



NICOMEKL RIVER DISTRICT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

SUMMARY OF OPEN HOUSE #2

MARCH 4, 2020 – NICOMEKL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



PURPOSE

The purpose of the Nicomekl River District Neighbourhood Plan's second open house was to present the preferred concept to the broader public. It was also an opportunity for people to confirm their support for the vision and principles, prioritize their favourite environmental, cultural, and recreational projects, and provide feedback on the form and character of the future neighbourhood.

EVENT

The open house was held at Nicomekl Elementary School on March 4, 2020, from 5:00PM to 8:00PM. 77 participants signed in upon entering the multipurpose room where the open house was taking place. We estimate that 100+ people attended the event.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

A significant portion of those attending were mobilized by Langley environmental groups who were initially dismayed by an image used for advertising purposes that depicted a collection of ideas from the design charrette in June 2019. Certain elements like a dock on Brydon Lagoon and a children's play structure were shown in the image but had since been removed from the preferred concept presented at the open house. Many who arrived at the open house used the engagement opportunity to express their opposition to these elements which were not being considered. Once these individuals found out these elements weren't a part of the preferred concept, they were generally much more supportive and appreciative of the work completed to date. The results from the engagement activities should therefore be understood within this context.

The most significant amount of support from participants was related to ecological restoration. This was true in both the prioritization activity and in the floor map comments. There was a clear consensus that protecting salmon habitat with more trees and shade while reducing and managing the non-native reed canary grasses would be positive for the floodplain. Non-native Himalayan Blackberry bushes were less of a concern to participants with many comments indicating the need to manage, not remove them.

There was also support for light interventions with the caveat that they would not have undue impacts on wildlife habitat and that they wouldn't cause privacy concerns for adjacent properties. These include: a lookout tower, interpretative elements and signage, a walkway on the southwestern part of the floodplain, and a children's adventure play area.

In relation to land use, there was support for a new mixed-use village adjacent to Portage Park. The proposed commercial corner nook at 50 Ave and 200 St received more mixed feelings with over a dozen votes in favour of prioritizing this new retail node, but several comments on the floor map indicating opposition.

When asked about the future Form and Character of the Nicomekl River District, participants strongly favoured building designs that incorporate strongly articulated architectural elements, a variety of materials, and some vibrant use of colour. For paths, trails, and wayfinding, participants preferred the use of wood and elements that blend or integrate with the natural environment such as a boardwalk or a wooden signpost.

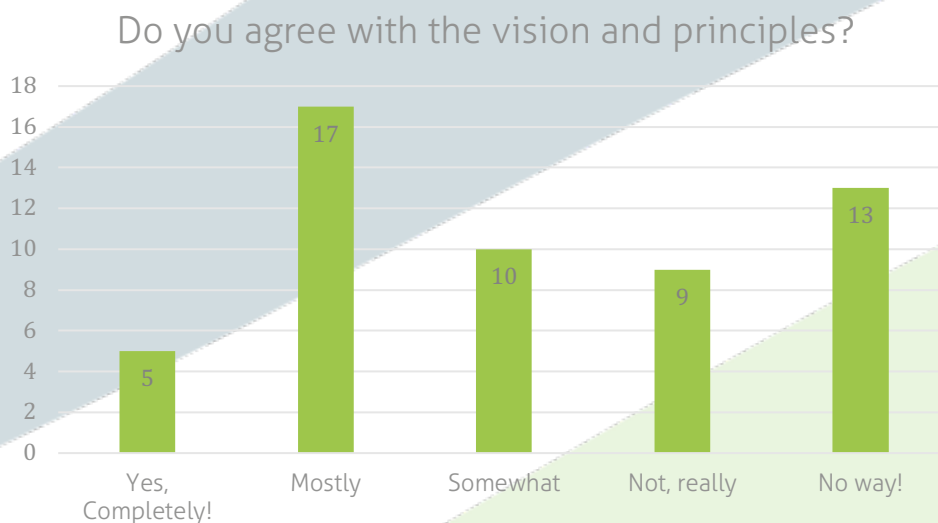
The following pages provide a more detailed look at the results for each engagement activity.

RESULTS

The following are results from the four engagement activities that sought feedback from participants.

