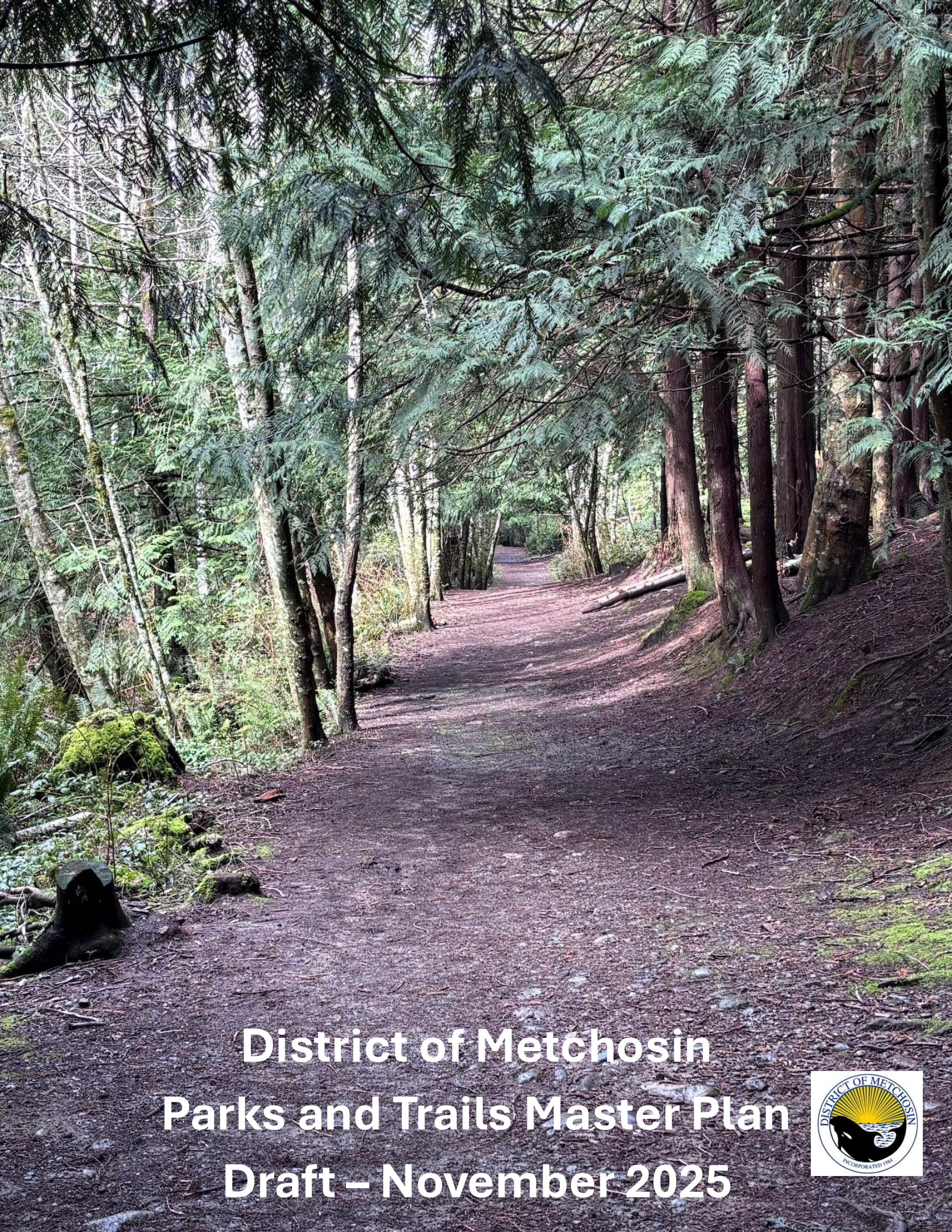


District of Metchosin
Parks and Trails Master Plan
Draft – November 2025

metchosin parks & trails



metchosin parks
crown lands (land swap)
CRD parks
metchosin trails
galloping goose

TRAILS

1 Blaney Trail *ocean lookout*
2 Blinkhorn Nature Park *45 acre lakeshore trail*
3 Bob Mountain Trail *Galloping Goose connector*
4 Bradene Steps *to the ocean*
5 Branson Trail *neighborhood connector*
6 Buckbrush Swamp *easy trail loop*
7 Carlton Cosh Nature Park *off Kangaroo*
8 Duke Roadside Trail
9 Ed's Lane *access to Metchosin Park*
10 Eleanor Mann Park *42 acres with trails*
11 Farhill Trail *neighborhood connector*
12 Ferncliffe Trail *Galloping Goose connector*
13 Helgesen Trail *roadside connector*
14 Hillman Trail *neighborhood connector*
15 Horse Trail *neighborhood connector*
16 Joe Lodge Trail *access to Metchosin Park*
17 Kangaroo Roadside Trail
18 Labonne Trail *Galloping Goose connector*
19 Lisandra Trail *neighborhood connector*
20 Libra Trails *park trails and Galloping Goose access*
21 Lusse Way Trail *neighborhood connector*
22 Madill Trail *neighborhood connector*
23 Matheson Lake Trail *Galloping Goose connector*
24 Metchosin Roadside Trail
25 Montreul Hill Trail *lookout*
26 Mount Ash Trail *lookout*
27 Municipal Grounds
28 Park Drive Trail *neighborhood connector*
29 Pearson College Trail *Galloping Goose connector*
30 Rocky Point Roadside Trail
31 Ron Weir Trail *connector*
32 Sea Bluff Trail *ocean lookout*
33 Section 95 *100 acres from land swap*
34 Sweet Chestnut *connector*
35 Taylor Beach Access
36 Upper Labonne Trail *connector to Lower Labonne*
37 Village Trails *roadside*
38 Wayne's Rock Trail *Galloping Goose connector*
39 Weir's Beach
40 Metchosin Wilderness Park *100 acres with trails*
41 Greenbelt *from land swap*
42 Albert Head Lagoon *CRD*
43 Devonian Regional Park *CRD*
44 Matheson Lake Park *CRD*
45 Tower Point *CRD*
46 Witty's Lagoon *CRD*
47 Witty's Lagoon Stairs

Table of Contents

Section 1 - Introduction Page 6

Section 2 – Community Profile and Process Page 12

Section 3 – Key Trends and Planning Considerations Page 20

Section 4 – Trails Page 34

Section 5 - Parks Page 54

Section 6 – Beaches Page 68

Section 7 – What We Heard Page 76

Appendices

Section 1 – Overview



View from Blaney Trail

1.1 Metchosin's Parks and Trails Masterplan

Metchosin's natural environment and spectacular landscapes are foundations of our community's unique rural character. Metchosin has a dynamic coastline, active farm fields, complex ecosystems, and steep terrain that capture the wind, rain, and sun of each successive season. The District's parks and trails network provides opportunities for community members and visitors to appreciate, experience and be active in this unique, multi-faceted coastal environment.

The following is ***[a draft version of]*** Metchosin's first integrated Parks and Trails Master Plan. The team developing this document strove to honour the past efforts that established our park and trail network. We have also worked to anticipate the network's future needs and challenges.

Our goal with the Master Plan is to affirm and highlight the value of our parks and trails assets, while clarifying the plans and work required to maintain that network, and where possible develop new opportunities.

Thank you to the community members who provided their insights into the Plan.

1.2 Territorial Acknowledgement

The District of Metchosin and its parks, trails and shoreline areas are located on the traditional territories of the Coast Salish people, including the Sc'ianew First Nation and the T'Sou-ke First Nation. The District of Metchosin is committed to respecting the unique history and the aspirations of these nations.

1.3 Plan Purpose

There are currently 5 parks and 51 trails under within the District of Metchosin. Two beaches are also covered, as the District has responsibility for the nearshore area, including parking and land use planning.

The Master Plan's purpose is to:

- Outline an overall management strategy and plan for community-owned parks and trails assets, including specific maintenance/management plans.

- Articulate the aspirations and vision that residents expressed around parks and trails.
- Outline standards for future parks and trails development.
- Prepare for new park assets that will move to Metchosin's ownership as a result of the 2017 Land Swap.
- Identify opportunities to grow our parks and trail network, particularly around new subdivisions.
- Identify current and future issues, risks, and opportunities for our parks and trails assets.
- Clarify operational and planning matters, such as the role of volunteers, the District's long-standing Parks and Trails Advisory Select Committee, subdivision processes, acquisition and disposal matters.

1.4 Existing Parks and Trails Assets

The Master Plan focuses on parks and trails assets that the District currently owns and manages, or may, in the future, own and manage. The Master Plan also covers Taylor and Weir Beaches.

1.4.1 Parks

• Blinkhorn Nature Park • Buckbrush Swamp Park • Carlton Cosh Nature Park	• Eleanor Mann Park • Metchosin Wilderness Park / 100 Acre Wood

1.4.2 Natural Trails

- Beckingham
- Blaney Trail Ocean Lookout
- Bob Mountain
- Bradene Steps (Witty Beach)
- Branson-Duke
- Chapel Heights
- Clapham
- Cliffe Trail
- Cook Road
- Deer Park
- Eales Road Trail
- Ed's Lane
- Farhill Connector (Latoria Creek Bridge)
- Ferncliff
- Gemini
- Graceland to Gilbert
- Helgesen-Lombard
- Hillman
- Horse
- Joe Lodge
- Libra
- Lisandra
- Lusse Way
- Madill
- Matheson Lake Trailhead
- Montreul Hill Heights
- Mount Ash Lookout
- Municipal Grounds Trail
- Olympic View to Annie Jackson
- Pearson College/Galloping Goose Connector
- Ron Weir
- Sea Bluff
- Sweet Chestnut / Labonne
- Top of LaBonne
- Upper LaBonne to Lower LaBonne
- Upper Park Drive
- Wayne's Rock
- Weir Beach Stairs

1.4.3 Roadside Trails

- Annie Jackson Place Roadside
- Duke Roadside Trail
- Kangaroo Roadside Trail
- Liberty Drive Roadside Trail
- Kangaroo Roadside Trail
- Metchosin Roadside Trail (Chapel Heights to Duke Road)
- Metchosin Roadside Trail (Happy Vally to Wootton)
- Pears Roadside Trail
- Rocky Point Roadside Trail
- Village RoadsideTrail
- William Head / Metchosin Roadside Trail

1.4.4 Un-Managed Parks

These are land parcels that have a “park” designation, but which are not actively managed by the District to support recreational purposes, such as walking.

• Graceland • Hi-Mount • Kasani • Metchosin Road • Saddleback	• Seaspray • Spellman • Stirrup • Windover

1.4.5 Notable Road Allowances

There are a number of road allowances (RoWs) in Metchosin that may have the potential to serve as trails or access points. These include RoWs off of the following roadways:

• Beckingham • Neild Road	• Wild Cherry

The RoW off of Winfall Road is discussed in section 4.7.8. A trail is not recommended off of this RoW.

1.4.6 Beaches

- Taylor Beach
- Weir Beach

1.4.7 Future Parkland Assets

At the time of the development of this Master Plan, the Buffer Land and Section 95 were not yet designated parkland or owned by the District. These are further covered in section 5.3.2.

The Master Plan does not cover playgrounds and playing fields, including those on municipal land or local schools.

Not all of the park and trail assets within the network are owned by the District. For example:

- *Sea Bluff Trail is located on private land, with access granted through a Right-of-Way provided by the family in the late 1980s.*
- *Metchosin Wilderness Park (100 Acre Wood, Section 25) is owned by the provincial government, with access granted through a Licence of Occupation (LOO) agreement.*
- *The land containing the Libra Park (Section 28)is also owned by the provincial government, with access granted through an LOO agreement.*

Both the Libra/Gemini Trails (Section 28), and Metchosin Wilderness Park (Section 25) and Section 95 are covered by the 2017 Boundary Adjustment , covered in section 5.3.2.

1.5 Regional Parks and Trails

Within or near Metchosin's boundaries are seven parks and the Galloping Goose Regional Trail (GGRT), which are managed by the Capital Regional District (CRD). While not covered under this plan, these regional assets are used extensively by Metchosin residents, and District owned/managed trails are often used to connect to the regional parks/trails.

Key CRD parks in relation to the District's network include:

1. Albert Head Lagoon Regional Park	5. Sooke Hills Regional Park
2. Devonian Regional Park	6. Tower Point Regional Park
3. Matheson Lake Regional Park	7. Witty's Lagoon Regional Park
4. Roche Cove Regional Park	8. Galloping Goose Regional Trail

Section 2 - Community Profile and Process



Latoria Creek Community Bridge

2.0 Community Demographics and Profile

Metchosin's rural nature is a vital element of Metchosin's community character. This is reflected in the community's patterns of growth, the abundance of agricultural land, and the presence of large tracts of greenspace, whether privately or publicly owned.

The District covers a land area of 69.57 km2 (17,396 acres), making it the second largest jurisdiction in the Capital Regional District by land mass. Additionally, Metchosin contains over 50 km of coastline and has over 1,000 hectares (2,470 acres or 14%) of land in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). In terms of District managed assets, there are over 101 hectares (249 acres) of parks and ~20 km of trails.

