



# *The Bristol Yacht Club* MAINSHEET

## No Big Favorites in Strategic Plan Survey

*158 Members Share Thoughts on Five Capital Projects*

BYC members' Strategic Plan survey responses produced no big favorites and little variation among the "yes" tallies for four of the projects as structured: Pavilion (68 yes), Ramp/Crane/Dredging (68 yes), Boat Workshop (68 yes) and Safety/Coach Boats (64 yes). The EBSF Sustainability project's "yes" total was 59.

But a dive into comments by members who responded "no" or "neutral" to the multifaceted Pavilion and Ramp/Crane projects revealed that some components were

*There is a more detailed version of this survey summary on the BYC website, along with verbatim comments on each project. [Link here](#) or go to [www.bristolyc.com/strategic-plan](http://www.bristolyc.com/strategic-plan).*

valued more as separate projects than when combined: 88 responses were for new or upgraded outside heads and 76 for the covered outdoor space portions of the Pavilion project, and 73 responses supported the improved ramp portion of the Ramp/Crane/Dredging project.

Due to space constraints, this article provides just a flavor of the hundreds of comments made by members, all of which will help the Executive Committee going forward as these projects receive further review.

Please note: There is a more detailed version of this Strategic Plan survey summary on the BYC website and verbatim comments are posted for each project. [Link here](#) or go to [www.bristolyc.com/strategic-plans](http://www.bristolyc.com/strategic-plans).

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*Our BYC  
Annual  
Meeting  
is Sunday,  
November 15,  
4 pm. It is a  
Zoom Webinar.*

*See page 8 for  
details.*





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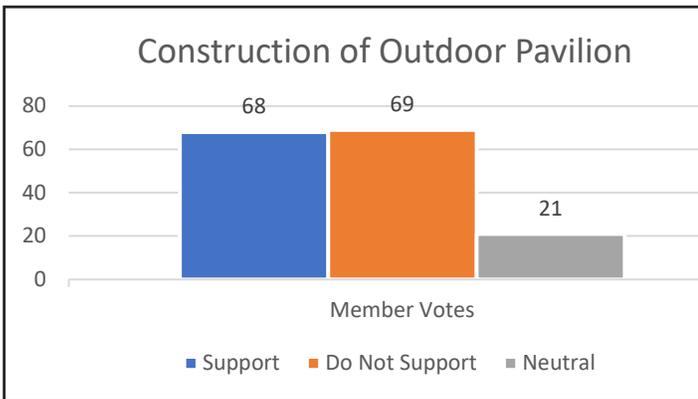
### General Observations

While members love the Club as it is and don't want to undertake anything beyond our fiscal capacity, some members are willing to consider projects if we have the money, after taking care of essentials like floats and docks. As one member commented, we are an "astute, fiscally conservative and pragmatic" membership and those values will guide future undertakings.

Members expressed concerns and worries. Lack of parking was mentioned frequently. "Let's keep the Club for members" and "We don't want to become an event venue" were mentioned, as was "Let's not become a large sailing center; we like our small Club." We also heard: "We love the EBSF program, but we give it enough support. Its programs should be self-sustaining."

Also, some members expressed their challenge in responding to the survey feeling that "the project cost estimates weren't robust enough to win their support."

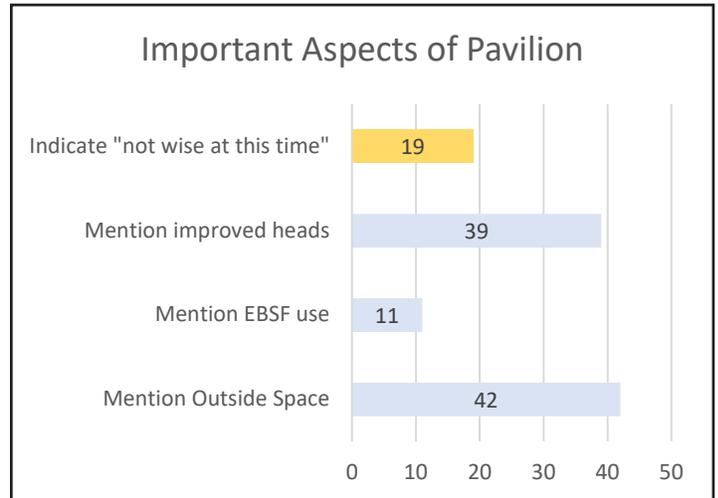
And did we mention parking? Here are the results for the individual projects.



