

## WHAT'S INCLUDED IN CONNECTIVITY?

The Connectivity bold move centres on a big idea to interconnect parks, public spaces, and recreational nodes across the City through new amenities and routes.

The supporting tool—the Citywide Parks and Recreation Network—envisioned vibrant, healthy communities and ecologies by encouraging connection and integration. The Network will create places to play, exercise and socialize while providing pathways for the movement of urban wildlife, and rainwater; and creating beautiful and direct and intuitive connections for pedestrians and cyclists of all ages and abilities.

# MOVE 3: CONNECTIVITY

## TOOL: CITYWIDE PARKS + RECREATION NETWORK

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# BACKGROUND

## 100-YEAR VISION

*As we imagine parks and recreation over the next hundred years, now is the time for bold ideas that tie together visions from the past with our hopes for the future.*

**We envision a network of parks, green spaces and recreation areas, interwoven into everyday life, that connects us to nature, to each other and to ourselves.** We often describe parks and recreation as a system – and for Vancouverites, it should feel that way.

Imagine a seamless public realm that connects places, such as community centres, trail systems and large parks together, and publicly accessible water-front lands that expand access regionally and protects ecosystems. The network will create places to play, exercise and socialise while providing pathways for the movement of urban wildlife, and rainwater; and creating beautiful and direct and intuitive connections for pedestrians and cyclists of all ages and abilities.

With the goal of greater connectivity, the parks and recreation network **will bolster Vancouver's human and ecological health at a site, local, citywide and regional scale.**

This is a big idea, one that will not be achieved by the Park Board alone. Instead it is the envisioned outcome of collaboration with Indigenous rights holders, Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh, City of Vancouver colleagues (principally in Engineering, Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability), Vancouver School Board, Metro Vancouver senior levels of government, not-for-profits, partners, Community Centre Associations, leaseholders, businesses, Business Improvement Areas and community groups.

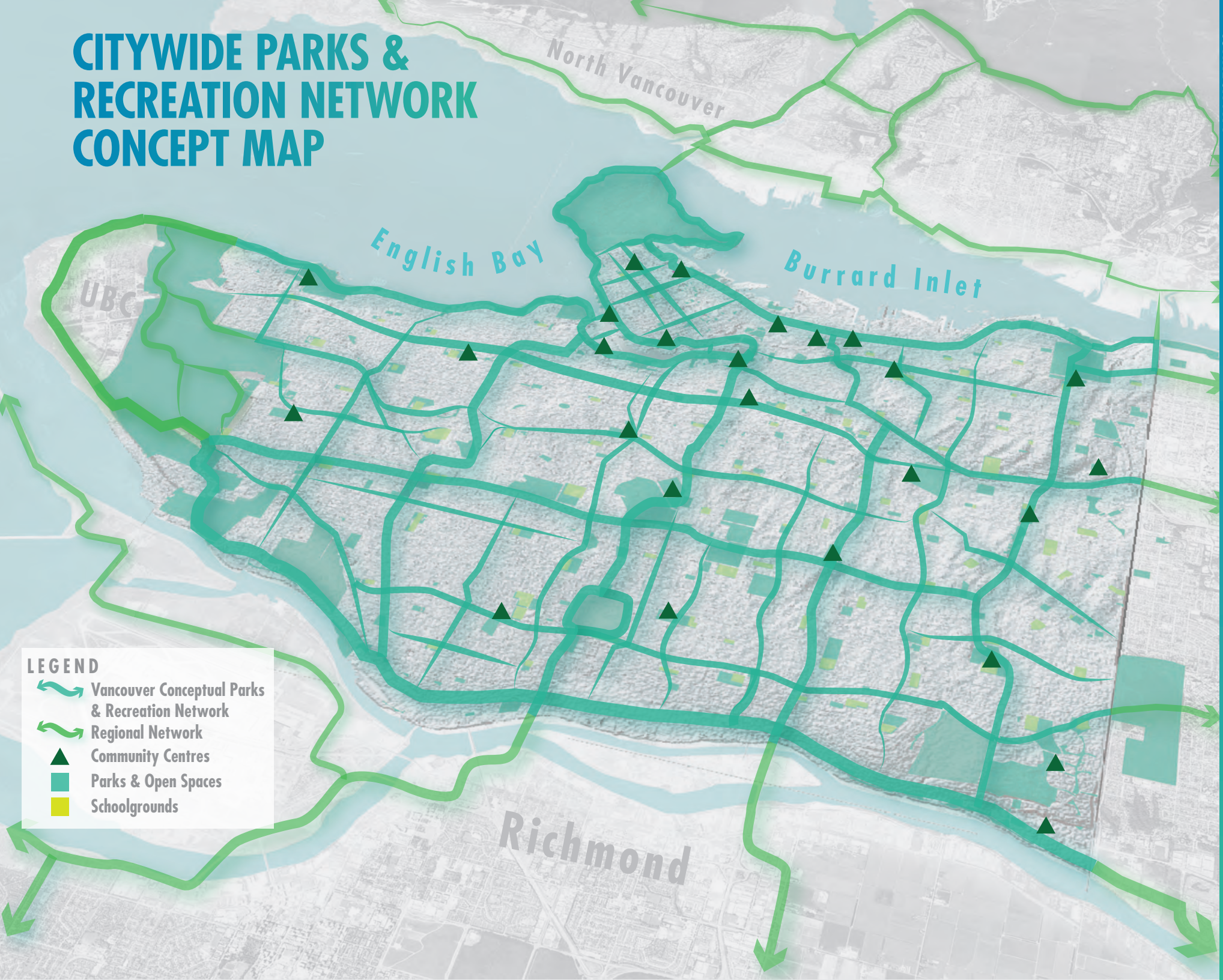
We gratefully acknowledge the system of service providers in which we exist. We are presenting this vision for the purposes of creating and sustaining momentum and identifying where the Park Board can take responsibility for implementation. All parties are invited to interpret the vision in their own way and work with the Park Board to bring it to life.

The graphic to the right presents a concept of a city-wide parks, recreation and nature network. This map is purely illustrative, meant to inspire ideas, collaboration and problem solving.

Implementation will be determined on a case-by-case basis, in collaboration with transit, active transportation, planning and Park Board staff.



# CITYWIDE PARKS & RECREATION NETWORK CONCEPT MAP



# BACKGROUND

## VISIONARY PLANS & POLICIES

*Vancouver has a history of big ideas, including the formation of the Park Board in 1888 to steward the newly designated Stanley Park.*

This 405-hectare park is both an extraordinary testament to the foresight of Vancouver's Western settlers and a solemn place of reflection on the forceful removal of First Nations peoples from their ancestral homeland. Today as we work toward truth and reconciliation and plan for the next one hundred years of our parks and recreation system, the successes and failures of past planning inform our way forward.

The 1922 *Plan for the City of Vancouver* was a seminal plan and led to the establishment of one park every square mile approach. Today, we can see the imprint of that plan in the city's well-distributed parks. The plan also introduced the idea of high streets and pleasure drives—linear connections across neighbourhoods designed for getting around easily by car.

At 28km long, the Stanley Park Seawall is the world's longest uninterrupted urban waterfront path. Clearly the result of extraordinary foresight, its construction commenced in 1917, creating what is now both an international destination and a daily recreational amenity for Vancouverites.

A groundbreaking Urban Landscape Task Force convened in 1991 set in motion Vancouver's enviable network of greenways for walking and cycling. The resultant 1995 Greenways Plan sought to "expand the opportunities for urban recreation and to enhance the experience of nature and city life" by creating a network for city and neighbourhood greenways for pedestrians and cyclists.

