DOUGLAS FIR TRAIL WWHR
Phase 1
Values and Priorities
Summer 2026



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Land Acknowledgement[1]

The Calgary area, where the Bow and Elbow rivers meet, is a place of confluence where the sharing of ideas and opportunities naturally come together.

Indigenous peoples have their own names for this area that have been in use long before settlers named this place Calgary. In the Blackfoot language, it is called Moh-kins-tsis (moh-GIN'-stis (a soft 'g'). The Îethka Nakoda Wîcastabi (ee-YETH'-kah nah-COH'-dah WHISK'-ah-tah-bay) First Nations refer to this place as Wicispa Oyade (weh-CHIS'-spa oh-YAH'-day) and the people of the Tsuut'ina (Soot-tenna) nation call it Guts-ists-I (GOOT'-sis). The Métis call the Calgary area Otos-kwunee (oh-TUSS' - kwanee).

We appreciate and acknowledge that we are gathered on the ancestral and traditional territory of the Blackfoot Nations of the Siksika (Seeg-see-kah), Piikani (bee-Gun-nee) and Kainai (G-ai-nah) First Nations; the Îethka Nakoda Wîcastabi (ee-YETH'-kah nah-COH'-dah WHISK'-ah-tah-bay) First Nations, comprised of the Chiniki (Chin-ick-ee), Bearspaw, and Goodstoney First Nations; and the Tsuut'ina First Nation. The City of Calgary is also homeland to the historic Northwest Métis and to the Otipemisiwak (Oti-pe-MES-se-wa) Métis Government, Métis Nation Battle River Territory (Nose Hill Métis District 5 and Elbow Métis District 6).

We acknowledge and give gratitude to the many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit who have lived in and cared for these lands for generations and call Calgary home.

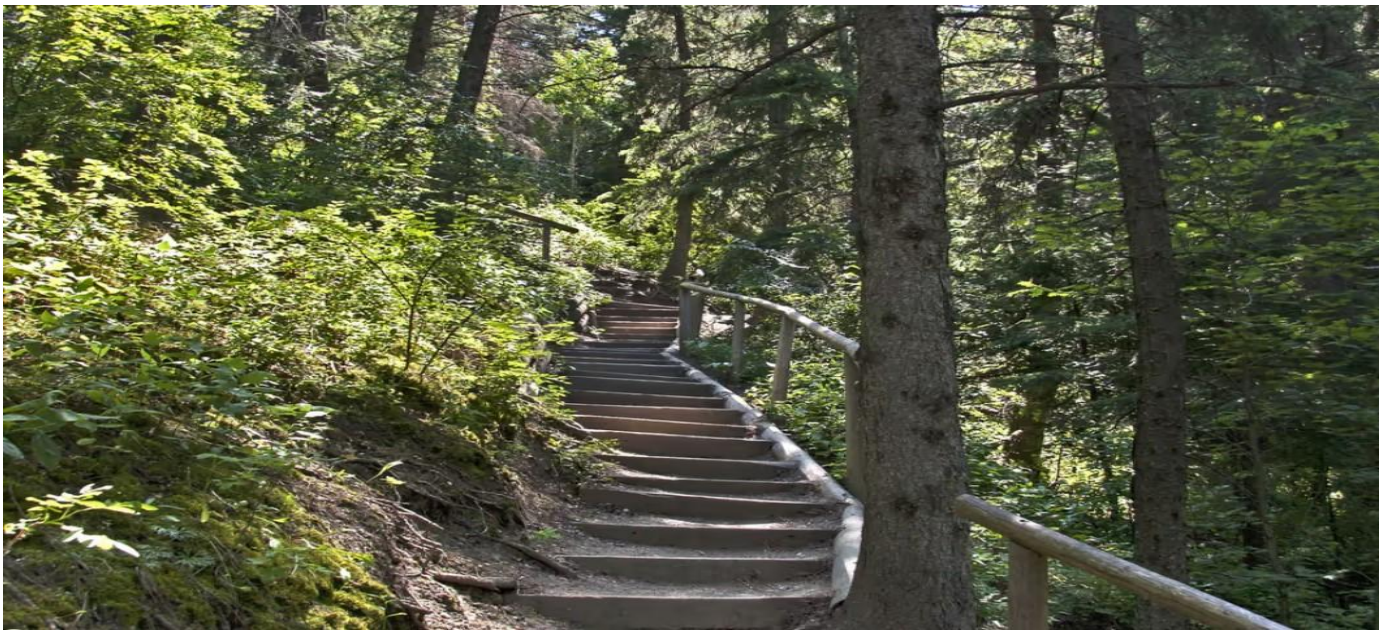


Figure 1: Wooden staircase on Douglas Fir Trail

[1] https://www.calgary.ca/communities/indigenous/collaboration.html

1.0 Project overview

What is Douglas Fir Trail?

The Douglas Fir Trail is a valued natural pathway located on a steep hillside above the Bow River Regional Pathway. Known for its unique forest setting and mountain-like hiking experience, it is one of Calgary's most distinctive natural areas.

Why is work needed?

Over time, erosion, drainage, weathering, and slope movement have damaged sections of the trail, creating safety concerns for users. City inspections first identified an unstable slope in 2014, and ongoing monitoring found conditions continued to deteriorate. By 2023, several sections of the trail were determined to be unsafe, resulting in closures to protect visitors and the surrounding environment.

What work is happening now?

Following City Council approval of funding in 2023, planning and design began to address the most critical slope stability issues. Construction started in September 2025 and is expected to continue through October 2026. The current project includes repairs to approximately 150 metres of slope above the Bow River Regional Pathway and the installation of instrumentation to monitor slope movement and help The City identify and respond to emerging stability issues. This work will improve public safety, protect the adjacent railway corridor, and support the long-term stability of the hillside.

How will this engagement input be used?

Between January 2024 and October 2025, The City completed a comprehensive assessment of the 1.5-kilometre Douglas Fir Trail corridor to better understand the requirements for a safe and sustainable reopening. The assessment evaluated trail conditions, erosion, drainage, slope stability, and infrastructure performance and identified opportunities to improve trail durability, environmental protection, and long-term access. The findings will help inform future rehabilitation planning for the broader Douglas Fir Trail corridor (DFT4). While construction funding for future rehabilitation work has not yet been secured, The City is actively pursuing funding opportunities to support the long-term reopening of the trail. Community feedback gathered through this engagement will help inform the development and evaluation of future trail rehabilitation options.

2.0 Engagement overview

Public engagement helps decision makers in understanding the perspectives of people potentially impacted by City decisions. Public input is balanced with factors like budgets, regulations, and best practices.

