



Topaz Park

Improvement Plan 2018 - 2028

June 2018



Acknowledgements

The City of Victoria recognizes the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations in whose traditional territories we live and work ‘Hay swx qa’.

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With thanks to City of Victoria Council, and the many stakeholders and members of the public who contributed their time and participation to this project.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Purpose

Parks, open spaces, and outdoor recreational facilities are critical components of a complete community. They help to improve the livability of urban areas, enable active lifestyles, promote personal health, and provide spaces for respite, celebration, and gathering. Parks and open spaces also play an important role in providing animal and plant habitat and maintaining ecosystem services (City of Victoria, 2012).

The City of Victoria is expected to grow by more than 20,000 people over the next fifteen years (City of Victoria, 2012). As Victoria continues to grow and change, thoughtful and strategic planning of our large parks and open spaces is essential to ensure that the development of parks and amenities aligns with changing community values.

As the third largest park in the City of Victoria, Topaz Park offers a unique opportunity to deliver expanded and improved recreational facilities for our growing community. The Topaz Park Improvement Plan is a high-level vision for Topaz Park that establishes desired renovations to existing park programs, new types of amenities, and other park upgrades. It also provides a strategic implementation framework to achieve the complete park vision over the 10-year time horizon of this plan.

1.2 How to use this plan

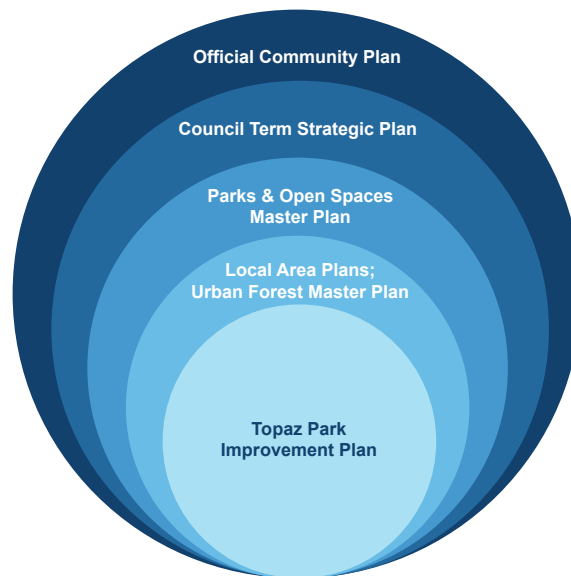
This plan determines what kinds of elements should be included in the park, and proposes an approximate size, location, and implementation priority. Prior to implementation, each of the park areas identified in this plan will require a detailed design phase to determine accurate design and cost estimates.

The following implementation tools are included in this plan:

- **Conceptual Improvement Plan (Section 4.2/4.3)**
The park vision and guiding principles determine the overarching goal for the future of Topaz Park and provide the framework for all future work. A conceptual diagram establishes a proposed layout of future park amenities.
- **Design Guidelines (Section 4.4)**
The plan includes design guidelines for each of the future park areas. These are the detailed considerations that will inform future detailed design and construction. The design guidelines reflect the vision statement, public feedback, goals in overarching City plans, and operational needs.
- **Implementation Strategy (Section 5.0)**
The implementation strategy sets out priority implementation phases and high level cost implications. A funding strategy outlines potential funding sources for design and construction.

1.3 Related Plans and Policies

The Topaz Park Improvement Plan is informed by other City plans and policies and furthers the City's strategic directions and goals. In developing this improvement plan, staff reviewed a variety of guiding documents including the Official Community Plan, the Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan, Create Victoria Arts and Culture Master Plan, and the Urban Forest Management Plan. The creation of each of these plans represents the results of extensive public engagement to identify key priorities and directions for the City.



Policy Framework

The following is a summary of some of the guiding principles and objectives that have informed the creation of this plan:

Official Community Plan (2012)

The Official Community Plan is a 30-year framework of objectives and policies to guide decisions on planning and land management in the City of Victoria. The plan provides a framework to shape and guide present and proposed development towards long-term goals for achieving a more sustainable community by 2041. The Official Community Plan identifies numerous goals related to parks and open spaces, along with other aspects of City planning, which have been considered and incorporated into this master plan. Key direction from the Official Community Plan includes:

- Goal 9(A): Victoria is an active community where everyone enjoys convenient access to community parks, open spaces, facilities, amenities and programs close to where they live.
- Objective 9(c): That parks, open spaces and facilities contribute to the enhancement and restoration of ecological functions.
- Objective 9(d): That a diversity of facilities, services, and programming enables broad community access and participation in an active lifestyle.
- Objective 9(e): That parks and recreational facilities are designed to achieve multiple benefits and accommodate a diversity of people and activities.

Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan (2017)

The Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan is a roadmap to guide planning, management, and investment in the City of Victoria's parks and open spaces over the next 25 years. The Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan is a strategic-level document that identifies broad goals and planning initiatives, and is used as a tool to inform more detailed planning work that takes place through individual park plans such as the Topaz Park Improvement Plan. Key direction from the Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan includes:

- Continue to implement the Urban Forest Management Plan, and increase the use of native plants and the quantity and quality of native ecosystems (1.1.2/1.1.3).
- Identify opportunities to incorporate more support amenities such as washrooms, drinking fountains, lighting and food services at select parks (2.1.5).
- Maximize efficient use of parks and open spaces to improve multifunctionality wherever possible (2.2.1).
- Incorporate a variety of spaces for socializing and group gatherings into park spaces (2.2.2).
- Identify new health and fitness cluster locations where outdoor fitness amenities, walking areas, playground, and sports amenities are located near each other (2.3.1).
- Identify a location and develop a second skate park that allows for a variety of activities (ie. roller blading, scooters, and BMX inclusive) (2.3.6).
- Provide amenities to encourage and support park users who walk and cycle (2.6.3).
- Incorporate support infrastructure and amenities at key parks to host special events on a regular basis (3.1.7).

Urban Forest Master Plan (2013)

The Urban Forest Master Plan provides guidance on the management and enhancement of treed environments throughout the City of Victoria. It is a high-level plan that provides direction to help the municipality invest in and maintain its urban forest for the next 20 years and beyond. The Urban Forest Master Plan includes the following relevant goals and direction:

- The urban forest contributes significantly to the beautification and local character of the public realm.
- The urban forest is part of the social fabric of the city, providing a safe place for festivals, smaller social gatherings and the enjoyment of nature.
- Residents enjoy significant health and recreational benefits from the public urban forest.
- Favour the planting of larger growing tree species wherever practical.
- Expand and enhance the urban forest on public and private lands.

Create Victoria Arts & Culture Master Plan (2017)

Create Victoria is a five-year arts and culture master plan designed to nurture conditions for creativity in the City, including festival and special event planning. Create Victoria includes direction for special events in parks, including:

- Use parks, open spaces, community centres and schools to act as central creative notes in neighbourhoods (1.1.1).
- Incorporate support infrastructure and amenities at key parks to host special events on a regular basis (1.3.2).

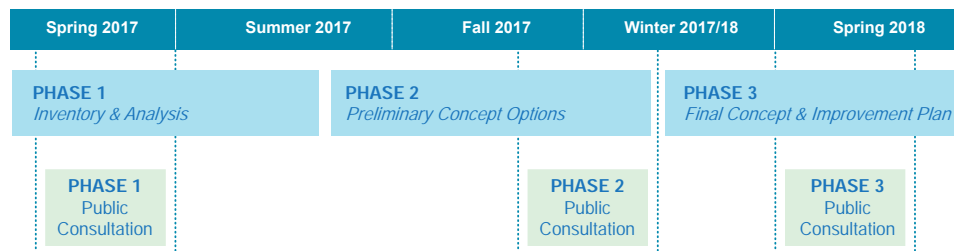
1.4 Planning Process

Many inputs informed the creation of the Topaz Park Improvement Plan. This plan is reflective of overarching City policies, including the Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan. It also reflects community feedback, condition assessments of existing amenities, City-wide needs, site constraints, and stakeholder input.



Planning Inputs

The Topaz Park Improvement Plan was conceived of as a three phase process, carried out from May 2017 to May 2018.



Project Timeline

Phase 1: Inventory and Analysis

May – August 2017

The initial phase of this project included an inventory and analysis of current park conditions, a comprehensive policy review, a review of recreational needs across the City and the region, and a review of best practices from other multi-sport recreation parks. Public consultation focused on collecting feedback on existing park conditions, and generating new ideas for future changes.

Phase 2: Preliminary Concept Plans

September 2017 – January 2018

This phase consisted of developing a guiding park vision and two high-level concept plans for Topaz Park based on the results of data gathered in Phase 1. This formed the basis for a 6-week public engagement effort.

Phase 3: Final Concept and Improvement Plan

February 2018 – May 2018

The final phase of this project included a detailed review of stakeholder feedback and a comprehensive needs analysis based on City-wide and regional recreational inventories. Weekly meetings with a staff steering committee were used to arrive at the proposed programs included in the final concept plan. External consultants were retained to conduct a feasibility assessment and preliminary design of the proposed turf field expansion, conduct a full parking impact assessment, and assess site accessibility. A series of detailed design guidelines were developed to guide future development of each of the park areas. These design guidelines were the focus of a final phase of public engagement.



Chapter 2

Inventory and Analysis

2.1 Location & Context

Topaz Park sits on the traditional territory of the Lekwungen People. Located north of downtown in the Hillside Quadra neighbourhood, it is the third largest park in Victoria (10ha/24.85ac). Topaz Park is the main active recreation park in the city, and is home to the City's only artificial turf field and numerous other features such as a lacrosse box, several sports fields, baseball diamonds, dog leash-optional areas, fitness equipment and a playground (see Fig.2). The park hosts a variety of sport and community events each year.

Topaz Park is bordered by Blanshard Street to the west, Topaz Avenue to the south, Finalyson Street to the north, and Glasgow Street to the east. This park is located approximately 350m from the Saanich border, and users of Topaz Park may also frequent nearby Saanich park and recreation facilities such as Rutledge Park, Cedar Hill Recreation Centre, and Cedar Hill Park.

