

Park West School Park

What We Heard Report



July 2021

HALIFAX

OVERVIEW

Community engagement exploring the possible transfer of parkland to the province for a new school in the forested area of Park West School Park ran from May 31, 2021 to June 21, 2021. Information and a survey were hosted on the Shape Your City portal. Residents also had the option to email comments to HRM staff. For questions related to the school, residents were directed to a contact person provided by the province.

Engagement opportunities were advertised via:

- A public service announcement
- Large format on-site signage at two locations
- Mailouts to adjacent residents (450)
- Social media posts
- Digital screen presence
- Halifax.ca homepage (2 days)

The main social media outreach was via Facebook and Twitter, where over 11,000 people were reached and over 130 people engaged through link clicks, likes, shares, and retweets.

ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

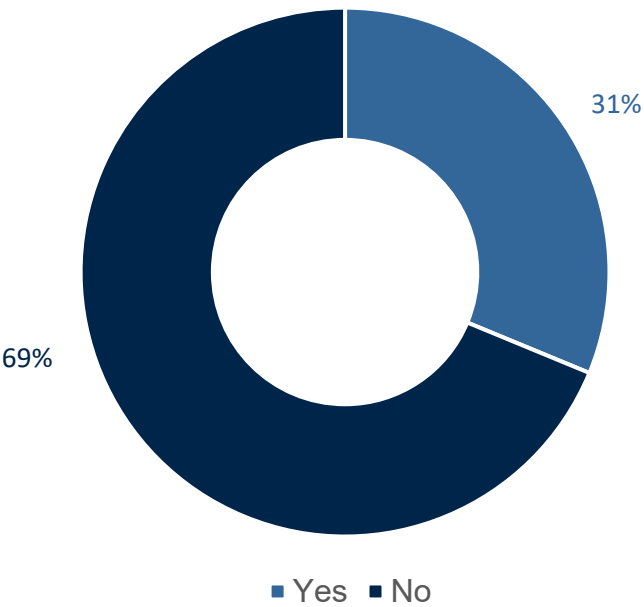
There were 380 survey respondents, over 82% were from the two postal code areas closest to the park: B3S and B3M. The majority of respondents, 69%, do not support the transfer of municipal parkland for the new public school. The loss of parkland was the most cited reason for not supporting the land transfer (244 respondents), followed by 144 who prefer an alternative location, 116 cited compatibility issues with surrounding uses and 60 had 'other' reasons (a third of these were related to concern over loss of forest and wildlife habitat).

Unique comments were left by 257 respondents. Over half of these, 138, were related to concerns around loss of parkland and associated losses of health benefits, wildlife habitat and environmental benefits (particularly considering HRM's declaration of a climate crisis). Many, 44, expressed interest in locating the school in a different location, while 43 were in favour of the Park West School Park site. Traffic and road safety concerns were cited by 37 respondents and 27 comments suggested using the existing Park West School site/building for a more creative solution rather than using the adjacent forest for greenfield development.

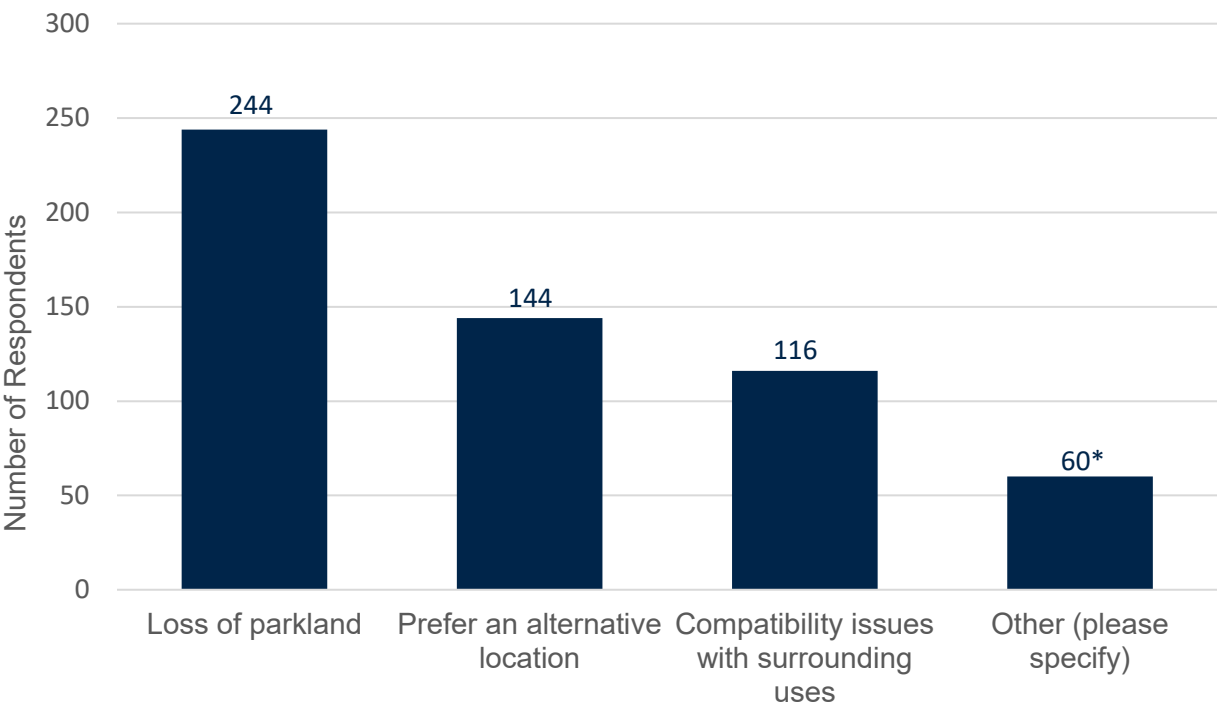
Fourteen individuals sent comments via email. One was in favour of transferring the parkland to the province for the new school, 10 were opposed and 3 were seeking additional information. The most common comments were related to concern over the loss of parkland and lack of engagement and information from the province regarding the other potential school sites they considered.

