Capital Regional District

625 Fisgard St.,
Victoria, BC V8W 1R7

Notice of Meeting and Meeting Agenda
Regional Parks Committee

Wednesday, November 26, 2025 | **9:30 AM** | **6th Floor Boardroom, 625 Fisgard St. Victoria, BC V8W 1R7**

J. Brownoff (Chair), L. Szpak (Vice Chair), C. Coleman, S. Goodmanson, G. Holman, M. Tait, S. Tobias, K. Williams, R. Windsor, C. McNeil-Smith (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. 25-1282 Minutes of the Regional Parks Committee Meeting of October 22, 2025

Recommendation: That the minutes of the Regional Parks Committee meeting of October 22, 2025 be adopted as circulated.

Attachments: Minutes - October 22, 2025

4. Chair's Remarks

5. Presentations/Delegations

5.1. 25-1283 Delegation - Robin Jenkinson; Representing Island Pathways: Re: Agenda Item 6.1. Salt Spring Island Regional Trail Feasibility Study Findings and Next Steps

6. Committee Business

6.1. 25-1253 Salt Spring Island Regional Trail Feasibility Study Findings and Next Steps

Recommendation: The Regional Parks Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:
1. That the planning, implementation, and operation of all regional trails on the Gulf Islands-such as those identified in the Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan-be referred to the CRD Transportation Committee for consideration;
2. That this report, including the Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan, be referred to the Salt Spring Island Electoral Area Administration for information, in recognition of the local interest in establishing additional community trails in village sites on Salt Spring Island; and
3. That staff report back with a list of all CRD Regional Parks plans, policies, and bylaws requiring amendment or repeal as a result of establishing the Regional Transportation Service, and outline the process and timeline for completing these changes.

Attachments:
- Staff Report: SSIRT Feasibility Study Findings & Next Steps
- Appendix A: SSIRT Final Section of Salish Sea Trail Network
- Appendix B: Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan
- Presentation: SSIRT Feasibility Study & Next Steps

6.2. 25-1171 Regional Parks and Trails - State of Natural Features Report

Recommendation: There are no recommendations. This report is for information only.

Attachments:
- Staff Reports: RP&T – State of Natural Features Report
- Appendix A: 2025 State of Natural Features Report
- Presentation: Regional Parks State of Natural Features

6.3. 25-1252 Regional Parks and Trails - State of Outdoor Recreation Report

Recommendation: There are no recommendations. This report is for information only.

Attachments:
- Staff Report: RP&T State of Outdoor Recreation Report
- Appendix A: 2025 State of Outdoor Recreation Report
- Presentation: RP State of Outdoor Recreation Report

7. Notice(s) of Motion

8. New Business

9. Adjournment

The next meeting will be held in 2026.

To ensure quorum, please advise Jessica Dorman (jdorman@crd.bc.ca) if you or your alternate cannot attend.

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625 Fisgard St.,
Victoria, BC V8W 1R7

Capital Regional District

Meeting Minutes

Regional Parks Committee

Wednesday, October 22, 2025 | **9:30 AM** | **6th Floor Boardroom, 625 Fisgard St., Victoria, BC V8W 1R7**

Budget

PRESENT
Directors: J. Brownoff (Chair), L. Szpak (Vice Chair), C. Coleman, S. Goodmanson (9:33 am) (EP), G. Holman (EP), M. Tait (9:35 am) (EP), S. Tobias (EP), K. Williams, R. Windsor, C. McNeil-Smith (Board Chair, ex officio)

Staff: T. Robbins, Chief Administrative Officer; L. Jones, General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Environmental Services; M. MacIntyre, Senior Manager, Regional Parks; V. Somosan, Senior Manager, Financial Services; N. Elliott, Manager, Climate Action Programs, Parks & Environmental Services; G. Tokgoz, Manager, Transportation; M. Medland, Senior Financial Advisor; M. Lagoa, Deputy Corporate Officer; T. Pillipow, Committee Clerk (Recorder)

EP - Electronic Participation

Guest(s): Director C. Plant

The meeting was called to order at 9:31 am.

1. Territorial Acknowledgement

Director Szpak provided a Territorial Acknowledgement.

2. Approval of Agenda

MOVED by Director Coleman, SECONDED by Director Szpak,
That the agenda for the Regional Parks Committee meeting of October 22, 2025 be approved.
CARRIED

MOVED by Director McNeil-Smith, SECONDED by Director Coleman,
That Director Plant be permitted to participate (without vote) in the October 22, 2025 session of the Regional Parks Committee.
CARRIED

3. Adoption of Minutes

3.1. 25-0853 Minutes of the Regional Parks Committee Meeting of June 25, 2025

MOVED by Director Szpak, SECONDED by Director Coleman,
That the minutes of the Regional Parks Committee meeting of June 25, 2025 be adopted as circulated.
CARRIED

Director Goodmanson joined the meeting electronically at 9:33 am.

4. Chair's Remarks

Chair Brownoff spoke briefly of the sessions she attended at the Union of BC Municipalities conference.

5. Presentations/Delegations

MOVED by Director Coleman, SECONDED by Director McNeil-Smith,
That a late delegation, Eulala Mills, be permitted to speak.
CARRIED
Opposed: Windsor

Director Tait joined the meeting electronically at 9:35 am.

5.1. Presentations

There were no presentations.

5.2. Delegations

5.2.1. 25-1163 Delegation - Eulala Mills; Representing CRD DOGG Society: Re: Agenda Item 7.2. Motion with Notice: Off-Leash Dogs in the Governor General Area at Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park (Director Plant)

E. Mills spoke to Item 7.2.

6. Committee Business

6.1. 25-0990 Regional Parks Service - 2026 Operating and Capital Budget

L. Jones and M. MacIntyre spoke to Item 6.1.

Discussion ensued regarding:
- allocation of resources for a forest fire management program within the parks
- current status of the grant applications
- clarification of the grants-in-lieu-of-taxes program and other revenue sources
- inventory of dams within the parks system
- status of electrification of the fleet vehicles
- clarification of the current land acquisition debt status

MOVED by Director Szpak, SECONDED by Director Williams,
The Regional Parks Committee recommends the Committee of the Whole recommend to the Capital Regional District Board:
That Appendix A, Operating & Capital Budget - Regional Parks Service, be approved as presented and form the basis of the Provisional 2026-2030 Financial Plan.
CARRIED

Motion Arising:
MOVED by Director Tobias, SECONDED by Director Goodmanson,
That staff be directed to investigate and report back to the Regional Parks Committee on a potential Strategic Forest Management and FireSmart Plan including scope objectives and budget.

Discussion ensued regarding:
- confirmation that a FireSmart coordinator is on staff
- the timeline to report back to the committee

Amending Motion:
MOVED by Director Windsor, SECONDED by Director Tait,
That the motion arising be amended by striking the words "scope objectives and" before the word "budget".
CARRIED

The motion was called on the motion arising as amended.
That staff be directed to investigate and report back to the Regional Parks Committee on a potential Strategic Forest Management and FireSmart Plan including budget.
CARRIED

6.2. 25-0711 Regional Trestles Renewal - Trails Widening and Lighting Project Update

G. Tokgoz presented Item 6.2. for information.

Discussion ensued regarding:
- clarification of non-tax revenue funds
- that bi-annual reports will go through the Transportation Committee

7. Notice(s) of Motion

7.1. 25-0810 Motion with Notice: Reduced CRD Parking Fees for Low Income Visitors (Director Holman)

Director Holman read in revised wording for the Motion with Notice.

MOVED by Director Holman, SECONDED by Director McNeil-Smith,
The Regional Parks Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:
That staff report back on including parking fees at selected regional parks, with provision for reduced fees for low-income visitors, be considered as part of the 2026 budget process.
DEFEATED
Opposed: Brownoff, Coleman, Goodmanson, McNeil-Smith, Szpak, Tait, Williams

7.2. 25-0988 Motion with Notice: Off-Leash Dogs in the Governor General Area at Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park (Director Plant)

Discussion ensued regarding:
- the history of this portion of the park
- potential impact to the existing work plan

Director Tobias left the meeting at 11:04 am.

MOVED by Director McNeil-Smith, SECONDED by Director Williams,
The Regional Parks Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:
That CRD Parks staff be directed to review and report back on potential options for better accommodating off-leash dogs in the Governor General Area at Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park along Elk Lake Road in Saanich, including site suitability, impacts to park use, environmental considerations, community input, and estimated costs.
CARRIED

8. New Business

There was no new business.

9. Motion to Close the Meeting

9.1. 25-0854 Motion to Close the Meeting

MOVED by Director Szpak, SECONDED by Director McNeil-Smith,
That the meeting be closed for intergovernmental negotiations in accordance with Section 90(2)(b) of the Community Charter.
CARRIED

The Regional Parks Committee moved into closed session at 11:11 am.

The Regional Parks Committee rose from closed session at 12:14 pm without report.

10. Adjournment

MOVED by Director Coleman, SECONDED by Director Williams,
That the Regional Parks Committee meeting of October 22, 2025 be adjourned at 12:14 pm.
CARRIED

_____
CHAIR

_____
RECORDER

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REPORT TO REGIONAL PARKS COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2025

SUBJECT **Salt Spring Island Regional Trail Feasibility Study Findings and Next Steps**

ISSUE SUMMARY

To present the findings of the Salt Spring Island Regional Trail Feasibility Study and recommend next steps for the project and continued implementation of the Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan.

BACKGROUND

The Capital Regional District (CRD) Regional Parks Division has long led the development, management and maintenance of regional trails across the Capital Region, including the Galloping Goose, Lochside and E&N regional trails, as well as the recently completed Mayne Island Regional Trail. Off-road segments of these trails are built and operated on lands managed by the CRD through leases, licences or statutory rights-of-way, while on-road segments fall under the jurisdiction of local governments or the Province.

Originally designed as linear park corridors for recreation, these trails are now recognized as key components of the region's transportation system—supporting low-carbon mobility and regional connectivity within the broader active transportation network.

Evolution of Regional Trail Planning and Management

In 2016, the CRD Board approved the Regional Trails Management Plan (2016), which sets priorities and establishes development guidelines for the planning and management of CRD regional trails. This plan considers both recreation and active transportation objectives.

In 2018, the CRD Board approved the Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan (GIRTP), establishing a long-term vision for a system of off-road bike and pedestrian trails on Mayne, Salt Spring, Pender, Galiano and Saturna islands. The initial phase of the Mayne Island Regional Trail (MIRT) was completed in 2024 as a demonstration project to assess opportunities and challenges associated with regional trail development on the Gulf Islands. Salt Spring Island is identified as the next priority for regional trail development.

Approved in 2023, the Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022-2032 (Strategic Plan) embeds both regional park and off-road regional trail commitments.

In June 2025, the CRD established the Regional Transportation Service (RTS) under Bylaw No. 4630 to consolidate transportation planning and regional trail management across the Capital Region. The RTS mandate for active transportation includes:

- Developing transportation policies, plans, programs, projects and studies.
- Managing regional trails that serve a transportation function, including planning, policy development, construction, operations, maintenance, capital planning and land tenure management.
- Providing services and support to municipal partners and public authorities for transportation initiatives that promote active transportation.

The RTS reports to the Board through the CRD Transportation Committee. The Board has identified the Galloping Goose, Lochside and E&N regional trails as initial priorities. Accordingly, CRD Regional Parks is transferring staff, including the regional trail planning functions and associated operational and capital funding, to the RTS. CRD Regional Parks will continue to operate and maintain these priority trails under an internal service agreement and allocation funded by the RTS.

While the GIRTP and associated trails are not current RTS priorities, Bylaw No. 4630 allows for the inclusion of additional trails that support regional transportation, subject to CRD Board approval.

Salt Spring Island Feasibility Study

In June 2024, CRD Regional Parks initiated the Salt Spring Island Regional Trail Feasibility Study (the Study), included in Appendix A.

The Study assessed physical constraints along the 21 km conceptual route outlined in the GIRTP. It proposes a regional trail alignment extending from the Fulford Harbour Ferry Terminal in the southeast, through Ganges Village, to the Vesuvius Bay Ferry Terminal in the northwest. The analysis applied active transportation design guidelines, developed preliminary cost estimates, and identified priority segments for phased implementation (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Salt Spring Island Regional Trail Route and Segment Overview

Recognizing past and ongoing efforts to improve active transportation on Salt Spring Island, the Study was developed with input from key community and agency partners, including:

- Island Pathways—a community organization that advocates for safer walking and cycling routes on Salt Spring Island.
- Salish Sea Trail Network Working Group—a coalition of community members and elected officials advocating for a trail network linking the Southern Gulf Islands and Vancouver Island.
- BC Ministry of Transportation and Transit
- Islands Trust
- CRD Salt Spring Island Administration

The Study confirms that a regional trail across Salt Spring Island is feasible and can meet active transportation design standards with significant investment. The initial concept proposed a three-metre-wide paved trail designed to meet BC Active Transportation Design Guide (BCATDG) All Ages and Abilities (AAA) standards, with an estimated cost of approximately $102 million. To identify more feasible alternatives, the Study explored design standards appropriate for low-use rural contexts—consistent with the BCATDG and the 2016 Management Plan—by narrowing the trail to two metres, using gravel surfacing (as applied on the MIRT), and incorporating traffic-calmed side streets in high-cost areas, reducing the cost to approximately $63.1 million.

In alignment with the implementation approach outlined in the GIRTP, the Study identified the Ganges Village to Vesuvius Bay section (segments J, H, L2, G, K, and I) as the highest priority for implementation. This includes a 2.5 km on-road portion through segments J and K on traffic-calmed side streets, which are outside CRD Regional Parks' mandate to manage.

Key implementation partners with jurisdiction over portions of the proposed corridor include MoTT, BC Ferries, the Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission (LCC) and Islands Trust, and additional cost savings may be achievable by leveraging existing or planned projects within their road rights-of-way.

Further consultation with these partners is required to confirm prioritization of route segments and inform an implementation strategy for the initial phase. Upon completion, route surveying, conceptual and technical design along with community and First Nations engagement could proceed.

Key Conclusions

- A fully separated regional trail across Salt Spring Island is not currently feasible under CRD Regional Parks' existing guidelines.
- To establish an active transportation corridor, a viable alternative could combine separated trails, traffic-calmed streets, sidewalks and bike lanes and multiple operators (a similar approach to the Lochside Regional Trail). Advancing active transportation on Salt Spring and the Southern Gulf Islands will require a coordinated, multi-year, multi-agency effort.
- With the establishment of the RTS, CRD Regional Parks no longer has the capacity to plan and develop regional trail infrastructure. Regional transportation matters fall under the governance of the CRD Transportation Committee and are the responsibility of the RTS. Including the Gulf Island regional trails within the RTS could represent a more effective approach to ensure consistency, apply a transportation lens, and enable multi-agency coordination.

- CRD Regional Parks' existing regional trail plans—including the 2016 Management Plan, 2018 GIRTP, and 2023 Strategic Plan—will require review and either revision or repeal to align with RTS's mandate and future plans.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1
The Regional Parks Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:
1. That the planning, implementation, and operation of all regional trails on the Gulf Islands—such as those identified in the Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan—be referred to the CRD Transportation Committee for consideration;
2. That this report, including the Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan, be referred to the Salt Spring Island Electoral Area Administration for information, in recognition of the local interest in establishing additional community trails in village sites on Salt Spring Island; and
3. That staff report back with a list of all CRD Regional Parks plans, policies, and bylaws requiring amendment or repeal as a result of establishing the Regional Transportation Service, and outline the process and timeline for completing these changes.

Alternative 2
The Regional Parks Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:
That this report be referred back to staff for more information.

IMPLICATIONS

Alignment with Board & Corporate Priorities

Implementation of the GIRTP, which includes the development of the SSIRT, supports 2023-2026 Board Priorities relating to Transportation by improving regional connectivity and safety across transportation modes (1a) and supporting investments, expansion, and equitable access to active and low-carbon transportation (1b).

Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies

The development of the SSIRT supports the implementation of the GIRTP (Appendix B). The Study's findings align with the recommended implementation approach within the GIRTP, with the Ganges Village to Vesuvius Bay section containing the highest priority segments for implementing the initial phase of the project.

The development of the Gulf Islands regional trail network is identified as a priority project for the upcoming decade in the Strategic Plan. CRD Regional Parks' existing regional trail plans and priorities will need to be reviewed and updated to ensure alignment or adjustment to correspond with the RTS mandate.

Financial Implications

The total cost to implement the SSRIT, as outlined in the Study, is an estimated $63.1 million. This is a class D estimate with a ±50% contingency and does not include land tenure costs. The initial phase of trail development identified in the GIRTP spans approximately 6 km—from the Atkins Road/Lower Ganges Road intersection to the Vesuvius Bay ferry terminal (excluding Ganges Hill). This section, identified in the Study as segments H through L2, has an estimated

construction cost of $8.5 million. This includes a 2.5 km on-road section through segments J and K on traffic-calmed side streets. More accurate estimates will be possible following detailed route surveying and design.

CRD Regional Parks has allocated $300,000 in 2027 and $330,000 in 2028 within the preliminary budget to support planning activities for the SSIRT. Construction funding of $4 million is currently designated for debt financing starting in 2029 and continuing into 2030, with additional support anticipated through external grant opportunities. In addition, approximately $2.3 million in the Regional Parks Capital reserve are designated to leverage external grants and support Gulf Islands regional trail development.

If Gulf Islands regional trails are determined to fall under the purview of the RTS, the financial plan will need to be amended to reflect implementation priorities.

First Nations Implications

Salt Spring Island is situated within the asserted territories of several First Nations, including the Semiahmoo First Nation, Snuneymuxw First Nation, SȾÁUTW̱ (Tsawout) First Nation, sc̓əwaθən məsteyəxʷ (Tsawwassen) First Nation, BOḰEĆEN (Pauquachin) First Nation, W̱JOŁEŁP (Tsartlip) First Nation, W̱SIḴEM (Tseycum) First Nation, Stz'uminus First Nation, Penelakut Tribe, Cowichan Tribes, Halalt First Nation, Tsu'uubaa-asatx First Nation, Lyackson First Nation and MÁLEXEŁ (Malahat) Nation. Engagement with these Nations is an important part of the process and would take place in a subsequent phase of the project, following the completion of route surveying and conceptual design drawings.

Intergovernmental Implications

Implementation of the SSIRT will require close coordination with multiple agencies. As Salt Spring Island is an unincorporated community, MoTT is responsible for its road rights-of-way. Similar to the MIRT, MoTT's role will include reviewing and approving detailed design drawings and entering into a licence agreement for the trail's development and operation. MoTT is also currently implementing recommendations from its *2023 Salt Spring Island Cycling Safety Review*, which include shoulder widening and other active transportation upgrades across the island. In some areas, these improvements may create safer conditions for cyclists and pedestrians along existing roads, reducing the need for separate trail development in some future SSIRT segments.

Local governing bodies, including the Salt Spring Island Electoral Area Administration, LCC and Islands Trust, will play key roles in representing community interests, guiding land use policy alignment, and ensuring the trail is built in a manner that preserves the island's character. The Salt Spring Island Electoral Area Administration and LCC are implementing active transportation improvements in Ganges Village, as outlined in the Salt Spring Island Active Transportation Network Plan, which the regional trail is envisioned to connect with in the GIRTP.

BC Ferries will be an essential partner in trail development near the Fulford Harbour and Vesuvius Bay ferry terminals, helping to ensure safe active transportation connections that align with terminal operations and long-term plans. These areas are spatially constrained and influenced by surrounding transportation, commercial, residential and tourism activities, making them particularly complex. As such, additional planning, engagement and inter-agency coordination will be required to thoughtfully integrate active transportation infrastructure into the broader public realm.

Service Delivery Implications

Completing the SSIRT project and advancing implementation of the GIRTP will require significant resources for planning and construction, as well as long-term operation, maintenance and asset renewal funding. Any CRD service (i.e., RTS, Regional Parks, and Salt Spring Island and Southern Gulf Island Administration) will need to assess implementation pathways and service needs for any existing and future regional trails on the Gulf Islands. However, this service may require additional time to become fully operational and to assess and plan to implement transportation priorities across the region.

The Salt Spring Island Electoral Area Administration and LCC have expressed strong interest in the project and may be able to leverage local partnerships to support cost-effective implementation, provided sufficient resources are made available to them.

Social Implications

Developing the SSIRT strengthens community connectivity, promotes active transportation and enhances recreational opportunities for residents and visitors alike. However, it may also raise concerns about impacts on private property, the environment, and increased development and tourism in rural areas. Early and meaningful community engagement is key to addressing these concerns and building support. Partnering with local groups, such as Island Pathways, can strengthen public trust and increase buy-in by ensuring local perspectives are reflected in the planning and design process.

CONCLUSION

The development of the SSIRT aligns with CRD Board corporate priorities and Regional Parks planning documents. However, it is a significant undertaking that will require coordination among multiple agencies, meaningful engagement with First Nations and the public, and careful consideration of construction, operation and maintenance costs, along with associated service demands. As responsibility and resources for regional trail management shift from CRD Regional Parks to the new Regional Transportation Service, it may be appropriate for the Transportation Committee and Board to consider including the regional trails on the Gulf Islands under the RTS mandate.

RECOMMENDATION

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

1. That the planning, implementation, and operation of all regional trails on the Gulf Islands—such as those identified in the Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan—be referred to the CRD Transportation Committee for consideration;
2. That this report, including the Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan, be referred to the Salt Spring Island Electoral Area Administration for information, in recognition of the local interest in establishing additional community trails in village sites on Salt Spring Island; and
3. That staff report back with a list of all CRD Regional Parks plans, policies, and bylaws requiring amendment or repeal as a result of establishing the Regional Transportation Service, and outline the process and timeline for completing these changes.

Submitted by:	Mike MacIntyre, Senior Manager, Regional Parks
Concurrence:	Luisa Jones, MBA, General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Environmental Services
Concurrence:	Kevin Lorette, P. Eng., MBA, General Manager, Housing, Planning and Protective Services
Concurrence:	Stephen Henderson, MBA, P.G.Dip.Eng, BSc, General Manager, Electoral Area Services
Concurrence:	Ted Robbins, B. Sc., C. Tech., Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A: Salt Spring Island Regional Trail: Final Section of the Salish Sea Trail Network Feasibility Study Report (October 2025)
Appendix B: Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan (January 2018)
Presentation: Salt Spring Island Regional Trail – Feasibility Study & Next Steps

APPENDIX A

Salt Spring Island Regional Trail:

Final Section of the Salish Sea Trail Network

Feasibility Study Report

October 15, 2025

Acknowledgements

The Capital Regional District (CRD) would like to acknowledge and thank all project participants for their contributions throughout the planning process.

Funding for a portion of this study was made possible through a grant from the Canadian Federal Active Transportation Fund to Island Pathways, a non-profit society whose mission is to improve active transportation on Salt Spring Island.

Capital Regional District

Stephen Henderson *Sr Manager of Real Estate, Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area*
Dan Ovington *Manager, Parks and Recreation*
Genevieve Tokgoz *Engineer*
Stuart Walsh *Parks Operations Supervisor*
Kevin Webber *Parks Planner (Chair and Project Oversight Lead)*

Islands Trust

Chris Hutton *Regional Planning Manager*
Chris Buchan *Island Planner*

BC Ministry of Transportation and Transit

Shawn Haley *Operations Manager, Vancouver Island District*
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Project Team*

Gavin Davidson *GJD Planning + Design*
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Colin Stein *GJD Planning + Design*
Roy Symons *ISL Engineering*

Community Partners

Island Pathways
Salish Sea Trail Network Working Group

*This report has been prepared by the CRD and GJD Planning + Design with support from ISL Engineering for the benefit of the CRD and others. The information and data contained in this report represents the author's best professional judgement considering the knowledge, information, and data available at the time of preparation. This is a living document, subject to change and updates based on changing conditions and circumstances. GJD Planning + Design denies any liability to other parties that may obtain access to this report for any injury, loss or damage suffered by such parties arising from their use of, or reliance upon this report without the express written permission of GJD Planning + Design and the CRD.

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Executive Summary

The Capital Regional District (CRD) has committed to developing a network of regional trails across the Southern Gulf Islands to link major transportation hubs with key community destinations. The Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan (CRD, 2018) outlines a conceptual regional trail route on Mayne, Salt Spring, Pender, Galiano, and Saturna islands. As outlined in the plan, the trails are to accommodate both cyclists and pedestrians, be situated within public road rights-of-way whenever possible, be separated from vehicle traffic where feasible, and be developed in phases.

The CRD engaged GJD Planning + Design to undertake a feasibility study for the Salt Spring Island Regional Trail (SSIRT)—a proposed 21 km active transportation corridor connecting Fulford Harbour, Ganges Village, and Vesuvius Bay. The SSIRT overlaps with a portion of the Salish Sea Trail Network—a 186 km conceptual active transportation loop envisioned by the local non-profit Island Pathways and supported by the Salish Sea Trail Network Working Group, a coalition of community members and elected officials. The feasibility study evaluated the technical, financial and strategic feasibility of implementing the SSIRT and includes proposed cross sections, illustrates potential alignment, and identifies opportunities and constraints along the corridor.

To address construction cost challenges—initially estimated at $102 million—and to expedite implementation, lower-cost options were explored, including incorporating on-road segments along traffic-calmed side streets, which reduced the estimated construction costs to $63 million. Segments requiring significant construction or property acquisition pose higher costs and complexity, whereas in some areas, existing public roadside pathways could be formalized into a regional trail with relatively few interventions. In particular, a number of segments between Ganges Village and Vesuvius Bay offer the potential for low-cost, early implementation and are prioritized for initial construction.

To support successful implementation of the SSIRT, the following actions are recommended:

1. **Route surveying** to confirm existing road right-of-way widths and site-specific conditions;
2. **Development of conceptual drawings** based on survey findings to refine trail alignments and address identified constraints;
3. **Engagement with community members and users, First Nations, local and provincial governments, and key stakeholders** to gather input, build consensus, and ensure the trail reflects community values and priorities; and
4. **Preparation of detailed design drawings and cost estimates** to support funding applications, permitting, and phased construction.

The SSIRT represents a significant opportunity to enhance sustainable, active transportation opportunities across Salt Spring, fostering healthier communities and stronger regional connections.

Introduction

On Salt Spring Island, the Capital Regional District (CRD) conducts its business on the territories of the SENĆOŦEN and Hul'q'umi'num' speaking peoples. These include the Penálaxeth' (Penelakut), Quw'utsun (Cowichan), Lyackson, Stz'uminus (Chemainus), Snuneymuxw, SȾÁUTW (Tsawout), WJOŁEŁP (Tsartlip), BOḰEĆEN (Pauquachin), WSIḴEM (Tseycum), MÁLEXEŁ (Malahat), and Halalt Nations, all of whom have a longstanding relationship with the land and waters from time immemorial that continues to this day.

In the 2008 Salt Spring Island Local Trust Area Official Community Plan[1], observed that Salt Spring Island is "*a place of extraordinary beauty, great environmental significance, and rare biological diversity. …We know that it is more important to leave a legacy than to leave an impact."*

Salt Spring Island is known for its rural character, vibrant arts community, organic farms and diverse natural landscapes. It has a population of under 12,000 permanent residents, along with a significant seasonal influx of visitors that places additional demand on local infrastructure. Despite its popularity and tourism appeal, Salt Spring has limited active transportation facilities, resulting in a high dependency on the use of private automobiles for the movement of people and goods.

