



Cottonwood Park Revitalization Community Survey Report

Executive Summary

The community is very supportive of revitalizing Cottonwood Park, evidenced by the high response rate: 274 completed surveys, our highest survey response to date. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive with only 3% of respondents opposed.

The highest priorities for the community are washroom upgrades and the construction of a new playground. Washroom upgrades were rated at 80% importance overall. The playground was the only feature where most of the respondents (61%) voted for the higher budget. All age groups except seniors voted for higher budget, including 76% of the 'families' age group (25-44 years). From a resident attraction perspective, the responses of the 'families' age group are important to consider.

The playground designs provided do not suit community preferences - the most popular selection was "other" with 19% of the votes. 53 people commented on the playground design (the most comments of any feature), with 45% of comments specifically requesting a design like the one at Paarens Beach. Based on the feedback received, the community wants a significant portion of the budget allocated to playground upgrades, including a larger playground with multiple structures and accessibility features.

The stage generated interesting discussion. While 68% of respondents preferred a low budget for the removal and construction of a new stage, the two most expensive designs received 83% of the votes. The stage design generated 15 comments with the majority (47%) requesting a more weatherproof design and/or larger design with a backstage area (both of which would be more expensive).

Upgrading the beachside walking path and seating was rated at 63% importance overall with the middle-aged age group (45-54 years) expressing the most support (80% importance).

Upgrading the picnic shelter is not a priority for the community as the lower budget was preferred by 71% of respondents. The picnic shelter design generated 20 comments with the majority (75%) requesting not to replace unless required and/or to refurbish the existing shelter.

The proposed locations of each feature were generally supported but will need further consultation. Only 39% of respondents approved of the proposed location of the stage and 25% opposed it. Many respondents would like to see the stage remain in the same location with the

same orientation. Similarly, the picnic shelter received 51% approval for the proposed location and the playground received 55%. Concerns with accessibility and safety should be considered.

There is community desire to expand the upgrades beyond this concept. When asked for any additional feedback, 51% of comments were in support of extensive upgrades, including suggestions such as outdoor showers, a designated swimming area, removable water structures (e.g. floating dock), accessibility features (e.g. Mobi-Mat), and beach raking/cleanups. Additionally, 21% of the comments on playground design requested additional recreation features, including a climbing wall, zip-line, and bike pump track.

Breakdown by Age Group

These age groups were separated by life stage and answer trends.

Under 18-24 (youth):

- 64% want a **high** budget for the **playground and walking path**
- 65% want a **low** budget for the **picnic shelter**
- 71% want a **low** budget for the **stage**
 - But 80% of selections were for the two most expensive stage designs (Options 2 and 3)
- The importance of upgrades to the **washrooms** was rated 75%
- The importance of upgrades to the **beachside walking path and seating** was rated 50%
- 87% supportive of overall **revitalization**, 13% “it depends” on: stage upgrades are expensive for something that is not used a lot

25-44 (families):

- 76% want a **high** budget for the **playground and walking path**
- 71% want a **low** budget for the **picnic shelter**
- 64% want a **low** budget for the **stage**
 - But 71% of selections were for the two most expensive stage designs (Options 2 and 3)
- The importance of upgrades to the **washrooms** was rated 85%
- The importance of upgrades to the **beachside walking path and seating** was rated 63%
- 87% supportive of overall **revitalization**, 13% “it depends” on: not using tax dollars, continued community input

45-54 (middle-aged):

- 63% want a **high** budget for the **playground and walking path**
- 74% want a **low** budget for the **picnic shelter**
- 69% want a **low** budget for the **stage**
 - 33% selected an expensive design (Option 3) and 33% selected Option 1
- The importance of upgrades to the **washrooms** was rated 83%

- The importance of upgrades to the beachside walking path and seating was rated 80%
- 69% supportive of overall **revitalization**, 6% not supportive, 25% “it depends” on: using local contractors, if funded by grants, not everything needs to be done

