

Sport Field Strategy

“WHAT WE HEARD” REPORT #2



ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW AND KEY FINDINGS

HOW DID WE ENGAGE?

The second phase of engagement was focused on gathering feedback on the foundational elements of the draft Strategy, which include the guiding principles, directions, and site selection criteria.

ENGAGEMENT TACTICS & PARTICIPATION



PUBLIC SURVEY

A public survey was made available through *Shape Your City* (shapeyourcity.ca) – the City of Vancouver’s public engagement platform. The survey was available from March 28 to April 11th, 2023, and collected 415 responses. 14 user groups participated in the survey.

WHEN WILL WE ENGAGE NEXT?

There will be a third phase of engagement in the summer of 2023. This final phase of engagement will gather feedback on the five “big moves” which will inform the significant capital project types within the strategy’s implementation plan and a list of potential capital projects for the most significant big moves. The feedback gathered through this final phase of engagement will be used to refine and finalize the strategy and implementation plan.

KEY THEMES FROM THE PHASE 2 ENGAGEMENT

DRAFT GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Over 80% of survey respondents confirmed that all of the draft guiding principles are important to achieve.
- Guiding principle #1 (optimally manage the system of sport fields) was consistently identified as most important, with over 90% of respondents indicating that it was either very or somewhat important to achieve.
- Respondents would like to learn more about the guiding principles and how they will be applied in the Sport Field Strategy. Some suggested creating a video or webinar to walk through the new strategy would be helpful.
- Equitable field access and allocations was reiterated as a key value by survey respondents.

DRAFT DIRECTIONS

- The draft directions were viewed favourably by a majority of respondents.
- Two-thirds (6 out of 9) of the directions were considered somewhat or very important by at least 80% of respondents (directions 1, 3-6, 8).
- Directions 2, 7, and 9 were considered somewhat or very important by 66-70% of respondents.
- Focusing available capital resources on field quality and adding functional capacity (direction 5), and implementing an equity model for allocation, booking, and permitting of fields (direction 3) were considered somewhat or very important by over 90% of respondents.

DRAFT SITE SELECTION CRITERIA

- There are eight draft site selection criteria. Two of them - the site test fit, and equity gaps and considerations - were considered mandatory while feedback was sought on the other six criteria.
- Parking considerations were viewed as important. Previous phases of engagement also identified the importance of parking for many sport field users.
- Respondents indicated that health, safety and neighbourhood context are important pieces to integrate in the application of the criteria.

HOW WILL THE FEEDBACK FROM PHASE 2 ENGAGEMENT HELP GUIDE THE DRAFT STRATEGY?

- Confirm that the draft strategy foundations (guiding principles, directions, and actions) and site selection criteria reflect the values of residents and sport organizations in Vancouver.
- Identify areas that need clarification.
- Help us understand which site selection criteria are most important to the public and user groups.
- Led to the development of one new site selection criteria.

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1. ABOUT THE SPORT FIELD STRATEGY

The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation (Park Board) is developing a Sport Field Strategy to guide future capital investment, focus areas, and overall management of the sports field inventory in the city. More specifically, the strategy was undertaken to:

- Better understand the current state of sport fields in Vancouver;
- Establish priorities for sports field upgrades, renewals, and potential new field projects; and
- Optimize how the sport field inventory is managed and allocated to different types of uses and user groups.

SPORT FIELDS are defined as open surface areas (natural grass, synthetic grass, or gravel) used for organized sport activities and play.



Two young people playing soccer.

2. THE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Engagement with residents, user groups, and other community interest groups is a critical aspect of developing the strategy. The project engagement encompasses three phases:



“What We Heard” Report #1 front cover image.

PHASE 1: Understanding the factors that drive sport field use and participation in Vancouver, including local trends (e.g., what sports are becoming more or less popular), potential barriers to access and priorities.

****The Phase 1 engagement findings can be found in the “What We Heard” Report #1.***

PHASE 2: Gathering feedback on the draft strategy foundations, including the guiding principles, directions, and site selection criteria. This phase of engagement helped to inform the development of the strategy’s big moves. ****This report document contains the findings from the Phase 2 engagement.***

PHASE 3: The final phase of engagement will share and get feedback on the Five “big moves” which will inform the significant capital project types within the strategy’s implementation plan and a list of potential capital projects for the most significant big moves.

3. PHASE 2 ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

OVERVIEW & METHODOLOGY

A public survey was made available through Shape Your City – the City of Vancouver’s public engagement platform. The survey was available from March 28 to April 11, 2023. The survey gathered 415 total responses. Sport field permit holder groups were also invited to take the survey and were asked to identify themselves at the beginning of the survey. 14 user groups participated in the survey. Additionally the (VFSF) Vancouver Field Sport Federation was provided an overview of this round of engagement at their regular meeting.

Promotion of the Survey included the following:

- 475 postcards sent to 25 community centres, including translations into five languages in addition to English*
- 25 site signs at high-traffic sport fields
- 115 project update email recipients

**They were translated into: Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Punjabi*

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SURVEY RESPONDENTS

- **The majority of respondents have children in their household.** 85% indicated that they have children residing in their household (66% were couples with children).
- **Fairly even mix of responses by gender.** 54% of respondents identified as men, 39% identified as women. 7% of respondents preferred not to say their gender and less than 1% indicated that they prefer to self describe or identify non-binary/ gender diverse.
- **Approximately one-quarter of respondents to the survey identified as being of non-European descent.** Of the respondents that indicated a non-European ethnic origin (26%), 13% indicated that they are of Asian descent and 6% indicated that they are of South Asian descent.
- **Most respondents have been active in Vancouver field sports for more than 10 years.** 63% of respondents indicated that they have been active in Vancouver field sports for more than 10 years, and 18% indicating that they have been active for 6 – 10 years and 10% indicating 1 - 5 years.

