

# Sport Field Strategy



## “WHAT WE HEARD” REPORT #3







# ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW AND KEY FINDINGS

## WHY DID WE ENGAGE?

The Phase 3 engagement was undertaken to get feedback on the “big moves” – proposed larger projects and shifts to the sport field inventory. The feedback provided helps refine these key elements of the strategy and supports the development of the implementation plan.



*Ball Diamond in Vancouver*

# HOW DID WE ENGAGE?

## ENGAGEMENT TACTICS & PARTICIPATION



### PUBLIC SURVEY

Survey open to the public through Shape Your City

**580 responses**



### “POP-UP” EVENTS

Members of the project team engaged sport field users and residents at several citywide sites throughout July

**Six pop-ups (75+ participants / attendees)**



### STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSIONS

Focused discussion sessions were held with sport field user groups and representatives from Community Centre Associations

**Five sessions (including 16 sport user groups and permit holders represented)**



### VANCOUVER FIELD SPORT FEDERATION WORKSHOP

The project team held a workshop with members of the Vancouver Field Sport Federation to gather feedback on the “big moves” and provide an update on project progress and next steps

**16 total attendees representing a variety of sport field user groups**

## WHAT DID WE ASK ABOUT?

The public survey, pop-ups, discussion sessions and workshop were designed to gather feedback on the five “big moves”:

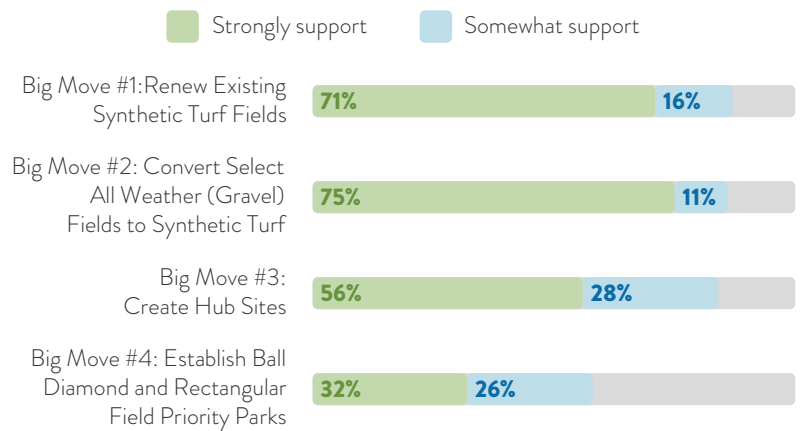
1. Renew existing synthetic turf fields.
2. Convert select all weather (gravel) fields to synthetic turf fields.
3. Create hub sites.
4. Establish dedicated ball diamond and rectangular field parks.
5. Establish sport specific priority fields.

# KEY THEMES FROM THE PHASE 3 ENGAGEMENT

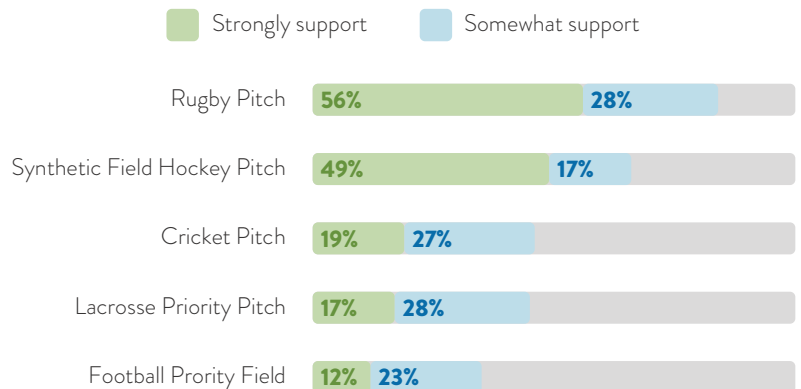
## PUBLIC SURVEY SUMMARY

The public survey gauged levels of support for the five potential “big moves”. The following graphs summarize the feedback received through the survey.

### LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR THE “BIG MOVES” #1 - 4



### LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR BIG MOVE #5: ESTABLISH SPORT-SPECIFIC PRIORITY FIELDS



## **THEMES FROM THE “POP-UP” EVENTS, STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSIONS, AND VANCOUVER FIELD SPORT FEDERATION WORKSHOP**

Field users, organization representatives and key stakeholders were engaged in dialogue on the “big moves” to get their perspectives on what they like and potential concerns. Key themes are identified as follows.

- Sport field user groups were generally supportive of the “big moves”, especially the opportunity to increase functional field capacity through the fall and winter months and developing hub sites.
- Reiterating feedback from previous engagement phases, many groups also indicated that undertaking smaller field improvements is important and could reduce the urgency for bigger projects. Types of improvements regularly identified included fencing repairs, improved and/or added washrooms, and increased supply of secure storage.
- Minimizing the impacts on existing field users was commonly expressed as an important consideration as the “big moves” are further explored. Many groups have long-standing tenure at certain sites and communication and dialogue will be key to avoid displacing these groups.
- While strong levels of support exist for increased synthetic turf provision, opponents to continued or increased use of this surface typology reiterated a number of human health and environmental concerns.

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# 1. ABOUT THE SPORT FIELD STRATEGY

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

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

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



*Two young people playing soccer.*


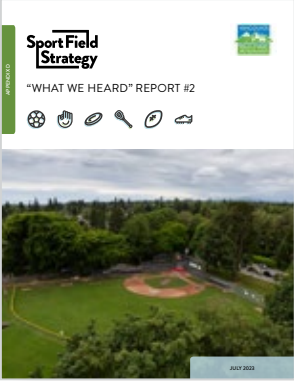
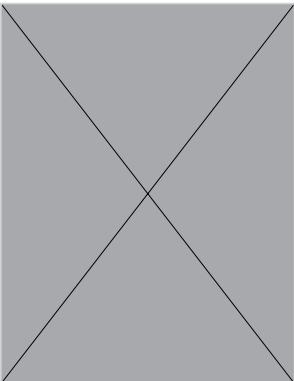
## 2. THE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

The sport field system in Vancouver is diverse, complex and impacts many citizens in Vancouver. Engagement with residents, user groups, and other community interest groups is therefore a critical aspect of developing the strategy.

*Football players raising helmets*



The project engagement encompassed three phases:

Phase	Focus	Reference
<p><b>Phase 1 Engagement</b></p> 	<p>Understanding the factors that drive sport field use and participation in Vancouver, including local trends (e.g., which sports are becoming more or less popular), potential barriers to access, and potential priorities.</p>	<p>The Phase 1 engagement findings can be found in the <a href="#"><u>“What We Heard” Report #1.</u></a></p>
<p><b>Phase 2 Engagement</b></p> 	<p>Gathering feedback on the draft strategy foundations, including the guiding principles, directions, and site selection criteria. This phase of engagement helped to inform the development of the strategy’s “big moves”.</p>	<p>The Phase 2 engagement findings can be found in the <a href="#"><u>“What We Heard” Report #2.</u></a></p>
<p><b>Phase 3 Engagement</b></p> 	<p>Gathering feedback on the five “big moves” which will inform the significant capital project types within the strategy’s implementation plan and a list of potential capital projects.</p>	<p>This report contains the findings from Phase 3 engagement</p>

# 3. PHASE 3 ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

## OVERVIEW & METHODOLOGY

A public survey was made available through Shape Your City – the City of Vancouver’s public engagement platform. The survey was open from July 7 – 23, 2023 and gathered 580 total responses.

