

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



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The community engagement process was designed to gather input to determine the public's priorities for parks, trails and open spaces in order to plan for these spaces when looking at Parksville's future. Seven community engagement events were designed to identify needs and values from a diversity of community members. These events included:

● Parks on the Street

● Foster Park Spring Mini Event

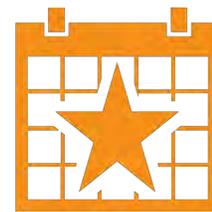
● Splash Park Opening

● User Group Interviews

● Individual Park Comment Boxes

● Online Survey

● Open House Series



7 Community  
Engagement Events



1000+  
Responses

Over 1,000 responses were gathered through these events and data collection techniques. A full Engagement Summary is located in Appendix A.



# PARKS ON THE STREET

On Saturday, March 17, 2018, VIU students were stationed in high-traffic areas around Parksville to ask passers-by three questions:

1. Apart from the Community Park, what other parks or open spaces do you use frequently, and why?
2. What changes would you like to see in these parks and open spaces?
3. What is your favourite trail around Parksville?

Results from Question 2 provided an initial understanding of Parksville's residents' priorities for parks. Answers were organized into five main themes:

1. **Dogs** — a need for more spaces for dog walkers and better signage to control where dogs can and cannot go
2. **Services and amenities** — parks should provide additional services and amenities, including lighting, places to sit, and areas for community gathering
3. **Connectivity and future acquisition** — improvements to the connectivity of the parks and trails network and additions to parks and trails spaces should be a priority
4. **Wildlife** — a desire to create natural environments to support wildlife and ensure that human wildlife interactions are managed responsibly
5. **Accessibility** — a need for more accessible parks and trails for all abilities.



## FOSTER PARK SPRING MINI EVENT



On Saturday, June 9, 2018, VIU students and faculty collaborated with City of Parksville staff and volunteers from Friends of Foster Park to host an event to collect data.

An informal voting system was used to collect data regarding the types of parks spaces residents would like to see in Parksville. The majority of respondents would like to see the parks to be preserved and enhanced as natural spaces.

Responses from the comments sheets provided were summarized. Respondents noted that they would like to see:

- More maintenance (mowing, debris removal, garbage);
- Increased wayfinding and educational signage;
- Multi-use facilities/events areas; and
- More off-leash dog areas.



## SPLASH PARK OPENING

On June 22, 2018, three students had an information tent set up at the Splash Park Opening at the Parksville Community Park. Posters provided community members with information about the purpose of the project and the process, as well as feedback from previous community engagement events.

Few responses were collected at this event, however, the majority of those who did respond noted that they would like to see parks and trails remain as natural spaces.

## USER GROUP INTERVIEWS

Parks and trail user group meetings were conducted to ensure the needs of these stakeholders were properly considered. A total of 14 user groups from across Parksville were interviewed. The three objectives for these interviews were:

1. Understand how groups use the parks and trails;
2. Gain general feedback on what groups like about the parks and trails; and
3. Determine what groups needs are for future development of the parks and trails.

The common themes expressed by the user groups were identified:

- A strong need for more fields and courts;
- A desire and need for more connections and better linkages between trails and parks;
- A desire for more signage and a wayfinding system;
- Increased lightning for fields and courts;
- Storage spaces at various parks;
- Fencing around courts and fields;
- Better surfaces for weather (i.e. turf fields and drainage on courts);
- Increased partnerships to allow for shared usage; and
- More maintenance.





## COMMENT BOXES

For five weeks, beginning on June 15, 2018, and ending on July 20, 2018, birdhouses utilized as comment boxes were rotated around all parks and trails in Parksville. The comment boxes were an effective way to gain feedback on each individual park from residents who use the parks the most. There were two main objectives of the comment boxes:

1. Gain feedback from residents of Parksville on each individual park regarding what they call the park and give an opportunity for them to record their thoughts about the state of the park; and
2. Add diversity to the responses by reaching out to a variety of demographics by locating comment boxes to be accessible and convenient for individuals who were unable to attend events.



A total of 548 responses were collected, indicating Parksville residents not only value their park space and trails, but also have strong opinions about how the parks and trails should be managed going forward. Due to the large volume of responses, the comments have been summarized by park classification.

### Pocket Parks:

- Keep natural;
- Increase parks amenities, such as benches and garbage cans;
- Maintenance concerns, including invasive species and dead trees removal;
- Signage for no dumping;
- Play structures for children; and
- Picnic shelters.

### Neighbourhood Parks:

- Keep parks as natural as possible;
- Safety concerns regarding fallen trees and brush piles that should be cleaned up;
- Maintenance concerns with garbage and cigarette butts;
- Additional playgrounds or amenities to support activities;
- More community gathering spaces; and
- Better accessibility for all users.

### Principal Parks:

- Signage, including directional and no-smoking signs;
- Flower gardens to attract pollinators; and
- Enhanced maintenance.

### Linear Parks:

- Maintaining natural parks space, including preserving native plants and bird habitat;
- Concerns regarding overdeveloped surrounding linear parks;
- Seasonal maintenance concerns that make accessibility difficult;
- Better accessibility for all users;
- Directional signage;
- Enhanced connectivity to the rest of Parksville;
- Animal secure garbage cans; and
- Invasive species control.



## Natural Resource Areas:

- Maintain them as natural areas;
- Use them as wildlife sanctuaries;
- Increase maintenance, such as more garbage cans and places to put cigarette butts;
- More benches;
- Add lighting;
- Maintain brush along paths;
- Address encroachment of surrounding residents onto parks property; and
- Include off-leash dog areas.

