



Notice of Meeting and Meeting Agenda Regional Parks Committee

Wednesday, September 22, 2021

10:00 AM

6th Floor Boardroom
625 Fisgard St.
Victoria, BC V8W 1R7

R. Mersereau (Chair), G. Young (Vice Chair), G. Holman, B. Isitt, R. Martin, J. Olsen, J. Ranns,
D. Screech, L. Seaton, M. Tait, N. Taylor, C. Plant (Board Chair, ex officio)

The Capital Regional District strives to be a place where inclusion is paramount and all people are treated with dignity. We pledge to make our meetings a place where all feel welcome and respected.

1. Territorial Acknowledgement

2. Approval of Agenda

3. Adoption of Minutes

3.1. [21-680](#) Minutes of the June 23, 2021 Regional Parks Committee Meeting

Recommendation: That the minutes of the Regional Parks Committee meeting of June 23, 2021 be adopted as circulated.

Attachments: [Minutes - June 23, 2021](#)

4. Chair's Remarks

5. Presentations/Delegations

Due to limited seating capacity, this meeting will be held by Live Webcast without the public present.

To participate electronically, complete the online application for "Addressing the Board" on our website. Alternatively, you may email the CRD Board at crdboard@crd.bc.ca.

5.1. [21-702](#) Delegation - Corey Burger; Representing Capital Bike: Re: Agenda Item 6.3.: Regional Trails Widening and Lighting Project

5.2. [21-703](#) Delegation - Alastair Craighead; Resident of Victoria: Re: Agenda Item 6.5.: Ecological Values and Biodiversity in Regional Parks

5.3. [21-704](#) Delegation - Nitya Harris; Resident of Langford: Re: Agenda Item 6.5.: Ecological Values and Biodiversity in Regional Parks

5.4. [21-705](#) Delegation - Alison Spriggs; Resident of Victoria: Re: Agenda Item 6.5.: Ecological Values and Biodiversity in Regional Parks

6. Committee Business**6.1. [21-679](#) Regional Parks Land Acquisition and Infrastructure Financing Strategy**

Recommendation: The Regional Parks Committee recommends the Committee of the Whole recommend to the Capital Regional District Board:
That the annual land acquisition levy be used to implement a debt financing strategy for future land acquisitions.

Attachments: [Staff Report: Parks Land Acquisition Financing Strategy](#)
 [Appendix A: Land Acquisition Decision Model](#)
 [Appendix B: Maximizing Acquisitions](#)
 [Appendix C: Phased Acquisitions](#)

6.2. [21-684](#) 2022 Service Planning - Parks & Natural Resource Management

Recommendation: The Regional Parks Committee recommends the Committee of the Whole recommend to the Capital Regional District Board:
That Appendix A, Community Need Summary - Parks & Natural Resource Management be approved as presented and form the basis of the 2022-2026 Financial Plan.

Attachments: [Staff Report: 2022 Service Planning - Parks & Natural Resource Management](#)
 [Appendix A: Community Need Summary](#)
 [Appendix B: Capital Plan Report](#)
 [Appendix C: Initiative Progress Report](#)

6.3. [21-678](#) Regional Trails Widening and Lighting Project

Recommendation: The Regional Parks Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:
That staff be directed to actively develop partnerships and pursue grant funding opportunities, including submission to the federal Active Transportation Fund, to support implementation of the separated use pathway design with lighting.

Attachments: [Staff Report: Regional Trails Widening and Lighting Project](#)
 [Appendix A: Regional Trails Widening Study Area - Map](#)
 [Appendix B: Separated Use Pathway Design](#)
 [Appendix C: Implementation Priorities](#)
 [Appendix D: Public Engagement Report](#)

6.4. [21-677](#) E&N Rail Trail - Humpback Connector

Recommendation: The Regional Parks Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:
That this report be received for information.

Attachments: [Staff Report: E&N Rail Trail - Humpback Connector](#)
 [Appendix A: Development Phasing Plan - Map](#)
 [Appendix B: Detailed Status of E&N Rail Trail Development](#)

6.5. [21-673](#) Ecological Values and Biodiversity in Regional Parks

Recommendation: The Regional Parks Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:
That this report be received for information.

Attachments: [Staff Report: Ecological Values and Biodiversity in Regional Parks](#)
 [Appendix A: Draft Conservation Strategy Framework - March 2010](#)

7. Notice(s) of Motion**8. New Business****9. Adjournment**

The next meeting is October 27, 2021.

To ensure quorum, please advise Tamara Pillipow (tpillipow@crd.bc.ca) if you or your alternate cannot attend.

Meeting Minutes

Regional Parks Committee

Wednesday, June 23, 2021

10:00 AM

6th Floor Boardroom
625 Fisgard St.
Victoria, BC V8W 1R7

PRESENT

Directors: R. Mersereau (Chair), G. Young (Vice Chair), G. Holman (EP), B. Isitt, R. Martin (EP), J. Ranns (EP), D. Screech, L. Seaton, M. Tait (EP), N. Taylor, C. Plant (Board Chair, ex officio) (EP)

Staff: R. Lapham, Chief Administrative Officer; N. Chan, Chief Financial Officer; L. Hutcheson, General Manager, Parks and Environmental Services; J. Leahy, Senior Manager, Regional Parks; S. Henderson, Manager, Real Estate; M. MacIntyre, Manager of Parks Operations, Regional Parks; M. Lagoa, Deputy Corporate Officer; T. Pillipow, Committee Clerk (Recorder)

EP - Electronic Participation

Regrets: Councillor J. Olsen

The meeting was called to order at 10:01 am.

1. Territorial Acknowledgement

Director Screech provided a Territorial Acknowledgement.

2. Approval of Agenda

MOVED by Director Screech, SECONDED by Director Taylor,
That the agenda for the June 23, 2021 Regional Parks Committee meeting be
approved.
CARRIED

Chair Mersereau advised the committee that Director Seaton will present a video
on behalf of the City of Langford, under New Business.

3. Adoption of Minutes

3.1. [21-516](#) Minutes of the April 28, 2021 Regional Parks Committee Meeting

MOVED by Director Taylor, SECONDED by Director Screech,
That the minutes of the Regional Parks Committee meeting of April 28, 2021 be
adopted as circulated.
CARRIED

4. Chair's Remarks

Chair Mersereau noted that Directors will be advised of any changes to the summer meeting schedule.

5. Presentations/Delegations

- 5.1. [21-518](#) Delegation - Alastair Craighead; Resident of Victoria: Re: Agenda Item 7.1.: Motion with Notice: Ecological Values and Biodiversity in Park
A. Craighead spoke in support of Item 7.1.
- 5.2. [21-519](#) Delegation - Nitya Harris; Resident of Langford: Re: Agenda Item 7.1.: Motion with Notice: Ecological Values and Biodiversity in Park
N. Harris spoke in support of Item 7.1.
- 5.3. [21-520](#) Delegation - Shauna Doll; Representing Raincoast Conservation Foundation: Re: Agenda Item 7.1.: Motion with Notice: Ecological Values and Biodiversity in Park
S. Doll spoke in support of Item 7.1.
- 5.4. [21-523](#) Delegation - Peter Gose; Resident of Highlands: Re: Agenda Item 7.1.: Motion with Notice: Ecological Values and Biodiversity in Park
P. Gose spoke in support of Item 7.1.

6. Committee Business

- 6.1. [21-502](#) Regional Parks - Service Level Review
L. Hutcheson and J. Leahy spoke to Item 6.1.
- Discussion ensued on the following:
- the financing strategy
 - the impact of proposed budget changes to land acquisition opportunities
 - staffing levels for park maintenance
 - aligning the financing guidelines for consistency
 - information on financing guidelines to be presented to the Finance Committee on July 7, 2021
- MOVED by Director Isitt, SECONDED by Director Screech,
The Regional Parks Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:
That staff be directed to report back to the Committee as part of the service planning process with a recommended financing option for future investments in land and major capital works that incorporates finance guidelines currently under development.
CARRIED**

- 6.2. [21-501](#) Adoption of Bylaw No. 4431 (Amendment of CRD Parks Regulation Bylaw No. 1, 2018) and Bylaw No. 4433 (Ticket Information Authorization Bylaw No. 1857, Schedule 18)

L. Hutcheson introduced M. MacIntyre who spoke to Item 6.2.

Discussion ensued on the summary of amendments.

MOVED by Director Screech, **SECONDED** by Director Seaton,
The Regional Parks Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:

1. That Bylaw No. 4431, "Capital Regional District Parks Regulation Bylaw No. 1, 2018, Amendment Bylaw No. 1, 2021", be introduced, and read a first, second and third time;
2. That Bylaw Amendment No. 4431 be adopted;
3. That Bylaw Amendment No. 4433, "Capital Regional District Ticket Information Authorization Bylaw, 1990, Amendment Bylaw No. 70, 2021", be introduced, and read a first, second and third time; and
4. That Bylaw Amendment No. 4433 be adopted.

MOVED by Director Isitt, **SECONDED** by Director Taylor,
That the motion be amended to insert as motion number 2: "That staff examine the potential revision of the definition of the word 'hunt' to account for traditional use"

MOVED by Director Isitt, **SECONDED** by Director Young
That the amending motion be further amended to replace the wording "...the potential revision of the definition of the word 'hunt'..." with the words "a potential amendment...".

CARRIED

OPPOSED: Screech, Seaton

The question was called on the amended amendment,

2. That staff examine a potential amendment to account for traditional use.

CARRIED

OPPOSED: Screech, Seaton

The question was called on the main motion as amended,

1. That Bylaw No. 4431, "Capital Regional District Parks Regulation Bylaw No. 1, 2018, Amendment Bylaw No. 1, 2021", be introduced, and read a first, second and third time;
2. That staff examine a potential amendment to account for traditional use.
3. That Bylaw Amendment No. 4431 be adopted;
4. That Bylaw Amendment No. 4433, "Capital Regional District Ticket Information Authorization Bylaw, 1990, Amendment Bylaw No. 70, 2021", be introduced, and read a first, second and third time; and
5. That Bylaw Amendment No. 4433 be adopted.

CARRIED

6.3. [21-498](#) Elk/Beaver Lake Recreational Use Advisory Committee - Terms of Reference and Associated Bylaw

J. Leahy spoke to Item 6.3.

MOVED by Director Seaton, **SECONDED** by Director Taylor,
The Regional Parks Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:

1. That the revised Terms of Reference for the Elk/Beaver Lake Advisory Committee be approved;
2. That Bylaw No. 4430, "Elk/Beaver Lake and Bear Hill Regional Park Management Plan Bylaw No. 1, 1992, Amendment Bylaw No. 3, 2021", be introduced, and read a first, second and third time; and
3. That Bylaw No. 4430 be adopted.

CARRIED

7. Notice(s) of Motion

7.1. [21-517](#) Motion with Notice: Ecological Values and Biodiversity in Parks (Directors Isitt, Holman and Mersereau)

Director Isitt spoke to Item 7.1.

Discussion ensued on the following:

- the current work load of staff
- the need for balance between ecological protection and recreational use
- including potential ecological monitoring and protection efforts in the report
- ecological protection enhancement in the service level proposals

Director Plant left the meeting at 11:52 am.

MOVED by Director Isitt, **SECONDED** by Director Holman,
Whereas one of the two goals of regional parks is "protecting the region's extraordinary biodiversity in perpetuity" and whereas the existing Regional Parks Acquisition Strategy prioritizes acquisition of park land to protect ecological values:

Therefore be it resolved that staff be directed to report on how ecological values and biodiversity are protected and monitored in regional parks and on the CRD's staffing and resource capacity to evaluate the effectiveness of ecological protection in the regional parks system, including consideration of wildlife habitat and disturbance, biodiversity, impacts of new infrastructure, and the CRD's declared climate emergency.

CARRIED

8. New Business

Director Seaton provided a presentation on the Jordie Lunn Bike Park for the information of committee members.

9. Motion to Close the Meeting

9.1. [21-334](#) Motion to Close the Meeting

MOVED by Director Screech, **SECONDED** by Director Taylor,

1. That the meeting be closed for Land Acquisition in accordance with Section 90(1)(e) of the Community Charter.

CARRIED

MOVED by Director Screech, **SECONDED** by Director Taylor,

2. That such disclosures could reasonably be expected to harm the interests of the Regional District.

CARRIED

10. Rise and Report

The Regional Parks Committee rose from the closed session at 12:41 pm without report.

11. Adjournment

MOVED by Director Seaton, **SECONDED** by Director Taylor,

That the June 23, 2021 Regional Parks Committee meeting be adjourned at 12:41 pm.

CARRIED

Chair

Recorder

**REPORT TO THE REGIONAL PARKS COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2021**

SUBJECT **Regional Parks Land Acquisition and Infrastructure Financing Strategy**

ISSUE SUMMARY

To develop land acquisition and infrastructure financing strategies key to the ability to execute investments and manage a sustainable service.

BACKGROUND

At the June 23, 2021, Regional Parks Committee meeting, staff were directed to report on a recommended financing option for future investments in land and major capital works that incorporates current financial guidelines.

Operating a long-term sustainable service relies on balancing priorities in operational delivery and the related financial implications. A financing strategy aimed at managing revenue and cash flow can increase capacity and unlock value to enhance the ability to operate and meet service needs.

Through the Finance Committee and the Capital Regional District Board, staff have reported on various decision models and guidelines to inform and influence financial strategies.

1. January 2019: the corporate asset management program and strategy was approved. The approach drives purposeful intervention to manage and maintain asset health through the lifecycle, ensuring long-term service delivery.
2. October 2019: debt term guidelines set optimal financing amortization periods on the basis of value. This report demonstrates a 15 year term as the optimal point of intersection between annual debt servicing costs and total interest expense.
3. July 2021: capital reserve guidelines established optimal savings versus debt financing by correlating the useful life of assets.

The culmination of these reports and other analyses influence both service and budget processes annually.

In relation to regional parks infrastructure, there is an opportunity to optimize both land acquisition and capital investment through a formal financing strategy which uses both savings and debt to invest in value-added service delivery. The strategy enables use of debt in a time where service demand is increasing and interest rates are at historic lows.

The current macro-economic environment supports a leveraged approach to land acquisition and infrastructure. Central banks across the globe rapidly expanded national balance sheets in an effort to combat the economic slowdown induced by the onset of the global pandemic. The Bank of Canada cut the overnight benchmark rate three times since March 2020 and simultaneously deployed a variety of monetary policy tools to expand the money supply. While signs of recovery have reduced the Bank of Canada's measures in recent months, ongoing low interest rates are anticipated.

Due to an indebted Canadian consumer, the Bank of Canada is expected to proceed cautiously in withdrawing monetary stimulus and will likely not allow borrowing rates to rise dramatically. Global capital markets maturity and related arbitrage activity provide nearly instant liquidity sufficient to meeting any return of consumer and industrial demand for goods and services. These factors create a natural cap to how high interest rates may rise in the near future, which provides an important foundational support for a revised land acquisition and infrastructure financing strategy.

This report focuses on outlining a proposed strategy which balances the current and future need for land acquisitions, maintaining capital reserve health, the relationship between leverage and debt affordability, and the integral impact on service delivery.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1

The Regional Parks Committee recommends the Committee of the Whole recommend to the Capital Regional District Board:

That the annual land acquisition levy be used to implement a debt financing strategy for future land acquisitions.

Alternative 2

That this report be referred back to staff for additional information.

IMPLICATIONS

At the November 13, 2019, Board meeting, the land acquisition levy was renewed through 2029. Subsequently, at the meeting of October 28, 2020, the Board resolved to increase the annual land acquisition levy rate per household by \$1 each year through 2025 (from \$20 to \$25).

The 2020-2021 Land Acquisition Strategy states that to be effective, the strategy needs to account for opportunistic acquisition of important lands. The purpose is to:

- meet the need of region's residents now and in the future
- respond to expected population growth
- connect, protect and restore the region's natural resources
- provide areas for residents to connect with nature

The current Land Acquisition Strategy identifies key areas of interest and identifies the overriding concept that bigger natural areas are better and connected natural assets are best.

Developing land acquisition and infrastructure financing strategies is key to staff's ability to execute investments and manage a sustainable service. A successful strategy will enable opportunistic acquisition versus saving for a cash purchase.

Through use of benchmarks established by the capital reserve guidelines, the Regional Parks Service was identified as having a low use of debt to deliver mandated services. Through operational planning, a significant portion of upcoming capital investment was directed for land and infrastructure replacement, which are assets characterized with a long, useful life. Both the

Public Sector Accounting Board (PSAB) and Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) do not permit depreciation of land; instead, land holds value in perpetuity.

The aforementioned capital reserve guidelines balance the implications of savings and borrowing, recommending an optimal blend or ratio as part of a financing strategy. When evaluating the reserve balance guidelines, the Regional Parks Service has significant borrowing capacity, and increased use of debt can be a tool to manage annual costs. For any asset, when the rate of appreciation exceeds the cost of borrowing, value growth and interim utility result. The current land acquisition funding strategy is a pay-as-you-go savings model which sees annual revenues set aside until the fund has a sufficient balance for purchases.

Appendix A presents a comparison between lands purchased today versus 15 years in the future. The analysis demonstrates the magnitude of value creation in the spread between land appreciation and cost of borrowing (net of holding costs, interest and inflation).

With the use of borrowing, the annual \$20 per household levy translates to an annual \$4 million revenue stream that can be used to debt service up to \$50 million worth of purchases. In 15 years, using historic land appreciation rates, the value would be approximately \$119 million. When adjusted for holding and interest costs, the net increase in value could be in excess of \$100 million.

Conversely, saving the annual requisition over the next 15 years would yield approximately \$67 million of purchasing power, translating to 57% of the land mass that could have been purchased today. Table 1 summarizes and compares two approaches based on \$50 million of land acquisition today.

Table 1: Illustrative Example of Financing vs Savings for Land Acquisition

	Financing Strategy	Current Funding Model
# Hectares	1,000 Hectares	563 Hectares
Future Value (Year 15)	\$119M	\$67M
Cost per Hectare	\$50,000 / hc (Today)	\$119,000 /hc (Year 15)
Future Value (Net of costs)	\$100M	\$67M
Present Value	\$74M	\$50M

Through an optimal financing strategy, \$24 million in value for the equivalent dollar expenditures could be added to the regional parks network while simultaneously providing asset utility to the region.

Appendix B provides a graphical representation of the value created through financing in maximizing acquisitions to the cap of \$20 per household in year 0. In this scenario, the Regional Parks Service could immediately acquire \$50 million of land and debt service over the next

15 years with no impact to requisition. After 15 years, the service could acquire an additional \$50 million of land and repeat indefinitely.¹

Recognizing various constraints, Appendix C provides a graphical representation of the value created through financing in phased acquisitions to the cap of \$20 per household through the first 5 years. In this scenario, the Regional Parks Service could acquire up to \$50 million of land and debt service over the next 20 years with immediate savings to requisition through year 5. As borrowing would be phased, debt would mature after year 15 where additional borrowing could be leveraged. This laddering strategy is similar to the financial strategies used in the Capital Regional Hospital District for major capital projects, and the Capital Regional District (CRD) investment holdings for GICs (Guaranteed Investment Certificates).²

Other Considerations

As required by the *Local Government Act*, Section 403 (1), and the *Community Charter*, Section 179, a loan authorization bylaw is required for long term borrowing. All loan authorization bylaws require Board approval, and capital expenditures must be included in the five year financial plan. Staff will continue to report on land acquisitions through the Board and supplement with impacts to annual debt servicing costs and the upper limit of the annual land acquisition levy. Additionally, financial health indicators will continue to be used to monitor liquidity, interest coverage, leverage, and capital reserve health of the Regional Parks Service and the CRD.

CONCLUSION

Staff were directed by the Regional Parks Committee to report on a recommended financing option for future investments in land and major capital works that incorporates current financial guidelines. The CRD corporate asset management program and strategy, debt term guidelines, and capital reserve guidelines inform and influence staff recommendations on financial strategies. The proposed financing strategy is designed to make good use of debt and capital reserves in order to provide sustainable service delivery and budgeting.

RECOMMENDATION

The Regional Parks Committee recommends the Committee of the Whole recommend to the Capital Regional District Board:

That the annual land acquisition levy be used to implement a debt financing strategy for future land acquisitions.

Submitted by:	Nelson Chan, MBA, FCPA, FCMA, Chief Financial Officer
Concurrence:	Larisa Hutcheson, P. Eng., General Manager, Parks & Environmental Services
Concurrence:	Robert Lapham, MCIP, RPP, Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT(S)

Appendix A: Financial Analysis – Land Acquisition Decision Model

Appendix B: Land Acquisition Decision Model – Maximizing Acquisitions

Appendix C: Land Acquisition Decision Model – Phased Acquisitions

¹ To simplify the illustration, all other variables held constant, including but not limited to annual levy per household, etc.

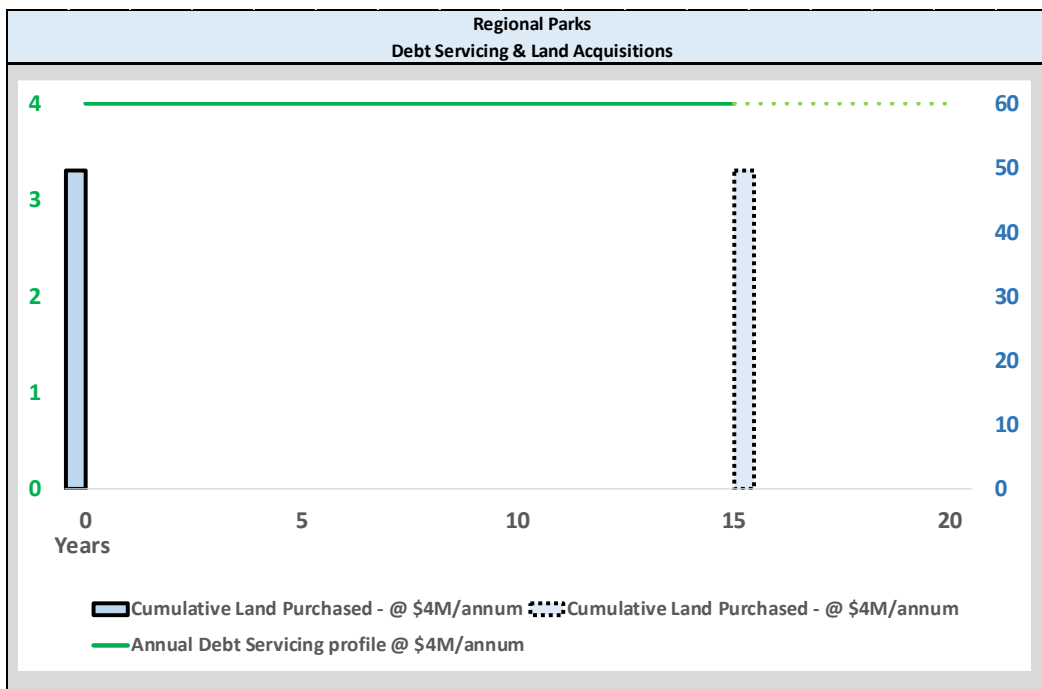
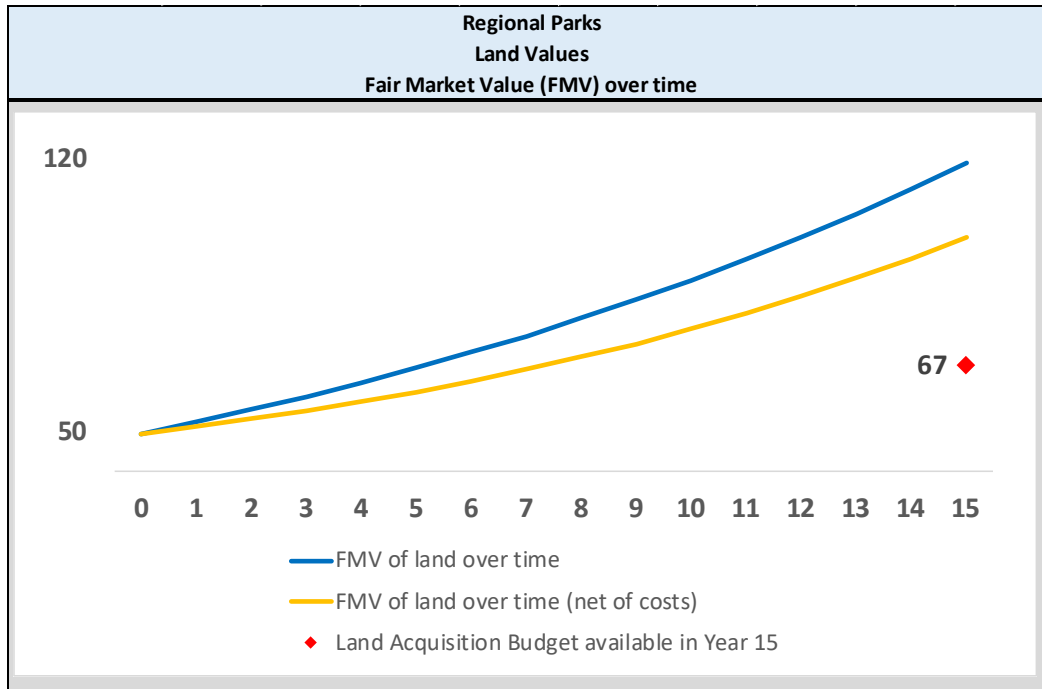
² To simplify the illustration, all other variables held constant, including but not limited to annual levy per household, etc.

