
PARKS MAINTENANCE POLICY

1. PURPOSE

To describe which municipal parks are to be maintained and to what level of service standard as designated by Council.

2. SCOPE

This Policy applies to Council, District administration, park users, and the public.

3. DEFINITIONS

“**Council**” means the Council for the District.

“**District**” means the District of the Municipality of North Cowichan.

“**Growing Season**” means the period of time from March 1st to September 30th.

“**Irrigation**” means the provision of water by means of a mechanical system to establish and sustain growing plants.

“**Manager**” means the Director, Parks and Recreation for the District or his/her approved designate.

“**Mowing**” means to cut Turf, grass or Natural Areas (primarily flail mowing) with a mechanical device.

“**Natural Area**” means an area that has retained its natural character, as evidenced by the presence of woody vegetation (native trees, saplings, shrubs and perennials) or rare or endangered plants. A disturbed area may be considered a Natural Area if such vegetation is present. A Natural Area does not include maintained lawns or areas landscaped with non-native plants.

“**Park**” means an area of District owned land, having facilities for rest and recreation and which may include outdoor recreation facilities.

“**Parks Steward**” means an organization or individual that:

- a) Formally takes on partial or full responsibility for the care and maintenance of a particular Park.
- b) Is generally a volunteer, not-for-profit organization whose stewardship is authorized through a memorandum of understanding or maintenance agreement.

“**Priority Park**” means a Park that is assigned a priority level under this Policy and listed in Appendix A – Priority Parks List.

“**Turf**” means a ground surface covered with a matt-forming grass or mix of grasses, as in a lawn

4. POLICY

- 4.1. The District holds its network of Parks in very high regard and is committed to the ongoing preservation, maintenance, use and enjoyment of such Parks, which are enjoyed by both residents and visitors. The District envisions a Parks system in which all residents take pride and assume responsibility for the protection of the Parks.

4.2. There are over 200 hectares of parkland within the District boundaries. The District is responsible for the maintenance of specific Parks that meet established criteria. The level of service for identified Parks is determined using a system of prioritization. This maintenance responsibility includes, but is not limited to, scheduled inspections, clearing, remediation, ongoing maintenance and issue tracking. The District will provide these services on a priority basis in a cost-effective manner, with consideration to safety, budgets, personnel, and environmental concerns.

5. OBJECTIVES

5.1. The objectives of this Policy are to create appropriate high-quality Parks within the community and provide equal opportunities for all residents to access a Park close to their neighbourhoods. This will be achieved by:

- a) Providing an annotated list of Priority Parks, to be reviewed on a periodic basis by Council;
- b) Assigning appropriate levels of service to Priority Parks;
- c) Describing and scheduling specific tasks associated with designated service levels;
- d) Ensuring that Parks are maintained in a safe, efficient and cost-effective manner;
- e) Maintaining high safety standards in Parks;
- f) Providing a framework to facilitate the effective allocation of available resources to maintain the North Cowichan Parks in accordance with the BC Landscape Standards; and
- g) Facilitating citizen participation in accessing the user experience in Priority Parks.

6. RESPONSIBILITIES

6.1. Council shall:

- a) Annually confirm the maintenance budget(s) for Priority Parks through the five-year financial plan bylaw;
- b) Set, adopt or amend the levels of service for Priority Parks on a periodic basis, as it deems necessary; and
- c) Set, adopt or amend the list of Priority Parks on a periodic basis, as it deems necessary.

6.2 District Administration (Parks and Recreation Department)

The Manager shall ensure the implementation of this Policy by:

- a) Determining when and how to initiate and perform maintenance activities on Priority Parks;
- b) Allocating and scheduling Park resources;
- c) Obtaining, allocating and scheduling privately held resources;
- d) Addressing public concerns and safety issues, where deemed necessary by the Manager;
- e) Managing the Parks budget; and
- f) Recommending revisions to this Policy as required.

6.3 The Manager shall have authority to:

- a) Amend the list of Priority Parks as required to reflect changes such as newly authorized Parks or sections of Parks that have been temporarily closed or decommissioned in the interests of public safety or the protection of the environment; and
- b) Amend the list of Parks Stewards in Appendix B of this Policy as necessary to reflect any changes.