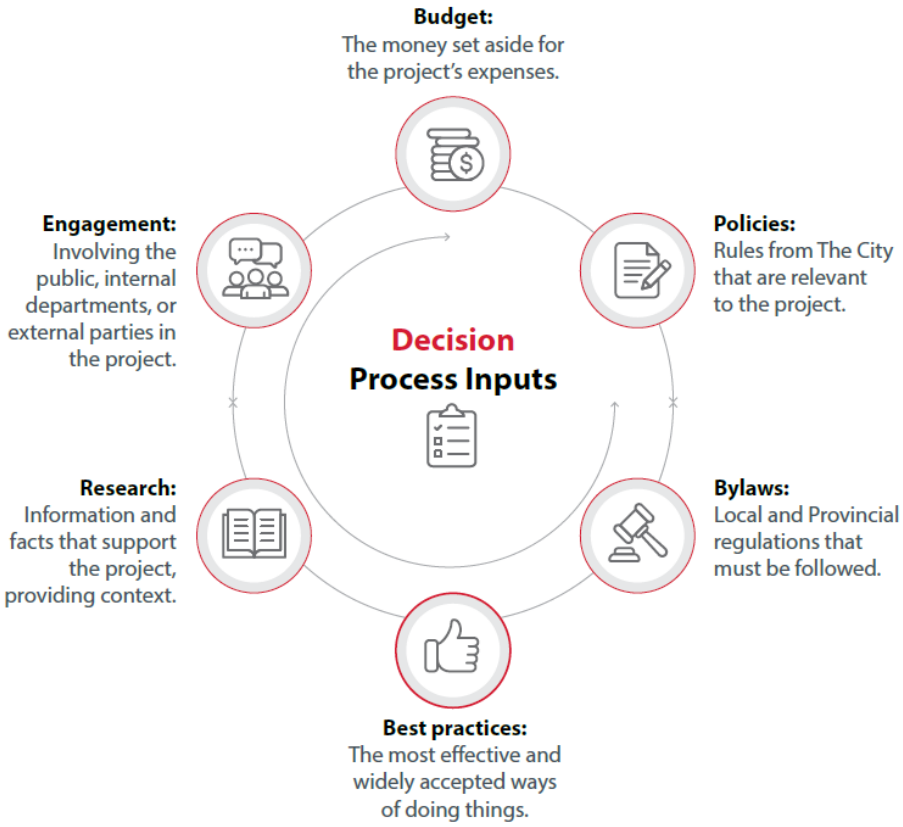


Figure 2: Decision Process Inputs

Engagement ran from June 15 – July 20, 2026. We engaged the community to better understand the values, priorities, and considerations that should guide the future rehabilitation of Douglas Fir Trail. Participants were invited to share what they value about the trail, their concerns, and what they believe should be prioritized as The City explores options for its long-term future.

Feedback focused on topics such as environmental protection, trail experience, safety, durability, accessibility, and connectivity. This input will help project staff, technical experts, and consultants evaluate future trail rehabilitation and/or realignment options by identifying what matters most to participants and where trade-offs may be required.

Engagement also provided an opportunity to share information about existing site conditions, project constraints, and the findings of the Douglas Fir Trail corridor assessment. Community feedback will be considered alongside technical, environmental, operational, regulatory, and financial factors as future options are developed and evaluated.

Decisions related to safety standards, slope stability requirements, regulatory compliance, and funding availability are outside the scope of engagement. Rather than determining whether these requirements should be met, engagement focused on understanding community priorities and informing design approaches that can meet both project requirements and community values.

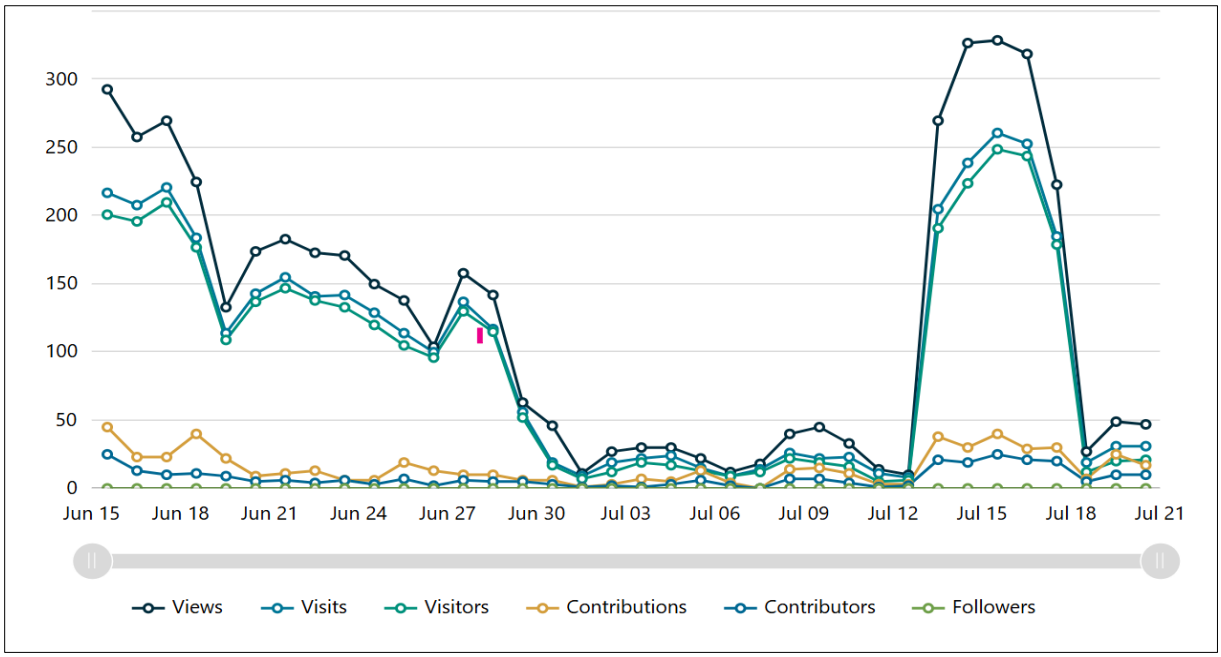


Figure 3: Participation numbers on the portal page

2.1 Tools and tactics

2.1.1 Portal page: As per Figure 2, the Engage portal page (www.engage.calgary.ca/DFT) was open from June 15 to July 20, 2026. During that time, we had 4,564 views, 3,623 visits, and 3,091 visitors. We received 557 contributions from 286 contributors. More than 1300 pieces of data were analyzed for this report.

