

COMMUNITY PARKS & TRAILS STRATEGIC PLAN

Electoral Areas E, F, G & H



January 2014

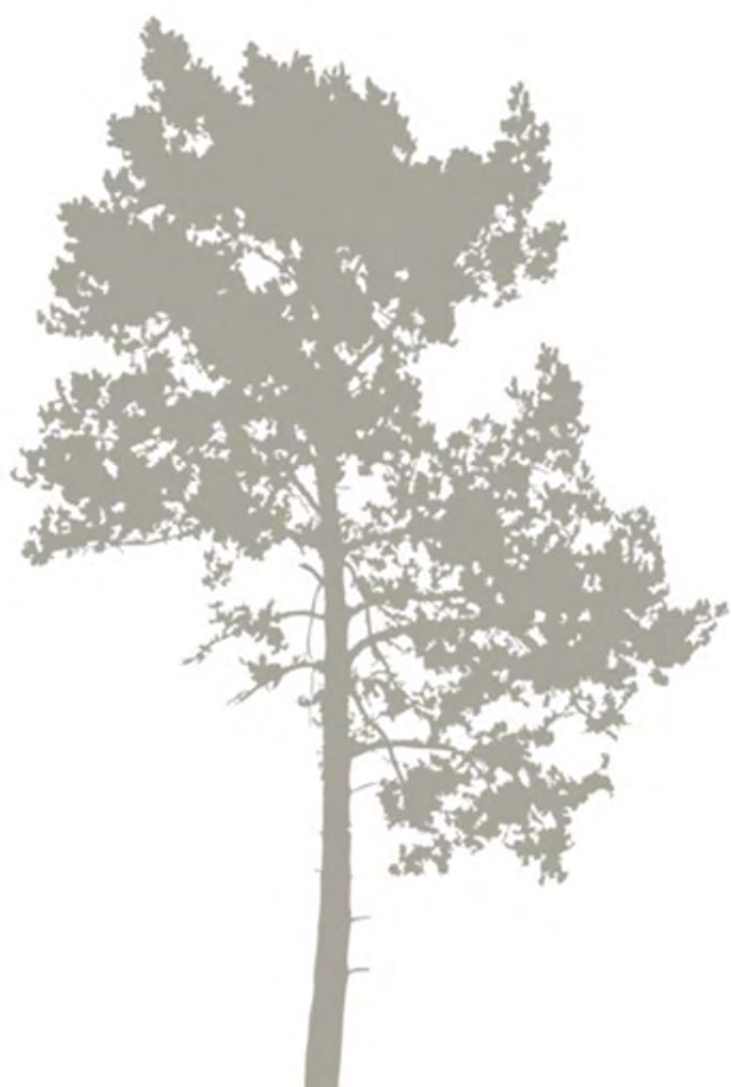


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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) Recreation & Parks Department would like to acknowledge the support and effort of the following individuals for their contributions to this plan.

To all those individuals who participated at the workshop events and provided feedback and input to the actions outlined in this plan – your local knowledge and perspectives were essential to shaping the future of the Community Parks and Trails Strategy – thank you for participating!

The **Community Parks and Trails Advisory Committee** provided guidance and insight during development of this strategic plan and participated at public workshops.

- George Holme, Electoral Area 'E' Director
- Julian Fell, Electoral Area 'F' Director
- Joe Stanhope, Electoral Area 'G' Director
- Bill Veenhof, Electoral Area 'H' Director
- Councillor Michael Recalma, Qualicum First Nation
- Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee (POSAC) Representatives:
Robert Rogers (Electoral Area E), Barbara Smith (Electoral Area F),
Brian Coath (Electoral Area G), Dagmar Seydel (Electoral Area H).

Consultants provided useful studies and detailed information that supported the development of the plan.

- Dave Palidwor, CPTS Project Manager
- Aquilla Archaeology for archaeology and cultural mapping
- Stantec Consultants Ltd. for work on the Trail Design Guidelines and Construction Standards
- Golder Associates Ltd. for support compiling the final document

RDN Staff oversaw, coordinated and provided input and review in the plan.

- Wendy Marshall, Parks Manager
- Joan Michel, Parks and Trails Coordinator
- Elaine McCulloch, Parks Planner
- Tom Osborne, General Manager of Recreation & Parks Services

The **RDN GIS Mapping Division** played a significant role in mapping and research.

- Tom Sohier, GIS Coordinator
- Stuart Barker, GIS Technician

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

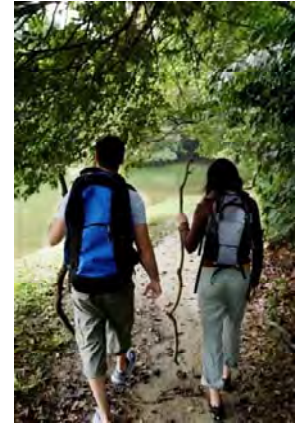
Introduction

As Electoral Areas within the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) develop, there is a need to continue creating a community parks and trails system that provides access to parks and recreation opportunities for the local community.

The overall goal of the Community Parks & Trails Strategy (CPTS) for Electoral Areas E, F, G, and H is to provide a systematic approach to parks and trails planning and development at the community level. This document is not intended to be a detailed guide for implementation of individual parks and trails; rather it provides a framework for identifying and evaluating opportunities.

The focus for this project is the four northern Electoral Areas:

- Electoral Area E: Nanoose Bay;
- Electoral Area F: Coombs, Hilliers, Errington, Whiskey Creek;
- Electoral Area G: French Creek, San Pareil, Dashwood, Englishman River; and
- Electoral Area H: Bowser, Qualicum Bay, Horne Lake, Spider Lake.



Planning Process

The Community Parks and Trails Strategy was completed over the course of 2013. A Working Group comprised of the Project Manager, RDN Community Parks Planner, Parks and Trails Coordinator and Manager of Parks Services coordinated development of the strategy and an Advisory Committee was formed to support the process and to review the document. Two Open Houses in each of the four Electoral Areas were held during the development of the CPTS and these events were supported by online surveys.

Two related studies were developed concurrently with the CPTS:

- A Cultural Mapping Summary was completed by Aquilla Archaeology to provide overview information for culturally sensitive mapping and protocols; and
- Parks and Trails Design Guidelines were prepared by Stantec Consultants Ltd. (see Section 1.3.4 for more information).

Evolution of Community Parks & Trails

Since its inception in the 1960s, the community parks and trails system has been growing at an accelerating pace. In Electoral Areas E, F, G and H community park area has grown from approximately 2 hectares of parkland in 1965 to almost 190 hectares in 2012.

When the community parks function began, the focus was largely on obtaining and preserving parkland and open space. In these early days, parkland was typically held in a natural undeveloped state with few or no amenities. Given the rural nature of the Electoral Areas, demand and capacity for more urban-style parks was limited. During this time, staff and funding resources were very restricted and did not support substantial park development.

Due to population increase and densification of communities, as well as increased awareness about the value of access to parks, public demand for improved parkland has been growing steadily. Over time, the community parks function has evolved from a mechanism for preserving open space to a function that supports strategic planning, design, development and operation of parkland.

COMMUNITY PARKS & TRAILS STRATEGIC PLAN ELECTORAL AREAS E, F, G, & H

Community Parks & Trails Today

The amount of existing community parks and trails varies between the four Electoral Areas. *Table 1* provides a summary of existing community and regional parks and trails in the RDN.

Table 1: Existing parks and trails summary

| Existing Parks & Trails | Electoral Area E | Electoral Area F | Electoral Area G | Electoral Area H |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Electoral Area population (2011) | 5,674 | 7,422 | 7,158 | 3,509 |
| Number of existing community parks | 31 | 16 | 32 | 40 |
| Area of existing community park (hectares/acres) | 29.7 ha 73.4 ac | 34.6 ha 85.5 ac | 57.0 ha 140.9 ac | 55.6 ha 137.3 ac |
| Community parkland (hectares/acres) per 1,000 people | 5.2 ha 12.9 ac | 4.7 ha 11.5 ac | 8.0 ha 19.7 ac | 15.8 ha 39.1 ac |
| Number of existing regional parks | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Area of existing regional park (hectares/acres) | 35.4 ha 87.5 ac | 44.0 ha 108.7 ac | 207.0 ha 511.5 ac | 118.7 ha 269.3 ac |
| Total area of community & regional parks (hectares/acres) | 65.1 ha 160.9 ac | 78.6 ha 194.2 ac | 264.2 ha 652.8 ac | 164.5 ha 406.6 ac |
| Number of potential water access sites (road ends) | 60 | TBD | 32 | 49 |
| Length of community trails | 0.72 km | 3.05 km | 2.03 km | 1.30 km |
| Length of regional trails | 0 km | 0 km | 10.00 km | 17.50 km |

Planning Framework for Community Parks & Trails

The CPTS is intended to provide a framework for decision-making for community parks and trails. The following goals are provided for acquisition and development of community parks:

- **Connect People and Places:** Develop an inter-connected system of parks and trails that supports active transportation (travel to destinations), recreation (exercise) and nature appreciation (spiritual), and is accessible to all community residents.
- **Provide Social and Recreation Opportunities:** Create a community where a variety of public spaces provide local opportunities for active living, social interaction and play.
- **Protect the Environment:** Safeguard the natural setting and character of the community and surrounding environmental functions.
- **Support Community Partnerships:** Encourage community spirit and energy when implementing the strategy.

Classification for Community Parks & Trails

There are five park classes proposed for the community park system:

- 1) Neighbourhood Park
- 2) Natural Park
- 3) Linear Park
- 4) Water Access
- 5) Surplus

There are three trail classes proposed for the RDN:

- 1) Type 1 – Hard/Compacted Surface Trail
- 2) Type 2 – Soft Surface Trail
- 3) Type 3 – Natural Surface Trail

Community Parkland Acquisition Criteria

One of the challenges encountered when planning for community parks is evaluating whether new acquisitions fit the needs of the overall system. To support this evaluation, a number of community parkland acquisition criteria are proposed. These criteria will:

- Support RDN staff and Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee (POSAC) members in evaluating potential community park and trail acquisitions;
- Provide developer clients a set of clear criteria in advance of proposing dedication; and
- Increase consistency and objectivity in assessments over time.

The criteria are organized under six categories and are designed to align with the proposed park classes (neighbourhood, natural, linear, water access, and surplus). The six categories include:

- **General Demographics & Public Values:** These values typically apply to all types of community parks. Parks that score high in this category may be well suited for acquisition and addition to the community parks system.
- **Neighbourhood Park Values:** These values are desirable for establishing neighbourhood parks with amenities. Parks that score high in this category may be most suitable for neighbourhood parks.
- **Ecological Park Values:** These values include protection and enhancement of natural environments. Parks that score high in this category may be most suitable for ecological park development.
- **Linear Park Values:** These values include connectivity and trail potential. Parks that score high in this category may be most suitable for trail development.
- **Water Access Values:** These values pertain to water sites. Parks that score high in this category may be most suitable for water access development.
- **Affordability:** These values include costs for acquiring, developing and maintaining park properties and typically apply to all community parks. Parks that score high in this category will be more cost effective.

Actions

The outcome of this plan is a set of actions that support the implementation of the vision, objectives and priorities generated through the CPTS process. These actions are provided for Board, staff and POSAC consideration within the context of annual community planning and budget considerations.

Two types of actions are provided for the CPTS: operational actions, and project actions.

1. Operational Actions:

These include ideas for planning initiatives, resources, education, and awareness planning. Operational actions include:

Planning Initiatives

- 1) **Complete Regular Updates of the CPTS:** Update the CPTS in 2018 and complete a new study with public consultation in 2023.
- 2) **Use Park & Trail Classifications & Criteria:** Encourage all RDN departments and committees to use the Community Park Classifications and Criteria for Community Parkland Evaluation identified in this document and the 2013 Parks & Trails Design Guidelines to evaluate and plan parkland that is proposed within development applications.
- 3) **Follow Archaeological Guidelines:** Follow guidelines developed in the Aquilla Report for considering cultural and heritage potential when planning or developing community parks and trails.
- 4) **Review Parks Policies during OCP Updates:** Incorporate the CPTS actions into OCP updates and review the vision for parks and potential projects for specific Electoral Areas during the update process.
- 5) **Review POSAC Structure & Mandate:** Complete regular reviews of the POSAC structure and mandate to review efficiency, roles and contributions in the evolving parks and trails system.
- 6) **Establish POSAC Chair Meetings:** Establish regular POSAC chair meetings to support collaboration, discussion and identification of issues and opportunities within the larger community park system.
- 7) **Create a Volunteer Policy & Guidelines:** Consider developing a clear volunteer policy and guidelines that provide more information about involvement with community parks and trails.
- 8) **Establish Partner Communications:** Seek to establish a system for ongoing partnership communications with other municipalities, Regional Districts and First Nations that provide community parks and trails services.

- 9) **Create a Developer Information Package:** Develop a clear information package for developers to outline expectations for community park and trail dedications. This information should be provided to all developer applicants at the concept stage of their projects.
- 10) **Support Community Projects:** Encourage and support community interest groups to enter into trail building and/or management agreements with the province for key recreational trails located on Crown land.
- 11) **Prepare an Active Transportation Plan:** Prepare an Active Transportation Plan that encourages access for all levels of mobility for the District 69 Electoral Areas based on work completed to date in the Regional Parks & Trails Plan, CPTS and Parks & Trails Guidelines.
- 12) **Consider a DCC Bylaw:** Consider creating a Development Cost Charges (DCC) bylaw for each Electoral Area to support acquisition and development of select park amenities (as permitted by the Local Government Act).
- 13) **Develop a Disposition Policy:** Develop a Community Parkland Disposition Policy to dispose of underutilized parklands that are costly to maintain for consideration by the RDN Board.
- 14) **Subdivision Application Process Review:** Review and update the RDN's "Review of the Consideration of Parkland in Conjunction with the Subdivision Application Process" policy (Updated 2006) to streamline the subdivision review process. Include the proposed Community Parkland Evaluation Criteria Checklist (see Appendix C).

Resources & Capacity

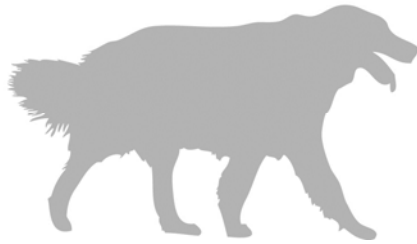
- 15) **Match Service Levels & Funding Allocations:** Match level of service expectations with funding allocations for community parks and trails.
- 16) **Create Park Maintenance Plans:** Develop a park maintenance plan as a component of all new park planning and development as per the Parks and Trails Design Guidelines. Update annual operating budgets for parks based on these plans.

Education & Awareness

- 17) **Increase Park Signage:** Increase community park and trail signage in developed parks as budget allows.

2. Project Actions:

In addition to operational actions that span the entire CPTS, several project actions and ideas were gathered for each Electoral Area during this process. These actions should be considered as potential priority projects when planning and budgeting community park development. See Section 4.2 for details.



1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of a Community Parks & Trails Strategy

As the Electoral Areas within the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) develop, there is a need to continue creating a community parks and trails system that provides access to parks and recreation opportunities for the local community. To date, community parks and trails provision has often been *ad hoc* and reactive – acquiring and developing parks as opportunities arise, rather than being systematically planned for an entire area. As the RDN Electoral Area communities grow, the Community Parks & Trails Strategy (CPTS) is intended to guide informed decision-making about future park acquisition and development.

1.1.1 Why are we Creating a Strategy?

Since the first community park was established in 1959, the RDN's community parks and trails program has been growing and evolving. In the late 1960s the program managed about 8 hectares (ha) of community parks and trails; today the system has grown to include almost 190 community parks in Electoral Areas A through H, with over 600 ha of land.

