

PHASE 2 ENGAGEMENT REPORT

# Willamette Cove Master Plan

December 2024

[oregonmetro.gov/cove](https://oregonmetro.gov/cove)







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# Introduction

This report details Metro's process for the second phase of community engagement and highlights key outcomes for the Willamette Cove Nature Park master plan.

In summer 2024, Metro planners used feedback from phase one to develop three design alternatives.

During engagement phase two, these alternatives were shared with the community through online and in-person workshops, tabling outreach at local events, an online survey, and an open house. Community members were invited to provide input and choose their favorite design options for key park elements.

Learn more about the nature park at: [oregonmetro.gov/cove](https://oregonmetro.gov/cove)





# Phase 1 Recap

# Phase 1: Community Insights

During the engagement phase 1, we asked community members to provide feedback on project values, programming ideas, and priorities for the future nature park. This is what we heard.

## Project Values

**Take responsibility for past harm** to land, water, wildlife, and communities impacted by colonization.

**Be open about decisions,** timelines, funding, and any uncertainties.

**Include Indigenous knowledge** and center their voices and expertise.

**Make nature accessible for everyone,** especially Indigenous, Black, POC, and disabled communities.

**Center resilient infrastructure,** and protect wildlife and habitats

# Phase 1: Community Insights

## Programming ideas and Priorities

- Community members want Willamette Cove to be a nature park, where nature could thrive amid miles and miles of industry
- Shallow water habitat is a priority. Community members want a restored, functional, and thriving waterside habitat
- People do want to access Willamette Cove, first and foremost to connect with nature in different ways:



Walking, running,  
rolling on the trails



Watching birds and  
other wildlife; being  
close enough to see  
and hear the water



Access Willamette  
Cove to spend time  
with loved ones



Interpretive signs,  
art, and storytelling  
to highlight  
Willamette Cove's  
cultural and natural  
features.

# Phase 2 Design Alternatives



# Design Alternatives

During the summer of 2024, Metro planners incorporated the ideas we heard from phase 1 into **three design alternatives**. Each design alternative incorporates **four key park elements**, reflecting what community members expressed they want to see and experience in the nature park:



Trails

- Regional Trails
- Nature Trails & Nature Loops
- Cultural Storytelling Loop



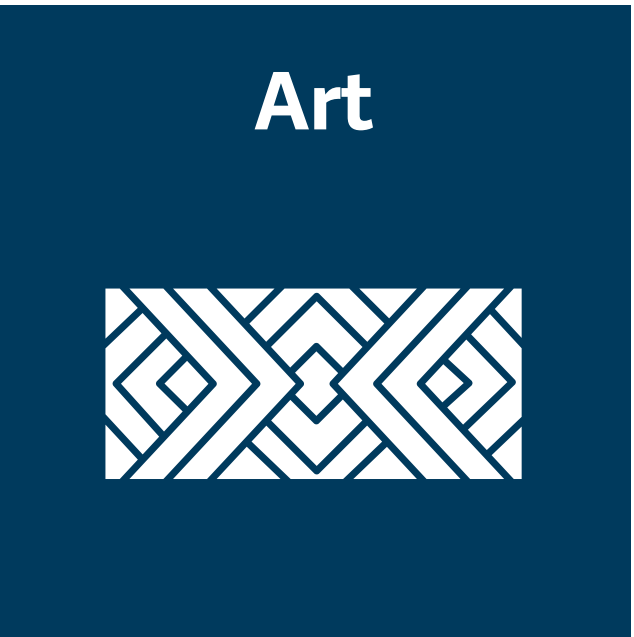
Water Access

- Kayak/Canoe Launch
- Swimming Dock



Gathering Spaces

- Covered Gathering
- Outdoor Classroom
- Nature Play Area



Art

- Artwork

# Design Alternatives

**PARK ELEMENTS**



## Design 1: Cove

A nature trail network, south of the regional trail, connects the entire park.

Direct path from parking to non-motorized boat ramp and fishing dock. Two beaches for visitors to enjoy.

Wellness trail with peaceful seating areas and a picnic spot. Storytelling loop with with interpretive displays, an outdoor classroom, and a storytelling circle.

Opportunities for artworks to be integrated throughout the site.

## Design 2: Panorama

A nature trail network spans east-west, north of the regional trail, which crosses the river with scenic views and seating on an elevated walkway.

A path crosses the regional trail, providing an accessible route to the boat ramp, fishing dock, and one of the park's two beaches.

Covered gathering areas are near parking area on the west side of the park. Outdoor classroom and storytelling circle are on the east side.

Visitors are greeted by a large art installation that leads into an open meadow with a covered gathering space.

## Design 3: Shallows

Regional trail is positioned further north, creating a more contiguous area for habitat and nature park experiences near the riverbank.

A nature play area is easily accessible from the west entrance where a trail leads to the non-motorized boat ramp and a long dock.

