

Cobble Hill



Community Parks and Trails Master Plan

Prepared for: Cowichan Valley Regional District Parks, Recreation and Culture
Department



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Prepared by: HB Lanarc Consultants Ltd.

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We are very pleased to submit the Cobble Hill Community Parks and Trails Master Plan. This plan has been prepared for the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) by HB Lanarc Consultants Ltd. The project was conducted with the assistance of CVRD Parks and Trails staff, Tanya Soroka and Brian Farquhar, with additional support from CVRD parks and trails staff. Their commitment and interest have been central to the development of this plan.

Collaboration with the Cobble Hill Parks and Recreation Commission was instrumental in the development of the Cobble Hill Community Parks and Trails Master Plan. The members' vision, observations and ideas provided meaningful input and helped form the basis of the report.

Cobble Hill Parks and Recreation Commission Members:

Gerry Giles – Area C Director	Bill Turner
John Krug, Chair	Alan Seal
Gord Dickenson	Ruth Koehn
Lynn Wilson	Dennis Cage
Keith Bartwick (past member)	Richard Shaw (past member)
Peter Wilkinson (past member)	Linden Collette (past member)
Sebrina Benson (past member)	Ian Sparshu, (past member)

Throughout the planning process, Cobble Hill residents gave their time and perspectives – by attending open houses and completing public response forms. Thank you for your thoughtful insights and ideas.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Community Parks and Trails Master Plan was initiated for the community of Cobble Hill (Electoral Area C) by the Cowichan Valley Regional District and the Cobble Hill Parks and Recreation Commission in spring 2008. The purpose of this plan is to set direction and priorities for community parks and trails in Cobble Hill over the next 10 to 20 years. This plan outlines parkland acquisition opportunities and trail linkages within the community that should be considered alongside future development and to ensure an ecologically and socially cohesive network of parks and trails are accessible to residents and visitors, now and into the future.

In developing the Community Parks and Trails Master Plan, public input was sought through open houses and public response forms. The ideas and priorities for Cobble Hill's parks and trails presented in this plan are based on input from the public, the Parks and Recreation Commission and CVRD Parks and Trails staff.

Each of the recommendations presented in Section 5 of this document were measured against the vision to determine the overall value it provides for the community parks and trails system. Each recommendation was weighed against the four key principles set out in the vision:

- Provide a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities,
- Protect natural ecosystems and feature representative landscapes,
- Link communities, and
- Enhance livability.

Priority Recommendations (Year 1-10)

1. Develop Quarry Nature Park to increase the park's ability to accommodate an expected increase in visitors each and create more of a Neighbourhood Park as defined in the plan.

Preserve, restore and enhance the natural flora within the park and use Quarry Nature Park as a primary location for displaying historic restorations.

"The residents of Cobble Hill value the rural nature of their community and wish to enrich its historic charm by securing in perpetuity a network of community parks and trails to provide a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities, protect natural ecosystems, feature representative landscapes, link our communities and enhance livability within Cobble Hill and South Cowichan."

2. Design and develop the former BC MoT Public Works Yard site, now Cobble Hill Common, into a functional space as a central public feature to the village.
3. Enhance connectivity within the community while protecting the sensitive ecosystem in Watson Park.
4. Develop village roadside pathway for connectivity of Cobble Hill Common and Memorial Park through the village to nearby Cobble Hill community parks (Watson Park, Fairfield Road Park, and Quarry Nature Park/Train Station).
5. Develop a nature park at Lefran Road/Garnet Creek to protect the natural ecosystem around Garnet Creek and allow community access.
6. Develop a partnership with the *Northwest Wildlife Preservation Society* for creating low impact community access for educational and environmental opportunities within Manley Farm
7. Develop Fairfield Road Park to provide formal access and user opportunities for the community.
8. Improve trail access within and through Manley Creek Park and aim to limit erosion on the steep slopes and protect local flora and fauna.

Secondary Recommendations (Beyond Year 10)

Additional recommendations are provided for a number of projects that are outside the 10-year timeframe. These recommendations are described within in the following categories:

- Improvements to existing Community Parks;
- Trail Development;
- Community Park Acquisitions and Land Use Partnerships; and
- System-Wide Recommendations.

These projects were identified during the master planning process, but were a lower priority. These recommendations have not been included within the 10-year implementation timeline (Table 19).

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1. INTRODUCTION

Recognizing a need to create a community parks and trails system that can evolve alongside future development and growth within Electoral Area C - Cobble Hill, the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) along with the Cobble Hill Parks and Recreation Commission, launched a process to create a Community Parks and Trails Master Plan. This Master Plan document sets direction and priorities for the next 10 to 20 years for community parks and public trail corridors in and around Cobble Hill.

1.1 What are Community Parks & Trails?

Community parks and trails are established to provide local, publicly accessible green spaces for residents of the Cobble Hill community. These sites often have a variety of purposes, such as sports or passive recreation, environmental protection, access to waterfront, or preservation of unique landscape or historical features.



Community parks provide recreational or natural green spaces for the enjoyment of residents and visitors.

Regional Parks and Regional Recreation Areas, also managed by the CVRD, make up a portion of Cobble Hill's larger recreation fabric but are not part of the community parks function. Community Parks are typically smaller parks evenly distributed throughout residential neighbourhoods. Each of the nine Electoral Areas in the CVRD has their own system of community parks which are levied separately by each Electoral Area.

1.1.1 Community Parks Administration

Community parks and trails are administered by the CVRD's Parks and Trails Division and are funded individually by each Electoral Area. This means that community parks and trails in Electoral Area C should directly benefit the people who live in the Cobble Hill community. The Cobble Hill Parks and Recreation Commission includes residents of Cobble Hill appointed to the Commission by the Cowichan Valley Regional District Board and make recommendations to the CVRD Board on park policy, community parks projects, and volunteer coordination in local Parks.

1.1.2 The Benefits of Community Parks & Trails

Parks and trails are an essential part of a community, and contribute to multiple aspects of resident life.

- **Community Health** – Parks and trails are places for people to enjoy safe and convenient recreation and activity. Health trends recently have shown a steady decline in activity levels of both adults and youth and a related increase in health problems due to inactivity. Providing access to active outdoor recreation through parks and trails will in turn help diminish physical inactivity and thus contribute to a healthier community.
- **Tourism** – A parks and trails system that offers an enjoyable outdoor experience helps attract tourism to a community. The CVRD is a tourism destination, known for its vineyards, agri-tourism, arts and outdoor recreation tourism opportunities. South Cowichan has an established bike and wine tour route as well as the ‘Rotary biking’ cycling tour route, which draws tourism to the community.
- **Economic Development & Investment** – Parks and trails are considered a quality-of-life indicator for a community. Residents and businesses looking for a location that provides a high standard of living are more likely to consider a community that has a well-established local parks and trails system.
- **Crime Prevention** – Programmed and un-programmed recreation provide children and youth with healthy, productive ways to channel energy. Access to recreational resources in a community has been shown to reduce inappropriate and anti-social behaviour.
- **Social Interaction** – Parks and trails can be a focal point for a community. These are spaces for the community to come together in a friendly, interactive setting. The newly constructed Trail Station is a good example of a gathering place as is Memorial Park.
- **Culture** – Parks and trails can often be part of a community’s historic and modern culture. They can also be used to protect and interpret historical resources in a community. Art in parks is becoming more popular



Cyclists on the ‘Rotary Route’ cycling tour explore the Cowichan Valley (<http://www.rotaryroute.org/>).



Parks can be places that the community comes together in celebration.



Memorial Park Remembrance Day celebration.

as a way to bring imagination and creativity to people's daily lives.

1.1.3 How are Community Parks Acquired?

New community park sites are incorporated into the Cobble Hill Parks and Trails system in various ways including:

1. Land donation.
2. Land dedication at the time of subdivision or re-zoning of individual properties.
3. Purchase of property using available financial resources of the Cobble Hill Community Parks function inclusive of tax dollars and established reserve funds accumulated through cash-in-lieu under Section 941 of the *Local Government Act*, cash donations, and accumulate surplus. Land purchase can also involve partnerships with the 3rd parties (if land trusts) where mutually beneficial.
4. Purchase of land using the community Parkland acquisition Reserve Fund. Each Electoral Area within the Cowichan Valley Regional District has its own parkland acquisition reserve fund.

1.2 Previous Publications & Related Literature

Community green space has long been an important part of Cobble Hill's (Electoral Area C) planning and development. Multiple past studies, inventories and policies have been completed to address parks and trails. The information from these studies is relevant to the development of this Community Parks and Trails Master Plan.

South Cowichan Official Community Plan

A new South Cowichan Official Community Plan (OCP) encompassing Cobble Hill, Shawnigan Lake and the Mill Bay Electoral Area communities was adopted by the CVRD Board in early 2012. Key elements from this Community Parks and Trails Master Plan emerging from the New South Cowichan OCP are:

- Support the identification, acquisition and development of multi-use community trails and pathways to improve non-automobile connections.
- Explore the potential need for additional active outdoor recreation areas.
- Support the continued development, expansion and formalization of community involvement in community parks development and acquisition and park stewardship activities.
- At the time of subdivision, the Regional District will determine whether to require the development proponent to:
 - Provide, without compensation, community recreation parkland at a minimum of 5% of the parent parcel size and in a location acceptable to the Regional District; or
 - Pay to the CVRD an amount, at a minimum of 5% of the land value based on the most recent appraised value, as per the provisions of Section 941 of the *Local Government Act*.

CVRD South Sector Parks Strategy – 1996

This strategy, prepared by CitySpaces Consulting Ltd. was developed as a guide for the selection, acquisition, development and management of a system of parks for the Mill Bay, Shawnigan Lake, and Cobble Hills areas of the CVRD. Key recommendations still relevant from this earlier strategy document for this Community Parks and Trails Master Plan are:

- Developing comprehensive natural trails and pathways should be a priority. The trails should provide linkages through the three communities and should include existing parks, natural areas and schools.
- Consider the following specific acquisitions in the Cobble Hill Area:
 - Crown land south of Quarry Nature Park (now secured as Cobble Hill Mountain Regional Recreation Area by the CVRD under the Regional Parks and Trails Program); and
 - A portion of the Fisher Road/Cobble Hill Elementary School site since leased from the Province by the Regional District to establish Fairfield Road Park.

Former Electoral Area “C” Cobble Hill Official Community Plan - 1989

The former OCP for Cobble Hill was originally adopted in 1989 and was developed to provide guidelines and policies for the planning and management of land and water in the Cobble Hill Area. The former OCP highlighted the values of parks and open space and stressed the need to provide for a “broad range of outdoor recreational activities” to enhance the overall quality of Cobble Hill’s living environment. The plan outlined eleven policies relating to parks and trails. While now superseded by the new South Cowichan Official Community Plan some of the original policies reflect current values of the residents of Cobble Hill. Key considerations for this Community Parks and Trails Master Plan are:

- Acquisition priorities from the former 1989 OCP included:

- Community outdoor recreation park in Cobble Hill Village, near the Farmers Institute and Cobble Hill Fairgrounds, now secured as Cobble Hill Common.
- Community outdoor recreation park in the Braithwaite Drive area between Telegraph Road and the Trans Canada Highway (since secured as Farnsworth Park).
- A shoreline recreation park between Garnett Road and Aros Roads (since secured as Cherry Point Nature Park).
- Linear trail expansion of Quarry Nature Park to provide a nature park linkage to the summit of Cobble Hill Mountain (since completed as part of the Cobble Hill Mountain Regional Recreation Area).
- Liberation Park at Cobble Hill Village Cenotaph (now Memorial Park managed under the South Cowichan Community Parks Function).
- Cash-in-lieu received, must be reserved for parkland acquisition in a suitable location within Electoral Area C.
- The Regional District shall encourage the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) to upgrade or permit upgrading of road right-of-ways (ROWs) where practical to permit ocean beach access to residents.
- The Regional District shall encourage and support volunteer assistance in the development and management of community parks and trails and shall recognize public involvement in planning, acquisition and development of the community parks network.
- Principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) shall be considered in park development.

A Recreation Survey of Electoral Districts A, B, C & D of the CVRD – 1981

Completed in 1981, this survey was performed to provide the Recreation Commission with a base of information upon which to make decisions. While this information is from an old source, a few key points continue to be relevant to

outdoor recreation in Cobble Hill today. Key findings to this Community Parks and Trails Master Plan are:

- **Beach Access** – When this report was developed, no parkland existed along the waterfront. This was considered very poor, given the length of the shoreline in the Electoral Area. Two years after the survey was completed, Manley Creek Park was acquired under licence with the Ministry of Transportation at the end of Radcliff Road.
- **Trails Routes** – In 1981, one significant recreation trail existed in the area and was in Cobble Hill Mountain.
- **Water-based Recreation** – Fishing, boating and swimming are prevalent along the coast, even though access to the shoreline is poor.
- **Beaches** – The beaches at Boatswain Bank and the Hatch Point Indian Reserve appear to be important attractions.

1.3 Purpose of the Community Parks and Trails Master Plan

While growing at a slower rate than other South Cowichan Electoral Area populations in the CVRD, Cobble Hill continues to face change and development. By recognizing that Cobble Hill's population will change, the Community parks and trails function in Electoral Area C also recognizes a need to plan how its green spaces will accommodate this evolution.

In spring 2008, the CVRD began to develop a Community Parks and Trails Master Plan for Cobble Hill. This process unfolded to address seven key objectives:

- Develop a clear vision and mandate for the Electoral Area C Community Parks and Trails system;
- Describe the current Parks and Trails Inventory;
- Research historical, regional and site specific context of Electoral Area C Parks;
- Compile and review existing research and studies;
- Develop strategies to address gaps and priorities;
- Determine funding policy and opportunities; and

- Develop an implementation action plan based on community input.

1.4 Master Planning Approach

The Community Parks and Trails Master Plan for Cobble Hill was completed in four phases beginning in spring 2008.

Phase 1 – Understanding the Current System

To begin thinking about the future of parks and trails in Cobble Hill, the planning process started by looking at what currently exists, using the following key steps:

1. A start-up meeting was held with the Cobble Hill Parks and Recreation Commission and CVRD Parks and Trails Division staff to clarify the objectives of the project and develop a clear process.
2. Identified, with the assistance of CVRD Parks and Trails staff and the Parks and Recreation Commission, key stakeholder groups that would be invited to provide direct input into the plan.
3. Assembled and reviewed background documents and information related to Cobble Hill's parks and trails (summarized in Section 1.2).
4. Collected digital data for Cobble Hill and developed a project Geographic Information System (GIS) Database.
5. Researched trends and demographics relevant to parks, trails and recreation in Cobble Hill, British Columbia and Canada as a whole.
6. Completed site visits and detailed analysis of existing parks and trails in Cobble Hill.

Phase 2 – Community Outreach

The second phase focused on the future of parks and trails through the eyes of the public, stakeholders, the Cobble Hill Parks and Recreation Commission, CVRD Parks and Trails staff and all those interested in Cobble Hill's parks and trails using the following key steps:

1. Held an introductory open house in conjunction with a South Cowichan Official Community Plan open house



event to inform residents of the Community Parks and Trails Master Plan and to gather preliminary ideas and information.

2. Consulted with local stakeholders including Provincial and Federal agencies, the Cobble Hill Parks and Recreation Commission, Land Trust agencies, local First Nations, and community groups. This was an opportunity to provide these groups with information on the master planning process and to gain preliminary feedback.
3. Worked with the Cobble Hill Parks and Recreation Commission to gather their knowledge of the area and begin identifying key issues, opportunities and ideas.

