



APPENDIX 2-4

COMMUNITY SURVEY – 2ND PUBLIC CONSULTATION FEEDBACK REPORT



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Community Survey – 2nd Public Consultation Feedback Report

The Hodson Bay
Waterfront Park Project





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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report sets out the consultation methods undertaken as part of the second public consultation event held for the proposed Hodson Bay Waterfront Park project and a summary of results recorded in the second community survey. The second public consultation event took place at the Hodson Bay Hotel, Athlone on the 22nd of April and a community survey was made available to the Public between the 22nd of April and the 6th of May 2026 to provide feedback on the emerging preferred design presented at the public consultation.

A review of the responses to the community survey found that there was an overall level of dissatisfaction with the emerging preferred design presented by respondents with mixed or somewhat negative responses provided by respondents to the questions contained within the survey. The key results of the community survey are further detailed:

Key Positives:

While the overall response to the survey was mixed or somewhat negative there were some positive responses in the relation to the emerging preferred design. Several respondents supported the more natural look of the design, following feedback from the first community survey. Some respondents supported the overall development for the economic and amenity benefit it will provide for the surrounding area. Some respondents supported the design for specific individual project elements.

Key Issues:

Facilities for Swimmers - Swimmers raised concerns over the lack of facilities, namely a shelter / changing area and toilets located in proximity to the area swimmers enter the lake to the north of Hodson Bay. Many swimmers were satisfied with the natural appearance of this area in the emerging preferred design.

Impact on Athlone Golf Club – Opposition to the proposed transfer of land from Athlone Golf Club to support the development of an active travel facility along the L2020 Local Road and the provision of car parking and how this will affect the layout and usability of the golf course.

Environment – Some respondents were concerned that the proposed development may lead to negative impacts on the surrounding environment including on the Natura 2000 sites in Lough Ree and the impact of the proposed designs on flooding in the area.

Many respondents responded positively to at least some of the design elements. There was a mixed response to the proposed active travel facilities and the impact of the proposed development on vehicular traffic, with some respondents supporting the proposed designs for these elements and others opposing the proposed designs.

The final design will consider the concerns raised under the specific themes in the survey as well as during the in-person public consultation event and incorporate, where appropriate, responsive measures to address the issues raised.

1.

INTRODUCTION

Roscommon County Council (RCC) has progressed the design development of the Hodson Bay Waterfront Park as a flagship tourism facility for the Hodson Bay area.

The development of the Hodson Bay Waterfront Park will consist of four elements:

1. **Water Sports Pavilion** – A new landmark group of buildings offering a café, changing facilities, wellness and meeting spaces.
2. **Marina Redevelopment** – Expansion of the existing marina to approximately 50 berths, new pontoons, extended breakwater, and improved amenities for boat users.
3. **Public Realm** – Creation of a continuous lakeside promenade, plaza, and landscaped play, picnic, and event areas.
4. **Sustainable Transport** – Active travel improvements, traffic calming on the L2020 Local Road, and reorganisation of car parking to improve visitor experience and safety.

This report sets out the consultation methods undertaken as part of the second public consultation event held for the proposed Hodson Bay Waterfront Park project and a summary of results recorded in the second community survey. The community survey provides an opportunity to all interested community and stakeholder groups to engage in the feedback process on the emerging preferred design for the proposed Hodson Bay Waterfront Park Project. The community survey was made available to the public between the 22nd of April and the 6th of May 2026.

The public consultation web page on the RCC website provided the necessary materials detailing the emerging preferred design for the proposed elements of the Hodson Bay Waterfront Park, to support respondents in submitting their feedback. The feedback received will be considered by RCC, Waterways Ireland and the Design Team in the finalisation of the proposal for this project prior to the submission of a planning application to An Coimisiún Pleanála (ACP).

2.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION METHODS

As part of the design development process of the Hodson Bay Waterfront Park, the Design Team is engaging with various stakeholders through a comprehensive public consultation process.

The first public consultation event was held in-person on the 23rd of October 2025 and was attended by representatives from the project team. This event was well attended by members of the public with over 135 people attending the in-person event. A community survey was also launched on the 23rd of October 2025 to provide an opportunity for people to engage with the process and express their views on the proposed plans for the Hodson Bay Waterfront Park Project. The community survey was open for feedback for a period of 3 weeks between 23rd October and 14th of November 2025.

Following the first public consultation event, the project team reviewed the responses to the community survey as detailed in the 'Community Survey – 1st Public Consultation Feedback Report' prepared by MKO, with the feedback influencing the design of the emerging preferred design.

The second in-person public consultation event was held on the 22nd of April 2026 between 14:00 and 19:00 at the Hodson Bay Hotel, Athlone. As with the first public consultation, the event was attended by representatives from the project team, and it was well attended by members of the public. A Community Survey was also launched as part of the second public consultation process, on the 22nd of April 2026 to provide an opportunity for people to engage with the process and express their views on the emerging preferred design for the Hodson Bay Waterfront Park Project.

To inform the local community of the first and second public consultation events, advertisements were placed in newspapers and flyers were distributed to local residents, businesses and schools prior to each event. An electronic copy of the flyer was additionally emailed to relevant local businesses, local schools and relevant community groups and organisations. RCC also published press releases, before, on the day and after the event, to encourage public participation and feedback in addition to providing updates about the process and progress of the public consultation event.