### HOW WAS THE SURVEY PROMOTED?

- 200 postcards sent to 25 community centres, including translated versions in Traditional Chinese, Simplified Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Punjabi
- 120 site signs at 79 parks and sport field locations
- 117 surveys sent to registered email recipients
- 350 permit holders were invited to participate in the survey.
- Promoted through the Park Board social media feeds, reaching an estimated 70,000 people.
- Promoted at the “Pop-Up” events using display boards and postcard handouts.

## KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SURVEY RESPONDENTS



**The majority of respondents have children in their household.** 73% indicated that they have children residing in their household (61% were couples with children).



**Fairly even mix of responses by gender.** 48% of respondents identified as men, 43% identified as women. Eight percent of respondents preferred not to indicate their gender and less than one percent indicated that they prefer to self describe or identify non-binary/ gender diverse.



**One-quarter of respondents to the survey identified as being of non-European descent.** Of the respondents that indicated a non-European ethnic origin (25%), 12% indicated that they are of Asian descent and six percent indicated that they are of South Asian descent.



**Approximately half of respondents are members of a sport group that has field permit with the Park Board.** 53% of respondents indicated that they are members of an organization that permits fields.

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



# SURVEY FINDINGS

Below are the survey results on the proposed ‘big moves’. Responses representative of particular user groups are highlighted for comparison. Survey participants were provided with resources to help inform their responses, including **information boards** with a refresher on the Phase 2 engagement items (guiding principles, directions, and site selection criteria) as well as context and background rationale on the five “big moves”. A brief description of each “big move” is provided in this section before the survey results.

## THE FIVE “BIG MOVES”

1. Renew existing synthetic turf fields
2. Convert select all weather (gravel) fields to synthetic turf fields
3. Create hub sites
4. Establish dedicated ball diamond and rectangular field parks
5. Establish sport-specific priority fields

## OVERVIEW OF BIG MOVE #1: RENEW EXISTING SYNTHETIC TURF FIELDS

Many of the synthetic turf fields’ surfaces are past or nearing manufacturer’s lifespan and in need of renewal. Community engagement (Phases 1 and 2) along with research on human health and environment support the continued use of synthetic turf to maximize use of available lands to meet community sport needs, including year-round play.

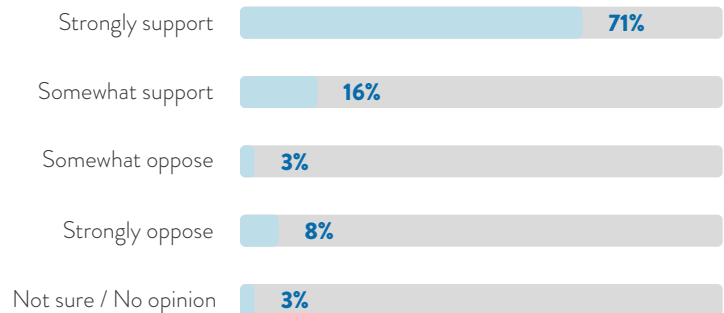
Renewal of synthetic turf fields means replacing synthetic field surfaces that are past their lifespan with new surfacing that meets current standards to ensure that the field best aligns with current user needs. Renewals ensure the fields are safe and have adequate amenities, maximizing year-round sport field opportunities.

## WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT BIG MOVE #1: RENEW EXISTING SYNTHETIC TURF FIELDS

### OVERALL LEVEL OF SUPPORT

When asked about overall level of support for Big Move #1: Renew Existing Synthetic Turf Fields, most respondents indicated support (87%) while 11% opposed this “big move”.

### OVERALL SUPPORT FOR BIG MOVE #1: RENEW EXISTING SYNTHETIC TURF FIELDS



### USER GROUP RESPONSES

14 out of 15 user groups indicated that they either strongly support (11 groups) or somewhat support (three groups) the “big move” to renew existing synthetic turf fields. One group indicated that they were not sure/ had no opinion.

Respondents were asked to explain why they support or oppose Big Move #1: Renew Existing Synthetic Turf Fields. Summarized below are key themes from the 469 comments provided.

- Replacing the old synthetic turf fields is important for player/user safety.
- It is important to maintain the fields that the city already has.
- Renewing existing synthetic turf fields will help to ensure maximum play year-round, especially during rainy seasons.
- Providing synthetic turf fields is an important part of supporting sport development and event hosting in the city. Sports such as soccer and field hockey play mainly from September to March, months with inclement weather.
- Many sport field users advocated for their own interest and type of sport field in the comments (e.g. synthetic turf typologies best suited to their sport).
- The current inventory of synthetic turf fields is well used and there is a need for more of them.
- While it is preferable to play on natural grass, there is a practical need for synthetic turf fields to maximize use of available land and sport field capacity.
- Comments not supportive of renewing synthetic turf fields primarily cited injury / human health and environmental impacts.

## OVERVIEW OF BIG MOVE #2: CONVERT SELECT ALL WEATHER (GRAVEL) FIELDS TO SYNTHETIC TURF FIELDS

User groups have expressed concerns over playability and risk of injury on all weather fields, which were typically installed prior to wider development of synthetic turf. They are often in parks with complementary amenities such as parking, lighting, and community centres which makes these fields good candidates for synthetic turf. Existing all weather fields that are not included as potential sites did not adequately meet the site selection criteria, including size of the existing field and lack of supporting infrastructure.

Conversion of select all weather fields to synthetic turf fields means, for each select location, developing a new synthetic turf field in the same location as an existing all weather field. In some cases, field amenities may also be upgraded.

*West Point Grey Field*

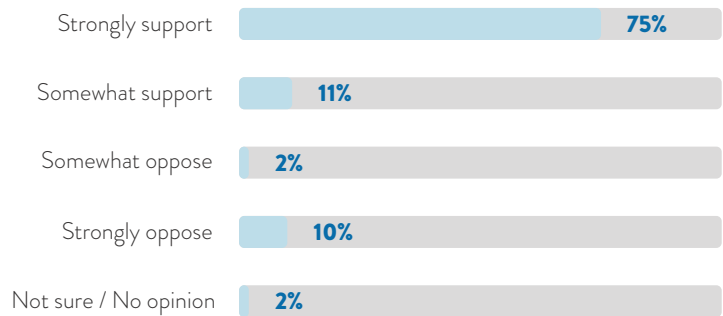


## WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT BIG MOVE #2: CONVERT SELECT ALL WEATHER (GRAVEL) FIELDS TO SYNTHETIC TURF

### OVERALL LEVEL OF SUPPORT

When asked about overall level of support for Big Move #2: Convert Select All Weather (Gravel) Fields to Synthetic Turf, the majority of respondents indicated support (86%) with a small number of respondents opposing this “big move” (12%).

