



CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT

Magic Lake Estates Community Issues Assessment



FINAL REPORT
March 2024



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Connecting communities every day, from the traditional territories of the Lək'wəḡən people.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Magic Lake Estates (MLE) is an approximately 600-acre neighbourhood on North Pender Island (see map inset), located on the traditional lands and waters of the Coast Salish peoples. Its origins date back to the 1960s as a vacation home development known as “Gulf Island Estates”. The proposed development is often cited as one of the catalysts for the formation of the Islands Trust in 1974. Today, Magic Lake Estates comprises approximately 1,200 parcels with an estimated population of 1,930 full and part time residents, and is one of the largest, most densely populated residential neighbourhoods in all of the Southern Gulf Islands.



The lands are situated within an unincorporated area of the Capital Regional District (CRD), in the Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area. Additional local amenities and community voice are provided by the Magic Lake Property Owners Society (MLPOS). In recent years, the MLPOS has identified a number of issues surrounding governance, service delivery, taxation and representation. In October 2021, the MLPOS requested funding from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs (the Ministry) for a formal governance study to be undertaken for the Magic Lake Estates neighbourhood. Given the range of forms that a governance study can take – from a high-level community issues assessment to a more detailed governance review – the Ministry considered the request and provided funding to the CRD in 2023 to support a Community Issues Assessment (“the study”).

The scope and objectives of the study were outlined in the Terms of Reference as follows:

- Document the current service delivery and governance arrangements;
- Itemize the interests, needs and concerns of the community;
- Describe how decisions are made by the various governments operating within the boundaries of the Magic Lake Water Service Area, including: Capital Regional District, Province of BC, Federal Government, Island Health, and Islands Trust, and Island Health; and
- Engage residents, property owners, and the regional district in the identification of practical methods to address issues under the current system.

Connections Planning Associates Ltd. (CPAL) has been commissioned to assist the CRD and MLPOS in undertaking the study. This report has been prepared as a summary of the background research, interviews with stakeholders and key interested groups, and community engagement conducted as part of the study.

2. BACKGROUND ON GOVERNANCE AND SERVICES

Governance is the framework by which decision-making for the provision of local services functions within a community. For residents and property owners in Magic Lake Estates, decisions on local services, regulations and funding are provided by a number of agencies at varying levels of government. An overview of these agencies is highlighted below, followed by a table of services to Magic Lake Estates residents and their delivery provider.

2.1 *Capital Regional District*

Like most of the island communities in the Salish Sea (with the exception of Bowen Island), North Pender Island is located in an unincorporated area of the province – in this case, within the Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area of the Capital Regional District. Regional districts are federations of municipalities and unincorporated areas, and were created in the 1960's to provide a variety of local government services to its residents, namely:

- Local government services to unincorporated areas within the electoral areas;
- Region-wide services provided to all electoral areas and municipalities within the regional district; and
- Sub-regional services provided to a subset of communities (municipalities and electoral areas) which agree to receive the services.

The CRD Board currently consists of 24 members, including 3 Electoral Area Directors. The current Electoral Area Director for Southern Gulf Islands is Paul Brent. Electoral area directors are elected to the same 4-year cycle as their municipal counterparts, and they represent the local interests of their constituents as would a municipal council. Voting on issues at the CRD Board table depends on the nature of the service area (i.e. local, sub-regional or regional), and the votes may be weighted or non-weighted depending on the issue.

To help support decision-making at the Board level, there are a number of committees and commissions who provide advice to the CRD on specific programs and services. In relation to Magic Lake Estates, these include the following:

- Magic Lake Water and Sewer Committee
- Pender Island Community Parks and Recreation Commission
- Other broader committees and commissions, e.g. Electoral Areas Committee, Southern Gulf Islands Harbours Commission, Southern Gulf Islands Public Library Commission, etc.

The CRD provides most of the typical local government services to Magic Lake Residents, including water and sanitary sewer (see Figures 1 and 2 on following page for service boundary maps), building inspection, fire protection, and library services. Refer to Table 1 for a more fulsome list of services provided by the CRD.

Figure 2 - Magic Lake Water Service Area (Source: CRD)

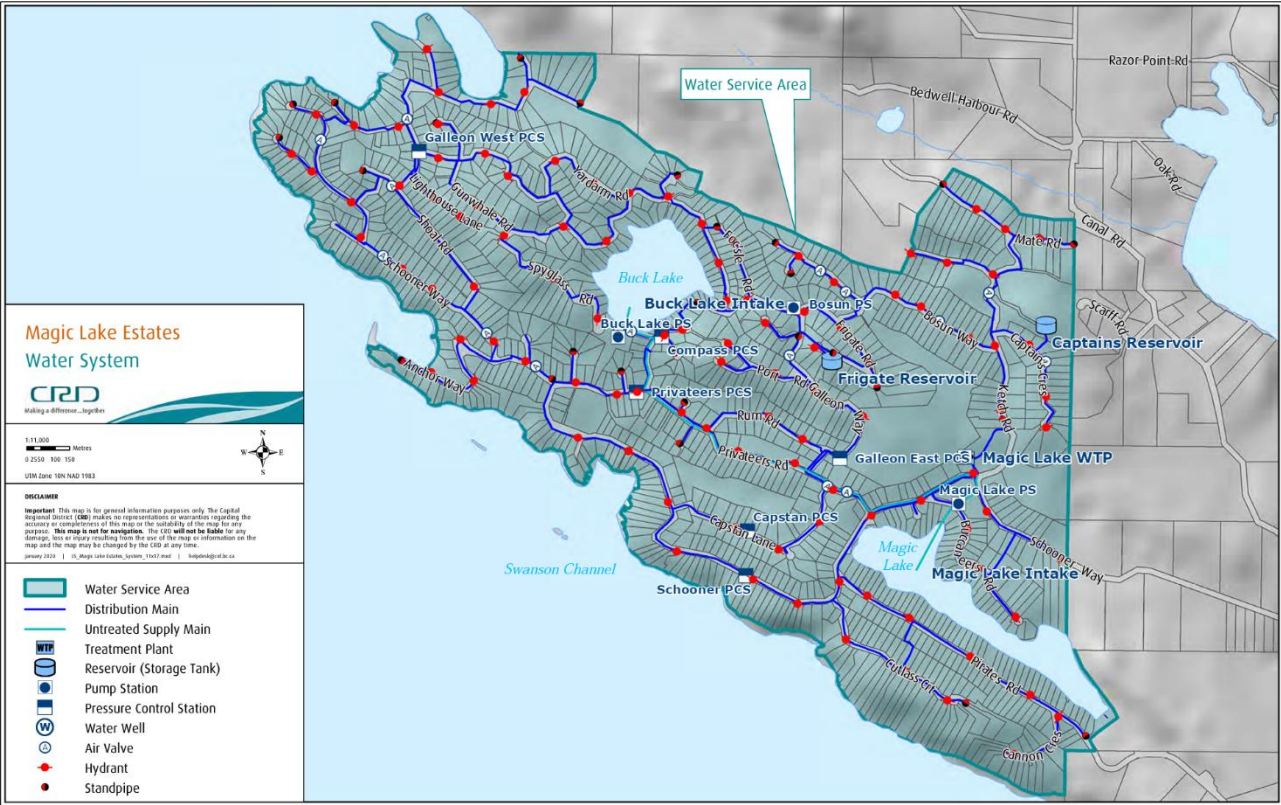
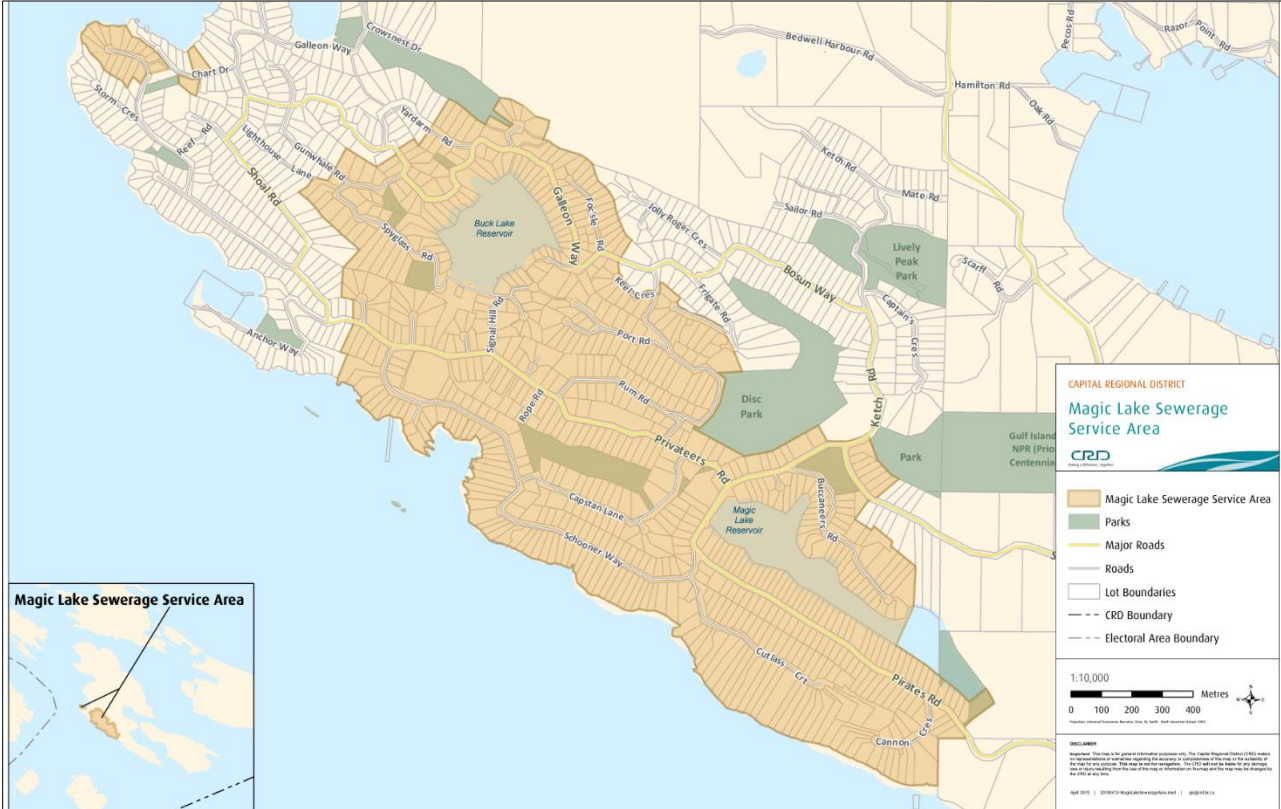


Figure 1 - Magic Lake Sewer Service Area (Source: CRD)



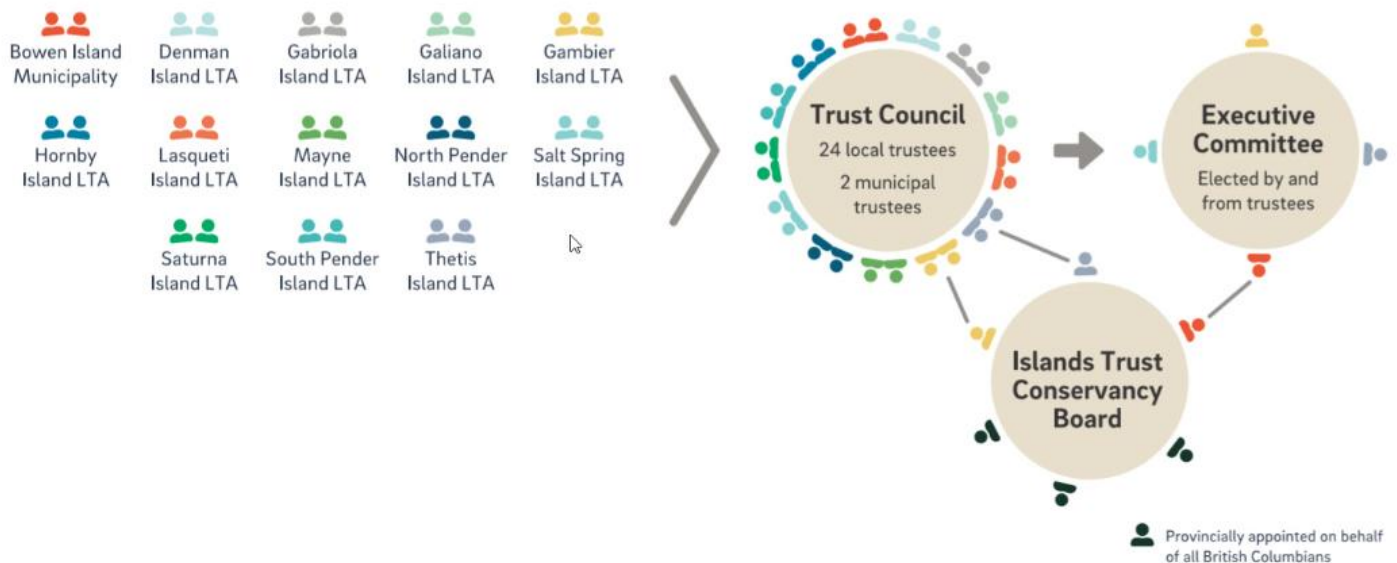
2.2 Islands Trust

Unique to the Gulf Island communities, the Islands Trust is a special purpose government established by the Province of British Columbia in 1974 mandated to manage the lands and environment of over 450 islands in the Salish Sea. The object of the Trust is to *“preserve and protect the Trust Area and its unique amenities and environment for the benefit of the residents of the Trust Area and of British Columbia in cooperation with municipalities, regional districts, improvement districts, First Nations, other persons and organizations and the government of British Columbia.”*

The Islands Trust manages lands use planning and regulation, including the preparation and adoption of Official Community Plans (OCPs), Zoning Bylaws, and Subdivision Bylaws, the regulation of soil removal and deposit, and authorization of permits. It is accountable to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, and is regulated by the Islands Trust Act.

