



West Vancouver Parks User Survey

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11-0188



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Background & Objectives



Background & Objectives

- The District Of West Vancouver wished to gain insight into households' usage of West Vancouver's parks, including the types of outdoor activities in which they participate.
- A research study was first conducted in 2002 to address these questions. In 2006 and again in 2011, the District has commissioned Synovate to conduct a similar study to measure the usage of West Vancouver's parks and outdoor activities participation.
- The specific objectives of the tracking survey are to:
 - Determine the types of outdoor recreation activities households participated in over the past year
 - Determine the reasons for visiting various types of West Vancouver parks
 - Understand the reasons for not visiting West Vancouver parks
 - Measure the usage and frequency of visiting various types of parks
 - Measure usage (incidence & type of usage) of the Upper Lands
 - Elicit suggestions for changes and improvements that could be made to West Vancouver parks to enhance residents' enjoyment of parks and open spaces
 - Determine what changes, if any, have occurred in terms of park usage and activity participation
- Additionally, the 2011 survey also captured:
 - Opinions on the adequacy of West Vancouver parks and recreational facilities
 - Satisfaction with maintenance and upkeep of parks and related areas
 - Support for various options to raise funds for park improvements
- The District intends to utilize the information gathered from the research study to guide the development of a parks master plan.
- This report presents the findings from the 2011 study and where possible, compares current findings against 2002 and 2006.

Methodology



Methodology

- A total of 520 telephone interviews were conducted with a stratified sample of West Vancouver residents.
- All interviewing was conducted by Synovate from May 10-15, 2011.
- At the data processing stage, the data was weighted by gender and age within regional areas to ensure the final sample accurately reflected the actual population of the District.
- At the 95% level of confidence, the maximum margin of error on the total sample of 520 is +/-4%. The maximum margins of error for the Upper, East, West and Central areas of the District are outlined below:

<u>Area Sample</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Max. Margin of Error</u>
Upper (V7S)	104	+/-10%
East (V7T)	120	+/-9%
Central (V7V)	206	+/-7%
West (V7W)	90	+/-11%

- When comparing 2011 results against 2002 and 2006 on the total sample, a shift of +/- 7 percentage points is generally required in order to be statistically significant at the 95% level of confidence. Shifts of less than 7 percentage points on the total sample may or may not be statistically significant based on the level of agreement to the particular question.
- Note 1: From 2006 onward, the focus of the survey is on household usage/behaviour while the 2002 study focused on individual resident usage/behaviour.
- Note 2: For reporting purposes, the term 'waves' refers to the 2002 and 2006 studies (i.e. the 2002 wave and the 2006 wave).

Executive Summary



Executive Summary

Outdoor Activity Participation

- **West Vancouver households continue to participate in a broad range of outdoor activities.**
 - The great majority of households took leisurely walks (95%) and went to the beach (83%).
 - This is followed next by hiking/trail walking and running/jogging/powerwalking, with broadly two-thirds of households participating in each.
 - One-in-two households participated in nature appreciation activities/bird watching, picnics and went cycling. Of note, more households currently enjoy nature appreciation/bird watching- the proportion of households participating grew 10 percentage points from 2006.

- **5% of households have participated in park stewardship volunteer opportunities in the past year.**
 - There is considerable interest in park stewardship volunteer opportunities - 18% of residents expressed an interest.

- **Participation dropped on a number of activities. Specifically, fewer households report going to the playground/kids pool/water park, golfing, kayaking/canoeing and participating in outdoor field sports such as soccer, baseball or hockey.**
 - Note: As the 2011 survey was administered in the spring instead of the fall, the drop in participation could be attributed in part to the seasonality factor. As participation in these activities tend to be during the summer months, residents may not as readily recall their participation because of the longer time lapse. The slightly aging population could also be contributing to these trends.

- As expected, the frequency of participation varies with the seasonality of the activity.
 - **Regular participation (i.e. once a week or more) is most commonly observed for activities** such as walking for leisure, dog walking and running/jogging/power walking.
 - **Park stewardship volunteering, swimming in the ocean, going on picnics or kayaking/canoeing tend to be the least frequent.**
 - Other activities exhibit more varied levels of involvement.

Executive Summary

West Vancouver Parks Usage & Visitation Frequency

- **West Vancouver parks continue to be well-used by District households.**
 - 95% of households visited a West Vancouver park in the past 12 months. Further, household park visitation remains high across all areas of the District.
 - The few households that do not use any of the parks generally cite personal barriers such as mobility challenges, rather than issues with the parks themselves.

- **Large, popular parks continue to be the most well-used despite a drop in the frequency of usage.**
 - Unchanged since 2002, 94% of households have visited these parks in the past year.
 - The majority of West Vancouver households (74%) continue to visit these parks once a month or more, including 48% who visit at least once a week. However, weekly visitation has trended down from 2002 (48% vs. 55 % in 2002).

- **Meanwhile, visitation of local, less popular parks has increased somewhat.**
 - Just over eight-in-ten (82%) households have visited these parks in the past year, up from 77% in 2006.
 - The increased usage has occurred by converting non-users into infrequent users.
 - Overall, most users of these parks continue to visit only occasionally.

- **Visitation to small neighbourhood parks remains on par with 2006. However, fewer households now make weekly visits.**
 - While the majority of households visiting small parks continue to do so on a more regular basis, that is at least once a month or more, this has trended down over the past 5 years. Specifically, fewer now report visiting once a week or more, down 11 percentage points from 2006, whereas households visiting a few times a year or less edged up 6 points.

Executive Summary

Reasons For Visiting West Vancouver Parks

- **The main draw for visiting West Vancouver parks, be it small neighbourhood parks, local parks or large popular parks, is for walking.** Moreover, more households now visit local parks for this purpose compared to 5 years ago (50% vs. 41%).
- Other reasons for visiting West Vancouver parks include dog walking, solitude/relaxation and family time.
 - Of note, more households now visit large parks to walk their dogs compared to 2006 (26% vs. 20%) while fewer visit local parks to spend family time (17% vs. 27% in 2006).
- **Overall however, the major reasons for visiting West Vancouver parks have not changed since 2002 and do not differ significantly by park types.**

Outdoor Activity Participation In the Upper Lands

- **Fewer households are visiting the Upper Lands for activity (34% currently vs. 43% in 2006).**
- Households most often visit Upper Lands to go for walks/hikes/snow shoeing.

Adequacy Of Parks And Recreational Facilities

- **Residents generally feel that there are enough parks and recreational facilities in West Vancouver.**
 - Residents are most pleased with the number of large, popular parks with 86% believing that there is enough in the District. This is followed next by local, less popular parks (78%).
 - Safe places to bicycle, community gardens and outdoor spaces for youths are the three main amenities that residents say the District needs more of – 51%, 37% and 29% say that there aren't enough of each present currently.
- No more than 4% feel that there is an excess of any one of the parks and facilities mentioned.

Executive Summary

Satisfaction With Maintenance And Upkeep

- **West Vancouver residents are generally satisfied with the maintenance and upkeep of the District's parks and facilities.**
 - **Broadly nine-in-ten residents are very satisfied/satisfied with each of the parks and facilities mentioned, the exception being park washrooms.**
 - One-in-five residents are critical of the maintenance of park washrooms with residents in the Upper area of the District being the most critical of this aspect.

