

MEMORANDUM

TO: Don Ettinger, P.E., Gorrill-Palmer

CC: James Tasse, Jame Tasse Consulting
Seth Kimball, PLA, ASLA, Aceto Landscape Architects

From: Kate Burch, Senior Planner, North Star Planning

RE: Bowdoinham PPI Study – Public Engagement & Survey Results

Date: October 31, 2024

North Star Planning (NSP) developed a survey in support of the Bowdoinham PPI Study to get feedback on biking and walking in Bowdoinham, Maily Waterfront Park, community preferences, and future development in the village.

The survey was available online from September 12 through October 21, and was made available in paper format at the town office. 114 people responded to the survey. The survey consisted of 24 questions that asked about current use and future desires for Bowdoinham's Village and Maily Waterfront Park, walking and biking safety, and basic demographic information. The survey included both multiple choice and open-ended questions, as well as one map-based question.

The Age Friendly Bowdoinham Committee solicited additional open-ended feedback on the project at the September 13 Celebrate Bowdoinham event.

Summary of Findings

The survey confirmed that Bowdoinham's Village and waterfront parks are walkable destinations. Almost 80% of respondents walk to Village locations frequently or often. People desire more local businesses and small restaurants or coffee shops that would fit into and support a walkable, mixed-use village.

The waterfront parks, Three Robbers Pub, and Bowdoinham Country Store are the most popular Village locations that people walk or bike to. The intersections to access these locations were all mapped as the priority places where pedestrian safety needed to improve, with the intersection of Main Street and Route 24 most frequently cited.

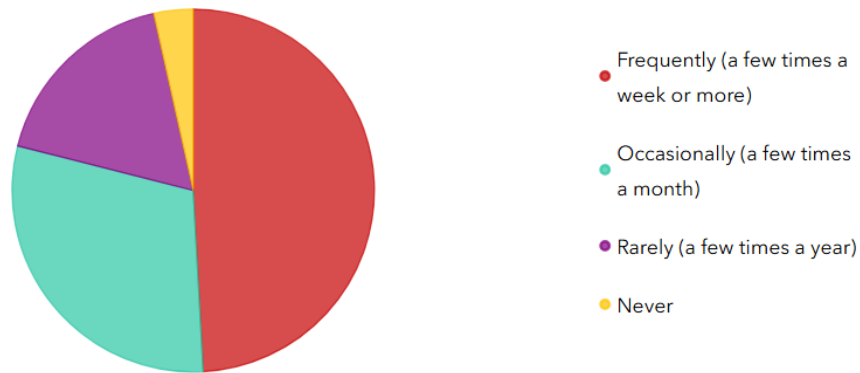
The Farmer's Market is the most popular use of Maily Waterfront Park. Other uses include general recreation, boating, swimming, and fishing. The diverse uses at the waterfront create conflicts between people with trailered boats, people fishing, and other types of recreation, especially children swimming. The boat launch is central to these use conflicts, but among survey respondents, most boat launch users only use it a few times a month or a few times a year. Better organization of the park space, including traffic flow at the boat launch and dedicated spaces for different types of users, would make the park safer and more usable for all.

Cars are the most common form of transportation to get around Bowdoinham, but more than half of respondents also walk to get around town. Biking is less popular, with only about 20% of respondents who bike to get around town. People who describe themselves as frequent walkers also tend to be the most frequent bikers, and both the most frequent walkers and bikers tend to be younger (under age 50.) Notably, this survey did not capture feedback from out-of-town cycling groups that frequently ride through Bowdoinham, which would likely provide different demographic data.

The biggest safety concern for both pedestrians and bicyclists is speeding cars, especially on Route 24. For pedestrians, lack of crosswalks and unsafe crosswalks are the main concern. For bikes, lack of safe space to bike in the shoulder is the top concern.

Bowdoinham's Village

How often do you visit businesses, shops, parks, or public spaces in Bowdoinham's Village?

