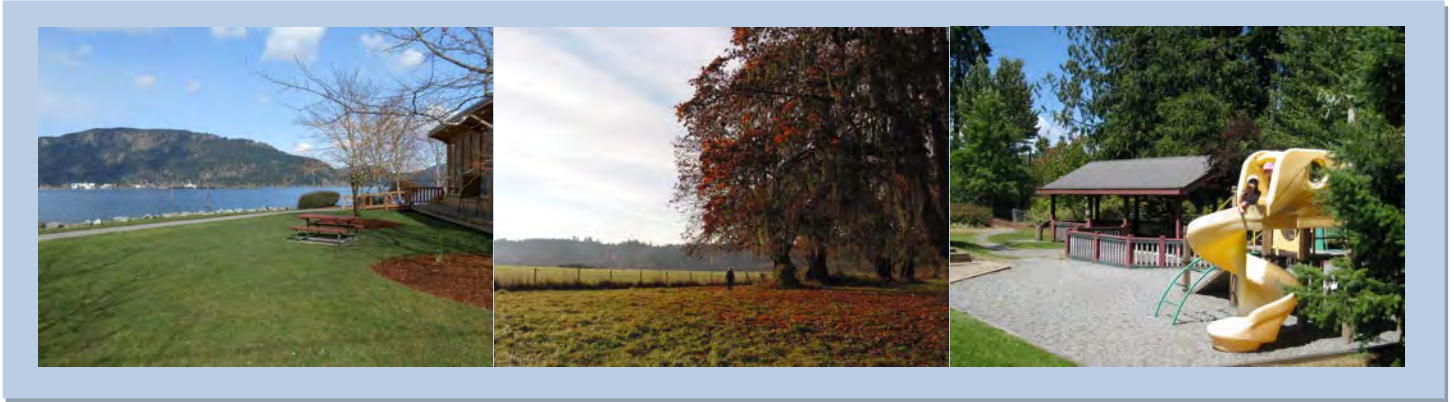


Cowichan Bay

(Electoral Area D)



Community Parks & Trails Master Plan

Prepared by: Cowichan Valley Regional District Parks, Recreation and Culture Department



October 2013

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Cowichan Bay Community Parks and Trails Master Plan could not have been completed without the vision, observations and ideas of the local Cowichan Bay Parks and Recreation Commission, and from Landworks Consultants who assisted with the background information gathering, field work and open houses. All input helped form the basis of the report.

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Throughout the planning process over the last few years, Cowichan Bay residents gave their time and perspectives by attending open houses and completing public response forms. Thank you for your thoughtful insights and ideas.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Community Parks and Trails Master Plan was initiated for the community of Cowichan Bay (Electoral Area D) by the Cowichan Valley Regional District and the Cowichan Bay Parks and Recreation Commission. The purpose of this plan is to set direction and priorities for community parks and trails in Cowichan Bay over the next 10 to 20 years.

This plan outlines parkland acquisition opportunities and trail linkages within the community that should be considered alongside future community development and to ensure an ecologically and socially cohesive network of parks and trails are accessible to residents and visitors, now and into the future.

In developing the Cowichan Bay Community Parks and Trails Master Plan, public input was sought through open houses and public response forms. The ideas and priorities for Cowichan Bay's local parks and trails presented in this plan are based on input from the public, the Parks and Recreation Commission and CVRD Parks and Trails Division staff.

Each of the recommendations presented in Section 5 of this document were measured against the plan's vision to determine the overall value each provides for the community parks and trails system.

Priority Recommendations (Years 1-10)

- 1. Preparation of a park development plan with community input for the re-development of Coverdale Watson Park to upgrade/replace aging park facilities and amenities.**
- 2. Construct a walking pathway connection starting from Cowichan Bay Road at Hecate Park, up the Wessex Ravine to Pritchard Road then a shared roadway to Stephanie's Stroll.**
- 3. Upgrades to the marine foreshore and trails within Hecate Park.**
- 4. Continue expansion of the Wilmot multi-use pathway with priority between George Road and the Cowichan Bay Village.**
- 5. Complete the Cowichan River Estuary Trail starting at Maple Grove Park, to the existing Dike Trail, looping around and along the Koksilah River with an eventual footbridge connection over the river to join up with Cowichan Bay Road.**
- 6. Construction of a multi-use pathway along Cowichan Bay Road from Ordano Road to Telegraph Road.**

- 7. Acquisition and construction of a multi-use trail corridor from the corner of Ordano Road and McGill Road travelling directly south to Koksilah Road.**
- 8. Construct the Cowichan Bay Village walkway from the Cowichan Bay Boat Launch to Wilmot Road.**
- 9. The establishment of public beach and waterfront accesses along the marine foreshore.**

Secondary Recommendations (Beyond Year 10)

Additional recommendations are provided for a number of projects that are outside the 10-year timeframe. These recommendations are described within the following categories:

- Community Park Revitalization
- Trail and Community Pathway Development
- Community Park Acquisitions

These projects were identified during the master planning process but were either a lower priority or an ongoing priority and therefore have not been included within the 10-year implementation timeline.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	1
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	4
1. INTRODUCTION	6
1.1 WHAT ARE COMMUNITY PARKS AND TRAILS?	6
1.1.1 Community Parks Administration	6
1.2 GOALS & OBJECTIVES OF THE MASTER PLAN	6
1.3 OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE.....	8
1.4 MASTER PLANNING APPROACH.....	8
2. COMMUNITY PARKS CONTEXT	10
2.1 COWICHAN BAY WITHIN THE CVRD	10
2.1.1 Background.....	10
2.2 COMMUNITY VISION	12
2.3 POPULATION GROWTH.....	12
2.4 LAND USE AND THE ENVIRONMENT	13
2.4.1 Oceanfront	14
2.4.2 Agricultural Land Reserve	15
3. EXPLORING THE CURRENT COMMUNITY PARKS AND TRAILS SYSTEM	17
3.1 EXISTING PARKS (2012)	17
3.1.1 Park Jurisdiction	17
3.1.2 CVRD Definition.....	18
3.1.3 Summary of Existing Community Parks (2012)	21
3.1.4 Other Parks and Community Land Spaces in Cowichan Bay	24
3.2 EXISTING TRAILS AND PATHWAYS	24
3.2.1 Trail Classifications.....	25
4. PLANNING A FUTURE PARKS AND TRAILS SYSTEM.....	28
4.1 OUTDOOR RECREATION TRENDS.....	28
4.1.1 Demographics - Population growth and Age Trends	28
4.1.2 Activity Choices	28
4.1.3 Demand Trends.....	30
4.1.4 Facility Factors	31
4.1.5 Environmental Factors	32
4.2 COMMUNITY PARKS FUNDING SOURCES	33
4.2.1 Local Government Funds.....	33
4.2.2 Senior Government Funding and Private Funds.....	35
4.2.3 Partnerships	35
4.3 PUBLIC CONSULTATION	36
4.3.1 Cowichan Bay Parks and Recreation Commission input	36
4.3.2 Community Outreach	36
4.3.3 Key Parks and Trails Issues.....	36
5. PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS	38
5.1 PRIORITY 1 RECOMMENDATIONS (YEARS 1 – 10)	39
5.2 PRIORITY 2 RECOMMENDATIONS (BEYOND YEAR 10).....	43

- 5.2.1 *Community Park Revitalization* 43
- 5.2.2 *Trail and Community Pathway Development*..... 43
- 5.2.3 *Community Park Acquisitions*..... 47
- 5.3 SYSTEM-WIDE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COWICHAN BAY 48
 - 5.3.1 *Community Parkland Acquisition and Land Use Partnership Strategy*. 48
 - 5.3.2 *Community Park Operations and Management*..... 50
 - 5.3.3 *Park and Trail Stewardship*..... 53
- 6. IMPLEMENTING THE COMMUNITY PARKS AND TRAILS PLAN..... 56**
 - 6.1 EXISTING STRUCTURE, PLAN OBJECTIVES & TIMEFRAMES 56
 - 6.1.2 *Maintaining Community Parks and Park Amenities*..... 57

1. INTRODUCTION

The Cowichan Bay Community Parks and Trails Master Plan document sets direction and priorities for the next ten to twenty years for community parks and public trail corridors in Electoral Area D – Cowichan Bay, recognizing the need to work alongside future development and growth in the community.

1.1 What are Community Parks and Trails?

Community parks and trails are established to provide local, publicly accessible green spaces for residents of the Cowichan Bay community. These sites often have a variety of purposes, such as sports or passive recreation, environmental protection, access to waterfront, or preservation of unique landscapes or historical features.

Each of the nine Electoral Areas in the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) has a system of community parks which are levied separately by each Electoral Area to establish, develop and maintain these parks.

1.1.1 Community Parks Administration

Community parks and trails are administered by the CVRD's Parks and Trails Division and are funded individually by each Electoral Area. This means that community parks and trails in Electoral Area D should directly benefit the people who live in the Cowichan Bay community. The Cowichan Bay Parks and Recreation Commission is comprised of volunteers that are residents of Cowichan Bay appointed to the Commission by the Cowichan Valley Regional District Board. The Parks Commission makes recommendations to the CVRD Board on park policy, park acquisition, community parks projects, and volunteer involvement in local community parks.

1.2 Goals & Objectives of the Master Plan

The Master Plan sets short and long-term goals for the community in providing for improved local parks and trails. These goals include:

- expansion and renewal of facilities and amenities within existing parks,
- acquisition of property for additional public parkland,
- establishment of linear trail/pathway corridors,
- continuation of public involvement and input towards acquiring and managing the local parks and trails system.

The Plan establishes the priorities and recommendations that will guide the meeting of these goals for the next 10-20 years. It is a living document that recognizes the limitations of existing government programs, policies, funding and legislation while striving to provide the highest possible level of service to residents of Electoral Area D-



Cowichan Bay Village area

Cowichan Bay. More specifically the following objectives were identified through the public process that coincides with the objectives outlined in the adopted 2013 Cowichan Bay Official Community Plan.

1. Encourage walkability in the community by connecting existing trails and parkland in subdivisions, through property acquisition either at future subdivision or through direct purchase, donation or gifting, and along road rights-of-way in the Kingscote, Lambourn, Alder Glen, Wilmot Road, Longwood areas, and to and through new subdivisions when they are approved.
2. Establish a process that enables lands to be acquired through the subdivision or rezoning process specifically for future disposition at future market value for the specific purpose of raising revenue to acquire sites that specifically meet the Community Parks and Trails Master Plan objectives.
3. Acquire lands to create public beach accesses when development proposals or subdivisions border any portion of the Cowichan Bay foreshore. *One of the OCP policy statements says that “at the time of subdivision of land adjacent to the ocean or a watercourse, the CVRD will recommend to the Subdivision Approving Authority that public access to all water bodies be required.”*
4. Seek partnerships with local community groups or other Government agencies to achieve the objectives within the community parks and trails master plan. *One of the OCP objectives says that “to collaborate with other government agencies, First Nations, non-profit organizations and community members to establish parks and trails infrastructure and connections to adjacent jurisdictions”.*
5. Adopt a Development Cost Charge (DCC) Bylaw as a means to raise additional revenues for parkland acquisition.
6. Encourage gifting and donations of lands or park amenities during re-zoning or by other means for community park purposes and develop an associated recognition program for donors of improvements and equipment (benches, bicycle racks, picnic tables, signage, etc.) to local parks and trails.
7. Adopt a funding strategy for parks and trails acquisition and long term maintenance.

8. Design parks that take long-term maintenance into consideration with respect to operational costs and replacement.

1.3 Official Community Plan Update

In 2013 a new Official Community Plan (OCP) for Electoral Area D – Cowichan Bay was adopted which represents the community’s vision for the future and provides a framework to guide growth and decisions about the use and management of land and water resources in the Electoral Area.

The OCP identifies 12 goals that are supported through this Community Parks and Trails Master Plan. These are to:

1. Restore, protect & enhance the health of the Cowichan Bay estuary & marine foreshore
2. Enhance rural community character
3. Carefully manage growth
4. Support productive agriculture & food self sufficiency
5. Improve transportation and mobility
6. Enhance the environment, ecosystems & biodiversity
7. Create an inclusive community with strong social infrastructure
8. Encourage meaningful economic development and employment
9. Enhance connections to the waterfront
10. Recognize heritage, cultural values & identity
11. Improve public & environmental health
12. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions

1.4 Master Planning Approach

The community of Cowichan Bay was first approached in 2005 as a first step in gathering input into where the community wished to go in terms of parks and trail opportunities through the Electoral Area. Two public open houses were offered to provide a forum for Cowichan Bay residents to identify what and where future parks and trails should go in their community.

As a second step, two more public open houses were held in 2007 by the CVRD to provide additional public input into potential parks and trail linkages throughout the Electoral Area. A public response form was presented during these open house sessions to provide additional means for the community to voice their ideas. A copy of the response form can be found in Appendix 4. In addition to these open houses, all relevant documents that have been created over the years were researched and

incorporated into the final Cowichan Bay Community Parks and Trails Master Plan and can be found in Appendix 3.

Since this time the new 2013 Cowichan Bay Official Community Plan has been adopted providing more direction on the community's vision, and through the public process additional information on parkland interests and future community growth potential has been collected. This information is now incorporated into the Cowichan Bay Community Parks and Trails Master Plan. More detail on the consultation process is covered under Section 4.3.

The Electoral Area D – Cowichan Bay Parks and Recreation Commission has provided valuable input throughout the process of creating this document, as well using their vast local knowledge of the area and keen enthusiasm for making Cowichan Bay the best possible place to live.

The approach taken to the development of this Community Parks and trails Master Plan has been to consider it as a road map for the community. The Master Plan includes:

- Existing parks, trails and wildlife corridors/preserves;
- Current inventory for each existing park including individual maps of each park.
- Proposed parks and trails for potential acquisition;
- Park inventory assessments to meet current and anticipated future needs of the community;
- Priorities for parks, trails and wildlife corridors/preserves for acquisition and development;
- Maps that identify existing and future potential parks and trails, and the timing for their development or acquisition.

