

Regional Parks Land Acquisition

2050



SERVICES AND SOLUTIONS FOR A LIVABLE REGION

Regional Parks Land Acquisition 2050

Regional Parks Land Acquisition 2050 strategy was adopted by the MVRD Board June 22, 2018.

That the MVRD Board adopt the Regional Parks Land Acquisition 2050 strategy, as presented in the report dated May 10, 2018, titled "Regional Parks Land Acquisition 2050".

The Regional Parks Land Acquisition 2050 strategy is a bold and visionary document that has the potential to maintain livability for the next generation of Metro Vancouver citizens and visitors, and grow the regional parks system before all the remaining unprotected natural areas are gone. It envisions growing the regional parks system into a connected network of resilient regional parks and greenways that protect regionally important natural areas and connects people to them.

Four challenges shaped the Regional Parks Land Acquisition 2050 strategy:

- **A Growing and Active Population** - The region's population is expected to grow from 2.5 million to 3.7 million by 2050, and visits to regional parks have been growing at double the population growth rate.
- **Market Trends** - Housing prices have increased three-fold over the past 15 years, putting pressure on land costs throughout the region.

- **Disappearing Sensitive Ecosystems** - Between 2009 and 2014, over 1,600 hectares of sensitive ecosystems across the region were lost – the equivalent of losing four Stanley parks every five years. Ten percent of the region is made up of sensitive terrestrial ecosystems that could still be protected.
- **Climate Change** – Metro Vancouver continues to prepare for the impacts of a changing climate, such as increased flooding and drought, decreased snowpack, proliferation of invasive species and at least one metre of sea level rise by 2100. Regional Parks can help mitigate and adapt to these growing concerns.

Regional Parks Land Acquisition 2050 took a systematic, evidence-based approach to identifying land suitable for protection as a regional park. The result identifies the most regionally important unprotected natural areas that could be acquired for future new and expanded parks.

Members of Metro Vancouver's Regional Parks Service

Village of Anmore

Village of Belcarra

Bowen Island Municipality

City of Burnaby

City of Coquitlam

City of Delta

Electoral Area A

City of Langley

Township of Langley

Village of Lions Bay

City of Maple Ridge

City of New Westminster

City of North Vancouver

District of North Vancouver

City of Pitt Meadows

City of Port Coquitlam

City of Port Moody

City of Richmond

City of Surrey

Tsawwassen First Nation

City of Vancouver

District of West Vancouver

City of White Rock

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1.0 Executive Summary



Metro Vancouver is one of the most livable regions in the world. Regional parks play a crucial role in making this region a desirable place to live and visit.

Ensuring regional ecosystems are protected, healthy and resilient for the long term is central to the Metro Vancouver region retaining its unique sense of place. Over time, the importance of protecting regional parks and connecting people

to nature will only increase as the region grows and evolves. Regional Parks Land Acquisition 2050 is Metro Vancouver's strategy to protect important natural areas so the region continues to be a great place to live for current and future generations.

Vision

The vision for the regional parks land acquisition strategy is to grow the regional parks system into a connected network of resilient regional parks and greenways that protect regionally important natural areas and connects people to them.

The vision for Metro Vancouver is "Metro Vancouver seeks to achieve what humanity aspires to on a global basis – the highest quality of life embracing cultural vitality, economic prosperity, social justice and compassion, all nurtured in and by a beautiful and healthy natural environment."

The vision for the Regional Parks Service is to protect important natural areas and connect people to nature.

Strategies

The regional parks land acquisition strategy includes five strategies outlining the plan and how it is to be delivered.

STRATEGY 1 – Build a system of regional parks that are resilient to the impacts of climate change, land use change, and growing visitation.

ACTIONS	
1. COMPLETE AND EXPAND EXISTING REGIONAL PARKS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Identify land to complete and expand regional parks, based on a set of criteria that aim to improve resiliency of the regional parks system. b) Undertake planning work to confirm boundaries for expanded regional parks. c) Confirm regional park vision, program and boundaries during the management planning process. d) Acquire land identified for regional parks.
2. CREATE NEW REGIONAL PARKS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Identify land for new regional parks, based on a set of criteria that aims to improve resiliency of the regional parks system. b) Undertake planning work for each new regional park to establish vision, program, and confirm interim park boundaries. c) Acquire and dedicate land identified for new regional parks.

STRATEGY 2 – Facilitate a regional greenway system that connects natural areas and promotes access to them.

ACTIONS	
1. UPDATE AND MAINTAIN THE REGIONAL GREENWAY SYSTEM VISION.	a) Work with member jurisdictions and other key stakeholders to develop and adopt an updated greenway vision for the region. Review it periodically.
	b) Promote development of the regional greenway system with member jurisdictions and other stakeholders.
	c) Identify regional greenway system routes and segments Metro Vancouver will provide as part of Regional Parks Greenway Program, including the Experience the Fraser routes.
2. COMPLETE AND EXPAND EXISTING REGIONAL PARKS GREENWAYS.	a) Identify land parcels and rights of way needed to complete acquisition of existing regional parks greenway routes.
	b) Acquire land identified for regional parks greenways.
3. CREATE NEW REGIONAL PARK GREENWAYS.	a) Identify land parcels and rights of way needed to complete acquisition of existing and new regional parks greenway routes.
	b) Acquire land identified for new regional parks greenways.

STRATEGY 3 – Ensure a sustainable funding model for land acquisition.

ACTIONS	
1. IMPLEMENT APPROPRIATE FUNDING MODELS TO ACHIEVE VISION.	a) Investigate feasibility of current and potential funding options available under provincial legislation and bring recommendations for future funding sources to MVRD Board for consideration.
	b) Evaluate the costs and benefits of funding options to address rapidly diminishing opportunities and bring a recommendation to MVRD Board for consideration.
	c) Evaluate linking the Regional Parks Land Acquisition Fund to regional land price trends.
	d) Review the Regional Parks Land Acquisition Fund at least every five years to ensure buying power is maintained over time.
2. ALIGN THE REGIONAL PARKS SERVICE'S OPERATING AND CAPITAL BUDGETS TO ENSURE APPROPRIATE FUNDING FOR NEWLY ACQUIRED LAND.	a) Explore establishment of a program as part of the annual capital budget to ensure all costs associated with acquisition of properties (e.g., demolition, trespass issues, and land restoration) will be available for immediate site management needs.
	b) Ensure that operating budget requirements based on approved levels of service are reflected in the five year financial plan.

STRATEGY 4 – Collaborate and Partner with Others.

ACTIONS	
1. CHAMPION THE PROTECTION OF THE REGION'S IMPORTANT NATURAL AREAS.	<p>a) Promote the regional parks land acquisition strategy with others who have interest in or responsibility for land protection.</p> <p>b) Review potential acquisitions with pertinent member jurisdictions and other stakeholders during the annual review.</p>
2. LEVERAGE RESOURCES WHERE PARTNER INTERESTS ALIGN WITH REGIONAL PARKS.	<p>a) Align land acquisition with the plans of other departments within Metro Vancouver to build upon common interests.</p> <p>b) Consider joint acquisition of property or joint land assembly where similar goals are shared and management objectives are aligned.</p>
3. INVESTIGATE OPPORTUNITIES TO WORK WITH FIRST NATIONS	<p>a) Explore innovative and cooperative arrangements, including opportunities to expand regional parks in collaboration with First Nations.</p>
4. MAXIMIZE APPLICATION OF LAND USE PLANNING DESIGNATIONS TO PROTECT REGIONAL PARKS LAND.	<p>a) Work with member jurisdictions to protect existing, expanded and new regional parks and greenways, through land use planning tools such as development setbacks, integrated storm water management plans and landscape buffers and identify these lands in their Official Community Plans.</p>

STRATEGY 5 – Enable clear, efficient and flexible decision-making.

ACTIONS	
1. ESTABLISH AN EFFICIENT STANDARDIZED PROCESS.	<p>a) Implement standardized land acquisition MVRD Board policies and corporate procedures.</p> <p>b) Regularly review and assess the land acquisition process for efficiency and effectiveness, and modify as required to address changing circumstances in the region.</p>
2. UPDATE THE STRATEGY IN RESPONSE TO NEW INFORMATION.	<p>a) Annually review land acquisition candidate properties.</p>

2.0 Introduction

Metro Vancouver is one of the most livable regions in the world. Regional parks play a crucial role in making this region a desirable place to live and visit. Ensuring regional ecosystems remain protected, healthy and resilient for the long term is central to the Metro Vancouver region retaining its unique sense of place. Over time, the importance of protecting regional parks and connecting people to nature will only increase as the region grows and evolves. Regional Parks Land Acquisition 2050 is Metro Vancouver's visionary strategy to protect important natural areas so the region continues to be a great place to live for current and future generations.

This regional parks land acquisition strategy is guided by the *Regional Parks Plan* (the 2016 strategic plan for the Regional Parks Service), *Metro Vancouver 2040 – Shaping Our Future* (the 2011 Regional Growth Strategy referred to as 'Metro 2040'), and a set of Board approved key directions for land acquisition.

