

Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan

Public Participation Report

Capital Regional District | December 2017



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Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	2
Purpose of this Report.....	3
Planning and Engagement Process.....	3
Communications Materials.....	4
Public Sessions.....	5
Responses.....	5
Government Agencies.....	5
First Nations.....	5
Public.....	6
Summary of Comments Received Through Response Forms.....	7
Strategic Direction - Policies.....	7
Regional Trail Routes.....	8
Implementation.....	10
Other Comments.....	11
Conclusion.....	12
Appendix 1 - Comment Form.....	13

Figures

Figure 1: Support for the Proposed Policies in the Draft Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan.....	7
Figure 2: Support for the Proposed Trail Routes in the Draft Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan.....	8
Figure 3: Support for Proposed Trail Routes by Island.....	9
Figure 4: Support for the Proposed Phased Approach in the Draft Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan....	11

Cover Photo: [Artist's rendition of a future regional trail](#)

Executive Summary

The Gulf Islands Regional Trail Plan project was initiated by the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board in March 2017. An initial round of public engagement was held in March 2017 to gather ideas and input to help develop the draft plan. A second round of engagement was held when the CRD Board approved the release of a draft Regional Trails Plan for public review and comment. The draft plan engagement took place between July – October 2017. The following report summarizes that engagement process and the comments received.

The second round of participation sought input from government agencies, First Nations and the public. The government agencies contacted included Parks Canada (Gulf Islands National Park Reserve), BC Parks, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI), Islands Trust-Local Trust Committees, CRD-Island Parks and Recreation Commissions, CRD-Community Economic Development/Sustainability Commissions, and CRD-Salt Spring Island Transportation Commission. Five First Nations, the Tsawout, Tseycum, Tsartlip, Paquachin, and Penelakut Nations, were also invited to participate in the project.

The engagement process included sending copies of the draft Regional Trails Plan to the government agencies and First Nations and requesting comments; meeting with the Wsanec Leadership Council to present the draft plan and receive comments; hosting 5 public information sessions on the islands to provide highlights of the plan to the public; and providing the draft plan and a response form on the CRD website for 1½ months.

Over 120 people attended the island information sessions. Approximately 60 response forms were received online, comments were received from 7 government agencies and from the members of the Wsanec Leadership Council.

A high level of support was expressed for the plan (86% support for the proposed policies, 78% support for the proposed trail routes, and 73% support for the phased approach for implementation).

The main themes heard through this round of engagement included:

- A desire for the CRD to start building the trails.
- Some additional policy suggestions were offered.
- A desire by those who are less supportive of the proposed routes for more trails or alternative routes.

Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is to highlight the public participation process to review the draft Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan, that was held between July – October 2017, and to summarize the responses received.

Planning and Engagement Process

The overall planning and engagement process is outlined below.

STEP 1: PROJECT INITIATION (completed)

Goal: to introduce the project and gather initial information to help in drafting the plan.

Tools used in this step include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> media release and social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> public sessions on Galiano, Mayne, the Penders, Salt Spring, and Saturna Islands
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> project bulletin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> meetings with First Nations and other government agencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CRD website, including a comment form 	

STEP 2: DRAFT PLAN & PUBLIC REVIEW (completed)

Goal: to consider information and ideas received in step 1, draft the plan, and seek comments on the draft plan.

Tools used in this step include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> initial public participation report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CRD website, including a response form
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> project team discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> project bulletin
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional Parks Committee and CRD Board review of draft plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> public information sessions on Galiano, Mayne, the Penders, Salt Spring, and Saturna Islands
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> referrals to government agencies and First Nations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> meetings with First Nations

STEP 3: FINALIZE PLAN (4th Quarter 2017/1st Quarter 2018)

Goal: to consider comments received in step 2 and finalize the plan for approval by the CRD Board.

Tools used in this step include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> public participation report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> project bulletin (for the public) if substantive changes are made to the plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> project team discussions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> staff report to Regional Parks Committee and CRD Board

Communications Materials

The communications materials prepared for the second phase of the project sought to highlight the draft plan and provide information on ways to provide comments.

A *media release* was published in July following the CRD Board meeting to highlight that the draft plan was available for review and comment.

The project information on the *CRD website* was updated to include the draft plan and related response form, information about the five public information sessions, and the second project bulletin.

