



STAFF REPORT

To: Regional and Corporate Services Committee

Date: 2025-12-04

From: Sara Vorlicek, Planning Technician

Subject: FVRD Parks and Trails 2050 Plan: 2025 User Survey

Reviewed by: Melissa Geddert, Manager of Integrated Planning and Engagement

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RECOMMENDATION

The results of the Fraser Valley Regional District Parks and Trails 2050 Plan - User Survey are being **brought forward for the Board's information**, and there is no staff recommendation.

BACKGROUND

The Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD) is updating the Parks and Trails Strategic Plan, originally adopted for the 2014–2024 period. With the timeframe of the current plan now complete, the FVRD has begun development of a new Parks and Trails 2050 Plan to provide continued strategic direction and reflect the significant changes that have occurred across the FVRD parks system. The new plan will include both regional and community parks and trails. The new plan will establish clear, measurable goals that respond to evolving community needs, recreation trends, and environmental priorities. To inform the development of the plan, the FVRD undertook a user survey to gather current data and insights.

Understanding who uses FVRD parks and trails, how they are used, and what challenges or opportunities exist will help ensure the system remains accessible, inclusive, and responsive to community needs. The survey results will inform multiple components of the Parks and Trails 2050 Plan, including visitor experience, future use trends, challenges and opportunities, and strategies to enhance the overall parks system.

In July 2025, the FVRD engaged Prairie Research Associates (PRA) to conduct the 2025 Parks and Trails User Survey. This survey took place during August and September and serves as phase one of engagement for the Parks and Trails 2050 Plan. The primary goal was to gather data on usage patterns across FVRD parks and trails, recreation preferences, visitor satisfaction, and demographics.

The survey was conducted both in-person and online. Intercept surveys were carried out at 14 regional parks and trails (excluding the Kettle Valley Rail Trail, which was closed following the 2021 Atmospheric River). Online surveys were available for the 15 regional parks and trails, as well as all

community parks and trails. In total, 1,248 responses were collected: 1,079 through intercept surveys, 80 from the online regional survey, and 89 from the online community survey. Community parks and trails were surveyed separately due to their distinct purpose, function, and amenities.

Survey promotion included multiple channels: FVRD social media, the Have Your Say website, posters with QR codes placed in park kiosks. Specifically for the community parks and trails survey household mailouts were sent out, which included direct survey links sent to over 1,000 households to encourage participation in the survey for the parks and trails they use, see Figure 1.



Figure 1. Kiosk poster and social media post produced to promote the Parks and Trails User Survey

DISCUSSION

The 2025 Parks and Trails User Survey builds on the data collected in the 2013 Regional Outdoor Recreation Opportunities Study. To support consistency and enable future comparisons, several questions from the 2013 survey were repeated. New questions were added to gather insights on user satisfaction, reasons for visiting specific parks, and where visitors come from. A key difference from the 2013 study is the inclusion of electoral area community parks and trails, aligning with the broader

scope of the Parks and Trails 2050 Plan. The survey has been designed for repeat implementation in future years, enabling ongoing monitoring and trend analysis.

A total of 1,248 responses were received through both in-person and online formats, a significant increase from the 200 responses collected in 2013.

Regional Parks and Trails

The following presents key findings from the 1,159 survey responses for regional parks and trails. Responses were generally well distributed across all regional park and trail locations, providing a balanced representation of user experiences:

1. Overall satisfaction with visits was 88%, reflecting a strong positive experience among visitors.
2. The most common reasons for visiting were to appreciate nature (44%), followed by physical activity or fitness (41%), and to spend time with family or friends (33%).
3. Trails (49%), washrooms (45%), and parking (38%) are the top three services and facilities identified as most important by users.
4. Most users perceive the parks and trails as safe, with 91% rating their sense of safety positively.
5. 86% of visitors access the park or trail by private vehicle, averaging 2.7 people per vehicle.
6. The majority of visitors reported spending less than two hours at a park and trail (59%).
7. Visitors are most likely to visit weekly in spring (29%) and summer (28%), compared to fall (20%) and winter (13%). In winter, 71% of visitors visit less than once per month or not at all.
8. The majority of users live within the FVRD (90%), while 8% travel from Metro Vancouver.

