

AGENDA
PARKS, TRAILS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Saanich Municipal Hall, Council Chambers
Thursday, September 3, 2020, from 5:00 – 7:00 PM

To register to hear this meeting by telephone please email clerksec@saanich.ca or telephone 250-475-5501. You will be asked to provide your name and an email address where instructions can be sent to you, along with the name and date of the advisory committee meeting you wish to hear. The registration deadline is 12:00 p.m. noon on the day of the meeting.

*** Territorial Acknowledgement ***

1. **ADOPTION OF MINUTES** (attachment)
 - February 27, 2020

2. **CHAIR'S REMARKS**

3. **COMMITTEE BRAINSTORM**
 - Discussion

4. **RECREATION DIVISION REPORT**
 - Report from Acting Senior Manager, Recreation (attachment)

5. **COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION REPORT**
 - Report from Senior Manager, Community Services (attachment)

6. **PARKS DIVISION REPORT**
 - Report from Senior Manager, Parks (attachment)

*** Adjournment ***

Next Meeting: October 1, 2020

In order to ensure a quorum, please call Tania Douglas at 475-5501 ext. 3505 or tania.douglas@saanich.ca if you are unable to attend.

Go Green!

Members are encouraged to bring their own mug to the meeting.

MINUTES
PARKS, TRAILS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room No. 2
February 27, 2020 at 5:30 pm

Present: Councillor Ned Taylor (Chair), Ted Austin, Alabama Chevrier, Amy-Jade Louie, Erin Lumley, Dexter Owen, Stefanie Yao

Staff: Eva Riccius, Senior Manager Parks, Chris Filler, Programmer, Community Services; Gary Darrah, Manager Park Planning & Development; Tania Douglas, Senior Committee Clerk

Regrets: Trevor Barry, Kathleen Burton, Pamela Carroll, Lyndsay Edgar

Minutes

MOVED by S. Yao and Seconded by T. Austin: "That the Minutes of the Parks, Trails and Recreation Advisory Committee meeting held January 23, 2020, be adopted as amended."

CARRIED

CHAIR'S REMARKS

The Chair welcomed newly appointed committee members and spoke about the work done by the committee. He noted that Council values the perspectives of advisory committee members and encouraged all to bring forward items that they feel warrants discussion. Meetings are scheduled to be two hours duration and the Chair will try to stay within that time frame.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Chair noted that the Terms of Reference (circulated to members) outlines the committee's purpose and were recently updated and adopted by Council.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY UPDATE

The Community Services Programmer presented information about the Youth Development Strategy which was adopted by Council in 2015. There are six strategic priorities and a total of 39 goals with 71 outcomes has been achieved. Strategic priorities were described as follows:

- Increase Participation
 - Considering how to give access to those who cannot afford.
 - New summer camp programs.
 - Free weight room access pilot at Cedar Hill Recreation.
- Collaboration
 - New partnership programs with the school districts (eg lunch hour clubs).
 - Start-up funds for youth groups (over \$3000 provided to the community).
- Risk and Outdoor Play
 - Looking at how to support; working towards a youth park at Tripp Station, and adding youth elements to park design projects.
 - Advocating for authentic outdoor challenge play areas for youth between 11-17 years.

- Social Wellbeing
 - Considering how health and wellness can be supported and recognizing the importance of youth mental wellbeing.
 - Working with key partnerships including Island Health, Ministry of Children and Family Development, Saanich Police.
 - Offering teen centres and mobile youth services.
- Communication
 - Staff are investigating better ways on how to reach out to youth. This is one of the biggest challenges.
 - Some social media (eg. Instagram) poses challenges at this time due to privacy and marketing issues.
- Youth Spaces
 - Recognizing the importance of safe spaces and resources for youth.
 - Keeping spaces and programs relevant with free access.
 - Developing new programming to attract youth.
- In 2020 staff will continue to explore a youth clinic with Island Health, host a youth summit, collaborate on providing service to Indigenous youth and continue working on a youth park at the George Tripp Substation.