VISION & PRINCIPLES

When asked “Do you agree with the vision & principles?” of the Nicomekl River District Neighbourhood Plan, respondents provided the following feedback:

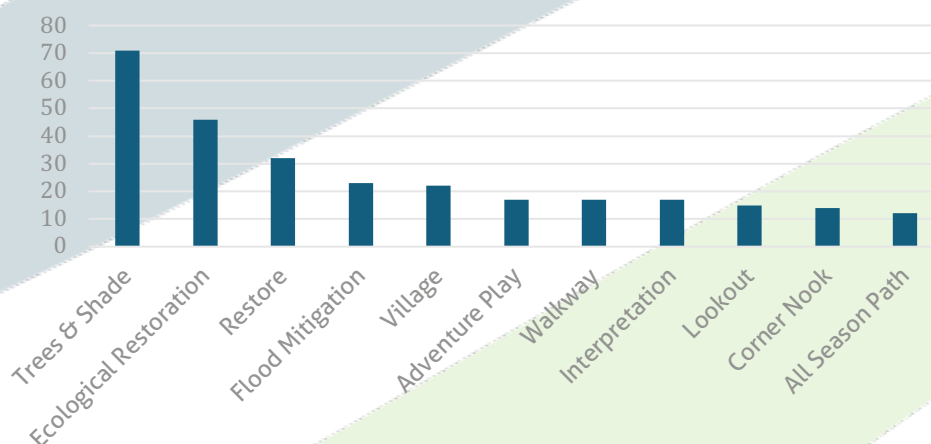


It bears noting that the principles received strong and nearly unanimous support at a prior open house in June 2019. It is unclear whether the mixed responses at the latest open house are the result of the miscommunication related to interventions in Brydon Lagoon, or general opposition to the vision and principles. At the third and final open house where the Neighbourhood Plan will be presented to the public, it will be important to get a more definitive answer from the public.

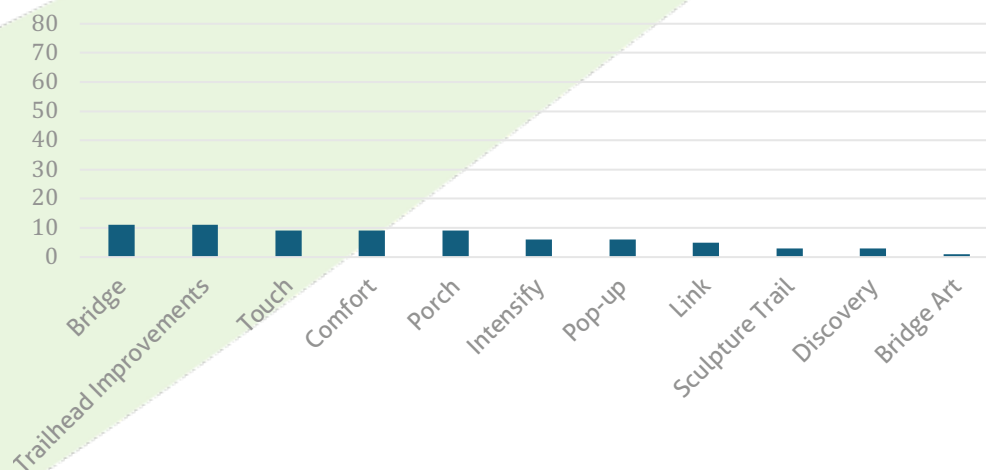
PROJECT PRIORITY RANKING

When asked to prioritize each proposed project within the neighbourhood plan area, respondents were primarily focussed on environmental priorities. The top 4 were all related to ecological restoration or flood mitigation, with “Trees & Shade” being the most popular intervention by a significant margin. Not far behind in 5th place was the concept of creating a vibrant mixed use “Village” adjacent to Portage Park. The 6th most popular interventions were an “Adventure Play” children’s structure, a “Walkway” in the southwest portion of the floodplain, and “Interpretation” signage – all tied with 17 votes. Rounding out the top half were a “Lookout” tower near 53 Ave and Michaud Crescent, a commercial “Corner Nook” at 50 Ave and 200 St, and an “All Season Path” across the northern edge of the Nicomekl floodplain.