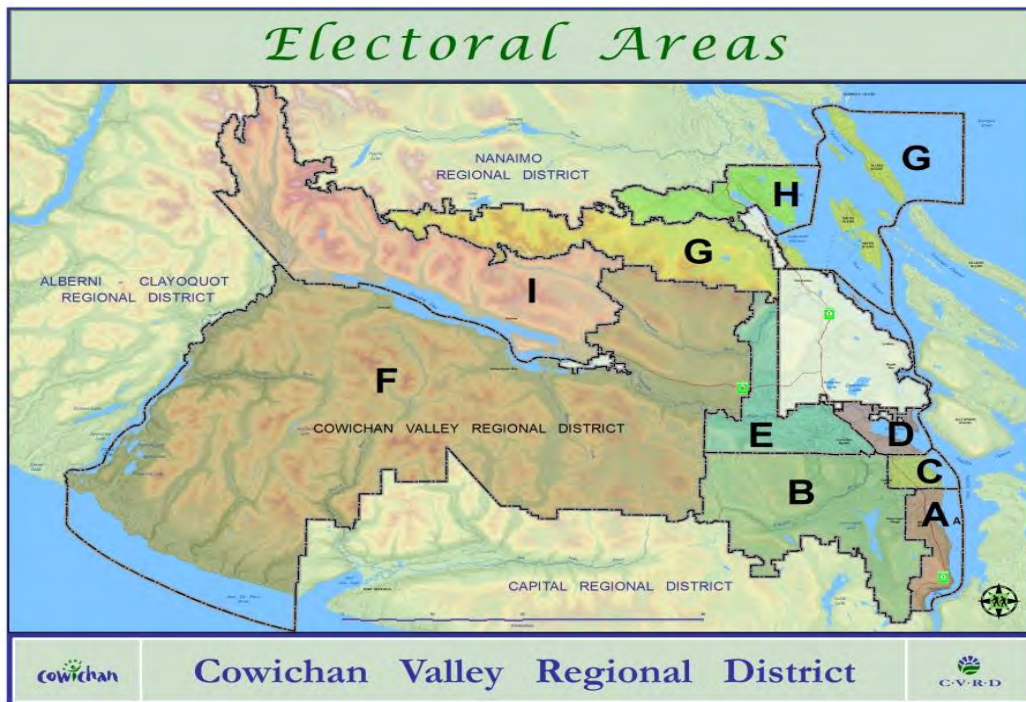


Looking towards Cowichan Bay and Mount Tzouhalem

2. COMMUNITY PARKS CONTEXT

2.1 Cowichan Bay within the CVRD

Electoral Area D - Cowichan Bay includes 4,600 hectares of land and water, and is located south of the Municipality of North Cowichan and within the Cowichan Valley Regional District, with the Trans-Canada Highway to the west, and the Strait of Georgia/Salish Sea to the east. Cowichan Bay, the Cowichan River estuary, the Cherry Point waterfront, Mount Tzouhalem and Separation Point are the dominant natural features of the area. Cowichan Bay shares its borders with Electoral Area E – Cowichan Station / Sahtlam / Glenora to the west, North Cowichan to the north, and both Electoral Area C - Cobble Hill and Electoral Area B – Shawnigan Lake to the south.



2.1.1 Background

Prior to large scale immigration from Europe and elsewhere, the Cowichan Bay area was inhabited for thousands of years by first nation communities that lived by hunting, fishing and trading with similar indigenous communities up and down the west coast. Since large scale settlement began, the Cowichan Bay Harbour played a major role in the opening up of the Cowichan Valley and its surrounding area, primarily for farming and the export of lumber. The advent of the railways in the earlier part of the last century supplanted the Harbour's role as a prime mover of people and

general goods, and now the Trans-Canada Highway has replaced the function of the railway.

A substantial fishing fleet grew in response to rich local fish stocks and the protected moorage, although the processing and export of lumber was the most dominant economic activity of the Harbour in the latter part of the 20th century. Now in the 21st century the major economic driver is tourism. In 2009, Cowichan Bay was designated North America's first Cittaslow Community. The Cittaslow Cowichan Bay mission is to preserve the unique identity of the Cowichan Bay area and to continually improve the quality of life for residents and visitors. Cowichan Bay has officially embraced the Cittaslow philosophy of sustainability, linking the community and the land in an environmentally responsible manner. The Electoral Area generally consists of agricultural, commercial and residential lands that make up the land uses in the area.

Cowichan Tribes has four reserves within the boundaries of Electoral Area D:

- Cowichan Reserve No. 9 (south of Clemclemalutz Village),
- Cowichan Reserve No. 1 (east of the Trans-Canada Hwy),
- Theik Reserve No. 2 (to the north), and
- Kil-Pah-Las Reserve No. 3 (east of 'Cowichan Bay Village').

Three of these reserves front on the Cowichan Bay foreshore while Cowichan Reserve No. 1 is located primarily in the estuary portion of the Electoral Area. In addition, a portion of the Municipality of North Cowichan is located at the head of the Bay occupying 305 metres of coastline and a larger upland area.

Cowichan Bay Village is a seaside historical commercial fishing village and is the heart of Electoral Area D. It includes residential, commercial, industrial, recreational, marine and institutional uses and is a busy working community that is attractive to residents and tourists. The Village has a number of marinas, a Harbour Authority and a deep-water port at the head of the bay.

Cowichan Bay itself is a sensitive marine/estuarine environment; the estuary is one of the largest on the coast of British Columbia and supports a biologically productive, diverse natural community that is protected through the Cowichan Estuary Environmental Management Plan (CEEMP) that was introduced by a Provincial Order in Council in 1987. The bay, the estuary, and the maritime character of the village play a strong role in shaping the community from a cultural, natural and physical perspective.



The Cowichan River Estuary taken from Mount Tzouhalem

2.2 Community Vision

The Community Parks and Trails Vision for Cowichan Bay (Electoral Area D) which evolved through the public engagement and input process and states:

“To have an interconnected system of local parks, inclusive of beach access points and waterfront parks, with major community destinations linked by a network of trails and pathways for walking, hiking and biking/cycling.”

This vision is based on public input through the Cowichan Bay Community Parks and Trails Master Planning open house sessions held throughout 2005 – 2007, the new OCP public open house sessions in 2011/2012 and the Cowichan Bay Community Parks and Trails Master Plan open house held in May 2013 to present the draft plan.

This vision has guided the preparation of the Community Parks and Trails Master Plan for Cowichan Bay and will help measure the success of its implementation. Residents want to walk, hike, cycle, and otherwise circulate within and between neighbourhoods and within the Electoral Area as a whole. They want to be able to enjoy safe roadside and off-road trail experiences, enjoy the local community parks, and the community has a strong desire for connectivity between existing and new residential communities and existing and newly created parks.

Residents have noted that when parks are established there is no single form of park that has priority or precedence. New parks should be based on:

- The needs and desires of the community,
- Preservation and protection of natural features and species,
- Acquisition of the largest and most appropriate areas for public parkland

The goal is to protect the community’s natural areas and resources as well as reflecting the Cittaslow principles of food management and security.

2.3 Population Growth

According to Statistics Canada and as noted in the 2013 Cowichan Bay OCP, by 2036 it is anticipated that almost 4000 people will live in the Electoral Area (excluding First Nation reserves). This population group will also be considerably older and will require community services and facilities to meet their needs. It is estimated that the population aged 65 and older will grow from 19% to 27% of the total population meaning that the number of seniors will almost double (from 575 to 1045) and that the population of over 85 years of age will triple (from 55 to 132).

Cowichan Bay Community Parks & Trails Vision

To have an interconnected system of local parks, inclusive of beach access points and waterfront parks, with major community destinations linked by a network of trails and pathways for walking, hiking and biking/cycling.

The 2006 census reported that 45% of the active labour force (605 people) worked outside the Electoral Area and that 21% (290 people) had a place of employment outside the Cowichan Valley. This equates to two thirds of the active labour force residing in Cowichan Bay and leaving the community each day for work. The adopted Cowichan Bay Official Community Plan (2013) identifies the following two objectives and associated policies that support the vision of the Cowichan Bay Community Parks and Trails Master Plan in terms of community growth and the transportation network.

OCP Objective 1

To improve active transportation (i.e. walking, cycling, horse, transit) connections between neighborhoods, commercial nodes, the waterfront and other communities.

***Policy (a):** All new and existing development should be integrated with the transportation and mobility network with linkages to roadside pathways, trails, cycling routes, public transit, and roadways.*

OCP Objective 2

To increase opportunities for healthy social and cultural interaction within the community through the provision of community services and facilities.

***Policy (a):** The CVRD will place a priority on enhancing community amenities, facilities and services, specifically within Village Areas and Rural Village Areas.*

2.4 Land use and the Environment

The Cowichan Bay OCP defines Land Use Designations throughout the Electoral Area. The Parks (P) designation encompasses all existing and proposed public parks and is intended to accommodate various classes of parks, trails, community gardens and facilities that complement parks purposes. Parks will continue to be allowed in any land use designation and will be subsequently placed in the “P” designation and zoned accordingly. The “P” designation covers all the classes of parks that are covered under this Cowichan Bay Community Parks and Trails Master Plan as well as any other future park classifications that may not be covered under this Master Plan.

A healthy natural environment is important to the health and well-being of a community as it provides economic, recreational, social and cultural opportunities which are highly valued by the community. Cowichan Bay is known for its Great Blue Heron population as significant nesting sites are located in the Electoral Area. The largest known Heron Rookery on Vancouver Island is situated within Wessex Ravine Park near Hecate Park just west of the village of Cowichan Bay. Other significant bird species known to reside in Cowichan Bay are bald eagles, purple martin, cormorants and various owl species. Rare plant and animal species

found within community parks are monitored and identified with assistance from local volunteer groups such as the “Naturalist Society”.

There are other important sensitive areas within the Electoral Area D that must be taken into consideration during development, and protection of these areas can often be provided through the establishment of park areas. Key environmentally sensitive areas are the Cowichan Estuary, the marine foreshore, and ravine areas (Wessex Ravine, Longwood Ravine, other smaller ravines). In addition to these areas the following have important environmental values within the community:

Riparian and Floodplain ecosystems are found adjacent to lakes, streams and rivers, where high soil moisture and light conditions support distinct soils and plant communities. Riparian ecosystems also occur along smaller streams and rivers and along lake shores. They vary in width from less than one metre along stream banks to more than 100 metres near large rivers such as the Cowichan and Koksilah Rivers. There are numerous creeks that run into Cowichan Bay that provide important habitat for fish and plant communities.

Seasonally Flooded Agriculture Fields are lands that have been modified for agricultural use but have important wildlife habitat value during specific times of the year. They are especially valuable as migrating and wintering waterfowl habitats. At the mouth of the Cowichan Estuary beside Maple Grove Park is an area managed by the Nature Trust of BC and Ducks Unlimited for waterfowl while being used part of the year for complementary agricultural purposes. A lot of this area is also part of a larger floodplain that extends further inland to the Koksilah Industrial Area.

Wetland ecosystems are characterized by seasonal or year-round water, either at or above the soil surface, or within the root zone or plants. They are generally found in areas of flat, undulating terrain and wetter climates. The most significant wetland in Electoral Area D is in the estuary at the mouth of the Cowichan and Koksilah Rivers.

2.4.1 Oceanfront

Electoral Area D - Cowichan Bay covers approximately 16.5 km of shoreline which is the longest length of ocean waterfront of the Electoral Areas in the CVRD along the east coast of Vancouver Island, which offers unique recreational and natural values for the community of Cowichan Bay. Approximately half of this distance is taken up by the Cowichan Bay estuary, and First Nation Lands, while the remaining distance is where the majority of the current development is situated. The foreshore is always in high demand for further development, yet is one of the highest priority areas to preserve for ecological conservation and passive public recreation



Riparian area on Koksilah River and floodplains



Agriculture fields adjacent to Maple Grove Park



Cowichan Bay Estuary

access to the foreshore, through parkland dedication or other means. Currently, there are limited public access points to the beaches in Cowichan Bay, all of which do not provide access for those with physical disabilities.

The Green Shores Initiative (www.greenshores.ca) is a new effort to promote “sustainable use of coastal ecosystems through planning and design that recognizes the ecological features and functions of coastal systems.”

There are four main principles to the Green Shores initiative:

1. Preserve the integrity and connectivity of coastal processes.
2. Maintain and enhance habitat diversity and function (on a local or regional scale).
3. Minimize and reduce pollutants to the marine environment.
4. Reduce cumulative impacts to the coastal environment.

In 2012 the community’s first green shores project took place on a portion of waterfront land between the Cowichan Bay Marine Gateway Site and Hecate Park adjacent to Cowichan Bay Road. The beach was modified from an armoured shoreline to a natural seascape beach shoreline. This project will set precedents for other similar projects in the community.

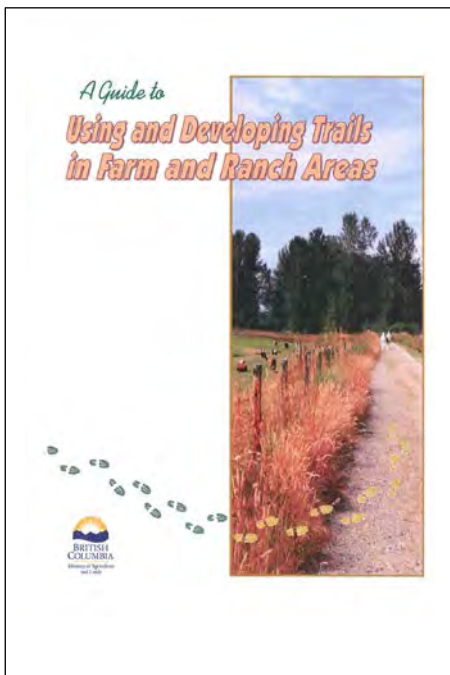
2.4.2 Agricultural Land Reserve

As of 1974, the preservation of quality agricultural land has been regulated in BC through the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and the development of the *Land Commission Act*. “*The Agricultural Land Reserve is a provincial zone in which agriculture is recognized as the priority use. Farming is encouraged and non-agricultural uses are controlled*” (Provincial Agricultural Land Commission, 2008).

Approximately 70% of the Electoral Area D – Cowichan Bay land base is within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), with just over 50% classified as active farmland. (*Cowichan Bay OCP*). A productive agricultural landscape is important to the local economy in terms of providing subsidiary tourism, recreation, and other value-added opportunities.

The adopted 2013 Cowichan Bay OCP includes a policy that all trails proposed on lands located within the ALR require the approval of the ALC and if approved, should be developed in accordance with the Ministry of Agriculture publication, “*A guide to Using and Developing Trails in Farm and Ranch Areas*”.

Buffers to agriculture land can reduce the risk of damaging crops through trampling or excessive dust. Depending on the type of



Provincial Guide to trails in Agricultural Areas (2002)

buffer, trail-users can have different experiences in relation to the farmland. Some buffers that work well in conjunction with trail corridors are:

- Vegetation screens; tall or short can block or allow partial views to fields.
- Physical separation in the form of fencing or water bodies.
- Terrain modifications such as berms and dykes.

Cowichan Bay’s rural setting invites unique recreational opportunities through trail linkages that can integrate the agricultural aspects of the community with core gathering areas such as the Cowichan Bay Village, Whippletree Junction and the Valley View Crossroads Centre.



Agricultural Fields off Koksilah Road



Agricultural Fields off Cherry Point Road

3. EXPLORING THE CURRENT COMMUNITY PARKS AND TRAILS SYSTEM

3.1 Existing Parks (2012)

The Cowichan Bay community parks and trails system as of the end of 2012 consists of 21 community park properties, including trail corridors, for a total of 24.27 hectares of park land. The majority of existing parks in Cowichan Bay are located within the vicinity of the Cowichan Bay Village core and the Cherry Point area between Lanes Road and Sutherland Road. Detailed summaries of all existing parks and trails can be found in Appendix 2.