Appendix A: Financial Analysis – Land Acquisition Decision Model

Assumptions:		Notes
Rate of land appreciation	6.0%	Based on BC Assessment Land data, historic 5 year regional land average appreciation rate
Rate of inflation:	2.0%	Based on BC Stats data, adjusted for forecast
Option 1: Borrow to invest in land today		
Fair Market Value of Land Purchased today:	\$50 million	Land acquisition is based on 100% financing based on maximum principal serviceable by a \$4 million/annum debt servicing budget
<div>Land Values Grow @ 6.0%/year ...</div> <div>↓</div>		
Growth-adjusted land value in Year 15:	\$119 million	Growth of land value over 15 years using rate of land appreciation assumption
<u>Less costs</u>		
Annual Land Holding Costs	\$9 million	Assume 1% of land fair market value acquired today per year and grown at assumed inflation rate. Accounts for cost of security/patrols, insurance etc
Financing Costs (financing rate 2.39%)	\$10 million	MFA 15 year debt @ current indicative rate
Growth-adjusted land value in Year 15 (after costs):	\$100 million	Land value in year 15 less costs
Land value today (after inflation):	<u>\$74 million</u>	
Option 2: Defer land purchase - save reserves over time		
Fair Market Value of Land Purchased today:	\$0	
Annual Reserve Contribution:	\$4 million	Annual reserve contribution assumption
Reserve Balance - Year 15:	\$60 million	\$4 million/annum for 15 years
<u>Plus</u>		
Interest Earned on Reserve Balances	\$7 million	Accounts for investment rate of 1.5% / annum on reserve balance
Land Acquisition Budget available in Year 15	\$67 million	Land acquisition budget available in year 15
Land Acquisition Budget available in Year 15, in today's dollars (after inflation):	<u>\$50 million</u>	
Value added by Option 1 over Option 2:	\$24 million	Difference in option 1 versus option 2 land values in today's dollars

Appendix B: Land Acquisition Decision Model – Maximizing Acquisitions

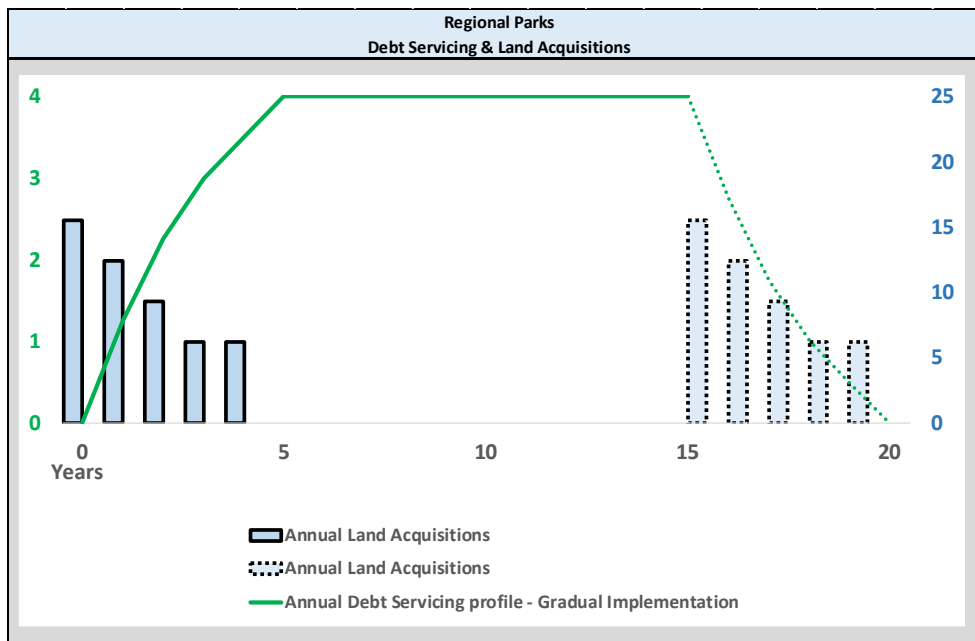
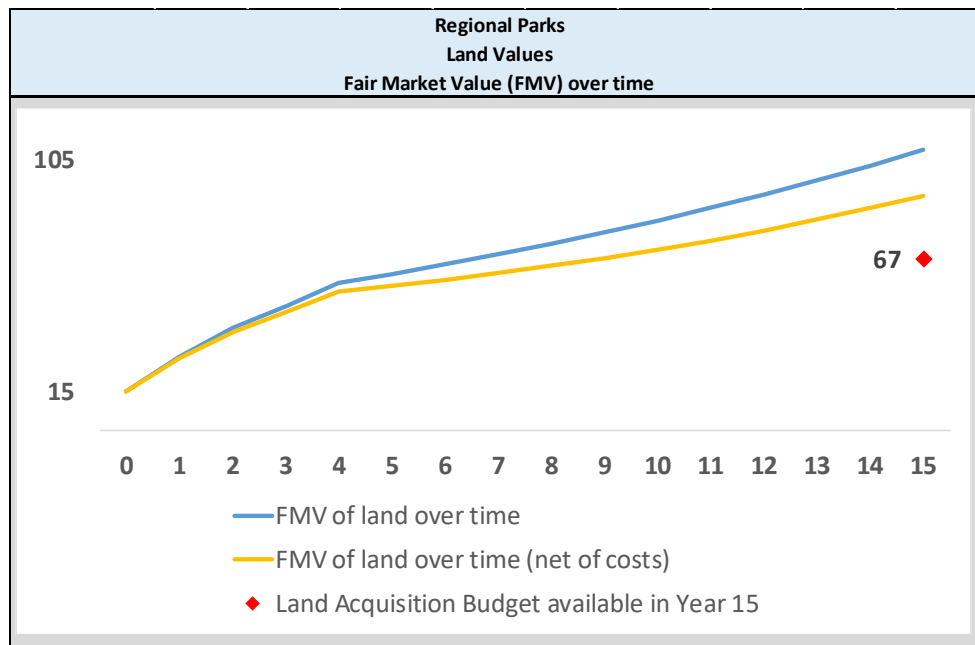
These charts represent the value created through financing in maximizing acquisitions to the annual levy cap of \$20 per household in year 0. In this scenario, the regional parks service could immediately acquire \$50 million of land and debt service over the next 15 years with no impact to requisition. After 15 years, the service could acquire an additional \$50 million of land and repeat indefinitely.¹



¹ To simplify the illustration, all other variables held constant, including but not limited to annual levy per household, etc.

Appendix C: Land Acquisition Decision Model – Phased Acquisitions

These charts represent the value created through financing in phased acquisitions to the annual levy cap of \$20 per household through first 5 years. In this scenario, the regional parks service could acquire up to \$50 million of land and debt service over the next 20 years with immediate savings to requisition through year 5. As borrowing would be phased, debt would mature after year 15 where additional borrowing could be leveraged. This laddering strategy is similar to the financial strategies used in the Capital Regional Hospital District for major capital projects, and the CRD investment holdings for GICs (Guaranteed Investment Certificates).¹



¹ To simplify the illustration, all other variables held constant, including but not limited to annual levy per household, etc.

**REPORT TO REGIONAL PARKS COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2021**

SUBJECT **2022 Service Planning – Parks & Natural Resource Management**

ISSUE SUMMARY

To provide the Regional Parks Committee with an overview of core service levels, new and progressing initiatives and performance metrics related to the Parks & Natural Resource Management Community Need. These activities are undertaken by the Regional Parks Division and deliver on approved Board Strategic Priorities and the Capital Regional District (CRD) Corporate Plan.

BACKGROUND

The CRD Board identified its strategic priorities in early 2019. Subsequently, staff prepared the 2019-2022 CRD Corporate Plan to align with this direction. The CRD Corporate Plan presents the work the CRD needs to deliver over the Board term to meet the region's fifteen most important needs (community needs). These initiatives are delivered in conjunction with the mandated core services and regulatory requirements that the CRD is accountable for delivering. The priorities were reconfirmed by the CRD Board at the annual check-ins on May 13, 2020 and May 12, 2021.

At the start of the Board term, staff identified that the ambitious plan for the region would require a significant amount of effort and resources to action and implement Board and Corporate Priorities, and to keep pace with the anticipated increase in service demands, primarily driven by population growth and construction activity. The general level of effort deployed by the organization has been increasing to keep pace since the direction was set and, in some cases, emerging trends and changes in economic activity have had a significant impact on the demand for services driving additional resource requirements.

This is the final year of service plan and budget approvals for this CRD Board, as well as the final year of implementation of its strategic priorities. For 2022, staff are recommending a significant package of work to finalize the delivery of the strategic priorities and Corporate Plan. Implementation timeframes for much of the work initiated in 2022 will carry into 2023.

2022 is a transition year for the CRD Board. Staff anticipate that any service planning requests for 2023 will be focused on operational adjustments while the Board is determining its strategic priorities for the 2023-2026 term.

The Community Need Summary Report (Appendix A) provides an overview of the strategic context for service areas by department, core service levels for services, new initiatives and a summary of the business model and performance metrics associated with targeted outcomes. A summary of the capital investment made in support of the Community Need (Appendix B) and the initiatives progressed over the course of this Board's term (Appendix C) have also been appended to this report.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1

The Regional Parks Committee recommends the Committee of the Whole recommend to the Capital Regional District Board:

That Appendix A, Community Need Summary – Parks & Natural Resource Management be approved as presented and form the basis of the 2022-2026 Financial Plan.

Alternative 2

That Appendix A, Community Need Summary – Parks & Natural Resource Management be approved as amended and form the basis of the 2022-2026 Financial Plan.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

The Executive Leadership Team (ELT) is taking steps to mitigate the financial impacts resulting from the work. ELT has reviewed the phasing of the work for 2022 to ensure that the activities and resources are allocated as efficiently as possible. Phasing out the initiatives over a longer period of time helps avoid delays that can occur when staff are too thinly spread across projects. Additionally, timing initiatives to start mid-year will also reduce the impact in 2022, but will have an incremental annualization impact in 2023 for ongoing impacts.

The CRD continues to look for ways to fund its services in a manner that relieves affordability pressure for the taxpayer. This is reflected in the policy for reserve balance measures and gaps/surplus, which was approved by the CRD Board on July 14, 2021. The CRD has had other funding successes optimizing capital funding and leveraging grant funding in a more aggressive way than ever before.

At the June 23, 2021 Regional Parks Committee meeting, staff were directed to report back to the Committee as part of the service planning process with a recommended financing option for future investments in land and major capital works that incorporate finance guidelines currently under development.

The 2022 Regional Parks budget introduces a plan of debt financing for land acquisition allowing for redirection of existing requisition capacity to cover adjustments to operating costs. This plan allows for enhancement to regional parks management by increasing staffing and materials in order to better service increased visitation and land acquisition which has outpaced operational growth in recent years.

Finally, where feasible, an incremental change management strategy has been adopted for larger projects. This means that divisions are testing out the objectives and delivery approach with a proof-of-concept and then deploying out more broadly, if the benefits can be demonstrated. This has been a successful strategy adopted for our enterprise asset management strategy deployment, for example.

A comprehensive overview of the resources required to advance the initiatives listed in all Community Need Summaries, including all proposed staffing changes, will be presented to the Committee of the Whole at the 2022 provisional budget review.

Alignment with Board & Corporate Priorities

The current Board Strategic Plan priority initiative under Climate Action and Environmental Stewardship is to “Ensure appropriate funding for parks and trails infrastructure, improvements and maintenance by updating the Regional Parks Strategy with consideration to ecological, recreation and reconciliation principles, land acquisition capacity, and expanded partnerships with First Nations.” Actions and key deliverables to date include: renewing the Land Acquisition Fund for an additional 10 years; development of an asset management plan; \$925,000 increase in the operating budget to address deficiencies and asset replacement; additional staffing; restructuring areas; and optimizing assets – to make the regional parks and trails system more efficient and cost effective.

Service Delivery Implications

CRD Regional Parks faces challenges to achieve basic service levels aimed at protecting and restoring regional park values, while offering compatible outdoor recreation opportunities. These challenges to the regional park system have steadily increased over a number of years as the size and complexity of the parks and park issues have grown. Adequate resources are required to effectively manage the park system and to meet the basic service levels required to deliver the CRD Regional Park mandate and CRD Board directions. As such, the identification of gaps and the resources required to fill those gaps is a critical step in determining and delivering the service delivery model going forward.

At its March 27, 2019 meeting, the Parks & Environment Committee directed staff to identify options during the 2020 budget process for service level adjustments to sustain CRD Regional Parks service delivery. At the October 23, 2019 meeting, staff presented sustainable service delivery report cards that identified that financial and human resources were no longer sufficient to meet current asset renewal demands. That meeting resulted in two motions related to sustainable service delivery: 1) that an additional \$925,000 be requisitioned each year for capital reserves to fund the refurbishment and replacement of existing assets; and 2) that staff report back in 2020 on strategies to ensure that sufficient funding is in place in future years to sustain the Regional Parks service. At the November 25, 2020 Regional Parks Committee meeting, a Regional Parks Revenue Generation Strategy 2021-2024 was presented. At this time, the Regional Parks Committee referred the matter back to staff to report back to the Committee with a set of revisions. At the February 24, 2021 committee meeting, staff presented alternatives for implementing the revenue strategy. The Regional Parks Committee directed staff to report back during the Regional Parks Strategic Planning process on additional options for parking revenues in regional parks.

Staff have undertaken various initiatives to make the regional parks and trails system more efficient and cost effective, such as an organizational review of its current structure, streamlining business processes, restructuring operational areas, repurposing positions and optimizing assets. In 2021, in line with a development of corporate-wide financing guidelines, reserve levels were reviewed to further optimize planned use and source of funds. Most recently, following a request from the Chief Administrative Officer, CRD Regional Parks has undertaken a comprehensive

service level exercise. This exercise identified CRD Regional Parks' ongoing needs to meet core service levels now and into the future. Gaps identified in financial and human resources are being used to justify a 2022 budget adjustment for CRD Regional Parks.

See Appendix A for more details about core service delivery.

New initiatives proposed for 2022:

Staff have identified three initiatives in support of this community need that will have budget implications in 2022 (Table 1). The key drivers for this work are:

1. Responding to an increase in demand for an existing service: visitation to regional parks has grown substantially, from around 5 million visitors a year in 2010 to over 8.5 million visitors in 2020. At the same time, the size of the parks and trails system the CRD is accountable for has grown by more than a third. This continues to place considerable strain on the CRD's ability to maintain service levels, protect park values, ensure public safety, meet asset maintenance requirements, meet public expectations for suitable recreation opportunities, and accessible facilities.
2. Imperative to operationalize capital investments: new requirement to maintain and monitor two aeration systems which are being installed at Elk and Beaver Lake to remediate toxic blue-green algae blooms.

Table 1: Parks & Natural Resource Management Community Need Initiatives

#	Initiative	Description	Year(s)	FTE impacts (2022)	Cost impacts (2022)	Funding source
6a-13	Elk/Beaver Lake Aerator Maintenance	Maintenance and monitoring of new aeration equipment	2022	--	\$100K	Requisition
6a-18	Accessibility Study	Evaluate current regional parks system against accessibility standards/best practices	2022	--	\$30K	Requisition
6g-1	Regional Parks Service	Comprehensive service level review of Regional Parks services	2022	+26 FTE* ongoing	\$3.5M	New funding model, allocations, requisition

* includes support service(s) adjustment

This information reflects the business case costs that the ELT reviewed as part of its annual assessment of initiatives.

6a-13 Elk/Beaver Lake Aerator Maintenance

Over the last several years, the appearance of toxic blue-green algae blooms has indicated

diminished health of the lake ecosystem and has caused the closure of the lakes on several occasions by the Vancouver Island Health Authority. Due to increased concerns regarding the health and safety of users of the park and the overall concern for the aquatic environment, the remediation of the lake ecosystem has become a priority for the CRD.

Two aeration systems are needed to address the low dissolved oxygen conditions. Funding for installation of the infrastructure (approximately \$1.5M) has been identified in the Regional Parks Capital Plan, with additional funding received from the Province. Initiative 6a-13 seeks additional operating funding to provide for the maintenance and monitoring of the aeration equipment on an ongoing basis, once installed.

6a-18 Accessibility Study

Regional parks visitation has grown considerably over the last 10 years. This has resulted in more demand for outdoor recreation opportunities from a wide variety of users, including those who may have different accessibility needs. The CRD has identified the need to conduct an accessibility study to evaluate the current network and identify next steps to better serve the public.

Initiative 6a-18 seeks funding to hire a consultant to evaluate the current regional parks system considering current standards of practice/design and user-friendly accessibility options. Implementation of any recommendations that could not be absorbed within existing core service levels would be subject to a separate business case, once developed and assessed.

6g-1 Regional Parks Service

From 2010 to 2020, visits to regional parks and trails have increased by more than 60% from 5.2 million in 2010 to 8.6 million in 2020. This growth has been steady at approximately 2-5% per annum, but increased significantly in 2020 due to COVID-19.

2020 has been typified by the efforts required to manage against the spread of COVID-19. The public appreciated the value that regional parks and trails played in managing personal health during these times. As a result of increased pressures on the system, the vast majority of regional parks and trails resources are being directed to high-profile areas with high visitation to address regional parks safety and satisfaction.

The division continues to face challenges in achieving existing service levels to protect and restore regional park values while offering compatible outdoor recreation opportunities. To address this, Regional Parks has undertaken a comprehensive service level review that identified gaps in services and the ongoing resources required to fill those gaps, as well as those required to deliver basic service levels that will meet public expectations now and into the future. Direction was received from the Regional Parks Committee on June 23, 2020 to translate the conclusions of this review into a refreshed service budget for presentation in the fall.

Initiative 6g-1 seeks to amend the funding and staffing structure (+24 FTE regular) of Regional Parks to:

- Enhance divisional capacity to manage new types of assets, increased levels of visitation and the changing recreational landscapes associated with a growing park system.

- Increase the capacity to undertake and manage increasingly complex projects, management plans and other initiatives while ensuring that meaningful engagement is a part of these processes.
- Introduce expert level conservation programs, that will ensure the maintenance and monitoring of ecological integrity including the impacts of recreation and climate change.
- Build operational elasticity so that the effects of weather events such as flooding and blowdown associated with climate change do not negatively impact core services for extended time periods, and so that staff can respond in a more timely manner to complaints and concerns raised by the public about safety issues.
- Enhance the capacity to meet the demands associated with the land acquisition process so that land purchasing decisions can be more efficient and opportunistic.
- Increase the resources available to meet the compliance and enforcement pressures associated with a park system approaching 9 million annual visits; pressures include: user conflicts on regional trails, displaced persons camping in parks, illegal trail building, encroachments, wildfire security, encroachments and safety issues in popular swimming areas.
- Improve the capital replacement, renewal and development program by providing dedicated staff to plan, manage and implement capital projects including those that ensure compliance with provincial regulations such as dam management.
- Increase staffing levels in order to address issues associated with approximately 200 km of backcountry trails as well as, other backcountry assets that are currently attended to infrequently due to time constraints.
- Accelerate the quantity of, and delivery time for, park management plans that will provide vision and direction for current and future regional parks.
- Increased capacity to work with volunteers, stewardship groups and park user groups to leverage volunteer hours in areas such as priority invasive species removal, mountain biking trail maintenance, and shoreline clean up.
- Increased awareness and education campaigns to protect visitors and park values and support education and compliance on emerging park issues.
- More proactive communications efforts that address complaints/issues before they arise, improved capacity to respond to public messages through social media, email and report to parks.

The size and scope of this initiative will also increase demand and requirements for a number of support services. This initiative will result in an adjustment to the Financial Services (+1.0 FTE) and Information Technology & GIS (+1.0 FTE) staffing models to accommodate the demand and an increase to the Human Resources & Corporate Safety auxiliary hours to keep pace with the increase in FTEs and associated workloads. To provide full transparency, the financial impact of the initiative reflects the whole cost of delivering the work, including flow-down impacts on support services.

Alignment with Board & Corporate Priorities

The direction given to staff was to bring forward work that is of essential nature. This was defined as:

- initiatives that provide for public health and safety and/or deliver on a regulatory requirement
- initiatives that are required to deliver the Board Strategic Priorities
- initiatives that will prevent the materialization of significant negative impacts on service

- customers, partners, the region, local services or the CRD's finances
- initiatives that minimize the materialization of financial, reputational or other risks and liabilities for the CRD by ensuring the organization is keeping pace with expectations and demand
- there is an imperative to deliver the work immediately and/or quickly

The current Board Strategic Plan priority initiative under Climate Action and Environmental Stewardship is to "Ensure appropriate funding for parks and trails infrastructure, improvements and maintenance by updating the Regional Parks Strategy with consideration to ecological, recreation and reconciliation principles, land acquisition capacity, and expanded partnerships with First Nations." Actions and key deliverables to date include: renewing the Land Acquisition Fund for an additional 10 years; development of an asset management plan; \$925,000 increase in the operating budget to address deficiencies and asset replacement; additional staffing; restructuring areas; and optimizing assets – to make the regional parks and trails system more efficient and cost effective.

The ELT has reviewed and assessed all business cases against the criteria. The consolidated package of work is appropriate and commensurate to the challenge facing the organization.

CONCLUSION

Staff have been progressing initiatives and actions identified in the CRD Corporate Plan, including Board Strategic Priorities. The CRD Board determines resourcing through its annual review and approval of financial plans. As per previous years, to support the Board's decision-making, staff are providing recommendations on funding, timing and service levels through the service and financial planning processes.

RECOMMENDATION

The Regional Parks Committee recommends the Committee of the Whole recommend to the Capital Regional District Board:

That Appendix A, Community Need Summary – Parks & Natural Resource Management be approved as presented and form the basis of the 2022-2026 Financial Plan.

Submitted by:	Jeff Leahy, RPF, Senior Manager, Regional Parks
Concurrence:	Larisa Hutcheson, P. Eng., General Manager, Parks & Environmental Services
Concurrence:	Robert Lapham, MCIP, RPP, Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A: Community Need Summary – Parks & Natural Resources Management
Appendix B: Capital Plan Report
Appendix C: Initiative Progress Report

Community Need

2022 Summary



Parks & Natural Resources Management

Strategy

Target Outcome

We envision additional land acquisitions and increased access to parks and recreational trails

Strategic Context

Strategies

- [Regional Climate Action Strategy](#)
- [Regional Parks Strategic Plan](#)
- [Land Acquisition Strategy](#)
- [Special Task Force on First Nations Relations](#)
- [Statement of Reconciliation](#)

Trends, risks and issues

- **Changes to the system** – From 2000 to 2020, Regional Parks has grown by 4,842.9 hectares, growing the land base by 37%. This is coupled with increased visitation of more than 36% over 10 years. 2020 alone saw an increase of 25% to the system. While the land base has grown exponentially, as well as pressures to the system, FTEs have not increased at a comparable rate.
- **Changes to Regional Development** – The region is experiencing growth in multi-family developments, development sites and intensity of development. This is leading to more pressure for recreational space on nearby regional parks.
- **Changes to Recreational Use Patterns** – There is increased pressure for a diversity of recreational uses and greater advocacy from stakeholder groups. Overcrowding in key areas, such as fresh water swimming locations, results in limited resources diverted to high-use areas for increased services, compliance and enforcement. Increased use in the backcountry, including unauthorized uses, such as off-trail hiking and mountain biking, is creating a need for more education, communication, monitoring, compliance, and decommissioning of unauthorized trails. 2020 saw unprecedented use in the system. Although this use may decrease slightly post pandemic, it signals what increased use will look like in the regional parks system as the population and pressures grow.
- **Sustainable Service Delivery** – Major infrastructure in regional parks is nearing its lifespan and needs improvements to support demands they were not built for. In recent years, the increased cost of materials and the complexity of projects has led to high costs for these major capital projects. As well, the volume and complexity of these projects requires a level of staff oversight that is unsupportable with current resources.
- **First Nation Reconciliation** – Projects, management plans and initiatives are increasingly complex, as it is important to provide for meaningful engagement, plan for land altering works, celebrate indigenous

Community Need

2022 Summary

perspective through education and communication, and protect cultural values in regional parks.