Phase 3 – Drafting a Plan

Using the information gathered from the public, stakeholders and the Cobble Hill Parks and Recreation Commission, a Draft Community Parks and Trails Master Plan was prepared and reviewed, using the following key steps:

1. Mapped proposed community parks and trails improvements and additions within the Cobble Hill Community - Electoral Area C.
2. Developed a preliminary vision to guide future decisions about community parks and trails in Cobble Hill.
3. Attended the Cobble Hill Fair and invited the public to review the ideas developed, provide feedback, identify gaps in information and help develop priorities for future park and trail development.
4. Developed a draft implementation plan which included prioritizing community parks and trails projects and assigning preliminary cost estimates to potential projects.
5. Made recommendations for policy, maintenance and operations, educational and volunteer opportunities, funding options and raising awareness about parks and trails in Cobble Hill.
6. Summarized all elements into a draft report prepared for the CVRD Parks and Trails Division, and the Cobble Hill Parks and Recreation Commission.

7. Worked with the Cobble Hill Parks and Recreation Commission to review, analyze and finalize the report.

Phase 4 – Finalizing the Plan

The final phase of the process was to revise the draft master plan, in accordance with the input received during Phase 3, using the following key steps:

1. Incorporated the CVRD Parks and Trails Division and the Cobble Hill Parks and Recreation Commissions' feedback into the plan and modified it to develop the final Community Parks and Trails Master Plan.
2. Provided the plan to the CVRD Parks and Trails Division and Cobble Hill Parks and Recreation Commission for final review and comment.
3. Prepared the final plan inclusive of feedback from CVRD Parks and Trails Division and the Parks and Recreation Commission for presentation to the CVRD Board for consideration of adoption for implementation to guide the Community Parks and Trails Program for Cobble Hill for the next 10-20 years.

1.5 Mapping

Mapping resources for this project were gathered by Provincial and Regional sources and compiled into working maps by the consulting team. Table 1 below provides a summary of source information used in the Master Planning process.

Table 1. Data sources used for mapping purposes.

Type of Information	Source
CVRD Geographic Information System (GIS) Geodatabase Layers: contours, district roads, Regional Area boundary, parcels, parks, sewer, neighbourhoods, water, zoning	CVRD GIS Data
CVRD Orthophoto	CVRD
Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory for East Vancouver Island and Gulf Islands	SEI Mapping Project by Environment Canada, Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management, and Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, 1997, updated 2004
Corporate Watershed Base (CWB) Lakes	Crown Registries and Geographic Base Branch (ILMB), updated 2006

Description of Maps:

Four maps were generated during this process and are located at the end of Chapter 6.

MAP 1: Existing Parks and Connector Trails in Cobble Hill

– This map shows all existing parks.

MAP 2: Proposed Park Acquisitions and Partnership Opportunities in Cobble Hill – This map identifies new potential acquisition areas and partnership opportunities in Cobble Hill and has been prioritized from 1-2.

MAP 3: Proposed Future Park Improvements in Cobble Hill

– This map identifies proposed improvements to existing parks in Cobble Hill and has been prioritized from 1-10.

MAP 4: Proposed Future Trail Connections in Cobble Hill –

This map shows all existing and proposed trails and roadway linkages. Priority projects are identified on the map.

NOTE: Map 4 is intended for planning purposes only and is not to be used as an outdoor trail map.

2. COMMUNITY PARKS CONTEXT

2.1 Cobble Hill within the CVRD

Electoral Area C - Cobble Hill is the smallest of the CVRD’s nine Electoral Areas at 23.3 square kilometres (Figure 1). The community is centered around the historic commercial core of Cobble Hill Village. Outside the village, the area has extensive agricultural land uses, intermixed with rural residential areas. These residential areas are located primarily in the south-eastern half of the Electoral Area on the east side of the Trans-Canada Highway.

Cobble Hill shares borders with Electoral Area A - Mill Bay to the south, Electoral Area B - Shawnigan Lake to the south and west, and Electoral Area D - Cowichan Bay to the north. Similar to Cobble Hill, the adjacent Electoral Areas are comprised mainly of small village centres, intermixed with rural, agricultural and forested lands.

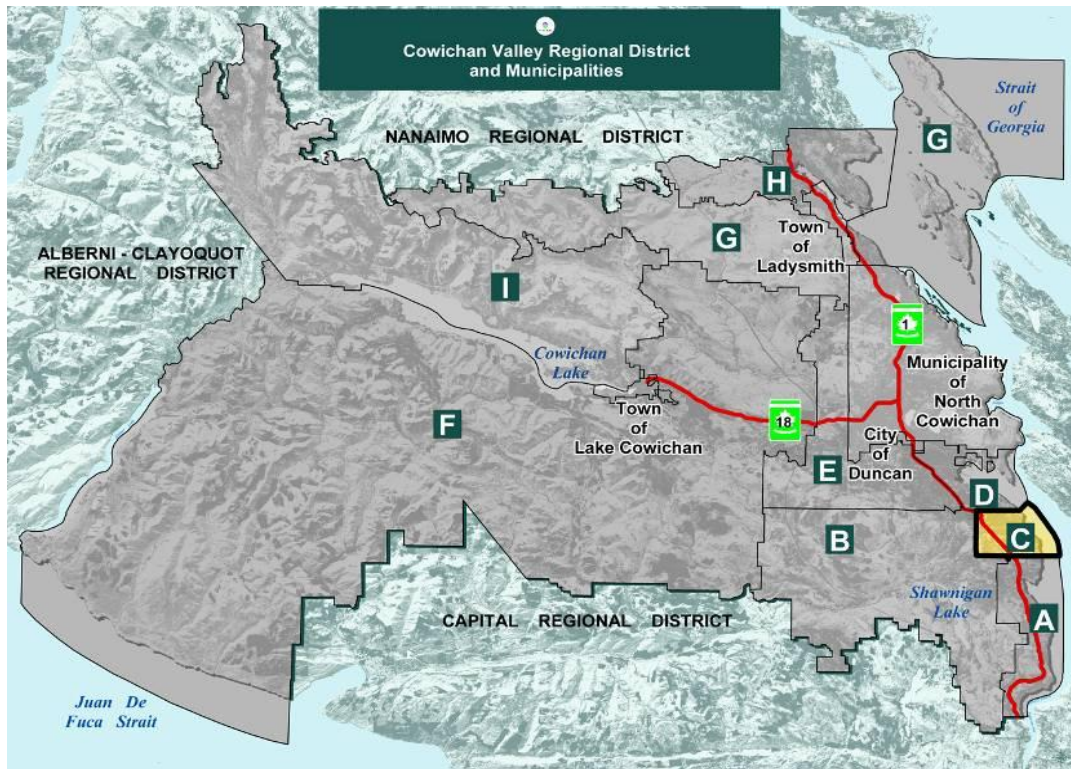


Figure 1. Cobble Hill, Electoral Area C, sits in the south-east area of the CVRD.

2.1.1 Key Facts

- Area = **23.3 km²** (0.65% of CVRD Land Mass, smallest Electoral Area in the CVRD)
- Population = **4,796** (5.97% of CVRD total Population, 2011 census)
- Population Density = **205.8 people/km²** (Highest population density of all Electoral Areas in the CVRD)

2.1.2 Historical Context

The Quw'utsun' people were the first known inhabitants of Cobble Hill, using the area for hunting and fishing while developing seasonal villages. Homesteaders began arriving in the mid-1800s, and the Esquimalt to Nanaimo (E&N) railway construction in 1886 brought settlers from Victoria further north.

The Village of Cobble Hill was the original settlement area because of its location adjacent to the E&N Railway. It became a popular stop along the railway, and a large hotel (Station Hotel later to be called the Wilton Place Hotel), bank, telephone office, creamery, feed store, blacksmith, bakery, general store and other businesses were developed to support the growing population. In 1893 the first community hall was built on the corner of Hutchinson and Cobble Hill Road and in 1915 the first school was constructed on Watson Avenue.

While Cobble Hill's early development thrived due to its location along the E&N corridor, once automobile travel became ubiquitous in the 1940s, the community lost much of this historical significance. The Wilton Place Hotel burned down in 1942 and was never rebuilt. Furthermore, when the Trans-Canada Highway was developed in the 1950s it bypassed the Village, and Cobble Hill's commercial business declined.

2.1.3 Settlement Context

Today, the Village core remains the commercial centre of the Cobble Hill community. Newer residential subdivisions that developed around the Village core in the late 1970s and early 1980s have kept the population in the village constant.



Original Cobble Hill Train Station 1906

The relocation of the Trans-Canada Highway from its former route along Cobble Hill Road to its current alignment east of the village, prompted post 1950s development to favour locations on the east side of the Electoral Area. Growth in the 1970s saw the development of subdivisions such as Satellite Park, Douglas Hill and Braithwaite (South Cowichan Restructure Study, 1996).

The Arbutus Ridge Community, a significant retirement development that occurred in the late 1980s through 1990s, created 560+ new homes along the coastal shoreline with a large golf course intermixed throughout the community.

Agriculture remains a major land use in Cobble Hill and the Agriculture Land Reserve (ALR) constitutes 62% of Cobble Hill's total area. While ALR lands have many possible uses, in Cobble Hill the majority of these properties support active farming. Recently, agricultural activities have been diversifying to include wineries, vineyards, organic produce farming and other specialty products.



*Cobble Hill has a mix of land uses ranging from agricultural to residential and has the added value of an eastern coastline
(Cherry Point Vineyard
http://www.winesofcanada.com/bc_island.html).*

These activities support local tourism and contribute to the creative community culture of the region. This creative culture also includes a multitude of painters, sculptors, potters and First Nations artists.

Electoral Area C also has the benefit of an ocean coastline along its eastern boundary looking out over Satellite Channel. Cobble Hill currently has a very high concentration of industrial uses in South Cowichan. The Chevron Canada petroleum tank site sits on the waterfront near Hatch Point and several light industrial uses are located near the village and along Fisher Road.

2.1.4 Transportation Context

Transportation corridors have had a major impact on the composition and character of Cobble Hill.

E&N Railway - The Railway curves through the southwest corner of the Electoral Area, running alongside Quarry Nature Park, defining the western boundary of Cobble Hill Village. For years VIA Rail operated Budd cars on the E & N line, passing through the Cobble Hill Village twice daily, travelling north from Victoria in the morning and South from

Courtenay in the afternoon. Currently rail traffic has stopped and pedestrians and vehicles can readily cross the corridor. However, the future of the E&N Corridor is evolving, which could result in increased rail traffic and/or future “rail with trail” opportunities.

Highway 1 – Electoral Area C is divided east-west by the Trans-Canada Highway which has four lanes of high speed vehicular traffic and limited points for crossing. Trails can be designed to improve safety and connectivity within the community and reduce the barrier that Highway 1 creates.

Main Roads – Cobble Hill Road and Telegraph Road run north-south through the Electoral Area. These rural two-lane roads have traditionally been used for mixed-use transportation including vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles and horses. However, increasing traffic volume and speed on these roads indicate a need to consider how to deal with rising safety concerns.

To date, accommodation of cyclists and pedestrians has been largely overlooked with no dedicated sidewalks or cycling lanes along transportation routes.

2.2 Statistical Trends

The composition of a population gives insight into the people living in a community and how parks and trails need to be planned to accommodate particular user groups, age ranges and predicted growth.



Manley Creek Park



Cleasby Bike Park



South Cowichan Dog Park

2.2.1 Population Growth

The combination of Cobble Hill’s small land base and current population of approximately 4,800 makes it the most densely populated Electoral Area in the CVRD.

Between 1996 and 2001, Cobble Hill’s population increased 6.0%, however, between 2001 and 2006 the population growth slowed to only increase by 0.1% (Figure 2). Interestingly, the Arbutus Ridge subdivision had an average growth rate of

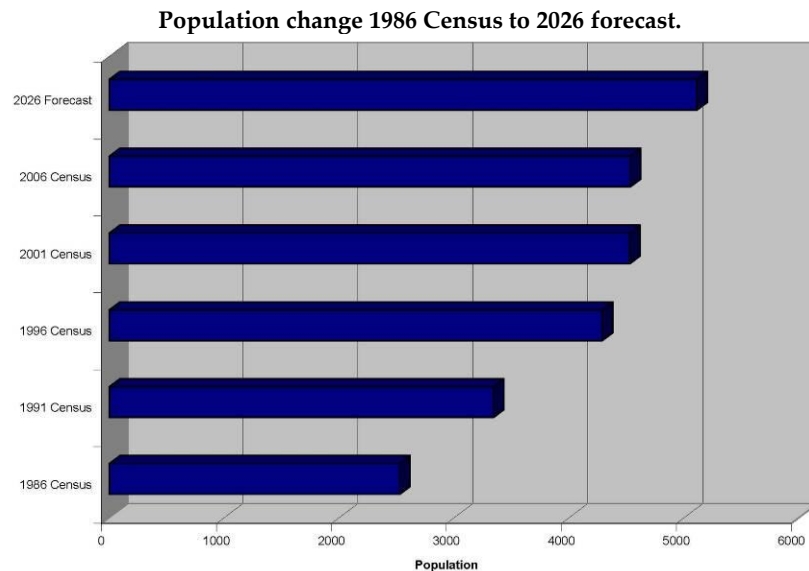


Figure 2. Population growth in Electoral Area C was significant during the 1980s and 1990s, but has slowed in recent years (BC Stats).

9.5% between 2001 and 2006, meaning the remaining Cobble Hill area saw an overall negative growth rate. This is an opposing trend to the greater CVRD growth of 6.8% between 2001 and 2006 (South Cowichan, OCP Background Study). The new census data from 2011 shows the population of Cobble Hill being 4796 which is an increase of 5.9% overall.

Calculations for population projections over the next 20 years are based on census periods 1996-2001 and 2001-2006. Based on the available data, it is estimated that 580 new residents will live in the Cobble Hill area by 2026, bringing the population to over 5000 people.

2.2.2 Population Age

Current population data show that senior residents are of a much higher proportion in Cobble Hill than elsewhere in the CVRD and British Columbia (Figure 3). In turn, this means that there are a smaller proportion of young children and families living in the area.

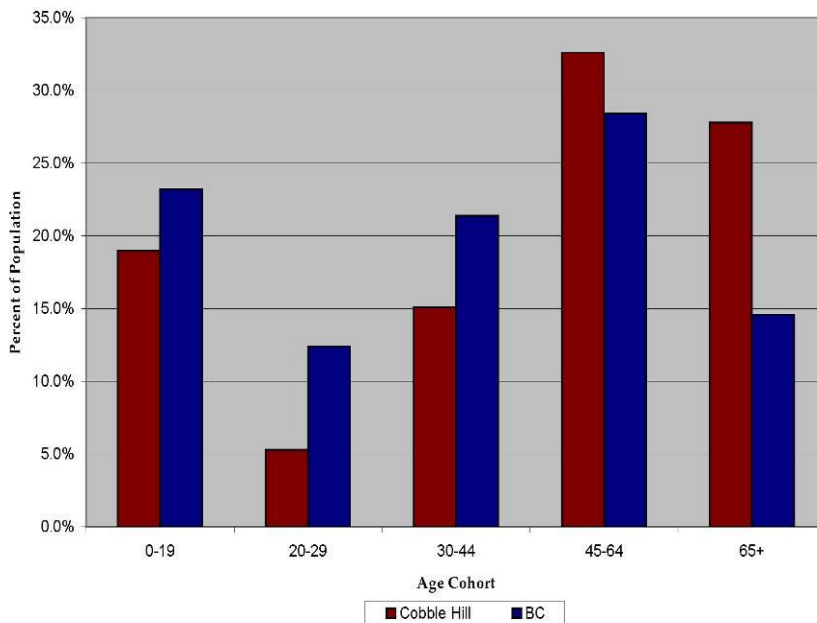


Figure 3. The 2006 Canadian Census for Cobble Hill shows a high proportion of seniors living in the Cobble Hill area. Over 60% of Cobble Hill's population is over the age of 45. Alternately, we see much lower numbers of young adults living in the Cobble Hill community than elsewhere in BC.