In addition to the size of land base, the function of community parks has also evolved. In the early days, when parkland was established, it was typically protected as undeveloped conservation area or open space. As population density increased in the Electoral Areas, a shift in demand from more natural parks to neighbourhood parks with amenities began to occur. This shift, along with the number of parks the RDN manages, makes it increasingly important to plan and prioritize improvements to the system.



Community parks and trails provide outdoor recreation opportunities for local community members.

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1.1.2 How to Use the Strategy

The overall goal of the CPTS for Electoral Areas E, F, G, and H is to provide a systematic approach to parks and trails planning and development at the community level. The CPTS is intended to be used in harmony with key RDN planning documents to:

- Clarify the mandate of the community parks and trails function;
- Provide a community park classification system;
- Map existing and proposed community parks and trails;
- Support a consistent level understanding about community parks and trails functions and priorities between RDN Staff, Board Members, Parks and Open Space Advisory Committee (POSAC) Members, Developers and the Public;
- Provide consistent evaluation criteria for reviewing and selecting potential community parks;
- Identify priorities for park acquisition and development;
- Position the RDN to respond to grant opportunities and negotiations during the land development process;
- Provide strategic directions and actions regarding land acquisition and disposition; and
- Show a clear link between park development and funding requirements.

This document is not intended to be a detailed guide for implementation of individual parks and trails; rather it provides a framework for identifying and evaluating opportunities.

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1.1.3 Electoral Areas Covered in the CPTS

The Regional District of Nanaimo encompasses approximately 207,000 ha of land on the central east coast of Vancouver Island¹. The region includes four municipalities –City of Nanaimo, City of Parksville, Town of Qualicum Beach and Village of Lantzville, along with a large rural land base which is divided into seven Electoral Areas.

This focus for this project is the four northern Electoral Areas (see Figure 1):

- Electoral Area E: Nanoose Bay;
- Electoral Area F: Coombs, Hilliers, Errington, Whiskey Creek;
- Electoral Area G: French Creek, San Pareil, Dashwood, Englishman River; and
- Electoral Area H: Bowser, Qualicum Bay, Horne Lake, Spider Lake.

A future process may be completed to develop strategic actions for Electoral Areas A through C.

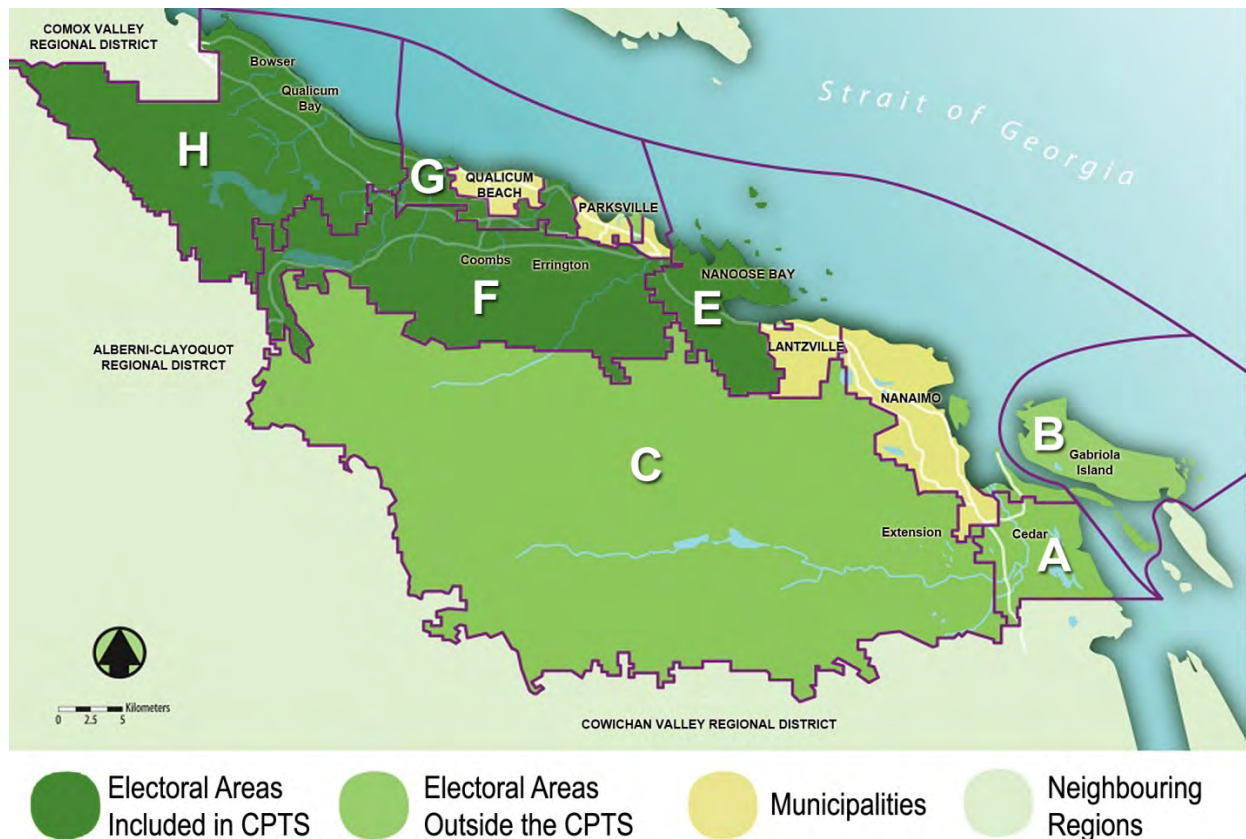


Figure 1: Study Area Map

¹ Regional District of Nanaimo Bylaw 1615: Regional Growth Strategy, 2011.

COMMUNITY PARKS & TRAILS STRATEGIC PLAN

ELECTORAL AREAS E, F, G, & H

1.2 What are Community Parks & Trails?

1.2.1 Park Context

Community parks and trails form part of the larger parks and trails network in our Electoral Areas (see Figure 2). While the CPTS focuses on community parks, it is intended to be complementary to the larger parks and greenways system and to consider connections and context with neighbouring electoral areas, municipalities and First Nations.

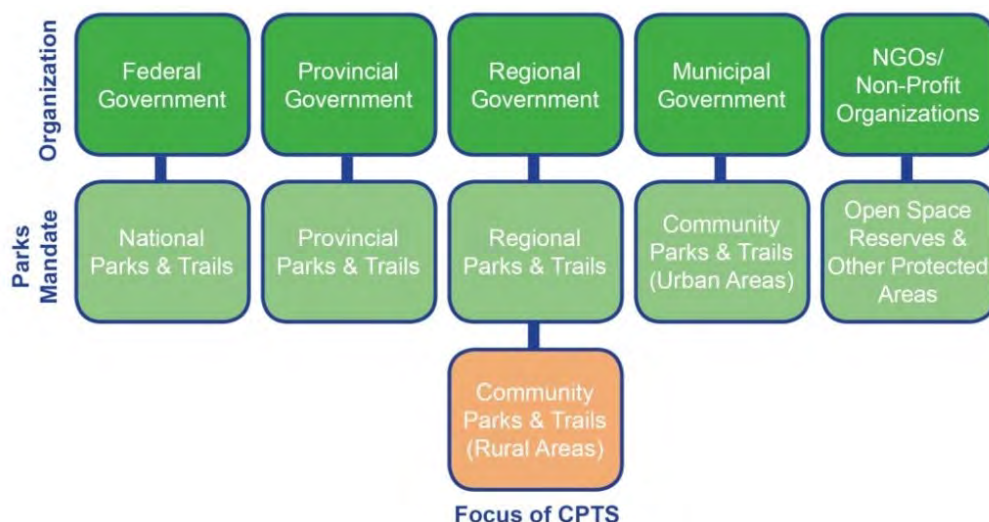


Figure 2: Parks Network Context

The RDN is responsible for two levels of parks – regional parks and community parks in the rural Electoral Areas. These mandates are administered under separate programs and provide different levels of service within the RDN. Table 2 provides a brief summary of the differences between regional and community parks in the RDN.

Table 2: Overview of differences between regional & community parks

| | Regional Parks | Community Parks |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| Key Mandate | Environmental protection and nature-based recreation | Provision of park amenities for local neighbourhoods |
| Target Population | All RDN constituents and tourists | Local Electoral Area constituents |
| Tax Base | All of RDN | Individual Electoral Areas |
| Typical Acquisition | Lease or Purchase | Parkland Dedication through Subdivision or Rezoning |
| Size | Large land areas | Smaller land areas |

As seen in *Figure 2* on the previous page) community parks and trails also exist within urban centres; however, these resources are the responsibility of the municipal level of government. In the RDN, this means that community parks and trails within the City of Nanaimo, City of Parksville, District of Lantzville and Town of Qualicum Beach are administered by the respective municipal governments, not by the RDN. With their higher populations, urban areas typically have a significantly larger tax base than rural Electoral Areas, which allows a generally higher standard of parks service in urban communities.

1.2.2 Community Parks & Trails in RDN Electoral Areas

Community parks in the RDN are intended to provide for the needs of each of the local Electoral Area communities. These parks are usually smaller and distributed throughout existing and developing residential neighbourhoods to provide local, publicly accessible green spaces for residents. These park sites often provide a variety of uses, including sports, passive recreation, environmental protection, water access or preservation of unique natural or culturally significant features.

Community trails provide local connections for non-motorized access to destinations such as parks, schools, community facilities, beaches, commercial areas and points of interest. Today there are few existing community trails in the Electoral Areas due to past development patterns, land availability and funding limitations. As a result, local roads are often used for non-motorized travel.

As Electoral Area populations grow and density increases, the community parks and trails function becomes increasingly important. These spaces are a vital resource for people to have access to safe and convenient outdoor recreation and non-motorized travel opportunities.

1.2.3 Acquisition, Development & Maintenance of Community Parks & Trails

Each Electoral Area has a separate tax base and funding system to acquire, develop and manage community parks and trails. Because these areas are locally funded, community parks and trails are developed to primarily benefit the residents that live in each Electoral Area.

Table 3 and *Table 4* (on the following pages) provide an overview of methods for acquiring and developing community parks and trails.



Community trails are becoming an increasingly important part of the local recreation network.

COMMUNITY PARKS & TRAILS STRATEGIC PLAN

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Table 3: Acquisition methods for community parks and trails

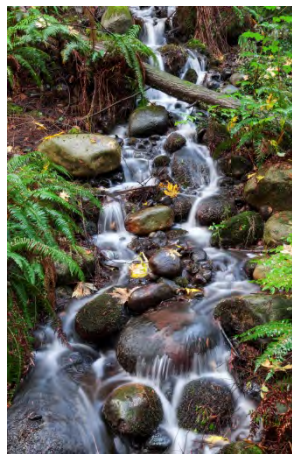
| Acquisition Method | Description |
|--|--|
| Land Dedication at Time of Subdivision | Land dedication is the primary acquisition tool for community parks and trails. The BC Local Government Act (Section 941) permits local governments to require up to 5% land dedication for park at the time of property subdivision (except where fewer than three additional lots will be created or where the smallest lot is larger than 2 ha in size). Policies related to park dedication can be included in an Official Community Plan. |
| Parkland Acquisition Reserve Fund | In some occasions the RDN may require cash-in-lieu, rather than land dedication at subdivision, in an amount equivalent to 5% of the assessed value (prior to subdivision) of the land being subdivided. |
| Community Amenity Contribution through Rezoning | In some instances, a contribution of parkland or cash towards purchase of park land, can be secured through the rezoning process. Policies in OCPs outline when this would occur. Most often park land is provided in return for an increase in the amount of development permitted. |
| Donation | Land dedication from private land owners may provide additional land area to the system. These lands may carry a park land use stipulation or covenant. |
| Provincial Lease or License | Lands owned by the Province, including Crown lands and Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) lands, can be developed under a permit for community park and trail use (see Section 1.2.5). |
| Private Lease or License | Legal agreements can be formed with private land owners to use a portion of land for public parks or trails. These types of agreements could include licensing of trails on private forestry lands. |
| Development Cost Charges (DCCs) | Regional Districts can collect DCCs from development projects for infrastructure improvements that are necessary to support community growth. The Local Government Act (Sections 932 to 937) enables municipalities to collect DCCs for parkland acquisition and minor park land improvements. Currently, Electoral Areas do not have DCC bylaws for community parks. |
| Purchase through Borrowing | In some cases, it may be desirable to secure park land before funds can be made available. Often these types of circumstances occur when there is risk of opportunities being lost. In these cases, borrowing with repayment through Electoral Area operating budgets is an option. |

COMMUNITY PARKS & TRAILS STRATEGIC PLAN ELECTORAL AREAS E, F, G, & H

Table 4: Financing methods for community park and trail development

| Acquisition Method | Description |
|--|---|
| Community Amenity Contribution through Rezoning | In some instances, in addition to land dedication at subdivision, a contribution to construct park amenities and trails can be secured through the rezoning process. Policies in OCPs outline when this would occur. Most often, park amenities are provided in return for an increase in the amount of development permitted. |
| Electoral Area Capital Budget | Property taxes are collected in each Electoral Area for providing services to residents. These services include the development of community parks and trails, among other services which must be prioritized. Because the tax base is smaller in rural areas due to lower populations, a limited amount of funding is typically available for park improvements. |
| Grants | Private or government grants are available to assist local and regional governments at various stages of parks planning and development. These grants often target elements like trail development, environmental stewardship and recreation, and can be a significant source of funding for park development. |
| Donation & Fundraising | Donors may give money, materials or time for the purposes of enhancing community parks and trails. In cases where there is strong community support for park projects, fundraising may be undertaken. |
| Development Cost Charges (DCCs) | Park improvements that may be completed using DCCs include trails, fencing, landscaping, drainage, irrigation, playground equipment, playing field equipment and washrooms. Currently, Electoral Areas in the RDN do not have DCC bylaws for community parks. |

1.2.4 Community Parks Budgets



Annual Electoral Area Budgets

Annual budgets provide funding for each Electoral Area and are financed through tax requisitions from the Electoral Area. The amount of funds allocated to community park improvements, studies and transfers is determined through the five year project planning process with the POSACs, discussions with Electoral Area Directors and annual approval by the Regional Board. Expenses in this budget include:

- Minor park improvements and upgrades;
- Major park improvements;
- Safety review and maintenance (e.g., hazard tree pruning, debris removal, park repairs, etc.);
- Routine maintenance (e.g., waste receptacles, grass cutting, weeding, painting, etc.) by contractors;
- Legal and professional fees (e.g., geotechnical studies, lot surveys, archeology reviews, design development, etc.);
- Staffing and overhead costs;
- Equipment maintenance and repairs;
- Transfers to operation reserve funds;
- Transfers to other organizations (e.g., community halls); and
- Transfers for other RDN services (e.g., bylaw enforcement, mapping).

Reserve Funds

The Reserve Fund is a pool of money created by yearly transfers from the Community Parks Budget. The amount of money transferred varies between each Electoral Area and changes annually. The amount transferred depends on upcoming projects, and the priorities of the Area Director and the POSAC. Reserve funds can be used to fund large capital projects or to purchase parkland. Large projects can be funded solely through reserve funds or combined with the Community Parks Budget, grant funds and donations.

Parkland Acquisition Fund

This fund is created by the cash-in-lieu from subdivisions and can only be used to purchase parkland in the Electoral Area of the development that generated the contribution.

Other Reserve Funds

In some cases, developers, through subdivision or rezoning, will contribute funds for specific park upgrades. These funds are placed in separate reserve funds dedicated for the intended project.

1.2.5 Park Jurisdictions (Crown, Lease, MOTI)

Community parks include lands owned by the RDN, as well as lands that the RDN manages but does not own outright. In some cases, the Regional District enters into land use agreements with other agencies and landowners to manage non-RDN owned lands for community park functions.

