

Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan

Public Participation Report

Capital Regional District | April 27, 2017



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Executive Summary

The Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan (GIRTP) project was initiated by the CRD Board in early March 2017. This report highlights the initial engagement process and comments received in Spring 2017.

The project scope includes identification of a conceptual route for a regional trail on each island and policies to guide plan implementation and trail development. Considerations for selecting a regional trail route included:

- The potential to link the main ferry terminal to key destinations such as commercial hubs and/or regional, provincial or national parks.
- Ability to locate the trail within existing road right-of-ways.

The Capital Regional District's Public Participation Framework was used in designing and implementing the public participation process. The overall public participation process includes two engagement steps: one at project initiation, prior to drafting the plan and a second one for public review of the draft plan.

This first round of participation sought public input and ideas for consideration in developing a draft plan. The process included five public sessions held on the islands and a comment form that was available at each open house and online through the CRD website for a month. Fourteen specific questions were asked relating to proposed regional trail route options, users, and priorities for trail development. One hundred (100) people attended the open houses and 111 comment forms were received. The submissions include both quantitative and qualitative responses that are reviewed and considered along with input received from government agencies and First Nations.

It is clear through the public participation process that there are many people who are interested in developing regional trails on the Gulf Islands and who are willing to provide ideas and suggestions for how they should be implemented.

Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is to describe the public participation process for the first phase of the Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan project, conducted in March 2017, and to summarize the responses received.



Engagement Process

The planning and engagement process is outlined in Table 1, below.

Table 1: Planning and Engagement Process

STEP 1: PROJECT INITIATION

Update Public		2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop project update bulletin Update CRD website information Develop media release Social media to update public 		First Quarter
Update Public and Stakeholders on SGI		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold a public session on four islands (Galiano, Mayne, Saturna, Penders) 		First Quarter
Introduce Project on SSI		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use local media and on-island posters for public awareness Send public session invitation to key stakeholders Hold a public session on-island to get initial input 		First Quarter
Introduce Project to First Nations		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up meetings with key First Nations to discuss project 		First Quarter

STEP 2: DRAFT PLAN & PUBLIC REVIEW

Review of Draft Regional Trail Plan		2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft the plan Regional Parks Committee and CRD Board approves draft plan for public review 		Second Quarter
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update website information, including draft plan and public comment form Media release/social media directing people to website Send draft plan to Government stakeholders and First Nations for comment (make presentations as needed) Hold five public sessions (Galiano, Mayne, Penders, Salt Spring, Saturna). Public sessions will be drop-in in nature and will provide highlights of the plan. Input will be solicited via the website comment form 		Third Quarter

STEP 3: FINALIZE PLAN

Final Regional Trail Plan		2017
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review all comments received Prepare a Participation Report for Regional Parks Committee Finalize plan for approvals in early 2018 		Fourth Quarter

Communications Materials

The communications materials prepared for the first phase of the project sought to update the public and stakeholders on the project. The materials provided background and contextual information on the project and highlighted opportunities to participate.

A project bulletin was published and circulated to CRD Commissions, Islands Trust Committees, First Nations with lands on the Gulf Islands and to island groups interested in parks and trails.

The CRD website contains information about the Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan project, including the project bulletin and open house display boards, and identified how people could provide input. During the course of the public participation process (March 2017), 452 people viewed the GIRTP home page (unique visits).

A media release was issued on March 8th to highlight the project and articles related to the project were published in the *Island Tides* (Volume 29, Number 6) and the *Driftwood News* (March 14, 2017). Advertisements were published in four local news publications, *The Mayneliner*, *The Active Page (Galiano)*, *the Saturna Scribbler*, and the *Pender Post*, as well as the *Driftwood News* and the *Island Tides*.

Social media, including Facebook and Twitter, was used to raise awareness about the project and promote opportunities to provide input. Approximately 5,000 people received the CRD's social media posts.

Letters were sent to the appropriate Local Trust Committees (Islands Trust) and to CRD Commissions with interest in trail development on the islands to update them on the project and invite their participation at the upcoming open house events. The latter included Parks and Recreation Commissions; Salt Spring Island Transportation Commission; Salt Spring Island Economic Development Commission; Southern Gulf Islands Economic Sustainability Commission; and the Southern Gulf Islands Harbours Commission.

Letters were sent to First Nations with reserve land on the islands, which includes the Tsawout, Tseycum, Tsartlip, and Penelakut First Nations, to introduce the project and invite their participation.

In addition, email invitations to the open house events were sent to local parks and trail organizations, such as Island Pathways, Moving Around Pender, Mayne Island Parks and Trails Association, local equestrian clubs, and conservation groups.

First Nations Presentations

The project was introduced to First Nations with reserve land on Salt Spring Island and the Southern Gulf Islands by letter. Staff reached out to the First Nations and to-date presentations have been made to the Tsawout Lands Sub-Committee and to the Chief of the Tseycum First Nation. A meeting planned with the Tsartlip Nation was cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances and we are continuing follow up with both the Tsartlip and Penelekut First Nations.

The First Nations representatives were asked if there was any information they wanted the CRD to be aware of about their reserve lands or their interests on the islands, how they would like to provide input, as well for their comments on the information provided (e.g. routes, prioritization criteria). Different Nations provided input differently, with one providing a comment form and general comments and others providing oral comments only.

Public Sessions

Five open house events were held on the islands in March 2017 to update the public and stakeholders on the Southern Gulf Islands and to introduce the project on Salt Spring Island. The events were drop-in style and staff were available to answer questions and discuss the project. Display boards at the open houses outlined the project background, regional context, vision information, proposed regional trail route options for each island, and potential prioritization criteria for the future development of the trails. The display boards were also posted on the project website to ensure all interested individuals received the same information. Approximately 100 participants attended the public open houses.

Comment forms were available at the open houses and on the CRD website between March 1 and 31, 2017 (Appendix 1). For consistency, the same questions were asked in the online comment form as were at the public open houses. The comment form included fourteen questions relating to the proposed regional trail routes on each island, who should be the users of the trails, criteria for prioritizing trail development, and other comments relating to the project. A total of 111 respondents provided information through the comment form process.

The public sessions provided background and contextual information, gathered ideas from individuals through their written comments, and provided an opportunity for discussion between staff and interested individuals.

Responses

Interested members of the public provided responses through the comment form and through the vision statement exercise at the open house events. All comments received were reviewed and considered as the draft plan was developed.

