

**AGENDA**  
**PARKS, TRAILS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**Saanich Municipal Hall, Council Chambers**  
**Wednesday, January 27, 2021, 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm**

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Due to COVID-19 measures, Saanich is unable to accommodate the public for any Council, Committee of the Whole, Advisory, Board or Foundation meetings while maintaining the limits on large gatherings due to the Public Health Order.

As per the Order of the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Emergency Program Act, Ministerial Order No. M192, public attendance at the meeting is not required if it cannot be accommodated in accordance with the applicable requirements or recommendations under the Public Health Act.

To listen to this meeting by telephone call **1-833-353-8610** and use code **9232581** during the time noted above.

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**\*\*\* Territorial Acknowledgement & Inclusivity Statement \*\*\***

- 1. ADOPTION OF MINUTES** (attachment)
  - October 1, 2020
- 2. WELCOME / INTRODUCTIONS**
  - Chair's welcome
  - Introduction of committee members and why they applied for PTR
  - Introduction of Parks, Recreation and Community Services management team
- 3. CHAIR'S REMARKS**
- 4. 2021 MEETING DATES / TERMS OF REFERENCE** (attachments)
  - For information
- 5. DEPARTMENTAL OVERVIEW**
  - Staff presentation
- 6. PROVIDING SAFE SPACES, PLACES AND ACTIVITIES DURING COVID-19** (attachment)
  - Staff presentation (Parks division)
- 7. COMMUNITY ARTS IN PARKS DURING COVID-19** (attachment)
  - Staff presentation (Community Services division)
- 8. GEORGE TRIPP YOUTH / BIKE PARK DESIGN UPDATE**
  - Staff presentation
- 9. DIVISION UPDATES** (attachments for information)
  - Community Services
  - Parks Division

**\* Adjournment \***

**Next Meeting: February 24, 2021**

**In order to ensure a quorum, please call Tania Douglas at 475-5494 ext. 3505 or  
tania.douglas@saanich.ca if you are unable to attend.**

**MINUTES**  
**PARKS, TRAILS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
Held in the Police Building, 760 Vernon Avenue, Kirby Room  
**October 1, 2020 at 5:30 pm**

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**Present:** Councillor Ned Taylor (Chair), Ted Austin (via telephone), Trevor Barry, Kathleen Burton, Pamela Carroll (via telephone), Lyndsay Edgar (via telephone), Amy-Jade Louie (via telephone), Erin Lumley (via telephone), Stefanie Yao

**Staff:** Eva Riccius, Senior Manager Parks; Gary Darrah, Manager, Park Planning and Development; Julie Lomerse, Park Planner Designer; Tania Douglas, Senior Committee Clerk

**Regrets:** Dexter Owen

**Guest:** Susan Haddon, Friends of Cedar Hill Park (via telephone)

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**Minutes**

**MOVED by K. Burton and Seconded by T. Barry: "That the Minutes of the Parks, Trails and Recreation Advisory Committee meeting held September 3, 2020, be adopted as circulated."**

**CARRIED**

**CHAIR'S REMARKS**

The Chair expressed appreciation to the Friends of Cedar Hill Park for their work in the community and also thanked staff for providing the reports for the meeting. He advised that youth representative, Alabama Chevrier, had to resign from the committee.

**FRIENDS OF CEDAR HILL PARK PULLING TOGETHER PROGRAM**

Susan Haddon, past Chair of Friends of Cedar Hill Park (FCP), presented historical information about Cedar Hill Park and provided comments about the Cedar Hill Park Draft Management Plan. She extended an invitation for committee members to come walk the park with members of FCP. The following was noted:

- There are Garry Oak ecosystems and environmentally significant areas in the park.
- Both the Colquitz and Bowker Creek watersheds, along with three ponds and Reach 17 of Bowker Creek are part of the park.
- The greater community has cared for the park for over 50 years. The FCP was formed in 2014.
- Regarding the Cedar Hill Park Draft Management Plan, the FCP supports many of the Plan's vision for the park, however a number of the Plan's goals imply development that could impact the park's natural areas.
- It is proposed that Saanich only permit development where it does not negatively impact the ecological value of the park.
- There are possible negative ecosystem impacts with some of the proposed trails, and it is also felt that cycling on the chip trail around the park is also unsafe, with conflicts with cyclists, golfers and pedestrians.

In reply to a question from the committee about the areas of concern in terms of development, Ms. Haddon noted that park draft management plan Goals 5.3 and 8-16 focus on development and include the paths around the park, recreation, play and gathering places, ball diamond upgrades, picnic and seating areas, youth specific areas, washrooms and the possible expansion of the Cedar Hill Recreation Centre.

Committee members expressed appreciation for the presentation and thanked Ms. Haddon for her time.

## **CEDAR HILL PARK DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Manager of Park Planning and Development and the Park Planner Designer were present to provide information regarding the Cedar Hill Park Draft Management Plan. This is a 20-year plan with prioritized goals, and staff are seeking Committee's support tonight and Council's approval at a meeting later this month. Five goals for environmental management and restoration have been identified, connectivity and mobility in the park is being assessed (and includes active transportation within the park), and new recreation, play and gathering places for all ages and abilities are also included in the plan. The budget estimate for the first five years is about \$960,000 and future budgets are to be determined.

