



# BC Parks proposal to build a Campground at Christina Lake Park

## What We Heard

### Public Input Summary Report

*June 2, 2022 – September 6, 2022*

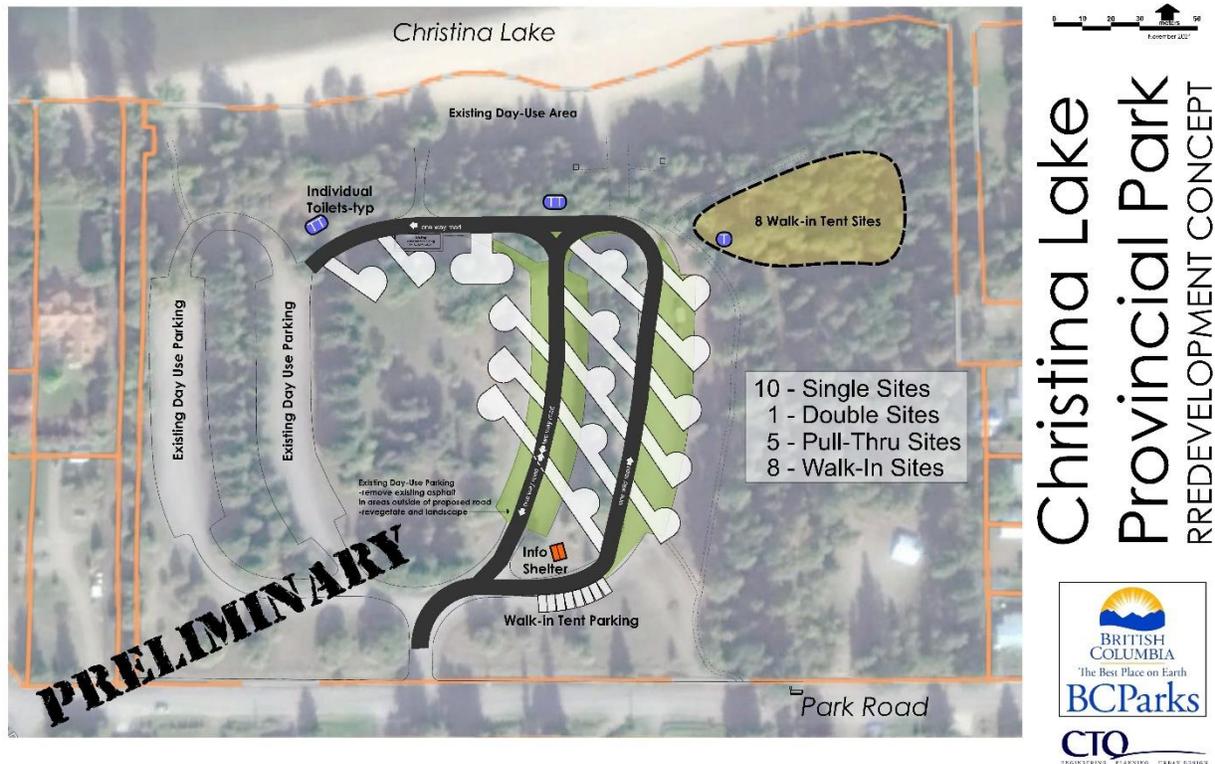
### Background

Camping and recreation opportunities are in extreme demand across the province due to a growing interest in outdoor recreation. In response to this demand, the BC government announced a \$21.5M investment over three years to expand and enhance opportunities for camping and outdoor recreation in BC Parks. BC Parks is focusing on areas with high demand, primarily in the South Coast, West Coast and Southern Interior.

Christina Lake Park is a six-hectare area located on the south end of the lake near Highway 3 in the town of Christina Lake (Regional District of Kootenay Boundary). Christina Lake Park is currently a day use park, with plenty of shade, picnic tables, and a shallow beach - perfect for kids. There are marinas and a public boat launch in the vicinity, but not in the park. The closest provincial park camping opportunity to Christina Lake is Texas Creek Campground located in Gladstone Park, 10km east of the community of Christina Lake. Texas Creek Campground has 63 sites and operates close to 100% capacity during the peak summer camping season.

To provide more camping opportunities for British Columbians, BC Parks is proposing to build a 25-site campground by converting two of Christina Lake Park's four parking lots to approximately 17 full-service vehicle accessible campsites and eight walk-in tenting sites nearby. The proposed development includes full services for the vehicle accessible campsites with a dedicated flush toilet and dishwashing station for the tenting area.