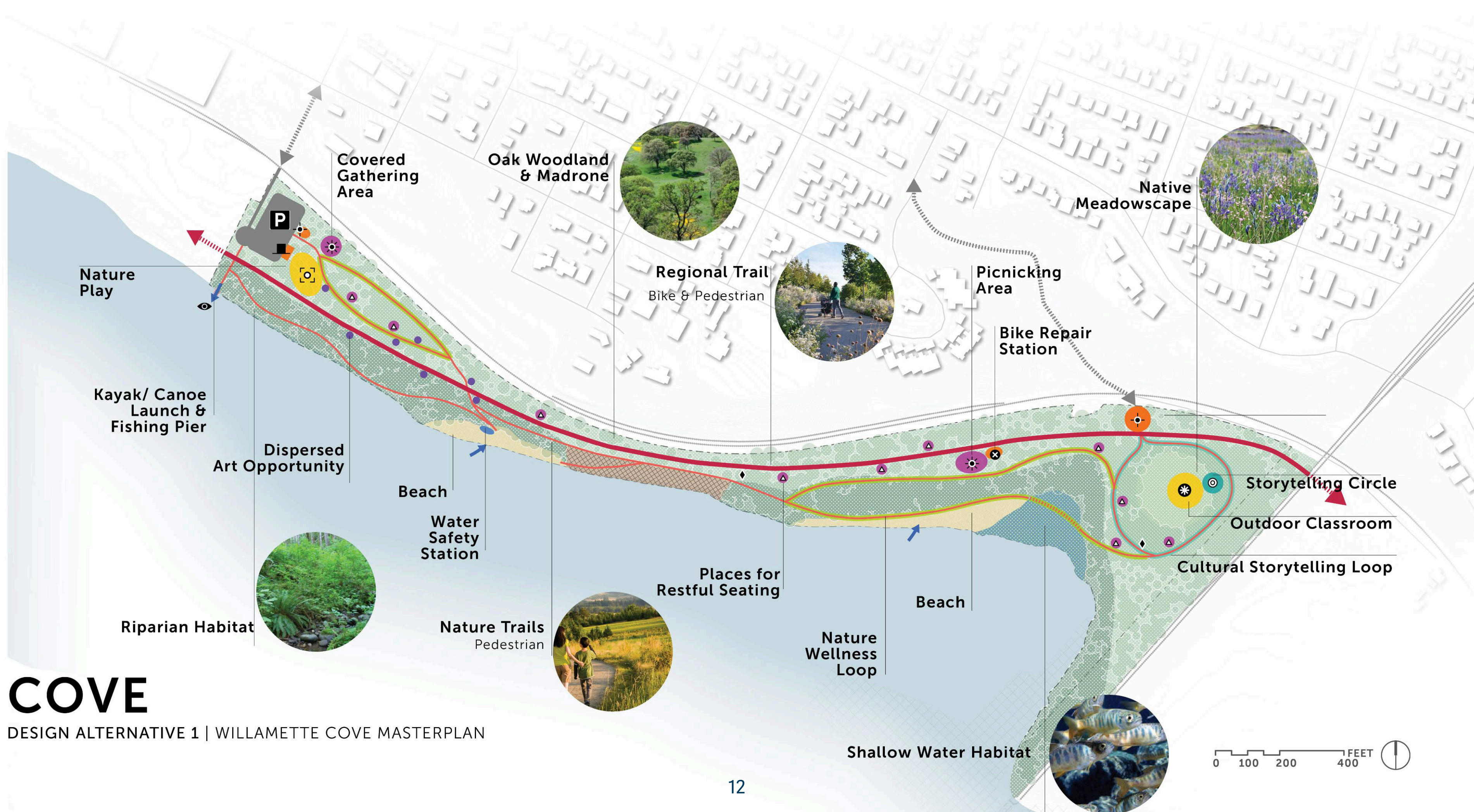
Gathering areas are concentrated on the west side to preserve the east side for restored habitat and trails.

Opportunities for artworks on the east side of the park.



# COVE

DESIGN ALTERNATIVE 1 | WILLAMETTE COVE MASTERPLAN







# PANORAMA

DESIGN ALTERNATIVE 2 | WILLAMETTE COVE MASTERPLAN





# SHALLOWS

DESIGN ALTERNATIVE 3 | WILLAMETTE COVE MASTERPLAN

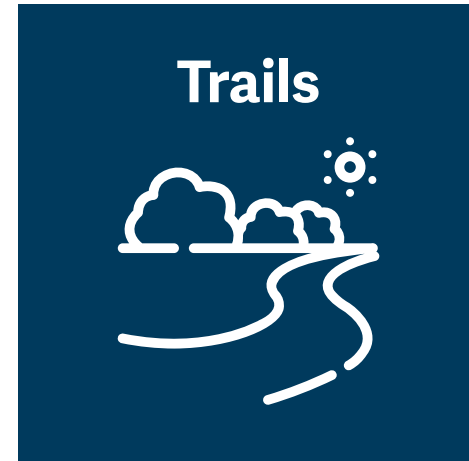


# Phase 2 Engagement Key Findings



# Phase 2: Design Preferences

In the second phase of engagement, we shared the three design alternatives with the community through online and in-person workshops, outreach at local events, an online survey, and an open house. Community members were invited to select their preferred design options for key design elements. **Below is a summary of their design preferences:**



## Trails STRONG PREFERENCE FOR PANORAMA DESIGN

Elevated walkway offering expansive views and seating.