3.1.1 Park Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction for local community parks in Electoral Area D – Cowichan Bay is under the Community Parks function of the Cowichan Valley Regional District. The community parks service for Cowichan Bay was established by the Regional District through bylaw in 1976. As with community parks services provided in both Cowichan Bay and other Electoral Areas across the Region, each Electoral Area funds separately, through local taxation, the community parks service, which is administered and operated by the CVRD.

While the CVRD owns outright many of Cowichan Bay's community parks (fee owned and Crown parks), alternate arrangements are in place for other parks which exist in this system. These include Crown leases, permits with the BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, agreements with the Nature Trust of BC and Ducks Unlimited and lease agreements with the Cowichan Bay Waterworks District. Table 1 details a list of jurisdictional arrangements the CVRD currently has for community parks and trails in Cowichan Bay (Electoral Area D).

Table 1: Jurisdictional designation of parks in Cowichan Bay

Jurisdiction Designation	Description
CVRD	Parkland acquired through subdivision, rezoning or purchased by the CVRD as a fee simple lot registered with land titles that is owned and managed by the CVRD.
Crown Park	Parkland dedicated through subdivision to the CVRD, but is vested in the ownership of the Provincial Crown. Under the Land Title Act, the CVRD as the local Regional District Government has the authority and control of these Crown Parks to manage/develop as local community parks.
Crown Lease	Crown lands that are leased to the CVRD for use as park or community sites. (e.g. Cowichan Bay Marine Gateway)
BC MoT	Lands owned by the Provincial Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure and leased to the CVRD. Typically these include undeveloped road rights-of-way (R/W) for park or trail corridors.
Agreement /Lease with others	Park-use Agreements with the Ministry of Environment and the Nature Trust of BC; lease agreements with Cowichan Bay Water Works District.

3.1.2 CVRD Definition

For the purpose of this Plan the following classifications are used when referring to the local park and trail inventory.

- Community Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Nature Park/Preservation Area
- Special Purpose Park
- Linear Corridor Park, and
- Public Beach Access.

Community Park: A Community Park provides passive and/or active recreational opportunities. Community parks are generally large, over 10 hectares (25 acres) in size, with designation based on diversity and value to the entire Electoral Area. These parks can protect environmental features and/or provide recreational opportunities and gathering facilities. They appeal to both residents and visitors, and typically offer space for passive activities such as

walking and picnicking and/or space for active uses such as sports and community events.

There are no “Community Parks” identified within the current system of local parks in Electoral Area D – Cowichan Bay.



Coverdale Watson Park

Neighbourhood Park: Neighbourhood parks respond to the open space and outdoor recreation needs of local residents at the neighbourhood level across the community/Electoral Area. These parks are typically centralized and within walking distance (+/- 400m) and are generally up to 6 hectares (15 acres) in size. Neighbourhood parks are generally smaller than community parks, with designation based on value to nearby residents. Neighbourhood parks are especially important in more developed neighbourhoods providing community space and outdoor recreation amenities. A combination of features and facilities are typical for neighbourhood parks including: lawn areas, picnic facilities, nature paths, tot lots/playgrounds, natural vegetation and un-programmed open space. Ideally, each neighbourhood should have easy access to a neighbourhood park.



Tom Bannister Park

Table 2: Existing Neighbourhood Parks in Cowichan Bay (2012)

Park Name	Size (ha.)
Tom Bannister Park	0.56
Coverdale Watson Park	0.66
Total Area (ha)	1.22

Nature Park/Preservation Area: Nature parks protect natural systems and preserve sensitive features such as watercourses, plant communities, ravines, habitat, significant flora or other unique natural elements. By preserving these spaces, important environmental features may be protected now and for future generations. Outdoor recreational use of nature parks is generally limited to pedestrian trails, although other amenities could be incorporated which do not unduly impact the environmental aesthetics of the park. The size of individual nature parks vary due to a variety of factors including the attributes of the environmental feature being protected, the circumstances providing for the land acquisition and future land expansion opportunities.



Lambourn Park

Table 3: Existing Nature Parks in Cowichan Bay (2012)

Park Name	Size (ha.)
Maple Grove Park	1.71
Cees and Miep Hof Memorial Park	4.14
Wessex Ravine Park	6.78
Austin Place Greenspace	0.23
Glen Road Greenspace	2.19
Lambourn Park	2.80
Waldy Road Park	0.13
Longwood Ravine Park	2.65
Longwood Road Park	0.20
Total Area (ha)	20.83

Special Purpose Park: Special Purpose parks are developed to serve specific uses or to protect particular community resources. A Special Purpose Park provides specific activities that may not fit a particular set of open space standards. These may include points of interest including historical, cultural, and social attractions or provide built facilities for specific outdoor recreational activities.

Table 4: Existing Special Purpose Parks in Cowichan Bay (2012)

Park name	Size (ha.)
Hecate Park	0.30
Robert Service Memorial Park	0.01
Total Area (ha)	0.31

Linear Corridor Park: Connecting open spaces and interconnecting neighbourhoods is one of the most important functions of a park and trail system. While these connections are often made through trail and pathway development, linear parks also play a role in providing connections, as well as walking, hiking and cycling opportunities.

Table 5: Existing Linear Corridor Parks in Cowichan Bay (2012)

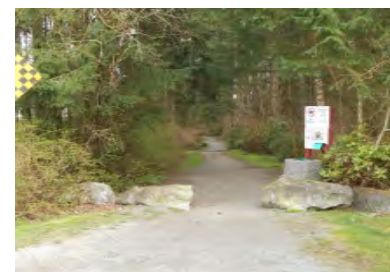
Park Name	Size (ha)
Wilmot Community Pathway	0.16
Kennedy Lane Pathway	0.05
Stephanie’s Stroll	0.03
Cowichan Bay Village Walkway	0.19



Hecate Park



Robert Service Memorial Park



Kingscote Heritage Trail



Stephanie’s Stroll



Wilmot Community Pathway

George Bartlett Trail	0.20
Kingscote Heritage Trail	0.15
Total Area (ha)	0.78

Public Beach Access: Access to the coastal shoreline is one of the unique attributes of living in Electoral Area D although there are very few public beach accesses located in the Electoral Area that provide for waterfront access. Other than Hecate Park and the Marine Gateway to Cowichan Bay the only two park sites with access to the water are listed in Table 6.

Table 6: Existing Beach Accesses in Cowichan Bay (2012)

Park Name	Size (ha)
Kingscote Road beach access (Cees & Miep Hof Memorial Park)	0.31
Bomford Trail	0.21
Total Area (ha)	0.52



Bomford Trail

3.1.3 Summary of Existing Community Parks (2012)

The existing community parks system in Cowichan Bay as of December 2012 is summarized below (Table 7) and can be viewed on Map 1 in Appendix 1. Table 7 breaks down the area of each Park classification type in the system. It should be noted that any population based standard has limited utility as a measure of sufficient parks space. Rather than a standard, the appropriate amount of parks space should be targeted to the protection of valued natural areas and community needs and desires for active and passive park space.

Table 7: Summary of existing local parks in Cowichan Bay (2012)

Park Classification/type	Area (Ha)- Community Wide	% of existing local park land base
Community Park	0	0
Neighbourhood Park	1.22	5%
Nature Park/Preservation area	20.83	89%
Special Purpose Park	0.31	1%
Linear Corridor Park	0.78	3%
Public Beach Accesses	0.52	2%
Subtotal - Cowichan Bay's Local Parks	23.66	100%

Existing Active vs. Passive Parks

The following parks in Electoral Area D (Cowichan Bay) are categorized based on their active or passive recreational use.

Active Park – An active park refers to a mix of uses in a park that includes one or more of the following facilities or facility types:

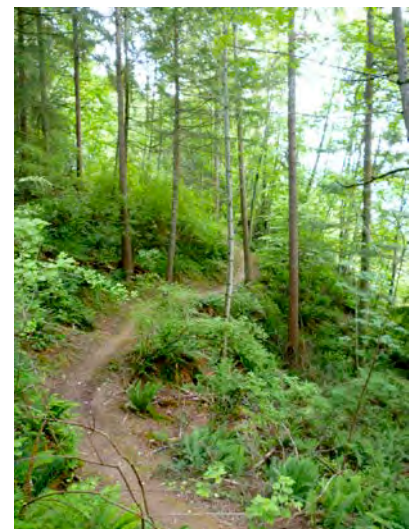
- Athletic fields,
- Buildings or structures for recreational activities,
- Concession,
- Community gardens,
- Sport courts,
- Children’s play area,
- Dog play area,
- Multi-use pathways.



Active Park: Coverdale Watson Park

Passive Park – A passive park refers to uses in a park which typically include one or more of the following:

- landscaped area,
- Natural area,
- Ornamental garden,
- Non-landscaped green space,
- Picnic area,
- Trail(s).



Passive Park: Cees and Meip Hof Trail

Table 8: Active versus Passive Parks in Cowichan Bay

Park Name	Area – (Ha)	Park Classification
Active Parks		
Tom Bannister Park	0.56	Neighbourhood Park
Coverdale Watson Park	0.66	Neighbourhood Park
Wilmot Community Pathway	0.16	Linear Corridor Park
Bomford Trail	0.21	Public Beach Access
Hecate Park	0.30	Special Purpose Park
Total Active Parks	1.89	
Passive Parks		
Maple Grove Park	1.71	Nature Park/Preservation area
Cees and Miep Hof Memorial Park	4.14	Nature Park/Preservation area

Wessex Ravine Park	6.78	Nature Park/Preservation area
Austin Place Greenspace	0.23	Nature Park/Preservation area
Glen Road Greenspace	2.19	Nature Park/Preservation area
Lambourn Park	2.80	Nature Park/Preservation area
Waldy Road Park	0.13	Nature Park/Preservation area
Longwood Ravine Park	2.65	Nature Park/Preservation area
Longwood Road Park	0.20	Nature Park/Preservation area
Kennedy Lane Trail	0.05	Linear Corridor Park
Stephanie's Stroll	0.03	Linear Corridor Park
Cowichan Bay Village Walkway	0.19	Linear Corridor Park
George Bartlett Trail	0.20	Linear Corridor Park
Kingscote Heritage Trail	0.15	Linear Corridor Park
Kingscote Road Beach Access (add to Cees & Meip Hof Park)	0.31	Public Beach Access
Robert Service Memorial Park	0.01	Special Purpose Park
Total Passive Parks	21.77	

There are more passive parks than active parks in Cowichan Bay. There are two active parks that have playgrounds while two are trails that are considerably longer and provide more of an active experience. In addition, Hecate Park has a wildlife viewing tower and the Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre. Cowichan Bay residents continue to be fairly active in regards to walkability in the community, therefore to continue with the acquisition of more passive parks or linear parks/trails would greatly benefit the walkability of the community as a whole into the future.

Within Cowichan Bay's existing system of community parks the rates of hectares of parkland per 1000 residents is currently 0.63 ha of active parkland/1000 residents and 7.32 ha of passive parkland/1000 Cowichan Bay residents based on the assumption of approximately 2,790 residents in the community. As the population grows, parkland would also be expected to increase in order to maintain or improve on this ratio although active parkland is in higher demand for the community.

3.1.4 Other Parks and Community Land Spaces in Cowichan Bay

The following are parks and community land spaces located within Electoral Area D that are accessible to the public, inclusive of sites managed by other agencies, or as part of the CVRD’s South Cowichan Parks System.

Table 9: Other Parks and Community Land Spaces in Cowichan Bay

Sites Managed by others	Management Authority	Description and Amenities
Cowichan Bay Boat Launch	CVRD – South Cowichan Parks	Concrete boat launch ramp and boat trailer parking, memorial benches, portable toilet, interpretive sign and trail/pathway.
Cowichan Bay Marine Gateway	CVRD - Electoral Area D	Community gathering space and kayak launching site
Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre	Cowichan Community Land Trust	The Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre is located in Hecate Park
Bench Elementary School	School District #79	Playground, grass playfields.
Cowichan Bay Estuary Dike Trail	Nature Trust of BC	Dike pathway and wildlife viewing tower.



Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre opening day ceremony in Hecate Park

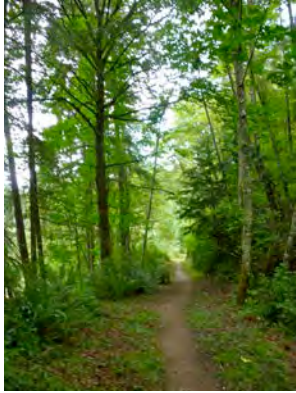


Bench Elementary School Playground

3.2 Existing Trails and Pathways

A community trails system should provide strategic non-vehicle access throughout a community for recreational use as well as commuting (active transportation). Trails provide pedestrians and cyclists convenient access to parks, community facilities, commercial destinations and to adjacent communities. Currently pedestrian and cyclist routes in Cowichan Bay are largely restricted to narrow road shoulders shared with vehicle traffic. Recent additions of linear corridor parks that support separated, multi-use trails, such as Wilmot Community Pathway, have been well-received. While progress has been made in circulation improvements, there are still locations where pedestrian/vehicle concerns exist, especially along narrow, winding roads such as Cowichan Bay Road.

- **Cees and Meip Hof Memorial Park** – provides a hiking trail between Cherry Point Road and the Kingscote beach access.
- **Wilmot Community Pathway** – is a separated multi-use Trail managed by the CVRD and constructed within the BC Ministry of



Cees and Meip Hof Trail



Lambourn Trail



Kingscote Heritage Trail



Kennedy Lane Trail



Wilmot Community Pathway

Transportation and Infrastructure (BC MoT) Wilmot Road right-of-way that begins at Koksilah Road and currently ends across the street from Falcon Crescent.

- **Kennedy Lane Trail** – is a 70 metre long connector trail located within the Kennedy Lane right-of-way linking Pavenham Road to Pritchard Road.
- **George Bartlett Trail** – links Ordano Road to Falcon Crescent and also runs along the south side of Wilmot Road (outside of the BC MoT Right-of-way) for approximately 280 metres. A short section of the trail also links Raptor Place to Wilmot Road.
- **Kingscote Heritage Trail** – runs east/west between McGill Road and Cowichan Bay Road within the Ordano Road right-of-way and also links north to Simon Place.
- **Lambourn Park** – has a trail that links Royal Island Terrace to Polo Field Place then continues through to Tom Bannister Park and Hurtin Road.
- **Bomford Trail** – is a beach access trail that is 260 metres long and begins at the end of Sparwood Road and makes its way to the beach.
- **Stephanie’s Stroll** – is a 90 metre long trail that runs through the Pritchard Road undeveloped right-of-way to Wilmot Road.

3.2.1 Trail Classifications

Four types of trails and trail connections are identified for Cowichan Bay. It is important for the Cowichan Bay Community Parks and Trails Master Plan to analyze and understand the extent of the entire pedestrian and cycling network, both existing and potential routes and linkages.