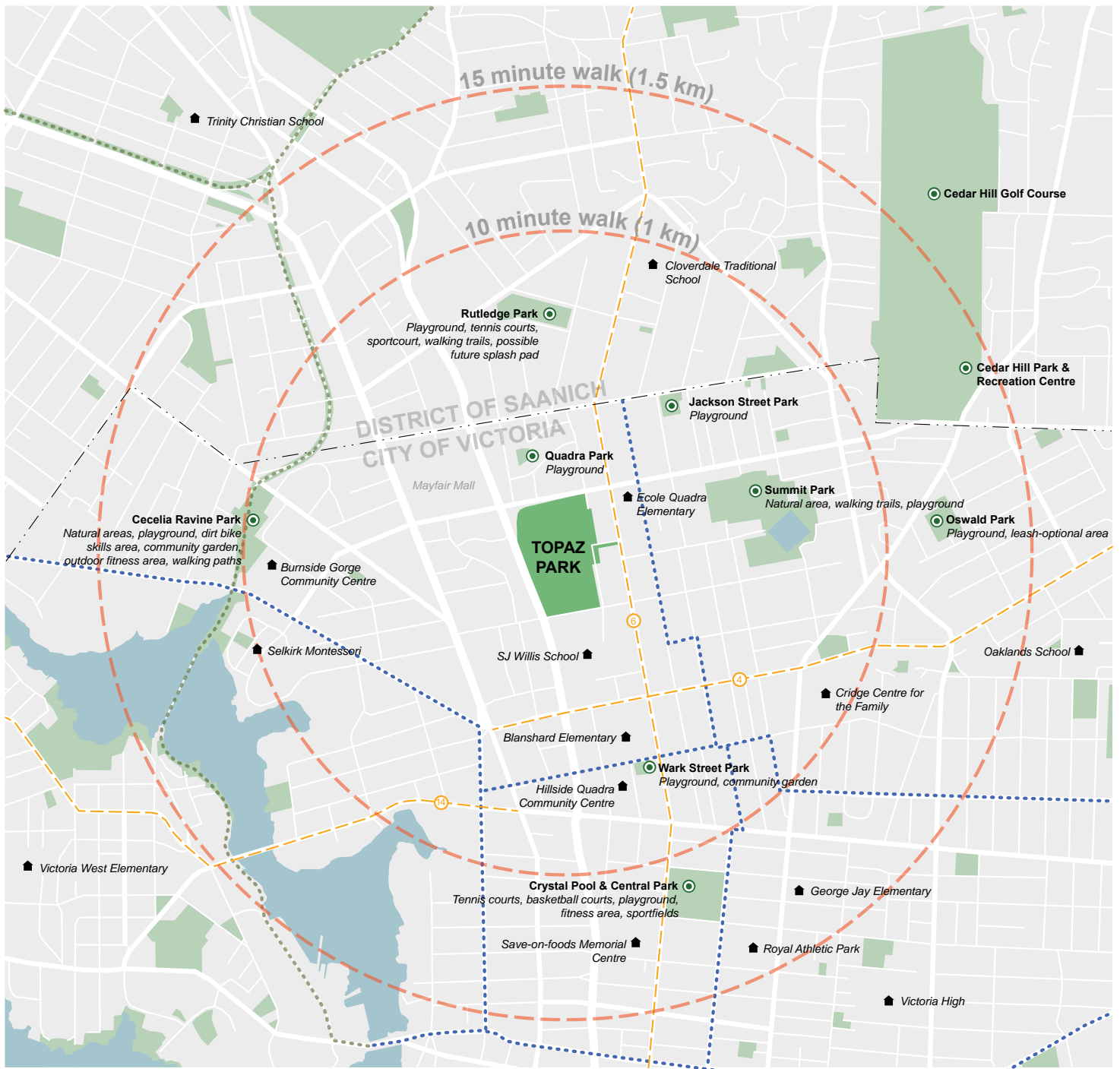
Topaz Park has been operating as a public park since 1929. The northern portion of the site (where the Finlayson artificial turf field now sits) was purchased in 1967 as an extension to the park. These lands were previously part of a large clay quarry and brickyard operated by Baker Brick and Tile. Historical air photos indicate that the clay quarry was open into the early 1960's.



Topaz Park, Glasgow field (left), Finlayson artificial turf field (right)

2.2 Hillside-Quadra Neighbourhood Snapshot

Hillside Quadra is approximately 166 hectares (410 acres), located in the north central portion of the City. There is a secondary commercial centre along Quadra Street, multi-family housing around the centre and along parts of the arterial roads, and the remainder of the neighbourhood is residential. There are 25.6 hectares (43 acres) of parks and open spaces in Hillside-Quadra, the majority of which is contained within two large parks, Topaz Park and Summit Park. Approximately 7,254 residents live in Hillside Quadra. Eighty percent of residents live in multi-family dwellings, making access to diverse parks and open spaces critical for this neighbourhood. (City of Victoria, 2017b)



Topaz Park: Site Context Map

- Planned AAA Bike Routes
- Galloping Goose Regional Trail
- Frequent bus service routes (15 minute or better service)

- Community Facilities
- Parks & Recreation Centres

Fig. 1: Site Context Map

2.3 Current Site Conditions

Topaz Park includes a mix of sports fields, natural areas, and community amenities. The park developed incrementally over time, and has never had an overarching master plan to guide changes. As a result, much of the park space is used inefficiently and many amenities are poorly connected. Key opportunities for future improvements to overall park conditions through the creation of this improvement plan include:

- More thoughtful placement of park amenities to create a more cohesive park experience;
- Improved connectivity to and throughout the park;
- More efficient use of park space to accommodate new types of activities and increase park visits;
- Infrastructure upgrades to improve user experience and use of park facilities; and,
- Enhancing existing natural areas and expanding tree canopy coverage.

The condition of park assets vary significantly. Much of the infrastructure is aging and will require replacement in the next 2-10 years. Detail on the characteristics and condition of individual park amenities is described below:

2.3.1 Finlayson Artificial Turf Field

The Finlayson artificial turf field was installed in 2005, and is the only turf field in the City of Victoria. The artificial turf field is Victoria's most popular playing field. In 2017, this field was reserved for 1977 hours (an average of 49 hours per week) for soccer. This represents 100% capacity during prime time (5 hours per weekday, 12 hours per weekend day). The field was used for 59 hours by slo-pitch teams. In 2017, the City collected \$84,515 in reservation revenue from this facility.

The Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan noted that Victoria is underserved compared to other similar-sized communities for artificial turf fields (City of Victoria, 2017c). There are 14 other artificial turf fields in Greater Victoria. Feedback from regional turf field operators indicate that all prime-time capacity on these fields is currently booked, with waitlists from user groups.

The existing overall turf surface is 123m x 80m and accommodates one full sized 105m x 74m soccer field, which is generally oriented along an east-west axis, and a warm-up area. In addition to the full-sized soccer field, the artificial turf surface has field markings for two 45m x 74m mini soccer fields oriented along the north-south axis. The facility includes a concrete apron that accommodates portable players benches and spectator bleachers, and is lit with 4 perimeter light poles. Perimeter fencing consists of 1.2m tall chain link fencing on 3 sides with tall 4.5m panels along the east end of the field. Based on a 15 year expected lifecycle, the turf surfacing will require renewal within the next 3 years. Feedback from facility users indicate that the surfacing has reached end-of-life.



Artificial turf field, existing conditions



Fig. 2: Current park amenities

2.3.2 Glasgow Grass Field

The Glasgow grass field is a shared use field that accommodates soccer and slo-pitch. A portion of this field is also reserved for general community use, including pick-up sports and a time-limited leash-optional area. The field contains two slo-pitch backstops. The field is too short for both backstops to be used simultaneously; the backstop located in the southeast corner is rarely used. The playing surface is uneven and requires repair, and the slo-pitch infields require resurfacing. This field is frequently too wet to be played on due to a failing subsurface drainage system. A portion of this drainage system was renovated in 2017, which has resulted in improved playing conditions.



Glasgow grass field, existing conditions

2.3.3 Blanshard Grass Field

The Blanshard grass field is a shared use field that accommodates soccer and slo-pitch. The field contains a slo-pitch backstop with dugouts in the southeastern corner. The playing surface is uneven and requires improvement, and the slo-pitch infield requires resurfacing. This field is frequently too wet to be played on, due to a failing subsurface drainage system.



Blanshard grass field, existing conditions

2.3.4 Topaz Grass Field

The Topaz grass field is a lit, sand-based field that accommodates soccer, fastball and slo-pitch. The field was constructed in 1994, and contains a slo-pitch backstop with dugouts and spectator seating in the northeastern corner, perimeter fencing, and pole lights. User feedback suggests that the surfacing requires improvement and does not hold up well to the existing level of use.



Topaz grass field, existing conditions

	WEEKDAY USE (2017)			WEEKEND USE (2017)		
	Available hours	Permit hours	% usage	Available hours	Permit hours	% usage
ARTIFICIAL TURF FIELD						
Fall/winter (soccer)	25	25	100%	26	24	92%
Spring/summer (soccer)	25	11.5	46%	26	16.5	63%
GLASGOW GRASS FIELD						
Fall/winter (soccer)	0	0	0%	8	4	50%
Spring/summer (ball)	12.5	10.5	84%	26	10.5	40%
BLANSHARD GRASS FIELD						
Fall/winter (soccer)	0	0	0%	8	4	50%
Spring/summer (ball)	12.5	12.5	100%	26	8.5	33%
TOPAZ GRASS FIELD						
Fall/winter (soccer)	10	9	90%	8	6	75%
Spring/summer (ball)	12.5	10.5	84%	26	8.5	33%

Table 1: Topaz Park sport field usage (by permits issued), 2017

2.3.5 Lacrosse Box

The lacrosse box at Topaz Park is the only facility of its kind in the City of Victoria. There are two similar facilities located in the District of Saanich, one in Oak Bay, and one in Esquimalt. In 2017, the lacrosse box was reserved for 590 hours, and used for a variety of sports include lacrosse and ball hockey. The box is also frequently used for drop-in recreation and for special events. The condition of the lacrosse box requires significant upgrades, including surfacing, boards, fences, and players benches. The use of this facility has decreased in recent years due to the condition of the playing surface; there has been a 50% decrease in bookings over the past 8 years.



Lacrosse box, surfacing repairs (left), players benches (right)

2.3.6 Tennis Courts

Topaz Park previously included 3 tennis courts. The tennis courts were closed in 2013 due to extreme surface degradation caused by tree roots, with an expectation that this asset would be replaced at some point in the future. Given the large trees which have grown around the courts and root systems close to the surface, repair or replacement of this asset in the original location was deemed to be not feasible.



