



# PARTICIPANT INPUT SUMMARY

## Public Meeting: Washroom at Charleson Park South False Creek Seawall Improvements

Hosted by the City of Vancouver and Vancouver Park Board  
Tuesday, October 3, 2017 | 7:00pm – 9:30pm  
False Creek Co-op Amenity Room

Meeting facilitation and reporting by Susanna Haas Lyons, with support from Emme Lee  
Report: November 2017

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## BACKGROUND

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The City of Vancouver and Vancouver Park Board are improving conditions for people walking and cycling along the South False Creek Seawall between Cambie Bridge and Burrard Bridge. The South False Creek Seawall is the oldest section of Vancouver's seawall, dating back to 1975. It has a unique character and carries a high volume of people walking and cycling, especially in the summer months. The planned upgrades will improve the safety, capacity and comfort of this All Ages and Abilities (AAA) walking and cycling route.

During the public consultation for the South False Creek Seawall Improvements, seawall users - in particular seniors, parents, and persons with disabilities - identified the need for a public washroom between existing

facilities at the False Creek Community Centre at Granville Island, businesses at Stamps Landing, and the Creekside Community Centre in Olympic Village.

To meet this identified need, City Council and Park Board approved the installation of an automated public toilet (APT) at the north end of Ironwork Passage based on functional requirements<sup>1</sup> informed by the public consultation.

Once construction started, some community members expressed concerns about the proposed location, so the City and Park Board hosted a public meeting on October 3, 2017, to share details about the washroom siting and better understand community interests.

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<sup>1</sup> See page 6 for a list of the 5 functional requirements

## Meeting Purpose and Overview

This meeting was held to build greater understanding between the City, Park Board and South False Creek residents regarding the siting of an accessible public washroom near Charleson Park, and discuss next steps. The meeting was generally organized into five parts:

- Presentation from Engineering staff on washroom requirements and the City's analysis to date of various potential washroom locations;
- Individual participant feedback on comment cards;
- Presentations from three area residents about their concerns with some locations and preferences for others;
- Questions and comments from the broader group, followed by a vote to gauge support for three options discussed; and
- Discussion of next steps for choosing a site for the public toilet.

## Next Steps

Next steps towards choosing a site for a new public toilet on the South False Creek Seawall include:

- Project staff will review this report with leadership from City of Vancouver Engineering and Park Board;
- A small working group of resident and seawall user group representatives will review the objectives and concerns summarized in this report and explore potential washroom locations in more detail with the goal of designing a location that achieves as many objectives as possible; and
- The recommendations from this working group will be shared with City decision-makers.

The False Creek South Neighbourhood Association (FCSNA) will nominate working group representatives to represent resident perspectives and the first meeting will be held in November 2017.

Meeting participants are encouraged to review this document and send any important feedback to [seawall@vancouver.ca](mailto:seawall@vancouver.ca).

## MEETING SUMMARY

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About 100 people participated in the evening meeting, almost all of whom own a home and live in the area of Charleson Park. More than half of participants were age 65 and older, and one-third were age 45 to 64. Participants were broadly representative of Vancouver's gender composition. More detail on meeting attendees is provided in Attachment 1.

City of Vancouver Planning and Engineering staff, Park Board staff, as well as Park Board Commissioner Stuart Mackinnon were in attendance. The meeting was facilitated by Susanna Haas Lyons, and note-taking was provided by Emme Lee.

## Welcome and Introductions

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The meeting began with a review of the meeting purpose, agenda, and commitment from the City staff that participant input will be carefully reviewed by senior managers from the City and Park Board. The City announced they will convene a working group on the topic, comprised of residents, park users, and other community stakeholders. Participants indicated where they live, whether they had participated in consultation on the Seawall improvements previously, and their level of awareness about Automatic Public Toilets (APTs).

## Presentation 1: David Rawsthorne, City of Vancouver

David Rawsthorne, the lead transportation engineer for the seawall improvements, presented an brief overview of the project to date, the functional requirements for the public washroom, and analysis to date of three potential sites.