SURVEY RESULTS

Q1. Do you support the transfer of the municipal parkland for the new public school? (380 responses)

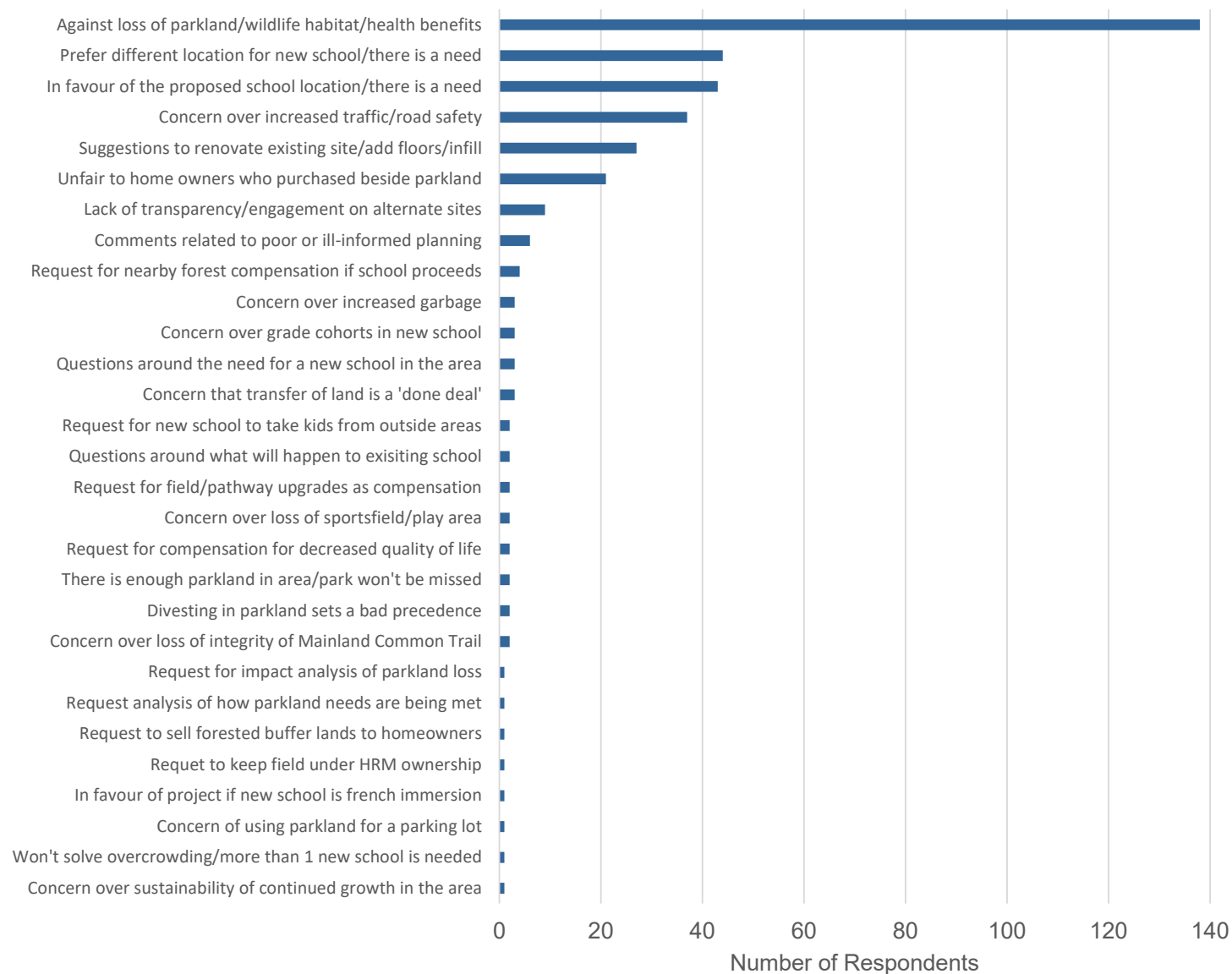


Q2. If you answered ‘No’ in question # 1 please indicate why (check all that apply):



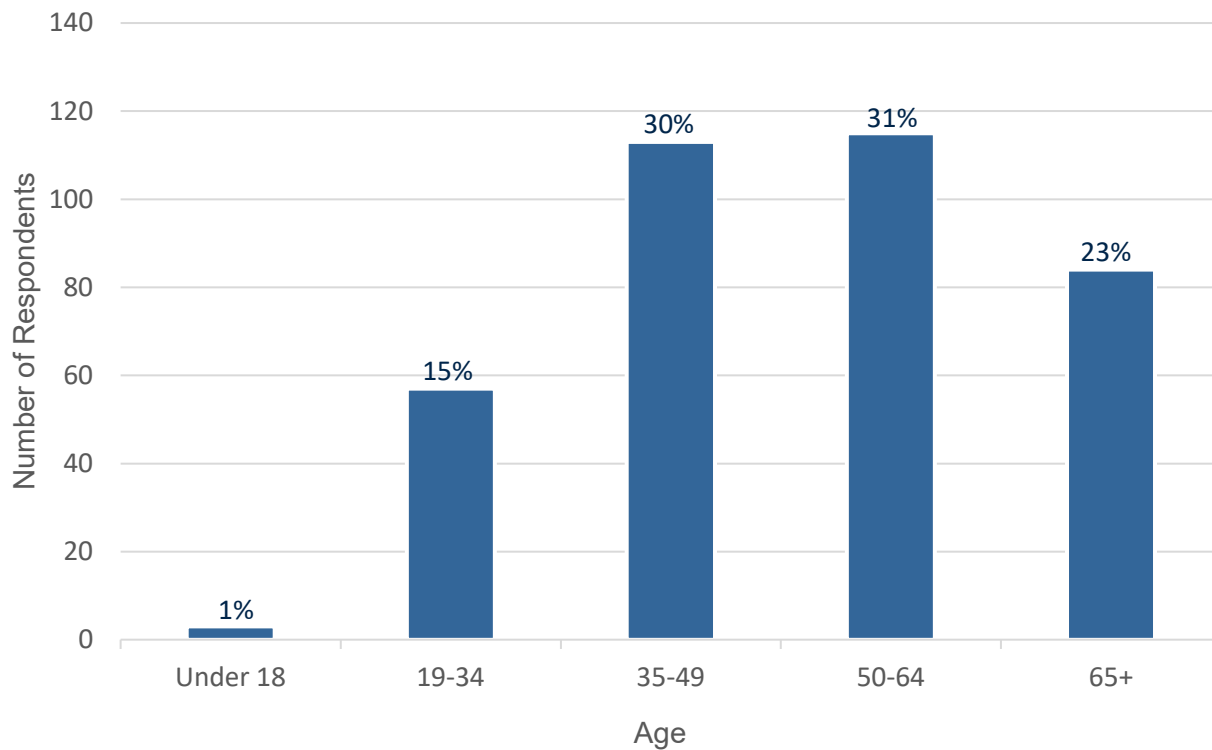
* 21 comments referred to concern over loss of forest, mature trees and habitat
13 comments were related to concern over traffic congestion
7 comments were related to concern over negative impacts to abutting residential properties
Remaining comments had 3 or fewer respondents; topics include concern over increased litter on the Mainland Common Trail, suggestions to build onto the existing school site and concern over decrease in forest health benefits.