### Construction of a Roofed Outdoor Pavilion

While just one response separated the "yes" from the "no" input on this project, there's a dark horse winner that emerged: new/updated heads. In fact, following a deep analysis of comments, the largest measure of member support for any improvement in the entire survey was for new/improved heads. And second is a covered outdoor space.

Favorable comments for the project centered on the value of covered outside space for sailing instruction, events, visiting yacht clubs and Club meetings. That said, concern was

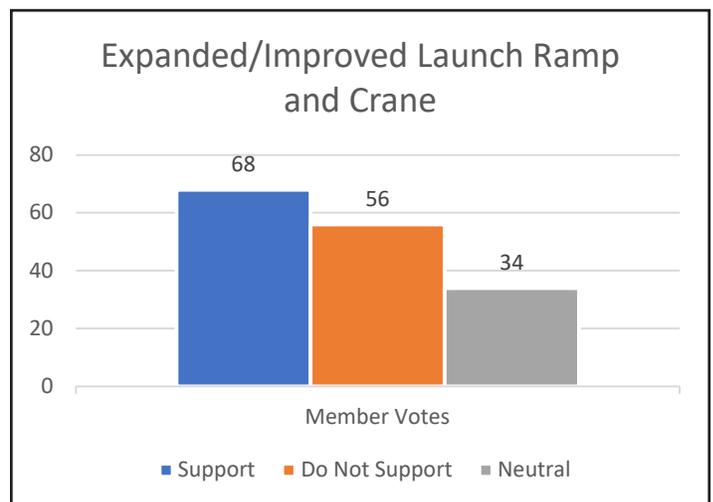


Survey respondents had an opportunity to mention which aspects of a potential pavilion they feel are most important. Nineteen respondents simply replied that they feel the project is not appropriate at this time.

expressed that the pavilion should be for member use rather than promoting BYC as an event venue. Increased use of Club property raised the issue of lack of parking and a repeated comment was that we should use our new Clubhouse for a while before deciding on the need for a pavilion.

### Expanded/Improved Launch Ramp and Crane

This project includes a launch ramp, crane and dredging. Analysis of comments showed there is somewhat more interest in improving the ramp than in doing the whole project.



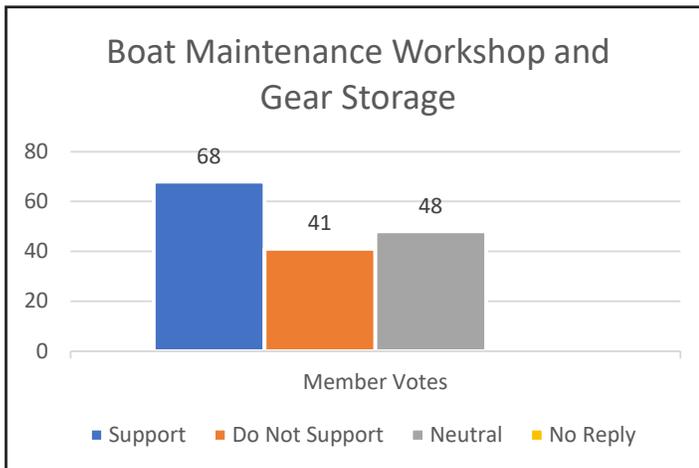
Respondents noted it will serve members with small power and sail boats, support keel boat racing and take keel boat launching off dock.

Others question how long dredging would last, that costs seem underestimated and that the crane would be used by just a few. "Better to work with Bristol Marine for these services — it has crane and storage" was one comment.

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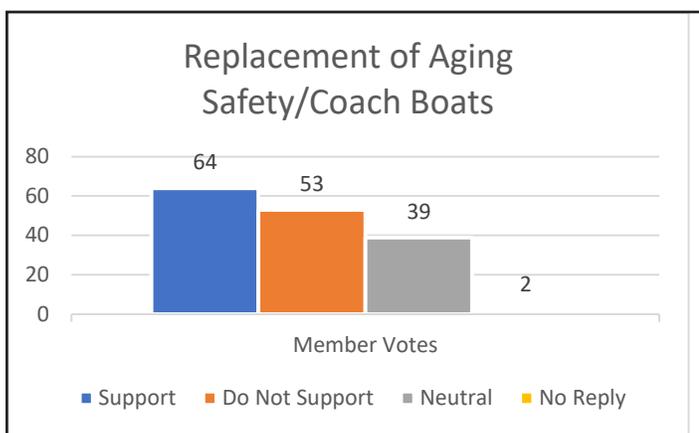
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**Boat Maintenance Workshop and Gear Storage**

Members showed support for this project with their high “yes” responses and the least “no” opinions of any other project. Responses noted the need to solve EBSF storage and that the Club can’t expect volunteer participation in vessel maintenance if not set up for success with tools and a space to work. Getting rid of the containers is another positive.

