

Community Survey Summary

1.0 Overview

A survey was available to the community members from August 31, 2020 to September 14, 2020. The purpose of the survey was to understand community needs for trails and recreational use and future residential housing and developments in the North Bench area. The survey was available through the City's website and hard copies were distributed at an engagement event.

The survey received a total of 383 responses. Respondents were allowed to skip questions, submit the survey at any point, and pick multiple answers for select questions. Responses from open-ended questions were reviewed and summarized by the themes that emerged. The following sections summarize what was heard from the survey.

Note: The percentages are calculated based on the number of respondents that responded to each question. Brackets (N=) in figure titles provide the total number of respondents that answered the question.

2.0 Demographics

Respondents were asked demographic questions to capture who participated in the survey.

Almost all respondents were residents of Merritt (94%) and some respondents were businesses owners or work in Merritt (20%).

Figure 1. Respondents' Relationship to the Merritt (N=383)

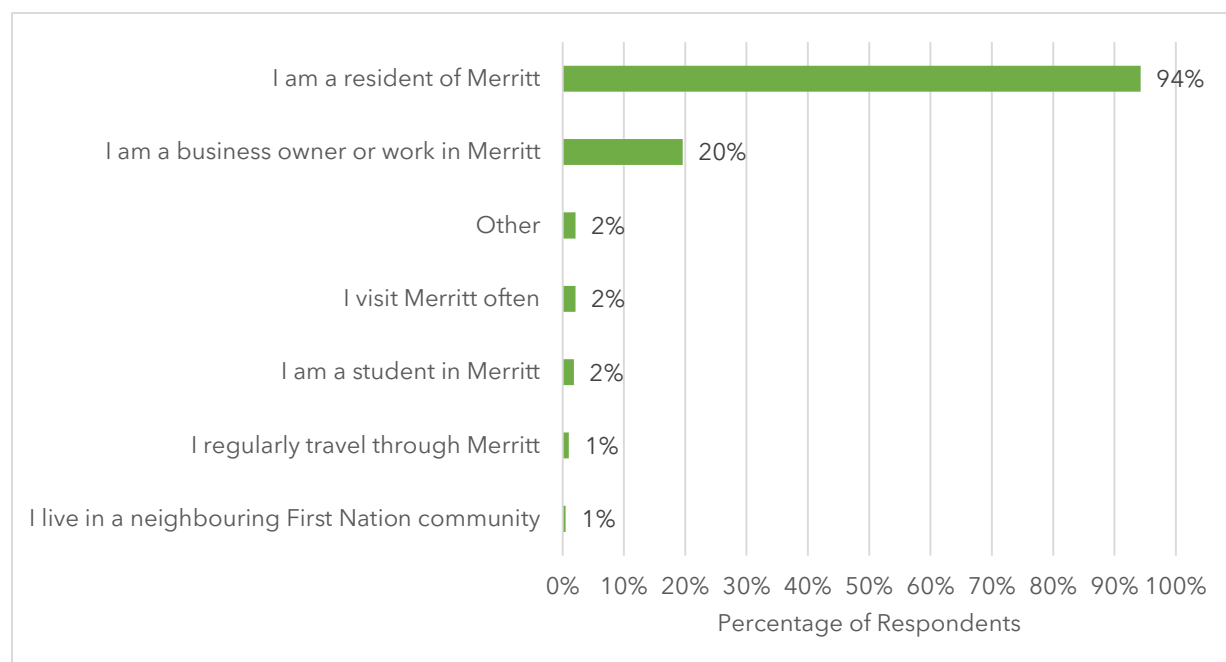
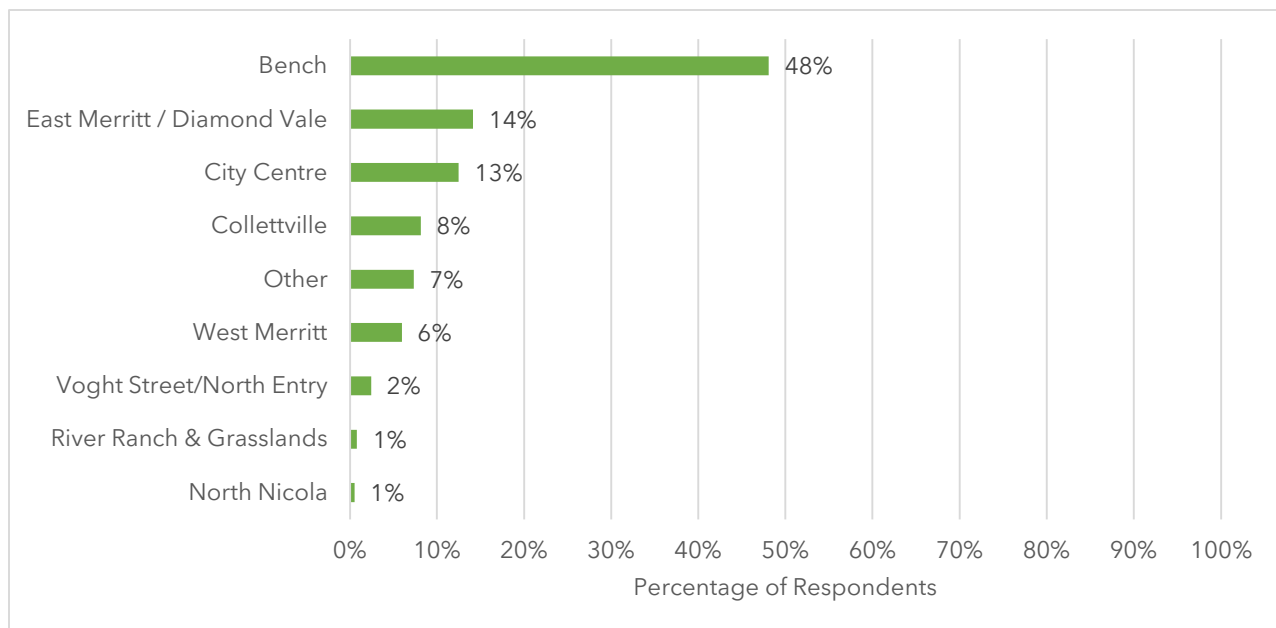