Governance of the Island Trust is through an elected 26-member Islands Trust Council (see Figure 3). This is comprised of two local trustees from each of 12 local trust areas and two municipal trustees from Bowen Island. All land use matters within Magic Lake Estates go through North Pender Island Local Trust Committee, which is comprised of the two North Pender Island Trustees (Aaron Campbell and Deb Morrison) as well a third Trustee from Mayne Island (David Maude), who is the Executive Committee Vice-Chair.

Figure 3 - Islands Trust Governance (Source: Islands Trust)



2.3 Province of British Columbia

The provincial government provides a number of services to all residents of British Columbia, including health, education, provincial highways, provincial parks, BC Assessment Authority and the Municipal Finance Authority. In unincorporated areas, property owners pay a Provincial Rural Tax which helps to fund the maintenance of local roads, which are the responsibility of the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI). Property owners also pay a separate Police Tax which helps to fund the provincial rural police services through the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).



The provincial government is also the collector of property taxes in unincorporated areas, through the Surveyor of Taxes. Please refer to Table 1 for a more detailed breakdown of services by delivery agency.

2.4 Magic Lake Property Owners’ Society

In the mid-1970s, the Magic Lake Property Owners’ Society (MLPOS) was established to provide a number of local community amenities, and to be a voice for residents of Magic Lake Estates. Currently, the MLPOS owns and manages Thieves Bay Marina, tennis/pickleball courts located on Privateers Road (see image), and a playground.



The MLPOS is a registered organization under the Societies Act, with a current Board of Directors/Officers of ten (10) members. The current MLPOS Board Chair is Bob Coulson. Membership in the association is encouraged for all Magic Lake Estates property owners, but is not mandatory.

2.5 Table of Services

As noted above, residents of Magic Lake Estates receive their local services from a variety of service providers rather than from a single municipality. The various agencies and their services provided include, but is not limited to: Province of BC (highways and local roads, subdivision approval, schools, policing, and others), Capital Regional District (water, sanitary sewer, building inspection, regional planning, library and others), Islands Trust (local land use planning), and the Magic Lake Property Owners Association (Thieves Bay Marina, tennis/pickleball courts and a playground). For ease of reference, a summary of local services to Magic Lake Estates residents listed by service provider can be found in the following table.

Table 1 - Summary of Local Services provided to Magic Lake Estates

Service	MLPOS	CRD	Province / Other
Thieves Bay Marina	•		
Tennis/Pickleball courts and playground	•		
Regional and Electoral Area General Government		•	
Regional Planning		•	
Regional Hospital District		•	
Regional Parks and Trails		•	
Community Parks and Recreation		•	
Emergency Planning and Preparedness		•	
Fire Protection		•	
Water System (within defined area)		•	
Sewer System (within defined area)		•	
Stormwater Quality Management		•	
Building Inspection		•	
Bylaw Enforcement (e.g. noise, unsightly premises)		•	
Small Craft Harbour Facilities		•	
Library		•	
Health Care (Pender Island Health / Island Health)		•	•
Septic Requirements (Island Health)			•
Land Use Planning (Islands Trust)			•
Policing (RCMP contract)			•
Schools (School District 64)			•
Subdivision Approval (MOTI)			•
Roads and Highways (MOTI)			•
Provincial Parks			•
BC Assessment Authority / Municipal Finance Authority			•
Property Tax Collection			•

Abbreviations:

MLPOS – Magic Lake Property Owners’ Association

CRD – Capital Regional District

MOTI – Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

RCMP – Royal Canadian Mounted Police

3. COMMUNITY ISSUES SURVEY

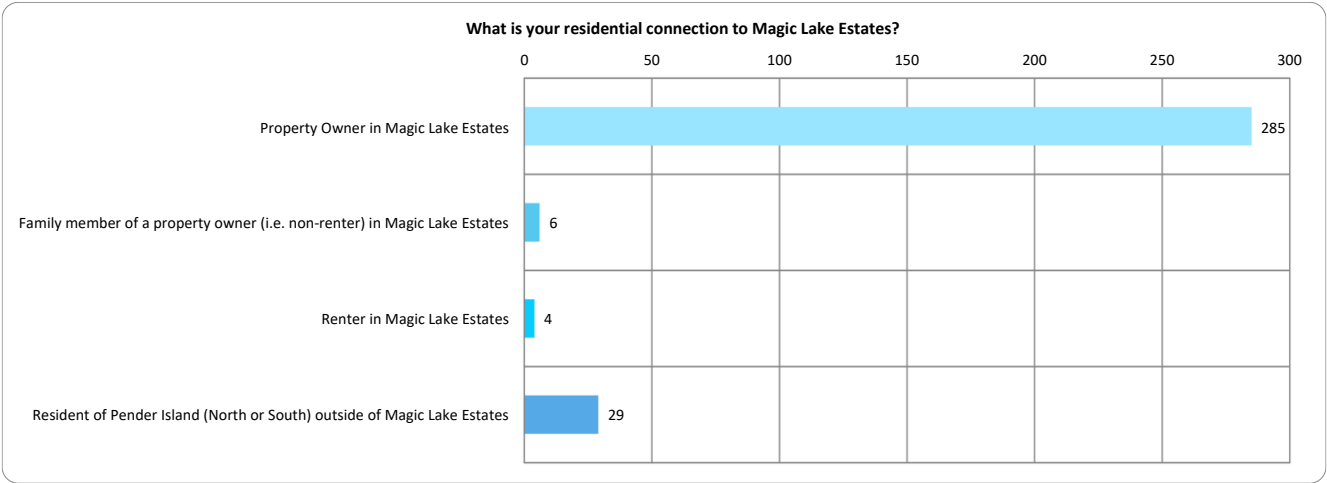
A component of the study was a comprehensive community survey of residents and property owners, in order to obtain key background information about Magic Lake Estates residents as well as gain a better understanding of the level of satisfaction and importance on a variety of local services provided by the various agencies.

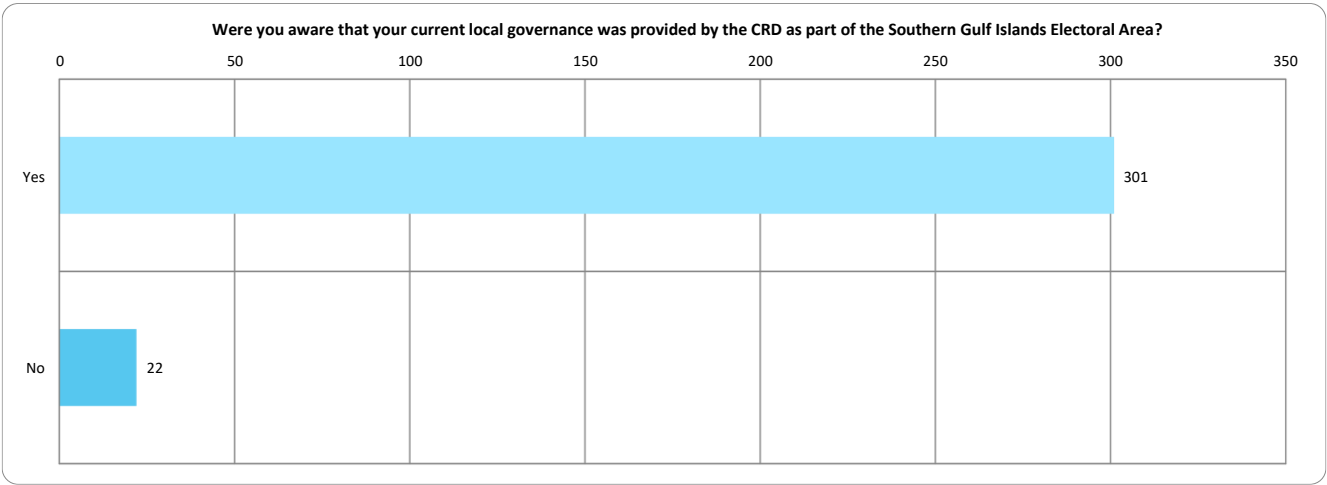
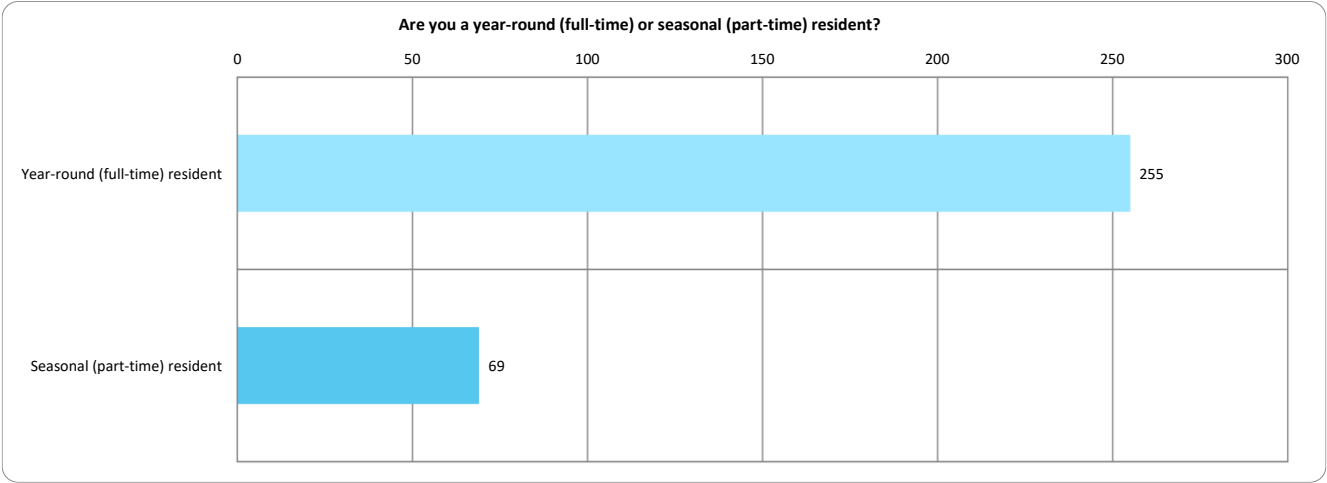
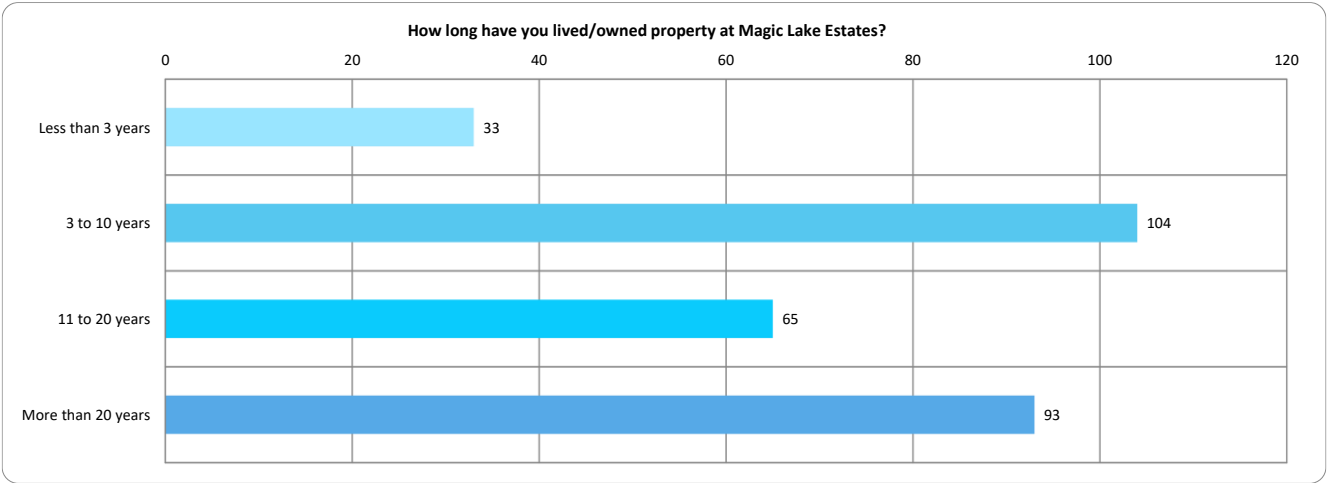
The survey was conducted over a period of 4 weeks, from September 22, 2023 to October 23, 2023. A copy of the survey template is provided in Appendix A. In preparation for the survey and community discussions, residents were asked to reflect on the following questions:

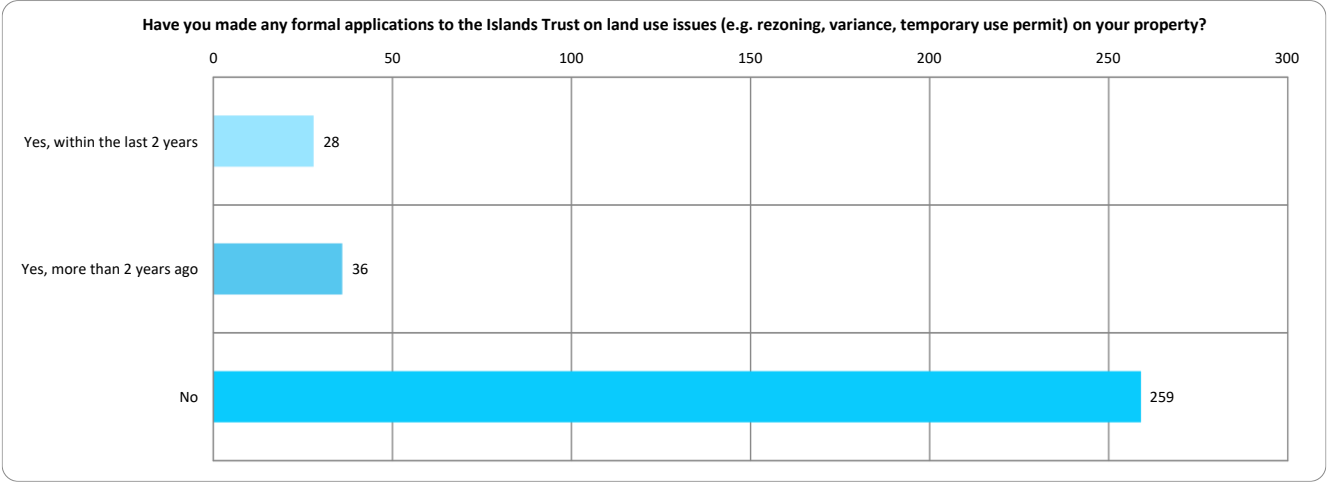
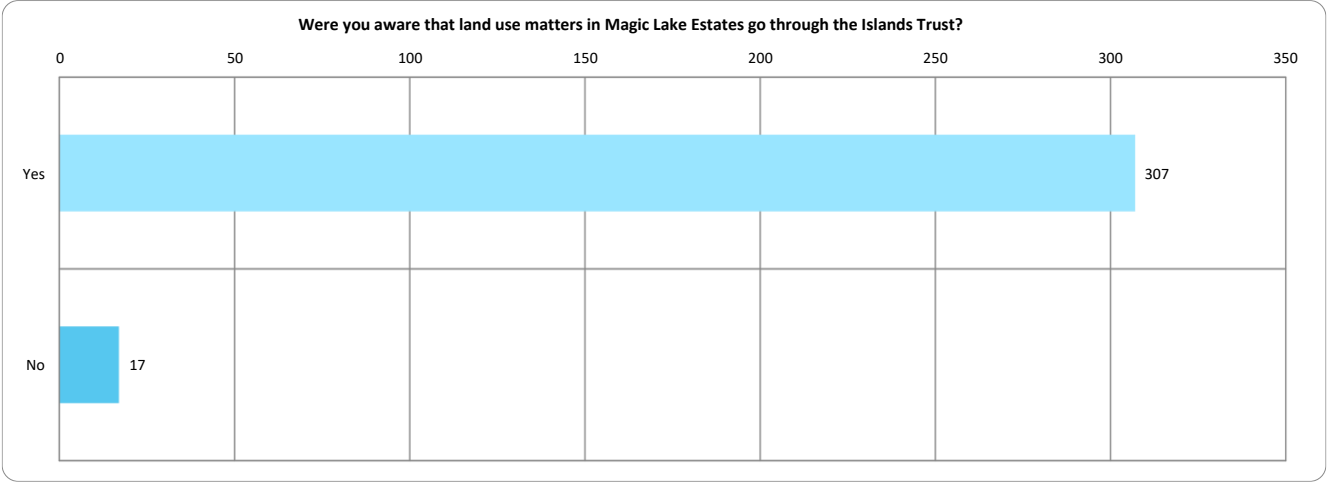
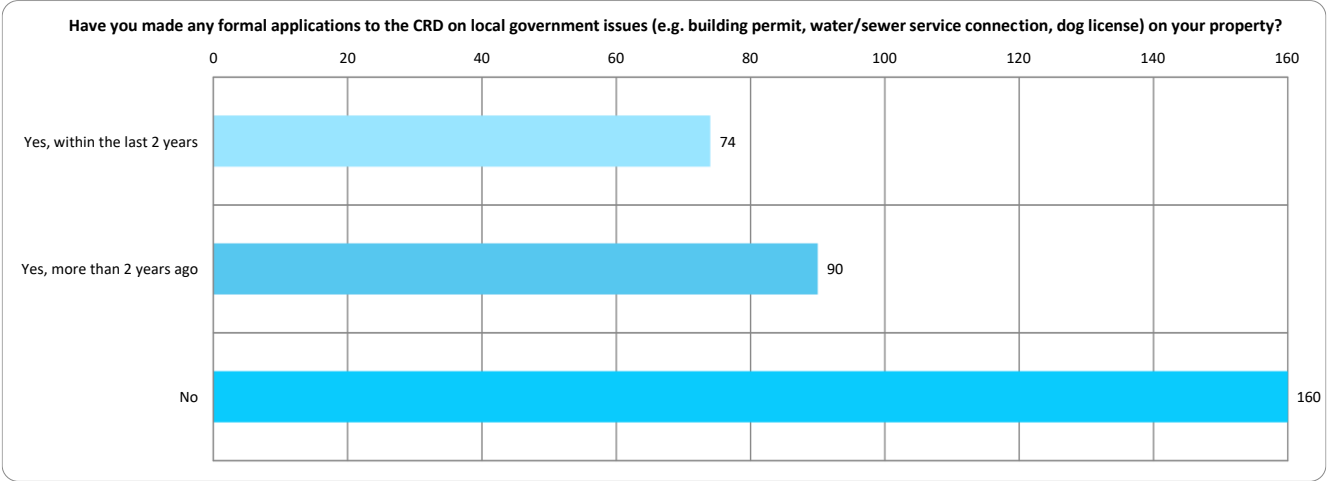
- Does Magic Lake Estates receive all the local services it needs? Are there some services that should be added or removed?
- Are current service levels appropriate? Are there existing levels that should be enhanced or reduced?
- Do you have concerns with any specific services? If so, which one(s)?
- In general, do you feel that you receive good value for the property taxes you pay?
- Do you think that Magic Lake Estates residents have sufficient input into, and influence over, decisions on the services that they receive?
- In unincorporated areas like Magic Lake Estates, services are coordinated through a variety of agencies. Is the inter-agency coordination of service delivery sufficient, and if not, how can it be improved?
- What could the Regional District do to help address your local government service and governance concerns?

3.1 General Survey Questions

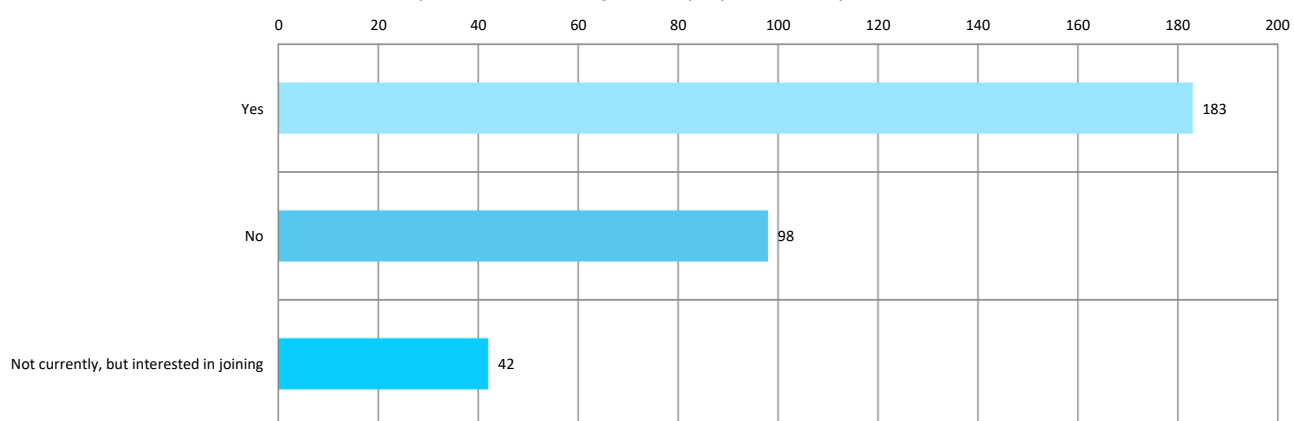
A total of 324 responses were received, with the vast majority of respondents (91%) being residents of Magic Lake Estates. A number of introductory questions were asked, with a summary of responses indicated in the following graphs:



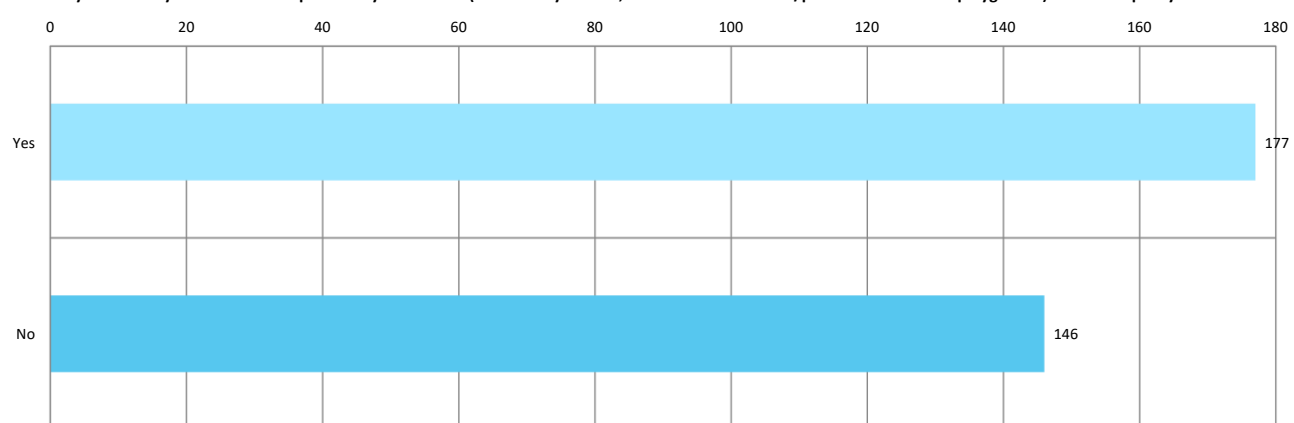




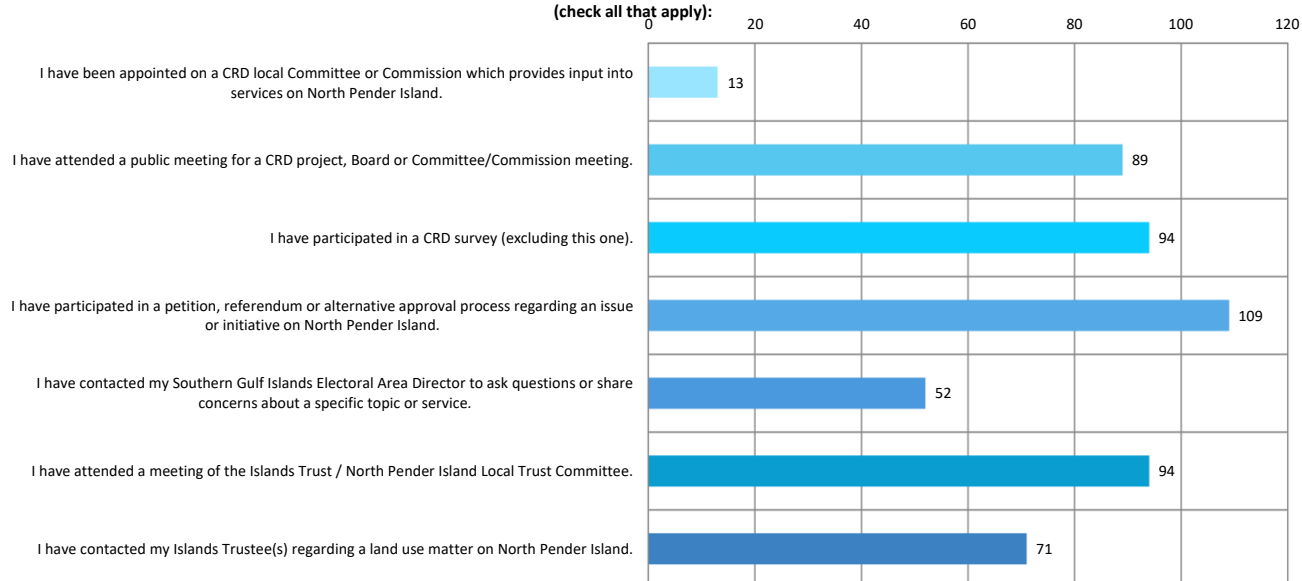
Are you a member of the Magic Lake Property Owners Society?



Have you used any of the facilities operated by the MLPOS (Thieves Bay Marina, Privateers Road tennis/pickleball courts and playground) within the past year?



Please indicate, in the past two years, if you have participated in any of the following CRD / Pender Island activities or community engagement opportunities (check all that apply):



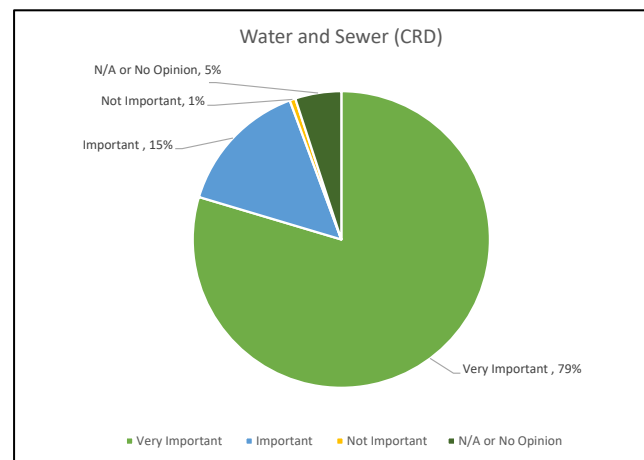
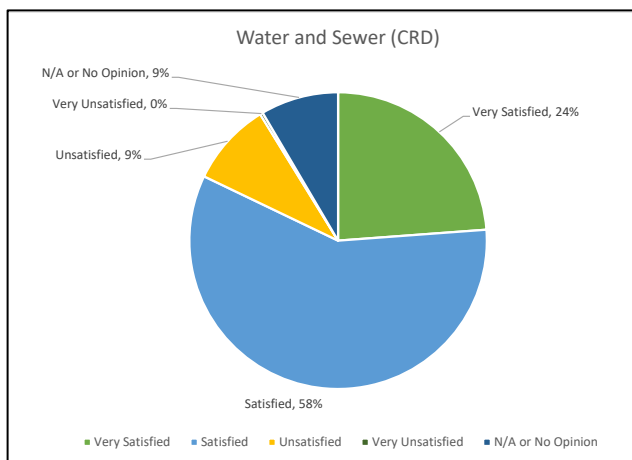
3.2 Local Services – Satisfaction and Importance

As discussed in Section 2 of this report, local services to Magic Lake Estates residents are provided by a variety of service providers. As part of the survey, the services were introduced individually to obtain feedback from respondents on the Level of Satisfaction and the Level of Importance residents placed on each. Respondents were asked to rate each service based on the following scale:

Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Unsatisfied	Very Unsatisfied	N/A or No Opinion
Very Important	Important	Not Important	Very Unimportant	N/A or No Opinion

In addition, many respondents included comments with respect to individual services. All written comments were reviewed and have been summarized within each respective service.

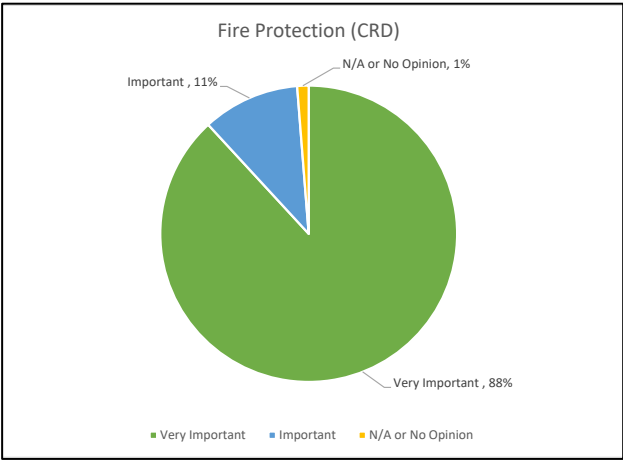
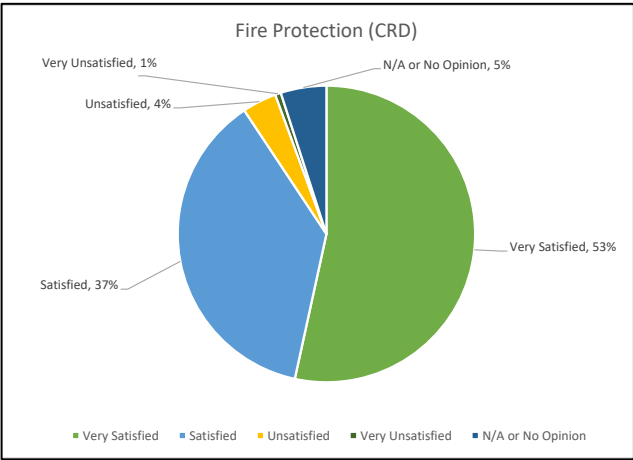
3.2.1 Water and Sewer (CRD)



Comments:

- Very important services (water and sewer), but cost is an issue
- Approximately 70% of properties within the Magic Lake Water Service Area are connected to the Magic Lake sewer system (718 of 1,036 parcels), with the remaining 30% on individual septic systems.
- Sewer pipe replacement challenges
- Some issues with water quality, especially from Buck Lake
- Protection of water source is very important

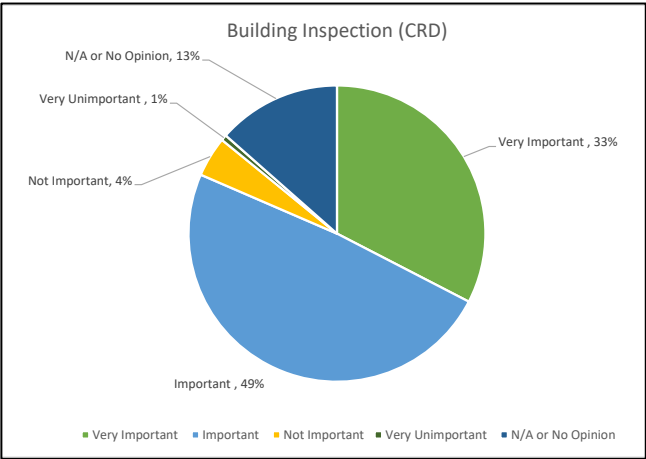
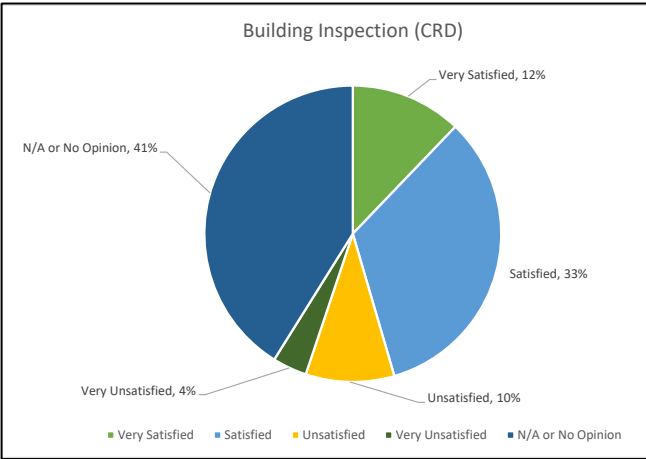
3.2.2 Fire Protection (CRD)



Comments:

- Dedicated group of volunteers, who do an excellent job
- Some felt costs were high, others felt more investment required
- More education on wildfire protection needed

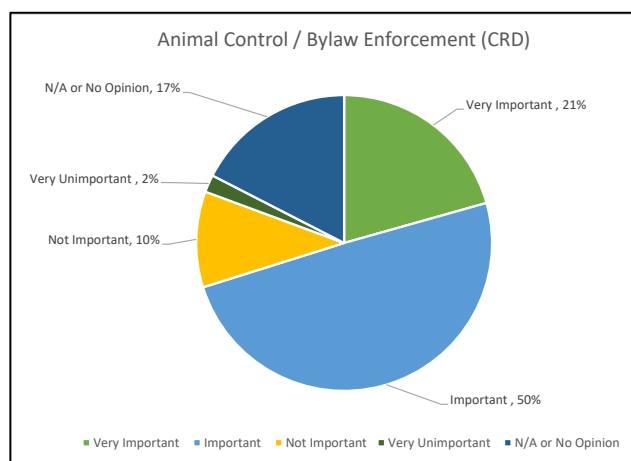
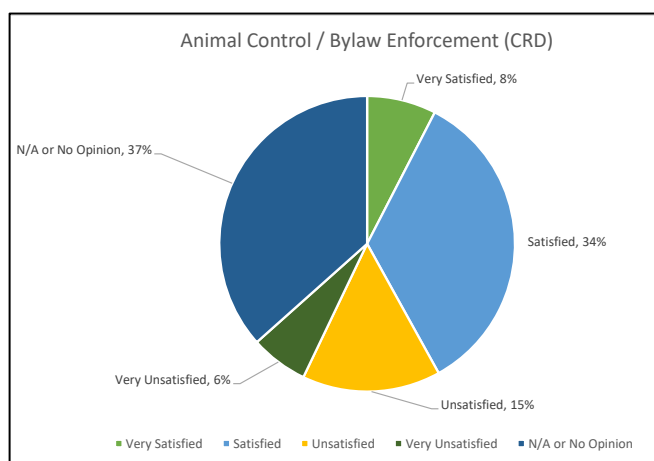
3.2.3 Building Inspection (CRD)



Comments:

- Generally good experience for those involved, with a few challenges with specific situations
- Would help to have more than one building inspector
- Some issues with red tape and cost

