

Electoral Area 'E'  
Official Community Plan  
Update  
Survey Results

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Chilliwack River Valley

June 2010



**Fraser Valley Regional District**

# Chilliwack River Valley Survey Results- Executive Summary

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Survey results will serve to guide staff, the Area 'E' Advisory Planning Commission (APC) and the Regional Board as they progress with the Electoral Area "E" Official Community Plan (OCP) update.

Key issues respondents would like the FVRD to be aware of include preserving rural lifestyle with little to no change in their community over the next ten years. Some of the results are highlighted below:

There was a low response/return rate for surveys. However, the open house was well attended and people were able to share ideas, values and issues in two different forms. In the majority of cases survey responses and open house information was similar to comments expressed by residents at recent public meetings.

## Development:

- ✓ 51% of respondents identified 'preserving rural landscape' as a principle that should guide land use planning;
- ✓ 62% of respondents want 'very little' change and a further 27% want 'no change' in their community.

## Environment:

- ✓ 39% of returned surveys identified 'environmental conservation' as a principle that should guide land use planning;
- ✓ 81% of respondents listed declining fish and wildlife populations and habitat as a top issue affecting the Chilliwack River Valley;
- ✓ 94% of respondents felt 'protecting fish and wildlife habitat' should be a top priority for the OCP update.

## Recreation:

- ✓ 32% identified access to recreational opportunities as an important issue;
- ✓ However, 5% of respondents identified access to recreational opportunities as a principle that should guide land use planning;
- ✓ 36% of respondents identified 'wilderness and natural areas' as a recreational facility they would most like to see in their community.

## Other Facts:

Total number of surveys mailed out: 552

Total number of surveys returned: 32

Return rate: 5%

Open house attendance: 50-60 community members

94% of responses identified the Chilliwack River Valley as their primary residence.

Average number of years a respondent has lived in the community: 17 years.

# Survey Results

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Surveys were mailed to households in Electoral Area 'E' in April 2010 as part of a newsletter introducing the OCP update project. Alternatively, residents could fill out an online survey.

Survey data was collected for approximately 6 weeks. The results of this information will be used along with open house feedback to guide two Advisory Planning Commissions, one located in the Chilliwack River Valley and a second located in Columbia Valley/Lindell Beach/ Cultus Lake.

Survey results were divided into two groups based on the APC boundaries. This allows local issues and values to be discussed by the APC and provide localized solutions and policy direction.

Below is a general summary of all survey information.

- ✓ Both survey groups identified **preserving rural landscape** and **environmental conservation** as principles that should guide land use planning in the coming years. These values were expressed at the open houses and again during directed discussions. As a result both of these values will be discussion topics at the APCs.
- ✓ Respondents in the Chilliwack River Valley expressed that over the next ten years they want **very little or no change** in their community. Whereas, residents in Columbia Valley/Lindell Beach/Cultus Lake were open to **moderate to very little change** in

their community. This reflects comments by the public at the open houses.

In Columbia Valley, community members expressed a desire for **more housing options**, a need to **ensure agriculture viability** in the future and retention of younger generations. High land costs and an aging population have put farms at risk, compromising farming viability.

- ✓ Both survey groups identified the **protection of agricultural land** and **fish and wildlife habitat** as top priorities. This reflects values of environmental conservation and preserving rural landscape as guiding principles for land use planning.
- ✓ Residents were asked to rank issues in order of greatest concern. Common in each area were the issues of **drinking water quality**, **hazards** and declining **fish and wildlife population and habitat**. Both survey areas ranked these as one of their top concerns. Ranking low in each area was the issue of community appearance and aesthetics.

In addition to the above issues, Columbia Valley ranked roads and access as a top concern. This reflects comments staff heard from community members at the open house concerning **traffic levels** in the summer months and problems having only one access point into and out of Columbia Valley.

- ✓ Electoral Area 'E' is rich in recreational opportunities due in part to the close proximity to amenities such as Cultus Lake and Chilliwack

River. The survey asked respondent to identify recreation facilities they would like to see in their community. Both communities responded with similar answers; **wilderness and natural areas**. This reflects similar values identified throughout the survey- **preserving rural landscape** and **environmental conservation**.