The *response form* was available between mid-July and September 30, 2017. It included 8 questions relating to the strategic direction (policies), proposed regional trail routes, and implementation and a 9th, open-ended question allowing people to provide other comments related to the draft plan.

Advertisements were published in local news publications: The Mayneliner, The Active Page (Galiano), the Saturna Scribbler, and the Pender Post, as well as the Driftwood News and the Island Tides, to let people know of the dates, times, and venues for the public information sessions.

Social media was used to promote the 5 island information sessions and to remind the public of the deadline for comments.

Letters were sent to 5 First Nations, Parks Canada, BC Parks, the Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure, 6 Local Trust Committees (Islands Trust), and to 8 CRD Commissions with interest in trail development on the islands. These letters provided an update on the project and invited their comments on the draft GIRTP.

In addition, *posters were put up on-island, and email invitations and reminders* about the open house events were sent to local parks and trail organizations, such as Island Pathways, Moving Around Pender, and Mayne Island Parks and Trails Association.

Public Sessions

Five drop-in public information sessions were held between August 12 and September 23, 2017, on Galiano, Mayne, North Pender, Salt Spring and Saturna Islands. Staff was available at each session to answer questions and discuss the project and display boards provided highlights of the draft plan, including the proposed regional trail routes. Approximately 120 participants attended the public information sessions. There was information available at each information session about how to submit comments and take-away cards with the project website address identified to encourage use of the online response form.

Responses

Government Agencies

Responses were received from 9 of the 17 government agencies that were referred the draft plan. Two responded that they had accepted the draft plan for information and/or they had no specific comments to provide. Seven indicated support for the proposed trail plan, either overall or specific to the island of their jurisdiction. Two of the seven provided specific comments for consideration, largely relating to specific route aspects on their island or priority for construction of their island's regional trail.

First Nations

Regional Parks' staff was invited to make a presentation at a Wsanec Leadership Council meeting. This Council included representation from the Tsawout, Tseycum, and Tsartlip Nations. The presentation provided highlights of the draft plan, including how comments received from the First Nations representatives in the initial engagement had been incorporated into the plan. Staff received some further comments from various individuals at the meeting. Items such as employment opportunities, proximity of routes to First Nations lands, importance of signage to share First Nations history, and respect for archaeological sites were noted. No concerns were raised about the proposed regional trail routes.

Public

Within the comment period timeframe, 59 online response forms were received and one member of the public made representation to the Regional Parks Committee (September 20, 2017) requesting that Ganges Hill on the south side of the village of Ganges, Salt Spring Island be the priority for initial regional trail development on that island. Following the official comment period, the CRD received 2 additional sets of comments; one through an email submission from a group of organizations that partner together for trail-related purposes and one phone call from an island resident. The comments received by email, phone and personal representation were considered in addition to those received through the response forms. Overall, there was a high level of support for the draft plan.



Artist's rendition of a future regional trail

Summary of Comments Received Through Response Forms

Strategic Direction - Policies

The first 3 questions in the response form related to the proposed policies that set the strategic direction for regional trails. The following summarizes the responses.

Question 1 asked: **Overall, do you support or oppose the proposed policies?**

Eighty-four percent of respondents expressed support (31%) or strong support (53%) for the proposed policies in the draft plan (Figure 1). Nine percent (7 individuals) indicated they opposed (7%) or strongly opposed (2%) the proposed policies. Others were neutral or indicated no response.