### OVERALL SUPPORT FOR BIG MOVE #2: CONVERT SELECT ALL WEATHER (GRAVEL) FIELDS TO SYNTHETIC TURF



### USER GROUP RESPONSES

12 out of 15 user groups indicated that they strongly support the “big move” to convert all weather (gravel) fields to synthetic turf. Two groups indicated that they somewhat opposed the move and one group indicated that they were not sure/ had no opinion.



Respondents were asked to explain why they support or oppose Big Move #2: Convert Select All Weather (Gravel) Fields to Synthetic Turf. The following points capture key themes from the 456 comments provided.

- There was a general dislike of gravel fields due to the belief that players are injured more often while playing on gravel fields than any other field type. Uneven playing surfaces, large puddles, and the wear and tear on sport equipment were also noted as negative qualities of gravel fields.
- Some respondents suggested or questioned whether conversion to natural grass may be worth considering or a better approach.
- Some respondents asked why Clinton and Strathcona Park fields are not listed among the potential sites.
- Converting all weather (gravel fields) to synthetic turf fields could help achieve better balance and improve access to synthetic turf across the city.
- Those in opposition of this “big move” identified health and environmental considerations. Comments were also provided regarding use of taxpayer dollars relative to other city priorities.



## FEEDBACK ON POTENTIAL PROJECT SITES

Respondents were also asked to identify any strengths and/or constraints that should be considered for each of the potential sites. Summarized below are the key themes from the 844 comments provided.

### POTENTIAL PROJECTS

Potential sites	Site specific comments themes
Beaconsfield Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most provided positive comments regarding the conversion of Beaconsfield Park to synthetic turf. Survey respondents expressed excitement about the opportunity as there are both growing soccer and field hockey programs close to this location. Some concern was expressed for potential drainage issues as residents of the area already experience flooding around the park.</li> <li>• Converting Beaconsfield Park’s all weather (gravel) field will help to more evenly distribute synthetic turf fields across the city.</li> </ul>
John Hendry Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The John Hendry Park location received mostly positive comments, however some concern was expressed regarding the potential impacts on the fields used for rugby. Many respondents wanted to ensure that they would still be able to play rugby at the location.</li> <li>• There is some concern that a synthetic turf field at John Hendry would take away from the beauty and current atmosphere of the park.</li> </ul>
Killarney Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments regarding Killarney Park indicated that respondents are happy about the potential to have a synthetic turf field in south east Vancouver and suggest that the field would be well used by the nearby school.</li> <li>• Some concern was expressed regarding how accessible the site is by public transit.</li> </ul>
Oak Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In general, the Oak Park site was supported by most respondents for conversion.</li> <li>• A number of different opinions exist on the targeted types of sport field activity use that would be most appropriate for a synthetic turf field at this site.</li> </ul>



## ADDITIONAL COMMENT THEMES

Comments were also provided that are applicable across all or multiple sites. Themes from these comments are summarized below.

- Parking is a concern for all four potential project locations.
- Field size should be a primary consideration in the selection of retrofit sites to enable maximum flexibility and ensure suitability for a wide array of field sports.
- Turf field conversions, upgrades to washrooms, bench seating and other amenities on site should be prioritized and completed simultaneously.



## OVERVIEW OF BIG MOVE #3: CREATE HUB SITES

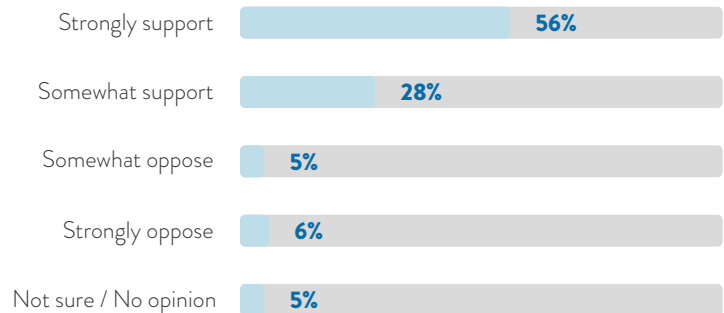
Providing three or more quality fields at a park provides opportunities and efficiencies for both tournament hosting and simultaneous programming. During the Phase 1 engagement, sport field user groups identified a need for multi-field sites that can accommodate tournaments. The Phase 2 engagement further validated user preference for these types of sites. Hub sites will offer a total of three or more Class A and / or synthetic turf fields at one park.

### WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT BIG MOVE#3: CREATE HUB SITES

#### OVERALL LEVEL OF SUPPORT

When asked about their overall level of support for Big Move #3: Create Hub Sites, the majority of respondents were supportive (84%), while 11% of respondents opposed this “big move”.

#### OVERALL SUPPORT FOR BIG MOVE #3: CREATE HUB SITES



#### USER GROUP RESPONSES

Seven out of 14 user groups indicated that they strongly support and two groups somewhat support the move to create hub sites. Two groups indicated that they somewhat opposed the “big move” and three groups indicated that they were not sure/ had no opinion.

Respondents were asked to explain why they support or oppose Big Move #3: Create Hub Sites. Summarized below are the key themes from the 358 comments provided.

- Hubs should be located in a way that optimally supports tournament play.
- Sport field locations with multiple fields are helpful for organizations that coordinate multiple games/ practices in an evening. It is also helpful for parents whose children play on different teams or in some cases play different sports.
- Concerns that other park uses would be reduced to accommodate tournaments regularly.
- Optimism about the potential economic benefits of hosting more tournaments at the potential hub sites.
- Some questions around whether the resources exist within the Park Board to maintain more premier field / hub sites.
- Concerns around emphasizing competitive organized sports over neighbourhood use of the park.
- Some comments expressed general support for the notion of more hub sites but, also reiterated concerns over new synthetic turf fields as part of these new or expanded hubs.

*Baseball player holding two baseballs*





## FEEDBACK ON POTENTIAL HUB SITES

The respondents were asked to identify any strengths and/or constraints that should be considered for each potential hub site. The following table identifies key themes from the site specific feedback provided.