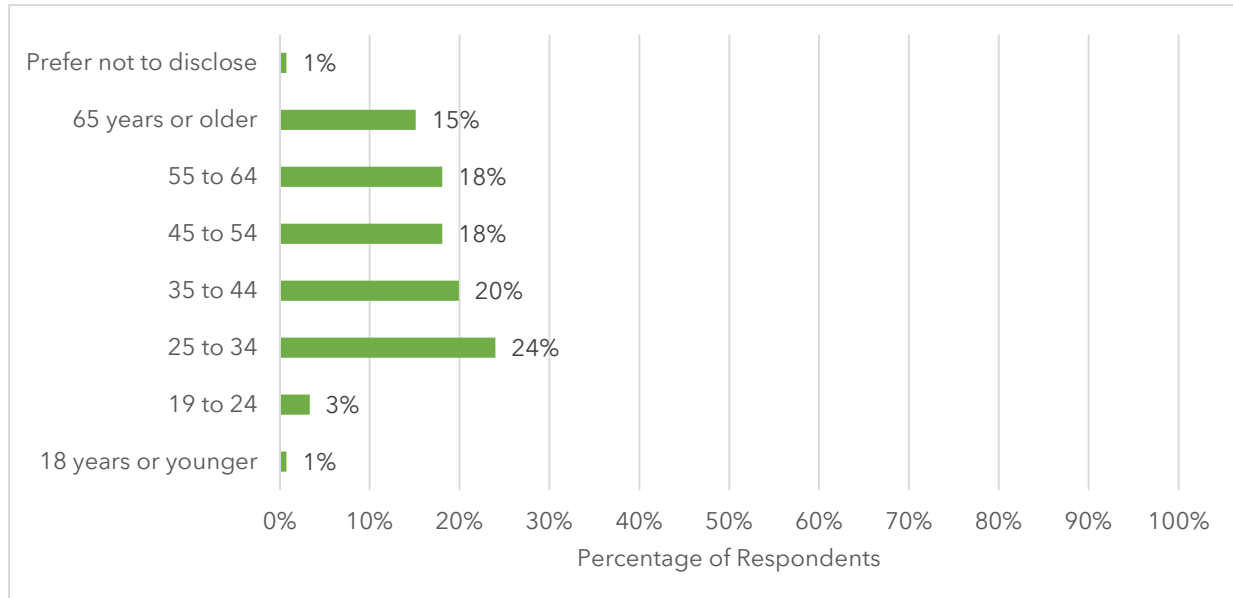
Figure 2 shows the distribution of where survey respondents live. 48% of respondents live in the study area while other respondents live in communities across Merritt. Eight respondents who selected 'other' said they live in Nicola.