In 2018, the Arbutus Greenway reimagined a historic rail corridor and opened up 9km of walking, cycling and rolling opportunity, instantly connecting the north and south of Vancouver like never before. As the greenway develops in the coming years, it will increasingly enliven Vancouver's inland neighbourhoods and serve as a daily recreational and active transportation corridor for all.

## KEY TERMS

### *citywide parks & recreation network*

A connected public realm that links places, such as community centres, greenways and trail systems, large parks and publicly accessible waterfronts together, to expand access regionally and protect ecosystems. Achieved through enhancing existing plans and assets, and creating new routes, the network will be the outcome of collaboration across multiple partners and service providers. See Report 4: *The Playbook: Implementation Plan* for more detailed Implementation steps.





### Harland Bartholomew's Plan For The City Of Vancouver, 1922

# BACKGROUND

## VISIONARY PLANS & POLICIES CONT.

**By weaving the city together with parks and recreation, we are celebrating and building from this legacy.**

Through the work of the Engineering, Planning, Sustainability, and Urban Design teams and various other partners, the City has made tremendous strides in building multimodal streets, growing our urban forest canopy, and working resiliency into our streetscapes. These tangible improvements to the City's infrastructure show a proactive stance on climate readiness and mitigating our impacts by helping move people out of cars and onto sidewalks and bikeways. Citywide plans, such as Greenest City Action Plan, RainCity, Transportation 2040, Healthy City, the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and the upcoming comprehensive City Plan, have already forecast a vision for the city, which we stand ready to help execute.

The Park Board will work collaboratively with City departments, neighbourhood organizations and the Community Centre Associations that make those facilities what they are. We are also positioned, through our colonial audit and commitments to reconciliation, to better listen and collaborate with Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil Waututh Nations and Urban Indigenous peoples to affect change. We are honoured to work alongside these partners and see great potential for the network as a synergetic project that builds capacity across the city.

### WHAT WE HEARD

- There was strong public support for a more “connected” system, and “access to nature” ranked among the top three big ideas for the future of Vancouver.
- In the 2018 TalkVancouver VanPlay survey on the 10 Goals to Shape the Next 25 Years, 93% of respondents supported the goal of a “green network” for people and wildlife to access recreation areas, parkland and shoreline throughout the city. Survey participants commented on the need to expand recreation infrastructure (including improved bicycle and pedestrian paths), provide a continuous seawall around the City's waterfront, increase accessible design, and ensure strategic partnerships and collaboration with local First Nations and Urban Indigenous Peoples.
- We heard that one of the most common barriers to recreation faced by residents is access, availability and integration, and critical to community centre access is transit.
- In his 2017 VanPlay Smart City Talk, ecologist Steven Apfelbaum, encouraged Vancouver to manage it's ecology by considering the wider landscape context.



# BACKGROUND

## A FIVE-MINUTE WALK TO GREEN

*Although Vancouver's much-loved parks are well distributed across neighbourhoods, connecting to, through, and from our green spaces and recreation areas can be a challenge.*

The *Greenest City Action Plan* kickstarted Vancouver on a path to be the greenest city in the world. One of the most ambitious goals of the plan is to have all Vancouverites live within a five-minute walk of a greenspace. Setting this goal is an important acknowledgement of how important it is for all Vancouverites to have green space close to home.

But what does a five-minute walk actually look like? A 400 meter circle around your house is not truly indicative of how far the average person can walk in five minutes. So, the Park Board set out to investigate this further and better understand how to measure success against this goal of city-wide access to high quality greenspace and recreation.

The 2016 (updated in 2018) *Park Provision Study* developed a new methodology to measure the walkable catchment of parks, which models human travel patterns and creates a realistic, yet functional network for accessibility analysis. The methodology considers delays caused by barriers, such as major roads, time lag on steep slopes, and wait time at intersections. It gives us a much more accurate understanding of how far you really live from a park. This new methodology found that 99% of Vancouver residents are within a 10-minute walk of a green space (parks, schools and other public open spaces) and 73% are within a 5-minute walk of a park.



Cover pages of Greenest City (2011)  
and Vancouver Park Provision Study (2018)



# BACKGROUND

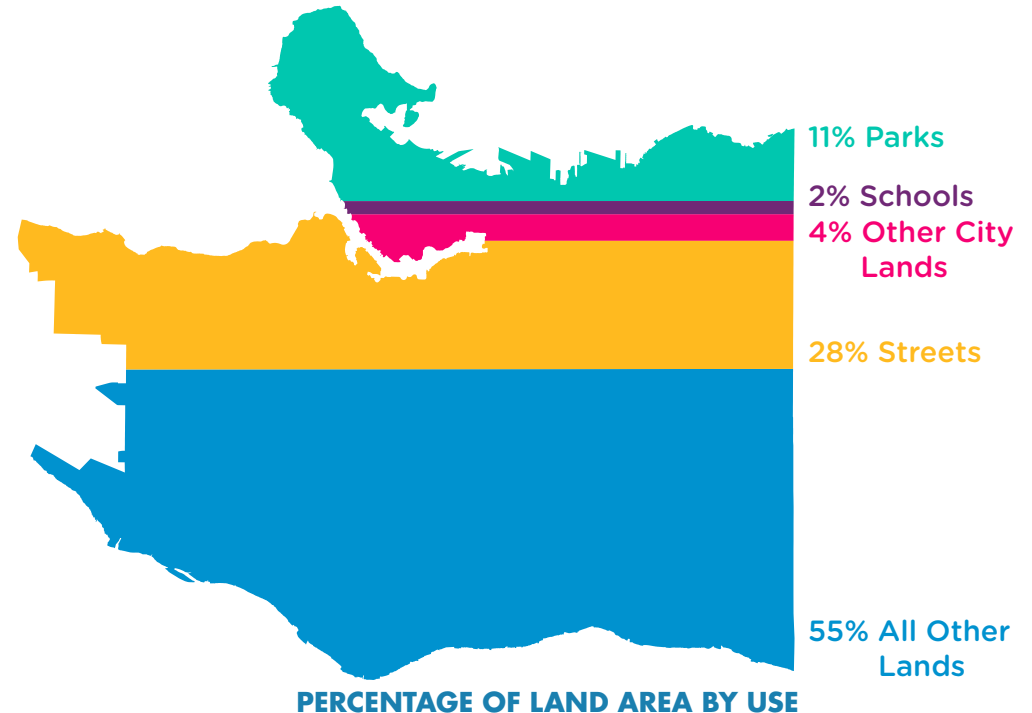
## WHY WEAVE PARKS & RECREATION?

*Large parks cannot be everywhere, but we can provide better access to those we have by creating a network of park-like experiences between them.*

With space at a premium, competing demands for park space and limited resources, it is becoming increasingly difficult to secure additional land for parks and recreation areas. A city-wide parks and recreation network is ultimately an encapsulation of our everyday lives: a safe walk to school, a training ground, and a place to learn from and to grow. From integrating exercise into our commute to creating citywide wildlife corridors, to connecting the city's core to beautiful shorelines, this vision of connectivity brings nature to our doorsteps and recreation to our weekly routines. Networks can be a catalyst for something bigger; vibrant, active lifestyles, strong communities, and healthy ecosystems. Parks account for 11% of Vancouver's land (see figure at right). As the population grows, the city's park space will need to accommodate more recreational use or become harder working parks. In addition, there are opportunities for recreation to connect through the network to schools and streetscapes as the city grows and land becomes more precious.

