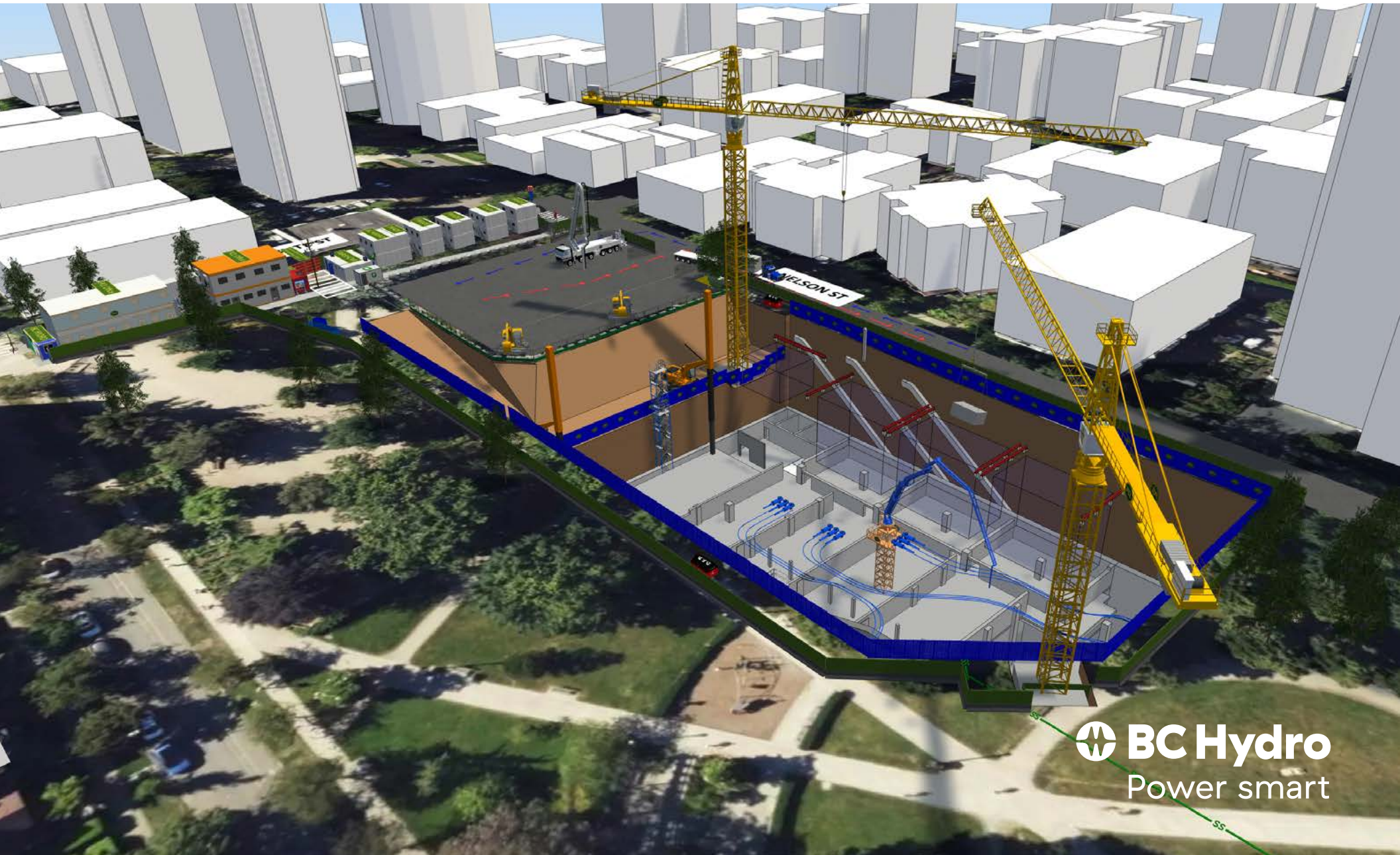


# West End Substation

Consultation summary and response, May 19 – June 19, 2026

Issued July 2026



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## Acknowledgement

We recognize and acknowledge that the West End Substation will be constructed on the unceded, traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tseil-Waututh) Nations.

Thank-you to everyone who provided input during this consultation on the West End Substation. BC Hydro is committed to working with stakeholders and the communities impacted by its work, and we appreciate your time and effort.

# Executive summary

In spring 2026, we shared our early construction plans for the West End Substation, including the schedule and methods, and anticipated impacts and mitigations. We invited stakeholders and the community to learn more and share their feedback.

## Numbers in brief

<b>13</b>	<b>576</b>	<b>346</b>
engagement events	attendees at open houses, pop-ups and meetings	surveys submitted

## Key themes

Through this consultation, we heard from people who live, work and recreate across the West End. They shared:

- A strong desire to preserve mature trees, especially the trees on Bute Street between Nelson Street and Henshaw Lane,
- The importance of Nelson Park and its amenities, including playgrounds, community gardens, and gathering spaces, to people who live in the community and the need to maintain access during construction and restore these features after, and
- Interest in more information about traffic management plans, because Nelson Street is the main thoroughfare within the West End.

Participants who identified as living closest to the construction site also asked about construction impacts to daily life, including noise, dust, and whether their buildings might be impacted by construction work. Many of the people we heard from asked for more details about proposed mitigation measures.

We also heard that clear, transparent, and accessible communication is important, including timely updates on construction activities, mitigation measures, and project timelines.

This input will continue to inform how we refine our plans, strengthen mitigation measures, and communicate with the community during construction.

Our construction team is considering this feedback and, when we onboard a contractor to construct the power lines, we'll share this feedback with them to inform the traffic management plans they develop.

# Background

BC Hydro provides clean, reliable power to homes and businesses across the West End, but our electricity system serving downtown Vancouver is ageing and needs upgrading.

A key step in updating our system is replacing the Dal Grauer Substation on Burrard Street, which was energized in 1953. Since this substation was powered up, downtown Vancouver's energy needs have changed. The Dal Grauer Substation is reaching the end of its life, and it can't be re-built at its current location, so we need to construct a new substation that can accommodate future growth when needed.

The West End Substation will be located underground at the Vancouver School Board's Lord Roberts Annex site on Nelson Street. Once we've finished construction, this substation will operate safely out-of-sight, serving 50,000 customers in downtown Vancouver, and can be topped by play space for a new school, located beside the substation.

In April 2026, we awarded a contract to PCL Constructors Westcoast Inc. to help us plan safe, efficient, cost-effective construction of the West End Substation. The PCL team has experience delivering complex facilities, including Mount Pleasant Substation and the new St Paul's Hospital.

With input from PCL, and considering everything we've heard from stakeholders and the community through years of consultation, we prepared an early construction plan to share for feedback. From May 19 to June 9, we shared our anticipated construction timelines and methods, and how we're working to reduce impacts in the neighbourhood. People who live, work, study and play in the West End were invited to review our plans, ask questions, and share their feedback.

This document shares what we did during consultation, what we heard, and how we plan to use this input. Our consultation materials can be found at [bchydro.com/westendsub](https://bchydro.com/westendsub).



# What we did

From May 19 to June 9, 2026, we held community consultation on early construction plans for the West End Substation.

