

8. PARKS, OPEN SPACES, TRAILS AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The importance of green space and access to recreation opportunities in urban contexts cannot be overstated. Access to public open space, parks, natural areas and playgrounds creates numerous health, environmental and social benefits.

Similar to many other municipalities in Canada, park space in Saanich has typically been focused on serving residential populations in suburban neighbourhoods. The Uptown–Douglas (UD) area represents a much different context than most other areas of Saanich. The vast majority of future residential development will be in the form of multi-unit housing, with limited private outdoor space. Additionally, the area has three times as many employees as residents, creating a much different park user profile than many other areas of the District. In order to continue to attract investment, support commercial activity and improve the quality of life for everyone in the area, parks and open spaces that service a variety of populations will need to be provided.

Generally speaking, the UD area is deficient in parks when compared with other neighbourhoods and Saanich parks standards, with the least park space per person of all areas

of Saanich. However, there are several public gathering spots in the UD: the Greater Victoria Public Library (Uptown Shopping Centre); Rutledge Park; Rudd Park; Uptown Plaza; and Mount View Park. As the population in the area grows so too will the need for open space and community facilities.

This section details how future population and employment growth will be supported through the introduction of new parks, trails and open spaces that will provide recreational opportunities, animate public space and better connect key destinations. Emphasis will be placed on creating new parks and open spaces in the centre of the plan area where significant growth is anticipated and there is an existing shortage of park space. These large park acquisitions will be achieved through the Development Cost Charge (DCC) Program, while smaller scale, local serving parks and public open spaces will be acquired through opportunities presented at the time of redevelopment. Collectively, these acquisitions will form a robust and varied network of spaces that is critical to a thriving, complete community.

Objectives

- A. Create a series of parks, plazas, open spaces and streetscape redesigns highlighted by a central civic space.
- B. Provide park space, including play areas, meeting places, tree cover, natural area parks, greenways and trail systems to serve the existing and future population.
- C. Retain and enhance areas of ecological value and connect natural areas.
- D. Promote the important role that parks, recreation and culture contribute to the quality of life and economic development of communities.
- E. Supply additional parks, open spaces and community facilities to meet existing needs and to support the future needs of the community.
- F. Consider a diversity of user needs and abilities for the park and open space network.



