

Columbia Valley Park and Recreation District

Community Engagement and Park Planning

ENVS 475: Community Development and Participatory Methods

Fall 2020

Report No.1 January 2021



Sustainable
Communities
Partnership



About SCP

Western's Sustainable Communities Partnership (SCP) program focuses the expertise, energy, and ideas of faculty and students upon the issues that communities face as our society transitions to a more sustainable future. SCP partners with communities each academic year, facilitating a program in which Western courses complete community-engaged learning projects that address challenges identified by the partner.



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SCP Partner for 2020: Columbia Valley Park and Recreation District (CVPRD)

SCP is proud to partner with the Columbia Valley Park and Recreation District (CVPRD) in East Whatcom County, Washington during the program's fifth year. One Western course and one graduate student coordinator tackled projects identified in collaboration with the CVPRD Commissioners.

Acknowledgement

The Association of Washington Cities (AWC) has provided invaluable assistance as SCP has grown and developed. AWC has provided advice on program development and has assisted in promoting the program.



SCP is housed within Western's Office of Sustainability



PREFACE

The Columbia Valley Park and Recreation District (CVPRD) has a mission to improve the quality of life in the Columbia Valley by providing the community with access to diverse parks and recreational opportunities. A handful of park initiatives have been discussed, and there is widespread support for parks amongst community members, but the community has limited capacity to prioritize, design, and construct these spaces. Through a partnership with Western Washington University's (WWU) Sustainable Communities Partnership (SCP) and the generous support of the First Federal Community Foundation, students in Dr. Tamara Laninga's Community Development and Participatory Methods course (ENVS 475) planned and implemented a community engagement campaign to understand how the Columbia Valley community feels about the CVPRD's work and to raise awareness of the CVPRD and the benefits of parks. The findings from this work will be used to inform the CVPRD's park planning and capital projects in the future.

Western Team

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Columbia Valley Park and Recreation District Commissioners

Chair:	Jessica Bee
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Commissioner:	Richard Whitson

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	i
CHAPTER ONE: FALL 2020 SURVEY	1
CHAPTER TWO: FOCUS GROUPS	8
CHAPTER THREE: STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS.....	12
CHAPTER FOUR: WEBSITE AND COMMUNICATION PLAN	16
CHAPTER FIVE: CVPRD VIDEO	21
APPENDIX A: FALL 2020 SURVEY	23
APPENDIX B: SURVEY RESULTS	27
APPENDIX C: STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW NOTES	45
APPENDIX D: COMMUNICATION PLAN	48

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In summer 2020, the Columbia Valley Park and Recreation District (CVPRD) partnered with WWU's Sustainable Communities Partnership (SCP) to draft a Comprehensive Park Plan. The Comprehensive Park Plan will serve as a guide for park planning, will show community members the purpose and goals of the CVPRD, and will make the CVPRD eligible for external funding.

To complete the Plan, community engagement was required. The SCP reached out to Dr. Tamara Laninga and students in her Community Development and Participatory Methods course (ENVS 475) to facilitate the engagement process. Over the fall, students in the course contributed a total of 530 hours to conducting engagement initiatives for the CVPRD. The student teams completed a survey of public demand, focus groups, and stakeholder interviews to identify community needs and desires for parks and recreation infrastructure. To increase awareness about the CVPRD, the class also developed a promotional video, a communication plan, and a new website.

Conducting community outreach during a global pandemic poses unique challenges. Students developed remote-only engagement methods including an online survey and zoom-based interviews and focus groups. Relying on online engagement methods likely reduced the level of engagement. For one, the Columbia Valley is an area that has limited and poor-quality internet and Wi-Fi. Furthermore, the students relied heavily on social media to promote the online engagement methods. Without being in the community and hosting in-person meetings, the community's awareness of the engagement options was limited. Despite the challenges, the students did receive feedback from community members that will help to guide future CVPRD planning. By offering different engagement approaches, the students gave community members multiple ways to be involved. The students found similar results from respondents who participated in the survey, the interviews, and the focus group.

Key Findings:

- There is a need for parks in Columbia Valley.
- There is strong support for parks in Columbia Valley.
- Residents want to see developed parks with playgrounds, picnic tables, walking paths, dog parks, and more.
- Residents do not want to pay for parks through levies; they do not support an increase in taxes.
- Residents do not know what the CVPRD is about.
- The CVPRD needs to be involved in more community outreach about parks and funding.
- The big concerns people have about the CVPRD are related to crime/vandalism, litter, and increases in taxes.

Recommended Actions for the CVPRD:

- Share the promotional video broadly to increase awareness and build momentum.
- Update the new website regularly.
- Connect with existing groups like the PTAs, Lions Club, churches, and so on to build awareness and support for the CVPRD mission and goals.

The following chapters detail the engagement methods, findings, and outcomes of the student work.

CHAPTER ONE: FALL 2020 SURVEY

Survey Team: Bryan Benjamin, Ben Breshears, Peter Clifford,
Zach Griffin, Zinta Lucans, Alexis Orellana

Introduction

The WWU student survey team elicited feedback from Columbia Valley residents regarding their perspectives on future park development in Columbia Valley. The team began the survey process with the following objectives in mind:

- Determine why residents support or do not support parks in Columbia Valley.
- Understand residents' attitudes towards the levy on the 2020 November ballot, which did not pass due to a slight majority of residents who voted "No".
- Determine what methods of funding residents support for park development.
- Learn what residents want in a public park (ie. Location, activities, etc.).

A total of 69 individuals completed the survey. With an estimated population of 5,657 people in Columbia Valley, the survey respondents represent 1.2% of the population. This sample is not statistically significant, and therefore, the team could not draw decisive conclusions representative of the larger Columbia Valley population. However, the insight collected from this initiative is informative. For example, many respondents listed specific concerns about the prospect of constructing parks in the area, which is crucial information for the CVPRD to consider before moving forward with park development. Respondents also advocated for the amenities that they would most like to see in parks, which will be helpful information as the CVPRD prioritizes capital projects in the future.

Most survey respondents indicated support for the development of parks in Columbia Valley. Most also identified as voting "Yes" on a parks levy in November 2020. Despite this support of the levy, respondents noted concerns about park use related to taxation, drug use, and vandalism. The community ultimately voted against the 2020 parks levy. The survey responses offered insight into why the levy was voted down.

Moving forward, the survey team recommends that the CVPRD conduct a public survey every 1-3 years to understand the needs, concerns, and desires of the community they serve and to understand what the community believes the CVPRD is doing well. The CVPRD should prioritize targeted outreach to underrepresented and underserved populations within Columbia Valley to gather more representative public input. The CVPRD should also prioritize engaging families with young children and people with dogs, as these groups are most likely to regularly use parks. The survey team recommends that the CVPRD distribute a follow-up survey to determine whether the results from the initial survey are representative of the larger population. The fall 2020 survey was a first step in reaching out to community members about their support for and concerns about the future of parks in Columbia Valley.

Project Methods

The survey team began their process by researching surveys used in nearby communities and reviewing theory related to the topic of surveys, particularly in the field of environmental studies. The team then created a survey using the online platform, Qualtrics. The survey is a blend of multiple choice, short answer, and visual preference questions. It elicited both quantitative and qualitative results. Quantitative results include data such as where respondents live and where they would like to see parks developed. Qualitative results include data such as why respondents do or do not support parks. The survey was also adapted into a paper version. A copy of the survey is available in Appendix A.

The team set out with a goal to reach as many people as possible. Information about the survey was shared on the CVPRD website, on a poster that was distributed around the community (see Figure 1), on social media, and via word of mouth. The poster included a QR code that, when scanned using a phone, directed participants to the online survey. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and social-distancing recommendations, the survey team did not have the opportunity for in-person interaction with the community. A CVPRD commissioner distributed the paper survey at the Foothills Food Bank distribution on Tuesday, November 24, and on one other occasion, but the internet was the primary means of recruitment for the survey.

CHECK OUT THESE RESOURCES ON HOW TO GET INVOLVED

COLUMBIA VALLEY, WE NEED YOUR HELP!

The Columbia Valley Park and Recreation District (CVPRD) has a mission to provide the community of Columbia Valley with access to diverse parks and recreational opportunities. Western Washington University (WWU) students have partnered with the CVPRD to collect community input about desires for local parks. Please provide your input by participating in any of the following ways...

Take the Survey!

Fill out this survey to share your interest in future parks in Columbia Valley and to tell us what amenities and activities you would like to see in parks. Participation is voluntary and anonymous.



Scan the QR code on the right, visit cvpr.my-free.website or call 360-650-7774 to complete the survey.

Send Us Video Footage of the Columbia Valley Community!

We are developing a video to highlight the CVPRD and the desire for parks in the area. Please send in footage of your favorite places in Columbia Valley or a short video of why you support parks in Columbia Valley.



Scan the QR code, visit cvpr.my-free.website or call 360-650-7774 for video submission instructions and to submit your video by Friday, Nov. 27th.

Participate in a Focus Group!

Participate in a one-time online focus group this November or December to share your thoughts and ideas about the future of parks and recreation in Columbia Valley.



Scan the QR code or visit https://bit.ly/CVPRD_Focus_Group to fill out a short form or call 360-650-7774.

 Visit the CVPRD website: <https://cvpr.my-free.website/> or call the WWU Community Development Team at (360)-650-7774 for more information.

Figure 1. Promotional flyer created in combined effort with the survey, focus group and video teams. The flyer was posted in several public areas within the community to reach individuals who were not reached through social media advertisement or word of mouth.

Findings

The following is a condensed description of the survey findings. For detailed results, please see Appendix B: Results of Data Collection.

Demographics:

Of the 69 completed surveys, 57 were filled out through the online platform and 12 paper surveys were completed. Among the respondents, every age group (18+) was represented, with a majority of respondents falling into the 30-39 age group (25%), followed closely by those in the 60+ age group (23%). The racial and ethnicity demographics of the respondents are as follows: 82% White (non-Slavic), 11% Mixed, 5% Hispanic, 5% Slavic, and 1% Native American. Forty-two percent of respondents reported having children under 18 years old at home, while 58% stated they did not. The number of children in a household ranged from 0-6.

Geographic location:

The physical distribution of survey respondents was also fairly even, with representatives from all three identified areas of Columbia Valley (Figure 2). Twenty-four respondents identified living in Zone B, 18 in Zone A and 14 in Zone C. These responses correlate almost directly with where people identified wanting to see parks in Columbia Valley, with 23 identifying Zone B, 11 in Zone A, and 10 in Zone C.