Tennis courts, previous court condition (left) and existing conditions (right)

2.3.7 Playground

The current playground equipment was installed in 2005 and features a swing set, slide and a series of climbing structures. This playground was designed for children ages 2-12. Based on its current condition, this playground will require replacement within the next 10 years.



Playground, existing conditions

2.3.8 Outdoor Fitness Equipment

The existing outdoor fitness equipment was installed in 2014, and is one of five outdoor fitness areas in the City. The fitness area contains nine stations, including an elliptical trainer, hand bike combo, arm and leg press, lower back trainer, air strider, knee raise dip combo, parallel bars, torso bench, and balance beam. The equipment was installed in a temporary location, with a permanent location to be determined through this planning process.



Outdoor fitness equipment, existing conditions

2.3.9 Leash-Optional Areas

Topaz Park contains two leash optional areas; a full-time leash optional area between Topaz Avenue and the playground, and a time limited leash-optional area on Glasgow grass field (available in the morning and evening, when the field is not in use). Both of these areas were designated 'leash-optional' as part of the City's 'Paws in Parks' program in the early 2000's. The full-time leash-optional area is a sloping site which frequently experiences drainage issues in the winter, especially along the Glasgow frontage. The site is currently partially fenced, with chainlink fencing along the Glasgow Street frontage, and partial chainlink fencing adjacent to the playground.



Leash-optional area, existing conditions

2.3.10 Parking

Topaz Park contains three surface parking lots, with a total of 153 spaces. In addition, there are 263 on-street parking spaces within a five-minute walk of Topaz Park; 78 of these spaces are currently unrestricted to the public, 185 of these spaces are currently restricted to residential parking only. The recommended number of on-site stalls to accommodate average peak demand is 129 stalls. The locations of publicly accessible stalls within and directly adjacent to the park are shown in Fig. 3.

A complete parking study has been completed as part of this project, and is attached as Appendix B.



Glasgow parking lot (left); Finlayson parking lot (right)



Existing Site Circulation

- Paved walking paths
- - - - Woodchip trails
- ▶ Pedestrian park access (no connecting pathway)
- X On-site parking stalls
- X Off-site parking stalls

Fig 3. Existing site circulation

2.3.11 Pathways

There are three main pathways in Topaz Park: (1) a paved walkway connecting the artificial turf field to the main public washroom building; (2) a paved walkway and alternate chip walkway connecting the Glasgow parking lot to Finlayson Avenue; and (3) a combination chip/paved walkway connecting the playground, fitness area, and Topaz grass sports field. A woodchip trail partially connects the wooded area in the southeast section of the park. There are two pedestrian entrances into the park off Blanshard Street, and one pedestrian entrance off Finlayson Street, but no connecting pathways from these entrances into the park. There are no direct, continuous pathway connections crossing the park in either an east-west or north-south direction. The lack of connected walking paths limits the use of this park for walking and jogging, decreases accessibility, and makes it difficult to use multiple facilities in one park visit. The location of existing park pathways is shown in Fig. 3.



Chip trail connecting playground and fitness area (left); Pedestrian entrance off Blanshard St. (right)

2.3.12 Park Buildings

The main washroom building and field house is located on the northwest corner of Glasgow grass field, adjacent to the Glasgow Street parking lot. This washroom contains public washroom stalls, changeroom facilities, referee facilities, and storage. A second washroom building is located in the southwest corner of the park, adjacent to the Topaz Avenue parking lot. This facility contains public washroom stalls and a storage area.



Topaz Avenue washroom (left); Main washroom building (right)

2.3.13 Site Accessibility

The City retained Copley Consulting to conduct a baseline accessibility assessment of Topaz Park. The full report is attached as Appendix D.

The assessment found that a range of improvements could be made to improve park use and meaningful access for visitors with a range of abilities. Key findings include:

- Accessibility from the parking lots could be improved by adjusting the number, layout, and location of accessible parking stalls.
- Improvements to slope and surfacing of existing park pathways would increase mobility.
- Inclusive access could be improved to existing park facilities, including the outdoor fitness area, playground, and spectator areas.
- Improvements to the interior layout of both washroom buildings would improve access and user experience.
- Clear, standardized, and high-visibility signage throughout the park would aid in overall park legibility.

2.3.14 Site Ecology

There are 362 trees within Topaz Park. A majority of trees (67%) are in good condition.

The northeast corner of the site contains a remnant patch of Garry oak woodland ecosystem that has been identified by the federal/provincial Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory (See Fig. 4)(Canada, 1998; City of Victoria, 2012). Garry oak woodlands support some of the highest diversity of plants in coastal British Columbia, including a significant number of 'at risk' species. This remnant patch includes exposed bedrock, Garry oak trees, and some deep soil pockets that support a rich meadow ecosystem with wildflowers. Garry oak woodlands are highly threatened; it is estimated that less than 5% of the history Garry oak woodlands remain. (Canada, 1998)

The southeast portion of Topaz Park contains a wooded area with significant underbrush growth, bisected by a series of wood chip trails. Many of the trees along the perimeter of this section were planted when the Topaz grass field was installed in the mid-nineties. The habitat value of this area is relatively low, and could benefit from selective shrub removal, pruning, and replanting with a higher diversity of native species that could enhance biodiversity of this area, improve safety and sightlines, and provide opportunities to integrate new types uses into this area of the park.



Southwest wooded area (left); Northwest Garry oak woodland (right)

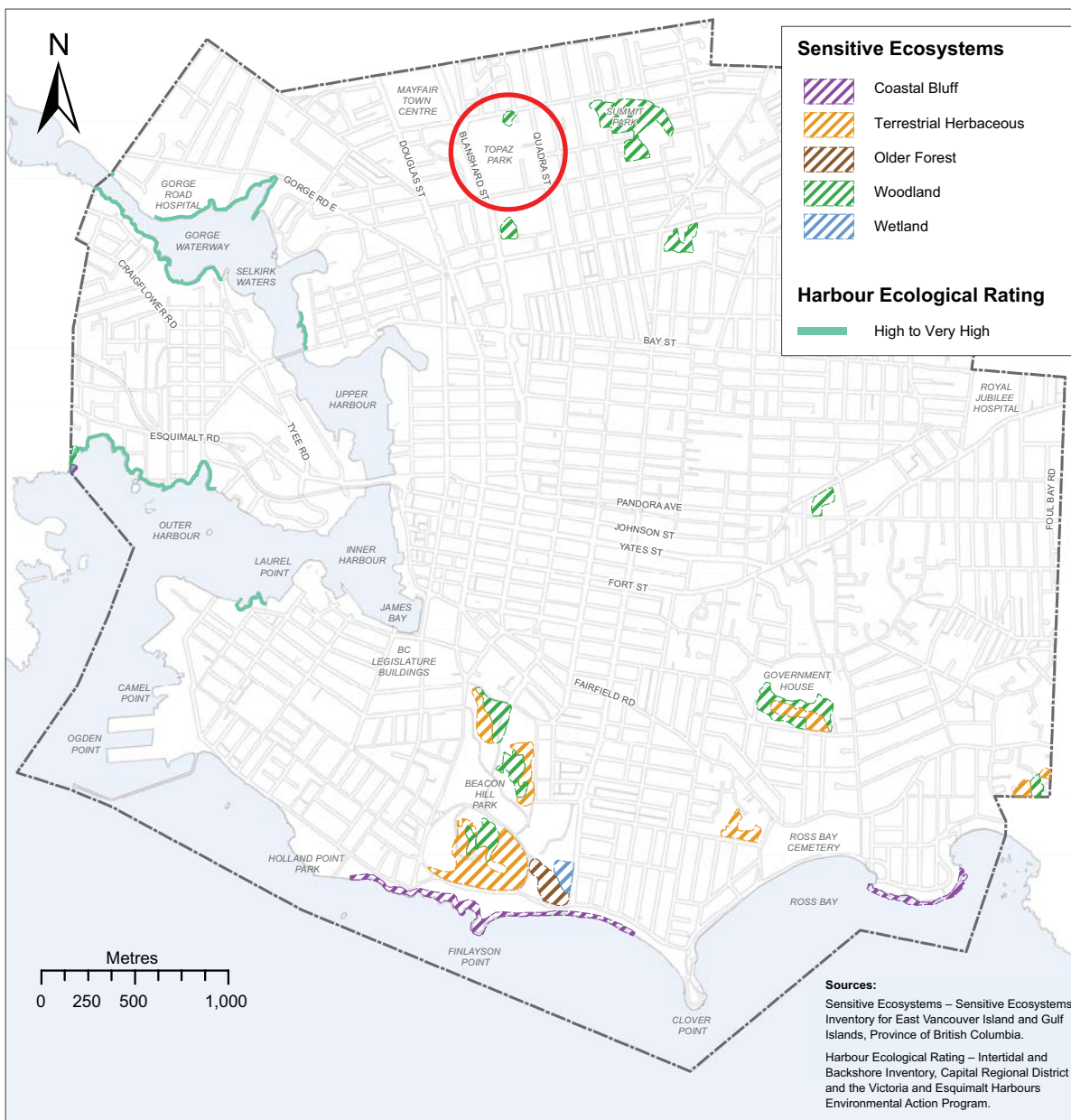


Fig. 4: Ecological Assets, City of Victoria Official Community Plan (2012)



Chapter 3

Consultation & Community 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 park that accurately reflects the community's needs and values.

The public engagement process included a wide range of tools, some targeted to specific stakeholder groups and others seeking to gather input from the general public. The stakeholders, partners, and community organizations who were engaged included sport permit holders, long-time users of various park facilities, the District of Saanich, the local neighbourhood association, and stakeholders and specialists representing potential new park programming.