## Notifications

We let stakeholders and the community know about this consultation with:

<b>588</b>	emails to project email subscribers
<b>9,028</b>	postcards distributed to addresses in the West End
<b>15</b>	poster locations across downtown Vancouver
<b>2</b>	posts on Facebook geotargeted to West End residents
<b>4</b>	publications displayed digital ads: The Vancouver Sun, The Province, Vancouver is Awesome, and The West End Journal

## Communications

We shared information with stakeholders and the community on our:

	webpage
	open house boards
	presentation materials



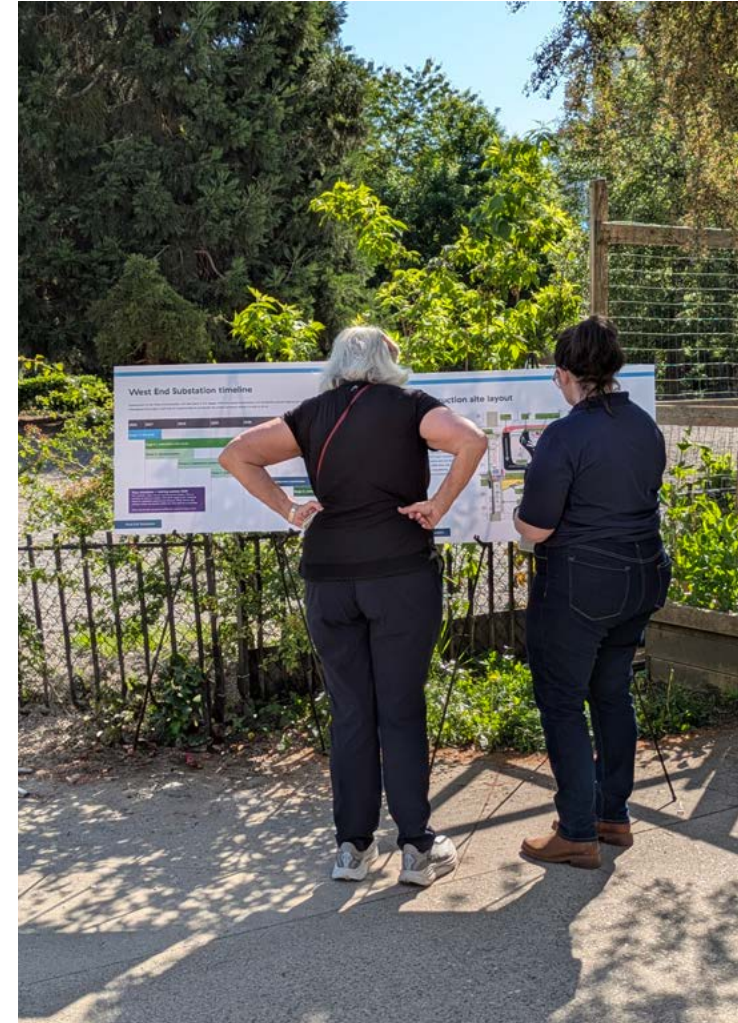
## Consultation activations:

We met stakeholders and the community at:

<b>2</b>	open houses for residents living closest to the new substation site
<b>2</b>	open houses for the broader community
<b>1</b>	virtual open house
<b>4</b>	stakeholder meetings
<b>4</b>	community popups

# How the public engaged with us and shared their input

Webpage	<b>1504</b>	views
	<b>1447</b>	visits
Digital ads*	<b>75,000</b>	impressions
	<b>151</b>	clicks
Social posts	<b>43,487</b>	Impressions
	<b>396</b>	link clicks
Open houses	<b>5</b>	open houses
	<b>58</b>	attendees
Stakeholder meetings	<b>4</b>	meetings
	<b>11</b>	attendees
Community pop-ups	<b>4</b>	pop-ups
	<b>507</b>	conversation
Surveys	<b>346</b>	online surveys
Email	<b>15</b>	emails
Telephone	<b>0</b>	phone calls



\* not all companies provided analytics

# What we heard and our response

Through both in-person conversation and the survey

Interest or idea	Our response
<p><b>Construction impacts</b></p> <p>The most common questions about construction impacts continue to be about traffic, with a particular interest in Nelson Street remaining accessible. We also answered many questions about the overall construction schedule, and days and times we expect to work at the site, as well as how we are planning to manage noise and dust for the closest residents.</p>	
<p><b>Duration</b></p> <p>e.g. you'll be working for so many years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Building an underground substation to high-safety standards does take time.</li> <li>○ We expect to begin substation construction in late 2026, subject to approval by the BCUC, and to complete the project in 2033.</li> <li>○ Within this timeframe, active construction will last about 5 years and will include 3 years of excavation and civil work and 2 years of substation electrical equipment installation.</li> <li>○ Following this, commissioning, energization, and interconnections will take up to 2 additional years, with minimal community impact expected during this phase.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Schedule</b></p> <p>e.g. "I live across the street and noise is a very big concern at all times of the day"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ We understand concerns about construction hours and the importance of minimizing disruption in the West End.</li> <li>○ We've asked PCL, our construction contractor, to build a schedule around the assumption that work be completed primarily during weekday, daytime hours.</li> <li>○ For a project of this scale, we will consider working on Saturdays to help shorten the construction overall and reduce the duration of impacts.</li> <li>○ We'll provide advance notice of any work outside typical hours and continue to consider community feedback as we refine our plans.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Traffic</b></p> <p>e.g. "Clearer traffic management plan, indicating traffic impacts (if any) to Nelson St between Bute St and Thurlow St"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ We understand the need to maintain safe, predictable movement within and through the West End, especially on Nelson Street.</li> <li>○ Most construction vehicles are expected to access the construction site from Nelson Street, with approximately 30 vehicle trips per day during typical activity, which we expect the road network can accommodate without significant disruption.</li> <li>○ Some specific work will require short-term closures of the road, and we'll provide advance notice to the community before this occurs and let them know about possible detour routes.</li> <li>○ We've directed our contractor to develop a traffic management plan that considers all modes and reflects feedback, including measures to maintain local access such as restricting Ted Northe Lane to local traffic only.</li> <li>○ We're also reviewing options to support safe walking and cycling along Bute Street and expect to share a draft traffic management plan with the community in early fall.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Traffic safety</b> e.g. we heard interest in how we'll ensure vulnerable road users</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Safety is BC Hydro's top priority and we are planning to ensure people can continue to move safely throughout construction.</li> <li>○ Our contractor is developing a traffic management plan that will consider all modes of transportation, and the City of Vancouver will review this plan.</li> <li>○ We expect that plan will include: trucks being limited to designated routes, space for emergency vehicles, clear signage and information about traffic changes, a new, temporary mid-block crosswalk on Nelson Street, and the use of trained flaggers to direct traffic and assist with crossings near the work site.</li> <li>○ During this consultation, we proposed temporarily relocating the Bute Street bike lane from the roadway to the boulevard: we heard from participants that they do not support this proposal, and we are working with our contractor and the City of Vancouver to explore alternatives.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Noise</b> e.g. "...working from home immediately across from the park (noise during key meetings)."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ We expect that construction noise will stay below 85 dB, the limit within the City of Vancouver.</li> <li>○ To help mitigate noise from site, we'll install noise-muffling fencing around the site, select quieter equipment when practicable, and turn off equipment when it's not being used.</li> <li>○ We'll also monitor and report noise from site.</li> <li>○ Some activities, such as installing soil anchors, are expected to be among the noisier construction activities. As this work progresses deeper underground, noise levels are expected to be reduced at street level.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Dust</b> e.g. we were asked how dusty the site will be</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Construction activities such as excavation can generate dust at times, so we're planning to pave key areas of the site and install vehicle wheel washes to prevent dirt and debris from being tracked onto surrounding streets by construction vehicles.</li> <li>○ We'll monitor site conditions through construction and adjust our approach as needed to limit dust where possible.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Impacts to nearby buildings</b> e.g. will you come in and check our building before you start work?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ We're planning to complete pre- and post-construction condition assessments of buildings closest to the work area.</li> <li>○ While we don't anticipate construction-related damage, these assessments will allow us to confirm conditions and provide reassurance to residents.</li> <li>○ These assessments will focus on buildings closest to construction activities and we expect to reach out to building managers and strata councils in the coming weeks.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Site safety</b> e.g. we were asked if there will be a fence around the site</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ To maintain public safety throughout construction, the site will be secured with robust perimeter fencing and an inner barrier around the excavation.</li> <li>○ Access to the site will be strictly controlled, with clearly defined entry points and safety procedures for workers and authorized personnel only.</li> <li>○ All workers on site will have appropriate training and qualifications to complete their work, and will be required to attend safety orientations, weekly updates and daily tailboards.</li> <li>○ Equipment will be inspected before each shift and used following safe handling practices.</li> </ul>

## Impacts to Nelson Park and surrounding streets

The most common feedback we received through the consultation was an ask to preserve trees on Bute Street. Participants who shared this feedback often recommended detouring the bike path away from Bute Street. We were also asked about why trees need to be removed, what will happen to community gardens, and whether play equipment will continue to be available within the block.

### Tree removals

e.g. “Reassess if there are other options to removing all/ most of the trees. We are so fortunate to have quite old growth. Should be protected if possible.”