Support for Park Development:

Fifty-two percent of respondents identified that they “Strongly support” building parks in Columbia Valley. Thirty-nine percent stated that they voted “Yes” on the parks levy. When asked what type of setting is desirable in a new park, a narrow majority responded they would like to use the parks to “Exercise or move about,” followed closely by “Relax or be reflective” and “Take the kids to play.” Respondents showed support for programmed parks, which typically have physical structures and encourage a specific type of activity. Examples of amenities at programmed parks include gated dog parks, play structures, wooden pathways, and basketball courts. Many respondents answered that they would like to have access to parks where they could take their children and grandchildren to play. At least five respondents listed a dog park, or at least an area where they could safely take their

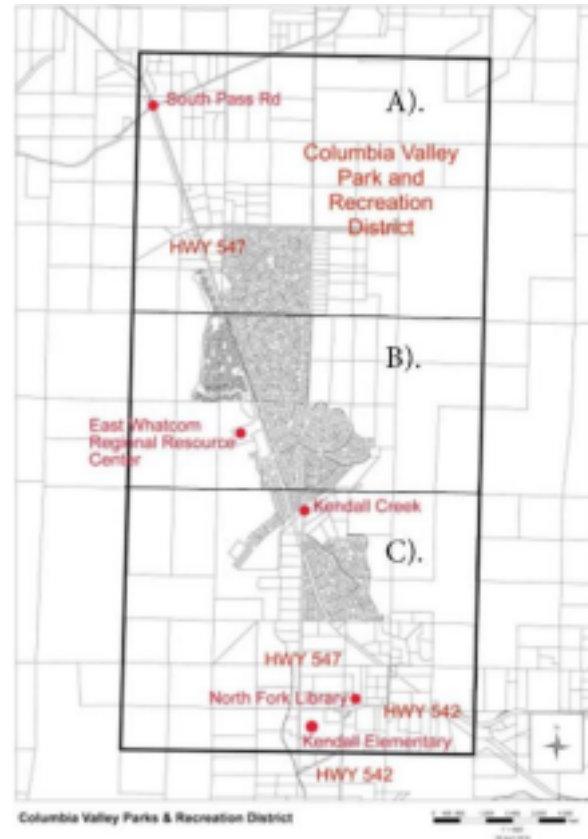


Figure 2. Columbia Valley Parks & Recreation District Map

dog for a walk, as a desirable feature. A majority of respondents (51%) said their preferred way to get to local parks is by pedestrian access or walking. Other methods listed were driving and biking.

Concerns About Park Development:

Of the survey respondents, 27% voted “No” on the levy. The most common concerns that came up during the survey and the frequency with which those concerns came up are shown in Table 1. Respondents’ concerns varied widely, and no specific concern was shared by all.

Table 1. Concerns and frequency of concerns about parks in Columbia Valley, as depicted in the fall 2020 CVPRD survey

Concern	Frequency
Drugs, crime, and other illegal activities	17
Litter / vandalism	10
Taxation	8
Plenty of existing outdoor recreational opportunities	4
Destruction of existing trails and forested areas	4
Traffic congestion	2
Security	2

Several respondents expressed concern over the potential for increased crime, drug use, and vandalism in parks. For example, one participant shared the following:

“The public spaces in this valley are trashed as is. We need to work on cleaning up what we have already before we create more spaces to be messed up.”

Another common concern that respondents cited is taxation. Several respondents identified the issue of poverty in the area, explaining that increasing taxes is not the solution and that there are more pressing needs for Columbia Valley than parks. Several responses on this topic include:

“Too much opposition - people need food - jobs -to survive - parks not on top of my list.”

“It will raise our taxes and we have already been hit hard with the school levy that started last year. And the schools are not even open. Also I am tired of being taxed for these types of things when I don’t have school aged children. I am paying for others children’s benefit.”

Some respondents explained that there are already plenty of outdoor spaces to enjoy in the area, and they did not see a reason to pay money for parks. More than one respondent pointed out that their community has already voted against similar levies in the past.

Additional respondent concerns regarding park development include:

- Homeless populations living there
- No safe walkways along Highway 547
- Property devaluation

Preference for Involvement:

A majority of respondents were interested in receiving updates about parks in Columbia Valley, with many expressing a desire for regular CVPRD social media updates.

Other ways respondents would like to get involved include:

- Attending planning meetings.
- Volunteering - One respondent suggested creating a “Friends of the Park” group of volunteers to help maintain the new parks.
- Attending work/clean-up parties.
- Donating/fundraising.

Key Takeaways

The survey team did not receive enough survey responses to draw any decisive conclusions from the results. For typical survey collection, studies show that at least 5% response rate is needed to validate the results. With an estimated population of 5,657 people in Columbia Valley, the 69 survey respondents represent only 1.2% of the population in Columbia Valley. Because of the limited internet access and cell service in Columbia Valley, in-person interaction in the area is generally key to community engagement. The COVID-19 pandemic presented a challenge in distributing the survey to potential participants. The survey team was not able to physically participate in survey collection in Columbia Valley because of social-distancing guidelines. The survey team relied heavily on online participation, which is likely a key reason why the survey participation rate was low. Jessica Bee, one of the CVPRD Commissioners, did distribute paper surveys in-person on multiple occasions, but only 12 surveys were completed and returned. While the survey team did not draw any decisive results from the survey, the responses did contain important information for the Commissioners to consider as they move forward with park development.

Key findings are below:

- **Geographic:** Most respondents would like to see a park in their own neighborhood and a strong majority reported they would prefer to have pedestrian access to parks.
- **Demographics:** According to Columbia Valley demographics reported by the Whatcom County Health Department, the Slavic, African American, Hispanic, and Asian populations in Columbia Valley are greater than were represented in the survey responses. For instance, Slavic ethnicity is at 25% in Columbia Valley; however, only 5% of our respondents identified as Slavic. Regarding age, 25% of respondents were 30-39 years old, and 24% were 60 years or older. A smaller percentage represented the other age groups, though every age group had at least some respondents. It might be beneficial to hear more from the younger populations and from those with young children at home, since they might benefit the greatest from having parks in the neighborhood. In order to collect a more representative

sample of survey responses, more targeted outreach needs to be conducted to these underrepresented populations.

- Support for park development: Only 26 respondents (39%) reported voting “Yes” on the levy in November 2020, which is slightly less than the 43% that actually voted “Yes” on their ballot. It is important to note that 12 respondents chose not to respond to the question. However, 39 respondents (59%) reported supporting the building of parks in the area, with 31 responding “Strongly support.” This shows a trend of respondents in support of parks in the area despite voting “No” on the levy.
- Community engagement: Many respondents noted wanting to get involved in the park development process. Such involvement opportunities might include volunteering, fundraising, work parties, clean up groups, etc. Two respondents explained that they would be unable to get involved in parks development because of age and/or disability. This is an opportunity for the CVPRD to practice inclusion by finding volunteer opportunities to suit every age and/or ability group. One such opportunity could be phone banking or simple word-of-mouth encouragement of park development. Another opportunity might be to invite elders or community members with disabilities to be on a park planning committee to help ensure that their interests are represented in the park development process.
- Visual preference surveys: The visual preferences part of the survey, included in Appendix A, showed images of different types of parks. In ranking these images, most survey respondents showed support for programmed parks with physical structures. Some attributes that respondents gravitated more towards in the visual preference survey include playgrounds, benches, swing sets, picnic tables, wooden walkways/bridges, and dog parks. Visuals that displayed grassy areas without any sort of physical structures or features were less popular.

Conclusion

The survey team recommends the following actions for the CVPRD in the future:

- Conduct targeted outreach to specific groups, especially families with young children, as well as underserved and underrepresented populations. Only 25 survey respondents (37%) indicated that they have young children at home. According to the Whatcom County Health Department demographic data for Columbia Valley, 30.2% of households reported having children under the age of 18. These families would possibly benefit the most from having parks in their neighborhood; therefore, hearing about their desires and preferences would be beneficial to further direct the focus of future park development. This targeted outreach could include direct contact such as knocking on doors, calling, or communicating through local organizations like the PTA. A spreadsheet including a list of people who signed up to be on the mailing list is located in the CVPRD Google Folder that was shared with the Commissioners in January 2021. A regular newsletter to the mailing list will help promote the work of the CVPRD and garner more support from the community.
- Create a follow-up survey. Based on the responses of this survey, use the compiled results and follow up with people to determine whether they believe these responses are representative of their thoughts and concerns.

- Distribute a similar survey in different languages, such as Russian and Spanish. This survey was distributed only in English. According to the demographic data provided by the Whatcom County Health Department, 9.4% of the population speaks another language primarily, so it would be crucial to reach these populations in their preferred language.
- Develop a plan to address community concerns. Many identified crime and drug-use as concerns. The plan for park development must address these issues through design, lighting, and park employment, for example. Further outreach to the community could help connect the benefits of parks with other issues in the community. Parks help build strong and resilient communities, and the benefits of parks affect not only physical health, but mental and emotional health, food resiliency, and more.
- Find the funding to do targeted advertising (Facebook pages/websites on community organizations). Targeted advertising will help reach out to certain demographics that may not have otherwise seen the survey. As an additional recommendation, consider designing the website to open straight up to the survey, instead of sharing a link. This could maximize potential responses.

CHAPTER TWO: FOCUS GROUPS

Focus Group Team: Jayden Packard, Bella Batson, McLain Jokinen, Chante Lee, Ea Kirkland

Introduction

The focus group team aimed to connect with the Columbia Valley community to gain knowledge about residents' thoughts on future parks, and more specifically, what their ideal park would look like. Through facilitating focused conversations amongst groupings of community members with similar traits, each group would have the opportunity to engage in deep conversations about parks in their community.

The focus group team's goals for community engagement, included:

- Create a welcoming and accessible environment for Columbia Valley community members to answer focus group questions and explain their interests in the development of parks and recreation opportunities in the community.
- Connect with a variety of Columbia Valley community members to elicit a diversity of responses to focus group questions. Reaching a wide range of people living in the community is important to hear the different interests and concerns regarding potential parks and recreation opportunities.
- Offer accessible participation options. Many residents do not have reliable access to internet or cell phone coverage, and in order to include the voices of the whole community, accessible focus group options are necessary.
- Evaluate the interests and concerns of community members of different age groups to represent a range of Columbia Valley residents.

Through implementing accessible and welcoming focus groups, including a diverse and representative population of the Columbia Valley, the focus group team intended to contribute valuable community input to the CVPRD's planning process. However, due to COVID-19 restrictions, the team's methods for reaching out to the community inevitably involved the internet. Many Columbia Valley residents do not have access to the internet and were not reached by the team's outreach. Only one participant showed up to a focus group session. Despite the low participate rate, valuable information came from the focus group session.

Project Methods

The focus group team identified four primary park user groups: households with young kids under the age of 13, households with kids ages 13+, households with animals, and households with elders. Each of these groups include potential park visitors who generally use parks in different ways. The team intended to facilitate a focus group session for each of these four user groups.

The project team formulated the following questions for the focus groups:

1. Do you support building parks in Columbia Valley? Why or why not?
2. What would make parks more appealing to you?
3. What would make parks feel safer to you?

4. What kind of activities would you like to see in parks?
5. What are your least favorite things about parks?
6. What values do you hold for the community?
7. What concerns do you have about parks?

The team recruited participants from the community through emails, a google form, and a flyer (see Figure 1 in Chapter 1), which was posted on several community boards in Columbia Valley. The team emailed various groups and stakeholders in the community, including the country club, multiple PTA's, and employees at the local schools. The team received the most responses from the google form, which allowed prospective participants to enter their email, age, preferred focus group, availability for focus group sessions, and a comment explaining why they would like to participate. The google form included a confidentiality statement and requested the prospective participants' contact information, park user group demographics, and availability.

Due to a low response rate, the focus group team abandoned the original plan for four demographically defined focus groups and instead organized two general Zoom sessions open to all participants. One participant attended the first session and shared helpful input. No participants attended the second session.

Findings

While three people RSVP'd for the focus group session, only one participant attended the session. This participant was a mother of young children. A summary of the main findings from the session are outlined below.

The participant supports building parks in Columbia Valley and said they would improve the quality of life and provide a place for families to go. She explained that parks within walking distance from her house would be nice because most places in the area require families to drive. The participant mentioned play structures, benches, garbage cans, paved trails for bikes and accessibility, security lighting, and workout equipment such as pull up bars as appealing amenities. The participant said that playground structures would be a good "reason to get kids out" and mentioned picnic tables, covered areas for rainy day play, exercise equipment, and off-leash areas for dogs. The participant's children drew pictures of their dream parks, which include monkey bars, a slide, a ladder and more (see Figure 3).

