



Public Involvement Outcomes Report

Comprehensive Plan Update

July 2019

Prepared by:



Introduction

From May 31, 2019 through June 30, 2019, the Bainbridge Island Metropolitan Park & Recreation District (Park District) invited those who utilize Bainbridge Island park and recreation facilities and programs to become involved in updating its [Comprehensive Plan—Parks, Recreation & Open Space \(2014\)](#). The Plan is updated every six years, which sets the due date for the next update in 2020.

To gain public perspectives on the Plan update, the Park District hosted two public meetings on June 1 and 4, 2019, and hosted an online forum that extended from May 31 to June 30, 2019. The length of the appendices to this summary attest to the substantial public response to the Park District’s request for comments. This report is a high-level synthesis of the key themes discerned from the Park District’s public involvement outcomes. Because it is high-level summary, comments or topics specific to just a few people may not be included in this summary—they are, however, still contained in the project record, and easily accessible to the Park District’s staff as they continue through the planning process.

This report is organized as follows:

[Section 1. Key Themes](#)

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[Section 3. Activity Priorities](#)

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[Section 5. Proposed Aquatic Center Capital Improvement Project](#)

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Attachments:

- A. Compiled notes from the June 1 and June 4, 2019 public meetings
- B. Compiled online interactive map feedback
- C. Compiled data from the online forum’s Activity Priorities survey
- D. Compiled data from the online forum’s Program Priorities survey
- E. Compiled data from the online Proposed Aquatic Center capital improvement project survey
- F. Compiled data from the Proposed Sakai Park capital improvement project

Section 1: Key Themes

Bainbridge Island residents are passionate about their park and recreation activities, programs, and facilities. Participants provided a substantial number of detailed and insightful comments at public meetings and through the online forum.

Key themes qualitatively distilled from the comments are noted below. A concept was interpreted as a “theme” when it was reflected in three or more comments, or if it received a high/majority percentage of affirmation in survey responses. Though individual insights may not appear in this thematic description, they are no less important. Park District staff and residents are encouraged to review the attachments for the complete set of unfiltered comments.

- The two most commented topics included the proposed capital improvement projects for a replacement pool at the Aquatic Center, and development of Sakai Park.
 - While there were dissenting voices with compelling reasons, the majority of those who commented on the proposed Aquatic Center capital improvement project preferred the proposal for the 52-meter pool, and said it was a personal priority for them.
 - Respondents differed in their opinions regarding the degree of development for the proposed Sakai Park capital improvement project. Many expressed a desire for a more passive, “natural” look and feel, while others advocated for additional indoor and outdoor recreation facilities. Respondents were nearly evenly divided in terms of the project being a personal priority for them.
- Water-based and trail-based recreation are the greatest priorities for participants.
- Indoor/outdoor tennis and pickleball courts are of high interest to many.
- Mountain biking use is increasing on island trails, potentially increasing conflicts between hikers and bikers; not only from direct contact, but from the types of trails that each prefers (shared use may not always be possible or desirable).
- Dog-owners on Bainbridge advocate for their dogs. Many expressed interest in increased opportunities for off-leash trail and park use, with interesting, engaging “play features” available at dog parks.
- Non-dog owners are not always supportive about dog use on trails and within parks. Trail conflicts between hikers, mountain bikers, and dog owners surfaced in the comments, as did those using parks who did not want to encounter evidence of dogs in park lawns, or dogs not under the direct control of their people.
- While there was substantial acknowledgement of the breadth and depth of Park District programs, many requested expanded hours to accommodate more people, and work and life schedules.

Section 2. “Place-Based” Feedback (organized by location)

Both during the public meetings and through the online forum, participants responded to the invitation to provide “place-based” feedback by identifying 1) places where they currently recreated and the activities they enjoyed doing there, 2) new recreational activities and opportunities they sought for the future, and 3) other feedback about the place.