- ✓ The second choice for recreational facilities amenities was the creation of **commuter bike lanes**. This was an idea expressed at both open houses and reflects a shift in priorities and values by many residents. Unlike other areas in the Regional District, Electoral Area 'E' is located in close proximity to the City of Chilliwack and provides an opportunity for residents to choose an alternative mode of transportation to more urban areas.

### **Question #1**

**Rank the following topics from very important to not at all important. The following are a result of these findings:**

### **Question #1**

**Rank the following topics from very important to not at all important.**

- ✓ Hazards
- ✓ Drinking Water Quality
- ✓ Declining fish and wildlife populations and habitat
- ✓ Access to recreational opportunities
- ✓ Inadequate treatment and disposal of sewage
- ✓ Community appearance and aesthetics
- ✓ Access and roads

Respondents were provided an opportunity to submit 'other comments' if an issue existed that was not listed above. These are some of those comments/issues:

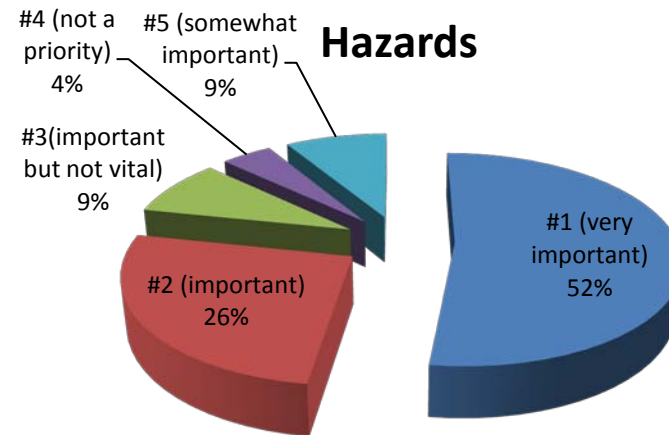
Crime, need a local store, watershed protection, forest fires, traffic levels, providing bus service into the City of Chilliwack, restrict gravel and mega power projects, residential fire protection and visual buffers from logging activities.

Please note that each of the topics divided the rankings into categories and assigned a percentage to it. However, the number of responses is an additional indicator to gauge how residents felt about a certain topic. In some areas the response rate was low, therefore indicating that the topic may be of little or no importance to respondents. In other cases 100% of respondents answered the question indicating a potential issue or value of importance to the community.

In total 32 surveys were returned to the Regional District pertaining to the Chilliwack River Valley.

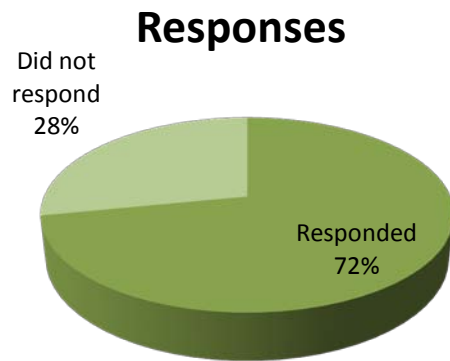
At a recent open house several community members attended to share their values, identify issues and information about their communities.

Combining these two results will provide insight into topics and issues that are important to community members and be used by the APC during the OCP update process.

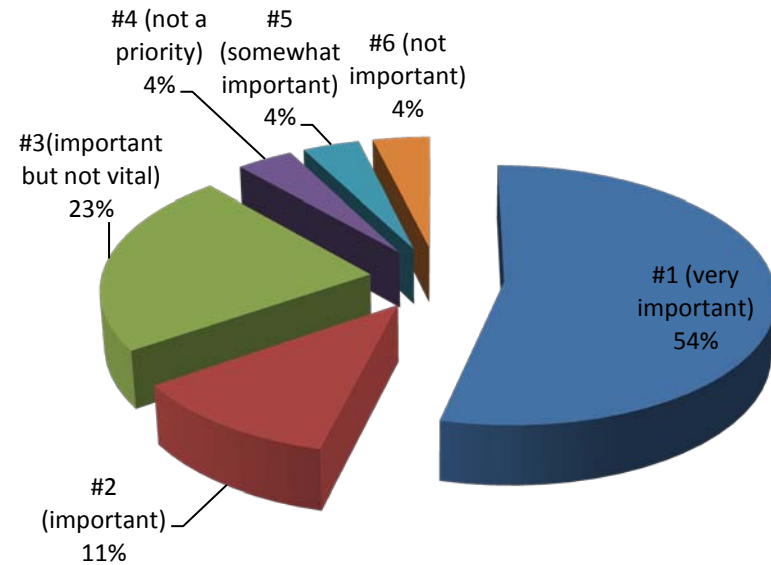


**Question #1**  
**Issue: Hazards**

**Hazards** were ranked by respondents as important or very important by 78% of respondents. However, only 72% of total respondents answered this question, indicating that the actual importance may be lower overall.