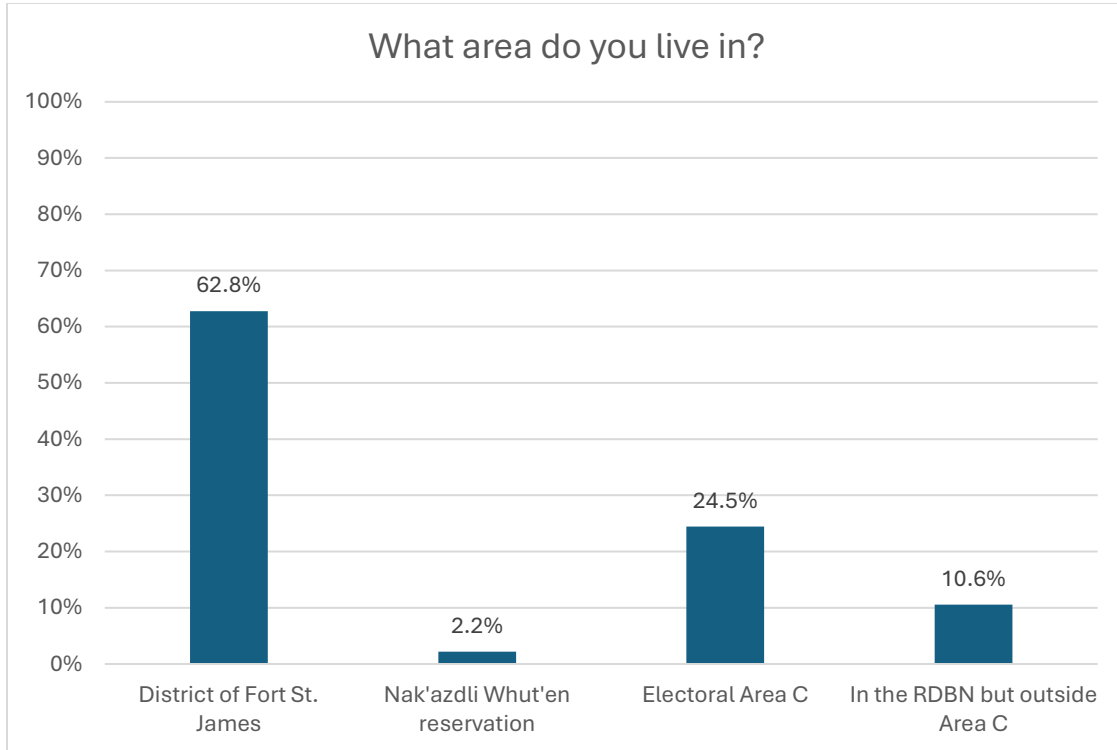
55-65+ (seniors):

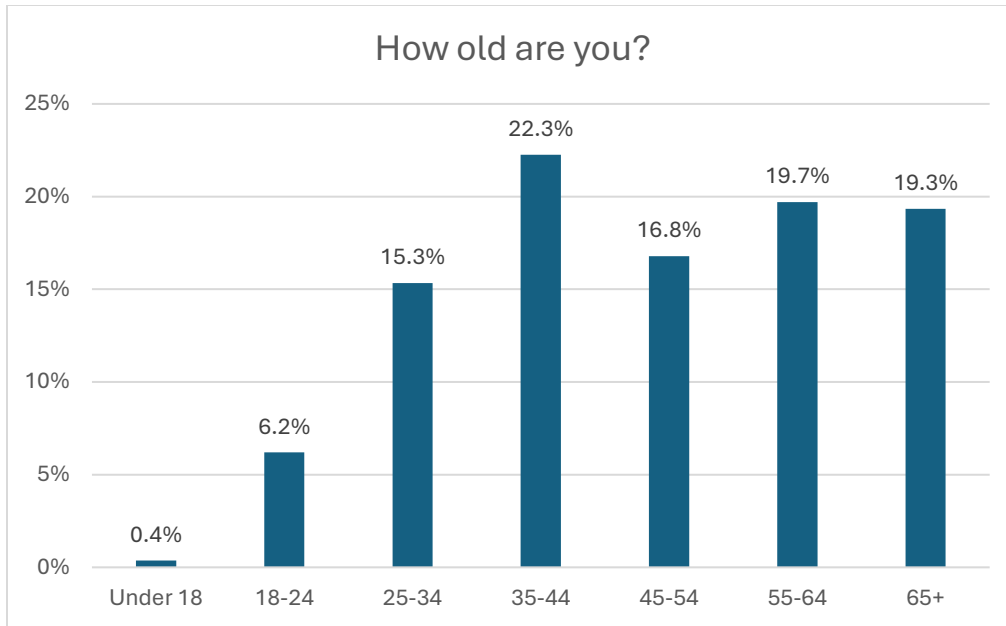
- 58% want a **low** budget for the **playground and walking path**
- 71% want a **low** budget for the **picnic shelter**
- 71% want a **low** budget for the **stage**
 - But 66% of selections were for the two most expensive stage designs (Options 2 and 3)
- The importance of upgrades to the **washrooms** was rated 75%
- The importance of upgrades to the **beachside walking path and seating** was rated 61%
- 60% supportive of overall **revitalization**, 7% not supportive, 33% “it depends” on: not using tax dollars/not increasing taxes, too expensive, other community priorities, not everything needs to be done

