

Regional Trails Management Plan

Public Participation Report

Capital Regional District | June 2016



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1.0 Executive Summary

The draft Regional Trails Management Plan (RTMP) was developed with significant input provided by the public, First Nations, and municipal representatives in 2013 and 2014.

In 2013, a Regional Trails Survey was conducted to gather information about the patterns of use, trail experiences, and trail management issues. A total of **2,259 responses** to the 25-question survey were received over more than 2 months through on-line and on-trail surveys.

In 2014, the CRD gathered ideas and suggestions on what the public wanted included in the Regional Trails Management Plan. This was done through an on-line comment form and three public sessions. Initial engagement with First Nations was also undertaken in 2014, with five meetings and/or community sessions held with two interested First Nations. Together, **over 1,300 ideas and suggestions** were received in 2014. A CRD-Municipal-Provincial Working Group, established for this project, met four times over 2014 to discuss information and ideas and the municipal and provincial representatives provided advice to the CRD as the draft plan was being developed.

A draft Regional Trails Management Plan was released for public comment in late 2015. The CRD received **435 comment forms and 162 other types of communication** (open house comments, emails, Facebook comments, etc.) between late November 2015 and the end of February 2016. The qualitative comments provided by the public through open houses, emails, Facebook and other types of communication are consistent with the information received through the comment forms. The draft RTMP was also referred to municipalities, electoral areas, eight First Nations and the Provincial Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure. Seven presentations were made at the request of municipalities or their committees and written **feedback was received from 11 municipalities or their respective advisory committees or staff**. No comments were received from First Nations or the Provincial Ministry.

This report outlines the level of support for the draft Regional Trails Management Plan and highlights key themes from the comments received through the 2015-2016 participation processes. These key themes will be considered further as the Regional Trails Management Plan is being finalized. The highlights below are based on an analysis of all comment form responses received.

Vision for Regional Trails

Nearly 70% of all respondents **support the proposed vision** for regional parks. Through the qualitative comments, participants expressed particular support for trails: 1) facilitating active and healthy lifestyles; 2) connecting different places; and 3) supporting commuting and recreation. Twenty-five

percent of respondents did not support the proposed vision. Some respondents indicated that paving and lack of multi-use access were their reasons for not supporting the vision.

Management Principles

There was **strong support (84%)** noted through the comment forms **for the overarching philosophy** proposed in the Management Principles. Only six per cent of respondents did not support the principles.

Strategic Policies

Three-quarters (75%) of respondents **supported the strategic policies**. There were suggestions from respondents regarding adding or removing specific policies. Participants focused on the need to enforce a multi-use etiquette, to implement safety on the trails, and to allow multiple use and not pave trails. Only 6% of respondents did not support the proposed strategic policies.

Strategic Actions

Eighty-three percent of respondents **supported the proposed strategic actions**. Some participants expressed concerns about increasing lighting on the Regional Trails, paving the trails, changes in equestrian use of the trails, and that developing additional operational policies, procedures, guidelines and standards might make the trails less user friendly. Only 5% of respondents did not support the proposed strategic actions.

Galloping Goose Regional Trail Management Plan

There was strong support for the Management Plan for the Galloping Goose Regional Trail, with **78% of respondents supporting the proposed management goals; 80% supporting the development concept; and 77% supporting the proposed actions**. Between 4% and 7% of respondents did not support the goals, development concept or actions.

Lochside Regional Trail Management Plan

There was a higher level of disagreement expressed around the Lochside Management Plan than other parts of the Regional Trails Management Plan. Even so, **65% of respondents supported the management goals** for the Lochside Regional Trail.

Concerns related largely to one statement in the development concept and one proposed action, as follows:

Part of development concept: "...Horseback riding will continue to be permitted along a small section

of the trail, between Island View Road (Central Saanich) and Lochside Park (Saanich), until the trail is paved. Separate surfacing will not be provided for horses alongside the trail.” and

Proposed Action: “Pave remaining sections of the trail, starting at south end and working north.”

The **majority of respondents did not support the development concept (54%), as proposed**. Thirty-nine per cent supported it. A split in support also came up regarding the priority actions. **Fifty-one percent supported the actions**, while 42% did not support them. Comments received related solely to the proposed paving and the desire for multiple use rather than just pedestrian and bicycle use. As directed by the CRD Regional Parks Committee, staff will assess various options to accommodate continued equestrian use along the trail between Island View Road and Saanich’s Blenkinsop Greenway trail (south of the Blenkinsop trestle) before finalizing the plan.

E&N Rail Trail – Humpback Connector Management Plan

Nearly 70% of respondents supported the goals, development concept, and proposed actions for the E&N Rail Trail (69%, 68%, and 68% respectively). In each case only 6% of the comment form respondents did not support the goals, the development concept and the actions. The fact that the E&N Rail Trail is the newest regional trail may account for the higher percentage of “don’t know” responses received relating to the E&N Rail Trail Management Plan sections (25% -26%).