Figure 2. Neighbourhood Where Respondents Live



The survey received responses from respondents across a wide range of age groups. There were limited responses from respondents who are 24 years old or younger.

Figure 3. Age of Respondents



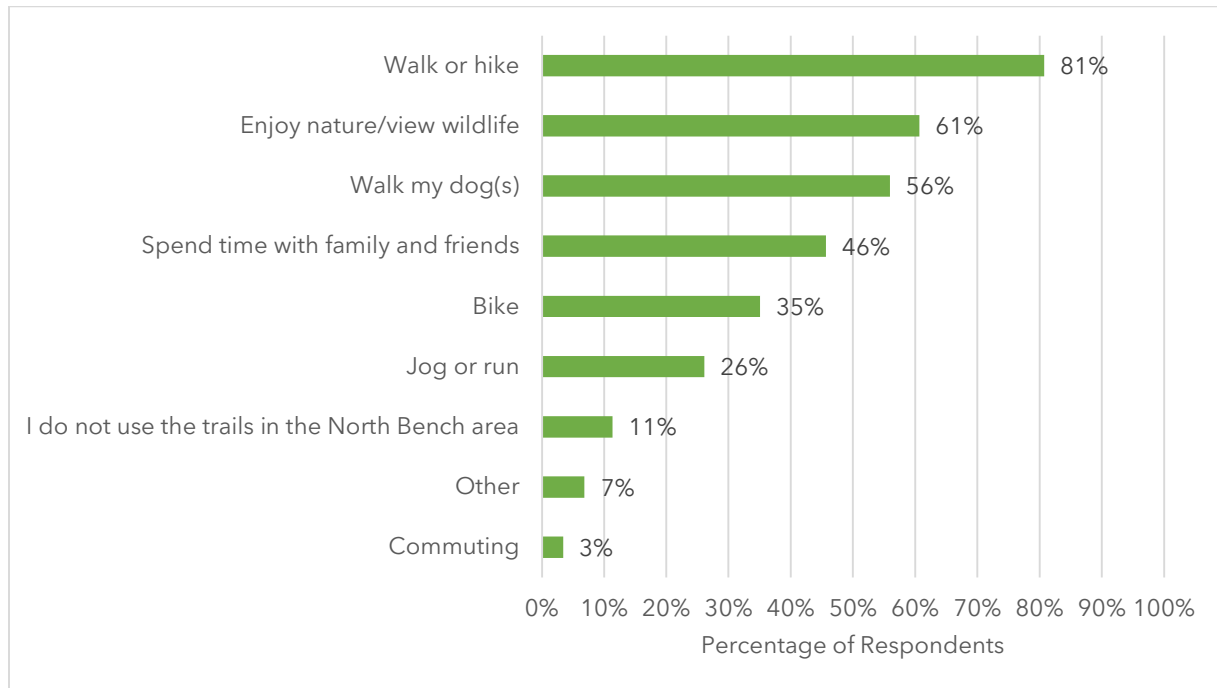
3.0 Trails and Recreation

Respondents were asked about their trail use and recreation activities in the North Bench area.

Almost all respondents (81%) indicated that they use trails in the North Bench area to walk or hike (Figure 4). Respondents use the trails for other common activities including enjoying nature or viewing wildlife (61%), walking their dogs (56%), or spending time with family and friends (46%).

