

CRD Regional Parks Funding Priorities Survey 2018

CRD Regional Parks
February 2019

The logo for CRD (Central Regional District) is located in the bottom right corner. It consists of the letters 'CRD' in a white, bold, sans-serif font, set against a teal background that features a wavy, abstract design.

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Executive Summary

The regional park system has grown from just over 8,400 hectares in 2000 to over 13,000 hectares in 2017. Visitation to regional parks and trails has also grown, from 5.2 million in 2010 to 7.3 million in 2017, an increase of 40%. Increased visitation to parks and trails results in more impacts on facilities and the environment. Some major facilities such as trestle bridges and dams need to be repaired/replaced in the near future to ensure the safety and enjoyment of park visitors. Planning and development of newly acquired land needs to be conducted prior to opening these parks for public use. Pressure on park facilities is expected to increase with population growth, increased visitation and acquisition of more parkland. Capital Regional District (CRD) Regional Parks has therefore conducted an online survey to explore opinions regarding the continuation of the Land Acquisition Fund and priorities for the use of the monies raised through the Fund. Below are the highlights of the survey:

- A total of 1,029 online surveys were completed between July 1 and October 8, 2018.
- The two largest age groups of people participating in the survey were 55-64 years of age (25%) and over 65 (28%) years old. The majority were couples with no children (44%) and parents with children (27%). Most respondents were from Saanich (31%) and Victoria (19%).
- Protecting the natural environment and species (61%), acquiring more parkland (49%), repairing and maintaining existing facilities (48%), and undertaking restoration projects to conserve natural environments and species (47%) were identified as high priorities to be pursued by CRD Regional Parks in the next 5 years. When specifically asked to rank the three highest priorities, respondents identified “acquire more land” as first, “protect the natural environment and species” as second and “undertake restoration projects to conserve natural environments and species” as third. Similar rankings were obtained for the resident surveys conducted in 2017 and 2005, validating the data obtained through this online survey.
- The majority of respondents (89%) supported the extension of the Land Acquisition Fund for another 10 years, while some respondents were neutral (7%) and fewer were against it (5%). Like the 2017 residents’ survey, support for extending the Fund was high, which shows that the data collected through the funding priorities survey are in line with previous public opinion surveys conducted by the CRD.
- Respondents believed that there was not enough land set aside for environmental protection and outdoor recreation (57%), and supported buying parkland where the primary purpose was conservation (60%), and even if funds to develop facilities for visitor use were not available for many years after acquisition (77%). Expanding the Regional Parks system through the Land Acquisition Fund was seen by respondents as essential for nature conservation, and promotion of local communities’ health and livelihood. Participants stressed the need to keep on buying

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parkland and quickly, to avoid losing natural land to development. Developing land for recreational use was seen as secondary and could be undertaken when funds become available.

- When asked if the Fund should be used only if other partners were contributing to the purchase, participants had diverse opinions, with a third agreeing, a third being neutral, and a third being against the statement.
- When asked about how the Land Acquisition Fund should be used in the future, most respondents (57%) wanted the fund to continue to be used only for land acquisition and related costs. The second most supported statement was to use the fund to maintain and replace facilities anywhere in regional parks and trails (19%), followed by planning and building new facilities in newly acquired parkland (13%) and planning and building new facilities in existing parks and trails (7%).
- When asked if any percentage of the Land Acquisition Fund should be used for purposes other than buying land and paying associated acquisition costs, the largest number of participants (22%) were in support of 0% or no allocation of funds for activities not directly related to acquisition.
- While the majority of respondents want the fund to continue a focus on land acquisition and related costs, it seems that they also want some percentage of the Fund to be used for other purposes than land acquisition. An explanation to these contradictory results can be found in the qualitative comments offered by respondents to the survey where participants expressed a lack of understanding about Regional Parks funding mechanisms and described the question about allocating a percentage of the Fund to other uses than acquisition as confusing and difficult to answer. To obtain reliable data that best represent CRD citizen opinions, we suggest exploring these questions by surveying at least 400 randomly selected CRD citizens, a methodology and sample size that allows us to obtain statistically valid and representative information for the whole district.
- The questions regarding the extension of the Land Acquisition Fund and Regional Parks' priorities for the next 5 years have been explored through several surveys over the last 20 years. The results obtained for these two questions are supported and validated by the longitudinal data CRD Regional Parks has on these topics. This is not the case for the remaining questions of this survey, which were explored for the first time in this survey. Due to the methodology used to conduct this survey, the data obtained for this new set of questions cannot be generalized to a broader population and need to be considered cautiously. Further public engagement is needed to validate the outcomes of those questions.

Introduction

The regional park system has grown from just over 8,400 hectares in 2000 to over 13,000 hectares in 2017. This growing park system helps protect the environment and biodiversity in the region, and provides residents with opportunities to connect with nature through outdoor recreation. Visitation to regional parks and trails has also grown, from 5.2 million in 2010 to 7.3 million in 2017, an increase of 40%.

The CRD, with the support of our partners, has acquired more than 4,100 hectares of land valued at over \$54 million through the Land Acquisition Fund since it was established in 2000. Our partners have contributed about 27% of the value of these acquisitions, with the CRD Land Acquisition Fund contributing the remainder. The Land Acquisition Fund is a separate property tax dedicated to the acquisition of land for regional parks and trails, which generates approximately \$3.7 million yearly. In 2019, the currently approved requisition for the Land Acquisition Fund expires, and the CRD Board must decide whether to continue the Fund into the future. More information about the Land Acquisition Fund can be found at <https://www.crd.bc.ca/parks-recreation-culture/parks-trails/crd-regional-parks/land-acquisition-fund>.

In 2018, the Capital Regional District (CRD) has allocated a budget of approximately \$13.4 million for the Regional Parks Service to protect natural environments and continue to offer safe and high quality outdoor recreation experiences to park visitors. Of this amount, approximately \$1.1 million is dedicated to develop and improve infrastructure within regional parks and trails. These funds, when possible, are supplemented by grants and contributions from other levels of government, which have averaged approximately \$1.7 million per year over the last 10 years. The overall budget includes the Land Acquisition Fund.

