



City of Victoria

# Parks & Open Spaces Masterplan





## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

City of Victoria Council

Neighbourhood Associations

Stakeholders, focus group participants, and other members of the public

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# Executive Summary

The City of Victoria's parks and open spaces are a vital piece of the city's character, culture, and vibrancy. Serving residents and visitors alike, they offer opportunities for socializing, recreation, relaxation, play, learning, and connecting with nature. They are an important contributor to quality of life, playing a role in the support of physical, social, ecological and economic health of the city and its residents. The residents of Victoria highly value their parks and open spaces and recognize the wide range of benefits they provide. As Victoria continues to grow and change, it is imperative that the development and management of park spaces and amenities align with community values and serve to protect the ecology and history of the area.

The Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan is the culmination of a year-long effort to create a strategic level roadmap to help guide the planning and management of, and investment into the City's parks system for the next 25 years. The Plan is grounded in an analysis of the existing parks and open spaces inventory, community context and input from the public and stakeholders. The Plan takes a city-wide approach to the parks and open spaces system and defines an overall vision and four goals:

## *VISION*

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*Victoria's parks and open spaces system is dynamic, vibrant, playful, sustainable, inclusive, and diverse. It engages residents and visitors with the unique ecosystems, culture, and character of the city, supports health and wellness for all, and protects natural areas as a vital resource.*

## GOAL 1: PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

Parks and open spaces protect and improve native ecosystems and help the city adapt to climate change.

## GOAL 2: FOSTER ENGAGING EXPERIENCES FOR EVERYONE

Parks and open spaces provide a range of different experiences, encourage active living, and are multifunctional, inclusive, and accessible.

## GOAL 3: CELEBRATE VICTORIA

Special places and amenities in parks and open spaces animate the city and support events for both residents and visitors.

## GOAL 4: STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS

Community members, stewards, and partners help enhance all parks and open spaces in the city.

Each goal includes guiding principles, objectives, and actions. The guiding principles recognize the underlying philosophy and approach to parks and open spaces planning and management. The objectives break each goal in to specific focus areas, and the actions outline specific planning and capital projects that will help meet each goal.

The implementation of this plan will include specific planning and capital projects, as well as application of the guiding principles and actions through the development of Local Area Plans, creation of individual park management or improvement plans, and specific park design and development projects. This Master Plan does not outline specific locations for parks or park amenities, recognizing that this is most effectively done at the neighbourhood and park planning level. Enough flexibility is included to allow implementation to be tailored to suit the unique needs of each neighbourhood, through additional consultation with local residents.

The following actions were identified as priorities. The complete action plan is provided in Chapter 6, which lists all the actions with the timeframe and order of magnitude cost estimates.

## Priority Actions

Action	Description	Timeframe
1.2.3	Identify opportunities to daylight or celebrate culverted streams.	SHORT
2.1.1	Update and/or consolidate the City's land use policies related to park land designation including consolidating park properties with multiple titles, updating the OCP with the current inventory and developing park zoning designations within the Zoning Regulation Bylaw.	SHORT
2.1.2	Develop a Park Development and Acquisition Strategy, develop and maintain a list of priority park land acquisitions. Coordinate with the Local Area Plans process.	SHORT
2.1.3	Implement a life-cycle analysis framework to ensure accurate forecasting and planning for significant maintenance, upgrades, repairs, and replacement of park amenities such as washrooms, sports fields and courts, playgrounds, and, trails.	SHORT
2.1.4	Adopt park design guidelines for park furniture and amenities.	SHORT
2.1.6	Establish a list of priority improvement projects to address safety issues and other barriers to park use.	SHORT
2.2.4	Develop a Dogs in Parks Strategy that builds off of the experiences of the existing Paws in Parks Program.	SHORT
2.3.3	Establish and maintain standards of care to ensure safe, high quality play features.	SHORT
2.3.6	Identify a location and develop a second skate park that allows for a variety of activities (i.e. roller blading, scooters, and BMX inclusive), ages and abilities.	SHORT
2.6.1	Create a wayfinding and signage strategy for the parks and open spaces system.	SHORT
4.1.5	Create a Park Volunteer Policy and Program	SHORT
1.1.1	Develop a Biodiversity Strategy.	MEDIUM
2.2.1	Identify existing underutilized spaces and develop a strategy for how to encourage broader use.	MEDIUM
2.3.2	Establish a target and implementation plan for the provision of play spaces within an 800 meter walking distance of 99% of households.	MEDIUM
2.3.5	Develop an All-Wheels Strategy.	MEDIUM
2.4.1	Develop a Sports and Facility Development Strategy.	MEDIUM
2.6.2	Develop digital tools and strategies that help people find and explore Victoria's parks and open spaces.	MEDIUM

Action	Description	Timeframe
2.6.5	Identify strategies to reduce user conflicts on the Dallas Road pathway.	MEDIUM
3.1.1	Review and amend the Park Regulation Bylaw to allow limited commercial activities in the parks system.	MEDIUM
3.1.2	Identify opportunities and obstacles to increased activation of Beacon Hill Park.	MEDIUM
1.3.4 (B)	Implement mitigation strategies related to climate change impacts on marine shorelines (based on Short Term Planning Action 1.3.4, above).	LONG
1.1.2	Continue to implement the Urban Forest Master Plan.	OPERATIONAL
1.2.1	Update the Environmental Management Standards for park operations and maintenance that will increase the resilience of parks and open spaces.	OPERATIONAL
1.3.3	Identify plants and ecosystems vulnerable to climate change and develop management strategies to help mitigate impacts.	OPERATIONAL
1.3.4	Identify marine shorelines within the parks system that are vulnerable to climate change impacts and develop mitigation strategies.	OPERATIONAL
2.4.2	Continue to conduct annual meetings with sports league representatives and other user groups.	OPERATIONAL
2.5.1	Incorporate community gardening and related amenities into the parks system.	OPERATIONAL
2.5.3	Work with other significant land owners, both public and private, to identify locations for urban food production and community gardening.	OPERATIONAL
2.6.3	Provide amenities to encourage and support park users who walk and cycle.	OPERATIONAL
2.6.4	Prioritize the development of active transportation linkages and infrastructure that connects residents and visitors to parks.	OPERATIONAL
2.6.6	Improve waterfront access and public uses along the City's waterfront spaces.	OPERATIONAL
4.1.1	Investigate the potential for Memorandums of Understanding with the provincial and federal governments, School District #61, the Greater Victoria Harbour Authority, and other land owners responsible for key public spaces to coordinate planning and identify efficiencies in operations.	OPERATIONAL



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# CHAPTER

# 1



# Introduction

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The City of Victoria is located on the traditional territories of the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations. Victoria is the capital city of British Columbia and is a compact community of 85,000 residents with an expected population growth to 100,000 by 2041. Victoria is one of 13 municipalities that comprise the Capital region, which has an overall population of 380,000 people. The city has 13 neighbourhoods, each with a distinctive character and charm created by its unique mix of land uses, forms of development, and parks and open spaces. Given its constrained condition, Victoria is considered to be largely built out. Population growth and development is taking place through redevelopment and increasing densification of existing urban areas.

The 2041 vision for the City as described in the Official Community Plan is that “Victoria is an urban sustainability leader inspiring innovation, pride and

progress towards greater ecological integrity, livability, economic vitality and community resiliency confronting the changes facing society and the planet today and for generations to come, while building on Victoria’s strength as a harbour-centred, historic, capital city that provides exceptional quality of life through a beautiful natural setting, walkable neighbourhoods of unique character, and a thriving Downtown that is the heart of the region.”

The parks and open spaces system is a vital component of this overall vision. The system protects important natural areas and ecosystems, celebrates the history of the city and region, and attracts tourists from across the world. Victoria is known as the ‘Garden City’ and its horticultural displays contribute to the city’s unique atmosphere and character. Victoria is a major tourist destination, and the parks and open spaces system is part of

what attracts those seeking cultural, historic, nature-based and active outdoor recreational activities.

The City of Victoria’s parks and open spaces are a vital piece of the city’s character, culture, and vibrancy. Serving residents and visitors alike, they offer opportunities for socializing, recreation, relaxation, play, learning, and connecting with nature. They are an important contributor to quality of life, playing a role in the support of physical, social, ecological and economic health of the city and its residents.

The residents of Victoria highly value their parks and open spaces and recognize the wide range of benefits they provide. As Victoria continues to grow and change, it is imperative that the development and management of park spaces and amenities align with community values and serve to protect the ecology and history of the area.

The City of Victoria's parks and open spaces are a vital piece of the city's character, culture, and vibrancy.



## 1.1 The Purpose of the Plan

This Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan lays out a roadmap to guide planning, management, and investment over the next 25 years. The Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan is a strategic-level document that identifies broad goals and planning initiatives. It will be used to focus efforts and prioritize resources toward achieving measurable outcomes. To achieve this, the scope of this plan includes:

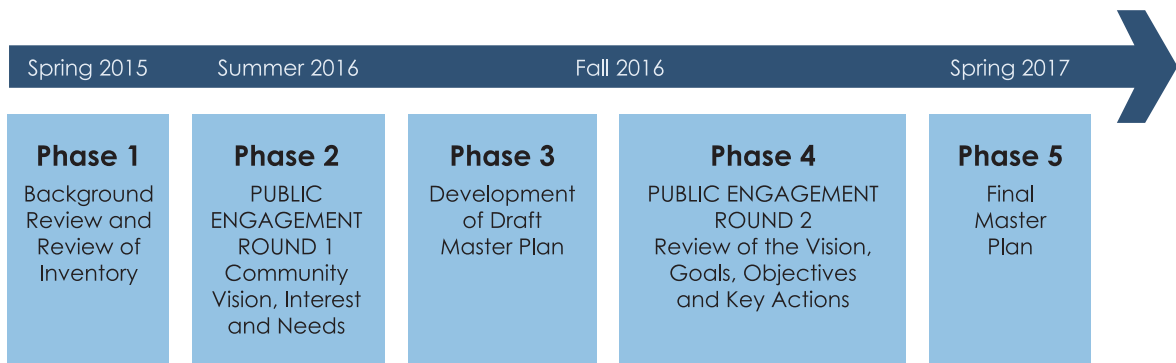
- Identification of key issues, opportunities and constraints;
- Identification of community values, interests and needs;

- Creation of a shared vision for the City's parks and open spaces;
- Creation of a set of goals for improving parks and open spaces;
- Identification of priorities for investment in parks and open spaces, and
- Development of an implementation plan to achieve the goals and priorities over the next 25 years.

## 1.2 The Plan Process

This plan was undertaken in five phases, as outlined in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1:  
Project Phases and Timeline



## 1.3 What's in the Plan?

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This plan describes where we are (Chapters 1-3), where we want to go (Chapters 4-5), and how we get there (Chapter 6). Each chapter is briefly described below.

### WHERE ARE WE?

*Chapter 2 – Best Practices and Trends* is an overview of a range of topics affecting parks and open spaces including demographics, environment, outdoor recreation and sports, health, and parks trends and challenges.

*Chapter 3 – The Current System* describes the City of Victoria and its existing parks and open spaces system, including distribution of key park amenities, the balance of active and natural areas, and the highlights and special features. Other green spaces, such as schools and provincial lands, are also described in terms of their contribution to the system as a whole.

*Chapter 4 – Public Engagement* outlines the processes and tools used to engage with residents and gather input for the development of the Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan. The key findings are outlined, with additional detailed findings provided in Appendix B.

### WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO?

*Chapter 5 – Vision, Goals, Objectives and Actions* proposes a vision statement and four primary goals that will form the overarching direction for Victoria's parks and open spaces. Each goal is further described through a set of objectives and actions that will help create a parks system that truly reflects community values.

### HOW DO WE GET THERE?

*Chapter 6 – Implementation Plan* describes how the plan will be implemented and includes priorities and timelines for the actions in Chapter 6. A brief overview of potential funding strategies is also provided.

## 1.4 Context within City Plans and Policies

This plan is informed by other City plans and policies and furthers existing strategic directions and goals. The 2012 Official Community Plan (OCP) identified numerous goals related to parks and open spaces, along with other aspects of City planning, which have been incorporated throughout this document. The 2015-2018 Strategic Plan specifically identified this Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan as an action to be undertaken.

The Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan will be used as a tool to inform the more detailed planning

work that will take place through the development of Local Area Plans, creation of individual park management or improvement plans, and specific park design and development projects. This Master Plan does not outline specific locations for parks or park amenities recognizing that this is most effectively done at the neighbourhood and park planning level. Enough flexibility is included in this plan to allow implementation to be tailored to suit the unique needs of each neighbourhood, through additional consultation with local residents. Parks, particularly neighbourhood parks, should reflect the diverse character and needs of each neighbourhood. Figure 1.2 illustrates the relationship of this plan with other City plans and documents.

Figure 1.2:  
Planning Context for the Parks and Open  
Spaces Master Plan



## 1.5 Plans and Policies Informing The Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan

A number of plans and policies were reviewed for the Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan. Relevant goals, objectives, outcomes, actions, and recommendations were identified and incorporated directly or were used as inspiration for the Goals, Objectives and Actions outlined in Chapter 5 of this plan.

The primary documents that were reviewed include:

- Official Community Plan (2012)
- 2015-2018 Strategic Plan
- Urban Forest Master Plan (2013)
- Greenways Plan (2003)
- 2016 #Biketoria study

### 2012 OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

The primary document that guided and influenced all aspects of this plan was the Official Community Plan (OCP). Some of the key goals and objectives of the OCP, related to parks and open spaces, included:

- Expand the variety of parks and balance the multiple purposes and uses of parks, such as cultural events, recreation, sports, ecosystem services, commemoration, and aesthetic enjoyment;
- Identify additional areas for ecological protection and restoration in parks, and develop appropriate management strategies and practices;
- Enhance child- and youth-friendly parks and recreational facilities, services, and programs in the city, to promote a healthy community and to help attract and retain households with children;
- Develop a Parks Acquisition Strategy; and
- Develop a Sports Fields Strategy.

### Broad Objectives for Parks and Recreation

*(Official Community Plan, 2012)*

The parks and recreation policies of this plan collectively address five broad objectives:

9 (a) That a network of parks and open spaces meets citywide and local area needs, including at least one park or open space within walking distance (400 metres) of 99% of households.

9 (b) That a well-connected, clearly identifiable, and multi-functional network of greenways is established across the city.

9 (c) That parks, open spaces and facilities contribute to the enhancement and restoration of ecological functions.

9 (d) That a diversity of facilities, services and programming enables broad community access and participation in an active lifestyle.

9 (e) That parks and recreational facilities are designed to achieve multiple benefits and accommodate a diversity of people and activities.



**2015-2018 STRATEGIC PLAN**

The Strategic Plan outlines 13 strategic objectives, each with a set of more detailed objectives, outcomes, and actions. Completion of this Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan is one of the key actions identified.

The David Foster Harbour Pathway was identified as a high priority as it will help achieve multiple objectives. Other highlights of the Strategic Plan include a focus on placemaking and enlivening public spaces, improving accessibility for everyone, collaborating with School District 61, and improving connectivity and safety.

**URBAN FOREST MASTER PLAN (2013)**

The Urban Forest Master Plan provides guidance on the management and enhancement of the treed environment throughout Victoria, including within parks and open spaces. It outlines a roadmap for investment and maintenance of the urban forest over the next 20 years.

Many linkages and synergies exist between the urban forest and the parks and open spaces system, and several recommended actions from the Urban Forest Master Plan have been incorporated into this Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan with additional details to help support implementation and ensure coordination between the plans.

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*In 2060, Victoria's homes and businesses lie within a stunning urban forest that is healthy, diverse and abundant in all parts of the city. Treed environments are valued as an integral part of this vibrant, livable and sustainable community: supporting biodiversity and watershed health; enhancing neighbourhoods; and creating places for activity, enjoyment and relaxation. Victoria's urban forest exemplifies sound and innovative practices and community stewardship.*

– Urban Forest Master Plan Vision Statement

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*Many linkages and synergies exist between the urban forest and the parks and open spaces system*

### **GREENWAYS PLAN (2003)**

The Greenways Plan was developed to provide a policy framework and a series of strategies to establish a greenways system for Victoria. The three goals were:

- To establish a human-powered transportation network;
- To restore native, aquatic and cultural habitats; and
- To provide opportunities for recreation.

The proposed greenways network identified linkages between destinations including parks, schools, commercial centres, recreation centres and other common destinations. The Greenways Plan and the network map were reviewed in terms of the connectivity and synergies with this Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan.

### **2016 #BIKETORIA STUDY**

The 2016 Biketoria Study reviewed the existing cycling network, made recommendations for enhancements to the 2014 recommended network, and identified priority corridors. The study was primarily focused on improving the cycling network for active transportation and overall city-wide connectivity. The priority routes were reviewed in terms of the connectivity to Victoria's parks and open spaces.



## 1.6 Community Profile and Context

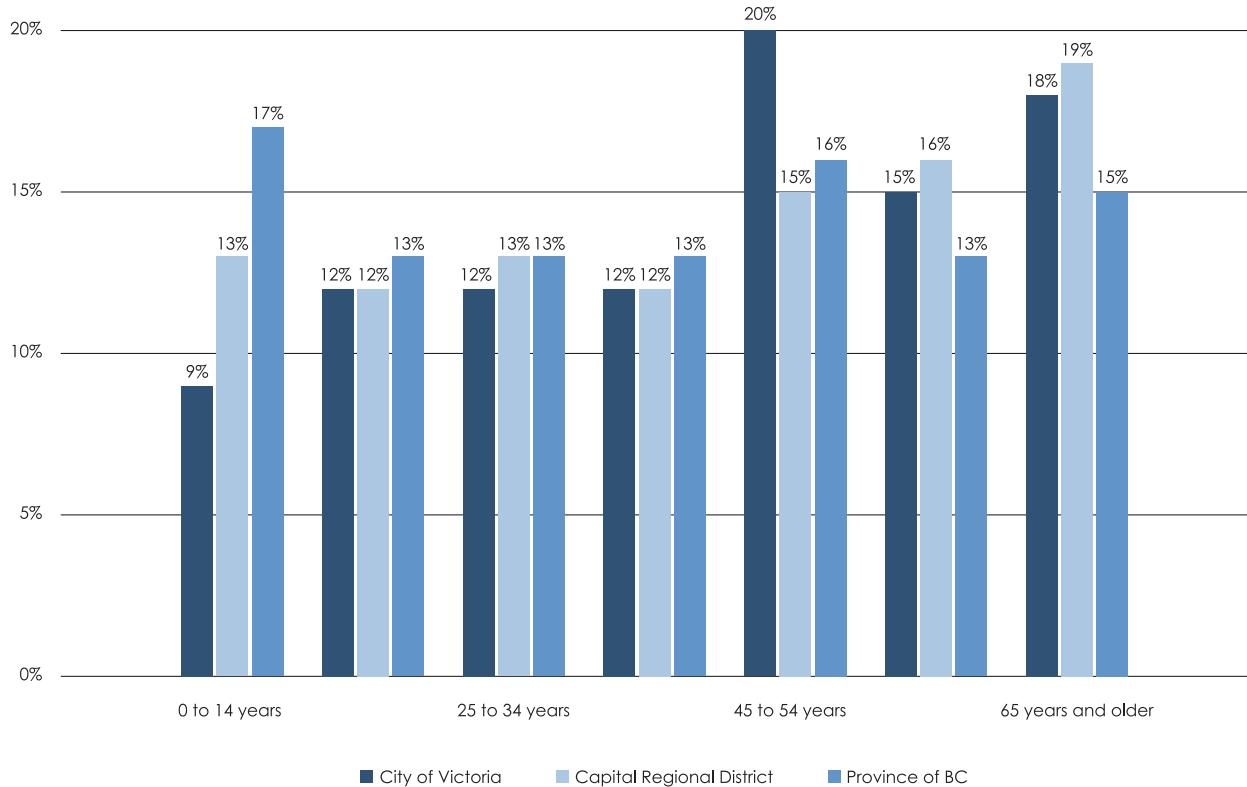
### Demographics

Victoria had a population of 85,792 people in 2016, while the metropolitan area of Greater Victoria had a population of 383,360 (Statistics Canada, 2016). The largest segment of the population in 2011 was between 45 and 54 years of age (20%), with 18% of the population being 65 and over. The median age was 41.9, which slightly increased from 41.6 in 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2011).

Population projections for the Capital Regional District estimate a 28% increase in population between the years 2011-2038, with the largest increase projected in those age 75 and older. There is also a large cohort of people who are currently between 50 and 65 and will be retiring over the next 10-20 years (Statistics Canada, 2011). The population is expected to grow to 100,000 by 2041 and is expected to see a substantial increase in older adults and retirees (City of Victoria, 2012).

The greatest influence on the growth of the Capital Regional District's population is a net influx of

Figure 1.3: Population Demographics – Victoria, Capital Regional District, and the Province (Statistics Canada, 2011)



people migrating from other areas of BC and Canada. Most of those who move from other locations in the Province were under the age of 50 (80%). Of those moving from other parts of Canada, the top three demographics included “pre-retirees” from ages 45-64 (~50%), young adults from ages 18-24 (22%), and retirees from ages 65-74 (12%). Young adults are drawn to the area for the educational opportunities, while the influx of those age 45-64 reflect the status of the Capital Regional District as a retirement destination (Urban Futures, 2014).

These demographic trends suggest that the parks and open space system will need to adapt to serve a larger proportion of older adults who are likely to remain active longer than previous generations. Parks will also be a key quality of life factor that will help attract and maintain families. Although children and youth will become a smaller proportion of the population overall, there will be a continued need to provide spaces for them.

### ***Housing and Development Patterns***

The City of Victoria is divided into 13 neighbourhoods, each with its own distinct character. Downtown and Harris Green are the densest neighbourhoods, followed by North Park and James Bay. Between 2006 and 2011, the greatest increase in the number of dwelling units occurred

in the Downtown, Harris Green, and Victoria West neighbourhoods. In all other neighbourhoods the number of dwelling units did not change significantly (between 2% decrease and 1% growth). The Urban Core, Town Centres, and Urban Villages are expected to shift toward medium and high density neighbourhoods to ensure housing needs are met, provide complete communities, encourage transit and active transportation, and ensure affordability (City of Victoria, 2012).

In 2011, 59% of Victoria residents rented their dwelling. The neighbourhoods with the highest rental rates were North Park, Downtown and James Bay (77%, 73%, and 69% respectively). The neighbourhoods with the highest home ownership rates were Gonzales, Oaklands, and Victoria West (70%, 58%, and 49% respectively) (Statistics Canada, 2011). Also of note, the number of one person households is at nearly 50% and will likely rise (see Figure 1.5).

The implications of these trends are that the City will need to take into account the higher demand placed on parks around the pockets of increased density, ensuring that park spaces are accessible to as many residents as possible. Development pressure and land values around these nodes will likely be higher than other areas, potentially making park land acquisition challenging. The high proportion of those living alone

Figure 1.4:  
Victoria's Parks and Neighbourhoods



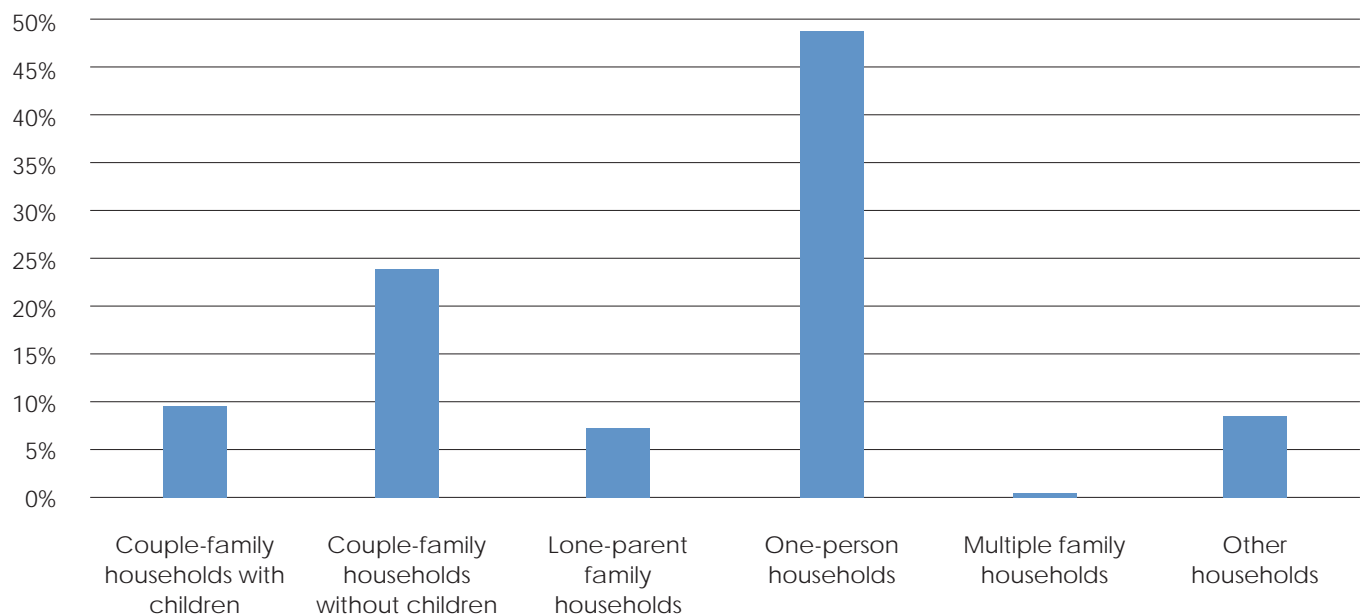
means it is critical to maximize the use of parks for those activities that build community, connect people, offer opportunities for socializing, and reduce isolation.

**Economy**

Victoria has one of the strongest economies in B.C., which has been enhanced by a rapidly growing knowledge-based economy which now boasts annual revenues in excess of \$4 billion and has surpassed Tourism. As identified in the City of Victoria’s economic action plan called Making Victoria – Unleashing Potential, the six sectors that serve as the primary engines driving businesses, generating jobs and raising household incomes are; Technology, Experiential Tourism, Government, Advanced Education

and Research & Development, Ocean and Marine, and Entrepreneurship/Start-ups/Social Enterprise. These engines were derived from data for the region and extrapolated for Victoria where possible. These engines will also help to stimulate growth in retail, arts and culture and other sectors that contribute to quality of life, well-being and happiness of Victorians. In Victoria, the City’s parks and open spaces contribute significantly to the economy by providing recreational opportunities, iconic views and vistas, and spaces for festivals and events that bolster the tourism industry. They also create a high quality of life that helps attract new businesses and job opportunities.

Figure 1.5:  
Distribution of households by household type, Victoria, BC (Statistics Canada, 2011)



Parks and open spaces are increasingly being recognized for their direct and indirect benefits to the economy.





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CHAPTER

# 2



# Best Practices & Trends

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## 2.1 Benefits of Parks and Open Spaces

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A significant body of research shows the importance of parks, open spaces, and recreation from a broad perspective. Key areas of benefit include individual well-being, community connectedness, ecological health, and economic benefits.

The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, in partnership with the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association, has assembled the National Benefits Hub (2016), an online resource with over 1,000 evidence based references that detail the benefits of parks, recreation, sports,

fitness, arts, and culture. This research has been summarized into eight key evidence-based benefits that indicate parks:

- Are essential to personal health as active living is a key determinant of health status;
- Are key to balanced human development;
- Are essential to quality of life and place;
- Reduce self-destructive and anti-social behavior;
- Build strong families and healthy communities;
- Reduce health care, social service, and police/justice costs;
- Are significant economic generators, and
- Are essential to our environmental and psychological survival.

The National Benefits Hub also details the environmental benefits provided by natural areas in parks through description of their important ecosystem services, including:

- Maintenance of clean air and water;
- Support of biodiversity;
- Climate stabilization;
- Provision of essential nutrient cycling;
- Support of pollinator populations, and
- Provision of flood mitigation and protection.

## 2.2 Trends and Challenges

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The trends and challenges faced by Victoria's parks and open spaces system have been identified through the engagement process and linked to provincial and national trends. Sources include the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA, 2006), and Public Health BC. Trends and key challenges in recent parks master plans from other similar communities were also reviewed.

### 2.2.1 NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

#### *Environmental Awareness*

Concern about climate change, water supply, species decline, and other environmental issues are affecting peoples' perceptions and behavior. In Victoria, 98% believe that "*protecting and highlighting natural areas and environmental stewardship*" is very or somewhat important, while the number one answer to what Victoria's parks system is missing was "more parks, greenspaces, and natural areas" (Mustel Group Market Research, 2016).

With eco-tourism and outdoor education increasing, municipal parks are often the most accessible places to experience native ecosystems and wildlife, particularly for school groups.

#### *Seeking a Work-Life Balance*

Increased commuting, two-career families, increasing demand for workplace productivity, and multiple extracurricular commitments for children have contributed to the growing need to fit leisure activities into convenient time slots. In Victoria, "lack of time" was the most commonly cited barrier to using parks and open spaces more often. Reasons for dissatisfaction in the parks system included "not enough parks" (65%) and lack of accessibility (20%). Ensuring a good distribution of parks, improving connectivity and access, and grouping amenities for different age groups and interests can improve the convenience of parks and their integration with peoples' everyday lives.

#### *Concern for Personal Safety in Public Places*

A person's sense of safety in a park or on a trail is affected by both actual and perceived risk. Park users may feel unsafe even where there have been no reported crimes or incidents (BCRPA, 2006).

In Victoria, 26% of residents cited “feeling unsafe” as a barrier to visiting parks more often, ranking 4<sup>th</sup> in the phone survey and 1<sup>st</sup> in the online survey. Improved lighting and sightlines, improved wayfinding and accessibility, and careful location and grouping of amenities can help address this barrier.

#### ***Concern for Health and Wellness***

While adults in BC are more active than they used to be, the level of activity declines with age. Active living can add up to two years to life expectancy (Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, 1997). As Victoria’s population ages, it is important to support active living. The Parks and Open Spaces Survey indicates that having safe places to walk should be a priority. Walking was the number one activity among adults (52% phone, 83% online) and pathways were the most appreciated amenity. The four most popular activities – walking, bicycling, hiking, and running/jogging - use pathways and trails.

#### ***Meeting the Needs of Children***

Children need adequate and engaging play opportunities to develop their social, cognitive, and physical abilities and counteract the health effects of rising obesity rates and increasing screen time. Further evidence indicates that providing children with access to natural

areas and contact with soil, plants and the non-built environment can improve health and well-being (BCRPA, 2006).

#### ***Increases in Informal and Individual Activities and Experiences***

As peoples’ schedules get increasingly busy, there is greater demand for informal and individual leisure activities such as walking or cycling, than for organized team sports with programmed schedules. This trend is reflected in the Parks and Open Spaces Survey data from Victoria residents where 7 out of the top 10 activities were individual pursuits. People are also seeking out experiential programs like outdoor adventures, cultural learning opportunities, and environmental education. Many are also interested in activities and programs with a social element, especially older adults.

#### ***Declining and Changing Volunteer Trends***

There has been a significant drop-off in volunteerism, with fewer volunteers contributing a greater proportion of hours. People are increasingly opting for short, event-based volunteer opportunities rather than long-term commitments. The most common reasons for not volunteering were lack of time and inability to make a long term commitment (Statistics Canada, 2010).