The 2021 census put Metchosin's population at 5,067. This is an increase of 359 people from the 2016 census. The median age among Metchosin residents is 50.8 years. This is both higher than the regional (45.2 years) and provincial (42 years) median ages. Approximately 26% of Metchosin residents are 65 years of age or over. Metchosin's population growth rate is expected to be low to modest over the next 20 years.[1]

Metchosin has low commercial / industrial development, with a small "village" core area where a number of businesses operate.

Metchosin has followed a low-density approach to development for decades. The District is located outside of the CRD's Urban Containment Policy Area, which was established for purposes of regional planning in the CRD's 2018 Regional Growth Strategy. A key CRD planning objective is to "locate a minimum of 95% of the region's new dwelling units to 2038 within the Urban Containment Policy Area." Metchosin's own low-density objectives are reflective of the community's infrastructure limitations. For example, Metchosin, in its entirety, relies on individual septic systems for liquid waste and many properties rely on wells for their water.

In terms of residential development, the community has ~1,880 private dwellings. The average assessed value for residential lots in 2025 was $1.25M. This represents the fourth highest assessed value (2025 figures) in the CRD, behind Oak Bay, North Saanich and the Highlands.

Metchosin shares a southern boundary with the Sc'ianew First Nation, and an western boundary with Sooke. The District is also bounded to the east by the City of Langford (pop 46,584; 2021) and by the City of Colwood (pop 18,961; 2021). All of these

[1] 2025 Metchosin Housing Capacity Analysis

communities are seeing significant population growth, which is expected to continue. Some of this growth will be beside or near Metchosin. For example, the Centre Mountain residential development will bring as many as 312 homes to an area immediately adjacent to Metchosin's border. The Royal Bay and Beachlands developments in Colwood will continue to bring thousands of new people through additional residential, commercial, institutional and recreational growth to the area.

In respect of our parks and trails assets, a number of inferences can be drawn from the demographic and regional context information:

- With continued urban growth in the CRD, and with many developments being higher-density dwellings, Metchosin's open spaces will likely take on increasing importance in the future on a region-wide basis.
- With a population that is older than the average further consideration may be given to new accessibility considerations on our trails, or even amenities (such as benches) to assist older walkers.
- Given its overall size, the distances to employment/schools/shopping, the low-level of public transit service, it's likely that Metchosin will continue to be a "car-community." However, with the development of new transit options, like e-bikes, there will be new opportunities for promoting active transportion options as an alternative to cars.
- While Metchosin has a tradition of low-density, there remain several large properties available for subdivision. As these properties are developed, care should be taken to ensure that parks/trails opportunities and obligations are addressed effectively.

2.1 Plan Process and Public Engagement

The Parks and Trails Advisory Select Committee (PTASC) was tasked with developing the Master Plan in January 2025. PTASC is an advisory body composed of Council-appointed community volunteers, with the committee's history going back over 30 years. Per its Terms of Reference, PTASC's mandate is to consider parks, trails and recreation matters and to report its findings and opinions to Council.

PTASC worked to inform and engage community members throughout the Master Plan process. Key activities included:

- March 2025 – Article in the *Metchosin Muse*
- April 2025 – Article in the *Metchosin Muse*

- April 5, 2025 – Open House #1 held at the Metchosin School
- September 7, 2025 – Booth at Metchosin Community Day
- October 2025 – Article in the *Metchosin Muse*
- November 15, 2025 – Open House #2

In addition, comments were always welcome at regular PTASC meetings during the public participation segment of the meeting. PTASC held 10 meetings throughout 2025. These are normally held on the third Tuesday of the month.

The goal of Open House #1 was to share the broad scope of the Master Plan process including a proposed timeline. Questions were presented to facilitate public input. A total of 23 people attended this open house.

The goal of Open House #2 was to share get community input into the first draft of the plan, which was made available in early November. .

Throughout the process, information was posted on the District's website, including material from Open Houses #1 and #2.

Public input via email was encouraged, whether through *Muse* articles or as indicated at the open houses.

Early in the process, the District completed its first Active Transportation Network Plan (ATNP). PTASC took steps to consider the results of the ATNP, including public input in the ATNP, as part of the development process.

A summary of the public input we received during the process can be found in the What We Heard report in Section 7 (comments received to October 31, 2025)

2.2 Administrative and Planning Context

Metchosin's Official Community Plan (OCP) covers parks and trails matters through several objectives and policy statements, as well as through two planning documents:

- The 2009 Metchosin Community Trail Network Master Plan.
- The District of Metchosin Parks and Recreation Master Plan (1986).

The parks related provisions in the OCP were brought into this plan, and were enhanced or better defined, where possible. Of particular note are:

Objectives:

- 5.2.1 To provide local parks, trail systems and recreation facilities for future needs.
- 5.2.2 To place a high priority on the acquisition and development of a marine park system.
- 5.2.3 To ensure areas with high recreation potential are identified before development and acquired before costs become prohibitive.
- 5.2.4 To develop parks in ways that protect the natural features and habitats and are not detrimental to the natural environment.
- 5.2.5 To increase accessibility to local and regional parks and open space.
- 5.2.6 To provide access over the trail system, where practical, for fire protection services and emergency equipment.

Policies

- 5.3.2 The provisions of the *Local Government Act* and *Land Title Act* should be used where possible to obtain land for community open space and public access. All lands should be conveyed in a condition satisfactory for park use.
- 5.3.4 When land is being subdivided, 5% of the land, or money in lieu of land, will be obtained following [Section 510] of the *Local Government Act*.
- 5.3.9 In the development of parks and trails, natural landscape, flora and fauna should not be disturbed more than is necessary to permit access or facilities required for active and passive recreational uses.
- 5.3.12 Existing and proposed parks should be developed to maximize the number and type of potential uses without aesthetically or physically harming the site through over-use.
- 5.3.15 A trail network should be developed through Metchosin linking parks and community focal points.

It’s important to note that the 2009 document focused exclusively on trails. This Master Plan reviews parks and beaches, in addition to trails. The 1986 document was developed with broad recreation matters in mind. This Master Plan update will focus on

outdoor recreation as related to parks and trails. Amenities like sports fields and playgrounds are not covered.

There are several District bylaws and policies which were also reviewed for relevance to the Master Plan and future parks and trails, including:

- PTASC Terms of Reference
- Advisory Select Committee Bylaw
- Trail Coordinator Terms of Reference
- Subdivision Referral Policy

In April 2025, the District finalized the Metchosin Active Transportation Network Plan. That plan has also been reviewed and the findings considered in the development of the Master Plan.

2.3 Guiding Principles

This Master Plan reflects four principles. These were developed by PTASC and then reviewed with District Council and presented at Open House #1 for community input. These are:

The Master Plan must reflect Metchosin's rural character and traditions

- Parks and trails are a vital element of Metchosin's community character and our connection to the environment.
- Preserve, enhance and protect our community's natural features.
- Encourage and enable volunteers in maintaining parks and trails.

Maintain and improve connectivity of our parks and trails

- Connecting our trails in a meaningful way for community members. For example, as access points to the Galloping Goose or between neighbourhoods.
- Connectivity considerations will be important in assessing future parks and trails opportunities.
- Look for opportunities to improve accessibility for those with mobility limitations, consistent with the District's Accessibility Plan.

Acknowledge First Nation traditional and ancestral connection to these lands

- As reflected in the Territorial Acknowledgement (Section 1.2) and supported by the intent to respect the environment and work to support biodiversity values.

Respect the environment and work to enhance biodiversity values

- Support wildlife corridors (i.e. undeveloped spaces that support biodiversity).
- Manage risks: invasives, climate change risk (fire, flooding), activities that may cause damage.
- Assess impacts from various current and future uses: mountain biking, e-bikes, commercial dog walking, dogs in parks, random camping.

Section 3 – Key Trends and Planning Considerations



Metchosin Wilderness Park

3.0 Trends and Planning Considerations

The following trends were considered as part of the Master Plan, and a number of vital matters are outlined in terms of future planning of Metchosin's parks and trails network.

3.1 Accessibility

The District of Metchosin has committed itself to removing or reducing barriers for people with accessibility limitations. The District (at the time the Master Plan was prepared) is part of the Capital West Accessibility Advisory Committee (Accessibility Committee), which includes Colwood, Esquimalt, Highlands, Langford, Sooke and View Royal. The Accessibility Committee developed a shared Accessibility Plan, which Metchosin District Council approved in 2024.

The definition of "Accessibility" used in this plan is "the concept of making a product, service, or experience that can be used or interacted by everyone – including individuals with disabilities or impairments."

The Master Plan looks at opportunities to address limitations, "disabilities" and "impairments," including those who:

- Are unable to walk long distances, particularly the elderly.
- Require aides for walking, such as canes or 'walkers'
- Use wheelchairs or other mobility devices
- Parents or caregivers who want to take children on paths in strollers

In developing the Master Plan, PTASC will continue to consult with stakeholders to better understand how accessibility considerations could be addressed within our parks and trails network. These stakeholders included the District's representative on the Accessibility Committee, the Senior's Information Resource Centre (SIRC), the Healthy Communities Advisory Select Committee, and individual community members.

In our parks and trails network, there are significant challenges in terms of removing all accessibility barriers. Two limitations are significant: 1) the natural features that are inherent in our parks and trails assets, including steep slopes, uneven terrain, soft ground, water features, flooding potential; and (2) limited operations and capital budgets.

Regardless, this plan recommends several actions to providing greater accessibility to our parks and trails network.

(DRAFT) Recommendations

- That key trails be improved to allow for access by wheelchairs or mobility assisted devices. Such improvements should not detract from the nature-focused character of the trails. Trails suggested: Blaney, Metchosin Road, Happy Valley Road in the Village area, Rocky Point Road and Annie Jackson Place.
- That additional benches be installed on key trails to support walkers with limited mobility or those who require rest-stops. Trails where additional benches would be valued include: Hillman, Lombard, Blinkhorn, Buckbrush Swamp, and 100 Acre Wood.
- That an alternative bench design be considered for remote locations (i.e. no concrete foundation).
- That an assessment be done of adding accessibility matts (MobiMatts) to allow for improved access to Weir Beach and/or Taylor Beach, starting at the parking lot and extending to a safe spot near the high-tide mark.
- To support safe passage, that the District make widening road shoulders a priority in future planning of road resurfacing projects. Priority roads could include: Happy Valley, Kangaroo, Glen Forest/Pears Road, Lindholm, Metchosin, William Head, Duke Road, and Rocky Point Road.

3.2 Regional Growth

Metchosin is bounded by two of the fastest growing communities in British Columbia, the City of Langford (pop 46,804; 2021) and by the City of Colwood (18,961; 2021).

This growth is expected to continue for many years. For example, Langford is anticipating its population will be 100,000 within 15 to 20 years[2]; Colwood is planning for 30,168 residents by 2041.[3] Population growth throughout the greater Victoria area is also expected to continue.

Metchosin is immediately adjacent to significant developments. The Centre Mountain residential development will bring as many as 312 homes to a natural area immediately

[2] Langford Official Community Plan, 2025
[3] https://www.colwood.ca/local-government/insights-statistics; https://communitycouncil.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/CSPC_Colwood-Prosperity-Project-2023.pdf

adjacent to Metchosin's border. The Royal Bay and the Beachlands developments in Colwood have brought thousands of new residents to the former gravel pit, and further residential, commercial, and institutional growth will continue for the next ten years. It will be important to consider the potential visitors from these communities, and also to engage with both municipalities and stakeholders to explore opportunities to collaborate on parks and trails planning where possible. For example, the development of a wider shoulder for biking on Metchosin Road would serve the regional cycling community.

With continued urban growth in the CRD, along with the provincial government's encouragement of higher-density dwellings (small-scale multi-unit housing), the open, natural space in Metchosin will likely take on increasing importance as recreational and cultural destinations.

DRAFT Recommendations:

- That parks and trails opportunities are rigorously pursued in light of any future subdivision in Metchosin.
- That partnership opportunities be sought with the CRD and neighbouring municipalities on key projects. These may include:
    - Developing a biking lane on Metchosin Rd and Happy Valley Rd. Improvements on the east side of Metchosin Road was identified as being of high interest among residents in a survey conducted for the Active Transportation process.
    - Appropriate parking spaces in CRD parks.
    - Crosswalks at Metchosin Road, Duke Road, and Pelican Road; connecting pedestrians from Latoria Creek Park in Colwood with the Latoria Creek Bridge and onward to CRD parks (Albert Head Lagoon, Tower Point, and Witty's Beach/Lagoon)
    - Adding additional connections to the GGRT, where feasible.
- That the District clarify its approach to working with volunteers in order to allow for a Park/Trail Stewards Program. The program would assist District staff and PTASC in identifying issues and impacts on our park/trail assets in light of expected increased use.
- That the District confirm its position on bikes of various types on trails.
- That the District confirm its position on commercial dog walking within District property (such as the Buffer Land), including a licensing program with fees and identification requirements.

- That additional impacts from population growth on Metchosin's borders be monitored and specific issues identified for planning and action, as possible.

3.3 District Resources

The District's ability to fund operations or new projects will always face the realities of limited resources and District-wide "wants" and "needs." Metchosin does not have a dedicated parks department or staff members; this is unlikely to change in the near future.