Community Engagement

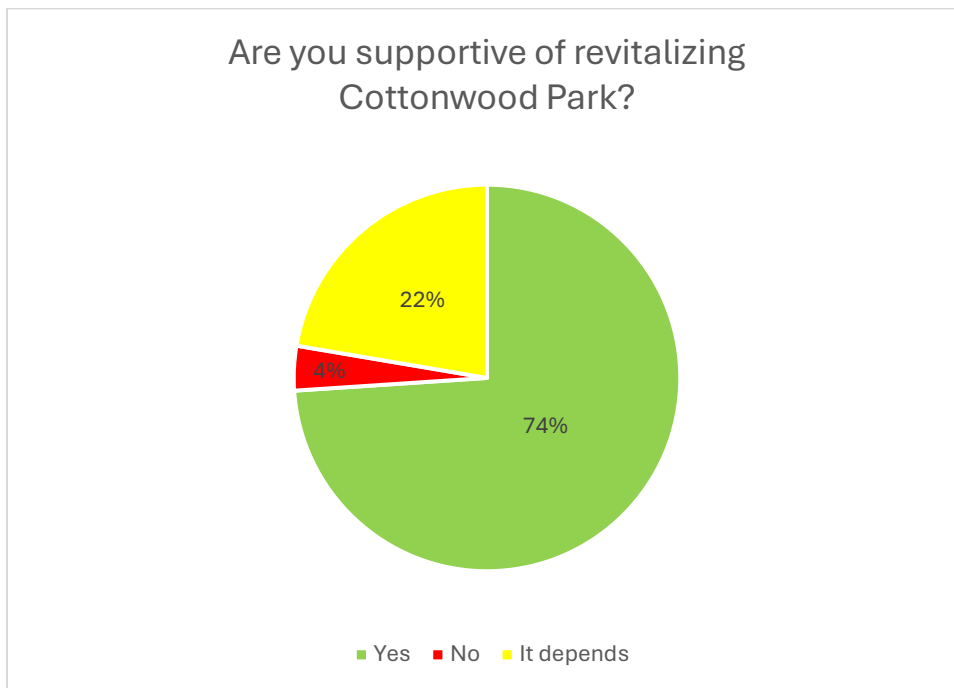
274 total responses

- District of Fort St. James: 172 people
- Nak'azdli Whut'en: 6 people
- Electoral Area C: 67 people
- RDBN: 29 people





- (1 respondent is under the age of 18)



- 59 people skipped this question
- Filtering just the District of Fort St. James respondents:
 - 73% are supportive
 - 5% are not supportive
 - 22% said it depends