Increased visitation to parks and trails results in more impacts on facilities and the environment. Some major facilities such as trestle bridges and dams need to be repaired or replaced in the near future to ensure the safety and enjoyment of park visitors. Planning and development of newly acquired land needs to be conducted prior to opening these parks for public use. Pressure on park facilities is expected to increase with population growth/increased visitation and acquisition of more parkland. CRD Regional Parks has therefore undertaken preliminary public consultation to explore opinions regarding the continuation of the Land Acquisition Fund and alternative uses for the monies raised through the Fund.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to describe the results obtained through an internet survey conducted by CRD Regional Parks in summer-fall 2018 to explore and obtain preliminary information on the public's

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views regarding:

1. How to prioritize spending in regional parks and trails;
2. What to do with the Land Acquisition Fund beyond 2019.

The information obtained through this online survey comes from a self-selected pool of participants and should not be interpreted as being representative of the whole population of the CRD. Hence, the data reported in this document will not be generalized to the broader population residing in the CRD.

Survey Methodology

A structured questionnaire (Appendix I) on the future of regional parks and trails funding priorities and the Land Acquisition Fund was made available to the public from July 1 to October 8, 2018. The public could take the survey online on the CRD website, acquire a hard copy of the questionnaire or complete the survey by phone. Details about how the data collection methodology was designed and implemented are described below.

Sampling Strategy

A self-selected sampling strategy was used for this survey. The key element of a self-selected survey is that the participants volunteered to take part in the survey on their own accord and were not approached directly by a researcher. To encourage participation, the CRD promoted the survey through a media release, monthly posts on Facebook, twitter posts and sandwich boards with information on how to take the survey placed in regional parks and trails.

Questionnaire Design

The survey was composed as a set of standardized questions. The main areas of focus for the questionnaire were funding priorities and the Land Acquisition Fund. Questions about participants' demographic characteristics (i.e., age, residency) were also added to the questionnaire. Such data can be compared to the Statistics Canada database of 2016 (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/index-eng.cfm>) to understand if the survey corresponds to a cross-section of CRD citizens.

The survey consisted of closed-ended quantitative questions and a single open-ended qualitative question. Closed-ended questions were used to reduce the response burden for participants. The open-ended question was included to allow respondents to offer additional comments and clarify their responses to the survey if they wished. All responses in the survey were voluntary, thus participants had the freedom to skip any question they did not wish to answer. All information was collected in compliance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIPPA) (see <https://www.crd.bc.ca/freedom-of-information>).

Completion Time

The survey was composed of 13 questions, many of which contained multiple statements requiring response. The survey was designed to take 10 minutes to complete.

Data Entry and Analysis

The data were entered directly from participants through the internet survey into Checkbox, the survey hosting software used by CRD. If the questionnaire was filled out on paper or via phone, the data were

entered by the recipient into Checkbox. The Checkbox dataset was exported to the social science software IBM SPSS 20 for analysis. Qualitative data were coded to identify the main themes mentioned by participants using a content analysis approach (Neiendorf, 2016). For more information about the statistical approach used, please consult “Survey Research and Analysis. Application in Parks, Recreation and Human Dimension” by Jerry J. Vaske (2008).

Representativeness and Limits of the Survey

The survey methodology used does not allow the collection of statistically representative data because it was not designed as a random sample survey. A random sample survey offers the same probability for each citizen within a population to be selected as a participant in the survey. Hence, the surveyor obtains a sample that represents a larger section of the population (Vaske, 2008). An internet self-selected survey is taken instead by respondents who are:

- aware of the existence of the survey;
- willing to fill in the questionnaire;
- able to access the internet.

Because internet surveys are compiled by self-selected individuals who have a strong motivation to participate in a survey and because those participants often differ from the average citizen (Bethlehem, 2008), weighting data to generalize the outcome to a broader population is not meaningful.

While internet surveys provide simple, cheap and fast access to a large group of people, these type of surveys suffer from methodological limitations (see Bethlehem, 2008). We remind the readers to be aware that the data presented in this report offers a preliminary and partial overview about respondent’s opinions on regional parks and trails funding priorities and the Land Acquisition Fund. The information discussed in the following sections needs therefore to be validated through other data collection approaches and public engagement processes.

Results

A total of 1044 online questionnaires were filled out online between July 1 and October 8, 2018. Of those, 15 questionnaires were blank, reducing the survey data to 1029 online responses (Figure 1).

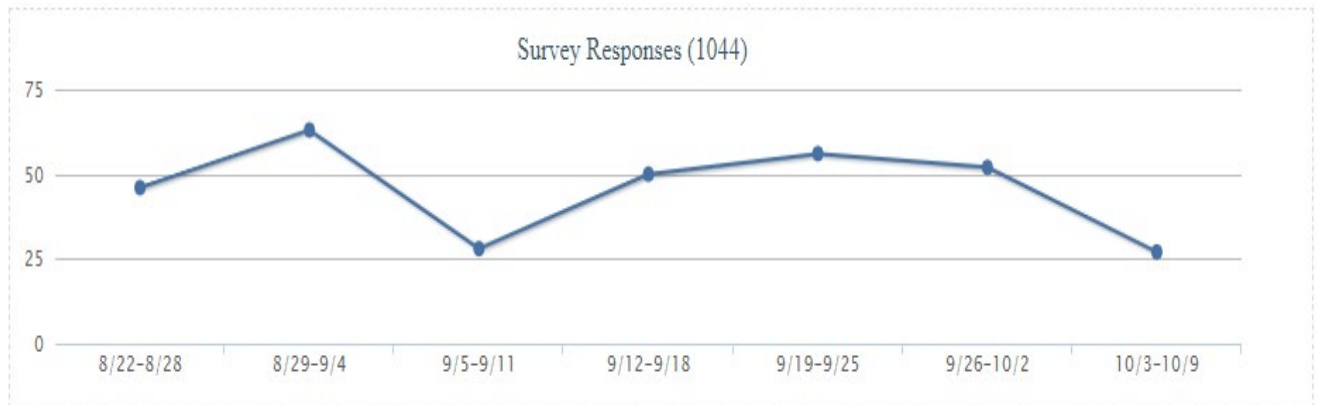


Figure 1 Checkbox graph about survey response over time

Socio-demographic Characteristics – Questions 10, 11 & 12

The socio-demographic characteristics of the responders to the Regional Parks Funding Priorities survey are described in Tables 1 & 2. The main highlights are:

- Age composition: The largest groups participating in the survey were 55-64 (n= 254; 25%) and over 65 (n=286; 28%) years old;
- Household composition: The majority were couples with no children (n=453; 44%) and parents with children (n=273; 27%);
- Place of residence: Most people were from Saanich (n= 314; 31%) and Victoria (n= 199; n=19%).

Some differences between the sample and the Census Canada population of 2016 are apparent. Younger people were under-represented, while participants between the ages of 35-44 were over-represented. The household compositions are also not comparable with those of Census Canada. Couples with no children were overrepresented and people living alone were underrepresented.