- **Demographic Changes** – The population is aging overall but is also trending to a high proportion of young people in some parts of the region. The ethnic composition of the population is becoming more diverse. This trend is anticipated to continue and will create demands for different forms of recreation and new ways of using open space. It also raises the need to help new migrants to learn about the regional parks and trails, to fully enjoy the park experiences, and to understand and respect the environment of the regional parks and trails system. These demographic changes will give rise to different recreation demands for people with differing needs and abilities.
- **Events** – The regional parks provide locations for recreation activity, events, tourism and filming, all of which are major contributors to the regional economy. However, there is also growing demand for economic activity in the parks, arising from activities such as commercial filming, and numerous group events. The number of permits continues to increase to allow these type of events to occur within the system.
- **Volunteers** – There is an increased interest in volunteering in regional parks and trails. Volunteer input is a valued and essential contribution to the regional park system; however, it requires investment to manage and facilitate volunteer programs.
- **Ecological Integrity** – Over a number of years, there has been increased interest in understanding the region's culture and biodiversity. There is a worldwide trend toward maintaining the viability of ecosystems rather than species management. The regional parks play an important role in managing entire and relatively intact ecosystems, and allowing people to experience the sights and sounds of nature and to participate in the management of the parks. Meeting these expectations places pressures on providing the funding, supervision and expertise to support conservation programs that maintain and monitor ecological integrity.
- **Human disturbance** – Conflict can occur between the need to protect ecological, geological and cultural features and visitor access or recreational activities. While some park features, such as streams, coastal dunes and similar natural ecosystems, may be considered attractive for some recreation pursuits, they may not be suitable for many activities because of their vulnerability to irreversible change.
- **Listed Species** – Effective management of threatened plant and animal species can be complex and requires specialist expertise. Threatened species recovery is a long-term process and success may take time and be financially costly.
- **Climate Change** – Weather events associated with climate change are unpredictable and at times create a significant pressure on the regional parks system.
- **Monitoring and research** – Ongoing monitoring and research is required to evaluate the success of conservation programs, the impact of activities on parks and to determine where additional efforts may be required.

2022 Summary

Services

Core Services Levels	
Service	Levels
<p>Planning, Resource Management & Development</p> <p>Contribute to effective and efficient decision making through plan and policy development, natural and cultural resource management, capital development planning, project management and geographic mapping; development of the Strategic Plan and park management plans. Provide oversight of the land acquisition program. Guide the implementation of scientific and technical work related to environmental management.</p> <p>→ Service level adjusted, see IBC 6g-1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage two Management Plan processes per year, with at least one approval annually; direct and conduct engagement with, on average, three First Nations per plan. • Evaluate 20 candidate properties for land acquisition and complete two acquisition per year. Annual budget of \$4M. Develop activity reports and strategy documents. • Support planning and provide project management, where needed, for capital facility projects, annual expenditures to \$3M. • Manage two contracts per year for technical planning studies or services. • Undertake five conservation projects per year • Manage asset inventory data and coordinate renewal forecasting asset management and capital project planning. • Provide spatial and GIS data analysis and collection for a range of purposes, including existing and new digital data sharing agreements and up to 200 public and internal cartography products for 34 parks and 100s of sign posts, park facilities, trails, etc. • Maintain and develop asset management data • Respond to around 70 development referrals per year.
<p>Regional Parks Operations</p> <p>Regional Park Operations is responsible for the operations and maintenance of all regional parks and regional trails. Park Operations staff operate and maintain all regional park facilities and critical infrastructure, including, bridges, dams, roads and trails. The operation of regional parks occurs 365 days per year with facilities being visited once or twice daily on average. The regional park system geographically spans from the Southern Gulf Islands to Jordan River and requires staff to travel large</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage and maintain 400 km of park trails, 55 washrooms and 132 garbage containers (most serviced daily). • Capital project management and implementation; undertake 20+ infrastructure and facility replacement and repair projects annually. • Every year, prepare or update a Facilities Plan and 33 Operating Plans. • Manage three regional campgrounds; meet target of 65% weekend occupancy rate at Sooke

Community Need

2022 Summary

<p>distances to visit facilities daily, weekly and monthly. Over 10,000 hours of vehicle travel is logged annually by operations staff.</p> <p>→ Service level adjusted, see IBC 6g-1</p>	<p>Potholes and Island View Beach (from May to September).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct 5,000 compliance and enforcement patrol hours annually (CRD bylaw enforcement officers and CRD park rangers).
<p>Visitor Services & Community Development</p> <p>Contribute to quality visitor experience in regional parks through education, communication products, and planning for recreational activities. Create opportunities for volunteer engagement. Serve the public through responses to public inquiries. Issue permits for events, commercial use, and other. Monitor trends in visitor use through park use and resident surveys. Manage online registration for regional parks camping.</p> <p>→ Service level adjusted, see IBC 6g-1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 580 volunteers delivering 5,700 hours of engagement, parks and trails condition checks and invasive species removal. Deliver 120 educational programs, 130 nature outings and 10 outreach events annually. Process 240 special events permits annually. Conduct up to eight Visitor Use Surveys annually. <p>(subject to COVID-19 health protocols)</p>
<p>Regional Trails</p> <p>Manage Regional Trails system to protect and operate three regional trails that provide a transportation and recreation function and that provide non-motorized trails for active transportation and recreation to connect municipalities, electoral areas and the region with adjacent jurisdictions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operate, manage and maintain 95 km of multi-use regional trails Conduct 250 km of boom flail vegetation removal annually
<p>Support Services</p> <p>The core services listed rely on the support of several corporate and support divisions to effectively operate on a daily basis. These services are reported on in the Accountability Community Need Summary.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services include Asset Management, Facility Management, Financial Services, Information Technology & GIS, Information Services, Human Resources & Corporate Safety, Corporate Communications, Legislative Services, Legal Services, Risk & Insurance and Real Estate Services.

Community Need

2022 Summary

Initiatives					
Ref	Initiative	Description	Year(s)	2022 impacts	
6a-13	Elk/Beaver Lake Aerator Maintenance	Maintenance and monitoring of new aeration equipment	2022	--	\$100K requisition
6a-18	Accessibility Study	Evaluate current regional parks system against accessibility standards/best practices	2022	--	\$30K requisition
6g-1	Regional Parks Service	Comprehensive service level review of Regional Parks services	2022	+26.0 FTE ongoing	\$3.5M New funding model + allocations + requisition

Business Model

Funding
<p>Who contributes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All 13 Municipalities and 3 Electoral Areas• Support Services: varies per service <p>Funding Sources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Requisitions, grants, donations and non-tax revenue

Reporting Structure
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regional Parks Committee

Community Need

2022 Summary

Performance			
Definition and Source	2020 Actual	2021 Forecast	2022 Target
Metric 1: 100% of critical infrastructure in the Regional Parks and Trails system in good or better condition Percentage of critical infrastructure in the Regional Parks and Trails system that is in good or very good condition; data from asset management sustainable report cards.	78%	89%	92%
Metric 2: Maintain a visitor experience satisfaction rate of 85% or better for Regional Parks and Trails Percentage of visitors that described their overall experience with Regional Parks and Trails as 'quite satisfactory' or 'very satisfactory'; data from CRD Regional Parks Resident Survey 2017 (collected every 5 years)	85%	85%	85%
Metric 3: A 25% contribution of land acquisition funding from community partners Percentage of the Land Acquisition Fund contributions annually that comes from community partners; data from Land Acquisition Updates	10%	25%	25%
Metric 4: Maintain a volunteer base of greater than 500 people Number of active volunteers in Regional Parks and Trails; data from volunteer registry	500	500	500

Community Need

2022 Summary

Discussion

Link to Target Outcome

- The Land Acquisition Fund provides funding for the purchase of land for regional parks and trails. Tracking community contributions helps demonstrate the sufficient availability of funding and community support for the strategy that has been put in place.
- Measuring the level of asset renewal investment and condition of parks and recreation trail infrastructure is a good indicator of how well-maintained, and therefore accessible and inclusive, the infrastructure is. This is supplemented by information about visitor satisfaction to ensure that expectations are met and that CRD actions and initiatives are facilitating a good experience for visitors.

Discussion

- COVID has had a significant impact on regional parks volunteer base.
- Metric 3: Since 2000, with the support of partners, the regional parks system has grown by 4,843 hectares through a number of land acquisitions valued at \$64M. The CRD partners in land acquisitions have contributed almost \$17M, or 27% of the overall cost of the purchases. Going forward, the CRD will seek an average of 25% contribution of land acquisition funding from community partners.

Community Need

Capital Plan Report



Parks & Natural Resource Management

Highlights since 2019

- The CRD has allocated **\$27M since 2019** on projects across the region that advance the Parks & Natural Resource Management Community Need. This was primarily funded through reserves and capital funds at hand and grants. Projects undertaken included:
 - Construction of the **E&N Rail Trail** phases 3 and 4 (from Atkins Road to Savory School and from Esquimalt Road to Tyee Road).
 - Structural upgrade of the **Todd Creek Trestle**
 - Drilling to determine the stability of the **Durrance Lake Dam**
 - Facility upgrades at Elk Beaver Lake, including municipal sewer connection to new washroom buildings at Filter Beds and Beaver Beach, as well as a new washroom facility at Eagle Beach.
 - Construction of a new parking lot at Sooke Hills Wilderness Regional Park
 - Asset management, including the replacement and repairs of equipment and facilities including washrooms, visitor facilities, large infrastructure and trails.

Planned for 2022

- The CRD will allocate **\$10M in 2022** on:
 - Potential land acquisition transactions
 - Purchase and installation of water remediation systems at Elk and Beaver Lakes
 - Meeting Dam Safety Branch requirements at Elk/Beaver Lakes, Thetis Lake and Humpback Reservoir
 - Galloping Goose Bridge repairs at Veitch Creek, Charters Creek and Interurban

Community Need

Capital Plan Report



- This work is funded through reserves (including equipment reserve fund) and capital funds on hand and grants.

Community Need

Initiative Progress Report



Parks & Natural Resources Management

Initiatives approved in 2020 and 2021			
Ref	Initiative	% complete	Progress to date
6a-1	Regional Parks Strategy Update	0%	Lead: Regional Parks (2020) Progressing - Regional Parks Committee staff report planned for fall 2021 to present options relating to the Regional Parks Strategy update. Options analysis being done in-house
6a-8	Dams, Bridges and Trestles Capital Reserve	100%	Lead: Regional Parks (2020) Completed
6b-1	Invasive Species Management	100%	Lead: Regional Parks (2020) Part of core services
6b-2	Environmental Stewardship Programs	100%	Lead: Regional Parks (2020) Part of core services
6b-3	Environmental Stewardship Volunteers	100%	Lead: Regional Parks (2020) Part of core services – program continues to evolve
6b-4	Park Operations	100%	Lead: Regional Parks (2020) Completed
6b-5	Mountain Bike Policy	100%	Lead: Regional Parks (2020) Completed – CRD Mountain Biking Guidelines approved by CRD Board on May 12, 2021
6d-1	Engage with First Nations	100%	Lead: Regional Parks (2020) Completed – vacancy repurposed for First Nations Cultural Interpreter
6e-1	Land Acquisition Fund Renewal	100%	Lead: Regional Parks (2020) Completed
6f-1	Dog Management Policy Framework	100%	Lead: Regional Parks (2020) Completed

**REPORT TO REGIONAL PARKS COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2021**

SUBJECT Regional Trails Widening and Lighting Project

ISSUE SUMMARY

To provide the outcomes from the public engagement process on the proposed 6.5 metre separated use pathway design with lighting for priority sections of the Galloping Goose and Lochside regional trails and to confirm next steps for securing funding through grant opportunities, partnerships, and reallocation of resources for project assessments, design and construction.

BACKGROUND

The Regional Trails Management Plan (RTMP) provides direction to conduct a comparative study to assess the engineering feasibility and cost/benefits of widening and separating the urban portions of the Galloping Goose and Lochside regional trails (Appendix A) and to study whether to install lighting along the corridors. The Capital Regional District (CRD) retained consultant services in 2019 to conduct the Regional Trails Widening Study (Report). The Report was received by the Regional Parks Committee at its meeting of January 27, 2021.

The Report recommends, and trail user numbers support, a 6.5 m wide separated use pathway design with lighting (Appendix B) and implementation priorities (Appendix C) to address many of the issues on the regional trails noted in the 2013 and 2019 Visitor Use Surveys and the 2016 RTMP, including high user volumes and speed differentials, lack of separation between trail users, poor trail etiquette, lack of lighting, safety concerns at intersections, and crime. The proposed facility design also considers forecasted use trends, changes in technology, best practices and trail design standards, and would enhance access to active transportation options in the region to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs), which is a current Board priority.

At its February 10, 2021 meeting, the CRD Board directed staff to expedite public engagement on the proposed separated use pathway design, lighting and implementation priorities, including consideration of low-intensity lighting in the trail segment adjacent to Swan Lake, aiming for balance between wildlife and public safety considerations. The Board further directed that public engagement and detailed designs be expedited, with a view toward having a shovel-ready project. Staff delivered an engagement process in spring 2021 for the Regional Trails Widening and Lighting Project that included opportunities for public, government and First Nations input and involvement, and that complied with COVID-19 safety protocols. Feedback highlights strong support for the separated use pathway design, proposed lighting scheme, and the priority sequence for implementation. The report of public engagement is included as Appendix D. Staff have also actively pursued partnerships with provincial and municipal agencies to determine funding options and to advance the project.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1

The Regional Parks Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:
That staff be directed to actively develop partnerships and pursue grant funding opportunities, including submission to the federal Active Transportation Fund, to support implementation of the separated use pathway design with lighting.

Alternative 2

That this report be referred back to staff for additional information.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial Implications

The total construction cost estimate provided in 2020 by the consultant of constructing the separated use pathway for the entire 6.6 km study area is estimated at \$14.2 million, including \$1.2 million for lighting and a 33% contingency. The order of magnitude 'Class D' cost estimates were derived in 2020 costs, assuming total removal of existing pathway and stripping to design width of new pathway. Staff estimated the total project cost at \$17.8 million, when all other costs are included, such as detailed design work, permits, assessments and project management. Staff and the consultants examined opportunities for cost reduction, such as reduced lighting and trail narrowing, and determined an overall project cost of as low as \$13.2 million.

Feedback from the engagement process indicates strong support for full implementation of the separated use pathway design with lighting concept. While cost saving measures are available, compromises to the overall facility design do not align with public feedback received.

The federal Active Transportation Fund is a \$400 million, five-year investment to fund projects in Canada that support active transportation infrastructure. The Fund will contribute up to 60% of municipal capital projects (40% where the asset is provincial), with the remaining funds sourced by other levels of government. Application intake is expected to open in fall 2021. Funding opportunities of this significance are not anticipated to be available beyond this five-year investment. Staff seek direction to submit a funding application for the project.

At this time, this project is not considered in the capital plan and there is no opportunity to fund the project through the CRD Regional Parks capital program, as the budget is fully subscribed on asset renewals to address critical infrastructure and public safety. To advance the project, reallocation of resources and innovative cost-sharing approaches are required to support implementation of the project in a phased approach over a number of years.

Service Delivery Implications

At its meeting of July 14, 2021, the Board advanced implementation of priority active transportation actions, including upgrading heavily-used urban sections of regional trails. User volumes continue to increase, with over 800,000 recorded cyclists on the Galloping Goose at Selkirk Trestle so far in 2021, and with average daily user volumes over 3,700 in August 2021, compared to 2,600 for the busiest months over the past five years. Development of a shovel-ready regional trail improvement project is within scope of the existing CRD service; however, additional staff and financial resources would be required to support the increased service level.

Critical infrastructure on the regional trails within the 6.6 km study area identified for improvement in the next five years include: \$20,000 for repairing the Interurban Bridge and \$80,000 for repairs to the Lochside trail at Borden Street in 2022; and \$4.45 million for assessment, design and replacement of the Swan and Brett trestles between 2023-2026. Where existing infrastructure requires repair or replacement, opportunities to integrate the proposed facility design should be considered. Planned improvements by Regional Parks or other agencies with jurisdiction in the trail corridors offer opportunity for efficiencies by aligning project work; however, flexibility in the sequence for implementation of the separated use pathway is required. Examples of project synergies determined through stakeholder discussions include: City of Victoria's cycling network

improvements on Gorge Road in 2022 and underground utility replacement within the Galloping Goose corridor in 2023, and Saanich's planned mobility hub improvements at Uptown.

Intergovernmental Implications

Implementation of the separated use pathway design with lighting requires collaboration and coordination among government agencies and community partners. The segments of regional trails in the study area are owned by the Province (Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure - MOTI) and road crossings are within the City of Victoria and District of Saanich jurisdictions. Staff-level discussions with government agencies to date indicate strong support for advancing the project.

The CRD, MOTI and the BC Transportation Financing Authority have established an agreement to collaborate on providing input on design and implementation of the Regional Trails Widening and Lighting Project, with an aim to achieve active transportation targets and implement design standards.

First Nations with an interest in the project area wish to provide further input should the project be implemented. Comments on the proposed project were received from the W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Council and Esquimalt and Songhees Nations. This feedback indicates interest in understanding any archaeological and environmental implications, in having cultural monitors present during land altering activities, and in any economic development opportunities arising from the project. An archaeological assessment would be required as a next step to inform development of the project.

Social Implications

The public engagement process for this project included an online survey, virtual open houses, meetings with stakeholders, and a variety of communications materials (Appendix D). In total, 1,784 online surveys were completed between May 25 and June 13, 2021. Overall, the majority of respondents support or strongly support the separated use pathway design (90% for Section A Selkirk – Switch Bridge; 88% for Section C Switch Bridge – McKenzie Avenue; and 87% for Section B Switch Bridge – Grange Road). With regards to the proposed sequence for implementation, 83% of respondents indicated support or strong support. The majority of respondents also indicated support or strong support for lighting the three sections of regional trails (87% for Section A Selkirk to Switch Bridge; 84% for Section C Switch Bridge – McKenzie Avenue; and 83% for Section B Switch Bridge – Grange Road), with 79% supporting or strongly supporting low-intensity lighting options adjacent to Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary between Darwin Avenue and Quadra Street. Of the 239 responses objecting to low-intensity lighting in this section of trail, the majority indicated preference for no lighting. An additional 904 comments were received from survey respondents relating to lighting, trail etiquette, trail widening, ecological values, wildlife and habitat, facility design, separation of users, opposition and concern for project costs. Similar themes were identified in the 10 email submissions received about the project.

Overall, public feedback received indicates strong support for the proposed separated use pathway design with lighting and implementation sequence. Should the separated use pathway with lighting improvements be implemented, ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the success of the facility could be assessed through future Visitor Use Surveys, trail counter data, and analysis of regional multi-modal transportation targets.

Environmental & Climate Implications

The CRD Board declared a climate emergency in 2019, and Board Priorities for 2019-2022 identify green and affordable multi-modal transportation and reduced greenhouse gas emissions as desired outcomes. The Regional Trails Widening and Lighting Project aligns with these priorities and with the CRD Regional Trails Management Plan, Regional Climate Action Strategy, Regional Transportation Plan and Regional Growth Strategy, and with policies from other agencies, such as the National Active Transportation Strategy, Clean BC, Move, Commute, Connect, and the South Island Transportation Strategy.

Potential impacts of widening and lighting the regional trails was raised during the engagement process. Environmental and geotechnical assessments would be required as next steps to inform preparation of detailed design drawings. Opportunities for natural areas restoration, removal of invasive species and stormwater management could be realized through the project. In addition, efficiencies can be gained where the new facility design can be incorporated into planned projects.

CONCLUSION

Public engagement on the Regional Trails Widening and Lighting Project was conducted in spring 2021. Results indicate strong support for the separated use pathway design and lighting concept, as well as for the proposed implementation sequence. Municipal and provincial partners are also in support of advancing the project by identifying project synergies, collaborating on design and pursuing funding. A significant amount of funding for active transportation projects is being released by federal and provincial programs, including the Active Transportation Fund. The CRD will continue to pursue partnerships and grant funding opportunities to support the project.

RECOMMENDATION

The Regional Parks Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:

That staff be directed to actively develop partnerships and pursue grant funding opportunities, including submission to the federal Active Transportation Fund, to support implementation of the separated use pathway design with lighting.

Submitted by:	Jeff Leahy, Senior Manager, Regional Parks
Concurrence:	Larisa Hutcheson, P.Eng., General Manager, Parks & Environmental Services
Concurrence:	Robert Lapham, MCIP, RPP, Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A: Regional Trails Widening Study Area – Map

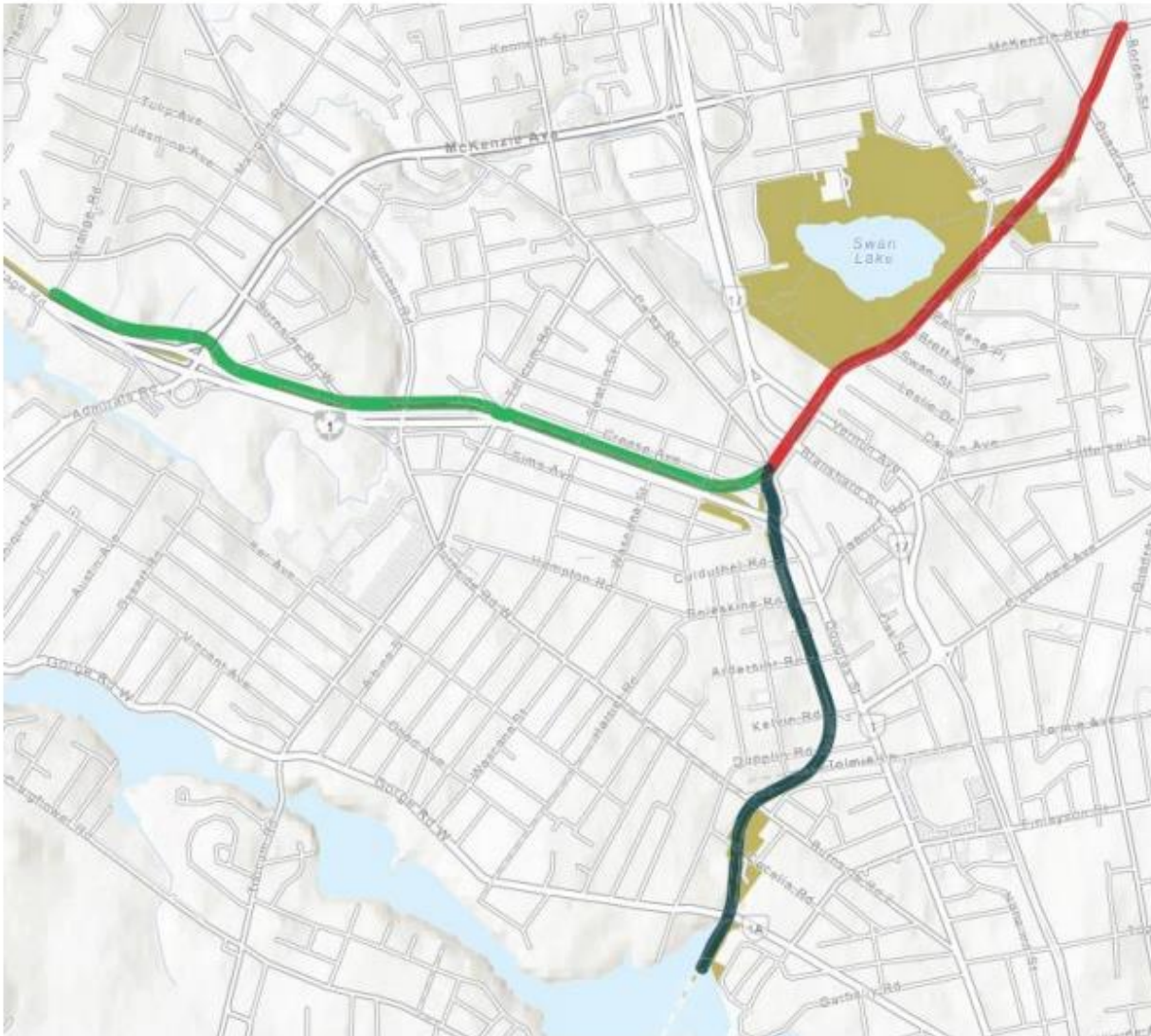
Appendix B: Separated Use Pathway Design