The place-based feedback captured below results from the synthesis of public comment provided from the June 1 and 4, 2019 public workshops (Appendix A contains the meeting summaries and flip chart notes from the public workshops), and the May 31-June 30, 2019 online forum (Appendix B contains information submitted through the interactive feedback map). Both Appendix A and B provide important context for the synthesized comments, and includes input from individual users that, while not necessarily repeated by other participants, is still valuable information. Readers are encouraged to examine these appendices.

The parks and facilities listed below received multiple public comments. They are organized alphabetically, and in no priority order.

2.1 Aquatic Center

Activities Enjoyed: Lap swimming, water/fitness classes, masters swimming, swimming lessons, diving tank, water polo, competitive swimming, special needs accommodation, and entertaining families and friends (particularly in Nakata Pool). The two pools at the Aquatic Center are an important component of many participants' recreational experience on Bainbridge.

New Activities: Replace the Ray Williamson pool with a larger, 50 or 52-meter pool to expand opportunities for competitive swimming, improve swimmer safety, and ease congestion and competition for lane space among the many interests that utilize the pool. Add a retractable roof installed to create an indoor/outdoor pool option. Expand open swim hours on weekends and in evenings.

Other feedback: The Ray Williamson Pool has exceeded its operational lifetime. Different age groups compete for space due to limited usage hours; there are training limitations due to the size and depth of the pool. Interest in upgrading the Aquatic Center overall to a level consistent with its importance to the water sports and greater Bainbridge community.

2.2 Battle Point Park

Activities enjoyed: Field/turf sports, tennis, pickleball, disc golf, basketball, the pump track, walking, running, picnicking, summer concerts, movies, the observatory, and the pea patch.

New Activities: Add conditional lighting to extend hours and enable expanded use of fields during winter months. Add tennis, pickleball, a couple volleyball nets (add sand in flat grass spaces, like Fay Bainbridge Park's volleyball net) and basketball courts. Enhance the pump track for more advanced riders, and/or add a jump line. Add an outdoor climbing structure.

Other feedback: Tennis courts appear to be in need of resurfacing. Pump track accommodates a wide variety of age groups.

2.3 Blakely Harbor Park

Activities enjoyed: Water access for swimming, kayaking, and paddle boarding. Some utilize the kayak storage area at the park. Hiking the connecting trail between Blakely Harbor Park and Old Mill/Fort Ward. Walking the connecting trail and quiet road between Port Blakely and Eagle Harbor.

New activities: None identified.

Other feedback: Move kayak storage closer to the concrete building (or clear some of the brush behind the kayaks and move them further off the beach). The kayak storage is positive for some, but others feel it has a negative impact on use of the beach, and is unsightly.

2.4 Cave Ave Park (proposed)

New activities: Propose creating and naming a park in the Cave parcels area in honor of a local citizen/professional arborist whom proponents feel has been an inspiration to them and a great source of knowledge on the island. Propose creating a shaded park with benches for quiet, passive enjoyment.

2.5 Fay Bainbridge Park

Activities enjoyed: Water views, picnicking, walking/hiking the beach (with or without a dog), camping, hosting family events, beachcombing, and observing wildlife.

New activities: Wildlife interpretive signage, guided interpretive walks, and beach outlook points at both the main and south beaches.

Other feedback: None provided.

2.6 Fort Ward Park

Activities enjoyed: Observing wildlife, hiking, walking their dog, picnicking, beachcombing, boat launch, enjoying kayaking, paddle boarding, and motor boating.

New activities: Wildlife/naturalist interpretive walks and signage, increased number of benches, beach outlook points. Play structure (like Schel Chelb) in northernmost section of Fort Ward parade grounds.

Other feedback: Park is particularly accessible to all ages and abilities. Add gravel to sections of trails prone to boggy during the rainy season.

2.7 Gazzam Lake Nature Preserve

Activities enjoyed: Observing wildlife, enjoying conservation of area, hiking, walking, trail running, mountain biking.

New activities: Dock built into the lake (with/without fishing), trail connections to facilitate walking/biking from the Grand Forest to Gazzam via Strawberry Hill. Add a new trail to connect Knudson and Westwood Trails.