2.1.2: Online office hours: We offered three Wednesday online office hour sessions from noon to 1:00 p.m. on June 17, July 8, and July 15 to provide additional opportunities for engagement. No participants attended the first two sessions, and the third session was subsequently cancelled due to a lack of interest.

2.1.3: Trail Signage: a series of interpretive signs were posted along the Douglas Fir Trail They were multipurpose as they share an interesting fact or story about the location (knowledge sharing), encouraged people to learn more and explore (explore your way) and connected particpants to additional information through a QR code.

2.1.4: Ward 6 Town Hall

Monday, June 15, 2026, from 6 to 8 p.m.

There were over 300 attendees. Along with comments, questions and concerns written on 'the graffiti wall', 11 feedback forms were also completed resulting in more than 75 pieces of data collected.

Members of the project team (leadership and the Innovation Lab) were also onsite providing information about the project and new signage asking the public to stay on the designated trails.

2.1.5: Park-Pop ups

To support outreach and engagement, we hosted three park pop-ups in two diferent locations.

- July 4, 2026, at Edworthy Park (west parking lot, near the Bow River Pathway)
- July 11, 2026, at 115-190 Wildwood Drive SW
- July 18, 2026, at Edworthy Park (west parking lot, near the Bow River Pathway)

Each event was held from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Collectively, the Park Pop-Ups attracted more than 100 participants, providing valuable opportunities to connect with community members, share project information, and gather feedback.



Figure 4: The DFT project team at Ward 6 town hall

3.0 What we asked

3.1 Portal page

3.1.1 Feedback Form

Participants were invited to complete an online feedback form that included a mix of multiple-choice and open-ended questions:

1. How far do you live from Douglas Fir Trail?
2. How often do you use Douglas Fir Trail?
3. How do you use, or have you used, Douglas Fir Trail? (Select all that apply.)
4. What do you value most about Douglas Fir Trail?
5. What concerns do you have about Douglas Fir Trail?
6. Thinking about the trail in the long term, what should be prioritized? For example, safety, accessibility, environmental protection, trail durability, or the overall visitor experience.

Open-ended questions had generous character limits to encourage detailed feedback and avoid restricting participant input. This approach supported meaningful participation while remaining manageable for review and analysis.

3.1.2 The BIG Question

Participants were asked:

As we continue to make improvements to Douglas Fir Trail, what should we focus on most? What is most important for us to consider?

This open-ended question provided participants with an opportunity to share their highest priorities for the future of the trail.

3.1.3 Future Thinking

Participants were asked:

Looking ahead, 5, 10, and 20 years, what should Douglas Fir Trail prioritize most?

This activity used the Visioner tool on the engagement portal and invited participants to share long-term ideas and aspirations for the trail.

3.1.4 Mapping Exercises

Interactive social mapping activities invited participants to identify specific locations and provide comments by placing pins on a map.

How Do You Use Douglas Fir Trail?

Participants were asked to drop a pin on the map and describe how they use Douglas Fir Trail.

What Are Your Concerns About Douglas Fir Trail?

Participants were asked to identify and map concerns related to Douglas Fir Trail, including specific locations where issues occur.

For both mapping exercises, participants could place multiple pins and add comments to each location. Participants could also upvote comments submitted by others.

3.1.5 Ask the Team

The **Ask the Team** tool provided an interactive question-and-answer forum where participants could ask questions about the project and receive responses from the project team. Questions were pre-moderated, and similar submissions were grouped together to improve readability and reduce duplication.

3.1 In person

We asked the following questions at all in-person events (Ward 6 town Hall and 3 park pop-ups)

1. What matters (most) to you about Douglas Fir Trail?
2. What do you value about Douglas Fir Trail?
3. What are your concerns with Douglas Fir Trail?

4.0 What we heard

Participants consistently described Douglas Fir Trail as one of Calgary's most unique and valued natural areas. Feedback emphasized the trail's importance as a rare urban forest, a place for physical activity and mental wellbeing, and a connection to nature that feels more like a mountain hiking experience than a typical city park.

Participants expressed strong support for preserving the ecological integrity and natural character of the trail while addressing known challenges related to erosion, slope stability, and aging infrastructure.

A clear message emerged across all engagement activities: participants want the Douglas Fir Trail protected, repaired, and reopened in a way that preserves what makes it special.

Key themes and messages

Protect the natural environment.
Participants consistently identified protection of the Douglas fir ecosystem, mature trees, wildlife habitat, and biodiversity as a top priority. Many emphasized that environmental stewardship should guide future decision-making and that interventions should minimize impacts on the surrounding natural area.

Maintain the trail's natural, mountain-like character.
The trail's rugged terrain, natural surfaces, elevation changes, and sense of adventure were frequently cited as some of its most valued characteristics. Participants generally preferred a hiking trail experience over a highly developed urban pathway and encouraged the use of natural materials and context-sensitive design solutions wherever possible**.**

Improve durability and address problem areas.
Participants recognized that erosion, drainage, slope movement, and aging infrastructure are ongoing challenges. There was broad support for targeted investments that improve long-term trail durability, address safety concerns, and reduce future closures while maintaining the overall trail experience.

Restore continuous access and connectivity.
Many participants expressed frustration with long-term closures and emphasized the importance of reopening the trail and maintaining connections between communities, Edworthy Park, and the regional pathway network. Continuous access through the corridor was viewed as an important part of the overall experience.

Balance safety, access, and environmental protection.
Participants generally supported improvements to address safety concerns, particularly in areas affected by erosion, unstable slopes, drainage issues, and deteriorating infrastructure. Many noted, however, that the trail should retain its identity as a natural hiking experience and that some level of challenge and risk is expected on this type of trail. Perspectives on accessibility varied, with participants encouraging a balanced approach that considers different user needs while respecting environmental constraints and the trail's character.

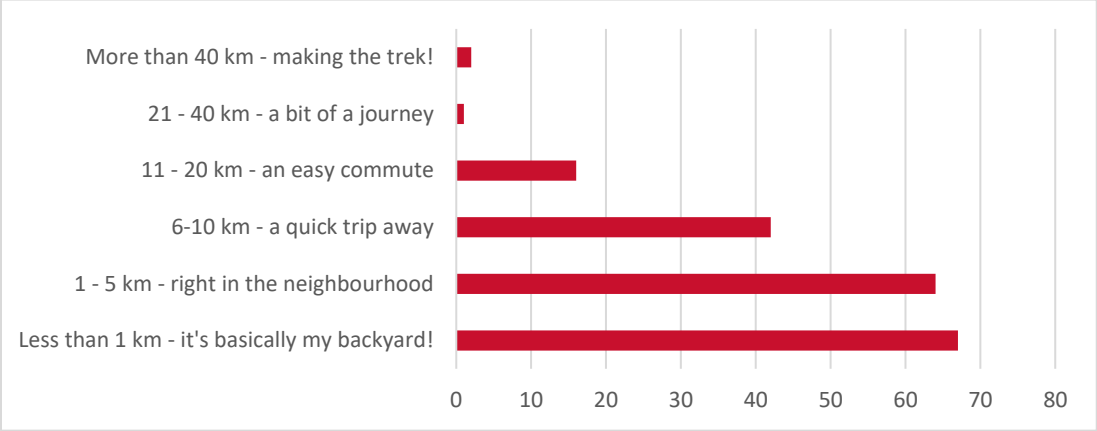
Support stewardship, education, and responsible use.
Participants expressed interest in improved education, wayfinding, and stewardship initiatives, including ecological interpretation, Indigenous history and culture, and measures to reduce off-trail use, trail braiding, litter, and other impacts on the natural environment.

