

### **CATHEDRAL GROVE** Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Study

### WINTER 2018/2019 ENGAGEMENT November 21, 2018 - January 4, 2019

Engagement Summary Report - February 25, 2019

Prepared by: Lanarc 2015 Consultants Ltd.





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### AT A GLANCE



MANY DISCUSSIONS AND OPINIONS ABOUT THE BALANCE BETWEEN HUMAN SAFETY AND PROTECTION OF RARE OLD GROWTH TREES AND VALUED ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS

### **1** BACKGROUND

Each year roughly 500,000 visitors from around the world come to experience the old growth giants and unparalleled spectacle of Cathedral Grove in MacMillan Provincial Park. Most visitors arrive by vehicle, parking along Hwy 4 and crossing the highway to visit trails on both sides of the park. During peak seasons and times, parking demand often exceeds capacity. This contributes to unsafe maneuvers, compromising safety for both pedestrians and motorists. A concern about safety has existed for many years and continues to grow as traffic through and to the park increases.

The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) aims to build and maintain a safe and reliable multi-modal transportation system for British Columbians. The intent of the Cathedral Grove Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Study ("study") is to identify and evaluate a range of potential pedestrian and traffic safety improvements and make recommendations that could be completed in a short-term time frame.

More information about the project can be found at engage.gov.bc.ca/cathedralgrove.



**OVERSIZE** I

Below: Typical conditions at Cathedral Grove during peak seasons.

### **2** ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

This summary documents the first phase of engagement which was focused on clarifying the scope of the study and understanding the values and perspectives of the public. This information will help identify and shape potential options and guide evaluation of these options. A vital component of this phase has been listening and learning from participants. The information obtained will be used to develop potential options that could address identified pedestrian and traffic safety issues. The next phase of engagement, planned for Spring 2019, will invite public review and feedback on draft options that are developed.

### **First Phase Engagement Objectives**

Goals for this initial engagement included:

- Informing First Nations and government agencies with interests in the study area about the project and discussing early input, comments, and concerns.
- Raising awareness among members of the public about the study and opportunities to be involved.
- Outlining the study scope, purpose, and objectives.
- Listening and learning from participants to understand the values, perspectives, and ideas that will help shape potential options and guide evaluations.

### **First Phase Engagement Topics**

The first phase focused on the following topics:

- Background about MacMillan Provincial Park and Cathedral Grove.
- Information about the study purpose, objectives, process, and opportunities to participate.
- Information about values and concerns compiled from previous studies and public input to help confirm these and identify other values that will need to be considered in coming steps.
- Summary of current roadway conditions and safety improvements completed at Cathedral Grove to date.
- Overview and data about three key issues observed in the study area:
  - » Pedestrian Movements
  - » Parking
  - » Vehicle Movements
- Information about planned next steps and opportunities for people to be involved.

### **Notification & Outreach**

The following notifications were used to raise awareness:

- Notification to Government Representatives: Outreach to First Nations, regional and local governments, and provincial and federal representatives within or near the study area.
- News Release: A release was issued on Wednesday, November 14, 2018. Coverage by local news outlets between November 14, 2018 and January 3, 2019 included, but was not limited to: CHEK News, My Cowichan Valley Now, Alberni Valley News, CTV Vancouver Island, CBC News, Ha-Shilth-Sa Newspaper, Nanaimo News NOW, Nanaimo News Bulletin, Parksville Qualicum Beach News, and Sooke News.
- Project Webpage: A project page was developed to host engagement materials and provide information about the project at: engage.gov.bc.ca/cathedralgrove.
- Social Media Posts: 4 posts on the <u>BC Transportation</u> and Infrastructure Facebook Page and 7 posts on BC Transportation <u>@TranBC</u> on Twitter.
- Park Signage: Signs posted on the bulletin boards at the Cathedral Grove parking lots (both sides) with information directing visitors to the project webpage.
- Interest Group Emails: Email notifications sent to known local interest groups to invite participation and encourage circulation of the notification with their memberships.
- Project Updates List: The project webpage provides an opportunity for participants to sign-up for email notifications during the study. Participants who signed up received email reminders about the questionnaire during this phase and will continue to receive updates over the course of the study.

### **Engagement Materials**

Materials used to engage the public included:

- Information posters describing the study background, process, current conditions, and opportunities for public participation (see Appendix A).
- A questionnaire collecting public input on participant experiences with parking, as a pedestrian, and as a motorist at Cathedral Grove; participant values and concerns about the area; and comments and input on preliminary ideas for improving pedestrian and traffic safety (see Appendix B). The questionnaire was available online at the project webpage and during the public events.
- A video capturing typical peak season conditions at the parking area.





Above: Displays and discussions during the public events in Parksville and Qualicum Beach.

### **Engagement Opportunities**

### **Online Engagement**

The engagement materials were available on the project website at <u>engage.gov.bc.ca/cathedralgrove</u>. There were 1,584 visits to the project website during the first phase engagement period, November 14, 2018 to January 4, 2019. Sixty-eight participants subscribed to the project updates list to request email updates about upcoming engagement opportunities. During the engagement period 488 questionnaires were completed and submitted, either online or in hard copy at public events or by mail.

Participants were also invited to submit written submissions to the project email at <u>cathedralgrove@gov.bc.ca</u> or to the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure offices or to contact the Ministry by phone at 250-751-3126.

### Public Events

Two public events were held during the first engagement:

- **Port Alberni Event** Wednesday, November 21, 2018 Port Alberni Friendship Centre Clutesi Hall
- Parksville Event

Thursday, November 22, 2018 Oceanside Place Multi-purpose Room

Approximately 45 people participated in the Port Alberni event and 30 people participated in the Parksville event.

At each event, information posters were displayed around the room, including interactive displays collecting initial input on the following question: "Thinking about pedestrian and traffic safety at Cathedral Grove, what do you believe is the most important aspect for us to consider when planning improvements?" A mapping station invited participants to engage in discussion with study team members and other participants on specific locations where issues exist, key values that warrant protection, or ideas for improvements. The video of typical peak season conditions at the park was also displayed.

During the event, study team members engaged with attendees one-on-one and in small groups to discuss their observations and ideas. Event participants were encouraged to complete questionnaires, either in hard copy or online.

### **3** FEEDBACK

The following summary represents the results of the feedback received from the 488 completed questionnaires submitted at open houses, online, or by mail, from discussions and inputs during public events, and from written submissions.

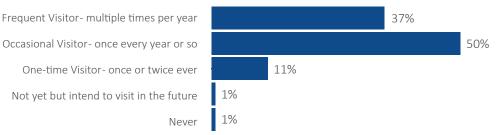
### **Section 1: About Participants**

Five questions were asked to understand who participated in the questionnaire.

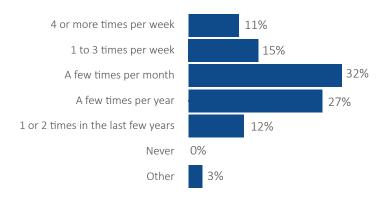
### 1. Cathedral Grove attracts both local visitors and those visiting from all over the world. Where are you from?



### 2. How often have you visited MacMillan Provincial Park (Cathedral Grove)?



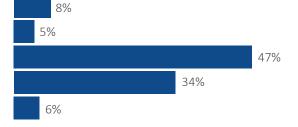
### 3. How often do you travel on Highway 4 (the highway between Qualicum Beach and Port Alberni)?



### 4. What is your primary reason for using Highway 4?

Commuting to/from work or school

Travel for business, including professional drivers (taxi driver, delivery/goods mover, courier) Personal including shopping, appointments, meeting friends/family To/from entertainment and recreation, including visiting Cathedral Grove Other (includes: business and personal, all of the above, passing through, active transportation)



### 5. What is your primary mode of transportation when using Highway 4?

Driver in a passenger vehicle (car, truck, van) Passenger in a passenger vehicle (car, truck, van) Driver in an oversized vehicle (semi, trailer, recreational vehicle, bus) Passenger on bus (transit or tourism) Other (includes: bicycle, motorcycle)



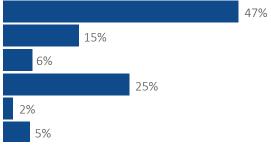
### **Section 2: Experiences**

Participants were asked about their experiences when visiting Cathedral Grove or traveling through on Highway 4.

### PARKING EXPERIENCES

### 6. Please share your most recent PARKING experience at Cathedral Grove. Please select only one.





### **OBSERVATIONS ABOUT PARKING DURING DIFFERENT SEASONS & TIMES**

- > Parking is very difficult during July and August, all days of the week, between early morning to late afternoon
- Parking areas can be intermittently full between morning to afternoon during the shoulder seasons, March through June and September through November, especially on weekends and during good weather
- > Parking is typically easy during the winter, December through February, with some busy times mid-day on weekends

THEMES FROM COMMENTS ABOUT PARKING EXPERIENCES	NUMBER OF MENTIONS
Parking areas full, difficult to find parking, or did not find parking	90
Concerns about safety in parking areas due to unpredictable car and pedestrian movements	81
Choose to visit the park off-season to avoid parking issues	53
Concerns about oversize vehicles in parking areas or on shoulders blocking parking, roadways, and visibility	47
Concerns about safety issues related to people parking and walking along highway shoulders	44
Suggestions for more parking, either in the park or at an alternate location	41
Concerns about people reversing or exiting into oncoming highway traffic	38
Concerns about people parking on one side of the park and crossing the highway to visit the other side	31
Observations about illegal maneuvers to get to parking or illegal parking	29
Parking experience was acceptable, sufficient parking was observed during visit	28
Concerns about people slowing on the highway to look or wait for a parking spot	14
Concerns about parking layout and clarity, haphazard parking reducing efficiency and creating safety issues	13
Concerns about speeding and aggressive driving on the highway creating safety hazards	13
Concerns that adding parking will impact existing old growth trees	10
Do not feel that additional parking would address the issues (will lead to more visitors)	6
Other (not enough places nearby to turn around, suggestions for paid parking / time limited parking)	7

### PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCES

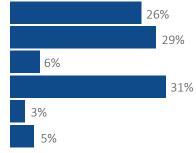
### 7. What has been your experience as a PEDESTRIAN crossing Highway 4? Please select only one.