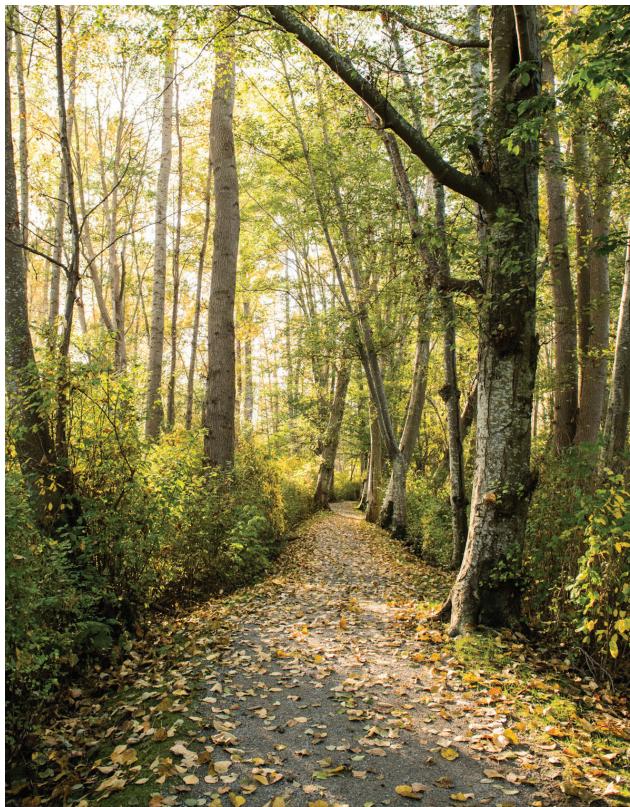
Metro 2040 offers a road map to maintain regional livability while accommodating an additional one million residents in Metro Vancouver over the next 22 years. The needs of this growing population will increase competition over a finite land base for a spectrum of land uses to support the growing region. Protecting the environment and responding to climate change are key goals of *Metro 2040*. Achieving these goals will help ensure that the region's important natural areas continue to provide vital ecological services.

The *Regional Parks Plan* sets out the mission, vision, goals and strategies that guide the delivery of the Regional Park Service. Protecting Metro Vancouver's

important natural areas and connecting residents and visitors to them are two goals of the Plan. A core tool in the delivery of the strategic goals of the *Regional Parks Plan*, the regional parks land acquisition strategy describes a long range vision for Regional Parks' role in protection of the critical remaining unprotected natural areas of the region.

In September 2017, the MVRD Board adopted 16 key directions that guided the development of this strategy. They are located in Appendix 11.1.

The MVRD Board identified the need to provide more protected natural areas within the constraints of high land prices, competition with other land uses, and the geographical limitation of the region. Implementation requires immediate and bold action.



2.1 Over 50 Years of Regional Parks in Metro Vancouver



In 1967, in response to significant population growth, increasing demand from residents for outdoor recreation, threatened and diminishing natural areas, and rising land costs, regional parks pioneers had the foresight to start acquiring and setting aside parkland. The first six regional parks opened to the public in 1969, when the regional population was just one million. Since then the system has grown to a network of 22 regional parks, five greenways, two ecological conservancy areas and three regional park reserves. For a map of Metro Vancouver's Regional Park System see *Figure 1*. The regional parks system currently protects approximately 13,614 hectares of land or approximately five percent (5%) of the region's land base. Annual growth of the regional parks system over time can be seen in *Figure 2*.

In 2017, Metro Vancouver was proud to celebrate 50 years of regional parks with almost 12 million visits to regional parks.

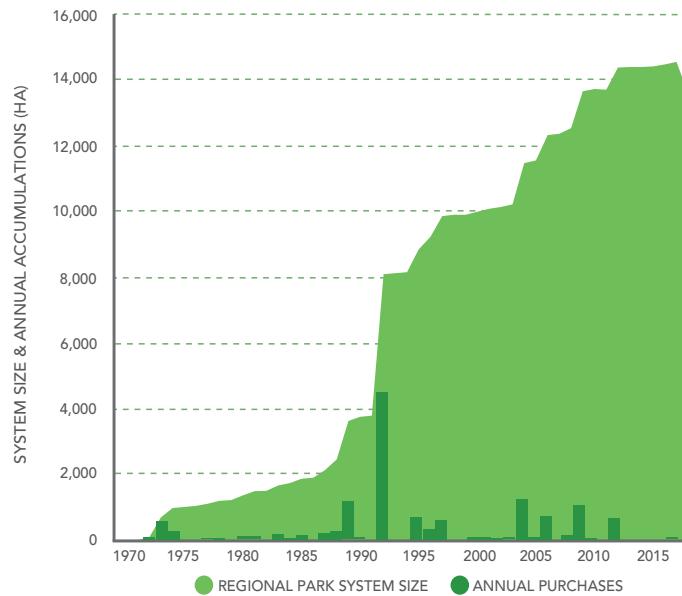


FIGURE 2: GROWTH OF THE REGIONAL PARK SYSTEM



FIGURE 1: METRO VANCOUVER'S REGIONAL PARK SYSTEM

2.2 Challenges

THERE ARE FOUR KEY CHALLENGES THAT SHAPE THE REGIONAL PARKS LAND ACQUISITION STRATEGY.

2.2.1 Growing and Active Population

The Metro Vancouver region has seen significant population growth over the past two decades. The regional population grew from 1.9 million in 2001 to 2.5 million in 2016 with another 1.2 million people expected to reside in the region by 2050. Not only is the population growing, but people are also visiting regional parks more often. Visits to regional parks are growing at a rate of 3.9% per year, twice as fast as population.

Existing regional parks facilities are often at capacity during peak times. As people's understanding of the physical and mental health benefits of spending time in nature increases, this trend is expected to continue. Changing demographics, both in the makeup of the regional population and the way that people are housed, will impact both the demand for natural areas close to urban areas and how these areas are used.

2.2.2 Market Trends

Metro Vancouver's housing price index has increased almost three fold over the past 15 years. The intense demand for housing and development has pushed out from the core areas and exerted upward pressure on land costs throughout the region. The larger undeveloped and relatively pristine tracts of land typically targeted for regional park expansion are now competing for space with residential, commercial, agricultural and industrial uses. Faced with a diminishing pool of new parkland prospects, Metro Vancouver has to ensure that it has the resources and flexibility to be successful in an increasingly competitive land market.

2.2.3 Sensitive Ecosystems in Metro Vancouver are Disappearing

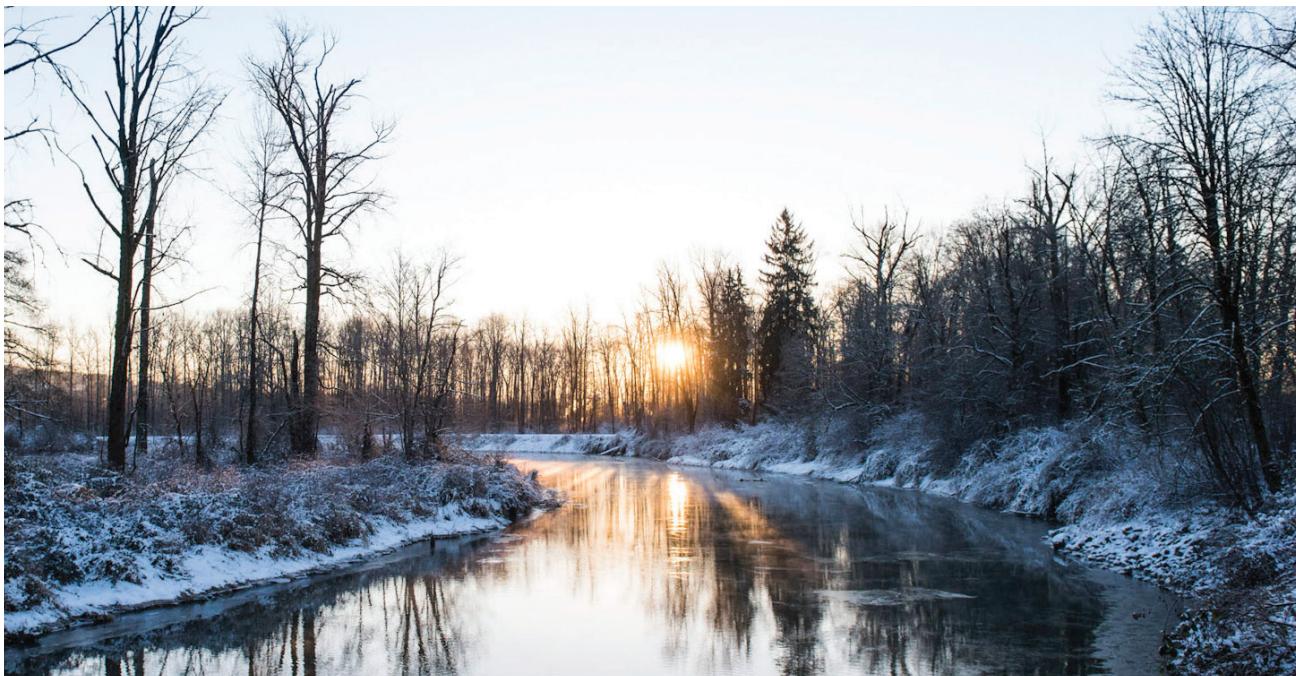
Since the late 1800s, approximately half of the Metro Vancouver region has been disturbed from its natural state. This has resulted in significant alteration to terrestrial ecosystems (e.g., forest and wetland loss, fish stream channelization and loss, habitat fragmentation, etc.) and the ecosystem services they provide.