- For a detailed summary of the input that was provided, please see the Summary of Input section.

5.0 Summary of Input

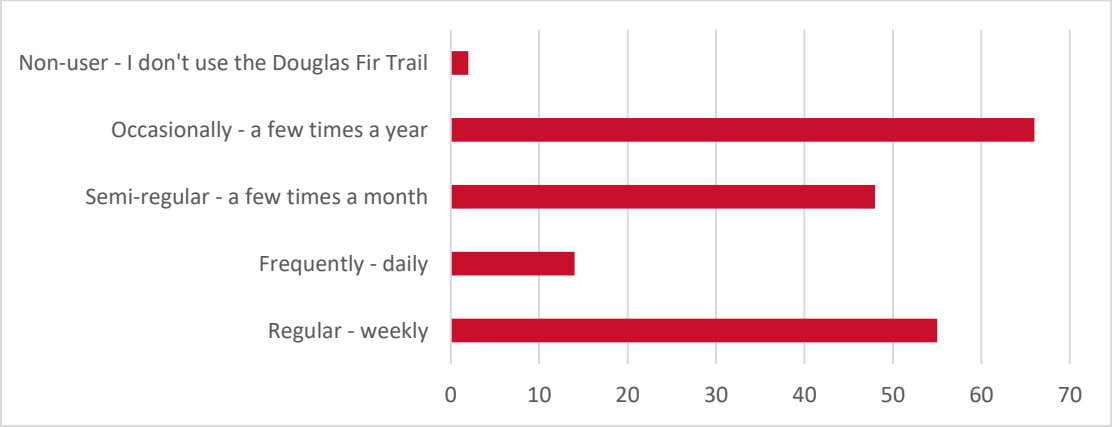
Question 1 How far do you live from Douglas Fir Trail?

As shown in the chart below, most respondents live less than 1 km from the area (67 respondents), followed closely by those living 1 to 5 km away (64 respondents). A notable number of participants live 6 to 10 km away (42 respondents), while fewer live 11 to 20 km away (16 respondents). The smallest groups of participants live 21 to 40 km away (1 respondent) and more than 40 km away (2 respondents).



Question 2 How often do you use Douglas Fir Trail?

As shown in the chart below, the largest group of respondents reported using the Douglas Fir Trail occasionally, a few times per year (66 respondents). This was followed by those who use the trail regularly on a weekly basis (55 respondents) and semi-regularly, a few times per month (48 respondents). Fewer respondents reported using the trail daily (14 respondents), while only 2 respondents indicated that they do not use the Douglas Fir Trail.



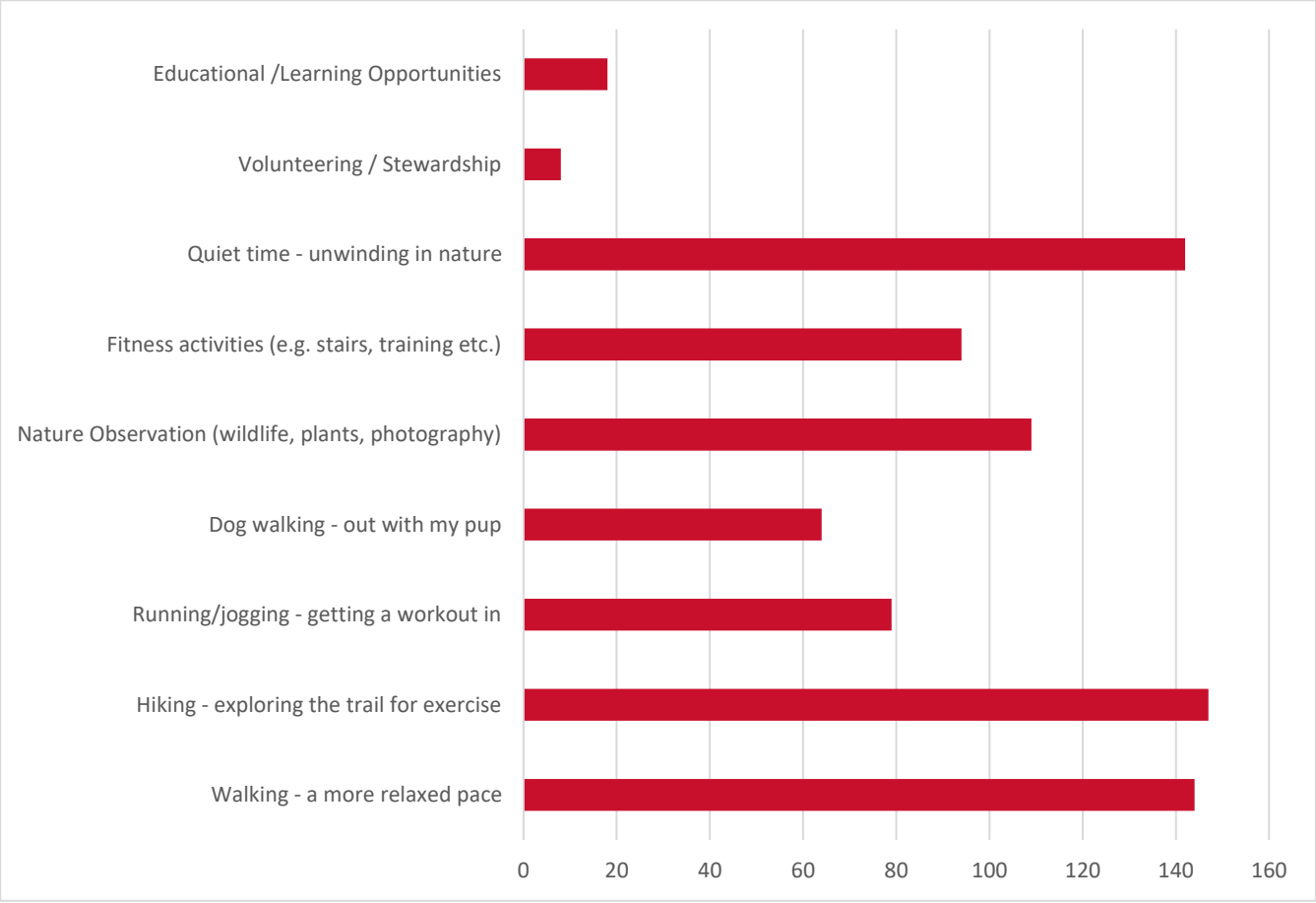
Question 3 How do you use, or have you used Douglas Fir Trail? Select all that apply.