Suggested Changes/Improvements

- Where more/improved facilities was the main change suggested in the past two waves, the focus this year is on having more places for dogs, including off-leash areas (10% mentioning). However, this is off-set by 5% who suggested that the District should enforce the no dogs or have dogs on leash rule.

Support For Fund Raising Options

- From a list of five options to raise funds and generate revenue, **residents are most supportive of allowing weddings and other private functions to be held in parks (88% approve of this option).**
- While opinions are divided on charging fees for businesses using parks, **West Vancouver residents are strongly against the introduction of pay parking in parks, 90% oppose this as an option for raising funds.**

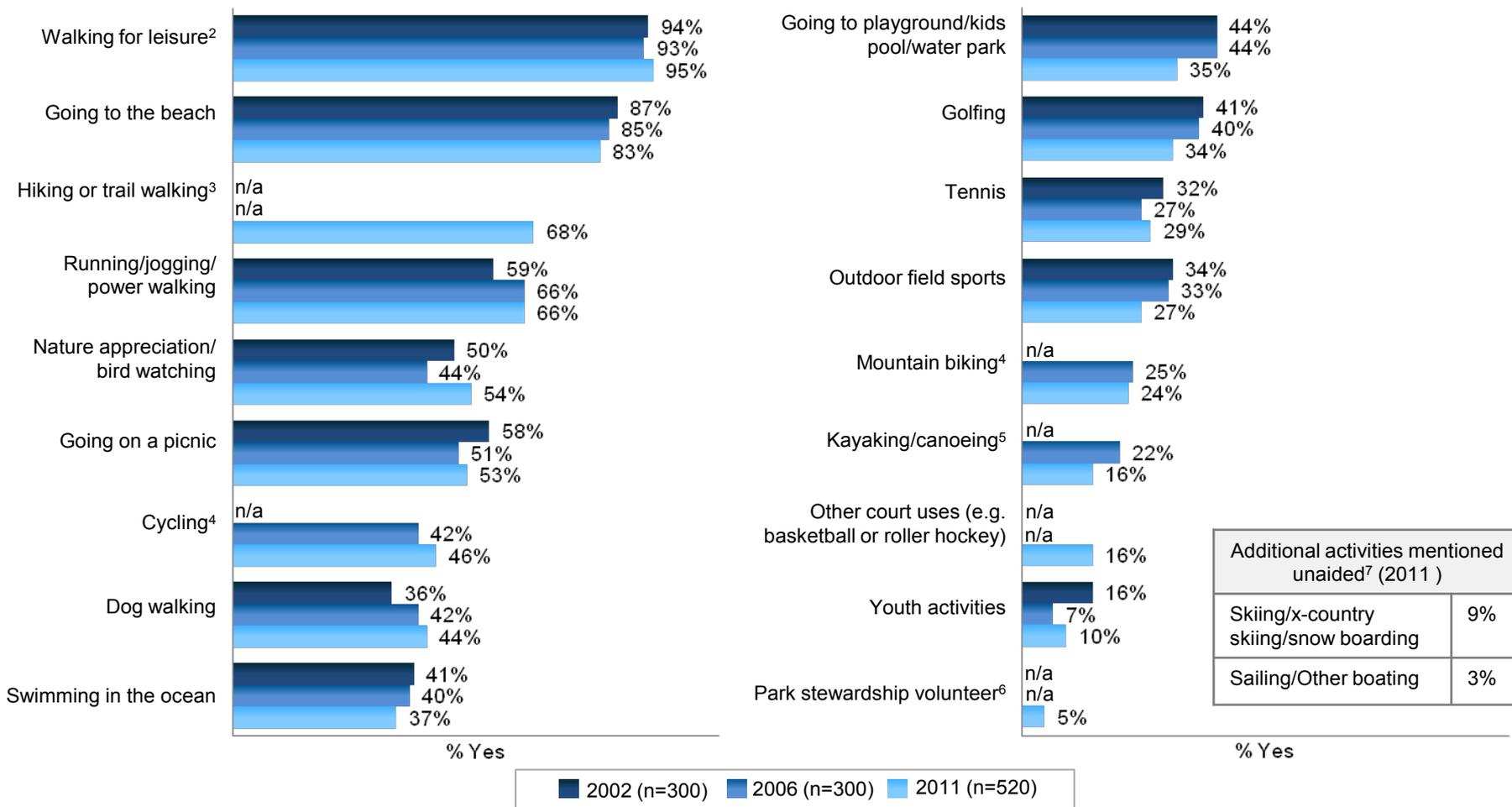
Summary of Findings



Outdoor Recreation Activities Participated In Past 12 Months

Q3a Thinking of the last 12 months, have you or family members living with you participated in any of the following outdoor recreation activities?¹

Q3b Anything else? (any other outdoor activities that your family does?)



¹ 2002 question wording: Thinking of the last 12 months, have you or members of your family participated in any of the following outdoor recreation activities?

² 2002/2006 question wording: Walking for pleasure.

³ 2002/2006 question wording: Day hikes. 51% and 50% mentions of day hikes in 2002 and 2006, respectively.

⁴ 41% mention of mountain biking/cycling in 2002. This compares to a 44% and 47% net mentions of mountain biking/cycling in 2006 and 2011, respectively.

⁵ 2% unaided mentions of kayaking in 2002.

⁶ 18% expressed interest in volunteering for park stewardship activities (QD4a).