The conversion of natural areas for residential, industrial, agricultural and commercial uses has accelerated in the past two decades. From 2009 to 2014, over 1600 hectares of sensitive and modified ecosystems were lost, which equates to losing four Stanley Parks every five years.

Ten percent of the region, approximately 30,000 hectares, is unprotected sensitive terrestrial ecosystem. Much of this land is in small, dispersed parcels and is distributed north and east of the region's urban core. To maintain regional livability and ensure the continued provision of ecosystem services for regional residents into the future, much of this land should be protected in its natural state.

2.2.4 Climate Change

The Metro Vancouver region has a rich and diverse natural environment that provides essential ecosystem services such as stormwater management, pollination, flood management, and cooling that addresses urban heat island effects. Forests, wetlands, and other ecosystems help regulate the global climate by removing and storing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.



However, the health of these ecosystems is deteriorating and is vulnerable to further degradation, especially with a changing climate. Many species and ecosystems in the region are at risk of being impacted or displaced entirely due to climate change, because they cannot adapt fast enough.

Temperatures around the world are warming with global climate change models projecting an increase of 3° Celsius in the Metro Vancouver region by the 2050s. This change is projected to lead to a doubling of days over 25° Celsius, a 20% decrease in the amount of rain in summer (with associated increased risk of drought conditions), an increase in extreme weather events, a decreased snow pack, and a sea level rise of at least one metre by 2100.

Although the specific nature and scale of the impacts to regional parks is uncertain, it is expected that climate change will impact ecosystems throughout the region, at the site scale as well as region wide. For example, changing climatic conditions may reduce the viability of some species or ecosystems within regional

parks. Rising sea level, spread of invasive species, changes to precipitation patterns, and increased drought conditions may also threaten biodiversity and the resilience of the regional parks system.

Regional parks and greenways help ecosystems withstand and adapt to changes brought on by climate change by offering an interconnected and protected network of park land. Enlarging protected natural areas, improving their connectivity, and conserving areas with complex natural systems are three ways to enhance the resilience of the species and ecosystems within regional parks.

Regional parks also help mitigate climate change impacts by protecting stored carbon in forests, bogs and wetlands. When considering the acquisition and protection of land, Metro Vancouver will examine both its potential to contribute to the ecological resilience of the regional parks system to climate change, as well as the potential to protect stored carbon.

2.3 Protected Areas in the Region

In Metro Vancouver about 40% of the region is currently protected by various levels of government and other organizations. Figure 3 outlines proportion of regional lands protected to some degree.

Metro Vancouver's regional parks system currently protects approximately 5% of the total regional land base (295,277 hectares). While significant progress has been made towards the protection of Metro Vancouver's important natural areas, the region's ecosystem types are not equally represented. Mountainous ecosystems are well represented in provincial and regional parks and the watersheds. It is the ecosystems of the lowlands near population centres that are underrepresented and most threatened.

All levels of government and other land protection agencies have worked together to achieve the protection of 40% of the region. The federal, provincial, regional, and municipal governments together with First Nations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and others need to continue to work together to secure as much of the remaining unprotected sensitive ecosystems as possible.

PROTECTED AREAS IN METRO VANCOUVER

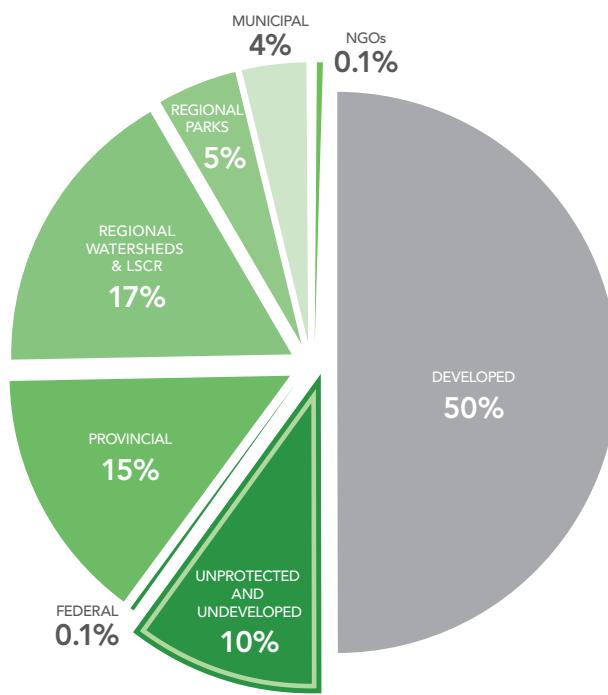


FIGURE 3: PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS IN METRO VANCOUVER BY JURISDICTION

Nature Needs Half is an international movement based on scientific data and principles that states in order for nature to provide the ecosystem services we all depend on, there is a necessity to protect at least half of the planet through large connected ecoregions.

A further 10% of the region would need to be protected for Metro Vancouver to reach the Nature Needs Half vision of 50% protected land.

2.4 Taking Action

Protection of the lands identified in this strategy ensures the most regionally important ecosystems are protected into the future. The strategy also identifies iconic landscapes, vital buffers, and access lands to provide a resilient network of regional parks and greenways across the region.

The most effective way to maintain the benefits of our regional ecosystems is to protect the remaining unprotected land before it is developed. This regional parks land acquisition strategy outlines Metro Vancouver's contribution to protection of important natural areas from now until 2050. Land protection in the region requires a collaborative effort and Metro Vancouver will work with others to protect the remaining important natural areas in the region.



3.0 Metro Vancouver Context

Metro Vancouver's vision, goals, strategies and values for its Regional Park Service guided the development of Regional Park Land Acquisition 2050. This section elaborates on the policies upon which the strategy is based.

3.1 Regional Parks Plan

Metro Vancouver's *Regional Parks Plan* (2016) is the strategic plan for the Regional Parks Service. It sets out the mission, vision, goals and strategies that guide the delivery of regional parks services to regional citizens and visitors. The vision for the Regional Parks Service is:

"Regional Parks protect natural areas and connect people to nature."

The two goals of the Regional Parks Service are:

- **Goal 1:** Protect important natural areas to contribute to regional livability and enhance connections; and
- **Goal 2:** Within the context of natural area protection, provide opportunities for people to connect with, enjoy, be active and learn about the environment.

Strategy 1 in the *Regional Park Plan* is the primary policy statement guiding this land acquisition strategy. It states that Metro Vancouver will "secure land for regional park use centered on protection of the region's important natural areas."

3.2 Values

Metro Vancouver Regional Parks has identified the following values that guide its work:

- *The Necessity of Nature* – We understand the critical role the natural world plays in the survival of the planet and our role in protecting and enhancing it.
- *Wellness* – We continue to witness the positive impact our service has on the mind, body and spirit of the members of our community.
- *The Sharing of Expertise* – We believe environmental sciences have the power to not only find solutions to new challenges, but also amaze, inspire and educate in the process.
- *Stewardship* – Through our relationships with our regional parks' partners, we strive to educate and empower people to help them become ambassadors of nature.

3.3 Regional Parkland Classification

Metro Vancouver utilizes a system to classify park land. It helps identify the role and purpose of lands within the system.

3.3.1 Regional Parks

A regional park is a large natural park, usually greater than 100 hectares in size that protects important natural areas and provide opportunities for people to connect with, enjoy, be active within and learn about the environment (*Regional Parks Plan*, 2016).

To ensure their long-term resiliency to impacts from climate change, competing land uses and growing visitation, each regional park should be composed of the following components:

- a) core natural areas** – lands that possess high habitat values, protect key ecosystem functions, scenic landscapes, unique geological features and provide limited opportunities to connect park visitors with nature;
- b) ecological buffer areas** – lands with moderate habitat values that help protect core natural areas and provide opportunities to connect park visitors with nature; and
- c) access areas** – lands with low to no habitat values which facilitate the development of regional park gateways (e.g., day use and staging areas) to connect people with nature.

3.3.2 Regional Greenways

A Regional Greenway is a linear corridor that contains trails which are, for the most part, physically separated from road traffic. They connect multiple regional parks, utility corridors, communities and other important natural areas and protect ecological services.