Staff replied to committee questions and the following was noted:

- A Water Resources Engineer (KWL) was hired to look at the feasibility of restoring Bowker Creek and constructing a wetland at Reach 17. Preliminary costs for a project like this are over \$1 million.
- The existing baseball diamonds do not generate much revenue. The plan to create one larger size ball diamond will not negatively impact the users of the two existing smaller diamonds and the space is there for Special Olympics to use the area.
- The Parks division has taken over the management of the public portions of the park from the Cedar Hill Golf Course, who will primarily focus on the active golf course zone.
- In reply to a concern expressed about prioritizing youth amenities, staff noted that every park that has been updated in recent years (eg. McMinn Park, George Tripp, Horner Park, Tolmie Park) has a youth component. In terms of what is planned, there are no specific ideas at this point in time.
- The Plan is just at the concept stage for amenity areas at this point and will have to go through detailed planning and public engagement later.
- There is no proposal to remove any high value natural areas in the park.
- It is too early to do a traffic demand study but it is not anticipated that there will be an increase in parking needs around the recreation centre. The parking will be renewed in an efficient manner and will have better stormwater management.

**Motion: MOVED by T. Barry and Seconded by L. Edgar, "That the Parks, Trails and Recreation Advisory Committee recommends to Council that the Cedar Hill Draft Management Plan be endorsed and that consideration be given to making youth amenities a 1 – 5 year priority within the Plan."**

Committee members debated whether it was necessary to prioritize the youth amenities in the Plan, and the following amendment was made:

**Motion to Amend: MOVED by K. Burton and Seconded by S. Yao, "That the motion be amended to remove the proviso that youth amenities be made a 1 - 5 year priority within the Plan."**

**Motion to Amend CARRIED**

**Main motion as amended:**

**MOVED by T. Barry and Seconded by L. Edgar, "That the Parks, Trails and Recreation Advisory Committee recommends to Council that the Cedar Hill Draft Management Plan be endorsed."**

**Motion as Amended CARRIED**

\*\*\* T. Barry left the meeting at 7:10 p.m. \*\*\*

## **NATURAL INTELLIGENCE**

The Senior Manager of Parks presented information on Natural Intelligence, Foundations of Stewardship, and the following was noted:

- Natural Intelligence was described as what we know about nature and how we interact with it.
- The goal is to have Saanich residents actively enhancing the natural world by 2025 in order to help with challenges of climate change, species/habitat loss, pollution, etc.
- Not one government can address these large issues; everyone needs to become involved with nature.
- A survey was done on Facebook but youth was a missing component; in order to reach more youth staff will look at reaching out on other social media such as Instagram.
- The people that responded to the survey averaged 1-2 hours outside daily. Walking, running, gardening and hiking were the most popular ways to spend time outdoors.
- Staff are looking to put together a campaign to encourage people to get out into nature; more data needs to be collected first.
- An advertisement on CTV Vancouver Island was played for committee members.
- Parks is well positioned to lead this initiative as there is already so much community engagement and partnerships with stewards of the land.

Committee comments:

- Appreciation was expressed for the advertisement on CTV. The Hiking the Island advertisement is well done.
- This is very good timing with COVID-19; it gives people options to get outside and keep active during the pandemic.
- This is a mindful program and can expand in the future.

## **BRAINSTORMING SESSION – REMAINING ITEMS**

This item to be discussed at a future meeting.

## **DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES**

Reports from Recreation, Parks, and Community Services were received by committee members in the agenda package. The Manager of Park Planning and Development noted that the Cuthbert Homes Management plan has delayed items because of the highway project. Information will be on the Saanich website regarding this.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

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Councillor Taylor, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

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Committee Secretary

# Memo

To: Parks, Trails and Recreation Advisory Committee  
From: Tania Douglas, Senior Committee Clerk  
Date: January 27, 2021  
Subject: **2021 Advisory Committee meeting dates**

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As per Section 85(a) of Council Procedure Bylaw 2015, No. 9321, each committee shall establish a regular schedule of meetings including the date, time and place of the committee meetings.

Advisory Committee meetings are scheduled to be two hours in duration. There are no meetings in July, August or December, unless a special meeting is called for urgent business.

The meeting rooms are in high demand and have been booked for the fourth Wednesday of the month, at 4:00 pm as follows:

January 27, 2021  
February 24, 2021  
March 24, 2021  
April 28, 2021  
May 26, 2021  
June 23, 2021  
September 22, 2021  
October 27, 2021  
November 24, 2021

It is possible that, on occasion, meetings may have to be moved to accommodate the Mayor or Council but we hope to maintain the above schedule.

No formal motion is required to approve the meeting schedule, committee consensus will suffice.



Tania Douglas  
Senior Committee Clerk  
/td

# **Parks, Trails and Recreation Advisory Committee**

## **Terms of Reference**

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### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Parks, Trails and Recreation Advisory Committee is to advise Council and recommend policies on parks\*, trails and recreation matters, including services, facilities and specific community interests.

