

Parks and Recreation

9



GOALS

- › 9 (A) Victoria is an active community where everyone enjoys convenient access to community parks, open spaces, facilities, amenities and programs close to where they live.

OVERVIEW

Parks, [open spaces](#) and both [indoor](#) and [outdoor recreational facilities](#) are critical components of a complete community. Collectively, they include a diversity of places such as playgrounds, sports fields, pathways, plazas, natural areas, pools, arenas, community and seniors centres, fitness centres, greenways, trails, dog parks, horticultural gardens, beaches, as well as associated services and programs. Victoria also has many other open spaces such as school yards and provincial and institutional lands that are used for recreational purposes but that are not designated City parks. Parks, open spaces and recreational facilities serve many different uses in an urban environment. They help to improve the livability of densely developed areas, enable active lifestyles and personal health, provide spaces for respite and contemplation, highlight historic and cultural landscapes, and provide indoor and outdoor gathering places. Many parks and open spaces also play an important role in providing animal and plant habitat and maintaining [ecosystem services](#).

When this plan was originally adopted, approximately 85% of residents had a City park within a five minute walk (400 metres) of home. While Victoria possesses a broad network of parks, open spaces and recreational facilities, several strategic additions will further enhance the livability of Urban Villages throughout the city. The City's parks are increasingly challenged with balancing demands for different types of activities on a relatively small land base. Acquiring additional land for ecological and recreational purposes will require creative approaches and the use of innovative tools. Many recreational facilities are already operated in partnership with other organizations, and approaches to maintaining and enhancing these assets and their programs will need to evolve in the face of a growing and aging population, aging infrastructure, and to be increasingly welcoming and inclusive for Victoria's diverse population.

The plan addresses these challenges by focusing the development of new parks, open spaces and recreational facilities in and near the Urban Core, Town Centres, and Urban Villages. Directions are provided to enhance existing parks, identify key locations for new parks, and enable tools to acquire sufficient parks and open space to meet the needs of a growing population. The plan also looks to new approaches to maintain and enhance the existing network of recreational facilities and programs. Greenways are envisioned to play a more prominent role in the city, expanding on their functions as human-powered transportation corridors and to provide an enhanced recreational experience. The plan also encourages parks to be planned and designed to meet the needs of many different users and uses.

BROAD OBJECTIVES

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

- 9 (a) That a network of parks and open spaces meets citywide and local area needs, including at least one park or open space within walking distance (400 metres) of 99% of households.
- 9 (b) That a well-connected, clearly identifiable, and multi-functional network of greenways is established across the city.
- 9 (c) That parks, open spaces and facilities contribute to the enhancement and restoration of **ecological functions**.
- 9 (d) That a diversity of inclusive facilities, services and programming enables broad community access and participation in an active lifestyle.
- 9 (e) That parks and recreational facilities are designed to achieve multiple benefits and accommodate a diversity of people and activities.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

- 9.1 Maintain and enhance the existing network of parks and open spaces identified on Map 11 through the implementation and monitoring of a Parks Master Plan and supportive parks related policies, strategies, and initiatives to achieve the following:
 - 9.1.1 Develop a variety of parks that support a range of healthy, active opportunities for all members of the community;
 - 9.1.2 Recognize and balance the multiple purposes and uses of parks, such as cultural events, recreation, sports, ecosystem services, commemoration and aesthetic enjoyment;
 - 9.1.3 Improve the connection of parks and open spaces to Urban Villages, Town Centres and other destinations through improvements to pedestrian, cycling and greenway networks;
 - 9.1.4 Protect and restore the function of sensitive ecosystems and natural areas, including the development of habitat corridors, taking into consideration the potential impacts of climate change; and,
 - 9.1.5 Recommend appropriate directions for parks management, design, planning and acquisition.
- 9.2 Develop a Parks Acquisition Strategy that defines tools, targets and potential sites for the following priority park land acquisitions:
 - 9.2.1 Areas with limited supply of City park lands and other publicly-accessible open space;
 - 9.2.2 Linear corridors and other lands for the protection, preservation and restoration of habitat and ecosystem features;
 - 9.2.3 Linear access rights for a continuous, publicly-accessible Harbour Pathway and other greenways, including multi-use access to these pathways;
 - 9.2.4 Linear waterfront access rights to shorelines and beaches;
 - 9.2.5 Larger land holdings to provide usable space for community benefit;

- 9.2.6 Areas designated for residential or employment growth, including Urban Villages and Town Centres; and,
- 9.2.7 New parks in Rock Bay, the north end of Downtown, Harris Green, North Jubilee, Hillside-Quadra and Burnside as indicated on Map 11.
- 9.3 Seek opportunities to partner with other levels of government, private industry, school boards, community agencies and individuals to acquire or gain access to land for park and outdoor recreational use.
- 9.4 Evaluate proposals for significant land use change in Town Centres or Large Urban Villages, to encourage the provision of:
 - 9.4.1 Land for park purposes sufficient to meet anticipated demand through measures such as development cost charges, voluntary amenity contribution, dedication at subdivision, or through cash contribution to a City parkland acquisition and improvement fund, earmarked for the acquisition or improvement of park land in the general vicinity; and,
 - 9.4.2 Usable on-site public and semi-public open space.
- 9.5 Recognize the city's recreation system as a vital part of the regional network of parks, open space, trails and recreational facilities.
- 9.6 Cultivate partnerships with community organizations, the private sector, other levels of government and the public to enhance the long-term sustainability and viability of parks and open spaces [SEE ALSO SECTION 10 – ENVIRONMENT].



MAP 11

Parks, Open Space and Recreational Facilities

- C** Community Centre
- R** Recreation Centre
- S** Seniors Centre
- A** Arena
- Existing Public School
- Proposed Park (approximate location)
- Park
- Open Space
- Designated Greenway
- Rail Corridor

Park: Land managed by the City of Victoria as a park.

