

The background is a vibrant, stylized illustration. At the top, a large white silhouette of a person is jumping joyfully. Below this, a city skyline is depicted in shades of orange and red. In the foreground, there are green evergreen trees, a blue body of water, and various recreational activities: a person on a skateboard, a person on a bicycle, and a group of people walking. The overall color palette is dominated by warm oranges, reds, and yellows, with cooler blues and greens at the bottom.

**Van  
Play**  
Imagine  
parks+recreation

# **VANCOUVER'S PARKS AND RECREATION: INVENTORY & ANALYSIS**

**REPORT 1-JULY 2018**





# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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*Approved by the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation – 23 July 2018*



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# ORIENTATION

## HOW DO I USE THIS DOCUMENT?

Vancouver's stunning, world-class parks are the culmination of more than a century of committed effort by the Vancouver Park Board. From our world-renowned seawalls to our lush destination gardens to our network of vibrant neighbourhood parks, it's a legacy we're proud of.

What's next for parks and recreation in Vancouver? How do we respond to the challenges we are currently facing and thrive into the future? To answer these questions the Park Board set out to create a new "Parks and Recreation Services Master Plan." We've called the journey "VanPlay," the first city-wide review of parks and recreation services we've done since 1992.

In 2017, we commenced robust data collection and analysis, research on international best practices and consultation with the public, Park Board staff, partners, stakeholders and experts. The result of this work is presented in four parts:

- **Vancouver's Parks And Recreation: Inventory & Analysis** – a compendium to the current state of the City's parks and recreation system - *this document* (2018)
- **Vancouver's Parks And Recreation: 10 Goals to Shape the Next 25 Years** – a set of aspirational statements to set the course for parks and recreation into the future (2018)
- **Vancouver's Parks and Recreation: Strategic Bold Moves** – outlining bold strategies to deliver on the vision for the future over the next 25 years (2019)
- **Vancouver's Parks and Recreation: Playbook** – the plan for implementation and operationalization of these big moves (2019)



## VANCOUVER'S PARKS AND RECREATION: INVENTORY & ANALYSIS

This report provides an overview of the current state of Vancouver's parks and recreation system and an introduction to the Park Board's assets, programs and operations. Due to the breadth of work undertaken and the services, programs and experiences offered by the Park Board, it does not attempt to cover everything. This document focuses in on the work of the Park Board with the acknowledgement that there is a vast network of partners and organizations that make the system what it is. For example, it does not address community centre operations or programming, marinas and speciality attractions, like the Stanley Park Train.

This thorough inventory and analysis provides the groundwork for future goals, actions and recommendations that will be issued in subsequent reports.





## THE VANCOUVER BOARD OF PARKS AND RECREATION

*The Vancouver Park Board is the only elected body of its kind in Canada. Formed in 1888 as a committee to manage the new Stanley Park, its history is as old as the city itself.*

It has exclusive possession, jurisdiction and control over 230+ public parks in Vancouver and a large public recreation system of community centres, pools, rinks, fitness centres, golf courses, street trees, marinas, playing fields and more.

The Vancouver Park Board's mission is to provide, preserve and advocate for parks and recreation services to benefit all people, communities and the environment.

The elected nature of the Park Board and the strength and focus of its mandate have resulted in urban parks and recreation that today hold an enviable and esteemed position world-wide.

The City of Vancouver, including the Vancouver Park Board, is regulated under the *Vancouver Charter*, a provincial statute. The Charter contains the rules that govern how the City operates, what bylaws City Council can create and how budgets are set. The seven members of the Park Board (Commissioners) are nominated and elected at the same time and in the same manner as City Councillors.

The elected Park Board is supported by a dedicated team of over 1000 City of Vancouver staff who oversee everything from lifeguarding at our beaches, tending to colourful gardens, growing the lush urban forest and fostering vibrant events, to crafting welcoming parks, facilities and services and much, much more.

*LEFT: Stanley Park*

## VANCOUVER PARK BOARD STRATEGIC VISION:

*To be the leader in parks and recreation by connecting people to greenspace, active living and community.*







# VISION + OBJECTIVES

## VISION

*Vancouver's Parks and Recreation Services Master Plan will provide a road map to maximize access to high-quality parks and recreation experiences that connect people with each other and with nature.*

## OBJECTIVES

- To provide a 25-year outlook on the future of Vancouver's park and recreation system, capturing the threats and opportunities that shape or hinder its potential
- To develop an implementation strategy that will work within the City of Vancouver's 10-year Capital Strategic Outlook
- To explore citywide service-level delivery for parks and recreation with recognition of the urban core and growth areas
- To foster a comprehensive policy framework that optimizes opportunities for positive health, well-being and social inclusion through a connected, diverse and equitable parks and recreation system
- To guide the development and renewal of parks and the development, renewal and replacement of recreation facilities

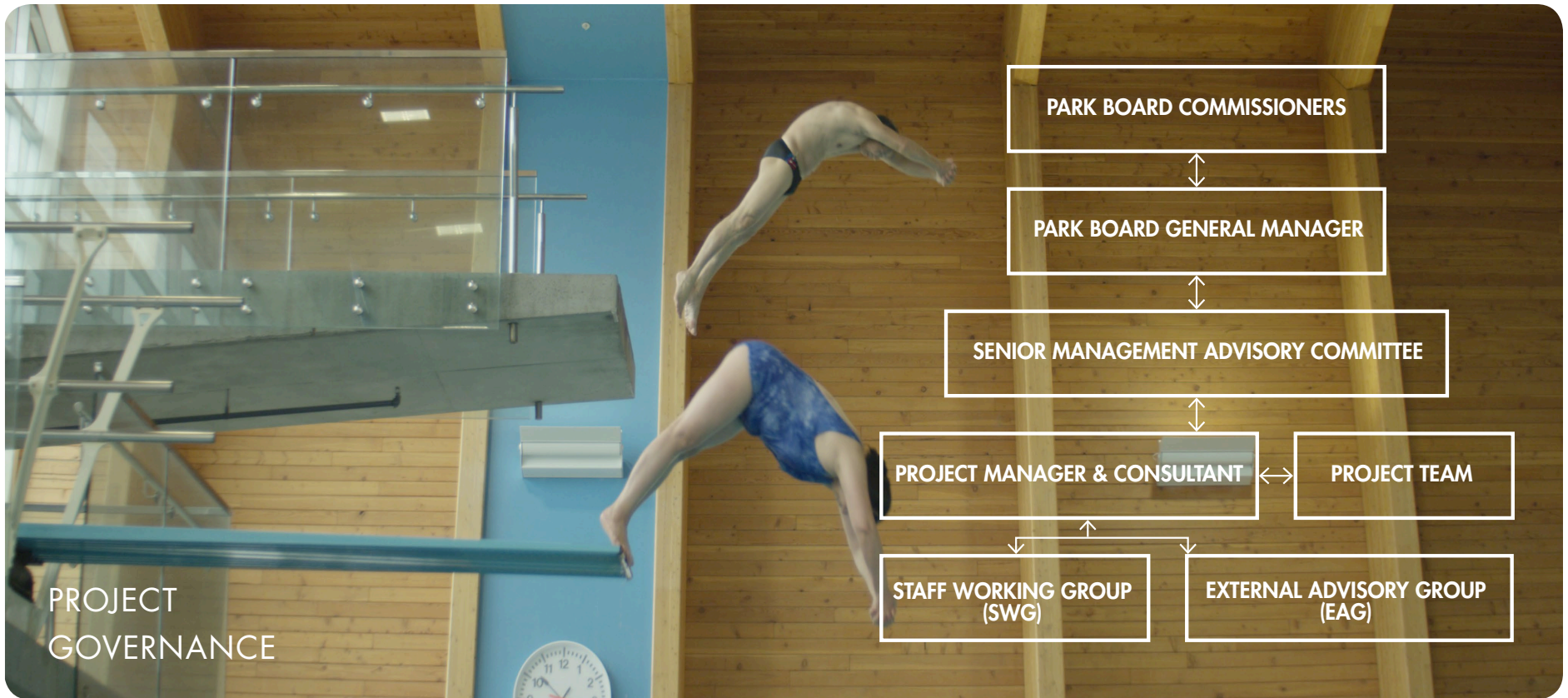


*Clockwise, from top:*

VanDusen in Autumn | Park Board

Swimming Lessons | Park Board

Vancouver from the Air, 1939 | City of Vancouver Archives (CoV Archives)



## PROJECT TEAM

A cross-departmental team of Park Board and City of Vancouver staff are overseeing the project, with Park Board Commissioners providing leadership and guidance throughout the process. Design Workshop, a global urban planning and landscape architecture firm, leads a consultant team of international experts and thought leaders including Vancouver-based firms, Modus Planning and Engagement and LEES+Associates. An External Advisory Group—composed of community stakeholders, key parks and recreation partners

and service providers—provides local insights to the team. A broad range of community members have opportunities for input throughout the planning process, including residents, visitors, non-profit organizations, businesses, user groups and non-users, and the general public. The Park Board are developing a strong relationship with Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations rights holders. This ongoing work has informed this report and will continue to shape the outcomes of the study.

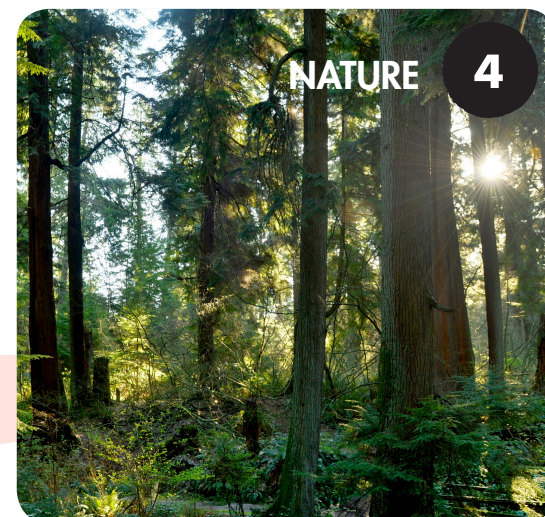


## PLAN STRUCTURE

*This Inventory and Analysis takes a systematic look at key elements of the parks and recreation network and is organized into four chapters:*

1. **Parks:** This chapter assesses Vancouver's inventory of parks across five classifications. Information is provided on the range of park amenities and programming in parks including horticulture gardens and community gardens.
2. **Recreation:** This chapter focuses on the activities that activate our parks and facilities, with a focus on outdoor sport, art and play amenities—including tennis courts, playing fields, playgrounds and dog off-leash areas.
3. **Facilities:** This chapter focuses on the recreational, social and cultural services provided by built spaces, such as community centres, pools, ice rinks, field houses, VanDusen Botanical Garden and Bloedel Conservatory.
4. **Nature:** This chapter explores how to bolster natural areas of ecological importance, expand wildlife habitat and better connect residents with nature.

The master plan is supported by VanPlay—a two-year-long conversation with residents, staff, partners, stakeholders and experts. The project's Critical Success Factors, which have guided development of the plan, can be found in the Appendix 1.



*Clockwise, from top right:*

*Girl Running | VanPlay Video Photos*

*Cycle Sport | VanPlay Video Photos*

*Stanley Park | Katherine Howard*

*Man Swimming | VanPlay Video Photos*

*Facing: Divers | VanPlay Video Photos*

## PROCESS

*This master plan is a multi-year engagement and content development process divided into the following phases:*

**PHASE 1—SATISFACTION, BIG IDEAS AND PRIORITY SETTING**—Focused on engaging the community in a conversation about the future of parks and recreation; gathering big ideas and accessing key constraints; and setting priorities through public outreach, stakeholder engagement and technical analysis.

**PHASE 2—CHALLENGES + OPPORTUNITIES**—Assessed key challenges and opportunities for each vision element through analysis and expert consultation; included a public lecture series—Smart City Talks—with subject matter experts; and convened a Community Dialogue and Community Centre Association Workshop to delve into issues facing service providers, partners and community members.

**PHASE 3—GOALS FOR THE FUTURE, ROLES + RESPONSIBILITIES**—Convened Park Board staff and stakeholders for goal setting, engaged community members in vital conversations, called Deep Dives, on subjects of interest; and partnered with the Society for Children and Youth to explore the parks from the perspective of elementary school students through the Urban Explorers project.

**PHASE 4—TESTING THE GOALS**—Leveraged over a year of consultation with the public, partners, staff and stakeholders to shape 10 goal statements to inspire the future of Vancouver's parks and recreation; see Report 2.

**PHASE 5—LEVEL OF SERVICE, BIG MOVES + OPERATIONALISATION OF BIG IDEAS**—To come in late 2018 and early 2019, phase 5 will include a series of workshops and an online survey to define metrics for success, write targets for park and recreation amenity provision and the implementation plan.

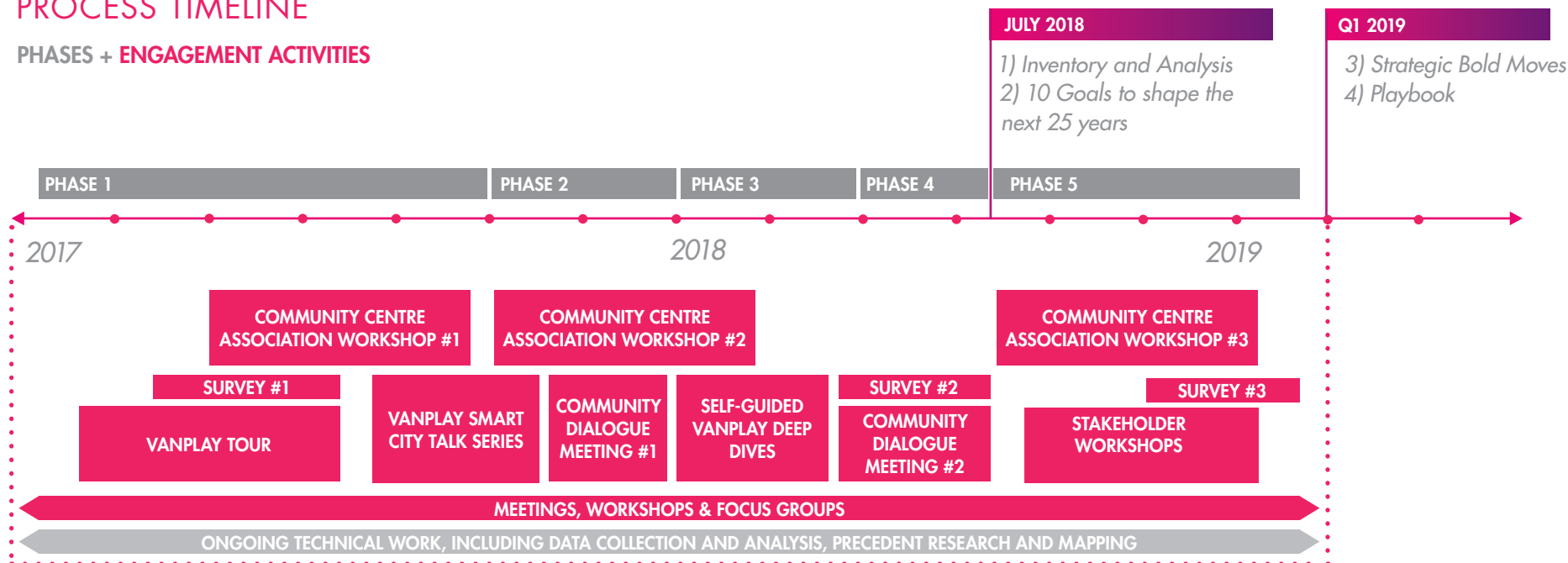


*VanPlay will develop  
a new roadmap for  
maximizing access to  
high-quality parks.*



# PROCESS TIMELINE

## PHASES + ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES



VanPlay Tour Photos left to right (all by Katherine Howard): Youth Participation, Challenges and Opportunities Outreach Board, Public Comments







# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## **BACKGROUND**

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Vancouver Today  
Planning Context  
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Growth Areas  
Identifying the Underserved

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Methods

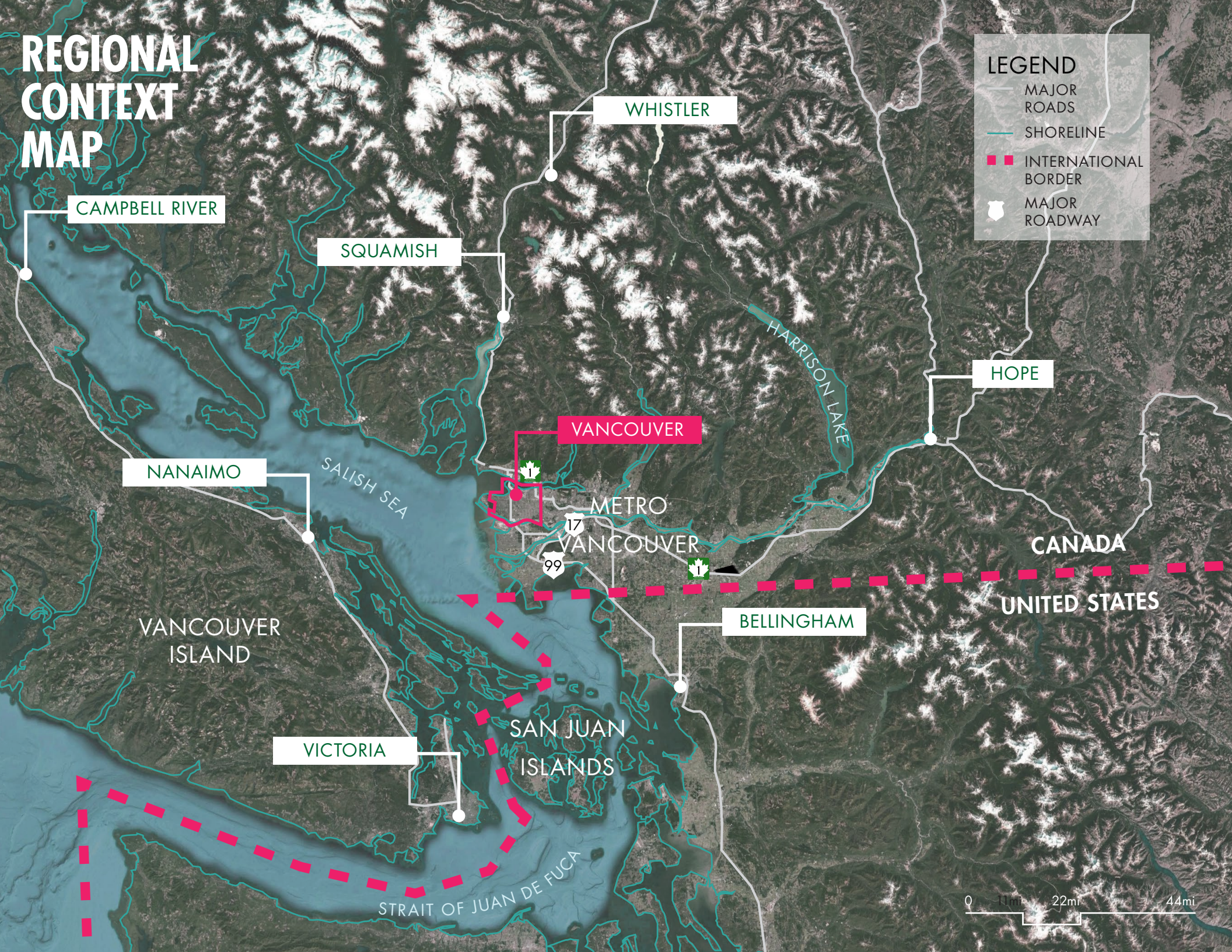
## **ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW**

**22**

*English Bay at dusk,  
photo by Colin Knowles.*



# REGIONAL CONTEXT MAP





# BACKGROUND

*The area we now call Vancouver supported a temperate rainforest full of towering Western red cedar, Douglas fir and hemlock trees.*

Indigenous peoples have been living on these lands since time immemorial. Vancouver is within the unceded traditional territory of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations, who still live here today.

In 1886, an early industrial settlement, Granville, was renamed Vancouver and incorporated as a city. The townsites included the earlier industrial settlement of Gastown.<sup>1</sup> Two years later, the City designated Stanley Park—an area originally home to villages of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations people. In 1890, Vancouver City Council set up an autonomous and separately-elected park board, the only one of its kind in Canada<sup>2</sup>. Known now as the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation (or Park Board), it remains committed to its mission of connecting people to green space, active living and community.

Since the early days, Vancouver has transformed from a trading post into a world-class city on the Pacific rim. As Vancouver continues to densify, the city's park and public space network becomes all the more precious and vulnerable. Since the last parks master plan in 1992, the city has gained

over 150,000 new residents, while its open space and park network has increased moderately<sup>3</sup>.

Today, The Park Board manages 228 public parks, from destination gardens to urban plazas. The Park Board also co-operates 24 community centres alongside the Community Centre Associations. The Board manages a robust network of recreation facilities, including swimming pools, arenas, playing fields and three golf courses. The Park Board serves the social and recreational needs of community members and acts as an important cultural steward through coordination of event venues, public art, arts and culture programming and cultural landmarks.

## VANCOUVER TODAY

Vancouver consistently ranks as one of the most livable cities in the world with aspirations to become the greenest city by 2020. Today, Vancouver is home to more than 630,000 residents who shared their city with over 10.3 million overnight visitors in 2017, the fourth consecutive record year for tourism in Vancouver. The economic impact of tourism was estimated at \$4.8 billion in direct visitor spending in 2017. Vancouver is located in the greater Vancouver Metro area, covering 4% of the land area with 24% of the regional population.<sup>4</sup>

Vancouver is surrounded by coastal landscapes and diverse recreation opportunities, including canoeing with indigenous tour leaders and sunset gazing at a waterfront beach. Vancouver's parks and recreation system hosts a range of activities that draw residents and visitors to the area's cultural, recreational and sporting destinations. These activities are the life of the city, inspiring people to connect to health, sports, entertainment and artistic endeavors.

1890:

*Vancouver City Council establishes the independently elected Park Board just four years after the incorporation of Vancouver.*

1 Morley, A. Vancouver: From Milltown to Metropolis. Vancouver: Mitchell Press. 1974.

2 Steele. The First 100 Years. Vancouver, BC, 1988.

3 Vancouver Park Board. Park Provision Standard Study. Vancouver, BC, 2016 / 2018.

4 Tourism Vancouver. Statistics, 2017.

# BACKGROUND

## PLANNING CONTEXT

*In the 20th Century, Vancouver undertook a series of planning initiatives that shaped the parks and recreation network.*

Most notably, the Harland Bartholomew and Associates' 1928 Plan for the City of Vancouver introduced neighbourhood parks every square mile, as well as greenways, pleasure drives and protected play areas. Follow-up plans in the 1940s, 1960s and 1980s cemented these goals and added active recreation amenities to parks and school grounds. Vancouver's Parks and Recreation Master Plan represents the first comprehensive parks and recreation planning project for Vancouver since 1992.

The master plan sits at the centre of a interrelated network of planning initiatives, occurring at a regional and local scale. The diagram on page 7 explores the master plan's relationship to concurrent social and cultural planning efforts as well as the relative timeline of each.

In 2018, the Park Board Commissioners adopted a statement of mission, vision and values for reconciliation with Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations. In 2016, the Park Board was the first municipal government body in Canada to endorse 11 ambitious strategies in its programs and facilities to advance the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and to recognise the rights of First Nations in unceded territory. The Park Board also endorses the United Nations' Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

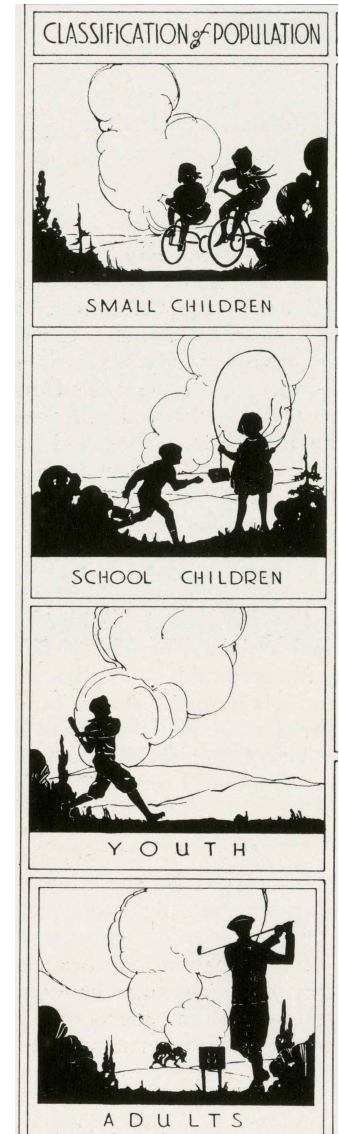
Influential Vancouver plans include:

### Vancouver Park Board

- Arts Policy–2003
- Sport for Life: Vancouver Sport Strategy–2008
- Culture Plan–2008
- Adaptation Strategy–2012
- Urban Forest Strategy–2014
- Rewilding Vancouver–2014
- Bird Strategy–2015
- Biodiversity Strategy–2016

### City of Vancouver

- High-Density Housing for Families with Children Guidelines–1992
- Housing and Homelessness Strategy–2011
- Greenest City 2020 Action Plan–2011
- Climate Change Adaptation Strategy–2011
- Healthy City Strategy–2014
- Renewable City Strategy–2016
- Local Area Plans (various)–ongoing
- Cultural Infrastructure Plan–ongoing
- Creative City Strategy–ongoing



*Left to Right:*

Classifications of Populations, Plan for the City of Vancouver, 1928 | Park Board

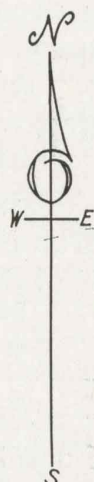
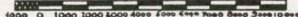
Playgrounds Map, Plan for the City of Vancouver, 1928 | Park Board









VANCOUVER  
TOWN PLANNING COMMISSION

1 9 2 8

SCALE IN FEET



## EXISTING & PROPOSED PLAYGROUNDS

-  EXISTING SCHOOL PLAYGROUNDS OF ADEQUATE AREA FOR FUTURE REQUIREMENTS
-  EXISTING SCHOOL SITES RECOMMENDED TO BE ABANDONED
-  EXISTING SCHOOL PLAYGROUNDS RECOMMENDED TO BE ENLARGED
-  CIRCLE OF 1/2 MILE RADIUS SURROUNDING PLAYGROUNDS THAT ARE TO BE RETAINED OR ENLARGED
-  CIRCLE OF 1/2 MILE RADIUS SURROUNDING NEW PLAYGROUNDS TO BE PROVIDED
-  EXISTING SUPERVISED PLAYGROUNDS

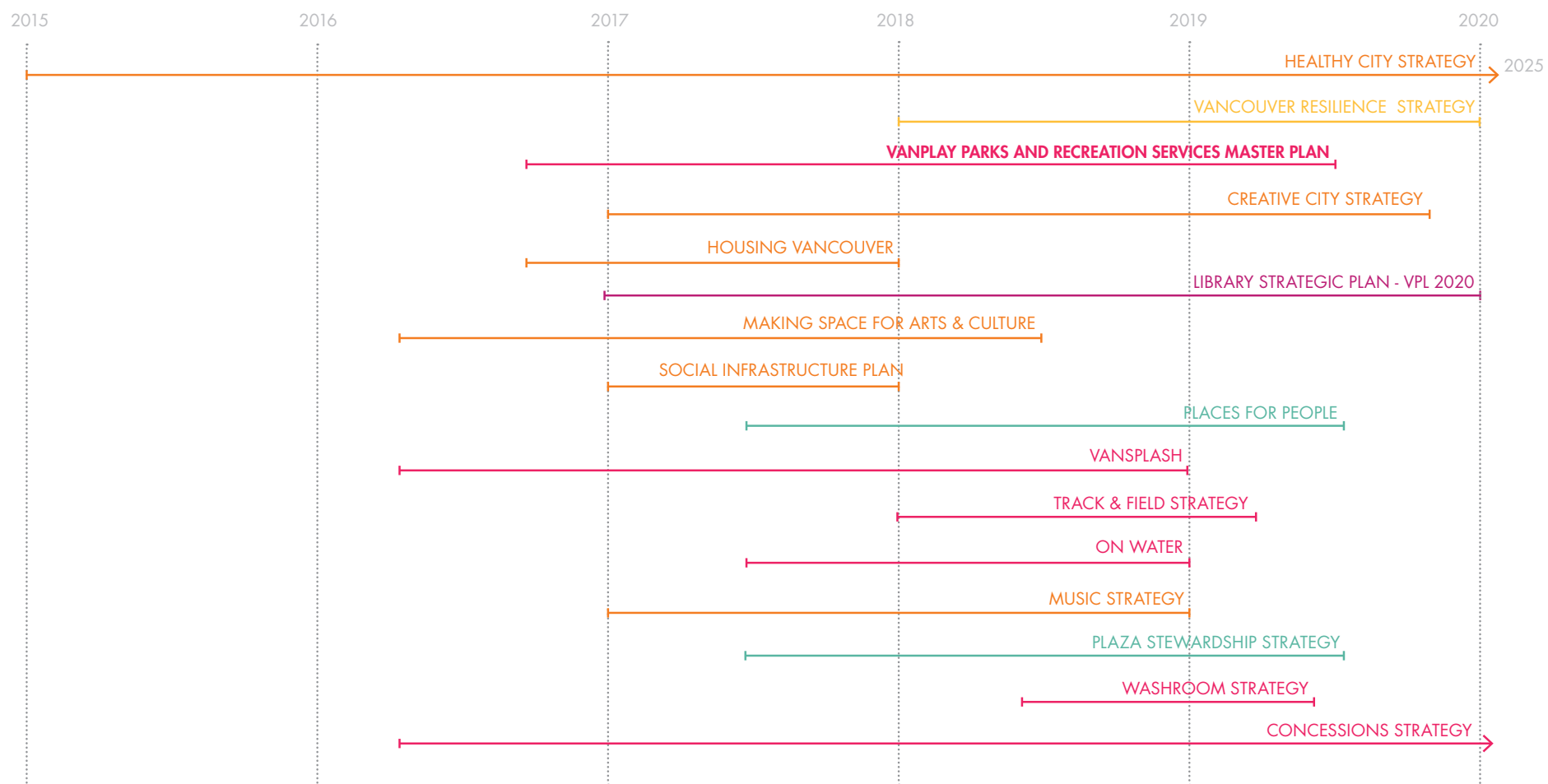
HARLAND BARTHOLOMEW  
& ASSOCIATES  
TOWN PLANNING CONSULTANTS

# CONCURRENT PLANNING EFFORTS (AS OF EARLY 2018)

SOCIAL, CULTURAL, PUBLIC REALM STRATEGIC PLANNING EFFORTS DIAGRAM



## SOCIAL, CULTURAL, PUBLIC REALM STRATEGIC PLANNING EFFORTS TIMELINE



YVR IS THE  
**#1**  
NORTH AMERICAN  
AIRPORT, SKYTRAX



**2010**  
WINTER OLYMPICS  
HOST CITY

THE 2010 OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC  
WINTER GAMES WERE AN INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS  
STORY OF SPORTS HOSTING AND SPURRED  
INVALUABLE INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS.

VANCOUVER RANKS HIGHER  
THAN ANY OTHER NORTH AMERICAN  
CITY ON WALKSCORE.COM

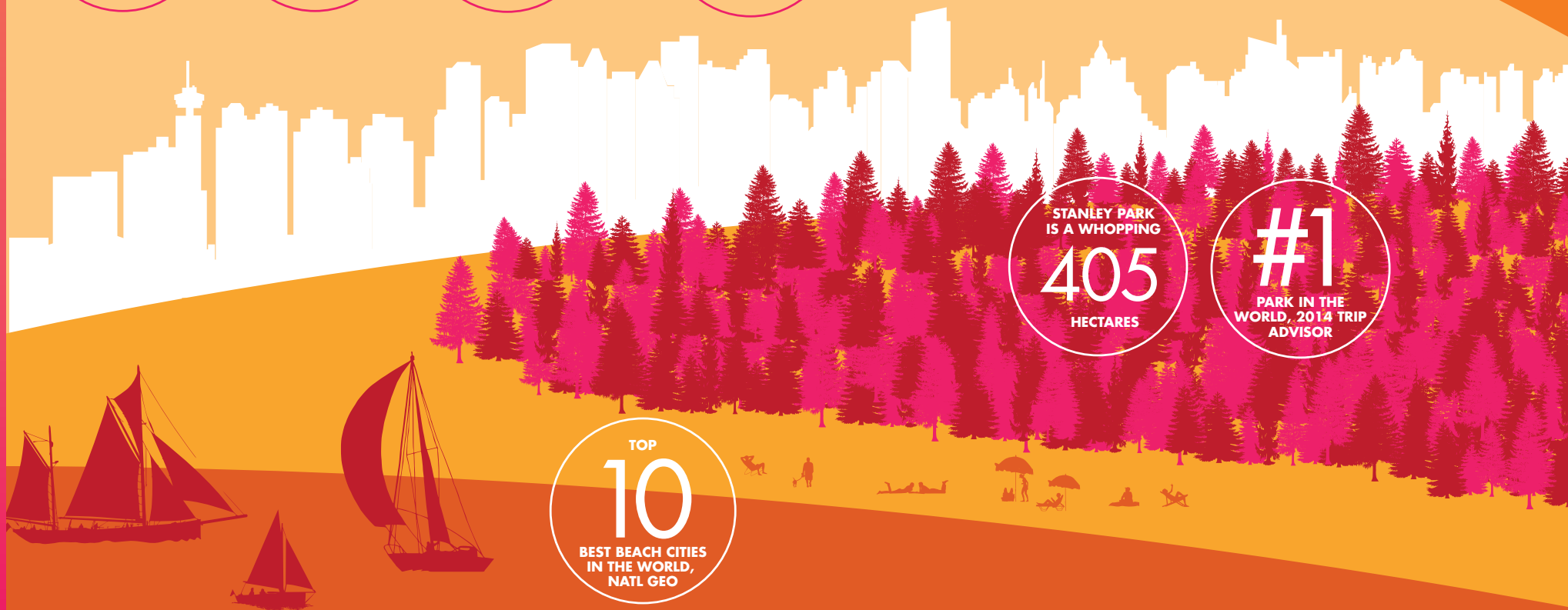
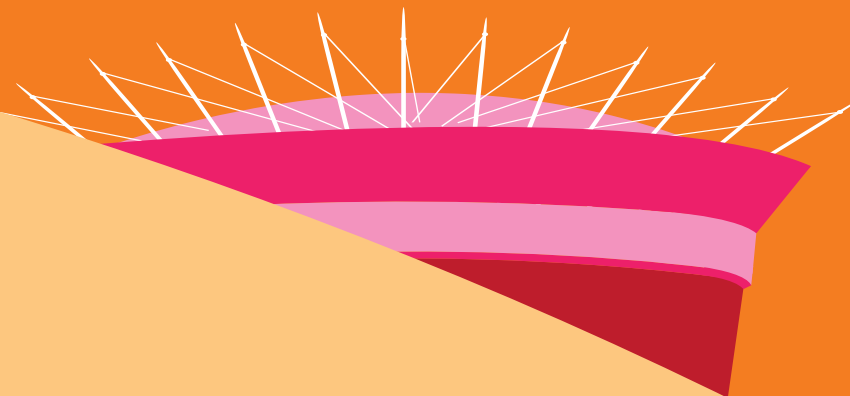
**93**  
WALKSCORE

**85**  
TRANSIT SCORE

**91**  
BIKE SCORE

WHICH IS JUST  
ONE REASON IT WAS  
VOTED THE

**#3**  
MOST LIVABLE CITY  
IN THE WORLD,  
ECONOMIST 2016



STANLEY PARK  
IS A WHOPPING  
**405**  
HECTARES

**#1**  
PARK IN THE  
WORLD, 2014 TRIP  
ADVISOR

TOP  
**10**  
BEST BEACH CITIES  
IN THE WORLD,  
NATL GEO



# BACKGROUND

## SYSTEM VULNERABILITIES

Across Vancouver, neighbourhoods continue to densify and diversify. With the rising cost of living, there is a decline in young families living in and moving to Vancouver. The City is facing increasing pressures to deliver additional affordable housing and childcare. With the average home price over \$1,000,000, homeownership is becoming out-of-reach for many. Over the next 25 years, the population over 65 is estimated to nearly double.<sup>1</sup> The demographic shift will impact everything from how parks and recreation services are provided to trends in desired amenities.

The parks and recreation system is increasingly under pressure from competing interests for land use and funding. The City of Vancouver collects Development Cost Levies from new development in order to fund new facilities and infrastructure made necessary by growth. In 2018, the proportion of these funds allocated to parks was reduced from 41% to 18%.<sup>2</sup> While collaboration with private and public interests offers mutually beneficial opportunities for unconventional public spaces (such as parklets), parks are often seen as "open" spaces that can accommodate future infrastructure for growth, such as underground power stations. Beyond securing adequate funding, growth of parks and community centres is further constrained by land availability.

Post-World War II, the parks and recreation system saw a major boom in park acquisitions and the building of community centres in all 22 Vancouver neighbourhoods.

<sup>1</sup> City of Vancouver. A Portrait of Social Infrastructure in Vancouver. Vancouver, BC, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Vancouver City Council Report. "Vancouver City-wide Development Cost Levy Update (2017-2026)", July 26, 2017.

However, this was the last major infrastructure boost to the parks and recreation system. More than 40 years on, the majority of facilities and amenities are now in need of renewal.

These dilemmas place increased stress on the parks and recreation system to provide adequate parks and public space for an increasingly large and diverse population. With density predicted to increase at a steady pace, stewardship and the strategic expansion of these spaces will become essential to the sustained health of the City moving forward.

*As the city increases in desirability, threats—from climate change to affordability—emerge that challenge the economic, social and environmental health of the parks and recreation system.*







## ECONOMIC THREATS:

**1) DEVELOPMENT PRESSURES** (e.g. higher land costs, affordability, limited acquisition opportunities, competing interests for public land and development fees, pressures from non-park uses, utility conflicts)

**2) INCREASING DENSITY** (e.g. growing populations, less parkland per capita, changing community needs, changing park typologies, increased usership)

## SOCIAL THREATS:

**1) RISING INEQUITY** (e.g. income inequity, housing unaffordability, uneven quality, increased need for social services, unwelcoming facilities, uneven funding)

**2) SOCIAL ISOLATION** (e.g. a topical concern as populations continue to age and shift into new and different lifestyles; difficult to engage newcomers, minorities and immigrants that are often underserved and unsure how to access opportunities)

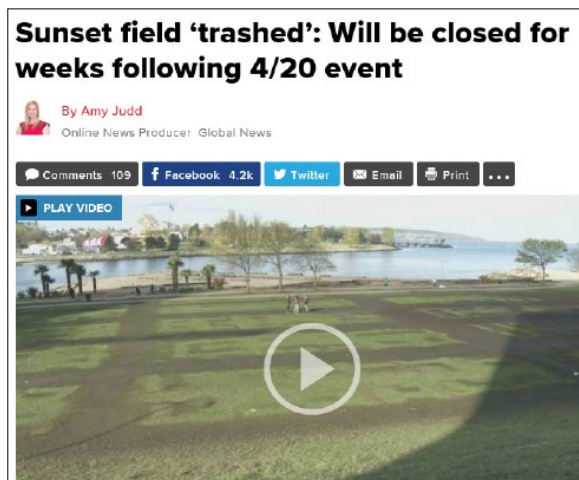
## ENVIRONMENTAL THREATS:

**1) ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE** (e.g. sea level rise; hotter, longer summers; more severe storms, seismic risk, lower snowpack, increased operations and maintenance costs, tree mortality, declining ecological health)

**2) HUMAN IMPACTS** (e.g. pollution causing air and water quality deterioration, overuse of park space causing degradation of landscapes, introduction of invasive species)



Development Pressures + Changing Community Needs | Vancouver Courier, August 10, 2017



Competing Interests + Human Impacts of Overuse | Global News, April 21, 2017



Secondary Threats of Environmental Change | CBC News, March 11, 2016

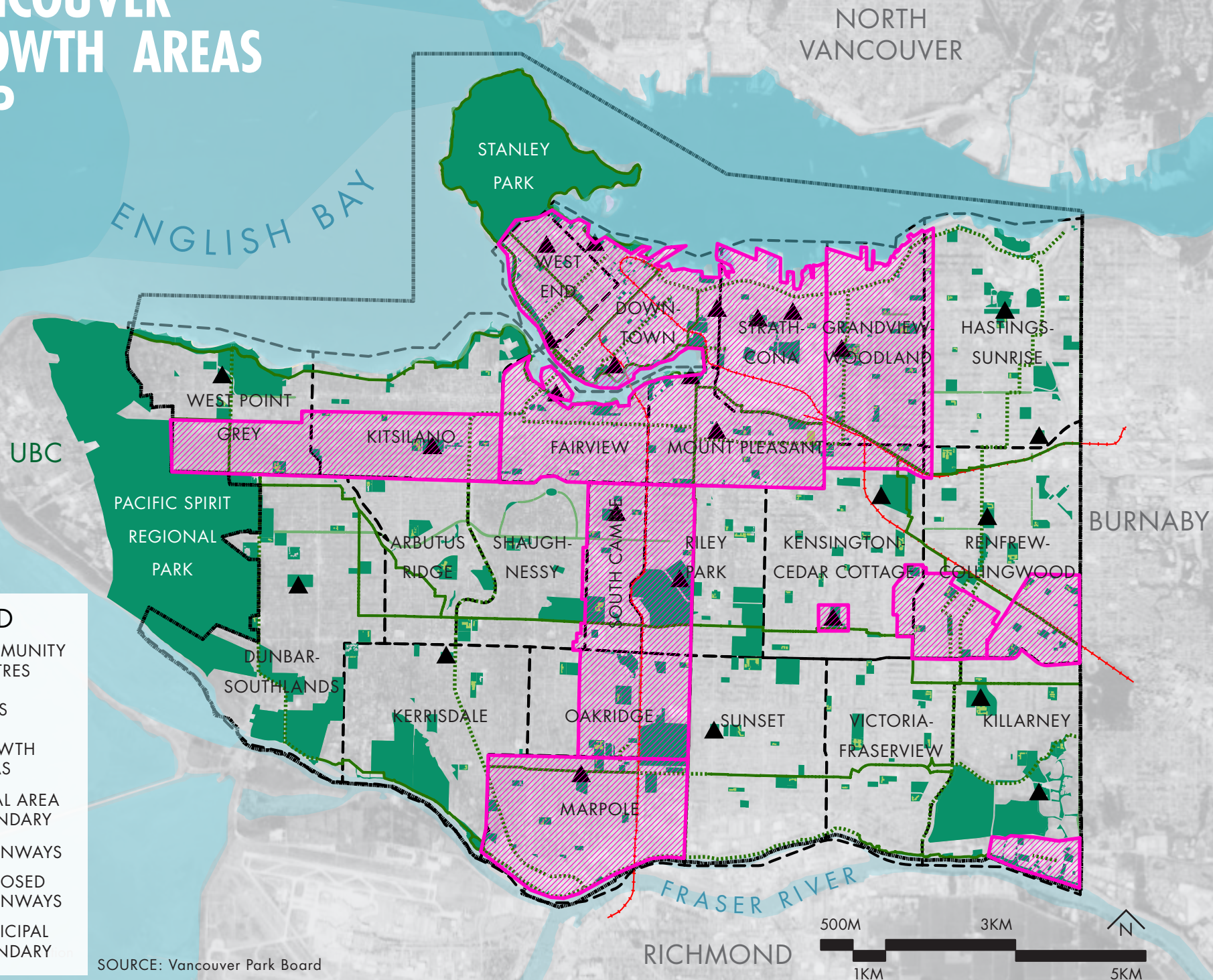


# VANCOUVER GROWTH AREAS MAP

## LEGEND

- ▲ COMMUNITY CENTRES
- PARKS
- ▨ GROWTH AREAS
- LOCAL AREA BOUNDARY
- GREENWAYS
- - - PROPOSED GREENWAYS
- ||||| MUNICIPAL BOUNDARY

SOURCE: Vancouver Park Board





# BACKGROUND

## GROWTH AREAS 2017-2041

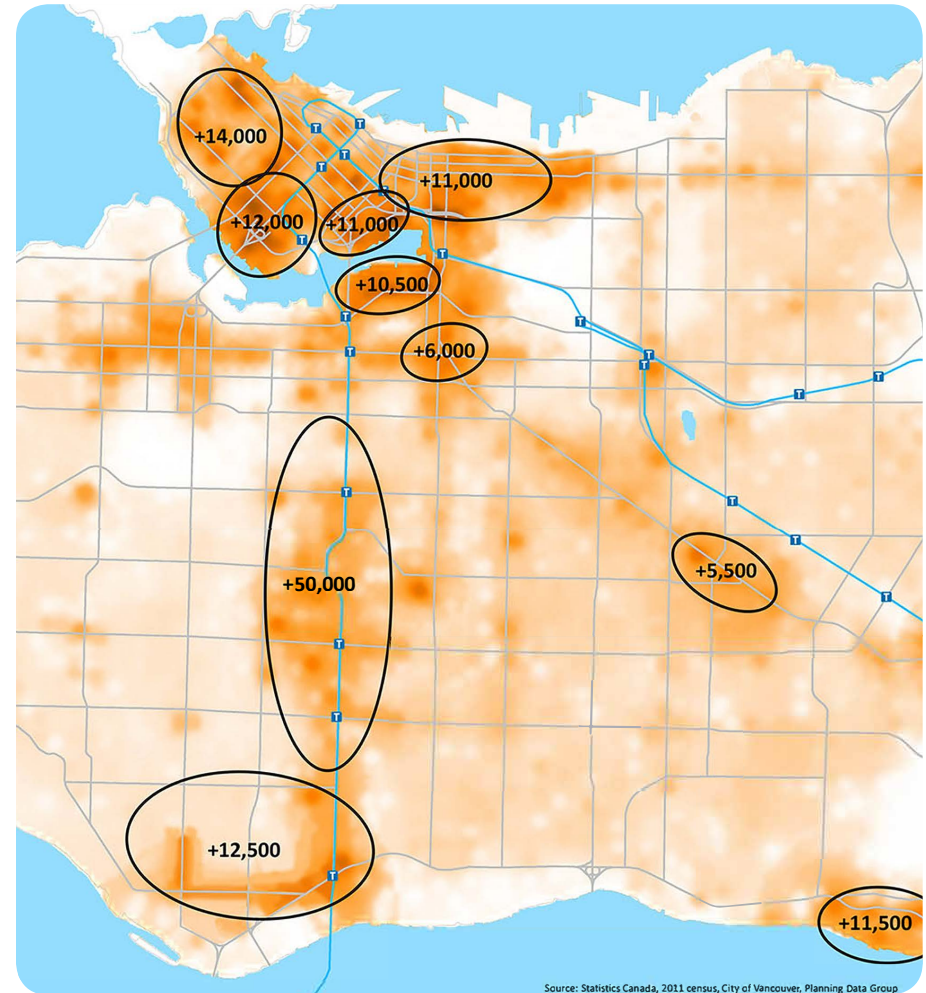
*With the population projected to gain more than 400 new residents each month, some areas of Vancouver are changing<sup>1</sup>. New density brings new life and increasing needs for park space and amenities to ensure the change is positive for neighbourhoods.*

Given the uneven nature of development—some areas are rapidly densifying, while others remain much the same, the Park Board must anticipate change before it happens in order to maintain the level of quality and service in each neighbourhood. In densifying areas, maintenance demands will be more acute with existing parks serving growing numbers of residents.

The growth areas selected for this study align with the City's 2041 population density projections (figure at right is an approximate projection as of 2016) as well as key transit corridors that are undergoing major transformation. The corridors included in the study are Cambie, Broadway and Hastings Sunrise.

Growth Areas identified for study through VanPlay:

- Downtown Urban Core
- Cambie Corridor
- Broadway Corridor
- Hastings-Sunrise Corridor
- Mount Pleasant
- Norquay
- Marpole
- River District



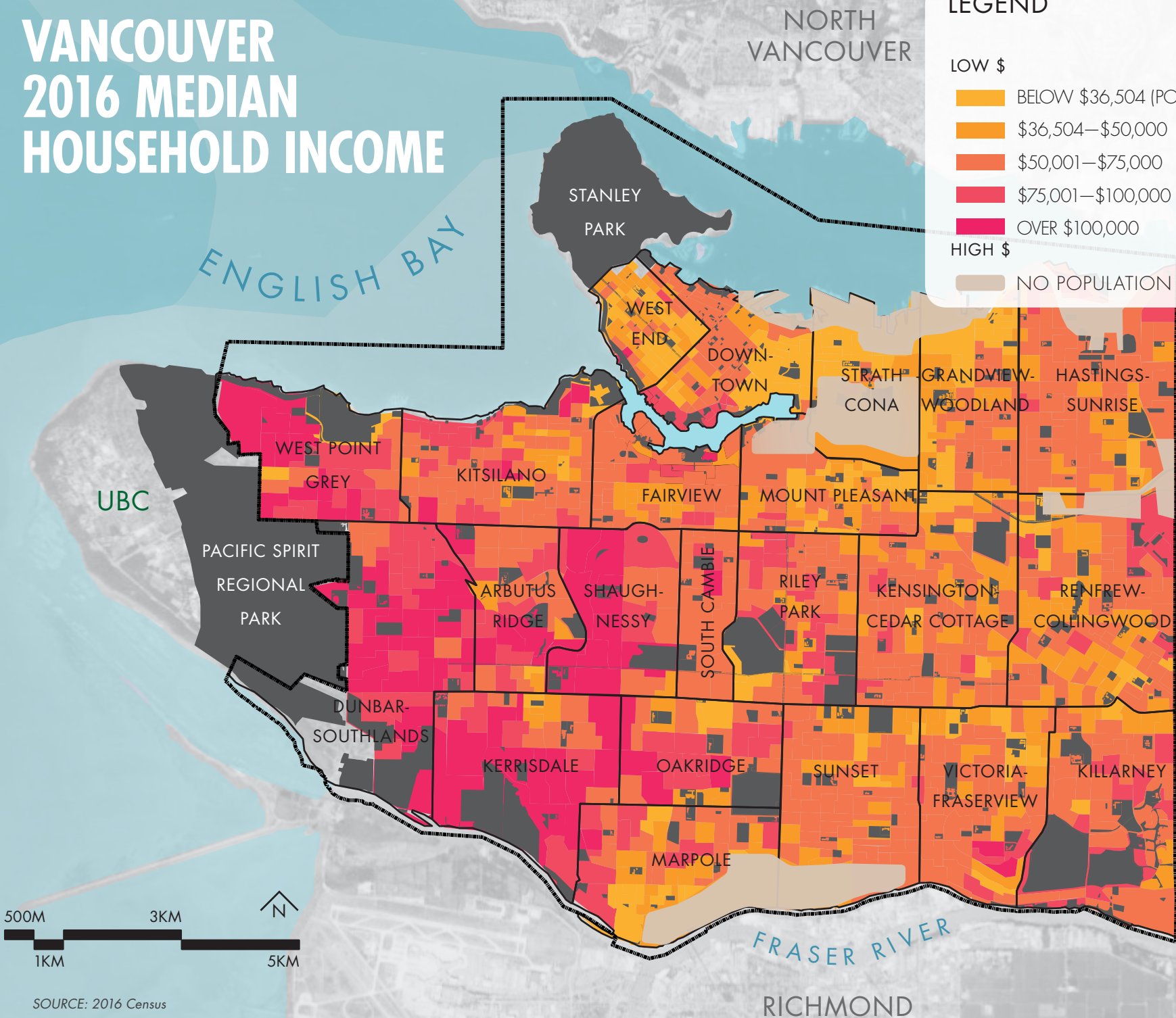
**2041 POPULATION DENSITY PROJECTIONS  
(APPROXIMATE PROJECTION AS OF 2016)**

**LEGEND**  
Population Density  
(Person per Hectare)



<sup>1</sup> City of Vancouver. A Portrait of Social Infrastructure in Vancouver. Vancouver, BC, 2016.