In May 2016, Vancouver City Council approved the provision of a public washroom near Ironwork Passage and allocated \$400,000 funding for construction. David presented five functional requirements for the new public washroom location. The site must be:

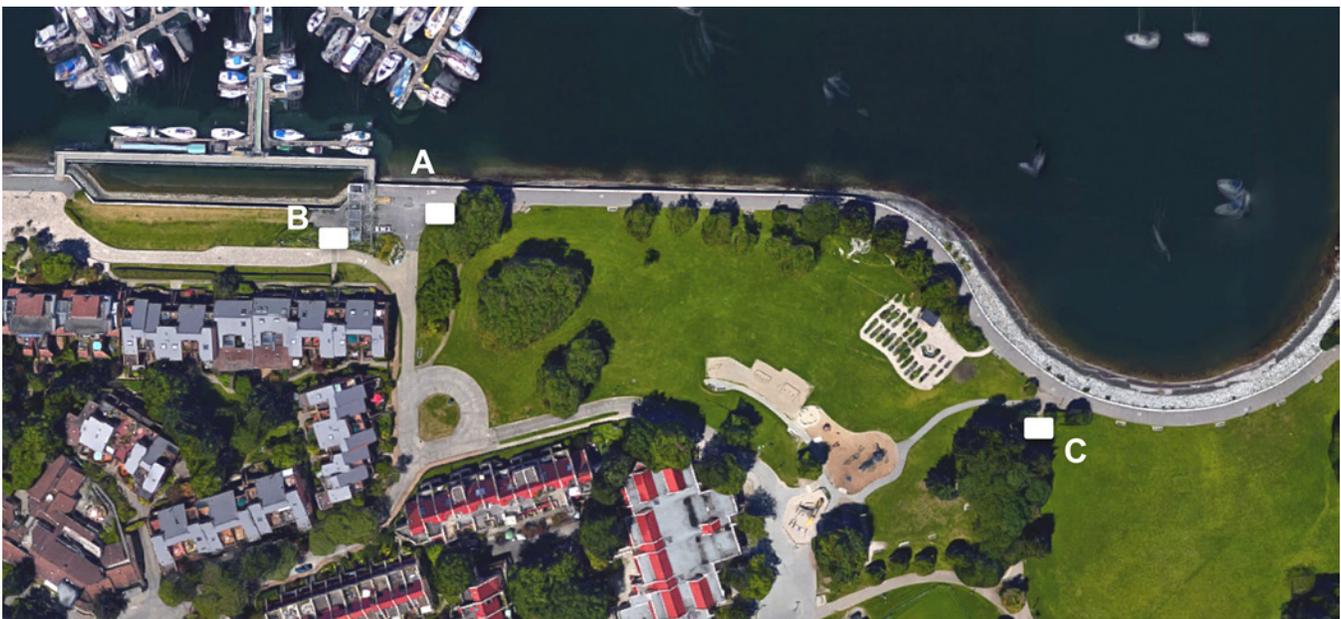
- Visible and close or next to the seawall
- Universally accessible structure and access route from the seawall (<5% grade)
- On City-controlled land with no leases or covenants that limit land use

- Serviceable from existing City water and sewer mains, and by telecom and power services
- Outside of clearance areas for existing underground infrastructure and tree root protection zones

The Park Board has directed that there be little/no loss of greenspace as a result of washroom siting.

David then presented three potential locations for the public washroom:

- **Site A:** the NW corner of Charleson Park on a paved surface currently used by the Marina for loading
- **Site B:** the garden area west of the Marina's garbage building
- **Site C:** Charleson Park on the east side of the path from the Laurel land bridge to the seawall



David then summarized how each location addresses the five functional requirements above, and presented the current cost estimate for each location.<sup>2</sup>

	SITE A	SITE B	SITE C
Foundation and site preparation	\$50,000	\$150,000	\$50,000
Water, sewer and electrical connections	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
Relocate existing storm drain	-	\$150,000	-
Extend water main to site (150m)	-	-	\$250,000
Extend sewer main to site (100m)	-	-	\$450,000
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>	<b>\$350,000</b>	<b>\$800,000</b>
Supply and deliver prefab washroom *	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$300,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$400,000</b>	<b>\$650,000</b>	<b>\$1,100,000</b>

\* by City street furniture program

<sup>2</sup> One of the City’s next steps includes preparing a more detailed design to further explore the most cost-effective means of extending water and sewer services to site C.

## Presentation 2: Geoff Freer, Marine Mews

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Geoff Freer, resident of Marine Mews and local volunteer, presented his assessment of the public washroom issue based on his interactions with a construction contractor and the Automatic Public Toilet (APT) manufacturer, his experience as a project manager of public infrastructure projects, and discussions with more than 300 people using Charleson Park and the surrounding area.