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Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents (Q11 & Q12)

| Age | Sample | Census Canada 2016 |
|--------------------------|--------|--------------------|
| Under 18 | 1% | |
| 18-24 | 3% | 6% |
| 25-34 | 9% | 13% |
| 35-44 | 17% | 12% |
| 45-54 | 17% | 14% |
| 55-64 | 25% | 15% |
| 65+ | 28% | 27% |
| Household (Q23): | Sample | Census Canada 2016 |
| Adult living alone | 18% | 33% |
| Couple with no children | 44% | 28% |
| Adults sharing residence | 11% | NA |
| Parent(s) with children | 27% | 27% |

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Table 2: Residency of respondents (Q10)

| Residency | Sample |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Beecher Bay First Nation (Scia'new) | 0.1% |
| Central Saanich | 4% |
| Colwood | 4% |
| Esquimalt | 3% |
| Esquimalt Nation | 0.1% |
| Highlands | 2% |
| Juan de Fuca Electoral Area | 2% |
| Langford | 6% |
| Metchosin | 4% |
| North Saanich | 7% |
| Oak Bay | 4% |
| Pacheedaht First Nation | 0% |
| Pauquachin First Nation (BOKÉCEN) | 0.1% |
| Salt Spring Island | 1% |
| Saanich | 31% |
| Sidney | 2% |
| Songhees Nation | 0.1% |
| Sooke | 7% |
| Southern Gulf Islands | 1% |
| Tsartlip First Nation (W_JOLELP) | 0% |
| Tsawout First Nation (SÁÁUTW_) | 0% |
| Tseycum First Nation (W_SIKEM) | 0% |
| T'Sou-ke Nation | 0.1% |
| Victoria | 19% |
| View Royal | 3% |
| Others: | |
| Vancouver Island | 1% |
| BC | 0.3% |
| USA | 0.1% |

About Funding Priorities – Questions 1, 2 & 3

As in the 2017 resident survey (CRD, 2017), participants were asked two questions about possible funding priorities regarding CRD regional parks and trails: (1) to rate the importance of a number of activities to be given priority over the next 5 years; and, (2) to rank their three highest priorities from the list of activities proposed.

The following activities were seen as a high priority by respondents (Figure 2):

- Protect the natural environments and species (n=630; 61%);
- Acquire more parkland (n=508; 49%);
- Repair and maintain existing facilities (n=489; 48%); and
- Undertake restoration projects to conserve natural environments and species (n=482; n=47%).

These results align with those obtained through the resident survey conducted in 2017 by CRD Regional Parks. For a more detailed overview, see Appendix 2, Table 2.1.

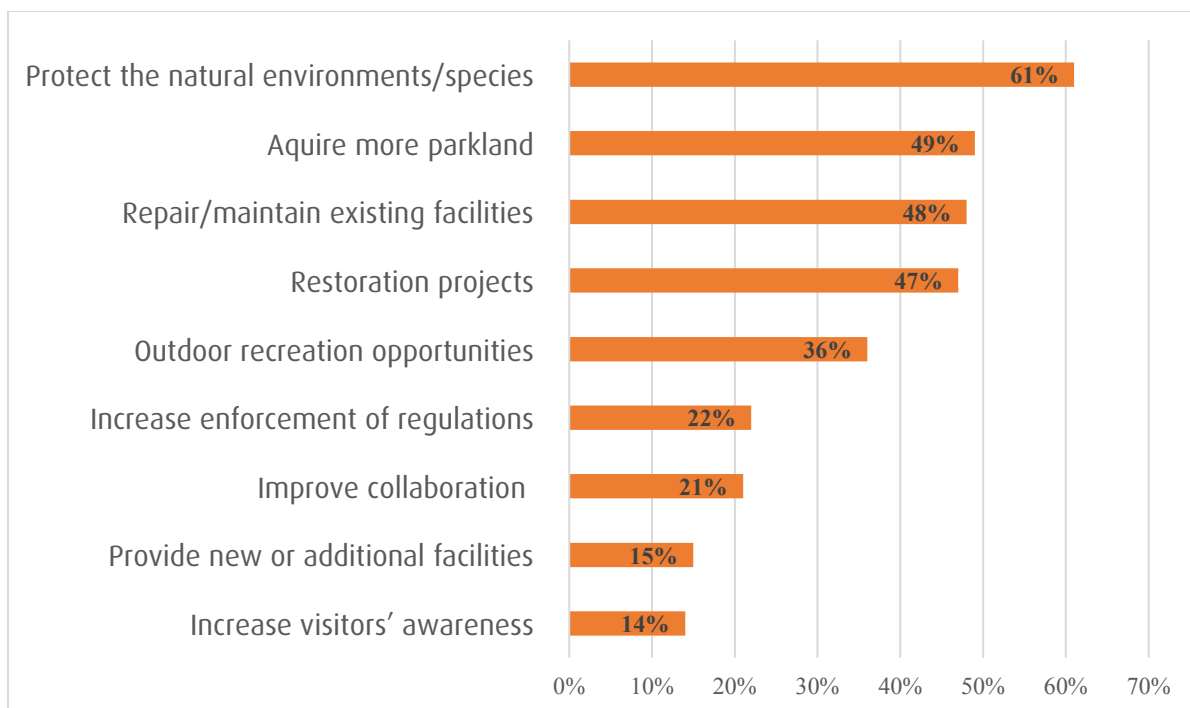


Figure 2: Percentage of participants responding “high priority” to a series of proposed management actions for regional parks and trails (Q1)

When specifically asked to rank the three highest priorities from the list of activities reported in Figure 2, the respondents identified the same priorities but in a different order than in the previous question. Specifically, “acquire more land” ranked first, “protect the natural environments and species” second

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and “undertake restoration projects to conserve natural environments and species” ranked third. Once again these results are similar to those obtained through the resident survey conducted in 2017 by CRD Regional Parks, where “repair and maintain facilities” ranked first, “undertaking restoration projects to conserve natural environments and species” ranked second, and “acquiring more parkland” was ranked third.

When asked if there was enough land set aside in the capital region for environmental protection and outdoor recreation, the majority of respondents disagreed (n= 586; 57%), with fewer respondents agreeing (n= 247; 24%) or being neutral (n=196; 16%) toward this statement (Figure 3).