- We heard from participants how much they value trees and urban greenery, and how important these are to defining the West End character.
- We currently expect to remove a maximum of 83 trees to support safe, efficient construction and to replant 107 trees following construction.
- We are also making plans to protect tree health for the remaining trees during construction, including measures such as tree protection fencing, careful excavation practices, and ongoing monitoring.
- During this consultation, we heard opposition to the removal of 3 trees on Bute Street to make space for a temporary bike lane.
- Since this consultation, we have met with our construction contractor and arborist, staff at the City of Vancouver, and the VPB to explore opportunities to preserve additional trees.
- We will share an update on our plans for local trees with the community in the coming months.
- Most of Nelson Park is expected to remain open and accessible throughout the construction period.
- Work within the park will be limited to short-term activities, including installing underground cables, which will be scheduled over the winter months and is expected to take approximately three months total.
- We’ll plan this work to minimize disruption to park users as much as possible, and will continue to provide updates so park users understand what to expect and when.
- Nelson Park will continue to be accessible throughout the construction.
- Although the central pathway from Bute St. to the circle pathway will be within our construction fence, and will not be available for use, all other park pathways will stay open.
- If there is a short-term need to close a pathway to complete work safely, we’ll provide advance notice to help park users plan ahead.
- Due to project design changes, our construction fence will need to be located along the south side of the central park pathway to provide safe working space.
- Garden plots on both sides of the central pathway will now be impacted: the gardens to the north will be removed because they are located on VSB property and the gardens to the south will be inaccessible during construction.
- We understand the VPB is working with the Nelson Park Community Gardeners to explore options for temporary garden space during this period, and we have offered to support gardeners as they transition to temporary locations.
- The VPB will work with the Nelson Park Community Gardeners to identify long-term plans for the gardens, once construction is complete.

### Park disruption

e.g. “This is a public park/recreation area and it needs to stay useable for this purpose. It’s an important space for families in the area.”

### Park walkways

e.g. will I be able to walk through the park during construction?

### Community garden impacts

e.g. “It has been difficult learning of constant changes to plans that affect the garden. Each time we seem to lose more. Even money for changes.”

### Playground equipment

e.g. “the annex playground is a major hub of our community and a way to get our inner city kids outside safely”

- Playground equipment within Nelson Park is expected to remain accessible for most of construction; however, it will be temporarily removed for up to three months during winter to enable underground cable work and will be reinstalled following this work.
- We'll continue working with the VPB to restore play equipment in Nelson Park after construction and to explore opportunities for additional play amenities or programming in the community.
- We understand that the playground equipment at the Lord Roberts Annex site will be permanently relocated to other schools within the VSB system, and that new play equipment is planned for this site as part of the future replacement school.
- Through this project, BC Hydro has supported upgrades to nearby play equipment at cawās Ch'elxwá7elch Skwuláwtxw Seaside Elementary School to support play in the community.



# Other topics we were asked about and our responses

During this consultation, we were asked about additional topics. The table below outlines these themes and our responses.

Interest or idea	Our response
<p><b>Substation location</b> We were asked if we would consider moving the substation location now that land is available elsewhere in the West End.  e.g. can you move the substation next to the Butterfly Building?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ We're planning to construct the West End Substation at the VSB's Lord Roberts Annex site, where we acquired property rights in 2018.</li> <li>○ Prior to this property purchase, we completed a thorough review of properties in downtown Vancouver that met our technical requirements, and carefully assessed them as possible sites for the new substation, before consulting on and selecting the VSB property.</li> <li>○ We believe that building underground on public property is the right approach in the West End because it benefits the community by: delivering a safe, modern substation to support reliable electrical service, protecting local housing stock, and investing in other local public amenities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Substation design</b> Some participants are concerned that the substation will be located above-ground.  e.g. "Must not proceed as designed"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ We've designed the West End Substation to be located underground.</li> <li>○ Like other underground structures, we need to make sure that people and air can enter and exit the substation, so there will be two vents and a street entrance at the surface.</li> <li>○ We're working closely with the VSB to ensure that the substation and future school designs are compatible, and that play space is maximized.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Substation safety</b> A few participants asked us about safety.  e.g. "I'm concerned about the impact living near an electrical substation"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Safety is our top priority and the new substation is being designed to meet rigorous industry safety standards.</li> <li>○ The West End Substation design includes technologies to monitor and respond to conditions that could lead to equipment failure before it occurs.</li> <li>○ Once the new substation is operational, it will be regularly inspected and maintained to ensure it continues safely throughout its lifecycle.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Electric and magnetic fields (EMF)</b> We have been asked if EMF is a concern for human health.</p> <p>e.g. “EMF Readings not safe for humans nearby”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ We take questions about EMF seriously and continue to monitor scientific research on this topic.</li> <li>○ Over 40 years, health agencies, including the World Health Organization and Health Canada, have reviewed scientific studies and have concluded that there are no confirmed health consequences from low-level electric fields and magnetic fields, like those near power lines.</li> <li>○ To help alleviate public concern about EMF, we have committed to 1) to bury transmission cables deeper than typical within Nelson Park and the Vancouver School Board’s property, 2) to shield the cables with steel plates within these same areas, 3) to commission an independent study of current EMF levels at the Lord Roberts Annex site and Nelson Park and communicate the results to the public, 4) to model expected EMF based on the final Project design, and 5) to verify EMF levels once the substation is in-service and energized and to report these measurements publicly.</li> <li>○ You can find more information about EMF on our website at <a href="http://bchydro.com/EMF">bchydro.com/EMF</a>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Criticism of the project</b> e.g. “This is probably the worst thing the west end has had to deal with to date”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ We continue to believe that an underground substation at the Lord Roberts Annex property provides the best outcome for the West End, because it will deliver a safe, modern substation to support electricity supply to 50,000 customers downtown, and building on public land ensures our property acquisition funds are being reinvested in local schools and park spaces, and that housing stock is protected.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Support for the project</b> e.g. “I support the project &amp; understand the need for the upgrade”</p>	
<p><b>Replacement school at the Lord Roberts Annex site</b> Some participants expressed concern about whether a replacement school will be developed at the Lord Roberts Annex site.</p> <p>e.g. “there needs to be a replacement school built.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ We understand that building a replacement school at this site remains a priority in the VSB’s capital plan.</li> <li>○ We’re working closely with the VSB to identify practical ways to support their project without adding costs for our customers, such as coordinating the construction of the school foundation and parkade up to the ground surface.</li> <li>○ More information about the VSB’s plans can be found on its website <a href="http://vsb.bc.ca">vsb.bc.ca</a>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Replacement school playground</b> Some participants asked about plans for the playground at the replacement school and recommended grass or turf for the playing field.</p> <p>e.g. “there needs to be a replacement school built.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The VSB will decide on landscaping and programming for the new play spaces, which can be grass or artificial turf, rubberized or hardscape surfacing, and trees and shrubs in raised planters.</li> <li>○ Following construction of the West End Substation, there will be limitations on the surface use to protect the underground facility, but we’re working closely with the VSB as it develops its plans to ensure that the substation and future school designs are compatible and the play space is maximized.</li> </ul>

# Next steps

We're continuing to refine our construction plans for the West End Substation project, Informed by feedback from the community, stakeholders, and past engagement activities. As planning progresses, we'll continue to share updates and opportunities for involvement. You can stay informed by:

- Visiting this project webpage
- Subscribing to project email updates
- Meeting us at the West End Farmers Market

The West End Substation project is currently under review by the BC Utilities Commission as part of its regulatory approval process. This independent review helps ensure the project is cost-effective and in the public interest.

Subject to receiving the necessary approvals, construction is expected to begin in late 2026. We'll provide advance notice and detailed information to the community before construction activities begin.