# VANCOUVER 2016 MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME



# BACKGROUND

## IDENTIFYING THE UNDERSERVED

*By analyzing both spatial and demographic data in Vancouver, we aim to develop a nuanced understanding of equity.*

Economic, social and environmental conditions have resulted in an uneven distribution of opportunities.

There are 16 underserved neighbourhoods as defined by hectares of neighbourhood parkland per 1,000 people metric (2015 + 2041). Below is a summary of what contributes to underserved areas in Vancouver:

- Parks and facilities projected to be impacted by climate change and sea level rise
- Parks and facilities in growth areas
- Parks, facilities and other public assets that are under pressure by development and redevelopment
- Parks and facilities that are isolated and not connected to other community assets, such as bikeways, schools and community centres

In addition to mapping spatial data, the VanPlay team is engaging in demographic research to better understand social and economic patterns across the city.

The goal in identifying populations likely to be underserved is not to connote deficit or imply victimhood

in these populations, but rather to recognize where the parks and recreation system is not meeting needs. This awareness allows us to ask better questions, to ensure these voices are heard, their needs acknowledged and additional resources are provided. In Vancouver, populations likely to be underserved can include:

- Visible minorities
- LGBTQ2S+ community
- Low-income individuals
- First Nations and Urban Indigenous People
- Persons over 65
- Persons with disabilities
- Females
- Persons with children
- Newcomers
- Renters

Mapping and understanding these demographic patterns is a complex, sensitive and constantly shifting task. To synthesize this effort, the planning team has identified two indicator categories for focus: areas of low income and population density. These two indicators were used as a proxy for a comprehensive needs assessment and allow for identification of patterns as a baseline for further work.

## *equitable access*

Recognition of the inherent privileges some populations have to access and enjoy parks and recreation and provide added support and welcome to those populations without this privilege.

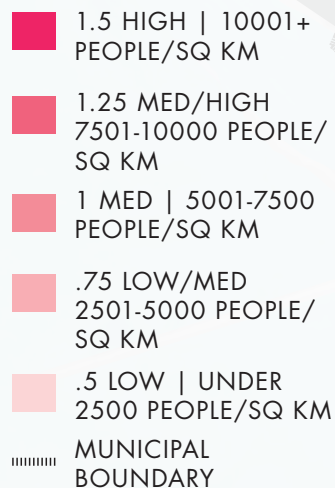
**Vancouver's 65+ population is set to double in the next 25 years. Families and seniors typically need a 5-minute walk distance to regularly access parks.**

SOURCE: City of Vancouver. A Portrait of Social Infrastructure in Vancouver. Vancouver, BC, 2016.



# POPULATION DENSITY PER NEIGHBOURHOOD (2016)

## DENSITY SCORE



SOURCE: Census Data, 2016

UBC

PACIFIC SPIRIT  
REGIONAL  
PARK

WEST POINT  
GREY

KITSILANO

FAIRVIEW

MOUNT PLEASANT

ARBUTUS  
RIDGE

SHAUGH-  
NESSY

SOUTH CAMBIE

RILEY  
PARK

KENSINGTON  
CEDAR COTTAGE

RENFREW-  
COLLINGWOOD

DUNBAR-  
SOUTHLANDS

KERRISDALE

OAKRIDGE

SUNSET

VICTORIA-  
FRASERVUE

KILLARNEY

MARPOLE

FRASER RIVER

RICHMOND

NORTH  
VANCOUVER

STANLEY  
PARK

WEST  
END

DOWN-  
TOWN

STRATH-  
CONA

GRANDVIEW-  
WOODLAND

HASTINGS-  
SUNRISE

500M

3KM

1KM

N

5KM

# MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME PER NEIGHBOURHOOD (2016)

## WHAT THIS MAP TELLS US:

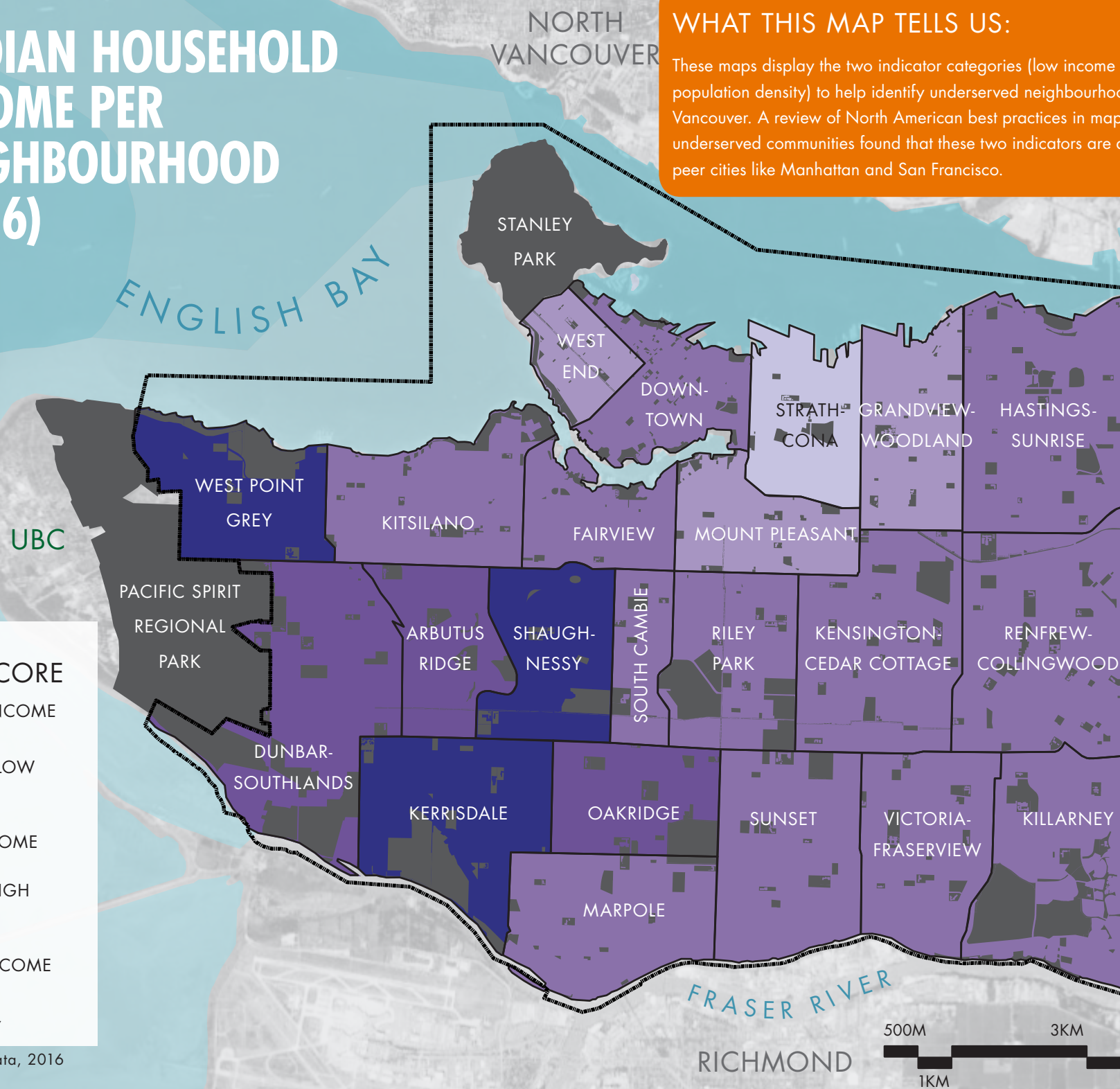
These maps display the two indicator categories (low income and population density) to help identify underserved neighbourhoods in Vancouver. A review of North American best practices in mapping underserved communities found that these two indicators are also used by peer cities like Manhattan and San Francisco.

### MEDIAN INCOME SCORE



MUNICIPAL BOUNDARY

SOURCE: Census Data, 2016



# FRAMEWORK FOR EQUITY + WELCOME

## CORE VALUES

Park Board staff, internal stakeholder groups, recent studies like the *Park Provision* report and the public recognize that providing welcoming parks equitably across the city is a core value. **The parks and recreation system provides life-sustaining services, including preservation of the city's remaining natural areas, health benefits from play, and connection to nature and community for mental health benefits.**

What does welcoming parks and equitable access to parks mean? The Environmental Justice Framework for Parks states that “all people and communities, regardless of their sociodemographic background **are entitled to equal distribution of environmental amenities and no group shall be disproportionately affected by environmental hazards** [e.g., pollution, impacts of climate change].”<sup>1</sup> Adding to this discussion, Edward W. Soja writes: “[Spatial justice] involves the fair and **equitable distribution in space of socially valued resources and the opportunities to use them.**”<sup>2</sup> Understanding the spatial distribution of privilege, choice, environmental hazards and socially valued resources is key to providing parks equitably.

1 Wen, Ming. Spatial Disparities in the Distribution of Parks and Green Spaces in the United States. Active Living Research Conference, 2012.

2 Soja, Edward W. *Seeking Spatial Justice*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

## LENSES FOR ASSESSING EQUITY + WELCOME

Here is where we are heading; the ultimate outcome is to evaluate Vancouver's parks and recreation across three criteria—access, quality and inclusivity. To do so, the VanPlay team has organized a set of the industry's best level of service standards and environmental justice tools into a framework for equity and welcome. These criteria will be evaluated over time as new priorities emerge.

### Access

The analysis evaluated current access standards, how Vancouver parks and recreation facilities are connected to walking networks, bikeways and greenways; and how parks and recreation are currently being accessed and used [public surveys and the System for Observing Play and Recreation in Communities (SOPARC)].

### Quality

Tools for this evaluation include park classifications and understanding the distribution of the range of park amenities, recreation programs, experiences, investment and maintenance across the park system.

### Inclusivity

This set of tools identifies pressing social, environmental and ecological challenges that make the park system vulnerable. By examining pathways towards inclusivity, the strategies will bolster the Park Board's ability to provide welcoming parks and recreation experiences over the next 25+ years.



LOOK OUT  
FOR SECTIONS ON  
ACCESS, QUALITY AND  
INCLUSIVITY IN EACH  
CHAPTER.

VanPlay Video Photos

## ACCESS

### FRAMING QUESTIONS

- Who has access within a five-minute walk?
- What kinds of parks and recreation facilities do we have? Do we have enough?
- How are parks and recreation used?
- How do we get to parks and recreation?

### EVALUATION TOOLS

- Trends in per capita level of service
- 2016 Park Provision access maps
- Connectivity (e.g. bikeways, greenways, transit, etc.)
- Survey and SOPARC findings on current use

Park Board

## QUALITY

### FRAMING QUESTIONS

- What is the historical capital investment?
- Are parks and facilities maintained consistently across the system? Does maintenance reflect the level of use?
- What is the range of experiences in parks and facilities? Do they meet their neighbourhood's needs?

### EVALUATION TOOLS

- Park classifications
- Capital investment and maintenance distribution of resources
- Range of park amenities and experiences
- Survey satisfaction levels

VanPlay Video Photos

## INCLUSIVITY

### FRAMING QUESTIONS

- How will parks and recreation adapt and plan for new development?
- What are the future impacts of climate change on parks and recreation and do they impact the system evenly?
- What services offer pathways for inclusion and welcome diverse cultures, abilities and needs?

### EVALUATION TOOLS

- Growth area and vulnerable populations
- First and secondary climate change threats
- Development pressures' impact
- Operations and maintenance impacts of social and environmental vulnerabilities



# ANALYSIS OVERVIEW

## METHODS

*The planning team is using an array of analysis tools to assess service and access. Below key methodologies are defined.*

### Park Provision Study

Vancouver first prioritized access to parks in the Harland Bartholomew and Associates' 1928 Plan for the City of Vancouver that introduced neighbourhood parks every square mile. The 1982 Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation Master Plan expanded the City's parks and recreation network and formalized many of the social services provided in facilities. An innovative Management Plan in 1992 set a clear standard by introducing the goal of providing 1.1 hectares of green space per 1000 residents.

In the Greenest City 2020 Action Plan, the City of Vancouver – in partnership with the Vancouver Park Board – set the goal of providing a green space within a five-minute walk of all residents. This study of the City's park and open space network measured park access with a 400m walk radius. This "as a crow flies" methodology put 92% of the City within the five-

minute walk range but did not account for how people actually walk to parks.

In 2016, the Park Board commissioned a Parks Provision Study to analyze park access through the sidewalk network to get a better understanding of how far residents actually live from parks. The study accounted for time delays at busy intersections and physical barriers to access, such as rail lines or steep hills. This study found that 73% of residents were within the five-minute walk range (and 99% were within a ten-minute range).

Using this new methodology we can analyse the impact of improvements to access, more clearly identify where new parks are required to fill access gaps and conversely can measure the population catchment of parks (how many people live within a 5-minute walk and what is the daytime population within that same distance) to see how hard parks are working.

For the full report, which outlines methodology and findings, see Appendix 2.

### System for Observing Play & Recreation in Communities (SOPARC)

System for Observing Play and Recreation in Communities (SOPARC) is a reliable and feasible observational survey tool for assessing physical

activity and how neighbourhood parks influence physical activity.

In late spring and early summer between May 28, 2017 and June 24, 2017, Urban Design 4 Health (UD4H) conducted a SOPARC study, collecting data on park usage and user behaviour from 24 parks (see map at right) in the City of Vancouver.

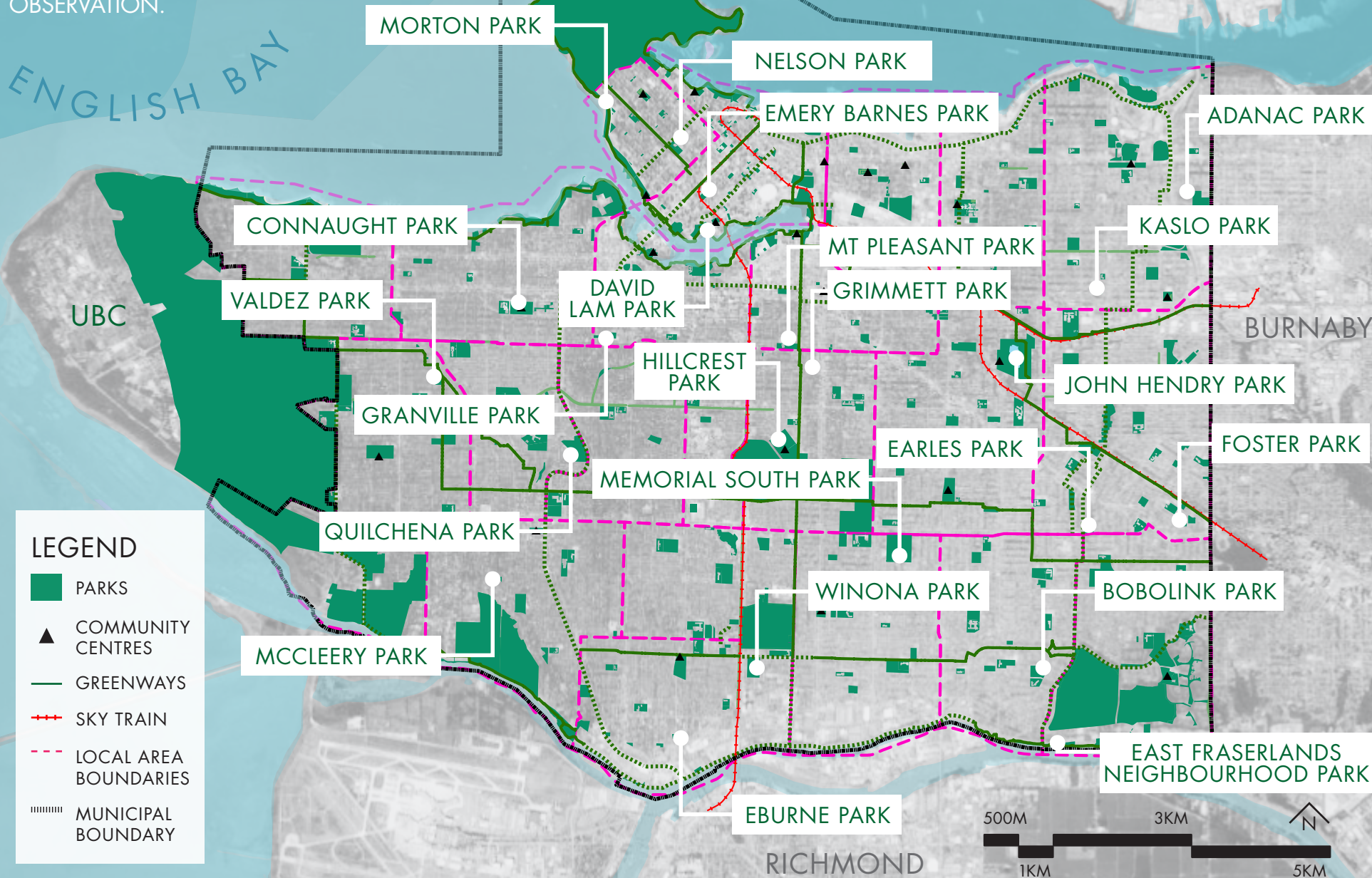
The survey instrument assesses who is accessing the park and provides demographic information, as well as physical activity levels by the park users. Out of the 228 parks, 24 were selected based on criteria including: presence of spaces for physical activity, parks located within City-defined growth areas, parks located in areas with a range of incomes, and park locations near a greenway.

Observational data gathering allows us to establish a good snapshot of how parks across the city are currently being used in an efficient manner. All observational data collection has pitfalls; it does not unearth the "why", but merely the "what" in a very broad sense. The data enables us to dig deeper, ask better questions and address the barriers to access that could be the cause of the patterns we observed.

For the full report, which outlines methodology and findings, see Appendix 3.

# SOPARC SURVEY LOCATIONS\*

\*LABELED PARKS INDICATE THE 24 PARKS SELECTED FOR OBSERVATION.





# ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

*Commencing in June 2017, VanPlay has engaged over 30,000 residents and stakeholders in imagining the future of parks and recreation.*

The engagement strategy intends to inspire the entire community to get involved in shaping the plans and to be proud of the result. High visibility events raise awareness and provide a spectrum of opportunities for participation, alongside more intimate spaces to allow for deeper conversation and room to problem solve.

Full Community Engagement Summary Reports can be found in the Appendix 7.

## Phase 1 – Satisfaction, Big Ideas and Priority Setting

### *VanPlay Tour and Survey*

During the first phase of the project we set out to:

- Encourage vibrant, exciting conversation about the future of parks and recreation.
- Gather big ideas, barriers to access and trends in informal conversations with the community by making connections and creating an experience.
- Encourage people to complete the online survey, which asked questions about current satisfaction levels, priorities, barriers to access and trends.

In June 2017, the VanPlay team visited 11 events, geographically spread throughout the city with a pop-up “Imagination Playground” and a series of interactive display

boards. An estimated 4000+ interactions with the community during these events resulted in over 2700 responses to the online survey.

### *Issue Papers*

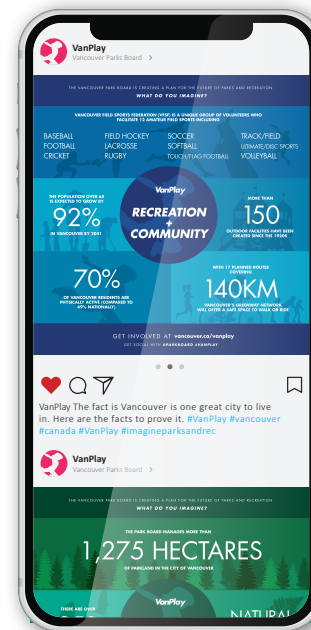
To inform and stimulate discussion among the public on key topics and trends, seven issue papers were developed on six themes; Innovation + Vision, Places + Access, Resilience + Wellbeing, Celebration + Tourism, Recreation + Community and Ecology + Nature. These papers helped shape the conversation and assisted in the public’s understanding of the scope of a master plan.

### *VanPlay Video*

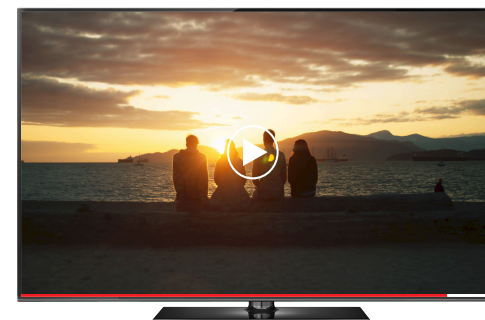
To support uptake of community engagement, we created an atmospheric promotional video to build excitement and call-to-action on parks and recreation in Vancouver.

It is an emotional, experiential rather than an instructional resource, puts the viewer in the elements, in our landscape, in our facilities and urges participation—“We want you to help us frame an ambitious vision for these assets, a vision that will guide us into the next century.”

The video appeals to the viewer’s senses and emotions – pride, identity, sense of ownership, excitement, being a part of the community. It focuses on ‘what moves us’ both physically and mentally.



Digital Campaign



VanPlay Video

### Previous Engagement Review

This planning effort is building on a substantial amount of previous strategic planning work undertaken by the Park Board. Key findings from 19 previous engagement efforts were reviewed, involving more than 34,000 people, including VanSplash, Smithe and Richards Park development, Sunset Park Master Plan, New Brighton Park Shoreline Habitat Restoration Project, Cambie Corridor Phase 3, Grandview Woodland Community Plan and many more. The summaries were studied and the findings added to the research for VanPlay. The full report can be found in the Appendix 6.

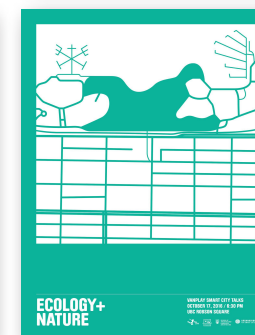
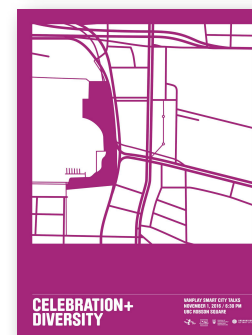
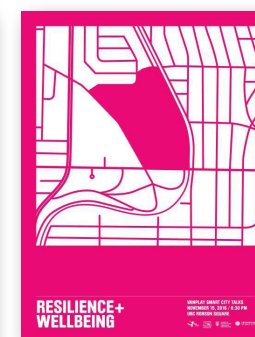
## Phase 2 – Challenges and Opportunities

### VanPlay Smart City Talks

Between September and November 2017, a series of public VanPlay Smart City Talks were held in partnership with Urbanarium, UBC School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture and the Vancouver Park Board. The series of five talks brought together 20 prominent thinkers from the field, both renowned experts and local leaders. The 600+ attendees were from both the industry and the community and the speakers represented many varied points of view, which allowed for a robust discussion that opened the door to new and different ideas beyond the “usual suspects.”

### Community Dialogue & Community Centre Association Workshop – Challenges and Opportunities for the Downtown Urban Core

The Park Board Commissioners and staff hosted a Community Dialogue and a Community Centre Association workshop to explore the key challenges and opportunities for the parks and recreation system. In response to the challenges and opportunities, participants were asked to identify some “big move strategies” to take on over the next 25 years. While the focus was on the Downtown urban core, the issues raised highlight city-wide issues as well.



### VanPlay Smart City Talks



# ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

## Phase 3 – Goals for the Futures and Roles and Responsibilities

### *VanPlay Deep Dives*

The Vancouver Parks and Recreation system is not just the work of the Vancouver Park Board. The many, varied and wonderful system is a result of thousands of organisations and groups working together in an “ecology” of sorts. As an important part of understanding the current state of the system, we are looking to better understand the ecology within which healthy, active neighbourhoods are created.

Consequently, this will help us better understand where the Park Board’s core responsibilities lie and allow us to better support our partners in providing services to the community.

Throughout February and March, our partners and stakeholders (teams, committees, organisations and agencies) were invited to host a VanPlay Deep Dive, an independently run, small group workshop. The goal of the “VanPlay Deep Dive” is to map out the many contributors to Vancouver’s parks and recreation system and outline where we want to go in the future and what we need to get there.

346 members of key stakeholder groups completed 64 Deep Dive workbooks. Park Board staff hosted a handful of unique Deep Dives including three focused on sport and wellness and one for youth that was attended by over 110 adolescents and youth workers.

### *Urban Explorers Parks and Public Spaces Showcase*

Over 6 months, three groups of Vancouver elementary school students explored the City of Vancouver and looked at various environmental and social challenges in their community.

The students present their findings and recommendations in a park and public spaces showcase. The presentation featured science-fair-style dioramas, short essays and photo walks addressing issues ranging from climb-ability, public art and comfortable spaces, to homelessness. Their projects highlighted ideas on how to make Vancouver's parks and public spaces better for young people.

This initiative was presented by the Society of Children and Youth of BC with the support of Translink, the Board of Parks and Recreation's VanPlay and the City of Vancouver's Places for People Downtown.



Hashtagged Social Media Posts | Instagram

## Phase 4 – Testing the Goals

As a result of over a year of public, partner, staff and stakeholder input and preliminary research into best practices and precedents from around the world, the VanPlay team drafted a set of 10 goals statements. Phase 4 tested these goals with the community and sought out any missing pieces.

Throughout May and June 2018, the goals were available for review and feedback via two online surveys, one for the community and one directed at Park Board staff and through a Community Dialogue event hosted by Park Board Commissioners.

The goal statements were refined as a result of the feedback and are published in “10 Goals to Shape the Next 25 Years”.



## Phase 5 – Level of Service, Big Moves and Operationalisation of the Big Ideas

To come in late 2018 and early 2019, Phase 5 will include a series of workshops and an online survey to define metrics for success, write targets for parks and recreation amenity provision and the implementation plan. The results of these efforts will support development of “Strategic Big Moves” (2019) and the “Playbook” implementation plan (2019).



*Top to Bottom:*

VanPlay Tour Van | Katherine Howard

Park Board Commissioners and Staff at VanPlay  
Imagination Playground | Katherine Howard







## WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THE PARKS CHAPTER?

This chapter assesses Vancouver's inventory of parks across five classifications. Information is provided on the range of park amenities and arts and cultural experiences found in parks, horticulture gardens and community gardens.

# CHAPTER 2: PARKS



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Automobile Parade, Stanley Park, circa 1911 | CoV Archives

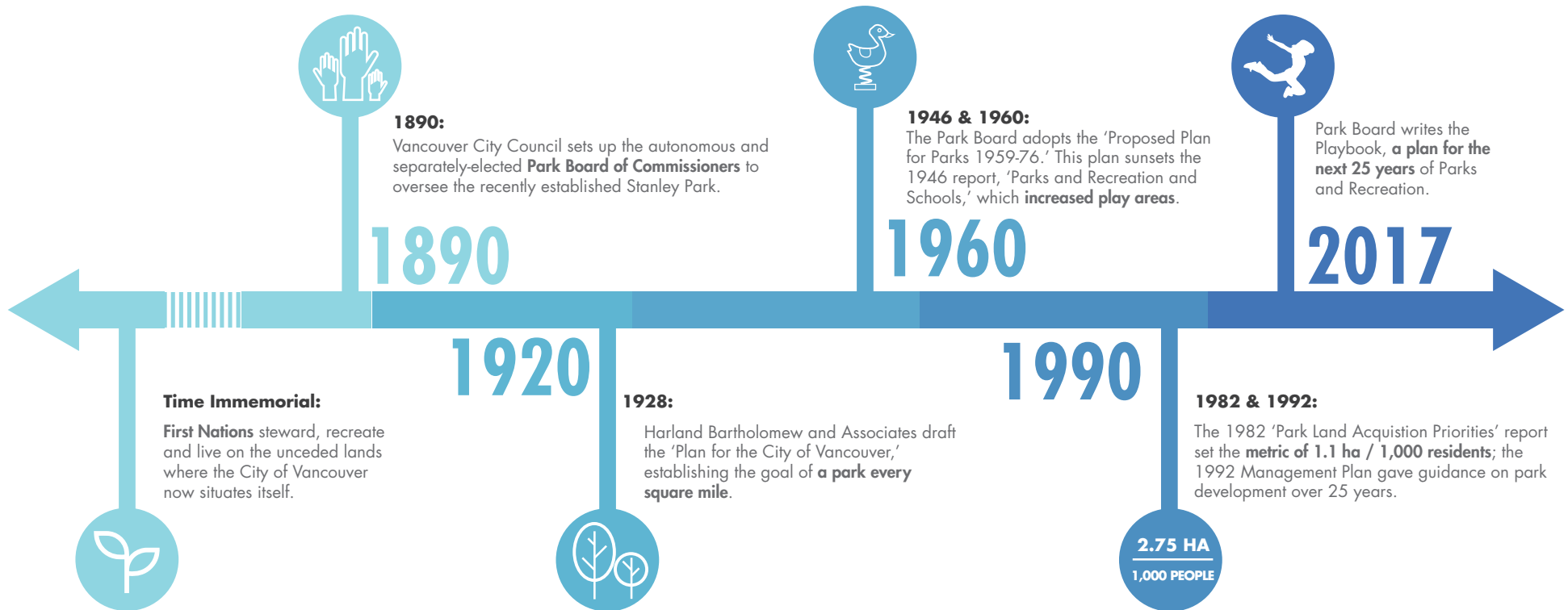


Second Beach, 1940 | CoV Archives



Performance at Malkin Bowl, 1952 | CoV Archives

## PARKS TIMELINE



# BACKGROUND

## HISTORY + SYSTEM CONTEXT

*Vancouver is home to a vibrant network of hundreds of parks, public gardens and plazas. The park system offers a wide variety of experiences and natural areas, from temperate rainforests to urban plazas.*

With 73% of residents within a five-minute walk of a green space and 99% within 10 minutes<sup>1</sup>, parks are integral to the character of Vancouver neighbourhoods and to the daily life and rhythms of the city. Today, 11% of Vancouver is covered in parkland and 46% of the city's shoreline is protected as public land with 63% as publicly accessible<sup>2</sup>.

While pedestrian access to parks is an important metric, the quality of parks also impacts how welcoming they are and how equitably individuals experience parks. Many of the city's parks are over 100 years old. A recent Park Board study of park condition found that 30% of park amenities are in critical condition. With the City increasing in density and the population gaining more than 400 new residents each month, the preservation of public land and strategic investment in the park system are key priorities of the current report.

Vancouver has a long history of prioritizing access to parks, dating back to the 1928 Plan for the City of Vancouver. The 1982 Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation Master Plan expanded the city's parks and recreation system through park classifications and the Management Plan in 1992 set a clear standard by introducing the goal of providing 1.1 hectares of neighbourhood parkland per 1,000 residents. There are currently 1.06 hectares of parkland (excluding destination parks) per 1,000 residents, although distribution is not uniform.

In the 2011 *Greenest City Action Plan*, the City of Vancouver in partnership with the Vancouver Park Board, set the goal of providing a green space within a five-minute walk of all residents. This study of the City's park and open space network measured park access with a 400m walk radius. This "as the crow flies" methodology did not account for how people actually walk to parks or the impact of physical barriers.

<sup>1</sup> Vancouver Park Board. Park Provision Study. Vancouver, BC, 2016 / 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Vancouver Park Board. Waterfront Inventory Report. Vancouver, BC, 2011.

## KEY TERMS

### *park*

an area of natural, semi-natural or groomed space set aside for human enjoyment, recreation and ecological value.

### *plaza*

a public square, marketplace or hardscaped open space.

### *garden*

a cultivated plot of land used to grow ornamental plants, vegetables or fruit.

### *natural area*

large and small patches of the urban landscape which support nature such as forests, wetlands and shorelines, but also including green roofs, constructed wetlands and rain gardens. 44% of Vancouver's parks are classified as natural area.



# BACKGROUND

## HISTORY + SYSTEM CONTEXT CONT.

The City of Vancouver's Real Estate and Facilities Management (REFM) department delivers many management and maintenance services to the Park Board as outlined in a Partnership Agreement (in place since 2014, revised in 2016). In regards to parks, the Park Board is responsible for management and maintenance of all park non-building assets (e.g. playgrounds, park furniture), while REFM is responsible for buildings, marinas and utilities. REFM's Real Estate Services group executes property acquisition, lease negotiations and other activities in relation to the City's land portfolio on behalf of the Park Board.

For a full description of the roles and responsibilities outlined in the Partnership Agreement, please see Appendix 5.

## MAJOR INITIATIVES

There are many major projects underway to renew or add to Vancouver's park system. Many related initiatives also address big ideas like healthy cities, reconciliation with First Nations, transportation connectivity and biodiversity. Future reports will use the most relevant metrics from these projects and plans to help build strategies to improve the park system and align appropriate resources for future improvements.

## RELATED INITIATIVES

- People, Parks and Dogs Strategy—ongoing
- VanSplash Aquatics Strategy—ongoing
- Downtown Places for People—ongoing
- Park Board 11 Reconciliation Strategies—2016
- Park Provision Study —2016 / 2018
- Vancouver Park Development Standards—2015
- Healthy City Strategy—2014
- City of Reconciliation Framework—2014
- Transportation 2040 Plan—2012
- Greenest City 2020 Action Plan—2011
- Metro Vancouver 2040 Regional Plan—2011
- Climate Change Adaptation Strategy—2011
- Downtown Transportation Plan—2002
- Vancouver Bicycle Plan—2008
- British Columbia: Provincial Transit Plan—2008
- Vancouver Transportation Plan—1999
- Park Board Management Plan—1992
- Vancouver Greenways Plan—1991



English Bay Beach Park



Ted & Mary Greig Rhododendron Garden



Public Art: Abundance Fenced | Park Board



Garden at Bloedel | Park Board



Big Draw at Marpole | Park Board - Arts, Culture & Engagement Team



Rendering of Smithe & Richards Park | Dialog



# ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Through VanPlay, the planning team conducted extensive community outreach to better understand the public's perception of parks. The following summary provides a small selection of key takeaways from the major outreach efforts in Phase 1.

## PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

- Over the next 25 years, survey respondents identified parks as the top priority (49% put it in their top three) for improvement.
- 84% of respondents are either 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the parks and recreation system.

### Top priorities for action:

1. Equality, inclusion and access
2. Arts and culture
3. Affordability of parks and recreation

## CHALLENGES

- The most commonly cited challenge was in relation to the maintenance and management of parks. The community identified the need for greater emphasis on renewal of aging infrastructure, regular waste removal and for improved access to drinking water.
- Participants highlighted that for easy access, destination parks and beach parks should be connected to active modes of transportation.
- Stakeholders and the external advisory group identified the need for a more granular park classification system for parks. They said that the existing two-tiered 'destination' and 'neighbourhood' classification system does not accurately describe the Vancouver park system.

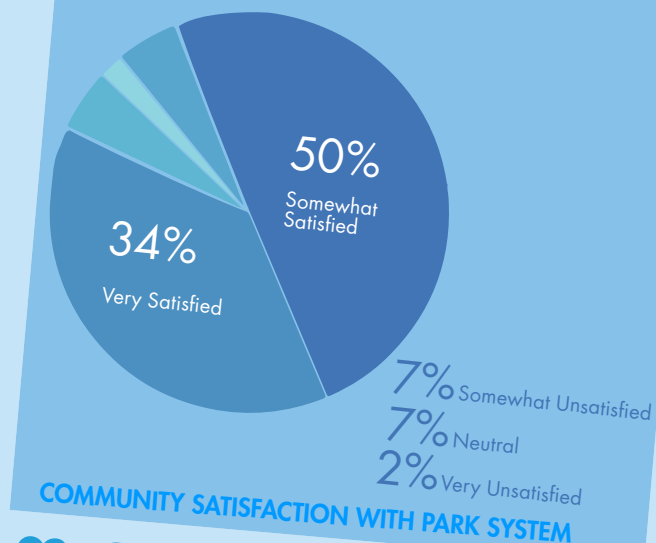
## OPPORTUNITIES

- Comments indicated concern for spatial inequity in access to parks and inequity in the quality of parks, in particular in the Downtown Urban Core where there is a large population and underserved and overused parks.
- Conversations on the VanPlay tour centred around the need to strike a good balance of spaces for quiet relaxation with space for gatherings, events and celebrations, public art, performances, farmers markets, food trucks, and more active pursuits, such as walking, cycling, outdoor sports.
- Growth of the park system was a commonly cited opportunity, especially to improve ecological integrity.
- Engagement with the community throughout VanPlay and over the last few years has indicated a strong desire for the incorporation of natural elements and more "wild" spaces into parks.
- Park spaces that suit the needs of older adults and seniors, a growing demographic in Vancouver, was an often mentioned opportunity for growth in the future. In particular, many previous park development projects heard a desire for looped accessible walking trails and outdoor fitness equipment.
- Stakeholders and the external advisory group brought up the need for park activation to create safe, inviting and colourful park spaces. They suggested considering placemaking initiatives, such as public art, events and celebrations and programming.

*Of the big ideas shared for the future, the most popular were to protect and expand green spaces, natural areas, wildlife and biodiversity (15%), and to improve, repair and upgrade existing amenities (12%).*

*Community Survey*

## COMMUNITY SURVEY TAKEAWAY



## PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENT REVIEW

3 previous surveys indicated participants were **satisfied with parks and recreation staff** as they are well trained and friendly.

2 previous surveys indicated **concern for public safety** on streets for children in the downtown urban core parks and recreation.

TALK VANCOUVER

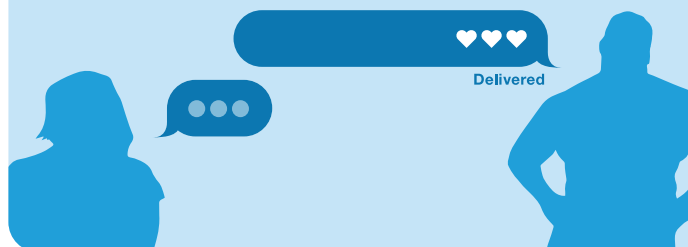
## VANPLAY TOUR TAKEAWAY

"The community needs to **honour the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil Waututh First Nations and urban Aboriginal communities** relationships to the land, through placemaking in parks."



## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT TAKEAWAY

**To better implement plans for parks**, Park Board could explore opportunities for networking, partnerships, alliances and information-sharing with community organizations and other governments.



## EMERGING QUESTIONS

**EQUITY, INCLUSION + ACCESS:** This was the top priority of the public in terms of what is most important to address in the next 25 years. What are the biggest challenges regarding equity, inclusion and access in the park system? In community centres? What populations are currently unwelcome or feel unwelcome? What do the public perceive as barriers now?

**CONCESSIONS:** What kinds of restaurants / food vendors would you like to see in parks? How much would you be willing to spend... for a sandwich? Coffee? Beer? Dinner? Would you be open to private vendors in parks? What Vancouver restaurants / vendors would you like to see in parks?

VanPlay



# ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

## VANPLAY DEEP DIVE

Between February and April 2018, key stakeholder groups were invited to engage in the VanPlay process through “VanPlay Deep Dives.” 345 members of key stakeholder groups completed 64 “VanPlay Deep Dive” workbooks. The goals of the VanPlay Deep Dive are:

- To better understand Vancouver’s parks and recreation system by mapping out and celebrating the diverse networks of amenities, programs, services and experiences to which stakeholders contribute in Vancouver.
- To identify who is involved in leading, sharing and supporting these diverse services.
- To shape the future by setting principles and goals that reflect what a successful future looks like.
- To identify the actions and resources needed to achieve these goals.

## STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES ON THE CURRENT STATE OF PARKS

Through the VanPlay Deep Dives, 774 comments were gathered on the current state of parks and recreation. The diagram on the facing page reflects findings from stakeholders on the current state of the park network and what broad park topics are top of mind to these stakeholders. The lines map out who the Deep Dive stakeholders see as providers of these park services.

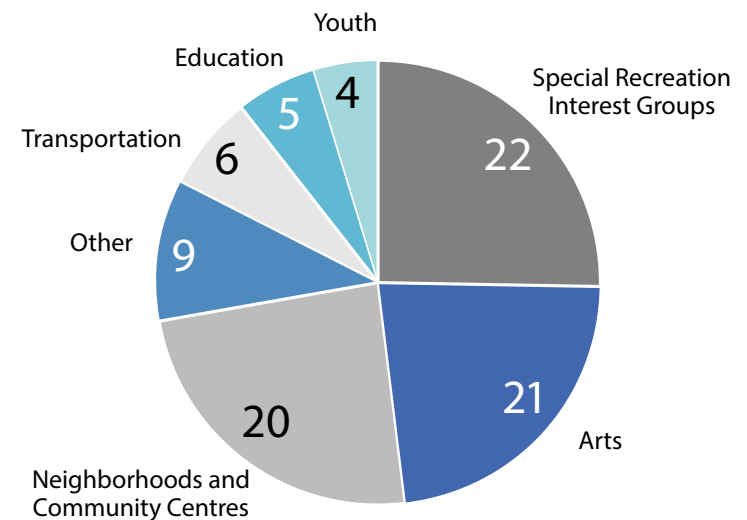
*For the full Deep Dive report, please see Appendix 7.*

### WHAT THIS DIAGRAM (OPPOSITE) TELLS US



This is a graphic representation of the wide and varied mix of stakeholders and parks services identified by participants in the VanPlay Deep Dives. It is a qualitative tool that does not represent a comprehensive view of the system. It does show a complex and valuable network of providers who support a multidisciplinary mix of services throughout the city. This sets the scene for further work on identifying roles and responsibilities for services. For parks, 15 of the 64 stakeholder discussions focused on parks.

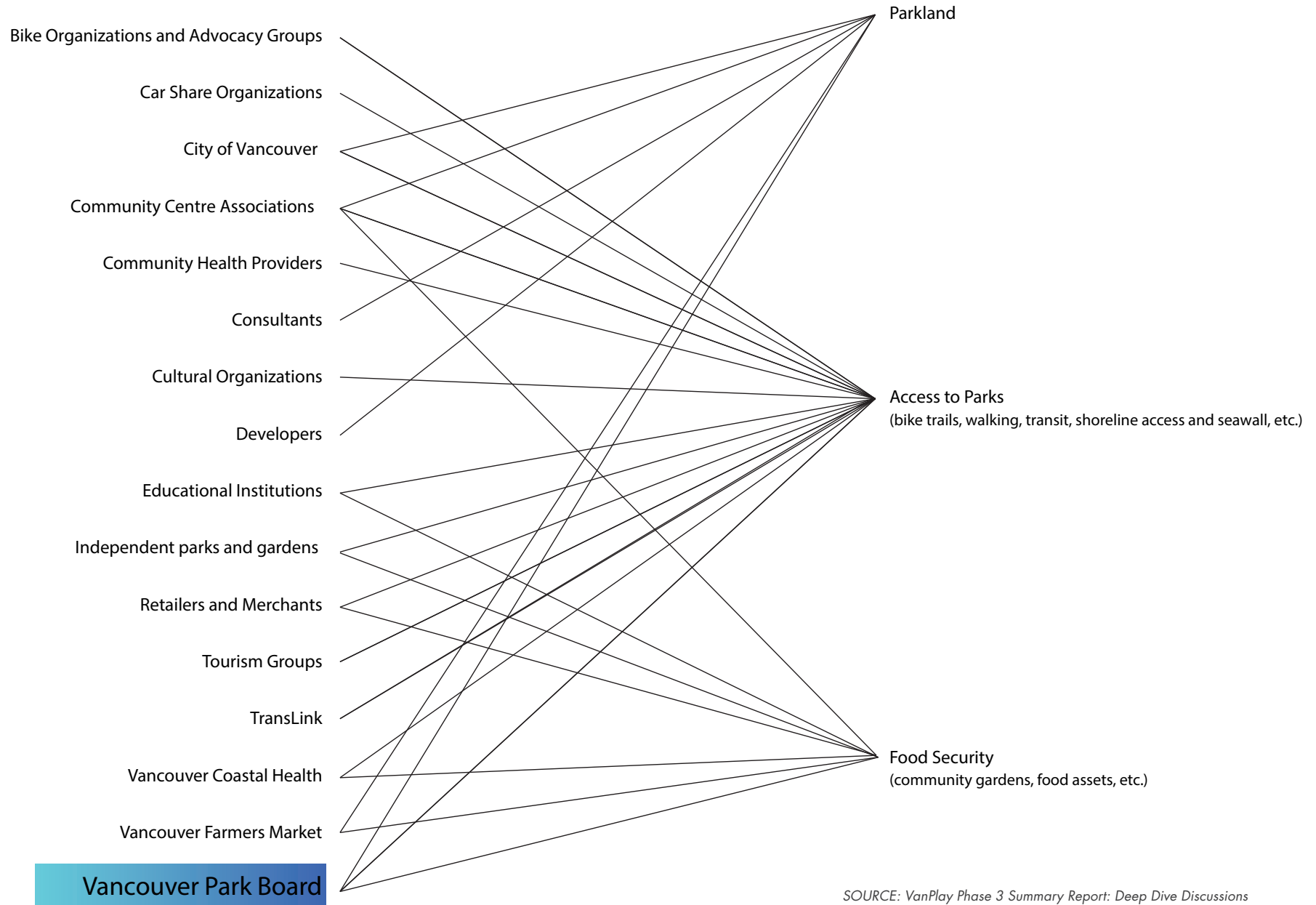
Groups Who Participated in Deep Dive Engagement



## DEEP DIVE FINDINGS SUMMARY: PARK SERVICES AND PROVIDERS

### SERVICE PROVIDERS IDENTIFIED BY STAKEHOLDERS

### STAKEHOLDER SELECTED DISCUSSION TOPICS



SOURCE: VanPlay Phase 3 Summary Report: Deep Dive Discussions



# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: ACCESS

## CITYWIDE PARKLAND PER CAPITA

*By 2041, Vancouver's population is predicted to grow by 150,000 people. The Park Board will need to acquire new parkland to keep up with future demand. Without these acquisitions we would see a 13% decrease in parkland available per capita.*

Since 1901, Vancouver has substantially expanded its park system by close to a thousand hectares or another two-and-a-half Stanley Parks. During the same time period, the population has increased twenty-fold. With parks serving more people than ever before, there is an overall decrease in the amount of parkland available to each person. A growing population using less space leads to harder working (or parks that see more use per hectare) parks across the board. This increased use leads to increased maintenance needs, potential conflicts over types of uses in parks and possible deterioration of existing natural areas.

## DENSITY + PARKLAND LEVEL OF SERVICE OVER TIME

	1901	1921	1941	1961	1981	2001	2017	2021	2041
<b>Population</b>	30,000	165,000	275,000	385,000	415,000	545,000	631,487	685,000	776,500
<b>Parkland Hectares</b>	459	470	782	923	1,207	1,283	1,262	1,310	1,359
<b>Level of Service</b> (Hectares of Parkland per 1,000 persons)	15.3	2.8	2.8	2.4	2.9	2.4	2.02	1.9	1.75
<b>Density</b> (Persons per sq. km)	261	1,435	2,391	3,348	3,609	4,739	5,491	5,957	6,752
<b>Municipal Landmass</b> (Hectares)	11,497								

SOURCE: City of Vancouver population projections and Park Board park acquisition data

## NEIGHBOURHOOD PARK PROVISION

The Park Board undertook its last major park plan in 1992. The plan sets a policy to acquire and assemble land to provide 1.1ha (2.75 acres) of "neighbourhood parkland" (i.e. all parks excluding destination parks) per 1,000 residents. There are currently 1.06 hectares of parkland (excluding destination parks), per 1,000 residents. Since that time, the city has become more dense. Destination parks, such as Stanley Park, provide critical neighbourhood park functions to local residents.

In this plan, we measured park provision on a citywide basis and included all Park Board spaces. 1.1ha/1000 is still a target goal for individual neighbourhoods but it is not reflected in citywide statistics.

# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: ACCESS

## CITYWIDE LEVEL OF SERVICE

It has been 25 years since the last major parks and recreation plan was prepared for Vancouver and the demographic profile of the city has changed significantly since then. The following infographics look at the citywide population today and 25 years into the future to better understand how citywide parkland level of service will change over time.

## KEY TERMS

### *optimum level of service*

Optimum level of service is the amount and kind of service that is both appropriate to the needs/desires of the community and sustainable/affordable/realistic.

### *access*

The opportunity to enter and make use of a space or resource. Access can consider factors, such as distance, quantity, welcome, usability and design for all people.

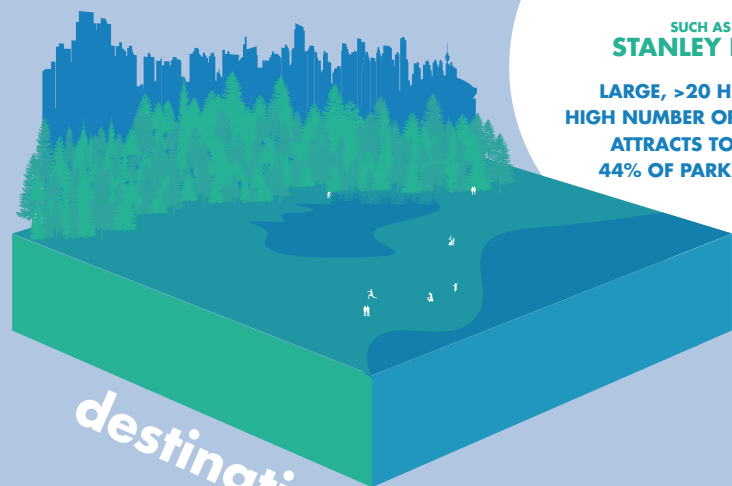


**If we don't keep  
pace, we will see a  
decrease of 13% in  
only 25 years.**

SOURCE: City of Vancouver population projections  
and Park Board park acquisition data



# PROPOSED PARK CLASSIFICATIONS



destination

TOTAL: 5

SUCH AS  
**STANLEY PARK**

LARGE, >20 HECTARES  
HIGH NUMBER OF AMENITIES  
ATTRACTS TOURISTS  
44% OF PARK SYSTEM

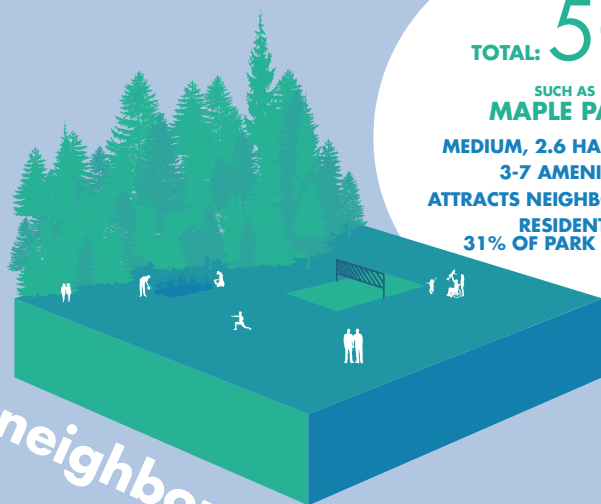


community

TOTAL: 101

SUCH AS  
**ENGLISH BAY BEACH PARK**

MEDIUM, 6.4 HA AVERAGE  
6-15 AMENITIES  
ATTRACTS PEOPLE FROM  
ALL ACROSS VANCOUVER  
22% OF PARK SYSTEM

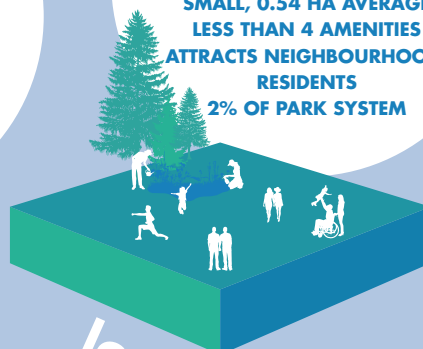


neighbourhood

TOTAL: 50

SUCH AS  
**MAPLE PARK**

MEDIUM, 2.6 HA AVERAGE  
3-7 AMENITIES  
ATTRACTS NEIGHBOURHOOD  
RESIDENTS  
31% OF PARK SYSTEM



local

TOTAL: 63

SUCH AS  
**ASH PARK**

SMALL, 0.54 HA AVERAGE  
LESS THAN 4 AMENITIES  
ATTRACTS NEIGHBOURHOOD  
RESIDENTS  
2% OF PARK SYSTEM



urban  
plaza

TOTAL: 9

SUCH AS  
**PIONEER PLACE**

SMALL, < 0.4 HA AVERAGE  
LESS THAN 3 AMENITIES  
ATTRACTS DAYTIME USERS  
<1% OF PARK SYSTEM

# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: QUALITY

## TYPES OF PARKS

*A park classification system allows us to establish a common language around park types and quality of amenities.*

Currently, the Vancouver Park Board manages 230+ parks, with another 30 new parks in the planning pipeline. The Park Board currently has two park classification designations (neighbourhood and destination). This study proposes a five-tiered classification system that provides a finer grain that is a more accurate description of Vancouver's system. The classifications are useful in communications (internal and external), parkland acquisitions (types and locations for future parks), development (amount of investment in a

given park), and operations (degree of maintenance and regular investment needed). A strong understanding of the types of parks in different areas of the city inform where service gaps exist. Previously, the park classifications were informal; however, this report recommends formalizing designations to allocate resources based on use. Park classifications have limited utility for: metrics regarding specific amenities; evaluation of how parks are used and their functionality; and for defining large parks. Subclassifications for parks include: Beach/Waterfront, Sports Hub and Facility Adjacent. For a full list of park classifications, please see Appendix 4.