A group of people, including children and adults, are walking away from the camera on a dirt path in a wooded area. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting a forest or park setting. The text is overlaid on the image in a white, sans-serif font.

Evidence shows that, in addition to environmental benefits, there are significant and quantifiable social and economic benefits associated with urban forest and ecosystem protection.

## 2.2.2 LOCAL TRENDS AND CHALLENGES

### *Urban Forests and Biodiversity*

In an effort to reverse trends of loss of urban trees, ecosystems, and biodiversity, cities across Canada are increasingly working to mitigate negative human impacts and address aging urban tree inventories. Evidence shows that, in addition to environmental benefits, there are significant and quantifiable social and economic benefits associated with urban forest and ecosystem protection. Victoria's Urban Forest Master Plan identifies increasing property values, lower crime, and increased retail sales (Gye & Associates Ltd., 2013).

### *Infrastructure Gap*

As municipalities across the country struggle with aging infrastructure, park development, management, and maintenance can fall by the wayside. Demonstrating the value of new parks and amenities is essential, as is the development of partnerships and a strong volunteer base. Opportunities to enhance adjacent public open spaces can often be pursued in concert with infrastructure projects. The incorporation of improved cycling, pedestrian, and public open space amenities as part of the Johnson Street Bridge replacement project is an example of how the City is already doing this.

### *Trails and Active Transportation*

Creative solutions are needed to address demand for trails. These include the conversion of old infrastructure, such as "Rails to Trails" projects like the Kettle Valley Trail, the Cowichan Valley Trail, and the region's popular Galloping Goose and Lochside Regional Trails. Trails can also be added within active rail right of ways, such as the E & N Rail Trail – Humpback Connector from Victoria to Langford.

Planning and implementation is underway to develop Victoria's on and off-road bicycle routes, but, given that pathways are the most appreciated amenity in the Parks and Open Spaces Survey, there is a need for a strategic effort to increase trails and pathways within the parks system.

### *Dogs in Parks*

Meeting demand for off-leash dog facilities and managing conflicts with other park and trail users is a key challenge for many urban municipalities, as the number of dogs in parks may increase with density. As backyards become less common, parks are the primary place for people to walk their dogs. This is a valid use of park space that can contribute to health and wellbeing, as well as safety since dog owners use parks year-round and during off-peak hours. However, since wildlife and environmental

areas, sports fields, and health and safety can be negatively affected by poor owner control of off-leash pets, waste management issues, and too many paws in the wrong places, it is important to find balance between competing demands. There is a critical need for a multipronged approach to dogs in parks including active management, education, and careful planning and location of designated off-leash areas.

#### ***Sports Participation Trends***

While the proportion of people participating in organized sports is declining, participation among children is still strong. Organized sports for young adults are often socially oriented, with a trend toward co-ed teams, especially for soccer and volleyball. While baseball and soccer are still the top field sports, field hockey and rugby are growing in popularity and were frequently mentioned by online survey respondents (15% and 13% for youth ages 12-17, respectively). Park space devoted to organized sports is under growing pressure due to the variety of sports to be accommodated and increasing demand for unprogrammed and natural areas.

#### ***Other Activity Trends***

In order to improve parks and expand the benefits to a wider population, many municipalities are seeking to

expand the range of park amenities to support a greater variety of activities. Key challenges include insurance, space, and funding needs (Parks and Recreation Ontario, 2004).

Action and adventure sports continue to gain popularity, with off-road biking (16%) and kayaking (7%) the most frequently cited activities in this category amongst adults in the Parks and Open Spaces Survey.

Other activities of note include disc golf and croquet, with each mentioned by 3% of people in the online survey.

#### ***Community Gardens***

Community gardens are surging in popularity and branching out into municipal parks, vacant lots, parking lots, and transportation right of ways. Most municipalities are supportive of community gardens because they provide multiple benefits including supporting food security and healthy eating, promoting inter-generational social interaction, and attracting participation from diverse residents who may not use other parks or open spaces. Public engagement on the master plan reaffirmed the results from the City's 2015 *Growing in the City* initiative, showing strong support for community gardens (Phone Survey – 89%).



### ***Special Events and Festivals***

Special events and festivals are growing in popularity due to increases in sports tourism, races for charitable causes, desire for “experiences” over activities, and the trend toward activities that are multigenerational and do not require a long-term commitment. They provide benefits to the community including tourism, inclusive, dynamic, and multi-generational events, and

support for arts, culture, and music in the community. Challenges include balancing the needs of visitors and residents, addressing traffic and parking issues, providing the necessary support infrastructure, and managing impacts of high concentrations of people. The public engagement results showed that most residents are in favor of increasing organized events and festivals in parks (Phone Survey - 71%).



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CHAPTER

3



# The Current System

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Victoria's parks and open spaces encompass 207 hectares (511 acres) of municipal parks and open spaces and approximately 132 hectares (326 acres) of other public open spaces (City of Victoria, 2016). They are an essential part of the City's character and foster a high quality of life, supporting healthy and active lifestyles for residents and visitors. The parks and open spaces include over 90 hectares (220 acres) of natural areas including Garry Oak meadows, rocky outcrops and coastal bluffs. Victoria's parks also provide a variety of amenities including play spaces, sports fields and courts, outdoor fitness equipment, dog off-leash areas, lawn bowling greens, plazas, gardens and horticultural displays, picnic areas, and a band shell. This chapter provides an overview of the existing parks and open spaces system and its amenities. It also includes a selection of city-wide evaluation measures that identify gaps in the current system.

A detailed inventory of the parks and open spaces system was completed by the City in 2016 and is summarized in Appendix A. Condition assessments of this inventory are either underway or will commence in 2017. This inventory was the primary source of information for this chapter, along with City planning documents, reports, GIS data, and the extensive knowledge of the City's parks staff. The approach of this project was intended to be city-wide and strategic, and as such a park by park analysis and detailed condition assessment was not part of the project scope.

## 3.1 Municipal Parks & Open Spaces

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The City's parks and open space system ranges from large parks which often act as venues for special events and outdoor sport activities, to community and neighbourhood parks and to small greens. Some of the key greenspaces in the City include:

### **Beacon Hill Park**

Located south of downtown, Beacon Hill Park is Victoria's largest, flagship park destination. Beacon Hill Park was granted in Trust to the City by the Province in 1882. It is an important heritage resource and is a designated heritage site. It has open vistas across the Strait of Juan De Fuca and a variety of natural areas and horticultural displays. The park offers unparalleled views in every season, from wildflower covered slopes in the spring to spectacular waves on stormy days (City of Victoria, 2017).

The landscape of this area was shaped by the Lekwungen People (today represented by the Esquimalt Nation and Songhees Nation), and is a place of historical, cultural and sacred significance. The park also holds an important status as the western terminus, the Mile "0" of the 8,000 kilometre Trans-Canada Highway.

Beacon Hill Park contains many opportunities for active recreation including sports fields, putting green, children's farm, playgrounds, cricket

pitch, water parks and a lawn bowling club. However Beacon Hill Park is probably best known for its natural features, such as the fragile, native Garry Oak ecosystem, Black Cottonwood Semi-swamp, Douglas-fir woods and large grasslands and Camas meadows.

#### **Topaz Park**

As Victoria's third largest park, Topaz Park hosts a variety of sport and community events each year. Located north of downtown in the Hillside-Quadra neighbourhood, it prides itself as being the main active recreation park in the City. It is home to the City's only artificial field and numerous other features such as a lacrosse box, several sport fields, baseball diamonds, dog off-leash areas, fitness equipment and a playground.

#### **Victoria West Park**

Victoria West Park is a significant community amenity for the Victoria West neighbourhood, which is separated from the rest of the City by Victoria Harbour and the Gorge Waterway. It features a popular skate park as well as a dog off-leash area, playground and sports fields and courts.

#### **Royal Athletic Park**

Royal Athletic Park is the City's sports and special events stadium. It is home to the Victoria

HarbourCats baseball team, and is also used by soccer and football teams. Royal Athletic Park often hosts larger special events such as music festivals.

#### **Waterfront**

The City of Victoria has an extensive and varied marine shoreline with many opportunities for scenic vistas, socializing, relaxing, and recreation. Among the highlights of the shoreline amenities in the parks and open spaces system are the David Foster Harbour Pathway, Dallas Road, Clover Point, Gonzales Beach, Westsong Walkway and Songhees Park. The David Foster Harbour Pathway connects multiple parks and nodes, such as Ship Point Park and Fisherman's Wharf. Pedestrians can pause to enjoy the views, visit a market or a festival, relax and socialize. The pathway provides a well-used recreational amenity for local residents, and is also an important tourist amenity.

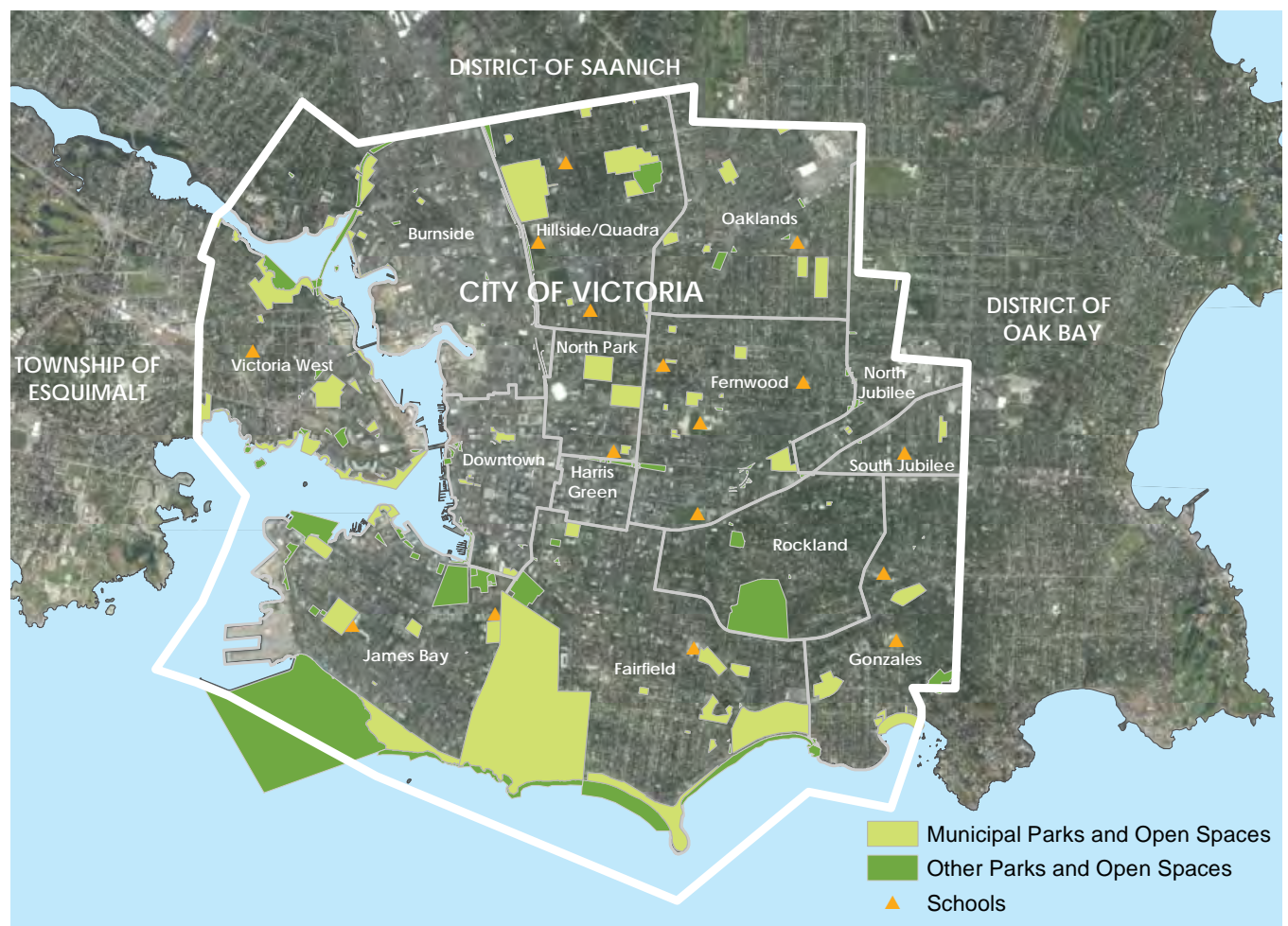
Paddling is a popular activity in the City. While small crafts like kayaks and paddle boards can be launched from many shoreline locations without a dock, some of the key access points with docks include Banfield Park, Regatta Point Park, and Clover Point.

### 3.2 Other Parks and Open Spaces

In addition to City-owned parks, there are over 40 hectares of other lands in Victoria that contribute to the green spaces, including regional parks and trails, schools,

provincial lands, federal lands, and lands managed by the Greater Victoria Harbour Authority. They offer a range of amenities including playgrounds, natural areas, trails, waterfront access, historic sites, gathering spaces, gardens, and unprogrammed open space. The lands vary in their accessibility to the public and the degree to which they provide park-like benefits.

Figure 3.1:  
Parks and Open Spaces



### 3.2.1 CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT LANDS

Capital Regional District (CRD) Parks manages a system of regional parks and trails. Regional parks are intended to protect natural areas that define the geography of the CRD and provide opportunities for non-motorized outdoor recreation. They range in size from five hectares to 7,000 hectares and include conservation, wilderness, natural areas, and outdoor recreation parks. Regional trails provide transportation routes for commuting or recreation, as well as habitat for wildlife and plants. The CRD's parks focus on preserving natural areas of ecological significance and important habitat for plants and animals (Capital Regional District, 2012). Within the City of Victoria, CRD Parks manages Gonzales Hill Regional Park and portions of the Galloping Goose Regional Trail and E & N Rail Trail.

CRD Integrated Water Services owns the lands at Smith Hill Reservoir adjacent to Victoria's Summit Park. This reservoir once supplied the city with its water supply. By the late 1940s, it was in use only as a back-up water supply and today, it is not part of the region's water supply system but plays a role in the region's emergency management program.

### 3.2.2 SCHOOLS

There are currently 16 private and public schools in the City of Victoria. While most include open green spaces and play spaces, they vary in their accessibility to the public and the degree to which they

provide park-like benefits. The total site area of the public school grounds is 14.56 hectares (35.98 acres). This includes buildings, parking lots, and associated open space. The largest school sites are Victoria Senior Secondary School, Central Junior Secondary School, and Victoria West Elementary School.

Public schools, which provide some of the same functions as neighbourhood and community parks, are under the greatest threat of change and potential loss of open space. Declining school enrolment has led to recent closures, including Blanchard and Burnside Schools. The B.C government has recommended that alternate community uses for schools be considered prior to selling the sites to the private sector.

The City has no formal joint use agreement with the School District to facilitate public use, although sports leagues do apply directly to the school district for permits to use many of the sports fields. Some school sites, such as Victoria West Elementary School, provide significant public open space, filling what would otherwise be a gap in the municipal park system.

### 3.2.3 PROVINCIAL AND FEDERAL PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

Provincial and Federal lands, parks, and plazas in Victoria contribute approximately 25 hectares (61.7 acres) to the passive green spaces in the City. The most significant of these sites are

Government House, St. Ann's Academy and the grounds of the BC Legislature Building. The range of amenities includes urban plazas with water features, historic sites, waterfront vistas, monuments, green spaces and ecological areas. Some of the sites include the lands located around institutional and government buildings.

#### ***Esquimalt***

The Township of Esquimalt's parks and open spaces system is comprised of fifteen parks and four open spaces, including the E & N Regional Trail which will provide a connection from Victoria West to the West Shore Communities. The parks system contains seven playgrounds, as well as the Archie Browning Sports Centre, Bullen sports field and a lacrosse box.

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*Public schools, which provide some of the same functions as neighbourhood and community parks, are under the greatest threat of change and potential loss of open space.*

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#### **3.2.4 GREATER VICTORIA HARBOUR AUTHORITY**

The Greater Victoria Harbour Authority (GVHA) owns and manages the Inner Harbour causeway, the Ogden Point breakwater, Fisherman's Wharf, Ship Point Wharf and other shoreline areas. There are public open space amenities within GVHA lands, including the David Foster Harbour Pathway.

#### **3.2.5 ADJACENT MUNICIPALITIES**

Victoria's context within the larger region provides residents with opportunities to enjoy the parks, open spaces and facilities provided in other municipalities. Examples include the Cedar Hill Golf Course, sports fields in Saanich and Esquimalt, and the beaches in Oak Bay.

#### ***Oak Bay***

The District of Oak Bay currently manages twenty nine parks; these parks offer a variety of amenities such as trails, picnic areas, seating areas, sports fields and courts, playgrounds, horticultural displays, beaches and green open spaces.

#### ***Saanich***

The District of Saanich has an extensive parks system of 171 parks, which cover 820 hectares. The parks system also includes over 100 kilometres of trails and 56 playgrounds, in addition to sports fields, courts, beaches and a golf course. Some of the popular parks include Cadboro - Gyro Park, Cuthbert Holmes Park, Gorge Waterway Park and Mount Douglas Park.

## 3.3 Trails and Greenways

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Victoria has an extensive network of greenways, bike routes, trails and paths that provide opportunities for recreation and active transportation. The Greenways Plan (2003) and the active transportation network plan outline the future of these amenities across the City and beyond. Active transportation and park systems naturally work together to support active lifestyles and improve connectivity and accessibility.

Key trails and greenways include the Harbour Pathway, Dallas Road waterfront, Westsong / Songhees Walkway, and the Galloping Goose and E&N Regional Trails.

### ***David Foster Harbour Pathway***

The David Foster Harbour Pathway is a waterfront route which connects residents and visitors with key destinations in the city, celebrates the unique working waterfront, and recognizes the history of the Lekwungen people. Once complete, the Harbour Pathway will extend over five kilometres from Rock Bay to Ogden Point.

### ***Galloping Goose Regional Trail***

The Galloping Goose Regional Trail is a picturesque multi-use trail, formerly a railway line, which moves through urban, rural and wilderness scenery on its 55 kilometre journey from Victoria to Sooke. It is part of the Trans Canada Trail, a national multi-use trail system linking trails from coast to coast. The City operates the section from the Selkirk Trestle to downtown Victoria.

### ***E&N Regional Rail Trail***

The Capital Regional District is leading the construction of a 17 km new cycling and pedestrian trail linking Victoria and communities to the west along the E&N rail corridor. When complete, the trail will start at the Johnson Street Bridge in Victoria and extend west through the Victoria West neighbourhood and into Esquimalt, View Royal, Colwood and Langford. At its western extent, the trail will connect to the Trans Canada Trail, heading north to the Cowichan Valley.

### ***Dallas Road Waterfront Route***

The Dallas Road waterfront pedestrian and cycling route connects to Beacon Hill Park and continues along sidewalks, side streets, and some sandy beaches to Oak Bay. The trail is widely used for walking, jogging and picnicking,

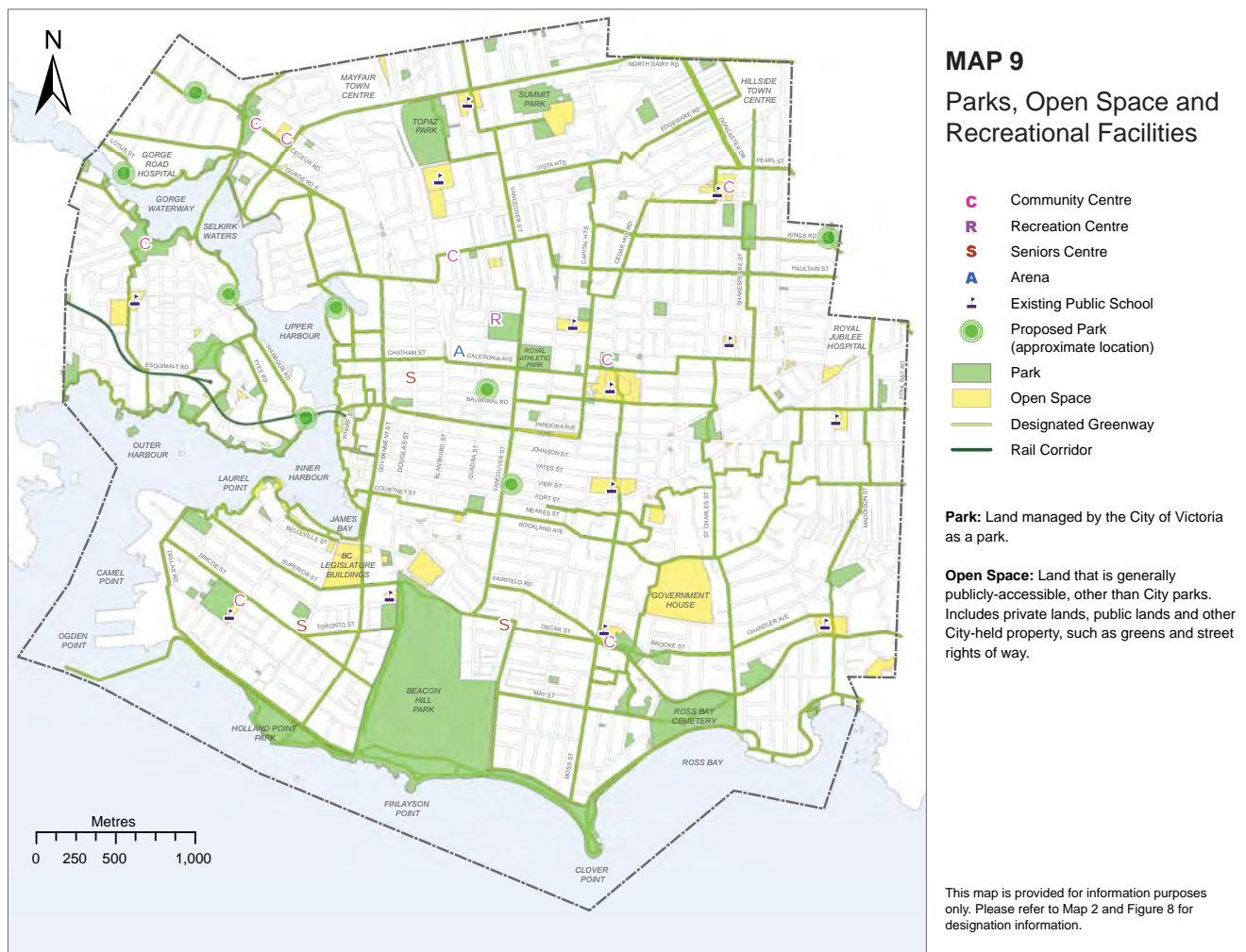
with sightseeing benches and stairs leading down to the rocky and sandy coastline. The adjacent streets also form an important seaside bicycle touring route. Clover Point is the pacific terminus of the Trans Canada Trail.

**Westsong/Songhees Walkway**

The Westsong/Songhees Walkway

is a scenic path which starts on the west side of the Johnson Street Bridge and winds westward along the Victoria Harbour into the Township of Esquimalt. It offers spectacular views of the Inner Harbour and downtown Victoria as well as great opportunities for observing waterfowl and other wildlife.

Figure 3.2:  
Parks and Greenways System (2012 OCP)





### 3.4 Parks and Open Spaces Supply Analysis

As the urban density and population increase, demand for parks, open spaces, and outdoor amenities such as gathering and social spaces also increase. There is no definitive way to establish whether a City has an adequate supply of park land, but common metrics include assessments of the amount of park land per capita compared

to other municipalities and whether residents can easily walk to parks.<sup>1</sup>

Park land per capita was also used to compare the supply of park land for each neighbourhood. This is an important consideration because parks that serve more people will be more heavily used than parks in neighbourhoods with fewer people.

Table 3.1:

Parks and Open Spaces Supply Analysis

Year	Population	Municipal Parks and Open Spaces <sup>2</sup> (hectares)	Municipal Parks and Open Spaces per 1000 residents	% of Municipal Land Base	All Public Parks and Open Spaces <sup>3</sup> (hectares)	All Public Parks and Open Spaces per 1000 residents (hectares)	% of Municipal Land Base
2016	80,017	212	2.65	11%	253	3.16	13%
2041	100,000	-	2.12	-	-	2.53	-

<sup>1</sup> BC comparison communities included Delta, Kamloops, Nanaimo, Abbotsford, and Saanich.

<sup>2</sup> Basis of park land - has been obtained from the 2016 Inventory.

<sup>3</sup> Basis of park land - has been obtained from the 2016 Inventory. Includes Federal, Provincial & Regional District Parks and Open Spaces, and School District 61 school sites.

As the urban density and population increase, demand for parks, open spaces, and outdoor amenities such as gathering and social spaces also increase.

*Opposite page*

*Figure 3.3:  
Total Municipal Park Land  
by Neighbourhood*

*Figure 3.4:  
Municipal Park Land Per  
Capita by Neighbourhood*

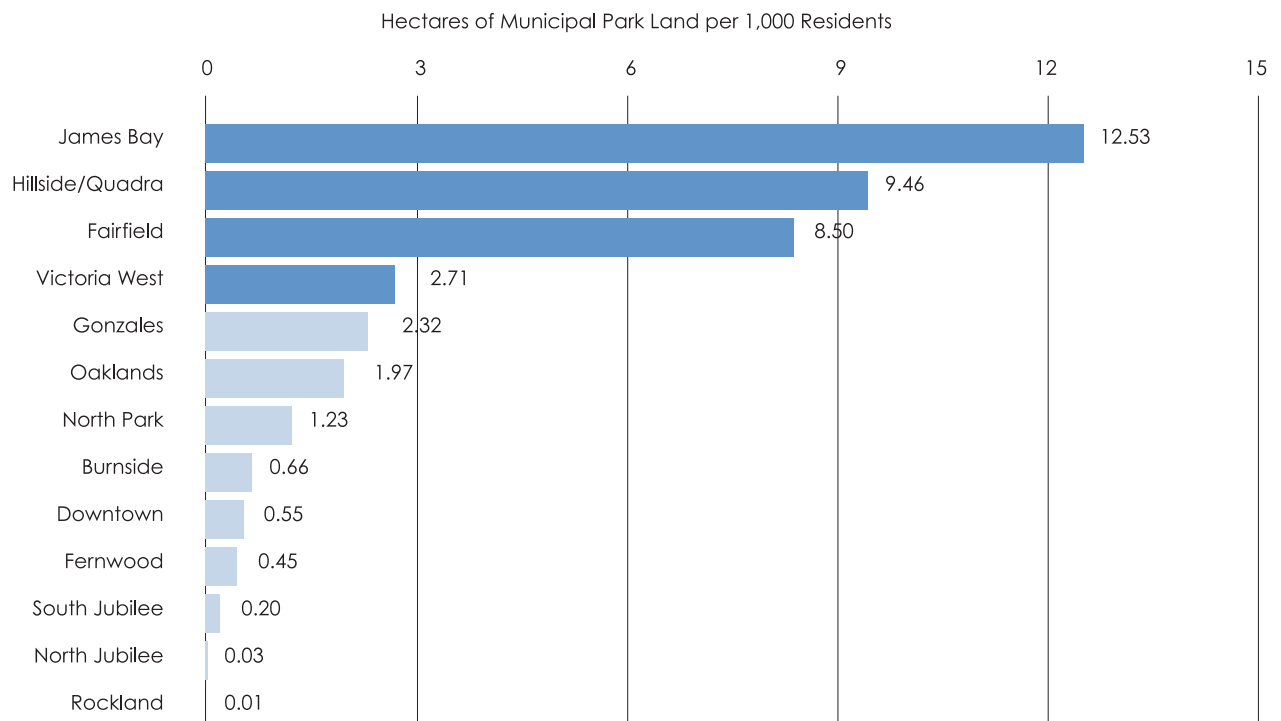
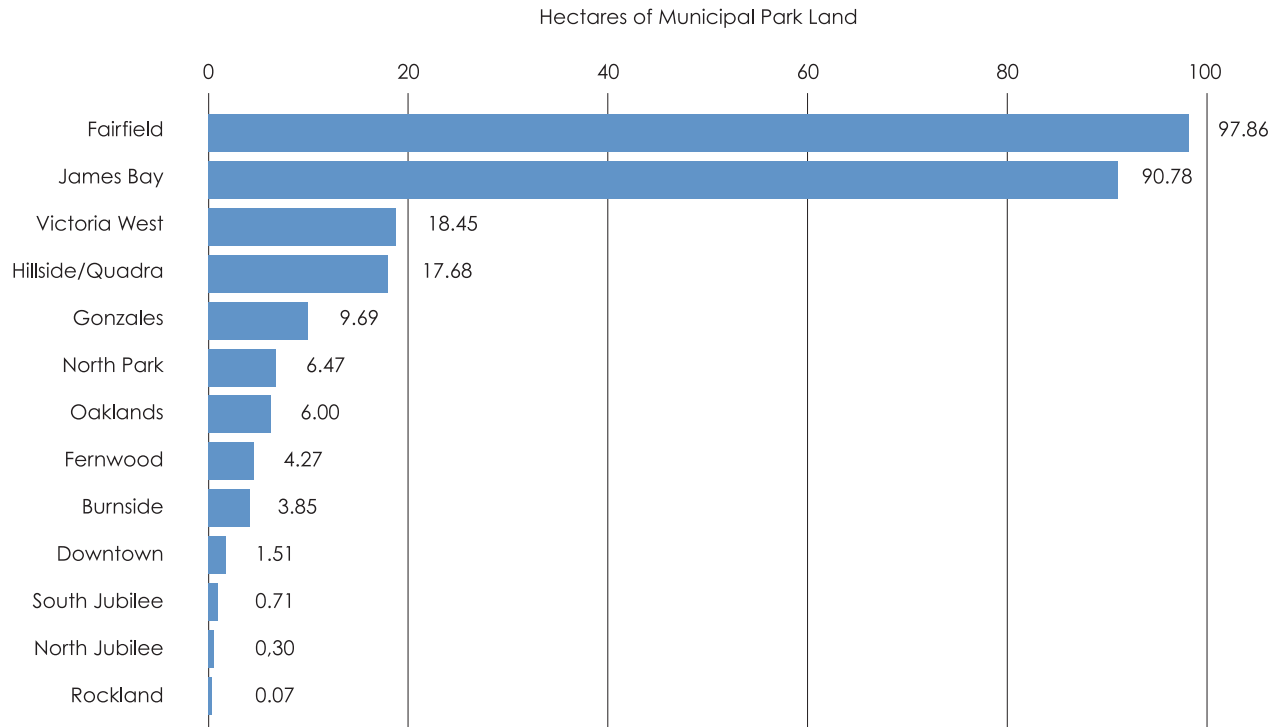
### 3.4.1 SUPPLY OF PARKS PER CAPITA

The following tables provide an analysis of the current and future municipal park land supply per capita for the City of Victoria overall and for each neighbourhood. The current park land provision within the City is 2.65 hectares of municipal parks and open spaces per 1,000 residents. This park land provision is lower than other similar sized communities in BC which have an average of 10.7 ha / 1,000 residents. This indicates that Victoria faces a significant challenge as a municipality that is largely built-out and experiencing increasing density.

#### Key Findings:

- The City of Victoria would need to acquire 53 hectares of park land over the next 25 years, approximately 2 hectares per year, to maintain the current per-capita park land provision.