Picnic Shelter

Design

Option 3: 39%



Option 1: 34%



Option 4: 25%



Option 2: 19%



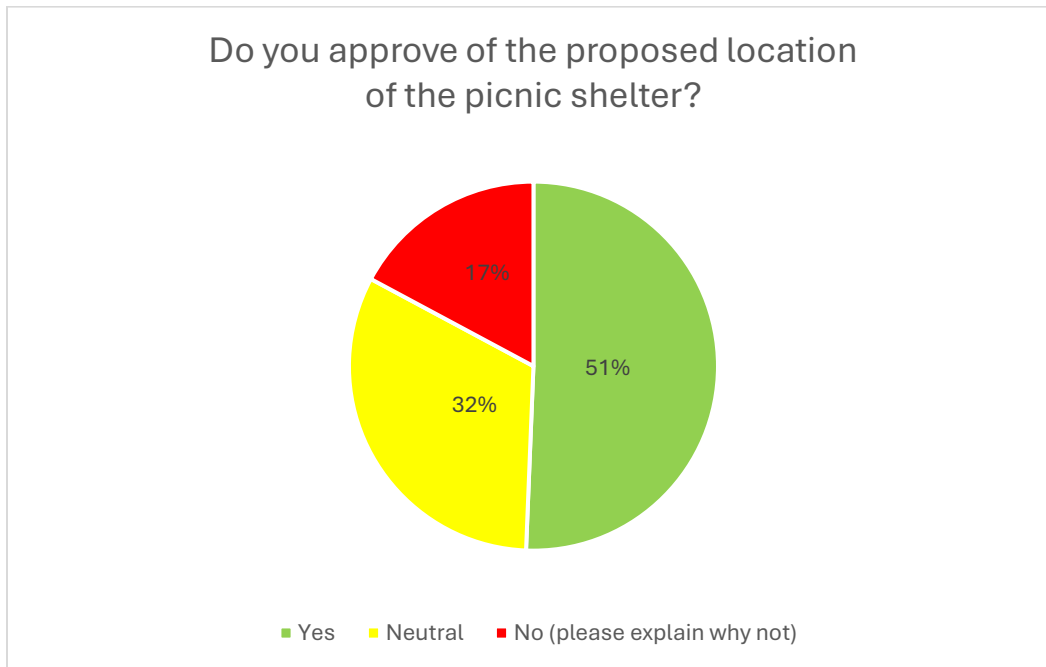
26 people (8%) voted "other"

We asked: If you selected "other" please provide an explanation of what you would like to see. You can also suggest examples from other locations around Fort St. James or other communities.

We received 20 comments. We heard:

- Don't replace unless necessary/refurbish existing
 - 15 comments (75%)
- Wind and rain protection (e.g. pull-down panels)
 - 8 comments (40%)
- Designated area for BBQs and/or a fire pit or wood stove
 - 4 comments (20%)
- Circle/octagon shape shelter (allows for larger groups, connection to Carrier culture)
 - 2 comments (10%)
- Desire for skylights/some clear roofing panels
 - 2 comments (10%)
- More accessible design (wheelchair and seniors' accessibility)
 - 2 comments (10%)
- Percentages may not equal 100% as some comments included multiple topics

Location

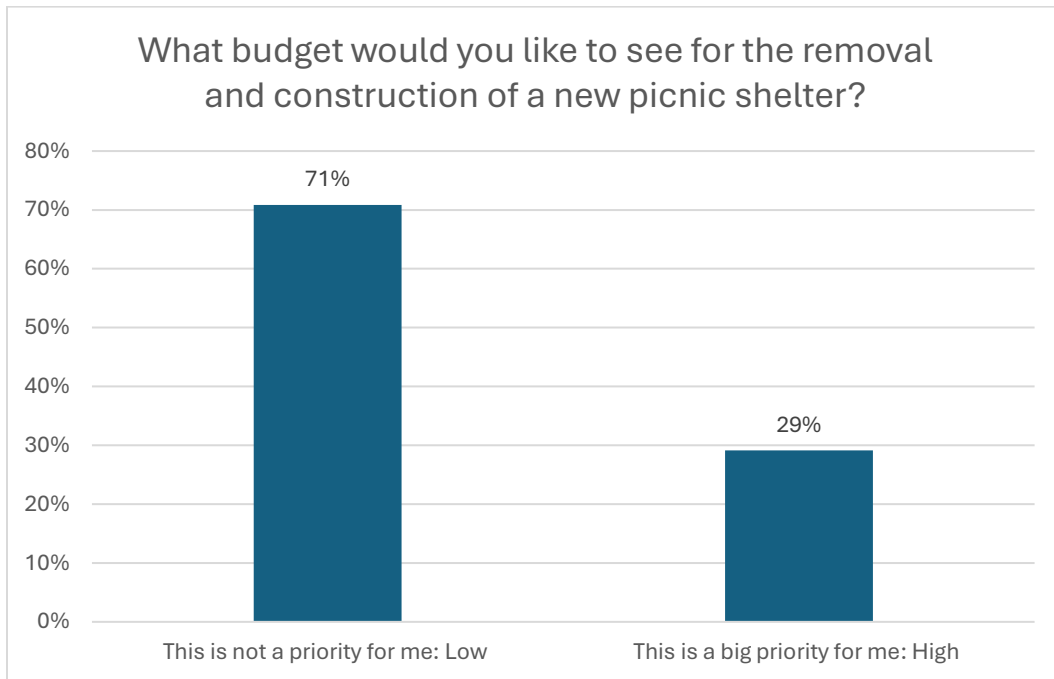


- 41 people skipped this question

From those that responded “no” (40 people):