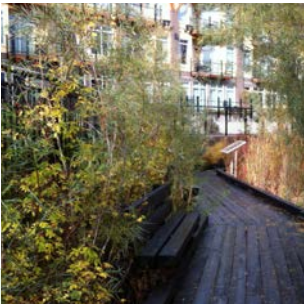


What projects should be prioritized?
(top half)




What projects should be prioritized?
(bottom half)



Here is a more complete look at the rankings in priority:




1 71 VOTES	TREES & SHADE Trees, shrubs, and other tall vegetation forms in strategic locations would help shade the Nicomekl watercourse and protect fish habitat from direct sunlight and heat. This is a priority for ecological restoration west of 203 Street, where grass expanses are remnants of old agricultural practices.	
2 46 VOTES	ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION Trees, shrubs, and other tall plants in strategic locations would help shade the Nicomekl watercourse and protect fish habitat from direct sunlight and heat. This is a priority for ecological restoration west of 203 Street, where the primary vegetation are grasses that are remnants of old agricultural practices. Himalayan Blackberry bushes are rampant in certain parts of the floodplain. This is an invasive species and efforts are needed to contain and manage this non-native vegetation and restore the ecological integrity of the River and its surroundings.	
3 32 VOTES	RESTORE Himalayan Blackberry bushes are rampant in certain parts of the floodplain. This is an invasive species and efforts are needed to contain and manage this non-native vegetation and restore the ecological integrity of the River and its surroundings.	
4 23 VOTES	FLOOD MITIGATION Controlling the Nicomekl River's floods is a complex, regional challenge that cannot be addressed solely within Langley City. Increasing the amount of permeable surface within the urban area and requiring redevelopment to build infiltration systems, where appropriate, can help divert stormwater into the ground. Other flood mitigation strategies involve increased development setbacks and new building flood elevations. At a regional scale, the creation of new retention ponds, wetlands, and river channels may also have an impact.	

5 22 VOTES	VILLAGE The Village is a place where people gather. Potential redevelopment adjacent to Portage Park would lead to a vibrant, mixed-use, transit-oriented, and walkable area. With shops and cafes next to the park and improved connections and public realm design, a focus on heritage is essential.	
6 ^(TIE) 17 VOTES	ADVENTURE PLAY Near or within Portage Park, an engaging and interactive play structure would blend into the natural surroundings and landscape. The structures would prioritize children's play and adventure with physically challenging structures and facilities. Learning about nature and wildlife would occur through interpretative elements.	
6 ^(TIE) 17 VOTES	WALKWAY Along the southern edge of the Garden Wild, no path currently exists. To increase connectivity in this area a walkway is proposed that would meander along the urban edge. It is intended to be slightly elevated from the grasses, wetlands, and other floodplain features to minimize impacts on wildlife habitat.	
6 ^(TIE) 17 VOTES	INTERPRETATION Telling the story of the Indigenous people who inhabited this area for millennia, and still do, is important. As is the story of early settlers and their use of the watercourse. Adding interpretative and story-telling signage throughout Portage Park would enhance local & historical knowledge for residents and visitors alike.	

9 15 VOTES	LOOKOUT <p>A lookout tower/platform near the intersection of 53 Avenue and the Michaud Crescent path would provide a beautiful overview of the ecological restoration projects, and trail systems. It would act as a landmark, identifying the entrance into the floodplain and its various trails and paths.</p>	
10 14 VOTES	CORNER NOOK <p>Several properties at the corner of 200 Street and 50 Avenue are owned by the City and could be developed into a neighbourhood amenity as a small corner retail shop and/or live-work opportunity. This gentle land use intervention would help bring a much needed commercial destination to an area lacking in walkability.</p>	
11 12 VOTES	ALL SEASON PATH <p>As a major improvement to the vitality and visibility of the Nicomekl River corridor, an all season path is proposed along the entire northern edge of the floodplain. This path should be constructed above regular flood levels where possible. Elsewhere, if needed the path may weave back into the developed urban area or be constructed as a floatable dock that lowers and rises with water levels.</p> <p>The path should meet safety and accessibility standards for those requiring mobility aids, be cycle-friendly, and it should have a consistent design palette across the neighbourhood. The path would eventually connect Langley's Downtown at Michaud Crescent and 207 Street to create a beautiful and engaging, walkable "loop" that links Langley's most cherished destinations.</p>	