### **Mandate**

The Parks, Trails and Recreation Advisory Committee will, consistent with the purpose described above, undertake the following:

- Develop and recommend policies to Council and respond to Council requests for advice and information.
- Provide advice to Council on projects, policies or bylaws under consideration by staff or Council, and on additional topics of interest to committee members that fall within the subject area of the committee.
- Review and provide feedback on the Strategic Plan.
- Provide a community perspective on parks\*, trails, facilities, services, and community programs.
- Foster public awareness, recognition and support for parks, trails, and facilities.

*\*Natural parks (P-4N zone) fall within the mandate of the Environment and Natural Areas Advisory Committee.*

Any initiatives proposed by the committee that has resource implications, including staff time, would have to be approved by Council.

### **Meetings**

The Committee will meet a minimum of four times per year in accordance with its regular schedule of meetings established annually at the first meeting of the year. No meetings are held during the summer and winter breaks (July, August and December). Special meetings may be held at the call of the Chair. The meeting rules and procedures will be in accordance with the Council Procedure Bylaw.

### **Membership**

To the extent possible, Advisory Committees will have a diverse membership with respect to gender, age and cultural-ethnic background.

The committee will consist of eleven (11) members qualified in the discipline relevant to the committee mandate or with a perspective necessary for fulsome consideration of the associated topic, including:

- One member of Council to serve as Chair, appointed by the Mayor; and,
- Ten (10) community representatives appointed by the Council including one youth voting member described as 16-24 years of age.

Members may serve a maximum of seven years on an Advisory Committee, consisting of a one-year term followed by a potential for three, two-year terms. Members who wish to be re-appointed after the completion of a term must re-apply and provide the application and their resume for Council's consideration.

School District Nos. 61 and 63 may each assign a trustee to the Committee as a non-voting liaison.

## **Parks, Trails and Recreation Advisory Committee**

### **Terms of Reference**

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#### **Staff Support**

The Parks and Recreation Department is the primary contact and will provide the required professional support. The Legislative Division will provide secretarial and administrative support.

#### **Review of Terms of Reference**

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed during the committee's first meeting each term.

January 2021

# **Parks, Recreation and Community Services 2020 COVID-19 Response**

Presented to the Parks, Trails and  
Recreation Committee





# COVID-19 outset (March to May)



# COVID-19 initial reopening (June onwards)

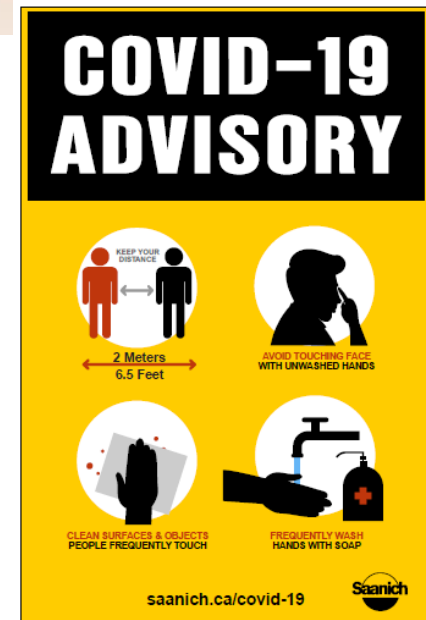
## Play it safe Guidelines for play

While visiting this park, we encourage you to follow health and safety guidelines to protect yourself and others.



Play structures are not cleaned.

Saanich Parks: 250-475-5522  
saanich.ca/parks





# Adjusting program delivery



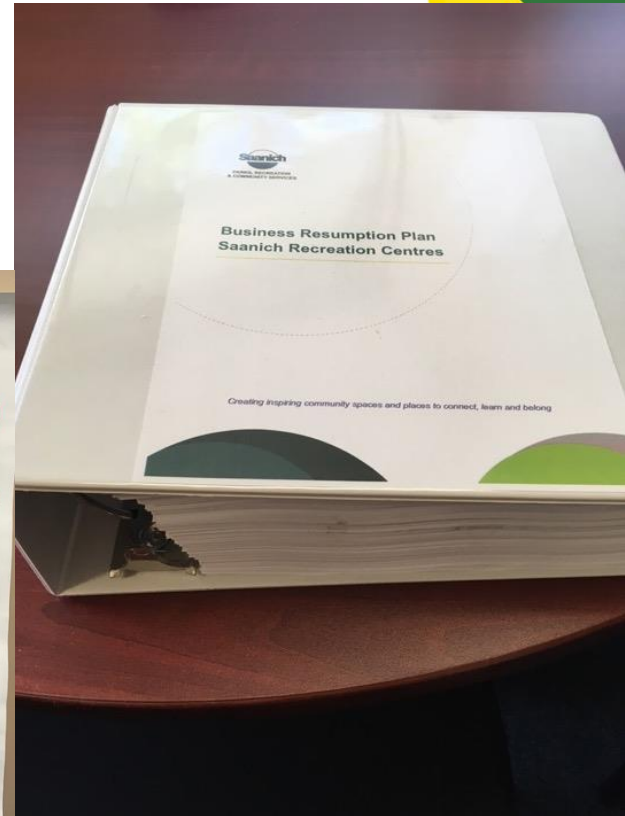
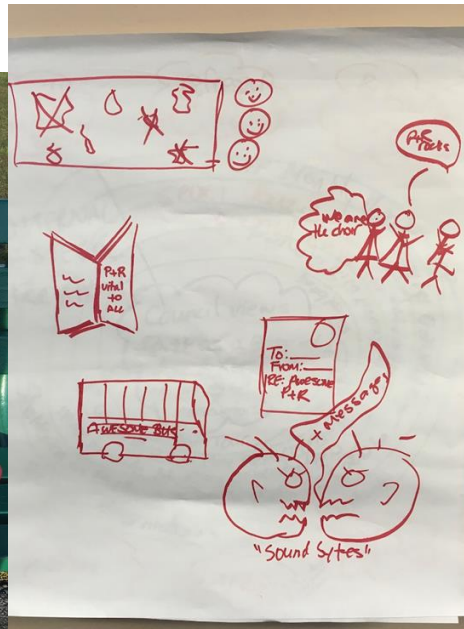