Prioritization of Actions

The majority of comment form submissions (**63%**) **were supportive of the proposed prioritization** in the plan. Thirteen percent did not support the proposed implementation prioritization. Again, staff will review and consider the comments received regarding prioritization of actions to determine what the concerns relate to (e.g., actions that should be re-ordered in terms of priority or other things).



Lochside Regional Trail

2.0 Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is to summarize the level of support for draft Regional Trails Management Plan and provide highlights from the comments received through the participation process between November 24, 2015 and February 29, 2016.

3.0 The Participation Process for the Draft Regional Trails Management Plan

Public input was gathered through three rounds of public participation, as follows:

Regional Trails Survey (2013):

- A public survey relating to Regional Trails was conducted in 2013. Over 2,000 respondents submitted a survey.

Initial information gathering process (2014):

- An initial round of three public sessions and an online comment form, available between May and June 2014, were used to gather ideas and suggestions from the public for a vision statement for regional trails, overarching management principles/values, strategic policies for all regional trails, and key management needs for each of the existing regional trails—Galloping Goose, Lochside and E&N Rail Trail.

Comments on draft Regional Trails Management Plan (2015-2016):

- The draft Regional Trails Management Plan and a related online comment form were available between November 24, 2015 and January 31, 2016.
- Two public open houses were held in January 2016.

Public sessions were advertised in local newspapers, on the CRD website, and through Facebook and Twitter. In addition, emails were sent to known interest groups (cycling, running, equestrian) alerting them of the processes and asking for their assistance in getting information out to people who might be interested in the regional trails management planning process.

Municipal input was gathered through two steps:

- A CRD-Municipal-Provincial Working Group, with staff representatives appointed by their municipalities/electoral areas/ministry, was established in 2014. The Working Group met four times over the year to discuss and advise on different aspects of the planning process, including public participation and draft sections of the Regional Trails Management Plan.
- The draft Regional Trails Management Plan was referred to Municipal Councils and Electoral Area Directors in November 2016 requesting comment by January 30, 2016. Through the referral letters offers of summary presentations were made.
- By request, presentations were made to seven municipalities or electoral areas or their respective committees.

First Nations input was sought in two phases:

- Four First Nations, with lands along the existing Regional Trails, were invited to participate in the initial information gathering process. Two chose to participate and provided input in 2014. The two nations requested different opportunities to gather/provide input (e.g., meetings with staff and knowledgeable individuals, attending community events, providing Regional Trails Management Plan information and questions in the community newsletter).
- The draft Regional Trails Management Plan was referred to Chief and Council of eight First Nations in early 2016 requesting comments by mid-March 2016. Through the referral letters offers of summary presentations were made.

The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, as the owner of the Galloping Goose corridor, was represented on the CRD-Municipal-Provincial Working Group and was sent a copy of the draft Regional Trails Management Plan in early 2016 for review and comment.

This report relates to the participation processes, held between November 24, 2015 and February 29, 2016.

4.0 Public Responses

The CRD received **435 comment forms and 162 other types of qualitative communications** between late November 2015 and the end of February 2016. The qualitative comments provided by the public through open houses, emails, Facebook and other types of communication are consistent with the information received through the comment forms. The following provides highlights from the analysis of those comments.

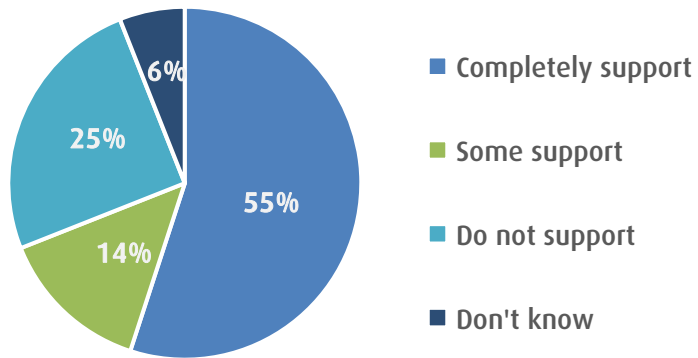
In late January 2016, following the public open houses, the equestrian community that uses the Lochside Regional Trail became engaged in the planning process. Because they engaged late in the planning process, they were unaware of some trail-related information and had not provided input into the development of the draft Regional Trails Management Plan, or more specifically the management plan for the Lochside Regional Trail (chapter 4 of the Regional Trails Management Plan). Two petitions were received by the CRD late in January 2016 relating to the desire for continued equestrian use on the Lochside Regional Trail and the desire to keep the remaining sections unpaved (approximately 4 km over six small, separated areas). There was considerable media relating to the equestrian interests and a swell of responses to the online comment form occurred toward the end of the participation process.