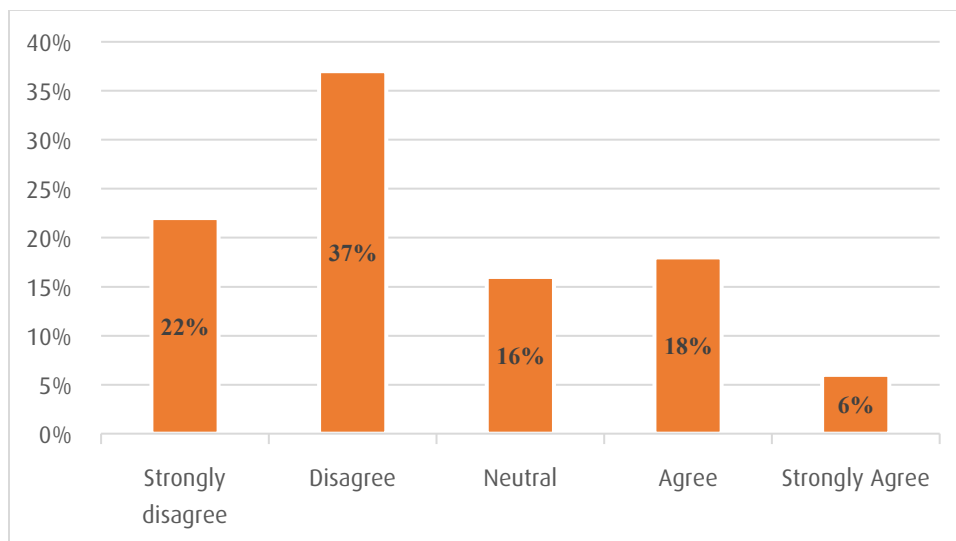


Figure 3: Percentage of participants responding that there is enough land set aside in the CRD for environmental protection and outdoor recreation (Q3)

Land Acquisition Fund – Questions 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, & 9

Respondents were asked about their support for, or opposition to, the extension of the Regional Parks Land Acquisition Fund for another 10 years. Concerning this question, the majority of respondents supported (n= 912; 89%) this proposed action, in alignment with the resident survey conducted in 2017 by CRD Regional Parks (see appendix 2, Table 2.2). Some respondents were neutral (n=69; 7%) and fewer were against it (n=43; 5%) (Figure 4).

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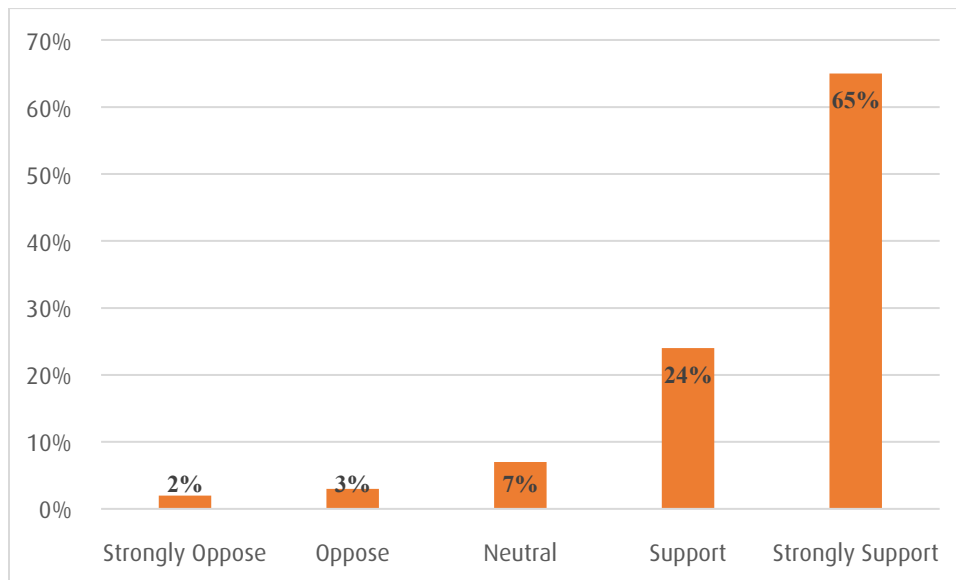


Figure 4: Percentage of participants supporting/opposing the extension of the Land Acquisition Fund for another 10 years (Q4)

To explore how the Land Acquisition Fund could be used in the future, respondents were asked whether they supported or opposed using the Land Acquisition Fund to buy park land 1) where the primary purpose is conservation, and outdoor recreation would not be allowed; 2) when funds to develop facilities for public use might not be available for many years; and 3) only if other partners were contributing to the purchase (e.g., land trusts, other governments, donors, etc.). The majority of respondents supported buying land only for conservation purposes (n=614; 60%), with nearly a third being opposed to it (n=247; 28%) and the remaining being neutral (n=162; 16%) (Figure 5). Most respondents also supported using the fund to buy parkland when facilities for public use might not be available for many years (n= 790; 77%), with very few being opposed (n=106; 10%) or neutral (n=124; 12%) (Figure 6). When asked if the fund should be used only if other partners were contributing to the purchase, participants had more evenly mixed opinions, with a third agreeing (n=284; 29%), a third being neutral (n=378; 37%), and a third being against (n=363; 35%) this statement (Figure 7). No similar question was asked in the 2017 resident survey.

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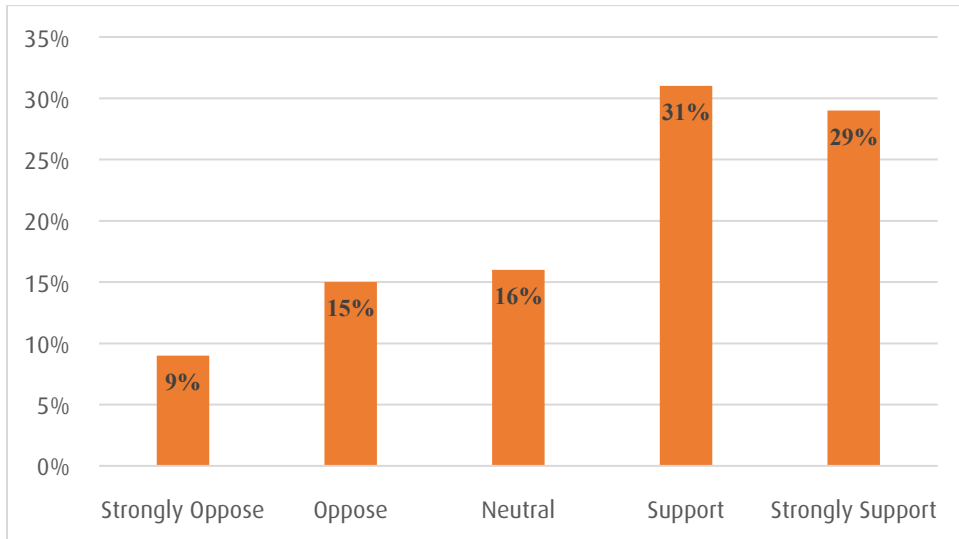