1. Multi-Use Trails and Pathways

Multi-use trails and pathways are ideal for walking, hiking and cycling and have characteristics of the following:

- Roadside trails and pathways that are separated from the roads and adjacent land uses.
- Generally part of a larger system that connects to significant destinations.
- Used by local residents, visitors and tourists for recreation and commuting.

Examples in Cowichan Bay:

- Wilmot Community Pathway

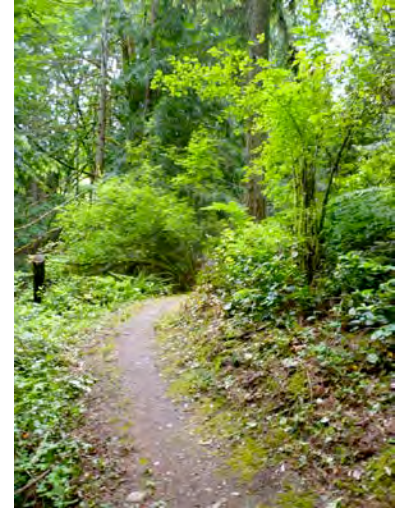
2. Walking/Hiking Trails

Walking/hiking trails are smaller, neighbourhood-scale sections of the trail networks and are often found within a park system. Key characteristics of these trails are:

- Often only pedestrian access due to more demanding terrain, environmental sensitivity and/or local community desires.
- Used primarily by local residents providing recreation, alternative transportation and access to natural areas.
- Often located within existing parks.

Examples in Cowichan Bay:

- Trails in Cees and Meip Hof Memorial Park
- Bomford Trail
- Trails in Coverdale Watson Park



Cees and Meip Hof Trail

3. Shared Roadway

Shared roadways are routes that incorporate cycling and/or pedestrian movement with vehicle traffic. The Provincial Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (BC MoT) is the road authority for the development and maintenance of all public roads in Electoral Area D – Cowichan Bay. Cycling in Cowichan Bay is popular on local roads shared with vehicle traffic as well as pedestrian use of road shoulders. Some key characteristics of a shared roadway are:

- Lightly used rural roads provide cycling and walking opportunities.
- Neighborhood roads that link with local parks, school and local businesses.
- Safe visibility and width of road

Examples in Cowichan Bay

- Roads in and around the Cowichan Bay Village community (Pritchard, Pavenham, Glen Road etc.)



Shared Roadway – Pritchard Road

4. Roadside Walkway

A roadside walkway is a road that shares vehicle, cyclist and pedestrian traffic, by providing a wider paved shoulder divided by a painted line. Care must be taken to ensure signage, line painting and maintenance is kept up to date to minimize conflict between uses. As mentioned previously the BC MoT is responsible for public roadways within Cowichan Bay. Some key characteristics of a roadside walkway are:

- Moderately used roadways that provide minimum one metre additional paved shoulder surfacing from cycling/pedestrian

use. Clearly painted white lines should be provided to separate vehicle traffic from the paved shoulder.

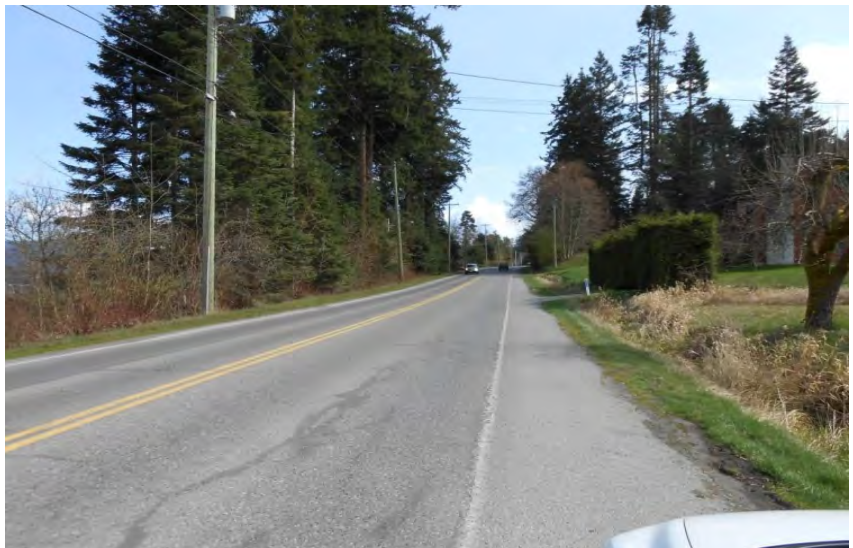
- Moderate traffic speeds (typically 50 kph to 80 kph)

Examples in Cowichan Bay

- Koksilah Road and portions of Cowichan Bay Road to the West of Hecate Park.



Roadside walkway – Koksilah Road looking east



Roadside Walkway - Cowichan Bay Road near Bench Road looking east

4. PLANNING A FUTURE PARKS AND TRAILS SYSTEM

4.1 Outdoor Recreation Trends

Studies in outdoor recreation trends throughout BC and Canada provide insight into how local community outdoor recreation interests and desires are changing. The information below is summarized from several resources to provide a brief outline of key trends significant to Cowichan Bay's community parks and trails system.

4.1.1 Demographics - Population growth and Age Trends

As highlighted in Section 2.3, it is estimated that the current Cowichan Bay population of approximately 2900 will increase to 4000 within the next 25 years. During this time the population aged 65 and older will grow from 19% to 27% of the total population meaning that the number of seniors will almost double (from 575 to 1045) and that the population of people over 85 years of age will triple (from 55 to 132). Activity preferences, capabilities, and amount of time to participate in outdoor recreation change with age. It is predicted that the next decade of retirees will be more active than previous generations, and will likely prefer to be integrated into mainstream recreational centres and programs. This trend will factor into the types of facilities that should be considered for local park and trail improvements and development.

Implications and opportunities for Community Parks and Trails –The implications of these demographics demonstrate a need for:

- Outdoor recreation systems to expand alongside population growth.
- Recognition that senior lifestyles need to be supported by accessible recreation.
- Variety in outdoor recreational opportunities for children and youth.

4.1.2 Activity Choices

More people pursuing individual activities – Studies indicate a clear shift from organized sports and recreation to individual recreation. This trend is attributed to several factors:

- Interest in exploring a greater diversity of individual pursuits.

- Desire to have access to recreation that fits with individual schedules to accommodate the higher number of people with non-traditional work weeks and schedules.
- Interest in activities that require less commitment and more compressed timeframes.



Hecate Park Welcome Totem Pole – Hecate Park and the Cowichan Bay Marine Gateway (located side by side) are two of the most welcoming public spaces for the community with open space, picnic areas, a bus stop, a natural play-space, a kayak/canoe dock, a viewing tower and the Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre.

Adult Lifestyle and Wellness – Increased awareness around the health benefits of physical activity has resulted in outdoor recreation appealing to a greater number of people. People who place importance on a healthy lifestyle increase demand for recreation resources that support active living such as walkability in the community.

Children and Youth Inactivity – Even as adult physical lifestyles are improving, children and youth inactivity is reaching unprecedented levels. “Screen time” or time spent in front of the television, video games and the internet, has dramatically increased. In turn, children are pursuing less active forms of recreation, a trend that will likely be carried throughout their lifetimes.

Children often exhibit a diversity of interests and values and one type of youth recreation, program or facility will most often not meet the needs of all children in a community. A study was conducted in 2012 called the “Cowichan Valley Youth safety Dialogues” and was prepared for the CVRD Safer Futures. The study was done to determine what “safety” means to youth, why and where youth are concerned about their safety, what they do to stay safe and what would help them to feel safer. Incorporating safer public spaces in the community will help the outreach to younger children and youth.

Implications and opportunities for Community Parks and Trails – The implications of these activity choice trends demonstrate a need for:

- A larger variety of outdoor recreation opportunities accessible at multiple times to accommodate the increasingly wide-ranging lifestyles and interests of a population.
- The development of an outdoor network of bikeways and walkways for people to use as they pursue individual activities and exercise for health and wellness.
- A variety of outdoor recreational opportunities in partnership with schools and community programs to develop spaces that accommodate outdoor youth recreation including programming in parks and organization of special events (e.g. Easter egg hunts).
- Having places that are youth friendly, safe, and are accepting of differences in youth.

- Have places to play sports (e.g. Providing an area for youth to recreate within a neighbourhood park such as Coverdale Watson), public spaces that are warm, welcoming to youth, have a friendly atmosphere and are accessible (e.g. having a bus stop or open area with good visibility).

4.1.3 Demand Trends

Service Demands – In communities throughout British Columbia (BC), Parks and Recreation Programs are being required to respond to a multitude of community-based social issues. The use of recreation programs and services has been recognized as a tool for social change.

Limited Local Finances – Despite evidence that supports the need for strong parks and recreation programs in BC, budget pressures often reduce financing available for parks and trails operations and maintenance. Although the demand for more parks, recreation and cultural services is increasing, expectations are still there that service levels, labour costs and other costs for parks and trails systems will remain the same.

Volunteerism – Volunteers are important to recreational programs, but volunteerism is on the decrease. Attracting and keeping volunteers is vital to leisure and recreational development and is largely related to the quality of volunteer management strategies within local parks programs. Strengthening the opportunities and involvement of volunteers in Cowichan Bay in the delivery of outdoor recreation programs and services would be beneficial to the community.

Implications and opportunities for Community Parks and Trails

- Development of parks and trail facilities and programming that support social interaction and development for seniors and youth.
- Realistic parks and trails budgets must take into consideration development, operations and maintenance costs of all projects.
- Increased awareness among government representatives and the local community about the level of financial commitment that is required to maintain a sustainable community parks and trails program.
- Volunteer organization and communication to provide citizens with multiple, easy opportunities to take part in improving parks and trails.



Spot Prawn Festival – Cowichan Bay



Wooden Boat Festival – Cowichan Bay



Dragon Boat Racing in Cowichan Bay in front of Hecate Park



Bench Elementary School

4.1.4 Facility Factors

Tourism – More and more community leisure programs and facilities are taking on a greater role in attracting tourism while working closely with economic development. In particular, games, tournaments, exhibitions and sporting events are bringing people into communities that support such events (e.g. in Cowichan Bay there is the annual M.S. RONA Bike Tour – Cowichan Valley Grape Escape, Spot Prawn Festival, Wooden boat Festival).

Single-Purpose vs. Multi-Purpose – Multi-purpose facilities are becoming more common as they support the shift to a wider variety of recreational interests. These facilities are designed to provide more options for users, support multi-gender and multi-generational users and are more flexible in supporting a variety of lifestyles. Cowichan Bay currently has no multi-purpose facility but due to its close proximity to North Cowichan/Duncan, Cowichan Bay residents have access to the Island Savings Centre and Aquatic Centre for recreational programs and activities.

Aging Infrastructure – A British Columbia-wide challenge is the aging recreational facility infrastructure; within parks this may include playgrounds, sport courts, picnic shelters and washrooms. Preventive maintenance and infrastructure life cycle planning should be considered during park and trail facility and amenity planning and renewal.

Ability to Respond to Demand – Ability to respond to changing leisure needs may be affected by fluctuations in economic growth, increasing costs for new development, needing to address existing facility maintenance and concerns over taxation increases.

Partnerships – In order to develop facilities that support the requirements of a community, partnerships are becoming more common. These can range from sharing of capital costs to the operation of entire facilities, to program operation and sponsorship.

Application to Community Parks and Trails in Cowichan Bay

- Identification of opportunities in outdoor recreation and events to promote tourism in the community.
- Careful planning around aging infrastructure to recognize where and when replacements will be necessary.
- Ability to amend parks and trails objectives where necessary to respond to changing economics and user interests.
- Active identification of possible partnerships that, with careful planning, will ensure positive gains for all parties involved

(Example: partnership with Cowichan Community Land Trust for the placement of the Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre in Hecate Park).

4.1.5 Environmental Factors

Public Stewardship – As environmental awareness increases, natural areas and nature-based recreation takes on additional significance. Parks programs are beginning to evolve beyond outdoor recreation, to also serve as spaces for preserving natural values such as clean air and water. Additionally, there is a growing desire by citizens to learn about the natural environment through outdoor experience and a willingness to participate in projects that protect or restore sensitive environmental areas.

The Longwood Ravine, Wessex Ravine and the Cees and Meip Hof Memorial Park (Ravine) are all examples of important lands to preserve for environmental protection but also may allow for low impact recreational trails through the lands for public enjoyment of these natural areas. The installation of interpretive signage along these trails to showcase the natural environment and unique ecological context of some of the community's local parks is another way of teaching the public about the environmental values and benefits of their parks.

Rainwater Management – Parks and open spaces are highly valued for their ability to absorb rainfall and balance impacts of urban development on watersheds. Additionally, some parks have evolved to include rainwater collection and treatment facilities such as bio swales, detention ponds and constructed wetlands. New residential development is incorporating these rainwater management treatments into public parkland, through consultation with the CVRD, thus creating aesthetically pleasing, as well as useful systems.

Climate Change – Parks and open spaces are considered to have value in the mitigation of the effects of global warming by increasing shade areas and CO₂ sinks (see sidebar). As well, it ensures the region maintains its long term climate resilience by utilizing parks as green infrastructure to buffer against increased rain events or protect valuable recharge areas critical to maintaining aquifer and stream health. In addition parks help mitigate the effects of global warming by protecting species diversity and by providing wildlife corridors.

Local Food – Parks can serve as a venue for re-connecting people with growing food through the integration of community gardens or through educational demonstration gardens. The Cittaslow movement in Cowichan Bay is an international movement aimed at growing and eating locally.

CO₂ sink: A carbon Dioxide sink is the opposite of a carbon "source". Forest areas and oceans are the main natural sinks. In forest areas, growing vegetation absorbs carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and stores it.



Cowichan Bay is the first North American Cittaslow community

Implications and opportunities for Community Parks and Trails – The implication of environmental factors demonstrate a need for:

- Consideration of the environmental value of future parkland when assessing park acquisition opportunities and priorities.
- Sound and sensitive operations and management policies for parks and trails which factor environmental principles.
- Increased visibility of the ecological contribution of community parks and open spaces.
- Engagement of local citizens and groups in environmental stewardship activities in parks.

4.2 Community Parks Funding Sources

In planning, designing, developing and maintaining parks and trails, funds must be acquired, often from a variety of sources. Outside funding opportunities, such as provincial grants, Non-Government Organization (NGO) grants, community-driven fundraising opportunities or donations help secure funds that would not normally be available for acquiring and developing local parks and trails. This section presents a variety of options for funding sources that are relevant to community parks and trails acquisition and development in Cowichan Bay.



Cowichan Village waterfront

4.2.1 Local Government Funds

Community Parks Service Establishment Authority – The authority to tax for and provide community parks and trails services in Electoral Areas is through the Cowichan Valley Regional District, which under Provincial legislation is the Local Government Authority for the unincorporated Electoral Areas within the region. Establishment of the community parks and trails services in Electoral Area D – Cowichan Bay dates back to 1976 when the local community was formally asked if it approved creating such a service based on taxation, which the community at the time supported. This authority for taxation is currently provided through “Cowichan Valley Regional District Bylaw No. 2671 – Electoral Area D Community Parks Service Establishment Bylaw, 2005”. The community parks and trails service under the authority of the bylaw provides for the acquisition, development, operation and maintenance of community parks within Electoral Area D – Cowichan Bay.