In this report, the overall level of support for the various sections of the Regional Trails Management Plan is presented initially. The overall support is based on all comment forms combined. This is followed, in some cases, with an illustration of outcomes split between the general public and participants mainly concerned about multiple use on, and paving of, the Lochside Regional Trail. Such an approach provides a clearer picture of the differences in opinion. For the purpose of this document participants interested in multiple use/paving of the Lochside Regional Trail will be called “multiple use/paving public”, while other respondents are named “general public”.

Vision for Regional Trails

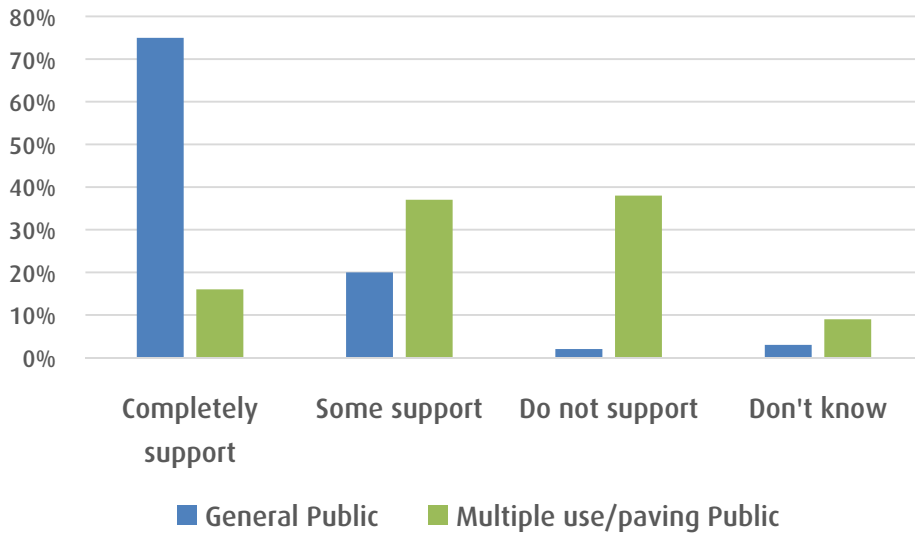
Nearly 70% of all respondents to the online comment form support the proposed vision for regional parks (Figure 1). Through the qualitative comments, participants expressed particular support for trails: 1) facilitating active and healthy lifestyles; 2) connecting different places; and 3) supporting commuting and recreation. Some respondents indicated that paving and lack of multi-use access were their reasons for not supporting the vision. Twenty-five percent of respondents to the comment form did not support the proposed vision. The qualitative comments received did not refer to any specific aspects of the vision statement that were not supported.

Figure 1: Support for the Vision



When looked at separately, it can be seen that the general public expressed stronger support for the vision when compared to the multiple use/paving public (Figure 2).

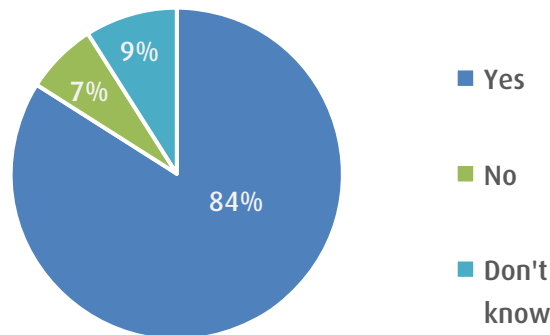
Figure 2: Support for the Vision by General Public and Multiple use/paving Public



Management Principles

There was **strong support (84%)** noted through the comment forms for the overarching philosophy proposed in the Management Principles (Figure 3). Only 6% of respondents did not support the principles.

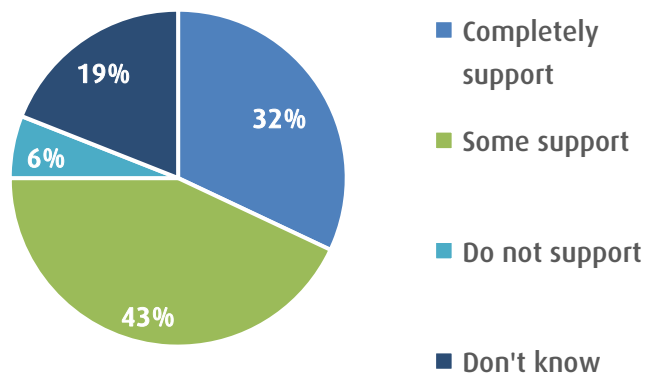
Figure 3: Support for the Management Principles



Strategic Policies

Three-quarters (75%) of respondents supported the strategic policies (Figure 4). There were some suggestions from respondents regarding adding or removing specific policies. Comments focused on the need to enforce a multi-use etiquette, to implement safety on the trails, and to allow multiple use and not pave trails. Only 6% of respondents did not support the proposed strategic policies. The multiple use/paving issue was widely mentioned in 51 comments even though it was not proposed in the strategic policy section of the plan.