⁷ Major mentions only

Outdoor Recreation Activities Participated In Past 12 Months

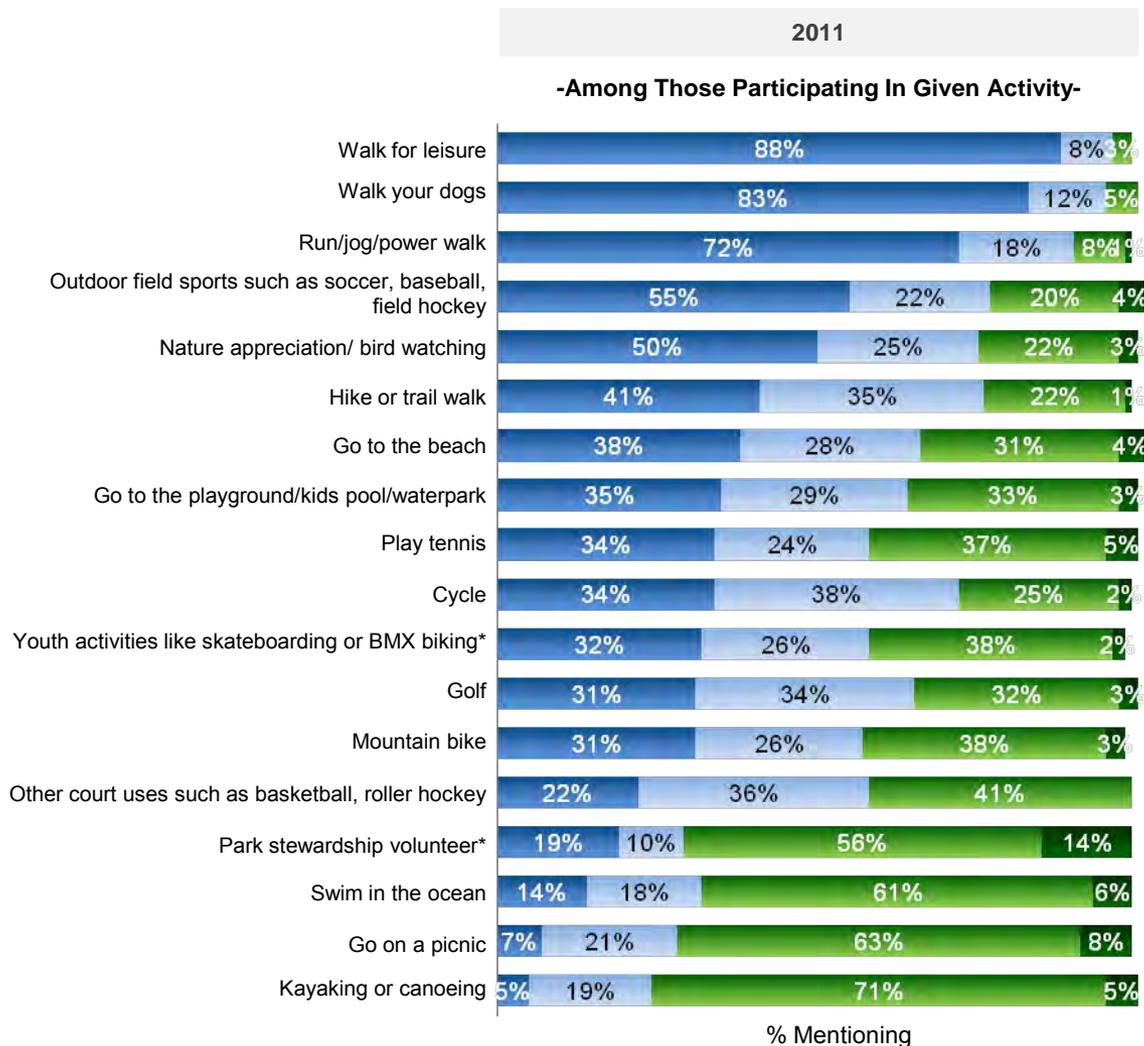
- Walking for leisure and going to the beach continue to be the most common outdoor recreation activities among West Vancouver households. Over the past 12 months, 95% report that they or somebody in their household took leisurely walks and 83% went to the beach. These levels are in line with previous waves.
- Two-thirds of households ran/jogged/power walked or hiked/trail walked in the past year and about one-in-two participated in nature appreciation/bird watching, went for picnics or cycled.
 - Of note, household participation in nature appreciation/bird watching increased from 5 years ago (44% in 2006 vs. 54% currently).
- Participation dropped on a number of activities.
 - Fewer households report going to the playground/kids pool/water park, kayaking/canoeing, golfing and participating in outdoor field sports such as soccer, baseball and hockey.

(Note: As the 2011 survey was administered in the spring instead of the fall, the drop in participation could be attributed in part to the seasonality factor. As participation in these activities tend to be during the summer months, residents may not as readily recall their participation because of the longer time lapse. The slightly aging population could also be contributing to these trends.)

- As observed in the past, participation in outdoor activities tends to be influenced by age and household composition.
 - On most outdoor activities, participation is higher among younger residents and among households with children.
- 5% report that they have volunteered for park stewardship in the past year.

Frequency of Participation

Q4 How often do you or your family member living with you (insert activity participated in) in the last 12 months?



- The frequency of participation varies with the activity with regular participation being the most common for leisure walking, dog walking and running/jogging/power walking.
- Conversely, volunteering for park stewardship, swimming in the ocean, going on picnics or kayaking/canoeing tend to be least frequent (i.e. a few times a year or less).
- The remaining activities exhibit a wider range of involvement – broadly an equal proportion say they participate regularly, 1 to 3 times a month or a few times a year or less frequently.

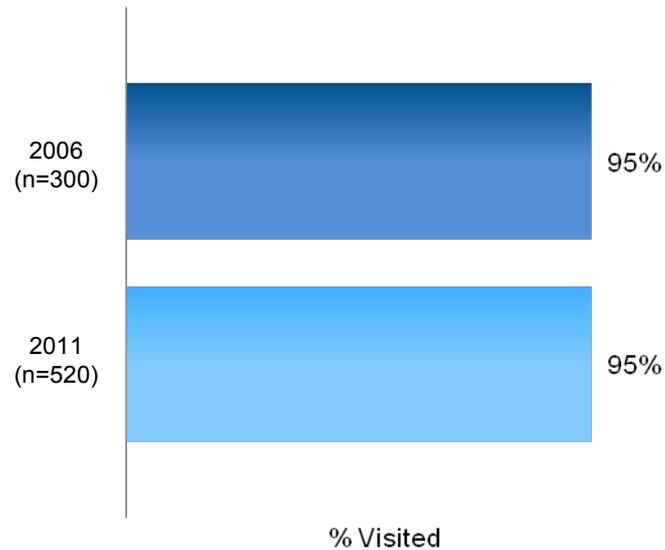
n= 26*-495

*Caution: Small base size

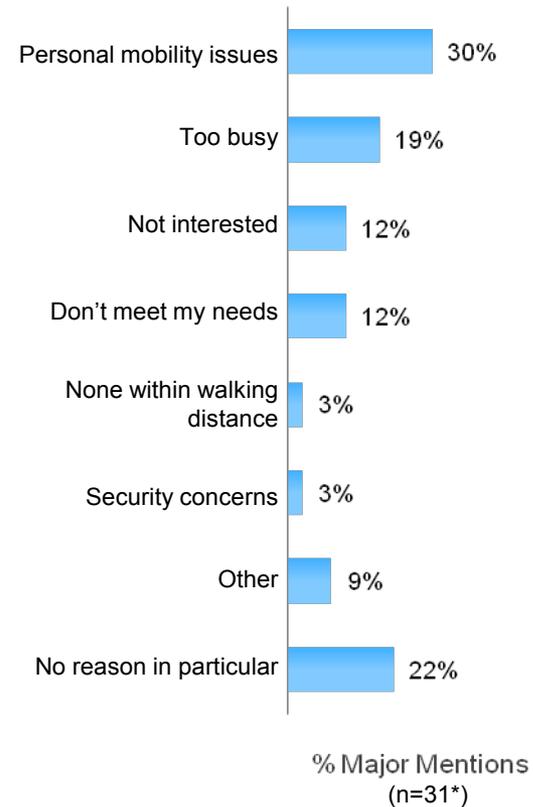
West Vancouver Park Visitation In The Past 12 Months

Q5a Have you or has any family member in your household visited a West Vancouver park in the past 12 months?

Q5b Why Not?



2011
-Among Those That Have Not Visited In The Past 12 months-



*Caution: Small base size

Note: In 2002, 96% of residents reported personally visiting a West Vancouver park in the past 12 months. The '% visited' reported above takes into account visits made by the respondent of the survey, any other family members or a combination of both.