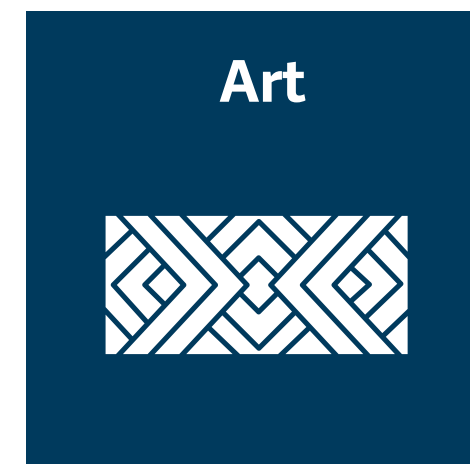
## Gathering Spaces PREFERENCE FOR COVE DESIGN

Seating and picnic spots, and a cultural loop with displays, an outdoor classroom on the East side.



## Water Access STRONG PREFERENCE FOR SHALLOWS DESIGN

Boat launch and a large dock on the West side.



## Art STRONG PREFERENCE FOR COVE DESIGN

Artwork dispersed across the site.

# Phase 2: Design Preferences by Type of Event

	Tabling Events	Online Workshop	In-Person Workshop	Online Survey	Open House
Trails	Panorama	Panorama	Panorama	Cove Panorama Shallows	Shallows
Water Access		Shallows	Shallows	Shallow Cove	
Gathering Spaces	Panorama	Shallows	Cove	Cove	Shallow Cove
Art		Cove Panorama	Cove	Cove	

## Who participated?

The demographic composition of participants differed across events. Online and in-person workshops featured a diverse group, with more than 70% participants identifying as Black, Hispanic, or Native American. Meanwhile, white participants made up the majority of survey respondents and open house attendees. Demographic information was not collected at tabling events and the open house.

For detailed demographic information, see *Who Participated?* on page 26.

# What We Heard at Each Event



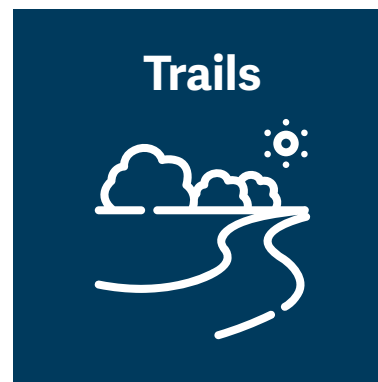
## TABLING ACTIVITIES

In September and October 2024, the Metro team attended three community events—the **Water Ceremony, El Grito celebration, and St. John's Farmers Market**—to share design options and gather feedback. Using a "jar" voting exercise, attendees cast their preferences for trail alignments and gathering spaces.

**Here's a snapshot of their top choices:**

### WATER CEREMONY

#### Most Popular Design



Trails

**Panorama**

Additional comments from participants include placing the outdoor classroom near parking and bathrooms for accessibility while dispersing nature play across the site, with the east end being ideal for its quietness.



Gathering Spaces

**Panorama**

### EL GRITO CELEBRATION

#### Most Popular Design



**Panorama**

Some participants raised concerns about trails near the water, noting potential safety risks, such as children potentially running toward the water.



**Panorama**

Some participants suggested clustering nature play and the covered shelter for multi-generational families to stay together and watch kids.

### ST. JOHN'S FARMERS MARKET

#### Most Popular Design



**Cove**

Participants highlighted the need to thoughtfully place gathering spaces like covered shelters and nature play areas, and suggested designing the regional trail with floodable detours, low-maintenance structures, and separate paths for walkers and cyclists.