## Get in touch

If you'd like to learn more about the project, or have questions, please:

**Visit:** [bchydro.com/westendsub](https://bchydro.com/westendsub)

**Email us:** [westendsub@bchydro.com](mailto:westendsub@bchydro.com)

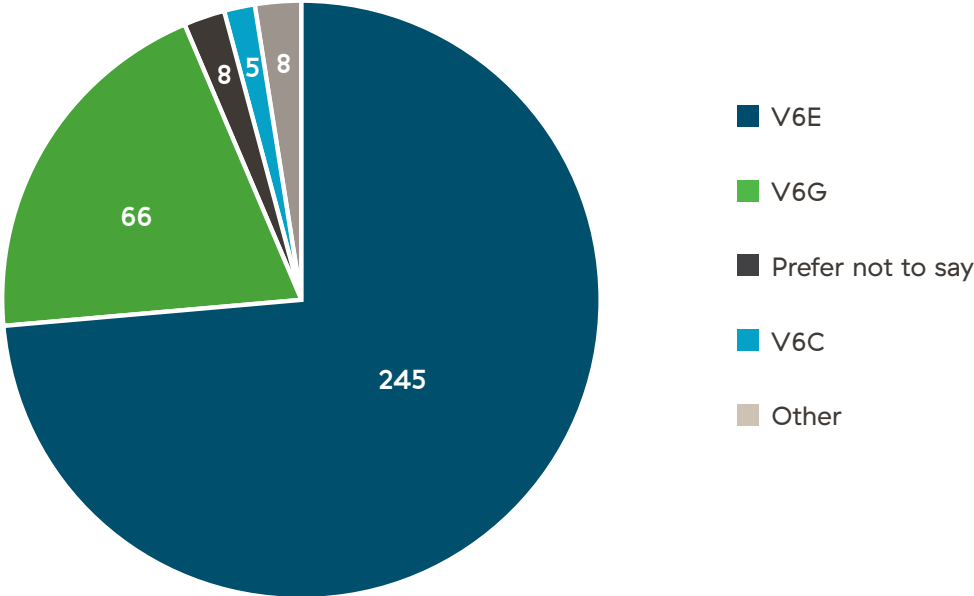
**Phone us:** 604 341 1304



# Appendix A: Survey results

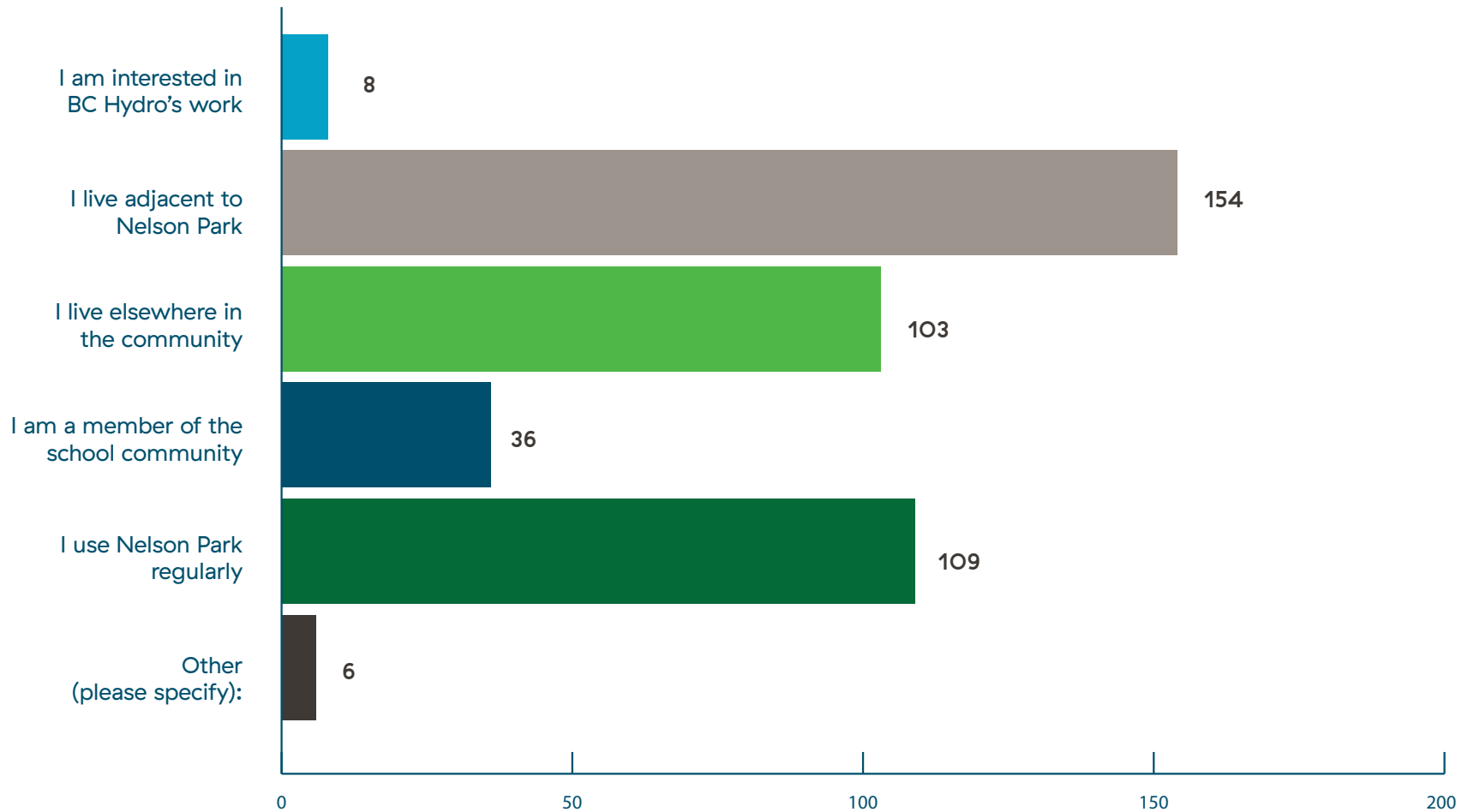
## 1. What are the first three characters of your postal code?

n = 332



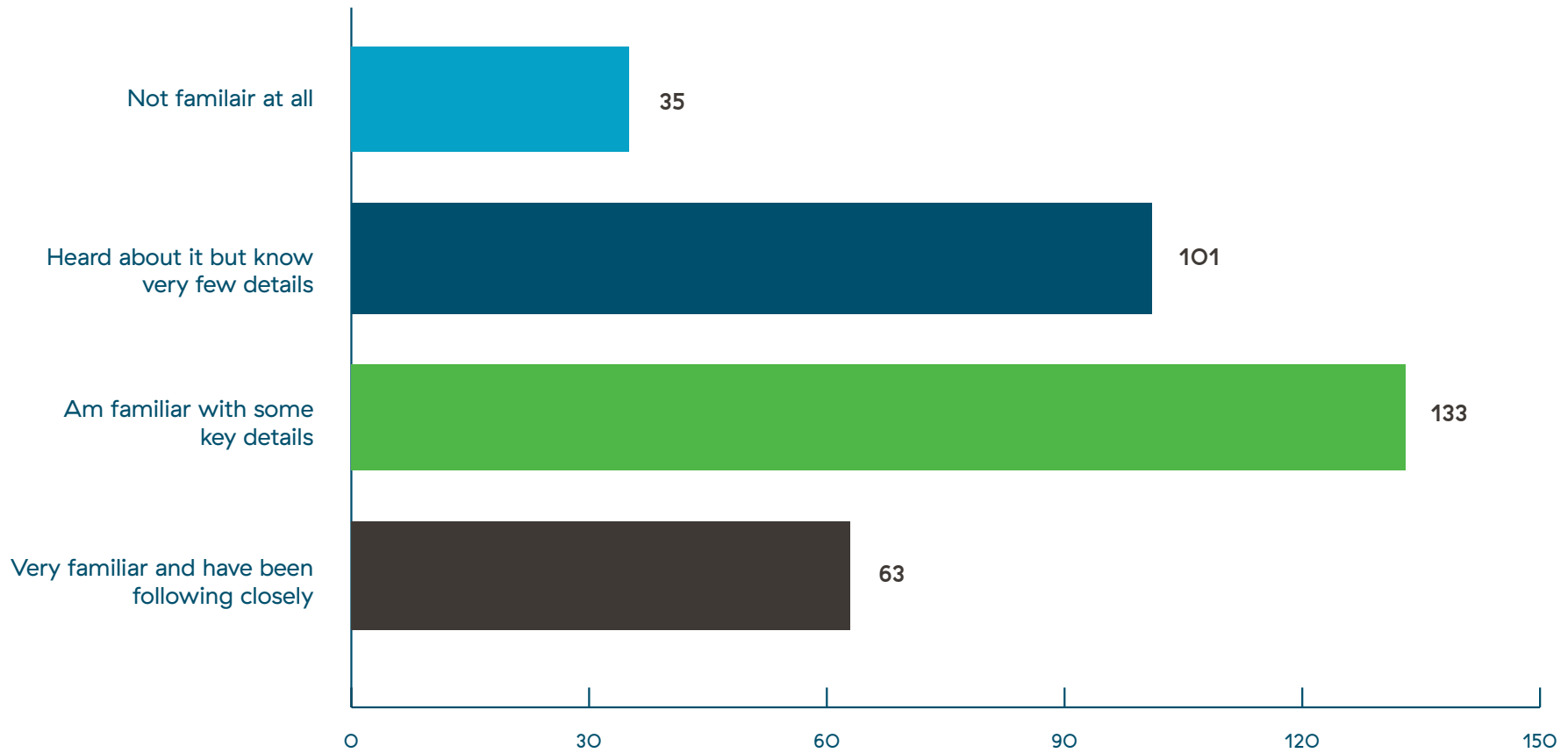
## 2. What is your interest in the West End Substation project? Select all that apply:

n = 416



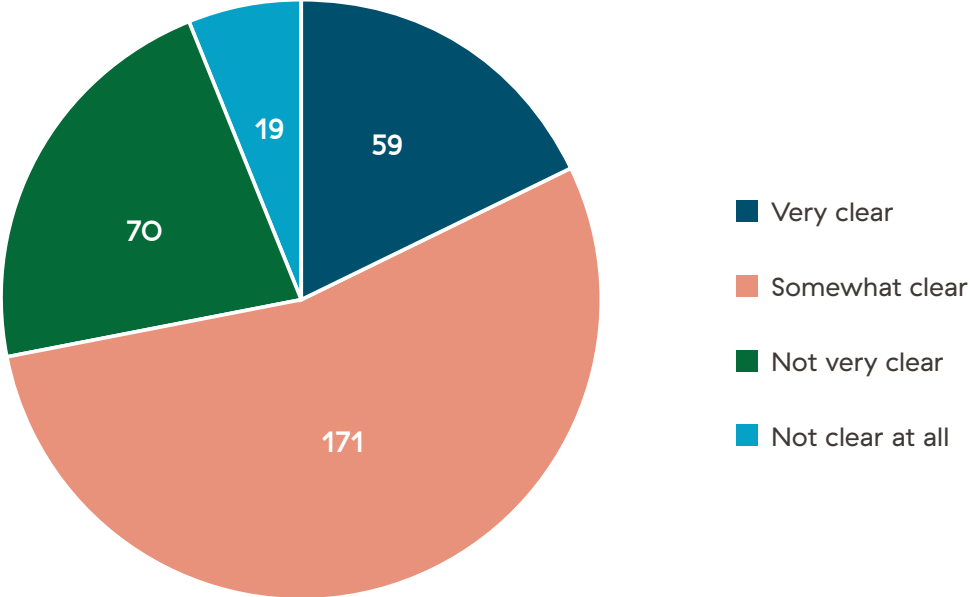
### 3. Before today, how would you describe your familiarity with the West End Substation project?

n = 322



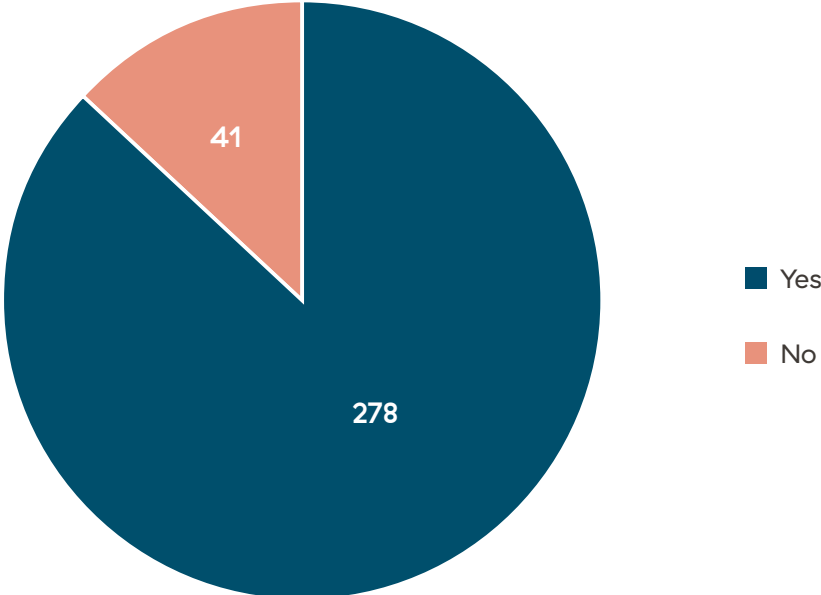
4. Based on the information provided, how clear is your understanding of the planned construction timeline and activities?

n = 319



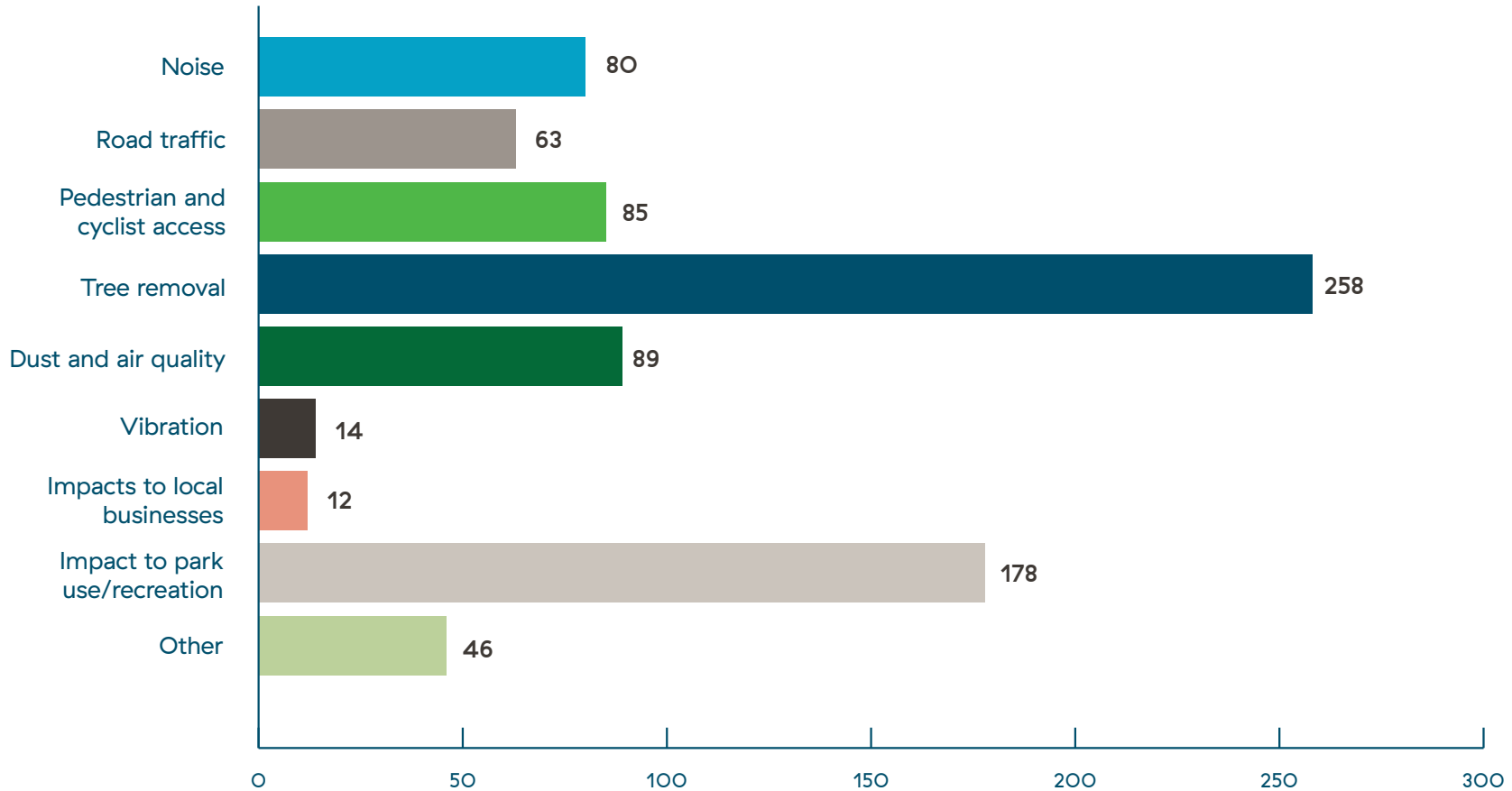
5. Do you have any outstanding questions or concerns about the substation construction?