Committee members commented and asked questions of staff. The following responses were noted:

- There will be more spaces for camps this year. Some years it is challenging to accommodate the number of youth who register for camps.
- For communication, Saanich currently uses Twitter and Facebook along with some school connections, e-newsletters, other online streams and the Active Living Guide.
- Having Instagram would also boost outreach; there are a number of youth that are not aware of any of the Saanich programs offered.
- The amount of youth that attend the teen centre and other programs can vary from 10-40 youth. It is important to keep the space for youth; some groups have asked for the space when they see lower youth attendance.
- Saanich no longer has a bus to pick up/drop off youth due to insurance issues, however staff are looking at walkable programming, similar to Safe Routes to School, as schools such as Colquitz, Royal Oak and Cedar Hill are within walking distance to recreation centres.

The Community Services Programmer was thanked for their presentation.

CEDAR HILL PARK PLAN

The Manager of Park Planning & Development provided information about a proposed plan for Cedar Hill Park. He noted that the draft Management Plan is available to view on the Saanich website and he is here to present information, but does not require endorsement at this point in time. He also provided responses to committee questions. The following was noted:

- A description of the community engagement done and information about the stakeholder working group was given.
- Phase 1 included the development of a vision and determine the type of plan for the park with much public engagement and a report to Council.
- The project is now at Phase 2; the draft management and implementation plan was developed, more working group meetings and public engagement occurred and currently a management and implementation plan is being finalized with internal and external review. Staff hope to take this to Council in May 2020.
- Park composition: 25% public park, 71% golf course and 3% recreation centre with the remainder being natural areas.

- Engineers have been hired to investigate daylighting opportunities for the stream within the park. Excess water runoff would be put in the Reach 17 (tributary of Bowker Creek). Water would also be held in Kings Pond.
- A history of the park is included in the draft Management Plan.
- Responsibilities for the golf course and the park had to be worked out.
- Themes that emerged through public engagement include: environmental management and restoration, connectivity and mobility in the park, recreation, plan and gathering places for all, park management, and opportunities for enhanced recreational opportunities.
- The reserve fund will have to be built up for some of the proposed improvements.
- This presentation is a broad overview of the plan. Staff will go back to the community when detail design happens.

Staff will request endorsement of this plan at a future Advisory Committee meeting.

HORNER PARK RENEWAL PLAN

The Manager of Park Planning & Development provided information about the Horner Park renewal plan. He noted that input can be given to the Parks department until March 16, 2020. The following was noted:

- Staff have been working with the Mount Talmie Community Association on this project and public engagement has occurred.
- Some of the proposed improvements include: volleyball courts, solar lighting, a path around the park, washrooms with better service levels, possible community garden, enlarged play court that can host both hockey and basketball play, lots of natural planting, bicycle racks, expanded playground.

Committee members expressed appreciation for the concept plan. The Manager of Park Planning & Development noted that Committee endorsement is not required as the park renewal plan is already part of the Capital Plan. The next phase of the project will be the creation of construction drawings.

DIVISION UPDATES

Division updates were circulated to members with the agenda and regular updates will be provided to committee every other meeting, or as items arise. In reply to a question, the Manager of Park Planning & Development stated that going forward, park identification signage will now be made from metal and recycled plastic, and signage will all be swapped out in the next 3-4 years.

ROUNDTABLE

Possible items for future discussion:

- Dogs in parks and the current policy for this topic.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.

Councillor Taylor, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

Committee Secretary

REPORT

To: Parks, Trails and Recreation Advisory Committee
Healthy Saanich Advisory Committee

From: Graham Thomson, Acting Senior Manager, Recreation

Date: 8/21/2020

Subject: September 2020 Monthly Report

RECOMMENDATION

That the Parks, Trails and Recreation and Healthy Saanich Advisory Committees receive this report as information.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide the Committees with an overview of the previous month's Recreation Division activities.

DISCUSSION

Cedar Hill Campus

During the closure, Cedar Hill Recreation Centre staff worked with Island Health to establish a COVID-19 Assessment Centre in the tennis facility and front parking lot. This temporary facility was part of the Island Health pandemic response and provided a safe venue for care providers to work with individual's requiring health services. The Assessment Centre opened at the beginning of April and served the public until the middle of June – just in time to transition to summer camps.

We installed a clay garden at our front entrance to welcome participants back. The clay flowers and insects were made at the 2019 Family Day Event.

After months of careful planning, Summer Camps began on June 29. Some new COVID friendly protocols included smaller groups, separate kits for art supplies and entry to the building through exterior doors. Over 700 campers joined us for a safe and activity-filled summer.



The Cedar Hill weight room opened on July 13 for reserved drop-in use. Weight room use is steady since the July opening with morning sessions more popular than the afternoon sessions. On July 20, The Cedar Hill Squash Club members returned to play after designating their player "bubble". Health Services returned to the front area of the weight room on August 4.