A ratio of population density to park area gives us a sense of how hard parks are working to meet the needs of the community, which acts as a proxy for quality and demand. Parks can "work harder" in many ways – resilient surfaces, more amenities, additional maintenance, programming and activation. All parks have the potential to thrive in a dense environment. With appropriate and balanced investment, maintenance and mindful park programming and design, parks don't have to be huge to be great.

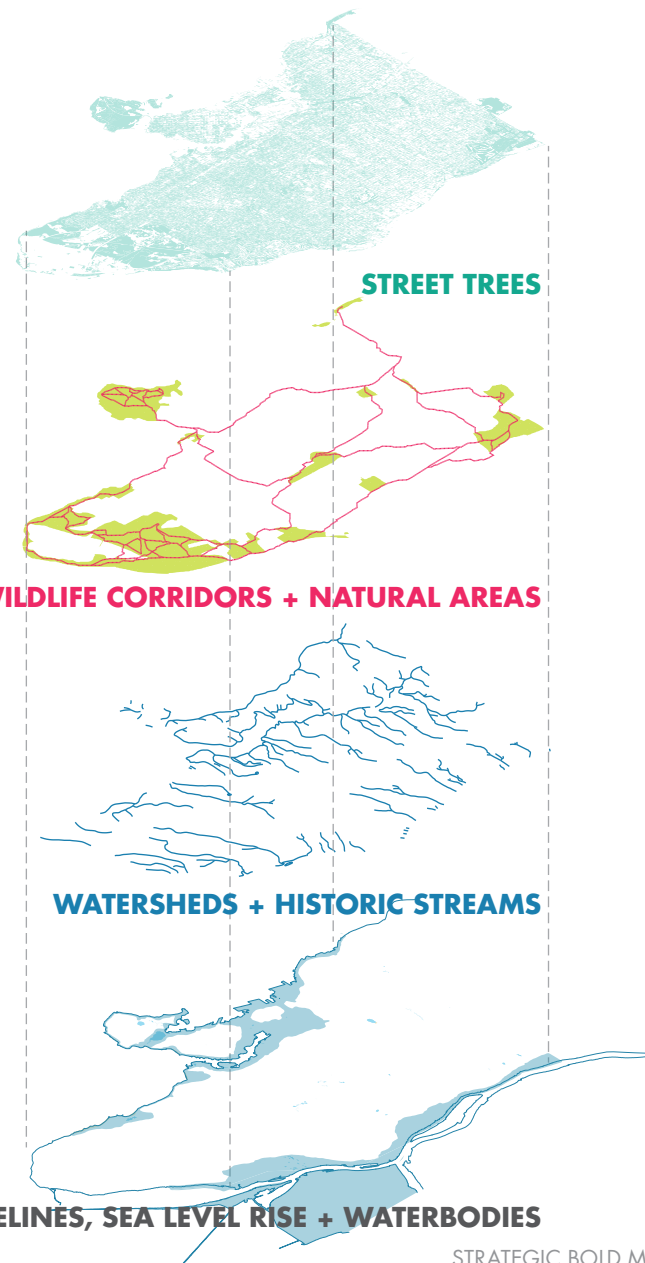
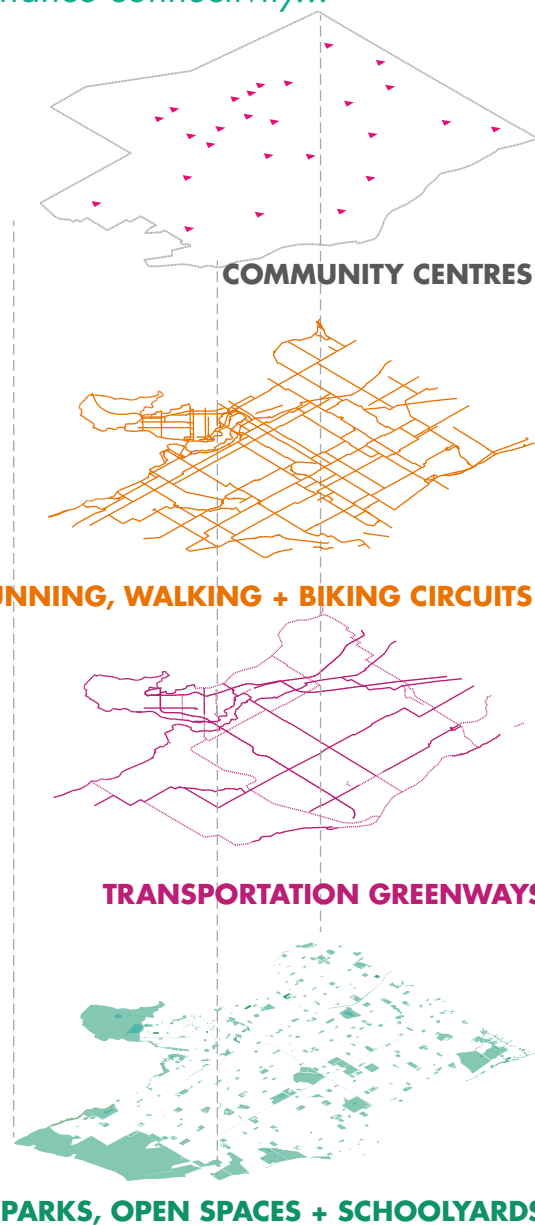
Viewing the city through this lens of connectivity presents an opportunity to revisit the role open space plays in ensuring ecological integrity and quality of life. Like many other parks and open space systems worldwide, Vancouver is challenged by the pressures of population growth, tourism, changing demographics, limited resources, evolving trends in recreation and shifting environmental conditions. This Bold Move and its supporting tool will ensure better access to well-connected, high functioning open spaces that support other city planning and respond to diverse needs.



# BACKGROUND

## LAYERS OF CONNECTIVITY

*A sample of components we are layering to create and enhance connectivity...*



# BACKGROUND

## NETWORK COMPONENTS & DESTINATIONS

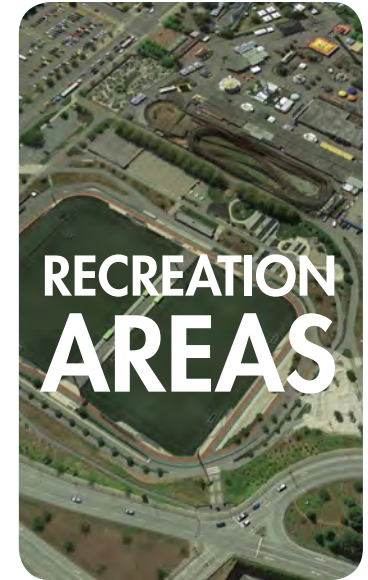
*Paths, bike routes, green corridors, street trees and your favorite bench on the seawall are all ways to connect the network.*

**The scope of this work is limited to outdoor open spaces that are publicly owned or publicly accessible, and the primary focus is on planning physical connections and infrastructure, as opposed to programming or other methods of animation.**

