



What We Heard Report

Park User Survey for Indigo Shores Parkland

March 2023

HALIFAX

1.0 Indigo Shores Parkland Planning

What's Happening?

Parks and Recreation staff have initiated the park planning process to guide the future development of seven parkland parcels in the Indigo Shores subdivision.

The first phase of online engagement took place from December 1st 2022, to January 6th 2023, in the form of an online survey, and had a total of 238 respondents.

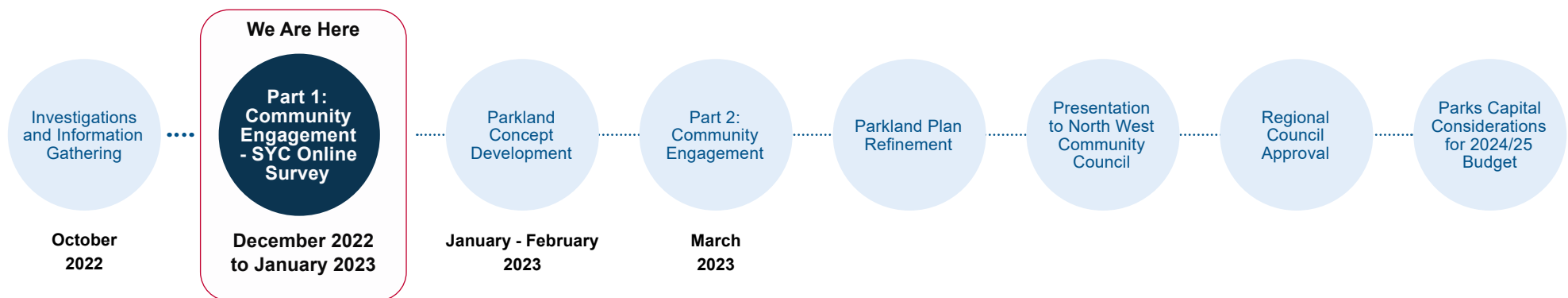
The survey sections focused on demographics, use of parks and open space areas, and recreational interests to understand respondents' values, preferred amenities, and the desired level of parkland of development.

Why?

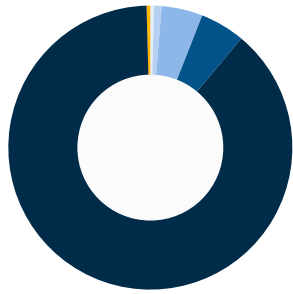
Indigo Shores is a subdivision on the northern side of McCabe Lake in Middle Sackville. The community is composed of new housing that has been established over the past several years, and new lots that are currently planned or under development. Currently, the subdivision contains six municipal parks; a seventh park will be acquired during the current phase of subdivision expansion. To date, only one parcel, "Unnamed Park 23", has some development which include trails, seating areas, and a parking lot.

The input received from this survey will be used to help inform the development of the Parkland Development Plan which will include conceptual

park plans and guidance on how the parks can be developed, implementation priorities, and the facilities envisioned for each parkland parcel.



2.0 What We Heard Summary



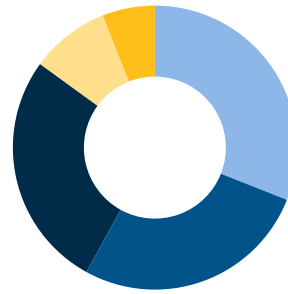
Participants Home Neighbourhoods

- Indigo Shores (89%)
- Low and Middle Sackville (5%)
- Glen Arbour/Kearney Lake (5%)
- Dartmouth Area
- Chester
- Unknown

Who Participated?

The majority of respondents (89%) are Indigo Shores residents. Of the remaining participants, 5% are from the Lower Sackville and Middle Sackville areas, 5% are from the Glen Arbor/Kearney Lake region (located along the western and southern shorelines of McCabe Lake), and the remaining are from Chester and the Dartmouth area.

Of the survey respondents, 12% indicated that they have private access to McCabe Lake.



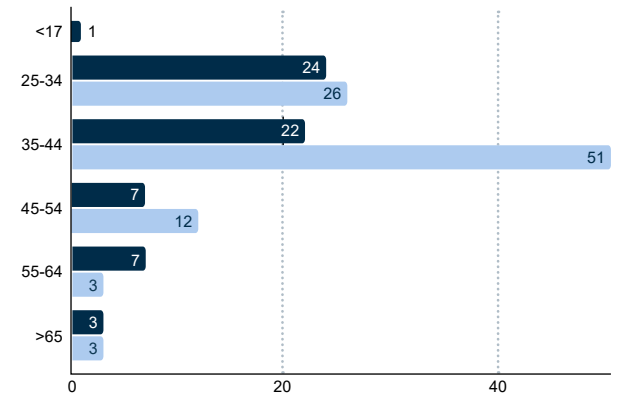
Household Characteristics

- Three person (27%)
- Two person (27%)
- Four person (31%)
- Four or more (6%)
- Single person (9%)

Household Makeup:

Almost two-thirds of the respondents (64%) are from households of three or more persons. 31% of participants are from 4-person households, 27% are from 3-person households, and 6% are from five or more person households. The remaining household compositions consist of two-person households (27%) and single-person households (9%).

Over two thirds (69%) of participants have children under the age of 18 in their household.



Age and Gender Demographics

- Cis Male
- Cis Female

Age and Gender

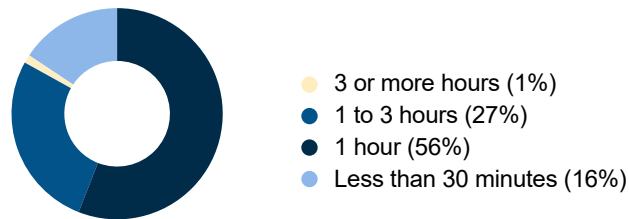
Almost half the participants (43%) are between the ages of 35 to 44. The second largest group is represented by individuals aged 25-34 (26%), followed by individuals aged 45-54 (15%), and individuals aged between 55-64 (10%). People older than 65 are the smallest age group (1%).