**Cove**



# What We Heard at Each Event

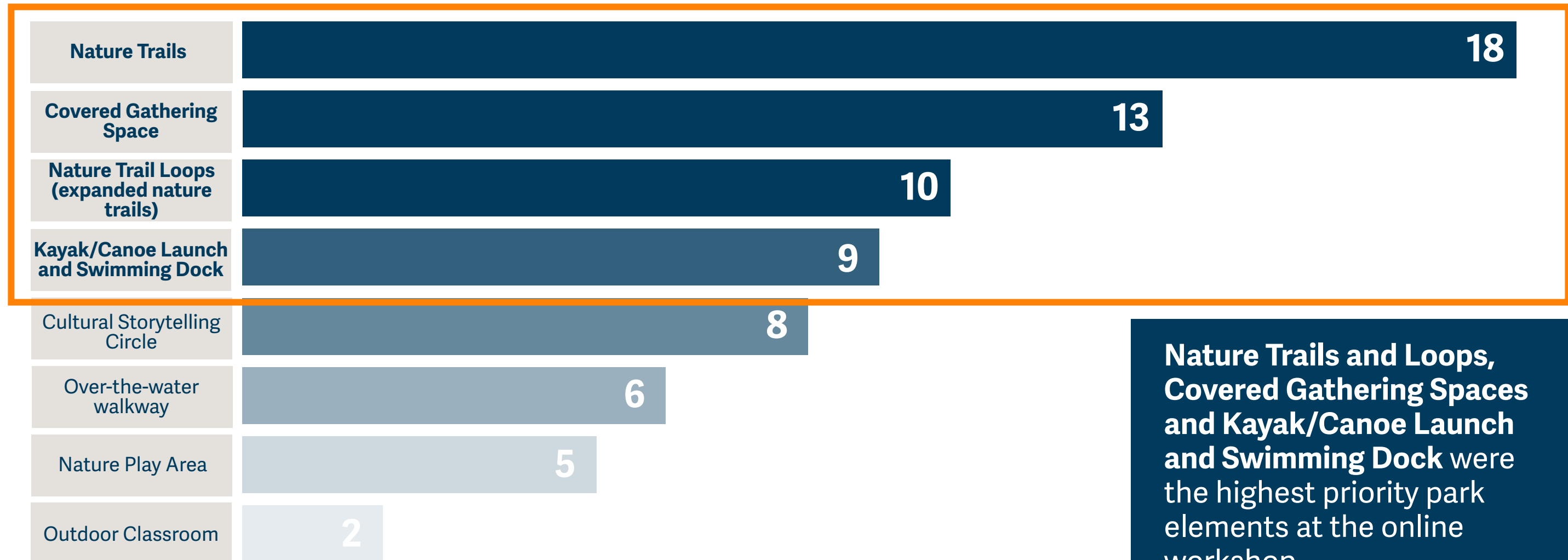


## COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS ONLINE SESSION

In September, Metro held two community workshops—one online and one in person. During the online session, participants worked in small groups to discuss preferences on design alternatives and prioritize their top three park elements.

**Here's what we heard from the online workshop:**

**Which of these park elements would be your priorities?**  
Choose three.



**Nature Trails and Loops, Covered Gathering Spaces and Kayak/Canoe Launch and Swimming Dock** were the highest priority park elements at the online workshop

# What We Heard at Each Event



## COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS ONLINE SESSION

The online workshop was held on Zoom, with 38 community members attending. It was facilitated in English with Spanish interpretation available. During small group discussions, Metro staff led conversations in both English and Spanish.

**Here's a summary of small group discussions by park element:**

### Trails



#### Design Preference: Panorama

**Panorama stood out for its over-the-water trail and scenic viewpoints**, but some had concerns about cost and feasibility.

Participants mentioned that they prefer trails that are looped with offshoots for exploration and privacy, and appreciate green spaces that provide a more enclosed, intimate feel.

### Gathering Spaces

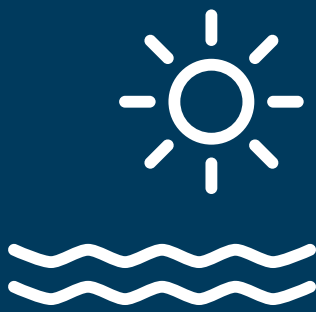


#### Design Preference: Shallows

**Shallows was popular for its accessibility, proximity to parking and bathrooms, and balanced layout of activity areas and wildlife spaces.** The nature play area for kids near parking was appreciated, though some had safety concerns.

Spanish-speaking participants suggested multipurpose spaces and picnic areas near play zones for families.

### Water Access



#### Design Preference: Shallows & Panorama

Participants were split between **Panorama** and **Shallows**. Some favored the quicker route, while others valued a gradual slope for safety and inclusivity.

### Art



#### Design Preference: Cove & Panorama

Participants showed strong interest in seeing **Indigenous, tactile, and interactive art**, with a focus on diverse artists representing different communities.

Preferences were split between scattered art throughout the park (**Cove**) and a dedicated art area near the entrance (**Panorama**) to create a balanced, welcoming experience.



# What We Heard at Each Event



## COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS IN-PERSON SESSION

At the in-person session, 57 participants met at the St. John's Community Center to share their input on the design alternatives. The session began with a questionnaire where attendees shared their preferences for four key park elements and offered ideas to make them more accessible.

**Here's a summary of what the community preferred:**

### Trails



#### Design Preference: Panorama

**Accessibility Considerations:** Universal accessibility is key. Smooth, wide, level trails with ramps, rest areas, and separate paths for cyclists, walkers, and wheelchairs.

**Other Comments:** Prioritize eco-friendly designs, habitat protection, clear wayfinding, lighting, and art with interpretive signage on the trails.

### Gathering Spaces



#### Design Preference: Cove

**Accessibility Considerations:** Inclusive spaces should feature sensory and natural play areas for all ages and abilities.

**Other Comments:** Safety and access are key, with emergency call options, well-lit paths, and play areas safely distanced from roads. Include spaces for community programs and nature education.

### Water Access



#### Design Preference: Shallows

**Accessibility Considerations:** Water access points with wide, non-slip ramps, gentle slopes, and wheelchair-friendly paths, located away from high-traffic areas for safety.

**Other Comments:** Participants desired access to free or affordable recreation equipment, such as kayaks and lessons to reduce barriers to recreation, along with clear safety signs and litter rules.