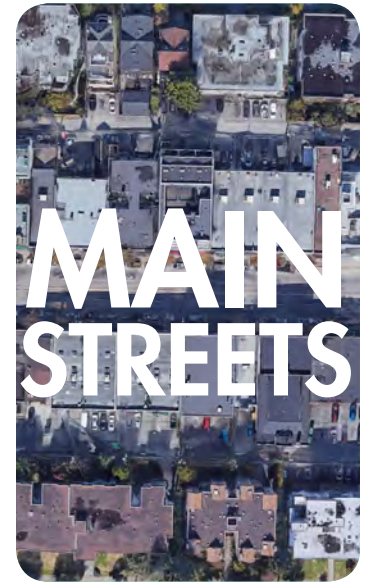
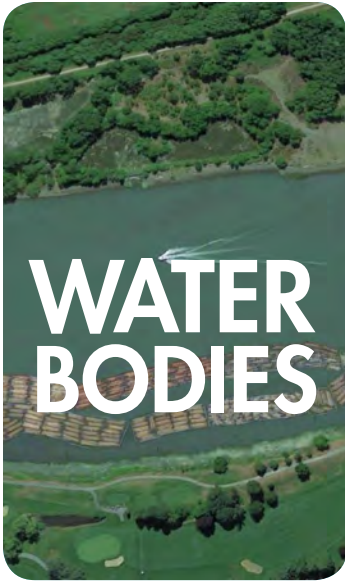
Community centres, pools, rinks, and parks anchor the network and act as destinations. Recreationally, community centres provide opportunities to increase everyday fitness amenities, such as looped trails, playing fields and play areas. These amenities build community capacity by providing low-barrier recreation, responding to demographic trends and needs of an aging population and drawing the neighbourhood outdoors to create a shared armature for health and wellness.

By tailoring each section of the network to the uniqueness of its neighbourhood, we can demonstrate the power of working together and plan for a variety of character types that integrate neighbours' diverse needs into decision-making. Co-creation and co-location of destinations and byways such as community centres, rinks, pools, courts, parks, open space, main streets, libraries, and trails serve the needs of many in one location and allow for innovative programming, walkable neighbourhoods and meeting people where they are. High-quality design of network components can also address safety concerns through increased activation of open spaces.

*What we are connecting...*









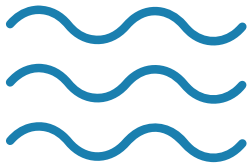
# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This vision is guided by four main principles:

1. *Vibrant, active communities*



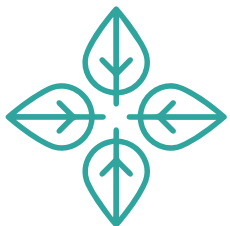
2. *Flow of water*



3. *Sense of place*



4. *Thriving ecosystems*



# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

## VIBRANT, ACTIVE COMMUNITIES

*Better connectivity helps create active, healthy, social communities with a high quality of life.*

Open spaces promote wellness by supporting active transportation, mental health and wellbeing, and opportunities to learn, celebrate, play and recreate. According to a 2019 study published in the International Journal of Environmental Health Research, spending just 20 minutes in nature or in a park—even if you do not exercise while you are there—is enough to improve wellbeing.

Parks and community centres do not exist in isolation. Stronger connections between them can build a healthier, resilient and more adaptive system. By moving beyond simple standards for the amount of open space, this Bold Move calls for a well-connected set of multifunctional open spaces.

The City's greenway network is envisioned to provide access to safe and green active transportation and recreation paths throughout the city. City Council has set ambitious goals through *Transportation 2040*, *Greenest City Action Plan*, the *Healthy City Strategy*, and the *Climate Emergency Response* to continue to work towards the goal of a sustainable, healthy city. By enhancing the urban forest, providing connected trails to, and through desirable destinations (parks and community centres), the Park Board contributes to making

active transportation more appealing and reducing trips made by car. Currently 63% of parks and 58% of community centres are fronted by a bikeway or greenway on at least one side.<sup>1</sup> By working together to make these destinations more accessible, and creating a connected system, we can achieve multiple goals.

Opportunities to play, run and connect increase our collective quality of life and ease the journey from home to work and other activities. Connectivity, access to the water, proximity to a park and attractive streets support better health and wellbeing. For example, you are more likely to walk to a school, community centre or workplace if your journey is through a park or along a well-lit, tree-lined street. The *UBC Cycling in Cities* study found that popular cycling routes were those well away from traffic, and associated noise and air pollution, and provided beautiful scenery (such as a park).

The network connects people by providing places for communities to gather and thrive. From parks and plazas to greenways and community event spaces, the network provides residents and visitors the opportunity to experience a wide range of amenities and activities.



A 2017 study found that where residents feel that they have access to a large park, the beach, or a beautiful neighbourhood, with high street connectivity, they were increasingly more likely to walk for recreation — 9 minutes per week or 12% more often, for each of those four factors (so, 36 minutes more per week or 48% more frequently if you combine all four).

*Christian, Knuiman, Divitini et al., 2017, A longitudinal analysis of the influence of the neighborhood environment on recreational walking within the neighborhood, Environmental Health Perspectives 125:7, University of Western Australia*

<sup>1</sup> Vancouver Park Board & Design Workshop Consultants. *VanPlay Report 1: Inventory and Analysis*, Vancouver, BC 2018





Orcas breaching in English Bay | Park Board



# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

## FLOW OF WATER

*Water is a central character in the story of Vancouver. The health and wellbeing of the city and its residents are closely linked to the water that surrounds us.*

People gravitate to water; for relaxation, play, replenishment, and restoration. While we need to manage water from an infrastructure perspective, we must also consider the daily human experience. By honouring the flow of water, unearthing historic streams, improving water quality, creating healthy habitats and urban ecosystems, we can reconnect the system for the benefit of everyone.

91% of Vancouver's original streams have been buried. Encouragingly, stream restoration and ecological management efforts have resulted in salmon returning to some of the city's creeks since 2012. This presents a unique and wonderful connection to nature for Vancouverites and demonstrates the improving health of streams.

The City's Green Infrastructure Team is revolutionizing how Vancouver manages its water resources. By keeping water close to its source, slowing water flows, and encouraging infiltration, we can create a city that acts more like a sponge. From vegetated swales to daylighting streams, these interventions improve water quality, increases urban greenery

and reduce the city's reliance on aging pipe infrastructure. This provides many benefits for parks including keeping them greener for longer through the year and providing places for nature play. Delivering cleaner water to receiving bodies, such as False Creek, will improve our beaches and waterways - good news for birds, fish, whales and of course, all of us.

Vancouverites value access to the water; and today 63% of the city's shoreline is protected as public land<sup>1</sup>. By prioritizing access to the water, we do not mean to assume that these areas will be managed as typical "parks" but rather, we intend to find opportunities to work together with First Nations rightsholders to further shared values of ecological protection, connecting to the land and learning. Collaboration is key; by seeking public access to waterfront land, we allow different types of physical space to work together to enhance the experiences of all.

Climate change brings with it the need for new ideas and a commitment to respond to sea level rise, reduce use of potable water, and increase green coverage to keep the city cool and protect against extreme weather events. Actions such as increasing development setbacks along the Fraser River, investigating design innovations that allow us to increase recreational access to waterways, implementing thoughtful green infrastructure projects, and managing the urban forest to be sustainable in a changing climate will set us up for success as the climate changes.

<sup>1</sup> Vancouver Waterfront Inventory, 2011.

*"There is a profound tie to the water that is expressed through the orientation of the coastal villages to the waterfront."*

*"This physical and spiritual connection is a key Indigenous design principle."*

**Indigenous  
Engagement  
Summary Report,  
Northeast False  
Creek Park Design,  
June 2018**



# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

## SENSE OF PLACE

*Vancouver's network of parks and recreation opportunities showcases its unique cultural and ecological character, and celebrates the cultural diversity of our rapidly growing, thriving city.*

What makes Vancouver, Vancouver for you? Is it being able to see the North Shore Mountains? Smelling the salty sea air? Cruising around the seawall? Is it seeing the crows fly over East Vancouver? Or seeing a friend and stopping to talk?