Vision

In 2013-2014, through a previous trail planning initiative, southern Gulf Island residents were asked their vision for a trail network on their island. Key points from that work were highlighted on the display board, including:

- Connect popular destinations
- Be used as part of islanders' daily routine
- Provide a priceless experience for all
- Provide for alternative transportation and active recreation
- Create a network for cyclists, hikers, walkers, runners and equestrians
- Be designed in an environmentally sensitive manner
- Improve safety.

Attendees at the March 2017 open houses were asked to contribute any additional points toward a vision for trail systems on the islands. Twenty-seven comments were received at the open house events. The comments related to: accessibility, connectivity, environmentally sensitive design, users, partnerships, and implementation. This information informed the development of the draft Gulf Islands Regional Trail Plan.

Comment Forms

There were a total of 111 comment forms received. Each person submitting a comment form could respond to all or as many of the questions as they wished. Some people chose to respond to questions about all of the islands, while others responded only about the island of most significance to them (e.g. island where they live). The following provides a summary of the input.

Galiano Island

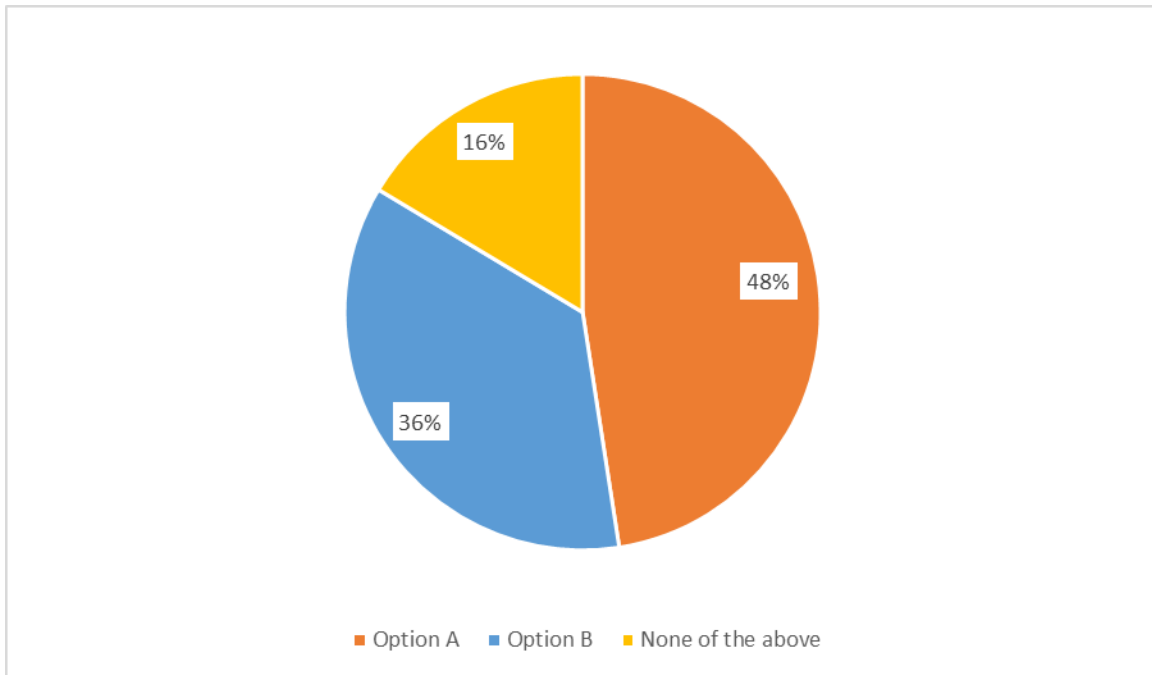
Two routes were proposed for a regional trail on Galiano Island, as shown on Map 1. Respondents were asked which of the two routes they preferred, Option A or Option B or if neither of the routes were preferred. Option A refers to a southern route from Sturdies Bay to Montague Harbour Provincial Park. Option B refers to a northern route from Sturdies Bay to Montague Harbour Provincial Park.

Map 1: Galiano Island



There was a total of 61 respondents. Results are shown in Figure 1. Respondents expressed stronger support for the southern route, Option A, on Galiano Island.

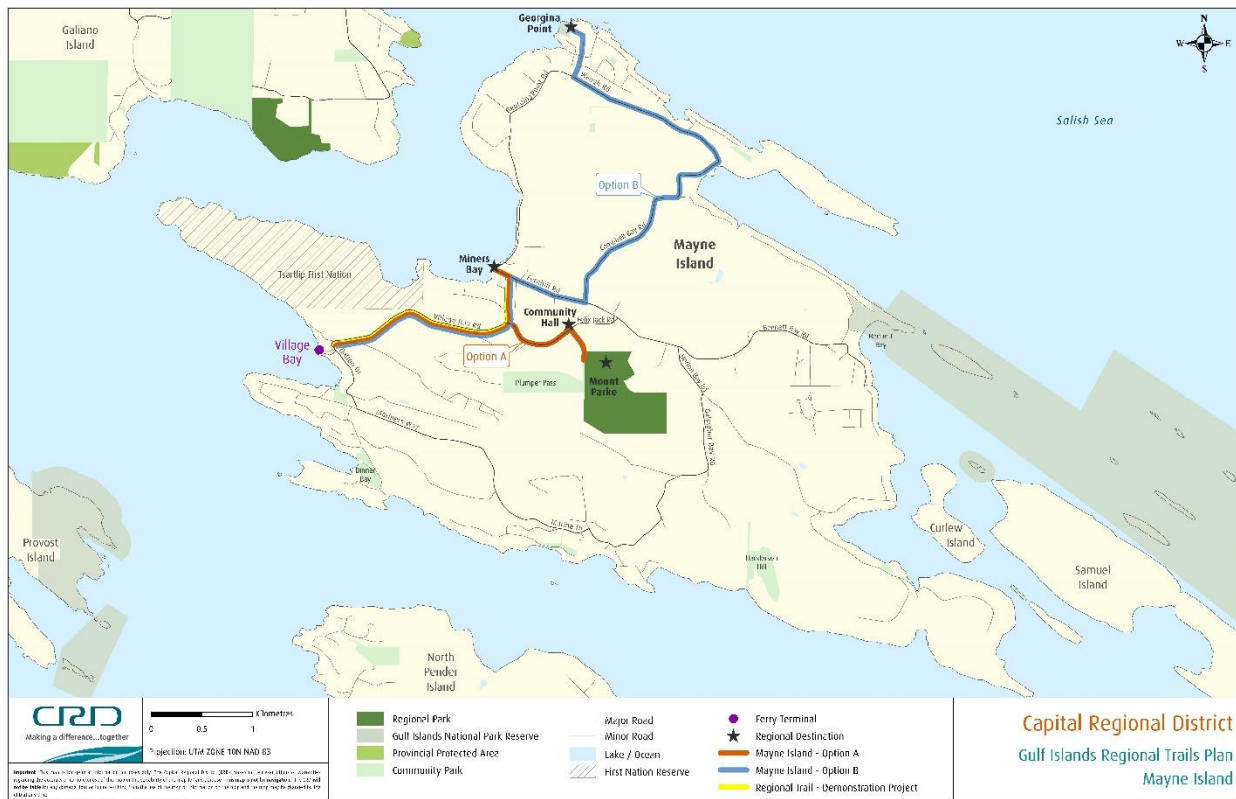
Figure 1: Route Options for Galiano Island