## Trails:

- Keep trails as natural as possible;
- Safety concerns and desire for additional trail lighting;
- Safe surfaces for walking and jogging;
- Trail maintenance to remove brush and level trails;
- Off-leash dog sections or areas;
- Circular trail routes; and
- Maps and directional signage.

The comment boxes received a large volume of positive and informative feedback from the Parksville community. Two main conclusions can be made from the data received from the comment boxes. The first is that the residents of Parksville prioritize nature and want to make sure their parks and trails remain as natural as possible, while still remaining functional and enjoyable. The second is that there is a high need for maintenance and amenities related to maintenance (i.e. garbage bins and dog disposal bags) in most of the parks and trails.

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*“I like the greenspace—great space for kids and it beautifies the neighbourhood.”*

- Community Respondent  
regarding Sylvan Crescent Park

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## ONLINE SURVEY

A survey was offered to Parksville residents to gain a clearer demographic understanding of the residents of Parksville use parks and trails. The survey was available between July 15 and August 13, 2018. There was an option to complete a paper survey from the City of Parksville and the Parksville branch of the Vancouver Island Public Library. A total of 107 surveys were completed. The survey had three objectives:

1. Gain an understanding of the age of respondents and where they live in Parksville;
2. Determine how often individuals use the parks and trails in Parksville; and
3. **Gain an understanding of residents' perspectives of what parks and trails mean to them.**

The survey included 15 questions, these questions and results can be found in Appendix A.

Question 5 included a set of questions that indicated the values residents of Parksville hold about parks and trails. These questions asked:

5. Please rate your level of agreement with the following from 1 (not at all important) to 5 (very important) - Parks are important for:
  - a. the conservation of natural environments;
  - b. mental well-being; physical well-being;
  - c. their recreational value;
  - d. beautifying the City;
  - e. me to spend time with family and friends;
  - f. the regional economy;
  - g. their educational value;
  - h. attending festivals and special events; and
  - i. taking my dog for a walk.



Results from Question 5 indicated individuals feel parks are very important for the conservation of natural environments, mental well-being, and physical well-being as about 80% of individuals ranked each of these statements as very important. The statements least important for individuals were the statements that parks were important for festivals and events and for taking their dog out for a walk.

## OPEN HOUSE SERIES

On July 19, 25 and 31, the research team set up a series of open house events at the Parksville Civic and Technology Centre, 100 Jensen Avenue East. The open house series was the last public event of the community engagement process for this project, although data collection continued into August through the Parks, Trails and Open Spaces online survey.

The open house series collected information on:

1. What type of amenities residents want to see in parks (residents had the opportunity to vote for the amenities they felt were of highest priority);
2. Which statements and priorities residents of Parksville felt were the most important to be the guiding principles of the Parks, Trails and Open Spaces Master Plan;
3. General comments and concerns that residents had, varying from general remarks on all areas in Parksville, to opinions on what specific parks and locations should look like; and
4. User information and attitudes towards **Parksville's parks, trails and open spaces through hard** copies of the Parks, Trails and Open Spaces online survey.



Community members were asked to complete the sentence “The Citizens of Parksville want a Parks, Trails and Open Spaces Master Plan that...” The three most popular statements voted on by residents include:

- Preserves and enhances sensitive ecological areas, natural resources and wildlife habitat
- Sets aside valuable greenspace to build climate resiliency
- Provides connection and active transportation options.

Community members were also asked to comment on the amenities they would like to see included in parks and trails. The highest priority amenities included trails, natural features, bicycle racks, garbage cans, playgrounds, and water fountains.

General comment sheets were available at the open house series. Many of these comments were park or trail specific; however, the remainder fit into three main themes:

1. Enhancing the **accessibility** of parks and trails
2. Increasing the number of trails and **improving connectivity** of the current network
3. Using parks and trails for **environmental protection**

Environmental protection was the most mentioned theme on the comment sheets. Parksville residents are concerned about the impact of development on the environment and are passionate about protecting the city’s natural spaces.