Figure 5: Percentage of participants supporting/opposing buying parkland where the primary purpose is conservation and outdoor recreation would not be allowed (Q5)

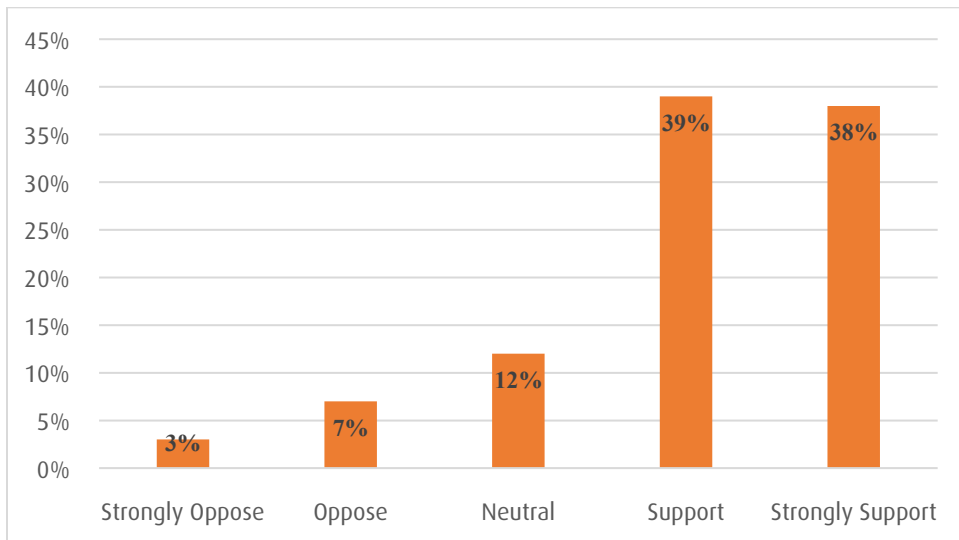


Figure 6: Percentage of participants supporting/opposing buying parkland when funds to develop facilities for public use might not be available for many years (Q6)

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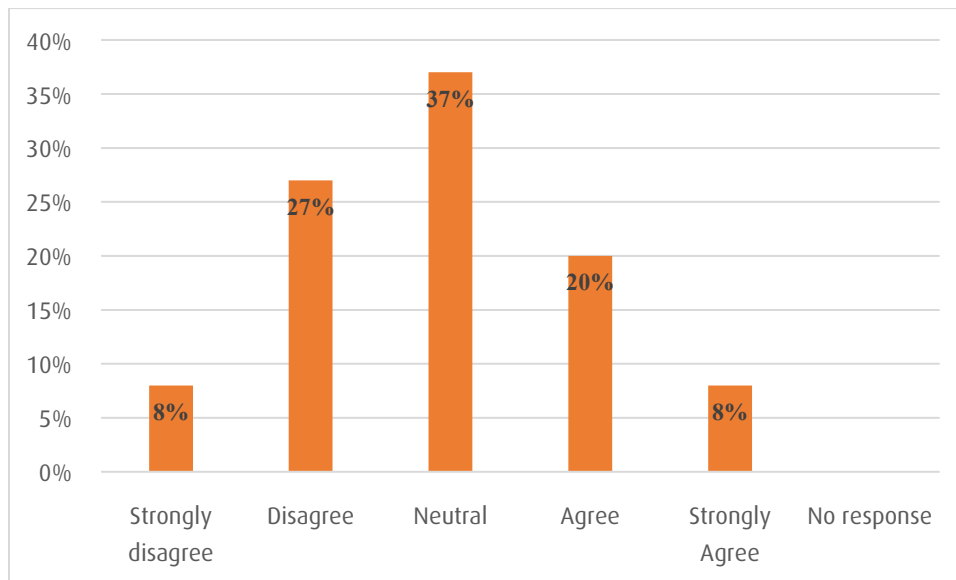


Figure 7: Percentage of participants supporting/opposing buying parkland only if other partners are contributing to the purchase (Q7)

When specifically asked about the way the Land Acquisition Fund should be used in the future, most respondents wanted the fund to continue a focus on land acquisition and related costs (n= 589; 57%). The second most supported statement was to “use the fund to maintain and replace facilities anywhere in regional parks and trails” (n=193; 19%), followed by “plan and build new facilities in newly acquired parkland” (n= 137; 13%) and “plan and built new facilities in existing parks and trails” (n= 73; 7%) (Figure 8). Respondents were offered the opportunity to suggest other ways to use the Land Acquisition Fund in the future. No major theme arose from the 44 qualitative comments offered by participants. The most common topics mentioned by respondents spanned from balancing land acquisition with current regional parks and trails management, focusing on conservation and/or recreation and enhancing the maintenance of the Regional Park system. All themes were reiterated and expanded in the final “other comments” question of the questionnaire (see section 4.4). No similar question was asked in the 2017 resident survey.

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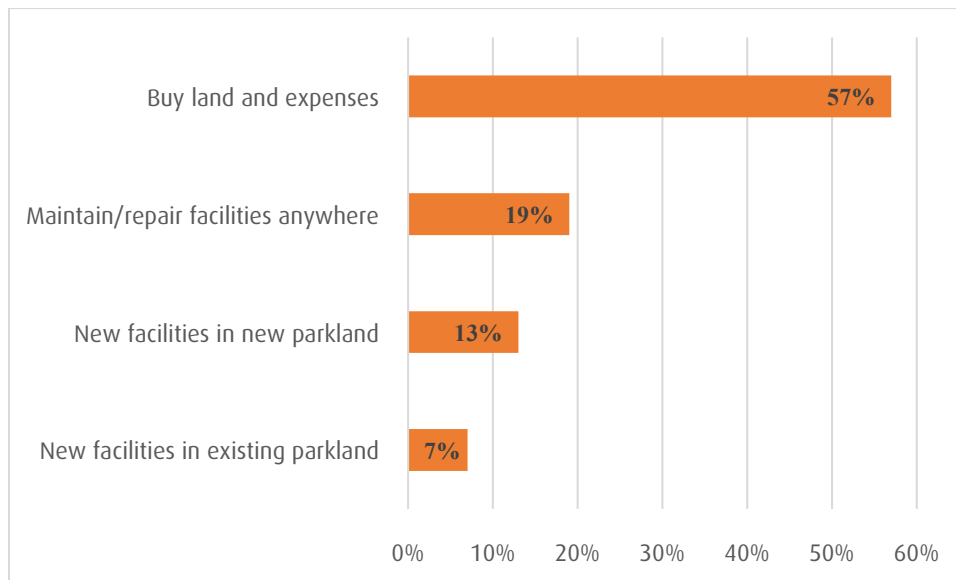


Figure 8: Respondent opinions about the way the Land Acquisition Fund should be used in the future (Q8)

The final closed-ended question of the online survey focused on what percentage of the Land Acquisition Fund, if any, should be used for purposes other than buying land and paying associated acquisition costs. The largest number of respondents (n= 206; 22%) suggested that 0% or no allocation of funds be allowed for activities not directly related to acquisition. Another nineteen percent (n= 195) supported the use of up to 20% of the fund for activities not directly related to acquisition, followed by fifteen percent (n= 154) of respondents supporting the use of up to 30% of the fund for other costs. All the other answers suggested for this closed-ended question scored less than 15% support (see Figure 9).