# COVID-19 2<sup>nd</sup> wave (Fall)



# What we have learned

- When old models don't fit
- Looking out, not just looking in
- Service delivery innovation
- Power of relationships
- It's Complicated





# Supporting vulnerable populations





# What we have seen...







# Community Arts in Parks in a Year of COVID-19

Brenda Weatherston, Community Arts  
Programmer, Community Services



**PARKS, RECREATION  
& COMMUNITY SERVICES**



# Summer 2020: The New Reality

- Large events cancelled
- BC's Restart Plan Phase 3 (June 24): limited reopening
- Community Programming with Restrictions & Guidelines:
  - Safer outdoors vs. indoors
  - Limit gathering (max. 50)
  - Health checks, physical distancing, handwashing etc.

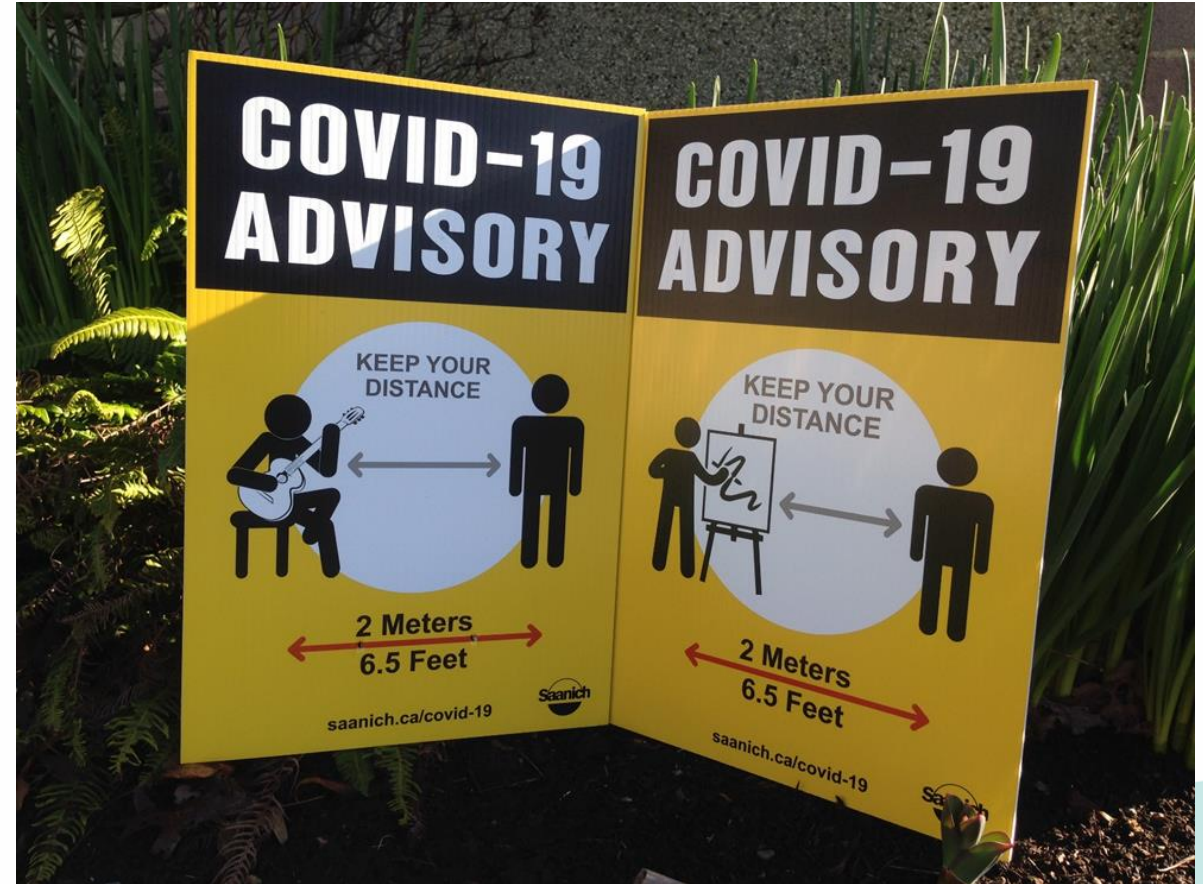


# Defining our Goals

- Support community well-being during difficult times through engaging in the arts and being outdoors
  - Take arts and culture to the community
  - Make arts and culture free, safe and accessible outdoors
  - Provide opportunities to support local artists and connect them with the community
  - Placemaking: activate our outdoor parks and spaces with unique, unexpected experiences
  - Authentic, in-person, small-scale & close-to-home
- 

# Adapting Arts, Culture and Events

- Careful, planned approach for approval and delivery
- Limit crowds: pop-ups vs. advertised times and locations
- Calls for Artists then provide guidance for artists & audiences
- Be flexible and adaptable to changing situations
- Measure success differently





# Music in the Community

- 32 performances offered from July through September



- Offered in varied parks and places for people to encounter music



- Diversity of ages, cultures, levels of experience, musical genres & instruments



# Arts in the Community

- Pop-up visual art and artists
- Pop-up theatre performances

***In This Together***  
mural at Cedar Hill  
Recreation Centre  
and Park by artists  
Joanne Thomson and  
Marcia Semenoff



**SAANICH NEWS**

[Read more below](#)



The arts encourage personal expression, health and wellness, and opportunity to connect and communicate with others. Here, Joanne Thomson creates a window mural at Cedar Hill Recreation Centre as an Arts in Community Pop-up.