- Would like the picnic shelter closer to the stage and within visibility/close contact of the playground
 - 13 comments (33%)
- Prefer the current location
 - 11 comments (28%)
- Proposed location is too close to the washrooms (odours)
- Proposed location is too close to the lake (weather)

Budget



- Low = approx. \$428,000
- High = approx. \$595,000
- 75 people skipped this question

Stage

Design

Option 3: 42%



Option 2: 41%



Option 1: 28%



Option 4: 6%



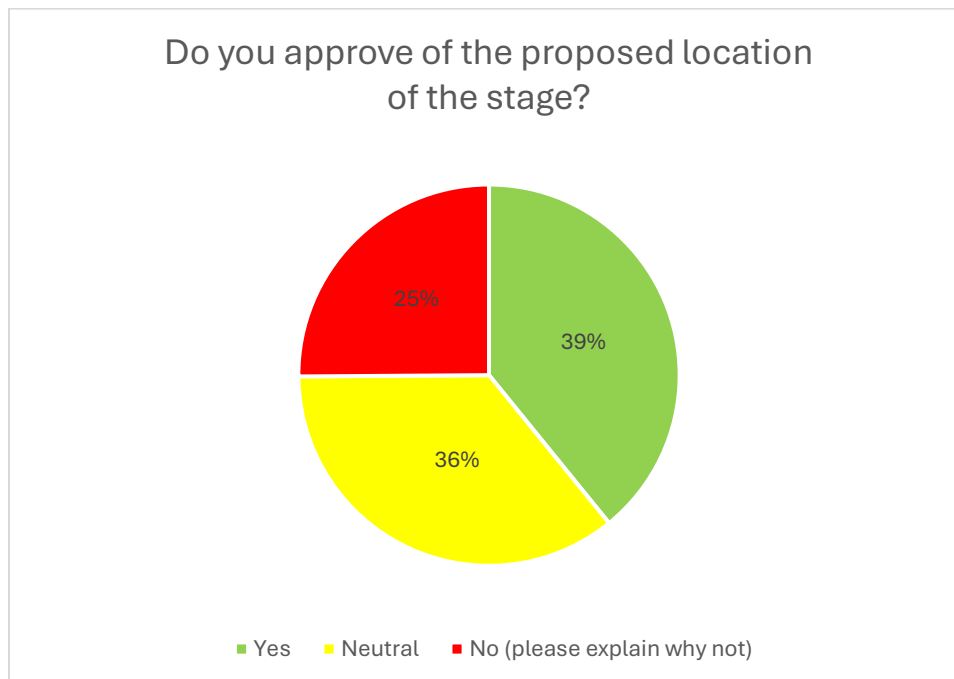
15 people (6%) voted “other”

We asked: If you selected “other” please provide an explanation of what you would like to see. You can also suggest examples from other locations around Fort St. James or other communities.

We received 15 comments. We heard:

- More weatherproof design (e.g. covered seating area, more closed in to protect stage from wind)
 - 5 comments (33%)
- Larger stage with a backstage area
 - 2 comments (13%)
- Design should minimize areas for people to gather after hours (one person suggested a removable back so you can see through it when not in use)
 - 2 comments (13%)
- No permanent tables/seating needed (likely referencing Options 2 and 4)
 - 2 comments (13%)
- Concerns about accessibility
 - 1 comment (7%)
- Percentages may not equal 100% as some comments included multiple topics