The majority (51.7%) respondents identify as female; 33.3% identify as male; 14.5% of individuals preferred not to answer.

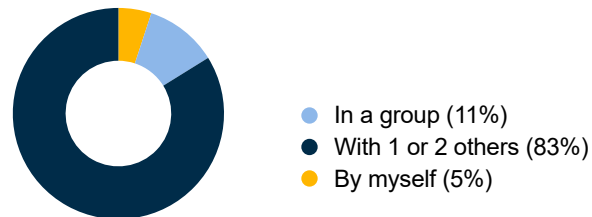
3.0 Current Park Use

This section of the survey focuses on current use of parks, trail, and beach use in the Indigo Shores and surrounding area.

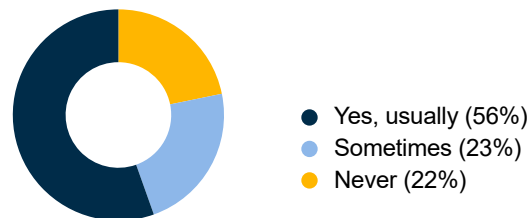
How much time do you typically spend in a park when you visit?



When you visit a park, do you usually come alone or with others?



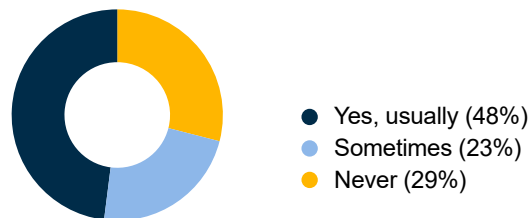
Do you visit a park with a child or children?



Park Use

- On average, over half (56%) of users will visit a park for one hour, and over a quarter (27%) of users will spend 1 to 3 hours in a park. The remainder of participants will use a park for less than thirty minutes (16%) or for more than three hours (1%).
- Over three-quarters (83%) of users will visit parks with one or two other people. The remaining participants will either visit the park alone (5%) or as a group (11%).
- When visiting parks, over half of participants (56%) of users will visit with children. 48% of users visit parks with a pet.

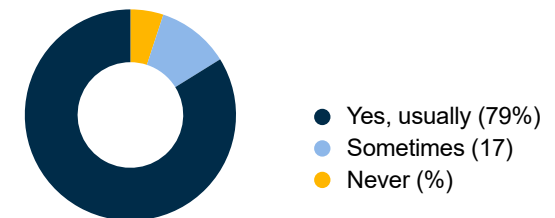
Do you visit parks with a pet?



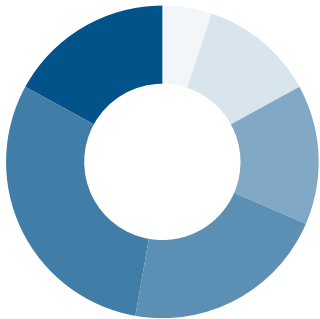
Park Visitation

- Over three-quarters (79%) of respondents currently visit parks in the Indigo Shores area.
- Over half of respondents (58%) visit Unnamed Park 23 the most, followed by McCabe Lake Drive Park (21%). Respondents visit the future parkland on Bondi Drive (2%) and Gaspereau Park (2%) the least.
- Respondents cited Acadia and DeWolf as the two parks they visit the most frequently outside of the community. Point Pleasant and First Lake Park were also listed as popular destinations - suggesting participants are drawn to parkland with passive recreational trails and waterfront access.

Do you currently visit one or more parks in the Indigo Shores area?

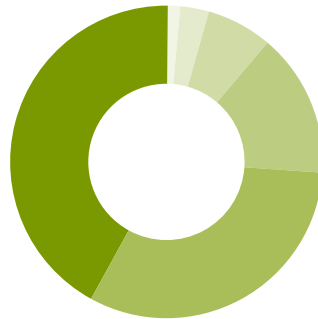


Thinking about a typical year, how often do you visit a park or open space?



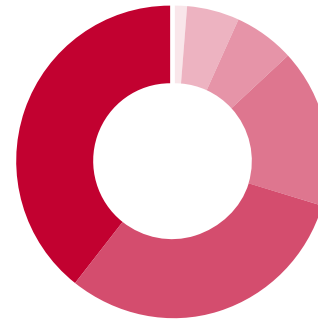
Winter Use

- A few times per week (17%)
- At least once per week (30%)
- Once every couple of weeks (21%)
- Once per month (14%)
- Less than once per month (12%)
- Not at all (5%)



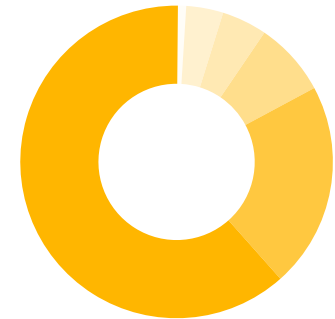
Springtime Use

- A few times per week (42%)
- At least once per week (32%)
- Once every couple of weeks (14%)
- Once per month (7%)
- Less than once per month (3%)
- Not at all (1%)



Autumn Use

- A few times per week (40%)
- At least once per week (31%)
- Once every couple of weeks (16%)
- Once per month (6%)
- Less than once per month (5%)
- Not at all (1%)



Summer Use

- A few times per week (62%)
- At least once per week (21%)
- Once every couple of weeks (8%)
- Once per month (5%)
- Less than once per month (4%)
- Not at all (1%)

Seasonal Use

- During the summer, over half the participants (61%) said they visit parks more than once a week; during the fall (39%) and spring (42%), participants continue to visit parks several times a week.
- During the winter, park visitation rates drop from visiting parks several times a week (17%) to visiting the park once a week (30%), or once every couple of weeks (21%).