PTASC has traditionally been provided with minor budget amounts ($5,000 to $10,000) for maintenance of the network. The long-standing arrangement in terms of division of labour is that:

- Public Works staff will undertake maintenance work on roadside trails.
- PTASC members will undertake maintenance work within District Parks, assisted by public works as required

Some flexibility in this arrangement is possible based on discussion with the District's Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and Public Works staff.

An amount of $20,000 for "Parks and Trails Minor Capital" improvements is typically allocated in District budgets. Drawing on this amount for specific projects often requires planning and coordination from PTASC and District staff.

Recommendations:

- That PTASC develop an annual parks and trails maintenance plan and share this with the CAO and Public Works staff to confirm roles and responsibilities.
- That the District further clarify the role of volunteers in undertaking parks/trails maintenance work.
- That budget allocations for parks and trails continue to be monitored and based on evolving needs, including the addition of new parks/trails (i.e. the Buffer Land).

3.4 Impacts from New Technology

Metchosin's parks and trails are seeing a range of new technology at play:

- Electric bikes are making cycling more accessible, particularly over larger distances and steeper slopes. Electric bikes have been observed on some of the most vertically challenging natural trails in the area (District and CRD trails).

- Those using mobility assisted devices, particularly scooters and wheelchairs, are benefitting from advances in battery technology which is resulting in these devices having greater range and more ability on challenging terrain.
- New fabric technology is allowing greater access to beach areas (see section 6.0 re. mobi-matts).
- IT applications ('apps') pose both opportunities and challenges, as certain apps allow for:
    - Identification of plants (including unique invasive species), such as through iNaturalist.
    - Locating trails, such as through "All Trails."
    - Locating overnight camping spots ("pass-though camping"), even in places where camping isn't permitted. Overnight camping has been observed in the parking lot of Blinkhorn Nature Park and near the entry to the Top of La Bonne Trail.
- Signs can now convey much more information through the use of QR codes, which allow for swift/easy access to on-line information.

The impacts (positive and negative) of these technologies have yet to be fully understood. The following recommendations are intended to enhance opportunities and limit risks.

DRAFT Recommendations

- That advances around mobility devices be considered by PTASC and the District when planning new roadside trails or nature trails that could have enhanced accessibility.
- That unauthorized trail development be monitored and that efforts be taken to close off these trails.
- That a pilot project be undertaken to use QR codes on signs where additional information will help with conservation efforts (i.e. invasive management, or awareness of sensitive ecosystems).
- That the District (supported by PTASC) recognize when IT apps are encouraging pass-through camping in unauthorized locations. When this is identified contact with the App provider may be in order or increased signage, patrolling.

3.5 Biking

PTASC has heard concerns about the impact of bikes on certain trails, particularly on the trails originating on steep slopes in the La Bonne / Liberty Road area, which access Matheson Lake Regional Park. These trails can be steep and narrow, and so lend themselves to mountain biking. In such cases, the risk of erosion and significant wear on trails exists. There is also the risk of collisions between down-bound mountain bikers and pedestrians or equestrian users (or other bikers).

Biking has also been noted on trails such as Hillman, Top of La Bonne, 100 Acre Wood and in the Gemini/Libra trails. While these trails can become muddy in the wet months, they are less steep and less likely to see significant damage from biking. It's likely that the limited use these trails see from bikes are those commuting from point to point, as opposed to actively mountain biking as recreation. Biking also occurs on certain roadside trails. In these cases, this use is encouraged, particularly in light of the District's recent work on an Active Transportation Network plan.

In seeking a balance between avoiding trail damage and allowing residents a safe space for transit, it's likely that safe transit can occur on certain trails without significant damage.

Within CRD parks, biking is allowed only on specifically designated trails. The CRD's website states: "Cyclists are welcome in regional parks on trails specifically designated for cycling…" These include Hartland, Mt Work and Harborview parks. However, there is no biking allowed off the GGRT into Matheson Lake Regional Park.

<u>Recommendations:</u>

- That the District permit biking on trails that serve primarily as a commuter route and where damage from bikes is unlikely or minor. Examples of such trails include the Hillman Trail, and all roadside trails such as along Pears Road, Rocky Point Road, Kangaroo Road. , Duke Road, and Annie Jackson Place. Consideration should be taken of the trail and cleared area width to allow pedestrian and cyclists to pass safely, or signage to encourage safe use.
- That the District post "No Biking" signs on trails and parks that are likely to see significant damage from mountain biking. Such trails may include: key trails in the La Bonne/Liberty area, Blinkhorn Nature Park, Buckbrush Swamp, 100 Acre Wood, etc..
- That the District take immediate action to close off new trails that have been created by Mountain Bikers or other users.

3.6 Volunteer Base

Perhaps in no other jurisdiction in the Greater Victoria region do volunteers play such an important role as in Metchosin. In addition to monitoring, maintaining and (sometimes) building Metchosin trails and parks, volunteers play vital roles in community events, local organizations and maintaining District assets, such as the School, Community House and Pioneer Museum.

PTASC has recommended the creation of a Trail Stewards program to expand the number of people who monitor Metchosin's parks and trails assets. At the time of developing this plan, the District was in the process of updating its approach to volunteers and confirming how it manages risks relating to various volunteer roles.

Reflecting a key element of Metchosin's overall demographics, many of our long-serving volunteers are getting older and are reducing the type of activities and duration they can be involved in. Continuous recruitment of new volunteers is essential.

Volunteer activities undertaken in natural/wildland areas comes with some risks, including the potential of danger trees, trips/falls, insect bites (ticks/wasps) and wildlife encounters. It's important that the District continue to assess its approach to risk reduction and risk management. Similarly, the District should review how it engages volunteers with the goal of defining a clear, easy and efficient process for registering and documenting volunteer efforts.

DRAFT Recommendations:

- That the District clarify its approach to volunteer work on District-owned lands, particularly around park/trail monitoring, maintenance and invasive species removal.
- That the District assess the cost of purchasing broader insurance coverage for volunteers.
- That the District encourage and support volunteers where appropriate, potentially through retaining a part-time volunteer coordinator.

3.7 Invasive Plants

Invasive plant species represent a significant threat to Metchosin's biodiversity values, whether on public or private lands. Metchosin residents have acted, individually and collectively, to remove species such as Scotch Broom, English Holly, Daphne, Canada Thistle, Tansy Ragwort and others. These efforts have seen considerable success, but the work to manage invasive species in our parks requires a long-term commitment and

attention, particularly to emerging threats. For example, Shiny Geranium was detected as a new species on southern Vancouver Island in 2020. Today, that species is considered widespread.

In terms of action on invasive species, volunteer resources are pivotal.

Recommendations:

- That the District clarify its approach to volunteer work on District-owned lands, particularly around park/trail monitoring, maintenance and invasive species removal.
- That a round-table session be held twice annually with organizations and individuals involved in invasive management, as well as representatives from the Capital Region Invasive Species Partnership (CRISP). The goal would be for groups to share information on priorities, best-practices and coordinate an overall approach, where possible.
- That PTASC consider invasive species management in the annual parks and trails maintenance plans that the committee develops.
- That the District develop a QR code pilot project to help convey the importance of invasive management within our parks and trails. This may be done for trails where certain species (such as Shiny Geranium) are known to be a problem.

3.8 Easements/Covenants, Statutory Rights of Way and Road Allowances

Statutory Rights of Way, Road Allowances and Easements are important elements of several Metchosin trails and park areas, including lands that may become District-owned parkland in the future. This section is intended to describe the specific nature of each land title element and identify key considerations, including:

- Landowner privacy and rights
- Public right of entry
- Environmental concerns
- Future use

Easement/Covenant

An easement is a legal right that allows for the use another's property for a specific purpose, including trail access. Easements are attached to the title of the land (often referred to as an "Instrument on Title") and are binding on current and future owners of

the property. Easements are often referred to as covenants. A “Section 219 Covenant” refers to section 219 of the *British Columbia Land Title Act*. This section of the Act permits a body of the Crown, including a municipal government like the District of Metchosin, to define uses for a private property. Often these are done as conditions of a re-zoning or subdivision application.

Easements often come with specific language around the long-term use of the Easement. For example, one easement agreement in Metchosin states the following:

> *“The Grantor [the property owner] hereby grants and conveys in perpetuity and at all times to the Municipality, its servants, employees, agents, contactors, invitees, licensees, administrators, successors, and assigns the full, free and unrestricted and uninterrupted right, licence, liberty, privilege, easement and right of way with respect to that portion of the Lands known as the Statutory Right of Way to…enter, go, return, pass, and repass without vehicles…”*

There are often specific restrictions on uses. For example (and as noted above), vehicle access can be forbidden, and survey information can be included to show the exact location of the easement area (as in, where walking is permitted).

Easements/Covenants are in place for the following trails:

- Ash Mountain Look-Out
- Sea Bluff Trail
- Top of La Bonne Trail
- Montreul Hill

Considerations regarding parks and trails:

- Trail access points covered by easements across privately owned land; as such, landowner respect is crucial in terms of privacy, and minimizing noise, trash, etc..
- Any efforts to disrupt, discourage or block access to these areas should be reported to the District.
- The responsibility for maintaining easement areas will normally be the responsibility of the District, but this needs to be confirmed in the specific wording of the covenant document.
- Easements may be considered in connection with donations of land.

<u>Statutory Rights of Way</u>

Statutory rights of way (SRW) are those rights that a municipal or industrial user has over certain lands. For example, municipalities often have statutory rights of way (usually along roadways) for water or sewer uses. Utility companies, like BC Hydro and Fortis, have rights of way over lands for their hydro and gas lines. Unlike an easement, which typically exists between property owners, a statutory right of way doesn't typically involve questions of land ownership.

That said, the term "statutory right of way" can be used in other forms, including easement and covenant documents.

Considerations in terms of parks and trails:

- Several roadside trails are located in areas with SRWs, including Rocky Point, Duke Road East, Kangaroo.
- The District's requirement to consider hydro and or gas lines in their planning.
- The District has cost responsibility if there are uses that will disrupt utility infrastructure.

Road Allowances

Road allowances are strips of land owned by the District and which are intended as potential roadways. These were often established during initial surveys, often for residential subdivisions. During the subdivision process, certain strips of land for trails may also be designated as road allowances, even if there is no intention for a future road. Blaney Trail and the road allowance at the end of Winfall are examples.

A current example is the connector trail to the Galloping Goose Regional Trail (GGRT) from the Beckingham subdivision, which will be turned over to the District by the property owner and designated as a 6 metre road allowance. This will then be owned and maintained by the District.

The 100-acre Section 95, which is part of the 2017 Land Swap, has two road allowance connectors off of Neild Road and Wild Cherry Drive. As Section 95 is expected to come to the District as parkland (see section 5.3.2) following the conclusion of the Sc'ianew Nation's treaty process, the District should consider how to best manage these areas and ensure adequate notification and consultation with adjacent neighbours.

Recommendations

- That the District consider the road allowances on Neild Road and Wild Cherry Drive in terms of future planning for Section 95 as parkland.
- That PTASC develop an annual trail maintenance plan, that is inclusive of Easements / Covenants, SRWs and Road Allowances.
- That the road allowance at the west end of Winfall Road not be considered as a connector trail to the GGRT, due to environmental and constructability issues.
- That the District promptly address issues where there are access disruptions to trails covered by easements / covenants or SRWs.

3.9 Land Donations for Donation Receipts (Municipal)

Local governments can offer donation receipts to private landowners as compensation for land donations. The donation receipt mechanism provides local governments, like the District of Metchosin, with the ability to acquire land other than through outright 'cash' purchase.

To qualify, the land in question (whether a whole or a portion of a parcel) must contribute to a demonstrable public interest or community benefit. Examples where a land donation could serve public interest or community benefit include space for a:

- playground
- roadside trail
- municipal facility
- public amenities (parking lot, bathroom facilities, space for emergency management service)

The value of the donation receipt provided is typically calculated based on the assessed value of the land. In the simplest terms, if a landowner donated 10% of their land to allow for a roadside trail, that landowner would be offered a donation receipt valued at 10% of the property's assessed value.

There would likely be additional costs to the District for such arrangements, including legal and surveying costs.

The donation receipt mechanism is distinct from federal and provincial programs. The federal governments Ecological Gifts Program focuses on lands that have ecological sensitivity and normally involves third party organizations who become responsible for

managing the donated land parcels. The BC Parks Land Acquisition Program focuses on land donations that can be included in parks, protected areas, wildlife management areas or other conservation areas

DRAFT Recommendations:

- That PTASC identify and assess opportunities where land donations may enable high value parks and trails opportunities.
- That a priority be placed on trails opportunities that enable safe passage, particularly along well-travelled roadways.
- On identifying such opportunities, that PTASC engage the District to assess the opportunity and develop a plan for dialogue with the relevant landowners.

Section 4 – Metchosin Trails



Lusse Trail

4.0 Overview

The District of Metchosin and its volunteers manage a network of 51 trails, which include over 20 kms of walkable area. These community trails provide opportunities for physical activity, active transportation opportunities, connection with the natural environment and social interaction. Our unique trails are a vital part of Metchosin's rural character.