Figure 4: Support for Strategic Policies



Strategic Actions

Eighty-three percent of respondents supported the proposed strategic actions (Figure 5). Some participants expressed concerns about increasing lighting on the Regional Trails, paving the trails, changes in equestrian use of the trails, and that developing additional operational policies, procedures, guidelines and standards might make the trails less user friendly. Only 5% of respondents did not support the proposed strategic actions. Again, stronger support is seen from the general public than from the multiple use/paving public (Figure 6).

Figure 5: Support for the Strategic Actions

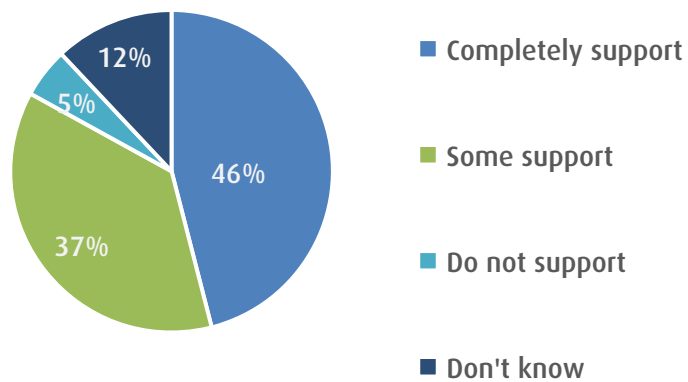
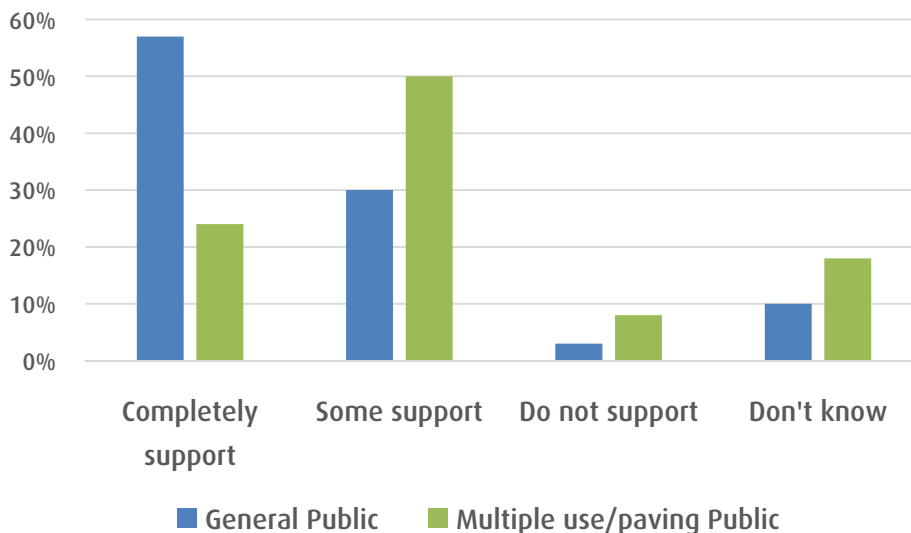


Figure 6: Support for the Strategic Actions by General Public and Multiple use/paving Public



Galloping Goose Regional Trail Management Plan

There was a high level of support for the Galloping Goose Management Plan, with 77% respondents supporting the proposed management goals; 80% supporting the development concept; and 77% supporting the proposed actions. Between 4% and 7% of respondents did not support the goals, development concept or actions. As an example, support for the development concept for the Galloping Goose Regional Trail is illustrated below (Figure 7). A significantly higher percentage of the general public completely supported the development concept than did the multiple use/paving public (Figure 8). Support for the proposed actions is illustrated in Figure 9.