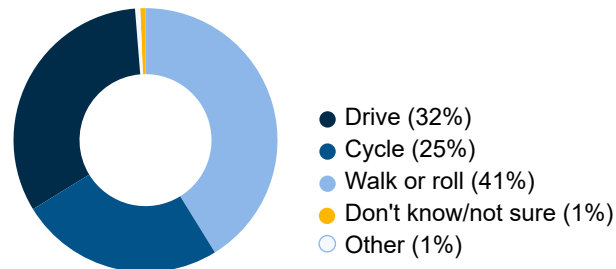
Park Use - Time of Day

- The most popular time for participants to visit parks is during the weekend. Most respondents prefer to use parkland on weekend afternoons (177 of 235 responses), followed by weekend mornings (152 of 235 responses).
- Weekend evenings (67 of 235 responses) and weekday mornings (69 of 235 responses) were the least popular times for park visitation.

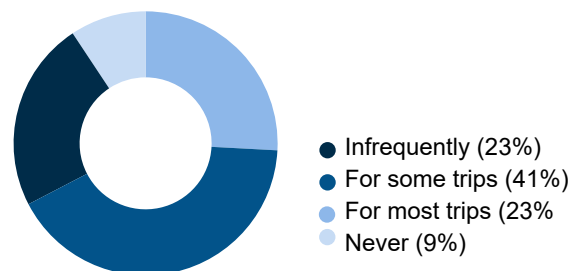
4.0 Future Park Use

This section of the survey ask participants about their preferred transportation methods and the future use of Indigo Shores. Respondents were also asked to rank their interest in recreational facilities.

Thinking about your future use of the parks in Indigo Shores, how would you travel to a park?



How often would you drive to a park in Indigo Shores?



Transportation

Participants were asked to select their preferred travel methods for visiting parkland in the Indigo Shores subdivision.

- 41% of participants indicated they would prefer to walk or roll to future parkland in Indigo Shores. Other popular transportation methods included driving (32%) and cycling (25%).
- Ride shares or taxis were the least popular transportation method. None of the survey participants indicated they would use this method to travel to a park.

Respondents were asked how often they would drive to future Indigo Shores parkland.

- Most (41%) of respondents said they would drive to a park in Indigo Shores for some trips; 25% said they would drive for most trips; 23% said they would drive infrequently; 9% said they would never drive to a park.

Recreational Activities

Participants were given twelve recreational activities and asked to rank their level of interest.

- "Physical activity" (159 responses, 67%) and "winter activities (153 responses, 65%)" were the top activities people were "very interested" in.

There were two activities more participants were "not interested" in than "very interested" in:

- Community gardening: 100 to 56 responses
- Picnicking or outdoor cooking: 90 to 72 responses.

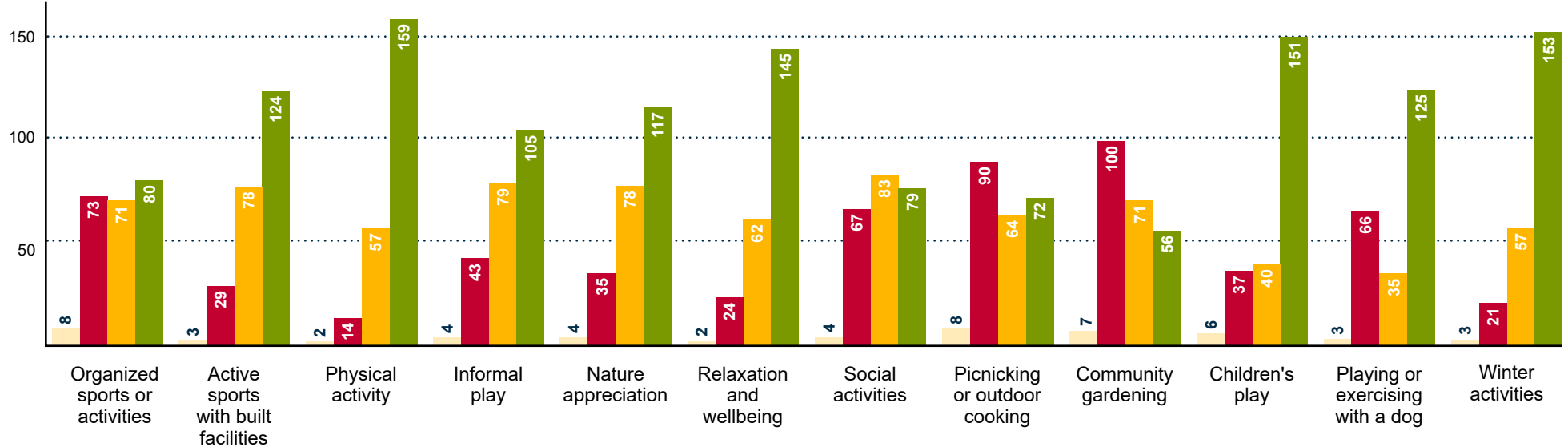
There were two categories where more participants selected "somewhat interested" than "very interested".

- Community gardening: 71 to 56 responses
- Social activities: 83 to 79 responses

Popular suggestions for other park activities included: Tennis or pickleball courts, playgrounds, and dog parks.