Location

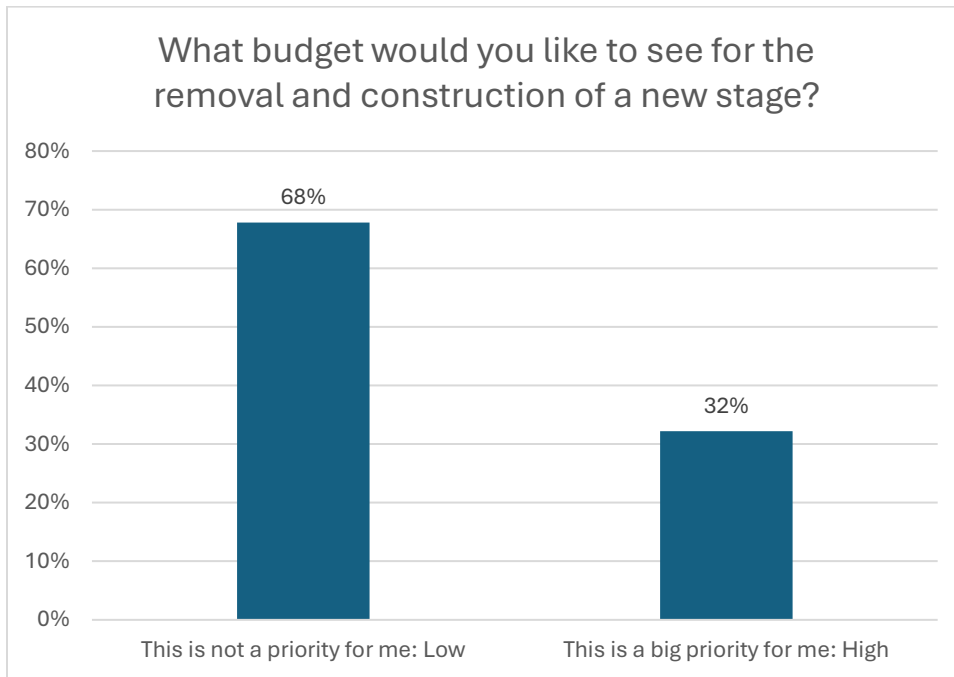


- 39 people skipped this question

From those that responded "no" (59 people):

- Prefer to keep the current location and orientation
 - 11 comments (19%)
- Concerned about stage facing the lake (sun in performers' eyes, poor sound with wind coming of the lake)
 - 16 comments (27%)
- Lake should be part of the view, does not want audience's back to the lake
 - 10 comments (17%)
- Concerned about RCMP patrols' line of sight into the stage
 - 4 comments (7%)
- Concerned about proximity to the road (safety, traffic noise)
 - 4 comments (7%)
- Proposed location limits crowd area
 - 2 comments (3%)
- Other suggestions: better backstage access for performers to haul equipment in/out, view for performers and audience should be out of sun's arc

Budget



- Low = approx. \$910,000
- High = approx. \$1,193,000
- 72 people skipped this question

Playground

Design

Option 8: 37%



Option 1: 22%



Option 2: 31%



Option 6: 19%



Option 7: 18%



Option 4: 10%



Option 3: 7%



Option 5: 3%



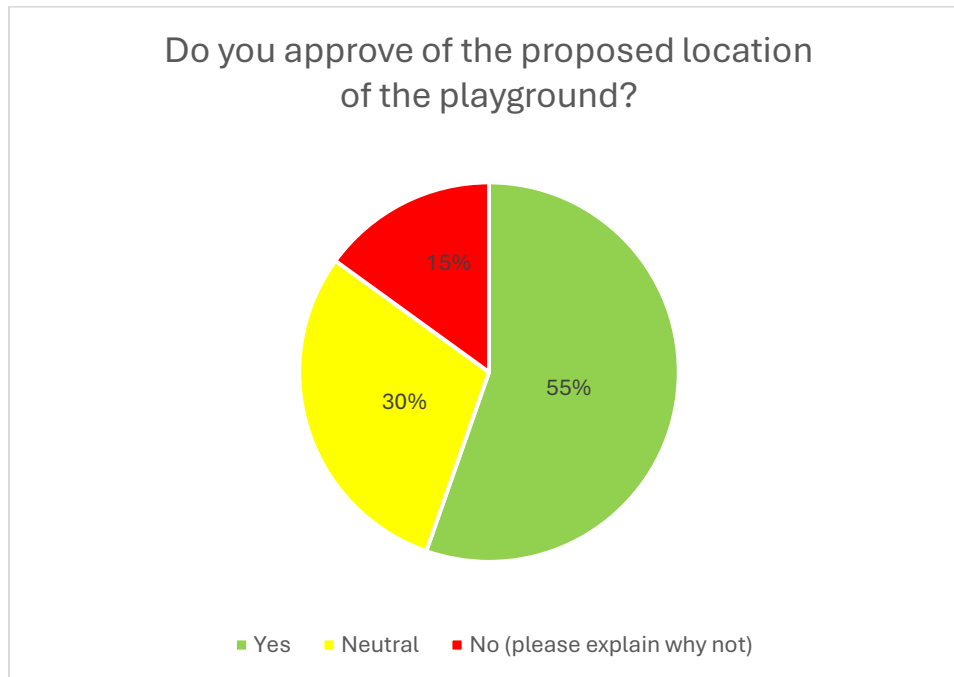
46 people (11%) voted “other”