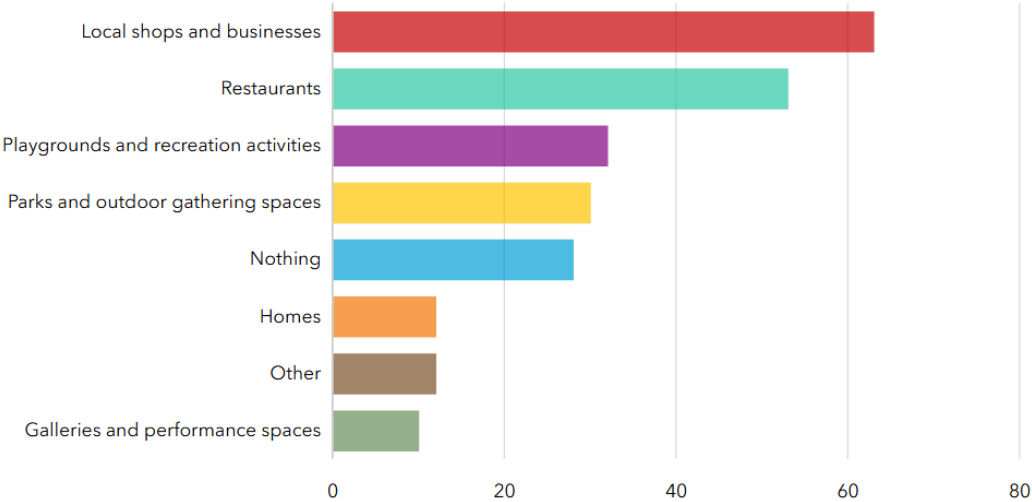


About half (48.7%) of respondents visit the Village frequently (a few times a week), and an additional 29.5% visit often (a few times a month.)

What is your favorite place in Bowdoinham's Village?

The top result is Mailly Waterfront Park, with about 60 mentions. Other popular locations are the Three Robbers Pub (15 mentions), Bowdoinham Store (10 mentions), and the library (5 mentions.)

What would you like to see more of in Bowdoinham’s Village?



Respondents could select multiple answers to this question. About 50% of respondents desire more local businesses and restaurants in the Village. About 25% are interested in more playgrounds, recreation, parks, and outdoor spaces. 25% responded they do not want anything else in the Village. More housing and art-related spaces were less desirable.

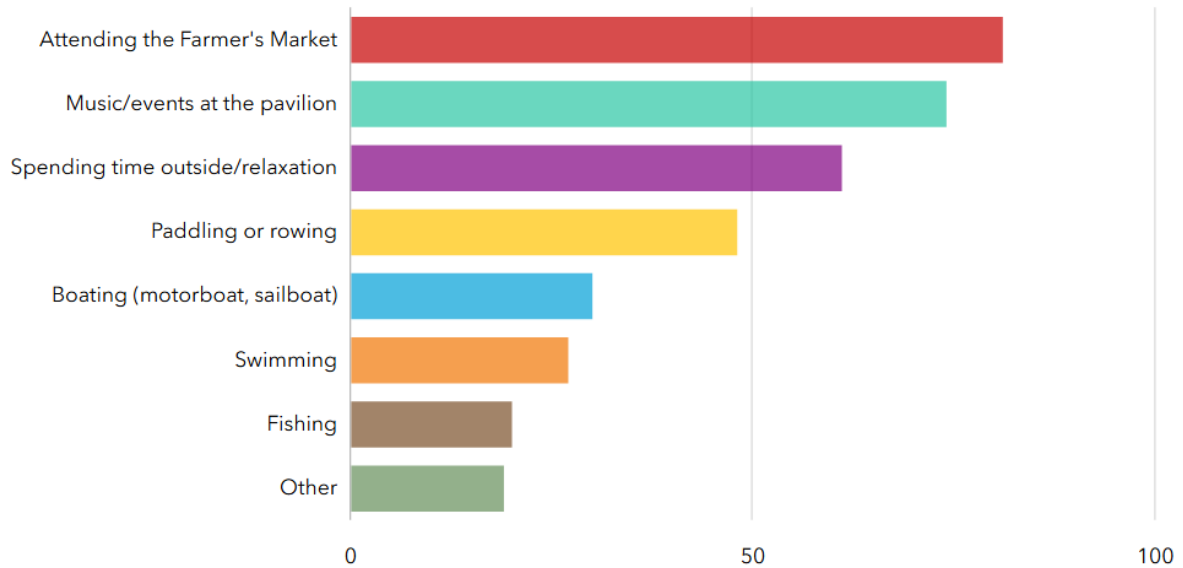
What is the one amenity or improvement you would like to see in the Village?



