



DISTRICT OF METCHOSIN

AGENDA

PARKS & TRAILS ADVISORY SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, August 26, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.
Council Chambers
Metchosin Municipal Hall

1. **Agenda, Additions, Approval**
2. **Presentations**
 - a. Richard Simpson – Buffer Land Signage and Trail Stewards 1
3. **Public Participation**
4. **Adoption of Minutes**
 - a. Parks & Trails Advisory Select Committee, June 16, 2026 3
5. **Business Arising from the Minutes**
 - a. Trail Visit Update and Next Appointments
 - b. Parks & Trails Master Plan Update
 - Key changes 7
 - Draft Plan, August 2026 9
6. **Reports**
 - a. Parks & Trails Coordinator Verbal Report
 - b. Council Liaison Verbal Report
 - c. Chair Verbal Report
 - d. Buffer Land Report
7. **Correspondence**
8. **Other Business**
9. **Adjournment and Next Meeting Date**

Briefing Note – Buffer Land Signage and Trail Stewardship

Prepared for: Metchosin Parks and Trails Advisory Select Committee (PTASC)

Prepared by: Friends of the Buffer Land (FoBL) Volunteer Group

Date: August 19, 2026

Issue

The Buffer Land currently lacks formal signage, creating risks for ecological restoration, public safety, and responsible trail use—risks that are increasing due to nearby residential development and recent wildfire incidents.

At the same time, FoBL volunteers are well positioned to support PTASC by serving as trail stewards to help monitor conditions, report issues, and encourage responsible use of the greenspace.

There are no signs in the greenspace indicating it is the Buffer Land or that it is Metchosin-owned land. Buffer Land stewards would walk the greenspace and report issues through PTASC to the district as they arise.

Background

The only existing sign on the Buffer Land is the Metchosin Creek Sensitive Habitat sign. With anticipated development in Langford, pressures on the informal trail network are expected to increase, including heavy dog-walking, night use, and potential incursions by mountain bikes and ATVs.

Recent small wildfires extinguished near the Buffer Land highlight the need for clear public guidance.

Following a visit to Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary, Mayor Little shared examples of effective signage and emphasized the importance of similar signage for the Buffer Land. FoBL subsequently contacted the CAO recommending initial signage at the Neild Road gate and the recently restored Scotch broom removal area. The CAO advised that signage requests be directed to PTASC, which is working toward consistent district-wide signage—an approach FoBL fully supports.

Signage Considerations

FoBL recommends that Buffer Land signage clearly communicate its conservation status, restoration activities, and permitted uses. Suggested messaging includes:

- Conservation ecological area
- Restoration work in progress

- Pedestrian-only access
- No biking / No ATVs
- No overnight stays
- No fires
- Dogs on leash
- Stay on existing trails

These messages align with ecological restoration goals, wildfire prevention, and respectful public use.

Trail Stewardship Considerations

FoBL strongly supports PTASC's initiative to restart the Trail Stewards Program. Several FoBL members live near the Buffer Land and are ready to serve as stewards.

Stewards would regularly walk the greenspace, observe conditions, and report issues through PTASC to the District. This volunteer presence would complement new signage by reinforcing expectations for responsible use and providing early detection of emerging concerns such as trail damage, fire risk, or inappropriate activities.

Request

FoBL respectfully asks that PTASC:

1. Review and confirm the signage needs identified by the volunteer group.
2. Develop consistent, district-aligned signage appropriate for the Buffer Land.
3. Install signage at the Neild Road gate, the restored area, and trail termini on the north and south lobes.
4. Ensure signage clearly communicates conservation status, restoration work, and permitted uses.
5. Authorize the FoBL Stewardship Team to identify four volunteers (subject to PTASC approval) to serve as trail stewards for the Buffer Land.

FoBL is ready to collaborate with PTASC on sign wording, placement, stewardship messaging, and trail steward training.

Respectfully,

Richard Simpson

richardsimpson@telus.net

DISTRICT OF METCHOSIN

AGENDA

Parks & Trails Advisory Select Committee Meeting
Tuesday, June 16, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.
Council Chambers
Metchosin Municipal Hall

Present: David Shanks (Chair), Jay Shukin (Council Liaison, Recorder), Ron Aubrey, Ian Baxter, Caroline Donohue, Emma Horgan

Regrets: Kathy Atherton, Chris Thibodeau

Meeting called to order at 6:04 p.m.

1. Agenda, Additions, Approval

- The June 16, 2026, PTASC Agenda, with the addition of Item 9. b) Metchosin Day, was approved by consensus.

2. Presentations

- None.

3. Public Participation

- Jim Nan, as the Blinkhorn Trail Steward, addressed the Committee with an update on Blinkhorn trail, including information on:
 - Graffiti and signage;
 - Entry point use and maintenance from Lindholm Drive; and
 - Metchosin Invasive Species Collective (MISC) removal of European Ash, Herb Robert (Stinky Bob) and English Bluebells from the park.

4. Adoption of Minutes

- The May 19, 2026, Parks & Trails Advisory Select Committee Meeting minutes were adopted.