As shown in the chart below, respondents reported using the Douglas Fir Trail for a variety of recreational, fitness, and nature-based activities.

Hiking for exercise was the most common use of the trail (147 respondents), closely followed by walking at a more relaxed pace (144 respondents) and spending quiet time unwinding in nature (142 respondents).

Nature observation, including wildlife viewing, plant appreciation, and photography, were also popular activities (109 respondents), along with fitness-related activities such as stair training and exercise (94 respondents).

Running or jogging was reported by 79 respondents, while 64 respondents indicated that they use the trail for dog walking. Volunteering and stewardship (8 respondents) and educational or learning opportunities (18 respondents) were the least common uses of the trail.



Question 4 What do you value?

Participants overwhelmingly valued the Douglas Fir Trail as a rare natural environment within Calgary that provides a mountain-like experience close to home.

Respondents frequently described the trail as a peaceful escape from urban life, supporting mental wellbeing, recreation, and connection with nature.

Many emphasized the importance of preserving the trail's rugged, natural character while maintaining access for the community and future generations.

Theme: Nature Escape / Feeling Outside the City

- Feels like being in the mountains, foothills, Kananaskis, or wilderness without leaving Calgary.
- Sense of escape from urban life, noise, and stress.
- Opportunity to disconnect and recharge.

Verbatim:

- "It feels like you're in Kananaskis, but you're in the middle of Calgary."
- "A wilderness escape in the city."
- "Feels like you are outside of the city without actually having to leave the city."

Theme: Natural Environment & Douglas Fir Forest

- Appreciation for the mature Douglas fir trees, forest setting, and overall ecology.
- Recognition of the rarity and uniqueness of the ecosystem.
- Importance of preserving its natural character.

Verbatim:

- "I love the Douglas Fir trees."
- "The natural environment is the most important and what makes it unique."
- "The easternmost stand of Douglas fir trees in Canada."

Theme: Peace, Quiet & Solitude

- Valued as a calm, restorative, and uncrowded place.
- Mental health benefits, reflection, relaxation, and "forest bathing."

Verbatim:

- "Quiet place to wander."
- "Peace and quiet."
- "A tranquil place to unwind and enjoy nature."

Theme: Access to Nature Close to Home

- Easy access from nearby communities and the inner city.
- Ability to experience nature without travelling long distances.

Verbatim:

- "Nature close to home."
- "Just a short ride from downtown."
- "A hiking trail right in my backyard."

Theme: Recreation, Fitness & Exercise

- Walking, hiking, running, trail running, stair workouts, and general physical activity.
- Users value the challenge provided by elevation changes and rugged terrain.

Verbatim:

- "A great workout."
- "Perfect place to run."
- "Exercise your body while enjoying nature."

Theme: Natural/Rugged Trail Character

- Desire to retain the trail's rustic, narrow, natural, and less-developed feel.
- Appreciation for single-track trails, uneven ground, roots, hills, and stairs.

Verbatim:

- "Keep its natural feeling."
- "Not overly curated."
- "A real hiking trail in the city."

Theme: Unique Calgary Destination

- Viewed as a rare and special asset not found elsewhere in Calgary.
- Often described as a "gem."

Verbatim:

- "A unique landmark in Calgary."
- "There is really nothing like it in the city."
- "A gem in the inner city."

Theme: Wildlife, Biodiversity & Ecology

- Appreciation for birds, wildlife, native plants, biodiversity, and ecological value.

Verbatim:

- "Wildlife including birds."
- "Flora and fauna."
- "An important wildlife corridor."

Theme: Community, Family & Personal Connections

- Family memories, childhood experiences, community identity, and sharing the trail with visitors.

Verbatim:

- "Many hours spent outdoors with my family."
- "I've enjoyed this trail my entire life."
- "It's why we moved here."

Theme: Connectivity & Access Routes

- Importance as a link between communities, Edworthy Park, the river valley, and pathway system.

Verbatim:

- "Important walking link."
- "Access to Edworthy and the pathway system."
- "Connects to other trails for longer runs and walks.".

Question 5: What are your concerns?

Participants' primary concerns focused on the prolonged closure of the Douglas Fir Trail, ongoing erosion and slope stability issues, and the need for regular maintenance to support safe access.

At the same time, respondents strongly emphasized preserving the trail's natural, rugged character and expressed concern that extensive accessibility upgrades, paving, or urban-style development could undermine the unique hiking experience that distinguishes the trail from other city pathways.

Concerns regarding encampments, litter, fire risk, and communication about closures were also commonly raised. Overall, participants supported targeted safety and stabilization measures while maintaining the trail's wilderness-like qualities.

Theme: Long-Term Closure and Loss of Access

- Frustration with prolonged closures and uncertainty about reopening timelines.
- Concern that closures are encouraging trail degradation, alternate routes, encampments, and declining public use.
- Fear that portions of the trail could be permanently closed.

Verbatim:

- "My primary concern is the extensive closures."
- "Closure of the trail & worry if we'll ever be able to use it again."
- "The biggest issue is that the trail is closed."

Theme: Overdevelopment and Loss of Natural Character

- Strong concern that upgrades will urbanize the trail.
- Opposition to paving, widening, excessive railings, gravel surfacing, or making the trail resemble a conventional park pathway.
- Fear of losing the rugged hiking experience that people value.

Verbatim:

- "That it becomes a paved pathway and becomes very busy."
- "Please don't pave or widen it."
- "My concerns are that a new trail will be over-engineered."

Theme: Erosion, Slope Stability, and Drainage

- Recognition that erosion, landslides, unstable slopes, groundwater seepage, and drainage issues are real concerns.
- Desire for targeted interventions to address problem areas while preserving the trail experience.

Verbatim:

- "Concerns are erosion and slope stability."
- "Water. Landslide."
- "The natural springs along the slope are extremely problematic."

Theme: Trail Maintenance and Infrastructure Condition

- Concerns about deteriorating stairs, bridges, railings, and trail surfaces.
- Frustration that maintenance has not kept pace with need.
- Desire for ongoing, proactive maintenance rather than prolonged closures.