### Art



#### Design Preference: Cove

**Accessibility Considerations:** Include accessible art with tactile, sound-based, multilingual features at various heights and locations.

**Other Comments:** Local, culturally rich art reflecting history, flora, fauna, and culture is a top priority.

# What We Heard at Each Event

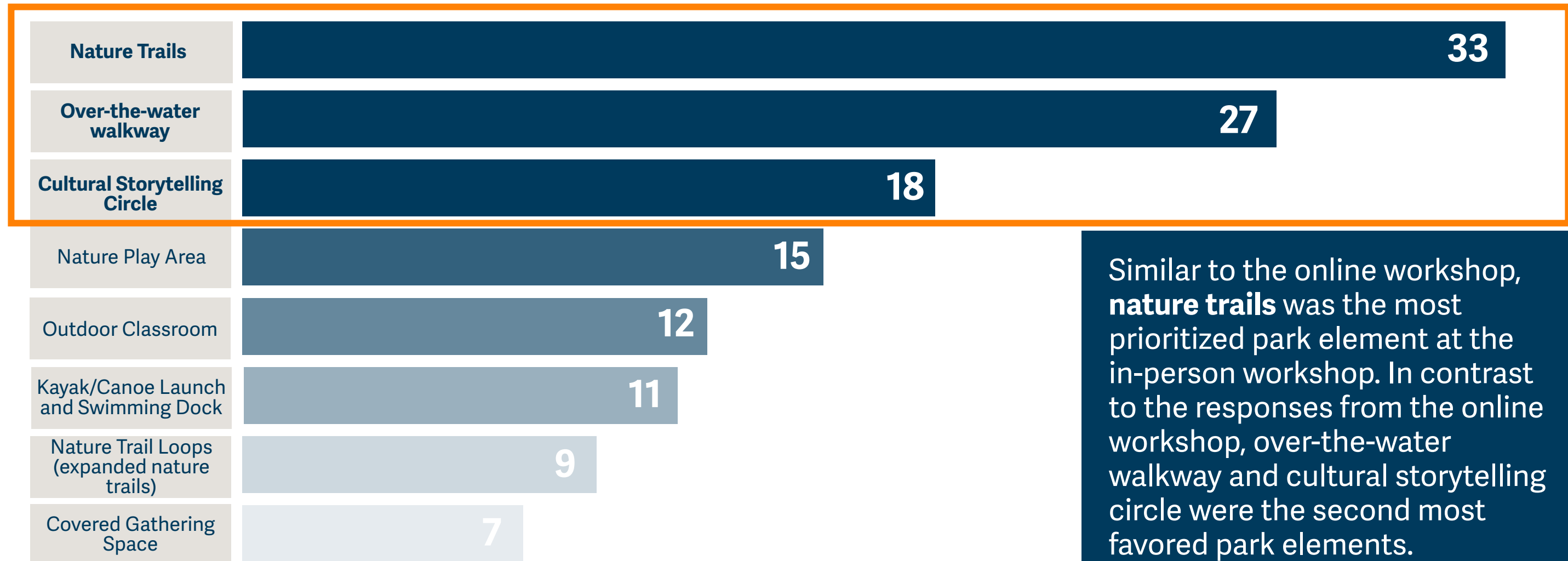


**COMMUNITY  
WORKSHOPS**  
IN-PERSON SESSION

The second activity of the in-person workshop closely mirrored the online version. Participants were given six dot stickers to allocate across their top priorities, allowing them to visually indicate what mattered most.

**Here's a summary of what the community favored:**

Which of these park elements would be your priorities?



Similar to the online workshop, **nature trails** was the most prioritized park element at the in-person workshop. In contrast to the responses from the online workshop, over-the-water walkway and cultural storytelling circle were the second most favored park elements.



# What We Heard at Each Event



## ONLINE SURVEY

An online survey was open to the public to weigh in the park design between September 25 through November 1st. The survey received 869 responses.

See Appendix on page 30 for survey details

Here's a summary of what survey participants preferred:

	Park Element	Most Popular Design		Park Element	Most Popular Design		
<p><b>Trails</b></p>	Regional Trail	Panorama	<p>Yet, 70% don't think elevated trail benefits surpass costs and tradeoffs.</p>	Outdoor Classroom	Shallows	<p>Respondents prefer to concentrate high-use amenities near the parking lot on the west side and nature-focused elements on the east side.</p>	
	Nature Trail	Cove		<p>Majority prefer balanced designs considering wildlife habitats and trail experiences.</p>	Gathering Spaces		Cove
	Cultural Storytelling Circle	Shallows	<p><b>Gathering Spaces</b></p>		Nature Play		Cove
<p><b>Water Access</b></p>	Route to Kayak/Canoe Launch	Cove	<p>Nature observation is prioritized over swimming or fishing. Most respondents favor a balance between habitat for wildlife and beach space for people.</p>	<p><b>Art</b></p>	<p>Artwork</p>	<p>Cove</p>	<p>Most respondents favor opportunities for artworks to be integrated throughout the site.</p>
	Dock Size	Shallows					