## PARK CLASSIFICATION TABLE

	CRITERIA	EXAMPLES	#	PERCENT
Destination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large in size (&gt;20 hectares)</li> <li>Large number of amenities (&gt;15); venue for events, concerts, weddings.</li> <li>Attracts tourists and populations from the region, in addition to local residents</li> <li>Maintained at a higher level to meet user expectations, keeps up with higher use and ensures space is suitable for programming</li> </ul>	Stanley Park Queen Elizabeth Park Hastings Park	5	44%
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Medium to large in size (&lt; 20 ha, average of 6.4 ha)</li> <li>Large number of amenities (6-15); includes sports hubs and beach parks</li> <li>Attracts populations from across the City of Vancouver</li> </ul>	John Hendry Park English Bay Beach Park	101	22%
Neighbourhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Medium in size (&lt;10 ha, average of 2.6 ha)</li> <li>Medium number of amenities (3-7)</li> <li>Attracts neighbourhood residents</li> </ul>	Maple Grove Park Aberdeen Park	50	31%
Local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small in size (&lt;2.5 ha, average of .54 ha)</li> <li>Select amenities, mostly passive (four or less)</li> <li>Attracts neighbourhood residents</li> </ul>	Ash Park Foster Park	63	2%
Urban Plaza	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small in size (less than .4 ha)</li> <li>Select amenities (three or less), low in landscape cover</li> <li>Located in areas with high day-time population - attracts daytime users</li> </ul>	Pioneer Place Yaletown Park	9	<1%



# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: ACCESS

## PARK SYSTEM ACCESS

*The Park Board undertook a study to better understand the accessibility and intensity of use of Vancouver's parks.*

In the Greenest City 2020 Action Plan, the City of Vancouver – in partnership with the Vancouver Park Board – set the goal of providing a green space within a five-minute walk of all residents by 2020. This study of the City's park and open space network measured park access with a 400m walk radius. This "as a crow flies" methodology put 92% of the City within the five-minute walk range but did not account for how people actually get to them.

In 2016 the Park Board commissioned a Parks Provision Study to analyze park access through the sidewalk network to get a better understanding of how far residents actually live from parks. The study employed census data to determine where people live and work in relation to parks.

The study used five-minute, eight-minute and ten-minute walk radiuses based on street and sidewalk networks as well as accounting for park entrances, barriers (such as steep grade or transit lines) and delays (such as intersections).

The result was that 73% of residents were within the five-minute walk range (and 99% were within a ten-minute range).

Using this new methodology we can analyse the impact of improvements to access, more clearly identify where new parks are required to fill access gaps and conversely can measure the population catchment of parks (how many people live within a 5-minute walk and what is the daytime population within that same distance) to see how hard our parks are working.

### WHAT THIS TELLS US

1. **Vancouver has one of the most accessible park systems in North America.** While the 2018 technical analysis makes it seem as though the access to parks figure is low, (in comparison to the Greenest City Action Plan metric), the new study provides more accurate evidence that Vancouver is a leader in walkability and park access, with 99% of residents within a 10-minute walk of a park or green space. San Francisco is the only comparably sized North American city that outranks Vancouver.
2. **The hardest working parks, densest areas and biggest park access gaps are in the Downtown Core.** While there are large service gaps in Oakridge and Kerrisdale, these are low density areas with some of the least hard-working parks in the system. The combination of high density, high use, high land value and large service gaps makes Downtown a top priority.

### WHERE MORE WORK IS NEEDED

1. **The 2016 study provides a thorough analysis of park system access but does not factor in the relative quality of parks.** Vancouver is a champion of park system access but has focused less on equity in terms of quality of environment and experiences within parks and addressing specific vulnerabilities.
2. **While access is an excellent way of gauging the equity of the park system, there are also other indicators that need further analysis.** To further understand geographic equity, analysis is needed to determine which populations or sub-groups require better access (see maps on following pages).

### greenspace

These are green areas that are not formally recognized as parks and/or are owned by the City or other lower mainland jurisdictions, such as Pacific Spirit Park, Central Park in Burnaby or Mountain View Cemetery.

### hardest working

Hardest working is a measure of the parks surrounded by the greatest volume of users. In the daytime, this is measured by amount of employees and schools nearby and during the evening, this is measured by the amount of residents living nearby.

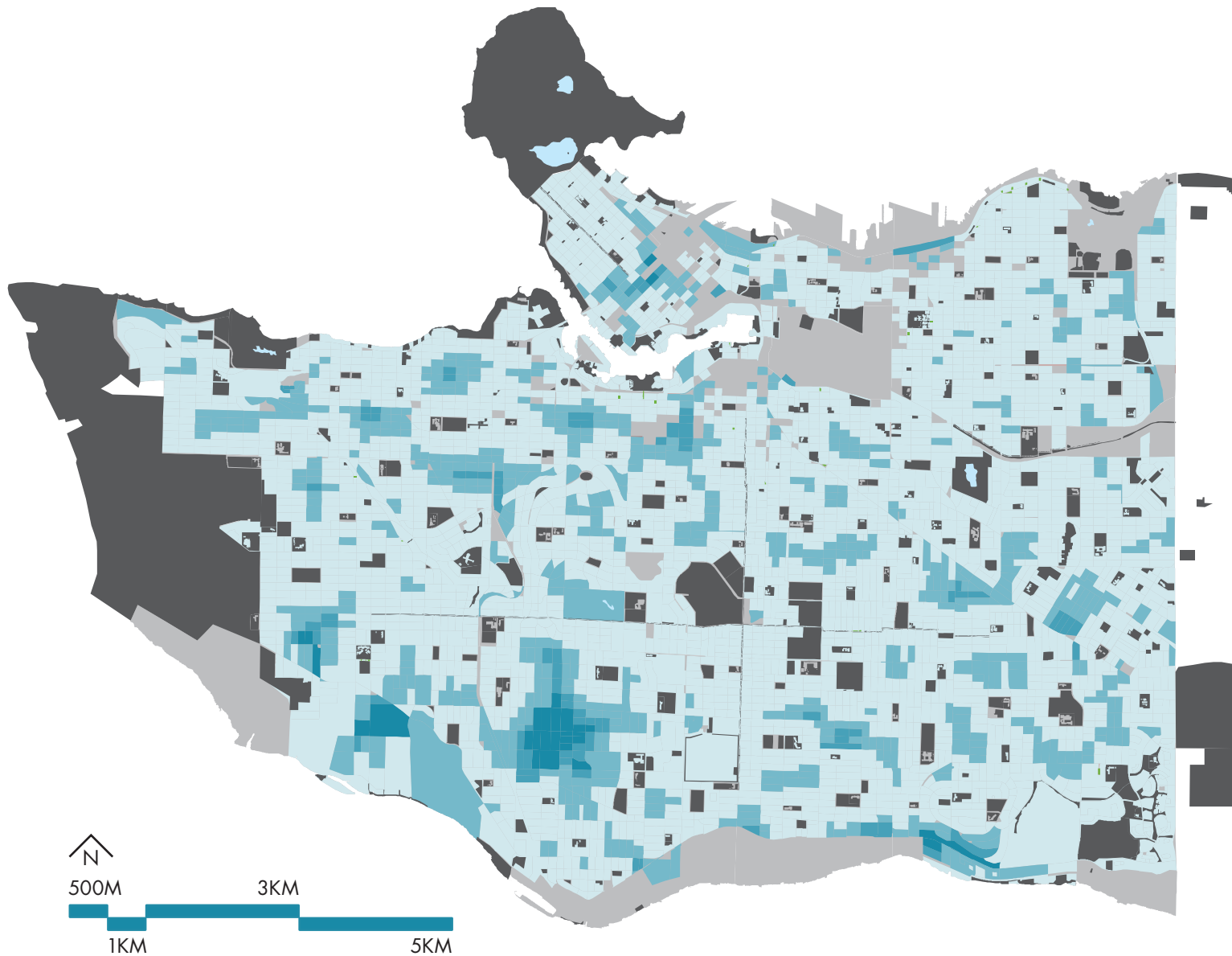
# 99%

*or 600,564  
people are within  
a 10-minute walk  
of a greenspace.*

## LEGEND

- 73% RESIDENTS WITHIN A 5-MINUTE WALK
- 96% RESIDENTS WITHIN AN 8-MINUTE WALK
- 99% RESIDENTS WITHIN A 10-MINUTE WALK
- 1% RESIDENTS BEYOND A 10-MINUTE WALK

SOURCE: *Park Provision Study*



# PARK PROVISION (2011)

EXCLUDING DESTINATION PARKS

NORTH  
VANCOUVER

## WHAT THESE MAPS TELL US:

Park provision analysis uses census data to assess how many hectares of neighbourhood parkland there are for every thousand residents. These maps can also be used to predict future service gaps (or areas that will have a deficit of park land) based on the population growth estimates (see map on facing page). The maps inform us that Grandview Woodland and Fairview have the least parkland per capita with other gaps Downtown and in East and Southeast Vancouver.

## PARK PROVISION SCORE

- 1.5 LOW | UNDER  
.6 HA/1000 RES.
- 1.25 MED/LOW  
.6-.9 HA/1000 RES.
- 1.25 MED  
.9-1.2 HA/1000 RES.
- .75 MED/HIGH | 1.2-  
1.5 HA/1000 RES.
- .5 HIGH | OVER 1.5  
HA/1000 RES

MUNICIPAL  
BOUNDARY

SOURCE: Park Board park data + 2011 census data. (Including all Park Board parks except for destination parks)

UBC

PACIFIC SPIRIT  
REGIONAL  
PARK

WEST POINT  
GREY

KITSILANO

FAIRVIEW

MOUNT PLEASANT

STRATH-GRANDVIEW-  
CONA WOODLAND

HASTINGS-  
SUNRISE

ARBUTUS  
RIDGE

SHAUGH-  
NESSY

SOUTH CAMBIE

RILEY  
PARK

KENSINGTON  
CEDAR COTTAGE

RENFREW-  
COLLINGWOOD

DUNBAR-  
SOUTHLANDS

KERRISDALE

OAKRIDGE

SUNSET

VICTORIA  
FRASERVUE

KILLARNEY

MARPOLE

FRASER RIVER

RICHMOND

500M

3KM

1KM

5KM





# PARK PROVISION (PROJECTED 2041 POPULATION)

EXCLUDING DESTINATION PARKS

ENGLISH BAY

NORTH  
VANCOUVER

STANLEY  
PARK

WEST  
END

DOWN-  
TOWN

STRATH-  
CONA

GRANDVIEW-  
WOODLAND

HASTINGS-  
SUNRISE

WEST POINT  
GREY

KITSILANO

FAIRVIEW

MOUNT PLEASANT

UBC

PACIFIC SPIRIT  
REGIONAL  
PARK

ARBUTUS  
RIDGE

SHAUGH-  
NESSY

SOUTH CAMBIE

RILEY  
PARK

KENSINGTON-  
CEDAR COTTAGE

RENFREW-  
COLLINGWOOD

DUNBAR-  
SOUTHLANDS

KERRISDALE

OAKRIDGE

SUNSET

VICTORIA-  
FRASERVUE

KILLARNEY

MARPOLE

FRASER RIVER

RICHMOND

## PARK PROVISION SCORE

- 1.5 LOW | UNDER  
.6 HA/1000 RES.
- 1.25 MED/LOW  
.6-.9 HA/1000 RES.
- 1.25 MED  
.9-1.2 HA/1000 RES.
- .75 MED/HIGH | 1.2-  
1.5 HA/1000 RES.
- .5 HIGH | OVER 1.5  
HA/1000 RES

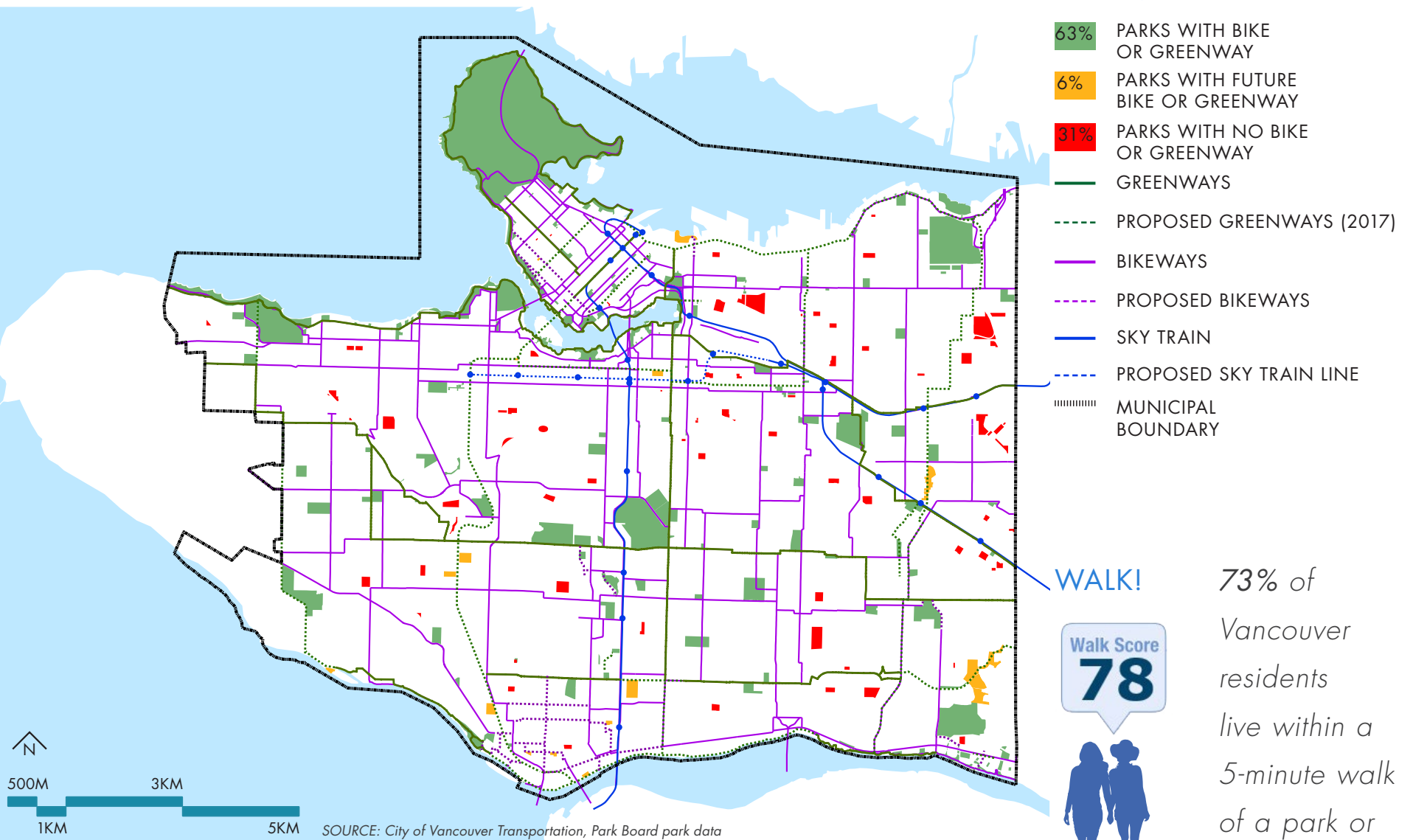
MUNICIPAL  
BOUNDARY

SOURCE: Park Board park data + 2041 Population Projections.  
(Including all Park Board parks except for destination parks)



# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: ACCESS

## PARK CONNECTIVITY MAP



SOURCE: Walkscore.com

# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: ACCESS

## CONNECTIVITY

*While Vancouver rates highly among peer cities in terms of bike and transit connectivity and walkability, stronger connections between parks and other cultural facilities are necessary.*

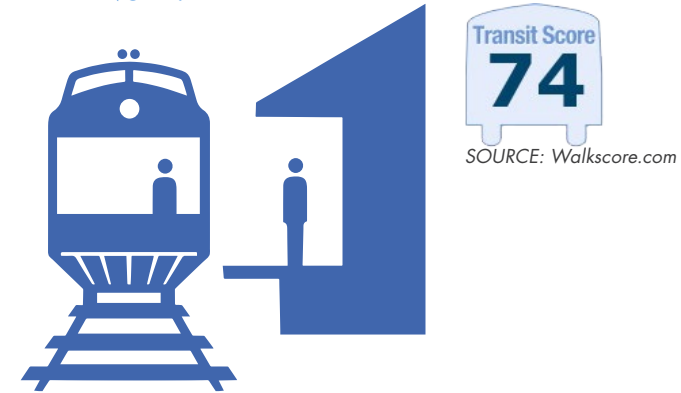
### Cycling + Walking

In the 2014 Transportation Panel Survey, 48% of Vancouverites reported commuting by transit, walking or cycling. Between 2013 and 2014, bike trips increased from 83,300 to 99,100, a 19% increase. Bike mode share increased by 1% (4.4% to 5.4%).<sup>1</sup> The Transportation 2040 Plan outlines several projects to improve bike and pedestrian experiences, including seawall upgrades, transformation of the Arbutus greenway, more public plazas and removal of the Georgia and Dunsmuir viaducts. Safe and continuous access between parks and other cultural facilities—such as schools and community centres—was identified as a public priority in the first stage of community outreach.

### Public Transit

The City of Vancouver offers a range of transit services, including light rail, rapid buses and ferries. The Transportation 2040 Plan proposes a set of recommendations to improve rapid and local transit. To serve future growth areas, the plan proposes to extend the Millennium Line along the Broadway corridor, upgrade SkyTrain stations and collaborate with Translink to improve service and capacity for local transit. While the City does not operate the regional transit system, the plan aims to provide a "transit-supportive public realm," including better wayfinding, multimodal connections and waiting areas.

## TRANSIT!



*91.5% of Vancouver residents can access transit within a five-minute walk.*

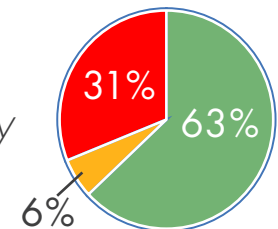
SOURCE: City of Vancouver. Transportation 2040. Vancouver, BC, 2012.

## BIKE!



*63% of parks are fronted by a bikeway or greenway on at least one side.*

SOURCE: Design Workshop Analysis, 2018.



<sup>1</sup> CH2MHill. 2014 Transportation Panel Survey. Vancouver, BC: 2015.



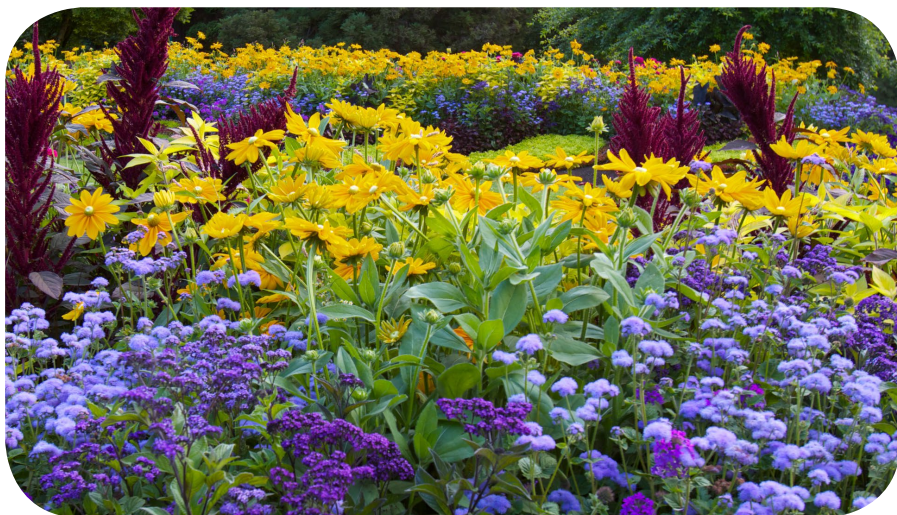
# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: QUALITY

## GARDENS + HORTICULTURE

*Rich red tulips one minute, sunny yellow daffodils the next, the bees love Vancouver's horticultural displays as much as the people.*

The Park Board maintains over 1,020,217 square metres (that's equivalent to completely covering Queen Elizabeth Park, twice!) of annuals, perennials, roses, naturalised areas, shrubs, water features and vegetable gardens. 32 gardeners and 12 apprentices (three new to the program each year) use pesticide-free practices. The Park Board co-manages VanDusen and Bloedel with Vancouver Botanical Gardens Association. Nearly half of all overnight visitors to Vancouver will visit a park or garden, with this number increasing to nearly 60% during the summer<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Data from Vancouver Park Board



### *Example: Stanley Park Gardens<sup>2</sup>*

- Stanley Park's horticultural practices aim to raise awareness of this cultural presence and the methods for cultivating the natural environment sustainably.
- While Stanley Park is comprised of mostly native plantings, unique pocket display gardens showcase plant specimens from around the world.
- Display gardens in Stanley Park include the Main Garden, the Rose Garden, the Pavilion Garden and the Ted and Mary Greig Rhododendron Garden.
- Professional gardeners and a range of other staff take care of the gardens and forest trails in Stanley Park.
- The gardeners plant 228,000 annuals and bulbs as well as many tropical shrubs and trees every year.

For more information on botanic gardens, please see the Facilities chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Data from Vancouver Park Board

This page: Stanley Park Annuals

Opposite: Queen Elizabeth Park is the highest point in Vancouver with the best views; Originally a rock quarry, this 52-hectare park was converted into a top show garden in the 1960s.











## COMMUNITY GARDENS

The Park Board currently supports nearly 1,000 community garden plots, 725 fruit and nut trees and four pollinator gardens.<sup>1</sup>

There are five key city-wide plans that set out a common vision for a sustainable food system in Vancouver, including:

- *Vancouver Food Action Plan*—2004
- *Vancouver Food Charter*—2007
- *Greenest City Action Plan*—2011
- *Local Food Action Plan (LFAP)*—2013
- *Healthy City Strategy*—2014

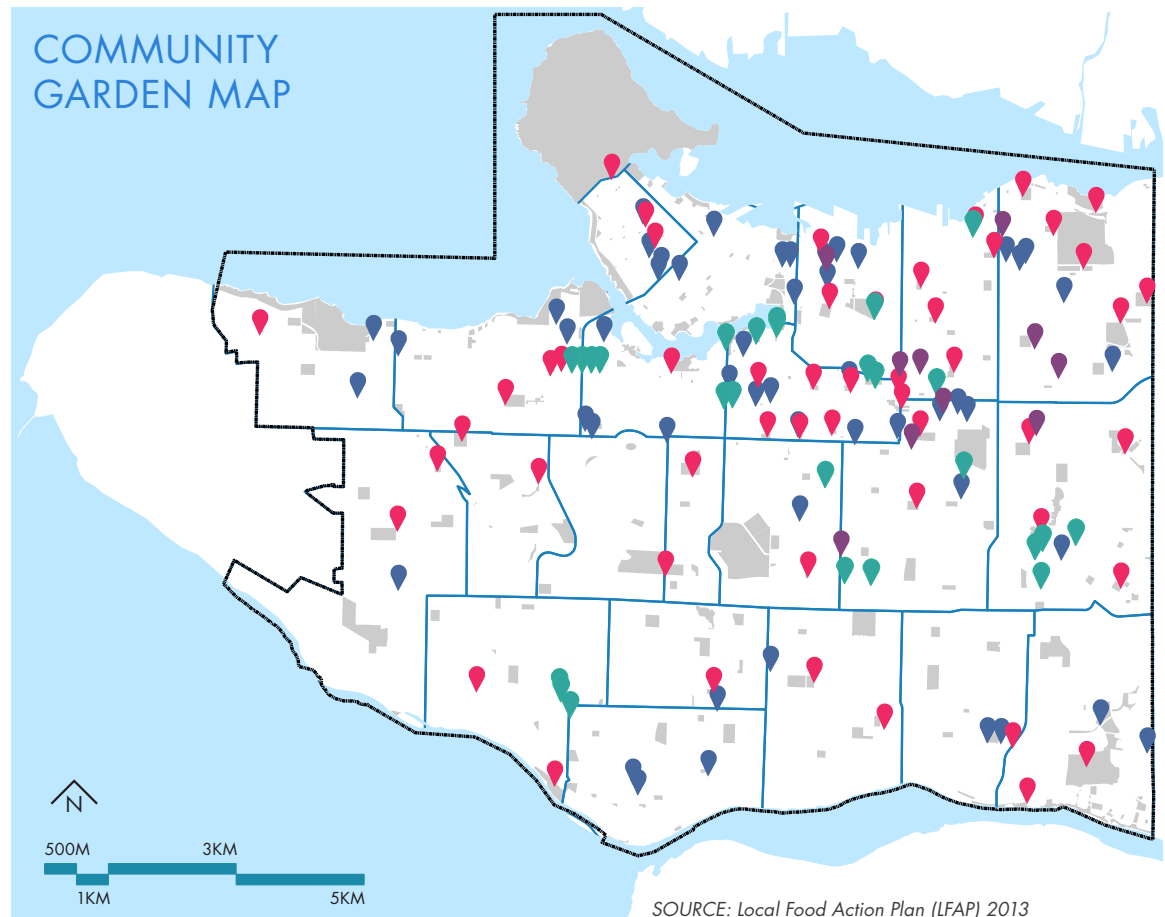
### What These Plans Tell Us

#### 1. The Vancouver Park Board is rich in food assets—

farmer's markets, festivals, community gardens, urban orchards and concession stands. Park Board concessions staff estimate that 30-40% of food served is grown in British Columbia. Community Centres enhance this resource by providing abundant food programming in their kitchens.

#### 2. Greenest City Action Plan (2011) established a key performance metric of increasing food assets by 50% over 2010 levels by 2020.

#### 3. Healthy City Strategy (2014) set a three-tiered framework of sustainable food systems by prioritizing food production, empowering residents and providing food access.



### LEGEND

- PARK BOARD GARDENS
- CITY + PARTNER GARDENS
- PRIVATE GARDENS
- OTHER GARDENS



### KEY TERM

#### *food asset*

Food assets are defined as “resources, facilities, services, or spaces, that are available to residents of the City...which are used to support the City’s food system” (LFAP, 2013)

<sup>1</sup> Data from Vancouver Park Board

# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: QUALITY

## ARTS AND CULTURE IN PARKS

*Vancouver parks are home to spectacular works of visual art from historic sculpture to contemporary installation art, as well as spaces and places for dance, music, theatre and more.*

The City of Vancouver's Public Art Program supports and presents contemporary and traditional visual art, by emerging and established artists in public spaces and parks throughout the city. Public art in parks ranges from memorial sculpture projects to totem poles to temporary contemporary installations. The Park Board provides a searchable online database of public art and community arts projects in parks and public spaces. Events showcasing the performing arts in established venues and pop-up spaces are abundant too—especially during the summer. Malkin Bowl, in Stanley Park, is an open air performance venue that also has indoor rehearsal space that is available for rent. It hosts the annual 'Theatre Under the Stars' during the summer as well as major music events year-round.

Artists at work in parks range from travelling painters and portraitists (in Stanley Park and Queen Elizabeth Park's Painter's Circles) to visual and performing artists who create pop-up projects with and for the public through Park Board artist-in-residence projects and arts partnerships. From stunning performances by aerial dancers high in the trees of Stanley Park, public to pedal-powered film projection with artists-in-residence in Hadden Park, Park Board support helps ensure that artists and arts organizations can present their work to audiences large and small, enhancing quality of life for Vancouver residents.



Top to Bottom:

[Mural in Chinatown](#) | Park Board

[Vancouver Draw Down](#) | Park Board - Arts, Culture & Engagement Team



*Cultural spaces and events are essential to Vancouver; they serve residents, attract tourists and support the economic health of the community.*

Festivals and cultural celebrations happen year-round in Vancouver parks. Skookum is a new popular music festival in Stanley Park that also showcases local artists and notable Vancouver chefs and restaurateurs. Oppenheimer Park is home to the Powell Street Festival showcasing Japanese Canadian culture with live music and theatre performances, martial arts, food and more. Jericho Beach Park welcomes The Vancouver Folk Music Festival every year, a family-friendly festival celebrating folk and world music and culture. On a more intimate, neighbourhood scale, Still Moon Arts' Moon Festival in Renfrew Ravine welcomes the harvest moon with food, community arts projects and local music. A commitment to diverse arts festivals reveals Vancouver as a lively city focused on bringing accessible cultural programming to its residents.

## *Reconciliation Arts*

Since 2013, the Vancouver Park Board has taken a lead role in Truth and Reconciliation work in and through the arts. The Park Board develops and supports Indigenous community consultation, conferences and education projects on Indigenous/non-Indigenous collaboration in the arts, Indigenous arts projects and Indigenous/non-Indigenous collaborations in the arts in parks and community centres, and Indigenous food security work. Examples include Park Board collaboration in the annual Wild Salmon Caravan, a cultural initiative and parade connecting Indigenous arts, food and environmental stewardship with a focus on the centrality of wild salmon to West coast cultures; a Roundhouse arts partnership in the annual Talking Stick Festival, Canada's largest festival of contemporary Indigenous culture; and artist-in-residence projects in community centres across the city that increase the presence and visibility of local Indigenous art and culture.



Top to Bottom:

Festival in Clark Park | Park Board

Vancouver Folk Music Festival Opening Day | Park Board

# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: OPERATIONS

## OPERATIONS + MAINTENANCE

With an operating budget of \$36M (including \$5.14M for urban forestry and \$2.6M for golf) per year, the Park Board manages and operates over 1,300 hectares of parkland and hundreds of recreation amenities. Maintenance and operations budgets are set internally each year. There are eight maintenance yards and seven greenhouses, all of which are in poor condition and in need of renewal.<sup>1</sup> Maintenance in Vancouver is divided into districts; these districts are identified for operational efficiency, not to equalize budget. The districts are designed to minimize travel time to and from the service yards (Stanley Park, Jericho, Evans and Sunset). Queen Elizabeth and Stanley Park have their own dedicated work force, whereas, the majority of parks are maintained by roving, mobile crews. The districts are as follows:

- **Stanley District:** Covers Downtown Vancouver—bounded by Main Street, Burrard Street and Broadway—and Stanley Park.
- **North District:** Northeast area of the City, bounded by Main Street, Cambie Street and King Edward Ave.
- **West District:** West of city, bounded by Burrard St, Cambie St, Broadway, 33rd Ave, Granville St, 49th Ave., Carnarvon St.
- **South District:** South of city, bounded by King Edward Ave, Cambie St, 33rd Ave., Granville St, 49th Ave., Carnarvon St.

<sup>1</sup> Vancouver Park Board Capital Planning Data

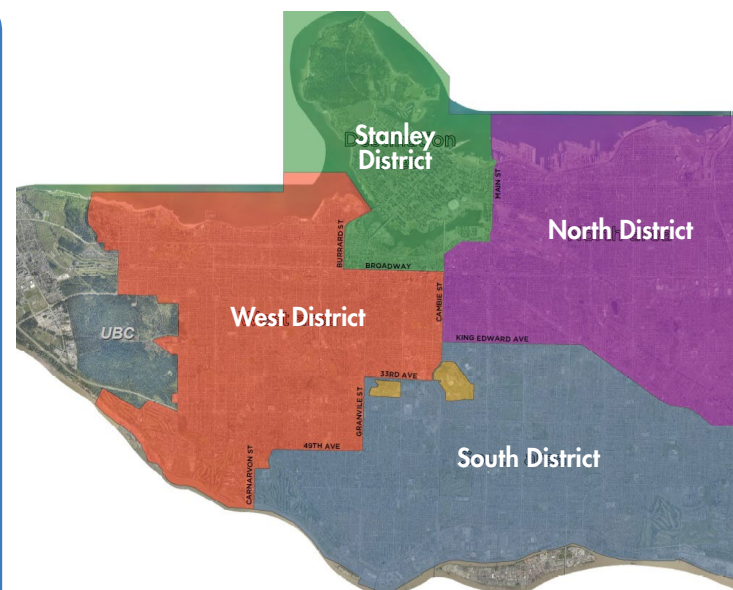
- **Bloedel, Queen Elizabeth and VanDusen** are grouped into their own district for the report since they have unique plant types and maintenance requirements. In 2016, the Park Board published the Turf and Horticulture Booklet. It provides a comprehensive inventory of all horticultural turf amenities in all parks, golf courses and pitch and putts. Managing Vancouver parks is part art and part science with many issues (such as weather and pests) outside of Park Board control. The inventory is a useful tool to understand these living assets and to preserve them on a day-to-day basis.
- **Golf courses** are their own separate maintenance district.

3 of the 4 service yards require complete rebuilds as they are in critical condition. The only one that's not critical is Evans Yard.

SOURCE: 2015-2018 City of Vancouver Capital Plan

### CRITICAL CONDITION

Many of the City's parks are overdue for renewal; a recent Park Board assessment found that 30% of park amenities are in critical condition. Keeping up with renewal and maintenance of existing parks is a challenge due to Charter restrictions on the use of specific funding sources. In addition, as new amenities are added, supplemental operating capacity is considered but needs are not always fully met.



SOURCE: Turf + Horticulture Booklet, Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, 2016



# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: FUNDING PARKS

Capital funding (to the Park Board) is used for parkland acquisition, developing new parks and replacement of assets; whereas operating funds look after maintenance, staffing and other costs for the ongoing care of those assets. Various sources and methods finance the City's capital and operating budgets. Park-related funding sources and mechanisms are described below.

## OPERATING

*Staff, operations and maintenance of existing assets are primarily funded through property taxes and revenue.*

### Revenue

The Park Board generates roughly \$42.4M (2017) of revenues from entities, such as concessions and user fees, providing roughly 34.5% of the necessary funding to operate a balanced budget. Pay parking is a critical source of revenue for the Park Board, \$7.2M in 2017 (13% of total revenues) that enables funding of necessary enhancements to the safety, security and cleanliness of our parks.

## CAPITAL

*New park components, such as the purchase of land for new parks and the development of those lands into parks, are funded primarily through developer and partner contributions.*

Community Plans include a Public Benefit Strategy, which identifies amenity needs such as parks and community centres, to support the projected density and urban form. Growth-related park amenities are typically delivered via development

cost levies (DCLs), density bonus zoning and other conditions of development, or through negotiations with developers for community amenities contributions (CACs).

### Development Cost Levies

DCLs are charges imposed on development to fund growth-related capital projects. They typically pay for new infrastructure and facilities to maintain service levels as the city grows. The principle is that 'growth pays for growth' so that the financial burden of the growth of the city is not borne by existing tax/rate payers. DCL funds (as per the Vancouver Charter) can only be used for acquiring parkland, providing fencing, landscaping, drainage and irrigation, trails, restrooms, changing rooms, playground and playing field equipment on parkland. So, DCLs don't fund upgrade work needed to serve the existing population, or for operations and maintenance. Park projects, such as new amenities to enhance an existing park, land acquisition to augment an existing park, or strategic acquisition of land along waterways, are typically funded by DCLs.

### Community Amenity Contributions

CACs are contributions provided by developers (either in-kind amenities or payments in lieu) or are negotiated during rezoning (such as new parks, recreation centers, fire halls and libraries to provide amenities to service the new population). Park projects on lands being rezoned for development are typically community amenity contributions.

### Partner Contributions

These can include cash contributions from other governments (federal, provincial and regional), non-profit agencies, foundations and philanthropists. Partner contributions can fund existing or new amenities.

## DCL REDUCTION

The City occasionally re-assesses the rate at which DCLs are allocated to City services (parks, non-market housing, infrastructure, etc.) Due to competing priorities, in 2017 the allocation for parks was reduced from 41% to 18%.

*SOURCE: Community Benefits from Development, 2017, City of Vancouver; 2018 Operating and Capital Budget Report to Park Board Commissioners November 2017*

# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: INCLUSIVITY

## SOPARC KEY PARKS FINDINGS

*The System for Observing Play + Recreation in Communities (SOPARC) is an observational survey tool that was used in the summer of 2017 to acquire data on community, neighbourhood and local park use.*

*To see the complete data and findings of the SOPARC study, please see the Appendix 3.*

### Park Atmosphere Findings

- Only 13% of parks had graffiti.
- 61% of parks had “a little” litter present.
- Food, drink or snack vendors in parks were observed 16% of the time.

### Park Use Findings

- 70% of all total users of parks were present on weekends.
- More women are proportionately present during weekdays.\*
- Afternoons (30%) are the most popular time to be in parks, followed by early evening (28%), mid day (26%) and early morning (16%).
- The highest numbers of users observed over all observation periods were seen in John Hendry (Trout Lake) and David Lam by a large margin, followed by Memorial South, Emery Barnes and Connaught Park.

### Demographics

- 46% of park users were female and 54% were male; (for children, the discrepancy was larger: 61% male, 39% female).\*
- 60% of park users were adults (20 to 59 years old).
- People using a wheelchair or mobility chair were observed 33% of the time in parks during the observation window.
- People who appeared homeless were observed being present in parks 27% of the time.

\*The observational surveillance nature of the SOPARC tool necessitates that raters make educated guesses on the gender of park goers using only the female and male binary, based on their physical appearance and dress. There is an acknowledgement that not all individuals adhere to this binary structure and some park users may identify as a gender other than female or male.

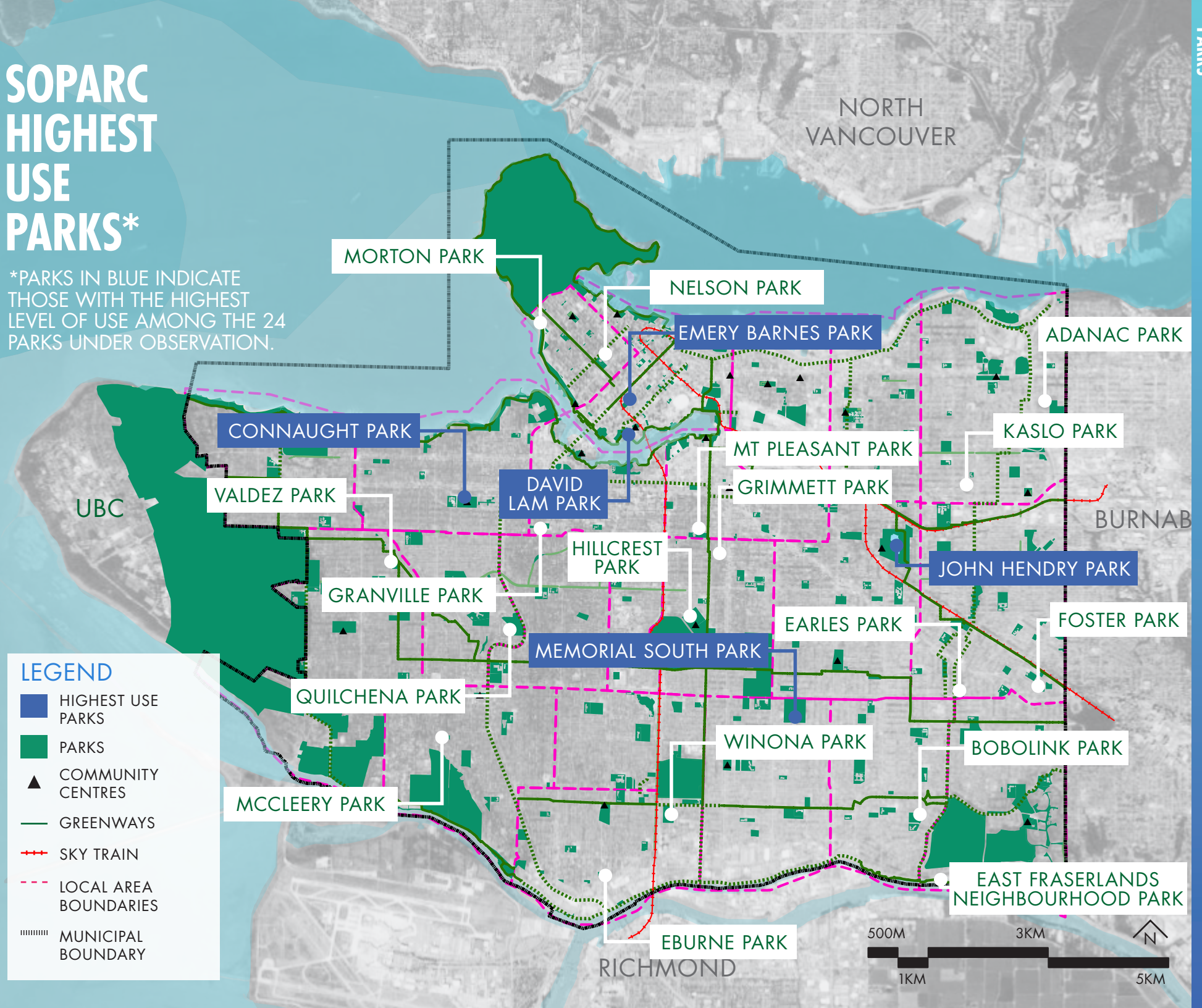


John Hendry Park | Park Board



# SOPARC HIGHEST USE PARKS\*

\*PARKS IN BLUE INDICATE THOSE WITH THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF USE AMONG THE 24 PARKS UNDER OBSERVATION.



# OPPORTUNITIES + CHALLENGES

*The following list of opportunities and challenges is a summary of key findings gleaned from consultation with staff, stakeholders and the community (including Fall 2017 Community Dialogue and Community Centre Association Meetings).*

## opportunities

Interests or topics that have the potential to positively impact parks and recreation

## challenges

Constraints or obstacles that have the potential to negatively impact parks and recreation

## OPPORTUNITIES

1. **CONNECTIVITY**—Increasing system connectivity benefits to both the human and nonhuman inhabitants of Vancouver by prioritizing habitat corridors and safe routes to schools and parks.
2. **CONNECTION TO NATURE**—Natural beauty ranked as the top reason residents call Vancouver home. A strong connection to nature is core to the identity of Vancouver and many of the opportunities identified by the public for the future of parks centre on improving natural area, including biodiversity, green corridors and more wild areas.

3. **UNCONVENTIONAL PARKLAND**—While land is limited in Vancouver, cities across the world—from Barcelona to New York City—have transformed their shorelines, former industrial sites, piers and barges into supplemental parkland.
4. **FIRST NATIONS**—Local First Nations have stewarded Vancouver's open spaces since time immemorial; learning from their intricate knowledge of the environment could transform how we manage the landscape. Park design integrates elements of Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh Nations and Urban Indigenous Peoples history and living culture. First Nations are integral rights holders in the future of parks and public lands. The Park Board is committed to learning from First Nations in the planning and programming of parks.
5. **INCLUSIVITY + WELCOME**—Through programming, activities, subsidies, permitting, events, art and education we can make spaces more welcoming, interesting and safe for everyone.
6. **GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**—Parks and park edges offer opportunities to collaborate with the City of Vancouver green infrastructure group. Collaboration could improve resiliency, aesthetics, the health and abundance of the urban forest and pedestrian safety. Multifunctional spaces that meet human needs as well as environmental are preferred.
7. **COLOCATION**—With the elevated cost of land, colocation offers opportunities for expanded parkland through partnerships and unconventional spaces, such as green roofs (if public access is ensured) or grade separated parks as proposed for the Oakridge Centre redevelopment. We recommend further study of this topic.
8. **FOOD + BEVERAGE**—This was identified by the public as a key gap in the park system. Project for Public Space notes that increased food choice increases dwell time, acts as a people multiplier and enables parks to be third spaces between work and home.
9. **EQUITY + ACCESS**—Equitable delivery of places and services recognizes the inherent privileges some residents have to access and enjoy parks and recreation and to provide added support and welcome to those residents without this privilege. By targeting land acquisition, amenity improvements and service provision in areas of the city with the highest need and to provide equitable delivery of parks and services, the VanPlay team is making an extensive effort to define, measure and set goals with the community for equity and welcome in parks.



10. **TRULY VANCOUVER**—As the steward and designer of the public realm we have the opportunity to influence the character and feel of a place. Our parks can reflect the traditional and contemporary values of everyone who lives here, to create our own look and feel that is unique and grounded in Vancouver.
11. **INFORMATION MANAGEMENT**—Mapping and tracking our assets, such as through development of a GPS located "hard assets inventory," allows for more efficient allocation of resources and the ability to consider the total life cycle costs and repair due dates for park amenities including park benches and lights.
12. **FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING**—Park maintenance is scheduled; however, it's not a precise art. Circumstances, such as unexpected weather, equipment malfunctions and expert staff availability, mean that a flexible approach is best. Communicating this well to our users could manage expectations and help us be more strategic.

## CHALLENGES

1. **INCREASED DEMAND**—While Vancouver has more park space today than it did 25 years ago, the amount of park space per person (or what we call park provision) has declined by almost a third. With space at a premium, many competing demands on park space and a limited budget, the Park Board is struggling to keep up with development and to provide adequate recreation space to its growing population.
2. **DEFERRED MAINTENANCE**—As Vancouver's parks work harder, keeping up with a high maintenance standard is a challenge. Downtown parks and those in the growth areas see disproportionate use and social issues alongside mounting maintenance and renewal costs. As we add new parks and amenities, we haven't added staff capacity to match. The capacity of our aging service yards is also impacting

maintenance efficiency. A lack of space for staff and specialist equipment and poor conditions impacts our ability to perform.

3. **VARYING NEEDS ACROSS COMMUNITIES**—There are local challenges facing parks that a systemwide plan cannot address. Downtown parks (like David Lam Park) see the most use, while local parks (such as East Fraserlands and Kaslo) are underutilized. With increased and varied usership, meeting the needs of neighbourhoods will remain challenging.
4. **DETERIORATING LANDSCAPES**—The decline of natural areas have long-standing impacts on parks and their resiliency. With a growing population and large public events, the city's beaches and lawns see use exceeding carrying capacity. Invasive species introduce further challenges, such as the Chafer and Japanese beetles impact on sports fields.
5. **CLIMATE CHANGE**—Predictions for climate change include higher temperatures and increased volatility of storms. Hotter, dryer summers are impacting the health and abundance of the urban forests and natural areas. Extreme weather events will bring increased maintenance and repair costs as a secondary impact, such as an increase in irrigation required to maintain the quality of gardens and turf.
6. **SEA LEVEL RISE**—Seas are estimated to rise by 1m by 2100 in Vancouver, putting 11% of the city's landmass at risk due to climate change. Waterfront parks will be impacted disproportionately by rising tides. The CCAs offers an action plan for sea level rise that will plan and implement feasible and adaptive solutions and address the impacts of sea level rise.
7. **HIGH DEMAND FOR PUBLIC LAND**—From housing to new roads to utilities to schools, there are many demands on public land and water. Collaboration with these agencies can create win-win scenarios and/or this plan can offer critical arguments to protect precious parkland. Parks are currently using potable water for irrigation. With a changing climate and increased scarcity and cost of water, this is a huge vulnerability for horticulture and turf in particular.
8. **LOSS OF SOLAR ACCESS**—Shadows from tall buildings is a challenge for growing cities. Open spaces must be protected from excessive shadowing to protect your sunny spot on the grass and keep vegetation thriving. New density can add vibrancy so proposals must be critically evaluated to ensure collaboration and win/win scenarios for city building.







# FOUNDATION FOR INNOVATION



## PEER CITY CASE STUDIES

*Park equity is a challenging question for urban park systems across the globe. Here are two innovative approaches.*

### ***NYC Parks: Framework for an Equitable Future — 2014***

This study sets a framework for how the City will equitably invest in park capital projects and programming and maintenance projects. Key to this approach is defining parks and communities that are underresourced. For parks, the planning team compiled longitudinal data on capital investments across the city to identify vulnerable parks. To identify communities with high potential need, they screened for above-average density, recent population growth and an above-average percentage of residents living below the federal poverty line. They then identified 35 parks of need within communities of need for immediate investment through the "Community Parks Initiative."

### ***San Francisco Parks + Recreation: Equity Metrics — 2016***

San Francisco's pathway to equity began with a proposition charter that mandated the department develop a set of equity metrics to establish a baseline of services for low-income neighbourhoods that equitably aligns with services provided citywide. The P+R department utilized the statewide tool from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to identify equity zones. The population characteristics included age (youth and seniors), asthma, low birth weight, low education, linguistic isolation, poverty and unemployment. Parks within a five-minute walk of equity zones are priorities for investment and are monitored yearly against the citywide average to track progress.









## CHAPTER 3:

# RECREATION

### WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THE RECREATION CHAPTER?

This chapter focuses on the activities that activate our parks and community centres, like sport, art and play amenities—including tennis courts, playing fields, playgrounds and off leash dog areas—as well as the range of recreational programs and experiences.

The following facilities chapter explores recreation in spaces like community centres, pools, ice rinks, field house, VanDusen Botanical Garden and Bloedel Conservatory.