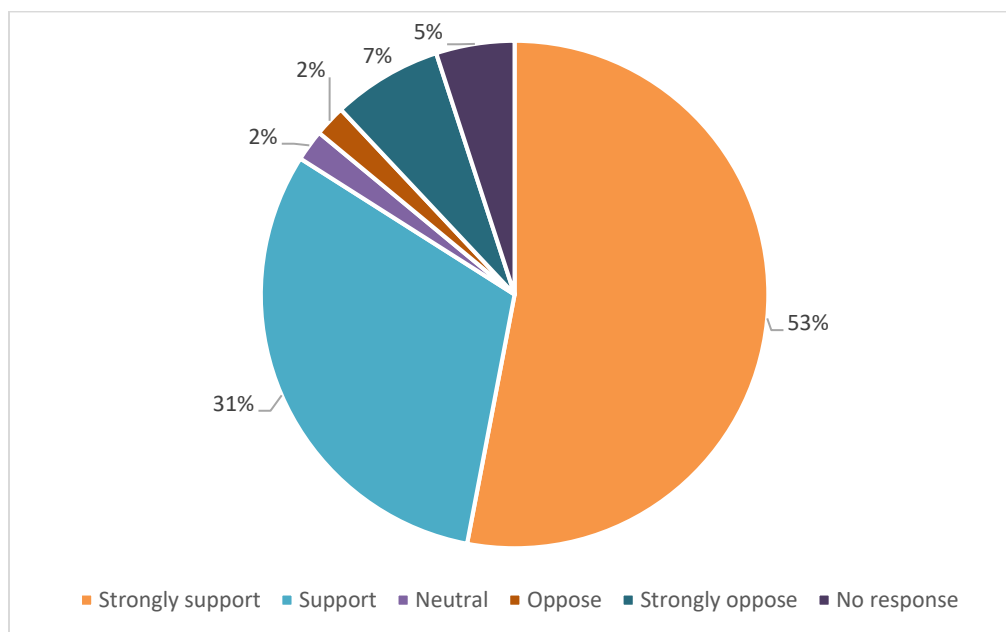


Figure 1: Support for the Proposed Policies in the Draft Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan

Question 2 asked: **Are there specific policies you oppose or strongly oppose? If so, please note the policy number(s) and provide a brief explanation of your opposition.**

In response to this question, no specific policy numbers were identified but a few people expressed concerns relating to items such as:

- likelihood of trees being cut down, rock being blasted and rural character being impacted;
- the need for safety, accessibility and inclusiveness;
- the need to permit animal companions on the trails, and
- trails being developed along roads rather than through more scenic areas.

Question 3 asked: **Are there additional policies needed? If so, please list them below.**

Fifteen suggestions were made. Some examples include:

- focus on making bicycle safety and regulations a priority;
- make the trails cycling/walking paths;
- commitment to serve the trail needs of residents, not of visitors to the islands;
- connect ports where pedestrians and cyclists can disembark from passenger-only boats;
- commitment to wheelchair, handcycle and stroller accessibility; and
- focus on habitat restoration.

Regional Trail Routes

Three questions related to the proposed regional trail routes were asked. The following summarizes the responses.

Question 4 asked: **Overall, do you support or oppose the proposed regional trail routes?**

Seventy-eight percent (78%) of respondents indicated support for the proposed regional trail routes (51% strongly supported and 27% supported). A much lower percentage of respondents (12%) indicated they did not support the proposed trail routes. Figure 2 illustrates the responses received.

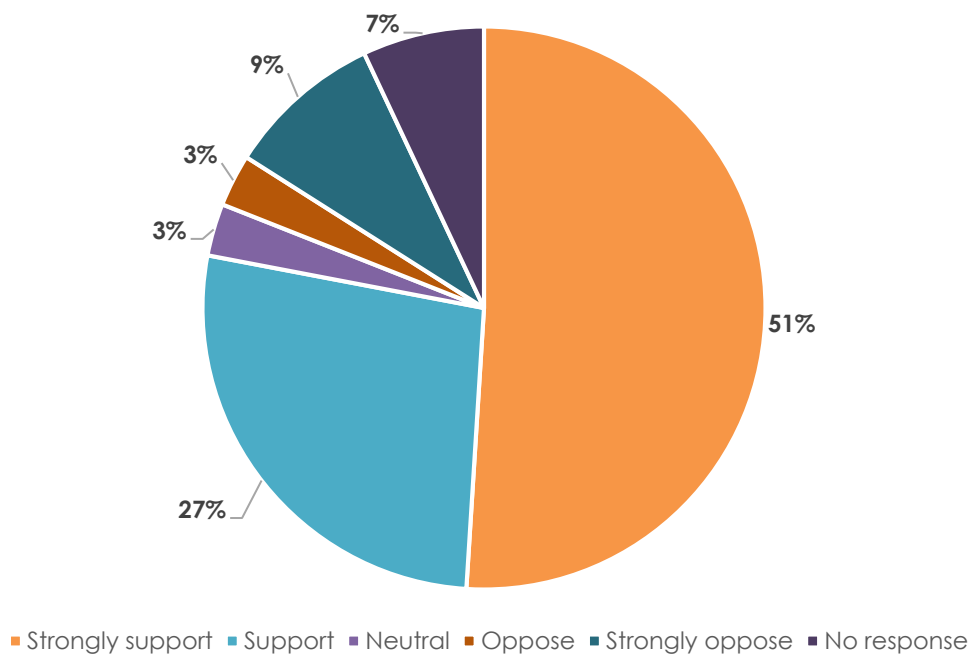


Figure 2: Support for the Proposed Trail Routes in the Draft Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan

Question 5 asked: **Do you support the following individual regional trail routes?**

At the individual island level, support continued to be expressed for proposed regional trail routes. Results are shown island by island below (Figure 3).