Improvements around Cedar Hill include new paint in program spaces, newly re-finished floors, front desk ergonomic improvements and full glass enclosure.

The Cedar Hill Golf Course closed March 23 and re-opened on May 5. Golfer Safety Protocols are in place to ensure safe play for all golfers. Golfers are asked to arrive just before their tee time in order to keep the group outside the pro-shop small. There are no ball washers or sand rakes and golfers are asked to leave the pin in the hole. Tee time intervals are longer to ensure players are well spaced on the golf course.

Gordon Head Community Recreation Centre

Maintenance: A number of facility projects were accomplished during the COVID-19 closure including: extensive 'dremelling', tiling and grouting in the Leisure Pool/Tots Pool/Hot Tub, Lifecycle replacement of piping, valves and gauges to pumps, new glass filter media for all pool filters (instead of silica sand), a relief air damper install in weight room, monkey bars motor installation, LED lighting upgrade, new cement pathway to rear of building, clean out of storage rooms at GHRC and Bert Richman buildings and disposal of items, additional storage in Feltham and Weightroom, minor building repairs including retiling of female staff changeroom, design for 2021 projects (pool deck acoustics, detailed construction plans for Feltham room and acoustic panelling on pool deck, room painting and regular annual maintenance shut down tasks. Building Service Workers have adjusted well to new cleaning and disinfecting routines and requirements and are instrumental in keeping our buildings safe.

Programming staff were busy proposing and planning for gradual re-opening of limited programs including summer day camps (June 29), Weightroom (July 13), Waterfit (July 20) and registered and reserved fitness programs.

Waterfit fill rates for July were 97%. We are seeing many City of Victoria residents enjoying our pool/waterfit classes and say they wish to stay even once "their" pool opens.

Weight Room fill rate for July was 59%; first week of August was 89%, second week of Aug was 69%.

We are seeing familiar faces and new faces. Patrons are so thankful and excited to be back to our centre.

Summer Camps have been successful and appreciated by the community at Gordon Head this summer. Camp Leaders adapted quickly to new protocols and procedures and showed their creativity, energy and enthusiasm to provide enjoyable experiences to campers. Over 1000 children have participated in Camps at Gordon Head this summer.

Aquatics continues to gradually re-open services at GHRC pool, first with Day camps, followed by Waterfit, then Family and Leisure Swims (Aug 5) and 'Swim With Me' (with parent/responsible person over 16 years) Lessons (Aug 24). Supervisors are in process of bring back Lifeguard/Instructors and re-orienting them to new protocols, each receiving 8-10 hrs of training. The Island Health Environmental Officers have been instrumental for each facility in assisting with cleaning, COVID-19 transmission, and programmatic questions, and approving COVID-19 Pool Safety Plans.

Reception teams have worked through COVID-19 closure and now re-opening, staying aware of ongoing changes impacting patrons and communicating this information through phone and now in

person. The biggest change for patrons is needing to register to 'reserve' their spot in the new drop-in programs. As some patrons were not familiar with online registration or may not have access to computers, the receptionists have played a vital role to support and teach patrons over the phone how to how to register online. Phone-in and in-person registration is available as well, although online registration is recommended.

G.R. Pearkes Community Recreation Centre

During the Closure a variety of work was completed at GR Pearkes Recreation Centre, this work had been scheduled during our annual rolling closures. Improvements include new paint in change-rooms/program spaces, newly re-finished floors, new ceiling tiles, lighting upgrades, and front desk glass guard.

Several program areas have returned, and are in the process of gradual expansion:

- Ice use has returned, and we are following directions from viaSportBC and the respective Provincial/National Sport bodies, on allowed activities.
- Daycamps returned in July and ran primarily out of our local SD61 School, Colquitz Middle School.
- Our Fitness area is back in operation as well, and programs and reserved drop-in's are seeing moderate numbers, but are showing signs of growth as the community become more comfortable in returning.
- Ice programs are filling fast and in many areas we are seeing 100% fill rate (ie Everyone Welcome Skates)
- We have had to cancel our Fieldhouse Tradeshow bookings due to COVID restrictions. This space will be reallocated to Community Use through bookings or programs.

Our major Gold Rink Slab project remains on track, and we are working with our colleagues in Engineering and design consultants. Even with some small delays during the COVID shutdown, we anticipate the Gold Ice to return for use by Sept 2021.