5. Business Arising from the Minutes

a) Trail Visit Update and Next Appointments

- Emma Horgan - Montreal Heights:
 - Trail entry is not clearly marked, and the trail route is not clear on the upper portion;
 - Possibility of trail sign relocation to outside of the gate before the private road.
- Ian Baxter - Village Core trail and Sea Bluff Trail:
 - No issues.
- Caroline Donohue - Libra Trails:
 - Broom.
- Jay Shukin – Chapel Heights:
 - No issues.
- Jay Shukin - Bob Mountain and Wayne's Rock:
 - Some overgrowth.
- Future Trail Assignments: PTASC members will send in their goals for future walks ASAP.

b) Beckingham Trail, Galloping Goose Regional Trail Connector

- Work party to clear and demarcate the trail for Galloping Goose (GGRT) connection. **Action: Jay Shukin to schedule and discuss with CAO.**
- Monitor in wet season.

c) Hillman Trail Clean-up

- a) Completed by Westmount School volunteers on June 2nd.
- b) The CAO met the volunteers on site to provide an orientation, and a sign-in sheet was used.
- c) Trail needs to be graveled in sections to address mud and wet. **Action:** develop a brief plan to share with CAO.

6. Parks & Trails Master Plan Update

- No update.

7. Reports

a) Parks & Trails Coordinator Verbal Report

- Corresponding with public interested in a memorial bench; the Village area or Duke Road could be options.
- Local Scout troops have offered to place bat boxes at Buckbrush Swamp with CAO approval.

b) Council Liaison Verbal Report

- b) Buffer Land Park Dedication Bylaw to be adopted by Council.
- c) A future ‘workshop’ session on climate change and environment has been discussed.

c) Chair Verbal Report

- d) Meeting with a MISC member to discuss on-going work at Blinkhorn, particularly around European Ash, Bluebells, and Stinky Bob.
- e) Duke Road South subdivision update.
- f) Recruitment for Trail Steward Program: Muse, Metchosin Day, Fire Hall sign
- g) Map updates for Parks and Trails Master Plan.

d) Buffer Land Report

- h) Creating a five-year plan;
- i) Table at Metchosin Day;
- j) Royal Roads student research has begun;
- k) Water level monitoring stations on Metchosin and Bilston; and
- l) Clarification desired on Buffer Reserve Fund

8. Correspondence

- None.

9. Other Business

a) Park Bench Inventory

- Provided to PTASC for information.
- Suggestion that this be posted on the PTASC page on the District’s webpage.
- Inventory needs to be updated with the recently installed Hillman Trail bench (April 2026).

b) Metchosin Day

- Presentation materials to bring
 - Info on the Trail Stewards program;
 - Maps and trails information (including the Big Map);
 - Contact sheets;
 - Giveaways;
- Update Big Map and bigger print version of the map book.
- Contact the M-Day organizers to confirm. (completed).

10. Adjournment and Next Meeting Date

- Next meeting date August 18, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Key Revisions to the Parks and Trails Master Plan – August 2026

PTASC Meeting – August 26, 2026

Buffer Land - Revised text to reflect park status being granted

- Changed reference to the fact that we now have 6 parks, not 5.
- Added Buffer Land to the Parks table.
- Updated the text in section 5.0

Input from the Metchosin Equestrian Society:

- Input added in the recommendations table and in section 4.4

Commercial dog walking regulations.

- Listed key points from the CRD's regulations on commercial dog walking. See section 3.2.
- This comes per the plan's recommendation that District specific regulations on commercial dog walking.

Beckingham additions

- Added reference to the roadside trail and the connector to the Galloping Goose.

Edits and revisions made throughout for brevity and clarity.

District of Metchosin
Parks and Trails Master Plan
DRAFT – August 2026

Table of Contents

Section 1 – Overview	Page 3
Summary of Recommendations	Page 7
Section 2 – Community Profile and Process	Page 15
Section 3 – Key Trends and Planning Considerations	Page 18
Section 4 – Metchosin Trails	Page 24
Section 5 – Metchosin Parks	Page 36
Section 6 – Metchosin Beaches	Page 43
Trails Management Table	Page <<td>>
Appendix 1 – Process and Public Engaement	Page <<td>>
Appendix 2 – Key OCP Sections	Page <<td>>
Appendix 3 – Projects Identified in 2009 Trails Plan	Page <<td>>
Appendix 4 – Park/trail areas identified in 1986 Plan	Page <<td>>

Section 1 – Overview

1.1 Metchosin's Parks and Trails Masterplan

Metchosin's natural environment and spectacular landscapes are foundations of our community's 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 the natural spaces in this multi-faceted coastal environment.

The following is **[a draft version of]** Metchosin's first integrated Parks and Trails Master Plan. The District's Parks and Trails Advisory Committee (PTASC) developed this document with a goal of honouring the past efforts that established our park and trail network, while anticipating future needs and challenges.

Our goal with the Master Plan is to affirm and highlight the value of our parks and trails, while clarifying the plans and work required to maintain that network, and where appropriate 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 Sc'ianew First Nation and the T'Sou-ke First Nation. The District of Metchosin is committed to respecting the history and aspirations of these nations.

1.3 Plan Purpose

There are currently six parks and 51 trails 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 strategy and plan for community-owned parks and trails, including individual 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 are anticipated to come into Metchosin's ownership as a result of the 2017 Reconciliation Agreement between the Sc'ianew Nation, the City of Langford and Metchosin. These parcels include Sections 95, 28 and 25.
- Clarify the land acquisition and subdivision process in relation to park/trail amenities.

- Identify opportunities to grow our park and trail network, particularly around new subdivisions.
- Identify current and future issues, risks, and opportunities for our parks and trails.
- 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, making recommendations on these matters as is appropriate

The Master Plan should be reviewed at five year intervals following Council approval.