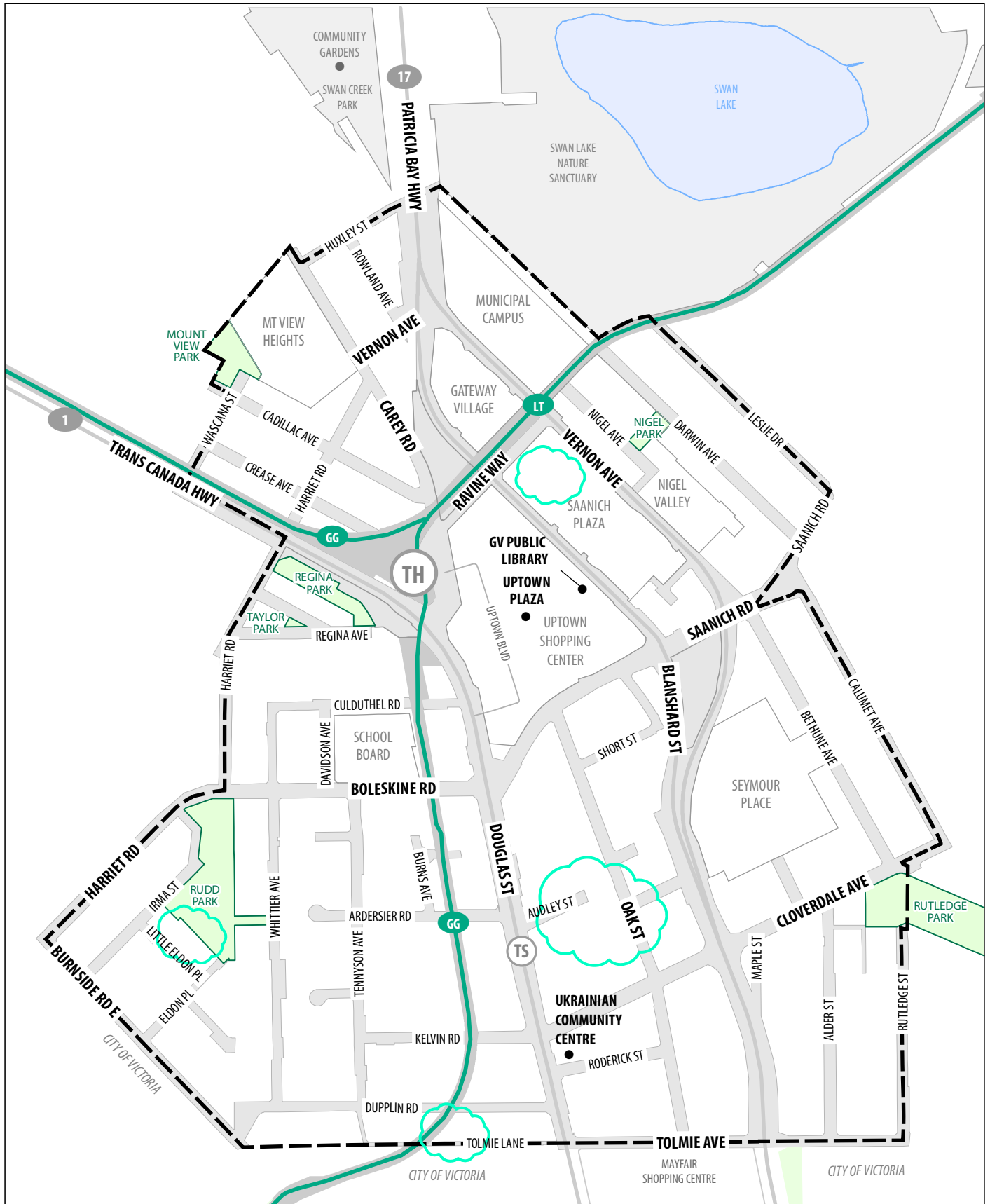
8.1 PARK ACQUISITION AND FINANCING

Based on the current park supply and projected population and employment growth, the Uptown–Douglas (UD) area has the greatest need for additional park space in all of Saanich. Significant new park space is foundational to support quality of life for new and existing residents. In order to fulfill anticipated need in this diverse urban area, a hierarchy of parks and open spaces with a range of sizes and functions will be required (See Figure 8.1).

A central civic space in close proximity to the Municipal Campus and future transit hub and a sizable community park close to Oak Street / Audley Crossing are significant building blocks to the envisioned network of parks and open spaces in the UD area. Smaller scale neighbourhood parks and publicly accessible open spaces and plazas will complete the network, supporting higher density development and contributing to a vibrant urban environment.

POLICIES

- 8.1.1 Work towards a network of parks and open spaces within the UD (Figure 8.1) that provides:
- A community park within 1000 metres (10-minute walk) of all properties;
 - A neighbourhood park or plaza / urban park within 500 metres (5-minute walk) of all properties; and
 - A publicly accessible open space within 300 metres (2-3 minute walk) of all properties.
- 8.1.2 Use the Development Cost Charge program to finance the acquisition of new community park space to support population and employment growth.
- 8.1.3 Prioritize new community park space acquisitions, as noted in Map 8.1, as follows:
- A central civic space, at least 0.5 hectares in size, in close proximity to the Municipal Campus and future transit hub;
 - A community park to support residential growth along Oak Street / Audley Crossing and a new major transit station at Audley Street;
 - Additional park space to enhance the role and function of Rudd Park and enable it to support future development; and
 - Park space that animates the Galloping Goose Regional Regional Trail and provides significant environmental benefits.
- 8.1.4 Use a minimum standard of 1.2 hectares of neighbourhood parks per 1,000 people to guide acquisition.
- 8.1.5 As part of any redevelopment application, seek to acquire land for neighbourhood parks, plazas/urban parks (non-DCC parks), and/or publicly accessible open space based on the gross land area of the total lot, as follows:
- Minimum 10% for properties 1 hectare or more, with a minimum 50% of this area to be formally dedicated as Park;
 - Minimum 5% for properties between 0.5 and 1 hectare, with no formal dedication of Park required.
- 8.1.6 Support the addition of pocket parks, plazas, and the general enhancement of streetscapes in all proposed development.
- 8.1.7 Consider private / public partnerships to acquire, develop and maintain parks, trails and community facilities.
- 8.1.8 Consider the use of covenants, development agreements, community amenity contributions, housing agreements, density bonusing, and variances as possible mechanisms to secure public amenities and open spaces including plazas and playgrounds during the application review process.
- 8.1.9 Collaborate with the Capital Regional District, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure and City of Victoria regarding potential for added parkland adjacent to the Galloping Goose Regional Trail at Tolmie Lane.