Under the proposal, the existing day use toilet/change building would be removed and be replaced with four new individual accessible flush toilets in the day use area.



The current management direction for the park is to provide “lake-oriented outdoor recreation activities”. The park was also established to protect the 350 metres of sandy beach and a small fir/cedar stand. The construction of a campground is not anticipated to impact public access to the beach, or the fir/cedar conservation values in the park.

All new infrastructure would be built to a universal design standard, ensuring facilities are accessible to all park users (e.g., picnic tables, washrooms).

In the spring of 2022, BC Parks received numerous requests from Christina Lake community members for additional information on the proposed project and an opportunity to provide public feedback. In response to those requests, BC Parks paused progress on the project, developed an online resource for information on the proposed project and initiated a process to collect feedback from the public through an online survey. This document provides a summary of what we heard from the public through the online survey.

## Public Engagement Timeline and Overview – Online Survey

[BC Parks' Christina Lake engagement webpage](#) went live on June 2, 2022. The webpage featured background information, frequently asked questions (14), a preliminary design concept, and an online survey. A hard copy PDF version of the survey was also added to the page. The survey, which was originally intended to close on August 2, 2022, was extended to September 6, 2022, to ensure as many seasonal users' perspectives could be captured in the feedback process as possible. An overview of public participation is captured below:

Who We Heard From	
Visits to <a href="https://HelpShapeBC.gov.bc.ca/ProposedChristinaLakeCampground">HelpShapeBC.gov.bc.ca/Proposed Christina Lake Campground page</a>	2922
Online survey respondents <sup>1</sup>	892
Hardcopy survey respondents (mailed in or dropped-off locally)	3
Total survey respondents	895

BC Parks staff also participated in a public meeting on June 22, 2022, with the local Member of the Legislative Assembly, Mr. Roly Russell. During that meeting, BC Parks staff heard many of the same themes reflected by the public as have been summarized in this document. Meeting participants were encouraged to fill out the survey online to ensure their comments could be recorded and catalogued.

Survey respondents were asked to provide the first three digits of their postal code so that BC Parks could gauge levels of local and/or provincial participation. The following locations/postal codes were represented:<sup>2</sup>

65%	SE Okanagan, Boundary (V0H)
10%	W. Kootenay (includes Castlegar, Trail) (V0G, V1N, V1R)
1%	N. Thompson, Shuswap, NE Okanagan (V0E)
1%	E. Kootenay (V0B)

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<sup>1</sup> To try and minimize duplicate responses to the survey, respondents were required to register through the Engagement HQ website using a valid email address. It is possible that some respondents with multiple email addresses were able to submit multiple survey submissions which may result in some over or under-representation of some views. The Engagement HQ platform does allow for BC Parks to see how many surveys were submitted from the same IP address (unique physical location), and some duplication did occur. BC Parks expects most of those duplications to be contributions from members of the same household or members of the same community sharing wi-fi resources.

<sup>2</sup> 14 respondents did not accurately enter their postal code.

17%	Rest of BC
6%	Rest of Canada

The postal code area that includes Christina Lake was strongly represented in this survey and many of the survey respondents self-identified as residents of the Christina Lake area. Of the 895 submissions BC Parks received, 568 have a V0H postal code.

## What We Heard – Summary and Overview

BC Parks received almost 900 responses to the online survey. Christina Lake and area residents were well-represented in the survey. Most of the survey respondents demonstrated a high familiarity with the park and its facilities, were regular or frequent visitors and used the park to recreate in several different ways.

When asked whether they supported camping in the park, most respondents were not in favour (79%). There were many reasons identified by respondents as to why they did not support a campground in Christina Lake Park, with most of the responses focusing either on possible impacts to existing users (e.g., reductions in parking capacity, displacement of day users, loss of changerooms), expected negative neighbourhood impacts (e.g., increased noise, increases in traffic congestion, campfire smoke impacts, unfair competition to local businesses), or the risk of negative impacts to the park's environment (e.g., water quality concerns, increased littering, loss of trees).

When asked for suggestions on how to reduce those potential impacts, the bulk of the respondents either did not provide suggestions or suggested BC Parks find a new location (expanding the number of sites at Texas Creek was a common suggestion). Of the suggestions received, the most common suggestions were to retain (and upgrade) the central washroom/changeroom facility, adding enforcement/security and to not affect parking capacity (either by adding more parking, decreasing the number or type of campsites, or moving the proposed campground). The suggestions provided in response to the question on improving the site design were similar to the suggestions for how to reduce potential impacts.