n = 319



## 6. Which construction impacts are you most concerned about? (Select up to 3)

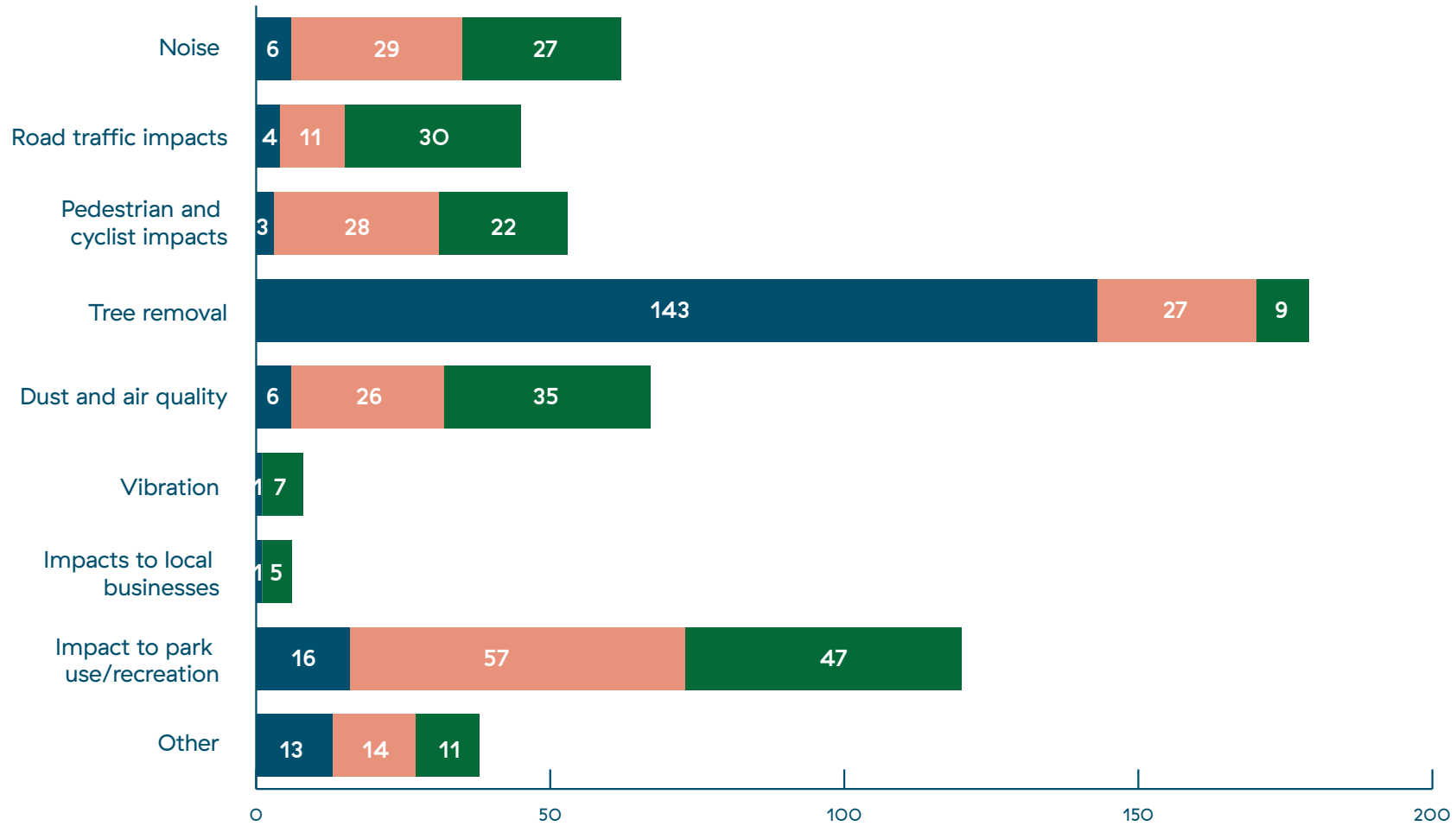
n = 275, participants could select multiple answers



Other included comments about limiting tree removal, impacts to students, and requesting additional playground equipment.

**7. Thinking about the topics you selected in the previous question, please rank them from most concerning to least concerning, where 1 = most concerning:**

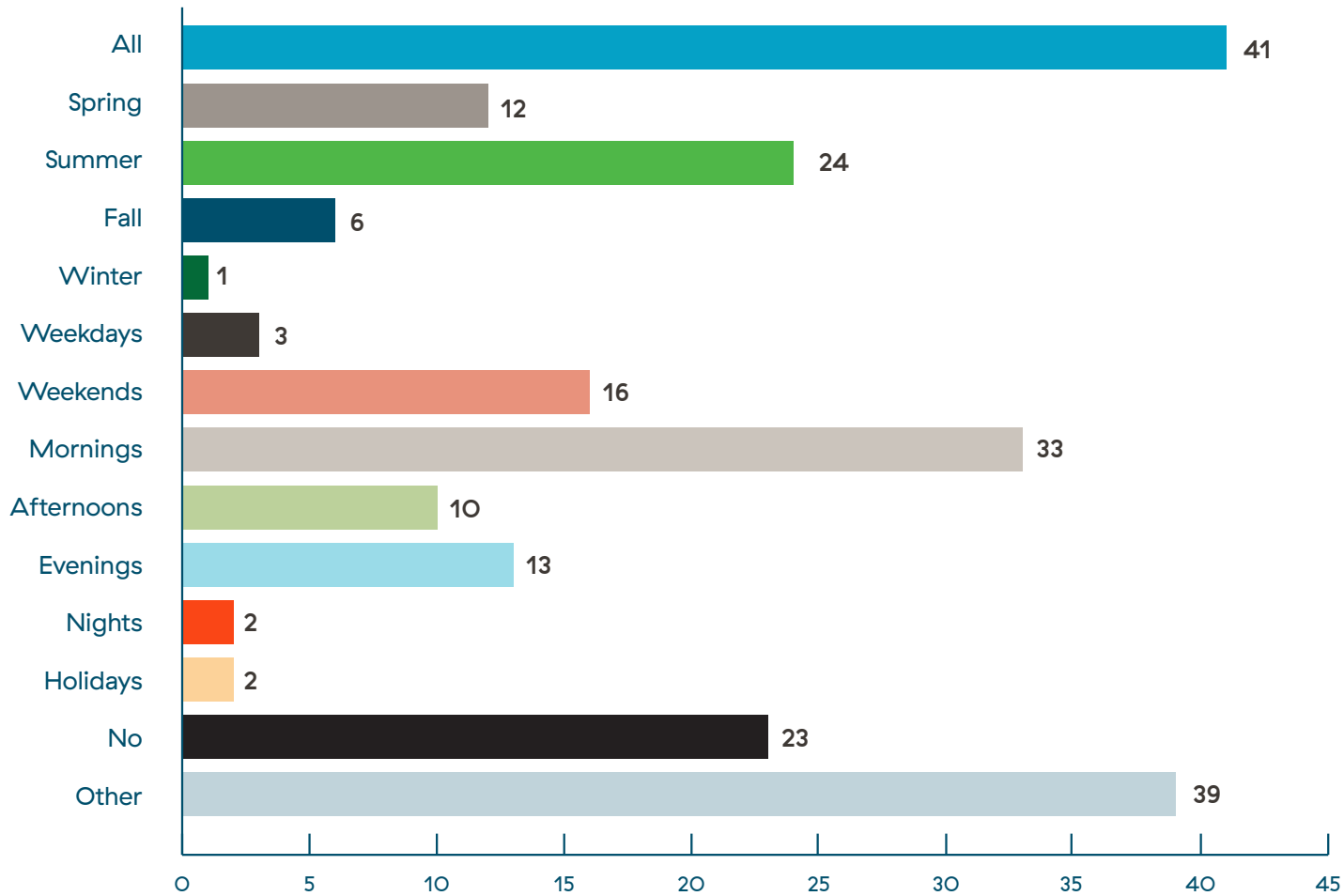
n = 193



Other included comments about limiting tree removal, requesting additional playground equipment, and health concerns.

