

Speikúmtn Community Forest Legacy Fund: Survey Report

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Project Background

At Council's direction, the Village of Pemberton launched a public engagement process on Engage Pemberton to gather community feedback on three potential projects identified during the 2025 budget discussions. These projects focused on how future allocations from the Speikúmtn Community Forest partnership could be invested back into the community.

To support this engagement, a dedicated project page and survey were created on Engage Pemberton. The goal was to share information about the proposed projects and invite residents to tell us which project they felt should be prioritized and why.

Survey Promotion

The survey was promoted through multiple communication channels to encourage broad participation, including:

- Social media posts on Village of Pemberton Facebook page
- Addition within the online Community Newsletter
- An article in Pique Newsmagazine

Results Overview

In total, 266 responses were received. Survey respondents provided input on potential projects for the Speikúmtn Community Forest Legacy Fund, offering valuable insight into community priorities.

The community strongly favours maintaining and improving existing infrastructure before investing in new amenities. The One Mile Lake Park Boardwalk emerged as the clear top priority, with residents citing its heavy year-round use, safety concerns, and importance as an accessible, inclusive space for locals and visitors. Many comments stressed that repairing the boardwalk is essential to avoid closure and should take precedence over new projects.

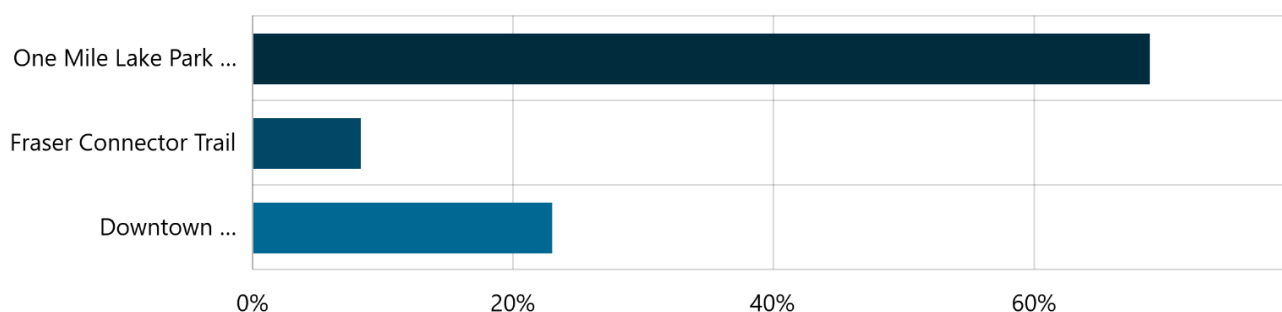
The Fraser Connector Trail received positive feedback for improving connectivity, supporting active transportation, and offering a cost-effective way to enhance access to nature. Residents see it as practical and beneficial for all ages, with minimal ongoing costs.

The Downtown Community Barn Ice Rink generated mixed reactions. Supporters highlighted the need for family-friendly winter recreation and community gathering spaces, while others raised concerns about high annual operating costs, climate change impacts on ice reliability, and potential tax implications.

Looking ahead, residents suggested that future funding focus on expanded trail networks, pools and aquatic facilities, playgrounds, skatepark upgrades, wildfire mitigation, and nature-based projects. Overall, the feedback reflects a strong desire for safe, accessible, and sustainable amenities that serve the greatest number of people year-round while managing costs responsibly.

Survey Results

1. Which project do you believe should be the top priority for funding?



One Mile Lake Park Boardwalk Replacement

Fraser Connector Trail

Downtown Community Barn Ice Rink

2. Why did you select this project? (Optional Question)

Key Themes and Comments from Respondents Who Selected the One Mile Lake Boardwalk

High year-round use

- Residents repeatedly stated that the boardwalk was one of the most used amenities in Pemberton, serving locals and visitors daily year-round. It was considered essential for recreation and wellness.

Safety concerns

- Many comments highlighted uneven boards, wobbly sections, and hazards that posed a risk of injury. Several noted that the boardwalk might need to close if repairs are not made soon.

Maintain existing infrastructure

- There was strong sentiment that funds should prioritize repairing what the community already has rather than adding new amenities.

Accessibility and inclusivity

- Residents requested improvements to accommodate strollers, wheelchairs, and mobility aids. Some suggested widening sections for easier passing.