The project team have reviewed the responses to the community survey following the second public consultation, and an analysis of these responses is outlined in this report.

3.

FEEDBACK AT THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION EVENT

This section sets out the feedback received at the second public consultation event which took place in-person at the Hodson Bay Hotel, Athlone on the 22nd of April 2026. The event was attended by representatives from the project team to explain the design options and answer any questions from the public on the proposed design options.

The project team recorded all the feedback, suggestions and concerns raised by the community at the in-person event. An overview of the feedback / opinion from the local community have been reviewed and identified under the following themes:

Ecology - Attendees raised concerns over the impact of the development on biodiversity with one attendee noticing the starlings which had previously flown over Yew Point, have shifted west following the commencement of construction on the Eco Hubs and expressed concerns that further construction may further impact bird movement. Attendees questioned whether the proposed development would be in line with Nature Restoration Laws.

Impact on the Athlone Golf Club – Opposition was noted from members of the Athlone Golf Club (AGC) to the proposed transfer of land from the golf club lands to support the proposed development. Particular attention was drawn to the impact of this transfer on Holes 4, 7 and 16. Attendees questioned how the proposed development would benefit AGC.

Changing Facilities for Swimmers – Attendees including members of the Hodson Bay Dippers stressed the need for changing facilities and storage at the wild swimming area to the north of Hodson Bay.

Plunge Pool – One attendee noted the potential for a plunge pool along the main marina similar to the type of outdoor pool currently proposed for the River Shannon in Athlone.

Diving Point – One attendee raised safety concerns over children jumping into the marina area in summer and suggested that a safer designated point is provided for them to jump into the water.

Public Toilets – Attendees requested that public toilets are installed which are accessible to the general public rather than accessible through a business with one attendee suggesting that this could be included as part of the marina block.

Access to Spit by Baysports – One attendee asked whether public access could be opened to the spit by Baysports which is currently closed off to the public.

Access to Yew Point – Attendees requested that the proposed walkways are extended to include Yew Point.

Active Travel – Attendees questioned where the bike storage and bike repairs station will be located within the public realm. Attendees requested that controlled crossing of roadways are provided as part of the scheme and that they should be accessible to people with mobility and visual impairments.

Traffic – The increase in traffic was frequently cited as a concern by attendees and many attendees supported traffic calming measures proposed for the L2020 Local Road.

N61/L2020 Junction – Attendees raised concerns over congestion at the N61 National Road/L2020 Local Road junction, outlining that traffic in the morning means it is difficult to turn right from the L2020 Local Road to the N61 National Road towards Roscommon Town.

Parking – There was a mixed response to the proposed provision of parking with some attendees stating the proposed quantity of spaces was insufficient while others stated the proposed quantity was an overprovision. Attendees questioned how access to public parking would be managed.

Removal of the Transport Hub – Attendees positively received the removal of the transport hub.

Road Surfacing – Attendees questioned whether the L2020 Local Road would be fully resurfaced as part of the development.

Infrastructure for Fishing – Attendees stated that 4 no. trailer parking spaces would not be sufficient to accommodate the number of people with boat trailers who want to go fishing at Hodson Bay.

Water Sports Pavilion – Most attendees responded positively to the proposed design of the Water Sports Pavilion. Attendees questioned how access to the buildings will be provided and who will be operating the water sports element and the café element. Questions were raised as to the internal building layouts, how the space will be used differently during the tourism peak and off-peak periods, where the saunas and hot tubs will be located and how unauthorised access to the pontoon will be controlled. A question was also posed as to how the existing water sports facilities will remain operable while the new facility is being constructed.

Playground – Attendees requested that a playground is installed at Hodson Bay.

Construction and Operation – Attendees requested further information on the construction phasing plan and operational plan and enquired as to the roles of key stakeholders and the community.

Maintenance of Infrastructure – Attendees sought more information on how the new active travel routes will be maintained.

4.

FEEDBACK FROM COMMUNITY SURVEY

This section examines the results of the community survey, which was launched on the 22nd of April 2026 and remained open for 2 weeks until 6th of May 2026 to provide sufficient opportunity for the public to express their views. The Community Survey recorded a total of 123 no. responses.

The survey asked respondents about their connection to Hodson Bay, and frequency of visitation, followed by questions on their satisfaction with the emerging preferred design overall and with each element. The survey provided opportunities to also include general feedback / comments on the project.

It is noted that the responses to many questions of the survey in relation to the emerging preferred design appears to be mixed or negative. Some implications for the direction of responses are reflected in the respondents' concerns in relation to the impacts on the AGC golf course, traffic and environmental concerns and facilities for swimmers at Hodson Bay.

This has been further highlighted under Section 4.4.1 to 4.4.6 of this report. The final design will consider the concerns raised under the specific themes in the survey as well as during the in-person public consultation event and incorporate, where appropriate, responsive measures to address the issues raised.

4.1

Context

The majority of respondents to the community survey either 'live locally' (57%) or 'visit the area regularly' (39%). Only 2% of respondents were 'occasional visitors' (2%) or 'do not currently use the area' (2%), as shown in **Figure 4-1**. It is therefore considered that there was strong interest in the proposed project from the local community and frequent visitors.

