

An aerial photograph of the Halifax waterfront, showing residential areas, industrial zones, and the harbor. A large blue diagonal overlay covers the left and top portions of the image, serving as a background for the text.

HALIFAX

Downtown Dartmouth Waterfront Revitalization Project

What We Heard Report

Phase 1 Engagement
July 2025

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Project Overview

The Downtown Dartmouth Waterfront Revitalization Project is a comprehensive planning and public consultation process that will culminate in a Conceptual Development Plan to guide the waterfront's evolution over the next 20–30 years.

Project Background

Downtown Dartmouth and its waterfront have undergone significant transformation in recent years, marked by new housing developments, expanded commercial and retail offerings, and strategic investments in waterfront amenities. These enhancements have solidified downtown Dartmouth's reputation as a vibrant, thriving waterfront community.

In response to this growth, the need for a dedicated plan to guide the waterfront's future has become increasingly clear. On March 5, 2024, Halifax Regional Council endorsed the Downtown Dartmouth Waterfront Revitalization Project. This project includes consultation with rights holders, residents, and interest groups to co-create a shared vision for the waterfront and will ultimately result in the creation of a Conceptual Development Plan.

Project Objectives

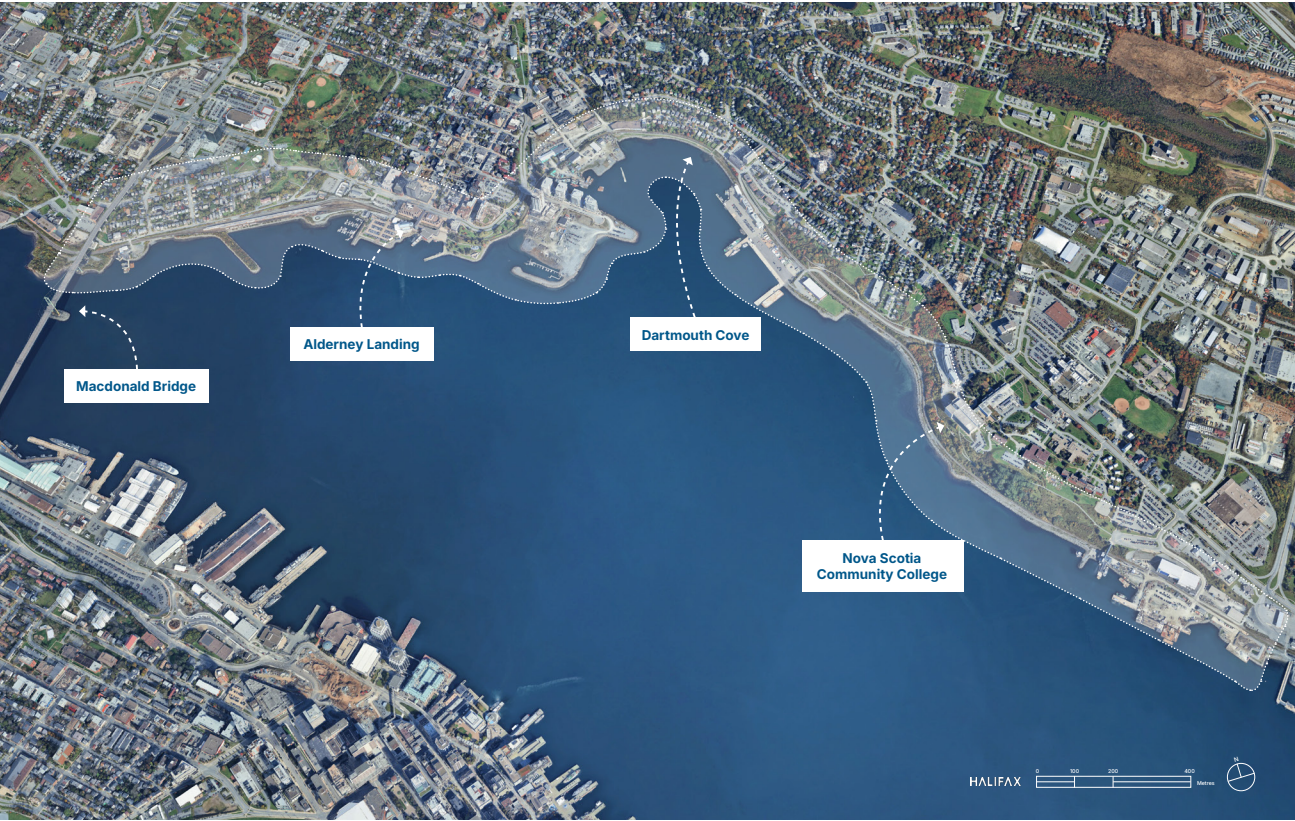
As a working waterfront with an active rail line, a core objective of this Project is to address emergency access requirements by developing a multi-functional access route with safe, grade-separated rail crossings.

Additional key objectives of this Project include:

- Enhancing **active transportation** connectivity along the waterfront, and between the waterfront and downtown Dartmouth.
- Creating enjoyable, **pedestrian-focused spaces** with landscaped areas that offer **access to nature**.
- Identifying, preserving, and **celebrating cultural heritage** along the waterfront.
- Mitigating the impacts of **climate change**, including **sea level rise**.

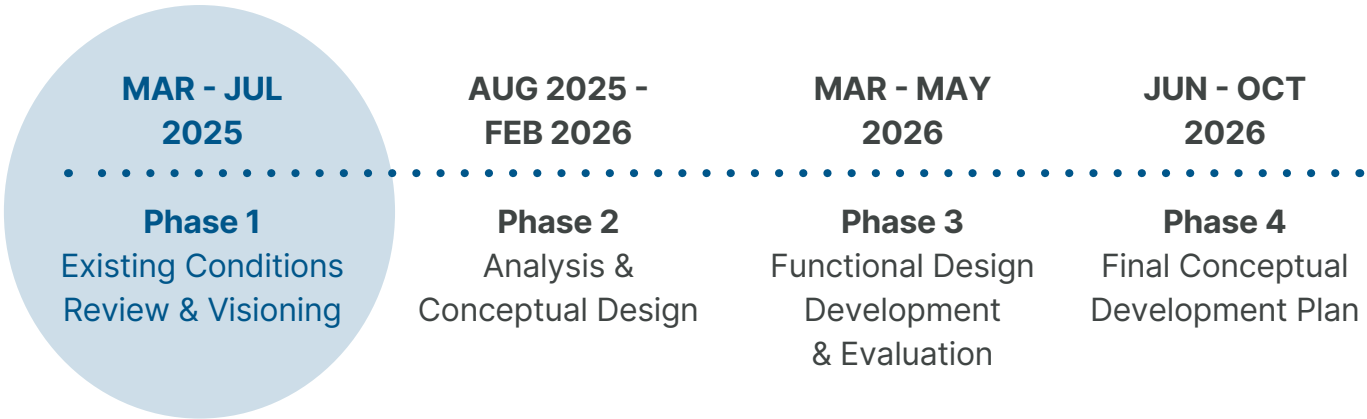
Project Study Area

The study area generally encompasses the waterfront between the Macdonald Bridge and Atlantic Street, across Alderney Landing and Dartmouth Cove, down to Woodside Ferry Terminal.