1.4 Existing Parks and Trails

This section lists the parks and trails covered by the Master Plan. *Not all of the parks and trails 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. See section 4.7.
- Metchosin Wilderness Park (100 Acre Wood, Section 25) and Libra Park (Section 28) is owned by the provincial government, with access granted through a Licence of Occupation (LOO) agreement. Both Section 25 and Section 28 were part of the 2017 Reconciliation Agreement with the Sc'ianew Nation and the City of Langford, which is further covered in section 5.3.3.
- Several trails cross through private lands, with access granted through a statutory right of way. See section 3.7

1.4.1 Parks

• Blinkhorn Nature Park • Buckbrush Swamp Park • Buffer Land Park • Carlton Cosh Nature Park	• Eleanor Mann Park • Metchosin Wilderness Park / 100 Acre Wood / Section 25
---	---

1.4.2 Natural Trails

• Beckingham Connector • Blaney Trail Ocean Lookout • Bob Mountain • Bradene Steps (Witty Beach) • Branson-Duke • Chapel Heights • Cliff Trail • Cook Road	• Joe Lodge • Libra • Lisandra • Lusse Way • Madill • Matheson Lake Trailhead • Montreul Hill Heights • Mount Ash Lookout • Olympic View to Annie Jackson
---	---

• Deer Park Upper and Lower Connector Trails • Deer Park • Eales Road Trail • Ed's Lane • Farhill Connector (Latoria Creek Bridge) • Ferncliffe • Gemini • Graceland to Gilbert • Helgesen-Lombard • Hillman • Horse	• Pearson College/Galloping Goose Connector • Ron Weir • Sea Bluff • Sweet Chestnut / LaBonne • Top of LaBonne • Upper LaBonne to Lower LaBonne • Upper Park Drive • Village Trails • Wayne's Rock • Weir Beach Stairs
--	---

1.4.3 Roadside Trails

• Annie Jackson Place Roadside • Beckingham Roadside Trail • Duke Roadside Trail • Kangaroo Roadside Trail • Liberty Drive Roadside Trail • Metchosin Roadside Trail (Chapel Heights to Duke Road)	• Metchosin Roadside Trail (Happy Valley to Wootton) • Pears Roadside Trail • Rocky Point Roadside Trail • Village Roadside Trail • William Head (Parry Road to Happy Valley Road)
---	--

1.4.4 Un-Managed Parkland

These are municipally owned lands that are undeveloped green spaces, which are not maintained to support recreation, such as walking. With two exceptions, these parcels were dedicated as “park” through prior subdivision processes (see section 107 of the *Land Title Act*). The two exceptions are the parcels on Metchosin Road and Spellman Drive, which have park designation indicated in the OCP.

• Branson Trail Pocket Park • Graceland • Hi-Mount • Kasani • Metchosin Road • Linear Park Saddleback Rd to Sundance Dr.	• Saddleback • Seaspray • Spellman • Stirrup • Windover
---	---

1.4.5 Notable Road Allowances

There are several road allowances (Rights of Way (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 Park Planning

On July 13, 2026, the 113.5 acre Buffer Land was designated as a park by way of *Buffer Land Bylaw 2026 No. 721*. A Section 219 Covenant was also approved by Council and will be attached to the land title sometime in the near future. Significant planning is now required to ensure that the community's environmental protection and conservation goals can be achieved. The Master Plan (section 5.3.2) identifies several pillars that should be included in a management plan.

1.5 Regional Parks and Trails

Within or near Metchosin's boundaries are seven Regional 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 Wilderness 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

Parks and Trails Master Plan

Recommendation Highlights and Implementation Schedule

Timeline Range	Investment Range
• On-going	\$ - under \$5,000
• Near term – 1 to 2 years	\$\$ - \$5,000 to \$10,000
• Medium term – 3 to 5 years	\$\$\$ - \$15,000 to \$50,000
	\$\$\$\$ - Over \$50,000

Recommendation	Additional information / Section #	Timeline	Investment	Resourcing
Review the potential of widening road shoulders as part of regular road repaving projects.	Roads to consider: • Happy Valley Road • Kangaroo Road • Glen Forest/Pears Roads • Lindholm Road • Metchosin Road • William Head Road • Duke Road • Rocky Point Road Section: 3.1	Continuing	\$\$\$\$	Council District staff PTASC
Trails proposed as part of residential subdivision projects be constructed and made useable / accessible during the subdivision development process.	Sections: 3.2, 4.9.4, 5.4	Continuing	n/a	Council District staff PTASC
High priority park and trail opportunities be assessed regularly.	Trail opportunities are noted in section 4.9.2 and 4.9.3. Park opportunities in	Continuing	n/a	Council District staff PTASC

Recommendation	Additional information / Section #	Timeline	Investment	Resourcing
New trail opportunities to be assessed through the criteria provided in the Master Plan.	5.4. Trail development criteria noted in 4.9.1.			
Seek partnership opportunities with the CRD on active transportation projects.	See 4.9.5 for specific project recommendations	Continuing	TBD	Council District staff
PTASC develop an annual parks and trails work and maintenance plan	Section 4.5	Continuing	TBD	PTASC
Support and encourage land donations.	Section 3.8	Continuing	TBD	Council District staff PTASC
A round-table session be held twice annually with organizations and individuals involved in invasive management.	Where possible, seek to involve the Capital Region Invasive Species Partnership (CRISP) and local groups. Section 3.6	Continuing	n/a	Council District staff
To support the protection of sensitive ecosystems, that the District continue to forge partnerships with key community groups conservation groups.	Groups to involve: • Metchosin Invasive Species Cooperative, • Bilston Watershed Habitat Protection Association, • Metchosin Foundation • Habitat Acquisition Trust • Friends of the Buffer Land • Friends of Metchosin Mountain Section 3.6, 5.0	Continuing	n/a	Council District staff PTASC

