerns around maintenance or condition.

**WELL-MAINTAINED |
OUTDATED**

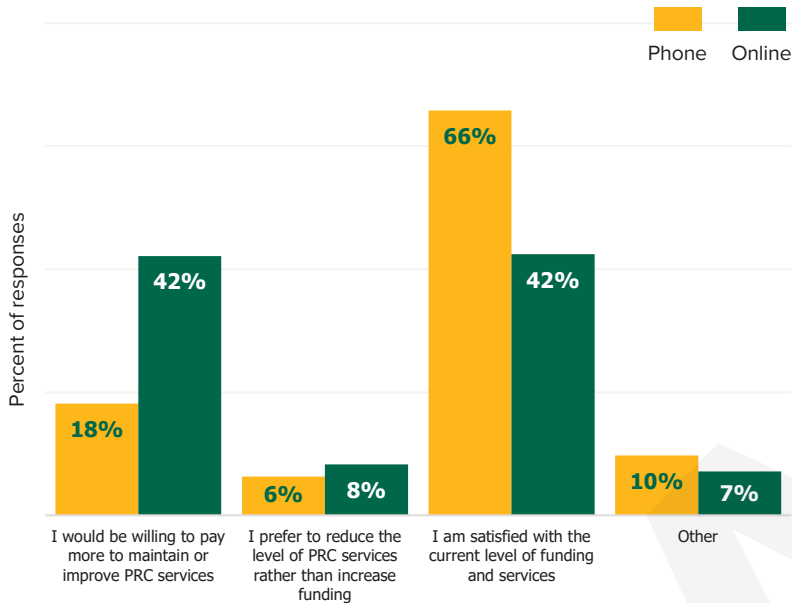
Capacity, busyness and access

Respondents express concerns around capacity and increasing busyness at spaces as reasons behind lower satisfaction. On the other hand, when respondents think the system is accessible they are more likely to be satisfied.

PEACEFUL | CROWDED

Funding

Question: Which of the following best reflects your view on funding for these services?



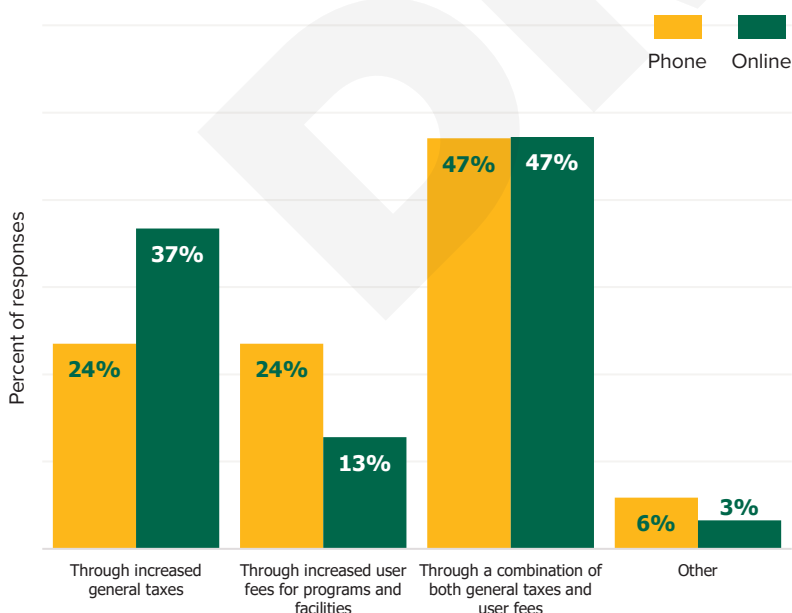
Key takeaways

The majority of phone survey respondents are satisfied with the current level of funding and services. More respondents would also be willing to pay more to maintain or improve services than respondents would like to see a decrease.

Demographic insight

Survey respondents willing to pay more for services are more likely to have higher incomes (compared to median in Burnaby). This also may explain why support for paying more is higher in the online survey, since it included more respondents with higher incomes. This indicates that increases to the cost of services may be received more negatively by lower income residents.

Question: How would you prefer to contribute to additional funding for parks, recreation and culture services?

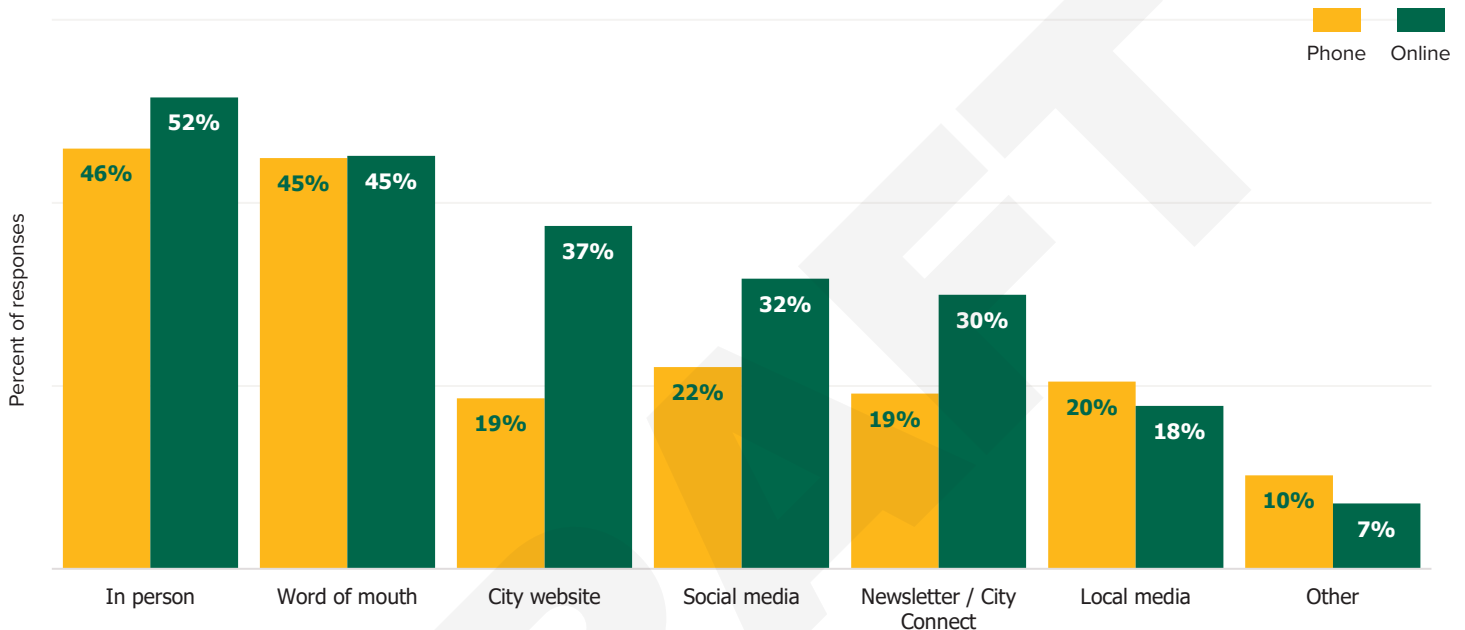


Key takeaways

Survey respondents most strongly support contributing additional funding through a combination of general taxes and user fees. This feedback validates the current approach taken by the City of Burnaby.

Learning about PRC opportunities

Question: When thinking of the parks, recreation and culture facilities and services you or someone in your household currently uses or appreciates, how do you learn about them?



Takeaways

Respondents learn most commonly about parks, recreation and culture in Burnaby through in-person communication and word of mouth.

The City website, social media, the newsletter/ City Connect and local media have relatively lower shares of responses.

In “other”, respondents identified additional ways of learning, such as walking around and using search engines (i.e., Google).

Demographic insight

Social media is particularly effective for residents who are younger, newcomers and families with children at home.

This underlines the needs for the City to continue to use a mix of approaches to reach different demographics.

What we learned:

Parks

Parks spaces and programs are affordable and accessible. At times, however, they do not have amenities that match user needs or interests and there is infrastructure that is not up-to-date.

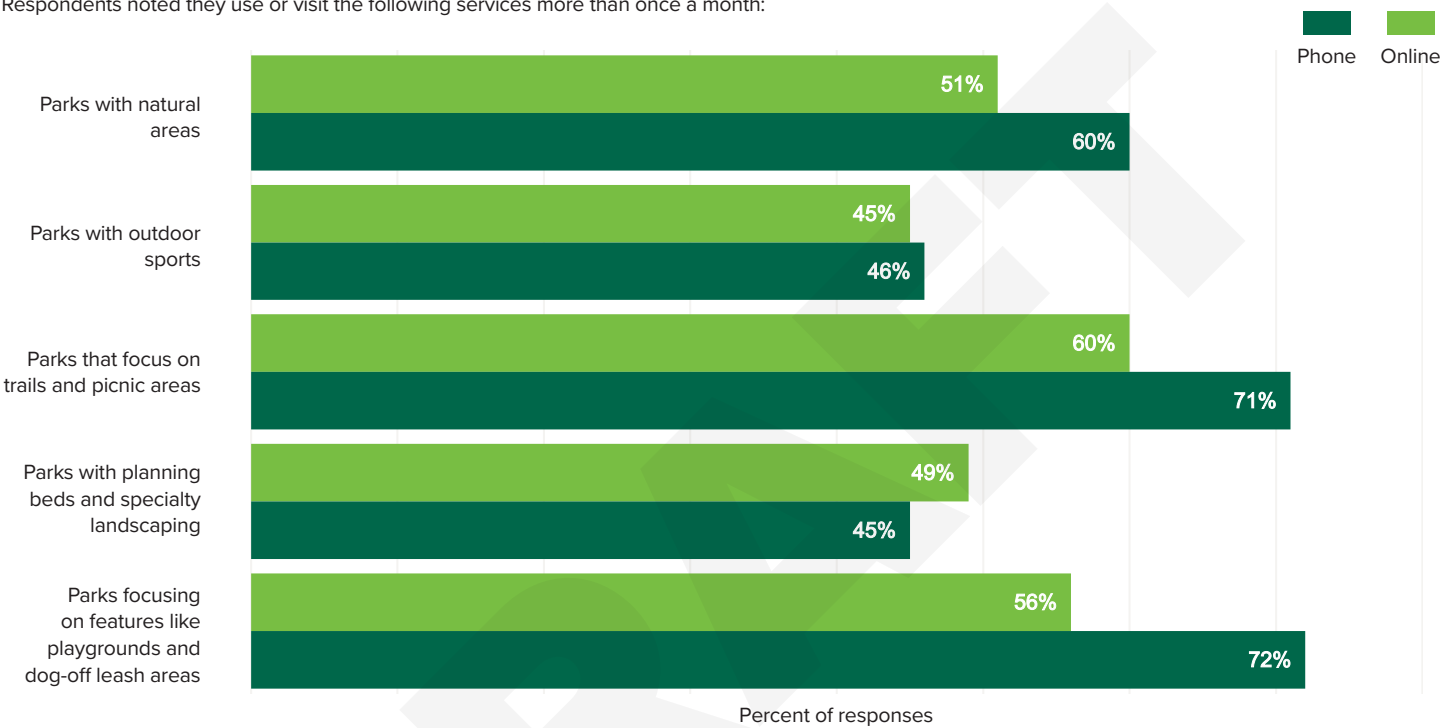
Almost all types of parks are used frequently, particularly the spaces that support unprogrammed and flexible uses such as hiking or gathering. These types of spaces also align with where respondents would like to see enhancements.



Current use

Question: How often do you, or someone in your household, currently use the following park facilities, programs and services?

Respondents noted they use or visit the following services more than once a month:



Takeaways

A large share of survey respondents visit parks more than once a month. The types of park spaces that have the highest frequency of visits support largely unstructured, flexible uses such as walking, cycling and gathering. More respondents noted they never use parks that focus on sport facilities compared to other service areas. This may be due to serving specific user groups.

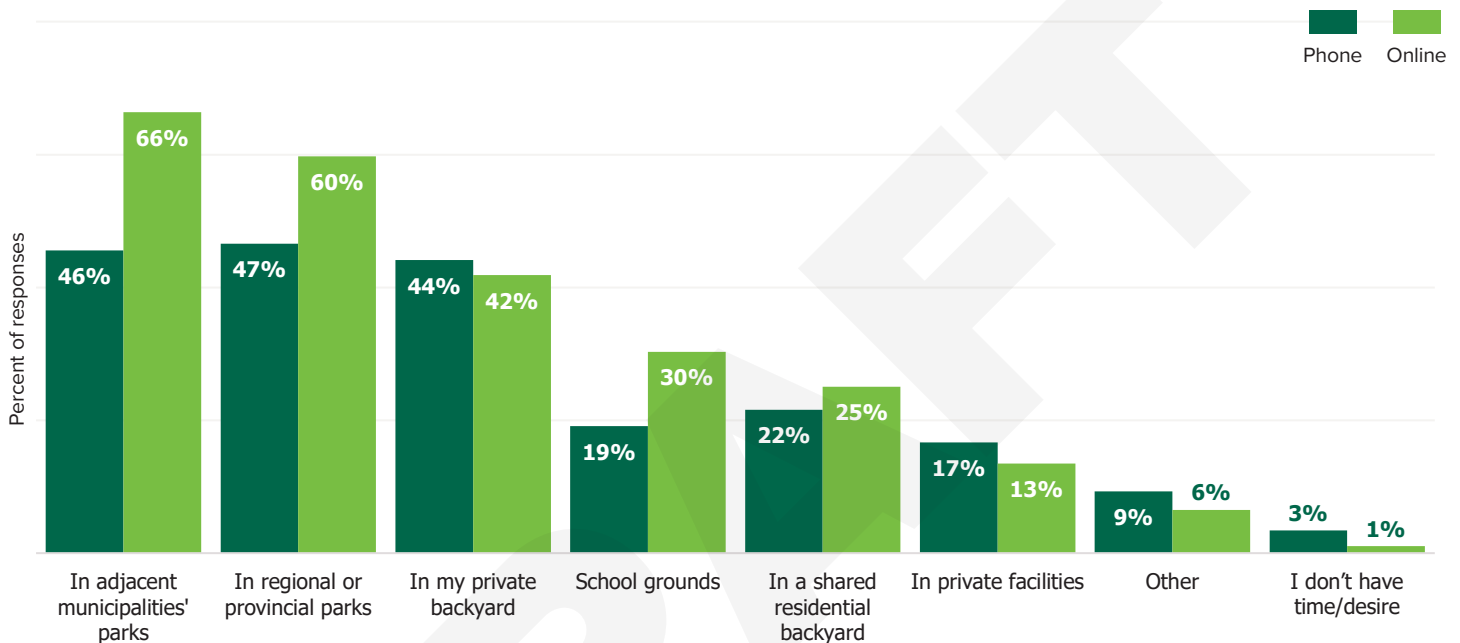
Demographic insight

Parks with features like playgrounds and dog-off leash areas have the highest frequency of use/visits. 35 to 44 year olds are more likely to visit these types of parks, which potentially highlights how families with young children rely on these spaces.