- Fairfield and James Bay are the neighbourhoods with the greatest amount of park land because of their proximity to Beacon Hill Park. Fairfield also includes Ross Bay Cemetery and Clover Point Park, and James Bay includes Holland Point Park.
- Victoria West and Hillside/Quadra also have significant areas of park land: Victoria West has three large parks including Banfield Park, Victoria West Park, and Songhees Park; Hillside/Quadra has Topaz Park and Summit Park.
- While park land is distributed across the city, only four of nine neighbourhoods are above the City-wide municipal park land per capita (2.65 ha/1,000 residents). North Park, Burnside, Downtown, Fernwood, South Jubilee, North Jubilee, and Rockland have less than half the City-wide municipal park land per capita.



*Opposite page*

*Figure 3.5:  
400 metre radius from municipal parks*

*Figure 3.6:  
400 metre radius from all parks and  
open spaces (City owned lands and  
non-City owned lands)*

### 3.4.2 ACCESS TO PARKS

The specific target identified in the OCP for measuring progress in terms of park land provision and access to parks uses a distance of 400 metres, as this is generally accepted as the distance that people will walk to a destination.

*“OCP target: A minimum of 99% of Victorians have a park or open space within 400 metres of home by 2041.”*

An analysis of the proximity of Victoria residents to parks was completed to identify locations where new parks and open spaces need to be added to meet this target. Boulevards and other lands were considered within the park land inventory, but those that do not provide places to play, socialize, or enjoy nature were excluded from this analysis. An additional analysis was done to determine if the gaps identified in the distribution of municipal parks were addressed by any other public open spaces. The results of these analyses are shown on the figures below. Both maps show the eight proposed park locations identified in the OCP.

### Key Findings:

- If parks were added at all eight locations identified in the OCP, there would still be some key gaps in the City.
- The Rockland neighbourhood is deficient in City-owned parks, but does have Government House and Craigdarroch Castle. These spaces offer gardens and walking trails for residents. They do not have play spaces for children or areas that specifically promote neighbourhood socializing.
- There are gaps within the Burnside neighbourhood, but they are primarily within the commercial and industrial area in the southern portion of the neighbourhood. If a new park is pursued near Rock Bay, as specified in the OCP, this gap would largely be addressed.
- There are gaps in the North Jubilee, and South Jubilee neighbourhoods as many of the parks and open spaces in these neighbourhoods are smaller greens/boulevards associated with roadways. As part of the overall green infrastructure of the City, those park spaces are a valuable amenity and contribute to the City's character and urban forest, but they have very limited potential for other uses.



*Opposite page*

*Figure 3.7:  
Municipal playgrounds with Service  
Area Radii*

*Figure 3.8:  
Municipal playgrounds with Service  
Area Radii and Schools*

## 3.5 Park Amenities

Victoria has a wide range of park amenities that provide opportunities for passive and active recreation, socializing, learning, celebrating and relaxing. The subsections below delve into more detail in terms of the inventory of playgrounds, sports fields and courts, dog parks, community gardens, waterfront areas and natural areas and sensitive habitats. Amenities in other parks and open spaces, such as school grounds, are not included in the inventory of City amenities, but have been considered in the analysis of supply gaps.

### 3.5.1 PLAYGROUNDS

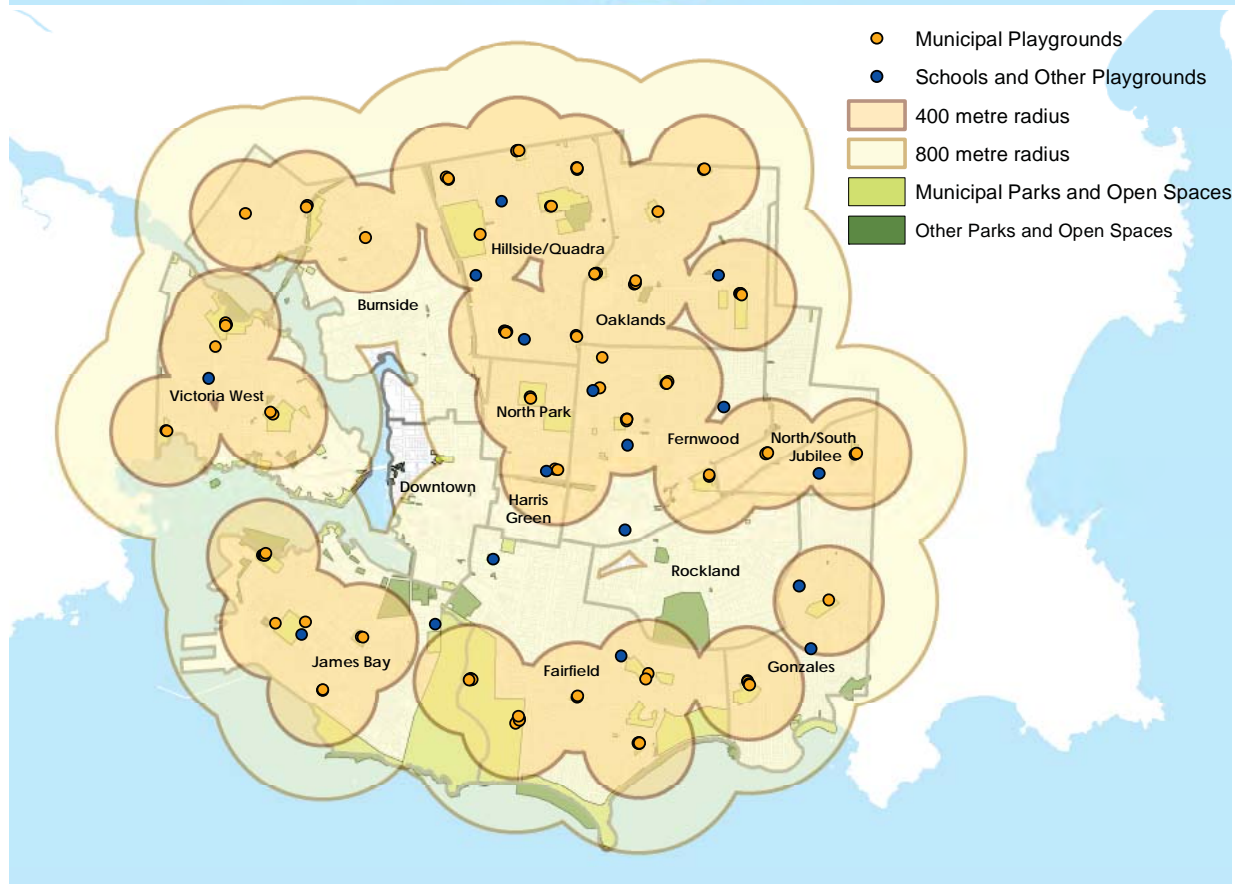
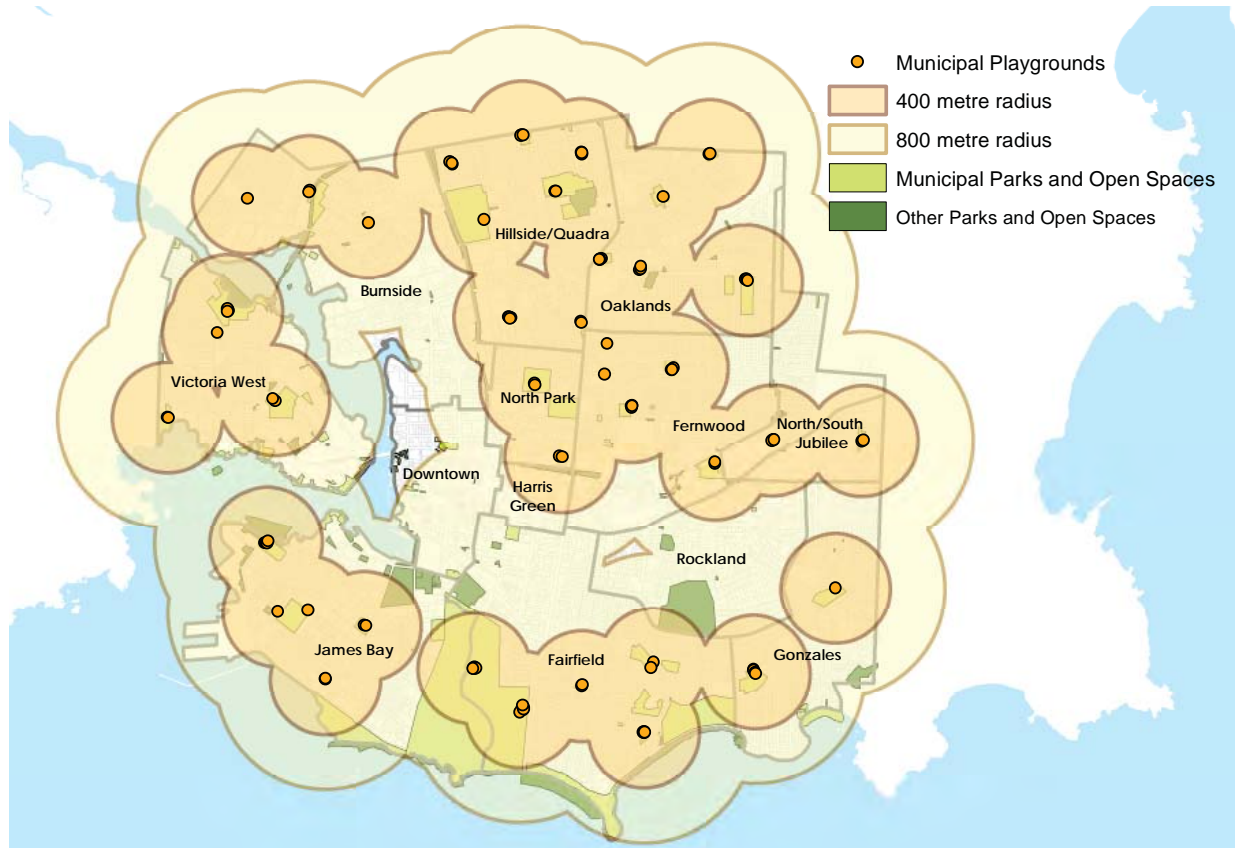
The City of Victoria currently has 40 playgrounds in the municipal parks system. The accessibility to playgrounds was evaluated using service area radii of 400 and 800 metres. Those within 400 metres are generally considered within easy walking distance (5 minutes).

While these radii are straight line distances, the actual service area for each playground varies depending on factors such as the quality and connectedness of the pedestrian route network and whether barriers exist. People may be willing to travel longer distances for specific features, higher quality or larger playgrounds.

#### Key Findings:

- The main areas of the city that are not within walking distance of a municipal playground include Downtown and portions of Rockland, Fairfield, and Burnside.
- School sites provide additional playgrounds, although they are only available to the public after school hours and are usually designed only for the age groups present at the school.
- There is not currently a metric or goal for the provision of playgrounds.







Opposite page

Figure 3.9:  
Municipal Sports Fields and Courts

Figure 3.10:  
Municipal Outdoor Fitness Equipment  
Locations



### 3.5.2 SPORTS FIELDS AND COURTS

The supply of sports fields and courts in Victoria was compared to six BC communities of comparable size<sup>4</sup>. These metrics do not include an analysis of the size or quality of the amenities, which can have a significant impact on the functional capacity. Although useful in terms of a rough comparison, each community has a variety of factors that affect the supply of park land and amenities, such as interest in various sports, development density, geography, land base, and proportion of natural areas.

#### Key findings:

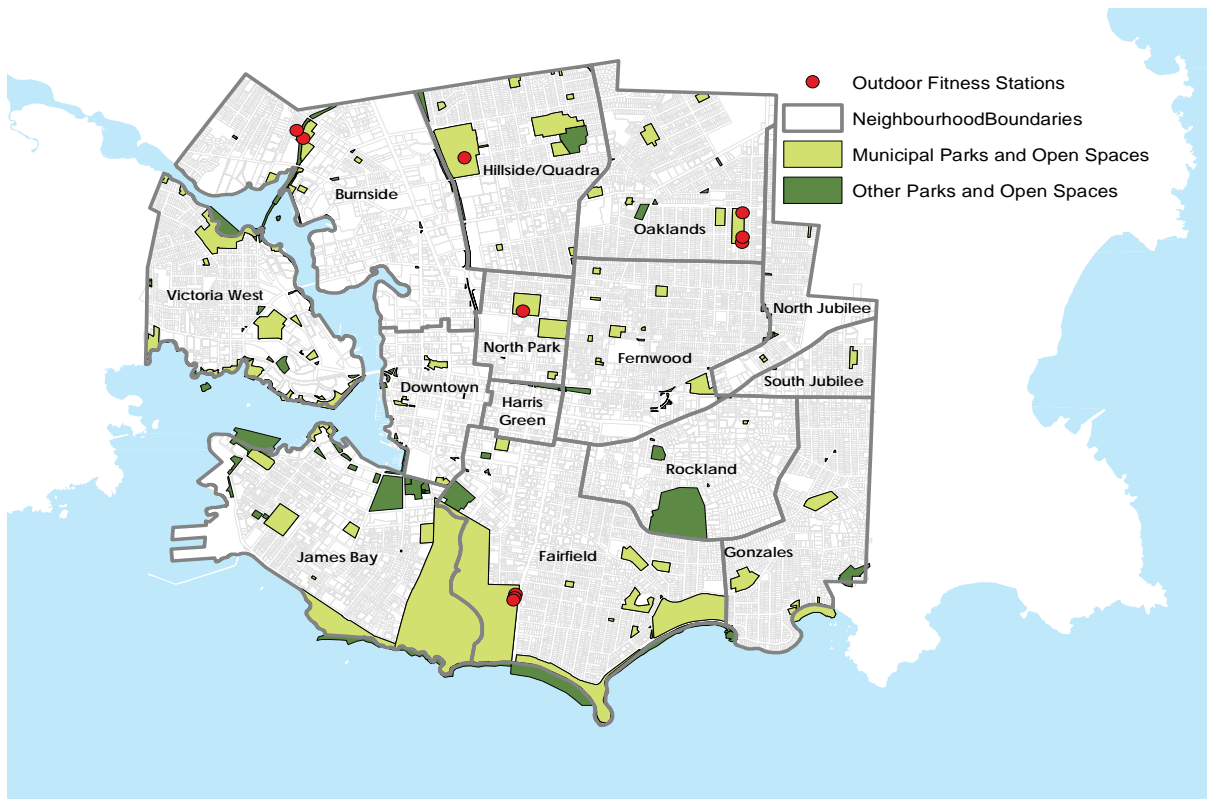
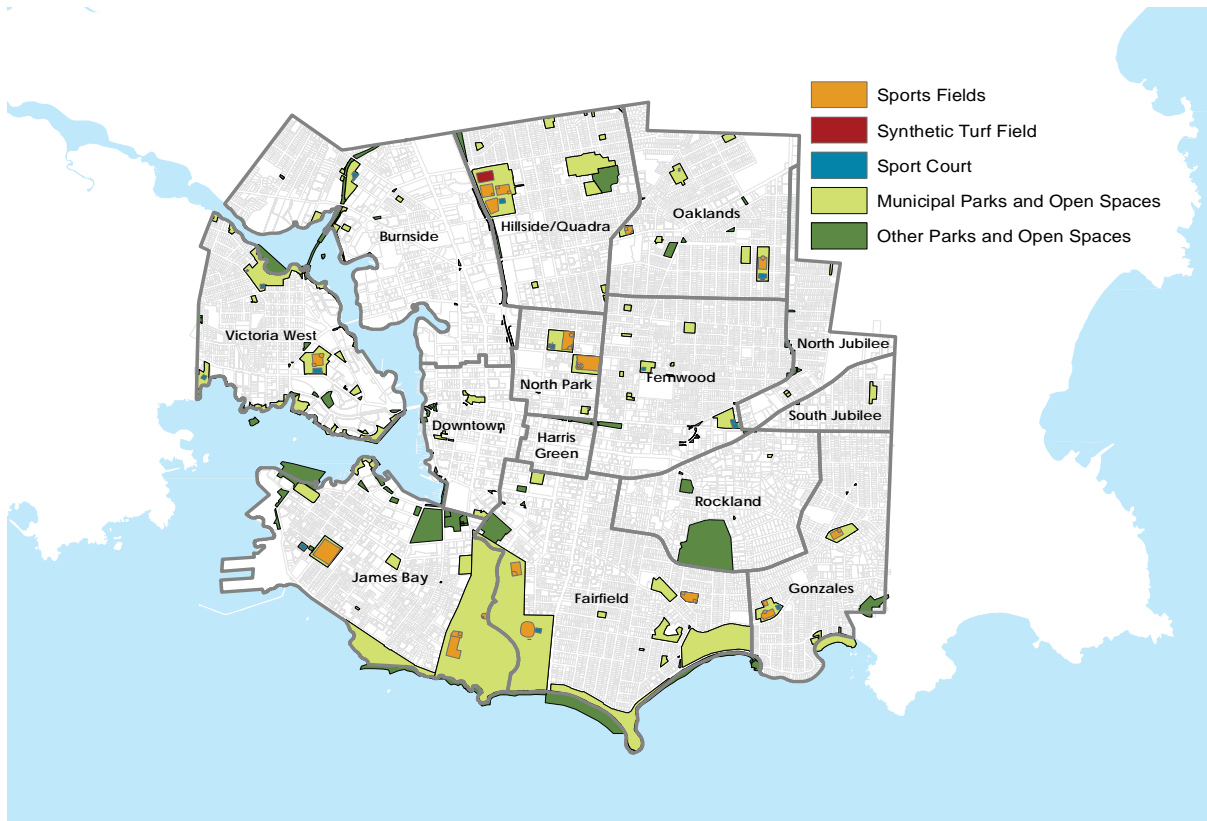
- Compared to cities of a similar size, the City of Victoria is at or above average for most sports amenities, with the exception of skateboard parks, soccer/rugby fields and artificial turf fields.

- Most municipal fields are being used at maximum capacity.
- There is demand for upgrading fields to improve capacity and the user experience. Converting one or two existing grass fields to artificial turf could greatly increase capacity.
- Public school grounds help fill the gap of soccer/rugby fields with 9 additional fields, although there are no joint-use agreements in place. Currently there is some capacity on school fields, but fields are often smaller than needed, have lower maintenance levels, and are challenging to book.
- While the City is above average for baseball/softball fields, there are only a few that are suitable for adult slo-pitch, a growing sport.
- In addition to formal sports, there are also 5 outdoor fitness locations. This is a relatively new type of activity that is growing in popularity, but there is not good evidence as to their actual use.

Table 3.2:  
Comparison of the supply of  
sports amenities to similar sized  
BC communities

Amenity/Facility	Average supply in comparison communities	City of Victoria
Baseball and softball fields	27	31
Outdoor basketball courts	6	9
Skateboard parks	2	1
Outdoor soccer/rugby fields	23	15
Outdoor tennis courts	25	25
Artificial turf fields	3	1

<sup>4</sup> BC comparison communities included Delta, Kamloops, Nanaimo, Port Coquitlam, Abbotsford, and Saanich.





### 3.5.3 OFF LEASH AREAS

There are currently 12 parks with off-leash areas within various neighbourhoods in the City, though not all neighbourhoods within Victoria are equipped with an off-leash area. The 'Paws in Parks' program ensures that each off-leash dog park has specific hours when dogs can be allowed off-leash. This accommodates the needs of owners to exercise their dogs while ensuring enjoyment of all park users<sup>5</sup>. All off-leash dog parks include signage, a dispenser

supplied with biodegradable doggie bags, and a garbage receptacle.

In 2015 there were 6,500 dogs licensed in Victoria. Based on 2014 data the top five dog breeds in Victoria were: Lab or Lab cross, Chihuahua, Golden Retriever, Shih Tzu and Jack Russell Terrier. Fairfield was the neighbourhood with the most licensed dogs at 802, while Victoria West had the highest percentage of homes with a dog at 50%.

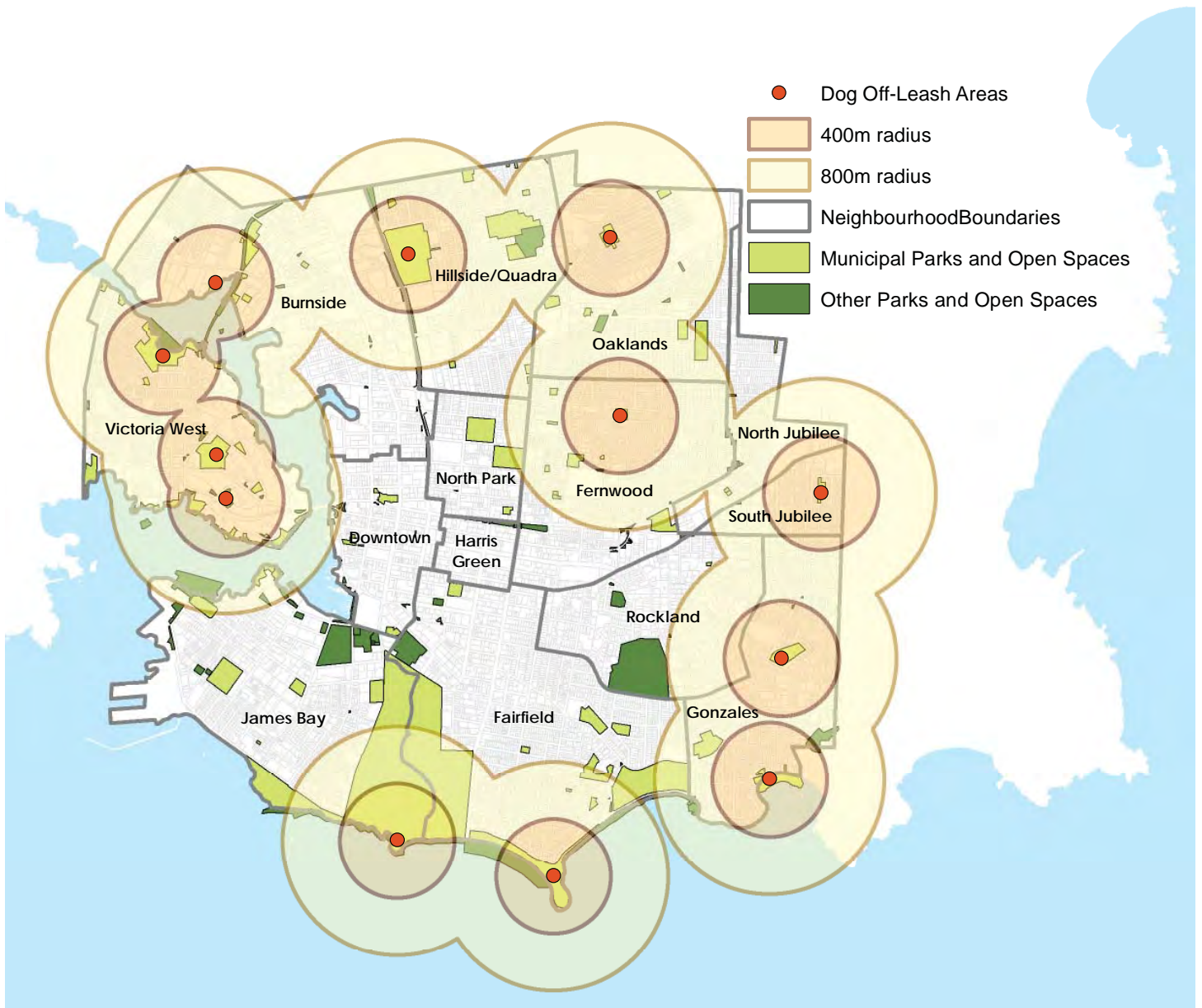
Table 3.3: Off-Leash Dog Areas in Other Communities<sup>6</sup>

Community	Off-Leash Areas	Off-Leash Areas per 1,000 Residents	Fully Fenced Off-Leash Areas
City of Victoria	12	0.14	1
City of Nanaimo	12	0.14	1
City of Kamloops	15	0.18	3
City of Abbotsford	4	0.03	2
City of Port Coquitlam	2	0.04	2
Corporation of Delta	12	0.12	Data not available
	<b>Average</b>	<b>0.11</b>	

<sup>5</sup> City of Victoria 'Paws in Parks' Brochure

<sup>6</sup> Includes fenced or unfenced. The District of Saanich was excluded, as it allows dogs off-leash in all but 6 of its parks.

Figure 3.11:  
Municipal Off-Leash Areas for Dogs





*The City of Victoria is well known as an innovative leader in urban agriculture.*

#### **Key Findings:**

- The City of Victoria is slightly above average in the number of off-leash areas per 1,000 residents compared with similar communities.
- There was public demand for fenced off-leash areas expressed through the public engagement process.
- There are no well-established metrics to guide the provision of dog parks. Municipalities must evaluate the demand for off-leash dog areas within the context of other demands for park amenities.
- All existing off-leash areas are located around the perimeter of the city with none in the central neighbourhoods (see Figure 3.11).

#### **3.5.4 COMMUNITY GARDENS**

The City of Victoria is well known as an innovative leader in urban agriculture. The City's Community Garden Policy was updated in 2016 and identifies three different types of community gardens: common gardens, which are harvested by all residents; allotment gardens, which include individual garden plots; and community orchards, which are groves of fruit or nut trees where the harvest is shared with the local community. Community gardens in the City are operated in partnership with a non-profit organization. There are eight community gardens located on City-owned land. The City also maintains two edible demonstration gardens.

OCP policies target a minimum of one allotment garden per neighbourhood. Currently there are seven allotment gardens, two of which are within City parks: the Burnside Allotment Garden in Cecelia Ravine Park and the Neighbourhood Garden of All Sorts in MacDonald Park. The following table shows the inventory of allotment gardens by neighbourhood. Most of these gardens are not within the municipal parks system.

**Key Findings:**

Neighbourhoods that do not currently have allotment gardens include:

- Fairfield,
- Gonzales,
- Hillside/Quadra,
- North Park,
- North/South Jubilee,
- Oaklands, and
- Rockland.

- Despite not having allotment gardens, the neighbourhoods of Fairfield, Hillside/Quadra, North/South Jubilee, and Rockland have commons gardens.
- The City completed an inventory and ranked City-owned lands with potential for community gardens. Numerous park sites were identified as have good potential for community gardens. These locations should be considered where there is local demand and where impacts to other park uses could be minimized.

Neighbourhood	Allotment Gardens	Commons Gardens	Community Orchards
Burnside	1	-	-
Downtown	1	-	-
Fairfield	-	1	-
Fernwood	2	1	1
Gonzales	-	-	-
Hillside/Quadra	-	1	-
James Bay	2	1	-
North Park	-	-	-
North/South Jubilee	-	1	-
Oaklands	-	-	-
Rockland	-	1	-
Victoria West	1	1	1

Table 3.4:  
Community Gardens Inventory

### 3.5.5 NATURAL AREAS AND SENSITIVE HABITATS

Victoria is located in the rich and complex Coastal Douglas Fir Biogeoclimatic Zone, which is characterized by forests generally dominated by Douglas fir, but also including Western redcedar, grand fir, arbutus, Garry oak and red alder. The zone includes about 50 rare species, most of which are at the northern limit of their range. There have been significant losses to intact ecosystems as a result of logging, urban development, and invasive species.

Within the City's parks, there are 91 hectares (225 acres) of sensitive ecosystem areas (City of Victoria, 2016). These include Garry oak ecosystems, woodlands, cottonwood bog, Douglas fir forest, coastal bluffs, meadows and wetlands. The largest areas include the coastal bluffs at Finlayson Point; forests, woodlands, wetlands, and meadows in Beacon Hill Park; and Garry oak woodlands at Summit Park. Other natural areas include Cecelia Ravine Park, Moss Rocks Park, Robert J. Porter Park,

Banfield Park, Holland Point Park, and other shoreline areas. All of these sensitive ecosystems and natural areas contribute to the biodiversity of southern Vancouver Island, the City of Victoria, and the parks and open spaces system.

There are also sensitive ecosystem areas identified in non-municipal parks and open spaces including Government House (Provincial) and Gonzales Hill Park (CRD). The marine ecosystem surrounding the City is part of the Victoria Harbour Migratory Bird Sanctuary (MBS) which is managed by the Canadian Wildlife Service (see Figure 3.13). The MBS is an important wildlife area that was established in 1923 to protect and conserve migratory birds. Over a four year period, 161 species of bird have been observed at Clover Point (Environment and Climate Change Canada, 2017). The MBS affects the adjacent shorelines and uplands, including some of Victoria's municipal parks, as there are restrictions on disturbing habitat and nesting birds. Within the MBS, there is also a

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*Park natural areas are those areas of parks that contain a high percentage of native plants and provide habitat for wildlife.*

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Federal Marine Ecological Reserve with additional restrictions and protections for habitat and wildlife.

Natural areas create a unique landscape character that residents

impacts from adjacent land uses, climate change impacts, and invasive species as well as increasing numbers of people using the park system and environmental damage or degradation due to use.

City staff monitor the health of natural

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*In addition to the park management plans, other planning and policy documents guiding the City's overall efforts toward the protection of the natural environment include the 2012 Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, the 2013 Urban Forest Master Plan, and the 2003 Greenways Plan.*

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and visitors recognize as distinct from any other place. They contribute to improved air quality, stormwater management, and climate regulation. They also provide valuable leisure opportunities for residents and visitors and economic benefits. Through the public engagement process, it was confirmed that residents highly value the natural areas in the city and support their protection and enhancement.

The primary threats to the remaining natural areas in the City are clearing, fragmentation, and degradation due to development, encroachment and

park areas and track endangered species populations. They also develop programs for staff and the public to raise awareness of environmental and conservation issues, work with volunteer groups to combat invasive species, and identify funding opportunities to support natural areas. With only two full time positions dedicated to accomplishing this work, it can be challenging to keep up with demands. There are several management plans for individual parks that focus on balancing protection of sensitive areas with the demand for active park space.