Geoff outlined two main concerns, the first of which focuses on public safety. Geoff expressed that the current proposed location (Site A) creates unreasonable risk because the area would be additionally congested, and the Marina loading zone, which is an essential area for Marina residents, is needed for turning vehicles around. Despite the seaside walkway improvements, which improve safety, there is still a lot of traffic, including people coming down from Laurel Street heading towards Granville Island; and, there will be continuing conflict between

pedestrians, cyclists, trucks, loading zone activity, service vehicles etc., in the area around the Marina loading zone. Public washroom traffic would add to the safety risk because it will increase the number of people in the area (using the washroom or lingering) and traffic conflicts between different users of that space.

Geoff's second point concerns the proximity of the public washroom to future potential users. The washroom should serve as many people as possible, and be located close to where the most people will need it — this means locating the public washroom in or near Charleson Park, which is closer to the soccer players, and those using the playground and dog park. He pointed out the locations of visible sewer infrastructure in and around Charleson Park, and expressed that there are alternative locations for locating the public washroom in that area, possibly near the dog park.



Geoff suggested that three additional criteria be added to the five design requirements defined by the City and Park Board (see p. 6):

- Public safety – and related risks due to congestion/traffic
- Residential impacts/views – including residents’ concerns such as noise, litter, and the impact on False Creek views

- Public washroom users – to include potential users from the park (in addition to those using the walkway).

He described that the current proposed location does not meet the City’s criteria of being located halfway between existing community centre washrooms, and locating the public washroom in Charleson Park or Stamps Landing would fulfill that criteria.

## Presentation 3: Rhonda Schuller, Spruce Harbour Marina

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Rhonda, a Director of Spruce Harbour Marina, provided an overview of the Marina residents and their lifestyle needs. The Marina has been around for 43 years, is the only co-op marina in North America, and is made up of 56 live-aboard families and 45 recreational boats, offering affordable and high-density housing options for its residents. The Marina has 3 building sheds: one for garbage & recycling, one for oil recycling, and a sewage pump-out and water main station, and maintains Caesar's bridge.

The community includes people of all ages and professions and has a range of needs and interests in terms of access to the seawall and loading zone area. They are committed and passionate about the lifestyle offered by marina living. Residents of the Marina regularly cross and access the seawall for everyday activities such as loading/unloading groceries, going to work or school, and receiving deliveries and

essential services. They agree that a public washroom is needed in the area and support the seawall upgrades, especially the separation of the bike and pedestrian lanes for safety.

The community's main concern with respect to the public washroom proposed location is the loading zone and vehicle area, which already poses some safety risk since vehicles are required to turnaround before exiting, and there is a fair bit of coming and going activity related to the daily lives of the Marina residents. If the space for turning vehicles around is further constrained, there is higher likelihood of safety-related risk. Lastly, the Charleson Park area is busy. Locating the public washroom closer to the park offers more overall benefit to the area because the a public washroom in Charleson Park would serve seawall users as well as those in Charleson Park.

## Presentation 4: Wendy Herdin, False Creek South Neighbourhood Association

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Wendy Herdin, President of the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association (FCSNA), shared the following FCSNA motion passed on September 6, 2017:

Dear Councillor Reimer and Councillor Affleck,

Re: Proposed Location of Public Washroom - False Creek South Seawall Upgrades

This is to advise you that by motion at the regular meeting of the False Creek South Neighbourhood Association on September 6, 2017, the Association has registered its opposition to the City's choice of location for a new public washroom.

This location is not in the interests of our community and would likely have particular negative impacts on adjacent residences.

We are mindful that there is no public washroom in or around Charleson Park and that the need for one has been evident for many years. Several alternatives to the City's chosen site have been proposed (including from the focus group established by the City) that could meet the needs of all concerned.

Accordingly, we are asking you for reconsideration of this decision and for serious consultation and consideration of alternatives.

Yours truly,

Wendy Herdin

President, False Creek South Neighbourhood Association

CC. Mayna Vancaillie, Karis Hiebert, False Creek South Neighborhood Association Delegates

# SUMMARY OF PARTICIPANT INPUT

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After the four presentations, meeting participants offered comments and posed questions to City and Park Board staff.