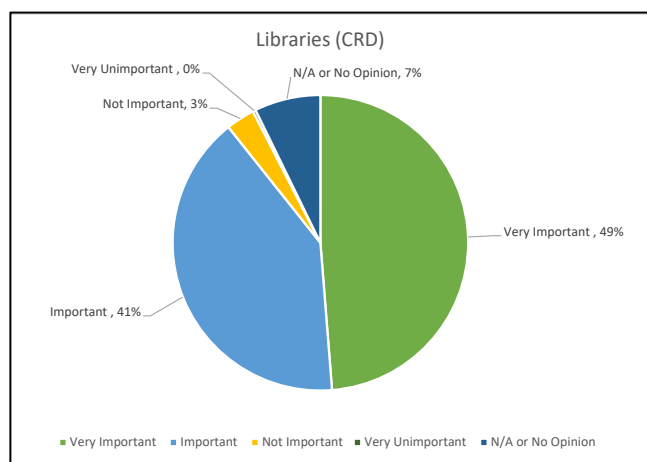
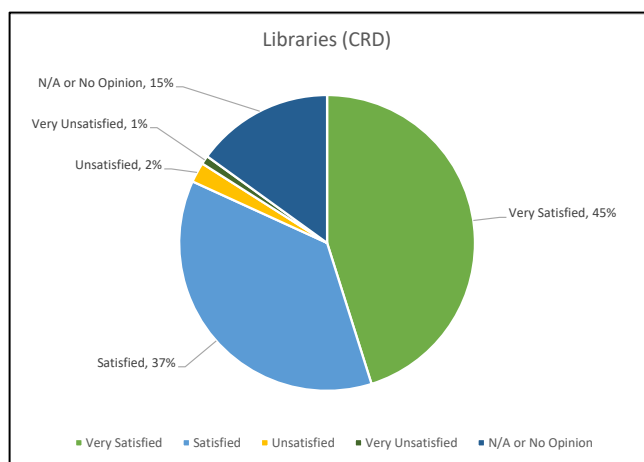
3.2.4 Animal Control / Bylaw Enforcement (CRD)



Comments:

- Generally good services provided by animal control
- Some challenging situations e.g. off-leash dogs and domestic cat concerns
- Other challenges with bylaw enforcement i.e. lack of
- Some deer issues

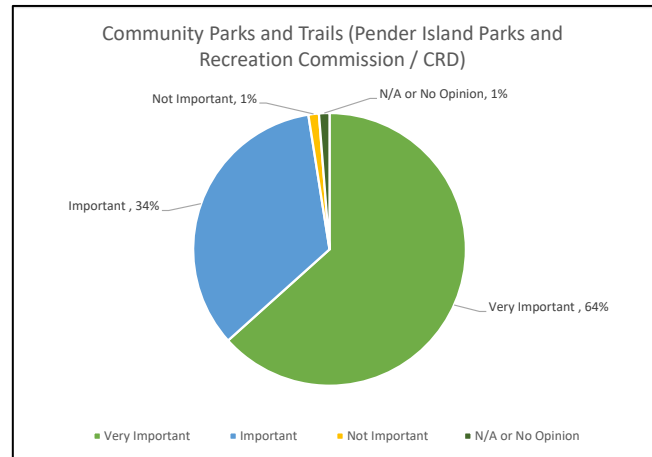
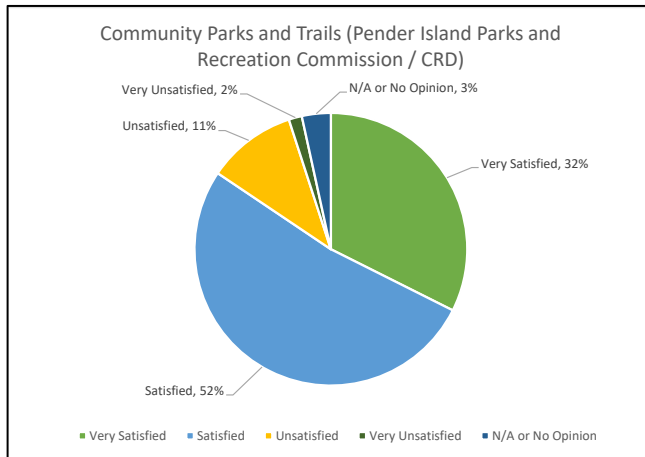
3.2.5 Libraries (CRD)



Comments:

- Excellent facility, important service to have
- Would like more online services
- Not being used to its full potential

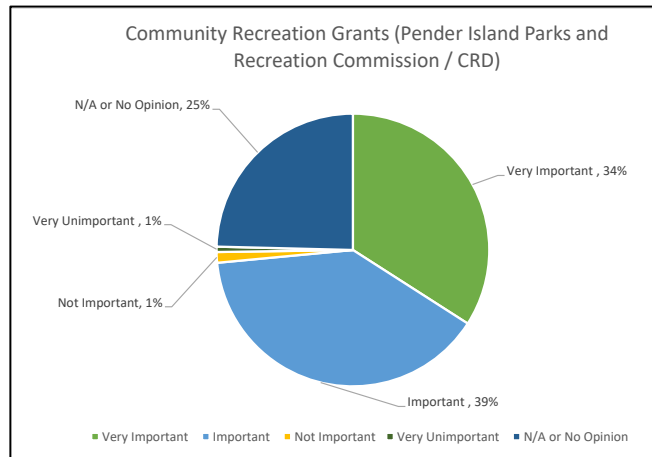
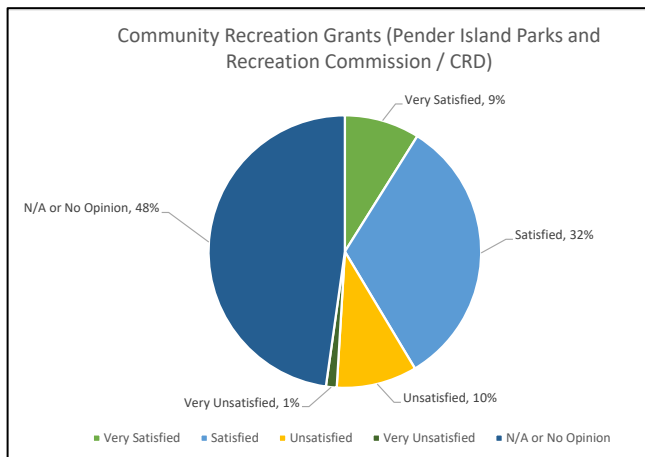
3.2.6 Community Park and Trails (Pender Island Parks and Recreation Commission / CRD)



Comments:

- Good network of parks and trails, more multi-use pathways desired
- Dog park issues
- Some parks in need of additional attention, i.e. maintenance
- Improvements needed for those with mobility challenges
- Questions about who operates certain parks, e.g. Danny Martin Ball Park (operated by the Pender Island Youth Sports Association under license from Pender Island Parks and Recreation Commission)

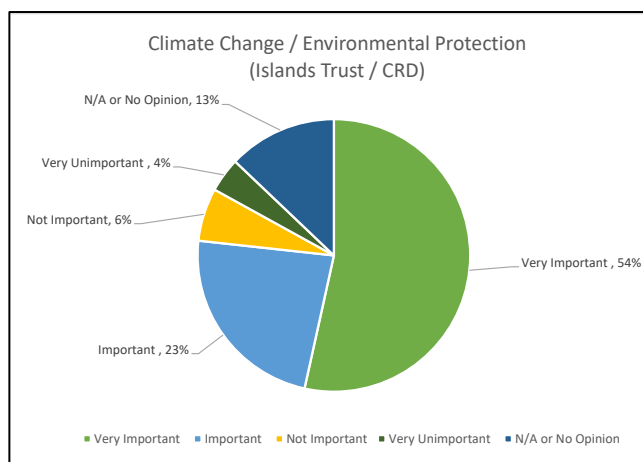
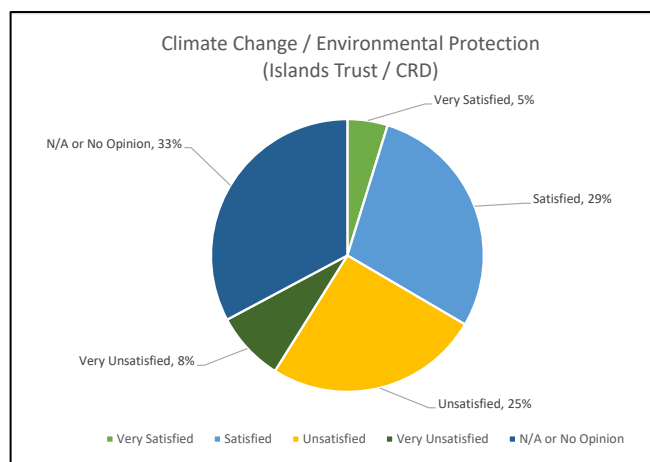
3.2.7 Community Recreation Grants (Pender Island Parks and Recreation Commission / CRD)



Comments:

- Generally not much awareness / information about grants
- More resources / funding needed, as it is over subscribed

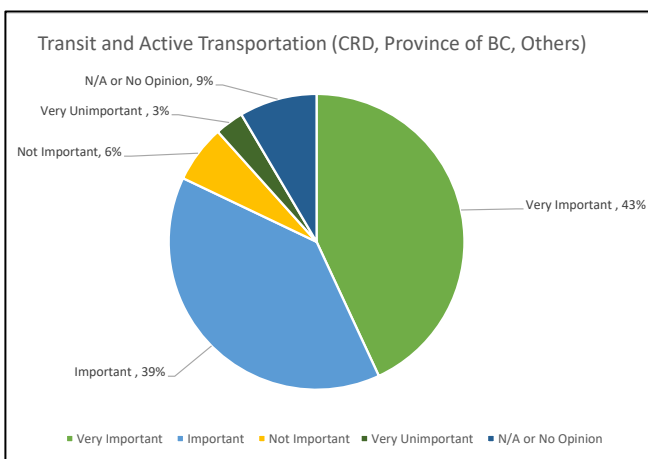
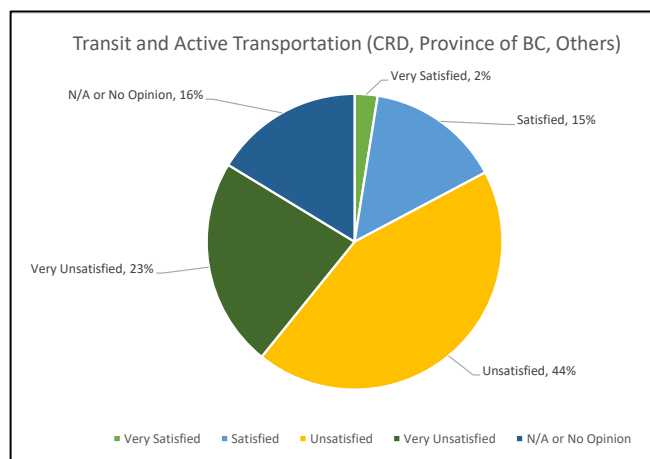
3.2.8 Climate Change / Environmental Protection (Islands Trust / CRD)



Comments:

- Climate change is important, but many obstacles so progress is challenging
- Managing invasive species
- A number of comments asking what the CRD can realistically do in this area

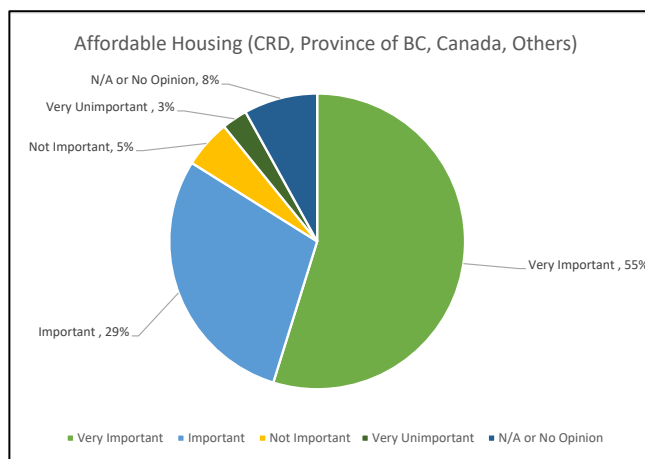
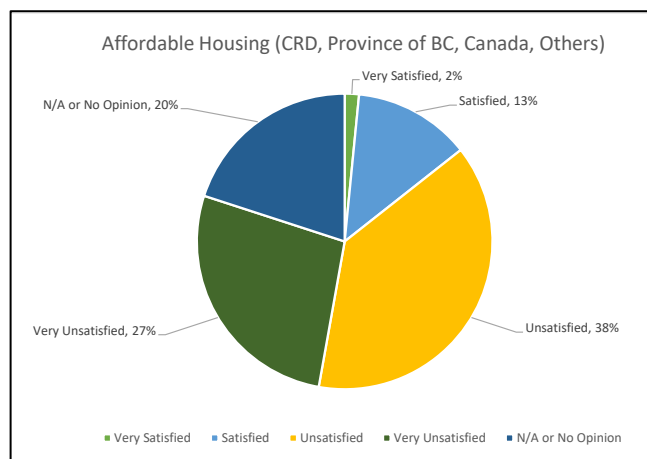
3.2.9 Transit and Active Transportation (CRD, Province of BC, Others)



Comments:

- Many comments regarding the recent Active Transportation referendum, which did not pass
- Desire for local/seasonal bus service
- More cycling facilities
- Ferry service challenges
- Road system challenges
- Car stops are great