### POTENTIAL HUB SITES

Potential sites	Site specific feedback themes
Churchill School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive feedback regarding the Churchill location due to its centrality and accessibility by transit.</li> <li>• Support for a partnership with VSB at Churchill School on the condition that there is washroom access for groups after school hours.</li> </ul>
Connaught Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerns around the competing interests at Connaught Park such as organized sports and casual recreational park use. These comments generally expressed that the creation of a hub site at this location will increase the contention between sport groups, especially if one sport is prioritized over others. Cricket and rugby players in particular expressed concern that their sport will be left out of the plans for this location.</li> <li>• Some believe that the west side of the city is already well served and that Connaught improvements should not be prioritized over other underserved areas.</li> </ul>
John Hendry Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mixed viewpoints were expressed on John Hendry Park as a hub site. Some commented that the natural space value John Hendry Park provides in an area of the city with minimal similar spaces could be impacted by this park becoming a hub site. Conversely, other comments expressed the need to provide more active recreation and sport spaces in east Vancouver.</li> </ul>
Killarney Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive response towards Killarney due to its size, potential space for growth and accessible location for those travelling for tournaments.</li> <li>• Some concerns were expressed around the lack of SkyTrain access.</li> <li>• Positive feedback on the prospect of a synthetic turf field at Killarney as there are no synthetic turf fields in south east Vancouver.</li> </ul>

## ADDITIONAL COMMENT THEMES

The following bullets reflect additional comment themes about potential hub sites.

- The current activities that take place at hub sites need to be considered in order to avoid displacing existing users.
- It is important to minimize field closure time/duration as sites are upgraded into hubs.
- Parking supply needs to be prioritized as potential hub sites are further analyzed.



*Young girl playing softball*

## OVERVIEW OF BIG MOVE #4: ESTABLISH DEDICATED BALL DIAMOND AND RECTANGULAR FIELD PARKS

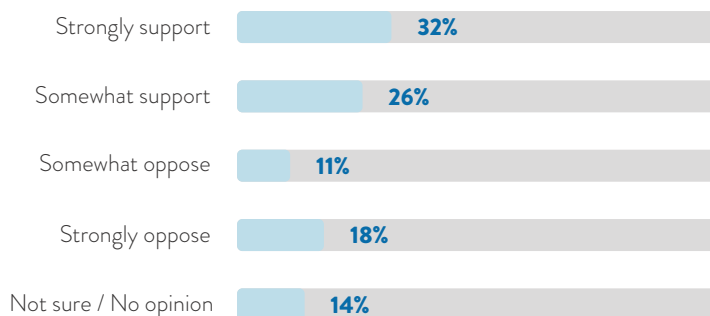
While overlapping fields allow the provision of more sport fields and more capacity in limited space, establishing a small number of dedicated ball diamond or rectangular field parks, with no overlap would allow specific infrastructure, like permanent outfield fences, at these locations for better user experience. It would also allow for more efficient maintenance and longer field booking seasons.

### WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT BIG MOVE #4: ESTABLISH BALL DIAMOND AND RECTANGULAR FIELD PRIORITY PARKS

#### OVERALL LEVEL OF SUPPORT

When asked about overall level of support for Big Move #4: Establish Ball Diamond and Rectangular Field Priority Parks, over half of respondents indicated support (58%) while 29% opposed the “big move” and 14% had no opinion.

#### OVERALL SUPPORT FOR BIG MOVE #4: ESTABLISH BALL DIAMOND AND RECTANGULAR FIELD PRIORITY PARKS



#### USER GROUP RESPONSES

10 out of 15 user groups indicated support for the “big move” (five strongly support and five somewhat support). Two groups expressed that they opposed the “big move”. Three groups indicated they were not sure/ had no opinion.

Respondents were asked to explain why they support or oppose Big Move #4: Establish Ball Diamond and Rectangular Field Priority Parks. Summarized as follows are the key themes from the 315 comments provided.

- Prioritizing specific uses would improve user experience.
- Creating the priority parks could limit neighbourhood use, especially if fencing is involved with ball diamond priority parks.
- Ball diamonds are not well used and are already limited to single sport use for only a few months of the year.
- Participants will have to travel further to play their sport of choice.
- Creating priority sites will reduce flexibility of the sites. Some believe that the fields/ sites will become harder to schedule the maximum amount of use and would maximize repetitive impact of single sport vs distributing the impact across multiple sports and different seasons.

*View behind the batter at an adult baseball game*





## OVERVIEW OF BIG #5: ESTABLISH SPORT-SPECIFIC PRIORITY FIELDS

Developing fields that can better accommodate underserved or emerging sports would support the growth of these sports. It would also reduce maintenance issues and conflicts between uses that can occur when field sports are played on surfaces that are not suitable to that sport’s unique needs.

The following sport-specific field projects have been identified for consideration as part of this “big move”:

- Develop at least one new field hockey pitch at a new or renewed synthetic turf field.
- Develop at least one lacrosse priority pitch.
- Develop or upgrade at least one cricket field.
- Develop or upgrade at least one rugby priority pitch.
- Develop or upgrade at least one football priority pitch.

*Lacrosse team holding up their lacrosse sticks*





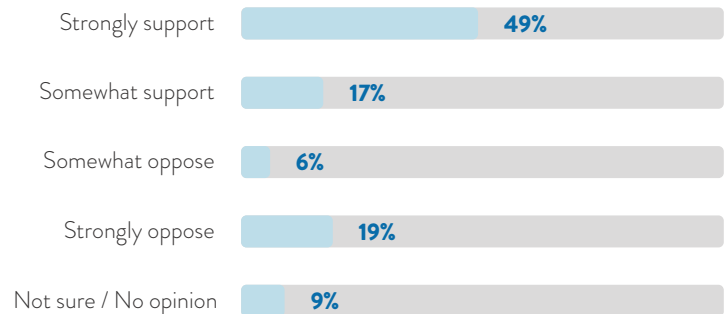
## WHAT WE HEARD ABOUT BIG MOVE #5: ESTABLISH SPORT-SPECIFIC PRIORITY FIELDS

For Big Move #5: Establish Sport-Specific Priority Fields, respondents were asked to indicate their level of support for each of the dedicated or priority field types identified.

### OVERALL SUPPORT FOR A NEW FIELD HOCKEY PITCH AT A NEW OR RENEWED SYNTHETIC TURF FIELD

The majority of respondents indicated that they support the development of a new field hockey pitch at a new or renewed synthetic turf field (66% strongly or somewhat support). One-quarter of respondents (25%) indicated that they oppose this move.

### LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPING AT LEAST ONE NEW FIELD HOCKEY PITCH AT A NEW OR RENEWED SYNTHETIC TURF FIELD



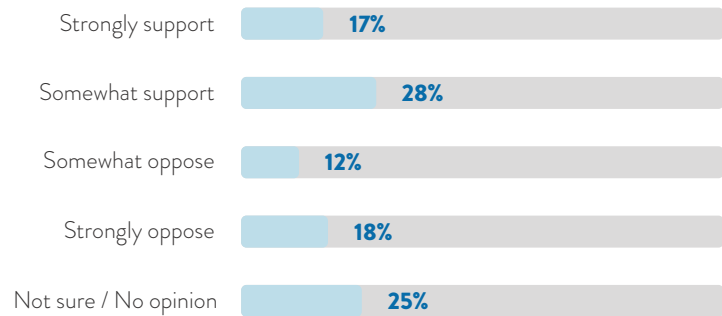
Respondents were asked to explain why they support or oppose the development of a field hockey pitch. Summarized as follows are the key themes from the 381 comments provided.