6.4 District Parks and Recreation Department employees shall carry out Park maintenance in accordance with this Policy, the approved budget, and the instructions of the Manager.

6.5 Private Contractors

Where not-for-profit or commercial operators assume the primary maintenance role on identified Priority Parks, the operator shall:

- a) Perform duties consistent with the established 'level of service' assigned to each Priority Park;
- b) Work within guidelines established by the North Cowichan Parks Policy and the BC Landscape Standards. ; and
- c) Report maintenance plans and activities to the Manager by April 1 and October 1 of each year.

7. PARK CLASSES

This classification system is adapted from the North Cowichan Parks and Trails Master Plan

7.1. There are eleven classes of District Parks. Athletic/Sportsfields, Recreation Facility and Public Plazas have the highest amount of traffic with multiple users and Blue-Green Space, Connectors and Natural Areas have the least amount of traffic with specific users.

a) Athletic/Sportsfields

Athletic/sportsfields provide outdoor sports surfaces that serve the community's needs for active recreation and organized outdoor sport. These parks have a strong sports focus, but they often include walking trails and children's playgrounds. Subsequently, these parks also serve the local neighbourhood and act as a destination for traveling teams during tournaments. They provide families the opportunity for passive play while siblings and friends are engaged in sporting activities.

Athletic/Sportsfields features may include:

- Soft Surface Athletic/sportsfields:
 - Regulation sized fields including but not limited to soccer, rugby, football and baseball.
- Hard Surface Athletic/sportsfields:
 - Tennis / Pickleball courts and basketball courts.

b) Recreation Facility

Facilities purpose built to contain single or multi-sports as well as numerous amenities typical to a recreation centre, arena, swimming pool and/or like facilities. Recreation facilities tend to be travel motivators for social and competitive purposes, from both within the District and abroad. They are locations where people can take classes in group fitness or arts and culture.

Recreation Facilities features may include:

- Ice arenas
- Swimming pools
- Community centres

c) Public Plaza

To provide residents and visitors respite from busier urban environments, places to rest and space for performers and vendors to enhance visitor experiences. These are lively areas for permitted performances, special events, social gatherings and open public spaces and common areas for people to gather. Public plazas are often hard surfaced with fountains or statues in the center and seating areas, surrounded by small shops. They can be in the heart of a community or business district.

Public Plaza features may include:

- Town square
- Promenade
- Boulevard
- Piazza

d) Water Access Park

To provide public access to ocean, river or lake frontage. Secondary uses include Natural Area, riparian, stream protection and viewing opportunities. These areas often include stairs, ramps, paths or trails to help the public gain access to public docks or beaches. The Park can range in size from a trail to a Park with Turf and picnic tables.

Water Access Park features may include:

- Kayak, tubing and boat launches
- Swimming areas
- Beach combing
- Seasonal off leash foreshore areas

e) Neighbourhood Park

To provide for the spontaneous recreational needs of the surrounding neighbourhood. Smaller parks designed to serve the local community often with a focus on preschool children and children under the age of 16. Neighbourhood parks often have open Turf areas for passive play, shade trees and a playground.

Neighbourhood Park features may include:

- Playground
- Forested Area
- Sport court
- Picnic tables

f) Special Purpose Park

Stand-alone parks that are designed for a particular use such as BMX park, mountain bike Skills Park, Skate Park, Dog Park, Specialty Garden or Cemetery. Industry best practices used to guide the design parameters and the meet the needs of the particular use.

Special Purpose Park features may include:

- Off-leash dog parks
- Skate board parks
- Cemetery

g) Community Park

To provide for the spontaneous and, to a lesser extent, programmed recreational needs of multiple neighbourhoods. May also conserve locally important habitats and provide for functioning ecosystem processes. Larger than a Neighbourhood park usually with one or more attractant or social motivator such as water access and tennis courts.

Community Park features may include:

- Picnic shelter
- Community garden
- Natural and Urban interface
- Hard Surface Courts (tennis, Pickleball and/or sport)

h) Destination Park

Major parks that offer unique features or recreational opportunities that have gained regional or higher recognition. These significant parks may be designed for single or multiple use and are travel motivators of the caliber to attract people from both within the District and abroad.