**Arts inspire connection and  
creativity in Saanich**



# From Pop-up Opera to Pop-up Chalk Art!



Pacific Opera Victoria



Artist Scott Gillies  
at Reynolds and  
McMinn Parks



[Link to time-release video](#)



# HeArts Together Community Art Project

- Collaborative project that responds to COVID-19
- Invite community to come together creatively while apart
- Outreach to isolated and vulnerable community members through community partners
- Connect with the community through park displays & online



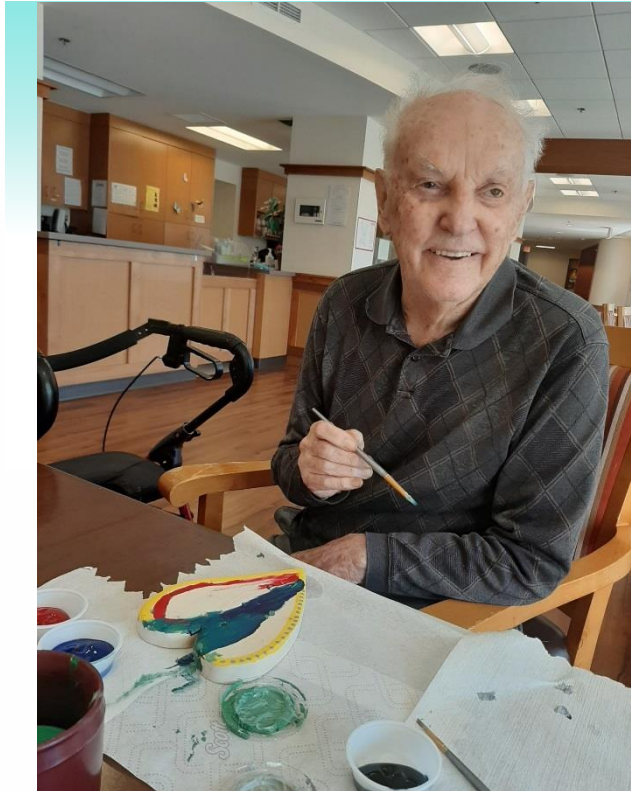
Rainbow Park

# Putting our HeArts Together

14 partner  
organizations

700+ hearts  
so far!

5 park displays  
& counting



View online on [Saanich website](#)



# Moon Festival Lantern Celebration

- Flow-Through Event: drive, bike, walk
- Outdoors only
- Controlled entry/exit
- Outdoor displays with scalable options

Lambrick Park and Gordon Head Recreation Centre



# Looking Ahead in 2021

- COVID-19 continues
- Build on successes of community arts in parks!
- Explore new ideas, opportunities, and collaborations
- Look for ways to improve and streamline delivery for 2021 and future years





Please share your experiences and ideas!

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[saanich.ca/arts](https://saanich.ca/arts)





## The Corporation of the District of Saanich

### Report

**To:** Parks, Trails and Recreation Advisory Committee

**From:** Cristina Caravaca, Senior Manager- Community Services

**Date:** January 27, 2021

**Subject:** Community Services Division Update

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### RECOMMENDATION

That 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

**Inclusion and Accessibility:** Despite the health climate we find ourselves in, Saanich Commonwealth Place has stepped up to the plate to offer care for children 5-12yrs over this holiday season. Although spots are limited, each week of Winter Holiday Camp will include two children requiring 1-on-1 Inclusion Leader support. Saanich has worked very closely with Recreation Oak Bay to support families looking for care, when our camp waitlists have created additional barriers for participation with Inclusion Leader support.