It is interesting to notice the discrepancy in results between responses about the way the Land Acquisition Fund should be used in the future, and the one about the percentage of the Land Acquisition Fund that could be used for purposes other than buying land and paying associated acquisition costs. While the majority of respondents want the fund to continue a focus on land acquisition and related costs, it seems that they also want some percentage of the Fund to be used for other purposes than land acquisition. An explanation to these contradictory results can be found in the qualitative comments offered by respondents to the survey where participants expressed a lack of understanding about Regional Parks funding mechanisms. Participants to the survey specified, *"I found the last question regarding the percentage of funds to be used for anything other than Land Acquisition is a bit difficult to answer. Without any firsthand knowledge, it's hard for the average citizen to guess what else you'd use the funds for"* (participant #60) and *"maybe I missed it, but I didn't see any information*

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on what the past percentage of funds was used to buy land. Lack of said info made it hard to estimate how funds should be spent” (participant #496). This lack of understanding was echoed in several other qualitative comments: “where do we access more information about long term funding?” (participant #176), “I very much like the acquisition fund, though I’m unclear on the entire regional parks funding model” (participant #219) and “I put 20% on question 9 but I have no context and no knowledge on how to answer that question” (participant #236). Respondents pointed out through a series of qualitative comment the difficulty of answering the question about what percentage of the Fund could be used for other purposes than acquisition because they 1) did not really understand the Regional Parks funding mechanism per se, 2) did not know why money should be diverted from the fund to other uses; 3) were unsure how the money would be used instead of acquisition; and/or 4) were unaware of the challenges Regional Parks has in funding regional parks and trails maintenance and management. No similar question was asked in the 2017 resident survey.

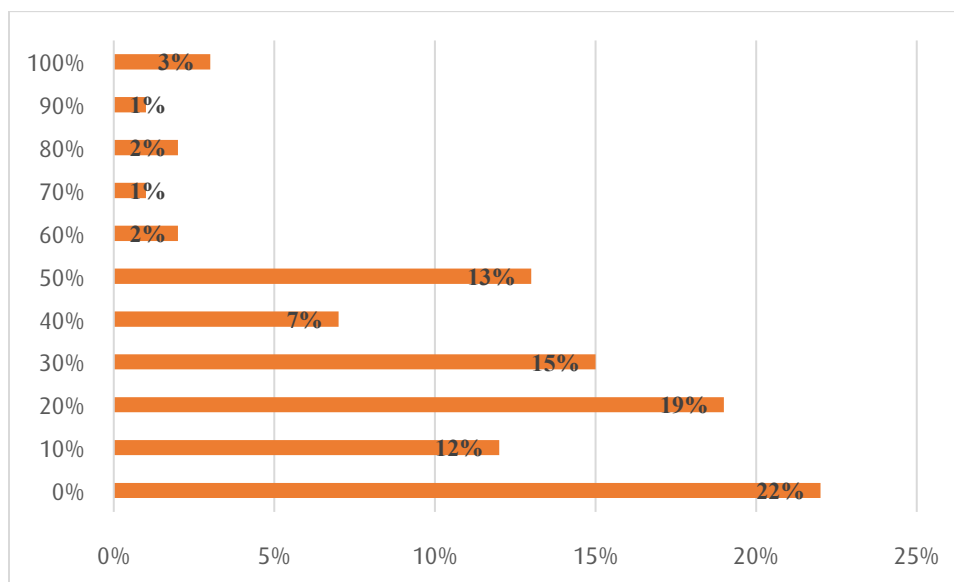


Figure 9: Respondent opinions about the percentage of the Land Acquisition Fund that should be used for purposes other than buying land and paying associated acquisition costs (Q9)

Additional Comments

Respondents were given the opportunity to offer further comments on the Regional Parks Funding Priorities survey. A total of 563 qualitative comments were provided by the survey participants. Half of the comments followed themes that were included in the survey questions, offering the respondents an opportunity to clarify their answers. These comment themes included: 1) the Land Acquisition Fund (n=159; 29%); 2) current regional parks and trails management (n=69; 12%); and 3) funding mechanisms (n=63; 11%).

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In regard to the Land Acquisition Fund, participants stressed the need to keep the fund ongoing and as it is. The main concern was the rapid urbanization and development of southern Vancouver Island, thus the need for CRD Regional Parks to secure land quickly for future generations. Some participants suggested buying land now when it is available with consideration for park infrastructure development in the future. Others supported an increase in the levy as property costs are rising across the CRD. Another key theme related to the Land Acquisition Fund was expanding regional parks and trails to promote local community health and livelihood. A special emphasis was given to increasing connectivity between parks, especially through linear corridors. Such connections would allow people to move across the CRD protected area system using active transportation.

The second theme was related to the management and maintenance of current regional parks and trails. Recognizing that managing an expanding system of park is challenging, some participants recommended the need to balance new land acquisitions and current regional parks and trails management, while others suggested that efforts should focus only on the current regional parks and trails system. Providing more resources for the development of management plans was another key theme mentioned by participants. In regard to maintenance, participants discussed issues related to current trail and facility conditions. Participants stressed the need to create partnerships between the CRD and external groups to address parks and trails maintenance challenges, and extend the effectiveness of current Regional Parks' funds. Comments about trail maintenance and partnerships were most often in relation to mountain biking.

When mentioning funding mechanisms, participants offered diverse opinions about which was the best way to fund the regional parks and trails system. Some suggested the creation of special funds for major infrastructure renewal, while others believed an increase in the operating budget was needed. A common theme arising throughout the comments on funding was that currently not enough money is available for maintenance and management of the regional parks and trails system.