We asked: If you selected “other” please provide an explanation of what you would like to see. You can also suggest examples from other locations around Fort St. James or other communities.

We received 53 comments. We heard:

- More like the playground at Paarens Beach (larger play structure, rubber matting, accommodates younger children, accessibility features)
 - 24 comments (45%)
- Must have accessible areas/features incorporated
 - 8 comments (15%)
- Natural aesthetic (wood, stone, etc.)
 - 3 comments (5%)
- Additional suggestions (13% of comments): swings, baby swings, wheelchair swing, zip line, climbing wall, Kids Ninja Warrior equipment
- Other examples: Spirit Square in Burns Lake, Lheidli T’enneh Memorial Park in PG, accessible playground in Quesnel
- Would like to see other upgrades (8%): waterpark, floating dock, defined swimming area, outdoor showers, bike pump track
- Playground upgrades are unnecessary/refurbish existing
 - 8 comments (15%)
- Percentages may not equal 100% as some comments included multiple topics

Location

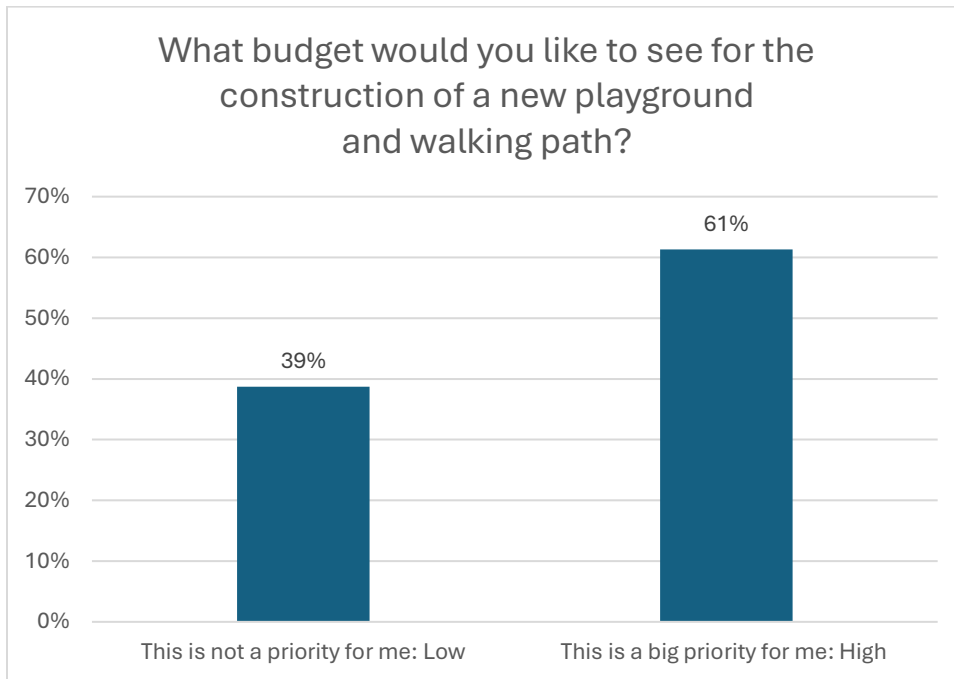


- 41 people skipped this question

From those that responded “no” (35 people):