Destination Park features may include:

- Public Plazas
- Mountain Biking and/or Hiking trails
- Instagram worthy views
- Athletic / Sportsfields
- Swimming Area

i) Connector

Small Park designations created, normally at time of development, to provide pedestrian linkage between streets and/or to Parks or significant trails between neighbourhoods.

Connector features may include:

- Paved trails
- Gravel paths
- Green or blue ways
- Wild life corridors

j) Blue-Green Space

Small Park designations created, normally at time of development, to provide riparian or stream protection and storm water retention ponds and natural linkages or buffers between streets and neighbourhoods.

Blue-Green Space features may include:

- Agricultural buffers
- Naturalized green space

k) Natural Area

To conserve provincially, regionally and/or locally significant native habitats, protect species at risk and maintain biodiverse ecosystem processes. Enhance, protect and/or continue the supply of ecosystem services, genetic diversity and physiological infrastructure to the community.

Natural Area features may include:

- Mature growth forest
- Undisturbed, pre-existing Natural Areas with native plants
- Naturalized or ecologically restored spaces

8. PARK PRIORITIES

8.1. In assigning a level of priority to Parks, consideration is given to criteria such as:

- a) Location;
- b) Visibility;
- c) Level of use by both residents and non-residents;
- d) Recreation needs;
- e) The nature of the facilities;

- f) Irrigation;
- g) The funds budgeted for Parks maintenance;
- h) Personnel;
- i) Resources; and
- j) Environmental and Social Impact.

8.2. The District has set three priority ratings for Parks maintenance, as outlined in this section and assigned to each Priority Park:

- a) Priority A: This priority level may be applied to Parks that meet one or more of the following criteria:
 - Athletic/sportsfields, Public Plaza Parks, Recreation Facilities, Destination Parks and select Community parks;
 - Parks in key locations, such as downtown;
 - Parks that are highly visible to the public;
 - Parks that receive high levels or intensity of use;
 - Parks that are generally viewed from a short distance or experienced close up; or
 - Parks with a high level of maintenance requirements due to the presence of specialized facilities, fixtures or equipment (i.e. Irrigation).
- b) Priority B: This priority level may be applied to Parks that meet one or more of the following criteria:
 - Neighbourhood Parks, Special Purpose Parks, Community Parks and some Water Access or less used sports fields;
 - Parks or areas not in key locations but that are readily visible to the public;
 - Parks or areas that receive moderate levels or intensity of use; or
 - Parks or areas that are generally viewed from medium to long distances.
- c) Priority C: This priority level may be applied to Parks that meet one or more of the following criteria:
 - Water Access, Connector parks;
 - Less used Recreation Facilities, Neighbourhood Parks, Community Parks;
 - Higher use Natural and Blue Green Areas;
 - Lower use Special Purpose Parks;
 - Parks that are not in key locations and are less visible to the public;
 - Parks or areas that receive low levels or intensity of use;
 - Parks or areas that are considered transitional areas from developed areas to Natural Areas;
or
 - Parks or areas that are generally viewed from a distance.
- d) Priority D: This priority level may be applied to Parks that meet one or more of the following criteria:
 - Blue Green Space and Natural Areas;
 - Lesser used Connector and Neighbourhood Parks;
 - Parks that are not in key locations and are less visible to the public;
 - Parks or areas that receive little to no use;
 - Parks that are Natural Areas; or
 - Parks or areas that are riparian, green ways or blue green infrastructure.

- 8.3. The District will not be required to maintain any Park not identified in this Policy as a Priority Park.
- 8.4. As part of the annual budget review process, the Manager shall make recommendations to Council regarding the appropriate priority and service levels for any new Parks that have been proposed.

9. MAINTENANCE LEVEL OF SERVICE

- 9.1. Maintenance and operations of Parks are under the general responsibility of the Parks and Recreation Department.
- 9.2. Parks inspections, where identified, include a review of the Park for overall safety, signage review, and review of constructed features. All issues observed will be logged and work orders created as deemed appropriate by the Manager.

9.3. Priority A Parks

The general objective for Priority A Parks is to meet and maintain the following service objectives of a neat, orderly groomed appearance:

- Plants and lawns are healthy and vigorous.
- Lawns are uniformly green and are regularly mowed and trimmed to within a 1½" to 2" (38 mm to 51 mm) height range.
- There are few weeds and little accumulated debris.
- Seasonal plantings, if present, are kept lush and showy during their Growing Season.