Section 941 of the Local Government Act - The provision of parkland as either 5% land dedication or 5% cash-in-lieu is a legal requirement of Section 941 of the Province of BC’s *Local Government Act* and is applied at the time of legal subdivision of a parcel of land. The funds must be deposited into a Parkland Acquisition Reserve Fund and can only be expended on the purchase of lands for park purposes. When

such funds are derived from the subdivision of lands within Electoral Area D – Cowichan Bay, the monies can only be spent on the purchase of lands for park in Electoral Area D.

Development Cost Charges (DCCs) - DCCs are a one-time charge levied against new residential, commercial, industrial and institutional developments that impose a capital cost on local government services provided such as community parks. They are paid at the time of subdivision, at the building permit stage, or according to a schedule set out in the DCC bylaw. They do not replace the *Local Government Act* requirement for 5% parkland dedication but can supplement dedications by establishing a charge for specific facilities or acquisition of land for park. A park DCC bylaw can specify that charges apply generally to park improvements within the Electoral Area or to a specific facility or purpose, such as establishing a reserve to purchase land for a community park or land for a trail or improvements to parks and trails.

Amenity Contributions - Amenity contributions must be established in OCP policies before they can be applied to land development proposals. Amenity amounts can be a set value per lot or can be expressed as a percentage of the value of the land subsequent to subdivision, which must be adopted by an enabling bylaw to have effect.

A policy has been created in the adopted 2013 Cowichan Bay OCP that states that through amenity zoning, the CVRD may accept the provision of a community amenity on the subject property proposed for development within the Electoral Area or accept cash-in-lieu, to be held in a reserve fund for the eventual provision of specified community amenities within the Electoral Area.

Park Amenity Negotiations during Rezoning - Amenity negotiations differ from amenity contributions required through an amenity bylaw, in that they are negotiated directly with the developer as a voluntary contribution commitment as part of a rezoning proposal. Parks, trails and protection of environmentally significant features are amenities that can be provided as voluntary contributions. The basic premise of an amenity negotiation process is that benefits can accrue to the community and to the developer; the community receives something it desires as does the developer, typically in the form of increased land development densities.

Disposal of Public Lands - Funds from the disposition of public land taken as parkland dedication through section 941 of the *Local Government Act* can be used towards the acquisition of another piece of property within the Electoral Area. The disposition of park land that was not acquired through the *Local Government Act* is an



Memorial Tree Donated by the community



Community Memorial Ceremony for the donated tree. Volunteers purchased, planted and staked the tree.



Partnership with Ministry of Environment and Nature Trust/Ducks Unlimited for use of lands in Maple Grove Park.

asset that can be ‘converted’ to cash in an active market where land values increase over time and can be used towards operational or capital assets. The sale of land purposely acquired for resale could be an attractive alternative when acquiring lands for parks and trails.

4.2.2 Senior Government Funding and Private Funds

Provincial and Federal Grant Programs – Specific funding programs from time to time are available through senior levels of government for park planning, design and/or construction. Similarly, private funding programs can and do support parks and trail development.

Gifting, Donations and In-kind contributions - Donation of lands for community park purposes benefit the community by providing more public recreation land or areas to set aside for environmental purposes. Evaluation of the lands being proposed for gifting is important to ensure the lands have suitable outdoor recreational /environmental value in keeping with the objectives and vision of the community. The Cowichan Valley Regional District can issue tax donation receipts under certain circumstances for donations of land, in-kind contributions, as well as for financial donations. While not a direct source of funding, in-kind donations can result in direct cost-savings from organizations or individuals who donate/volunteer their time or services for community parks and trails in Cowichan Bay.

4.2.3 Partnerships

Partnering with interested agencies or organizations helps to join the efforts for both funding and developing of parks and trails.

Existing and potential agencies/groups to consider partnering with in Cowichan Bay include:

- Cowichan Valley School District
- Sports/Outdoor Recreation Organizations
- Province of British Columbia
- Conservation Organizations
 - The CVRD has an agreement with the Nature Trust of BC and Ducks Unlimited for Maple Grove Park.
 - The CVRD also has an agreement with the Cowichan Community Land Trust for locating the Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre within Hecate Community Park.
- Private Landowners
- Cowichan Tribes

4.3 Public Consultation

An integral part of community parks and trails planning is public consultation. A total of 5 public open houses were held in the course of preparing the Cowichan Bay Community Parks and Trails Master Plan. During this time regular meetings and discussions with the Cowichan Bay Parks and Recreation Commission took place to discuss current and future parks and trails.

4.3.1 Cowichan Bay Parks and Recreation Commission input

The Cowichan Bay Parks and Recreation Commission is comprised of members of the Cowichan Bay community who helped guide the Community Parks and Trails Master Planning process. Meetings were held regularly with the commission throughout the planning process to receive additional feedback on the desires of the community for trail connectivity and gaps in the park and trail system in Cowichan Bay.

4.3.2 Community Outreach

In 2005 two public open houses were offered to provide a forum for Cowichan Bay residents to identify what and where future parks and trails should go in their community. Two more public open houses were held in 2007 by the CVRD and the local parks commission to allow for additional public input into potential parks and trail linkages throughout the Electoral Area. A public response form was presented during these open house sessions to provide additional means for the community to voice their ideas. A copy of the response form can be found in Appendix 4.

In May of 2013 the final public open house was held at the Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre to invite community comment on the draft plan and to help prioritize the recommendations that came out of the planning process. These recommendations were broken into short term (first 10 years) and long term (10 – 20 years) and can be found in Section 5.0 of the Cowichan Bay Community Parks and Trails Master Plan.

4.3.3 Key Parks and Trails Issues

The main issues brought up consistently in the meetings were the lack of connectivity of trail systems in the community to provide a continuous “looped” trail system. There was not too much concern expressed about the current number of “Active Parks” in the community, although upgrades to existing active parks of both Coverdale Watson and Tom Bannister Park were mentioned as a priority.

The continuation of the Wilmot Community Pathway to link Koksilah Road to the village core via Wilmot Road was noted in the 2013 open house as one of the high priority projects supported due to safety concerns for pedestrians trying to walk to the village. Additionally, roadside trails along key connector roads were also identified as a high priority to safely link residential neighbourhoods to Bench School, public transit routes, neighbourhood parks and the village core.

5. PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

This section of the Cowichan Bay Community Parks and Trails Master Plan presents recommendations that incorporate feedback provided from the community through the public consultation process, analysis of gaps and opportunities within the existing network of local parks and trails, emerging/future trends of community engagement in outdoor recreation, and environmental stewardship.

These recommendations outline improvements to existing parks and trails, and acquisitions of new parkland to expand and enhance the network of local parks and trails for the residents of Cowichan Bay to access and enjoy. They establish an overall strategy for a community parks and trails system in Electoral Area D - Cowichan Bay that is focused on:

- Community-based recreation health and active transportation needs,
- The preservation of unique and sensitive sites,
- Creating parks, trails and open spaces that meet community needs for connectivity and accessibility, and
- Builds on existing community strengths and resources.

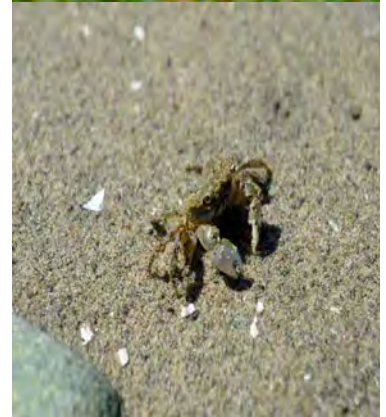
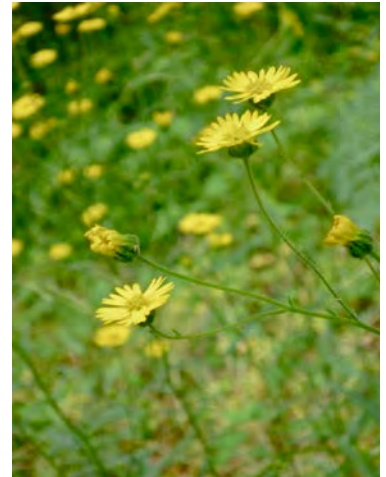
Section 5.1 presents those projects that are deemed a high priority by the community to be pursued over the next 10 years (2014-2023).

Section 5.2 outlines additional medium priority parks and trails projects that are important to building a sustainable community parks and trails network in Cowichan Bay. These medium priority projects will be implemented over the subsequent 10 year period (2024-2033) unless opportunities arise to advance such projects within an earlier timeframe (i.e. grant funding secured). This section has been broken into two subheadings:

- Trail and Community Pathway Development; and
- Community Park Acquisitions.

Section 5.3 presents system-wide recommendations that are planning and operational policies which support the community parks system as a whole. These recommendations are included as important components to implementing a comprehensive park and trails network in Cowichan Bay and are categorized as:

- Community Parkland Acquisition and Land Use Partnership strategy;
- Community Park Operations and Management; and
- Park Stewardship.



5.1 Priority 1 Recommendations (Years 1 – 10)

The following recommendations are intended to guide improvements to community parks and trails within the Cowichan Bay Electoral Area over the next 10 years (2014-2023). These priorities arose from the community park planning process and support the vision for community parks in Cowichan Bay. The capital projects described in this section are presented in order of priority as identified through this master planning process and are incorporated into the proposed 2014-2023 annual budget recommendations for the Cowichan Bay Community Parks and Trails program as outlined in Table 13 to achieve the plan's objectives.

- Community Park and Trail Improvement Recommendations (*These projects can be completed on lands already owned or maintained by the Cowichan Valley Regional District*).
- Community Parkland Acquisition and Land Use Partnership Recommendations (*Projects cannot begin until such properties are acquired or a partnership agreement obtained*).

Recommendation:

1. ● **Preparation of a park development plan with community input for the re-development of Coverdale Watson Park to upgrade/replace aging park facilities and amenities.**



Coverdale Watson Park Washroom Building

Rationale:

Coverdale Watson Park was originally developed in 1971 with a swimming pool, a picnic shelter and a tennis court. In 1991 the park was revitalized and the pool was removed, the bathroom was renovated, a new picnic shelter built, an irrigation system installed, an adventure playground installed and the parking lot constructed. In 2011 the sport court was renovated into a full size tennis court with basketball hoops. The playground and washroom building are now more than 21 years old and need to be replaced/upgraded.

Recommendation:

2. ● **Construct a walking pathway connection starting from Cowichan Bay Road at Hecate Park, up the Wessex Ravine to Pritchard Road then a shared roadway to Stephanie's Stroll.**

Rationale:

There is currently no pedestrian friendly connection between the Cowichan Bay Village waterfront and the established residential area above. For those walking, the only means is along Wilmot Road/Cowichan Bay Road. This pathway will provide a valuable pedestrian connection from the upper village area to Cowichan Bay Road and the lower village area.



Pritchard Road – looking towards Stephanie's Stroll.

Recommendation:

3. ● **Upgrades to the marine foreshore and trails within Hecate Park.**

Rationale:

Storm events and higher than normal tides have caused considerable erosion along the foreshore of Hecate Park and the rip rap that is currently in place is in need of upgrading and reinforcement. The paved trail that runs through the park ends at the wildlife viewing tower and turns into a gravel pathway. Continuation of a paved pathway to the Cowichan Bay Marine Gateway would provide a year-round accessible pathway for all users, inclusive of strollers and wheelchairs.

Recommendation:

4. ● **Continue expansion of the Wilmot multi-use pathway with priority between George Road and Cowichan Bay Village.**

Rationale:

Wilmot Road is a very busy and narrow road that does not provide a safe means for pedestrians or cyclists to travel on. Pedestrian safety along Wilmot Road has been a concern in the community as expressed through the public consultation process.

Recommendation:

5. ● **Complete the Cowichan River Estuary Trail starting at Maple Grove Park, to the existing Dike Trail, looping around and along the Koksilah River with a footbridge connection over the river to join up with Cowichan Bay Road.**

Rationale:

There is an existing trail from Maple Grove Park to an improved portion of the dike along the Koksilah River that dead-ends at an unimproved, treed portion of the dike. A public viewing platform was installed a number of years ago by the Nature Trust of British Columbia at this location. Whilst the dike walk is very popular, the abrupt end of the improved portion of the dike often results in users trespassing onto adjacent farmlands through the estuary to return to Maple Grove Park rather than retrace their steps along the trail around the estuary. On-going trespass onto estuary lands conflicts with habitat issues particularly during late-fall, winter and early-spring when wildfowl such as Trumpeter swans, Snow geese and a variety of ducks over-winter in the estuary.

This trail could include a pedestrian crossing of the Koksilah River to access Cowichan Bay Road. It will require entering



The Cowichan River Estuary trail runs around this agricultural field and follows the treeline in the distance.

into agreements with Ministry of Environment (MOE) and the Cowichan Estuary Environmental Management Plan (CEEMP) partners to complete the Cowichan River Estuary Trail loop for pedestrian use.



Cowichan River Estuary Trail – Wildlife viewing tower on the very eastern tip of the estuary.

Recommendation:

6. ● **Construction of a multi-use pathway along Cowichan Bay Road from Ordano Road to Telegraph Road.**

Rationale:

This trail will provide a safe means for school children to get to Bench School and will connect local residents to the community pathway network leading to local parks and the waterfront portion of the Village core. The multi-use gravel pathway will be a separated roadside trail and will generally be located in the Cowichan Bay Road right-of-way beginning at Ordano Road and ending at Telegraph Road.

Recommendation:

7. ● **Acquisition and construction of a multi-use gravel trail corridor from the corner of Ordano Road and McGill Road travelling directly south to Koksilah Road.**

Rationale:

This trail will provide a safe means for school children to get to Bench School and will connect local residents to the community pathway network leading to local parks and the waterfront portion of the Village core. This will require an action to acquire and construct a multi-use trail through farm land to connect the Glen Road area south to Koksilah Road.

Recommendation:

8. ● **Begin construction of the Cowichan Bay Village walkway from the Cowichan Bay Boat Launch to Wilmot Road.**

Rationale:

The Cowichan Bay Village area is very congested with pedestrians and vehicles and there is a lack of parking for



Cowichan Bay Road – Looking from Telegraph Road towards Cherry Point Road.

visitors and local residents shopping in the area. The establishment of a separated roadside walkway/pathway along Cowichan Bay Road through the village or a boardwalk along the waterfront in cooperation with local businesses will provide a safe means of travel for non-motorized use. This trail will take considerable planning and consultation but is important for the future of the village.

Recommendation:

9. ● **The establishment of public beach and waterfront accesses along the marine foreshore.**

Rationale:

This is an ongoing high priority as there is a strong desire in the community to establish new public beach accesses which are typically established within gazetted Provincial road rights-of-way under permit from the BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, and play an integral role in community connectivity. Looped trails between beach accesses provide opportunities for longer walks or hikes along the shoreline and associated upland areas.