Recommendation	Additional information / Section #	Timeline	Investment	Resourcing
Equestrian use of District trails be continued. Recommendations: - Add a horse crossing sign at William Head Rd at the Ron Weir Trail. - Add a mounting block on the Hillman side of Happy Valley Rd.	Section 4.4	Continuing	N/A	District Staff
The District assess the future of under-utilized parkland, with the goal of either 1) Enhancing biodiversity and/or recreational values, or 2) assessing the sale of such parcels with funds being placed in the Parkland Acquisition Fund.	Section 5.5	Continuing	TBD	Council District staff
Parks/trails containing sensitive ecosystems be identified, management plans developed and other protective measures assessed.	Section 4.9.1	Continuing	TBD	District staff PTASC
The District maintain its current stance on not having garbage receptacles or bathroom facilities at its managed park or beach sites.	Section 6.0	Continuing	n/a	Council District staff
The prohibition on beach fires continue.	Section 6.0	Continuing	n/a	Council District staff
The District take steps to prevent the storage of large beach items (e.g. paddle boards, tents, kayaks, bbqs, umbrellas) and motorized watercraft on Weir Beach.	Section 6.0	Continuing	n/a	Council District staff
The District install benches on key trails to support walkers with limited mobility or those who require rest-stops.	Priority trails: - Hillman Trail - Happy Valley Road in the Village area.	1 – 2 years	\$\$\$	Council District staff PTASC

Recommendation	Additional information / Section #	Timeline	Investment	Resourcing
	Other trails: • Metchosin Road, • Rocky Point Road • Annie Jackson Place. Section 3.1, 4.0			
Assess the potential of an all-season walking track around the School Field	Included as an accessibility action. Section 3.1	1 – 2 years	\$\$\$	Council District staff PTASC
District to clarify its approach to community volunteers working on trails, including issues such as work-levels and insurance needs.	Relates to Trail Stewards Program, Buffer Land, invasive management Sections: 3.2, 3.3, 3.5	1 – 2 years	\$	Council District staff PTASC
Develop a Trail Stewards Program <i>Program underway as of February 2026.</i>	Sections 3.2, 3.6	1 – 2 years	\$	Council District staff PTASC
Confirm approach regarding biking on District managed parks trails. Key recommendations: • Bike use continue to be allowed on all roadside trails. • No biking or the use of mechanized/electric devices on trails where erosion and damage is likely. “No Biking” signs to be placed on trails at high risk of damage. • Motorcycles and ATVs be banned from all district parks and trails.	Section 3.4	1 – 2 years	\$	Council District staff

Recommendation	Additional information / Section #	Timeline	Investment	Resourcing
Pedestrian safety initiatives be undertaken in the Village area. <i>In late 2025, Council voted for funds to implement traffic barriers in two locations: 1) Happy Valley Road after Rocky Point (toward the Village); and, 2) William Head Road south of the Community Hall.</i>	Section 4.3, 4.9.3	1 – 2 years	\$\$\$	Council District staff PTASC
Park signage be developed and placed in highly visited parks; messaging to focused on responsible use and sustainability.	Litter & pet waste, dog under control, staying on trails, limits on biking, etc.. Section 4,0, 5.0	1 – 2 years	\$\$	Council District staff PTASC
The District confirm its position and approach to commercial dog walking on District property. Consideration should be given to a licencing program with fees and identification requirements.	Section 3.2	1 – 2 years	\$	Council District staff
Action be taken to support the environmental conservation goals and the development of a park management plan for the Buffer Land, including: • An inventory / assessment of sensitive environmental areas. • An access management plan. • A restoration plan be developed for areas previously logged and cleared. May include plans for invasive removal, reforestation, riparian enhancement, including the possibility of an engineered wetland.	Section 5.3.3	1 – 2 years	\$\$\$\$	Council District staff PTASC

Recommendation	Additional information / Section #	Timeline	Investment	Resourcing
- Encouraging interest among community members in contributing to restoration and monitoring activities. - A new park name.				
Encourage biking to the beaches, particularly Taylor Beach.	Section 6.0	1 – 2 years	TBD	District Staff
Implement a 20 km/hr speed limit on Taylor Road and Sandgate Road.	Section 6.0	1 – 2 years	\$	District Staff
Steps be taken to prevent parking in areas of high risk pedestrian safety areas, such as near the William Head Rd access point to the Weir Beach stairs.	Section 6.0	1 – 2 years	\$	District Staff
Improve key trails to allow for better access by wheelchairs or mobility assisted devices.	Priority trails: - Happy Valley Road in the Village area. Additional Trails - Blaney - Metchosin Road, - Rocky Point Road - Annie Jackson Place Section 3.1	3 to 5 years	\$\$	District Staff PTASC
District to encourage and support volunteers where appropriate, potentially through retaining a part-time volunteer coordinator.	Section 3.5, 3.6	3 to 5 years	\$\$\$	Council District staff PTASC