**Please refer to the appendices for additional survey respondent characteristics.*

SURVEY FINDINGS

This section provides details on the survey findings. Notable responses from user groups are highlighted for comparison.

DRAFT GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Respondents were asked about the draft guiding principles.

WHAT ARE GUIDING PRINCIPLES?

Guiding principles are value-based statements that provide overarching foundations for sport field investment and service delivery. The four guiding principles developed for the Sport Field Strategy identify key service delivery objectives and foundational values. In other words, the guiding principles articulate the key reasons why the Park Board provides sport fields, and what outcomes we are looking to achieve through ongoing investment.



Group about to play spike ball in the park.

OVERVIEW OF THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

GUIDING PRINCIPLE #1



Optimally manage the system of sport fields.

Sport field infrastructure in Vancouver is managed as an integrated, efficient system that makes optimal use of limited land resources to provide maximum public benefit.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE #2



Provide great sport field experiences for all.

All residents in Vancouver should have the opportunity to access and benefit from the public investment in sport fields. The Park Board recognizes that some residents face barriers to accessing sport field opportunities and is working to eliminate these barriers and ensure all residents have access to an array of sport field activities and spaces.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE #3



Effectively plan for the future and make the best value of capital resources.

Sport field infrastructure planning is data driven and prioritized based on aligning available land and financial resources with those projects and initiatives that provide the highest benefits value to residents. Future capital planning also recognizes that innovation, partnerships and collaboration will be key to future planning and resource optimization.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE #4

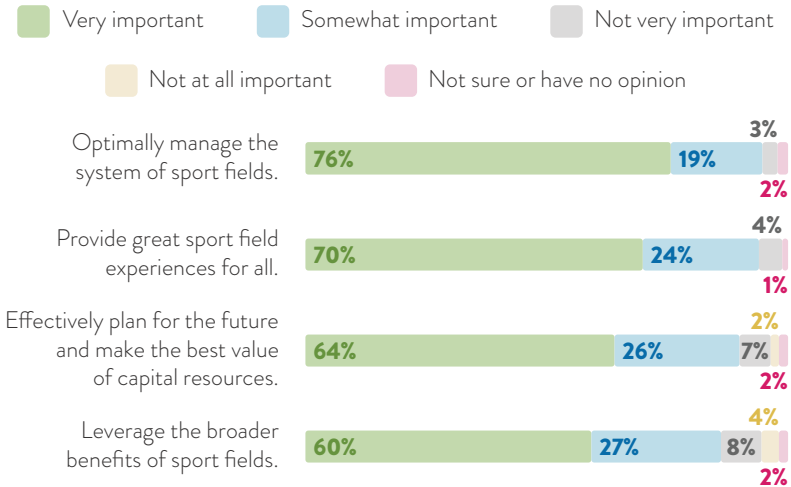


Leverage the broader benefits of sport fields.

Sport field infrastructure helps support community gathering and event hosting that complements other recreation and civic infrastructure.

When asked about the importance of achieving each guiding principle, the majority of respondents indicated that all of the draft guiding principles are either very important (60 – 76%) or somewhat important (19 – 27%) to achieve. Guiding principle #1 (optimally manage the system of sports fields) and guiding principle #2 (provide a great sport field experiences for all) were both identified as being very important by over 70% of respondents.

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT TO ACHIEVE EACH GUIDING PRINCIPLE?



USER GROUP RESPONSES

All of the guiding principles were supported (identified as very or somewhat important) by the participating user group representatives. Similar to the overall responses, guiding principle #1 (optimally managing the system of sports field) was indicated as being very important to achieve by 11 out of 14 groups and somewhat important to achieve by the remaining three groups.

Respondents were given space to comment on how the draft guiding principles could be improved, or if there is anything missing. The following points summarize the 171 comments we received.

- More specific information on each of the guiding principles is desired, with some individuals indicating that they would like examples of how the principles will be applied.
- A number of comments generally reiterated support for guiding principle #1 (optimal management of the fields).
- Approximately one quarter of all comments were related to allocation of fields. **There is a desire for a more collaborative process that ensures access to the fields is fair and equitable.** A number of the comments also referenced additional support needed to navigate the booking process.
- Respondents indicate a desire to expand the scope of guiding principle #4 (leverage the broader benefits of sport fields) to **include mental and physical health, community building, and social development.**
- Environmental impacts and human health and safety were noted as missing from the guiding principles. Some comments raised concerns about synthetic turf field surfaces and ensuring that the Sport Field Strategy contributes to the City’s net zero goals and Climate Emergency Action Plan.
- **Important safety considerations described in some of the comments included maintenance, proximity of the fields to areas of high social vulnerability, and lighting considerations.** It was expressed that these factors are important to capture as part of the guiding principles and other strategy content.
- Some respondents used the space to advocate for their sport of interest, specifically indicating that their activity was not adequately supported through the current inventory investment and the allocation of field time.

DRAFT DIRECTIONS

Respondents were asked to review the draft directions (along with corresponding actions) and indicate how important they think each one is.

WHAT ARE THE DIRECTIONS?

The directions reflect key, overall focus and priority areas. Directions advance the guiding principles by addressing key gaps, re-embedding practices that work well, and optimally aligning the sport field inventory and management practices. Each direction includes a series of more detailed actions, identifying specific tactics and projects.