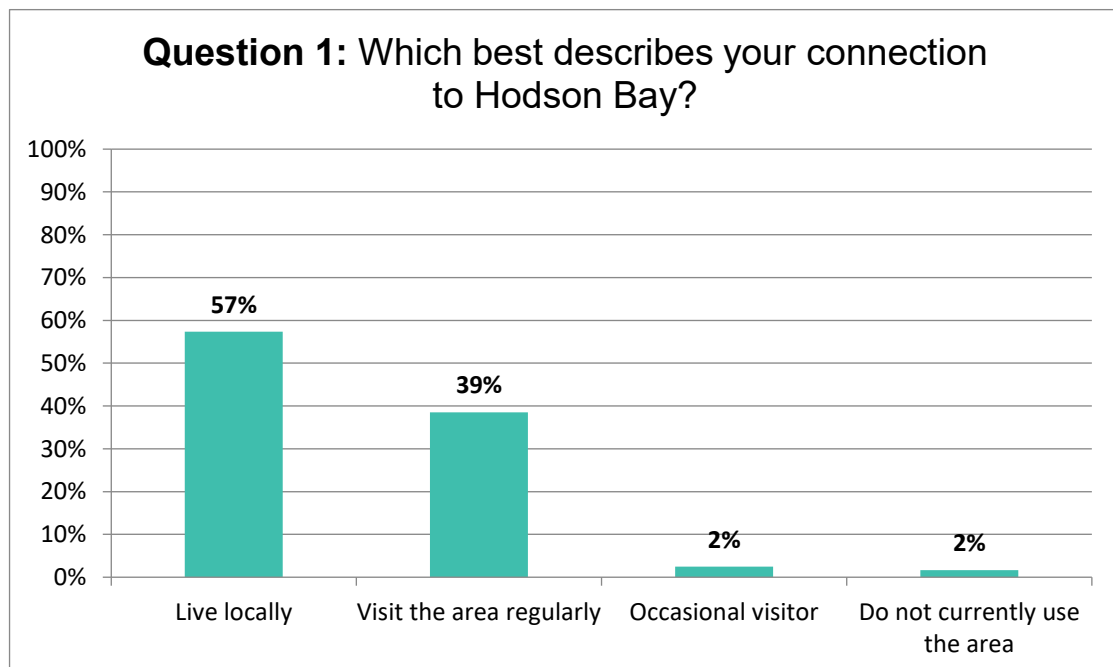


Figure 4-1 Responses to Question 1: Which best describes your connection to Hodson Bay?

Similarly, most respondents to the community survey visit Hodson Bay at least weekly (85%) with 14% visiting daily, as shown in **Figure 4-2**. Only 1% of respondents never visit Hodson Bay.

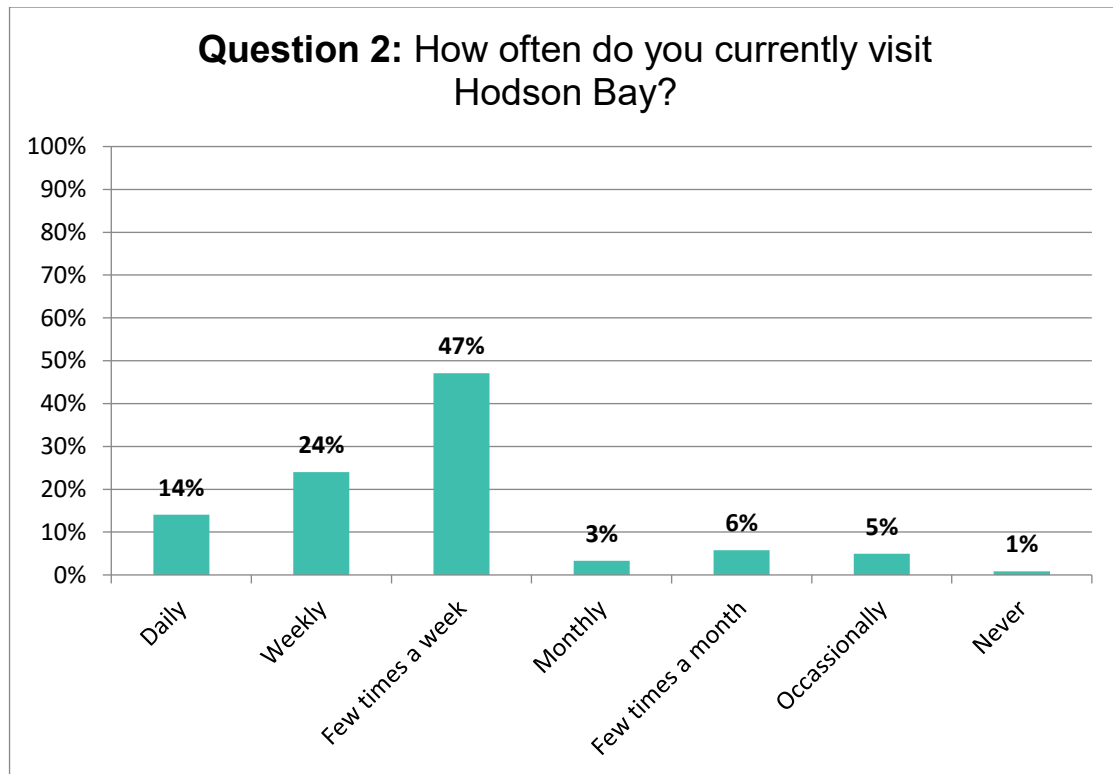


Figure 4-2 Responses to Question 2: How often do you currently visit Hodson Bay?