Responses to this question are highly varied. A coffee shop or place for breakfast is the most popular, with 13 mentions. The other most popular responses are related to traffic improvements or reduced speeding (11 mentions) and sidewalks or walking (10 mentions.)

Maily Waterfront Park

What activities do you participate in at Maily Waterfront Park?



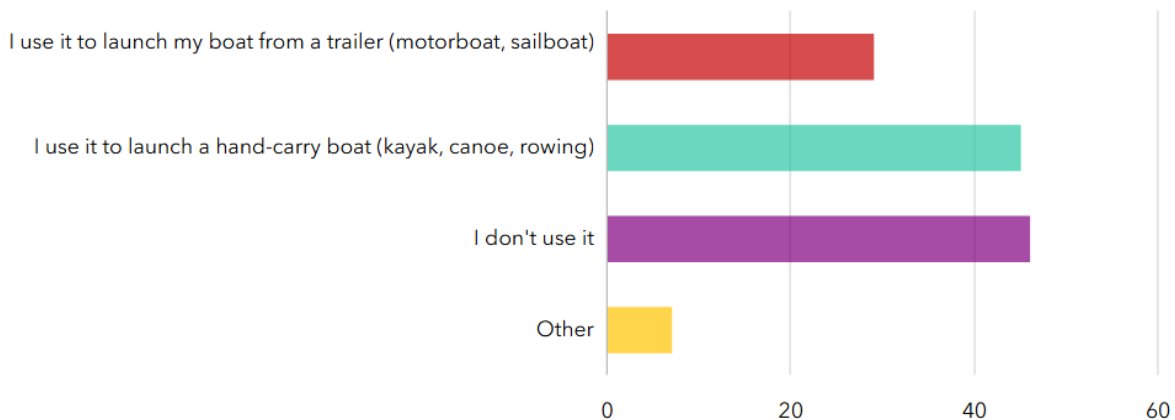
Respondents could select multiple answers to this question. More than half of respondents visit Maily Waterfront Park to attend the Farmer's Market, attend events at the pavilion, or just to spend time outside. About 40% of respondents use the park for paddling or rowing. Boating, swimming, and fishing were less popular among respondents.

What new events or activities would you like to see at Maily Waterfront Park?

Only 43 respondents (37%) answered this question. 16 people said they did not want to see anything change at the park. 7 people suggested more events, like festivals, markets, live music, and yoga classes. 5 people requested a playground for kids.

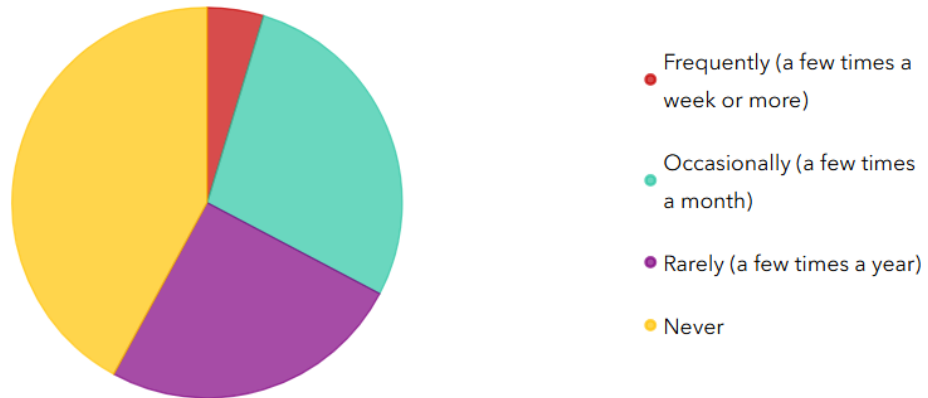
At the Celebrate Bowdoinham event, volunteers asked attendees for amenities they'd like to see at Maily Waterfront Park. Responses included: dog park, new pavilion, more parking, mature old trees, community compost pile, and decorated sidewalks with colorful polka dots.

Do you use the town boat launch?



Respondents could select multiple answers to this question. 25% of survey respondents use the boat launch to launch a motorboat or sailboat from a trailer. About 40% of respondents use it to launch a hand-carry boat, while 40% don't use it.

How often do you use the town boat launch?