I was able to find a safe gap in traffic and walk across I had difficulty finding a safe gap and eventually ran across I waited until traffic stopped for us then crossed

I did not cross and just visited the side on which we were parked

Don't remember

Other (includes: don't stop at park, observations about unsafe pedestrian behaviour)

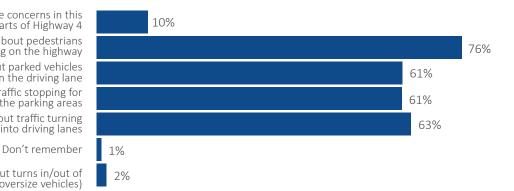


THEMES FROM COMMENTS ABOUT PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCES	NUMBER OF MENTIONS
Busy, difficult, or scary to cross the road and/or walk along the highway to the park	115
Choose to visit only one side of the park to avoid crossing the highway	30
Concerns about erratic pedestrian behaviours (e.g., walking into moving traffic, crossing when unsafe, expecting traffic to stop, etc.)	30
Concerns about slower-moving pedestrians (e.g., those with mobility limitations, children, groups)	27
Feeling that pedestrians should not be permitted on any part of the highway	21
Concerns about aggressive driving, unwillingness of motorists to slow or stop for pedestrians	21
Pedestrian experience was acceptable, no concerns or issues crossing	14
Concerns about tourists and those unfamiliar with the area not understanding / following safe behaviours	10
Concerns about vehicles in the parking area hitting or backing into pedestrians as they enter or exit	9
Concerns about low-visibility conditions (e.g., fog, rain, bright sun/shadow) increasing safety hazards for pedestrians	6

### DRIVING EXPERIENCES

### 8. Please share your most recent personal experience with **DRIVING** on Highway 4 through Cathedral Grove. *Please choose all that apply.*

I did not have any more concerns in this location than on other parts of Highway 4 I was concerned about pedestrians crossing or walking on the highway I was concerned about parked vehicles encroaching on the highway in the driving lane I was concerned about traffic stopping for pedestrians or vehicles at the parking areas I was concerned about traffic turning or pulling into driving lanes



Other (includes: concerns about turns in/out of parking lot, concerns about oversize vehicles)

THEMES FROM COMMENTS ABOUT DRIVING EXPERIENCES	NUMBER OF MENTIONS
Concerns about the high activity in the area in summer; moderate concerns about activity in spring and fall; perceptions that the busy season is expanding	112
Frustrations and concerns about unpredictability of park visitors (both pedestrians and motorists) entering the highway unexpectedly	112
Concerns about shoulder parking encroaching into highway drive lanes	31
Feeling that if rules are followed (e.g., speed limit), there are minimal concerns or issues	27
Concerns that not all motorists slow to the speed limit when traveling through the park	26
Desire to see actions taken as quickly as possible	20
Feeling that there are many large trucks using the highway which increases the degree of danger	19
Concerns about trees / tree limbs falling onto the roadway during storms or winds	17
Concerns that changes will impact existing old growth trees	15
Concerns about visibility when entering the park (i.e., not seeing pedestrians until too late)	7
Acknowledgment that recent signage (e.g., speed readers) have improved some motorist behaviours	6
Other (no accommodation for cyclists, undefined pedestrian / vehicle right of ways, situation makes a poor impression on tourists, air pollution)	6

### Section 3: Park Values

To help inform and evaluate potential pedestrian and traffic safety improvement options, participants were asked to provide input on values and concerns. This information will be used when evaluating preliminary options to identify how well they do or do not align with key park values.

9. This is not the first time that improvements to MacMillan Provincial Park/Cathedral Grove have been considered. Looking back at previous projects, some key values and concerns can be identified. Participants were asked the level of importance for each of the values listed and to identify other values that may warrant consideration.

	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Very Important	Not Important
Safety of park visitors and road users		8	34%		9% 5% -1% -1%
Opportunities to continue visiting Cathedral Grove		57%		22%	14% - 4% - 3%
Potential effects on an important old growth forest area		66%		17%	11% - 4% -2%
Potential effects on the Cameron River		61%		21%	11% 5% -2%
Potential effects on First Nations values	4	-3%	17%	16%	12% 12%
Potential habitat impacts, notably related to Roosevelt Elk, a blue-listed species		59%		20%	13% 5% -3%
Potential fish habitat impacts		62%		22%	11% - 3% - 2%
Potential impacts to red-listed plant species in the area		57%		19%	17%4% -3%
Windthrow (trees uprooted or broken by wind)		49%	21	2% 2	21% 5% - 4%
Concerns about too much use or development in a natural area		49%	15%	19%	9% 8%

### Other values identified include:

- Accessibility for all abilities
- Maintaining efficient traffic flow through the area
- Accommodating multiple modes of transportation (including non-motorized)
- Fiscal responsibility
- Emergency access / reducing risks of highway closures
- Addressing risks posed by danger trees
- Potential impacts beyond the site or park boundary

- Long-term protection of Cathedral Grove
- Support for tourism / economic development
- Aesthetics / beauty
- Opportunities for education
- Climate change impacts
- History of the area
- Overall park experience / amenities

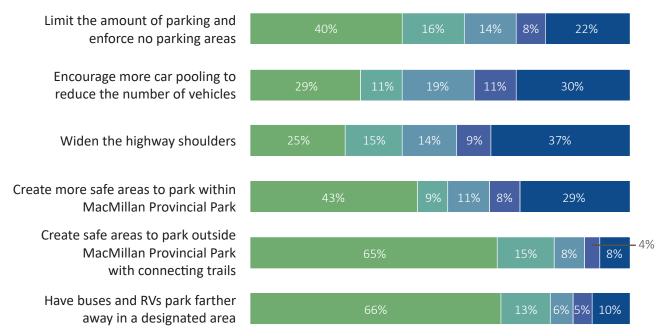
### **Section 4: Preliminary Ideas for Improvements**

In the past, a number of ideas have been suggested for improving **PEDESTRIAN SAFETY, TRAFFIC SAFETY,** and **PARKING CAPACITY** around Cathedral Grove. Questionnaire participants were asked their level of support for these preliminary ideas. Feedback will help determine the long list of potential options to be explored in Phase 2 of the study.

### 10. The following potential **PEDESTRIAN** and **TRAFFIC SAFETY** improvements could be considered at Cathedral Grove. Participants were asked to identify their level of support for each.



11. The following potential **PARKING CAPACITY** improvements could be considered at Cathedral Grove. Participants were asked to identify their level of support for each.



Participants were asked to identify any specific ideas or suggestions they had for improving **PEDESTRIAN SAFETY, TRAFFIC SAFETY,** or **PARKING CAPACITY** at Cathedral Grove. From 2,224 written comments collected at the public events, in completed questionnaires, and through written submissions, the following themes were identified. It should be noted that many comments contained more than one theme.

THEMES FROM COMMENTS ABOUT IDEAS FOR IMPROVEMENT PEDESTRIAN SAFETY, TRAFFIC SAFETY, OR PARKING CAPACITY ISSUES	NUMBER OF MENTIONS
<ul> <li>Relocate / develop parking in a location away from the highway</li> <li>Many suggestions to move parking elsewhere to increase safety / protect old growth trees</li> <li>Common locations: areas to the south and east of the park boundary, Cameron Lake before park boundary, foot of the hump, top of the hump, previously studied location, cleared utility line right-of-way west of the highway, private access road to cabins, second growth areas, more distant locations (e.g., Qualicum Beach, Port Alberni, Englishman River- with shuttle)</li> <li>Varied opinions about appropriate walking distance (e.g., less than one kilometre to several kilometres)</li> </ul>	316
<ul> <li>Create a pedestrian overpass or underpass to keep pedestrians from crossing Highway 4</li> <li>Recognition of grade separation challenges (e.g., tree roots, flooding, space limitations, accessibility)</li> <li>Desire for structures be designed to fit with the natural setting of the grove</li> <li>Suggestions to use bridge at Cameron River for potential pedestrian underpass (seasonal)</li> </ul>	290
<ul> <li>Consider an alternate route for Highway 4, outside Cathedral Grove</li> <li>Comments about additional benefits, including emergency access</li> <li>Common locations: Horne Lake connector, Comox Lake route, north shore of Cameron Lake, E&amp;N rail alignment, southeast of park boundary, previously forested sites, split highway to two one-way routes</li> </ul>	255
<ul> <li>Develop safe trails that prevent the need for people to walk along Highway 4</li> <li>If shoulder parking remains, trails on the park side to prevent people from walking on the highway</li> <li>Safe trails from any new parking area to the park, not along the highway</li> <li>Additional trails could spread the park footprint, reducing impacts to areas at the existing trails</li> </ul>	138
Ensure any improvements carefully consider the sensitive environment of the area / do not require cutting of old growth trees	124
<ul> <li>Consider a shuttle / transit system to move visitors between off-site parking and Cathedral Grove</li> <li>Shuttle suggestions: small buses, transit buses, rail cars, golf carts, horse and buggy</li> <li>Suggestion to consider a public transit route between Port Alberni and Qualicum Beach, with a stop at Cathedral Grove as a part of the regional public transportation system</li> </ul>	114
<ul> <li>Create an at-grade pedestrian crosswalk at Cathedral Grove with signals / barriers to limit pedestrian crossings to one location</li> <li>Lower impact / cost than grade-separated alternatives, while making crossings more predictable for both pedestrians and motorists</li> <li>Suggestions that crossing signals be timed (rather than pedestrian-activated) to reduce motorist impacts (i.e., pedestrians collect then cross at one time, rather than on demand)</li> </ul>	109
Add centre barriers to road at the existing parking area to prevent people from crossing the highway (both pedestrians and motorists) and provide physical barriers to prevent illegal parking	85
Increase traffic calming such as further reduction of speed limits, speed humps, rumble strips, narrower driving lanes	81
Increase enforcement to address speeding, illegal vehicle maneuvers, jay-walking	63
<ul> <li>Consider limiting or closing access to Cathedral Grove</li> <li>Observations that current parking helps to limit the number of park visitors, helping to manage overall impacts</li> </ul>	58