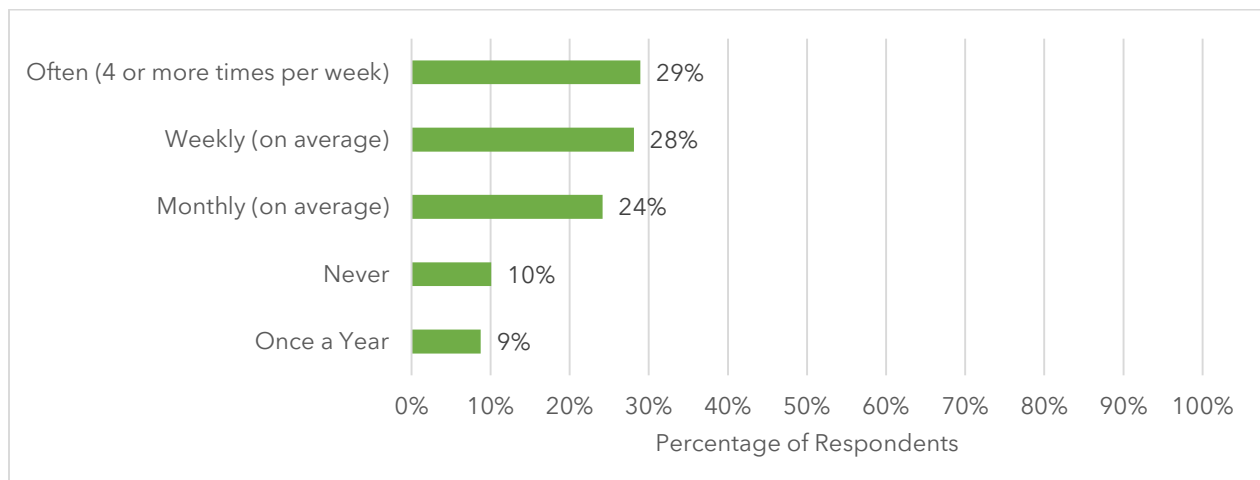
Respondents that selected 'other' said they use the trails for motorized recreation, including dirt biking or ATVs (18 respondents), snowshoeing (1 respondents), meditating (1 respondent), or scavenger hunts (1 respondent).

Figure 4. Activities in Existing Trails Network (N=379)



Respondents were asked how often they use trails in the North Bench area. On average, trails are being used frequently by residents (Figure 5).

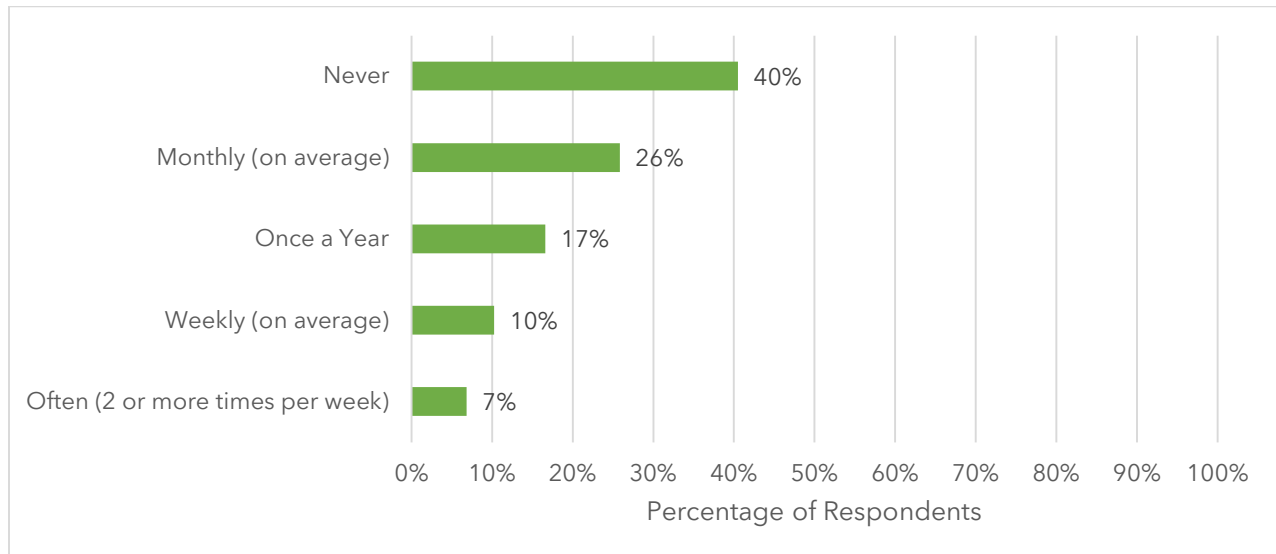
Figure 5. Frequency of Trail Use (N=377)