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Sailing on Lost Lagoon, 1920's | Handbook of Parks, Playgrounds + Bathing Beaches

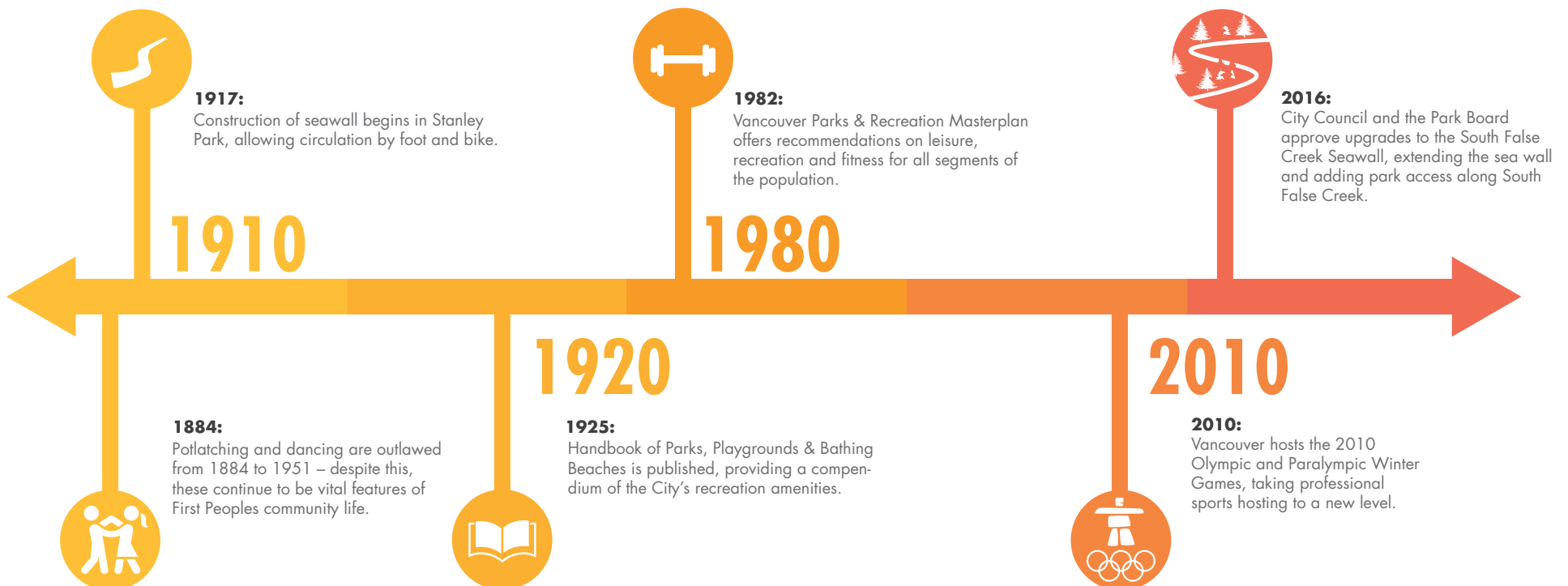


Tennis Net Repair, 1962 | CoV Archives



Olympic Day at Carnarvon Park, 1976 | CoV Archives

## RECREATION TIMELINE





# BACKGROUND

## SYSTEM CONTEXT

*Vancouverites are known for their healthy lifestyles and love of the outdoors due to unique weather that allows for outdoor recreation throughout the year.*

Art, dance, music, sport, fitness, hiking, cycling and play are vital activities that enrich life in Vancouver. There is a wide array of leisure sports, culture and recreation programs at the neighbourhood community centres and parks to meet the needs of residents. The list of services is expansive, from mahjong to lacrosse, bird watching to curling. Sport, cultural expression and recreation provide positive rewards not only in the physical health of participants but in their sense of social connection, artistic expression, spiritual health and connection to nature.

In the early days of the Park Board (1880s), programming concentrated largely on leisure and informal activities. Postcards from that era speak to the popularity of weekend drives through Stanley Park and bandshell concerts by the beach.<sup>1</sup> By the early twentieth century, however, the Park Board and Community Centre Association (CCAs) shifted their focus to active recreation. Sports courts and children's playgrounds were built throughout the city through the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>2</sup>

In recent years, the Park Board has undertaken efforts to expand programming, to advance sport for recreation and to strengthen neighbourhood partnerships. Today the Park Board's recreational focus is not just to expand sport development, but also to support Sport for Life, through physical literacy and participation. Strategies and programs that align the True Sport Principles and the Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L)'s Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD) framework aim to support lifelong engagement with sport. The Sport for Life philosophy, as articulated in the Park Board's Sport Strategy, advocates for facilities for participation of all ages and abilities right through to elite training and sport hosting venues.

1 Harland Bartholomew and Associates. Plan for the City of Vancouver. Vancouver, BC: 1928.

2 Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation. Master Plan. Vancouver, BC: 1982.

## KEY TERMS

### *recreation*

An activity that people engage in during their free time, to relax or have fun

### *sport*

An activity involving physical exercise and skill in which an individual or team competes for entertainment

### *play*

An imaginative, intrinsically motivated, non serious and freely chosen activity done for its inherent pleasure

### *sports tourism*

Any activity in which people are attracted to a particular location as a sport event participant, an event spectator, or to attend sport attractions or business meetings

### *secondary providers*

Private and nonprofit recreation service providers autonomous of the Park Board

# BACKGROUND

## SYSTEM CONTEXT CONT.

In addition to recreation programs and services, the Park Board maintains a network of active outdoor recreation amenities across the city. These facilities include tennis courts, volleyball courts, basketball courts, golf courses, baseball diamonds, playing fields (turf, gravel and artificial), playgrounds and dog off-leash areas. Complementing these facilities, the City's trails, bikeways and greenways support an array of sports and activities including running, biking and tai chi.

## MAJOR INITIATIVES

There are major projects currently shaping Vancouver's recreation services system, in addition to the related initiatives at right:

- The Leisure Access Program (LAP) provides low-income residents with access to recreation programs at a reduced cost. A simplified application process initiated in 2015 has further lowered the barriers to accessing this program.
- Park Board's Trans, Gender Diverse and Two-Spirit (TGD2S) Inclusion steering committee provides input on creating safety protocols, interpersonal communication protocols, and working on Two-Spirit engagement. The Park Board is working with the CoV LGBTQ2+ advisory committee to guide initiatives, programs and events. The Trans and Gender Variant Inclusion (TGVl) Working Group assists the organization with identifying barriers citizens face in accessing parks and recreation services.
- The Park Board is improving access to adapted recreation amenities city-wide, including accessible playground features (Creekside playground), providing beach mats at English Bay in 2017 and Kitsilano Beach in 2018, installing floating water wheelchairs located at beaches and outdoor pools, and offering indoor pool wheelchairs.
- The 11 Reconciliation Strategies include a "360 degree" approach to programming in culture, health and sport to increase public awareness and support for First Nations children, youth and elders in Park Board programs.

## RELATED INITIATIVES

- Making Space for Arts and Culture: Cultural Infrastructure Plan—ongoing, 2018
- Creative City Strategy—ongoing, 2018
- OnWater: Vancouver's Non-motorised Watercraft Strategy—ongoing, 2019
- People, Parks and Dogs Strategy—2017
- Assessment of Playspaces—2015
- Healthy City Strategy—2014
- Canadian Sport for Life—2014
- Grass Field Renewal Plan—2002
- Sport for Life: Vancouver Sport Strategy—2008





Beach Volleyball | VanPlay Video Photo



Downtown Skateboard Park, 2018 | Michael Schmidt



Soccer Field | VanPlay Video Photo



Children looking at Heron nests | Park Board



5th and Pine Pop Up Park | VanPlay Video Photo



Biker in Stanley Park | VanPlay Video Photo

# ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

## PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

Survey respondents most frequently used these amenities:

1. Dog facilities
2. Parks
3. Playgrounds

The top three themes of the Big Ideas we heard from survey respondents were:

1. Protect and expand green spaces, natural areas, wildlife, biodiversity –15%
2. Improve, repair and upgrade existing amenities –12%
3. Enhance social connections, sense of community and place-making –8%

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Play is not just for children! During the VanPlay Tour we heard lots of support for all-ages play spaces, including play equipment and monkey bars for adults.
- Pickleball is a rapidly growing sport in Vancouver; many respondents highlighted the need for more outdoor (and indoor) Pickleball courts throughout the city to meet demand.
- During engagement for the North East False Creek Park and for the Marpole Community Plan, in addition to VanPlay survey responses, we heard great support for additional skate parks and spots.
- Amenities of interest to older adults (i.e. outdoor exercise equipment, looped walking trails and beautiful spots to sit and talk) were regularly brought up on the VanPlay tour.
- Andy Livingstone Park Playground Renewal Engagement participants identified climbing (50%) and sliding (24%) as their favourite playground activities. This is supported by the Urban Explorers (child & youth engagement in planning project): “traditional play

equipment continues to be important for children and they would improve these structures with bigger, faster, longer & higher slides and swings.”

- Water play continues to be hugely popular, with many mentions during the VanPlay Tour. Many of the student projects presented by the Urban Explorers featured swimming pools, water slides, a splash park, swimming fountains, creeks and a waterfall also open to swimming and playing.
- One of the most commonly suggested big ideas heard during the VanPlay tour was for more adventure play and elements of risky play in playgrounds. Many residents cited Terra Nova in Richmond as being a great example. This was heavily supported by the Urban Explorers, almost all of them included exciting play amenities like zip lines and treehouses in their projects.
- Access to drinking water and shelter (from the sun and rain) was a commonly requested area of improvement mentioned during the VanPlay tour.

## CHALLENGES

- The most common challenges and barriers reported by survey respondents were a lack of available programs and activities of interest (23%) and inconvenient timing of programs and/or events (20%).
- As Aaron Licker articulated in his VanPlay Smart City Talk, a short walk isn't a short walk for everyone. His “grumpy toddler index” examined access to splash parks across the city and identified walking distance, major road crossings and washrooms as barriers to access for toddlers and their parents.
- Many comments regarding challenges focused on broader stressors on Vancouver's recreation amenities and services including population growth, changing demographics and community needs, and social isolation.
- Parents commonly reported how important it is to have a continued focus on public safety. Survey and tour participants requested more fenced playgrounds and safer street crossings.
- The tricky balance between quiet, passive recreation spaces with active outdoor amenities was apparent during conversations with VanPlay Tour participants. Many called for more shady spots, lush grass and benches and tables situated away from those undertaking more active pursuits.



## COMMUNITY SURVEY TAKEAWAY

4% Limited accessibility  
3% Lack of cultural sensitivity  
3% Not feeling welcome  
1% Language barrier

23%

Lack of available  
programs of  
interest

20%

Inconvenient timing

46%

Perceive no signifi-  
cant barriers to  
accessing recreation

## BARRIERS TO ACCESSING RECREATION



## PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENT REVIEW

All three of the community plan engagement summaries reviewed listed "park connectivity" as an opportunity for recreation (creating trails) and for access to amenities.

A study of playground renewal in the downtown indicated priorities for playgrounds include canopy cover, public furniture for passive recreation and integration with natural elements.

## EMERGING QUESTIONS

**EQUITY, INCLUSION + ACCESS:**

This was the top priority of the public to address in the next 25 years. What are the biggest challenges and opportunities regarding equity, inclusion and access in the recreation system? What are 'affordable' services for all? What populations currently feel unwelcome? What does the public perceive as barriers now?

**ARTS + CULTURE:** What are the biggest challenges and opportunities regarding enlivening our city with creativity, arts and culture?

**EVENTS + SPORTS:** How can we develop and enhance new and unique sports opportunities, community building events and sports tourism?

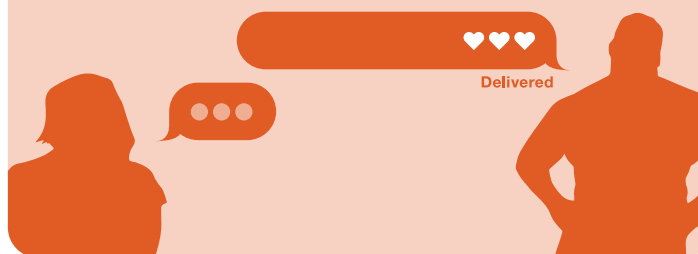
## VANPLAY TOUR TAKEAWAY

"Recreation facilities and services, including playgrounds, outdoor sports facilities, indoor and outdoor pools and dog areas, help people connect and play together."



## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

"It's important to consider the breadth of recreation opportunities that are and can be, offered by the Park Board. Considerations should be made for both passive and active programming, programming for different ages and abilities, among others."



**VanPlay**

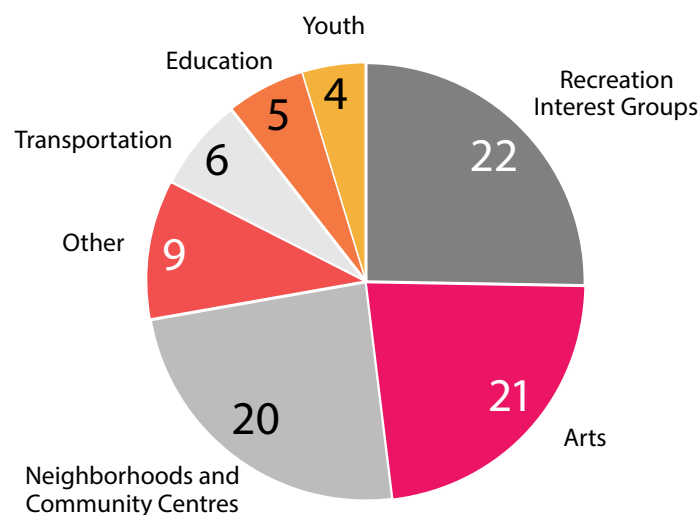
# ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

## VANPLAY DEEP DIVE

Between February and April 2018, key stakeholder groups were invited to engage in the VanPlay process through “VanPlay Deep Dives.” 345 members of key stakeholder groups completed 64 “VanPlay Deep Dive” workbooks. The goals of the VanPlay Deep Dive are:

- To better understand Vancouver’s parks and recreation system by mapping out and celebrating the diverse networks of amenities, programs, services and experiences to which stakeholders contribute in Vancouver.
- To identify who is involved in leading, sharing and supporting these diverse services.
- To shape the future by setting principles and goals which reflect what a successful future looks like.
- To identify the actions and resources needed to achieve these goals.

Groups Who Participated in Deep Dive Engagement



## STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES ON CURRENT STATE OF RECREATION

Through the VanPlay Deep Dives, 774 comments were gathered on the current state of parks and recreation. The diagram on the facing page reflects findings from stakeholders on the current state of the recreation network and what broad topics are top of mind to these stakeholders. The lines map out who the Deep Dive stakeholders see as providers of these recreation services and facilities. Specific recreation programs of special interest to the Deep Dive participants include:

- Adaptive sport and recreation for persons with disabilities
- Art programming (pottery, painting, etc.)
- Cultural programming (concerts, festivals, etc.)
- Disc Golf
- Dog parks and amenities (recently addressed in People Parks and Dogs)
- Educational programs (after school programs, ESL, etc.)
- Elite sports and training
- Field Hockey
- Health and wellness (yoga, counseling, health monitoring, etc.)
- Paddle ball / pickleball
- Parkour
- Rugby
- Skateboarding
- Sport courts (e.g. tennis, basketball, pickle ball, volleyball)
- Sport fields (e.g. soccer, rugby, ultimate, cricket)
- Tennis

*For the full Deep Dive report, please see Appendix 7.*

### WHAT THIS DIAGRAM (OPPOSITE) TELLS US

For recreation, stakeholders identified the Park Board and Community Centre Associations as both playing lead roles in providing parks and access to parks among others in a complex network.



# DEEP DIVE FINDINGS SUMMARY: RECREATION SERVICES AND PROVIDERS

## SERVICE PROVIDERS IDENTIFIED BY STAKEHOLDERS

## STAKEHOLDER SELECTED DISCUSSION TOPICS



\*Addressed in the 2017 People, Parks and Dogs Strategy  
SOURCE: VanPlay Phase 3 Summary Report: Deep Dive Discussions

# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: ACCESS

## DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

The population of Vancouver is growing, aging and continuing to be more diverse.

- By 2041, Vancouver's population is predicted to grow by over 150,000 people, which puts increasing demand on our parks and recreation facilities.<sup>1</sup>
- Vancouver's population over 65+ is expected to grow by 92% by 2041.<sup>2</sup>
- The 2011 Census reported that only 50.2% of Vancouverites were native English speakers and 1.5% spoke French only. 45.4% of people in Vancouver speak a language other than English or French, such as Chinese, Tagalog, Punjabi or a Coast Salish language. In comparison, the BC average is 70.3% for English only, 1.3% French and 26.5% for other languages.

## HEALTH TRENDS

If high quality parks, recreation and social destinations are located within a five to 10-minute walk, people are more likely to grab their bikes or walk a trail than get into their cars. Walking, cycling and being outside provide long-term health benefits against obesity and heart disease. Recreational programming has become an important strategy in addressing the obesity crisis by promoting physical activity through means of organized sports leagues, outdoor fitness classes, interventions to encourage the use of walking paths and trails and varied activities like yoga, Pilates and martial arts. Active, passive and sport recreation have

tremendous potential to address health trends:

- Only 10% of children ages nine to 12 participate in after school sports activities but 50% would like to.<sup>3</sup>
- Rate of obesity in Vancouver is increasing at twice the rate of the rest of British Columbia.<sup>4</sup>
- Only 46% of Vancouver adults are getting the recommended 150 minutes of physical activity per week.<sup>5</sup>
- 50% of estimated weekday trips are made by the more active options of walking, cycling or transit.<sup>6</sup>

## WELLNESS TRENDS

Wellbeing depends on feeling a sense of safety, belonging and inclusion in our communities. Feeling like part of a community can help shape identity and encourage societal participation. Stronger senses of belonging are associated with better mental health. Social networks are built up through community and are a critical support system. These social networks allow us to relieve stress and improve our mental health conditions. Social isolation is when there is a lack of these social networks or contact between an individual and their community or society. This is often an issue with populations such as aging individuals and immigrant groups, both of which are found in Vancouver. Programming that encourages community participation and social interaction has the possibility to address wellness trends:

- Only 52% of adults in Vancouver report having excellent or very good mental health.<sup>7</sup>
- Nearly half of Vancouver adults do not feel a sense community belonging.<sup>8</sup>
- Half of adults have four or more people to turn to for help in difficult situations.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> City of Vancouver. *Diversity Dialogue*. March 31, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> City of Vancouver 2016 Projections

<sup>3</sup> Sport for Life: Vancouver Sport Strategy. Vancouver, 2008

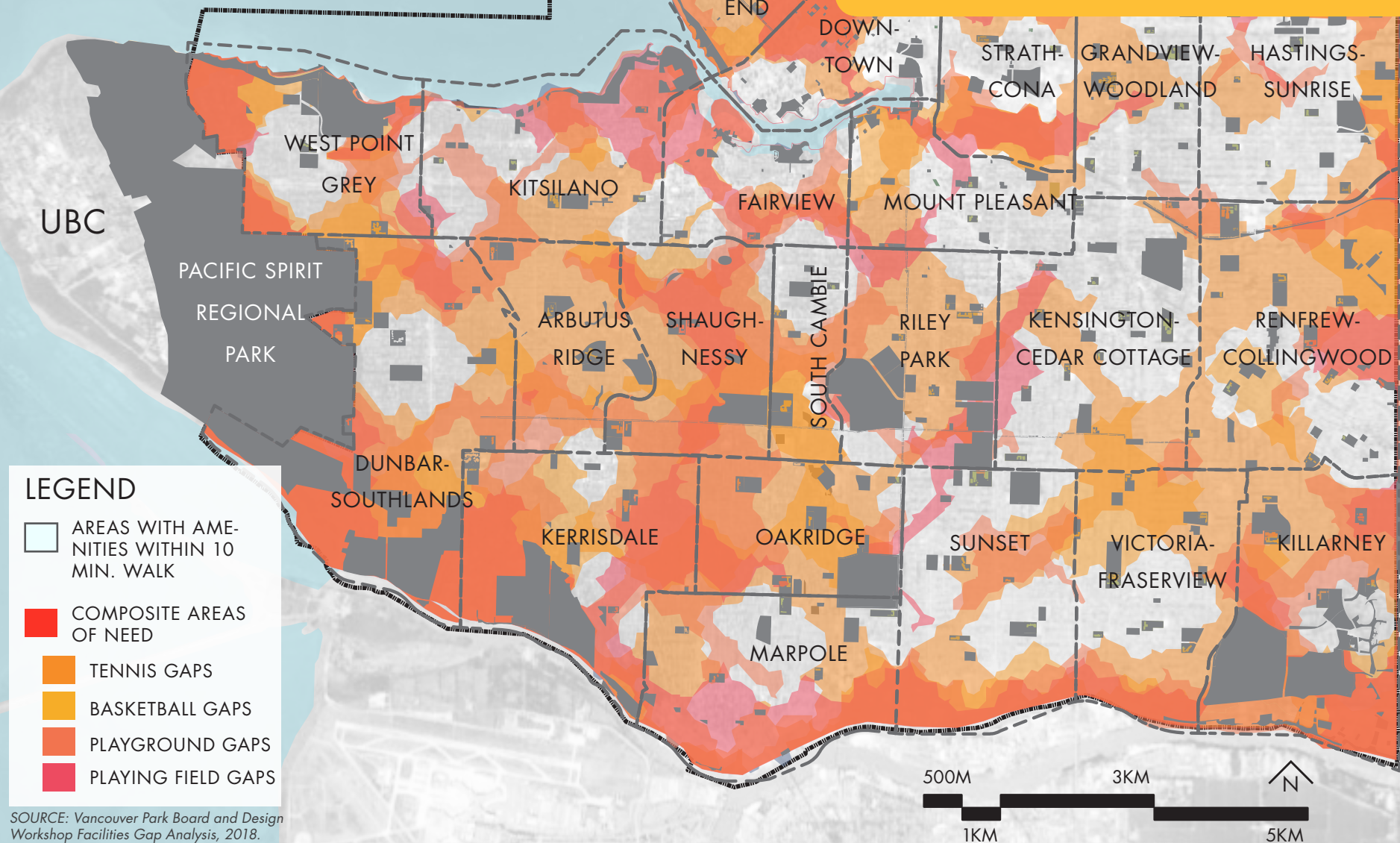
<sup>4</sup> "Obesity Rates Higher than Previous Report." Vancouver, May 29, 2014.

<sup>5-9</sup> My Health My Community Project Survey Results. Vancouver, 2013.



# OUTDOOR RECREATION AMENITIES: 10-MIN WALK BASELINE MAP

**WHAT THIS MAP TELLS US:** This is a composite map of service gaps for four recreation types. Using the sidewalk network, the VanPlay team mapped facilities within a 10-minute walk. **Coloured areas show gaps for each recreation type with the darkest areas indicating composite gaps. This map does not factor in private recreation access.** Further discussion is needed with staff, stakeholders and the community to determine ideal modes of accessing these recreation amenities (transit, cycling, walking, etc.) and the ideal service provision.



SOURCE: Vancouver Park Board and Design Workshop Facilities Gap Analysis, 2018.

# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: ACCESS & QUALITY

## PASSIVE, LEISURE + INFORMAL RECREATION TRENDS

Park Board venues from scenic beaches and seawalls to ornamental gardens offer the community destinations for passive recreation like hiking, picnicking, or taking in the view. The VanPlay survey results revealed that community health and wellbeing, and passive recreation are important community priorities for the future development of the system. The BC Recreation and Parks Association reports that the province is seeing a trend in people choosing informal, individual activities that can fit into their daily schedules and travels. Experiential, adventure play, cultural and outdoor activities will likely increase in demand. Temporary art installations, public art and murals, and cultural programs are important offerings to current and future populations of Vancouver. For example, the popular *A-maze-ing Laughter* sculpture in English Bay draws playful children, tourists and even a couple who staged their wedding at the park.

Metro Vancouver runs the regional parks system, which is geared toward natural areas and passive recreation. It also has a regional greenways program that is recreationally focused (not active transportation/commuter focused). Vancouver City Council approved a regional greenways vision plan in 1999 and there are future linkages planned between the local and regional systems.



Latern Festival | Park Board

## TECHNOLOGY TRENDS

While Vancouver reports higher rates of physical activity than peer cities, the rate of obesity in Vancouver is increasing at twice the rate of the rest of British Columbia. This paired with digital entertainment as a proxy for outdoor recreation is creating a greater risk for obesity. Adapting to changes in technology will rely on looking beyond the here and now. Smartphone ownership in British Columbia is at 68%, with users logging in more phone screen time than TV screen time<sup>1</sup>.

Fitness apps and other technological advances will encourage recreation participation (e.g. apps to share equipment) while also creating potential management conflicts (e.g. permissibility of drones, electronic bikes, etc. on Park Board lands). Technology used to capture, review and analyze movements with high performance cameras, multi-angle video and artificial intelligence is revolutionizing sport training and play. Online coaching tools and live streaming connects players, coaches and supporters, which encourages learning, performance and motivation.

Wearable technology has come a long way since pedometers – technology to track performance, biometrics and routes can also be integrated with equipment on courts, fields and tracks.

<sup>1</sup> *Insights West. British Columbians Spend Nearly as much Time Using Smartphones as Watching their TV Screens. May 8, 2017.*



Dance Class | VanPlay Video Photo



## RECREATION IN THE METRO VANCOUVER REGION

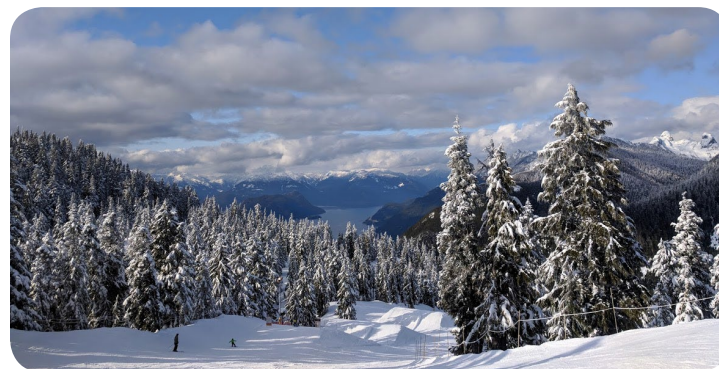
*Vancouver's dramatic mountain backdrop is more than just stunning; it offers a wealth of recreation opportunities.*

Spectacular skiing, snowshoeing, camping and hiking within an hour's drive (or less) of Downtown make these activities accessible for many on a day-to-day basis. The gulf islands, the Indian arm and Salish Sea are wonderful venues for sea kayaking and sailing.

Leveraging this proximity to big nature experiences and enabling more Vancouverites to make the most of these assets is something the Park Board and Metro Vancouver can continue to work together on into the future.

Metro Vancouver's regional parks system is managed with a focus on water quality protection and adventure recreation. Metro Vancouver, in partnership with Pacific Spirit Park Society, also manage Vancouver's immediate neighbour to the West: Pacific Spirit Regional Park. This beautiful 750-hectare forest features over 54km of trails, many of them dog-friendly and is much loved by Vancouver residents, and UBC students and staff alike.

The University of British Columbia (UBC) offers a suite of amenities including aquatics, drop-in fitness, ice, rowing, sports clubs, tennis and summer camps to both students and the public. Simon Fraser University (SFU) offers public recreation amenities at their Vancouver and Burnaby campuses and offers recreation memberships in partnership with the Park Board.



Cleveland Dam at Capilano River Regional Park  
Outdoor Rock Climbing at Murrin Provincial Park  
Skiing at Cypress Mountain | Katherine Howard

## HIGH PERFORMANCE AND SPORT HOSTING TRENDS

*Vancouver's stunning natural setting, mild climate and outdoors culture make it a popular destination for sports competitions.*

A 2011 study estimated sport tourism travel generates \$7.68 billion in visitor spending globally, with 19 million sports tourists visiting Canada each year. The 2010 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games were an international success story of sports hosting and showed the world Vancouver's ability to host large-scale events successfully. The Games built a relationship with host First Nations and spurred invaluable infrastructure improvements. As an example, the Olympic legacy of Hillcrest Centre is the Park Board's largest aquatics facility and also houses a regulation-sized hockey rink, a curling facility and two new public art installations. The Olympic Legacy Reserve Fund (and set of 37 commitments based on community input and supported by the Park Board and City) created a suite of community projects focused on cultural, recreational and affordable opportunities.

The Park Board supports a diverse mix of opportunities for people to pursue sport at any level and at any stage in life, including opportunities and spaces for high performance training.

Sport hosting and high performance training facilities play an important role in a comprehensive offering of Sport for Life. By keeping athletes engaged and supported, they in turn inspire the next generation to keep playing and strive for high performance.

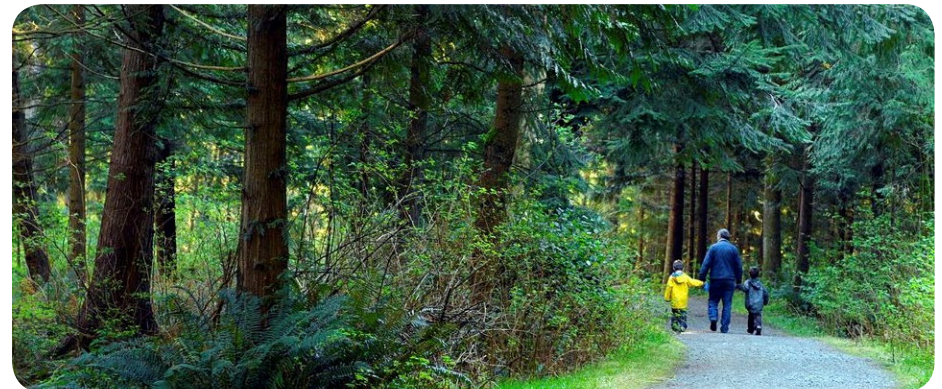
The Vancouver to Whistler Gran Fondo cycling race, 122km into the mountains, is the largest in North America. Marathons and triathlons are

a popular feature of summers in Vancouver. Notably the Vancouver Marathon is regarded as one of the most beautiful marathon routes in the world.

BC Place (owned and operated by BC Pavilion Corporation) and the Pacific Coliseum and surrounding grounds of the Pacific National Exhibition at Hastings Park provide the stage for hundreds of major sport, art and cultural events each year.

Vancouver's neighbours have extensive sport hosting and high performance training amenities, which supplement Park Board recreation amenities. Regional Olympic legacy venues in neighbouring municipalities Richmond, West Vancouver and Whistler offer world-class recreation venues to the community. Many sports leagues make use of facilities in the greater Metro Vancouver area, such as Softball City in Surrey and Swangard Stadium or Canlan Ice Sports 8 Rinks in Burnaby.

University of British Columbia's 3,500 seat Thunderbird Stadium hosts local and international rugby, football and soccer games. Also on campus is Thunderbird Park with a new track and field facility. Doug Mitchell Thunderbird Sports Centre has rinks in winter, tournament ready tennis in summer and has competition hosting capacity for many sports.



Walking through Stanley Park | Park Board

RIGHT: UBC and Pacific Spirit Regional Park | Russ Heint Photography and University of British Columbia

<sup>1</sup> Canadian Sport Tourism Alliance. *Value of Sport Tourism*. Ottawa, ON: 2011.

<sup>2</sup> Canadian Sport for Life & the Vancouver Sport Strategy, 2016







# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: FUNDING RECREATION

## FUNDING OUTDOOR RECREATION AMENITIES

Capital funding is used for developing new recreation amenities, parkland acquisition and replacement of assets, whereas, operating funds look after maintenance, staffing and other costs for the ongoing care of these assets. Various sources and methods finance the City's capital and operating budgets. Recreation-related funding sources and mechanisms are described below.

## OPERATING

*Staff, operations and maintenance of existing assets are primarily funded through property taxes, revenues and, in some cases, grants and donations.*

### Revenue

The Park Board generates roughly \$42.4M (2017) of revenues from entities, such as concessions and user fees, providing roughly 34.5% of the necessary funding to operate a balanced budget.

A portion of the \$9.8M (2017) received from golf user fees is directed into the Golf Reserve Fund, which sustainably funds management, maintenance and upgrades of the golf courses.

### SOURCES:

*Community Benefits from Development, 2017, City of Vancouver*

*2018 Operating and Capital Budget Report to Park Board Commissioners November 2017*

### Leisure Access Program

Providing Vancouverites subsidized recreation programs and services

[vancouver.ca/leisureaccess](http://vancouver.ca/leisureaccess)

**3-1-1**



### LEISURE ACCESS PROGRAM

The operations budget also supports the Leisure Access Program, which provides access to recreation programs at a reduced cost. In 2017 \$2.23M was provided in subsidies.



## CAPITAL

*New things, such as the development of new or enhanced outdoor recreation amenities, are funded primarily through developer and partner contributions.*

Community Plans include a Public Benefit Strategy that identifies amenity needs, such as parks and community centres, to support the projected density and urban form described in the community plan. Growth-related recreation amenities are typically delivered via development cost levies (DCLs), density bonus zoning and other conditions of development or through negotiations with developers for community amenities contributions (CACs).

### Development Cost Levies

DCLs are charges imposed on development to fund growth-related capital projects. They typically pay for new infrastructure and facilities to maintain service levels as the city grows. The principle is that 'growth pays for growth' so the financial burden of the growth of the city is not borne by existing tax/rate payers. DCL funds (as per the Vancouver Charter) can only be used for acquiring parkland, providing fencing, landscaping, drainage and irrigation, trails, restrooms, changing rooms, playground and playing field equipment on park land. So, DCLs don't fund upgrades

needed to serve the existing population or for operations and maintenance.

Outdoor recreation projects, such as new playgrounds, spray parks or courts, on an existing park are typically funded by DCLs.

### Community Amenity Contributions

CACs are contributions provided by developers (either in-kind or payments in lieu), negotiated during rezoning, such as new parks, recreation centers, fire halls and libraries, to provide amenities to service the new population. Park projects on lands being rezoned for development are typically community amenity contributions.

### Partner Contributions

These can include cash contributions from other governments (federal, provincial and regional), non-profit agencies, foundations and philanthropists. Partner contributions can fund existing or new amenities.

#### SOURCES:

*Community Benefits from Development, 2017, City of Vancouver*

*2018 Operating and Capital Budget Report to Park Board Commissioners November 2017*

### CRITICAL CONDITION

Many of the City's recreation assets are aging; a recent Park Board assessment found that 30% of programmed activity areas (e.g. sports fields, courts and tracks) are in critical condition, requiring \$90M in investment over the next 10 years.

### DCL REDUCTION

The City occasionally re-assesses the rate at which DCLs are allocated to City services (parks, non-market housing, infrastructure etc.). Due to competing priorities, in 2017 the allocation for parks was reduced from 41% to 18%.

# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: QUALITY

## ARTS AND CULTURE IN RECREATION

*A wide variety of arts programming is offered through Vancouver community centres and in local parks.*

Arts classes and workshops offered in community centres and parks give Vancouver residents the opportunity to build skills in drawing, painting, photography, ceramics, wood-working and a diversity of dance disciplines from ballet to aerial dance. In addition, most community centres offer music classes—both instrumental and vocal—and several are home to community choirs. This skill development work complements a rich program of community-engaged artist-in-residence projects that enable participants to develop new understandings of creativity and the role of the arts in their everyday lives. A community-engaged practice is a working collaboration between professional artists and community members who may not think of themselves as artists. For example, Arts & Health: Healthy Aging Through the Arts, is a ground-breaking project that connects professional artists with seniors and Elders to work together for one to three years to dance, sing, write, paint, weave and more. This work gives creative expression to the life experience and knowledge of seniors and Elders and contributes to health and well-being. Artist-in-residence work is supported citywide through Park Board funding and staffing initiatives including The Artists in Community program and The Neighbourhood Matching Fund.

Building on the robust schedule of classes, workshops and artist-in-residence work in community centres are arts initiatives that support the development of big picture creative thinking and the celebration of creativity outdoors in parks. Participatory community dance, pop-up theatre performances and visual arts interventions take place outdoors in parks and public spaces. For example, Poetry in Parks is an annual program that invites the community to join professional poets in writing and reciting poetry in public parks.



Top to Bottom:

Poetry in Parks | Park Board - Arts, Culture & Engagement Team

Ceramics Class | VanPlay Video Photo



*Vancouver is a city that has embraced its diversity of culture and this shows in recreational programming.*

From Dragon Boating in False Creek to the international cooking classes found in many community centres, recreation programming reflects the cultural diversity of the city and its neighbourhoods. Programming based in cultural traditions is offered at many locations throughout the city, including mah jong clubs, martial arts classes, belly-dancing, Iyengar yoga, tai chi, Qigong and more. There are also a wide variety of language and culture camps and classes for all ages at many community centres. The Park Board is also host to vibrant cultural festivals offering workshops and performances, including Vancouver Celebrates Diwali and Sound of Dragon Chinese Music Festival.



Top to Bottom:

Yoga Class | VanPlay Video Photo

Dragon Boating | VanPlay Video Photo

# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: INCLUSIVITY

## RECREATION CONSIDERATIONS FOR A WELCOMING SYSTEM

The Vancouver Park Board is committed to being a leader in parks and recreation by connecting people to green space, active living and community. Recognizing that Vancouver residents represent a diverse mix of socioeconomics, religions, abilities, sexual orientations, gender identities, ethnicities and cultural groups from all over the world, the Park Board strives to ensure that the parks, facilities, programs and services under its jurisdiction are accessible and inclusive to all. Access and Inclusion Services creates accessible and

inclusive opportunities for Vancouver's diverse population through community engagement, policy development and system change.

The reduction of barriers to recreation is the key to inclusivity. As such, it is important to track and continue outreach to Vancouver populations who experience less choice, access and capacity and who warrant special consideration of their recreation needs.

The purpose for grouping populations by demographic attributes is not to label, but to identify lack of privilege in accessing recreation and ensure these voices are explicitly heard during the VanPlay process of determining needs and priorities.

GROUP	KEY STATISTIC(S)	RECREATION CONSIDERATIONS
Diversity	<p>52% of Vancouver's population identifies as a minority population (Census, 2011)</p> <p>7% of 2011 Vancouver population immigrated to Canada from 2006-2011 (Statistics Canada)</p>	<p>Inclusive recreation reshapes policies, programs and services so that the needs of diverse and minority populations are reflected. The 2006 BC Recreation and Parks Association trends report found that implications of increased cultural diversity include reflecting these groups' needs in policies, programs, services, staffing and marketing approaches.</p> <p>Considerations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of flexible spaces—e.g. spaces that can accommodate large gatherings with adequate shelter and washrooms</li> <li>• Translated documents</li> <li>• Provision of spaces/amenities for non-mainstream Canadian sports (such as Padel tennis)</li> <li>• Park Board staff—front line representation—"Do I see myself in our front line staff teams?"</li> <li>• Park Board Staff and Volunteers—Recruitment process—identify barriers and new outreach methods</li> </ul>
LGBTQ2S+ Community	<p>Tourism Vancouver states that the city has one of the largest LGBTQ2S+ communities in Canada. In general, this group may be under-represented in available statistics.</p>	<p>Actively engaging gender diverse communities in creating inclusive and caring spaces, reflective programs and initiatives has been critical in the identification and removal of systemic barriers in parks and recreation services. 2018 designated as Year of the Queer as many Queer organizations in the City of Vancouver have reached significant anniversaries.</p> <p>Considerations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcoming Spaces, including signage and universal change spaces or stalls in gendered spaces</li> <li>• Inclusive Programming—e.g. Trans Swim, Trans Fitness, creating opportunities for diverse families to engage</li> <li>• Park Board Staff – Awareness training at community centres and with staff groups, workshops for external recreation systems and at the BC Recreation and Parks Association</li> <li>• Community Awareness and Welcome—media campaigns emphasizing personal stories and experiences of TGD2S community members</li> <li>• Park Board Hiring Practices –Front line representation, inclusive recruitment processes</li> <li>• Resources—Ensuring information to aid in access are readily available e.g. creation of <a href="http://vancouver.ca/tgd2s-inclusion">vancouver.ca/tgd2s-inclusion</a> website listing activities and community resources</li> </ul>



GROUP	KEY STATISTIC(S)	RECREATION CONSIDERATIONS
Persons with Disabilities	<p>14.8% of the adult population in Canada are persons with disabilities (Statistics Canada, 2012).</p> <p>The 2017 VanPlay SOPARC study found that 33% of the time at least one park user was in a wheelchair or mobility chair. This statistic is an average of the parks observed in the study.</p>	<p>Accessible facilities, outdoor spaces and program services continue to be of paramount importance for those who face mobility challenges, hearing or sight impairments, and physical and mental disabilities. Community agencies play an important role in assisting parks and recreation in being subject experts for accessibility audits and creative, inclusive solution-making.</p> <p>Considerations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adapted recreation programming—e.g. sports, aquatic, beaches, exercise and social and recreational activities, and adapted recreation amenities – e.g. accessible playground features, beach mat, floating water wheelchairs</li> <li>Accessible facilities—e.g. ceiling lifts for indoor pools, audio loops in large rooms</li> <li>Resources and Signage—e.g. Site maps showing accessibility, consistent signage</li> <li>Customer Service—an Accessible / Inclusive Customer Service Standard based on the Ontario Accessible customer service policy template to set facility, communications and registration standards</li> <li>Park Board Staff – Awareness training, e.g. Building Inclusive Communities proposal to offer Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) awareness training</li> <li>Park Board Staff and Volunteers – Recruitment process – HR training e.g. partnership with Canucks Autism Network, Open Door Group and BC Partners in Workforce Innovation to identify and reduce barriers to employment to create long-term work opportunities for people of diverse abilities</li> </ul>
Females	<p>51% identified as female in Vancouver (Census, 2011).</p> <p>Between 4 and 86 yrs old, female participants are outnumbered by male participants at every age (ViaSport BC).</p>	<p>Girls and women continue to be under-represented in sport and physical activities. Women across all income, education levels and ethnicities are far less likely to participate or volunteer in sport, including coaching at all levels (Vital Signs Sport &amp; Belonging Report 2016, Community Foundation of Canada). If a girl doesn't participate by age 10, there is only a 10% chance she will be physically active at age 25 (Canadian Health Measure Survey 2007-2011) Finding ways to engage this demographic and keep them active is a challenge facing recreation.</p> <p>Considerations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welcoming spaces – e.g. gym programs and fitness centers</li> <li>Equitable allocation of resources – e.g. Sport field allocations and facilities booking policies</li> <li>Recreation programming –e.g. identification of barriers and the development of accessible programming for women and girls</li> <li>Identification of barriers – work with partners such as ViaSport BC, BCRPA, Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity, Vancouver Field Sport Federation, to identify barriers to participation</li> </ul>
<p>Persons of Low Income</p> <p>1 person \$ 25,516 2 persons \$ 36,084 3 persons \$ 44,194 4 persons \$ 51,031 5 persons \$ 57,054 6 persons \$ 62,500 7 or more persons \$ 67,508</p> <p>*Low Income Measure (before – tax) is set by Statistics Canada</p>	<p>21% of Vancouver population qualifies as low income (2013), which is the highest rate among Canada's eight largest metro areas.</p> <p>82% of renter households (2011) are under 24.</p>	<p>Affordability was a key concern during VanPlay Phase I outreach and many of these demographic groups' most pressing needs intersect with locations of low income in the City. Of vulnerability indicators, low income intersects with the largest cross-section of vulnerable groups characteristics and will act as a core characteristic in this study. The Vancouver Park Board through the Leisure Access Program (LAP) is a leader in removing economic barriers limiting access to recreation for residents of Vancouver.</p> <p>Considerations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Availability of Recreation Equipment—on site so storage and transportation barriers are limited</li> <li>Ensuring facilities and amenities are accessible by transit, walking and biking</li> <li>Arts and cultural events –free/low cost events in parks makes these important community building activities are available to all</li> <li>Park Board Staff – Awareness training to support use of LAP and sense of welcome for participants without stigma</li> <li>Partnershuos – to further subsidize programming at recreation centres</li> </ul>

# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: INCLUSIVITY

## RECREATION CONSIDERATIONS FOR A WELCOMING SYSTEM

GROUP	KEY STATISTIC(S)	RECREATION CONSIDERATIONS
Indigenous People	Vancouver has the third largest Aboriginal population of any city in Canada, after Winnipeg and Edmonton. Yet, Aboriginal peoples account for only two percent of the total population of Vancouver (Census, 2011).	<p>The 11 Reconciliation Strategies include a “360 degree” approach to programming in culture, health and sport to increase public awareness and support for First Nations children, youth and elders in Park Board programs.</p> <p>The term 'urban indigenous peoples' refers primarily to First Nation, Inuit and Metis individuals currently residing in urban areas. According to 2011 Census data, off-reserve Indigenous people constitute the fastest growing segment of Canadian society (7% increase between 1996 and 2011).</p> <p>Considerations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaging Indigenous communities in the planning and development of recreational programs</li> <li>• Ensuring programs and services have a lens that is inclusive of Indigenous world views and perspectives</li> <li>• Acknowledging that Indigenous communities in Vancouver are diverse (e.g. urban indigenous) and can represent many nations from across the country so identity, culture and traditions will vary</li> </ul>
Children up to 12	<p>15.3% of 2011 Vancouver population is under 14 years old</p> <p>25% of the 18,229 observed persons during the VanPlay SOPARC study were youth under the age of 12</p>	<p>Children in this age group mostly rely upon their parent’s ability to access social and recreational programs and services on their behalf. It is important to ensure that systems listen to what children want and need for programming and assist parents in accessing services for their children.</p> <p>Partnerships with groups like Moresports and Kidsport (the charitable arm of Sport BC) will be critical.</p> <p>The Urban Explorers – Child &amp; youth engagement in planning project (Society for Children and Youth BC, 2018) found that “by far the most common theme for young people that emerged was their desire for ample opportunities to play and have fun in all parks/public spaces around the city.”</p> <p>Considerations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using the HIGH FIVE principles for healthy child development when designing quality programming for children</li> <li>• Using sliding scales for payment to ensure programs are accessible for children who face financial barriers</li> <li>• Place-based activities –e.g. work with school districts to offer joint programming where children are to eliminate the barrier of transportation</li> <li>• Having fun, age-appropriate equipment and the opportunity to make friends are key to success for this age group</li> </ul>



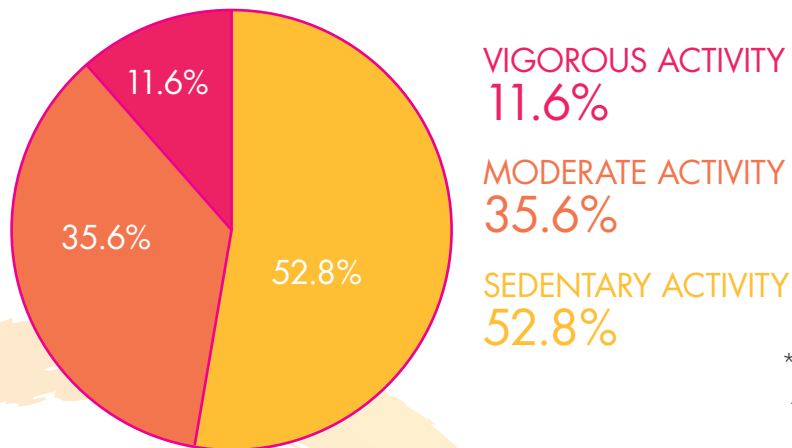
GROUP	KEY STATISTIC(S)	RECREATION CONSIDERATIONS
Youth 13 – 19	82% of renter households (2011, census) are under 24.	<p>Youth-friendly spaces, programs, services and staff are important ingredients in engaging youth in their local communities. Recreation centers and staff play an important role in facilitating community connectedness and social belonging for this demographic. Considerations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring programs and services are 'youth driven' e.g. Citywide Youth Council</li> <li>• Making sport programs accessible e.g. Night Hoops</li> <li>• Catching youth doing something right e.g. Positive ticketing</li> <li>• Offering a wide vary of meaningful volunteer opportunities where youth can learn valuable skills</li> </ul> <p>Youth need specific and dedicated spaces to feel a sense of belonging, e.g. youth dedicated room</p>
Persons over 65 years old	14% of Vancouver is currently over 65 years in age; this group is projected to grow 92% or more by 2041.	<p>As the community ages, shifts in recreation trends may lean towards more cultural and outdoor activities and popular social recreation like Pickle Ball will increase in demand. This group could also represent an important pool of highly-skilled volunteers for the Park Board. This age group will also be more likely to walk to destinations within a 5-minute walk rather than longer destinations as mobility decreases.</p> <p>Only 8% of the 18,229 observed persons during the 2017 VanPlay SOPARC study (see Appendix 3) were noted as persons over 65 years old. Relative to the citywide population, this represents only a 50% participation in parks by this group.</p> <p>Considerations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is huge variation in recreation aspirations and ability amongst this broad demographic. Programming and facilities should reflect this to ensure all older adults can participate in recreation.</li> <li>• Providing Seniors centres and lounges within community centres, while providing dedicated space for programming, activities and connection and balanced with intergenerational spaces</li> <li>• Providing more looped footpaths and trails and outdoor exercise equipment in parks as these are particularly valuable for older adults</li> <li>• Working towards offering more daily meal programs for seniors throughout the city</li> </ul>

# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: INCLUSIVITY

## SOPARC KEY RECREATION FINDINGS

*The System for Observing Play + Recreation in Communities (SOPARC) is an observational survey tool that was used in the summer of 2017 to acquire data on physical activity in community, neighbourhood and local parks.*

Please see Appendix 3 to find the full report.



Source: UD4H, SOPARC: System for Observing Play and Recreation in Communities.

### Physical Activity by Park Type\*

- Largest parks have the most users.
- Levels of physical activity vary substantially by park type.
- Largest parks have the most sedentary, passive activity.
- Community Parks typically had 60% of park users engaged in sedentary activity.
- Neighbourhood Parks including Adanac Park, Bobolink Park and Winona Park had the highest levels of moderate to vigorous physical activity (55-75%).

\*See Parks chapter for park type classification framework

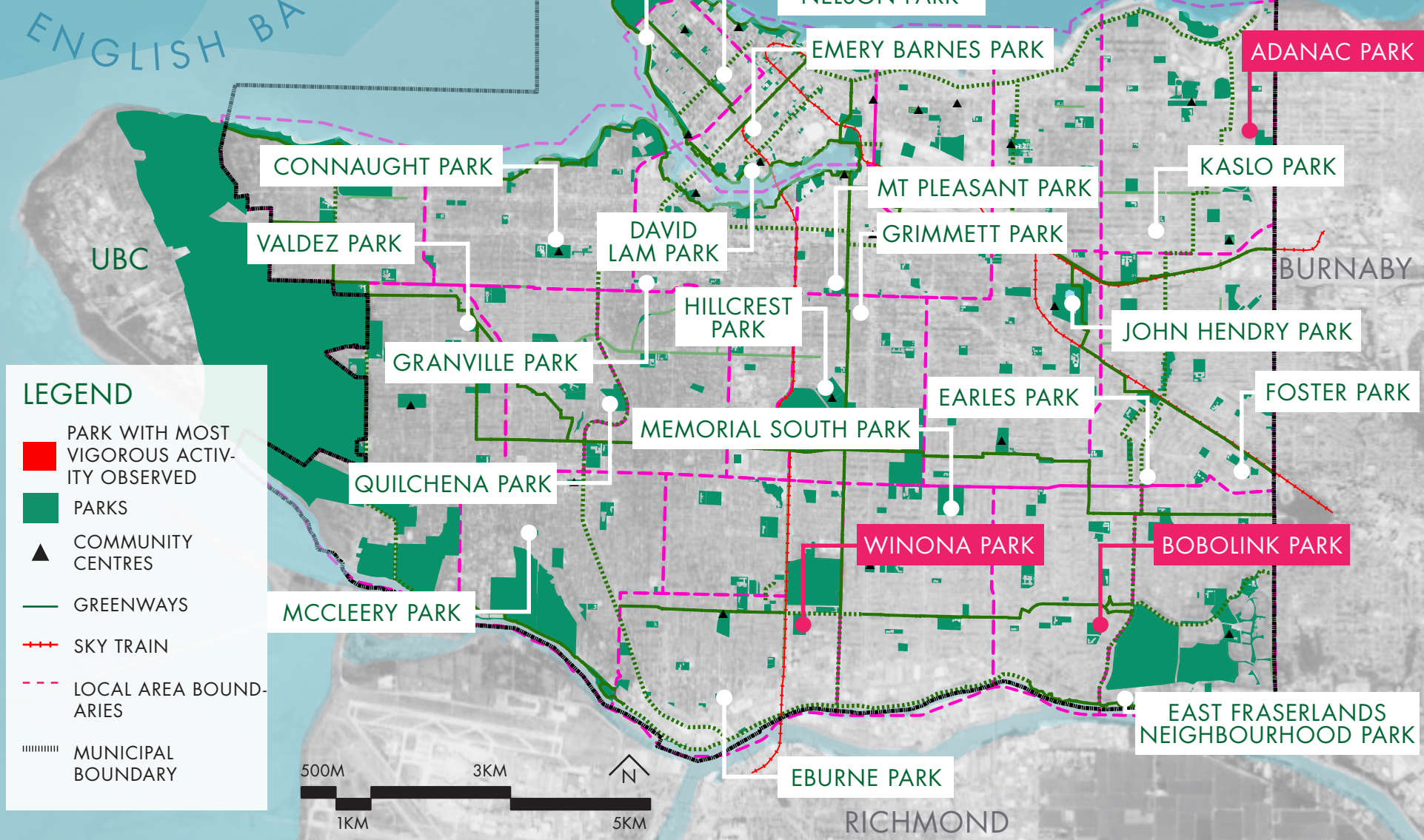
### Park User's Physical Activity

- Men are more active than women with 10.3% participating in vigorous activity, compared to 6% for women.
- Most common active activities were: playgrounds (14%), walking (13%), baseball (8%) and soccer (4%).
- Most common passive activities were: sitting (31%), standing (12%) and picnicking (6%).
- The most vigorous and moderate activities were found in local parks (47.9% of all activity versus 40.4% for community parks and 42.2% for neighbourhood parks).