Registration for Spring Break Camps opened earlier this month. In the first week alone, we have seen an increase in new families registering with Saanich that require 1-on-1 support for their children. Where we would normally see new families during summer registration, the consensus from parents is that they are coming to Saanich now to prepare for summer and the diverse programs we offer.

Departmentally, Inclusion and Accessibility has been working closely with Older Adult Services as the Sign Strategy nears completion. Discussions with the Rick Hansen Foundation and the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) has generated conversations internally for the need for staff training at the supervisory and frontline level on how to support the diverse abilities of people using our facilities. As well as, creating welcoming and safe environments for gender diverse persons in our community.

**Community Arts:** The "Healing through the Arts" program for the Victoria Women's Transition House wrapped up in December. This program provided healing art experiences to women who have survived domestic violence. "Women who have experienced trauma found this arts program to be one of the most effective ways to begin their healing journey," said the Transition House's Program Manager, "I am always amazed at the heart-felt creative results coming from this program and women are lined up to attend again and again." We hope to continue our partnerships with Transition House in 2021.

**Diversity and Equity:** Community Services was awarded two \$1400 grants from “Give it a Try! BC 55+ Games”. Greater Victoria is scheduled to host the 2021 BC 55+ Games. This event will provide anyone over the age of 55 an opportunity to try a new sport at the local community centre. It is an opportunity for members of the community to come together through sport to learn more about the 55+ BC Games and the services and programs at their local community recreation centre in a fun and supported environment.

If it proceeds as planned, Saanich Commonwealth Place will host archery, darts, badminton and possibly swimming activities in February. Cedar Hill will follow in April with a focus on table tennis, tennis, badminton, and possibly bridge. The emphasis for these sessions will be to reach out to isolated, multicultural and Indigenous seniors. All plans are contingent upon Provincial Health Order related to COVID19.

**Financial Assistance:** An additional BCRPA grant allowed us to continue our partnership with PISE (Pacific Institute for Sport Excellence) and Tillicum Elementary School through December. The funding was used to support children in after school activities. Children who do not have means or resources to engage in “out-of-school” activities, were identified by school personnel. A recent survey conducted by the school revealed that students who attended the program performed better in school, and were more likely to attend school on the days that the program was offered.

Community Services has acquired twenty-four skating/hockey helmets to share with children in Saanich who want to take skating lessons. Because helmets are mandatory for participation in activities that occur on the ice, low-income families experience a significant barrier to participation. Those who qualify to receive a helmet will also receive a \$50 grant to offset the cost of skating lessons at Pearkes Arena.

**Child and Youth Services:** The Upside Teen Centre has a shift in programming over this quarter. The Friday night program for 2spirit, queer, trans, and allied youth has adapted from previously being a community dinner program, to becoming an activity-based evening for youth. Each week, leaders will set up distanced games and crafts and provide the youth with individually prepared snacks. The program filled to 100% quickly. Feedback so far has been excellent, with youth saying “we have really missed coming to this space” and “I am so glad this program is finally open again!!” Friday night programs at the Cedar Hill Arts Centre have been full of youth safely gathering in a social setting. Board Games, snacks, crafting, and watching movies together have all been very popular. In the New Year, the youth will also enjoy monthly art workshops hosted by professional artists and makers from our communities.

Programs at Pearkes, in the Tillicum neighbourhood, have been widely popular, with Youth Services offering a “Wheel Riders” program as a registered drop-in at the fieldhouse. During the activity, the leaders set up Saanich’s moveable skate park. This allows youth to get out of the dark rainy night, to practice their wheel riding indoors with some fun obstacles. Many of the youth attending these programs had previously been involved with the Flipside Teen Centre, and it has been exciting to welcome them back to the building in another capacity. The Wheel Riders has been the most successful program of fall 2020, with full registration.