This section reports on participants' feedback on the South False Creek Seawall's accessible public washroom. Following the City's presentation on each topic, participants gave input via individual worksheets. As well, questions and comments shared throughout the session were captured by a notetaker. Key objectives and concerns raised in this participant input are summarized below.

Phrases in quotation marks are direct quotes from a participant, reflecting an idea heard from multiple participants.

## Input Specific to Sites at Ironwork Passage

1. A washroom next to Ironwork Passage will **reduce safety and increase congestion and conflicts** between Marina vehicles and other seawall users
  - “The two [public toilet] locations near Spruce Harbour Marina would cause congestion problems in high season – vehicles going to Marina, service vehicle for toilet maintenance, service vehicles for Marina. So many pedestrians and bike riders and people waiting for toilet.”
  - “Not in a loading zone/junction where there are multiple vehicle types (garbage trucks, service, delivery, cars) pulling in and backing out right where Site A is proposed and where pedestrians/cyclists will be.”
2. Site A **removes much-needed loading spaces and truck turnaround area** for the Marina
  - “The parking/loading zone area is needed by Marina residents and guests. A public washroom may reduce or have negative impacts on this space, decreasing access or making it more difficult for vehicles to turn around.”
  - The site should “Not take away parking that will affect disabled people like me accessing the temporary loading/unloading area when I go to the Marina.”
3. A washroom at Ironwork Passage is **too far from the park** to be used by park users
  - “Not close enough to where it's needed”
4. The proposed Ironworks Passage locations **impact views**
  - “View restrictions [for site location options] A & B – is not ‘some’ but over 60 residences – 50 Marina and at least 10 apartments. Consideration – keep [the

toilet] out of view.”

- “Doesn’t destroy view of boats and water for residents and visitors”, “I don’t want to look out my windows at a bathroom! I have a beautiful green view right now and this could ruin it.”

## Input Specific To Site C in Charleson Park

5. A washroom in Charleson Park will **serve park users and seawall users**

- “Best location is where Laurel Crossing sidewalk meet the seawall. That’s where the dog walkers, soccer players and seawall people are. Not in front of residences that will not use it”
- “The location of the public toilet should be at a destination point for all park users (near the sports field, playground and everything else in the centre of the park), not just on the seawall path.”

6. **Site C addresses community concerns** about Site A

- “Site C would accommodate the view restriction, proximity to homes, and noise concerns mentioned, and also accommodate the large gathering of people at the dog park throughout the day. Win-win – money well spent.”

## Input Applicable To All Potential Sites

7. The location should be **visible and convenient** to seawall and park users

- “Serve as many users as possible: seawall pedestrians, cyclists, park users, sports field users, community gardeners”, dog park, and playground users.
- “We need a place that can make people feel like a washroom was built here for the whole community, not just the seawall users.”
- Locate the washroom “close to heavy usage areas (e.g. dog park, soccer field)”
- Some park users currently use the berm and other treed areas as a bathroom.

8. Users should **not have to cross a path** to reach the toilet

- A public toilet location would be more safe for park users, particularly children, if they don’t have to cross the bike path or seawall to reach it.

9. The washroom should **not create noise, smell or safety impacts** on residents

- Concern that toilet may be used by drug users and sex workers, particularly at night.
- Keep in mind “considerations for noise and additional late night use.”

- “Don’t want bad odors near homes.”
- Ensure washrooms are well maintained.

10. **Cost should be only one consideration** in the choice of location

- “Listen to the desires and wants of the community, not cost estimates.”
- “Detailed cost estimate required to fully understand difference between options.”
- “Cost is an important consideration.”
- The existing sewer connection in the dog park was raised as an asset for Option C, and the City clarified these pipes do not have the capacity for a public toilet

11. Going forward, the City should put **more emphasis on the needs and preferences of local residents** when choosing a washroom location

- “Respect community – this is a very unique area and it is working well. Let’s not disrupt this. If we can’t do this right, let’s not do it.”
- “Please consider local residents and move this [the toilet location] to Site C. Majority of park users are by Site C. Put it near the park where people don’t live. I don’t want to look at this every day. This is my home. Surely the size of the audience says something to you.”
- Participants expressed the concern that their feedback isn’t being considered. The City affirmed that a decision has not been made, and public input is being carefully considered in exploring options for locating the accessible public toilet