BC Parks received several suggestions for new or expanded facilities. Topping the list were: shade features, more picnic tables, a playground, a dog off-leash area and water-based amenities or improvements, such as weed removal, a dock, and a diving board.

## Next Steps

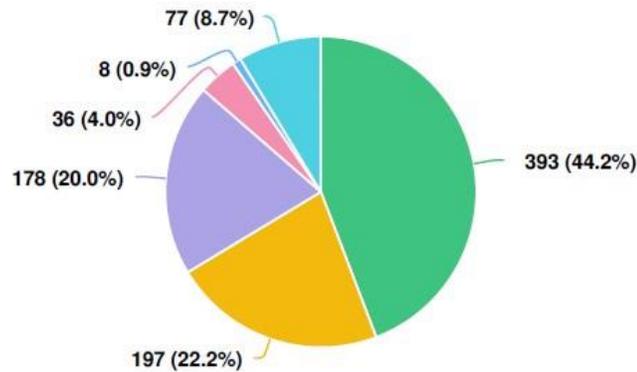
BC Parks sincerely appreciates the feedback provided by the public during this process.

BC Parks is currently reviewing the input we received during the online survey and updates to our data, including park visitation numbers from this past season. As this work continues, any further opportunities for public engagement and/or updates for the project

will be added as updates on the [project webpage](#), so please check back in the coming months.