-  UPTOWN DOUGLAS PLAN
-  UDC PARK
-  PRIORITY AREA FOR PARKS
-  COMMUNITY FACILITIES / POINTS OF INTEREST

Parks & Open Space Type	Purpose	Size	Walking Distance Guideline	Examples
Private Open Space	To provide outdoor space for private property/strata developments.	Various sizes	On-site	Balconies Patios Courtyards Backyards Gardens Green Roofs Rooftops Common outdoor spaces
Publicly Accessible Open Space (private ownership)	To increase the availability of publicly accessible open space, including places for residents, employees and visitors to gather on private, publicly accessible open space developments.	Various sizes	2-5 minutes	Uptown Shopping Centre Plaza, Community Gardens
Plaza / Urban Park	To increase public gathering places throughout the area in a variety of urban forms, complete with public amenities and decorative elements.	Various sizes	5 minutes	Plaza, Square, Urban Park
Neighbourhood Parks	To provide local recreation opportunities, including play equipment, pathways, open grass, seating around play environments or areas of refuge for residents and employees within 400 metres.	Various sizes	5 minutes	Mount View Park, Regina Park
Community Parks	To provide spaces with high quality elements such as sports fields, playgrounds, skateparks, trails, urban plazas and/or natural features for users 1 to 3 kilometres away.	0.5 ha and larger	10-20 minutes	Rudd Park, Rutledge Park
Municipal Parks	To provide a range of park uses, including natural features such as beaches and forests for all Saanich residents.	20-200 ha	n/a	Swan Lake Nature Sanctuary

Figure 8.1: UD Parks and Open Space Framework

8.2 PARKS, OPEN SPACES AND TRAIL NETWORK DESIGN

The design of cities and neighbourhoods affects the ease with which people can walk, cycle, participate in active recreation and interact with neighbours and their community. With an increase in multi-unit housing in the Uptown–Douglas (UD) area, ensuring access to well-planned parks and trails will foster a sense of community, promote healthy

lifestyles and connect destinations. The type of open space will range greatly within the UD area from multi-use trails and greenways to urban plazas, community gardens and natural spaces, each connected to create a complete network for the community.

POLICIES

- 8.2.1 Support the development of additional public parks, open spaces and trails to provide amenity space throughout the area and strengthen the green corridor network identified on Map 4.2.
- 8.2.2 When considering new parks or publicly accessible open spaces as part of development proposals or capital projects, seek to locate and design spaces to:
 - Optimize connectivity to active transportation networks;
 - Complement or expand existing parks or public spaces;
 - Address gaps in the parks and open space network, enhancing walkable access;
 - Add new connections to improve walking and cycling;
 - Maximize sunlight and minimize potential impacts from shading; and
 - Be supported by active uses, such as coffee shops, restaurants or community facilities.
- 8.2.3 Enhance the design of municipal streets and rights-of-way to better link parks, open spaces and plazas.
- 8.2.4 Support the Capital Regional District in moving towards separate cycle paths for cyclists along the Galloping Goose and Lochside Regional Trails.
- 8.2.5 Ensure parks, plazas and other publicly accessible open spaces are well-maintained and safe and provide varied amenities to participate in social activity (consider children, youth, and seniors).
- 8.2.6 Increase the profile of the Municipal Campus site and adjacent Gateway Village/Saanich Plaza sites, including through the development of a central civic space that is visually prominent, multi-purpose and easily accessed by all modes of travel.
- 8.2.7 Support options for the future of Regina Park, including a re-design or land swap, that would improve the functionality of the park and reduce the impact of the Trans-Canada Highway (see Policies 4.5.3 and 5.13.4).
- 8.2.8 Pursue enhancements to Regina Park that enrich the recreational and ecological value of the park, including enhancement of the urban forest and introduction of community facilities (see Policies 4.4.4 and 5.13.4).
- 8.2.9 Work with the Provincial Government to explore options to achieve greater public benefit from the MOTI highway islands (on Blanshard Street north of the Lochside Regional Trail and south of Saanich Road).
- 8.2.10 Support opportunities to incorporate food producing trees and plants in public areas where appropriate (see also Section 4.1 and Policy 10.5.1).
- 8.2.11 Consider community gardens within existing or proposed parks, institutional lands, undeveloped parcels, and closed road rights-of-way, as per the Community Gardens Policy, where appropriate.