The character of Vancouver, beyond its dramatic natural setting, is characterized by its parks and beaches, accented with big trees, lush vegetation and daily encounters with wildlife. The urban forest connects the city's streets, parks and neighbourhoods, creating coherent patterns and comfortable spaces for people to enjoy.

Sense of place is determined by personal experiences, social interactions and identities. In a 2016 North American Association for Environmental Education study, researchers found that people with a heightened sense of place appreciate natural and ecological aspects of cities more.<sup>1</sup> Nurturing a positive sense of place takes collaboration, co-creation, thoughtful design and excellent ongoing cultivation.

The network will reflect key themes and First Nations principles, such as a strong sense of belonging on the land, relationship to the water and orientation to the waterfront, and the importance of gathering spaces and places to heal. Keeping "place" at the centre of design and management of the network is an opportunity for the City to listen and learn from First Nations, whose land management and adaptive practices have allowed them to effectively care for this land since time immemorial.

Parks and recreation spaces can be seen as inaccessible because they feel unsafe, unwelcoming, exclusive or otherwise threatening on a variety of scales, which make them ineffective as "places." We will reduce barriers to access at a local, city and regional scale by problem-solving with the community.

Connecting people with open space, nature and each other on a day-to-day basis is dependent on those spaces being easily accessible and integrated into everyday routine. Getting outside everyday connects you to the world and your community. The pace of observing the world while walking or cycling allows you time to see your neighbours, the seasons changing, flowers, birds, bees and trees.

In the case of an emergency or disaster, social and physical connectivity supports resilience. Socially connected communities where people know their neighbours are more than just beneficial to daily health and wellbeing; connection between people and groups is also one of the most significant predictors of fast and effective disaster recovery. Ensuring the city is easy to navigate with integrated open spaces increases access to community facilities which supports fast and efficient emergency response.

<sup>1</sup> Adams, J., Greenwood, D., Thomashow, M., and Russ, A. "Sense of Place." *The Nature of Cities*. North American Association for Environmental Education. 2016.



# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

## SENSE OF PLACE (CONTINUED)

The more you are connected to a place physically, the more you are connected to it mentally. Being in a place you care for and about, contributing to collective art-making, restoring local natural areas, or planting a community garden, contributes to a collective sense of place that can build on existing local neighbourhood character and develop values surrounding green space and ecological aspects of the place.

Strengthening connections between people and shared places is a collaborative process. This is why it is so important that communities are fully involved in the implementation of connectivity in their neighbourhood. We will work together to integrate parks and recreation in a way that is grounded in place, is conscious of equity, and makes sense for you and your community.



### WHAT IS SENSE OF PLACE?

“Different people perceive the same city or neighborhood in different ways. While one person may appreciate the ecological and social aspects, another may experience environmental and racialized injustice.

A place may also conjure contradicting emotions—the warmth of community and home juxtaposed with the stress of dense urban living. Sense of place—the way we perceive places such as streets, communities, cities or ecoregions—influences our wellbeing, how we describe and interact with a place, what we value in a place, our respect for ecosystems and other species, how we perceive the affordances of a place, our desire to build more sustainable and just urban communities, and how we choose to improve cities.

Our sense of place also reflects our historical and experiential knowledge of a place, and helps us imagine its more sustainable future.”

*Excerpt from: Adams, Greenwood, Thomashow and Russ, 2016, Urban EE Essays – Sense of Place, North American Association for Environmental Education.*





# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

## THRIVING ECOSYSTEMS

*As Vancouver expanded, much of the natural environment was cleared. Focused effort has protected, restored or rebuilt more than 480 hectares of natural area within the city boundaries.*

Weaving with parks and recreation provides an essential ecological backbone for the city as it grows and densifies. The urban ecosystem supports biodiversity, climate regulation, food production, risk mitigation, and waste and water management. Hundreds of thousands of trees and the city's natural areas already work hard to improve air quality, reduce urban heat, and allow for the movement of wildlife. Environmentally, new routes can expand urban wildlife corridors and increase Vancouver's capacity for resiliency at a citywide scale in the face of shrinking shorelines and an increase of extreme weather events. Urban ecological networks and street trees provide resiliency to climate change through shade, evaporative cooling and stormwater infiltration services.<sup>1</sup>

Robust linkages between large natural areas must be maintained to support a thriving ecosystem. Establishing and maintaining a robust urban forest and network of natural areas is the focus of the Park Board's *Biodiversity Strategy*

<sup>1</sup> WIREs Clim Change 2012, 3:581–596. doi: 10.1002/wcc.195

(2016) and *Urban Forest Strategy* (2018). The Park Board cares for more than 147,000 street trees, which are a powerful tool for increasing ecological connectivity.

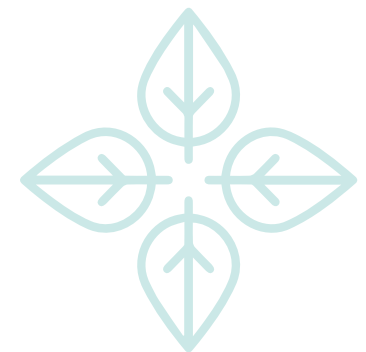
While it is unlikely that a new, large park (like Stanley Park) will be achievable, we can continue to support the city's ecosystems by increasing connectivity between existing large natural areas. This can be achieved by filling gaps in the urban forest by planting trees on public land (streets and parks), encouraging planting on private lands, and continuing to increase "naturally managed" areas in places where it works. Innovation is required in advancing ecological health in the city. For example, there are many competing demands for park space (habitat, sport, events, passive recreation, etc.) and as populations increase, these competing demands are creating pinch points. Many of the available planting spots on streets have been filled, making new planting hard due to poor soils, lack of adequate soil depth and lack of space. The changing climate requires faster rates of replacement, reconsideration of species choice and management techniques.

Increased ecological connectivity between large areas of habitat will support and enhance the environment by sustaining healthy and resilient ecosystems. For example, "almost 80% of bird families include some insects in their diet."<sup>2</sup> Many birds feed their fast-growing young a diet of insects, spiders, and other invertebrates. To support a healthy avian population in the city we need to think of insects too. Ecosystem connectivity supports the interconnected web of life.

<sup>2</sup> Klasing, Kirk C. 1998. *Comparative Avian Nutrition*. CAB International, NY.

*"Biodiversity in urban landscapes depends on maintaining a network of connected natural areas anchored by larger patches such as Stanley Park, the Fraser River, and Pacific Spirit Regional Park. We call it the "ecological network," which reflects how it functions as a connected system."*

**Biodiversity Strategy, 2016**



# APPROACH

## PROJECTS WITH MULTIPLE BENEFITS

*The Park Board will take a multiple-benefit approach to create a citywide network of parks and recreation experiences.*

Projects which achieve multiple objectives, and perform multiple functions, make the most efficient use of public land, which is a scarce but valuable civic resource. This land use planning approach looks for solutions based on the interactive and interdependent nature of many factors, including how people use the land, development planning, surface and groundwater flows, landforms and slopes, species and habitats and ecological conservation.