Tourism and community value

- The boardwalk was seen as a unique feature that attracts visitors and supports local businesses while offering residents a scenic, safe route.

Cost-effectiveness

- Compared to the other two projects, this was viewed as a lower-cost option with minimal ongoing operational expenses.

Comments:

"It is used constantly by locals and tourists and it is fantastic to have a fully accessible pathway."

"It's currently dangerous."

"Bringing existing structures/amenities up to required accessibility and safety standards should take priority over all other projects."

Key Themes and Comments from Respondents Who Selected the Fraser Connector Trail**Improved connectivity**

- Residents valued safer, easier links for walking and biking, reducing reliance on highways and creating a more connected community.

Year-round usability

- The trail was seen as practical for all ages and abilities, offering recreation and transportation options in every season.

Nature experience

- There was interest in trails that connected to wetlands and included interpretive features, enhancing outdoor learning and enjoyment.

Low operating costs

- The project was viewed as a fiscally responsible choice with minimal ongoing expenses compared to other projects.

Community health and lifestyle

- Residents believed it added opportunities for active transportation and outdoor activity, supporting wellness and sustainability.

Comments:

"Improving connectivity."

"Very good pedestrian connectivity with low operating costs."

"More trails and access to community members. This will enhance the community and provide a resource to all ages."

"Easiest to do, would be a great access point, nice wetland area."

Key Themes and Comments from Respondents Who Selected the Downtown Community Barn Ice Rink**Winter recreation and family activities**

- Many residents wanted more options during the long winter months, especially activities that were affordable and accessible.

Community gathering and vibrancy

- The rink was seen as a way to bring people together downtown, support local businesses, and create a lively winter atmosphere.

Accessibility and equity

- Skating was viewed as an inclusive activity for all ages, reducing the need to travel to Whistler for winter recreation.

Concerns about cost and climate

- Numerous comments raised issues about high annual operating costs, staffing needs, and the impact of warming winters on ice reliability.

Mixed support

- While some residents were enthusiastic, others called the rink wasteful or unsustainable, preferring funds go to existing infrastructure or other priorities.

Comments:

"We need more free/low cost recreation."

"Ice rinks bring communities together."

"Annual cost to maintain rink is too high."

"Creating ice in an era of climate change is so wasteful."

"Would be a fun addition to the town!"

3. Do you have any other comments or suggestions about how the Spelkúmtn Community Forest Legacy Fund should be used in the future? (Optional Question)

Maintain existing infrastructure:

- Many residents stated that funds should be used to repair and maintain current amenities before adding new ones. This was seen as a responsible approach to ensure safety and longevity of existing assets.

"We have limited income for the town at the moment, instead of making new amenities, we should maintain the current facilities and keep them safe and enjoyable to everyone."

Pools and aquatic facilities:

- Swimming pools were the second most frequently mentioned ideas. Residents felt a pool would provide year-round recreation and support swimming lessons and community health.

"Outdoor pool, over an ice rink any day."

Expanded trail network:

- There was strong interest in paving and extending trails, especially the Friendship Trail, to improve connectivity and allow winter maintenance. Residents also suggested adding interpretive features and linking trails to nature areas.

"Paving friendship trail to allow easier winter plowing."

"Investment into developing a larger walking/biking network in the valley for families to walk on that are safe and accessible."

Child and youth amenities:

- Suggestions included playgrounds, skatepark upgrades, and indoor play spaces. Residents wanted more family-friendly options that are accessible and safe.

"Please add a playground at Den Duyf Park."

"Skatepark expansion. The size of the community has outgrown our little skatepark."

"One thing town doesn't have that would be an amazing addition is an indoor play space that is open consistently. Or a community climbing wall could be cool."

Wildfire mitigation and nature-based projects:

- Several comments emphasized aligning spending with wildfire risk reduction and conservation goals, referencing the Community Wildfire Resiliency Plan (CWRP).

"The Spelkumtn Community Forest funds should be invested back into wildfire mitigation like the CWRP states."

Arts and culture spaces:

- A smaller number of comments suggested indoor recreation or cultural facilities, such as an arts and culture building or climbing wall.

"An Arts and Culture building."

"Climbing wall built in town for courses and year-round practice."