8.3 GALLOPING GOOSE AND LOCHSIDE REGIONAL TRAILS

The Galloping Goose Regional Trail was originally a freight railway line built during the First World War. Dedicated to recreational use in 1989, it is part of The Great Trail, a national multi-use trail system linking trails from coast to coast. “The Goose” intersects with the Lochside Regional Trail, a 29-kilometre former railway line from Saanich to Sidney. It also intersects with the E&N Rail Trail – Humpback Connector, a new 17-kilometre cycling and pedestrian trail being constructed largely within the E&N rail corridor that links Victoria and the Westshore communities.

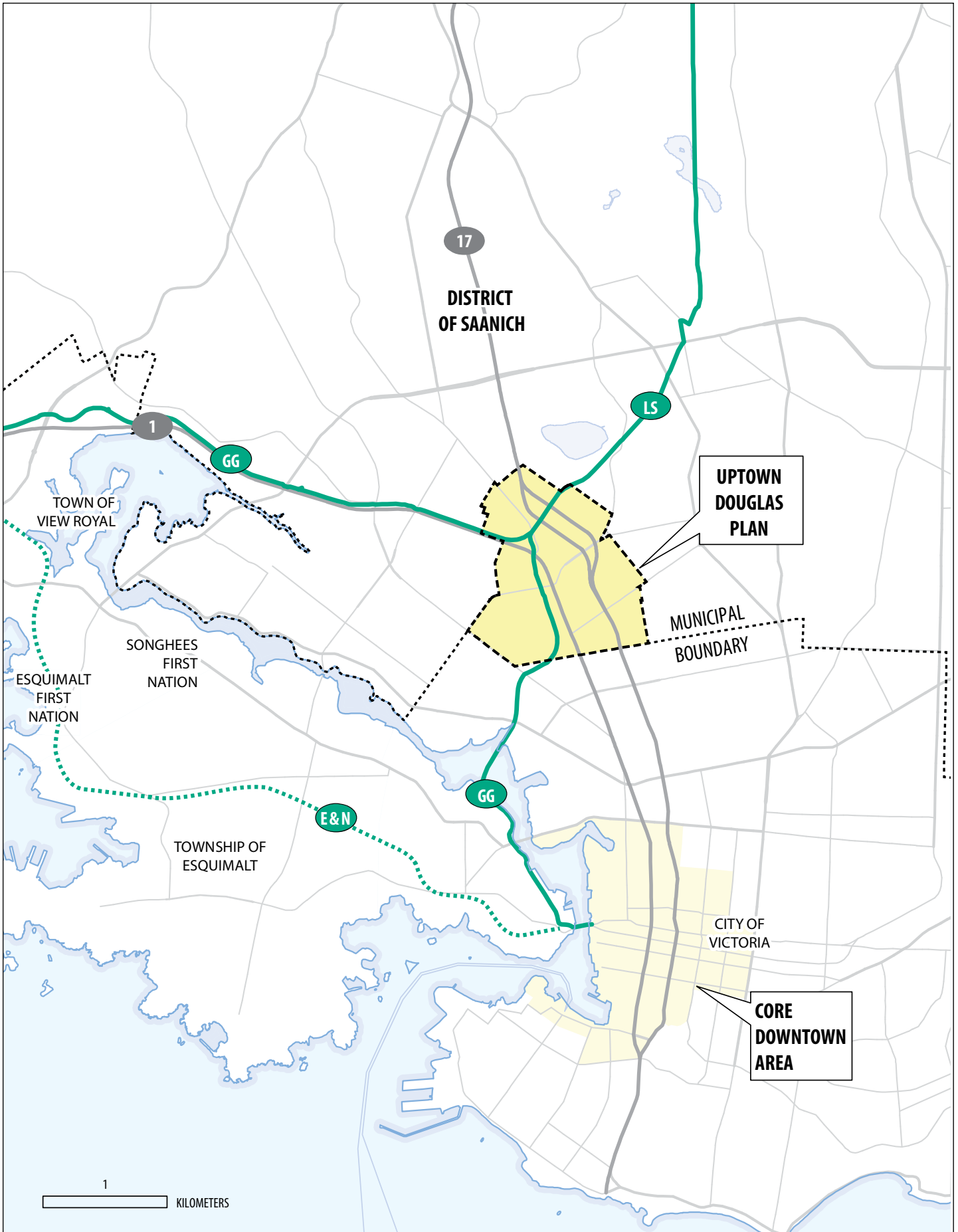
The corridors that contain the Galloping Goose and Lochside Regional Trails within the Plan area are owned by the Province of BC, administered by the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) and leased by the Capital Regional District’s (CRD) Regional Parks Division,

where development, operation and maintenance is overseen.