Despite her support, the participant cited some concerns about parks, including tax raises, vandalism, night-time loitering, littering, and garbage dumping. The participant suggested that in order to ensure a feeling of safety at the park, she would recommend installing motion activated lights to deter drug use and illegal activities, garbage cans to avoid litter, and that the parks should be visible from the street. Parks should also be safely accessible to each neighborhood.

The participant expressed an interest in parks as a method to build community in Columbia Valley. She explained that she felt disconnected from the community before becoming involved with local committees. She suggested that the CVPRD emphasize community building and that more involvement of residents in the parks project could create community ownership and investment in the area.



Figure 2. Drawings submitted by the children of the focus group participant. The drawings depict what the children would like to see in parks in the Columbia Valley community.

The focus group team received additional feedback in the form of an email and a comment in the google document. The feedback came from a woman who is within the age range of 36-45 and has children over the age of 13. Because she could not make it to either focus group, she wrote an email saying, “[p]lease share my opinion, that we shouldn't agree to anything that will increase property taxes, and parks are just going to be another place for people to dump their garbage until we actually address the garbage dumping problem here.” She wrote a very similar message in the google form comments box, but with a bit more vigor and the use of caps lock.

Key Takeaways

While the focus group participation rate was low, the process elicited insight into several community members perspectives regarding park development. Specifically, the CVPRD should address community members concerns in conjunction with park development. The focus group communication elicited only a few concerns regarding parks, including safety infrastructure, litter/vandalism, and taxes. Those who raised these concerns said that adequate lighting, visibility, and garbage disposal would ensure that the parks act as a positive gathering place for the public.

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic presented the team with challenges in recruiting participants and facilitating focus group sessions that were accessible to individuals without internet access. Despite the low participation rate, the insight gathered from the focus group is consistent with the results

from the other community engagement initiatives. There is support for parks in Columbia Valley, but concerns need to be addressed and outreach and education about the benefits of parks and the goals of the CVPRD need to be prioritized to garner more support.

In the future, the focus group team recommends that the CVPRD physically visit a PTA meeting, retirement home, church, or library event to advertise the focus group sessions. The team also recommends that the CVPRD offer several in-person sessions so that community members who do not have access to reliable internet can participate. The focus group team recommends that the CVPRD facilitate another round of focus group sessions in the future to elicit public input and support community ownership over the future parks. Focus groups will be particularly helpful in informing park design and amenities once a park site is secured.

CHAPTER THREE: STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Stakeholder interview team: Carter Naegeli, Malene Garcia, Laura Mucci, Xiang Qin Nagle-Christensen, Connor Spannuth

Introduction

Over the course of November 2020, the interview team conducted eleven interviews with various Columbia Valley stakeholders. The goals of these stakeholder interviews were to:

- Gain insight into community members' support for and concern regarding the Columbia Valley Park and Recreation District's (CVPRD) goals of constructing parks within Columbia Valley.
- Connect with community leaders and stakeholders to gauge their feelings and opinions towards park development in Columbia Valley.
- Help CVPRD Commissioners connect with community members.
- Use feedback and insight elicited from the interviews to inform CVPRD park planning.

The interviews were completed through online platforms (Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, Phone) to mitigate safety concerns associated with in-person interviews during the COVID-19 pandemic. This chapter reviews the project team's methods, findings, key takeaways, and conclusions.

Project Methods

The project team started their work by developing interview questions that would help inform the CVPRD about the community's perspectives towards parks. The final questions were:

1. What is your background and role within the community?
2. How do you feel about the current stock of parks and green spaces in your community? Does it adequately serve the community's needs?
3. Are you familiar with the work being undertaken by Columbia Valley Park and Recreation District?
4. The CVPRD levy on the November ballot failed. Why do you think this was the case?
5. What do you think are the community's main concerns related to the levy?
6. Do you see benefits to building parks within Columbia Valley? If so, please explain those benefits.
7. What potential drawbacks stand out to you?
8. What assets do you think Columbia Valley has at its disposal to support park development? Which assets do you want to see further funded/developed?
9. What types of park amenities do you think would be most beneficial for the community?
10. What do you think your organization's role is in supporting park development in Columbia Valley?
11. How do you think other community members feel about the goals and plans of the CVPRD?

12. Can you recommend other community leaders that may have informative insights into the CVPRD projects?
13. Is there anything that we have not covered yet that you feel would be important to discuss or anything else you would like to mention?
14. What is it that you would like to see CVPRD do more of? What would they have to do to get you to vote “Yes” on a future levy?

The team reached out to stakeholders from the following community groups:

- Whatcom Family & Community Network
- Whatcom County Health Department
- East Whatcom Community Council
- Kendall Columbia Valley Connectivity Plan Association
- Columbia Valley Park and Recreation District
- Fire District #14
- Peaceful Valley Country Club
- The Foothills Foodbank
- Mount Baker School District

The team contacted potential interviewees via email and conducted a total of eleven interviews. The interviews were recorded with the informed consent of the stakeholder, and one team member took notes during each interview. After the interviews were completed, the team transcribed and compiled key points from the interviews into one document. The team color-coded the key points based on the following themes: safety, money and finance, community engagement, communication and amenities. The notes are included in Appendix C.

Key Takeaways

Interviewees consistently voiced that there is a need for parks in the community. They noted that there is a general lack of awareness about the CVPRD’s goals and objectives amongst community members, and this has led to hesitation and misunderstanding within the community. A summary of key insights from the interviews is included below.

How does the community feel about the current stock of parks and green spaces in serving the community’s needs?

- Amenities are not adequate
- Lack of ability to access recreational parks
- Lots of undeveloped green space, but not accessible or safe enough
- Private parks do not serve all members of the community

What does the community like about parks?

- Public place to interact with neighbors and other community members
- Safe place for kids to play and make friends
- Good place to exercise and partake in recreational activities and sports
- Accessibility and proximity to neighborhoods
- Adding parks increases community safety, socially and physically

What concerns does the community have about parks?

- Parks will be used by vagrants and homeless people
- Parks will turn into places to deal and do drugs
- Parks will encourage teens to participate in unsavory behavior
- Parks will not be maintained and lead to lowered home values
- Some community members want parks, but not adjacent to their homes

What parks and recreation amenities does the community want developed?

- Developed areas with activities for children and teens
- Multi-use areas to save the community money and time
- Recreational activities like basketball courts, soccer fields, skate parks, baseball mounds, etc.
- Covered pavilions for family and community gatherings
- Trails, walking path, hiking paths, etc.

How does the community feel about the CVPRD's work?

- Most stakeholders feel that community members want parks and would benefit from CVPRD actions
- Community members generally trust the CVPRD and are under the impression that they have their best interests in mind
- Community feels positive about the CVPRD and its work, but many are too busy or underserved to participate in the outreach process
- Some community members feel there is a lack of communication between the CVPRD and the community on funding, plan development, and goals

Why did the community vote down the levy in November?

- Concerned over economic and tax increases
- Lack of knowledge and outreach to community members
- A large community of renters or part time residents that might not want to invest in the area
- Possible distrust from previously mismanaged privately developed parks

Conclusion

The interview team recommends that the CVPRD expand their communication and outreach with residents. Through outreach and education, the CVPRD can raise awareness about their mission and goals and the benefits of parks, thereby garnering more support for park development.

The team also recommends that the CVPRD continue to build trust with the community. One way to accomplish this would be by addressing community members' concerns regarding new parks. Concerns about parks drawing in criminal activities can be addressed with explanations on how parks can improve safety within Columbia Valley. Concerns about parks becoming a tax burden on residents can be addressed with accessible information regarding how parks will be funded. Developing visual representations of the goals of the project would help community members visualize what they are being asked to invest in if another levy is proposed in the future.

Expanding methods of communication and engagement would also benefit the community's clarity on the CVPRD's goals. Providing progress updates to the public through various methods would help community members to engage and would eliminate some barriers in communication. Some

recommendations from the interviewees include distributing flyers in the Foothills Foodbank boxes, posting regularly on Facebook and posting flyers throughout the community. By implementing these various methods, the CVRPD will help clarify the benefits of parks and the work that the CVPRD is doing.

CHAPTER FOUR: WEBSITE AND COMMUNICATION PLAN

Communications Team: Chloe Bonsen, Kendall Burke, Charlie Engel, Logan Hopkins, Emily Tsan, and Brandon Whitmarsh

Introduction

The communications team created a new website and compiled a Communication Plan for the CVPRD. The website provides a space for community members and potential funders to learn more about the CVPRD and for the CVPRD to disseminate information and receive community feedback. The Communication Plan recommends methods for community engagement beyond online options since many Columbia Valley residents do not have reliable internet access or cell service. The Plan can be used as a resource to distribute information to community members about the new website and other community news and events. Through effective communication, the CVPRD can garner support for parks and recreational opportunities from the community and potential funders.

The main goal in website development was to create an organized and inviting space to facilitate communication between commissioners and the community. The primary objective for the Communication Plan was to help the commissioners effectively communicate with each other and the community they serve. Specifically, the goals for the communication plan included:

- To formulate a communication schedule for sharing updates and events.
- To explain how the community can access CVPRD meetings and stay informed about the parks planning process.
- To provide a comprehensive list of key locations and individuals to contact to share information.
- To explain the uses and the different purposes of various social media platforms to communicate with the community.
- To show an outline of communicative action in the event of a crisis.

Project Methods

For the website, the team first researched local parks and recreation district websites, such as Blaine-Birch Bay, San Juan Island, and Orcas Island. These parks and recreation districts were both similar in size and geographic location to the CVPRD. Different websites were reviewed to assemble a list of website elements that other parks districts had that the CVPRD website did not have. The team found that the other websites had many of the same elements that the CVPRD website did not. The team recommended these elements for the new CVPRD website.

The team presented their recommendations to the commissioners at a community meeting. The recommendations were separated into green, yellow, and red light elements. Green light elements should be immediately incorporated into the next iteration of the website. Yellow light elements should eventually be added to the website either when parks are installed or when more funding to

allow for more events or services becomes available. Red light elements should be put on hold either for now or permanently.

Green light elements include pages for "meet the commissioners," a calendar, events, a gallery of community photos, volunteering and its benefits, history of the CVPRD, the benefits of parks, and future parks. The yellow light elements include adding a search bar and pages for community feedback and frequently asked questions. There is only one red light element, and it is related to the domain .gov, which was found to be neither feasible nor preferable. Instead, the team recommended a .org domain as this is the domain most used by other small parks and recreation districts. The team also recommended available domain names for the CVPRD and their costs.

The second half of the presentation consisted of comparing and contrasting different website platforms including WordPress, Wix, Constant Contact, and Strikingly. The Commissioners approved the recommendations and decided to switch website platforms from Constant Contact to WordPress with a new domain.

The team used information from the previous website and the CVPRD Comprehensive Park Plan to develop content for the new website. The pages on the new website include "Home," "About," "Meetings," "District News and Events," "Parks," "Volunteer," "Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)," and "Contact Pages." The team included community photos throughout the website. The new website is easy to navigate and is full of relevant information about the CVPRD for the community members. The website can be accessed at www.cv-prd.org.

The purpose of the Communication Plan was to create a guide for the commissioners on how they can engage with the community. The team researched examples of other communication plans and developed a list of different components that were important to include. The team broke these components into easily accessible communication methods such as the local radio station, social media, and flyers to communicate with the community. The team then identified key contacts and locations that would support quality communication and, finally, drafted the Communication Plan.