**85% of respondents think the designs address their community's needs or concerns.**

# What We Heard at Each Event



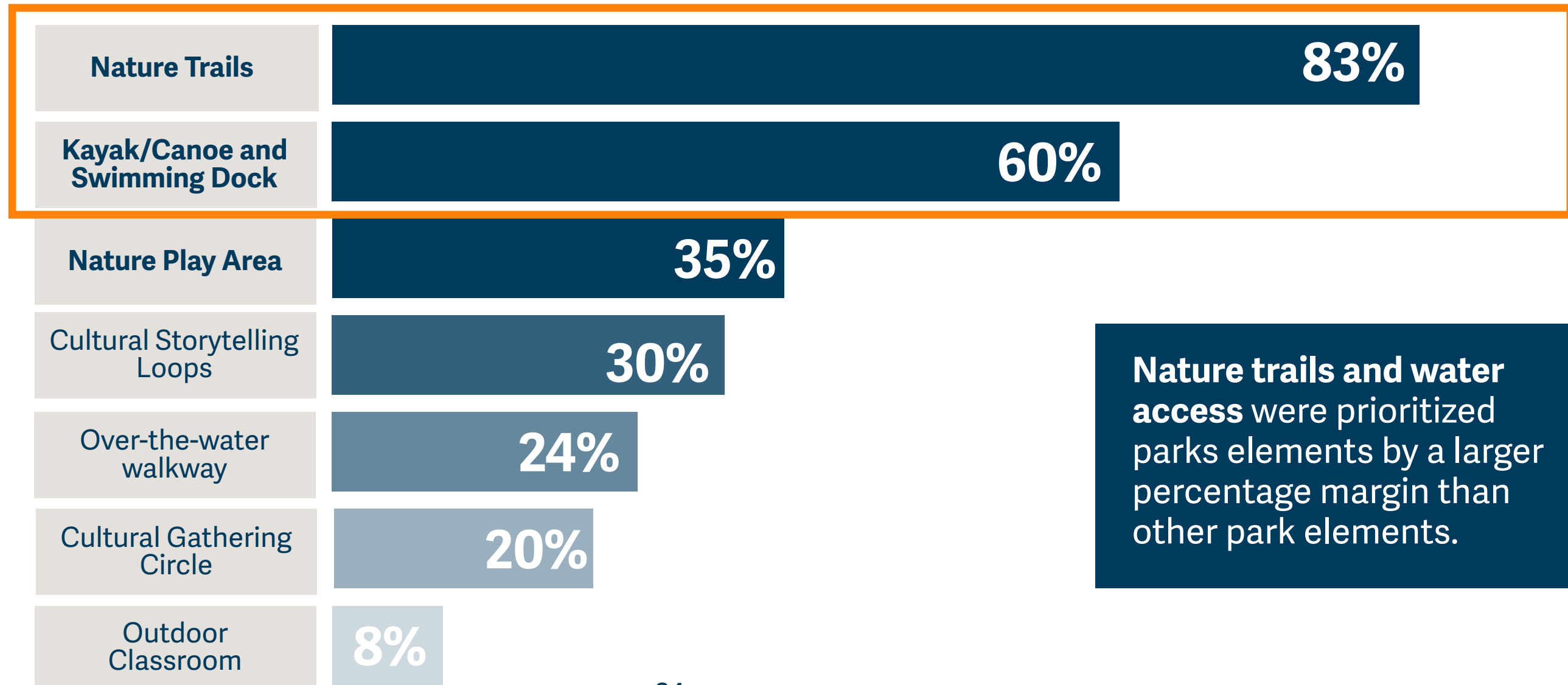
## ONLINE SURVEY

Survey participants also chose three key park elements they most want to see at the nature park.

**This is a summary of their priorities.**

See Appendix on page 30 for survey details

Which of these park elements would be your priorities?



**Nature trails and water access** were prioritized parks elements by a larger percentage margin than other park elements.



# What We Heard at Each Event



## OPEN HOUSE

An open house was held on October 26 as part of Willamette Cove Field Day, attracting approximately 50 attendees who engaged with the master plan booth. Visitors asked questions about the project and shared feedback on design alternatives. They were also invited to participate in a "jar" voting exercise, selecting their preferred designs for two key park elements: trails and gathering spaces.