Andy Livingstone Park

OVERVIEW OF THE DRAFT DIRECTIONS



DIRECTION 1: IMPLEMENT A RENEWED SPORT FIELD CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM.

This new classification system will clearly outline type of use, quality standards and complementary infrastructure for each type of field within the inventory.



DIRECTION 2: SEEK OPPORTUNITIES TO APPLY A REVENUE GENERATING STRATEGY LENS.

This will include a review of user fees, identifying rationale for setting fees based on clear metrics. User fees will balance the cost of providing fields with the need to ensure equity and access for all residents. We will also explore revenue generation opportunities such as sponsorships and partnerships.



DIRECTION 3: IMPLEMENT AN EQUITY MODEL FOR ALLOCATION, BOOKING, AND PERMITTING OF FIELDS.

A new approach to field allocations (permitting) will focus on aligning the right users with the right fields at the right times.



DIRECTION 4: FACILITATE SPONTANEOUS USE OF SPORTS FIELDS AND BALL DIAMONDS FOR RESIDENTS.

We will continue to facilitate access to casual, non-program based sport field opportunities and ensure spaces exist across the city for this type of use.



DIRECTION 5: FOCUS AVAILABLE CAPITAL RESOURCES ON FIELD QUALITY AND ADDING FUNCTIONAL CAPACITY.

The field renewal and enhancement projects identified will be aimed at achieving these key strategic aims.



DIRECTION 6: RENEW AND INCREASE SUPPLY OF SYNTHETIC TURF.

Synthetic turf fields can safely maximize field capacity and reduce the footprint taken by sport fields. Existing synthetic turf fields will be renewed, and the strategy will identify sites that would be suitable to retrofit to synthetic turf in the future.



DIRECTION 7: WORK WITH LOCAL NATIONS AND THE URBAN INDIGENOUS POPULATION TO INCREASE THE WAYS IN WHICH THE SPORT FIELD INVENTORY REFLECTS INDIGENOUS CULTURE AND SPORTS.

Work with local First Nations partners on an ongoing basis to identify projects and initiatives, including supporting lacrosse infrastructure, and to increase visibility through sport field facility design and naming.



DIRECTION 8: ENHANCE COLLABORATION WITH KEY LOCAL AND REGIONAL PARTNERS IN THE PLANNING, DELIVERY AND MAINTENANCE OF SPORT FIELDS.

Recognizing that many user groups and residents are using sport fields across municipal boundaries, we will identify opportunities for collaborations and partnerships.

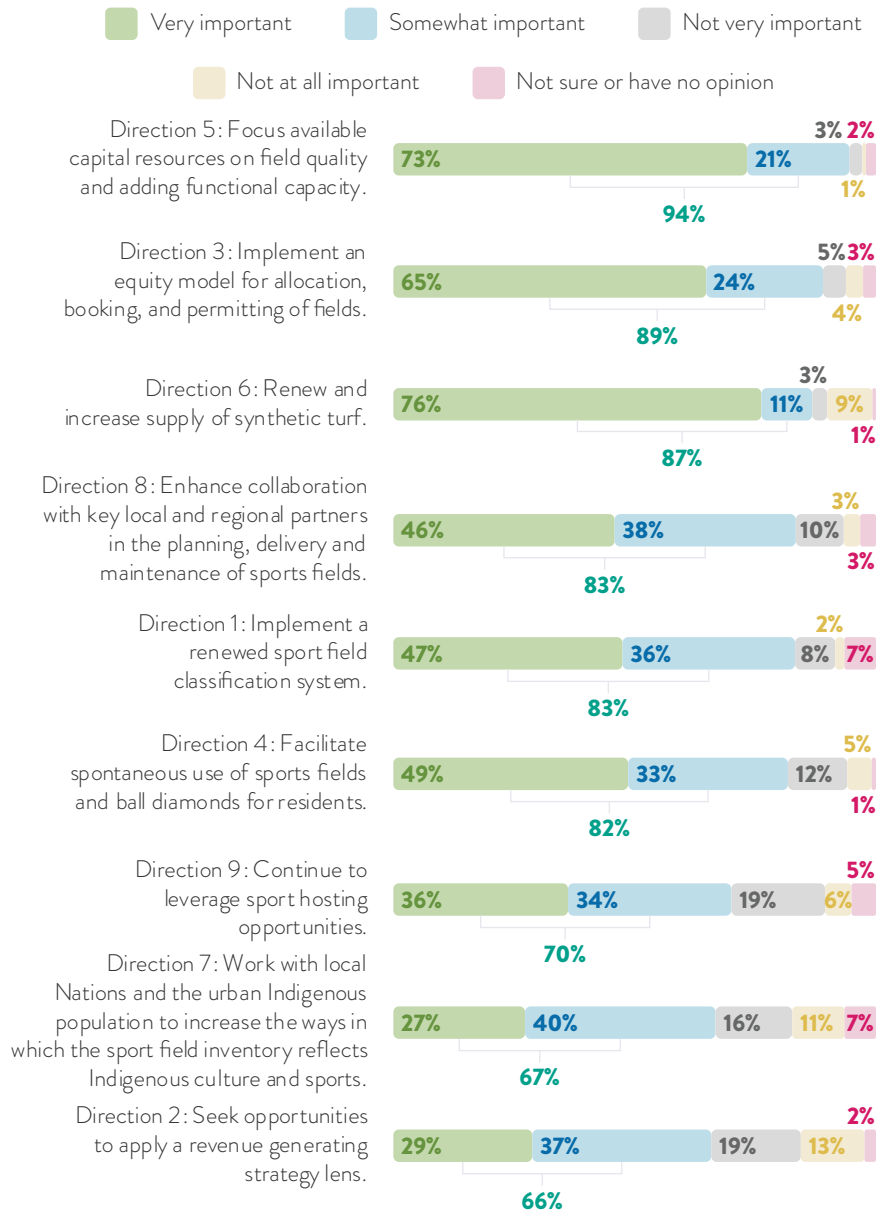


DIRECTION 9: CONTINUE TO LEVERAGE SPORT HOSTING OPPORTUNITIES.