Main Deliverable

The first main deliverable was the new and updated website in WordPress, found at www.cv-prd.org. As mentioned earlier, the website is divided into eight different pages:

1. HOME PAGE: includes sections on the benefits of parks, public meetings, and contacting the CVPRD.
2. ABOUT PAGE: includes the CVPRD purpose and mission statement, a history of how the CVPRD began, and a section about the unique geographic location of Columbia Valley.
3. PUBLIC MEETINGS PAGE: includes the date and times for meetings and how to join as well as a link to a Google drive folder containing the meeting minutes. This page also includes a section called "Meet the Commissioners!" which includes a photo and short bio of each commissioner. This section was intended to help make coming to public meetings more inviting to community members.
4. DISTRICT NEWS & EVENTS PAGE: includes current and past news and events. "Current events" includes a section about the survey team, a section for the East Whatcom Gets Active! program, and a link to the public meetings page. The "Previous news and events" section includes archived posts from the previous website.

5. **PARKS PAGE:** includes the goals that the CVPRD has for parks, a section for the survey from the survey team, and a section on parks' benefits.
6. **VOLUNTEER PAGE:** includes the opportunities listed on the previous website and the benefits of volunteering.
7. **FAQ PAGE:** includes questions about how to get involved, the purpose of the CVPRD, the purpose of parks districts and parks, and Comprehensive Park Plan information.
8. **CONTACT PAGE:** has a form that community members can fill out and send to the Commissioner's email. This page contains a link to the community Facebook page.

The updated website is an accessible and organized way to learn more about CVPRD and how community members can get involved.

The second main deliverable created by the team is the Communication Plan, which is available in Appendix D. The Communication Plan consists of four different sections, including:

- A communication schedule, which focuses on different communication methods and tactics and when they should be completed.
- A list of internal communication methods that highlight the importance of clear and clean communication within the CVPRD. This section also has a key contacts table and key locations.
- A list of market-based communication methods including: platforms like Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter; the local radio station; and flyers.
- A crisis communication plan that focuses and defines what is meant by the word crisis and what to do in the event of one. This section also includes a section for key locations to post news and information tables.

Key Takeaways

The website contributes to three CVPRD goals, as listed in the CVPRD Comprehensive Park Plan. Goal 2 is to “Promote the Health and Well-being of Community Members” (2020). The website furthers this goal by promoting the usage of the CVPRD parks and providing a space to advertise upcoming events. Goal 3 is to “Strengthen Community Connections.” The website furthers Goal 3 since it directly promotes parks and other programs. Finally, Goal 4 is to “Encourage Community Members of all Ages and Abilities to Visit the CVPRD Parks and Participate in Recreational Programs” (2020). Consistent with this goal, the website's purpose is to inform community members about what the CVPRD is doing and to actively promote parks in the area.

The Communication Plan supports the goal to “Promote the health and well-being of community members” as it deliberately outlines how the Commissioners should effectively communicate new activities and wellness-based programs. Additionally, the crisis communication section will better prepare the CVPRD to address their community during an unplanned and dangerous event. The Communication Plan will also support the CVPRD's goals of “Strengthening community connections.” Communication methods like bi-annual community meals or park clean-up parties are great ways to bond with neighbors and meet new people who care about where they live. Lastly, the Communication Plan succeeds in “Encouraging community members of all ages and abilities to visit the CVPRD parks and to participate in recreational programs” by including a variety of

communication methods that will reach residents from across the generational spectrum. Social media and Google surveys specifically target younger demographics, while newspaper inserts and radio adverts/discussions will help reach the pre-internet generation.

Conclusion

The newly created website is minimal in design and can grow and evolve with the CVPRD. The current theme was chosen because it works well on any screen size. The WordPress (WP) platform allows for further customization within the current theme and a library of other themes. If the CVPRD does choose to change the theme, the content will be saved and transferred. The current website is easy to navigate, and the information is easily found. In the future, if the volume of content warrants a search bar, one can be added. The current website does not include a calendar of events as monthly Zoom meetings were the only current events.

In the future, when there are more events, commissioners could add a calendar to the District News/Events Page. For a short list of events, this can be done in WP by listing the dates and information of events as text. In the personal subscription, a visual representation of a calendar with events showing on specific days can only be added if you create that calendar externally and then link to it. A free opportunity for this would be to create a Google calendar associated with the CVPRD Gmail account. Once that is linked to the website, instead of editing this calendar in WP, you would edit it in google, and it would automatically update on the website.

Another future opportunity is a YouTube channel where past public meeting recordings can be uploaded for community members to see. This channel could easily be linked on the website. At the end of each meeting, the recording could be uploaded to YouTube, and because the videos are housed there, nothing would have to be updated on the website.

As WP is a common platform, many useful resources are available for the Commissioners to learn about all the features available with their current subscription. Getting to know the extent of the website's customizability will allow it to grow as the CVPRD does. Future parks facilities, exercise classes, additional community photos, and more can be easily integrated into the site.

The Communication Plan is similarly designed as a foundation from which to grow and adapt to exactly what the CVPRD needs in the future. The team recommends that the CVPRD follow the communication schedule, or a variation of it. Certain communication methods like website updates, commissioner meeting uploads, and newsletters work well when posted frequently.

While the Communication Plan includes the use of social media platforms as a means for disseminating information quickly and easily, a sizable portion of the Columbia Valley community may not have access to the internet or may not participate in social media. Still, these common platforms may help reach new audiences in the future, and social media followings are fantastic points of connectivity when communities share posts with each other. The CVPRD should adapt the Communication Plan so it is most effective in meeting their needs.

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CHAPTER FIVE: CVPRD VIDEO

Video student team: Thomas Carmona, Simran Dhaliwal, Jasmine Ro, Mara Scally

Introduction

The video team created a public service announcement (PSA) style video for the CVPRD. The video is intended to educate the public and potential donors about the CVPRD by explaining what the CVPRD is, how parks can benefit the community, and how the community can get involved with the CVPRD's work. Other student teams found that community members were not aware of the CVPRD or the benefits of parks. By raising awareness about these topics through methods like promoting the PSA video, the CVPRD can garner support for parks within the community and increase the likelihood of receiving funding.

In creating the video, the team aimed to:

- Create a public service announcement (PSA) style video that utilizes images and videos from Columbia Valley.
- Obtain videos of the community from the CVPRD and community members themselves.
- Collect video footage of the area.
- Get a local narrator with a smooth voice to enhance video quality.
- Use real footage rather than stock footage.
- Make use of informative captions and ensure the video is visually appealing.

Project Methods

This video incorporates the community in several ways. The team prioritized sourcing video footage from within the community. To achieve this, they collaborated with other project teams from the WWU course to request video footage from community members. The Commissioners connected the team with a local narrator, Devin Connolly, as well as a local musician, Winter Bee, who were both featured in the video. Finally, the team visited Columbia Valley to record video footage of the area and get a better understanding of the community and its character.

Most of the footage used in the video was recorded on the team members phones during their site visit. The video was edited on iMovie and will be uploaded onto YouTube. It was shared with the Commissioners via the CVPRD Google Folder.

The PSA video style was effective in meeting the objectives as this style delivers the most information in the shortest time frame without overwhelming the audience. The CVPRD can use this video for years to come as it offers valuable information on the community and the CVPRD.

Key Takeaways

Raising awareness about the CVPRD and the benefits of parks is a critical step in garnering public support and bringing parks to the community. The project team found that prioritizing the community in their video was an effective way to show the support for parks that already exists

within the community. The team found that constant and deliberative communication was key to getting quick and reliable answers to questions. The team found that cross-team collaboration was critical in the public engagement efforts. For example, several groups worked together to create a community flyer that was posted in Columbia Valley. Through this flyer, the video team was able to invite community members to participate in the video-making process.

Conclusion

The project team encourages the CVPRD to share the PSA video on their website, social media and in other public venues. By sharing this video, the CVPRD can raise awareness about their efforts and garner support for park development. The CVPRD may consider creating additional videos in the future to raise awareness about their efforts. For example, the CVPRD might create a video requesting funding for a specific park site or to raise awareness about a proposed levy, if applicable. Education is a critical step in building support for parks within the community.

Link to YouTube Video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LEqGZIYPlt4&ab_channel=ColumbiaValley

APPENDIX A: FALL 2020 SURVEY

Hello and welcome to the Columbia Valley Parks Survey!

The following survey has been developed by a team of Western Washington University (WWU) students in the Urban Planning and Sustainable Development program. Our Community Development class has partnered with the Columbia Valley Park and Recreation District (CVPRD) to collect public input about the community's wants and desires for local parks. The CVPRD was formed by popular vote in November 2016, and their mission is to improve life in the Columbia Valley by providing the community with access to parks and recreational opportunities.

With the presence of COVID-19 and many other stresses, we recognize that these are difficult times. It may not be easy to think about ordinary details like what a park in your neighborhood could look like, but we hope it might be encouraging to look towards the future. Studies have shown that spending time outdoors is beneficial to our physical and mental health. The benefits do not stop at children—everyone needs to experience time outside in the fresh air! With this survey, we are aiming to gauge interest in parks in Columbia Valley and understand the types of amenities and activities people would like to see offered in their parks.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary. There are no penalties for not answering some or all of the questions, but since each person will represent many others who will not be surveyed, your participation is greatly appreciated. The answers you provide are anonymous and the results will be aggregated.

You must be 18 years of age or older to participate.

Thank you for taking time to fill out the survey! Your input is valuable and will make a difference in future park plans.

Please be sure to complete the survey in one session. The survey will not save your progress if you leave the window and return later.

Based on the information above, do you consent to participate in the survey?

Yes

No

1. What is your age?

a) 18-19

b) 20-29

c) 30-39

d) 40-49

e) 50-59

f) 60 or older

2. Are you Hispanic or Latino

Yes

No

3. What is your race or ethnicity?

a) Native American

b) Black or African American

c) Asian

d) White (non-Slavic)

e) Slavic

f) My race or ethnicity is:

4. Do you currently have children under the age of 18 living in your household?

- Yes
- No

5. If yes, how many?

6. Do you support building parks in Columbia Valley?

- a) Strongly support
- b) Support
- c) Impartial
- d) Opposed
- e) Strongly Opposed

7. How did you vote on the Parks Levy on the November Ballot?

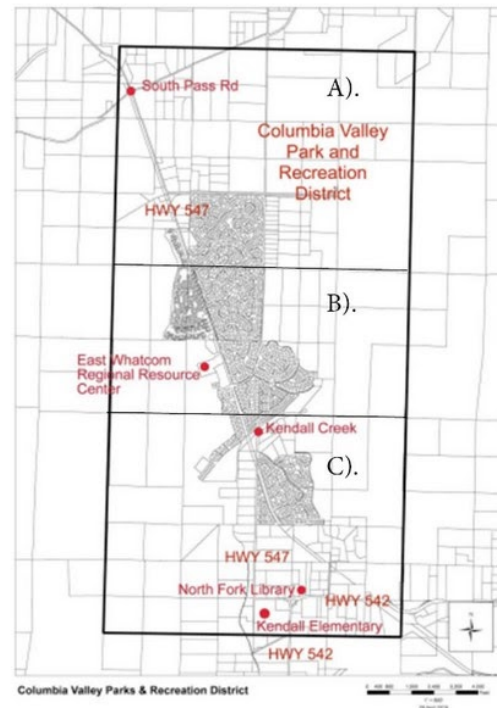
- a) I voted Yes
- b) I voted No
- c) I did not vote
- d) I prefer to not respond

8. If you voted No, what are your reasons?

9. What type of setting do you desire in a new park? Your ideal park is a place to... (select all that apply).

- a) Relax or be reflective.
- b) Gather and hold community events.
- c) Learn about natural surroundings.
- d) Take kids to play or safely hang out.
- e) Grow food in the community.
- f) Exercise or move about.
- g) Other:

Use the map below to complete the next two questions:



10. What part of Columbia Valley do you live in?

- A
- B
- C

11. Where would you most like to see parks in Columbia Valley?

- A
- B
- C

12. What would be your preferred way to get to a local park?

- a) Pedestrian access or walking
- b) Biking
- c) Driving
- d) Other:

13. What concerns, if any, do you have about opening new parks in Columbia Valley?

14. As a community member, how would you like to be involved in parks development?

15. Is there anything else you would like to note about the future of parks in Columbia Valley?

- Local paper
- Email newsletter
- Direct mailers
- Other:

16. How would you like to receive updates about parks in Columbia Valley?

- CVPRD website
- Social media

17. Would you like to be added to our email list and receive District updates? If so, please provide your email address.

The following 10 images display a variety of parks and activities. Please rate each image on a scale of 1-10 according to the kinds of parks and activities you would like in Columbia Valley.