Over the last 40 years, there has been increased demand and coordinated efforts from residents and community groups to support the construction of an active transportation network on the island. In 2024, CRD Regional Parks formally joined the effort, working with Island Pathways and other key community members to establish a preliminary design for a ferry-to-village-to-ferry active transportation route that would:

- reduce the personal and collective carbon footprints of Salt Spring residents and visitors;
- provide individual and population health benefits;
- enable more accessible and equitable transportation options to those for whom the use of a motor vehicle is unnecessary or impossible;
- provide a greater variety of transportation options—particularly those that are low impact—to support visitor and tourism revenue growth for the local economy; and
- reduce the noise, traffic congestion and safety risks associated with motor vehicle traffic.

The following Feasibility Study Report (the Study) represents the first steps towards the creation of 'shovel-ready' projects on Salt Spring, linking Fulford Harbour, Ganges Village, and Vesuvius Bay.

[1] See https://islandstrust.bc.ca/island-planning/salt-spring/bylaws/#community_plans

Project Background

For decades, there has been interest in establishing safe and accessible active transportation facilities on Salt Spring Island—specifically, a connected network of paths to support walking and cycling between key origins and destinations across the island. Over this time, a number of CRD reports, including the Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan: Salt Spring Island Edition (CRD 2013) and the Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan (CRD 2018), have identified this network as a regional priority.

In 2022, a groundswell of support from local community members led to the establishment of the Salish Sea Trail Network Working Group (SSTNWG)[2], a coalition of community members and elected officials dedicated to developing a public walking and cycling route that would:

1. connect existing regional trails in the CRD and Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD);
2. utilize the BC Ferries routes that connect Vancouver Island to Salt Spring Island;
3. a new walking and cycling route across Salt Spring Island, linking Fulford Harbour, Ganges, and Vesuvius Bay; and
4. together, these segments would form the circular 186 km Salish Sea Trail Network, with Salt Spring Island representing the final incomplete section.

Island Pathways, a local non-profit society founded in 1988, secured funding through the Federal Active Transportation Fund to support the development of a formal project plan for the SSIRT. In early 2024, the CRD assumed the role of project sponsor, and CRD Regional Parks contracted GJD Planning + Design to complete the Study.

Future phases of the SSIRT will require continued collaboration across multiple levels of government and community organizations. Together, these organizations will help guide the construction, operation, and maintenance of the SSIRT, ensuring it reflects regional priorities and supports provincial climate and transportation goals.

Provincial Context

In 2019, as part of its CleanBC policy initiative, the Province of BC introduced *Move Commute Connect and the CleanBC Roadmap to 2030*, the province's first active transportation strategy, intended to help more people use active transportation more often and is part of a broader plan to lower climate-changing emissions by 40% by 2030.

[2] Established in 2022 and chaired by the previous Member of the Legislative Assembly for Saanich North and the Islands. This working group includes representatives of the federal Member of Parliament for Saanich-Gulf Islands, the BC Ministry of Transportation and Transit, CRD, BC Ferries - Salt Spring Island Advisory Committee, Islands Trust, Island Pathways, and Transition Salt Spring. Following the October 19, 2024 election, the working group has reconvened regular meetings.

Today, the Province is working on the Clean Transportation Action Plan (CTAP), a commitment under CleanBC to support the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 27-32% in the transportation sector, specifically over the next five years. CTAP will recommend actions in foundational areas of transportation, including reduction of vehicle kilometres travelled and a shift to more efficient modes.

As public roads on Salt Spring Island fall under provincial jurisdiction, the Ministry of Transportation and Transit (MoTT) is responsible for their management and maintenance. MoTT will be responsible for reviewing and approving detailed design drawings and a licence agreement for the trail's development and operation within road rights-of-way. BC Ferries will be an essential partner for trail sections near ferry terminals, where spatial constraints and overlapping land uses will require additional planning, engagement, and interagency coordination to ensure safe and integrated active transportation connections.

Local and Regional Context

Over the past decade, several CRD divisions—including Regional Planning, Regional Parks, and the Salt Spring Island Electoral Area (SSIEA)—along with the Islands Trust and the Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission (SSILCC), have supported active and sustainable transportation planning and implementation on Salt Spring Island. This includes the development of regional strategies and policies and the construction of trails to enhance walking and cycling networks.

The CRD will play a central role in advancing planning and implementation for most segments of the SSIRT and the SSILLC will play a key role in representing community interests, guiding land use policy, and leading complementary infrastructure projects such as sidewalk and bike lane improvements in Ganges Village.

Community Partner Context

Island Pathways has been a long-time advocate for active transportation on Salt Spring Island and is expected to remain a key partner in the planning and development of the SSIRT and community outreach. Their work brings together residents and government representatives to improve walking and cycling infrastructure across the island. In 2007, they formed the Partners Creating Pathways Committee, which includes members from MoTT, the SSIEA, the Salt Spring Trail & Nature Club, and previously, the Parks and Recreation and Transportation Commissions. This committee focuses on creating safe and accessible walking and cycling routes, supported by fundraising, education, and safety programs. A key achievement is the construction of a 2.2 km trail along Lower Ganges Road, linking major destinations like Ganges Village, Portlock Park, the Fritz movie theatre, and the Salt Spring Island Golf Club. This trail makes up nearly 10% of the planned regional route from Fulford Harbour to Vesuvius Bay and is currently maintained by the SSIEA.

Feasibility Study Overview

The Study provides a foundational assessment of the proposed 21 km route, examining physical constraints, identifying preliminary planning needs and suitable designs, and estimating planning-level construction costs.

Technical guidance and support for the Study, including strategic oversight, information and data provision, and review of draft reports from the consulting team, was provided by a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), made up of representatives from participating organizations and agencies (see Acknowledgements). Island Pathways has also continued to participate in an advisory role throughout the project, including coordination and collaboration with other organizations and agencies involved in the SSTNWG.

The Study is informed by a range of provincial, regional, and local plans and strategies that collectively guide active transportation planning, policy development and capital investment. These foundational documents include:

- Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan: Salt Spring Island Edition (CRD, 2013)
- Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan (CRD, 2018)
- Salt Spring Island Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan (CRD, 2019)
- Move Commute Connect, BC's Active Transportation Strategy (MoTT, 2019)
- BC Active Transportation Design Guide (MoTT, 2019)
- Salt Spring Island Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 434, 2008 (Islands Trust, 2022)
- Salt Spring Island Cycling Safety Review—Final Report (MoTT, 2023)
- Salt Spring Island Active Transportation Network Plan (CRD, 2023)
- Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022-2032 (CRD, 2023)
- Salt Spring Island Local Community Commission Strategic Plan 2024–27 (CRD, 2024)

Study Area

The Study area is situated on Salt Spring Island in British Columbia and spans approximately 21 km from Fulford Harbour, through Ganges Village, to Vesuvius Bay. It falls within the jurisdiction of local, regional, provincial, federal, and Indigenous governments.

The route follows the conceptual SSIRT route that was identified within the Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan (CRD, 2018). For the purposes of this Study, the route has been separated into 14 segments to allow for detailed analysis, cost estimates and potential phased construction over time. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the study area and Table 1 provides an overview of each of the segments.

Figure 1: The Salt Spring Island Regional Trail Study Area and Route Segments

Table 1: Salt Spring Island Regional Active Transportation Route Segments

Seg. Code	Segment Name	Location	From	To	Length (m)
A1	**Fulford Ferry Terminal**	Fulford Ganges Road	Fulford Ferry Terminal	Beaver Point Road	302
A2	**Fulford Ferry Link**	Fulford Ganges Road	Beaver Point Road	Isabella Point Road	1,022
B	**Fulford Valley**	Fulford Ganges Road	Isabella Point Road	Burgoyne Bay Road	3,493
C	**Mountainside**	Fulford Ganges Road	Burgoyne Bay Road	Kitchen Road	3,221
D	**Cusheon Lake-Cranberry**	Fulford Ganges Road	Kitchen Road	Saltspring Way	2,742
E	**Ganges Hill**	Fulford Ganges Road	Saltspring Way	Seaview Avenue	2,987
F	**Ganges Village Core**	Fulford Ganges/Lower Road	Seaview Avenue	Upper Ganges Road	805
G	**Upper Ganges Village**	Lower Ganges Road	Upper Ganges Road	Blain Road	795
H	**Blain-Sharp**	Lower Ganges Road	Blain Road	Sharp Road	836
I	**Sharp-Central**	Lower Ganges Road	Sharp Road	Vesuvius Bay Road	1,432
J	**Portlock-Mobrae DETOUR**	Vesuvius Bay Road, Mobrae Ave, Woodland Dr, Mobrae Ave	Lower Ganges Road	Mobrae Avenue (west)	1,923
K	**Vesuvius Curves ALT**	Mobrae Ave, Bradley Rd, Elizabeth Dr, Chu-An Dr	Mobrae Avenue (west)	Chu An Drive	1,563
L1	**Vesuvius Ferry Link**	Vesuvius Bay Road	Chu An Drive	Bayview Road	612
L2	**Vesuvius Ferry Terminal**	Vesuvius Bay Road	Bayview Road	Vesuvius Terminal	340

Scope and Limitations

The scope of the Study was to provide preliminary planning and designs for the proposed SSIRT, including a planning-level construction cost estimate and ranking each segment of the route for phased implementation.

The alignment and facility design were informed by available road right-of-way (ROW), physical and jurisdictional constraints, surrounding land use, preliminary stakeholder input, and relevant data and design guidance from various agencies.

This report does not include comprehensive public engagement and therefore does not fully represent the views of all affected parties. The outcome is a report that is intended to support the CRD and partner agencies in advancing engagement, conceptual and detailed designs, fundraising and other steps required for implementation.

Cost estimates identified in the Study are provided by ISL Engineering and are based on real projects and tender bids and/or engineers' estimates for detailed design. The source of cost estimates reflects similar projects and does not include any land acquisition costs. The estimates provided represent a Class D estimate (±50%) described by the Engineers and Geoscientists British Columbia as a preliminary estimate that, due to little or no site information, indicates the approximate magnitude of cost of the proposed project and may be used in developing long-term capital plans and preliminary discussions of proposed capital projects.

Methods

This section outlines the data, research and analysis techniques used to evaluate the feasibility of the SSIRT. This information was used to support the overall design and cost estimates of the project.

Data

Data to support the Study came from various sources, including local, regional, provincial and federal datasets, as well as through input from community partners. Much of the data is Geographic Information System (GIS) based and can be combined and layered to allow a spatial assessment of physical opportunities and constraints. Data collected and assessed as part of this study was used to prioritize segments for implementation and highlight costs and barriers to implementation. Key data sources include:

- **Mapping and Spatial Data** – property boundaries from Parcel Map BC[3], elevation contours (1 m intervals) from LiDAR BC, and road ROW details from the BC Digital Road Atlas and CRD aerial imagery, including alignment, intersections, lanes, shoulders, and setbacks.
- **Infrastructure** – above- and below-ground utilities (hydro poles, streetlights, and water lines) from local and regional government sources and planned or active infrastructure projects based on input from local, regional, and provincial agencies.
- **Transportation** – transit stops from BC Transit and Google Street View, formal and informal walking and cycling routes from Google Maps, OpenStreetMap, Bikemap, and Beeline, and

[3] Property lines provided from Parcel Map BC are not entirely accurate. Typically, a land-based survey is required to accurately pinpoint the precise location of property lines. Land-based surveys are recommended as part of further conceptual and/or detailed designs to accurately assess private property impacts.

motor vehicle collisions involving pedestrians, cyclists, and other active transportation users from the Insurance Corporation of BC (ICBC).

- **Community Amenities** – locations of grocery stores, parks, and public rest stops from Google Maps and OpenStreetMap.
- **Demographic Data** – population and commuting data from the 2016 and 2021 Canada Census.

GIS data layers and images were used to show the location of each dataset and offer varying degrees of accuracy. Aerial photographs allow measurements to within +/- 20 cm, while the location of property lines, hydro poles, and bus stops vary considerably in their accuracy, with their estimated locations being anywhere from 0 to 20 m from their actual location.

The resulting preliminary design is appropriate for this stage in the planning process and to support initial planning-level cost estimates. However, more refined conceptual designs, land surveys, and detailed designs will ultimately be needed to confirm recommended designs and more precise cost estimates for each segment of the proposed SSIRT.

Appendix A provides an example of how base-level data sources were used in this assessment to understand existing road ROW conditions and possible cross-section design.

Field Visits

Two field visits were undertaken and provided valuable insight into the physical characteristics, usage, and infrastructure along the proposed SSIRT. The first field visit included cycling the full 21 km corridor, documenting existing conditions and exploring alternative alignment options. The second field visit was used to validate desktop analysis, refine potential alignment options and improve understanding of physical constraints and alignment feasibility.

Key Findings:

- Infrastructure Gaps: The corridor lacks consistent pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, especially outside Ganges Village.
- Safety Concerns: Narrow shoulders and high-speed rural segments pose risks to vulnerable road users. Dedicated infrastructure is limited and inconsistent.
- Design Complexity: Varying terrain, roadside features, and property constraints will influence alignment feasibility.
- Community Use: The route is actively used by cyclists and pedestrians despite infrastructure limitations.
- Planning Insight: Combining fieldwork with GIS and LiDAR analysis provided a strong foundation for identifying opportunities and constraints along the corridor, informing the proposed SSIRT.

- Existing Road Conditions: Outside of Ganges Village the roadway generally involves a single general-purpose travel lane in each direction and narrow shoulders (Figure 2). Speed limits vary from 60 to 80 km/h. Within Ganges Village the roadway varies somewhat; speed limits drop to 50 to 30 km/h, and there are more left-hand turn bays, intermittent curb and gutters, curbside parking, signed and marked pedestrian crossings, and bike lanes (Figure 3).

Figure 2: A typical cross section along Lower Ganges Road, just west of Sharp Road/Wildwood Crescent (Credit Google Street View)

Figure 3: Typical cross-section in Ganges Village (Lower Ganges Road, north of Hereford Avenue/Purvis Lane) (Credit Google Street View)

Benchmark Review

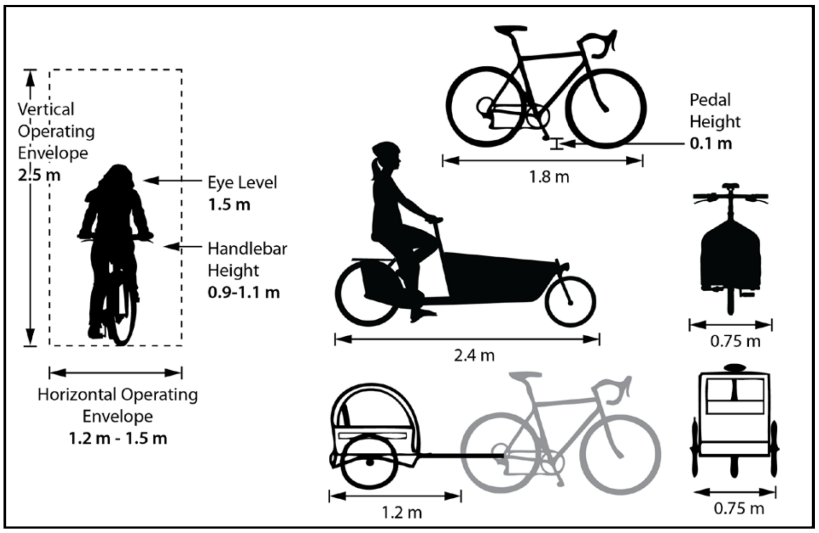
This benchmark review summarizes relevant standards, guidelines and best practices that have informed the development of design options for the SSIRT.

Active Transportation User Considerations

In accordance with the British Columbia Motor Vehicle Act, a "vulnerable road user" is defined as individuals who are at increased risk in traffic environments, including pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists, persons using mobility aids or personal transportation devices, and those on or in animal-drawn vehicles or animals themselves.

Users on the SSIRT are envisioned to include pedestrians, human-powered cyclists and micro-mobility devices that are compatible with bicycle infrastructure in terms of size, weight and speed. Micro-mobility devices are constantly evolving; new guidance is helping define which ones are suitable for shared-use paths with pedestrians and cyclists. The design of the SSIRT is based upon the dimensions, speed and weight of a bicycle, as described in provincial and national transportation design guidance (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Bicycle operating space (TAC Geometric Design Guide, 2017)



Other characteristics and considerations for micro-mobility devices include:

- a weight of less than 40 kilograms;
- a motor that is not capable of propelling the vehicle at a speed greater than 32 km/hr on level ground;
- a continuous power output that, in total, does not exceed 500 watts; and
- that the vehicle must not be equipped with a generator, alternator or similar device powered by a combustion engine.

Design Guidelines

The design for the SSIRT is predicated upon guidance within the British Columbia Active Transportation Design Guide (BCATDG), which offers the most up-to-date, applicable and comprehensive guidance available in Canada for each of the facility types recommended as part of this route. The following section summarizes the recommended design guidance and facility types applied across different segments of the SSIRT, in accordance with the BCATDG and consistent with the design standards used for the CRD's recently constructed Phase 1 of the Mayne Island Regional Trail.

Preliminary Design Overview

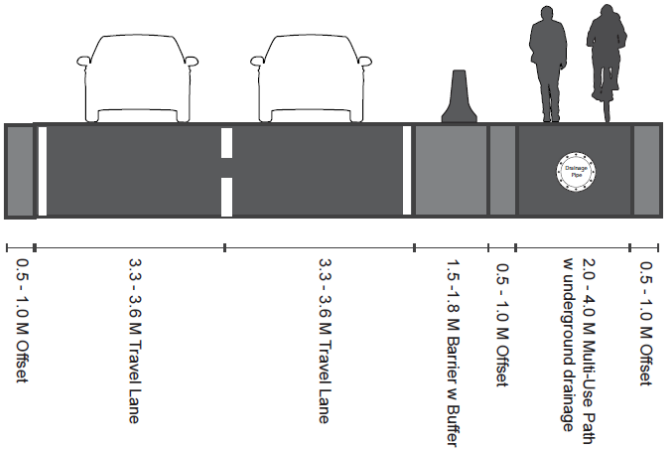
The design of the proposed SSIRT varies to reflect Salt Spring Island's diverse landscapes and community contexts. Recommended facility types are outlined below, and while not always suitable for all ages and abilities, they are intended to serve a broad range of users while balancing the challenge of constructing active transportation facilities within constrained right-of-way and with a limited budget. The following section provides detailed descriptions of each recommended facility type, while Appendix B presents an overview of their proposed locations along the route.

2-Way Multi-Use Paths

The BCATDG offers guidance concerning the width of off-street pathways along or adjacent to provincial roadways. It states that the desirable width is 4.0 metres and that the constrained width of a multi-use pathway is 3.0 metres. The absolute minimum width of a multi-use pathway is 2.0 metres, based on the operating envelope of a single bicycle user (1.2 metres) and the operating envelope of one person walking (0.75 metres). However, this minimum width of 2.0 metres should only be considered in exceptional circumstances, including in undeveloped rural contexts with very low volumes of people walking and/or cycling and if there are significant constraints such as property or natural features, including significant trees, ditches, or slopes (BCATDG, 2019, p. 268).

In most areas, the proposed SSIRT will involve a 2-way multi-use path on either side of the road and will feature a 2.0 to 3.0 metre wide, unpaved, two-way multi-use path, physically separated or protected from motor vehicle traffic. A 2.0 m wide path within constrained circumstances is illustrated in Figure 5. Construction costs in constrained circumstances are typically more expensive to build and maintain because of the cost for physical barriers between trail users and the roadway and drainage systems under the pathway. In some constrained areas, existing roadside ditches within the ROW may need to be undergrounded, adding to both construction and maintenance costs.

Figure 5: A 2 m wide 2-way path within a constrained ROW



As outlined above, a 2.0 m width should only be used in exceptional circumstances, such as a rural setting with low anticipated user volumes and physical constraints (e.g., property boundaries or natural features). These conditions are present in a number of areas throughout the proposed route. As the SSIRT expands to connect key destinations and ferry terminals, user volumes are expected to grow. To future-proof the trail and enhance safety and comfort, it is strongly recommended that a minimum width of 3.0 m be provided wherever feasible, especially near activity centres, on steeper terrain, and in areas with higher anticipated use. Given the island's hilly topography and evolving demand, ongoing monitoring will be essential to assess whether narrower segments (2.0 m) remain appropriate over time.

Protected Bike Lanes

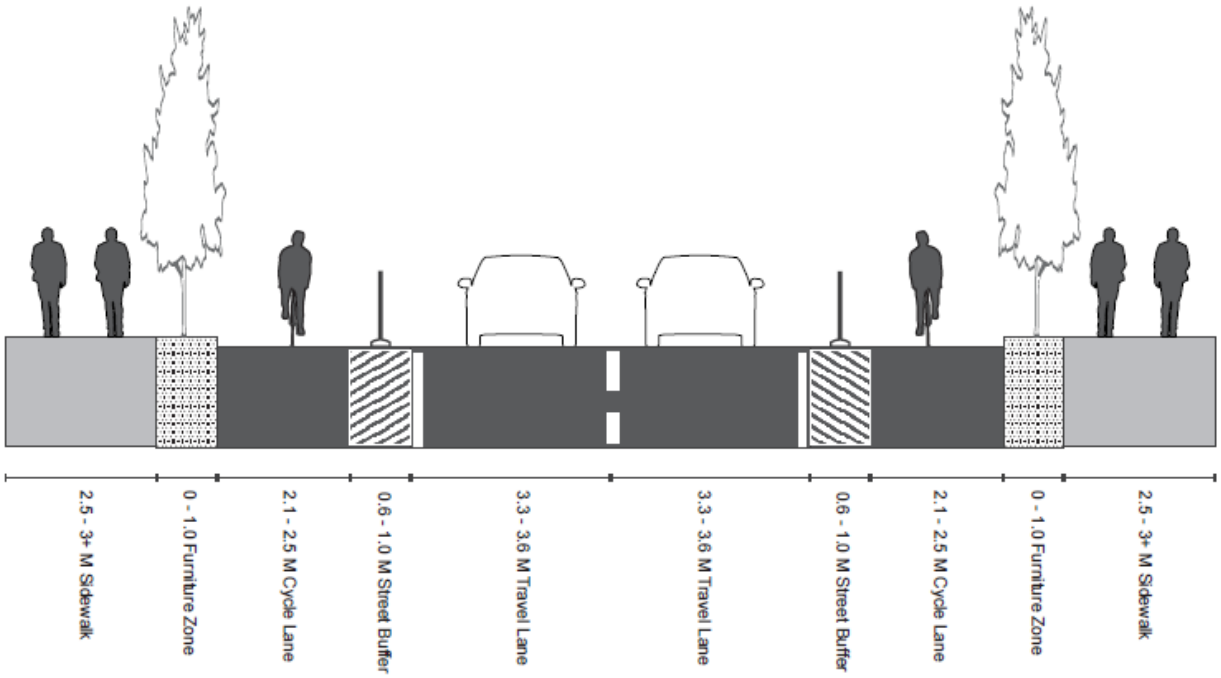
Through Ganges Village, where the land use is more urbanized, the facilities will include segregated, unidirectional cycling facilities on either side of the road that are physically protected from motor vehicle traffic. Exceptions will occur where the road ROW is constrained, leading to some instances where users may not be physically protected from motor vehicle traffic. In such circumstances it is recommended that speed limits be appropriate for side-by-side operation of motor vehicles and active transportation users. Fortunately, speed limits tend to be between 30 and 50 km/h in Ganges Village, allowing cyclists, pedestrians and other active transportation users to be more comfortable travelling in close proximity to motor vehicle traffic.

Protected bike lanes have been installed on roadways in urban settings within smaller communities throughout southern British Columbia. This cross section is intended to accommodate a complete set of active transportation features, including sidewalks, a furnishing zone for street furniture and landscaping, protected bike lanes, a buffer zone for physical separation between cyclists and vehicles, and one travel lane in each direction. To accommodate additional elements such as left-turn lanes or curbside parking, the design can be adjusted while still maintaining safety and functionality for all roadway users. These adjustments may include, for example, removing or narrowing the furnishing

zone, reducing the buffer width between vehicles and bike lanes from 1.0 m to 0.6 m, and narrowing left-turn bays to 3.0 m.

In areas where the road ROW is less than 20 m, further space savings can be achieved by providing a sidewalk on only one side of the street. This approach ensures that the core elements of a safe and inclusive street design are preserved, even in constrained conditions. See Figure 6 for further details concerning the design of protected bike lanes within the context of a multi-modal ROW.

Figure 6: Protected Bike Lanes and Sidewalks on a roadway in an urban setting



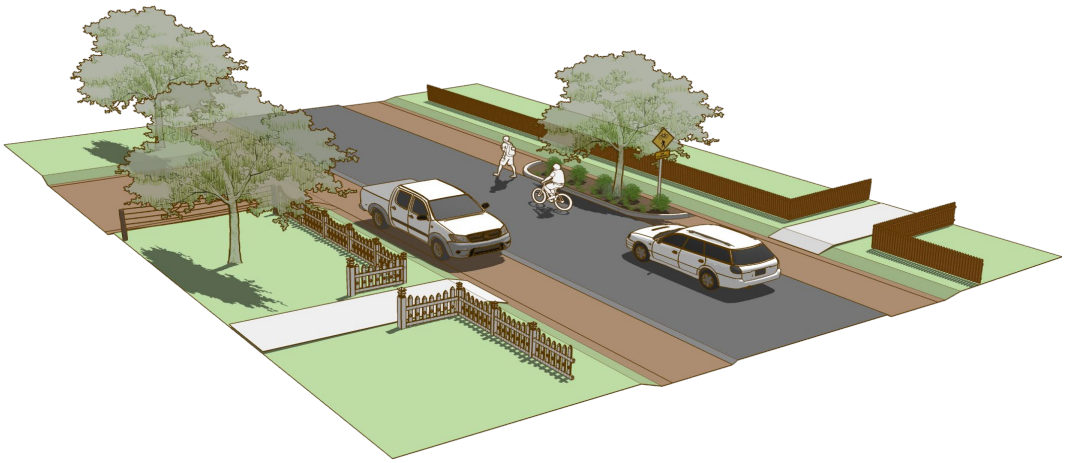
Shared Local Streets

The Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan envisioned this route following Vesuvius Bay Road. However, due to the steep terrain and narrow road widths on Vesuvius Bay Road between Chu an Drive and the eastern access to Mobrae Avenue (corresponding to Segments J and K in this report), the facility is recommended to be routed onto local side streets as an interim measure to advance construction of this route. On these streets, subject to MoTT approval, it's recommended that signage and pavement markings be used to reduce the maximum speed limit from 50 to 30 km/h, allowing pedestrians, cyclists and micro-mobility users to more safely share the roadway with motor vehicle traffic. This approach is similar to sections of the CRD's Lochside Regional Trail, of which portions are located within Lochside Drive, a shared-use local street. An example of a Shared Local Street is illustrated below in Figure 7, and Appendix D shows the proposed local road alignment through Segments J and K.