We will identify approaches to leveraging and maximizing hosting opportunities.

All nine of the directions were deemed as very important or somewhat important by at least 66% of respondents. “Focusing available capital resources on field quality and adding functional capacity”, “implementing an equity model for allocations, bookings, and permitting of fields” and “renewing and increasing the supply of synthetic turf” were identified as the three most important directions, with over 87% of respondents indicating that they are very important or somewhat important.

HOW IMPORTANT IS IT TO ACHIEVE EACH STRATEGY DIRECTION?



USER GROUP RESPONSES

All 14 user groups indicated that direction 5 (focusing available capital resources on field quality and adding functional capacity) is an important direction with 13 groups identifying this direction as very important. Notably, all groups indicated that direction 7 (working with local Nations and the Urban Indigenous population to increase the ways in which the sport field inventory reflects Indigenous culture and sports) and direction 9 (continue to leverage sport hosting opportunities) are important focus areas.

User group representatives were also given space to comment on how the draft directions could be improved, or if there was anything missing. Summarized below are the key themes from the 150 comments received.

- **Varying perspectives and opinions were offered regarding direction 6 (renew and increase supply of synthetic turf).** Some comments provided by public respondents cited a variety of negative environmental impacts, while other comments advocated for increased provision of synthetic turf fields throughout the city.
- A number of comments emphasized the importance of direction 3 (implement an equity model for allocation, booking, and permitting of fields). **Respondents reiterated the desire for allocations to look at gender equity considerations, providing opportunities for new and emerging sports, the number of participants of organizations booking fields, and the quality of fields/types of fields being booked/allocated to groups** (gravel fields vs synthetic turf fields).
- General concern about a lack of field capacity was expressed, with many respondents indicating that **adding lighting and increasing field maintenance at existing fields may be part of the solution.**
- Several comments were made in support of direction 8 (enhance collaboration with key local and regional partners in the planning, delivery and maintenance of sports fields). Specifically, these **comments expressed that working with the school board is important to maximize use of available land resources.**
- Comments were provided expressing that **direction 2 (seek opportunities to apply a revenue generating strategy lens) should not influence how fields are allocated.**

DRAFT SITE SELECTION CRITERIA

To conclude the survey, respondents were asked to provide feedback on the draft site selection criteria. Respondents were asked to review information on the draft criteria and indicate how important they think each should be when prioritizing potential sport field projects. The **site test fit** and **equity gaps and considerations** criteria were considered mandatory, the question presented to respondents focused on gathering feedback on the other 6 criteria.

WHAT ARE THE SITE SELECTION CRITERIA?

The criteria reflect key considerations and attributes that will be used to identify the best candidate sites for:

- Retrofits of field surfaces (e.g., changing a field surface from natural surface (grass) / all weather (gravel) to synthetic turf).
- Future new sport field “hub” sites.

OVERVIEW OF THE SITE SELECTION CRITERIA

Overall screening criteria: site test fit

For a proposed project to be viable it must physically fit on the site (e.g., regulation field with amenities).

If the project passes this initial criteria it proceeds to the system wide criteria and site specific criteria as summarized on the following two pages.

System-wide criteria

In alignment with the guiding principles, sport fields in the city need to work well as part of a broader system.

- *Supported by policy and planning*
 - » *Do other Park Board and City plans and policies support the potential project?*
 - » *Examples: Track and Field Strategy, City Council-approved neighbourhood plan*
 - *Geographic distribution and gaps*
 - » *Does the project help address an identified geographic gap?*
 - *Equity gaps and considerations*
 - » *Is the project location well suited to serve equity denied groups?*
-