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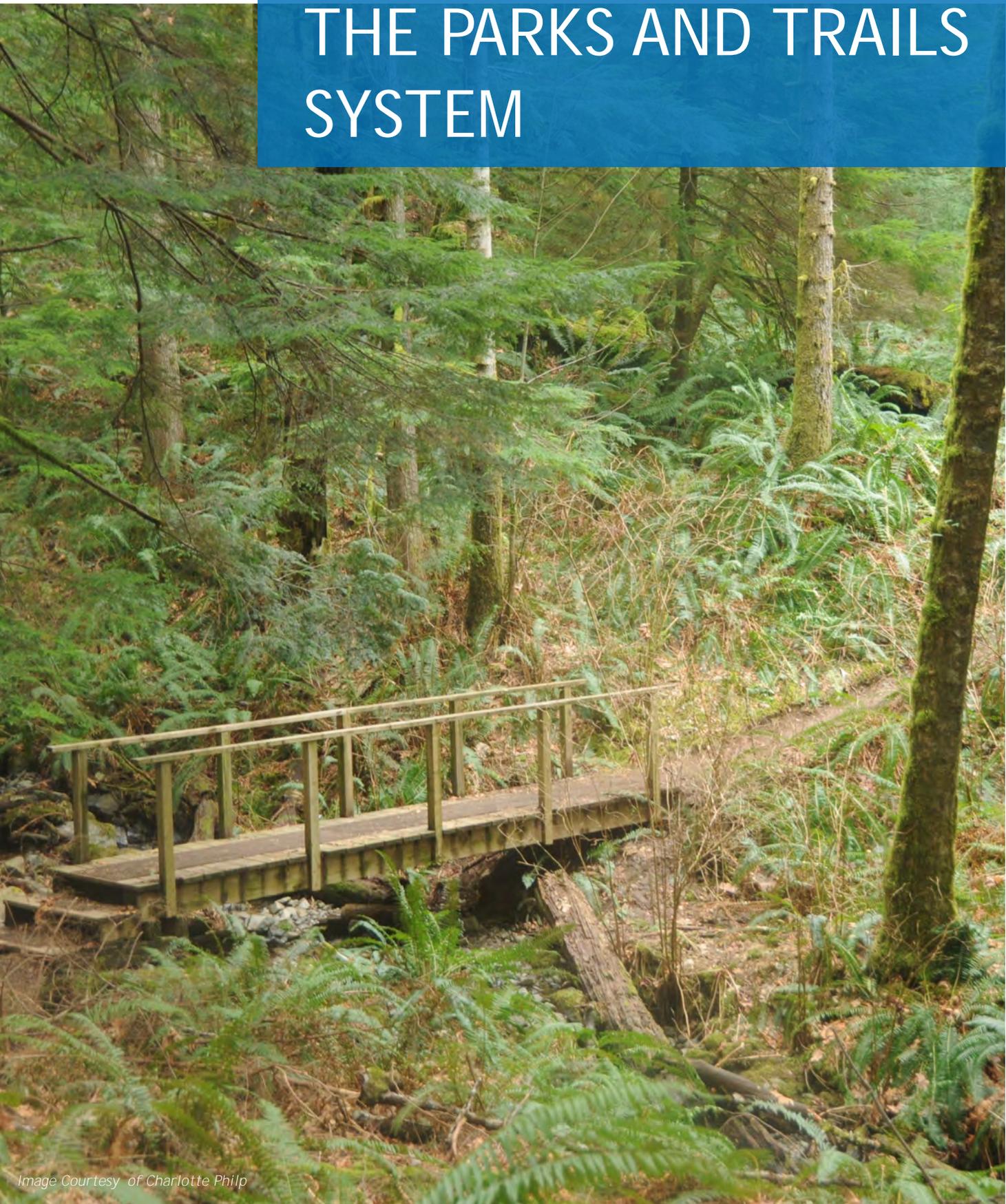
“Trails should be the key linkage for our neighbourhoods. It should be possible to walk or cycle from any part of Parksville to any other.”

- Community Respondent

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# THE PARKS AND TRAILS SYSTEM



*Image Courtesy of Charlotte Philp*

# THE PARKS AND TRAILS SYSTEM

Parksville's parks and trails include 108 hectares of municipal parks space, 163 hectares of other provincial or regional parks spaces and 19 km of trails. Parks and trails are key to creating a high quality urban environment for people and nature. Residents and visitors benefit from healthy and active living afforded by the parks and trails network. Parksville's parks provide access to beaches and the Salish Sea, outdoor fitness areas, off-leash dog parks, sport fields, and gardens. This section provides an overview of the parks and trails spaces and amenities and identifies gaps in the current system. A full list of all existing parks in Parksville is shown in Appendix B and a list of existing trails is shown in Appendix C.



An inventory and mapping of the parks, trails and open spaces system was completed in the spring 2017 and is included in Appendix D. The inventory provided the basis of this analysis, along with the other bylaws and documents reviewed.

