



The Corporation of the District of Central Saanich

REGULAR COUNCIL REPORT

For the Regular Council meeting on Monday, October 21, 2024

Re: DRAFT Parks and Trails Master Plan

RECOMMENDATION(S):

Staff be directed to initiate the public consultation process to seek community feedback on the Plan's objectives, opportunities, and proposed improvements.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to present the DRAFT Parks and Trails Master Plan to Council and seek direction to proceed with the next phase of public engagement. The Plan provides a long-term vision and actionable framework for the enhancement, development, and management of parks, trails, and shoreline accesses within the District of Central Saanich. It aims to align with the community's recreational needs, environmental stewardship goals, and the District's strategic priorities by identifying opportunities for improved accessibility, connectivity, and sustainable growth of the park system.

BACKGROUND:

Since the adoption of the last Parks and Trails Master Plan in 1996, Central Saanich has undergone significant demographic changes, urban growth, and shifts in recreational trends. Population growth, particularly among young families and older adults, has highlighted the need for more diverse park amenities to accommodate various age groups and abilities. Additionally, the community has shown increased interest in protecting natural ecosystems and improving access to green spaces. These evolving priorities called for a new Parks and Trails Master Plan that addresses both current and future needs.

In 2023, Council directed staff to develop an updated plan to reflect today's community needs and explore opportunities for the District's parks and trails. Recognizing the value of public input, the planning process was designed to be collaborative and inclusive, beginning with a series of community surveys, workshops, and stakeholder meetings to gather feedback on park use and future aspirations.

Public input highlighted several key areas of focus:

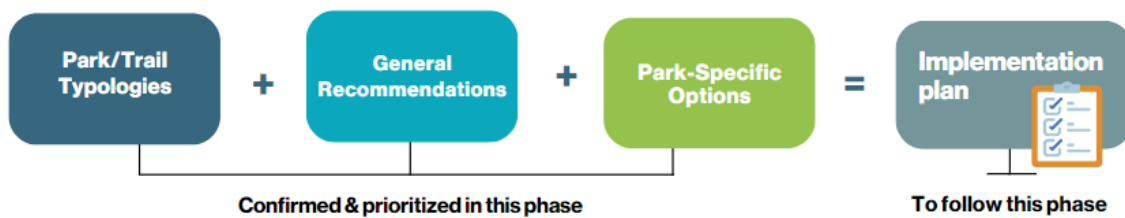
- Improving accessibility to ensure parks and trails are inclusive for all ages and abilities.
- Expanding recreational amenities, with specific calls for enhanced playgrounds, sports facilities, youth amenities, and natural areas.
- Strengthening connectivity within the District's trail network to support active transportation, linking parks to residential areas, schools, and commercial hubs.
- Enhancing the protection of natural environments, particularly through efforts to manage invasive species and protect sensitive ecosystems.

- Improving shoreline access and creating opportunities for water-based recreation.

DISCUSSION:

The DRAFT Parks and Trails Master Plan establishes a structured approach for developing and managing Central Saanich’s parkland by integrating three key components: Park and Trail Typologies, General Recommendations, and Park-Specific options. Together, these elements provide a comprehensive and flexible framework to help the District prioritize, phase, and implement improvements that enhance the parks and trails system.

These three components will work together to inform a detailed Implementation Plan with budgeting considerations and will serve as the operational guide for executing the Master Plan. The Implementation Plan will prioritize projects based on community input, financial considerations and other strategic priorities.



Park and Trail Typologies:

The DRAFT Plan categorizes parks and trails into distinct typologies based on their function, size, and use. This classification system allows the District to respond to local needs and ensure there is a range of different experiences for park users. Typologies help set ideal standards that can be realized across the parks and trails within these categories and can assist in the management of park land including future land acquisition and operational/capital improvements. They can also be used to help the public identify, at a high level, the features that they can expect to find in any park.

Park Typologies

	Community Parks	Neighbourhood Parks	Nature Parks
Description	Large destination spaces that benefit the broader community.	Respond to localized outdoor recreation needs of residents.	Dedicated for community access to nature and can include conservation and protection.
Examples	Centennial Park	Adam Kerr Park	Gore Park
Ideal Amenities	Mowed grass area, trails, playground with fencing along roads, benches or picnic table, waste facility, dog bag dispenser, bike racks, shade trees, and signage and wayfinding.	Mowed grass area, trails, playground with fencing along roads, benches or picnic table, waste facility, dog bag dispenser, bike racks, shade trees, and signage and wayfinding.	Trails, fencing in environmentally sensitive areas, benches at rest/viewpoints, bike racks, and signage and wayfinding

General Recommendations:

The DRAFT Plan also establishes a set of general recommendations that apply across the entire parks and trails system. These recommendations are broken down into five high level categories including

Parkland, Park Amenities, Trails, Shoreline Access, and Environment. These categories are then broken into high level priorities including:

- Planning & Design
- Accessibility
- Signage and Wayfinding
- Land Acquisition & Disposition
- Maintenance & Management
- Partnerships

And a few category specific priorities including:

- Playgrounds & Youth Amenities
- Sport Courts and Fields
- Community Gardens
- Boat launches
- Tree Canopy
- Invasive Species

These recommendations provide the guiding framework for park, trail, and shoreline access point development, ensuring alignment with broader District policies, best practices, and community aspirations.