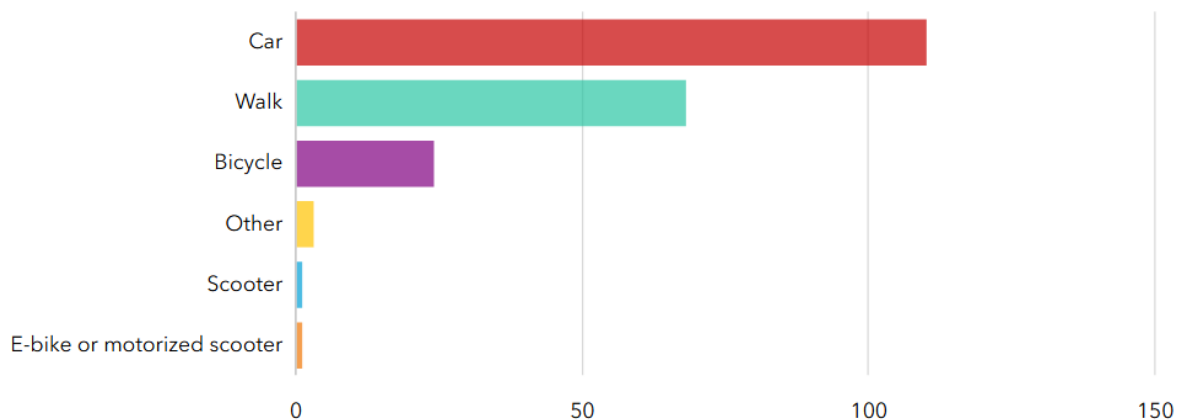
Of those respondents who use the town boat launch, most use it a few times a month or a few times a year.

What improvements or changes would you like to see to the town boat launch?

Only 42 people answered this question. Of these responses, 14 people discussed the conflict between different users of the boat launch, including swimming (especially with children and dogs), fishing, hand-carry boats, and motorboats, and the need for better organization or coordination.

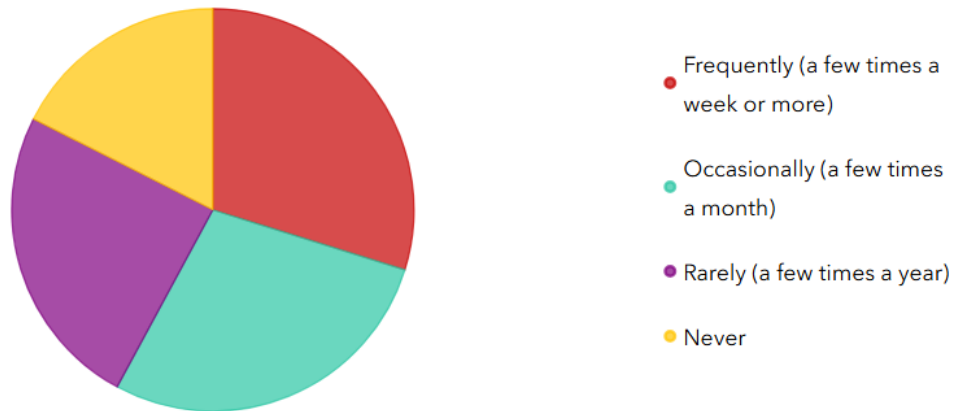
Walking and Biking Around Bowdoinham

What forms of transportation do you use to get around Bowdoinham?



Respondents could select multiple answers to this question. Cars are the most popular method of transportation around Bowdoinham – 95% of users selected this option. About 60% of respondents walk to get around Bowdoinham, and 20% bike.