THEMES FROM COMMENTS ABOUT IDEAS FOR IMPROVEMENT PEDESTRIAN SAFETY, TRAFFIC SAFETY, OR PARKING CAPACITY ISSUES	NUMBER OF MENTIONS	
Create separate parking area for oversize vehicles including buses and RVs	57	
Widen highway shoulders to ensure parked vehicles are fully pulled off driving lanes and to potentially add more shoulder parking		
<ul> <li>Complete improvements to existing parking such as separated pull-through parking areas with angle parking, barriers between parking and the road, designated entrance / exit, marked stalls</li> <li>Mixed opinions about potential for expanded parking in the current location</li> </ul>	55	
Eliminate all parking along highway shoulders to reduce potential for pedestrian / motorist conflicts	54	
Add signage and pavement markings such as more advanced warning signs about pedestrian crossings, digital message readers with current information (e.g., parking lot full), regulatory signs for pedestrians, more no parking signs, more reflective pavement markings, multi-lingual information signs	48	
Ensure accessibility for visitors with limited mobility, including nearby parking or drop-off, accessible ramps for grade changes, and accessible trail connections	45	
Plan improvements that will not require further speed reduction of Highway 4 through traffic	38	
Consider opportunities to improve park amenities (e.g., elevated boardwalks, washroom upgrades, visitor centre, food, tours, additional points of interest, naturalist program)	33	
Consider pay parking, time-limited parking, or a reservation system to limit vehicles stopping at the park	31	
Consider increasing presence of park wardens, volunteers, or officers to help manage visitor behaviour (e.g., safe crossing, parking management)		
Consider adding u-turn sites outside the park to allow visitors to turn around after a visit or to find parking	21	
Consider park expansion to increase protected area around Cathedral Grove, protect the grove from winds	17	
Opinions that car pooling will not be effective / difficult to enforce	14	
Undertake danger tree assessments / removals as needed along the highway for safety	12	
Consider multi-modal access through the area (cycling, other active transportation)	12	
Consider no change / leave the park as existing	11	
Carefully consider design and integration of all changes to fit within the park environment (e.g., small parking areas between trees, attractive infrastructure, gravel vs. paved areas)	10	
Increase education to better inform visitors about park conditions and challenges, encourage visitation during off-peak times, and provide information about the importance of park protection	10	
Support utilization of existing rail to move people and/or goods (thereby reducing highway traffic)	10	
Consider variable speed limits to reflect conditions during different seasons / times of day	9	
Consider making the existing parking area a drop-off only	8	
Provide lighting to increase visibility	7	
Recognize the geographical challenges around the park (i.e., steep terrain, slope instability)	4	
Other (general issues along Highway 4, issues at other park areas, traffic circle)	7	

### **General Themes**

Throughout the engagement, several notable themes could be observed and may warrant consideration during the development of options or in future projects:

- The issues at Cathedral Grove are typically seasonal and time of day dependent (although input suggests busy times are perceived to be increasing). This suggests that seasonal adjustments to regulations or services may warrant consideration.
- Desire to ensure improvements consider design, aesthetics, and "fit" within Cathedral Grove, for example parking areas integrated within trees, or use of several small lots (rather than a large paved parking lot), use of soft surfaces where feasible, infrastructure that blends with the forest setting.
- Suggestions to use a multi-modal lens to integrate cycling and other alternative modes of transportation.
- Recognition that while a new highway or bypass could resolve several issues at Cathedral Grove, financial, environmental, archaeological, and other challenges would need to be considered.
- Suggestions for park expansion to integrate more of the surrounding forest areas into the park.
- Concerns that human behaviour will continue to create issues, regardless of physical improvements (e.g., pedestrians continuing to cross the highway even if an over/underpass is built, motorists continuing to park illegally, motorists continuing to speed, etc).
- Concerns about tree impacts in areas beyond the park boundary, due to forestry and the impacts of winds on areas adjacent to cut blocks (i.e., blow-down risks).

- Suggestions that Cathedral Grove is vulnerable to human impacts and options that reduce, limit, or spread out visitation (e.g., reservations or pay parking, potential park closures, more distant parking) could benefit the health of the ecosystem.
- Suggestions that global trends, including future changes to modes of transportation, could affect the way we travel in the relatively near future, potentially affecting long-term changes.
- Suggestions for improvements to Highway 4 overall, including more traffic pullouts to reduce large convoys and consideration of other destinations including Cameron Lake Picnic Area and Beaufort Picnic Area.
- Identification of a number of precedent examples to be considered for developing ideas at Cathedral Grove. These examples will be reviewed by the study team during options development.
- A sense of urgency from some to move forward with addressing potential safety issues.
- A desire from some to carefully consider how larger future trends (demographics, transportation changes) could affect the needs of the future before implementing improvements.
- Recognition from many participants that it will be difficult to fully satisfy all interests – challenging compromises will need to be explored.



### APPENDIX A: INFORMATION POSTERS



### Thank you for participating in this engagement for the **Cathedral Grove Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Study**.

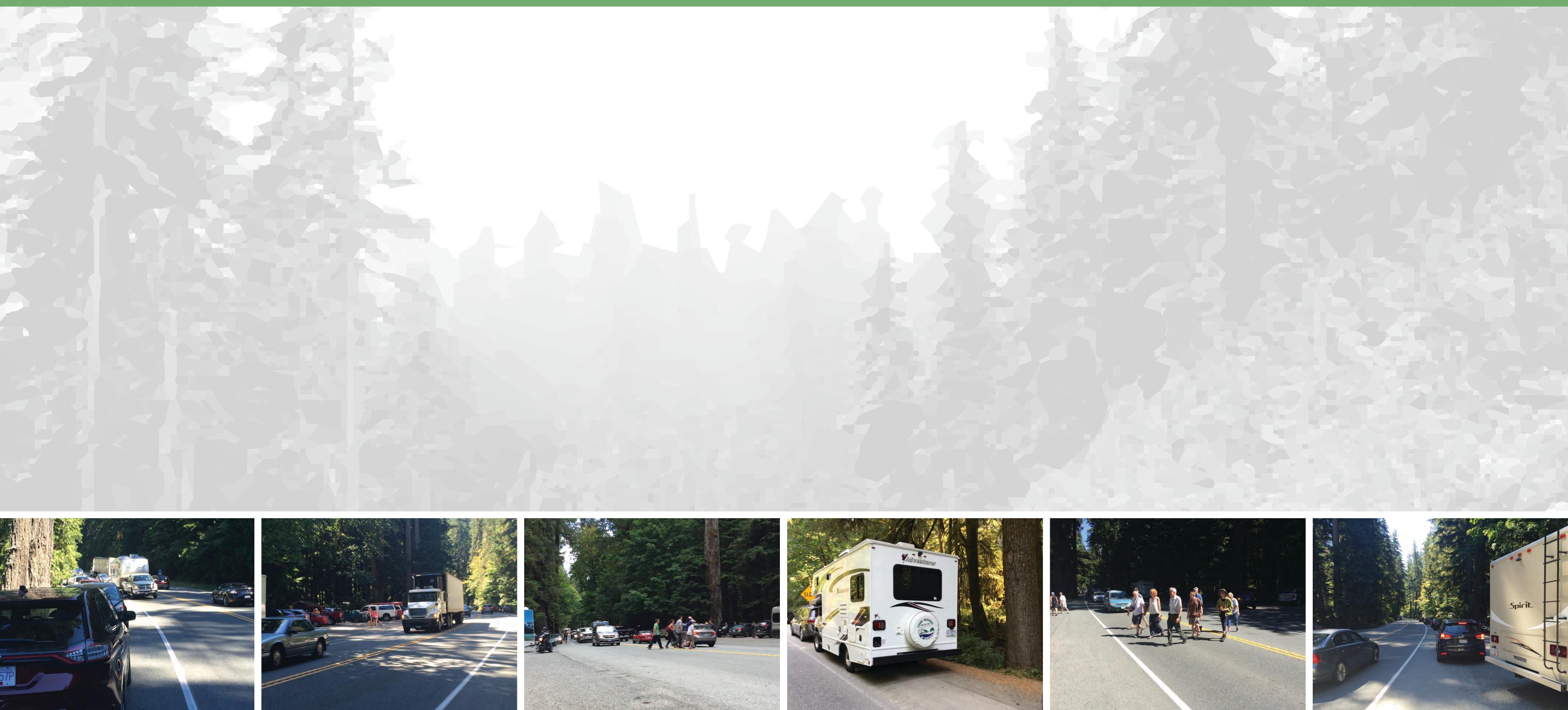
The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure is seeking your input on how to address safety concerns at the existing Cathedral Grove park access while continuing to protect inherent environmental, social, and cultural values. We understand this is a very special place. We'd like your help to carefully consider an approach.