## Detailed Results

### Q1 | How often do you visit Christina Lake Park?



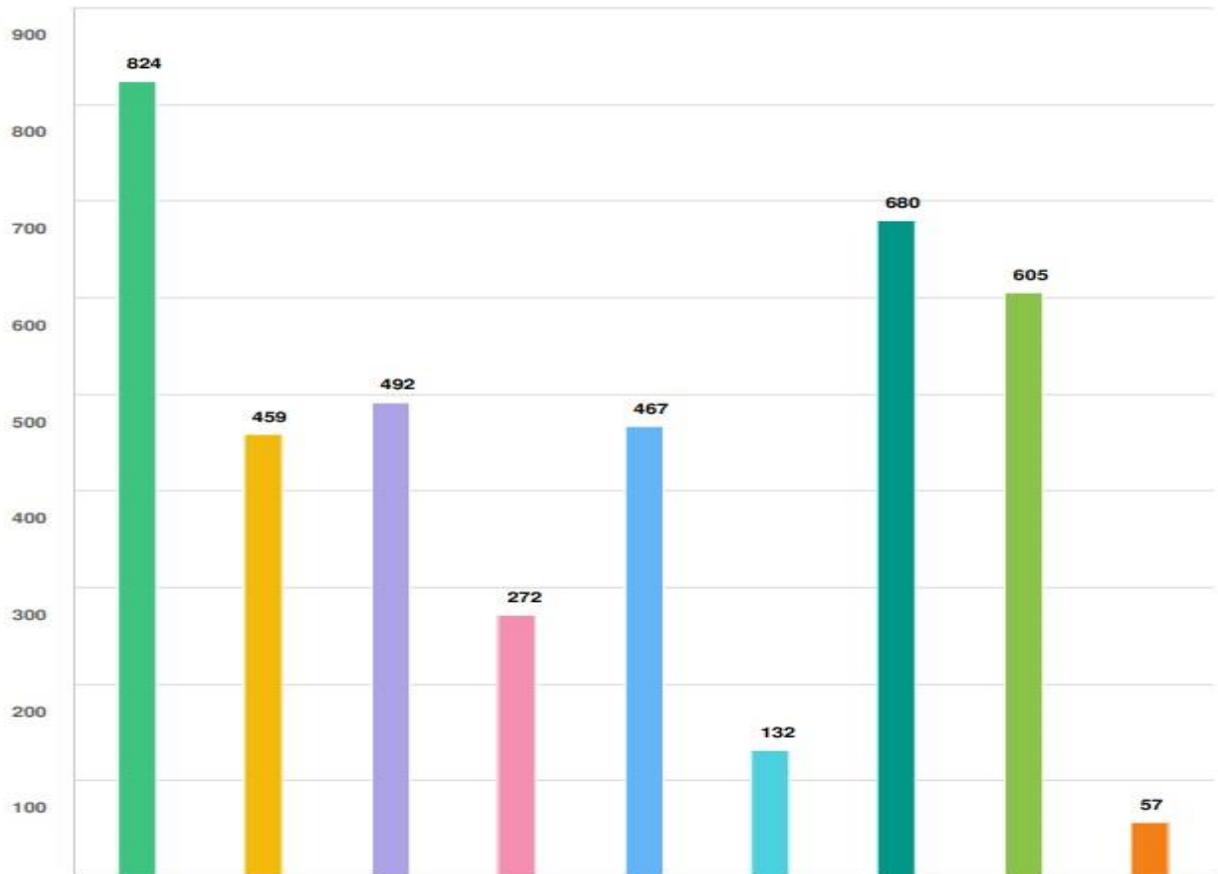
#### Question options

- Frequently (every 1-2 weeks or more)
- Often (every month or so)
- Regularly (about once a year)
- Rarely
- Never
- Other (please specify)

Optional question (889 response(s), 2 skipped)  
Question type: Radio Button Question

Most respondents (greater than 66%) routinely visit the park, every few months or more frequently. Because of this, many of the survey respondents had a high familiarity with the park, and its existing services and features.

## Q2 | When you visit Christina Lake Park, what activities do you enjoy in the park?



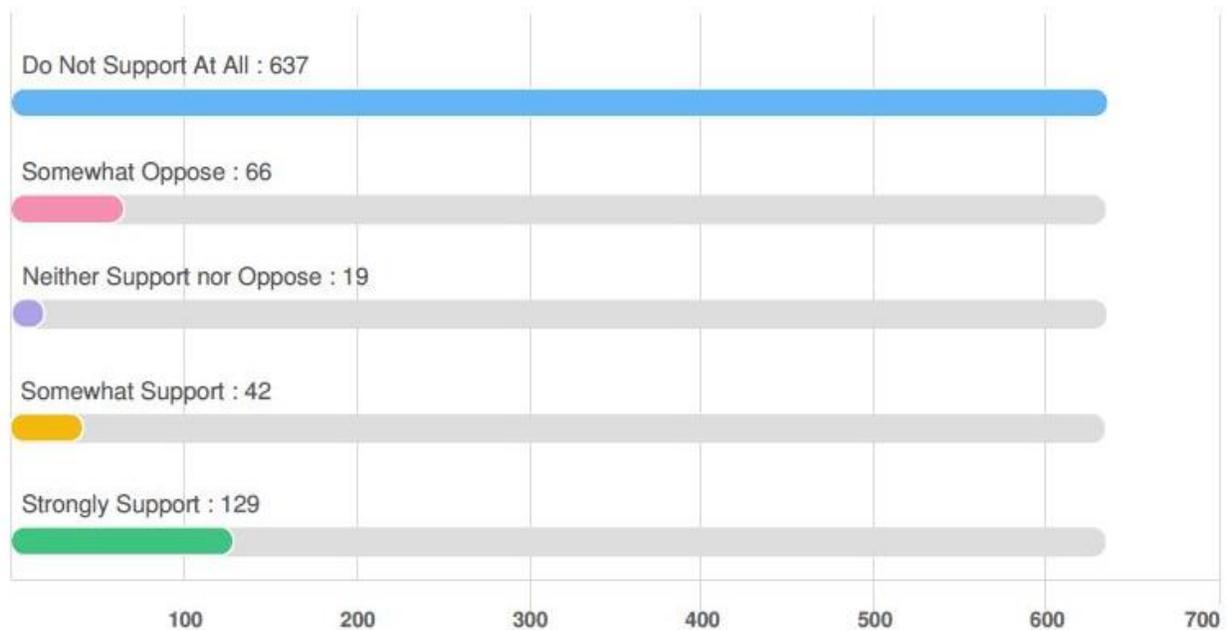
### Question options

- Swimming/beach time
- Nature appreciation/bird watching/wildlife viewing
- Boating/paddling
- Dog walking
- Recreation/exercise
- Outdoor education
- Activities with family/friends
- Enjoyment of solitude/relaxation
- Other (please specify)

In general, visitors to Christina Lake Park appear to engage in multiple activities when they visit the park with most users selecting an average of four different activities. Not surprisingly, the most popular activity is swimming/beach time. Christina Lake Park provides important public access for Christina Lake and the park has 350 metres of beautiful sandy beach.

### Q3 | Please rate your level of support for the project by the following statement:

#### I support camping at Christina Lake Park



BC Parks received 893 responses. 79% of the respondents do not support the idea of camping at this park; with most of those respondents identifying themselves as not supportive at all. Only 19% of respondents were supportive of camping. This strong level of opposition to the project was reiterated in the survey questions with text responses (see summaries for questions 4, 5, 7, 9 and 10 below).