- Proceed to images
- Skip

Rate from 1 (not desirable) to 10 (very desirable).

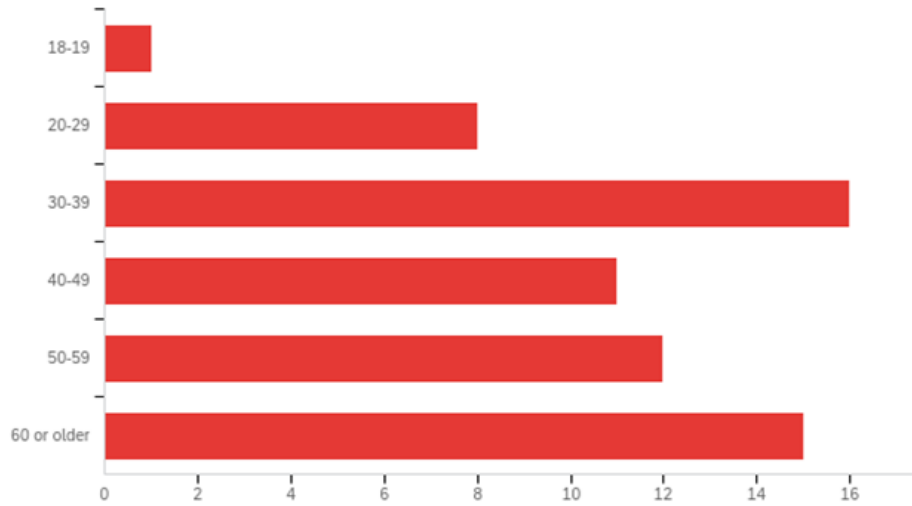




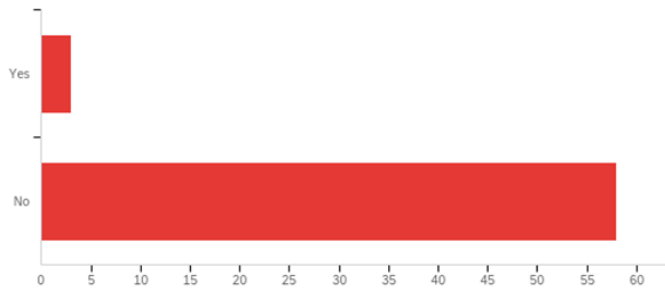
APPENDIX B: SURVEY RESULTS

*Graphs show count (not percentage)

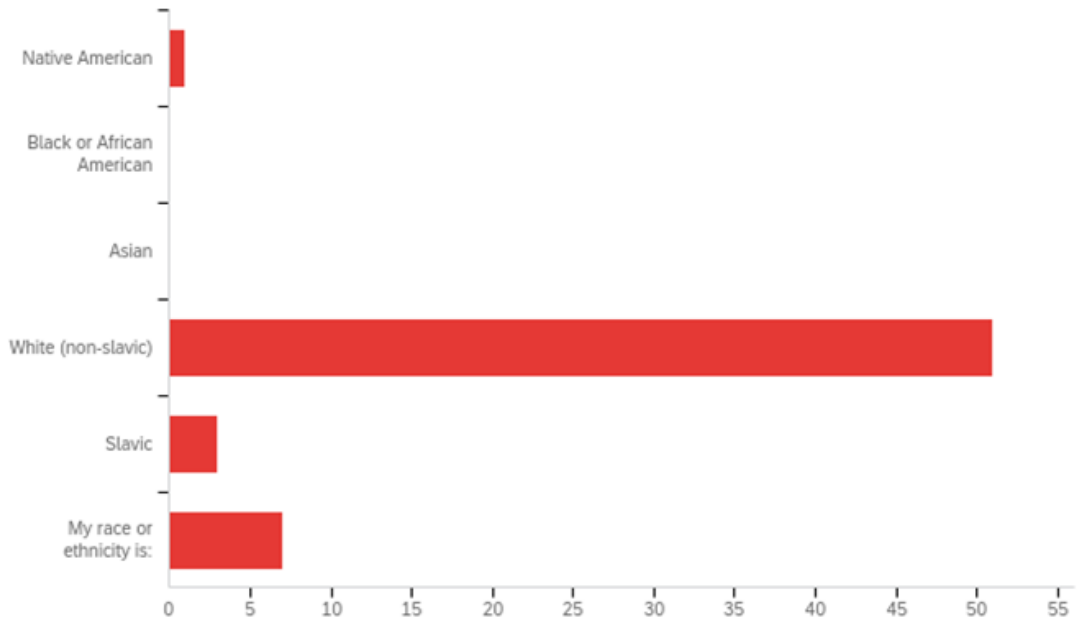
Q4 - What is your age?



Q5 - Are you Hispanic or Latino?



Q6 - What is your race or ethnicity?



Q6_TEXT - My race or ethnicity is:

Estonian

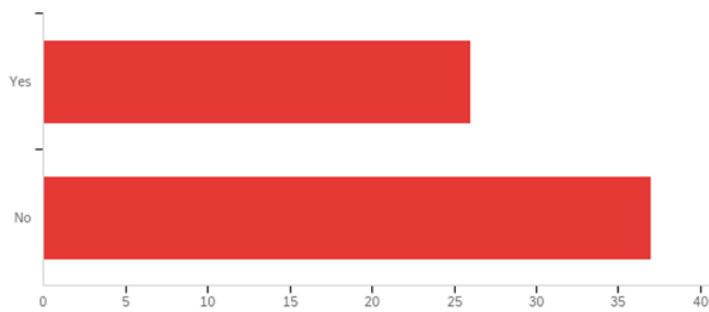
We are a mixed household

white/hispanic

Mixed

Other

Q7 - Do you have children under the age of 18 living in your household?

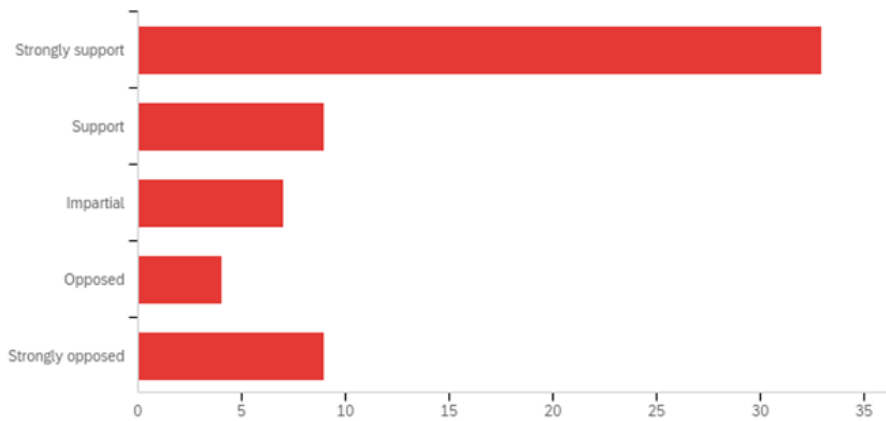


Q8 - If yes, how many?

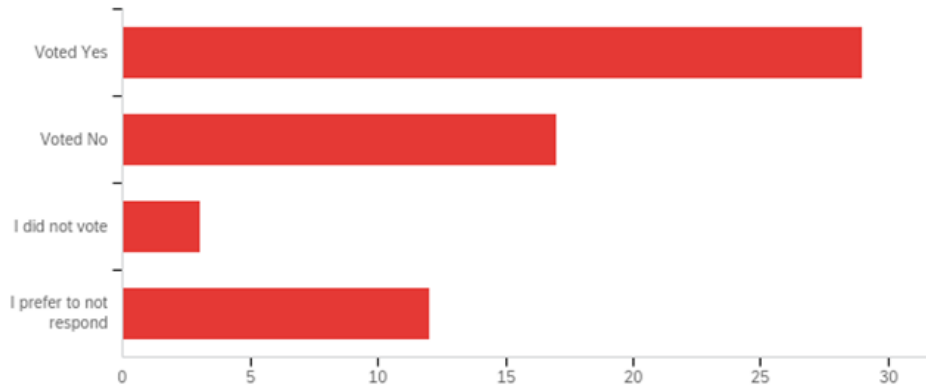
How many?	Frequency of answer

1	7
2	10
3	3
4	2
5	1
6	1

Q9 - What is your level of support for building parks in Columbia Valley?



Q10 - How did you vote on the Parks Levy on the November Ballot?



Q11 - If you voted No, what are your reasons?

No more taxes!

I'm not going to pay higher taxes for it

There are more pressing needs for this valley than a park. There is severe poverty up here, adding to taxes is not the answer.

there is Silver Lake park for the kids to go to.

worded wrong.

Do not want our taxes raised. Can't afford it and we have parks already like Silver Lake and EWRRC

Money for nothing. I don't approve of stealing money from people legally. Raise the funds some other way. Stop forcing people who don't agree with you to give you money.

We live in a forest area with plenty of hiking and biking trails that we don't need to ruin what is already here with parks

Too much opposition - people need food - jobs -to survive - parks not on top of my list

It will raise our taxes and we have already been hit hard with the school levy that started last year. And the schools are not even open. Also I am tired of being taxed for these types of things when I don't have school aged children. I am paying for others children's benefit.

The plan proposed is not something I would like to see in my neighborhood. I don't mind traveling to a park, such as the Maple Falls Park. I don't want to live next to a lot converted to a neighborhood park.

Parks will be a magnet for the already ample population of ne'er do wells in this area. Parks attract bad behavior at night in particular. We live in a rural treed area and do not need parks. We do not want to pay and keep paying to support these parks. Parks could be located next to your house without your input - this would result in a drop in your property value. We cannot get enough police in this area as it is, then add parks for the homeless to take over? Which then leads to more property crime, which is bad enough in this area. Parks District was voted on without knowledge that they would then ask for money. Nearly 60% of the people in this area do not support a levy for these Parks and they just keep asking for money (3 x so far - how many more will it take?) Each time they ask, they get the same response.

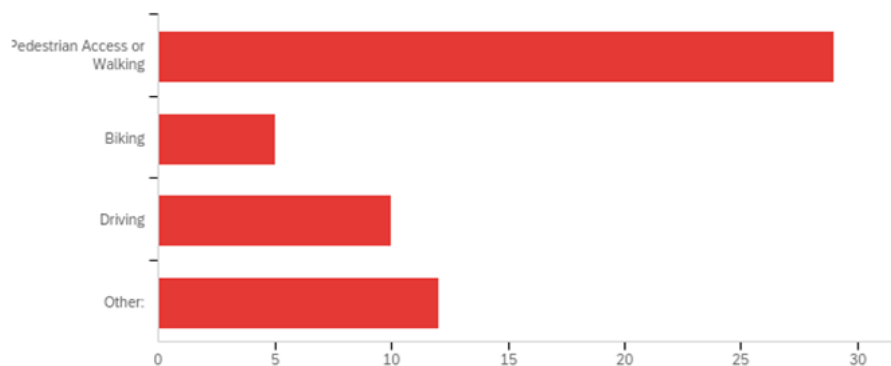
The park would just be damaged. It would be a waste of money.