### STICKY NOTES EXERCISE

Design Alternatives	Key Comments
Cove	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrate public art with sheltered spaces for community gatherings, such as outdoor classrooms or nature walks</li> <li>Storytelling circle should be relocated away from the railroad for a quieter experience</li> </ul>
Panorama	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have less built elements in the park overall and focus more on wildlife</li> <li>Use large wood for bank stabilization. No riprap.</li> <li>The storytelling circle is in a good location away from the noisy railroad traffic</li> </ul>
Shallows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunities for engagement and immersion in nature is a priority in this design, since it does lend itself more towards preservation.</li> <li>North Portland desperately needs an approach like this that engages nature</li> </ul>

### "JAR" EXERCISE

Park Element	Most Popular Design
Trails	Shallows
Gathering Spaces	Cove
	Shallows

# Who Participated?



# Who Participated?



## TABLING ACTIVITIES

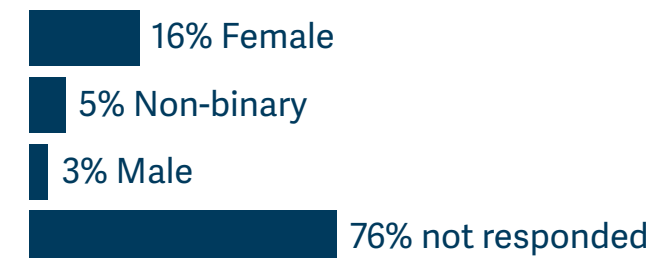
Demographic information was not collected at tabling activities. However, these events were intentionally chosen to engage culturally specific groups for whom traditional outreach methods, such as surveys or open houses, may not be as effective. **The Water Ceremony and El Grito Celebration were largely attended by Tribal and Indigenous, and Latino populations, respectively**, while participants at the St. Johns Farmers market was a combination of white and BIPOC populations.



## COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS ONLINE SESSION

**Total participants: 38**  
**Participants who shared demographic information: 9**

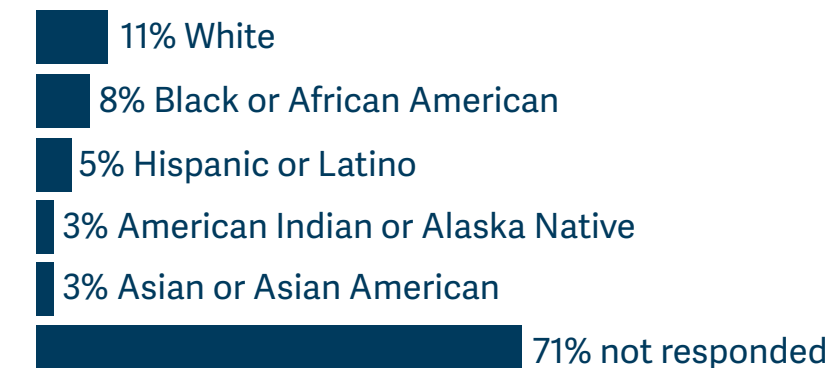
### Gender



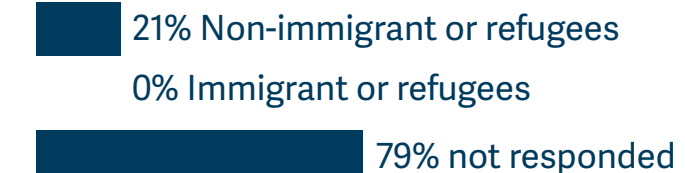
### Housing Tenure



### Race/ethnicity



### Immigration Status



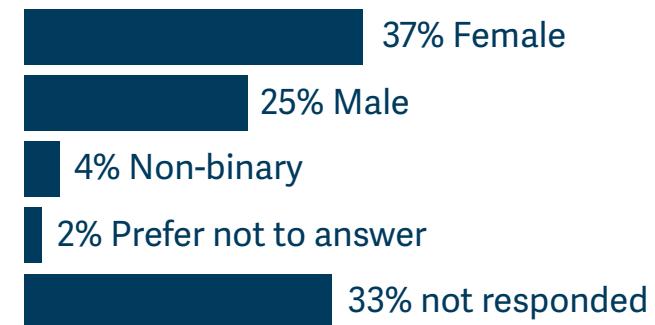
# Who Participated?



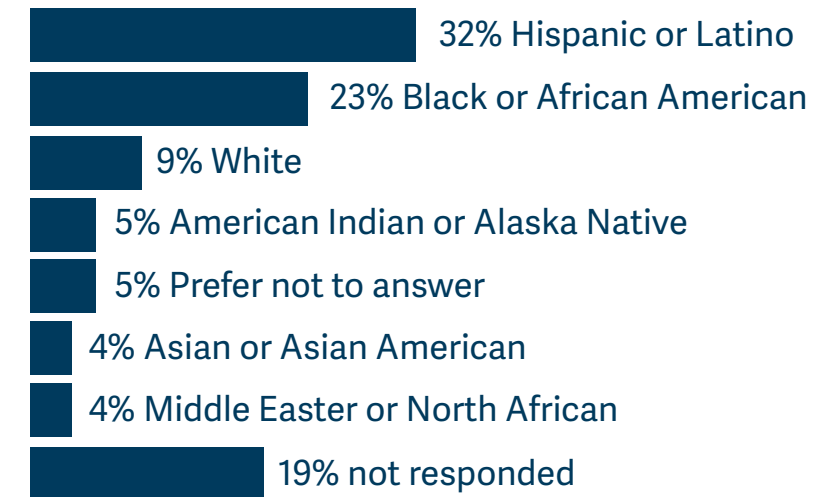
## COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS IN-PERSON SESSION