## Parksville's Parks and Trails Network:

108 ha

Municipal park space

163 ha

Regional/Provincial  
park space

19 km

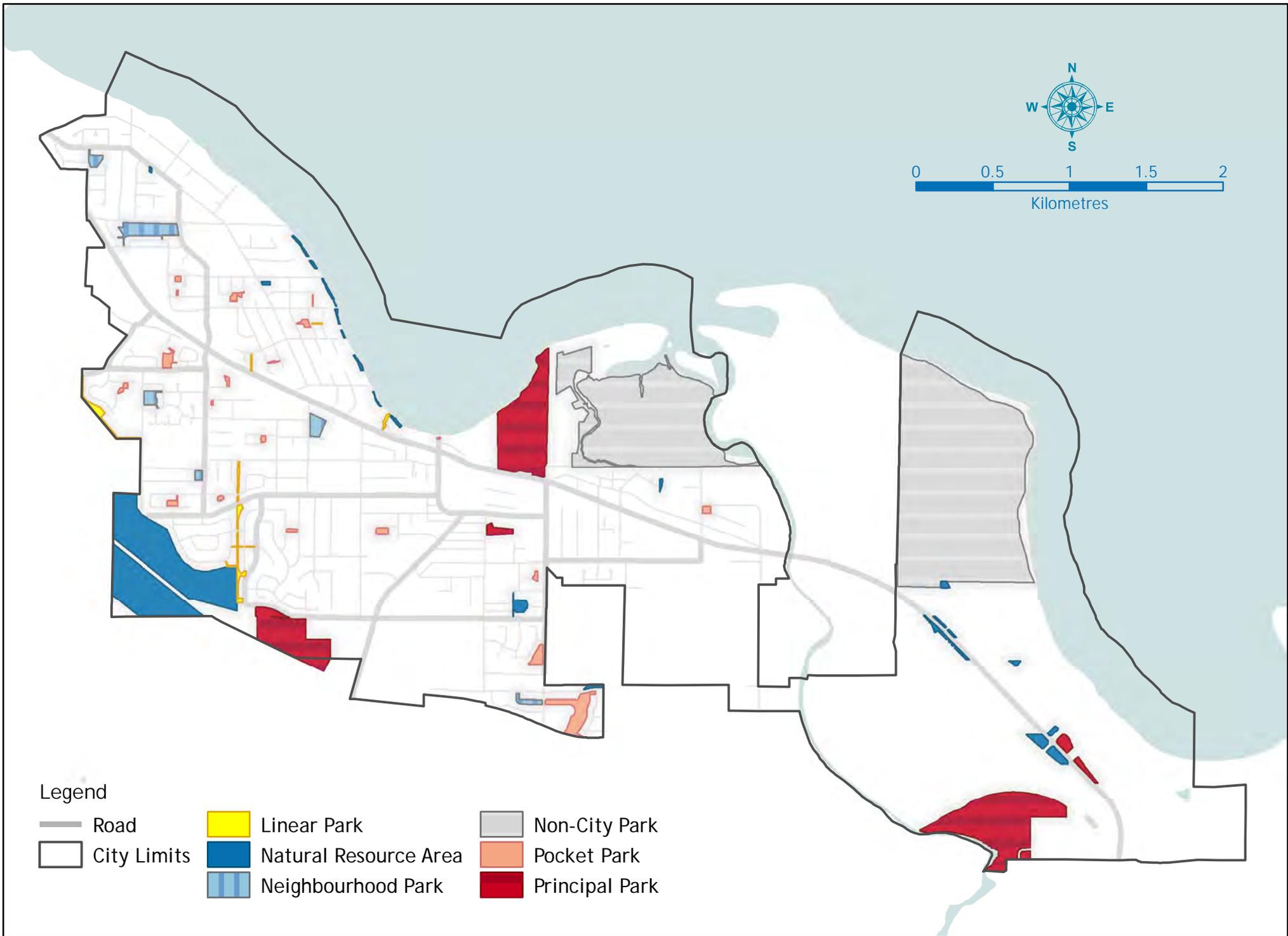
of trails



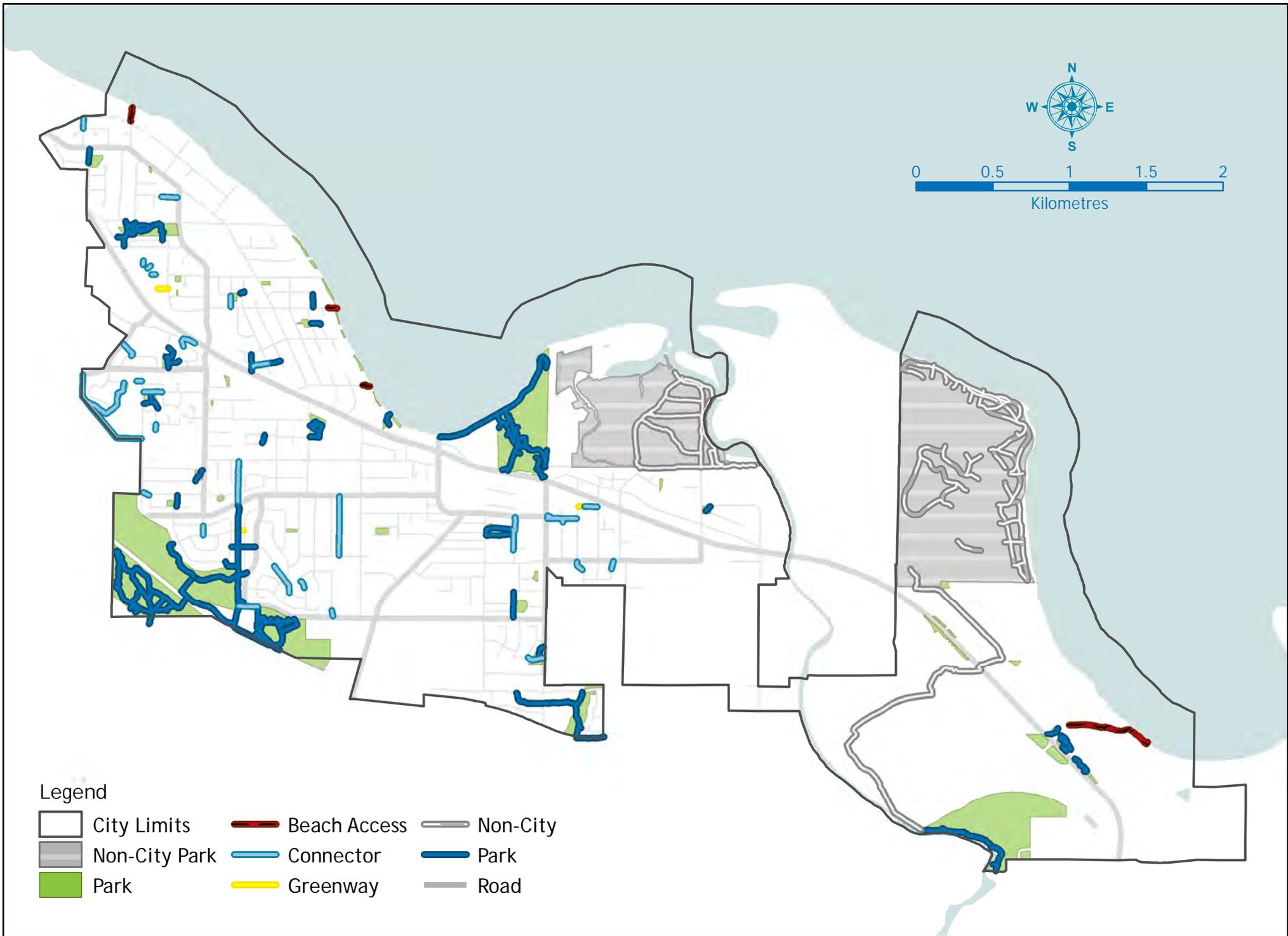
## PARKS AND TRAILS OVERVIEW

- Map 1 shows all of the City's 61 parks organized by classification type. There are 6 Principal Parks, 6 Neighbourhood Parks, 22 Pocket Parks, 6 Linear Parks, 21 Natural Resource Areas, and 2 parks which are within City boundaries but are not municipally managed parks: Englishman River Estuary and Rath Trevor Beach Provincial Park.
- Map 2 shows all of Parksville's trails organized by trail classification type. There are 67 trail segments, which include beach accesses, connector trails, greenways, and trails located within parks. There are also two high-traffic trails which are within City limits but are not City trails: the Nature's Trust Estuary trail and the RDN's Top Bridge Regional Trail to Rath Trevor Beach Provincial Park.





Map 1: Parksville parks organized by classification type.



Map 2: Parksville's trails organized by classification type.

# PARKS, TRAILS AND OPEN SPACES CLASSIFICATIONS

## PARKS

### Principal Parks

Principal parks are the largest and most developed parks, typically serving the greatest number of people. They provide a variety of amenities for both active and passive recreation that draw people from inside and outside the community. These destination parks provide opportunities for all ages to enjoy and visit the parks for daily activities, sporting events, and special events.

User Profile: All residents within the City and often visitors from the region and beyond.



### Neighbourhood Parks

Neighbourhood parks are medium-sized parks centrally located within a neighbourhood are intended to be within walking distance for all residents. They provide a combination of features and facilities that foster both active and passive recreation opportunities and are highly used by residents in the area. Neighbourhood Parks add character and are often the social and recreational focal point of neighbourhoods.

User Profile: Typically serve residents within a 400m to 800m walking and biking distance.

## Pocket Parks

Pocket parks are easily reachable small green spaces usually found within high density or single unit residential areas. They provide park access and green space to nearby residents. They generally serve a limited population but provide a safe and inviting environment for surrounding community members to gather, relax, and enjoy the outdoors. They are also commonly referred to as mini parks, tot-lots, or vest-pocket parks.

User Profile: Typically serve residents living within a 400m walking distance.