Appendix C: Implementation Priorities

Appendix D: Regional Trails Widening and Lighting Project – Report of Public Engagement

REGIONAL TRAILS WIDENING STUDY AREA MAP

September 2021

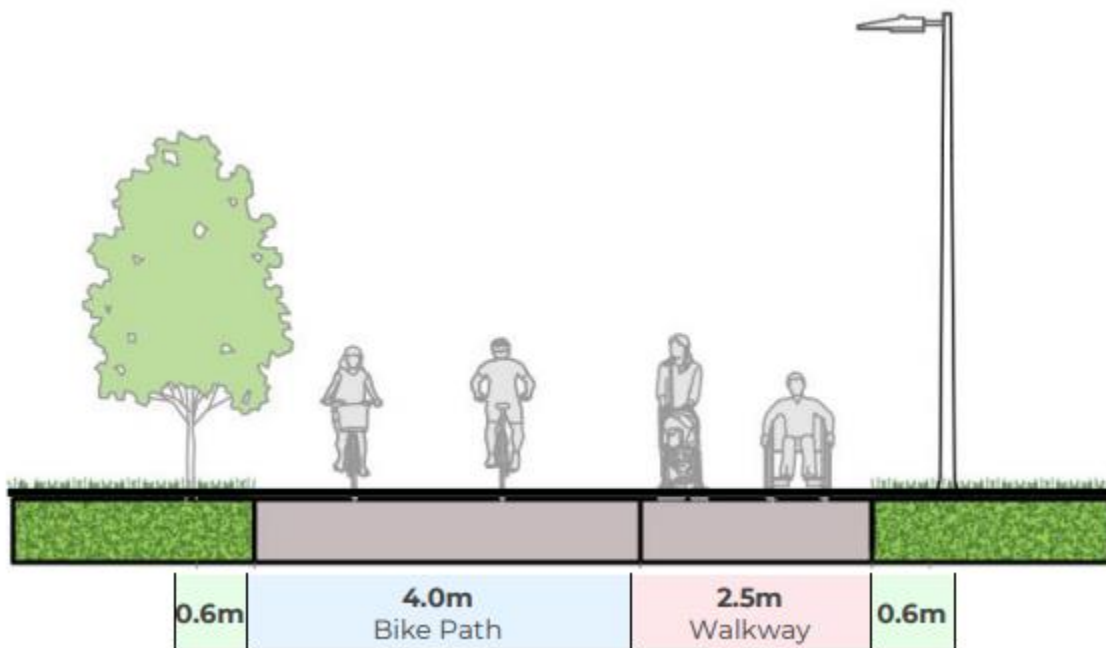
**Trail Sections**

-  **Section A.** Galloping Goose, Selkirk Trestle to Switch Bridge
-  **Section B.** Galloping Goose, Switch Bridge to Grange Rd
-  **Section C.** Lochside Trail, Switch Bridge to McKenzie Ave

SEPARATED USE PATHWAY DESIGN

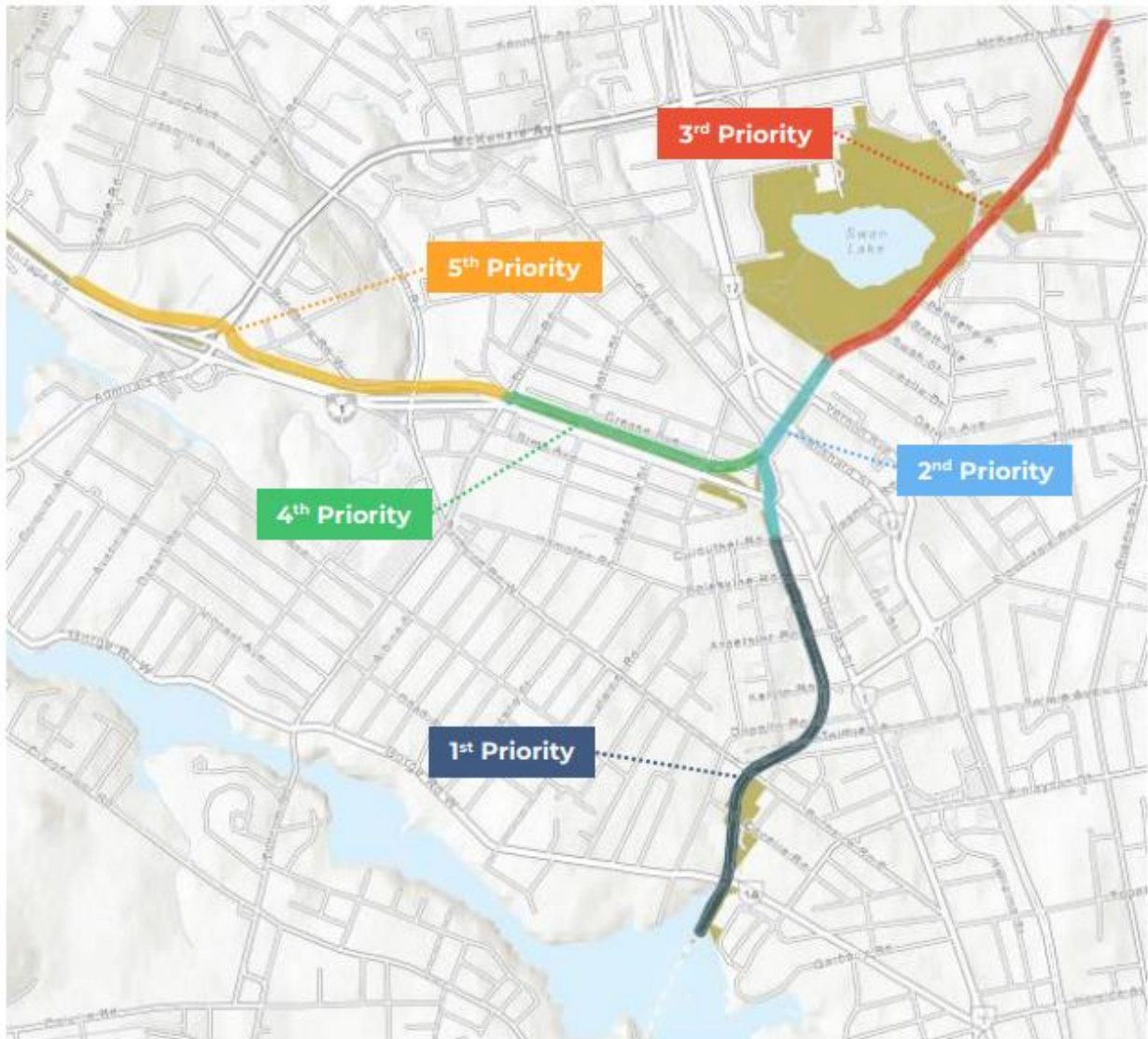
September 2021

Separated Use Pathway



IMPLEMENTATION PRIORITIES

September 2021



Regional Trails Widening and Lighting Project



Regional Parks

Capital Regional District | September 2021

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1.0 Introduction

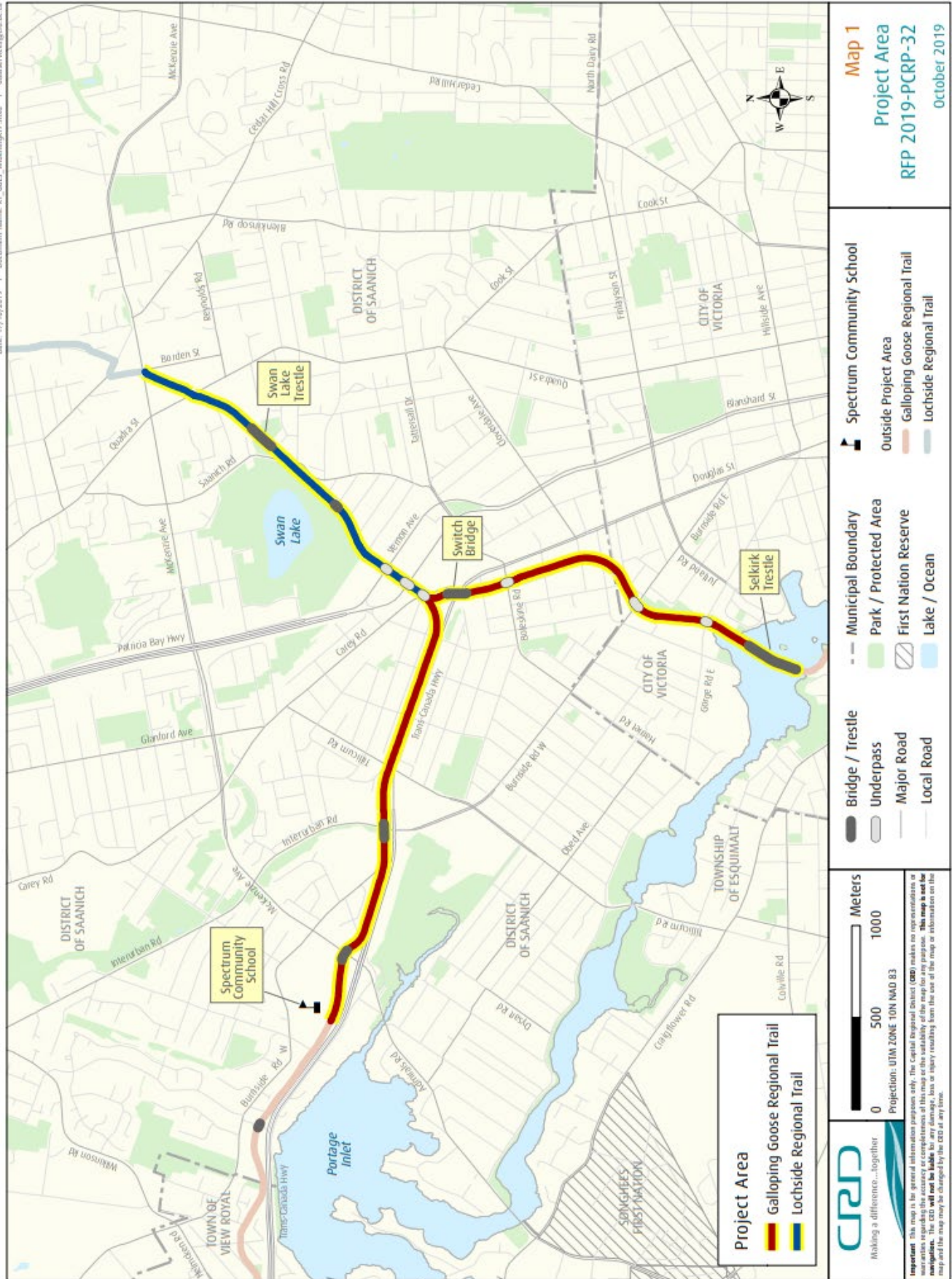
The Galloping Goose and Lochside regional trails have steadily increased in popularity since being constructed in the late 1980s (Galloping Goose) and early 2000s (Lochside) and now average over 3 million visits per year. The increase in user volumes, types of users and safety concerns in urban trail sections have been identified as challenges for years.

The 2016 Regional Trails Management Plan (RTMP) identifies assessing the feasibility of separating or widening the Galloping Goose between the Selkirk Trestle and Grange Road at McKenzie Avenue/Highway 1, as well as to assess widening the Lochside between the Switch Bridge and McKenzie Avenue. The RTMP also identifies the need to study the possibility of adding lighting along regional trails.

The Capital Regional District (CRD) retained consultant services in 2019 to conduct the Regional Trails Widening Study. The Study considered options to widen and separate trail users and potentially light the 6.6 km portions of the Galloping Goose and the Lochside regional trails identified in the RTMP (Map 1).

Urban Systems and PBX Engineering were retained to conduct the study and submitted a report with recommendations and conceptual design drawings in 2020. The report was received by the Regional Parks Committee and the CRD Board in February 2021. Staff were directed to conduct expedited public engagement on the 6.5 m separated use pathway design with lighting and implementation priorities as recommended, including consideration of low-intensity lighting in the trail segment adjacent to Swan Lake, aiming for balance between wildlife and public safety considerations.

Map 1: Project Area



2.0 Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to summarize the expedited engagement process conducted in spring 2021 and to highlight responses and key themes received by the general public related to supporting/opposing the proposed Regional Trails Widening and Lighting Project.

3.0 Engagement Period

The expedited engagement process was launched from May 25 to June 13, 2021 and included the following opportunities to participate:

- Two virtual open houses held on June 4 and June 7, 2021;
- An online survey available on the project website from May 25 to June 13, 2021;
- Meetings with staff from government and agencies; and
- Invitations to First Nations to provide input.

A project webpage and communication materials were published and circulated in May and June 2021. This report includes a summary of the expedited engagement activities completed and responses received until the end of June 2021.

4.0 Focus of Engagement

The CRD is committed to involving First Nations, stakeholders and the public in the development of regional trails. The aim of this expedited engagement process is to inform First Nations, stakeholder groups and the public about the Regional Trails Widening Study and to determine the level of support for the proposed 6.5 m separated use pathway design with lighting and implementation priorities from interested and affected individuals.

Other goals of the engagement process included information sharing, dialogue and discussion, building ongoing relationships and developing regional trail facilities that reflect organizational needs and public interests.

5.0 Who Was Engaged

5.1 First Nations

First Nations with traditional territory within the project area were invited to provide input on the proposed project. Letters and emails were sent to Songhees Nation, Esquimalt Nation, Pauquachin Nation and to the W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Council in May and June 2021.

5.2 Government & Agencies

Meetings with staff from agencies and government departments with direct or related jurisdiction over the regional trails were held between May and June 2021, which included: the City of Victoria, District of Saanich, Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure and the Saanich and Victoria Police departments. A meeting was also held with staff from Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary who expressed interest in the project as being adjacent to the Lochside Regional Trail.

These government and agencies were notified by email about the project and requested to provide input related to their jurisdictional role and interest in the project. Information sharing about potential project synergies, mutual interests and cost-sharing was encouraged.

5.3 Interest Groups

Interest groups with general interest or expertise in the project were notified by email about the engagement process and opportunities for input through the online survey and virtual open houses.

Thirty-seven interest groups were identified from a larger contact list used by Regional Parks for engagement processes. These interest groups included: the Greater Victoria Cycling Coalition, South Island Mountain Bike Society, Victoria Pathfinders Walking Club, Southern Vancouver Island Nature Trails Society, Garden City Horseman's Club, Capital Region Equestrians, Victoria Disability Resource Centre, Eccentrics, Wheelhouse Society, Victoria Wheelers, Xtreme Eccentrics, Victoria Club Tread, Wednesday Wanderers, Run Victoria, UVic Student Society, UVic Campus Planning and Sustainability, Vancouver Island University Student Union, Camosun College Student Society, Tripleshot Cycling Club, Victoria Club Tread, SHIFT collaborative, GoByBike Week, Saanich Community Association Network, Greater Victoria Placemaking Network, Boys and Girls Club of Victoria, Tourism Victoria, Walk On Victoria, Better Transit Alliance, Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary, Habitat Acquisition Trust, The Nature Conservancy, Canadian Forces Base Esquimalt, Dirty Girlz Bike Club, Marigold School Parent Advisory Committee, Spectrum School Parent Advisory Committee, School District 61 and St. Joseph's Victoria School.

Adjacent owners and occupants of the trail corridor were not directly notified as part of this process but were targeted through the broader notification to community interest groups described above. Also, individuals and stakeholders with tenure agreements within the trail corridor were not directly notified as such agreements are between the Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure as the property owner and not the CRD.

5.4 General Public

The general public in the region were notified of the project and opportunities on how to provide input through the CRD website, social media, advertising campaigns, video, email notification, and posters on the trails.

6.0 Engagement Methods

A number of tools and approaches were used to engage First Nations, the public, interest groups and agencies in the project. The following sections describe in more detail the engagement methods used to inform the public about the project; to gather information, views and opinions; and to discuss stakeholder interests.

6.1 Website

A project webpage was established on the CRD website in March 2021 and is updated for the duration of the project (www.crd.bc.ca/TrailsProject). The webpage includes an overview of the project; materials summarizing the proposed separated use pathway design with lighting and rationale; information about the engagement process; and frequently asked questions with answers. There were 2,902 visits to the project webpage during the engagement period from May 25 to June 13, 2021.

6.2 Online Survey

An online survey was made available through a link on the project webpage from May 25 to June 13, 2021. The survey included 13 questions with both quantitative and qualitative responses. A map of the project area and links to the Regional Trails Widening Study accompanied the survey to provide additional context about the proposed project. Options were made available for completing the survey by phone or in writing. Survey methodology is included in Appendix A. In total, 1,784 online surveys were filled out by participants. Results of the online survey are summarized below and included in Appendix B. In addition, 10 email submissions were received and the results are also included in Appendix B.

6.3 Virtual Open Houses

Two virtual open houses were held using the CRD's Zoom webinar platform to provide information about the project and to respond to questions and comments from participants (Appendix C). The virtual open houses were held on June 4 from 7-8 pm and on June 7 from 12-1 pm. The CRD project manager and the lead consultant for the Regional Trails Widening Study delivered a twenty minute presentation and responded to questions and comments. There were 44 participants in total. Recordings of the virtual open houses are posted on the project webpage. Participants were able to remain anonymous to ensure their privacy.

6.4 Video

A short video was produced to highlight the project rationale and details of the separated use pathway design with lighting. A link to the video was available on the project website and hosted on CRD's YouTube account at: <https://www.youtube.com/user/CRDVictoria/videos>.

6.5 Advertising

A media release was issued by the CRD on May 25, 2021 outlining the project and engagement process and encouraging the public to complete the online survey. Multiple news outlets received the media release and published articles during that week.

A print ad was published in the Black Press newspapers on May 26, 2021. An online ad was published in the Times Colonist on May 28, 2021. The ads directed readers to the project webpage to complete the online survey (Appendix D).

Posters were placed at various key points along the project area notifying trail users about the project and engagement process, and directing them to the webpage and online survey (Appendix E).

6.6 Social Media

Social media posts were made on the CRD's Facebook and Twitter accounts during May and June 2021, directing people to the project webpage and online survey. These posts went out to 7,126 followers on Twitter and 3,899 followers on Facebook.

Facebook ads were boosted throughout the survey process, with a link to the project webpage to complete the online survey. The targeted demographic for these ads were people living in the region aged 18-65+. Table 1 outlines the level of engagement with the Facebook ads.

Dates	Reach	Post Engagements*	Link Clicks
June 8-12, 2021	15,021	909	616

Table 1: Facebook Ads

*Post engagements refer to someone liking, sharing, commenting on or otherwise engaging with the post.

7.0 Responses

The following is a summary of the responses received through the initial engagement process.

7.1 First Nations

Comments were received from W̱SÁNEĆ Leadership Council, Esquimalt Nation and Songhees Nation. Feedback indicated an interest in the archaeological implications of the project; in having cultural monitors present during land altering activities; in understanding any potential environmental impacts of the project; in any economic development opportunities; and concern for infringements on Douglas Treaty Rights.

7.2 Government & Agencies

Comments were received from staff at the District of Saanich, City of Victoria, Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure, Victoria and Saanich Police departments and Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary. Feedback received from municipal and provincial government departments indicated strong support for the project and a commitment to pursue partnerships and/or align initiatives to achieve efficiencies and positive outcomes. Both Victoria and Saanich Police departments offered insight into safety along the trails and expertise in Crime Prevention through Environmental Design should the project advance to detailed designs. As an adjacent property owner and conservation organization, Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary stated concern for potential environmental impacts from the proposed trail widening and lighting, suggesting the CRD focus on improving trail etiquette, and expressed interest in future partnerships to minimize impacts, remove invasive species and restore the area should the project move forward.

7.3 Interest Groups & General Public

Responses to the online survey were submitted by members of the public who may or may not represent special interest groups in the region. Similarly, the identity of participants in the virtual open houses was not disclosed.

A total of 1,784 online surveys were completed between May 25 and June 13, 2021 (Appendix B). The majority of respondents were residents of Saanich and Victoria and between 35-44 years old. Survey responses indicate strong support for the separated use pathway design and for the priority sequence for implementation. Strong support was also indicated for lighting the trails and for low-intensity lights adjacent to Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary between Darwin Avenue and Quadra Street. Of the 239 respondents who oppose low-intensity lights adjacent to Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary, the majority indicated a preference for no lighting in that section. Responses to the open-ended survey question asking for comments about the project relate to trail lighting, trail etiquette, widening, ecological values, wildlife and habitat, design suggestions, separation and cost. In addition to the qualitative survey responses, email submissions and virtual open house questions/comments largely related to trail lighting, ecological values, wildlife and habitat, and trail etiquette (Appendix C).

8.0 Limitations

Feedback about the Regional Trails Widening and Lighting Project was gathered through an expedited engagement process, which limited the extent and depth of engagement. Nevertheless, the data collected through the expedited engagement process can be strengthened through the insights obtained in the 2013 and 2019 Regional Trails surveys, both of which lead to this project.

Participants may have provided input related to other issues related to the regional trails (i.e., trail etiquette, motorized vehicles), yet those comments cannot be directly considered as part of the Regional Trail Widening and Lighting Project.

Significant limitations to in-person engagement were experienced due to COVID-19 public safety measures. Because of the quick turnaround of this project, there was no opportunity to develop a COVID-19 Safety Plan outlining protocols for in-person engagement. Hence, typical community events such as in-person open houses were not feasible.

Technological tools were heavily relied on during this engagement process due to COVID-19 public safety measures. Lack of access to, and knowledge of, technology can be a limitation to those wishing to participate.

Finally, the project timeline and allocated resources constrain the project to an extent. The timeline for engagement was limited to 20 days between May and June 2021. Project financial expenditures were kept minimal by primarily focusing expenses on advertising, support from the consultant and printing materials.

9.0 Conclusion

Staff were directed by the CRD Board in February 2021 to conduct an expedited public engagement on the 6.5 m separated use pathway design with lighting and implementation priorities, including consideration of low-intensity lighting in the trail segment adjacent to Swan Lake. Public engagement was conducted on the Regional Trails Widening and Lighting Project between May 25 and June 13, 2021. First Nations, government and agencies were also invited to provide input. A number of tools and approaches were used to provide information about the project, to gather views and opinions, and to discuss stakeholder interests which included: a project webpage, video, posters, advertisements, social media, an online survey and virtual open houses.

A total of 1,784 online surveys were completed, 10 email submissions received, 44 participants attended the virtual open houses, and approximately 18,000 people viewed the project webpage or social media posts. Survey responses indicate strong support for the separated use pathway design and for the priority sequence for implementation. Strong support was also indicated for lighting the trails and for low-intensity lights adjacent to Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary between Darwin Avenue and Quadra Street. Three First Nations provided comment about potential environmental and archaeological impacts. Staff from Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary expressed concern for environmental impacts of widening and lighting. Staff representing government agencies expressed support for the project and willingness to align initiatives or partner, where possible.

Appendix A: Online Survey Methodology

A survey, with 13 questions focused on support and opposition toward the Regional Trails Widening and Lighting Project, was available on the CRD website from May 25 to June 13, 2021. The questionnaire was designed to take 5-8 minutes to complete.

Close-ended questions were measured through a five-point rating scale ranging from strongly support to strongly oppose or by offering pre-determined categories. Close-ended questions were used to reduce the response burden for participants. An open-ended question was included at the end of the survey to allow respondents to offer additional comments and clarify their responses, if they wished. Questions about participants' demographic characteristics (i.e., age, residency) were also added to the questionnaire.

Analysis

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 25.0 (IBM 2017) was used to analyze descriptive statistics, which are reported as a percentage for all quantitative questions of the survey. To analyze the qualitative comments provided by participants in a replicable and systematic manner, content analysis was performed. Specifically, all qualitative data were categorized using codes, which allowed identifying code themes and response patterns. Both dimensions of a content analysis, quantitative (focused on counting and measuring) and qualitative (focused on interpreting and understanding) were used to offer insights on respondents' opinions about the Regional Trails Widening and Lighting Project. Content analysis was also used to analyze the emails received by CRD staff from the public and the questions posed by participants during the open houses.

Rationale

It is important to acknowledge that the aim of the survey was to offer an easy-to-access venue for the public to voice their opinions about the Regional Trails Widening and Lighting Project. The information obtained through this participation tool is not intended to be representative of the whole population of the island or the capital region. Hence, the data reported in this document will not be generalized to the broader population.