4.2

Feedback on the Emerging Preferred Design

4.2.1

Overall Satisfaction

When asked of their overall satisfaction regarding the emerging preferred design:

Overall, the response in relation to the emerging preferred design was mixed with an equal proportion of the respondents 'somewhat satisfied' and 'somewhat dissatisfied' with the emerging preferred design, with around 24% of the respondents expressing they were 'very dissatisfied' as shown in **Figure 4-3**.

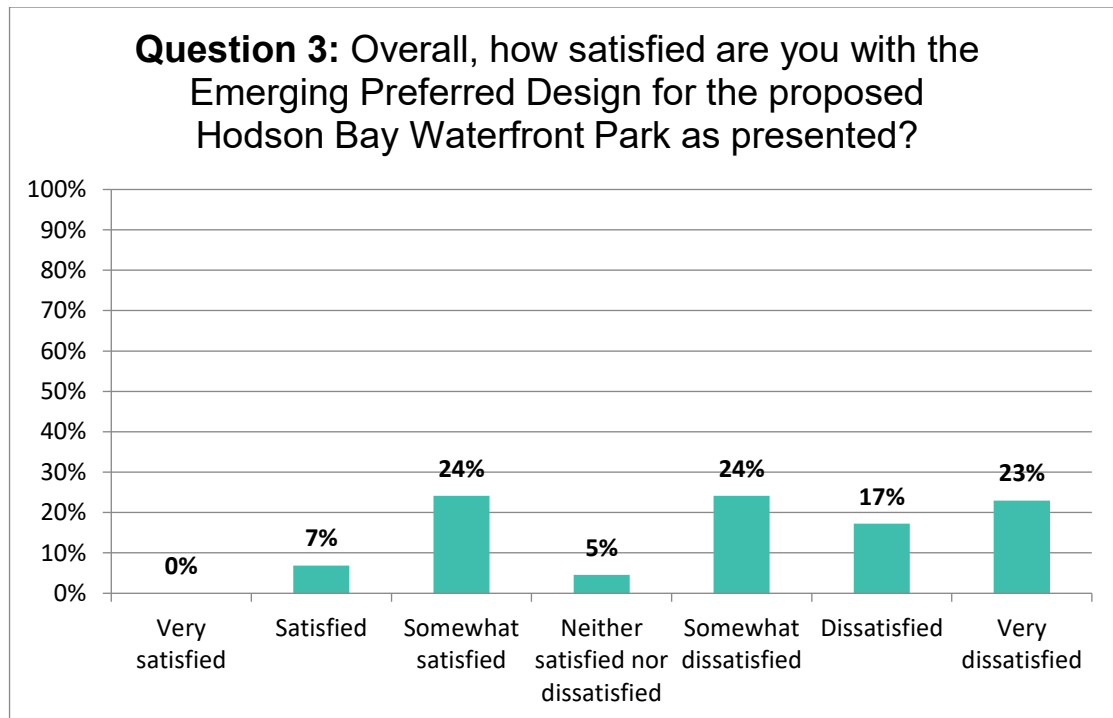


Figure 4-3 Responses to Question 3: Overall, how satisfied are you with the Emerging Preferred Design for the proposed Hodson Bay Waterfront Park as presented?

When asked specifically about how the emerging preferred design responds to the surrounding context and local community needs, 51% of respondents believed the design responds negatively as shown in **Figure 4-4**. However, 49% of respondents remained either neutral in their opinion on the design, or stated the design responded positively.

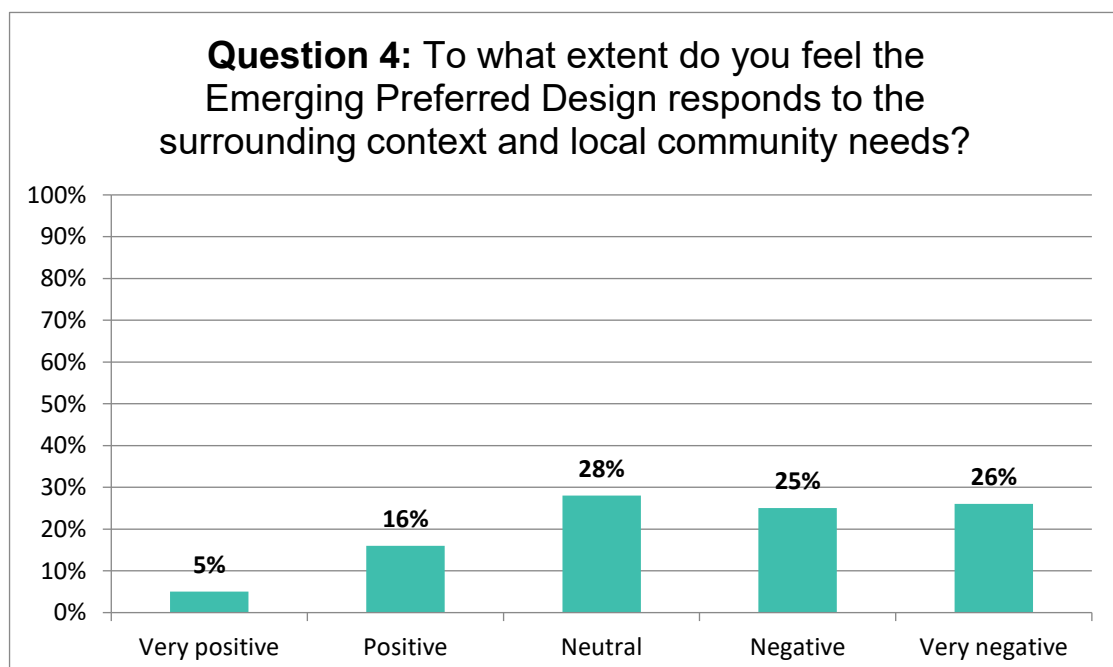


Figure 4-4 Responses to Question 4: To what extent do you feel the Emerging Preferred Design responds to the surrounding context and local community needs?