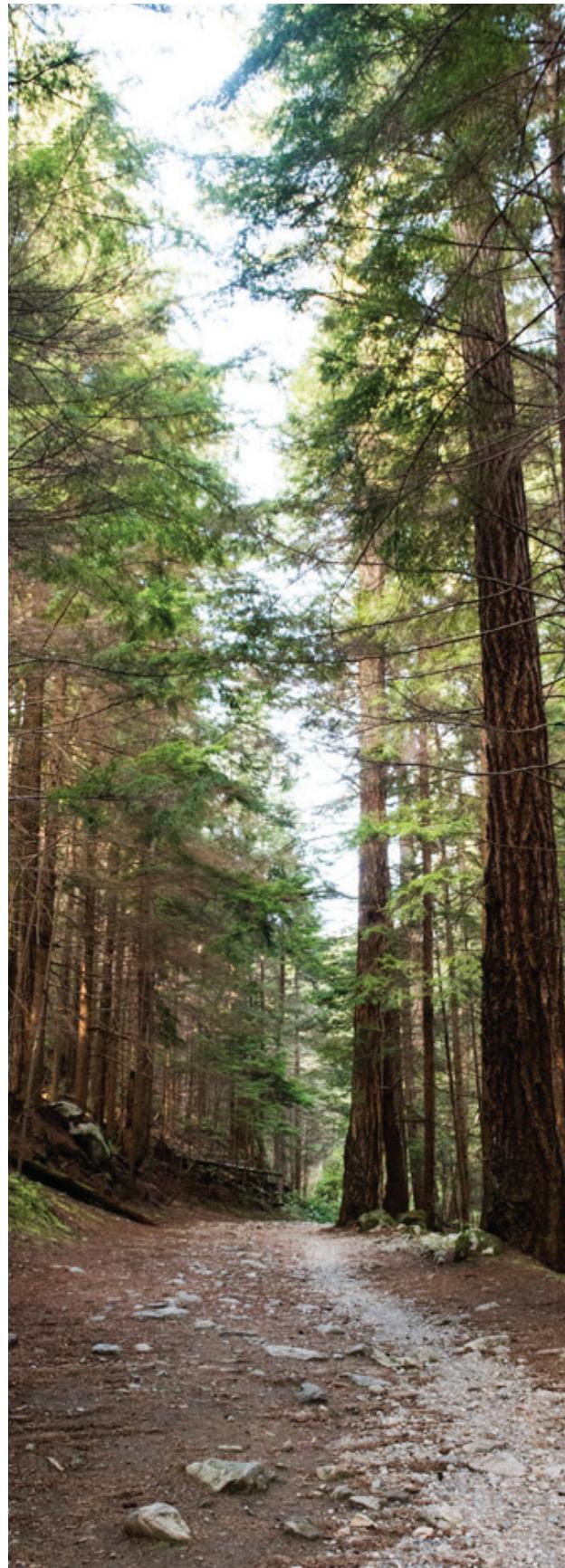
Parks that are not yet fully assembled may be designated as:

3.3.3 Regional Reserves

A Regional Park Reserve is an area of land which has been acquired for regional parks purposes, but is not yet formally open to the public. These areas may be managed for informal recreation and ad hoc conservation purposes. Regional parks land can be held in 'reserve' status until enough land has been assembled and it can be opened to the public.

3.3.4 Regional Ecological Conservancy Areas

A Regional Ecological Conservancy Area is an area of regional parks land that is managed wholly for conservation purposes. Access to the public will be limited except for research or conservation purposes.



4.0 Regional Parks Land Acquisition Strategy

The Regional Parks Land Acquisition Strategy articulates the following vision and outlines five strategies to shape the plan.

4.1 Vision

The vision for the Regional Park Land Acquisition Strategy is to grow the regional parks system into a connected network of resilient regional parks and greenways that protects regionally important natural areas and connects people to them.

4.2 Strategies

Five strategies have been developed to guide the strategy and its implementation.

4.2.1 Strategy 1 – Build a system of regional parks that are resilient to the impacts of climate change, land use change, and growing visitation

Metro Vancouver will protect important natural areas as part of a healthy and resilient regional parks system to promote regional livability and protect ecosystem services.

4.2.2 Strategy 2 – Facilitate a regional greenway system that connects natural areas and allows users to access them

Metro Vancouver will collaborate with others to update the regional vision for a system of greenways that physically connect important natural areas and communities across the region, promote its completion and determine which of those greenways will be provided directly by Metro Vancouver through the Regional Parks Service.

4.2.3 Strategy 3 – Ensure a sustainable funding model for land acquisition

Metro Vancouver will protect its buying power over time, explore new funding sources and ensure management resources keep pace with the growth of the regional park land base.

4.2.4 Strategy 4 – Collaborate and Partner with Others

Metro Vancouver will collaborate with others who share similar goals in order to magnify the impact of the Land Acquisition Program. We will partner with member jurisdictions, First Nations, NGOs, provincial and federal governments, and other agencies via approaches such as collaborative planning and management, joint land acquisition, innovative land tenures and operating agreements.

4.2.5 Strategy 5 – Enable clear, efficient and flexible decision-making

Metro Vancouver will promote a clear, efficient and flexible acquisition process that facilitates timely decision-making on previously identified or unforeseen acquisition opportunities.

5.0 Strategy 1

Build a system of regional parks that are resilient to the impacts of climate change, land use change, and growing visitation.

Regional parks contribute to a healthy and sustainable region by protecting natural areas, which help maintain ecological health and biodiversity while providing opportunities for people to experience the natural world. Within the spectrum of parks (see *Figure 4*), regional parks lie between municipal parks and large national parks. Compared to municipal parks, regional parks are generally larger containing more complex landscapes that protect regionally important natural areas. While municipal parks are used by nearby residents for active sport and recreation, regional parks attract residents from across Metro Vancouver and visitors seeking connection with nature.

5.1 Identifying Potential Future Regional Parks Land

The following section outlines the process for how lands were identified for inclusion within the strategy. The unprotected sensitive and modified ecosystem lands were filtered through a set of 'Conservation Criteria' (*Table 1*), which resulted in a set of lands with High Regional Conservation Potential.

Those lands were further refined using a set of 'Planning Criteria' (*Table 2*), which resulted in areas of interest for expanded and new regional parks. This process is visualized in *Figure 5* and is detailed further in this section.

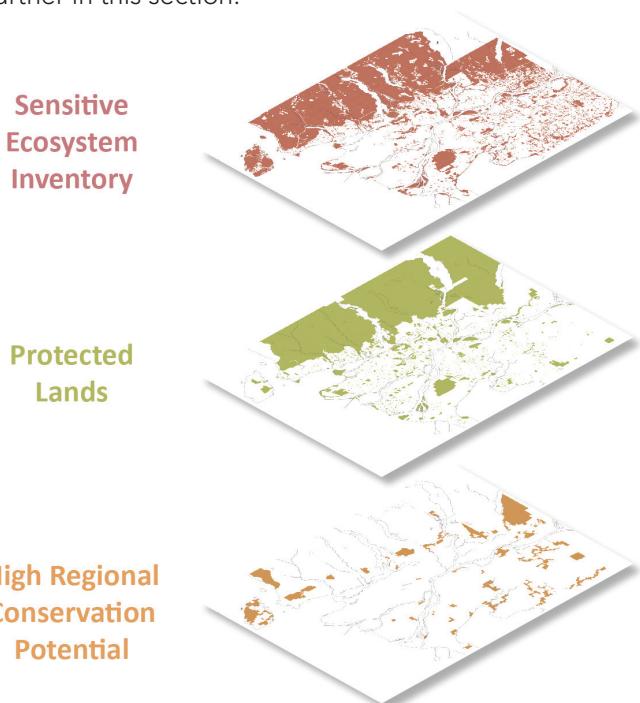


FIGURE 5: DIAGRAM OF PROCESS TO DETERMINE FUTURE REGIONAL PARKS LAND.



FIGURE 4: SPECTRUM OF PARKS

Table 1 – Conservation Criteria

CRITERIA	DESCRIPTION
HIGH RELATIVE CONSERVATION VALUE	The relative ecological value of a natural area. The higher the relative conservation value, the more valuable the ecosystem. This criteria identified the region's outstanding natural areas.
COMPLEX SIZE	The relative size of a contiguous natural area. The larger the natural area the more important.
ECOLOGICAL CONNECTIVITY	The relative proximity of a natural area to already protected areas. This criteria leverages ecological size and quality.
HABITAT DIVERSITY	The relative diversity of sensitive ecosystem classes found within a large natural area. The higher the variety of sensitive ecosystem classes contained in a large natural areas, the higher its comparative value.
LARGE WATERCOURSES / WET AREAS	The relative value of lands containing wet areas (e.g., headwaters, ground water recharge areas, and floodplains beyond typical riparian setbacks). These lands are valued due to their role in maintaining park hydrology.
BUFFER LANDS	These lands protect core natural areas.

A set of planning criteria were developed to determine feasibility and prioritize lands as potential regional parks land. While the first of the two filters was based on conservation principles, these criteria take into account a variety of human factors and municipal plans.

Table 2 – Planning Criteria

CRITERIA	DESCRIPTION
IDENTIFICATION IN PREVIOUS LAND ACQUISITION STRATEGIES	Land previously examined and prioritized in past land acquisition planning.
MUNICIPAL POLICY	The relative compatibility of regional park designation with municipal plans.
RELATIVE AVAILABILITY	The relative availability of lands identified with potential for protection.
OTHER CONSTRAINTS	Vulnerability and threat from urban development and other park-incompatible uses affecting identified land parcels.

2.5% of the region has unprotected high-value sensitive ecosystems, buffer lands and access lands that will be considered as future regional park land.



5.2 Strategy and Actions

The regional parks land acquisition strategy describes the following strategies and actions with respect to the regional parks system.

STRATEGY 1 – Build a system of regional parks that are resilient to the impacts of climate change, land use change, and growing visitation.