**REPORT TO:** Parks, Trails & Recreation Committee

**DATE:** January 19, 2021

**FROM:** Eva Riccius, Senior Manager, Parks

**SUBJECT: Parks Division Update – January 28, 2021**

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

## **Park Planning and Development**

### **Planning and Design:**

- **Washroom Plan** – Parks staff are working on an RFP for new public washrooms for parks. The goal is to have one or two installations completed this year (McMinn and Playfair Parks).
- **George Tripp Youth Park** – Saanich Council recently unanimously approved a design-build contract to Bike Track Ltd out of Revelstoke. Staff will now begin the process of working with Bike Track to engage youth and the community on the design of the youth park. Construction is anticipated to occur this year.
- **Cuthbert Holmes Park Trail Relocation and River Improvement Project** – Approximately 200 m of the asphalt trail adjacent to SilverCity Theatre will be relocated to allow a 30m wide river buffer to be restored. In-stream improvements to the Colquitz River are also planned this year. This is a multi-year project that will further actions identified in the Cuthbert Holmes / Tillicum Parks Management Plan (2015). The river buffer restoration component will begin with invasive English hawthorn removals beginning soon.
- **Normandy Park Playground Replacement Project** – Public participation is underway to collect feedback on what type of play equipment residents would like to see at Normandy Park. The playground has been identified as a priority upgrade and is in the planning phase with construction in 2021. The online survey is available from January 5<sup>th</sup> to February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021.
- **Cedar Hill Park Management Plan** – The plan, approved by Council in October 2020, has been updated and is now posted on the project [webpage](#). Goals and Actions for 2021 have been established which include:
  - Natural Areas Plan – providing a tool for the systematic removal and restoration of identified Natural Areas (Zones 1-15) in the park,
  - Hydrological and Environmental Assessment and Restoration Plan for Kings and Jenkins Pond,
  - Design review and upgrades to the Derby Road Connector focusing on the area between the parking lot to the ProShop as this multi-use section is heavily utilized by pedestrians, cyclists and golfers.

- **Allenby Park Playground and Sportcourt Replacement Project** – The playground and sportcourt at Allenby Park have been identified as priority upgrades. Residents will have an opportunity to provide comments with an online survey from January 18<sup>th</sup> to February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021. Public participation feedback will finish this spring with construction anticipated to start in the summer.
- **Lambrick Park** - Staff has started background research on the park in preparation for an upcoming planning project to consider the 'precinct' or internal area of the park. This project is scheduled to span into 2022. Also, a site plan has been completed to reroute an existing trail to the south of the Recreation Centre to accommodate the construction of a Chemical Storage Area. Construction will begin later this winter.

### **Construction:**

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

- **Horner Park** – All major components of the Horner Park renovation project have been completed and the park has been fully open to the public since early December. Some of the general landscaping work as well as installation of the drinking fountain, the central plaza and decals for the playground will be completed as weather permits. Overall community response to the new upgrades has been very positive.
- **Quadrant 1 Trail Resurfacing Program** – work is being completed on gravel trails within Quadrant 1 (South Saanich). Most recently work has been completed at Cedar Hill Park with a new section of trail allowing a safe access to the day-care in the back of the building installed at the request of Recreation Centre staff.
- **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 2021 with two parks completed so far. With addition to installing new park ID signage we have also worked on updating many parks and beach accesses regulatory signage as well as directional and wayfinding signs at many locations throughout Saanich.
- **Hampton Park** – Work on renovation of the main parking lot in the park will commence soon. The project will include enlarging the existing parking area with additional parking stalls as well as an additional exit/entrance to improve traffic flow. Engineering and Public Works Department staff have completed their sidewalk and boulevard improvements work on Hampton Road in December 2020.
- **Bridge and Staircase Replacement Program** – Our crew is working on repairing and replacing steps on steep slopes in Donwood and Boulderwood Parks.
- **Trail washout repairs** – Our crew is working on and has completed repairing many trails damaged by intense rain events in recent weeks. Affected parks include Panama Flats, Colquitz River, Copley East, Annie, Playfair, Mt. Tolmie, Vantreight, McBriar, Knockan Hill and a few others. This work will continue throughout the winter.

## **Park Operations**

### **Maintenance Section:**

Maintenance is continuing to support core services:

- Washrooms are being cleaned daily and have been receiving a lot of graffiti.
- Refuse is still quite heavy with quite a lot of dumping in parks. Parks is continuing to deal with camping in parks and cleaning up debris and garbage abandoned.
- Parks shop is busy repairing equipment and getting ready for 2021.
- The maintenance crews are cleaning catch basins and grading parking lots to minimize water damage.
- Irrigation section is installing quick couplers and raising valve boxes. They are also working on plans for various parks including Saanich Commonwealth Place and Municipal Hall as well as various locations for drip irrigation for newly planted trees.

### **Horticulture Section:**

Horticulture staff completed landscape improvements at 3500 Blanshard in mid December. January and February will see staff focused on completing pruning and maintenance at over 200 of our neighbourhood traffic circles. We continue to provide grounds maintenance at all municipal facilities, parks and streetscapes.

### **Urban Forestry Section:**

UF continues to be extremely busy after a mid-December storm generated many new tree related calls. UF staff have started working on the hazard tree abatement project in Cuthbert Holmes Park. This project will see the removal/reduction of 112 dead firs within 3m's of the main park trails. UF supervisory staff continue to review Engineering drawings for tree impacts, and provide onsite Arborist supervision for Public Works projects. Our formal Park tree planting for 2020/21 is 90% completed. The planting crew has moved onto boulevard tree planting. The first neighborhoods up for planting are Cordova Bay, Royal Oak and Gorge/Tillicum.

### **Natural Areas Section:**

December was a very busy planting month for the Natural Areas section; over 30 restoration sites were planted including about two dozen sites cleared by our Pulling Together volunteers. Over 3000 native trees and shrubs were planted before Christmas. A few more sites are yet to be planted and a big order of forbs and grasses was just placed with Saanich Native Plants. Our goal is to create more diverse pollinator restoration areas to add to the mix of native trees and shrubs already establishing. Some of the forb and grass species include: Harvest Brodiaea, Field Chickweed, Mountain sneezeweed, Fool's Onion, Woolly Sunflower, Roemer's Fescue, Sea Blush, Strawberry, Fringecup, Yarrow, Graceful Cinquefoil, Trillium, and Canada Goldenrod.