## Drinking water quality

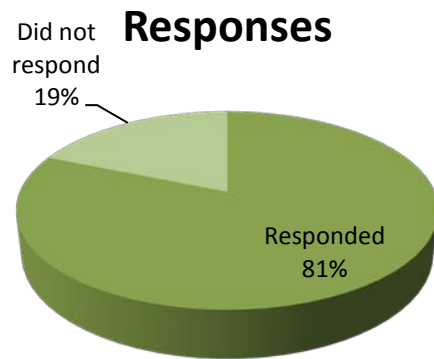


One of the higher response rates, the response rate indicates this is a topic/issue important to community members.

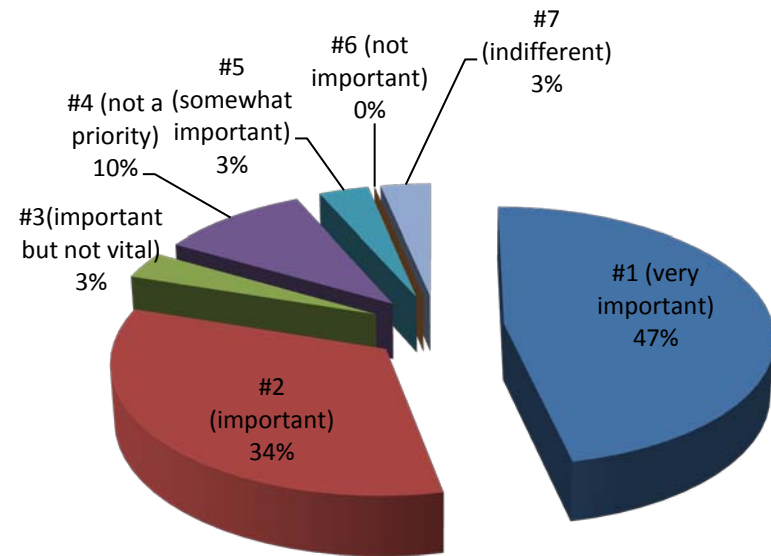
**Question #1**  
*Issue: Drinking water quality*

*Issue: Declining fish and wildlife populations and habitat*

54% of respondents rated this issue/topic as very important or #1 in the ranking system. Indicating the issues around **water quality** should be identified during the planning process; and furthermore the plan should respond to water quality issues and protection.



## Declining fish and wildlife populations and habitat

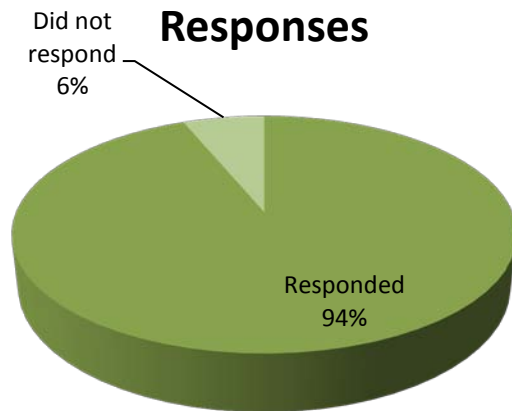


The Chilliwack River Valley is rich in recreational opportunities and is not surprising that a large number of respondents ranked this as a top issue.