- The field hockey community feels strongly that they require another pitch in Vancouver. The sport is growing and players are passionate that the sport will continue to grow with an increase / improvement in the current infrastructure.
- Field hockey is a popular sport among female athletes. A number of comments provided identified the relative low cost and inclusiveness as potential drivers of growth.
- Field hockey is played on a specific field type and it is important to ensure that high level athletes have access to the proper surface type to progress the sport.
- Some respondents felt that field hockey already has a greater allocation of fields per player than other sports in the community. Many of these comments reiterated that all fields should be multi-use and not prioritize one sport or activity over another.

## OVERALL SUPPORT FOR A LACROSSE PRIORITY PITCH

When asked about their level of support for developing at least one lacrosse priority pitch, just under half of respondents indicated some level of support (45% strongly or somewhat support) with 30% of respondents indicating some level of opposition. One-quarter of respondents were unsure or had no opinion.

## LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPING AT LEAST ONE LACROSSE PRIORITY PITCH



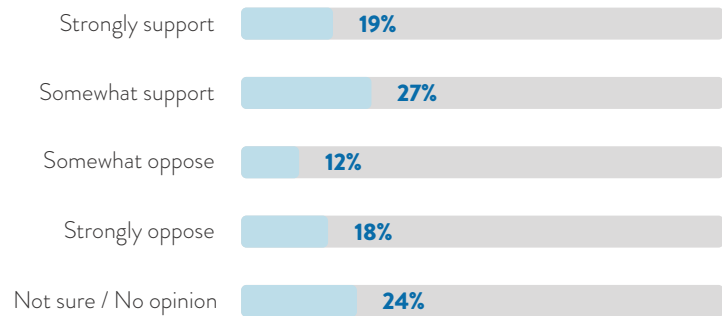
Respondents were then asked to explain why they support or oppose the development of lacrosse priority pitch. Summarized as follows are the key themes received from the 231 comments provided.

- Importance of this sport having its own pitch because of its origin and cultural significance for Indigenous peoples.
- The sport may grow if more suitable infrastructure is provided.
- Adding more lacrosse specific amenities to existing fields and allocating more time to the sport could support growth and wouldn't necessitate developing dedicated fields.
- All fields should be multi-use and no sport use should be prioritized over another.
- Unclear on the demand of this sport.

## OVERALL SUPPORT FOR A CRICKET FIELD

When asked about their level of support for developing or upgrading at least one cricket field, just under half of respondents indicated some level of support (46% strongly or somewhat support) with 30% of respondents indicating some level of opposition. Just under one-quarter of respondents (24%) were unsure or had no opinion.

## LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPING AT LEAST ONE CRICKET FIELD



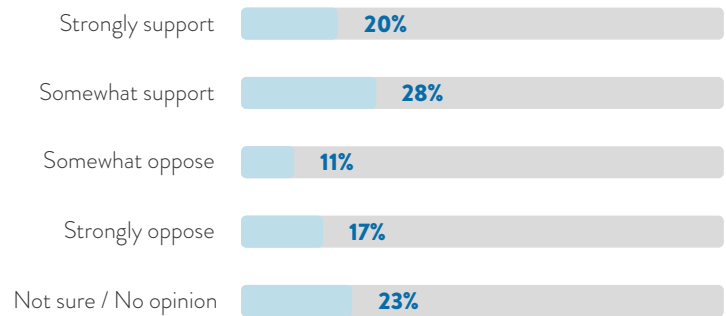
Respondents were asked to explain why they support or oppose the development of a cricket field. Summarized as follows are the key themes from the 254 comments provided.

- Support for upgrading what already exists for cricket infrastructure.
- Immigrant communities who are underserved may benefit culturally and socially from this sport.
- All fields should be multi-use and no sport use should be prioritized over another was again reiterated as it pertains to this field type.
- Converting multi-use fields exclusively for cricket reduces equitable access for community members.
- Cricket requires too much space for what many respondents consider a small or niche user group.

## OVERALL SUPPORT FOR A RUGBY PRIORITY PITCH

When asked about their level of support for developing or upgrading at least one rugby pitch, just under half of respondents indicated some level of support (48% strongly or somewhat support). 28% of respondents indicated that they oppose developing incremental rugby infrastructure and 23% were unsure or had no opinion.

## LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPING AT LEAST ONE RUGBY PITCH



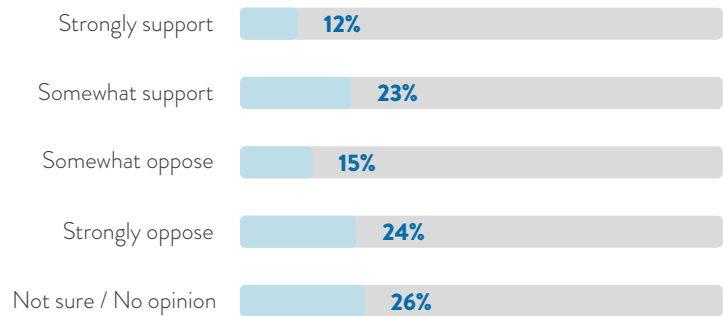
Respondents were then asked to explain why they support or oppose the development of a rugby pitch. Summarized as follows are the key themes from the 222 comments provided.

- The sport has growing popularity with female participants.
- Vancouver has produced provincial and national team players, and feel that providing a hosting venue for the sport would advance it further.
- Unclear on the popularity of this sport and whether it requires its own pitch.
- Rugby can be hard on grass pitches, both on the body and on the pitch itself. Having a dedicated field where the grass can be kept longer would be helpful for both.

## OVERALL SUPPORT FOR A FOOTBALL PRIORITY PITCH

A similar proportion of respondents were supportive (35%) and opposed (39%) to this “big move”. Notably, a high proportion of respondents (26%) provided a not sure / no opinion response.

## LEVEL OF SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPING AT LEAST ONE FOOTBALL PRIORITY PITCH



Respondents were asked to explain why they support or oppose the development of a football pitch. Summarized as follows are the key themes from the 224 comments provided.

- The development or upgrading of football fields would increase interest in the sport.
- All fields should be multi-use and football needs can be accommodated at multi-use rectangular fields by using painted lines.
- Comments provided noted the perception that the sport is primarily played by male athletes and questioned the need for a dedicated field.
- The health dangers of football, specifically concussions, were identified in a number of comments.



## GENERAL COMMENTS REGARDING THE SPORT FIELD STRATEGY “BIG MOVES”

Respondents were asked if they had any additional or general comments regarding the “big moves”. In total 259 comments were provided. Many of the comments reiterated those made previously throughout the survey. The following points represent different comments or summarize previously stated perspectives that applied across the various dedicated or priority field questions.