*Opposite page*

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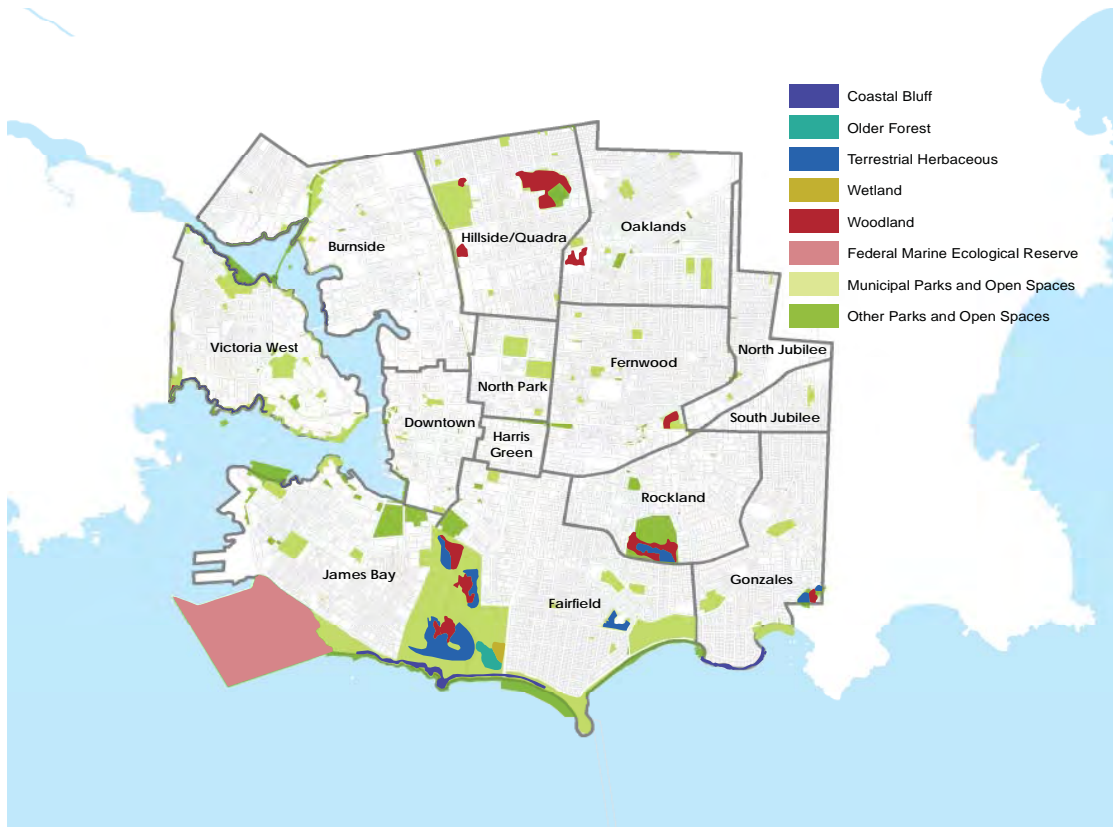
*Figure 3.12:  
Victoria's Sensitive Ecosystems  
(2012 Official Community Plan)*

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*Figure 3.13:  
Victoria Harbour Migratory  
Bird Sanctuary*

**Key Findings:**

- A majority of the significant sensitive environmental areas are located within parks and open spaces owned by the City or other public and government institutions. Private lands that have remnants of ecosystems, areas with restoration potential, and areas adjacent to existing park natural area should be identified and prioritized for potential future park land acquisition.
- Given the importance of natural areas to the public, increased investment in the monitoring and maintenance of existing natural areas and restoration of additional areas is needed. In an urban context, natural areas are under considerable pressure from impacts and encroachment of adjacent land uses, narrow or absent buffers, unsanctioned trails, and invasive species. Identification of the biggest problems can be addressed directly, but may also need to be addressed with a public education and outreach campaign (example: yard waste dumping).
- A balance between preservation of natural areas and providing opportunities for access is essential to the sustainability of natural areas in parks and open spaces. Public feedback showed support for protecting and increasing natural areas in the parks and open spaces system.
- Communication, knowledge sharing and coordinated planning with stewardship groups, municipal and regional governments, educational institutions and others will continue to be an important tool in the maintenance and management of natural areas in parks and open spaces.
- Investing in volunteer programs, particularly those that are episodic and require only a short-term time commitment, can result in substantial increases in number of volunteer participants and the value of their contributions.



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CHAPTER

4



# Public Engagement

Public engagement was an essential component guiding the development of this plan. The goal was to gather meaningful input that would allow the creation of a strategic direction for the parks system that accurately reflects the community's values.

The public engagement process included a wide range of tools, some targeted at specific stakeholder groups and others seeking to gather input from the general public. The stakeholders, partners, and community organizations who were engaged included Island Health Authority, the Greater Victoria School District, Tourism Victoria, the Greater Victoria Harbour Authority, Victoria's Green Team, and representatives from adjacent municipalities.

Overall the number of people estimated to have actively participated to date is approximately 1,600. This number does not include the significant number of people who were reached through the pop-up events and other forms of communication and publicity.

## Public Engagement Goals

- Develop community-led vision, goals and values
- Identify current demand and future needs
- Develop awareness and support for the final plan
- Promote the City's parks and open spaces

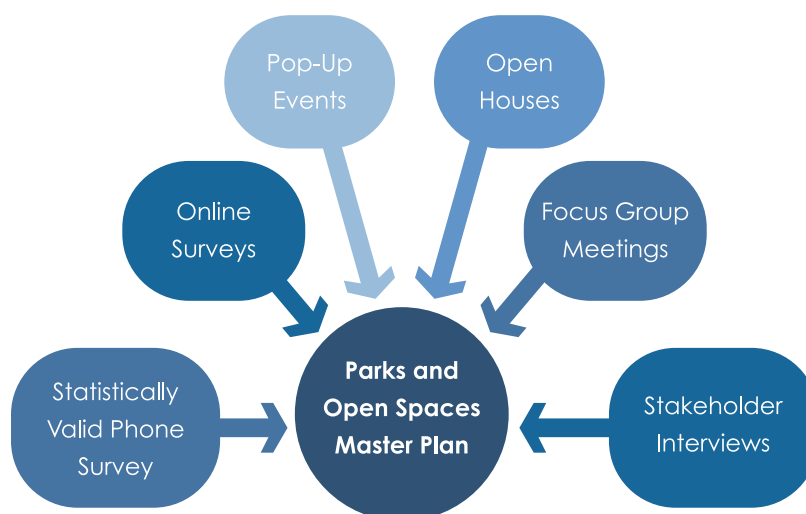


Figure 4.1:  
Public Engagement Methods

## 4.1 What We Heard

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The following were common themes that emerged through all the public engagement methods.

- Overall satisfaction with Victoria's parks and open spaces is very high with 90% of residents at least 'somewhat' satisfied and 60% 'very' satisfied. Satisfaction levels were lower in the online survey respondents, but were still high with 85% 'very' or 'somewhat' satisfied.
- Pathways are the most appreciated park amenity. Other amenities of note include natural areas, park washrooms, unprogrammed green space, children's play spaces, and waterfront/beach areas.
- Victoria residents value the environmental features, natural areas, and ecosystems within the City's parks and open spaces system and would like to see more of them.
- Preserving and improving the environmental features and benefits arose as the highest priority through multiple engagement methods.
- Residents value flexible outdoor spaces that can accommodate a range of uses. There is a leaning toward more unprogrammed spaces in the parks and open spaces system. Related to this, there is a desire for more diversity in parks including social spaces and quiet, meditative spaces.
- There is support for improving parks and open spaces by adding more inclusive spaces and designs that are accessible and accommodate a range of ages, abilities and needs.
- Spaces to play are important, particularly for children and youth, but also places for families to play together. There are opportunities to incorporate a wider variety of amenities for all ages. For example, the youth focus group revealed that youth mostly use public plazas and seating areas as opposed to parks and green spaces.
- Residents want improvements at existing parks and open spaces to be a priority including adequate maintenance, washrooms, safety, drinking fountains, and other support amenities. This was highlighted in multiple engagement methods.
- Satisfaction is weakest for off-leash dog areas and outdoor

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fitness equipment, but for a variety of reasons. Desire for more washrooms was cited frequently, although some also expressed concern that washrooms encourage inappropriate park uses (i.e. camping). There were some requests for more off-leash areas for dogs, including fenced areas, while others cited conflicts between off-leash dogs and other park users. While there were a few requests for more outdoor fitness equipment, others cited that some existing fitness equipment did not seem to be well-used.

- When asked what amenities are missing or need improvement, most residents had no suggestions. Among desired changes, having 'more' of the following was mentioned frequently: more parks/ green space or natural areas, washroom facilities, off-leash dog areas and shared-use pathways (cycling, walking, etc.).





#### STATISTICALLY VALID PHONE SURVEY

A statistically valid phone survey was completed by Mustel Group Market Research in June 2016. A total of 403 interviews were conducted by telephone over a random selection of residents 15 years of age or over. Survey participants were representative of the population as a whole, as well as geographically representative of the City's neighbourhoods. The margin of error on the sample is +/-4.9% at the 95% confidence interval.

The phone survey provides the City with a reliable source of data that is representative of the city population as a whole, including "non-users" whose input cannot be captured through other means.

#### 4.1.1 COMMUNITY VALUES

Twelve value statements, as listed in Table 3.1, were tested across the phone survey, online survey and the first public open house. Respondents were asked how important each statement was in guiding the future of Victoria's park system: very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important. All 12 were considered somewhat or very important by a majority of residents (70% or more), but the most important value was:

*"Protecting and highlighting natural areas and environmental stewardship".*

Three-quarters of residents believe this objective is 'very important' and nearly everyone agreed that this is an important guideline. Several other objectives are 'very important' to at least half/almost half of residents, but standing out are:

- "addressing climate change" (64% very important), and
- "encouraging community gardening and local food production" (61% very important).

Table 3.1:  
Public Responses to the Draft  
Community Values Criteria

Community Value	Phone Survey % Very or Somewhat Important	Online Survey % Very or Somewhat Important
Protect and highlight natural areas and environmental stewardship	98%	95%
Provide informal spaces for picnics and socializing	93%	89%
Ensure access to the water and promote marine recreation	92%	89%
Encourage community gardening and local food production	89%	76%
Beautify the community	88%	88%
Address climate change	88%	80%
Highlight the cultural heritage of the community	86%	71%
Improve safety	84%	69%
Create unique, attractive places	84%	87%
Expand the range of amenities and potential uses in parks	82%	72%
More organized events and festivals in parks	71%	61%
Provide dog off-leash areas and trails	70%	59%



#### 4.1.2 DRAFT PLAN REVIEW

There was strong support for the Draft Vision and Goals, with over 75% of respondents strongly supporting or somewhat supporting all of the goals.

Questions about some of the key actions were asked in order to gather more information and to help determine the highest priorities. Below are some of the key findings, with additional details provided in Appendix B.

- When asked what should be prioritized for park land acquisition, the top three priorities were land with sensitive ecosystems, waterfront sites for parks and pathways, and locations that more equally distribute parks in all neighbourhoods.
- Of the options for social spaces or new seating, quiet seating areas at viewpoints were the top choice (56% of respondents), followed by areas with lighting (41%) and covered group picnic areas (33%).
- In preparation for development of a Dogs in Parks Strategy, the survey asked what issues related to dogs in parks were the most important. The top three issues were rules and etiquette for park use (49%), defining off-leash boundaries and fencing (46%), and waste management (42%). Specific locations and design features for off-leash areas were lower priority (39%).
- Overall, 64% of respondents said they strongly support or somewhat support the recommended action to amend the Park Regulation Bylaw to allow limited commercial activities in parks.
- Open House attendees supported increasing natural areas and showed strong support for achieving this by replacing ornamental flower beds and lawns with native plants.
- Open House attendees strongly supported having allotment gardens in City parks (32 support/7 don't support).
- Specific types and locations of new amenities in parks will be determined through more detailed planning and design at the neighbourhood level, but there was strong support for another water/spray park (24 support/1 don't support), more bike features (21 support/1 don't support), and outdoor fitness equipment (17 support/1 don't support) from those who attended the Open House.



**CTV Vancouver Island**  
10 hrs · 🌐

The City of Victoria is working on a plan to invest in parks and open spaces and it's looking for the public's input.



**Community input to guide future investments in Victoria parks**  
vancouverisland.ctvnews.ca

*There was strong support for the Draft Vision and Goals, with over 75% of respondents strongly supporting or somewhat supporting all of the goals.*

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CHAPTER

# 5



# Vision

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The following vision statement has been developed in response to public input and the City's strategic directions.

*Victoria's parks and open spaces system is dynamic, vibrant, playful, sustainable, inclusive, and diverse. It engages residents and visitors with the unique ecosystems, culture, and character of the city, supports health and wellness for all, and protects natural areas as a vital resource.*

## 5.1 Goals, Objectives and Actions

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### **GOAL 1: Protect the Environment**

Parks and open spaces protect and improve native ecosystems and help the city adapt to climate change.

### **GOAL 3: Celebrate Victoria**

Special places and amenities in parks and open spaces animate the city and support events for both residents and visitors.

### **GOAL 2: Foster Engaging Experiences for Everyone**

Parks and open spaces provide a range of different experiences, encourage active living, and are multifunctional, inclusive, and accessible.

### **GOAL 4: Strengthen Partnerships**

Community members, stewards, and partners help enhance all parks and open spaces in the city.

## GOAL 1: PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

**Parks and open spaces protect and improve native ecosystems and help the city adapt to climate change.**

Sensitive ecosystems and natural areas are an important part of the biodiversity of southern Vancouver Island, the City of Victoria, and the parks and open spaces system. They create a unique landscape character that residents and visitors recognize as distinct from any other place. Sensitive ecosystems and natural areas also provide numerous benefits such as climate regulation and stormwater management. Protecting and enhancing natural areas was the highest priority of

citizens, and it continued to be highlighted as an issue of great importance to residents throughout the public engagement process.

The objectives and actions for this goal will help achieve the City's 2041 Vision as described in the Official Community Plan which states that "Victoria is an urban sustainability leader inspiring innovation, pride and progress towards greater ecological integrity....".

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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- ▶ *We strive to be leaders in sustainable landscape planning, design, development, operations, and maintenance and share our expertise to improve landscapes city-wide.*
- ▶ *We recognize the importance of native ecosystems to biodiversity, resilience, sense of place, and quality of life.*
- ▶ *We recognize the importance of addressing climate change and incorporate mitigation and adaptation actions throughout the planning, design, development, operations, and maintenance of the parks system.*
- ▶ *We recognize the valuable knowledge and passion of environmental stewardship groups and local naturalists.*

## Objective 1.1

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### Increase protection and enhancement of native ecosystems in parks and open spaces across the city

#### ACTIONS

##### 1.1.1 Develop a Biodiversity Strategy

The Urban Forest Master Plan recommends the development of a Biodiversity Strategy that includes measurable objectives for the protection, recovery or enhancement of sensitive ecosystems, species at risk and other important flora and fauna. The Biodiversity Strategy should be a coordinated effort with other City departments and should include engagement with other key land owners and adjacent jurisdictions. Some of the specific components to be included are:

- An inventory of sensitive ecosystems, species at risk, and regionally significant habitat corridors;
- Strategies to protect areas on City-owned and private-lands;
- An inventory of opportunities to improve and restore ecosystem patches and habitat corridors;
- A prioritized action plan;
- A list of key partners and partnership actions; and
- A monitoring plan to track changes and measure success.



*Open house attendees supported the following strategies for increasing the amount of natural areas in parks:*

- *Expand existing natural areas;*
- *Replace ornamental flower beds with native plants; and*
- *Replace lawns with native plants.*

### **1.1.2 Continue to implement the Urban Forest Master Plan.**

There are many recommendations in the Urban Forest Master Plan that apply to parks and open spaces such as the development of an Urban Forest Action Plan and a Tree Risk Management Program for public trees.

### **1.1.3 Develop targets for increasing the use of native plants and the quantity and quality of native ecosystems.**

As part of the Biodiversity Strategy or through a more detailed implementation plan, a set of “ecosystem templates” should be developed that outline key site condition requirements and provide a list of species and the relative proportions of plants for each ecosystem type. It is also recommended that specific targets be set to:

- increase the variety of native plant species planted in parks and open spaces (considering all areas, including hanging baskets, plazas and gardens);
- increase the proportion of native ecosystems in the parks and open spaces system; and
- restore native ecosystem areas that are currently degraded.







## Objective 1.2

### Improve sustainability and ecosystem services

Parks and open spaces offer a wide range of ecosystem services such as erosion protection, support of biodiversity, reduction of the heat island effect, reduction of stormwater runoff, filtration of rainfall, and improvements to air quality. Parks planning, design and operations should seek ways to demonstrate sustainable practices and increase the inherent benefits of parks and open spaces.

#### ACTIONS

##### **1.2.1 Update the Environmental Management Standards for park operations and maintenance that will increase the resilience of parks and open spaces.**

The goal of the Environmental Management Standards is to increase the value of the ecosystem services and increase the ability of the parks and open spaces system to recover quickly from stresses by establishing or updating existing maintenance and operations standards and methodologies for topics such as:

- Integrated pest management;
- Invasive species management;
- Reduction of GHG Emissions;
- Sustainable materials;
- Soil management;
- Horticultural practices;
- Natural areas management; and
- Irrigation.

##### **1.2.2 Create demonstration projects showcasing best practices for sustainability within the parks system.**

Demonstrating best practices and trying innovative ideas in the parks system provides a wide range of educational and training opportunities and demonstrates the City's commitment to sustainability principles. Some examples of practices that can be demonstrated in the parks system include green waste collection and composting, a wide range of recycling opportunities, rain gardens and other soil and plant-based stormwater management. Where this or other actions are implemented in the parks system, consider the incorporation of signage that highlights and describes the practices being demonstrated and points people toward additional resources.

### 1.2.3 Identify opportunities to daylight or celebrate culverted streams.

Daylighting streams that have previously been confined to underground pipes can result in water quality improvements, flooding reduction, increased aquatic habitat and native ecosystems, and community and economic revitalization. The feasibility of daylighting streams is challenging in an urban environment. In the short term, the emphasis will need to be on highlighting and celebrating culverted streams through signage, events or small interventions. Fully daylighting a stream is costly and requires a long term plan, engineering studies and potential land acquisition. Having a plan in place will allow the City to take advantage of opportunities when they arise.

Two specific opportunities have been identified: Bowker Creek and Rock Bay Creek, but others may arise. The Capital Regional District is currently coordinating the Bowker Creek Urban Watershed Renewal Initiative with the City of Victoria as a partner.

#### ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

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The concept of ecosystem services focuses attention on the ways that humans benefit from and depend on, both directly and indirectly, natural process within healthy, functioning ecosystems. Ecosystems support life, security and quality of life by providing benefits such as production of oxygen and food, mitigation of extreme weather events, and support for psychological well-being (Value of Nature to Canadians Study Taskforce, 2017).



## Objective 1.3

### Mitigate and adapt to climate change

Parks and open spaces will be impacted by climate change, but can also help the city adapt. Action needs to be taken now to identify risks and to develop strategies to mitigate impacts and boost the city's resilience.

#### ACTIONS

##### 1.3.1 Incorporate more vegetation in areas of the city most vulnerable to the urban heat island effect.

Urban areas absorb and re-radiate heat from buildings, vehicles and paved areas, making some urban environments over 10 degrees warmer than surrounding undeveloped areas. Urban heat islands can exacerbate summer heat waves and have the greatest impact on vulnerable populations including the elderly and young children. Parks and trees can help alleviate the heat island effect because vegetation absorbs heat and disbands heat accumulation; vegetation cools the air through evapotranspiration; streams and other waterbodies cool the atmosphere as water evaporates; and trees provide shade that offer relief from the sun.

To strategically address the urban heat island effect, overlay vegetation data with vulnerable population data to identify key areas and then seek ways to incorporate more shade trees and other vegetation in those areas.

##### 1.3.2 Use vegetation to shade impervious areas and buildings to reduce the heat island effect and consider green roofs on park buildings and shelters.

In addition to targeting the most vulnerable areas of the city, addressing impervious areas and buildings throughout the parks system will help reduce the urban heat island effect. Impervious areas and buildings are major contributors to the heat island effect because they absorb and re-radiate heat which leads to increased localized temperatures. Shading large areas of asphalt (e.g., parking lots) and planting green roofs and walls reduce the amount of heat that these surfaces generate. There are also potential added benefits of reduced pollution from vehicles and the potential to have the vegetation be part of a rainwater management system, particularly evergreen species (Gye & Associates Ltd, 2013).

### **1.3.3 Identify plants and ecosystems vulnerable to climate change and develop management strategies to help mitigate impacts.**

The Urban Forest Master Plan noted that many plant species are already in decline due to prolonged drought conditions resulting from climate change. While trees have been the primary focus so far, other plants are also being affected and will need to be addressed. This action could be integrated into the Biodiversity Strategy.

### **1.3.4 Identify marine shorelines within the parks system that are vulnerable to climate change impacts and develop mitigation strategies.**

Waterfront parks and open spaces are the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change and some areas will be more impacted than others. Identifying vulnerable areas, developing a tool box of mitigation strategies and then prioritizing actions will help protect the shoreline. Tracking changes at these locations is also recommended to allow for adaptive management.

### **1.3.5 Reduce impervious surfaces, particularly along the waterfront.**

Much of Victoria's waterfront has been impacted by human uses and infrastructure, but there are many opportunities to restore impacted

areas within the parks system to prioritize native ecosystems and park areas over parking and pavement. Restoration to natural conditions can help improve the resiliency to the impacts of sea level rise and storm surges. It can also help improve the ability of those shorelines to buffer adjacent upland areas while also increasing the habitat values for vulnerable species.

### **1.3.6 Explore the potential to complete a Green Shores shoreline restoration project.**

The City of Victoria can continue its leadership in sustainability and improving ecological integrity by undertaking a shoreline restoration program that meets the criteria outlined in the Green Shores Coastal Development Rating System (Green Shores CDRS) which is a program of the Stewardship Centre for BC. The Green Shores CDRS promotes healthy shore environments and encourages project designs that work with the natural features and functions of coastal ecosystems. The benefits include reduced risk to shorelines, property and infrastructure, and opportunities to improve connections between residents and the marine shoreline. The program requires that a project design achieve a certain number of points using a credit system similar to that for LEED. Examples of urban park shoreline restoration projects using the Green Shores CDRS include Jericho Beach in Vancouver.





## PARKS, URBAN FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

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Parks and open spaces can help cities adapt to climate change by providing habitat, connecting ecosystems, managing stormwater, protecting floodplains, reduce flooding and impacts of flooding, and opportunities for public education around climate change. Use of parks may change as well, with more use during heat waves and greater demand for more shade (West Coast Environmental Law, 2012).

The British Columbia Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development has published a guide to help B.C. communities to better utilize the capacity of their urban forests in adapting to climate change.

Best practices include the following:

- Placing groves of large-leaved trees and shrubs upwind of heat island areas, so that evapotranspiration from the vegetation will create cooler, moister air that blows into the 'hot spots'.
- Planting green roofs and green walls, which help to cool the air through evapotranspiration of plants.
- Shading large areas of asphalt (e.g., parking lots), which reduces polluting emissions from cars, extends the life of the asphalt, as well as providing a more pleasant environment for parking. In winter, these trees and their roots can be designed to be part of the rainwater management system.
- Planting evergreen species where managing stormwater is a prime concern, to maximize water uptake during the raining seasons.
- Making it easy for water to soak into the ground, through raingardens (especially with trees), or where a generous unpaved area has been left around the trunk area (perhaps planted with shrubs).
- Reducing windfall risks by ensuring that trees are windfirm.
- Selecting tree species that are adapted to anticipated future climates.

## GOAL 2: FOSTER ENGAGING EXPERIENCES FOR EVERYONE

**The parks and open spaces system meets current and future needs of Victoria residents, provides a range of different experiences, encourages active living and is multi-functional, inclusive and accessible.**

and new activities, the desire for programmed and unprogrammed, quiet spaces and the challenge of expanding the parks and open spaces system in a largely built-out and geographically constrained city.

The parks and open spaces system must be adaptive to meet the changing needs of residents. Among the most critical factors to address are the increasing population and higher densities in some areas, the aging population, the desire to attract families, changes in demand

The objectives and actions in this section strive to protect and maintain existing parks and open spaces while expanding inventory in keeping with increasing population demand; minimizing barriers; and, expanding and encouraging social connection, active living and inclusivity.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- ▶ *We take pride in providing a safe, well-maintained park system that is improved over time.*
- ▶ *We recognize the increasing pressure on park lands and continually strive to use space efficiently and to create multifunctional, flexible spaces to meet changing demands.*
- ▶ *We strive to improve parks for all residents, particularly those who are currently underserved.*
- ▶ *We strive to increase the accessibility of the parks and open spaces system by considering a broad range of accessibility issues at the outset of all park planning and design projects.*
- ▶ *We recognize the importance of parks and open spaces as part of the active transportation system.*
- ▶ *We will continue to engage a wide variety of people through the local area planning process and development of individual park plans to ensure residents' ideas, concerns and needs are heard.*

## Objective 2.1:

### Parks and amenities are equitably distributed and well maintained.

Overall, the city is well-supplied with parks and open spaces for the current population. However, some neighbourhoods are underserved, and as the population increases the pressure put on existing parks will increase. New park lands will need to be acquired to meet increasing demand.

Similarly, the level of maintenance required to keep existing parks in good repair will increase. The City of Victoria is striving to provide parks and amenities equitably across the city, ensuring that all residents can reap the wide range of benefits that they provide. Improvements to parks that improve the sense of safety can also increase the range of residents who are comfortable in parks and open spaces.

The following actions are aimed at protecting and improving the parks and open spaces that already exist and planning for an expansion of the parks and open spaces system to meet future demand.

#### ACTIONS

**2.1.1 Update and/or consolidate the City's land use policies related to park land designation including consolidating park properties with multiple titles, updating the OCP with the current inventory and developing park zoning designations within the Zoning Regulation Bylaw.**

Within the City of Victoria, there are several different ways that the tenure of park land is secured. These include: identification as Parks and Open Space in the Official Community Plan; reservation by by-law; designation by municipal or Provincial authority; trust agreements; and, covenants.

The City of Victoria does not currently have parks specific zones in the Zoning Regulation Bylaw. While park status is already secured through the Official Community Plan, developing a specific zone for parks will help to clarify park land regulation.

**2.1.2 Develop a Park and Development Acquisition Strategy, develop and maintain a list of priority park land acquisitions. Coordinate with the Local Area Plan process.**

Approximate locations for eight new parks have already been identified in the OCP based on the



400m guideline. Park land is also expected to be acquired through the development process by dedication at subdivision, rezoning, and density bonusing for amenities. The OCP has identified that a Park Acquisition Strategy is needed to define tools, targets and potential sites. It also outlines several priority park land acquisitions, including waterfront areas, large sites suitable for community parks, and areas around designated Urban Villages and Town Centres.

Expanding the parks and open spaces system in the City of Victoria over the next 10-20 years will be challenging due to the limited amount of undeveloped land, the limited amount of land suitable for parks, competition with other land use needs, and increasing land values. Given these limitations, it is important to develop a Park Acquisition Strategy that includes:

Guidelines for acquiring new park, open space and trail lands. Parks should:

- Have topography and natural features suited to the intended uses;
- Be convenient to the populations they serve;
- Be compatible with adjoining land uses;

- Be safe and accessible; and
- Create connections and key linkages.

Based on the public engagement for this plan, the following should be prioritized:

- Acquisition of land that has ecological values and sensitive ecosystems or species;
- Acquisition of sites that will enable informal uses such as socializing and picnicking;
- Acquisition of sites identified in local area plans and in park deficient neighbourhoods;
- Consideration of additional lands needed for community allotment gardens;
- Consideration of lands necessary to daylight culverted streams;
- Consideration of lands required to fill gaps in the Greenways Plan and to ensure parks are linked to the active transportation system; and,
- Consideration of access to lands for other recreational uses including play spaces.

Strategies for acquisition such as purchase, establishing first rights of refusal, interagency land transfers, joint use agreements, leases, easements and rights-of-way.

**2.1.3 Implement a life-cycle analysis framework to ensure accurate forecasting and planning for significant maintenance, upgrades, repairs, and replacement of park amenities.**

Life-cycle analyses should establish the current condition and capacity of park amenities, determine deficiencies and short-term repair needs, and forecast a timeline for major repairs/upgrades and estimated life-span for each. This will allow for long-term budget planning to ensure a high level of maintenance and consistent level of service.

**2.1.4 Adopt park design guidelines for park furniture and amenities.**

Park Design Guidelines will establish a reference for standards and design requirements that can be used in park assessments and during the park development or redevelopment process. The guidelines should include:

- Universal accessibility guidelines for common amenities such as pathways, playgrounds, water fountains, seating and picnic tables, etc.



- A catalog of standard park furniture and amenities, including a basic “kit of parts” for amenities that are needed at most parks; and
- An implementation program to upgrade and replace park furnishings and amenities with accessible options that sets priorities, timelines, and budget requirements to make the parks and open spaces system more barrier-free.

**2.1.5 Identify opportunities to incorporate more support amenities such as washrooms, drinking fountains, lighting and food services at select parks.**

The previous action to develop a “kit of parts” should be followed up with an assessment of existing parks to determine which are in need of these amenities and plan for park upgrades. Additional consideration

should be given to determining which parks may benefit from washrooms, lighting, and food services such as community ovens or outdoor barbeques. Other actions related to this include identification of parks suitable for hosting various sizes of events and incorporation of event support infrastructure.

**2.1.6 Establish a list of priority improvement projects to address safety issues and other barriers to park use.**

Safety issues and other barriers can be identified and prioritized through analysis of reports from the Victoria Police Department, Calls for Service submitted to the City and other reports, on-site assessments, and consultation with the Accessibility Working Group, seniors, new Canadians, and other target populations. This list should be reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

## Objective 2.2:

### Expand the variety of experiences and activities within the parks and open spaces system.

The parks and open spaces system will be under increasing pressure to serve a diverse array of purposes and to meet changing demands within a finite land base. Current lifestyle trends are toward denser urban areas, smaller living spaces, with an increase in the number of people living alone. This is leading people to use parks and open spaces more for casual social gatherings and to the recognition that parks and open spaces can help combat social isolation.

#### ACTIONS

##### 2.2.1 Identify existing underutilized spaces and develop a strategy for how to encourage broader use.

There is a need to maximize efficient use of parks and open spaces and to improve the multifunctionality wherever possible, keeping in mind that natural areas and flexible open spaces remain high priorities. Examples include adding lines on sport courts to allow more activities, improving circulation to

reduce remnants or inaccessible areas; creatively incorporating food production; adding art, creative seating areas, small skate features, or playful elements.

##### 2.2.2 Incorporate a variety of spaces for socializing and group gatherings into park spaces.

Informal spaces for picnics and socializing was identified as the second most important community value in the Parks and Open Spaces survey. Outdoor social spaces are particularly important amenities for new Canadians and youth. By incorporating more of these spaces, the parks system will become more inclusive and enlivened. Social spaces can also be great locations to incorporate public art and features that celebrate the city. Examples of types of social spaces include:

- Informal seating areas for 3-6 people;
- Informal seating areas for 6-10 people;
- Spectator seating at sports fields and courts;
- Covered group picnic shelters;
- Seating areas around a public art or interpretive feature;
- Paved plaza areas for community festivals, markets, and events; and
- Areas with electricity and lighting to allow outdoor gatherings year-round.



### **2.2.3 Develop areas in the parks and open spaces system that encourage mental restoration and relaxation.**

Parks offer an important respite from the urban landscape and provide opportunities for people to connect with nature and relax. Spaces should include a variety of paths and seating areas at viewpoints, within natural areas, and in gardens that are quiet, comfortable, and restorative.

### **2.2.4 Develop a Dogs in Parks Strategy that builds off of the experiences of the existing Paws in Parks Program.**

Dog owners and their pets are a large user group of park spaces. Pets often provide the impetus for people to visit parks, to exercise, and to socialize with others while

visiting the park. However, dogs in parks can cause conflicts with other park users. Providing off-leash facilities in specific areas can help to reduce those conflicts.

There are twelve parks with off-leash dog areas currently in the city. However, there were requests for more dog off-leash areas, particularly fenced areas.

A Dogs in Parks Strategy would include:

- an assessment of demand;
- an evaluation of conflicts and issues;
- strategies to address conflicts and issues;
- specific recommendations for improvements to park amenities for dogs; and
- identification of the appropriate balance between dog-oriented amenities and other park uses.

## Objective 2.3:

### Parks and open spaces offer a wide variety of activity spaces that contribute to the health and wellness of residents and engage youth and children.