Detailed data is provided in Appendix A

Alternatives to Burnaby's parks

Question: Aside from Burnaby's parks and green spaces, where do you (and people in your household) spend time outdoors?



Takeaways

The largest share of respondents visit parks in regional and provincial parks as well as parks in adjacent municipalities. This emphasizes the importance of Burnaby's location within Metro Vancouver as well as nearby provincial parks such as Mount Seymour Park. Adjacent municipalities have a range of park spaces that are close to the boundaries of Burnaby.

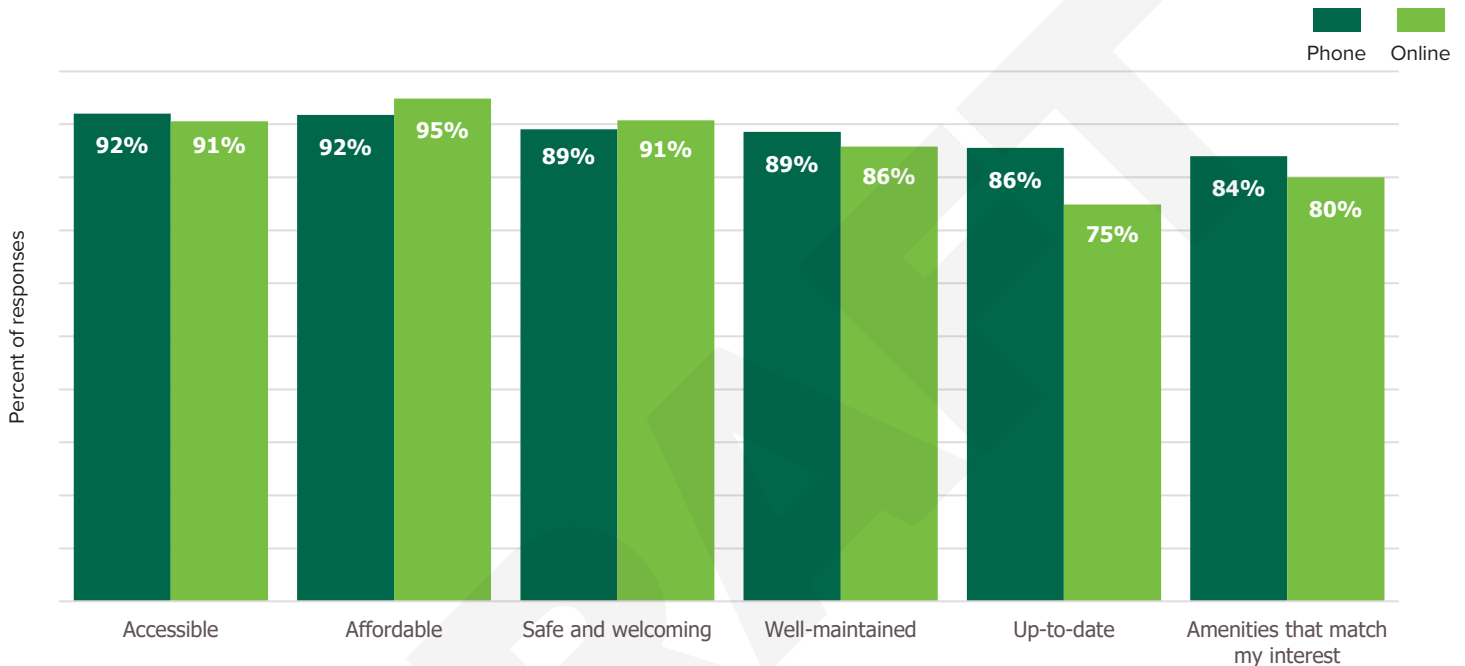
Respondents who indicated that they never use Burnaby parks are primarily using parks in adjacent municipalities. Future research or engagement could seek clarification on whether this relates to something missing in Burnaby's park system.

Demographic insight

Respondents who are older than 55 years old are less likely to visit parks in adjacent municipalities. This may be a reflection of higher mobility limitations among seniors. If so, it reinforces the importance of having a local, widely-distributed park system.

Park assessment

Question: Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements concerning Burnaby's park spaces and programs.



Question: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the statement: “I am getting good value from Burnaby’s park facilities, programs or services,”?

Most respondents think they are getting good value. This is a strong level of support that potentially reinforces the high level of satisfaction for parks, recreation and culture and support to maintain funding and services (see Overview section above).

Takeaways

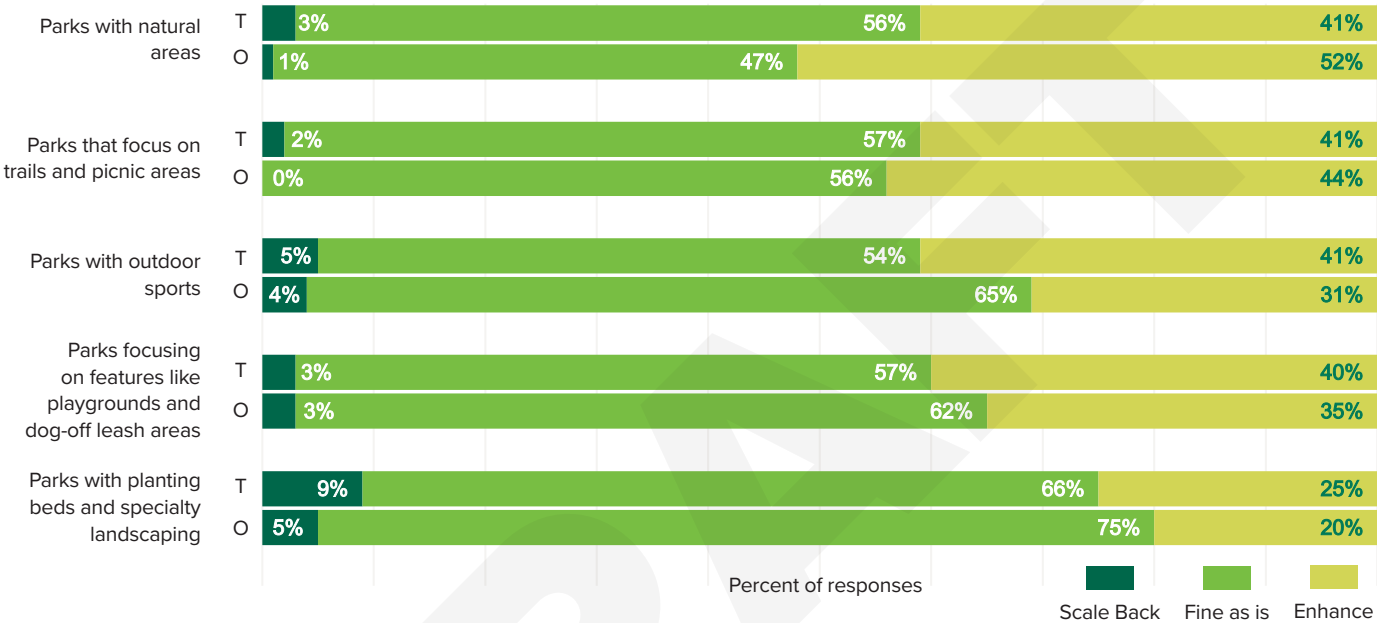
Based on the two questions, most of the public see the parks service as providing good value and view parks as accessible and affordable. Accessing a park is usually free with the exception of allotments for sport fields and picnic areas, but it is not clear which area respondents are evaluating in their feedback.

There is an expectation gap in having amenities that match peoples’ interests and being up-to-date. This is particularly evident in the online survey. The feedback aligns with responses received elsewhere through the engagement around suggestions for amenities (e.g., washrooms to bigger playgrounds) and suggestions for improving condition of features (e.g., trails).

Levels of service

Question: In the following list of parks and green space facilities, programs and services, which do you think could be scaled back, is fine as is, or enhanced.

T=Phone O=Online and passive engagement stations



Takeaways

The phone survey highlights a relatively strong and even support for enhancing four out of five service areas. When considering the online survey, the service areas with the strongest support for enhancement are the ones that align with gathering and unprogrammed uses:

- Natural areas with forests and streams
- Parks with trails and picnic areas
- Parks with features like playgrounds and dog-off leash areas

On the other hand, Parks with planting beds and specialty landscaping included the highest share of responses to scale back among the park service.

Detailed data is provided in Appendix B

Demographic insight

New Canadians are more likely to support enhancement of parks with trails and picnic areas, as compared to the general population. This is an important perspective in ensuring an inclusive park network.

Marble activity

(see pop-up events in How we engaged)

The ranking of service areas differs somewhat through the marble activity where parks focusing on playgrounds and dog off-leash areas received the highest share of responses. Natural areas with forests and streams ranked 2nd and parks with planting beds and specialty landscaping similarly ranked low.

Question: What is working well and/or needs improvement?

Key takeaways

The key takeaways outlined in this section come from both the phone and online survey, as well as from feedback received at pop-ups and through passive engagement stations.

Parks that focus on playgrounds and dog off-leash areas

Working well

Residents appreciate parks, playgrounds and dog off-leash areas and being able to gather and connect with their community in these spaces.

Needs improvement

Cleanliness, safety and conflicting uses are highlighted as areas for improvement, with additional lighting suggested as a safety feature, as well as more garbage receptacles and signage. More amenities overall and offerings for diverse abilities and age groups are also requested.

Differences in views

There were a variety of requests for more amenities that relate to this service area (e.g., dog-off leash areas, unprogrammed spaces and natural features). While these amenities and features are not exclusive to one another, the variety of suggestions may highlight competing priorities that can be addressed within a limited amount of land.

Parks with planting beds and specialty landscaping

Working well

Trees, greenery, flowers and other plantings are appreciated, particularly within urbanized areas.

Needs improvement

Community-driven invasive species management, more landscaped areas within parks, fruit trees and a focus on indigenous plant species are suggested.

“Really enjoy the improvements to Central Park and hope this continues. Pickleball courts and some noise absorbing walls along the west side of trail would be really appreciated.”

Respondent from online survey

“Keep Central Park green — minimum man-made structures”

Respondent from passive engagement station

Parks that focus on trails and picnic areas

Working well

Residents enjoy the many opportunities for outdoor recreation, picnicking and trails that are offered in Burnaby. Bike trails, mountain biking trails and walking paths all play an important part in how residents spend time outside.

Needs improvement

Garbage and litter near picnic sites and a lack of shade at picnic sites and along trails are noted as challenges within this service area. Additional signage is suggested for legibility of these areas.

Differences in views

Some respondents would like to see more lighting along trails, drinking fountains and bike racks, while others do not want more developed features in these areas. Some respondents also want more bike and mountain bike trails, while others want pedestrian-only trails.

These tensions highlight a potential conflict in priorities and usage that relate to future trail strategies or management practices (e.g., bylaw).

“I love how many memories I created with my friends at Confed[eration Park]. I enjoy my time at the park with my friends and family.”

Respondent from pop-up event

“Peaceful and lively spaces — love spending my time here every season.”

“Love all the wonderful playgrounds, parks, splashpads, green space. Bonus would be if there were washrooms in more/all of parks.”

Respondent from passive engagement station

Parks that focus on outdoor sports

Working well

Residents value and intensively use outdoor sport facilities. Residents noted that outdoor sports allow them to have fun and stay active.

Needs improvement

Due to high demand, some residents cannot access the features they want to use. Long wait times for courts, a lack of lighting and washrooms and some maintenance requirements are also noted.

Differences in views

Some residents want outdoor sport facilities enhanced with shade features and dedicated courts for high-demand sports (like pickleball and tennis), while others want more flexible or spontaneous green spaces.

Parks with natural areas

Working well

The peaceful character of urban forests and natural areas is emphasized. Respondents would like to see these spaces continue to be maintained and protected.

Needs improvement

Respondents would like to see less litter and garbage within natural areas.

Differences in views

No major differences are noted for this service area. Respondents broadly want to see more natural areas, existing areas protected and more accessible trails. A balanced approach is suggested that prioritizes both ecological health and resident access.

What we learned: Recreation

Recreation facilities are safe, welcoming and accessible, but infrastructure is aging and sometimes does not meet user needs or interests.

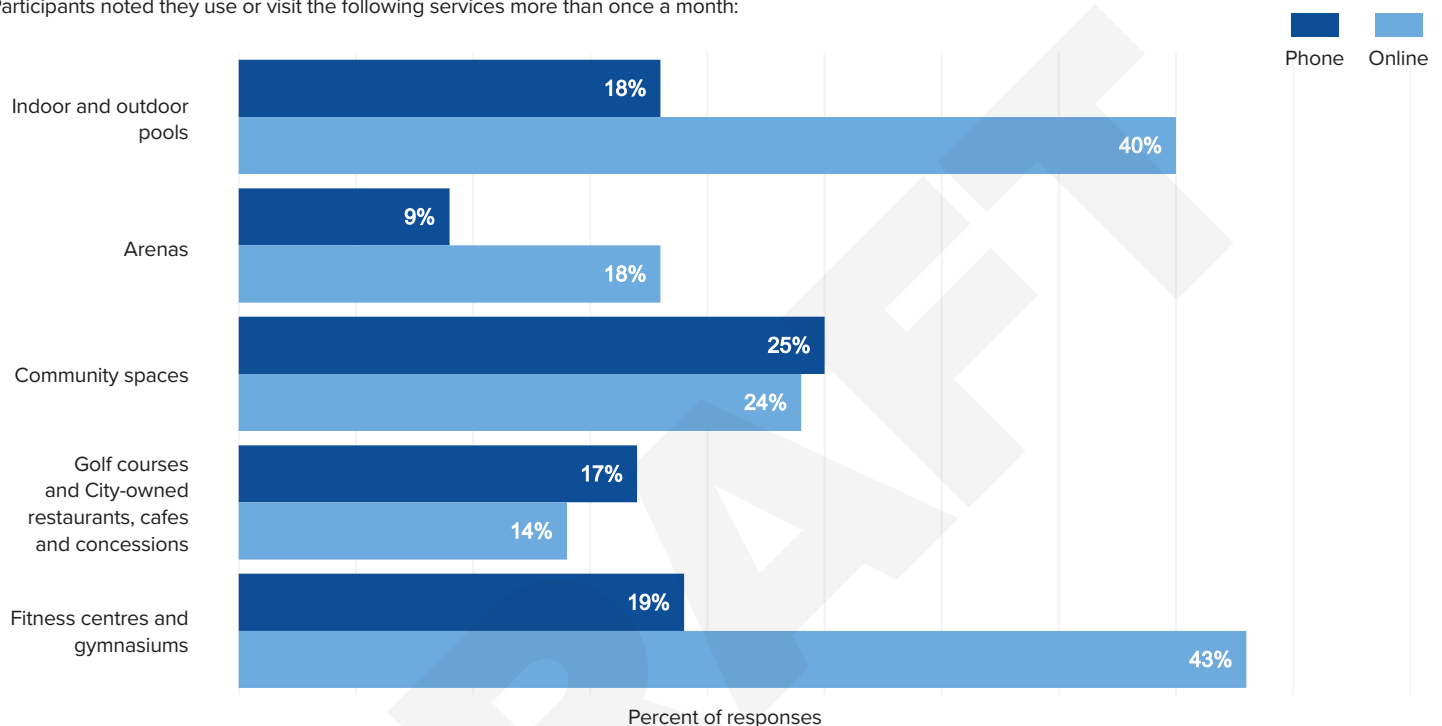
Uses that tend to be located in multi-use recreation centres are more frequently used and favoured for enhancement. Community spaces, for instance, are a top priority across the public. Indoor and outdoor pools are a top priority for residents that already use the service area.