### Q4 | Do you have any feedback/concerns around camping at Christina Lake Park?

BC Parks received 784 text responses. Many of the responses included multiple concerns. The three most common themes were neighbourhood impacts (e.g., increased traffic, noise, smoke from fires, negative impacts to local businesses), impacts to existing park users (e.g., loss of parking, competition for beach space/amenities, risk of impacts on existing events, loss of changerooms) and localized park impacts (e.g., environmental concerns, impacts on water quality, increased littering, loss of park vegetation).

The five most-cited concerns within these themes were:

- The proposed campground would result in a loss of parking capacity.
- The proposed campground would restrict public access to the beach.
- Camping in the park would result in increased noise pollution in the neighbourhood and litter on the beach.
- Traffic on local roads would increase if a campground were developed.
- Removal of the changeroom building and loss of washroom capacity.

## **Q5 | If you identified concerns, do you have any suggestions on how we might reduce those concerns?**

BC Parks received 686 text responses. Over 200 of those responses did not provide any suggestions, instead the respondents reiterated their interest in seeing the project cancelled. Many others (who also advocated for seeing the project cancelled) used their response to this question to request upgrades/improvements to the day use area and its facilities. The most common suggestion was to develop camping at a different park/location. Of those that suggested this option, most advocated for expanding the Texas Creek campground at Gladstone Park.

For the responses where suggestions were made for reducing concerns if the campground were developed at Christina Lake Park, the following four were most common:

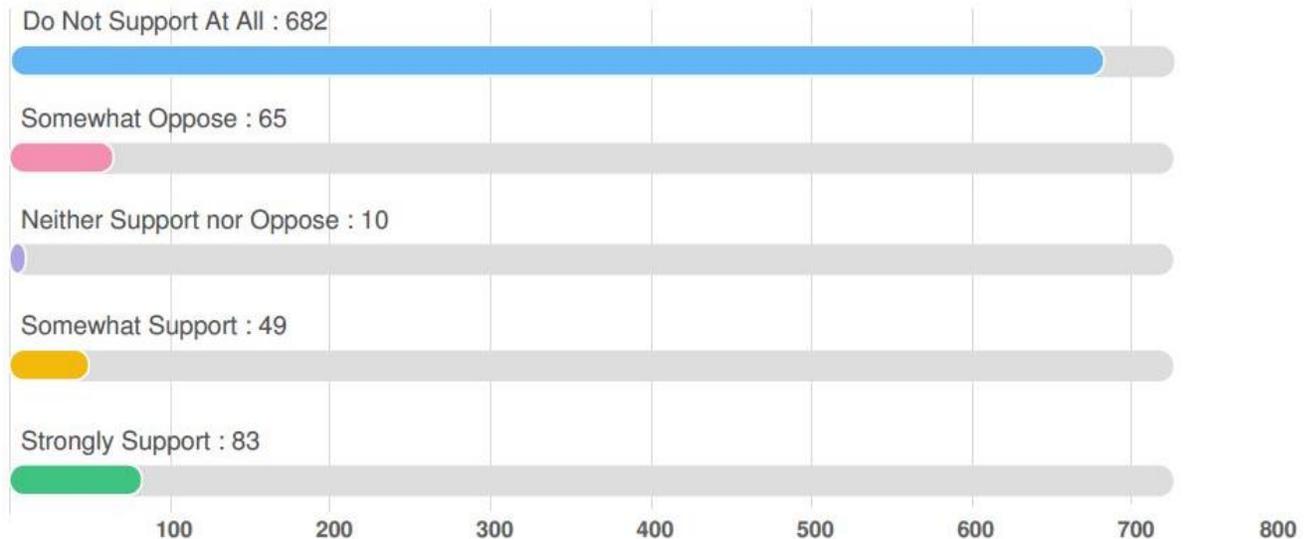
- Ensure a central washroom/changeroom building is retained (but it should be updated).
- Decrease the number of campsites so that less of the existing space for day-use parking would be affected, or compensate for the loss of parking (e.g., plan to develop more parking, repaint parking lines or reconfigure/realign the remaining parking area).
- Ensure greater management/security presence (e.g., regulation enforcement, after hours security).
- Only allow tenting or develop smaller sites (no pull-throughs) or do not provide serviced sites.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> A smaller number of respondents suggested adding full-service sites; however, approximately 17 full-service sites are already included in the draft design.