Any traffic calming measure incorporated into the project must conform to MoTT's construction specifications. Current specifications do not allow for narrowed lanes or speed bumps, so alternative

methods to calm traffic may be needed. However, given the low traffic volumes and the function of these roadways as local residential streets, it is anticipated that signage and pavement markings will be adequate to calm traffic and allow motorists, cyclists and pedestrians to share these roads in safety and comfort.

Figure 7: A Shared Local Street (Rural Design Guide) – Segments J and K



Shared Bi-directional Pedestrian and Bicycle Shoulder

Within approximately 250 metres of each ferry terminal (Segments A1 and L2), pedestrian and bicycle shared shoulders, as illustrated in Figure 8 and 9, are recommended to address physical constraints and improve access to terminals, shops, and services. This approach balances the need for safe, accessible infrastructure within the spatial constraints found within Segments A1 and L2.

In these areas the road ROW can be as narrow as 11.1 metres. Approximately 4.5 metres can be allocated for a shared bi-directional pedestrian and bicycle shoulder. Due to space limitations, it will not be possible to include grade separation or physical protection between the roadway and trail users. To enhance safety, it is recommended the posted speed limit be reduced from 50 km/h to 30 km/h through these areas.

Figure 8: A Pedestrian and Bicycle Shared Shoulder – Segments A1 and L2

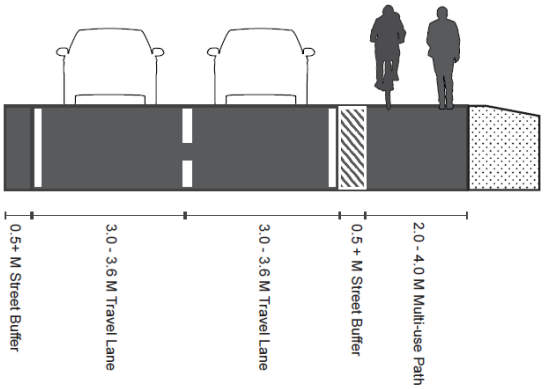


Figure 9: A Pedestrian and Bicycle Shared Shoulder recently constructed on Bowen Island (Credit Google Street View)

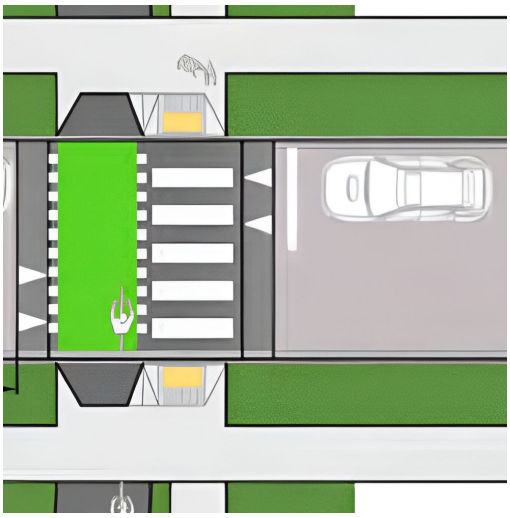
Pedestrian and Bicycle Crossing Infrastructure

Pedestrian and bicycle crossing infrastructure is recommended in areas where the facility crosses a roadway that accommodates high speed or high volumes of motor vehicle traffic. In all instances, pedestrian and bicycle crossings will be designed to safely accommodate vulnerable road users in accordance with crossing guidance within the BCATDG and taking into account, motor vehicle speeds, volumes, and roadway geometrics, including, but not limited to, sight lines, grades and speed limits.

While such facilities may vary in their design, depending on local circumstances, bicycle and pedestrian activated signals are becoming more common on roadways under provincial jurisdiction. A similar type of facility is located in Ganges Village and includes rapid response flashing beacons and associated pavement markings (Figure 10). Current standards would require these elements to include separated bike and pedestrian crossings with visual and physical markings as shown in Figure 11.

Figure 10: Pedestrian Activated Rapid Response Crossing Signal at Rainbow and Lower Ganges Roads (Credit Google Street View)

Figure 11: Markings for a Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing (BCATDG, 2019)



Amenities, Furnishings and Landscaping

Amenities, furnishings and landscaping will be appropriate to the level of development, ranging from minimal adaptation in rural settings to continually higher levels of accommodation in suburban and urban settings. Space has been set aside within the preliminary design to accommodate these features and further details will be left for consideration in future stages of the design process. This approach allows those responsible for the conceptual and detailed designs to utilize the available space to provide an attractive, safe and beautiful setting for all users of the road ROW.

There are already conceptual designs for active transportation facilities that have been proposed for this route within Ganges Village by Watt Consulting in their Salt Spring Island Active Transportation Network Plan (CRD, 2023).

Prioritization and Estimated Cost

This section presents a data-driven approach to prioritizing the implementation of 14 proposed trail segments for the SSIRT. It outlines the evaluation framework, scoring methodology, and resulting rankings to guide strategic decision-making and investment.

Segment Prioritization Analysis

To support strategic decision-making, an evaluation framework was developed in consultation with the Technical Advisory Committee. The evaluation framework was used to rank the 14 route segments

for phased implementation (Appendix C). This evidence-based approach considered 10 measures across the following four key criteria areas:

1. **Projected Demand** – Identifies where improvements are most needed, based on population density, current walking/cycling rates, and published CRD priorities.
2. **Connectivity, Access & Safety** – Assesses how well segments connect to transit and other active transportation routes and considers safety factors like collision history and steep grades.
3. **Support** – Evaluates alignment with provincial infrastructure grant criteria.
4. **Cost & Conflicts** – Estimates construction costs and identifies potential property conflicts.

Those route segments that score highest on these accounts are ranked as highest priorities for implementation, with a possible total of 65 points. The highest score was 43.6 and the lowest was 30.0. Table 2 provides an overall summary of the scores for each segment and Appendix C provides a detailed breakdown of the scoring for each of the 10 measures.

Table 2: All Accounts Summary Scores

Seg. Code	Seg. Name	Projected Demand Total /15 Max	Connectivity Total /30 Max	Support Total /05 Max	Costs & Conflicts Total /15 Max	Final Score Total /65 Max	Implementation Priority
A1	Fulford Ferry Terminal	6	18.5	5	7.9	37.4	7
A2	Fulford Ferry Link	4	19.0	5	6.6	34.6	11
B	Fulford Valley	3	18.0	5	8.1	34.1	12
C	Mountainside	3	16.5	5	7.3	31.8	13
D	Cusheon Lake-Cranberry	3	20.5	5	7.6	36.1	10
E	Ganges Hill	4	19.0	5	2.0	30.0	14
F	Ganges Village Core	10	16.0	5	6.3	37.3	8
G	Upper Ganges Village	10	19.0	5	6.3	40.3	4
H	Blain-Sharp	14.5	10.0	5	12.7	42.2	2
I	Sharp-Central	12	12.0	5	10.0	39.0	6
J	Portlock-Mobrae DETOUR	10	20.0	3	10.6	43.6	1
K	Vesuvius Curves ALT	10	14.5	0	14.6	39.1	5
L1	Vesuvius Ferry Link	10	13.0	5	8.5	36.5	9
L2	Vesuvius Ferry Terminal	10	17.0	5	9.5	41.5	3

Segment J from Portlock Park to Mobrae West is the highest priority for implementation and represents a desirable option for short-term implementation due to its favourable cost, user demand and connectivity. The top six segments, including J, H, L2, G and K, each fall within the area between Ganges Village and Vesuvius Bay. The only segment between Vesuvius and Ganges Village that is a lower priority is Segment L1, Vesuvius Ferry Link, between Chu An Drive and Bayview Road, which is ranked ninth. It is recommended that the prioritization be reviewed and updated over time to reflect changing context and priorities.

Estimated Costs:

The total estimated construction cost for a 2.0- to 3.0-metre-wide unpaved path is approximately $63 million.

Initially this study considered a 3.0-metre-wide paved path across all segments with an estimated total construction cost of $101 million (Appendix E). To reduce construction costs, a less expensive option was explored by considering surface treatment and refining the assessment within high-cost areas—specifically those requiring drainage ditch relocation, hydro pole relocation and retaining wall construction.

The following table summarizes the prioritization, distance and estimated total capital construction costs for each of the 14 route segments and does not include any land acquisition costs. Construction costs are based on Class D estimates provided by ISL Engineering. Due to the limited information available at this stage and in accordance with Class D estimates, a 50% contingency has been applied to all capital cost estimates included in this report. The subsequent conceptual and detailed design phases offer opportunities to refine the cost estimates.

Table 3: Route Segment Prioritization for Implementation

SEG. CODE	SEG. NAME	COST PER KILOMETRE		
		Length (m)	Est. Cost[4]	Cost/km Avg.
A1	Fulford Ferry Terminal	302	$1,360,000	$4,500,000
A2	Fulford Ferry Link	1,022	$4,180,000	$4,090,000
B	Fulford Valley	3,493	$6,480,000	$1,850,000
C	Mountainside	3,221	$7,600,000	$2,360,000
D	Cusheon Lake-Cranberry	2,742	$7,710,000	$2,810,000
E	Ganges Hill	2,987	$18,970,000	$6,350,000
F	Ganges Village Core	805	$3,930,000	$4,880,000
G	Upper Ganges Village	795	$4,370,000	$5,490,000
H	Blain-Sharp	836	$1,220,000	$1,460,000
I	Sharp-Central	1,432	$1,820,000	$1,270,000
J	Portlock-Mobrae DETOUR	1,923	$1,740,000	$900,000
K	Vesuvius Curves ALT	1,563	$390,000	$240,000
L1	Vesuvius Ferry Link	612	$2,120,000	$3,460,000
L2	Vesuvius Ferry Terminal	340	$1,180,000	$3,460,000
		Total:	$63,070,000	$3,080,000

Discussion

Based on the findings of this report, the highest priority for implementation is Segment J, with an estimated capital cost of $1,750,000. The next highest priority is for an upgrade to the existing trail within Segment H that will expand the width of that trail from 1.5 m to a 2 to 3 m wide, unpaved trail.

Feedback from the TAC and SSTNWG suggests that the Salt Spring community is likely to react negatively if Segment H is prioritized for upgrades while other gaps along the route continue to languish without any improvements. It's therefore recommended that CRD move forward on construction of Segment J. Some planning funds should be retained to monitor usage and related conflicts within Segment H. If the construction of Segment J does not lead to an increase in demand for active travel on Segment H, then it is recommended that L2 be considered as the next priority for implementation following the implementation of Segment J.

While the standard design width for the trail is 2 metres, consideration should be given to widening the path to 3 metres in locations where space and budget permit. Prioritizing a 3-metre width where feasible can enhance user safety and comfort and is likely to increase usage. To make the facility

[4] Cost estimates are provided by ISL Engineering and are based on real projects and tender bids and/or engineers estimates for detailed design. The source of cost estimates reflect similar projects and do not include any land acquisition costs.

attractive to a wide range of users, it's recommended that the speed limit be dropped to 30 km/h wherever pedestrian and/or cycling facilities are not physically protected from motor vehicle traffic.

The proposed trail has strong potential to attract significant use, as it would connect to a larger regional loop that is already well-established and popular with both residents and visitors. Ongoing growth in travel to Salt Spring Island—currently estimated at 3.5% annually (BC Ferry Services Inc., 2024)—further underscores the need for expanded active transportation options.

While access to capital funding remains highly competitive, the most feasible path forward lies in a coordinated approach between the CRD, MoTT, and the SSILCC. By combining efforts to widen shoulders and construct the trail concurrently, it is possible to deliver both a dedicated multi-use path and enhanced roadway shoulders. This integrated solution would support a wider range of users, improve safety and comfort, and may be achievable even in constrained segments where a reduced trail width is necessary.

Next Steps

This section outlines potential next steps and actions to support the design, funding, construction, and ongoing operations and maintenance of the SSIRT. There are several significant steps that must be taken to progress this project to construction and operation. Any further work should be supported by a formalized consultation process to document all First Nations, public and stakeholder input for incorporation in the detailed design.

To advance planning and implementation, it is recommended that the CRD and partners undertake the following initiatives. To support efficiency and maintain project momentum, some of these components may proceed concurrently:

- Business Case Development – Prepare a value proposition assessing benefits, costs, and risks to build public support and secure investment.
- Public Engagement – Formal engagement to generate interest and inform government policy and funding decisions.
- Funding Strategy – Further work will be necessary to identify a clear pathway forward, including seeking Board and corporate support, to better understand project priorities in relation to funding options and available grant programs. Grant funding is available to leverage CRD budgets for planning, design and construction. See Appendix F for funding and partnership opportunities.
- Implementation Plan Development – Formalize a Memorandum of Understanding among local, provincial, and federal agencies to clarify roles, responsibilities, and timelines for advancing the SSIRT. See Appendix G for key implementation tasks to be undertaken for each phase of the project.

- Conceptual & Detailed Design – Complete surveys and designs, with stakeholder input, to refine infrastructure and cost estimates. This process should also explore efficiencies, such as sourcing trail material locally, batching surveys/designs, and optimizing tendering strategies.
- Operations & Management Agreement – Establish pre-construction agreements outlining responsibilities, resource needs and funding sources for long-term infrastructure management.
- Permitting & Land Acquisition – Consult regulatory agencies, senior governments, BC Ferries, and utility owners through review and permitting processes, and secure required land or easements from private owners[5].

[5] Note that the cost estimates provided in this report do not include any funds toward property acquisition.

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Appendix A: Typical Road Cross Section Designs

Data-Driven Right-of-Way Assessments

The following images provide an example of how base-level data sources were used in this assessment to identify appropriate alignments and active transportation facilities. This approach was taken for the full SSIRT and was used to evaluate the proposed corridor and inform field validation. Key roadside features are shown, including property lines, bus stops, streetlights, hydro poles, the road ROW, and approximate distances from the road edge to property boundaries. The examples provided below focus on the development of a rural and urban cross section.

Rural Areas Cross Section

The following lateral dimensions are recommended for a rural cross section:

- 2-way multi-use path—3.0 m (2.0 m pathway and 0.5 m shoulder on each side to accommodate required setbacks),
- Space to accommodate the ditch and above-ground utilities—6.2 m (approximately 2 to 4 m on each side),
- Road shoulders—3.6 m (1.8 m on each side),
- Travel lanes—6.6 to 7.2 m (3.3 to 3.6 m lanes in each direction),
- Total ROW width—normally 20 m, but varies.

Figure 12: Plan view of a portion of Fulford-Ganges Road near Garry Oaks Winery

Urban Areas Cross Section

The following lateral dimensions are recommended for an urban cross section:

- Sidewalks of 2.5 to 3.0 m
- Furnishing zones of between 0 and 1 m
- Protected Bike Lanes of 2.1 to 2.5 m
- Traffic Lanes and Turn Lanes of 3.0 to 3.3 m
- Physical protection between traffic lanes and bike lanes 0.6 to 1.0 m
- Total ROW width—normally 20 m, but varies

Where left-hand turn bays are not required, that space can be reallocated to furnishing zones to accommodate street furniture and landscaping and increased width for physical protection between motor vehicles and cycling facilities.

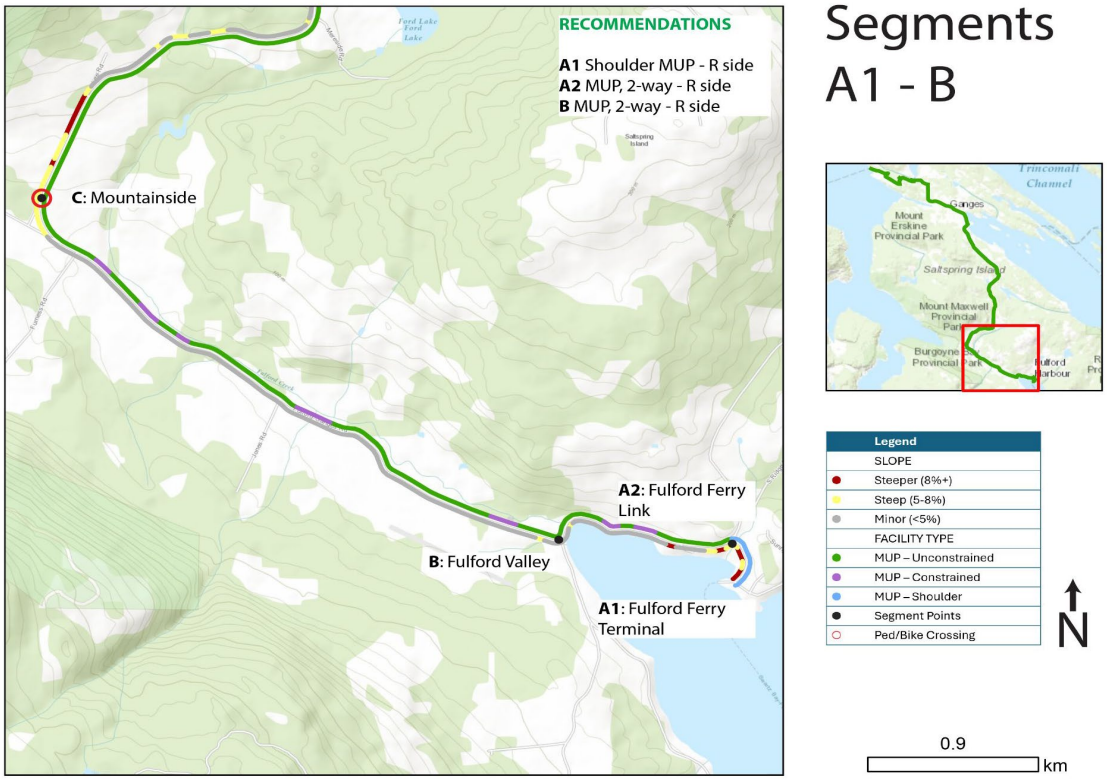
Figure 13: Plan view of a portion of the route through Ganges Village

Appendix B: Design Standards by Segment

The following maps illustrate the proposed route alignment, based on detailed assessments and 1:1,000-scale plan view drawings prepared for the full trail corridor.

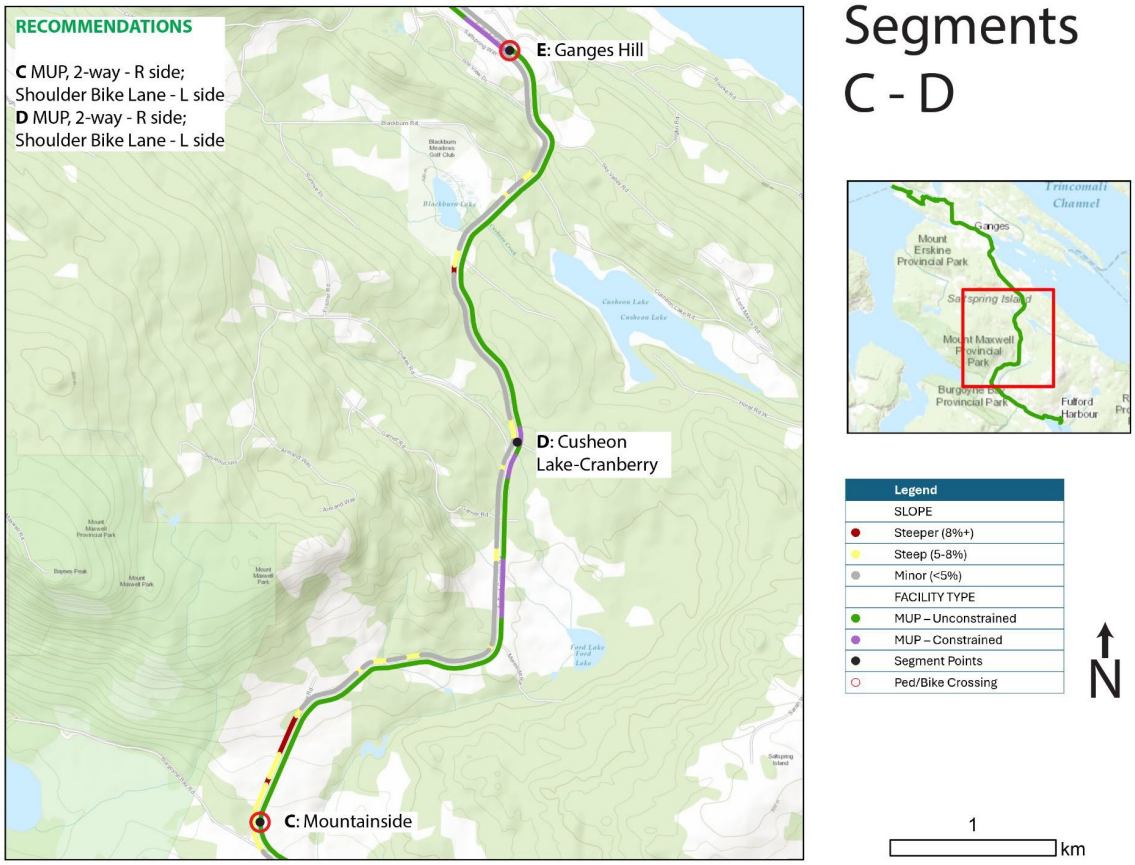
In most areas, the proposed SSIRT will involve a 2-way multi-use path on either side of the road. Through Ganges Village (Segment F), where the land use is more urbanized, the facilities will typically include segregated, unidirectional facilities on each side of the road that are physically protected from motor vehicle traffic. Exceptions will occur where the road ROW is constrained, leading to some instances where active transportation users may not be physically protected from motor vehicle traffic nor segregated in unidirectional facilities. Speed limits are lower through Ganges Village, allowing pathway users to be more comfortable travelling in close proximity to motor vehicle traffic.

Fulford Ferry Terminal (A1), Fulford Ferry Link (A2) and Fulford Valley (B)



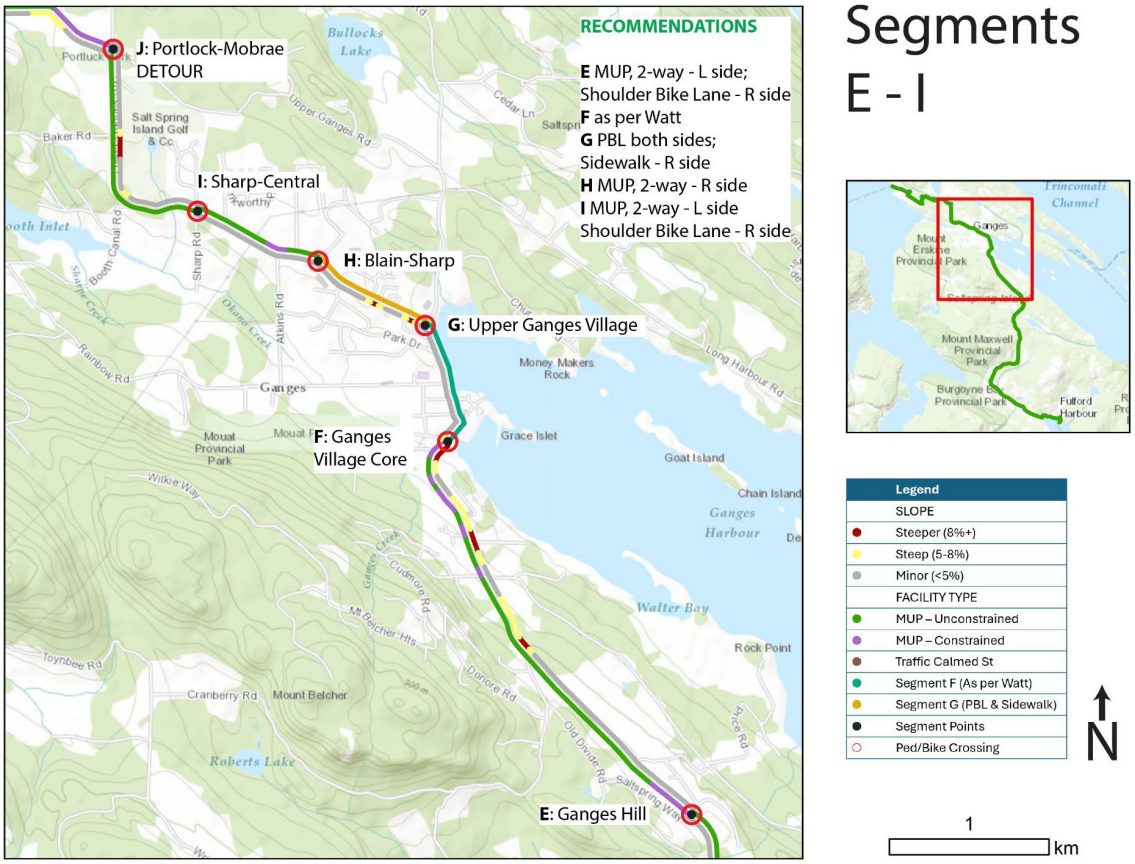
Segment	Constrained (m)	Unconstrained (m)	Property Impacts m² & (#) of Properties
A1	235	0	28 (2)
A2	204	818	903 (5)
B	637	2,856	2,026 (11)

Mountainside (C) and Cusheon Lake-Cranberry (D)



Segment	Constrained (m)	Unconstrained (m)	Property Impacts m² & (#) of Properties
C	468	2,753	2,318 (8)
D	90	2,652	1,047 (14)

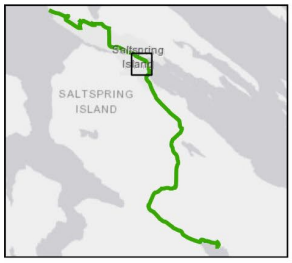
Ganges Hill (E), Ganges Village Core (F), Upper Ganges Village (G), Blain-Sharp (H) and Sharp-Central (I)[6]



[6] Appendix B shows the details concerning the active transportation facilities recommended through Ganges Village in Segments F and G.