Over 3,600 people actively participated in public consultation for this project.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT GOALS

- Develop community-led vision, goals and values
- Identify current demand and future needs
- Develop awareness and support for the final plan

3.1 Phase 1 Public Engagement *(May-June 2017)*

The first phase of public engagement was focused on collecting feedback on existing park conditions, future improvements, and ideas for future changes to the park. Overall, an estimated 1,107 people participated through a range of engagement opportunities including:

- Online survey
- Open house in Topaz Park
- Pop-Up engagement stations at Quadra Village Days, Highland Games, Caffe Fantastico, and the Quadra Village Community Centre
- Presentation to the Hillside-Quadra Neighbourhood Action Group
- Stakeholder workshop session for sport facility users

Key findings:

- **Lack of programming diversity:** There is not enough diversity of uses in Topaz Park. Many respondents were unaware of the full extents of the park, only use a small portion of the park, or don't have a reason

to visit the park at all. Respondents felt that there is not enough programming in the park that meets the needs of the immediate community. Over 1,200 requests for new types of amenities were received, including a bike skills park, skateboard park, pickleball courts, disc golf course, and a spray park.

- **Lack of connectivity:** There is a lack of pathway connectivity in the park, making it difficult to use the park for walking or jogging. Many requests were received for some form of perimeter woodchip walking trail. There is a lack of perceived safe walking routes at night. Additional pathway lighting is desired, especially connecting the main washroom building to the artificial turf field, and between the parking lots of Glasgow and Finlayson Streets.
- **Existing facilities need repairs:** Repairs are needed to the sports fields, including a new carpet for the artificial turf field, and repairs to the drainage, field surface, infields, and dugouts for the grass sports fields. Repairs are needed to the lacrosse box, including new surfacing and boards. Repairs are needed to the leash-optional area, including perimeter fencing and surfacing/drainage repairs.
- **More support amenities:** More support amenities (e.g. garbage cans, water fountains, bike racks, lighting, signage and wayfinding) are desired throughout the park.

3.2 Phase 2 Public Engagement *(December 2017 – January 2018)*

The second phase of public engagement was focused on collecting feedback on a draft vision statement and two high-level concept plans for Topaz Park based on the results of data gathered in Phase 1. Participants were asked to provide feedback on what they liked most/least about the elements in each concept, and to rank their overall priorities for improvement. They were also asked to provide feedback on two ‘big ideas’ for the park: repurposing a grass sports field to accommodate different types of activities, and expanding the artificial turf field to accommodate lost field space and increase field capacity.



Topaz Park Concepts for public engagement phase 2: Concept #1 (left); Concept #2 (right)

Over 2,000 residents participated in this phase of engagement through a range of engagement opportunities including:

- Online survey
- Open house at Quadra Village Elementary School/L'Ecole Quadra
- Pop-Up engagement stations at Quadra Village Community Centre
- Presentation to Hillside-Quadra Neighbourhood Action Group
- Stakeholder workshop session for sport facility users (current and potential future users)
- Outreach to key stakeholder groups, including Victoria Highland Games Association, sports leagues, and Victoria Skateboard Association

Key findings:

- A majority of people (78%) supported the idea of repurposing a grass sports field to accommodate new types of activities.
- A majority of people (81%) supported the idea of making the artificial turf field larger. It was important to people to try and retain the row of mature black cottonwood trees on the south side of the field.
- A high level of support for diversifying the types of activities offered in the park, with a preference for clustering activities together in the southern portion of the park to make it easier to visit the park as a family.

The top five overall priorities for Topaz Park were:

- Pathway improvements
- Natural play opportunities
- Picnic facilities
- Enhancement and protection of natural areas
- Skateboard/all wheels park

3.3 Public Engagement Phase 3 *(April 2018)*

The final phase of public engagement was used to collect feedback on the final proposed concept plan and the design guidelines that will be used to guide the future park improvements. A key outcome of this phase of engagement was to educate and share information about the various plan elements and to confirm no important considerations had been overlooked.

Overall, approximately 550 residents participated in this phase of engagement through a range of engagement opportunities:

- Online survey
- Open house at Topaz Park
- Presentation to Hillside-Quadra Neighbourhood Action Group

Key Findings:

- 87% of survey respondents indicated that they were supportive of the proposed improvement plan.
- All design guidelines proposed in this plan received a high level of support (70% or greater).



Chapter 4

Conceptual Plan

4.1 Park Vision Statement

The vision establishes the overall future direction and design for Topaz Park. It is based on input from the public and the City of Victoria's strategic goals:

Vision for Topaz Park

Topaz Park is a destination park for outdoor recreation and sport, offering a wide variety of activity spaces that contribute to the health and wellness of residents of all ages and abilities.

It is an inclusive, flexible gathering place for the community, the region and visitors, to engage in daily active living, to socialize, and to celebrate together at special events.

4.2 Guiding Principles

These guiding principles will ensure that the park develops in a manner consistent with the vision statement:

- **Accessibility and Inclusion:** *Well-placed amenities and activities foster access to a variety of opportunities for active living, suited to all ages and abilities.*
- **Maximize Multi-Functionality:** *Enrich park areas by creating multi-functional spaces that can be adapted to serve multiple types of activities.*
- **Two Scales:** *Design the park to function at two scales; as a regional destination for sports and special events, and as a neighbourhood park for the local community.*
- **Celebrate the Urban Forest:** *Enhance and celebrate the role of the urban forest and natural areas in Topaz Park through tree management and natural area protection.*
- **Sustainability and Innovation:** *Demonstrate best practices in sustainability through innovative solutions to site design, material selection, and technology.*

4.3 Conceptual Diagram

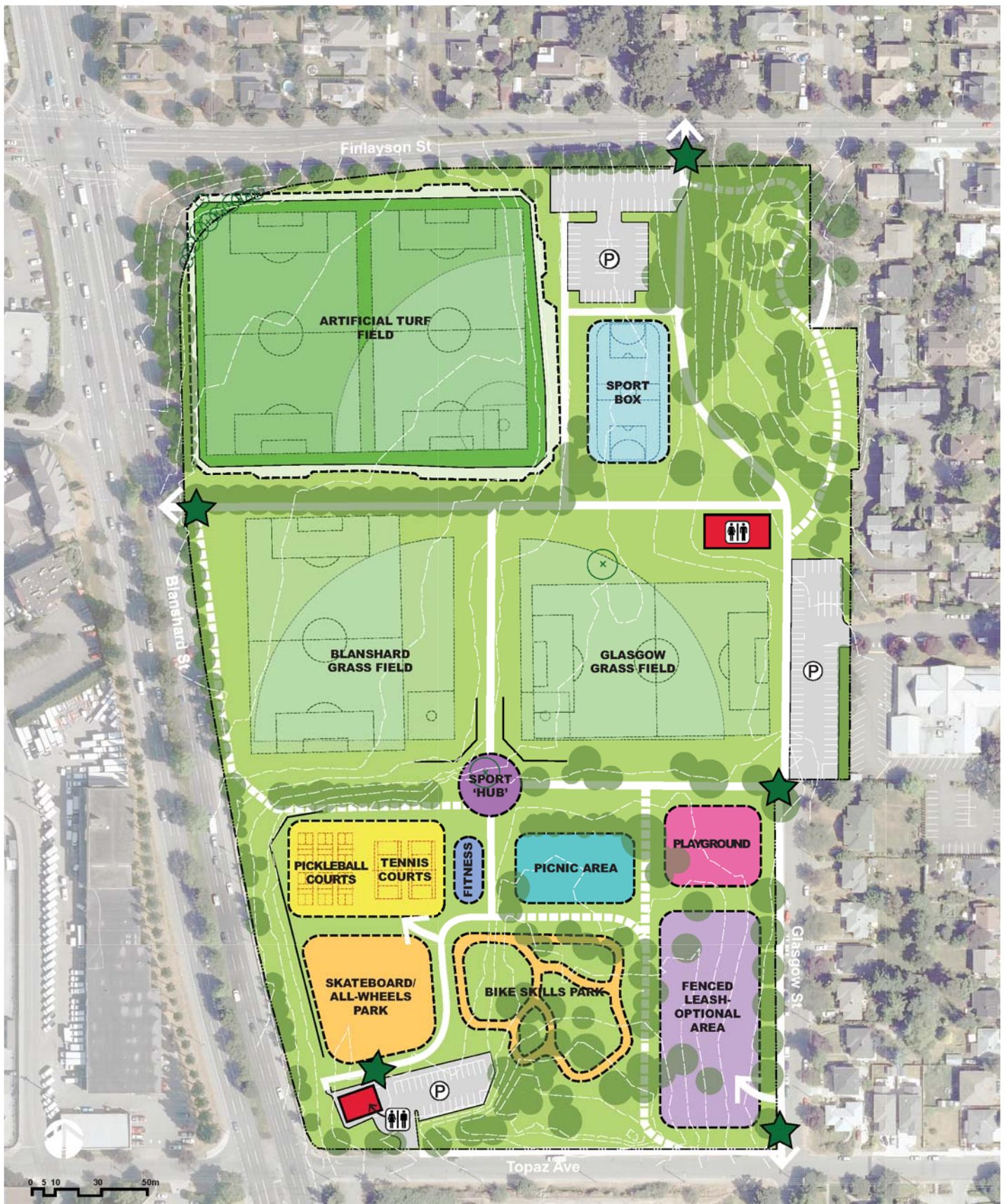
The elements included in the Topaz Park Improvement Plan are based on the results of a fulsome public engagement effort, direction from guiding City documents, financial considerations, and operational needs. The plan responds to these inputs to create a park experience that will meet the needs of our growing community for many years to come.

The concept diagram (Fig. 5) establishes a proposed layout of future park amenities. The exact layout, location, and size of program elements, pathways, and other site elements will only be determined through detailed design, as each area of the park progresses to construction. Design guidelines for each park element in the Section 4.4 will be used to inform these future design exercises.

Key features of the plan include:

- Enlarging the artificial turf field to increase the overall capacity for field sports;
- Diversifying park uses by adding new types of activities, including a skateboard park, bike skills park, tennis courts, and pickleball courts;
- Improving existing infrastructure, including upgrading the condition of grass sports fields, increasing multi-functionality of the lacrosse box, and improving the playground and leash-optional area;
- Improving park connectivity and accessibility by installing a continuous network of pathways and trails, including marked routes for walking and jogging loops;
- Enhancing natural areas and protecting and increasing tree canopy coverage; and,
- Improving support for special events and festivals, by integrating support infrastructure into park upgrades.