Arbutus Ridge's population of more than 1000, mostly over the age of 50, influences the age demographic of the Cobble Hill area.

As the baby boomer generation (born between 1946 and 1964) ages, the CVRD will continue to see seniors representing a greater proportion of the population. A surge in this age bracket population can be expected as the baby boomers and retirees continue to migrate to the CVRD at current rates.

The Arbutus Ridge development is a gated, 55+ golf community with over 560 detached and semi-detached homes located at Hatch Point. It is a high-density, small lot development located along the Cobble Hill's coastal shoreline. It accounts for approximately a quarter of Cobble Hill's population, significantly affecting the overall demographic of the area.

With a proportionately greater number of seniors aged 50+ than the rest of the Province and the CVRD, parks and trails planning in Cobble Hill should emphasize facilities that are accessible and enjoyable to the older demographic. It is important to recognize that this proportion is largely affected by the Arbutus Ridge development, which is localized to a small area. The remaining population of the Electoral Area is a more even demographic.

Other conditions, such as economic factors, are also important considerations in changing demographic profiles as working-age residents seek jobs and more diversified housing options in Victoria and Nanaimo, the larger centers to the south and north.

2.2.3 Population Density

Population density refers to the number of people per square kilometre. Large urban centres such as Victoria or Vancouver have a much higher population density than rural communities like Cobble Hill (Table 2).

Table 2. As a rural Electoral Area, Cobble Hill has a relatively small population density. However, given its small land base, it has a higher density than other CVRD Electoral Areas.

Community Centres/Villages	2011 Population	Size (sq.km)	Population Density (Persons/sq.km)
Vancouver	603,502	115	5,249
Victoria	80,017	19.5	4,109
Duncan	4,932	2.1	2,382
Cobble Hill (Electoral Area)	4,796	22.6	212.3
Shawnigan Lake (Electoral Area)	8,127	306.5	26.5

A challenge faced by lower density communities is the provision of convenient access to open spaces for all residents. The spread-out nature of rural communities can result in a need for more parks and trails to serve a smaller population. Funding such a system can be challenging, as a lower population means fewer resources are available to add to community parks and trails.



Trails, such as Hammond Way in Cobble Hill running parallel to Aros Road, offer great potential for safe alternative routes for people to get around the community without their cars.



Dog Park Grand Opening



Cobble Hill Fair (2010)



Planting at the Train Station

2.2.4 Transportation

Typical of a semi-rural community, Cobble Hill residents working outside the home generally choose to drive to their jobs. About 83% of Cobble Hill's labour force drives independently to work, while about 10% ride as passengers in vehicles, 3% walk or cycle and 1% use public transit. Fewer Cobble Hill residents walk or cycle to work than elsewhere in the CVRD and BC.

These trends may be partly explained by the high number of Cobble Hill residents working outside their Electoral Area. Only about 17% of Electoral Area C residents work in the Cobble Hill community; 40% work in other CVRD Electoral Areas or Municipalities and 43% work outside the CVRD.

While Cobble Hill has a large population commuting to work outside the community, an improved system of interconnected trails would have the capacity to provide employees working in Cobble Hill and adjacent communities such as Shawnigan Lake, Mill Bay and Cowichan Bay, increased opportunities for cycling and walking to work, school, shopping, social outings and accessing outdoor recreation sites.

2.2.5 Community Lifestyles

In looking at culture and leisure trends, Stats Canada (2007) found that rising incomes and interest in health and wellness have increased recreational spending across the country. As baby boomers experienced rising personal incomes, the number of fitness and recreation centres expanded country-wide in 2005. Interestingly however, participation levels in many sports have declined in the past decade. Studies attribute this change to a decline in the youth population, youth physical inactivity levels, and a shift from organized sports to individual activity preferences (BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) 2008). This coincides with the trend of increased walking, cycling, gardening, cultural activities, outdoor education and ecotourism, which for the most part are individually-based activities. This shift from strenuous activities to more culturally-based and low-impact activities is expected to continue (BCRPA 2008).

2.3 Land Use and the Environment

This section describes land use and the local environment within Cobble Hill.

2.3.1 Sensitive Ecosystems

In the new South Cowichan Official Community Plan, Environmentally Sensitive Areas are defined as land or water areas sensitive to human presence or having historic, scientific or recreational significance. In 1997 the Canadian Wildlife Service, the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management, and the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection, conducted a Sensitive Ecosystems Inventory (SEI) for East Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. The purpose of this inventory was “to identify areas of greatest ecological concern...to promote a proactive approach to land use decisions” (SEI Introduction, 2004). Air photo analysis and field observations during 1993 to 1997 were the methods used to identify and map rare and ecologically sensitive ecosystems existing in a relatively natural state. Eight percent of the study area contained natural sensitive ecosystems. In 2004, the study was updated and areas of disturbance were mapped to determine the ecosystems lost during the previous decade. The outcome showed over 11% of these original sensitive areas had been lost (SEI 2004).

There is consistency between the original environmentally sensitive areas identified in Cobble Hill’s 1989 OCP, the new South Cowichan OCP and the Provincial SEI mapping. Of the nine Sensitive Ecosystems defined by the study, six are situated within Cobble Hill. Figure 4 (page 24) shows the location of these ecosystems.

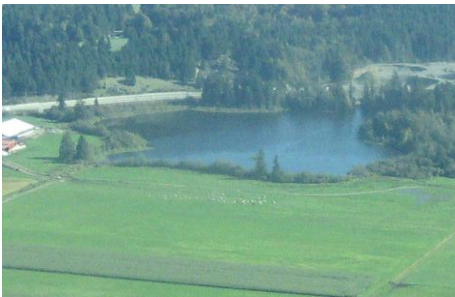
Terrestrial Herbaceous: Terrestrial Herbaceous ecosystems are open wildflower meadows and grassy hilltops, usually interspersed with moss-covered rock outcrops. They typically occur as small openings in forested areas with gentle to moderate slopes and are found in areas of shallow soils and bedrock near shorelines and at the summit of hills and mountains. While primarily located just outside the Electoral Area C boundary with Electoral Area B, these sites are found



Cobble Hill Mountain summit

on Cobble Hill Mountain in proximity to older second growth forest and older forest sensitive ecosystems.

Older Forest: Older forest is defined as conifer-dominated forest with an average tree age of 100 years or greater. These stands are structurally complex, with an understory that may contain snags, coarse woody debris in all stages of decomposition and a fully developed moss layer. The trees are generally large and tall, reaching up to 1.5m in diameter and over 50m in height. Older forest is often found in combination with older second growth forest and occasionally with terrestrial herbaceous ecosystems. At lower elevations (<150m), Douglas-fir is the dominant canopy tree. Low soil moisture conditions favour open stand structure and low growth of herbs, grasses and woody shrubs in the understory. Similar to terrestrial herbaceous ecosystems, older forest is found on Cobble Hill Mountain and occurs in four patches totaling 21.2 ha of which the majority is located in Electoral Area B. Only a small portion of this forest crosses into the Cobble Hill boundary.



Dougan Lake Riparian Area

Riparian: Riparian ecosystems are found on floodplains adjacent to lakes, streams and rivers, where high soil moisture and light conditions support distinct soils and plant communities. They vary in width from less than one metre along stream banks to more than 100 metres near large rivers. These ecosystems are found primarily along Garnet Creek and the shoreline of Dougan Lake.

Wetland: Wetland ecosystems are characterized by seasonal or year-round water, either at or above the soil surface, or within the root zone of plants. They are found in areas of flat, undulating terrain and colder, wetter climate. Wetlands encompass a range of plant communities unique to wet environments. Merilees Nature Park, Watson Park, locations within the Northwest Wildlife Preservation Society property (Manley Farm), and the Garnet Creek estuary are the three most prominent wetland locations in Cobble Hill; there are also three other smaller significant wetlands dotted throughout the Electoral Area.

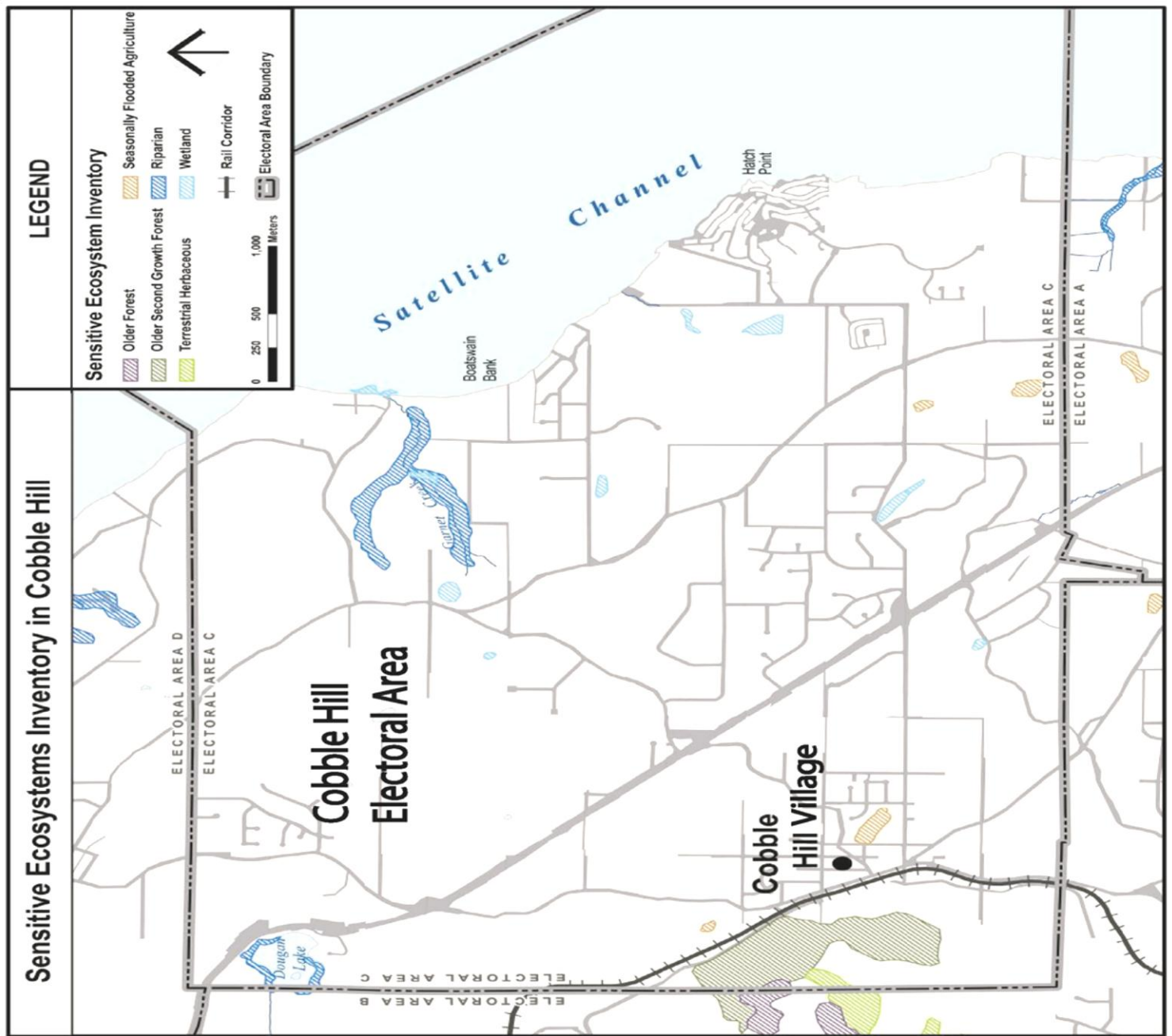


Figure 4: Six of the nine provincially identified sensitive ecosystems are found in Cobble Hill.

Older Second Growth Forest: Older second growth forests are the most common forested ecosystem in the SEI study area. They function as both essential habitat areas for many wildlife species, and as primary connections between ecosystems in the highly fragmented landscape of the Georgia Basin. All second growth forests have been disturbed by logging or other human activities since the settlement of Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands began in the middle of the 19th century. Stands of older second growth forests are well represented on Cobble Hill Mountain adjacent to Quarry Nature Park.

Seasonally Flooded Agriculture Fields: Seasonally flooded agricultural fields are lands that have been modified for agricultural use, but have important wildlife habitat value during specific times of the year. They are especially valuable as migrating and wintering waterfowl habitats. There are four isolated areas located in the southern portion of the Electoral Area. The largest area of seasonally flooded agricultural field is part of, and adjacent to, Watson Park in the Cobble Hill Village area across from the Cobble Hill Fair Grounds.

Disturbance Areas: The 2004 SEI updated study identified one area adjacent to Holland Avenue near Galliers Road that was previously identified as sensitive ecosystem but was lost to residential development.

Because Vancouver Island is becoming an increasingly attractive place to live and more people are moving here, the need to identify, protect and monitor sensitive ecosystems is more important than ever. This Master Plan considers the potential of these areas for permanent protection as parkland. Sensitive ecosystems are significant for many reasons, they:

- Represent specific habitats that cannot be found elsewhere;
- Offer breeding and/or nesting grounds for numerous fauna species;
- Support rare soil and climatic conditions required for rare or endangered native plant species;
- Contribute greenway environmental corridor linkages; and

- Showcase historical value.

To help protect these habitats both for the functions they serve and the perseverance of other species, specific actions may be considered:

- Place a vegetated buffer around sensitive ecosystems and their associated systems;
- Allow natural ecological processes and succession to occur;
- Restrict access by humans, livestock, pets, feral animals, etc.;
- Control/prevent the introduction and spread of invasive plant species;
- Prevent disturbance of nesting or breeding areas;
- Prevent disturbance of hydrologic cycles and drainage patterns;
- Conduct an ecological inventory prior to development; and
- Plan and implement all development activities in a manner that will not adversely affect or disturb the ecosystem.

2.3.2 Oceanfront

With 5.7 kilometres of shoreline along the eastern edge of Electoral Area C - Cobble Hill, oceanfront offers unique recreational and natural values for the community of Cobble Hill. While few ecologically sensitive areas were identified along the coastline, the oceanfront is often among the most sought after land for development and requires careful planning to ensure its protection - both ecologically and as a public amenity. As more residential development occurs along coastlines, public access points become difficult to secure. Currently, there are limited access points to the beaches in Cobble Hill, all of which have at least two steps leading down to the beachfront restricting access to this unique community landscape, especially for those with physical disabilities.



An example of a naturalized Green Shores shoreline with the house and retaining wall set back from the shoreline.



Cherry Point Nature Park in Cobble Hill currently has riprap edging along the high tide line, met by gravel parking on the other side.

The Green Shores Initiative (www.greenshores.ca) is a new effort to promote “sustainable use of coastal ecosystems through planning and design that recognizes the ecological features and functions of coastal systems.”

There are four main principles to the Green Shores initiative:

1. Preserve the integrity and connectivity of coastal processes.
2. Maintain and enhance habitat diversity and function (on a local or regional scale).
3. Minimize and reduce pollutants to the marine environment.
4. Reduce cumulative impacts to the coastal environment.

The Green Shores initiative has also developed a voluntary rating and certification process similar to LEED certification and is currently recruiting pilot projects to test the certification process.

Although a Priority 2 recommendation, Cherry Point Nature Park is a site that may benefit from Green Shores treatment by removing riprap and re-establishing a more natural foreshore ecosystem. An innovative approach may be required to maintain a naturalized shoreline that withstands winter storms and erosion.