Ganges Village

Facility Types



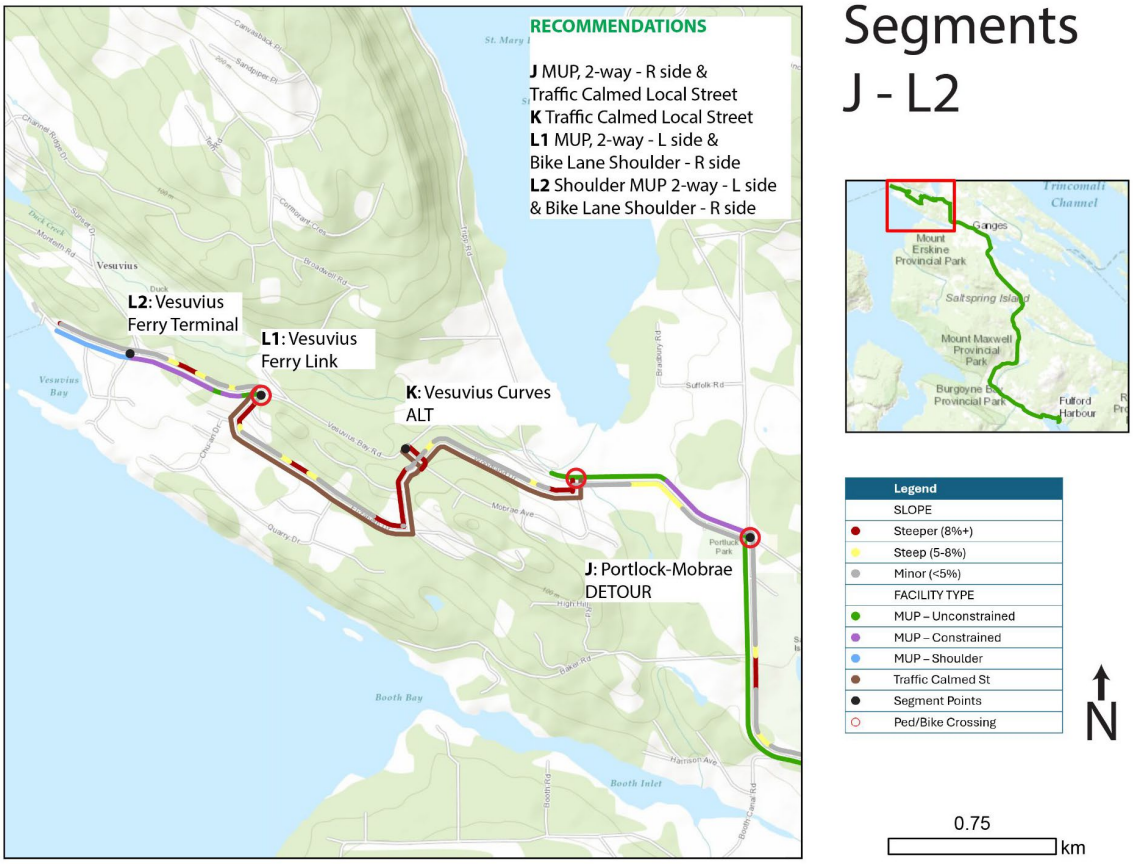
Legend
FACILITY TYPE
MUP – Constrained
Sidewalk
Protected Bike Lane
Buffered Bike Lane
Bike Lane

N

1 km

Segment	Constrained (m)	Unconstrained (m)	Property Impacts m^2 & (#) of Properties
E	766	2,221	1,141 (15)
F	NA	NA	409 (12)
G	NA	NA	13 (1)
H	125	711	1 (1)
I	0	1,432	1,066 (8)

Portlock-Mobrae Detour (J), Vesuvius Curves (K), Vesuvius Ferry Link (L1) and Vesuvius Ferry Terminal (L2)



Segment	Constrained (m)	Unconstrained (m)	Property Impacts (m^2 & # of Properties)
J	453	519 (Traffic Calmed St 951)	1,920 (5)
K	NA	(Traffic Calmed St 1,563)	0 (0)
L1	475	136	272 (10)
L2	340	0	0 (0)

Appendix C: Detailed Segment Evaluation Framework

Segments prioritized for early implementation have the highest scores for criteria within the categories of Projected Demand, Connectivity/Access and Safety, Support, Cost, and Conflicts.

Projected Demand

Alignment with CRD Priorities

Considers segments previously identified as priorities for implementation in the Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan. Identified segments received a score of five (or less, depending on the proportion of a segment that fell within the high-priority area). Those outside this priority area received a score of zero.

Population Density Proxy

Measures the population density of local census tracts that are adjacent to the planned route and scaled relative to the length of each segment (Census Canada, 2021).

Active Transportation Use Proxy

Data was drawn from Census Canada 2021 (Journey to Work) to assess the percentage of people who regularly walk and cycle to work, relative to the length of the segment.

Outcomes of Projected Demand Evaluation

The following table summarizes the scores for each segment in this category. Segment H scores the highest since it lies largely within CRD's priority area for construction of a regional trail and has a relatively high population density and proportion of residents who commute using active modes.

Summary of Project Demand Scores Based on Route Segments

SEG CODE	SEGMENT NAME	PROJECTED DEMAND					
		CRD Priorities Score*	Est. Pop/km² Scaled Relative to Census Frontage %	Population Density Proxy Score*	Active Transportation Commute % / Frontage %	Active Transportation Use Proxy Score*	**Total Score (/15)**
A1	Fulford Ferry Terminal	0	46.9	3	11.9%	3	**6**
A2	Fulford Ferry Link	0	46.2	3	9.5%	1	**4**
B	Fulford Valley	0	36.6	1	11.0%	2	**3**
C	Mountainside		30.7	1	11.0%	2	**3**
D	Cusheon Lake-Cranberry	0	40.4	2	9.6%	1	**3**
E	Ganges Hill	0	40.8	2	10.2%	2	**4**
F	Ganges Village Core	0	115.9	5	35.5%	5	**10**
G	Upper Ganges Village	0	237.5	5	24.4%	5	**10**
H	Blain-Sharp	4.5	237.5	5	24.4%	5	**14.5**
I	Sharp-Central	5	48.4	3	14.2%	4	**12**
J	Portlock-Mobrae DETOUR	5	41.9	2	11.8%	3	**10**
K	Vesuvius Curves ALT	5	35.5	2	11.9%	3	**10**
L1	Vesuvius Ferry Link	5	41.9	2	11.8%	3	**10**
L2	Vesuvius Ferry Terminal	5	46.1	3	10.2%	2	**10**

*CRD Priorities Scoring:
Vesuvius Bay to Atkins Road = 5 pts
Elsewhere = 0 pts

*Population Density Proxy Scoring:
100+ = 5 pts
99-50 = 4 pts
49-45 = 3 pts
44-40 = 2 pts
39-0 = 1 pt

*Active Transportation Use Proxy Scoring:
15+ = 5 pts
12+-15 = 4 pts
11+-12 = 3 pts
10+-11 = 2 pts
10-0 = 1 pt

Connectivity/Access/Safety

Connections to Key Destinations

Using data from Google Maps and OpenStreetMaps, segments were scored based on their connectivity to key destinations, including grocery stores, parks and publicly accessible rest stops.

Parallel Alternative Routes

This criterion was scored based on the availability of parallel alternate routes to accommodate active transportation users.

Connections to Transit Stops

The SSIRT will be complementary to transit as a connection between Salt Spring communities. This criterion scored segments based on the number of transit stops per kilometre along the segment.

Collisions Involving Active Transportation Users

Collisions involving active transportation users on Salt Spring occur very rarely. Yet, such collisions tend to have costly repercussions for individuals, families and society as a whole. The objective is to expedite implementation in segments where collisions involving active transportation users occur more regularly. This criterion scored segments based on the number of collisions involving active transportation users reported to ICBC between 2017 and 2022 (the last 5 years for which data is publicly available).

Percentage of a Segment with Steep Grades

This criterion scored segments based on the grade of the slope as a percentage of the length of each segment.

Connectivity/Access/Safety Summary

The following table summarizes the scores for each segment in the Connectivity/Access and Safety category. Segment D scored the highest since it has a number of important destinations, no parallel active transportation route, a relatively high number of collisions involving active transportation users, as well as some connections to transit and steeper grades.

Summary of Connectivity/Access & Safety Criteria Scores

SEG. CODE	SEG. NAME	CONNECTIVITY/ACCESS & SAFETY					
		Connections to Key Destinations Score*	Parallel Alternate Routes Score*	Connections to Transit Stops Score*	Collisions Involving Active Transportation Users Score*	% of Segment with Steep Grades Score*	**Total Score (/30)**
A1	Fulford Ferry Terminal	1.5	7.0	5	0	5	**18.5**
A2	Fulford Ferry Link	2	10.0	5	0	2	**19.0**
B	Fulford Valley	2	10.0	3	3	0	**18.0**
C	Mountainside	2.5	10.0	1	0	3	**16.5**
D	Cusheon Lake-Cranberry	3.5	10.0	1	5	1	**20.5**
E	Ganges Hill	2	8.0	0	5	4	**19.0**
F	Ganges Village Core	5	3.0	3	5	0	**16.0**
G	Upper Ganges Village	1	5.0	5	5	3	**19.0**
H	Blain-Sharp	1	1.0	5	3	0	**10.0**
I	Sharp-Central	1	1.0	3	5	2	**12.0**
J	Portlock-Mobrae DETOUR	1	8.0	5	3	3	**20.0**
K	Vesuvius Curves ALT	1.5	5.0	3	0	5	**14.5**
L1	Vesuvius Ferry Link	1	10.0	0	0	2	**13.0**
L2	Vesuvius Ferry Terminal	2	10.0	5	0	0	**17.0**

*Connections to Key Destinations Scoring
No Important Destinations Available = 0 pts
Highest # of destinations = 5 pts

*Parallel Alternate Routes Scoring
Welcoming Alternative Exists = 0-1 pts
Reasonable Alternative = 2-3 pts
Problematic or Circuitous Alternative = 4-5 pts
Partial Comfortable Alternative = 6-7 pts
Partial Problematic Alternative = 8-9 pts
No Real Alternative = 10 pts

*Connections to Transit Stops Scoring
2+ Stops/km = 5 pts
1 - 2 Stops/km = 3 pts
>0 and <1 = 1 pts

*Collisions Involving Active Transportation Users Scoring
2+ Collisions = 5 pts
1 Collision = 3 pts
0 collisions = 0 pts

*% of Segment with Steep Grades Scoring
50% or more = 5 pts
40% = 4 pts
30% = 3 pts
20% = 2 pts
10% = 1 pts
0% to 10% = 0 pts

Community Support

Alignment with Provincial Grant Criteria

BC Provincial Active Transportation capital grants require that eligible projects be part of an approved active transportation plan. The entire SSIRT route is identified as a planned major regional active transportation route within Salt Spring's Pedestrian Cycling Master Plan.

Community Support Summary

The following table summarizes the scores for each segment in the Community Support category. All segments except J and K received the maximum score, as each segment forms part of the planned, designated active transportation route. None of Segment K and only a portion of Segment J form part of the planned, designated active transportation route. The recommended route in this Study for these segments detours off Vesuvius Bay Road and follows local streets as a means to avoid portions of Vesuvius Road that will face high capital construction costs.

Summary of Community Support Scores

SEG. CODE	SEG. NAME	SUPPORT	
		Alignment with BC Grant Criteria Score*	**Total Score (/5)**
A1	Fulford Ferry Terminal	5	5
A2	Fulford Ferry Link	5	5
B	Fulford Valley	5	5
C	Mountainside	5	5
D	Cusheon Lake-Cranberry	5	5
E	Ganges Hill	5	5
F	Ganges Village Core	5	5
G	Upper Ganges Village	5	5
H	Blain-Sharp	5	5
I	Sharp-Central	5	5
J	Portlock-Mobrae DETOUR	3	3
K	Vesuvius Curves ALT	0	0
L1	Vesuvius Ferry Link	5	5
L2	Vesuvius Ferry Terminal	5	5

*Alignment With BC Grant Criteria Scoring
Entire segment is on planned route = 5 pts
Part of segment is on planned route = 3 pts
No part of segment is on planned route = 0 pts

Costs and Conflicts

Relative Cost per Kilometre

Sections are scored based on their relative construction cost per kilometre.

Property Boundary Conflict

Anticipated property conflicts occur when the path of the planned facility is anticipated to encroach on property that is outside of the road ROW. This criterion looked at the square metres of pathways that fell outside the road ROW.

Costs and Conflicts Summary

The following table summarizes the scores for each Segment in the Costs and Conflicts category. Segment K scores the highest, since it has a relatively low capital cost and does not stray outside of the road ROW. Segment E is the lowest priority in this category since it has relatively high estimated

capital costs and over approximately 1,100 square metres of active transportation facilities that fall outside of the road ROW.

Cost and Conflicts Account Summary Scores

SEG. CODE	SEG. NAME	COST & CONFLICTS				
		Cost/km Avg.	Cost/km Score*	Conflicts w/ Property Boundaries (m^2)	Property Conflicts Score*	**Total Score (/15)**
A1	Fulford Ferry Terminal	$4,500,000	2.9	28	5	**7.9**
A2	Fulford Ferry Link	$4,090,000	3.6	903	3	**6.6**
B	Fulford Valley	$1,850,000	7.1	2,026	1	**8.1**
C	Mountainside	$2,360,000	6.3	2,318	1	**7.3**
D	Cusheon Lake-Cranberry	$2,810,000	5.6	1,047	2	**7.6**
E	Ganges Hill	$6,350,000	0.0	1,141	2	**2.0**
F	Ganges Village Core	$4,880,000	2.3	409	4	**6.3**
G	Upper Ganges Village	$5,490,000	1.3	13	5	**6.3**
H	Blain-Sharp	$1,460,000	7.7	1	5	**12.7**
I	Sharp-Central	$1,270,000	8.0	1,067	2	**10.0**
J	Portlock-Mobrae DETOUR	$900,000	8.6	1920	2	**10.6**
K	Vesuvius Curves ALT	$240,000	9.6	0	5	**14.6**
L1	Vesuvius Ferry Link	$3,460,000	4.5	272	4	**8.5**
L2	Vesuvius Ferry Terminal	$3,460,000	4.5	0	5	**9.5**

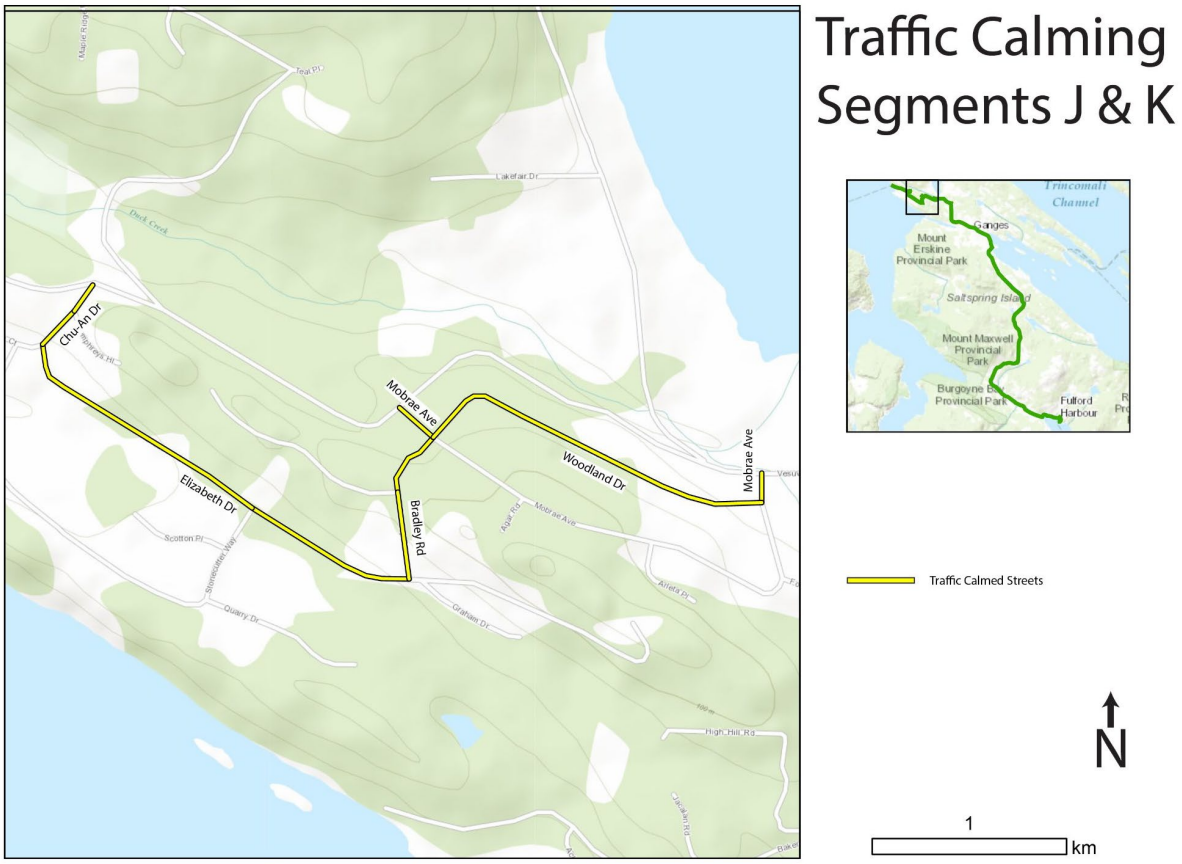
*Relative Cost/km Scoring

$0 - 1 million = 10-8 pts
$1 - 2 million = 8-7 pts
$2 - 3 million = 6-5 pts
$3 - 4 million = 5-4 pts
$4 - 5 million = 3-2 pts
$5 - 6 million = 1-0 pts
$6+ million = 0 pts

*Property Conflicts Scoring

0 - 30 m^2 = 5 pts
31 - 500 m^2 = 4 pts
501 – 1,000 m^2 = 3 pts
1,001 – 2,000 m^2 = 2 pts
> 2,000 m^2 = 1 pt

Appendix D: Proposed Shared Local Street Alignment Through Segments J & K



Appendix E: Trail Design Costing for a 3.0 m Paved Path

The following table provides an overview of construction cost estimates for a 3.0-metre-wide paved path across all segments. To reduce construction costs, a less expensive option was explored and is recommended through this Study.

Seg. Code	Seg. Name	Length (m)	Est. Cost	Cost/km Avg.	Prelim. Score (/5)	Rank
A1	Fulford Ferry Terminal	302	$1,860,000	$6,160,000	1.4	12
A2	Fulford Ferry Link	1,022	$5,350,000	$5,230,000	2	10
B	Fulford Valley	3,493	$11,120,000	$3,180,000	3.2	2
C	Mountainside	3,221	$10,670,000	$3,310,000	3.1	3
D	Cusheon Lake-Cranberry	2,742	$10,730,000	$3,910,000	2.7	4
E	Ganges Hill	2,987	$25,780,000	$8,670,000	0	14
F	Ganges Village Core	805	$3,930,000	$4,880,000	2.2	9
G	Upper Ganges Village	795	$4,370,000	$5,490,000	1.8	11
H	Blain-Sharp	836	$1,770,000	$2,110,000	3.8	1
I	Sharp-Central	1,432	$6,430,000	$4,488,000	2.4	5
J	Portlock-Mobrae DETOUR	1,724	$11,380,000	$6,600,000	1.2	13
K	Vesuvius Curves ALT	746	$3,570,000	$4,780,000	2.2	6
L1	Vesuvius Ferry Link	612	$2,930,000	$4,780,000	2.2	6
L2	Vesuvius Ferry Terminal	340	$1,630,000	$4,780,000	2.2	6
	Total:	**21,755**	$101,520,000	$4,600,000		

Appendix F: Funding and Partnership Considerations

To successfully implement this project, a fundraising approach focused on a diversity of sources is essential, including federal, provincial, and alternative government, and public and private funding programs available to support planning, capital development, and long-term operations. Some funding programs are identified below; additional funding opportunities may be available through the private sector, including corporate sponsorships and donations from individuals, groups, estates, and other organizations.

Capital Planning

Integrating active transportation route construction into capital planning is the most effective way to realize the project vision and ensure alignment with broader transportation, climate, land use, and public safety strategies.

Municipal Funding Tools—Land Development Policies

In British Columbia, municipal and regional governments can implement funding tools like Development Cost Charges and Community Amenity Contributions to ensure that new developments contribute to the cost of infrastructure and amenities. By adopting bylaws and negotiating with developers, local governments can direct these funds towards active transportation projects such as sidewalks, bike lanes, and multi-use paths. These tools allow local governments to align growth with community goals, reduce reliance on general taxation, and support healthier and more connected communities.

Provincial Government

The **B.C. Active Transportation Infrastructure Grant**, administered by MoTT, offers up to $500,000 per project to cost-share new walking, cycling, and trail infrastructure, with funding levels based on community size and type. Projects that improve safety, connectivity, and inclusivity—and have detailed designs and strong partnerships—are more likely to be funded. The 2025/2026 intake of the BC Active Transportation Infrastructure Grant Program has been paused pending a review (expected fall 2025).

The **Rural Economic Diversification and Infrastructure Program**, led by the Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation, supports rural infrastructure and clean economy projects, with future funding expected to increase beyond its initial three-year term.

ICBC's **Road Improvement Program** provides funding for pedestrian and cycling infrastructure that enhances road safety and reduces crash-related claims.

Federal Government

The Government of Canada offers several funding programs to support municipal infrastructure, typically covering up to one-third of project costs. The **Active Transportation Fund** provides up to

$50 million per project for planning and capital initiatives that improve walking, cycling and trail infrastructure, with contribution rates between 60 and 100% depending on location and recipient type. Though current intakes are closed, future funding is expected to be announced in the future, and the federal government has since allocated $3 billion annually starting in 2026-27 under the **Canada Public Transit Fund.**

The **Federation of Canadian Municipalities** also supports climate-resilient infrastructure through the **Green Municipal Fund**, offering grants of up to **$1 million** for adaptation and net-zero projects, covering 50 to 80% of eligible costs.

Appendix G: Key Implementation Tasks

Key Implementation Tasks

The implementation of the active transportation route involves a series of coordinated tasks across all phases of the project—from early planning to long-term operation. These tasks are designed to ensure the route is thoughtfully designed, legally compliant, well-funded and effectively maintained. Each segment of the active transportation route will undergo its own implementation phases and associated tasks. Roles and responsibilities for executing these tasks may vary by segment and will be defined based on factors such as jurisdiction, available resources and technical requirements.

Planning & Design Phase

- Develop a Memorandum of Understanding to establish shared goals and collaboration.
- Initiate capital and operational fundraising efforts.
- Conduct public and stakeholder engagement during conceptual and detailed design.
- Prepare conceptual and detailed design plans.
- Begin property acquisition processes, including early engagement with landowners.
- Carry out archaeological assessments to identify and mitigate potential impacts.
- Submit applications for Agricultural Land Commission approvals.
- Apply for Licences of Occupation for necessary land use.
- Draft operations and maintenance agreements based on infrastructure needs.
- Establish transit and transportation service agreements.
- Conduct geological assessments to inform design and construction.

Construction Phase

- Issue Requests for Proposals for construction services.
- Oversee construction activities to ensure quality and compliance.

Operations Phase

- Implement operations and maintenance protocols, either in-house or via contractors.
- Launch monitoring and evaluation processes to track usage trends and safety, starting with baseline data collection.

APPENDIX B

Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan

Capital Regional District | Reference Date: **January 15, 2018**

Capital Regional District Regional Parks
490 Atkins Avenue, Victoria BC V9B 2Z8
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Making a difference...together

Acknowledgements

Capital Regional District (CRD) Regional Parks would like to acknowledge and thank everyone that participated in the planning process for their contributions.

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Cover Photo: View from Matthews Point Regional Park Reserve, Galiano Island

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Salt Spring Island roadway (Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan: Salt Spring Island Edition)

1 Executive Summary

The Capital Regional District (CRD) has prepared a Regional Trails Plan for the Gulf Islands (the Plan). The Plan identifies a conceptual route for a regional trail on each of Galiano, Mayne, North and South Pender, Salt Spring, and Saturna Islands (Map 3, page 17). Regional trails are managed to provide an arterial trail system that connects the municipalities and electoral areas in the region. Each of the trail routes proposed in this plan will connect a main transportation hub, such as a ferry terminal, with key destinations on island; for example, a commercial hub or a regional, provincial or national park. The Plan sets out policy direction specific to these regional trails that supplements the direction provided by the Regional Trails Management Plan (2016). In particular, the Plan identified that the regional trails in the Gulf Islands will be:

- developed and classified as *Bike and Pedestrian Trails*
- located within public road dedications, where possible; though in some areas they may be on-road
- separated from the travelled portion of the road, where feasible, and
- developed using a phased approach.

The Plan provides guidance on how development of these regional trails will be prioritized and how the CRD will work together with others to implement the plan. Policies in the Regional Trails Management Plan (2016) also apply and guide development and management of the regional trails in the Gulf Islands.

Implementation of the Plan will create approximately 50 km of regional trail, benefiting the region by providing opportunities for non-motorized recreation and active transportation, and by facilitating eco-tourism. Completion of the trails will be a long term initiative, relying on significant external funding. The regional trails will provide an arterial route on each island to which other local trails can connect, creating a wider network.

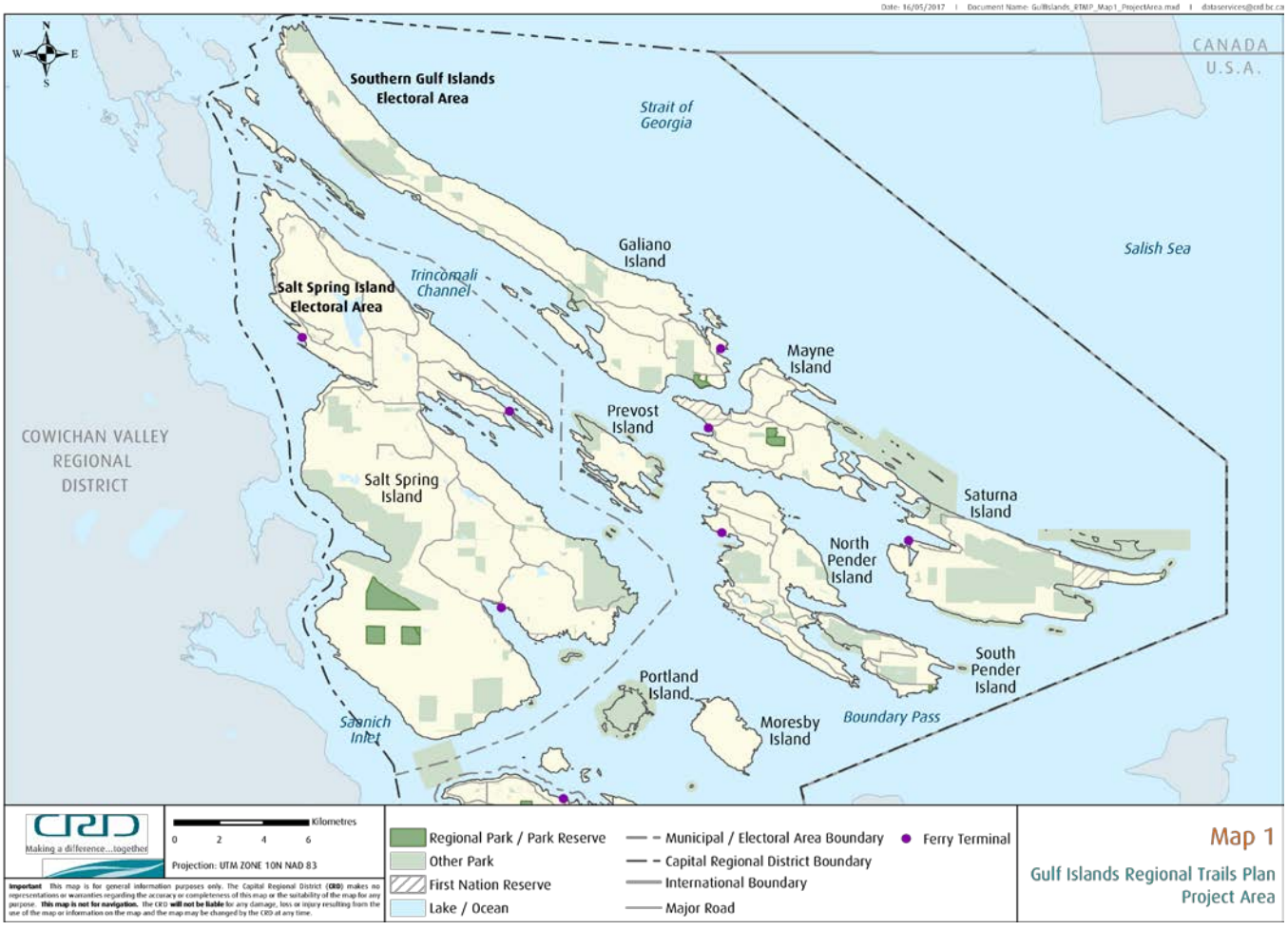
Completion of this Plan achieves a strategic action identified in the Regional Parks Strategic Plan 2012-2021 and a priority action identified in the Regional Trails Management Plan (2016). Further, it supports the Experience the Gulf Islands initiative of the Southern Gulf Islands Economic Sustainability Commission and the Salt Spring Island Economic Development Commission.