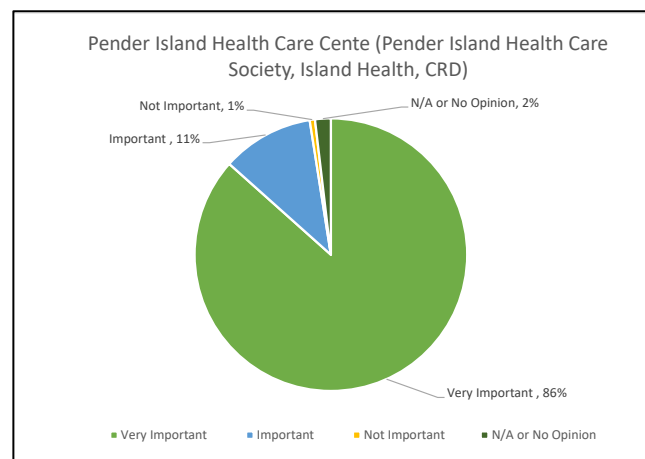
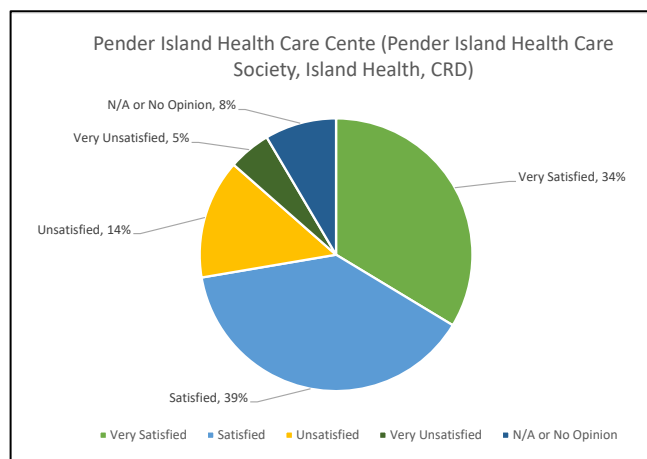
3.2.10 Affordable Housing (CRD, Province of BC, Canada, Others)



Comments:

- Important and desperate need for affordable housing, especially for local workers
- Bylaw changes to allow secondary and rental units, but challenges with Short Term Rentals
- Complicated issue with many organizations involved

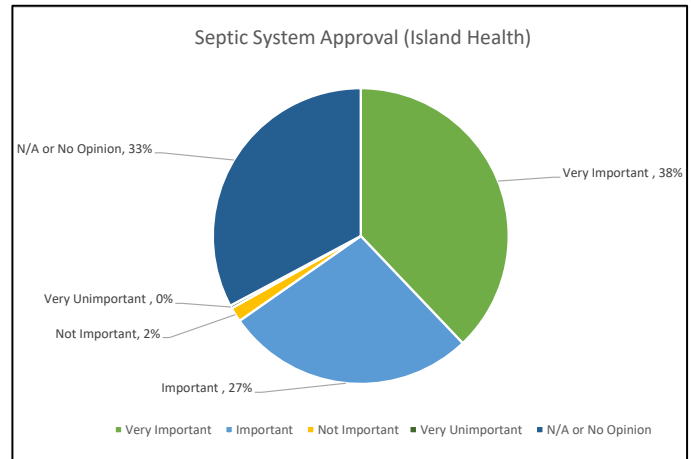
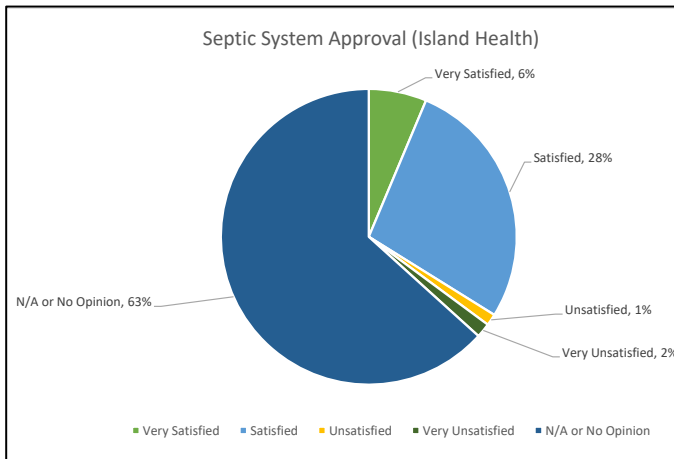
3.2.11 Pender Island Health Care Centre (Pender Island Health Care Society, Island Health, CRD)



Comments:

- Grateful for the excellent service given the limited population
- Challenges with attracting and retaining doctors
- Needs more resources, run more like a full Island Health facility

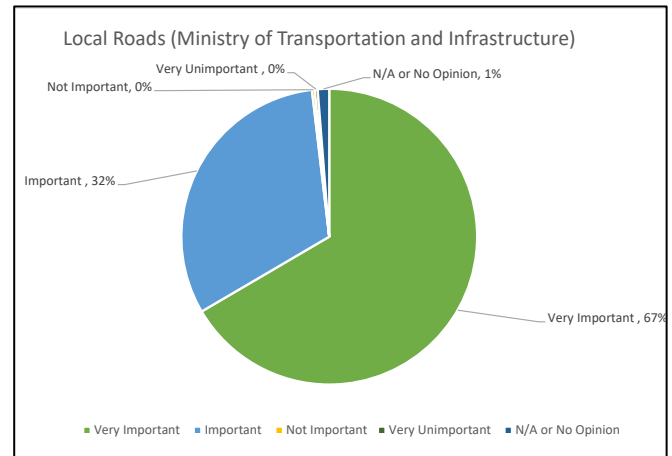
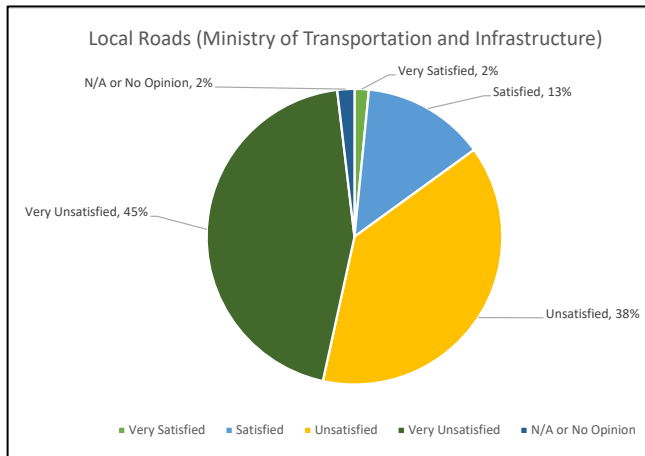
3.2.12 Septic System Approval (Island Health)



Comments:

- An important service, although most are on community sewer system
- Should be approved by CRD instead of Island Health

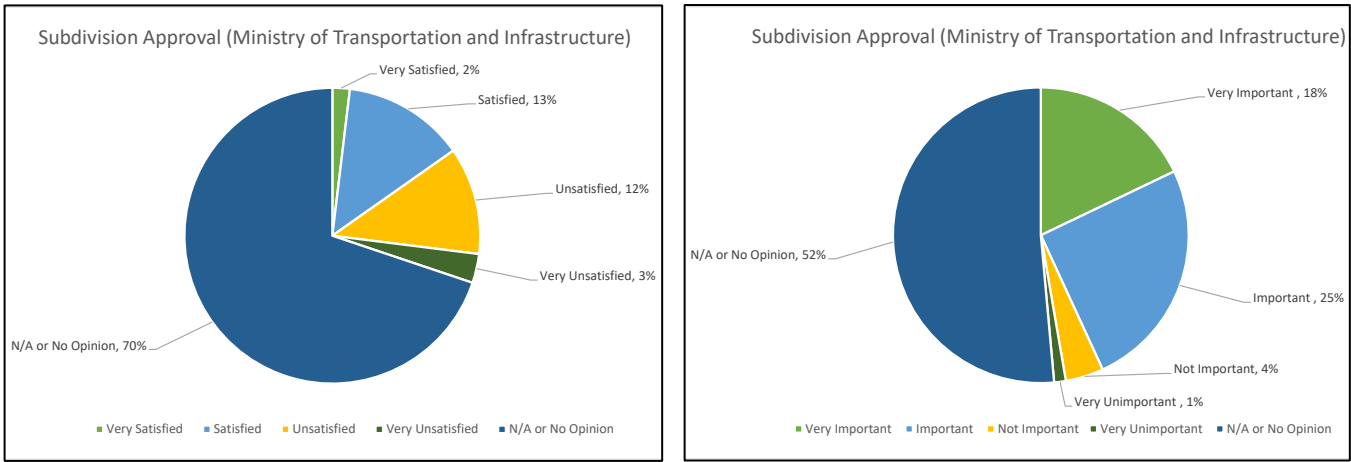
3.2.13 Local Roads (Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure)



Comments:

- Numerous issues with road conditions and lack of line painting
- Road maintenance is hit and miss, i.e. numerous potholes in certain areas
- Safety concerns - blind corners, speed, additional signage required
- Lack of cyclist facilities
- Numerous comments about "the dip" (Canal Road dip slide)
- Largest number of comments from survey respondents

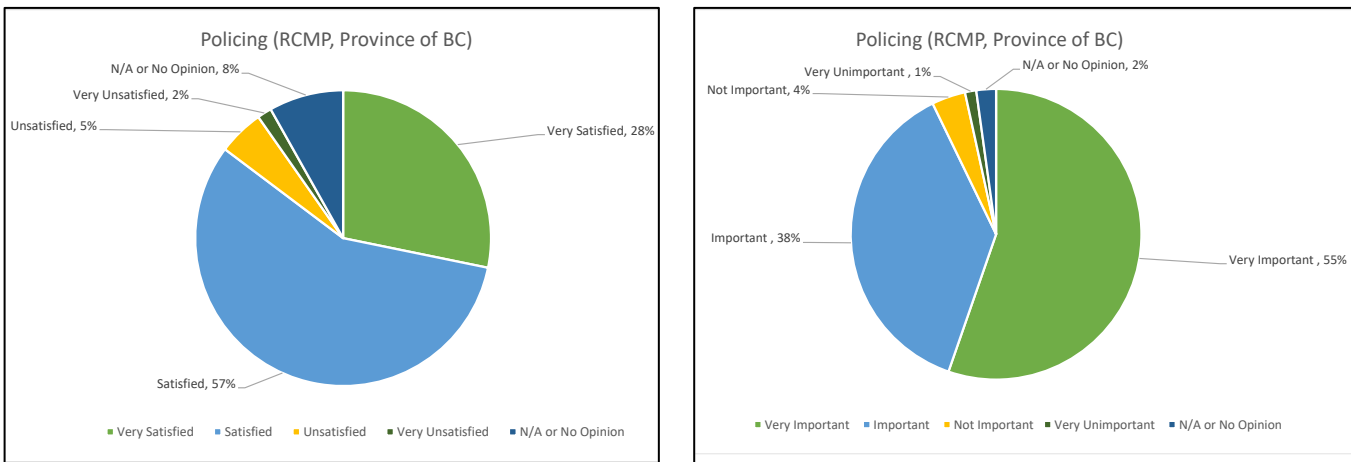
3.2.14 Subdivision Approval (Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure)



Comments:

- Not too many experiences, given that MLE is largely subdivided out
- Some would like to potentially subdivide in the future
- Consider water supply for future subdivisions

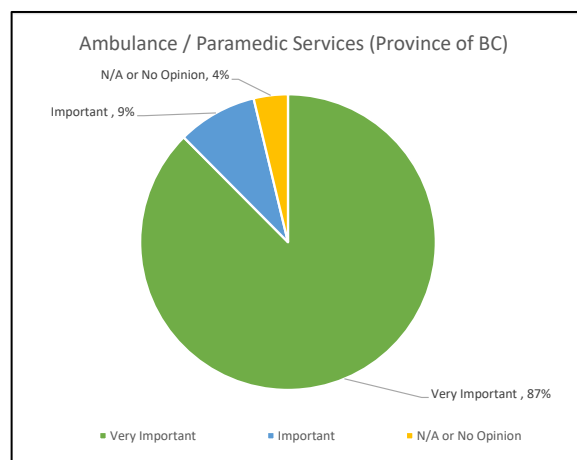
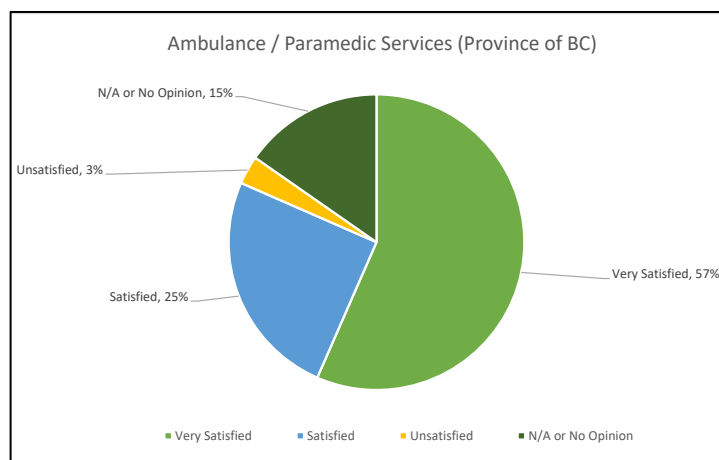
3.2.15 Policing (RCMP, Province of BC)