Project Timeline

The Project and Conceptual Development Plan will be developed over four phases:



Who We Engaged

Community engagement

At the heart of Phase 1 engagement is the community of people who live, work, play, and visit Dartmouth's waterfront. Ensuring their needs and visions for the future of waterfront are reflected in the final Plan is critical. Recognizing that the waterfront is both a local treasure and a regional asset, the engagement process includes the voices of Dartmouth residents as well as the wider Halifax community.

Interest group engagement

Another stream of engagement was conducted with interest groups representing diverse perspectives on the waterfront's present and future. This includes local businesses and organizations, local interest groups, advocacy groups, elected officials, landowners and developers, utilities and governmental agencies whose strategic insights about the waterfront are critical to informed planning. A summary of insights from conversations with interest groups can be found in Appendix A.

Indigenous engagement

Parallel to engagement with community and interest groups, outreach and initial conversations with organizations representing Indigenous communities has been ongoing and will continue over the duration of this project.

African Nova Scotian Engagement

Outreach and initial conversations with organizations representing African Nova Scotian communities has been ongoing and will continue over the duration of this project.

How We Engaged

In this first phase of the Project, engagement focused on building relationships, fostering a shared understanding of the waterfront's potential and challenges, and generating ideas and priorities for its future. Engagement took the form of an online survey, in-person workshop, a market pop-up, and interviews with key interest groups.

Interviews

Interviews and conversations were held with a diverse range of interest groups to gather insights about the waterfront's present challenges and future opportunities and to understand technical constraints and feasibility related to option development.

Number of meetings with interest groups: 19

Online Survey

An online survey was created to collect community input on the vision and guiding principles for the waterfront and to gather ideas to help inform key components of the plan including open space, mobility, recreational and cultural uses of the waterfront, and more.

Dates: The survey was live from Monday, May 5, 2025, to Monday, June 2, 2025

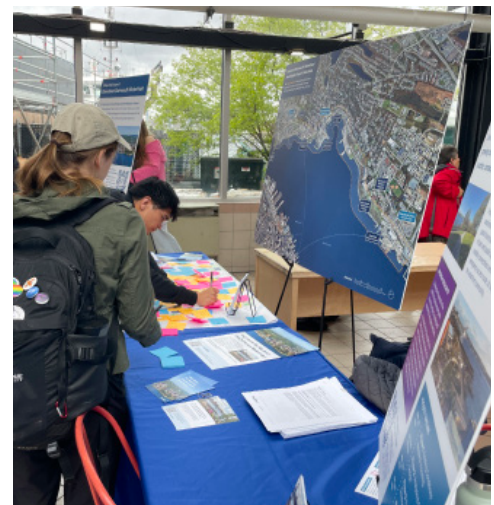
Number of survey responses: 691

Market Pop-Up

A pop-up table was set up at the Alderney Landing Market to engage community members directly in the waterfront study area. This presence not only raised awareness about the Project but also encouraged participation in the survey, ensuring diverse voices were included in the process.

Dates: Wednesday on the Waterfront Market, May 21, 2025; Saturday Farmers Market, May 24, 2025

Number of people engaged: ~100



Community Workshop

An in-person workshop was held to engage community members in shaping the future of downtown Dartmouth Waterfront. Through guided discussions, attendees explored the current strengths and unique character of the waterfront, identifying opportunities for enhancement. Key topics included mobility, open space, programming, and infrastructure, with conversations focused on the amenities needed to support future uses of the area.



Date: Wednesday, May 21, 2025

Time: Afternoon (2:30 PM – 4:30 PM) and evening (6:30 PM – 8:30 PM) sessions of the workshop were held.

Venue: Alderney Landing Theatre

Number of workshop participants: 217 (130 in the afternoon and 87 in the evening)

Promotion of Engagement Opportunities

Shape Your City webpage: The dedicated Shape Your City webpage served as a central hub for project information, offering detailed background, timelines, and engagement opportunities, including direct access to the online survey and registration for the community workshop.

Number of page views: 4.4K

Max Daily Visits: 321

FAQ Page Visits: 112

Mailout: A targeted mailout to Dartmouth residents within and around the study area provided essential project details and a personalized invitation to participate in the community workshop, ensuring broad awareness and inclusivity.

Notices Mailed: 3305

Social Media: Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter were leveraged to amplify awareness of the revitalization project, actively promoting the online survey and community workshop to engage a diverse and digitally connected audience.

What We Heard

Key Takeaways

1. The waterfront is a local treasure and beloved community asset

The downtown Dartmouth waterfront is beloved by the local community and is considered to be a treasure in Halifax. Many who participated in the Phase 1 engagement process highlighted the waterfront's scenic trails and natural beauty as strengths to be protected and enhanced. The easy access to the waterfront on the Dartmouth side creates unique opportunities to connect with the harbour – to “touch the water” as one community member shared – and contributes to the overall quality of life that Dartmouth residents are proud of.

2. Connecting and activating the waterfront remain key challenges

Community members were clear-eyed and consistent in naming the challenges that need to be resolved in order to unlock the waterfront's full potential. The top challenges identified through the Phase 1 engagement process include:

- **Gaps in trail connectivity:** Disconnected trails along the waterfront hinder seamless movement, and there is a lack of safe, accessible connections into surrounding neighborhoods and over the CN rail line.
- **Accessibility and safety concerns:** Uneven surfaces, physical barriers, and poor lighting limit access for all users, particularly those with mobility aids or strollers, while safety concerns prevent full enjoyment of the space.
- **Lack of waterfront amenities and things to do:** Limited seating, gathering spaces, and nature-focused elements reduce opportunities for leisure and connection, and there is a desire for more food and beverage options, cultural programming, and events.
- **Balancing growth with preservation:** Ensuring new development enhances the waterfront without overshadowing its natural beauty, cultural heritage, or community character, and addressing the impacts of climate change, such as sea level rise.

3. An emerging vision for the future of the waterfront

Responding to the challenges outlined above, community members shared ideas and keywords to create a shared vision for the future of the waterfront. Hundreds of ideas were shared, reflecting the values, feelings, and attributes that people wish to see the waterfront embody. Some of the keywords that define the community's vision include:

**Safe | Accessible | Green | Sustainable | Inclusive | Welcoming | Connected | Relaxing
Fun | Vibrant | Clean | Friendly | Beautiful | Inviting | Nature | Culture | and more...**

Community members were generous in sharing suggestions for waterfront amenities, activities and experiences needed to bring this vision to life. Some of the ideas suggested include:

- **Nature and Green Spaces:** Parks, naturalized areas and community gardens.
- **Passive Leisure:** Benches, picnic areas, boardwalks, and shaded gathering spots.
- **Recreation:** Multi-use paths, playgrounds, dog parks, and spaces for active uses.
- **Food, Beverage and Retail:** Markets, food trucks, restaurants, patios, retail options.
- **Entertainment:** Festivals, live music, movies in the park, community programming.
- **Arts and Culture:** Public art, murals, interactive installations, light festivals.
- **Heritage:** Interpretive elements honouring Dartmouth's rich cultural heritage.