Table 5 provides an overview of jurisdictional arrangements the RDN uses for community parks.

Table 5: Community park jurisdiction arrangements

| Jurisdiction | Description |
|--|--|
| Regional District | Parkland that is owned and managed by the RDN. Parks acquired through subdivision are RDN jurisdiction. |
| Crown Parks | Some RDN parkland, dedicated prior to current regulations, may remain vested in the ownership of the Provincial Crown. Under the Land Title Act, the RDN, as the regional government, has authority to manage these areas as community parks. |
| Crown Lease/ License of Occupation | Crown lands can be leased or licensed to the RDN by the province for use as community park or trails. Nanoose Park (in Electoral Area E) is an example of a lease while Malcolm Park (in Electoral Area F) is an example of a licensed tenure. |
| Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure License | Lands owned by MoTI may be used for community parks and trails. Permits to construct on MoTI lands are common in undeveloped road right of ways (ROWs) for creation of trail corridors and unused road ends that front the foreshore can be used as water access sites. |
| Water Access | If a property borders a body of water, the <i>Land Title Act</i> , and <i>Bareland Strata Regulations</i> , require that a 20 m wide right-of-way access to the water be provided at intervals of not less than 200 m, or in rural areas, where new parcels exceed 0.5 ha, 400 m intervals. If land is to be included in a bareland subdivision adjoins a body of water, a strip of land not exceeding 7 m width along the bank or shore for public access may be required. These accesses are provided as dedicated road owned by the Crown and may be important points of public access to the water. These water accesses can be improved by the RDN under license with the Province. |

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In cases where parkland is leased or licensed, the land remains under the ownership of the province, but the RDN has rights to develop and manage the area as a park. These arrangements may include some commitment from the RDN for liability, and while they are typically long-term arrangements, do not guarantee the land will remain as a park indefinitely.

1.3 Policy Context



The following documents form the policy context for the Community Parks and Trails Strategy.

1.3.1 Regional Growth Strategy

The RDN's Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) encompasses the entire region and outlines broad goals and general direction for region-wide policies, planning and actions. The following policies from the RGS inform community parks and trails:

- Adopt Official Community Plans (OCPs) and zoning bylaws that support the development of places to live, work, learn, play, shop and access services within a walkable area that are located in designated mixed-use centres inside Growth Containment Boundaries;
- Adopt OCPs and Park Plans that include strategies and policies to protect and conserve Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs);
- Adopt OCPs that include strategies and policies to identify and protect important historic and cultural resources and sites; and
- Create complementary uses that are located in rural areas including rural residential, parks, open spaces, environmental protection and recreation.

1.3.2 Official Community Plans

The intent of Official Community Plans (OCPs) is to guide land use and development decisions and to provide detailed planning direction with respect to community development. Each Electoral Area has an OCP. These plans outline the goals and objectives the community has for the Electoral Area. Relevant OCPs that inform the CPTS include:

- Nanoose Bay Official Community Plan Bylaw # 1400 (2005)
- Electoral Area F Official Community Plan Bylaw #1152 (1999)
- Electoral Area G Official Community Plan Bylaw #1540 (2008)
- Electoral Area H Official Community Plan Bylaw #1335 (2003)

The current OCPs vary in the amount of direction provided on acquisition and development of community parks and trails – one OCP provides specific acquisition criteria for new parks and trails, while others contain very little direction on park acquisition. In general, newer OCPs contain more detailed policy on parks and trails. OCPs, as policy documents, do not contain park or trail construction standards.

The CPTS is intended complement Electoral Area OCPs by providing land suitability criteria to improve clarity and promote consistency for community park dedication and development. The CPTS also provides a greater level of detail on potential priority projects. When OCP reviews are undertaken, the CPTS should provide a basis for policies on community parks and trails.

1.3.3 Regional Parks & Trails Plan (2005)

The Regional Parks and Trails Plan 2005-2015, provides direction for the establishment of regional parks and trails including classification systems, service standards and implementation strategies. While the plan does not address community parks and trails, it provides context on which to build the community parks and trails function. The Regional Parks & Trails Plan and the CPTS are intended to be complementary and integrated documents.

1.3.4 Parks & Trails Design Guidelines (2013)

The guidelines provide direction for planning community and regional parks and trails, staging areas and amenities. The document includes a proposed planning process, trails classifications system, staging area classification system, signage hierarchy and maintenance processes. The document also provides general guidelines for park and trail design, such as accessibility, hazards, environmental protection, structures and furnishings. The CPTS refers to the trail types described in this document and the guidelines should be referenced when planning and developing community parks and trails.

1.3.5 Other Documents

Various other RDN documents are related to the CPTS including:

- Water Sites, Inventory & Site Descriptions for Electoral Area H (2000);
- A Parks and Open Space Plan for Nanoose Bay (2001);
- Electoral Area A Community Trails Study (2002);
- Community Active Transportation Plan, Electoral area A (2009);
- Lakes District Neighbourhood Plan, Nanoose Bay (2011); and
- Schooner Cove Neighbourhood Plan, Nanoose Bay (2011).

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1.4 CPTS Planning Process Summary

The Community Parks and Trails Strategy was completed over the course of 2013 (*Figure 3: Schedule and Process Diagram*). A Staff Working Group comprised of the RDN Community Parks Planner, Parks and Trails Coordinator and Manager of Parks Services coordinated the development of the strategy. Other RDN staff resources including GIS Mapping, Parks Operations staff and Long-Range Planning staff provided technical support and information review.

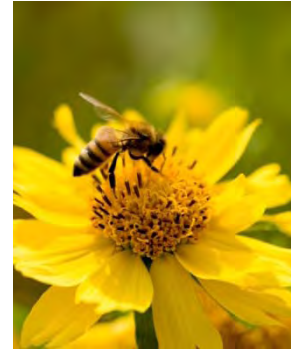


Figure 3: Schedule and Process Diagram

1.4.1 Project Team

The development of the CPTS was completed by the RDN and key consulting resources. To support the process, a Community Parks & Trails Strategy Advisory Committee was created to provide:

- Input on materials for public review including: the vision, goals and objectives, summaries from public input, park classifications, parkland provision guidelines, land suitability criteria and implementation; and
- Review of and comment on the draft plan prior to presentation to the Regional Board.



Advisory Committee Composition:

The terms of reference for the project invited a number of groups to participate in the Advisory Committee, including:

- Each POSAC for Electoral Areas E, F, G, and H;
- Qualicum First Nation;
- K'omoks First Nation;
- Snaw-Naw-As First Nation;
- Snuneymuxw First Nation; and
- Sliammon First Nation.

Those that participated in the Advisory Committee included:

- 2 representatives from each POSAC for Electoral Areas E, F, G, and H; and
- 1 representative from Qualicum First Nation.

Related Studies:

Two related studies were developed concurrently with the CPTS:

- A Cultural Mapping Summary was completed by Aquilla Archaeology to provide overview information for culturally sensitive mapping and protocols; and
- Parks and Trails Design Guidelines were prepared by Stantec Consultants Ltd. (see Section 1.3.4 for more information).

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The public open houses were an opportunity to meet with community residents and discuss their vision and ideas for the future.

1.4.2 Public Consultation

The CPTS included public consultation through:

- Open Houses;
- Online surveys;
- Project webpage;
- Facebook and Twitter social media; and
- Email and telephone correspondence.

Public Events & Input Opportunities

Two Open Houses were held in each of the four Electoral Areas during the development of the CPTS, along with 2 online surveys and opportunities for review. *Table 6* provides a summary of public input opportunities.

Table 6: Summary of opportunities for public input

| Open House #1 Summary | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Timing | February 27 th to March 6 th , 2013 |
| Location | Each of the 4 Electoral Areas |
| Survey | Online and Hardcopy surveys open for two weeks |
| Purpose | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Locate sites the public identified for consideration for future parks; ▪ Suggest improvements for existing community parks and trails; and ▪ Increase public knowledge about the extents of formal parkland, including the difference between RDN park land and informal trails on Crown land or private forest land. |
| Displays | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning process; ▪ Goals and objectives; ▪ Purpose of the CPTS; ▪ Proposed park types; and ▪ Maps showing existing parks and trails in relation to land ownership in the Electoral Areas. |

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Open House #2 Summary

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Timing | May 6 th to June 5 th , 2013 |
| Location | Each of the 4 Electoral Areas |
| Survey | Online and hard copy surveys open for two weeks |
| Purpose | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review of mapping showing a proposed community trail network; ▪ Gaps in the distribution of neighbourhood parkland; and ▪ Priority directions for implementation. |
| Displays | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Engagement summaries from OH#1; and ▪ Revised plans showing a proposed trail network and distribution of community parkland. |

Final Concept Plan Review

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Timing | August 10 th to August 30 th , 2013 |
| Location | Online |
| Survey | Online for two weeks |
| Purpose | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public viewing and comment on the final concept maps. |

Public Input Themes

There were several reoccurring themes identified during the public engagement process:

- Demand for more community trails for recreation, nature appreciation and commuting to local destinations;
- Desire for increased access to the oceanfront using undeveloped Road Rights of Way (ROWs);
- Continued and improved access to trails on Crown land;
- Belief that the Electoral Areas are reasonably well served by neighbourhood parkland and that taking cash-in-lieu is generally supported, except in areas where there are gaps in service provision;
- Support for more park amenities with signage as the first priority, followed by benches and picnic tables;
- General feeling of safety using parks and trails, but concerns about using road shoulders for non-motorized travel; and
- Identification of typical park uses, the most common being exercise, nature appreciation and dog walking.

1.4.3 Archaeology Review

While the CPTS was being developed, Aquilla Archaeology was retained by the RDN to complete a Cultural Mapping Project to describe known and potential cultural and heritage resources in the four Electoral Areas to be included in the CPTS. The objective of this work was to identify potential issues and opportunities in relation to cultural and heritage values in new and existing community parks and water access sites. The study provides an overview of heritage sites compiled from community based archives, the provincial Heritage Conservation Act (HCA), archaeological site registry, and available grey literature (informally published reports). First Nations, whose territories overlap with the four Electoral Areas, were also consulted. The assessment is not a detailed Archaeological Impact Assessment (AIA) but rather provides an overview of potential sensitivities. The information developed in the study was entered into an internal database and mapped for analysis and reference. Archaeological sites are not made publicly accessible due to the risk of vandalism associated with these sites.

The Aquilla Archaeology report (see **Appendix B: Cultural Mapping Project Summary**) recommends that cultural data and mapping information be integrated with community parks planning and operations. The report outlines a process for review and recommends various protocols, depending on whether a site is registered, what the potential may be, possible strategies such as avoidance or alteration and regulatory channels.

The archaeological review is intended to support the RDN in applying due diligence when planning or constructing in areas that have potential archaeological sensitivity to proactively help protect cultural and heritage resources and reduce the risk and potential costs associated with unintentional impacts.

2.0 COMMUNITY PARKS & TRAILS TODAY

2.1 Overview of the Existing System

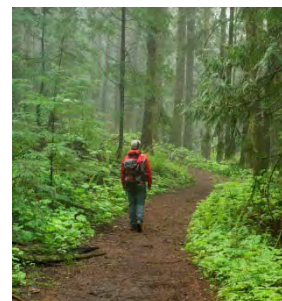
Each Electoral Area has unique landscape, character, demographics, growth rates and socio-economics. This means that these areas will each have their own requirements and priorities for community parks and trails.

2.1.1 Overview of Electoral Areas E, F, G, H

Table 7 provides a summary of population and land use statistics for Electoral Areas E, F, G and H.

Table 7: Electoral Area summary

| Statistics (2011 Census) | Electoral Area E | Electoral Area F | Electoral Area G | Electoral Area H |
|--|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Total area | 75 km ² | 264 km ² | 50 km ² | 277 km ² |
| Total population (2011) | 5,674 | 7,422 | 7,158 | 3,509 |
| Population density (per km ²) | 75.5 | 28 | 145 | 12.6 |
| Public land (includes Provincial, Federal, RDN) (hectares/acres) | 1,127 ha 2,785 ac (15%) | 3565 ha 8,810 ac (13%) | 712 ha 1,760 ac (14%) | 6,179 ha 15,269 ac (22%) |
| First Nation land (hectares/acres) | 31 ha 77 ac (0.4%) | 30 ha 74 ac (0.1%) | 164 ha 408 ac (3.3%) | 6 ha 15 ac (0.2%) |
| Private land (hectares/acres) | 3,148 ha 7,781 ac (42%) | 9,096 ha 22,477 ac (34%) | 2,903 ha 7,173 ac (58%) | 5,865 ha 14,493 ac (21%) |
| Private forestry land (hectares/acres) | 2,945 ha 7,277 ac (40%) | 14,164 ha 35,000 ac (53%) | 953 ha 2,355 ac (19%) | 15,985 ha 39,500 ac (58%) |



Settlement Patterns

Electoral Areas E and G have smaller land bases, relatively high population densities, and more suburban settlement patterns. Areas F and H, have larger land bases and are more rural in nature. The RDN Regional Growth Strategy aims to direct a greater proportion of growth within the Growth

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Crown lands are popular destinations for back country recreation. Often it is not clear that while Crown lands are typically accessible for public use, they are not part of the community parks and trails system.



In the RDN, residential and rural roads are often used for pedestrian and cycling access.

Containment Boundaries around existing urban and village centres. This indicates that Electoral Areas F and H will continue to remain more rural in character while Areas E and G may experience moderate growth.

The amount of publicly owned land is proportionately similar among all the Electoral Areas with Area H having the highest proportion at 22% public land base and Area F having the lowest at 13%.

Crown & Forest Lands

Crown lands can provide increased access to trails and recreation in some rural areas; however, these routes are unsanctioned and long-term protection is not guaranteed. The RDN does not have the resources to consider managing informal trail systems on Crown lands, but could play a supporting role to community groups that may want to formalize some trail activities.

A large area of the RDN is designated as private forestry land. Private forestry lands are not considered publicly accessible; however, historic use of logging roads and trails for recreation in these areas is common. These informal trails provide recreational value, but since the tenure is private, there is no guarantee for ongoing protection. Area H, in particular has large areas of private forest lands which are popular for recreational use.

Transportation

The transportation network in the Electoral Areas includes:

- Highway 19A, the Oceanside Highway that connects the urban centers;
- Highway 19, the Inland Island Highway that provides an alternate upland services corridor;
- Residential and rural roads; and
- E&N Rail Corridor that bisects each of the Electoral Areas.

Highways are used by some pedestrians and cyclists for commuting; however, traffic volume, speed and air quality are concerns. Residential and rural roads are more commonly used for trail routes, but typically have narrow shoulders, which can contribute to potential conflicts between vehicles and non-motorized transportation.

The E&N Rail corridor forms a significant piece of the proposed RDN regional trail system. Plans for the regional trail network include a route along the rail corridor to link RDN municipalities and Electoral Areas to each other and to neighbouring regional districts. Community parks and trails planning must consider this future linkage when planning local parks and trails.

COMMUNITY PARKS & TRAILS STRATEGIC PLAN ELECTORAL AREAS E, F, G, & H

2.1.2 Overview of Current Park & Trail Status

The amount of existing community parks and trails varies between the four Electoral Areas. *Table 8* provides a summary of existing community and regional parks and trails in Electoral Areas E, F, G and H.