12 (tie) 11 VOTES	BRIDGE The Garden Wild is the only of the four rooms that doesn't presently have a pedestrian bridge crossing the Nicomekl River. To increase connectivity between the north and south of the City, a new bridge is proposed leading from the Lookout to the Walkway along the floodplain's southern edge. Environmental impact will be assessed.	
12 (tie) 11 VOTES	TRAILHEAD IMPROVEMENTS There are numerous trailheads across the neighbourhood, each with a unique context requiring a specialized design to create inviting entrances into the natural spaces. Including elements like wayfinding maps, interpretative signage, benches, lighting, and public art at entrances would help people orient themselves within the system of paths, trails, and amenities. Pruning overgrown foliage would provide more direct sightlines into the floodplain and help with safety and comfort. Finally, adding a small amount of parking stalls, specifically for those with mobility challenges would help make the trail system more inclusive.	
14 (tie) 9 VOTES	TOUCH People have a natural inclination and desire to be near water. The Nicomekl River - as a peaceful and meandering water feature - will attract visitors who'll want to get up close and personal, regardless if there's formal access or not.	
14 (tie) 9 VOTES	COMFORT The intersection of Fraser Highway at 208 Street is large, busy, and intimidating for pedestrians and cyclists. It's also a barrier for further trail connections to the Derek Doubleday Arboretum and beyond. The plan proposes redesigning the intersection and greening 208 Street (ie. street trees, cycling facilities) to improve the comfort and safety for those using active transportation modes in the area.	

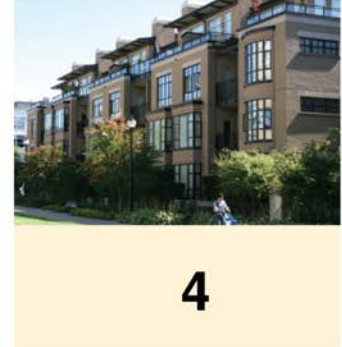
14 (tie) 9 VOTES	PORCH As the gateway to the Nicomekl, the City-owned property on 53A Avenue has redevelopment potential. The plan envisions a community and cultural destination with retail and a patio overlooking the Nicomekl River. Enhanced streetscaping and wayfinding will improve the connection to Douglas Park.	
17 (tie) 6 VOTES	INTESIFY The density maximums along 207 Street from Douglas Crescent to 53A Avenue could be increased to create an attractive and inviting street corridor that draws people from Downtown Langley. 207 Street is seen as the connection for the All Season Path "loop" and redevelopment here would enable its construction.	
17 (tie) 6 VOTES	POP-UP Near the end of 201a Street, an opportunity exists to incorporate a small or mobile vendor in the form of a seasonal cafe or ice cream shop. It would add a rest stop along the All Season Path and make the eventual Link to Sendall Gardens even more attractive.	
19 5 VOTES	LINK South of the Nicomekl, along 201a Street, there is an opportunity to redesign the right-of-way and include a more attractive pedestrian environment. This would increase the visibility of the Sendall Gardens and establish a formal link from the Nicomekl floodplain to Simonds Elementary and the Hydro corridor.	

<p>20 (tie) 3 VOTES</p>	<p>SCULPTURE TRAIL</p> <p>Along the various trails that meander in the floodplain, an opportunity exists to place sculptures in interesting locations to add whimsy to the experience of the floodplain.</p> <p>Ideally, the sculptures would have a similar aesthetic quality (i.e. similar material palette, background inspiration, and/or artist) helping tie them all together. Discovering all sculptures along the trail system would become a family-friendly activity and draw art enthusiasts to the neighbourhood.</p>	
<p>20 (tie) 3 VOTES</p>	<p>DISCOVERY</p> <p>The historic Michaud House presents a great opportunity to be the foundation for several cultural pavilions within the Library, linked by the Nicomekl trails, all within short distance of one another, and each telling the stories that make this area unique and special.</p>	
<p>22 1 VOTE</p>	<p>BRIDGE ART</p> <p>Four major transportation crossings over the Nicomekl River exist within the Plan area at 200, 203, and 208 Streets, and 51b Avenue. These crossings were identified as being underwhelming and unsafe from a design perspective.</p> <p>One way to make the River District more welcoming and attractive is to integrate art with the bridges. These could illuminate, enliven, and add colour to an environment that is presently cold and uninviting.</p>	

FORM & CHARACTER

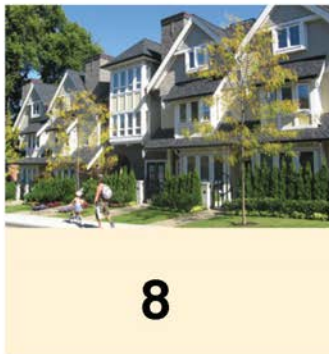
Apartment Buildings

The first two images depicting apartment buildings were the most popular. They show more variation in materials and more vibrancy in colour.