Other feedback: Some conflicts experienced between park walkers and mountain bikers on trails (especially blind corners). Concerns regarding off-leash dogs, and user-created mountain bike trails. Parking is difficult to find at trailhead off Marshall Road.

2.8 Grand Forest

Activities enjoyed: Trail hiking/running, hiking/walking with dogs (some use trails daily, all sections of the Grand Forest). Experiencing the big trees. Observe wildlife and birds, enjoy nature and birdsong. Weekly horseback trail riding (Grand Forest-East to Battle Point) is easily accessed from equestrian barns. The Forest-to-Sky Trail noted as especially scenic and enjoyable.

New activities: Mountain biking in Grand Forest-North (less-used section of the Grand Forest and may be suitable for this use). Off-leash dog use in Grand Forest-North. Interpretive trails and signage, additional benches, naturalist tours/walks, access to information about the history and natural history of the different forest regime areas within the Grand Forest (e.g. triggered by GPS coordinates as they are passed on the trails).

Other feedback: Potentially significant wildland urban interface wildfire hazards--hazard mitigation efforts will be required to reduce wildfire hazards.

2.9 Hawley Cove Park

Activities enjoyed: Water access, water views, beachcombing (especially enjoyable during negative tides, when one can hike to the Wing Point gravel spit).

New activities: Involve youth/teens in park cleanup.

Other feedback: Walkable from downtown. Experiences some litter problems.

2.10 Madison Tot Lot

Activities enjoyed: Children playing, quiet spot in otherwise busy Winslow—convenient and walkable.

New activities: Expand and improve the existing park. Create similar “pocket parks” in other neighborhoods.

Other feedback: This park is valuable to Winslow neighbors who use it (and many do). If possible, expand and improve the park. Parking lot for the park often seems co-opted by nearby residents—improved signage would be beneficial.

2.11 Manzanita Park

Activities enjoyed: Horse trails, equestrian cross-country jumping course, walking.

New activities: Jump improvements.

Other feedback: None provided.

2.12 Sakai Park

Current uses: Hiking

Future uses: RV park, fieldhouse, indoor tennis and indoor/all-season pickleball courts

Other feedback: See synthesis of feedback regarding the proposed Sakai Park capital improvement project, page 10.

3. Activity Priorities Survey Results

The Park District surveyed those participating in the online forum regarding their priorities for categories of activities. Participants were asked to select their first and second priorities from a list of related activities. In those instances where an activity was within 3% of the top first or second priority, that activity is noted parenthetically. If an activity was chosen by 50% or more of the participants, it is listed in **BOLD**:

Table 3.1: Activity Priorities

Category of Activities	Highest First Priority <i>(within 3% of highest priority)</i>	Highest Second Priority <i>(numerically close to highest second priority)</i>
Water access	Beach combing/walking	Kayaking/canoeing/paddle boarding
Sports facilities	Tennis courts <i>(soccer fields)</i>	Pickleball courts <i>(baseball/softball/kickball fields)</i>
Trails	Hiking/walking	Bicycle
Outdoor facilities	Trails	Trails
Recreational opportunities	Aquatic activities	Outdoor programming <i>(community events)</i>
Recreational Segments	Adult programs <i>(youth, teen programs)</i>	Active adult, adult, teen programs <i>(youth programs)</i>

Category of Activities	Highest First Priority <i>(within 3% of highest priority)</i>	Highest Second Priority <i>(numerically close to highest second priority)</i>
Conservation/wildlife	Natural area restoration	Environmental education
Special use facilities	Aquatic Center	Aquatic Center, Teen Center

The highest priorities were for activities that generally could be accessed by the widest audiences, required less specialized training, and were connected in some way to water and natural resources.

Attachment C contains the complete, compiled report of the priority activities survey responses.

4. Programs Survey Results

Seventy-eight people responded through the online forum, and programs were a discussion point during the public meetings. While most responded regarding organized programs, many repeated uses they enjoy independently (non-organized). Only responses related to organized programs are noted below.