Table 8: Existing parks and trails summary table

| Existing Parks & Trails | Electoral Area E | Electoral Area F | Electoral Area G | Electoral Area H |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Electoral Area population (2011) | 5,674 | 7,422 | 7,158 | 3,509 |
| Number of existing community parks | 31 | 16 | 32 | 40 |
| Area of existing community parks (hectares/acres) | 29.7 ha 73.4 ac | 34.6 ha 85.5 ac | 57.0 ha 140.9 ac | 55.6 ha 137.3 ac |
| Community parkland (hectares/acres) per 1,000 people | 5.2 ha 12.9 ac | 4.7 ha 11.5 ac | 8.0 ha 19.7 ac | 15.8 ha 39.1 ac |
| Number of regional parks | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Area of existing regional park (hectares/acres) | 35.4 ha 87.5 ac | 44.0 ha 108.7 ac | 207.0 ha 511.5 ac | 109.0 ha 269.3 ac |
| Total area of community & regional park (hectares/acres) | 65.1 ha 160.9 ac | 78.6 ha 194.2 ac | 264.2 ha 652.8 ac | 164.5 ha 406.6 ac |
| Number of potential water access sites (road ends) | 60 | TBD | 32 | 49 |
| Length of community trail | 0.72 km | 3.05 km | 2.03 km | 1.30 km |
| Length of regional trail | 0 km | 0 km | 10.00 km | 17.50 km |

Summary

- Community parkland provision per population ranges between 4.7 ha per 1,000 people in Electoral Area F (low) to 15.8 ha per 1,000 people in Electoral Area H (high).
- Regional parkland provision ranges from 35.4 ha in Electoral Area E (low) to 207.0 ha in Electoral Area G (high).
- Electoral Area F is inland and does not have ocean water access sites but there may be access to freshwater sites on the rivers and lakes. At the time of the study, the number of these potential access points was not determined.
- Apart from Electoral Area H there are relatively few existing formal community and regional trails in the Electoral Areas.
- Roadside trails exist on both developed and undeveloped Road Rights of Way, but the lengths of these routes are not calculated at this time.

COMMUNITY PARKS & TRAILS STRATEGIC PLAN ELECTORAL AREAS E, F, G, & H

2.1.3 Detailed Summary of Electoral Areas

The composition of a community provides insight on planning for parks and trails to accommodate user groups, age ranges and predicted growth.

Electoral Area E

Table 9 provides an overview of relevant statistics for Electoral Area E in comparison to the RDN.

Table 9: Electoral Area E statistics

| Statistical Trends (2011 Census) | Area E | RDN |
|--|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Population 2006 | 5,462 | 138,631 |
| Population 2011 | 5,674 | 146,574 |
| % change in population | 3.9% | 5.7% |
| Population density per km ² | 75.5 | 21.9 |
| Median age | 57.3 | 49.3 |
| % of population under 15 years old and under | 8.6% | 13% |
| % families without children at home | 75% | 64% |
| Average # of children per family | 0.5 | 0.8 |
| Number of community parks | 31 | 187 |
| Area of community parks (hectares/acres) | 29.7 ha 73.4 ac | 600.8 ha 1484.7 ac |
| Community parks/1,000 population (hectares/acres) | 5.2 ha 12.9 ac | 4.1 ha 10.1 ac |

Key Trends

- Population growth over the last 5 years has been slightly above average.
- Population density is fairly high at 75.5 people per square kilometer. This density indicates that Electoral Area E has a more suburban character.
- A higher density makes it easier to fund and service the population with respect to community parks and trails.
- Average population age (57.3 years) is higher than the median age and there are a lower than average number of families with children at home.
- Community parkland provision is slightly higher than the RDN average at 5.2 ha/1,000 population.

COMMUNITY PARKS & TRAILS STRATEGIC PLAN ELECTORAL AREAS E, F, G, & H

Electoral Area F

Table 10 provides an overview of relevant statistics for Electoral Area F in comparison to the RDN.

Table 10: Electoral Area F statistics

| Statistical Trends (2011 Census) | Area F | RDN |
|--|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Population 2006 | 6,680 | 138,631 |
| Population 2011 | 7,422 | 146,574 |
| % change in population | 11% | 5.7% |
| Population density per km ² | 28 | 21.9 |
| Median age | 46 | 49.3 |
| % of population under 15 years old and under | 15.3% | 13% |
| % families without children at home | 53% | 64% |
| Average # of children per family | 0.9 | 0.8 |
| Number of community parks | 16 | 187 |
| Area of community parks (hectares/acres) | 34.6 ha 85.5 ac | 600.8 ha 1484.7 ac |
| Community parks/1,000 population (hectares/acres) | 4.7 ha 11.5 ac | 4.1 ha 10.1 ac |

Key Trends

- Population growth over the last 5 years has been much higher than elsewhere in the RDN.
- Population density is low at 28 people per square kilometer. This density indicates that Electoral Area F has a rural character.
- The lower density presents a challenge in the provision of convenient access to open spaces for all residents. Low density results in more parks and trails serving a smaller population and a smaller tax base.
- Average population age (46 years) is lower than the median age and there is a higher than average number of families with children.
- Community parkland provision is close to the RDN average at 4.7 ha/1,000 population – the lowest in the CPTS study area.

COMMUNITY PARKS & TRAILS STRATEGIC PLAN ELECTORAL AREAS E, F, G, & H

Electoral Area G

Table 11 provides an overview of relevant statistics for Electoral Area G in comparison to the RDN.

Table 11: Electoral Area G statistics

| Statistical Trends (2011 Census) | Area G | RDN |
|--|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Population 2006 | 7,023 | 138,631 |
| Population 2011 | 7,158 | 146,574 |
| % change in population | 1.9% | 5.7% |
| Population density per km ² | 145 | 21.9 |
| Median age | 56.2 | 49.3 |
| % of population under 15 years old and under | 9.8% | 13% |
| % families without children at home | 72% | 64% |
| Average # of children per family | 0.6 | 0.8 |
| Number of community parks | 32 | 187 |
| Area of community parks (hectares/acres) | 57.0 ha 140.9 ac | 600.8 ha 1484.7 ac |
| Community parks/1,000 population (hectares/acres) | 8.0 ha 19.7 ac | 4.1 ha 10.1 ac |

Key Trends

- Population growth over the last 5 years has been flat.
- Population density is very high at 145 people per square kilometer. This density indicates that Electoral Area G has a mostly suburban character.
- A higher density makes it easier to fund and service the population with respect to community parks and trails.
- Average population age (56.2 years) is higher than the median age and there are a lower than average number of families with children at home.
- Community parkland provision is higher than the RDN average at 8.0 ha/1,000 population.
- Electoral Area G has a complex jurisdictional boundary, with the Electoral Area surrounding municipal borders.
- Electoral Area G is situated around the municipal boundaries with Parksville and Qualicum Beach, providing nearby access to community parks in these municipalities.

COMMUNITY PARKS & TRAILS STRATEGIC PLAN ELECTORAL AREAS E, F, G, & H

Electoral Area H

Table 12 provides an overview of relevant statistics for Electoral Area H in comparison to the RDN.

Table 12: Electoral Area H statistics

| Statistical Trends (2011 Census) | Area H | RDN |
|---|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Population 2006 | 3,474 | 138,631 |
| Population 2011 | 3,509 | 146,574 |
| % change in population | 1% | 5.7% |
| Population density per km ² | 12.6 | 21.9 |
| Median age | 56.2 | 49.3 |
| % of population under 15 years old and under | 10% | 13% |
| % families without children at home | 77% | 64% |
| Average # of children per family | 0.5 | 0.8 |
| Number of community parks | 40 | 187 |
| Area of community parks (hectares/acres) | 55.6 ha 137.3 ac | 600.8 ha 1484.7 ac |
| Community parks/1,000 population (hectares/acres) | 15.8 ha 39.1 ac | 4.1 ha 10.1 ac |

Key Trends

- Population growth over the last 5 years has been flat.
- Population density is very low at 12.6 people per square kilometer. Large areas of land in this Electoral Area are private managed forest land and Crown land. The majority of populated area is located along the coast line.
- The lower density presents a challenge in the provision of convenient access to open spaces for all residents. Low density results in more parks and trails serving a smaller population and a smaller tax base.
- Average population age (56.2 years) is higher than the median age and there are a lower than average number of families with children at home.
- Community parkland provision is much higher than the RDN average at 15.8 ha/1,000 population – the highest within the CPTS study area.

COMMUNITY PARKS & TRAILS STRATEGIC PLAN

ELECTORAL AREAS E, F, G, & H

2.2 Community Park Administration

A number of groups are involved in planning, developing and operating community parks. *Table 13* briefly summarizes the roles and responsibilities of the various parties.

Table 13: Community parks: roles and responsibilities

| Group | Responsibility |
|--|--|
| RDN parks planners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Plan, design, research and engage with the public on community parks and trails; ▪ Review development applications related to parks dedication; ▪ Administer POSACs in each Electoral Area; ▪ Develop grant applications; ▪ Identify budgeting for park priorities; and ▪ Support and organize volunteer efforts. |
| RDN operations staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Operate and maintain community parks in each Electoral Area; and ▪ Install park amenities. |
| RDN Board members | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review and approve parks plans and budgets. |
| Parks and Open Space Advisory Committees (POSACs) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Represent public opinion; ▪ Advise on community parks and trails matters; ▪ Review potential park acquisition sites with the park planner; and ▪ Support volunteer efforts. |
| Public | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide input and ideas for community parks and trails; and ▪ Participate in volunteer activities and programs. |

2.2.1 RDN Staff

The Community Parks and Trails function for all RDN Electoral Areas is currently supported by:

- 1 Community Parks Planner;
- 2 Parks Operations Staff;
- 1 Parks and Trails Coordinator (splits time between Community & Regional Park and Trail functions and is tasked with integrating parks and trails at both scales);
- 1 Manager of Parks Services (splits time between Community & Regional Park functions); and
- 1 General Manager of Recreation and Parks Services (splits time between Community & Regional Park and Recreation Facilities and Service functions).

2.2.2 RDN Board & POSACs

The Regional District of Nanaimo Board is responsible for review and approval of acquisition, development and budgets for community parks and trails.

Parks and Open Space Advisory Committees are made up of appointed representatives from Electoral Areas to advise the Regional Board on matters that pertain to community parks and trails in each Electoral Area.

Currently, each Electoral Area has a POSAC comprised of 7 members, including the Electoral Area Board Director. Each POSAC is supported by the Community Parks Planner.

2.2.3 Partnerships/Volunteers

There are currently two formal volunteer opportunities typical to the RDN:

- Participation on the POSACs; and
- The Regional Park Warden Program.

These programs are administered by RDN staff and require time and resources to plan and execute. In addition, the RDN supports informal volunteer opportunities such as trail management and building that are organized by alternate agencies.

Moving forward, the RDN may wish to expand and further define additional volunteer opportunities related to community parks and trails. If this occurs, there will need to be staff time allocated to developing and administering these programs.



Volunteer opportunities can be a valuable resource for community parks and trails; however, these programs require time and resources to develop.

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2.2.4 Comparison to Other Community Park Programs

Looking at other community park programs is a useful way of identifying different approaches and service levels for parks. Sharing ideas between other local and regional government staff is a great way to build partnerships, share resources and ideas and reduce duplication of effort.

Table 14 provides a brief overview of services for the RDN and other surrounding communities including:

- The Capital Regional District (CRD) community parks program;
- The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) community parks program; and
- The City of Nanaimo (CoN) community parks program.

Table 14: Overview of community park programs

| Statistical Trends (2011 Census) | RDN Electoral Areas | CRD Electoral Areas | Cowichan Valley Regional District | City of Nanaimo |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Population 2011 | 37,550 | 19,453 | 31,454 | 83,810 |
| # of Electoral Areas | 7 | 3 | 9 | n/a |
| Area of community park (ha) | 600.9 | Unknown | 950 | 810 |
| Community parks planning staff | 1.5 | 2 | 4 | 2 |
| Permanent community parks operations staff | 2 | 0 | 2 | 29 |
| Seasonal community parks operations staff | 0 | 0 | 1 | 20 |
| Advisory Committees | 7 Committees (POSACs) | 6 Commissions | 10 Commissions | 1 Committee (Parks, Recreation, & Culture) |

Capital Regional District (CRD)

The CRD has three Electoral Areas within its boundaries – Juan de Fuca, Salt Spring Island and the Southern Gulf Islands.

- Many CRD communities are urban, incorporated municipalities that provide municipal community parks.
- In Electoral Areas, the community parks function is typically administered by Parks Commissions comprised of volunteers and an Elected Official. Parks Commissions are delegated the responsibility for administering community park and recreation services.
- The CRD has six Parks Commissions:
 - The Juan de Fuca Electoral Area is the CRD's largest area Electoral Area, encompassing all unincorporated areas within the CVRD on Vancouver Island. The Commission administers 23 community parks, along with foreshore accesses. There is one dedicated parks staff for these parks.
 - The Salt Spring Parks and Recreation Commission (PARC) is an eight member, locally appointed advisory commission. The local CRD Director also sits on the Commission. The Commission administers 62 community parks and 22 trail corridors on Salt Spring Island. There is one dedicated parks and recreation manager for the community.
 - The Galiano Parks Commission administers six community parks and 15 shore accesses on Galiano Island (2007) with plans to improve another 32 of these shore access points.
 - The Pender Islands Parks Commission is composed of eight volunteer Commissioners and the Electoral Area Director for the Southern Gulf Islands, and is delegated administrative powers with respect to the development, maintenance and operation of community parks. The Pender Islands Parks and Recreation Commission manages 80 community parks, beach accesses and trails for the use by residents of North and South Pender Islands.
 - The Mayne Island Parks & Recreation Commission is composed of eight volunteer Commissioners and the Electoral Area Director for the Southern Gulf Islands, and is delegated administrative powers with respect to the development, maintenance and operation of community parks and trails on Mayne Island.
 - The Saturna Island Commission administrates services that provide community parks and recreation for Saturna Island. The commission operates its services with volunteers.

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Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD)

The CVRD is comprised of nine Electoral Areas and four incorporated municipalities. With a large rural land base, the CVRD and RDN have distinct similarities in community composition, although the CVRD has more 'village' type developments within its urban areas.

- Since 2005, the parks and trails system has been growing rapidly, adding about 10-15 community parks each year.
- Leases and licenses are significant tools in securing community park space. The CVRD maintains multiple agreements with MoTI, Crown, private forest companies, non-profit organizations, and in some cases private landowners (although the preference is to obtain land outright from private owners).
- While the communities continue to place a high value on natural areas, demand for more urban-types of parks is increasing.
- The CVRD has seven full-time planning staff and one administrative staff who split their time between community and regional parks.
- The CVRD completes all their operations and maintenance through a contract basis. They maintain a seasonal operations assistant, carpenter and part-time carpenter's assistant for minor improvements.
- Like the RDN, each Electoral Area in the CVRD funds community parks function separately.
- There are 10 Parks Commissions – one for each Electoral Area plus the sub-regional South Cowichan Parks Commission, which includes four Electoral Areas. The Commissions provide feedback and guidance on budgets, priorities and parks and trails planning. Each fall the Commission completes a planning exercise to set priorities for the following year. Typically this exercise looks beyond the current year to plan for a long-term future.
- The Commission Chairs from each Electoral Area meet three to four times each year to evaluate priorities, discuss commonalities and plan for the future. The benefit to these meetings is an increased awareness and opportunity for cooperation amongst the Commissions.
- The Parks Planner prepares an annual report that documents directions and achievements for the parks system (regional and community) and is distributed to Board Directors and Commissions as well as posted online for public review.
- General trends have suggested a desire to increase walkability and cycling through trail linkages and corridors. In rural areas, MoTI is the road authority which creates challenges for securing pathways.

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- Long-term planning is well-supported by the community. Two of the nine Electoral Areas have community parks and trails plans in place and two additional Electoral Areas are currently completing plans. These tools are proving to be valuable for staff and Commissions to envision a long-term future and implement steps to achieve this vision
- It is becoming increasingly common for developers to provide neighbourhood park amenities for their 5% parkland dedications.
- Funding requisitions for community parks and trails have been increasing to account for development and operation costs as the number of parks and trails grow.