Current use

Question: How often do you, or someone in your household, currently use the following recreation facilities, programs and services?

Participants noted they use or visit the following services more than once a month:



Takeaways

The online survey shows a much higher frequency of usage for indoor and outdoor pools and fitness centres and gymnasiums compared to the phone survey. This suggests that more users of these service areas participated in the online survey. When the surveys are combined, the most common answers are visiting recreational spaces more than once a month and a few times a season. More frequent visits generally relate to services areas that are included in multi-use community centres.

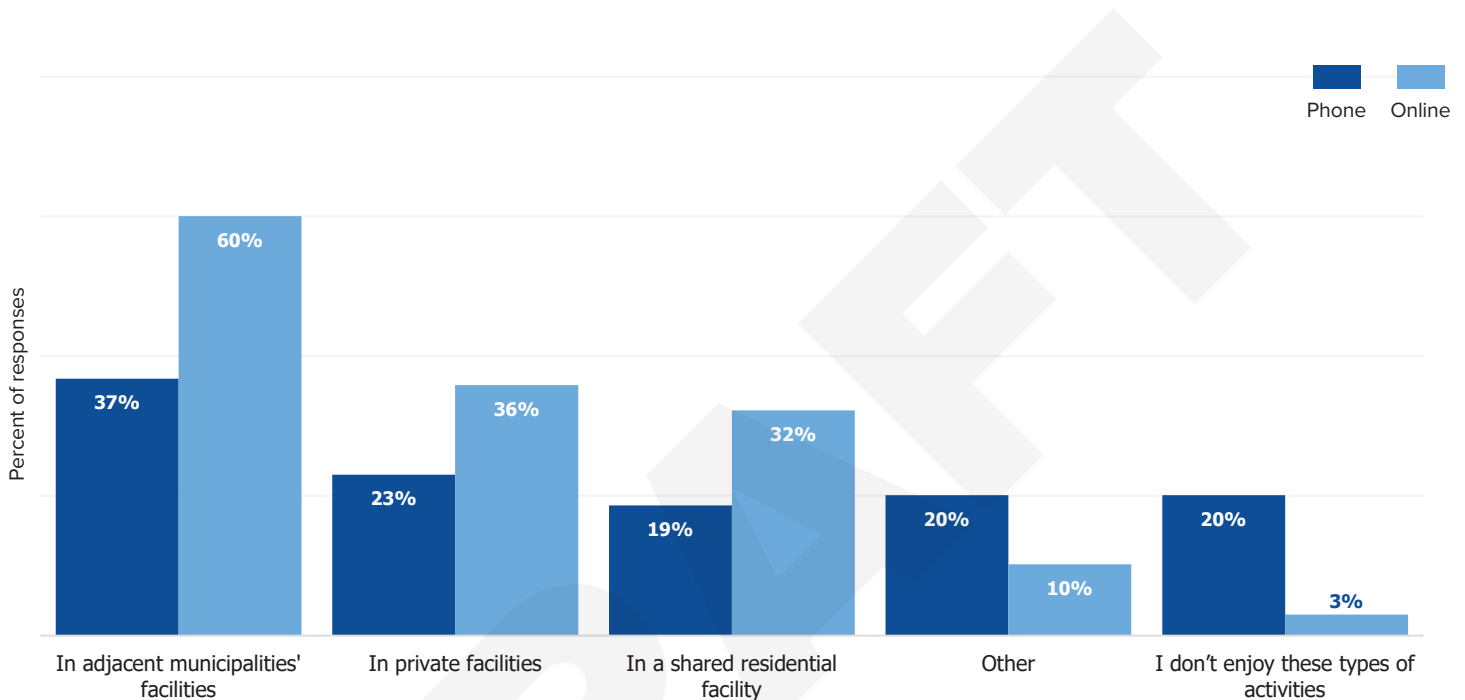
Demographic insight

The online survey indicated indoor and outdoor pools to be one of the most frequently visited recreational spaces. 18 to 34 year olds are less likely to visit frequently.

This may indicate lower interests for pools for this demographic, compared to youth who are enrolled in swimming lessons/competitions and older adults who continue to swim or participate in other aquatic programs.

Alternatives to Burnaby's recreation

Question: Aside from Burnaby's recreation facilities, where do you (and people in your household) recreate?



Takeaways

Many respondents use recreation spaces in adjacent municipalities, particularly noted within the online survey. This may be connected to the online survey having higher rates of people who frequently use indoor and outdoor pools and fitness centres and gymnasiums.

Of participants who never use recreation spaces (i.e., non-recreation users), the most common answer differs by service area. This suggests that there is no single alternative that is currently serving people who do not access City recreational spaces.

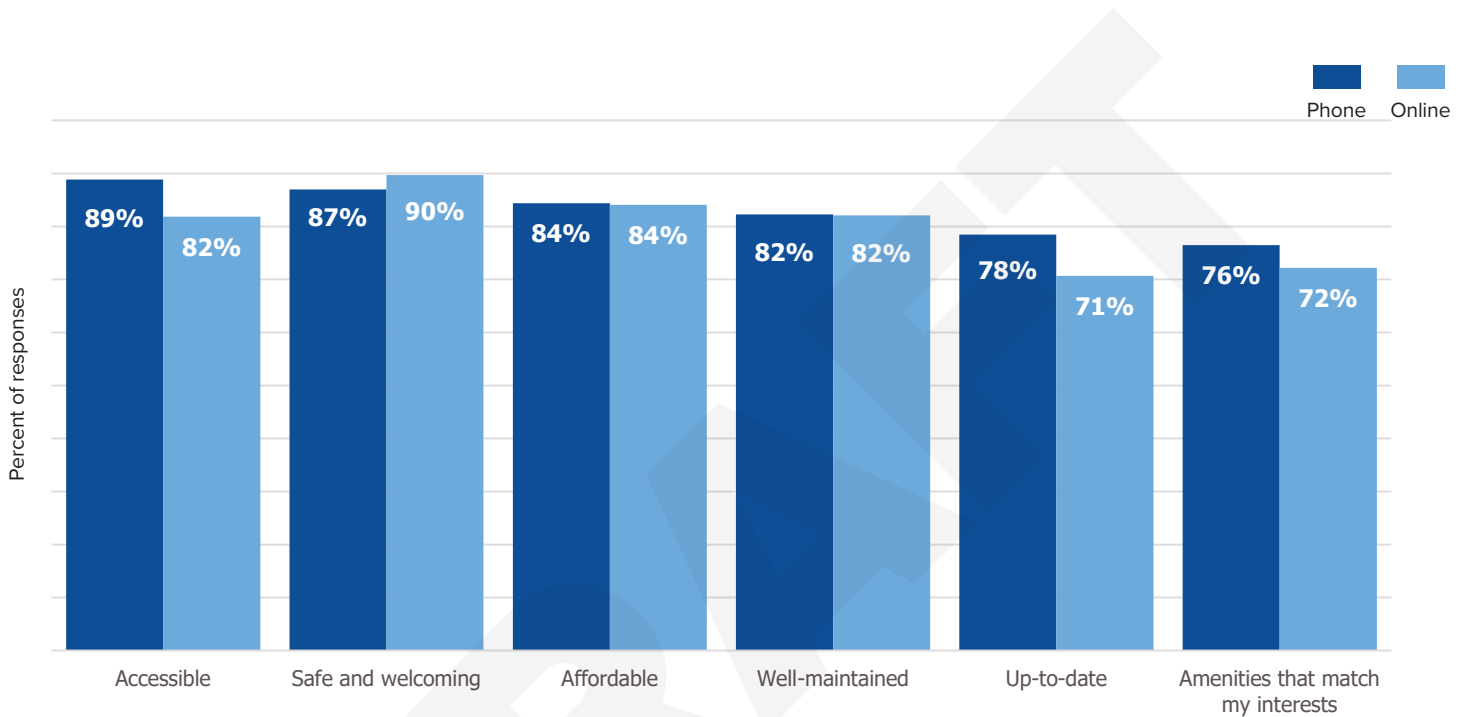
Demographic insight

Respondents with lower incomes (compared to the median) are less likely to use recreation spaces in adjacent municipalities. Respondents with higher incomes are more likely to use recreation spaces in adjacent municipalities.

This difference in use may indicate financial barriers in utilizing facilities in other municipalities (e.g., travel costs) and underline the importance of affordability for recreational spaces in Burnaby.

Recreation assessment

Question: Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements concerning Burnaby recreation facilities and services.



Question: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the statement: “I am getting good value from Burnaby’s recreation facilities, programs or services,”?

Most respondents think they are getting good value and this is a positive reflection on the service offered.

However, there is a significant portion of respondents who only somewhat agree or somewhat disagree that they are getting good value. This is a potential area for improvement.

Takeaways

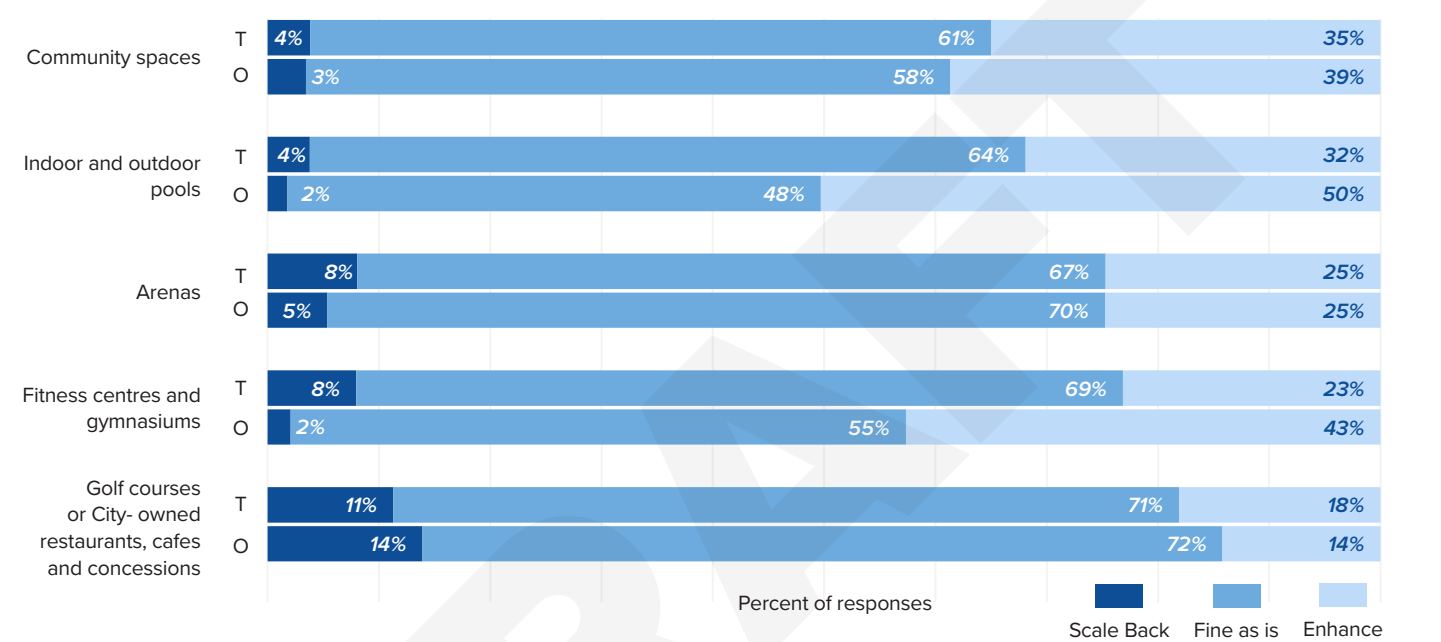
Based on the two questions, most of the public see the recreation service as providing good value and view it is safe and welcoming, as well as accessible.

There is, however, an expectation gap in having amenities that match peoples’ interests and being up-to-date. This is particularly evident in the online survey. The feedback aligns with responses received elsewhere through the engagement around suggestions for additional types of uses/ programs (e.g., water slides or board game spaces) and concerns around the age of some facilities.

Levels of service

Question: In the following list of recreation facilities, programs and services, which do you think could be scaled back, is fine as-is, or enhanced?

T=Phone O=Online and passive engagement stations



Takeaways

Most participants view each service area fine as-is. However, there is strong support for enhancing service areas that are typically included in multi-use community centres: community spaces and indoor and outdoor pools. Support for pool and fitness centre and gymnasiums enhancement was stronger within the online survey and passive engagement stations. This may reflect priorities among existing user groups.

Marble activity

The marble activity reinforces strong support for enhancing indoor and outdoor pools, fitness centres and gymnasiums and community spaces.

Demographic insight

Low-income residents are more likely to want enhancement of community spaces, as compared to the general population. This potentially highlights the value of these spaces as an affordable space to recreate and gather.

Residents living in the south are also more likely to support enhancement. This may reflect feedback from people using Central Park outdoor pool and Bonsor Recreation Complex, which are older facilities.

Detailed data is provided in Appendix A

Q: What is working well and/or needs improvement?

Key takeaways

Through the survey, interactive map and boards at pop-up events, participants provided a range of important feedback on the services areas.

Indoor pools and outdoor pools

Working well

Participants noted appreciation for helpful staff and pool amenities like water slides.

Needs improvement

Some respondents are concerned about overcrowding and aging facilities.

Differences in views

Some participants would like to see a focus on increasing supply of facilities or programming whereas others would like to see a focus on revitalization/expansion of aging facilities.

Fitness centres and gymnasiums

Working well

There is support for staff, variety of options and building community.

Needs improvement

Concern around the quality of equipment, number of locations, hours and maintenance.

Differences in views

Some participants focus on increasing supply whereas others would like to see a focus on improving the quality of some existing equipment, extending hours, or introducing new programming options (e.g., roller derby and rock climbing).

Arenas

Overall, there was a relatively small amount of specific feedback on arenas, but some support for more access to ice and dry floor space (e.g., skating/ball hockey) and for these facilities to include more activities.

Community Spaces

Working well

Respondents appreciate staff and opportunities to build community.

Needs improvement

Respondents suggested that more spaces and some improvement to existing spaces are needed.

Differences in views

Some participants would like to see more spaces and different programming whereas other participants focus on upgrading existing spaces.