Please indicate your level of interest in the following activities for the Indigo Shores parks:

● Very interested
● Somewhat interested
● Not interested
● Don't know/not sure



Top Activities

Not Interested

1. Community gardening, orchards, or berry-picking (100 responses, 43%)
2. Picnicking or outdoor cooking (90 responses, 38%)
3. Organized sports or activities, such as sport leagues (73 responses, 31%)
4. Social activities, such as group gatherings or events (67 responses, 28%)
5. Playing or exercising with a dog (66 responses, 28%)

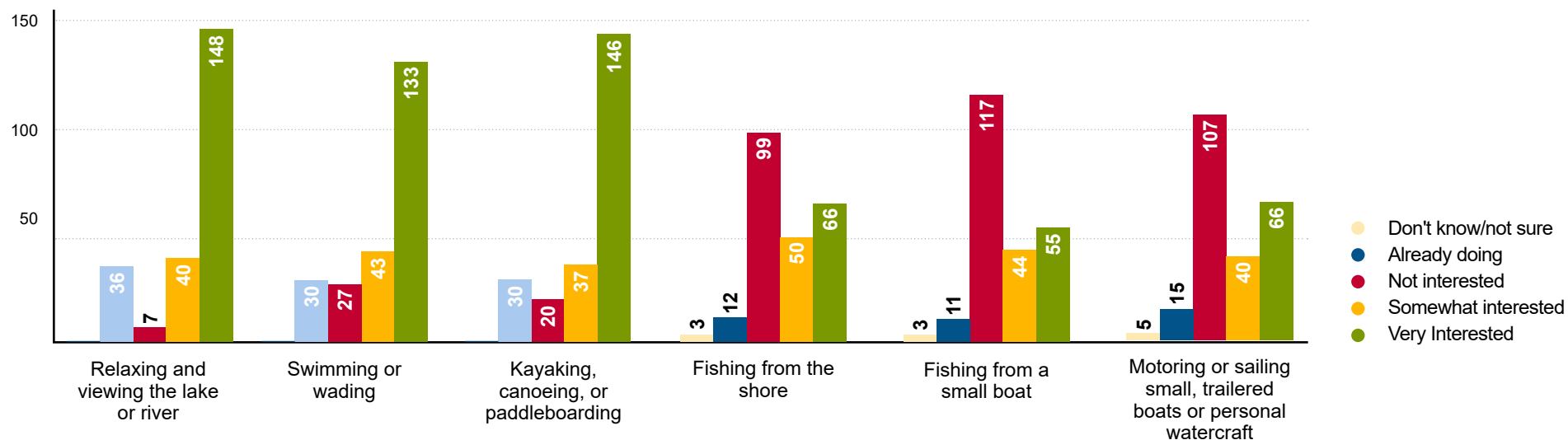
Somewhat Interested

1. Social activities, such as group gatherings or events (83 responses, 35%)
2. Informal play, such as lawn games, kite flying, or tossing a ball (79 responses, 33%)
3. Active sports with built facilities, such as playing fields, sports courts, or sports parks (78 responses, 33%)
4. Nature appreciation, such as nature walks, bird watching, or photography (78 responses, 33%)
5. Community gardening, orchards, or berry-picking (30% responses)

Very Interested

1. Physical activity, such as walking, jogging, or exercising (159 responses, 67%)
2. Winter activities, such as saking, snowshoeing, or sledding (153 responses, 65%)
3. Children's play, such as visiting a playground, informal games, or nature exploration (151 responses, 64%)
4. Relaxation and well-being (145 responses, 61%)
5. Playing or exercising with a dog (125 responses, 53%)

Thinking about your recreational use of McCabe Lake, what types of recreational facilities would be important for you?



Top Activities

Already Doing

1. Relaxing and viewing the lake or river (36 responses, 15%)
2. Swimming and wading (30 responses, 13%)
3. Kayaking, canoeing, or paddleboarding (30 responses, 13%)
4. Motoring or sailing small, trailered boats or personal watercraft (15 responses, 6%)
5. Fishing from the shore (12 responses, 5%)

Not Interested

1. Fishing from a small boat (117 responses, 50%)
2. Motoring or sailing small, trailered boats or personal watercraft (107 responses, 46%)
3. Fishing from the shore (99 responses, 42%)
4. Swimming or wading (27 responses, 12%)
5. Kayaking, canoeing, or paddleboarding (20 responses, 9%)

Somewhat Interested

1. Fishing from the shore (50 responses, 21%)
2. Fishing from a small boat (44 responses, 19%)
3. Swimming or wading (43 responses, 18%)
4. Motoring or sailing small, trailered boats or personal watercraft (40 responses, 17%)
5. Relaxing and viewing the lake or river (40 responses, 17%)

Very Interested

1. Relaxing and viewing the lake or river (148 responses, 63%)
2. Kayaking, canoeing, or paddleboarding (146 responses, 63%)
3. Swimming or wading (133 responses, 57%)
4. Fishing from the shore (66 responses, 28%)
5. Motoring or sailing small, trailered boats or personal watercraft (66 responses, 28%)

Water-Based Activities

Participants were asked to provide feedback on six water-based activities on McCabe Lake.

Respondents are the most interested in:

- Relaxing and viewing the water (148 responses)
- Kayaking, canoeing, or paddleboarding (146 responses)
- Swimming or wading (133 responses)

More respondents were "not interested" than "very interested" in:

- Fishing from a small boat (117 to 55 responses)
- Motoring or sailing small, trailered boats (107 to 66 responses)
- Fishing from the shore (99 to 66 responses)