Figure 7: Support for the Galloping Goose Development Concept

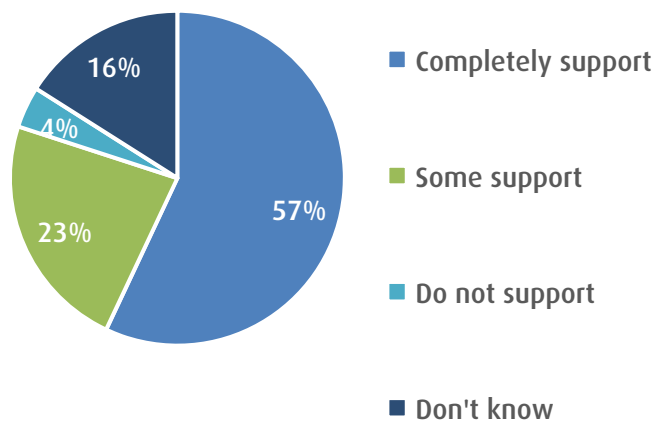


Figure 8: Support for the Galloping Goose Development Concept by General Public and Multiple use/paving Public

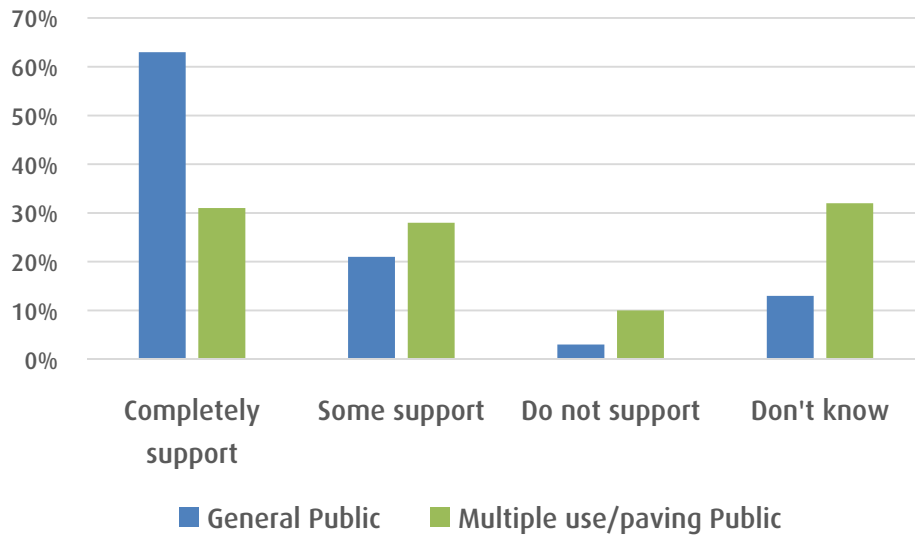
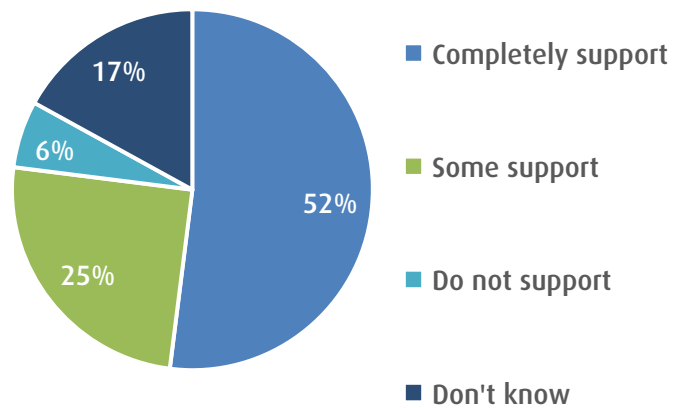


Figure 9: Support for the Galloping Goose Priority Actions



Lochside Regional Trail Management Plan

There was a higher level of disagreement expressed around the Lochside Management Plan than other parts of the Regional Trails Management Plan. Concerns seem to have arisen largely due to one statement in the development concept and one proposed action, as follows:

Part of development concept: "...Horseback riding will continue to be permitted along a small section of the trail, between Island View Road (Central Saanich) and Lochside Park (Saanich), until the trail is paved (emphasis added here through underlining). Separate surfacing will not be provided for horses alongside the trail." and

Proposed Action: "Pave remaining sections of the trail, starting at south end and working north."

The majority of respondents did not support the development concept (54%) while 39% supported it (Figure 9). The split in opinion becomes more obvious when responses were separated (Figure 10). Ninety-one percent of the multiple use/paving public do not support the development concept and only about 3% support it. Of the general public 56% support the development concept and 36% do not.