It is helpful for us to understand what is at the top of participants' minds as we start this process. Share your thoughts by writing a response to the following question on your sticker and post it in the forest below: **"Thinking about pedestrian and traffic safety at Cathedral Grove, what do you believe is the** 

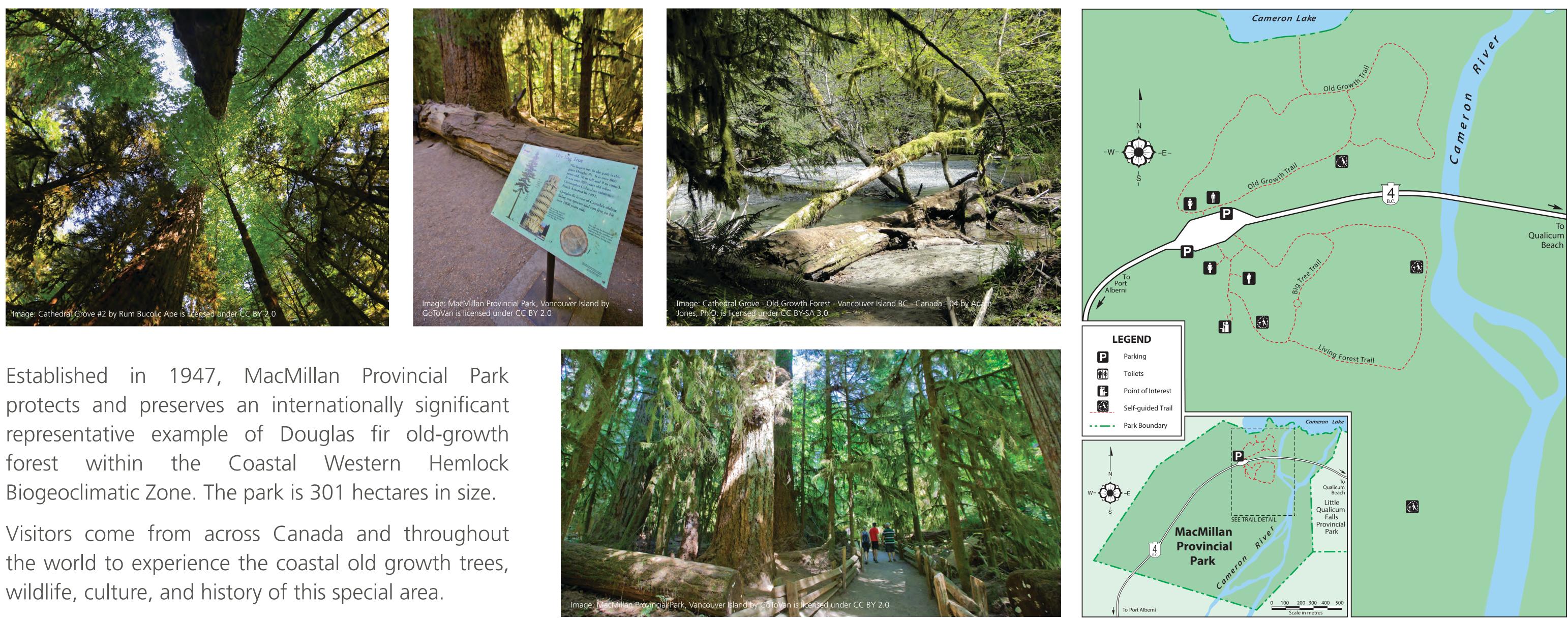
"Thinking about pedestrian and traffic safety at Cathedral Grove, what do you believe is the **MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT** for us to consider when planning improvements?"



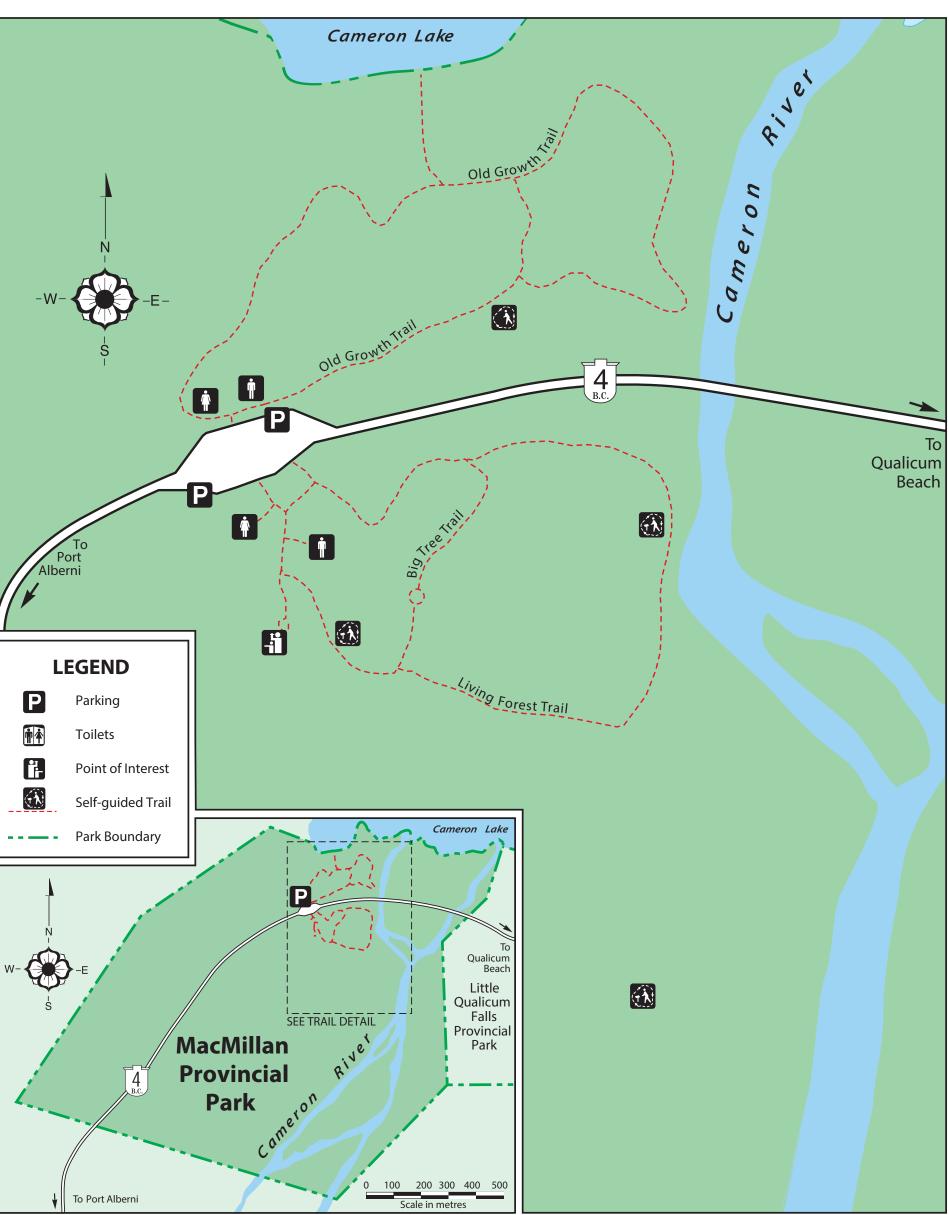


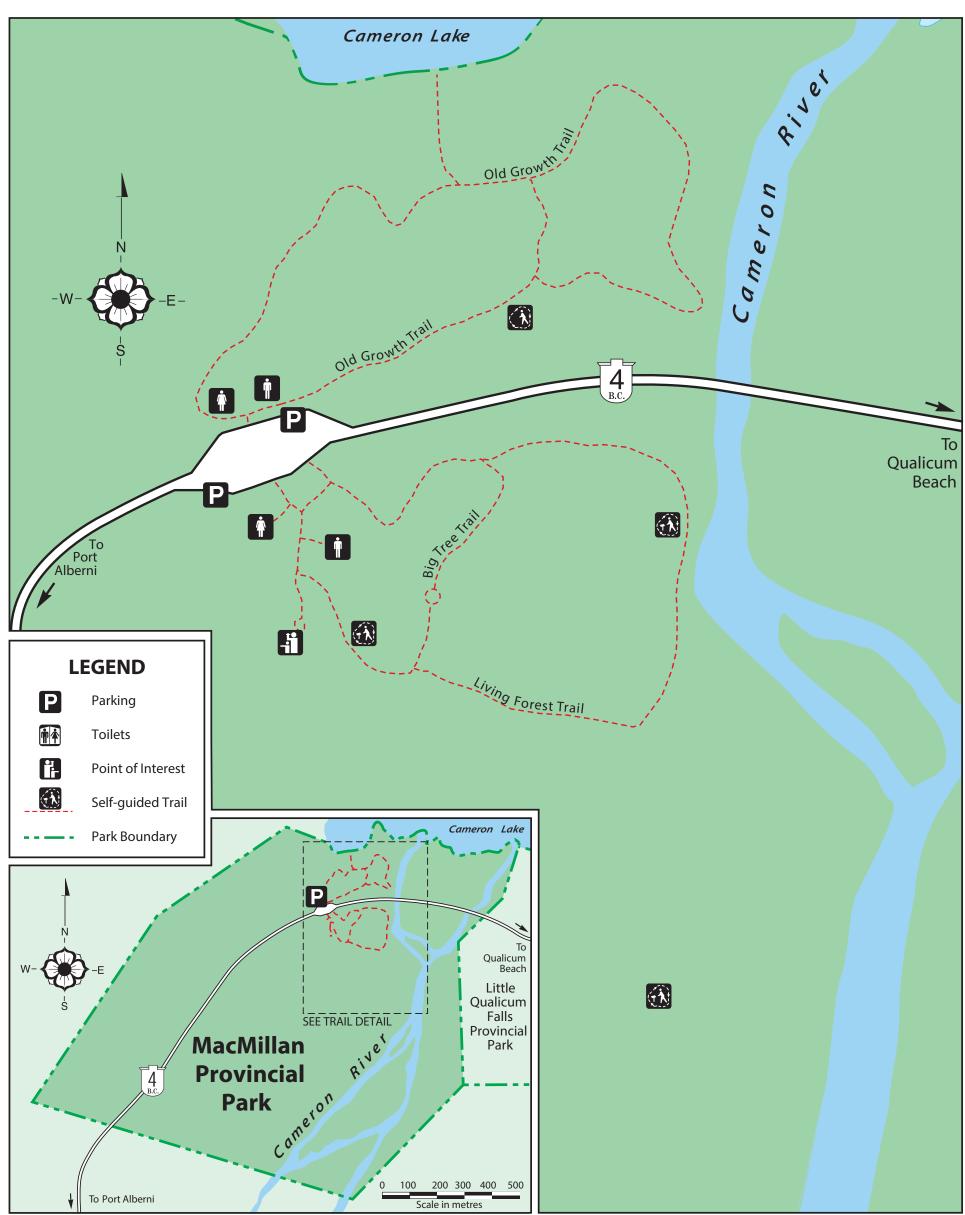
# MacMillan Provincial Park

Cathedral Grove, located in MacMillan Provincial Park, is one of the most accessible stands of giant **Douglas fir trees on Vancouver Island.** Here visitors can stroll through a network of trails under the shadow of towering ancient Douglas-fir trees, majestic pillars untouched by the modern world – some more than 800 years old.