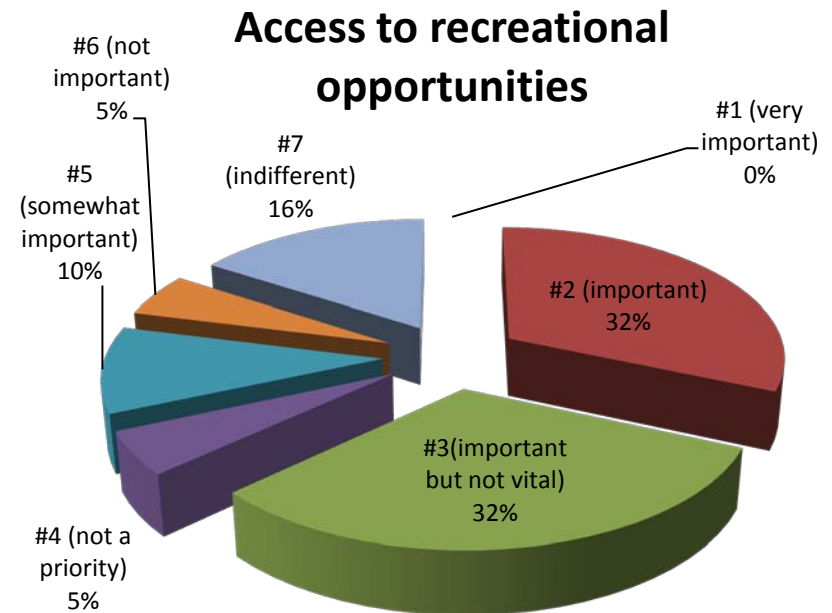
### Question #1

Survey Results:  
Chilliwack River Valley  
June 2010

As the highest response rate percentage and combined with the 81% of respondents identifying the issue/topic as important or very important, the plan should address **declining fish and wildlife populations and habitat**.



**Question #1**  
**Issue: Access to recreational opportunities**

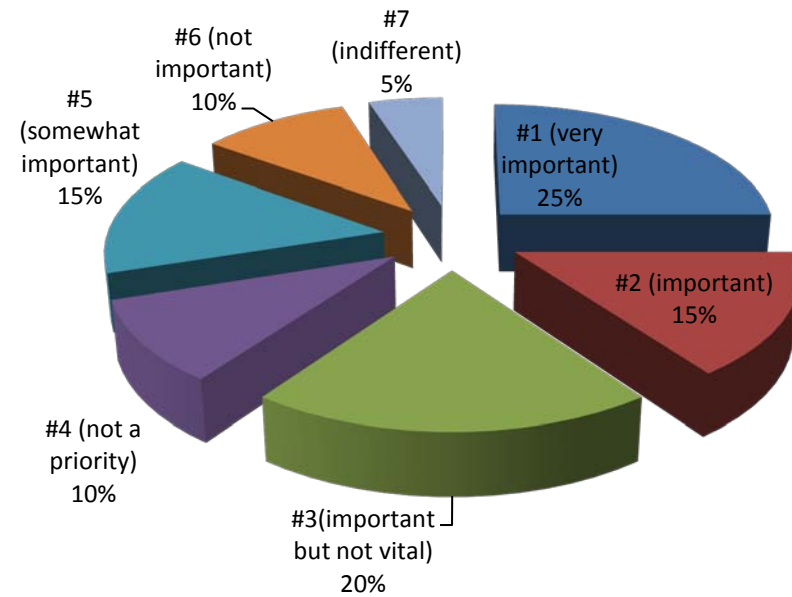


The low response rate indicates that this is not as high of a priority as other issues.

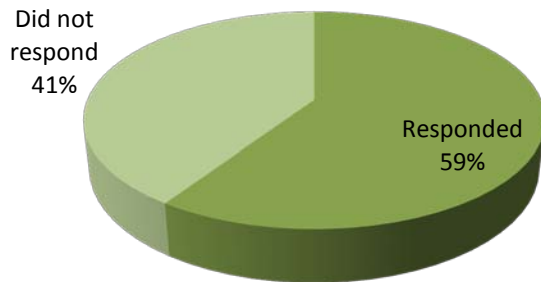
36% of respondents ranked this issue as lower priority and another 32% of respondents identified **access to recreational opportunities** in a middle category, important but not vital.