Metchosin's trails are located on both public (District-owned) land and private property, where access is often granted from easements/covenants.

'Connectivity' is an important planning consideration in the development of Metchosin's trail network, with a number of our trails connecting in ways that allow walkers to move through the community via unique, natural pathways.

The purpose of this section is to:

- Provide a broad overview of Metchosin's trail assets, including the types of trails that exist in Metchosin.
- Outline the key management principles and considerations, including trail design standards.
- Recommend future actions for the protection, care and maintenance of Metchosin's trails.
- Identify opportunities for further extending our trails network.

4.1 Management Principles

With the abundance of assets already in Metchosin, the onus in terms of future planning is on the maintenance and enhancement of the existing trail network. However growth opportunities will continue to be pursued, particularly when these are part of future subdivisions or through resident donations.

The following management principles guide the management of Metchosin's trails:

The principles guiding management activities on Metchosin's trails are

- High prioritization of the maintenance of Metchosin's nature trails and the experience these provide of our natural environment.
- Supporting active transportation options, in particular roadside trails will be managed and maintained to allow for bike use and (where possible) mobility assisted devices.

- Pursuing opportunities to provide improved accessibility to those with mobility limitations, where such opportunities are likely to see high use and can be achieved with minimal environmental impact.
- Promptly addressing threats to the local environment or biodiversity, such as invasives or damage through human use.
- That high value trail opportunities are pursued, particularly as these opportunities come as a result of subdivisions (see section 4.7.7.).
- Encourage and enable volunteer support for appropriate levels of the District's trail maintenance.
- Amenities (such as bathrooms, parking, benches, signage) will continue to be limited, except in cases where amenities such as benches have been identified as aids to accessibility.

4.2 Roles and Responsibilities

The following outlines the roles that key participants play in maintaining Metchosin's parks and trail network.

District Council

- Approve and affirm broad planning principles (including this Master Plan)
- Approve annual budgets.
- Approve budgets for special projects.
- One member serves as the liaison to PTASC.

District Chief Administrative Officer

- Authorizes and directs work on the parks and trails network, including who undertakes the work and when.
- Authorizes volunteer action by groups or others, including inmates at William Head Institution.
- Advises Council of issues or the need for action on priority areas.

Public Works Staff

- Public Works staff play an important role in trails maintenance, particularly the maintenance of roadside trails or significant work required within parks.

Parks and Trails Advisory Select Committee (PTASC)

- Makes recommendations to Council on parks and trails matters.
- Identifies priority work on parks and trails; brings matters to the attention of the CAO.
- Provides volunteer assistance in maintaining parks and trails. PTASC has traditionally turned to the District's Public Works team for maintenance work on roadside trails, but undertakes maintenance work on trails within parks.
- While PTASC has previously undertaken work to construct roadside trails (Pears, Kanagroo), matters like insurance and road safety make this unlikely in the future.

District Trails Coordinator

- Key contact for public concerns regarding parks and trails.
- Advises the CAO and PTASC about trail development and maintenance issues.
- Organizes efforts to address issues in coordination with the CAO.
- Organizes efforts related to PTASC's annual maintenance plan.

4.3 Metchosin's Trail Network – Trail Types

This section identifies the broader categories of our trails. The goal here is provide some categorization for the purposes of planning and additional reference in this plan

Park-based trails

With one exception, trails are found in all of Metchosin's parks, including Blinkhorn, Buckbrush, Eleanor Mann and Metchosin Wilderness Park. The exception is the Carlton Kosh Nature Park.

Connector Trails

These trails are routes that connect other trails, roads, neighbourhoods. They are often narrower or steeper than roadside trails and are not always suitable for all types of users.

These are the most common types of trails within Metchosin and include the following trails (to name just a few): Branson-Duke, Graceland to Gilbert, Hillman, Lusse Way, Gemini, Ed's Lane, Farhill-Latoria Creek Bridge.

Destination/Viewpoint Trails

These are trails that are either notable or take visitors to specific community viewpoints. Examples of these trails include Blaney Trail, Deer Park Lookout, Mount Ash Lookout, Montreul Heights, and Sea Bluff.

Roadside Trails

Roadside trails, as their name suggests, travel parallel to roadways. Preferably, these are physically separated from the roadway, but may be directly adjacent in constrained locations. Roadside trails are to be located within the road right-of-way, permitting long, continuous routes. They are intended for direct, long distance travel by pedestrian, bicycle and equestrian users. In terms of maintenance, the District's Public Works crew will normally be assigned to complete needed work.

Metchosin has a number of roadside trails, including those on Duke Rd, Kangaroo Rd, Pears Rd, and Rocky Point Rd.

Village Trails

These trails are highlighted due to their concentration in the Village area, and the role that these paths play in assisting in safe passage to community destinations. These trails include the Municipal Field trail, the Madill Trail, the Happy Valley Road Trail, and the William Head Rd trail. Of note, is the passage between the historic St. Mary's Church on Metchosin Road, through the cemetery to the School field.

4.4 Equestrian Use

There's a long history of equestrian use and stewardship of Metchosin's parks and trails network. Since its inception, PTASC has had significant membership involvement by equestrians. Metchosin Equestrian Society (MES) members have been involved with building and maintaining trails. Some of the trails developed due to equestrian initiative include those in the Metchosin Wilderness Park, Wayne's Rock Trail and Hillman Trail. There are currently no restrictions on horses being allowed on either natural or surfaced District trails. A continuation of this approach is recommended. Riders should continue to exercise good judgement in terms of which trails are accessed and at what time of year. Other trail users should use common sense around horses and yield to riders.

4.5 Maintenance and Enhancement

The following is a list of priority maintenance and enhancement recommendations, in keeping with the principles outlined in section 4.1. Many of these actions pertain to the broader trails (and parks) network, while others will refer to specific assets.

4.5.1 PTASC Annual Maintenance Plan

Annually, PTASC will develop a parks and trail maintenance plan for review and discussion with the District's CAO. The plan may include work on roadside trails; however, that work is normally undertaken by the District's public works team. The plan should consider the following:

- Damage that should be addressed on a priority basis. Issues may include flooding (leading to 'trail braiding'), downed trees, erosion, or unauthorized trails.
- Vegetation overgrowth. Certain trails may become impassable due to overgrowth, particularly Himalayan blackberries.
- Invasives. The plan may highlight areas where invasive removal is important for protecting biodiversity elements.
- Biodiversity enhancement. In addition to invasive removal, actions could include planting of native species or trees; riparian protection; signage to inform visitors of sensitive areas.

Time and resources are important elements to consider in developing the plan. In terms of PTASC, volunteer time may only allow for four to five work parties during the year. It's important to prioritize and focus on achievable goals.

4.5.2 Trail Stewards Program

A Trail Stewards Program (TSP) previously existed in Metchosin, and it's recommended that this program be reintroduced. The TSP would involve residents volunteering to be the 'eyes and ears' of a set trail or group of trails. Their main function would be to advise the District and the Trail Coordinator on needed work (invasives, fallen trees, etc..) or situations that need attention (unauthorized trails). Decisions around the work required (and who does this) would be made by the District's Chief Administrative Officer.

The TSP will require the District to confirm its approach to engaging volunteers. (see section 3.6)

4.5.3 Manage invasives

Invasive plants are a serious issue throughout BC, but particularly in Metchosin where there is an abundance of natural spaces. The District should continue to encourage volunteer action on invasive removal. PTASC should consider invasive removal and management in its annual parks/trails maintenance plan.

4.5.4 Accessibility

It's recommended that the District enhance trail accessibility with the following actions:

- A park bench on the south-side of Happy Valley Rd in the Village area.
- Re-installation of a park bench on Hillman trail.
- A park bench in Metchosin Wilderness Park.
- Locations on other trails as indicated in public input.

The Active Transportation Plan notes resident interest in further work on Hillman Trail to make this an 'all-weather' trail. It's recommended that monitoring be done to identify specific areas where gravelling or other work can minimize flooded spots.

4.5.5 Pedestrian safety – Village Trails

It's recommended that the following actions be taken to improve pedestrian safety in the Village area:

- A No Parking zone be developed on the upper portion of the William Head Rd trail. Consideration may be given to permanent barriers.
- A No Parking zone be created on the south side Happy Valley Road, immediately after Rocky Point Rd.

4.5.6 Biking and Mechanized Devices

As noted in section 3.5., roadside trails can serve as a safe space for cycling. However, there are a number of trails where biking has the potential to cause serious erosion and damage to trails, particularly in the case of mountain biking~~)~~. Electric bikes are included here to cover the potential of new (likely electric) technology that enables recreational access to steep slopes.

The following is recommended:

- Bike use be allowed on all roadside trails.
- Motorcycles and ATVs banned on all trails.
- Biking or the use of mechanized/electric devices NOT be allowed on trails where erosion and other damage is likely. Policy may need further consideration depending

on future pressure on local trails? “No Biking” signs should to be placed on the following trails:

- At the access points of all parks
- Branson-Duke Trail
- Gemini Trail
- Libra Trail
- Lisandra Trail
- Horse Trail
- Matheson Lake Trail
- Wayne’s Rock Trail
- Bob Mountain Trail
- Montreuil Hill Trail
- Top of La Bonne Trail
- La Bonne Connector Trail
- Lusse Way Trail

4.5.7 Sea Bluff Trail

Sea Bluff is a key destination trail in Metchosin, offering spectacular views of the ocean below and the opportunity to see active farming. There is also a large stand of native Alaska Onion Grass near the William Head lookout point. While a section of the trail is within a District road allowance (off Wootton Rd), the other three sides of the trail are wholly within private land. In 1988, Geoffrey and Jacqueline Mitchell granted this easement for the public trail “Sea Bluff Trail” around the edges of the land parcel. Current landowners maintain this agreement. This area is actively farmed and there are often sheep grazing on this land.

In granting the Right of Way, the original landowner stipulated several conditions: that gates be maintained at Wootton Road and Parry X Roads; that no motorcycles or motor propelled vehicles are permitted on the Right of Way; that dogs are not permitted on the trail unless on a leash.

The following additional recommendations are made with the goal of assuring continued quality use of the trail:

- District staff will consult with the property owners regarding any future maintenance work on the trail, including invasive removal.
- No further memorial benches or monuments will be considered for Sea Bluff, unless these are first proposed by the landowners.

4.6 Trail Standards

Two main standards are recommended for trail development, and subsequent maintenance. Illustrations of and additional details on the standards are found in Appendix x.x. <<forthcoming>>

Natural Trail Standard

The goal of these types of trails is to minimize the impact on the surrounding environment. The trail width is to be 1.0 meters with a cleared zone of 2.0 meters wide and 3.5 meters in height. The trail base structure only requires compacted native soil. The right-of-way is to be a minimum of 4.0 meters. The trail grade is not to be limited, but information about the degree of difficulty or specific information about the trail terrain may be placed at the trail head. It is desirable to provide natural barriers that separate the trail user and any adjacent landowners, where privacy may be an issue. Native plant life is most appropriate for barriers.

Surfaced Standard

Surfaced trails are those that are specifically constructed and have a gravel/aggregate surface. These are the multi-use trails that are intended for situations where use is likely to be high and will involve a range of activities (walking, cycling, equestrian).

This type of trail requires careful planning and development, as well as requiring yearly review and regular maintenance. The trail width is to be 2.0 meters with a cleared zone of 3.0 meters wide and 3.5 meters in height. The base structure requires an equivalent of 50mm of 10mm crushed rock (screenings), 75mm of 25mm crushed base course (CBC), and 100mm of 75mm selected granular sub-base (SGSB). The right-of-way is to be an average of 6 meters with a minimum of 4 meters. The maximum trail grade is to be within 10% for sustained distances and may be 15% for distances less than 100 meters. It is desirable to provide barriers that separate the trail user and adjacent landowners where privacy may be a concern. Signage or natural (native plant life) barriers are recommended.

4.7 Growth Opportunities for our Trails Network

In terms of expanding the trails network, the emphasis should be on opportunities that are of ‘high value’ (per the criteria listed below) and/or of community significance.

This section identifies several high value opportunities and establishes criteria for assessing those opportunities. This section also reviews the efforts that were undertaken on trail development following completion of the 2009 Trail Network Master

Plan. During the public engagement process a number of ‘desired’ trails were also identified for potential development. Areas where new trails are not recommended for development are also identified.

4.7.1 Criteria for new trails

New trail development opportunities should be assessed with the following:

- **Prioritization**. The potential trail is included in the Parks and Trails Masterplan.
- **Community interest**. The community has shown support for the development.
- **Neighbourhood consultation**. Neighbours have been informed and their input has been considered in trail planning.
- **Connectivity**. The potential trail connects to an existing asset like the Galloping Goose Regional Trail (GGRT) or a local park or a community facility, such as a school or arts centre, or adjacent neighbourhoods.
- **Safety**. Where development of a trail, particularly a roadside trail, supports greater pedestrian safety or enhances active transportation efforts.
- **Constructability**. The trail has the potential to be built economically and with minimal land disruption.
- **Suitable Trail Type**. The trail type (Natural, Surfaced) is conducive to the location, environment and potential uses.
- **Minimizing environmental impacts**. Includes (where possible) avoiding tree removal, avoidance of sensitive areas or inclusion of steps to protect sensitive areas, avoidance of effects like flooding or slope erosion. Overall, the trail opportunity supports the District’s commitment to environmental protection by using as small a footprint as possible.
- **Land Tenure**. The land involved in the project is either under the District’s jurisdiction or neighbours will consider a donation or access arrangement (see section 3.8)
- **View point**. Trail provides access to a viewpoint or other point of interest.