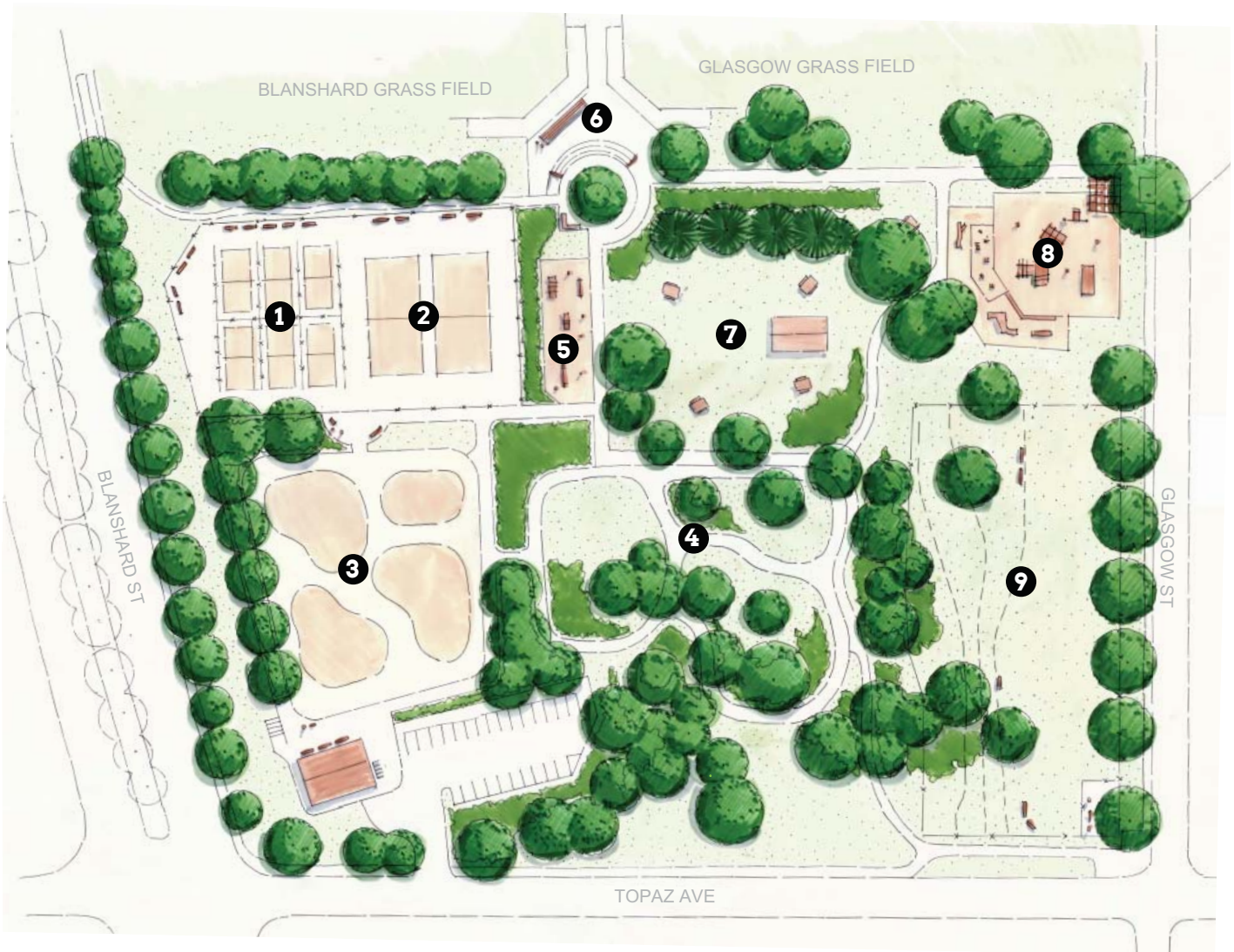




Topaz Park: Concept Diagram

Primary pathway (paved)
 Secondary pathway (woodchip/gravel)
 Tree (retained)
 x Tree (removed)
 ★ Park entry

Fig 5: Topaz Park Concept Diagram



Illustrative Sketch: Southern Park Enhancement



A number of new activities are proposed in the southern portion of the park. This sketch represents an artist's interpretation of what this part of the park could look like in the future. This is an illustration only. The exact design and placement of these park areas will be determined through future more detailed design exercises.

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 Pickleball Courts | 4 Bike Skills Park | 7 Picnic Area |
| 2 Tennis Courts | 5 Outdoor Fitness Area | 8 Playground |
| 3 Skateboard/All-wheels Park | 6 Sport Hub | 9 Fenced Leash-optional Area |

Fig 6: Illustrative Sketch, Southern Park Enhancement

4.4 Plan Elements & Design Guidelines



Key Plan

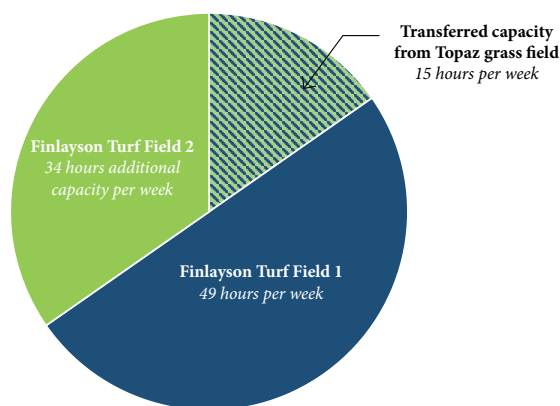
4.4.1 Finlayson Artificial Turf Field

The Finlayson artificial turf field is Victoria's most popular playing field, providing reliable year-round play. The existing field surface is at the end of its life and needs to be replaced. Demand for quality sports fields continues to grow, and the Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan found that there is demand for upgrading fields to improve capacity and the user experience (City of Victoria, 2017c).

Enlarging the artificial turf field will increase the overall field capacity at Topaz Park by 34 primetime hours per week (soccer). This is because a grass sports field requires resting time between permitted play hours (accommodating an average of 15 hours of play per week), while an artificial turf field can accommodate continuous bookings (accommodating an average of 49 hours per week).

Based on 2017 permits, 100% of soccer teams currently using the Topaz grass field can be accommodated in the expanded turf facility. Incorporating an integrated ball diamond and proper dugouts will also greatly improve the ability of the turf field to serve slo-pitch teams. With scheduling efficiencies, it is possible to accommodate 100% of existing slo-pitch permits from the Topaz grass field in the new artificial turf facility.

The City retained Binnie Consulting to complete a full feasibility study for the proposed facility, including geotechnical, arborist, and lighting reports, and a Class C cost estimate. The schematic design is shown in Fig. 7. The full report is attached as Appendix C.



Expanded turf field: weekly primetime capacity (soccer)

Design Guidelines: Artificial Turf Field

- Two full-sized soccer field dimensions: 64 x 100m.
- Four small-sided soccer fields overlain on the full-sized soccer field.
- One multi-use ball diamond overlain on the full-size soccer field including a full size backstop and dugouts.
- Off-field goal storage for 4 full size soccer goals and 8 mini soccer goals.
- Covered and rainscreen protected players shelters.
- Spectator grandstand located on the east side of the field, built into the existing slope
- Include adequate ball control fencing to prevent balls from leaving the fields.
- LED sports field lighting system to IES RP-6 Class III standard (min.)
- Protect row of mature black cottonwood trees by installing adjacent root barrier and protecting critical root zones during field construction. When these trees reach end-of-life, replace with a large canopy park tree species.

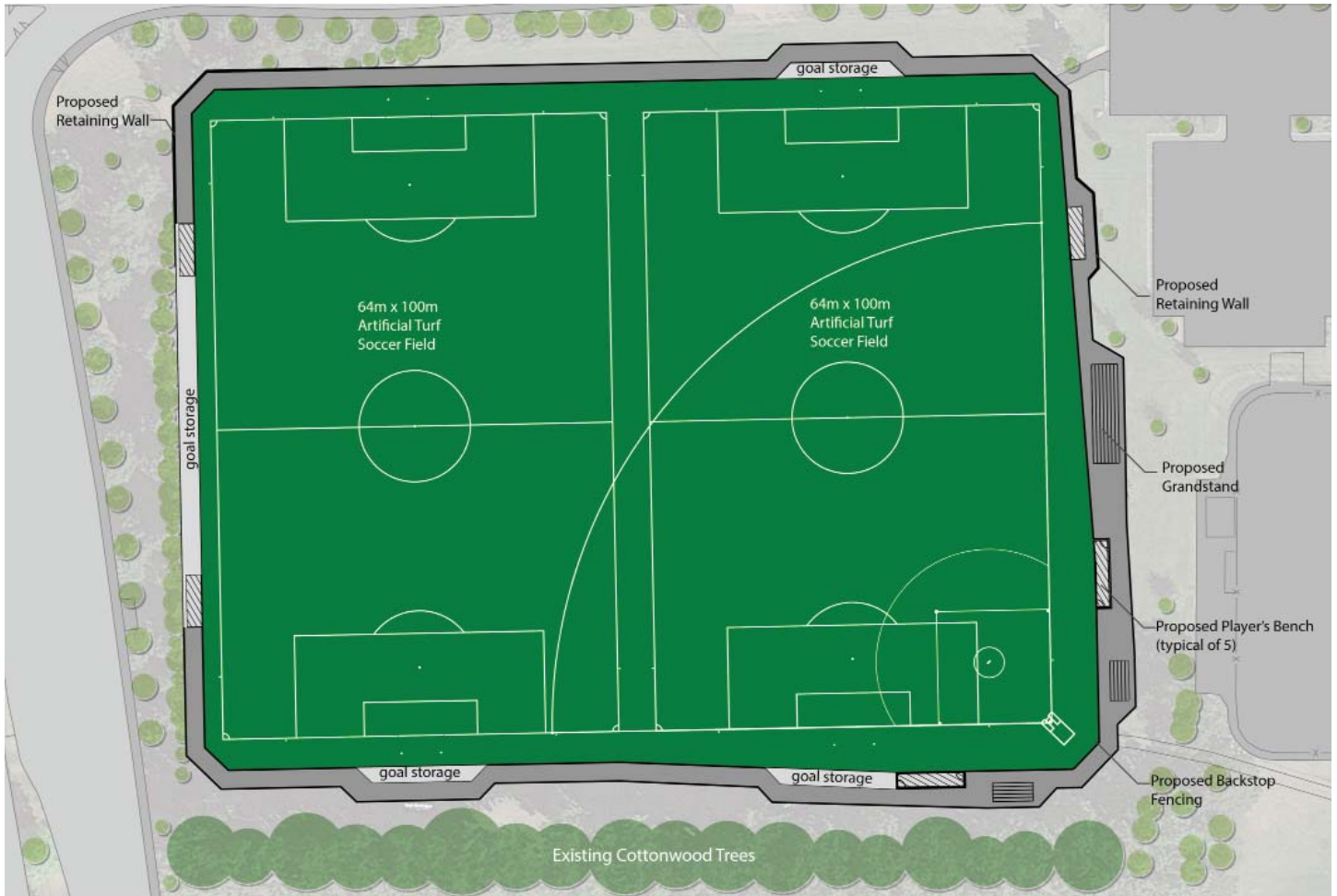


Fig. 7: Finlayson artificial turf field xpansion: schematic design



Precedent Images



Key Plan

4.4.2 Sport Box

Improvements to the sport box will increase multi-functional use of this facility for a variety of user groups. Improvements to surfacing, player facilities, and fencing will enhance programming opportunities for casual use and permitted league and tournament play for all ages and abilities. Permitted use of the facility is expected to increase due to the facility improvements and the addition of lighting, which will extend playable hours.