Table 10: Proposed new Public Beach Accesses in Cowichan Bay

Proposed Beach Accesses	Location	Description and Amenities
Cowichan Bay Road west of Hecate Park	McCreery Road	Develop as public beach access trail
Lambourn Estates area	Beach access between Bomford Trail and Seaside Road	A beach access is desired in this general location.
Cowichan Bay Village	Botwood Road	Develop as public beach access trail

5.2 Priority 2 Recommendations (Beyond Year 10)

This section outlines community parks and trails projects that are proposed beyond the next 10 years due to the funding limitation capacity of the annual community parks tax requisition for Cowichan Bay. These recommendations are not presented in a chronologically prioritized order, rather just under the following three headings:

- Community Park Revitalization
- Trail and Community Pathway Development;
- Community Park Acquisitions.

5.2.1 Community Park Revitalization

Recommendation:

Upgrade and replace park amenities in Tom Bannister Park due to aging infrastructure.

- Playground replacement
- Picnic tables
- Gazebo
- Sport Court

Rationale:

Tom Bannister Park was dedicated in 1998 and in 1999 the playground and other amenities were installed. As this is a very central Neighbourhood Park its use will be increasing as the population grows in this area through planned residential development. The play equipment and the sport court are more than 14 years old and are reaching their lifespan. A park revitalization plan with community input should be prepared prior to any work commencing to refurbish the park.

5.2.2 Trail and Community Pathway Development

Trail and community pathway linkages are an important component of any Community Parks and Trails system. Trends indicate that people are becoming more interested in pursuing individual activities and personal health, and trails are one of the most effective ways to get people moving. This Community Parks and Trails Master Plan focuses on encouraging pedestrian linkages and cycling by connecting neighbourhoods with trail networks and also linking communities to commerce. Through the community open houses the public and the Electoral Area D Parks Commission identified the following trail and pathway priorities which are incorporated into the plan:



Tom Bannister Park playground

- Providing community connectivity through pedestrian trails and cycling routes has priority over creating new parks in the Electoral Area.
- Where possible trails will be developed to serve cyclists and pedestrians as well as providing for accessibility for the mobility challenged.
- Trails should be used to create multiple opportunities linking Cowichan Bay with other communities.
- Trails and pathways should be separated from roads where site conditions and funding permits.
- Trails to connect parks, parks to residential areas and other public facilities are important.
- The use of public beach accesses as trail-heads or trail-ends.
- More pathway and trail connections to key destinations, such as Valley View Centre and Whippletree Junction.

Map 4 identifies the recommended trail and community pathway connections and Table 11 lists all the trails and community pathways proposed.

Table 11: Summary of Priority 2 (beyond year 10) trail and community pathway connections in Cowichan Bay as identified on Map 4

Proposed Trail Connection	Recommended Trail Type	Length (m)
Tom Bannister Park to Cees & Miep Hof Park	Walking/Hiking Trail	1253
Cherry Point Road (Cowichan Bay Road to Lanes Road)	Multi-Use Pathway	638
Lanes Road to Sparwood Road to Bomford Trail	Multi-Use Pathway	832
Cowichan Bay Road (Wilmot Road to Ordano Road)	Multi-Use Pathway	885
Cowichan Bay Road (Gateway to North end Thiek Reserve)	Multi-Use Pathway	795
Telegraph Road	Roadside Walkway	2280
Bench Road	Roadside Walkway	1335
Hillbank Road	Roadside Walkway	1980
Trails through Cowichan Bay Estates	Walking trail/pathway	855
Cherry Point Road (Lanes Road to Cobble Hill)	Multi-Use Pathway	3328
Old CN Rail bed	Multi-Use Pathway	2000
Pavenham Road	Shared Roadway	885
George Road	Shared Roadway	1005



Telegraph Road – Looking southeast from Koksilah Road towards Cobble Hill.

Recommendation:

Construct a separated multi-use pathway within the road right of way for Cowichan Bay Road from Telegraph Road to Cobble Hill.

Rationale:

Construction of a separated multi-use roadside pathway within the Cowichan Bay Road right of way will provide a safe walking/cycling route for cyclists and pedestrians.

Recommendation:

Develop a walking/hiking trail connection from Tom Bannister Park through to the Cees and Meip Hof Memorial Park.

Rationale:

A walking trail connection should be created that will connect the Lambourn community from Tom Bannister Park through to the Cees and Meip Hof Memorial Park and the Kingscote beach access. In order to create this connection, lands would have to be acquired through various means such as donation, purchase, or subdivision/rezoning.



Lanes Road looking north from Cherry Point Road.

Recommendation:

Construct a multi-use pathway along Cherry Point Road from Cowichan Bay Road to Lanes Road.

Rationale:

This pathway will provide a safe walking route for pedestrians from the Lambourn Estates subdivision to join to the roadside pathway along Cowichan Bay Road that extends to Bench School.

Recommendation:

Begin construction of a multi-use pathway along the full length of Lanes Road and down Sparwood Road to join to the Bomford Trail.

Rationale:

For safety reasons, establish a separated roadside pathway within the Lanes Road right of way for cyclists and pedestrians.



Lanes Road looking east towards Sparwood Road.

Recommendation:

Construct a separated multi-use pathway within the road right of ways of Cowichan Bay Road from Wilmot Road to Ordano Road.

Rationale:

The pathway will create a separated route from the road surface providing a safe walking/cycling route.

Recommendation:

Construct a separated multi-use pathway within the road right of way of Cowichan Bay Road from Cowichan Bay Marine Gateway to the end of Theik Reserve #2.

Rationale:

The pathway will create a separated route from the road surface providing a safe walking/cycling route.



Cowichan Bay Road - section through the Theik Reserve land. Proposed Separated multi use pathway along foreshore.

Recommendation:

Coordinate with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (BC MoT) to upgrade and accommodate Roadside Walkways on the following roads in Cowichan Bay:

- Telegraph Road (Koksilah Road to Cobble Hill)
- Bench Road (Cowichan Bay Road to Trans-Canada Highway then along frontage road to Whippletree Junction)
- Hillbank Road (Cowichan Bay Road to Trans-Canada Highway)

Rationale:

The intent is to provide a widened shoulder with a white line to separate traffic from walkers and cyclists



Bench Road – Looking south from Cowichan Bay Road towards the Highway.

Recommendation:

Develop a walking pathway connection from Pritchard Road through the Cowichan Bay Estates property to the Wilmot Road multi-use pathway across from Coverdale Watson Park.

Rationale:

This will provide a significant connector route for local residents from Koksilah Road, near the Trans-Canada Highway through to Hecate Park.

Recommendation:

Construct a separated multi-use pathway within the road right of way for Cherry Point Road from Lanes Road to Cobble Hill.

Rationale:

The pathway would be separated from the road surface to provide a safe walking/cycling route.



Cherry Point Road location for a multi-use separated roadside trail

Recommendation:

Identify and secure a multi-use trail/pathway linking Maple Grove Park to the Trans-Canada Highway.

Rationale:

A safe connection from Cowichan Bay to Duncan/North Cowichan's trail network for recreation use and active

transportation and commuting opportunities needs to be secured either along Cowichan Bay Road from Maple Grove Park to the Trans-Canada Highway or possibly through Reserve lands through consultation with Cowichan Tribes.



McGill Road – Shared Roadway



George Road – Shared Roadway



Cowichan Bay Marine Gateway– Kayak dock for launching.

Recommendation:

Designate the following roads as a shared roadway.

- Pavenham Road (Wilmot Rd to McGill Rd to Glen Rd)
- George Road (Wilmot Rd to Ordano Rd to McGill to Glen Rd)

Rationale:

Work with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to have the two roads designated as a shared roadway to establish safe use for cyclists and pedestrian movement with vehicle traffic.

Recommendation:

Promote the marine kayak trail route along the foreshore with designated beach rest stops. A key kayak rest stop location for acquisition is somewhere between Sparwood Road and Sutherland Road.

Rationale:

The Cowichan Bay Marine Gateway site supports the Province’s BC Marine Trail Network through the Southern Gulf Islands, attracting kayakers and canoeists both as a safe day use water destination and includes a kayak/canoe designed launching float with access ramp as well as an alternate beach launching area and an upland grassy area for staging watercraft.

Another key location for kayakers to stop would be in the vicinity of the Lambourn Estates area. These rest areas will consist of a beach area for kayakers to be launched from and a picnic table for lunch stops. Cowichan Bay offers excellent kayaking opportunities, whether from the Kingscote area or the village. The Marine Kayak Trail provides quality excursions for kayakers from both a recreational and tourism/sight-seeing perspective.

5.2.3 Community Park Acquisitions

Planned parkland acquisitions ensure that new parks and trails are selected and developed based on their contribution to the existing parks and trails system and the community. One of the key goals that the community desires, as emerged during the community consultation process, is to protect important and valued

environmental landscapes such as the ocean waterfront and riparian areas.

Recommendation:

Work towards the acquisition of lands within the Longwood Ravine area.

Rationale:

There is an interconnected network of natural ravines throughout the area between the ends of Wasser Road and Waldy Road which are noted as having important ecological values as well as providing rainwater runoff management values. Protection of these areas is a priority and should be actively pursued through a variety of means inclusive of acquisition through the community parks function.

5.3 System-Wide Recommendations for Cowichan Bay

This section presents system wide recommendations for planning and operational policies that support the community parks and trails system as a whole in Cowichan Bay and are equally important in terms of developing a comprehensive Community Parks and Trails Master Plan.

This section consists of:

- Community Parkland Acquisition and Land Use Partnership Strategy,
- Community Park Operations and Maintenance,
- Park Stewardship



View of the Bay from Hecate Park

5.3.1 Community Parkland Acquisition and Land Use Partnership Strategy

The adopted 2013 Cowichan Bay Official Community Plan includes a policy that states that the CVRD will support partnerships with other government agencies, First Nations, for profit and non-profit organizations, individuals and other agencies to develop universally beneficial parks and trails infrastructure. In order to ensure consistency with partnership agreement, a land use partnership strategy should be developed.

The Cowichan Bay Community Parks and Trails Master Plan encourages the development of strong partnerships and gain approval from various government agencies and other local groups to ensure the effective completion of specific partnerships such as the Cowichan Estuary Trail. Effective partnerships with Cowichan Tribes, Federal and Provincial governments and agencies such as the Habitat Acquisition Trust, the Nature Trust of BC and Ducks Unlimited, among others are noted as key in moving the initiative



Partnerships signage for Maple Grove Park

forward. The Cowichan Bay Improvement Association has long supported the establishment of parks and trails in the Estuary and should be encouraged to participate in any partnerships established. Additional partnerships can be entered into with landowners and non-government agencies such as the Cowichan Community Land Trust. These Partnerships can include lease agreements that enable current owners to transfer their property to the CVRD while maintaining their interest in the land for the period of an established tenancy.

In addition to partnerships other land use arrangements can be considered. For example, due to the lack of sidewalks in the CVRD's Electoral Areas, and with the increased demand for active transportation in the community, consideration should be given for a partnership with the BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to establish safe, active transportation corridors within the road right-of-ways. This partnership could be established throughout the unincorporated electoral areas in the Cowichan Valley Regional District.

Recommendation:

Pursue a mutually agreeable and beneficial partnership with Cowichan Tribes with regards to trail connections in the Cowichan Bay area, inclusive of the Marine Gateway Site, that achieve objectives of both parties for increased safe walking and cycling opportunities.



Robert Service Memorial Park cairn



Coverdale Watson Park cairn

Rationale:

Public response indicated a desire to establish the Cowichan Bay area as a more 'walkable' community inclusive of extending opportunities to Cowichan Tribes to link neighboring reserve lands to the network of trails to facilitate safe walking and cycling for all.

Recommendation:

When opportunities arise to acquire land or develop partnerships that support local cultural and heritage values, they should be considered a high priority.

Rationale:

Cowichan Bay has a broad and interesting history. Historical features should be incorporated into and exposed through community parks and trails, ensuring that valued cultural assets are preserved for future educational and historical value.

Recommendation:

When opportunities arise to acquire land, develop partnerships or acquire permits with the Ministry of Transportation and

Infrastructure that facilitates connections of existing or identified future trails, they should be considered a high priority.

Rationale:

Improved connectivity in Cowichan Bay for pedestrians and cyclists has been identified as a high priority and the proposed trail connections identified on Map 4 should be acquired when opportunities arise, whether it's a primary or secondary priority. The CVRD should actively work with developers to facilitate establishment of trail ways that achieve the plan's objectives as part of new developments.

Recommendation:

Maintain the application of Section 941 of the *Local Government Act* requiring 5% parkland dedication during subdivision or cash-in-lieu. Where opportunities for park dedication during subdivision do not coincide with the objectives and recommendations of the Community Parks and Trails Master Plan, the CVRD should accept cash-in-lieu with funds deposited into the Cowichan Bay Community Parkland Acquisition Reserve Fund.

Rationale:

Not all subdivisions have land areas of interest that meet the objectives of the Cowichan Bay Community Parks and Trails Master Plan or provide measurable benefits/opportunities to develop/manage as a park or green space. Therefore, careful review of all subdivision parks dedication proposals should be undertaken, and the benefits of the proposed dedicated lands be weighed against the vision and principles set out in this Community Parks and Trails Master Plan. Where lands do not meet the vision and principles, cash-in-lieu should be accepted.

Recommendation:

Set aside ten percent (10%) of the annual Cowichan Bay Community Parks and Trails requisition for community parkland acquisition.

Rationale:

As a means of deriving funds for future land purchases for parks, annual commitments of requisition funds provide a means of building up such funds over time.



This parking area and roadside walkway is under a permit to construct with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to link Hecate Park with the Cowichan Bay Marine Gateway site.

5.3.2 Community Park Operations and Management

These recommendations fall under:

- Codes of Conduct;
- Policies and Partnerships; and

- Programs and Guides.

Codes of Conduct

Recommendation:

Develop a Trails Code of Conduct that describes expectations for trail users.

Rationale:

Existing and proposed trails in the Master Plan connect between and through local neighbourhoods, business centres and the rural farming community. A Trail Code of Conduct provides expectations of trail users to respect other trail users and adjoining landowners. This code of conduct may include:

- A review of codes from other jurisdictions;
- Development of policies for trails;
- Review and modifications based on consultation with stakeholders;
- Development and distribution of a trail brochure;
- Presentations to key trail user-groups to encourage adoption of the trail code.

Recommendation:

Develop a Code of Conduct that guides expectations for pets and pet-owners while using local parks and trails.

Rationale:

A “Pets in Parks” code of conduct can identify appropriate dos and don’ts and provide a common starting point for users of the local parks and trails system in Cowichan Bay. Dogs off leash or on leash in community parks can create conflict with other park users.

Many examples of Pet Codes have been developed in other park jurisdictions. As might be expected, these all have much in common. For example, a code may:

- Be written in a memorable way using a humorous or poetic style;
- Be illustrated with original artwork from local artists or school children; or
- Be designed and published with the support of local commercial interests, i.e. groomers, boarders, or suppliers.