Dartmouth Waterfront Today

This section captures perspectives on the current state of the downtown Dartmouth waterfront, summarizing the strengths and challenges identified by workshop participants, and highlighting accessibility and safety considerations shared by survey respondents.

Note on the presentation of survey and workshop results:

Given the overlap between some of the questions asked in the online survey, community workshop, and pop-up event, the outputs and findings from these engagement activities have been grouped into thematic sections.

Strengths and Challenges

Workshop participants were asked what they believe the waterfront's greatest strengths are, and conversely, what they believe are the most significant challenges that need to be addressed to unlock the waterfront's full potential.

Strengths were defined as features that make the waterfront unique, things about the waterfront that people cherish, and things that should be preserved and built upon. Challenges were defined as things that are potentially holding the waterfront back that need to be improved to make the waterfront a more desirable place to spend time.

Waterfront strengths

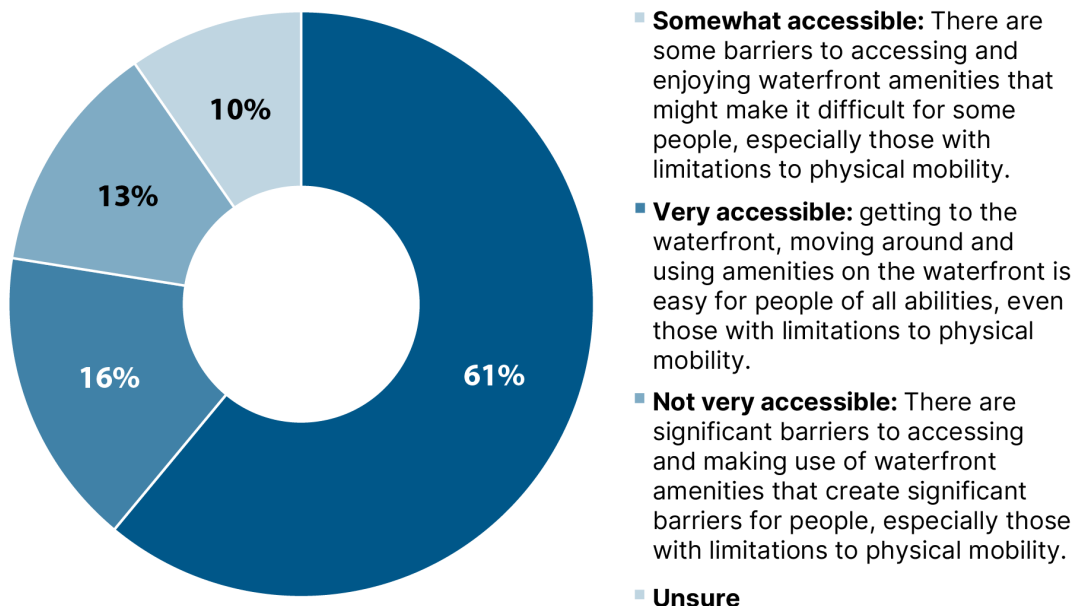
- Trails and walking paths along the waterfront.
- The ability to access the waterfront from downtown Halifax and other parts of Dartmouth.
- Connections with nature and greenspace and the harbour.
- Special events, markets and cultural programming, especially at Alderney Landing.
- Views of the harbour and downtown Halifax from the Dartmouth waterfront.
- The waterfront's perceived community-oriented and relaxed atmosphere.

Waterfront challenges

- Gaps in trail connectivity.
- Concern about infill around Dartmouth Cove.
- Lack of safe access over the rail line.
- Safety concerns around lack of lighting, general state of repair of some areas under construction, poor site lines around Alderney Landing, and encampments
- Lack of direct water access (e.g. for kayaking or personal boating).
- Traffic congestion.
- Lack of retail, food and beverage options, or things to see and do.
- Lack of designed green spaces.

Accessibility Considerations

Survey respondents were asked to rate the accessibility of downtown Dartmouth's waterfront on a three-point scale ranging from 'not very accessible', to 'somewhat accessible', to 'very accessible', with 'unsure' as an alternate option.



Answered: 685 | Skipped: 6

61% of respondents indicated that they felt the waterfront was only 'somewhat accessible' due to the presence of barriers that make it difficult for some people to access and enjoy the waterfront. A further 13% indicated they felt the waterfront was 'not very accessible', with significant barriers for people with mobility issues.

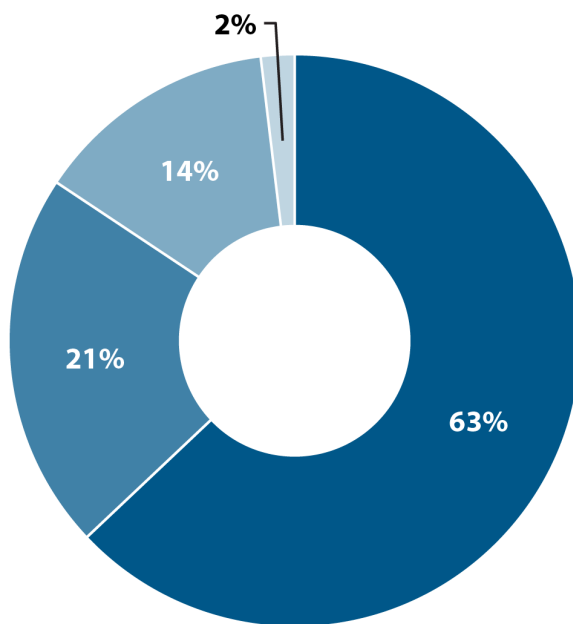
Respondents were invited to share specific accessibility issues or improvements that would make it easier to get to, move around, and utilize waterfront amenities. 309 responses were shared. The following is a summary of the most common themes:

- **Railway tracks:** Railway tracks were cited as a significant barrier, impeding access and connectivity of the waterfront, with many calling for safer pedestrian crossings.
- **Uneven surfaces:** Several respondents noted that sections of the wooden boardwalks around Alderney Landing are uneven, making it difficult for people with strollers or mobility aids to use.
- **Trail connectivity:** Many respondents talked about the gaps in trail connectivity along the waterfront and dead ends, making it difficult to continue travel.

- **Trail design:** Some respondents noted that sections of the waterfront trail and boardwalk should be wider. Others noted the presence of steep slopes where local roads intersect with the waterfront trail creating hazards, especially in winter.
- **Winter maintenance:** Consistent winter maintenance was cited as an issue, with timely and regular snow and ice removal being key to improving accessibility.
- **Accessibility features:** Respondents called for more accessibility features built into the waterfront, including ramps, automatic doors, and accessible bathrooms to accommodate individuals with mobility barriers.
- **Poor lighting:** Respondents noted the need for improved lighting around Alderney Landing and along the trail network to improve safety at night.

Safety Considerations

Survey respondents were asked to rate the safety of downtown Dartmouth's waterfront on a three-point scale ranging from 'not very safe', to 'somewhat safe', to 'very safe', with 'unsure' as an alternate option.