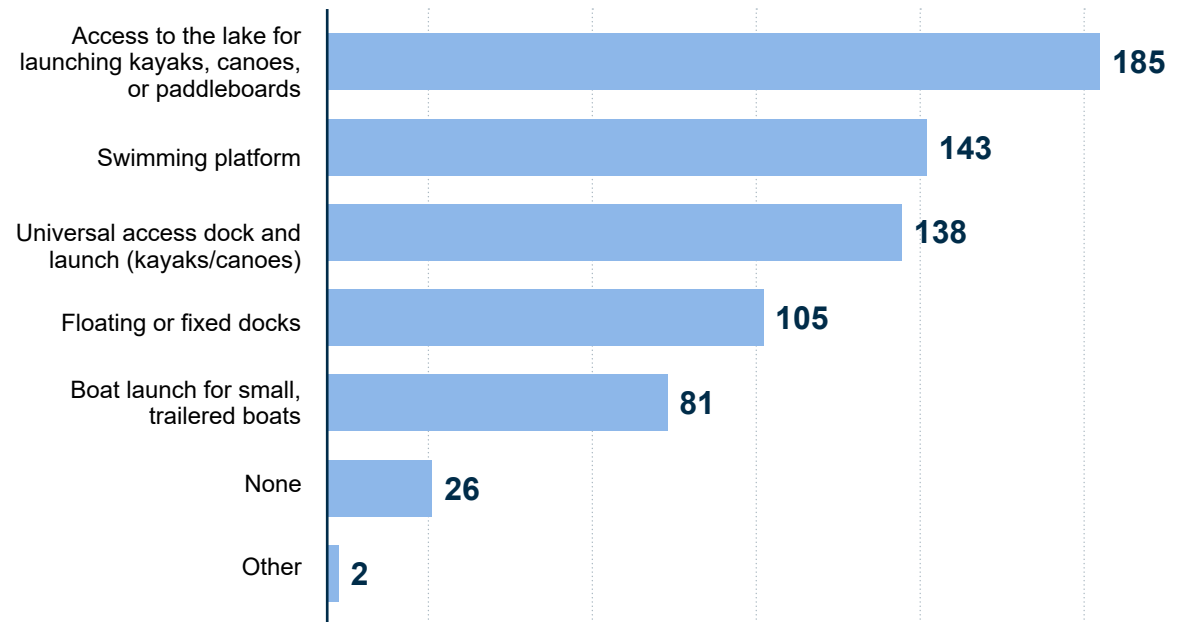
The top activities participants are already doing are:

- Relaxing and viewing the lake or river (36 responses)
- Swimming or wading (30 responses)
- Kayaking, canoeing, or paddle boarding (30 responses)

Participants were also asked about what types of public facilities were important for their recreational use of McCabe Lake.

- The most important public facilities were those supporting paddling on the lake, with access for launching kayaks, canoes, or paddleboards, and a universal access dock ranking in the top three choices. A swimming platform was the second most popular amenity.
- 35% (81) of respondents said a trailered boat launch was important to them.

Thinking about your recreational use of McCabe Lake, what types of recreational facilities would be important for you?



Future Use of Indigo Shores Parkland

Participants were asked which of the seven parks they would visit most often, the level of development they envision for each park, and how they would like each parcel to be developed.

- Respondents are most likely to visit McCabe Lake Drive Park in the future (24%), closely followed by Midnight Run Park (21%).
- Respondents are the least likely to visit Azure Court Park (6%) in the future.
- Very few respondents (1%) indicated they would not visit any of Indigo Shores' future parks.

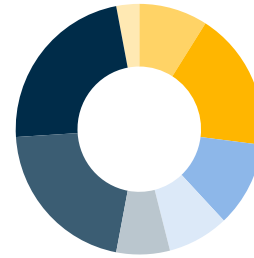
Specific amenities were offered as an option in several parks. These amenities were the most popular in the following parks:

- Playground: Midnight Run (162 responses)
- Seating areas: Bondi Drive (153 responses)
- Sports courts: Midnight Run (176 responses)
- Off-leash dog area: Bondi Drive (121 responses)
- Canoe/Kayak boat launch: Unnamed Park 22 (178 responses)
- Trailered boat launch: Unnamed Park 22 (89 responses)

Participants were asked to rank the level of development they preferred for each park site:

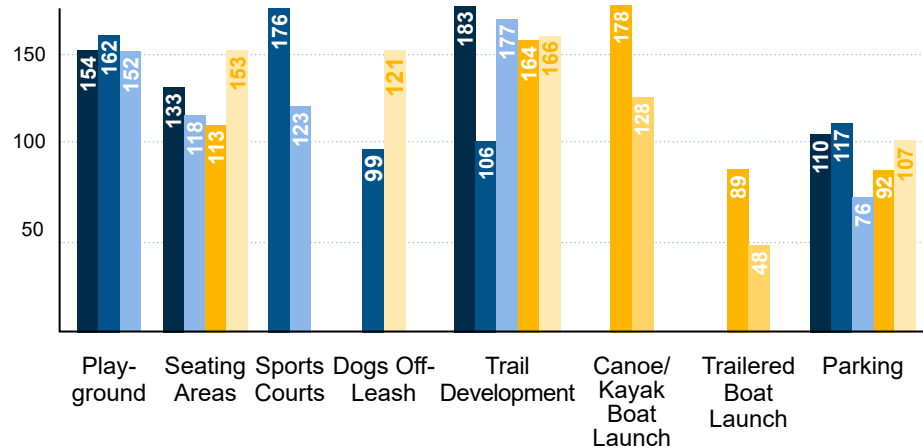
- Midnight Run Park is the only park the majority of respondents would like to see highly developed (118 responses).
- With the exception of Midnight Run Park, the majority of respondents would like the remaining park sites to be moderately developed to support active and passive recreation.
- Leaving the parkland in its natural state was the least popular option for all of the sites.

Thinking about your future use of the parks in Indigo Shores. which park would you visit the most often?