Example of a Trail Code of Conduct sign in the United Kingdom



This is a sample of a regulatory sign that is posted in local community park within the CVRD.

Policies and Partnerships

Recommendation:

Develop a Community Park Revenue Generation Policy, including direction for implementation with the parks and trails system in Cowichan Bay.

Rationale:

A revenue generation policy would be intended to provide consistency in assessing and determining application of user fees and charges, as appropriate for specific activities and users of local parks. It would allow the CVRD to provide further services to the community by charging a fee for the use of a community park for a special event or new service provided, or offset costs associated with supporting park programs or events.

Recommendation:

Work with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to develop signage and directional markings for Shared Roadways.

Rationale:

Cowichan Bay is a small community with a road network that was not originally designed for pedestrians and cyclists. However, roads serve as important connections between homes, schools and local businesses. As the community continues to grow, there will be an incremental increase in the volume and speed of traffic. Walkers and cyclists may feel less comfortable using roads as part of a community trail network. Roadway markings and signage that indicate a special designation would remind drivers that they should expect to see walkers and cyclists using certain roads.



Volunteers in Parks

Recommendation:

Encourage the growth of a volunteer strategy for the CVRD Parks and Trails Volunteer program in the Cowichan Bay community.

Rationale:

Communities throughout BC have seen tremendous support for parks and trails, with volunteers providing passive reconnaissance and reporting, park and trail enhancement, park hosting/interpretive programs and other in-park activities. Volunteers enrich the quality and delivery of parks and trails programs through their dedication, experience and willingness to get involved at little or no cost to the community. Where these programs have been most successful, there has been recognition of the need to provide



Volunteers from the Kingscote Community on a park clean-up day in the Cees and Meip Hof Memorial Park

staff resources to support volunteer efforts. Staff support may include:

- **logistical** – arranging for hand tools or litter removal after a park clean-up; or
- **organizational** – providing a centralized resource area for volunteer opportunities or advertising and correspondence on behalf of the community.

5.3.3 Park and Trail Stewardship

Park and trail stewardship ensures that all improvements and management of parks are done in a sustainable manner that respects natural systems, balanced with appropriate opportunities for public use and enjoyment.

Recommendation:

Develop and implement a long-term invasive species management plan for Community Park sites in Cowichan Bay.

Rationale:

Local parks remain at risk to the introduction of invasive species that, once established, can displace native species, cause damage to parks infrastructure and/or pose a health risk to park users.

Invasive species are defined as non-native plants and animals that have established themselves in existing natural areas. The BC Ministry of Forests and Range states that “Invasive plants are a threat to our native environment and are recognized globally as the second greatest threat to biodiversity.” In order to support Cowichan Bay’s native flora and fauna and support the integrity of natural environments, invasive species management should be an important component of parks and trails management.

Recommendation:

Engage the CVRD’s Parks, Recreation and Culture Department to work with other CVRD Departments to educate residents about “living by water” principles, invasive species management, and important environmental processes that occur in community parks.

Rationale:

Such programs can develop community awareness of not only how environmental sustainability can be achieved within community parks, but that such actions can also be applied to lands (i.e. residential, institutional, commercial etc.)



throughout the community. Opportunities to distribute information include:

- Information on the CVRD Website,
- Interpretive Signage (Hecate Park, Marine Gateway to Cowichan Bay, Wessex Ravine Park, are examples of parks in Cowichan Bay that may benefit from educational signage);
- The development and distribution of an “invasive species” brochure by CVRD or other agencies having responsibility and jurisdiction;
- The development and distribution of a “water protection” information brochure;
- Arrange, support and/or develop community invasive species removal workshops or volunteer programs; and
- Arrange, support and/or develop community water protection workshops and programs.

Multiple resources provide information and support. Through the Community Parks and Trails Program, members of the community can be made more aware of the valuable resources available. Some resources include:

- The Green Shores Project, with the mission to “promote sustainable use of coastal ecosystems through planning and design that recognizes ecological features and functions of coastal systems.”
<http://www.greenshores.ca>
- The Province of BC Stewardship Series publication titled “Access Near Aquatic Areas: A Guide to Sensitive Planning, Design and Management”. This document provides a guide for balancing conservation with the development of recreational space.
<http://atfiles.org/files/pdf/aquatic-access-canada.pdf>
- The Living By Water Project, with the mission of “working towards healthier human and wildlife habitat along the shorelines of Canada”. The Project supports groups, agencies and individuals by providing services and materials related to shoreline stewardship.
www.livingbywater.ca
- The Invasive Species Council of BC is a non-profit society working to minimize the negative ecological, social, and economic impacts cause by the introduction, establishment and spread of invasive plants. The IPCBC is an extensive information source for identifying, monitoring and controlling invasive species, including T.I.P.S., a series of publications that focuses on



View of the Green shores work looking southeast from the new Cowichan Bay Marine Gateway site



Looking northwest at the Green shores project between Hecate Park and the Cowichan Bay Marine Gateway



View from the Hecate Park Wildlife viewing platform

Integrated Pest Management of common invasive plant species. The group also helps promote the “report a weed” application for cell phones and online to allow the public to report a weed at any time. <http://www.bcinvasives.ca/>

- The Coastal Invasive Species Committee is a non-profit society that focuses specifically on coastal British Columbia. www.coastalisc.com
- The Ministry of Forests and Range hosts the Invasive Alien Plant Program Application, a database for invasive plants in BC. It holds information about where invasive plant colonies have been identified in BC’s communities. www.for.gov.bc.ca/hra/Plants



View from the Cowichan Bay Marine Gateway Site towards Hecate Park and the Cowichan Estuary Nature Centre.

6. IMPLEMENTING THE COMMUNITY PARKS AND TRAILS PLAN

6.1 Existing Structure, Plan Objectives & Timeframes

The focus of this Plan is to provide strategic direction for parks and trails land acquisition, development and planning in Cowichan Bay, as well as setting priorities for implementation actions over the next 10 to 20 years.

The Plan is intended to be a ‘living’ document; it provides direction for a twenty-year period but may be adapted and amended, as priorities and recommendations in the Plan are regularly reviewed through the term of the Plan. It is anticipated that in addition to assessing annual priorities and projects to the yearly budgeting process, the recommendations established within Section 5 of the Plan will be reviewed every five years.

Funding for maintenance of existing park facilities, as well as large and small park development projects is important for the long term sustainability of well-managed parks and trails systems that meet the needs and desires of the community. The first component of defining priorities for parks and trails development projects requires a detailed summary of potential projects that could occur within the community. Field visits were conducted to gain insight on improvements to existing parks and trails. Recommendations were formed through input from the community and the Cowichan Bay Parks Commission.

Following the detailed inventory of potential projects, (see appendix 2 for the inventory details) prioritization was established based on several criteria, including level of community support and importance, replacement requirements of aging existing park facilities and annual budget capacity to fund such projects. The 2013 community parks budget for Cowichan Bay is summarized as outlined in Table 12.



Cowichan Bay Marine Gateway



Hecate Park



Lambourn Park



Maple Grove Park

Table 12. 2013 Cowichan Bay Community Parks Budget

<u>Budget Funding Sources (2013)</u>	
• 2013 Tax Requisition for Cowichan Bay Community Parks	\$130,000
• 2012 Unspent Surplus Carry forward	\$-3,615
• Transfer from Cowichan Bay Community Parks Reserves	\$0
• Short Term Borrowing	\$100,000
Available Funds Source for 2013	\$226,385
<u>Planned Budget Expenditures (2013)</u>	
• Parks Operations and Maintenance	\$93,166
• Summer Playground Program	\$7,946
• Minor Capital Projects	\$0
• Potential Land Purchase	\$90,000
• Major Capital Projects	\$10,363
• Loan Repayment	\$25,580
Planned Expenditures Total 2013	\$226,385

In order to successfully implement this long term community parks and trails strategy, priorities were defined for the capital projects to be implemented in the first 10-years of the Community Parks and Trails Master Plan. A detailed summary of these priorities that are planned for the community are identified in Table 13. In addition,

- Table 14 summarizes the estimates for the Priority 1 (Year 1-10) recommended projects.
- Table 15 summarizes the estimates for the Priority 2 (beyond Year 10) recommended projects.

6.1.2 Maintaining Community Parks and Park Amenities

While the majority of park maintenance funding is established through local taxation, some costs can be offset through fees charged for special use of park facilities, and/or contributions provided by community volunteers.

As park improvements are completed and new parks are acquired, more resources will need to be allocated to maintaining these parks. Planning for improvements and expansion of the Cowichan Bay Parks and Trails system will therefore require careful consideration of increased operational budgets to maintain the current standard of care for community parks and trails.

Table 13. Cowichan Bay Community Parks and Trails Proposed Priority Improvements (Years 1-10) Budget Timeline

Project	Base Year	Annual Capital Budget										Total budget	
		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023		
Capital Budget	2014	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
	Base Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023		
	Project budget required	Annual Capital Budget	Annual Capital Budget	Annual Capital Budget	Annual Capital Budget	Annual Capital Budget	Annual Capital Budget	Annual Capital Budget	Annual Capital Budget	Annual Capital Budget	Annual Capital Budget	Annual Capital Budget	
Priority Recommendations (Year 1-10)													
1. Coverdale Watson Park	\$ 125,300.00											\$ 125,300.00	
	Playground		\$ 50,000.00									\$ 50,000.00	
	Parking lot expansion			\$ 21,000.00								\$ 21,000.00	
	Irrigation/pathway/landscaping			\$ 19,800.00								\$ 19,800.00	
	Washroom Building			\$ 30,000.00								\$ 30,000.00	
	Bench/Fountain/waste receptacle			\$ 4,500.00								\$ 4,500.00	
2. Trail Connection from Hecate Park to Pritchard Road.	\$ 10,200.00					\$ 10,200.00						\$ 10,200.00	
3. Seawall reconstruction and trail upgrades within Hecate Park.	\$ 62,850.00					\$ 40,000.00						\$ 62,850.00	
						\$ 22,850.00						\$ 22,850.00	
4. Wilnot Road Multi-use Pathway	\$ 50,000.00				\$ 20,000.00					\$ 30,000.00		\$ 50,000.00	
5. Cowichan Estuary Trail to Dike Trail	\$ 100,000.00						\$ 30,000.00			\$ 50,000.00		\$ 100,000.00	
6. Multi-Use Trail on Cowichan Bay Road to Telegraph Road.	\$ 52,200.00							\$ 30,000.00		\$ 22,200.00		\$ 52,200.00	
7. Acquisition and construction of a multi-use gravel trail from Ordano/McGill to Koksilah Road.	\$ 21,000.00										\$ 21,000.00	\$ 21,000.00	
8. Cowichan Bay Village walkway	\$ 33,100.00										\$ 33,100.00	\$ 33,100.00	
Total (Year 1-10)	\$454,650.00	\$ -	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 45,300.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,200.00	\$ 52,850.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 52,200.00	\$ 54,100.00	\$ 454,650.00

*** Total budget does not take into account the annual inflationary percentage therefore must be adjusted in future budget planning.

Table 15. Proposed Parks and Trails Projects in Cowichan Bay for Priority 2 projects (11-20 yrs)															
	LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS		INFRASTRUCTURE				TRAILS AND LINKAGES			PARK & TRAIL PLANNING/DEVELOPMENT					
	\$77	/sq. m. Manicured Shrub / Tree Landscape		New Playground	Paved Playing court (with fence)	Bench, Table or Bike Rack on Concrete Pad	Parking area with permeable surface		Multi use gravel trail (3 m)	Roadside walkway (paved)	Community Pathway (1.5 m)	Nature Trail (native material - 1.5 m)	Pedestrian bridge (2 m with handrail)	Park Plan	Total Capital Work
			Each	Each	Each	/stall		/l. m.	/l. m.	/l. m.	/l. m.	/l. m.	Each		
Proposed improvements to existing Community Parks															
Tom Bannister Park	400		1	1	2	2						75		1	\$ 162,175
Proposed trail linkages															
Tom Bannister Park to Cees & Meip Hoff Park												1253			\$ 31,325
Cherry Point Road (Cow Bay Rd to Lanes Rd)								638							\$ 31,900
Lanes Road to Sparwood Road to Bomford Trail								832							\$ 41,600
Cowichan Bay Road (Wilmot Rd to Ordano)								885							\$ 44,250
Cowichan Bay Road (Gateway to North End Theik Reserve)								795							\$ 39,750
Telegraph Road									2280						\$ 371,640
Bench Road									1335						\$ 217,605
Hillbank Road									1980						\$ 322,740
Trails through Cowichan Bay Estates										855					\$ 42,750
Cherry Point Road (Lanes Road to Cobble Hill)								3328							\$ 166,400
Old CN Rail Bed								2000				10			\$ 138,250
															\$ 1,610,385

Appendix 1:

Maps

Appendix 2:

Existing Cowichan Bay Community Parks and Trails Inventory

Appendix 3:

Background Document Review

COWICHAN BAY COMMUNITY PARKS AND TRAILS MASTER PLAN

Review of Background Documents

Cowichan Estuary Environmental Management Plan (CEEMP)

The CEEMP prepared by MOE is intended to provide a framework for managing environmental decisions and priorities in the Cowichan Estuary regarding projects proposed within the Plan boundaries. Historically, industrial, commercial and residential uses in the estuary have competed with the protection of its environmental resources of high-quality salmon and waterfowl habitat. MOE adopted the CEEMP to "... avoid further habitat losses, and to support rehabilitation of presently degraded habitat in the estuary."¹

The CEEMP's primary aim is to maintain and improve the quality and quantity of habitat in the estuary through habitat restoration and improvement projects while accommodating industrial, commercial and other development activities. Activities can be restricted or prohibited and reparations required for violations.

Land-use designations provided for the estuary indicate the general type of acceptable activity for different parts of the estuary. They also provide a decision-making guide for projects and proposed changes in use in the estuary. The designations are to be used to allow a reasonable fulfillment of the potential each area has for the activity that is permitted. The designations in the CEEMP override local planning policies and provisions for land uses in the estuary. Nonetheless, when a project receives CEEMP approval, local zoning and building requirements apply.

Activities in areas designated Conservation/Recreation are to be compatible with habitat conservation and recreation that do not irreversibly affect conservation. Activities can include canoeing, wildlife viewing, hunting or fishing but not marinas. Areas designated Habitat Management are intended to be preserved; recreational activities might be restricted as a result.

Projects proposed for the estuary are reviewed by an intergovernmental committee through a process that links environmental impact of the project with conformity with the CEEMP. This process would apply to trails and recreational activities proposed for the estuary by the Area D Parks and Recreation Commission and the CVRD. When considering a proposed activity that conforms to the CEEMP, MOE consults with other governments including First Nations, regulatory agencies and interested groups for input regarding the proposal. MOE also considers the provisions of the *Environmental Management Act*, the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* and its regulations, the *Navigable Waters Protection Act* and the *Fisheries Act* and their applicability to the Plan area.