4.1 Program participation and feedback

Respondents noted participation in the following programs:

- Discover Bainbridge
- Fitness programs
- Tai Chi Chin
- Mountain-biking programs
- Youth Sports (tennis, soccer, basketball, gymnastics (traditional and non-traditional), yoga, dance)
- Swim Lessons
- Summer Camps (Fairy Camp, Lego Camp, paddling camps)
- Art programs (painting, pottery, creative writing)
- Aquatic programs (Masters, Aqua Fitness)
- Walking groups
- Dog classes
- Outdoor programs (hiking, canoeing, kayaking)

Feedback: People commented on the wide variety of programs offered by the Park District, with complimented staff who are responsive and experienced.

For families, participation often follows with the seasons (i.e. youth sports, youth camps). Those with children growing up on Bainbridge Island commented that they regularly used park programs

until their children reached 12 years old and beyond. Generally, families would like to see more teen/older teen programs available as children mature.

Adults have participated for years in swimming and fitness programs that have become central to meeting their personal fitness goals. And new residents make friends and learn about Bainbridge Island and the Kitsap and Olympic Peninsulas through evening and weekend outdoor sports and exploration programs. Some mentioned the need for more advanced skill programs (e.g. mountain biking).

Where programs depend on facilities, some identified areas of needed improvement, e.g. tennis courts in need of maintenance, overcrowding at the gymnastics facility and Aquatic Center and the opportunity to expand these programs through enlarged facilities.

Comments also included the inability of people to participate in park programs due to the associated costs and/or the times programs are offered (e.g. commuters are generally limited to weekends).

4.2 Future parks and recreation programs of interest:

- Partnering with Ovation to offer theatre classes
- More technically advanced mountain biking programs
- Voluntary bike license program to fund bike trails
- Co-ed softball program
- Expanded art program offerings and expanded hours
- Language classes
- Meditation classes
- Outdoor swimming program
- Strengthening and stretching classes for seniors
- After-school programming that extends throughout the school year

Some commented on the interest in having expanded program times in the future (for those working during the day/commuting), in addition to requests for new programs. And some comments were received asking the Park District to scale back some programs due to conflicts with other uses (e.g. kayaking in Eagle Harbor)

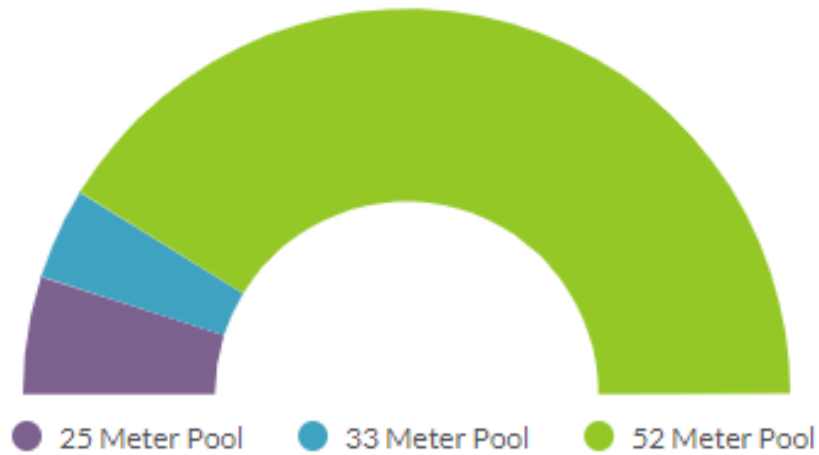
Attachment D contains the complete results of the online forum Programs survey.

5. Proposed Aquatic Center Capital Improvement Project

During the June 1 and 4, 2019 public meetings, participants received a presentation from Park District Staff regarding the proposal to replace the Ray Williamson pool with the same or larger-sized pool and associated updated Aquatic Center facilities. Meeting participants were encouraged

to go to the online forum and indicate their preferences through this mechanism. In total, 165 people completed the Aquatic Center Capital Improvement Project survey:

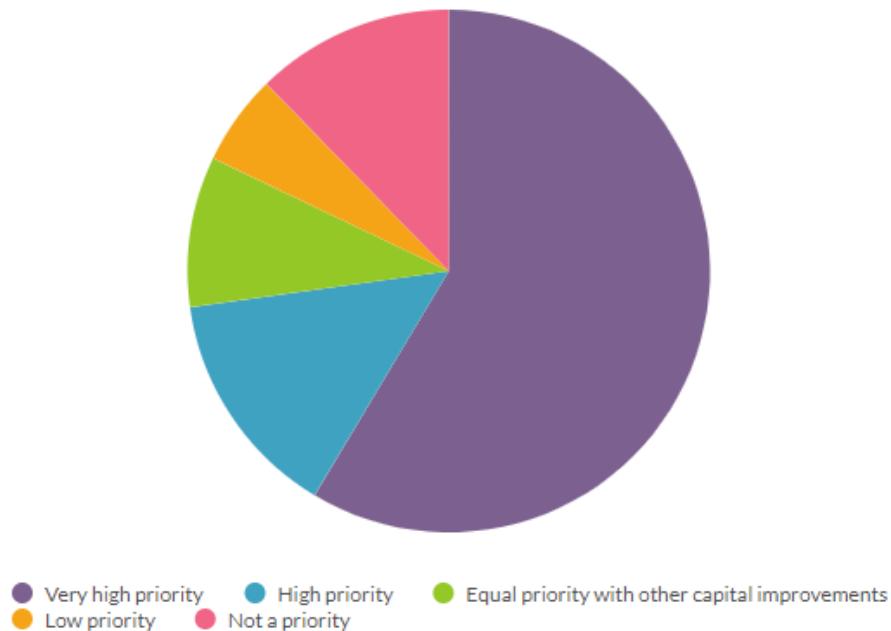
Figure 5.1 Preferred Pool Alternative



As part of the survey, participants were asked to identify which size of replacement pool they preferred:

- 82% preferred the 52-meter pool
- 8% preferred the 33-meter pool
- 10% preferred the 25-meter pool

Figure 5.2 Personal Priority for Pool Replacement



Participants were also asked to identify how high of a priority the replacement of the pool was for them:

- Very high priority = 59%
- High priority = 14%
- Equal priority with other capital improvements = 9%
- Low priority = 6%
- Not a priority = 12%

52-meter pool: Most of those who favor pool replacement stated they preferred the 52-meter pool to accommodate a greater number of simultaneous uses (e.g. lap swimming with water polo), both from a capacity and from a safety perspective, and/or to allow for competitive uses.

33-meter pool: Most who favor the 33-meter pool spoke from the perspective of available budget. They were not in favor of spending the additional tax dollars/other funding that would be required for the 52-meter pool.

25-meter pool: Those who favored the 25-meter pool (existing size) generally didn't feel the reasons for a larger pool warranted the additional cost, though several supported the need to financially support maintaining the existing pool in a safe condition. Others preferring the 25-meter pool expressed that this was not a priority for them or (from their perspective) the community and they did not wish to publicly finance such a project. Some mentioned that the park budget needs to serve many interests, and feel the larger, 52-meter pool would serve a fairly narrow set of interests.

Not a priority: There are those who did not view any of the above pool options as a priority. Some respondents stated the Sakai Park development is a higher priority for them since it provides a greater diversity of uses, and that they would prefer to see financial resources support that capital improvement project first, rather than a replacement pool.

Attachment E contains the complete report of the proposed Aquatic Center Capital Improvement Project survey responses.

6. Proposed Sakai Park Capital Improvement Project

During the June 1 and 4, 2019 public meetings, participants received a presentation from Park District Staff regarding the proposal to develop Sakai Park. Meeting participants were encouraged to go to the online forum and indicate their responses to four questions through this mechanism. In total, 215 people completed the Sakai Park Capital Improvement Project survey.