Actions in planning new trails should also include:

- On-site visits during different seasons and conditions when possible.
- Assessing flora, fauna, gradients, environmentally sensitive areas, etc..
- Assessing safety hazards and safety issues.

- Considering historical uses, e.g. ‘desire lines,’ existing uses, presence of old trails, and skid roads.
- Determining suitability of use types: walking only, multi-purpose (including cycling)
- Determining trail type and connectivity: destination, loop, connector.
- Determining constructability requirements and on-going maintenance.
- Assessing impact on current and future residences.
- Reviewing parking needs.
- As needed, reviewing alternatives. If substitution is requested, consider relocation only when a trail of equivalent type and value is offered.
- Assessing regulatory considerations, particularly the provincial Streamside Protection and Enhancement Act if any trails are within 30 metres of a water course.

Other considerations are presented in Appendix X.X. <<forthcoming>>

These criteria should be regularly reviewed during the development process of specific opportunities.

4.7.2 High Priority Trail Development Opportunities

The following table lists opportunities that were identified as priorities by PTASC and through the public engagement.

Location	Description
Hans Helgesen School via Tavane Rd Or Hans Helgesen School via Rocky Point Rd (east side) from Lombard Dr	Tavane Rd has connectivity to the GGRT and may provide a eastern access point to the school grounds, pending discussion with neighbours. The east side of Rocky Point Rd may also hold potential for a roadside trail, based on discussions with neighbours. The 40 to 60 metre segment before the School has the potential to be a nature trail that can provide safe passage, while still being near the roadway. Opportunities to develop a roadside trail on the west side of Rocky Point have been assessed and found challenging from a constructability standpoint.
Top of Mount Blinkhorn from Blinkhorn Nature Park	The summit is an important viewpoint. District currently owns a strip of land near the summit. This would require negotiations with the property owners.

Mount Metchosin	This area is privately owned and is part of the Olympic View Golf Course property. While there is an existing informal trail network in the area, this property also has the potential for future residential development. This larger parcel is notable as it covers both Colwood and Langford in addition to Metchosin. Development proposals have been approved in both Colwood and Langford.
Duke Road East	Work is continuing on assessing options to improve pedestrian safety on this roadway. Options include the potential of a roadside trail on the lower portion of Duke Road. In October 2025, the driving lanes were repainted from Albert Head Road to Metchosin Road to create a wider shoulder on the east side of the road. The wider shoulder will allow for more space for pedestrians and cyclists.
Duke Road West	Several local residents have indicated there would be value in developing a roadside trail from Metchosin Road down to the lower portion of Duke Road, ideally connecting with the existing roadside trail that connects to Duke Road East.
Rocky Point Road	There has been interest in a roadside trail on the westside of Rocky Point Road between Arden Road and Windover Terrace. This may be explored in connection with any future trails to Hans Helgesen. This is identified as a project of interest in the Active Transportation Plan

4.7.3 Additional Opportunities for Trail Development

The following are other opportunities that may be considered in terms of trail development. Several of these opportunities are identified in the District's Active Transportation Network Master Plan (ATNP).

Location	Description
Village Centre Improvements	Focused improvements in the Village Centre were identified in the ATNP • a roadside trail on the north side of Happy Valley Road between the Schoolhouse Museum and Metchosin Road; • spot improvements and widening of the trail on the south side;

	• safety improvements at the Happy Valley Road / Metchosin Road intersection; • new safe crossing opportunities at the Happy Valley Road / Rocky Point Road intersection.
Metchosin Road	Roadside improvements here are noted in the ATNP: • including the East side of the Metchosin Road between Colwood and Duke Road, including the potential of a crossing at Metchosin Road at Duke Road / Pelican Drive; • the east side of Metchosin Road between Duke Road and Pears Road; • the east side of Metchosin Road between Pears Road and Happy Valley Road.
Helgesen Trail (Lombard Road) Extension	An extension of the existing Lombard Trail to Rocky Point Road. (ATNP)
Kangaroo Road	Roadside trail on the north side of Kangaroo Road between Morland Road and Rocky Point Road, with spot improvements to existing trail sections further west on Kangaroo Road. (ATNP)
Happy Valley Roadside Trail to the Village core from the GGRT at Lindholm Road.	This was suggested at the April 2025 open house. This was included in the 2009 plan and was subsequently reviewed by PTASC and found to be unfeasible at that time. Depending on other priorities, this route may merit a further assessment.

4.7.4 Trail Development during Subdivision Planning

Future subdivision projects are likely to be the primary means by which Metchosin gains new trails or parks. Subdivision applications are referred to PTASC to review the potential of new parks and trails. The District's parks and trails network has grown significantly as a result of dedications from previous subdivision projects, including those in the LaBonne Road, Albert Head, and Beckingham areas.

A key recommendation in this plan is that trails which are identified as amenities by the District and subdivision developers are constructed and made useable / accessible during the subdivision development process, thus entering the District's parks inventory as an active trail. If this work does not occur **prior to final approval** there is a greater risk that trail (and park) space never gets developed as intended.

Regarding subdivisions, PTASC should assess opportunities using the criteria noted above in section 5.5.

While subdivision amenities will likely serve nearby residents, these should be accepted for the benefit of the entire community.

4.7.5 Partnership opportunities

There are several trail development opportunities that the District should consider pursuing in partnership with the CRD and the City of Colwood, as these are likely too costly for Metchosin to pursue on its own. These are typically opportunities that:

- Have the potential of expanding Metchosin's trails network.
- Would enhance cross-jurisdictional active transportation opportunities.
- Have the potential to enhance safety for both cyclists, pedestrians and motorists.
- Have regional applicability (i.e. many of the cyclists that use Metchosin roads live elsewhere).

Location	Description
Metchosin Rd – Cycling Lanes	Metchosin Rd is a popular cycling route. The shoulder in each direction is under-sized. A partnership with the CRD and Colwood on enhancing the shoulders here would provide a region-wide amenity for the cyclists (many of whom do not live in Metchosin. Interest in roadside improvememts here noted as a priority in the Active Transportation Network Plan (ATNP).
Happy Valley Rd – Cycling Lanes	The 2009 Trails plan identified a continuous roadside trail on Happy Valley, noting the significance of Happy Valley Rd as a key cycling route in the CRD's identified regional network of the time. Opportunities may be considered here for partnerships with the CRD and Langford to further enhance the roadside shoulders here.
Parking lot on Metchosin Road – Colwood side	There has been discussion about the potential of a parking lot just after Farhill Rd (on the Colwood side). In tandem with a wider shoulder on Metchosin Road and pedestrian safety improvements on Duke Road East, a parking lot could help reduce traffic on Metchosin roads and better enable residents to access public transit.
Albert Head Lagoon Park	The route to this CRD park is through Metchosin. Parking is noted as constrained in the park entry. Additional active transportation support (bike lanes, walking shoulders) or the

	development of a parking lot on Metchosin Rd would help alleviate some of this congestion.

The crossing of Duke Rd & Pelican Rd at Metchosin Rd noted as dangerous for both trail/recreational pedestrians, particularly school-age children waiting for busses. A partnership opportunity may exists between Colwood and Metchosin.

Partnership opportunities may also exist with the City of Langford in terms of the Buffer Land, but further planning by the District is required before these opportunities are better known.

4.7.6. Review of Projects in 2009 Trails Master Plan

The 2009 Trail Network Master Plan identified a list of 12 priority areas for the development of roadside trails. Following approval of the 2009 plan, PTASC began work on evaluating and executing these projects, where they proved viable based on the situations and realities of the time. Of the projects, seven were completed or are partially complete.

Many of the projects were determined to be “not feasible.” Based on discussions with past and current PTASC members the lack of feasibility was determined based on an assessment of costs, constructability, land ownership/tenure issues, and other factors.

The following outlines the work and evaluations that PTASC conducted on the 2009 priority list.

Main trail area	Section evaluated
Duke Rd	Duke Road East roadside trail or pedestrian safety improvements - currently under discussion.
Park Dr	To be further assessed. There is the potential for a trail to connect connect pedestrians from Albert Head Lagoon (CRD) with the Beach to Mountain trail (Colwood Planned), this could include/extend the existing Upper Park Drive trail.
Kangaroo Rd	Rocky Point Rd to Eales Rd – Completed Eales Rd to Lindholm Rd – Evaluated; likely not feasible Lindholm to Sooke Road – Evaluated; likely not feasible
Rocky Point Rd	Winfall Rd to Kangaroo Rd – Completed

	Kangaroo Rd to Matheson Lake Rd - Evaluated; likely not feasible
Happy Valley Rd	Metchosin Rd to Rocky Point Rd - Completed Rocky Point Rd to Lindholm Rd - Evaluated; likely not feasible Lindholm Rd to the District's north boundary - Evaluated; likely not feasible
Metchosin Rd	Happy Valley Rd to Witty Beach Rd – Completed to Wootton Rd Witty Beach to District's north boundary – Completed from Duke Rd to Chapel Heights. The under-utilized trail was built between Colwood-Metchosin border & Chapel Heights and needs cleanup to re-establish the other portion of this trial for safe passage.
William Head Rd	Happy Valley Rd to Swanwick Rd – Completed to Parry Rd Swanwick Rd to Boblaw Plc – Evaluated; likely not feasible Boblaw Place to Sandgate Rd – Evaluated; likely not feasible
Lindholm Rd	Happy Valley Rd to Kangaroo along Lindholm Rd – Evaluated; likely not feasible.
Glen Forest Way / Pears Rd	Pears Rd – Completed Glen Forest Way – Evaluated; likely not feasible.
Arden Rd	Roadside trail on the length of Arden - Evaluated; likely not feasible.
Liberty Dr	Roadside trail on the length of Liberty – Evaluated; likely not feasible
Neild Rd	Roadside trail on the length of Neild – Evaluated; likely not feasible

Based on input received during the public engagement process for this plan, the District and PTASC may wish to re-evaluate the following roadside trail segments or projects:

- Arden Rd
- Happy Valley Rd (potentially with partnerships)
- Metchosin Rd (potentially with partnerships)

4.7.7. Additional Trails considered in the 2009 Plan

The following were also included in the 2009 plan. Many (but not all) of these projects are unlikely to be completed due to a range of circumstances, which are noted below in brackets.

- Connector trail up to and around Metchosin Mountain.
- Connector trail from Hillman Trail at Pears Road to the vicinity of Lomax.
- Brotherstone and Briarwood Roads and Latoria Creek Park in Colwood.
- Connector trail from Derrien Road to Saddleback Road / Sundance Drive;
- Connector trail from Boulderpath Road to the GGRT and to Leefield Road [a short RoW exists from Boulderpath into a privately-owned land parcel (Section 119), and would require agreement with that landowner to allow for such a trail]
- Connector trail from Beckingham Road to the Galloping Goose Regional Trail [Under construction as of 2025, as part of the Beckingham subdivision]
- Connector trail from the back of the municipal grounds to Rocky Point Road at Winfall Road [No public land or RoW exist to allow for such a trail].
- Connector trail between Kasani Place and Eleanor Mann Park [No public land or RoW exist to allow for such a trail].
- Connector trail from Kevere Road to Meridale Road [No public land or RoW exist to allow for such a trail].
- Connector trail between Windover Terrace and Arden Road [a short stretch of linear park exists off of Windover, but does not extend to Arden; a trail would require the cooperation of landowners]
- Connector trail between Malloch Road and Bob Mountain Trail [a short stretch of linear park exists off of Malloch, but further trail development would require the cooperation of landowners]
- Connector trail connecting Hans Helgesen School with the GGRT [See section 4.7.2]
- Connector trail from Boblaw Place to GGRT [would require cooperation with landowners]
- Connector trail between Pearson College Drive and the GGRT [connector trails exist on the Pearson College campus]
- Connector trail to the top of Montreux Hill [currently exists]

- Connector trail to the top of Mary Hill. [The Sc'ianew First Nation is currently in discussions with the federal government about transferring ownership of Mary Hill. Considerations of a public trail and access should be considered only after discussion with the Sc'ianew Nation.]

4.7.8. Trail Projects Not Recommended for Development

The following areas for trails have been considered and are not recommended for development.

Winfall Road, East Road Allowance

There has been past consideration of a connector trail to the GGRT using the Right of Way at the end of Winfall Rd. PTASC has previously assessed the potential of such an extension and has determined that this would require a significant construction effort given the slopes and terrain in the area. Nearby connections to the GGRT also exist off of Moreland Rd, Rocky Pt Rd, with another access point being constructed in the Beckingham subdivision area.