When asked whether respondents would use the proposed disc golf course on the upper portions of the planning area once it is constructed, 50% of respondents said no, 25% said yes, and 26% were unsure.

Those who answered yes indicated how often they anticipate they would use it (Figure 6). Only a small proportion of respondents said they would use it more than twice a week (7%) or weekly (10%) on average.

Figure 6. Frequency of Potential Usage (N=205)



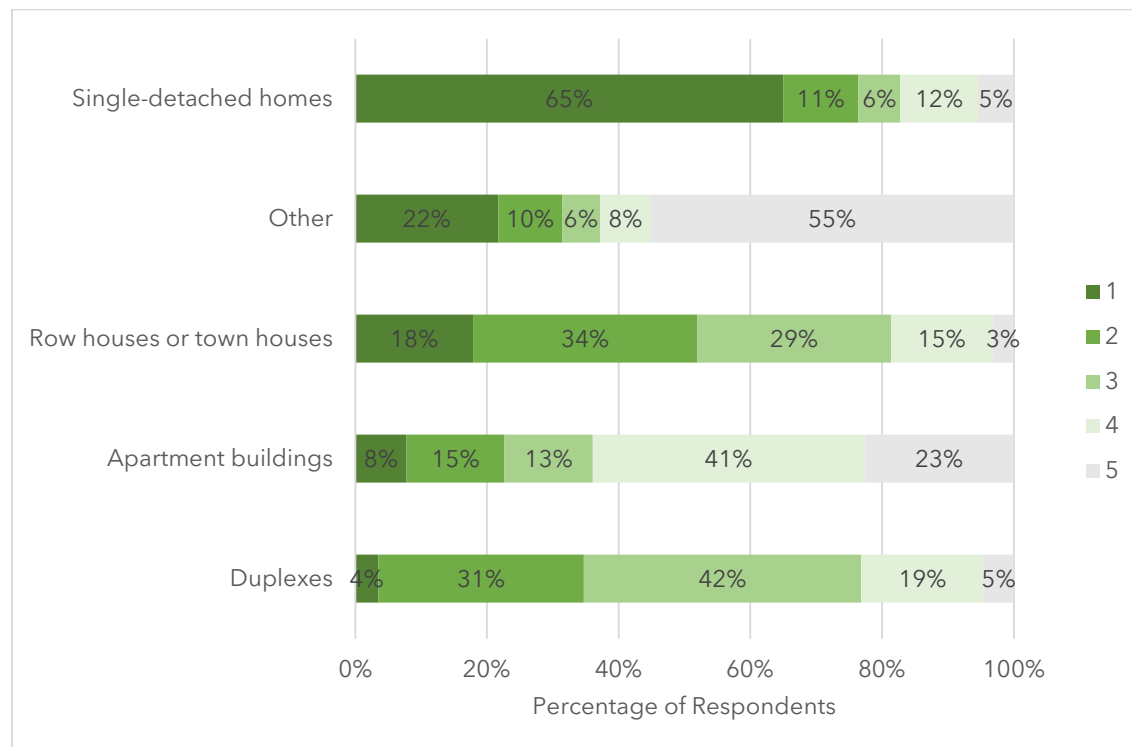
4.0 Housing and Development

Respondents were asked question specific to the future residential housing and other developments in the North Bench area.

Types of Housing

Single-detached homes were ranked as the most desired housing type (65%). Duplexes, row houses, or town houses were most commonly ranked as the second or third most desired type of housing.