ACTIONS		TIMING
1. COMPLETE AND EXPAND EXISTING REGIONAL PARKS	a) Identify land to complete and expand regional parks, based on a set of criteria that aim to improve resiliency of the regional parks system.	Ongoing
	b) Undertake planning work to confirm boundaries for expanded regional parks.	Short term
	c) Confirm regional park vision, program and boundaries during the management planning process.	Short to Medium
	d) Acquire land identified for regional parks.	Ongoing
2. CREATE NEW REGIONAL PARKS	a) Identify land for new regional parks, based on a set of criteria that aims to improve resiliency of the regional parks system.	Ongoing
	b) Undertake planning work for each new park to establish vision, program, and confirm interim park boundaries.	Short to Medium
	c) Acquire and dedicate land identified for new regional parks.	Ongoing

6.0 Strategy 2

Facilitate a regional greenway system that connects natural areas and promotes access to them.

6.1 Defining Regional Greenway

Regional greenways are linear corridors that contain trails, often multi-use, which are for the most part physically separated from road traffic. They connect multiple regional parks, utility corridors, communities and other important natural areas and protect ecological services.

6.2 Metro Vancouver's Role

The mandate for Metro Vancouver Regional Park's Regional Greenway Program is nested in the goals of the *Regional Parks Plan* (i.e., protect and connect). As greenways are linear in nature, often contain multi use trails and are less likely to protect large natural areas, they tend to be more strongly aligned with the connect part of the Regional Parks Service's strategic goals. *Figure 6* graphically shows the relative alignment of regional greenways and parks with the Regional Parks Service's strategic goals. For this reason, Metro Vancouver's Regional Greenway Program focuses on greenway routes which connect people to nature and protect important natural areas.

Historically Metro Vancouver has played two roles with respect to the planning and implementation of the regional greenway network. They are:

1. **Vision Holder:** As vision holder, Metro Vancouver works collaboratively with municipal jurisdictions and other key regional stakeholders to develop a common regional greenway vision and promotes its implementation.

2. **Provider:** In addition to its role as vision holder, Metro Vancouver directly provides greenway services to the region. As a provider Metro Vancouver acquires, designs, constructs and operates five regional greenways in partnership with other jurisdictions.

Metro Vancouver will continue to perform its role as greenway vision holder and provider.

6.3 Challenges

Occasionally, sections of greenways can be established quickly through the conversion of abandoned rail corridors or obtaining public access rights on dikes, but this is not the norm. Acquiring tenure to corridors is generally challenging due to their narrow linear form and the fact that they traverse multiple communities and numerous land parcels – many of which have well established and highly valued uses.

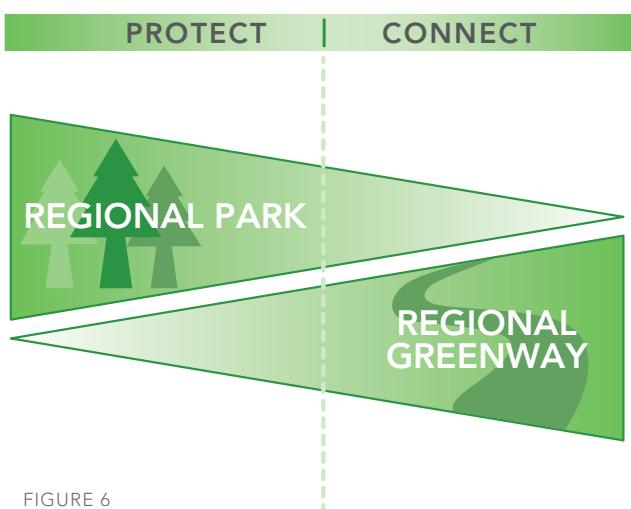


FIGURE 6

6.4 The Regional Greenway System

The MVRD Board adopted the *Greater Vancouver Regional Greenway Vision* in 1999. Over the following six years, the vision was refined through a series of collaborative sector planning processes for much of the region. The results of which were greenway sector plans for the Burrard Peninsula/Richmond, Northeast, Pitt Meadows/Maple Ridge, Northshore, Fraser Valley, and South Shore planning sectors.



Metro Vancouver currently provides five regional greenways:

Brunette Fraser Regional Greenway, Delta South Surrey Regional Greenway, North Alouette Regional Greenway, Pitt River Greenway and the Seymour River Regional Greenway,

Metro Vancouver and its partners have made significant progress in the implementation of the current vision.

With the passage of time and changes to the region, a formal collaborative review of the system vision is overdue. A regional greenway system vision update should be done in collaboration with Metro Vancouver's municipal jurisdictions, Translink, the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure and other key regional stakeholders.

6.5 Strategy and Actions

The regional parks land acquisition strategy describes the following strategy and actions with respect to the regional greenway system.

STRATEGY 2 – Facilitate a regional greenway system that connects natural areas and promotes access to them.

ACTIONS	TIMING
1. UPDATE AND MAINTAIN THE REGIONAL GREENWAY SYSTEM VISION.	a) Work with member jurisdictions and key stakeholders to develop and adopt an updated greenway vision for the region. Review it periodically.
	b) Promote development of the regional greenway system with member jurisdictions and other stakeholders.
	c) Identify regional greenway system routes and segments Metro Vancouver will provide as part of Regional Parks Greenway Program including the Experience the Fraser routes.
2. COMPLETE AND EXPAND EXISTING REGIONAL PARKS GREENWAYS.	a) Identify land parcels and rights of way needed to complete acquisition of existing regional parks greenway routes.
	b) Acquire land identified for existing greenways.
3. CREATE NEW REGIONAL PARKS GREENWAYS.	a) Identify land parcels and rights of way needed to complete acquisition of new regional parks greenway routes.
	b) Acquire land identified for new regional parks greenways.

7.0 Strategy 3

Ensure a Sustainable Funding Model

This section outlines the funding mechanism that has supported the assembly of the existing regional parks land base, options to support future acquisition, and the implementation tools available for contemporary park land acquisition.

7.1 History of Regional Parks Acquisition Funding in Metro Vancouver

Between 1969 (establishment of the Regional Parks Service) and 1993, regional park land was acquired through tax levy funded departmental budgets, borrowing and Provincial government contributions. In November 1993, in response to strong public support for acquiring and protecting regional lands while still affordable and available, the MVRD Board approved establishing a \$3.5 million annual allocation for park land acquisition to be funded via the MVRD tax requisition.



This newly created fund, called the Heritage Parkland Acquisition Fund (HPAF), allowed Metro Vancouver to grow the regional park system significantly. It was complemented by programs like the 1995 Lower Mainland Nature Legacy Program, which was financed by several levels of government and added some 1,900 ha to the regional park system. Annual contributions to the HPAF were increased to \$3.77 million in 2003.

In 2017, the HPAF was reviewed, which resulted in a name change to the Regional Parks Land Acquisition Fund (RPLAF). In fall 2017, the MVRD Board approved an increase in the annual tax requisition for the RPLAF by \$3.8 million for a total contribution of \$7.57 million annually. At this rate, the cost to tax payers is approximately \$3.15 per capita for regional parks land acquisition (Figure 7).

2018 REGIONAL PARK FOR LAND ACQUISITION FUNDING IN BC

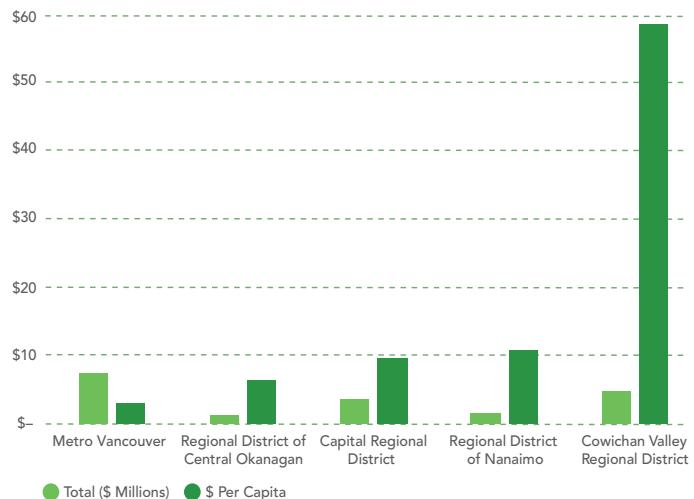


FIGURE 7: 2018 REGIONAL PARK FUNDING FOR LAND ACQUISITION IN BC

7.2 Ensuring a Sustainable Funding Model for Land Acquisition

Regional parks land acquisition funding has not historically been linked to a park land acquisition target or regional population trends. Due to sustained and often rapid increases in land prices in the face of steady regional population growth, being able to compete for land under current market conditions is critical.



7.3 Strategy and Actions

STRATEGY 3 – Ensure a sustainable funding model for land acquisition.