### 8. Are there specific times of day, days of week, or seasons when construction impacts would be particularly challenging for you?

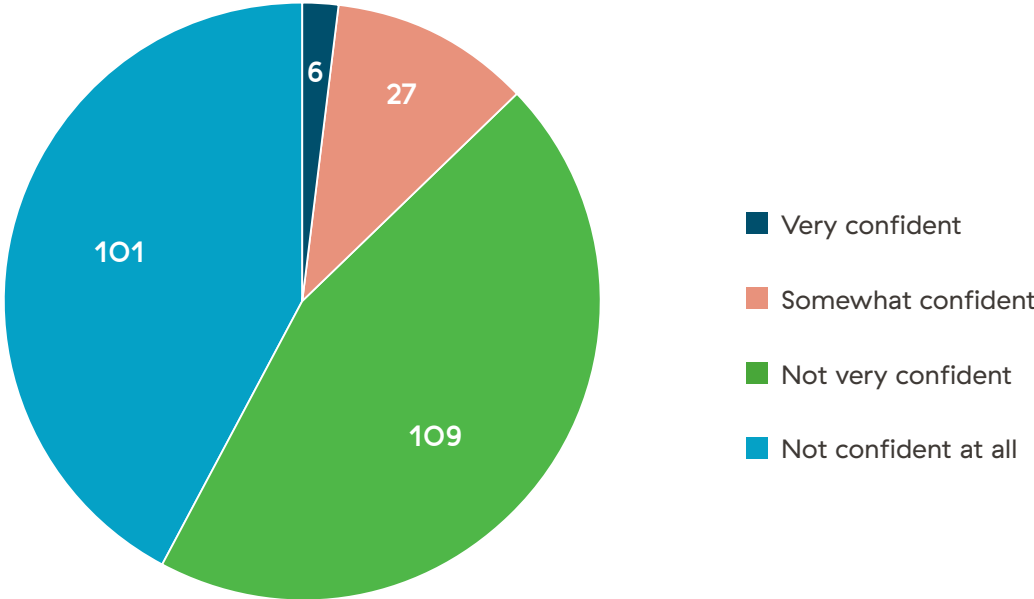
n = 186, 225 responses categorized



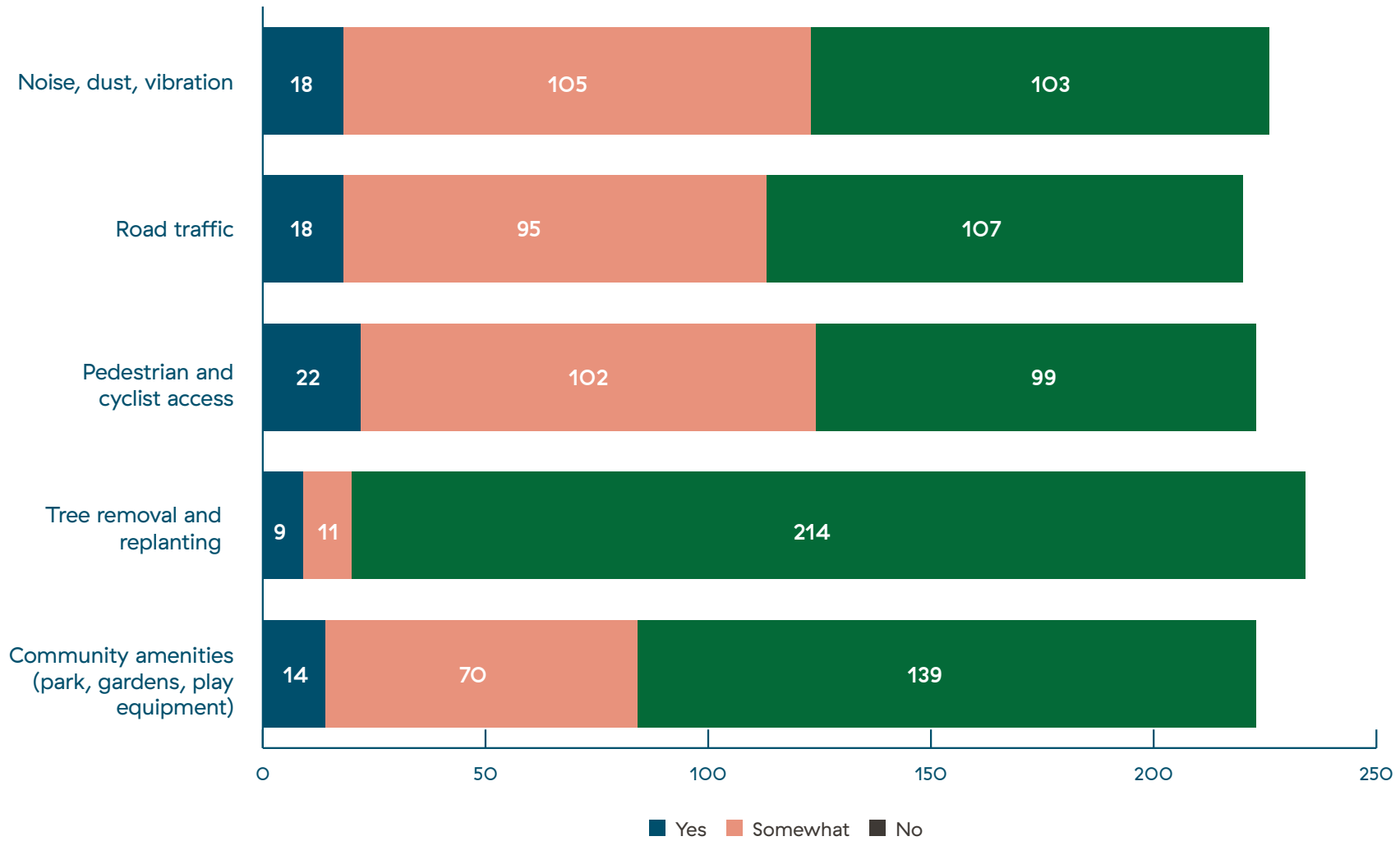
Other included comments about limiting tree removal.