There is increasing evidence that parks are essential to personal health and encourage active living, which is a key determinant of health and well-being. As Victoria's population ages, it will be important to support older adults to stay active. Children

also need support to stay healthy and to develop their social, cognitive and physical abilities. Opportunities for active play and connecting to nature are important tools to combat rising obesity rates, anxiety and social isolation across the age spectrum.

#### ACTIONS

**2.3.1 Identify new health and fitness cluster locations where outdoor fitness amenities, walking areas, playgrounds, and sports amenities are located near each other.**

By clustering amenities, multiple family members can be active at the same time and location. This action also coordinates with the "Build Partnerships" action to work with Island Health and other municipalities and stakeholders to identify projects that enhance active living.

2012 OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN OBJECTIVE:

*"Enhance child- and youth-friendly parks and recreational facilities, services, and programs in the city, to promote a healthy community and to help attract and retain households with children."*

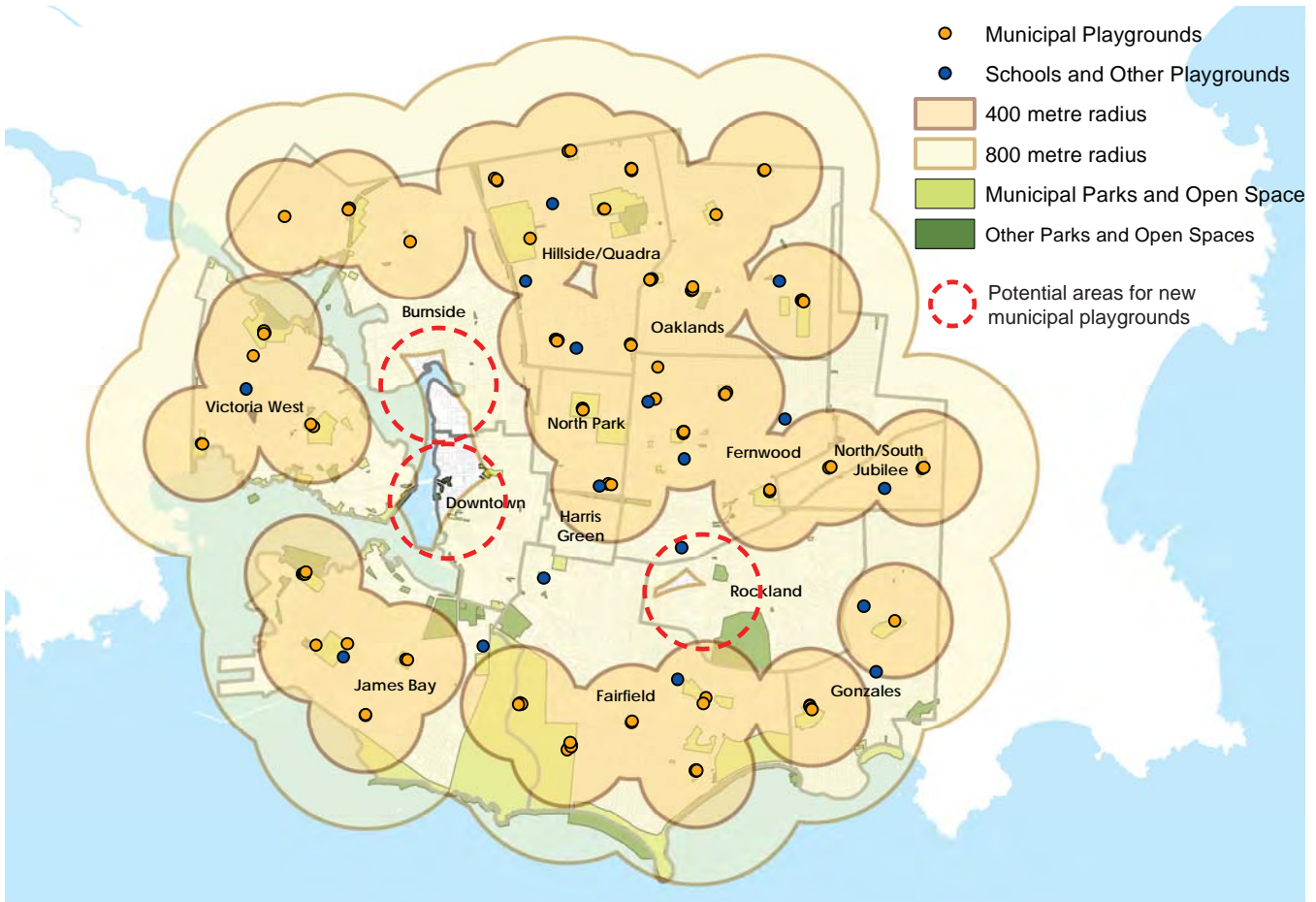


Figure 5.1:  
Approximate locations for new  
municipal playgrounds or play features

**2.3.2 Establish a target for the provision of play spaces within an 800 meters walking distance of 99% of households.**

The main areas of the city that are not within walking distance of a playground include Burnside and Downtown. Figure 5.1 shows general areas where the addition of playgrounds would address existing walkability gaps. Secondary areas that could also be considered for playgrounds in the future include central Rockland, North Jubilee, and the SE area of Victoria West.

School sites help address some of the gaps in the distribution of playgrounds, but they are not accessible to the public during school hours, only serve specific age groups, and do not have secure tenure. Further discussions regarding the locations and types of playgrounds that are needed should be done through the local area planning process and the park redevelopment process. In areas where gaps are identified, when limited land allows for construction of a new playground, the City should consider the development of smaller play points within existing City-owned lands.

### **2.3.3 Establish and maintain standards of care to ensure safe, high quality and creative play features.**

Playgrounds will be included in the life-cycle assessment framework. As a rule-of-thumb, playgrounds should be evaluated every 15 years to determine upgrade and replacement needs. A rolling schedule is recommended to ensure that playgrounds are keep up to date with safety requirements, trends and demand.

### **2.3.4 Identify a location for a new all ages and abilities accessible water/spray park.**

There are two water/spray park features, both at Beacon Hill Park, but demand for more water play features was highlighted in the public engagement results. The northeast area of the city should be considered for a new water/spray park because of the limited access to the beaches and waterfront areas. There may also be other opportunities to incorporate small, interactive water features at other locations to help draw people to and animate underutilized spaces.

### **2.3.5 Develop an All-Wheels Strategy.**

An All-Wheels Strategy is recommended to identify the demand and specific needs of skateboarders and other similar activities such as BMX, roller skating, in-line skating, scootering as well as

youth bike skills areas. It should include public and stakeholder engagement; identification of amenity typologies, site requirements, and potential locations; actions related to programming, operations, maintenance; and strategic partnerships.

### **2.3.6 Identify a location and develop a second skate park that allows for a variety of activities (i.e. roller blading, scooters, and BMX inclusive), ages and abilities.**

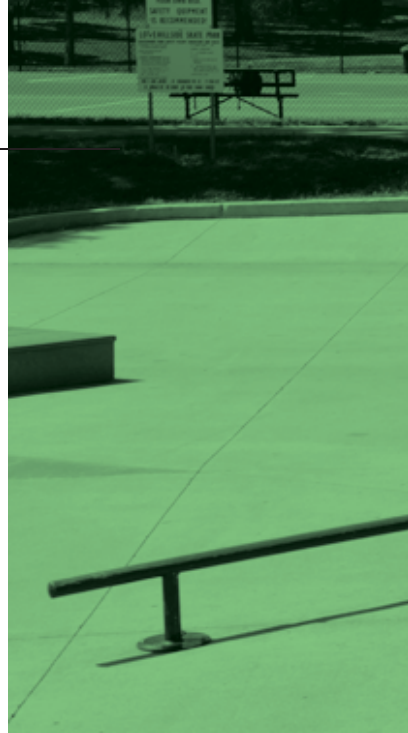
While the All-Wheels Strategy will provide an overall approach, it was identified through the public consultation process that there is demand for a second skills facility. It should serve a variety of uses and include a beginner area where children can safely learn and more advanced areas where beginners can watch more experienced riders.

### **2.3.7 Develop a process to evaluate and assess demand for new/emerging activities.**

Demand for activities will change over the timeline of this plan, and the parks and open spaces system should strive to provide a range of different activities to engage residents. New/emerging activities include disc golf, pickleball, field lacrosse, and, rugby. Requests for new or enhanced amenities will need to be considered within the context of this plan which places higher priority on providing unprogrammed open spaces and more native ecosystems.



Establish and maintain standards of care to ensure safe, high quality and creative play features.





## Objective 2.4:

### Improve and maximize the utility of existing sports amenities.

Given the range of different demands on the parks system, the overall approach for meeting demand for organized sports is to prioritize making the most of existing amenities and strategizing on how to improve multifunctionality of those amenities. Demand for additional amenities may be identified, but those demands should be carefully weighed against the priorities of increasing natural areas and providing flexible open spaces.

#### ACTIONS

##### 2.4.1 Develop a Sports and Facility Development Strategy.

A Sports and Facility Development Strategy would provide guidance on field and court sport planning and investment, in collaboration with sports leagues and clubs, School District 61, and adjacent municipalities, and other stakeholders. Content may include but is not limited to:

- Assessment of the current condition and capacity of existing sports fields and courts;
- Determination of existing and future demand for sports fields and courts, including tournament and competition facilities;
- Identification of gaps in the sports facilities inventory; and
- Identification of strategies for improving capacity such as conversion of fields to artificial turf, installation of lighting, enhanced maintenance; and
- Identification of strategies to enable use of existing facilities for new sports and activities.

##### 2.4.2 Continue to conduct annual meetings with sports league representatives and other user groups.

Annual meetings with stakeholders will ensure ongoing communication and collaborative planning. These meetings should enable the Sports and Facility Development Strategy development and implementation, as well as to address more detailed issues.

## Objective 2.5:

### Encourage community gardening and local food production by providing multigenerational, collaborative opportunities for learning and growing.

There is on-going demand for more allotment gardens and fruit and nut trees in Victoria. The OCP targets one allotment garden per neighbourhood with more in areas with high density. The challenge is finding appropriate space, as well as the conflicting community desire for more natural areas and unprogrammed open spaces.

#### ACTIONS

##### 2.5.1 Incorporate community gardening and related amenities into the parks system.

A healthy local food system and opportunities for urban agriculture are important to Victorians. Gardens provide positive social-interaction, environmental education, contribute toward sustainability, and support health and well-being. The parks system can play an important role in improving access to food, increasing local food production, and educating

people about various aspects of the food system. When park improvement plans are prepared, consider the addition of community garden and local food production amenities.

##### 2.5.2 Incorporate more public and barrier-free features into or adjacent to community gardens.

Gardens located on park lands increase the visibility and awareness of food production and community gardening opportunities, enliven the park, help build community connections, and encourage new users to visit parks. They can also make participation easier when located near other park amenities. Public and barrier-free features in and adjacent to community gardens will improve their benefits for everyone. Examples include interpretive signs, pollinator-friendly or edible edge plantings, and seating areas with views into the garden.

##### 2.5.3 Work with other significant land owners, both public and private, to identify locations for urban food production and community gardening.

As with other amenities, the right balance of garden space relative to demand for other types of spaces must be considered. In addition, there are other spaces in the city available for urban agriculture. Other potential locations include school grounds, provincial lands, other institutional lands owned by faith-based organizations, Island Health or other private property.

## Objective 2.6:

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### Parks and amenities are easy to find and well-connected by pedestrian and cycling routes.

Victorians love their trails and pathways. There is on-going work towards a city-wide active transportation network. The following actions are aimed at improving trails and pathways within the parks system, as well as recognizing the importance of parks and open spaces as part of the active transportation network.

#### ACTIONS

##### 2.6.1 Create a wayfinding and signage strategy for the parks and open spaces system.

Consistent and clear signage will help improve awareness of the park system, create a common reference and make it easier for people to find and navigate through parks. This action should build on the Visual Victoria project for city-wide wayfinding, and coordinate with efforts to remove barriers and improve accessibility.

##### 2.6.2 Develop digital tools and strategies that help people find and explore Victoria's parks and open spaces.

There are many new tools available to help engage people, encourage use of the parks system, enliven the parks, and to gather information to inform future decisions. Apps, interactive maps, social media, and many other options are available depending on the goal. As examples, there could be a collection of "best of" walking or jogging routes could be collected from the public, voted on and published digitally or apps could be developed to help people locate the nearest playground, natural area, trail or specific amenity.

##### 2.6.3 Provide amenities to encourage and support park users who walk and cycle.

This action coordinates with others that recommend better utilization of space, clustering amenities, and improving multifunctionality. Consideration of active transportation end-of-trip amenities should be incorporated into parks, and pathway routes should be

designed to support increased use of walking and cycling. The location of washrooms, drinking fountains, bike racks and benches should be convenient to both adjacent active transportation routes and park users wherever possible, and some park pathways may benefit from widening, paving, or separation of cyclists and pedestrians.

#### **2.6.4 Prioritize the development of active transportation linkages and infrastructure that connects residents and visitors to parks.**

The City is continuing to develop linkages that support access to parks by bicycle and foot. By focusing on infrastructure improvements connecting parks, benefits of active transportation connections can be maximized by reducing vehicle trips and the associated greenhouse gas emissions.

#### **2.6.5 Identify strategies to reduce user conflicts on the Dallas Road waterfront.**

The Dallas Road waterfront was highlighted as a specific area of conflict because it is not designed to accommodate the range of users including dog owners with dogs on and off leash, recreational cyclists, bicycle commuters, joggers, and pedestrians.

#### **2.6.6 Improve access and public uses along the City's waterfront spaces.**

The waterfront and its pathways are highly valued park amenities, and waterfront pathways and access points continue to be in high demand. The City should continue to prioritize initiatives such as the David Foster Harbour Pathway, and identify areas for improving public access to the water and extending existing waterfront pathways through local area plans.

## GOAL 3: CELEBRATE VICTORIA

**Special places and amenities in the parks and open spaces system animate the city and support events for residents and visitors.**

Outdoor festivals, celebrations, concerts, and performances are increasing in popularity. These activities enliven the parks and open spaces system, entice new park users, offer opportunities for social connection, and are naturally multigenerational. Tourists are increasingly travelling for specific events and are looking for unique local experiences.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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- ▶ *We recognize that the City of Victoria is located on the traditional territories of the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, and we seek ways to recognize and celebrate First Nations culture, traditional knowledge, and art within the parks and open spaces system.*
- ▶ *We celebrate Victoria by highlighting the history and heritage of the city within the parks and open spaces system.*
- ▶ *We celebrate Victoria by showcasing horticultural features in the downtown core and other key areas.*
- ▶ *We recognize the economic benefits of tourism and the activation that events can bring to the parks and open spaces system.*
- ▶ *We prioritize actions that benefit both residents and visitors.*
- ▶ *We seek to maintain a balanced approach to providing special events that meet demand while respecting potential impacts on local residents and user groups and their access to neighbourhood parks.*

## Objective 3.1:

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### Parks and open spaces highlight Victoria's unique features and character, and support arts, culture and Tourism.

Victoria has many special and unique features including Gonzales Beach, the Inner Harbour, Beacon Hill Park, and the Garry Oak ecosystems, gardens and beautiful horticultural displays. The arts and culture community is thriving. Parks and open spaces can help support local arts and culture by providing opportunities within the parks system for residents to interact with arts and culture features and events.

Tourism is a major economic sector in the City of Victoria. Over 3 million visitors come to Victoria each year to experience the natural and cultural features that make the city special. People are travelling to experience nature, to have shared experiences, to explore historic sites and areas, and to escape from the every day. Outdoor recreation and cultural activities are important tourism areas that overlap with the parks and open spaces system. The parks system should be enhanced to include new venues and amenities to facilitate a wide range of events from sports competitions to cultural festivals.

## ACTIONS

### 3.1.1 Review and amend the Park Regulation Bylaw to allow for opportunities for limited commercial activities in the parks system.

The existing limitations on commercial activities in the parks prevent the City from improving services that would enable people to enjoy and benefit from longer park visits, entice new users to visit the parks and allow more events to take place by limiting ticketed performances, liquor sales and vending. To ensure that commercial activities provide benefits and have minimal negative impacts, they should be accessible, inclusive, and affordable and should meet a specific need or help enliven the park. Examples of commercial activities that could be considered include recreational equipment rental, coffee carts, food services, temporary markets, etc.

### 3.1.2 Identify opportunities and obstacles to increased activation of Beacon Hill Park.

Beacon Hill Park is a unique park site that is important for both residents and visitors and holds high cultural value for local First Nations. It is currently governed by the parameters outlined in the Trust, which prohibits certain activities. However, there are some activities that could improve the park user experience and improve activation of the park without limiting access or causing damage. This action should be coordinated with the review of the Park Regulation Bylaw regarding appropriate commercial activities in the parks and open spaces system.



**3.1.3 Develop ‘hands on’ experiences, interpretive elements, and educational programming that celebrate Victoria’s special features, unique character, and natural environment.**

Developing a variety of programs and interactive features throughout the parks system will help meet the demand for new experiences, connections with nature, and more inclusive, family-oriented and multigenerational opportunities.

**3.1.4 Enable the animation of Victoria’s parks and open spaces by developing a permitting process for temporary arts and culture installations and activities.**

In conjunction with the previous action, above, the City can make it easier for artists and organizations to enliven the parks and open spaces system with interesting, temporary features. Examples include site specific art installations; performances; and, light and/or sound installations.

**3.1.5 Incorporate outdoor art projects and programs into the parks and open spaces system through the existing artist-in-residence program.**

This action could begin by including outdoor projects and programming within the City’s existing artist-in-residence program. Depending on the success of initial short-term projects, a

more extensive program could be developed with a dedicated artist-in-residence or a rotating art station specifically for the parks system.

**3.1.6 Create Event Hosting Guidelines to help facilitate events hosting by community organizations and the public.**

These guidelines will help provide information for the public and community organizations who want to hold events in the parks and open spaces system. The guidelines should include an outline of the process and resources to help ensure successful events.

**3.1.7 Incorporate support infrastructure and amenities at key parks to host special events on a regular basis.**

Support infrastructure can help improve the delivery of events and improve the experience for participants. Some examples of infrastructure that could be considered include adequate power and water, lighting, washrooms with suitable locations to supplement with portable washrooms; access for event vehicles and staging areas; and features to support stages and tents without resulting in long-term damage to surfaces.



**SCAN THE QR CODE  
TO HEAR THIS BIRD'S CALL**

 Tūi		 Silvereye/tauhou	
 North Island brown kiwi		 Whitehead/pōpokotea	
 Fantail/piwakawaka		 Grey warbler/riroriro	
 NZ falcon/kārearea		 Bellbird/korimako	
 Morepork/ruru		 North Island kākā	

www.mta.govt.nz  Department of Conservation  
Te Papa Kaitiaki



## GOAL 4: STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS

**Community members, stewards, and partners help enhance all parks and open spaces in the city.** through the public engagement process.

City-owned lands are only one part of the overall parks and open spaces system in the city. Significant public green spaces are owned or managed by the provincial and federal government, School District #61, and the Greater Victoria Harbour Authority. These spaces provide significant benefits to the residents of Victoria, but can also be enhanced to meet the specific needs and priorities identified

There are also a significant number of residents and volunteer organizations that contribute to the improvement of open spaces across the city, from community garden leaders to neighbourhood associations to environmental stewardship groups. The City will need to continue to play a proactive role to build partnerships, support volunteers, coordinate efforts, and maximize the benefits to parks and other open spaces.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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- ▶ *We strive to improve dialogue and communication with neighbourhood organizations and residents through the neighbourhood and park planning processes.*
- ▶ *We partner and coordinate with other government agencies, municipalities, and other institutions to share knowledge and achieve common goals and objectives.*
- ▶ *We recognize the valuable contribution of volunteers to the parks and open spaces system.*

## Objective 4.1:

### Collaborate with owners of public green space, other partners and volunteers throughout the City to maximize community benefits.

The following actions highlight some key partnerships including governments and public institutions, as well as volunteers. Partnerships with organizations and increased support for volunteers are important components that will allow the City to achieve the goals and objectives outlined in this Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan.

#### ACTIONS

**4.1.1 Investigate the potential for Memorandums of Understanding with the provincial and federal governments, School District #61, the Greater Victoria Harbour Authority, and other land owners responsible for key public spaces to coordinate planning and identify efficiencies in operations.**

Memorandums of Understanding could be developed to cover numerous opportunities for increasing the benefits of non-City-owned open spaces for Victoria residents. Opportunities

for joint-use agreements, shared or contracted specialized equipment, joint purchase opportunities, and other design and operations coordination efforts should be sought.

**4.1.2 Develop partnerships with First Nations, researchers, government and institutions to advance cultural knowledge, research and innovation in urban ecology.**

This action highlights the importance of developing partnerships and leveraging local knowledge in order to achieve objectives including increasing sustainability and ecosystem services and mitigating and adapting to climate change.

**4.1.3 Work with stakeholders to identify management practices for park lands to help protect and enhance the Victoria Harbour Migratory Bird Sanctuary.**

The Victoria Harbour Migratory Bird Sanctuary encompasses all the marine and shoreline ecosystems in the city. Stakeholders including Environment and Climate Change Canada, CRD, Gorge Waterway Initiative, and others are working to improve stewardship of the upland and marine ecosystems that support birds and other wildlife in the Victoria Harbour. This action also aligns with the objective to increase protection and enhancement of native ecosystems.

**4.1.4 Work with Island Health, other municipalities and stakeholders to identify projects that enhance active living, active transportation and the benefits of balanced lifestyles through joint planning, programming and promotion.**

Island Health is a potential partner that is seeking to improve public health through a range of outreach efforts. Their objectives align with several of the objectives outlined in this plan, including offering opportunities to improve health and wellness, increase active transportation, and connect people with healthy, local food.

**4.1.5 Create a Park Volunteer Policy and Program.**

Volunteers play an important role in the protection and enhancement of parks and open spaces. Many local groups have extensive knowledge and expertise in areas such as native ecosystems and local food systems. Components of a Park Volunteer Policy and Program could include:

- Consultation with First Nations, volunteer organizations and individuals;
- An inventory of the existing activities of volunteers in the parks system;
- Identification of barriers to increased volunteerism, such as policies, insurance or capacity limitations;
- A summary of the key overlap areas of parks and open spaces needs and volunteer interests;
- A program for volunteer leadership training; and
- Either internal staff training in volunteer coordination and facilitation or the creation of a Volunteer Coordinator position.



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CHAPTER

6



# Implementation & Priorities

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This plan provides recommendations for improvements to the parks and open spaces system over the next 25 years. Council's adoption of the master plan represents agreement in principle, but is not a commitment to spend. Specific financial decisions are made by Council as part of the financial planning process. This section includes priorities and timelines for the recommended actions.

## 6.1 Decision-Making Criteria

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As new ideas and initiatives arise over the life of this plan, they will need to be evaluated based on their contribution toward achieving the Vision, Goals and Objectives. Those initiatives that help achieve multiple benefits, improve equitable access to parks, improve environmental sustainability and increase inclusiveness should be prioritized. Other considerations for reviewing and assigning priorities include alignment with OCP goals, cost effectiveness and partnering opportunities.

## 6.2 Tracking and Reporting

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City of Victoria Parks staff will be responsible for ongoing implementation and tracking of the plan, which will be achieved through these actions:

### **Review and Prioritize Existing Resources:**

Reprioritize parks maintenance resourcing in light of the changing scope and total area of park and open space maintenance the Department is responsible for over the next 10 years.

### **Annual Reporting:**

To ensure that progress is being made toward achieving the Vision and Goals staff should incorporate information and metrics into the annual financial reporting, highlighting measurable outcomes wherever possible.

### **Official Community Plan Updates:**

The Official Community Plan should be brought forward to Council for consideration of updating whenever changes to the inventory of parks and open spaces occur.

### **Integrated Planning:**

To ensure the priorities of this plan are reflected city-wide, it is recommended that a process be developed for integrating the plan into other planning initiatives such as implementation of the Urban Forest Master Plan, Local Area Plans, the Arts and Culture Master Plan, active transportation planning and, the City's Financial Plan.

### **Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan Update:**

It is recommended that this plan be reviewed and updated every 5 years to ensure that it continues to be relevant and reflective of the needs and priorities of residents.



## 6.3 Funding Strategies

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### 6.3.1 CORE FUNDING

Core funding to create, sustain, and renew park assets are generally provided through the municipal property taxes, as outlined in the Financial Plan. Core funding for parks is sometimes supplemented by user fees such as for picnic shelters, food truck permits, sports fields permits, etc. As the inventory of parks and amenities increases, operational costs will need to keep pace.

### 6.3.2 DEVELOPMENT COST CHARGES

Development Cost Charges (DCCs) are an essential funding source for infrastructure related to population

growth, including parks and trails, however the City of Victoria has recognized that as a built-out city, future funding through Development Cost Charges is limited. Collected DCCs can be used for park land acquisition, and park development projects listed in the DCC bylaw.

### 6.3.3 COMMUNITY AMENITY CONTRIBUTIONS

The City of Victoria seeks Community Amenity Contributions (CACs) as part of property rezonings that result in additional density. Eligible amenities, such as parks, plazas, play lots, and community spaces, are identified through the local area planning process and can be provided directly by the developer or through monetary amenity contributions that are placed into a fund to be used for those amenities.

### 6.3.4 OTHER FUNDING STRATEGIES

Some external funding is possible through provincial and federal government investment, a variety of granting opportunities although such funding is intermittent and can be challenging to anticipate.

#### Public Agency Joint Ventures

Cooperative ventures between the City and other organizations and institutions can leverage limited funding to meet mutual mandates and interests. Partnerships can include joint funding of amenities or programs, potentially reducing capital and operating costs.

#### Community Organizations

Groups who have particular interest in some of the recommended capital projects may be effective at fundraising and often have access to grants and funding sources that are not available to municipal governments. There have been a wide range of successful grass-roots campaigns for things like

playgrounds, community gardens, and environmental protection initiatives on fundraising platforms such as Go Fund Me.

#### Private Sector Partnerships

Contracts and partnerships with private business can provide a variety of revenue streams. Related services that could complement the parks system and generate revenue in the form of rental or permit fees could include food trucks, concessions, equipment rentals (bicycles, kayaks, etc.), souvenir shops, and photography services. Other private business could include tour operators, fitness programs, and other training programs and camps. All of these private endeavors would need to complement the parks system and enhance the experience and enjoyment of the parks space and should not overly inhibit use of the parks by residents as well as comply with all relevant City regulations.

## 6.4 Action Plan

The Action Plan below suggests estimated timeframes for recommended actions identified in this Plan, as well as potential costs. All items would be subject to annual work plan and Financial Plan approvals.

The following timeframes are considered estimates:

### Short-Term (0-3 Years):

These items may be completed as part of the current three-year capital plan. These are actions that were identified as priority projects through the engagement process and also those projects that will help prioritize improvements of existing assets across the parks system.

### Medium-Term (3-10 Years):

These items would be recommended for funding in the future. They may be recommended for future capital budgets, may be advanced if triggered by redevelopment projects, or if funding (amenity contributions, grants, etc.) becomes available.

### Long-Term (10+ Years):

These items represent longer-term objectives without specific funding strategies or allocations or longer term items contingent on land acquisition or redevelopment.

### Operational Items:

The following actions will be completed over time as part of ongoing City operations or through ongoing park improvement planning and design.

The following are the estimated cost categories:

<b>LOW:</b>	<b>&lt; \$100,000</b>
<b>MEDIUM:</b>	<b>\$100,000-300,000</b>
<b>HIGH:</b>	<b>&gt; \$300,000</b>

An additional table outlining all the recommended actions in numerical order with their associated timelines and costs is included in Appendix C.