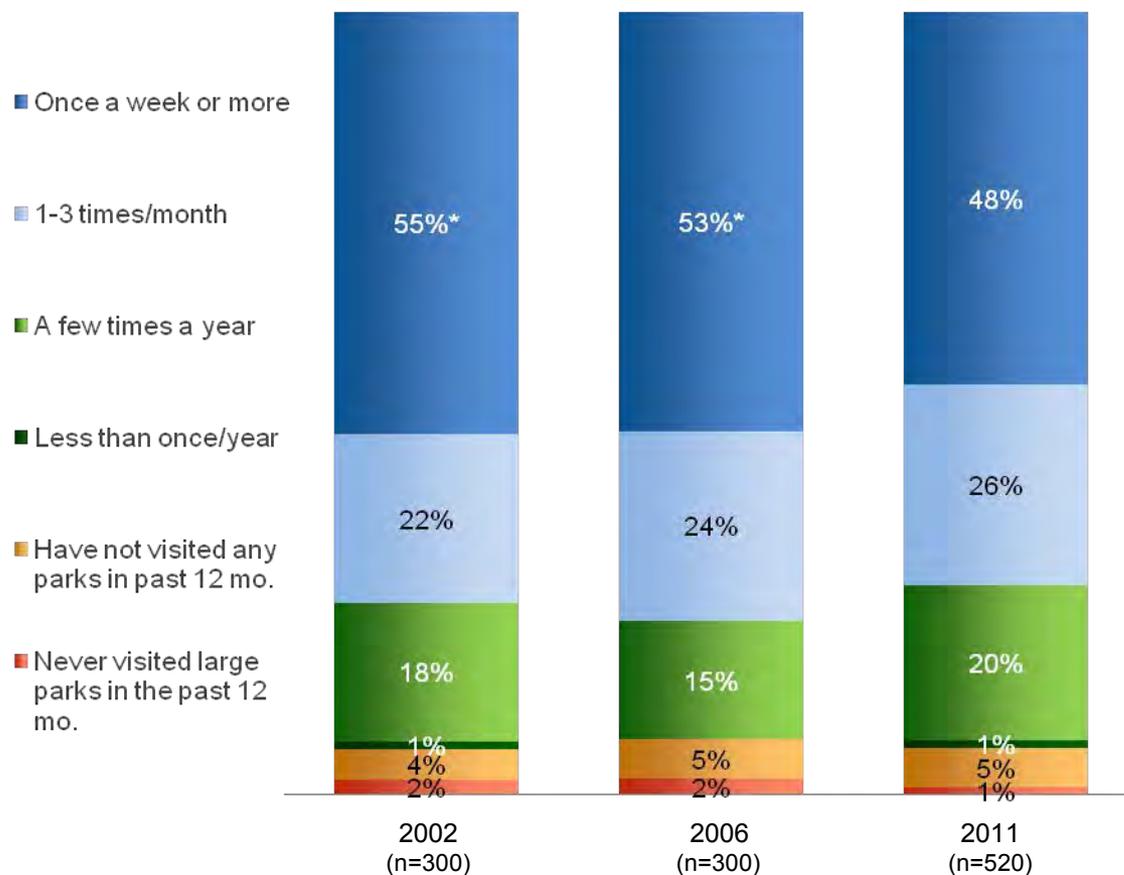
West Vancouver Park Visitation In The Past 12 Months

- Identical with 2006, 95% of West Vancouver households visited a West Vancouver park in the past 12 months.
- Household park visitation is currently similar across all four regional areas of the District.
- All West Vancouver households with children and all middle aged residents (40-59 yrs old) have visited a West Vancouver park in the past 12 months.
- Mobility issues (mentioned by 30% of the few who have not visited a West Vancouver Park) continues to be the primary barrier for using District parks.



Frequency of Visiting Large, Popular Parks

Q6a How often do you or your family visit large, popular parks such as Ambleside, John Lawson, Whytecliff or Lighthouse Park that offer a variety of features and active things to do?

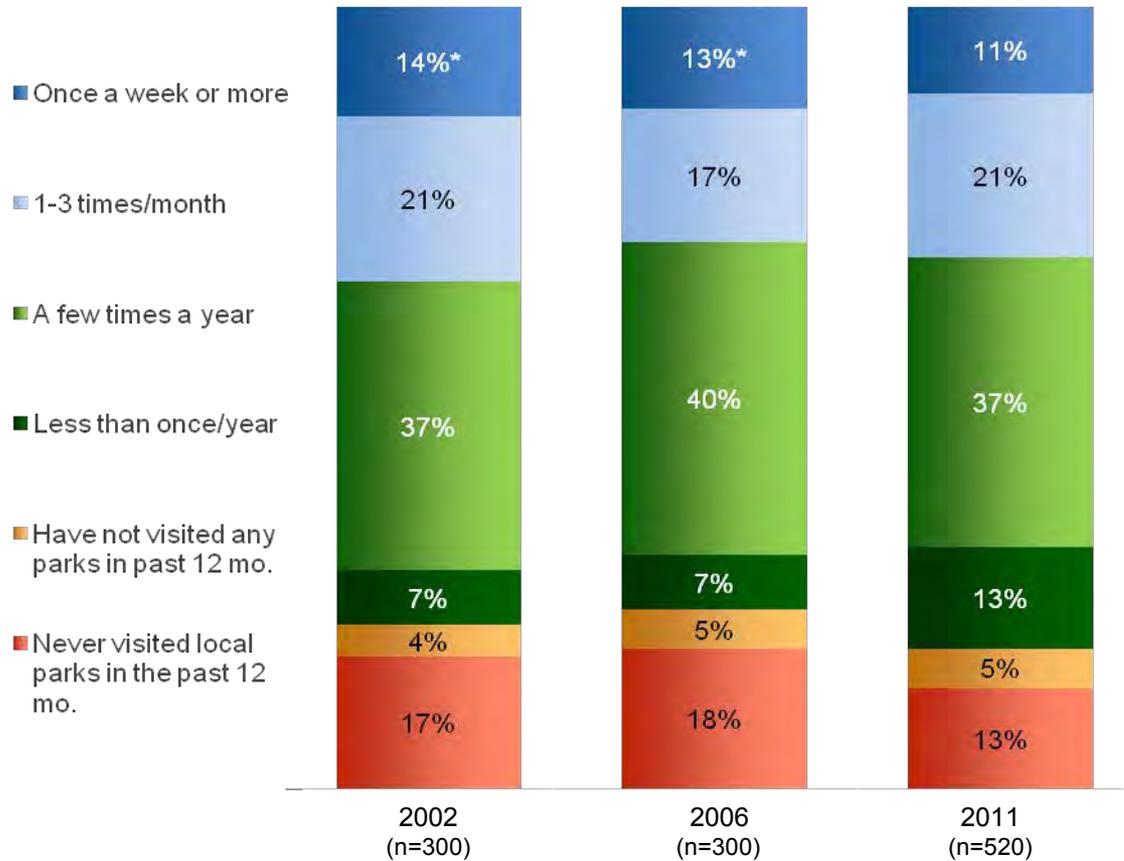


- Past year visitation of large, popular parks in West Vancouver remains unchanged from previous waves.
 - Only a small proportion (6%) of West Vancouver households have not visited these parks in the past 12 months.
- However, there has been a drop in the frequency of usage.
 - Households visiting once a week or more have trended down from 55% in 2002 to 48% currently.
 - Correspondingly, those visiting these parks 1-3 times/month or a few times a year is directionally up.
- Those residing in the Upper area of the District are the least likely to visit these parks regularly (38% vs. 48% among all West Vancouver households).
- Large parks are more likely to be used frequently by dog owners.

*Includes 10% (in 2002) and 13% (in 2006) who say they visited these parks everyday

Frequency of Visiting Local, Less Popular Parks

Q7a How often do you or your family visit local, less popular parks such as Horseshoe Bay Park, Cypress Falls Park, or Memorial Park that offer other park experiences and features?