**Question #1**  
**Issue: Inadequate treatment and disposal of sewage**

### Inadequate treatment and disposal of sewage



### Responses

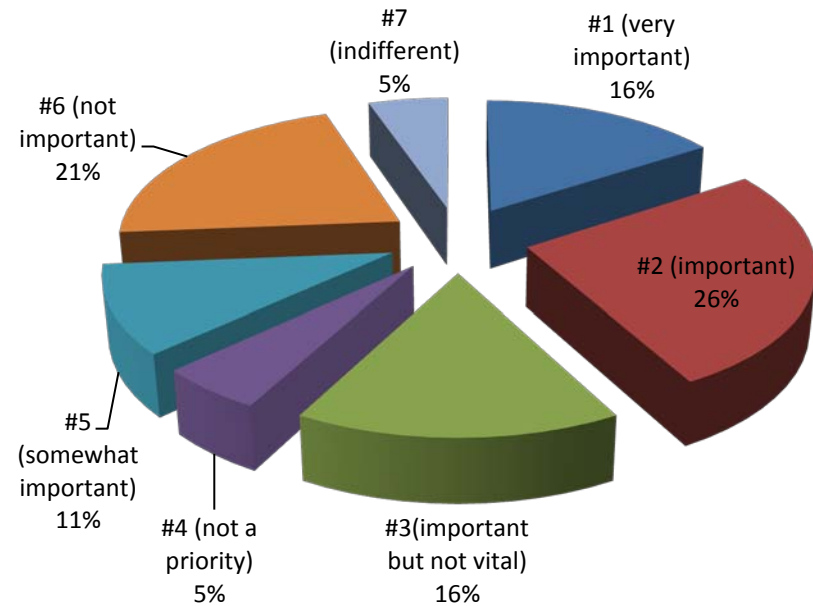
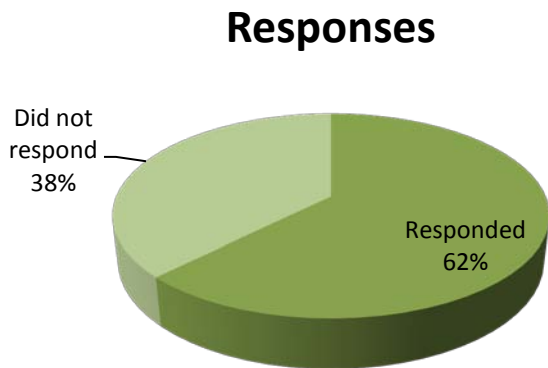


**Question #1**

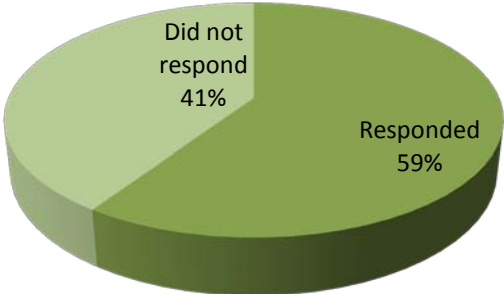
*Issue: Community appearance and aesthetics*

Of all the topics ranked in the survey, this topic has the most varied response. A moderate response rate and combined with range of responses, **sewage disposal may not be a priority topic** for the APC to consider.