4.2.2 Water Sports Pavilion

When asked of their view on the impact of the proposed Water Sports Pavilion on the local community and visitors:

While 50% of the respondents expressed that the Water Sports Pavilion would have a negative impact on the local community and on visitors to Hodson Bay, 40% of respondents felt it would have a positive / very positive impact, as shown in **Figure 4-5**. 11% of respondents responded remained neutral on their opinion in relation to the impact of the Water Sports Pavilion on the local community and visitors.

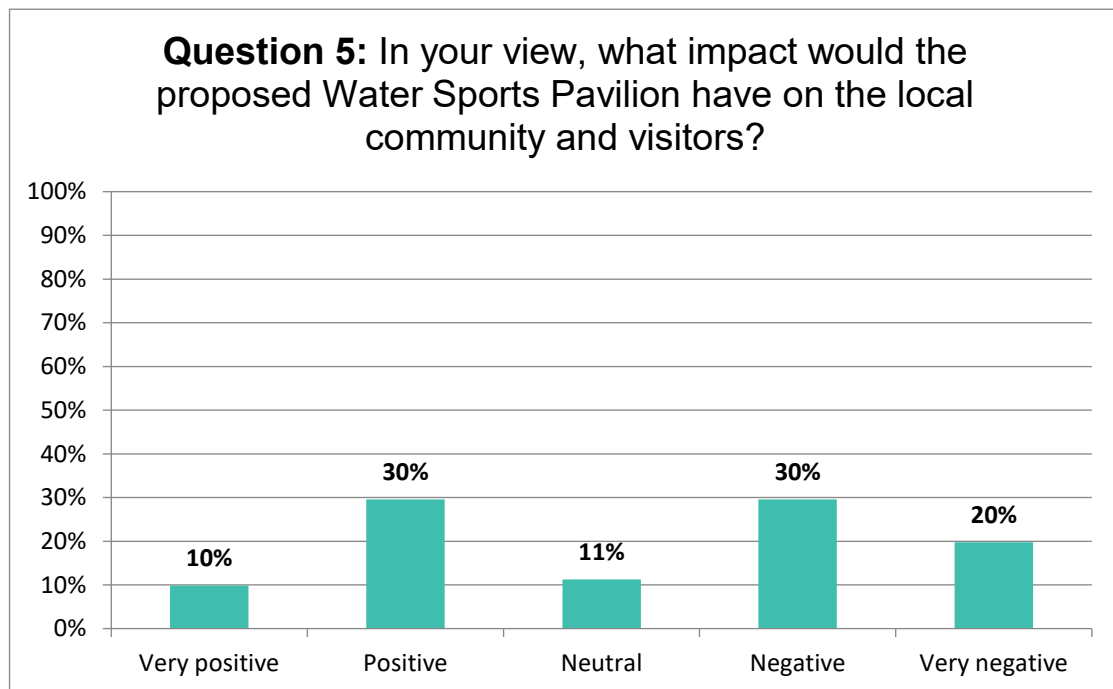


Figure 4-5 Responses to Question 5: In your view, what impact would the proposed Water Sports Pavilion have on the local community and visitors?

4.2.3 Marina Redevelopment

When asked to what extent the proposed Marina Redevelopment would meet their current and future needs:

Majority (71%) of respondents felt that the proposed Marina Redevelopment partially, mostly or fully meets the needs of the current and future users, as shown in **Figure 4-6**. Only 13% of respondents felt it does not meet the needs of current or future users.