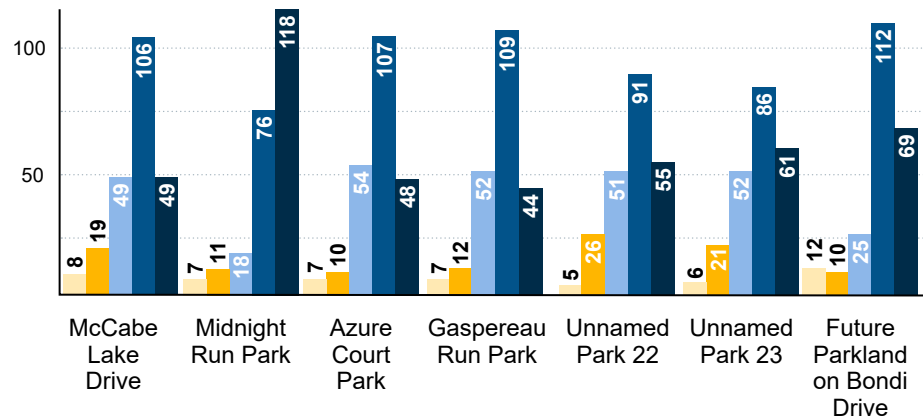
- McCabe Lake Drive Park (23%)
- Midnight Run Park (21%)
- Azure Court Park (7%)
- Gaspereau Run Park (8%)
- Unnamed Park 22 (11%)
- Unnamed Park 23 (18%)
- Future Parkland on Bondi Drive (9%)
- None of the Parks (3%)

Considering the potential park development, what amenities would you be interested in?



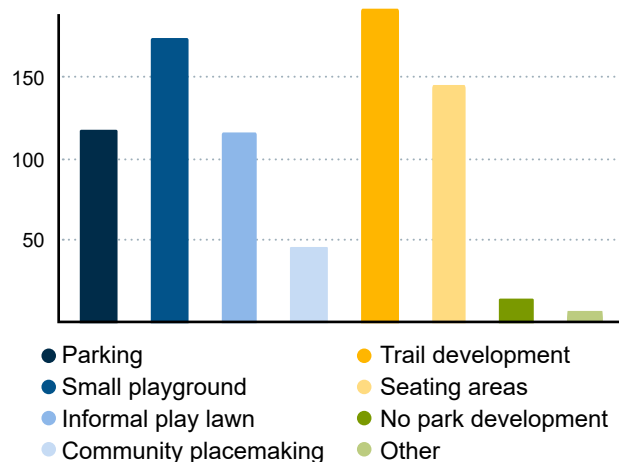
- McCabe Lake Drive Park
- Midnight Run Park
- Azure Court and Gaspereau
- Unnamed Park 22
- Unnamed Park 23
- Future Parkland on Bondi Drive

What do you think is a reasonable level of park development for the following park sites?



- Don't know/not sure
- Leave in natural state
- Low level
- Moderate level
- High level

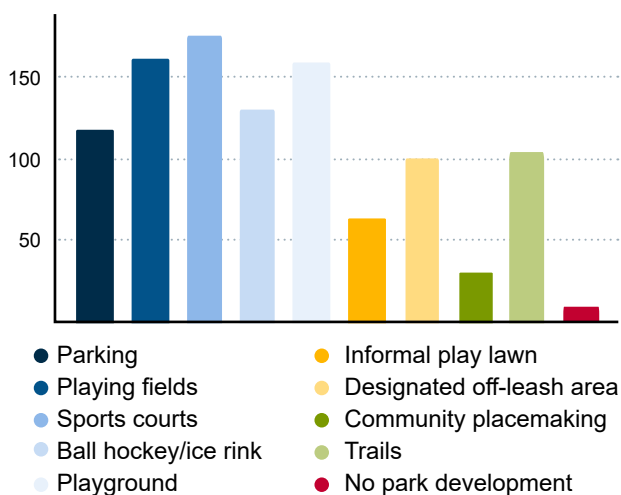
McCabe Lake Drive Park - Preferred Amenities



McCabe Lake Drive Park

- Trail development (183 of 234 respondents), seating areas (133 of 234 respondents), and a small playground (154 of 234 respondents) were the top-ranked facilities proposed for McCabe Lake Drive Park.
- Respondents were not interested in community placemaking initiatives (47 of 234 respondents) and leaving the park undeveloped (14 of 234 respondents).
- The majority of respondents would like to see McCabe Lake Drive Park moderately developed (106 of 232 respondents).
- Leaving the park in its natural state was the least popular option for development (19 of 232 respondents).

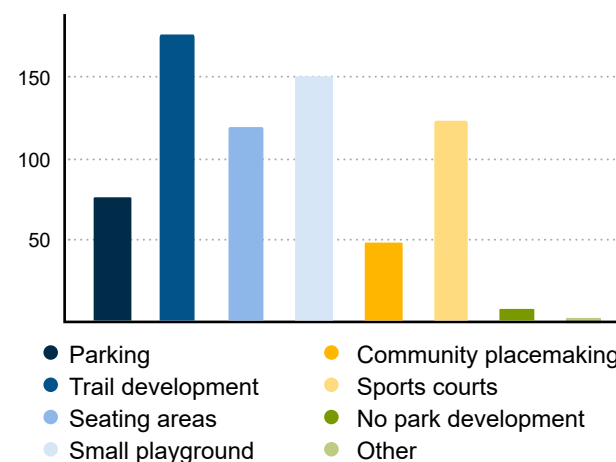
Midnight Run Park - Preferred Amenities



Midnight Run Park

- Sports courts (176 of 232 respondents), a playground (162 of 232 respondents), and playing fields (161 of 232 respondents) were the top-rated amenities for Midnight Run Park.
- Participants were not interested in community placemaking initiatives (30 of 232 respondents) and leaving Midnight Run undeveloped (7 of 232 respondents).
- Midnight Run is the only park the majority of respondents would like to see highly developed (118 of 232 respondents) to support active recreation.
- Respondents were not interested in leaving Midnight Run Park in its natural state (11 of 232 respondents)