9. Overall, how confident are you that the proposed mitigation measures will reduce construction impacts?

n = 243

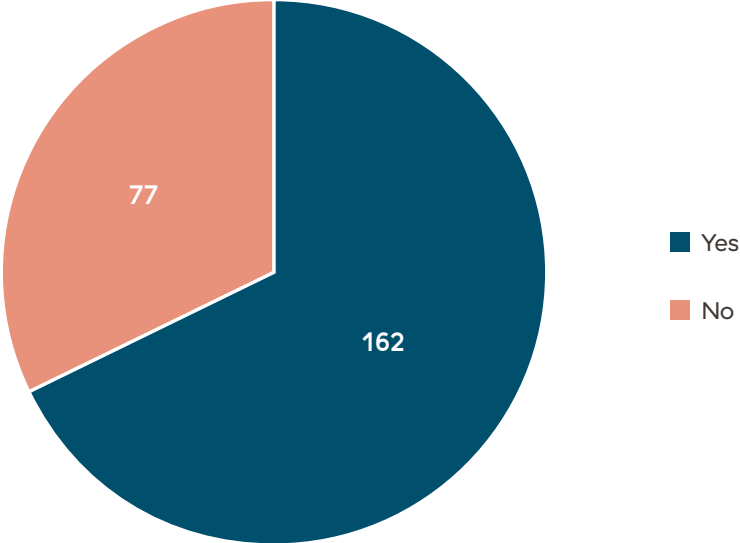


10. Do you feel the proposed mitigations for the following impacts are sufficient?



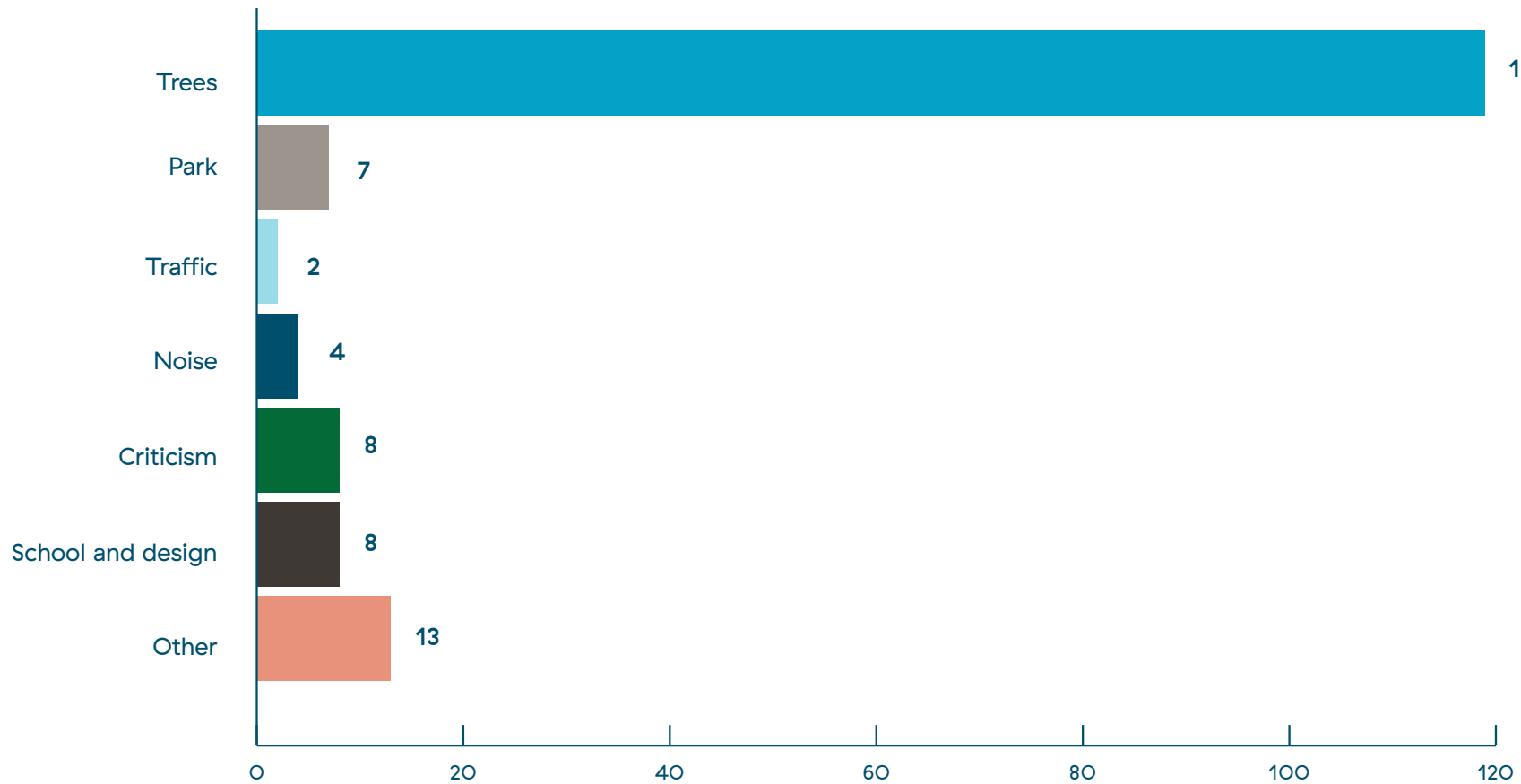
**11. Are there additional mitigation measures you would like the project team to consider?**

n = 239



### 11b. What additional mitigations measures would you like the project team to consider?

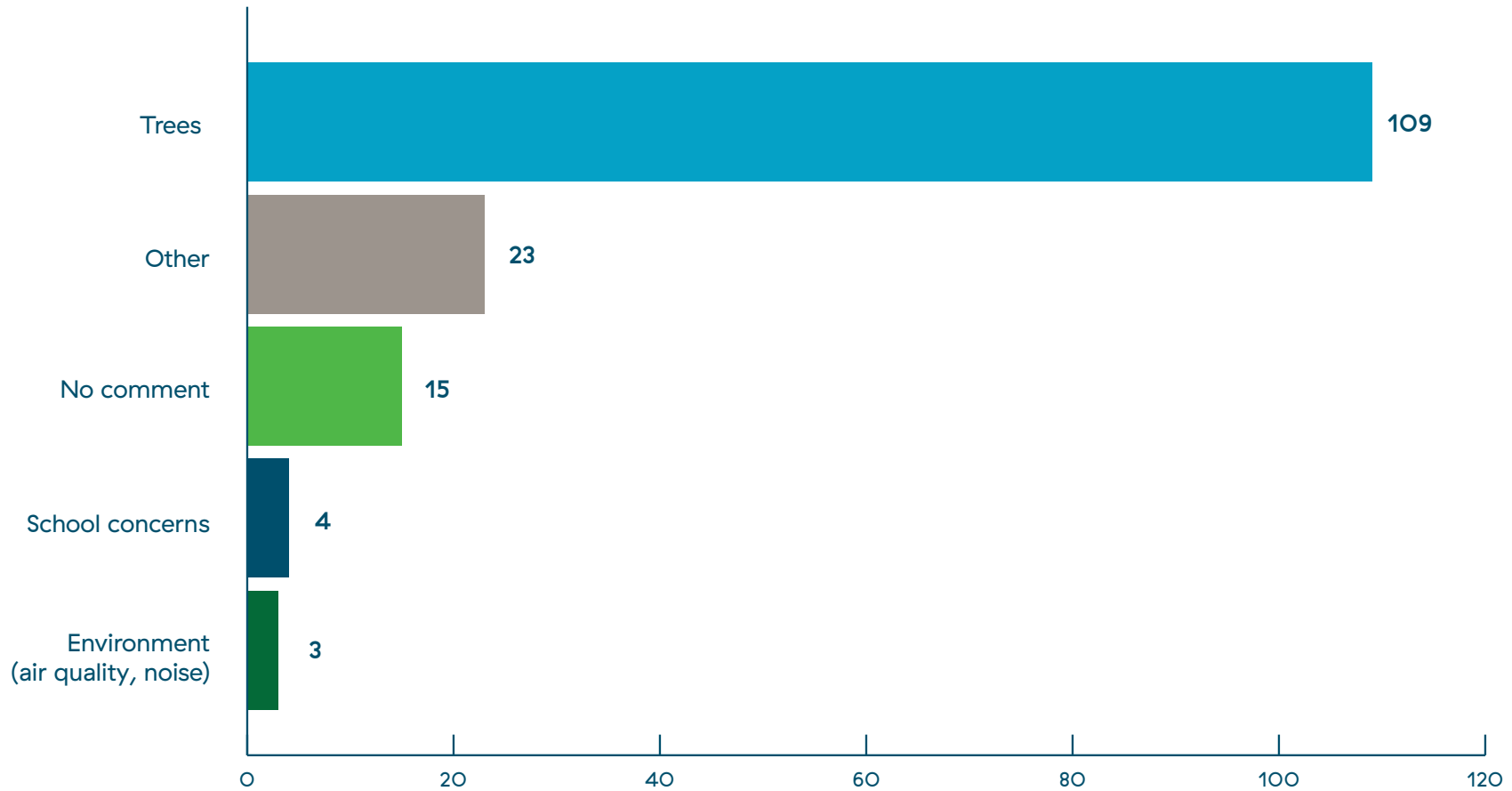
n = 161



Other included comments about West End traffic planning and parking

## 12. Do you have any additional comments or feedback you'd like to share?

n = 154



Other included comments about the replacement school at the Lord Roberts Annex site, operational noise from the substation, and overall construction within the West End.