Mayne Island

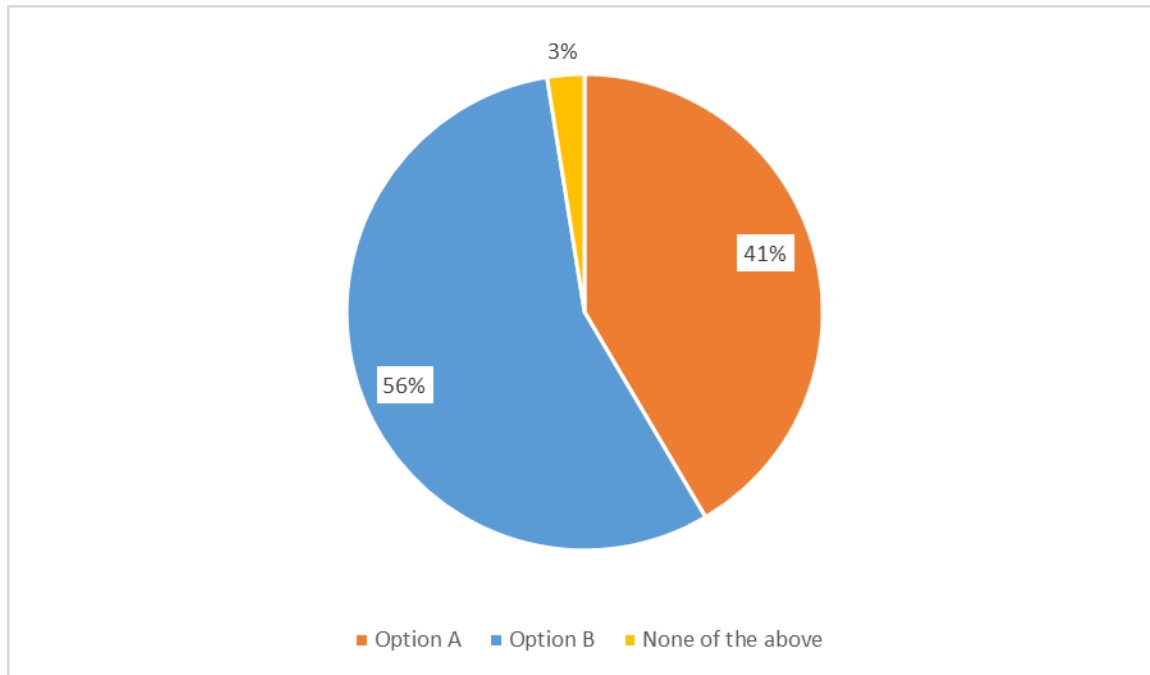
Two routes were proposed for a regional trail on Mayne Island, as shown on Map 2. Respondents were asked which of the two routes they preferred, Option A or Option B or if neither of the routes were preferred. Option A refers to a southern route from Miners Bay to Village Bay and Mt Parke Regional Park. Option B refers to a northern route from Village Bay to Miners Bay commercial hub and to Georgina Point in Gulf Islands National Park Reserve.

Map 2: Mayne Island



There was a total of 62 respondents. Results are shown in Figure 2. Respondents expressed stronger support for Option B from Village Bay to Georgina Point.

Figure 2: Route Options for Mayne Island



North and South Pender Islands

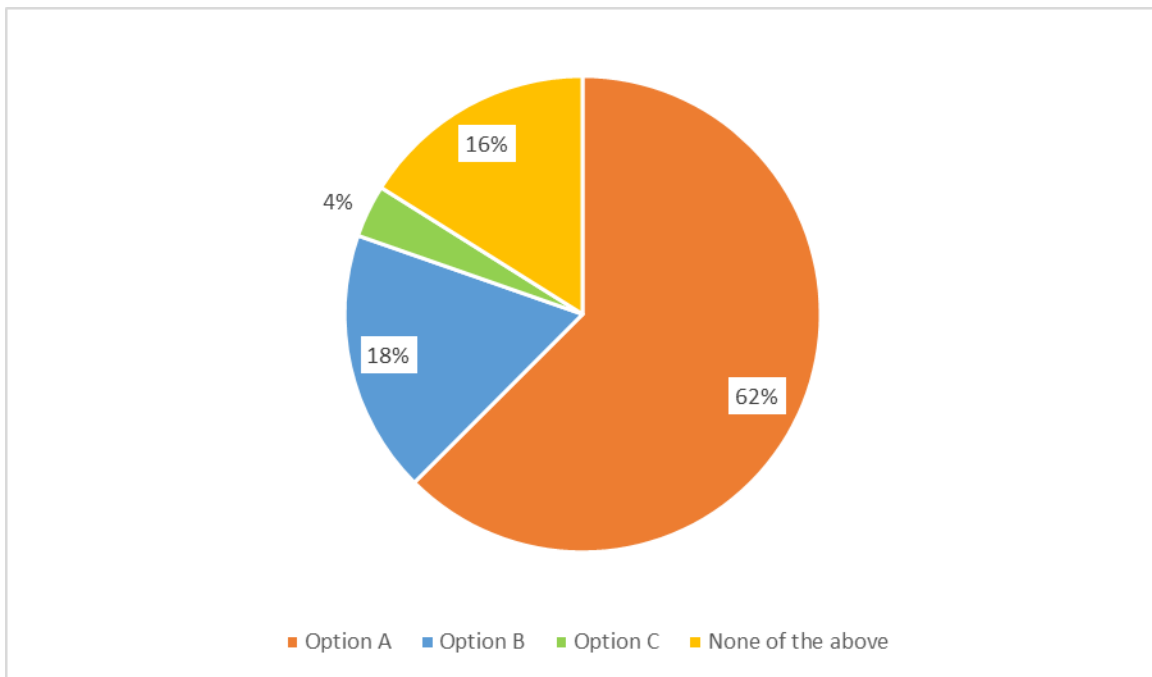
Three routes were proposed for regional trails on North and South Pender Islands, as shown on Map 3. Respondents were asked which of the three routes they preferred, Option A, Option B, Option C or if none of the routes were preferred. Option A refers to a central route from Otter Bay to Mount Norman/Beaumont in Gulf Islands National Park Reserve. Option B refers to a northern circular route from Otter Bay to Port Washington to Hope Bay and back to Otter Bay. Option C refers to a southern route from Poets Cove to Brooks Point Regional Park.