This network will act as a living framework, allowing the city to make the best use of its lands, bringing together key information on the opportunities and challenges the city faces as it grows and develops. For example, a constructed wetland can provide stormwater management, aesthetic, educational, recreational, and habitat functions simultaneously. Where functions overlap, the Park Board, City and community partners must coordinate to determine how best to create, accommodate and complement different uses.

From wetlands to ice rinks, running trails to social gathering spaces, the network concept responds to the needs and identities of Vancouver's diverse communities, by offering a

set of solutions, appropriate for various scales and contexts. While climate change, for example, may necessitate new stretches of seawall in some areas, green infrastructure and adapted playing fields may help address flooding in others.

These components can be localized as neighbourhood projects that will incrementally build toward a citywide network, improving quality of life across Vancouver. The multiple-benefit approach also allows flexibility of scale in implementation to empower City staff to partner on large-scale efforts and residents to advocate for desired components and/or to reflect on the cultural diversity and ecology of their neighbourhood.



START



## MULTIPLE BENEFITS BOARD GAME

How many of these benefits can be incorporated into a place, project or program?

CONNECTIVITY

FINISH



# PUBLIC SPACE SUPERHERO CHOOSE-YOUR-OWN NETWORK GAME

**PICK 2! OR MORE!**  
**DESTINATIONS**

*What destinations  
will we connect?*

**COMMUNITY CENTRES**

**PARKS**

**DESTINATION GARDENS**

**MAIN STREETS**

**NATURAL AREAS**

**FIELD HOUSES**

**CULTURAL FACILITIES**

**WATERBODIES**

**PICK 1! OR MORE!**  
**CONNECTORS**

*With what connectors?*

**REGIONAL TRAILS**

**WILDLIFE CORRIDORS**

**GREENWAYS**

**STREET GREENING**

**FLYWAYS**

**RUNNING CIRCUITS**

**DAYLIT STREAMS**

**SEAWALLS**

**PICK 1! OR MORE!**  
**ENHANCERS**

*And what enhancers are  
there are along the way?*

**POCKET PARKS**

**PUBLIC ART**

**HORTICULTURE**

**DRINKING FOUNTAINS**

**RESTROOMS**

**PLAY AREAS**

**GREEN ROOFS**

**SITTING AREAS**



*This graphic was developed by the VanPlay External Advisory Group  
as a compelling and simple way to illustrate connectivity through parks and recreation.*



# APPROACH

## NETWORK ENHANCERS

*Elements which aid in creating a comfortable, colourful, safe and attractive network...*



Green Roofs



Pocket Parks



Pop-Up Parks



Washrooms



Bike Repair Stations



Play Areas



Horticulture



Public Art



Drinking Fountains



Lighting



Wayfinding



Sitting Areas

# ANALYSIS

## THE CITY & BEYOND

*Vancouver exists within a complex landscape of natural, traditional, and political boundaries and jurisdictions.*

This landscape provides a backdrop for the network of parks and recreation opportunities to thrive by adding connections between places, partners and neighbours. The main goal of this Bold Move and its supporting tool is to create vibrant, healthy communities by encouraging connection and integration of open space at neighbourhood, community, city and regional levels.

Small-scale actions will help serve the overall vision of connecting the entire landscape. Some examples of how this citywide network will work in small-scale ways to strengthen neighbourhoods include:

- Partnering with Vancouver School Board to improve open access to school lands for recreational activities during out of schools hours;
- Locating and designing community centres and facilities to accommodate easy transitions between indoor and outdoor programming;
- Co-locating new and renewed parks and recreation amenities and facilities such as community centres with schools and libraries, and playgrounds with skateparks and community gardens

- Coordinating with Viva Vancouver and the City's Street Activities team to create parklets, convert street ends to plazas, and activate streets and laneways; and
- Working with the "Safe Routes to Schools" program to continue mapping out and improving routes to schools and community centres by building better connections with bike paths; improving neighbourhood traffic calming through curb bulb-outs and raised crosswalks; improving lighting; and adding street trees and way-finding signage.

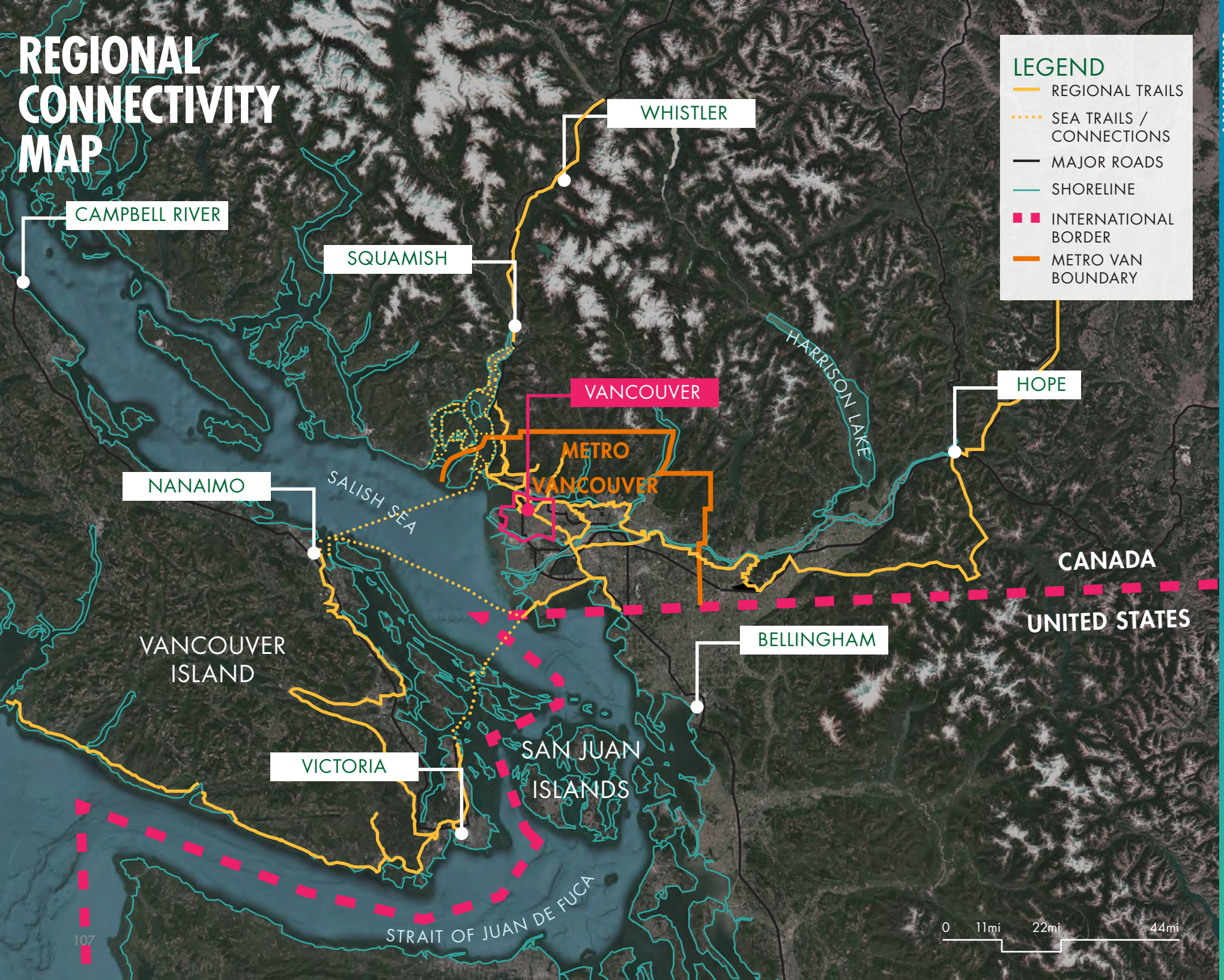
**Metro Vancouver's Regional Parks Department mission statement is "Protecting the region's natural areas and connecting people with them," and as a member of the Council of the Metro Vancouver region, we are champions of this endeavour and have crafted this vision to help achieve it.**