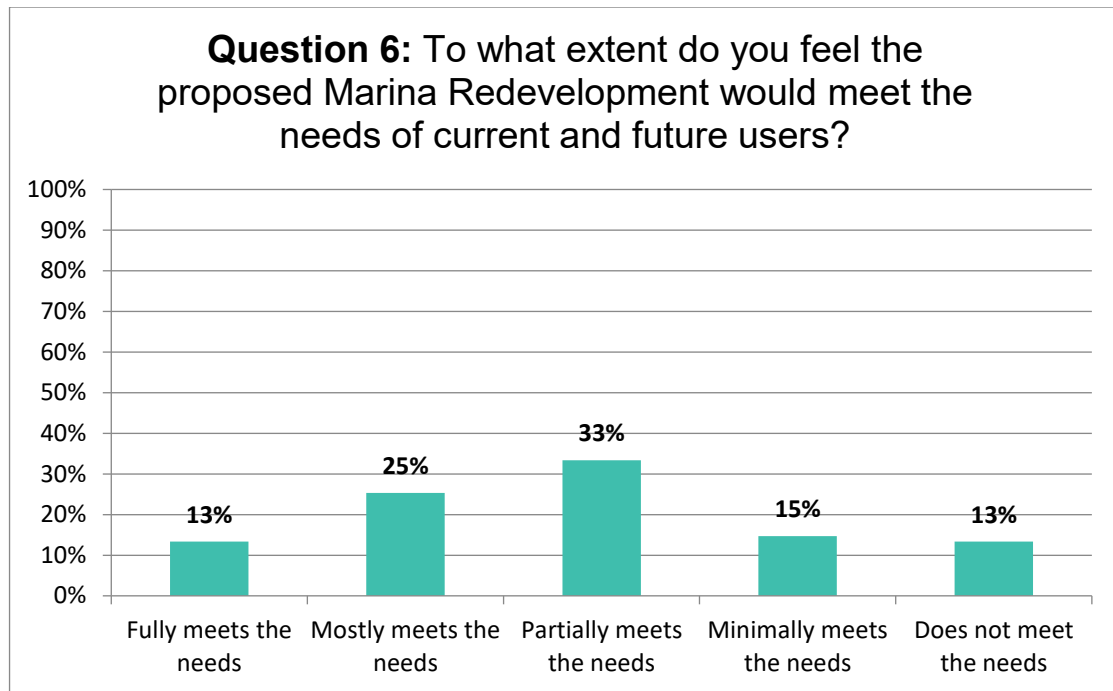


Figure 4-6 Responses to Question 6: To what extent do you feel the proposed Marina Redevelopment would meet the needs of current and future users?

4.2.4 Public Realm Upgrades

When asked to express how they felt about the proposed public realm design and its relationship to the receiving environment:

49% of respondents felt the relationship was either positive or remained neutral, as shown in **Figure 4-7**. 1% of respondents felt the relationship of the public realm to land, water, leisure and nature was very positive. 50% of the respondents, however, felt that the relationship of the proposed public realm design to land, water, leisure and nature at Hodson Bay, is negative.

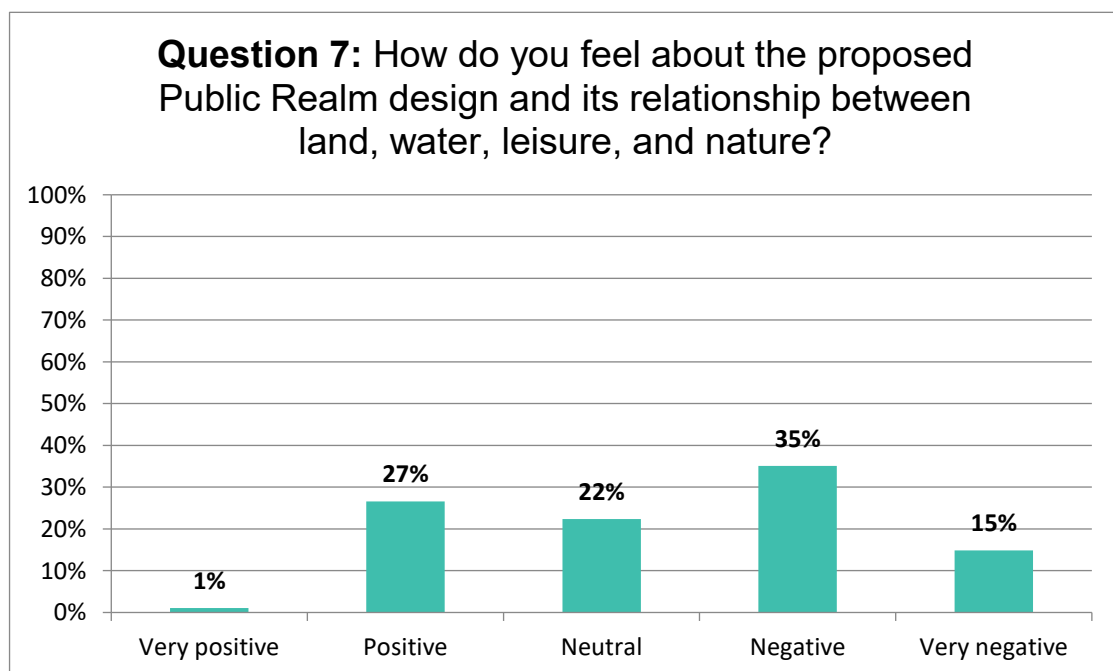


Figure 4-7 Responses to Question 7: How do you feel about the proposed Public Realm design and its relationship between land, water, leisure, and nature?

4.2.5 Active Travel

When asked if the active travel design supports ease of movement including walking, cycling and access:

There was a mix of responses to the design of the proposed active travel infrastructure. While 46% of respondents felt that the proposals did not support ease of movement, 54% of respondents either felt the proposal was supportive of ease of movement or were neutral in their response, as shown in **Figure 4-8**.