Golf courses and City-owned restaurants, cafes and concessions

Working well

Respondents list online booking and accessibility of pitch and putt courses.

Needs improvement

Responses list the busyness of the golf courses, some environmental concerns and support for more—and more affordable—food options.

Differences in views

Some responses highlight support for golf courses and food service to be kept as-is whereas other responses would like to see golf courses become more accessible for locals (or focused on community benefit) and food to be more varied and affordable.

What we learned:

Culture

Culture spaces and programs are safe and welcoming and well maintained. At times, however, they do not have amenities that match user needs or interests and there is infrastructure that is not up-to-date. There may also be room for improvement around affordability.

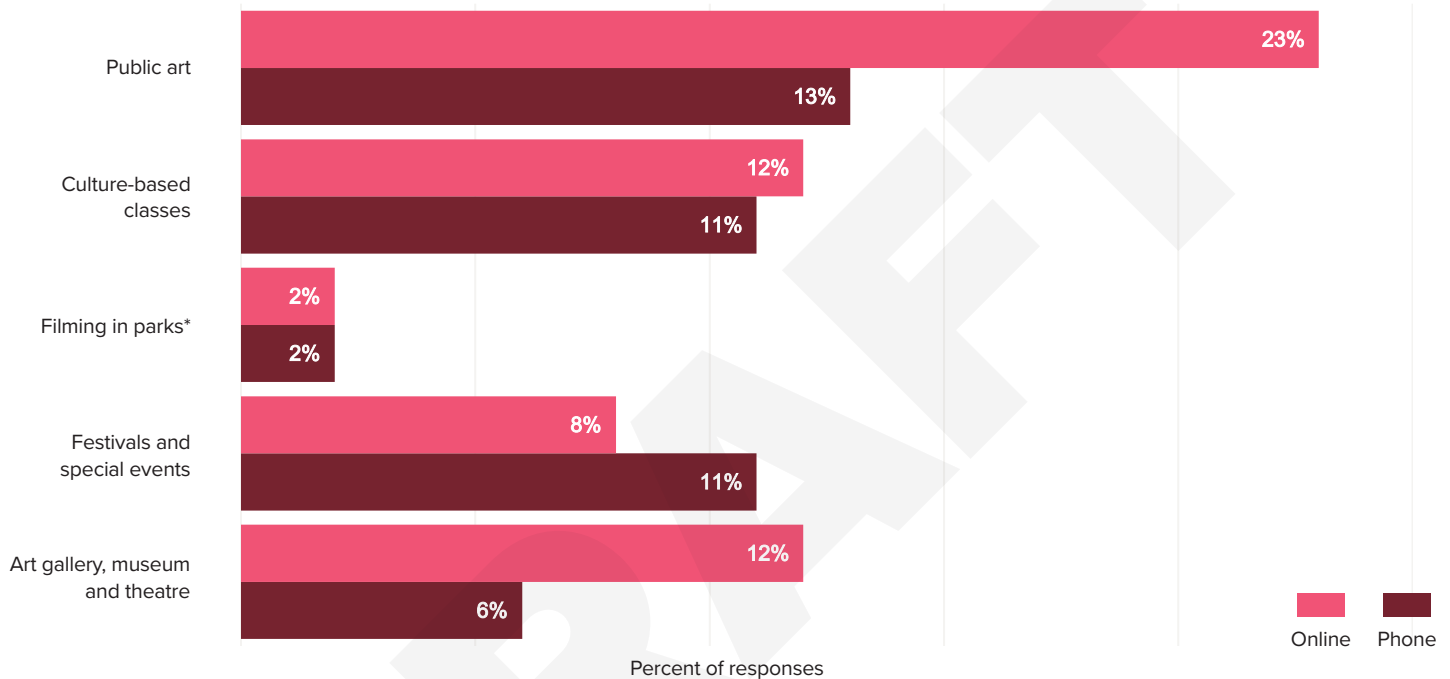
Many residents use culture spaces a few times a season or a few times a year. Respondents want to enhance the art gallery, museum and theatre as well as festivals and special events.



Current use

Question: How often do you, or someone in your household, currently use the following culture facilities, programs and services?

Participants noted they use or visit the following services more than once a month:



Takeaways

Respondents most commonly visit/use culture service areas a few times a season or a few times a year. The top three service areas ranked by the highest share of frequency (more than once a month) are public art, culture-based classes and the art gallery, museum and theatre.

Frequency of use/visit in this area may be impacted by the current distribution of cultural facilities, as opposed to low demand for these services. Engagement participants shared that they would like to see improved distribution of these facilities, which could facilitate their more frequent visitation and usage.

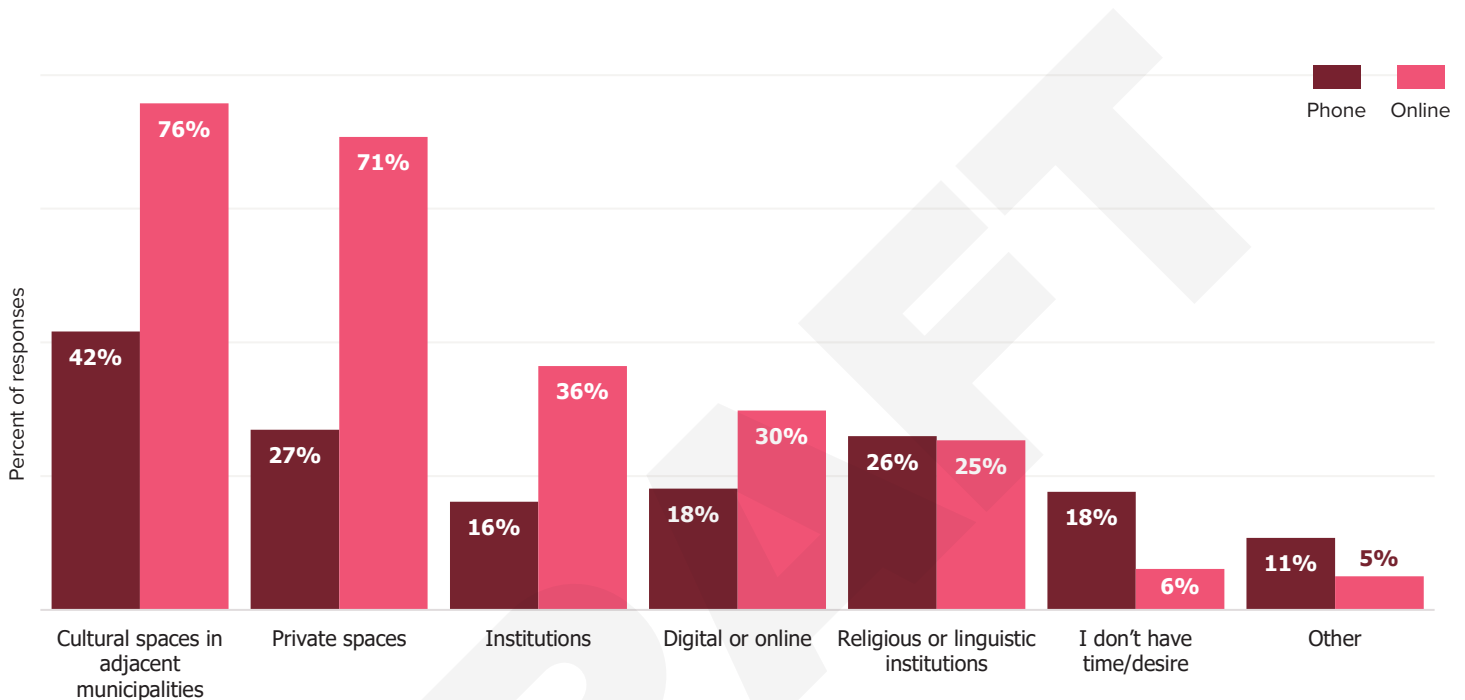
Demographic insight

The frequency of visits to the art gallery, museum and theatre vary across the population. Those aged 24 and under are more likely to visit, whereas those aged 25 to 44 years are less likely to visit frequently. A future engagement opportunity may be to clarify the cause of the lower participation among the 25 to 44 year olds.

*Film is unique in this context as people may see film shoots as they are out in parks rather than interacting or using the service area.

Alternatives to Burnaby's culture facilities/services

Question: Aside from Burnaby's culture facilities, where do you (and people in your household) experience culture?



Takeaways

The largest share of participants visit culture spaces in adjacent municipalities. This could reflect either an interest in experiencing the unique cultural destinations located in Metro Vancouver (e.g., Vancouver Art Gallery) or participation in classes outside of Burnaby. Future engagement or research could clarify this dynamic.

More respondents in the online survey indicate visiting adjacent municipalities as well as private spaces compared to the telephone survey. It is not clear what is behind this difference.

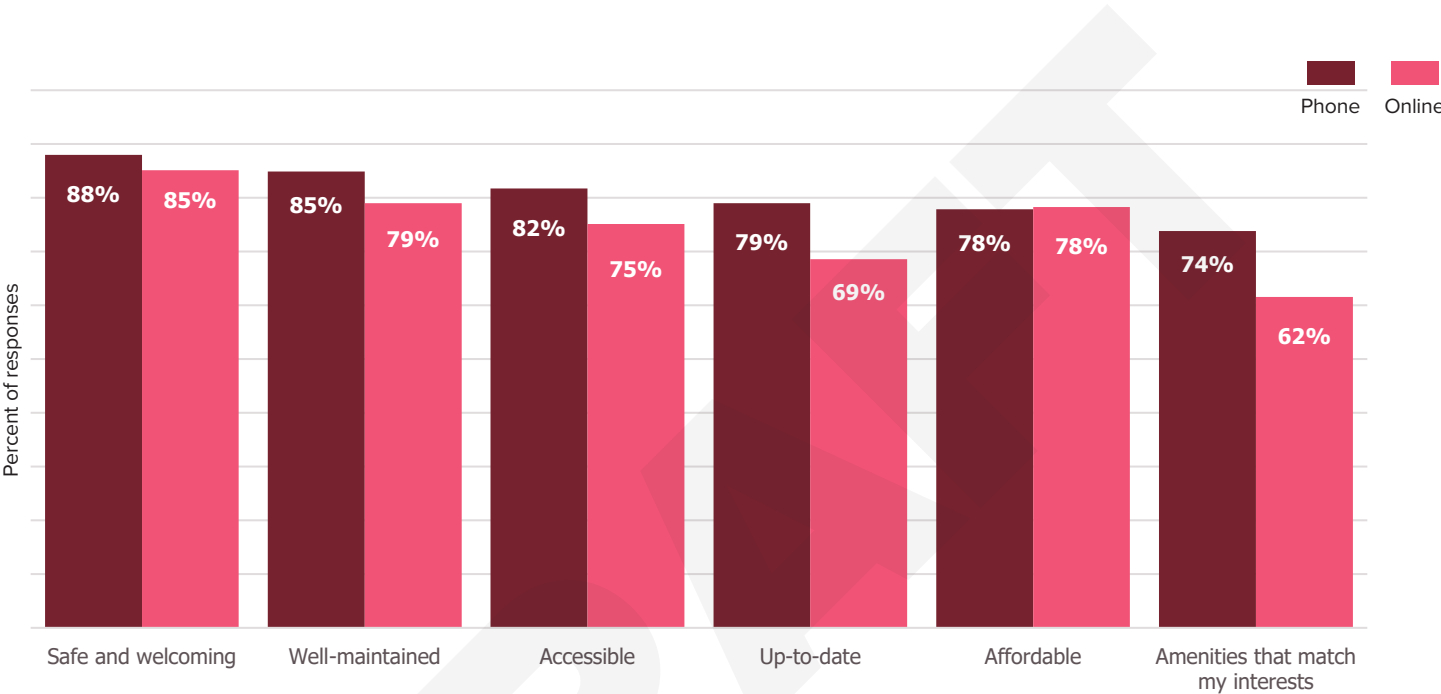
Of participants that never visit cultural spaces, visiting adjacent municipalities was the most common answer for all service areas.

Demographic insight

Those aged 24 and under are less likely to visit cultural spaces in adjacent municipalities. This is the same demographic that is more likely to visit Burnaby spaces. This may suggest either a barrier to visit spaces outside of Burnaby or a stronger interest in attending local spaces among this demographic.

Culture assessment

Question: Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements concerning Burnaby culture facilities and services.



Question: How strongly do you agree or disagree with the statement: “I am getting good value from Burnaby’s culture facilities, programs or services,”?

Most respondents think they are getting good value and this is a positive reflection on the service offered. However, there is a significant portion of respondents who only somewhat agree or somewhat disagree that they are getting good value. This is a potential area for improvement.

Takeaways

Based on the two questions, most of the public see culture services as providing good value and view it is safe and welcoming, as well as accessible.

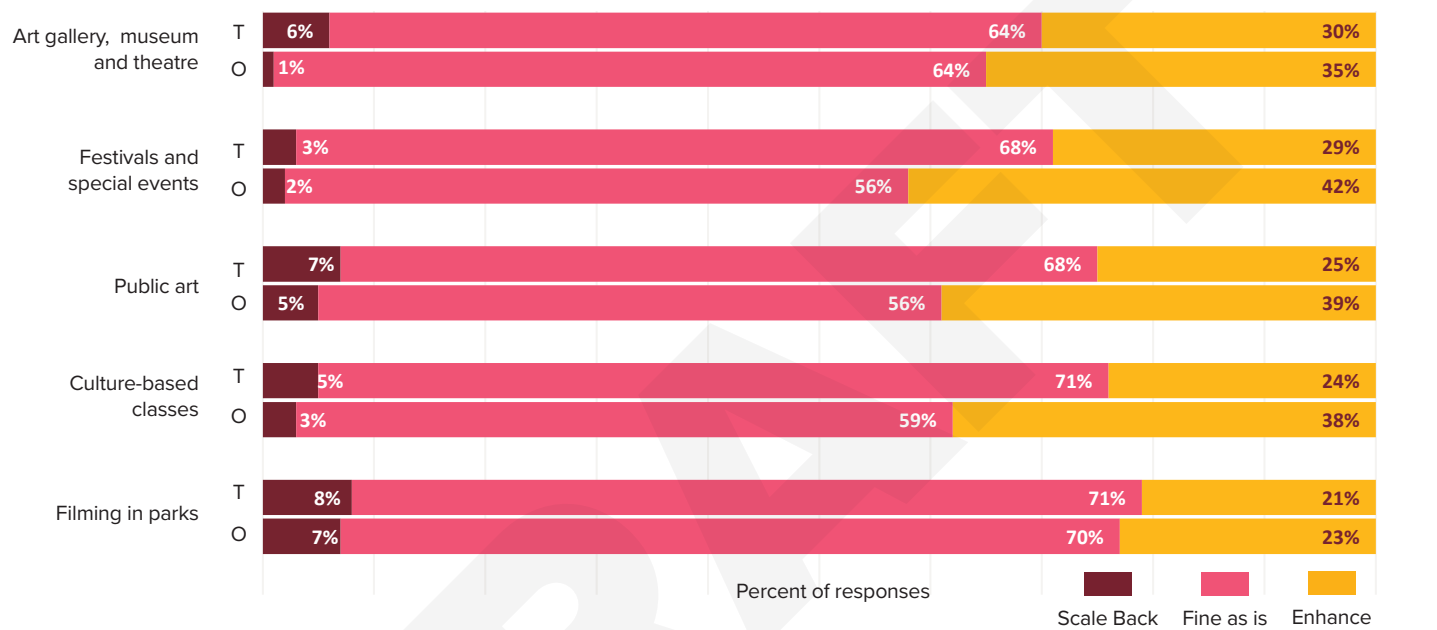
There is, however, an expectation gap in having amenities that are up-to-date and match peoples’ interests. This is particularly evident in the online survey. The feedback aligns with responses received elsewhere through the engagement, such as concern around facilities (e.g., aging or small) and suggestions for new classes and spaces (e.g., cooking classes and more public art).