- Geographic distribution of fields across the east and south side of Vancouver is important.
- The addition of lights and increasing the maintenance of existing fields is important and should be prioritized alongside the development of new fields.
- Multi-use fields should be a priority. While some of the comments reiterated needs for specific types of surfaces and field dimensions, a general theme in these comments was the need for sport field investment to benefit as many groups and individuals as possible.
- Parking is a concern. Fees associated with parking at fields for practice or games and the overall amount of available parking and impact on neighbourhoods were noted.
- Advocacy for and against synthetic turf fields development and renewal was a prominent theme included within the general comments provided. Those who support synthetic turf expressed that it is important to increase capacity during the winter and rainy seasons and believe that increased synthetic turf sport field provision would help optimize sport development opportunities. Those in opposition to synthetic turf fields believe that the human health and the environment risks are too significant.

## 4. OTHER ENGAGEMENT METHODS

Beyond the survey, several other engagement tactics were employed to gather feedback on the “big moves”. This section describes these methods.



*Youth girls playing soccer*

# POP-UP EVENTS

## OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Members of the project team engaged sport field users and residents at six pop-up citywide locations<sup>1</sup> in July. The following points summarize the format, participation, and themes from comments received at the events.

- Approximately 70+ people were engaged over the six pop-up events.
- **Phase 3 information boards** provided people with an overview of the project as well as information encouraging their feedback on the draft content. Additionally, people were able to provide comment forms.
- The most frequently mentioned comments included the following:
  - » Support for converting gravel fields to synthetic turf in some locations;
  - » Concern about the potential health and environmental impacts of synthetic turf; and,
  - » A desire to have a dedicated area for off leash dogs and the reality that many sport fields are used for this purpose.
- Some suggestions were offered about different turf field fill types (e.g. walnut, rubber) and desires for additional sport field lighting were mentioned.



1 Trout Lake, Hastings Community Centre, Connaught Park, Andy Livingstone Park, and Sunset Community Centre (2)



# STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSIONS

## OVERVIEW & METHODOLOGY

The project team hosted five discussion sessions to gather additional feedback from organized sport field user groups, program providers, and key stakeholders. The sessions were organized as follows:

- Two sessions focused on ball diamond user groups and permit holders.
- Two sessions focused on rectangular field user groups and permit holders.
- One session was held with representatives from Community Centre Associations (CCA's).

The discussions started with an update on the project and an overview of the five proposed “big moves”. In total, 16 sport field user groups / permit holders and representatives from six community centres participated. The full list of invitees and participant groups can be found in Appendix C along with additional detail from the discussion findings.

*Sport Field in Vancouver*



## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM THE STAKEHOLDER DISCUSSIONS

- **Implement micro-improvements:** Most attendees expressed a desire for micro-improvements (smaller projects and amenity or surface enhancements) to existing sport fields in the city and that these improvements may lessen the urgency to retrofit some existing fields and facilities.
- **Impacts to legacy organizations:** Some attendees expressed concern that the potential projects could result in users being relocated from fields where there has been long-standing tradition and historical use.
- **Field allocation practices:** Although not a focus of the workshops, field allocation was still top of mind for many participants. There were questions raised on how the proposed projects and changes (particularly Big Moves #3 and #5) might impact the current allocation process.
- **Decision making for implementation:** A common sentiment raised during the discussions was a desire to better understand the decision-making criteria that will be used to implement the “big moves”.

*Sport Field in Vancouver*





## BIG MOVES FEEDBACK:

A virtual poll was held at the end of each session. The results showed general support for the proposed big moves, with all participants stating that ‘yes they supported’ or were ‘somewhat in support’ of the proposed “big moves” as presented. When asked which of the “big moves” they were most excited about, Big Moves #4 and #5 received the highest level of support across all sessions with five votes each (out of 16 total votes). The following summarizes the key feedback on each of the five “big moves”.

### **BIG MOVE #1: RENEW EXISTING**

**SYNTHETIC TURF FIELDS:** Generally supported by most workshop attendees. There were several questions raised about the type of synthetic turf that would be used during field retrofits. While the needs of field hockey were expressed, the importance of ensuring most surfaces can be multi-use was also frequently noted.

### **BIG MOVE #2: CONVERT SELECT ALL WEATHER (GRAVEL) FIELDS TO SYNTHETIC TURF:**

Big Move #2 was generally supported by most workshop attendees. There were questions raised about the criteria used to select the gravel fields and potential impacts on groups that use these fields as affordable back-up fields during certain times of the year.

**BIG MOVE #3: CREATE HUB SITES:** There was excitement from many attendees about Big Move #3 – specifically in relation to being able to host high-profile tournaments and events. It was noted that hub sites should be centrally located with good access to transit and major transportation routes.

### **BIG MOVE #4: ESTABLISH DEDICATED BALL DIAMOND AND RECTANGULAR FIELD PARKS:**

There was high-level of support for Big Move #4 from most workshop attendees. There were questions about the decision-making process used to move field or diamond users.

### **BIG MOVE #5: ESTABLISH SPORT-SPECIFIC PRIORITY FIELDS:**

There was high-level of support shown for Big Move #5 from most workshop participants. Many groups recognized the importance of sport-specific fields and support the idea based on the success of sport-specific hubs in other local municipalities. There were questions raised about how the sports on the list (field hockey, lacrosse, rugby, football, and cricket) were selected.

# COMMUNITY CENTRE ASSOCIATION DISCUSSION

Community Centre Association (CCA) representatives reiterated comments from previous engagements about the strong synergies between their facilities and adjacent sports fields, noting that community centres are often co-used or support sport field activities. In general, CCA representatives were keen to express positive sentiments towards the strategy process and the potential for re-investment in sport field infrastructure.

Feedback on the “big moves” was mixed with different perspectives existing among the six CCA’s represented at the session. Summarized below are key themes and feedback from the sessions.

- Some CCA representatives expressed concern with synthetic turf while others expressed support for increase provision of this turf typology.
- Some CCA representatives expressed that some park sites aren’t suited for sport fields and that community event and casual use needs should be further considered before changes are made.
- CCA’s want to be involved when planning how support amenities at or adjacent to their facilities cross over with community centre infrastructure (e.g. washrooms, parking, change areas, etc.).
- Questions on potential changes to allocations practices were raised during the discussion. CCA representatives were keen to learn more about how equity will be integrated more into sport field allocations and how these changes may impact use at fields near their facilities.
- Parking issues and impacts are top of mind for many community centres. It was expressed that parking is becoming even more challenging at many community centre sites and the impacts of field projects (and the potential for increasing levels of use) needs to be analyzed as planning and decision making occurs.

# VANCOUVER FIELD SPORT FEDERATION WORKSHOP

## OVERVIEW OF WORKSHOP

Members of the Vancouver Field Sport Federation were invited to an in-person workshop to provide input on the proposed “big moves”. The initial part of the workshop included a recap of the process to-date and introduced the five proposed “big moves”. This was followed

by small group table discussions on each “big move” and a wrap-up summary. Each small group discussion had a facilitator and note taker to report back on key themes and points of interests from the discussion during the wrap-up.

*Group of people attending a workshop*



## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The following are the key themes from each table discussion during the workshop. A full list of invitees and participant groups is available in Appendix D.