Currently known as the 'Lacrosse Box', the refurbished facility will be rebranded as the 'Sport Box' to make it clear the facility supports a wide range of sport pursuits.



Precedent Images

Design Guidelines: Sport Box

- Provide a new, smooth paved surface.
- Provide new solid perimeter boards.
- Install new chainlink perimeter fencing.
- Explore the potential to add two basketball courts.
- Provide regulation line painting for ball hockey and lacrosse courts.
- Add timed lighting to facilitate evening play.
- Provide lockable storage space.
- Provide improved seating, including players benches and portable bleachers.



Key Plan

4.4.3 Grass Sports Fields & Sport Hub

Improvements to Glasgow and Blanshard grass sports fields will increase the usability of these fields for field sports and special events. Relocating the Glasgow field backstop and creating an improved spectator zone (“sport hub”) will create a more social atmosphere during tournaments, provide a longer outfield, decrease programming conflicts between the ball field and playground, provide enhanced dugout and spectator facilities, and improve circulation between park areas.



Precedent Images



Design Guidelines: Grass Sports Fields & Sport Hub

- Upgrade drainage and playing surface on Glasgow and Blanshard grass fields.
- Remove backstop at Glasgow Street edge.
- Provide new backstops, dugouts, and benches for both sports fields.
- Retain a portion of Glasgow field as a ‘community field’
- Create a ‘sport hub’ that provides spectator benches (either built in or space for portable bleachers), player amenities (including power connection and water bottle filling station), and an accessible pathway from the upper park area in the south to the playing fields.



Key Plan

4.4.4 Skateboard / All-wheels park

The City of Victoria has an active skateboarding community. The Vic West Youth Park is currently the only City-operated skate park in Victoria. It is heavily used year-round by skateboarders, BMX riders and scooters, and hosts a popular annual skate competition each June. The Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan identified the need for a second skate / all-wheels park in the City of Victoria, recognizing through public consultation the demand for a second skills facility (City of Victoria, 2017c).

Skateboard parks have specific siting requirements. The proposed location at Topaz Park offers an ideal location; it offers a large, flat space, is convenient to access from major streets and transit routes, is located far from adjacent residents to limit noise impacts, and serves a quadrant of the City that currently has limited access to skateboarding opportunities.

Skateboard and all-wheels parks provide a popular activity for all ages. Research shows that youth involved in unstructured and adaptable activities like skateboarding are more likely to continue participating in the sport into adulthood. By comparison, participation in organized and structured sports such as basketball, hockey, and soccer tends to peak around age 10, and drop off considerably after the age of 20 (Toronto, 2016).



Precedent Images

Design Guidelines: Skateboard / All-wheels Park

- Offer a suitable riding experience for a variety of wheels, including bikes, skateboards, and scooters.
- Include a beginner's area where people can safely learn, and more advanced areas where beginners can watch more experienced riders.
- Design in collaboration with the local skateboard community to ensure a different type of skating experience than is offered at the Vic West Youth Park.
- Provide timed lighting for evening use.
- Include locker/storage facilities for skate park users and hosts.
- Include shaded seating areas (e.g. through tree planting or shade structure(s))
- Include a water bottle filling station (shared with other adjacent park programs)
- Include clear signage and other types of delineation to outline park rules and flow patterns.



Key Plan

4.4.5 Bike Skills Park

The bike skills park will provide an undulating paved pathway with rollers and berms that can be ridden by bikes, skateboards, and scooters. A well-design bike skills park can provide a fun and challenging riding experience for all skill levels, from toddlers to professionals. A key benefit of community bike skills parks is the low barrier to entry. A basic bike and helmet are all that is needed to use the facility, making this form of recreation accessible to a broad socio-economic spectrum (IMBA, 2014). Research indicates that these types of facilities are especially popular with youth park visitors; a 2013 report published by the Outdoor Industry Association found that bicycling was the most popular outdoor activity for youth participants; 27% of Americans between the ages of 6 and 17 engaged in some form of cycling (road, mountain, BMX) (IMBA, 2014).

The City of Victoria has committed to becoming a national leader in cycling infrastructure (City of Victoria, 2015). The bike skills park at Topaz Park will help support the growth of community cycling by promoting cycling as an active lifestyle choice, by creating a social hub for an all-ages cycling community, and by providing skills development to inspire the confidence needed to ride on street.



Precedent Images

Design Guidelines: Bike Skills Park

- Incorporate existing trees where possible and protect tree roots.
- Selectively prune, remove, and/or replant vegetation to provide a safe cycling experience with clear sightlines.
- Serve a variety of skill levels, with low-risk, low-skill areas that are suitable for beginners and small children, and enough challenge for skilled riders to hone their skills.
- Provide a clear and progressive level of difficulty, with skills levels made apparent using signs or visual cues.
- Offer a suitable riding experience for a variety of wheels, including bikes, skateboards, and scooters.
- Provide a bike repair station.
- Provide perimeter seating at key viewpoints.



Key Plan

4.4.6 Tennis & Pickleball Courts

Tennis was previously a popular amenity at Topaz Park. Community feedback indicated that new tennis courts would be well-utilized and should be reintroduced to the park. There are eight existing tennis court facilities in Victoria (23 courts total), used for permitted use, drop-in use, sport camp, and youth programs. While this supply of tennis courts is consistent with other similar-sized municipalities, feedback from tennis users indicate that the existing inventory does not meet current demand.

Pickleball is a court sport that combines elements of tennis, badminton, and ping-pong. It is currently one of the fastest growing sports in North America. The smaller court size, easy rules, and varying levels of competition make it popular with a wide age range. There is currently a growing demand for pickleball facilities throughout the Capital Regional District. A total of 25 courts are available across Victoria, Saanich, Esquimalt and Oak Bay. The majority of these (21 courts) are shared court space with existing tennis courts or are located on converted tennis courts. There are 5 purpose built courts across the region (1 in Victoria, 4 in Saanich).

The plan proposes a large court facility to accommodate dedicated space for both pickleball and tennis courts. Round-robin style tournaments are popular in pickleball, ideally requiring 8-12 courts; the combined court facility will allow the tennis courts to be temporarily converted to additional pickleball court space when the full facility is permitted for a pickleball tournament.



Precedent Images

Design Guidelines: Court Sports

- Provide two full-size tennis courts.
- Provide 6 purpose-built pickleball courts.
- Provide 4' high chainlink fencing between beach pickleball court.
- Provide timed lighting for evening play.
- Provide chainlink fencing around the perimeter of the court sport area.
- Provide bench seating for players and spectators.
- Provide an accessible pathway to the parking lot and public washroom facility.
- Provide a water bottle filling station (to be shared with other adjacent programs).



Key Plan

4.4.7 Outdoor Fitness Area

Outdoor fitness areas promote an active lifestyle by offering a variety of training equipment pieces that are easily accessible and free to use. An improved fitness area for Topaz Park will be located in a more central location, in close proximity to other active park programs such as the tennis and pickleball courts, skateboard park, and bike skills park. The new location is also located along marked walking/jogging circuits, which will make it easier to include the outdoor fitness area as part of circuit training activities.

Feedback from community consultation indicated that new types of equipment should be added that support “functional” or bodyweight training; adding additional static pieces such as horizontal bars, monkey bars, and parallel bars support the growing interest in cross-fit style training and provide greater adaptability of the equipment to suit multiple types of workouts.



Precedent Images



Design Guidelines: Outdoor Fitness Area

- Design the fitness area with rubber (or similar) surfacing to improve accessibility and accommodate a range of exercise types.
- Provide equipment suitable for a range of ages and abilities.
- Include a mix of equipment types, with some static pieces and some kinetic pieces.
- Include a water bottle filling station (to be shared with other adjacent programs).



Key Plan

4.4.8 Playground & Picnic Area

The playground at Topaz Park works well in its existing location, and is very popular with the local community. In the future, this playground will be upgraded with natural play opportunities in response to community feedback.

The picnic area at Topaz Park will offer an improved space for community gathering and celebrating. Its central location between the nearby bike skills park, skateboard park, racquet courts and playground will make it an ideal central gathering place for families visiting the park.

Providing a variety of spaces for socializing and group gatherings in parks is a direction included in both the City's Official Community Plan (2012) and Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan (2017c). The community desire for this type of amenity in Topaz Park was confirmed during public engagement, when incorporation of a picnic area ranked third in overall priorities for future improvements.



Precedent Images

Design Guidelines: Playground

- Provide updated play equipment with an expanded footprint that appeals to children aged 2-12.
- Provide a mix of natural and traditional play opportunities.
- Incorporate play opportunities for a range of ages and abilities, including universally accessible play features.
- Consult the community during the planning and design process for the playground.

Design Guidelines: Picnic Area

- Provide universal accessibility to a variety of picnic facilities.
- Create a space conducive to a range of types and sizes of gatherings (e.g. birthday celebrations, family dinner, special events).
- Consider inclusion of a covered picnic area for weather protection.
- Enhance the natural beauty of the picnic area with planting areas/gardens. Consider native and/or edible plants in addition to canopy shade trees.