## Closing Vote

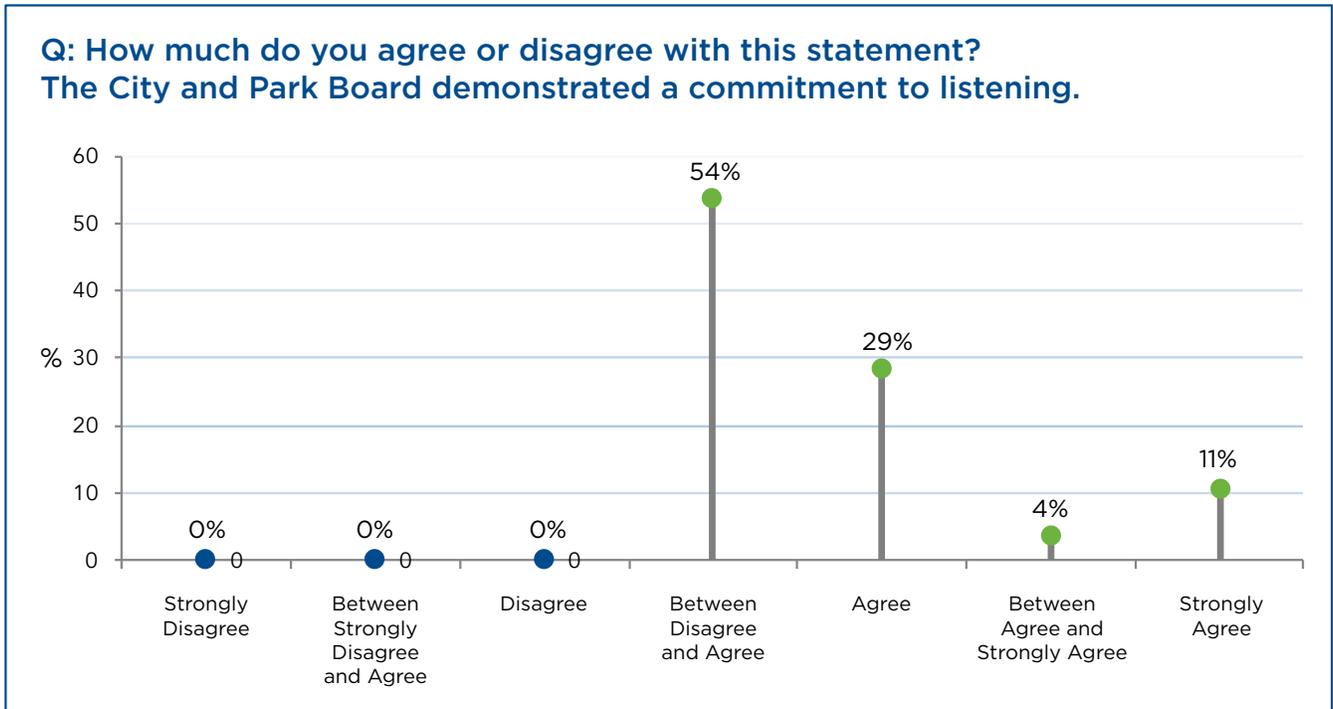
Participants requested a vote to express their preference regarding the proposed sites. Approximately 70 people were in the room at the time of the vote.

- Site A: 0
- Site B: 1
- Site C: 57
- Different location (unspecified): 26

Through both comments and a vote taken at the end of the meeting, participants overwhelmingly recommended the City pursue the toilet location site in Charleson Park, rather than a location on the seawall in the Charleson Park area.