This Bold Move offers the opportunity to tie into regional parks and recreation connectivity initiatives, including:

- Pacific Spirit Regional Park on the western boundary of the city, managed by Metro Vancouver;
- North Shore trails including Spirit Trail, The Great Trail, Baden Powell Trail, and Grouse Grind with connection via the SeaBus Terminal/ Waterfront Station in Downtown Vancouver;
- BC Parkway and Central Valley Greenway routes that connect Westminster Quay waterfront to False Creek via a 19km linear park;
- Richmond's foreshore and Sea Island trails which connect to the Iona Beach jetty; and
- Experience the Fraser (ETF) project proposing 550km+ of trails and blueways (water) routes linking cultural and heritage destinations along the Lower Fraser River Corridor connecting Hope to the Salish Sea.



# REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY MAP





# ANALYSIS

## DAY IN THE LIFE: STILL CREEK

A day along the network of parks and recreation enables old and young Vancouver residents to live inside-out: the network punctuates our day-to-day responsibilities with opportunities for recreation and cultural connection.

The route offers expansive views followed by moments of solitude along a sunlit stream.

### YOUNG FAMILY



7:00 AM Walk to school through Renfrew Ravine Park



4:30 PM After-school art classes at Renfrew CC



5:00 PM Walk the Dog in the Park Off Leash Area Near Renfrew CC



6:00 PM Check in on community garden at Slocan Park on way home

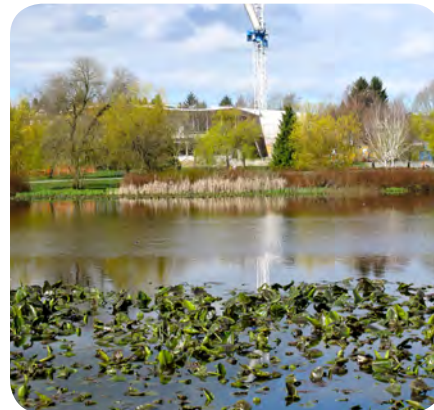
### OLDER ADULT



9:30 AM Morning skate at Trout Lake Rink



11:15 AM Vancouver Farmer's Market at John Hendry Park



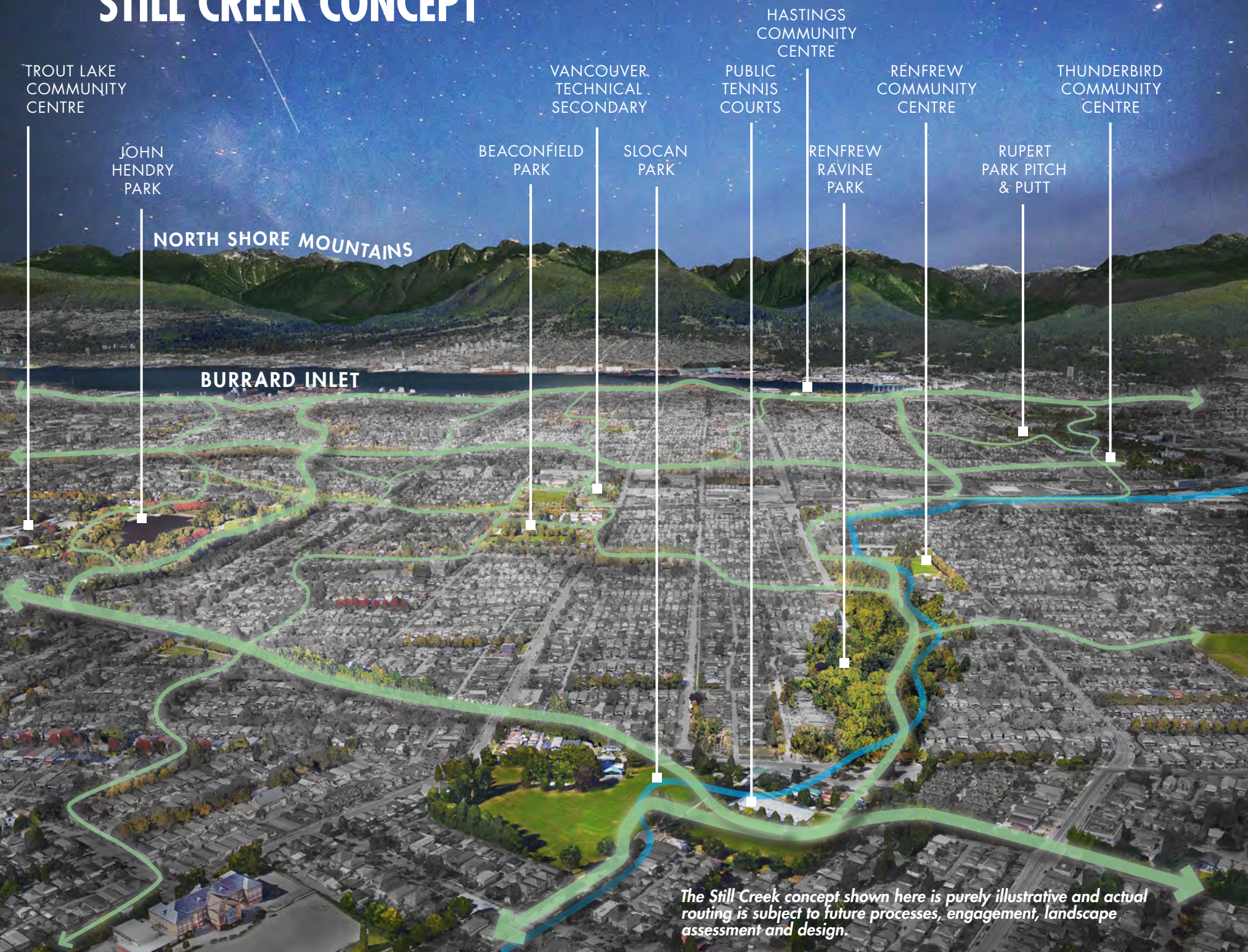
1:05 PM Walk home around the lake



6:00 PM Moon Festival at Still Creek



# STILL CREEK CONCEPT





# ANALYSIS

## DAY IN THE LIFE: LITTLE MOUNTAIN TO BIG RIVER

The environment along the network of parks and recreation enables urban wildlife and rainwater to thrive. By accommodating natural systems into our city's infrastructure, humans reap ecosystem benefits, ranging from reduced

risk of flooding, better storm water quality, opportunities for co-location of new and improved recreation infrastructure and more opportunities to plug into nature for health and wellness benefits.