Figure 2 illustrates the relationship between the importance of park services and facilities and visitor satisfaction. Trails stand out as the highest-performing feature, rated highly for both importance and satisfaction. Washrooms, however, are identified as a priority for improvement, as they are considered highly important but received lower satisfaction ratings. Other features such as parking, benches, signage, and garbage/recycling bins are also rated high in importance and would benefit from improvements to better meet visitor expectations and enhance the overall experience.

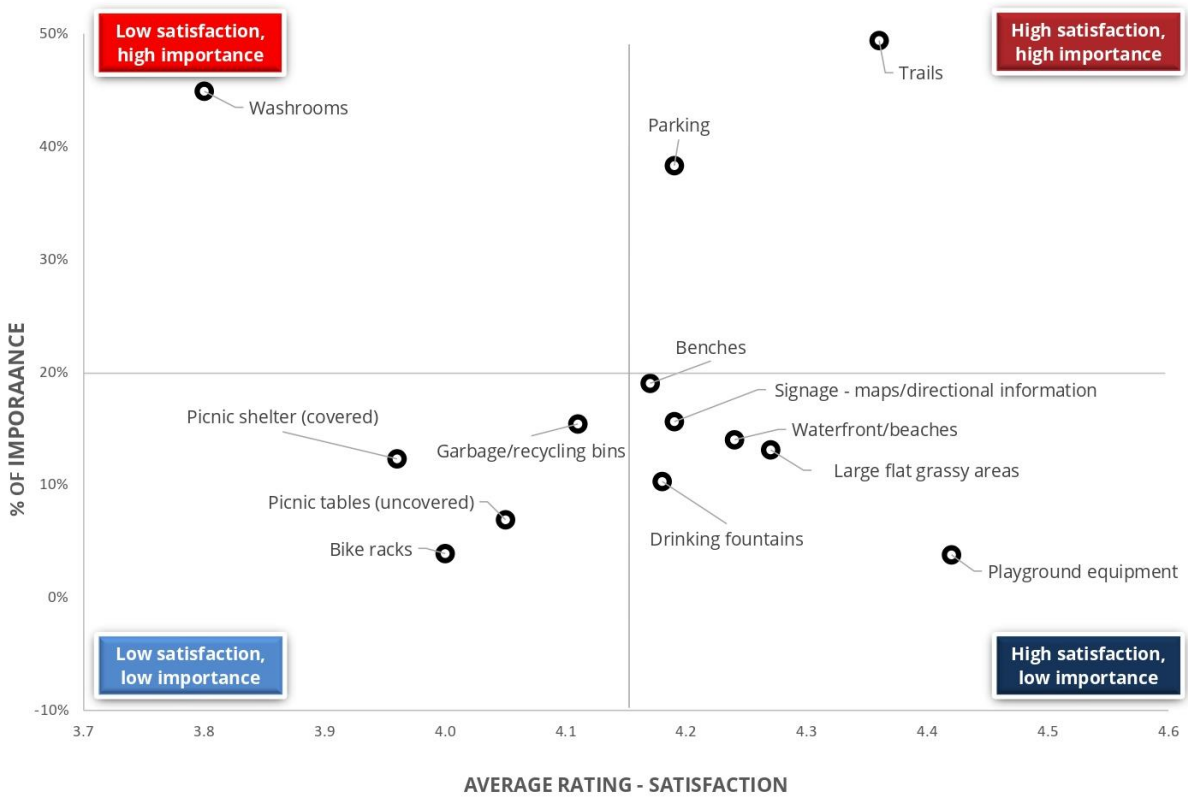


Figure 2. Satisfaction of regional park services and facilities versus importance

Community Parks and Trails

Due to the lower response volume for community parks and trails, results were analyzed separately from the regional parks and trails to maintain the integrity of the data. The following summarizes key findings from 89 responses collected for community parks and trails:

1. Overall satisfaction with visits to was 76%.
2. The most common reasons for visiting were for the convenient location (62%), followed by physical activity or fitness (52%), and to appreciate nature (47%).
3. Trails (55%), garbage/recycling bins (54%), and parking (29%) are the top three services and facilities identified as most important by users.
4. Most users perceive the parks and trails as safe, with 80% rating their sense of safety positively.
5. 80% of visitors access parks or trails by walking, with only 17% using a private vehicle, averaging 2.9 people per vehicle.
6. The majority of visitors reported spending between 30 minutes to 1 hour at a park and/or trail (45%).
7. Visitors are consistent year-round, with more than half visiting at least weekly across all seasons, from 74% in summer to 57% in winter. In winter, 25% visit less than once per month or not at all.
8. The majority of users live within the FVRD (99%), while 1% travel from outside the region.