The Galloping Goose and Lochside Regional Trails are integral components of the active transportation network, providing transportation and recreation opportunities for residents and visitors alike. As usage of the trails increases over time, Saanich and the CRD will continue to work together to address changes and improvements to ensure the safety and comfort of all users. Additionally, the trail represents a key asset in the Uptown-Douglas (UD) area – one that can be further animated through adjacent land use changes and better integrated through new points of access to advance social well-being, economic development and environmental health.

POLICIES

- 8.3.1 Work with the Capital Regional District to enhance the Galloping Goose and Lochside Regional Trails by expanding the width of the trail and creating separate areas for pedestrians and cyclists to improve safety and enhance the experience for all users.
- 8.3.2 Work with the CRD to explore opportunities to improve the safety and visibility of access points and crossing locations along the Galloping Goose and Lochside Regional Trails, through:
 - Focusing on high use/high conflict areas;
 - Addressing sightlines and signage needs; and
 - Improving road-trail crossings, including through marking and lighting.
- 8.3.3 Pursue the development of pocket parks or plazas along the Galloping Goose Regional Trail (see Policy 5.8.6).
- 8.3.4 Work with the Capital Regional District to enhance wayfinding to better link regional trails with key destinations and active transportation routes.
- 8.3.5 Work with Capital Regional District and adjacent property owners to enhance public amenities along the Galloping Goose and Lochside Regional Trails, including through the provision of shelters, water fountains, benches, washrooms and bike kitchens.
- 8.3.6 Support public art installations on private property along the Galloping Goose and Lochside Regional Trails, to celebrate and animate the area.
- 8.3.7 Enhance connectivity to the Lochside Regional Trail and support the creation of a public/ open space at the Municipal Campus site that complements the Nigel Valley Plaza as part of upgrades or redevelopment (see Policies 8.2.6 and 5.12.11).
- 8.3.8 Work with the Capital Regional District and MOTI to enhance the integration of the Galloping Goose and Lochside Regional Trails with adjacent land uses, including exploring additional non-motorized access points to uses fronting on to the Trail.
- 8.3.9 Ensure redevelopment proposals adjacent to the Galloping Goose and Lochside Regional Trails are designed to:
 - Improve passive visual surveillance while maintaining the greenway character of the Trail;
 - Add to interest and enhance the recreational experience of the trail;
 - Address potential conflicts created by access points; and
 - Include landscaped areas adjacent to the Trail with a balanced focus on native and drought tolerant plants to enhance the greenway character of the trail corridor.