The survey was used to ensure that respondents' support/opposition toward the Regional Trails Widening and Lighting Project are documented and considered. The information retrieved through this participatory tool complement the insights provided by the other engagement approaches reported in this document. The data in the following appendices should therefore be interpreted in conjunction with the overall engagement process outcomes.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and Privacy Impact Assessment

All responses in the survey were voluntary, thus participants had the freedom to skip any question they did not wish to answer. All information was collected in compliance with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of*

Privacy Act. A Privacy Impact Assessment (CRD PIA #21-016) was developed for this project to ensure research involving humans was conducted in compliance with ethics and local legislation.

Appendix B: Online Survey Responses

A total of 1,784 online surveys were filled out by participants to the survey between May25 and June13, 2021 (Figure 1). Below is a summary of the online survey responses.

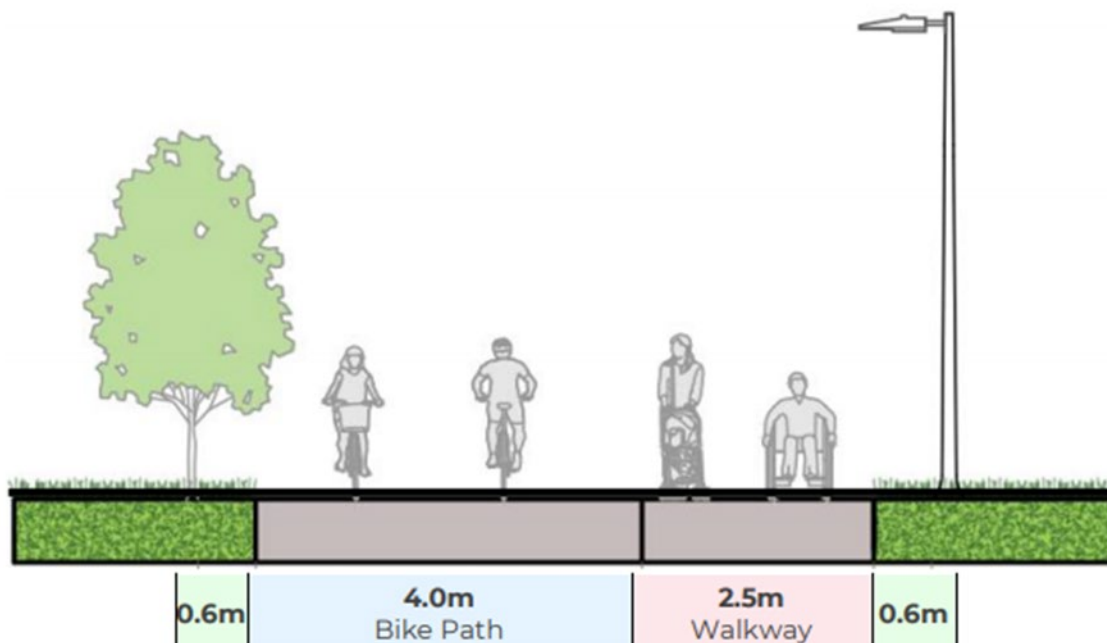


Figure 1: Regional Trails Widening and Lighting Surveys filled by participants during the engagement period.

Section 1: Widening Design

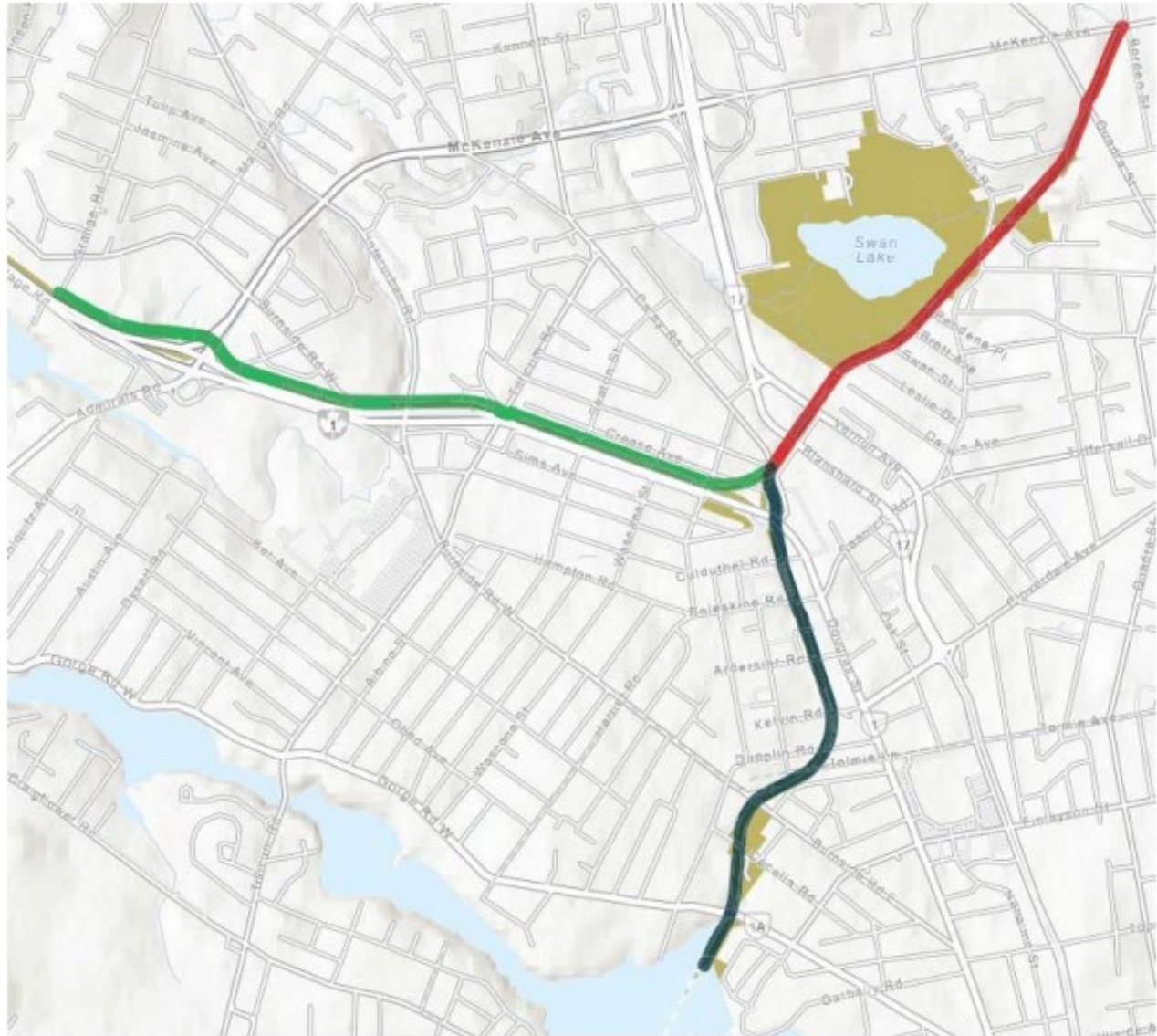
A conceptual design was recommended for widening and lighting three sections of the Galloping Goose and Lochside regional trails. To accommodate increased trail use, the design would widen the paved surface to 6.5 m and create a cycling path (4.5 m wide, dual direction) and an adjacent pedestrian path (2 m wide, dual direction), separated by a painted line.

Separated Use Pathway



Support and opposition toward the possibility of widening the trails was explored for:

- the Galloping Goose Regional Trail between the Selkirk and Switch Bridge (2.0 km);
- the Lochside Regional Trail between the Switch Bridge and McKenzie Avenue (2.0 km); and
- the Galloping Goose Regional Trail between the Switch Bridge and Grange Road (2.6 km).



Trail Sections

- Section A.** Galloping Goose, Selkirk Trestle to Switch Bridge
- Section B.** Galloping Goose, Switch Bridge to Grange Rd
- Section C.** Lochside Trail, Switch Bridge to McKenzie Ave

QUESTION 1-3: DO YOU SUPPORT OR OPPOSE THE RECOMMENDED WIDENING DESIGN PROPOSED FOR THE GALLOPING GOOSE REGIONAL TRAIL BETWEEN THE SELKRIK AND SWITCH BRIDGE (2.0KM), THE LOCHSIDE REGIONAL TRAIL BETWEEN THE SWITCH BRIDGE AND MCKENZIE AVENUE (2.0KM), AND THE GALLOPING GOOSE REGIONAL TRAIL BETWEEN THE SWITCH BRIDGE AND GRANGE ROAD (2.6KM)?

There were 1,784 responses. The majority of respondents supported the widening designed proposed for the three sections of the regional trails.

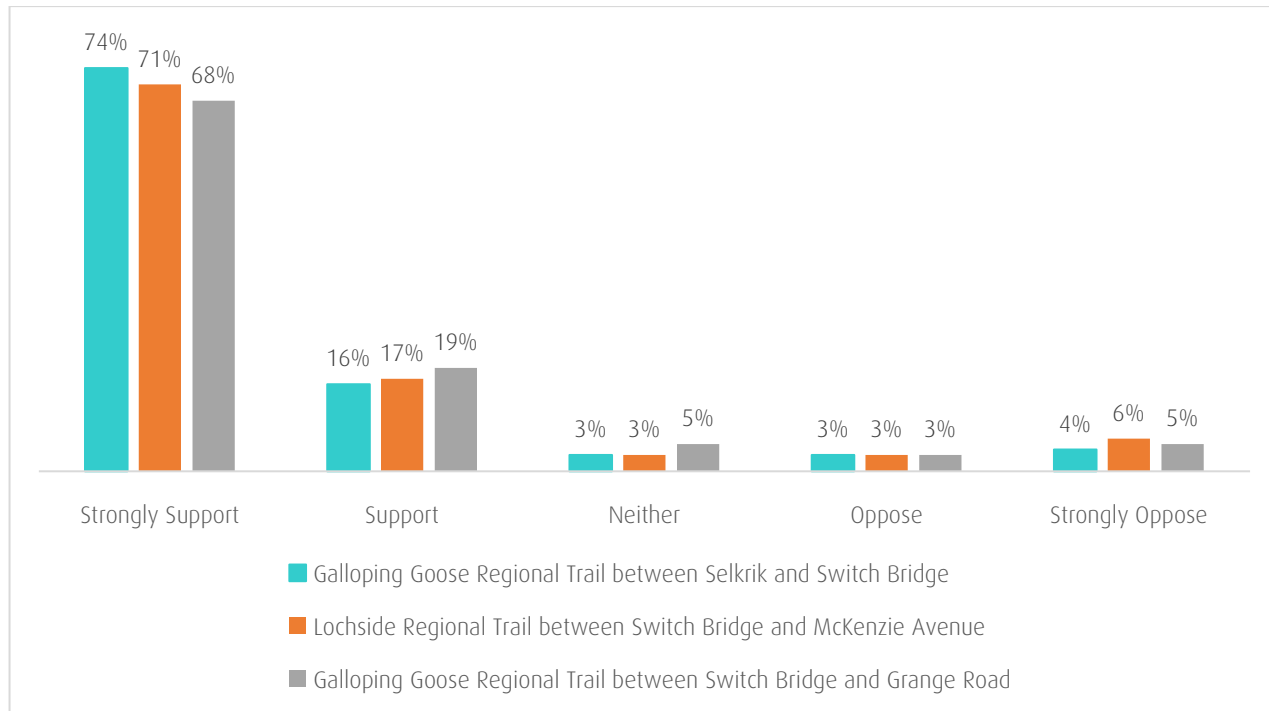
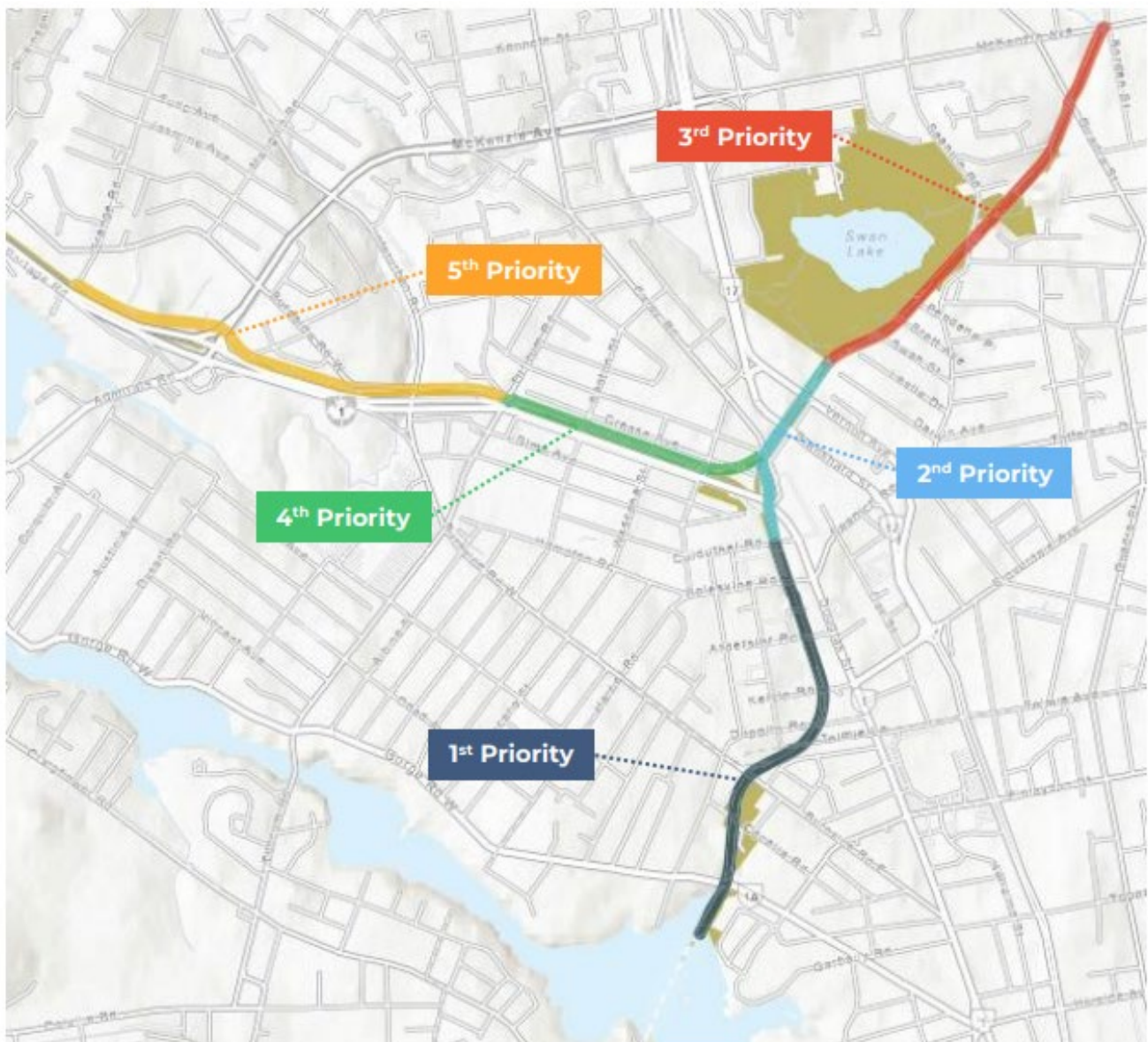


Figure 2: Support/opposition expressed by participants to the survey in regard to the widening design proposed for the three sections of the regional trails.

Section 2: Phases

Support/opposition toward the recommended phased sequence to implement the project was explored. The sequence proposed was:

1. Galloping Goose between Selkirk Trestle and Culduthel Road – 1,600 m
2. Galloping Goose between Culduthel Road and trail junction (including Switch Bridge), and Lochside Trail between trail junction and Darwin Avenue – 700 m
3. Lochside Trail, Darwin Avenue to McKenzie Avenue – 1,600 m
4. Galloping Goose between Lochside Trail junction and Tillicum Road – 950 m
5. Galloping Goose between Tillicum Road and Grange Road – 1,600 m



QUESTION 4: DO YOU SUPPORT OR OPPOSE THE RECOMMENDED PHASED SEQUENCE?

There were 1,784 responses. The majority of respondents supported the recommended phased sequence proposed for the three sections of the regional trails.

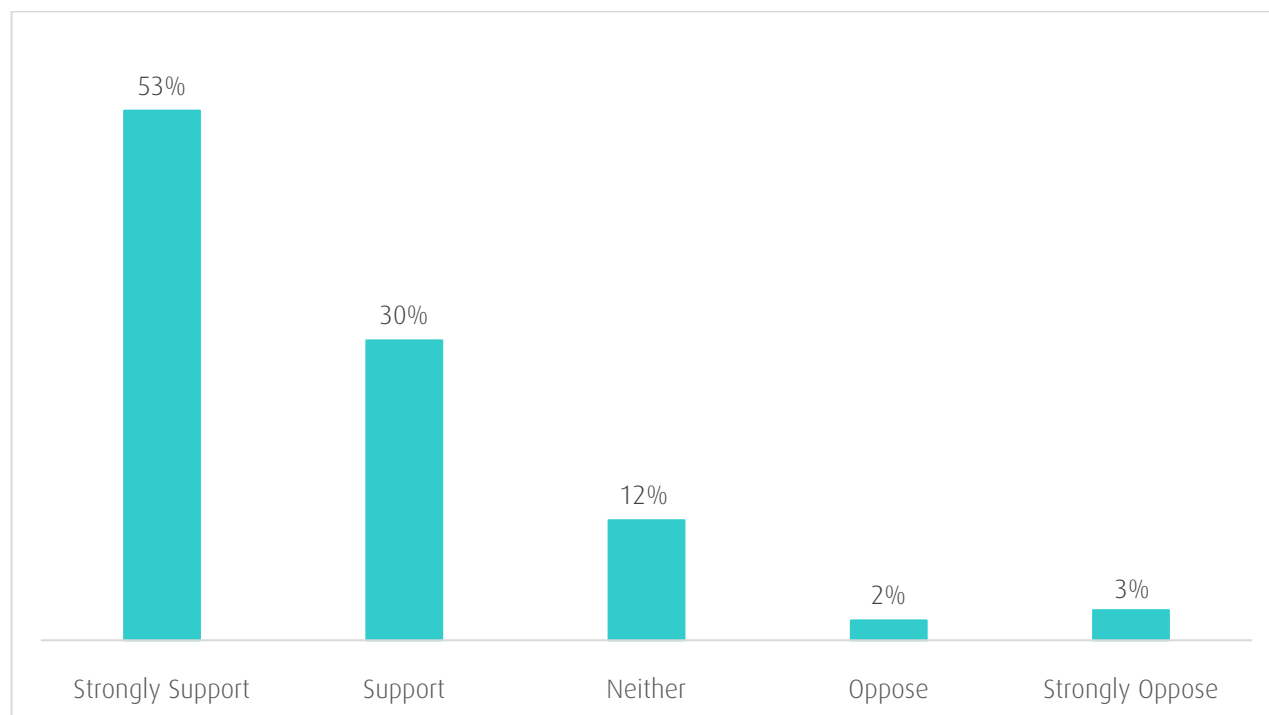
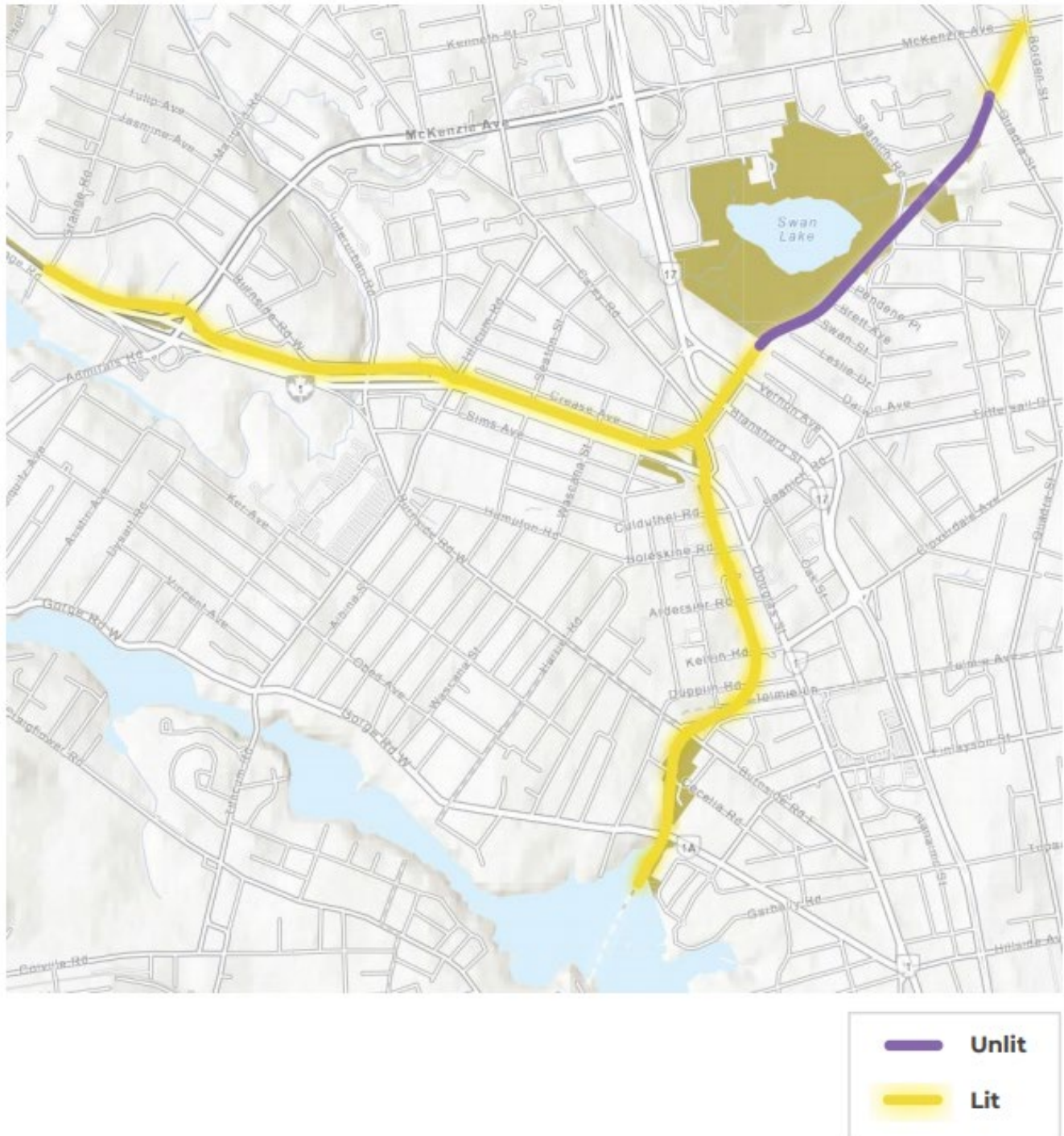


Figure 3: Support/opposition expressed by participants to the survey in regard to the recommended phased sequence proposed for the three sections of the regional trails.

Section 3: Lighting

Lighting is recommended for most of the 6.6 km of the Galloping Goose and Lochside regional trails sections described in the study. Low-intensity lighting is recommended adjacent to Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary that aims for balance between wildlife and public safety considerations in this area. Support/opposition for lighting the three sections of the regional trails was explored through the following questions.



QUESTION 4-6: DO YOU SUPPORT OR OPPOSE LIGHTING THE GALLOPING GOOSE REGIONAL TRAIL BETWEEN THE SELKRIK TRESTLE AND SWITCH BRIDGE (2.0KM), THE GALLOPING GOOSE REGIONAL TRAIL BETWEEN THE SWITCH BRIDGE AND GRANGE ROAD (2.6KM) and THE LOCHSIDE REGIONAL TRAIL BETWEEN THE SWITCH BRIDGE AND DARWIN AVENUE AND BETWEEN QUADRA STREET AND MCKENZIE AVENUE (700M)?

There were 1,784 responses. The majority of respondents supported the lighting of the three sections of the regional trails.