Verbatim:

- "Lack of trail maintenance."
- "The trail needs to be kept in a maintained condition."
- "Maintenance of the trail has been very poor."

Theme: Safety Concerns

- Concerns about steep slopes, unstable footing, slippery conditions, ice buildup, washed-out infrastructure, and winter conditions.
- Many respondents distinguished between needing reasonable safety improvements and over-managing the trail.

Verbatim:

- "Safety is paramount."
- "Narrow eroded sections and water pooling."
- "Safety and poor maintenance have made the trail a hazard."

Theme: Encampments, Fire Risk, and Personal Security

- Concerns about encampments, litter, fire risk, drug paraphernalia, and feeling less safe using the trail, especially alone.
- Many respondents linked the increase in encampments to long-term closures and reduced public presence.

Verbatim:

- "Homeless encampments."
- "The drug use is dangerous."
- "I'm nervous now to go alone."

Theme: Accessibility Improvements Affecting the Trail Experience

- Concern that accessibility objectives could fundamentally alter the trail's character.
- Many respondents felt the DFT should remain a hiking trail rather than be redesigned to accommodate all user types.

Verbatim:

- "Adding accessibility at the cost of conservation."
- "The City is overly focused on accessibility and safety."
- "This is rugged mountain terrain."

Theme: Environmental Protection and Ecological Impacts

- Desire to protect Douglas fir trees, wildlife habitat, biodiversity, and the ecological integrity of the area.
- Concerns about invasive species, trail braiding, off-trail use, vandalism, and environmental damage.

Verbatim:

- "Need to protect the trees."
- "An important wildlife corridor."
- "Trail braiding is creating a feedback loop."

Theme: Signage, Wayfinding, and Communication

- Requests for better maps, trail information, educational signage, and clearer communication from The City regarding closures and work underway.

Verbatim:

- "Proper navigation of trails."
- "Some signage would help."
- "The City has done a very poor job explaining what's going on."

Theme: Increased Use, Crowding, and User Conflicts

- Concern that modernization or accessibility improvements could increase visitation and reduce solitude.
- Concerns about bikes on hiking trails, crowding, and loss of the quiet experience.

Verbatim:

- "Making it more accessible will make it busier."
- "I don't want bikes on it."
- "Keep it a hiking trail."

Queston 6: What are your top priorities?

When considering the long-term future of Douglas Fir Trail, participants most frequently prioritized protection of the natural environment, including the unique Douglas Fir ecosystem, mature trees, wildlife habitat, and overall ecological integrity.

Respondents also emphasized preserving the trail's rugged, mountain-like character and expressed concern that extensive development or accessibility-focused upgrades could diminish the experience that makes the trail distinctive.

Participants generally supported investments in trail durability, erosion control, drainage, and slope stabilization to reduce future closures while maintaining access and connectivity. Safety improvements were supported when targeted to specific hazard areas and implemented in ways that preserve the trail's natural character and hiking experience.

Theme: Protect the Natural Environment

Participants consistently identified protection of the Douglas fir ecosystem, forest character, wildlife habitat, and ecological integrity as the highest priority.

- Protect mature Douglas fir trees and rare ecosystem features.
- Minimize impacts on wildlife and habitat.
- Preserve the forested character and natural setting.
- Manage erosion and human impacts without compromising ecological values.

Verbatim:

- "Protecting the natural environment must be the main priority."
- "This is a unique environment in Calgary."
- "Protecting the natural environment is more important than any inconvenience."

Theme: Maintain a Natural, Rugged Trail Experience

Many respondents emphasized preserving the trail as a hiking trail rather than transforming it into a highly developed urban pathway.

- Keep the dirt trail, wooden stairs, and natural materials.
- Avoid paving, widening, or over-engineering.
- Retain the mountain-like hiking experience.
- Preserve the sense of adventure and challenge.

Verbatim:

- "Keep it natural. Forests don't come with handrails."
- "This should not become an overly curated space."
- "Protect this backcountry-style hiking experience."

Theme: Trail Durability and Long-Term Sustainability

Many participants supported investments that would make the trail more resilient while maintaining its character.

- Build infrastructure that withstands erosion, water, and ice.
- Reduce future closures.
- Invest in long-term solutions rather than temporary fixes.

Verbatim:

- "Trail durability is a must."
- "Design for long-term use."
- "Available for future generations to enjoy."

Theme: Erosion, Drainage, and Slope Stability

Respondents recognized that water, ice, groundwater seepage, and slope movement are the underlying challenges that need to be addressed.

- Improve drainage and water management.
- Stabilize erosion-prone sections.
- Focus interventions on problem areas.
- Work with natural processes where possible.

Verbatim:

- "Water and erosion management."
- "Stabilizing the slope."
- "Control natural water flow."

Theme: Keep the Trail Open and Accessible for Future Use

Many respondents prioritized restoring and maintaining continuous trail access rather than prolonged closures.

- Reopen closed sections.
- Maintain route continuity.
- Reduce future closures.
- Preserve community access.

Verbatim:

- "What matters most is that the trail stays open."
- "Reopening the trail is top priority."
- "Make closures rare, if ever."

Theme: Balance Safety with Natural Character

Participants generally supported reasonable safety improvements but not at the expense of the trail experience.

- Address genuine hazards.
- Use minimal intervention where possible.

- Accept that hiking trails involve some risk.
- Focus on targeted safety improvements.

Verbatim:

- "Safe but still rustic."
- "Basic safety, not perfection."
- "Hiking always involves some measure of risk."

Theme: Preserve the Overall Trail Experience

Many responses focused on maintaining what makes the trail special rather than simply fixing infrastructure.

- Maintain peace, quiet, and immersion in nature.
- Preserve scenic views and forest canopy.
- Retain the feeling of escape from the city.

Verbatim:

- "Overall experience."
- "Maintaining that feeling of escape, peace, and nature."
- "The feel of being removed from the city."

Theme: Minimize Accessibility-Driven Changes

Some felt accessibility should not drive major design decisions because of the trail's terrain and purpose.

- Recognize the trail as a hiking experience.
- Avoid major modifications to accommodate all user groups.
- Maintain a diversity of trail types across the city.

Verbatim:

- "Not everything has to be accessible to everyone."
- "Accessibility should be a lower priority."
- "This is a hiking trail."

Theme: Ongoing Maintenance and Stewardship

Respondents emphasized regular maintenance and community stewardship.

- Routine maintenance rather than major reconstruction.
- Monitoring trail conditions and environmental health.

Verbatim:

- "Regular upkeep."
- "Active partnership between City, users and communities."