Map 3: North and South Pender Islands



There was a total of 56 respondents. Results are shown in Figure 3. Respondents expressed the strongest support for Option A with 62% supporting this route. Option C was poorly supported as a route.

Figure 3: Route Options for North and South Pender Islands



Saturna Island

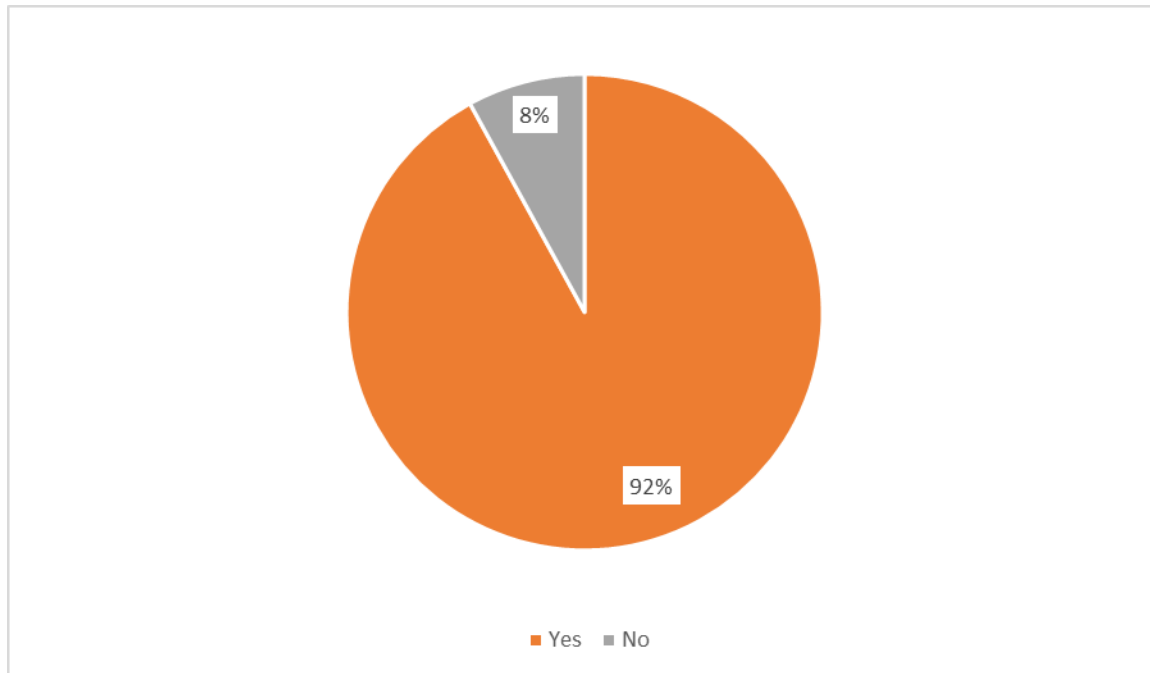
One route was proposed for a regional trail on Saturna Island, as shown on Map 4. Through the initial trail planning work undertaken in 2013-2014, consideration was given to potential routes and only one route was proposed. When considering other possible options in early 2017, it was confirmed that terrain constraints precluded a potential route to Winter Cove. Also, it was agreed that the CRD should not propose regional trail routes through the national park reserve or through First Nations lands, which precluded another potential route to East Point. Respondents were asked if they were in favour of the route or not. The route follows Narvaez Bay Road from Lyall Harbour to Narvaez Bay in Gulf Islands National Park Reserve.

Map 4: Saturna Island



There was a total of 50 respondents. Results are shown in Figure 4. Respondents expressed strong support for the route with 92% in favour of the proposed regional trail route.

Figure 4: Route Option for Saturna Island



Salt Spring Island

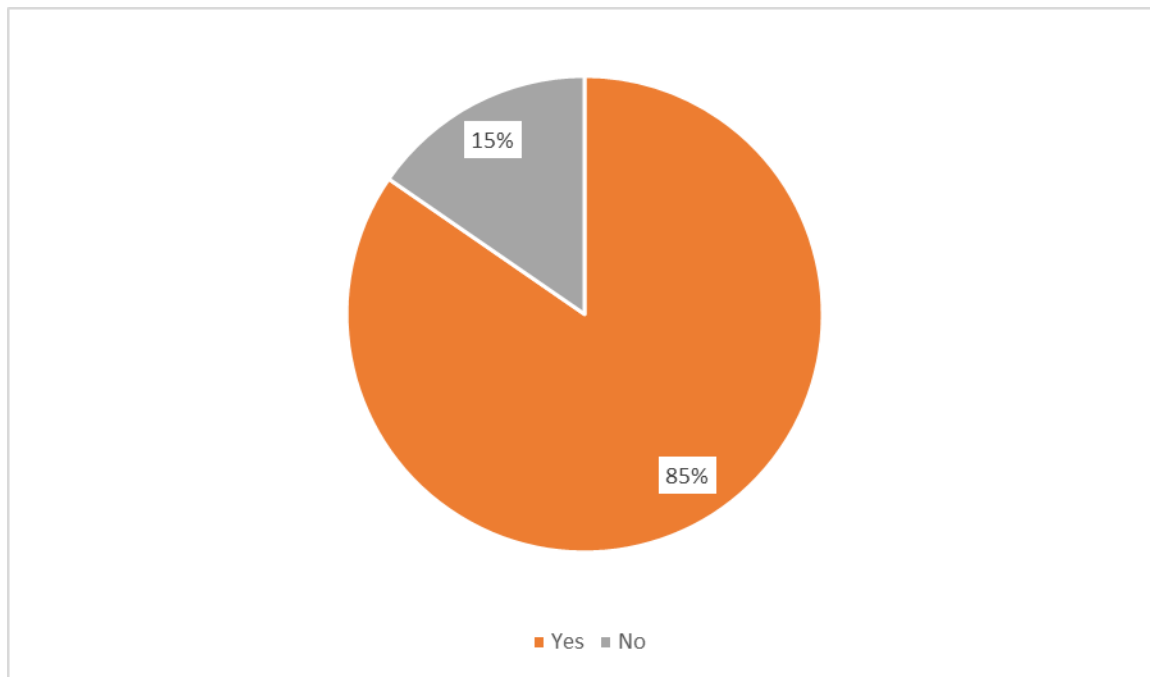
One route was proposed for a regional trail on Salt Spring Island, as shown on Map 5. This route was conceptually identified in the Regional Parks Strategic Plan 2012-2021. The route connects Fulford Harbour with Burgoyne Bay Provincial Park, Ganges village and Vesuvius Bay. Respondents were asked if they were in favour of this route or not.