Other themes (each representing 8% of the comments) were: general support and appreciation for the regional parks and trails and the survey; advocacy for a more conservation-oriented management of regional parks and trails; and, requests to improve outdoor recreation opportunities (e.g., biking, mountain biking and horse riding) across the Regional Parks system.

Another 13% (n= 73) of the comments provided input on Regional Parks in general, with suggestions to focus on education; improving access (e.g., parking, universal access); and supporting or opposing dog presence in parks. The remaining 12% (n= 68) of the comments included a variety of themes which were not related to the survey or the Regional Parks system, such as the protection of agricultural land and greenspace across municipalities and the construction of facilities not pertaining to CRD jurisdiction.

Conclusion

The majority of people (n= 912; 89%) who responded to the survey supported the continuation of the Land Acquisition Fund in the future. Opinions of respondents regarding how to use those funds is more diverse. The majority of the respondents (n= 589; 57%) believed that the Land Acquisition Fund should only be used to purchase land and associated costs, while others support the use of the fund to maintain and replace facilities anywhere in regional parks and trails (n= 193; 19%), plan and build new facilities in newly acquired parkland (n= 137; 13%) and/or plan and built new facilities in existing parks and trails (n= 73; 7%). Twenty two percent of respondents (n= 206) suggested that 0% or no allocation of funds be allowed for activities not directly related to acquisition. When in favour of using some of the Fund to support other aspects of the maintenance and management of the park system, nineteen percent (n=195) suggested using 20% and fifteen percent (n=154) suggested using 30% of the funds for those purposes.

While the majority of respondents want the fund to continue a focus on land acquisition and related costs, it seems that they also want some percentage of the Fund to be used for other purposes than land acquisition. An explanation to these contradictory results can be found in the qualitative comments offered by respondents to the survey where participants expressed a lack of understanding about Regional Parks funding mechanisms and described the question about allocating a percentage of the Fund to other uses than acquisition as confusing and difficult to answer. To obtain reliable data that best represent CRD citizen opinions, we suggests to explore these questions by surveying at least 400 randomly selected CRD citizen, a methodology and sample size that allows to obtain statistically valid and representative information for the whole district.

Respondents' opinions about the extension of the Land Acquisition Fund aligns with the data collected by CRD Regional Parks over the last 20 years. This is not the case for the remaining questions of this survey, which need to be considered cautiously as they are not necessarily representative of the whole population of the CRD. Further public engagement is suggested to validate the outcomes of those questions.

Consistent with other surveys conducted by CRD Regional Parks, younger people were under-represented in this survey. Participants between the ages of 35-44 were over-represented, a result differing from the usual CRD surveys where this demographic class of the population is more aligned with Census Canada data. In regard to household composition, results were similar to the 2017 residents' survey where couples with no children were overrepresented, while adults living alone were underrepresented (CRD 2017).

Visitors were asked two questions about possible management actions for CRD regional parks and trails: (1) to rate the importance of several management actions; and, (2) to rank their three highest

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priorities from a list of management actions. The following management actions were seen as a high priority: “protect the natural environments and species”; “acquire more parkland”; “repair and maintain existing facilities”, and, “undertake restoration projects to conserve natural environments and species”. These results are similar to the 1998, 2005 and 2017 resident survey’s findings (CRD, 2017). It is interesting to notice that acquiring more parkland has become a higher priority over the period of these surveys. As resident survey data have been collected in a systematic way over the years, the findings of the online survey in regard to management priorities can be seen as in line with previous opinions of CRD citizens.

When specifically asked to rank the three highest priorities from the list of management actions proposed, respondents identified the same priorities but in a different order than in the previous questions. Specifically, “acquire more land” ranked first, “protect the natural environments and species” second and “undertake restoration projects to conserve natural environments and species” ranked third. Similar ranking was obtained for the residents surveys conducted in 2017 and 2005, validating the data obtained through the online survey (CRD, 2017).

The majority of respondents supported the extension of the Regional Parks Land Acquisition Fund for another 10 years. In comparison to the 2017 residents’ survey, more respondents to this survey expressed strong agreement with this statement, showing the importance of this issue for those participating in this survey. It is important to notice that support for extending the Land Acquisition Fund for another 10 years was high in both surveys, which shows that the data collected through the funding priorities survey are in line with previous public consultations. No question about the Land Acquisition Fund was asked in the 1998 and 2005 residents’ surveys so no comparison can be made for this period.

Respondents believed that there was not enough land set aside for environmental protection and outdoor recreation; and supported buying parkland where the primary purpose was conservation, and when funds to develop facilities for visitor use were not available. These results can be explained through the qualitative data obtained in the open-ended question. Expanding the Regional Parks system through the Land Acquisition Fund was seen by respondents as essential for nature conservation, and to promote local communities’ health and livelihood through the provision of ecosystem services and active recreation. Participants stressed the need to keep on buying parkland and quickly, so to avoid losing natural land to development. Developing land for recreational use was seen as secondary and could be undertaken when funds become available. When asked if the fund should be used only if other partners were contributing to the purchase, participants had diverse opinions, with a third agreeing, a third being neutral, and a third being against the statement. No similar questions were asked in previous surveys. Further public engagement is needed to validate the outcomes of these questions.

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When specifically asked about how the Land Acquisition Fund should be used in the future, most respondents wanted the fund to continue a focus on land acquisition and related costs. The second most supported statement was to use the fund “to maintain and replace facilities anywhere in regional parks and trails”, followed by “plan and built new facilities in newly acquired parkland”, and “plan and build new facilities in existing parks and trails”. When further asked if any percentage of the Land Acquisition Fund should be used for purposes other than buying land and paying associated acquisition costs, the largest number of participants (22%) were in support of 0% or no allocation of funds for activities not directly related to acquisition. The outcomes of this question need to be considered cautiously as respondents pointed out that the question was confusing and difficult to answer, mostly due to lack of knowledge and clarity about the current funding challenges for regional parks and trails.

Respondents were given the opportunity to offer further comments to the Regional Parks Funding Priorities survey. A total of 563 qualitative comments were provided, half of which followed themes that were included in the survey. Other themes mentioned by respondents were general support and appreciation of the regional parks and trails and the survey, advocacy for a more conservation-oriented management of regional parks and trails, and requests to improve outdoor recreation opportunities across the Regional Parks system. Respondents also provided input on Regional Parks in general, with suggestions focusing on education, improving access, and supporting or opposing dog presence in parks. The remaining comments included a variety of themes, which were not related to the survey or the Regional Parks systems.