Theme: Education, Signage, and User Management

Participants identified opportunities to improve stewardship through education and wayfinding.

- Interpretive signage.
- Encouraging users to stay on designated trails.
- Education about ecology, history, and conservation.

Verbatim:

- "Nature interpretation."
- "Educational signage."
- "Help people stay on designated trails."



Figure 5: Park Pop-up July 11, 2026

Visioner Activity

83 bits of information.

Looking ahead (5, 10, 20 years), what should Douglas Fir Trail prioritize most?

Participants consistently expressed a desire to "leave the trail alone" and preserve its natural character. However, comments generally supported targeted interventions needed to address erosion, slope stability, safety, and access issues. Feedback suggests support for a light-touch stewardship approach that protects the wilderness experience while ensuring the trail remains accessible for future generations.



Figure 6: Snipping of online activity

Mapping Exercise - How do you use Douglas Fir Trail?

Recreation, Wellness, and Nature

Participants primarily use Douglas Fir Trail for walking, hiking, running, cycling, dog walking, and enjoying nature. Many described the trail as an important place for exercise, relaxation, and connecting with a wilderness-like environment within the city.

Access and Connectivity

Participants highlighted the importance of neighbourhood access points and trail connections. Some expressed concerns about closures and supported improved connectivity throughout the network.

Natural Character

Many participants value the trail's natural, unpaved setting and support protecting its forested character while carefully considering any future upgrades.

Maintenance and Amenities

Participants identified opportunities to improve trail conditions, signage, wayfinding, seating, and other visitor amenities.

Safety and Trail Etiquette

Common concerns included steep terrain, trail conditions, navigation challenges, and conflicts between trail users. Participants emphasized the importance of clear signage and responsible trail use.

Views, Wildlife, and Natural Features

Scenic views, wildlife, the mature forest, and the river valley setting were frequently identified as valued features that should be protected.

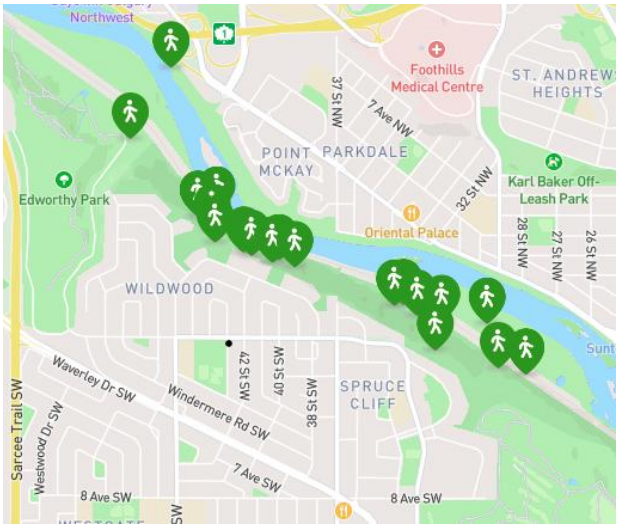


Figure 7: Walking and running

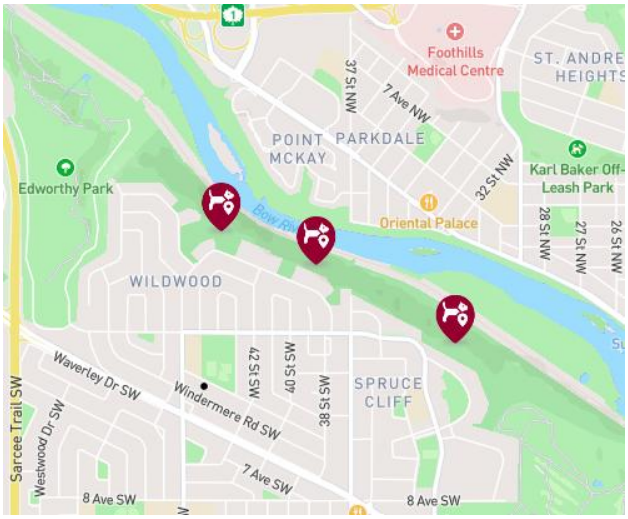


Figure 8: Walking the dog (on leash)