2 Context

2.1 Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of the Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan (the Plan) is to identify a conceptual regional trail route on Galiano, Mayne, North and South Pender, Salt Spring and Saturna islands. The project area is shown on Map 1, below. Each regional trail route aims to connect a main transportation hub, such as a ferry terminal, with key destinations on island; for example, a commercial area or a regional, provincial, or national park. The Plan also provides guidance on how the trails will be prioritized, developed, managed and operated.

Implementation of the Plan will create five new regional trails, totaling approximately 50 kilometers that will benefit the region by providing opportunities for non-motorized recreation and active transportation and by facilitating eco-tourism. These trails will contribute to an integrated network of trails on the islands.



2.2 Strategic Context

The Regional Parks service focuses on nature conservation and connecting people with nature. The primary way this is accomplished is through the establishment and management of regional parks and regional trails. Both help create a vibrant and sustainable region.

Regional trails help deliver on two of the CRD Board's strategic priorities—climate change and active and multi-modal transportation. By providing opportunities for both active outdoor recreation and active (non-motorized) transportation, regional trails have the potential to help reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions within the region. Regional trails are developed for the use of all regional residents as well as visitors to the region. In the case of the Gulf Islands, these trails will service both island residents and many visitors from off-island.

This Plan expands upon strategic statements made in the Regional Parks Strategic Plan 2012-2021 and the Regional Trails Management Plan (2016). The CRD's Regional Parks Strategic Plan identified a strategic action to initiate planning for the regional trails system on Salt Spring Island and the Southern Gulf Islands and outlined a conceptual regional trail route on Salt Spring Island. The 2016 Regional Trails Management Plan provides strategic direction for all regional trails and also establishes the scope for this project (Appendix 1).

Other related plans, such as the Experience the Gulf Islands Concept Plan, the Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan: Salt Spring Island Edition, and official community plans, also provided guidance and context for the development of the Regional Trails Plan. More information about these plans is provided in Appendix 2.

Other agencies, including CRD's community park and recreation commissions, BC Parks, Parks Canada, and some local organizations are also active in developing trails and/or promoting active recreation and transportation opportunities. Alignment and cooperation between CRD and these others will be important in the development of trail networks that complement the regional trail routes. In addition, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) is responsible for public roads on the Gulf Islands and is the lead for transportation infrastructure. If trails are to be built within the public road dedications, MOTI involvement and approval will be required.

2.3 Project Background

An initial trail planning process for the Southern Gulf Islands was undertaken in 2013-2014 in association with the Southern Gulf Islands Economic Sustainability Commission's Experience the Gulf Islands initiative. Information was gathered at meetings and public events regarding where future trails on the islands were desired. This work was broad in scope and identified desired local, regional and national park trails. The information collected through that earlier process was used as a starting point to identify potential regional trail routes for this plan.

2.4 Regional Setting

For the purposes of this plan, Galiano, Mayne, North and South Pender, Salt Spring and Saturna Islands are collectively referred to as the Gulf Islands. These islands are within the traditional territories of several First Nations. Four First Nations have reserve lands on the Gulf Islands–Tsawout and Tseycum First Nations share a reserve on Saturna Island and one on South Pender Island. Tsawout also has a reserve on Salt Spring Island. Tsartlip First Nation has a reserve on Mayne Island and Penelekut First Nation has a reserve at the north end of Galiano Island. These reserves and other lands on the islands are used by the First Nations for hunting, gathering, and other cultural practices. Nothing in this plan is intended to infringe on First Nations rights.

These islands are within the Islands Trust Area and Islands Trust provides both local land use planning services and broader oversight to foster the preservation and protection of the Trust Area's ecosystems, to sustain the islands' character, and to support healthy communities.

Within the regional governance structure, this area is split into the Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area and the Salt Spring Island Electoral Area. The CRD provides a number of services in these electoral areas, including the development, management, and operation of regional parks and regional trails.

The total population of the Gulf Islands in 2016 was 15,289 (Table 1). This has not changed significantly from the 2011 census population.

Table 1: 2016 Population

2016 Population (Census)	
Salt Spring Electoral Area	10,557
Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area	4,732
Total Gulf Islands	**15,289**
By Island	
Galiano Island	1,044
Mayne Island	949
Pender Island	2,302
Salt Spring Island	10,557
Saturna Island	354

Source: CRD, 2016, *Demographics, Population Change 2016 Census Results, Capital Region*

BC Ferries provides ferry service to the Southern Gulf Islands from Swartz Bay and from Tsawwassen. Service to Salt Spring Island is provided from Crofton to Vesuvius, Swartz Bay to Fulford Harbour, and Tsawwassen to Long Harbour. BC Ferries records annual vehicle and passenger trips by route. For the purposes of this project, BC Ferries provided data on annual bicycle and foot passenger trips, in addition to overall vehicle numbers.

Table 2 shows the traffic statistics by mode of transportation travelling to the islands for 2016. More details on bicycle and foot passengers is provided in Appendix 3. This information is useful to help determine where regional trail development might be prioritized based on the levels of use.

Table 2: BC Ferries Traffic Statistics 2016

Route	Vehicles	Bicycles**	Foot Passengers***
Tsawwassen to the Southern Gulf Islands*	65,938	4,675	131,952
Swartz Bay to the Southern Gulf Islands	95,189	2,517	50,034
Swartz Bay to Salt Spring Island	121,974	2,623	51,271
Crofton to Salt Spring Island	93,931	1,285	35,130

Source: BC Ferries, Traffic Statistics System, Total Vehicle and Passenger Counts by Route for 2016.

*Southern Gulf Islands includes Galiano, Mayne, North Pender, Salt Spring and Saturna Islands.

**Bicycle statistics from BC Ferries was provide in a combined format for both directions; hence the number has been halved for the purpose of this table.

***Foot passengers are only counted leaving Tsawwassen, Swartz Bay and Crofton.

In addition to BC Ferries, some visitors to the Gulf Islands arrive by private boat, water taxi, or float plane to the various community docks overseen by the CRD's Southern Gulf Islands Harbours Commission.

In line with the Experience the Gulf Islands Concept Plan, efforts to increase community bus services on the islands and passenger-only ferry service between the islands are being investigated by the Southern Gulf Islands Community Economic Sustainability Commission. The Ministry of Transportation & Infrastructure (MOTI) has jurisdiction over roads in the unincorporated electoral areas and has responsibility for ongoing maintenance and road improvements. MOTI and Islands Trust have an agreement to maintain rural road standards and to protect heritage aspects of the road corridors on the islands.

A number of larger trails, including The Great Trail (formerly known as the Trans Canada Trail)—a 24,000 kilometer trail across Canada—and the Salish Sea Marine Trail, are located in the vicinity (Map 2). Future regional trails developed on the Gulf Islands will complement these routes and create an enhanced experience for users.

Trail use, CRD Regional Parks


Salish Sea Marine Trail
Horseshoe Bay
Vancouver
Nanaimo
Gabriola Island
Valdes Island
Thetis Island
Ladysmith
Tsawwassen
The Great Trail - Alternate Route
Penelakut Island
VANCOUVER ISLAND
Chemainus
Galiano Island
Mayne Island
Saturna Island
Salt Spring Island
North Pender Island
Duncan
South Pender Island
The Great Trail - Main Route
Juan de Fuca Marine Trail
Galloping Goose Regional Trail
Victoria
N
W
E
S
Making a difference...together
Kilometres
0 2 4 8
Projection: UTM ZONE 10N NAD 83
The Great Trail - Main Route
The Great Trail - Alternate Route
Salish Sea Marine Trail
Galloping Goose Regional Trail
Juan de Fuca Marine Trail
Ferry Terminal
Ferry Route
Project Area
Map 2
Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan
Regional Context

3 Strategic Direction

3.1 Vision

Over the years, through different trail-related projects, residents of the Gulf Islands have expressed key components of their visions for trail systems on their islands. These various components have been pulled together in an overall vision for island trails, as follows:

> The Gulf islands are an interconnected archipelago of living, working communities in the Salish Sea. Like a necklace jeweled together by unique destinations, the islands are a special place in every season. From wild coasts and beaches, pastoral farmlands, spectacular bluffs, and quaint villages to cool and shady forests, glacially-striated and sandstone pocked rock formations, these islands provide priceless experiences for those who live there and for those who visit.
>
> Trail systems on the islands are sustainable in design, respectful of adjacent neighbours, and provide recreation and alternative transportation opportunities for different types of users. Regional Trails connect island communities and facilitate access to key destinations. They provide primary routes to which other trails connect; creating a broader trail system on each island.
>
> Trails are used as part of the daily routine of local people and attract visitors to experience naturally and culturally significant destinations on the islands. An array of visitor services and amenities are available on or along the trails to serve cyclists and backpackers, families and individuals, and young and old alike.

In 2016, the CRD approved the Regional Trails Management Plan, which sets out a vision for all existing and future regional trails, including those on the Gulf Islands. That vision is:

> "As the Regional Trails system grows and matures, a network of interconnected trails emerges. The trails connect the Capital Region's communities and facilitates access to key destinations within and beyond the region. The network facilitates active, healthy lifestyles for people of all ages and abilities by providing opportunities for recreation and active transportation. We work together to create and maintain regional trails as greenway corridors that accommodate a diversity of users. The Capital Regional District promotes respect among users and supports positive experiences for all".

These visions, one related specifically to regional trails and one broader in nature, are complementary. The visions will be achieved through trail planning and development that spans local, regional, provincial, and national agencies and groups. This Regional Trails Plan is just one step in creating a broad network of trails on the Gulf Islands. In the longer term, once the five regional trails are in place and have been operating for some time, the CRD will be in a position to assess if additional regional trails are needed on the islands.

3.2 Policies

In addition to the policies below, the strategic policies and general direction in the Regional Trails Management Plan (2016) and other approved CRD policies, such as the regional park and trail naming convention (2016), also apply to the regional trails on the Gulf Islands.

Two specific policies from the Regional Trails Management Plan (RTMP) are noted below:

- For the safety of all trail users, their pets and wildlife, all pets must be on-leash at all times while on regional trails...Pet owners or guardians should ensure that their pets remain both on the trail and on the proper side of the trail. (RTMP 2.4.1.2)
- Priority will be given to developing regional trails as off-street facilities, where feasible. Preference for routing along road or railway corridors will be used where possible and practical. In some cases, on street sections will exist... (RTMP 2.4.3.1)

The following policies relate specifically to regional trails on the Gulf Islands:

1. The regional trail routes proposed in this plan are conceptual in nature. The specific route for the trail may vary somewhat depending on more detailed assessments of the route at the trail design stage.
2. The regional trails on the Gulf Islands will be developed for non-motorized recreation and active transportation. They will be classified and managed as 'Bike and Pedestrian Trails'.
3. Where regional trails are proposed within surveyed road dedication, CRD will encourage the MOTI to participate early in the trail design process, including inviting representatives to review design standards and preliminary trail designs.
4. Where there is insufficient surveyed road dedication available for a separated trail, the regional trail routes may be on-road or the CRD may work with interested adjacent landowners to accommodate the trail routes.

5. The CRD will liaise with MOTI regularly and will request that if MOTI is seeking new road dedications along any proposed regional trail routes identified in this plan, that MOTI request adequate width to accommodate a separated regional trail.
6. The CRD will liaise with the Island Trust and the MOTI to indicate the CRD's interest in being referred information regarding development proposals adjacent to proposed regional trail routes. Further, where appropriate, the CRD may request that the approving agency require the development proponent to assist with the regional trail in some way as a requirement of approval (e.g., provide land tenure, cash in lieu, or in-kind contribution towards development of the regional trail).
7. Where the trail route is along a road identified as a Heritage Road by MOTI and Islands Trust, CRD will seek input from both organizations on the trail design.
8. Trail development will be based on best practices to maximize safety, minimize environmental impacts, and maximum cost-efficiency and longevity of regional trails.
9. The Regional Trails Plan will be implemented using a phased approach. An initial segment of trail will be developed on each island generally linking the ferry to a key commercial hub (on Galiano Island the initial segment will link the ferry to a regional park).
10. Once initial segments are completed on each island, the following criteria (in no particular order) will be considered when prioritizing extensions to the regional trails:
    a. Aligns with another planned project (e.g., MOTI road improvements)
    b. Potential levels of use
    c. Connects to other trails
    d. Cost and ease of development (financial cost of each project; physical challenges of route)
    e. Completes or extends an existing regional trail
    f. Potential funding partnerships
    g. Addresses identified safety concerns
11. CRD Regional Parks will liaise with MOTI, BC Ferries and CRD commissions and, where possible, coordinate with them to align resources, create efficiencies and achieve multiple goals for improvement projects, such as road and terminal upgrades and trail projects.
12. The design and development process for regional trails will ensure opportunities for public input.
13. Through the detailed planning and design stage, consideration will be given to appropriate visitor facilities (e.g., rest stops; signage) and to working with community groups, where

appropriate, to salvage and reuse native plant materials from the trail route prior to construction.

14. The CRD will work with First Nations to incorporate messages into regional trail information kiosk signage or regional trail interpretive signs to raise public awareness of First Nations' history and First Nations' connections with and interests in the islands.
15. A field check for significant archaeological/cultural features, conducted by qualified individuals, will be incorporated into the trail development phase.
16. Regional trail design and construction will be subject to successfully obtaining funding through external partnerships or grant opportunities, in addition to CRD funding.
17. Regional trail construction, operation, and maintenance will be the responsibility of CRD Regional Parks.
18. CRD Regional Parks will consider expanding the existing volunteer program to include regional trails on the Gulf Islands.
19. CRD Regional Parks supports ongoing liaison with local organizations, particularly those that undertake trail projects, to promote a coordinated trail network and to identify potential partnership opportunities.
20. Recognizing that construction of regional trails will take many years to implement and that other agencies may want to develop interim trails along the regional trail route, CRD encourages liaison/cooperation with groups regarding possible interim trails until such time as CRD Regional Parks is able to develop a regional trail. At the regional trail design stage, the CRD will assess any existing interim trails along the route to determine if they are adequate for regional trail purposes or if the CRD needs to upgrade them to regional trail standards. Any necessary agreements will be put in place before the CRD trail is constructed.

4 Regional Trail Routes

4.1 General

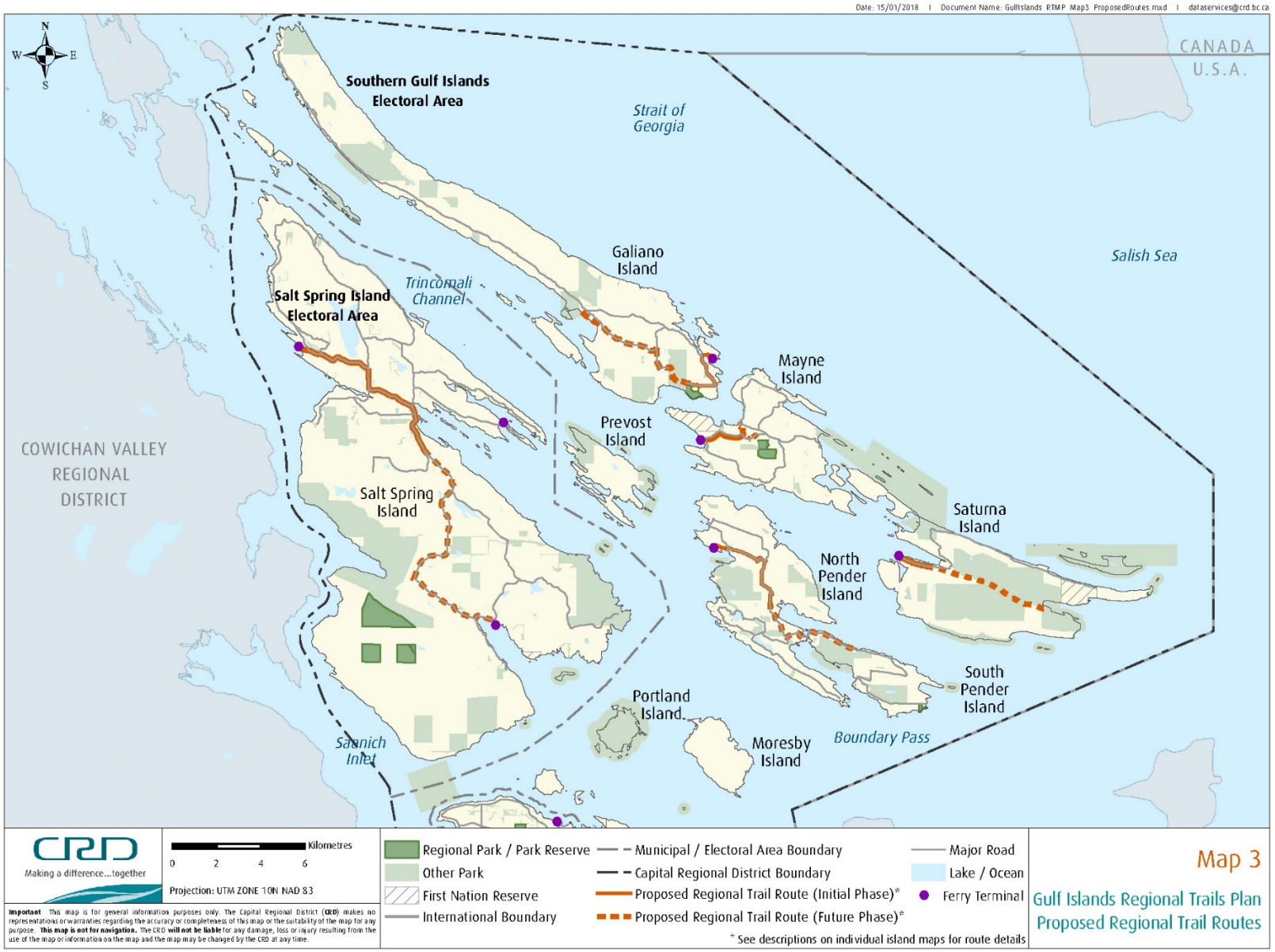
The proposed regional trail routes are collectively shown on Map 3 on page 17. The individual regional trail routes are described in more detail below and are illustrated on Maps 4 through 8.

Together the regional trails will create approximately 50 km of trail for residents and visitors. As noted previously, the regional trails will provide a link generally between a BC ferry terminal and a key recreation area or island commercial hub. Local trail organizations may wish to develop additional trails linking from the regional trail to other island areas, such as public docks, ferries, attractions, or local facilities in order to expand the trail offer on each island. These trail routes have been selected on the basis of public comments received during the development of this plan.

Development of these trails will take many years to complete. External funding, to supplement CRD funding, and cooperation with other groups and agencies including MOTI, will be needed to fully implement the plan. As noted above, where local trails exist along the regional trail routes, the CRD will assess if the existing trail is adequate for regional trail purposes or if the CRD needs to upgrade them to regional trail standards.

4.2 Galiano Island

The regional trail route on Galiano Island will begin in the vicinity of the Sturdies Bay ferry terminal, follow Sturdies Bay Road, turn south on Burrill Road, follow Bluff Road to Georgeson Bay Road, turn north, and then north-west on Montague Road, ending in the vicinity of Montague Harbour Marine Provincial Park. The regional trail route is approximately 10 km in length, with the initial segment to be built being approximately 3 km, between the ferry area and Matthews Point Regional Park. In particular, the regional trail route provides access to two regional destinations - Matthews Point Regional Park and Montague Harbour Marine Provincial Park, as well as the ferry and the commercial hub by the ferry terminal. The proposed Galiano Island regional trail route is illustrated on Map 4.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CANADA
U.S.A.
Southern Gulf Islands
Electoral Area
Strait of
Georgia
Salish Sea
Galiano
Island
Trincomali
Channel
Salt Spring Island
Electoral Area
Mayne
Island
Prevost
Island
COWICHAN VALLEY
REGIONAL
DISTRICT
Salt Spring
Island
Saturna
Island
North
Pender
Island
South
Pender
Island
Portland
Island
Boundary Pass
Moresby
Island
Saanich
Inlet
Making a difference...together
Kilometres
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Projection: UTM ZONE 10N NAD 83
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.
Regional Park / Park Reserve
Other Park
First Nation Reserve
International Boundary
Municipal / Electoral Area Boundary
Capital Regional District Boundary
Proposed Regional Trail Route (Initial Phase)*
Proposed Regional Trail Route (Future Phase)*
* See descriptions on individual island maps for route details
Major Road
Lake / Ocean
Ferry Terminal
Map 3
Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan
Proposed Regional Trail Routes


Galiano Island
Parker Island
Trincomali Channel
Salish Sea
Montague Harbour
Montague Harbour Marina
Galiano Heritage Forest
Clanton Rd
Montague Rd
Georgeson Bay Rd
Sturdies Bay Rd
Bluff Rd W
Bluff Rd E
Burrill Rd
Gossip Island
Commercial Hub
Sturdies Bay
Burrill Point
Bluff Park
Mount Sutil
Mount Galiano
Collinson Point
Matthews Point
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OVERVIEW MAP
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Projection: UTM ZONE 10N NAD 83
Regional Park / Park Reserve
Provincial Protected Area
Community Park
Municipal / Electoral Area Boundary
Major Road
Minor Road
Lake / Ocean
First Nation Reserve
Ferry Terminal
Regional Destination
Galiano Island - Proposed Regional Trail Route (Initial Phase)
Galiano Island - Proposed Regional Trail Route (Future Phase)
Map 4
Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan
Galiano Island Proposed Regional Trail

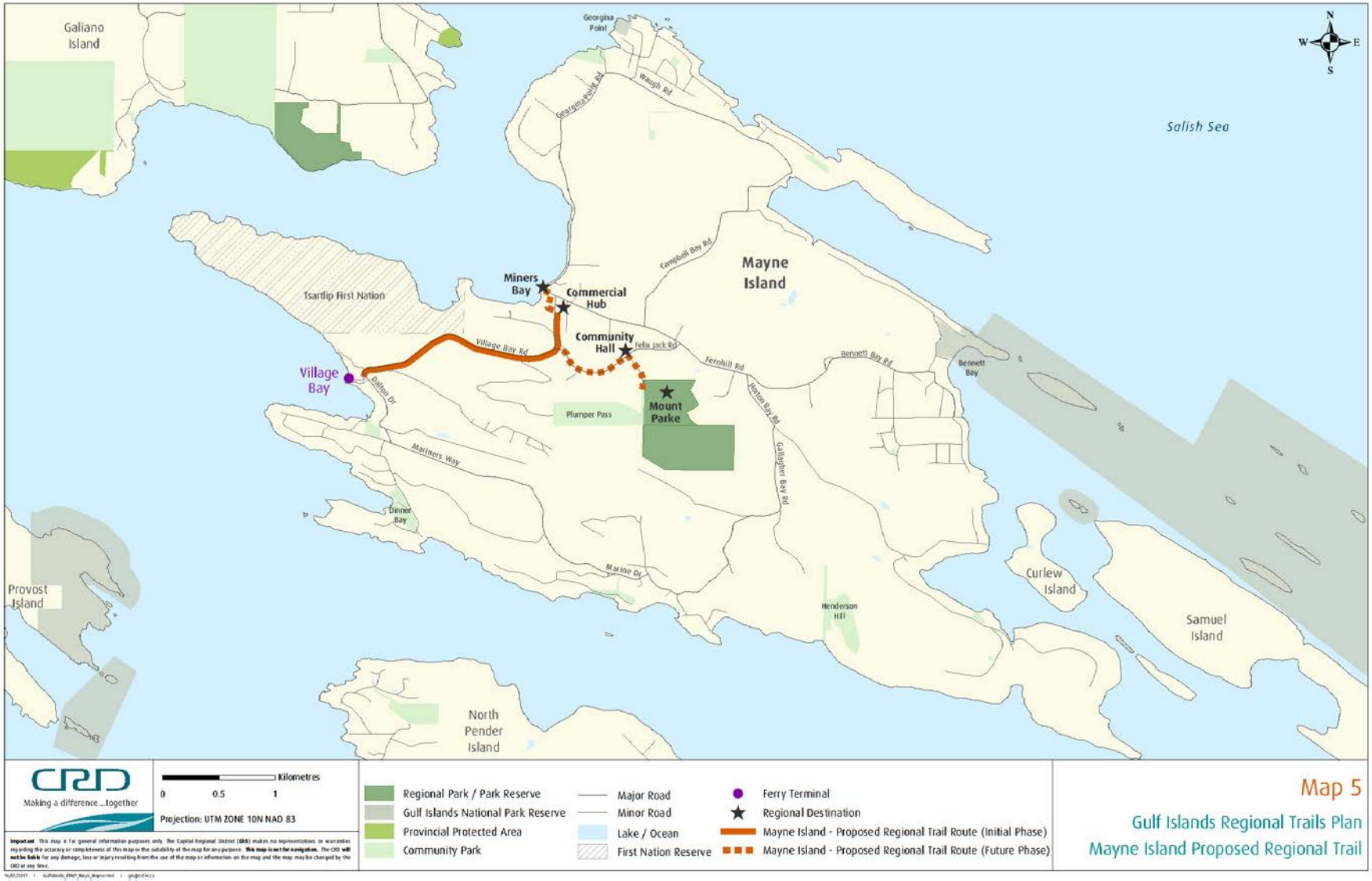
4.3 Mayne Island

The regional trail route on Mayne Island will begin in the vicinity of the Village Bay ferry terminal, follow Village Bay Road and Fernhill Road to the Miners Bay dock. The trail will also follow Felix Jack Road and Kim Road to Mount Parke Regional Park. The regional trail route is approximately 3.6 km in length and will connect the ferry, the Miners Bay commercial centre, the community dock, and Mount Parke Regional Park. The initial 2.3 km segment to be built will be between the ferry area and Naylor Road in Miners Bay. The proposed Mayne Island regional trail route is illustrated on Map 5.

4.4 North & South Pender Islands

One regional trail route is proposed for North and South Pender Islands. The route will begin in the vicinity of the Otter Bay ferry terminal on North Pender Island, follow MacKinnon Road to Otter Bay Road, to the junction with Bedwell Harbour Road, where it turns south and follows Bedwell Harbour Road and Canal Road to the bridge between North and South Pender Islands. On South Pender Island, the trail will link to Mount Norman-Beaumont in Gulf Islands National Park Reserve. The regional trail route is approximately 10 km in length, with the initial section to be built being approximately 5 km between the ferry area and the Driftwood commercial area. Recognizing that various options have been raised on-island for trail routing in the vicinity of Einar's Hill, which is part of the recommended initial route, the CRD will consider options at the trail design stage. The regional trail will provide access to the community hall, Driftwood Centre commercial hub, and Prior Centennial campground and Mount Norman-Beaumont, both in Gulf Islands National Park Reserve. The proposed Pender Islands regional trail route is illustrated on Map 6.