Map 5: Salt Spring Island



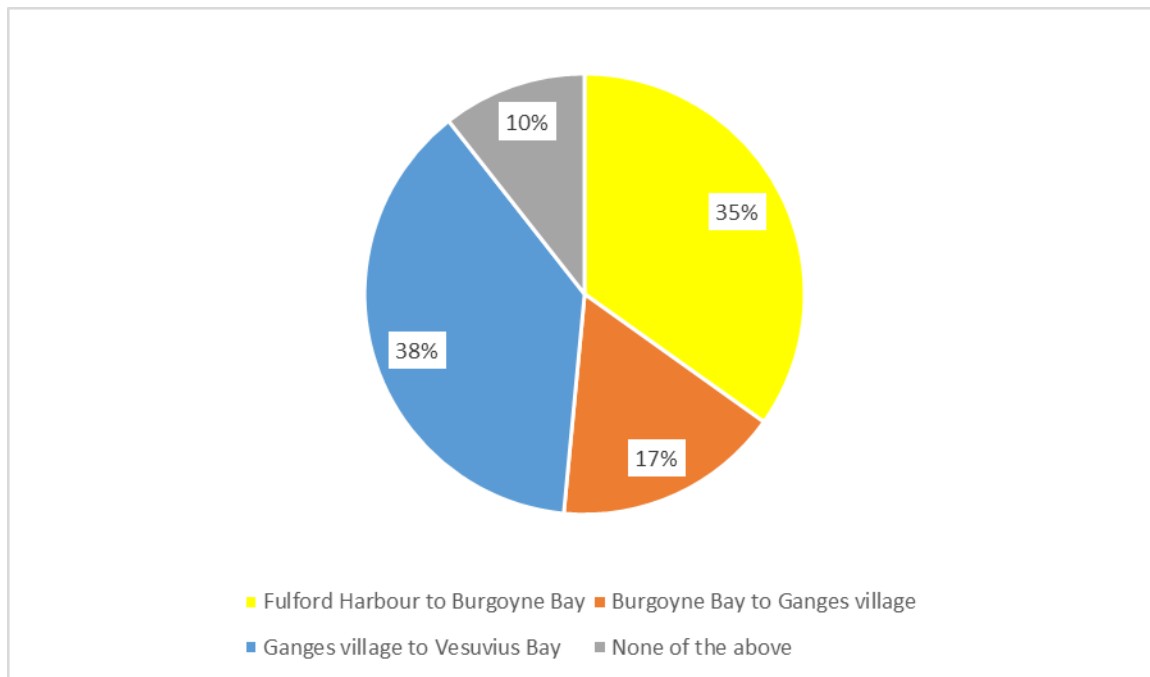
There was a total of 52 respondents to the question of support for the trail route. Results are shown in Figure 5. Respondents expressed strong support for the route presented for a regional trail on Salt Spring Island with 85% in favour of the regional trail.

Figure 5: Route Option for Salt Spring Island



Due to its 20 kilometer length, the regional trail on Salt Spring Island was divided into three segments: Fulford Harbour to Burgoyne Bay Provincial Park, Burgoyne Bay Provincial Park to Ganges village, and Ganges village to Vesuvius Bay. Respondents were asked which of the three segments of the route they felt should be the initial priority for development or, if none of the routes were preferred. There was a total of 66 respondents. Results are shown in Figure 6. Preferences for the segment from Ganges village to Vesuvius Bay and the segment from Fulford Harbour to Burgoyne Bay were quite similar at 38% and 35% respectively. A much smaller percentage supported the Burgoyne Bay to Ganges village segment (17%).

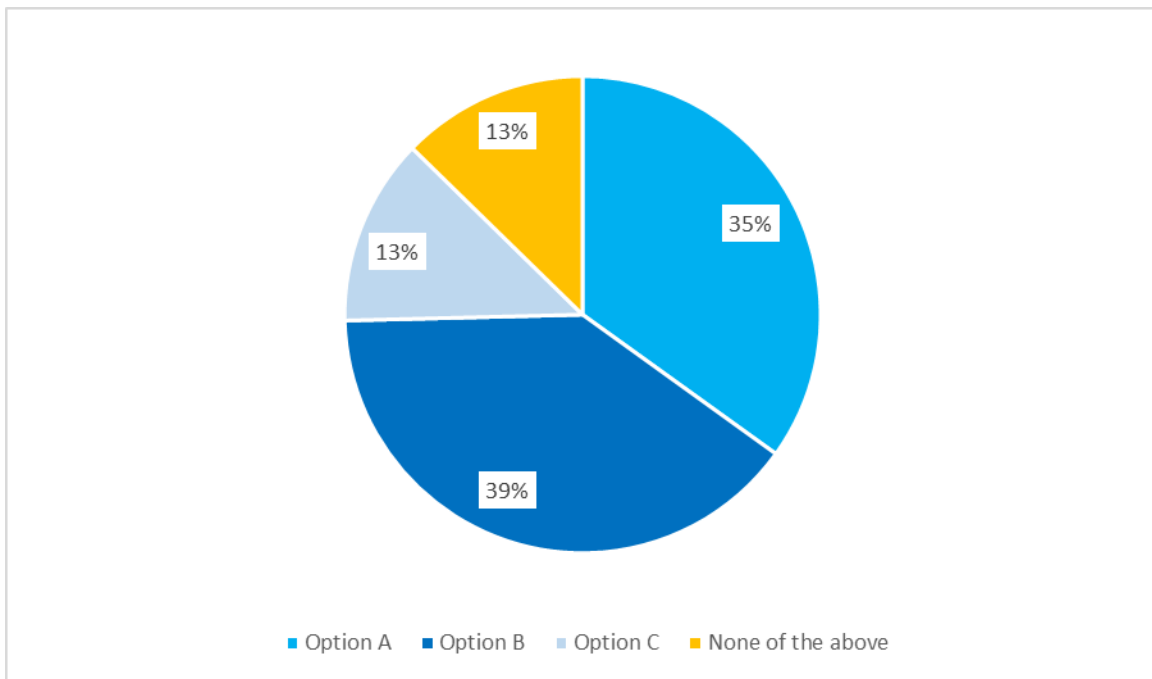
Figure 6: Priority Segment for Salt Spring Island