### **BIG MOVE #1: RENEW EXISTING SYNTHETIC TURF FIELDS &**

### **BIG MOVE #2: CONVERT SELECT ALL WEATHER (GRAVEL) FIELDS TO SYNTHETIC TURF**

*\*Big moves #1 and 2 were combined into the same discussion table as both are regarding synthetic turf field provision and investment.*

- **Location is important** - prioritize centrally located sites when looking at conversion opportunities; When putting a field in a neighbourhood, ensure it's designed for sports that are played there; and make sure you are anticipating areas of new growth and demographic changes.
- **Timing is key** - respondents were clear about the importance of not taking fields offline for retrofits until the new ones (conversion) are ready - there is already a backlog; try and time construction/retrofits so that they occur in the off-season or during times where fields may already be less accessible or undergoing construction / maintenance (e.g. Trillium during construction of new St. Paul's, Andy Livingstone during NEFC Park construction).
- **Keep in mind the different needs of different sports** when prioritizing/ designing new facilities (proximity to other fields, turf type, field lining, fencing requirements, and amenities).

## BIG MOVE #3: CREATE HUB SITES

- **Three fields are not necessarily enough** to host many larger provincial and national level events. Participants suggested that it should be made possible to book out two or more sites at the same time to run a tournament.
- **John Hendry and/or Killarney were preferred** due to their size, ease of access, existing amenities, and relatively small degree of disruption to existing users. Feedback related to Connaught Park suggested that the site is currently too busy/ booked to allow more activities to occur; conflict with dogs and school use were noted as specific issues with the park that would be tricky to manage.
- **Need to look holistically** at the sites to determine suitability – current state (e.g. actual usage, drainage, geotech), transit access, parking, surrounding amenities and neighbourhood needs.

## BIG MOVE #4: ESTABLISH DEDICATED BALL DIAMOND AND RECTANGULAR FIELD PARKS

- **General support for the concept** – as it may help mitigate conflict – especially as seasons get longer and begin to overlap more frequently, slows wear and tear on fields, and allows for permanent sport-specific amenities (fencing, storage, ball cages, etc).
- **Need to consider neighbourhood/ geographic displacement** – many sports/clubs are strongly rooted in their communities – relocation could have significant social/cultural/ financial impacts on both clubs and communities.



## **BIG MOVE #5: ESTABLISH SPORT-SPECIFIC PRIORITY FIELDS**

- **Participants are keen to learn more** about which sports will be prioritized, specific sites, and how fields will be prioritized. It was also expressed that some sports have a higher need than others.
- **Priority consideration** should be given to year-round sports, training time vs. gameplay, and sports prioritizing athlete development. Track and field user groups noted they’d like to be considered as. Track related field sports (throwing) require natural turf surfaces.



*Lacrosse player holding a lacrosse stick*

# APPENDICES



*Soccer players cheering on their teammates*

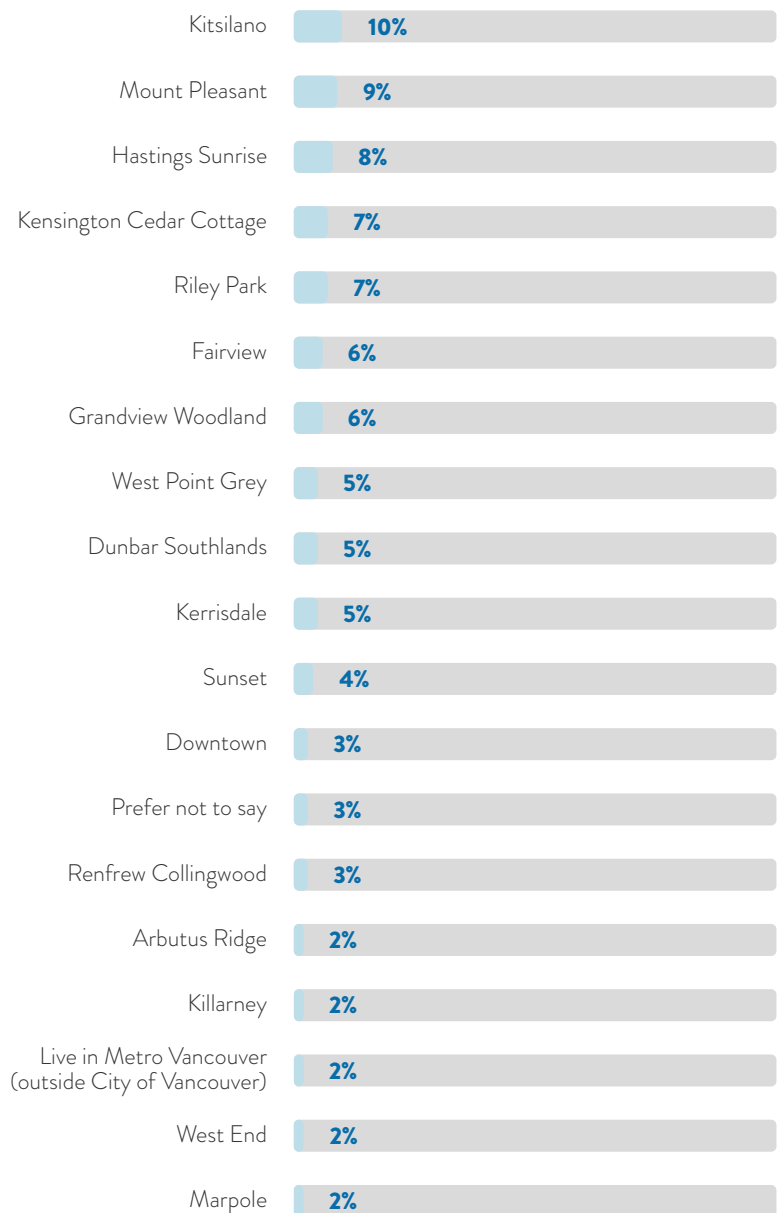


# APPENDIX A: SURVEY RESPONDENT PROFILE



Football on a field

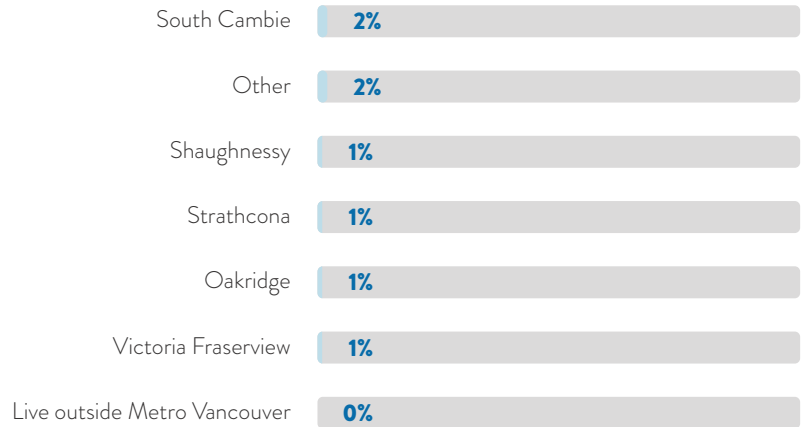
## NEIGHBOURHOOD LOCATION OF RESPONDENTS