ACTIONS	TIMING
1. IMPLEMENT APPROPRIATE FUNDING MODELS TO ACHIEVE VISION.	a) Investigate feasibility of current and potential funding options available under provincial legislation and bring recommendations for future funding sources to MVRD Board for consideration.
	b) Evaluate the costs and benefits of funding options to address rapidly diminishing opportunities and bring a recommendation to MVRD Board for consideration.
	c) Evaluate linking the Regional Parks Land Acquisition Fund to regional land price trends.
	d) Review the Regional Parks Land Acquisition Fund at least every 5 years to ensure buying power is maintained over time.
2. ENSURE THAT OPERATING BUDGET REQUIREMENTS BASED ON APPROVED LEVELS OF SERVICE ARE REFLECTED IN THE 5 YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN.	a) Explore establishment of a program as part of the annual capital budget to ensure all costs associated with acquisition of properties (e.g., demolition, trespass issues, and land restoration) will be available for immediate site management needs.
	b) Ensure that operating budget requirements based on approved levels of service are reflected in the 5 year financial plan

7.4 Acquisition Tools

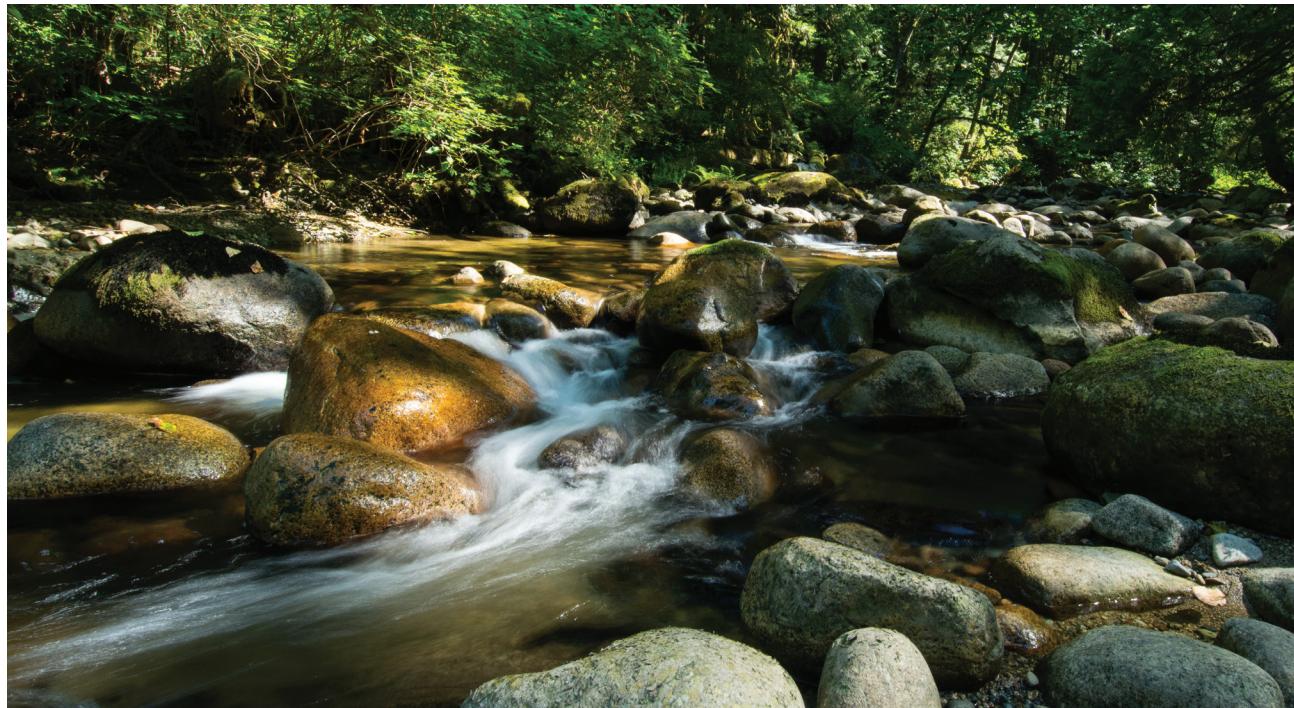
There are a number of options for acquiring lands as part of a park land acquisition strategy. In choosing the most suitable land acquisition option, the principal factor is how best to achieve Metro Vancouver's goals. Corporate policy, bylaws, and enabling legislation may require a certain security of tenure in order to allow the expenditures of funds and provide adequate protection of natural values. Furthermore, practical considerations such as budget constraints, community development and collaborative governance may require a partner be granted the appropriate tenure.

- **Fee Simple (ownership)** – Currently, 59% of regional parks land is owned fee simple by Metro Vancouver which provides the largest interest in ownership and highest level of rights. Such ownership can be obtained in a variety of ways. (See Table 3).
- **Co-ownership (purchase partnerships)** – A partnership between Metro Vancouver and one or more other organizations, all of which are on title as tenants-in-common.
- **Easement** – an interest in land that provides rights to use the land or a portion of it for a designated purpose, such as access or accommodating utilities. The easement must benefit another adjacent or nearby parcel of land and the interest cannot be personal in nature.
- **Statutory Rights of Way** – A Statutory Right of Way (SRW) can be obtained by specified entities including many public agencies to access or utilize a private property for a specified purpose, such as installing and maintaining infrastructure needed for the delivery of a specific service. It does not need to benefit an adjacent or nearby property. A SRW runs with the land title and is binding on all existing and future owners of the affected property.
- **Conservation Covenant** – restricts a landowner's activities on the land or a portion of the land. Certain types can also require the landowner to undertake specific actions or activities. Covenants are registered on the title of a parcel of land and run with the land regardless of ownership unless discharged.
- **"Placeholder" Agreements: Option to Purchase, Right of First Refusal** – If a landowner indicates a desire to sell land sometime in the future, a legally binding agreement can be written to provide the opportunity to purchase under certain terms or match a future purchase offer on the property before it's sold.
- **Leasehold** – Metro Vancouver can hold a registered interest in a parcel of land that often provides exclusive use.
- **License or Permit** – typically a shorter term contractual agreement between two parties that generally ceases when the land is sold.
- **Partnerships / Co-management** – Lands owned by a public agency or non-government organization that are co-managed by two or more parties under a formal agreement.



Table 3 – Methods of Obtaining Fee Simple Ownership

METHOD	DESCRIPTION
PURCHASE	Transactions with a willing buyer and a willing seller typically at current market value.
CROWN GRANTS	Land passing from the Federal or Provincial governments either at market value or nominal cost.
MUNICIPAL TRANSFER	Whether obtained via dedication or other means, municipal natural land can potentially be transferred to a regional district often at nominal cost.
DONATIONS	Donations of land or property rights to a regional parks service to protect the land for conservation purposes and/or public access.
ECOLOGICAL GIFTS	A specific class of donation under the Federal Ecological Gifts Program to preserve Canada's natural heritage. This program allows Canadians who own certified ecologically sensitive land to donate those lands, or an eligible interest or right in land to a qualified recipient (e.g., Metro Vancouver) in exchange for a tax receipt and capital gains exemption.
EXTENDED TENANCY (LIFE ESTATE)	An owner donates or sells land, but retains entitlement to use the land for a period of time following sale, sometimes for life.
EXPROPRIATION	Although not Metro Vancouver's current practice with respect to regional parks land, the government (the Crown or one of its agencies, including municipalities) can through a legal process take private property (typically at fair market value) that has been deemed to have a greater public use or benefit.



7.5 Funding Sources

There are several tools available for Metro Vancouver to raise funds for regional parks land acquisition.

Revenue sources currently used include:

- **Property Tax** – Based on a property's assessed value, property tax is collected and used by municipalities to fund important services like police, fire and ambulance, recreation and community centres, libraries, and parks. Metro Vancouver assesses a tax levy to fund MVRD services, including regional parks.
- **Partnerships** – Generally not an ongoing revenue source and restricted to a particular project of mutual importance. Some NGOs also access government conservation land securement or wildlife conservation funding that may be available for the life of specific programs. Typically partners provide their interest to Metro Vancouver for management through a leaseback and partnership operating funds are generally not provided.

Potential future funding sources that can be explored include:

- **Parcel Tax** – Applied to each parcel at a flat rate, a parcel tax can be used to raise money for regional parks land acquisition. Currently used in other regional districts in BC, including Regional District of Nanaimo and Comox Valley Regional District.
- **Development Cost Charges (DCCs)** – currently used by BC municipalities to partially fund services directly related to growth, including the development of parks. Metro Vancouver could create a DCC to be applied to new development in the region to fund new regional park land acquisition or development.
- **Borrowing** – In BC, local governments can engage in long-term borrowing for items and projects that are considered "capital" in nature, and it must be

done through the Provincial Municipal Finance Authority (MFA). Long-term borrowing by local governments cannot be undertaken without the approval of the Inspector of Municipalities and the assent of the electorate. While this is not a revenue source, it is a tool that could be used to accelerate the purchase of land.

- **Charitable Foundation Endowment** – donations and public/corporate fund-raising designated specifically for park land acquisition. The Regional Parks Service has its own charitable foundation – the Pacific Parklands Foundation – which is one way to raise non-tax requisition funding for regional parks land acquisition.

7.6 Management of Regional Parks Land

An increase in regional parks land will come with a responsibility to maintain it, therefore operational budget implications should be anticipated. Effective operational and resource management plans will be needed for each site to determine the magnitude of the impacts to operations budget. However, as sensitive ecosystems are being lost, one strategy is to protect land now while it is still available and conserve it for future use. The incremental costs of land management are scalable depending in part on how much public access is provided. Those capital development requests will be brought forward in the future through the regular budget process and the MVRD Board will be able to direct the rate of growth of the Regional Parks Service.