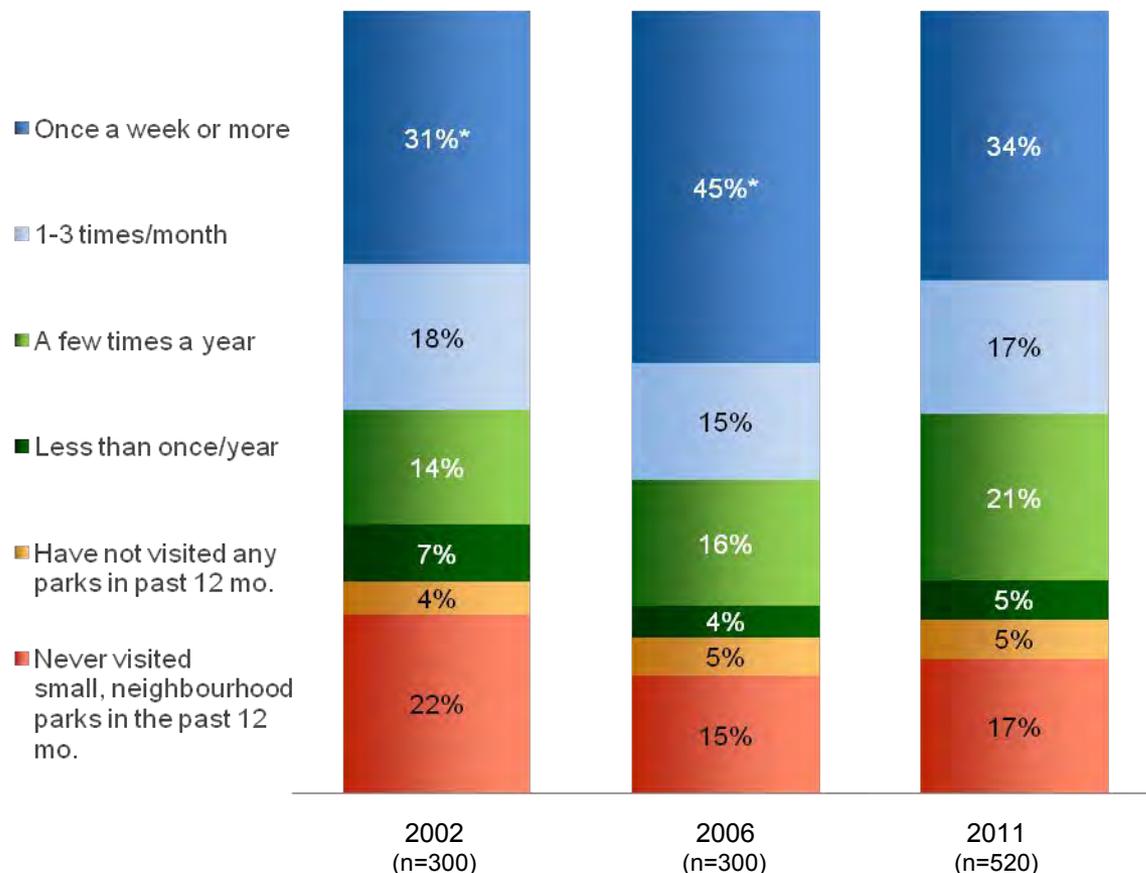


- Past year visitation of local, less popular parks is slightly higher than in 2006 (82% have visited these parks vs. 77% in 2006).
 - The increased usage has occurred by converting non-users into infrequent users.
 - Residents living in the West are the most likely to have visited a local park at least once in the past year.
- Most users of these parks continue to visit only occasionally.
- Households with young children (all under 12 yrs old) remain more apt than others to visit local, less popular parks weekly (23% versus 11% among households with no children and 6% among households with older children).

*Includes 2% in 2002 and 2006 who say they visited these parks everyday

Frequency of Visiting Small Neighbourhood Parks

Q8a How often do you or your family visit small parks located right in your neighbourhood?



- Visitation to small, neighbourhood parks remains on par with 2006 – just over three-quarters (78%) have visited these parks in the past year.
- However, fewer households now report visiting once a week or more (34% currently, down 11 percentage points from 2006) while those visiting a few times a year or less edged up 6 points.
- Consistent with past waves, visits to small neighbourhood parks tend to be made on a regular basis.
 - Twice as many households visit these parks once a month or more versus a few times a year or less.
- Residents in the Upper area of the District are the least likely to have visited these parks. Moreover, they are the least apt to be frequent visitors (17% vs. 38% of households in other areas).

*Includes 10% in 2002 and 14% 2006 who say they visited these parks everyday

Reasons For Visiting West Vancouver Parks

Q6b/7b/8b What draws you and your family to these parks – what do you do there?

	Large, <u>Popular Parks</u>		Local, Less <u>Popular Parks</u>		Small, <u>Neighbourhood Parks</u>	
	2006 %	2011 %	2006 %	2011 %	2006 %	2011 %
Base (Among Those Visiting Specific Park Types) Major Mentions Only	282	479	209	350	232	365
To go for a walk	64	62	41	50 ▲	56	53
To find quiet/solitude/sit/relax/people watch	26	26	24	22	14	16
To walk the dog	20	26 ▲	16	20	29	25
Family time and activities/picnic/casual, unorganized sports	34	21 ▼	27	17 ▼	17	15
Birdwatching/nature activity	17	14	19	21	10	10
Go to playground	16	14	10	7	13	17
For individual exercise/activity/jog or run	18	13	16	10	15	7 ▼
To get out and socialize	4	8	4	5	2	3
For marine use (e.g. kayaking, canoeing, boating, yachting, scuba diving, snorkeling, swimming)	9	8	4	2	3	-
To play organized, league sports	8	5	1	3	4	3
To bike/cycle	3	3	4	1	4	3
Outdoor festivals/concerts	2	2	-	-	1	-
Hiking	3	1	4	4	2	-
Art shows	-	1	-	-	-	-
Close to home/easy to get to	-	-	-	-	-	2

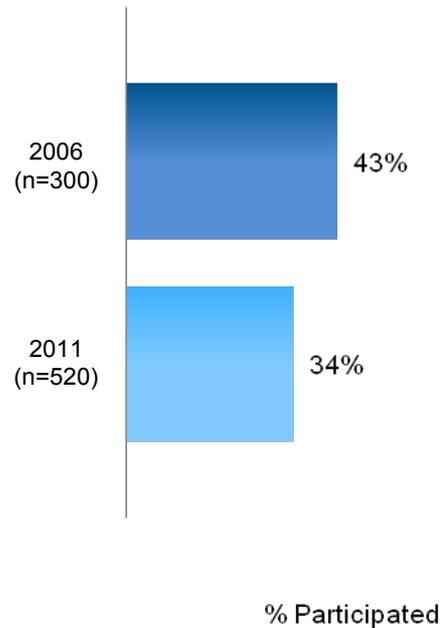
▲ : Statistically significant increase ▼ : Statistically significant decrease

Reasons For Visiting West Vancouver Parks

- The main draw for visiting West Vancouver parks continues to be going for a walk. This is true regardless of the size of the park.
 - More households visit local parks to go for a walk compared to 5 years ago (50% currently vs. 41% in 2006).
 - Residents in the East are the most apt to visit their local parks for this reason.
- Secondary reasons for visiting larger parks and local less popular parks are the same as the previous waves:
 - Between 20% and 26% say they visit these parks to find quiet/solitude or to walk their dogs. Of note, more now visit large parks to walk their dogs.
 - Although fewer now visit larger or local parks to spend time with family (down 13 and 10 points respectively from 2006), this remains a leading reason for park visits.
- Apart from going for a walk, the next most mentioned reason for visiting small, neighbourhood parks is for dog walking.
- Though a less common reason for visiting to small parks overall, fewer household now exercise at these parks.
 - Residents in the West are the most apt to exercise at small, neighbourhood parks