**Total participants: 57**  
**Participants who shared demographic information: 38**

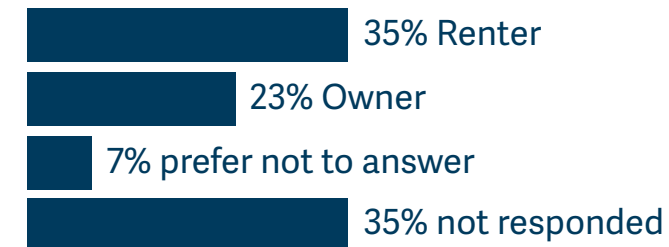
### Gender



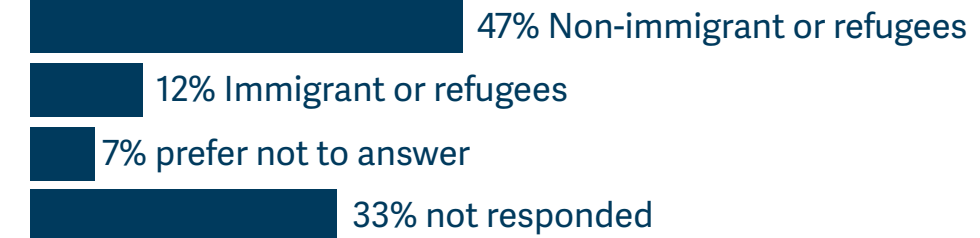
### Race/ethnicity



### Housing Tenure



### Immigration Status



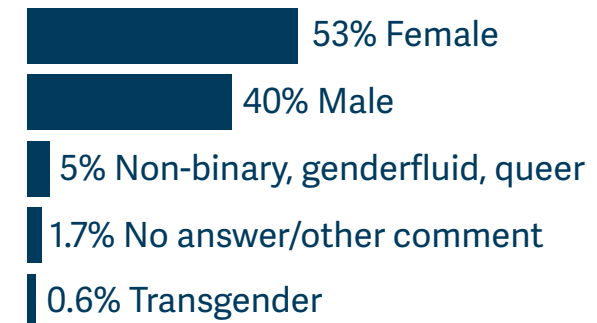
# Who Participated?



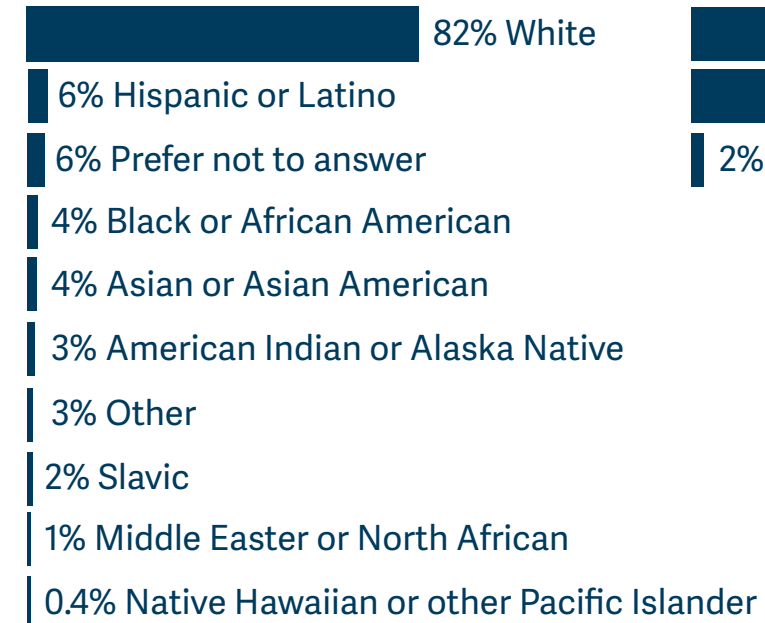
## ONLINE SURVEY

**Total responses: 1,407**  
**Participants who shared demographic information: Approximately 700**

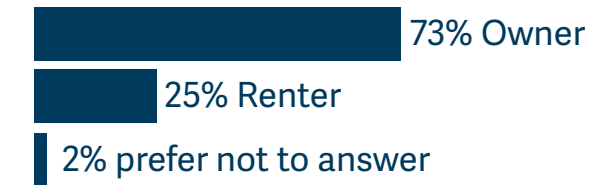
### Gender



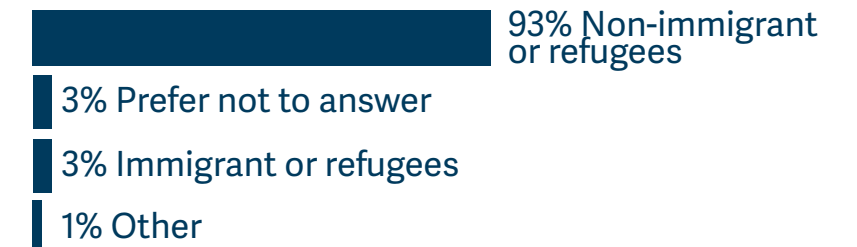
### Race/ethnicity



### Housing Tenure



### Immigration Status



## OPEN HOUSE

Demographic information was not collected at the Willamete Cove Field Day.