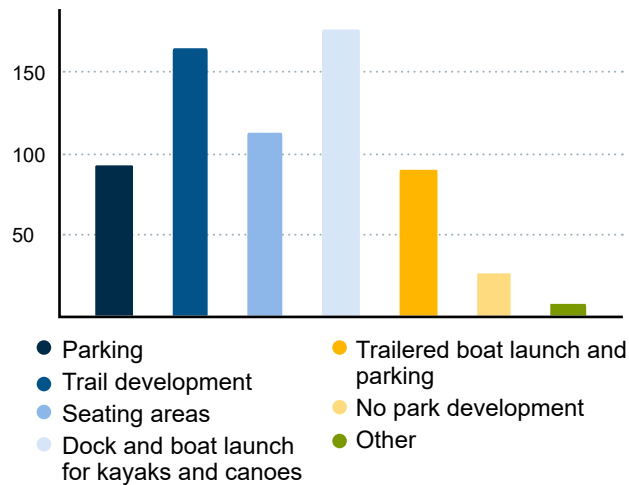
Azure and Gaspereau Park - Preferred Amenities



Azure Court Park and Gaspereau Run Park

- Respondents selected trail development (177 of 231 respondents), small playground (152 of 231 respondents), and sports courts (123 of 231 respondents) as their preferred amenities for Azure Court and Gaspereau Run Park.
- Community placemaking (47 of 231 respondents) and no park development (7 of 231 respondents) were the least popular options for park amenities.
- Participants are equally interested in seeing Azure Court Park and Gaspereau Run Park moderately developed (107 and 109 of 232 respondents).
- Respondents expressed the same amount of disinterest in leaving both parcels in their natural state (10 and 12 of 232 respondents).

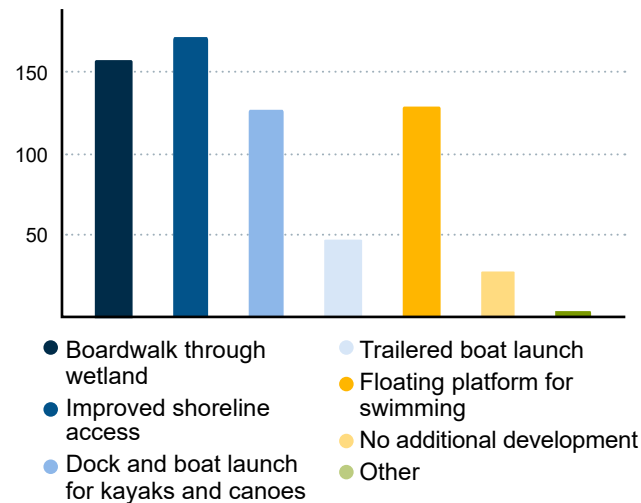
Unnamed Park 22- Preferred Amenities



Unnamed Park 22

- A dock and boat launch for kayaks and canoes (178 of 231 respondents) and trail development to the lake (164 of 231 respondents) were selected as the most important park facilities
- A trailered boat launch (89 of 231 respondents) and leaving Unnamed Park 22 undeveloped were the least popular options for proposed amenities (26 of 231 respondents).
- The majority of respondents would like to see Unnamed Park 22 moderately developed (91 of 232 respondents).
- Survey participants were not interested in leaving the park in its natural state (26 of 232 respondents).

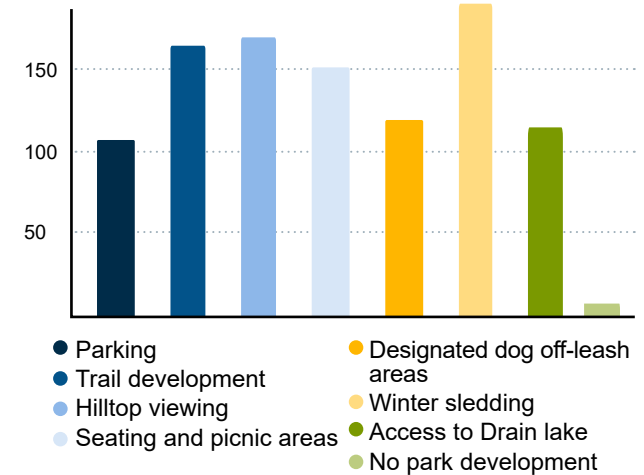
Unnamed Park 23- Preferred Amenities



Unnamed Park 23

- Improved shoreline access for wading and swimming (172 of 234 respondents) and boardwalk through the wetland (158 of 234 respondents) were the most popular park amenity options.
- Participants were the least interested in a trailered boat launch (48 of 234 respondents) and leaving the park undeveloped (28 of 234 respondents).
- The majority of respondents were interested in seeing Unnamed Park 23 moderately developed (86 of 232 respondents)
- Respondents were the least interested in leaving the park in its natural state (28 responses of 232 respondents).

Future Parkland on Bondi Drive - Preferred Amenities

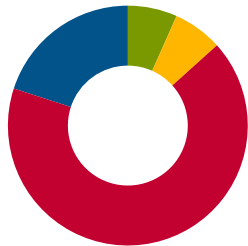


Future Parkland on Bondi Drive

- Winter sledding (191 of 232 respondents), hilltop viewing (171 of 232 respondents), and trail development (166 of 232 respondents) are the top-rated amenities participants would like to see implemented in the future parkland on Bondi Drive.
- Participants are the least interested in leaving the park undeveloped (8 of 232 respondents).
- Most respondents would like to see Bondi Drive moderately developed (112 of 232 respondents), or highly developed (69 of 232 respondents).
- Participants are not interest in seeing the parkland left in its natural state (10 of 232 respondents) or undergo a low level of park development (25 responses of 232 respondents).