Comments:

- Generally good service, seen as draw for living on Pender Island (i.e. public safety)
- Potential for over-policing given the types of issues seen on the island

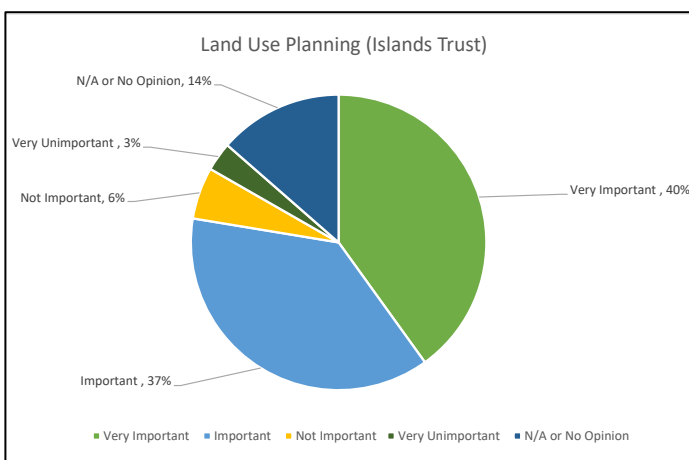
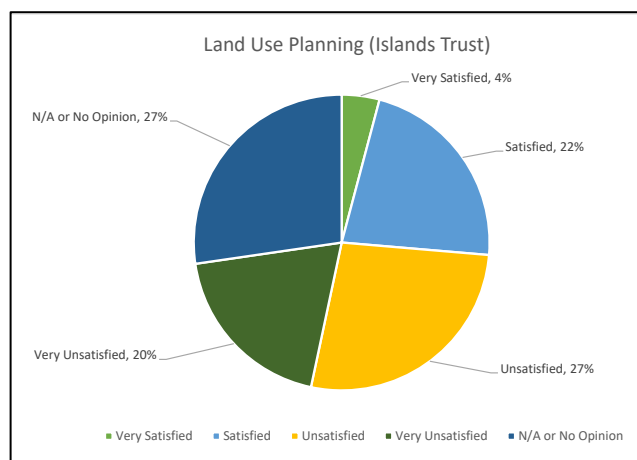
3.2.16 Ambulance / Paramedic Services (Province of BC)



Comments:

- Good service, appreciative of first responders
- Concerns about future staffing / recruiting issues

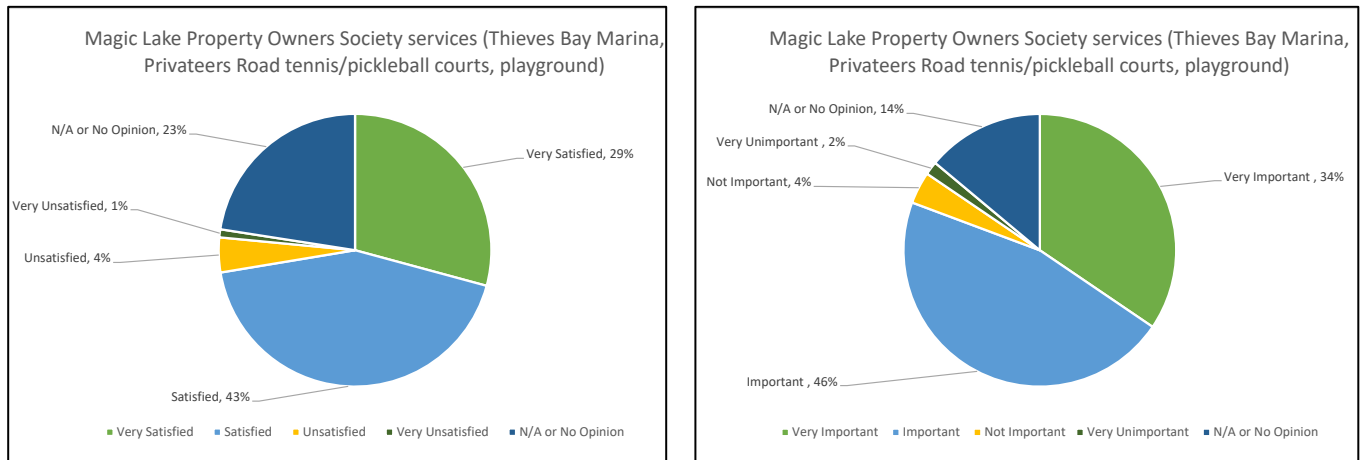
3.2.17 Land Use Planning (Islands Trust)



Comments:

- Land use planning is important, to address growth management concerns
- While some saw value in the mandate of the Islands Trust, many expressed challenges with the Islands Trust structure and service delivery model
- Expand housing density as appropriate, more commercial spaces
- Protect sensitive ecosystems

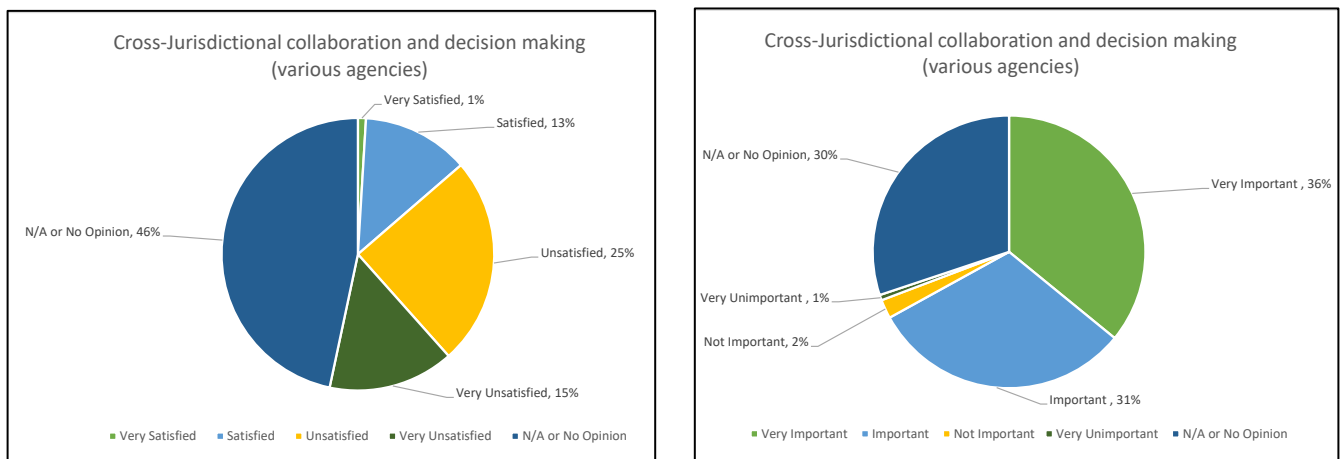
3.2.18 Magic Lake Property Owners Society services (MLPOS)



Comments:

- Good service delivery, appreciate the volunteers
- New facilities, e.g. separate pickleball courts
- Thieves Bay park/marina valued, but some areas could use maintenance
- MLPOS seen as an advocate for the neighbourhood

3.2.19 Cross-jurisdictional collaboration and decision making (various agencies)



Comments:

- Challenges of crossover jurisdictions i.e. overlap
- Too many layers / duplication
- Better and more efficient communications required, e.g. semi-annual meetings between parties
- A few were not aware / not understanding the question

3.3 Additional Survey Comments

In addition to the rated responses provided above, respondents were asked if there were any additional local services or issues not mentioned, with the following additional suggestions provided:

- Inter-island passenger only ferry service
- Alternative transportation, e.g. allow electric scooters on roads
- Community gardens
- Enhanced garbage/recycling collection
- Health care / doctor shortage
- Faster / lower cost internet

Finally, respondents were provided an opportunity to provide any additional comments, which are summarized below:

- Concentrate on making existing services more efficient, would like to see more for the taxes paid
- Keep it simple, we are rural
- Governance of Pender Island is complex and could be improved, streamlined or consolidated

3.4 Services Summary

Based on the survey responses, a “scatterplot” was created which mapped out the percentage of responses that were Very Satisfied and Satisfied against the percentage of responses that were Very Important and Important. The resulting graph is provided on the following page. It should be noted that while the level of satisfaction (x-axis) is shown between 0% and 100%, the level of importance (y-axis) begins at 80% and goes to 100%, as there was no service identified with a level of importance less than 85%. For the 19 services reviewed, they generally fall into 3 categories:

High Satisfaction / High Importance – eleven (11) of these services fall into this category, including the following (sorted by level of satisfaction):

• Ambulance / Paramedic Services	96% Satisfaction	100% Importance
• Libraries	96% Satisfaction	96% Importance
• Fire Protection	95% Satisfaction	100% Importance
• Policing	93% Satisfaction	95% Importance
• Magic Lake Property Owners Services	93% Satisfaction	94% Importance
• Septic System Approval	92% Satisfaction	97% Importance
• Water and Sewer	90% Satisfaction	99% Importance
• Community Parks and Trails	87% Satisfaction	99% Importance
• Pender Island Health Care Centre	79% Satisfaction	99% Importance
• Community Recreation Grants	79% Satisfaction	97% Importance
• Building Inspection	77% Satisfaction	94% Importance

Medium Satisfaction / Medium Importance – four (4) of the services fall into this category, including the following (sorted by level of satisfaction):

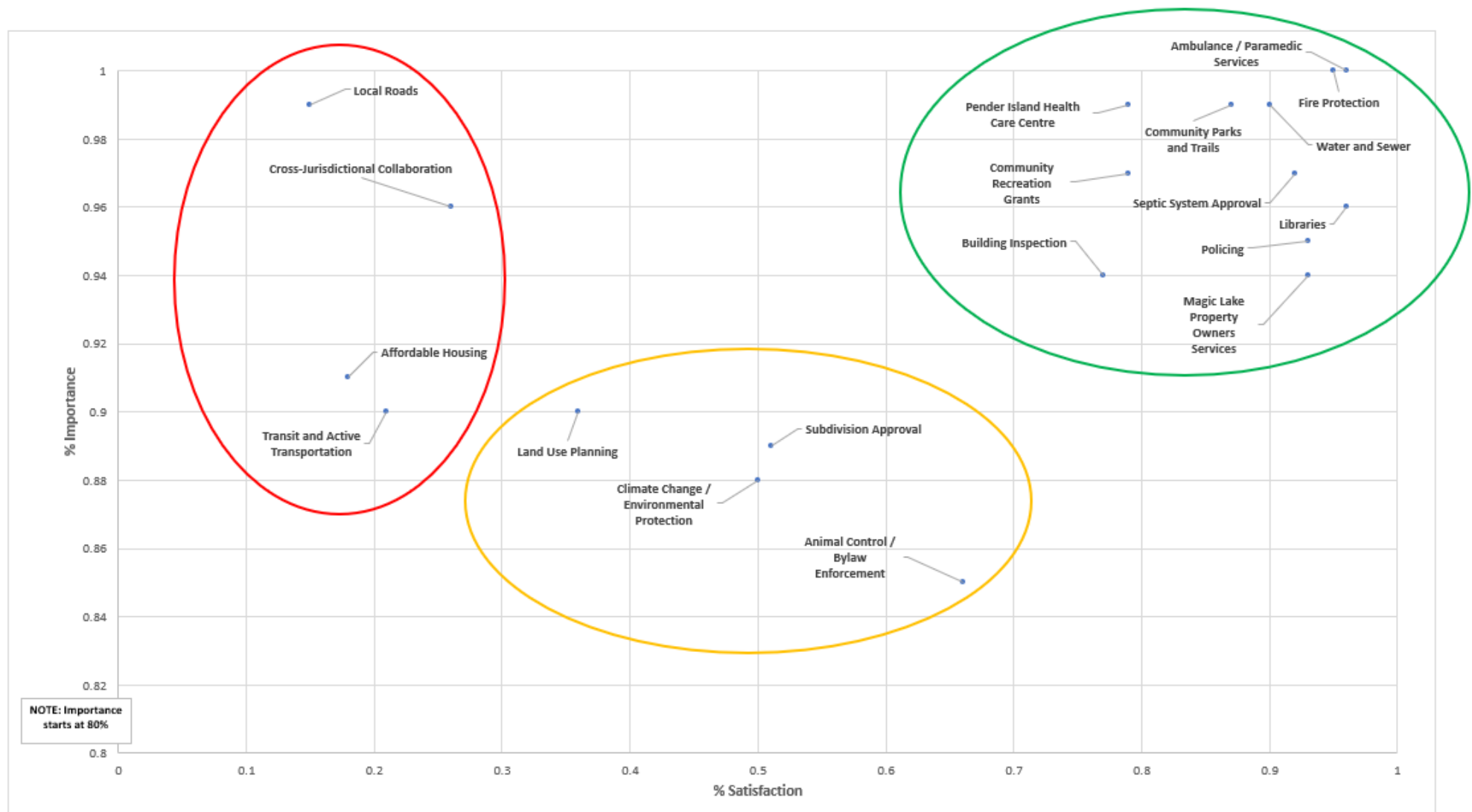
• Animal Control / Bylaw Enforcement	66% Satisfaction	85% Importance
• Subdivision Approval	51% Satisfaction	89% Importance
• Climate Change / Environmental Protection	50% Satisfaction	88% Importance
• Land Use Planning	36% Satisfaction	90% Importance