The route proposed for the regional trail segment on Salt Spring Island between Ganges village and Vesuvius Bay has three alternative route options, as shown on

Map 5. Participants were asked which of the three route options for this segment they preferred. Option A refers to a northern route along the Upper Ganges Road, Option B refers to a route along Lower Ganges Road, and Option C follows Rainbow Road and Atkins Road. An option was also given to not support any of these routes. There were a total of 63 respondents. The results are shown in Figure 7. The segment along the Lower Ganges Road received the strongest support (39%).

Figure 7: Route Options for Ganges to Vesuvius

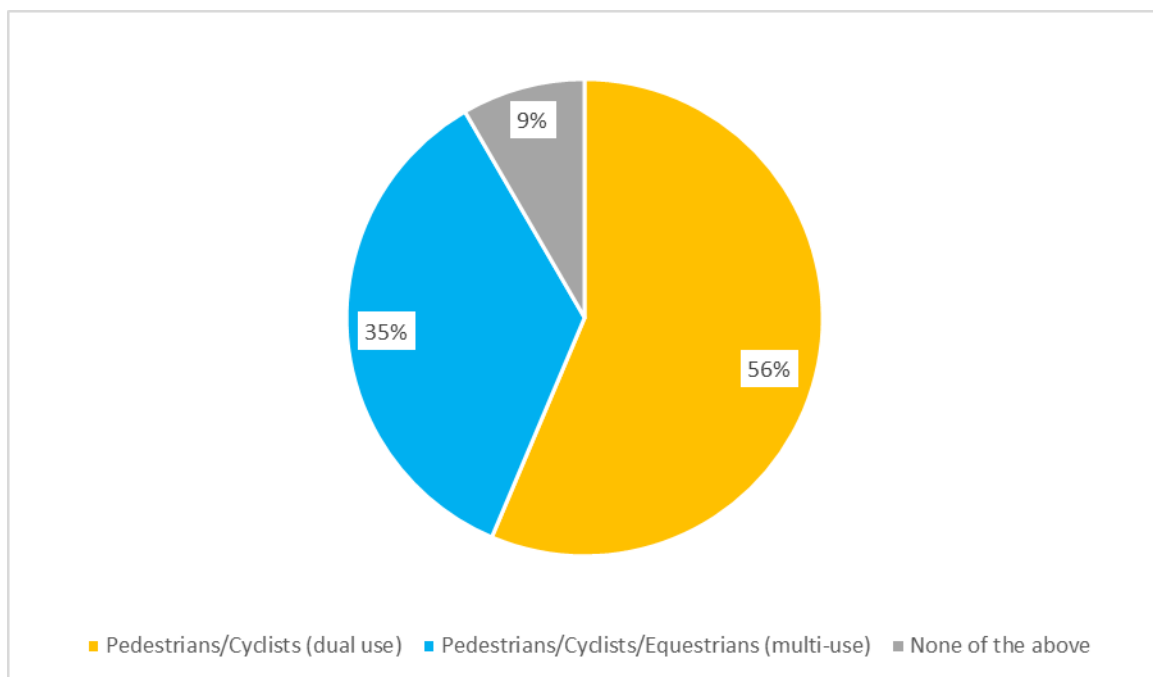


Trail Use

In addition to route options, participants were asked to indicate whether they prefer that the regional trails provide for dual-use (pedestrians and cyclists) or multi-use (pedestrians, cyclists, and equestrians). An option was also provided to choose neither dual nor multi use. The preferences are presented in Figure 8. There were 298 total responses. The greatest support (56%) is for dual-use on the trails. Support for multi-use trails was considerably lower at 35%.

In the comment section at the end of the comment form, 11 participants included comments about users on the regional trails. Of those comments, 6 respondents aired concerns about equestrian use on the trails due to safety concerns and issues with horse manure. Four (4) respondents wanted pedestrians-only regional trails.