The Priority A Parks level of service will be as follows:

- a) Priority A Parks will be inspected daily during the Growing Season.
- b) Frequent, regular routine maintenance of a fairly high intensity will be conducted, with regular monitoring and adjustment to maintain high visual quality.
- c) Many of the maintenance tasks require certified landscape horticulturists or those holding a Turf management diploma for proper execution, and this will be arranged as necessary and as deemed appropriate by the Manager.
- d) All issues observed will be logged and work orders will be created as deemed appropriate by the Manager.
- e) Public complaints will be tracked and work orders will be created as deemed appropriate by the Manager.

9.4. Priority B Parks

The general objective for Priority B Parks is to meet and maintain the following service objectives of a generally neat and orderly appearance, adapted to and tolerant of expected wear and tear:

- Plants and lawns are healthy.
- Lawns are mowed and trimmed to within a 2" to 2½" (51 mm to 64 mm) height range.
- Weeds and debris are kept to acceptable levels within the limits of regular visits.
- Seasonal plantings are not typically found in moderately maintained areas.

The Priority B Parks level of service will be as follows:

- a) Routine maintenance of moderate frequency and intensity will be conducted, with regular monitoring to avoid serious deterioration.
- b) All issues observed will be logged and work orders will be created as deemed appropriate by the Manager.
- c) Public complaints will be tracked and work orders will be created as deemed appropriate by the Manager.

9.5. Priority C Parks

The general objective for Priority C Parks is to meet and maintain service objectives of preserving natural or naturalized conditions while accommodating low intensity activities (i.e. passive recreation), and maintaining plants with a normal, healthy appearance.

The Priority C Parks level of service will be as follows:

- a) Maintenance requirements are low to very low – Priority C Parks will be maintained to encourage or preserve existing native vegetation or naturalized plantings in a more or less natural condition.
- b) Mowing is done only as deemed necessary by the Manager.
- c) Weeds and debris are removed only as deemed necessary by the Manager.
- d) All issues observed will be logged and work orders will be created as deemed appropriate by the Manager.
- e) Public complaints will be tracked and work orders will be created as deemed appropriate by the Manager.

9.6. Priority D Parks

Priority D Parks will not be maintained. Public complaints will be documented, and will be completed based on budget and resources available, as deemed appropriate by the Manager.

9.7. Additional Maintenance

Parks may require additional maintenance if one or more of the following occurs:

- 9.7.a.1. Deterioration or vandalism of natural or constructed features.
- 9.7.a.2. Erosion or excessive soil loss.
- 9.7.a.3. Ruts or vegetation cover loss.
- 9.7.a.4. Incidents such as flooding, insufficient drainage, windfall or diseased trees, etc.

Work will be completed based on available resources, budgets, and priorities, as deemed appropriate by the Manager.

9.8. Repair of Damage Caused by Vandalism

- a) Repair of damage to Parks grounds, facilities or fixtures caused by vandalism is carried out in order to maintain an aesthetic level consistent with Park priority level, to maintain Park facilities and fixtures in good repair, to minimize recurrence and to ensure public safety.
- b) Repair of damage caused by vandalism includes repair/replacement of damaged plantings or fixtures.
- c) Public complaints will be received and logged. Data will be used to schedule for maintenance, capital upgrades and replacement, as deemed appropriate by the Manager.
- d) Repair of damage caused by vandalism will be undertaken year round.

10. CONDITIONS FOR PARK CLOSURES

10.1. Parks or sections of Parks that pose a significant risk to public safety and/or the environment may be temporarily closed under the authority of the Manager while the issue is resolved through clean up, maintenance, and/or other means.

10.2. In the event that risks to public safety or the environment cannot be resolved through clean up or maintenance, the Manager may decommission Parks or sections of Parks as deemed necessary. However, any decommissioning of whole Parks shall be subject to confirmation by resolution of Council.

- 10.3. At any time as deemed necessary, the Manager may temporarily close any Park or portion thereof to public use, including adjacent public Open Space.
- 10.4. When considering temporary closure, the Manager may take the following steps:
- a) Consultation and cooperation with relevant stakeholders or Parks Stewards to determine remediation requirements;
 - b) Posting a public notice indicating the reason for closure;
 - c) Fencing and/or barricade placement as required; and
 - d) Monitoring to ensure compliance with the closure of the Park.
- 10.5. The authority for permanent closure of Parks rests with Council.