Saddleback and Hi-Mount Linear Parks

No trail development is recommended at this time in the three linear parks in this area. This is based on the following:

- Lack of neighbour support for trails. A broad group of neighbours have spoken out and presented written concern regarding trail development in 2008, 2015 and most recently in 2024.
- Council has not directed PTASC to consider trails in these parks.
- A group of neighbours has formed a stewardship group with the goal of protecting the environmental aspects of these areas.

It's recommended that District and PTASC maintain contact with this neighbour group and offer support for activities like invasive removal or dealing with any encroachment issues on these public lands. The status of these lands should be reevaluated should any significant changes occur to the current situation.

Trail from Graceland Park to Duke Road East

The park at the end of Graceland has been identified as an under-utilized park space (i.e. an orphan park; see section 5.6). There has been recent evaluation of a connector trail from Graceland, through this park space to Duke Road East. While there is a strip of vacant land adjoining the park area, this has been identified as a collectively owned

land strip done at the time of the subdivision. The exact nature of the ownership of this parcel – thus decision-making processes – is unclear. Unless a priority need is identified, trail development is not recommended here.

4.8 Summary of (DRAFT) Recommendations

4.8.1. Accessibility and Pedestrian Safety

- That accessibility opportunities be developed per section 3.1 and that benches be established on the trails noted in section 4.5.4.
- That the following actions be taken to improve pedestrian safety in the Village area:
    - A No Parking zone be developed on the upper portion of the William Head Rd trail. Consideration may be given to permanent barriers.
    - A No Parking zone be created on the south side Happy Valley Road, immediately after Rocky Point Rd.

4.8.2. Volunteers

- That PTASC develop an annual maintenance plan.
- That a Trail Stewards Program be developed.
- That the District confirm its approach to volunteers, finding ways of enabling resident involvement in key aspects of parks/trails maintenance and planning.

4.8.3 Equestrian Use

- There are currently no restrictions on horses being allowed on either natural or surfaced District trails. A continuation of this approach is recommended.

4.8.4 Biking

- Bike use continue to be allowed on all roadside trails.
- Biking or the use of mechanized/electric devices NOT be allowed on trails where erosion and other damage is likely. “No Biking” signs should to be placed on trails at high risk of damage, per section 3.5 and those trails noted in section 4.5.6.
- Motorcycles and ATVs be banned from all district parks and trails.

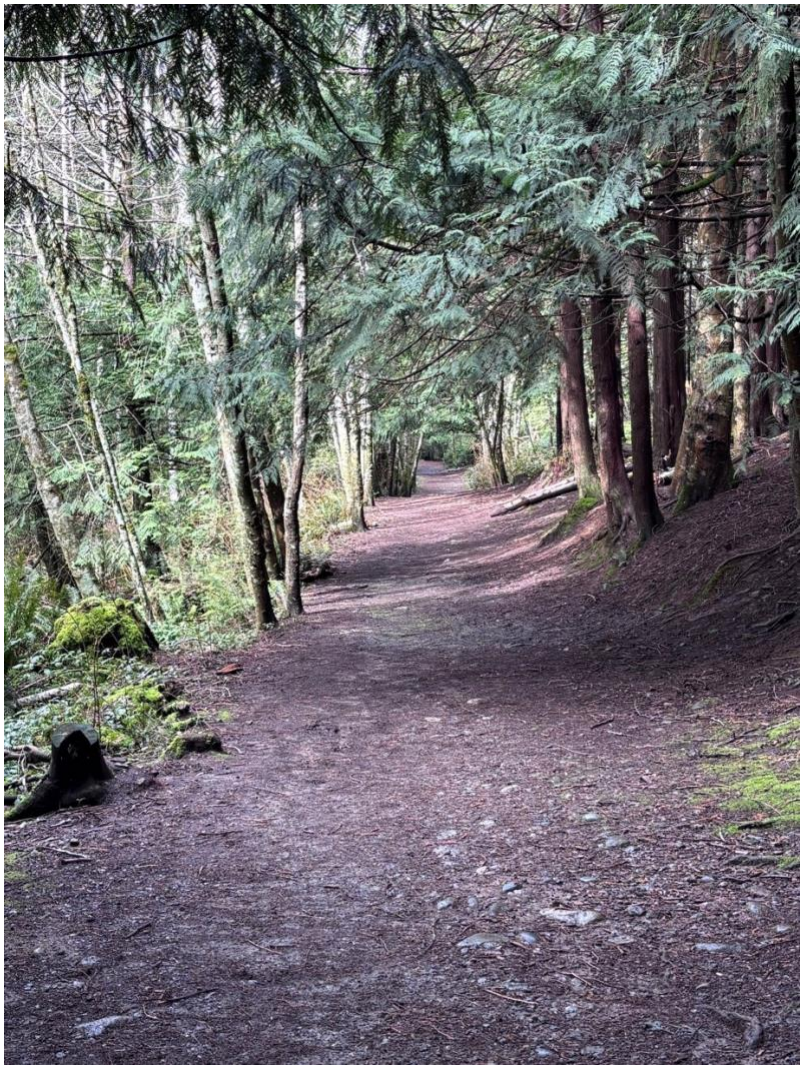
4.8.5 New Trails

- That new trail opportunities be assessed through the criteria outlined in section 4.7.1.
- That the specific opportunities identified in sections 4.7.2 and 4.7.3 be evaluated for future action.
- That trails proposed as part of residential subdivisionsbe constructed and made useable / accessible **during** the subdivision development process.
- That future partnership opportunities be explored as identified in section 4.7.5.

4.8.6 Invasive plant species

- That management of invasives be seen as a priority by District Council, staff and volunteers, as also noted in section 3.7.

Section 5 – Metchosin Parks



Blinkhorn Nature Park

5.0 Overview

The District of Metchosin owns or has active management of over 101 hectares (249 acres) of land, designated as “park”. Two additional parcels (the Buffer Land and section 95) with a combined area of 85 hectares (213 acres) are expected to be added to these assets in the future.

Our parks assets include large-scale parks like Blinkhorn Nature Park and Buckbrush Swamp, and smaller parcels such as the pocket parks in the Albert Head area.

The purpose of this section is to:

- Identify specific risks and issues, and strategies to mitigate these risks.
- Outline the key management principles and considerations.
- Identify opportunities for additions to our parkland assets.
- Recommend future actions for the protection, care and maintenance of Metchosin’s parks.

Parkland has special legal protection from the potential of sale (“disposal”) by local governments (see section 5.6). However, overall management decisions, including decisions about what type of “park” a land parcel should become, are largely left to the discretion of local governments.

5.1 Issues, opportunities, risks

Metchosin’s park network provides areas that allow for recreation uses, preserve natural landscapes, and serve to maintain the rural character of the community. The District, PTASC, and volunteers need to continuously assess vital matters in protecting our parkland, such as:

- Ensuring adequate funding for maintenance and desired development.
- Balancing conservation/protection with public access.
- Impacts of increased visitation from population growth in neighbouring communities.
- Addressing environmental risks such as inappropriate use, habitat loss, water quality and quantity, and the management of invasive species.

These issues are covered in detail below.

5.2 Management principles

The following management principles have been developed based on the District's limited resources, the history of Metchosin's parks and trails as natural spaces with limited amenities (i.e. parking, bathrooms, etc..), and an on-going interest in maintaining or enhancing environmental protection and biodiversity.

The principles guiding management activities within Metchosin's parks are:

- Maintaining the natural features of our parkland will be prioritized.
- Natural trails will be the primary means of accessing our parkland, with the exception of where appropriate opportunities exist to enhance accessibility for those with mobility impairments.
- Efforts to minimize threats to the local environment or biodiversity (such as invasives or erosion through human use) will be prioritized.
- Volunteer support for appropriate parks maintenance will be encouraged and enabled by the District (see section 3.6).

An annual parks and trails maintenance plan developed by PTASC is covered in section 4.5 and applies to this section.

5.3 Parkland Assets

Parks are provided by a municipality to meet local recreation and conservation needs with the intent of improving quality of life for residents and their families. In the context of this plan, a park is defined as a piece of land or water which has been specifically identified but not necessarily acquired or prepared yet for public use.

5.3.1 Current parks

The parks and public spaces on District land or maintained by the District are:

- **Blinkhorn Nature Park** (20 ha; 49 acres): This park at the geographic center of Metchosin was originally considered for a regional water reservoir. Designated as a parkland in 1998, it features a **1-km trail** around Blinkhorn Lake. The lake's outlet stream flows into Veitch Creek and ultimately into the Sooke Basin.

- **Buckbrush Swamp Park** (3.2 ha; 7.9 acres): A unique wetland area that provides important habitat for local wildlife. The park features diverse vegetation and serves as a natural floodplain, helping to regulate water levels and support biodiversity. It contains a natural trail loop, half of which is easily accessible and half less so.
- **Carlton Cosh Nature Park** (0.91ha; 2.24 acres): A small, forested park adjacent to Kangaroo Road, known for its mature trees, native plant species, and opportunities for birdwatching.
- **Eleanor Mann Park** (17 ha; 42 acres): A scenic park that provides green space for relaxation, walking and equestrian activities.
- **Metchosin Wilderness Park** (40ha; 100 acres): The largest park and natural space in the district known as the "100 Acre Wood" and formally referred to as "Section 25." This property is owned by the provincial government but operated by the District through a Licence of Occupation agreement.
- **Municipal Grounds and Village Area** (4450 Happy Valley Road): Includes a cricket pitch, covered spaces for farmers' market stalls, the Metchosin Pioneer Museum, and recreational dirt jump park for biking, and an equestrian facility.
    - The Municipal offices, Fire Hall and the Community House reside on portions of these lands.
    - The northeast portion of these lands contains a grass field, which is used for additional parking for large community events. This space is currently being considered as a location for a replacement for the existing Fire Hall.
    - The School Field (4475 Happy Valley Road), contains a large field that includes the District's tennis courts and a forthcoming community garden space. Adjacent to the field is the Old Metchosin Schoolhouse Museum.

5.3.2. Future Parkland Assets from the Land Swap

In 2017, the District completed an agreement with both the Sc'ianew First Nation and the City of Langford on a comprehensive land swap. That agreement immediately transferred one parcel, the 46 ha Buffer Land, to Metchosin, and upon completion of Sc'ianew's Treaty, three additional land parcels will transfer ownership to the District to serve as parkland:

- Section 95: 40 ha (100 acres), located adjacent to the Buffer Land.
- Section 28: 20 ha (50 acres), contains the Libra trails.
- Section 25: 40 ha (100 acres), known at 100 Acre Wood or Metchosin Wilderness Park.

All three of these parcels are Crown-owned lands, held by the province. Regarding sections 28 and 25, the District currently has a Licence of Occupation (LoC) with the provincial government to allow for use of these lands as trails. Section 95 is not covered by an LoC.

As noted above, increased visitation and use either is or is expected to be is a challenge for many of Metchosin's parks, particularly as residential development continues in Langford and Colwood (e.g. Centre Mountain, Royal Bay/Beach Lands). Unique approaches are likely required for parks that may see increased visitors due to their proximity to densely populated areas.

5.3.3. The Buffer Land

The Buffer Land (46 ha; 113.5 acre) is currently owned by the District, by way of a land sale (for nominal price) as part of the 2017 Land Swap. This is composed of a north lobe (zoned Commercial Recreation 2) and a south lobe (zoned Commercial Recreation 3). Together, the parcels have an area of 46 ha (113.5 acres). A large section of Metchosin Creek runs through the north lobe, before it enters the Bilston Creek system.

At the time this plan was being prepared, the District was considering rezoning this parcel from Commercial Recreation 2/3 to a new zoning designation that would create a designated park, with a conservation focus. This recommendation emerges from a community working group process that took place from April to October 2023. This process featured numerous public engagement opportunities.

The Buffer Land Working Group's (BLWG) October 2023 report came with the following recommendations and observations:

- That the District of Metchosin retain ownership, control and autonomy over the Buffer Land.
- Protection and enhancement of the area's ecological values is vital and managing access and limiting certain activities within the Buffer Land is central to achieving this goal.
- The Buffer Land is unique in that it is immediately adjacent to a future residential subdivision, located in another jurisdiction (City of Langford).
- This fact means that the Buffer Land potentially presents a considerable management challenge to the District of Metchosin.
- The "do nothing" option (maintain current zoning; minimal management) was assessed by the BLWG. This option was viewed as irresponsible, and also one that

increased risks in terms of District liability, ecological degradation, public safety, and negative impacts to nearby residents.

- The BLWG believes that if Metchosin is to remain as the owner of the Buffer Land it has a responsibility to care, protect and manage this land effectively.

Should the Buffer Land be rezoned to a park designation, the following actions are recommended:

- That an inventory/assessment of sensitive environmental areas be undertaken.
- That an access management plan be developed, with attention to the potential use and interest in the land from the Centre Mountain residential area.
- That a restoration plan be developed for areas that were previously logged and cleared. This may include plans for invasive removal, reforestation, riparian enhancement, including the possibility of an engineered wetland.
- Encouraging and fostering interest among community members in contributing to restoration and monitoring activities.
- That a new name for the Buffer Land be considered.

5.4.4 CRD Parks

There are five regional parks located within Metchosin, which are managed by the , Capital Reginal District. These include Albert Head Lagoon, Devonian, Matheson Lake, Tower Point, and Witty's Lagoon.