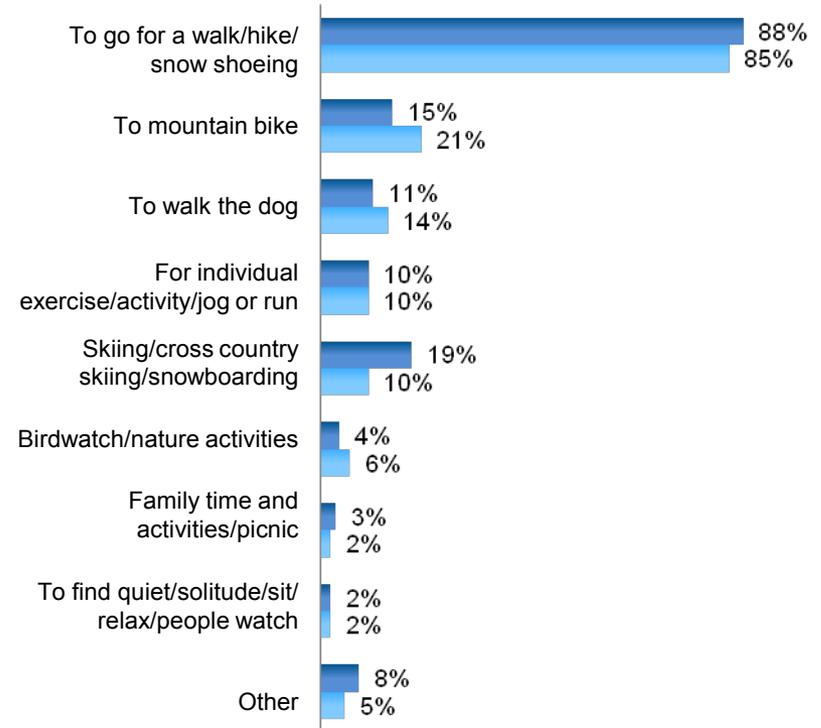
Outdoor Activity Participation In The Upper Lands

Q9a Have you or family members ever participated in any outdoor recreation activities in the forested lands above the residential neighbourhoods, known as the Upper Lands?



Q9b What activities do you do there?

-Among Those Participating -



% Major Mentions

■ 2006 (n=129) ■ 2011 (n=178)

Outdoor Activity Participation In The Upper Lands

- Relative to 2006, fewer households report participating in outdoor activities in the Upper Lands (34% currently vs. 43% in 2006).
- Dog owners are more likely than others to report participation in outdoor activities in the Upper Lands.
- Those households who participate in outdoor activities in the Upper Lands mainly report going for walks/hikes/snow shoeing, in line with 2006.

Suggested Changes/Improvements

Q10 What one change, addition or improvement would most enhance your enjoyment or usage of parks and naturals areas in West Vancouver?

	2002	2006	2011
Base (Among Past Year West Vancouver Park Users)	289	287	488
Major Mentions Only	%	%	%
More places for dogs/off-leash areas	4	4	10 ▲
More/improved facilities (e.g. picnic tables, washrooms, concessions)	9	10	6
Enforce the no dogs rule/have dogs on leash	2	4	5
More/better maintained mountain bike trails ¹	2	3	4
More walks, trails and greenways	3	5	4
Maintain cleanliness/more garbage cans ²	3	-	4
Free parking/more parking available ³	-	2	3
Better upkeep/cut the grass/prune ⁴	5	3	3
More/enhanced information (maps, interpretive signs)	1	3	3
More/enhanced/updated playgrounds	6	3	2
Less development/keep it natural	-	2	2

▲ : Statistically significant increase ▼ : Statistically significant decrease

¹ More bike paths (2002 wording)

² More litter/garbage cans (2002 wording)

³ Free parking (2002/2006 wording)

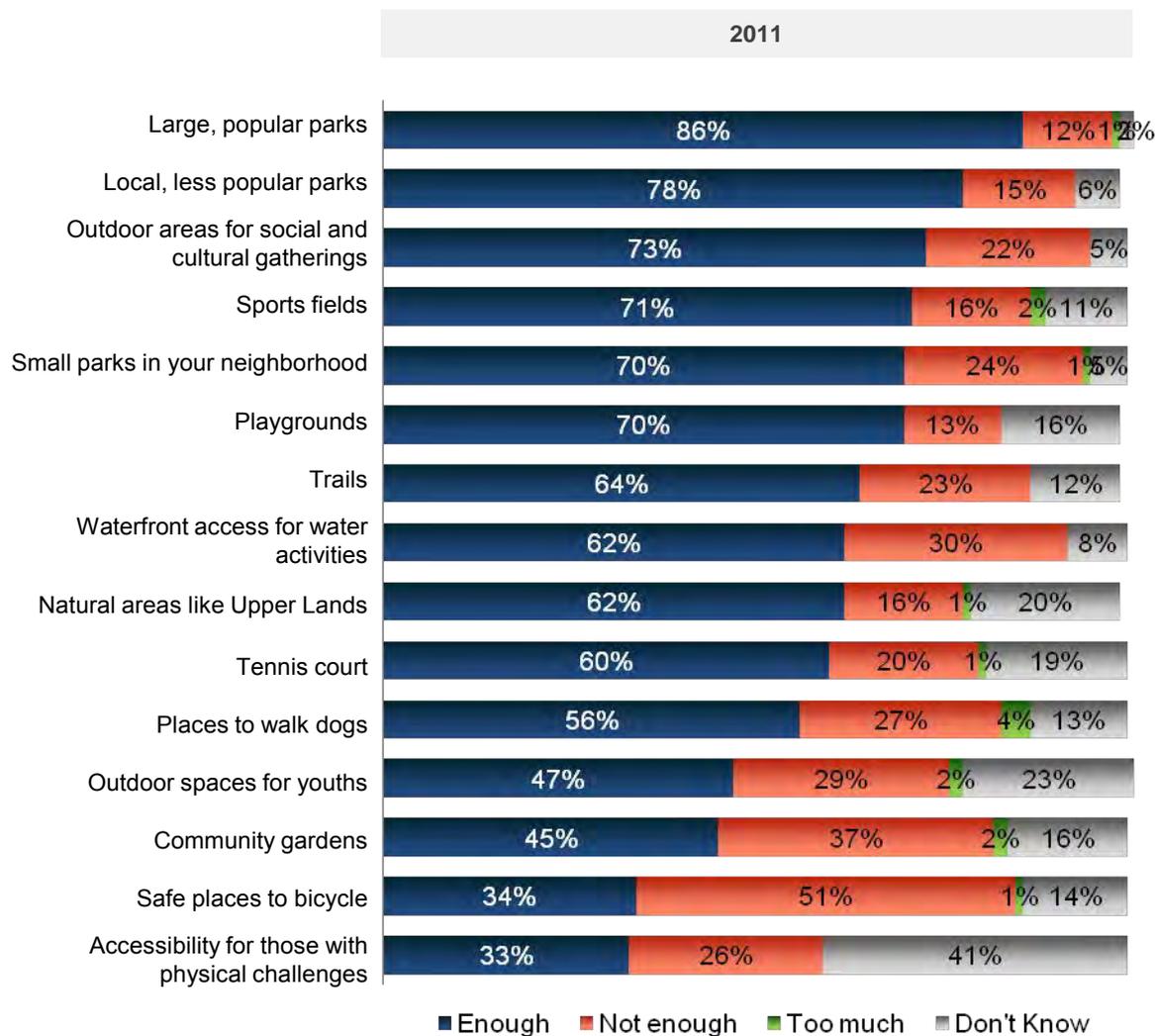
⁴ Better upkeep/maintenance (2002/2006 wording)

Suggested Changes/Improvements

- Where more/improved facilities was the main change suggested in the past two waves, the focus this year is on having more places for dogs, including off-leash areas (10% mentioning). However, this is off-set by 5% who suggested that the District should enforce the no dogs or have dogs on leash rule.
- 6% of West Vancouver park users also suggested that there should be more or improved facilities such as picnic tables, washrooms or concessions.
- All remaining suggestions were made by no more than 4% park users.
- As observed in the past, suggestions to improve parks in West Vancouver do not vary greatly by the different areas of the District.