■ **Not very safe:** I have significant concerns about my safety when I am on the waterfront. My safety concerns cause me to avoid the waterfront, and I do not have confidence in the safeguards in place to protect me while I am visiting the waterfront.

■ **Somewhat safe:** There are certain times, or certain seasons or certain locations where I feel unsafe on the waterfront. I sometimes question my physical safety and am unsure about the safeguards in place to protect me while I am visiting the waterfront.

■ **Very safe:** I feel safe in the waterfront study area at different times of day and during different seasons. I do not question my physical safety, and I know there are safeguards in place to protect me while I am visiting the waterfront.

■ **Unsure**

Answered: 683 | **Skipped:** 8

63% of respondents indicated that they felt the waterfront was only 'somewhat safe' in certain locations or during different times of day or seasons. In contrast, 21% of respondents indicated they feel 'very safe' along the waterfront and feel confident in the safeguards that are in place to protect them when visiting the waterfront.

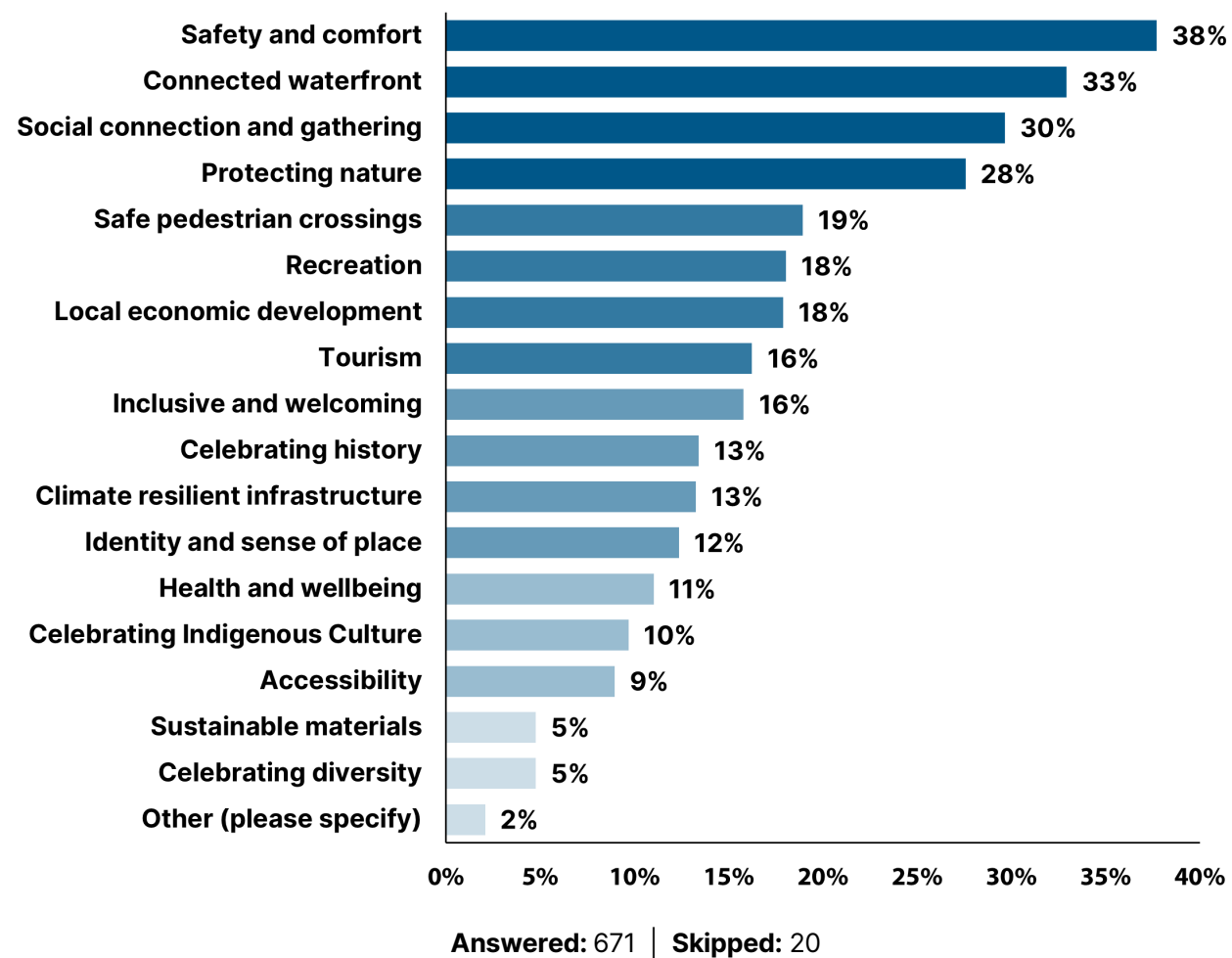
Respondents were invited to share their safety concerns, as well as specific improvements they feel could be made to enhance safety for people who visit the waterfront at different times of day or in different seasons. 400 responses were shared. The following is a summary of the most common themes:

- **Need for more lighting:** The most frequently cited issue by respondents was the lack of adequate lighting and safety concerns after dark. Many respondents said the lack of lighting in key areas made them feel unsafe and called for more lighting to be installed along trails and around buildings and secluded areas.
- **Presence of encampments:** Many respondents expressed feeling unsafe due to the presence of encampments and use of waterfront spaces by 'unhoused' people. Some respondents called for increased security presence and for compassionate services to support unhoused and vulnerable people.
- **Anti-social behavior:** Some respondents report incidents of open drug and alcohol use, aggressive behavior, vandalism and theft contributing to a general sense of insecurity. For these respondents, the presence of anti-social behaviour may discourage them from using these spaces more frequently.
- **Request for increased security presence:** To address anti-social behaviour described above, some respondents called for increased presence and visibility of police and security. A 'community policing' approach was suggested by some participants as a strategy to better support people experiencing addiction or mental health issues.
- **Traffic:** A few respondents raised concerns about pedestrian safety due to traffic volumes around the waterfront.

In addition to the safety concerns highlighted above, some respondents suggested safety could be improved through improvements to infrastructure, better designed spaces and general maintenance and care of waterfront amenities. Some respondents also suggested that activation of public spaces through programming and community-based foot patrols could help improve perceptions of safety.

Guiding Principles

In addition to the vision statement, survey respondents were invited to weigh in on guiding principles to provide direction and clarity to the waterfront revitalization project. Respondents were presented with a list of 18 guiding principles and asked to select the three principles that they felt were most important.



The four principles which received the most support broadly align with the themes which emerged in the previous vision question. These principles also align with the core project objectives as defined by Halifax Regional Council and can be seen as foundational pillars.

The top four top guiding principles are:

- Making the waterfront feel **safe** and **comfortable** for daily use at all times of year.
- Creating a **continuous** and **connected** waterfront experience.
- Providing **public spaces** that promote **social connection** and community gathering.
- **Protecting** and enhancing **nature, habitat and wildlife**.