Figure 7. Ranking of Types of Housing Needed (N=336)



Themes from respondents that selected 'other' types of housing are summarized below:

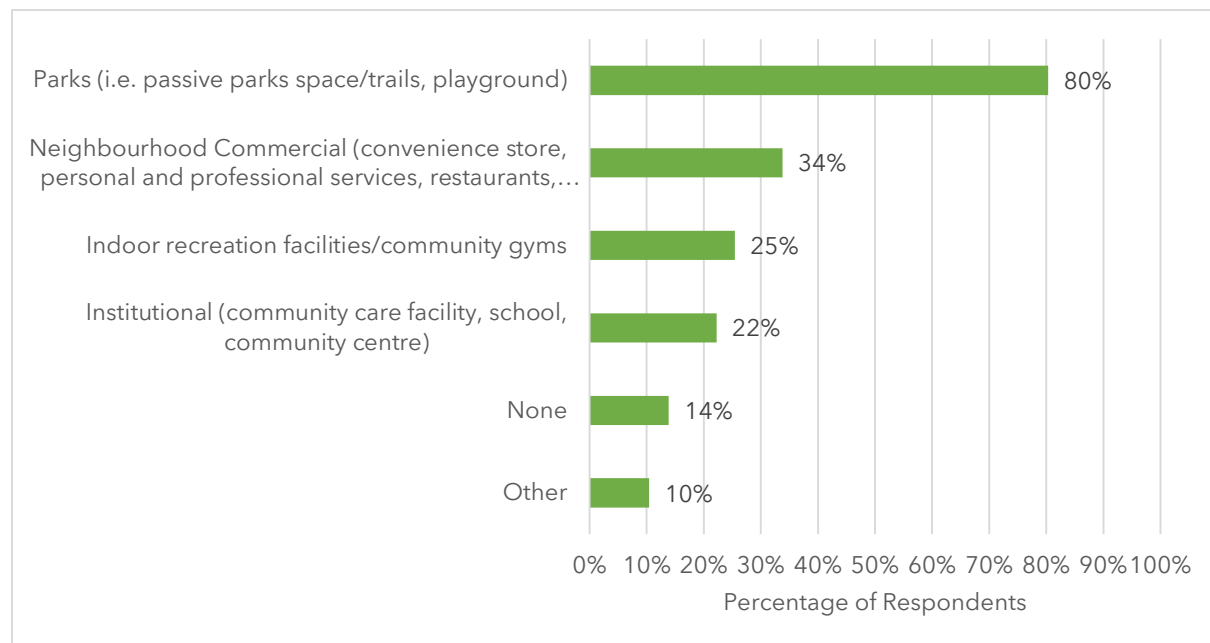
- Affordable housing or low-income housing (10 respondents)
- Tiny homes (8 respondents)
- Senior housing (6 respondents)
- Single-detached homes or mansions on large lots (4 respondents)
- Carriage homes (3 respondents)
- Modular homes (3 respondents)
- Cabins or campground (2 respondents)
- Gated community (2 respondents)
- High-rise apartment (2 respondents)
- Co-op housing
- Condo
- Mixed-use
- Small farms

57 respondents indicated that they do not want to see any housing developed in the area.

Future Developments

Respondents were asked to identify other developments they would like to see in the area. Parks were the most common selection (80%), followed by neighborhood commercial services and stores (34%).

Figure 8. Other Developments Needed (N=346)