### Community appearance and aesthetics



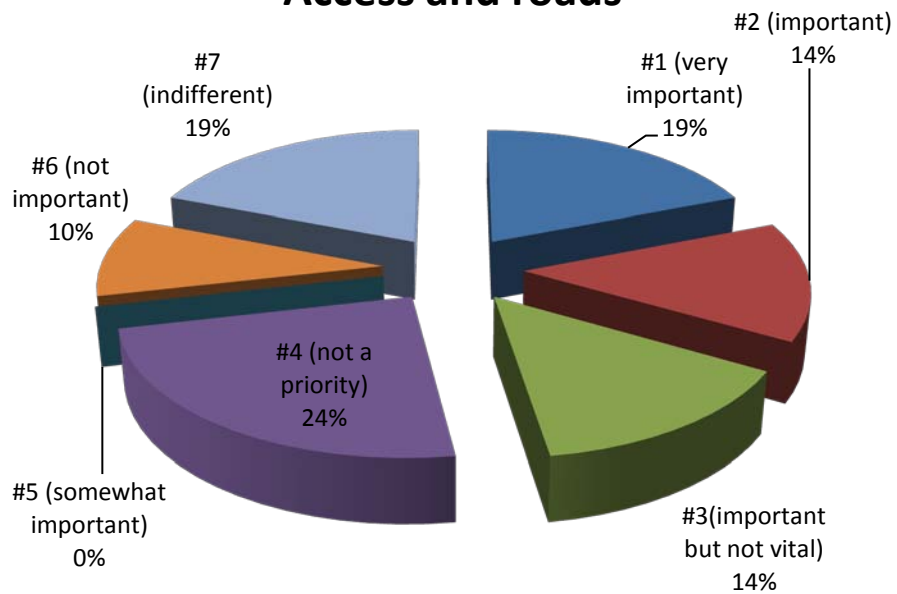
# Responses



Similar to the above topic, **community appearance and aesthetics** has a varied response by residents and a low response rate. Once again this is an issue that should not be a priority for the APC to consider.

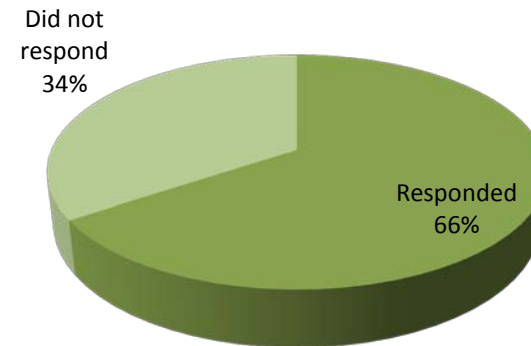
*Question #1  
Issue: Access and roads*

## Access and roads



Once again, this topic has a varied response. Coupled with a lower overall response level, once again this is a topic the survey would suggest is not of high importance to respondents.

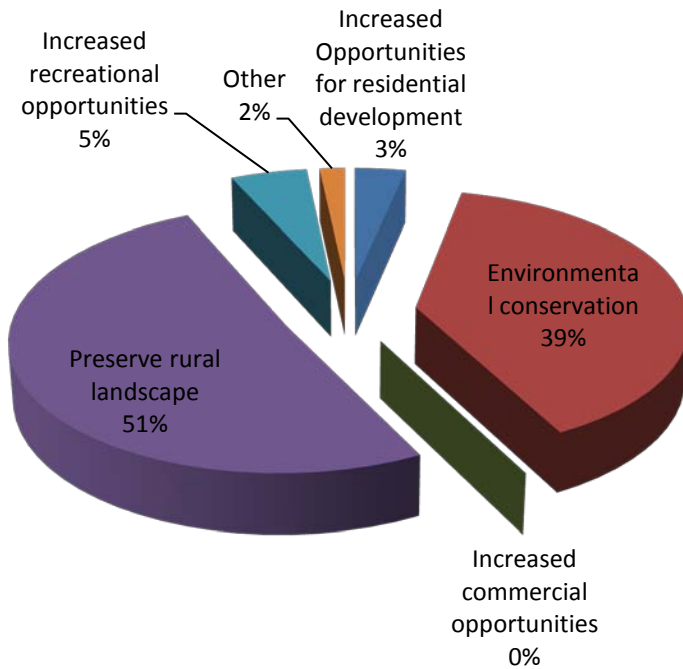
## Responses



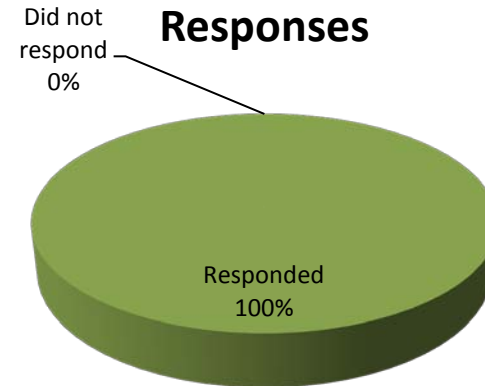
Question #2

Guiding principles for land use planning:

### Guiding Principles for land use planning



Common among survey respondents were providing more than one answer. Two overwhelming values emerged among respondents to this question- **environmental conservation** and **preserving the rural landscape**.