A Grass Field in Vancouver

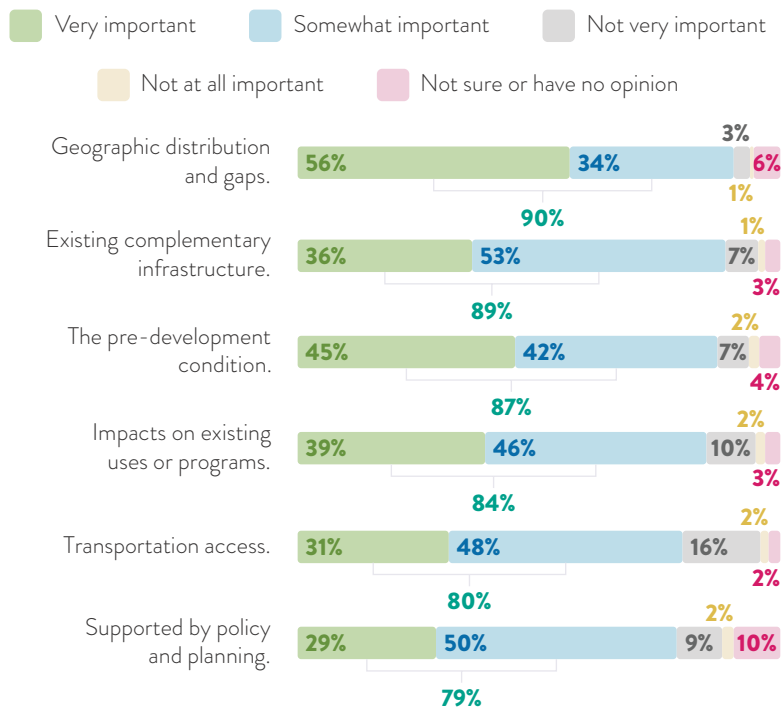
Site-specific criteria

The following criteria help further analyze the suitability of a specific site

- *Pre-development condition*
 - » *Does the physical condition of the site support a new or upgraded field?*
 - » *Is it a “typical” site, or does the site condition add cost or complexity to the project?*
 - » *Examples: geotechnical, topography, impacts to trees or water bodies*
 - *Existing complementary infrastructure*
 - » *Is the project supported by existing amenities or programming? Examples: adjacent community centre, access to washroom*
 - *Impacts on existing uses or programs.*
 - » *Examples: is the project converting an existing shared rectangular/ball diamond site to only a rectangular field? Does it require removal or significant modification to another existing park use? Is there displacement of another type of sport field or park use?*
 - *Transportation access*
 - » *Is the site easily accessible by all modes of transportation?*
-

The draft site selection criteria received strong support for all six criteria on which feedback was sought. Geographic distribution and gaps, and existing complementary infrastructure were indicated as very important or somewhat important by approximately 90% of respondents.

HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE FOLLOWING POTENTIAL SITE SELECTION CRITERIA?



USER GROUP RESPONSES

13 out of 14 user groups indicated that existing complimentary infrastructure was either very important (seven groups) or somewhat important (six groups) criteria. 12 out of 14 groups believe that geographic distribution and gaps, pre-development condition, and impacts on existing uses or programs are either very important or somewhat important criteria. 11 out of 14 groups believe that transportation access is either very important (3 groups) or somewhat important (eight groups) criteria.



Young cricket player up to bat

When asked to comment on the criteria and what may be missing the following themes emerged from the 99 comments provided.

- Respondents reiterated the importance of accessing fields using active transportation but acknowledged that there is still a need for parking specifically when hosting larger events or tournaments. Some felt that parking considerations should be considered as part of the transportation access criteria.
- Safety and social factors were cited as being important to consider when identifying potential projects sites. Many of these comments identified specific sites in the Downtown Eastside.
- A number of comments reiterated concern about potential health and environmental impacts of synthetic turf. The comments suggest that continued monitoring would be beneficial.
- Many comments highlighted the importance of amenities within the field area, including washrooms, seating areas, gathering spaces, and picnic areas.

APPENDICES



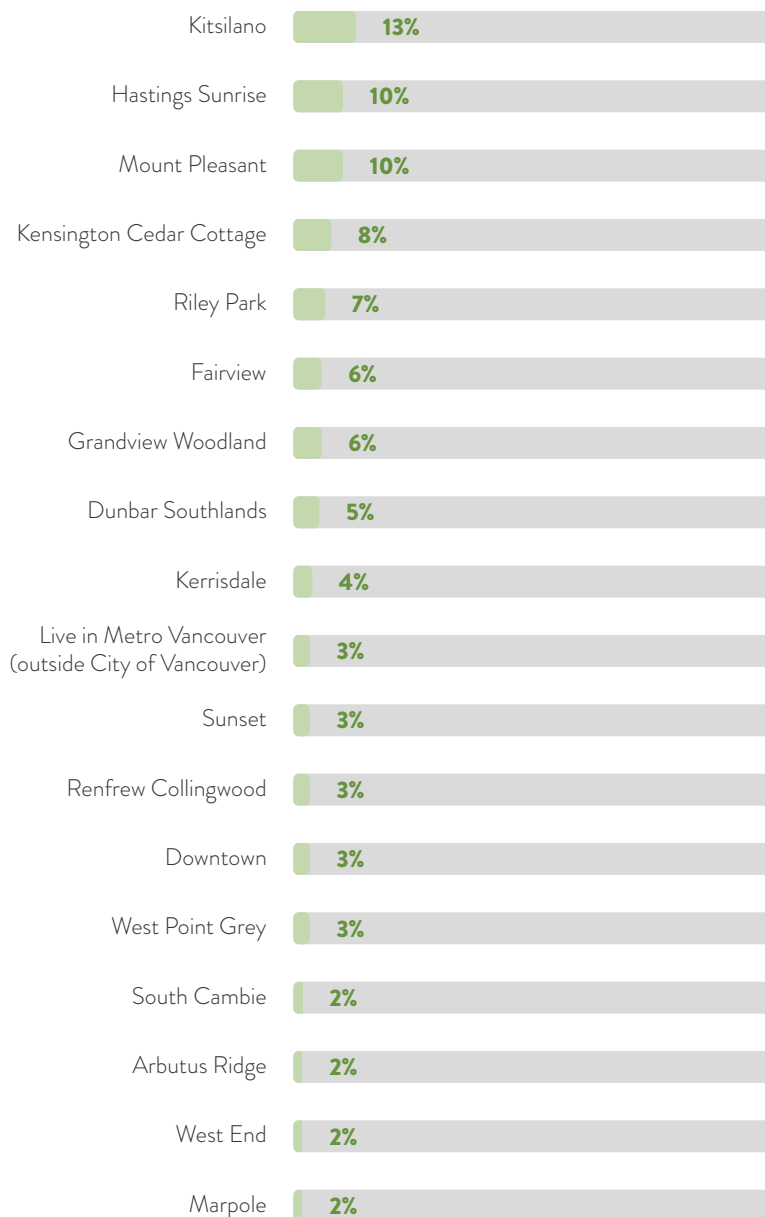
Baseball player holding two balls.