## WHY ARE WE DOING THIS STUDY?

- Each year roughly 500,000 visitors from around the world come to experience the old growth giants and unparalleled beauty of Cathedral Grove in MacMillan Provincial Park.
- Most visitors arrive by vehicle, parking along Hwy 4 and crossing the highway to visit both sides of the park.
- Parking demand often exceeds capacity which leads to unsafe maneuvers, compromising safety for pedestrians and motorists.
- A safety issue has existed for many years and continues to grow as traffic through the park increases.
- The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure aims to build and maintain a safe and reliable multimodal transportation system for British Columbians.

## Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Study

## WHERE ARE WE GOING?

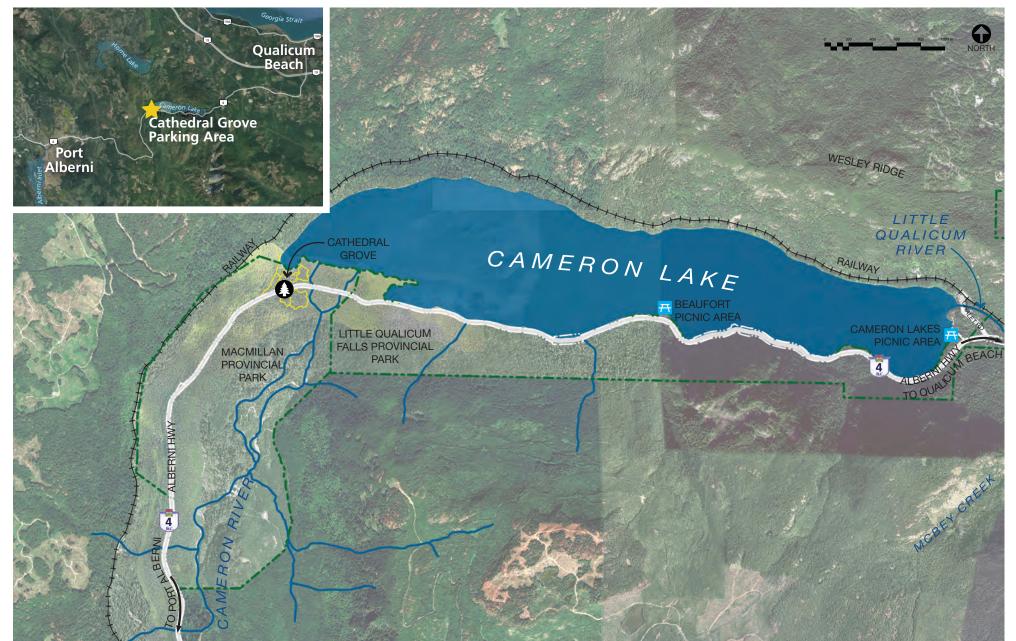
The objective of this Study is to make recommendations for pedestrian and traffic safety improvements that could be completed in a short-term time frame.

### **HOW CAN YOU HELP?**

- Share your experiences as a visitor to the Park
- Share your experiences using Highway 4 and traveling through the Park
- Discuss your views on pedestrian and traffic safety issues and on Park values
- Consider potential improvements that could improve safety while protecting important park values

During this first engagement, our focus is on learning about the issues and the area. The input we receive will be used to guide development of pedestrian and traffic safety improvement options. In Spring 2019 we'll be engaging further on these options.

## **STUDY AREA**



## WHAT IS THE PROCESS?

# Understanding Park Values

options are brought forward for consideration.

## **LEARNING FROM THE PAST**

This is not the first time that changes in MacMillan Provincial Park have been considered. Looking back at these previous projects we are learning about the ecological and spiritual values of the park and the concerns people have about potential impacts.

For this Study, we would like to undertake a thoughtful and thorough engagement process, in which we listen carefully to opinions, values, and ideas before options are developed.

Our goal is to work with participants to find solutions that address both safety concerns AND protection of the park's inherent values.



### PLEASE SHARE YOUR INPUT

To help build a more specific list of values and concerns, we ask you to participate in one of the table discussions at this public event. Looking at a map of the area, help us document important aspects of the park, concerns you have, or ideas you would like to suggest.

## Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Study

## Before developing pedestrian and safety improvement options, we'd like to better understand the various aspects that need to be considered. This process will begin with listening and understanding before improvement

## **NOTED VALUES & CONCERNS**

As we compile values to be taken into this process, we can look back at those that have been previously identified, including:

- Safety of park visitors and road users
- Opportunities to continue visiting Cathedral Grove
- Potential effects on an important old growth forest area
- Potential effects on the Cameron River
- Potential effects on First Nations values
- Potential habitat impacts, notably to Roosevelt Elk, a blue-listed species
- Potential fish habitat impacts
- Potential impacts to red-listed plant species in the area
- Windthrow (tree blow-down) issues related to tree removal
- Concerns about too much use or development in a natural area





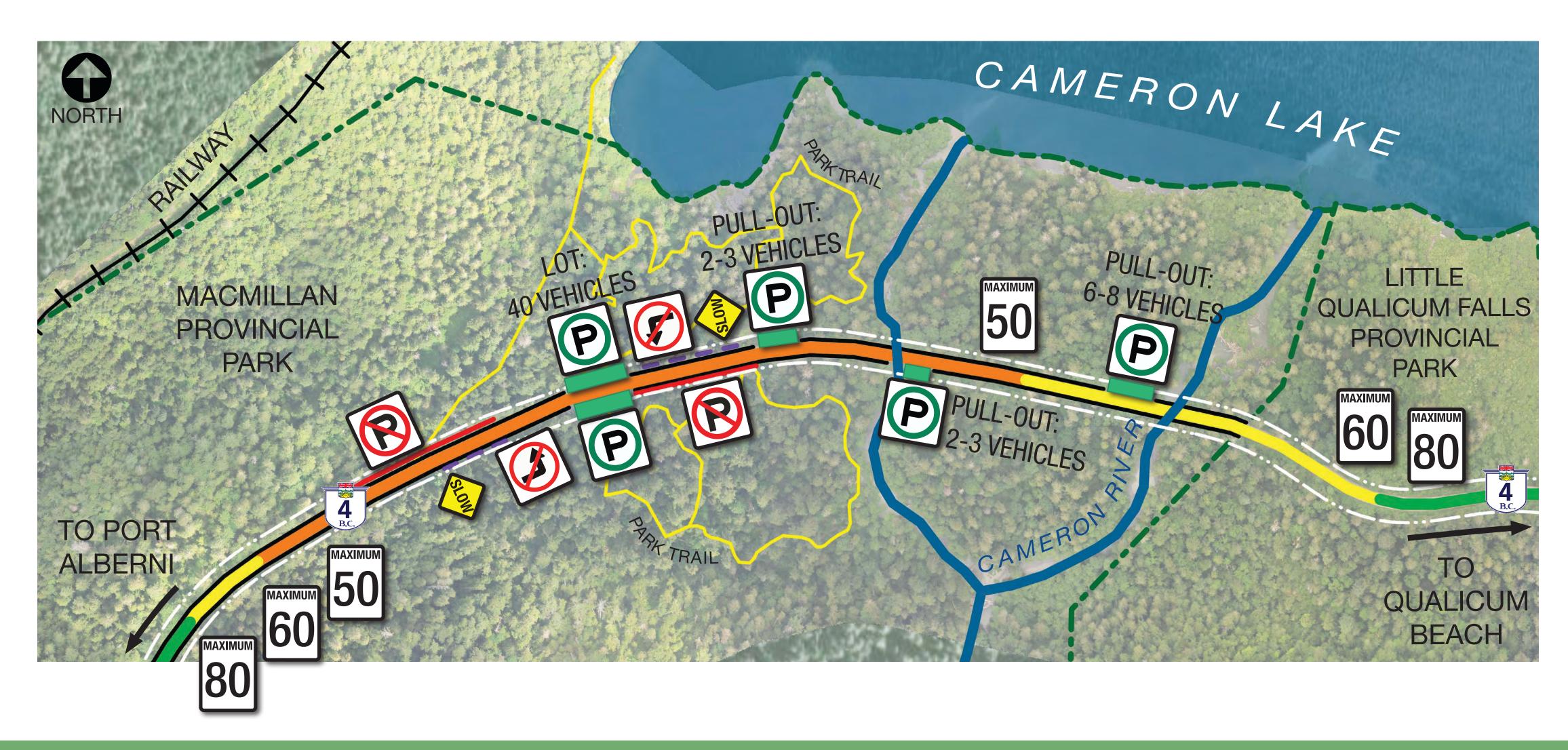


# Current Roadway Conditions

A lot happens at Cathedral Grove. To better understand how people and vehicles interact, the Ministry has analyzed existing roadway conditions, pedestrian movements, parking capacity, and vehicle movements.

### **SPEED LIMITS**

- Highway 4: 80 km/hr
- Cathedral Grove: Reduced speed to 50 km/hr with transitional 60 km/hr zones



## Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Study

### PARKING AREAS

- One primary parking lot
- Three parking pull-outs
- Total parking capacity: 50 54 vehicles

### **HIGHWAY SHOULDERS**



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Narrow width <2.0m

Mature trees in close proximity to shoulder

### LEGEND

Park Boundary 

Cathedral Grove Trail

### **Speed Limits**

- 50 KM/HR
- 60 KM/HR
- 80 KM/HR

### Parking



Parking Area

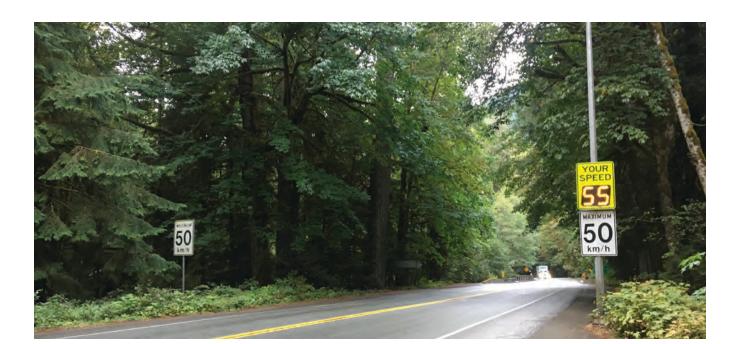


Designated No Parking Zone

— Narrow Shoulder (<2 m paved width)</p>

Safety Improvements to Date

## Over the years, several safety improvements have been implemented at Cathedral Grove. These have improved conditions by increasing motorist awareness and slowing vehicles. However, safety concerns still exist.