Recommendation	Additional information / Section #	Timeline	Investment	Resourcing
New technology (camping location aps, e-bikes, e-scooters, etc.) be considered in parks and trails planning.	Section 3.	3 to 5 years	TBD	PTASC
Explore using QR codes on signs to promote awareness of key issues.	Potentially a pilot project on on invasive species Section 3.6	3 to 5 years	TBD	District staff PTASC
Review Master Plan at the five year mark, post-approval, assessing against any OCP updates.	Section 1.3	3 to 5 years	TBD	Council District staff PTASC
At least one accessibility parking space be considered at Taylor and Weir Beach.	Section 3.1, 6.0	3 to 5 years		Council District staff PTASC
Assess adding accessibility matts (MobiMatts) to allow for improved access to Tayor and/or Weir beaches. These should be considered as part of any updates to the District's Accessibility Plan.	Section 3.1, 6.0	3 to 5 years	\$\$\$	District staff
District to seek opportunities to better understand who visits Weir and Taylor Beaches, possibly through a visitor survey.	Section 6.0	3 to 5 years	\$\$	Council District staff PTASC
Enhance the Parkland Reserve Fund.	Section 5.6		TBD	Council District staff
District to monitor the key lands for potential future parkland opportunities.	Section 5.6			District staff
Explore initiatives to help protect the local marine environment in the Weir and Taylor Beach areas.	Section 6.0		TBD	Council District staff PTASC / MEASC

Recommendation	Additional information / Section #	Timeline	Investment	Resourcing
Any future increases to parking at Taylor and Weir beaches be considered only with a environmentally and economically compelling opportunity.	Section 6.0		N/A	Council District staff

Section 2 - Community Profile and Process

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 6,957 hectares (69.57 km²; 17,396 acres), making it the second largest jurisdiction in the Capital Regional District by land area. Additionally, Metchosin has over 50 km of coastline and has over 1,000 hectares (2,470 acres) 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, and an increase of 359 people from the 2016 census. The median age among Metchosin residents is 50.8 years, which 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 over the next 20 years.¹

Metchosin has limited commercial / industrial development, and a small "village" core area where a number of businesses operate. Metchosin has also followed a low-density approach to residential development for decades. The District is 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 low-density objectives reflective the community's infrastructure limitations. For example, Metchosin relies entirely 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, which represents the fourth highest assessed value (2025 figures) in the CRD, behind Oak Bay, North Saanich and the Highlands.

The District is also 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). Langford is anticipating its population will be 100,000 within 15 to 20 years²; Colwood is planning for 30,168 residents by 2041.³ Population growth throughout the greater Victoria area is also expected to continue.

¹ [2025 Metchosin Housing Capacity Analysis](#)

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

Some of this growth will be beside or near Metchoshin. For example, the Centre Mountain residential development could add as many as 312 homes to an area immediately adjacent to Metchoshin's border. The Royal Bay and Beachlands developments in Colwood will continue to bring thousands of new people to the broader area through additional residential, commercial, institutional and recreational growth..

Regional growth was a key consideration in the development of this plan.

In respect of our parks and trails network, several 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, Metchoshin's undeveloped spaces will likely take on increasing importance on a region-wide basis.
- With a population older than the average further consideration should be given to new accessibility supports on our trails, or even amenities (such as benches) to assist older walkers and those with mobility issues (see section 3.1).
- Given its overall size, the distances to employment/schools/shopping, and the low-level of public transit service, it's likely that Metchoshin will continue to be a "car-community." However, with the development of new transit options, like e-bikes, there will be new opportunities to promote active transportation options as an alternative to cars.
- While Metchoshin has a tradition of low-density, several large properties remain 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

In January 2025, District Council tasked the Parks and Trails Advisory Select Committee (PTASC) with developing the Master Plan. Information on the process that followed is found in Appendix 1.

2.2 Administrative and Planning Context

Metchoshin's Official Community Plan (OCP) covers parks and trails matters through several objectives and policy statements. The OCP also contains two planning documents specific to parks and trails:

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

The key OCP provisions considered as part of the Master Plan are found in Appendix 2.

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
- Metchosin's Green and Blue Spaces Strategy

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 was developed with four principles in mind.

The Master Plan must reflect Metchosin's rural character and traditions, including volunteer stewardship of the natural environment.

- 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 the 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 present, traditional and ancestral connections 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

- Park and trail planning to take into account key environmental goals, including biodiversity enhancement and protection of natural spaces, minimizing impacts to riparian areas, enhancing wildlife corridors, monitoring and managing invasive species.
- Manage risks, including: invasives, climate change risk (fire, flooding), activities that may cause damage.
- Manage and minimize human impacts to natural assets from various current and future uses: mountain biking, e-bikes, commercial dog walking, dogs in parks, random camping.
- Seek new ways of enhancing conservation and environmental preservation, including new park zoning focused on conservation purposes.

Section 3 – Key Trends and Planning Considerations

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. An additional phase of the Accessibility Plan is expected within the next three to five years.

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

Recommendations to support greater accessibility are found in the Recommendation and Implementation Schedule.

3.2 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 budget amounts in the range of \$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 organize efforts to undertake maintenance work within District parks and nature trails, 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.

A recommendation is also made that the District confirm its position and approach to commercial dog walkers, including the potential of a licencing and fee system. The District may chose to follow the CRD’s approach, which includes:

- A park use permit. For commercial dog walkers this was \$465 annually as of 2026.
- A business licence.
- Commercial liability insurance, with a minimum of \$2,000,000 in general commercial liability insurance.
- Dog licencing. All dogs in care must be licenced in their respective municipality.
- Leash Rules. Only off-leash in designated areas.
- Release and Indemnification. An indemnification form must be completed by the holder of the permit.