In terms of planning for recreational opportunities along coastlines, passive rather than active recreational use of shoreline landscape is encouraged.

2.3.3 Forested Land and the Agricultural Land Reserve

Although Cobble Hill is primarily dominated by fertile agricultural farm land today, Cobble Hill was, in the past, economically based in forestry. In recognizing the value of its fertile valley land, Cobble Hill’s early pioneers cleared the standing timber to establish farming as an important part of the local economy. Cobble Hill has historical roots as a farming community and this practice is still an important part of the local economy. As of 1974, the preservation of quality agricultural land has been regulated in BC through the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and the development of the *Land Commission Act*. “The Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR)



Pastoral view in Cobble Hill

is a provincial zone in which agriculture is recognized as the priority use. Farming is encouraged and non-agricultural uses are controlled” (Provincial Agricultural Land Commission, 2008).

In Electoral Area C - Cobble Hill, 62% of the land base or 1396 ha (3450 ac) is designated within the ALR (Figure 5). Like other land uses and sensitive ecosystems in Cobble Hill, Agricultural Land is at risk of encroachment from development. In 1974, nearly 22,000 hectares of land in the Cowichan Valley was identified as part of the ALR. As of March 2008, this number dropped to about 17,750 ha. There is an opportunity for Electoral Area C - Cobble Hill to promote the value of its local agriculture to the community.

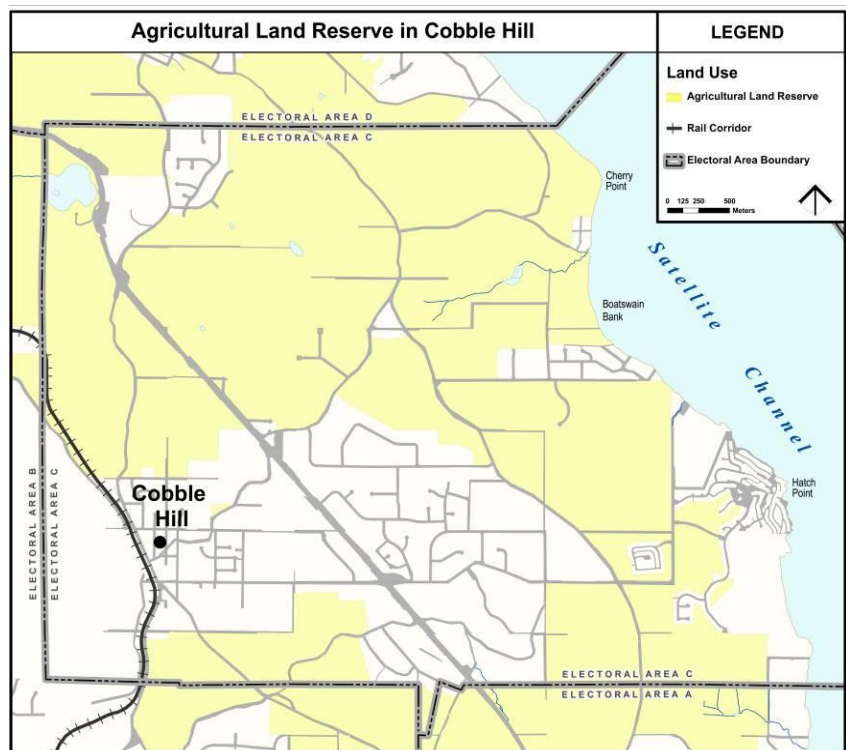


Figure 5. ALR in Cobble Hill Electoral Area is a dominant land use.

Recreational opportunities alongside agricultural land are of value to local residents and visitors. The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries has published a brochure called “A Guide to Using and Developing Trails in Farm and Ranch Areas. (2002)” Buffers in multiple forms can reduce the

risk of damaging crops by trampling or excessive dust. Depending on the type of buffer, trail-users can have different experiences in relation to the farmland. Some examples of buffers include:

- Vegetation Screens; tall or short can block or allow partial views to fields;
- Physical Separation in the form of fencing or water bodies; and
- Terrain such as berms and dykes.

Programs that support the local economy and offer tourism and recreational opportunities to the public have been explored in other jurisdictions. A farm or farm gate cycling tour is an example of this.

Cobble Hill's setting positions it well to offer unique and inviting recreational opportunities that integrate the agricultural aspects of the community.

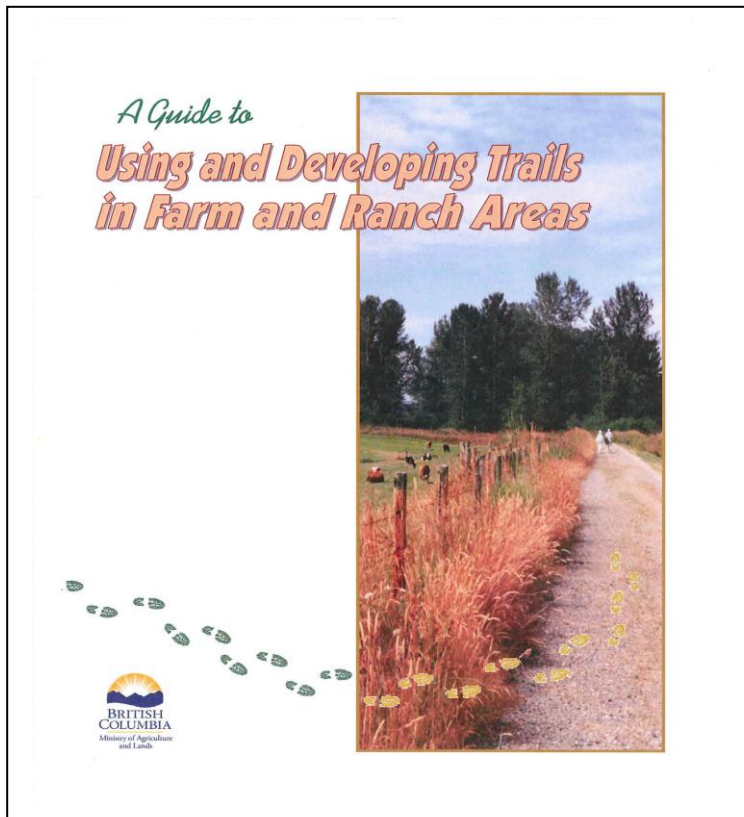
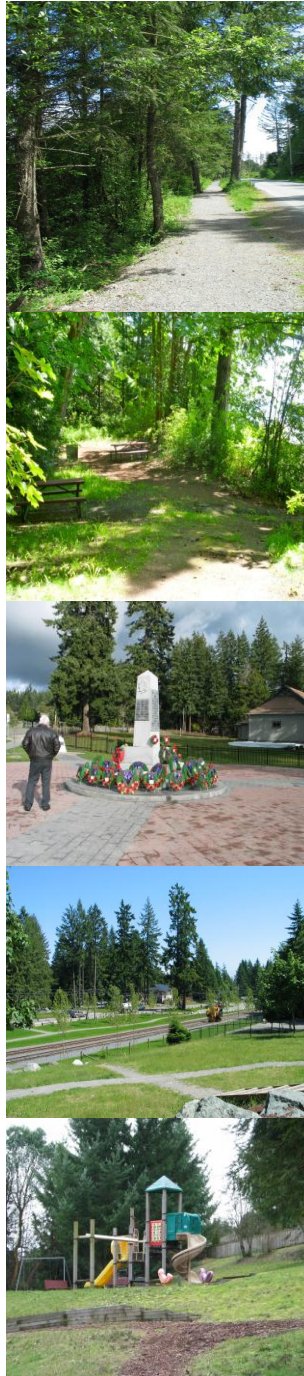


Figure 6. Provincial Guide to trails in Agricultural Areas (2002)

3. EXPLORING THE CURRENT COMMUNITY PARKS & TRAILS SYSTEM



3.1 Existing Parks

The existing community parks and trails system in Cobble Hill consists of 19 park properties; 24.06 hectares (56.7 ac), or 1.03% of Electoral Area C’s entire land base as of March 2012. This outdoor recreation system also includes two recreation/conservation reserves.

Cobble Hill’s current parks and trails system has significant assets including oceanfront access, outdoor recreational opportunities and distinctive agricultural character. However, it also faces challenges. Vehicle traffic corridors, such as the Trans-Canada Highway, limited pedestrian, equestrian and cyclist connections and an increasing population all present challenges to Cobble Hill’s open space systems. It is necessary to analyze and understand gaps and opportunities in the existing system to plan effectively for the future system. Detailed summaries of all existing parks can be found in Appendix A.

3.1.1 Park Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction for local community parks in Electoral Area C is under the Community Parks function of the Cowichan Valley Regional District. The community parks service for Cobble Hill was established by the Regional District through a bylaw in 1986 at the request of residents in the community. As with community parks services provided in both Cobble Hill and other Electoral Areas across the Region, each Electoral Area funds separately, through local taxation, the community parks service, which is administered and operated by the CVRD.

While the CVRD owns outright many of Cobble Hill’s community parks, alternate arrangements are in place for other parks which exist in this system. For example, Fairfield Road Park is provincial crown land which the regional District leased for park purposed for the local Cobble Hill community. Table 3 details a list of jurisdictional arrangements the CVRD currently has for community parks.

Table 3. Jurisdictional designation of parks in Cobble Hill.

Jurisdiction Designation	Description
CVRD	Parkland acquired through subdivision, rezoning or purchased by the CVRD as a fee simple lot registered with land titles that is owned and managed by the CVRD.
Crown Park	Parkland dedicated through subdivision to the CVRD, but is vested in the ownership of the provincial crown. Under the <i>Land Title Act</i> , the CVRD as the local Regional District Government has the authority and control of these Crown Parks to manage/develop as local community parks.
Crown Lease	Crown lands that are leased to the CVRD for use as Community Park sites.
BC MOT	Lands owned by the Provincial Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure and leased to the CVRD. Typically these include undeveloped road right-of-ways (ROW) for park or trail corridors.



Quarry Nature Park

3.1.2 Classifying Existing Parks

The Cobble Hill community has a variety of parks varying in type, size and amenities. As with any community, the residents of Cobble Hill represent a wide range of user groups with differing abilities and interests within the population. To meet these diverse needs, a range of recreation options from high-impact mountain biking to low-impact relaxation is required.

The existing community parks within Cobble Hill can be classified under the following headings:

- Community Park,
- Neighbourhood Park,
- Nature Park,

- Special Purpose Park,
- Linear Corridor Park, and
- Public Beach Access.

Community Park

A Community Park provides passive and/or active recreational opportunities. Community parks are generally large, over 10 hectares in size, (25 acres) with designation based on diversity and value to the entire Electoral Area. These parks can protect environmental features and provide recreational opportunities and gathering facilities. They appeal to both residents and visitors, and typically offer space for passive activities like walking and picnicking and/or space for active uses like sports and community events.



Boatswain Park



Farnsworth Park



Galliers Road Park



William Shearing Park

Table 4. Existing Community Parks in Cobble Hill (2012).

Park Name	Jurisdiction	Size (Ha)
Quarry Nature Park	CVRD	9.61
Total Area (Ha)		9.61

Neighbourhood Park

Neighbourhood parks respond to the open space and outdoor recreation needs of local residents in the neighbourhood level across the community and Electoral Area. A neighbourhood park is generally smaller than a community park designation. Neighbourhood parks are especially important in more developed neighborhoods where providing community space and outdoor recreation amenities are a priority.

A combination of features and facilities are typical for neighbourhood parks, including lawn areas, picnic facilities, nature paths, tot lots/playgrounds, natural vegetation and un-programmed open space. Ideally, each neighbourhood should have easy access to a neighbourhood park. The park is typically centralized and within walking distance (+/- 400m).

Table 5. Existing Neighbourhood Parks in Cobble Hill.(2012)

Park Name	Jurisdiction	Size (Ha)
Boatswain Park	CVRD	0.81
Fairfield Road Park	Crown Lease	2.31
Farnsworth Park	Crown Park	1.17
Galliers Road Park	CVRD	0.42
Maple Hills Park	Crown Park	0.74
William Shearing Park	Crown Park	0.69
Total Area (Ha)		6.14

Nature Park

Nature parks protect natural systems and preserve sensitive features such as watercourses, plant communities, ravines, habitat, significant flora or other unique natural elements. By preserving these spaces, important environmental features may be protected now and for future generations. Recreational use of nature parks is generally limited to pedestrian trails although other amenities could be incorporated which do not unduly impact the environmental values of the park. The sizes of Nature Parks vary due to environmental features being protected, the circumstances providing for the land acquisition, as well as future land expansion opportunities, etc. Both Cherry Point Nature Park and Manley Creek Park are waterfront Parks as well, located in Satellite Channel.

Table 6. Existing Nature Parks in Cobble Hill (2012).

Park Name	Jurisdiction	Size (Ha)
Cherry Point Nature Park	Crown Lease	0.06
Manley Creek Park	CVRD	2.09
Merilees Pond Nature Park	CVRD	2.70
Watson Park	CVRD	2.15
Total Area (Ha)		7.00



Cherry Point Park



Manley Creek Park



Train Station



Hammond way



Hatch point Trail

Special Purpose Park

Special purpose parks are developed to serve specific user groups or protect particular community resources. A special purpose park provides specific activities that may not fit a particular set of open space standards. These areas may include points of interest, including historical, cultural and social attractions, or provide built facilities for specific outdoor recreational activities.

Table 7. Existing Special Purpose Parks in Cobble Hill (2012).

Park Name	Jurisdiction	Size (Ha)
Cobble Hill Common	CVRD	0.66
Ross Park	CVRD	0.05
Train Station	BC MOT/ICF lease	0.31
Total Area (Ha)		1.02

Linear Corridor Park

Connecting open spaces and interconnecting neighbourhoods is one of the most important functions of a park and trails system. While these connections are often made through trail and pathway development, linear parks also play a role in providing connections as well as walking, hiking and cycling opportunities.

Table 8. Existing Linear Corridor Parks in Cobble Hill (2012).

Park Name	Jurisdiction	Size (Ha)
Granfield Way	CVRD	0.22
Hammond Way	BC MOT	0.41
Hatch Point Trail	Crown Park	0.38
Total Area (Ha)		1.01

Public Beach Access

Access to coastal shoreline is one of the unique benefits of living in Electoral Area C. There are few parks located in the

Electoral Area that provide waterfront access; however, there are public beach accesses along the Satellite Channel. Some of these accesses are undeveloped but in other cases, amenities such as stairs and parking have been provided.

Table 9. Public Beach Access Parks in Cobble Hill (2012).

Park Name	Jurisdiction	Size (Ha)
Clearwater Road Beach Access	BC MOT	0.01
Satellite Park Drive Beach Access	BC MOT	0.03
Total Area (Ha)		0.04



Satellite Park Beach access - parking area



Satellite Park Beach Access – view of the beach

3.1.3 Summary of Existing Community Parks (2012)

The existing community parks system in Cobble Hill as of March 2012 is summarized below (Table 10) and can be viewed on Map 1. It breaks down the amount of each type of park in the system, as well as the hectares of parkland/1000 residents (parkland area divided by 4.5 given that approximately 4,500 people live in Electoral Area C). A minimum of 5.0 ha/1000 residents is a common “rule of thumb” for active parkland/open space within a community. This information is a general observation and is intended to provide an indication of the level of investment other communities strive for in their local parks programs. Cobble Hill’s existing community park area (5.40 ha/1000 residents) reflects this commonly held objective. As the population grows, parkland would also be expected to increase in order to maintain or improve on this ratio.

It should be noted that any area population based standard has limited utility as a measure of sufficient parks space. Rather than a standard, the appropriate amount of parks space should also be targeted to natural environmental sensitivities and the values and objectives of the community.