**Q6 | Please rate your level of support for the following statement:**

**I support the proposed draft design.**



BC Parks received 889 responses. 84% of the respondents do not support the design (many of those respondents were not in support of the project in general (79%)). Of the respondents that support the draft design (15%), 63% strongly support the design.

**Q7 | Do you have any suggestions/feedback about the draft design?**

BC Parks received 560 text responses. As with Q5 many of the respondents reiterated their interest in seeing the project cancelled and/or were interested in seeing day use facility upgrades. There was also a lot of overlap with Q5 on the types of suggestions made. For the respondents who made design-related suggestions, the following were most common:

- Limit camping to a small number of walk-in tenting sites.<sup>4</sup> (A number of these respondents also wanted the parking for the walk-in tent sites moved closer to the sites or a pull-out for unloading).
- Move the proposed campground location within the park (sometimes coupled with the suggestion of separate access roads for campground and day use visitors).
  - The most common suggestion was to move the proposed campground east into either the treed area of the park (walk-in tenting only and tree removal both suggested) or into the park operator service area.

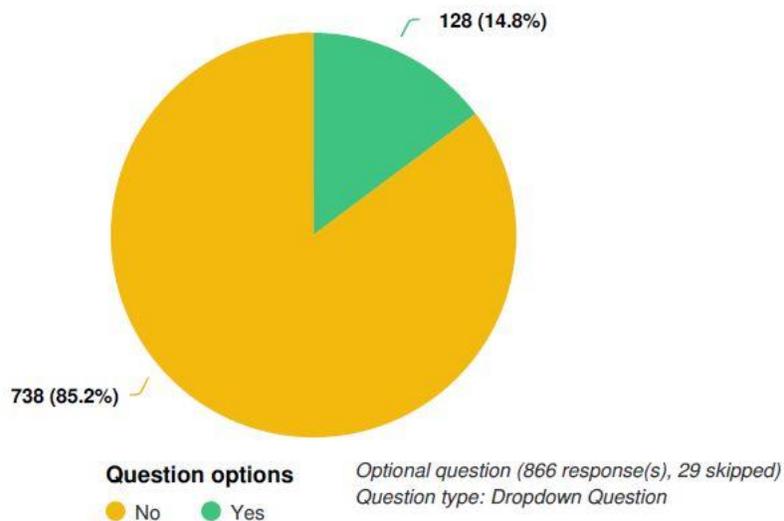
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<sup>4</sup> BC Parks received suggestions to both decrease and increase the number of campsites in the proposed design. We also received multiple suggestions on changing the type of sites offered but reducing the number of sites and making the sites tent or walk-in only was most common.

- A fewer number of other respondents thought moving the campground to the western parking lots would be a better arrangement.
- Several suggested moving the proposed campground to the top of the parking lot so that parking close to the beach is retained for day users.<sup>5</sup>
- Provide a better visual of the plan or at least measurements.
- Increase trees between sites for privacy.
- Add bike-in only sites.

**Q8 | Would you plan to visit/camp at the campground if it were developed?**

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The majority of respondents identified that they would not utilize the campground if it were developed.

**Q9 | Are there any other site amenities you would like to see incorporated?**

BC Parks received 532 text responses. Many of the feedback/suggestions identified by respondents have been listed above in either Q5 or Q7, but some of the common suggestions for site amenities that haven't already been identified are:

- Increase shaded areas; add a gazebo and more picnic tables
- Add a playground
- Improve the swimming area (e.g., remove milfoil/weeds, add a dock and/or a diving board)

<sup>5</sup> Two responses were received to relocate campsites closer to the beach.

- Add an off-leash area for dogs
- Build a dock for public moorage
- Add a shower building or an outdoor shower
- Add a Sani dump
- Incorporate dedicated small boat/paddleboard/kayak access on one or both ends of the park
- Improve the sand on the beach/remove the rocks
- Further improve accessibility (e.g., tactile transitions, braille signage, accessible dog beach area)

**Q10 | Do you have any other suggestions or comments you would like to share about this project?**

BC Parks received 524 text responses. Most of the responses/feedback BC Parks received were duplicated in a previous question. Some common comments that haven't been previously mentioned include:

- Concern regarding communication about the proposal.
- General disagreement with a campground in a residential area.
- Suggestion that BC Parks should offer educational programs.
- Recommendation to charge a day-use fee instead of putting in a campground if the reason for the proposal was to increase revenue.