The long term funding strategy will consider establishing a stewardship program as part of the annual capital budget to guarantee all costs associated with acquisition of properties will be available for immediate site management needs. This will ensure the land is adequately protected before it is turned over to ongoing operations.

8.0 Strategy 4

Collaborate and Partner with Others



8.1 Metro Vancouver's Role

Metro Vancouver's past success in developing its system of regional parks and greenways has been, in part, thanks to joint efforts and partnerships between federal, provincial and municipal jurisdictions to achieve common aims. These collaborations have significantly leveraged the tools and funding available to Metro Vancouver to achieve its vision for the regional parks system – particularly with respect to acquiring tenure to Crown lands. To magnify the impact of its land acquisition program, Metro Vancouver will continue to collaborate with others who share similar goals. We will partner with member jurisdictions, First Nations, NGOs, provincial and federal governments, and other agencies via approaches such as collaborative planning and management, joint land acquisition, innovative land tenures and operating agreements.

8.2 First Nations

Significant areas of the region have been protected for conservation purposes through designation as regional parks in collaboration with the Province of BC. Although large unprotected important natural areas of the region are found within Crown land holdings, there is uncertainty around protection, conservation and public access given that there are unresolved Aboriginal rights and title claims over these Crown lands, at a time when Crown-First Nation relationships are making efforts to move moving towards reconciliation. If Crown lands are to play a significant part in Metro Vancouver achieving its "protect and connect" goals in the region, innovative First Nations engagement, collaboration, and negotiation approaches along with new land tenure models, will be required.

8.3 Strategy and Actions

The regional parks land acquisition strategy describes the following strategy and actions with respect to collaboration.

STRATEGY 4 – Collaborate and Partner with Others

ACTIONS		TIMING
1. CHAMPION THE PROTECTION OF THE REGION'S IMPORTANT NATURAL AREAS.	a) Promote the Regional Parks Land Acquisition 2050 with others who have interest in or responsibility for land protection.	Ongoing
	b) Review potential acquisitions with pertinent member jurisdictions and other stakeholders during the annual review.	Ongoing
2. LEVERAGE RESOURCES WHERE PARTNER INTERESTS ALIGN WITH REGIONAL PARKS.	a) Align land acquisition with the plans of other departments within Metro Vancouver to build upon common interests.	Ongoing
	b) Consider joint acquisition of property or joint land assembly where similar goals are shared and management objectives are aligned.	Ongoing
3. INVESTIGATE OPPORTUNITIES TO WORK WITH FIRST NATIONS.	a) Explore innovative and cooperative arrangements, including opportunities to expand regional parks in collaboration with First Nations.	Ongoing
4. MAXIMIZE APPLICATION OF LAND USE PLANNING DESIGNATIONS TO PROTECT REGIONAL PARKS LAND.	a) Work with member jurisdictions to protect existing, expanded and new parks and greenways, through land use planning tools such as development setbacks, integrated storm water management plans and landscape buffers and identify these lands in their respective Official Community Plans and zoning bylaws.	Short to Medium

9.0 Strategy 5

Enable clear, efficient and flexible decision making

Metro Vancouver's Regional Parks Land Acquisition Program is currently conducted on a willing buyer, willing seller basis. The majority of acquisition prospects are generated through direct contact with landowners or as a result of properties being listed on the open market. It is common for properties to have been held in long-term ownership for decades, often in an undeveloped state. Due to their location and ecological attributes, these properties are often unique opportunities that cannot be substituted for in the market. Capitalizing on these opportunities requires an efficient and timely process especially when competing with other buyers in Metro Vancouver's generally active real estate market.

The aim of the land acquisition process is to maximize opportunities to acquire important natural areas subject to available financial resources, legislative requirements and corporate financial policy and processes. Land acquisition opportunities will generally be those in the strategy endorsed by the Metro Vancouver Regional District Board. Occasionally unanticipated but compelling opportunities not in the strategy will arise and be vetted by the MVRD Board prior to staff taking action to investigate and possibly acquire them.



9.1 Land Acquisition Process

The following table describes the land acquisition process.

STEP	ACTION	APPROVAL
1.	Land Acquisition Strategy – The regional parks land acquisition strategy is the MVRD Board's long term vision for acquiring land for regional parks.	MVRD Board approval of strategy.
2.	Land Acquisition Review – The strategy will be updated regularly to respond to changes in the region. Proposed changes will be approved by the MVRD Board.	MVRD Board Approval
3.	Annual update of Land Acquisition Activity – Staff will submit an annual information report to the MVRD Board outlining the progress of current land acquisition initiatives and prospects that may come forward in the coming year. This will include fee simple purchase or interests in lands being obtained through transfers from other levels of government or agencies.	MVRD Board Information Report
4.	Pre-acquisition Approval to Offer – A memo outlining the property's background and rationale for purchase, appraisal information and anticipated negotiation issues, is provided to senior management for approval with a recommendation for an offer price or offer price range.	Chief Administrative Officer Approval
5.	Acquisition Approval – Seek authority to purchase from the MVRD Board. This will be done through a board report that includes appropriate mapping, background documents and the acquisition criteria summary.	MVRD Board Approval
6.	Execution of Purchase and Sale Agreement following removal of conditions	Staff
7.	Announce Acquisition – MVRD and funding partners announce the acquisition after the transfer of title is complete.	Staff
8.	Unforeseen Opportunities – Compelling properties not included in the Strategy will be brought to the Board for consideration at the earliest opportunity, and if approved, included in the Strategy and pursued in accordance with the process described above.	MVRD Board Approval

9.2 Acquisition Criteria

This land acquisition strategy employs land evaluation and prioritization systems at two points of the process. A first set of conservation and planning criteria was used to filter the region's unprotected sensitive ecosystems. A second set of criteria is used to evaluate individual land acquisition opportunities

prior to purchase, as part of Metro Vancouver's due diligence process. These acquisition criteria are described here. The market availability of lands identified for potential regional parks or greenway acquisition is generally low at any particular time. Staff initiatives to proactively cultivate purchases and donations of target lands can enhance land availability to some extent.

ACQUISITION CRITERIA	DESCRIPTION	SCORING	MAX POINT VALUE
Contribution to a Regional Park or Greenway	Estimates the relative contribution to a regional park or greenway. It encompasses the facets of a 'resilient' and connected regional parks system.		
ECOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE	Estimates the relative conservation value(s) of the parcels being considered for purchase.	Points are assigned only to the primary and secondary contributions to the park with up to 20 points allocated to the primary contribution and up to 10 points to the secondary.	30
	Estimates the relative quality, rarity and importance of the landscape feature(s) contained in the land parcels being considered for purchase.		
	Estimates the relative value of the opportunities for visitors to experience and learn about nature contained in the land parcels being considered for purchase.		
	Estimates the relative value to improve the operational function of a regional park or greenway		
	Estimates the relative value to the physical connectivity, safety, or security of tenure of a regional greenway. This sub-criterion will be used to evaluate lands that support greenway trail extensions only.		
LEVEL OF THREAT	Estimates the relative level of threat to the natural values present on the subject lands if not acquired for regional park or the potential for the loss of connectivity if permanent tenure is not acquired for a Greenway.	Maximum points given where risk is highest.	10
STEWARDSHIP IMPLICATIONS	Estimates the relative level of stewardship effort Metro Vancouver will be required to invest in the land to optimize its contribution to the Regional Parks Service's goals.	Maximum points are given where restoration and stewardship costs are lowest.	5
OTHER CONSIDERATIONS	Estimates the value of other specific and timely factors not addressed above; such as balancing supply/demand in a portion of the region or responding to an issue with high municipal or public profile.	Maximum points are given when the purchase contributes highly to addressing a pressing concern or issue.	5
PARTNERSHIPS (BONUS)	Estimates the relative benefits of the presence of a collaborative effort supporting the acquisition of a subject property. This criterion is employed as a bonus due to the relative infrequency of land acquisition partnerships over the past decade.	Maximum points given for large scale donations/partnerships.	5

The above table is a general summary of the acquisition criteria. A long form score sheet will be completed by a staff committee and their input

consolidated into a summary sheet attached to land acquisition reports when a property is brought forward.

9.3 Transfer of Land from Other Jurisdictions to Metro Vancouver

As per MVRD Board direction through adoption of the 2014 Regional Parks Service Review Report, Metro Vancouver will decline any requests to transfer responsibility for **local** parks to Metro Vancouver as well as requests for financial contributions to assist in the development or ongoing operation of **local** parks.

Notwithstanding the above, MVRD Board will cautiously consider the transfer of responsibility for natural areas from municipal or other jurisdictions to Metro Vancouver where regional management is in the public interest. Transfers will be considered on a case-by-case basis only after a thorough system level review has been conducted.

The following criteria will be used in review:

- **Contains regionally important natural areas:**

If the natural areas present on the land in question are found to be regionally important, it may be within the regional interest for Metro Vancouver to manage them.