11. PARK MAINTENANCE AND ENHANCEMENTS BY PARK STEWARDS

- 11.1. Parks Stewards intending to conduct Park maintenance or enhancements within District boundaries shall submit proposals outlining their intentions to the District prior to commencing any work.
- 11.2. Proposals for maintenance or enhancements of Parks may be approved by the District if deemed to be a good fit for the Park class and priority.
- 11.3. Proposals to enhance or diversify a Park by constructing new Park features may be approved by the District if:
- a) Public safety, user conflicts, and environmental issues can be managed; and
 - b) In the opinion of the Manager: 1) the District has the resource capability to adequately manage the enhanced Park system; or, 2) if the resources do not currently exist, the proponent agrees to enter into a long-term use agreement where maintenance and management responsibility is passed onto the Park organization or Parks Steward.

12. PUBLIC RELATIONS

The Parks and Recreation Department (250.746.3106) shall hear concerns and inquiries, Monday to Friday, 7:30AM to 4:00PM. After hours emergency concerns and inquires shall be directed to the Duty Foreman. Park maintenance activities or information is advertised on the Parks and Recreation Department’s pages on the District website (www.NorthCowichan.ca).

13. APPENDICES

- Appendix A – Priority Parks Inventory
- Appendix B – Parks Stewards List

14. SUPPORTING REFERENCES

The *Local Government Act*, related council bylaws and policies, and other applicable Acts and Regulations, as amended from time to time.

APPROVAL HISTORY

WRITTEN BY: Keona Wiley, Manager, Parks,, Parks & Recreation Department	APPROVED BY: Council	DATE: November 17, 2021
---	-------------------------	----------------------------

APPENDIX "A"

Maintenance Priority Parks Inventory

Appendix "A" assigns priority ratings for Parks in accordance with sections 8 and 9 of the Policy. Each Park listed is described according to the class types listed in section 7.

PRIORITY A PARKS

#	Name	Park Class	Hectare	Acre
1	Chemainus Ball Fields	Athletic / Sportsfield Park	4.62	11.43
2	Cowichan Aquatic Centre	Recreation Facility	1.59	3.92
3	Crofton Museum Park	Destination Park	0.53	1.31
4	Crofton Seawalk	Destination Park	0.66	1.62
5	Evans Park	Athletic / Sportsfield Park	12.28	30.36
6	Fuller Lake Arena	Recreation Facility	13.61	33.64
7	Fuller Lake Park	Destination Park	8.24	20.36
8	Gerry Smith Park	Public Plaza	0.20	0.49
9	Heritage Park	Public Plaza	0.06	0.14
10	Properties Park	Athletic / Sportsfield Park	2.33	5.76
11	Rotary Park	Public Plaza	0.06	0.16
12	Sherman Road Park	Athletic / Sportsfield Park	4.90	12.10
13	Waterwheel Park and Cenotaph	Public Plaza	1.17	2.88
TOTALS			50.25	90.53

PRIORITY B PARKS

#	Name	Park Class	Hectare	Acre
1	Alan Wilson Park	Neighbourhood Park	0.77	1.90
2	Art Mann Park	Community Park	2.10	5.20
3	Carmel Drive Park	Neighbourhood Park	0.34	0.84
4	Caswell Park	Neighbourhood Park	0.13	0.32
5	Chemainus Rd.	Community Park	0.42	1.03
6	Chemainus Skate Park	Special Purpose Park	0.21	0.52
7	Coronation Hill Park	Neighbourhood Park	0.51	1.26
8	Crofton Beach Park	Community Park	0.17	0.43
9	Crofton Sportsfield Park	Athletic / Sportsfield Park	2.26	5.57
10	Harmony Estates Park	Neighbourhood Park	1.41	3.48
11	Hawkes Park	Neighbourhood Park	0.38	0.93
12	Herd Road Park	Community Park	1.63	4.02
13	Humbird Street Park	Neighbourhood Park	0.08	0.19
14	Kinsmen Beach Park	Community Park	0.55	1.35
15	Maple Bay Beach Park	Community Park	0.16	0.39
16	Mayo Park	Neighbourhood Park	0.25	0.62
17	Moorfield Park	Neighbourhood Park	0.24	0.59
18	Properties Park	Community Park	4.37	10.81
19	Queen Street Playground	Neighbourhood Park	0.27	0.68
20	Somenos Creek Dog Park	Special Purpose Park	1.15	2.83
21	Sterling Ridge Park	Neighbourhood Park	0.34	0.84
22	X-treme Skate Park	Special Purpose Park	0.22	0.55
TOTALS			17.96	44.35