Tax hikes

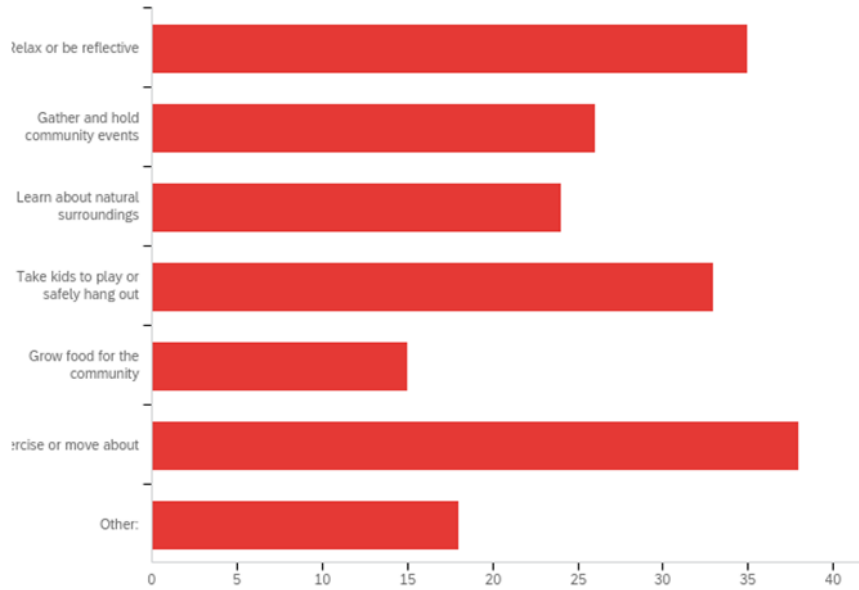
I live in the Columbia Valley. We are completely surrounded by department of natural resource land. Step out your door and you are in the outdoors. There are literally 100 miles of trail for you to walk on for free. There are several parks within driving distance from the Whatcom park and recreation. I do not see the need to raise my taxes an extra 30% for parks just so a bunch of teenagers have a place hang out.

The public spaces in this valley are trashed as is. We need to work on cleaning up what we have already before we create more spaces to be messed up.

Q12 - What would be your preferred way to get to your local park?



Q13 - What type of setting do you desire in a new park? Is your ideal park a place to... (select all that apply)



Q13_TEXT - Other:

Dog park

DOG PARK!

No parks!

None

No park!

Dogs!!!

all of the above

All above

My preferred Park is one that doesn't exist. I like natural. I don't want parks. I want our lands here to remain natural. The whole area is a huge park. Keep strangers away from our children.

Hiking and mountain biking

No parks

NO PARKS! People can do all of this at their own homes. We do not need a park for these purposes.

Dog park area for off leash

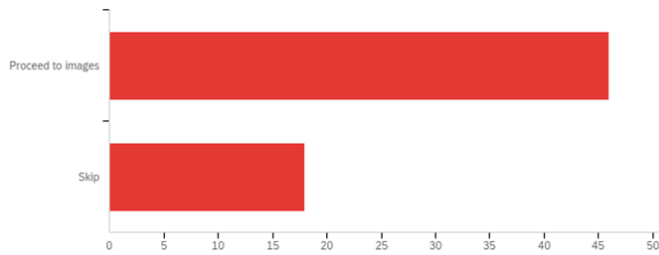
Dog park

large enough for a baseball field.

BBQ with friends and family

No park

Q14 - The following 10 images display a variety of parks and activities. If you have the time, please rate each image on a scale of 1-10 according to the kinds of parks and activities you would like in Columbia Valley.



Q15 - Rate from 1 (not desirable) to 10 (very desirable).



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Image 1	0.00	10.00	4.62	3.08	9.48	45

Q18 - Rate from 1 (not desirable) to 10 (very desirable).



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Image 2	0.00	10.00	4.17	3.09	9.52	42

Q20 - Rate from 1 (not desirable) to 10 (very desirable).



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Image 3	0.00	10.00	6.18	3.21	10.29	44

Q22 - Rate from 1 (not desirable) to 10 (very desirable).



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
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1	Image 4	0.00	10.00	6.34	2.97	8.82	44
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Q24 - Rate from 1 (not desirable) to 10 (very desirable).



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Image 5	0.00	10.00	4.46	3.08	9.52	41

Q27 - Rate from 1 (not desirable) to 10 (very desirable).



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Image 6	0.00	10.00	5.71	3.02	9.14	45

Q29 - Rate from 1 (not desirable) to 10 (very desirable).



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Image 7	0.00	10.00	4.15	3.03	9.16	39

Q31 - Rate from 1 (not desirable) to 10 (very desirable).



#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Image 8	0.00	10.00	4.72	3.07	9.45	40

Q33 - Rate from 1 (not desirable) to 10 (very desirable).



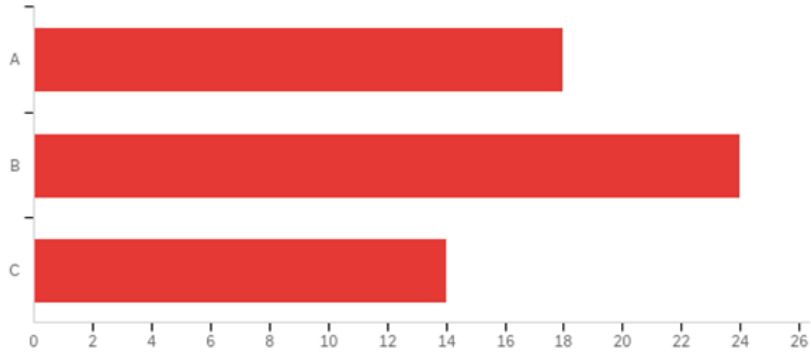
#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Image 9	0.00	10.00	6.12	3.08	9.47	41

Q35 - Rate from 1 (not desirable) to 10 (very desirable).

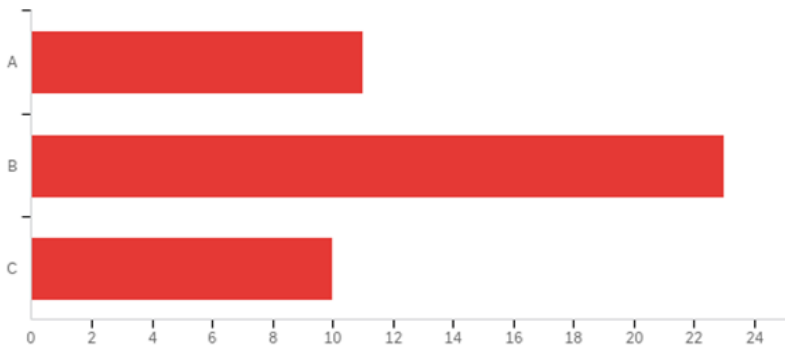


#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Image 10	0.00	10.00	6.41	3.55	12.63	41

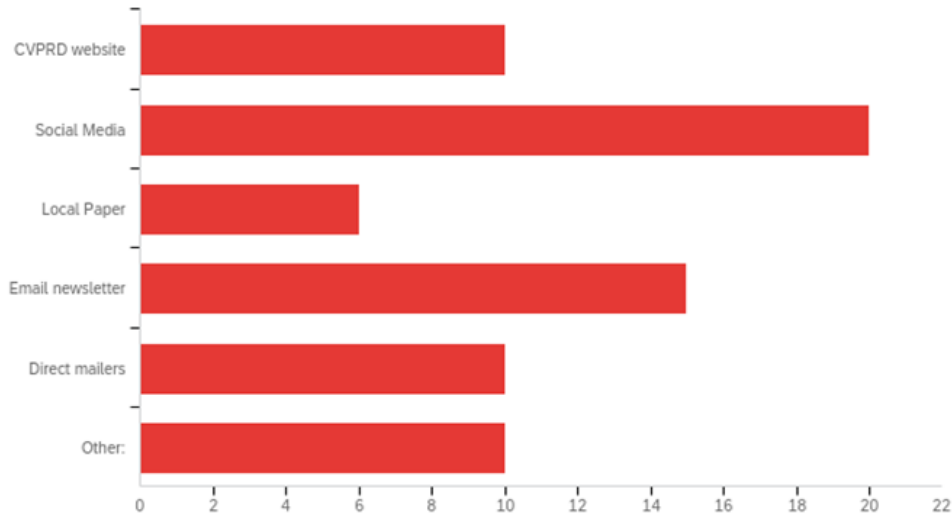
Q38 - What part of Columbia Valley do you live in?



Q39 - Where would you most like to see parks in Columbia Valley?



Q40 - How would you like to receive updates about parks in Columbia Valley?



Q40_6_TEXT - Other:

Only update I want is telling me it's not happening

Multiple respondents provided their email addresses for updates. Email addresses have been emitted from this report for privacy purposes. They can be found in the Contacts List spreadsheet in the CVPRD Google Folder.

Can I be notified when this idea has been put to rest and NO PARKS are planned?

Q42 - What concerns, if any, do you have about new parks in Columbia Valley?

Locating it in C is closer to the elementary school and library; I worry about trash and vandalism, it would be good to have Friends of the Park group of volunteers to help maintain it.

No parks!

Drugs vandalize and garbage

Security and cleanliness. Not enough trees.

There should be no new parks

People trashing it.

There is too much drug activity in this area to have a safe area for any child , or adult for that matter. If you want that kind of stuff earn it and clean up the area first. You at the university have no clue about this area, nor do you care..

security

litter, vandalism, illegal activities

vondale bad elemnts drugs

none

Traffic Congestion

Drug attics

Proper paths w/ good lighting

Not really

None

riff raff

Tweakers vandalism :(

Costs and crimals and homeless people camping there

That they be paid for by the people who want them. That you stop trying to tax people who do not want the parks who have no money who want to just be left alone. If you want a park, Then you pay for it. Stop hurting people. We're poor. We can't afford your stupid parks!

How to keep them clean and fuctional? Lots of drug activity in the area, how to keep that away from the parks? How to keep people from dumping trash at a local park? Will the park be monitored by the police frequently? How will we avoid vandalism and or destruction of the parks?

Destroying existing trails and Forest

Clean restrooms, proper security, and effective lighting.

My concern is there is no walkway along Highway 547 in this area. People have been killed walking and biking there

Cost

Drugs in the parks

Clear cutting trees and taking private property traffic increase property taxes going up

Costs, taxes going up, homeless and drug addicts taking over

Traffic, crime, maintenance

None. As a senior with a dog, a park with sidewalks for walking and a dog park would be great

Maintaining it. Will they get destroyed by teenagers.

Answered in the survey (WHY I VOTED NO). Crime. More Crime. Drugs. More Drugs. Homeless encampments. Noise. Traffic. Costs. More Costs. Property devaluation. NO TO PARKS!

Vandalism

Concerned that the park would be damaged or have needles left at them

Proper use and maintenance

Sidewalk access for safer highway walking and bike

Q41 - As a community member, how would you like to be involved in parks development?

I would attend planning meetings, but can't do zoom/online due to insufficient internet bandwidth

Informed, educated, volunteer opportunities.

No parks!

I wouldn't i protest them

Not having adequate lighting, especially at night. Also if there is a dog park, for it to be gated and allow dogs to run without me a leash in the gated part. And a nice marked trail for running.

I only hope it is large enough for all to enjoy both peace and play

Traffic and cutting thru green belt getting there

That it will be a place that is not up kept and that will be used buy them any drug dealers in the area instead of the children.