Townhomes

Again, the first two images depicting townhomes were the most popular. They show greater architectural articulation and material variation. Also, Individual units are more distinct from one another in the first two photos.



Trails & Paths

The most popular depictions of Trails and Paths were the first and third images. Both show a boardwalk, rather than a paved surface and they appear to be more integrated into their natural surroundings, with very little impact on the environment.



16



4



17

Wayfinding & Signage

Only one image – the second one – captured participants interest as it relates to wayfinding and signage. It depicts a more subtle expression with a wooden post. Words are used at a minimum and symbols are much more prominent.



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FLOOR MAP

The floor map acted as more of an open-ended forum for feedback. Participants were encouraged to write their thoughts on the preferred concept on a sticky note and leave it on the map. The following is a summary of those results, while a more thorough transcription of the input (104 total comments) is included afterwards.

Garden Wild

Enhance and protect trees, wildlife & natural environment (19)

Concerns about security, safety & privacy (11)

Do not touch anything (6)

Concerns about bridge, southern walkway (6)

Concerns about Corner Nook (6)

Support for new & accessible bridge, southern walkway (5)

Keep, maintain, control the blackberry hedges (5)

Concerns about cost & taxes (3)

Maintenance of existing paths & trails (3)

Parking & Traffic (3)

Other (6)

Living Room

Enhance and protect trees, wildlife & natural environment (2)

Concerns about All Season Path (2)

Traffic & Parking (2)

Other (7)

Library

Keep, maintain, control the blackberry hedges (4)

Protecting deer nursery area (2)

Protect salmon spawning (2)

First Nations recognition (2)

Fire escape/hazard signage (2)

Lighting for trails (2)

Other (4)

Front Porch

Floodplain management and ecological restoration (3)

Other (2)