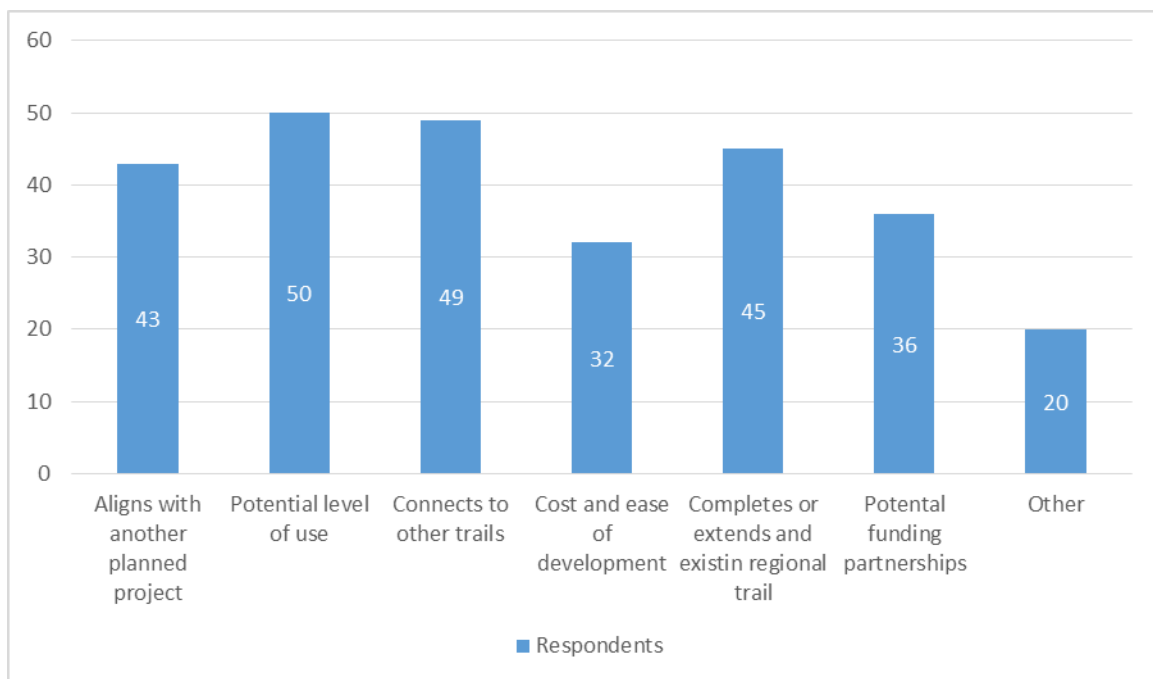
Figure 8: Trail Use



Criteria for Trail Development

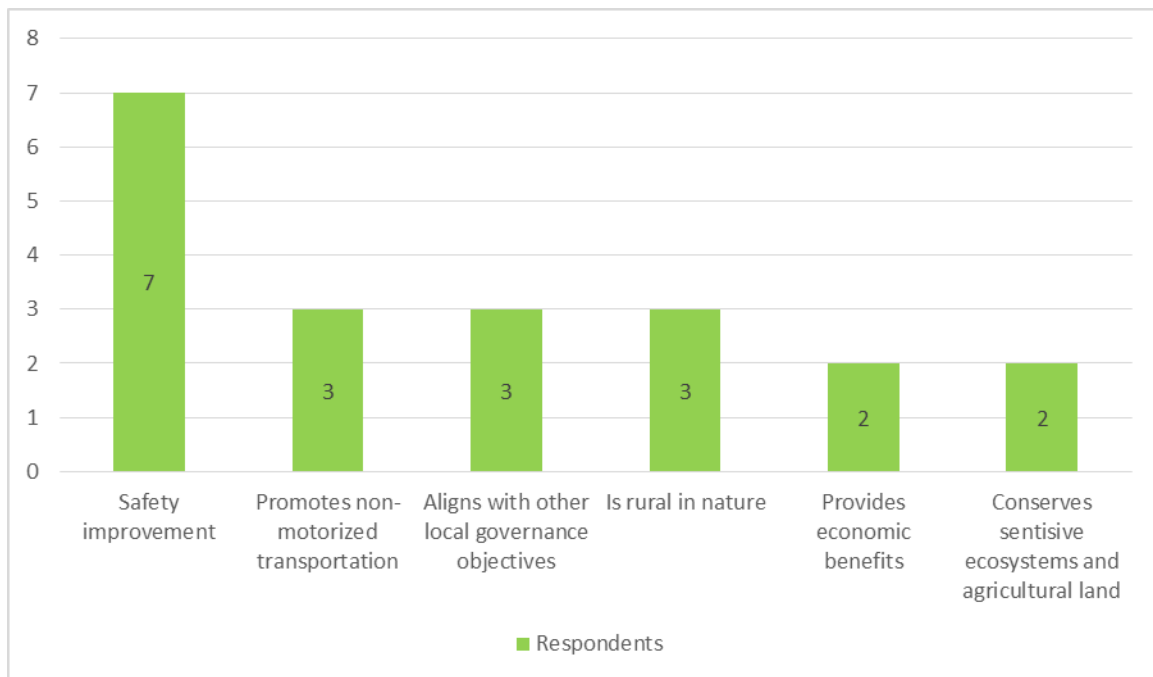
Given that the Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan will be proposing new regional trails on six Gulf Islands, development of regional trails will take place over time as budget and resources are available. To assist in determining how priorities might be set for trail development, six potential criteria were identified. The criteria were: aligns with another planned project (e.g. road work), potential level of use, connects to other trails, cost and ease of development, completes or extends an existing regional trail and potential funding partnerships. Participants were asked what criteria should be considered by the CRD and they could check as many of the example criteria as they supported and/or suggest other criteria. There were 85 respondents to this question. The results are shown in Figure 9 and Figure 10. The strongest support for prioritizing trail development was based on criteria that consider level of use and connections to other trails.

Figure 9: Criteria for Prioritizing Trail Development



Of the 20 “other” responses received, the greatest number related to safety (e.g., if the trail would improve safety).

Figure 10: Other Criteria



General Comments

An opportunity was provided on the comment form for participants to include other comments related to the project. Sixty-six (66) respondents provided additional comments for consideration in developing a plan for regional trails on the Gulf Islands.

Nearly one-half of the comments related to prioritizing trail routes (18) or suggesting alternative routes (13). Some responses about trail routes highlighted differing perspectives of trail functions - as active transportation corridors along existing road networks or as recreational trails providing more scenic or enhanced recreational experiences. Others suggested developing portions of the routes in a phased approach, expanding routes (more or longer routes) and/or realigning them to different destinations.

Several people (15) provided support for the project in this section of the comment form. Other respondents (11) commented about trail users, including pedestrians, equestrians, cyclists and dogs. There were also comments related to trail design (8), impacts of trails development (7), and implementation (2).

Ten (10) comments discussed concerns with the plan development process. As trail planning has been considered since 2013, several stakeholders were eager to have the plan completed and see trail construction begin.

First Nations Input

In seeking input on the Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan, presentations were made to Tsawout and Tseycum First Nations. The following highlights key information received from the First Nations that participated in this round of engagement.

In general, it was noted that First Nations communities practice their treaty rights and undertake cultural practices on their reserve lands and elsewhere on islands. These include things such as harvesting cedar, berries, and medicinal plants. There was some expression of interest in showing a presence through signage to raise awareness of First Nations connections with the islands. There was also some interest in keeping the regional trails away from the First Nations lands.