There are several District owned trails that are used to access these CRD parks, including:

- Annie Jackson
- Bradene Steps
- Top of La Bonne
- Wayne's Rock
- Matheson Lake Access Trail
- Bob Mountain Trail

5.4.5 Undesignated Parkland

In addition to formal parks, Metchosin also has an inventory of other land parcels with park designations. Some of these have come to be known as “pocket parks”, or “orphan parks” as they are undeveloped and have not been established as identifiable parks, but remain public lands. These parcels include:

- Hi-Mount/Saddleback lands: linear parks from a past subdivision process serving as a nature space in these areas. See section 4.7.8.
- Graceland: an under-utilized park (0.416 ha / 1.02 acres) from a past subdivision in the Albert Head neighbourhood.
- Kasani: a 0.66 ha (1.6 acre) park parcel at the end of Kasani Place road.
- Metchosin Rd: this space includes the “Welcome to Metchosin” sign, donated by Ron Aubrey, and is located at the corner of Metchosin Rd and Briarwood Ln.
- Seaspray: an under-utlized park from a past subdivision in the Albert Head neighbourhood.
- Spellman: an under-utilized park located across the Lindholm Rd near an entry to Blinkhorn Nature Park. The parcel was once considered as a parking area for Blinkhorn.

Additional comments are made below in section 5.6.

5.5 Potential Parkland Acquisitions

Future additions to the District’s parks assets may occur in several ways:

- Subdivision processes or rezoning processes (including Amenity Rezoning).
- Purchase, such as through the District’s Parkland Acquisition Fund (see section 5.7).
- Donation by a private landowner (see section 3.9)

Subdivision processes have been previously used as a means of obtaining parkland. Under the BC’s *Local Government Act* (section 510) developers have an obligation of providing either parkland or a payment to the District of the market value of the land that could have been donated. It is the developer’s choice as to what approach they take.

Certain limitations are set out in the legislation:

- The amount of land required for park by local governments cannot exceed 5% of the total land being proposed for subdivision.

- The parkland requirement does not apply to subdivisions of fewer than three lots.
- The requirement does not apply to subdivisions where the “smallest lot being created is larger than 2 hectares” (4.94 acres).
- Funds provided by a landowner in lieu of parkland must be placed in a reserve fund for the purpose of acquiring parkland.
- The donated land must be in good condition.

The District’s ability to acquire more park lands is also limited by both availability of funds, and land availability for purchase.

In addition to the criteria outlined in section 4.7.1, the addition of new land parcels should be assessed based on the potential of these to:

- Expand existing green spaces.
- Improve connectivity by enabling additional trails between parks and residential areas.
- Have clear biodiversity and environmental values.
- Have recreational or other tangible community value to Metchosin residents, including the potential of developing community gardens or gathering spaces.

Metchosin’s 1986 Parks and Recreation Master Plan listed parcels that had potential value as parkland. Many of these parcels continue to have relevance in terms of District interests. A summary of the 1986 list follows:

1. Section 25: currently part of agreed land swap, contains trails & managed as Metchosin Wilderness Park
2. Section 28: currently part of agreed land swap, contains Libra trails
3. Section 95: currently part of agreed land swap, adjacent to the Buffer Land
4. Remainder of Sections 62 & 66 (Goldstream District)
5. Metchosin Mountain (peak and lower peak in Section 67A)
6. Blinkhorn Lake: now District asset Blinkhorn Nature Park contains trails
7. Mount Helmcken: open east slope located in Section 40
8. Buck Hill (Section 63)

9. Montreul Hill: trail and peak now District asset, acquired as part of land subdivision. Is accessible by walking only upon private shared road, or the fire road from the Aquarius subdivision.
10. Mount Ash: A public walking trail to Mount Ash Lookout is covered by an easement.
11. Garibaldi Hill (Section 50)
12. Mary Hill: the Sc'ianew Nation is currently in discussions with the federal government about the potential of this becoming Tribal Park or an Indigenous Protected and Conservation Area.
13. Church Hill (Section 66)
14. Glinz Lake (Section 56 & 57, Goldstream District)
15. Pedder Bay Beach (Section 56, DND property) part of Mary Hill property
16. Eemdyck Passage and Edye Point Beach (DND property, part of Ammunition depot)
17. Bentinck Island (DND property)
18. Whirl Bay Beach (Sections 54 & 55, DND property, part of Ammunition depot)
19. Municipal Hall Lands: administrative and municipal uses should have the highest priority. These lands have an Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) status.
20. Identified to acquire 2 to 4 hectares to meet existing needs of sports, equestrian, and agricultural groups. This space also identified to provide a community fairground.
21. Identified to acquire 0.5 to 1.5 hectare park in Albert Head subdivision to incorporate family oriented facilities (e.g minor playground equipment)

5.6 Under-utilized Park Parcels

The District of Metchosin owns several land parcels which are designated as parks, but which have (based on PTASC's knowledge and experience) low public usage and, in some cases, low value as "parks." These land parcels have previously been referred to as to as "Orphan Parks."

The low use is likely due to a number of circumstances, including:

- Limited recreational value, mainly due to a lack of natural features and/or no connectivity with other park parcels or connective roads.
- The location of the parcel,

- Poor signage or no signage, and;
- Privacy or trespass concerns from adjacent neighbours.
- Terrain constraints (e.g steepness).

While it is recognized that undeveloped, natural space has considerable value in terms of conservation and biodiversity enhancement, certain land parcels may serve a greater public good by being designated for other uses. For example, if certain parcels were sold for other uses, such as appropriate residential development, the District could see considerable financial increases to its Parks Acquisition Fund (see below).

The sale of parkland has special requirements as outlined in Section 27 of the *Community Charter*:

- "Approval of electors" must be obtained. This would likely be done through an alternative approval process (AAP). In this process, those opposed to a sale are required to sign a District approved form indicating their opposition. If at least 10% of electors oppose the initiative through the AAP process, Council could not proceed with a sale without holding a referendum on the initiative.
- Metchosin has an existing Parkland Acquisition Reserve Fund, to which the funds of any sale of park land would be directed.

<u>(DRAFT) Recommendations:</u>

1. That the District assess the future of under-utilized parkland, with the goal of taking one of two actions.
   - **Potential action 1: Enhancing biodiversity and/or recreational values,** or other elements of community benefit (e.g. community gardens, or shared space for community connections); this may be done with partner organizations or with the involvement of neighbours and neighbourhood stakeholders; or
   - **Potential action 2: Assessing the sale of such parcels** with funds being placed (as is required) in the Parkland Acquisition Fund.

2. That criteria be developed to assess the suitability of lands for potential sale. This option may be considered where a land parcel that nominally serves as parkland has:
   - Low recreational potential (low connectivity, low potential as a credible nature park).

- No community amenities, or the potential for amenities, such as playgrounds or parking.
- Low biodiversity values (i.e. lands supporting wildlife corridors; riparian protection).
- Gained no interest among adjacent landowners in terms of stewardship actions (i.e. removing invasives; monitoring for dumping activity or encroachments)
- Clear signs of significant and intentional neighbour encroachment or appropriation (i.e. potentially reducing public recreational access and biodiversity values)
- Potential for residential development, in terms of parcel size and location.

3. That the District regularly review priority lands for possible sale.

5.7 Parkland Acquisition Fund and Potential Acquisitions

As of the January 1, 2025, there was $284,546 in Metchosin's Parkland Acquisition Reserve Fund (the "Parkland Fund". This fund was established in 2009 based on a single allocation of funding from a development in the Tower Point area. To date, this fund has not been used.

Recommendations are noted above in terms of further enhancing this fund through possible sale of "orphan parks."

As noted in section 5.5, the 1986 Parks and Recreation Plan identified a number of parcels for possible purchase for park space. That list was reviewed as part of the current Master Plan process and recommendations for possible acquisitions are noted below.

Based on current market values, it's estimated that the District would need a minimum of $<<TBD>> to acquire a land parcel of meaningful size and value.

DRAFT Recommendations

- That the District look for appropriate opportunities to enhance the Parkland Reserve Fund.
- Per recommendations in section 5.6 the District assess under-utilized park space for potential sale.

- That the District monitor the following lands for potential future parkland opportunities, accessing the Parkland Fund and other resources to potentially acquire land as opportunities are presented.
    - Metchosin Mountain
    - Blinkhorn Mountain
    - Rocky Point Rd or Tavane Rd, in terms of securing lands for a trail to Hans Helgesen School
    - Mount Matheson
- Additional opportunities should be reviewed in terms of these lands:
    - Eemdyck Passage and Edye Point Beach
    - Bentinck Island
    - Whirl Bay Beach
    - Buck Hill
    - Garibaldi Hill
    - Church Hill
    - Glinz Lake

5.8 Summary of DRAFT Recommendations

5.8.1 Annual Parks and Trails Maintenance Program

- As outlined in section 4.5, that an annual parks and trails maintenance program be developed

5.8.2 Environmental protection and enhancement

- That parks containing sensitive ecosystems, such as threatened species or riparian areas, should be identified, management plans developed and other protective measures assessed, including the use of restrictive covenants.
- That environmental protection and enhancement plans be developed for the following parks (and soon to be parks):
    - The Buffer Land
    - Sections 95/28/25

5.8.3 Subdivision

- That PTASC continues to have input into subdivision processes related to parks and trails.
- That lands which are designated as “parkland” (including linear parks for trails) during subdivision processes, are developed as useable and accessible spaces for potential use by the broader community, thus entering the District’s parks inventory as active parkland, rather than “orphan park space.”

5.8.4 Under-utilized parkland area

- That each orphan park be assessed per the criteria in section 5.6, and options be considered, including, but not limited to: 1) development as formal and useable public parks; 2) designation as protected/conservation area; 3) enhanced public recreation (playgrounds, community gardens; 4) disposition by the District.

5.8.5 Signage and public information

- That the District encourage responsible and sustainable public use of parklands by providing clearly identified access, parking (as appropriate), and well-defined trails that allow for public enjoyment and preservation of nature.
- That park signage be developed, and placed in highly visited parks (which ones), that encourage sustainable actions while using parks, including:
    - Cleaning litter and collecting pet waste to be properly disposed
    - Signage identifying interesting or unique wildlife/plants that helps with their identification and preservation.
    - Increase community engagement in park planning and maintenance.
    - Limits on biking, where appropriate.
    - Reminders of dogs to be “under control.”
- That QR codes be utilized on signage to convey more detailed information, such as targeted or known invasive species of concern with contact information to identify to stewardship groups (PTASC, MEASC, MISC).

5.8.6 Partnerships and volunteers

- To support the protection of sensitive ecosystems, that the District continue to forge partnerships with conservation groups, such as the Metchosin Invasive Species

Collective, Bilston Watershed Habitat Protection Association, the Metchosin Foundation, and Habitat Acquisition Trust.

- That the District clarify its approach to volunteer work on District-owned lands, particularly around park/trail monitoring and maintenance and invasive species removal.

5.8.7 Connectivity

- That plans are developed to further enhance park/trail connectivity for both District owned and Regional parks.

5.8.8 New Park Opportunities

- That the District identify specific parcels for potential acquisition, based on the criteria outlined in section 5.5

5.8.9 The Buffer Land

- That an inventory/assessment of sensitive environmental areas be undertaken.
- That an access management plan be developed, with attention to the potential use and interest in the land from the Centre Mountain residential area.
- That a restoration plan be developed for areas that were previously logged and cleared. This may include plans for invasive removal, reforestation, riparian enhancement, including the possibility of an engineered wetland.
- That interest among community members in contributing to restoration and monitoring activities be encouraged and fostered.
- That a new name for the Buffer Land be considered. A potential name could be the Metchosin Creek Preservation Area. This would acknowledge the area's important riparian values, and support the potential conservation focus of a new zone.
- That a zoning change be considered.

Section 6 – Beaches



Taylor Beach

6.0 Overview

This section covers Weir Beach and Taylor Beach, which are relevant to the Master Plan because of the existing park on Weir Beach and the fact that the District has responsibilities in both areas. The beaches at Witty's Lagoon Regional Park Devonian Regional Park, and Albert Head Lagoon Regional Park are not covered as these are managed by the Capital Regional District.

Weir Beach and Taylor Beach receive thousands of visitors a year, both from local residents as well as those living in the greater Victoria area. Both beaches are part of a complex chain of shoreline features spanning the 50 kilometres of Metchosin coastline. These features include rocky shores, marsh shores, accretion beaches, erosion beaches and pocket beaches. The environmental significance of the marine shorelands in the community is noted in Metchosin's OCP, which contains the following policy element: "To manage marine shorelands in a manner compatible with the biological and physical processes acting on and within them" (OCP - 2.2.5). Additional policy objectives regarding marine shorelands are found in section 2.6 of the OCP.

While the tidal areas typically fall under the jurisdiction of the provincial and federal governments, the District of Metchosin does have a set of responsibilities related to both beaches. These include traffic management (parking), garbage collection, emergency management, fire protection, land use and bylaw enforcement matters related to adjacent properties.