Affordability may be an area for improvement- for Parks and Recreation, this statement area was in the top three statements which people agreed with, but is relatively lower in Culture. The online survey had higher rates of frequent users/visitors to the gallery, museum and theatres, so this potentially indicates that more frequent users are more concerned over affordability.

Levels of service

Question: In the following list of culture facilities, programs and services, which do you think could be scaled back, is fine as-is, or enhanced?

T=Phone O=Online and passive engagement stations



Takeaways

Most participants prefer to have each service areas remain as-is. The service areas with the strongest support for enhancement are the art gallery, museum and theatre and festivals and special events. Respondents in the online survey also indicated stronger support for enhancing culture-based classes and public art. The reason behind this difference is unconfirmed.

Marble activity

The marble activity reinforces the support around enhancing festivals and special events as well as the art gallery, museum and theatre.

Demographic insight

Youth and young adults are more likely to support enhancement of the art gallery, museum and theatre than the general population. This age segment is also more likely to use these spaces. It, therefore, may be a case where those who use the service are more likely to support enhancement.

Detailed data is provided in Appendix A

Q: What is working well and/or needs improvement?

Key takeaways

Through the survey, interactive map and boards at pop-up events, participants provided a range of important feedback on the services areas.

The art gallery, museum and theatre

Working well

There are positive associations with Deer Lake, supporting local artists and building a sense of community.

Needs improvement

Responses noted that Deer Lake can be hard to get to with issues around parking and transit connectivity. There were also concerns around limited space for collections and larger performances.

Differences in views

Some participants would like to see the development of a large arts and performance centre whereas other participants would prefer more distributed cultural offerings within communities.

Festivals and special events

Working well

There is a strong appreciation for this service area in building community and being free of cost for attendees.

Needs improvement

There is demand for more or different events, more event spaces for neighbourhood organizations and increasing awareness of what events are occurring.

Differences in views

No major differences are identified but there are suggestions for festivals/events to be hosted in specific areas of the city such as Brentwood.

Culture-based classes

Working well

There is support for staff and the variety of classes offered.

Needs improvement

Responses noted demand for a variety of new classes (e.g., cooking, Hitotose), more options distributed across the city (such as pottery at Christine Sinclair Community Centre) and some concern over limited hours.

Differences in views

There are no differences noted specifically for classes, but related feedback regarding a more centralized programming focus in Deer Lake versus a more distributed focus across the city (see art gallery, museum and theatre) may be relevant here as well.

Public art

Working well

There is an appreciation for existing installations.

Needs improvement

Support for public art to be more distributed throughout the city and at new locations (e.g., walls of buildings, parks).

Differences in views

There are no differences noted for public art.

Film

Working well

There is limited specific feedback on what is working in regards to film.

Needs improvement

There is limited specific feedback but some concerns raised over negative impacts to parks.

Differences in views

There are no differences noted for film.

Q: Where would you expect to experience culture?

Key takeaways

Participants expect to experience culture in a variety of spaces across the city. This information complements feedback on what is working and what is not.

Common types of spaces include:

- Theatres, galleries and museums
- Outdoor public spaces (streets and parks)
- Spaces in private developments (at the street edge)
- Indoor public spaces (community centres, libraries)
- Transit corridors
- A range of specific geographic suggestions such as Brentwood, Burnaby Mountain and Metrotown

“Festivals, musical events, markets all summer long! Great urban parks and urban streetscapes & plazas!”

Respondent from the pop-up at the Amazing Brentwood Farmers Market

“Too many arts activities are centered around Deer Lake. I know this is where the Art Gallery is and Shadbolt Centre, etc, but it is poorly located for transit and thus not very easy to access for many residents.”

Respondent from the online survey

“I love the idea of having a central ‘heart’ to the City. I feel like the Deer Lake area/ Shadbolt Centre/City of Burnaby building and parking lot can evolve into that through a little more dynamic growth”

Respondent from the online survey

User group engagement



Overview

Strong partnerships with community organizations enrich Burnaby's parks, recreation, and cultural services. Local groups deliver programs, host events, and bring residents together, offering valuable insights into emerging needs, trends, and opportunities.

Groups and organizations rely on the recreation spaces, cultural facilities, and City parks provided by PRC, and in turn, their work complements the City's own programs and activities. Collectively, City and community offerings provide residents of all ages, interests and skill levels with a wider range of opportunities to stay active and healthy.

Making Life Better's first round of engagement focused on Visioning. User groups were invited to take part in the process in a few ways by:

- promoting public engagement opportunities with their participants and networks with Making Life Better's Community Toolkit
- completing a digital survey about how they use PRC services and share their insights into trends that are shaping participation and future needs for PRC services

The survey was available to more than 100 groups and organizations between July 11 and October 10, 2025. PRC staff received a total of 50 responses from 43 organizations during this time, including 48 completed surveys and three written submissions. An additional 30 responses from the public were gathered through the Community Toolkit. This feedback has been included in the summary of public feedback in this report.

Their feedback has helped to validate current state assessments in Phase 1: Key Findings, highlighting growing pressures on their own organizations and services. It has also provided deeper insights into strengths in PRC services, and opportunities to improve them in the future. These results will inform key directions and recommendations in Making Life Better, which will be shared with user groups and the public in early 2026.

Results

Who we engaged



48 individuals

48 individuals representing 43 groups and organizations completed the survey.



43 organizations

Most (31) have been operating for more than seven years and four (4) for less than three years.



35 youth serving

10 representatives from SD41 and Burnaby schools, 24 from non-profits and one businesses that work with local youth.



32 park users

Use green spaces, sport fields and other amenities in PRC parks to deliver programs.



24 recreation users

Deliver their services and gather in community spaces and indoor recreational facilities.



16 culture groups

Coordinate participation in City programs, visits to collections, and celebrations held at PRC sites.

What we asked

- Q1.** What changes are you seeing in your programs, participants or community needs, over the last 5 years?
- Q2.** Thinking about the City of Burnaby facilities and amenities your organization uses, what's working well?
- Q3.** Are there aspects, such as booking process, maintenance, schedule, space availability or accessibility, that could be improved in the future?
- Q4.** Is there anything else you would like us to know about your experience of parks, recreation and culture in the City of Burnaby?

Service interests

Participation needs and interests are shifting.

More people are expressing interest in the programs and services that user groups provide in PRC spaces.

Complex needs

Many organizations are welcoming new individuals and families into their programs, many of whom need more personalized approaches to participate (e.g., translation, program adaptations, specialized equipment/environmental features, etc.).

Grassroots and community-oriented

Organizations that serve the larger Metro Vancouver Region are seeing more local representation in their programs (e.g., outdoor sports). Interests have also been shifting to:

- introductory programs in family-friendly spaces
- program offerings closer to home

Keeping fees affordable

Participation costs (registration fees, equipment, transportation, etc.) are becoming more of a factor for participants. Approaches like Fair Play that lower fees have been effective in reducing barriers for many residents.

Parks

"We are seeing increased interest in community soccer. We are having to compete with more and more for-profit academies for children and field space."

Recreation

"For off-site programs, transportation can be an issue. Some families cannot afford a car. Older siblings are sometimes tasked with taking young children to programs."

Culture

"More folks are looking for activities that do not require a screen and instead wanting to engage both their hands and minds."

Service delivery

Programs are adapting to meet a wider range of needs and interests in our community

Inclusive programs

Accessing programs remains challenging for some people living in Burnaby, particularly for programs that are delivered in locations with limited transit service. Physical barriers in the design of aging buildings and a lack of spaces suited to specialized service delivery are limitations that groups have difficulties working around.

Resource-intensive delivery models

Personalized approaches to programming has become highly valued. User groups are providing more one-on-one instruction, translation, hands-on and continuous learning opportunities. These efforts are helping people with more complex needs take part in programs, and providing more entry points into skill development for residents of all ages and abilities.

Bringing services closer to participants

Groups would like more opportunities to bring introductory, family-oriented versions of their programs into community spaces and parks at convenient locations for residents who might not otherwise learn about or attend programs delivered in the City's destination facilities (e.g. Shadbolt Centre for the Arts).

Parks

"More lights on paths and fields...Night is a popular time to play but too dark."

Recreation

"Families are really valuing the 1:1 support that [our programs] provide, ensuring programs are accessible even for children with significant behavioural challenges."

Culture

"PRC staff are well informed about current trends in pottery, and help us stay up to date, increase our knowledge base, and keep people wanting to join our group."

Feedback on services

User groups shared opportunities for improving PRC services

Update bookings and allotments

City processes could be more sensitive to user group operations (e.g., booking deadlines not aligning with registration deadlines). They report that the process is very competitive and difficult for new users to navigate. Suggestions for improving the bookings process include:

- allowing groups to query, cancel and book space in real time or on short notice
- assigning staff who liaise with groups based on the types of programs they offer rather than the type of space they use

More opportunities to collaborate

Many groups feel they could reach more people and diversify their own services to meet more needs if the City could provide:

- more access to suitable space and amenities (e.g., kilns, cricket, curling)
- support marketing and promoting their services
- resources to build organizational capacity

Public gathering spaces

Groups noted a lack of unstructured public spaces in Burnaby's parks and facilities for people to play, create and socialize in for free. Parks, recreation facilities, schools and youth centres are examples of locations that groups would like to leverage in meeting this need.

Upgrades to add capacity

On-site storage, more parking, food amenities, and lighting add convenience and functional capacity to existing PRC locations. Exploring opportunities to upgrade or reallocate underused facilities such as gravel fields could help address demand.

Address gaps in supply

Suitable spaces for some activities, particularly sports, are still lacking. Many groups are reaching new participants with adapted programming but need the right spaces to meet their needs and keep them engaged (cricket pitches for women and children, barrier-free ice surfaces, etc.).



Host Nations engagement

Overview

The City of Burnaby is located on the unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷə́yəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh), and kʷikʷə́łəm (Kwkwetlem) Peoples. Each Nation has distinct histories and distinct traditional territories that fully or partially encompass the city.

All four Host Nations were invited to provide feedback on the results of Making Life Better's first phase: Key Findings. The feedback and recommendations shared through the City's formal referral process are summarized below.

Support cultural visibility in parks and facilities

- Increase representation and visibility of Host Nations culture and hə́nqəmihəm and Skwxwú7mesh sníchim languages through signage and public art
- Provide opportunities for Host Nations to share Host Nation cultures, histories, and connections to their territories
- Work with Host Nations to co-develop materials to support public education of Host Nation cultures and histories in culturally-significant locations
- Consider potential archaeological and cultural impacts of PRC projects and engage with Host Nations through the referral process to create opportunities for their review and input

Lower barriers to participation

- Lowering fees for organized and unorganized activities at City facilities (pools, gyms, golf courses, etc.) or access to City sports facilities and outdoor spaces (soccer, lacrosse, hockey, etc.) to advance reconciliation through recreation
- Remove parking restrictions at City parks for members of Host Nations

Restore natural areas

- Increase the use of native, climate-resilient species in horticultural and natural areas that particularly benefit native bees and other pollinators
- Improve the health and function of historical watercourses, including removal of invasive species and daylighting buried streams
- Continue to explore opportunities for co-management, rehabilitation plans, stormwater initiatives, and access to parks and facilities with Host Nations

Provide more access to parks for cultural and educational uses

- Improve Host Nation access to natural areas where traditional uses can be re-established and resources can be harvested. This includes planting native, harvestable climate-resilient species in harvesting areas
- Facilitate teaching gardens for learning about plants, harvesting practices, and historical uses with Indigenous teachers

Incorporate Indigenous programs into services

- Explore ways to bring Indigenous recreation and related fitness programs (e.g., Pow-wow cardio or lacrosse) into community centres and recreation facilities with Indigenous instructors

Next steps



Drafting our direction

The Phase 2 Visioning What We Heard Report summarizes the first round of community engagement conducted during the summer of 2025. The report provides initial insight into the views expressed by the community.

The project team will now draft Making Life Better: Burnaby's Parks, Recreation and Culture Plan. This work will set a vision for planning and managing the parks, recreation and culture network in Burnaby. The engagement will directly inform direction in the plan.

Setting service levels

The public shared their priorities for enhancing and scaling back service areas. This feedback will inform service level recommendations.

Identifying strategic work

The public shared feedback on what matters most with parks, recreation and culture. The Plan will incorporate this feedback and prioritize short-term improvements or identify future work to be undertaken.

- Where the engagement raised needs around particular service areas, the Plan may identify new strategies.
- Where the engagement raised issues with operations or enforcement, the Plan may identify updates to bylaws or exploration of new practices.
- Where the engagement raised site-specific improvements, the City may evaluate these requests as part of ongoing work.