## Linear Parks

Linear parks serve the primary function of providing non-automobile access between two locations. They can include wildlife corridors, pathways, and trails and serve various forms of transportation, excluding motorized vehicles. Linear parks create recreational and practical links through neighbourhoods allowing users to access commercial, residential, and natural areas by travelling through green space.

User Profile: Typically serve residents within a 400m to 800m walking and biking distance.



## Natural Resource Areas

Natural resource areas are landscapes of any size that are set aside for preservation and enhancement of biodiversity, open space, visual values, or buffering. They may have reduced or restricted entry. These can include utility easements, lands too steep or too wet for development, wetlands, shorelines, and reservoirs. Participation and use are secondary to environmental protection and generally these spaces are limited to low impact recreational, educational, and interpretive opportunities that foster an understanding of the natural assets of the space. The main purpose of these areas is to contribute to the natural health of the environment and the community.

User Profile: All residents.



# TRAILS

## Connector Trails

Connector trails are paved or unpaved pedestrian/cycle trails with a focus on transportation within and around the community. Trails are usually short and help people travel from one location in the city to another. Connector trails are easily accessible for any non-motorized form of transportation including: walking, biking, skate boarding, and rollerblading. In Parksville some of the Pocket Parks and Linear Parks act as connector trails, linking two roadways.

## Park Trails

Park trails are generally unpaved and focus on recreation value and are built for walking, hiking, mountain biking, nature study, or exercise.

## Bike Routes

Bike routes are dedicated, marked lanes provided for bicycles as part of a road design or upgraded to travel more safely throughout the City.



## PARKS AND OPEN SPACE SUPPLY ANALYSIS

Parks and Trails Summary Table		
Park Type	Measurement	Note
All Park Types Area	107.9 ha	271.1 ha**
Neighbourhood Parks Area	6.3 ha	
Natural Resource Areas	40.3 ha	
Community Parks Area	51.9 ha	
Linear Parks Area	2.6 ha	
Pocket Parks Area	6.9 ha	
Total Open Space Area	9.1 ha	119.2 ha***
Total Trails Length	19.3 km	38.0 km****
Total Municipal Land Base	1443.2 ha*	
% of Municipal Land Base covered by Parks	7.5 ha	18.8 ha**

Table 3: Parksville Parks and Trails summary table.

\* Total City Limits Area (including ocean) is 1740.12 ha. Total Municipal Land Base (excluding the ocean) is 1443.17 ha.

\*\* These are the areas/lengths that include Rath Trevor Beach Provincial Park and Englishman River Estuary.

\*\*\* This value indicate all park areas, such as Rath Trevor Beach Provincial Park and Parks maintenance areas.

\*\*\*\* This includes Rath Trevor Beach Provincial Park and Englishman River Estuary (also Top Bridge to Rath Trevor Trail, Coombs to Parksville Rail Trail).