Table 10. Summary of existing local parks in Cobble Hill (2012).

Park Classification	Area (Ha) –		% of existing Community Park landbase
	Community Wide	Ha / 1000 Population	
Community Park	9.61	2.14	39%
Neighbourhood Park	6.14	1.36	25%
Nature Park	7.00	1.56	28%
Special Purpose Park	1.02	0.22	4%
Linear Corridor Park	1.01	0.22	4%
Public Beach Accesses	0.04	0.01	0%
Subtotal – Electoral Area C Community Parks	24.82	5.36	100%

Existing Passive vs. Active Parks

The following parks are categorized based on their active or passive recreational use.

Active Park – An active park refers to a mix of uses in a park that includes one or more of the following facilities or facility types:

- athletic fields,
- building or structures for recreational activities,
- concession,
- community garden,
- sport courts,
- children's play area,
- dog play area,
- bike path.

Passive Park - A passive park refers to uses in a park, which typically include one or more of the following:

- landscaped area,
- natural area,
- ornamental garden,
- non-landscaped green space,
- stairway,
- decorative fountain,
- picnic area,
- water body,
- trail.

Table 11. Passive versus Active Parks in Cobble Hill.

Park Classification	Area – (Ha)	Park Classification
Passive Parks		
Fairfield Road Park	2.31	Neighbourhood Park
Maple Hills Park	0.74	Neighbourhood Park
Cherry Point Nature Park	0.06	Nature Park
Manley Creek Park	2.09	Nature Park

Merilees Pond Nature Park	2.7	Nature Park
Watson Park	2.15	Nature Park
Memorial Park	0.08	Special Purpose Park
Hatch Point Trail	0.38	Linear Corridor Park
Ross Park	0.05	Special Purpose Park
Clearwater Road Beach Access	0.01	Beach Access
Satellite Park Drive Beach Access	0.03	Beach Access
Total Passive Park	10.6	

Active Parks

Quarry Nature Park	9.61	Community Park
Boatswain Park	0.81	Neighbourhood Park
Farnsworth Park	1.17	Neighbourhood Park
Galliers Road Park	0.42	Neighbourhood Park
William Shearing Park	0.69	Neighbourhood Park
Granfield Way	0.22	Linear Corridor Park
Hammond Way	0.41	Linear Corridor Park
Total Active Parks	13.33	

Currently there seems to be slightly more Active Parks than Passive Parks, and these active parks have playgrounds that are centrally located throughout the community. In terms of the passive parks, most of these have trails in them for public use. As trends indicate, Cobble Hill is a fairly active community in terms of walking and hiking therefore to continue with the acquisition of more passive parks or linear parks/trails would greatly benefit the walkability of the community as a whole into the future.

3.1.4 Other Parks and Community Land Spaces in Cobble Hill

Beyond the scope of the CVRD Community Parks and Trails Program there are areas managed by the Regional District and other agencies which provide additional open space accessible to Cobble Hill residents for outdoor recreation and/or the protection of natural areas/ecological values. While these areas are not managed under the CVRD Community Parks and Trails program, it is important to recognize the attributes and contributions these open space areas provide to the overall outdoor recreation and natural space values and opportunities within the community of Cobble Hill.

Table 12. Other Parks and Community Land spaces in Cobble Hill.

Name	Management Authority	Size (Ha)
Manley Farm (environmental habitat protection)	Northwest Wildlife Preservation Society	106.48
Cobble Hill Farmers Institute grounds	Farmers Institute	0.60
Memorial Park	South Cowichan Parks	0.08
Dougan Lake	Provincial	10.0
Cobble Hill Mountain Regional Recreation Area	CVRD Regional Parks	93.08
Total Area (Ha)		210.51



Cobble Hill Mountain Regional Recreation Area sets the backdrop to Cobble Hill Village.

3.2 Existing Trails

A Community trails system should provide strategic non-vehicle access throughout a community for recreational use as well as commuting. Trails provide pedestrians, cyclists and equestrian users safe and convenient access to parks, community facilities, commercial destinations and adjacent communities. Currently pedestrian and cyclist routes in Cobble Hill are largely restricted to narrow road shoulders shared with vehicle traffic. Recent additions of linear corridor parks that support separated, multi-use trails, such as Hammond Way and Hatch Point Trail, have been well-received. While progress has been made in circulation improvements, there are still locations where pedestrian/vehicle concerns exist, especially along narrow, winding roads.

- **Cobble Hill Mountain Regional Recreation Area** – A portion of the 406 hectare Regional Recreation Area which is managed under the CVRD Regional Parks and Trails Program is within the Cobble Hill Electoral Area. There are numerous designated trails in the Regional Recreation area for hiking, cycling and horseback riding.
- **Watson Avenue Trail** - This trail starts at Watson Avenue and runs behind Evergreen Elementary School and joins up to Watson Park and the Twin Cedars subdivision.
- **Fairfield Park Trail** - A trail runs through the park connecting Fairfield Road to Cobble Hill Elementary School.
- **Hammond Way** - This is a separated roadside multi-use trail managed by the CVRD, constructed within the Ministry of Transportation right-of-way along Aros Road.
- **Hatchpoint Trail** - This trail is constructed within an undeveloped highways road right of way between Ratcliffe Road and Telegraph Road.

3.2.1 Trail Classes

Six types of trails and trail connections are identified for Cobble Hill. While not all of these classes are traditional trail types, it is important for the master plan to analyze and understand the extent of the entire pedestrian, cycling and equestrian network.

1. Multi-Use Trails

Multi-use trails are ideal for walking, hiking, cycling and/or horseback riding.

Key Characteristics:

- Separate from roads and adjacent land uses.
- Generally part of a larger system that connects to significant designations.
- Used by local residents, visitors and tourists for recreation and commuting.

Examples in Cobble Hill:

- Quarry Nature Park to Cobble Hill Mountain Regional Recreation Area.
- Hammond Way.



Multi-use Trail in Cobble Hill Mountain Regional Recreation Area

2. Walking/Hiking Trails

Walking/hiking trails are smaller, neighbourhood-scale sections of the trail network.

Key Characteristics:

- Often only pedestrian access due to more demanding terrain, environmental sensitivity and/or local community desires.
- Used primarily by local residents providing: recreation, alternative transportation and access to natural areas.
- Often located within existing parks.

Examples in Cobble Hill:

- Trails in Quarry Nature Park
- Trails in Manley Creek Park
- Trails in Fairfield Road Park



Hammond Way Trail



Hiking trail in Quarry Nature Park

3. Shared Roadway

Shared roadways are routes that incorporate cycling and/or pedestrian movement with vehicle traffic. The Provincial Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (BC MOT) is the road authority for the development and maintenance of all public roads in Electoral Area C – Cobble Hill. Cycling in Cobble Hill is popular on local roads shared with vehicle traffic as well as pedestrian use of road shoulders.



Shared Roadway

Key Characteristics:

- Lightly used rural roads can provide cycling and walking opportunities.
- Used mostly by cyclists, but also pedestrians and equestrians.

Examples in Cobble Hill:

- Streets in Cobble Hill Village

4. Roadside Walkway

A roadside walkway is a road that shares vehicle, cyclist and pedestrian traffic, by providing a wider paved shoulder divided by a painted line. Care must be taken to ensure signage, line painting and maintenance to minimize conflict between uses. As noted above, the BC MOT is responsible for public roadways within Cobble Hill.

Key Characteristics:

- Moderately used roadways that provide minimum 1m additional paved shoulder surfacing for cycling/pedestrian use. Clearly painted white line to separate vehicle traffic from the paved shoulder.
- Moderate traffic speeds (typically 50 kph to 80 kph).

Examples in Cobble Hill:

- No examples currently exist in Cobble Hill; however, Telegraph Road, Cobble Hill Road and Hutchinson Road would all be candidates for an improved shoulder walkway.

5. Boardwalks

Boardwalks are generally a small portion of a trail network, providing safe, convenient and non-intrusive access to environmentally sensitive and/or physically difficult geography. Boardwalks can wind their way through sensitive environmental areas, keeping impact on the land to a minimum while giving people a chance to explore the protected resource on an easy path. Boardwalks also provide the opportunity to make connections over wet, muddy or uneven terrain that would otherwise prohibit trail access.

Key Characteristics:

- Generally short spans used to provide access to sensitive or difficult areas and are usually wood material.
- Provide access and connections to spaces that would not be accessible through traditional trails.

Examples in Cobble Hill:

- There is a boardwalk incorporated over the marshy areas along the Hatch Point Trail.



Hatch Point Trail Boardwalk

6. Informal Trails

Informal trails are often on private or crown lands, and have no formal trail designation. These areas warrant monitoring and consideration for formal addition to the Cobble Hill community parks and trails system as opportunities arise.

Key Characteristics:

- Can have varied surfacing and width, based on use.
- Often developed for recreation use by: mountain bikers, hikers, walkers seeking a shortcut, horseback riders or ATV users.
- Often old logging roads are used as informal trails.
- Have no official designation or protection. Could be lost to forestry activity, development and/or closure.



Informal Trail

Examples in Cobble Hill:

- Verner Road right-of-way (ROW)

4. PLANNING A FUTURE COMMUNITY PARKS & TRAILS SYSTEM

4.1 Outdoor Recreation Trends

Studies in recreation trends throughout BC and Canada help understand how peoples' outdoor recreation needs are changing. The information below is summarized from several resources to provide a brief outline of key trends significant to Cobble Hills' Community Parks and Trails.

4.1.1 Demographics

Population Growth – Population growth plays a role in the amount of recreation space that the community requires. As indicated in Section 2.2, population growth in the Cobble Hill area has slowed in recent years. As overall growth on Vancouver Island is predicted to continue, growth should be expected to continue in Cobble Hill, though perhaps not at the same rate of other Electoral Areas in the CVRD. Growth, regardless of the rate, requires the addition of new green spaces to provide adequate opportunities for outdoor recreation.

Population Age Trends – Cobble Hill's population shows a greater proportional number of residents over the age of 50 than elsewhere in the CVRD and British Columbia. This over-50 trend is largely influenced by the Arbutus Ridge development, and it is expected that it would be partly localized to this development. However, throughout British Columbia, and especially on Vancouver Island, the proportion of older residents continues to increase. Activity preferences, capability, and time to participate in outdoor recreation change with age. It is predicted that the next decade of retirees will be more active than previous generation, and will likely prefer to be integrated into mainstream recreational centres and programs. This trend will factor into the types of facilities that should be considered for local park improvements and development.

Implications for Community Parks and Trails– The implications of these demographics demonstrate a need for:

- Outdoor recreation systems to expand alongside population growth.
- Recognition that senior lifestyles need to be supported by accessible recreation.
- Variety in outdoor recreational opportunities for children and youth.

4.1.2 Activity Choices

More people pursuing individual activities – Studies indicate a clear shift from organized sports and recreation to individual recreation. This trend is attributed to several factors:

- Interest in exploring a greater diversity of individual pursuits;
- Desire to have access to recreation that fits with individual schedules to accommodate the higher number of people with nontraditional work weeks and schedules;
- Interest in activities that require less commitment and more compressed timeframes.

Adult Lifestyle and Wellness – Increased awareness around the health benefits of physical activity has resulted in outdoor recreation appealing to a greater number of people. People who place importance on a healthy lifestyle increase demand for recreation resources that support active living.

Children and Youth Inactivity – Even as adult physical lifestyles are improving, children and youth inactivity is reaching unprecedented levels. “Screen time” or time spent in front of the television, video games and the internet, has dramatically increased. In turn, children are pursuing less active forms of recreation, a trend that will likely be carried throughout their lifetimes.

Children often exhibit a diversity of interests and values and one type of youth recreation, program or facility will most often not meet the needs of all children in a community.



Young child in the Cleasby Bike Park

Implications for Community Parks and Trails – The implications of these activity choice trends demonstrate a need for:

- A larger variety of outdoor recreation opportunities accessible at multiple times to accommodate the increasingly wide-ranging lifestyles and interests of a population.
- The development of an outdoor network of bikeways and walkways for people to use as they pursue individual activities and exercise for health and wellness.
- A variety of outdoor recreational opportunities in partnership with schools and community programs to develop spaces that accommodate outdoor youth recreation (Example: construction of a sport court in conjunction with Evergreen School to be used by the public as well as the school.)

4.1.3 Demand Trends



Volunteers constructing the Trails in Cleasby Bike Park

Service Demands – In communities throughout BC, Parks and Recreation Programs are being required to respond to a myriad of community-based social issues. Leisure is becoming more widely recognized as a tool for social change. The use of recreation programs and services have been advocated for reducing crime, reducing risk factors for youth, breaking down ethnic divisions and creating better understanding between cultures.

Local Finances – Despite evidence that supports the need for strong parks and recreation programs in BC, budget pressures often reduce financing available for parks and trails, operations, and maintenance. Although the demand for more parks, recreation and cultural services is increasing, expectations still exist that service levels, labour costs and other costs for parks and trails systems will remain the same.

Volunteerism – Volunteers are important to recreational programs, but volunteerism is on the decrease. Attracting and keeping volunteers is vital to leisure and recreational development and is largely related to the quality of volunteer management strategies within local parks programs. The

Cobble Hill Electoral Area has a very strong pool of volunteers keen to work on trails and in parks throughout the community.

Implications for Community Parks and Trails

- Development of parks and trail facilities that support social interaction and development.
- Realistic parks and trails budgets must take into consideration development, operations and maintenance costs of all projects.
- Increased awareness among government representatives and the local community about the level of financial commitment that is required for successful community parks and trails programs.
- Volunteer organization and communication to provide citizens with multiple, easy opportunities to take part in improving parks and trails.

4.1.4 Facility Factors

Tourism – More and more community leisure programs and facilities are taking on a greater role in attracting tourism and economic development. In particular, games, tournaments, exhibitions and races are bringing people into communities that support such events.

Single-Purpose vs. Multi-Purpose – Multi-purpose facilities (Farmers Institute) are becoming more common as they support the shift to a wider variety of recreational interests. These facilities are designed to provide more options for users, support multi-gender and multi-generational users and are more flexible in supporting a variety of lifestyles.

Aging Infrastructure – A BC-wide trend has been the aging of infrastructure; within parks this may include playgrounds, sport courts, picnic tables and benches. Preventative maintenance and planning should be considered during park and trail planning.

Ability to Respond to Demand – Ability to respond to changing leisure needs may be affected by fluctuations in economic growth, increasing costs for new development,



Cobble Hill Fair (2010)



Beside the Farmers Institute during the Cobble Hill Fair (2010)

needing to address existing facility maintenance and concerns over taxation increases.

Partnerships – In order to develop facilities that support the requirements of a community, partnerships are becoming more common. These can range from sharing of capital costs to the operation of entire facilities, to program operation and sponsorship.



Sport court in Boatswain Park

Implications for Community Parks and Trails

- Identification of opportunities in outdoor recreation and events to promote tourism in the community.
- Careful planning around aging infrastructure to recognize where and when replacements will be necessary.
- Ability to redefine policy where necessary and to respond to changing economics.
- Opportunities to integrate multiple outdoor recreation uses in close proximity (Example: Quarry Nature Park has an off leash dog park, bike park and multi-use trail system).
- Active identification of possible partnerships that, with careful planning, will ensure positive gains for all parties involved (Example: partnership with Evergreen School for shared amenities).

4.1.5 Environmental Factors

Public Stewardship – As environmental awareness increases, natural areas and nature-based recreation takes on additional significance. Parks programs are beginning to evolve beyond outdoor recreation, to also serve as spaces for preserving natural values such as clean air and water. Additionally, there is a growing desire by citizens to learn about the natural environment through outdoor experience and a willingness to participate in projects that protect or restore sensitive environmental areas.