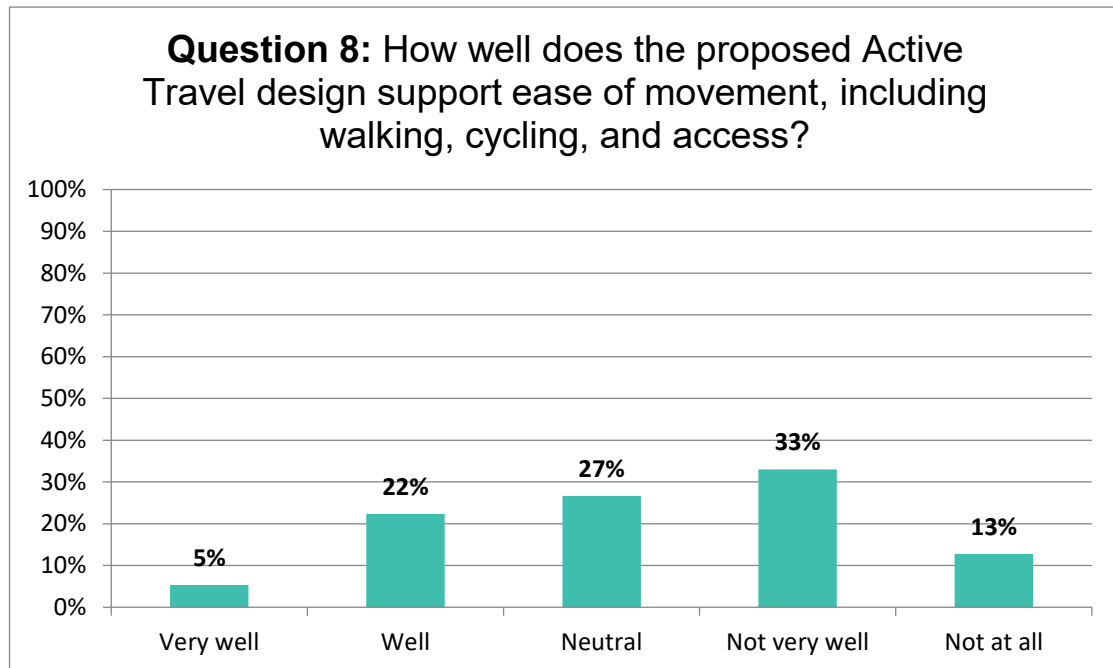


Figure 4-8 Responses to Question 8: How well does the proposed Active Travel design support ease of movement, including walking, cycling, and access?

4.3 Implications of the Mixed/Negative Responses

Having reviewed the graphs of the responses to the Community Survey generated for questions 1-8 (See **Section 4.2**), it is clear that the feedback on the emerging preferred design is largely mixed or negative in nature. This was the case for both of the questions which asked respondents to rate their satisfaction with the overall proposed development and the individual elements.

A review of the subjective responses in **Section 4.4**, provides further insight into the primary concerns respondents had with the emerging preferred design which influenced their dissatisfaction with the overall project. There was a range of concerns raised by respondents and while some respondents opposed the project in its entirety, many respondents expressed concern with specific elements of the project only. The main concerns raised, with which there are opportunities to respond to in the finalisation of the design of the Hodson Bay Waterfront Park Project, include:

- › Facilities for swimmers
- › Impact on Athlone Golf Club
- › Impact on ecology / environment
- › Active travel facilities
- › Parking and Public Transport Facilities

4.4

General Feedback on the Project

Overall, the responses from the survey reflected a mixed opinion from the local community in relation to the emerging preferred design. To understand the views of the respondents and provide them with the opportunity to expand on their impression of the design, the following questions were asked:

- › What aspects of the Emerging Preferred Design do you consider most successful?
- › What aspects of the Emerging Preferred Design would you like to see improved or adjusted before it is submitted for planning permission?
- › Do you have any additional comments or suggestions regarding the proposed Hodson Bay Waterfront Park?

Some of the emerging themes from the subjective responses have been recorded in the sections below. This provides an insight into the concerns of the respondents and subsequently the reasons for comparatively mixed feedback. *It is noted that not all the respondents that responded to the survey answered / provided feedback under these questions.*

4.4.1

Facilities for Swimmers

18 no. responses to the Community Survey (15% of respondents) referenced facilities for people who swim in Lough Ree at Hodson Bay. The majority of respondents raised concerns in relation to facilities for swimmers. Several respondents requested that a shelter, changing area and toilets are located at the area where swimmers enter the lake at the grass area beside the northern car park and that these facilities should be open for use year-round. While many respondents mentioned all three structures (shelter, changing area and toilets), a shelter was the most frequently cited requirement.

Respondents also raised concerns that the changing facilities proposed as part of the Water Sports Pavilion are located too far from the swimming area and/or that these facilities would not be freely available for them to use.

Most respondents who raised concerns about the lack of facilities for swimmers did however support the overall project, in particular the proposed investment in modern facilities at Hodson Bay and improvements to access by way of increased parking and enhanced active travel facilities. Many respondents also appreciated that the area where they enter the lake is proposed to be kept natural in nature, retaining the reedbeds and grassy areas. However, some respondents noted conflicts between the use of the lake by swimmers and other water sports, for example one respondent noted that Baysports currently provides canoeing activities in the area which is frequented by swimmers.

4.4.2

Impact on Athlone Golf Club

13 no. responses referenced AGC (10% of respondents). The comments in relation to AGC primarily raised concerns regarding the possibility of a transfer of land to accommodate the development of a wider active travel corridor along the L2020 Local Road which bisects the AGC lands and/or the development of public car parking within part of the AGC lands to the north of the Hodson Bay Hotel. Some respondents further detailed concerns that the transfer of land may require a revision to the layout of the golf course or would lead to the loss of holes on the golf course.