The Flipside Youth Centre (overseen by Community Services) will not reopen this fall. Saanich Fire Department crew has been temporarily relocated, from the Saanich #1 Fire Station, to operate from G.R. Pearkes on a 24/7 basis. This move allows for appropriate physical distancing while ensuring crews are still able to provide efficient and timely service to the community. This Saanich Fire crew will remain operating from G.R. Pearkes, including the teen centre space, for the foreseeable future. Community Service will be focusing on expanding work with community partners in the Tillicum neighbourhood.

Saanich Commonwealth Place

During the closure period, the Weight Room at SCP had a cosmetic upgrade with new flooring and paint. Since reopening we have averaged 100 people/day in our reserved drop in sessions in the Weight Room and we have received many positive comments on the fresh looking space. The pool deck around the wave pool was resurfaced and the floor in the Garry Oak room (gymnasium) and Dance Studio were both sanded and sealed. Painting was completed throughout the building and benches in all the change rooms were refinished.

Our High Performance clubs were among the first groups to return to the pool when it reopened in early July. We are slowly increasing the number of teams and athletes training. Synchronized swimming returned to the pool mid-August for their physically distanced training camp. As anticipated, the National Swim Team moved their training centre to the lower mainland and had their last practice in our facility on Aug 15. The Pool Allocation Policy for High Performance Clubs is in the final stages of development with an anticipated implementation date of Aug 31, 2020.

Reserved Drop in Lane Swimming was opened to the public in July with 100% fill rate. We increased the available lane space from 160 to 300 available spots per week. Demand for these spaces remains very high as most other pools in the region are not open for length swimming.


Day camps looked different due to COVID but we have had a successful summer and families were grateful to have the support of our programs to keep kids busy this summer.



Prepared by: _____

Graham Thomson

Acting Senior Manager, Recreation

Approved by: 

Suzanne Samborski

Director, Parks & Recreation & Community Services

The Corporation of the District of Saanich

Report

To: Parks, Trails and Recreation Advisory Committee

From: Cristina Caravaca, Senior Manager- Community Services Division

Date: 03 SEP 2020

Subject: Community Services Division Update

RECOMMENDATION

That the Parks, Trails and Recreation Advisory Committee receive this report as information.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an overview of Community Services division activities.

DISCUSSION

Community Arts: This summer/fall, Saanich's "HeArts Together" community art project supports isolated and vulnerable community members to come together creatively while staying safely at home – with support from collaborating long term care and community service organizations. "Creative caring kits" are being delivered to healthcare and service organizations, including Aberdeen Hospital, the Prioory, Garth Homer Society, The Heights at Mount View, Victoria Cool Aid Society, Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Society, the Victoria Native Friendship Centre and the Victoria Women's Transition House. Participants are creating hearts and messages that will be assembled alongside hearts made by children and community members in outdoor displays in Saanich parks and public spaces. These collective heart displays are a legacy of our experience together that will remind us all to continue to be safe and caring for all in our community as we move forward together. For more on the project, visit <https://www.saanich.ca/EN/main/parks-recreation-community/arts/hearts-together-community-art-project.html>



Across the region, artists and arts organizations have been hit hard by the closure of arts spaces for performance, exhibition, learning and art making. Small-scale, pop-up outdoor arts programming opportunities were created in Saanich to provide ways to connect the community and its artists. As we move towards fall, some arts programming resumes at Saanich facilities. As well, the exhibition program for Saanich Municipal Hall is resuming in late August, following the reopening of the Hall. The Cedar Hill galleries exhibition program continues to be on hold due to COVID-19 and facility constraints. Plans are underway to explore reinitiating it at some point in the future.

Inclusion and Accessibility: This summer has proven, with or without a global pandemic, that there is a greater need for Inclusion Leader support in our day camp programs. Despite COVID-19, Saanich has been approached by 32 families through Supported Child Development with Queen Alexandra and the Victoria Native Friendship Centre (an increase of 33% from summer 2019). While support for kids is a year-round service for this program, we see the highest activity during Spring and Summer Breaks. Because Inclusion and Accessibility Services are new to our portfolio, the future is yet to be fully developed. The level of support needed once school resumes in 2020 remains to be seen, but we will continue actively seek ways to enable kids to integrate seamlessly into Recreation programs.