Figure 10: Support for the Lochside Development Concept

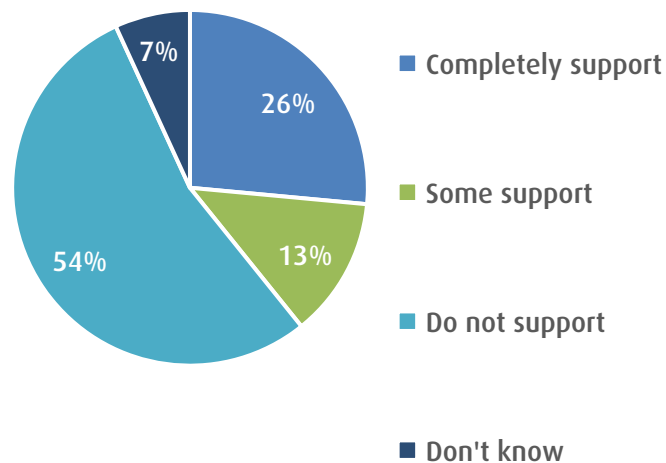
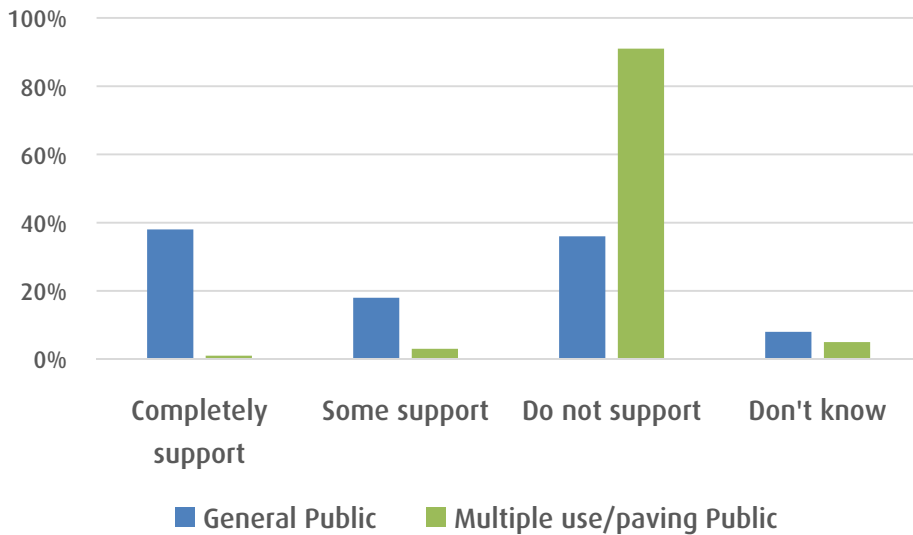


Figure 11: Support for the Lochside Development Concept by General Public and Multiple use/paving Public



A split in support also showed regarding the priority actions with 51% supporting the actions and 42% not supporting them (Figure 11). Again, the split in opinion becomes clearer when looking at the two groups independently (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Support for the Lochside Priority Actions

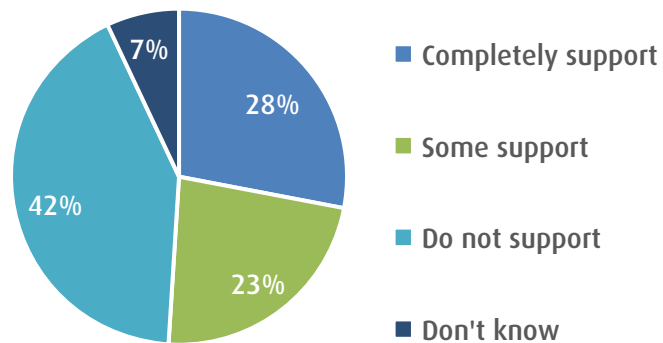
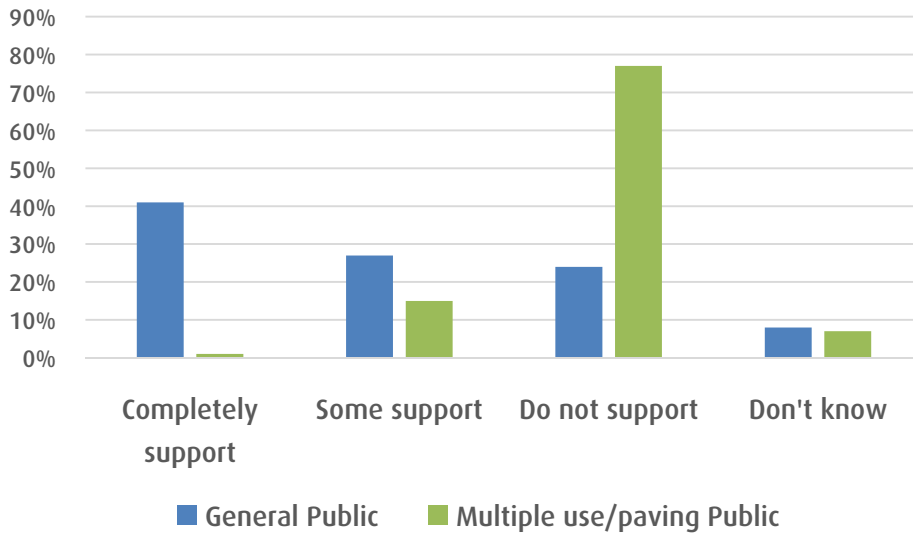


Figure 13: Support for the Lochside Priority Actions by General Public and Multiple use/paving Public