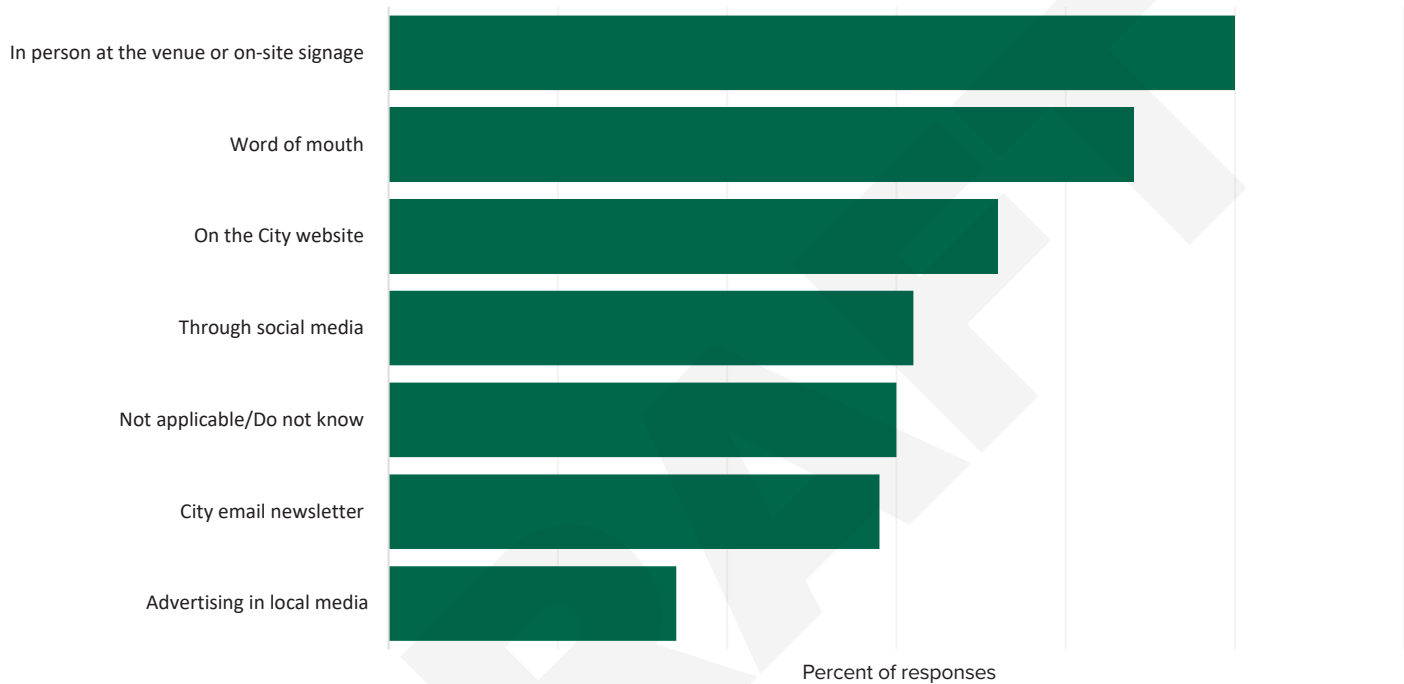
Appendix A

Detailed analysis of results

The following section provides a detailed analysis of results from the public engagement. It is intended to be a reference to support insights found within the body of the What We Heard Report.

Communications

Question: How did you find out about this public engagement process?



Takeaways

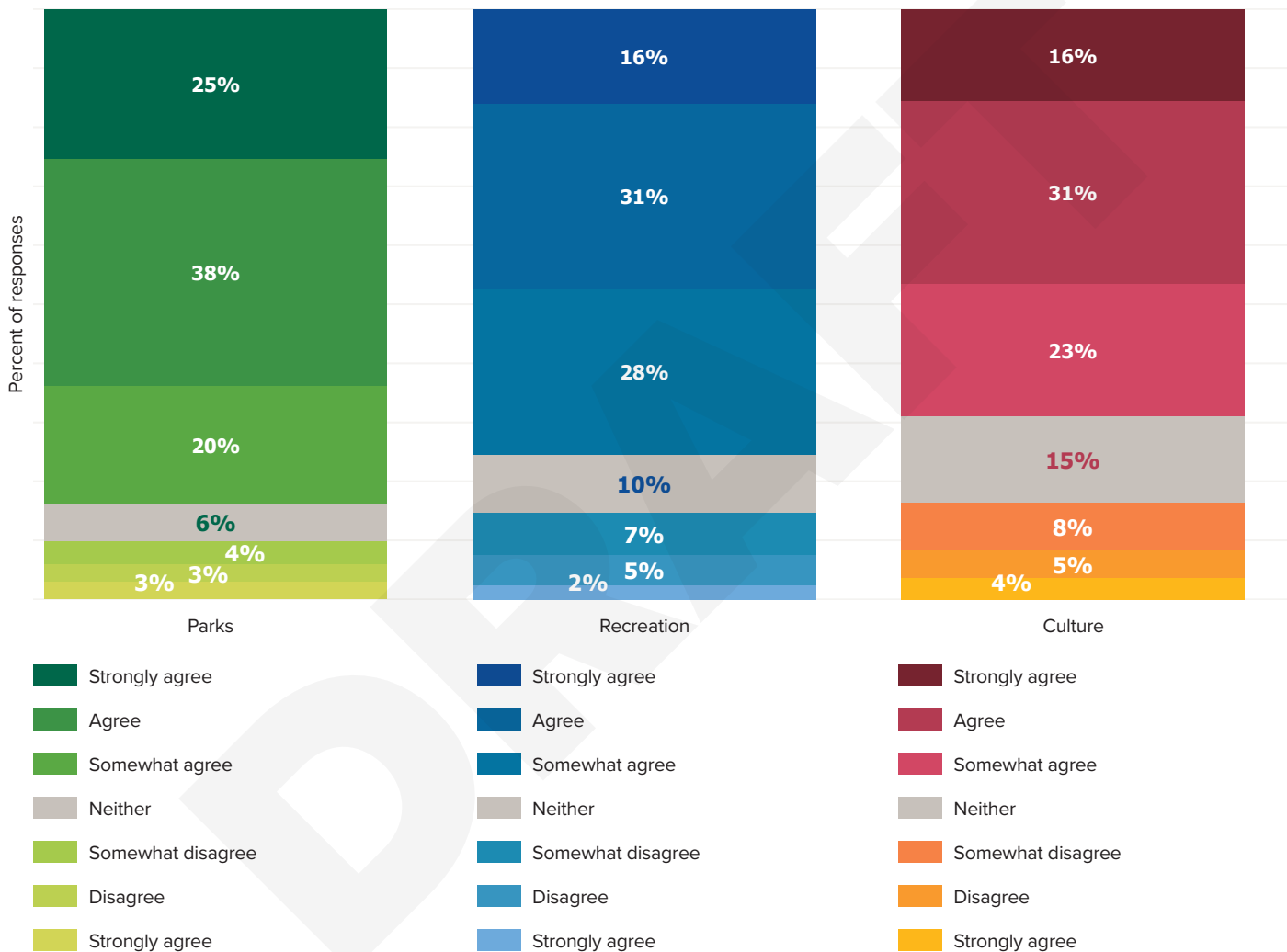
Participants noted postcards were the most common way they learned about the engagement (57%) followed by the the City newsletter and social media posts. Posters, the City of Burnaby's website and City staff were less commonly noted as how respondents learned of the engagement.

Through "other", respondents shared other ways they were informed of the project, including:

- Emails
- Social communities such as clubs, sport teams and community centre facilitated social spaces, allowing communities to interact and exchange information
- Social networks and by word of mouth

Getting good value

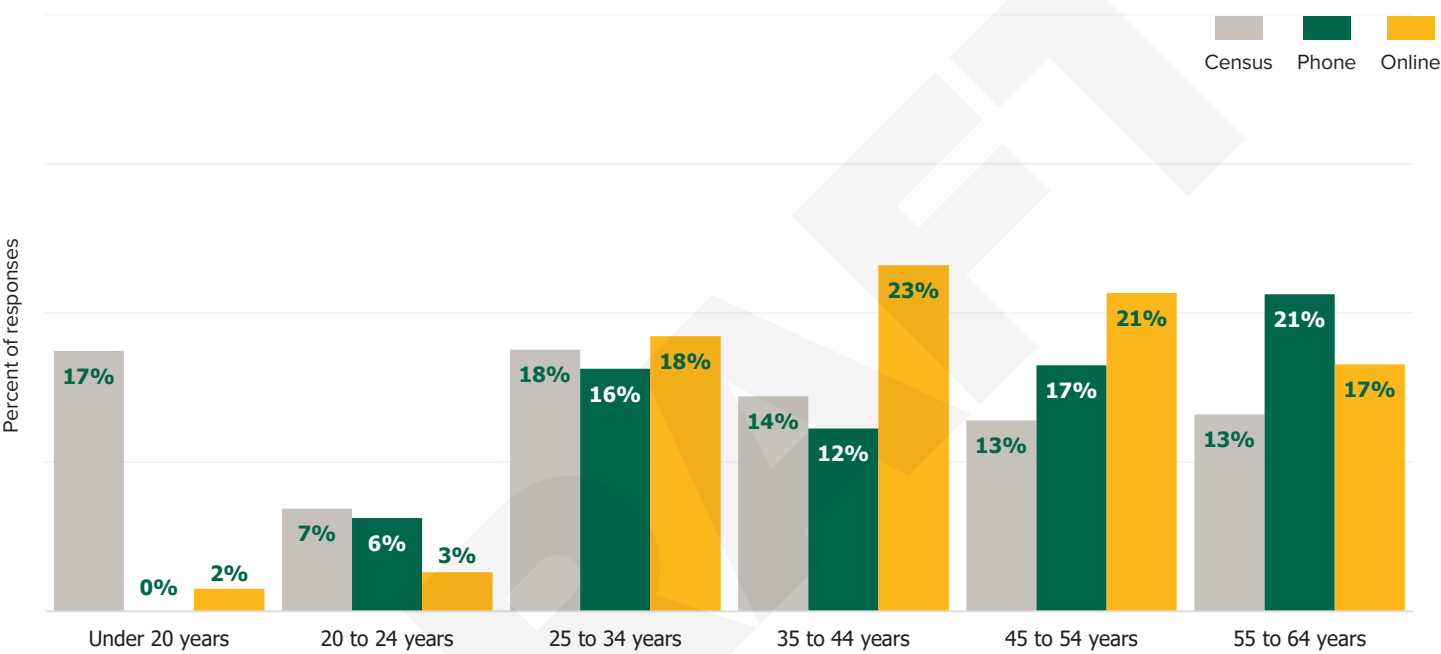
Question: “On a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 is strongly agree and 7 is strongly disagree, how strongly do you agree or disagree with the statement, “I am getting good value from Burnaby’s parks/recreation/culture facilities, programs or services”?”



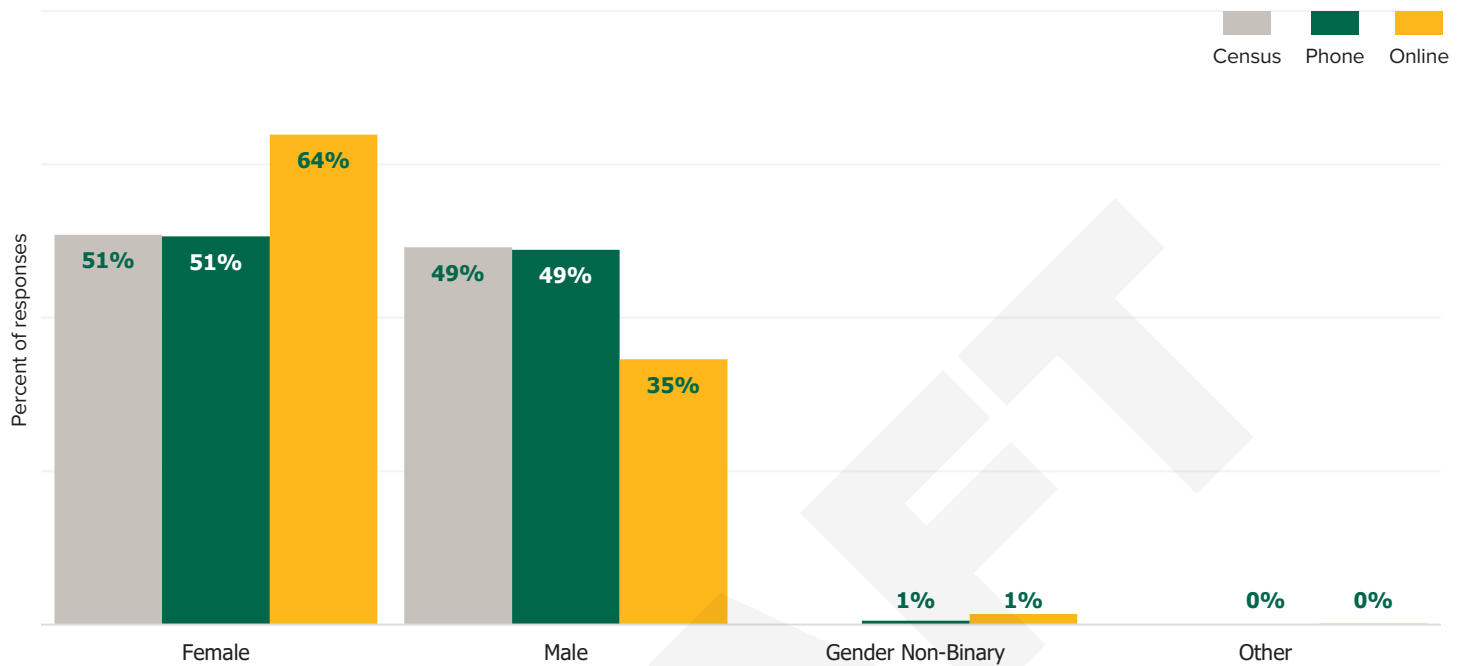
Demographics

The following graphs display the demographic composition of the phone and online surveys compared to the 2021 Canadian census for Burnaby. The results of the phone survey are weighted to align with the census to account for any differences.