3.3 Impacts from New Technology

Metchosin’s parks and trails are seeing a range of new technology:

- 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 and recording of plants, animals and fungi (including invasive species), such as through SEEK and iNaturalist.
 - Locating trails, such as through “All Trails.”
 - Locating overnight camping spots (“pass-through camping”), even in places where camping isn’t permitted. Overnight camping has been observed in in certain parks and trailhead areas.
- 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.

3.4 Biking

PTASC heard concerns about the impact of bikes on certain trails, particularly on the trails originating on steep slopes. 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). A key recommendation is that biking not be permitted 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 • La Bonne Connector Trail • Lusse Way Trail
---	--

Additional trails may be added based on continuing input from PTASC, neighbours and community members.

Biking has also been noted on trails such as Hillman, 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 to support active transportation.

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 GGRT, Hartland, Mt Work and Harborview Parks. No biking allowed off the GGRT into Matheson Lake Regional Park.

3.5 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 re-establishment of a Trail Stewards program to expand the number of people who monitor Metchosin's parks and trails. At the time of the development of this plan, a trail of the Trail Steward program had begun.

Many of Metchosin's long-serving volunteers are getting older and many 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.

3.6 Invasive Plants

Invasive plant species represent a significant threat to Metchoshin's biodiversity values, whether on public or private lands. Metchoshin 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 and is now widespread. It was found in Metchoshin in 2025.

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

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

Statutory Rights of Way, Road Allowances and Easements are important elements of several Metchoshin trails and park areas, including lands that may become District-owned parkland in the future. This section describes 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 of 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 Metchoshin, 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 Metchoshin 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:

- Several 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.
- Maintaining easement areas will normally be the District’s responsibility, , but this needs to be confirmed in the specific wording of the covenant document.
- Easements may be considered in connection with donations of land.

Statutory Rights of Way

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 Road, bottom of Duke Road, Kangaroo Road.
- 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 parcels of land owned by the District that are, or may have been, designated as potential roadways. These allowances were frequently established during initial land surveys, particularly for residential subdivisions. In the subdivision process, certain areas

allocated for trails may also be classified as road allowances, even if there is no current intent to develop a roadway. Historical examples would be Blaney Trail and the road allowance at the end of Winfall.

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

The 100-acre Section 95, which is part of the 2017 Reconciliation Agreement, 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 5.3.3) 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.

3.8 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 for such arrangements, including legal and surveying costs.

The donation receipt mechanism is distinct from federal and provincial programs. For example, the federal government's [Ecological Gifts Program](#) focuses on lands that have ecological sensitivity and normally involves third party organizations that 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.

Section 4 – Metchosin Trails

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 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 its natural pathways.

The purpose of this section is to:

- Provide a broad overview of Metchosin's trails, 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 trails 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 any new subdivisions or through resident donations.

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

- Prioritize the maintenance of Metchosin's nature trails so that these provide a safe and enjoyable experience of the natural environment.
- Support active transportation options, in particular roadside trails will be managed and maintained to allow for bike use and (where possible) mobility-assisted devices.
- Pursue opportunities for 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 address threats to the local environment or biodiversity, such as invasives or damage through human use.
- Pursue land dedications and high value trail opportunities, particularly as these opportunities come as a result of subdivisions.

- Encourage and enable volunteer support for appropriate levels of the District's trail maintenance.
- Amenities (such as bathrooms, garbage, parking, benches, signage) will continue to be limited, except in cases where amenities such as benches serve as aids to accessibility.

4.2 Roles and Responsibilities

The following outlines the roles that key participants:

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.
- Provides regular updates to Council on special projects.

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.

Other District staff

- The District's Planner will have expertise in land use matters and general planning in terms of parks.
- The District's Chief Financial Officer develops annual operating and capital budgets, which include allocations for parks and trails matters.

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 of roadside trails, but undertakes maintenance on trails within parks.

- While PTASC has previously undertaken work to construct roadside trails (Pears, Kangaroo) matters like insurance coverage 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 Metchosisin's Trail Network – Trail Types

The broader trail categories include:

Park-based trails

With one exception, trails are found in all of Metchosisin's parks, including Blinkhorn, Buckbrush, Eleanor Mann and Metchosisin 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 Metchosisin 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, Montreuil 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. These 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.

Metchosisin has numerous 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 were 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.

Two recommendations are proposed by the MES:

- That consideration be given to adding a horse crossing sign or crosswalk on William Head Road at the Ron Weir Trail. This can be very dangerous to cross, since it is difficult to see drivers coming down the hill.
- Addition of extra mounting rock on the Hillman side of the Happy Valley/Rocky Point/Hillman intersection.

Riders should continue to exercise good judgement in terms of which trails are accessed and when. Other trail users should use common sense around horses and yield to riders.

4.5 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 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.

4.6 Trail Stewards Program

A Trail Stewards Program (TSP) previously existed in Metchosin, and at the time of preparing this plan the District had just reintroduced the program. The TSP involves 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.

4.7 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 sheep often graze 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.

4.8 Trail Standards

Two main standards are recommended for trail development, and subsequent maintenance.