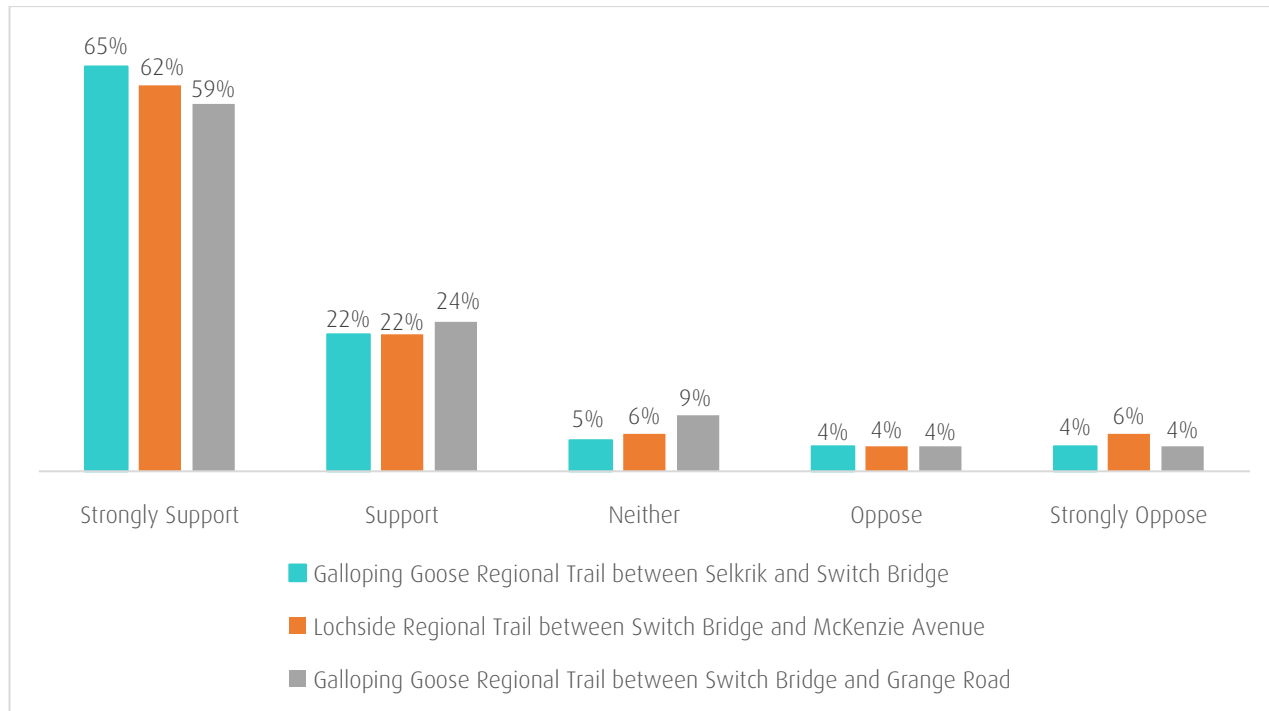


Figure 4: Support/opposition expressed by participants to the survey in regard to lighting the three sections of the regional trails.

QUESTION 7: DO YOU SUPPORT OR OPPOSE LOW-INTENSITY LIGHTING ON THE LOCHSIDE REGIONAL TRAIL ADJACENT TO SWAN LAKE NATURE SANCTUARY BETWEEN DARWIN AVENUE AND QUADRA STREET (1.3KM)?

There were 1,784 responses. The majority of respondents supported the lighting of the Lochside Regional Trail adjacent to Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary between Darwin Avenue and Quadra Street with low-intensity lighting.

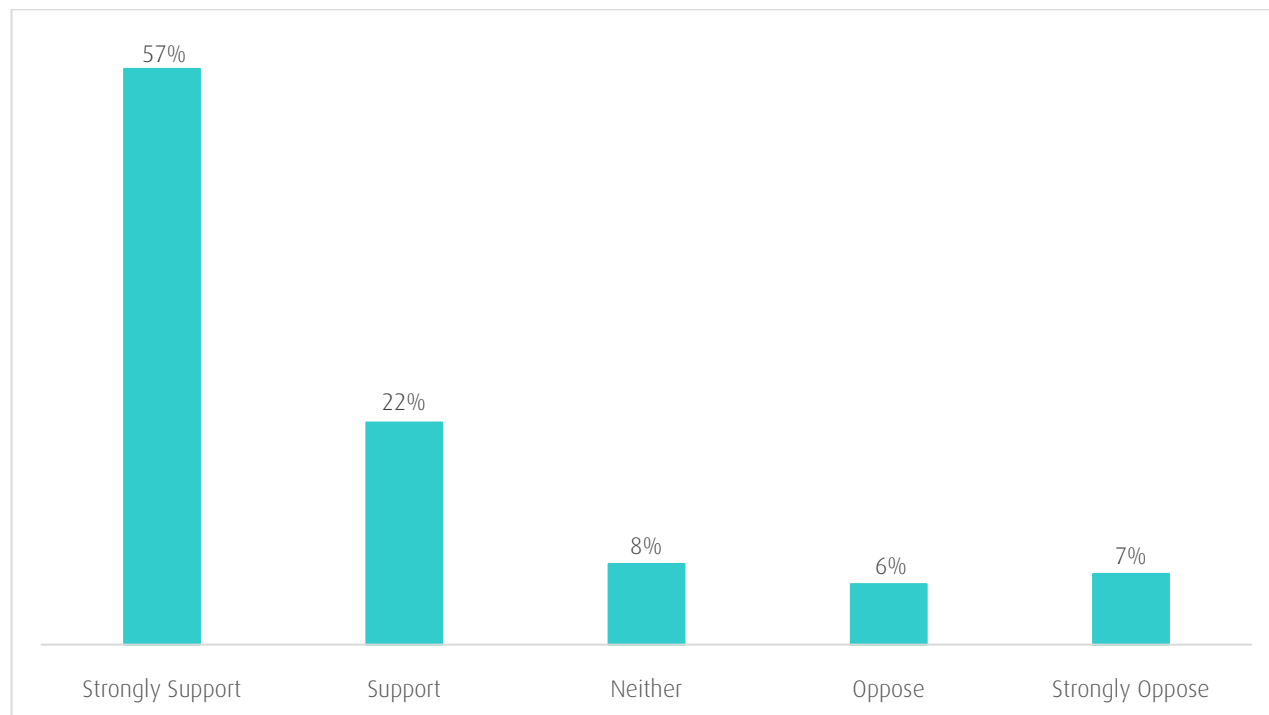


Figure 5: Support/opposition expressed by participants to the survey in regard to lighting of the Lochside Regional Trail adjacent to Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary between Darwin Avenue and Quadra Street with low-intensity lighting.

QUESTION 8: IF NOT, WHAT WOULD YOU SUPPORT FOR THE SWAN LAKE SECTION?

There were 239 responses. The majority of respondents suggested no lights for the Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary section.

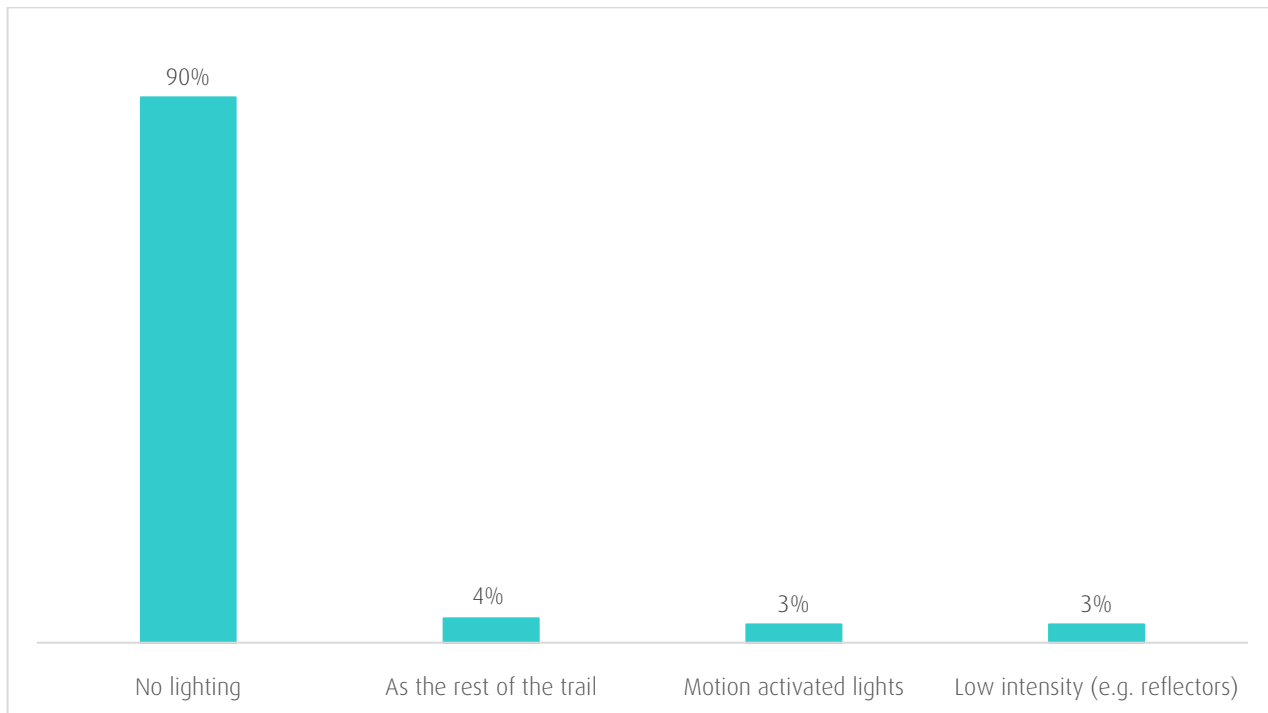


Figure 6: Suggestions of alternative illumination options by participants against the lighting of the Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary section.

Section 4: Other Comments

A total of 904 qualitative comments were provided by respondents to the open-ended question asking: **DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER COMMENTS ABOUT THE TRAIL WIDENING AND LIGHTING PROJECT?** Each comment entailed multiple themes. The qualitative responses were coded to identify emerging themes and quantified to evaluate such themes relevance.

The most mentioned themes were:

- Lighting (n= 323; 36%): participants mentioned support for lighting in general (n=139), and/or suggested minimal lighting (n=94), no lighting at all (n=44) or full lighting (n=46) for all the trail sections proposed in the project. Often preference for minimal lighting and no lighting were discussed in association with concern for light pollution and impacts to the natural environment and species along the trail sections intersected by the project. Lighting in general and full lighting were often associated with improving personal security on the trails, especially at night, as well as, extending the time the trails could be used, especially during winter months.
- Etiquette (n=246; 27%): participants referred to the need for improved trail etiquette (n=100), mentioned issues around different speeds on the trails (n=86) and e-bikes (n=30), and the need for more enforcement along the regional trails (n=30).
- Widening (n=144; 16%): participants expressed general support for widening the trails (n=121), with fewer suggesting even wider paths (n=4) or no separation at all (n=19).
- Ecological value, wildlife and habitat (n=99; 11%): participants commented on the impacts the proposed project could have on the environment and species along the trail, especially in relation to widening and lighting the trails. Participants were concerned about losing trees and the natural habitat along the trails, as well as disturbing wildlife, especially along the Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary area.
- Design suggestions (n=63; 7%): several participants offered insights on how to improve the proposed design or expressed a preference for the other options suggested in the report. Many comments focused on how to reduce light pollution with alternative lighting designs.
- Separation (n=62; 7%): participants expressed a preference for separation, including having a physical barrier between cyclists and pedestrians (n=35).
- Opposition (n=45; 5%): some participants used this section to reiterate their opposition toward the project.
- Cost (n=42; 5%): participants mentioned the high costs of the project as a reason of concern, specifying the project was too costly and finances should be used for more important projects.

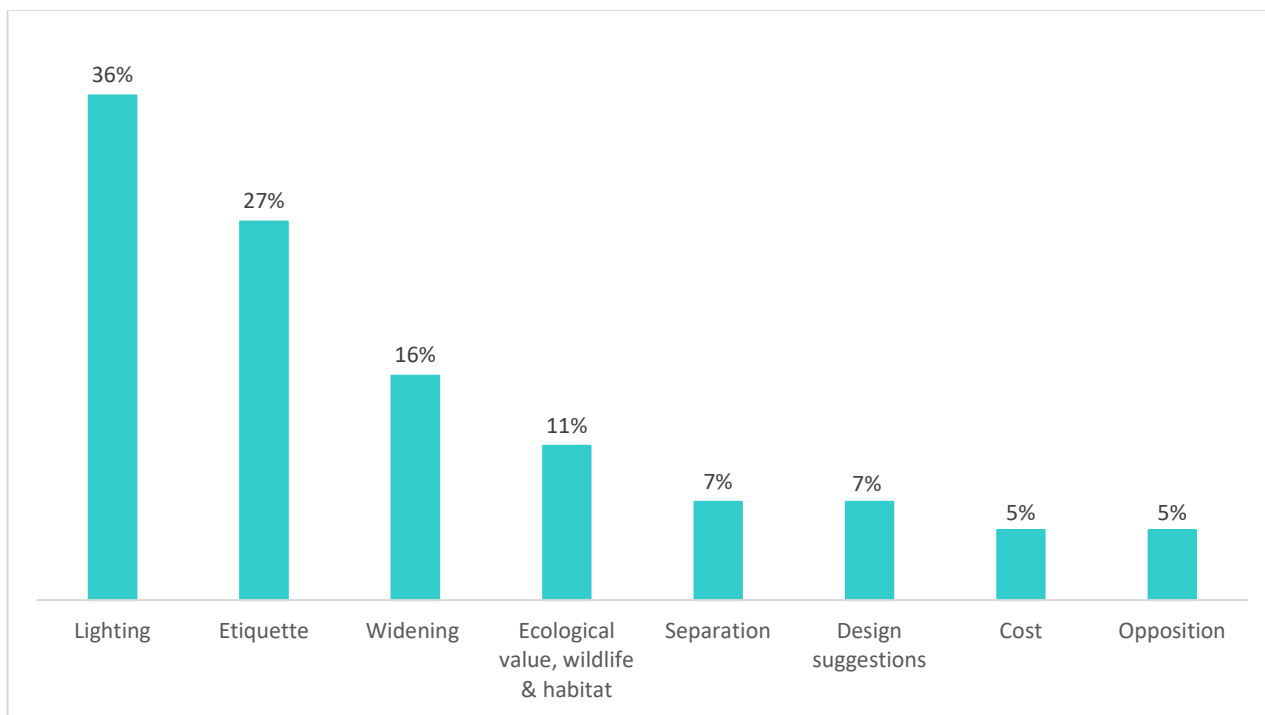


Figure 7: Qualitative comments offered by respondents to the survey.

This open-ended question was also used by respondents to reiterate support for the project and provide thanks for the opportunity to participate in the survey (n=285, 32%), and to offer other comments (n= 259; 28%). Participants used this section to offer suggestions about other locations where trail widening, lighting and separation should be considered (n=88), in regard to facilities along the trails (n=61), discuss topics not related to the trails (n=52), stress the CRD move faster on the proposed project (n=33), and to suggest how to enhance the trail network beyond the three regional trails (n=22).

Section 5: Demographics

QUESTION 9: WHERE DO YOU LIVE?

There were 1,784 responses. Most respondents lived in Saanich and Victoria, the municipalities most affected by the project.

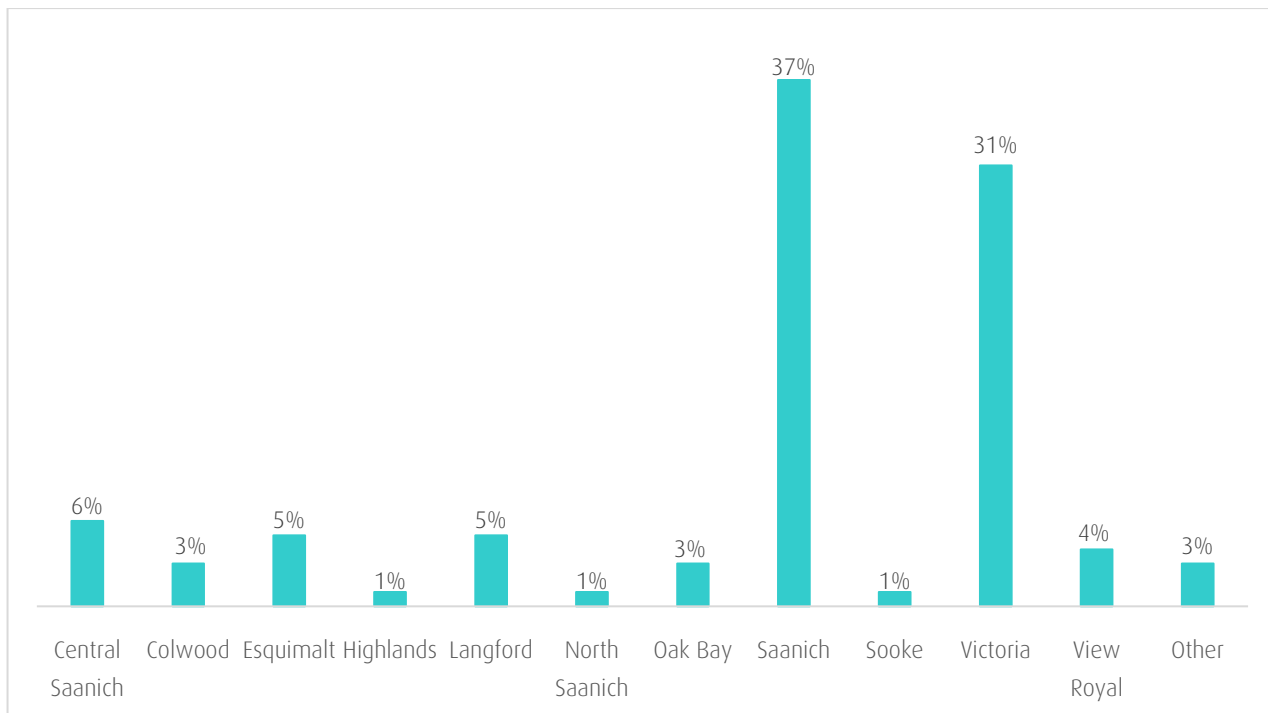


Figure 8: Breakdown of where visitors live.

QUESTION 10: IN WHICH AGE CATEGORY DO YOU FALL?

There were 1,784 responses. Respondents to the survey were distributed similarly between the age categories 25-65+, with a slight majority of respondents aged 35-44 years old.

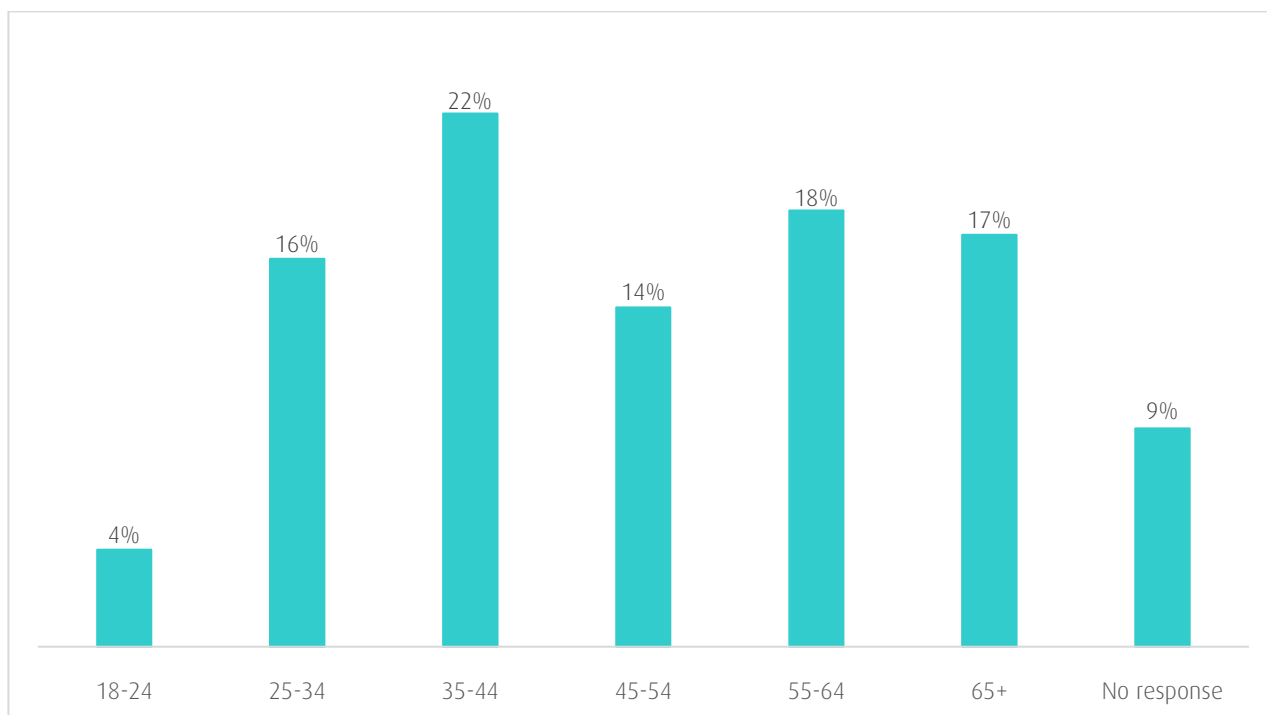


Figure 9: Age distribution of respondents.

QUESTION 11: HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THIS SURVEY?

There were 1,940 responses. Respondents to the survey heard about the survey mostly through the CRD Facebook page, newspaper and word of mouth.

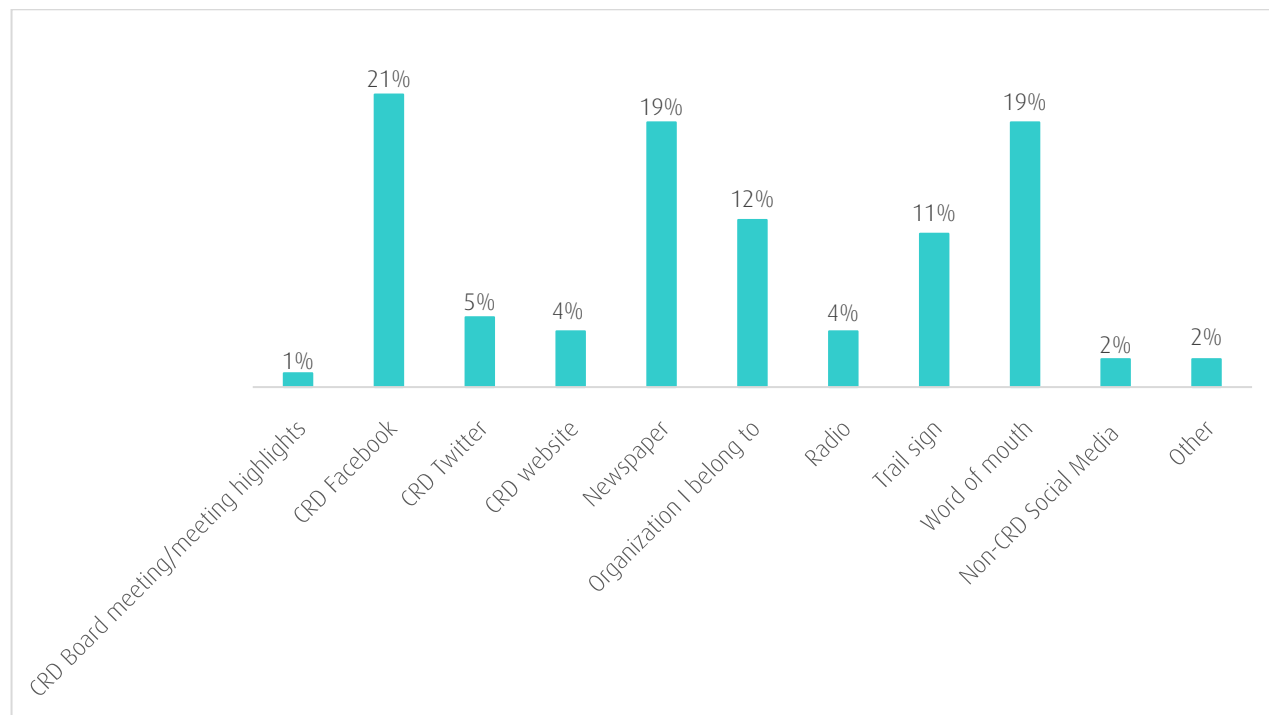


Figure 10: Information sources used by respondents.

Section 6: Emails

Regional Parks received additional comments through email from 10 members of the public. Each submission entailed multiple themes. The qualitative emails were coded to identify emerging themes and quantified to evaluate such themes relevance. The qualitative comments in the emails paralleled the topic emerged in the qualitative comments of the survey. Specifically, participants expressed their concern about lighting (n=4) and the impact the project will have on the ecological values, wildlife and habitats along the trails (n=4). Etiquette was another common theme mentioned by participants (n= 5), especially in relation to speed, e-bikes and bylaw enforcement. Suggestions were offered on improving other areas along the three regional trails (n=2) and about other ways to design the project (n=1). General comments about widening and separating the trails were also offered (n=2). Two emails offered background information and data and another three suggestions on how to improve the survey.