Figure 6.1 Potential Sakai Park Elements of Greatest Personal Interest

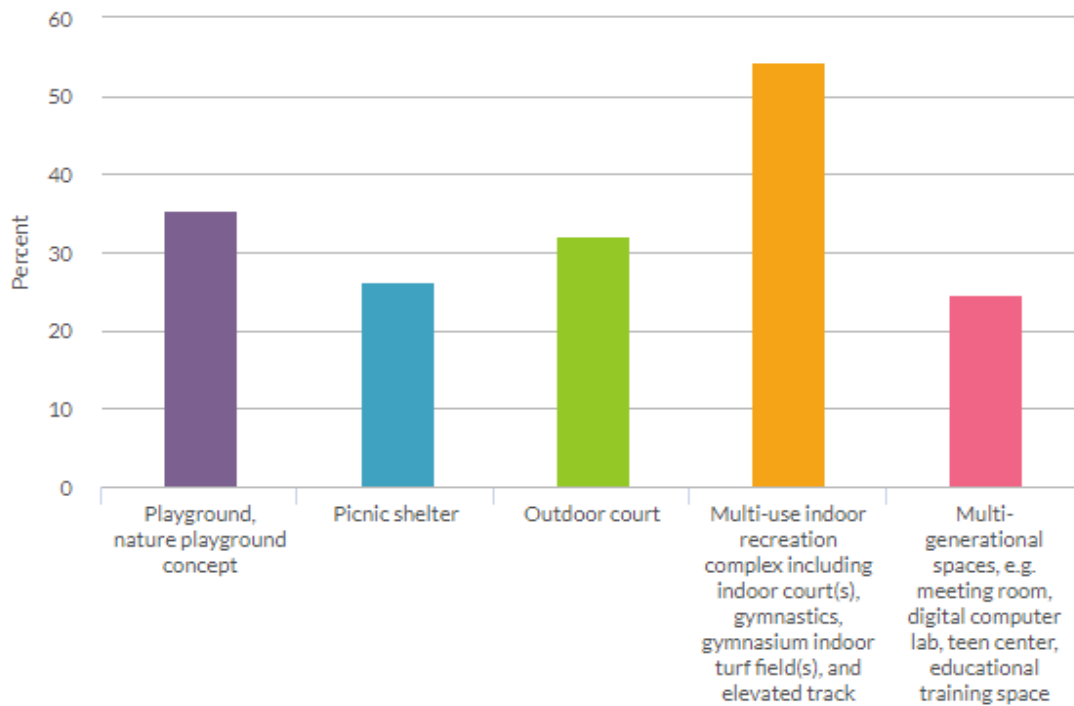
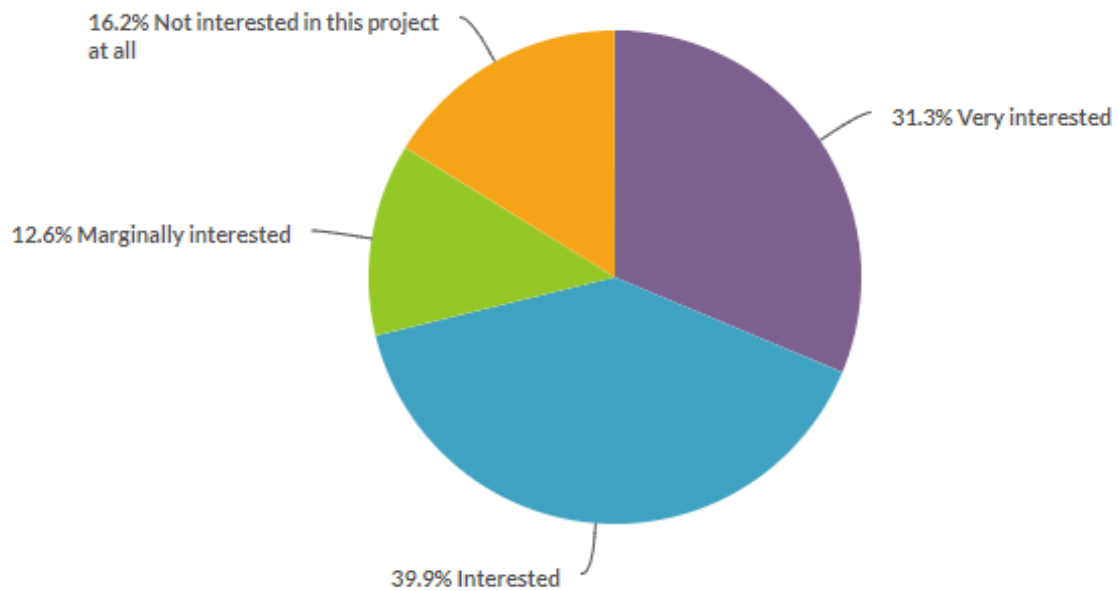
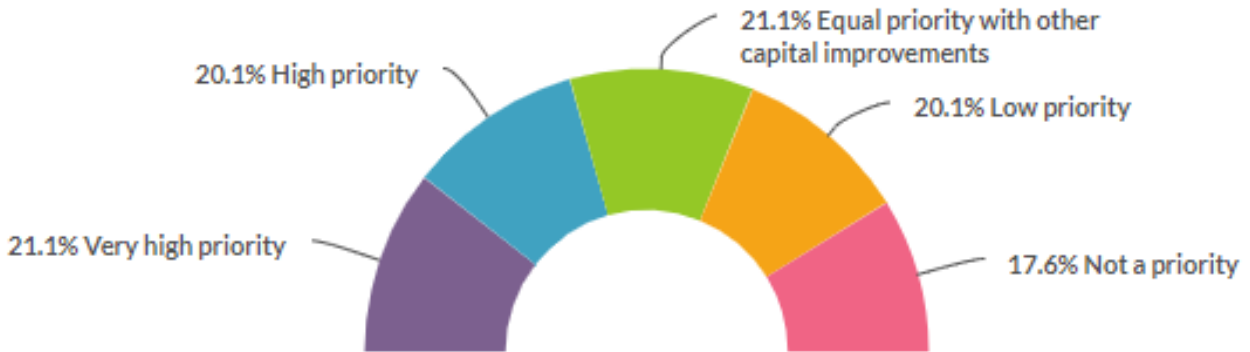