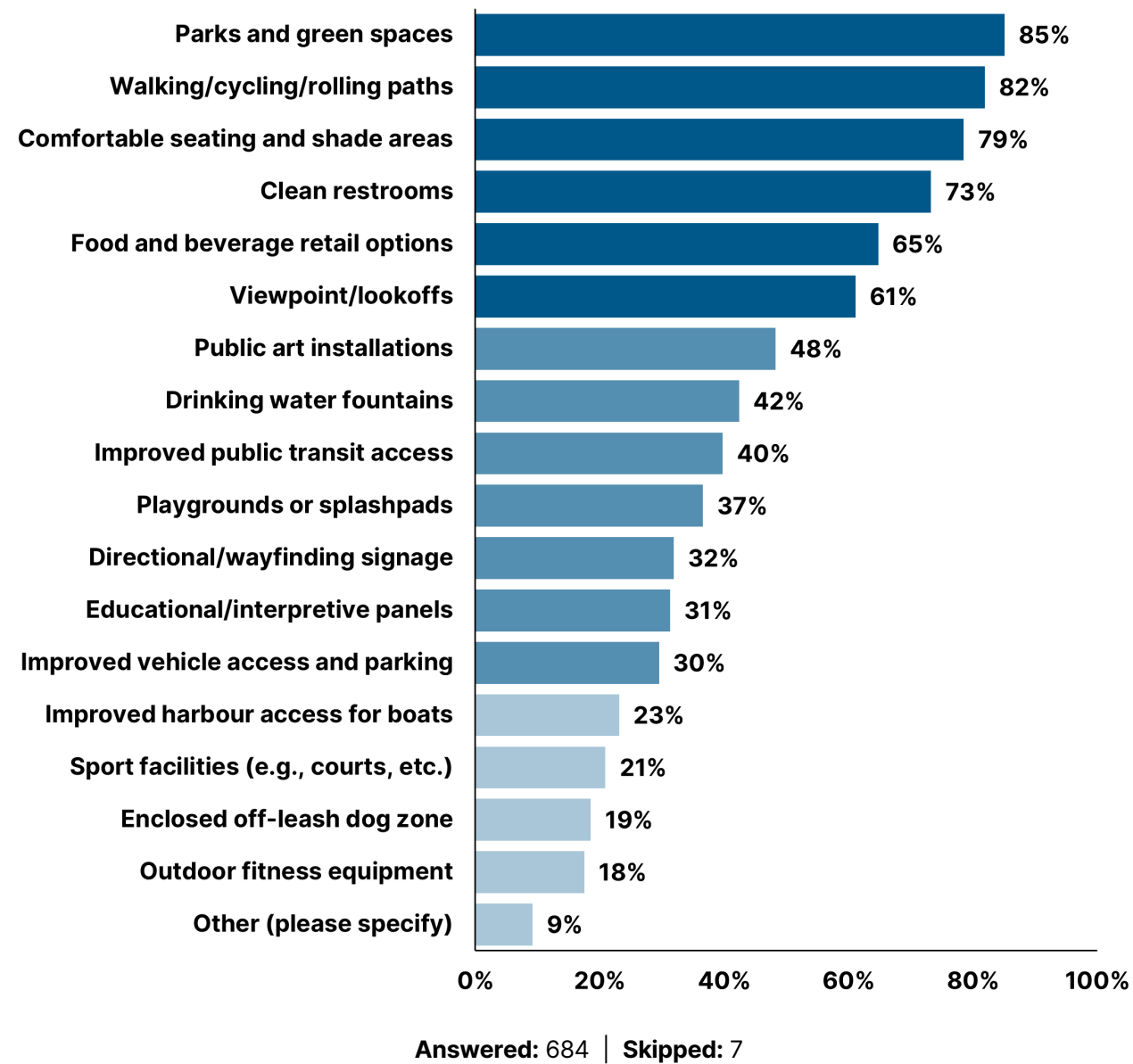
14 respondents selected 'other' as one of their top three choices. While some of these responses reflected themes already presented in the options, some respondents shared additional ideas such as:

- Limit motorized vehicles around the waterfront
- Improve parking options in the area
- Improve public transit connectivity to the waterfront
- Create space for the celebration of Indigenous heritage
- Create more opportunities to interact with the water

Waterfront Amenities and Experiences

Waterfront Amenities

Survey respondents were presented with a list of 17 waterfront amenities and asked to choose the amenities that would encourage them to spend more time on the waterfront.



The top six amenities selected by a minimum of 50% of respondents include:

- Parks and green spaces
- Walking/cycling/rolling paths
- Comfortable seating and shade areas
- Clean restrooms
- Food and beverage retail options
- Viewpoints/lookoffs

These choices suggest a preference for waterfront amenities which promote passive leisure and social connection. The amenities which received the least amount of support were more active and recreational in nature such as sports facilities, boat launches, and outdoor fitness amenities.

Other ideas for waterfront amenities

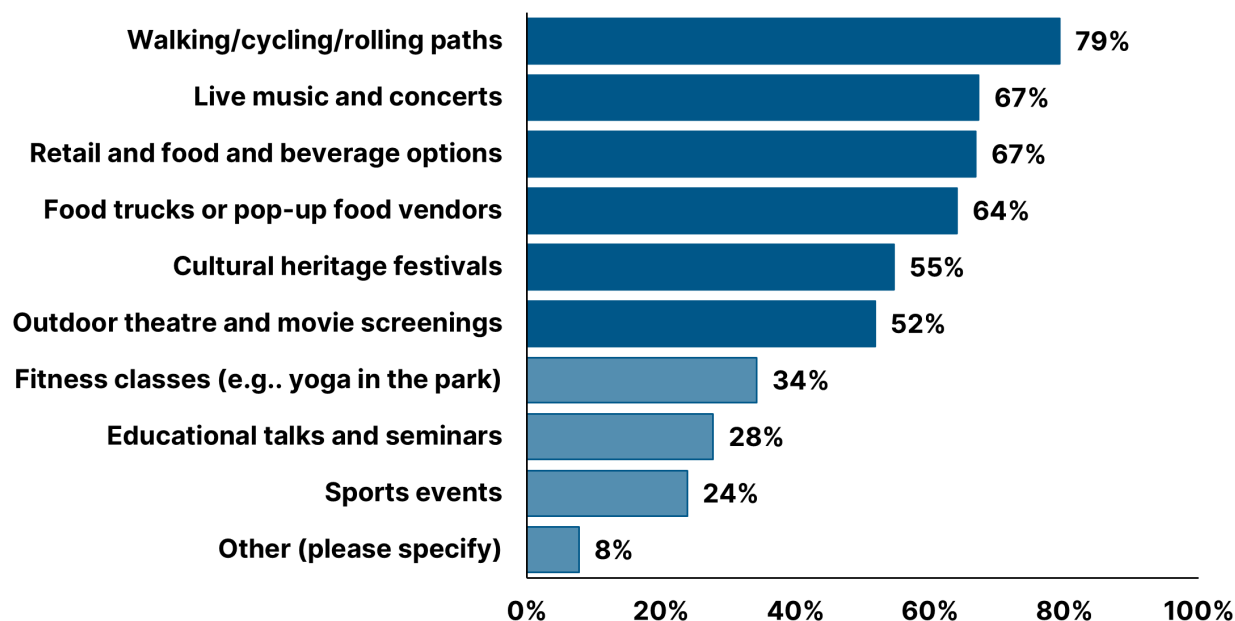
Other ideas for waterfront amenities were shared by survey respondents in the comments to this question as well as by participants who attended the workshop and market pop-up. These ideas have been grouped and summarized in the table below.