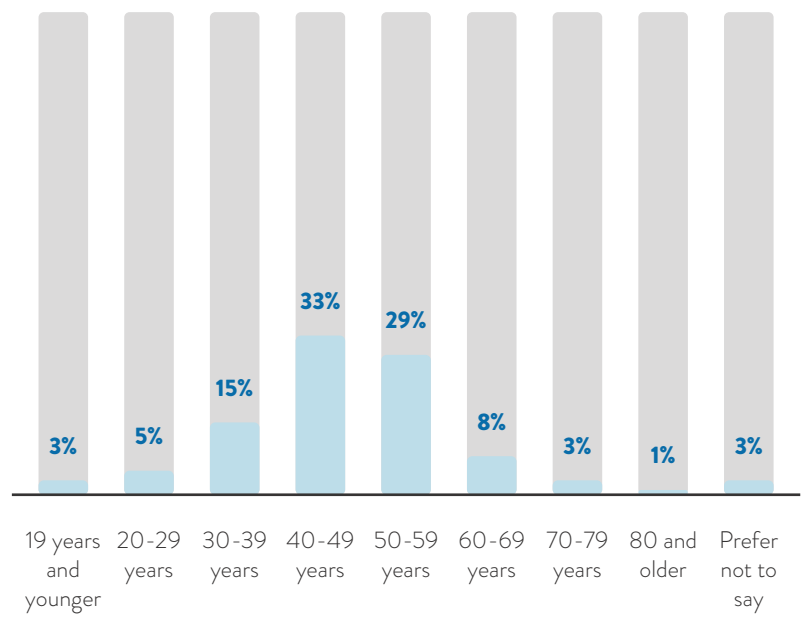


Lacrosse sticks

### NEIGHBOURHOOD LOCATION OF RESPONDENTS (CONTINUED)



### AGE RANGE OF RESPONDENTS

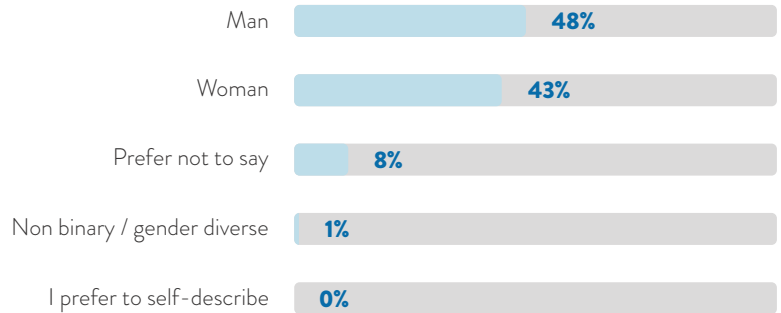




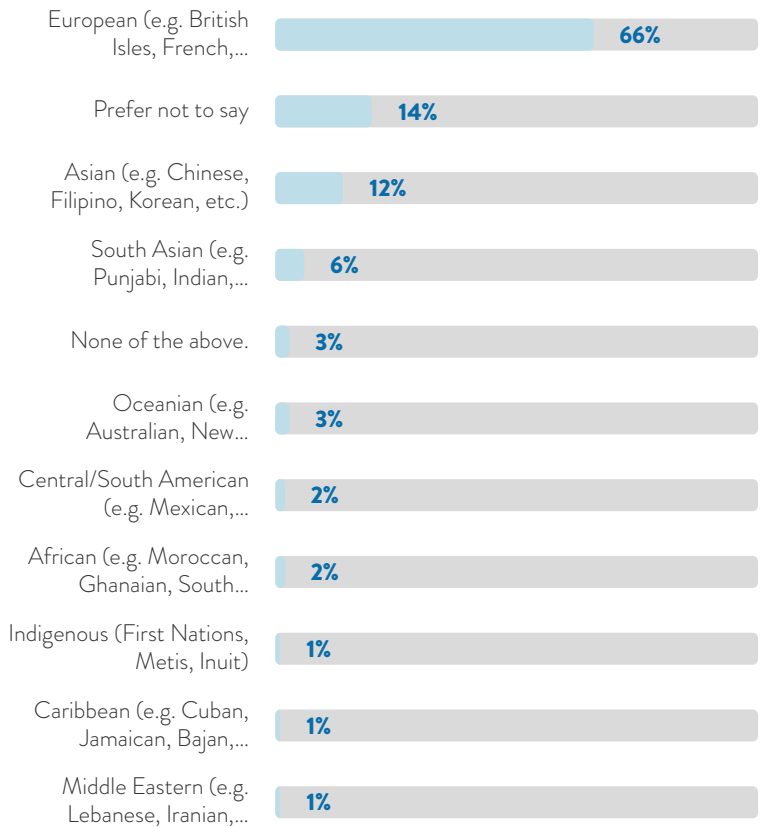


Young softball player batting

## GENDER IDENTITY OF RESPONDENTS



## ETHNIC ORIGIN OF RESPONDENT ANCESTORS



# APPENDIX B: USER GROUP/ PERMIT HOLDER SURVEY RESPONDENTS

## Permit Holder

BC Masters Soccer

BC Rugby

British Columbia Mainland Cricket League

Dashmesh Field Hockey

Jokers Field Hockey Club

Little Mountain Baseball

Metro Vancouver Pro League

Polar Bears Field Hockey

Royal Soccer Club

Vancouver Athletic Football Club (VAFC)

Vancouver Hawks Field Hockey Club

Vancouver Minor Softball Association

Vancouver Youth Soccer Association (VYSA)

Vancouver Ultimate League Society

West Coast Football Club

# APPENDIX C: ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED DURING THE USER GROUP / PERMIT HOLDER DISCUSSION SESSIONS

Organization
BC Rugby
Field Hockey
Kats RFC
Kensington Adult Softball
Jericho Little League
Meralomas Rugby
Rugby
Scribes RFC
Track and Field
VAFC / VYSA
Vancouver Field Sport Federation
Vancouver Hawks FHC
Vancouver Metro Soccer
Vancouver Minor Softball
Vancouver Rugby
Vancouver Slow Pitch
Vancouver Ultimate League

# APPENDIX D: VANCOUVER FIELD SPORT FEDERATION WORKSHOP ATTENDANCE

Organization
Baseball
BC Ultimate
Cricket
Fast Pitch
Field Hockey
Lacrosse
President, VFSF (also representing cricket)
Rugby
Rugby
Softball
Track + Field
Ultimate
Vancouver Rugby Union
Vancouver Metro Soccer League / Metro Women’s Soccer League
Vice President, VFSF (also representing Vancouver Ultimate League Society)
Youth Baseball
Youth Soccer (District 2)