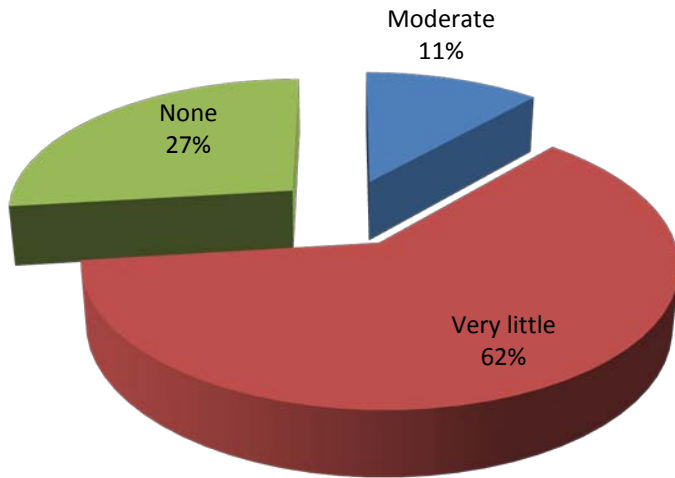


One of the few questions that garnered a 100% response rate, the same values were communicated by residents at the open house.

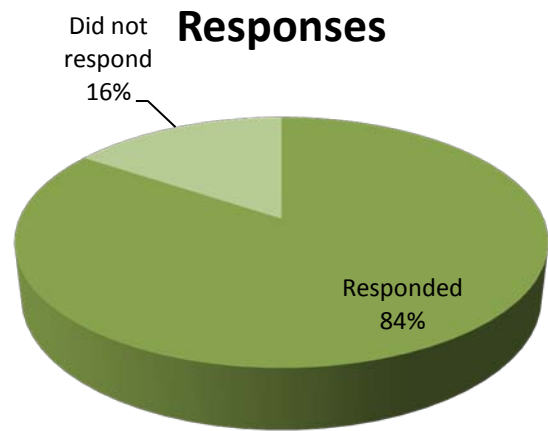
**Question #3**

*How much change would you like to see in the next ten years?*

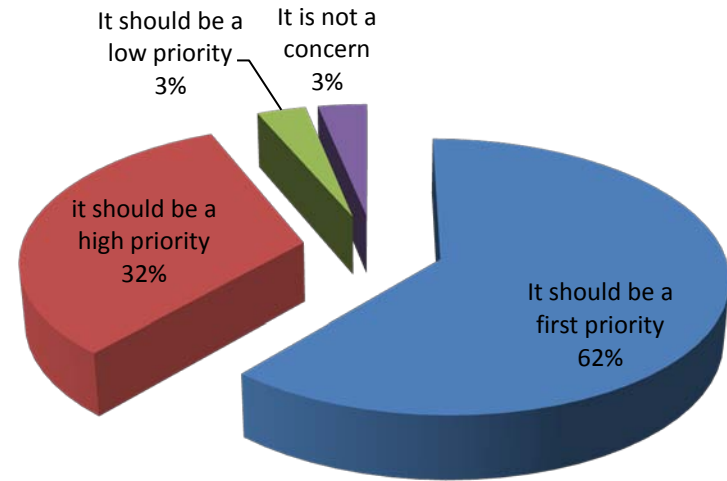
## How much change would you like to see in the next ten years?



**Very little and no change** comprised 89% of respondent's vision for the future. Very little to no change is a sentiment heard at the open house by Chilliwack River Valley residents.



### How important is it to protect fish and wildlife habitat?

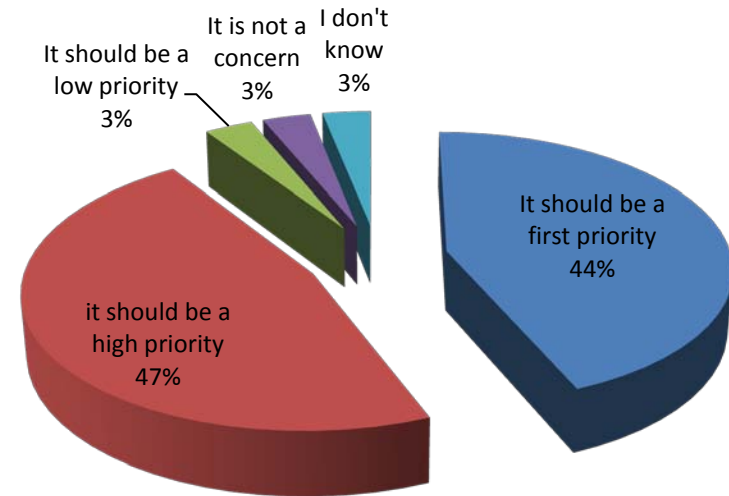
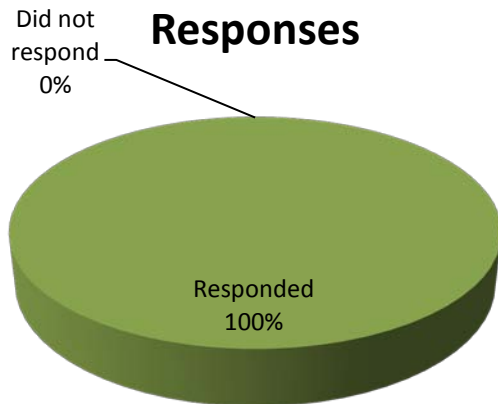