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 high. The trail base structure only requires compacted native soil, but may be augmented with additional surfacing when required. 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 trailhead. 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 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 high. The base structure requires an equivalent of 75mm of 25mm crushed base course (CBC), over 100mm of 75mm selected granular sub-base (SGSB). The top layer should be composed of 50mm of 10mm crushed rock (screenings) or 75mm of wood chips. Landscape cloth should be installed under the base course where necessary. 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.

4.9 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.

4.9.1 Criteria for new trails

The following should be used to assess new trail development opportunities:

- **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 considered in trail planning.
- **Connectivity.** The potential trail connects to an existing asset like the Galloping Goose Regional Trail (GGRT), 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 can be built economically and with minimal land disruption.
- **Suitable Trail Type.** The trail type (Natural, Surfaced) is appropriate for the location, environment and potential uses.

- **Minimizing environmental impacts.** Where possible, avoid tree removal, avoid sensitive or protected areas, minimize the potential of flooding or slope erosion. Where possible, multiple on-site visits should occur during separate seasons to better understand site-specific flora/fauna.
- **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.

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

4.9.2 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, which also cover Colwood and Langford. The property is zoned CR2/CR3 and thus there is the potential of a future subdivision. Trail development and/or land preservation opportunities may arise in future discussions with the property owners regarding subdivision plans (if/when these arise). An informal trail network currently exists on the Metchosin portion of the property.
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

4.9.3 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 2025 Active Transportation Network 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.

4.9.4 Trail Development during Subdivision Planning

Future subdivision projects are likely to be the means by which Metchosin gains new trails or parks. 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 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 be developed as intended. While subdivision amenities will likely serve nearby residents, these should be accepted for the benefit of the entire community.

4.9.5 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 improvements 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 is noted as dangerous for both trail/recreational pedestrians, particularly school-age children waiting for buses. A partnership opportunity between Colwood and Metchosin should be explored.

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.

4.9.6. Projects in 2009 Trails Master Plan

The 2009 Trail Network Master Plan identified 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 feasibility assessments were done looking at costs, constructability, land ownership/tenure issues, and other factors.

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:

- Happy Valley Rd (potentially with partnerships (CRD or other))
- Metchosin Rd (potentially with partnerships (CRD or other))
- Arden Rd
- Rocky Point Rd (sections of)
- William Head Rd (sections of)

A list of the projects in the 2009 Trails Master Plan can be found in Appendix 3.

4.9.8. Trail Projects Not Recommended for Development

The following have been considered and are not recommended for trail development at this time.

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 Morland 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 in the three linear parks in this area. This is based on the following:

- Lack of neighbour support for trails. A group of neighbours raised concerns regarding trail development in 2008, 2015 and most recently in 2024.
- Council has not directed PTASC to consider trails in these parks.
- Area neighbours have formed an environmental stewardship group for this area. The group has cited a number of reasons for excluding trails from this area, including fire risk,

protection of riparian values, ground cover and natural vegetation as well as numerous species of wildlife that coexist with neighbours in this area.

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.

Trail from Graceland Park to Duke Road East

The park at the end of Graceland has been identified as an under-utilized park space. 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.

Section 5 – Metchosin Parks

5.0 Overview

The District of Metchosin owns or has active management of over 147 hectares (362 acres) of land, designated as “park”. This includes the Buffer Land, which became a District park in July 2026. The District has a licence of occupation for park use with Section 28 and 25 (both are accounted for in the total acreage above). Section 95 (100 acres), which is adjacent to the Buffer Land, is expected to be conveyed to the District as parkland in the future. Our parks include large 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. 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.
- Managing costs and quality of work.

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 3.5).

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

5.3 Metchosin's Parks

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 prepared for public use or conservation purposes or acquired (as is the case with Section 25 and 28).

5.3.1 Current parks

- **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 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.
- **Buffer Land** (45.92 ha; 113.49 acres). Dedicated as a park in July 2026, this area borders the housing and commercial area under development in Langford.
- **Carlton Cosh Nature Park** (0.91ha; 2.24 acres): A small, forested park adjacent to Kangaroo Road, known for mature trees, native plant, and birdwatching opportunities.
- **Eleanor Mann Park** (17 ha; 42 acres): A scenic park that provides green space for relaxation, walking and equestrian activities.
- **Libra Trail Area** (Section 28) (20 ha; 50 acres): This section of land contains a set of trails that connect the Aquarius-Gemini-Libra neighbourhood to the GGRT. Ownership of this property will transfer to the District as part of the 2017 Reconciliation Agreement Land Swap (see Sec. 5.3.2). Presently, this property is owned by the provincial government but operated by the District through a Licence of Occupation agreement.
- **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." Ownership of this property will transfer to the District as part of the 2017 Reconciliation Agreement Land

Swap (see Sec. 5.3.2). Presently, 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 community garden space. Adjacent to the field is the Old Metchosin Schoolhouse Museum.

5.3.2. Future Parkland Assets from the 2017 Reconciliation Agreement

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 as 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.

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). Action is 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 acres) came into the District's ownership through the 2017 Boundary Adjustment. It was designated as a park in July 2026 and a Section 219 Covenant affirming conservation objectives is to be attached to the land title in the near future. A significant environmental feature of this area is that a large section of Metchosin Creek runs through the north lobe, which then enters the Bilston Creek system.

The Buffer Land Working Group's (BLWG) October 2023 report made 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 among Metchosin's greenspaces as it's 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 for, protect and manage this land effectively.
- Opportunities should be pursued to have Buffer Land be the site of ecologically-oriented research, potentially in partnership with local post-secondary institutions (RRU, UVic, Camosun).