Diversity & Equity: Music in the Community has been offering small unadvertised music performances in specific Saanich locations to get music into the community. There has been fifteen 1hr performances in locations where community will be out. Locations like top of Mt. Tolmie, Cadboro-Gyro Park, Beckwith Park, Gorge Waterway and Uptown. Those lucky folks who have been out in the community get a surprise performance.

Older Adult Services: Programs for older adults are returning slowly and carefully. Many older adults have been isolated and are feeling very lonely. Many have voiced their desire to get back to their activities. As such we are starting to offer small group activities where possible.

At Pearkes Recreation Centre, older adults lost their social drop in time and cannot return as the Flipside Teen Centre is now occupied by Saanich Fire. A social reserved drop in table tennis will be offered twice a week to make some social time available at that site.

Cedar Hill Social Club will start with once a week reserved social sessions. Activities will be seated and may include chair exercise, bingo, or just lively discussion on current events from an appropriate physical distance.

The NEAT (Neighbours Engaged in Activities Together) program has restarted. The first location has started at Mt Doug Court where residents can participate in bocce ball, croquet, and horseshoes.

Older adults can also register for free croquet at Burnside Lawn Bowling or to take a free Guided Walk in one of our gorgeous Parks as well.

Special Events: The **Saanich Strawberry Festival** shifted to an online celebration for the 2020 event due to the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic. Residents were encouraged to visit a festival website which asked them to share their favourite memories from past events. A total of 77 entries were collected and a final video presentation was compiled using quotes from the individual entries.



All entries were eligible to win one of 3 "Day at the Beach" prize baskets. The video compilation featured music from the Commodores Big Band which has played at the event for over 30 years. The video slideshow included images from the past 4 decades and showcased a wide range of activities featured over the years. The always popular strawberries and ice cream was a common highlight for many families

that shared their stories.

The **Cadboro Bay Festival** was postponed until 2021 but local artists were given the opportunity to sculpt a sand sculpture in the theme of "community". The artists featured unique ways in which we have all come together to get through these difficult times. The sculpture was funded through community partnerships with Pepper's Foods, The Cadboro Bay Village Business Improvement Association and BCLC. The sand sculpture was created at the end of July and will remain on display in Gyro Park during the month of August.



In mid-August an online contest was promoted asking residents to vote on their favourite sand sculpture from the past 13 years of the Festival. Popular themes included the Giant Octopus (2016) and the Pepper's Sandcastle (2014) but the most popular of all was the original Marine Life theme featured in 2007 which won the contest with 154 votes. A total of 336 entries were received and three prize baskets donated by the CBVIA will be awarded to three guest who voted.

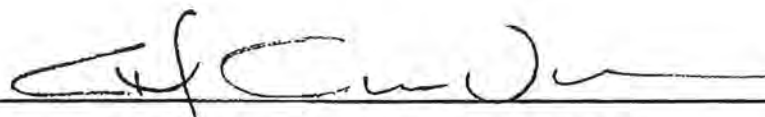
Volunteers: With the resumption of fall programming in Recreation Centres the Volunteer Program is looking to resume and provide opportunities to community members looking to share their time. Volunteers that were in existing positions prior to the Covid-19 closures will be invited to return to their roles and provided training with new Covid-19 protocols and procedures. Recruitment of new volunteers for highly specialized areas such as Aquatics, Moon Festival or the Arts Centre will be facilitated by area programmers to ensure that the operational needs of the facility will be met.

Child and Youth Services: The onset of the pandemic this spring disrupted our ability to provide youth programs and services through our normal venues and partner sites. One fantastic exception this summer has been the successful resumption of 4 weeks of our outdoor youth camp – Breakout Adventures. With full registration and waitlists each week, the need for this community based outdoor camp for 11-14yrs was heard loud and clear. Our team of amazing youth staff have not disappointed.

As we plan for the upcoming fall season, we look forward to continuing some of our valued and needed programs and services for this age group. What we are hearing is the need for safe places and spaces for youth to gather in accordance with current distancing measures is only growing in importance and is anticipated to become greater as the season shifts into fall. The loss of our Flipside Teen Centre in the Tillicum neighbourhood, while unfortunate and untimely, has meant an opportunity to branch out through purposeful partnerships and creative contingency planning. We look to continue our strong connection with local schools and anticipate hearing their plans including capacity for community partnership soon.