From the qualitative comments, “Allowing horses on the trail” and “No paving” were the two comments made most often (183 and 164, respectively). Specific comments spanned from suggesting the Management Plan needs to better consider equestrian use on regional trails, to suggesting the CRD change the classification of the trail from Bike & Pedestrian Trail to Multiple Use Trail, to suggesting that adjacent paths be created along the trail either for horse riders or for cyclists. Comments were received from users who preferred to keep some unpaved areas for exercise or for safety reasons. Specifically, some participants believed that having unpaved sections of the trail would oblige cyclist to slow down and be less dangerous for the other users. Some participants stated the exact opposite as the unpaved sections of the Lochside Regional Trail are often muddy, spread with the wood mix used to create the existing equestrian path and, mentioned most often, covered with horse droppings. The latter was perceived as especially challenging for users with strollers, children, disabilities, and cyclists.

As directed by the Regional Parks Committee, staff will consider options to accommodate continued equestrian use along the trail between Island View Road and Sannich’s Blenkinsop Greenway trail (south of the Blenkinsop trestle) when finalizing the plan.

E&N Rail Trail – Humpback Connector Management Plan

Nearly 70% of respondents supported the E&N Rail Trail Management Plan. Only 6% of the comment form respondents did not support the goals, the development concept or actions. As an example, support for the development concept for the E&N Trail is illustrated below (Figure 13). Similar to other sections of the Regional Trails Management Plan, differences in opinions are clear when the general public is separated from those with specific multiple use/paving interests (Figure 14).

Figure 14: Support for the E&N Rail Trail Development Concept

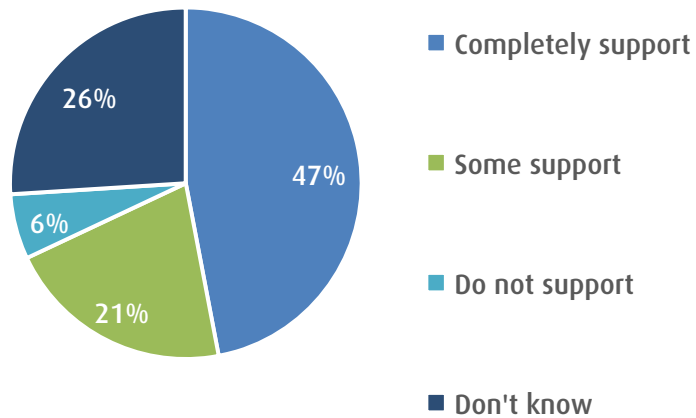
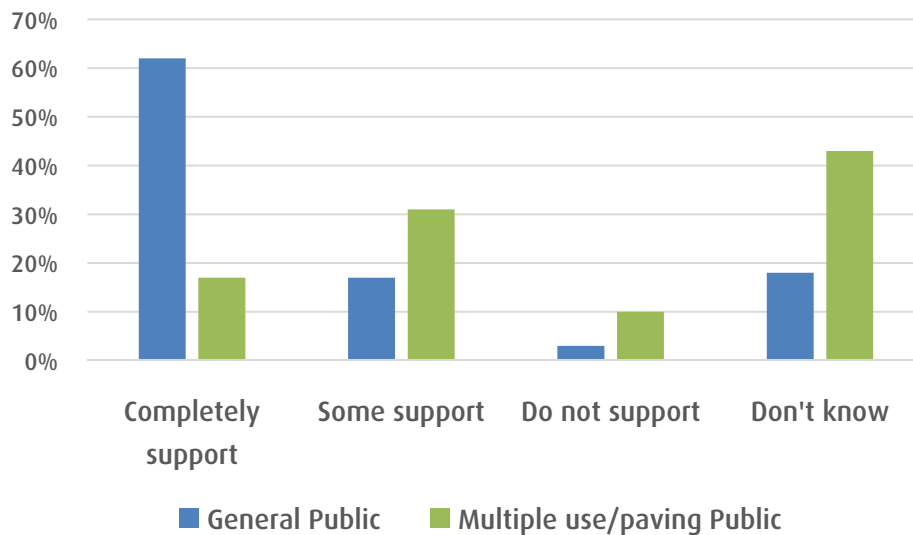
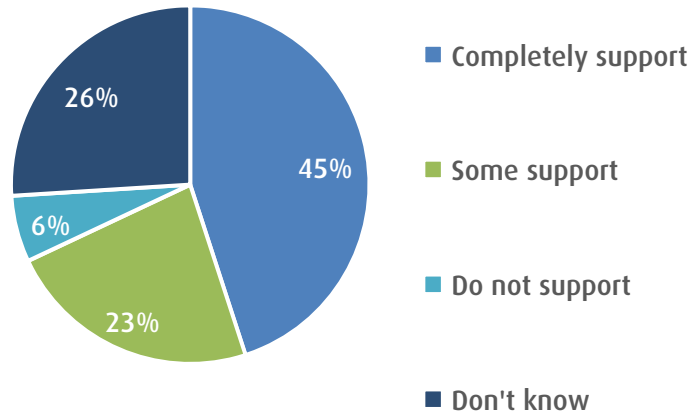