Storm water Management – Parks and open spaces are highly valued for their ability to absorb rainfall and balance impacts of urban development on watersheds. Additionally, some

parks have evolved to include storm water collection and treatment facilities such as bioswales, detention ponds and constructed wetlands.

Climate Change – Parks and open spaces are considered to have value in the mitigation of the effects of global warming by increasing shade areas and CO₂ sinks (see sidebar).

Local Food – Parks can serve as a venue for re-connecting people with growing food through the integration of community gardens or through educational demonstration gardens.

Implications for Community Parks and Trails – The implication of environmental factors demonstrate a need for:

- Consideration of the environmental value of future parkland when setting out park acquisition priorities.
- Sound and sensitive operations and management policies for parks and trails.
- Increased visibility of the ecological contribution of community parks and open spaces.
- Engagement of local citizens and groups in environmental stewardship activities in parks.

CO₂ sink: A carbon Dioxide sink is the opposite of a carbon “source”. Forest areas and oceans are the main natural sinks. In forest areas, growing vegetation absorbs carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and stores it.



Cobble Hill Train Station - Storm water infiltration swales contribute to storm water management in a way that improves the local ecosystem and offers a new visual aesthetic.

4.2 Community Parks Funding Sources

In planning, designing, developing and maintaining parks and trails, funds must be acquired, often from a variety of sources. Outside funding opportunities, such as provincial grants, Non-Government Organization (NGO) grants, fundraising opportunities or donations help secure funds that would not normally be available for acquiring and developing local parks and trails. This section presents a variety of options for funding sources that are relevant to community parks and trails acquisition and development of capital projects.

4.2.1 Local Government Funds

Community Parks Service Establishment Authority – The authority to tax for and provide community parks and trails services in Electoral Areas is through the Cowichan Valley Regional District, which under Province of British Columbia legislation is the Local Government Authority for the unincorporated Electoral Areas within the region.

Establishment of the community parks and trails services in Electoral Area C– Cobble Hill dates back to 1976 when the local community was formally asked if it approved creating such a service based on taxation, which the community at the time supported. This authority for taxation is currently provided through “Cowichan Valley Regional District Bylaw No 2670 – Electoral Area C, Community Parks Service Establishment Bylaw, 2005”. The community parks and trails service under the authority of the bylaw provides for the acquiring, developing, operating and maintaining of community parks within Electoral Area C - Cobble Hill.

Electoral Area C Community Parkland Acquisition Reserve Funds – Funds are accumulated in a Parkland Acquisition Reserve Fund held by the CVRD which can accrue from the sale of surplus park land and/or cash-in-lieu with funds received as part of subdivision developments. The funds can only be used for park acquisition in Electoral Area C.

Cash-in-Lieu – Section 941 of the *Local Government Act* permits the acceptance of cash-in-lieu of parkland dedication under the provisions of the Act. Where cash-in-lieu is accepted by the Regional District for developments occurring in Electoral Area C – Cobble Hill, these funds must be held in

the Parkland Acquisition Reserve Fund and can only be expended on the purchase of lands for park purposes within Electoral Area C – Cobble Hill.

Residual Parks Capital – Unspent annual parks and trails capital funds can be transferred to Reserve Funds for future expenditure on park development or land acquisition for park purposes in Electoral Area C.

Parks Fees – Revenue from user fees can provide funding to assist with operations and maintenance of community parks and trails. User fees are generally associated with private use of parks (i.e. special events, wedding bookings, etc.).

4.2.2 Senior Government Funds

Provincial and Federal Grant Programs – Specific funding programs from time to time are available through senior levels of government for park planning, design and/or construction. Examples of such programs include:

- BikeBC – Cycling Infrastructure Partnership Program, which aims to support commuter cycling (to and from work, school, and errands) as a means of reducing traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.
<http://www.th.gov.bc.ca/BikeBC/CIPP.html>
- Environment Canada’s EcoAction – Community Funding Program, which encourages project submissions that will protect, rehabilitate or enhance the natural environment.
http://www.ec.gc.ca/ecoaction/what_is_e.html

As the funding programs change and new ones are announced, it is important to regularly check on funding program updates and eligibility requirements. There are at least two sources to search through for funding opportunities; Environment Canada’s Green source Funding Database <http://www.ec.gc.ca/financement-funding/default.asp?lang=En&n=768DAFB1-1> and the BC Community Networks Association.

4.2.3 Private Funds

Private Grant Programs – Similar to senior government funding, several private funding programs that support parks and trails development exist and can be found on the internet. Examples of such programs include:

- The Victoria Foundation and other Community Foundations of Canada.
<http://www.victoriafoundation.bc.ca/web/grantingprograms/available>
- Endswell Foundation – Offers support to charitable organizations dedicated to conservation and related public education in British Columbia.
<http://www.endswell.com/>
- Heritage Legacy Fund of British Columbia – A joint initiative between The Land Conservancy and Heritage Society of BC Conservation that supports local projects that protect, preserve or rehabilitate heritage resources.
<http://www.heritagelegacyfund.ca/>

Commemorative Gifting & Donations – On occasion, private donors may give monies for the purposes of enhancing community parks and trails. Donation of lands for community park purposes benefit the community by providing more public recreation land or areas to set aside for environmental purposes. Evaluation of the lands being proposed for gifting is important to ensure the lands have suitable outdoor recreational/environmental value in keeping with the objectives and vision of the community parks and trails master plan and vision of the community. The Cowichan Valley Regional District can issue tax donation receipts under certain circumstances for donations of land, in-kind contributions as well as for financial donations.

In-kind Donation – While not a direct source of funding, in-kind donations result in direct cost-savings from organizations or individuals who donate/volunteer their time or services for community parks and trails in Cobble Hill.

4.2.4 Partnerships

Partnering with interested agencies or organizations helps to join the efforts for both funding and developing of Parks and Trails. Potential agencies/groups to partner with could be:

- Cowichan Valley School District
- Sports/Outdoor Recreation Organizations
- Province of British Columbia
- Conservation Organizations
- Private Landowners
- Local First Nations



Cobble Hill Village (Sept 2010)

4.3 Public Response

An integral part of community parks and trails planning is public consultation. Two open houses were held during the development of the Cobble Hill Community Parks and Trails Master Plan to encourage public input on the future of Parks and Trails in Cobble Hill. In addition, meetings with the Cobble Hill Parks and Recreation Commission offered additional information about current and future parks and trails.

4.3.1 Cobble Hill Parks and Recreation Commission

The Cobble Hill Parks and Recreation Commission is comprised of members of the Cobble Hill community who helped guide the Community Parks and Trails Master Planning process. During this process, meetings with the Commission served as milestones to assess progress and provide additional input as needed. Input from the Commission, along with feedback from the general public and CVRD Parks Staff, provided direction for future acquisitions as well as improvements to existing local parks and trails in Cobble Hill.

4.3.2 Community Outreach

Both open houses followed a similar format. Posters were displayed to explain the Master Planning process and maps showing the existing Parks and Trails in the Electoral Area were used to collect public input. At each public meeting response forms were used to document public input.

The first Open House was held in the spring of 2008. Public insights on current issues as well as gaps and opportunities related to parks and trails in Cobble Hill were documented. A map of the Electoral Area served as a tool to identify gaps in the trail network, to locate sites the public felt warranted consideration for future parks, and to note any improvements that were important for existing parks and trails.

The second Open House focused on setting priorities. Previously suggested improvements to existing parks and trails, areas for new parkland as well as trail connections were displayed and the public identified which were of highest priority for Cobble Hill.

4.3.3 What Was Heard

All materials used and feedback from both Open Houses can be found in Appendices B and C, respectively.

Open House 1: Collecting Ideas

Four parks stood out as “favourites” as identified by respondents: Cobble Hill Mountain Regional Recreation Area, Cherry Point Nature Park, Manley Creek Park, and Quarry Nature Park. The top three favourite outdoor activities identified by respondents were walking/dog walking, biking, and hiking. Based on the questionnaire responses, the majority of respondents felt that a priority should be placed on the acquisition of new community parks and trails over improvements to existing community parks and trails.

Hiking trails were the most important *addition* to the parks and trails systems, followed by trail connections to adjacent Electoral Areas, nature parks/protected green space, and walking paths within Cobble Hill.

Additional comments from the first Open House echo the importance for improved connections, and point to opportunities of using existing roads such as Telegraph Road, Fisher Road and Cobble Hill Road. Safety along these roads is an issue and one suggestion was to have an off road trail similar to Hammond Way in these locations.

Another issue raised multiple times is the importance of inclusive trails that can be accessed by all, while others suggest the segregation of horseback riders to other trails. This issue will need further investigation and consultation with the community beyond the scope of the parks and trails master plan.

Open House 2: Setting Priorities

The focus of this public session was to gain insight on project priorities. From the responses, three parks were identified as highest priority for Cobble Hill: Quarry Nature Park, Cherry Point Nature Park and Cleasby Bike Park (part of Quarry Nature Park). The Trails that were identified as highest priority are: the E&N Rail Trail, Telegraph Road and Cobble Hill Road.



Hammond Way Trail – off road trail

In terms of general comments, the points made are parallel to those raised in the first open house, in addition to improved beach access along the ocean front in general.

4.3.4 Key Parks & Trails Issues

In summary, the main issues regarding community parks and trails in Cobble Hill focus on:

- Safe pedestrian and cycling linkages, and
- Compatibility between outdoor recreation user groups in using and enjoying local parks and trails.

4.4 Vision & Objectives

A Vision Statement is a guiding principle by which decisions about parks and trails are made and which can measure progress and success as the plan unfolds.

4.4.1 Community Parks & Trails Vision

To develop a vision that clearly reflected Cobble Hill's character, the participants from the community attending the open houses were asked to contribute words or phrases that they felt would best describe the ideal future parks and trails system. These words and phrases were crafted, with the direction of the Cobble Hill Parks and Recreation Commission, into a vision. This vision was used to guide the preparation of this master plan and is intended to measure success of its implementation:

The residents of Cobble Hill value the rural nature of their community and wish to enrich its historic charm by securing in perpetuity a network of community parks and trails to provide a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities, protect natural ecosystems, feature representative landscapes, link our communities and enhance livability within Cobble Hill and South Cowichan.

4.4.2 Key Principles for Community Parks & Trails

Embedded in the vision statement are four broad principles for community parks and trails within the Cobble Hill Community and are as follows:

A) Providing opportunities for outdoor recreational opportunities

The provision of outdoor recreational opportunities that protect access through the various landscapes will be a unique and valued element of the community parks system. As well, safe, permanent and accessible recreation that offers a diversity of recreational activities should be available.

B) Protect natural ecosystems and feature representative landscapes

Cobble Hill's natural ecosystems range from wetlands and rivers to forested slopes; from coastal shoreline to rural farmland. Some of these areas represent sensitive ecosystems which must be protected, preserved and in some cases, restored. Other types of feature landscapes are in the form of historical or cultural landscapes.

Careful siting and management of parks and trails will minimize detrimental impacts to the environment and will also highlight the community's natural assets. Public education is key to developing a long-lasting and sustained natural and cultural environment.

C) Link communities

Linking communities means both physical and social connections. Deliberate connections within Cobble Hill and to neighbouring Electoral Areas will not only promote community access to natural spaces and amenities, but also enhance linkages to public spaces and social gathering places.

D) Enhance livability

Livability in Cobble Hill refers to quality of life: safety, health and happiness. A community parks and trails system promotes livability by providing outdoor recreational opportunities for residents of all ages, offering opportunities for alternative transportation, and encouraging active public engagement in the community.



Cherry Point Nature Park

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

This section of the Cobble Hill Community Parks and Trails Master Plan presents recommendations for improvements to existing parks and trails, and acquisitions of new parkland to expand and enhance the network of local parks and trails for the residents of Cobble Hill to access and enjoy.

Section 5.1 presents the approach taken to identify and assess potential projects.

Section 5.2 presents those projects that are deemed a high priority by the community and ought to be pursued over the next 10 years (2012-2021).

Section 5.3 outlines additional medium-priority parks and trails projects that are important to building a community parks and trails network in Cobble Hill; however, due to budget constraints, these projects will have to be implemented beyond a 10-year time horizon, unless opportunities and funding resources arise sooner. This section groups projects as follows:

- Improvements to Existing Community Parks;
- Trail Development; and
- Community Park Acquisitions and Land Use Partnerships.

Table 18 in Chapter 6 summarizes the recommended community parks and trails projects identified and supported through this master planning process, and includes those projects presented in Sections 5.2 and 5.3. Lower-priority projects are not described in detail in this plan as it is anticipated that funding resources will likely not be available within the 10-20 year time frame horizon detailed in the plan. The summary provides long term direction for the Parks and Trails Program in Cobble Hill inclusive of future reviews at appropriate intervals to ensure the plan's objectives remain on track with community values and expectations.

Section 5.4 presents system-wide recommendations that are not "capital" projects, rather planning and operational policies that support the community parks system as a whole. These recommendations are included as important components to implementing a comprehensive park and trails network in Cobble Hill and are categorized as:

- Park site planning;
- Parks and Trails operations and maintenance; and
- Park stewardship.

5.1 Developing an Implementation Approach

The final outcome of this plan is the development of a set of recommendations that carry forth the ideas, values and priorities generated through the community parks and trails master planning process. In development of this strategy, several sources of input were used:

- Feedback generated from the public open houses.
- Review of trends, demographics and land use.
- Input from CVRD Parks and Trails Staff and the Cobble Hill Parks and Recreation Commission.

The ideas generated were measured against the vision to determine its overall value for the community parks and trails system in Cobble Hill. Each recommendation was weighed against the four key principles set out in the vision.

Vision Principles:

- Provide opportunities for outdoor recreation,
- Protect natural ecosystems and feature representative landscapes,
- Link communities, and
- Enhance livability.

5.2 Priority 1 Recommendations (Year 1 - 10)

The following recommendations are intended to guide improvements to community parks and trails within the Cobble Hill Community over the next 10 years (2012-2021). These priorities arise from the community park planning process and support the vision for community parks in Cobble Hill. The capital projects described in this section are presented in order of priority as identified through this master planning process and are consistent with the proposed 2012-2021 annual budget recommendations for the Cobble Hill Community Parks and Trails program to achieve the plan's objectives (Table 16 in Chapter 6).

- Community Park and Trail Improvement Recommendations *(These projects can be completed on lands already owned or maintained by the Parks and Trails Division).*
- Community Parkland Acquisition and Land Use Partnership Recommendations *(Projects cannot begin until the properties are acquired or a partnership agreement obtained)*

Recommendation:

1. ● **Develop Quarry Nature Park to increase the park's ability to accommodate an expected increase in visitors each year and create more of a Neighbourhood Park as defined in the plan. Key amenities to be incorporated include:**

- Public Washroom building,
- Litter receptacles,
- Realignment of Parking,
- Picnic areas,
- Directional signs, and
- Playground.

In addition, preserve, restore and enhance the natural flora within the park and use Quarry Nature Park as a primary location for displaying historic restorations. Specific historic restorations include:

- Restoration of an old compressor currently located on Cobble Hill Mountain.



Quarry Nature Park and South Cowichan off leash Dog Park

- Re-building of the Cobble Hill Train Station building in possible partnership with the Island Corridor Foundation.

Rationale:

Located on the east side of Cobble Hill Mountain, this 9.6 ha Nature Park is valued for its proximity to Cobble Hill Village; providing access to hiking, biking and equestrian trails for residents in the community and the surrounding areas. The South Cowichan off-leash Dog Park, the Cleasby Bike Park as well as the equestrian parking lot are all located within Quarry Nature Park. The year round significant use and popularity of Quarry Nature Park supports the replacement of the existing porta potties which are no longer sufficient to meet demand and need an accessible public washroom facility for both hygenic and convenience reasons.