City of Nanaimo

The City of Nanaimo is an urban municipality, which means it has a greater population base and density for funding community parks and trails.

- A substantial area of park (approximately 193 ha or 24%) has been added since 2009, supporting the trend of increases in parkland.
- The City considers 85% of their community parkland to be natural in character.
- While the City has only two dedicated parks planning staff – one parks planner and one outdoor programmer – they have almost 30 full-time operational staff and approximately 20 seasonal staff dedicated to developing and maintaining community parks, boulevards and public spaces. They also have several parks custodians and civic property custodians.
- The City has one Parks, Recreation and Culture Commission which serves as an advisory board. Positions on the commission include:
 - Three City Councillors;
 - Three RDN Representatives;
 - Six Members at Large; and
 - Senior staff who attend Commission meetings.
- There are several sub-committees of the Parks, Recreation, & Culture (PRC) Commission. The mandate of the Commission is to represent the public for important decisions surrounding parks. Some key tasks they complete include grant approvals, review and approval of staff actions for political decisions, review and comment on annual budgets and input on other key decisions.
- The City runs an extensive *Volunteers in Parks* program that includes opportunities for neighbourhood playground development, invasive plant removal, youth opportunities, park wardens, public art, gatekeepers, park naturalists, community gardens, beautifications, and boulevard tree planting opportunities.

2.3 Evolution of Community Parks & Trails

2.3.1 Parkland Growth & Development

Since its beginning in the 1960s, the community parks and trails system has been growing at an accelerated pace. In Electoral Areas E, F, G and H community park area has grown from approximately 2 hectares of parkland in 1965 to almost 190 hectares in 2012.

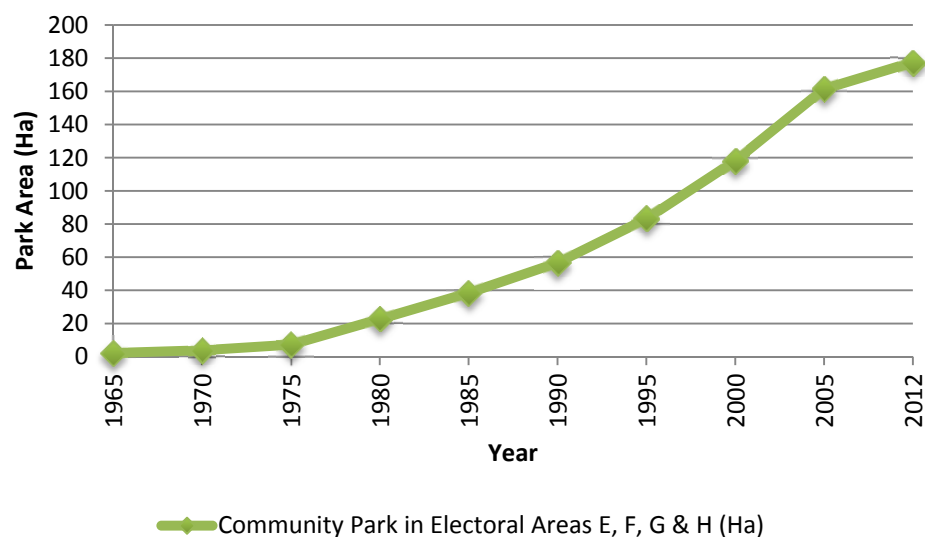


Figure 4: Community park land growth in Electoral Areas E, F, G, H (1965-2012)

Table 15 provides a snapshot comparison of how the recent growth of community parkland in Electoral Areas E, F, G and H has related to population growth in the RDN over the past 15 years.

Table 15: Parkland vs. population growth (1996 - 2011) in Electoral Areas E, F, G & H

| | Population Growth | Parkland Growth |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1996 | Total population 19,413 | Community parkland 83 ha |
| 2011 | Total population 23,763 | Community parkland 180 ha |
| % Change over 15 years | 22% | 117% |
| Average annual growth rate | 1.5% per year | 7.8% per year |

While this is a general snapshot in time, the trend shows that community parkland growth in Electoral Areas E, F, G and H has accelerated at a greater speed than population growth in the electoral areas during this timeframe. This trend indicates challenges of funding through taxation keeping up with parkland dedication and development.

2.3.2 Evolution of Parkland Type

Public input during this process indicated that in many areas the public is generally satisfied with the amount of community parkland that is available. However, input indicates that there is a desire for more parkland that is developed to a neighbourhood standard – with amenities such as playgrounds, structures, signage, trails and manicured areas.

When the community parks function began, the focus was largely on obtaining and preserving parkland and open space. In these early days, parkland was typically held in a natural undeveloped state with no amenities. Given the rural nature of the Electoral Areas, demand and capacity for more urban-style parks was limited. During this time, staff and funding resources were very restricted and did not support park development.

Due to an increase in population and the densification of communities, as well as increased awareness around the value of access to parks, public demand for improved parkland has been growing steadily. Over time, the community parks function has evolved from a mechanism for preserving open space to a function that supports strategic planning, design, development and operation of parkland.

Undeveloped parks, including nature parks and potential neighbourhood parks that are held in reserve for future development, receive little to no maintenance, which means operational costs for these sites are minimal. When parkland is developed, even to a small degree, maintenance requirements increase as well. Developed parks invite public use, which increases maintenance requirements, at minimum, for safety. Practices including safety inspections and tree and amenity maintenance are required.

Table 16 (on the following page) provides an overview of tasks typically required in developed parks, along with general estimates for these tasks. These estimates are intended to provide an indication of the level of effort required to maintain a developed park. Actual costs should be tracked and refined as parkland is developed to maintain an understanding of current operational requirements.



Natural and undeveloped parkland have very few requirements for maintenance and operations.



When parkland is developed with amenities, maintenance requirements including safety inspections, mowing and repairs increase substantially.

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Table 16: Preliminary estimates for maintenance requirements

| Task | Budget Estimate |
|--------------------|--|
| Mowing | \$160/ha (\$65/acre) |
| Garbage Receptacle | First Can at Site = \$600/year Additional Cans at Site = \$350/year |
| Porta Potty | \$1,600/year |
| Weeding | \$35/hour |
| Tree Maintenance | Varies |
| Structure Repairs | Varies |
| Trail Maintenance | Varies |

2.3.3 Evolution of Parks Servicing

Staffing for parks services has evolved over the past two decades. *Table 17* summarizes the records and anecdotal information available about the program.

Table 17: A summary of the evolution of park services

| Date | Staff Description |
|--------------|--|
| Pre-1997 | 1 Staff: Parks planning was completed under the Planning Department and staffed by one parks planner who was responsible for reviewing parkland dedication through subdivision. At this time there was no development or maintenance of the system. |
| 1997 | 2 Staff: The first full-time parks coordinator was hired to complete planning, development and maintenance tasks for parks. |
| 2000 | 3 Staff: A parks and trails coordinator and parks technician were brought on full-time. |
| 2006 | 4 Staff: A parks manager role was created. Summer and temporary staff were added. |
| 2008 | 6 Staff: Two planning staff were added (parks and trails coordinator, parks planner), as well as three operations staff (parks operations coordinator, two parks technicians) and 1 manager. Summer and temp positions were eliminated to create full time positions. |
| 2009 to 2014 | 8 Staff: Community and regional park functions were split recognizing the growth of both systems. A planner and an operations coordinator were added. Total staff include three planning staff, four operations staff and one manager. |

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Key trends that have contributed to demand for staffing include:

- Overall growth of the community and regional parks systems.
- A shift from more natural parks to parks with a greater level of development and amenities (*e.g.*, garbage cans, porta-potties, benches, play equipment, manicured grass, etc.) which increases requirements for maintenance and operations.
- Increased regulations and permit requirements for parks development including:
 - External processes (*e.g.*, Riparian Area Regulations, Section 9 Water Act Notification, Archaeological Assessment); and
 - Internal processes (*e.g.*, building permits, development permits, contract requirements).
- Increased risk management demand, including liability management. For example, in the past, volunteers were able to build structures like beach access stairs. Today, increased liability insurance requirements necessitate engineering design and professional construction for large structures.
- Lease requirements with other agencies such as MoTI include higher standards for development.
- Increased design development processes for parks including concept development, community consultation, detailed design and construction documentation.
- Technology improvements including website, GIS mapping and social media have increased demand for readily accessible and accurate information.
- Community consultation and participation requirements have increased over time and the number of POSACs has increased from one in 1998 to seven today.

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2.3.4 Park System Development

Dedicated parks staff came online in 1997 as demand for community parks projects grew. A review of parks projects over the past 15 years provides an overview of the evolution of parks projects and services. *Table 18* provides an overview of key capital and planning projects completed between 1997 and 2013².

Table 18: Community park projects (1997-2013)

| Date | Staff Description |
|------|---|
| 1997 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Morden Colliery Bridge and Trail Construction (community park at the time) ▪ San Pareil Boardwalk Install |
| 1998 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Miraloma Park Development |
| 1999 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Boulton Park Development ▪ Nanoose Playground Install ▪ Dunsmuir Park Development |
| 2000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Area B Beach Access Study ▪ Area H Beach Access Study |
| 2001 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nanoose Bay Parks Plan |
| 2002 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Area A Trails Study |
| 2003 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Area E Beach Access Study |
| 2004 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Area F Trails Plan |
| 2005 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cox Community Park – Trail and Bridge Install |
| 2006 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cedar Heritage Centre Playground Install ▪ El Verano Beach Access Parking Lot |
| 2007 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mudge Island Park Shore Restoration ▪ Nelson Boat Ramp Improvements ▪ Joyce Lockwood Community Park Stairs Install |
| 2008 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Thelma Griffiths Community Park Redevelopment Planning and Install ▪ Local Motion and Active Communities Grant Application for Meadow Drive Community Park |

² Note: The project list is based on historical records and anecdotal information and should not be considered a comprehensive list of all past projects. The list includes planning and capital projects only – engineering, environmental and other technical studies are not included.

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| Date | Staff Description |
|-------------|---|
| 2009 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meadow Drive Community Park Development Planning ▪ Deep Bay Community Park Boardwalk ▪ 707 Management Plan ▪ Cedar Skateboard Park Planning ▪ Extension Miners Community Park Planning and Install ▪ Dashwood Community Park Playground Install |
| 2010 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meadow Drive Community Park Completion ▪ Cedar Plaza Design Development and Install ▪ Andres Dorit Community Park Design ▪ 707 Community Park Management Plan (completion) ▪ Decourcy Community Park Stairs Install ▪ Fairwinds Neighbourhood Plan |
| 2011 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Henry Morgan Community Park Design Process ▪ Cedar Plaza Construction ▪ Meadowood Way Community Park Planning Process ▪ Cedar Skateboard Park Construction Drawings ▪ Grant applications for Henry Morgan, Meadowood Way and Cedar Skateboard Park ▪ 707 Community Park Signage Plan ▪ Fairwinds Neighbourhood Plan |
| 2012 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meadowood Way Community Park Planning Process ▪ Quenelle Lake Boat Launch Planning and Install ▪ Miller Road Bank Armoring ▪ Community Parks and Trails Strategy ▪ 707 Community Park Signage Install ▪ South Road Stairs ▪ ACT Trails – Act I development |
| 2013 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Henry Morgan Community Park Install ▪ Andres Dorit Community Park Open House ▪ Blue Back Community Park Planning ▪ Mudge Island Community Park Planning ▪ Huxley Community Park Planning Process ▪ Cedar Skatepark Install ▪ Community Parks and Trails Strategy ▪ Parks & Trails Guidelines & Standards Document ▪ 707 Community Park Bank Stabilization ▪ ACT Trails – Act II development ▪ Fairwinds Rezoning Phased Development Agreement |



Henry Morgan Park, completed in 2013.

2.4 Trends Affecting Community Parks & Trails

2.4.1 Population Growth

The number of people living in the RDN has increased 5.7% between 2006 and 2011, resulting in an additional 8,000 people. While the growth rate varies considerably between Electoral Areas, the net effect is increasing community pressures on existing resources and staff. In most cases, development accompanies population growth which provides opportunities to acquire or obtain cash-in-lieu funding for community parks. However, acquisition funds are only suitable for obtaining parkland and costs associated for development, operations and maintenance of parklands may require deeper investment from the RDN.

2.4.2 Aging & Community Expectations

The Baby Boom generation accounts for one-third of the Canadian population and has a profound effect on parks and leisure services. This population cohort is often focused on improved health and interested in low-impact activities such as walking and biking. The development of greenways, bikeways and pathway systems is a key priority for community open space systems.



The Baby Boom generation, which accounts for a large portion of our population, is becoming an increasingly active population that demands access to active transportation and low-impact recreation.

In addition to walking and biking for recreation there is also a trend towards active transportation and a desire to move through communities without reliance on motorized transportation. The CPTS engagement process reflected this trend with a strong emphasis on roadside trails. The results from the online surveys in the CPTS showed dissatisfaction with regard to trail access for all of the Electoral Areas. It is anticipated that this will be a focus for community parks and trails in the coming years.

2.4.3 Downloading

In recent years, senior levels of government have been downloading responsibilities to regional and municipal governments, a trend that is expected to continue. With growing health care and education costs, the province is becoming increasingly less involved in providing parks services at the provincial level. This trend means that local governments, including the RDN, are required to play a larger role in the provision of parks and trails. These trends, and the results from the public engagement process, suggest that the RDN parks staffing levels will need to expand to meet community needs and expectations – in particular, additional resources aimed at trail planning and construction.

2.4.4 Benefits of Community Parks & Trails

The benefits of parks and trails have been well researched and documented over the past decade. There is a growing awareness that access to nature and quality open spaces is fundamental to health, social function and economic prosperity.

Economic Benefits

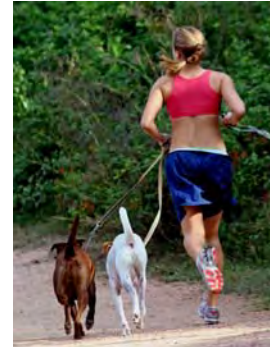
Economic value can be measured through elements like property values, profits generated from tourism, and savings on infrastructure to manage water and transportation. Several studies have been conducted to help better understand the value that parks and trail systems bring to neighbourhoods.

Parks and trail systems typically have a positive impact on property values in both urban and rural areas; in more densely populated areas the impact is greater, raising land values. A study prepared in a rural county near Austin, Texas shows that parks had no significant negative impact on the property prices (Nicholls and Crompton, 2005).

In recent years, buyers are showing increasing interest in the amenity value of their neighbourhoods – often valuing proximity to parkland when selecting a home. This phenomenon is called “hedonic value”. The main factor that affects property values near amenity open spaces is the distance. A recent study conducted in Miami, Ohio concluded that a home in Hamilton County will devalue by \$8,960 (USD) as it moves away from Little’s Miami Scenic trailhead by 300 meters (vom Hofe and Parent). Residential properties close to the Minuteman Bikeway and Nashua River Rail Trail in Massachusetts sold closer to their list price compared to those more distant from the trails. Furthermore, properties closest to trails sold nearly twice as fast than those that were not (State of Florida, 2006).

Parks and trail systems also have a positive impact on tourism. A large trail system can be a recreational destination and thus attracts visitors in the area. The Great Allegheny Passage (GAP), a multi-use trail between Pennsylvania and Maryland, has generated over \$40 million (USD) in direct annual spending and \$ 7.5 million (USD) in wages in 2008. Business owners along the GAP attribute 25% of their revenues to their proximity to the trail (The Great Allegheny Passage Economic Impact Study, 2008).