PLANNING ACTIONS		ESTIMATED COST			
		Priority	Low	Medium	High
<b>Short Term Actions (1-3 Years)</b>					
2.1.2	Develop a Park Development and Acquisition Strategy, develop and maintain a list of priority park land acquisitions. Coordinate with the Local Area Plans process.	1	•		
2.1.3	Implement a life-cycle analysis framework to ensure accurate forecasting and planning for significant maintenance, upgrades, repairs, and replacement of park amenities such as washrooms, sports fields and courts, playgrounds, and, trails.	1	•		
2.1.4	Adopt park design guidelines for park furniture and amenities.	1	•		
4.1.5	Create a Park Volunteer Policy and Program.	1	•		
2.1.1	Update and/or consolidate the City's land use policies related to park land designation including consolidating park properties with multiple titles, updating the OCP with the current inventory and developing park zoning designations within the Zoning Regulation Bylaw.	1	•		
2.2.4	Develop a Dogs in Parks Strategy that builds off of the experiences of the existing Paws in Parks Program.	1	•	•	
1.2.3	Identify opportunities to daylight or celebrate culverted streams.	1	•	•	•
2.6.1	Create a wayfinding and signage strategy for the parks and open spaces system.	1		•	•
<b>Medium Term Actions (3-10 Years)</b>					
1.1.1	Develop a Biodiversity Strategy.	1	•		
2.3.2	Establish a target and implementation plan for the provision of play spaces within an 800 meter walking distance of 99% of households.	1	•		
2.3.5	Develop an All-Wheels Strategy.	1	•		
2.6.2	Develop digital tools and strategies that help people find and explore Victoria's parks and open spaces.	1	•		
3.1.1	Review and amend the Park Regulation Bylaw to allow limited commercial activities in the parks system.	1	•		
3.1.2	Identify opportunities and obstacles to increased activation of Beacon Hill Park.	1	•		
2.2.1	Identify existing underutilized spaces and develop a strategy for how to encourage broader use.	1	•	•	•
2.6.5	Identify strategies to reduce user conflicts on the Dallas Road pathway.	1	•	•	•
2.4.1	Develop a Sports and Facility Development Strategy.	1	•	•	
1.1.3	Develop targets for increasing the use of native plants and the quantity and quality of native ecosystems.	2	•		

PLANNING ACTIONS		ESTIMATED COST			
		Priority	Low	Medium	High
<b>Medium Term Actions (3-10 years)</b>					
3.1.4	Enable the animation of Victoria's parks and open spaces by developing a permitting process for temporary arts and culture installations and activities.	2	•		
3.1.5	Incorporate outdoor art projects and programs into the parks and open spaces system through the existing artist-in-residence program.	2	•		
3.1.6	Create an Event Hosting Guidelines to help facilitate events hosting by community organizations and the public.	2	•		
3.1.8	Collaborate with Tourism Victoria on promotional materials that highlight the special features of the parks system.	2	•		
<b>Operational Items</b>					
1.1.2	Continue to implement the Urban Forest Master Plan.	1	•		
1.2.1	Update the Environmental Management Standards for park operations and maintenance that will increase the resilience of parks and open spaces.	1	•		
1.3.4	Identify marine shorelines within the parks system that are vulnerable to climate change impacts and develop mitigation strategies.	1	•		
2.6.3	Provide amenities to encourage and support park users who walk and cycle.	1	•		
4.1.1	Investigate the potential for Memorandums of Understanding with the provincial and federal governments, School District #61, the Greater Victoria Harbour Authority, and other land owners responsible for key public spaces to coordinate planning and identify efficiencies in operations.	1	•		
2.4.2	Continue to conduct annual meetings with sports league representatives and other user groups.	1	•		
2.5.3	Work with other significant land owners, both public and private, to identify locations for urban food production and community gardening.	1	•		
2.6.4	Prioritize the development of active transportation linkages and infrastructure that connects residents and visitors to parks.	1	•	•	
4.1.4	Work with Island Health, other municipalities and stakeholders to identify projects that enhance active living, active transportation and the benefits of balanced lifestyles through joint planning, programming and promotion.	2	•		
4.1.3	Work with stakeholders to identify ways that City-owned park lands can help protect and enhance the Victoria Harbour Migratory Bird Sanctuary.	2	•	•	
4.1.2	Develop partnerships with First Nations, researchers, government and institutions to advance cultural knowledge, research and innovation in urban ecology.	3	•		

CAPITAL ACTIONS		ESTIMATED COST			
		Priority	Low	Medium	High
<b>Short Term Actions (1-3 Years)</b>					
2.1.6	Establish a list of priority improvement projects to address safety issues and other barriers to park use.	1	•	•	•
2.3.3	Establish and maintain standards of care to ensure safe, high quality play features.	1	•	•	
2.3.6	Identify a location and develop a second skate park that allows for a variety of activities (i.e. roller blading, scooters, and BMX inclusive), ages and abilities.	1		•	
2.3.7	Develop a process to evaluate and assess demand for new/emerging activities.	2	•	•	•
<b>Medium Term Actions (3-10 Years)</b>					
1.3.1	Incorporate more vegetation in areas of the city most vulnerable to the urban heat island effect.	2	•		
2.3.1	Identify new health and fitness cluster locations where outdoor fitness amenities, walking areas, playgrounds, and sports amenities are located near each other.	2	•	•	
3.1.3	Develop 'hands on' experiences, interpretive elements, and educational programming that celebrate Victoria's special features, unique character, and natural environment.	2	•	•	
3.1.7	Incorporate support infrastructure and amenities at key parks to host special events on a regular basis.	2	•	•	
2.1.5	Identify opportunities to incorporate more support amenities such as washrooms, drinking fountains, lighting and food services at select parks.	2		•	
1.2.2	Create demonstration projects showing best practices for sustainability within the parks system.	2		•	•
1.3.6	Explore the potential to complete a Green Shores shoreline restoration project.	3			•
2.3.4	Identify a location for a new all ages and abilities accessible water/spray park.	3			•

CAPITAL ACTIONS		ESTIMATED COST			
		Priority	Low	Medium	High
<b>Long Term Actions (&gt;10 Years)</b>					
1.3.4 (B)	Implement mitigation strategies related to climate change impacts on marine shorelines (see Short Term Planning Action 1.3.4).	1			•
1.2.3 (B)	Implement stream daylighting projects (see Short Term Planning Action 1.2.3).	3			•
<b>Operational Items</b>					
1.3.3	Identify plants and ecosystems vulnerable to climate change and develop management strategies to help mitigate impacts.	1	•		
2.5.1	Incorporate community gardening and related amenities into the parks system.	1	•		
2.6.6	Improve waterfront access and public uses along the City's waterfront spaces.	1	•	•	•
1.3.2	Use vegetation to shade impervious areas and buildings to reduce the heat island effect and consider green roofs on park buildings and shelters.	2	•		
2.5.2	Incorporate more public and barrier-free features into or adjacent to community gardens.	2	•		
2.2.2	Incorporate a variety of spaces for socializing and group gatherings into park spaces.	2	•	•	•
2.2.3	Develop areas in the parks and open spaces system that encourage mental restoration and relaxation.	2	•	•	•
1.3.5	Reduce impervious surfaces, particularly along the waterfront.	2			•

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# Appendices



# Appendix A

## Parks and Open Spaces Inventory



## 2016 Park Asset Inventory Summary

Asset/Amenity	City Data	Total number / units	Count (# of parks with this feature)	Estimated # of features or # of parks
Ball Diamonds	31	31	12	31
Basketball Courts		14	9	9
Chess Tables	2 chess tables	2	1	2
Cricket Field	1	1	1	1
Outdoor Fitness Locations	5	10	5	5
Football Field	1	2	1	1
Gazebo	8	8	4	8
Ball Hockey Courts	1 ball hockey court and 2 half courts	4	3	3
Annual Beds	19 parks with this feature	2305	19	19
Green Roofs	1 green roof	617	1	1
Ponds	2 pond water features	14283	2	2
Rain Gardens	3 parks have rain gardens, 7 gardens total	631	3	3
Rose Gardens	5 rose gardens	774	5	5
Lacrosse Box	1	1	1	1
Community Gardens	2 Edible Demonstration Gardens	3273	8	8
Community Orchard	1 community orchard at Banfield Park	435	1	1
Urban Farms	1 farm: Beacon Hill Children's Farm	4930	1	1
Lawn Bowling Greens	3 lawn bowling greens (Vic West Park, Cridge Park, Beacon Hill Park)	7174	3	3
Natural Areas		510744 sq.m.	7	
Picnic Tables	103 (43 in parks)	10	9	43
Playgrounds	40 playgrounds spread across 39 parks	98	39	39
Rugby Field	3 pitches - 2 at macdonald and one at Royal Athletic	10	2	2
Scoreboards	3 scoreboards	3	3	3
Shade Structures (All)	37	21	7	37
Shade Structures	16 (wood only)	16	12	19
Soccer Fields	12	25	7	12
Basketball Courts	4 full (two at Central Park, 1 Vic West, 1 William Stevenson) and 5 half (Banfield, Oswald, Cecelia, Oaklands and BHP)	4	4	4
Bike Park	1	1	1	1
Multi-Sport Courts	2	2	2	2
Skateboard Park	1	1	1	1
Tennis Courts	25 courts in 10 different parks	11	10	11
Artificial Turf Field	1	1	1	1
Volleyball Courts	2	4	2	2
Water and Spray Parks	1	2	1	1



# Appendix B

## Public Engagement





## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

To provide guidance on how investments are made in parks and open spaces, the community was engaged in the development of a parks and open spaces master plan throughout the course of the project.

There were two phases of engagement. The first phase sought to solicit feedback from the community to inform a vision for parks and open spaces and guidelines to inform short and long term investment in parks and open spaces. Phase two sought input from the community on the draft vision, goals, objectives, and key actions, ensuring that the community’s feedback has been accurately reflected. All of the feedback collected has been incorporated and will help guide improvements over the next 25 years.

### ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

The engagement approach included a wide range of tools, some targeted at specific stakeholder groups and others seeking to gather input from the general public and “non-users” - those who may not regularly use parks and open spaces.

Overall the number of people estimated to have actively participated to date is approximately 1,600. Additionally, a significant number of people were reached through the pop-up events and other forms of communication and publicity.

The following tools were used to engage stakeholders and the general public:

<p>Phone Survey</p>	<p>A statistically valid phone survey was completed by Mustel Group Market Research in June 2016. A total of <b>403 interviews</b> were conducted by telephone over a random selection of residents 15 years of age or over.</p> <p>The margin of error on the sample is <b>+/-4.9% at the 95% confidence interval</b>. The phone survey provides the City with a reliable source of data that is representative of the city population as a whole, including “non-users” whose input cannot be captured through other means.</p> <p>Respondents were representative of the population as a whole, as well as geographically representative of the City’s neighbourhoods (data is included in the Engagement Details section).</p> <p>The interviewees included 39% renters and 58% home owners. In comparison, the online survey only included 26% renters.</p> <p>There was a significantly greater proportion of respondents who had physical limitations compared with responses to the online survey (11% vs 6%).</p>
<p>Online Survey #1</p>	<p>An online survey, aligned with the phone survey questions, was hosted on the City’s website for anyone to complete. Between June 13<sup>th</sup> and August 2, <b>670 residents</b> participated in the survey. Mustel Group Market Research</p>

	<p>analyzed the online data alongside, but separate from, the phone survey results.</p> <p>Respondents were not representative of the population as a whole, as there were fewer responses from those ages 15-39 and more responses from those ages 40-79 compared with the phone survey.</p> <p>There were responses from all neighbourhoods, but fewer from Hillside-Quadra, Fernwood, Downtown, Oaklands, Burnside, and North Park compared with the phone survey.</p> <p>15% of the responses were from people living outside of Victoria.</p> <p>Compared with the phone survey, there were fewer people living alone who answered the online survey, but more retirees and more people who own their home.</p>
Focus Groups	<p>1.5 hour long focus group sessions were held with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Neighbourhood Associations (3 sessions, 21 participants) - Attendees included James Bay, Downtown, Fairfield, Fernwood, Rockland, Hillside/Quadra, Vic West, North Jubilee, Burnside Gorge, Oaklands, and North Park. Those not attending included Harris Green, South Jubilee, and Gonzales.</li> <li>▪ Seniors – 9 participants</li> <li>▪ Youth (30 min session) – 9 participants, consultants met with youth participating in a youth leadership workshop.</li> <li>▪ Field Sports Groups – 8 participants</li> <li>▪ Naturalists and Stewardship Groups – 4 participants</li> <li>▪ Accessibility Working Group – 9 participants, including 2 City staff and 1 councillor</li> </ul>
Pop-Up Events	<p>Information booths were set up at 8 different public events and locations across the city during the month of June including a Harbour Cats Game, #YYJ, the Moss Street Market, Crystal Pool, and other locations.</p>
Open House #1	<p>An open house was held on Wednesday, July 27, 2016 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the Fernwood Community Centre. Display boards included information on the project as well as a series of participatory activities and opportunities for feedback. Attendees were also able to talk directly with members of the consulting team and City staff. Attendance was approximately 30 people which is likely due to the nice weather, mid-summer date, and the absence of any controversial proposals.</p>
Stakeholder Interviews and Meetings	<p>An interagency meeting was held with representatives from Island Health Authority, Greater Victoria School District, and City staff from Food Systems, Recreation, and Parks Planning &amp; Design.</p>

	<p>Telephone or in-person interviews were also conducted with the following stakeholders in July and August:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Oak Bay</li> <li>▪ Equimalt</li> <li>▪ Tourism Victoria</li> <li>▪ Greater Victoria Harbour Authority</li> <li>▪ Victoria’s Green Team (to be completed)</li> </ul>
<p>Online Survey #2</p>	<p>An online survey was hosted on the City’s website for anyone to complete for the month of November 2016. 465 residents participated in the survey, with <b>372 residents</b> completing all of the main questions.</p> <p>Respondents represented a range of ages, although there were slightly more responses from those 40-59 and slightly fewer from those under 24 and over 80 years of age compared to the random sample from the first phone survey.</p> <p>There were responses from all neighbourhoods, with slightly lower response rates from those in Downtown than expected.</p> <p>19% of the responses were from people living outside of Victoria.</p>
<p>Open House #2</p>	<p>An open house was held on Saturday, November 19<sup>th</sup> from 10am – 1pm at the McPherson Theatre with approximately <b>60 people</b> attending.</p> <p>Display boards included the Draft Vision, Goals, Objectives and Key Actions, as well as a series of participatory activities and opportunities for feedback. Attendees were also able to talk directly with members of the consulting team and City staff.</p>

## PUBLICITY AND MEDIA

The following communication tools were also used to create awareness of the project and the opportunities to participate:

- Information boards – posted at 14 major City parks
- Social media campaign – interesting facts and photos posted to social media outlets
- Playground passport – encourages young families to visit different parks for a prize
- Publicity and media – City website updates, press releases, event advertising, etc.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT RESULTS – ROUND #1

Similar feedback was received across all engagement channels. Outlined below are high-level themes and which emerged through the public engagement process:

- Victoria residents value the environmental features, natural areas, and ecosystems within the City's parks and open spaces system and would like to see more of them. Preserving and improving the environmental features and benefits arose as the highest priority through multiple engagement methods.
- Residents value flexible outdoor spaces that can accommodate a range of uses. There is a leaning toward more unprogrammed spaces in the parks and open spaces system. Related to this, there is a desire for more diversity in parks, social spaces and quiet, meditative spaces.
- There is support for improving parks and open spaces by adding more inclusive spaces and designs that are accessible and accommodate a range of ages, abilities and needs.
- Spaces to play are important, particularly for children and youth, but also places for families to play together. There are opportunities to incorporate a wider variety of amenities for all ages. For example, the youth focus group revealed that youth mostly use public plazas and seating areas as opposed to parks and green spaces.
- Residents want improvements at existing parks and open spaces to be a priority including adequate maintenance, washrooms, safety, drinking fountains, and other support amenities. This was highlighted in multiple engagement methods.

## PHONE AND ONLINE SURVEY #1

### Outdoor Recreational Activities, Habits and Barriers

- **Types of Activities:**
  - Walking, followed by cycling and hiking are the most popular outdoor recreational activities among City of Victoria residents 15 and over, including both summer and winter months.
  - Among children 5 to 11 years of age, bicycling is the most favoured activity—mostly on-road but many also enjoy off-road cycling. Playgrounds, soccer and swimming are also quite popular. Among children 12 to 17 years old, bicycling is also the most popular outdoor activity. Other favourites among the older children/teens include hiking and swimming.
  - Other items not on the list suggested by online respondents included disc golf, badminton, table tennis, tai chi, outdoor fitness classes, playgrounds, photography, and bocce.
- **Frequency:** Residents visit parks and open spaces in the City very regularly. A majority report going weekly or more often (72%) and 6-in-10 say they visit multiple times weekly. Of the online survey respondents, 92% visit parks at least once per week.

- **Barriers:** Lack of time is the most mentioned obstacle to visiting City parks more often. The next most mentioned barriers are lack of parking, difficult access/too far away and feeling unsafe (particularly by women). Other obstacles of note include: being too crowded, poor maintenance/ conditions, lack of interest and excessive noise.

### Satisfaction and Improvements Desired

- **Most Appreciated:** Pathways are the most appreciated park amenity. Other amenities of note include natural areas, park washrooms, unprogrammed green space and waterfront/beach areas.
- **Satisfaction:** Overall satisfaction with Victoria's parks and open spaces is very high with 90% of residents at least 'somewhat' satisfied and 60% 'very' satisfied. Satisfaction levels were lower in the online survey respondents, but was still high with 85% 'very' or 'somewhat' satisfied.
- In terms of specific park amenities and facilities, residents are satisfied with most aspects. Topping the list are waterfront and beach access, flower displays, pathways and natural areas. Other aspects well-regarded by a majority of randomly sampled residents include unprogrammed green space, outdoor sport fields, playgrounds and court facilities.
- Satisfaction is weakest for park washrooms, off-leash dog areas, and outdoor fitness equipment.
- **Additions/Improvements:** When asked what amenities are missing or need improvement, most residents had no suggestions. Among desired changes having 'more' of the following was most mentioned: more parks/green space or natural areas, washroom facilities, off-leash dog areas and shared-use pathways (cycling, walking, etc.).

### Important Objectives for Future Parks Systems

- Respondents rated the importance of 12 objectives for guiding the future of Victoria's parks system. These objectives were developed based on the background review, inventory and discussions between staff and the consulting team. The 12 objectives included:
  - Protect and highlight natural areas and environmental stewardship
  - Provide informal spaces for picnics and socializing
  - Ensure access to the water and promote marine recreation
  - Encourage community gardening and local food production
  - Address climate change
  - Beautify the community
  - Highlight the cultural heritage of the community
  - Create unique, attractive places
  - Improve safety
  - Expand the range of amenities and potential uses in parks
  - More organized events and festivals in parks
  - Provide dog off-leash areas and trails

- All 12 objectives are considered important by at least a majority of residents (70% or more), but clearly the most important is: **“Protecting and highlighting natural areas and environmental stewardship”**.

Three-quarters of residents believe this objective is ‘very important’ and nearly everyone agrees that this is an important guideline.

- Several other objectives are ‘very important’ to at least half/almost half of residents, but standing out are:
  - “addressing climate change” (64% very important), and
  - “encouraging community gardening and local food production” (61% very important).

### **Communications**

- While the current methods used by the City to communicate with the public about parks and open spaces amenities and issues are considered effective by the majority of residents, a sizeable proportion think there is room for improvement (39%).
- The most preferred methods of communication to help increase awareness of parks and open spaces are online interactive maps showing parks, amenities and walking routes. About half of residents would prefer this type of online resource.
- Better signage is preferred by about one-quarter.

## FOCUS GROUPS

Key themes heard in the focus groups include:

### **Safety**

Improve park user safety/comfort in all parks especially in Irving Park and Beacon Hill, clean up needles left in parks and provide needle boxes, improve lighting, improve level of maintenance.

### **Washrooms**

Increase number of washrooms, make gender neutral and family friendly, keep open later, provide better signage, improve level of maintenance, consider providing water and electric hookups.

### **Universal Accessibility**

Ensure parks are accessible by bike routes and public transit, provide bike parking, improve marked crossings at park entrances, provide QR codes and tactile wayfinding indicators, incorporate tactile path markings, provide more shallow ramps and paved paths, offer hard surface beach access to hard-packed sand, provide scent-free and quiet areas.

### **Improved Maintenance and Park Quality**

Create park classification system that defines park use and level of maintenance, provide and map out green corridors/linkages (for habitat and people), address poor sports field drainage, improve general maintenance (emptying garbage receptacles more often, mowing, etc), restore and maintain natural park ecosystems, upgrade wayfinding, provide more benches/seating and trash receptacles.

### **Shared Space**

Allow for different age groups/abilities to play side by side, be technology-friendly (charging stations, wifi, QR codes), be culturally sensitive (use beyond nuclear family, more group-friendly), allow food carts, include community gathering places, update children's play spaces (natural and constructed, water play), provide adult play spaces that aren't sports fields or paved sports courts (swings, parkour, etc), provide opportunities for community gardening and urban agriculture on currently unused land (public greenhouse, food security, compost education, orchards/food gardens).

### **Investment needs**

Communities with the least amount of park space should be the priority (maintain minimum standard).

## POP-UP EVENTS

The feedback from the pop-up events included the following comments and suggestions:

- More edible community gardens;
- Additional outdoor fitness equipment in parks;
- More trees and stewardship of plants, wildlife and sensitive ecosystems;
- Unsanctioned camping in parks needs to be addressed;
- Amenities for the following sports were mentioned:
  - lacrosse;
  - frisbee golf;
  - outdoor basketball courts;
  - tennis courts; and
  - lawn bowling;
- More seating, benches and sculpture/public art in parks;
- The following community amenities were mentioned:
  - tea room near beacon hill park;
  - community stage for local performers;
  - community gathering spaces;
  - increased green space downtown;
  - and
  - more fenced in off-leash dog areas.





## OPEN HOUSE #1

The open house had approximately 30 attendees, but despite the small numbers it included people from around the city and a variety of ages.

1. Attendees were asked to mark where they live (yellow dots) and what parks they use the most (blue) on a map. There was limited attendance from those residing toward the edges of the city.



2. What existing park features do you or your family use the most?

Waterfront / beach access	15
Pathways / walking trails	15
Natural areas	14
Unprogrammed green space	12
Children's play areas	10
Off-leash dog areas	7
Picnic areas	7
Interpretive features	7
Park washrooms	6
Court facilities	5
Outdoor sport fields	5
Horticulture displays	3
Outdoor fitness equipment	1

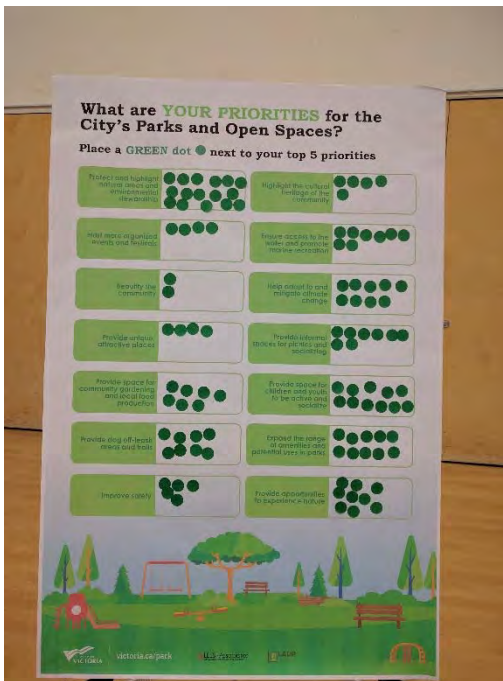
3. What new park features would you like to see in parks?

- Skateboard parks and micro skate features
- Water fountains
- Cleaner beaches
- Continue guided walks and more educational programs in parks
- Art and kinetic installations, poetry, prose, painting in parks
- Water / spray parks
- Kids play spaces, including adventure/wild play, places to explore and experiment
- Bocce
- Community greenhouses at community gardens
- Dog fencing / dog off-leash areas
- Meditation area
- Floating gardens
- Bird-watching areas
- Pocket parks
- More food forests and community greenhouses

4. What are your priorities for the City's parks and open spaces?

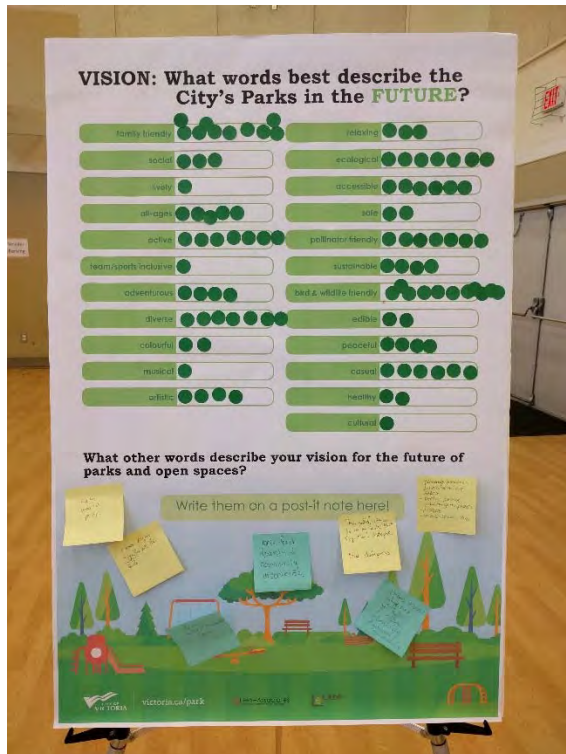
The objectives tested in the phone survey were also tested at the Public Open House. Two additional objectives were added to those originally included in the phone survey (denoted with a \* in the table below), which were identified by the community through the focus groups.

Protect and highlight natural areas and environmental stewardship	16
Provide a space for children and youth to be active and socialize*	11
Expand the range of amenities and potential uses in parks	10
Address climate change	9
Provide opportunities to experience nature*	9
Provide informal spaces for picnics and socializing	8
Ensure access to the water and promote marine recreation	8
Provide dog off-leash areas and trails	8
Encourage community gardening and local food production	7
Highlight the cultural heritage of the community	5
Improve safety	5
Create unique, attractive places	4
More organized events and festivals in parks	4
Beautify the community	2



5. VISION: What words best describe the City's parks in the future?

Bird and wildlife friendly	11	Peaceful	4
Family friendly	10	Social	3
Active	7	Relaxing	3
Diverse	7	Colourful	2
Ecological	7	Safe	2
Pollinator-friendly	7	Edible	2
Accessible	6	Healthy	2
Casual	6	Lively	1
All-ages	5	Team/sports inclusive	1
Adventurous	4	Musical	1
Artistic	4	Cultural	1
Sustainable	4		



6. How would you balance the different desired park uses in the future?

Participants were asked to distribute 5 beans into jars marked with 6 overarching park uses. The responses reflected the other input gathered at the open house and through the phone survey.

Natural areas and environmental protection	32
Play spaces	30
Quiet areas for relaxing	18
Picnic / Social spaces	17
Dog off-leash areas	15
Sports fields and courts	14

7. There was also a children's colouring station, asking what they like to do outdoors. Responses included climbing trees, playgrounds, beaches, soccer and lots of great scribbles.



## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT – ROUND #2

There were two primary methods for public engagement to review the Draft Vision, Goals, Objectives and Key Actions in the fall of 2016: an Online Survey #2 and Public Open House #2.

An online survey was available on the City's website for the month of November and had **372 complete responses**.

Open House #2 was held on November 19<sup>th</sup> from 10am – 1pm at McPherson Theatre to provide an opportunity for the public to review the Draft materials, provide feedback, and discuss the plan with City staff and the consulting team in person.

## ONLINE SURVEY #2 RESULTS

The following provides a summary of the data, as well as the detailed open-ended responses.

### 1. Draft Vision

**Support 68%**

**Somewhat Support 28%**

Do not 2.8%

Don't know 1.3%

#### Why:

- It's hard to capture all the roles that parks play - for residents and for ecosystems - but this captures it well.
- It needs to include "safe" too. I don't feel safe in some of the city parks and squares.
- I like that the parks become part of the character of the city. I also like that they are considered ecosystems that are sustainable.
- You have included "inclusive" which is very important to me as a person with a disability.
- Terrific span of choices for any kind of need.
- No mention of traditional territory, not sure if "culture" is enough. Food for thought.
- For such a dog-friendly city, Victoria is woefully lacking secure, fenced off-leash areas.
- Would be good to articulate the ecological role they play, including the climate adaptation and mitigation role.
- Looks like it covers just about everything.
- It is a very broad statement and covers a lot of what is important in a park.
- Dynamic, yes! Playful! Dedicated sanctuaries where people can commune.
- Parks are a vital resource for current and future generations.

### 2. Draft Goals

The goals are listed in order from highest % of "strongly support" to lowest. All were supported by a majority of survey respondents.

**Protect and improve ecosystems and help the City mitigate and adapt to climate change**

<b>Strongly Support</b>	<b>76%</b>
<b>Somewhat Support</b>	<b>13%</b>
Neutral	8.2%
Not very Supportive	1.75%
<b>Do not Support</b>	<b>1.5%</b>

**Support and encourage people to be active and participate in activities that improve their health**

<b>Strongly Support</b>	<b>75%</b>
<b>Somewhat Support</b>	<b>18%</b>
Neutral	5.5%
Not very Supportive	1.0%
<b>Do not Support</b>	<b>1.0%</b>

**Create parks and open spaces that are inviting and friendly to everyone and easy to access, navigate, and enjoy**

<b>Strongly Support</b>	<b>75%</b>
<b>Somewhat Support</b>	<b>15%</b>
Neutral	6.8%
Not very Supportive	1.76%
<b>Do not Support</b>	<b>1.76%</b>

**Create parks and open spaces that have a variety of opportunities for people to socialize, build community, and relax**

<b>Strongly Support</b>	<b>68%</b>
<b>Somewhat Support</b>	<b>23%</b>
Neutral	6.3%
Not very Supportive	1.3%
<b>Do not Support</b>	<b>1.8%</b>

**Enhance parks and open spaces to provide a wider range of possible uses**

<b>Strongly Support</b>	<b>55%</b>
<b>Somewhat Support</b>	<b>28%</b>
Neutral	8.7%
Not very Supportive	5.6%
<b>Do not Support</b>	<b>2.3%</b>

**Create special places and amenities in parks and open spaces that animate the city and support events for both locals and visitors**

<b>Strongly Support</b>	<b>52%</b>
<b>Somewhat Support</b>	<b>27.5%</b>
Neutral	13.6%
Not very Supportive	4.3%
<b>Do not Support</b>	<b>2.3%</b>

**Develop partnerships to enhance all green spaces in the city**

<b>Strongly Support</b>	<b>51%</b>
<b>Somewhat Support</b>	<b>25%</b>
Neutral	14%
Not very Supportive	6%
<b>Do not Support</b>	<b>3%</b>

**3. Draft Key Action: Environment and Natural Areas**

<b>Strongly Support</b>	<b>68.5%</b>
<b>Somewhat Support</b>	<b>20.5%</b>
Neutral	7%
Not very Supportive	2.5%
<b>Do not Support</b>	<b>1.3%</b>

**4. Draft Key Action: Park Land Acquisition**

**When considering new parkland, what should the City’s focus be? (choose up to 3):**

Land with sensitive ecosystems	61%
Waterfront sites for parks and pathways	60%
Locations that more equally distribute parks in all neighbourhoods	52%
Locations in areas where more residential development is expected (Downtown and the Urban Villages)	48%
Sites that enable socializing and picnicking	36%

Comments:

- Land for sport and recreation is also important
- Park land is so needed in the downtown area, and playgrounds.
- Land with sensitive ecosystems if it ensures its preservation and prevents development on that land.

**5. Draft Key Action: Opportunities for socializing and quiet contemplation**

**Which of the following would you most like to see more of in the City’s parks? (choose up to 3):**

Quiet seating areas at viewpoints	56%
Areas with lighting to allow outdoor gatherings year-round	41%
Covered group picnic shelters	33%



Informal seating areas for groups of 6-10 people	32%
Paved plazas for community festivals, markets and events	21%
Spectator seating at sports fields and courts	17%
Seating around a public art feature	16%

**6. Draft Key Action: Dogs in Parks**

To give us a better sense of what the Dogs in Parks Strategy should focus on, please tell us which of following issues related to dogs in parks are the most important (choose up to 3):

Rules and etiquette for park use	49%
Defining off-leash boundaries and fencing	46%
Waste management	42%
Additional off-leash areas	39%
Locations and design features for off-leash areas	39%
Environmental protection	31%
Safety and enforcement	30.5%

**7. Draft Key Action: Commercial Uses in the Parks**

Please tell us how much you support this action:

<b>Strongly Support</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Somewhat Support</b>	<b>34%</b>
Neutral	14%
Not very Supportive	11%
<b>Do not Support</b>	<b>11%</b>

**8. Draft Key Action: Park Volunteers**

<b>Strongly Support</b>	<b>52%</b>
<b>Somewhat Support</b>	<b>25%</b>
Neutral	16%
Not very Supportive	5%
<b>Do not Support</b>	<b>2.4%</b>

**9. Draft Key Action: Waterfront**

How much do you support this action as a priority for waterfront improvements?

<b>Strongly Support</b>	<b>58%</b>
<b>Somewhat Support</b>	<b>23%</b>

Neutral	10.5%
Not very Supportive	6%
<b>Do not Support</b>	<b>3%</b>

**Are there specific locations we should consider?**

- Harbour Pathway
- Along the Gorge, connecting with Saanich walkway.
- Cordova Bay walkway or boardwalk along oceanfront.
- Arbutus park or the bottom of harriet for a kayak launch.
- Dallas Road and particularly Clover point. This should be a park not a parking lot.
- Along Dallas Road, David Foster Walkway.
- Completing and expanding upon the current harbour walkway plan would be wonderful. The view of our city from the water is unique and special. Stopping the degradation of the Dallas Rd. cliffs in a more natural looking way would be nice.
- Dallas Road between Ogden Point/Breakwater beach and Clover Point;
- Inner Harbour, Upper Harbour, Selkirk Water
- The City should focus on the Inner Harbour to Dallas Rd Path. It should be see more than a path, but a journey. The plan for that journey should include the obvious seating areas, viewpoints, but also gathering areas 'entertainment and busker pavilions' and cafes every 200-400 metres. This will create a world class experience of Victoria.
- Along the Gorge. There is so much development happening along the north side of the Gorge from downtown, and the waterfront along this shore is mostly inaccessible. Could be amazing.
- It would be great if there were docks/small storage shelters installed so that people can launch kayaks, SUPs, canoes, and other small boats safely and easily, and lock them up somewhere out of the rain. This would make water-based recreational activities more accessible and affordable than they are currently. Obviously people with valuable boats would not leave them in park shelters, but I think that some people would store less valuable boats.
- Along the Gorge waterway in Burnside Gorge.
- Don't provide access to the most ecologically sensitive areas!