Artist's rendering - regional trail in the Gulf Islands


Galiano Island
Georgina Point
Georgeanna Rd
Waugh Rd
Salish Sea
N
W
E
S
Campbell Bay Rd
Mayne Island
Miners Bay
Commercial Hub
Tsartlip First Nation
Community Hall
Felix Jack Rd
Village Bay Rd
Jerohill Rd
Bennett Bay Rd
Bennett Bay
Village Bay
Dalton Dr
Mount Parke
Plumper Pass
Horton Bay Rd
Gallagher Bay Rd
Mariners Way
Dinner Bay
Marine Dr
Curlew Island
Henderson Hill
Samuel Island
Provost Island
North Pender Island
Making a difference...together
Kilometres
0
0.5
1
Projection: UTM ZONE 10N NAD 83
Regional Park / Park Reserve
Gulf Islands National Park Reserve
Provincial Protected Area
Community Park
Major Road
Minor Road
Lake / Ocean
First Nation Reserve
Ferry Terminal
Regional Destination
Mayne Island - Proposed Regional Trail Route (Initial Phase)
Mayne Island - Proposed Regional Trail Route (Future Phase)
Map 5
Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan
Mayne Island Proposed Regional Trail


Portland Island
Mayne Island
Port Washington
Port Washington Rd
Hope Bay
Otter Bay
Otter Bay Rd
Community Hall
North Pender Island
Bedwell Harbour Rd
Roe Lake
Driftwood Centre
Prior Centennial Campground
Lyall Rd
Mount Norman/ Beaumont
Pratt Rd
Swanson Channel
Poets Cove
Greenburn Lake
South Pender Island
Tsawout, Tsleycum First Nations
Gowland Point Rd
Brooks Point
Boundary Pass
Saturna Island
Salish Sea
N
W
E
S
Making a difference....together
Kilometres
0 0.5 1 2
Projection: UTM ZONE 10N NAD 83
Regional Park / Park Reserve
Gulf Islands National Park Reserve
Community Park
First Nation Reserve
Lake / Ocean
Major Road
Minor Road
Capital Regional District Boundary
Municipal / Electoral Area Boundary
Ferry Terminal
Regional Destination
Pender Island - Proposed Regional Trail Route (Initial Phase)
Pender Island - Proposed Regional Trail Route (Future Phase)
Map 6
Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan
North and South Pender Islands
Proposed Regional Trail

4.5 Salt Spring Island

The regional trail route on Salt Spring Island will run between the Vesuvius and Fulford ferry terminal area, along Vesuvius Bay Road, Lower Ganges Road, and Fulford-Ganges Road. The trail will link the ferry areas to the Ganges commercial and residential hub and to Burgoyne Bay Provincial Park. The regional trail route is approximately 20 km in length, with the initial segment to be built being approximately 5 km between the Vesuvius ferry area and Atkins Road. Within the Ganges area, the initial segment of the regional trail will use existing roads/bicycle lanes and sidewalks/pedestrian pathways. At the south end of Ganges, the Salt Spring Island Transportation Commission is currently considering the development of a trail between Seaview Road and Cranberry Road in partnership with the Ministry of Transportation. Once that trail is complete, it will be included in the initial segment of the Regional Trail, subject to it meeting regional trail standards for cycling and pedestrian trails. The proposed Salt Spring Island regional trail route is illustrated on Map 7.

4.6 Saturna Island

The regional trail route on Saturna Island will start in the vicinity of the Lyall Harbour ferry terminal, follow East Point Road and Narvaez Bay Road to the community hub at Harris Road and continue along Narvaez Bay Road to Narvaez Bay in Gulf Islands National Park Reserve. This route is approximately 7 km in length, with the initial 1.5 km segment to be built being between the ferry area and the commercial hub. It is suggested that the CRD conduct further consultation on Saturna Island prior to proceeding with development of the additional 5.5 km full route to determine level of need/level of support for its development to Narvaez Bay. The proposed Saturna Island regional trail route is illustrated on Map 8.

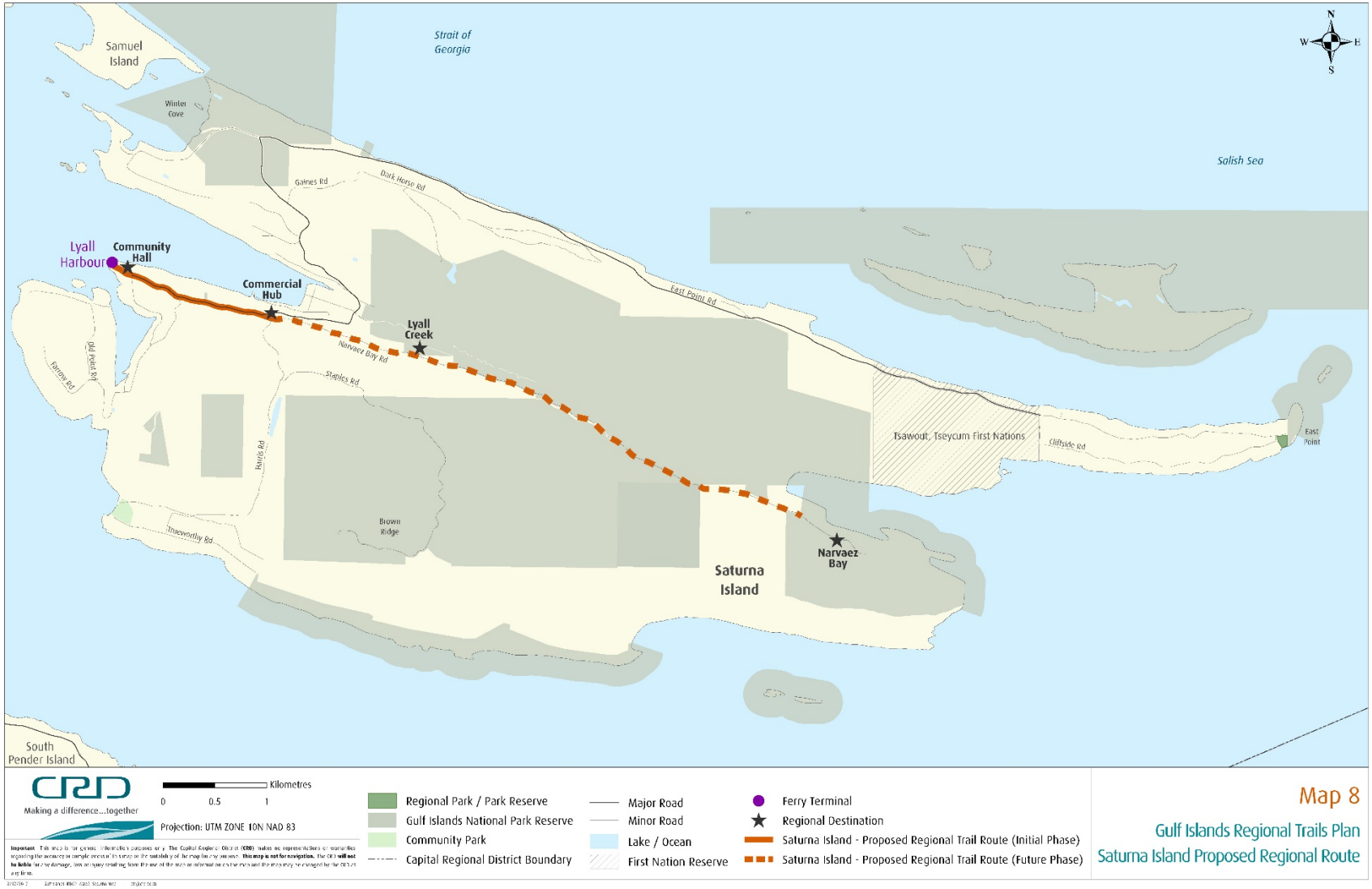
A Gulf Islands view (Photo: Danica Rice)

Map 7

Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan

Salt Spring Island

Proposed Regional Trail



Map 8

Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan

Saturna Island Proposed Regional Route

5 Implementation

The Regional Parks' Service Plan guides implementation of priority projects requiring funding on a four year rolling timeframe. It is expected that implementation of this plan will take decades given that 50 km of trail are proposed. Regional Parks has reserved an annual fund specifically for Gulf Islands trail planning and development; however, securing external funding will also be required to construct all of the regional trails identified in this plan.

A typical regional trail development project is staged as follows:

Planning & Design Phase

- Seek funding for design
- Route surveying and environmental investigations
- Development of engineered design drawings
- Public engagement on design

At the end of the planning & design phase, a project is considered "shelf ready" and design is 80-90% complete.

Funding Phase

- Seeking external/grant funding for construction, to supplement internal funding.

This process includes applying for grants as funding opportunities are announced and if successful, undertaking all necessary requirements of the granting agency.

Construction Phase

- Finalize design to "construction ready", including confirmation that all specifics on infrastructure have been addressed adequately
- Project tender process
- Award of contract
- Project initiation

Operation & Maintenance Phase

- Ongoing trail operations and maintenance are undertaken by CRD staff.

Design of a 2.3 km demonstration project on Mayne Island commenced in 2015 and the trail design will be completed in 2018. The goal of the demonstration trail project is to develop the initial segment of regional trail identified in this plan, from the Village Bay ferry terminal to the commercial hub within the road right-of-way, where possible, and to assess 'lessons learned'. This will highlight opportunities and challenges for regional trail construction on the Gulf Islands. This trail segment will be the first priority for implementation.

As a second priority for implementation, it is recommended that external funding be sought for the planning & design of an initial segment of trail on each of the remaining islands (approximately 17 km), as one project. A project that includes multiple islands may be of greater interest to potential funders who are looking for regionally significant projects or who are interested in seeing multiple jurisdictions working together on projects. Further, a combined project, being larger in scope, may also garner more interest from consulting firms when the project is contracted. Lastly, having shelf-ready designs for each of the region trails creates efficiency and flexibility for the CRD in terms of seeking external funding and partnerships for construction.

Once the initial trail designs are complete and adequate funding is in place, proposed construction priorities are, in descending order, as follows:

1. Salt Spring Island (5 km; Vesuvius to Ganges; with a possible additional 300 m on Ganges Hill) then
2. North Pender Island (5 km; Otter Bay to Driftwood Centre) then
3. Galiano Island (3 km; Sturdies Bay to Matthews Point Regional Park) then
4. Saturna Island (2 km; Lyall Harbour to Harris Road).

This order is proposed based on considerations of island population and potential levels of cycling and walking use. BC Ferries cycling and foot traffic statistics (Table 2 and Appendix 3) were used to estimate the potential use of regional trails.

Priority order may change subject to trail development cost (identified at the design stage), other planned projects that trail development can be linked with (e.g., MOTI/municipal road work), significant funding partnership opportunities, or other CRD priorities. Following completion of the initial trail segment on each island, additional trail development priorities will be set using the criteria in Policy 10 (page 14).

Table 3 identifies a general strategy for the implementation of this plan. Implementation is subject to available staff and financial resources.

Table 3: Implementation Strategy

Action	Timing
Seek external grant funding for construction of Mayne Island regional trail demonstration project.	2018
Seek external grant funding for the design of four initial regional trail segments as one project (Salt Spring, North Pender, Galiano, Saturna).	2018
Construct Mayne Island regional trail demonstration project and assess "lessons learned"	Once funds are in place
Seek external grant funding for construction of Salt Spring Island initial trail section	Once Mayne Island demonstration trail segment is complete
Construct initial trail section on Salt Spring Island	Once funds are in place
Seek external grant funding for construction of Pender Island initial trail section	Once Salt Spring Island initial trail segment is complete
Construct initial trail section on North Pender Island	Once funds are in place
Seek external grant funding for construction of Galiano Island initial trail section	Once Pender Island initial trail segment is complete
Construct initial trail section on Galiano Island	Once funds are in place
Seek external grant funding for construction of Saturna Island initial trail section	Once Galiano Island initial trail segment is complete
Construct initial trail section on Saturna Island	Once funds are in place
Determine next phases of trail development and initiate next round of design/funding/construction	Once Saturna Island initial trail segment is complete

Appendix 1: The Regional Trails Management Plan (RTMP)

In 2016, following a two year public planning process, the CRD Board approved a Regional Trails Management Plan (RTMP). This plan includes strategic direction that applies to all trails (existing and future) as well as management plans for each of the three existing regional trails (Galloping Goose, Lochside, and E&N Rail Trail – Humpback Connector).

In particular, the following section of the RTMP are noteworthy and should be referenced along with this Plan.

Section 2 Regional Trails Strategic Direction, which includes, among other things, a vision for regional trails, management principles, and 50 overarching policies for regional trails.

Appendix 3: Trail Development Guidelines, which sets out guidelines for different types of regional trails and for use of certain trail management tools. Comments from members of the public on the islands regarding trail standards were addressed through the development and approval of the RTMP.

Appendix 4: Example of Standard Regional Trail Signs, which outlines key types of signs used along regional trails and explains rationale for their general use.

Also, Appendix 6: Southern Gulf Islands-Salt Spring Island Regional Trail Planning, provided the scope for the development of this plan.

A copy of the RTMP is available through the CRD website at:

https://www.crd.bc.ca/project/past-capital-projects-and-initiatives/regional-trails-management-plan

Appendix 2: Existing Plans and Complementary Work

Each of the following plans has informed the development of the Regional Trails Plan for the Gulf Islands.

The **Experience the Gulf Islands (ETGI) initiative** of the **Southern Gulf Islands Economic Sustainability Commission and the Salt Spring Island Economic Development Commission** seeks to promote tourism to the islands. The **ETGI Concept Plan** includes goals to "build sustainable, low-carbon, inter-island and on-island transportation connections and linkages that limit or lower on-island car traffic" and "enhance and expand inter-community, organization and government partnerships." A key strategy area identified in the Concept Plan is to improve transportation through coordinated trail planning initiatives.

The CRD administers the **Salt Spring Island Transit and Transportation service** which is overseen by the Salt Spring Island Transportation Commission. The service includes construction, maintenance and regulation of active transportation infrastructure, such as bicycle paths and sidewalks, including pedestrian safety and traffic calming. A **North Ganges Transportation Plan** was approved in 2007 and a capital project is underway from 2015-2019 to install pedestrian and cycling and intersection improvements around Ganges Village.

A **Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan: Salt Spring Island Edition** was undertaken by **Regional & Strategic Planning** and accepted by the CRD Board in 2013. This Master Plan identifies a Primary Inter-Community bikeway network that connects Fulford Harbour to Ganges Village to Vesuvius and Long Harbour.

The local **Parks and Recreation Advisory Commissions** on the Southern Gulf Islands and Salt Spring Island are responsible for planning, developing and maintaining community parks and trails. **Community park and trail plans** have been approved for Galiano, Pender and Salt Spring Islands. Community park and trail networks will complement the regional trail route.

Official Community Plans for each island, developed by the **Islands Trust**, guide development on the islands. Opportunities to develop and enhance the regional trail routes can be identified in coordination with Islands Trust as the agency responsible for land use on the islands.

Appendix 3: BC Ferries Data on Bicycle and Foot Traffic

BC Ferries has provided additional information relating to bicycle and foot traffic to and from the Gulf Islands. This data gives an idea of numbers of potential users of the regional trails. In summary, it shows:

- The greatest bicycle traffic is between Tsawwassen and Galiano Island (average 1,757 over three years), followed by Swartz Bay to Pender Islands (average 1,144 over three years) and then Tsawwassen to Salt Spring Island (average 1,077 over three years).
- The largest volumes of inter-island bicycle traffic are between Mayne Island and Pender Island (average 135-208 over three years; depending on direction of travel), followed by Galiano Island to Mayne Island (average 134 over three years).
- The greatest foot traffic is between Tsawwassen and Galiano Island (average 23,094 over three years), Tsawwassen to Salt Spring Island (average 18,062 over three years), Tsawwassen to Mayne Island (average 14,600 over three years), and Swartz Bay to Pender Island (average 14,144 over three years).
- Inter-island foot traffic was highest between Salt Spring Island and Pender Island (average 722-981 over three years depending on direction of travel), followed by Salt Spring Island to Galiano Island (average 583-694 over three years depending on direction of travel).

Annual Bicycle Traffic for Routes 5 and 9

From	To	2014	2015	2016
Swartz Bay	Galiano Island	454	492	463
	Mayne Island	585	609	584
	Pender Island	1,138	1,176	1,117
	Salt Spring Island	0	4	3
	Saturna Island	433	450	468
Tsawwassen	Galiano Island	1,666	1,835	1,770
	Mayne Island	905	1,022	932
	Pender Island	375	366	371
	Salt Spring Island	1,056	1,049	1,126
	Saturna Island	159	154	151
Inter-Island				
Galiano Island	Mayne Island	107	126	170
	Pender Island	62	69	87

	Salt Spring Island	66	90	140
	Saturna Island	8	16	11
Mayne Island	Galiano Island	104	137	170
	Pender Island	171	193	259
	Salt Spring Island	74	51	77
	Saturna Island	48	38	31
Pender Island	Galiano Island	60	54	49
	Mayne Island	116	142	146
	Salt Spring Island	52	95	110
	Saturna Island	20	20	26
Salt Spring Island	Galiano Island	60	102	101
	Mayne Island	69	42	64
	Pender Island	52	90	76
	Saturna Island	0	0	0
Saturna Island	Galiano Island	8	4	3
	Mayne Island	32	29	20
	Pender Island	7	11	16
	Salt Spring Island	7	6	3

Annual Foot Traffic on Routes 5 and 9

From	To	2014	2015	2016
Swartz Bay	Galiano Island	4,929	5,056	5,047
	Mayne Island	6,750	6,937	7,182
	Pender Island	14,087	14,019	14,325
	Salt Spring Island	11	14	8
	Saturna Island	2,975	2,954	3,348
Tsawwassen	Galiano Island	22,979	23,311	23,092
	Mayne Island	14,412	14,813	14,574
	Pender Island	8,623	8,440	8,821
	Salt Spring Island	17,395	17, 460	19,332
	Saturna Island	2,082	1,807	1,682

Inter-Island				
Galiano Island	Mayne Island	478	418	458
	Pender Island	304	316	311
	Salt Spring Island	560	585	606
	Saturna Island	21	32	28
Mayne Island	Galiano Island	578	465	565
	Pender Island	459	531	743
	Salt Spring Island	538	513	452
	Saturna Island	103	83	63
Pender Island	Galiano Island	321	251	245
	Mayne Island	531	502	596
	Salt Spring Island	695	757	715
	Saturna Island	76	81	96
Salt Spring Island	Galiano Island	678	752	651
	Mayne Island	818	700	560
	Pender Island	786	924	978
	Saturna Island	5	1	3
Saturna Island	Galiano Island	0	0	0
	Mayne Island	0	0	0
	Pender Island	0	0	0
	Salt Spring Island	0	0	0

Narvaez Bay, Gulf Islands National Park Reserve, Saturna Island

Salt Spring Island Regional Trail Feasibility Study & Next Steps

Regional Parks Committee
November 26, 2025

Background

- 2016 Regional Trails Management Plan
- 2018 Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan
- 2023 Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022-2032
- 2023-2026 Board Transportation Priorities (1a, 1b)

Regional Transportation Service

- **Regional Transportation Service (RTS) established**
  - Bylaw No 4630 consolidates transportation planning and regional trail management
  - Reports to CRD Transportation Committee
- Initial priorities: Galloping Goose, Lochside and E&N regional trails
- Regional Parks transferred staff/funding resources to RTS
- Gulf Island regional trails not current RTS priorities, but may be included with CRD Board approval

Feasibility Study Overview

- Project managed by CRD Regional Parks
- Launched in June 2024
- Assessed the 21 km conceptual route from Fulford Harbour to Vesuvius Bay via Ganges Village
- Applied BC Active Transportation Design Guide standards
- Identified physical constraints, cost estimates and priority segments for phased implementation
- Developed with input from key community and agency partners

Feasibility Study Results

Initially, 3m Paved, Separated Trail

- Meets AAA standards
- Generally, aligns with guidelines (except 4 segments)
- Estimated cost: $102M

2m Unpaved Trail, Semi-Separated Trail

- Similar to Mayne Island Regional Trail
- Aligns with low-use rural guidelines (except 6 segments)
- Estimated cost: $63M

Phase 1 Priority Segments

- Ganges–Vesuvius Bay
- Estimated cost: $8.5M

Conclusions

- Fully separated trail not feasible under current guidelines
- Viable corridor: mix of trails, traffic-calmed side streets, sidewalks and bike lanes ($63M)
  - Interim measures could further reduce costs
- Requires coordinated, multi-year, multi-agency effort
- Regional Parks lacks capacity/expertise for active transportation trail development
- Aligns with CRD Transportation Committee mandate
- Existing plans may need review, revision, or repeal to align with RTS plans and priorities

Recommendation

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

1. That planning, implementation and operation of all regional trails on the Gulf Islands—such as those identified in the Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan—be referred to the CRD Transportation Committee for consideration;

2. That this report, including the Gulf Islands Regional Trails Plan be referred to the Salt Spring Island Electoral Area Administration for information, in recognition of the local interest in establishing additional community trails in village sites on Salt Spring Island; and

3. That staff report back with a list of all CRD Regional Parks plans, policies, and bylaws requiring amendment or repeal as a result of establishing the Regional Transportation Service, and outline the process and timeline for completing these changes.


Thank you

Making a difference...together

REPORT TO REGIONAL PARKS COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2025

SUBJECT **Regional Parks and Trails – State of Natural Features Report**

ISSUE SUMMARY

To present the Capital Regional District (CRD) Regional Parks and Trails State of Natural Features report, which will inform park planning and management, support the development of the CRD Regional Parks Stewardship Plan (Stewardship Plan) and guide the update to the Land Acquisition Strategy.

BACKGROUND

The State of Natural Features report fulfills priority action 2-1a of the CRD Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022–2032. Alongside the State of Outdoor Recreation Report, it will inform the development of the Stewardship Plan—a key strategic action. The Stewardship Plan will offer an evidence-based approach for managing CRD regional parks, integrating both recreation and conservation values, and addressing the opportunities and challenges where these priorities intersect.

The State of Natural Features Report provides a comprehensive overview of natural features within the CRD's regional parks and trails system. Prepared by CRD staff, with the support of a technical report developed by external consultants, it synthesizes internal and external ecological data into a clear and accessible assessment of the health of regional parks and trails.

In addition to guiding the Stewardship Plan, the State of Natural Features and State of Outdoor Recreation Reports will:

- support the development of related plans, strategies and policies;
- facilitate knowledge sharing with interested First Nations; and
- enhance the understanding and management of CRD regional parks and trails.

Key Findings:

- CRD regional parks and trails span two biogeoclimatic zones: Coastal Douglas-fir (22%) and Coastal Western Hemlock (78%).
- Sensitive ecosystems were identified in 29 regional parks encompassing 19% of total park area. The most common sensitive ecosystems include mature forests (over 80 years old; 28%), old forests (over 250 years old; 11%), and sparsely vegetated habitats, such as coastal sand dunes (3%).
- The oldest forested stands within regional parks are found in Sooke Hills Wilderness (411 years old) and Sooke Potholes (256 years old) regional parks.
- One hundred and sixty-one species at risk have been documented, and 61 are protected under the *Species at Risk Act*.
- Key threats to ecological health include invasive species, visitor use disturbance, water level fluctuations, climate change, changes to wildfire regimes, and development.

IMPLICATIONS

Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies

The completion of this report directly achieves priority action 2-1a of the Strategic Plan and supports additional goals and actions in the Strategic Plan, including the development of the Stewardship Plan and the update to the Land Acquisition Strategy.

First Nations Implications

The report is based on Western scientific methodologies and does not incorporate traditional ecological knowledge. Future planning will prioritize respectful and equitable integration of Indigenous knowledge through ongoing engagement and relationship-building.

Environmental Implications

The presence of a diverse range of at-risk species and sensitive ecosystems underscores the ecological importance of regional parks. It highlights the urgent need for strategic management and targeted conservation efforts to protect these habitats from known threats, including visitor use disturbance, through the development of the Stewardship Plan.

Climate Implications

The report highlights sensitive ecosystems that are particularly vulnerable to climate change and those that contribute to climate resilience, such as mature and old forests, riparian zones, and wetland ecosystems that store carbon, mitigate flooding, and support biodiversity. The report acknowledges threats to ecosystem health and recommends addressing these threats through management and protection of intact ecosystems.

Financial and Service Delivery Implications

There are no immediate financial or service delivery impacts. Opportunities exist to enhance monitoring, collaboration, education and data analysis. Staff will prioritize actions within existing work plans and seek cost-effective implementation strategies. While the findings in this report do not immediately affect service delivery, they may influence staff priorities by shaping park management and guiding future policy and planning efforts.

Intergovernmental Implications

Information from the report will aid in data sharing and collaboration across First Nations, community partnerships and other levels of government.

CONCLUSION

The CRD Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022-2032 identified the State of Natural Features Report as a key priority to support management and decision-making. Staff will use the report to inform park planning and management, the development of the Stewardship Plan and Land Acquisition Strategy update, and future engagement with community partners, First Nations and other government organizations.

RECOMMENDATION

There are no recommendations. This report is for information only.

Submitted by:	Mike MacIntyre, Senior Manager, Regional Parks
Concurrence:	Luisa Jones, MBA, General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Environmental Services
Concurrence:	Ted Robbins, B. Sc., C. Tech., Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A: 2025 State of Natural Features Report
Presentation: Regional Parks State of Natural Features Report

APPENDIX A

2025 State of Natural Features Report

Making a difference...together

September 2025

TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The CRD conducts its business within the Territories of many First Nations, including but not limited to BOḰEĆEN (Pauquachin), MÁLEXEŁ (Malahat), paaʔčiidʔatx̣ (Pacheedaht), Spune'luxutth (Penelekut), Sc'ianew (Beecher Bay), Songhees, SŦÁUTW̱ (Tsawout), T'Sou-ke, W̱JOŁEŁP (Tsartlip), W̱SIḴEM (Tseycum), and xʷsepsum (Esquimalt) Nations, all of whom have a long-standing relationship with the land and waters from time immemorial that continues to this day.

Dancing Dragonflies by Chris Paul

The CRD commissioned W̱SÁNEĆ artist Chris Paul to create an image based on the idea of First Nation and Settler communities living side by side and our governments making a difference together.

Dragonfly is a symbol of change, transformation and swiftness. He represents a symbol of change in the view of self-understanding and the kind of change that has its source in maturity and insight into the deeper meaning of life.

It is our hope today that our work to change and transform will be swift, that as we mature we will develop insight that allows us to be poised for reconciliation and that we continue to build strong and meaningful relationships with local First Nations.

