

# 2024 BUDGET

## Parks Division



### Our role

#### ***Net budget \$12,173,000***

Safe and enjoyable park spaces contribute to the health and well being of our community. The Parks Division stewards Healthy Nature through planning, designing, constructing, managing, programming and maintaining the District's 172 parks. These parks range from neighbourhood and multi-sport athletic parks to natural areas and open spaces that cover more than 825 hectares with over 100 kilometres of trails.

Parks' work is environmental stewardship and protection, which is integrated into the Division's work, whether providing outdoor sports facilities using best-of-class environmental practices or providing trail or nature restoration opportunities. Biodiversity does not recognize fence lines, so caring for and protecting nature on private lands is as important as public lands. The lands are biologically diverse, offering residents a spectrum of active living experiences and opportunities to connect with nature.

### Services we provide

#### **PARKS ADMINISTRATION**

#### ***Net cost \$1,104,100***

The Administration Section is the nerve centre of the Division providing support to residents, parks staff, external staff, and the community broadly. The section manages a small group of front-line staff, processes over 3,000 calls for service annually, processes all park permits for activities occurring in parks, processes tree removal permits, and carries out all administrative functions from invoice processing through to payroll.

# 2024 BUDGET

## Parks Division



### URBAN FORESTRY

**Net cost \$1,745,900**

The urban forest is a major component of the District's green infrastructure and natural areas, supporting biodiversity, clean air and water, and improving the quality and livability of urban neighbourhoods. The Urban Forestry team aims to protect and enhance the urban forest on public lands, while providing a safe environment for the public and staff.

Core service areas include:

- Community safety and requests for service: provision of adverse storm and weather event response and hazard tree mitigation services. Staff respond to over 2,000 requests for service by the community on an annual basis.
- Tree planting: planting on property frontages, boulevards, streets, and in open area parks.
- Tree care: services to ensure long-term health with over 1,000 trees pruned and maintained each year.

### NATURAL AREAS AND STEWARDSHIP

**Net cost \$1,299,000**

Natural areas cover about 65% of Saanich parks. These natural areas provide unique ecological characteristics and are home to many rare and threatened species. Saanich's Natural Area team protects and enhances these ecosystems for current and future generations.

Service areas include:

- Tree planting, watering, and care: the maintenance and establishment of newly planted trees in natural area parks.
- Community safety: hazard tree assessment and mitigation and trail improvements and maintenance throughout natural areas.
- Biodiversity protection and enhancement: invasive species management and restoration of natural systems, including riparian zones, creeks and waterways, and terrestrial areas, in natural area parks.
- Community stewardship: staff support for Pulling Together in over 40 park locations for over 450 active volunteers. Includes volunteer coordination, pick up and removal of over 50 tonnes of invasive species annually. Park Ambassadors, Our Backyard and Naturescaping are also components of this program area.

# 2024 BUDGET

## Parks Division



### ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IN REVIEWING DEVELOPMENTS

*Net cost \$1,363,500*

Saanich Parks reviews development proposals to ensure compliance with the Urban Forest Strategy, the Tree Protection Bylaw and the Streamside Development Permit Area guidelines. Parks staff also administer and enforce the Tree Protection Bylaw and ensure that residents abide by the terms of their Natural State and Tree Covenants registered on title of their private property.

The development review team provides expertise to other Departments to ensure that other Parks-related interests and assets are considered when developments are proposed so that impacts to the parks system are considered and addressed. The section assists Saanich residents to inform them of their rights and responsibilities in managing trees on their private property. This work unit is also responsible for assessing and mapping prioritised trees with the goal of providing transparent information to residents about how trees are managed and protected in Saanich.

Saanich Parks works directly with more than 45 sport and community user groups of Saanich Parks to support their programs, community driven projects, and provincial and national tournaments. Saanich Parks continues to work with our established user groups to provide fair and equitable access to high quality fields and playing surfaces across the District. Our community development activities continue to leverage grants and in-kind donations, and volunteer efforts to supplement taxpayer funded capital projects to invest in new facilities, and upgrades to existing facilities.

### PARK OPERATIONS

*Net cost \$5,128,300*

Parks Operations comprises the Maintenance section and the Horticulture section. This large unit carries out a broad spectrum of work to ensure that parks are safe and enjoyable. The services provided include:

- Horticulture Displays: including display gardens at various parks, recreation centres, Municipal Hall, streetscapes and over 475 cul-de-sac gardens.
- Irrigation: for sports fields, horticulture displays and many drip systems to irrigate new public trees.
- Park washrooms and refuse: Park visitors rely on these services for their enjoyment of Saanich parks. This function also includes cleaning up after illegal dumping and instances of illegal overnight sheltering.

# 2024 BUDGET

## Parks Division



- Turf maintenance: for sports and casual enjoyment. Maintenance is carried out using integrated pest management practices. Over 35 sports clubs use Sports fields.
- Park roads and parking lots: maintained year-round to provide safe surfaces.
- Parks' shop: responsible for maintaining hundreds of pieces of small equipment used by field staff, along with larger equipment such as mowers, excavators, and chippers.

### **PARKS PLANNING AND CONSTRUCTION**

***Net cost \$ 1,532,200***

The Parks Planning/Design and Construction teams are responsible for all aspects of planning and designing the park system, including strategy development, park asset management, and new project design and implementation.

Park assets that the groups manage include:

- 56 playgrounds
- 1 water park
- 50 courts (tennis, pickleball, and sports courts)
- 1 skate park
- 81 park buildings (including park washrooms)
- 97 footbridges
- 124 km of trails
- 72 parking lots

Service areas include:

- Designing, developing, and maintaining playgrounds to ensure they are fun and attractive, in safe working condition, and include accessibility features.
- Constructing and maintaining sports courts to ensure they are in optimal condition for members of our community to enjoy active recreation.
- Procuring and maintaining park buildings, bridges, furniture, and amenities that improve the function, comfort, safety, and enjoyment of parks.
- Developing and maintaining park trails to improve visitor experiences and public safety and helps to protect the natural environment.
- Planning and designing park projects to enhance and add recreation opportunities/facilities, reduce user conflict, and provide additional amenities for our growing community.

# 2024 BUDGET

## Parks Division



- Upgrading and installing washroom facilities to ensure the provision of an important service to our residents, allowing visitors to enjoy our parks for longer periods of time.
- Designing and installing signage, for identification, education, wayfinding or for the posting of regulations, which contribute to a strong sense of community, an appreciation for our parks, and improves communications/park safety.
- Developing varied strategies and park-specific plans based on community engagement, science, and best practices to ensure a welcoming, environmentally responsible, cost-effective approach to park development.