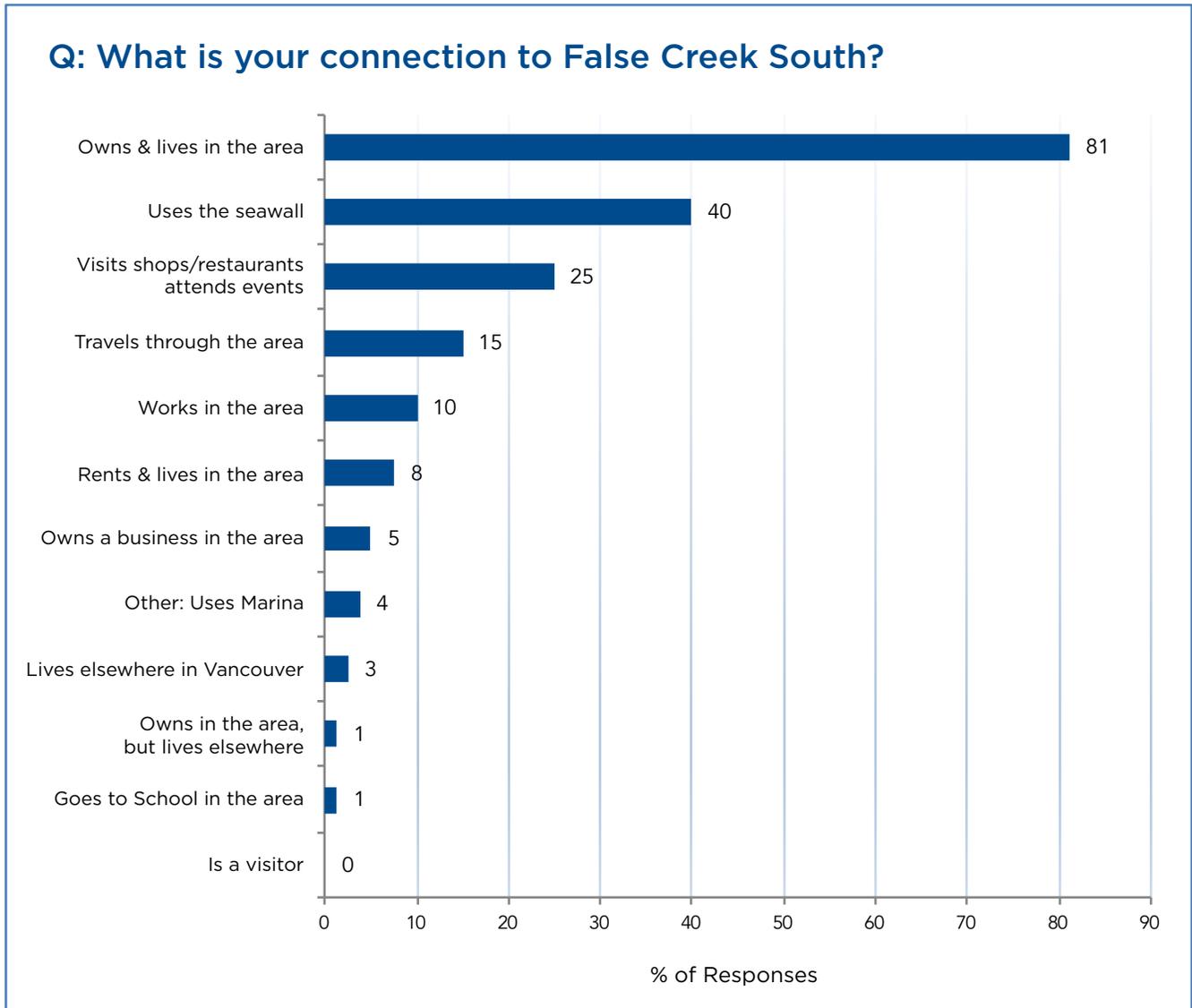
## Participant Feedback on the Meeting

Participants were asked one question to help evaluate the meeting; 28 people responded.