# SOPARC MOST PHYSICALLY ACTIVE PARKS\*

\*PARKS WITH THE HIGHEST AMOUNTS OF VIGOROUS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OBSERVED, ACROSS THE 24 PARKS SURVEYED.



# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: OUTDOOR RECREATION AMENITIES

## OVERVIEW OF OUTDOOR ACTIVE RECREATION AMENITIES

This section provides an overview of a selection of outdoor active recreation amenities. Each includes an inventory count, a citywide map and a description of some trends and issues impacting delivery of these amenities into the future.

These descriptions will set the scene for discussions regarding metrics and target levels of service over the next 25 years, which will be determined through consultation with the user groups, stakeholders and staff and an appraisal of international best practice.

Vancouver's parks and recreation system is extensive, so this section is not an exhaustive list of available outdoor active recreation amenities; however, it does provide a primer for:

- Court Sports
- Basketball
- Ball Diamonds
- Field Sports
- Golf
- Playgrounds
- Skateparks
- Dog off-leash areas

It does not introduce other park amenities, such as splash parks (as these are addressed in VanSplash 2019), our six cricket pitches, two lacrosse boxes, four outdoor roller hockey rinks or the two bike parks, to name just a few.

For information regarding indoor recreation pursuits (including pools, community centres and rinks) and other built amenities (such as docks and washrooms), please refer to Chapter 4: Facilities.



THE POPULATION OVER  
**65+**

IS EXPECTED TO GROW BY 192% BY 2041. AS SUCH, PROGRAMMING IS SHIFTING TO INCLUDE SENIORS OF ALL ABILITIES WITH ACTIVITIES SUCH AS PICKLEBALL, GARDENING, AND OTHER LEISURE ACTIVITIES.



OVER **150** PLAYGROUNDS HAVE BEEN CREATED BY THE VANCOUVER PARK BOARD SINCE GRACE CEPERLY DONATED THE FIRST IN THE 1920S.



**70%**

OF VANCOUVER RESIDENTS ARE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE (COMPARED TO 49% NATIONALLY).



**VFSF**

VANCOUVER FIELD SPORTS FEDERATION IS A UNIQUE GROUP OF DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS FROM 12 AMATEUR FIELD SPORT GROUPS WHO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON NEEDS AND PRIORITIES FOR SPORTS INCLUDING:

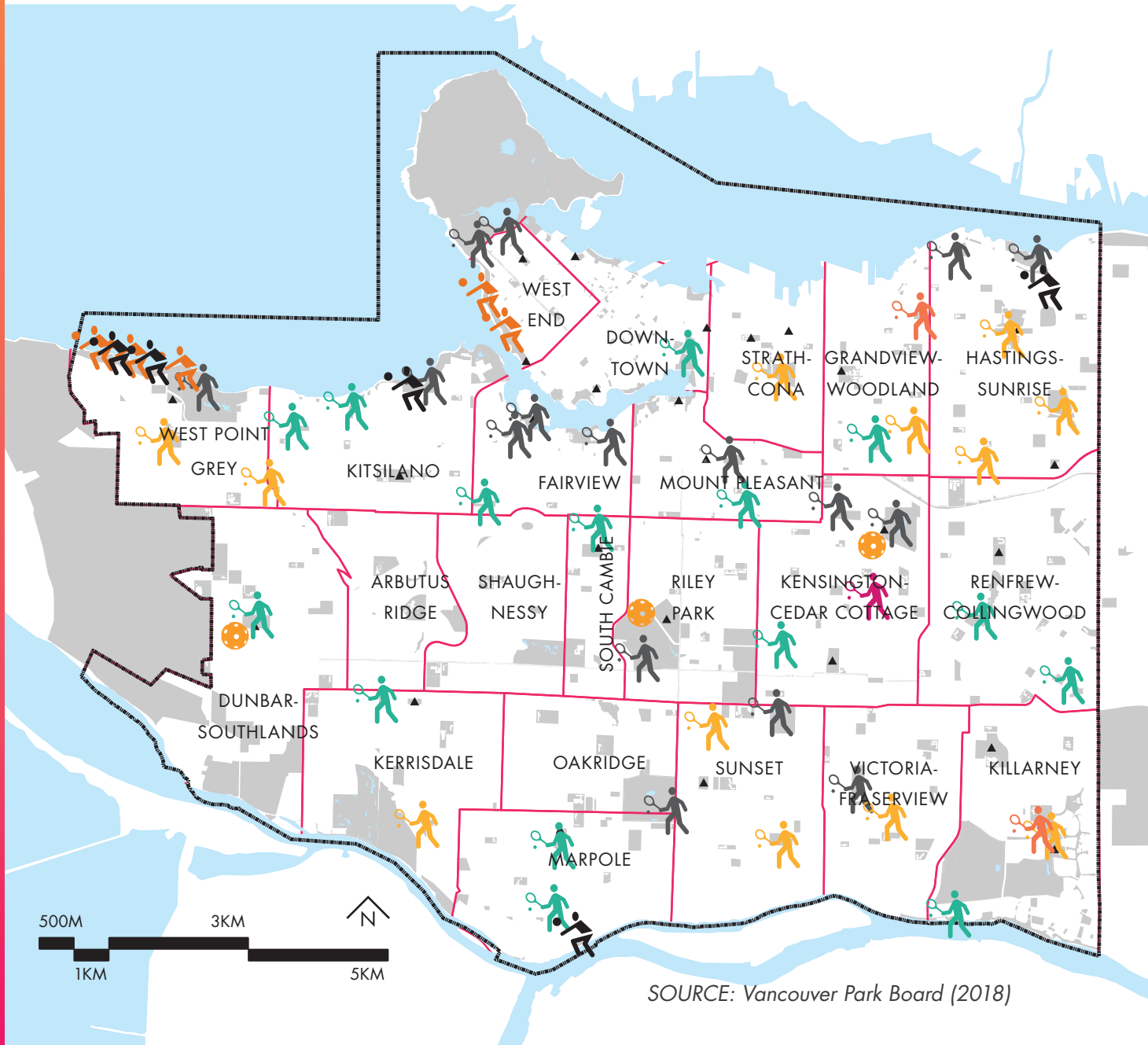
- BASEBALL
- FOOTBALL
- CRICKET
- FIELD HOCKEY
- FIELD LACROSSE
- RUGBY
- SOCCER
- SOFTBALL
- TOUCH/FLAG FOOTBALL
- TRACK/FIELD
- ULTIMATE/DISC SPORTS
- VOLLEYBALL

VANCOUVER'S  
**SEASIDE GREENWAY**  
IS 28KM OF CONNECTED WATERFRONT FOR A WALK, CYCLE, ROLLERBLADE OR JOG.



# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: COURT SPORTS

## COURT SPORTS INVENTORY





## COURT SPORT ANALYSIS

*Tennis courts are distributed well across the city, whereas volleyball tends to be located near beaches.*

Both tennis and volleyball courts are available on a first-come, first-served basis with exceptions made for the tennis courts in Stanley Park and organized tournaments. There is a mixture of public access volleyball and permitted access to beach volleyball. There are eight indoor racquetball/squash courts in facilities across Vancouver and nine pickleball courts. Schools and community centres also operate tennis courts that fill many of the Park Board service gaps.

- An assessment of the existing tennis courts revealed that 33% were in good condition, 26% in fair condition, 7% in poor/critical condition and 35% unknown.<sup>1</sup>
- There is low inventory of public tennis courts in Oakridge, Shaughnessy, Arbutus Ridge and Dunbar-Southlands.
- The Park Board has a tennis court management assessment underway to look into programming, access and reservation options for tennis courts citywide.
- Presently, volleyball courts are located near beaches and at large parks.

## COURT SPORT PER CAPITA INVENTORY\*

TYPE	#	PER CAPITA SUPPLY BASED ON CURRENT (2017) INVENTORY	PROJECTED (2041) PER CAPITA SUPPLY BASED ON CURRENT (2017) INVENTORY	NOTES
Tennis Courts	169	1 court per 3,737 people	1 court per 4,595 people	44 sites citywide, 21 sites with four or more courts situated together, no covered/all-weather tennis courts
Volleyball Courts	65	1 court per 9,715 people	1 court per 11,946 people	34 permanent courts
Pickleball Courts	9	1 court per 70,165 people	1 court per 86,278 people	Three locations with these courts

\*Inventory and population projections from Park Board.



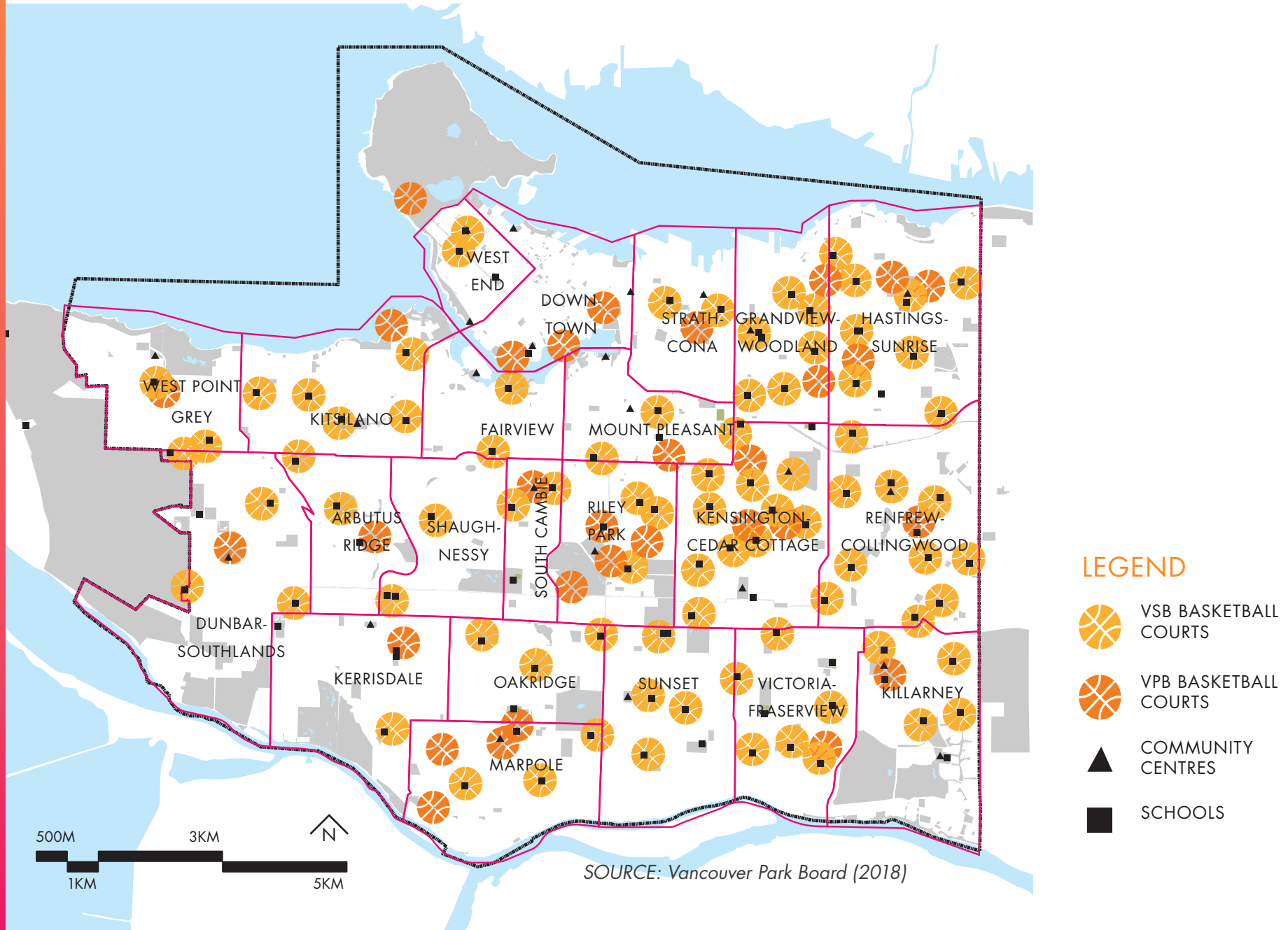
Women at tennis tournament | Tennis BC

### court sports

Outdoor sports requiring a hard surface court, such as tennis, basketball + volleyball.

# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: BASKETBALL

## BASKETBALL COURT INVENTORY





## BASKETBALL ANALYSIS

*Basketball leagues play year-round in Vancouver with outdoor courts popular in the summer months. The majority of outdoor public courts are managed by Vancouver School Board (VSB).*

All Park Board outdoor basketball courts are drop-in only with no reservation system. In addition to the courts that the Park Board manages, there are also basketball courts at schools and in community centres. Drop-in hours are available at several community centres.

- A condition index is needed to assess the quality and renewal of outdoor basketball courts as well as to determine how to coordinate renewal with the courts maintained by VSB.
- An initial study of walk access gaps showed facility gaps in neighbourhoods along the Fraser River, including Dunbar-Southlands, Kerrisdale and Killarney and in Downtown.
- There are 77 basketball courts that are owned and maintained by VSB. These courts are publicly accessible after school hours and on weekends.



Basketball game | Park Board

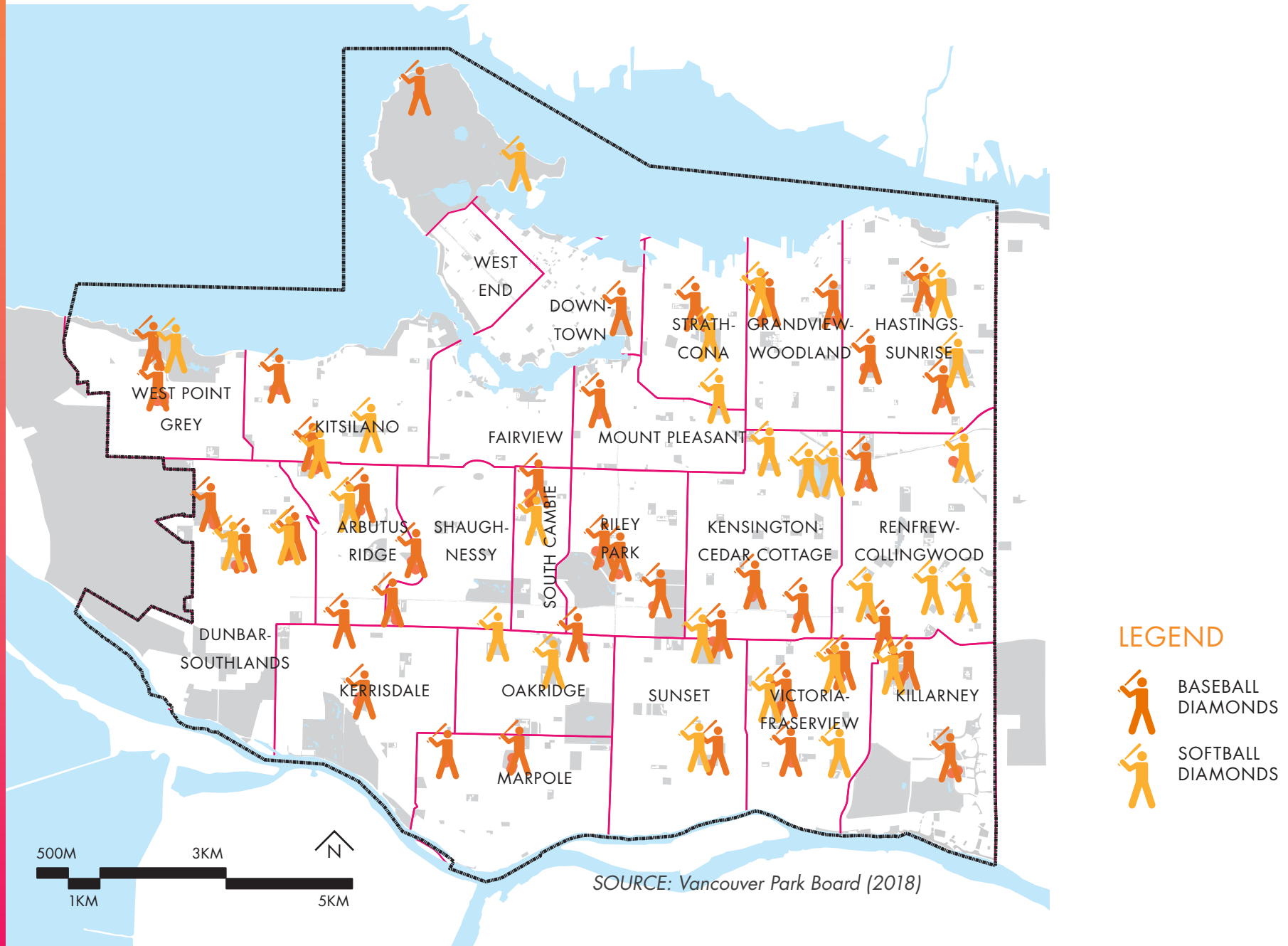
## BASKETBALL COURTS PER CAPITA INVENTORY\*

TYPE	#	PER CAPITA SUPPLY BASED ON CURRENT (2017) INVENTORY	PROJECTED (2041) PER CAPITA SUPPLY BASED ON CURRENT (2017) INVENTORY	NOTES
Basketball Courts	42	1 court per 15,035 people	1 court per 18,488 people	12 half-courts, four junior hoops, two junior courts

\*Inventory and population projections from Park Board.

# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: BALL DIAMONDS

## BALL DIAMOND INVENTORY





## BALL DIAMOND ANALYSIS: BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL

*The network of ball diamonds that the Park Board manages supports a broad range of play, from little league to the Vancouver Canadians.*

Of the 119 ball diamonds, 67 are softball diamonds, which can also be used for T-Ball. T-Ball opens the sport to a wider population. Baseball and softball leagues and all sport amenities, are allocated and permitted by a facility-booking office assisted by ActiveNet, a cloud-based reservation/registration and point-of-sale system.

- A walkability analysis, based on a 10-minute walk, shows that neighbourhoods along the Fraser River, such as Dunbar-Southlands, Marpole and Killarney, have significant service gaps, as well as the West End, Downtown and Fairview.
- In 2017, the Park Board and its partners opened Challenger Field at Hillcrest Park. It is the first fully accessible, all-weather facility in Western Canada to cater to children with physical and cognitive disabilities.
- Further analysis is needed to study demand, calibre, suitability for types of play, competition level, latent demand, distribution, condition and the ratio of softball pitches to regulation-sized diamonds.
- These ball sports are primarily played from April to September. A number of diamonds convert to fields for winter due to competing demand for space.



Richard Saunders Field | Park Board

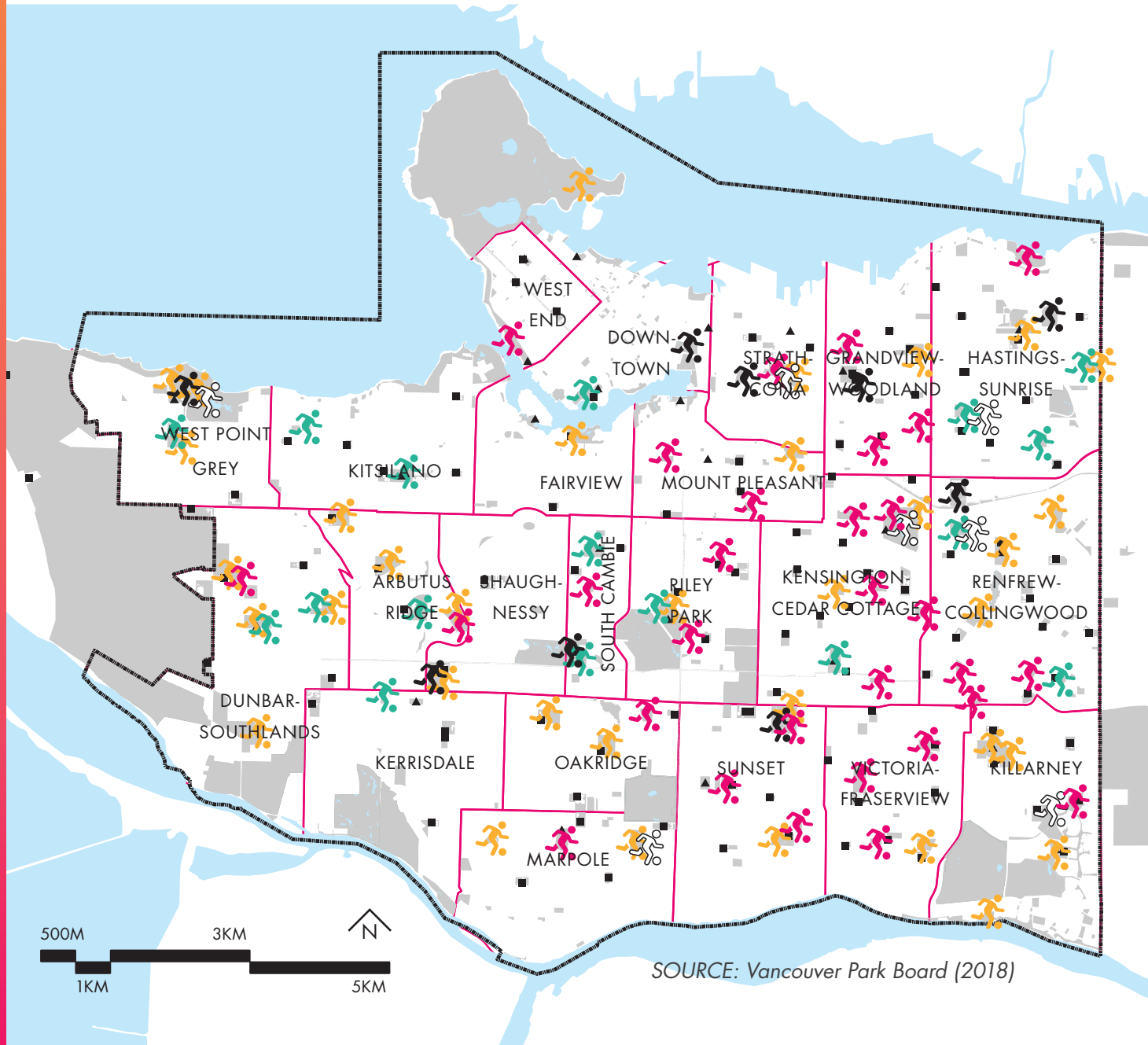
## BALL DIAMONDS PER CAPITA INVENTORY\*

TYPE	#	PER CAPITA SUPPLY BASED ON CURRENT (2017) INVENTORY	PROJECTED (2041) PER CAPITA SUPPLY BASED ON CURRENT (2017) INVENTORY	NOTES
Baseball	51	1 diamond per 12,382 people	1 diamond per 15,225 people	One all-abilities diamond at Hillcrest Park, 50 diamonds at 24 sites
Softball	68	1 diamond per 9,287 people	1 diamond per 11,419 people	68 softball diamonds at 45 sites that can also be used for T-Ball
Total Diamonds	119	1 diamond per 5,307 people	1 diamond per 6,525 people	66 permitted

\*Inventory and population projections from Park Board.

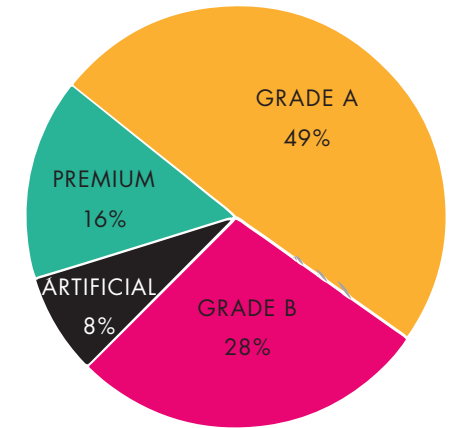
# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: FIELD SPORTS

## SPORTS FIELD INVENTORY



SOURCE: Vancouver Park Board (2018)

## TURF COMPOSITION



## LEGEND

- PREMIUM TURF PLAYING FIELDS
- GRADE A TURF PLAYING FIELDS
- GRADE B TURF PLAYING FIELDS
- ARTIFICIAL TURF PLAYING FIELDS
- ALL-WEATHER PLAYING FIELDS
- SCHOOLS
- COMMUNITY CENTRES

SOURCE: Turf and Horticulture Study



## FIELD SPORTS ANALYSIS

*The Vancouver Park Board partners with the Vancouver Field Sport Federation to maintain public playing fields.*

The Park Board operates over 150 playing fields that support a broad range of sport play from soccer to lacrosse. It also manages eight all-weather gravel fields, six cricket pitches and two lacrosse boxes. The Park Board meets quarterly with the Vancouver Field Sport Federation (VFSF). Vancouver School Board hosts additional playing fields.

- Natural turf fields face a number of management issues. Recent infestation by European Chafer Beetles has caused unforeseen replacement costs and climate change is bringing wetter winters and drier summers. Year-round use leaves little time for regrowth.
- Neighbourhoods in South Vancouver, including Sunset, Victoria-Fraserview, Marpole and Killarney, have access to the lowest quality fields. Downtown and the West End have the greatest shortages per population.
- Further analysis is needed as grades used here are based purely on turf/soil rating and not based on the sport facility classification.



Rugby Game | Park Board

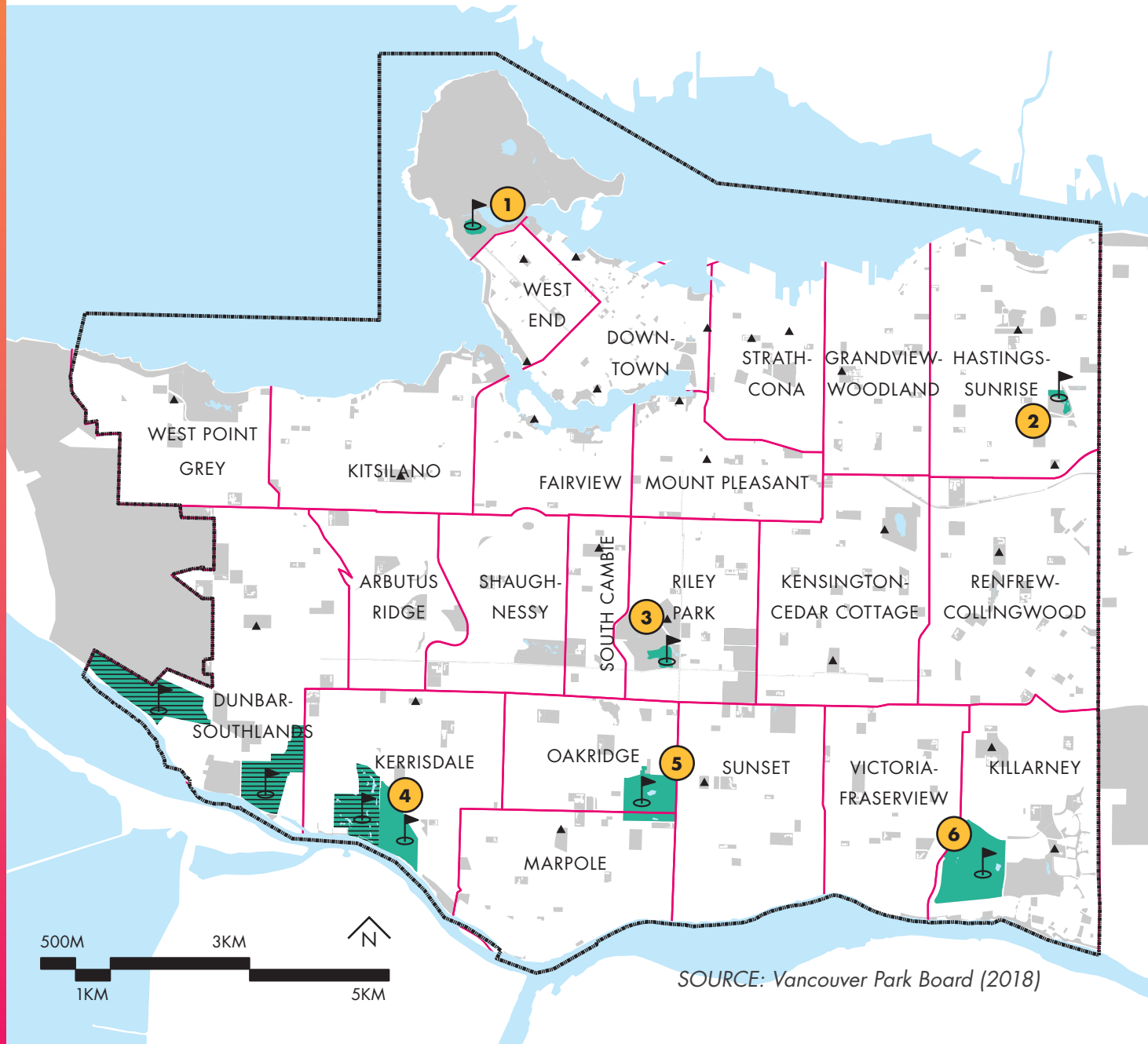
## FIELDS PER CAPITA INVENTORY\*

TYPE	#	PER CAPITA SUPPLY BASED ON CURRENT (2017) INVENTORY	PROJECTED (2041) PER CAPITA SUPPLY BASED ON CURRENT (2017) INVENTORY	NOTES
Turf Playing Fields	143	1 field per 4,416 people	1 field per 5,430 people	66 A Grade Fields, 51 B Grade Fields, 22 Non-regulated fields
Synthetical/Artificial Turf Playing Fields	13	1 field per 48,576 people	1 field per 59,731 people	
All Weather Fields (Gravel)	7	1 field per 45,106 people	1 field per 55,464 people	

\*Inventory and population projections from Park Board.

# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: GOLF

## GOLF INVENTORY



### LEGEND



PUBLIC GOLF FACILITIES



PRIVATE GOLF FACILITIES



COMMUNITY CENTRES

### PUBLIC FACILITIES

1

- STANLEY PARK PITCH + PUTT
- 18 Short Holes
  - 1,100 Meter Course Length

2

- RUPERT PARK PITCH + PUTT
- 18 Short Holes
  - 1,130 Meter Course Length

3

- QE PARK PITCH + PUTT
- 18 Short Holes
  - 1,250 Meter Course Length

4

- MCCLEERY GOLF COURSE
- Ted Baker-designed Course

5

- LANGARA GOLF COURSE
- Thomas McBroom-designed Course

6

- FRASERVUE GOLF COURSE
- Thomas McBroom-designed Course

SOURCE: Vancouver Park Board (2018)



## GOLF ANALYSIS

*Approximately 64 million rounds of golf were played in Canada in 2017, an increase of 7% in the past three years.<sup>1</sup>*

Vancouver's mild climate makes golf attractive year-round. The Vancouver Park Board offers a gamut of affordable and accessible golf experiences from driving ranges and golf lessons to special events and tournaments. Golf operations are the Park Board's second largest source of operating revenues, generating roughly \$9.8M in revenues (16% of Park Board total) in 2017. Golf operations and maintenance are self-sustaining thanks to the Golf Reserve Fund.

- Golf is a lifelong sport and is attractive to all ages. 31% of all golfers in BC are over the age of 65.
- More women play golf than any other sport in Canada. Women comprise the fastest growing segment of new golfers and typically prefer local public golf courses.
- Many golfers are new Canadians. Signage and communication welcome players in multiple languages.
- In partnership with the golf courses, the Park Board developed VanGolf, an app to allow easy registration. Courses and clubhouses host over 200 events a year and provide affordable event spaces to the community.
- The golf courses also offer sizeable open spaces and naturalised areas that are important to the sustenance of the city's urban forest and wildlife.
- All Park Board golf courses are Audubon certified. The co-operative sanctuary program helps the golf course staff protect the environment. This award-winning education and certification program offers support and training for golf course employees.



Queen Elizabeth Park Pitch & Putt | Park Board

<sup>1</sup> Golf Canada, PGA of Canada and National Golf Foundation. *Golf Facilities in Canada 2017*. Toronto, Canada, 2017.

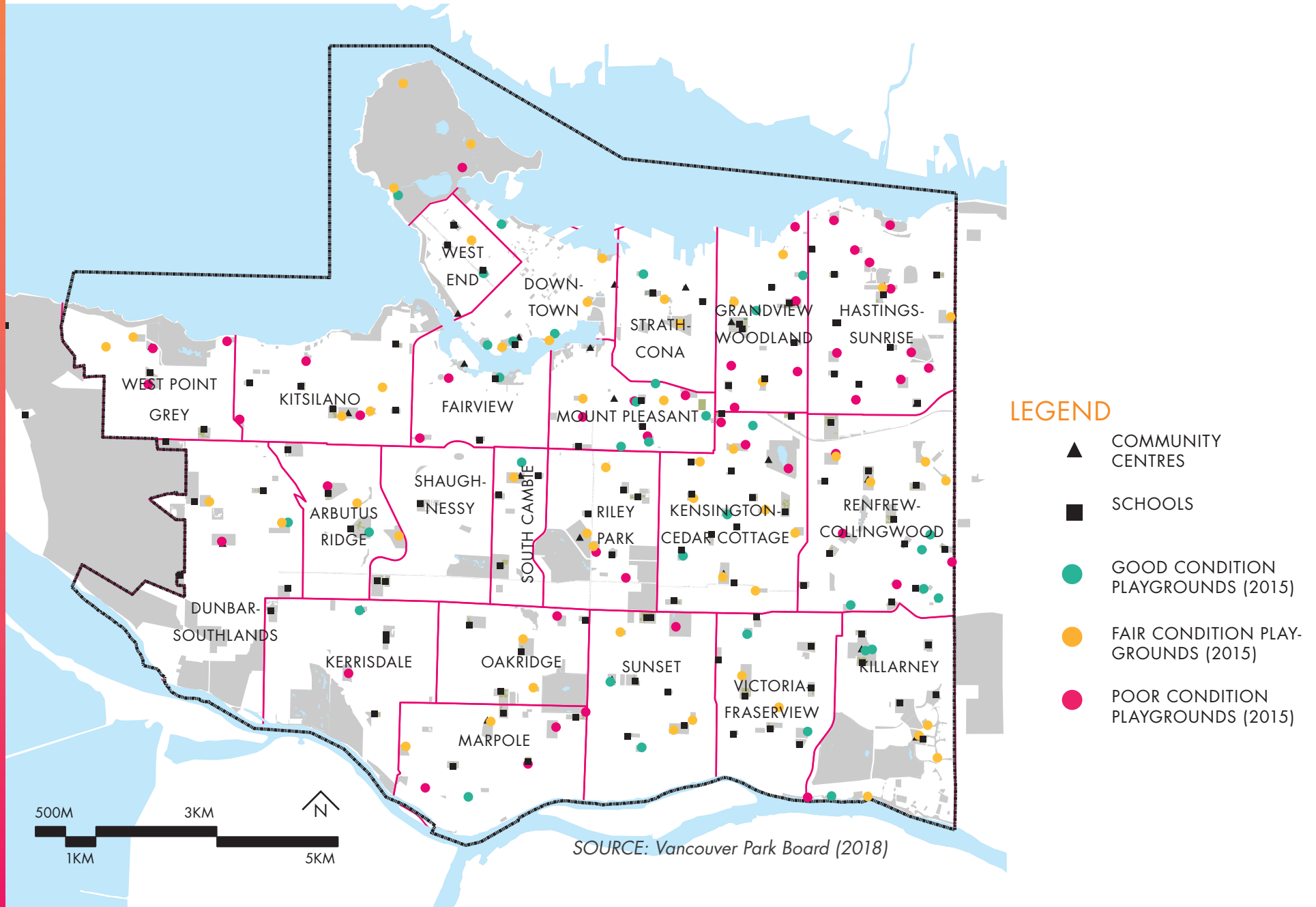
## GOLF COURSES PER CAPITA INVENTORY\*

TYPE	#	PER CAPITA SUPPLY BASED ON CURRENT (2017) INVENTORY	PROJECTED (2041) PER CAPITA SUPPLY BASED ON CURRENT (2017) INVENTORY	NOTES
18 Hole Championship Courses	3	1 course per 210,496 people	1 course per 258,833 people	Courses have driving ranges and club houses
Pitch and Putt Courses	3	1 course per 210,496 people	1 course per 258,833 people	Free in winter

\*Inventory and population projections from Park Board.

# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: PLAYGROUNDS

## PLAYGROUND INVENTORY





## PLAYGROUNDS ANALYSIS

*Both the Vancouver Park Board and Vancouver School Board own and maintain playgrounds that are vital neighbourhood amenities.*

Although the proportion of children as part of the general population is expected to decline, the total population of children is set to increase from 75,000 to 100,000 by 2041. In addition to play areas for children, there is increased interest in play equipment, like monkey bars, for all ages.

- Hastings Sunrise neighbourhood has the highest concentration of playgrounds needing renewal with 10 in poor and two in fair condition.
- Beyond the playgrounds listed for renewal, there are 62 playgrounds over 15 years old with an average timeline for renewal of 45 years.
- Nature play and risky play movements are regarded by experts as crucial to a child's development, especially since the neighbourhood play space can often be the extent of urban children's outdoor experience. These spaces are cost and maintenance intensive so designs must be balanced with other play amenities.
- Universally accessible playgrounds are welcoming and engaging for children and caregivers across a wide range of age, mobility and sensory abilities. At a minimum play spaces need to be physically accessible, but should also provide for auditory, visual and tactile learning experiences.

## PLAYGROUNDS PER CAPITA INVENTORY\*

TYPE	#	PER CAPITA SUPPLY BASED ON CURRENT (2017) INVENTORY	PROJECTED (2041) PER CAPITA SUPPLY BASED ON CURRENT (2017) INVENTORY	NOTES
Playgrounds	166	1 playground per 3,804 people	1 playground per 4,678 people	

\*Inventory and population projections from Park Board.



The new Creekside playground in False Creek is universally accessible and provides for auditory, visual and tactile learning experiences. | Park Board

### *nature play*

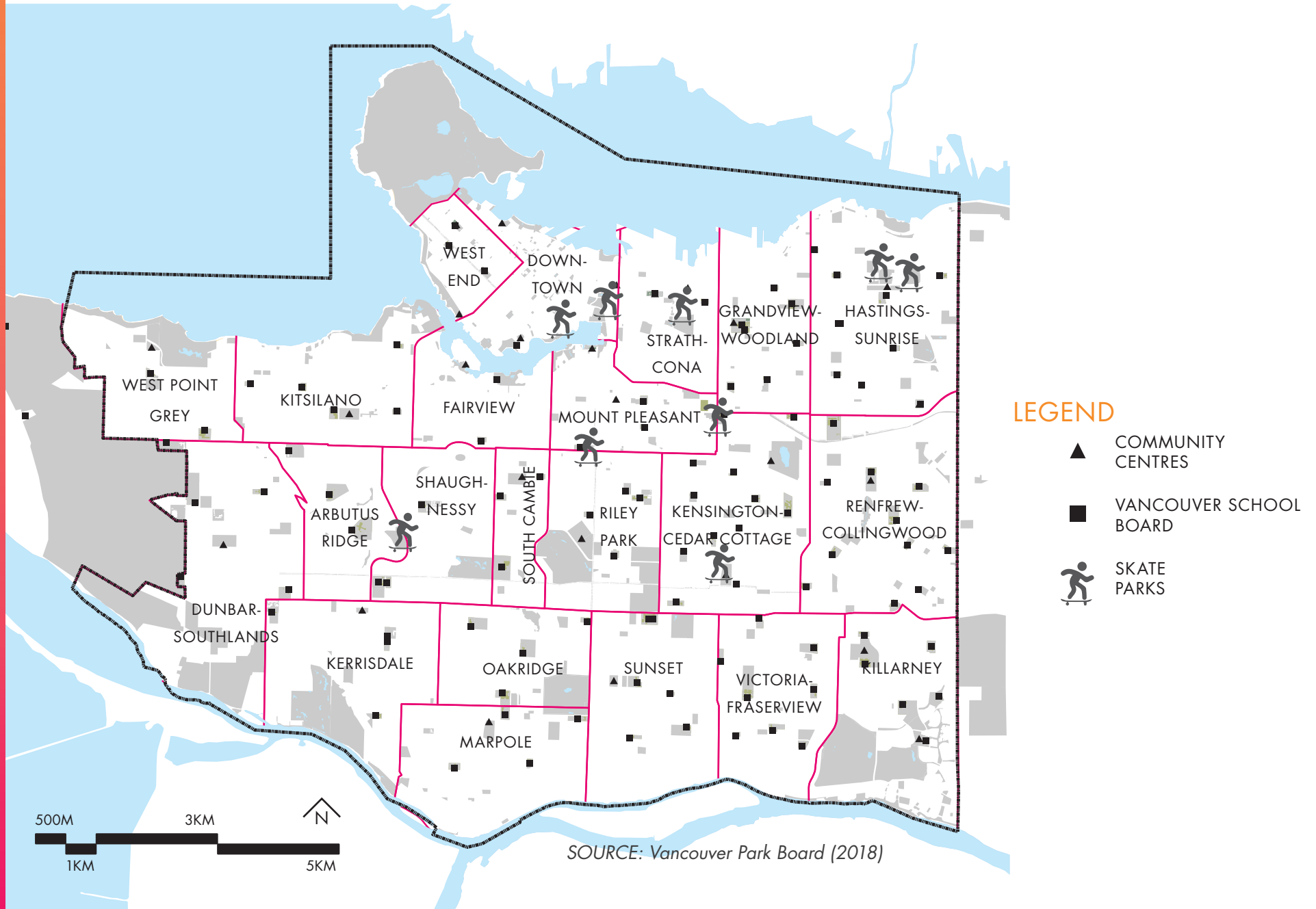
Nature play spaces are constructed of natural building materials and include elements that children can physically manipulate, such as sand and water. They typically also incorporate quiet reflective spaces, such as a planted nature path, to support more introverted behaviours.

### *risky play*

Risky play acknowledges that risk is inherent in play and learning, and that risk-taking opportunities are an integral component of a well-functioning play space and essential for child development.

# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: SKATE PARKS

## SKATE PARK INVENTORY



## SKATE PARK ANALYSIS

*Currently there are nine skate parks and one skate spot in the city, concentrated on Vancouver's east side.*

Of Vancouver's nine skate parks, two were built after 2005 and two are outside of the Park Board's jurisdiction. In comparison, the City of Toronto has 13 skate parks and Calgary has 11. Half of Vancouver's skate parks are under 600m<sup>2</sup>, which is roughly able to accommodate approximately 10 individuals at a time. These smaller parks are currently not meeting the needs of local users as they are often overcrowded and not big enough to have multiple skateboarders skating simultaneously. According to statistics gathered from a 2017 skateboard survey of 2,248 users of the Downtown Plaza Skate Park:

- 25% of skaters are 20-24 years old, 22% are 25-29 years old and 20% are 14-19 years old.
- 42% of skaters skate more than once a week and 22% skate daily.
- 81% use skate parks on both weekdays and weekends.

Skateboarding is a growing sport that appeals to individuals, many of whom are youth, who are not involved in other organized sports. It is a multi-generational sport, where learning is based largely on mentorship and community building since lessons are generally not associated with it.

For the first time ever, skateboarding will be included in the 2020 Olympics in Japan. Vancouver does not have adequate facilities for athletes to train or to bring up future prospects.



Skate Park | Michael Schmidt

## PLAY AREAS PER CAPITA INVENTORY\*

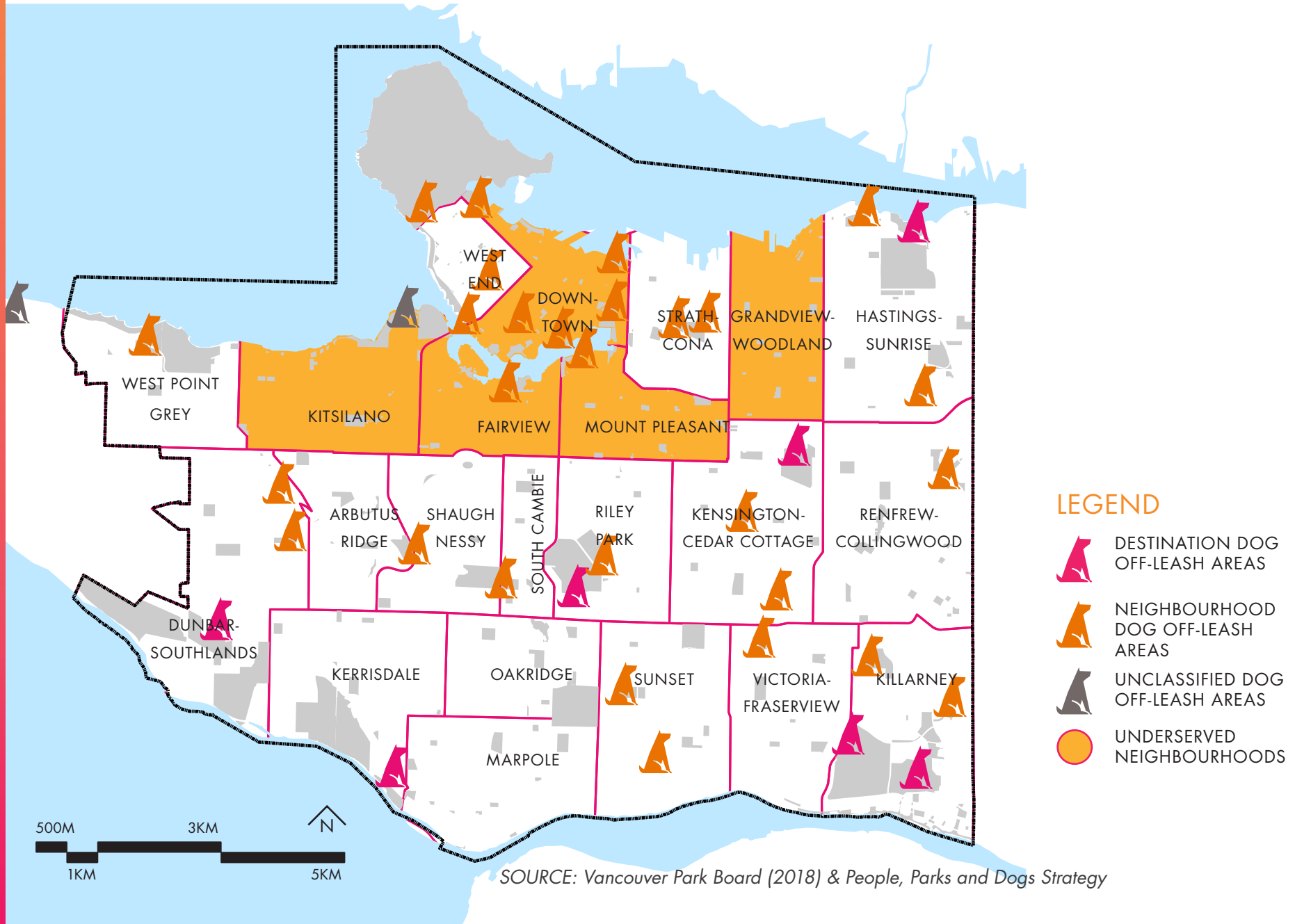
TYPE	#	PER CAPITA SUPPLY BASED ON CURRENT (2017) INVENTORY	PROJECTED (2041) PER CAPITA SUPPLY BASED ON CURRENT (2017) INVENTORY	NOTES
Skateparks	9	1 skatepark per 70,165 people	1 skatepark per 86,278 people	

\*Inventory and population projections from Park Board.



# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: DOG OFF-LEASH AREAS

## OFF-LEASH DOG AREAS INVENTORY



## DOG AREA ANALYSIS

*An estimated 30,000 to 55,000 dogs live in Vancouver.<sup>1</sup>*

In 2017, the Vancouver Park Board undertook a comprehensive study of dog activity in parks citywide and made recommendations regarding quantity, distribution and design of off-leash areas. Some of the key findings and metrics of the plan are summarized below:

- Demand for off-leash areas falls into two categories: smaller, simpler neighbourhood facilities to serve residents daily needs and larger destination spaces with more amenities, like trails in a more natural setting.
- Hours of use for off-leash areas vary across the city with half of all dog parks restricting hours of operation to select morning and evening hours. This is challenging for both dog owners and other park users, so the Park Board will be phasing out these restrictions over time.
- The environmental impact of dog areas is a key public concern, and education and stewardship is needed on the part of dog owners to ensure compliance.
- Neighbourhood dog areas vary in both size and amenities. In the future, site design will reflect the need for dog relief areas and dog runs in high density parts of the city, and more big, natural off leash experiences.



Couple with dog | Park Board

<sup>1</sup> Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation Planning. *People, Parks and Dogs Strategy*. Vancouver, BC, 2017.

## DOG OFF-LEASH AREAS PER CAPITA INVENTORY\*

TYPE	#	PER CAPITA SUPPLY BASED ON CURRENT (2017) INVENTORY	PROJECTED (2041) PER CAPITA SUPPLY BASED ON CURRENT (2017) INVENTORY	NOTES
Dog Off-Leash Areas	36	1 off-leash area per 17,541 people	1 off-leash area per 21,569 people	Calculated by total Vancouver population not by dog owners.

\*Inventory and population projections from Park Board.

# OPPORTUNITIES + CHALLENGES

*The following list represents synthesized opportunities and challenges for Vancouver's park system based on inventory findings. Stakeholders weighed in on opportunities and challenges at various events including the fall 2017 Community Dialogue and Community Centre Association Meetings.*

## opportunities

Interests or topics that have the potential to positively impact parks and recreation

## challenges

Constraints or obstacles that have the potential to negatively impact parks and recreation

## OPPORTUNITIES

1. **HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**—With sedentary behavior and poor health on the rise, the need for health and wellness programs is high. The Park Board can explore partnership opportunities with health care providers to advance Healthy City initiatives and to fund, maintain and support recreation. For example, "Arts & Health - Healthy Aging Through the Arts" is a partnership between Vancouver Coastal Health and the Park Board. It is a working collaboration of seniors and professional artists, who together develop arts practice that focuses on creative expression of ideas and issues, such as health, wellbeing and belonging.