Recommendation:

2. ● **Design and develop the former BC MoT Public Works Yard site, now Cobble Hill Common, into a functional space as a central public feature to the village.**

Rationale:

Cobble Hill Common, the former highways works yard, is located on the corner of Holland and Fisher Roads, across the street from Memorial Park and was acquired by the CVRD in 2009 for park use.

Through this Community Parks and Trails master planning process a preliminary list of ideas for the site, based on gaps in park amenities within Cobble Hill Village and through public input, were generated. In addition to this process a public community survey was conducted in 2010 to gather ideas for the park and a preliminary concept plan was drafted in early 2011.

The following list was mentioned during the public input processes:

- Provide manicured trees that frame but do not block views to Cobble Hill Mountain,



Train Station area upgrade adjacent to the E&N Railway, formerly a gravel parking area.



Cleasby Bike Park airtime

- Unstructured, irrigated grassed playing area,
- Playground,
- Tennis courts,
- Senior housing complex,
- Picnic tables, benches, and litter receptacles,
- Parking, and
- Connections to the village and other nearby parks such as Memorial Park.

A further public consultation process with the community is recommended to develop a detailed vision and site plan for this unique property in the heart of Cobble Hill Village.



Memorial Park

Recommendation:

3. ● **Enhance connectivity within the community while protecting the sensitive ecosystem in Watson Park by:**
 - Development of a boardwalk and entry trail between Twin Cedars and Watson Road, and
 - Installation of entrance and interpretive signage.

Rationale:

Watson Park is a large community park identified by the provincial sensitive ecosystem inventory as being a seasonally flooded area, however, portions of the site also has wetland ecosystem values that are worth protecting / enhancing. In the southern portion of the park there is an opportunity for an environmentally sensitive community trail to be constructed with minimal impact on the wetland area.

Recommendation:

4. ● **Develop the Village Roadside Pathway for connectivity of Cobble Hill Common and Memorial Park through the village to nearby Cobble Hill Community parks (Watson Park, Fairfield Road Park, Quarry Nature Park/Train Station).**

Rationale:

Given the prominent location of Cobble Hill Common and Memorial Park in the village core, there is a real opportunity for these parks to serve as a gateway to other parks and nodes in the community. Linking with Watson Park, Quarry Nature Park, the Train Station and any other new or existing parks and nodes in the vicinity will greatly enhance the overall connectivity within the community. This “Hub” in Cobble Hill will provide important pedestrian connectivity for the Community ensuring safe walking areas for all users.

Opportunities for use of a shared roadway for pedestrians/cyclists with existing vehicle traffic or a separated trail should be pursued with BC MoT.

Recommendation:

5. ● **Acquire lands to establish a nature park in the vicinity of Lefran Road/Garnet Creek to protect the natural ecosystem around Garnet Creek. A trail could be developed that allows community access to this natural setting while enhancing connectivity of the overall Cobble Hill Community Parks and Trails Master Plan. Specific features to consider in developing this park are installation of:**

- Benches,
- Boardwalk/bridge over Garnet Creek & riparian habitat, and
- Interpretive signage.

Rationale:

The proposed park site is located along Garnet Creek where it meets the Lefran Road ROW (see Proposed Park B, Map 2: Proposed Park Acquisitions and Partnership opportunities in Cobble Hill). Garnet Creek is located in the north east quadrant of Cobble Hill and discharges into Satellite Channel at Cherry Point Nature Park. The riparian area of Garnet Creek is identified as ecologically sensitive in the provincial Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory, therefore any park or trail planning within this area will require extreme care so as not to damage the riparian area or surrounding habitat. With this in mind, the desire to build a connected network of parks and trails in Cobble Hill could be enhanced by a potential link from Cherry Point Road to Lefran Road, across Garnet Creek.

A linear park that provides a single, well-designed creek crossing would provide Cobble Hill residents with a minimally intrusive connection to the natural beauty of this site, while facilitating access from the isolated Cherry Point Nature Park to the rest of the community as well as protecting the creek corridor.

Recommendation:

6. ● **Develop a partnership with the Northwest Wildlife Preservation Society for creating low impact community access for educational and environmental opportunities within Manley Farm.**

Rationale:

The Manley Farm, managed by the Northwest Wildlife Preservation Society, is a large green space within the Cobble Hill Community that could greatly enhance all aspects of the community's parks and trails vision if the CVRD were to partner with them. There is significant opportunity for interpretive or educational activities and a trail system on this property. There is an existing building which could potentially be upgraded for community use.

Recommendation:

7. ● **Develop Fairfield Road Park to provide formal access and user opportunities for the community, including:**

- Park entrance signs,
- Parking / turn-around,
- Litter receptacles,
- Picnic tables, and
- Interpretive signage.



Trail at Fairfield Road Park

Rationale:

Fairfield Road Park is centrally located in the community. Trails recently developed in the park have facilitated better public access as the trail weaves through the forested park, from the end of Fairfield Road down to the southeast corner of Cobble Hill Elementary School. Due to its proximity to the school and residential areas, this park has the potential to

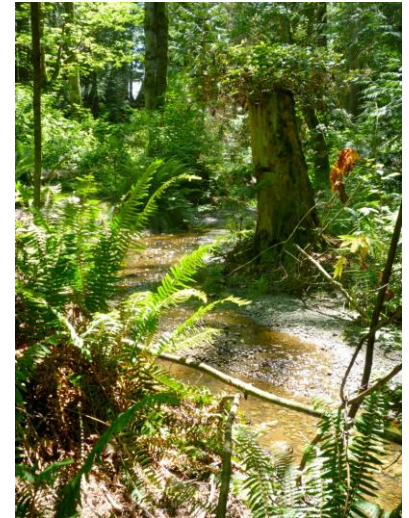
provide for a variety of low impact outdoor recreation amenities as noted above. Its natural setting presents a good opportunity to educate students and the community about the local forest ecosystem through an interpretive walk.

Recommendation:

8. ● **Improve trail access within and through *Manley Creek Park* and aim to limit erosion on the steep slopes and protect local flora and fauna. Park improvements include:**
- Directional signs at main trail intersections,
 - Steps in various sections along the upper trail where steep.

Rationale:

Manley Creek Park is Cobble Hill's largest shoreline park and offers a natural forested setting with Manley Creek spilling down towards the beach. Steep slopes in combination with running water, makes the risk of erosion a primary concern. Manley Creek Park is situated just north of the growing Arbutus Ridge community, therefore increased pedestrian traffic in this park can be expected. This increase will amplify the risk of trail erosion if trails are not properly designed and maintained.



Manley Creek Park

5.3 Priority 2 Recommendations (Beyond Year 10)

This section outlines community parks and trails projects that are proposed beyond the next 10 years due to the capacity of the community parks requisition annually for Cobble Hill.

Unlike Section 5.2, these recommendations are not presented in a chronologically prioritized order. Rather, they are categorized as: Improvements to Existing Community Parks; Trail Development; and Community Park Acquisitions, and Land Use Partnerships, and represent a record of community desires for the future of parks and trails in Cobble Hill. It is important to note that where funds and resources could be secured, certain priority 2 recommendations could be completed earlier (See Maps 3 & 4).

5.3.1 Improvements to Existing Community Parks

Table 13: Summary of the improvements to the existing parks in Electoral Area C – Cobble Hill

Existing Park	Recommended Minor Improvements
Boatswain Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playground refurbishment • Tree Clearing/pruning for safety • New paved playing court • Drinking fountain
Cherry Point Nature Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscaping • Green Shores restoration • Updated park amenities • Concrete stair or wheelchair ramp to beach
Clearwater Road Beach access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park entrance sign
Farnsworth Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drinking fountain • Washroom building • Community pathway
Galliers Road Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drinking Fountain • Washroom building • Information Kiosk
Granfield Way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community pathway
Hammond Way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naturalized landscaping • Litter receptacle on concrete pad
Hatch point Trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature trail upgrades • Informational Kiosk • Directional signage
Maple Hills Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manicured shrub and tree landscaping • New playground • Vinyl black chain link fence • Bench on concrete pad • Directional signage
Merilees Nature Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park entrance sign • Informational kiosk
William Shearing Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manicured tree and shrub landscaping • Selective Pruning and dangerous tree removal. • New playground • Small picnic shelter and table • Irrigation system • Nature trail

*Recommendation***Improve accessibility to the beach at Cherry Point Nature Park by:**

- Construction of a wheelchair accessible ramp, and
- Installation of a bike rack.

In addition, restore the natural coastline through application of proven restoration techniques (i.e.: Green Shores). Special consideration for developing shoreline improvements that will withstand wave action during winter storms is required.

Rationale:

Cherry Point Nature Park is one of Cobble Hill's four community beach access points, all of which provide several steps or more to descend to the beach. A lack of wheelchair accessible beach accesses in the community was identified in the process and demonstrated a need to provide for ramp access where feasible, in particular, at Cherry Point.

Cherry Point's natural setting is valuable to protect. Not only is it the discharge location for Garnet Creek, it also has a sensitive marine community characterized as a wetland in the sensitive ecosystem inventory. Currently there is rip rap edging the foreshore and a gravel parking lot that meets the beach area. Restoration of the shoreline and improvements to the creek would benefit the aesthetic and ecological function of the park.

*Recommendation:***Upgrade Farnsworth Park through acquisition of a second entrance point to the park for access and safety reasons and improve general park usability by:**

- Installing a washroom building,
- Upgrading the park trail, and
- Providing a drinking fountain.

Rationale:

Farnsworth Park is a medium sized neighbourhood park that is practically invisible from the road. Two entrance paths sweep on either side of playing court, which has the effect of blocking off the rest of the park. A forested area in the north portion of the park offers a quiet picnic area. However, no points of exit exist from the forest area, making it a potential safety hazard. It is a relatively busy park with kids recreation programs provided in the summer and would benefit from improved facilities and additional access/exit points to the park.



Entrance to Farnsworth Park

5.3.2 Trail Development

Trail linkages are an important component of any Community parks and trails system. Currently in Cobble Hill, safe, convenient trails for pedestrians and cyclists are limited. Trends indicate that people are becoming more interested in pursuing individual activities and personal health, and trails are one of the most effective ways to get people moving (Refer to Map 4 for recommended trail connections).



View from the Train station to Memorial Park. Currently pedestrians and cyclists are not well accommodated on roads.

Table 14. Summary of trail connections in Cobble Hill as identified on Map 4

Proposed Trail Connection	Recommended Trail Type	Length (m)
E&N Rail Trail	Multi use-gravel Trail	2500
Cobble Hill Road	Roadside walkway	5200
Hutchison Road	Roadside walkway	3200
Telegraph Road	Roadside walkway	5600
Heigh Road	Roadside walkway	250
Cherry Point Road	Community Pathway	2500
Aros Road	Community Pathway	900
Satellite Park Road	Community Pathway	600
Ratcliffe Road	Community Pathway	800
Christina Drive /Cowerd Road	Community Pathway	2900
Galliers Road	Community Pathway	550
Merilees/Chapman Rd	Community Pathway	1200
Mile End to Hutchison	Community Pathway	1850
La Fortune Road	Community Pathway	1550
Freeman Road	Community Pathway	875
Wilder Road	Community Pathway	500
Freeman Rd / Wilder Rd	Community Pathway	1250
Verner Road Trail	Community Pathway	175

Recommendation:

Coordinate with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (BC MoT) to upgrade and accommodate shoulder walkways that provide safe and convenient cycling and walking access for:

- Cobble Hill Road,
- Hutchinson Road, and
- Telegraph Road.

Rationale:

When road improvements are planned, shoulder walkways should be expanded to provide safer cyclist and pedestrian facilities. In addition to nature and multi-use trails, which are typically separate from roads, it is important to look at the roads themselves as potential linkages for building a connected network of pedestrian and cycling routes to promote active transportation throughout the Cobble Hill community. Often times, some of the more major community roads provide the most direct route to popular amenities and locations such as schools and shopping centres. Safety is the main concern when addressing the use of roads for pedestrian use and a designated shoulder walkway is an appropriate way to separate people from cars. Will need to coordinate with BC MoT to ensure future road upgrades include road widening and line painting to allow for shoulder walkways.



Shoulder walkways along BC MoT roadways

The E&N Rail Trail Initiative

The Island Corridor Foundation (ICF), the not-for-profit organization which owns the E & N railway corridor, supports development of “Rail with Trail” within the corridor.

Recommendation:

Support the development of the E&N Rail Trail (Multi-Use Trail) through Cobble Hill to enhance connectivity within and beyond the community, and develop staging areas and signage to provide residents easy access to this recreational and transportation resource.

Rationale:

Sections of the E&N Rail corridor, which are typically 30 metres in width, are suitable for trail development parallel to and at a safe distance away from the tracks. Use of this corridor for trail development provides the opportunity to

allow trail linkages across Cobble Hill and to adjoining Electoral Areas.

5.3.3 Community Park Acquisitions and Land Use Partnerships

Planned parkland acquisition ensures that new parks and trails are selected and developed based on their contribution to the existing parks and trails system and the community. As noted in this plan, there is a desire to provide for sufficient public green space within the community to protect important and valued environmental landscapes and provision of usable park space for a range of active and passive outdoor recreation activities.

The Cobble Hill Community Parks and Trails Master Plan will need to be responsive and adaptable to ensure plans and acquisition principles support securing a desirable distribution of park types and locations. This plan should be flexible to allow for quality acquisitions to occur, should the opportunity and funding arise.

The following acquisition recommendations were identified through this planning process by means of reviewing existing and future potential developments as guided by the Official Community Plan. See Maps 2 and 4 for recommended acquisitions.

Recommendation:

Acquire and upgrade the existing informal trail located along the Verner Road ROW north of Hutchinson Road, to CVRD trail standards, including:

- Local trail development
- Directional signs

Rationale:

There is an existing informal trail that extends north along the Verner Road ROW from Hutchinson Road. This trail provides a key link from Hutchinson Road up to Fairfield Park and Cobble Hill Elementary School. The length of trail that needs to be addressed is relatively short (+/- 250m) and if pursued early, would greatly enhance connectivity within the community.

Recommendation:

Consider the following site as a possible park acquisition, as opportunity arises:

- Land adjacent to or in the vicinity of Galliers Road Park (Potential Park Location B on Map 2).

Rationale:

Over the long-term, acquisition of other properties should be considered for addition to the Community Parks and Trails system because as Cobble Hill develops, park priorities, opportunities and community demands will change. As Galliers Park is the only park with a playground near the Cobble Hill Village it provides an excellent opportunity for the expansion of a network of trails and outdoor recreation experiences.

Recommendation:

Develop a partnership with the Cobble Hill Elementary School.

Rationale:

Parks within Cobble Hill lack formal grass sports playing fields. Supplementing outdoor recreation opportunities through partnerships with others would contribute to the other elements of the community's parks and trails vision.

5.4 System-Wide Recommendations

This section presents system wide recommendations that are not “capital” projects, rather planning and operational policies that support the community parks system as a whole and are equally important in terms of developing a comprehensive Community Parks and Trails Master Plan.

5.4.1 Community Parkland Acquisition and Land Use Partnership Strategy

Recommendation:

When opportunities arise to acquire land or develop partnerships that support local cultural and heritage value, they should be considered a high priority.

Rationale:

Cobble Hill has a broad and interesting history. Historical features should be incorporated into and exposed through community parks and trails, ensuring that valued cultural assets are preserved for future educational and historical value.

Recommendation:

When opportunities arise to acquire land, develop partnerships or acquire permits with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure that facilitate connections of existing or identified future trails, they should be considered a high priority.