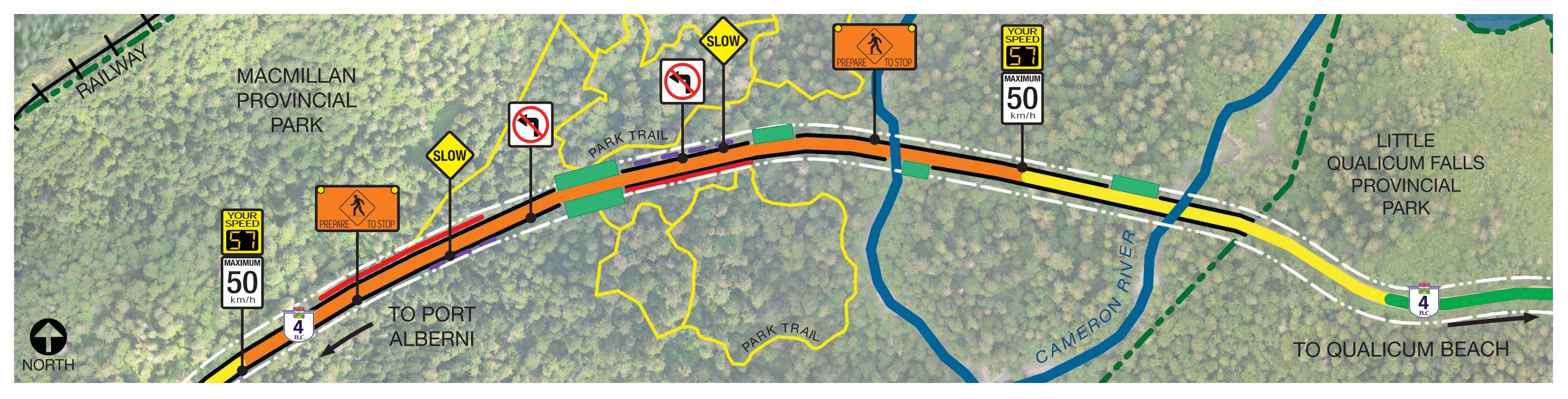


50 km Speed Limit & **Speed Reader Boards** 





Advise motorists if they're within the posted speed limit



## Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Study

### **Overhead Flashing Pedestrian Sign**

Emphasize the need for extreme caution in the area





### **"SLOW" Warning Signs** Remind motorists to mind their speed as they enter the park



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No Left Turn Signs Advise motorists they cannot turn left into the parking area

# About the Issue: Pedestrian Movements

Most park-goers cross the highway to visit trails on both sides

Pedestrians walk along highway > shoulders from parked vehicles to park destinations, at times walking in vehicle travel lanes

Groups of 1 - 20 people cross the highway at a time, often including children, infants in strollers, and the elderly

There is no designated crossing > point or time – pedestrians cross when traffic stops or slows, at times waiting several minutes or running to beat vehicles



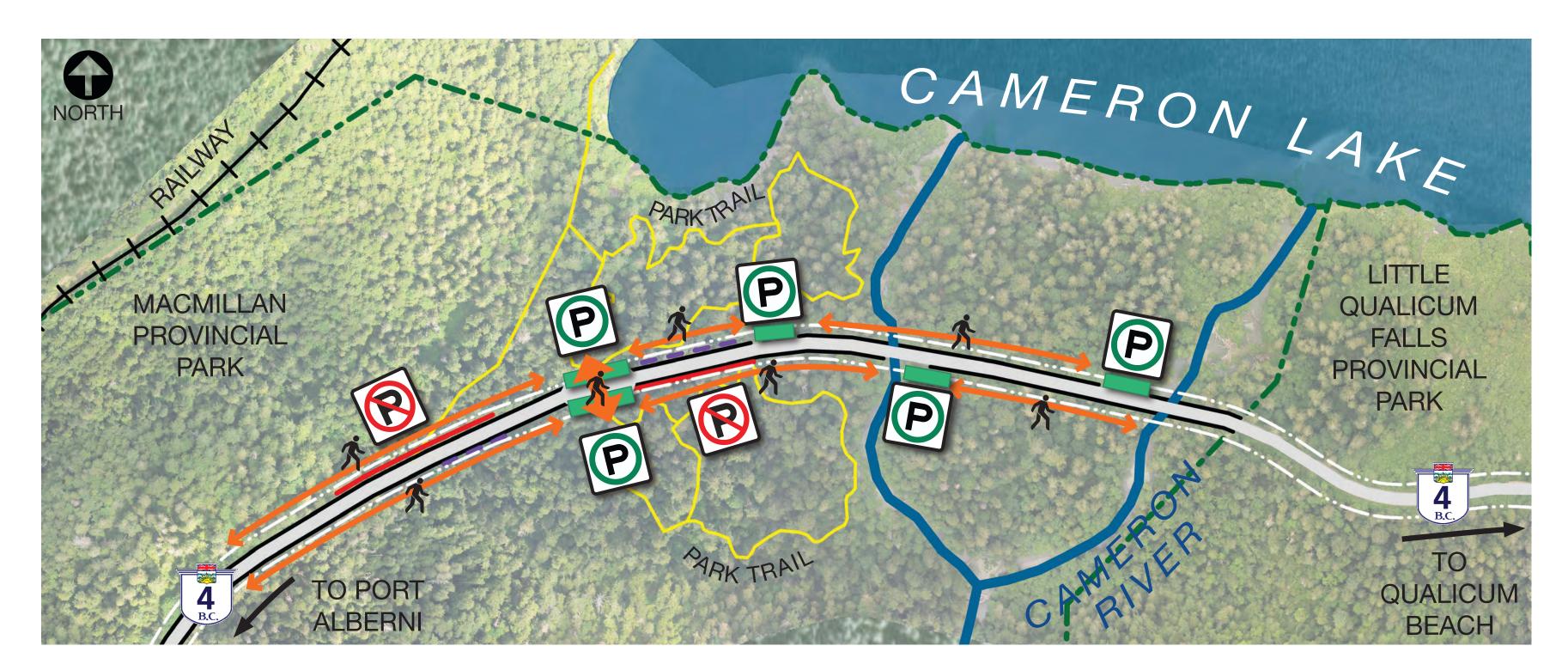






## Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Study

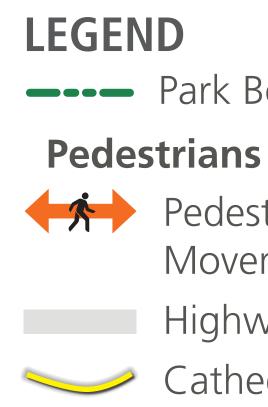
### **Thousands of people travel through Cathedral Grove daily.** Pedestrians on the highway and uncontrolled crossings increase the potential for an accident that could have serious consequences.



### On average, during **a twohour period** on a summer day



pedestrians cross the highway in at Cathedral Grove





Ministry of ransportation

---- Park Boundary

- Pedestrian
  - Movement
  - Highway
  - Cathedral
  - Grove Trail





Parking Area



R



Designated No Parking Zone

Narrow Shoulder (<2 m paved width)

# About the Issue Parking

The location of the park means most visitors arrive by personal vehicle, with some arriving by tour bus. Parking demand often exceeds capacity at mid-day

Vehicles parked on narrow shoulders affect roadway widths, impacting pedestrian and motorist safety

> Vehicles often park in no-parking zones when designated lots are full

Larger vehicles like buses and RVs often double park, impacting sight-lines for pedestrians and drivers









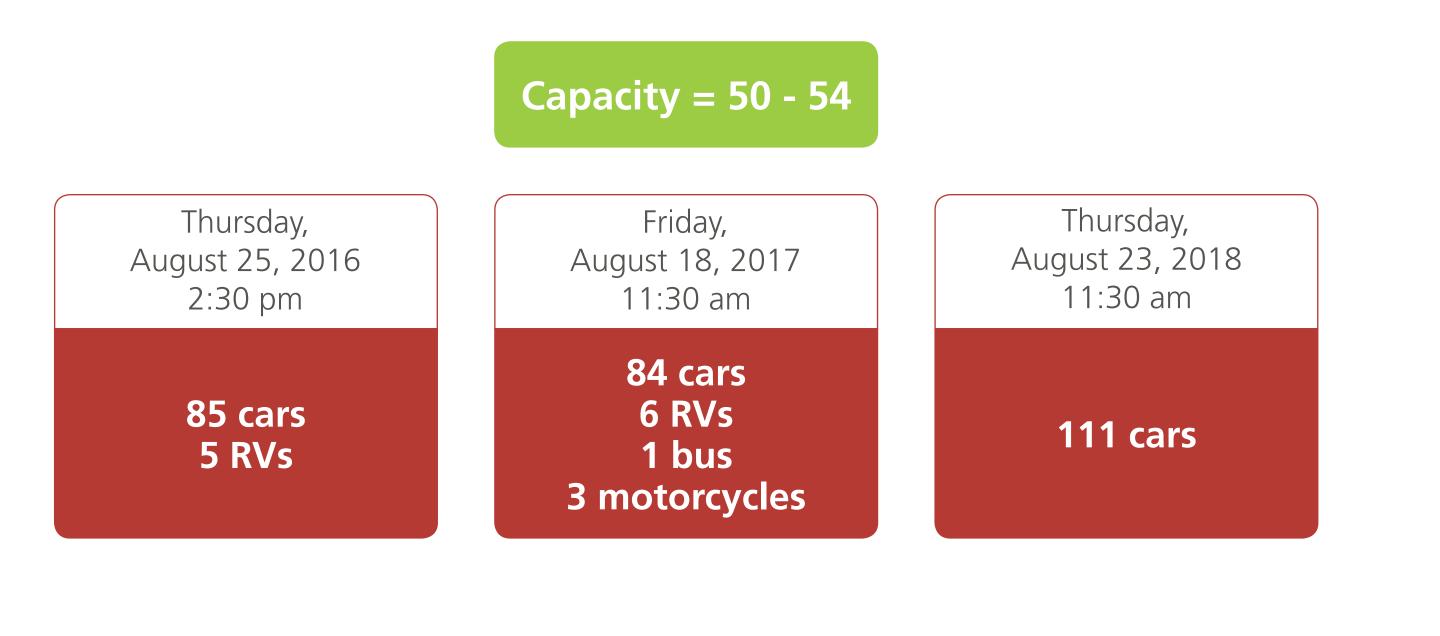
## Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Study

### People travel many kilometres to visit Cathedral Grove.

Because the park is a destination, people want to complete their visit even if the parking lot is full. This can lead to visitors parking in unsafe ways.