The questions regarding the extension of the Land Acquisition Fund and Regional Parks’ priorities for the next 5 years have been explored through several surveys over the last 20 years. The results obtained for these two questions are supported and validated by the longitudinal data CRD Regional Parks has on these topics. This is not the case for the remaining questions of this survey, which were explored for the first time in this survey. Due to the methodology used to conduct this survey, the data obtained for this new set of questions cannot be generalized to a broader population and need to be considered cautiously. Further public engagement would be needed to validate the outcomes of those questions.

References

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire

PART 1: GENERAL QUESTIONS

With limited funding availability, the CRD must make choices about how to prioritize spending in regional parks and trails.

1. What priority should the following activities be given over the next 5 years to enhance your enjoyment of regional parks and trails? (Please circle one answer per statement)

| Activities | Not a priority | Low priority | Neutral | Medium priority | High priority |
|---|-------------------|-----------------|---------|--------------------|------------------|
| A. Provide outdoor recreation opportunities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| B. Repair and maintain existing facilities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| C. Protect species and the natural environment | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| D. Undertake restoration projects to conserve natural environments and species | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| E. Acquire more parkland | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| F. Increase enforcement of regional parks and trails regulations | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| G. Provide new or additional facilities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| H. Increase visitors' awareness about regional parks and trails regulations | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I. Improve collaboration with regional parks and trails neighbours (i.e., First Nations, Government agencies, stakeholders) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

2. Which activities should regional parks and trails focus on for the next 5 years? Please select first, second and third priority and insert letters from the list above.

First Priority

Second Priority

Third Priority

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Almost 20% (47,826 hectares) of the capital region's geographic area (237,000 hectares) is under some form of protection status. This includes the Greater Victoria Water Supply Area (20,550 hectares), which is not accessible to the public.

3. In your opinion, is there enough land set aside in the capital region for environmental protection and outdoor recreation?

- Yes, I strongly agree
- Yes, I agree
- Neutral
- No, I disagree
- No, I strongly disagree

PART 2: LAND ACQUISITION FUND

From 2000 to 2018 the CRD has acquired, with the help of its partners, over 4,000 hectares of land. The CRD acquires land for regional parks through a dedicated property tax (the Land Acquisition Fund), currently set at a rate of \$20 per average residential household assessment until 2019.

4. Do you support or oppose extending the Land Acquisition Fund for another 10 years?

- Strongly support
- Support
- Neutral
- Oppose
- Strongly oppose

5. Do you support or oppose using the Land Acquisition Fund to buy park land where the primary purpose is conservation, and outdoor recreation would not be allowed?

- Strongly support
- Support
- Neutral
- Oppose
- Strongly oppose

6. Do you support or oppose using the Land Acquisition Fund to buy park land, when funds to develop facilities for public use will not be available for many years?

- Strongly support
- Support
- Neutral

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

- Oppose
- Strongly oppose

7. In your opinion, should the CRD only use the Land Acquisition Fund to buy land if other partners are contributing to the purchase (e.g., land trusts, other governments, donors, etc.)?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Currently the money collected through the Land Acquisition Fund is used only for buying land and paying associated acquisition costs (i.e, appraisal, environmental assessments, legal fees).

8. If renewed, how should the Land Acquisition Fund be used in the future? (Check all that apply)

- Buy land and pay associated acquisition costs
- Plan and build new facilities in newly acquired parks
- Plan and build new facilities in existing regional parks and trails
- Maintain or replace facilities anywhere in the regional parks and trails system
- Other _____

9. What percentage of the Land Acquisition Fund, if any, should be used for purposes other than buying land and paying associated acquisition costs?

- 0%
- 10%
- 20%
- 30%
- 40%
- 50%
- 60%
- 70%
- 80%
- 90%
- 100%

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

PART 3: ABOUT YOU

Please provide the following information about yourself. This information is collected to establish how representative our respondents are to the population of the capital region. Responses are voluntary and you may opt out of any question in this section. Your previous responses will still be recorded if you choose not to answer any of these questions.

10. Which area of the Capital Region do you live in?

- Beecher Bay First Nation (Scia'new)
- Central Saanich
- Colwood
- Esquimalt
- Esquimalt Nation
- Highlands
- Juan de Fuca
- Langford
- Mayne Island
- Metchosin
- North Saanich
- Oak Bay
- Pacheedaht First Nation
- Pauquachin First Nation (BOKÉCEN)
- Salt Spring Island
- Saanich
- Sidney
- Songhees Nation
- Sooke
- Southern Gulf Islands
- T'Sou-ke Nation
- Tsartlip First Nation (W_JOLELP)
- Tsawout First Nation (SʔÁUTW_)
- Tseycum First Nation (W_SIKEM)
- Victoria
- View Royal
- Other _____

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

11. In which age category do you fall?

- under 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+

12. What type of household do you live in?

- Adult living alone
- Couple with no children
- More than two adults sharing a residence
- Parent (s) with one or more dependent children
- Other _____

13. Do you have any other comments about the regional parks funding model?

The information collected through this survey will be used to help CRD Regional Parks set priorities for allocating funds for regional parks and trails. Any personal information collected in this survey is in accordance with Section 26(e) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. Please contact Karen Ward at CRD Regional Parks, 490 Atkins Avenue, Victoria, 250-360-3339 or kward@crd.bc.ca if you have questions.

Appendix 2: Comparison between the 2017 resident survey and the funding priority survey

Table 2.1. Management of regional parks and trails (Q1), comparing 2017 survey results and funding priorities survey results

| Possible Management Action: | Percent (%) Responding high priority | |
|--|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| | 2017 Resident Survey | Funding Priorities Survey |
| Provide outdoor recreation opportunities | 36.5 | 36.3 |
| Provide new or additional facilities | 16.9 | 15.5 |
| Repair and maintain existing facilities | 51 | 47.5 |
| Protect the natural environments and species (****) | 58.2 | 61.2 |
| Undertake restoration projects to conserve natural environments and species (****) | 48.6 | 46.8 |
| Acquire more parkland | 48.1 | 49.4 |
| Increase enforcement of regional parks and trails regulations (****) | 17.2 | 21.8 |
| Increase visitors' awareness about regional parks and trails regulations | 22 | 13.8 |
| Improve collaboration with regional parks and trails neighbours | 22.7 | 21.1 |

Table 2.2. Extension Land Acquisition Fund for another 10 years (Q18) for the whole CRD

| Land Acquisition Fund | Percent (%) Responding | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| | 2017 Resident Survey | Funding Priorities Survey |
| Strongly support | 29.7 | 64.4 |
| Support | 40.2 | 24.2 |
| Neutral | 17.3 | 6.7 |
| Oppose | 5.5 | 2.5 |
| Strongly oppose | 3.4 | 1.7 |
| No response | 3.8 | 0.5 |