Rationale:

Improved connectivity was identified in the public process as important. Cobble Hill currently has very limited areas for safe and convenient connections for pedestrians and cyclists. Proposed trail connections identified on Map 4 should be acquired when opportunities arise. The CVRD should actively work with developers to identify existing informal trails that connect key locations.

Recommendation:

Continue upholding Section 941 of the *Local Government Act* requiring 5% parkland dedication during subdivision or cash-in-lieu, as an alternative to land dedication, whereby money received is held for future parkland purchases.

Rationale:

A minimum of 5% parkland will be provided without compensation in the location acceptable to the local government. If it is deemed that no new park is needed in a specific area then the 5% cash-in-lieu will be taken and used for land acquisition in another part of the Electoral Area C.

Recommendation:

Continue to support the existing Cobble Hill Community Parkland Acquisition Reserve Fund (Bylaw No. 2735) that supports strategic parkland acquisitions.

Rationale:

From time to time strategic park acquisition opportunities may arise that allow specific properties to be purchased to support the community's parks system objectives. Several potential acquisition sites are identified as part of the community parks master planning process. The Cobble Hill Community Parkland Acquisition Reserve Fund derives revenues through:

- Residual unspent community parks capital funding from year to year, and
- Cash-in-lieu from development activities where land for parks is unsuitable for inclusion within the park system.

Recommendation:

Set aside ten percent (10%) of annual expenditures for community parks for acquisition.

Rationale:

As a means of deriving funds for future land purchases for parks, annual contributions provide a means of building up

such funds without major impact to other program resources (i.e. operations, new property etc.).

Recommendation:

Where opportunities for park dedication during subdivision do not coincide with the parks and trails vision, the CVRD should accept cash-in-lieu and supplement the Cobble Hill Community Parkland Acquisition Reserve Fund.

Rationale:

Not all subdivisions have land areas of interest that meet the objectives of the Cobble Hill Community Parks and Trails Master Plan or provide measurable benefits/opportunities to develop/manage as a park or greenspace. Therefore, careful review of all subdivision parks dedication proposals should be undertaken, and the benefits of the proposed dedicated lands be weighed against the vision and principles set out in this Community Parks and Trails Master Plan. Where lands do not meet the vision and principles, cash-in-lieu should be accepted.

Recommendation:

In the long-term, park management plans should be completed for specific parks which are anticipated to have complex or multiple use issues, specifically Quarry Nature Park.

Rationale:

This master planning process has identified new parkland acquisition and partnership opportunities for the Cobble Hill parks and trails system. As these properties or other properties are acquired over the years, individual park management plans should occur. Preparation of these plans provides the context for development, management, operation and funding support.

5.4.2 Community Park Operations and Management

Park operations recommendations apply to the overall community parks and trails system in Cobble Hill. These recommendations fall under: Codes of Conduct; Policies and Partnerships; and Programs and Guides.

Codes of Conduct

Recommendation:

Develop a Trails Code of Conduct that describes expectations for trail users.

Rationale:

The Community Park and Trails Master Plan includes a network of established and off road trails. Some trails are located on right-of-ways, working landscapes, or even private land. Maintaining these connections will require a high degree of cooperation between landowners and the public. This code of conduct may include:

- A review of codes from other jurisdictions;
- Development of policies for trails;
- Review and modifications based on consultation with stakeholders;
- Development and distribution of a trail brochure;
- Presentations to key trail user-groups to encourage adoption of the trail code.

Recommendation:

Develop a Code of Conduct that guides expectations for pets and pet-owners.

Rationale:

Education about the expectations of pets and their owners is a first step in the development of this strategy. It is true that most people will do what is asked if they know what is being asked, and why. A “Pets in Parks” code of conduct can identify appropriate do’s and don’ts and provide a common starting point for users.



Sample of a regulatory sign that is posted in the community parks.

Many examples of Pet Codes have been developed in other park jurisdictions. As might be expected, these all have much in common. For example, a code may:

- Be written in a memorable way using a humorous or poetic style,
- Be illustrated with original artwork from local artists or school children, or
- Be designed and published with the support of local commercial interests, i.e. groomers, boarders, or suppliers.

Policies and Partnerships

Recommendation:

Develop a Community Park Revenue Generation Policy, including direction for implementation with the parks and trails system in Cobble Hill.

Rationale:

This would be intended to provide consistency in assessing and determining application of user fees and charges, as appropriate for specific activities and users of local parks.

Commemorative gifting could also be considered whereby residents can contribute directly to their local parks in the form of money for facilities, equipment or land for recreation use and/or nature preservation.

Recommendation:

Develop and implement an operational response plan to deal with fire risk in parks.

Rationale:

The CVRD conducted wildfire fuel management work in 2010 in Quarry Nature Park and Cobble Hill Mountain Regional Recreation Area. This project was completed to help reduce and manage wildfire fuel hazards. Similarly, other Regional Districts in British Columbia have started thinking more seriously about how to maintain parks and trails so as to limit the risk of interface fires. While perhaps more appropriately

addressed at the regional level, Community Park planning, design and management can contribute to reducing fire risk.

The Province has prepared a report that speaks directly to the issue of interface fires; how to reduce the threat, as well as emergency response. The report can be found at:

<http://www.2003firestorm.gov.bc.ca/firestormreport/default.htm>

Recommendation:

Expand and support community partnerships between the CVRD, and public/private schools, sports associations, trail groups and others.

Rationale:

Through the parks and trails master planning process, it was identified that some recreation opportunities would need to be incorporated in the parks and trails network by way of partnership.

The community park program actively seeks out formal and informal partnerships that provide for increased park use and share some of the operational mandate for community parks. Examples of partnerships currently established by the Cowichan Valley Regional District through the Cobble Hill Community Parks and Trails Program include:

- Agreement with Evergreen Independent School to build a sport court for community and school use.
- Agreement with the Cobble Hill Farmers Institute for a trail on their land for public use.
- Agreement with the Island Corridor Foundation (ICF) for use of the Train Station lands as park and public space.

Recommendation:

Work with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure to develop signage and directional markings for Shared Roadways.

Rationale:

Cobble Hill is a small community with a road network that was not originally designed for pedestrians and cyclists. However, roads serve as important connections between homes, schools and local businesses. As the community continues to grow, there will be an incremental increase in the volume and speed of traffic so that walkers and cyclists are less comfortable using roads as part of a community trail network. Roadway markings and signage that indicate a special designation would remind drivers that they should expect to see walkers and cyclists using certain roads.

Volunteers in Parks*Recommendation:*

Encourage the growth of the CVRD Parks Volunteer program in the Cobble Hill community.

Rationale:

Communities throughout BC have seen tremendous support for parks and trails, with volunteers providing passive reconnaissance and reporting, park and trail maintenance, and park programming. Where these programs have been most successful, there has been recognition of the need to provide staff resources to support volunteer efforts. Staff support may include:

- **logistical** – arranging for hand tools or litter removal after a park clean-up; or
- **organizational** – providing a centralized resource area for volunteer opportunities or advertising and correspondence on behalf of the community.

In all cases, modest investments of staff resources can be shown to provide significant paybacks in achieving the visions of the community and Park Commission.

Park Volunteers – These are individuals or groups who engage in positive community volunteer activity within a specific park. Volunteers may be responsible for organizing occasional park clean-up activities, park events and programs, or monitoring trails and trail use. Example of



Local volunteers building the South Cowichan Off-leash Dog Park

resources to support community park and trail volunteers may include:

- Volunteer access to a CVRD web resource that allows them to easily report current activities in a way that staff and other ‘volunteers’ can easily review; and
- Volunteers invited to training opportunities and special recognition events.

In addition sports associations assist in field or facility maintenance. In the future, volunteer programs could be expanded to provide increased volunteerism for services such as: trail maintenance, invasive plant species removal, and guided nature walks.



Volunteers working hard installing split rail fencing at the Train Station

5.4.3 Park Stewardship

Park stewardship ensures that all changes, policies and management of parks are done in a sustainable manner that respects natural systems, balanced with appropriate opportunities for public use and enjoyment.

Recommendation:

Develop an Environmental Management Strategy in collaboration with the CVRD’s Environmental Division that includes policies and plans for Community Parks.

Rationale:

Public process indicated a desire to see protection and improvement of the area’s natural character. An Environmental Management Strategy for the entire Electoral Area will help set priorities and strategically plan how protection, improvement and maintenance can collectively ensure longevity of the area’s environment. Components related to community parks to be included or referenced within the Environmental Management Strategy include:

- Water conservation with respect to irrigation in community parks and other water conscious strategies.
- A vegetation management plan that preserves sensitive ecosystems, unique habitats and significant ecological sites.
- An urban forestry plan that addresses tree management in parks.
- A wildlife management plan that addresses how to minimize conflicts between wildlife and humans.



Merilees Nature Pond

Recommendation:

Develop and implement a long-term invasive species management plan for Community Park sites in Cobble Hill.

Rationale:

While no current parks in Cobble Hill were identified as having significant invasive species, there remains a risk that unwanted plants or animals will establish themselves from

INVASIVE SPECIES ALERT

Garden Loosestrife
Lysimachia vulgaris



Garden Loosestrife poses a serious threat to this Region. There have been six sightings of Garden Loosestrife in different locations within BC. These locations include Sooke, Shawnigan Lake, Swan Lake as well as three locations in the Greater Vancouver Area. Garden Loosestrife is a perennial which attends to inhabit wetland areas. It can grow up to a half a metre in height. Although *Lysimachia* is sometimes referred to as "loosestrife" it is not from the same family as purple loosestrife. Purple loosestrife is part of the primrose family, *Primulaceae*.

For more information on the plant or to report a sighting please visit the eflora website at: <http://www.geog.ubc.ca/biodiversity/eflora/invasives.html>



adjacent land use activities and development that can cause invasive species to spread to local parks.

Invasive species are defined non-native plants and animals that have established themselves in existing natural areas. These species are generally very aggressive and are a significant threat to natural ecosystems all over Vancouver Island and beyond. The BC Ministry of Forests and Range states that "Invasive plants are a threat to our native environment and are recognized globally as the second greatest threat to biodiversity."

In order to support Cobble Hill's native flora and fauna and support the integrity of natural environments, invasive species management should be an important component of parks and trails management.

Recommendation:

Engage the CVRD's Parks and Trails Division to work with other CVRD Departments to educate residents about "living by water" principles, invasive species management, and important environmental processes that occur in community parks.

Rationale:

Such programs can develop community awareness of not only how environmental sustainability can be achieved within community parks, but that such actions can also be applied to lands (i.e. residential, institutional, commercial etc.) throughout the community. Opportunities to distribute information include:

- Information on the CVRD Website,
- Interpretive Signage (Watson Park, Hatch Point Trail, Fairfield Road Park and Quarry Nature Park are examples of parks in Cobble Hill that may benefit from educational signage),
- The development and distribution of an "invasive species" brochure,
- The development and distribution of a "water protection" information brochure,

- Arranging, supporting and/or developing community invasive species removal workshops or volunteer programs, and
- Arranging, supporting and/or developing community water protection workshops and programs.

Multiple resources provide information and support. Through the Community Parks Program, members of the community can be made more aware of the valuable resources available. Some resources include:

- The Green Shores Project, with the mission to “promote sustainable use of coastal ecosystems through planning and design that recognizes ecological features and functions of coastal systems.”
<http://www.greenshores.ca/sites/greenshores/documents/media/99.pdf>
- The Province of BC’s Stewardship Series publication titled “Access Near Aquatic Areas: A Guide to Sensitive Planning, Design and Management.” This document provides a guide to balancing conservation with development of recreational space.
<http://atfiles.org/files/pdf/aquatic-access-canada.pdf>
- The Living By Water Project, with the mission of “working towards healthier human and wildlife habitat along the shorelines of Canada.” The Project supports groups, agencies and individuals by providing services and materials related to shoreline stewardship.
www.livingbywater.ca
- The Invasive Plant Council of BC is a non-profit society working to minimize the negative ecological, social, and economic impacts caused by the introduction, establishment and spread of invasive plants. The IPCBC is an extensive information source for identifying, monitoring and controlling invasive species, including T.I.P.S., a series of publications that focuses on Integrated Pest Management of common invasive plant species.
www.invasiveplantcouncilbc.ca
- The Coastal Invasive Plant Committee is a non-profit society that focuses specifically on coastal British



Galliers Road Park sports court surrounded by invasive Broom.

Columbia.

www.coastalinvasiveplants.com

- The Ministry of Forests and Range hosts the Invasive Alien Plant Program Application, a database for invasive plants in BC. It holds information about where invasive plant colonies have been identified in BC's communities.
www.for.gov.bc.ca/hra/Plants



View from Satellite Park Drive Beach access

6. IMPLEMENTING THE PARKS STRATEGY

6.1 Parks & Trails Development and Operating Budget Priorities

Planning for the future of parks and trails in Cobble Hill requires an understanding of the funding mechanisms which support the program. Funding for maintenance of existing park facilities, as well as large and small park development projects is important for the long term sustainability of a well-managed parks and trail systems that meets the needs and desires of the community.

The first component of defining priorities for parks and trails development projects required a detailed summary of potential projects that could occur within the community. Field visits were conducted to gain insight on improvements to existing parks and trails. Recommendations for acquisitions were formed by input from the Cobble Hill Parks and Recreation Commission and CVRD Parks and Trails staff.

Following the detailed inventory of potential projects, prioritization was required because not all projects can be completed in a 10-year time horizon. The second open house was the main venue for initiating the prioritization process, followed by review by the Cobble Hill Parks and Recreation Commission and CVRD Parks and Trails staff. Based on the annual parks capital planning budget, the 2012 community parks budget for Cobble Hill is summarized as:

<u>Budget Funding Sources (2012)</u>	
• 2012 Tax Requisition for Cobble Hill Community Parks	\$160,000
• 2011 Unspent Surplus Carry forward	\$14,769
• Transfer from Cobble Hill Community Parks Reserves	<u>\$140,000</u>
Available Funding Sources for 2012	\$314,769
<u>Planned Budget Expenditures (2012)</u>	
• Parks Operations and Maintenance	\$112,244
• Summer Playground Program	\$6,795
• Minor Capital Projects	\$10,730
• Potential Land Purchase	\$140,000
• Major Capital Projects	<u>\$45,000</u>
Planned Expenditures Total 2012	\$314,769

In order to successfully implement this long term community parks and trails strategy, priorities were defined for the capital projects to be implemented in the first 10-years of the Community Parks and Trails Master Plan. A detailed summary of these priorities that are planned for the community are identified in Table 16.

Prioritization was required for these capital projects as not all are achievable within a 10-year time horizon given the level of annual funding support for the Parks and Trails program. As the community grows, priorities can change; therefore, it is important for this plan to be dynamic and flexible. The plan should be reviewed every five years by the local Parks and Recreation Commission to assess whether the goals and vision are being achieved or whether the priority ratings should be adjusted.

- Table 17 provides a summary of the unit cost estimates that were used for estimating potential projects
- Table 18 summarizes the estimates for the Priority 1 (Year 1-10) recommended projects.
- Table 19 summarizes the estimates for the Priority 2 (beyond Year 10) recommended projects.

6.1.2 Maintaining Community Parks and Park Amenities

While the majority of park maintenance funding is established through local taxation, some costs can be supplemented with fees charged for special use of park facilities, and/or provided by volunteers who donated their time. Grant funding opportunities from upper levels of government and NGO's area also sources for potential funding resources.

As park improvements are completed and new parks are acquired, more resources will need to be allocated to maintaining these parks. The Improvements and expansion of the Cobble Hill Parks and Trails system will require increased operational budgets to maintain the current standard of care for community parks and trails.

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MAPS