### RAIN DROP



9:42 PM Hit the roof of Bloedel Conservatory



10:15 PM Run downhill between trees at Queen Elizabeth Park



1:12 AM Release into the Fraser River estuary marshlands



6:37 AM Lapped up by an urban adapted coyote

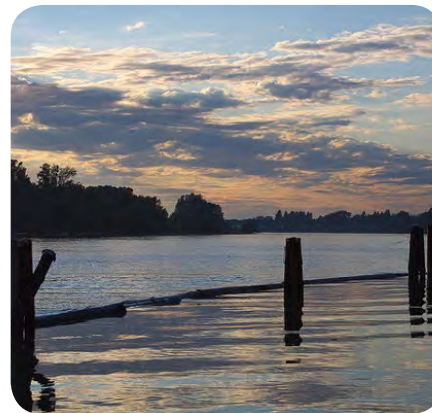
### YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER



6:26 AM Morning song in nest in the Quarry Garden



8:42 AM Fly over Langara Golf Course



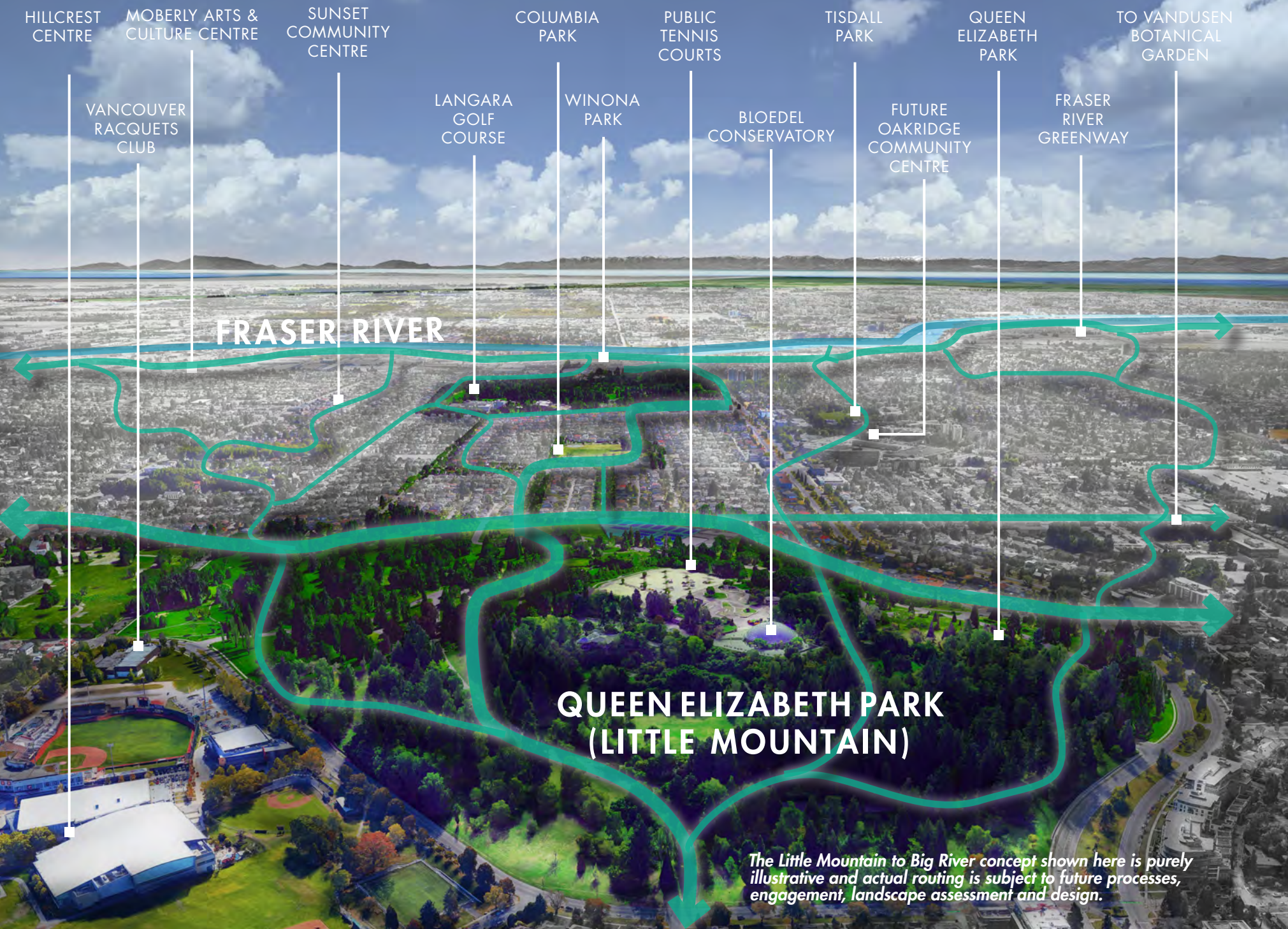
7:12 PM Hunt for insects along banks at Fraser River Park



9:02 PM Rest on flight home at Oakridge Centre roof garden



# LITTLE MOUNTAIN TO BIG RIVER CONCEPT





# NEXT STEPS

## RECOMMENDATIONS

*The vision for a connected parks, recreation and nature experience leverages the legacy of past visionaries and embodies an ethos of respect and collaboration with First Nations people who have been stewarding the land for millennia.*

Creating an integrated network will require innovation and experimentation to combat the realities of climate change and increasing competition for the use of public land.

Reflecting on the vision and findings outlined here, the implementation steps provided in *Report 4: The Playbook: Implementation Plan* will provide plans, projects and partnerships that aim to support this Bold Move.

### PRIORITY ACTION

Enshrine a citywide bold vision for connectivity into everyday thinking by advocating for further development of the concept and vision of the Network as part of the upcoming *Vancouver Plan* and future city-wide planning such as renewing the *Greenways Plan*.

Supporting actions to achieve greater connectivity for parks and recreation include:

### Policies

- Advance an internal Park Board and City **interdepartmental working group** to coordinate efforts and identify opportunities for increased connectivity, putting into practice the “multiple-benefit approach” as described in this chapter. This working group should include, at a minimum, the Park Board Park Planning, Park Development, Recreation and Operations groups, as well as the following City departments: Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability.
- During **park and community centre renewals**, upgrade and development projects should make use of thorough community consultation and context-specific details to determine how best to increase connectivity to, within and through the site.
- Develop policy and/or guideline documents to address various connectivity topics, contexts and design considerations. These new documents are to reside in the proposed **Park Board Policy Manual** where appropriate.



## Partnerships

- Partner with First Nations, Community Centre Associations, community organizations, and City of Vancouver departments for **shared visioning** and implementation of the citywide network of parks and recreation opportunities.
- Work with City, First Nations and regional partners to find policy, acquisition and design solutions to increase **public access to shorelines** and plan for how that access will adapt as sea levels rise. No decisions regarding the design, ownership or function of shorelines, beaches and subtidal zones should be made without genuine collaboration with Musqueam, Squamish and Tseil-Waututh Nations. These spaces open up new possibilities for reconciliation and cooperation.
- Coordinate with **Transportation Planning** to create walking, biking and rolling opportunities to lower emissions, encourage active lifestyles and more intimate connections as people move from place to place.

## Projects

- Create a map for the City's **Geographic Information System** (GIS) which identifies existing connectivity and gaps, design improvements required, and potential partnerships. Development of this map should be iterative to allow for continual improvement over time as more data is collected. Qualitative information should be collected in collaboration with the community, external partners and stakeholders.
- Undertake further study locations for **habitat corridors** based on urban wildlife movement, biodiversity hotspots, watersheds and green infrastructure gaps, as guided by the *Rain City Strategy*, *Biodiversity Strategy (2016)* and the *Urban Forest Strategy (2019)* at a minimum.
- Grow the urban forest and address **street tree deficits**.
- Scope potential for increased activation of parks by identifying **locations for placemaking** and pilot projects in parks and adjacent to community centres.