Finally, parks and trail systems can help reduce the infrastructure costs through preservation of natural watersheds. Surface drainage reduces construction and maintenance costs from conventional underground drainage infrastructure. In a subdivision development in the USA, a



Access to outdoor recreation opportunities is becoming an increasingly important part of the amenity value that people are seeking when selecting places to live.

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developer saved \$800 per lot with the use of an open drainage system, conveying the stormwater run-off through swales to irrigate agricultural areas, rather than of installing a closed drainage system with storm sewers (Rocky Mountain Institute, 2008).

Health Benefits

Participation in physical activity and recreation is a key determinant of health status and is known to:

- Reduce risk of heart disease and stroke, the leading cause of death in Canada;
- Help prevent certain types of cancers including colon, breast and lung;
- Help combat type 2 diabetes, the fourth greatest cause of death in Canada;
- Reduce occurrence of youth obesity, which often translates to adult obesity;
- Reduce the occurrence of adult obesity, a key contributor to chronic health conditions;
- Help reduce incidence of fall-related injuries and chronic conditions in older adults; and
- Foster social opportunities and contribute to mental health by reducing stress, combatting depression and building emotional well-being.



Community parks provide health benefits for people of all ages and interests.

“United States health authorities have identified increasing physical activity as a key factor in controlling health care costs in that country, through the prevention of unnecessary illness, disability and premature death, and the maintenance of an improved quality of life into old age” (Colman & Walker, 2004).

“Just over 1,400 British Columbians die prematurely each year due to physical inactivity, accounting for 5.0% of all premature deaths” (Katzmarzyk, et.al, 2000). Chronic conditions such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes are sometimes known as lifestyle diseases due to their strong correlation to personal behaviour choices. Twenty percent or more of the cases of type 2 diabetes, stroke, coronary heart disease and colon cancer result from a sedentary lifestyle; being obese more than doubles an individual’s risk of dying early – or losing an average of seven years of life (BCHLA, 2005). Statistics Canada (2004) reports that in 2004, 26% of youth between the ages of 2 and 17 were overweight or obese. This is over 2.5 times higher than the prevalence of youth obesity 25 years ago.

Physical inactivity is identified as a major contributor to chronic diseases. In BC, approximately 1.2 million people, or 36% of adults suffer from some type of chronic condition (BCHLA, 2005). Chronic diseases are long-lasting conditions that are rarely cured completely. For people suffering from chronic diseases, the effect is felt physically, emotionally and mentally. It is often a challenge to maintain normal routines and relationships. Studies show that chronic diseases cost BC's economy around \$3.8 billion annually (BCHLA, 2005). The good news is that a large proportion of chronic disease incidences in BC could be prevented through increased physical activity.

Regular, life-long physical activity can help increase overall wellness and reduce illnesses. Over the long term, it can postpone disability and allow for longer independent living in elderly individuals. According to Torjman (2004), older adults who are physically active show characteristics of being physiologically one to two decades younger than their sedentary counterparts.

Physical activity does not have to be overly strenuous or prolonged – moderate levels of physical activity can have significant health benefits. Many experts believe that building physical activity into daily routines through accessible recreation opportunities and active transportation is one of the most effective ways to improve community fitness.

More than just improving physical health, recreation has been linked to mental health. It is connected to improved self-esteem, decreased stress and anxiety and overall well-being.

Generally, physical activity makes people feel better about themselves and helps to reduce physiological reactions to stress and anxiety. It is also known to help sleep and improve mood. "Physical activity can be considered both for its therapeutic effects on mental illness, and also for its impact on mental health in the general population" (Britain's Department of Health, Physical Activity, Health Improvement and Prevention, 2004). Overall, physically active people feel happier and more satisfied with life, regardless of socioeconomic or health status.

Connections with the community and a supportive environment can both prevent and mitigate the impact of mental health disorders in some people and encourage overall well-being. Recreation facilities, parks and trails can be places for safe physical activity and mental solace.



Active transportation is becoming increasingly popular as people realize the benefits of regular activity. Trail development helps support active transportation.



Parks have a key role in building social cohesion and civic pride.

Community Benefits

Recreation engages our people and builds social cohesion resulting in communities with civic pride and participation. People feel an emotional connection to the places that bring them enjoyment, making recreation nodes truly a heart within our communities.

As the single largest citizen participation mechanism in BC, indoor and outdoor recreation facilities enable hundreds of thousands of British Columbians to participate in leisure activities. Park, recreation and cultural facilities offer places and programs for us to gather and build relationships. The resulting social capital – relationships and norms that are created when people come together out of a shared purpose – creates communities where people feel connected, children have positive role models and celebrations occur (Bloom et.al, 2005).

In communities that offer a wide variety of facilities and recreation options, there are opportunities for all residents to participate regardless of economic or cultural background. Sport, culture and other recreational pursuits can encourage mutual respect, inclusion, tolerance and understanding.

Every citizen is a potential participant and can be involved according to their needs, preferences, abilities and goals. Participation can act to address and promote social change by incorporating safety, gender equity, equitable access and violence prevention.

3.0 PLANNING FRAMEWORK FOR COMMUNITY PARKS & TRAILS

3.1 Goals & Objectives of the CPTS

Goals

The CPTS is intended to provide a framework for decision-making for community parks and trails. Acquisition and development of community parks should follow the following goals:

Connect People and Places

Develop an inter-connected system of parks and trails that supports active transportation (travel to destinations), recreation (exercise) and nature appreciation (spiritual) that is accessible to all community residents.

Provide Social and Recreation Opportunities

Create a community where a variety of public spaces provide local opportunities for active living, social interaction and play.

Protect the Environment

Safeguard the natural setting and character of the community and surrounding environmental functions.

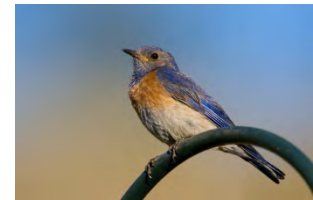
Support Community Partnerships

Encourage community spirit and energy when implementing the strategy.

Objectives

A related objective is to provide outdoor venues that bring together members of the community both physically and socially, while improving the overall livability of the community. This will be accomplished through:

- Developing a community trails system that provides residents with alternatives to motorized travel and recreational connections that link key destinations;
- Providing local recreational opportunities and public gathering spaces for community residents that are generally within a 500 m to one km radius of populated residential areas;
- Providing information that lets people know about the system available to them; and
- Protecting environmentally and culturally sensitive features and functions.



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Electoral Area Vision Statements

Through public consultation a vision statement was created for each Electoral Area. While the visions share common components, each shows a unique emphasis and priority for community parks and trails.

The process used to develop vision statements that involved the Advisory Committees, respondents to the online surveys and Open House participants. A draft list of key relevant words or phrases that have been used in similar projects was provided in Survey #1 and at the Open House and residents identified words that resonated with them from the list. These words were crafted into a draft vision statement that was tested for validity during the second Open House and online survey and suggestions were incorporated into the final vision statement for each Electoral Area.

Electoral Area E

“A vibrant community where residents can easily access community parks and beaches through a system of inter-connected trails that provides for recreation, social interaction and nature appreciation.”

Electoral Area F

“A community where all residents can easily access a system of inter-connected community trails for recreation, alternative transportation opportunities and nature appreciation and local parks for play and social interaction.”

Electoral Area G

“A vibrant community where residents can easily access community parks and other destinations using a system of inter-connected trails that provides for recreation, social interaction and nature appreciation.”

Electoral Area H

“A vibrant community where residents can easily access community parks, beaches, services, and destinations using a system of inter-connected trails for recreation, social interaction and nature appreciation.”

3.2 Community Parks Classification

Classifying community parks according to their primary function provides a basis for understanding the composition and distribution of parkland in the region. This classification enables the RDN to:

- Plan for present and future population needs;
- Prioritize classes of park development that may be under represented in some areas;
- Evaluate ideas for acquisition and improvement against criteria to ensure land base is suited for intended purpose; and
- Better understand operational budget requirements.

3.2.1 Proposed Community Park Classes

There are five park classes proposed for the community park system:

- 1) Neighbourhood Park
- 2) Natural Park
- 3) Linear Park
- 4) Water Access
- 5) Surplus

The following tables summarize typical characteristics of each of the five park classes.

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1. Neighbourhood Park



Neighbourhood parks often include amenities like playgrounds and open space.

Table 19: Neighbourhood park characteristics

| Function | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| Primary Function | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide active recreation amenities | | |
| Secondary Function(s) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protection of natural areas Provision of trails Protection of cultural or heritage features | | |
| Criteria | | | |
| Usable Space | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Min. 0.5 acres of usable area | | |
| Max. Slope | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <20% slope for 90% of site | | |
| Shape | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equilateral rectangle preferred Good road frontage exposure (corner lot preferred) No panhandle lots Minimal number of residential backyards along the park edges | | |
| Encumbrances | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absent or minimal encumbrances such as geotechnical, floodplain, environmental and underground utilities (encumbrances are permissible over and above the 5% dedication) | | |
| Location | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Closer/within population centres; not in lower density rural areas | | |
| Other | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water service connection where possible | | |
| Typical Development | | | |
| Amenities | <table border="0"> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playground Trails Sports field Sports court Washroom Picnic facilities </td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benches Signage Bike facilities Parking Art Water service </td> </tr> </table> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playground Trails Sports field Sports court Washroom Picnic facilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benches Signage Bike facilities Parking Art Water service |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Playground Trails Sports field Sports court Washroom Picnic facilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benches Signage Bike facilities Parking Art Water service | | |

2. Natural Park

Table 20: Natural park characteristics

| Function | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| Primary Function | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Protection of a significant environmental features or functions | | |
| Secondary Function(s) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Protection of cultural or heritage features ▪ Provision of trails ▪ Providing local 'green space' for aesthetics and nature appreciation | | |
| Criteria | | | |
| Usable Space | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sufficient to protect environmental feature | | |
| Max. Slope | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No max. slope ▪ Not to include high risk, geotechnically-sensitive lands that require significant engineering works | | |
| Shape | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No constraints | | |
| Encumbrances | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Absent or minimal encumbrances that may impact environmental protection | | |
| Location | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No location constraints | | |
| Typical Development | | | |
| Amenities | <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="border-right: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trail segments ▪ Benches ▪ Fencing </td> <td style="padding: 5px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interpretive signage ▪ Habitat restoration ▪ Wildlife boxes </td> </tr> </table> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trail segments ▪ Benches ▪ Fencing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interpretive signage ▪ Habitat restoration ▪ Wildlife boxes |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Trail segments ▪ Benches ▪ Fencing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interpretive signage ▪ Habitat restoration ▪ Wildlife boxes | | |



The primary objective of natural parks is protection of environmental features.

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3. Linear Park



Linear parks provide trail connections.

Table 21: Linear park characteristics

| Function | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| Primary Function | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trail connectivity to community destinations through active transportation | | |
| Secondary Function(s) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to natural areas Emergency access/egress | | |
| Criteria | | | |
| Usable Space | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum 4m on cleared sites Minimum 10m where significant trees are present | | |
| Max. Slope | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2% preferred trail slope for accessible trails 5% max. slope over long distances for accessible trails Where slopes exceed 5%, landings required for accessible trails Slopes may be steeper in backcountry trails Switchbacks or steps on steep lands | | |
| Shape | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linear | | |
| Encumbrances | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to build hard surface pathway without encumbering access to underground utilities Not obstructed by utility boxes, hydro, mailbox, hydrants, etc. | | |
| Location | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connecting key destinations | | |
| Typical Development | | | |
| Amenities | <table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trail Signage Fencing </td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bollards Benches </td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trail Signage Fencing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bollards Benches |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trail Signage Fencing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bollards Benches | | |

4. Water Access

Table 22: Water access characteristics

| Function | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| Primary Function | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Access to ocean or river frontage | | |
| Secondary Function(s) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Natural area protection ▪ Viewing opportunities ▪ Trails | | |
| Criteria | | | |
| Usable Space | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No required size ▪ Unstable slopes to be avoided | | |
| Max. Slope | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No max. slope ▪ Low bank sites with easier access are preferred ▪ Slopes >50% may require stairs and have higher costs | | |
| Shape | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Linear | | |
| Encumbrances | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Access achieved with minimal tree or vegetation removal | | |
| Location | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use of public, undeveloped road rights of way is preferred ▪ No encroachment onto adjacent properties ▪ Adequate buffer to adjacent private properties | | |
| Typical Development | | | |
| Amenities | <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parking ▪ Benches ▪ Washroom </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Signage ▪ Stairs ▪ Trail </td> </tr> </table> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parking ▪ Benches ▪ Washroom | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Signage ▪ Stairs ▪ Trail |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parking ▪ Benches ▪ Washroom | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Signage ▪ Stairs ▪ Trail | | |



Water accesses provide opportunities view and interact with oceans and rivers.

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5. Surplus Park

Table 23: Surplus park characteristics

| Function | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Primary Function | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lands acquired in past without environmental protection or active park value or potential ▪ The cost/benefit analysis suggests disposition may be desirable |
| Secondary Function(s) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ n/a |
| Criteria | |
| Usable Space | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ n/a |
| Max. Slope | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ n/a |
| Shape | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ n/a |
| Encumbrances | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ n/a |
| Location | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Varies |
| Typical Development | |
| Amenities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None |

3.2.2 Summary of Existing Park Types

Table 24 provides a summary of the total number of existing parks and trails by type in each of the four Electoral Areas. This list includes trail and beach accesses under permit on MoTI lands and private agreement for trails.

Table 24: Existing park classification summary

| Park Classification | Electoral Area E | Electoral Area F | Electoral Area G | Electoral Area H |
|---------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Neighbourhood Park | 8 | 3 | 9 | 9 |
| Natural Park | 13 | 7 | 12 | 9 |
| Water Access | 0 | 0 | 4 | 10 |
| Linear Park | 10 | 4 | 12 | 9 |
| Surplus | 0 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 31 | 17 | 38 | 37 |

Summary Observations

- Area F, with its rural nature, has fewer neighbourhood parks than the other areas.
- All areas have approximately even numbers of natural parks.
- Area H has the greatest number of secured water access parks. Area E does not have any existing water access parks even though it does have oceanfront.
- Area H has the greatest number of linear parks.
- Area F has the greatest number of parks deemed to be potentially surplus.

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3.3 Community Trails Classifications



Type 1 trails are proposed to have hard or compacted surfaces that are accessible for a wide range of transportation options.



Type 2 trails will have a soft surface and will be suitable for local connections.



Type 3 trails will have a natural surface and will be suitable backcountry and rural recreation.

Concurrent with the CPTS, the RDN is developing a set of Parks and Trails Guidelines. The guidelines have been developed for creating and maintaining parks and trails. The document provides descriptions, examples and guidelines for three different classes of trails. Classifying trails types helps to:

- Plan and develop trails to a consistent standard; and
- Better understand operations budget requirements.

3.3.1 Proposed Trail Classes

There are three trail classes proposed for the RDN:

- 1) Type 1 – Hard/Compacted Surface Trail
- 2) Type 2 – Soft Surface Trail
- 3) Type 3 – Natural Surface Trail

Table 25: Summary of trail classes

| Trail Class | Typical Characteristics |
|---|---|
| Type 1: Hard /Compacted Surface Trail (Highest level of development) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Urban or rural areas ▪ Target uses: active transportation, tourism, recreation ▪ Target user groups: local residents, commuters, tourists ▪ Level of amenities: high ▪ Surface: paved/compacted gravel ▪ Maintenance level: high ▪ Construction and maintenance costs: high |
| Type 2: Soft Surface Trail (Medium development) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Urban or rural areas ▪ Target uses: recreation ▪ Target user groups: local residents ▪ Level of amenities: low ▪ Surface: crushed gravel or natural surface ▪ Maintenance level: moderate ▪ Construction and maintenance costs: moderate |
| Type 3: Natural Surface (Minimum development) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rural or backcountry areas ▪ Target uses: recreation ▪ Target user groups: local residents, tourists ▪ Level of amenities: low to none ▪ Surface: natural, gravel where needed ▪ Maintenance level: low ▪ Construction and maintenance costs: low |

At the time of the CPTS development, existing community trails have not been classified in the RDN. As new trails are developed, mapping and documentation should reflect the trail classes identified in the Parks and Trails Guidelines.