As the City of Parksville continues to grow, the demand for parkland increases. The current parkland target stated in the Official Community Plan is 10 hectares per 1,000 residents. The City is close to achieving this goal with 9.38 hectares per 1,000 residents. It is noted that if the parkland calculation is amended to include the Englishman River Estuary and Rath Trevor Beach Provincial Park, neither of which are municipally managed parks spaces but are located within the City limits, the ratio would increase to 23.76 ha per 1,000 residents.



# PARKS SUPPLY PER CAPITA

Figures 4 and 5 illustrate the current municipal parkland available to residents per census tract.

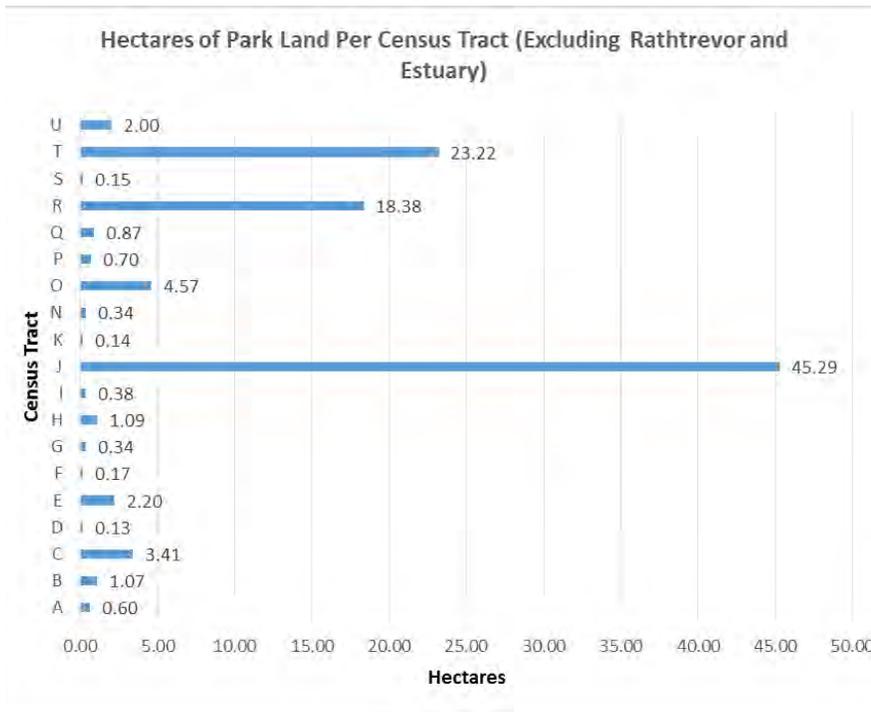


Figure 4: Hectares of Park Land per Census Tract (Excluding Rathrevor and the Estuary).

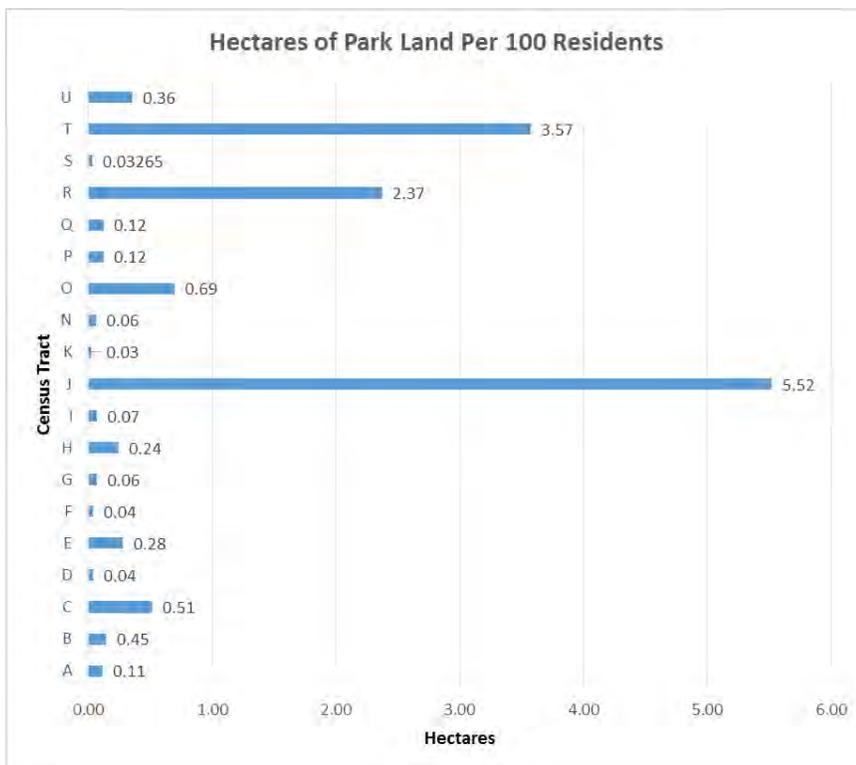


Figure 5: Area of park land per census tract per 100 residents.