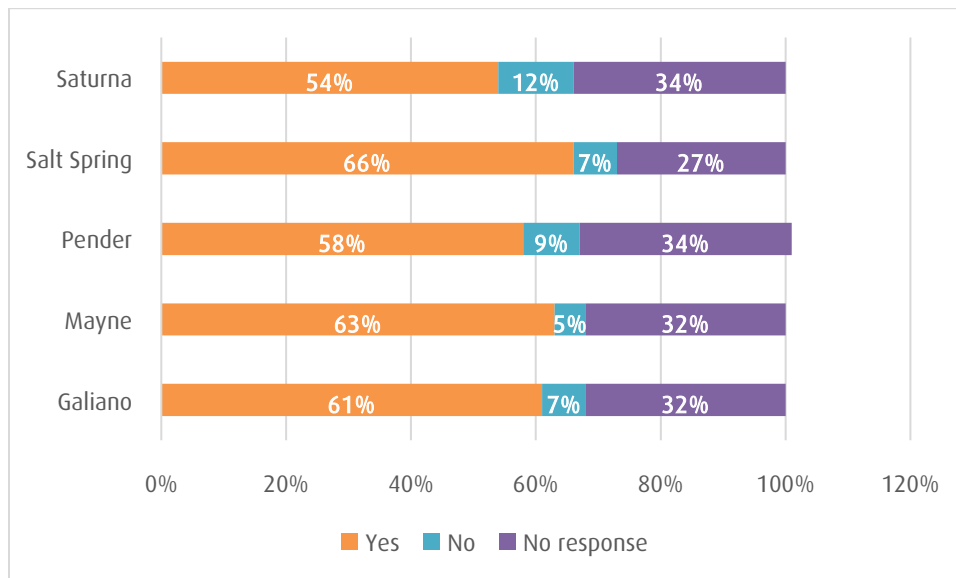


Figure 3: Support for Proposed Trail Routes by Island

There was a high level of “no opinion” comments on this question. Staff believe this may be due to individuals from one island having no opinion on proposed trail routes on the other islands.

Question 6 asked: **If there are specific routes you do NOT support (in Question 5 above), please note the island and provide a brief explanation of your opposition.**

Nineteen comments were received. Of those, 5 related to Salt Spring Island. Safety issues on Fulford-Ganges Road at Ganges Hill (south side of the village of Ganges), suggestions that these issues should be resolved through the development of a regional trail route, and that this should be identified as the priority location for regional trail development on Salt Spring Island were noted in 4 comments. The fifth comment suggested that the proposed regional trail on that island be extended to also include a route to Ruckle Provincial Park (approximately an additional 10 km).

Five comments were also received specific to the Saturna Island regional trail routes. Two noted that the proposed route is more of a sidewalk and not a real recreational route. One was concerned that

all the trails are along roads and not in more rural/natural settings. Another suggested that priorities for trail building be changed as Saturna Island already has a trail network. Lastly, one comment suggested there was a need for a trail between the ferry and the store (at the junction of Harris Road) but that the trail is not needed all the way to Narvaez Bay.

With respect to the Pender Islands, 5 comments were received. Two comments received suggested the alternative route option that was put forward in March 2017 for North Pender Island (Ferry to Port Washington to Hope Bay loop) that was not chosen as the preferred option following the initial round of consultation. Two comments suggested that the regional trail route should go from Magic Lake Estates (the largest subdivision on North Pender Island) to the elementary school, community hall and library. One additional comment indicated that the proposed Pender Island Regional Trail route lacks interesting stops and is not needed.

Three comments related to Mayne Island; two proposing an extension of the regional trail route along Fernhill Road to Bennet Bay (approximately an additional 4 km) and one suggesting the trail be made longer (without any specific location identified).

Lastly, one comment specific to Galiano Island suggested the regional trail route be extended to Dionisio Point Provincial Park at the north end of the island (approximately an additional 20 km).

Implementation

Two questions were asked about the implementation section.