Cover photos:
Front: Matheson Lake Regional Park
Back: Mill Hill Regional Trail

Background

The State of Natural Features Report provides a comprehensive overview of the ecological values within the Capital Regional District's (CRD) regional parks and trails. It will inform the development of the Regional Parks Stewardship Plan—a key action in the CRD Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022-2032. The Stewardship Plan will provide a holistic, evidence-based approach to the management of CRD regional parks. The plan will provide conservation and outdoor recreation management strategies in a balanced and complementary manner; to inform the planning, management and monitoring of the parks system.

The State of Natural Features report utilizes both internal and external data sources to better understand the state of regional parks and trails and the ecological health of natural areas within the region. The report set out the following objectives:

1. Provide an overview of the ecological features present within regional parks and trails using available data sets.
2. Summarize and discuss ecological threats both external and internal to regional parks and trails.
3. Discuss ways to protect features from ecological threats, such as through management planning and stewardship actions.
4. Identify the proportion of regional parks lands undergoing active ecological restoration and quantify the number of parks with active restoration sites.
5. Summarize ongoing research opportunities within regional parks and trails.
6. Provide recommendations for future monitoring, management and ecological health assessment work for future reporting.

Matheson Lake Regional Park

Eco-cultural Context

The report compiles western scientific methodologies and does not encompass other traditional ways of knowing, including Traditional Ecological Knowledge. Understanding of both bodies of knowledge and how they can be integrated and applied to support decision-making in regional parks and trails is an important next step. Future efforts to meaningfully integrate Indigenous knowledge in a respectful and equitable way would better inform management and planning decisions.

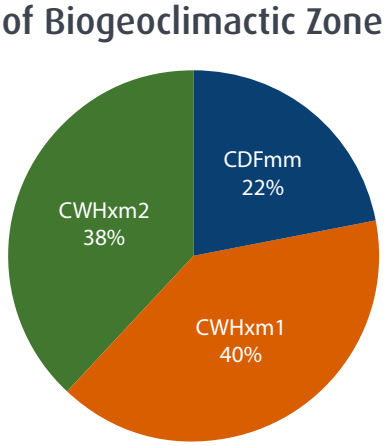
Capital Regional District Regional Parks

The CRD is responsible for managing 34 regional parks covering 13,400 hectares, which represents 6% of the regional land base. These range from small, coastal parks (East Point and Gonzales Hill regional parks, both less than 2 ha) to large swathes of forest (Sea to Sea and Sooke Hills Wilderness regional parks, both over 4,000 ha).

Natural features within regional parks and trails provide a way to assess important ecosystems and wildlife habitats for species and ecosystems of conservation concern. This includes the classification and quantification of ecosystems according to land cover, biogeoclimatic conditions and vulnerable or at-risk ecosystems. Vulnerable species and ecosystems face several stressors that threaten the ecological health and integrity of the regional parks and trails system. For example, the introduction of invasive plants poses a threat to native species within the system. The CRD is addressing these threats through ongoing research, park management and policy development.

Natural Features Summary

CRD regional parks and regional trails are located in two biogeoclimatic (BGC) zones: the Coastal Douglas-fir (CDF) and Coastal Western Hemlock (CWH). These BGC zones are further classified into the Moist Maritime (CDFmm) and the Very Dry Maritime (CWHxm1 and CWHxm2) subzones, with most parks occurring within the CWH subzones (78%). These CWH subzones are characterized by cool summers and mild winters and are in the rain shadow of the coastal mountains.



Mill Hill Regional Park

Sensitive Ecosystems

Sensitive and other important ecosystems can be found in all regional parks. The presence of these ecosystems indicates a variety of habitats that support distinct flora and fauna. Sensitive ecosystems are particularly vulnerable to threats such as habitat loss, climate change and invasive species. It is important to preserve these diverse ecosystems to support regional biodiversity and ecological health.

In the regional parks system, mature forest, old forest and sparsely vegetated ecosystems are the most commonly occurring sensitive ecosystems, covering over 3,803 ha (28%), 1,584 ha (11%) and 410 ha (3%) of regional parks, respectively. Forests are considered "mature" when the average stand age is at least 80 years whereas old forests are stands that are over 250 years old. The oldest forested stands can be found in Sooke Hills Wilderness (411 years) and Sooke Potholes (256 years) regional parks. Sparsely vegetated habitats include open habitats, such as coastal sand dunes, spits and inland cliffs and bluffs. Other sensitive ecosystems that occur in regional parks include herbaceous, intertidal, riparian, woodland, wetland and cliff.

Western Painted Turtle, Pacific Coast population

Species at Risk

CRD regional parks and trails are critically important for biodiversity conservation in the region, as they represent some of the less impacted areas from human development. Parks provide habitat within an urban landscape for a diverse array of species including plants, birds, mammals and other wildlife, and represent some of the best available habitats in the region.

Regional parks and trails are home to 161 documented occurrences of species at risk, comprising:

- 144 provincially listed species, and
- 61 species protected under the federal Species at Risk Act (SARA).

In addition, Critical Habitat—essential for the recovery of 25 federally listed species—has been identified within 28 regional parks, encompassing a total area of 8,574 hectares. Furthermore, 20 provincially red-listed ecological communities are known to occur within these protected areas.

The presence of such a wide range of at-risk species and sensitive ecological communities highlights the ecological significance of regional parks and trails. It underscores the urgent need for strategic management and conservation efforts to safeguard these vital habitats and ensure the long-term survival of the species they support.

Ecological Threats

Parks and trails play an important role in protecting biodiversity, preserving ecosystems and maintaining healthy natural environments. However, simply designating these areas as protected doesn't shield them from threats. These threats can come from outside the parks—like climate change—or from within, such as invasive plants.

To keep parks and trails healthy and sustainable over the long term, it's important to understand these threats and how they interact. This helps guide effective and flexible management strategies.

Threats outside of parks include climate change, adjacent development, changes to wildfire regimes and changes to hydrology. Threats inside the park include invasive species, visitor use disturbance and infrastructure development.

Ecological Research

The parks and trails are often used as sites for research, providing valuable spaces for both observational and experimental research. Research conducted in regional parks and trails can contribute to national or global programs, provide valuable opportunities for post-secondary students, or answer specific questions of local interest. All research activities are subject to park rules, regulations and bylaws and go through the relevant privacy review process.

Research work conducted by CRD staff or contractors provides the bulk of site-specific knowledge for CRD Regional Parks. For example, prior to acquiring new land, information on ecological values is collected to aid in decision-making.

In 2021 the CRD Board approved the establishment of two full-time permanent Conservation Technician positions and these roles allow Regional Parks to undertake more internal research focusing on priority items for conservation and park management.

Staff monitoring rare plants at Witty s Lagoon Regional Park

Volunteers and staff doing restoration work

Ecological Management

CRD staff are working under the direction of the Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan (2022-2032) which identifies priorities and actions for the next 10 years. Additional protections and management tools can be used to preserve the ecological integrity of regional parks and trails, with widespread benefits for the entire capital region. Staff support ongoing restoration and habitat enhancement, in partnership with other organizations and volunteers to maintain, restore and enhance natural and culturally important features.

The CRD aims to monitor, assess, restore, enhance and protect the ecological integrity and biodiversity of regional parks and trails in the region. This includes monitoring for ecological changes and trends, assessing for the presence of known threats, taking action to mitigate threats, and restoring, enhancing, and protecting ecosystems and habitat for ecologically and culturally important species. This approach to stewardship aims to ensure the overall health, function and integrity of natural areas both within parks and trails and the surrounding region.

Conclusion

CRD regional parks and regional trails protect a wide variety of ecosystems and species and support regional biodiversity and ecosystem services. Parks provide a refuge for at-risk species (both federal and provincial) and habitat that is critical to their recovery and help to connect a regional landscape of natural areas.

Understanding the natural features within the parks is important for informing decision-making and developing policies that guide the management of the regional parks and regional trails. The CRD supports protection of natural features through partnerships, research, ecological monitoring and knowledge sharing, planning and stewardship.

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Regional Parks State of Natural Features

Regional Parks Committee

November 26, 2025

Presentation Content

- Background
- Scope of Report
- Key Findings
- Implications
- Conclusion


Mount Work Regional Park

Background

The State of Natural Features Report fulfills priority action 2-1a of the CRD Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022–2032.

The report:

- Enhances understanding of CRD regional parks and trails
- Informs the development of key actions identified in the Strategic Plan: the Stewardship Plan and the update to the Land Acquisition Strategy
- Guides the development of Management Plans

East Sooke Regional Park

Regional Park Overview

- 34 regional parks
- Four regional trails
- More than 13,350 hectares
- Represent 6% of the regional land base
- Represent 27% of all parks and protected areas in the region

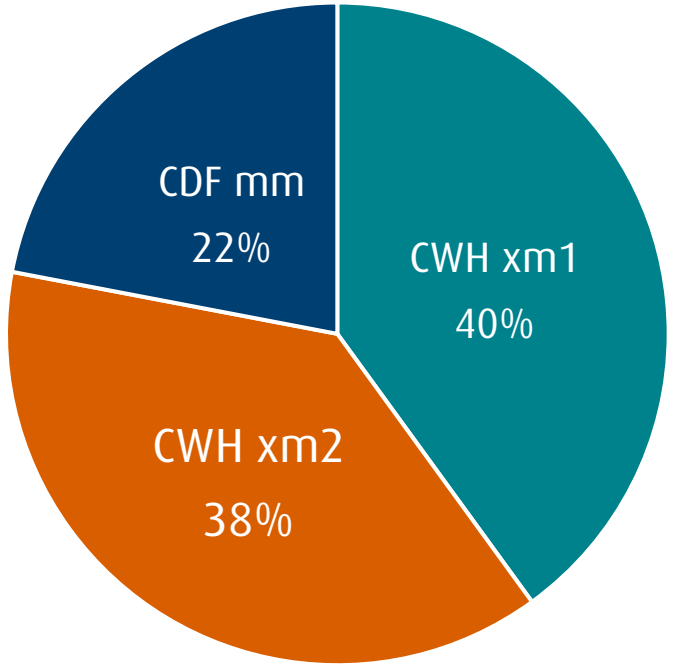
Island View Beach Regional Park

Scope of Report

- Provides an overview of the ecological features present within regional parks and trails
- Summarizes ecological threats
- Identifies ways to protect features from ecological threats
- Summarizes active ecological restoration activities and research within parks and trails
- Provides recommendations for future monitoring, management and ecological health assessment

Key Findings
Biogeoclimatic Zones

High biodiversity and rich forest compositions, featuring Douglas-fir and Western Hemlock.



- **Coastal Douglas-fir (CDF mm; moist maritime)**
  present in 23 parks
- **Coastal Western Hemlock (CWH xm1; eastern drier)**
  present in 11 parks
- **Coastal Western Hemlock (CWH xm2; western less dry)**
  present in 9 parks

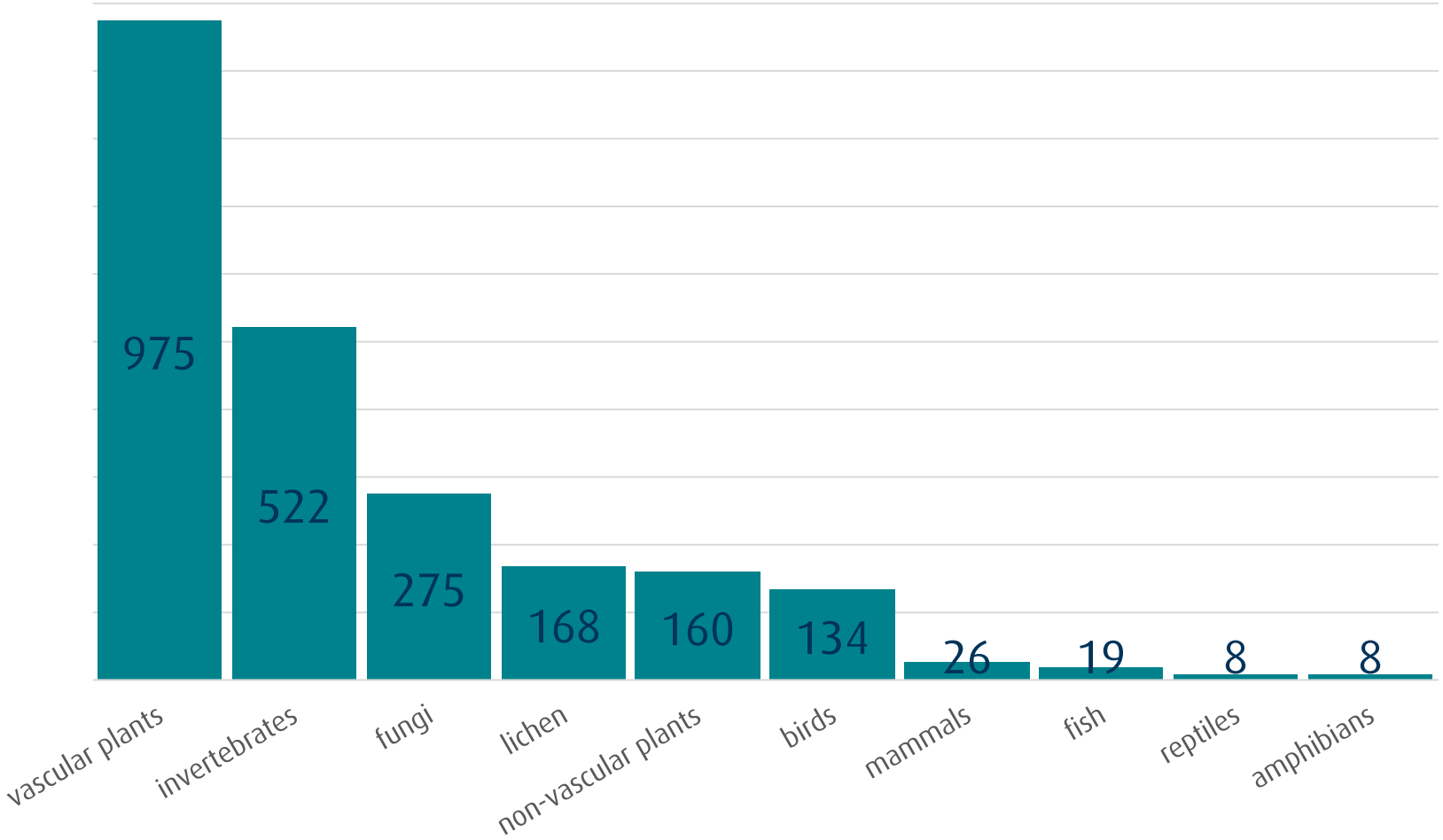
Key Findings
Sensitive Ecosystems

- Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory provides valuable information about at-risk and vulnerable ecosystems.
- 19% of regional parks and trails are identified as sensitive, e.g., old forests (over 250 years old) and sparsely vegetated (coastal sand dunes)
- 28% of regional parks and trails identified as important, e.g., mature forests. (80-100 years old)
- The data underscores the importance of preserving these diverse ecosystems to support regional biodiversity and ecological health.


Island View Beach Regional Park

Key Findings

Species Diversity



Species at Risk

- 144 are listed by the province (red or blue)
- 61 are listed federally (schedule 1 of Species At Risk Act)

Implications
First Nations and Environmental


Western Painted Turtle


Salmon Berry


Camas Flower


Island View Beach Regional Park

- Compiles western scientific ways of knowing
- Underscores the ecological importance of regional parks
- Does not include traditional ecological knowledge
- Understanding both bodies of knowledge and how they can be integrated is an important next step.

Implications

Service Delivery and Staff Priorities

- Traditional ecological knowledge
- Species and wildlife features inventories
- Terrestrial ecosystem mapping
- Invasive plant surveys
- Monitoring and research
- Restoration, habitat enhancement and impact assessment

Conclusion

- Collaboration and knowledge sharing
- Aids on-the-ground operations and land management
- Informs Management Plans and Interim Management Guidelines
- Aids in creating policies, guidelines and strategic plans


Mill Hill Regional Park


Mill Hill Regional Park

Questions?

Capital Regional District

CRDVictoria

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Making a difference...together

REPORT TO REGIONAL PARKS COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2025

SUBJECT **Regional Parks and Trails – State of Outdoor Recreation Report**

ISSUE SUMMARY

To present the Capital Regional District (CRD) Regional Parks and Trails State of Outdoor Recreation report, which will inform park planning and management, support the development of the CRD Regional Parks Stewardship Plan (Stewardship Plan) and guide the update to the Land Acquisition Strategy.

BACKGROUND

The State of Outdoor Recreation report was completed in alignment with the State of Natural Features Report to inform the development of the Stewardship Plan—a key action in the CRD Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022–2032. The Stewardship Plan will offer an evidence-based approach for managing regional parks, integrating recreation and conservation values, and addressing the opportunities and challenges where these priorities intersect.

The report provides an overview of recreation opportunities within the CRD's regional parks and trails system. Prepared by CRD staff, with the support of a technical report developed by external consultants, it synthesizes internal and external data to summarize existing assets and infrastructure, analyze visitation trends and assess visitor use patterns. It also identifies environmental, physical and social barriers to access, as well as data gaps and areas for future research.

In addition to guiding the Stewardship Plan, the State of Natural Features and State of Outdoor Recreation Reports will:

- support the development of related plans, strategies and policies;
- facilitate knowledge sharing with interested First Nations; and
- enhance understanding and management of CRD regional parks and trails.

Key Findings:

- CRD regional parks and trails cover 13,400 hectares, about 6% of the regional land base.
- Four regional trails span approximately 103 km, connecting 12 municipalities and two electoral areas.
- CRD parks and trails comprise over 27% of all protected areas in the region, including national, provincial and municipal parks.
- Approximately 91% of residents live within a 15-minute drive of a regional park.
- Forested landscapes dominate the system but 52% of parks offer waterfront access, enabling activities such as swimming, fishing, kayaking and canoeing.
- Hiking is the primary activity, with a range of challenge levels in front- and mid-country settings. Four parks offer backcountry experiences.
- Multi-use trails that support hiking, cycling and equestrian use are available in 48% of parks.

- Recreational infrastructure includes boat launches, campgrounds, play structures, day-use areas and 345 km of designated trails, supported by washrooms and parking.
- Between 2014 and 2024, system-wide visitation increased by 47%, reaching 9.3 million annual visits.
- Regional trail visitation increased by 22% and park visitation by 58% over the same period.

Barriers to accessing regional parks:
- Only 4% of trails are designated as accessible or user-friendly.
- Public transit access is limited to 30% of parks; 25% are accessible via regional trails.

Key Limitations and Data Gaps:
- As the report did not analyze regional outdoor recreation demands, it is not possible to conclude if current opportunities and infrastructure meet regional demands.
- The compatibility of individual outdoor recreation activities was not considered within this report. This report and the State of Natural Features report will be used to develop management strategies within the Stewardship Plan that address compatibility and mitigation of visitor use impacts.

IMPLICATIONS

Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies

As outlined in goal 3 of the Strategic Plan, regional parks provide opportunity for stewardship and compatible nature-based outdoor recreation opportunities for visitors, while supporting and protecting ecological values. The information in the State of Outdoor Recreation report supports multiple goals and actions within the Strategic Plan and will be used to inform the development of the Stewardship Plan.

First Nations Implications

The report supports information sharing with First Nations and provides context for engagement on policy documents, including the Stewardship Plan, Land Acquisition Strategy and park management processes.

Climate Implications

The report highlights opportunities for low-carbon transportation to parks, supporting the CRD Board's goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Implications

The report considers regional demographics and physical and social barriers to accessing parks and trails. It provides an overview of current accessible or adaptive outdoor recreation opportunities, identifies gaps and supports project prioritization.

Intergovernmental Implications

Regional parks and trails are a vital part of the interconnected network of parks and protected areas in the region. This report supports collaboration with First Nations and other levels of

government to meet regional conservation and recreation goals.

Financial and Service Delivery Implications

There are no immediate financial or service delivery impacts. Opportunities exist to enhance monitoring, collaboration, education and data analysis. Staff will prioritize actions within existing work plans and seek cost-effective implementation strategies. While findings do not immediately affect service delivery, they may influence future priorities and planning.

Environmental Implications

This report identifies known impacts of outdoor recreation on ecological and cultural values. In combination with the State of Natural Features, it highlights the necessity for strategic management to support compatible outdoor recreation while protecting the ecological integrity of the regional parks.

Social Implications

Outdoor recreation supports mental and physical health and fosters social and community connectivity for residents and visitors. Exceptional ecosystems provide high-quality recreation opportunities, and maintaining healthy ecosystems requires responsible, well-managed planning. Insights from the report will support data-driven planning and help achieve the strategic goal of providing enjoyable outdoor recreation experiences.

CONCLUSION

The State of Outdoor Recreation report, alongside the State of Natural Features report, will play a critical role in shaping the CRD Regional Parks Stewardship Plan—a key priority of the Strategic Plan 2022–2032. By summarizing recreation values and use patterns, it will serve as a foundational resource for park planning, management and the update to the Land Acquisition Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION

There are no recommendations. This report is for information only.

Submitted by:	Mike MacIntyre, Senior Manager, Regional Parks
Concurrence:	Luisa Jones, MBA, General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Environmental Services
Concurrence:	Ted Robbins, B. Sc., C. Tech., Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A: 2025 State of Outdoor Recreation Report
Presentation: Regional Parks State of Outdoor Recreation

APPENDIX A

2025 State of Outdoor Recreation Report

Making a difference...together

September 2025

TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The CRD conducts its business within the Territories of many First Nations, including but not limited to BOḰEĆEN (Pauquachin), MÁLEXEŁ (Malahat), paaʔčiidʔatx̌ (Pacheedaht), Spune'luxutth (Penelekut), Sc'ianew (Beecher Bay), Songhees, SŦÁUTW̱ (Tsawout), T'Sou-ke, WJOŁEŁP (Tsartlip), W̱ SIḴEM (Tseycum), and xʷsepsum (Esquimalt) Nations, all of whom have a long-standing relationship with the land and waters from time immemorial that continues to this day.

Dancing Dragonflies by Chris Paul

The CRD commissioned W̱SÁNEĆ artist Chris Paul to create an image based on the idea of First Nation and Settler communities living side by side and our governments making a difference together.

Dragonfly is a symbol of change, transformation and swiftness. He represents a symbol of change in the view of self-understanding and the kind of change that has its source in maturity and insight into the deeper meaning of life.

It is our hope today that our work to change and transform will be swift, that as we mature, we will develop insight that allows us to be poised for reconciliation and that we continue to build strong and meaningful relationships with local First Nations.

Cover photos:
Front: Mount Work Regional Park Back: Galloping Goose Regional Trail

Background

The State of Outdoor Recreation report provides a comprehensive understanding of the current scope of outdoor recreation opportunities, amenities and programs within the Capital Regional District (CRD) Regional Parks. It was primarily commissioned to inform the development of the Regional Parks Stewardship Plan—a priority action from the CRD Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022-2032. The Stewardship Plan will provide a holistic, evidence-based approach to the management of CRD regional parks. The plan will provide conservation and outdoor recreation management strategies in a balanced and complementary manner, to inform the planning, management and monitoring of the parks system.

The State of Outdoor Recreation report will also support the development of related plans, strategies and policies and facilitate knowledge sharing with interested First Nations and other inter-governmental partners. The report set out the following objectives:

1. Provide an overview of the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the capital regional district and their implications on outdoor recreation.
2. Summarize the latest and most influential outdoor recreation trends.
3. Provide an overview of visitation and visitation trends in regional parks and on regional trails.
4. Describe and quantify the outdoor recreation opportunities, amenities/ infrastructure and programs provided in regional parks and trails, including licences and park use permits.
5. Summarize the level and extent of outdoor recreation-specific volunteerism in regional parks and trails.
6. Present the most significant physical or environmental barriers to accessing regional parks.
7. Identify outdoor recreation and visitation-related data gaps.
8. Provide considerations and recommendations to be addressed in the Regional Parks Stewardship Plan.

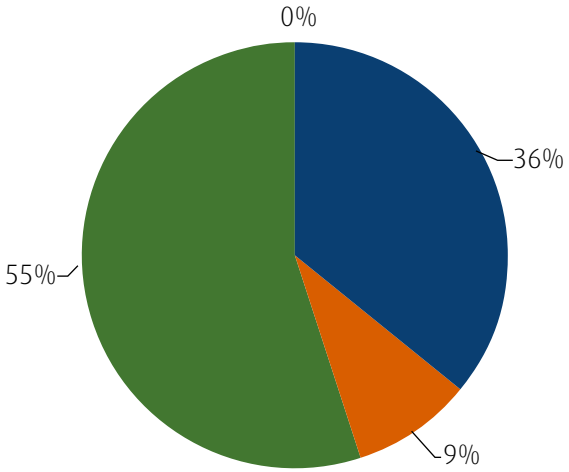

Witty s Lagoon Regional Park

Capital Regional District Regional Parks

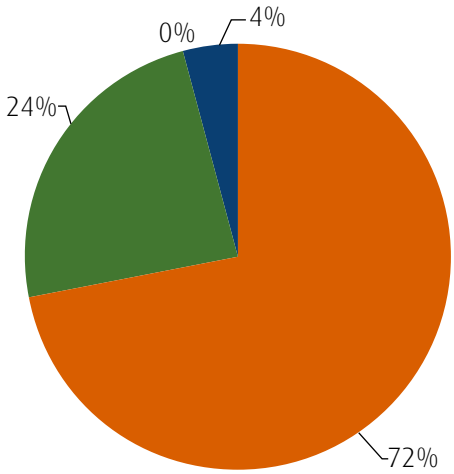
The CRD is responsible for managing 34 regional parks covering 13,400 hectares and representing 6% of the regional land base. While the CRD regional parks system is just one of multiple parks systems in the region, it is the largest park system by area and represents 27% of all parks and protected areas in the CRD.

Regional parks are given one of four classifications to guide their management. Conservation Areas focus on interpreting natural and cultural features. Wilderness Areas provide remote and secluded outdoor recreation. Conservancy Areas enhance the understanding of Indigenous cultural use. And Natural Recreation Areas balance the protection of natural areas with compatible outdoor recreation. This classification dictates the types and intensity of supported outdoor recreation, with Conservation, Wilderness and Conservancy Areas prioritizing ecological and cultural values over recreation, while Natural Recreation Areas strive to balance these priorities. The figures below identify the proportion of parks and the proportion of park land base within each classification.