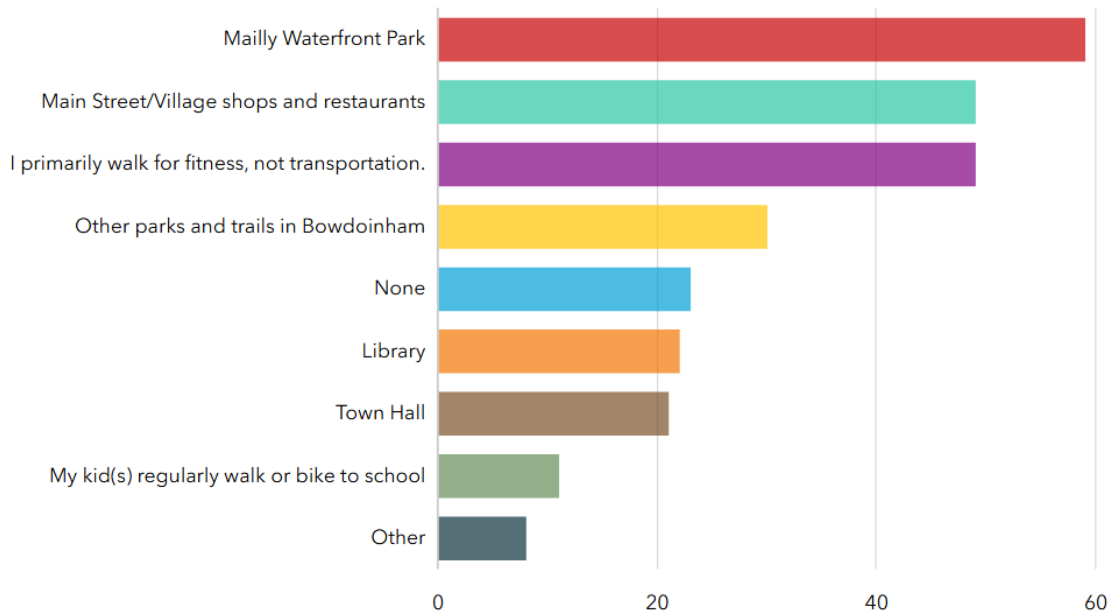
How often do you walk to get around Bowdoinham?



Respondents were almost evenly split on how often they walk around Bowdoinham, with just over 25% each walking frequently or occasionally, and just under 25% each walking rarely or never.

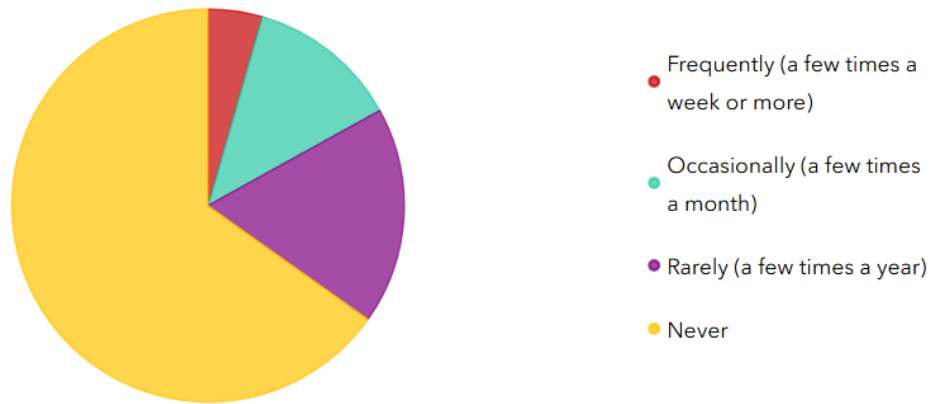
The frequency of walking may be influenced by the age of the respondent. Among frequent walkers, 66% of respondents were younger than 50. Among those who never walk, 62% were age 50 or older.

What places in Bowdoinham to you frequently walk to?



speeding. Other suggestions included a new sidewalk on Bay Road to Wallentine, making sure sidewalks are plowed in the winter, and rebuilding the walls on Ridge Road and Center Street.

How frequently do you bike (or e-bike, or scooter) to get around Bowdoinham?