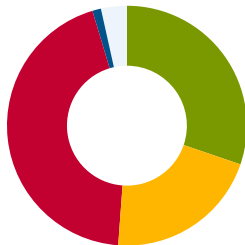
5.0 Considerations for Future Park Development

Interest in Trailered Boat Launch x Private Lake Access



Very interested (7%) Not Interested (67%)
Somewhat interested (7%) Already doing (20%)

Interest in Trailered Boat Launch x Private Lake Access



Very interested (30%) Not Interested (44%)
Somewhat interested (21%) Already doing (1%)
Don't know/not sure (3%)

Trailered Boat Launch

The subject of a public, trailered boat launch was a divisive topic amongst respondents. When asked about their interest in a trailered boat launch, almost half the respondents said they were not interested (44%) or somewhat interested (21%). 30% of respondents said they were very interested in a public boat launch.

Over half of respondents (67%) with private lakefront access are not interested in motoring or sailing small, trailered boats. While respondents without private lakefront access were more receptive to the idea of developing a boat launch for motored or sailing boats (30% were very interested and 21% were somewhat interested), almost half (44%) of respondents without private lakefront access were not interested in a trailered boat launch.

Participants stressed the size, depth, and environmental sensitivity of McCabe Lake as key concerns. Many respondents felt opening the lake to inexperienced or unfamiliar users would lead to increased safety concerns and boat crashes due to the lake's varying depths and rocky bottom. Additionally, participants stressed that the lake is too small to host people from outside the Indigo Shores community. Noise pollution, increased

litter, environmental degradation and the potential introduction of invasive species by outside boats were also cited as common concerns. Many residents would rather see a boat launch for kayaks and canoes.

"McCabe Lake is a small and relatively shallow lake. Public access to this will increase boating activity that could become dangerous and noisy like other public lakes in the area. McCabe lake is also a sensitive area for snapping turtles and changing water depths during the summer make it very challenging to navigate safely."

"We do not have a community launch for the lake. If anyone not on the lake needs access they have to carry their equipment down a long trail which is not ideal. A public launch would be perfect."

Playgrounds

Playgrounds ranked in top three most popular options when offered as a potential parkland amenity. Overall, participants stressed the need for playgrounds within walking or driving distance of their homes, and preferably built within the next years to serve the needs of the community's children.

Community gathering space to exercise/ enjoy nature

When asked how future parkland can serve the Indigo Shores Community, many participants said they would use parks as a gathering place to meet their neighbours. Beyond playgrounds, participants stressed the need for outdoor spaces where their children can play and make friends with children in the neighbourhood. Respondents suggested playing fields, passive recreational spaces, and meeting areas as suitable amenities to encourage gathering and recreating amongst community residents.

Lake Access

Many participants said lake access was an important amenity in future parkland. Beyond trailered boat launches, lake access can be provided in the following ways: Improved shoreline access, boat launch for kayaks canoes, trails to the shoreline, and swimming areas with floating docks.

Off-Leash Areas

Many respondents expressed concern about noise, safety, and litter associated with off-leash areas. However, almost half (47.7%) of participants usually visit parks with their pet and said an off-leash area would be beneficial

To minimize the number of dogs in parks and ensure future parkland is enjoyable to all park users, it is recommended that an off-leash area be assigned to a specific park in the subdivision.

Tennis and Pickleball Courts

Many respondents specified tennis and pickleball courts as a desired amenity whenever sports courts were as a suggested amenity.

Privacy, Safety and Environmental Protection

Participants were hesitant about the amount of outside traffic and privacy concerns caused by future parkland. Traffic concerns were largely related to the public boat launch, as many respondents felt people from outside the subdivision would be visiting Indigo Shores to use this amenity.

Respondents were also worried about an increase in partying, as teenagers currently use Unnamed Park 23's parking lot after-dark for illicit purposes. Participants felt further developing parks without suitable lighting or visibility may lead to an increase in these behaviours

Lastly, respondents were worried about the associated noise and views future parkland may have on their current property; many did not want to see a parking lot from their homes.

Environmental Protection

While "moderately-developed" was the preferred option for future parkland development, many participants said they would prefer if the parkland remained somewhat natural.

"McCabe Lake is a small and relatively shallow lake. Public access to this will increase boating activity that could become dangerous and noisy like other public lakes in the area. McCabe lake is also a sensitive area for snapping turtles and changing water depths during the summer make it very challenging to navigate safely."

"We are in desperate need of a playground for children. I currently need to drive across the highway to Lower Sackville to take my children to a playground. "

"There are a lot of young families in this area, most with a family dog. Folks have moved here to enjoy nature while also being close to amenities. Playgrounds, launch areas for kayaking/canoeing, trails for bike and dogs walks falls more in line with the intentions and interests of the community here."

"Privacy and consideration for nearby homeowners... We do not want to be looking at parking lots from our living room windows. There have been problems with late night parties."

"The beauty of Indigo Shores is that heavily wooded. The parks should keep the natural look of the land"

Prioritize the protection of the riparian zones - buffer areas with trees and scrubs intact. Interpretation panels for public education on biodiversity."

"...If a public launch were put in, it would lead to a dramatic increase in traffic on the water, resulting in more pollution, and more pressure on wildlife and fish population."

"[Parks should be] socially inclusive, with a balance of interactive and quiet spaces."

"Safe distances from home to nearby park (trail, bike lane) for independence"

Several respondents also mentioned the importance for maintaining riparian zones, shoreline and lake biodiversity, and buffers between the parks and the neighbouring properties. Additionally, many participants stressed an increase in boat traffic would negatively affect the overall health and biodiversity of McCabe Lake and potentially introduce invasive species.

Universal Access

6.8% (16 responses) of participants indicated they or someone in their household have a degree of physical disability, mental impairment, intellectual disability, learning disability, mental disorder, or experienced a workplace injury. Respondents made the following suggestions to accommodate residents with different needs:

- Balance of interactive and quiet spaces
- At grade, smooth surfaces
- Well-maintained trails, free of debris, roots, and other hazards
- Space to wander
- Universal access to water