**Do you have any other comments on the draft vision, goals and actions for Victoria's parks and open spaces?**

- All parks and open spaces plans must have realistic operating funds and staffing for maintenance, repairs, clean-up and environmental remediation (e.g. removing fallen trees and branches after windstorm) as well as recycling kiosks where visitors can dispose of waste or recyclables.
- The community school with which I'm involved makes constant use of the parks, and with the rise in outdoor kindergartens and interest in the environment there could be more interpretation and learning spaces in the parks. Partnership with the museum?
- Would like to see some recognition that children, their safety and access to high quality play equipment and facilities are a high priority.
- I hope you will not allow allotment gardens on existing Park land...it is not inclusive or community building to fence off public space for the benefit of individuals, and there is less desirable and unused space that can be used for

allotment gardens. True, open, community gardens are different and welcome in public parks.

- Victoria is in dire need of more large parks (featuring restored native ecosystems) within walking distance of the city centre. It's unacceptable that the closest examples such as Mount Douglas Park or Thetis Lake are so far from the city. Look to Vancouver's Stanley Park as something to aspire toward.
- Children's playgrounds downtown are needed.
- Remember that parks are on indigenous land and food and plants should be indigenous and harvesting of these plants by local nations should be encouraged.
- Creating more opportunities for diverse use of parks (i.e. music, markets, BBQ spaces) will help get people using parks more and in different ways.
- Protect what little natural areas that we have left, acquire more land to add to the park system, and restore and enhance natural areas that have become degraded and ignored. And provide the human and financial resources for this work!
- I appreciate the City's focus on our green spaces and the preservation of trees and ecologically sensitive areas.
- Actions: more "natural" playgrounds in addition to equipment being purchased. I see a lot of funds spent around the city on specialized and expensive exercise equipment and play structures. I think in some cases well maintained natural landscapes (logs, rocks) could appeal to groups more widely than special age-specific structures.
- Ensure that waterfront accessibility does not compromise biodiversity and sensitive shoreline habitats.

## PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE #2

A public open house was held on November 19<sup>th</sup> to provide an opportunity for the public to review the draft goals, objectives, and key actions for the Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan and to talk to City staff and the consulting team.

Attendees were given dots to respond to specific questions as well as sticky notes to provide comments related to any of the draft content.

*The results of the dot voting on specific questions are summarized below.*

### 1. Does the VISION capture the overall community priorities?

Yes	Somewhat	No
33	4	1

### 2. Which of these GOALS should be the top priorities?

Create Parks for People	26
Protect the Environment	22
Be Active	19

Be Inclusive and Accessible	14
Be Multifunctional	13
Celebrate Victoria	11
Build Partnerships	5

- 3. Increased Natural Areas:** To increase the amount of natural areas in parks, some trade-offs must be considered. Do you support the following strategies?

	<i>Support</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Don't Support</i>
<i>Expand existing natural areas</i>	23	4	0
<i>Replace ornamental flower beds with native plants</i>	20	9	0
<i>Replace lawns with native plants</i>	18	9	2

- 4. Allotment Gardens:** Do you support having allotment gardens in City Parks?

<i>Support</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Don't Support</i>
32	5	7

- 5. Do you support the addition of the following features to the parks system?**

	<i>Support</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Don't Support</i>
<i>Water/spray park</i>	24	4	1
<i>Skate park</i>	8	7	2
<i>Bike features</i>	21	3	1
<i>Disc golf</i>	8	3	2
<i>Outdoor fitness</i>	17	1	1

The written comments received included the following:

**GENERAL / HAVE YOUR SAY**

- Support replacement for Vic West Elem play structure
- Expand use of McDonald Park
- Safe corridors for biking between green space and neighbourhoods
- Allow fruit trees on boulevards and create adopt a tree program for those trees similar to the Fruit Tree Stewardship Program

## **ENVIRONMENT**

- I would love to see specific commitment to protecting and enhancing native bird/insect/plan/etc species

## **PLAYGROUNDS**

- Playgrounds, especially in the downtown core
- More play areas downtown. The pop up park really highlights the need for parks downtown. There is nowhere to go from here with my kids.

## **DOGS IN PARKS**

- Dog park needed Downtown, North Park and Fairfield
- “balance” must be people (all ages) first
- In high density residential areas need passive parks not accepted by special interest groups
- Enclosed dog play parks; walking, roller skating/blading, stroller paths along Dallas with dogs on leash
- Put in split rail fence by pathway on Dallas road, as proposed
- Encourage training and socializing for dogs; add pocket enclosed dog play parks
- Enforce on-leash areas

## **NEW AMENITIES**

- More black benches, fewer white benches
- Community gardens only (i.e. no privatization of public land to private allotments)
- Water features are too expensive to maintain and Victoria has enough “water”
- Use CALUC groups with experience on steering committee to take to broader group
- Include community in the creation of a new park beyond just the CALUC process
- Upgrade park in Fairfield that has old play equipment
- Need seating, bike parking and child play equipment at Clover Point and Holland Point Parks
- Water fountain in every park and washroom in all major parks
- Edible landscaping maintained by parks staff not just citizen volunteers
- Community gardens are open to all, not just allotment gardeners therefore should be given equal City resources as dog parks or community centres proportionally
- Minimize public washrooms – only downtown needed – public washrooms encourage camping
- More “innovative” seating; benches are passé

## **CELEBRATE VICTORIA**

- Creative, playful spaces please
- Art installations should be active, serve multi-uses
- Allow commercial food services in parks
- Consult with neighbours prior to approving events
- Bring back the lantern festival in Beacon Hill; find a way around outdated “trust” provisions and restrictions

- Need inner harbour beach-like or water access area

**BUILD PARTNERSHIPS**

- Encourage co-operation with First Nations to plant species (i.e. camas) in Beacon Hill Park

## ENGAGEMENT DATA

### PHONE AND ONLINE SURVEY #1

- The random sample was weighted to match census statistics on the basis of age within gender. The on-line survey sample is unweighted.
- Note that the on-line survey includes 15% of respondents who reside outside of the City of Victoria.
- Differences of note between the two samples are indicated by the following notations:
  - Differences between the samples is noted with the following notations:
    - ▲ Significantly higher ▼ Significantly lower

	<i>Random Sample (403)</i> %	<i>Online Sample (670)</i> %
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	47	44
Female	53	51
Other/ refused	-	5
<b>Age</b>		
15 to 24	11	4
25 to 39	30	25
40 to 59	27	33
60 to 79	25	35
80+	5	1
Refused	3	3
<b>Neighbourhood of residence</b>		
Fairfield	16	20
James Bay	13	9
Victoria West	9	12
Hillside-Quadra	12	8▼
Fernwood	9	6▼
Downtown	11	4▼
Rockland	5	8
Oaklands	7	4▼
Burnside Gorge	7	3▼
North and South Jubilee	5	3

Gonzales	2	3
North Park	4	1▼
Harris Green	1	1
Outside of Victoria	-	15▲
Refused	-	2

	<i>Random Sample (403)</i>	<i>Online Sample (670)</i>
	%	%
<b>Personal family situation</b>		
Person living alone	28▲	19
Person living with parents	10▲	2
Person living with friends	4	3
Spouse or partner, no children at home	35	45▲
Spouse or partner with children at home	17	25▲
Single parent with children at home	3	3
Prefer not to say	2	2
<b>Employment</b>		
Employed	64	62
Full-time	45	48
Part-time	10	15
Self-employed	11	-
Not employed	39	42
Retired	24	32▲
Unemployed and not looking for work	7	2
Homemaker and not employed outside of the home	2	3
Student	7	6
Full-time	7	4
Part-time	1	2
Prefer not to say	1	3
<b>Home ownership</b>		
Own	58	72▲
Rent	39	26
Prefer not to say	2	3

	<i>Random Sample (403)</i>	<i>Online Sample (670)</i>
	%	%
<b>Years lived in Victoria</b>		
5 or less	10	18
6 – 9	16	14

### 11. How old are you?

Number of respondents : 368

Choice	Total	%
under 18 years old	3	0.82
18 - 24	14	3.80
25 - 39	114	30.98
40 - 59	144	39.13
60 - 79	92	25.00
80 or over	1	0.27

Note: There were slightly more responses from those 40-59 and slightly fewer from those under 24 and over 80 years of age compared to the actual demographics of the city.

10 – 19	28	25
20 – 29	22	15
30 – 39	10	11
40+	13	13
Prefer not to say	1	5
Average	21	20
<b>Physical limitations</b>		
Yes	11 ▲	6
No	89	91
Prefer not to say	-	3

## ONLINE SURVEY #2

### 12. Do you identify as:

Number of respondents : 369

Choice	Total	%
Male	140	37.94
Female	218	59.08
Transgender	0	0.00
Other / Prefer not to say	11	2.98

Note: There was a slightly higher proportion of women than men who completed the survey.

### 13. Which neighbourhood do you live in?

Number of respondents : 361



City of Victoria – Parks & Open Spaces Master Plan

Choice	Total	%
Burnside Gorge	19	5
Downtown	23	6
Fairfield	54	15
Fernwood	22	6
Gonzales	10	3
Harris Green	4	1
Hillside Quadra	38	11
James Bay	41	11
North and South Jubilee	20	6
North Park	6	2
Oaklands	17	5
Rockland	9	3
Victoria West	29	8
Outside of Victoria	69	19

Note: Responses were spread proportionally across the City's neighbourhoods, although there were slightly fewer responses from those living Downtown than expected and 19% of responses were from people living outside of Victoria.



July 2016

# City of Victoria Parks and Recreation Master Plan — Community Survey



MUSTEL GROUP  
MARKET RESEARCH

 **LEES+Associates**  
Landscape Architects and Planners

 **LADR**  
LANDSCAPE  
ARCHITECTS

## ➤ Foreword

### Introduction

The following report summarizes the findings from a City of Victoria survey regarding current usage habits and opinions of municipal parks and open spaces. The survey was administered by telephone among a random selection of residents, and was available on-line to residents interested in expressing their opinions.

### Telephone Survey Methodology

- A total 403 interviews were conducted by telephone with a random selection of residents, 15 years of age or over.
- The margin of error on the sample is +/-4.9% at the 95% confidence level.
- Specific steps were taken to insure the sample is representative of the community at large including:
  - sample drawn at random from an up-to-date database of published residential listings and cell phone listings;
  - next birthday method employed to randomize respondent selection within the household;
  - up to 6 calls made to each household/individual to reduce potential bias due to non-response;
  - final sample weighted by gender within age to match Statistics Canada Census data.

### Telephone Survey Methodology, cont.

- Interviewing was conducted by Mustel Group interviewers weekday evenings and during the day on weekends from June 23<sup>rd</sup> to July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016.
- The questionnaire used is appended.
- Detailed computer tabulations are provided under separate cover.

### Open-Access On-line Survey Methodology

- 670 residents participated in the open access survey.
- The online survey was open from June 13<sup>th</sup> to August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016.
- The analysis of findings in this report focuses on the random survey results but the findings from the on-line survey are displayed in the charts. The online results should however be interpreted with caution as the findings may not be reflective of the broader community. For example, the on-line survey sample is skewed to older residents, and includes more homeowners and slightly more with children at home, but fewer singles and fewer in some neighbourhoods, such as Downtown.
- Also note that the on-line survey includes 15% who reside outside of the City of Victoria.

## ➤ Executive Overview

### Outdoor Recreational Activities Habits and Barriers

- **Types of Activities:** Walking and then cycling, followed by hiking are the most popular outdoor recreational activities among City of Victoria residents 15 and over, including both summer and winter months.
- Among children 5 to 11 years of age, bicycling is the most favoured activity—mostly on-road but many also enjoy off-road cycling. Playgrounds, soccer and swimming are also quite popular. Among children 12 to 17 years old, bicycling is also the most popular outdoor activity. Other favourites among the older children/teens include hiking and swimming.
- **Frequency:** Residents visit parks and open spaces in the City very regularly. A majority report going weekly or more often (72%) and 6-in-10 say they visit multiple times weekly.
- **Barriers:** Lack of time is the most mentioned obstacle to visiting City parks more often. The next most mentioned barriers are lack of parking, difficult access/too far away and feeling unsafe (particularly by women). Other obstacles of note include: being too crowded, poor maintenance/ conditions, lack of interest and excessive noise.

### Satisfaction and Improvements Desired

- **Most Appreciated:** Pathways are the most appreciated park amenity. Other amenities of note include natural areas, park washrooms, unprogrammed green space and waterfront/beach areas.
- **Satisfaction:** Overall satisfaction with Victoria's parks and open spaces is very high with 9-in-10 residents at least 'somewhat' satisfied and 6-in-10 'very' satisfied.
  - In terms of specific park amenities and facilities, residents are satisfied with most aspects.
  - Topping the list are waterfront and beach access, flower displays, pathways and natural areas. Other aspects well-regarded by a majority of randomly sampled residents include unprogrammed greenspace, outdoor sport fields, playgrounds and court facilities.
  - Satisfaction is weakest for park washrooms, off-leash dog areas, and outdoor fitness equipment.
- **Additions/Improvements:** When asked what amenities are missing or need improvement, most residents have no suggestion. Among desired changes having 'more' of the following are most mentioned: more parks/green space or natural areas, more washroom facilities, more off-leash dog areas and more shared-use pathways (cycling, walking, etc.).

## ➤ Executive Overview (cont'd)

### Important Objectives for Future Parks Systems

- Respondents rated the importance of 12 objectives for guiding the future of Victoria's parks system.
- All 12 objectives are considered important by at least a majority of residents (70% or more), but clearly the most important is:
  - 'protecting and highlighting natural areas and environmental stewardship'.

Three-quarters of residents believe this objective is 'very important' and nearly everyone agrees that this is an important guideline.

- Several other objectives are 'very important' to at least half/almost half of residents, but standing out are:
  - 'addressing climate change' (64% very important)
  - and 'encouraging community gardening and local food production' (61% very important).

### Communications

- While the current methods used by the City to communicate with the public about parks and open spaces amenities and issues are considered effective by the majority of residents, a sizeable proportion think there is room for improvement (39%).
- The most preferred methods of communication to help increase awareness of parks and open spaces are online interactive maps showing parks, amenities and walking routes. About half of residents would prefer this type of online resource.
- Better signage is preferred by about one-quarter.



MUSTEL GROUP  
MARKET RESEARCH

# Detailed Findings

## ➤ Participation in Outdoor Recreational Activities

	Random survey <u>Unaided</u> (403) %	Online survey <u>List aided</u> (670) %
Walking	52	83
Bicycle	34	63
Only on-road	19	29
Both off-road and on-road	13	34
Only off-road	3	3
Hiking	27	62
Running/ jogging	15	31
Swimming	11	2
Tennis	10	22
Dog walking	10	33
Kayaking, canoeing	7	25
Soccer	6	10
Baseball/ softball	5	6
Golf	5	16
Gardening	4	50
Basketball	4	8
Boating/ fishing	3	13
Picnicking/ socializing	3	55
Skiing/ snowshoeing/ snowboarding	2	<1
Skateboarding	1	6
Windsurfing/ kite boarding	1	3
Bird watching	1	23
Playgrounds (natural play, sand play, obstacle courses, etc.)	1	1
Rock climbing	1	7
Rugby	1	3
Lawn bowling	1	13
Lacrosse	<1	1
Field hockey	<1	1
Pickleball	<1	4
Cricket	-	1
Other	17	14
None	8	<1

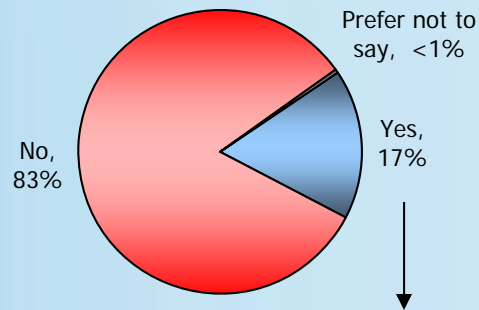
Q.1) What outdoor recreational activities do you participate in on a regular basis? Please think of both summer and winter months.

- Random sample respondents were asked to name the types of outdoor recreational activities that they participate in on a regular basis, including both summer and winter months.
- Walking is the most popular outdoor recreational activity among residents 15 years of age and over. Cycling is the next most common outdoor pursuit, followed by hiking.
- Participants in the open access on-line survey appear more active and engaged in activities than the general population. However, note that on-line respondents were provided with a checklist whereas telephone respondents volunteered their activities unprompted. This difference could account to some extent for higher levels of response in the on-line survey.
- Note that the analysis in the remainder of the report will focus on the random telephone survey findings.

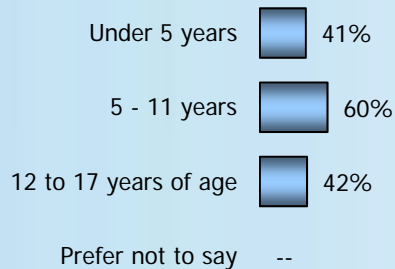


## Children Under 18 Years of Age in Household

### Random Survey



#### Ages of Children



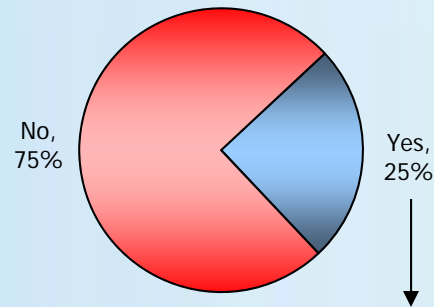
Base: Total random survey (n=403)  
 Total online survey (n=670)

Q.Di) Do you have children under the age of 18?

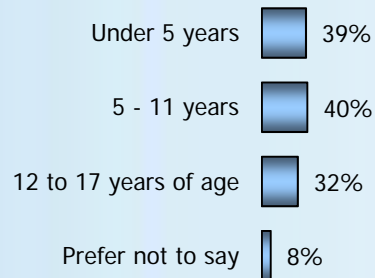
Base: Total have children under 18  
 Total random survey (n=48)  
 Total online survey (n=167)

Q.Dii) What are the ages of your children?

### Online Survey



#### Ages of Children



- While most City of Victoria residents do not have children under 18 years of age at home, about one-in-six report that they do. The children are distributed across all age groupings but with more in the 5-11 year age range.
- Note that a slightly higher proportion of on-line respondents report children in the household (25%).

## ➤ Child Participation in Outdoor Recreational Activities

Children between 5 and 11 years old	Random survey <u>Unaided</u> (27)* %	Online survey <u>List aided</u> (67) %
Bicycle	52	93
Only on-road	34	22
Both off-road and on-road	10	64
Only off-road	8	9
Playgrounds (natural play, sand play, obstacle courses, etc.)	32	6
Soccer	31	52
Swimming	29	2
Hiking	18	61
Baseball/ softball	16	21
Skateboarding	8	33
Tennis	8	36
Walking	7	78
Running/ jogging	5	33
Kayaking, canoeing	3	37
Lacrosse	3	3
Basketball	3	22
Picnicking/ socializing	-	67
Dog walking	-	28
Boating/ fishing	-	24
Gardening	-	21
Rock climbing	-	19
Bird watching	-	13
Golf	-	10
Rugby	-	6
Field hockey	-	6
Pickleball	-	6
Other	22	8
None	6	-

*Q.2a) What type of recreation or cultural activities does you child or children between 5 and 11 years enjoy?*

*\*Caution: Small base sizes*

- Bicycling is the most favoured outdoor activity for children 5 to 11 years of age. Most ride on-road, but many children cycle off-road as well.
- Other popular activities among this age group are playgrounds, soccer and swimming, followed by hiking and baseball/softball.\*
- Open access online respondents selected responses from an extensive aided list and so may include activities that may be done with less frequency. The following are other activities that were commonly chosen online: walking, dog walking, picnicking/ socializing, running/jogging, among many other activities.
- \*NB: Playgrounds and swimming receive little mention from the online respondents, but are more prominent in the random survey, although the base size is small. The random telephone survey reflects top-of-mind recall, and so, likely activities done more frequently.

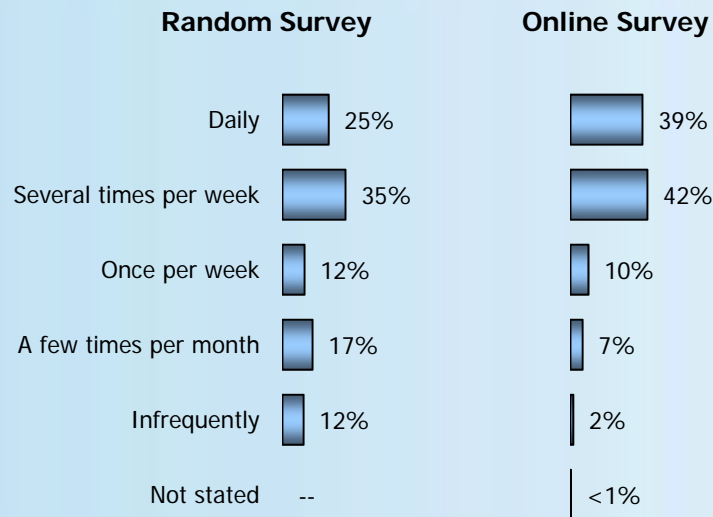
## ➤ Child Participation in Outdoor Recreational Activities, cont.

Children between 12 and 17 years old	Random survey <u>Unaided</u> (22)* %	Online survey <u>List aided</u> (53) %
Bicycle	59	89
Only on-road	27	25
Both off-road and on-road	23	62
Only off-road	9	4
Hiking	36	62
Swimming	32	6
Baseball/ softball	20	19
Kayaking, canoeing	18	34
Soccer	16	40
Running/ jogging	12	43
Skateboarding	12	30
Walking	11	70
Windsurfing/ kite boarding	6	2
Tennis	6	25
Dog walking	3	45
Basketball	3	26
Field hockey	2	15
Picnicking/ socializing	-	55
Rock climbing	-	34
Gardening	-	15
Boating/ fishing	-	13
Rugby	-	13
Pickleball	-	8
Bird watching	-	6
Golf	-	4
Lacrosse	-	4
Cricket	-	2
Lawn bowling	-	2
Other	29	11
None	3	2

*Q.2b) What type of recreation or cultural activities does you child or children between 12 and 17 years enjoy?*  
\*Caution: Small base sizes

- Bicycling is also the most popular outdoor activity among children 12 to 17 years of age. Again, while most ride on-road, off-road is also quite popular among older child cyclists.
- Other favourite activities among the older children/teens include hiking and swimming\*, followed by baseball/ softball, kayaking/canoeing and soccer.
- Selecting their responses from an extensive aided list, open access online respondents indicate that these activities are also quite popular: walking, dog walking, picnicking/ socializing, running/jogging, among many other activities.
- \*NB: Swimming was mentioned unaided in the random survey (although the base size is small), but few open access respondents chose it. When given a long list of items in a self-administered survey, the selected items may include activities that are done but with less frequency.

## ➤ Frequency of Visiting City Parks or Open Spaces

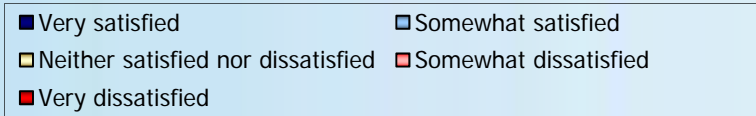
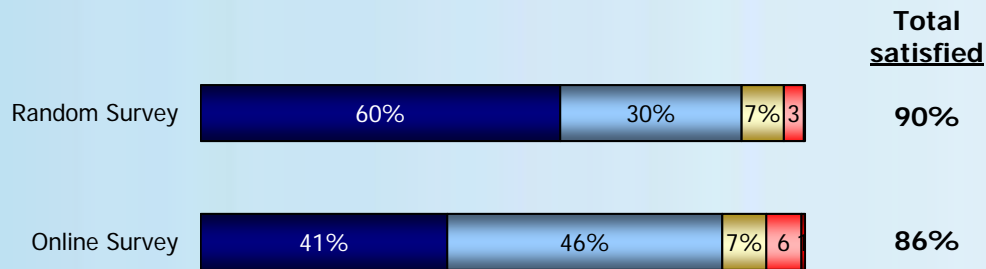


Base: Total random survey (n=403)  
Total online survey (n=670)

Q.3) How often do you visit a City of Victoria park or open space?

- Residents visit City parks and open spaces very regularly with a majority saying weekly or more (72%) and 6-in-10 going multiple times a week.
- Frequency is quite similar across age and gender.
- Note that this study was conducted in July, so may reflect summer patterns more than winter.

## ➤ Satisfaction With Access to Parks and Open Spaces



- Overall, 9-in-10 residents are satisfied with their access to parks and open spaces in the City of Victoria and a majority (60%) are 'very satisfied'.

Base: Total stating an opinion  
 Random survey (n=403)  
 Online survey (n=519)

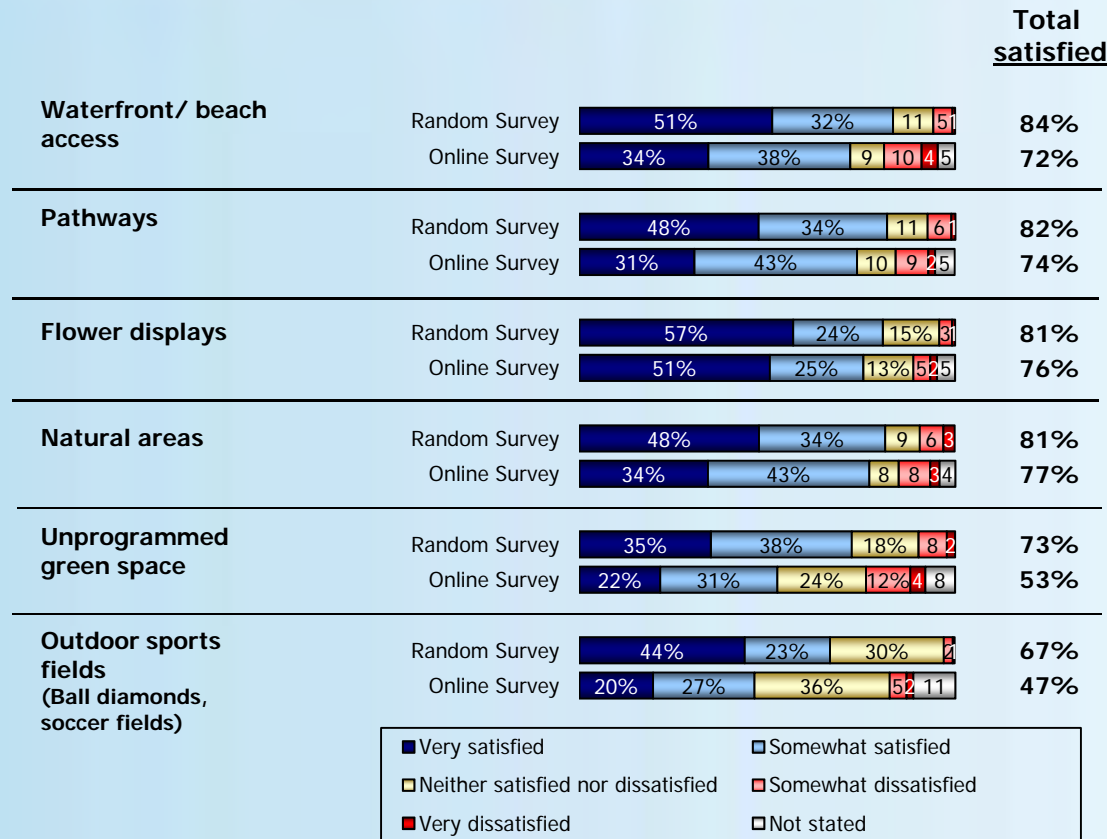
Q.4a) Overall, how satisfied are you with access to parks and open spaces available in City of Victoria? Are you:

## ➤ Reasons for Dissatisfaction

	Random Survey (14)* %	Online Survey (n/a)
Not enough parks	65	-
Lack of accessibility/ hard to get to/ lack of parking	20	-
Lack of off-leash dog areas	19	-
Poor maintenance	16	-
Lack of amenities	11	-
Homeless people/ camps	9	-
<i>Base: Total dissatisfied</i>		
<i>Q.4b) Why do you say that?</i>		
<i>*Caution: Small base sizes</i>		

- The very small group who are not satisfied cite 'not enough parks' as the main reason.

## ➤ Satisfaction with Aspects of Park Amenities/Facilities



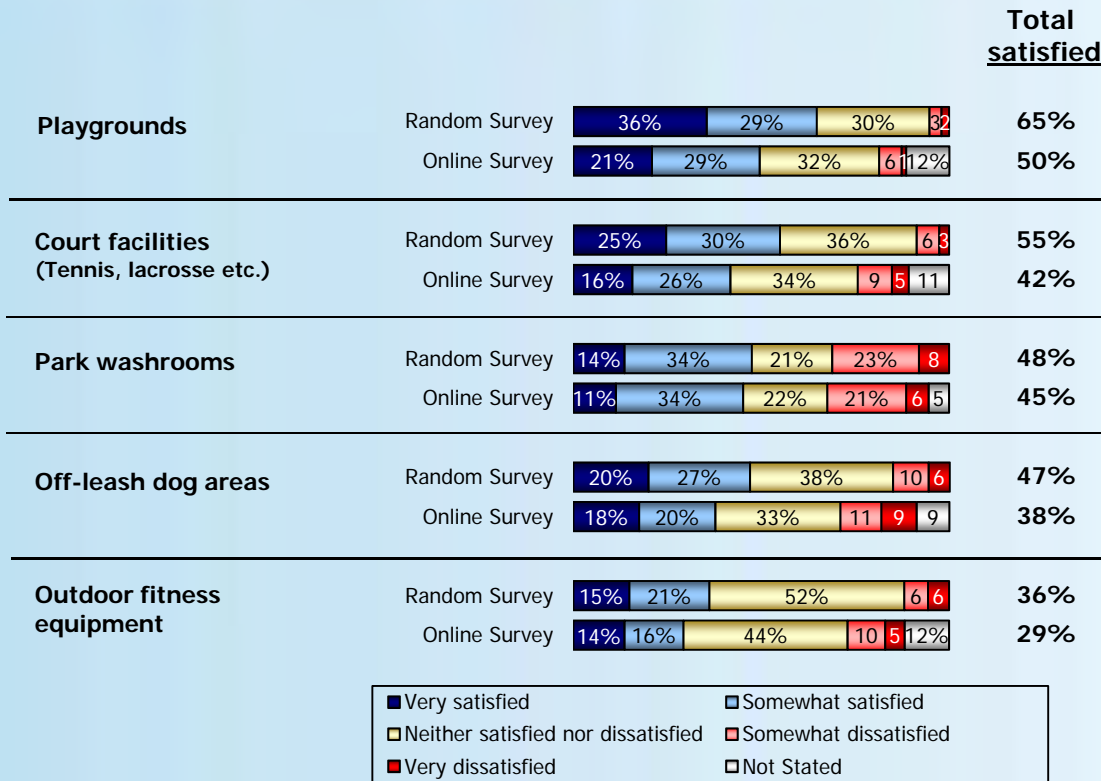
- In general, residents are satisfied with most aspects of the park amenities and facilities in their community.
- At the top of the list are waterfront and beach access, flower displays, pathways, and natural areas.
- Other aspects regarded as satisfactory by a majority of randomly selected residents include unprogrammed greenspace, outdoor sport fields, playgrounds and court facilities.