Key Plan

4.4.9 Leash-Optional Areas

Topaz Park offers the only dedicated leash-optional space in Hillside Quadra. Feedback from community consultation indicated that both of the leash-optional areas at Topaz Park are currently well-utilized, and that investment should be made in the full-time leash-optional area to increase its functionality. Future improvements to the full-time leash-optional area include full perimeter fencing, better site amenities, and increasing the available flat area. These improvements are anticipated to make the leash-optional area a popular neighbourhood gathering space for local dogs and their owners.



Precedent Images

Design Guidelines: Leash-Optional Areas

- Retain existing time limited shared use of a portion of Glasgow (community) field.
- Install a perimeter chainlink fence around primary leash-optional area.
- Install a minimum of one double-gated entry point. Locate entry(s) away from playground to minimize conflicts between dogs and children.
- Regrade a portion of this sloping site to ensure a large, flat area for dog exercising and play; provide accessible pathway access from the entrance through the flat area.
- Retain and protect mature trees.
- Selectively remove underbrush as required to facilitate fence installation and improve sightlines; retain some underbrush areas on the upper hill as a dog play feature.
- Include benches for seating.
- Include a dog water station and dog bag dispenser.

4.4.10 Walkways and Cycling Paths

A well-connected system of walking paths will make it easier to travel within the park, and provide an affordable and effective way to increase fitness and physical activity (see Fig. 8). Recent research has found that the presence of walking and jogging loops increases park use by up to 80%, and the level of physical activity in a park by up to 90% (Cohen 2017). This is especially true of seniors; the level of physical activity by seniors doubles in parks with walking loops (City Parks Alliance 2017). The importance of an improved network of walking and jogging paths at Topaz Park was reiterated in public consultation; pathway improvements were the number one community priority for future improvements. Pathways also emerged as the most appreciated park amenity through public engagement conducted in 2016 for the Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan.

At just over 25 acres, Topaz Park is large enough to accommodate distance marked walking and jogging circuits to meet a range of fitness goals for local residents. Continuous 1 kilometer and 1.5 kilometer circuits will include a mix of pathway surfaces. A 1 kilometer fully paved circuit will make it possible to complete a circuit for those who have difficulty navigating softer pathway surfacing (e.g. strollers or wheelchairs). (See Fig. 9)

The City of Victoria's Greenways Plan (2013) identifies a greenway connection through Topaz Park, connecting Glasgow Street to Finlayson Avenue. On-street and pathway improvements are proposed to accommodate this cycling connection, and will make cycling through the park easier and safer.



Precedent Images

Design Guidelines: Walking & Cycling Paths

- Provide a mix hard (paved) and soft (woodchip or gravel) pathway surfacing to meet a range of accessibility needs.
- Provide pathway lighting to create safe walking connections across the park and to key destinations at night.
- Provide distance-marked walking/jogging loops around and throughout the park.
- Provide a greenway bicycle connection through the park connecting Glasgow Street to Finlayson Avenue.



Internal Park Circulation

- | | |
|---|---|
| — Primary pathways (3m wide, paved surface) | ● ● ● Proposed/existing pathway lighting |
| — Secondary pathways (1.5m, paved surface) | ● ● ● Potential pathway lighting (TBD based on field light locations) |
| - - - Woodchip or gravel trails | ● Overhead lighting (field lights, street lights) |
| - - - Greenway cycling connection | |

Fig. 8: Internal park circulation



Walking & Jogging Loops

- 1km circuit*
- 1.5km circuit*
- 1km accessible circuit (all paved pathways)*

* Solid lines = paved trail sections
Dashed lines = woodchip or gravel trail sections

Fig. 9: Walking and jogging loops



Key Plan

4.4.11 Entries and Wayfinding

A key finding from public consultation was that many residents don't utilize or are unaware of the full extents of Topaz Park. Improved major entry points and cohesive and clear wayfinding signage will improve park accessibility and use by making it easier to know what different recreational opportunities are offered within the park and how to move between them. Park signage can also be used to identify unique park features, such as sensitive ecosystems, walking/jogging loops, and interpretive information.

Investment in high quality park signage offers a high return on investment. Recent research released from the US National Study of Neighbourhood Parks found that investments in clear wayfinding and informational signage in parks is one of the most effective ways to increase park visits; better signage is correlated with a 62% increase in park activity (City Parks Alliance 2017).



Precedent Images



Design Guidelines: Signage & Wayfinding

- Design park entries to provide a clear sense of arrival at Topaz Park.
- Wherever possible, provide universal accessibility to the internal parkway system at park entries.
- Install park signage to clearly identify the location of programs and activities available at Topaz Park.
- Provide clear wayfinding signage throughout Topaz Park.



Key Plan

4.4.12 Parking

The City retained Urban Systems Inc. to investigate the potential parking impacts of the proposed new uses at Topaz Park, using multiple on-site assessments, precedent studies, and recommended parking supply levels from the ITE Parking Generation Guide.

The full parking study is attached as Appendix B. Overall, the parking study found that there is sufficient parking on-site to support the proposed expansion of recreational facilities, and that the amount of on-site parking spaces meets recommended targets for a 25 acre multi-use park.

The study found that overall peak parking demand in the proposed plan is similar to the existing uses. Given that the proposed concept plan will result in a greater variety of park uses and activities, it is likely that average parking demand will increase as a variety of user groups look to access new park facilities. The current parking supply is anticipated to meet this increase in average parking demand.

The study did not find a parking shortage during the observed special event (Bill Drew Memorial SoccerFest). While the on-site parking lots were mostly full, there was plenty of unrestricted on-street parking available throughout the day, especially along Topaz Avenue. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some other events throughout the year experience parking shortages. While parking supply may be exceeded by demand during a very small number of major events each year, it is best practice to base parking requirements on the average parking demand that will be experienced throughout the year.

The baseline accessibility assessment (Appendix D) found that improvements can be made to the accessible parking spaces in Topaz parking lot and Finlayson parking lot to provide better access for park visitors with disabilities.

Improvements to the parking lots are planned to make it easier to arrive at and leave Topaz Park during peak times, to improve accessibility, and to encourage alternate modes of transportation. Improvements in park signage and pathways are also anticipated to make it easier to travel between park amenities and parking areas.

Design Guidelines: Parking

- Improve entry/exit conditions at Finlayson parking lot.
- Explore opportunities to establish shared parking agreements with nearby landowners and institutions to provide overflow parking space during major events.
- Create a space near one of the entrances of Topaz Park to allow people attending major events to be easily picked up/dropped off.
- Encourage more park users to walk, bike, and take transit, especially during special events.
- Ensure a high level of transit access to Topaz Park by optimizing transit route connections and the location of bus stops.
- Provide bike racks at park entrances and adjacent to key park destinations.
- Adapt the accessible parking stalls in Topaz and Finlayson parking lots to improve accessible parking options.



Key Plan

4.4.13 Park Buildings

The plan retains both washroom buildings in their current locations. Short-term improvements include improving washroom amenities and animating building exteriors with mural painting.

The baseline accessibility assessment (Appendix D) found that improvements are needed to the interior layouts of both washroom buildings to allow for increased access and more intuitive use. Interior upgrades may also be needed to adapt the interior of the buildings to changing park needs. These interior renovations will be assessed as part of a planned City-wide assessment of all public washrooms in parks to determine cost, phasing, and feasibility.



Precedent Images

Design Guidelines: Park Buildings

- Incorporate additional amenities into existing washroom buildings, including soap, paper towels, and baby changing stations.
- Explore opportunities for increasing the presence of washroom buildings by animating building facades with mural painting.
- Improve and promote accessibility and inclusion, including making the washroom buildings more family-friendly and altering interior layouts to increase access.
- Analyze options for renovations to both washroom buildings (e.g. by reconfiguring internal layout) as part of larger planned City-wide assessment of public washrooms in parks.

4.4.14 Trees & Natural Areas

The Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan (2017c) found that environment features, natural areas, and ecosystems within the City's parks and open spaces are highly valued by Victoria residents. Preserving and improving environmental features and benefits throughout the park system emerged as the highest overall priority for Victoria's parks through multiple engagement methods. This was reiterated through community consultation for this project, when preserving and enhancing trees and natural areas ranked fourth in overall priorities.

The urban forest plays a vital role at Topaz Park by providing shade, beauty, character, and habitat. The park contains a healthy tree canopy, including several large canopy tree species and a significant remnant Garry oak ecosystem. The plan locates future park activities to preserve existing trees wherever possible, and provides the opportunity to expand canopy coverage in the park over time (see. Fig. 10). Protection and management of natural areas will improve biodiversity and ensure that park activities and natural areas are mutually beneficial.



Precedent Images

Design Guidelines: Trees & Natural Areas

- Plant new trees in locations that provide canopy coverage, shade, definition, and character to new park areas.
- Where planting areas are included through detailed design, consider native plants, edible plants, or plants that offer wildlife habitat value.
- Retain, protect, and enhance the environmentally sensitive Garry oak woodland ecosystem in the northeast corner of the park.
- Where trees need to be removed due to poor health or to facilitate construction, plant replacement trees to ensure no net loss of canopy coverage, with a preference for planting large canopy park tree species.
- Ensure long-lived, healthy park trees by providing sufficient soil volumes, root barrier, and irrigation where appropriate.
- Selectively remove underbrush in the southeast section of the park to facilitate new park activities, sightlines, and safety.



Trees & Natural Areas






- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
|  | Environmentally sensitive area (OCP/Provincial Inventory) |  | Opportunity for new tree planting (TBC through detailed site design) |
|  | Additional environmentally sensitive area to be protected |  | Existing trees |
|  | Wooded area (Enhance with pruning, planting, selective shrub removal) | | |

Fig. 10: Trees and natural areas

4.4.15 Event Infrastructure

As one of the largest parks in the City of Victoria, Topaz Park is a popular outdoor special event venue, hosting a range of festivals, sports tournaments, and other events each year.

Integrating support infrastructure such as power and water connections will make it easier and more affordable to host special events in the park and will support the continued use and potential growth of Topaz Park as a special event venue (see Fig. 11). Incorporating infrastructure for special events supports key goals in both the Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan and Create Victoria Arts and Culture Master Plan (2017a,c).





Precedent Images

Design Guidelines: Event Infrastructure

- Design an internal park pathway loop to provide periodic one-way vehicular access for special events and food trucks.
- Provide electrical connections for special events at the grass sports fields, sport hub, artificial turf field, picnic area, washroom buildings, and sport box.
- Provide potable water connections at the sport hub and both washroom buildings.