### PARKING DEMAND OFTEN EXCEEDS CAPACITY

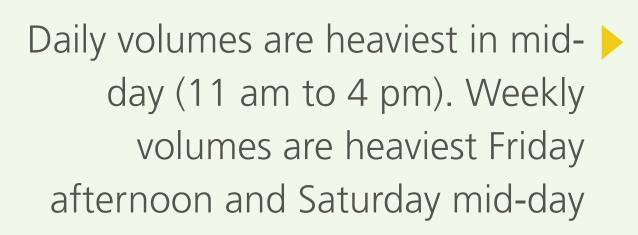
Typically in summer, the parking areas are over capacity between 10 am to 4 pm. Counts show parking demand often reaches twice the capacity at this time. Below are numbers from parking counts completed in the past three summers.





Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

# About the Issue: Vehicle Movements



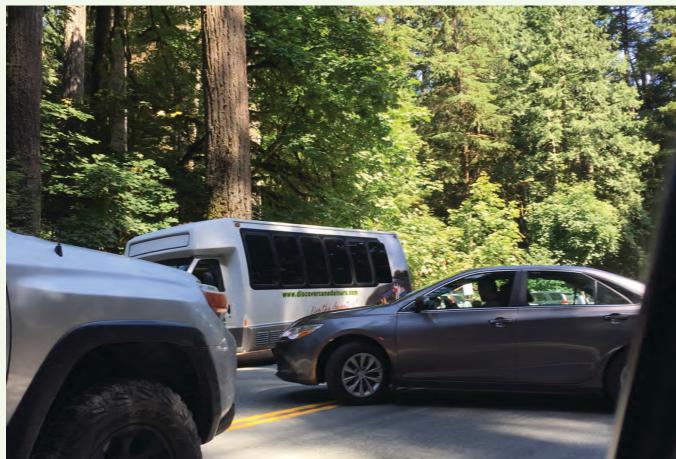


About 90% of the traffic is passenger vehicles. The remaining 10% are heavy vehicles and recreational vehicles

> Long platoons of motorists following slow-moving vehicles are frequently observed on the highway

Park visitors use a range of maneuvers to access the park, many illegal





## Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Study





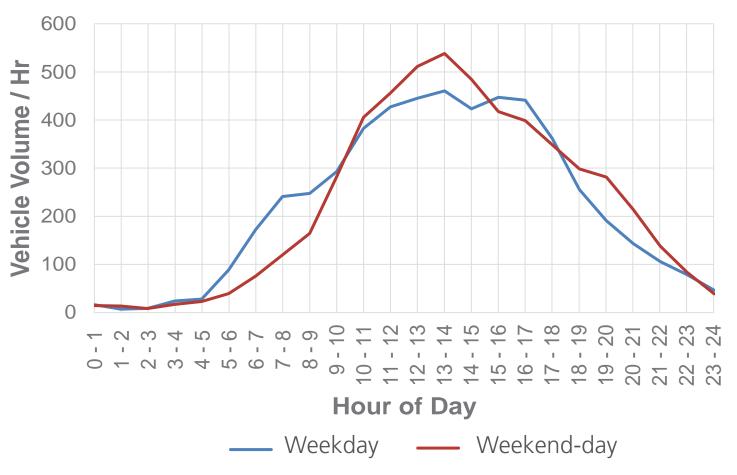
**Over 10,000 vehicles pass through Cathedral Grove on** Hwy 4 daily. Many stop to visit the park. During site analysis, vehicles at Cathedral Grove were observed using the highway as a loading zone, conducting U-turns and three-point turns in the travel lanes, reversing into oncoming traffic, and backing up across both highway lanes.

### TRAFFIC IS INCREASING

Periodic traffic counts show a steady increase in the number of vehicles passing through Cathedral Grove.

5,800 vehicles/day in 1987

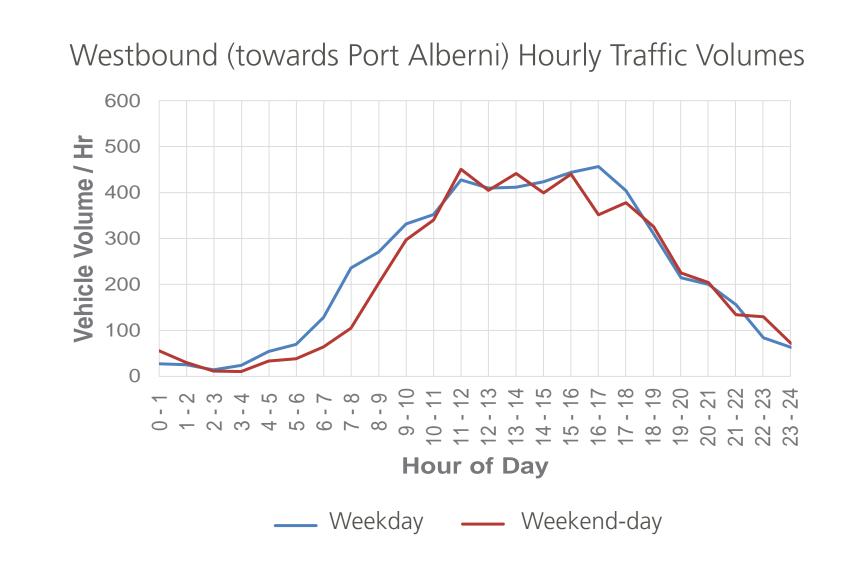
### Eastbound (towards Qualicum Beach) Hourly Traffic Volumes





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# Looking Ahead

### After reviewing input and gathering ideas, options to address safety concerns will be considered. The focus will be on identifying projects that could be implemented in a short-term time frame.

## WHAT TYPES OF IMPROVEMENTS COULD **BE CONSIDERED?**

Over the years, a range of ideas have been suggested for improving pedestrian safety, parking capacity, and traffic safety around Cathedral Grove. This Study could look at ideas such as:

- Improved pedestrian movements
- Upgrades to existing parking areas
- Additional parking
- New trail connections
- Safe U-turn locations
- Improved safety along the highway shoulders
- Improved signage and markings
- Other ideas?

What issues or concerns do you think need to be addressed if these types of improvements are considered? What other ideas should be considered? Please fill out a questionnaire to share your thoughts.

## Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Study

### WHAT'S NEXT?

For the remainder of 2018 we will continue to receive input and ideas. Please provide your initial input by **January 4, 2019**.

In Spring 2019, watch for:

- An input summary posted on the Project website at: www.engage.gov.bc.ca/cathedralgrove
- be involved





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Announcements about next steps in the process and opportunities to

www.engage.gov.bc.ca/cathedralgrove

BC Transportation and Infrastructure @TranBC

BC Transportation @TranBC

# How to Share your Input

Cathedral Grove is a valued place. We would like to hear your input, concerns, or suggestions. This input will be used to develop and evaluate safety improvement options that are carefully aligned with the values of the area. Please take a few minutes to record your thoughts. Here's how:



### TALK WITH US

MOTI staff and project team members are here today to discuss your concerns, learn new information, and to listen to your ideas. Please say hello!



### **FILL OUT A QUESTIONNAIRE**

Fill in a paper questionnaire today or online at www.engage.gov.bc.ca/cathedralgrove



### PARTICIPATE IN A DISCUSSION

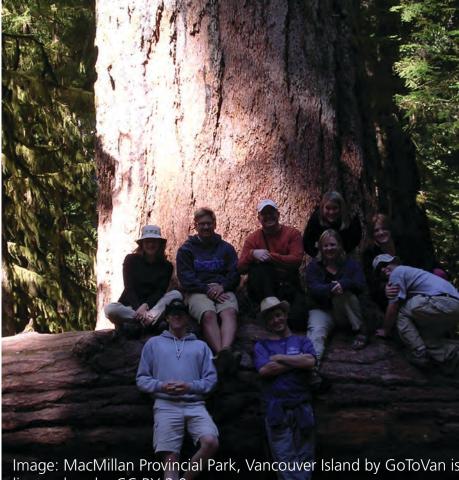
Join a discussion table to talk with the project team and other participants about your values and concerns



### **QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?**

Please contact the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure **Phone:** 250-751-3126 **Email:** cathedralgrove@gov.bc.ca













### APPENDIX B: INPUT QUESTIONNAIRE

PUBLIC INPUT QUESTIONNAIRE - FALL 2018





Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

Thank you for participating in the **Cathedral Grove Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Study**.

The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure is seeking your input on how to address safety concerns at Cathedral Grove while continuing to protect inherent environmental, social, and cultural values. We understand this is a very special place. We'd like your help to carefully consider an approach.

#### WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Provide your input by:

- Reviewing the engagement materials and submitting a questionnaire online at <u>engage.gov.bc.ca/cathedralgrove</u>
- Completing a feedback form in hard copy and dropping it at one of the Public Information Sessions:
  - » Port Alberni Session- Wednesday, November 21
  - » Parksville Session- Thursday, November 22
- Mailing a feedback form or other comments to:
  - Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure 3rd Floor- 2100 Labieux Road Nanaimo, BC V9T 6E9
- Emailing your comments to <u>cathedralgrove@gov.bc.ca</u>

#### HOW INPUT WILL BE USED

Input from First Nations, local government, and the public is vital to understanding the issues, opportunities, and values associated with the Cathedral Grove area.

This input will be used to develop potential safety improvement options that are aligned with the values of the area.