Question 7 asked: **Overall, do you support or oppose the proposed phased approach to regional trail development?**

Of the 59 people who responded, 73% supported the proposed implementation approach (32% support; 41% strongly support). Figure 4 illustrates the responses received.

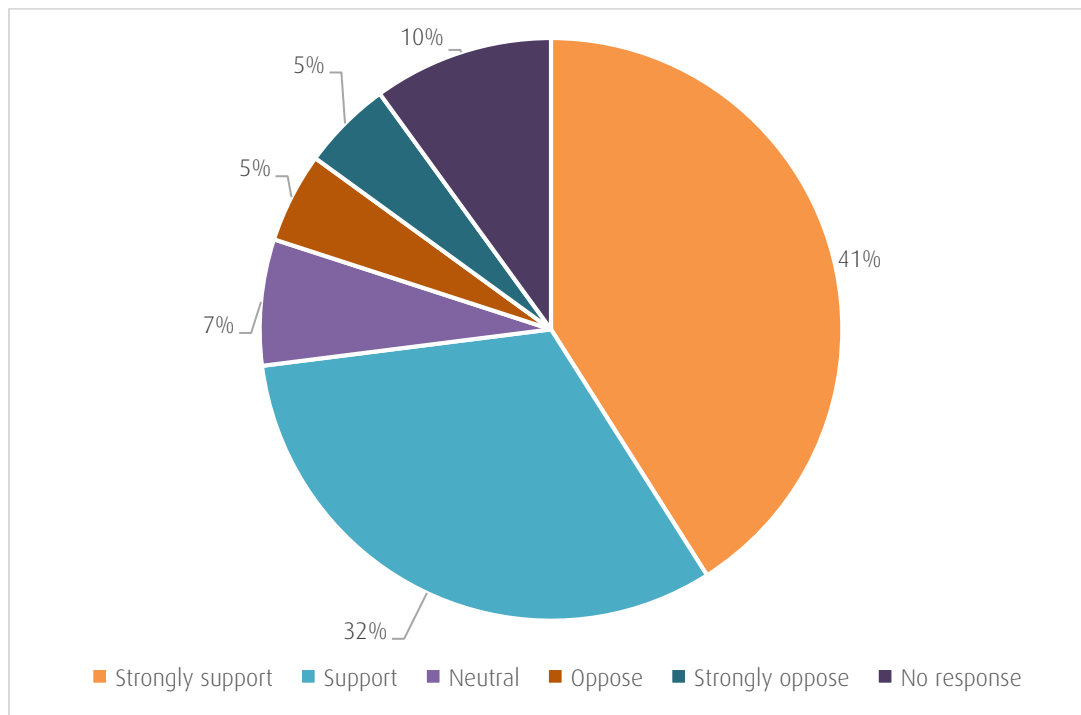


Figure 4: Support for the Proposed Phased Approach in the Draft Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan

For those who opposed the proposed phased approach, Question 8 asked them to: **please provide a brief explanation for your opposition.**

Four comments were received, expressing:

- distrust of the CRD;
- that they felt the plan was a waste of time and money;
- that the plan does not serve the needs of residents but instead the needs of tourists, and
- suggesting that the plan should identify Ganges Hill as the priority for Salt Spring Island.

Other Comments

An opportunity was provided on the response form for participants to include other comments related to the project. Thirty-six (36) comments were received.

The two most significant themes, by number of comments received, related to:

- trail development priorities between islands or on individual islands (10 comments), and
- the need to speed up the process and build the trails (8 comments).

Three additional comments, summarized below, were received through a representation to the Regional Parks Committee, an email and a phone conversation.

- Ganges Hill should be the priority area for regional trail development on Salt Spring Island (2 comments).
- We support the route on Salt Spring Island.
- Sturdies Bay Road should be the route for regional trail development on Galiano Island; it is a much less safe route with more traffic than the route currently proposed and it is better for cycling to Montague Provincial Park.

Conclusion

Approximately 150 people (public, First Nations representatives, and government representatives) were directly engaged through this participation process for the draft Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan. Additional people engaged through a review of information on the website or by viewing Facebook and Twitter feeds but chose not to submit official comments.

Through the comments received, support was expressed for the draft Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan. Some suggested changes were received through the process and all comments were reviewed and considered as part of the process to finalize the Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan.