Regional Parks by Classification

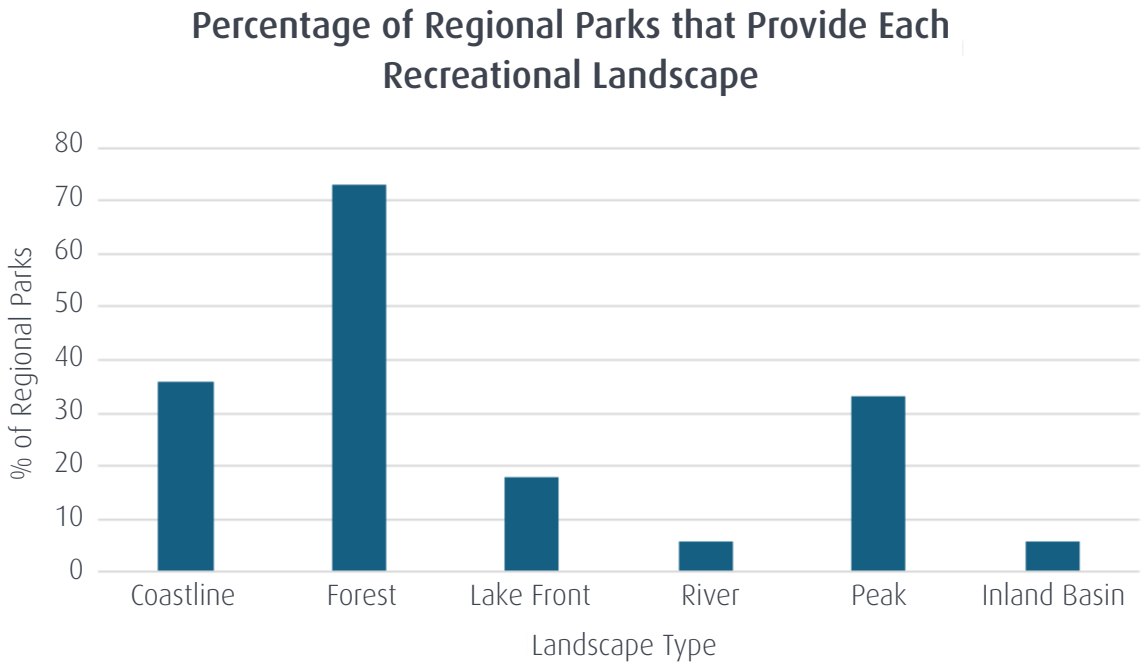


Regional Park Land Base by Classification



Regional parks support a range of outdoor recreation activities. Visitors can enjoy frontcountry/auto-accessible camping, various trail activities such as hiking, running, walking, backpacking, equestrian activities and different types of cycling, including mountain biking and gravel biking. Water activities include swimming, rowing, paddling, sailing, powerboating and fishing. Additionally, other activities like wildlife viewing, photography, geocaching and picnicking are supported within regional parks.

Regional parks provide opportunities for these activities to be enjoyed in a range of recreational settings and landscapes. They can primarily be classified as front or mid-country, though some opportunities for backcountry recreation exist within the area of Sea to Sea and Sooke Hills Wilderness regional parks. Regional parks provide a range of recreational settings including coastline, mountains (peaks) and lake front, but forested landscapes are the most highly represented setting across the system.



Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park

Trails and Recreational Infrastructure

Regional parks include a variety of infrastructures and amenities that support high-quality outdoor recreation. Within regional parks there are 345 km of sanctioned trails, primarily multi-use, allowing for hiking, cycling and equestrian activities. Day-use and picnic areas are available in nine parks, with a total of 151 picnic tables. The CRD provides three regional campgrounds with 141 camping pads and one main accessible play structure at Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park. There are 17 parks with beach access (freshwater and coastal) and four boat launches, along with various comfort and convenience amenities such as toilets, washrooms, parking areas, drinking fountains, benches and bicycle racks.

- 345 km of sanctioned trails
- Beach areas – 21
- Boat Launches – 4
- Campgrounds – 3 (141 campsites)
- Docks – 6
- Mobi-mats – 2
- Mountain Bike Technical Training Areas – 1
- Nature Centres – 2
- Parking Lots – 85
- Picnic Shelters – 4
- Picnic Tables – 151
- Playground structures – 2
- Washrooms - 55

The CRD has four formal licence agreements with not-for-profit organizations that support specific outdoor recreation locations or activities. Through these agreements more than 6,000 volunteer hours annually are contributed to support visitor experience in the regional parks.

Visitation

Between 2014 and 2024 regional park visitation increased by 58%. A substantial proportion of this increase coincided with the COVID19 pandemic; visitation increased 24% from 2019 to 2020. However, long-term visitation patterns suggest that the increase in visitation and participation in outdoor recreation is a sustained trend that will likely continue and possibly even grow further into the future, especially given the region's projected population growth.

When regional parks are considered individually, growth in visitation varies substantially, with 13 regional parks experiencing visitation growth above the average 58% system-wide increase. High visitation parks include Elk/Beaver Lake and Thetis Lake regional parks. In general, parks near urban areas and parks with diverse settings and activities tend to attract more visitors.

Access to CRD Regional Parks

Despite the extensive network of regional parks and current infrastructure and amenities throughout the CRD Regional Parks system, barriers to access still exist. CRD regional parks are geographically dispersed across the region. Approximately, 91% of households within the CRD are within a 15-minutes drive of at least one regional park. However, barriers are present that limit access to regional parks. Only 30% of regional parks are accessible by public transit and only 35% of regional parks are connected to one of the CRD regional trails. Social barriers also play a role, such as gaps in information, the effects of urbanization, and underrepresentation of equity-denied groups in park usage and management.

Capital Regional District Regional Trails

The CRD is responsible for four regional trails with a total length of approximately 103 km. The regional trails provide visitors the opportunity to participate in both active transportation and recreational activities, as well as linking eight regional parks with neighbourhoods, amenities and other community spaces.

- E&N Rail Trail Humpback Connector – 13.9 km
- Galloping Goose Regional Trail – 55.85 km
- Lochside Regional Trail – 29.5 km
- Mayne Island Regional Trail – 4 km

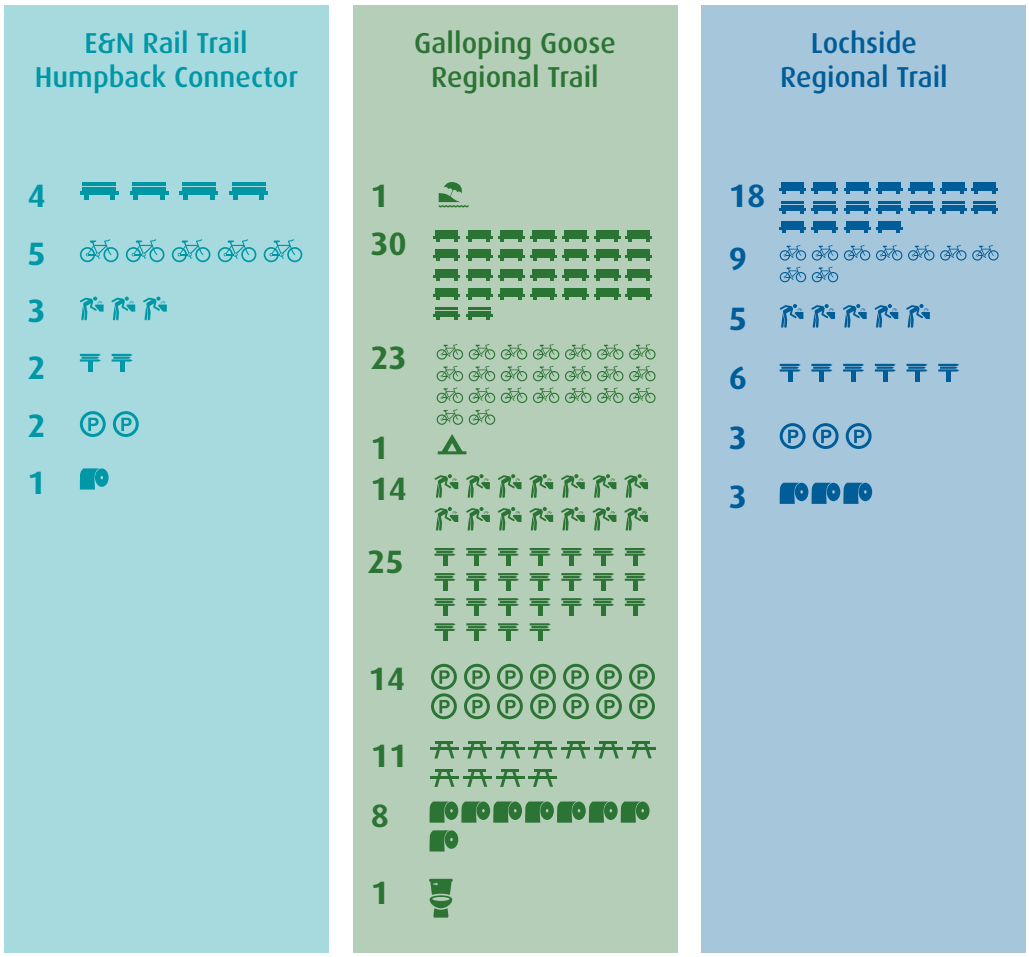
Trail-based outdoor recreation opportunities provided on the regional trails include hiking, running, walking, dog walking, equestrian activities, roller blading, skateboarding, and cycling. Designated uses vary according to specific trail and location. The entirety of the E&N and Mayne Island regional trails are designated for cycling and pedestrian use with no equestrian use permitted. 66% of the Galloping Goose Regional Trail and 45% of the Lochside Regional Trail are designated for cycling, equestrian and pedestrian use and the remainder is limited to cycling and pedestrian use.

The regional trails traverse multiple landscapes and developed urban areas, rural areas and regional parks. In general, the E&N Rail Trail provides a developed recreational setting, the Lochside and Mayne Island regional trails provide both developed and frontcountry settings, and the Galloping Goose provides developed, frontcountry, mid-country and some backcountry semi-primitive settings.

Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park

In respect to the outdoor recreation landscapes, each trail provides a range of opportunities to experience different recreational landscapes, with the Galloping Goose Regional Trail providing the most diverse range of landscapes, including coastlines, forests, rivers and lakes. Along CRD regional trails (within 100 m of a given regional trail) there is a broad range of outdoor recreation-related infrastructure and amenities.

189 Total Amenities



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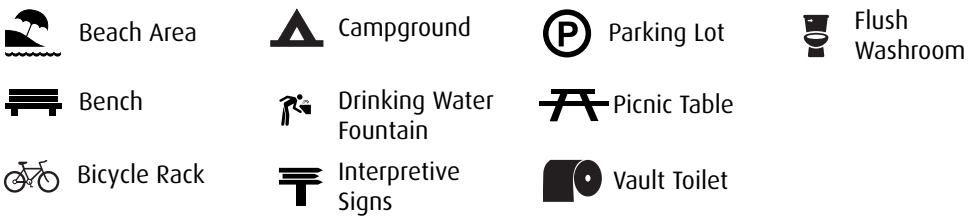

Mount Work Regional Park

Regional Trail Visitation

Consistent with regional park visitation, regional trail visitation has increased in the past decade. Between 2014 and 2024 regional trail visitation increased by 35% to an estimated visitation of over 4 million in 2024. Overall trail use is highest in urban areas with a mix of different forms of transportation and ability levels, whereas rural sections see more seasonal, varied use.

Resident Feedback

The 2024 Resident Survey revealed that 94% of CRD residents think that regional parks are an important fixture in the community with high visitation rates and top activities, including walking, hiking, wildlife viewing and dog walking. The 2013 and 2019 Regional Trail Surveys highlighted the importance of commuting and fitness, satisfaction with trails, and concerns about safety and facilities. The 2021 Regional Park Visitor Survey emphasized outdoor recreation as a primary motivator, high satisfaction rates, concerns about dogs off-leash, and lack of amenities.

Outdoor Recreation Data

The details, data and summaries outlined in the State of Outdoor Recreation report are crucial for effective outdoor recreation planning and management and the development of the CRD Regional Parks and Trails Stewardship Plan. A few data gaps have been identified, including the classification of trails, understanding regional outdoor recreation demands, inventory of recreation settings, monitoring visitor use impacts, and assessing the economic impact of outdoor recreation.

Conclusion

Overall, the CRD's regional parks and trails system plays a vital role in providing diverse outdoor recreation opportunities, supporting conservation efforts, and enhancing the quality of life for residents and visitors. Continued efforts to address barriers, manage impacts, and gather comprehensive data will help ensure the sustainability and enjoyment of these valuable natural resources.

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Regional Parks State of Outdoor Recreation Report

Regional Parks Committee

November 26, 2025

Presentation Content

- Background
- Scope of Report
- Key Findings
- Implications
- Conclusion


Mount Work Regional Park

Background

The State of Outdoor Recreation Report was completed in alignment with the State of Natural Features Report

This report:

- Enhances understanding of CRD regional parks and trails
- Informs the development of key actions identified in the Strategic Plan - the Stewardship Plan and the update to the Land Acquisition Strategy
- Guides the development of Management Plans

East Sooke Regional Park

Regional Park Overview

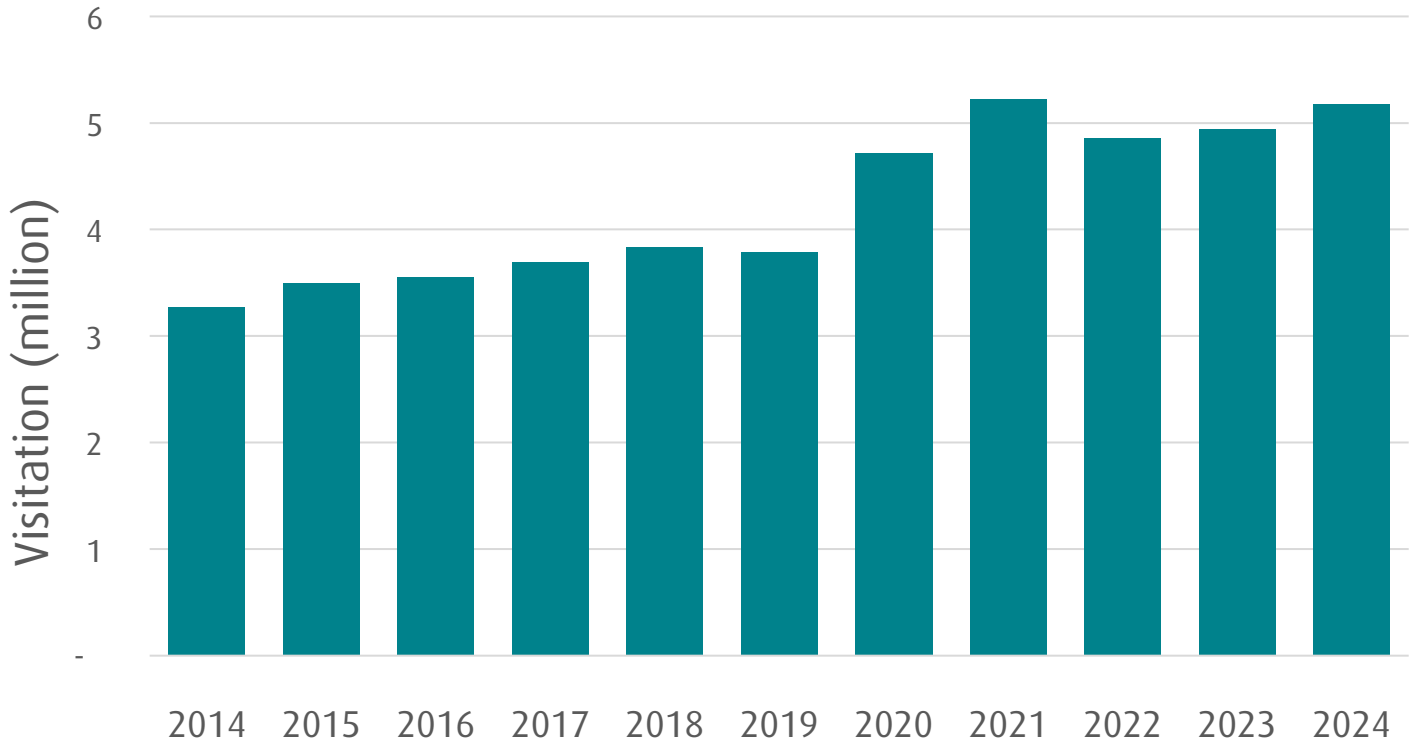
- 34 regional parks
- Four regional trails
- More than 13,350 hectares
- Represent 6% of the regional land base
- Represent 27% of all parks and protected areas in the region

Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park

Scope of Report

- Summarize demographic and socio-economic characteristics of CRD.
- Summarize outdoor recreation trends.
- Provide an overview of regional parks and trail visitation trends.
- Summarize and quantify outdoor recreation opportunities, amenities and infrastructure.
- Identify the most significant physical or environmental barriers to accessing regional parks and trails.
- Identify outdoor recreation related data gaps.

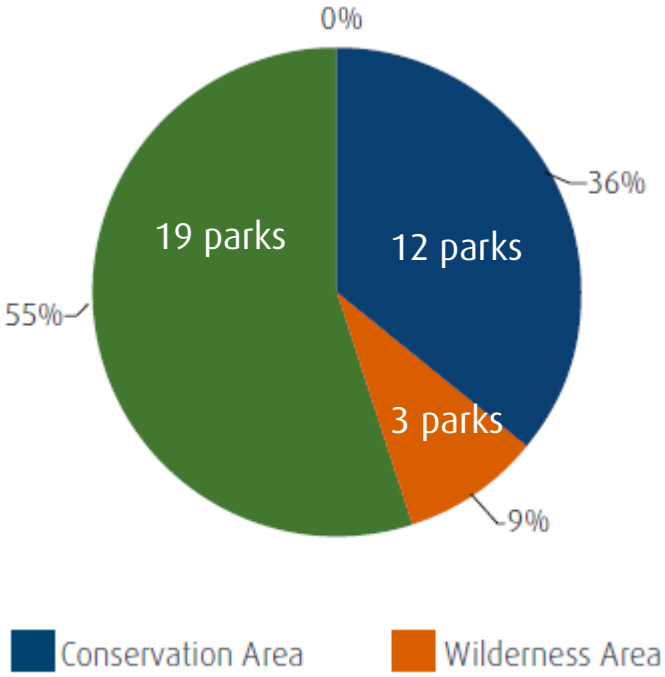
Key Findings
Regional Park Visitation



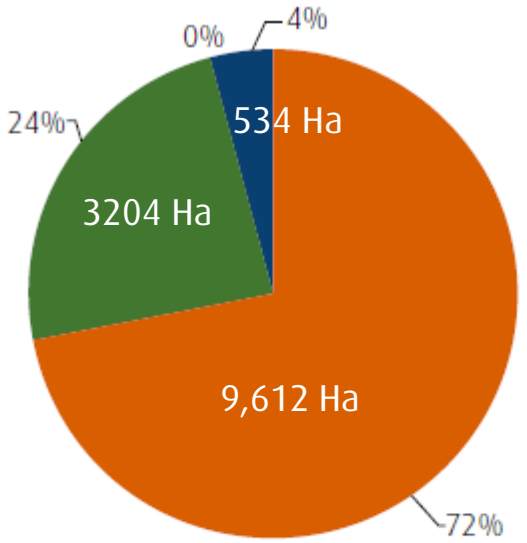
Regional Park visitation has increased 58% between 2014 and 2024.

Key Findings
Park Classifications

Regional Parks by Classification



Regional Park Land Base by Classification



Conservation Area | Wilderness Area | Natural Recreation Area | Conservancy Area


Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park

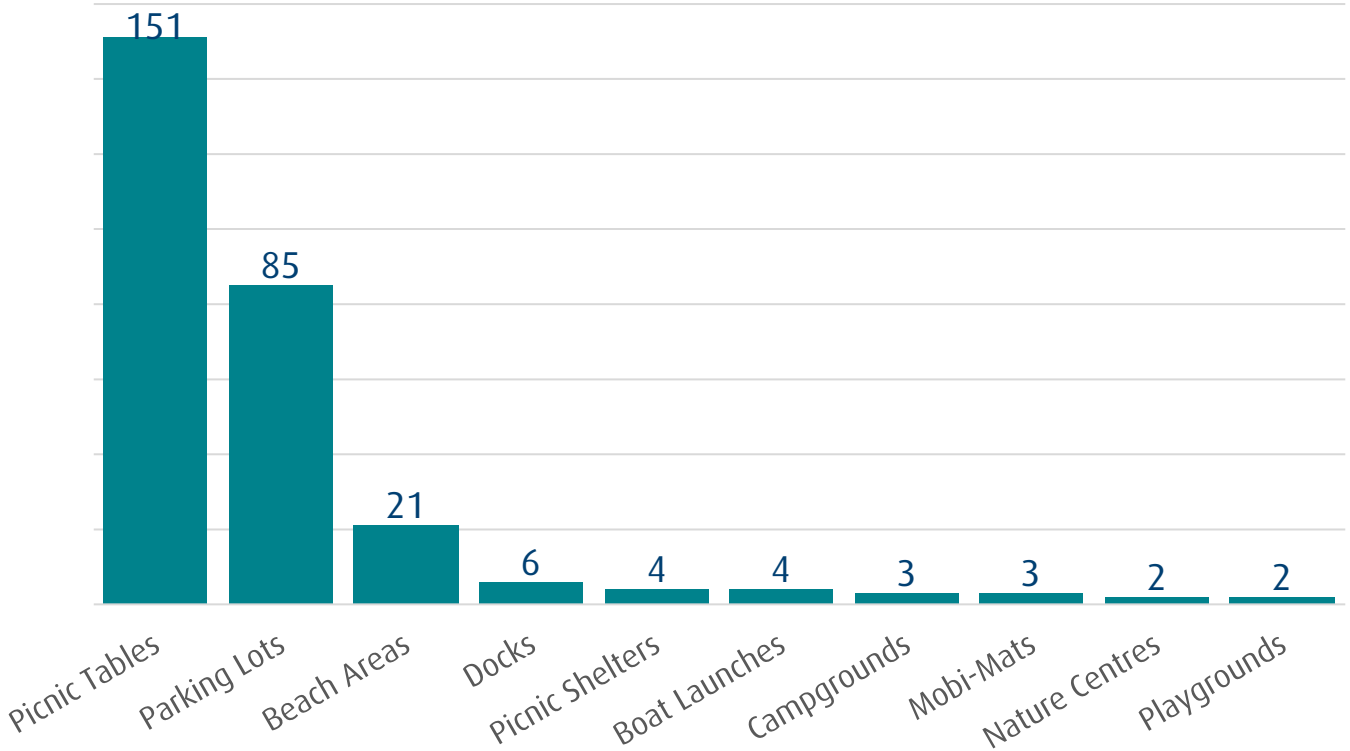
Key Findings
Recreational Landscapes

Regional parks and trails provide a range of recreational landscapes that represent regionally significant landscapes.

- Water access (lake or ocean) is provided in 52% of regional parks.
- Forest landscapes are present in 73% of regional parks.
- Hilltops provide summit opportunities and viewpoints in 33% of regional parks.

East Sooke Regional Park

Key Findings
Recreational Infrastructure



Plus, regional parks provide 354 km of maintained trails.


East Sooke Regional Park

Key Findings
Access and Equity


Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park


E&N Rail Trail


Island View Beach Regional Park


Elk/Beaver Lake Regional Park

- 91% of households in the CRD are within a 15-minute drive of at least one regional park.
- 30% of regional parks are accessible by public transport.
- Only 4% of total length of trails in regional parks are classified as accessible or user-friendly.

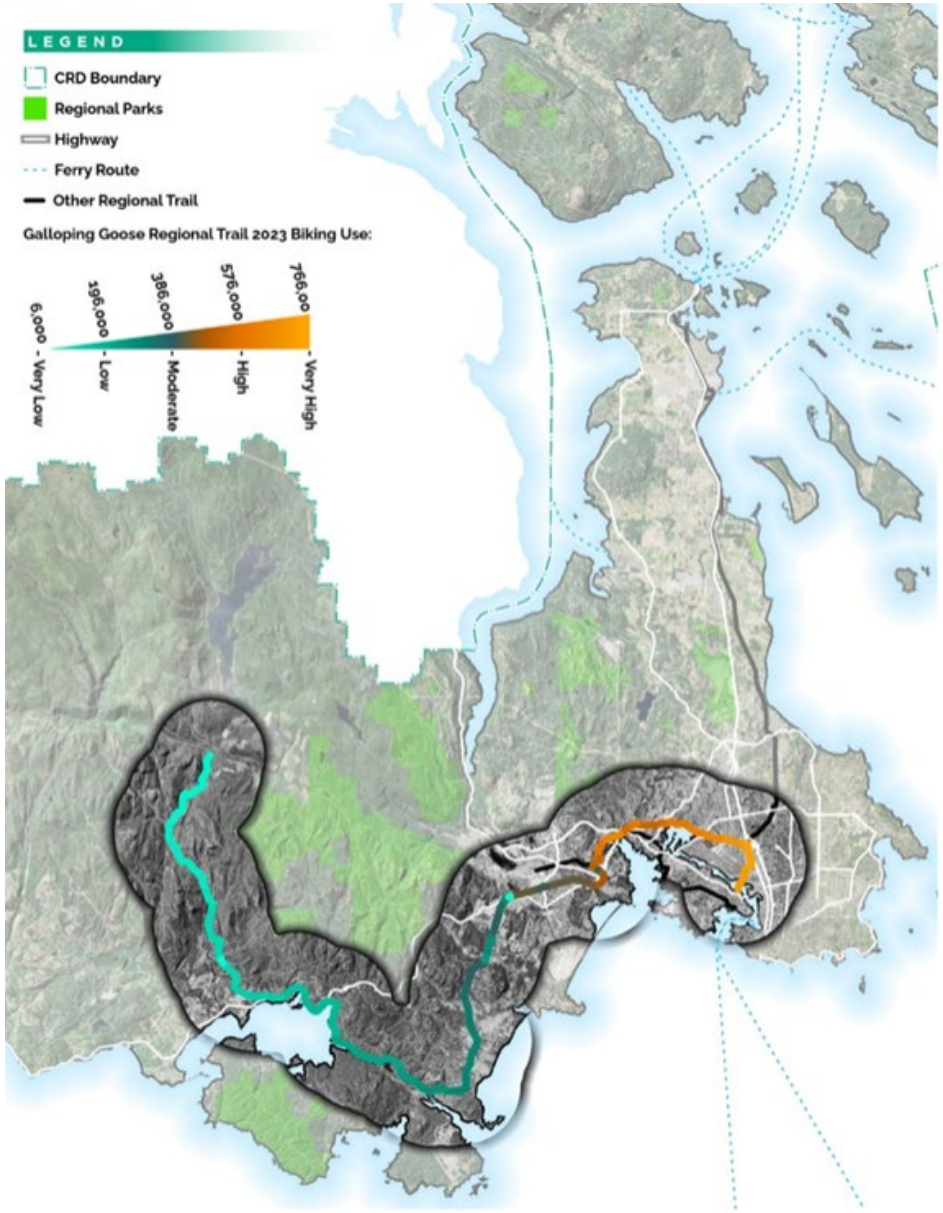
Key Findings
Regional Trails

E&N Rail Trail Humpback Connector
13.5 km

Galloping Goose Regional Trail
55.85 km

Lochside Regional Trail
29.5 km

Mayne Island Regional Trail
4 km



Regional Trail Visitation

- 35% increase from 2014 to 2024
- Estimated visitation of over 4 million in 2024
- Trail usage is highest in urban areas.
- Rural areas have a more seasonal use pattern.

Implications
Areas for Further Development

- Regional outdoor recreation demands
- Inventory of regional recreational settings
- Classification of trails in regional parks
- Visitor use surveys
- Visitor use impacts


Mount Work Regional Park

Conclusion

- Collaboration and knowledge sharing
- Aids on-the-ground operations and land management
- Informs Management Plans and Interim Management Guidelines
- Aids in creating policies, guidelines and strategic plans


Mill Hill Regional Park

Questions?

Capital Regional District

CRDVictoria

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