2. **SOCIAL CONNECTIVITY, INCLUSIVITY + WELCOME**—Through programming, activities, subsidies, permitting, events, art and education, we can make spaces more welcoming, interesting and safe for everyone. Recreation through volunteerism and care of public space in our leisure time can help communities build social capital. Being connected to each other builds more resilient communities. Increased volunteerism, especially among persons 65+ could offer critical human capital to address stewardship needs. Among youth in Vancouver, there are reported feelings of social isolation and a lack of youth specific space throughout the city.
3. **RESPONSIVE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**—In the VanPlay survey, seniors programming, nature programming and multilingual services were all public priorities. Plans to expand aquatic recreation and access are currently underway in the Vancouver Aquatics Strategy and On Water study. There is a strong public desire for all-age play areas and risk/adventure playgrounds. User groups also demand safer, higher quality and adaptable recreation amenities.
4. **COLLABORATION**—Colocation of compatible uses, such as sport field hubs or community centres with community gardens, can strengthen neighbourhoods and extend the city's recreation network through partner operations. Equipment sharing or renting presents an opportunity to make recreation more affordable, accessible and community-oriented. The Park Board can play a bigger role in connecting service providers through programs, such as the annual symposium for CCAs, to share knowledge and spotlight trends.
5. **EDUCATION + STEWARDSHIP**—Partner organizations offer opportunities to provide programming and education beyond the traditional. An affiliation policy could help provide consistent service to collaborators and partners by outlining responsibilities, expectations and values. This could help to expand the types of recreation offered in Vancouver to include the Field Sports Associations, dragon boating and other cultural programming.
6. **INFORMAL PLAY**—Further study is needed to evaluate the current event and community use policies and protocols to allow for more everyday activation and informal uses. Prioritising enforcement and management on critical issues



is needed, and re-thinking regulation where possible. Large events with entrance or ticket fees offer opportunities to generate revenue that can help offset operations and maintenance costs, especially where the event requires park restoration.

7. **RESILIENCE**—Recreation areas designed to withstand a higher level of use are necessary to keep up with growing demand. This may include more durable facilities in some areas, such as transitioning fields to synthetic turf or rubberized surface playgrounds, but also more flexibility in response to demand, such as lighting in winter to extend play hours and more free programming.

## CHALLENGES

1. **LACK OF RESOURCES**—Securing sufficient funding for the renewal, replacement and maintenance of recreation amenities is a challenge. Due to ever increasing use and competing demands, the Park Board is increasingly spread too thin. Beyond keeping up with demand, with sufficient resources the Park Board could invest in amenities that extend the reach of recreation, such as cultural spaces to extend a sense of welcome to particular cultural groups, including facilities that meet the needs of the cultural group – tandoori ovens, outdoor covered spaces for Punjabi men to gather, etc.
2. **GROWING DEMAND**—Increased demand on recreation programs and amenities, especially in Downtown Eastside, puts both financial and capacity stress on the Park Board. In addition, in the Public Survey, a lack of available programs or programs of interest was the top reason for not participating in recreation activities. Overuse has long-standing impacts on parks and recreation sites. With a growing population and large public events, the city's beaches and lawns are slow to recover. Overuse of playing fields causes many to be shut down for long periods to allow renewal.
3. **BARRIERS TO ACCESS**—There is a growing economic divide in Vancouver with the top 10% of earners bringing in 34% of the income. With the median personal income reported at \$29,000 in 2013, much of the population is struggling to meet their basic needs. The high cost of living in Vancouver means that recreation can sometimes be a low priority (despite its incredible benefits to health and wellbeing). Free and reduced fees, enhancing integration into everyday life (through location, timing etc.) or offering day-care can help lower barriers to recreation.
4. **LACK OF EQUITY**—In analyzing recreation facilities, there were several notable differences in service provision between neighbourhoods. High quality sports fields tend to be consolidated in East Vancouver, whereas West Vancouver has over 75% of the Grade B fields. Many West Vancouver neighbourhoods have longer timelines for renewal of playgrounds and other facilities. Providing equitable services between neighbourhoods and reflecting the conditions of use is an important priority. There are conflicting ideas on which programs should be offered and these vary between neighbourhoods, demographics (young families versus seniors) and local organizers. It is important to prioritise resources and increase capacity in the neighbourhoods that need it the most.
5. **LACK OF ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY**—Vancouver relies on the Metro Vancouver region for sport hosting and tournament/competition facilities for sport. The Park Board is not currently set up to manage recreation programming outside of community centres (parks, outdoor tennis courts, etc.) and cannot currently grant money to organizations to run recreational programs (art, sport, environmental etc.) Accommodating more capacity for partnerships and resource sharing will allow the Park Board to focus on its core mission and services.
6. **CLIMATE CHANGE**—Climate change will increase drought, floods, pests (chafer beetle), heat island effect and other factors that negatively impact human comfort and health of the living recreation systems, like sports fields. Populations with income, mobility and health vulnerabilities will rely more on Park Board services.

# FOUNDATION FOR INNOVATION

## PEER CITY CASE STUDY

*Providing recreation opportunities that encourage and engage everyone can be a challenging task.*

### TORONTO: INCLUSIVE RECREATION

By focusing on a comprehensive outreach and communications strategy and improving and enhancing access for underserved residents, *Recreation Service Plan 2013-2017*, hopes to continue to increase the number of people involved in Toronto's recreation programs. The division distributes a FUN guide that details recreation programs and services, which is available online and in print. Residents can register for over 63,000 programs online or in-person, using an automated touch-tone phone or speaking with a customer service representative over the phone (residents can access interpreters in over 150 languages for free).

To address the needs of underserved residents, two programs have been established. The Investing in Families program is a partnership with Toronto Employment and Social Services, Toronto Public Health and Parks, Forestry and Recreation that uses a case-based approach to provide subsidies for recreation programs, equipment and transportation. The Newcomers Initiative, a federally funded pilot project, was utilized to provide automated information kiosks for newcomers in local community centers. Services available for people with disabilities include adapted and integrated services, multi-sensory environments, warm water pools and large fonts in the FUN Guide and TTY services. While Toronto uses innovative approaches to inclusive recreation, performance is consistently measured and monitored and new actions are taken to continue to eliminate non-financial barriers to participation.



## Recreation Service Plan 2013 – 2017



Parks, Forestry and Recreation



## SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA: THE ROTARY PLAYGARDEN

A true community park should be accessible to everyone and promote a feeling of connectedness. Multigenerational playgrounds that are accessible for people of all abilities are one way to achieve this. These multigenerational, all-ability playgrounds focus on low-impact equipment and ability sensitive design. The Rotary PlayGarden at Guadalupe River Park in San Jose is just over four acres and a great example of an all-age play area.

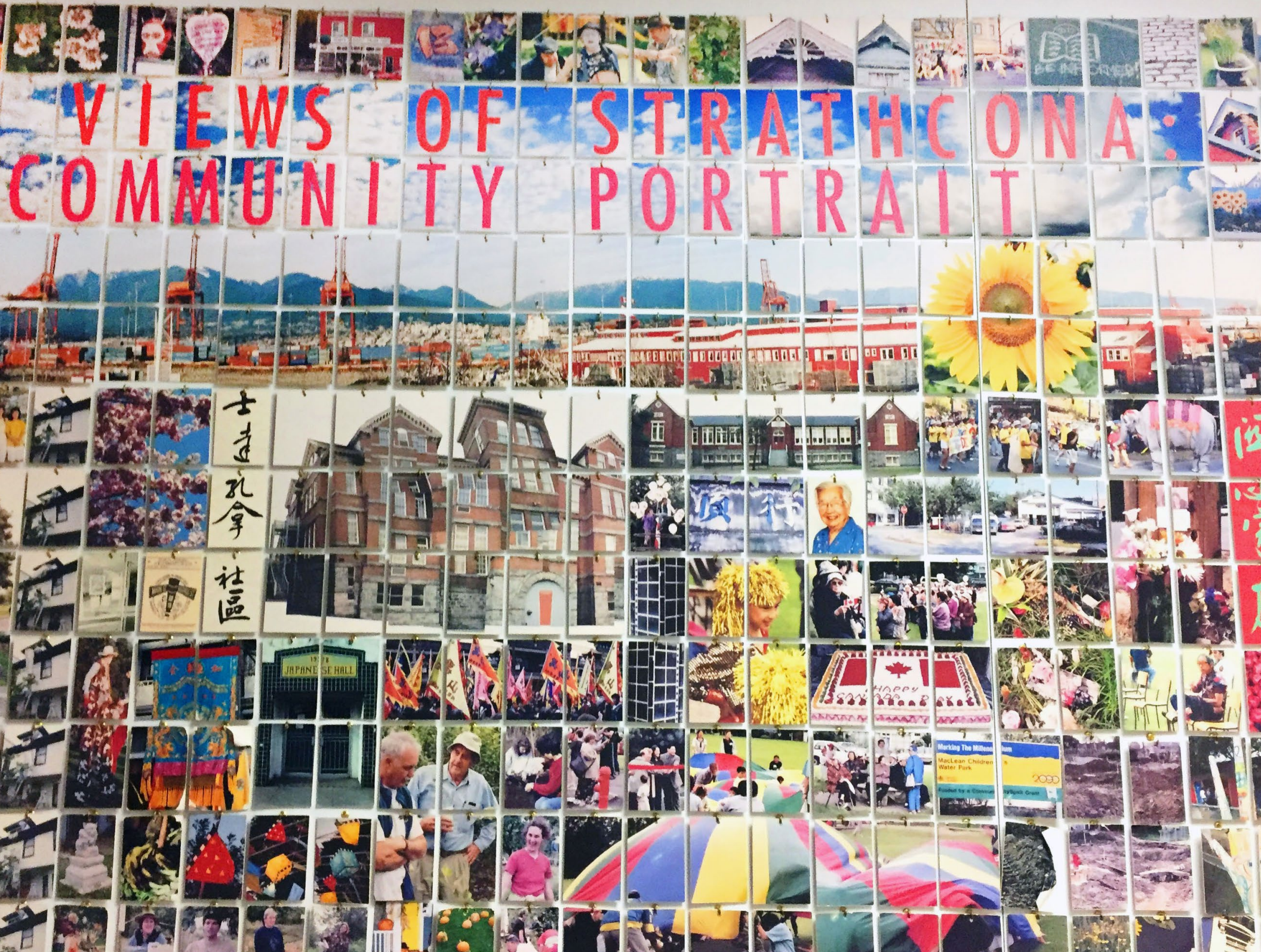
The adult playground equipment includes fitness equipment, larger swing sets and a rubberized walking and jogging track. These features are chosen to improve balance, build muscle and increase range of motion while allowing for adults of all abilities to use the play equipment. This park also has wheelchair accessible equipment like a dual swing and a rope merry-go-round that the wheelchair can roll

into and be secured on. There are climbing structures for all ages, even teenagers. The slides are made of concrete since plastic can interfere with cochlear implants. The slides also vary in length and width to encourage a variety of users to play on them.

Additional amenities include history panels, large murals and interesting sculptures placed throughout the park to appeal to older users. Benches surround the playground and are also scattered throughout the rest of the garden and trails to provide some more relaxing options. The Rotary PlayGarden is an example of a well-designed, multigenerational playground that encourages fun and active lifestyles, minimizes stress and encourages social interaction for users of all ages and abilities.









## WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THE FACILITIES CHAPTER?

This chapter focuses on the recreational, social and cultural services provided by built structures, such as community centres, pools, ice rinks, field houses, VanDusen Botanical Garden and Bloedel Conservatory.

# CHAPTER 4: FACILITIES

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Painting Class, 1950s | CoV Archives

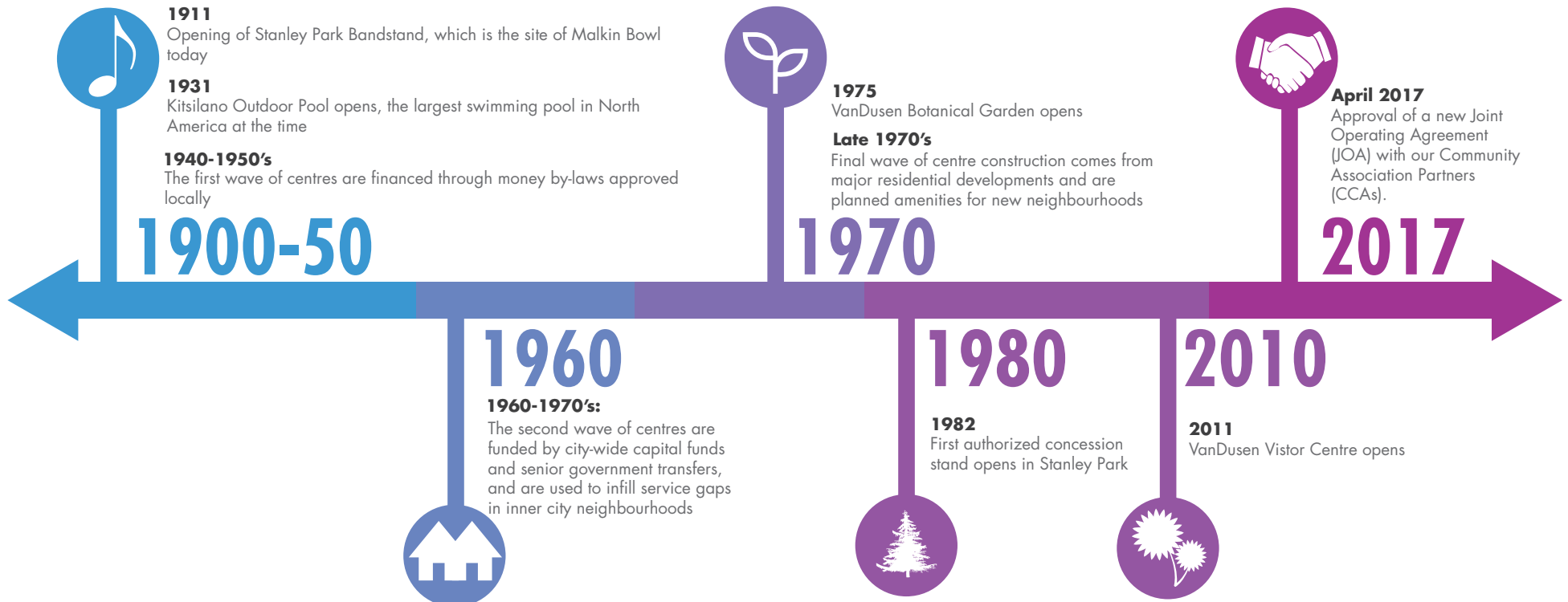


Vancouver Aquatic Centre, 1980s | CoV Archives



2010 Olympics Opening Ceremony | Sue + Martin Curtis

## FACILITIES TIMELINE





# BACKGROUND

## SYSTEM CONTEXT

*Across Vancouver, hundreds of recreational, social and cultural facilities serve the city's 22 diverse neighbourhoods.*

These critical community facilities include community centres, fieldhouses, concessions, washrooms, senior centres, pools, rinks, marinas, docks, the Jericho Sailing Centre, operations centres and greenhouses, Bloedel Conservatory, VanDusen Garden and Stanley Park Pavilion, among others.

Over seventy years ago, local and community-minded individuals set out to implement a vision to ensure all residents had access to recreational facilities in their community. As a result, Vancouver has 24 community centres with pools, rinks, fitness centres, meeting rooms, libraries and childcare with programs for people of all ages and abilities to play, exercise, learn and connect with others in their neighbourhood.

Each of Vancouver's community centres serves as the hub of its respective neighbourhood, linking residents together with resources to encourage positive health outcomes through healthy lifestyles, social connectedness and the ability to contribute to community.

### ***Community Centre Associations***

One of the unique aspects of Vancouver's recreation service delivery model is the critical role that Community Centre Associations (CCAs) have played over the last 50–60 years. The long and rich historic relationship between the Park Board and CCAs gives facilities a heart and soul with a unique grounding in neighbourhood culture.

CCAs provide access to quality, responsive programming and services to encourage healthy lifestyles through participation in physical, recreational, cultural, educational, social and capacity-building programs for residents of the community.

## KEY TERMS

### *community centre*

A place where people from a particular community can meet for social, educational or recreational activities. The facility is owned and maintained by the City of Vancouver and the Park Board and most are jointly operated with Community Centre Associations (CCAs).

### *community hub*

A space that provides a focal point and facilities to foster greater local community activity and brings residents, local businesses and community organizations together to improve quality of life.

### *Community Centre Association*

A valuable community-based society incorporated under the *Societies Act*. With an elected Board of Directors, it plays an important role in contributing to the success of the community centre network, by delivering programming and services that ensure a healthy, engaged and inclusive community.

## SYSTEM CONTEXT

The partnership between the Park Board and the CCAs and their respective roles and responsibilities are outlined through a “Joint Operating Agreement” (JOA). This distinctive collaboration keeps the community in our community centres.

In general terms, community centre programming is determined and delivered by the CCAs. The operation of centres, including maintenance, provision of core facility staffing and all overhead costs, as well as the operation and programming of pools and ice rinks, is the responsibility of the Park Board. For the full breakdown of roles and responsibilities for the operation of community centres, please see the JOA (October, 2017).

In April 2017, after a year-long consultation, the Park Board approved a new JOA that expresses a citywide approach to quality recreation and access for all.

### Foundational Principles:

- **Equity among Community Centres:** All Vancouver citizens have access to a core set of programs that lead to healthy living and ultimately, to healthy communities.
- **Access to a Network of Community Centres:** System that allows for a universal membership or other system to be used for all rinks, pools, fitness centres and core programs across all community centres.
- **Access for all Citizens:** Single policy and process that respects confidentiality to ensure all residents have access to basic recreation programs and services regardless of income.
- **Operational Sustainability and Accountability:** An operating relationship for community centres that is sustainable, accountable and transparent.

Progress. Improvement. Equity. Respect. These values are at the heart of the new arrangement with these valued community partners. They are grounded in the Park Board’s principles of equity and access, operational sustainability and accountability.

### *City of Vancouver - Real Estate and Facilities Management*

The City of Vancouver's Real Estate and Facilities Management (REFM) department delivers many management and maintenance services to the Park Board as outlined in a Partnership Agreement (in place since 2014, revised in 2016). This agreement allows for a consolidation of services relating to facilities across the city under one management structure. For the Park Board, this includes community centres, senior centres, pools, service yards, fieldhouses, golf course buildings, marinas, concessions and washrooms.

The Partnership Agreement outlines how REFM delivers services to the Park Board across its four main departments: Real Estate Services, Facilities Planning and Development, Facilities Operations, Strategic Operations and Program Management. For example:

- **Facilities Planning and Development** is responsible for managing new facilities and renewals, coordinating building upgrades (including energy retrofit projects to improve efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions), major maintenance projects and together with the Park Board, co-leads strategic planning for investment in facilities.
- **Facilities Operations** is responsible for the operation and maintenance of buildings including inspection, operation, maintenance and repair of building systems and equipment.

For the full scope of services provided to the Park Board by REFM, please see Appendix 5.



Hillcrest Community Centre | Park Board



Trout Lake Community Centre Ice Rink | Park Board



Roundhouse Community Arts + Recreation Centre | Park Board



Mount Pleasant Community Centre | Park Board



Visitor Centre at VanDusen | Park Board



Creekside Community Centre

## RELATED INITIATIVES

- Making Space for Arts and Culture: Cultural Infrastructure Plan—ongoing, 2018
- Creative City Strategy—ongoing, 2018
- VanSplash: Aquatic Strategy—ongoing
- Social Infrastructure Plan—ongoing
- Resilience Strategy—ongoing
- Renewable City Strategy—2016
- Park Board 11 Reconciliation Strategies—2016
- City of Reconciliation Framework—2014
- Healthy City Strategy—2014
- Greenest City 2020 Action Plan—2011
- Housing and Homelessness Strategy—2011
- Climate Change Adaptation Strategy—2011
- Sport for Life: Vancouver Sport Strategy—2008
- Cultural Facilities Key Gap Update—2008
- Community Centre Renewal Plan—2001
- OnWater: Vancouver's Non-motorised Watercraft Strategy—ongoing, 2018
- High-Density Housing for Families with Children Guidelines—1992



# ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

## PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

- The most highly rated park and recreation amenity in terms of user satisfaction was gardens, such as VanDusen and Dr Sun Yat Sen.
- 75% of respondents reported being satisfied with community centres.
- Most survey respondents said that they use community centre facilities (73%), close to half (46%) go every week, 23% every month and 21% every few months.
- Of those that use community centre programs, 49% participated every week. The majority of respondents (75%) were satisfied with the programs.
- Survey respondents and CCA representatives highlighted the need to prioritise senior centres, and spaces in community centres such as senior lounges, in addition to multigenerational shared spaces.

## OPPORTUNITIES

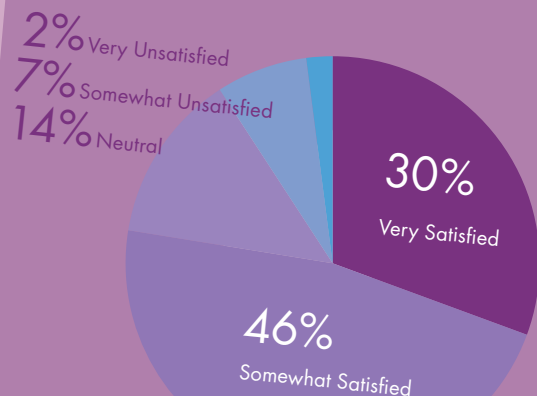
- VanPlay tour participants were keen for the Park Board to address the equitable delivery of access to facilities across the city. Many Big Ideas shared related to good access, close to home.
- Many residents and stakeholders (including CCA representatives) shared how important green space adjacent to facilities to them. This co-location is valuable to the community as a space for programming, events and as a space that enables people to connect and socialise before and after amenity use.

- The second most common desire heard from the Urban Explorers (child & youth engagement) was for more affordable and variable food sources in parks and public spaces. They suggested more opportunities to grow food and sell fresh produce alongside a call for more concession stands, ice cream stores and farmers markets.
- Survey responses indicated that while gardens (such as VanDusen and Bloedel) received the highest satisfaction rate (62% as 'very satisfied'). They were the most infrequently used (34% responded that they go every few months). This highlights an opportunity to encourage more frequent visits.
- On the lookout for coffee! Many VanPlay tour participants were keen to see more opportunities to find food and drink in, near, or overlooking parks.

## CHALLENGES

- Youth leaders shared their need for more youth spaces in community centres and other facilities. Youth spaces are often too small to be functional.
- While visiting many parks and community events during the VanPlay tour, a frequent topic of conversation was the need for basic park facilities, such as accessible, safe and clean washrooms and fresh drinking water.
- CCA representatives and survey respondents highlighted the challenge of responding to the needs of changing demographics (aging, multi-lingual populations) in the planning and management of facilities.
- Not being able to walk, cycle, or take transit to all centres was a commonly cited challenge by VanPlay Tour participants.
- The renewal and renovation of aging community centres is top of mind for both the Community Centre Association representatives and VanPlay Tour participants. This was also raised prominently in the engagement for the Grandview Woodland, Marpole and the West End Community Plans (all three of the community plan engagement summaries reviewed as part of Phase 1 of VanPlay).

## COMMUNITY SURVEY TAKEAWAY



SATISFACTION LEVEL WITH COMMUNITY CENTRES



## PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENT REVIEW

Community engagement for VanSplash, the draft Aquatics Strategy, highlighted the need for **space and activities that enable people to connect and socialize** before, during and after aquatic amenity use.

## EMERGING QUESTIONS

### EQUITY, INCLUSION + ACCESS:

This was the top priority of the public in terms of what is most important to address in the next 25 years. What are the biggest challenges and opportunities regarding equity, inclusion and access amongst community centres? What are affordable services for all? What populations are currently unwelcome or feel unwelcome? What does the public perceive of as barriers now?

### IMPROVING EXISTING FACILITIES

**+ SERVICES:** How do we prioritise improvements to existing infrastructure in response to demand across the city? How do we balance addressing changing needs with addressing growing needs for existing services?

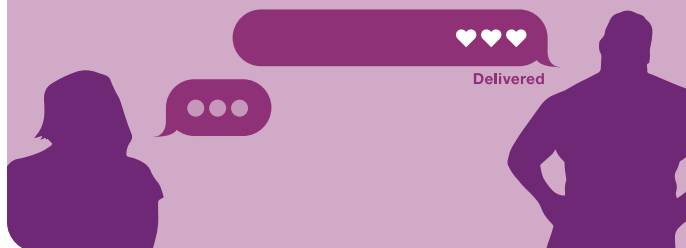
## VANPLAY TOUR TAKEAWAY

Food, water and washrooms are critical facilities that allow more people to spend a longer time enjoying parks, playing sport and being outside.



## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Colocation of recreation and community facilities with libraries and schools presents a great opportunity to create vibrant, efficient destinations that are integrated into every day life.



VanPlay

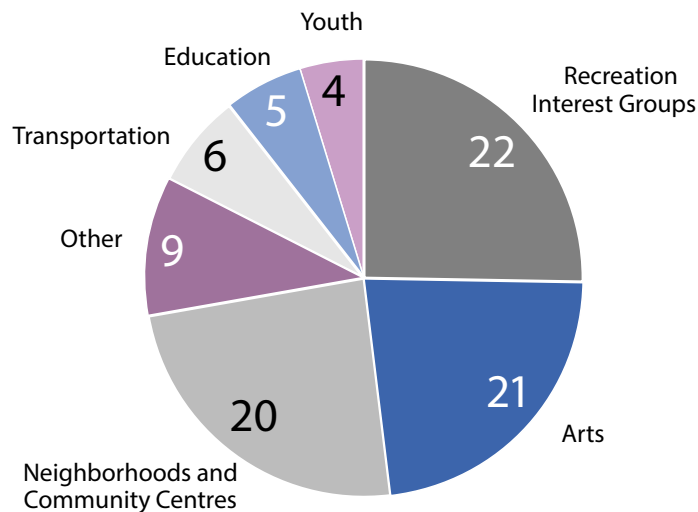
# ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

## VANPLAY DEEP DIVE

Between February and April 2018, key stakeholder groups were invited to engage in the VanPlay process through “VanPlay Deep Dives.” 345 members of key stakeholder groups completed 64 “VanPlay Deep Dive” workbooks. The goals of VanPlay Deep Dive are:

- To better understand Vancouver’s parks and recreation system by mapping out and celebrating the diverse networks of amenities, programs, services and experiences to which stakeholders contribute in Vancouver
- To identify who is involved in leading, sharing and supporting these diverse services
- To shape the future by setting principles and goals which reflect what a successful future looks like
- To identify the actions and resources needed to achieve these goals

Groups Who Participated in Deep Dive Engagement



## STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES ON CURRENT STATE OF FACILITIES

Through VanPlay Deep Dives, 774 comments were gathered on the current state of parks and recreation. The diagram on the facing page reflects findings from stakeholders on the current state of the recreation and facilities network and what broad topics are top of mind to these stakeholders. The lines map out who Deep Dive stakeholders see as providers of these recreation services and facilities.

Specific facilities of special interest to Deep Dive participants include:

- Dance studios
- Fitness centres
- Ice rinks
- Aquatic recreation (recently addressed in VanSplash)

*For the full Deep Dive report, please see Appendix 7.*

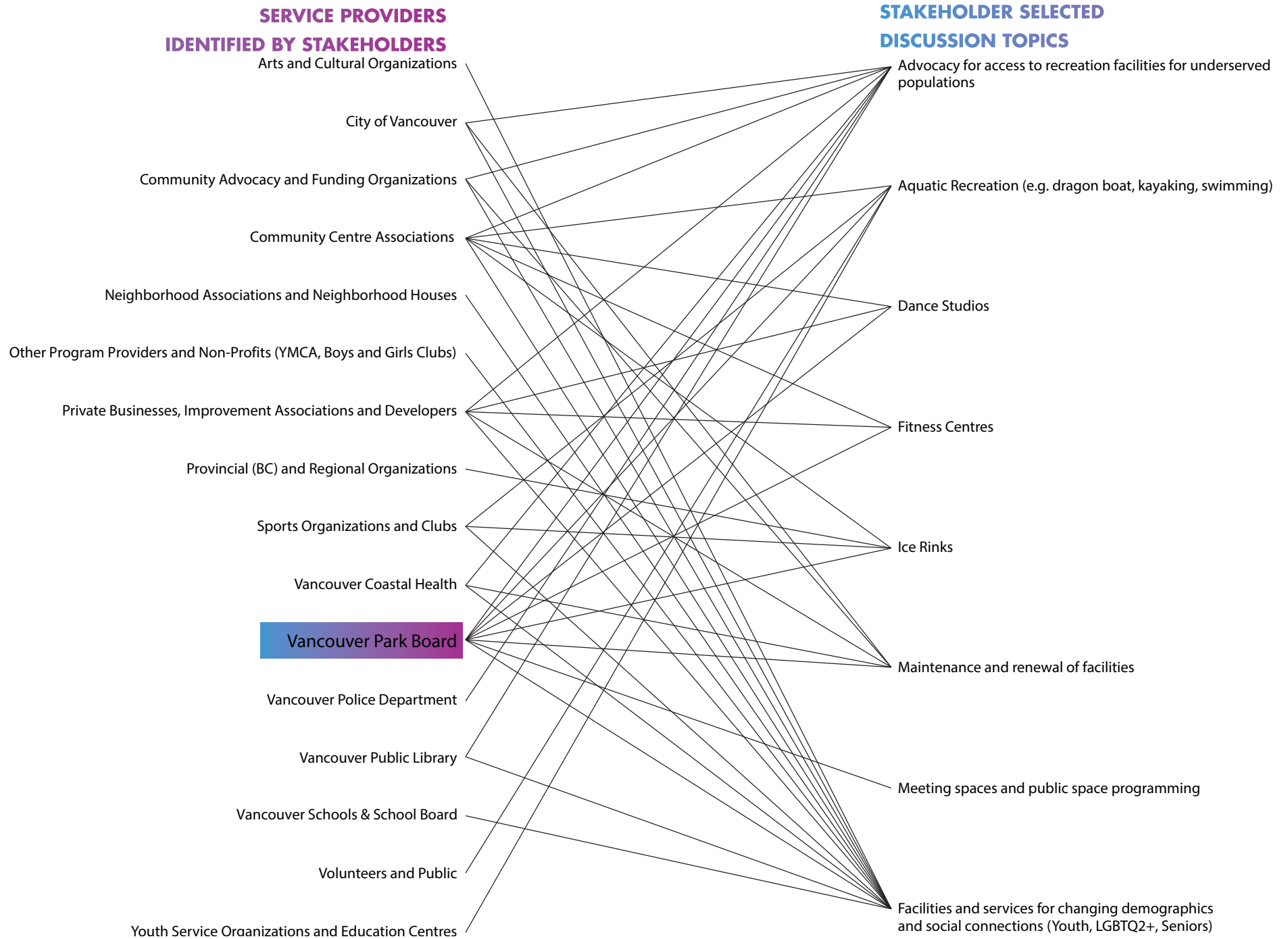
### WHAT THIS DIAGRAM (OPPOSITE) TELLS US



For recreation facilities, stakeholders identified the Park Board and Community Centre Associations as both playing lead roles in providing programs, services and facilities, among others in a complex network.



# DEEP DIVE FINDINGS SUMMARY: FACILITIES SERVICES AND PROVIDERS



# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: INCLUSIVITY

## RANGE OF SERVICES

*Vancouver's 24 community centres provide three categories of essential services to the community.*

- **SOCIAL:** Community Centres are integral to local neighbourhoods and provide a third space for people to congregate between work and home. These facilities provide welcoming spaces, programs and services, such as childcare, healthy eating, community group gathering, meeting and events spaces. Many centres act as warming and cooling centres in the case of extreme weather.
- **CULTURAL:** Community Centres offer a wide range of arts and cultural programs, from the public art murals that adorn many facades to performances, art classes, potter studios and theatre classes, to artist residencies, cultural landmarks and festivals.
- **RECREATIONAL:** Community Centres provide many places to play, such as gymnasiums, fitness centres, aquatic facilities, multi-purpose rooms, ice rinks, dancing and yoga studios, paddling launches, climbing walls, indoor cycling equipment and playground spaces.



Round House Winter Solstice Festival | Park Board



Inclusive changing rooms in Vancouver's community centres | Park Board







# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: ACCESS

## COMMUNITY CENTRE INVENTORY

*While the community centres are roughly distributed in each of Vancouver's neighbourhoods, if no new community centres are added in the next 25 years, the facilities per capita metric will decline.*

An inventory per population is a useful baseline, but does not evaluate the quality of facilities nor availability of services, demand or capacity. In addition to recreation, the facilities provide cultural and social experiences, from mahjong to watercolouring. Given the cost of land and Vancouver's landlocked location, existing community centre spaces are a scarce resource and will need to be carefully maintained, thoughtfully renewed and expanded when possible.

## INVENTORY WITH PROJECTED POPULATION

	2017	2021	2041
Population	631,486	685,000	776,500
# of Community Centre Facilities	24	24	24
Community Centres Per Capita (# facilities/10,000 residents)	0.4	0.4	0.3
Density (Persons per sq. km.)	5,493	5,958	6,754
Vancouver Land Area	115 sq. km.		

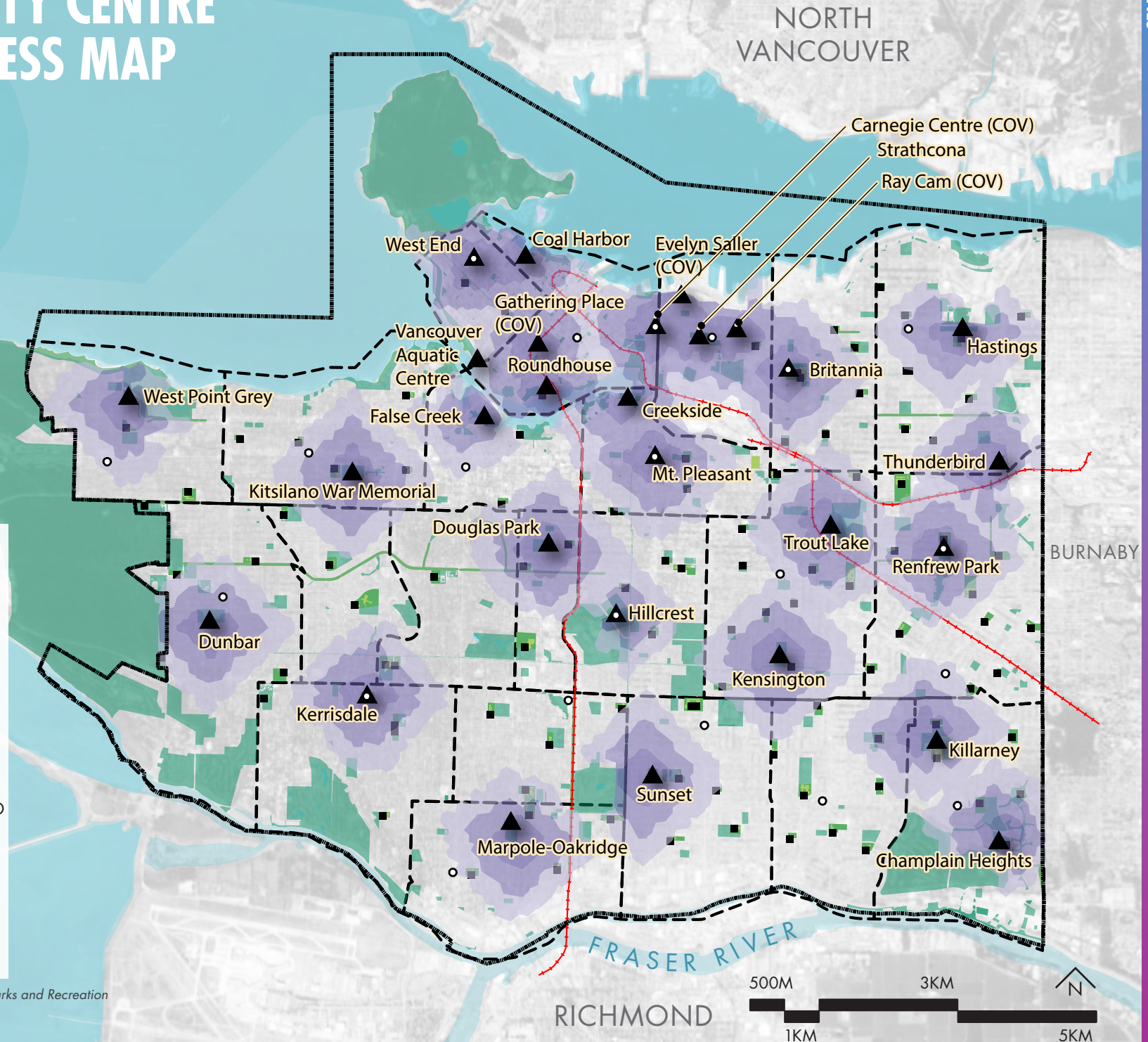


Photos from top: Child care services at Ray-Cam Community Centre | Park Board; Mount Pleasant Community Centre Climbing Wall | VanPlay Video Photo; Dancing the Parenting project with Foolish operations 2015 | Park Board - Arts, Culture & Engagement Team

# COMMUNITY CENTRE WALK ACCESS MAP

## LEGEND

- 5-MIN WALK  
400M
- 10-MIN WALK  
800M
- 15-MIN WALK  
1.2KM
- PARKS
- COMMUNITY CENTRE
- VANCOUVER SCHOOL BOARD
- LIBRARY
- SKYTRAIN
- LOCAL AREA BOUNDARIES
- MUNICIPAL BOUNDARY



SOURCE: Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation



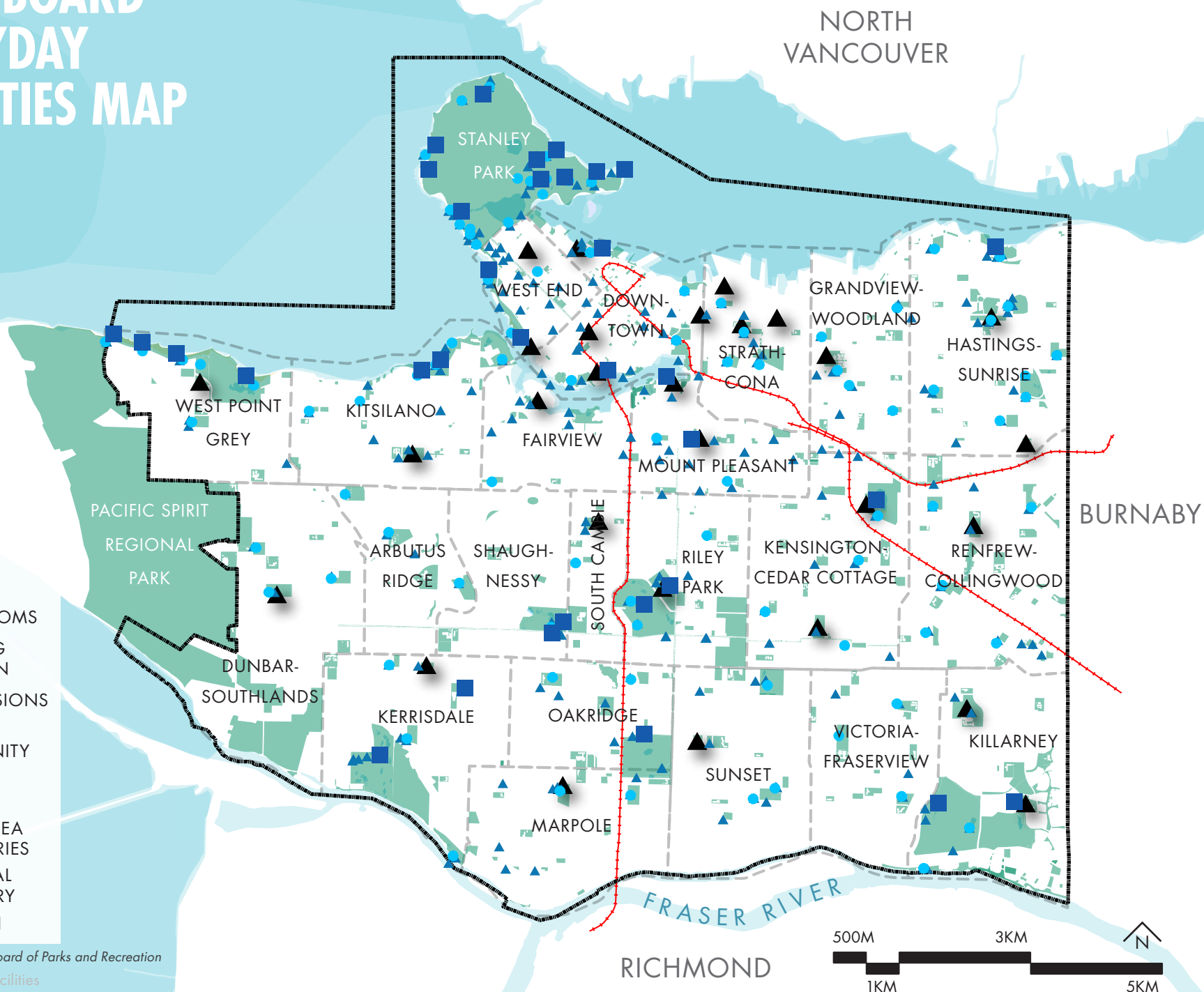
# PARK BOARD EVERYDAY FACILITIES MAP

## LEGEND

- WASHROOMS
- ▲ DRINKING FOUNTAIN
- CONCESSIONS / DINING
- ▲ COMMUNITY CENTRE
- PARKS
- LOCAL AREA BOUNDARIES
- ||||| MUNICIPAL BOUNDARY
- SKYTRAIN

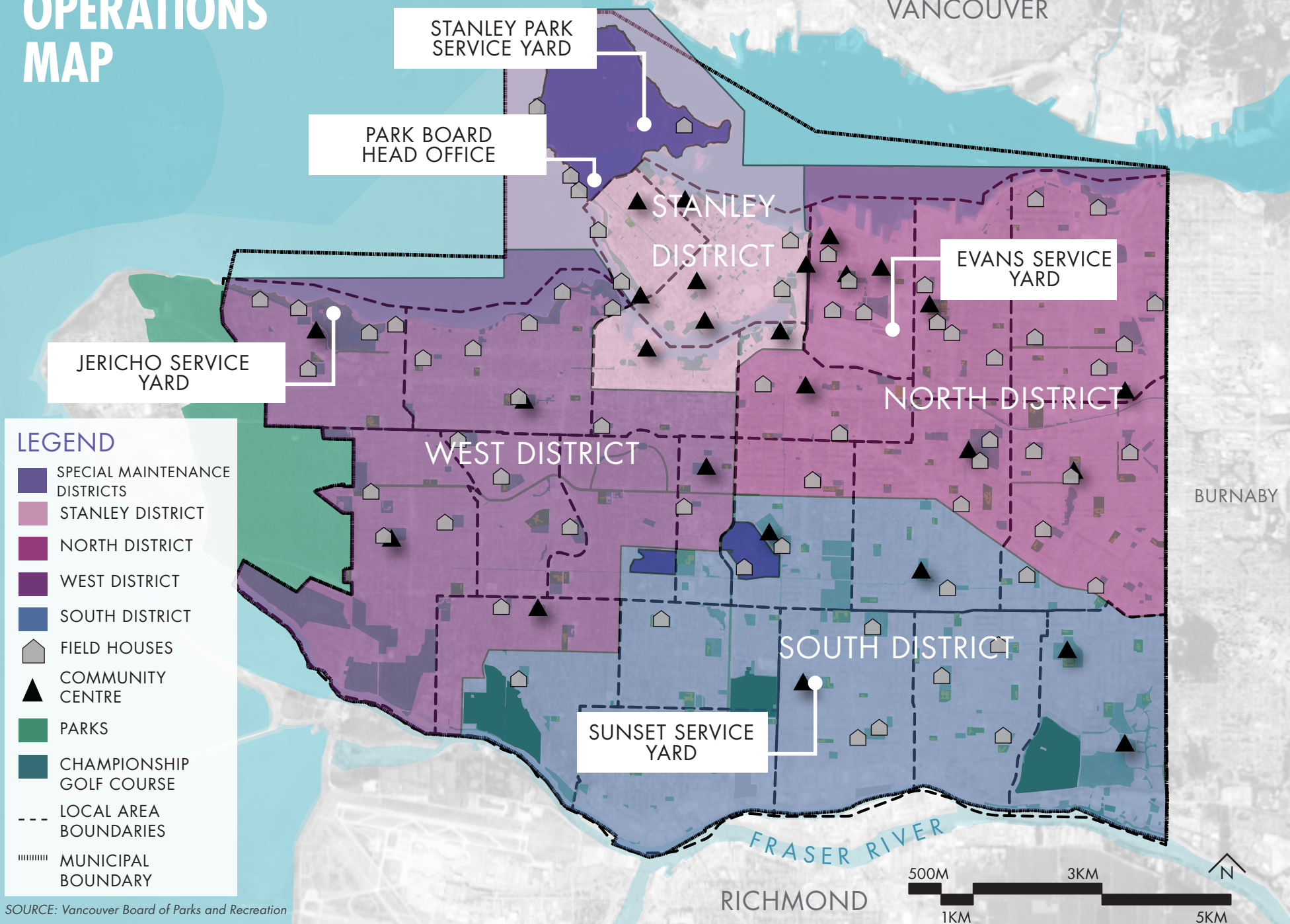
SOURCE: Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

122 Chapter 4: Facilities





# PARK BOARD OPERATIONS MAP



# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: FUNDING FACILITIES

The Park Board partners with the City's Real Estate and Facilities Management Department to build and maintain recreation facilities and park buildings. Capital funding is used for full renewal and development of new recreation facilities as well as major renovations, whereas operating funds look after maintenance, staffing and other costs for the ongoing care of these assets. Various sources and methods finance the City's capital and operating budgets. Facility-related funding sources and mechanisms are described below.

## OPERATING

*Staff, operations and the maintenance of existing assets is primarily funded through property taxes and revenue.*

### Revenue:

The Park Board generates roughly \$42.4M (2017) of revenues from entities, such as concessions and user fees, providing roughly 34.5% of the necessary funding to operate a balanced budget.

The Park Board receives approximately \$30.2M each year in revenue from facility uses, such as entrance fees at VanDusen, Bloedel and the Stanley Park train, moorage fees at marinas, purchases at concession stands, leases for buildings in parks, city-wide recreation programming and admissions (rinks, pools, Park Board run fitness centres etc.) and recreation facility rentals. This revenue makes up a quarter of the total Park Board operating budget.\*

## CAPITAL

*New facilities, such as the development of new community centres, pools and other rinks, are funded primarily through Community Amenity Contributions.*

With the renewal of existing facilities, such as community centres, only the growth-related portion for the facilities is eligible for CAC funding. The remainder must come from other sources.

Community Plans include a Public Benefit Strategy that identifies amenity needs, such as parks and community centres, to support the projected density and urban form described in the community plan. DCL funds (as per the Vancouver Charter) can only be used for acquiring parkland, providing fencing, landscaping, drainage and irrigation, trails, restrooms, changing rooms, playground and playing field equipment on park land - they cannot be used to fund new facilities.

### Community Amenity Contributions:

CACs are contributions provided by developers (either in-kind or payments in lieu), negotiated during rezoning, such as new parks, recreation centers, fire halls and libraries to provide amenities to service the new population. New facilities on lands rezoned for development are typically community amenity contributions.

### Partner contributions:

These can include cash contributions from other governments (federal, provincial and regional), non-profit agencies, foundations and philanthropists. Partner contributions can fund existing or new infrastructure amenities.

*\*2018 Park Board Operating Budget \$122M, funded by \$59.5M in revenues and \$63M from tax-based operating funds.*

## PRIORITISING RESOURCES

Vancouver saw a boom of building civic facilities in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. The majority of the community centres in operation today are the legacy of this investment. Many of these facilities, 84% of all the community centres, without interim repair, could require significant investment or replacement within the next 10 years.

In 2001, the Park Board prepared a Community Centre Renewal Plan that considered building condition assessments, a 10-year major maintenance schedule, building by-law audits, seismic studies and qualitative data from staff and CCAs on the programmability and operational functionality of facilities. The purpose of this plan was to prioritise renewal of community centres.

An update to the document is being planned by Park Board staff. When commenced, the process will rely heavily on our CCA partners, recreation staff and the community to ensure all perspectives are considered when determining both optimum level of service and priorities.

## FACILITY CONDITION INDEX 2016

One quantitative tool available in the complex analysis of community centre renewal planning and prioritisation is the Facility Condition Index (FCI).

FCI is a benchmark that facility managers utilise to compare and contrast the condition of one facility against another facility or group of properties, in an effort to gauge the current and future condition of a building.

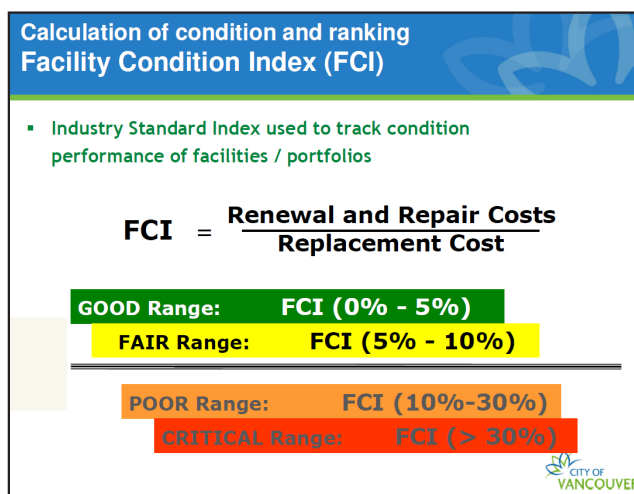
For example when determining the FCI of a community centre, the cost of the community centre's repair and renewal needs are compared against the cost of rebuilding that same centre from the ground up. The results of this comparison—fixing a centre or rebuilding it—provides the FCI, which is measured as a percentage.

Therefore, a centre with a low FCI rating needs less repair and renewal work than a centre with a higher FCI rating which requires greater investment to keep the building in a functioning state. Usually an FCI of 10% and below signals a building with good effective age. An FCI greater than 10% suggests the building is beginning to deteriorate with components reaching the end of their lifecycle. The equation below shows how the FCI is determined and the scoring ranges from good to critical.

This tool does not calculate the qualitative aspects of the facility and the citywide network of social infrastructure. FCI is just one indicator to be considered in the priority of facility renewal; it does not take into account seismic risk, capacity, or need among other things.