The final numbers for trees planted in natural areas for 2020 are:

- 373 trees planted from 5 gallon pots or bigger,
- 421 trees planted from 1 gallon pots (most of these came from the Fanny Bay Salmonid Enhancement Society and the Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society),
- 85 tree plugs, all Western Red Cedar.

The total of 879 trees were planted in creekside, under canopy forest and Pulling Together volunteer restoration sites.



Haro Woods kept the crew busy with an active mountain bike group building many bike runs through the park, mostly running off the UVIC property close to the family housing. As per the Haro Woods Management Plan, staff dismantled the jumps and filled in the holes. We will look at getting some native plants in to cover up the exposed soil disturbance. Many sections of Cedar split-rail fencing were built in Haro woods to help keep trail users on the designated trail system. Haro Woods was one site that plants were supplied to Pulling Together volunteers (50 Sword fern and 50 Dull Oregon grape).

Staff continues to manage invasive English Holly trees in many parks. The program is effective and is paying off with many forests, that were once dominated with Holly trees, now re-establishing an understory of native plant species in a more open canopy. Haro Woods, Ferndale Forest, and Konukson are a few of the parks where Holly has been removed.

Projects coming up include:

- Mount Douglas summit split-rail fencing and restoration planting,
- Planting of the 1000 plus forbs and grasses from Saanich Native,
- Begin restoration work in Cuthbert Holmes Park along the Colquitz Creek,
- Bare earth trail repairs,
- Continue with Holly/Hawthorne treatments,
- Winter Lesser celandine survey and treatments,
- Supporting Pulling Together volunteers and Park Stewardship Coordinator to outline restoration plans for 2021,
- Working with Public Works Storm & Wastewater crew to plan for creek work in the 2021 Fisheries window,

## **Community Development and Business Systems**

### **Park Stewardship:**

- **Volunteer support** - Parks' Stewardship Coordinator has been busy supporting the good work of our community-based stewardship programs. 58 Lead Stewards with volunteer groups (43 park sites) and 11 Park Ambassador are active to varying degrees while adhering to Covid-19 protocols for volunteering. Regular check ins indicate that volunteers are complying with protocols and extremely appreciative for the efforts taken by Parks staff so that they can continue stewardship activities. On average two school groups per week were supported during October and November with stewardship activities in parks. Considerable interest from new folks wishing to volunteer continues, but until Public Health Officer orders are lifted, opportunities for new volunteers and school/community groups are on hold.
- **Collaboration with Natural Areas staff** - Natural Areas staff continue to support Pulling Together volunteer efforts in the field. Fall was very busy, with over 24 Pulling Together Lead Stewards carrying out planting projects. More than 1000 plants were ordered and still counting, making this a record for a fall order of native plants. Plantings occurred on sites where hours of volunteer time was spent removing and managing invasive plants. Parks like Konukson, Ferndale Forest, Feltham, Whitehead, and Arbutus Cove were planted to enhance biodiversity. Natural Areas staff also assisted in supported school stewardship opportunities.

- **Other initiatives** - A very full year ahead is expected while we continue to support current volunteer groups, plan stewardship projects, respond to volunteer inquiries, and support a variety of external and internal initiatives. 2021 also marks the beginning of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, this is an exciting opportunity to engage the community in restoration and stewardship of Saanich Parks natural areas.



Volunteers planting while maintaining a safe distance

**Park user groups:** Fall season saw soccer starting up their usual season with COVID-19 protocols in September and ball ended at Thanksgiving. COVID-19 created an immense, but necessary, administrative workload in supporting groups with COVID-19 safety plans and updates to comply with the frequently changing Public Health Officer orders. Overall in 2020, Parks resumed / re-resumed more than 100 user groups and issued permits accordingly for various activities. Parks would like to acknowledge the role that all parties played to bring activity back safely into parks including Parks staff, Public Health Office, sport governing bodies and the user groups (and more). Everyone acted with integrity and professionalism during these sensitive and challenging times with the goal of doing it right for public safety. 2021 is off to a slow start with the current province-wide restrictions, but planning will proceed as normal to resume groups unless PHO orders and restrictions remain in place.

There were some good news stories on the park partner project front despite COVID-19. The artificial turf at Hampton Park was completed (mainly externally funded), dugout roofing and building siding at Layritz, Lacrosse scoreboard replacements at Braefoot and Lambrick and various bulb replacements for field lighting at Braefoot. 2021 will likely see some more exciting and important park partner projects.

**Tree Protection:** Council received and supported a staff [report](#) in November 2020 outlining a plan to develop mapping and tracking of the urban forest. This is in part preparation for the review the Urban Forest Strategy which was funded at the end of 2020. Staff will be preparing terms of reference for the Urban Forest Strategy review.