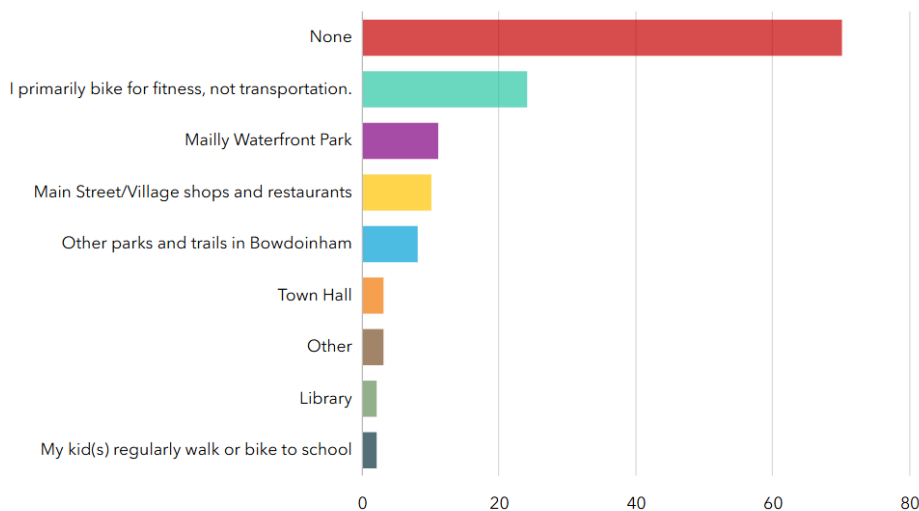


Biking is less popular among survey respondents. 63% stated they never bike. 4% bike frequently, 16% bike occasionally, and 17% bike rarely.

Like walkers, biking frequency may be related to the age of respondent, with more frequent bikers tending to be. 60% of those who bike frequently, 71% of those who bike occasionally, and 60% of those who bike rarely were under the age of 50. However, the age of those who never bike was split almost evenly, with 47% under the age of 50 and 52% over the age of 50.

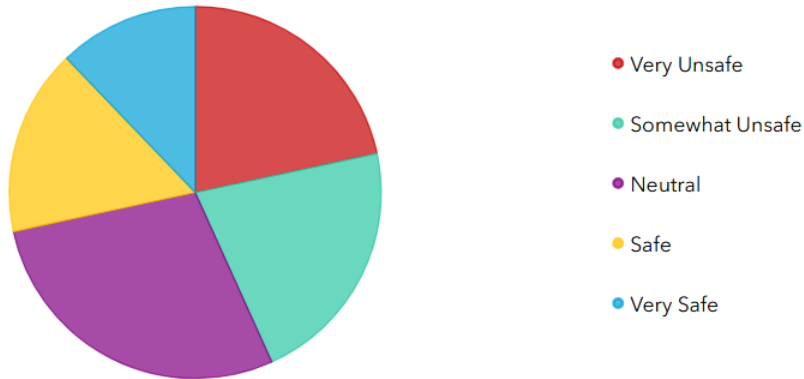
The frequency of biking also may be related to how often people walk to get around Bowdoinham. Among the frequent walkers, 25% are also frequent or occasional bikers; 21% of occasional walkers described themselves as frequent or occasional bikers. Of those who rarely or never walk, only 2 people said they frequently or occasionally bike.

What destinations in Bowdoinham do you frequently bike to?



Among those who do bike, about 20% bike for fitness, not transportation. Just under 10% of respondents bike to visit Maily Waterfront Park and other Main Street/Village destinations.

How safe do you generally feel biking around Bowdoinham?



Respondents do not generally feel safe biking around Bowdoinham. About 28% of people feel somewhat or very unsafe biking around Bowdoinham. 18% are neutral. About 17% feel safe or very safe.

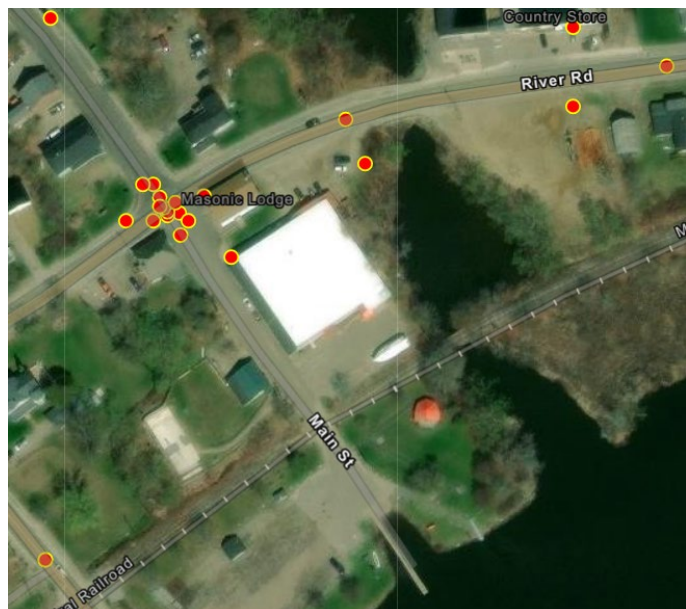
Attendees at Celebrate Bowdoinham were asked how to improve bicycle safety in town. Responses included: improve Route 24, Main Street, and Pond Street; speed bumps or other traffic calming; bike lanes or paths; signage for bicyclists; and converting the train tracks to a multiuse trail.