Sufficiency Of Parks And Recreational Facilities

Q11a For each of the following, please tell me whether West Vancouver has enough, not enough or too much of the following?

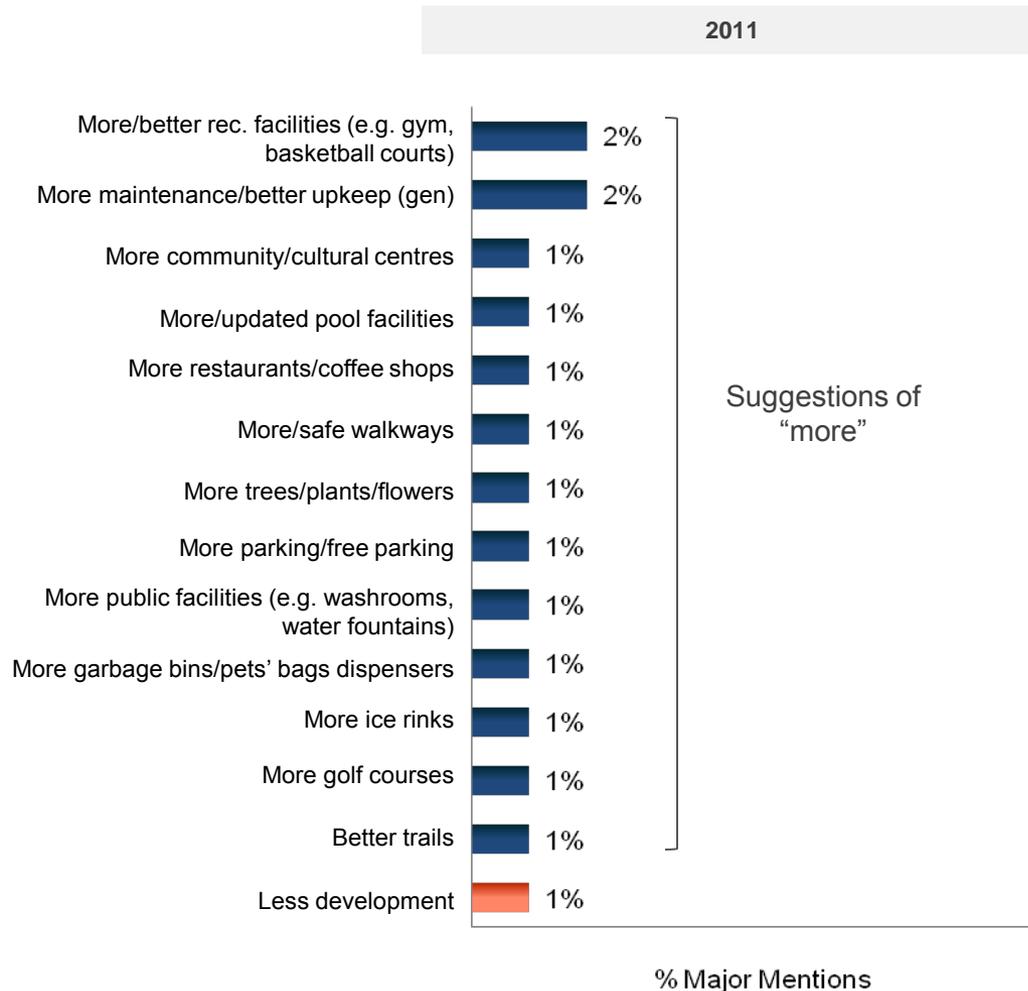


- West Vancouver residents generally feel that there are enough parks and recreational facilities in the District.
 - Residents are most pleased with the number of large, popular parks with 86% believing that there is enough in the District.
 - This is followed next by local, less popular parks, outdoor areas for social/cultural gatherings, sports fields, small parks and playgrounds with broadly seven-in-ten stating that there are enough.
- Safe places to bicycle, community gardens and outdoor spaces for youths are the three main amenities that residents say the District needs more of – between 29% and 51% mentioned that there is not enough of each present.
- No more than 4% feel that there is an excess of any one of the parks and facilities mentioned.

n=520

Sufficiency Of Parks And Facilities

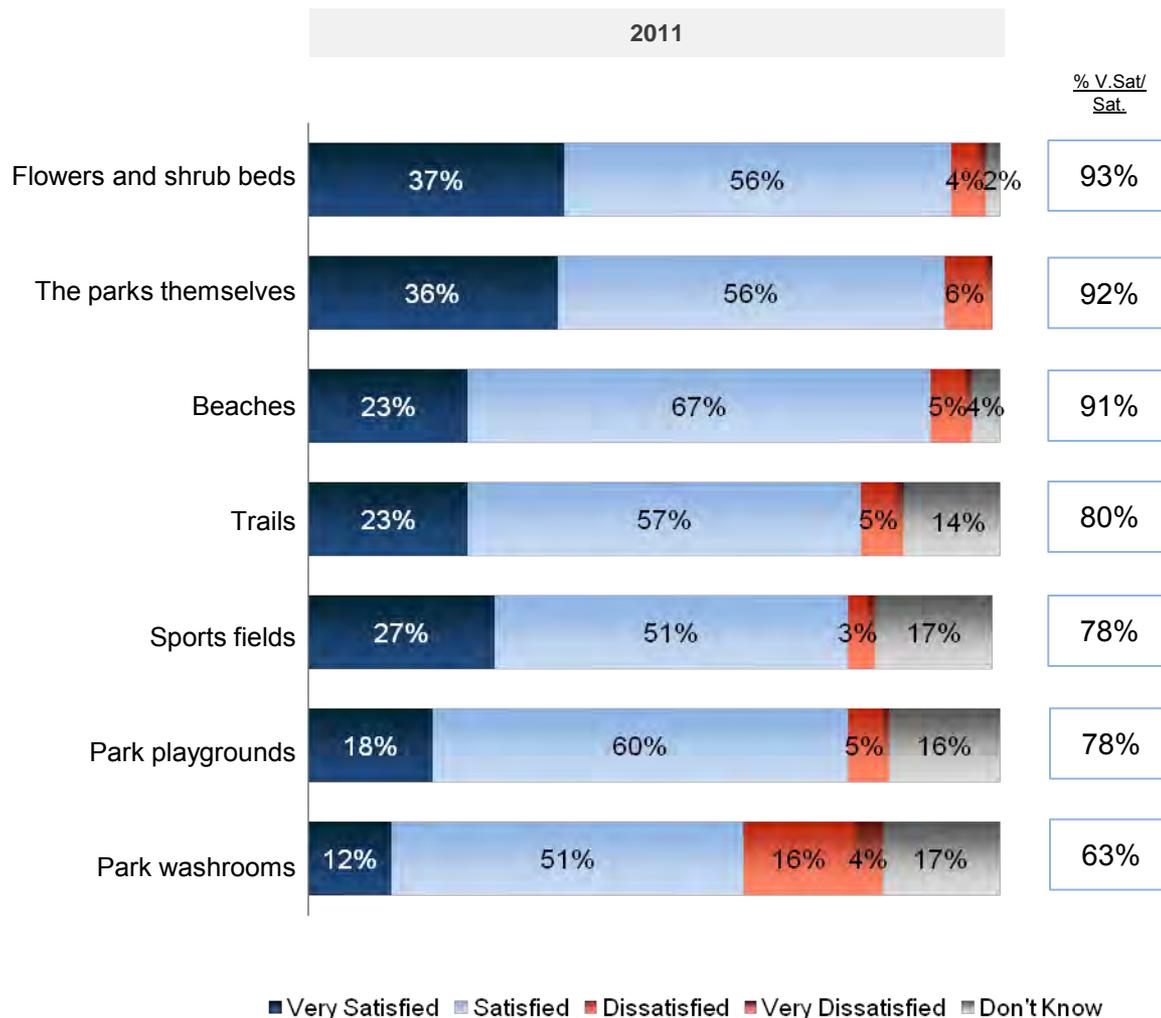
Q11b Is there anything else that we need more or less of?