One respondent raised a concern that the transfer of land could impact on AGC's regional status, which they contended was "*well regarded as a Golf Union of Ireland (GUI) competitions venue*", due to the loss of maintenance buildings. Other respondents raised concerns over the impact from the proposed development on the generation of increased vehicular journeys, therefore necessitating the possibility of a transfer of land. *Respondents requested that the Design Team and Roscommon County Council further liaise with AGC.*

Some respondents who raised concerns over the possibility of a land transfer supported other developments proposed including the proposed modern facilities at Hodson Bay and greater access to the waterfront while other respondents opposed the project outright.

At the second public consultation event the Design Team advised concerned AGC members that a golf course design consultant (Ken Kearney Golf Design) has been appointed to review the proposed development and ensure that there would be no adverse impact on the AGC golf course which would result in the loss of holes on the golf course.

4.4.3 Ecological Impacts

While many respondents supported that the emerging preferred design is the more natural of the two options presented at the first consultation, several respondents raised concerns over the impact of the proposed development on the local environment and the wider Lough Ree Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Lough Ree Special Protection Area (SPA). One respondent mentioned that there was no information provided on the interaction of the proposed development with the SAC and SPA in the public consultation material.

4.4.4 Active Travel Facilities

There were several responses relating to the provision of improved active travel facilities, which raised a variety of sentiments. There was about an even number of responses that supported and did not support the enhanced active travel facilities along the L2020 Local Road. Responses in favour of the enhanced facilities noted that the facilities would make walking and cycling safer. Some of the responses against the enhanced facilities had concerns about the impact it would have on traffic and on how cyclists will cross the road.

One respondent suggested that the Yew Point walk should be incorporated into the rest of the proposed routes through agreement with the Hodson Bay Hotel. One respondent raised that the success of the active travel facility along the L2020 Local Road hinged on the provision of the facility along the full length of the L2020 Local Road as having cyclists and vehicles share road space would be unsafe.

Several respondents supported the incorporation of additional footpaths along the lakeshore to enhance access.

4.4.5 Vehicular Traffic and Public Transportation

Several respondents raised concerns regarding access to Hodson Bay, the availability of parking and speeding on the L2020 Local Road. Many respondents were concerned that the proposed development would increase traffic on the L2020 Local Road, a road which currently suffers from cars frequently speeding on it. Very few respondents referenced the proposed traffic calming measures but those that did, generally supported them. One respondent did not support the narrowing of the L2020 Local Road to accommodate a widened footpath/cycle route.

Several respondents supported the increase in car parking spaces at Hodson Bay, with some respondents saying there were not enough additional parking spaces proposed. One respondent supported the redistribution of parking spaces away from the lakeshore.

Three respondents raised that there is no public transport serving Hodson Bay, with one respondent suggesting that a bus should be provided between Hodson Bay and Athlone or that a bus stop should be added on the existing 440 bus at the junction between the N61 National Road and L2020 Local Road. One respondent suggested that a water taxi should run between Hodson Bay and Athlone.

4.4.6 Other Comments

Many respondents reiterated their support for specific elements of the project, in particular the Water Sports Pavilion including the café, the Marina Redevelopment and increased access to the waterfront. Some respondents raised general concerns over the lack of information on the duration of the construction of the proposed project and the impact it will have on access to the waterfront and facilities. One respondent raised concerns over the impact the proposed development will have on flooding in the area.

5.

CONCLUSIONS

This report provides an overview of the effort undertaken to engage with the local community and stakeholder as part of the second public consultation process for the Hodson Bay Waterfront Park Project and feedback recorded.

Overall, the responses to many of the questions on the survey in relation to the emerging preferred design appear to be mixed or negative. This is reflected in the comments left on the community survey as well as the comments presented by stakeholders and the local community and the Public Consultation Event. In response to the concerns raised at the public consultation event and in the community survey the following topics could be considered as **potential priority areas** to be examined in determining the final design:

Facilities for Swimmers – There are opportunities for the enhancement of facilities for swimmers at Hodson Bay to address concerns raised over the lack of facilities, namely a shelter / changing area and toilets located in proximity to the area swimmers enter the lake to the north of Hodson Bay.

Impact on Athlone Golf Club – There are opportunities to further liaise with AGC and its members in relation to the design of project elements that it is foreseen will require the transfer of land from ACG to facilitate namely the active travel facility along the L2020 Local Road and the provision of car parking and how this will affect the layout and usability of the golf course.

Ecology / Environment – There are opportunities to consider mitigation measures in to reduce the impact of the proposed development on the surrounding environment and flooding in the surround area.

Active Travel, Parking and Public Transport Facilities – There are opportunities to consider the design of active travel, parking and public transport facilities in line with the points of support and concern raised by the respondents at the Public Consultation Event and in the community survey.

It is considered that the key risk to the obtention of planning consent for the proposed Hodson Bay Waterfront Park is in relation to the possibility of objections to the proposed development and its design as part of the statutory planning process. Engagement with stakeholders who raised concerns as part of the community surveys including members of the AGC could be considered as a means to secure support for the proposed development.

Following on from the second public consultation process, the project team will finalise the designs for the four elements of the Hodson Bay Waterfront Park: The Water Sports Pavilion, Marina Redevelopment, Public Realm, Sustainable Transport. The final design will consider the concerns raised under the specific themes in the survey as well as during the in-person public consultation event and incorporate, where appropriate, responsive measures to address the issues raised. It is then expected that a planning application to ACP will be submitted in July 2026.