The questionnaire includes **13 questions** and will take about **10 - 15 minutes** to complete. It is divided into **4 Sections**:

- Section 1: About You
- Section 2: Your Experiences
- Section 3: Park Values
- Section 4: Preliminary Ideas for Improvements

#### Please submit your questionnaire by Friday, January 4<sup>th</sup> 2019.

**Collection Notice:** Your personal information collected through this survey will inform the Cathedral Grove Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Study conducted by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure under sections 26(c) and 26(e) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act ("FOIPPA"). Please do not share personal information about others. Should you have any questions about the collection of this information please contact: Executive Director, South Coast Region, Ministry of Transportation. Suite 310 - 1500 Woolridge St, Coquitlam, BC V3K 0B8. Telephone: 604-527-2221

## **STUDY PURPOSE**

The Cathedral Grove Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Study will:

- Undertake an engagement process to understand the park and its values
- Use this information to create safety improvement ideas
- Recommend pedestrian and traffic safety improvements that could be completed in a short-term time frame

## **STUDY AREA**





Your comments and feedback are collected by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure under sections 26(c) and 26(e) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act ("FOIPPA"), for the purposes of soliciting the public's feedback on the Cathedral Grove Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Study. Please do not include any personally identifiable information about yourself or others in your responses.

# **SECTION 1: ABOUT YOU**

To help us understand who responds to this questionnaire, please answer the following FIVE questions.

# 1. Cathedral Grove attracts both local visitors and those visiting from all over the world. Where are you from?

- □ Vancouver Island
- Elsewhere in British Columbia
- Elsewhere in Canada
- □ International Visitor
- □ Prefer not to answer

# 2. How often have you visited MacMillan Provincial Park (Cathedral Grove)?

- □ Frequent Visitor multiple times per year
- □ Occasional Visitor once every year or so
- $\Box$  One-time Visitor once or twice ever
- $\Box$  Not yet but intend to visit in the future
- □ Never
- 3. How often do you travel on Highway 4 (the highway between Qualicum Beach and Port Alberni)? *Please select only one.* 
  - □ 4 or more times per week
  - □ 1 to 3 times per week
  - $\Box$  A few times per month
  - □ A few times per year
  - □ 1 or 2 times in the last few years
  - □ Never

- 4. What is your primary reason for using Highway 4? *Please select only one. If you do not travel on Hwy 4 skip to Section 2.* 
  - □ Commuting to/from work or school
  - □ Travel for business, including professional drivers (taxi driver, delivery/goods mover, courier)
  - Personal including shopping, appointments, meeting friends/family
  - □ To/from entertainment and recreation, including visiting Cathedral Grove
  - □ Other, please specify:
- 5. What is your primary mode of transportation when using Highway 4?

*Please select only one. If you do not travel on Hwy 4 skip to Section 2.* 

- Driver in a passenger vehicle (car, truck, van)
- □ Passenger in a passenger vehicle (car, truck, van)
- Driver in an oversized vehicle (semi, trailer, recreational vehicle, bus)
- □ Passenger on bus (transit or tourism)
- □ Other, please specify:



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## **SECTION 2: YOUR EXPERIENCES**

The following FOUR questions ask about your experiences when visiting Cathedral Grove or traveling through on Highway 4. In written responses, please try to note the time of year (e.g., season or month) and approximate time of day you had this experience.

If you have not visited Cathedral Grove or traveled on Highway 4 skip to the next section.

Need more space to write? Please use the additional writing space on p.9.

- 6. Please share your most recent **PARKING** experience at Cathedral Grove. *Please select only one.* 
  - $\Box$  I was able to park in the designated parking area
  - □ I parked on the shoulder of the highway and walked to the trail entrance
  - □ I parked in an area that I was unsure I was allowed to park
  - $\hfill\square$  The parking area was full so I did not stop
  - Don't remember
  - $\Box$  Other (describe in the space below)

*Do you have any specific comments or observations about your PARKING <i>experience?* 

- 7. Most visitors to Cathedral Grove visit the trails on both sides of the highway. What has been your experience as a **PEDESTRIAN** crossing Highway 4? *Please select only one.* 
  - $\hfill\square$   $\hfill$  I was able to find a safe gap in traffic and walk across
  - □ I had difficulty finding a safe gap and eventually ran across
  - □ I waited until traffic stopped for us then crossed
  - □ I did not cross and just visited the side on which we were parked
  - Don't remember
  - $\Box$  Other (describe in the space below)

Do have any additional comments or observations about your **PEDESTRIAN** experience?

- 8. Please share your most recent personal experience with **DRIVING** on Highway 4 through Cathedral Grove. *Please select all that apply. If you have not driven through Cathedral Grove, please skip to Question 9.* 
  - □ I did not have any more concerns in this location than on other parts of Highway 4
  - □ I was concerned about pedestrians crossing or walking on the highway
  - □ I was concerned about parked vehicles encroaching on the highway in the driving lane
  - □ I was concerned about traffic stopping for pedestrians or vehicles at the parking areas
  - □ I was concerned about traffic turning or pulling into driving lanes
  - Don't remember
  - $\hfill\square$  Other (describe in the space below)

*Do you have any specific comments or observations about your DRIVING <i>experience*?

9. Do you have other comments or observations you can share about your experiences PARKING, as a PEDESTRIAN, or DRIVING at Cathedral Grove. If possible, note the time of year (e.g., season or month) and approximate time of day (e.g., early morning, noon, late afternoon) you had this experience.



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#### **SECTION 3: PARK VALUES**

Before developing pedestrian and safety improvement options, we'd like to better understand the various aspects that need to be considered. The following question asks about values and concerns that should be considered when planning pedestrian and traffic safety improvements in MacMillan Provincial Park/Cathedral Grove.

10. This is not the first time that improvements to MacMillan Provincial Park/Cathedral Grove have been considered. Looking back at previous projects, some key values and concerns can be identified. Share how important each value or concern is to you and your observations, ideas, or questions in the table below. This information will provide guidance on how pedestrian and traffic safety improvements are developed and evaluated. *Need more space to write? Please use the additional writing space on p.9.* 

**IMPORTANCE TO YOU** (1 = not important **VALUE OR CONCERN** YOUR OBSERVATIONS, IDEAS, OR QUESTIONS 5 = very important) No 2 3 4 5 1 Opinion Safety of park visitors and road users No Opportunities to continue visiting 5 2 3 4 Opinion Cathedral Grove No Potential effects on an important old 5 1 2 3 4 Opinion growth forest area No Opinion 5 3 1 2 4 Potential effects on the Cameron River No 4 5 2 3 Opinion Potential effects on First Nations values No 5 Potential habitat impacts, notably related 2 3 4 1 Opinion to Roosevelt Elk, a blue-listed species No 2 3 4 5 1 Opinion Potential fish habitat impacts No Potential impacts to red-listed plant 2 3 4 5 1 Opinion species in the area No Windthrow (trees uprooted or broken by 4 5 2 3 Opinion wind) No Concerns about too much use or 5 2 3 4 1 Opinion development in a natural area

What other values are important to you? Please describe them below:

Other Value and Concern #1: \_

Other Value and Concern #2: \_



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#### **SECTION 4: PRELIMINARY IDEAS FOR IMPROVEMENTS**

Over the years, several safety improvements have been implemented at Cathedral Grove. These have improved conditions by increasing motorist awareness and slowing vehicles. However, due to increased traffic and park use, safety concerns still exist. A number of ideas have been suggested for improving **PEDESTRIAN SAFETY, PARKING CAPACITY,** and **TRAFFIC SAFETY** around Cathedral Grove. The following THREE questions gather early input on ideas that may warrant exploration in this Study.

#### 11. The following potential **PEDESTRIAN** and **TRAFFIC SAFETY** improvements could be considered at Cathedral Grove. Please identify your level of support for each idea and add any comments you have in the table below.

PEDESTRIAN & TRAFFIC SAFETY IMPROVEMENT IDEA	LEVEL OF SUPPORT (1 = do not support 5 = strongly support)	COMMENTS ON THE IMPROVEMENT IDEA?
Improved pedestrian movements	1 2 3 4 5 Opinion	
Upgrades to existing parking areas	1 2 3 4 5 Opinion	
Additional parking	1 2 3 4 5 Opinion	
New trail connections	1 2 3 4 5 Opinion	
Safe u-turn locations	1 2 3 4 5 Opinion	
Improved safety along the highway shoulders	1 2 3 4 5 Opinion	
Improved signage and markings	1 2 3 4 5 Opinion	

Do you have any specific ideas or suggestions for improving **PEDESTRIAN** and **TRAFFIC SAFETY**?



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# 12. The following potential **PARKING CAPACITY** improvements could be considered at Cathedral Grove. Please identify your level of support for each idea and add any comments you have in the table below.

PARKING CAPACITY IMPROVEMENT IDEA	LEVEL OF SUPPORT (1 = do not support 5 = strongly support)	COMMENTS ON THE IMPROVEMENT IDEA?
Limit the amount of parking and enforce no parking areas	1 2 3 4 5 <sup>No</sup> Opinion	
Encourage more car pooling to reduce the number of vehicles	1 2 3 4 5 Opinion	
Widen the highway shoulders	1 2 3 4 5 Opinion	
Create more safe areas to park within MacMillan Provincial Park	1 2 3 4 5 Opinion	
Create safe areas to park outside MacMillan Provincial Park with connecting trails	1 2 3 4 5 <sup>No</sup> O O O O O	
Have buses and RVs park farther away in a designated area	1 2 3 4 5 Opinion	

Do you have any specific ideas or suggestions for addressing **PARKING CAPACITY** issues?



Your comments and feedback are collected by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure under sections 26(c) and 26(e) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act ("FOIPPA"), for the purposes of soliciting the public's feedback on the Cathedral Grove Pedestrian and Traffic Safety Study. Please do not include any personally identifiable information about yourself or others in your responses.

# **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS**

13. Do you have any additional comments or ideas regarding pedestrian and traffic safety at Cathedral Grove? Please describe or use the map below to mark specific locations if possible.





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# **ADDITIONAL WRITING SPACE FOR COMMENTS**




## **THANK YOU!**

Your responses will help inform Pedestrian and Traffic Safety improvement options.

In Spring 2019, watch for:

An input summary posted on the Project website at:

engage.gov.bc.ca/cathedralgrove

Announcements about next steps in the process and opportunities to be involved.



Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