PRIORITY C PARKS

#	Name	Park Class	Hectare	Acre
1	Askew Creek Park	Natural Area	3.34	8.24
2	Averill Creek Park	Natural Area	1.20	2.95
3	Chemainus Lake Park	Community Park	20.38	50.36
4	Chemainus River Park	Community Park	0.63	1.57
5	Cook Street Park	Water Access Park	0.13	0.33
6	Crofton Outdoor Pool & Courts	Recreation Facility	0.20	0.50
7	Daniel Street Park	Water Access Park	0.22	0.54
8	Fairview Park	Neighbourhood Park	0.27	0.66
9	Hérons Wood Park	Natural Area	2.60	6.43
10	Hérons Wood Park	Neighbourhood Park	0.45	1.12
11	Kin Park	Community Park	0.74	1.84
12	Kingston Park	Natural Area	0.62	1.54
13	Larkspur Park	Neighbourhood Park	0.18	0.45
14	Marsh Road Park	Neighbourhood Park	0.26	0.65
15	Mum's Park	Blue-Green Space	0.21	0.52
16	Northview Park	Natural Area	0.12	0.31
17	Otter Park	Neighbourhood Park	0.07	0.17
18	Properties Park	Connector Park	.30	.74
19	Quailview Park	Connector Park	0.04	0.10
20	Regina Park	Connector Park	0.25	0.61
21	Rockridge Park	Neighbourhood Park	0.06	0.14
22	Ryall Park	Natural Area	0.66	1.63
23	Somenos Creek Park	Water Access Park	2.77	6.84
24	Stonehaven Park	Connector Park	1.42	3.51
25	Timbercrest Park	Neighbourhood Park	0.16	0.40
26	Trumpeter Point Park	Blue-Green Space	0.04	0.10
27	Trumpeter Point Park	Connector Park	0.90	2.22
28	Trumpeter Point Park	Water Access Park	0.47	1.16
29	Vimy Park	Water Access Park	0.96	2.36
30	Vista Grande Park	Water Access Park	0.03	0.08
31	Wu'laam Park	Natural Area	19.83	49.01
TOTALS			59.28	146.51

PRIORITY D PARKS

#	Name	Park Class	Hectare	Acre
1	Abbey Road Park	Blue-Green Space	0.31	0.78
2	Caswell Buffer	Blue-Green Space	0.04	0.09
3	Hillwood Connector Park	Connector Park	0.43	1.07
4	Holmes Creek Park	Blue-Green Space	0.16	0.39
5	Keystone Drive Park	Blue-Green Space	0.03	0.07
6	Lakeview Park	Connector Park	1.36	3.36
7	Lakeview Park	Blue-Green Space	1.64	4.06
8	Lakeview Park	Natural Area	4.15	10.25
9	Larkspur Drive (not named)	Natural Area	0.10	0.24
10	Panorama Park	Blue-Green Space	2.08	5.15
11	Pemberlea Crescent (not named)	Connector Park	0.07	0.18
12	Properties Nevilane Park	Natural Area	5.34	13.19
13	Properties Park	Blue-Green Space	7.04	17.39
14	Sherman Road (not named)	Blue-Green Space	0.76	1.88
15	Sunset Drive Park	Natural Area	0.29	0.73
16	Swans Nest Park	Natural Area	0.90	2.21
17	York Road (not named)	Natural Area	0.10	0.25
TOTALS			25.24	62.38

APPENDIX "B"

Park Stewards List

Chemainus Communities in Bloom
Cowichan Green Community
Cowichan Valley Naturalists
Crofton in Bloom
Herons Wood Food Forest
Kin park Community Garden
Orca View
Sequoia Park Boosters
Somenos Marsh Society