Open Space: Land that is generally publicly-accessible, other than City parks. Includes private lands, public lands and other City-held property, such as greens and street rights of way.

This map is provided for information purposes only. Please refer to Map 2 and Figure 8 for designation information.

GREENWAYS

- 9.7 Implement the City's Greenways Network as shown on Map 7, seeking opportunities to enhance recreational opportunities, identity, green features and the pedestrian and cycling experience by [SEE ALSO SECTION 7 – TRANSPORTATION AND MOBILITY]:
 - 9.7.1 Integrating Urban Villages, Town Centres, parks, open spaces, recreational facilities and other common destinations into the greenways network;
 - 9.7.2 Restoring terrestrial and aquatic habitats, enhancing the urban forest, and improving habitat connectivity;
 - 9.7.3 Piloting green infrastructure and urban food production in greenways;
 - 9.7.4 Strengthening the visual identity of the greenways system to aid with greenway navigation and increase the prominence of the network;
 - 9.7.5 Integrating elements that reflect unique neighbourhood character and identity, such as signage, public art, and streetscape treatments;
 - 9.7.6 Enhancing the greenways network along the waterfront by completing the multi-modal Harbour Pathway and better integrating connections to existing pedestrian and cycling networks; and,
 - 9.7.7 Integrating the greenways network within a regional system.

ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT IN PARKS

- 9.8 Recognize and enhance the ecosystem services provided by parks and open space, including design to enhance biodiversity, carbon sequestration, climate resilience, and air and water quality [SEE ALSO SECTION 10 – ENVIRONMENT AND SECTION 11 – INFRASTRUCTURE].
- 9.9 Plan and manage natural areas in parks to protect and restore natural ecosystems, including the development of habitat corridors to connect to other remnant ecosystems for the movement of native flora and fauna.
- 9.10 Identify additional areas for ecological protection and restoration in parks, and develop appropriate management strategies and practices.
- 9.11 Work collaboratively with other levels of government, organizations and citizens to protect and restore native ecosystems and species at risk within City parks and open spaces [SEE ALSO SECTION 10 – ENVIRONMENT].

ACCESS TO SERVICES AND FACILITIES

- 9.12 Seek to maintain partnerships, policies and fee structures for parks and recreational facilities that encourage the participation of people of all ages, incomes, abilities, backgrounds and lifestyles [SEE ALSO SECTION 15 – COMMUNITY WELL-BEING].
- 9.13 Work closely with community centres, senior centres, community organizations, the public library and residents to seek innovative opportunities to sustain and enhance community-based recreation services and programs.
- 9.14 Enhance child- and youth-friendly parks and recreational facilities, services, and programs in the City, to promote a healthy community and to help attract and retain households with children [SEE ALSO SECTION 15 – COMMUNITY WELL-BEING].

FACILITIES PLANNING

- 9.15 Seek innovative options and mechanisms to upgrade and provide new sports and recreation, equipment, infrastructure and facilities, including for the Crystal Pool and Fitness Centre and the Royal Athletic Park.
- 9.16 Encourage public and private sector partners to invest in civic park and recreational facilities and infrastructure through means such as capital funding and private donations.
- 9.17 Support joint use agreements with the school district, other institutions and the private sector to make effective and economic use of recreational and school facilities for community benefit.
- 9.18 Seek opportunities to integrate green infrastructure in park and recreational facilities during new construction and major upgrades [SEE ALSO SECTION 11 – INFRASTRUCTURE].
- 9.19 Develop a comprehensive strategy for the use, maintenance, improvement, addition to and funding of sports fields in Victoria, with the goal of facilitating field sports and physical activity, and meeting the needs of the community and sports tourism sector.
- 9.20 Seek opportunities to sustain and enhance recreational services and programs through the development of a Recreation Services and Facilities Delivery Strategy that identifies:
 - 9.20.1 Recreational service needs and gaps and defines long-term approaches to service delivery;
 - 9.20.2 Sports, recreation and other facilities needed to support service delivery, including in areas of population growth;
 - 9.20.3 Innovative opportunities for the delivery and location of neighbourhood recreation and community services and programs in Town Centres and Urban Villages; and,
 - 9.20.4 Opportunities to use existing City and other facilities as integrated centres for the delivery of City and non-City services.

MULTIPLE USES OF PARKS

- 9.21 Design and upgrade parks, indoor and outdoor recreational facilities, community centres and other public spaces to serve multiple purposes and users, and to achieve the following objectives:
 - 9.21.1 Continue and expand the use of City parks and open spaces for festivals, celebrations, concerts and other special events [SEE ALSO SECTION 16 – ARTS AND CULTURE];
 - 9.21.2 Provide opportunities for outdoor experiences and activities that foster respect for and enjoyment of the natural environment in City parks and open spaces;
 - 9.21.3 Provide opportunities to enhance the value of play for all ages;
 - 9.21.4 Consider ways to recognize and celebrate the value of history and place, including multi-cultural and Indigenous aspects, in parks design, interpretation and other initiatives;
 - 9.21.5 Protect and steward cultural heritage landscapes on City land as consistent with the National Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada [SEE ALSO SECTION 8 – PLACEMAKING];
 - 9.21.6 Integrate celebratory, contemplative and recreational spaces in parks and facilities planning and design; and,
 - 9.21.7 Design outdoor park and recreational amenities to include features that accommodate public eating and social interaction, where appropriate.

MEASURING PROGRESS

- 9.22 The following target should be considered in measuring progress towards the plan's parks and recreation objectives:
 - 9.22.1 A minimum of 99% of Victorians have a park or open space within 400 metres of home by 2041.