¹ Lambertsen, G. K. *Cowichan Estuary Environmental Management Plan*. 1987, BC Ministry of Environment and Parks. P.1

Cowichan Bay Official Community Plan (OCP)

The OCP was adopted by Bylaw #3605 in 2013 and represents the collective values and vision of community members. The Plan replaces the 1986 Cowichan Bay Official Settlement Plan (OSP) and presents a current policy framework to guide decisions on land use and planning activities in the Plan Area. There were 12 Community Goals identified in the plan and the goals specific to Parks and Trails in the community are:

1. *To Restore, Protect and Enhance the Health of the Cowichan Estuary and Marine Foreshore.* The OCP looks towards policies being adopted in regards to the estuary so that fish and shellfish can be safely harvested and the coastal environment can be enjoyed for social, cultural and recreation purposes.
2. *Improve Transportation and Mobility.* The OCP seeks to create a viable, safe and efficient multi-modal transportation system, which lessens dependency on private vehicles through improved transportation infrastructure and a variety of transportation alternatives including walking, cycling and transit. Associated Policies:
 - The provision of safe roadside walkways along main roadways to accommodate safer pedestrian, cycling and equestrian use, and for safer access to Bench Elementary School.
 - Establish a safe and continuous pedestrian pathway through Cowichan Bay Village to Maple Grove Park.
 - Create a trail connection between the residential and commercial area of Cowichan Bay Village from Pritchard and Fenwick Roads.
 - Creation of a trail connection between Coverdale Watson Park and Hecate Park.
3. *Enhance the Environment, Ecosystems and Biodiversity.* The OCP will enhance natural areas, ecosystems and special biodiversity while providing opportunities for human enjoyment. Associated Policies:
 - The CVRD will seek to protect, restore and enhance environmentally sensitive areas through a variety of mechanisms such as strategic park acquisition, conservation covenants, community education and stewardship.
 - CVRD will seek to prevent the unnecessary spread of invasive species.
 - The CVRD will support projects such as interpretive signage programs and local nature festivals, and will facilitate the provision of interpretive and way finding signage through the Parks function for the purposes of educating the public about parks and the natural environment and improving access to parks, trails, recreational facilities and the crown foreshore.
4. *Enhance Connections to the Waterfront.* The OCP encourages linkages between neighbourhoods and the waterfront through public beach accesses, trail connections, and an unobstructed

foreshore to ensure that all community members can enjoy this valuable public resource. Associated Policies:

- Acquisition, during subdivision and rezoning processes, of environmentally sensitive riparian and marine riparian areas for the purpose of designating such areas as nature parks and creation of beach accesses.
- At the time of subdivision of land adjacent to the ocean or a watercourse, the CVRD will recommend to the Subdivision Approving Authority that public access to all water bodies be required.

5. *Recognize Heritage, Cultural Values and Identity.* The OCP seeks to recognize and protect heritage, cultural and archaeological resources. Associated Policies:

- The CVRD will support the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department in the identification and mapping cultural resources such as cultural sites, assets and elements.
- The CVRD will support the integration of public art in the development of public facilities, parks and trails.

6. *Improve Public and Environmental Health.* The OCP seeks to improve public and environmental health through opportunities for alternative non-vehicular transportation and road safety improvements as well as parks that are designed to be accessible to all residents regardless of their physical ability and to deter crime and provide opportunities for recreation and socialization, and the protection of natural area and features in order to reduce the risk of hazards such as erosion, flooding and sea level rise. Associated Policies:

- The CVRD will undertake a regional active transportation plan to create a well-integrated active transportation network connecting neighbourhoods, parks and trails within the Plan area and communities within the region.
- The CVRD will accommodate horse-friendly parks and trails and facilities in close proximity to parks, schools and other community designations.
- The CVRD will place a high priority on implementing safe continuous walkways to schools, commercial areas, neighbourhood hubs, bus stops and other high volume pedestrian areas.
- The CVRD will support the development of an integrated cycling network as a major component of transportation and mobility.
- The CVRD will encourage bicycle parking and storage with new major development, parks and major transit nodes throughout the Electoral Area.

The 1985 PERC Report

In 1985 the CVRD commissioned Professional Environmental Recreational Consultants (PERC) to complete a Regional District-wide, Electoral areas and municipalities, *Parks & Recreation Master Plan*. The PERC report noted the CVRD “has superfluous amounts of community park land”² much of it undeveloped and underutilized. It supported less community parkland in rural areas and recommended an initiative for a regional park in Area D – the development of an ocean-front park with boating support in Cowichan Bay. This Park has since been developed and is now Hecate Park and the Cowichan Bay Boat Launch (managed through the South Cowichan Community Parks Function.)

The report called for more cash-in-lieu of land dedications and establishing community parks reserves for acquisition and development. The PERC plan recommendations focused on fine-tuning the “comprehensive system for the delivery of public leisure services ... in the Cowichan Valley”³. It proposed the identification and acquisition of a site as an ocean-front day-use park in Cowichan Bay. (Now Hecate Park)

Cowichan Bay Improvement Association (CBIA) Action Plan (1992)

The 1991 *CBIA Action Plan* proposes initiatives for dealing with issues of concern to the community. It defines the community as Cowichan Bay itself, the Estuary and the commercial and residential development along Cowichan Bay Road from the Theik Reserve in the west to Kil-Pah-Las in the east as well as the water leases north of Cowichan Bay Road.

Shortcomings specified in the Action Plan include the shortage of public pathways, nature and hiking trails and pedestrian access within the ‘Bay’ area and connections to adjacent areas of interest. It identifies the need for a comprehensive footpath system within the Village. The Action Plan shows the need for sidewalks within the Village to provide access to viewpoints, parking and access to Cowichan Bay, Hecate Park and north along Cowichan Bay Road. The acquisition of safe pedestrian access to Hecate Park is identified as an initiative coupled with a call to prepare a seawall with a related promenade.

The preferred location of a seawall that would likely offer best exposure to the attributes of Cowichan Bay would be on the ‘outside’ of the developed area. Decisions regarding specific location of a structure, access points and the structure itself would need input from the CVRD, provincial agencies, DFO and First Nations. Obtaining the seawall/walkway would likely have to occur in incremental steps as development occurs, likely through development applications and with the cooperation of applicants.

The Plan acknowledges that, as development intensifies, there is a growing desire to have public access to the waterfront. The completion of a comprehensive footpath system for the Bay is an important initiative it identifies; increased public awareness highlights the need for additional trails. It notes that although limitations to pedestrian connections exist, opportunities to link footpaths with interpretation and viewing areas are also present. The successful completion of a pedestrian network will require the cooperation of the Cowichan Tribes, the CVRD, relevant landowners and the Province.

² Professional Environmental Recreation Consultants Ltd., (PERC) *Cowichan Valley Parks and Recreation Master Plan. 1985, p.25*

³ PERC,1985. op. cit. p.1.

Area D Zoning Bylaw No. 1015

Zoning Bylaw 1015 was adopted in 1986. The consolidated version, including amendments to April 12, 2006, was reviewed for this project. A zoning bylaw implements an OCP through specific controls for uses in each zone by regulating uses on a site, the height of buildings, buildings setbacks from the street and lot lines, among others.

Zoning Bylaw No. 1015 defines a public park as:

“public park” means public land used or intended for outdoor recreation, including lands set for archaeological, historical, or ecological purposes;”.

This definition includes all parks within the Cowichan Bay Electoral Area.

Zoning bylaws often include a section that permits certain types of uses in all zones. Section 4.3 (b) of the *Basic Provisions* of the Zoning Bylaw permits a “public park” in any zone. This enables parks to be located in all zones within the Electoral Area, as well as in zones that are created when a subdivision occurs, without a rezoning application being required for the park. Parks have to meet the requirements of the zone in which they are located.

The Zoning Bylaw establishes the *P-1 Zone – Parks and Institutional*. The *P-1 Zone* permits assembly uses, civic use, institution, schools, personal care facilities, botanical gardens, ecological reserves, public parks, greenbelts and an accessory single-family dwelling or mobile home.

Also included in Zoning Bylaw 1015 is the *W-1 Zone – Water Conservancy Zone* and the *W-2 Zone – Water Recreation*. The *W-1 Zone* permits environmental protection and habitat enhancement activities, passive recreational activities, community water supply area and non-commercial docks or floats. The *W-2 Zone* allows all the uses permitted in the *W-1 Zone* as well as a public docks, seawall, boardwalk and ramp.

No zone of this bylaw lists trails as a permitted use. It will likely be necessary to correct this deficiency when the zoning bylaw is amended in the future.

This zoning bylaw has been amended on several occasions since its adoption. *CVRD Bylaw No. 2618* amended this zoning bylaw by adopting the minimum parcel sizes for uses in the *P-1 Zone* as 0.2 ha for uses on full water and sewer services, 0.4 ha when located either on water or sewer services, and 1.0 ha where no services are provided. All uses within the *P-1 Zone*, including parks, must comply with this requirement.

Draft Trail Network & Cycling Plan

In 2000 the District of North Cowichan prepared a *Draft Trail Network & Cycling Plan*. References regarding establishing trails within the Cowichan Bay Electoral Area were made in the Plan as partial funding for the Plan was from the CVRD. Elements of this Plan include linkages from Cowichan Bay to Electoral Area E (Glenora), North Cowichan and Duncan. A potential multi-use trail is identified extending approximately from the Westcan terminal on Cowichan Bay to Tziquaw Road in Electoral Area

E. This route extends over the former CN Rail right-of-way abandoned some time ago. A second route follows the Cowichan River through the Cowichan First Nation Reserve to North Cowichan and Duncan.

Cowichan Region Economic Development Strategy

This 2002 document identifies tourism as a growing industry in the CVRD with major attractions being outdoor recreation experiences, including parks and natural areas. Although not mentioned in the document, it is recognized that walking, hiking, cycling and climbing excursions are popular adventure activities with tourists that contribute to local economies and would be a benefit to this area.

Great Blue Heron Population and Monitoring Report

Heron colonies have been identified in Cowichan Bay yet declining low productivity rates, high rates of colony failure and declining populations in central and northern Vancouver Island colonies are of concern. The Cowichan Bay and southern colonies do not seem to be suffering the same declines of northern Vancouver Island and the Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) where there were no successful colonies north of Nanoose Bay.⁴ This is likely a result of the higher rates of development in the RDN and the Comox Valley Regional District.

Although not a criterion for the Master Plan, the heron nesting site located in Wessex Ravine Park in Cowichan Bay is worthy of preservation because of its environment sensitivity and strength. The colony could likely benefit from stewardship and protection through this Plan as generally discussed in the report prepared for MOE.

MOE Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory

MOE maps and monitors sensitive ecosystems on eastern Vancouver Island to preserve and conserve as many ecosystem types as possible. The diversity of the ecosystems that are maintained contributes to the stability of the overall environment and provides healthy environments for these areas. Areas identified as sensitive ecosystems could be included in the parks system for the Electoral Area where conservation efforts complement parks and trails objectives. A first step would be to identify and designate them as protected areas within the new Official Community Plan (OCP) being prepared.

⁴ Chatwin, op. cit., p. 11.

Appendix 4:

Summary of Open House survey from 2007

Compiled Responses from Public Consultation Process

OPEN HOUSE QUESTIONNAIRE – 30 MAY 2007

1. Do you have any comments on the suggested parks and trails ideas shown on the draft Cowichan Bay Parks & Trails Master Plan?
 - Very good, hopefully they will come to fruition.
2. Using the chart below, tell us what you think about the current inventory of parks and trails in the Cowichan Bay area.

Parks	Have Enough	Need More	Don't Know	If more needed, where and what type?
Local or mini parks		3		
Neighbourhood parks		1	1	Hook all the trails and parks together.
Community parks	1	1	1	
Waterfront parks		4	1	Can Hecate Park be expanded into Theik Park or the other direction? Boardwalk along the water.
Nature parks and open space	1	2	1	
Greenways		1	1	
Special use parks		1		
Trails & Pathways				
Park trails		3		Access to beach from Waldy or Longwood Roads. The trail from Cowichan Bay Road to Ordano needs more gravel at Cow Bay Road end – it floods badly! Hooking Bright Angel Park to a trail with Maple Grove or to Whippletree, then to Cowichan Bay. Great walking trail!
Community trails		4		
Community pathways		5		Need a safe walkway from Wilmot (Park) to highway (Koksilah); the road is too narrow and many people walk there. Along Wilmot Road after park to Koksilah.
Facilities				
Sports complex	2		1	Too much money; aging population.
Playgrounds	2		1	
Picnic areas	2		1	
Closed courts	1		1	
Tennis courts	2		1	
Other		1		Bicycles and others (facilities) for renters; parks for families to grow their own veggies.

3. What should be the parks and trails priorities in your community –
 - (a) over the next 5 years?
 - other-use park
 - acquisition and protection of wildlife corridors and habitats
 - connecting walking trails
 - viewing platforms around estuary
 - ability to walk around Area D passing through the Village
 - acquiring land for parks
 - interconnections for walking; do not allow bicycles on paths – too dangerous!
 - (b) over the longer term?
 - developing land into nice parks
 - many of the same priorities noted above

4. Implementation of the final Cowichan Bay Parks & Trails Master Plan may require the acquisition of additional parkland, greenways or trails. Would you accept an increase in your property taxes to have more parks and trails?

If so, how much of an increase?

Up to \$10/household per year	1 (minimally)
\$10 to \$20/household per year	-
\$20 to \$25/household per year	4
Or - \$50 - \$100/household/year	1

5. Do you have any additional suggestions, comments or concerns?
 - I would like to see all the parks in Area D connected, hook into Maple Grove Park, then on to the Trans-Canada Trail. Make Cowichan Bay area a walking, hiking, biking, eco destination. I would like to see the link up to Whippetree from Cow Bay.
 - A walkway from Wilmot (Coverdale Park) to Whippetree; a walkway from Austin Place to Cow Bay Road; a walkway from Koksilah to Ordano water tower.
 - Do not develop Glen Road greenbelt. Leave it natural. Trails would reduce residents’ privacy and open them up to theft.
 - As most homes don’t have fences between their back yards and greenbelt areas in Glen Park subdivision, we would prefer not to have a pathway go through this area.

- Keep cyclists and pedestrians separate on trails where visibility is limited. Some cyclists have no consideration for other users and spoil the amenities provided.
- It would be nice to have First Nations involved, sharing parks and trails, including access to the beach at the end of Longwood.
- We'd like to have a connection to the Trans-Canada Trail.
- There is a group of people in the area who plan to create a bird sanctuary – and would like support.
- What is the proposed connection between the estuary and Whippletree Junction?
- How about making more of the trails into cycle trails?
- There are elk, bears and cougars in the area; we need to maintain wildlife corridors.

Please leave the completed questionnaire with us, if you can, or mail/fax to:

Tanya Soroka, Parks and Trails Planner
Cowichan Valley Regional District
175 Ingram Street, Duncan, BC V9L 1N8
Fax: 746-2621