3.4 Parkland Provision

Different approaches can be used for determining how much community parkland should be provided in Electoral Areas:

- **Traditional Standards-Based Approach:** This traditional methodology applies a numerical standard to evaluating parkland provision. A typical standard for community parks is 2.5 to 5.0 hectares per 1,000 population. There are challenges applying this approach evenly between urban and rural communities as it cannot factor in the different demographic profiles of communities or the class of parkland being provided. The existing community parkland provision for the Electoral Areas in the CPTS ranges from 4.7 to 15.8 hectares per 1,000 population.
- **Distance Standard Approach:** 500 meters is a common standard for measuring walking distance to community parks. This length has been identified as the distance most people are willing to walk to a park. This standard is most relevant in urban and suburban population densities where private open space is limited. In rural areas, private lots are typically larger and access to rural open space is more prevalent, reducing the need for dedicated park within walking distance. Due to the varied development of the Electoral Areas in the RDN (urban, suburban and rural), it is recommended that a flexible approach be taken – using 500 m radius for neighbourhood parks in suburban and urban areas, up to one km or more in more rural areas.
- **Community-Based Approach:** A community-based approach combines quantitative data and qualitative information such as demographics, population growth and densities, distance to other park types (Regional Parks, Provincial Parks, Crown lands, etc.), active and passive parkland types and user input to identify priorities for community parks decisions. This is the recommended approach for developing community parks and trails in the RDN.

3.4.1 Process for Determining Parkland Provision

The following steps are proposed for determining need and location of additional parkland using a community-based approach:

1. Review existing parkland classes to understand how much of each park type exists in the local area.
2. Review the existing community parkland acreage per 1,000 population as a general indication of parkland provision.
3. Review mapping showing 1 km radius circles around existing parkland to show how the area is generally served by existing parkland.
4. Consider the following key statistics to understand the general demographic profile and sense of need for the Electoral Area being considered:
 - Percent change in population over the past 5 years;
 - Population density per sq. km;
 - Median age of population;
 - Percent of population under 15 years old and under; and
 - Percent of population without children at home.
5. Consider priorities identified in this plan through public consultation (See Section 4.2), as well as other input received through the Parks Department.
6. Map and review the results of analysis onto the Community Parks and Trails Mapping for the Electoral Area.

This analysis will be useful to strategically determine needs, value of park dedication versus cash-in-lieu and a general indication of the class of park that is best suited to the location and demographic profile.

3.5 Community Parkland Acquisition Criteria

One of the challenges encountered when planning for community parks and trails is evaluating whether new acquisitions fit the needs of the overall system. To support this evaluation, community parkland acquisition criteria are proposed. These criteria will:

- Support RDN Staff and POSAC members in evaluating potential community park and trail acquisitions and making decisions about whether proposed parkland should be added to the system or if cash-in-lieu should be considered;
- Help identify appropriate classification for potential community park dedications;
- Provide developers a set of clear criteria to review in advance of proposing dedications; and
- Increase consistency and objectivity of assessments over time.

Table 26 is a Community Parkland Evaluation Criteria Checklist that provides a set of proposed criteria and value questions to be asked when evaluating potential community parkland acquisitions.

The checklist is organized under 6 categories and is designed to align with the proposed parks classes (See **Section 3.2.1: Proposed Community Park Classes**). The 6 categories are described as follows:

- **General Demographics & Public Values:** These values typically apply to all types of community parks. Parks that score high in this category may be well suited for acquisition and addition to the community parks system.
- **Neighbourhood Park Values:** These values are desirable for establishing neighbourhood parks with amenities. Parks that score high in this category may be most suitable for neighbourhood parks.
- **Ecological Park Values:** These values include protection and enhancement of natural environments. Parks that score high in this category may be most suitable for ecological park development.
- **Linear Park Values:** These values include connectivity and trail potential. Parks that score high in this category may be most suitable for trail development.
- **Water Access Values:** These values pertain to water sites. Parks that score high in this category may be most suitable for water access development.



Neighbourhood park values



Ecological park values



Linear park values



Water access values

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- **Affordability:** These values include costs for acquiring, developing and maintaining park properties and typically apply to all community parks. Parks that score high in this category will be more cost effective.
- Where review identifies potential parkland to be low in all or most of the above categories, alternatives to acquisition (e.g., cash-in-lieu) should be considered.

The CPTS recommends that this checklist be incorporated with Policy C1.5: *Review of the Consideration of Park Land in Conjunction with the Subdivision Application Process* and also used during the Rezoning Review process.

Evaluators using the table will review the criteria and decide if the subject site provides:

- **High Value:** If the site would be a significant asset or fully fulfill the evaluation criteria
- **Moderate Value:** If the site would be a good or moderate asset or partially fulfill the evaluation criteria
- **Low Value:** If the site would be a low or negative asset or does not fill the evaluation criteria

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Table 26: Proposed community park land and trails evaluation criteria checklist

| Category 1: General Demographic & Public Values | | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|----------------|-----------|
| Proposed Criteria | Evaluation Criteria | Assigned Value/Quality (check column) | | |
| | | High Value | Moderate Value | Low Value |
| 1) Population Density | Is the site located in an area with substantial existing or anticipated residential density where there will be a high demand for community park? | | | |
| 2) Existing Park Access | Will the acquisition provide parkland to a neighbourhood that is currently underserved by parks and recreation opportunities? | | | |
| 3) Level of Public Interest | Is there a known community interest for park development in the area? | | | |
| 4) Neighbouring Property Impacts | Could park development in this area have a significant negative impact on existing properties in terms of property value, privacy, noise or other undesirable impacts? | | | |
| 5) Encumbrances | Is the site reasonably free of encumbrances that would impact part development such as such as geotechnical, floodplain, environmental and underground utilities? | | | |
| Overall Rating (high, moderate, low) for Category 1 = | | | | |

Parks with a majority of high value ratings for Category 1 are valuable potential properties for the community parks system overall, as they fill gaps and/or provide parks services that are in demand. These properties should be considered for community park acquisition. Parks with moderate or low value ratings should only be considered for acquisition where there are high scores in one or more of the other categories.

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| Category 2: Neighbourhood Park Values | | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|----------------|-----------|
| Proposed Criteria | Evaluation Criteria | Assigned Value/Quality (check column) | | |
| | | High Value | Moderate Value | Low Value |
| 6) Usable Space | Does the site provide at least 0.5 acres of usable park area? | | | |
| 7) Slope | Are there gentle slopes for most of the site that would support a variety of active recreation opportunities? | | | |
| 8) Location | Is there a significant residential population within walking distance (1 km) to the park location? | | | |
| 9) Recreation Potential | Is the site suitable to provide recreational amenities that appeal to the surrounding community? | | | |
| 10) Accessibility | Is the site easily accessible to surrounding population, e.g. is it connected to public roads, trails and access routes? | | | |
| 11) Cultural, Historic or Heritage Values | Does that site contain any valuable cultural, historical or heritage features that warrant protection? | | | |
| 12) Education or Interpretive Values | Does the site provide features with educational or interpretive value and would support interpretive development? | | | |
| Overall Rating (high, moderate, low) for Category 2 = | | | | |

Parks with a majority of high value ratings for Category 2 are potential properties for classification as neighbourhood parks as they fill gaps and provide opportunity for amenities. These properties should be considered for neighbourhood park designation.

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Category 3: Ecological Park Values

| Proposed Criteria | Evaluation Criteria | Assigned Value/Quality (check column) | | |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|----------------|-----------|
| | | High Value | Moderate Value | Low Value |
| 13) Sensitive Ecosystem Protection | Does the site include significant sensitive ecosystems that warrant protection? | | | |
| 14) Unique Landscape Features | Are there unique or representative landscape features such as significant trees, rock formations, water features or other features that warrant protection? | | | |
| 15) Endangered/ Protected Species | Are there known blue- or red-listed species occurring on the site or within the surrounding area? | | | |
| 16) Potential Habitat or Wildlife Corridor | Does the site have potential to maintain or form a wildlife corridor that connects natural features? | | | |
| Overall Rating (high, moderate, low) for Category 3 = | | | | |

Parks with a majority of high value ratings for Category 3 are potential properties for classification as nature parks as they protect unique or sensitive features. These properties may warrant consideration for natural park designation or protection through other means.

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| Category 4: Linear Park Values | | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|----------------|-----------|
| Proposed Criteria | Evaluation Criteria | Assigned Value/Quality (check column) | | |
| | | High Value | Moderate Value | Low Value |
| 17) Trail Route Connection | Does the site form a potential connection to the regional or community park trail system? | | | |
| 18) Community Amenity Connection | Does the proposed site link community amenities or facilities to a neighbourhood (e.g. provides access to schools, retail areas, parks or other destinations)? | | | |
| 19) Max. Slope | Does the route provide gentle grades for accessible trail? | | | |
| Overall Rating (high, moderate, low) for Category 4 = | | | | |

Parks with a majority of high value ratings for Category 4 are potential properties for classification as linear parks as they provide potential trail connections. These properties may warrant consideration for linear park designation.

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| Category 5: Water Access Values | | | | |
|--|---|--|----------------|-----------|
| Proposed Criteria | Evaluation Criteria | Assigned Value/Quality (check column) | | |
| | | High Value | Moderate Value | Low Value |
| 20) Shoreline or Riparian Protection | Is the site near a water body or river corridor and capable of providing shoreline protection or enhancement? | | | |
| 21) Accessibility | Is the site reasonably accessible with minimum need for stair or ramp construction? | | | |
| 22) Small Development Footprint | Can the park be developed to provide water access with no or minimal tree or vegetation removal? | | | |
| 23) Enhanced Access | Can water accesses be combined together, or with park land to provide enhanced public access? | | | |
| Overall Rating (high, moderate, low) for Category 5 = | | | | |

Parks with a majority of high value ratings for Category 5 are potential properties for classification as water access sites as they provide access points to water bodies – including the ocean, lakes, rivers, wetlands and streams. These properties may warrant consideration for water access designation.

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| Category 6: Affordability | | | | |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|----------------|-----------|
| Proposed Criteria | Evaluation Criteria | Assigned Value/Quality (check column) | | |
| | | High Value | Moderate Value | Low Value |
| 24) Acquisition Costs | Can the site be acquired with little or no cost? | | | |
| 25) Development Costs | Is the public investment required to develop the park to a suitable standard reasonable? Are there any unusual or extensive anticipated costs? | | | |
| 26) Maintenance Costs | Are the amount staff time and financial resources required to maintain the park high or low? | | | |
| Overall Rating (high, moderate, low) for Category 6 = | | | | |

Parks with a majority of high value ratings for Category 6 may be considered for acquisition. Where parks score low in this category, considerations for off-setting costs or taking cash-in-lieu may be warranted.

4.0 ACTIONS

The outcome of this plan is a set of actions that support the implementation of the vision, objectives and priorities generated through the CPTS process. These actions are provided for Board, staff and POSAC consideration within the context of annual community planning and budget considerations. It is important that an adaptive management approach is taken when implementing the plan, so that when new opportunities or circumstances arise, Board members and staff are able to make informed decisions and appropriate adjustments.

Two types of actions are provided for the CPTS:

- **Operational Actions:** Ideas for policy development, planning initiatives, management strategies and information distribution.
- **Project Actions:** In addition to operational actions that span the entire CPTS, several project actions and ideas were gathered for each Electoral Area during this process. These actions should be considered as potential priority projects when planning and budgeting for community park development.

Section 5.0: Implementation Summary provides an overview of the actions. Each year, staff should review the actions and prepare detailed strategies for funding and implementation of priority projects.

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4.1 Operational Actions

4.1.1 Planning

Action #1: Complete Regular Updates of the CPTS

Review and update the CPTS in 2018 and complete a new study including public consultation in 2023.

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Rationale: | This plan provides a long-term planning horizon. While it is anticipated that projects identified during this process will continue to be important, it should also be expected that new priorities and opportunities will emerge. In 5 years, staff should review accomplishments of the CPTS to date and re-evaluate priorities for the next 5 years. In 10 years, a full update of the plan is recommended. |
| Resources: | Moderate staff time |
| Recommended Timing: | 2018 Review 2023 Complete Update |

Action #2: Use Park & Trail Classifications & Criteria

Encourage all RDN departments and committees to use the Community Park Classifications and Criteria for Community Parkland Evaluation identified in this document and the 2013 Parks & Trails Design Guidelines to evaluate and plan parkland proposed as part of development applications.

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Rationale: | Planning acquisition using the Parks Classifications and Criteria supports selection and development of new parks and trails based on their contribution to the overall system and Electoral Area. Use of consistent criteria will help provide clarity for staff, POSACs and the development community during the development process. This also permits land to be evaluated in context of the larger parks and trails network. |
| Resources: | Low staff time |
| Recommended Timing: | Immediately and ongoing |

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Action #3: Follow Archaeological Guidelines

Follow guidelines developed in the Aquilla Report for considering cultural and heritage potential when planning or developing community parks and trails.

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Rationale: | It is the legal responsibility of land managers to ensure activities and operations do not impact sites protected under the Heritage Conservation Act (HCA), whether these sites are known (registered) or not. The database and mapping by Aquilla Archaeology developed during this process 'flags' areas of sensitivity or potential sensitivity. This information should be reviewed as part of planning for parks acquisition or development. |
| Resources: | Low staff time for initial evaluation |
| Recommended Timing: | Immediately and ongoing |

Action #4: Review Parks Policies during OCP Updates

Incorporate the CPTS actions into OCP updates and review vision and potential projects for specific Electoral Areas during the update process.

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Rationale: | OCPs are subject to ongoing review and renewal. In the past, the amount of detail on parks and trails included in Electoral Area OCP documents has varied significantly. The OCP review process is an opportunity to incorporate the CPTS actions and projects into Electoral Area OCPs. |
| Resources: | Moderate staff time |
| Recommended Timing: | During all OCP updates |

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Action #5: Review POSAC Structure & Mandate

Complete regular reviews of the POSAC structure and mandate to review efficiency, role and contribution in the evolving parks and trails system.

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Rationale: | <p>POSACs were created several years ago to play an important role in supporting community parks and trails planning and development. As the community park and trail system evolves, it is important to revisit the mandate of these groups to ensure they remain efficient and applicable to the present structure of the system. It is recommended that the structure be internally reviewed every 5 years to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review the group's mandate; ▪ Set expectations and work focus; ▪ Update policies and documentation; ▪ Review length of members' terms; and ▪ Review staff time allocations. |
| Resources: | Moderate staff time |
| Recommended Timing: | 2014 2019 |

Action #6: Establish POSAC Chair Meetings

Consider establishing regular POSAC Chair meetings to support collaboration, discussion and identification of issues and opportunities within the larger community park system.

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Rationale: | <p>Each Electoral Area has a POSAC that participates in community park planning and development. The CVRD has established regular meetings between the Chairs of their Commissions to encourage discussion, collaboration and understanding. The RDN may wish to consider a similar type of meeting to encourage collaborative planning for community parks throughout all Electoral Areas of the RDN.</p> |
| Resources: | Moderate staff time |
| Recommended Timing: | Annually or bi-annually |

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Action #7: Create a Volunteer Policy & Guidelines

Consider developing a clear volunteer policy and guidelines to provide more information about involvement with community parks and trails.