Event Infrastructure

-  Special event vehicle access/loading (one-way in/out)
-  Power connections



-  Potable water connections
-  Possible future greywater disposal

Fig. 11: Event infrastructure



Chapter 5

Implementation

5.1 Funding

Implementation of this plan will rely on a variety of internal and external funding sources.

5.1.1 Internal Funding Sources

Internal funding requests will be brought to Council for consideration as part of the annual Financial Plan process, and will consider a number of internal funding mechanisms including core funding (municipal property taxes) and available reserve funds.

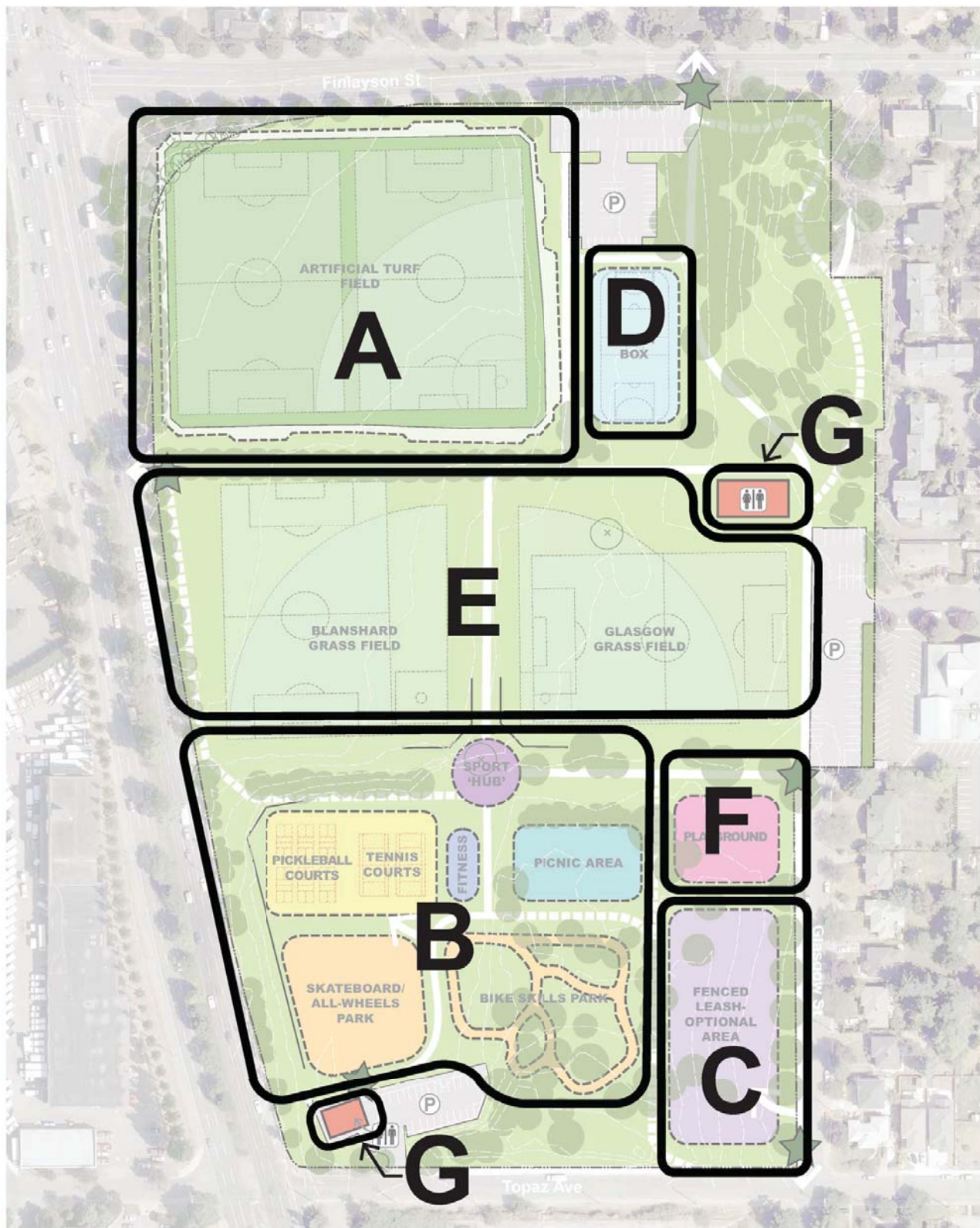
5.1.2 External Funding Sources

A variety of external funding sources will be explored to implement this plan, including:

- **Grant Opportunities:** *Some external funding is possible through provincial and federal government investment and other external grant opportunities. Potential grant opportunities will be actively pursued. Potential grant funding sources will be reported on as part of the City's quarterly updates.*
- **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 could 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. These groups also often have access to grants and funding sources that are not available to municipal governments.*
- **Private Sector Partnerships:** *Contracts and partnerships with private business can provide a variety of revenue streams. Topaz Park currently collects permit revenue from field booking permits and special event permits. Future services that could complement Topaz Park and generate additional revenue in the form of rental or permit fees include food trucks, fitness programs, and other training programs and camps. Private endeavors would need to complement and enhance the overall park experience, comply with all relevant City regulations, and not overly inhibit use of the park by residents.*

5.2 Plan Phasing

The improvement plan for Topaz Park is an ambitious vision to deliver expanded and improved recreational facilities that will better meet the needs of our growing community. This plan will be implemented across multiple phases. The proposed phasing considers replacement timelines for existing amenities, linkages between projects, construction efficiencies, required project timelines, priorities from public consultation, and financial impacts. Relative cost impacts are estimated based on the current construction market, and are intended to be used for preliminary project budgeting. More detailed cost estimates for each project will be prepared through preliminary and detailed design exercises to guide future funding requests. See Fig. 10 and Table 2.



Phasing & Implementation Strategy: Key Plan

Fig. 10: Phasing and implementation strategy: key plan

Phasing and Implementation Strategy

Short Term Actions (1-2 years)					Estimated Cost		
Map Key	Project	Scope	Rationale	Time required to complete project	Low (< \$500,000)	Medium (\$500,000 - \$1M)	High (>\$1,000,000)
A	Artificial turf field replacement	Design and Construction: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Synthetic turf field</i>• <i>Field lighting</i>• <i>Player benches and bleachers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Must be done in advance of repurposing Topaz grass field to retain field capacity.• Carpet is at end of life and requires replacement within 3 years.	14 months			●
B	Southern park enhancement <i>(Design Phase)</i>	Consultation and Design: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Skateboard park</i>• <i>Bike skills park</i> Design: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Tennis/pickleball courts</i>• <i>Outdoor fitness area</i>• <i>Picnic area</i>• <i>Sport hub/infields</i>• <i>Associated amenities (pathways, lighting, seating, entries etc.)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Detailed design of new park amenities is required to generate an accurate construction cost estimate.• Completing the detailed design of the southern park area as one project will result in a more cohesive design.	12 months	●		
Medium Term Actions (3-6 years)					Estimated Cost		
Map Key	Project	Scope	Rationale	Time required to complete project	Low (< \$500,000)	Medium (\$500,000 - \$1M)	High (>\$1,000,000)
B	Southern park enhancement <i>(Construction Phase)</i>	Construction: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Tennis/pickleball courts</i>• <i>Skateboard park</i>• <i>Bike skills park</i>• <i>Outdoor fitness area</i>• <i>Picnic area</i>• <i>Sport hub/infields</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Construction of new park amenities can proceed after artificial turf field expansion is completed.• Constructing adjacent elements as one project will result in a more cohesive design and offer construction cost efficiencies.	12 months			●
C	Leash-Optional area	Design and construction: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Perimeter fencing</i>• <i>Regrading and resurfacing</i>• <i>Site amenities (seating, water fountain)</i>• <i>Topaz @ Glasgow park entry</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This is a discrete project that can be completed in advance of other site improvements, as funding becomes available.	10 months	●		
D	Sport box replacement	Design and Construction: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Surfacing and boards</i>• <i>Lighting</i>• <i>Storage</i>• <i>Seating</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilities are nearing end of life.	12 months	●		
E	Grass field drainage/surfacing repair <i>(cost per field)</i>	Repair: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Drainage, surface, infields, irrigation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design of sport hub and spectator areas is required prior to repairing field condition.	6 months		●	
N/A	Pathway improvements	Design and Construction: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Any pathway upgrades not already completed as part of another project</i>• <i>Improvements to parking lots</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pathway upgrades must typically be installed as part of or after adjacent facility improvements (e.g. field drainage must be repaired before cross-park pathways can be installed).• Pathway improvements should be included as part of other facility upgrades where feasible.	N/A	●		
N/A	Park signage and wayfinding	Design and Construction: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Park wayfinding signage</i>• <i>Park ID signage (where not already completed as part of another project)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Construction of new park amenities must be completed before accurate park maps and wayfinding signage can be installed.	N/A	●		
Long Term Actions (7-10 years)					Estimated Cost		
Map Key	Project	Scope	Rationale	Time required to complete project	Low (< \$500,000)	Medium (\$500,000 - \$1M)	High (>\$1,000,000)
F	Playground replacement	Consultation, Design and Construction: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Playground upgrade</i>• <i>Improved playground park entry</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Playground to be upgraded in accordance with City of Victoria's playground upgrade program.	12 months	●		
Operational Items (to be completed as part of ongoing City operations)							
Map Key	Project	Scope	Rationale				
N/A	Tree planting		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tree planting locations to be confirmed as part of other park upgrades				
G	Park washroom upgrades	Repair: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Washroom amenities</i>• <i>Exterior murals</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Washroom amenity upgrades to be determined as part of City-wide assessment of public washrooms in parks.• Exterior murals to be completed at any time as funding allows or building require repainting.				

Table 2: Phasing and Implementation Strategy

5.3 Operational Impacts

The improvement plan for Topaz Park includes a significant change in the types of amenities offered in the park. Adjustments to the cost of ongoing park operations and maintenance over time will be included in future Financial Plans for consideration.

5.4 Measuring Success: Monitoring and Review

The City of Victoria Parks Division will be responsible for ongoing implementation and tracking of this plan. Progress reports will be incorporated into annual reporting on the Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan. This plan should be reviewed during the five year review of the Parks and Open Spaces Master Plan to ensure that it continues to be relevant and reflective of the needs of the City of Victoria parks system.

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