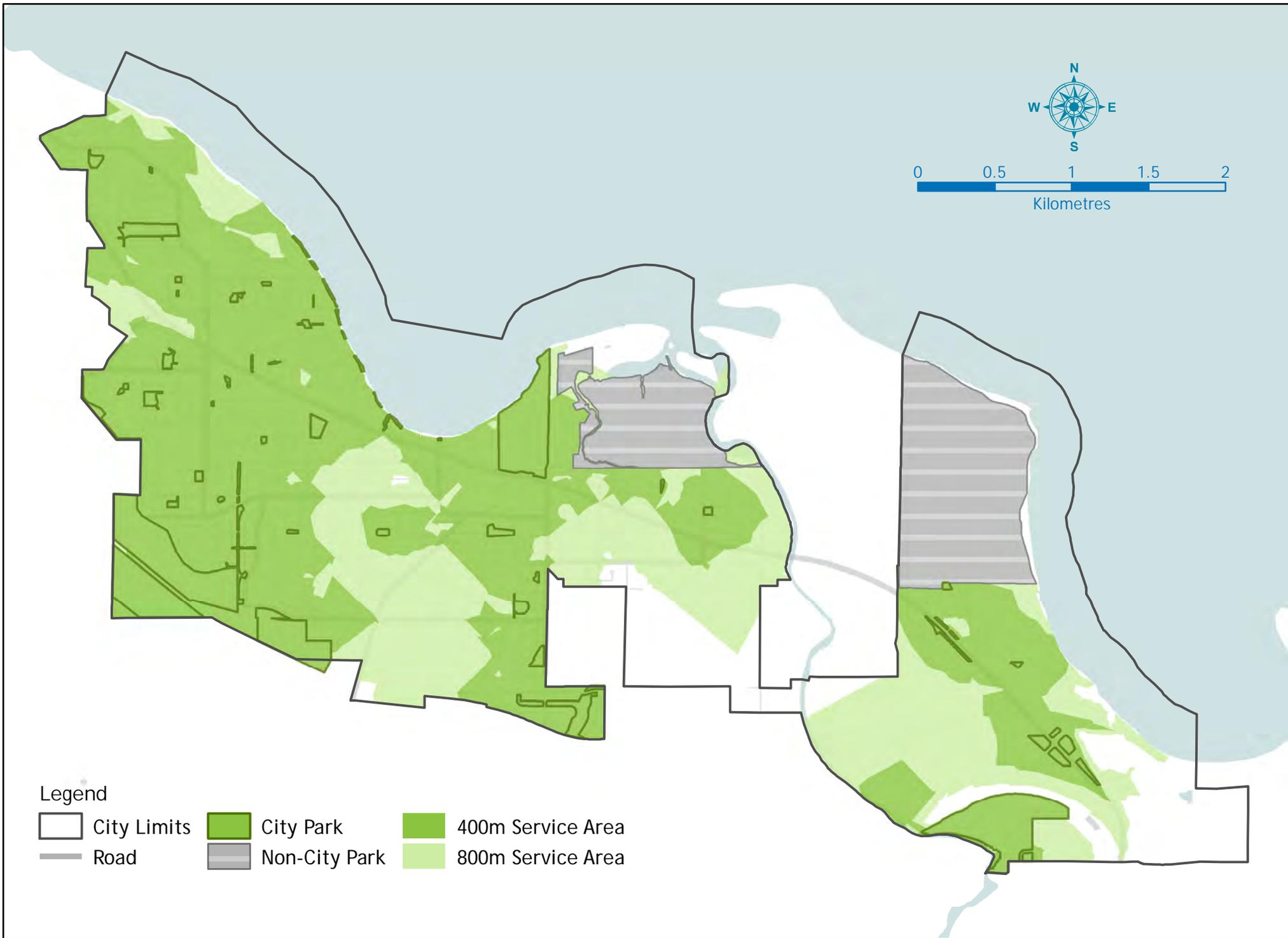
By including Rathtrevor Beach Provincial Park and the Englishman River Estuary in the City's parkland supply analysis, the City is currently exceeding its goal for the provision of parkland. Despite this, parks distribution is a concern within the City as it is unevenly distributed when compared to population densities across neighbourhoods. Some census areas have ample park space per resident, while other areas appear to be underserved. Parksville may want to explore the opportunity to set a new goal for the area of parkland provision per resident.

## PARKS SERVICE AREAS

Research shows people are willing to walk between five and ten minutes to access an amenity or service. If the target destination is located outside of that walking area, typically measuring approximately 400m, people will get in their vehicles to drive. In addition, people are less likely to regularly access the site if it perceptually feels disconnected to their residence or is not located along their normal travel corridors.

An analysis of residents was conducted to determine the relationship between residences and the 400m walking radius (Map 3). This analysis shows that while Parksville has many parks, many residents are actually underserved because it takes more than ten minutes to walk to the nearest park space from their homes.





Map 3: Parks with 400m and 800m buffered service areas.

## PARKS AMENITIES

The parks and trails inventory included recreation amenities. The list (Table 4) below includes the City of Parkville and School District 69 amenities as both contribute to servicing user’s recreation needs. This analysis does not identify the surface conditions of the courts or fields necessary for playing which may be a factor in the use of the facility. There are currently nine baseball/softball fields within the City. However, each of these sports requires specific considerations for fields, such as the differences between the baseball and softball infields. As indicated in the engagement process, the current supply of fields and courts does not meet the specific needs of users.