COMMENTS

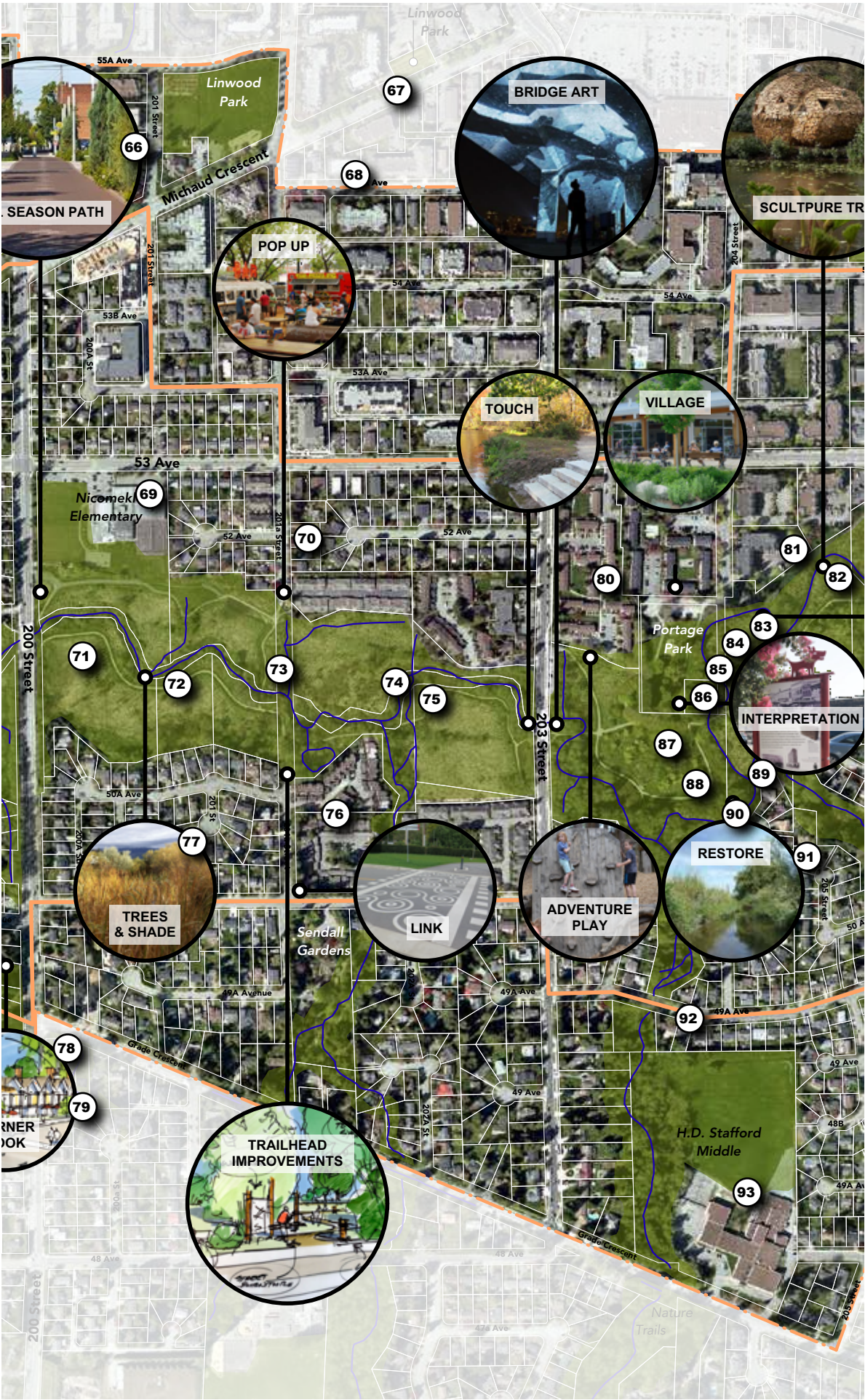
1. Put 53rd thru to 196th
2. If Langley City develops this area @ Brydon, what about the City of Surrey Side + BC Hydro right of way?
3. More trees
4. Maintain/upgrade paths to residences
5. Currently not enough parking @ Brydon Lagoon. What's the parking plan?
6. Green Heron, turtles, snakes, otters use these edges-especially NW corner
7. Pond needs new pumps or something to keep it going from going so straight
8. Wood ducks nest in these woods; also used by Little Brown Bats, a species at risk
9. We need to see a priority on protecting habitat here/maintaining "privacy"/protection for nesting
10. Gates on path, more bat boxes
11. Signal needed; "dogs on leashes", "no cycles"
12. Accessible bridge to High Knoll
13. Bryon Lagoon is an ecologically sensitive area supporting hundred of nesting birds and waterfowl. It must not be disturbed with artificial man-made structures. A treasure any city would love to have
14. Southern walkway not needed. Bridge a trails in High Knoll connect to Langley trails
15. Plenty at least entire south side
16. Police presence- lots of theft
17. Pathway/Privacy keep low 2' off of ground- not above flood level/more privacy
18. Pathway- concern about security/privacy, keep path low, nice idea- maybe relocate north side of river?
19. An elevated pathway will cost too much money to build- waste of tax payers money
20. Keep as many trees as possible here
21. Keep the blackberry hedge around the Lagoon. Keep dogs and joggers SAFE
22. Leave the blackberries by the lagoon-keep dogs at bay
23. Leave the wetland alone
24. No lookout- that's an owl nesting area. No people!
25. Leave alone!
26. Please keep the blackberry hedges for picking and for the birds
27. Remediation tributaries
28. No bike lanes
29. Improve wildlife areas and protect them
30. Stop the zoning to medium/high density in this area!
31. Please make a safe pedestrian crossing on 53rd Ave. from the path off Michaud to Brydon Lagoon
32. Birds like Virginia _____ and snipe use these ditches and edges of the marsh
33. Brydon Lagoon is supposed to be a "wildlife sanctuary" which means ducks and geese, fish, tortoises, herons (green heron), fish for Bald Eagles and cormorants. Keep it for wildlife which people love to see!
34. Take out blackberry but add native shrubs, waterfowl
35. Need privacy for nesting so dogs can't get in
36. Blackberry should be controlled but not gotten rid of
37. No lookout/walkway into the floodplain- it's special wetlands area
38. RCMP bike patrols presence is key, home security
39. Leave the natural habitat and wildlife alone
40. Habitat and salmon restoration and protection
41. Flooding! to the area and my property. Did you see Jan/Feb 2020? ie. Conder Creek?