While youth programming has been largely on hold, our focus shifted to the reopening of our summer camp offerings for school age children (5.5-11yrs). We coordinated and implemented the sought after Saanich Neighbourhood Playground Program (SNPP), serving up to 16 families at each of our 8 park locations. In a typical year, we would only run 7 camp sites, but demand from the community was so overwhelming that we added Majestic Park in order to handle the substantial waitlists for this program. At the time of this writing, SNPP holds a 95% fill rate while still holding a waitlist of 70+ for certain locations. Also new this summer is that we held up to 4 spots per week per camp location in reserve for our low income members who qualify for the L.I.F.E program. By all accounts this has been a well prescribed offering this summer and one which we will consider expanding in summers to come.

Prepared by:



Cristina Caravaca, Senior Manager- Community Services Division

Approved by:



Suzanne Samborski, Director- Parks, Recreation & Community Services Department

THE CORPORATION OF THE DISTRICT OF SAANICH

REPORT TO: Parks, Trails & Recreation Committee

DATE: September 3, 2020

FROM: Eva Riccius, Senior Manager, Parks

SUBJECT: Parks Division Update – September, 2020

The following update is provided for the Parks, Trails & Recreation Committee:

I start by acknowledging that COVID 19 has created challenges and opportunities for Saanich Parks. We are grateful that the District took the approach to keep permanent staff working and also went to bat with other municipalities and the Regional District to keep local and regional parks open, when provincial and federal agencies closed parks back in the spring.

Saanich Parks has seen an abundance of use. Residents and visitors have been getting out enjoying nature and more recently resuming some outdoor sports activities. Across Canada park use has increased over baseline numbers by more than 100% In BC that is a bit lower (as we start with greater baselines), but still see almost 80% increases in use over baselines. This is really exciting and provides us with tremendous opportunities in building a strong public base of park users and supporters. It also reminds us that we need to be thoughtful and vigilant regarding inappropriate uses, potential overuse and ensure we have the capacity and ability to manage the impacts of increased use.

Parks staff have had to be flexible and have adapted to the current world we live, work and play in to keep the park visitors safe in the best ways we can. We have followed the advice of the Provincial Health Officer and the District's Emergency Operations Centre. We have had to make decisions with little time and continue to revisit and evolve as we learn more.

I'm also happy to report that for the most part we have had compliance from park visitors to follow Dr Henry's advice to practice social distancing and be calm, kind and safe.

This month's Parks report provides an update on our COVID related activities and previously planned work.

Maintenance

Ongoing maintenance services include washroom cleaning, refuse collection, camper cleanups. COVID has increased demands on park washrooms and refuse has increased substantially.

Maintenance crews have been able to do some much needed maintenance procedures on all of our sports fields with no organized sports using the fields. All sports fields are ready for play and play is slowly resuming at decreased levels.

Irrigation staff are busy doing repairs to systems as they happen. We are installing a new drip irrigation system in Horner Park for the new trees to be planted. 3500 Blanchard St irrigation will be installed where possible this fall.

Homeless camp clean ups are increasing and they are dealt with as they are reported using the Parks Management and Control Bylaw and established protocols. Illegal dumping in parks is unfortunately ongoing and growing requiring more staff time and resources.

The Parks mechanic shop is busy repairing equipment as needed.

Construction

The Construction Section has been working on the following major projects:

- **Quadrant 1 Trail Resurfacing Program** – work is being completed on gravel trails within Quadrant 1 (South Saanich). Most recently work has been completed at Gorge Park. In addition, crews have also completed supplementary trail work at Broadmead Park which is in Quadrant 3.
- **Reynold's Park** – all work in Reynolds Park has been now completed. Both the playground and washroom building have been open for summer recreation programming (Saanich Neighbourhood Playground Program).
- **Parks ID Signage** – The crew has been installing new park ID signs across the Parks system. We are planning on completing a total of 25 new park ID signs in 2020 of which 15 parks have been completed to date.
- **Horner Park** – The Horner Park renovation project started in the first week of July and is well underway. As part of the project, the construction crew is renovating the playground, sports court and central pathway and installing a new youth area, solar lighting (along the central path), a drinking fountain, an interpretive sign and additional looping asphalt and gravel pathways. Close to 40 new trees will be planted in the park. As part of the Washroom Operations and Capital Plan, a portion of the park building will be renovated in conjunction with the park upgrades, so that visitors have seasonal access to an already existing washroom. We anticipate reopening the park in mid to late October.
- **Tennis Court Resurfacing Program** - Tennis courts in both Maltwood and Rutledge Parks have been recently resurfaced and both courts are now open for play. Cadboro-Gyro Park tennis court, which was rebuilt in the fall 2019, will also receive new acrylic surfacing as a part of this program.
- **Mount Tolmie Park Pedestrian Entrance** – The pedestrian entrance to Mount Tolmie Park from Cedar Hill X Rd and Gordon Head Rd has been reconfigured for better access along with a small plaza area. This was done in partnership with the Mount Tolmie Community Association.