Nature & Green Spaces	Passive Leisure	Active Recreation	Retail & Food/Drink
Parks	Benches and seating	Trails / multi-use paths	Restaurants
Landscaped areas	Picnic tables / shelters	Playgrounds	Cafes / Bars
Naturalised areas	Grassy areas for gathering	Splashpads	Patios
Public botanical gardens	Public chess boards	Fenced-in dog park	Food hall / market space
Arboretum	Shade structures	Outdoor fitness area	Grocery store
Community gardens	Cooling mist sprayers	Outdoor ice rink / Ice trail	Retail options
Urban farm	Adirondack chairs	Outdoor pool	Beer garden
Natural shoreline	Hammocks	Court sports (basketball, pickleball, tennis, volleyball, etc.)	Brewery
Flood mitigation measures	Piers / wharfs for strolling	Skateboard park	Community oven
Urban beach	Boardwalk / Floating dock	Harbour swimming dock	BBQ pits
Outdoor learning centre	Outdoor fire pits	Kayak rentals	
		Zipline / Ropewalk	

Heritage & Community	Arts & Entertainment	Transit & Mobility	Safety & Convenience
Historical plaques	Public art	Shuttle service	Water ambulance
Interpretative signage	Mural / Graffiti wall	Water taxis	Emergency stations
Commemoration of Black and Indigenous history	Artist studios	Bike rentals	Wayfinding / Signage
Amphitheatre / Bandstand		Bike storage	Information panels
Multi-purpose stage		Pedestrian crossings over the rail line	Public Wi-Fi access
Wellcome Centre		Light rail / Monorail	Garbage bins
Museum of Dartmouth		Underground parking	Washrooms
Rentable spaces		Ferry to the Georges and McNabs islands	Trail lighting
Tool library / Repair site			
Expanded library			

Waterfront Experiences

Survey respondents were presented with a list of 9 waterfront activities and asked to choose the activities that would draw them to spend more time on the waterfront.



Answered: 681 | Skipped: 10

The top six experiences selected by a minimum of 50% of respondents include:

- Walking/cycling/rolling paths
- Live music and concerts
- Retail and food and beverage options
- Food trucks or pop-up food vendors
- Cultural heritage festivals
- Outdoor theatre and movie screenings

These results align with several of the amenities shared by respondents in the previous question. Live events, cultural programming and food, beverage and retail options are a top draw for survey respondents, with more active recreational events ranking lower.

Other ideas for waterfront experiences

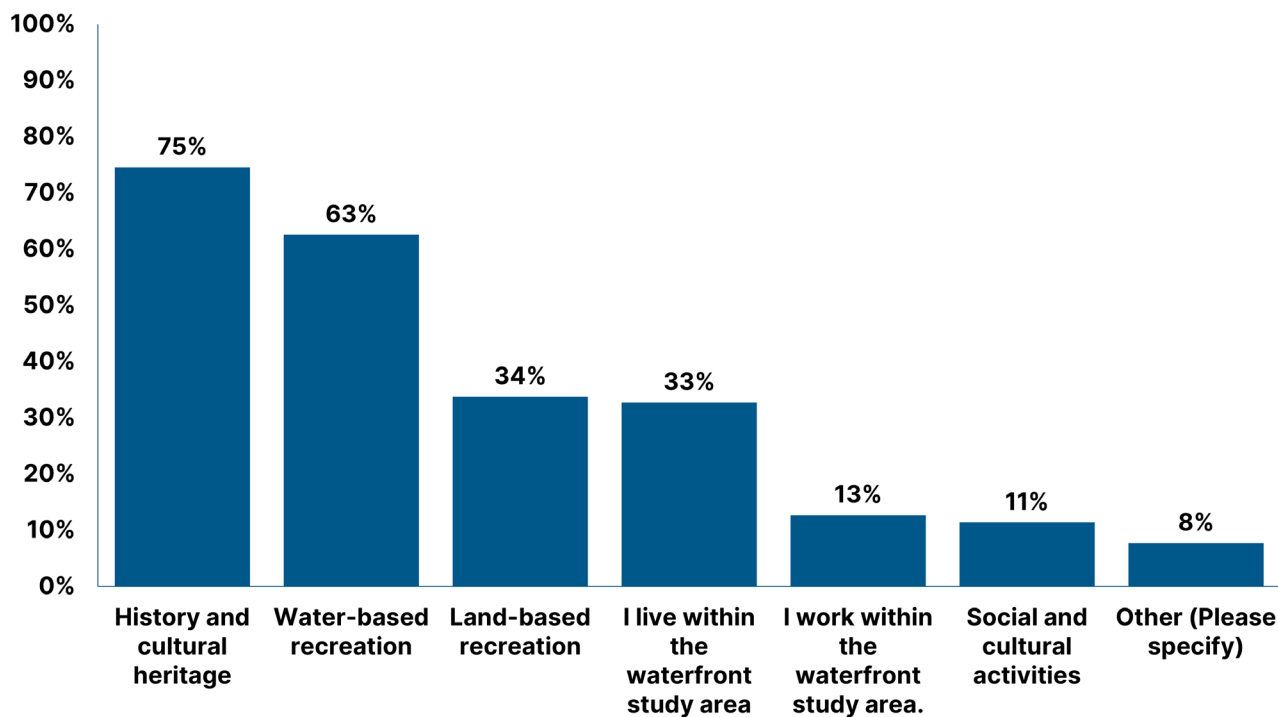
Other ideas for waterfront experiences were shared by survey respondents in the comments to this question as well as by participants who attended the workshop and market pop-up. These ideas have been grouped and summarized in the table below.

Passive Leisure	Active Recreation	Retail & Food/Drink
Walking	Cycling	Cultural food festivals
Bird watching	Winter skating	Community dinners
Sunbathing	Harbour swimming	Food tours
Outdoor painting	Kayaking	Maker markets
Tai chi lessons	Volleyball and badminton	Night markets
Fishing	Frisbee throwing	Seasonal markets
	Youth programming	Food trucks
		Ice cream vendors
Heritage & Community	Arts & Entertainment	
Interpretive walks	Music in the park	Fireworks
Bike repair clinics	Movies in the park	Dance parties / Raves
Educational programs	Theatre in the park	Carnival / Midway
Cultural heritage festival	Outdoor dance lessons	Music festivals
Bookable outdoor spaces	Buskers	Outdoor maze
'Third' spaces to gather	Light festivals	Aquarium
	Drone light shows	Casino

Waterfront Usage and Demographics

Reasons for visiting the waterfront

Survey respondents were asked to share their connection to the waterfront study area.