42. Wildlife visit us daily. Deer/raccoons, ducks, etc. No thanks to development!!
43. Use existing path off of 50A to bridge to path don't build new path off of a cul-de-sac
44. Do not want extra traffic and parking on my quiet cul-de-sac!
45. I bought in this neighbourhood because it is quiet. Just how it is, is how it should stay
46. Privacy, wildlife, home security
47. Putting an access point at 51st, alongside Conder Creek concerns me: re-shoring up the creek. Also- will the backs of properties be fenced at City expense?
48. Langley has plenty of nice trails, focus on cleaning them out, maintaining them and making them safe. Focus on drugs and homeless.
49. No thank you to a path.
50. Massive concern on wildlife displacement (deer). Security will be compromised along southside of river residences. Solve the homeless and theft around our streets and bring down taxes.
51. Concerns about privacy
52. Great Blue Heron Rookery (nesting birds)
53. Heron Rookery, Eagle Nest
54. Connect sidewalk on south to Conder Park
55. Walkway in behind property-No
56. Shops here will bring too much crime and traffic for my kids walking to school
57. Streetlights for safety
58. I love the Corner Nook Idea
59. No walkway, no development on 200 + 50th Ave. Ecosystem!!
60. Retail at 200th and 50th is not needed. Too much traffic, no right turn out, safety for kids walking to school.
61. Brookwood is close enough for retail!
62. No retail- environmental impact wildlife!
63. Lower our taxes- forget these plans. Too much!
64. Please make a safe crosswalk, overpass or underpass connecting Penzer Park to the trails on the other side of 200th St.
65. Leave the floodplain alone! Do not remove blackberries. Leave the area wild- for the birds and animals, and the humans!

COMMENTS

- 66. Impractical? For parts of the floodplain at certain times of the year.
- 67. Homeless Shelter?
- 68. Washrooms
- 69. Traffic lights! Left turn since bike lanes
- 70. Parking 2 spaces per housing unit for condos and town houses
- 71. Save my tax money and leave the flood plain alone
- 72. Work with nature, not against it
- 73. First Nation consult- with Kwantlen FN
- 74. Habitat restoration-targeted areas
- 75. Keep the trails wild :)
- 76. Safety concerns throughout now
- 77. Must withstand flooding ie. cottonwoods
- 78. Don't want to see "light commercial" here. Brookwood is a stones throw away! This is a gateway for high density living
- 79. No town homes too much traffic. Environmental/wildlife impact- no infrastructure
- 80. Food trucks no- too much garbage
- 81. Deer nursery
- 82. Keep the blackberries
- 83. Keep the blackberries- Knot weed habitat!
- 84. Children's play areas mesh with landscape
- 85. First Nation's recognition- art, signage
- 86. No off-leash dogs- deer nursery area
- 87. Fire hazard signs
- 88. Signage regarding fire escape routes
- 89. Lighting along trails
- 90. Ecological restoration is important but we should be careful not to simplify the process into "invasive = bad". Species like Himalayan blackberry contribute to biodiversity by providing forage and structural complexity to the habitat. Species like reed canary grass ARE almost wholly negative because they form dense clumps that choke out water flows and reduce habitat. In summary, removing parts of blackberry thickets is preferable to removing it all.
- 91. Himalayan blackberry should be controlled but not removed; it is excellent wildlife and pollinator habitat and keeps people out of the water!
- 92. Be mindful of salmon spawning
- 93. Salmon spawning!



COMMENTS

94. Make Fraser Highway/208 intersection improvements a priority
95. Give this back to flood plain
96. Get rid of the blackberries with live goats (there is a contractor)
97. Work with First Nations on remediation and archaeology work and explore other partnership opportunities
98. Flood management that enhances habitat- not restricting it
99. No physical structures within Brydon Lagoon
100. Sanctioned public art under bridge (like wall at Stafford)
101. First Nations traditional language on signs
102. More skate parks
103. Lights in trails please to make safe!
104. 48th+208 left turn light, E>W