Park-Specific Options:

In addition to typologies and general recommendations, the DRAFT Master Plan identifies specific options for individual parks, trails, and shoreline access points tailored to the unique needs, and opportunities identified through the first round of community engagement and staff assessments. These actions offer a clear roadmap for targeted investments, addressing both immediate improvements and longer-term projects. This section will be a key focus of community engagement to ensure alignment with community desires.

IMPLICATIONS:

Strategic

The Master Plan will ensure that park development and trail improvements contribute to the broader vision in the OCP, including enhancing green spaces, promoting active lifestyles, and supporting environmental stewardship. This project aligns with 2024-2027 Strategic Plan's priorities: "Investing in Infrastructure and Active Transportation", Foster a Community of Inclusion, Diversity and Accessibility and Champion Climate Adaptation, Mitigation and Preparedness." Projects that improve walkability, cycling routes, and overall connectivity will also support the goals of the Active Transportation Plan, ensuring the integration of parks and trails into the District's sustainable transportation network.

Financial/ Resource

Implementing the Parks and Trails Master Plan will require careful future financial planning strategies and budgeting. Currently there are no reserve funds set aside for new parks assets, and the new infrastructure financial strategy, at least in the short term, is committed to escalating active transportation works. The goal of this engagement phase is to confirm proposed actions; and identify community priorities to guide the creation of an Implementation Plan. The Implementation Plan will include estimated costs and financial strategy options to advance these priorities over time.

The Long-Term Financial Strategy and Asset Management Plan (2022) (AMP) is used to help the District make informed decisions about its assets and financial strategies for service and financial resiliency. The

AMP ensures alignment between the level of service that is being provided and resilient funding levels required to sustain it for future asset replacement. Replacement and repair of existing 2022 park and trail assets are included in the AMP. Therefore, the District has been preparing for their “end of life” replacement and will be funded through a capital reserve or debt, depending on the project. Any actions within the Implementation Plan that include significant improvements, or new infrastructure will need to be referred to the update to the AMP that is scheduled for 2026. The District is also updating the Development Cost Charge (DCC) Bylaw and the Amenity Cost Charge (ACC) Bylaw (new) in 2025 and 2026. DCCs and ACCs are charges by the District to Developers to help pay for new infrastructure and amenities that are required based on the growth of the community. The Implementation Plan will help inform that process. Projected revenue from DCCs and ACCs are included in the AMP as part of the funding model. In addition, the DRAFT Masterplan identifies recommendations to help increase funding, including the revitalization of a donation and legacy program and the creation of a corporate sponsorship policy. The plan also encourages the use of partnerships, such as the Peninsula Recreation Commission, and to apply for applicable grants.

First Nations

As part of engagement, staff will work with WJOLELP (Tsartlip), and SXÁUTW (Tsawout) First Nations to incorporate their perspectives, goals, and knowledge into the Parks and Trails Master Plan. This outreach is essential to ensure that the plan reflects the cultural, historical, and environmental significance of the land to the Nations.

OPTIONS:

Option 1 (recommended):

Staff be directed to initiate the public consultation process to seek community feedback on the Plan’s objectives, opportunities, and proposed improvements.

Option 2:

That alternate direction be provided.

CONCLUSION:

The DRAFT Parks and Trails Master Plan represents a comprehensive and forward-thinking approach to enhancing Central Saanich's green spaces, supporting active transportation, and fostering environmental stewardship. Through community engagement and alignment with the Official Community Plan and Active Transportation Plan, the Master Plan will serve as a strategic guide for the District's future investments in parkland.

NEXT STEPS:

1. Initiate public engagement to gather feedback on the draft Plan.
2. Revise the Plan based on community input and finalize it for Council approval.
3. Develop an implementation strategy and budget for phased improvements to ensure the sustainable development of parks and trails.

Report written by:	Julie Bull, Community Planner
Respectfully submitted by:	Jarret Matanowitsch, Director of Planning and Building Services
Concurrence by:	Christine Culham, Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix A: DRAFT Parks & Trails Master Plan

Appendix B: DRAFT Park & Trail Specific Actions

Appendix C: Parks & Trails Appendix