APPENDIX A: RESPONDENT PROFILE AND CHARACTERISTICS



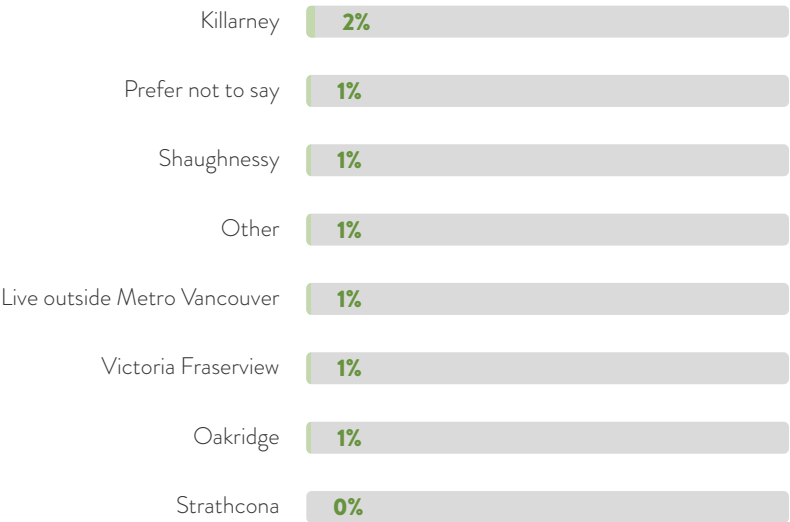
Soccer players about to sub in to a game.

WHERE RESPONDENTS LIVE

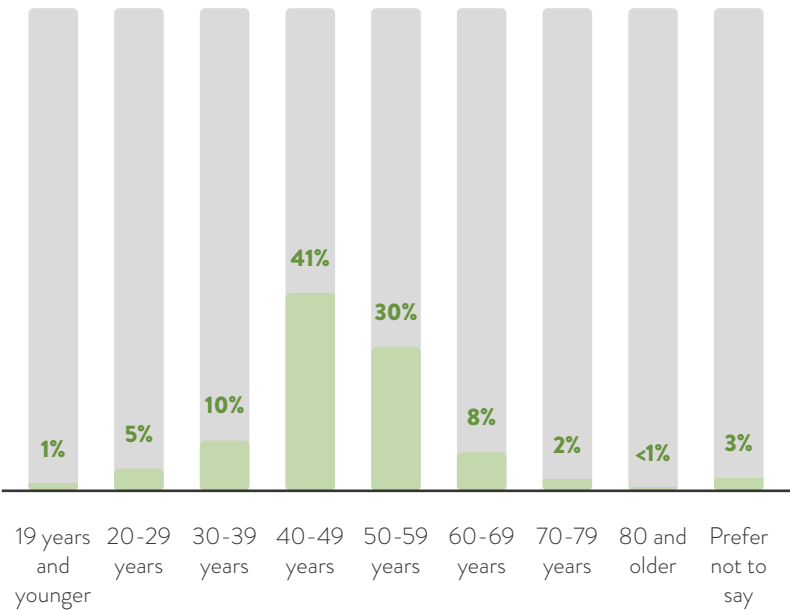




WHERE RESPONDENTS LIVE (CONTINUED)



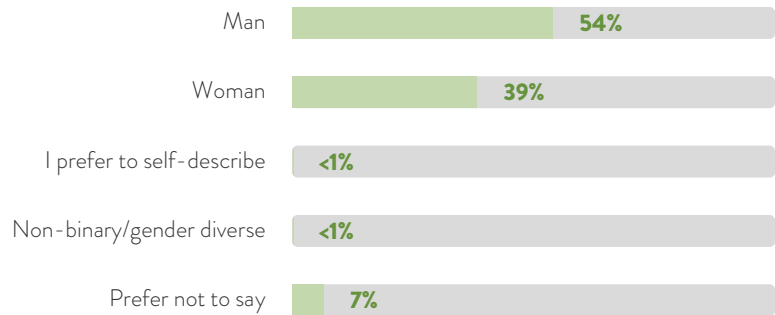
AGE DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS



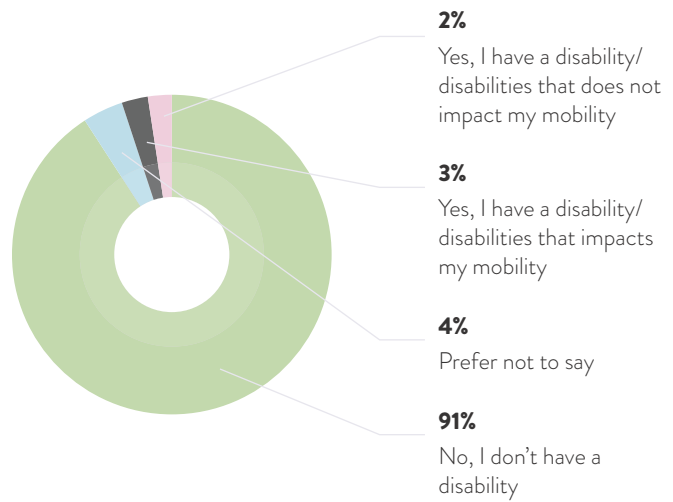


Andy Livingstone Park

GENDER IDENTITY OF RESPONDENTS



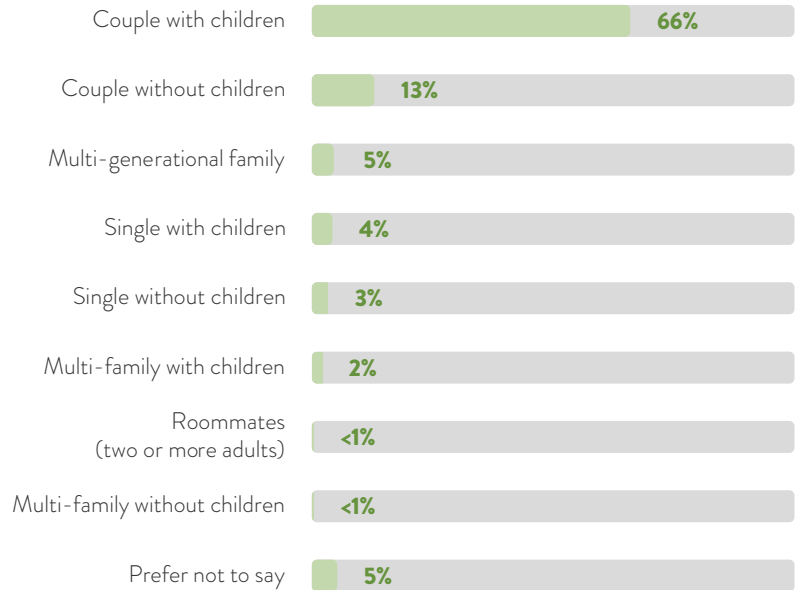
RESPONDENTS THAT IDENTIFY AS HAVING A DISABILITY



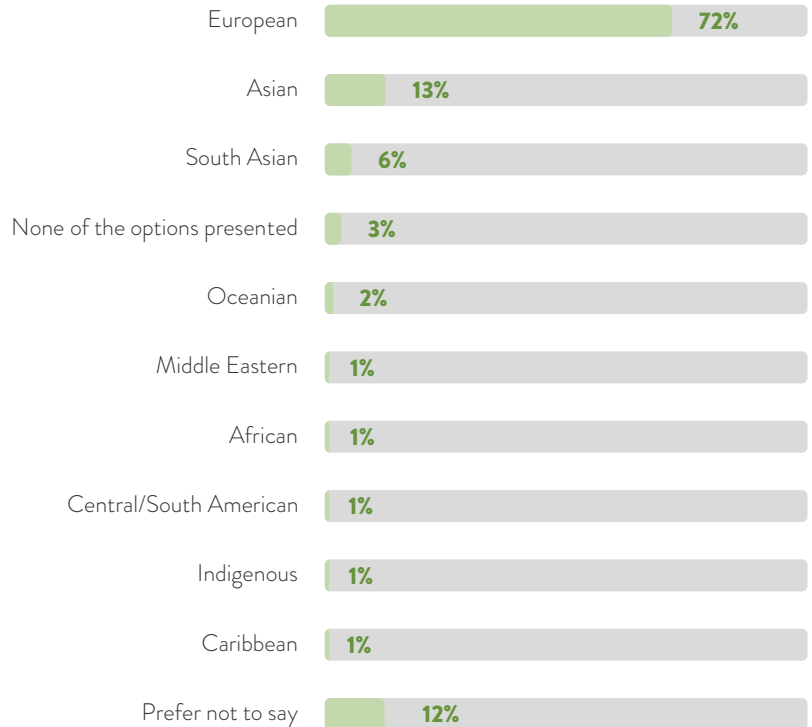


Young soccer goal tender.