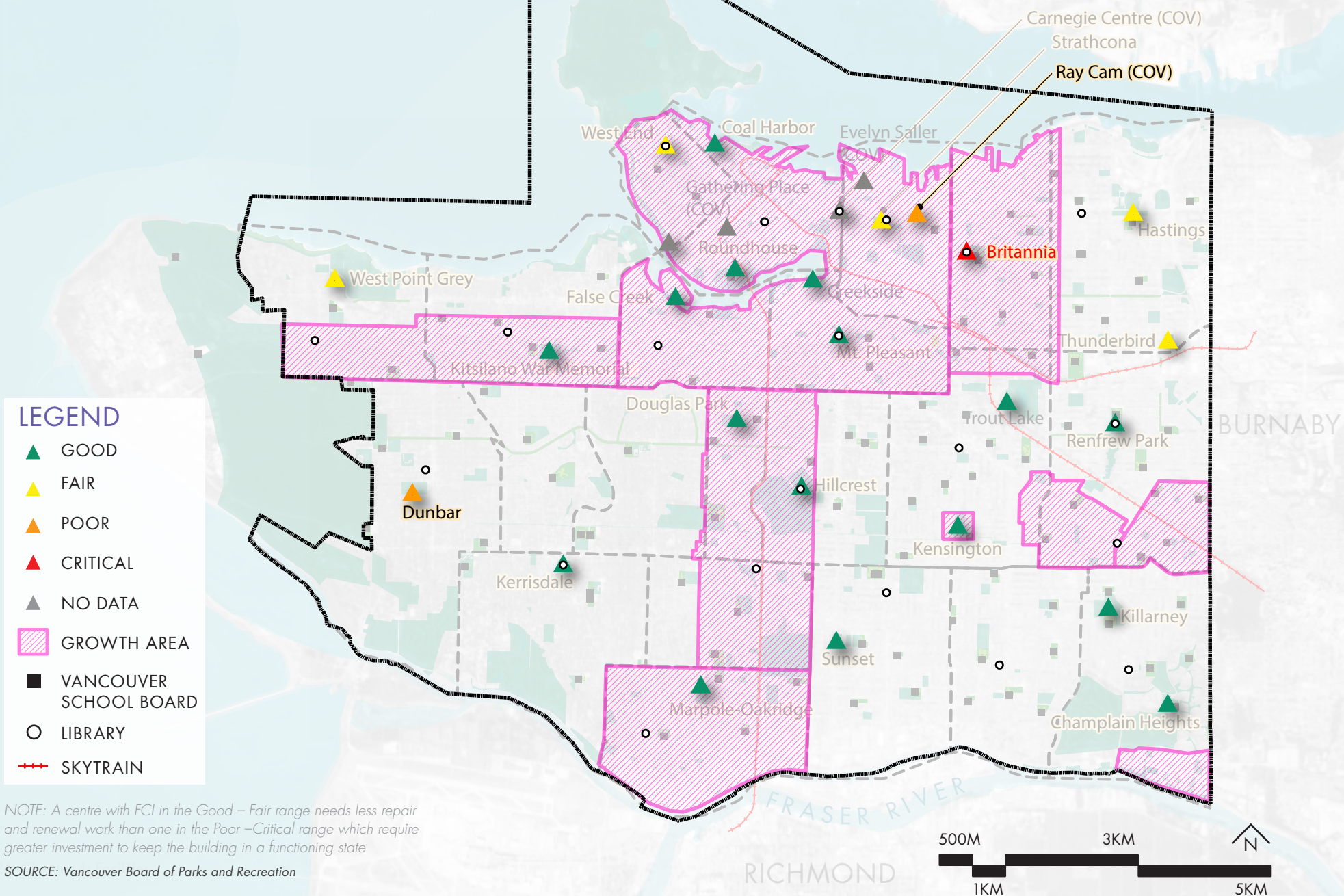
The purpose of the FCI is to provide a means for objective comparison of facility or building condition as well as allowing decision makers to understand building renewal funding needs and comparisons.

The maps on the following pages show community centre locations with their FCI score for 2017 and projected score for 2026. The maps assume no major renovation or renewal.

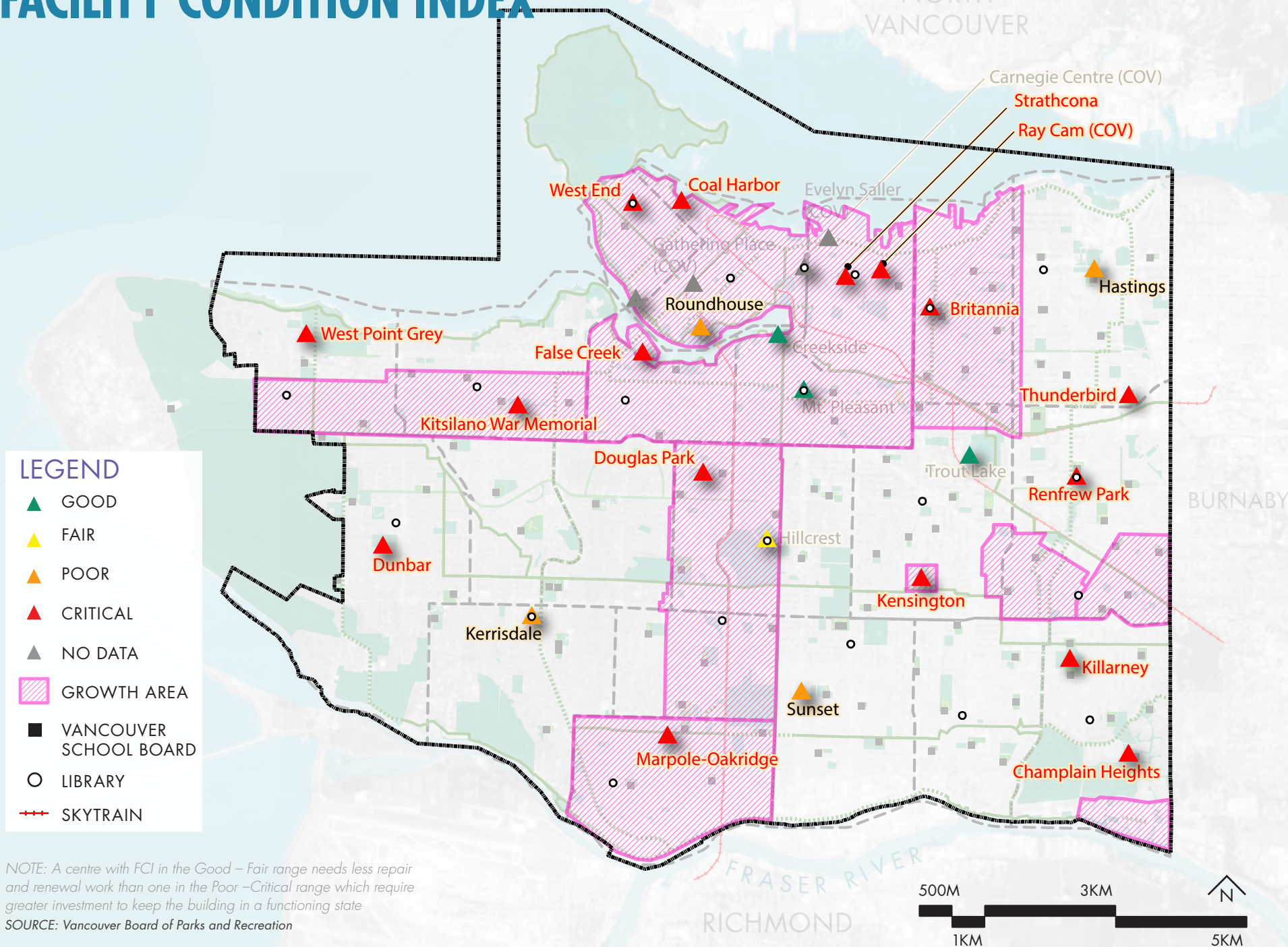




# 2016 COMMUNITY CENTRE: FACILITY CONDITION INDEX



# 2026 PROJECTED COMMUNITY CENTRE: FACILITY CONDITION INDEX





# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: QUALITY

## QUEEN ELIZABETH PARK'S BLOEDEL FLORAL CONSERVATORY

*The former 52-hectare industrial quarry site, locally known as Little Mountain Park, was renamed Queen Elizabeth Park after a Royal Visit in 1939.*

The geodesic-domed Bloedel Conservatory is the crowning jewel of the park and was opened in 1969. This lush domed tropical paradise sits at the City of Vancouver's highest elevation, at 152 metres above sea level. The roof glazing, consisting of 1490 acrylic panels of 32 sizes, was replaced in 2014 as part of a \$2.7 million roof renewal project.

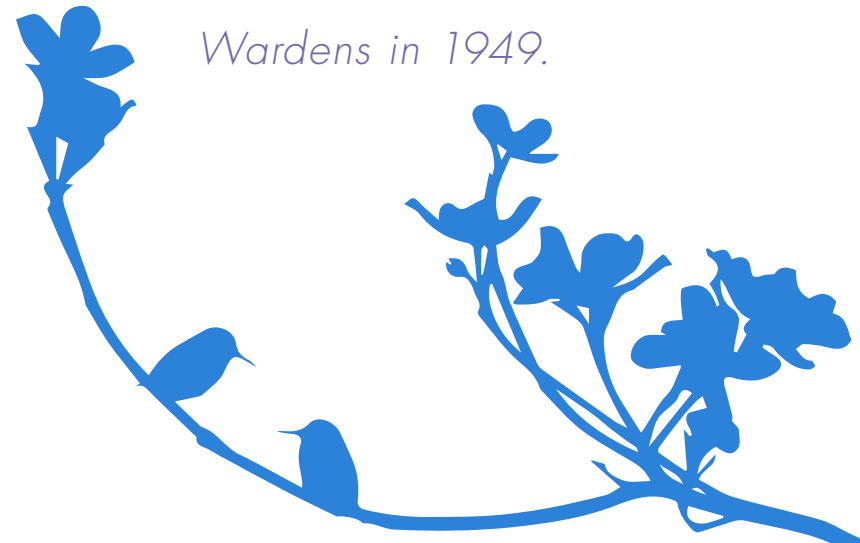
More than 120 free-flying exotic birds and 500 species of exotic plants and flowers thrive in three simulated environments, including tropical rainforest, sub-tropic and desert climates.

- Constructed through a generous donation from Prentice Bloedel, the Conservatory is dedicated to expanding the understanding and appreciation of the world of plants.
- The conservatory was the first large triodetic dome conservatory in Canada. It remains Canada's largest single-structure conservatory and is the second largest in North America. It is a Class "A" designated heritage building.
- The Conservatory is jointly operated by the Vancouver Park Board and the VanDusen Botanical Gardens Association (VBGA).
- The Queen Elizabeth Park Plaza adjacent to the Conservatory was redeveloped in 2007 at a cost of \$6 million. This 1.2 hectare area, built atop Metro Vancouver's principal drinking water reservoir, contains seven covered tai chi arbours, ornamental gardens, the Celebration Pavilion and the dramatic "Dancing Waters" fountain.



Geodesic dome at Bloedel Floral Conservatory | Park Board

*Queen Elizabeth Park contains Canada's first civic arboretum, which was first planted by a crew of Junior Forest Wardens in 1949.*





## VANDUSEN BOTANICAL GARDEN

*This 22-hectare public garden contains over 250,000+ plants from around the world. In 2011, a LEED Platinum accredited Visitor Centre with its green roof and beautiful orchid-inspired design was constructed and designed by Cornelia Oberlander and Peter Busby of Perkins+Will Architects.*

In 2014, the Visitor Centre was named "Most Sustainable Building of the Year" by World Architecture News. The Garden's mission is "to inspire understanding of the vital importance of plants to all life, through the excellence of our botanical collections, programs and practices."

- In 1960, the Shaughnessy Golf Club moved a few kilometres south, leaving the former site open to re-development. The local community lobbied against a proposed subdivision. Money was raised from private donors, the City of Vancouver and the Province of BC to acquire the property for a botanical garden, which opened in 1975.
- The Vancouver Botanical Gardens Association (VBGA) fosters love and appreciation of biodiversity through a vibrant calendar of educational programs, while coordinating a team of 1,200 passionate volunteers.
- The Park Board supports the garden by funding six full-time horticulturists, support staff, a curator, superintendent and garden director positions.
- New for 2018 is the Backyard Bird Garden, a feature aimed at inspiring people to make their outdoor spaces bird-friendly. This garden features sitting areas, bird interpretive signage and a child-sized birdhouse to observe birds undetected.
- The garden hosts the legendary Festival of Lights during the month of December, featuring over 1 million twinkling lights and seasonal exhibits. The garden hosts other events throughout the year including the Cherry Blossom Festival, art shows, photography classes, plant sales, gardening courses, Yoga in the Garden and nature camps.



The VanDusen Maze is made of 3,000 pyramidal cedars planted in 1981 | Park Board



Quarry garden at Queen Elizabeth Park | Park Board



Bird house in the new backyard bird garden at VanDusen | Park Board

# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: QUALITY

## ARTS AND CULTURE IN FACILITIES

*Encouraging artistic development is essential to a community and Vancouver Park Board maintains several arts focused public facilities.*

The Roundhouse Community Arts and Recreation Centre and Moberly Art and Cultural Centre are the Park Board's key arts centres focusing on innovative artist-in-residence work and leadership in community-engaged art. Each facility houses presentation space for performances and exhibitions showcasing Park Board arts projects and the creative work of arts partner organizations, in all disciplines, with strong connections to community. The Roundhouse maintains a 200-seat black box theatre and a major exhibition space as well as a pottery studio, dance studio and a woodworking shop. Moberly has a smaller black-box theatre suited to rehearsal and project development and intimate performances. Both facilities are available for public rental and collaborate on festivals, performances and exhibitions with local cultural and arts organizations. Partner projects presented in these spaces range from Vancouver International Jazz Festival shows to VANCAF celebrating Vancouver comic book artists.

Britannia Community Services Centre is home to a carving pavilion that works to highlight and support Indigenous cultural practices, creating opportunities for Indigenous artists to work and connect with Indigenous and non-indigenous community members.

Most of the parks and community centres located throughout Vancouver have spaces for cultural programming and events. Community centres across Vancouver house some level of purpose built arts facilities including visual art studio space, dance studios, pottery studios and pop-up performance spaces.

Inventive use of space is always top of mind in Vancouver. The Park Board began the innovative Fieldhouse Activation Project in 2012. This smart initiative sees former caretaker cottages in parks transformed into studios for artists who work with the community. The program provides free studio space in parks for 50+ artists who lead participatory community-engaged arts projects across the city.



Top to Bottom:

Gita Asmara at Field House Residency Program | George Rahi

All-age dance classes at Moberly | Parks Board - Arts, Culture & Engagement Team

Cultural Day at Moberly | Parks Board - Arts, Culture & Engagement Team

RIGHT: Dancer at Roundhouse | Ergun Calisgan







# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: INCLUSIVITY

## COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

*Vancouver is a growing, culturally diverse city with a thriving economy, consistently voted one of the most livable cities in the world. But is it livable for all?*

Beyond community wellbeing, resilience also speaks to the sustained health of our environment, our social ties and our sense of community. Addressing these challenges includes working to provide added support to those with fewer means and access to services. Vancouver's parks and recreation facilities are the places people can go to build resilience for many of these challenges and pressures.

Physical activity, spending time outdoors and engaging with a community all grow personal resilience, mental health and community connection by building social capital. Community centres offer the opportunity to learn new skills, build a social network, be physically active and engage our brains. All which help us negotiate change and increase the likelihood of us banding together in the case of a negative shock or emergency. Many centres offer low-cost or free healthy meal programs and warming shelters for the homeless during extreme weather events.

Community centres are natural places for people to go in an emergency. As such, they can serve as natural disaster hubs where citizens can gather following an earthquake or other natural disaster to find safety and to share information and resources.

In planning for the future, the Park Board is committed to making Vancouver parks and recreation more resilient to emerging issues such as inequity, social isolation and natural disasters.

## KEY TERMS

### *social infrastructure*

An interdependent mix of facilities, places, spaces, programs, projects, services and networks that maintain and improve the standard of living and quality of life for a community

### *resilience*

The ability to cope with external stresses and disturbances as a result of social, political and environmental change



Community Centre serving as Disaster Hub | Park Board

RIGHT: Intergenerational Dance | Desiree Dunbar



EXIT



# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: INCLUSIVITY

## CULINARY ASSETS

*Park Board offers the full spectrum of dining options from subsidised meal programs to fine dining.*

- **CONCESSIONS:** The Park Board operates 13 concession stands across the city. In 2015 the Park Board began work on a business strategy for the concessions. It is now complete and roll out commenced in 2018. The goals of the strategy are to improve and diversify food and beverage options by introducing food services that respond to emerging trends, by supporting local businesses, by studying options for converting current locations into full-service restaurants and by studying options for seasonal installations. The strategy is also exploring the public's appetite for responsible, appropriate alcohol sales at concession stands.
- **FOOD SERVICES:** A number of community centres provide hot meals to communities in need. Senior centres at Killarney and Kerrisdale provide meals and opportunities to socialize. The Carnegie Centre and nonprofit organizations offer free and reduced costs meals for persons experiencing homelessness. Strathcona and Ray-Cam Community Centres send healthy food home with kids for the weekends through their Napsack program.
- **COMMUNITY KITCHENS:** Nine community centres and a few field houses have community kitchens. From these kitchens CCAs host a wide range of cooking lessons that span from making kombucha and pickling to French and Syrian cuisine.
- **FINE DINING:** In addition to concessions and food services, there are several fine dining establishments at the City's parks, botanic garden and golf courses. All of these establishments are leases on Park Board land. These restaurants offer elevated dining experiences as well as event planning and catering services for weddings and other large events.



Top to Bottom:

Mini tarts at VanDusen's Truffles | Park Board

Salads at the Golf Course| Park Board

Spanish Banks Beach Concession | Park Board

RIGHT: Stanley's Bar and Grill at Stanley Park Pavilion  
| Park Board





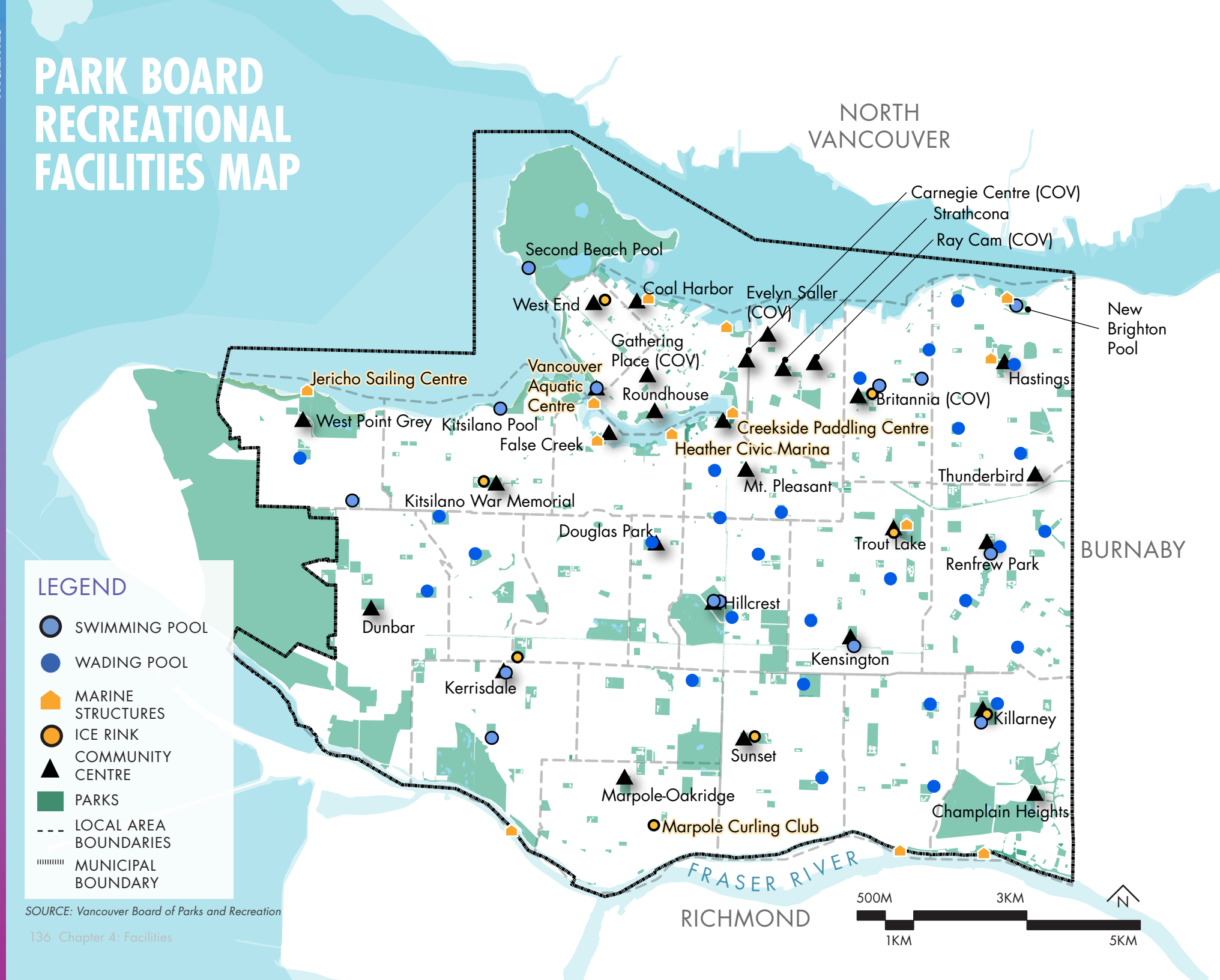


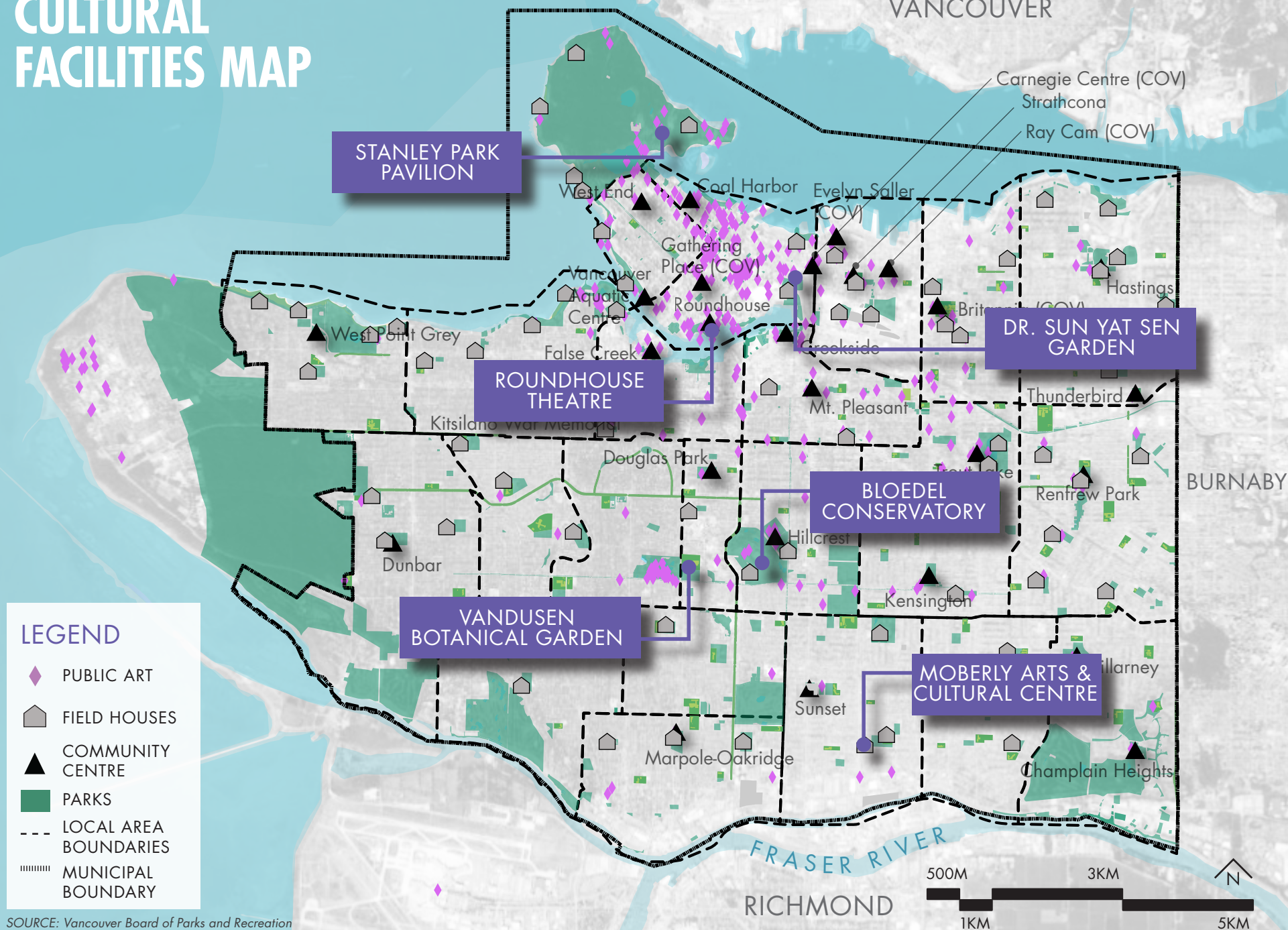
# PARK BOARD RECREATIONAL FACILITIES MAP

## LEGEND

-  SWIMMING POOL
-  WADING POOL
-  MARINE STRUCTURES
-  ICE RINK
-  COMMUNITY CENTRE
-  PARKS
-  LOCAL AREA BOUNDARIES
-  MUNICIPAL BOUNDARY

SOURCE: Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation







# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: INCLUSIVITY

## PROGRAM ACCESS

*The Leisure Access Program tackles making recreation more affordable, while universal and gender-neutral washroom signage is now standard across all facilities. Swim and fitness programming is available as a safe space for the Transgender, Diverse and Two-Spirit (TGD2S) community.*

### LEISURE ACCESS PROGRAM

The Leisure Access Program (LAP) supports individuals, families, groups and communities in need. Through the LAP, Vancouver residents facing financial barriers are provided free or reduced cost access to Park Board programs and services offered at its pools, rinks, participating fitness centres and community centres. Upon qualifying for LAP, the subsidy is loaded onto a “OneCard” that can then be used for easy discounted access.

- Staff at non-profit agencies that assist their clients to attend recreational programs and foster parents may be eligible for a Leisure Access Agency Pass to attend programs with their clients or foster children at no charge.
- As of May 31, 2018, LAP participation has grown to 17,459 members, the largest number of participants in LAP history.

LAP PARTICIPATION	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Pass Holders	11,952	13,814	15,853	11,289	14,623	16,646
% of Eligible Population	10%	11%	13%	10%	12%	13%



### onecard

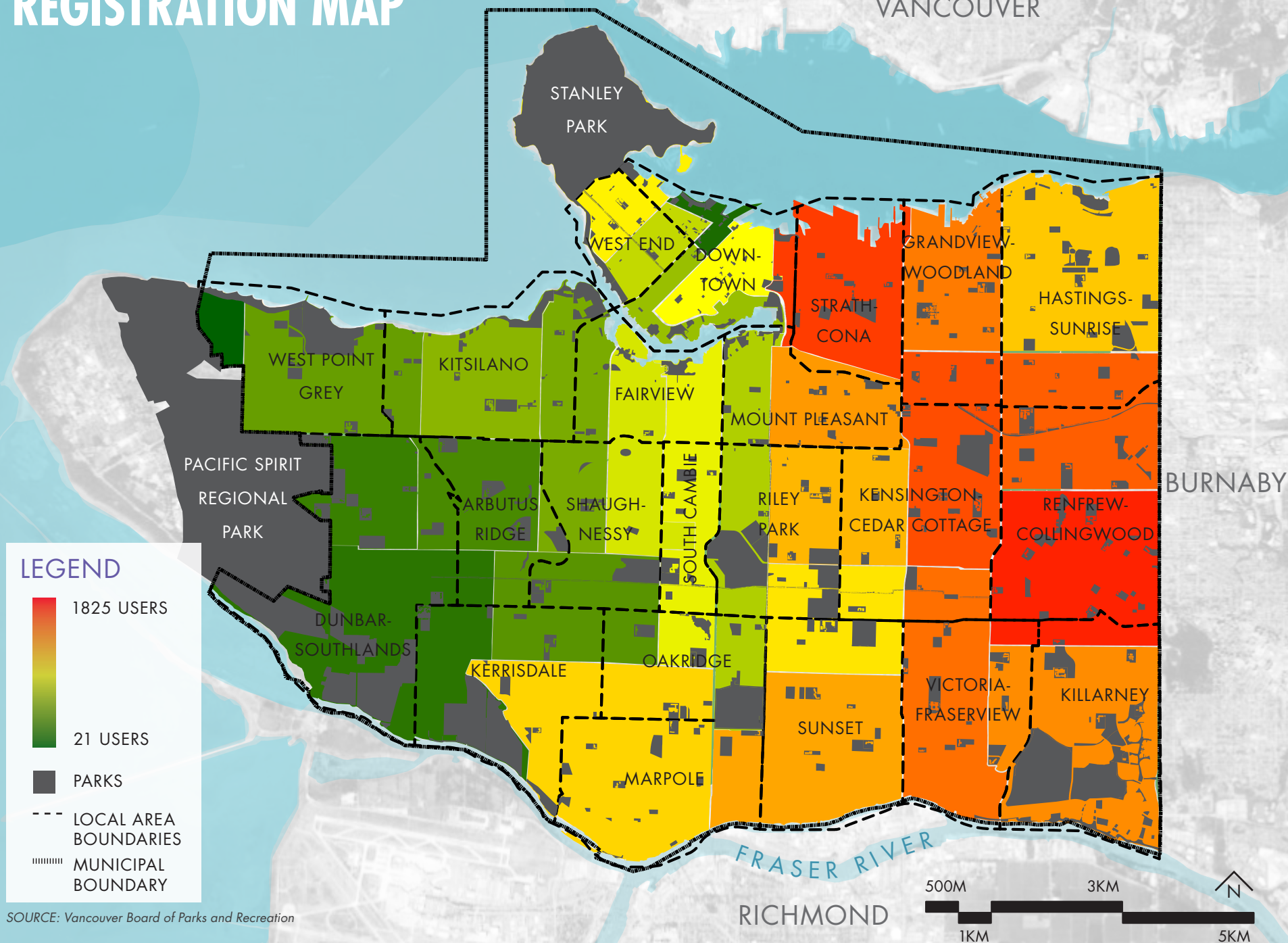
A convenient loadable card that replaces the need for multiple membership cards and flexi passes. OneCard can be reloaded online and is accepted at all Park Board pools, rinks and fitness centres and participating community centres.

### 2018 LAP Eligibility

A family's combined after-tax income (Line 236) must be at or below the Low Income Measure (set by Statistics Canada)

One person	\$ 25,516
Two people	\$ 36,084
Three people	\$ 44,194
Four people	\$ 51,031
Five people	\$ 57,054
Six people	\$ 62,500
Seven or more people	\$ 67,508

# 2014 LEISURE ACCESS REGISTRATION MAP



SOURCE: Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation



# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: INCLUSIVITY

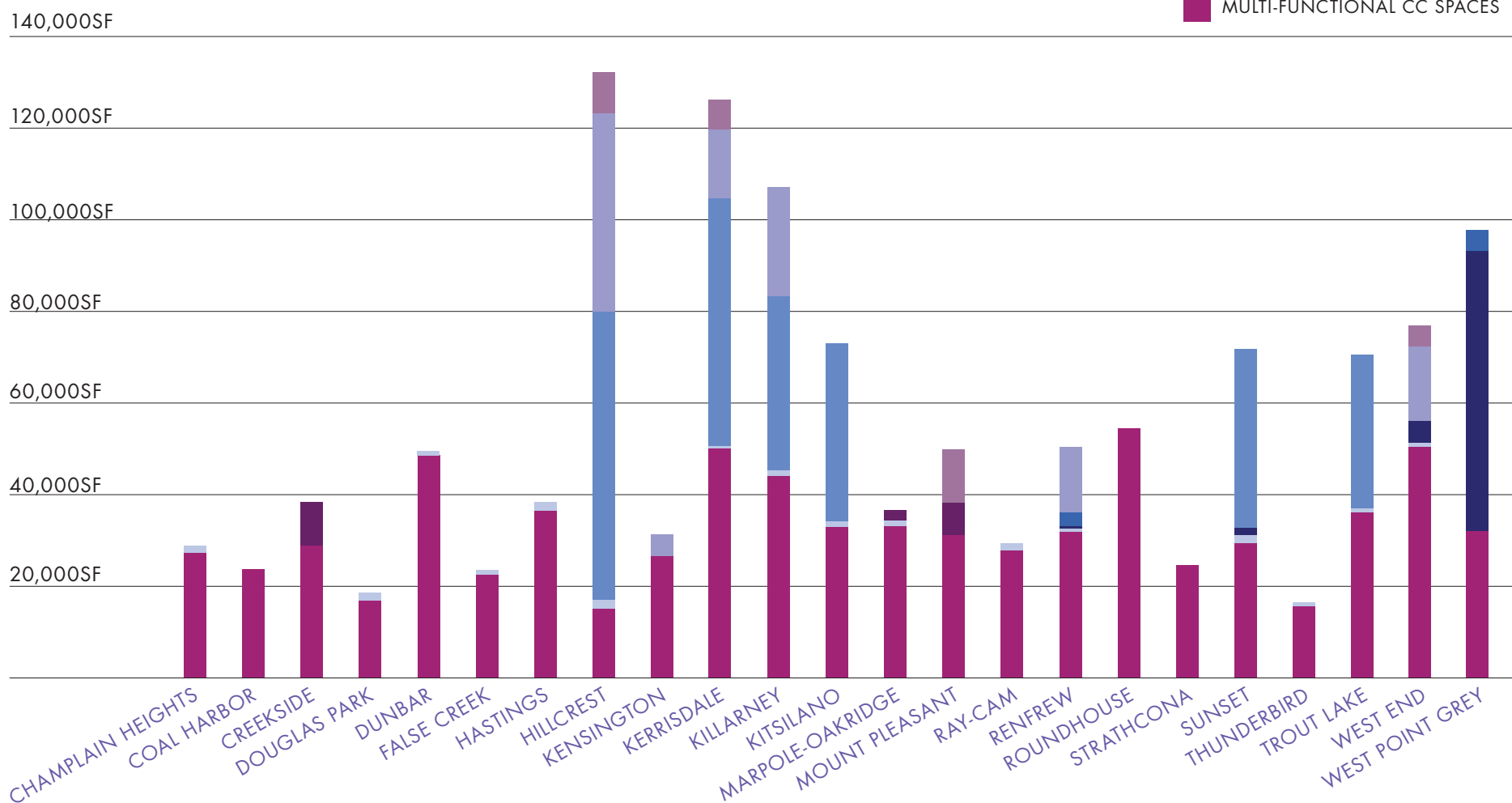
## COMMUNITY CENTRE COMPARISON

*The composition, size and breadth of services within community centres varies greatly across Vancouver's diverse communities.*

Below is an inventory of the facilities, in broad categories, at Park Board community centres. The square footage map at right, compares provision of core spaces (all other CC spaces) across neighbourhoods. As Vancouver grows and changes, the layout of community centres has the capacity to serve and reflect its constituents and provide important cultural, recreational and social services.

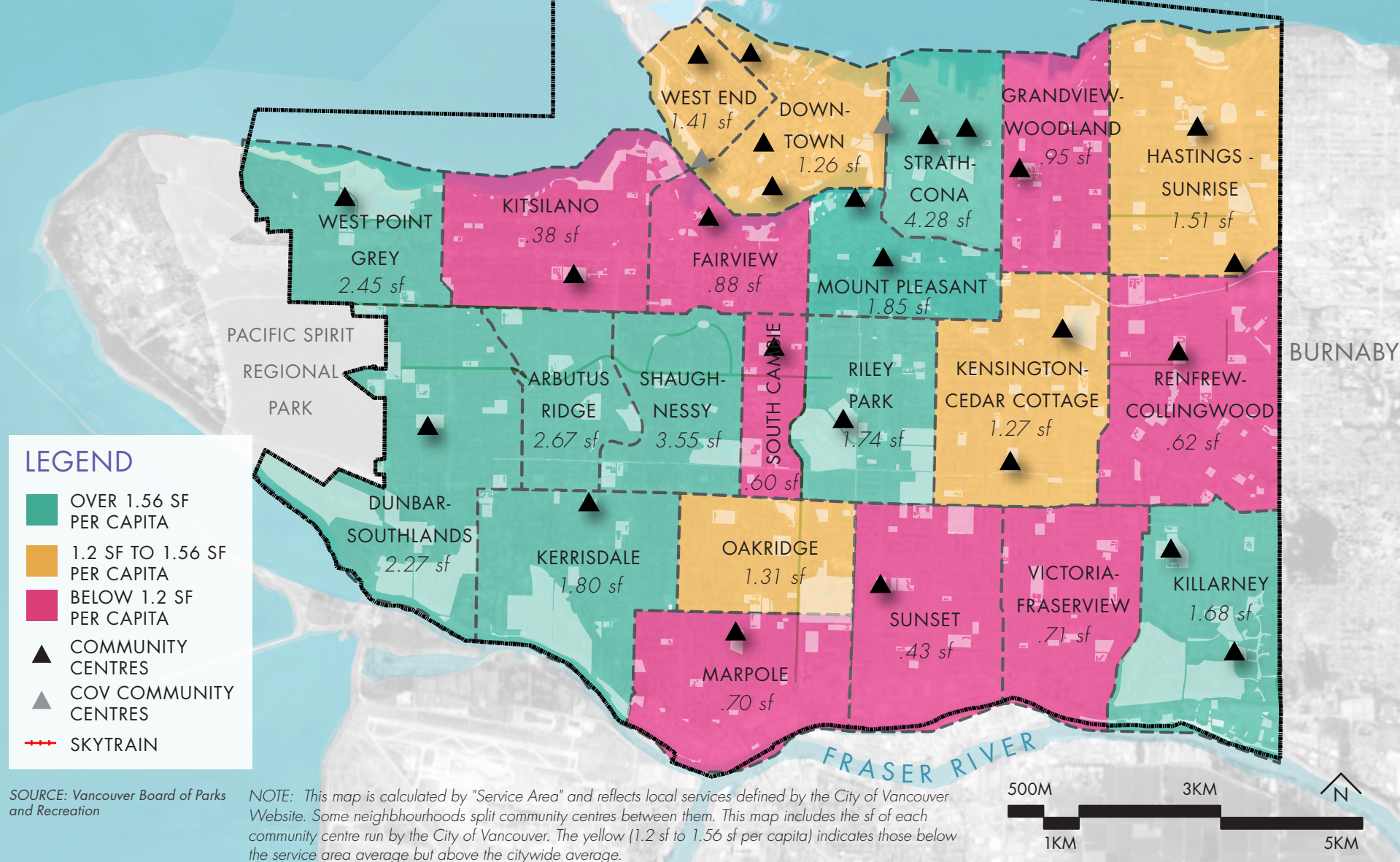
## LEGEND

- LIBRARY AT CC
- AQUATICS AT CC
- RINK
- SATELLITE W/ PROGRAMMING BUT NOT CCA
- CHILDCARE
- SATELLITE W/ CCA RUN PROGRAMMING
- PRESCHOOL
- MULTI-FUNCTIONAL CC SPACES



# COMMUNITY CENTRE SQ FT PER RESIDENT

(EXCLUDING POOLS, RINKS, CHILDCARE, LIBRARY  
AND/OR OFFSHOOT SPACES)





# OPPORTUNITIES + CHALLENGES

*The following list of opportunities and challenges is a summary of key findings gleaned from consultation with staff, stakeholders and the community, including fall 2018 Community Dialogue and Community Centre Association Meetings.*

## opportunities

Interests or topics that have the potential to positively impact parks and recreation

## challenges

Constraints or obstacles that have the potential to negatively impact parks and recreation

## OPPORTUNITIES

1. **COLLOCATION**—Grouping together compatible uses, such as sports field hubs, libraries, schools, community centres and community gardens, can strengthen neighbourhoods and allows residents to access a number of programs and facilities in one location. Multilevel and/or integrated facilities provide opportunities for many community services to locate together with the best outcome for public access.
2. **COLLABORATION**—Partners extend the reach of the Park Board and allow for delivery of important aspects of the parks and recreation system. For example, a long and rich historic relationship between the Park Board and CCAs gives facilities a heart and soul with a unique grounding in neighbourhood culture. CCAs provide access to quality, responsive programming and services to encourage healthy

lifestyles through participation in physical, recreational, cultural, educational, social and capacity-building programs for residents of the community. Schools and libraries also offer opportunities for partnership.

3. **SUSTAINABLE BUILDING STANDARDS AND OPERATIONS**—Vancouver is a leader in sustainability best practices for renewal and replacement of facilities (e.g. LEED and SITES certification). Aging community centres can be improved by retrofitting them with new, environmentally sustainable technology and building materials.
4. **SENSE OF PLACE**—The architecture and design of civic facilities can reflect local character, values and history. In collaboration with Vancouver's local host Nations there is the opportunity to creating facilities that are rooted in the local context. Additionally, a welcoming space for urban indigenous people would reflect the sharing culture of local Nations.
5. **PLACEMAKING IN FACILITIES**—Large, useable common spaces like lobbies and lounges are ripe for placemaking initiatives to encourage people to gather and connect. Power outlets and comfy chairs enhance the spaces.
6. **FITNESS CENTRES**—Vancouverites love to stay fit, so the Park Board fitness centres are in very high demand. Even the largest, Trout Lake with 4000 sq. ft., is undersized.
7. **FUNCTIONALITY**—Facilities should be intuitively functional, have many multi purpose rooms that can change in size and have adequate and easy-to-access storage space. All new and renewed facilities are an opportunity to improve the standard.
8. **YOUTH SPACE**—Historically, the youth spaces in community centres have been small and tucked away. Big, functional spaces that are integrated into the community centre, while also providing dedicated space, is a fantastic opportunity to make centres more welcoming to youth. Imagine a youth space with a sound-proofed music and mixing studio!

## CHALLENGES

1. **LACK OF SPACE**—Many of the community centres reported having inadequate facilities for expanding field sports, amateur and elite sports training and sports hosting (e.g., track and field regulation facility, multi-sport complexes). Specialised spaces for arts programming (music rooms, music mixing studios, pottery studios, art rooms) are in high demand and require dedicated space. Gymnasium and other large hard floor space is at a premium—users like Roller Derby leagues often miss out.
2. **INCREASED/CHANGING USES/DEMANDS**—The demands on community centres and facilities are unique to each location and vary across the system. In neighbourhoods experiencing significant growth, many facilities are over capacity with little to no room to expand their services or their space.
3. **BARRIERS TO ACCESS**—The Leisure Access program opens all community centres to Vancouverites and OneCard makes access easy. However, not all Community Centres accept One Card or the Leisure Access Program, and many people experiencing financial barriers to access are not eligible for LAP. Other barriers to access include time, availability, energy, child care availability and location. The Park Board is working to reduce barriers where possible, however this is an ongoing process.
4. **LACK OF ADAPTABILITY**—Many facilities lack the resources, staff and operational bandwidth to adapt to demands as they arise, including homeless services, meals for seniors and expanded interest in particular classes or activities. The inability of both parks and recreation facilities to swiftly respond to demand for activity-specific spaces is a design and programming challenge.
5. **ACKNOWLEDGING THE SPECTRUM OF PROVIDERS**—There may be other providers providing duplicate recreation services. Park Board should identify its core responsibilities (i.e. physical literacy, low barrier recreation, facilitating sport for life) and not try and compete with private, for profit and community partners who provide similar services.
6. **CLIMATE CHANGE**—Rising temperatures will increase operations and maintenance costs for facilities and will also threaten vulnerable populations who may use community centres as disaster or climate crisis hubs.
7. **AGING INFRASTRUCTURE**—Park Board service yards are in critical condition and need urgent replacement. The lack of essential spaces and facilities is affecting efficiency. Field houses, concessions and washrooms in parks are in a similar situation and need to be prioritised for investment.



# FOUNDATION FOR INNOVATION



## PEER CITY CASE STUDY

*Improving aging community centres in a dense environment is a challenge that San Francisco is tackling.*

The San Francisco Recreation and Park Department operates 25 recreation centers across the city. Using Park Bond funding mechanisms, phased in roughly 10-year increments (2000 and 2012), the department is funding large-scale capital improvement projects to many recreation centres. The bond initiatives were framed as the "Clean and Safe Neighbourhood Parks Bond" and raised close to \$200 million (USD) in funds to address capital improvement. Recreation centers built in the 1940s (like Sunset Recreation Center pictured above) have received critical updates as part of this larger bond initiative.

## PEER CITY CASE STUDY

*The University of Victoria First Peoples House is a socio-cultural and academic facility created to strengthen the relationship between the university and Canada's First Peoples.*

The First Peoples House at the University of Victoria was designed by Formline Architects and draws inspiration from the Coast Salish Longhouse. The LEED Gold Building references traditional structures showcasing local materials and designing for passive ventilation and maximizing light. The main entrance to the building is announced by houseposts that welcome visitors to the space. Completed in 2010, the facility consists of a generous covered entry plaza and 12,975 square feet of multi-purpose interior space. The educational facility serves as a social, cultural and academic hub for the University's Indigenous students. According to the University's website, "the First Peoples House is a home-away-from-home for Indigenous students and provides a safe space for learning, sharing and community building. Acknowledging the teachings from these territories, one must enter the House with a good mind and good heart." The building is designed to be a safe and welcoming environment with visitors asked to enter "with respect for the ancestors, the original care takers of this land, and for each other."



VICTORIA, BC







## WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THE NATURE CHAPTER?

This chapter explores how to bolster natural areas of ecological importance, expand wildlife habitat and better connect residents with nature.

# CHAPTER 5: NATURE

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Autumn in Stanley Park, 1890s | CoV Archives



Coal Harbour, now Lost Lagoon, 1897 | CoV Archives



Children playing in intertidal marshes, False Creek, 1902 | CoV Archives

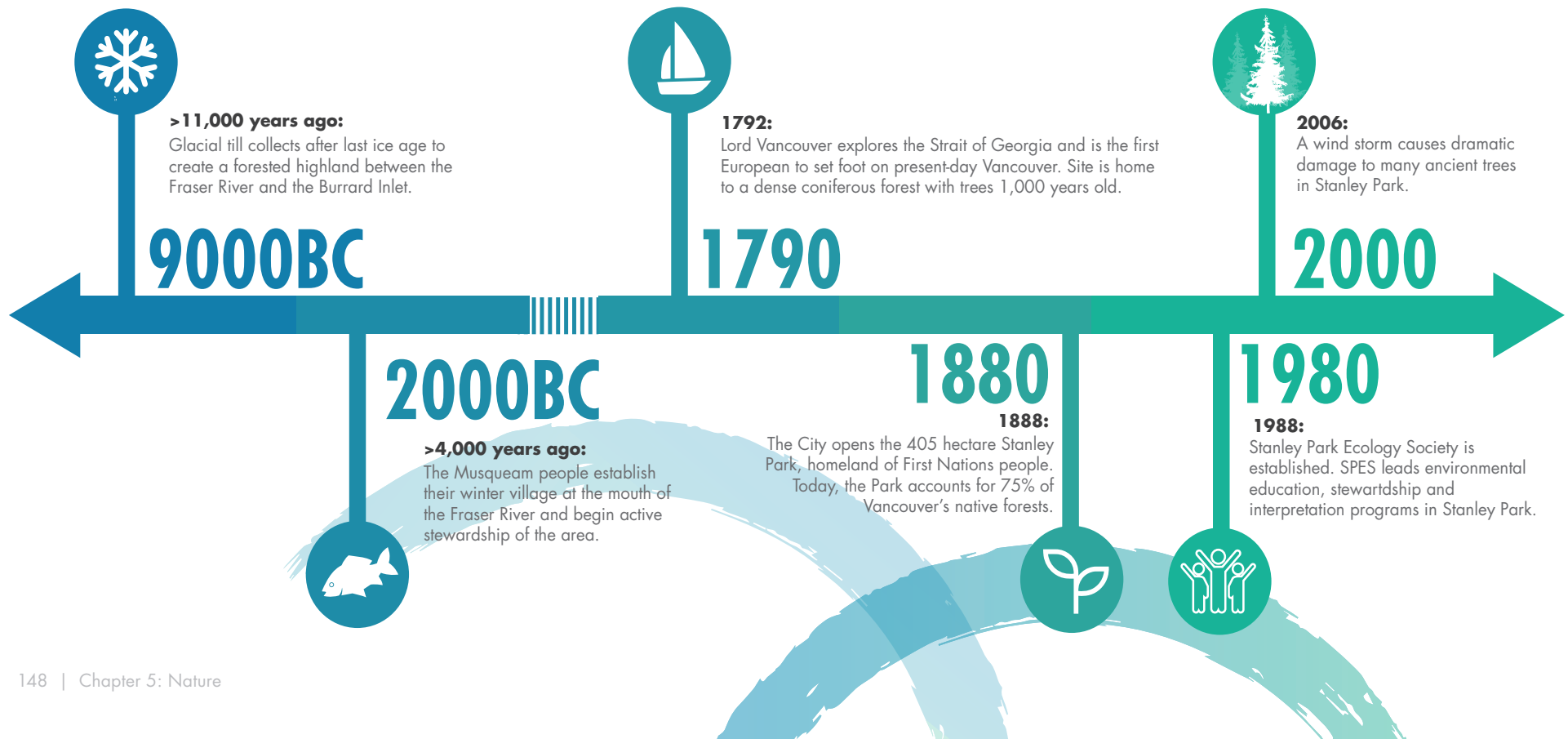


Bison in Stanley Park, 1939 | CoV Archives



Stanley Park Windstorm, 2007 | Park Board

## NATURE TIMELINE



# BACKGROUND

## HISTORY + SYSTEM CONTEXT

*Vancouver is a coastal city at the foot of the North Shore Mountains, situated between the Salish Sea and the Fraser River.*

The City of Vancouver sits on the Burrard Peninsula or Ulksen in the Squamish language, a shallow glacial deposit from the retreat of the last ice sheets 11,000 years ago. Within the unceded and traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations, Vancouver's boundaries once included 11,490 hectares of relatively undeveloped habitat. Since incorporation and because much of Vancouver was planned before environmental regulation, extensive areas of historic ecologies are gone, including most coastal wetlands and inland streams. The Park Board manages over 1,275 hectares of parkland in the City of Vancouver, of which 847 hectares are considered natural areas.

Along with managing the majority of remaining natural areas in the city and its greatest ecological assets, the Park Board also plans for and responds to pressures including increasing development, rising sea levels, ocean acidification and changes in precipitation. Scientists predict increased severity of rain storms as well as prolonged summer droughts. Invasive and urban-adapted species, such as English ivy, Japanese knotweed and the American bullfrog, are outcompeting native fauna and flora. In addition, suppression of natural ecological processes is negatively impacting biodiversity and natural succession. Environmental contaminants in air, water and soil impact wildlife, including oil spills, pest control and stormwater runoff. These disturbances pose profound threats to natural areas and could require millions of dollars of preventative and restorative measures (e.g., replacement of urban forest due to summer droughts).

From large natural areas like Stanley Park to small neighbourhood parks, nature takes many forms in the city and its benefits touch all parts of the system. Parklands connect neighbourhoods, frame views to mountains and waterfront, provide vital habitat and allow city dwellers to disengage from a busy world.

## KEY TERMS

### *ecological network*

The inter-connected system of natural spaces across the city. It is composed of both terrestrial and marine (shoreline and intertidal) areas

### *natural areas*

Large and small patches of the urban landscape that support nature, such as forests, wetlands and shorelines but also green roofs and rain gardens

### *habitat*

The area or type of environment in which a species of plant or animal lives, such as a woodpecker in a forested habitat or tide pool sculpin in an intertidal marine habitat

### *climate change*

Disturbance to the typical climate (or average weather) of a region or city and overall change of the Earth's climate





New Brighton Salt Marsh, is a recent major initiative and a collaboration with Port Metro Vancouver (2017) to create salt marsh on the east side of New Brighton Park. The project is a unique opportunity to restore coastal wetland habitat on the south shore of Burrard Inlet. Photo: Vancouver Fraser River Port Authority



# BACKGROUND

## SYSTEM CONTEXT CONT.

*According to the 2016 Vital Signs report by the Vancouver Foundation, “natural beauty” is the number one reason people give for choosing to live in BC.*

While this chapter focuses on natural areas managed by the Park Board, ecosystems like wildlife corridors do not follow jurisdictions (e.g. Stanley Park is owned by Parks Canada, water is managed by DFO in the intertidal zones). To truly provide an innovative ecological framework, the Playbook must build on existing efforts while also advocating for system-wide thinking and integrating how the city's natural areas tie into a larger context of protected lands.