Other respondents wondered if it could be built for less; would members be able to use the workshop; or, if it was exclusively for EBSF use, should it be at members’ expense.



**Replacement of Aging Safety/Coach Boats**

There is strong agreement that safety is a priority, however, how to fund safety boat replacements over time is the question. Many respondents were concerned that the proposed boat rental program would not generate needed funds and, as a member stated, “might be a headache for staff.”

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**Favorable/Unfavorable Survey Responses Provide Additional Insight**

The opportunity to “vote again,” expressing strong feelings, is unusual in a survey, yet very useful in evaluating survey results. There were 158 expressions of yes/no/neutral for each project. There were also 59 comments expressing strong feeling which were not combined with the other responses in any way. All comments are published in their entirety on the BYC website. ([Link here.](#))

There are no clear-cut results in this survey and a path to consensus looks like a long one, requiring much more communication. These favorable/unfavorable “vote again” responses add additional guidance.

	Favorable	Unfavorable
Pavilion	14	13
Crane/Ramp	5	2
Boat Workshop	1	0
Safety/Coach Boats	1	0
EBSF Sustainability	15	8
Totals	36	23

Twenty-three members (28 percent of responses) expressed “strong feelings” which could not be categorized as favoring or opposing a single project. Note that these comments are in addition to those tallied above. These sentiments ran along various themes, partially expressed by the following comments.

- Negative on any additional capital projects until BYC can successfully fund existing facilities maintenance and replacement projects well into the future.
- Find a long-term organizational structure for BYC/ EBSF to coexist for the betterment of the Club.
- Parking space and storage of empty boat trailers need to be addressed.
- Fix the dock and waterfront first. Everyone depends on them, including the EBSF.
- The grounds, and in particular parking, need to be brought under control.
- Financial sustainability is most important.
- We are a private yacht club. If we take into account all of these things, we would indeed be moving in the direction of a community sailing center.
- It would seem that BYC and EBSF are not on the same page as to our future. This needs to be addressed.



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**Survey Comments and Suggestions to Club Leadership Will Help Guide Executive Committee Review**

Seventy-five of the 158 Strategic Plan survey respondents took the opportunity to leave general comments for Club leadership. [All responses are posted here.](#)

Several people commented along these lines of thought, among others:

- *BYC and EBSF are separate entities. Keep the transfer of money, facilities and services transparent.*
- *EBSF is a very worthy activity, teaching the next generation and bringing youth to the Club.*
- *During these uncertain times, like all members, the Club should watch spending.*
- *I believe all projects should be delayed until the effects of COVID on our financial condition are known.*
- *Let's keep the Club a sailing club above and beyond anything else. Let's keep fees in check and access to the water as good as possible.*
- *Please show support for EBSF, which provides critical services for any club wishing to last into future years.*
- *We're a sailors' club and should stop trying to compete with the New York Yacht Club.*
- *You have handled a challenging year with grace and determination.*

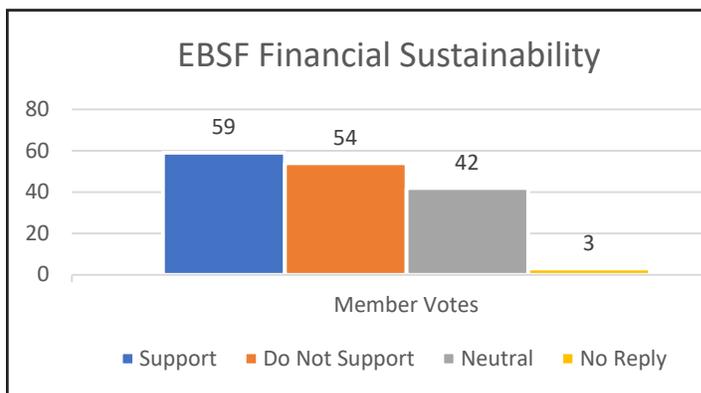
*Thanks to all the BYC members who participated in this survey. The large number of thoughtful comments and suggestions made by members add a great deal to the value of the survey.*

*Communication is the key to the present and our future. It's a bit of a struggle under COVID, but let's all keep working on it.*

Several comments suggested that supporting coach and safety boats should be the responsibility of EBSF via either fundraising or higher enrollment fees rather than BYC support.