What is the greatest safety concern for people biking in Bowdoinham?

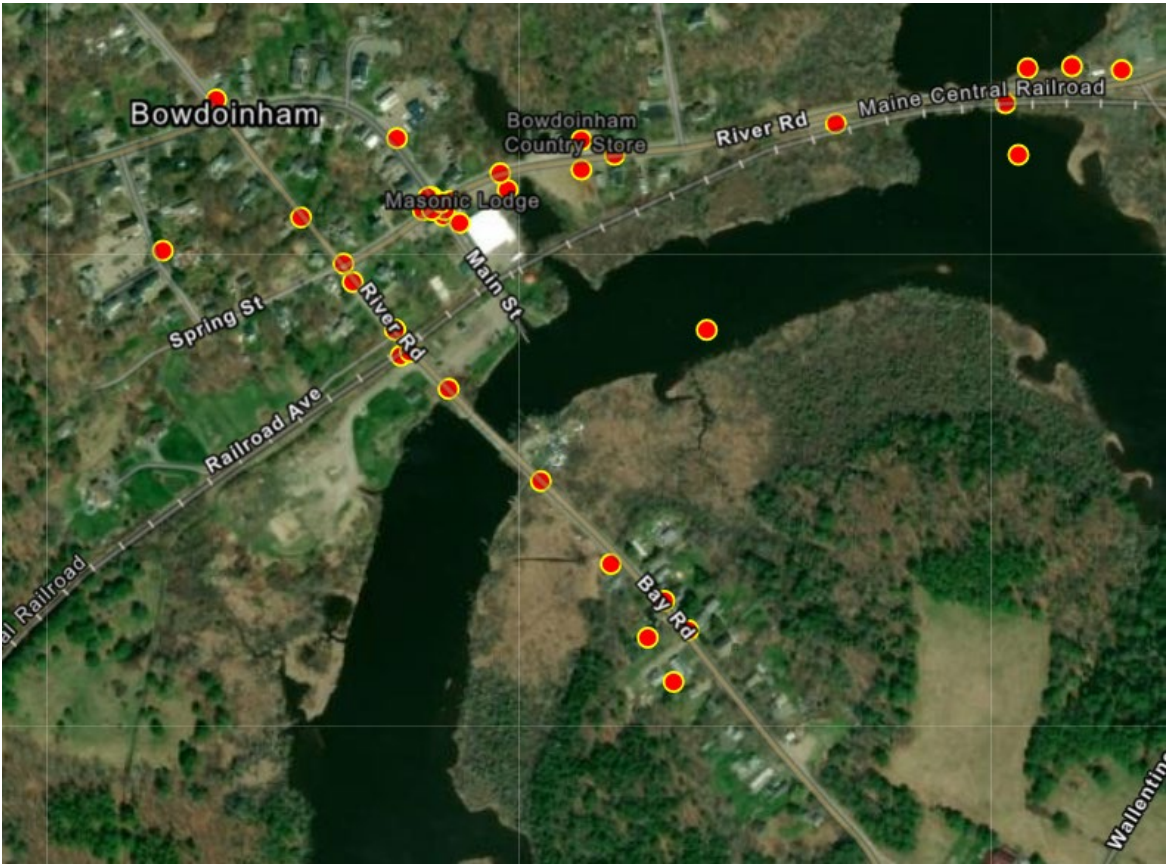
The most common theme was the speed of traffic, with 31 responses related to cars speeding or fast traffic. 17 people mentioned lack of space in the shoulder.

What is the one place in Bowdoinham where you'd most like to see pedestrian safety improved?

Respondents placed pins on an interactive map to answer this question. The majority of pins (31) were placed along River Road/Route 24, with a cluster of 13 pins at the intersection of Main Street and River Road. These responses correspond to the open-ended responses about walking and biking safety, where River Road/Route 24 was frequently mentioned. Other smaller clusters include at the intersection where the waterfront park entrances meet Route 24, and at the Bowdoinham Country Store. 5 additional pins were placed on Fisher Road, Ridge Road, and Main Street outside of the study area.