Figure 15: Support for the E&N Rail Trail Development Concept by general public and multiple use/paving public



The majority of participants supported the proposed priority actions (68%) (Figure 15). The fact that more than one-quarter (26%) of respondents indicated “don’t know” as their response to questions relating to the E&N Rail Trail Management Plan may be an indication that the public is not yet familiar with this regional trail.

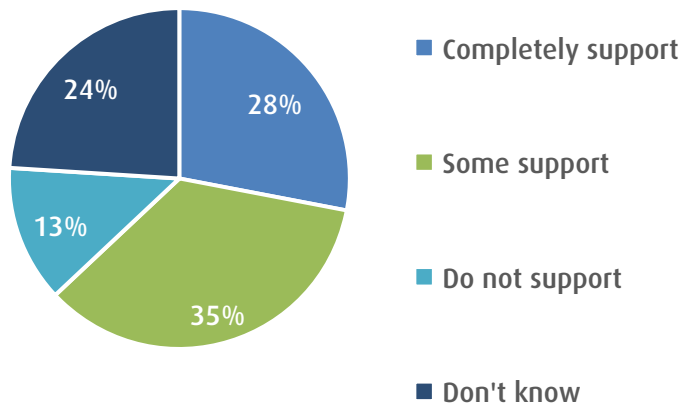
Figure 16: Support for the E&N Rail Trail Priority Actions



Prioritization of Actions

The majority of comment form submissions (63%) were supportive of the proposed prioritization in the plan (Figure 16). Thirteen percent did not support the proposed implementation prioritization.

Figure 17: Support for the Prioritization of Actions



5.0 Municipal Responses

Responses were received from 11 municipalities and electoral areas. In some cases, responses were received from separate advisory committees and/or staff in addition to or in place of comments from Council. On balance, there was good support expressed for the draft Regional Trails Management Plan by the municipalities and electoral areas, or their respective advisory group(s). Many of the comments seemed to support policy direction and actions proposed in the draft Regional Trails Management Plan. A few examples of these types of comments include:

- Collaborating with municipalities to develop shared standards and specific signs at Regional Trail crossings is recommended.
- Safety could be fostered also by separating cycling and pedestrian uses on the trails.
- CRD should enhance education opportunities and increase reminders about users' etiquette on the trail.

While the general public offered general feedback on the Regional Trails Management Plan, some of the municipal comments were more specific and detailed, often relating to their jurisdiction. Some examples of these types of comments include:

- A priority action should include a multi-use trail overpass across Island Highway in the city's downtown core.
- Priority actions for the Galloping Goose should also include safety improvements at the Cecelia Road right of way in Cecelia Ravine Park.
- There also needs to be a long term solution to the recurring vandalism of the fencing – particularly at the Wilson's Food property - such as enhanced fencing, an overpass or culvert (underpass).

Some municipal comments were more editorial in nature and focused on how to make the plan more succinct or how to clarify or improve the text.

6.0 Conclusions

Overall, there is reasonably strong support for the draft Regional Trails Management Plan.

A high level of public support exists for the proposed Management Principles (84%), Strategic Policies (75%), Strategic Actions (83%) and the Galloping Goose Management Plan (78%). The majority of respondents support the Vision (69%), the E&N Rail Trail – Humpback Connector

Management Plan (68%), the Lochside Management Plan goals (65%), and the overall prioritization of actions in the Regional Trails Management Plan (63%).

With respect to the Lochside Regional Trail, the Priority Actions were supported by a majority, but just 51%. Comments received focused on one action only relating to the proposed paving the remaining gravel sections of the trail (approximately 4 km of trail spread over six small, separated areas) and expressed a desire to have these areas maintained as gravel surfaces. The Development Concept for the Lochside Regional Trail had low support (39%). Based on the responses to the draft management plan, there is a high level of desire for continued horse use in the rural Hunt Valley and the Blenkinsop Valley sections of the Lochside Regional Trail.

Staff will review and consider all of the comments received as the Regional Trail Management Plan is being finalized for approval. As directed by the CRD Regional Parks Committee, in finalizing the Regional Trails Management Plan, staff will consider options to continue to accommodate horseback riding on a portion of the Lochside Regional Trail between Island View Road and Saanich's Blenkinsop Greenway trail, south of the Blenkinsop trestle.



Galloping Goose Regional Trail (Todd Creek Trestle)