Base: Total random survey (n=403)  
Total online survey (n=670)

Continued...

Q.5a-k) How satisfied are you with each of the following facilities or park amenities in your community?

## ➤ Satisfaction with Aspects of Park Amenities/Facilities (cont.)



- Satisfaction is weakest for park washrooms, off-leash dog areas, and outdoor fitness equipment.

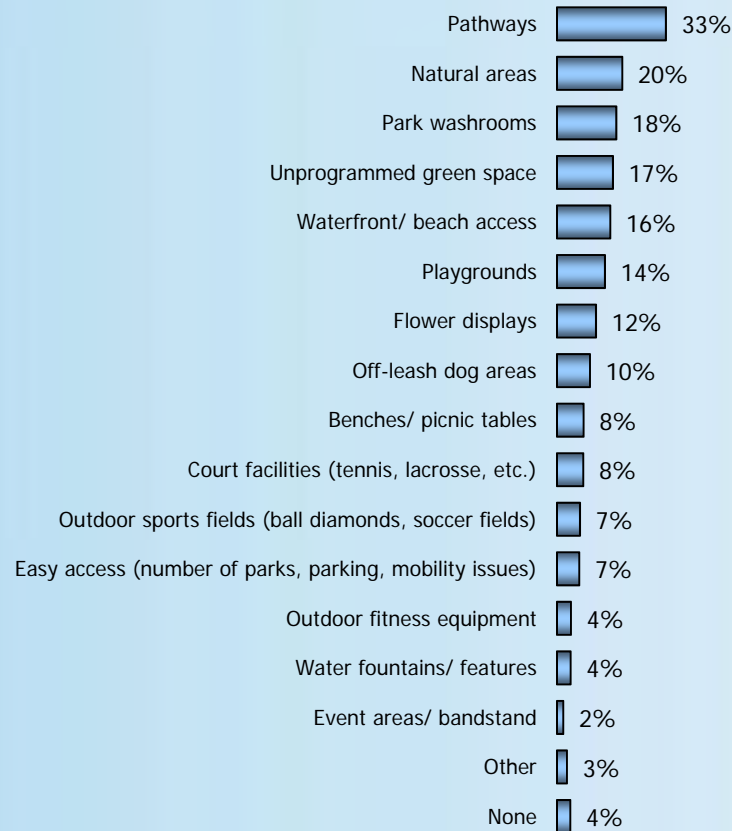
Base: Total random survey (n=403)  
 Total online survey (n=670)

Q.5a-k) How satisfied are you with each of the following facilities or park amenities in your community?

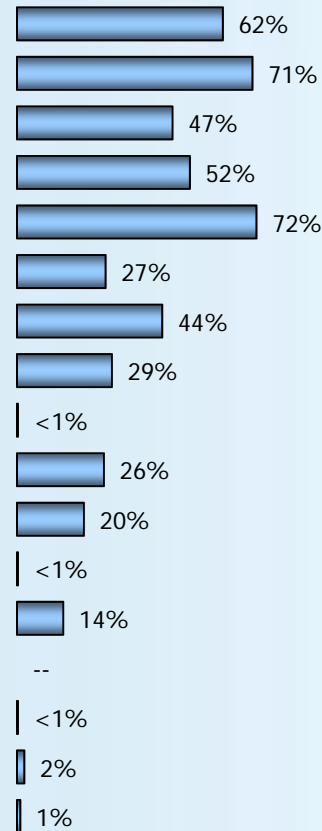


## ➤ Park Amenities Most Appreciated

### Random Survey -- Unaided



### Online Survey – List Aided



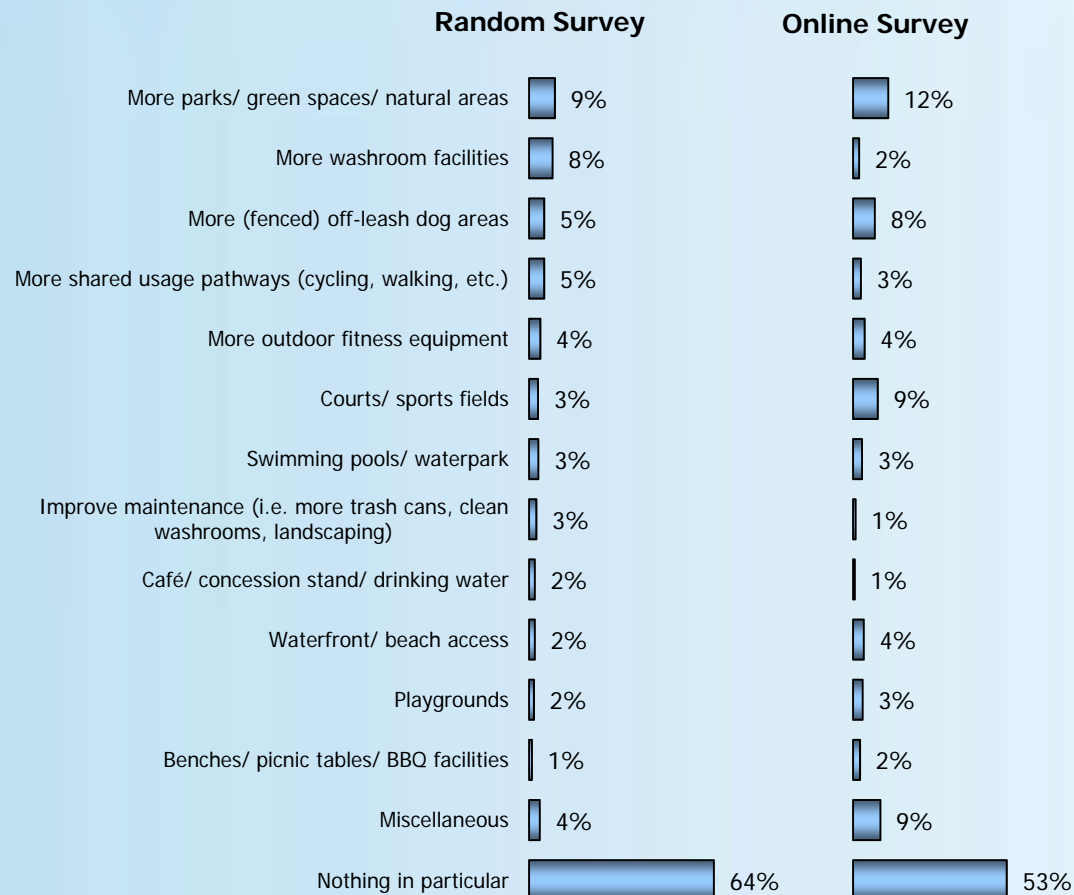
- Pathways are the most commonly identified as the most appreciated park amenity.
- While many other amenities are named unprompted to varying degrees by random sample respondents, those identified somewhat more include natural areas, park washrooms, unprogrammed green space and waterfront/beach areas.

Base: Total random survey (n=403)

Total online survey (n=670)

Q.6) What park amenities do you appreciate the most?

## ➤ Missing Amenities in City Parks and Open Spaces

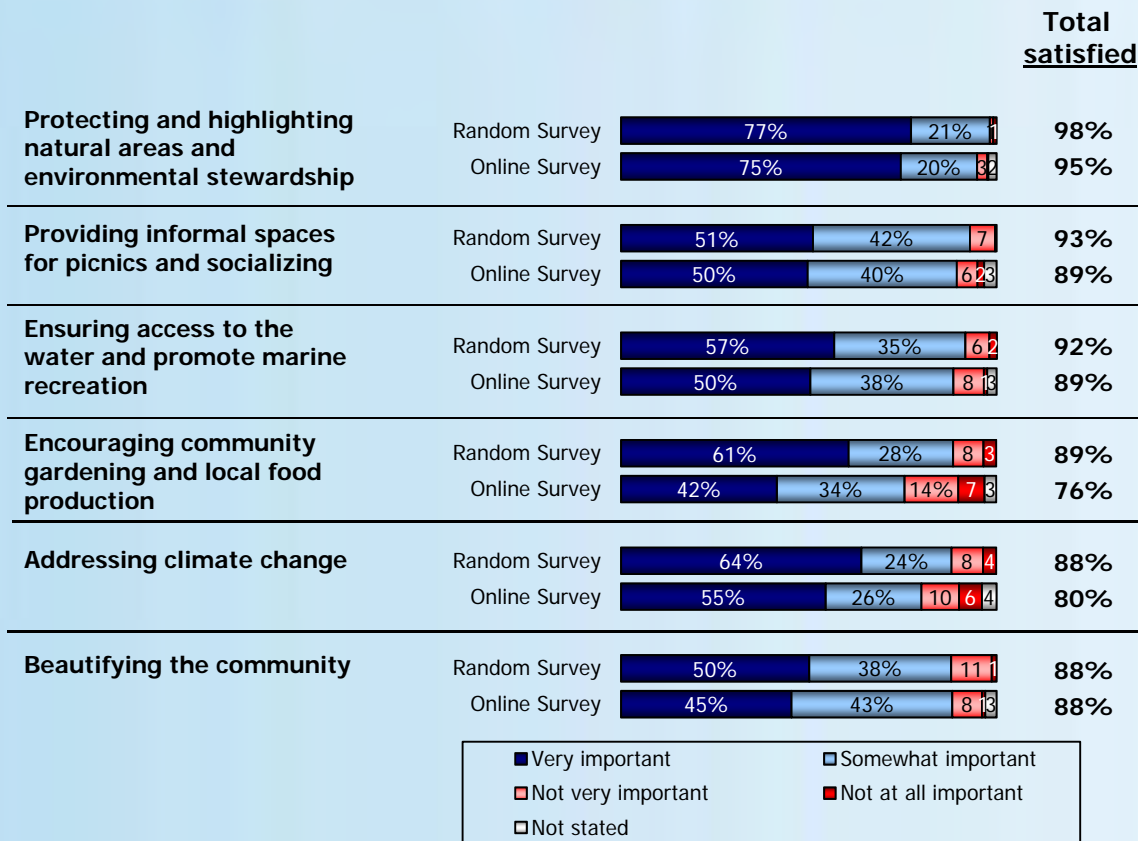


Base: Total random survey (n=403)  
Total online survey (n=670)

Q. 7) Are there parks and open space amenities that are missing in the City of Victoria?

- The majority of residents do not think any particular amenity is missing from City of Victoria parks and open spaces.
- Those who do name missing amenities tend to say they would like to see more of the following: more parks/green space or natural areas, more washroom facilities, more off-leash dog areas and more shared usage pathways (cycling, walking, etc.).
- Online survey respondents are most likely to name more parks/green spaces and natural areas, courts/sports fields and more (or fenced) off-leash dog areas.

## ➤ Importance of Objectives in Future Parks Systems



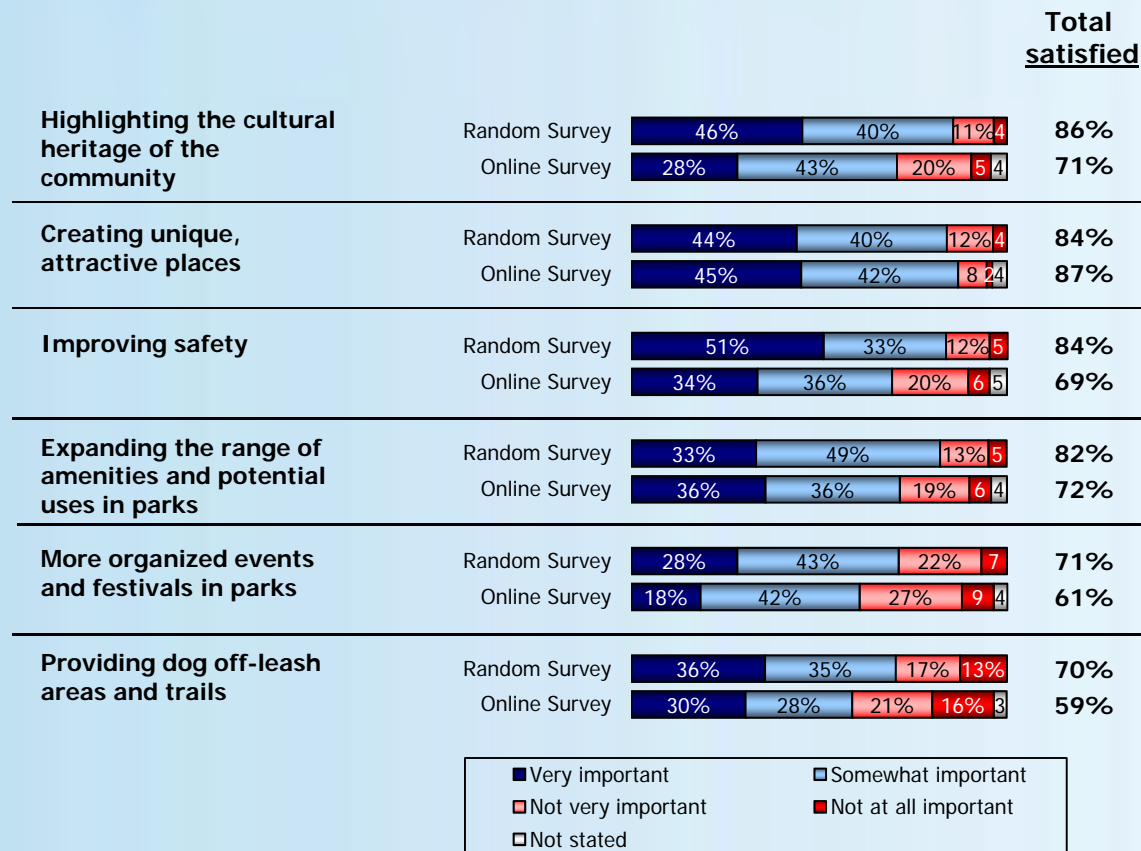
- Residents were asked to rate the importance of 12 objectives for guiding the future of Victoria's parks system.
- All 12 are considered important by at least a majority of residents (70% or more), but clearly the most important is *'protecting and highlighting natural areas and environmental stewardship'*. Three-quarters of residents believe this objective is 'very important' and nearly everyone agrees that this is an important guideline.
- Several other objectives are 'very important' to at least half/almost half of residents, but standing out are *'addressing climate change'* (64% very important) and *'encouraging community gardening and local food production'* (61% very important).

Continued...

Base: Total random survey (n=403)  
Total online survey (n=670)

Q.8a-1) How important to you are each of the following objectives for guiding the future of Victoria's parks system?

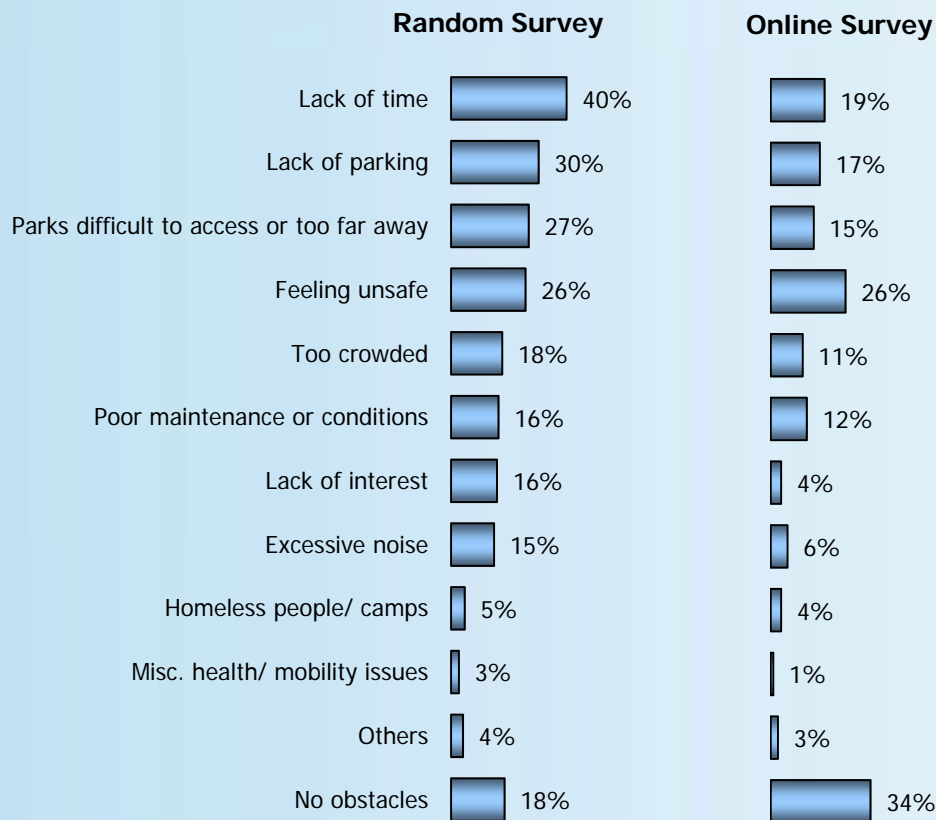
## ➤ Importance of Objectives in Future Parks Systems (cont.)



Base: Total random survey (n=403)  
Total online survey (n=670)

Q.8a-1) How important to you are each of the following objectives for guiding the future of Victoria's parks system?

## ➤ Obstacles to Visiting City Parks More Frequently

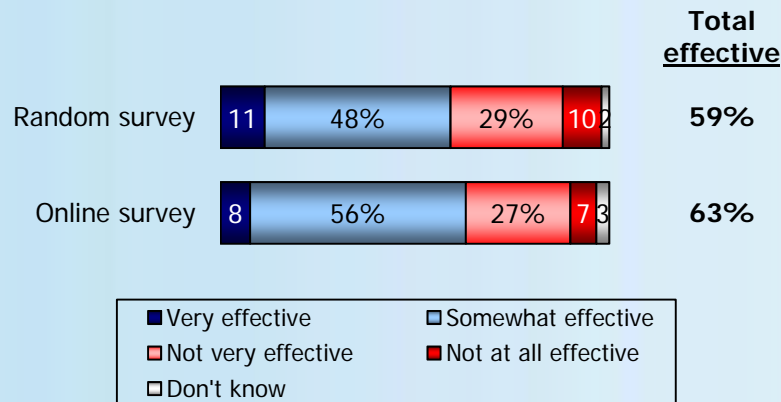


Base: Total random survey (n=403)  
 Total online survey (n=670)

Q.9) Do any of the following keep you from visiting the City's parks more frequently?

- Respondents were presented with a list of possible obstacles that could keep them from visiting the City's parks more often.
- The following are the most common barriers to visiting more frequently:
  - Lack of time is the most mentioned.
  - Lack of parking, difficult access/too far away and feeling unsafe (all stated particularly by women) are next on the list of barriers.
  - Other obstacles noted include: being too crowded, poor maintenance/ conditions, lack of interest and excessive noise.

## ➤ Effective Methods of Communicating



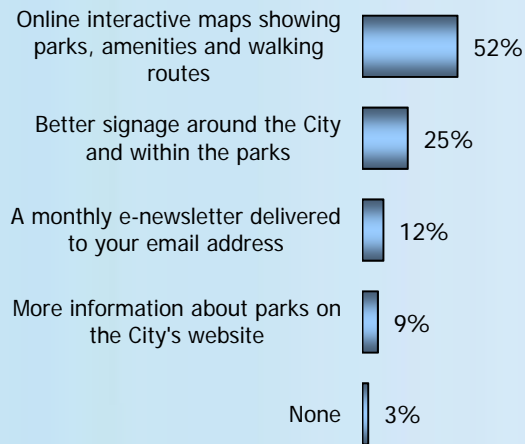
- A majority of residents think that the current methods used by the City to communicate with the public about parks and open spaces amenities and issues are effective.
- However, a sizeable proportion think there is room for improvement (39%).
- There are no differences in the findings by demographic segments.

Base: Total random survey (n=403)  
 Total online survey (n=670)

Q.11) How effective are the current City of Victoria methods of communicating around parks and open spaces amenities and issues?

## ➤ Preferred Method to Increase Awareness of Parks

### Random Survey



Base: Total (n=403)  
Total online (N/A)

Q.12) Which of the following would be most helpful to you in increasing your awareness of the parks and open spaces in Victoria?

- The most preferred method of communication to help increase awareness of parks and open spaces are online interactive maps showing parks, amenities and walking routes. About half of residents would prefer this online resource.
- Better signage is preferred by about one-quarter.



MUSTEL GROUP  
MARKET RESEARCH

# Demographics



## Demographic Profile

	Random Sample (403) %	Online Sample (670) %
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	47	44
Female	53	51
Other/ refused	-	5
<b>Age</b>		
15 to 24	11	4
25 to 39	30	25
40 to 59	27	33
60 to 79	25	35
80+	5	1
Refused	3	3
<b>Neighbourhood of residence</b>		
Fairfield	16	20
James Bay	13	9
Victoria West	9	12
Hillside-Quadra	12	8▼
Fernwood	9	6▼
Downtown	11	4▼
Rockland	5	8
Oaklands	7	4▼
Burnside Gorge	7	3▼
North and South Jubilee	5	3
Gonzales	2	3
North Park	4	1▼
Harris Green	1	1
Outside of Victoria	-	15▲
Refused	-	2

- The random sample was weighted to match census statistics on the basis of age within gender. The on-line survey sample is unweighted.
- Note that the on-line survey includes 15% who reside outside of the City of Victoria.
- Differences of note between the two samples are indicated by the following notations:
  - ▲ Significantly higher
  - ▼ Significantly lower

## Demographic Profile

	Random Sample (403) %	Online Sample (670) %
<b>Personal family situation</b>		
Person living alone	28▲	19
Person living with parents	10▲	2
Person living with friends	4	3
Spouse or partner, no children at home	35	45▲
Spouse or partner with children at home	17	25▲
Single parent with children at home	3	3
Prefer not to say	2	2
<b>Employment</b>		
Employed	64	62
Full-time	45	48
Part-time	10	15
Self-employed	11	-
Not employed	39	42
Retired	24	32▲
Unemployed and not looking for work	7	2
Homemaker and not employed outside of the home	2	3
Student	7	6
Full-time	7	4
Part-time	1	2
Prefer not to say	1	3
<b>Home ownership</b>		
Own	58	72▲
Rent	39	26
Prefer not to say	2	3

## Demographic Profile

	Random Sample (403) %	Online Sample (670) %
<b>Years lived in Victoria</b>		
5 or less	10	18
6 – 9	16	14
10 – 19	28	25
20 – 29	22	15
30 – 39	10	11
40+	13	13
Prefer not to say	1	5
<b>Average</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Physical limitations</b>		
Yes	11▲	6
No	89	91
Prefer not to say	-	3



# Appendix C

## List of Actions



ACTIONS BY NUMBER				ESTIMATED COST			
Action	Description	Timeframe	Project Type	Priority	Low	Medium	High
1.1.1	Develop a Biodiversity Strategy.	MEDIUM	PLANNING	1	•		
1.1.2	Continue to implement the Urban Forest Master Plan.	OPERATIONAL	PLANNING	1	•		
1.1.3	Develop targets for increasing the use of native plants and the quantity and quality of native ecosystems.	MEDIUM	PLANNING	2	•		
1.2.1	Update the Environmental Management Standards for park operations and maintenance that will increase the resilience of parks and open spaces.	OPERATIONAL	PLANNING	1	•		
1.2.2	Create demonstration projects showing best practices for sustainability within the parks system.	MEDIUM	CAPITAL	2	•	•	
1.2.3	Identify opportunities to daylight or celebrate culverted streams.	SHORT	PLANNING	1	•	•	•
1.2.3 (B)	Implement stream daylighting projects (based on Short Term Planning Action 1.2.3, above).	LONG	CAPITAL	3			•
1.3.1	Incorporate more vegetation in areas of the city most vulnerable to the urban heat island effect.	MEDIUM	CAPITAL	2	•		
1.3.2	Use vegetation to shade impervious areas and buildings to reduce the heat island effect and consider green roofs on park buildings and shelters.	OPERATIONAL	CAPITAL	2	•		
1.3.3	Identify plants and ecosystems vulnerable to climate change and develop management strategies to help mitigate impacts.	OPERATIONAL	CAPITAL	1	•		
1.3.4	Identify marine shorelines within the parks system that are vulnerable to climate change impacts and develop mitigation strategies.	LONG	CAPITAL	1	•		
1.3.4 (B)	Implement mitigation strategies related to climate change impacts on marine shorelines (based on Short Term Planning Action 1.3.4, above).	LONG	CAPITAL	1			•
1.3.5	Reduce impervious surfaces, particularly along the waterfront.	OPERATIONAL	CAPITAL	2			•
1.3.6	Explore the potential to complete a Green Shores shoreline restoration project.	MEDIUM	CAPITAL	3			•

ACTIONS BY NUMBER					ESTIMATED COST		
Action	Description	Timeframe	Project Type	Priority	Low	Medium	High
2.1.1	Update and/or consolidate the City's land use policies related to park land designation including consolidating park properties with multiple titles, updating the OCP with the current inventory and developing park zoning designations within the Zoning Regulation Bylaw.	SHORT	PLANNING	1	•		
2.1.2	Develop a Park Development and Acquisition Strategy, develop and maintain a list of priority park land acquisitions. Coordinate with the Local Area Plans process.	SHORT	PLANNING	1	•		
2.1.3	Implement a life-cycle analysis framework to ensure accurate forecasting and planning for significant maintenance, upgrades, repairs, and replacement of park amenities such as washrooms, sports fields and courts, playgrounds, and, trails.	SHORT	PLANNING	1	•		
2.1.4	Adopt park design guidelines for park furniture and amenities.	SHORT	PLANNING	1	•		
2.1.5	Identify opportunities to incorporate more support amenities such as washrooms, drinking fountains, lighting and food services at select parks.	MEDIUM	CAPITAL	2		•	
2.1.6	Establish a list of priority improvement projects to address safety issues and other barriers to park use.	SHORT	CAPITAL	1	•	•	•
2.2.1	Identify existing underutilized spaces and develop a strategy for how to encourage broader use.	MEDIUM	PLANNING	1	•	•	•
2.2.2	Incorporate a variety of spaces for socializing and group gatherings into park spaces.	OPERATIONAL	CAPITAL	2	•	•	•
2.2.3	Develop areas in the parks and open spaces system that encourage mental restoration and relaxation.	OPERATIONAL	CAPITAL	2	•	•	•
2.2.4	Develop a Dogs in Parks Strategy that builds off of the experiences of the existing Paws in Parks Program.	SHORT	PLANNING	1	•	•	
2.3.1	Identify new health and fitness cluster locations where outdoor fitness amenities, walking areas, playgrounds, and sports amenities are located near each other.	MEDIUM	CAPITAL	2	•	•	
2.3.2	Establish a target and implementation plan for the provision of play spaces within an 800 meter walking distance of 99% of households.	MEDIUM	PLANNING	1	•		
2.3.3	Establish and maintain standards of care to ensure safe, high quality play features.	SHORT	CAPITAL	1	•	•	



Appendix C

ACTIONS BY NUMBER					ESTIMATED COST		
Action	Description	Timeframe	Project Type	Priority	Low	Medium	High
2.3.4	Identify a location for a new all ages and abilities accessible water/spray park.	MEDIUM	CAPITAL	3			•
2.3.5	Develop an All-Wheels Strategy.	MEDIUM	PLANNING	1	•		
2.3.6	Identify a location and develop a second skate park that allows for a variety of activities (i.e. roller blading, scooters, and BMX inclusive), ages and abilities.	SHORT	CAPITAL	1			•
2.3.7	Develop a process to evaluate and assess demand for new/emerging activities.	SHORT	CAPITAL	2	•	•	•
2.4.1	Develop a Sports and Facility Development Strategy.	MEDIUM	PLANNING	1		•	
2.4.2	Continue to conduct annual meetings with sports league representatives and other user groups.	OPERATIONAL	PLANNING	1	•		
2.5.1	Incorporate community gardening and related amenities into the parks system.	OPERATIONAL	CAPITAL	1	•		
2.5.2	Incorporate more public and barrier-free features into or adjacent to community gardens	OPERATIONAL	CAPITAL	2	•		
2.5.3	Work with other significant land owners, both public and private, to identify locations for urban food production and community gardening.	OPERATIONAL	PLANNING	1	•		
2.6.1	Create a wayfinding and signage strategy for the parks and open spaces system.	SHORT	PLANNING	1		•	•
2.6.2	Develop digital tools and strategies that help people find and explore Victoria's parks and open spaces.	MEDIUM	PLANNING	1	•		
2.6.3	Provide amenities to encourage and support park users who walk and cycle.	OPERATIONAL	PLANNING	1	•		
2.6.4	Prioritize the development of active transportation linkages and infrastructure that connects residents and visitors to parks.	OPERATIONAL	PLANNING	1	•	•	
2.6.5	Identify strategies to reduce user conflicts on the Dallas Road pathway.	MEDIUM	PLANNING	1	•	•	•
2.6.6	Improve waterfront access and public uses along the City's waterfront spaces.	OPERATIONAL	CAPITAL	1	•	•	•
3.1.1	Review and amend the Park Regulation Bylaw to allow limited commercial activities in the parks system.	MEDIUM	PLANNING	1	•		
3.1.2	Identify opportunities and obstacles to increased activation of Beacon Hill Park.	MEDIUM	PLANNING	1	•		

ACTIONS BY NUMBER					ESTIMATED COST		
Action	Description	Timeframe	Project Type	Priority	Low	Medium	High
3.1.3	Develop 'hands on' experiences, interpretive elements, and educational programming that celebrate Victoria's special features, unique character, and natural environment.	MEDIUM	CAPITAL	2	•	•	
3.1.4	Enable the animation of Victoria's parks and open spaces by developing a permitting process for temporary arts and culture installations and activities.	MEDIUM	PLANNING	2	•		
3.1.5	Incorporate outdoor art projects and programs into the parks and open spaces system through the existing artist-in-residence program.	MEDIUM	PLANNING	2	•		
3.1.6	Create an Event Hosting Guidelines to help facilitate events hosting by community organizations and the public.	MEDIUM	PLANNING	2	•		
3.1.7	Incorporate support infrastructure and amenities at key parks to host special events on a regular basis.	MEDIUM	CAPITAL	2	•	•	
3.1.8	Collaborate with Tourism Victoria on promotional materials that highlight the special features of the parks system.	MEDIUM	PLANNING	2	•		
4.1.1	Investigate the potential for Memorandums of Understanding with the provincial and federal governments, School District #61, the Greater Victoria Harbour Authority, and other land owners responsible for key public spaces to coordinate planning and identify efficiencies in operations.	OPERATIONAL	PLANNING	1	•		
4.1.2	Develop partnerships with First Nations, researchers, government and institutions to advance cultural knowledge, research and innovation in urban ecology.	OPERATIONAL	PLANNING	3	•		
4.1.3	Work with stakeholders to identify ways that City-owned park lands can help protect and enhance the Victoria Harbour Migratory Bird Sanctuary.	OPERATIONAL	PLANNING	2	•	•	
4.1.4	Work with Island Health, other municipalities and stakeholders to identify projects that enhance active living, active transportation and the benefits of balanced lifestyles through joint planning, programming and promotion.	OPERATIONAL	PLANNING	2	•		
4.1.5	Create a Park Volunteer Policy and Program	SHORT	PLANNING	1	•		