Q3. Please add any other comments directly related to this project.*

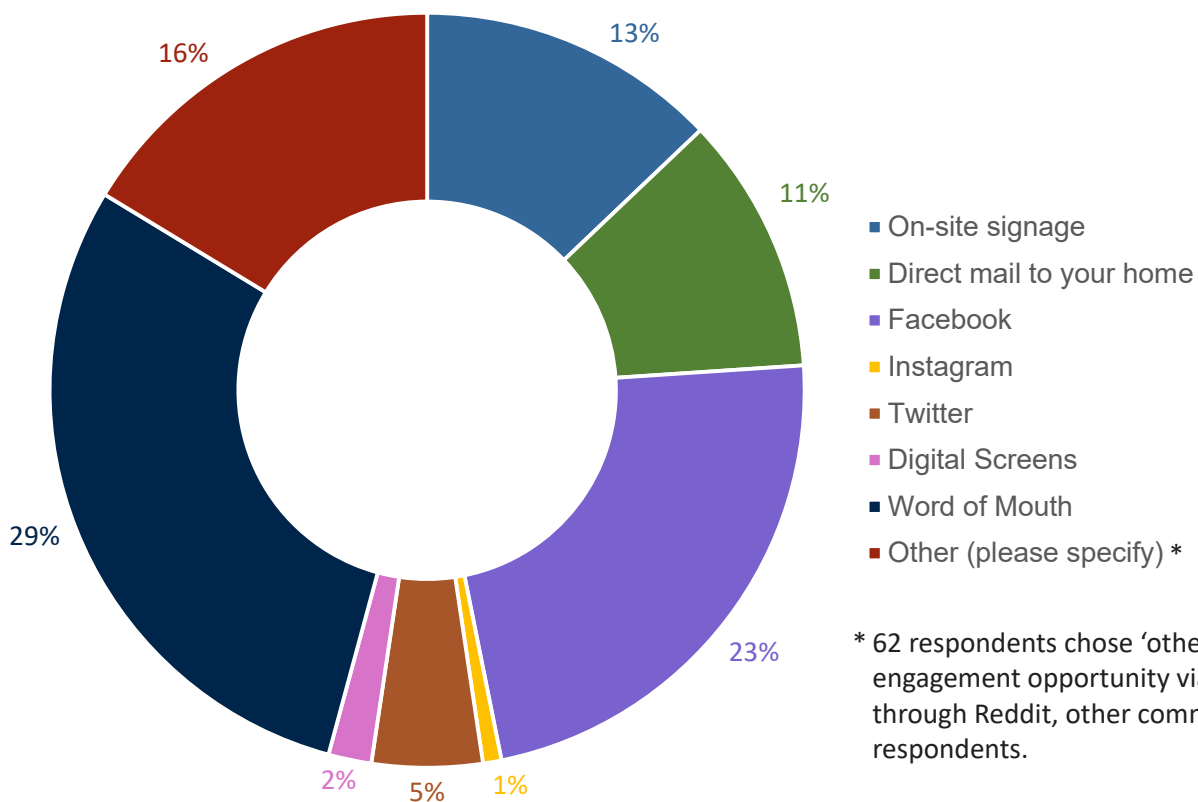


*257 respondents left detailed comments. Similar comments have been consolidated into the above categories.

Q4. Which age group do you fall in?



Q5. How did you first hear about this engagement opportunity (choose one)?



* 62 respondents chose 'other', 38 heard about the engagement opportunity via news media and 8 through Reddit, other comments had 2 or fewer respondents.

COMMENTS RECEIVED VIA EMAIL

Emails with detailed comments were received from 14 individuals. One was in favour of the transfer of parkland for the new school, 10 were against and 3 were seeking further information. One email from a resident against the transfer of parkland included supportive signatures from 5 other individuals. Residents with school-related questions were directed to the provincial contact person.

Comments are summarized below. The number in parenthesis indicates the number of individuals with similar comments.

- Concern over loss of parkland/habitat and that loss of parkland is against the UFMP and HGNP* (8)
- Concern over lack of engagement/transparency from province over other potential sites (8)
- Traffic concerns (3)
- Suggestions to build close to existing school/infill (3)
- Concern over lack of notice of engagement/lack of time for community to engage with one another (3)
- Concern over poor condition of sports field (2)
- Concern over lack of detail provided about the proposed school (2)
- Concern over changing community subdivision parkland plan (2)
- In favour of proposed school (1)
- Concern about what the school cohort will consist of (1)
- Request for compensation if parkland is converted to school (1)
- Concern that parkland divestment is a 'done deal' (1)
- Request for detailed school site plan (1)
- Questions around size of buffer that will be left (1)
- Question regarding school catchment (1)
- Request for environmental impact study on the loss of parkland (1)
- Traffic concerns specific to Turnmill Drive (1)
- Complaints about lack of park maintenance at Turnmill Road Park (1)
- Concern that amount of parkland within Clayton Park West has been overstated by staff (1)

*Urban Forest Master Plan and Halifax Green Network Plan

Several alternate locations for the new school were proposed:

- The greenspace between Costco and Kent along Lacewood/Chain Lake Drive
- Near Halifax West High School
- Along Chain Lake Drive close to the hospital expansion
- Sheffield Park
- Fairview Hills Golf Centre
- Seaton Ridge area