



The Corporation of the District of Central Saanich

PARKS AND ENVIRONMENT STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT

For the Parks and Environment Standing Committee meeting on Thursday, April 4, 2024

Re: Parks & Trails Master Plan Phase 1 Summary

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Parks and Environment Standing Committee receive this report for information and provide any additional input to be considered when preparing a draft Parks and Trails Master Plan during the next phase of the project.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the Parks and Trails Master Plan project, and specifically provide a summary of public input received and the background materials that have guided the project.

BACKGROUND:

The District is working on a new Parks and Trails Master Plan to update our vision and priorities for these valuable public spaces. The first phase of the plan involved listening to residents, businesses, partners, and visitors of the District, as well as assessing the current condition and use of our facilities and identify their natural and physical features.

The result will be a new Parks and Trails Master Plan to help guide our decisions and actions for the next 10 to 20 years. The plan will build on the work we have already done through the Official Community Plan review, the Active Transportation Plan, the Saanichton Village Design Plan, the Age-Friendly Community Plan, the Accessibility Plan, and others. The new Parks and Trails Master Plan will help us make our parks and trails more attractive, accessible, functional, and sustainable for everyone to enjoy.

DISCUSSION:

What We Heard

More than 600 people participated in Phase 1 (September 2023 to March 2024) through a survey, pop-up events, workshops, an open house, and school visits; this input identified the community priorities for the plan. The priorities were consistent across parks, trails, and beaches, highlighting the need to ensure all areas are accessible and safe for all users by improving connectivity, signage and infrastructure while maintaining a natural feel of the rural Central Saanich area. District staff were also provided opportunities to provide input, and comments received from staff closely reflect those from the community. Particularly our Parks Crew have appreciated the opportunity and have provided valuable input including operations and maintenance considerations. The project's What We Heard Report is attached as Appendix A.

The seven priorities identified from our community and partner engagement are:

Accessibility for all users to access beaches, trails, and parks in all weather.

- Improve trail width, surfaces, and signage ratings for accessibility.
- Ensure beach / water access including mats and boat launches are cleared and maintained.
- Ensure paved areas for wheelchair and stroller access.
- Expand accessible washrooms, parking, and use of curb cut outs.

Connectivity between communities, neighbourhoods, and link to other networks.

- Provide better bike trails connecting Central Saanich such as Lochside.
- Connect trails in residential areas to and from rural areas and to schools.
- Ensure continuous connectivity of trail systems.

Dog Friendly Initiatives including responsible dog ownership.

- Provide off-leash dog areas to enjoy nature and trails with dogs.
- Ways for dogs to remain under control for the safety of people and sensitive natural areas, whether it be on-leash requirements, animal-free areas, or enforcement.

Environment Protection of the natural areas, wildlife, and natural ecosystems.

- Keep the parks as natural as possible and maintain green spaces.
- Remove invasive species and plant of native species.
- Maintain and expand forest canopy.

Infrastructure improvements including maintenance and expanding facilities.

- Expand availability of washrooms, parking, and boat launches.
- Update playgrounds with more natural feature (trees, boulders) and places to climb; also add zipline features.
- Add desired youth amenities including pump tracks/bike parks and pool/splash parks.
- Ensure funding is available for maintenance and improvements.
- Expand designated trails and access to parks for horses including designated spaces for parking.

Safety for all users including signage, interaction, connectivity, and lighting.

- Address multi-user trail safety (dogs, pedestrians, bikes, horses) such as dog incidents, and e-bike usage.
- Provide safe connections for walkers and cyclists using bike lanes, trails, and sidewalks.
- Improve lighting at parks, commuter trails, and crosswalks for evening/winter use.

Trail marking & signage to identify activities, wayfinding signage, and education.

- Provide educational signage about flora, fauna, and Indigenous significance including SENĆOŦEN names.
- Add education and wayfinding through signage, maps, GIS, and information on trails.
- Take a regional partnership approach to maps, guides, icons on trails.

Background Report

A background report is attached as Appendix B that summaries key findings from a range of materials reviewed, community demographics, and currents trends affecting parks and trails management. The background information review helps to inform development of a draft plan and provides guidance for developing policies and priorities. The background review helps the project team identify where further analysis needed and identify where competing interests may create tension and require further research to explore possible solutions.

NEXT STEPS:

The project team is seeking further input and considerations for the Parks and Trails Master Plan from members of the Parks and Environment Standing, and subsequently Council, before preparing a draft plan. We have also been engaging with WJOLELP (Tsartlip) and S7ÁUTW (Tsawout) First Nations. We have been invited to attend an upcoming WJOLELP (Tsartlip) Band Council meeting and are coordinating with S7ÁUTW (Tsawout) about a similar meeting. Continued analysis of various aspects of our parks system, such as environmental conditions, spatial distribution, and trail conditions is ongoing and will help determine the recommended parks and trails classifications, park supply targets, and operational impacts among others.

CONCLUSION:

The project team truly appreciates the level of interest and public input into the project to date and look forward to re-engaging with all the community partners once a draft plan is prepared.

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Report reviewed by:	Britt Burnham, Manager of Community Engagement
Respectfully submitted by:	Jarret Matanowitsch, Director of Planning and Building Services
Concurrence by:	Christine Culham, Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENTS:

- Appendix A: What We Heard Report
- Appendix B: Background Review Report