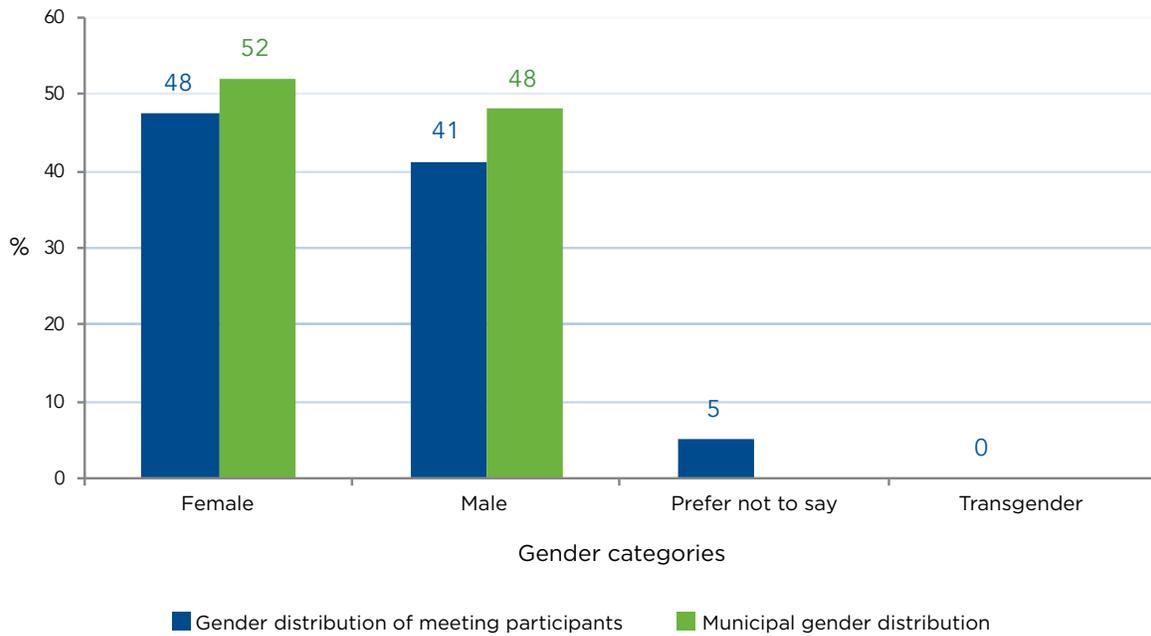
# ATTACHMENT 1: WHO PARTICIPATED

About 100 people participated in the evening meeting, the far majority of whom own a home and live in the area of Charleson Park. Participants who filled out a comment card were asked to share some demographic information, which is reflected in the tables below.



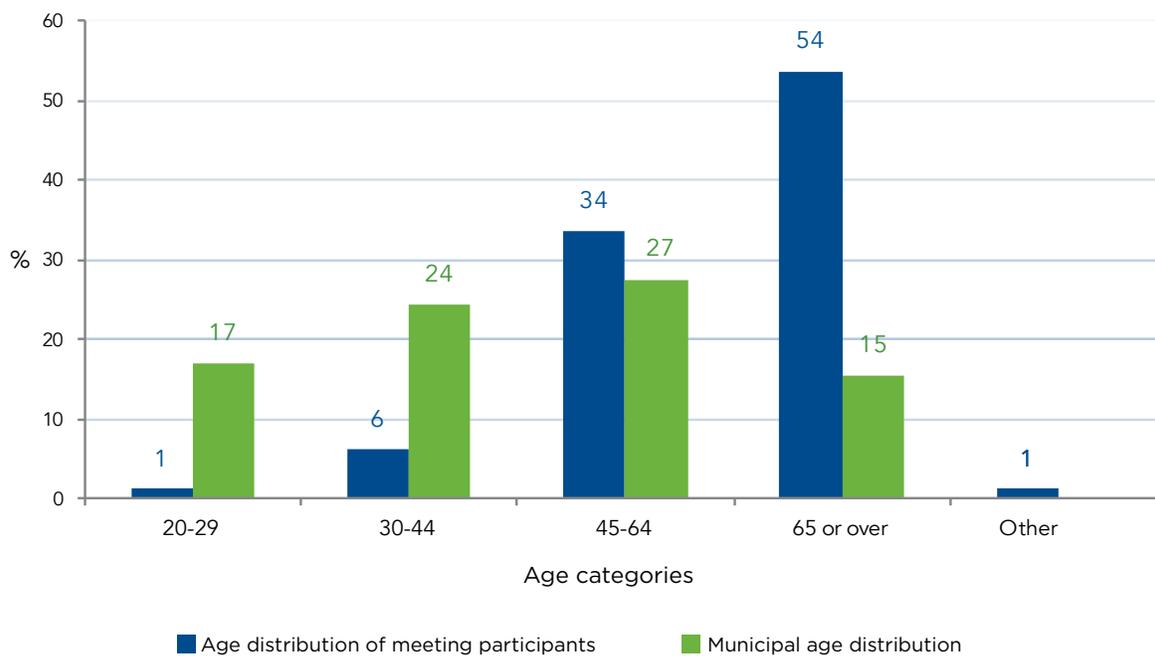
### Q: Do you identify as...?

Gender distribution of meeting participants compared with municipal distribution  
(Based on Vancouver Census data — Statistics Canada, 2016)



### Q: What age category are you in?

Age distribution of meeting participants compared with municipal age distribution  
(Based on Vancouver Census data — Statistics Canada, 2016)



Participants were also invited to respond to questions posed to the whole room. Participants stood or raised their hand when the statement was true about themselves.