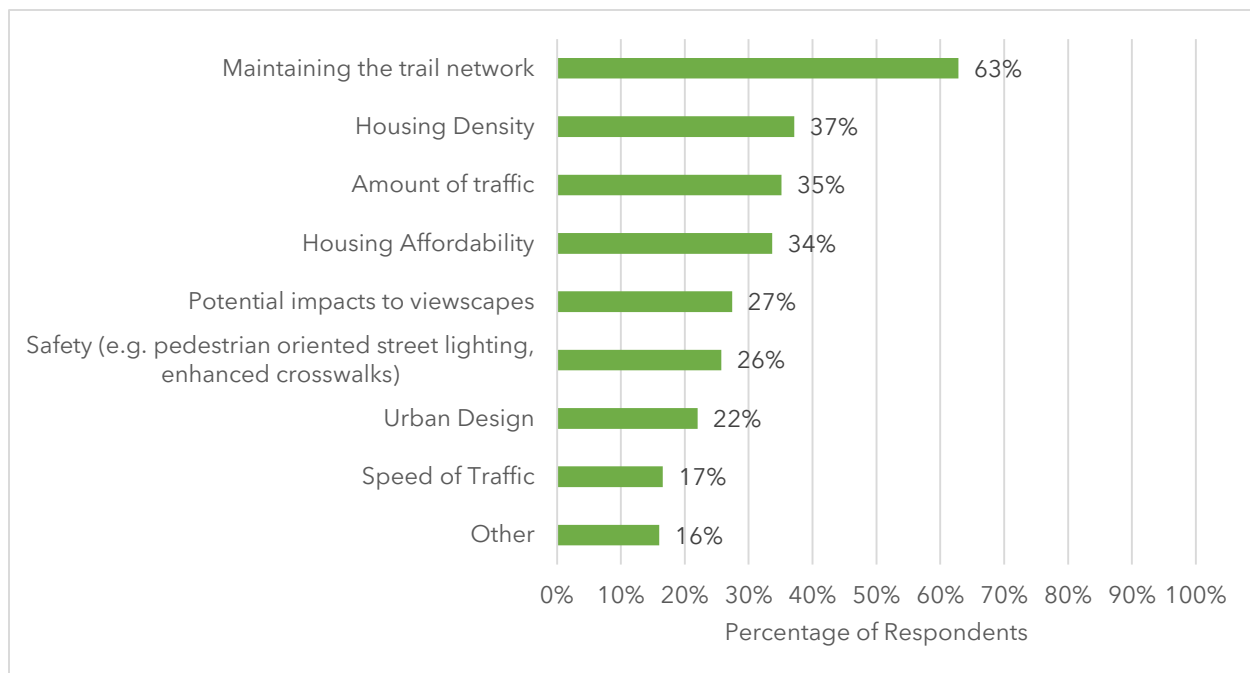


Themes from respondents that selected 'other' are summarized below:

- Nature spaces (e.g. educational botanical garden, nature-based preschool, outdoor amphitheater, bird sanctuary) (4 respondents)
- Mini golf (2 respondents)
- Soccer field (2 respondents)
- Campgrounds (2 respondents)
- Renewable energy facility
- Parking lots to access trails
- Offices
- Dog park

Respondents were asked to indicate concerns they have regarding development in the North Bench area. Figure 9 shows the top concerns respondents reported. Respondents were most concerned about maintaining the current trail network (63%), followed by concerns about housing density and affordability (37%), and traffic in the area (35%).

Figure 9. Top Concerns with Development (N=350)