Appendix C: Virtual Open House Comments

A total of 44 participants attended the virtual open houses on June 4 and 7, 2021. Questions and comments posed by the attendants mainly focused on lighting, environmental values, wildlife and habitats protection, and trail etiquette. These themes align with those received through the online survey.

Below is a list of questions posed by participants at the virtual open houses:

- What are you doing to preserve urban forest along the routes you are widening?
- Did projections include the completion of the E&N rail trail?
- Could a barrier be installed afterwards if cyclists are using the pedestrian lane?
- Will the Selkirk Trestle be lit as well, as it is dangerous in the dark between bike riders and walkers?
- Priority 1 (switch bridge to Selkirk) is convergence of two trails into one: Galloping Goose and Lochside. There is another convergence ("Hells Gate"). This is Galloping Goose and E&N from Langford to View Royal. When will this be widened for pedestrians?
- How will you discourage pedestrians from walking in the section of the trail dedicated to cyclists?
- Light spillover is really light trespass and causes increased sky glow. Light at night is linked to adverse health effects. Have the factors been considered?
- Will the big trail maps be updated to include all recent trail developments (E&N Millstream) and these widening sections?
- Could consideration be given to using option 1 for some areas of the trail, where loss of shrub cover and trees would be significant with the wider option 2? Particularly Swan Lake and Swan Trestle to Quadra.
- I didn't notice mopeds in your presentation. They are increasing in numbers and going very fast. What will be done about their increased numbers with regards to safety for walkers?
- Has the effect of dark adaption and changes to visual ability due to slow visual adaption to light changes been considered, particular at cycling speeds?
- South of the Selkirk Trestle, I often see walkers in the bike lanes as there are no obvious signs telling users where to walk. Will there be some way of showing users where they should be?
- Can you try to design segments with generous right of way to accommodate further expansion or elements of option 3 separation? Average volumes projected for 2040 are not much higher than numbers recorded on high use days in summer months, and capacity should accommodate maximum expected trip volumes more so than average numbers of trips.
- What design lighting levels are being considered? Dimming and motion sensor activated lighting would be best, particularly if a late night and low traffic volume curfew was used.
- As work is being conducted, will measures be taken to address trail offshoots that people have created (unmarked side paths) as shortcuts in order to deter collisions? Lighting would definitely decrease this possibility as a first step.

- Has an analysis been considered to ascertain the number of irregular non-compliant motorized scooters etc. that are a growing danger to legitimate trail users?
- Has it been considered that lighting will likely result in an increase in cycling speeds with increased danger of collisions and injury?
- I think it's 'tourists' who move between bike lanes and walking lanes as they take in the view and take photos. Will there be any signage?
- It seems unsafe to leave the Swan Lake section of the trail unlit. Why is that not included in the lighting plan? Is there a way to mitigate impacts that would allow for lighting?
- Will you install warning signage when the 3 lanes come back down to 2 (loss of pedestrian section)? I expect conflicts in these areas.
- When you design and complete the last section of the E&N Rail Trail to West Hills, would you please widen and construct the separated pedestrian lane as well?
- As a long time lighting professional and dark sky advocate for the Royal Astronomical society, would it be possible to have a direct discussion on the more complex technical lighting technical issues with your lighting experts?
- Are there plans to increase the proposed areas of interest? The stretch of the Galloping Goose past Grange Road is currently unlit due to the huge wall constructed as part of the MacKenzie interchange project.
- What kind of time line would that you be looking at for that (referring to the project implementation)?
- Are you planning any buffer planting along the boundary of Swan Lake?
- Have behavioural considerations been considered? For example, prioritizing bikes at high commuting times, so that the overall trail width could remain the same and preserve the most green space by the Nature Sanctuary (a place that represents some of critical last contiguous space for rare, threatened and endangered plants and animals in the region)?
- Will we have further opportunities to have input when implementation studies are being done to look at environment, geological and archeological studies are being done as you mentioned?
- While you have touched on it briefly, and based on my extensive experience over many years biking, perhaps the biggest issue we face is around appropriate behaviour and expectations for trail users, as not following simple rules lead to conflict and concerns. If trail users were considerate and polite, followed the same etiquette, some of the design features being presented would not be necessary. Could not some of the money being proposed to be spent here be better used on informing and educating people about how to use the trail?
- Is there a possibility of involving a defined local group of concerned citizens when the time comes for looking at the segment between the Swan Lake Bridge to Quadra? There are a lot of people in the area who are strongly opposed to any vegetation change and are anxious to prevent it.
- Can you address what the plans might be for the Swan Lake trestle should the plan be to widen the trail?
- Is anything being considered to improve ease and safety of road crossings along the trail?

Additionally, the following comments were made by participants:

- Selkirk trestle lighting would need to consider impact on the migratory salmon that use the gorge waterway.
- A safety measure that could be implemented immediately on all the trails would be to have pedestrians walking on the left so that they can see approaching traffic as current etiquette proposals do not work.
- I have been biking the trails for years and can say steadfastly that the incentives that are being handed out work on a very temporary basis. I see many users who attend Go by Bike events, who are delivered safety info and then within a few weeks are the same people who dismiss the measures. Perhaps some educational sessions sharing experiences resulting from the lack of safety skills.
- There are a lot of concerns about how you plan to widen the section of Lochside between the Switch Bridge and Quadra, especially between the creek bridge and Quadra where there are either trees close to the trail or steep hillside on the other side.
- While I agree with most of the plan, I do not like that the section around Swan Lake will be widened. This is a wonderful natural area, and the one size fits all is NOT appropriate for Option 2 here. This area could also be used as “park area” for users, as well as for the park itself. Modification of user behaviour could be taught in this area. I have lots more I want to say about this, and other issues - what is the best way for my voice to be heard on this? I have ridden my bike for 50 years, and am on my bike every day, including lots of use on all areas of the trail sections is question. And yes I have completed the survey, but I don’t feel that my detailed comments can be presented adequately. How can I submit detailed comments?
- Thank you for this Zoom meeting to review and discuss these opportunities to improve the bike and pedestrian trails. My concern is outside of the areas being redesigned but want to voice my concern regarding the redevelopment project at 4590 Lochside (at Royal Oak, Lochside and Lochside Elementary School), which will increase vehicular traffic on the Lochside Trail. I want CRD and Saanich Municipality to seriously consider the safety of this particular intersection of the trail.
- Trail widening between Quadra and Saanich Rd will have significant impact on wildlife values in the riparian zone of the Blenkinsop Creek. The trail is constricted between rocky outcrops and steep banks down to the stream. Significant disruption and loss of habitat will occur only to have a choke point at the trestle. Why widen this section where the habitat loss is most critical for so little gain with the trestle constriction.

Appendix D: Advertisement

Capital Regional District

CRD

Public Feedback Opportunity

Regional Trails Widening and Lighting Project

The Capital Regional District is seeking your input on a 6.5 m separated use pathway design with lighting. **Take the survey by June 14.**

Virtual open houses will be held on:
June 4, 7–8 pm
June 7, 12–1 pm
Advance registration required.

See website for details:
www.crd.bc.ca/TrailsProject

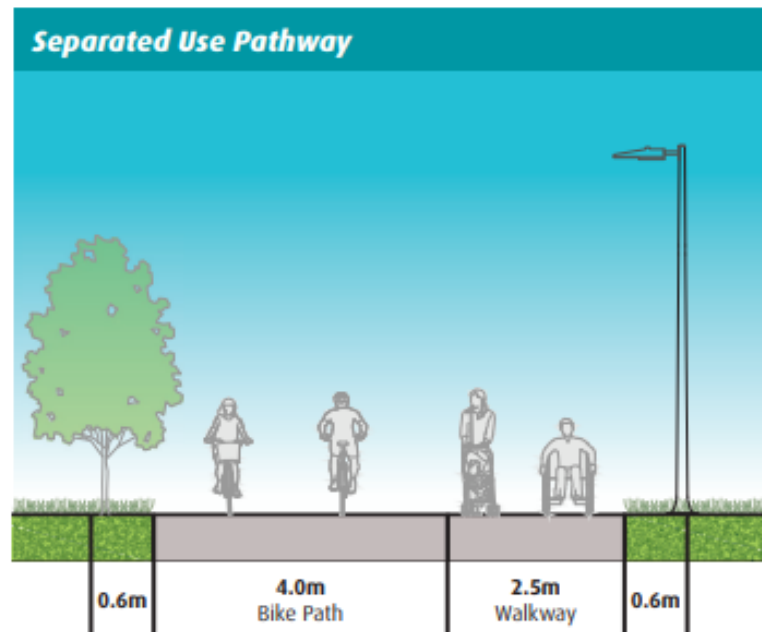


Appendix E: Posters

CRD - Regional Trails

Widening and Lighting Project

The CRD is considering a Separated Use Pathway design with lighting for sections of the Galloping Goose and Lochside regional trails.



Objectives for separated use pathway:

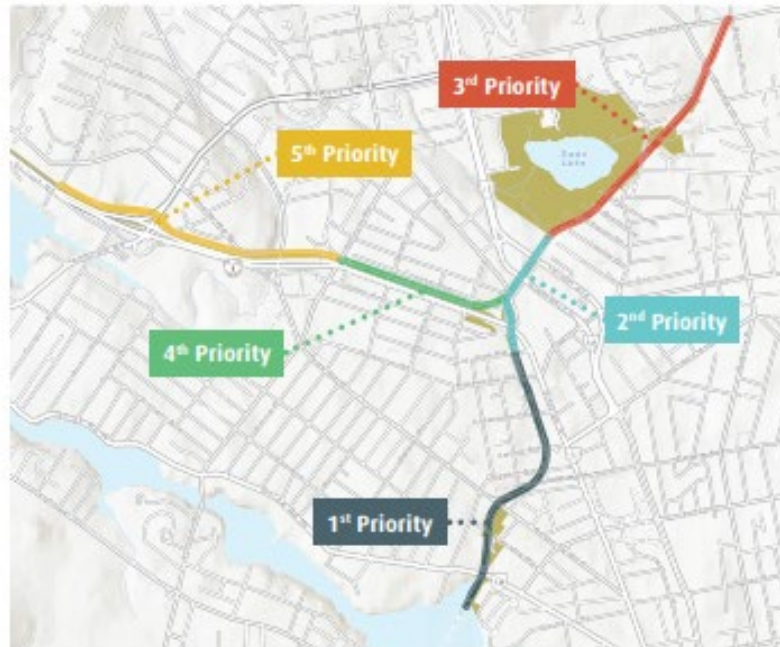
- ✓ create safer, more comfortable trail conditions for all users
- ✓ accommodate a predicted increase in trail use over the next 20 years
- ✓ help the region meet its targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promote healthy lifestyles



CRD - Regional Trails

Widening and Lighting Project

Changes would be made over time, with the busiest sections of trail being given priority.



Objectives for trail lighting:

- ✓ improve safety and visibility at key locations such as trail junctions and underpasses (the following could be priority locations for new lighting along the trails):
 - underpasses
 - bridges and trestles
 - trail junctions and street crossings
 - areas of safety concern
- ✓ use efficient LED technology that requires minimal maintenance
- ✓ minimize potential impacts on wildlife near natural areas, such as Swan Lake, by using low-intensity lights or reflectors



Provide your input!

The Capital Regional District (CRD) is seeking feedback on a proposed design to widen and light sections of the Galloping Goose and Lochside regional trails.



HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE

OF REGIONAL TRAILS !

Visit the CRD's website:



www.crd.bc.ca/TrailsProject

Scan to provide your feedback:



**REPORT TO REGIONAL PARKS COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2021**

SUBJECT **E&N Rail Trail – Humpback Connector**

ISSUE SUMMARY

This report provides an information update regarding the status of development of the E&N Rail Trail.

BACKGROUND

In October 2006, the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board initiated a project to develop a 17 kilometre long new regional trail largely within the E&N railway corridor and located beside the existing railway tracks. In 2007, due to the anticipated cost to develop the trail (\$36 million), a decision was made to undertake the project in a phased approach (Appendix A). Construction was initiated in 2009.

This trail provides both recreation and active transportation opportunities. To date, three of the five phases have been completed, creating approximately 13 km of new regional trail. The trail currently runs continuously between Jacklin Road in the City of Langford to Esquimalt Road in the City of Victoria; and links the City of Langford, Town of View Royal, Esquimalt Nation, Songhees Nation, Township of Esquimalt and City of Victoria (Appendix A).

Contributions of approximately \$21 million have been received from grant programs to assist in the development of the three completed trail phases. Additional funding to date has been provided through CRD Regional Parks' core budget and a CRD Board authorized loan.

Two remaining phases extend the trail by approximately 3.2 km in Langford between Jacklin Road and Humpback Road at the west end of the trail; and 0.7 km at the east end of the trail between Esquimalt Road and the Harbour Road overpass/Galloping Goose/Johnson Street Bridge end of the trail in conjunction with the City of Victoria (Appendix A).

A detailed status and explanation of the phases is provided in Appendix B.

IMPLICATIONS

Environmental & Climate Implications

This regional trail adds to the regional opportunities for active recreation and active transportation, both of which assist in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Intergovernmental Implications

The E&N Rail Trail – Humpback Connector route connects six communities: City of Langford, Town of View Royal, Esquimalt Nation, Songhees Nation, Township of Esquimalt and City of Victoria.

Social Implications

This regional trail furthers the goal of promoting active and healthy communities. The trail is largely along a former railway corridor and most of the trail route is relatively flat and suited to use by people of all ages and abilities.

Financial Implications

Capital grant funding is needed to complete Phase 5 of this regional trail and is currently identified as a total of \$4 million in years 2024 and 2025 of the Regional Parks' five-year capital plan.

Service Delivery Implications

From a sustainable service delivery perspective, the remaining two sections of the trail will be developed using the same standards as the previous sections of trail (e.g., paved, minimum width 3m/preferred width 4m, standard regional trail signage) and, when complete, they will be incorporated into the asset management program as per other sections/other regional trails.

Alignment with Board & Corporate Priorities

In terms of alignment with Board priorities, this trail furthers the priority of Community Wellbeing – Transportation & Housing, as it provides additional regional multi-modal transportation opportunities to increase walking and cycling. It can also help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, which is a desired outcome under the Climate Action & Environmental Stewardship priority. The Esquimalt and Songhees Nations were involved in the planning of the trail sections in and around their communities, which aligns with the Board's priority relating to First Nations Reconciliation.

With respect to corporate priorities, the development of the E&N Rail Trail – Humpback Connector project aligns with the priorities of Fiscal Responsibility (approximately \$19 million of grant funding has been received to assist in the development of this regional trail); Efficiency & Collaboration (collaboration with each of the four municipalities and two First Nations has occurred during planning and construction); and Customer Service (this project expands the regional trail system to respond to increasing interest in active transportation and active recreation by regional residents).

Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies

The Regional Parks Strategic Plan 2012-2021 includes continuing construction of the E&N Rail Trail as a strategic action under Strategic Priority #2 (strategically plan for and open existing land banked regional parks and trails as resources are approved).

CONCLUSION

The E&N Rail Trail – Humpback Connector is well in progress, with approximately 13 of the 17 km route now complete. This newest regional trail connects the City of Victoria, Township of Esquimalt, Songhees Nation, Esquimalt Nation, Town of View Royal and City of Langford, expanding opportunities for active transportation and active recreation. Two remaining sections (Phase 4 and Phase 5) will extend the trail route in both directions, in the City of Victoria and the City of Langford. The CRD is moving forward, working with the City of Victoria, to begin

construction of Phase 4 in 2022, and Phase 5 will be scheduled once the route has been finalized and funding has been determined.

RECOMMENDATION

The Regional Parks Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:

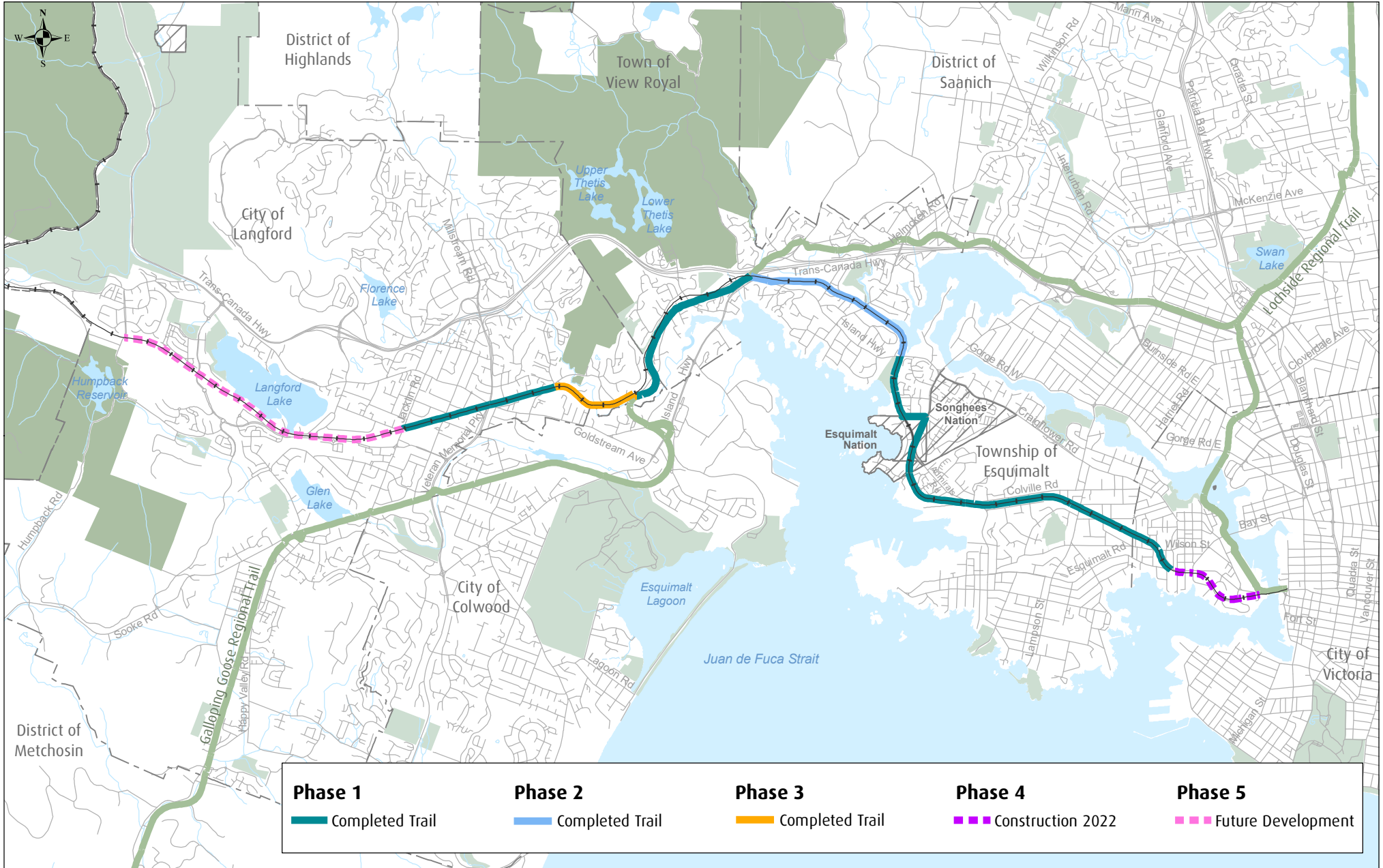
That this report be received for information.

Submitted by:	Jeff Leahy, RPF, Senior Manager, Regional Parks
Concurrence:	Larisa Hutcheson, P.Eng., General Manager, Parks & Environmental Services
Concurrence:	Robert Lapham, MCIP, RPP, Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A: Development Phasing Plan – Map

Appendix B: Detailed Status of E&N Rail Trail Development



Important This map is for general information purposes only. The Capital Regional District (CRD) makes no representations or warranties regarding the accuracy or completeness of this map or the suitability of the map for any purpose. **This map is not for navigation.** The CRD will not be liable for any damage, loss or injury resulting from the use of the map or information on the map and the map may be changed by the CRD at any time.

— Galloping Goose / Lochside Regional Trails
— E & N Rail Corridor
— Municipal / Electoral Area Boundary

Regional Park
Other Park
First Nation Reserve
Lake / Ocean

Appendix A
E & N Rail Trail - Humpback Connector
Development Phasing Plan
Regional Parks Committee Staff Report
September 22, 2021

DETAILED STATUS OF E&N RAIL TRAIL DEVELOPMENT

September 2021

Phase 1 – Completed December 2018

The initial phase was split into seven different project areas and was built between 2009 and 2018. Just over 9 km of trail was created, spread over each of the communities, as follows:

- City of Langford: approximately 2 km of new trail was developed plus approximately 0.5 km of the overlapping E&N/Galloping Goose segment was paved.
- Town of View Royal: approximately 0.75 km of new trail was developed, approximately 2 km of the overlapping E&N/Galloping Goose segment was paved, and three bridges were developed (trail bridge over Helmcken Road and trail and rail bridges at Island Highway/4 Mile).
- Esquimalt Nation: approximately 0.75 km of new trail was built along Hallowell Road and Admirals Road.
- Songhees Nation: approximately 0.25 km of new trail was built between the Songhees and Esquimalt Nation boundary and Maplebank Road.
- Township of Esquimalt: approximately 3 km of new trail was developed from Maplebank Road to the Esquimalt/Victoria boundary by Hereward Road.
- City of Victoria: approximately 0.2 km of new trail was built from Esquimalt/Victoria boundary to Esquimalt Road.

The cost of developing this phase of the trail was covered through a mix of grants and CRD funding.

Phase 2 – Completed June 2015

This phase was initiated in 2013, with construction over 2014-2015. This phase added 2 km of new trail in the Town of View Royal, between Island Highway/Burnside Road West and Island Highway/4 Mile Bridge. It linked existing Phase 1 trail sections on either end.

The cost of developing this phase of the trail was covered through a mix of grants and CRD funding.

Phase 3 – Completed in July 2021

Phase 3 began in 2018. In considering environmental aspects, privacy for neighbours, technical aspects and costs, several design options were developed and reviewed before a final route plan was confirmed. Construction began in 2019 and was completed in July 2021.

This 1 km section connects existing Phase 1 sections of trail and creates a continuous 13 km route. All six communities are now connected (Langford, View Royal, Esquimalt Nation, Songhees

Nation, Esquimalt, and Victoria). This trail section is unique along the E&N Rail Trail in that it includes two underpasses, one by the east end to avoid Millstream Creek and one toward the west end to provide trail access to/from Westwind Drive.

Costs for Phase 3 were covered through a CRD loan and a \$1 million Active Transportation grant from the Province.

Phase 4 – In Progress

CRD and City of Victoria staff are working together on the planning of this phase. In this phase, the CRD, through its E&N Rail Trail agreement with the Island Corridor Foundation, has authority/jurisdiction to develop the trail between Esquimalt Road and Catherine Street. East of Catherine Street, the City of Victoria and local developers have jurisdiction over the railway corridor and will be developing the route beyond Catherine Street.

In the immediate term, the City of Victoria is developing a two-way all ages and abilities bike lane along Kimta Road and improving an existing multi-use path by the Harbour Road overpass in Victoria. This will provide a continuous pedestrian (on sidewalks/trail) and cycling (on AAA cycle path) route for the E&N Rail Trail in the short term. In the longer term, the final trail route will be implemented through private development, as required by the City of Victoria through the development approvals.

All costs for the CRD's portion of Phase 4 is being covered through a CRD loan. The CRD has provided a letter of support to the City of Victoria for a grant application to assist with the City's section.

Phase 5 – Not Yet Scheduled or Funded

The last segment of trail, Phase 5, between Jacklin Road and Humpback Road in the City of Langford is not yet scheduled or funded. It will create approximately 3.5 km of new trail and complete the E&N Rail Trail – Humpback Connector.

CRD staff need to work with Langford staff to review the 2009 proposed route and determine if modifications are required due to development that has occurred along the route since 2009.

This last phase of the E&N Rail Trail – Humpback Connector is tentatively scheduled for 2024/2025 but is dependent on securing grant funding. Timing for the project will be finalized once the route has been determined and funding has been determined. A staff report outlining funding and timing proposals will be submitted for Board consideration in the future.

Humpback Road Link

Through the Regional Trails Management Plan (2016), the CRD Board supported extending the E&N Rail Trail - Humpback Connector trail to link with Sooke Hills Wilderness Regional Park and the Sooke Hills Wilderness Trail, which provides part of the route for the Trans Canada Trail in the CRD. The City of Langford, through a local trail planning initiative, also identified the value in this proposed link and has developed a path along Humpback Road between Irwin Road and the E&N railway line.