Amenity	Number in Parkville
Artificial Turf Field	0
Baseball Fields	4
Softball Fields	4
Basketball Hoop (Single)	2
Basketball Courts	2
Beach Volleyball	38
Field Lacrosse/Field Hockey	1
Lacrosse Box/Street Hockey	1
Lawn Bowling	1
Pickleball Courts	14
Soccer/Football Fields	4
Tennis Courts	8
Skateboard Parks	1
Track and Field Amenities	2

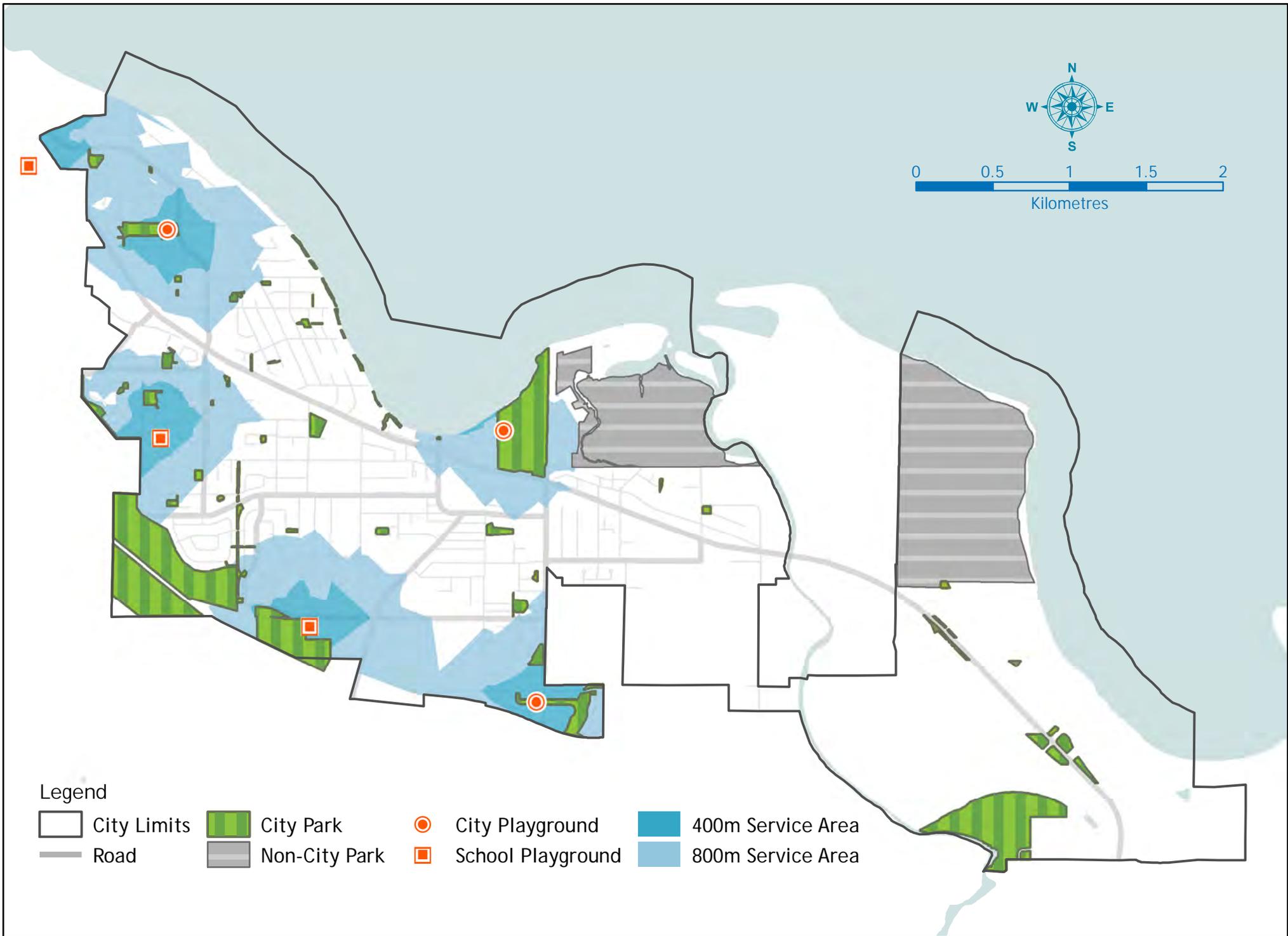
Table 4: Parkville and SD 69 amenities



## PLAYGROUND SERVICE AREAS

The City currently maintains three playgrounds in the parks system located at Parksville Community Park, Foster Park, and Shelly Creek Park West. An additional two parks exist within Parksville but are not owned by the city maintained by the Parks Department. Accessibility and location of playgrounds was evaluated based on 400m and 800m walking service areas (Map 4). These maps indicate many residents do not have proximate access to playgrounds.





Map 4: Playground service areas with 400m and 800m walking buffers.

## OFF-LEASH DOG PARKS

Throughout the engagement process it was apparent there are many dog enthusiasts in the City of Parksville who feel the City lacks dog-friendly amenities. A comparison to other municipalities indicates Parksville’s supply is comparable to other nearby or similarly-sized cities (Table 5). However, an issue is the accessibility of existing areas to Parksville residents, as well as the perception Parksville is under-serviced (Map 5).

Community	Of-leash Areas	Off-leash Areas per 1000 Residents	Fully Fenced Off-leash Areas
City of Parksville	1	0.16	1
City of Victoria	12	0.14	1
City of Nanaimo	12	0.14	1
City of Kamloops	15	0.18	3
City of Abbotsford	4	0.03	2
City of Port Coquitlam	2	0.04	2
Corporation of Delta	12	0.12	Data not available
	Average	0.12	

*Table 5: Parksville’s dog park services compared to other cities*





Map 5: Off-leash dog park service areas.