- Concerned about being too close to the lake or road (safety, lake views, wind)/want a central location
 - 12 comments (34%)
- Would like the playground in the proposed picnic shelter location
 - 3 comments (9%)
- Would like the playground close to the bandstand for parents to watch children
 - 1 comment (3%)
- Prefer to keep the current location
 - 7 comments (20%)
- Don't want any upgrades to the playground
 - 7 comments (20%)

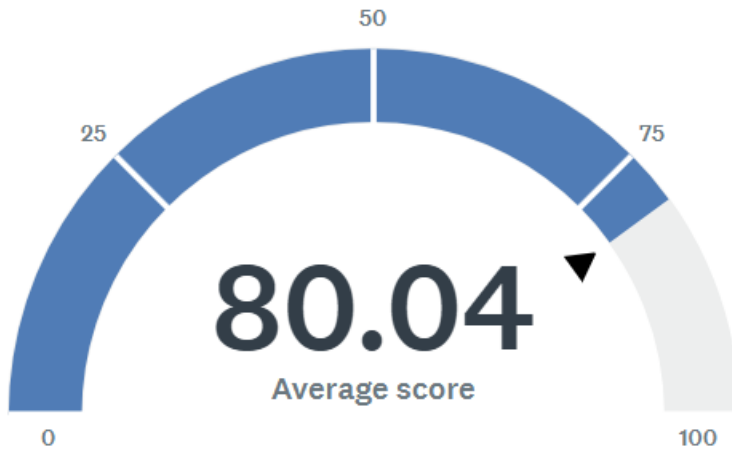
Budget



- Low = approx. \$577,000
- High = approx. \$593,000
- 75 people skipped this question

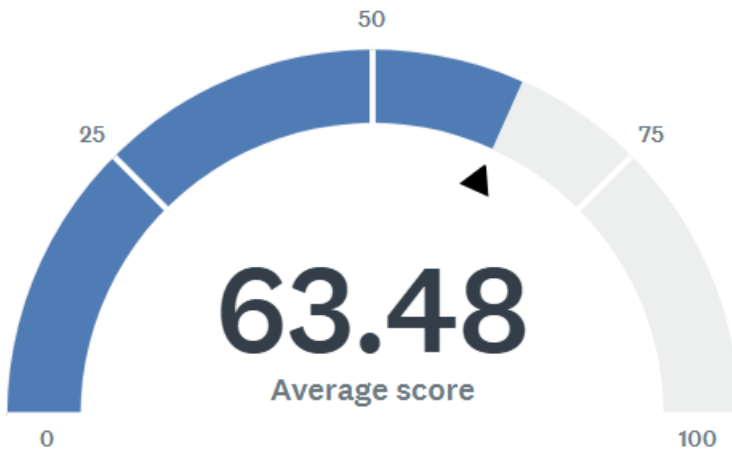
Other Upgrades

How important are upgrades to the existing washrooms?



- 66 people skipped this question
- Median: 91%
- Mean: 80%

How important are upgrades to the beachside walking path and seating?



- 72 people skipped this question
- Median: 66%
- Mean: 63%

Other Feedback

- Desire to purchase the Goodwin land to further develop the area
- Desire to keep the washrooms open year-round
- Accessible and appropriate for all ages and abilities
 - Access to the beach for wheelchair users
 - Playground features for babies to seniors and people with mobility challenges
- Include Indigenous voices – design, art, land blessing for new opening, drummers
 - Permanent circular seating arrangement (maybe around a fire pit) for ceremonies
- Large sign of “Fort St. James” for people to take their photo with
- Community volunteer tear-downs where appropriate to save money and increase community engagement
- Preservation of the cottonwood trees, use of native vegetation
- Desire for an outdoor shower for swimmers to rinse off, also indoor showers for campground users
- Additional upgrades suggested
 - Inflatable water park, dock
 - Expanded water sports rentals (paddle boats, canoes, ice fishing gear, xc skis)
 - Additional recreational features (splash park, pump track, portable sauna, outdoor ice rink, horse shoe pitch)
 - Bigger and brighter washrooms
 - More seating throughout
 - Service area for markets, pop-up events, food trucks, etc.
 - Employment opportunities created through park operations, rentals, maintenance, programming