Making a difference...together

REPORT TO REGIONAL PARKS COMMITTEE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2021

SUBJECT Ecological Values and Biodiversity in Regional Parks

ISSUE SUMMARY

This report provides an information update on ecological values and biodiversity in Regional Parks in response to a Notice of Motion.

BACKGROUND

At the June 23, 2021 Regional Parks Committee meeting, the following Notice of Motion was introduced and carried:

Whereas one of the two goals of regional parks is “protecting the region’s extraordinary biodiversity in perpetuity” and whereas the existing Regional Parks Acquisition Strategy prioritizes acquisition of park land to protect ecological values: therefore be it resolved that staff be directed to report on how ecological values and biodiversity are protected and monitored in regional parks and on the CRD’s staffing and resource capacity to evaluate the effectiveness of ecological protection in the regional parks system, including consideration of wildlife habitat and disturbance, biodiversity, impacts of new infrastructure, and the CRD’s declared climate emergency.

At its meeting of July 14, 2021, the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board approved the Notice of Motion with an amendment that “mitigation of fire risks” also be considered in the staff report.

The Regional Park system is comprised of regionally significant landscapes, which are classified by management focus. Depending on its predominant characteristics and purpose, a regional park falls into one of four distinct management focus classifications: Recreation Area, Natural Area, Conservation Area, and Wilderness Area. These park classifications are supported by management planning documents that provide strategies to protect the natural environment and define appropriate levels of activity.

In 2009-2010, as a precursor to the development of a conservation strategy, staff worked with consultants to review ecological and organizational literature, analyze ecological information, identify key factors (known as stressors) impacting native species and ecosystems, and outline strategic approaches to address those factors.

In 2010, the draft *Conservation Strategy for Capital Regional District – Regional Parks: Providing strategic direction for parkland stewardship* was prepared. A companion framework document that summarizes the larger document is attached (Appendix A).

The draft conservation strategy outlines a practical, science-based approach to reduce negative impacts to ecological values within regional parks. The draft conservation strategy was meant to initiate the development of a program that would include developing more detailed action plans to address specific ecosystems, species, issues and/or parks.

The draft strategy was presented to the Regional Parks Committee in March and September 2010. Both times, the conservation strategy was referred back to staff for further work. In September 2010, staff addressed the five main points raised by the Regional Parks Committee in March 2010, which included the concerns: 1) that the conservation strategy could be used to exclude some recreational uses; 2) that additional funding would be required to implement the strategy and may not be available; 3) that more information was needed about strategic choices and about balancing recreation needs versus conservation needs; 4) that First Nations needed to be consulted; and 5) that some land acquisitions are not immediately available for public use.

In November 2010, as part of the General Manager's Report, it was determined that the conservation strategy would be revised but put on hold until the Regional Parks Strategic Plan was adopted. Although the Regional Parks Strategic Plan was adopted in March 2012, the conservation strategy was deferred with no specific deadline. The current Regional Parks Strategic Plan is set for an update and conservation and recreation strategies will be developed and included in the strategic plan.

The challenges of the conservation program that Regional Parks is currently facing are: 1) staffing and resources; 2) lack of conservation strategies pertaining to condition and monitoring of regional parks; and 3) the rapid increase in the size of the system in terms of area and visitation.

Regional Parks has one staff member dedicated to conservation. The Environmental Conservation Specialist (ECS) role and responsibilities include preparing and delivering conservation plans and projects, providing technical advice for planning and operations, terrestrial and aquatic ecosystem management, restoration and invasive species management, program administration, land acquisition and collaborating with community and partners. In addition, the ECS is often asked to address urgent requests from the public or CRD staff.

Regional Parks primarily protects ecological values through the application of various bylaws, policies, plans and other tools, including park management planning, policy and guideline development, best management practices, annual operating plans, park use permit conditions, park stewardship agreements, ecological restoration, habitat mapping, species surveys, interpretive and educational activities, and compliance and enforcement. Significant effort is also spent on invasive species removal, especially through volunteer and partner efforts. Regional Parks is also piloting an Impact Assessment process to evaluate management actions that may impact park values and to aid in identifying appropriate mitigation measures, if required.

Low intensity wildfires were once the dominant disturbance regime in the region and fire suppression over the past century has contributed to the loss of biodiversity and ecological values. Fire risk mitigation within the regional park system takes on two forms: prevention and suppression activities. Prevention activities reduce the risk of wildfire in regional parks and include strategies such as: prohibiting smoking in all regional parks; permitting campfires only in designated facilities (i.e., no open fires) and prohibiting all campfires when a provincial fire ban is in effect; limiting high-risk activities in accordance with the BC Wildfire Act requirements; and patrolling worksites to monitor for potential flare-ups. Regional Park rangers undertake wildfire patrols as conditions warrant as per the MOU between BC Wildfire Service and the CRD. In terms of suppression activities, Regional Parks trains staff in mop-up responsibilities to augment municipal fire departments and the BC Wildfire Service, who respectively have primary responsibility for initial attack and related fire suppression activities inside and outside of municipal fire protection areas.

Local climate models predict increases in temperatures, dry conditions, storms and sea levels that will impact ecological values. Ecosystems will likely shift toward more drought tolerant systems. Despite these changes, regional parks will continue to serve as critical natural assets for carbon storage and sequestration.

A systematic regional parks monitoring program does not currently exist. However, monitoring of specific species, such as the endangered contorted-pod evening primrose and invasive species such as carpet burweed, does occur. Development of a comprehensive monitoring program would benefit the environmental health of regional parks.

IMPLICATIONS

Environmental & Climate Implications

Improving the understanding of ecological values and biodiversity in regional parks will benefit overall ecological integrity and environmental health and contribute to climate change resiliency. The availability of data to identify sensitive or rare species and ecosystems and critical wildlife habitat is variable and often limited. When resources permit, studies are conducted but there are still gaps in the understanding of ecological values within the regional parks system.

Social Implications

The capital region is a unique part of Canada. The climate, influenced by wet and warm coastal air and the rain shadow from the mountain ranges, along with its complex geography spanning from sea level to mountaintops, means that a diverse range of ecosystems and species occur, many of which do not occur elsewhere in Canada. This combination of climate, geography and uniqueness also makes the CRD one of the fastest growing communities in Canada and a popular travel destination. Regional parks are part of a protected areas system that helps regulate our climate, purify the water, provide habitat for rare and endangered species and provide opportunities to engage in a wide range of recreational activities. Regional parks and trails continue to see significant growth in visitation, which puts pressures on the regional park system and can make protecting and monitoring regional park values and biodiversity challenging.

Financial Implications

Additional staff and resources would be required to allow for an ecological monitoring program. A proposal for service level adjustments in this area has been brought forward to this Parks Committee agenda as part of the 2022 Service Planning report.

Service Delivery Implications

In spring 2021, staff were asked to complete a comprehensive budget review exercise to identify staffing and resource needs that are required to meet core service levels. For the conservation program, this included identifying resources required to support the protection of ecological values and biodiversity in regional parks. Key gaps that were identified during the budget review process for the delivery of the conservation program included the need for a conservation strategy, improving understanding of the ecological values in regional parks through baseline inventories and a “state of the parks” assessment, and monitoring and action planning in all three major program areas (terrestrial ecosystem management, aquatic ecosystem management, and

restoration and invasive species management). The lack of an ecological monitoring program was also identified as a key gap in the delivery of core conservation program services.

Alignment with Board & Corporate Priorities

Strategic Board Priorities identified in the 2019-2022 Corporate Plan that apply to the Regional Parks conservation program include ensuring appropriate funding for parks and trails by updating the Regional Parks Strategic Plan with consideration of ecological, recreation and reconciliation principles, land acquisition capacity, and expanded partnerships with First Nations and park user groups.

Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies

The 2012-2021 Regional Parks Strategic Plan includes a number of strategic goals that pertain to the conservation program, including protecting and conserving biological diversity; maintaining and restoring healthy, viable ecosystems in regional parks; and undertaking management activities that improve the understanding of park ecosystems and the ability to sustain them.

CONCLUSION

Increased size of regional parks and visitation over the years has outpaced Regional Parks' ability to comprehensively assess and monitor ecological values and conditions. Regional Parks utilizes its existing resources to protect known ecological values through the application of bylaws, strategies and other tools. Additional staffing and resources would enable Regional Parks to better manage ecological values and biodiversity, mitigate fire risks, address the impacts of new infrastructure, and respond to the CRD's declared climate emergency.

RECOMMENDATION

The Regional Parks Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:

That this report be received for information.

Submitted by:	Jeff Leahy, RPF, Senior Manager, Regional Parks
Concurrence:	Larisa Hutcheson, P.Eng., General Manager, Parks & Environmental Services
Concurrence:	Robert Lapham, MCIP, RPP, Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT

Appendix A: Draft Conservation Strategy Framework for Capital Regional District Regional Parks
– March 2010

Conservation Strategy for **DRAFT** Capital Regional District - Regional Parks | *Providing strategic direction for parkland stewardship*

March 17, 2010

F R A M E W O R K



MILL HILL REGIONAL PARK

CRD

Making a difference...together

CONSERVATION VISION

CRD Regional Parks are comprised of vibrant, functional ecosystems, with healthy populations of native species and a secure future for rare plants, animals, fungi, and other organisms. All of us—policy makers, parks staff, volunteers, visitors, and neighbours, and the general public—are aware of and respect the ecological values of CRD Regional Parks. Together, we steward regional parks and take care that our activities help the ecosystems, ecological communities, and species flourish for the long term.

Introduction

British Columbia's Capital Regional District (CRD), covering the southern tip of Vancouver Island and the southern Gulf Islands, encompasses a unique area in Canada, with a complex geography and climate and a diverse range of ecosystems dominated by Coastal Douglas-fir and Coastal Western Hemlock forests. Home to Coast Salish and Nuu-chah-nulth First Nations peoples for thousands of years, in recent times it has been increasingly settled and developed. The intersection of intense development and unique ecosystems has made the area one of Canada's focal points for conservation concerns. Protected areas, including lands set aside for conservation purposes by parks agencies and land trusts, are quickly becoming the only remaining areas of natural habitat within the developed landscape of the CRD. This fact underscores the critical importance of ongoing appropriate stewardship of acquired lands, to protect and restore native biodiversity over the long term.

The CRD Regional Parks system currently includes 28 parks and four regional trails ranging in size from 1.8 to over 4,000 hectares and totaling more than 11,500 hectares of land. Parklands help to protect a broad diversity of native ecosystems, ecological communities, and species, including dozens of species and ecological communities at risk of disappearing from the wild. Parklands also provide a range of critical ecosystem services, such as carbon storage, climate regulation, flood control, and many others. The *CRD Regional Parks Master Plan (2000)* states that the two primary purposes for CRD Regional Parks are:

1. To establish and protect a network of regional parks in perpetuity that represent and help maintain the diverse range of natural environments in the Capital Regional District.
2. To provide opportunities for outdoor experiences and activities that foster appreciation and enjoyment of, and respect for, the region's natural environments.

The Master Plan also affirms that protecting the natural environment is CRD Regional Parks' core value and primary responsibility, and that protecting the natural environment provides the means by which people can partake in the outdoor experiences that put them in close touch with nature. The Master Plan outlines a commitment to incorporate environmental conservation, defined as the careful protection, use, and planned management of living organisms and their vital processes, to prevent their depletion, exploitation, destruction or waste, into all aspects of park management and operation.

The *CRD Strategic Plan* similarly upholds the importance of protecting the natural environment by identifying environmental protection as one of the five priorities for 2009-2011. The Strategic Plan further identifies "effective stewardship of regional park lands and protected areas" as a desired outcome of this strategic priority. However, given intense pressures on the parks system from factors originating both within and without park boundaries, managing parks to protect and maintain the diverse range of ecosystems, ecological communities, and species is an enormous challenge. This Conservation Strategy provides guidance for meeting that challenge.



MOUNT WELLS REGIONAL PARK PHOTO RICK EPPLER

Context

The ecological values and conditions within the CRD Regional Parks system include:

- Representation of two biogeoclimatic zones, the Coastal Douglas-fir and the Coastal Western Hemlock, of the three that occur in the CRD, and three of 9 different subzone variants that occur within the CRD. All 3 of the variants, the Coastal Douglas-fir Moist Maritime and the Eastern and Western Very Dry Maritime Coastal Western Hemlock variants, are globally significant because of their limited distributions and unique ecosystems. Those variants not represented within regional parks are located west of the Sooke River, an area that to date does not include any regional parks.
- All nine different ecosystems of conservation significance mapped by the federal-provincial *East Vancouver Island and Gulf Islands Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory*.
- Forest cover dominating 85% of the land base within regional parks, interspersed with other ecosystems.
- Documented disruptions to natural disturbance regimes in all regional parks, most commonly logging history, and numerous developments such as roads, buildings, parking lots, and utility corridors.
- Many invasive exotic plants invading non-forested areas, and some species invading forested areas.
- One-third of regional parks having excellent or good connectivity with other natural areas, the remainder being more or less isolated “islands” of habitat within the greater landscape.
- Reported occurrences of 59 different nationally and/or provincially-listed plant species, 31 animal species, and 12 ecological communities at risk, distributed among 26 of the regional parks and trails. How many of these occurrences are extant is not currently known.
- Potential habitat for 9 different regionally significant wildlife species or species groups that require large areas of relatively undisturbed habitat and/or specific important habitat elements. Five native salmonid species are distributed among 10 different regional parks and trails.

Purpose of the Conservation Strategy

The Conservation Strategy outlines a practical, science-based approach to reduce key stressors, or factors that can negatively affect ecological values within CRD Regional Parks. It is system-wide in scope, and follows the analysis of ecological values, ecosystem stressors, and organizational context presented in *Towards a Conservation Strategy for Capital Regional District – Regional Parks: Situational Analysis*.

The Strategy develops the following series of logically-linked desired outcomes:



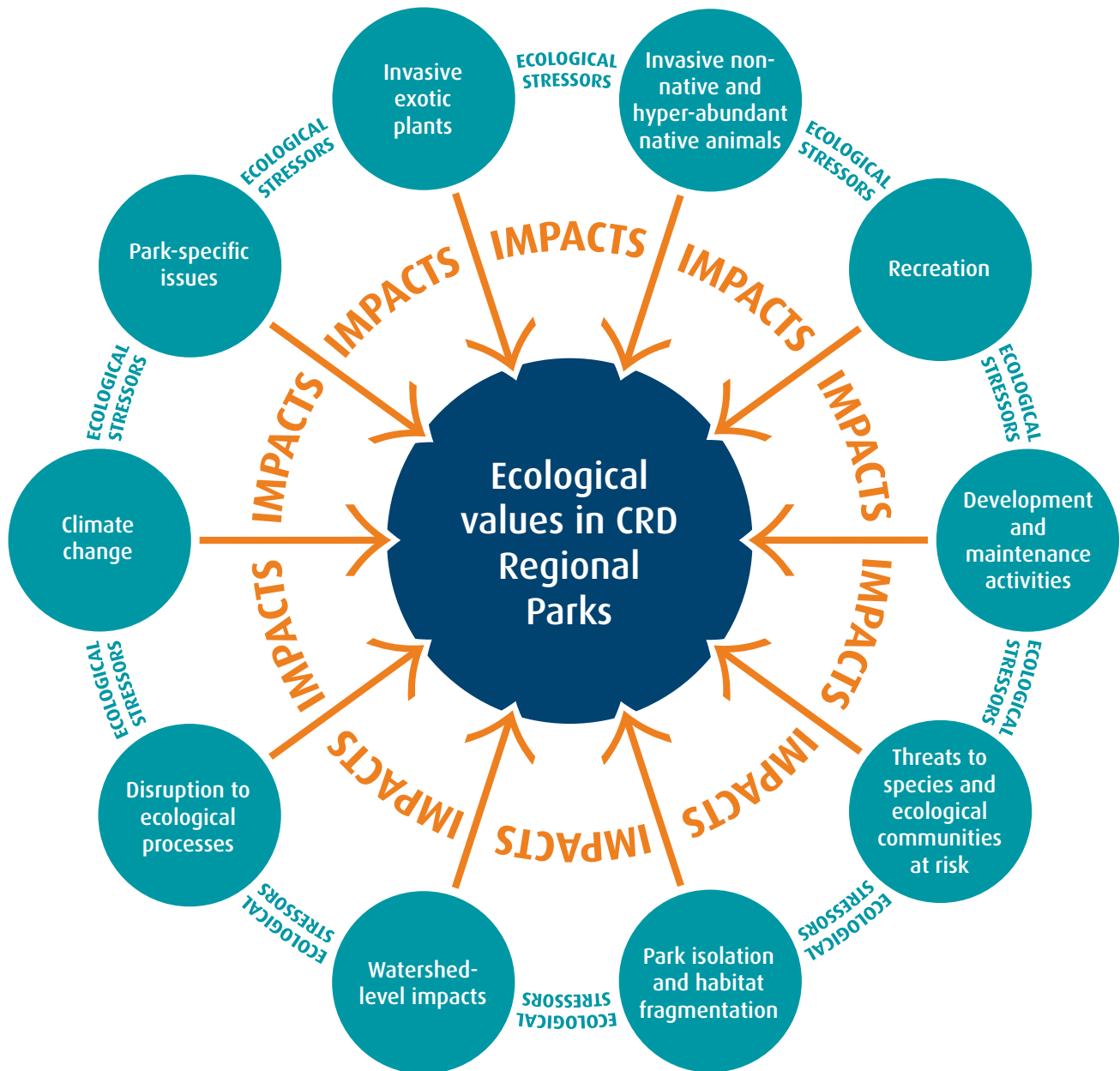
1. A **goal** statement for each stressor.
2. A list of target changes in **condition or state** associated with each stressor. These are changes that are aimed at the longer term and require significant changes in policies and practices, which must be achieved through shorter term changes in human behaviour.
3. For each change in ecological condition, a list of associated changes in human behaviour, described as **policies and practices required**. Often considered the “medium-term” outcomes, identifying these required changes in behaviour helps in the process of identifying appropriate short-term outcomes and outputs that will achieve the longer term change in condition.
4. **Potential participants**, or groups of people who would likely have a role to play in achieving each of these changes in policies and practices.
5. The **information and understanding** the potential participants would need to have the motivation as well as the technical tools and capacity to participate.



ROUGH-SKINNED NEWT

Strategic Approaches

Ecological Stressors, goals and targets



The ecological stressors, their associated goals, and the target states and conditions outlined in the Strategy are:

1. Invasive exotic plants

Goal: The presence and impacts of invasive exotic plants are minimized.

- New invasions are prevented to the extent possible.
- Early invasions are eradicated (“early detection and rapid response”).
- Select species of invasive exotic plants (including legally designated noxious weeds, species posing human health hazards, and other priority species) are eliminated from park lands.
- Select species of established invasive exotic plants are managed at priority sites.
- Regional Parks policies appropriately address the threat to ecosystems and species from invasive exotic plants.



JAPANESE KNOTWEED - INVASIVE EXOTIC PLANT

2. Invasive non-native and hyper-abundant native animals

Goal: The presence and impacts of invasive non-native and hyperabundant native animals are minimized.

- New invasions of non-native animals are prevented to the extent possible.
- Early invasions of non-native animals are eradicated where possible.
- Select species of established invasive non-native animals and hyperabundant native animals are managed at priority sites.
- Impacts of invasive non-native animals and hyperabundant native animals are mitigated.
- Regional Parks policies appropriately address the threat to ecosystems and species from invasive non-native and hyperabundant native animals.

3. Recreation

Goal: Recreational activities within CRD Regional Parks are compatible with protection of ecosystems and species.

- Recreational impacts are prevented to the extent possible.
- Impacted ecosystems are restored.
- Regional Parks policies appropriately address current and potential impacts to ecosystems and species from recreation.

4. Development and maintenance activities

Goal: Development and maintenance activities within CRD Regional Parks are compatible with protection of ecosystems and species.

- Ecological impacts of development and maintenance activities are prevented or mitigated.
- Impacted ecosystems are restored.
- Regional Parks policies appropriately address current and potential impacts to ecosystems and species from development and maintenance activities.

5. Threats to species and ecological communities at risk

Goal: Species and ecological communities at risk thrive within CRD Regional Parks at current or improved population levels and/or distributions.

- Threats to species and ecological communities at risk are mitigated.
- Essential attributes of critical habitat for species at risk are protected and restored.
- Additional recovery actions are implemented.
- Regional Parks policies appropriately address protection and recovery of species and ecological communities at risk.



NATIONALLY ENDANGERED BLUE-GREY TAILDROPPER PHOTO KRISTIINA OVASKA

6. Park isolation and habitat fragmentation

Goal: The impacts of park isolation and habitat fragmentation are minimized.

- Within-park habitat fragmentation is minimized.
- Within-park habitat connectivity is restored where possible.
- Connectivity between parks and other natural areas is protected and enhanced.
- Habitat buffers surrounding parks are protected and enhanced.
- Activities of park neighbours do not compromise ecological values within parks.
- Regional Parks policies appropriately address impacts to ecosystems and species from park isolation and habitat fragmentation.

7. Watershed-level impacts

Goal: Healthy aquatic ecosystems exist in CRD Regional Parks, with excellent water quality and water flows within natural ranges.

- Degradation of water quality from upland conditions and activities is reduced or eliminated.
- Disruptions to water flow from upland conditions and activities is reduced or eliminated.
- An interconnected network of aquatic and riparian ecosystems is protected and restored.
- Regional Parks policies appropriately address watershed-level impacts to aquatic and riparian ecosystems and species.

8. Disruptions to ecological processes

Goal: Natural ecological processes are protected and restored.

- Disruptions to ecological processes are prevented or minimized.
- Ecological processes that have been disrupted are restored or the impacts are mitigated.
- Regional Parks policies appropriately address protection and restoration of ecological processes.

9. Climate change

Goal: Ecosystems and species in CRD Regional Parks retain their natural potential to mitigate and are resilient to climate change.

- Carbon storage capacity of ecosystems is protected.
- Degraded carbon storage capacity of ecosystems is restored.
- Ecosystem and species diversity support ecosystem resilience to climate change.
- Protection of key ecological functions of species and species groups support ecosystem resilience to climate change.
- Land management interventions consider ecosystem resilience to climate change.
- Amelioration of all ecosystem stressors considers predicted changes from, and supports ecosystem resilience to, climate change.
- Regional Parks policies appropriately address climate change mitigation and adaptation.



DEAD AND DYING WESTERN REDCEDARS. PHOTO RICHARD HEBDA. FROM MITIGATING AND ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE THROUGH THE CONSERVATION OF NATURE IN BRITISH COLUMBIA, PUBLISHED BY LAND TRUST ALLIANCE OF BC, 2008.

10. Park-specific issues

Goal: Impacts on ecological values from park-specific stressors are minimized.

- Impacts on ecological values from unique proposed developments or activities are prevented to the extent possible.
- Impacts from former and current developments and activities are mitigated and/or sites are restored.
- Regional Parks policies appropriately address current and potential impacts to ecosystems and species from park-specific issues.

Next Steps

The next steps in developing a comprehensive conservation program will entail developing action plans outlining the outputs, consisting of activities, services, events, and products that would provide the information and understanding required by the potential participants, as defined in this Strategy, and thereby support the participants to make each of the designated changes in policies and practices.



The actions plans need to define objectives that are SMART – specific, measureable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound.

The conservation program outlined in this Strategy is an ambitious undertaking involving a wide range of participants and partners, and will require significant commitments of internal and external resources. A suggested initial sequence for Strategy implementation is:

1. Invasive exotic plants and threats to species and ecological communities at risk, based upon the immediacy of the conservation issues and the potential consequences of delaying action.
2. Recreation and development and maintenance activities, based upon the feasibility and likely effectiveness of implementation.

This implementation sequence should not be equated with overall priority. Most of the other stressors are more complex, yet likely the most important, to address, given their impacts on fundamental ecological attributes that structure and maintain ecosystems at the broadest scales. CRD Regional Parks will build as much capacity as possible to address the stressors in the coming years.

Resource challenges notwithstanding, this Conservation Strategy provides an important and innovative program for protecting and maintaining the regionally, provincially, nationally, and globally significant ecological values represented in CRD Regional Parks. The CRD has a tremendous responsibility to steward the natural resources under its jurisdiction and a critical role to play in protecting and restoring the ecological values so they can persist into the future. This comprehensive and integrated conservation program that systematically addresses all of the key risks to ecological values offers the best hope for success.



MATHESON LAKE REGIONAL PARK



Making a difference...together

Capital Regional District-Regional Parks

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