Figure 6.2 Level of Interest for Implementing the Sakai Park Concept Plan



As part of the survey, participants were asked to identify how high of a priority the development of Sakai Park was for them:

Figure 6.3: Personal Priority for Park Development



Those who favored moving forward with Sakai seemed interested in the wide variety of uses that could be accommodated under the proposed concept plan (or variations of it). The location of Sakai in proximity to numerous schools and downtown would provide convenient, walkable access.

The opportunity to add indoor recreation space (tennis courts, pickleball courts, gymnastics, table tennis, etc.) to the existing plethora of outdoor facilities is an important consideration for many, as is lessening the congestion at existing facilities. Some noted that a competition pool would be a good addition here (if not at the Aquatic Center across the street), as would an outdoor pool.

Many noted the need for more indoor spaces to facilitate recreation during the cold, wet, dark months. Some noted the need to provide more recreation facilities for tweens and teens, and current development concepts could accommodate this.

Some emphasized there is no need to duplicate facilities already within proximity to Sakai; for instance, outdoor play structures (unless “naturalized” using rocks and wood), picnic shelters, outdoor fields (with or without lighting).

Others would like to see a less developed, more “rural” feel to the park, and believe its proximity to already developed/overdeveloped areas on the island is a compelling reason to focus on trails, benches, and the ecosystem services (aquifer regeneration, wildlife habitat, etc.) this area could provide. There are not a lot of walkable trails in the Winslow area.

Collaboration with the Suquamish and Japanese-American community on park development would provide an opportunity to honor those important island cultures. Interpretive signs and artwork would contribute to this.

Several mentioned the need for more public meeting space, and that Sakai could accommodate that need.

And still others would like to see the park left as is—no further development.

Attachment F contains the complete report of the proposed Sakai Park Capital Improvement Project survey responses.

Conclusion

As previously stated, this report is a high-level synthesis of the key themes discerned from the Park District’s public involvement outcomes. Because it is high-level summary, comments or topics specific to just a few people may not be included in this summary—they are, however, still contained in the project record, and accessible to Park District staff as they continue through the planning process.