As a city, Vancouver has made strategic plans for biodiversity, climate change resiliency and stormwater management. VanPlay offers an opportunity to advance key objectives of these plans through a variety of avenues, such as system-wide strategies for environmental education, green operations, connections to nature and rewilding.

## MAJOR INITIATIVES

In addition to the efforts indicated at right, the Park Board is pursuing the following larger efforts:

- Restore or enhance natural areas across Vancouver, such as forest restoration in Everett Crowley Park.
- Use park acquisition and development planning to expand and connect parks.
- Seek partnerships with other agencies and First Nations to improve estuary habitats and shorelines, such as the New Brighton Salt Marsh.
- Incorporate small-scale habitat areas, such as pollinator meadows, into parks and streets.

## RELATED INITIATIVES

- Vancouver Biodiversity Strategy—2016
- Vancouver Bird Strategy—2015
- Healthy City Strategy—2015
- Environmental Education + Stewardship Action Plan—2014
- Urban Forest Strategy—2014 and 2018
- Park Board Adoption of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action (11 Recommendation Strategies)—2016
- City of Reconciliation—2014
- Green Operations Plan—2013
- Climate Change Adaptation Strategy—2012
- Greenest City 2020 Action Plan—2011
- Stanley Park Ecological Action Plan—2011
- Metro Vancouver Ecological Health Action Plan—2011
- Still Creek Enhancement Plan—2002
- Vancouver Greenways Plan—1995
- Vancouver Parks Management Plan—1992
- Vancouver Parks + Recreation Master Plan—1982
- Fraser River and Burrard Inlet Waterfront Policies and Guidelines—1974



# ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

## PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

Throughout all the community engagement to date, the most commonly cited opportunities and big ideas were on the topics of:

- Access to nature
- Wild spaces
- Biodiversity
- Wildlife

The public identified natural areas as the third highest priority (38% put it in their top three) for action over the next 25 years. Beaches ranked in the top two of frequently used amenities, with 86% of respondents to the survey visiting a beach in the last year.

## OPPORTUNITIES

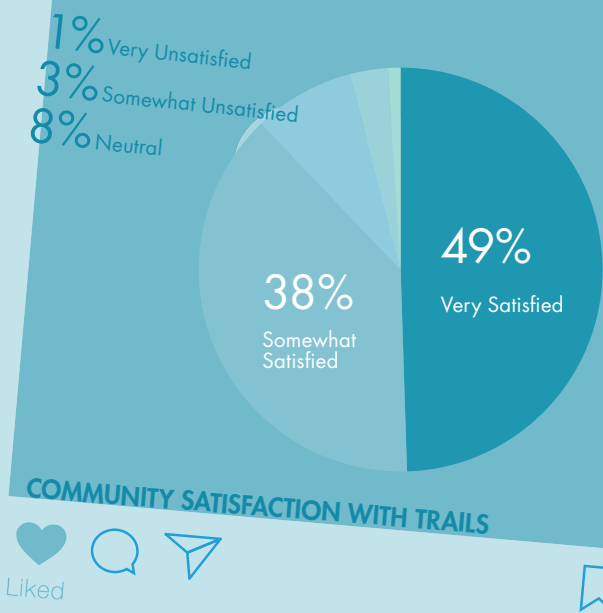
- There is a strong public appetite for more wild, less curated spaces. This proposes a change in the way we view and manage public landscapes. Increasing the diversity of landscapes in parks—including pollinator meadows and wetlands—will better serve local ecologies but will also offer more and different opportunities to access nature.
- Many of the conversations during the VanPlay Tour were about the possibility of expanding outdoor recreation and education programs to support Vancouverites heading out into nature in a confident and responsible way.
- Previous Park Board engagement, such as for New Brighton Shoreline Restoration and Water Conservation initiatives, suggests that the community supports habitat restoration and green corridors, including daylighting creeks and pedestrian paths that support nature.
- The External Advisory Group suggested that a classification system for natural areas would help define ecological management priorities as well as access to nature opportunities.

- Spatial equity and access to nature were topics that the External Advisory Group felt we could explore more. It is important to ensure all Vancouverites have access to nature.
- Speakers Haley Roser and Eleanor Arkin from frida&frank at the VanPlay Smart City Talks, received lots of audience support for their initiative to encourage us to play in the rain and to connect with nature (weather) and other people in public spaces.

## CHALLENGES

- Throughout VanPlay engagement and previous conversations with the public (People, Parks and Dogs and numerous other projects), the amount, location and management of off-leash dog areas were cited as common challenges.
- Many residents would like to see improved waste management and reduced use of single-use plastics and would like to see replacement with compostable materials to reduce the impact of rubbish on natural areas (in addition to the environmental impact globally).
- During the consultation for New Brighton Habitat restoration, some residents communicated a concern about loss of outdoor recreation amenities (tennis courts, off-leash dog areas) as a result of naturalising the space.
- Steven Apfelbaum, in his VanPlay Smart City Talk, challenged the Park Board to manage the ecology of the city by considering the wider landscape context.
- Park spaces that suit the needs of old adults and seniors, a growing demographic in Vancouver, was an often mentioned opportunity for growth in the future in particular, many previous park development projects heard a desire for looped accessible walking trails and outdoor fitness equipment.
- Stakeholders and the external advisory group brought up the need for park activation to create safe, inviting and colourful park spaces. They suggested considering placemaking initiatives such as public art, events and celebrations and programming.

## COMMUNITY SURVEY TAKEAWAY



## PREVIOUS ENGAGEMENT REVIEW

Studies show residents are generally supportive of habitat restoration projects in Vancouver's natural areas.

Priorities for habitat restoration and park designs include preserving existing habitats, enhancing land and marine ecosystems and adding in parkland, environmental educational features and dog areas.

## EMERGING QUESTIONS

**MORE WILD SPACES:** Where can we create more wild spaces in the city? How can we balance need for wild, less curated spaces with needs for other outdoor recreation amenities?

**ECOLOGICAL HEALTH:** In a growing city, how can we support ecological health? Can green infrastructure improve water quality and ecological health while managing the city's stormwater?

**CONNECTION TO NATURE:** How can we best support Vancouverites to be stewards of our natural spaces? How do we diversify the types of landscapes in our parks to bring more nature into Vancouver's neighbourhoods?

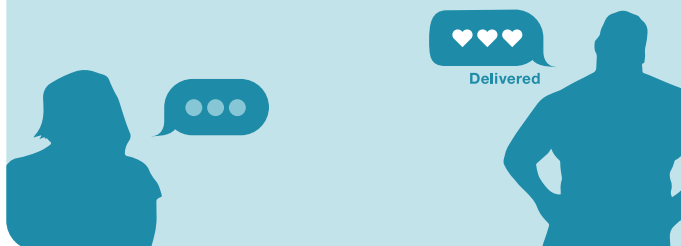
## VANPLAY TOUR TAKEAWAY

"Natural areas are patches of the urban landscape that support nature. From large natural areas like Stanley Park to small parks, nature takes many forms in the City: connecting neighbourhoods and providing habitat, canopy cover and space for community gardens and horticulture, while allowing residents to disconnect from a busy world."



## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

"Natural areas play an important role in the city's environmental, social and economic systems. Systems thinking can help to improve the quality of planning and decision-making for natural areas."



VanPlay



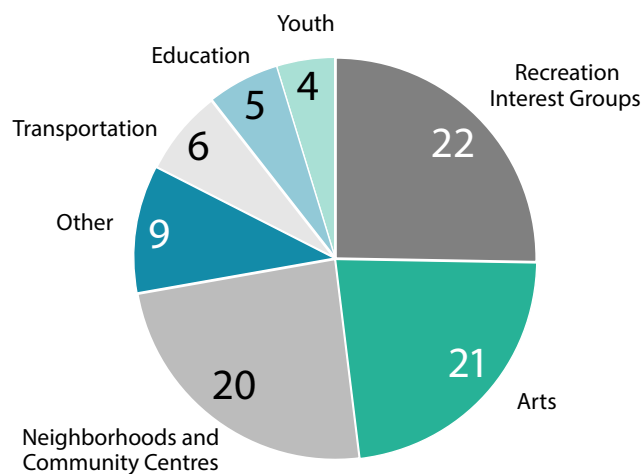
# ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

## VANPLAY DEEP DIVE

Between February and April 2018, key stakeholder groups were invited to engage in the VanPlay process through “VanPlay Deep Dives.” 345 members of key stakeholder groups completed 64 “VanPlay Deep Dive” workbooks. The goals of the VanPlay Deep Dive are:

- To better understand Vancouver’s parks and recreation system by mapping out and celebrating the diverse networks of amenities, programs, services and experiences to which stakeholders contribute in Vancouver.
- To identify who is involved in leading, sharing and supporting these diverse services.
- To shape the future by setting principles and goals which reflect what a successful future looks like.
- To identify the actions and resources needed to achieve these goals.

Groups Who Participated in Deep Dive Engagement



## STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES ON CURRENT STATE OF NATURE

Through VanPlay Deep Dives, 774 comments were gathered on the current state of parks and recreation. From a list of potential focus topics (see list below), Deep Dive stakeholders identified environmental health as a priority.

- Access to natural areas (bike trails, walking, transit, etc.)
- Environmental health
- Indigenous reconciliation
- Maintenance and renewal
- New natural areas
- Environmental education (programs, interpretative signage, etc.)
- Green Infrastructure (stormwater, green streets, etc.)
- Streams and waterway management
- Urban forest (street trees, park trees, privately owned trees)
- Wildlife habitat (pollinator gardens, wetlands, etc.)
- Wildlife management (feral rabbits, song birds, etc.)

*For the full Deep Dive report, please see Appendix 7.*

### WHAT THIS DIAGRAM (OPPOSITE) TELLS US

The diagram on the facing page reflects findings from stakeholders on the current state of the nature network and what broad topics are top of mind to these stakeholders.

# DEEP DIVE FINDINGS SUMMARY: NATURE SERVICES AND PROVIDERS

## SERVICE PROVIDERS IDENTIFIED BY STAKEHOLDERS

Academic Researchers  
City of Vancouver  
Development Community  
Everett Crowley Park Committee  
Federal Government  
First Nations  
Individual Donors  
Metro Vancouver  
Port Authority of Vancouver  
Province of BC  
Public  
Fraser River Keeper  
Rivers Institute  
SPES (Stanley Park)  
Stewardship and Educational Groups  
Still Moon Arts Society  
Surfrider  
Vancouver Aquarium  
Vancouver Coastal Health  
**Vancouver Park Board**  
Vancouver School Board

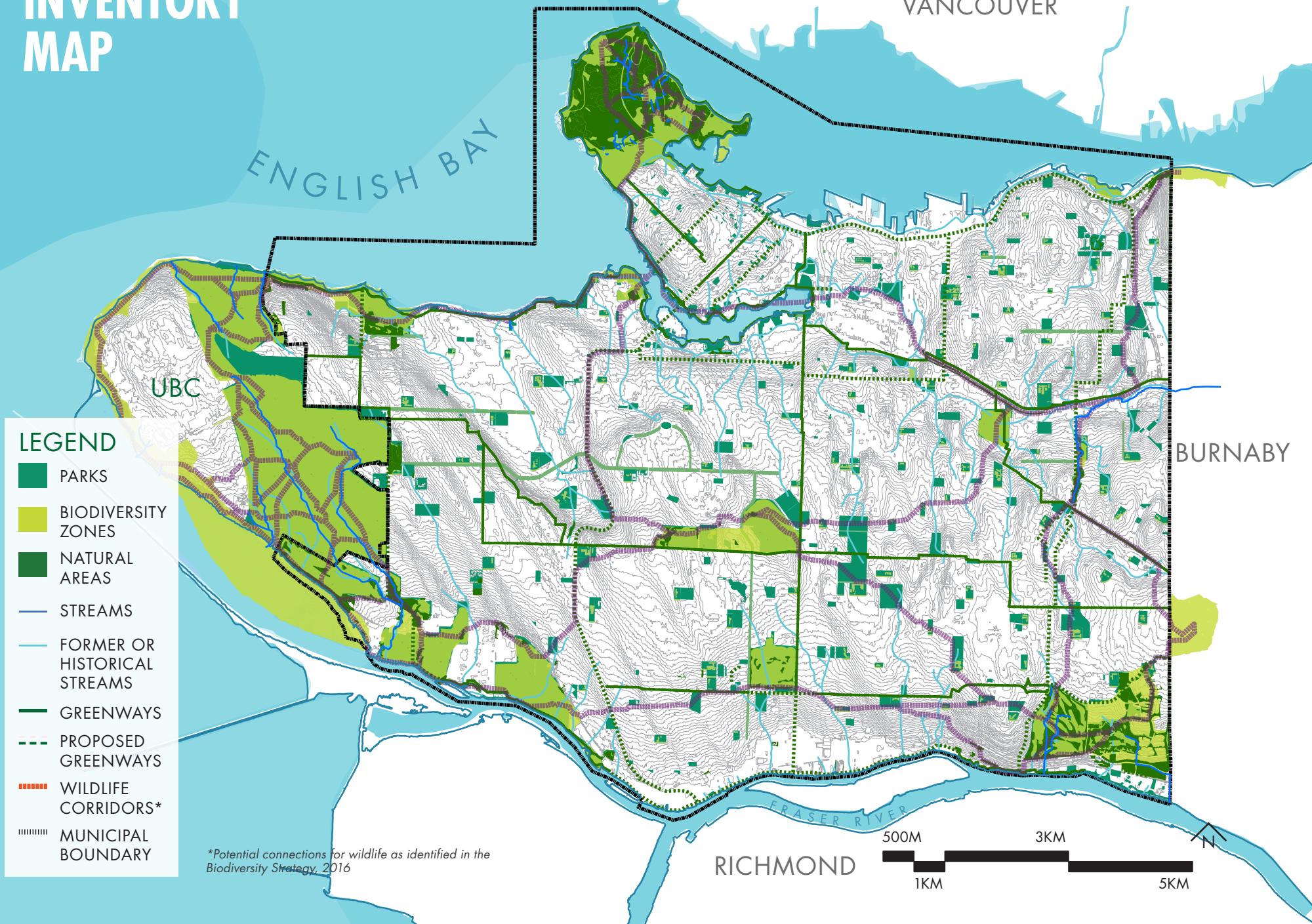
## BROAD SERVICES IDENTIFIED BY STAKEHOLDERS

Environmental Health-Protection  
Environmental Health-Restoration  
and Enhancement  
Environmental Education  
Green Infrastructure

SOURCE: VanPlay Phase 3 Summary Report: Direction – Citywide



# NATURAL AREAS INVENTORY MAP



# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: ACCESS

## NATURAL AREAS INVENTORY

Vancouver's parks host 482 hectares of natural areas that range from tidal flats to mature forests.<sup>1</sup> The map at left provides an inventory of natural areas, former streams and potential ways to connect the network (wildlife corridors). The table at right summarizes information found in the Turf and Horticulture Booklet.

### WHAT THIS ANALYSIS TELLS US

1. Through programs like Audubon certification of golf courses, **the Park Board has taken steps towards creating ecologically rich public lands** but there are opportunities to expand these efforts.
2. **Biodiverse areas are relatively isolated.** While Stanley Park and Pacific Spirit Regional Park offer large tracts of habitat, corridors between habitat areas are sparse.

### OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPLORE

3. **Habitat creation can occur at many scales, ranging from pollinator meadows to street trees to coastal habitat.** Understanding the opportunities for increased biodiversity across scales will allow us to protect what we have but also see potential in urban areas.
4. **Managing turf more naturally can result in more habitat areas** but is contingent on community support and additional funding to support invasive species management and ensure service standards and safety are maintained.
5. **The map and table do not show the impact of private open space,** such as backyards and private facilities, that provide additional connectivity.

<sup>1</sup> Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation. Biodiversity Strategy. Vancouver, BC, 2016

## HORTICULTURE BEDS, TURF IN PARKS + GOLF COURSES Analysis of Opportunities to Provide Natural Areas

<b>TOTAL AREA OF MANAGED TURF AND HORTICULTURE BEDS</b>		715.2 ha
<b>CURRENT TURF AND HORTICULTURE AREAS MANAGED NATURALLY BY THE PARK BOARD</b>		
Native Areas in Golf Courses	Unmaintained grass and woodland remnant areas (including riparian zones). Not irrigated.	6.9 ha
Meadows in Parks	Unmaintained grass areas. Cut at four to six inches in height. Non-irrigated.	0.94 ha
Naturalised Beds in Parks + Golf Courses	Remnant woodland and native plantings (including riparian zones).	29.1 ha
Pond + Water Features in Parks	Living body of water. Non-chlorinated. Non-recreational.	36.8 ha
<b>CURRENT TOTAL MANAGED NATURALLY THROUGH EXISTING MANAGEMENT PRACTICES</b>		73.7 ha or 10%
<b>POTENTIAL TURF AND HORTICULTURE AREAS TO MANAGE NATURALLY BY THE PARK BOARD</b>		
Grade C Turf in Parks	Soil based grass areas. Infrequent maintenance. Non-irrigated. Could transition to meadow or naturalized.	298.3 ha
Rough Areas on Golf Courses	Sand-based golf playing areas surrounding greens and fairways. Well maintained. Cut at one and half to two inches. Mowed twice weekly. Irrigated. With transition to Audubon certified courses, this would transition into meadow.	107.1 ha
Shrub + Ground Cover in Beds	Shrub species mix primarily for landscaping, requiring less care.	16.3 ha
<b>POTENTIAL TOTAL TO MANAGE NATURALLY THROUGH CHANGED MANAGEMENT PRACTICES</b>		421.7 ha or +59%

SOURCE: Turf + Horticulture Booklet, Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, 2016



# RANGE OF HABITATS

## SUBTIDAL

Strait of Georgia  
Second Narrows  
False Creek

## INTERTIDAL

Spanish Banks  
Jericho  
Kitsilano  
Second Beach  
Third Beach

## FORESTED

Stanley Park  
Jericho Forest  
Queen Elizabeth Forest  
Everett Crowley Park

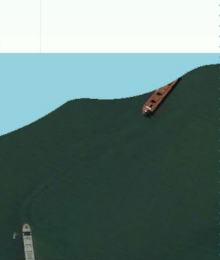
## WETLANDS

Beaver Lake  
Trout Lake  
Lost Lagoon  
Still Creek  
Renfrew Ravine

## RECREATIONAL

Sports Facilities  
Schoolyards  
Play Areas  
Hillcrest Park  
David Lam Park

Downtown  
West End  
Commercial Corridors



## SUBTIDAL

**SIZE:** 1,639 ha

**ASSETS:** Large Marine Animals + Fish Habitat | Migratory Routes | Trade Routes | Views

**THREATS:** Acidification | Contamination | Rising Water Temperatures | Overfishing

**JURISDICTION:** Federal + Provincial Government

**HABITAT STATUS:** Stable but poorly surveyed

## INTERTIDAL

**SIZE:** 246 ha

**ASSETS:** Resident + Migratory Birds | Forage Fish | Wave Mitigation | Tidal Pools | Beaches | Recreation Space | Views

**THREATS:** Acidification | Contamination | Rising Water Temperatures | Sea Level Rise

**JURISDICTION:** Park Board, Port Authority

**HABITAT STATUS:** Declining

## FORESTED

**SIZE:** 2,069 ha (urban forest); 713 ha (habitat)

**ASSETS:** Coastal Temperate Rainforest | Record Trees | Native Species | Connection to Nature

**THREATS:** Hotter, Longer Summers | High-intensity Storms | Invasive Plants + Insects

**JURISDICTION:** Park Board, CoV, Private

**HABITAT STATUS:** Stable

## WETLANDS

**SIZE:** 49 ha

**ASSETS:** Freshwater Wetlands + Water Bodies | Nursery Areas | Amphibian Habitat | Connection to Nature

**THREATS:** Invasive Species | Buried Streams | Contamination | Eutrophication

**JURISDICTION:** Park Board

**HABITAT STATUS:** Rare but Stable

## RECREATIONAL

**SIZE:** 1,525 ha

**ASSETS:** Recreation Space | Meadow / Pollinator Habitat | Detention Areas | Green Infrastructure

**THREATS:** Low Biodiversity | Overuse | Development | Contamination | Rising Temperatures | Chafer Beetle | Dog Waste

**JURISDICTION:** Park Board

**HABITAT STATUS:** Stable

## URBAN

**SIZE:** 2,286 ha

**ASSETS:** Green Roofs, Strata Parks + POPS | Green Infrastructure | Unconventional Open Space | Views

**THREATS:** Heat Island Effect | Contamination | Severe Storms | Human Impacts

**JURISDICTION:** CoV

**HABITAT STATUS:** Growing





# URBAN FOREST MAP

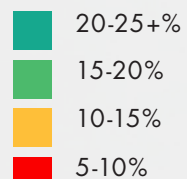
NORTH  
VANCOUVER

ENGLISH BAY

UBC

## LEGEND

### CANOPY COVERAGE



— SHORELINE

- - - LOCAL AREA  
BOUNDARY||||| MUNICIPAL  
BOUNDARY

Source: City of Vancouver, Greenest City 2020 & Vancouver Park Board. City of Vancouver Urban Forest Strategy. Vancouver, BC, 2014.

WEST  
END  
18.6%DOWN-  
TOWN  
8.3%STRATH-  
CONA  
5.9%GRANDVIEW-  
WOODLAND  
13.6%HASTINGS-  
SUNRISE  
11.3%WEST POINT  
GREY  
28.9%KITSILANO  
19.8%FAIRVIEW  
14.3%MOUNT  
PLEASANT  
13.1%SOUTH  
CAMBIE  
14.1%RILEY PARK  
14.3%KENSINGTON-  
CEDAR COTTAGE  
12.1%RENFREW-  
COLLINGWOOD  
9.7%DUNBAR SOUTH-  
LANDS  
28.1%ARBUTUS RIDGE  
17%SHAUGHNESSY  
27.1%KERRISDALE  
24.6%OAKRIDGE  
15%SUNSET  
8.6%VICTORIA-  
FRASERVUE  
9.8%KILLARNEY  
23.9%MARPOLE  
11.4%

RICHMOND

FRASER RIVER

BURNABY

500M

3KM

1KM

5KM



# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: QUALITY

## URBAN FORESTS

*Vancouver's magnificent rainforest setting is a mix of everything from native towering cedar, fir and hemlock trees to annually blossoming cherries. Its urban forest comprises approximately 140,000 street trees, 300,000 park trees and many trees on private property.*

### WHAT THIS TELLS US

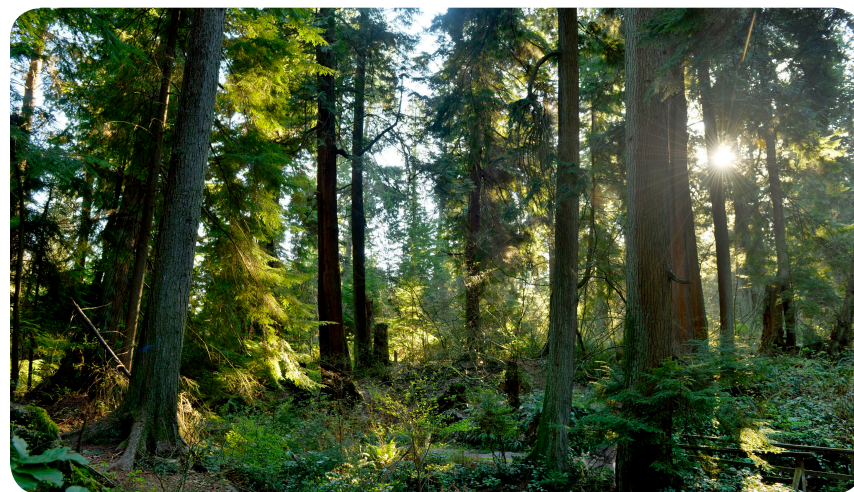
1. **Canopy cover is uneven across neighbourhoods.** The West side of Vancouver, including Shaughnessy and West Point Grey, has substantially more canopy than the East side.
2. **Industrial areas and major traffic arterials have particularly low canopy coverage.** The industrial zones along the Burrard Inlet, False Creek Flats and Fraser River and major thoroughfares, like Cambie, are largely devoid of trees.

### OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPLORE

1. **We have extensive data on forest abundance but not on forest health and forest quality.** While the city has undergone extensive mapping of canopy cover, citizen scientists can help determine forest health and quality.
2. **Vancouver should encourage the planting of trees that are hardy and resilient to climate change.** Planting tree species that are resilient to a changing climate will protect the urban forest. The Park Board is updating tree selection guidelines to plant trees that are suitable for Vancouver's future climate.
3. **Continued investment in the urban forest will aim to address these green deficits.** Some creative problem solving is required to add trees in areas with limited space, permeability or insufficient soil depth to maintain a large tree. Innovation, such as use of green infrastructure for drainage, has potential to enhance the urban forest.



Vancouver's urban forest ranges from street trees to dense forests in Stanley Park | Park Board



Stanley Park | Katherine Howard



# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: QUALITY

## SPECIES AND HABITAT HEALTH

As Vancouver developed, much of the natural vegetation was cleared. The impacts of urbanization—from invasive species to heat island effect—imperil the city's ecological health, meaning that ongoing work is required to repair years of disturbance. The following summarizes the Biodiversity Strategy:

### WHAT THE BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY TELLS US

1. **While some species are thriving, more are in decline.** Due to the restoration of native streams and wetlands, salmon have returned to Vancouver after many years of absence. Urban-adapted mammals are also increasing.
2. **Native species of both flora and fauna are struggling.** The pressures of invasive species, competition and changing climactic conditions are unevenly affecting native insects, mammals, amphibians and plants.

### OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPLORE

1. **Re-introduction of wildlife.** Logging and land clearing, draining of wetlands and streams and hunting of large mammals and other wildlife all led to a decline of biodiversity in Vancouver. Re-introduction of important species may be an essential way to enhance biodiversity in Vancouver's highly urbanized landscape.
2. **Improved ecological function requires further focus and collaboration.** Green infrastructure, maintenance and management all influence ecological processes that can improve water quality and mitigate impacts, such as the urban heat island effect.

#### INCREASING

urban adapted birds

urban adapted mammals

#### STABLE

urban forests

streams + freshwater wetlands

marine birds + waterfowl

subtidal + intertidal habitats

trout + salmon

#### DECREASING

native amphibians + reptiles

native bees

forage fish

forest dependent birds

native mammals

SOURCE: Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation. Biodiversity Strategy. Vancouver, BC, 2016

SOURCES FOR RIGHTHAND PAGE: Regional Context Statement, Biodiversity Strategy, Urban Forest Strategy, Metro Vancouver Industrial Lands Inventory, Turf + Horticulture Inventory, Open Data Catalogue, Vancouver Park Board. Park Provision Standard Study. Vancouver, BC, 2016 / 2018.

# NATURE KEY FINDINGS

83  
GREAT BLUE  
HERON NESTS  
IN STANLEY PARK  
IN 2016

SEEING TREES  
REDUCES MUSCLE  
TENSION & BLOOD  
PRESSURE  
SIGNIFICANTLY  
WITHIN 3 MINUTES

## URBAN FOREST CANOPY

37% PRIVATE 35% STREETS 28% PARKS

STANLEY  
PARK

SEA  
LEVEL  
RISE

91%  
OF VANCOUVER'S  
ORIGINAL STREAMS  
ARE BURIED!

BUT SALMON  
HAVE RETURNED TO  
STILL CREEK  
SINCE 2012

+1M 2100  
+ 50CM 2050

VANCOUVER  
LAND RECORDS

Van  
Play  
Imagine



# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: QUALITY

## ARTS AND CULTURE IN NATURE

*Nature often serves as a muse for artists and Vancouver's stunning natural beauty is no exception.*

Theatre and dance performances in parks, forests and on beaches move the arts out of the theatre and gallery and into the natural landscape. For example, as part of Vancouver's Canada 150+ celebrations, Aeriosa aerial dancers, Spakwus Slolem Squamish dancers and drummers created Thunderbird Sharing, a stunning performance high in the trees and on the forest floor of Stanley Park—a creative work of gratitude to the ancient forest.

Environmental art projects also happen in parks around the City. Working collaboratively with Park Board operations and gardeners, EarthHand Gleaners has transformed Trillium Park into a site where artists grow materials for weaving, dying, papermaking and more and where they maintain the park plantings as part of their arts practice. Park-based environmental art and site-specific natural materials generate creative activities that are both ancient and innovative, and in harmony with eco-systems. For example, the EarthHand Gleaners' Weaving Wagon is a pop-up studio where green waste is repurposed as material for weaving practices from around the world. Another eco art garden grows behind West Point Grey Community Centre/Aberthau House. At this site, textile plants and local food grow together, encouraging permaculture, urban agriculture and textile arts.



Top to Bottom:

Dancer in Aberthau Woods | Desiree Dunbar

Weaving Wagon | Park Board - Arts, Culture & Engagement Team

## INTERPRETING NATURE

*Environmental learning feeds our curiosity about the natural world. Whether it is a guided walk or a path with fascinating interpretative signs, parks offer spaces to explore and learn about our surroundings.*

The Stanley Park Ecological Society (SPES) connects thousands of individuals with nature through public education programs and habitat restoration. Beyond programming (such as discovery walks, nocturnal animal tours, indigenous medicine workshops and wetland explorations), SPES also offers cultural events. Their Celebrating Solstice event highlights natural elements in the solstice holiday traditions by hosting a walk in the park. The event culminates with an indigenous solstice dinner at the end of the night. Other parks and community centres offer similar programming, like family-friendly nature walks and wildlife watching. For example, the Moberly Arts and Cultural Centre garden is used for growing herbs and medicinal plants under the guidance of a renowned indigenous eco artist. The VanDusen Botanical Garden provides guided tours of its 55-acre oasis, as well as summer camps focused on topics such as foraging or birdwatching and adult education classes, like bumblebee identification workshops or indigenous medicinal plant walks.



Top to Bottom:

Children at VanDusen listening to guided tour | Park Board

Fire Dancer at Solstice in 2014 | Tatiana Balashova



## STEWARDSHIP PROGRAMS



Park Stewards | Park Board



5th and Pine Pollinator Garden, planting day | Park Board

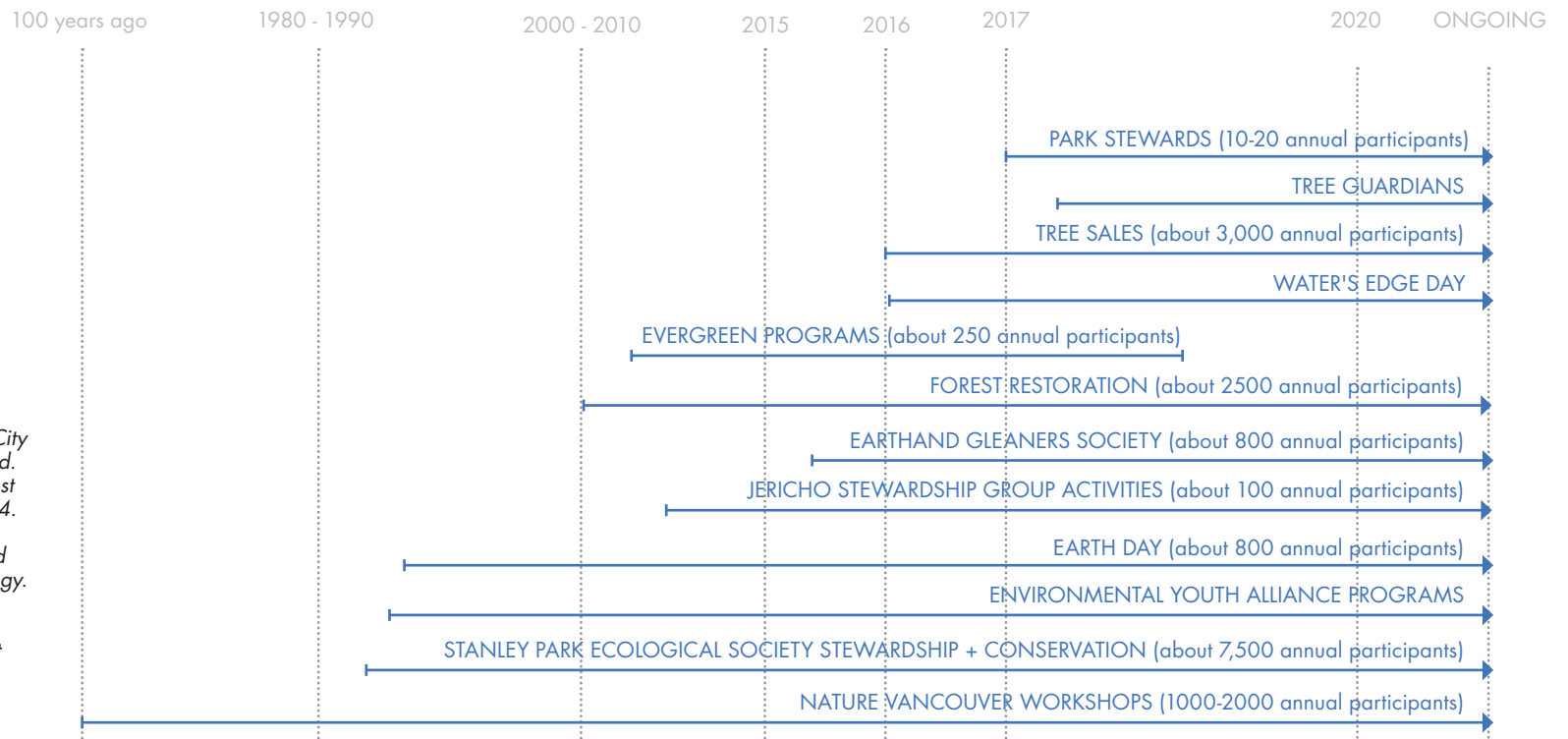


Urban Forest restoration | Park Board

**SOURCE:**  
City of Vancouver, *Greenest City 2020 & Vancouver Park Board*.  
City of Vancouver Urban Forest Strategy. Vancouver, BC, 2014.

Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation. *Biodiversity Strategy*. Vancouver, BC, 2016.

City of Vancouver & Greenest City 2020. *Vancouver Bird Strategy*. Vancouver, BC, January 2015.



# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: INCLUSIVITY

## EDUCATION + STEWARDSHIP

*Thriving stewardship programs, a popular bi-annual tree sale and popular planting days show that Vancouverites are keen to get their hands dirty.*

The Park Board's Environmental Education and Stewardship Action Plan aims to increase and enhance nature experiences for all Vancouverites and to improve understanding and awareness of nature in the city.

In addition to making big strides in the ecological health of the city, environmental stewardship offers opportunities for recreation through volunteerism and care of natural areas in leisure time, and builds social capital.

Park Board stewardship activities have been happening for over one hundred years (see diagram at left) and the community has participated by:

- Removing invasive plants.
- Sharing nature sighting stories with neighbors.
- Picking up litter.
- Planting trees.
- Installing and maintaining bird houses.
- Replacing invasive plants with native ones.
- Ongoing efforts to create habitat in parks.
- Caring for the urban forest and other significant ecological spaces.

## KEY TERM

### *steward*

A steward is a person who cares for something that benefits everyone.

### *environmental stewardship*

A principle that recognises the need to conserve and restore natural ecosystems for the benefit of current and future generations of all species. More than simply respecting their surroundings, environmental stewards respond and actively take responsibility for human and ecosystem health.

### *environmental education*

Lifelong, interdisciplinary learning focused on the relationship between humans and their natural environment.









# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: INCLUSIVITY

## CONNECTION TO NATURE

*Studies show that interacting with nature improves our mental and physical health, increases empathy and lowers stress.*

In addition to their ecological benefits, natural areas act as vibrant community spaces that connect us to our neighbours and to our environment. Many residents choose to call Vancouver home due to its incredible natural setting and easy access to wild spaces. The Park Board and its community partners offer dozens of ways to both engage with nature and support the city's wildlife—from educational programs to tree planting to fun runs.

As the city continues to urbanize, natural areas should be maintained to protect the human health benefits they provide. According to the 2014 report—*Connecting Canadians with Nature by the Canadian Parks Council*, Canadians on average spend 90% of their time indoors. This, in part, has led to a vitamin D deficiency among 1.1 million Canadians as well as a decline in outdoor activity by children. Only 7% of Canadian children and youth meet the daily activity requirements and 28% of children walk to school, compared to 58% of their parents.

However, appreciation of nature is a near universal value shared among Canadians. We have much to learn from Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh nations who have managed and stewarded the landscape since time immemorial. Their knowledge of horticultural cultivation, sustainability and maintaining ecological health has the potential to transform our relationship with nature.

Increasing the diversity of landscapes in parks will better serve local ecologies but also offer more and varied access to nature. Protecting and expanding natural areas pays dividends for future generations through the following benefits:

- **IMPROVED HEALTH OUTCOMES:** Walking in the woods can improve sleep quality. Exposure to nature lowers our blood pressure and stress levels.
- **SPIRITUAL CONNECTION:** Studies have shown that participants immersed in natural environments are more likely to place value on experiential aspirations than material ones.
- **CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT:** A multitude of studies have shown that playing in natural environments is essential to our children's development of core skills, including observation, problem-solving and reasoning, categorization, creativity, imagination and risk-identification.

RIGHT: Jericho Pond | Nick Page



# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS: INCLUSIVITY

## RESILIENCE

*The 21st century has been marked by rapid urbanization and an increasingly volatile climate across the globe.*

### *Climate Change Adaptation*

As part of the Greenest City 2020 Action Plan, the City of Vancouver adopted the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy in 2012 to proactively prepare for climate change. This cross-departmental initiative provided an action list of projects, programs and investments to safeguard the city in the future. The climate change action items that will impact Vancouver's natural areas include:

- **SEA LEVEL RISE:** Prepare coastal parks for sea level rise and erosion, adjust beach/park plantings to be salt tolerant and educate the public on storm surge impacts.
- **HOTTER, DRIER SUMMERS:** Use vulnerability mapping to locate spaces for new parks and green spaces and to identify zero irrigation zones.
- **IMPACTS TO NATURAL AREAS:** Incorporate climate change best practices in the Urban Forest Management Plan, map tree deficit areas, adapt species criteria for planting strategies and tree selection to be climate resilient, apply wind management along shorelines and explore rainwater storage options.

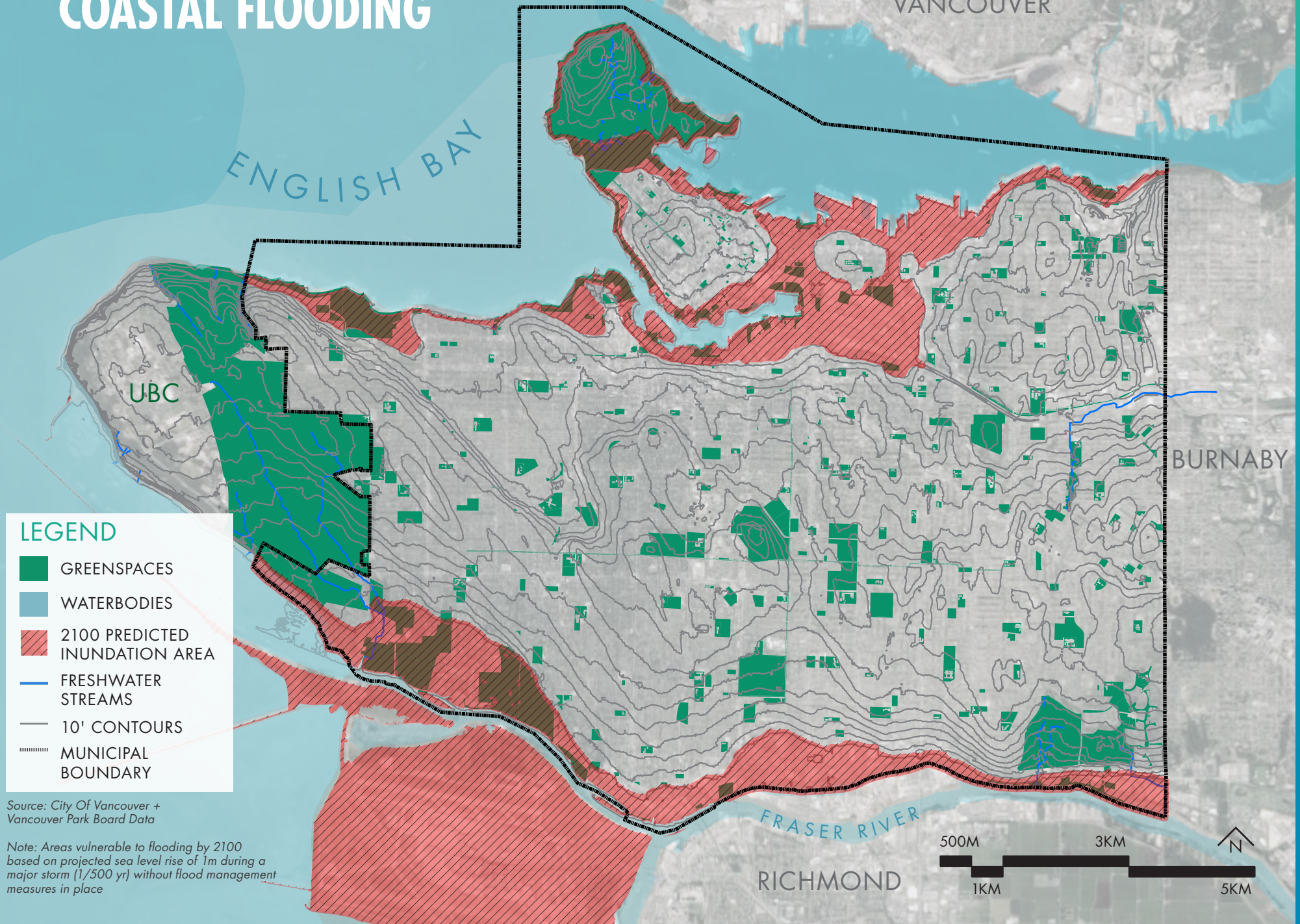
### *Green Infrastructure*

When it rains or snows in urban areas, streets are inundated with large volumes of stormwater. Traditional approaches to handling this storm water include piping, storing and channelling waterways to deal with the increased volumes. Green infrastructure provides 'soft' alternatives to the typical 'hard' infrastructure structures that disrupt natural hydrologic function and improve water quality. Green infrastructure returns ecological function by using soil, plants and root structure to address critical urban hydrological challenges, such as flooding, drought, urban heat island effect and coastal erosion. By mimicking the natural water cycle green infrastructure is effective, economical and provides additional community benefits, such as beautification, reduced flooding and storm resilience.

There are a number of plans influencing green infrastructure planning in Vancouver. Provincial, regional and local level plans are summarised below:

- **BRITISH COLUMBIA:** In 2008, BC adopted the Climate Action Plan, which includes green infrastructure initiatives, such as green land and sea transportation and solar highways. One such initiative at Peace Arch Border crossing is a new signal that has been installed to move waiting traffic in a series of pulses, allowing motorists to reduce unnecessary vehicle idling by turning off their engines while waiting for traffic ahead to clear.
- **METRO VANCOUVER:** "Green Infrastructure in Metro Vancouver" provides a legal and regulatory framework, identifies a range of opportunities for various contexts, and frames the ecological and economic value of green infrastructure.
- **CITY OF VANCOUVER:** The Climate Adaptation Strategy and Rain City Strategy includes a number of green infrastructure initiatives, including green streets, turf conversion, capturing and cleaning rainwater and retaining and reusing stormwater in parks.

# AREAS VULNERABLE TO COASTAL FLOODING





# OPPORTUNITIES + CHALLENGES

*The following list of opportunities and challenges is a summary of key findings gleaned from consultation with staff, stakeholders and the community, including the Fall 2017 Community Dialogue and Community Centre Association Meetings.*

## opportunities

Interests or topics that have the potential to positively impact parks and recreation

## challenges

Constraints or obstacles that have the potential to negatively impact parks and recreation

## OPPORTUNITIES

- 1. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND STEWARDSHIP**—Engaging the public in critical conversations, stewardship projects and educational programs increases stakeholder engagement with natural areas. In initial feedback on opportunities for the park system, nature programs and expanded natural areas were top priorities.
- 2. CONNECTION TO NATURE**—Natural beauty polled as the top reason residents call Vancouver home. A strong connection to nature is core to the identity of Vancouver and many of the opportunities identified by the public for the future of parks centre on improving natural areas. These include biodiversity, green corridors and creating more wild areas in the city.
- 3. RENEWED ECOLOGICAL FUNCTION**—Urbanism has disrupted the hydrology of Vancouver and buried 91% of the city's native streams. Daylighting some of these streams and re-creating them through green streets and infrastructure would positively impact Vancouver's resiliency to flooding and storms. Forest restoration and street tree planting can enhance the urban forest.
- 4. AQUATIC RESERVES AND PROTECTED HABITAT**—With water bordering three sides of the city, there are opportunities for protection and designation of marine protected areas while providing space for sensitive recreational uses in these areas.
- 5. GREEN OPERATIONS**—Greening operations allows the Park Board to demonstrate best practices at their parks and community centres. Recycling, compost, cargo bikes for operations and water use reduction are all potential opportunities.
- 6. SUPPORTING URBAN NATURE**—There is a strong public desire for more nature play and wild spaces in and around Vancouver. This offers opportunity to change landscape types in parks, provide Park Board leadership and incorporate nature in everyday life.
- 7. FIRST NATIONS STEWARDSHIP**—We have much to learn from Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh nations who have managed and stewarded the landscape since time immemorial. Their knowledge of horticultural cultivation, sustainability and maintaining ecological health has the potential to transform our relationship with nature.

8. **INCLUSIVITY + WELCOME**—Through programming, activities, subsidies, permitting, events, art and education, we can make spaces more welcoming, interesting and safer for everyone. There is also an opportunity for community centres to act as entryways to natural areas.
9. **RE-INTRODUCTION TO WILDLIFE**—Vancouver's declining biodiversity reflects over a century of development ranging from logging and land clearing, draining of wetlands and streams, to hunting of large mammals and other wildlife. Many wildlife species were lost during the early part of this development process. Re-introduction of important species may be an essential way to enhance biodiversity in Vancouver's highly urbanized landscape. This won't mean releasing black bears and elk, but could involve re-introducing tree frogs, Douglas squirrels, American marten, cutthroat trout and other species that are essential components of food-webs and ecosystem functioning.
10. **ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING**—Natural areas are of interest to teachers looking for an engaging way to capture students imaginations and provide a connection with nature. Outdoor classrooms, lessons and camps in partnership with the environmental stewardship programs are in demand. The Park Board is working with the Vancouver School Board to make outdoor learning easier and more accessible.

## CHALLENGES

1. **TOUGH TRADEOFFS**—With the limited land mass for parks, there are many competing interests that affect the size and quality of natural areas. Balancing recreational areas with land for natural areas is a key challenge.
2. **DECLINE OF ECOLOGICAL HEALTH**—Degraded environments can negatively impact the community's experience and their potential to experience nature in the city. Insufficient maintenance makes increasing the sustainability and resilience of urban natural areas a challenge.
3. **SEA LEVEL RISE**—Rising tides threaten all of Vancouver's shorelines and up to 11% of the city's landmass. Engaging in resilient, living shoreline practices is preferred wherever possible, rather than hard armouring or dyking; recognize that the parks may provide a buffering effect for adjacent properties to the impacts of sea level rise and erosion.
4. **CLIMATE CHANGE**—First and secondary impacts of climate change will stretch the Park Board's operations and maintenance resources, from irrigation to storm cleanup and tree removal. With hotter, drier summers and increased volatility in storms, ecosystems will be increasingly vulnerable to environmental stresses.
5. **INVASIVE SPECIES**—There is potential for serious impacts to ecosystems due to Chafer and Japanese Beetle, fire ants, Japanese knotweed, Himalayan blackberry and other invasive species. Assessing the stressors and location of invasives is a first step in developing a management plan and educating the staff on early detection signs that can limit their spread.
6. **BALANCING PARK LAND USES**—Changes to park vegetation, such as converting mowed turf to wildflower meadows, is not always supported by park users.
7. **NATURE DEFICIT DISORDER**—Connection to nature is core to the identity of Vancouverites but with technology increasingly integrated into our lives, getting people outdoors remains a challenge. Lack of time outdoors can curtail people's appreciation of and advocacy for the natural world.



# FOUNDATION FOR INNOVATION



## PEER CITY CASE STUDIES

*Natural areas are a critical aspect of park systems around the world. Here are three pioneering approaches from near and far.*

### **Singapore National Parks (NParks): The Garden City**

Combining high-tech innovations with native plant species, Singapore has become a model for providing abundant green space in one of the densest cities in the world. NParks has done this by greening Singapore with more than 300 parks and four nature reserves, while actively engaging the community. With limited land area and a growing population, the City has taken innovative approaches to providing natural areas wherever it can. Greenery is not just at ground level but also layered vertically throughout the city. The CEO of the Housing + Development Board, and a former



architect and urban planner, Cheong Koon Hean, describes Singapore's model of livable density: "Innovative design can reduce that feeling of density by creating the illusion of space using 'green' and 'blue' elements. We intersperse parks, rivers and ponds amid our high-rises. These bodies of water also double as flood-control mechanisms. And we plant lushly – some three million trees cover Singapore, including a stand of virgin rainforest, rich in biodiversity, right in the heart of the island." The addition of 16 Nature Ways (Nature Ways are routes lined with specific plants to replicate the natural forest and facilitate the movement of birds and insects between two green spaces) throughout the city is an innovative approach to facilitating the movement of animals between green spaces and connecting high biodiversity to urban communities. Currently, the network stretches a total of 68km and the goal is to increase this to 180km by 2020. The nature ways are designed to mimic the natural structure of forests and include four layers: shrub, understory, canopy and emergent.



## PEER CITY CASE STUDIES

### *New York: Hyde Park + Citizen Science*

On the other side of the world in New York, technology is used as a tool to engage citizens in scientific exploration and discovery of new knowledge – a crowdsourcing of science. Citizen scientists volunteer their time, resources and efforts to collaborate with professional scientists via projects posted to the SciStarter.com website. This work promotes the notion that “anyone, anywhere can participate in meaningful scientific research”. A variety of citizen science projects have been completed in Hyde Park. Over 3,500 citizen scientists from around the United States, involved with the Mastodon Matrix Project, helped sift through 22 tons of dirt/matrix that was excavated after scientists discovered a mastodon fossil in a Hyde Park backyard. This work has provided a deeper understanding of Pleistocene ecology. Subsequent projects have involved citizen scientists studying amphibian migrations, measuring mercury in dragonflies and completing water assessments. Citizen science can

help bridge gaps, provide large samples of data that in the past were hard to gather and perhaps most importantly, cultivate a deep connection to the natural world through science.

### *Seattle: Street Edge Alternatives + Green Streets Program*

Seattle's Department of Public Works has been a pioneer in green streets and green infrastructure since the early 2000s. The Street Edge Alternatives Project reimagined street rights-of-way to mimic natural hydrology in the roadway design and reduce impacts to waterways. The project narrowed the street, detained stormwater onsite in bioswales and provided natural infiltration through extensive native planting. Since this pilot project, the program has expanded green street projects to neighbourhoods across the city with natural drainage systems (or roadside rain gardens) recently completed in Ballard and Delridge, as well as over 30 other green infrastructure projects underway.