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Rationale: | Volunteer programs are a good opportunity for people to contribute to community park and trail development. By providing a clear policy and guidelines for involvement, it becomes easier to manage volunteer services and expectations. |
| Resources: | Moderate staff time |
| Recommended Timing: | 2015 |

Action #8: Establish Partner Communications

Seek to establish a system for ongoing partnership communications with other municipalities, regional districts and First Nations that provide community parks and trails services.

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Rationale: | <p>Community park and trail services are provided by other regional districts, municipalities and First Nations. Consultation indicated a desire to increase communication lines between staff to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Share funding and development opportunities that are mutually beneficial to local residents (e.g., municipal and regional district staff may find collaborative opportunities for parks and trails that are adjacent to or cross boundaries); ▪ Share resources, programs and policies to avoid duplication of effort and gain value from understanding other systems; ▪ Discuss annual projects to identify opportunities for collaboration, shared funding and design considerations; and ▪ Discuss trends, benefits and shared knowledge. |
| Resources: | Moderate staff time |
| Recommended Timing: | Bi-annual or quarterly meetings |

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Action #9: Create a Developer Information Package

Develop a clear information package for developers to outline expectations for community park and trail dedications. This information should be provided to all developer applicants at the beginning of their projects.

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Rationale: | Clarifying objectives and expectations for parks and trails at the beginning of the development process reduces the potential for time delays during the review process. Creating an easy-to-use developer information package for each Electoral Area that provides the vision and priorities for community parks and trails, along with the Park Classification and Criteria for Community Parkland Evaluation, will help improve clarity. |
| Resources: | Moderate staff time |
| Recommended Timing: | 2014 |

Action #10: Support Community Projects

Encourage and support community interest groups to enter into trail building and/or management agreements with the province for key recreational trails located on Crown land.

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Rationale: | Community groups often have capacity and interest for trail development and protection. The RDN's resources do not support active involvement for securing all trails on Crown land; however, there is capacity to support community groups in establishing agreements (e.g., Section 57) that permit management and development of Crown lands. An example is the equestrian trail developed by the Silver Spur Riding Club in which the RDN provided information and support to the Club as they navigated the permitting process with the province. |
| Resources: | Moderate staff time |
| Recommended Timing: | Ongoing |

COMMUNITY PARKS & TRAILS STRATEGIC PLAN ELECTORAL AREAS E, F, G, & H

Action #11: Prepare an Active Transportation Plan

Prepare an Active Transportation Plan that encourages inclusivity to all levels of mobility for the District 69 Electoral Areas based on work completed to date in the Regional Parks & Trails Plan, CPTS and Parks and Trails Guidelines.

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| Rationale: | <p>Active transportation plans promote physical activity through alternate forms of transportation. Benefits of having an Active Transportation Plan include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Potential to access active transportation grants; ▪ Identification of opportunities for partnership; and ▪ Generation of interest from the local community for volunteer programs and fundraising. <p>It is recommended that RDN staff prepare an active transportation map and report based on work done to date through the CPTS and related processes.</p> |
| Resources: | Moderate staff time |
| Recommended Timing: | 2015 |

Action #12: Consider a DCC Bylaw

Consider development of a Development Cost Charges (DCC) bylaw for each Electoral Area to support acquisition and development of select park amenities (as permitted by the Local Government Act).

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| Rationale: | <p>The <i>Local Government Act</i> (Sections 932 to 937) enables regional districts to collect DCCs for infrastructure improvements necessitated by community growth. There is potential to collect DCCs for parkland acquisition and minor improvements including trails, fencing, landscaping, drainage and washrooms. Currently the RDN is not using DCCs for parkland dedication or development. Given the funding limitations for community parks and trails, DCCs may support the higher level of development being requested for community parks.</p> |
| Resources: | <p>Moderate staff time Potential legal review</p> |
| Recommended Timing: | 2017 |

COMMUNITY PARKS & TRAILS STRATEGIC PLAN ELECTORAL AREAS E, F, G, & H

Action #13: Develop a Disposition Policy

Develop a Community Parkland Disposition Policy for consideration by the RDN Board.

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| Rationale: | The CPTS process identified some community parkland that shows relatively low value for the community parks and trails system. The RDN is responsible for liability and maintenance costs for these lands while receiving very little in terms of recreational or environmental value, so it may be advantageous to dispose of the lands. The Local Government Act permits disposition of parkland through a bylaw process and adopted with electorate approval through referendum or Alternate Approval Process (AAP). The process should only be completed where potential benefit offsets the costs and efforts of completing an AAP process. Any revenue from sale of lands would go to future park acquisitions in the Electoral Areas. |
| Resources: | Moderate staff time Potential consulting for survey and legal review |
| Recommended Timing: | 2016 |

Action #14: Subdivision Application Process Review

Review and update the RDN “Review of the Consideration of Parkland in Conjunction with the Subdivision Application Process” Policy (Updated 2006) to streamline the subdivision review process. Include the proposed Community Parkland Evaluation Criteria Checklist (see Appendix C).

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| Rationale: | The review period for subdivision proposals that include community parkland dedication takes significantly longer than those that do not. While parkland dedication is a key part of the process, efforts to streamline the steps should be made. |
| Resources: | Moderate staff time |
| Recommended Timing: | 2016 |

4.1.2 Resources & Capacity

Action #15: Match Service Levels & Funding Allocations

Match level of service expectations with funding allocations for community parks and trails.

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| Rationale: | <p>Population growth, community expectations for developed park, densification and downloading all increase pressure on park funding allocations. It is important to match the level of service expectations with funding that is available for parks and trails.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If community parks and trails continue to be added to the system and move from more natural parks to more developed parks, increased resources will be required. ▪ If resource allocations cannot be increased, service levels and community expectations need to be re-established and communicated. |
| Resources: | Moderate staff time |
| Recommended Timing: | Annually |

Action #16: Create Park Maintenance Plans

Develop a park maintenance plan as a component of all new park planning and development as per the Parks and Trails Design Guidelines. Update annual operating budgets for parks based on these plans.

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| Rationale: | <p>Park planning and development typically increases park operations requirements – especially the addition of developed neighbourhood parks. It is important that the operational requirements for new parks are considered and planned to ensure parks remain at a high standard. Creating a maintenance plan that is clearly associated with budget requirements is an important step in allocating staff time and efforts.</p> |
| Resources: | Moderate staff time |
| Recommended Timing: | <p>2014 – Initial review of existing park operations</p> <p>Ongoing during all improvement projects</p> |

COMMUNITY PARKS & TRAILS STRATEGIC PLAN

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4.1.3 Education & Awareness

Action #17: Increase Park Signage

Increase community parks and trails signage in developed parks as budget allows.

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| <p>Rationale:</p> | <p>The most requested park improvement feature by the public for existing community parks was signage. The types of signs that are needed include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Park identification signage, including site diagrams showing park boundaries; ▪ Park directional signage within the parks; and ▪ Regulatory signage and interpretive signage. <p>The Trails Classification and Construction Standards document includes signage standards for the design and construction of the various signs.</p> |
| <p>Resources:</p> | <p>Moderate staff time</p> |
| <p>Recommended Timing:</p> | <p>2015 and ongoing</p> |

4.2 Project Actions

In addition to operational actions that span the entire CPTS, several project actions and ideas were gathered for each Electoral Area during this process. These actions should be considered as potential priority projects when planning and budgeting community park development.

4.2.1 Electoral Area E

- Investigate potential neighbourhood parkland expansion in the Beachcomber area.
- Prepare park design plans for Rowland, Northwest Bay/Stone Lake, and Collins Crescent Community Parks.
- Prepare a Community Trail Plan for Davenham Road to Sea Ridge Community Park.
- Support the Regional Trails initiative in the preparation of a Trails Plan for the area south of Moorecroft and east of Fairwinds.
- Investigate the feasibility of a new trail from Northwest Bay to Schirra Drive along the undeveloped Nanoose Road right of way.
- Develop Phase 1 Blueback Community Park improvements from the park design process.
- Upgrade Wall Estate Community Park trailhead and trails (clearing, brushing, map for park boundary).
- Install directional signage at Dolphin Lake and Community Park.
- Implement the Fairwinds Community Parks Development Program as per the Phased Development Agreement and Neighbourhood Plan for the Lakes District Area.
- Develop roadside trails.



4.2.2 Electoral Area F

- Work with the Parks and Trails Coordinator for connections/integration with the E&N Parksville-Alberni spur.
- Continue working with the community on all the Act trails.
- Undertake a park design process for Romaine Community Park, including a potential bike skills park.
- Consider securing tenure of the French Creek School site if the opportunity arises.
- Investigate the feasibility of developing the undeveloped road allowance in private forest lands, from Longmoor Rd to Chatsworth Rd.
- Investigate the feasibility of developing a bridge connection from Errington to the Englishman River area; either along Fairdowne Road or Leffler Road alignments for pedestrian/bicycle use and as an emergency access route for vehicles.
- Consider moving forward with the disposition of the three surplus parks identified in the park classifications.
- Complete Phase 1 and 2 of development for Meadowood Community Park.
- Investigate playground and other park improvements for Errington Community Park.
- Improve the trailhead and install park signage at Malcolm Community Park.
- Develop an agreement with Errington War Memorial Hall Society for the operation of Errington Community Park.

4.2.3 Electoral Area G

- Undertake a Water Access Site Inventory and Evaluation Study to determine opportunities and priorities for public access and RDN management.
- Consider preparing an Active Transportation Plan and a Bicycle Network Plan to further refine the Conceptual Trail Network Plan.
- Prepare the Rivers Edge Community Park and Trail Plan.
- Support the development of a community trail from Columbia Drive to French Creek Marina as noted in the Official Community Plan.
- Investigate the feasibility of developing a community pedestrian/bicycle trail from Ganske Rd to Waters Rd.
- Consider park improvements to existing parks and playground infrastructure and equipment at Dashwood, Maple Lane, Columbia Beach, Rivers Edge, San Pareil and Boultebee Community Parks.
- Consider trail improvements between Miller Rd north and the south community parks.
- Consider improvements and management by RDN for the Kinkade water access site.
- Provide signage water access sites and Miller Rd south park entrance via the right of way through the residential development.
- Consider an Adopt a Beach program to allow/encourage community groups to steward water access sites as part of the Water Access Study.

4.2.4 Electoral Area H

- Conduct a Preliminary Field Reconnaissance (PFR) of the existing and proposed water access sites in order to assess opportunities or constraints with regards to heritage or cultural sensitivities.
- Consider applying for additional water access sites outlined in the POSAC Water Access Report, based on the results of the PFR.
- Negotiate a License of Occupation with the province that includes the trails in Oakdowne Park.
- Investigate the feasibility of the proposed community trail section from Deep Bay to Wildwood Park including the rail crossing at Jamieson Rd.
- Prepare a Park Design Plan for Dunsmuir Community Park.
- Consider moving forward on the disposition of the two surplus parklands.
- Undertake minor improvements to existing RDN managed water access sites outlined in the POSAC Water Access Report based on the results of the PFR.
- Complete Henry Morgan Community Park Phase 2.
- Install park identification signage at Pearl Community Park and water access sites and trail signage at Oakdowne and Wildwood Parks.
- Consider an Adopt a Beach program to allow/encourage community groups to steward water access sites.

5.0 IMPLEMENTATION SUMMARY

5.1 Summary Table

Table 27 summarizes the operational actions outlined for the CPTS. Each operational goal and list of actions is associated with a recommended timeframe and an assigned priority responsibility as well as any additional parties involved in completing the actions.

Table 27: Implementation Summary Table

| Action | Description | Recommended Timeframe | Parties Involved |
|---|---|--|---|
| 1) Complete Regular Updates of the CPTS | Review and update the CPTS in 2018 and complete a new study including public consultation in 2023. | 2018 Review 2023 Complete Update | Parks Planning POSAC |
| 2) Use Park Classifications & Criteria | Encourage all RDN departments and committees to use the Community Park Classifications and Criteria for Community Parkland Evaluation identified in this document and the 2013 Parks & Trails Design Guidelines to evaluate and plan parkland proposed as part of development applications. | Immediately Ongoing | Parks Planning Planning |
| 3) Follow Archaeological Guidelines | Follow guidelines developed in the Aquilla Report for considering cultural and heritage potential when planning or developing community parks and trails. | Immediately Ongoing | Parks Planning Planning Archaeology Consulting |
| 4) Review Parks Policies during OCP Updates | Incorporate the CPTS actions into OCP updates and review vision and potential projects for specific Electoral Areas during the update process. | During all OCP updates | Parks Planning Planning RDN Board |
| 5) Review POSAC Structure & Mandate | Complete regular reviews of the POSAC structure and mandate to review efficiency, roles and contributions in the evolving parks and trails system. | 2014 2019 | Parks Planning POSAC RDN Board |
| 6) Establish POSAC Chair Meetings | Establish regular POSAC Chair meetings to support collaboration, discussion and identification of issues and opportunities within the larger community park system. | Annually or Bi-annually starting in 2014 | Parks Planning POSAC |

COMMUNITY PARKS & TRAILS STRATEGIC PLAN ELECTORAL AREAS E, F, G, & H

| Action | Description | Recommended Timeframe | Parties Involved |
|---|---|--|--|
| 7) Create a Volunteer Policy & Guidelines | Consider developing a clear volunteer policy and guidelines to provide more information about involvement with community parks and trails. | 2015 | Parks Planning POSAC |
| 8) Establish Partner Communications | Seek to establish a system for ongoing partnership communications with other municipalities, regional districts and First Nations that provide community parks and trails services. | Bi-Annual or Quarterly Meetings starting in 2014 | Parks Planning Other Government Organizations |
| 9) Create a Developer Information Package | Develop a clear information package for developers that outlines expectations for community park and trail dedications. This information should be provided to all developer applicants at the beginning of their projects. | 2014 | Parks Planning Community Planning |
| 10) Support Community Projects | Encourage and support community interest groups to enter into trail building and/or management agreements with the province for key recreational trails located on Crown land. | Ongoing | Parks Planning POSAC |
| 11) Prepare an Active Transportation Plan | Prepare an Active Transportation Plan that encourages inclusivity for all levels of mobility for the District 69 Electoral Areas based on work completed to date in the Regional Parks & Trails Plan, CPTS and Parks and Trails Guidelines. | 2015 | Parks Planning Planning |
| 12) Consider DCC Bylaw | Consider development of a Development Cost Charges (DCC) bylaw for each Electoral Area to support acquisition and development of select park amenities (as permitted by the Local Government Act). | 2017 | Parks Planning Planning |
| 13) Develop a Disposition Policy | Develop a Community Parkland Disposition Policy for consideration by the RDN Board. | 2016 | Parks Planning |

COMMUNITY PARKS & TRAILS STRATEGIC PLAN ELECTORAL AREAS E, F, G, & H

| Action | Description | Recommended Timeframe | Parties Involved |
|--|---|---|--|
| 14) Subdivision Application Process Review | Review and update the RDN's Review of the Consideration of Parkland in Conjunction with the Subdivision Application Process Policy (updated 2006) to streamline the subdivision review process. Include the proposed Community Parkland Evaluation Criteria Checklist (see Appendix C). | 2016 | Parks Planning Planning POSAC RDN Board |
| 15) Match Service Levels & Funding Allocations | Match level of service expectations with funding allocations for community parks and trails. | Annually | Parks Planning RDN Board |
| 16) Create Park Maintenance Plans | Develop a park maintenance plan as a component of all new park planning and development as per the Parks and Trails Design Guidelines. Update annual operating budgets for parks based on these plans. | 2014 – Initial review of existing park operations Ongoing for all improvements | Parks Planning Parks Operations RDN Board |
| 17) Increase Park Signage | Increase community parks and trails signage in developed parks as budget allows. | Annually | Parks Planning |