Horticulture

As with all sections in Parks it has been a challenging year due to the uncertainty surrounding COVID and how it would impact our operations. In March we were considering cancelling our bedding plants and hanging baskets and were unsure what our staffing level would be. Fortunately we were able to plant all our seasonal displays and hanging baskets at facilities which eventually were able to reopen. We have received positive public feedback and the displays provide colourful and happy features throughout the community.

More recently, we have been busy maintaining annual displays/shrub beds, mowing parks and responding to a high volume of calls for service to cul-de-sac traffic islands from residents. On a positive note we grew some vegetables in some of the seasonal display beds again this year and were able to deliver food to the Shelbourne Street Community Kitchen five times so far this season.

Urban Forestry

Urban Forestry continues to have another extremely busy year, with 950 customer calls to date as of mid August. Over 700 of these calls are pruning requests for either boulevard or park trees. The section continues to provide support to Engineering and Public Works on civil plan reviews and construction supervision around public trees. The arboriculture crews are focused primarily on getting through the backlog of Requests for Service, before we get into the winter storm months.

Natural Areas

The boulevard and park tree watering program has been in full swing since early May. Three full-time watering trucks and one part time truck are busy keeping up with the watering requirements for the District's trees. Thankfully we haven't had a scorcher of a summer so far. We are working closely with the irrigation crew to keep the dozens of irrigation systems on top of the watering needs of many boulevard and park trees. Working closely with the Planning department we are working on a dozen or so large park planting projects to help compensate for the loss of trees from engineering and construction projects. Some of the planting projects include Quick's Bottom Park Phase 2, Baxter Park, Layritz Park, and Regina Park. We are planning the first phase of tree planting at Cedar Hill Park. We hope to plant about 40 trees per year over the next five years in the park to enhance and beautify the buffer zones between the golf course and the very busy trail system around the park.

The invasive species crew continues to be busy managing Poison hemlock, Yellow flag iris, and will be busy on Viaduct Pond and Colquitz River removing Purple loosestrife. The Knotweed control program will start shortly. We are co-hosting a Yellow flag iris workshop later in September to teach other local land managers and some of our staff another technique to help eradicate the species.

We just completed another ~90m section of Colquitz



River restoration with the Public Works Storm and Waste Water crew and Peninsula Streams Society. This was an extension of the ~110m section that we did last year between Eastridge and Copley East Park. There are now a series of spawning beds, riffles, ponds and the river banks are lined with boulders, stumps and logs to enhance fish habitat. The community can enjoy the fish spawning from the Copley East bridge and the new viewing area constructed last year. We will be planting more native trees and shrubs later in the year.

Pulling Together volunteer groups are very active with crews supporting several groups on a weekly basis. The Natural Areas team is working closely with our Park Stewardship Coordinator catching up on some site meetings with volunteers that were postponed.

Vegetation control crews are working hard to take the pressure off the Urban Forestry crews as Requests for Service continue to roll in. Some of the beach access points are receiving their second round of vegetation pruning.

We have two large cedar split rail fencing projects this summer and fall at Haro Woods and Mount Douglas Parks. The Haro Woods project will help us deactivate non-designated trails and help restore areas with native trees and shrubs. This is an action from the Haro Woods management plan. The trail from the Mount Douglas upper parking lot to the summit lookout will also receive some trail-side fencing to help restore some high-activity Garry Oak rocky outcrop areas and sites that have had extensive invasive plant (mostly Scotch broom) removal. Our goal is to close many of the non-designated trails and restore with native plants and flowers.

Park Planning and Design

Washroom Plan – A Request for Information (RFI) is currently out to prospective manufacturers of pre-fabricated washroom buildings. Staff will use this information to determine what the market has to offer and design a Request for Proposals (RFP) appropriately. Staff anticipate bringing a recommendation to Council early in 2021.