That we are not getting them! I want a place to walk with my grandkids to, take our dogs to, gather with friends and families

Drugs, dumping, theft

By getting rid of the parks department

work party, volunteering

would love to see it happen

no thank you

Yes, clean up

NA	Would want to protest it
Unsure	Depends on how much I support a specific project.
undecided	Any way I can. Not sure how valuable I would be.
I want to do everything I can to stop this. It is a legal theft to put this on our property taxes. We will never allow it. Put a swingset in your own damn yard.	I don't want Parks.
Tax increase and having a say on location.	I don't.
Hands on!	Any way possible
We can give to fundraising	Not much I can do, due to age and disability
Not	unable due to disability
Yes, but i have zero time.	no
I'm opposed to the idea of having parks put in there's silver lake don't want the rural area becoming city like reason live out here to enjoy the trees and quiet and the affordability. I don't want it to become like Lynden	Anyway I can
	I don't believe it should exist

Q43 - Is there anything else you would like to note about the future of parks in Columbia Valley?

It would be nice to put a kids playground at the EWRRC, so it's closer to A & B neighborhoods, and continue the community garden there. neighborhoods	Stay natural, but embrace new technologies.
---	---

Thank you for thinking about this! We would love to see more beautiful escapes in this area

No parks!

Dont want them here moved up here to get away from people

Shut it down

fence up Dog park off leash

NA

More showers laundrmat

(In reference to question 6 “do you support building parks in Columbia Valley?” The responded noted) Reopen that place in paradise North Peaceful

Stop trying to steal money from others through their property taxes. Leave us alone.

Don't want one

I know the Kendall Area needs parks, i have lived in the Kendall area for 20+ years, and have continued to do whatever i can to help the kids in this area find constructive outlets. I feel the most efective park would have covered table space, playground, and a small Skateboarding area with a covered ramp for wet days. We face rain most of the

year it only makes for a more accesable park all year round.

Too many people think it will turn into a hangout for thugs and drug dealers

Wait ungil things are back to (near) normal

We need parks. We need people to vote for them.

Make Kendall quarry accessible to all for recreation.

Find another way to pay for it, if people want it they should pay for it. We should not be taxed to pay for it

Stop putting defeated measures on the ballot. Come up with something new rather than nagging at old measure already defeated twice.

No

It would be wonderful to have a safe place for kids to play.

We have voted overwhelmingly against a Parks Levy. What more do you want? We are not in 'the city'. We do NOT need parks in this area. This is a fantasy proposed by people who just can't stay out of other people's business.

No.

dog park and bike/walk trails

This area is rapidly growing; new building is destroying the green belts; we MUST save some green spaces before the entire area is densely packed and undesirable

Good luck and Blessings to all

You can't raise our taxes when we are already struggling

I will vote against them every single time.

Shut it down

APPENDIX C: STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW NOTES

A number of major themes were present in the interviews, including safety, money and financing, community engagement, communication and amenities. These themes are highlighted according to the legend below in relation to the interview responses.

Main Theme Color-coded Legend:

Yellow - Safety

Green - Money and Finance

Purple - Community Engagement

Blue - Communication

Orange - Amenities

1. How do you feel about the current stock of parks and green spaces in your community? Does it adequately serve the community's needs?
 - Need more activities for our kids and teens.
 - Need safer paths for kids and teens.
 - Want places to get to quickly to meet and play that are safe.
 - There is green space, but they are not accessible. Most parks are private or reserved for private communities.
 - Lacking: Ability to access them; amenities are not adequate for a broad range of uses.
 - Saddened by private parks.
 - Swimming pool in one of the communities.
2. Are you familiar with the work being undertaken by Columbia Valley Park and Recreation District?
 - They are concerned about their finances, and a 3-4% raise in taxes would take money away from them when they need it the most. If the pandemic wasn't around, the levy might have passed.
 - Many older generations do not want parks near them that will attract homeless people, drug users, and other shady characters.
 - Mentioned that if she, being an active member of the community and in touch with people working in the community, does not know much about the CVPRD then the average person must know nothing or very little about the CVPRD. There should be more outreach to the community.
3. The CVPRD levy on the November ballot failed. Why do you think this was the case?
 - Not the right time, during the pandemic, to propose park projects when people are more concerned with the pandemic.
 - People do not want to commit to the taxes.
 - Educating CV population on the park plan. Didn't see a lot of facebook posts about it. Many people who live there are renters.

- Pandemic fears and hardships made people worried over increased taxes and payments.
 - Mistrust from previously mismanaged park authorities.
 - The CVPRD failed to educate people on the parks projects, and almost everything else related to it (his opinion).
 - No mention of the benefits and its process of implementing parks.
 - She believed that people didn't want to put money into the community. Some people, if their taxes are raised, can no longer afford to stay there. She felt that most people would want a park, but the means to get them and to get people to actively want them is different.
 - Fear, (25%): Its gonna be trashed and it will be destroyed, Spot for drug use and not safe, Covid adds to the risk factor.
 - Economics: Too much of risk, 80% low income at an elementary school.
 - Lack of understanding of what having a park would be like, Envision that it would affect the community negatively.
 - Communication isn't as strong as it could have been. People want to see what it would like.
4. What do you think are the community's main concerns related to the levy?
 - Issues over increased taxes.
 - Whether the parks would be safe and supervised.
 - Stigma of community members from influx of community members who aren't following the law.
 5. Do you see benefits to building parks within Columbia Valley? If so, please explain those benefits.
 - Places for Family and community to connect.
 - Amazing volunteers in the community.
 - Great benefit for the kids. They don't have a lot to do in the CV especially since you have to cross a state highway to get to the EWRRC where the biggest open space is.
 - People would be out and about to prevent bad behavior.
 - Public meeting place.
 6. Do you see any drawbacks to park development?
 - If people aren't invested, it could be a place where you might find criminal activity happening but it's one of those things where if the community is invested there is a community block watch program and that would keep criminal activity to a minimum. Within the first ten years property crimes dropped 90% after the block watch program because people start to get to know each other.
 7. What assets do you think Columbia Valley has at its disposal to support park development?
 - Undeveloped green spaces.
 - EWRRC and the Opportunity Council working to get a covered play area at the EWRRC.
 - Local and state government support to this kind of development. I think having a good fundraising committee to explore private funding. Just have to find the right place with money to support. Income volunteer donations grants.
 - A lot of people that care about the community, Provides good opportunities
 - Library: "Stick to it" ness, Built by the community, Small fundraisers
 8. Which assets do you want to see further funded/developed?
 - If parks had basketball hoops!

- More fields, such as baseball and soccer
 - Grants and small businesses that support children
 - Multi Use Facilities
9. What types of park amenities do you think would be most beneficial for the community?
- Activities in parks such as camps, gardening, and sports
 - Outdoor kitchen where people can gather and share food
 - Playground
 - Fitness equipment
 - Fitness trail
 - Open grassy areas for play
 - A swimming pool: Used to be public, if you paid a fee
 - A place for youth to go
10. How do you think other community members feel about the goals and plans of the CVPRD?
- Uncertain on the CVPRD because there was really no acknowledgement or education of this topic.
 - A lot more advocating and outreach that needs to be done.
 - People do not really know about the project or understand what it would bring. Pictures and designs would be beneficial in promoting the work.
 - I haven't heard anyone say we don't want parks- it's just how it's framed and how you share the information in a way that people understand the goal and how it will be managed and how funding will come about to create and sustain it.
 - People did not know about it

Columbia Valley
Parks & Recreation
District
Communication Plan



Contents

3 Communication Plan Introduction

4 Communication Schedule

This is the tentative communication schedule recommended for the Columbia Valley Parks and Recreation District to follow.

5 Internal Communication Methods

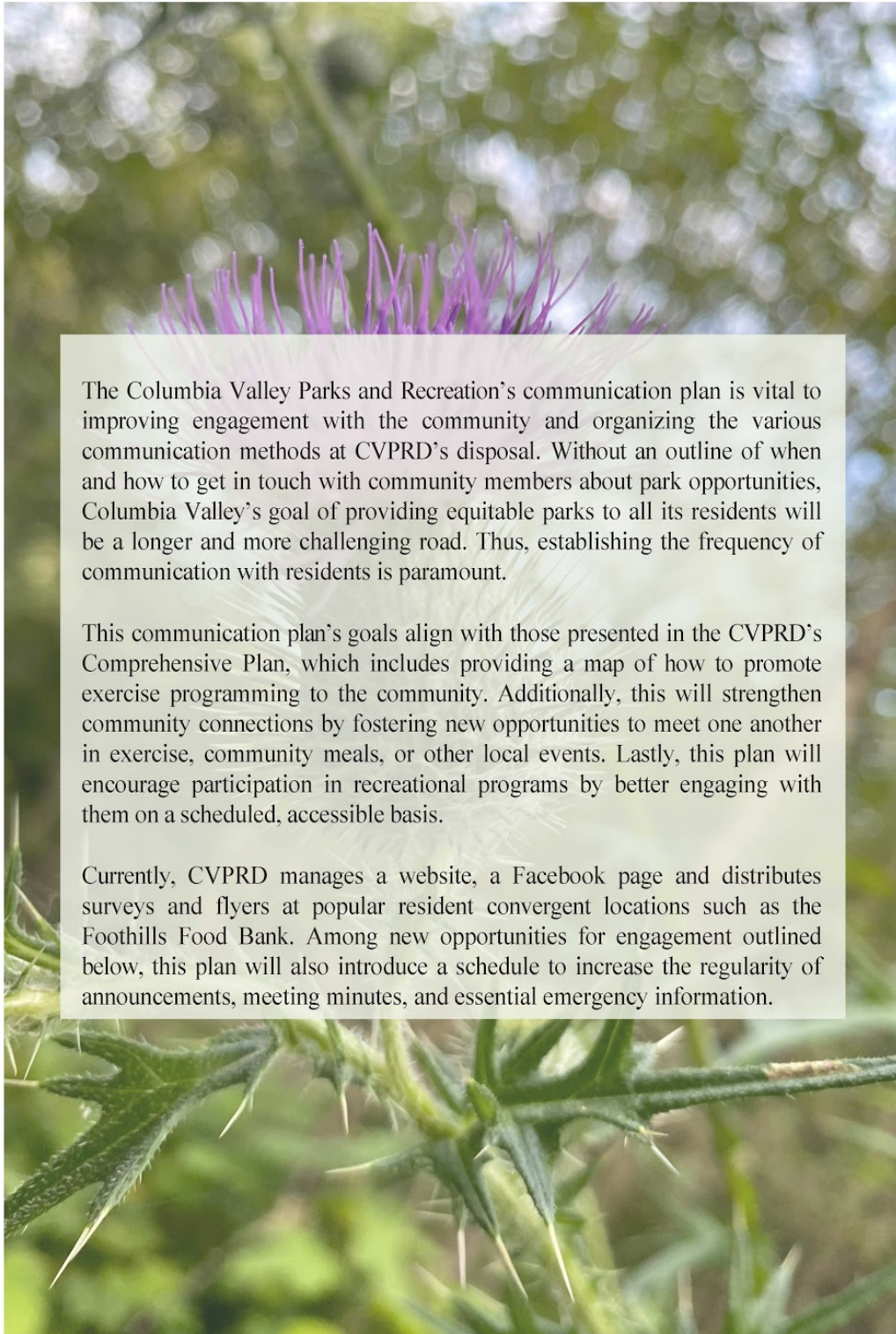
This section will include key contacts and key locations for communication between commissioners and other important community members as seen fit.

8 Market Based Communication Methods

There are a variety of different methods that are recommended to be used. This section also provides information on why these methods are preferred and how they would benefit the communication between the community and the Parks and Recreation District.

12 Crisis Communication Methods

This section will include a definition of what is meant by the term crisis and why these communication methods are important to have set in place. This section also will describe the process of actions needed and include key locations with their contact information.