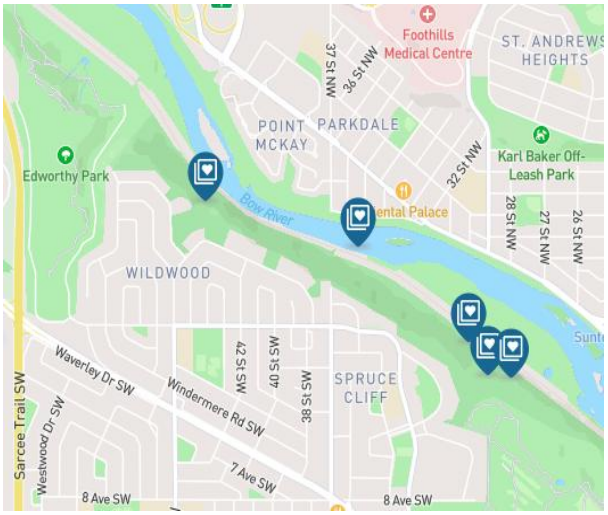


Figure 8: Health and wellness

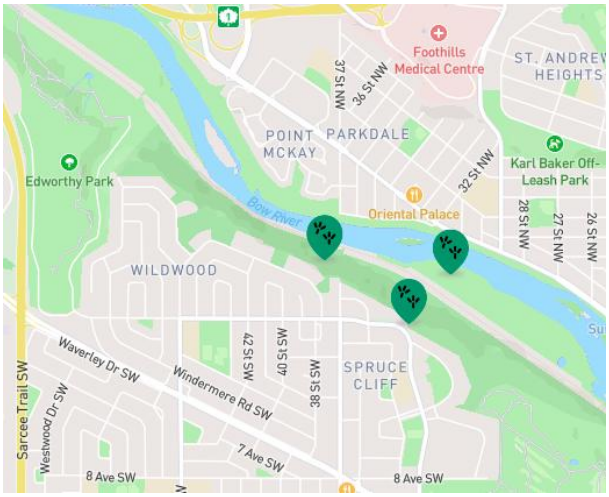


Figure 9: Bird watching

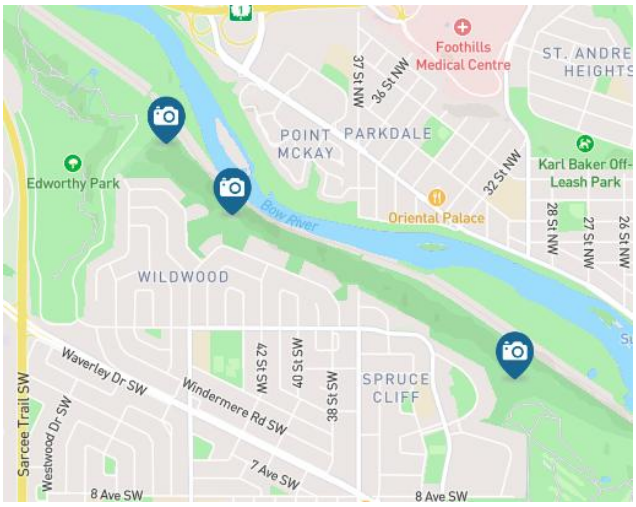


Figure 10: Photography

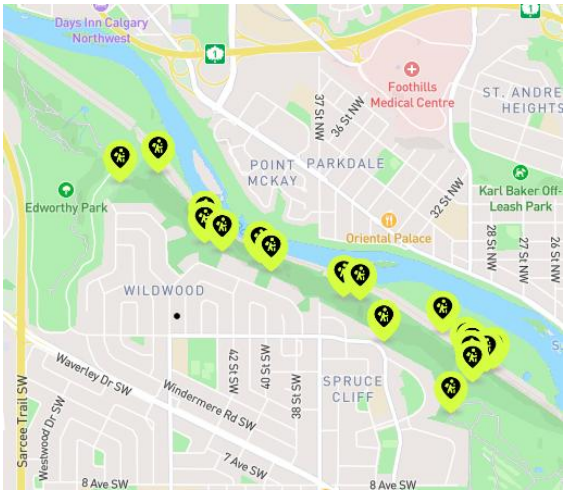


Figure 11: Hiking

Mapping Exercise: What are your concerns with Douglas Fir Trail?

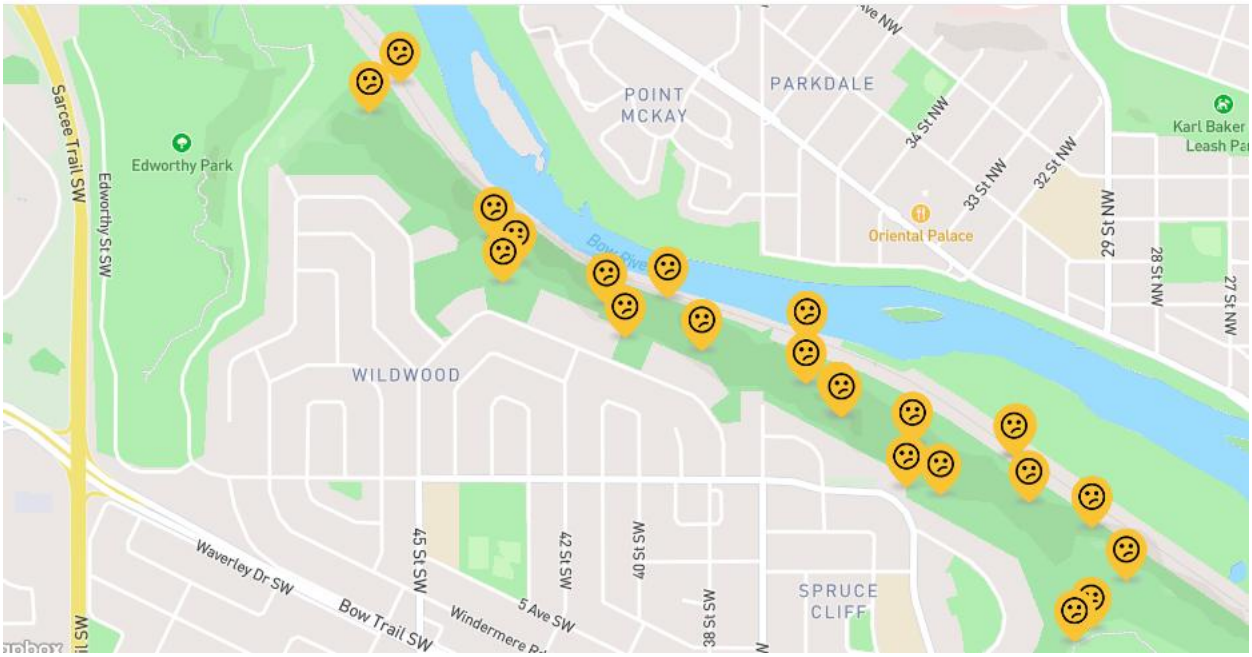


Figure 13: Concerns

Safety, Trail Conditions, and Access

Participants identified concerns about icy conditions, erosion, steep slopes, seasonal closures, and areas where trail users come close to the railway corridor. Common suggestions included improved maintenance, safer crossings, and upgrades to problem areas.

Encampments and Trail Experience

Encampments were a recurring concern, with participants citing impacts on perceived safety, litter, fire risk, and natural areas. Some suggested that increased trail activity could help improve the overall trail experience.

Trail Management and Signage

Participants requested improved wayfinding, clearer trailhead signage, better communication of dog leash requirements, and warnings at challenging trail sections. Concerns were also raised about off-trail use and informal trails contributing to erosion.

Infrastructure and Connectivity

Participants identified opportunities to improve trail connections, amenities, and aging infrastructure. The Quarry Road Trail was frequently mentioned as an important pathway and cycling route.

Environmental Concerns

Erosion, slope stability, and the long-term health of the Douglas fir forest were common concerns. Participants emphasized the importance of protecting the ecosystem and supporting forest regeneration.

Railway Safety

Many participants raised concerns about trail proximity to the railway corridor. Suggestions included improving safety measures, exploring formal crossings, and addressing slope stability issues near railway infrastructure.

6.0 Next steps

Who will see the input and what will they do with it?
All feedback received will be reviewed by the project team and decision-makers responsible for the initiative. The input will be analyzed alongside technical, operational, and strategic considerations and will be used to inform recommendations, refinements, and future decisions.

Will more input be solicited?
Additional engagement opportunities will be provided as the project progresses, and more detailed information becomes available.

Was a decision made?
No final decision has been made at this stage. Feedback is being gathered and considered as part of the decision-making process. It will also help to inform the next phase of engagement in Fall 2026.

When will you communicate with the public next?

Participants and the public will receive an update following review of the engagement findings and prior to the next phase of engagement, anticipated in Fall 2026.

Communication is anticipated within the next project milestone or reporting period. You can also get the latest updates by subscribing to our newsletter through this link: https://www.calgary.ca/planning/parks-rec/douglas-fir-trail-project.html



Figure 12: Unexpected visitor. Park Pop-up July 11, 2026