Answered: 684 | Skipped: 7

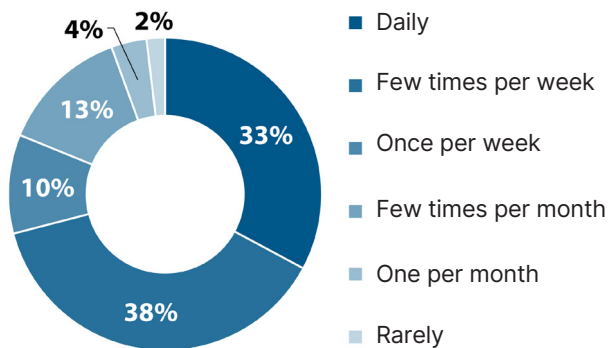
The top selected reasons for visiting the waterfront are ‘to feel connected to the history and cultural heritage’ of the area, followed by visiting the waterfront for water-based recreation. Slightly less than half of respondents (311 out of 684) indicated that they live within the study area (224) or work within the study area (87).

Of the respondents who selected ‘other’, many clarified that they live in Dartmouth near the waterfront but not within the waterfront area, or that they visit the area for a different reason such as to visit the library or to drop-off children at daycare.

Frequency of visits in summer vs. winter

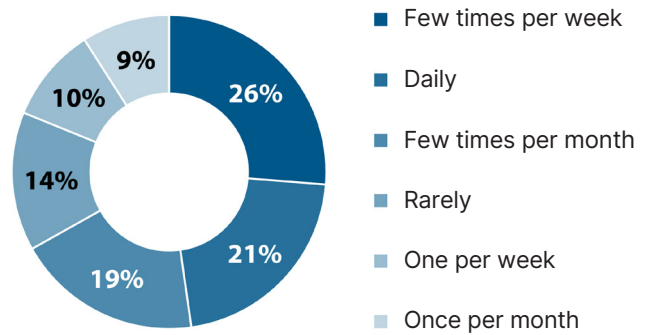
Survey respondents were asked to indicate how frequently they visit the waterfront during the summer months versus winter months. A combined total of about 70% of respondents indicate that they visit the waterfront either daily or a few times per week during the summer. This number drops in the winter months, with only 47% of respondents indicating that they visit the waterfront daily or a few times per week.

Summer months



Answered: 685 | Skipped: 6

Winter months



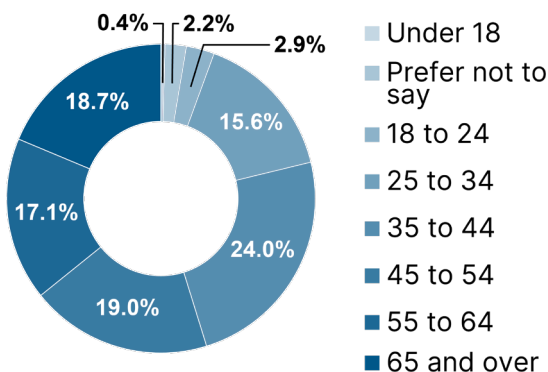
Answered: 685 | Skipped: 6

While some respondents report that they rarely visit the waterfront in the winter months, a sizable percentage indicate that they continue to visit at least a few times per month or on a weekly or monthly basis. This suggests the waterfront is perceived and enjoyed as a four-season destination.

Age and gender identity of survey respondents

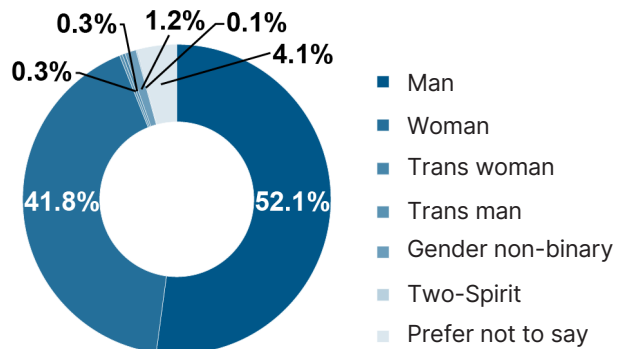
Nearly half of respondents were in the 34-54 age bracket. Another 35% of respondents were older than this, in the 55+ demographic, and about 20% of respondents were younger. Slightly more women responded to the survey than men.