Map 8.2 Regional Trail Network

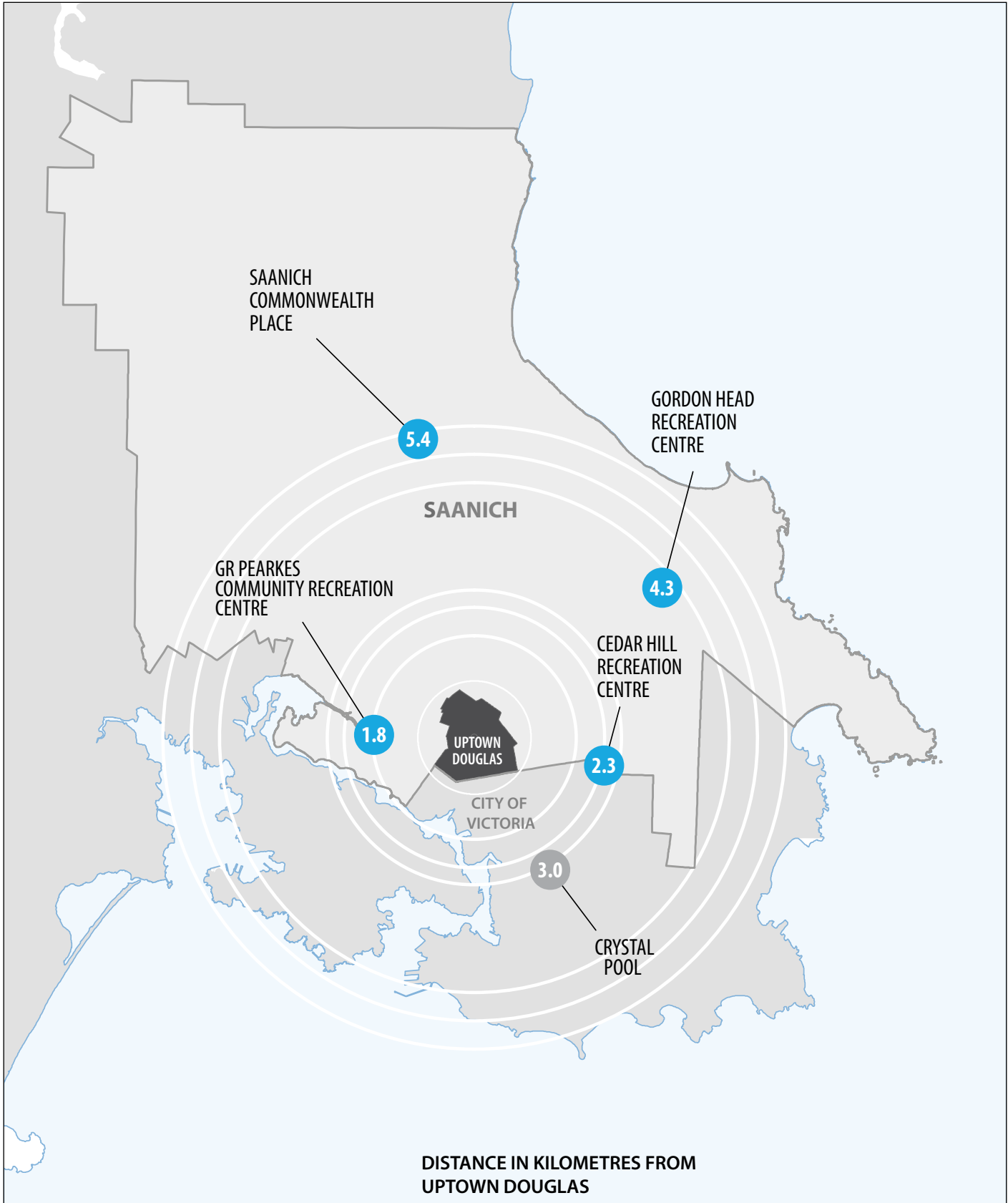
8.4 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The Uptown–Douglas (UD) area does not contain any major Saanich Recreation Centres. However, Pearkes Recreation Centre, Commonwealth Recreation Centre and Cedar Hill Recreation Centre can all be accessed within a 10-minute drive (See Map 8.3). While the facilities currently in Saanich meet the needs of today’s population, additional growth in the UD area may provide a long term rationale to explore the addition of a new recreation facility in the area. Easy access to transit and the Galloping Goose and Lochside Regional Trails combined with a high density of residents and employees would make this area an ideal fit for a community recreation centre when the need is warranted.

While pursuing a larger community facility in the long term is desirable, additional community facilities will also need to be added incrementally to help support population growth and provide the recreational opportunities that are critical to the quality of life of residents, employees and visitors. These incremental changes can include adding smaller scale or privately owned community facilities and improving the connectivity to and accessibility of existing facilities. Needs expressed by community members include a new school, meeting spaces and daycare.

POLICIES

- 8.4.1 Review recreational programming and facilities in the context of projected population growth for the UD planning area and directions from the Recreation Market Analysis to ensure they are meeting emerging needs.
- 8.4.2 Support the long term introduction of a new community recreation facility within the UD area in a location that has convenient access to transit and active transportation networks.
- 8.4.3 Explore possible public-private partnerships as a means to add new recreation facilities.
- 8.4.4 Liaise with the Library Board regarding implementation of its long-range facility plan, and support the concept of co-location of libraries and community centres.
- 8.4.5 Support the enhancement of library facilities in the area, including through development of a new facility that has greater floor space, is more prominently located in the area and is easily accessible by foot.
- 8.4.6 Work with the School Board to accommodate long-term needs for school facilities in the area to respond to anticipated growth in population and school age children.
- 8.4.7 Support the exploration of a new public school within the UD, with a priority on the School Board site at Boleskine Road as a potential future location (See also Policy 5.13.2).
- 8.4.8 As part of redevelopment applications, pursue community facility amenity contributions, including daycares, community centres or community meeting spaces.
- 8.4.9 Explore the introduction of youth-oriented facilities and amenities in Rudd Park.
- 8.4.10 Support the establishment of a youth centre in the area, potentially as a component of a multi-unit residential, mixed-use or commercial development.
- 8.4.11 Explore the potential introduction of a community recreation facility and/or library as a potential component of any redevelopment of the Municipal Campus site.



Map 8.3 Recreational Facilities