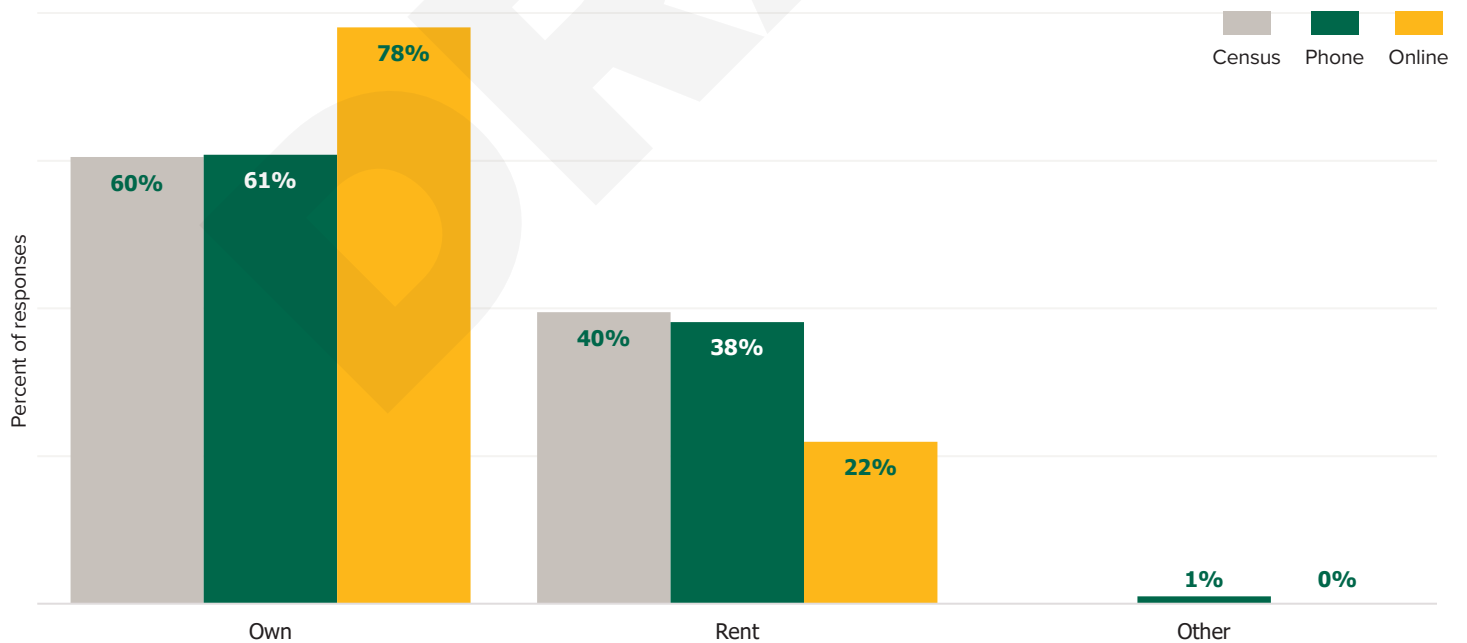
Age



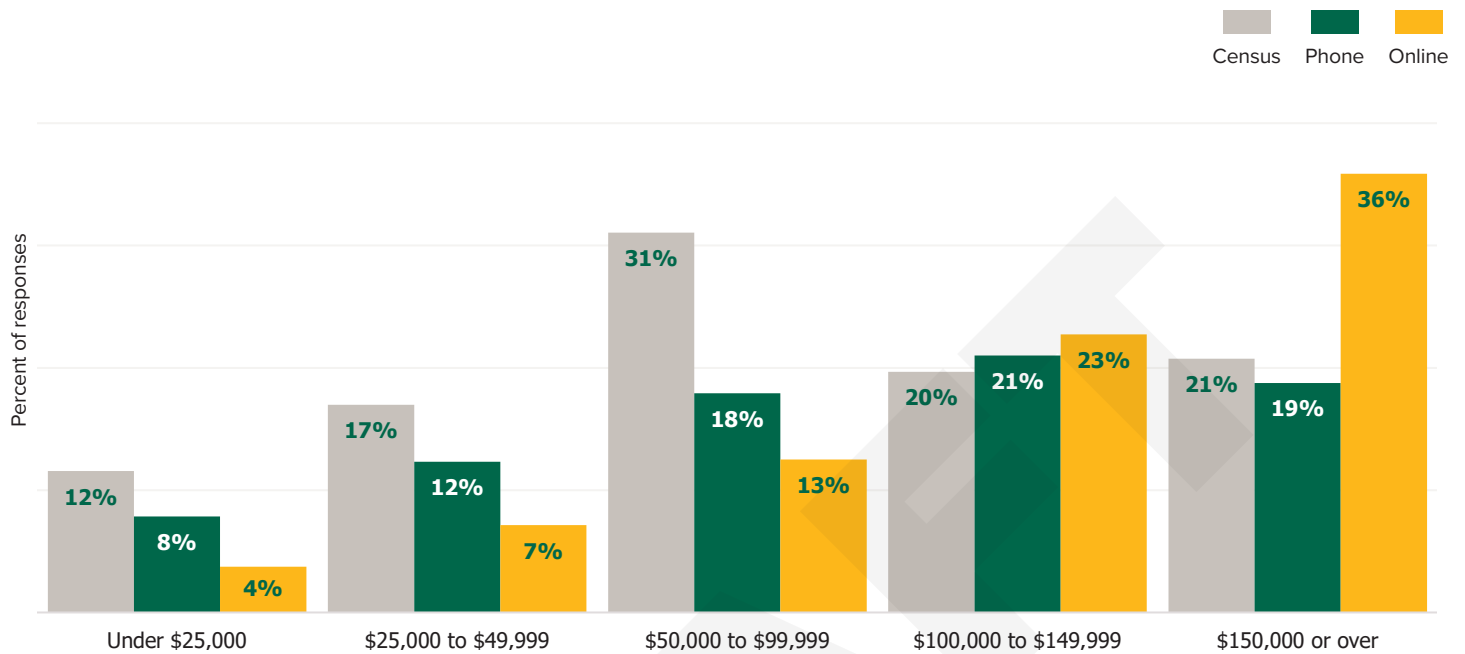
Gender



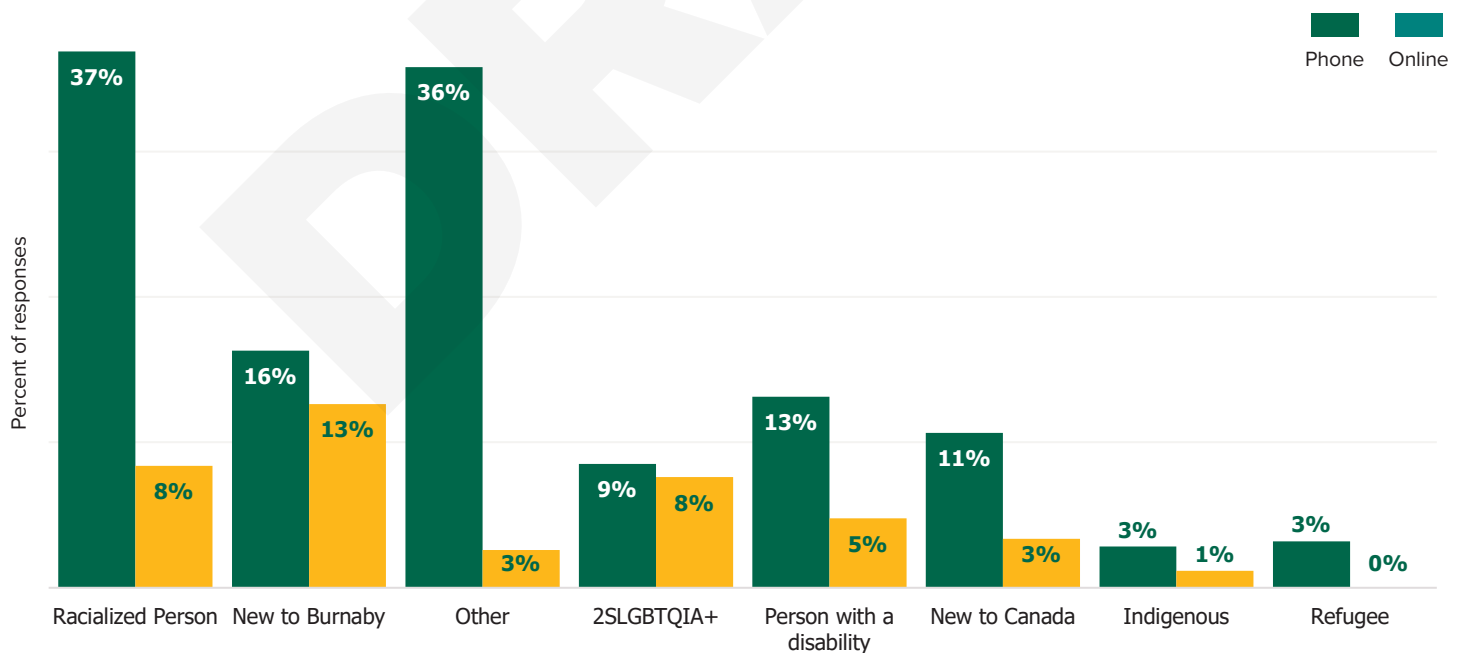
Home ownership



Household income



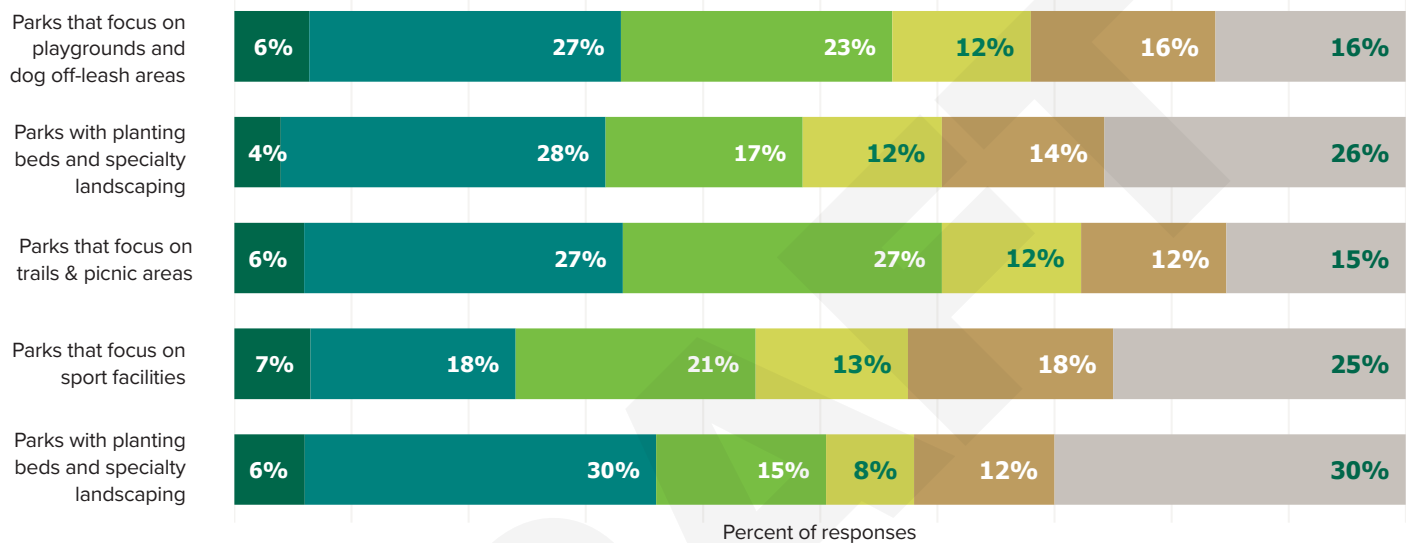
Identity



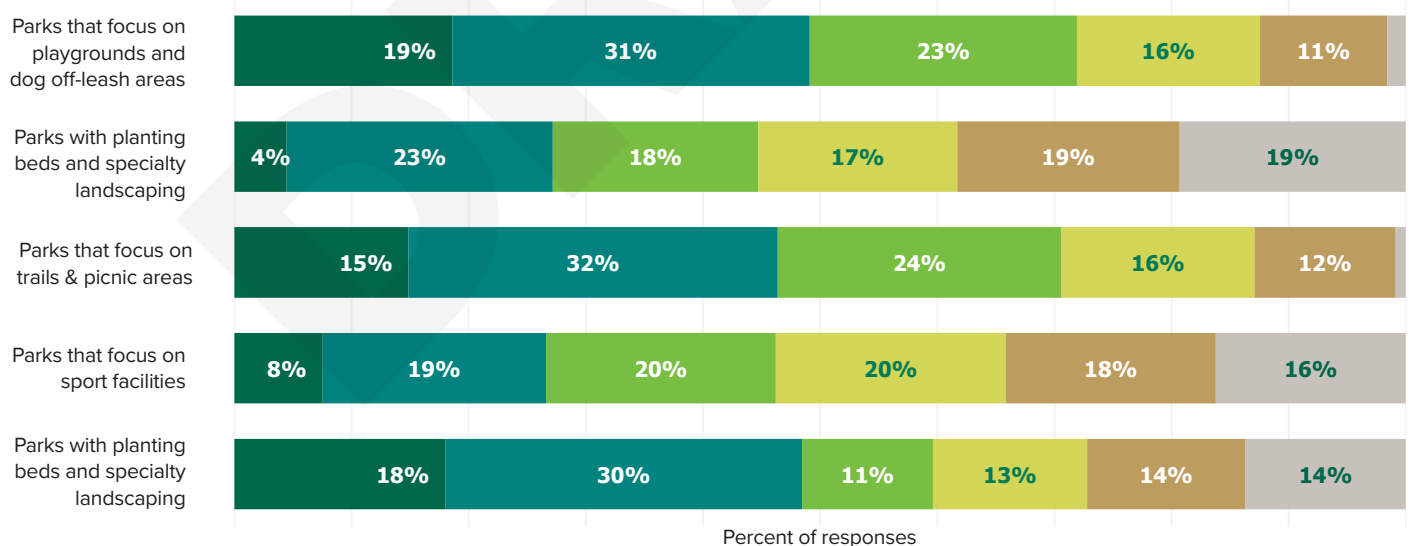
Current use

Question: How often do you, or someone in your household, currently use the following park facilities, programs and services?

Phone survey responses



Online survey responses

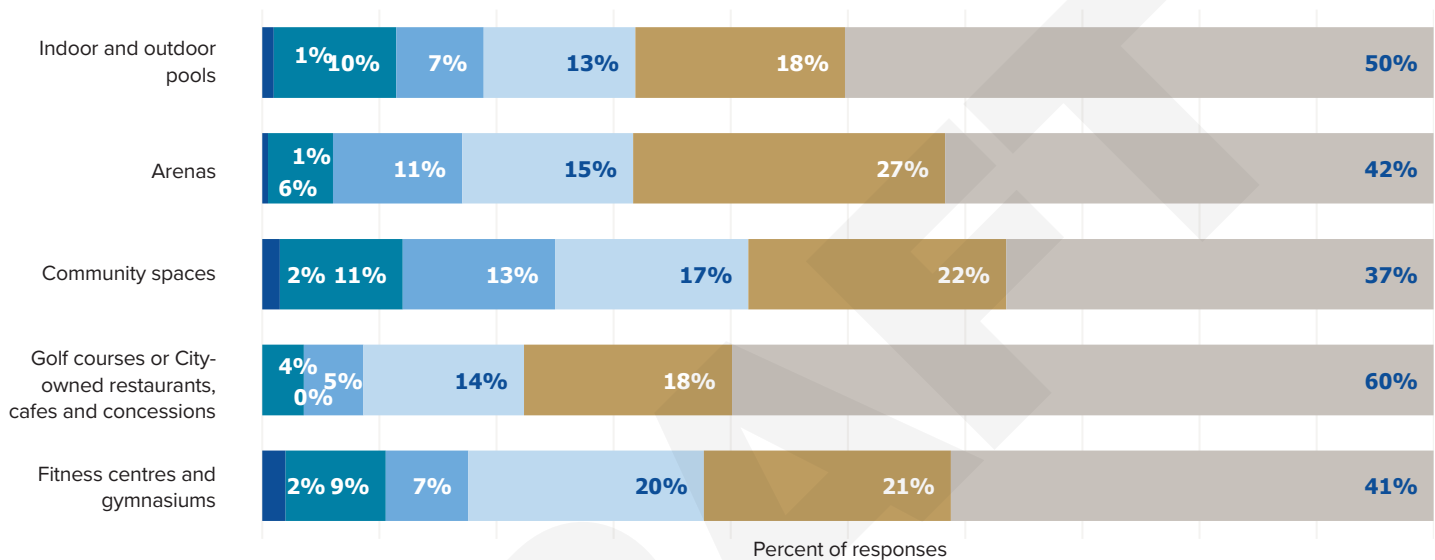


Every day
 More than once a week
 More than once a month
 A few times a season
 A few times a year
 Never