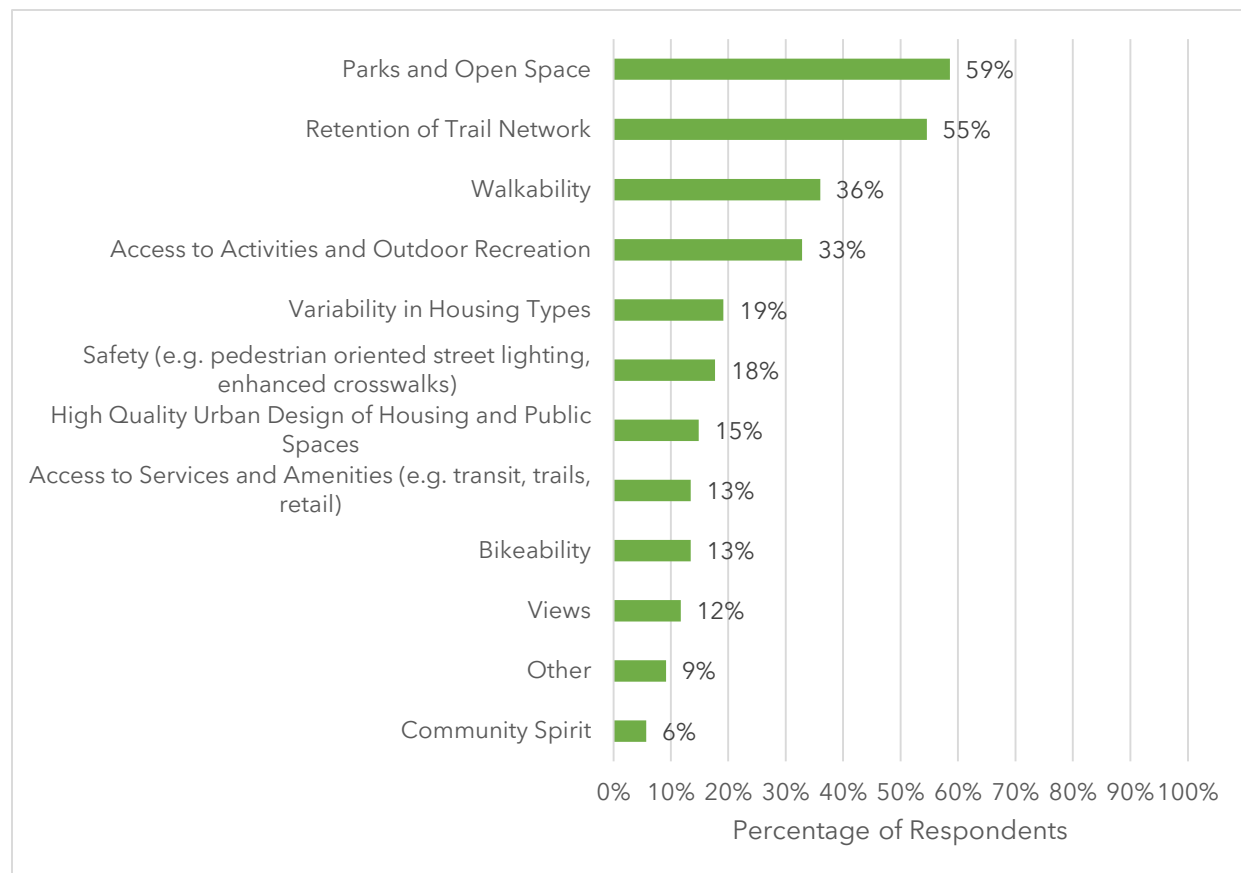


Themes from respondents that selected 'other' are provided below:

- Lack of water pressure / demand for water supply (19 respondents)
- Environmental degradation to natural landscape and encroachment on wildlife habitats (13 respondents)
- Forest fires hazards / wildfire mitigation (3 respondents)
- Affordability of homes (3 respondents)
- Accessibility (2 respondents)
- Lack of jobs and industry
- Lack of nearby medical services
- Organized crime
- Competition of businesses
- Increased motorized vehicle use
- Overcrowded school
- Construction noise

Thinking about the future of the neighbourhood, respondents identified aspects that were most important to them. Respondents generally valued access to outdoor spaces (e.g. parks) and trail networks for walking or recreational activities. Variability of housing types in the area was also seen as one of the more important aspect to respondents (19%).

Figure 10. Top Aspects Valued in Future North Bench Neighbourhood (N=350)



Themes from respondents that selected 'other' are provided below:

- Affordability of housing (5 respondents)
- Privacy and quietness of neighbourhood (3 respondents)
- Clean air and natural landscapes (2 respondents)
- A traffic plan (2 respondents)
- Parking

Respondents were asked to identify elements that would make them feel most safe in a neighbourhood. Streetlights (65%), enhanced sidewalks (56%), and dedicated bike lanes and off-street trails (43%) were the top three elements that respondents said would make them feel safer (Figure 11). Seven respondents who selected 'other' suggested that increased regular police patrol in the area is needed. Another respondent commented that owner-occupied housing by local landlords would allow residents to know their neighbours.

Figure 11. Elements of a Neighbourhood that Make Respondents Feel Safe (N=350)