Mayne Island public information session

Appendix 1 – Comment Form

Draft Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan

COMMENT FORM

Capital Regional District | Parks & Environmental Services

The Capital Regional District (CRD) is developing a regional trails plan for Galiano, Mayne, North and South Pender, Salt Spring and Saturna Islands. The plan identifies a conceptual regional trail route on each island and outlines how each regional trail will be developed over the long term. The purpose of this comment form is to seek your input on the draft Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan. Your responses will remain anonymous and will only be used by CRD Regional Parks for planning purposes involving the Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan.

The comment form should take about 15 minutes to complete. You can fill out this form online at www.crd.bc.ca/project/gulf-islands-regional-trails-plan, if preferred.

Comment forms will be received until 4:30pm on September 30, 2017.

Mail to 490 Atkins Ave., Victoria V9B 2Z8 | Email crdparks@crd.bc.ca | Fax 250.478.5416

Strategic Direction – Policies

Twenty policies are proposed to provide direction and guide implementation of the plan on pages 12-14.

1. Overall, do you support or oppose the proposed policies?

- Strongly support
- Support
- Neutral
- Oppose
- Strongly oppose
- No opinion

2. Are there specific policies you oppose or strongly oppose? If so, please note the policy number(s) below and provide a brief explanation for your opposition.

3. Are there additional policies needed? If so, please list them below.

Regional Trail Routes

The proposed regional trail routes, when completed, will provide approximately 50 km of new regional trails for pedestrian and cycling use. The proposed routes are illustrated on the map on page 17 and summarized below.

- The proposed regional trail on Galiano Island will link the Sturdies Bay ferry area to Matthews Point Regional Park and Montague Harbour Marine Provincial Park.
- The proposed regional trail route on Mayne Island will link the Village Bay ferry area to Miners Bay village and dock, and to Mt Parke Regional Park.
- The proposed route on North and South Pender Islands will link the Otter Bay ferry area to the Driftwood Centre commercial area and to Prior Centennial Campground and Mt Norman/Beaumont in Gulf Islands National Park Reserve.
- The proposed route on Salt Spring Island will link the Vesuvius ferry area, Ganges, Burgoyne Bay Provincial Park, and the Fulford ferry area.
- The proposed route on Saturna Island will link the Lyall Harbour ferry area to the community hub at Harris Road and to the Narvaez Bay area in Gulf Islands National Park Reserve.

4. Overall, do you support or oppose the proposed regional trail routes?

- Strongly support
- Support
- Neutral
- Oppose
- Strongly oppose
- No opinion

5. Do you support the following individual regional trail routes?

- Galiano (page 18) Yes No No opinion
- Mayne (page 19) Yes No No opinion
- North and South Pender (page 20) Yes No No opinion
- Salt Spring (page 21) Yes No No opinion
- Saturna (page 22) Yes No No opinion

6. If there are specific routes you do NOT support (in Question 5 above), please note the island and provide a brief explanation for your opposition.

Implementation

The Plan identifies priorities for implementation. Given that 50 km of new regional trail is proposed over multiple islands and trail development will have significant costs, a phased approach is recommended. The approach includes developing an initial section on each island, as noted below. Once initial sections are completed, priorities for the next round of development will be set.

Note: The CRD identified the Mayne Island Regional Trail demonstration project as a priority in 2015 and trail design is in progress. The other four initial trail segments have been prioritized by potential levels of use based on island populations and BC Ferries' bicycle and walk-on passenger statistics. Once these initial sections are completed, further trail development priorities will be set.

- Mayne Island - 2.3 km regional trail demonstration project between Village Bay and Miners Bay
- Salt Spring Island – 5 km regional trail route between Vesuvius area and Ganges
- North Pender Island – 5 km regional trail route between Otter Bay area and Driftwood Centre
- Galiano Island – 5 km regional trail route between Sturdies Bay area to Matthews Point Regional Park
- Saturna Island – 2 km regional trail route between Lyall Harbour area and Harris Road

Note: kilometres above are approximate only.

7. Overall, do you support or oppose the proposed phased approach to regional trail development?

- Strongly support
- Support
- Neutral
- Oppose
- Strongly oppose
- No opinion

8. If you oppose the proposed phased approach, please provide a brief explanation for your opposition.

9. Do you have any other comments related to the draft Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan?

Thank you for your participation. We value your input.

Personal information contained on this form is collected under the authority of the Local Government Act and is subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. The personal information will be used for purposes directly associated with this survey. Inquiries about the collection or use of information in this form can be directed to Karen Ward, Administrative Officer, Capital Regional District 250.360.3339.