Age



Answered: 685 | Skipped: 6

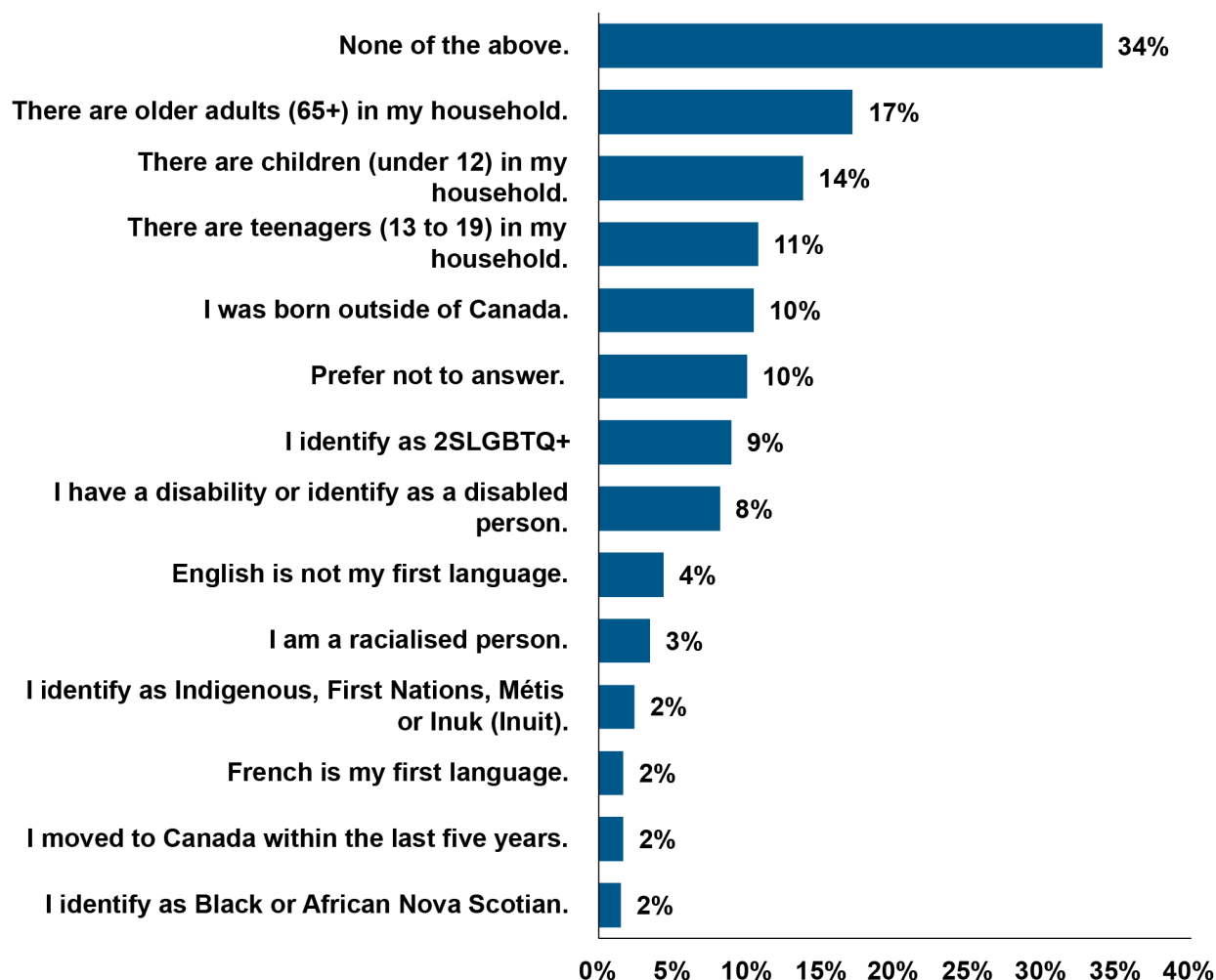
Gender



Answered: 685 | Skipped: 6

Demographic identifiers

Survey respondents were asked to self-report on key demographic identifiers. A third (34%) of respondents did not identify with any of the listed categories. Many respondents indicated whether there were older adults (17%), children (14%) or teenagers (11%) in their households. Additionally, 10% of respondents were born outside of Canada, 9% identify as 2SLGBTQ+, and 8% identify as having a disability.



Answered: 659 | Skipped: 32

Appendices

Appendix A: Summary of Interest Group Interviews

Overcoming the Barrier of the Rail Line

A dominant theme emerging from interest group discussions is the physical and psychological barrier created by the CN rail corridor, which runs parallel to the shoreline. Unlike other waterfronts in the region that have evolved into continuous public spaces, Dartmouth's is fragmented and inward-facing.

Interest groups strongly advocated for long-term solutions to move or mitigate the impact of the rail line, which currently hinders waterfront access, development, and activation. The success of King's Wharf—where development has "leapfrogged" the railway to create a dense, animated node—serves as both a model and a provocation: if it can be done there, why not elsewhere?

A Continuous and Climate-Resilient Waterfront Trail System

The waterfront is seen as a prime location to enhance and expand active transportation networks. Interest groups proposed a new waterfront branch of the Trans Canada Trail, tying together key destinations and linking into regional systems such as the Shubenacadie Trail and the Atlantic View Trail. These connections would support both recreation and commuting by foot and bike.

Equally important is climate resilience. As the city plans for the next century, shoreline design must account for rising sea levels, storm surge, and erosion. This includes elevating public spaces, incorporating green infrastructure, and allowing for adaptable edge conditions.

Reimagining the Emergency Trail Corridor

Currently envisioned as a shoreline access route for emergency vehicles, the emergency trail was seen by interest groups as a dual-purpose opportunity. In some areas, it could function as a publicly accessible road or shared street; in others, as a multi-use path with restricted vehicular access. The design of this corridor should maximize public benefit while respecting emergency requirements—offering not just infrastructure, but experience.

Reconnecting Downtown with the Waterfront

Interest groups repeatedly emphasized the need to create stronger physical and experiential connections between the urban core and the shoreline. This could be achieved through:

- Improved pedestrian and cycling infrastructure across the rail corridor.
- New public gathering spaces that serve as extensions of the downtown street grid.
- Active use destinations such as cafes, restaurants, and waterfront programming, that extend the vibrancy of Portland Street to the harbour's edge.
- Reconnecting downtown with the waterfront isn't simply about physical access—it's about reintegrating the waterfront into the everyday life of the city.

Strategic Infill and New Development

Interest groups identified strategic infill as a major opportunity to reshape the waterfront. Between King's Wharf and the COVE (Centre for Ocean Ventures & Entrepreneurship), underused parcels present options for new residential, commercial, and public space developments. These should focus on mixed-use, mid-rise urban forms that are climate-resilient and architecturally responsive to their maritime context. There was enthusiasm for a phased approach to development, beginning near downtown where existing infrastructure and foot traffic can support early activation.

Reimagining Alderney Landing and Civic Uses

Alderney Landing was frequently mentioned as a site of untapped potential. Interest groups supported its rejuvenation, including:

- A new 1,800-seat performance venue, as explored in a feasibility study.
- Underground parking, enabling the surface to be used as a plaza or event space.
- Improved pedestrian access and clearer wayfinding, especially for cruise and ferry passengers.
- Demolishing or repurposing Alderney Gate, which is seen as an underperforming civic asset in a high-potential location.

There was consensus that Alderney should serve residents first, not just tourists—a waterfront “by and for Dartmouth” rather than a replica of Halifax.

Getting People to the Water

Water access emerged as a central theme, with interest groups advocating for more ways to get people physically into or onto the water. Ideas included:

- Kayak and canoe launches.
- Designated swimming areas.
- Seasonal floating docks.
- Public wharves for fishing and water taxi use.

Planning for Cruise Tourism and Marina Expansion

The potential for two new Oasis-class cruise berths near the waterfront was discussed as a significant opportunity and challenge. Interest groups highlighted the need to:

- Design arrival points that are welcoming and integrated with the local context.
- Ensure tourist infrastructure supports local business without overwhelming the area.
- Balance maritime activity with public space needs.

Additionally, expanding the existing marina—or developing multiple marinas—was seen as a way to encourage recreational boating and reinforce the identity of Dartmouth as a working waterfront.

Expanding COVE and the Blue Economy

COVE was widely praised as a critical innovation anchor with national and international relevance. Interest groups suggested its role as a marine research hub could be expanded through partnerships with academic institutions, expanded water access for testing and demonstration, and the clustering of related marine tech firms. COVE's presence also provides an opportunity to infuse the waterfront with a sense of cutting-edge identity—linking Dartmouth's industrial past with its innovation future.

Celebrating Authentic History and Culture

Interest groups emphasized that the new waterfront must feel unmistakably “Dartmouth.” The goal is not to replicate another city’s waterfront, but to create a place that resonates with Dartmouth’s unique past and aspirational future. This includes integrating:

- Historical references to shipbuilding, fishing, and local industry.
- Public art and interpretation that tells diverse community stories, including Indigenous and African Nova Scotian heritage.
- Architecture and materials that reflect maritime traditions and local craft.
- Dedicated Mi’kmaw spaces for ceremony, cultural celebration, and storytelling.
- Recognition of residential school survivors, potentially through commemorative spaces.
- Interpretive elements connected to the Shubenacadie Canal and historic Mi’kmaw travel routes.

Appendix B: Most Frequent Waterfront Vision Words

211	safe	20	safety
162	accessible	19	peaceful
104	relaxing	18	people
93	natural	18	trail
52	community	18	walking
45	connected	17	inviting
45	fun	17	local
45	vibrant	17	playgrounds
43	sustainable	15	space
41	inclusive	15	music
40	tourism	15	views
37	friendly	14	art
35	active	14	history
35	clean	14	parks
35	green-spaces	14	play
35	welcoming	14	trees
33	social-spaces	13	free
32	water	12	culture
32	cultural	12	harbour
27	food	12	housing
27	social	12	open
26	beautiful	12	public
25	exciting	12	walkable
24	heritage	11	comfortable
21	family	11	destination



HALIFAX