The following elements should be considered as part of a Park Management Plan specific to the Buffer Land:

- An environmental/ecological inventory. Understand wildlife movement, tree canopy preservation and enhancement, understory vegetation, riparian protection, soils/hydrology.
- A restoration plan for disturbed areas, including invasive species removal and reforestation where possible.
- An access plan, including identifying entry/exit points, designated trails, 'no-go' areas for conservation protection, approach to recreational activities and dog-walking,
- An operations plan, including clarity on roles/responsibilities (i.e. staff/volunteer), key park actions (fencing, signage, riparian measures, etc.), enforcement (e.g. unauthorized uses, newly created trails), monitoring for fire risk, etc..

Friends of the Buffer Land, an group composed of community members, formed as this Master Plan was in development. This group should be consulted and involved in the development of the park management plan.

In developing the Park Management Plan, District staff should actively engage PTASC and community groups like Friends of the Buffer Land and the Bilston Creek Watershed Habitat Protection Association.

5.3.4 CRD Parks

There are five regional parks located within Metchosin, which are managed by the CRD. 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 • Bob Mountain Trail • Beckingham (forthcoming)	• Matheson Lake Access Trail • Top of LaBonne • Wayne's Rock
--	--

5.3.5 Unmanaged Parkland

The District also owns land parcels that are undeveloped, but do not function as established parks,. These parcels include:

- Branson Trail Pocket Park
- Graceland: a pocket -park (0.416 ha / 1.02 acres) from a past subdivision in the Albert Head neighbourhood.
- Hi-Mount/Saddleback: linear park space granted from a original subdivision process serving as a nature space in these areas. Three park parcels extend at a range of points from Hi-Mount Drive to Saddleback Road.
- Undeveloped linear and pocket park connecting Saddleback Road to Sundance Drive, of approximately 1.5 acres.
- 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.
- Metchosin Road: a pocket park between 3740 and 3790 Metchosin Road.
- Saddleback-Stirrup Place: linear park space granted from the original subdivision process now serving as a nature space in these areas. Extends from Saddleback Road to Stirrup Place.
- Seaspray: a pocket park from a past subdivision in the Albert Head neighbourhood.
- Spellman: an pocket 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.

5.4 Potential Parkland Acquisitions

Future park additions 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 5.6) or funds from other sources (i.e. funds from organizations or individuals)

- Donation by a private landowner (see section 3.8)

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 4.9.1, 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, including protection of wildlife corridors.
- 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. These are found in Appendix 4.

5.5 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 "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 use, the District could see financial benefit for 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 (see 5.6), to which the funds of any sale of park land would be directed.

(DRAFT) Recommendations:

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 not 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.

5.6 Parkland Acquisition Fund and Potential Acquisitions

As of 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. Based on current market values, it's estimated that the District would need a minimum of \$500,000 to acquire a land parcel of meaningful size and value.

It's recommended that the District watch for opportunities to acquire suitable parcels in the following areas: Metchosin Mountain, Blinkhorn Mountain, Rocky Point Rd/Tavane Rd, 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.

The 1986 Parks and Recreation Plan identified a number of parcels for possible purchase for park space. This list can be found in Appendix 4.

Section 6 – Beaches

6.0 Overview

This section covers Weir Beach and Taylor Beach. Both beaches receive thousands of visits a year, whether from local residents or those in the greater Victoria area. Both beaches are part of a complex chain of shoreline features spanning over 50 kilometres. 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 directive: "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 has responsibilities related to both beaches. These include traffic management (parking), garbage collection, emergency management, fire protection, land use and bylaw enforcement.

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.

This section does not cover the beaches at Witty's Lagoon Regional Park, Devonian Regional Park, and Albert Head Lagoon Regional Park as these are managed by the CRD or under the jurisdiction of other levels of government (federal/provincial).

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. In Metchosin's situation, the 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

Weir Beach is located at the southern end of the District and is accessible from Sandgate Road via William Head Road or by 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 homes accessible from Sandgate Road. A RV 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. Concerns have been raised about leaking septic systems and impacts on the beach and marine environment.

There are two freshwater 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 bathroom facilities. Both ideas were considered challenging in terms of the additional staff workload and added costs of servicing bathrooms.

Parking is limited in this area. There are approximately 19 stalls near the beach on Sandgate Road. 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. During Covid, with the increase in beach and trail usage, the District had a yellow line painted along one side of Sandgate Road and portions of William Head. No Parking signage was also erected so that first responders could attend emergencies in a safe manner. 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.

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."

From time to time, there has been consideration of adding bathrooms to Weir Beach (and/or Taylor Beach). 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 (small-sized doggie-bags) 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.

Beach fires are prohibited on Weir Beach (and Taylor Beach), 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

In terms of broader connectivity, the Ron Weir Trail is accessible via William Head Road and Pearson College Drive. 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. The Weir Beach stairs were replaced in 2025, but will need to be monitored due to their proximity to the tidal area.

6.3 Taylor Beach

Taylor Beach is valued for its clear waters and accessible shoreline. 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. No other parking is allowed on Taylor Road. When the weather is warm it is a popular place with limited parking!

Taylor Beach itself spans over 1 km of ocean front and is also accessible from the CRD-managed Devonian Regional Park with its larger parking lot. The beach serves as frontage for several large residential properties and farms north of Devonian Park.