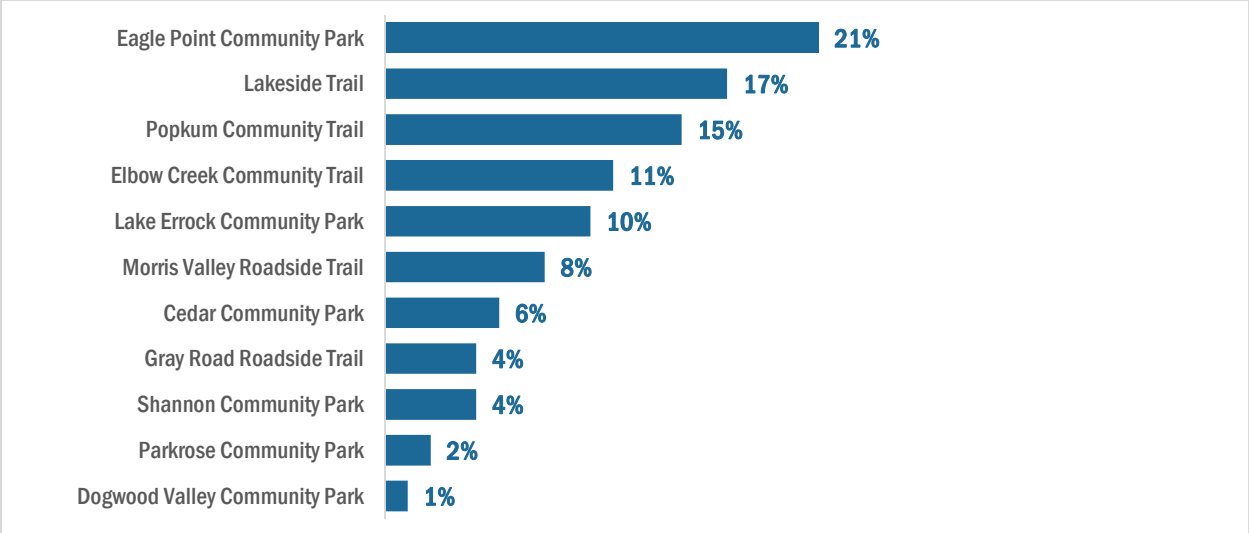


Figure 3. Breakdown of responses by Community Park or Trail (unweighted)

Overall, the survey results reflect a high level of satisfaction with both regional and community parks and trails, indicating a generally positive user experience across the FVRD park system. Visitors consistently rated their experiences as safe, enjoyable, and aligned with their recreational needs. Common themes in satisfaction feedback included appreciation for scenic natural beauty, positive experiences on trails and walking routes, and family-friendly amenities such as picnic areas and river access, while areas for improvement focused on trail conditions and accessibility, availability of seating and picnic infrastructure, and washroom cleanliness. These insights reinforce the importance of maintaining core amenities while addressing emerging needs to enhance the overall quality of park experiences.

A full summary of findings is provided in the *Fraser Valley Regional District 2050 Plan: 2025 User Survey Report* (attached) prepared by PRA. Each regional park and trail has its own two-page dashboard with a detailed, park-specific breakdown of results.

COST

The Parks and Trails 2050 Plan, including the user survey, has approved funding through the Sub-Regional Parks budgets 700 and 735.

CONCLUSION

The 2025 Parks and Trails User Survey provides a strong foundation for understanding how FVRD parks and trails are used and experienced across the region. The results indicate that most users have positive experiences, particularly in regional parks, where satisfaction and perceived safety are notably high. Community parks also play an important role in supporting everyday recreation, especially for residents who access these facilities by foot and use them consistently throughout the year. The

feedback highlights the importance of core amenities such as trails, washrooms, and parking, while also pointing to opportunities for improvement in areas like infrastructure and accessibility. These insights will help guide the development of the Parks and Trails 2050 Plan by identifying priorities for investment, maintenance, and long-term planning.