TYPE OF HOUSEHOLD



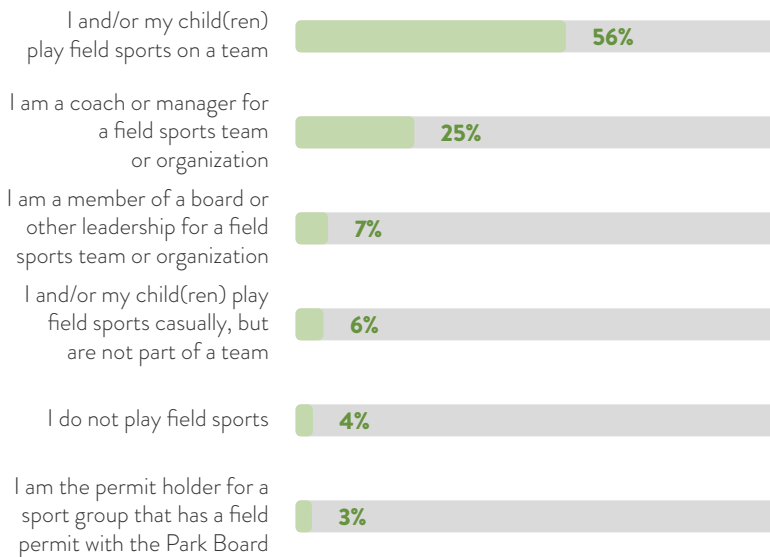
MAIN ETHNIC ORIGIN OF RESPONDENTS



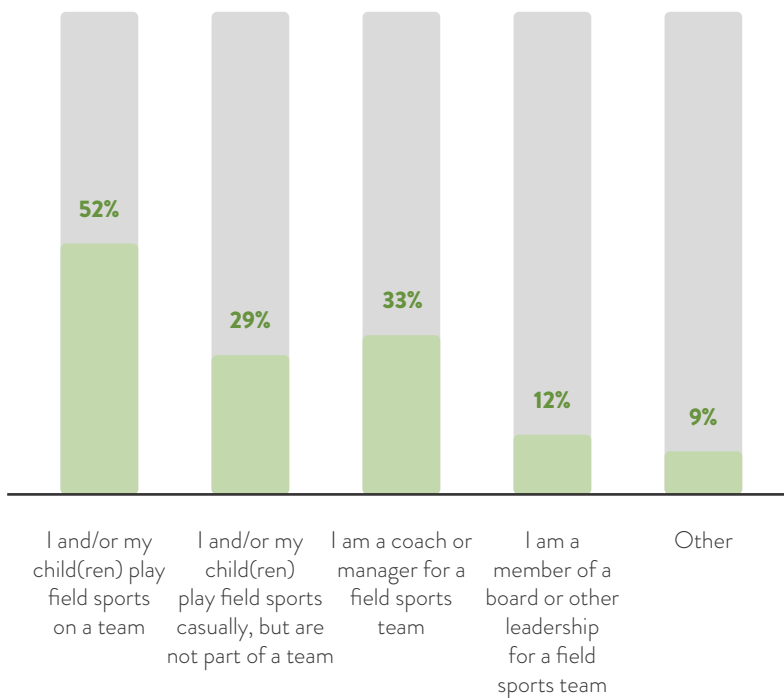


Coach and two young baseball players.

WHAT IS YOUR PRIMARY RELATIONSHIP TO FIELD SPORTS?

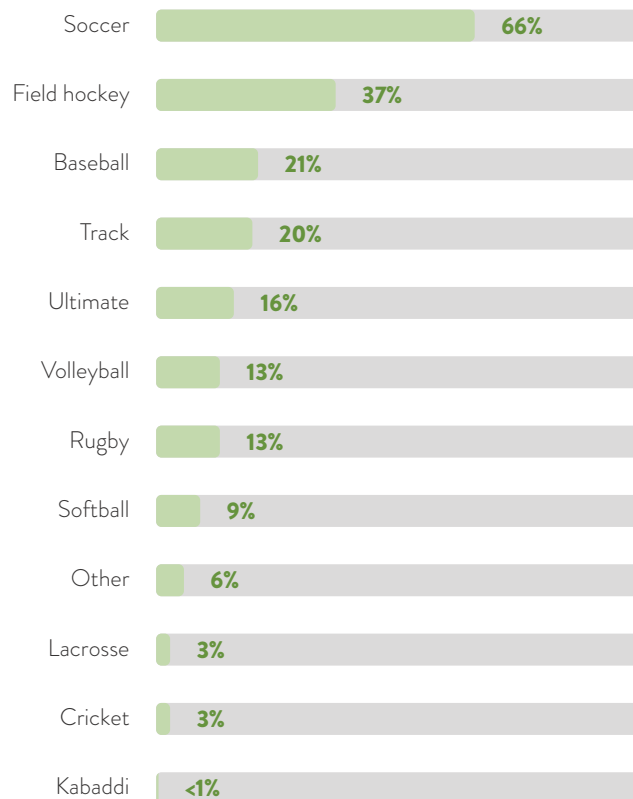


ARE THERE OTHER WAYS YOU ARE INVOLVED WITH FIELD SPORTS?

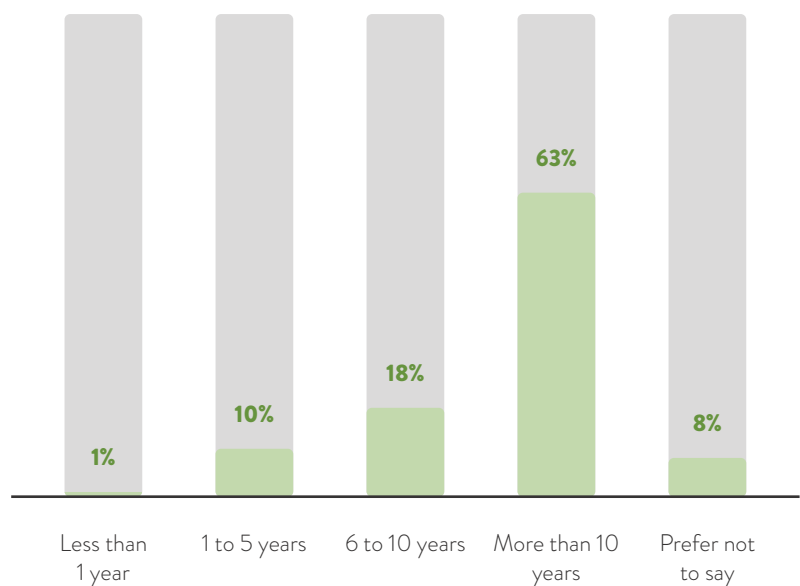




WHAT TYPES OF FIELD SPORTS DO YOU AND/OR YOUR CHILD(REN) PLAY?



HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN ACTIVE IN VANCOUVER FIELD SPORTS?



APPENDIX B: USER GROUP/ PERMIT HOLDER SURVEY PARTICIPANT

Respondent Organizations

British Columbia Mainland Cricket League (BCMCL)

Field Hockey Canada

Last Man Stands Canada and Last Man Stands Canada DEI Foundation

Meraloma Menace

Twin Arrows FC

Unidentified Non- Profit

Vancouver Athletic Football Club (VAFC)

Vancouver Hawks Field Hockey Club

Vancouver Minor Softball Association

Vancouver Ultimate League Society

Vancouver Youth Soccer Association

VRC Jokers Field Hockey Club

Westend Co-Ed Slow-pitch League