- When asked if there is anything else that the District needs more or less of, residents generally say that the District is need of more amenities/facilities. However, suggestions are varied with no more than 2% mentioning each.

Satisfaction With Maintenance and Upkeep

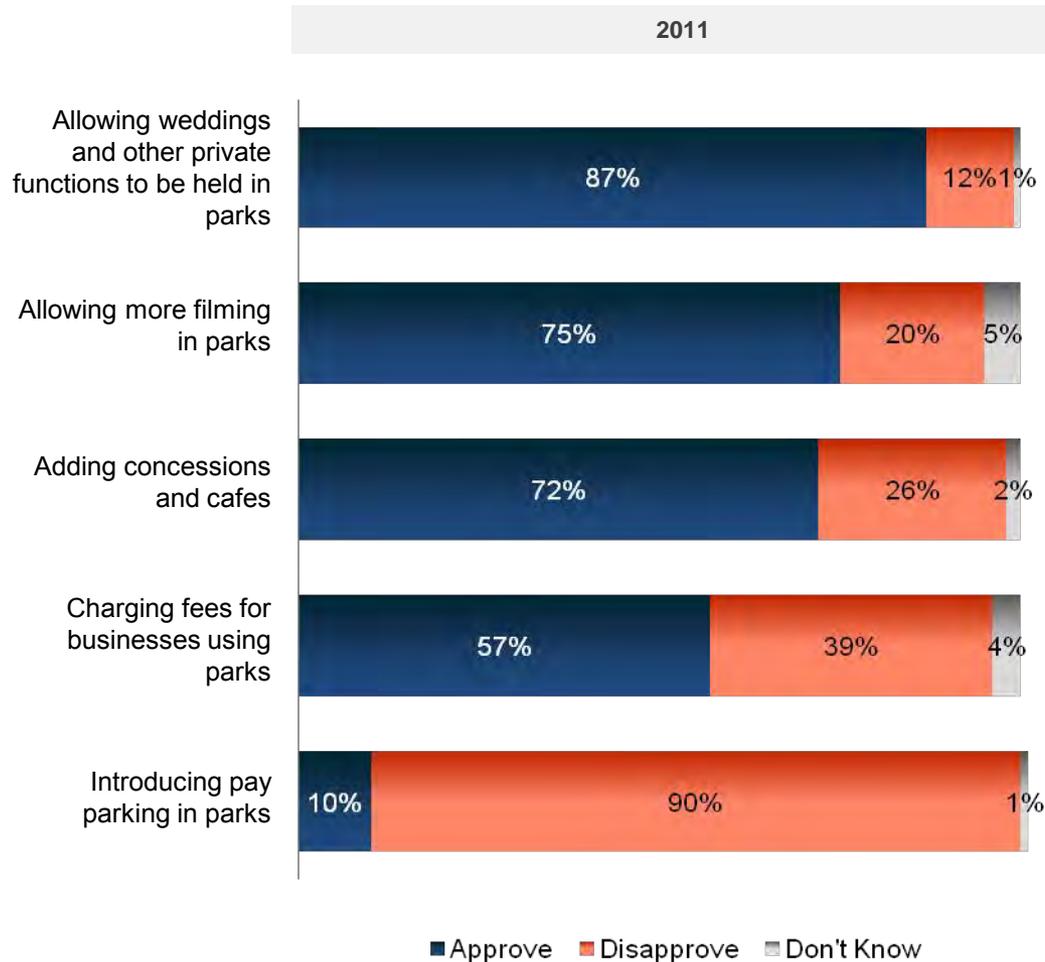
Q12 Next, how satisfied are you with the maintenance and upkeep of the following...



- Residents are largely satisfied with the maintenance and upkeep of West Vancouver parks and related facilities.
 - Satisfaction levels range from 63% for park washrooms to 93% for flowers and shrub beds.
 - Residents in the West are more likely than others to be satisfied with the upkeep and maintenance of trails and park washrooms.

Support For Fund Raising Options

Q13 The District is always looking for ways to raise funds and generate revenues. Would you approve or disapprove of the following ways of raising funds for park improvements?



- From a list of five options to raise funds and generate revenue, residents are most supportive of allowing weddings and other private functions to be held in parks (87% approve of this option).
- This is followed next by allowing more filming (75%) and adding concessions and cafes (72%).
- Opinions are relatively more divided on charging fees for businesses using parks.
- West Vancouver residents are strongly against the introduction of pay parking in parks as a means to raise funds, 90% disapprove of this.

Demographic Profile

	Total			2011 (District Areas)			
	2002	2006	2011	Upper (V7S)	East (V7T)	Central (V7V)	West (V7W)
Base	300	300	520	104	120	206	90
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Areas							
Upper (V7S)	n/a	n/a	24	100	n/a	n/a	n/a
East (V7T)	n/a	n/a	22	n/a	100	n/a	n/a
Central (V7V)	n/a	n/a	35	n/a	n/a	100	n/a
West (V7W)	n/a	n/a	19	n/a	n/a	n/a	100
Age							
18-19	n/a	2	5	12	2	3	4
20-29	n/a	7	8	9	9	8	8
30-39	n/a	16	10	7	11	11	9
40-59	n/a	40	39	41	26	38	45
60 or over	n/a	34	37	31	41	41	33
Gender							
Male	44	46	45	48	42	44	48
Female	56	54	55	52	58	56	52
Children in Household							
All under 12	n/a	n/a	11	8	10	11	16
All between 12 and 18	n/a	n/a	15	25	8	13	17
Mix of younger and older children	n/a	n/a	6	5	8	8	3
No children under 18 at home	n/a	n/a	67	63	73	68	64
Number of Dogs							
0	n/a	65	65	60	68	70	58
1	n/a	27	28	33	25	23	33
2	n/a	5	6	7	4	6	7
3	n/a	1	1	-	3	1	1

thank you 