Cedar Hill Park Management Plan – The Management Plan for Cedar Hill Park is in its final stages of development (just undergoing final revision and layout). The plan will be forwarded to PTR in October and then to Council a few weeks after that. For more information please visit the project web-page.

<https://www.saanich.ca/EN/main/parks-recreation-culture/parks/projects-in-saanich-parks/active-projects/cedar-hill-park.html>

Hampton Park – Engineering crews have started work on their part of the project. A rock wall between the parking lot and Hampton Road is nearing completion. Gorge Soccer has started their artificial turf replacement and Engineering's Storm and Wastewater crew is about to begin replacing the old sewer line along the north end of the park. Parks crews will install a new paved trail in that location once the SWW are finished. This trail will connect the existing asphalt trail in the park to Seaton near the sport court and tennis courts. The new parking lot will create a one-way in and one-way out configuration and increased pedestrian access should improve the safety of the area. We anticipate the work be completed by the end of the year. Parks is also planning to use soil cells under the concrete plaza to provide adequate soil volume for the feature tree planned for the plaza. This will be the District's first use of soil cells on

one of our own projects. Soil cells allow for planting larger trees as there is space underground for good root system development.

Interpretive Sign Program – Work has started on a new interpretive sign that will feature the **History of Horner Park and Neighbourhood**. Parks has partnered with the Mount Tolmie Community Association on this sign who researched the information for the sign. The back side of the sign will provide a new Community Notice Board.

At **Haro Woods Park** orientation signs with maps for way-finding, and an interpretive sign featuring information about First Nations, Finnerty Creek, the forest and wildlife will be installed this fall.

McMinn Bike Park – Unfortunately this continues to be delayed due to a lack of appropriate soil materials and COVID. Staff is reassessing options to complete this project.

George Tripp Youth Park – As a result of COVID, the next phases of exploring options and public engagement have stalled. Staff is reassessing engagement options.

Community Development and Business Systems Section

Park Stewardship:

In response to COVID-19, all volunteer stewardship activities in parks were postponed. Since mid June, volunteers have been active again with 52 Lead Stewards (at 41 park sites), and 11 Park Ambassador volunteers trained by conference call on new COVID-19 protocols that adhere to the Provincial Health Officers orders, and ensure the health and safety of volunteers, staff and the public. Volunteers have expressed great appreciation for the efforts taken by staff to resume stewardship activities in their beloved parks. Natural Areas staff continue to support Pulling Together volunteer efforts in the field.

During volunteer closure there was considerable interest from the community to volunteer in parks, with 100+ inquiries, we are now working to respond and find opportunities for these inquiries, while maintaining safe practices. A busy season ahead is expected while we continue to support our current volunteer groups, plan new stewardship projects, respond to volunteer inquiries, train new volunteers, and support a variety of external and internal initiatives (ex. Natural Intelligence, Great Victoria NatureHood, Gorge Waterway Initiative to name a few).



Volunteers pulling together with physical distance at Marigold and Konukson Parks

Park user groups:

Sport User groups: resumption of activities and permits: Many user groups have resumed their activities after a complete shutdown in March due to COVID-19. The process to resume is complex since each sport or activity has their own sector's guidelines in addition to Saanich's requirements, all of which must be consistent with the Provincial Health Officer's orders. We worked closely with our partners to guide them through this complex set of tasks and want to thank and commend all groups on their efforts, commitment and diligence. It's not an easy process, especially as this is new for everyone, but there has been an unwavering sentiment to get it right to ensure public safety. The Parks Use Coordinator and Parks administration team have resumed more than 30 sport and community user groups plus countless general permits from bootcamp classes to weddings and picnics. We anticipate that there will be another uptick in resumptions and permit requests for the fall season.

Partner Projects:

Hampton park artificial turfs replacement: Saanich Parks, in partnership with Gorge Soccer Association (GSA), are replacing the Hampton Park artificial turf fields. Construction is funded through GSA via grant applications (supported by Saanich). Saanich is providing oversight (permits) and support for construction so there is no additional financial costs to Saanich (or savings). This is a positive example of a strong community partnership with a local non-profit and support and endorsement from Saanich. The non-profit can access significant funding that the municipality cannot, resulting in a needed public infrastructure upgrade at no cost to the tax payer. The result will be a renewed and safe playing surface for quality soccer practicing and games for Gorge Soccer, other sport groups, and the general public for the next decade at least. The project is underway and should wrap up mid-September.