Low Satisfaction / High Importance – four (4) of the services fall into this category, including the following (sorted by level of satisfaction):

• Cross-Jurisdictional Collaboration	26% Satisfaction	96% Importance
• Transit and Active Transportation	21% Satisfaction	90% Importance
• Affordable Housing	18% Satisfaction	91% Importance
• Local Roads	15% Satisfaction	99% Importance

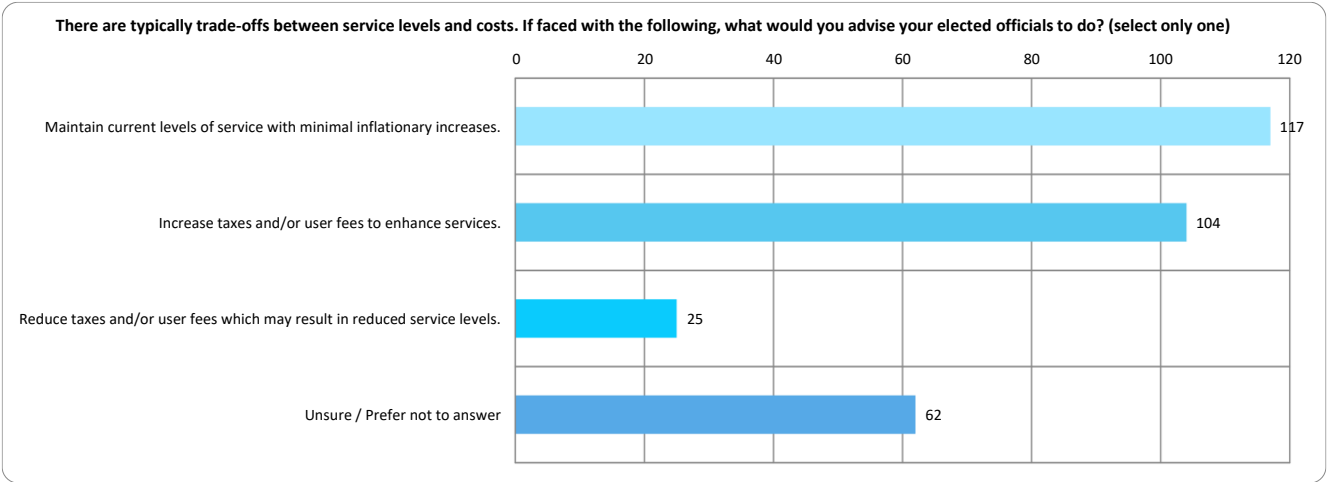
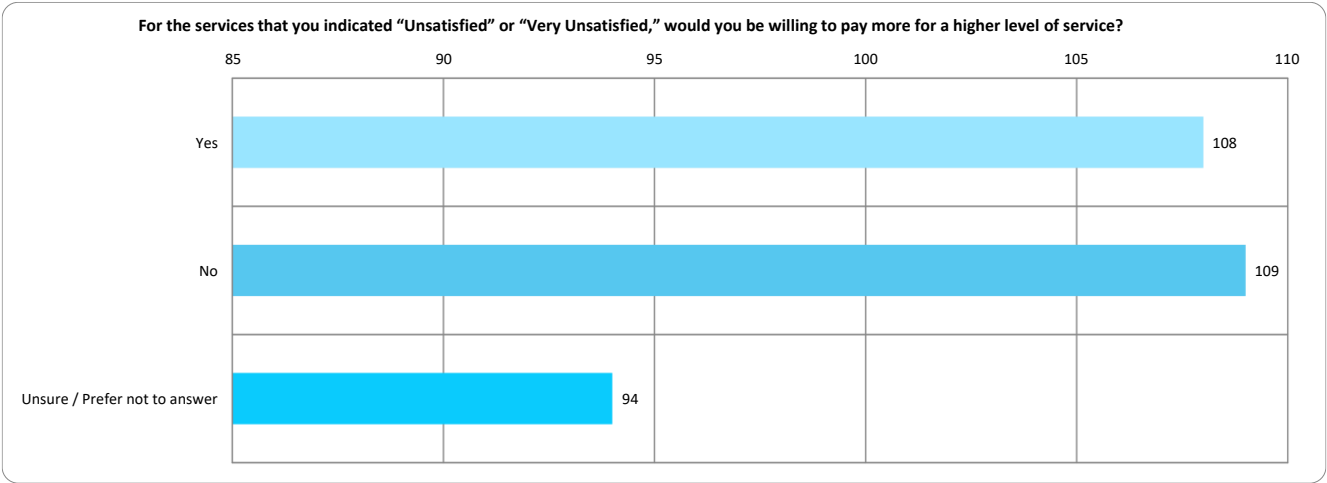
While the respondents were generally satisfied with the majority of services, whilst also attaching a high importance to them, four of the services stood out as having low satisfaction/high importance ratings, namely: cross-jurisdictional collaboration (given the many service providers); transit and active transportation (possibly due to the recent failed referendum); affordable housing (an issue faced in communities across Canada) and local roads (under the jurisdiction of MOTI). These topics were further explored and discussed with the community during the information sessions, described further in the next section.

Services Scatterplot - Satisfaction vs. Importance



3.5 Willingness to Pay

Two additional survey questions were posed to respondents, which were related to the community’s willingness to pay for additional level of service, as well as consideration of trade-offs between service levels and taxation. The summary charts are shown below:



Based on the survey respondents, it appears that the community is fairly evenly split in balancing the current levels of service and their willingness to pay for an enhanced service. This is reflected in the recent (October 2022) referendum for the creation of a new transportation service for the Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area, which was very narrowly defeated with a vote of 1,495 “yes” (49.95%) to 1,498 “no” (50.05%).

4. CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Throughout the project, the consultant worked closely with CRD staff and the MLPOS Board in gathering background research, gaining a fulsome understanding of the various issues, and getting the word out to Magic Lake Estates residents and property owners.

4.1 Community Engagement

An information website was established for the project (<https://getinvolved.crd.bc.ca/MLE-community>) through the CRD's Let's Connect portal, which provided background materials, project updates, community survey and open house materials. Project updates were also provided in the local publication (Pender Post) with a flyer advertising the survey being delivered to all MLE residents.

In addition to the community survey described in the previous section, two Community Information Sessions were held – an in-person meeting on November 3, 2023 with 28 MLE residents in attendance, and a follow-up virtual session on December 6, 2023. A copy of the second information session is provided in Appendix B.

4.2 Additional Engagement with MOTI

As shown in the results of the survey, and through discussions with MLE residents at the Community Information Sessions, the most challenging service noted by residents is the operation and maintenance of local roads. This included everything from pothole repair, line painting, speed and safety concerns, and capital upgrades (i.e. repaving). As previously noted, all local roads in unincorporated areas within the Province of British Columbia fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI).



Given the magnitude of this service level discrepancy in the community (15% satisfaction / 99% importance) the consultant and CRD conducted a number of meetings with MOTI staff to better understand the administrative, operational, and financial considerations that go into the decision-making process for local roads operations and maintenance. A summary of our conversations is provided below:

- Local roads within Magic Lake Estates fall within the South Vancouver Island region, which covers all rural roads from Chemainus south and including all of the Southern Gulf Islands.
- The region is Service Area #1, and there are 28 service areas within the Province of BC.
- Local road maintenance in each region is generally contracted out; the current roads contract for Service Area #1 is with EMCON (5 years into a 10-year contract).
- All roads have a rating system based on their summer (1-8) and winter (a-f) classification. For example, the highest rated road is the Trans Canada Highway at '1a'. Most of the roads on Pender Island are rated '6c' (minimum school bus route) or lower.

- The total annual budget for Service Area #1 is approximately \$15 million, comprised of 2 components:
 - Routine Specifications – annual maintenance and repair, including work activities that are unpredictable in nature (e.g. pothole repairs, signage replacement)
 - Quantified Specifications – planned maintenance, repair or replacement including activities that are reasonably predictable or seasonal (e.g. ditching, brushing / mowing, planned paving and line painting)
- Given the current fixed contract with EMCON, opportunities for additional funding from the CRD to supplement local roads service are not possible.
- There are some exceptions to this for “Local Area Specifications”, e.g. park and ride facilities, but these are generally rare.
- There are no capital road upgrades / repaving planned for Magic Lake Estes in next 5 years. A \$2 million upgrade/repair to the Canal Road Pender Dip is planned in 2024. Most recent road work on Pender Island has been focused on the route to the ferry.
- The total annual regional paving rehabilitation program is approximately \$5 million, which covers both the South Island and Lower Mainland regions. Paving is very expensive on the Gulf Islands due to mobilization of equipment and materials.
- A concern was expressed by residents regarding the removal of community-placed speed signage. It was noted by MOTI that all speed limit signs must meet design and regulatory requirements, and that all non-approved signage within the public road right-of-way would need to be removed by EMCON due to liability concerns.
- Notwithstanding speed limit signs, it was noted that warning signs (yellow) are not regulatory and could be added upon request to MOTI where appropriate and warranted.
- There may be opportunities to install speed reader boards through the Speed Watch program (ICBC, RCMP) using local volunteers (training is provided for volunteers).

The summary of our conversations with MOTI were relayed to the community at the December 6, 2023 meeting for further information and discussion. Since then, CRD staff continue to be in regular communications with MOTI to explore any and all opportunities for local road improvements in Magic Lake Estates, including but not limited to signage and line painting.

5. SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

The Magic Lake Estates Community Issues Assessment provides a high-level overview of the myriad of local services provided for MLE residents and property owners, from a variety of government agencies and contracted service providers. Based on the community survey and information session with MLE residents, it appears that Magic Lake Estates residents are generally satisfied with the level of local services that they receive, with the exception of local roads and active transportation. The community also raised concerns with respect to affordable housing and land use planning, which are much more complex multi-faceted issues to address.

While all uninincorporated areas in the province receive local services from a variety of service providers, Magic Lake Estates has a few additional and unique layers of agencies including: the Islands Trust (land use planning for all Gulf Island communities), Magic Lake Property Owners Society (volunteer organization providing a number of valued community amenities) and other non-profit organizations (e.g. Pender Island Health Care Society). Given all of these layers, there is a desire for better cross-jurisdictional collaboration, which could be led by the CRD (e.g. organize a semi-annual meeting with all the parties involved in local service delivery). Increased effort has been occurring between CRD, MOTI and Islands Trust, but it is acknowledged that there is always room for improvement.

It was noted that additional information, education and communication between the CRD and MLE residents would be helpful in better understanding the various local services and their service providers. This could occur through regular updates on the CRD website, brochures/information leaflets in utility bills, and town hall meetings with residents and elected officials.

Based on community feedback received through this Community Issues Assessment, challenges with services that were rated highly important with low satisfaction, such as local roads, may continue to drive a desire for governance changes in order to improve local influence over the level of service provided. As the scope of this project did not include recommendations regarding alternative governance models, there should be continued dialogue and engagement with the MLPOS Board and the community, and a request to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs for further study could be considered by the CRD and the Ministry in the future.