**Question #4**  
*How important is it to protect fish and wildlife habitat?*

*Question #5*  
*How important is it to protect agricultural land?*

As reflected in question #2 where respondents supported preserving rural landscape and environmental conservation, it is expected that **protecting fish and wildlife habitat** would be a first or high priority. This suggests that the plan should address ways to protect habitat and work towards environmental conservation.

### How important is it to protect agricultural land?

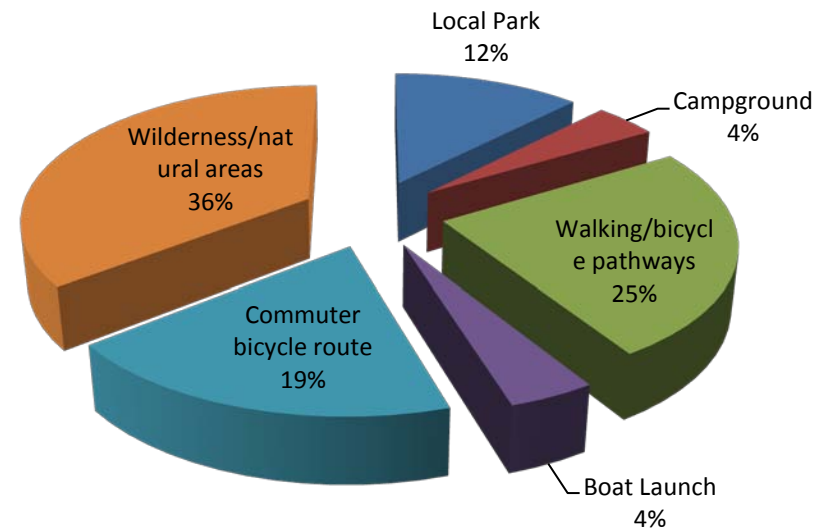
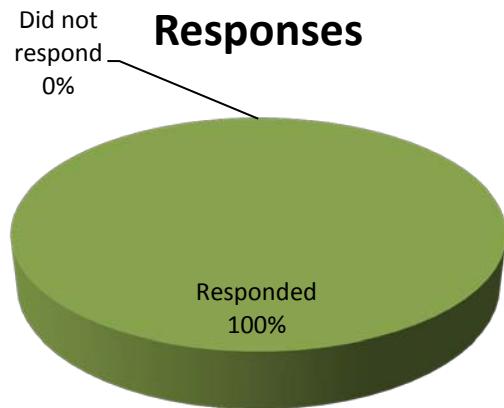


**Question #6**

*What type of recreational facilities would you like to see in your community?*

Similar to the above response, values expressed in the survey support the protecting agricultural land and preserving the rural landscape.

### What kind of recreational facilities would you like to see in your community?



Responses varied with two common recreational facilities emerging as the preferred types of facilities- **wilderness and natural areas** and walking bicycle pathways. This reflects the large number of recreational opportunities and the type of recreation available as Electoral Area 'E' is rich in natural and wilderness areas.

Commuter bicycle pathway is a value expressed at the local open house by multiple residents. To seems to reflect a shift in values and a desire for alternative transportation modes and the close proximity of the electoral area to the City of Chilliwack.

Other responses included: non-motorized recreational routes and areas, keep bikes of Chilliwack Lake Road- need separate bike paths and a local park with a playground for children.