Concerns were raised regarding the protection of the ancestors and their resting places. Some sites were identified as being of archaeological importance and it was asked that staff check in with them regarding those sites. It was suggested that First Nations' cultural workers be involved at the construction stage.

It was suggested that the CRD needs to consider trail-related facilities such as toilets and garbage cans along the routes. Also, individuals noted that on the Gulf Islands it is important to think about potential for fires and to work closely with local fire departments. The need for enforcement of restrictions was noted and there were questions about how enforcement would occur.

With respect to specific route options, some general information was received and preferences were expressed by some.

General comments included things such as:

- Option A on Galiano Island has some rough terrain that would have to be overcome.
- Option A on North and South Pender is more useful than the other options on the Penders as it will capture more people and take them farther.
- If Option C on Pender is chosen, there is potential to work with First Nations to have a sign at the beginning of the trail, perhaps a 13 Moons sign.
- All of the example prioritization criteria were supported, although it was suggested that since all of the trails will be important that one could just “pull from a hat” to determine what order they are built in. It was suggested that sometimes it is better to complete one project before moving on to a new one (e.g. complete the whole trail on one island before moving on to the next island).

Where preferences were provided, the following was heard:

- Option A on Galiano Island (south route) was preferred.
- Option B on Mayne Island (to Georgina Point) was preferred.
- Support was expressed for the Saturna Island proposed route.
- Support was expressed for the Salt Spring Island, with preference for the Fulford to Burgoyne Bay as the first segment to be constructed. On the Ganges to Vesuvius segment, Lower Ganges Road was preferred.

The CRD will provide an additional opportunity for engagement with First Nations when the draft Regional Trail Plan is available for review and input.



Conclusion

The first phase of the engagement process for the Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan was conducted in accordance with the framework approved by the CRD Board in March 2017. Approximately one hundred people attended the open house events and 111 comment forms were received.

The public sessions provided an opportunity to strengthen CRD's relationship with different individuals and interest groups as they allowed staff to converse with people in addition to receiving their written ideas. Both the website and the public sessions allowed CRD to provide information to the public about the project and seek ideas and input.

The public comments and suggestions received through this engagement process were considered along with comments received from the project's team members, interested First Nations with lands on the islands, and input gained through discussions with other government agencies.

Recognizing that, in some cases, divergent or opposing opinions or suggestions exist, not all suggestions were incorporated into the plan. The goal of the planning process is to consider all ideas, understand the underlying interests to the best of our ability, and address as much as possible given the overall vision and priorities for regional trails.

Appendix 1 – Comment Form

Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan COMMENT FORM	
Capital Regional District Parks & Environmental Services	
<p>The Capital Regional District (CRD) is developing a Regional Trails Plan for Galiano, Mayne, North and South Pender, Salt Spring and Saturna islands. Your comments will help identify preferred trail routes and priorities. Forms can be submitted in-person at the open house or by mail to CRD Regional Parks, 490 Atkins Road, Victoria, BC V9B 2Z8 until March 31st, or online at: www.crd.bc.ca/project/gulf-islands-regional-trails-plan</p>	
<p>1. The CRD is proposing two route options for a regional trail on Galiano Island. Which route do you prefer?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Option A <input type="checkbox"/> Option B <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above</p>	
<p>2. Of the user options below, select the one you prefer most for the regional trail on Galiano Island:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Pedestrians/Cyclists (dual use) <input type="checkbox"/> Pedestrians/Cyclists/Equestrians (multi-use) <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above</p>	
<p>3. The CRD is proposing two route options for a regional trail on Mayne Island. Which route do you prefer?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Option A <input type="checkbox"/> Option B <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above</p>	
<p>4. Of the user options below, select the one you prefer most for the regional trail on Mayne Island:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Pedestrians/Cyclists (dual use) <input type="checkbox"/> Pedestrians/Cyclists/Equestrians (multi-use) <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above</p>	
<p>5. The CRD is proposing three route options for a regional trail on North and South Pender Islands. Which route do you prefer?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Option A <input type="checkbox"/> Option B <input type="checkbox"/> Option C <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above</p>	
<p>6. Of the user options below, select the one you prefer most for the regional trail on North and South Pender Islands:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Pedestrians/Cyclists (dual use) <input type="checkbox"/> Pedestrians/Cyclists/Equestrians (multi-use) <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above</p>	
<p>7. The CRD is proposing one route option for a regional trail on Saturna Island. Do you support this route?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	
<p>8. Of the user options below, select the one you prefer most for the regional trail on Saturna Island:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Pedestrians/Cyclists (dual use) <input type="checkbox"/> Pedestrians/Cyclists/Equestrians (multi-use) <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above</p>	

9. The CRD is proposing one route option for a regional trail on **Salt Spring Island**. Do you support this route?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

10. The regional trail on **Salt Spring Island** consists of three segments:

- Fulford Harbour to Burgoyne Bay Provincial Park
- Burgoyne Bay Provincial Park to Ganges Village
- Ganges Village to Vesuvius Bay

In your opinion, which segment of the route should be the initial priority for development?

- ☐ Fulford Harbour to Burgoyne Bay
☐ Burgoyne Bay to Ganges
☐ Ganges to Vesuvius Bay
☐ None of the above

11. The CRD is proposing three alternative route options for a regional trail between Ganges Village and Vesuvius Bay. Which route do you prefer?

- ☐ Option A
☐ Option B
☐ Option C
☐ None of the above

12. Of the user options below, select the one you prefer most for the regional trail on **Salt Spring Island**:

- ☐ Pedestrians/Cyclists (dual use)
☐ Pedestrians/Cyclists/Equestrians (multi-use)
☐ None of the above

13. The Plan will identify new regional trails on six Gulf Islands. Development of regional trails will take place over time as budget and resources are available. What criteria should the CRD consider to help prioritize trail development? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Aligns with another planned project (e.g. road work)
☐ Potential level of use
☐ Connects to other trails
☐ Cost and ease of development
☐ Completes or extends an existing regional trail
☐ Potential funding partnerships
☐ Other (please specify) _____

14. Do you have any other comments relating to this project? (Please use bullet points)

Thank you for taking the time to provide your comments.

Information contained on this form is collected under the authority of the *Local Government Act* and is subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. The information will be used for purposes directly associated with the Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan project. Inquiries about the collection or use of information in this form can be directed to Karen Ward, Coordinator of Administrative Services, Capital Regional District 250.360.3339.