**EBSF Financial Sustainability**

Members seemed surprised by the EBSF request for annual funding, having assumed this separate organization was self-sufficient. There were calls for more communication between BYC's Executive Committee and EBSF leadership to get on the same wavelength about EBSF's operations and financial plans.



Many respondents noted it's important to foster younger generations to keep feeding the sport of sailing. Others felt a need for BYC members to have a better understanding of what EBSF is and its fit with BYC. And, as one respondent said, "There's a lot of value to our instructional program, but its leadership needs to live within its means."

**In Conclusion**

Our Commodore outlines next steps in this process on page 5. The Strategic Plan Summary Report ([link here](#)), published in August and reported in the September *BYC Mainsheet*, also listed many noncapital recommendations. The Strategic Plan is now complete with the transmission of these survey responses, which will guide the Executive Committee's future actions on these projects.

Thank you to members for your responses and to everyone involved in the planning efforts.

Respectfully submitted,  
John Bell and Susan Grandpierre  
Co-Chairs, Strategic Plan Steering Committee  
Chris Bjerregaard, *ex officio*



## Where Do We Go From Here?

After several years of effort by dozens of BYC members, the initial phase of the BYC Strategic Plan is now complete. Many thanks to Nick Cromwell for getting the process started, and to Susan Grandpierre and John Bell for getting us across the finish line.

I've studied the results of the member survey and, clearly, your thoughtful comments are a great way for our volunteer Executive Committee to hear from the members directly. The responses show that members use BYC in many different ways and have varying opinions to match.

So what are the next steps?

**1.** I plan to schedule a special Executive Committee meeting to discuss the

Strategic Plan survey results in detail. I'm sure there will be many opinions here as well, but we will work to reach a consensus and provide a report to the membership. A part of this conversation will certainly be an analysis of how (and when) we might be able to take on additional financial commitments. Two articles in this issue of *The BYC Mainsheet* (the 2020/2021 financial review and the waterfront float/pier reserves articles) demonstrate that decisions about the Strategic Plan initiatives cannot be made in a vacuum.

**2.** As you've studied the graphs on the previous pages, you will have noted that there really isn't a burning consensus for a singular Strategic Plan initiative.

## Commodore's Corner

As many members said, improving our outdoor heads should be a priority and, personally, I agree. There also seems to be a leaning toward moving on the Boat Maintenance Workshop/Gear Storage initiative. Development of this initiative began prior to our Clubhouse fire, not knowing that the storage need would be significantly more critical as both BYC and EBSF lost basement storage and working space due to electrical and heating/cooling system upgrades that were part of the rebuild. Thus, this has become a more immediate issue requiring weighing all possible options in the near term.

**3.** There appears to be no consensus among BYC members on what the relationship between EBSF and BYC is or should be. I think we need to clearly define this relationship and the type of Instructional program we want at BYC, set goals, divide up responsibility and work hard to make it successful.

The initial phase of the Strategic Plan is now complete but, as always, we still have a lot of work to do. Again, I am deeply appreciative of the many, many hours of work that brought us to this point, and to the robust response from our membership whose comments, concerns – and even criticisms – are enormously informative. I promise that your Club leadership will review them closely.

Please contact me at [chrisbj@cox.net](mailto:chrisbj@cox.net) if you have any questions or comments.

- Chris Bjerregaard, Commodore

*The Strategic Plan survey focused on "aspirational" Club projects requiring capital expenditures. We shouldn't lose sight of the fact that there are many other "administrative" strategic initiatives requiring modest and/or no financial support. A table of these efforts was published in the September issue of The BYC Mainsheet and is available by [linking to this page](#) of the BYC website.*

*An example of these projects is a reconsideration of requirements to become an Old Salt member of BYC and you'll see on page 8 of this newsletter that you will be asked to vote at the Annual Meeting on a proposed bylaw change addressing this issue. Another example is addressing onsite parking, an ongoing challenge but one that is being looked at carefully.*

*You've read member comments in the previous article and you will find others on our website. Some comments are beyond or outside project scopes or impacts, but it feels important that we relay a range of input from members rather than edit what you are thinking. To this end, I encourage you to once again review the presentations compiled by our project leads and to view the videos of the Zoom meetings held a few weeks ago. They all can be [found here](#) and will inform your thinking, just as they have done for your Executive Committee members.*

*A final thought - a successful Strategic Plan is a working document and we must commit to revisit it every few years to ensure it reflects our current focus and finances.*

- Chris B. and the Steering Committee Team