The activities on both beaches (particularly Weir) have the potential to impact residents and community members, particularly with high visitation from outside of the community. Residents have raised concerns about parking, traffic safety, garbage, human waste (no bathrooms exist in these areas), dogs, beach fires, and the use of District resources.

The following is intended to:

- Situate the Weir Beach and Taylor Beach within Metchosin's parks and trails system.
- Make recommendations on issues of concern.

6.1 Jurisdiction in Coastal Areas

All three levels of government and First Nations have a jurisdictional scope along and near ocean shorelines.

The **federal government's** jurisdiction is generally considered to begin at the low tidal mark and continue off-shore.

The **provincial government** owns most of the foreshore from the natural land boundary to the low water level. Of note, in the case of the Strait of Juan de Fuca, the provincial government also owns the seabed.

Municipal governments have the authority to plan and regulate within their boundaries. Regarding Metchosin's situation, this area where regulatory oversight begins is generally considered to be the boundary between the tidal area and the terrestrial land boundary. It's notable that the District can enforce certain bylaws in relation to the beach, including the prohibition on beach fires and animal control (i.e. dogs not being under-control).

First Nation authority over coastal waters is complicated and will depend on the right being exercised and what provisions may be contained in treaties.

6.2 Weir Beach - Background (location, natural history)

Weir Beach is located at the southern end of the District and is accessible from Sandgate Road via William Head Road or a set of stairs at the far end of the beach near the intersection of William Head Road and Pearson College Drive. A designated park under municipal jurisdiction is located within the beach areas and covers 0.22 hectares (0.54 acres), which includes ~140 metres of beach front. The entire length of Weir Beach spans ~540 metres.

There is a significant residential area around Weir Beach, with over 20 residences accessible from Sandgate Road. A trailer park with space for as many as 50 units exists on the southern end of the beach. As noted below, the number of people living in the area means that Weir Beach is popular. It's notable there have been on-going concerns regarding possible leakage of septic systems on this beach.

There are two lagoons/ponds behind the beach. These border several of the residences and a portion of one of these bodies is included in Metchosin's park boundary. There are two memorial benches located on the path within the park area.

There are no garbage cans or bathrooms at Weir Beach. In the past, residents have organized garbage clean-ups on Weir Beach. There has been previous discussion about the potential of adding a permanent space for garbage cans and adding

permanent space for garbage cans and adding bathroom facilities. Both ideas were considered challenging in terms of the additional staff workload and added costs resulting from servicing bathrooms.

Parking is limited in this area. There are currently 19 stalls near the beach. Residents have expressed concern about parking along William Head Road during peak beach season, particularly near the Weir Beach Stairs. In that area, the road is narrow and winding, making pedestrian safety a legitimate concern.

There has been some consideration of expanding parking. On this, OCP policy statement 5.3.11 is notable: “Parking should be restricted to environmentally insensitive areas adjacent to the park and should be developed and buffered from adjacent land uses particularly residential uses and should complement the aesthetics of the surroundings.”

In terms of broader connectivity, the Ron Weir Trail is accessible via Sandgate Road. The Weir Beach stairs allow walkers to access Pearson College Drive, which eventually connects to a network of trails in the college area, which lead to the Galloping Goose Regional Trail. Likely the most common trail use is the natural loop formed by walking along the beach, climbing up the Weir Beach stairs, and the returning via William Head and Sandgate. Unfortunately, the Weir Beach stairs have faced maintenance challenges due to weather and steep slope.

6.3 Taylor Beach – Background

Taylor Beach is valued for the clear waters, and the accessible shoreline, which is (if you can find parking) much less of a walk than the beach at Witty’s Regional Park. While there is no designated municipal “park” on Taylor Beach, the District has responsibilities here in maintaining a small parking lot at the end of Taylor Road. During the warmer seasons, visitors will park along Tayor Road often resulting in vehicle congestion. In short, when the weather is warm it is a popular place!

Taylor Beach itself spans over 1 km of ocean front and is also accessible from Devonian Regional Park (managed by the CRD). The beach serves as frontage for several large residential properties and farms north of Devonian Park.

6.4 DRAFT Recommendations on Issues/Opportunities

The following are recommendations in relation to Weir Beach and Taylor Beach as recreational sites for the community and the broader region.

6.4.1 Parking

- That at least one mobility impaired parking space be considered at Taylor and Weir Beach.
- Any future increases to parking for the beaches should be considered only in the context of an environmentally and economically compelling opportunity.

6.4.2 Accessibility

- That accessibility mats be considered for Weir Beach and Taylor Beach, starting at the parking and extending to a safe spot beyond the high-tide mark.
    - *A pilot project may be considered at Weir Beach. As of 2025, the City of Victoria was using a product called Mobi Matts to allow for greater access on some of the City's beach front areas.*

6.4.3 Bathrooms and Other Amenities

- That the District maintain its current stance on not having garbage receptacles or bathroom facilities.
- That signage be installed to highlight the importance of packing out garbage, particularly animal waste.
- That the District should explore creative signage to highlight public service messaging.

    - *The cost of constructing even simple bathrooms is likely to be significant. Given the popularity of these beaches, maintaining these bathrooms will require significant budget allocation and staff time. An experiment in late 2023 with receptacles for animal waste saw the containers being overwhelmed within a few days of being emptied. The disposal of animal waste requires a different process than regular waste, and thus more cost.*

6.4.4 Neighbour privacy

- That signage be placed at key spots on Weir Beach indicating where private property begins.

    - *A number of residents in the Weir Beach area have experience with beach visitors entering private property, often to 'go to the bathroom' in the bushes. Signage will make them aware of trespass in such situations.*

6.4.5 Data on visitor origins

- That the District look for opportunities to better understand who visits Weir and Taylor Beaches.

    - *Should Metchosin see a need to increase resourcing for the beaches, it would be important to have more information on usage.*

6.4.6 Use of the Beach

- That the prohibition on beach fires continue, and that signage be considered indicating this.
- That the District monitor beach usage, and take steps to prevent the storage of beach toys or water craft on beaches.

    - *Beach fires are prohibited on both Weir and Taylor beaches, and violations can be enforced by Metchosin Fire Department staff. Residents have raised concerns about beach fires as a result of late night noise and the mess from the fire debris. Residents have noted that 'beach toys' are increasingly being left on the beach. The observation is that such items are often concentrated in the area around the RV park.*

6.4.7 Active Transportation

- That steps are taken to encourage biking to the beaches, particularly Taylor Beach. This may include reduced speeds or awareness signage on William Head Road.
- Implement a 20 km/hr speed limit on Taylor Road.

    - *The recommendation does not include consideration of a roadside trail along Taylor Road, as such trails would likely be used for vehicle parking.*

6.4.8 Environmental Protection and Pollution

- That the District continue to monitor and be responsive to complaints of septic leaks or septic malfunctions in the area.
- That further initiatives be examined to help protect the local marine environment in these areas.

    - *The District has received numerous complaints about septic issues in the Weir Beach area. There are concerns about potential contamination of the coastal water and resulting odours.*

6.4.9 Connectivity

- That the District continue to monitor the Weir Beach Stairs, taking steps to maintain the stairs as a safe, passable area for residents and visitors.
- That steps be taken to prevent parking in areas of high risk pedestrian safety areas.

Section 7 – What We Heard

Comments Received to October 31, 2025

Should we 'gifting' Weir Beach and Taylor Beach over to the CRD? This might help with maintenance and management of these areas.

Regarding dogs, Metchosin should be following the CRD's bylaws for their parks, verbatim.

We should look at additional playgrounds in the community, particularly in areas of higher density (Albert Head).

Would like to see better connectors the the GGRT i.e. roadside trails.

Would like to see bike lanes along Duke Road, Metchosin Road, Rocky Point Road and Kangaroo Rd.

The Ivy is killing many trees around Rocky Point on the GGRT. We have tried to do our best but the trees are suffering.

Thank you for caring so much for our trails and parks and for picking up garbage.

Very concerned about invasive species in our parks, particularly European Ash.

Commercial dog walkers are abusing our trails through over-use (I know of two instances in which a commercial dog walker has used Metchosin trails 3-4 times a day over a period of 5+ years to walk between 3-6 dogs. The trails are scoured from over-use…as are areas of Matheson Lake Regional Park that are effectively turned into off-leash parks.

Our Parks and Trails are a treasure! But run and maintained by volunteers, the allowable uses really need to be carefully delimited, on signage. Along with commercial dog walking or other for profit uses, I think mountain biking should be prohibited on all our P&Ts. Especially trails that connect with regional parks, and that run thru private properties, commercial uses should not be allowed (imho).

Is there a chance to create access to the beach below Blaney Trail?

Please add move benches along our trails, particularly Hillman, Wootton and the areas in the Village Core. It would be great to have these located every 15 minutes on certain trails.

People really need to pick up their dog poop.

Maintenance is needed on muddy sections of the trails so that they do not just get

wider and wider. In 100 acre they did put gravel down which really helped...

We really use the Metchosin Parks and trails to walk our dog. I like to use the municipal yard
and school on windy days and at night in the winter.

We have a great parks system which I love. I sometimes worry that the rest of the region will discover them and then management would need to be addressed.

As always the acquisition of parkland is important -- for the protection for the future. Bicycles should not be on the trails - not good for the trees and also creates extra mud

Do our trail construction standards need to be designed for equestrian use standard (to be checked), as in wider pathways and more overhead clearance.

I'd like to see a roadside trail from the Goose along Lindholm then along Happy Valley to connect to Metchosin Core.

The roadside trail between Chapel Heights and Duke Road East is no longer there. Has it simply been lost to overgrowth.

Nature conservancy very important, wildlife is our natural asset

Drainage on Hillman Trail (Pears rd side) needs work - Likely due to base of the trail being hard packed clay

Need to look at the blackberries on both sides of Hillman trail

Request to re-install Hillman Trail bench (older person who would use to bench to rest) - observed that he used to see more elderly people but no longer does

Observation that park benches are important for mobility purposes for accessibility

Metchosin Road trail does not exist. But it should.

We have formed a group called Friends of Mount Metchosin Neighbourhood (FMMN) in the Himount, Ferncliff, Hackamore, Saddleback and Stirrup Road Neighbourhoods. The neighbours are opposed to the development of trails in the linear parks in this area. We have raised concern many times: 2005, 2016, 2024 with petitions and letters signed by the vast majority of the people living here. We wish to have these areas set out as "Protected Green Space" in order to keep these in their natural state, protecting the habitat, streams and water courses, ground cover and natural vegetation, and the wildlife. The Parks and Trails Master Plan should commit to preserve, protect and care for this Protected Natural Greenspace, and ensure that it be maintained in its natural and current state. This includes the maintenance of invasive species such as broom, holly, gorse, ivy, thistle, ragwort, blackberry bushes etc.. The FMMN will support and

encourage removal of invasive species by neighbourhood residents wherever possible. Fire risk is at an all-time high, and in particular in the Mount Metchosin neighbourhood where the wind and heavily treed acreages are extremely susceptible to forest fires. They need to be protected from the public. The revised Master Plan should ensure: Care should be taken to protect existing trees and foliage; Sensitive areas and protected fauna should be maintained; Water courses need to be protected to avoid public crossings, turbidity and erosion. Many of the water courses feed directly (or indirectly) into Bilson Creek; No dumping of excavated materials or yard waste should be allowed; No encroachment onto greenspace by existing neighbours should be allowed; Removal of invasive species such as broom, holly, gorse, ivy etc. should be encouraged.

Please don't push horses out of our parks and trails as has been the case in other areas of the Island. Bikes are taking over a lot of areas. I'm a member of the Backcountry Horsemen and we do a lot provincially to protect/create/steward the lands and trails.

We have beautiful trails, and I just hope they don't get overrun with our growth in surrounding areas.

Everyone needs to be respectful. Dogs should be under control; bikes should not go too fast. Users need to be aware of others on path.

What is happening with the Weirs Beach stairs? Can these be repaired?

To include wildlife in your master plan. To develop a Wildlife Nature Reserve as a place to be protected from development."

As per mentioned in the Horse Trail Description in the 2009 Plan, horses are supposed to be invited on all trails. This does not take into consideration the unique variability of each trail. And also the liability for you to even suggest it.

Make more connector trails. Encourage trail stewards. Continue to applaud and support our volunteers. We need a creative way to deal with cigarette and cigar butts and beer cans and dog poop bags.

Manage existing trail network. Minimize impacts to environment. Use Active Transportation Plan and Road Safety data to Align and Prioritize.

I am concerned that this plan was being developed in secret. Why haven't the subcommittees released the minutes of their meetings? Transparency is critical.

Safe transportation for pedestrians along Park Drive, Delgada and Duke Road.

The maintenance and workload of our trails may be outgrowing our volunteers. How much will be put on Public Works?

Evidenced based decision making critical. In terms of vehicle/pedestrian safety look up road safety statistics from ICBC. Key crash sites include Hans Helgesen, Kangaroo/Sooke Road; Lindholm and Happy Valley.

Continue to engage the public as you develop the plan; sharing ideas and what you've come up with will generate responses and ideas from the community, and serves as a way of engaging the community.

For future open houses it may add value to have maps of the parks and trails that people can draw on or mark up.