The Columbia Valley Parks and Recreation's communication plan is vital to improving engagement with the community and organizing the various communication methods at CVPRD's disposal. Without an outline of when and how to get in touch with community members about park opportunities, Columbia Valley's goal of providing equitable parks to all its residents will be a longer and more challenging road. Thus, establishing the frequency of communication with residents is paramount.

This communication plan's goals align with those presented in the CVPRD's Comprehensive Plan, which includes providing a map of how to promote exercise programming to the community. Additionally, this will strengthen community connections by fostering new opportunities to meet one another in exercise, community meals, or other local events. Lastly, this plan will encourage participation in recreational programs by better engaging with them on a scheduled, accessible basis.

Currently, CVPRD manages a website, a Facebook page and distributes surveys and flyers at popular resident convergent locations such as the Foothills Food Bank. Among new opportunities for engagement outlined below, this plan will also introduce a schedule to increase the regularity of announcements, meeting minutes, and essential emergency information.

Communication Plan Schedule

Activity	Monthly	Quarterly	Bi-Annual	Annually
Online Based Activities				
Social Media Posts and Updates				
Instagram	o			
Facebook	o			
YouTube	o			
Twitter	o			
Website Posts	o			
Website Updates	o			
Google Form Survey				o
Event Newsletter Posts	o			
Calendar Updates	o			
Physical / Paper Based Activities				
Event Pending Newsletter	o			
Newspaper Inserts		o		
Newspaper Stories		o		
Flyers		o		
Mount Baker Community Newsletter		o		
Volunteer / Procedural Activities				
Crisis Planning	o			
Correlate Key Contacts			o	
Gathering			o	
Cleanup Efforts			o	
Other				
Radio Talks & Updates		o		

*Disclaimer: These are just all suggestions on when activities should be done and how frequently they should be done. There are some activities that will be needed at times or during events that do not align with the schedule and those events can include crises such as hazard events like flooding or severe weather conditions. *

Internal Communication Methods

Columbia Valley Parks and Recreation District holds regular public meetings at 5 pm on each month's second Thursday. Open to the public. These meetings typically occur at the Peaceful Valley Country Club or over Zoom video call when an in-person meeting is not possible. These meetings are the primary means of internal communication between district commissioners and other internal members. Since these meetings address official district policies and planning, they are incredibly valuable when provided to the public. Therefore, all meeting minutes and Zoom call recordings should be uploaded regularly every month to Google Drive and then provided on the cv-prd.org website.

Key Contacts and Locations

The following two tables are potential key names and locations to reach out to disperse information about parks or in a crisis.



Key Contacts

Key Names	Position	Organization	Contact Info
Jessica Bee	EWRRRC Coordinator & CVPRD Commissioner	Opportunity Council	
Richard Whitson	Commissioner	CVPRD, Country Club Member	Email: rawdew55@gmail.com
Carl McDaniel	CVPRD Commissioner & Water Commissioner		Email: swtcarl_1@hotmail.com
Kriste Slette	Executive Director	Whatcom Family & Community Network	Phone: (360) 738-1196 Email: kristi.slette@wfcn.org
Wa'Lynn Sheridan	Mt. Baker Community Coalition Coordinator	Whatcom Family & Community Network	Phone: (360)738-1196 Email: mbcoalition@wfcn.org
Mary Sewright	Superintendent	Mount Baker School District	Phone: f(360)383-2000 Email: msewright@mtbaker.wednet.edu
Aly Robinson	Community Health Specialist	Whatcom County Health Department	Email: arobinso@co.whatcom.wa.us
Jerry DeBruin	Fire Chief	FIRE DISTRICT #14	Phone: (360) 599-2823
Shorty Bjornstad	Vice-Chair and Rep Commissioner KVCPCA		Phone: (360)5992628
Dawn Hilliard-Leach	Exec Director	Mount Baker Foundation	
Paula Grahm	Director	Foothills Food Bank	
Nick Perrigo	Principal	Kendall Elementary	
Andrew Remien	Assistant Principal	Mount Baker High	Email: aremien@mtbaker.wednet.edu
Debra Brown	Principal's Secretary	Mount Baker JR/SR High	Email: debra.brown@mtbaker.wednet.edu
Troy Wright	JR High Principal	Mount Baker JR High	Email: twright@mtbaker.wednet.edu

Key Locations

Key Locations	Phone/Address
FIRE DISTRICT #14	Phone: (360) 599-2823 Address: 7528 Kendall Rd, Maple Falls, WA 98266 Hours: Open 24 Hours
Mount Baker High	Phone: (360) 383-2015 Address: 4936 Deming Rd, Deming, WA 98244
Mount Baker JR/SR High	Phone: (360) 383-2015 Address: 5100 Mitchell Road, PO Box 95, Deming, WA 98244
Kendall Elementary	Phone: (360) 383-2055 Address: 7547 Kendall Road, Maple Falls, WA 98266
Foothills Food Bank	Phone: (360) 937-3724 Address: 8255 Kendall Rd, Maple Falls, WA 98266
Mount Baker School District	Phone: (360) 383-2000 Address: 4956 Deming Rd, PO Box 95, Deming, WA 98244
Opportunity Council	Phone: (360) 734-5121 Address: 1111 Cornwall Ave. Bellingham, WA 98225
East Whatcom Regional Resource Center (EWRRC)	Phone: (360) 599-3944 Address: 8251 Kendall Rd in Maple Falls, WA

Market Based Communication Methods

Social media

With social media becoming ever more popular in adults and children's lives, it represents a great avenue of communication to reach new members who may not otherwise be aware of Columbia Valley or her parks plan. Posts on various platforms on a semi-regular basis are informative, communally minded, and show citizens that the district is present and engaged with its community.

Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are some of the most popular platforms currently. These websites are a great place to post photos of Columbia Valley, announce new activities, or get the word out on important community events. Posting at least monthly is recommended due to the relative ease of posting and zero cost associated with these social media outlets. Also, the similarities in these three sites mean only one draft post may be needed, which can then be posted on all three platforms. Social media mainly thrives on an engagement level due to being algorithm-based, so small weekly posts are highly recommended when possible.

YouTube represents a more accessibility focused communication method. By uploading Zoom meeting recordings or district-sponsored projects to YouTube, they can be easily accessed and stored for the foreseeable future. It is recommended that uploading Zoom commissioner meetings to YouTube happens monthly, ideally within a week of the session, so the information presented in said meetings can be accessed quickly and promptly. Other videos created by CVPRD, such as WWU's ENVS 475 video project, can be uploaded as needed on a non-scheduled basis.

Radio (KAVZ)

The KAVZ radio station provides an audio source where the community can get updates of the website, announcements, or future events. It is highly recommended that statements by CVPRD are made quarterly. These statements would include radio talks, recent community activities, and updates on the website. Below is a suggested script to be used and edited as needed.

[The Columbia Valley Parks and Recreation District website is where you can learn about the parks we have in the Columbia Valley Area. Our website includes general information about the parks and rec district, community events, and opportunities to get involved. You can access the website on.... New updates and announcements...]

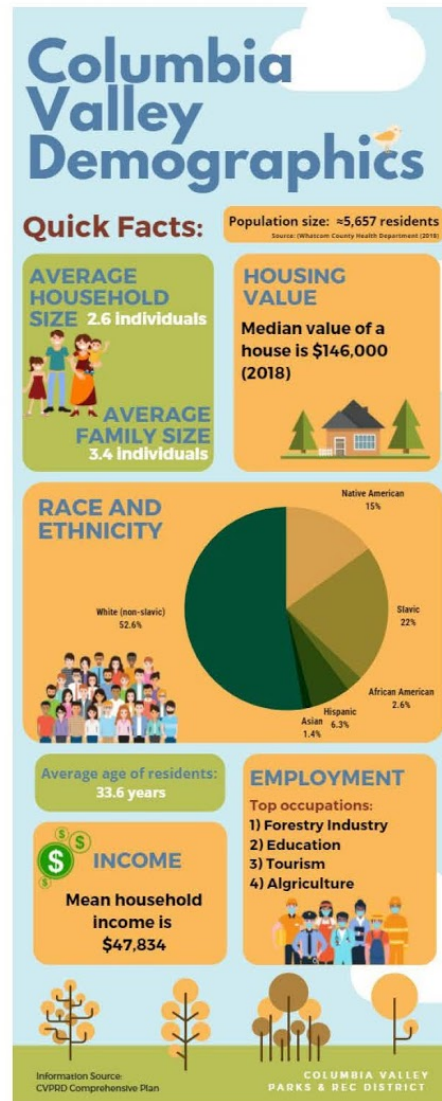
Flyers Updates

Flyers posted around the area of Columbia Valley provides a physical source where the community can get updates of the website, announcements, or future events.

The images displayed are some template examples of flyers about the website and events. These flyers can be implemented on websites or in physical locations. A tip for making flyers is using the website called Canva. It is a graphic design platform with various templates to choose from. It is a great tool to easily and quickly make flyers, and the cost is free.

Canva Link: <https://www.canva.com/>

We recommend that the distribution of these flyer updates be sent out quarterly.



COLUMBIA VALLEY PARKS AND REC DISTRICT
PRESENTS

EVENT NAME

insert image here

Event description :
The description includes a blurb about
the event, dates, location, and any
important information



FOR MORE INFO/CONTACT



COLUMBIA VALLEY PARKS & REC DISTRICT

insert image here

Upcoming Events!

Event 1:

The description includes a blurb about the event, dates, location, and any important information.

Event 2:

The description includes a blurb about the event, dates, location, and any important information.

Event 3:

The description includes a blurb about the event, dates, location, and any important information.

About the Website

The Columbia Parks and Rec District website is a place where you can learn more about the services we have to offer. This includes community events, volunteer opportunities, how you can get involved with the parks, and rec district.

Updates /Announcements

Updates, announcements, other information.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE:

INSERT WEBSITE LINK



Crisis Communication Methods

What is a crisis?

A crisis is an event of danger in which actions need to be taken to mitigate or stop the situation from escalating. A crisis is a danger that affects an individual or community, such as natural disasters and diseases.

What a crisis for CVPRD looks like?

Depending on the crisis level, a crisis for the CVPRD could look like a tree falling on the road that blocks traffic on the road. Proper actions such as physical notices near the blockage site or announcements on social media alerting the community of such incidents should be posted as necessary. For higher levels of crisis, the crisis communication plan will serve as a critical source of information for individuals during an emergency.

What is the purpose of a crisis communication plan? How to implement in a crisis.


The purpose of crisis communication prepares those who are making decisions under a crisis way of delivering essential information in a time of need.

The process of action in crises include:

1. Identifying crisis (natural disaster, disease, etc.)
2. Identify the potential locations and key stakeholders.
3. Level of response (level 1-2-3)
 - a. Level 3: low
 - i. The impact is small to on individual scale or area.
 - b. Level 2: moderate
 - i. The impact is medium on community-scale or area.
 - c. Level 1: high
 - i. The impact is large on a society scale or area.
4. Internal communications (i.e.: social media or broadcast centers)
 - a. CVPRD website: cv-prd.org
 - b. Columbia Valley Next-door
 - c. Columbia Valley Facebook
5. External communications (i.e.: physical locations)

Key Locations

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East Whatcom Regional Resource Center (EWRRC)	Phone: (360) 599-3944 Address: 8251 Kendall Rd, Maple Falls, WA
Starvin Sams	Phone: Call (360) 599-2668 Address: 7519 Kendall Rd, Maple Falls, WA
North Fork Library	Phone: 360-599-2020 Address: 7506 Kendall Road Maple Falls, WA 98266
KAVZ	



“There is no power for
change greater than a
community discovering
what it cares about.”
– Margaret J. Wheatley