Cluster of pins at River Road/Main Street

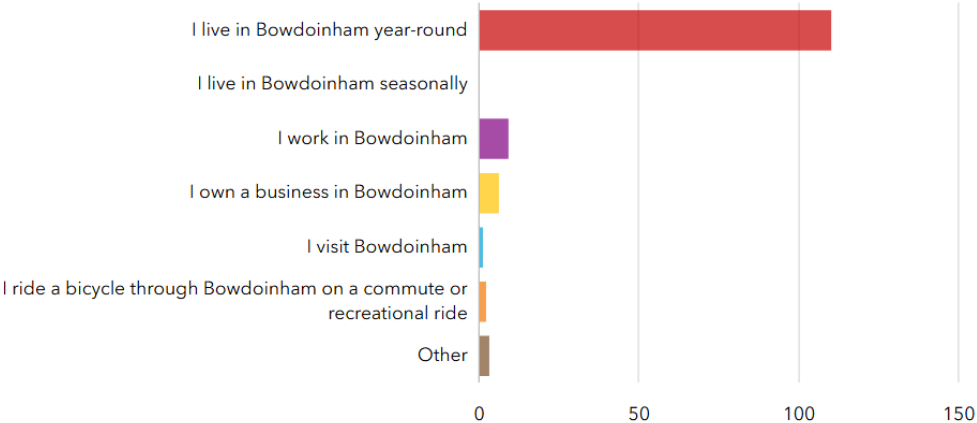


All pins placed in study area.

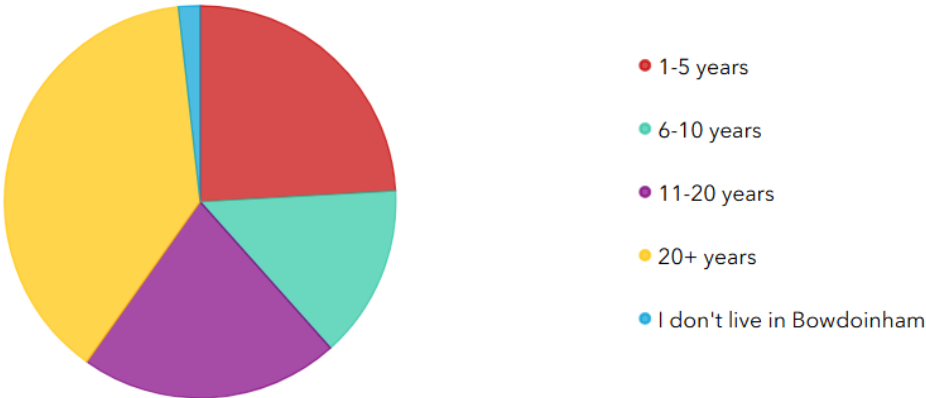
Demographics

The majority of respondents (95%) are year-round residents of Bowdoinham. About 12% of respondents also work or own a business in Bowdoinham. Among Bowdoinham residents, more than half (about 57%) have lived in town for 11 or more years. About half of survey respondents were under the age of 50. About 1/3 have school-age children.

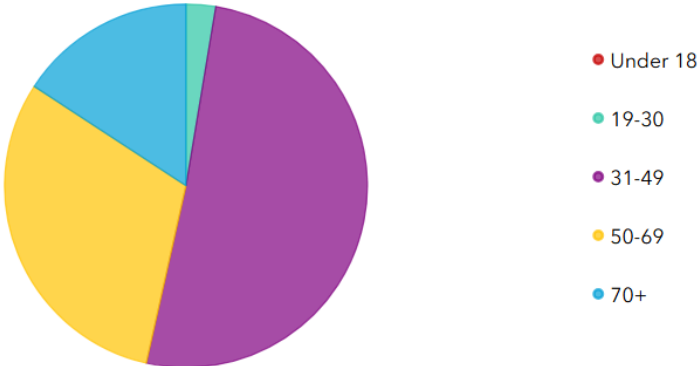
What’s your relationship to Bowdoinham?



How long have you lived in Bowdoinham?



How old are you?



Do you have school-age children?