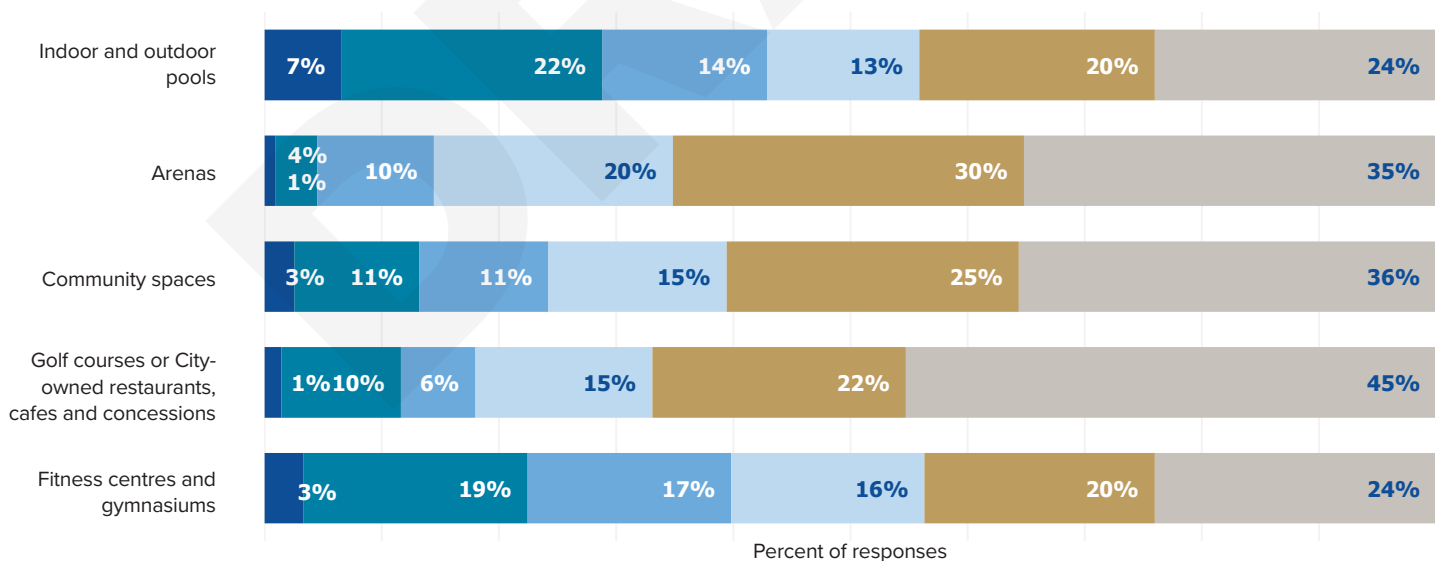
Current use

Question: How often do you, or someone in your household, currently use the following recreation facilities, programs and services?

Phone survey responses



Online survey responses

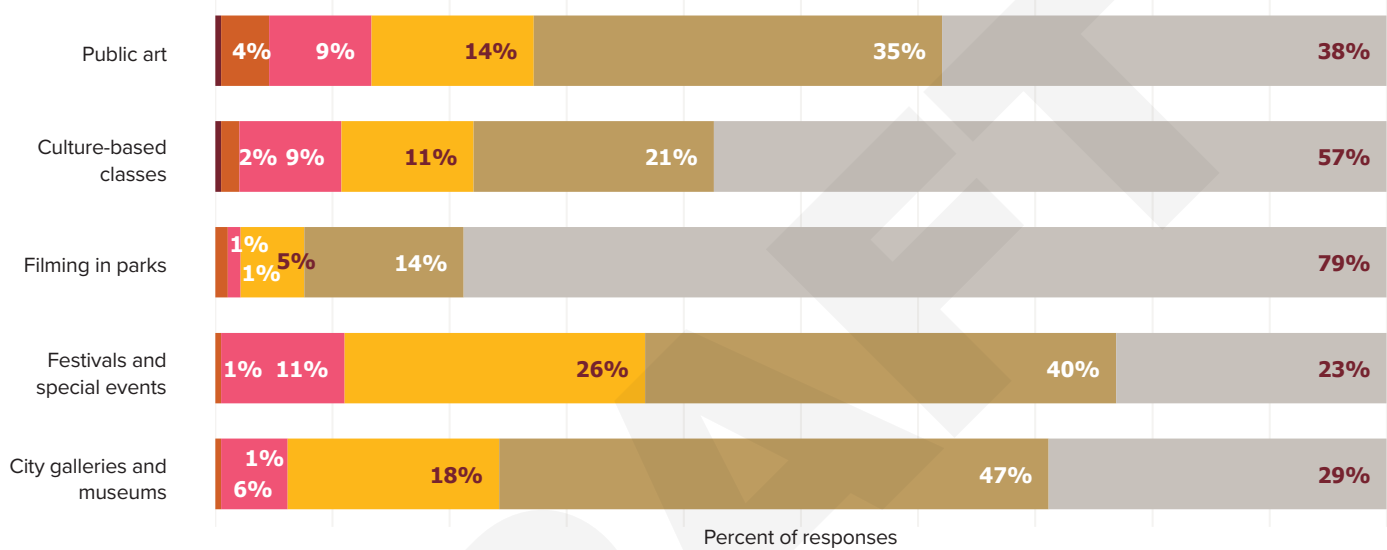


Every day
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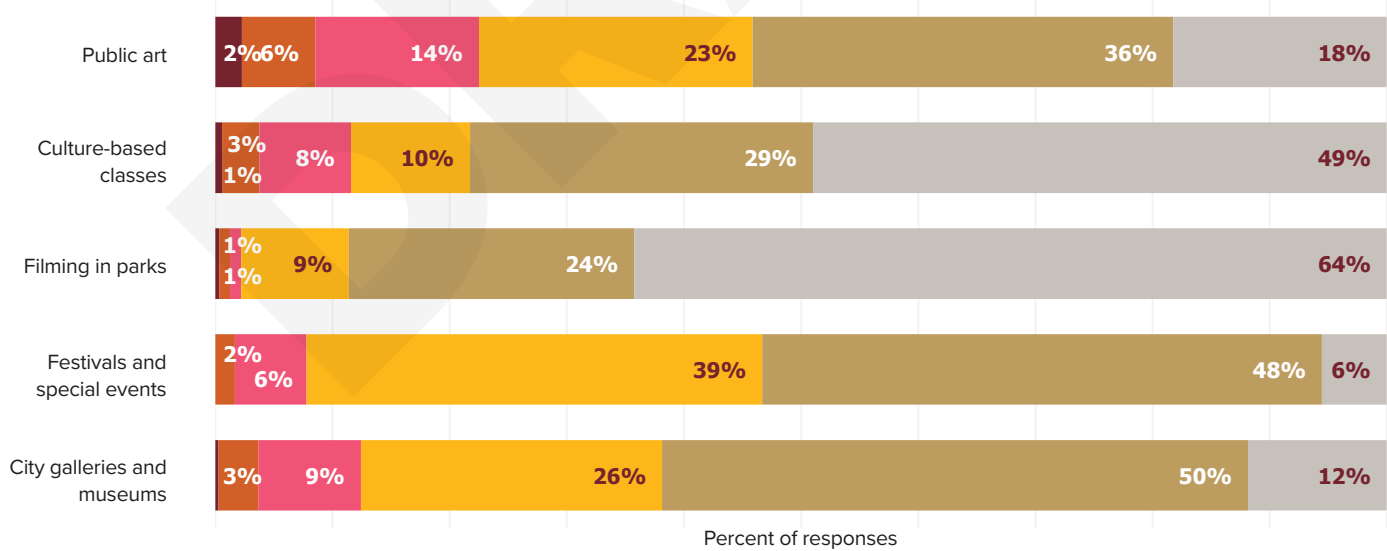
Current use

Question: How often do you, or someone in your household, currently use the following culture facilities, programs and services?

Phone survey responses



Online survey responses

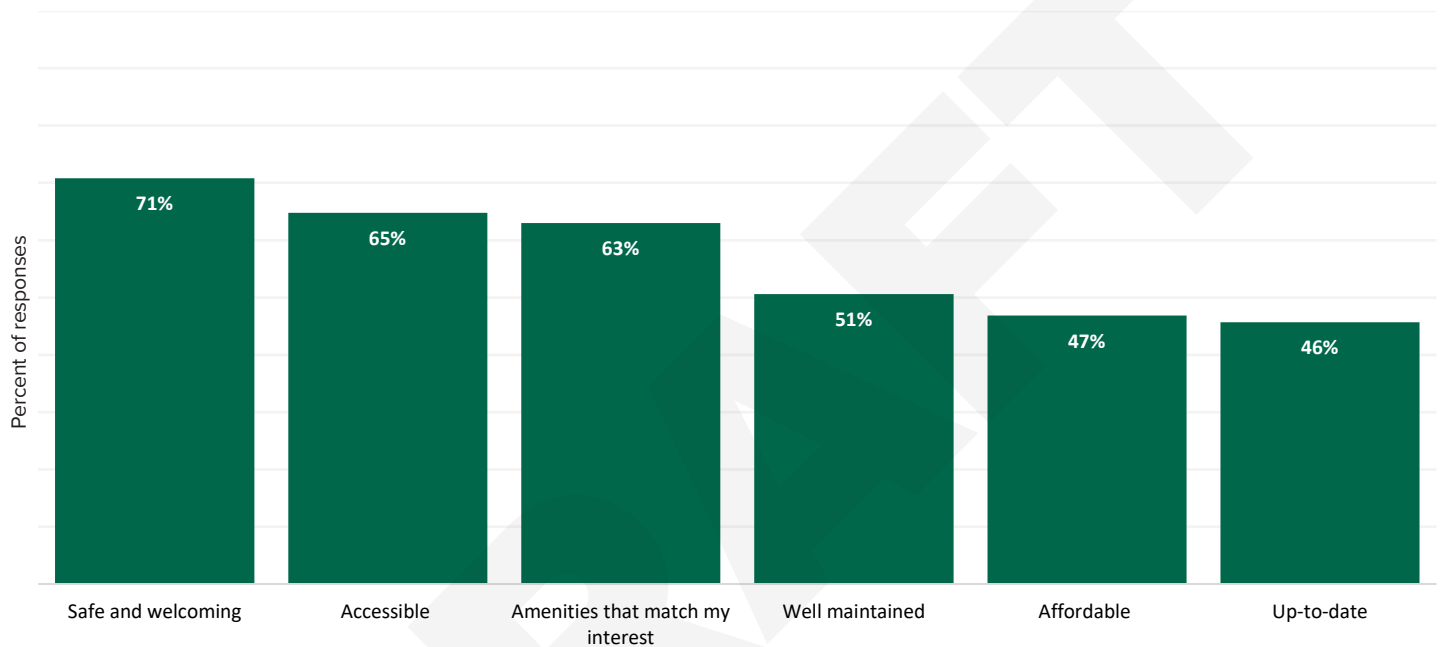


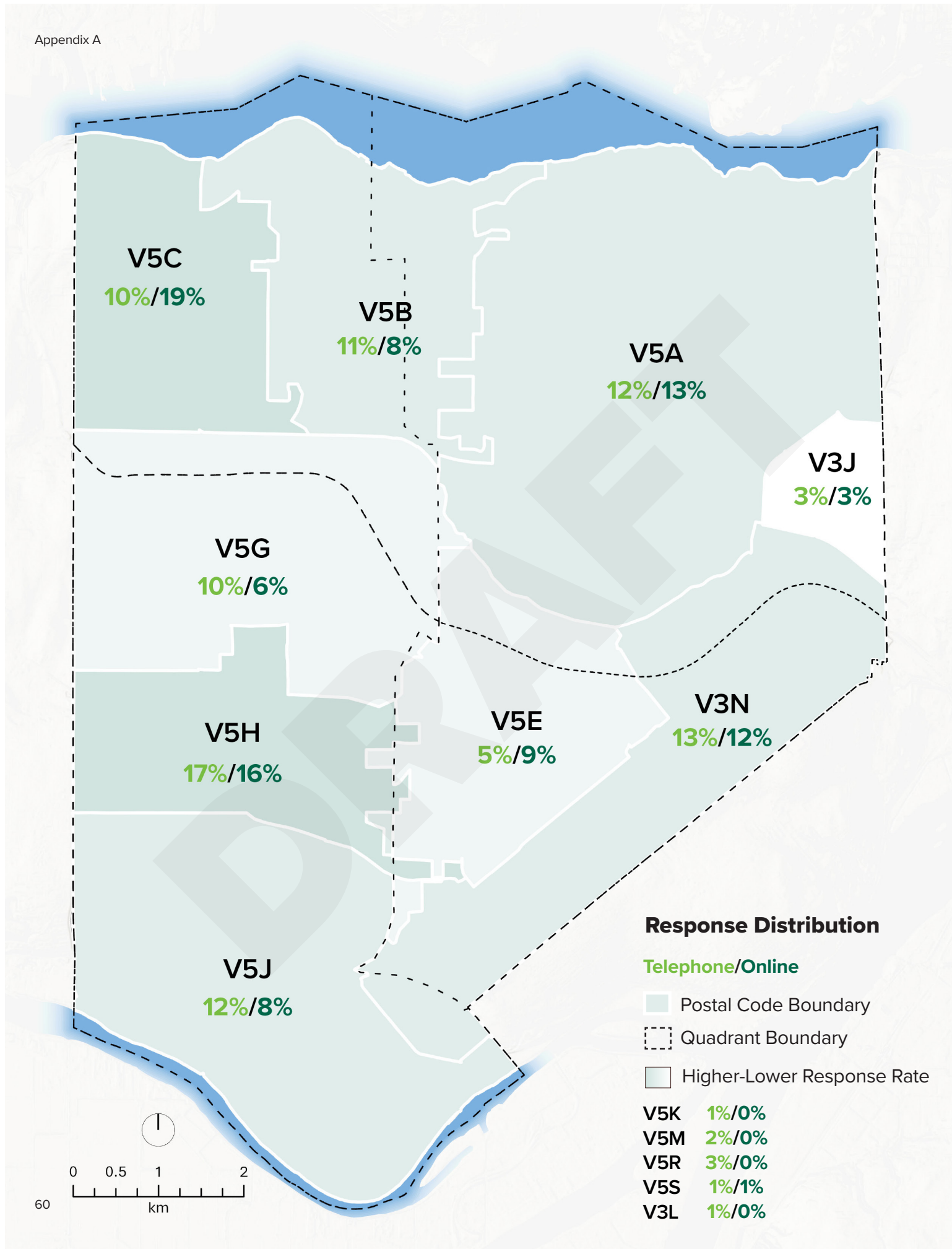
Every day
 More than once a week
 More than once a month
 A few times a season
 A few times a year
 Never

Assessment

Questions: Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements concerning Burnaby PRC facilities.

This question was only asked at the passive engagement stations. In the online and phone surveys, this question was specific to parks, recreation, or culture.





Appendix B

Detailed analysis of results

This Appendix will include detailed results of the telephone survey, including its methodology