- **Supports an identified regional connection:**

If the land in question provides Metro Vancouver an opportunity to advance an identified regional connection consistent with the regional district's greenway service provision role, it may be within the regional interest for Metro Vancouver to manage them.

- **Enhances stewardship:** If the natural area in question is adjacent to existing Metro Vancouver park land or planned park expansions, improves the size or configuration of a regional park from a conservation perspective and/or enhances stewardship, it may be within the regional interest for Metro Vancouver to manage it.

- **Justifiable financial implications:** If the operating budget impacts are minor or the benefits to the regional parks system offered by a proposed land transfer are deemed to outweigh the consequential

impacts to operating budget, it may be within the regional interest for Metro Vancouver to operate them.

9.4 Land Disposition Process

On occasion, portions of land acquired by Metro Vancouver in support of Regional Parks Service delivery is determined to be surplus to its needs. When this occurs, Metro Vancouver will dispose of the land according to the requirements of the Local Government Act, the Community Charter and corporate best practices.

9.5.1 Transfer of Parks or Park Land from Metro Vancouver to Other Jurisdictions

Metro Vancouver will consider transfer of responsibility for regional parks or regional parks land to municipal or other jurisdictions with caution. Transfers will be considered on a case-by-case basis only after a thorough system level review has been conducted. The following criteria will be used in the review:

- **Role** – the role of the park land in the regional parks system. Removal of park land does not compromise Metro Vancouver's ability to achieve its strategic goals or the resiliency of the parks system.

- **Purpose** – the original purpose for which the park land was acquired is no longer valid.

- **Visitation** – if visitation is overwhelmingly local rather than regional, it may make sense for a municipality to manage these lands.

- **Adjacency** – if pieces of park land are adjacent to another jurisdiction's park land, and the regional pieces are not sufficient to create a complete park, it may make sense for another jurisdiction to manage these lands.

When regional park land is transferred to another jurisdiction for continued use as public open space, Metro Vancouver will endeavor to ensure that the land remains protected as parkland.

9.5 Performance Indicators

Performance indicators help citizens, elected officials, managers and employees gauge the effectiveness of the Regional Parks Service in achieving organizational goals. Performance indicators are intrinsically linked to an organization's strategic goals and are used to help managers assess whether they are on target as they work towards those goals. The following indicators have been developed to track the effectiveness of the implementation of Metro Vancouver's regional parks land acquisition strategy.

1. Number of hectares acquired annually
2. Number of hectares of sensitive and modified ecosystems acquired annually
3. Number of opportunities completed relative to number of opportunities pursued annually

9.6 Strategy and Actions

The regional parks land acquisition strategy incorporates the following strategy and actions to enable clear, efficient and flexible decision making.

STRATEGY 5 – Enable clear, efficient and flexible decision-making.

ACTIONS		TIMING
1. ESTABLISH AN EFFICIENT STANDARDIZED PROCESS.	a) Implement standardized land acquisition MVRD Board policies and corporate procedures.	Short term
	b) Regularly review and assess the land acquisition process for efficiency and effectiveness and modify as required to address changing circumstances in the region.	Ongoing
2. UPDATE THE STRATEGY IN RESPONSE TO NEW INFORMATION.	a) Annually review land acquisition properties.	Ongoing



10.0 Conclusion



Can you imagine...

It's 2050 and the Metro Vancouver region continues to be consistently ranked as one of the best places in the world to live, work and play.

Regional parks continue to provide essential ecosystems services for the region, and have helped maintain a healthy region in the face of an uncertain future.

Due to the regional parks land acquisition strategy, there is:

- A system of regional parks that is resilient to the impacts of climate change, land use change, and growing visitation, and
- A greenway system that connects natural areas and allows users to access them.

This was achieved by:

- Ensuring there was a sustainable funding model for land acquisition.
- Collaborating and partnering with others to achieve the vision, and
- Having a clear and efficient decision making process that allowed for flexibility and the ability to capitalize on unforeseen opportunities.

Thirty two years ago, Metro Vancouver adopted a vision of a connected network of resilient regional parks and greenways to protect regionally important natural areas, and connect people to them. Three decades later, it is regarded by citizens as one of the region's greatest achievements.

11.0 Appendices

11.1 Regional Parks Land Acquisition Strategy – Key Directions

These key directions were endorsed by the MVRD Board in September 2017 and provided guidance to the development of Regional Parks Land Acquisition 2050.

1. Metro Vancouver must be aggressive and create a very ambitious land acquisition strategy vision due to the high development pressures on the limited and decreasing supply of natural lands available for protection as regional parks.
2. The new land acquisition strategy needs to take into consideration that funding for regional parkland acquisition has not kept up with rising costs of lands. Mechanisms for ensuring that a revised funding model remains reflective of the reality of land costs should be evaluated and incorporated if warranted.
3. Regional greenspace defines Metro Vancouver's livability.
4. The land acquisition strategy must take into consideration the regional growth strategy (Metro 2040) and anticipated outcomes.
5. The land acquisition strategy should seek and include a diversity of land acquisition opportunities (i.e., not 100% Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory (SEI)). These non SEI (or complementary) lands can be important in supporting public access to nature and/or protecting other regionally important natural values/ecological services such as hydrology.
6. The land acquisition strategy should contemplate the acquisition of lands within Metro Vancouver if the land is consistent with Metro Vancouver's mandate in providing regional parks services to its members.
7. Metro Vancouver needs to work with its municipal partners as it develops and implements the land acquisition strategy for regional parks. Opportunities to align the regional parks land acquisition strategy with local planning and opportunities to leverage local funding to achieve joint goals should be explored.
8. To set targets consider a blend of approaches including establishing quantitative targets, but focus on gap analysis while integrating opportunism.
9. The flexibility to readily take advantage of unforeseen opportunities must be built into the land acquisition strategy.
10. The land acquisition strategy should carefully explore the potential role of the acquisition of modified and marginalized lands, including farmland, in protecting regionally important natural areas and establishing regional parks.
11. In general, the Regional Parks Committee concurs with the draft definition of a regional greenway presented by staff "Greenways are linear parks that contain multi use trails which are for the most part physically separated from road traffic. They connect regional parks, other important natural areas and communities. Regional greenways may also function as ecological corridors that protect and connect important natural areas."

12. Regional greenways and trails are part of the regional infrastructure, critical for our communities and important to residents.
13. Metro Vancouver has a role in supporting both wildlife and human connectivity through regional greenways and trails. This can be supported by Metro Vancouver in a number of ways. Options include roles such as resource provider, direct provided or vision holder and policy leader. Notwithstanding Metro Vancouver's role, an expanded greenways program needs a regional vision and additional resources to be made available.
14. Consideration should be given to the integration of the Coast to Canyon Trail concept from the Experience the Fraser plan as a foundational element into the regional greenway network vision developed through the land acquisition strategy project.
15. Overall equity in funding a regional greenway network is an important consideration in the ultimate implementation of the land acquisition strategy.
16. Land acquisition strategies should enhance communities and preserve natural habitat while minimizing impact on economic development and industry.

11.2 Engagement Summary

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the completion of the Regional Parks Land Acquisition 2050 project, Metro Vancouver engaged with other stakeholders that had compatible values and goals.

INITIAL ENGAGEMENT

In the initial phases of the regional parks land acquisition strategy, Metro Vancouver engaged with targeted internal, municipal and non-governmental stakeholders that had compatible values and goals. This included internal (i.e., Metro Vancouver) business units along with a series of external meetings with:

- (a) GVRD Member Municipalities, Electoral Area 'A', and Tsawwassen First Nation
- (b) External Agencies (Regional, Provincial and Federal) and
- (c) Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) including land trusts.

The purpose of these meetings was to share information on this project and gather feedback on regional parks land acquisition.

KEY MESSAGES

The primary outcome of these meetings was an expression of widespread support for the role of Metro Vancouver's Regional Parks Service, the goals set down in the *Regional Parks Plan* (2016) and the assumptions behind the Regional Parks Land Acquisition Strategy project. Some of the key messages include:

- Multi-lateral communication and collaboration is needed between Metro Vancouver, other jurisdictions and stakeholders to protect important natural areas.
- External government agencies, land trusts and other NGOs have limited mandate and/or funds. When they do have a mandate and funding, the Metro Vancouver region is not a focus of their work because of the high cost of land and the limited opportunities to protect nature due to urban development.
- Few municipalities have a formal park land acquisition strategy or evaluation criteria and their park land acquisition is commonly guided by targets and distribution standards set out in OCPs, park master plans or neighbourhood plans.
- A strong consensus, particularly among municipal jurisdictions, that Metro Vancouver has a key planning and leadership role in establishing, maintaining and communicating a regional vision for regional parks and greenways.
- Confirmation that municipal jurisdictions emphasize connectivity and active transportation over experiential character, passive recreation, or biodiversity corridor protection in their greenway and trail development activities.

RECOMMENDED LAND ACQUISITION CRITERIA

The following land acquisition criteria were recommended to Metro Vancouver during the engagement process:

- Protect important natural areas guided by Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory, ecological health, habitat for migratory species, and regional bio-diversity.
- Assess watershed issues and consider upstream conditions that may impact a parcel.
- Provide connectivity between natural areas for people and wildlife.
- Protect freshwater wetlands and mature forests – especially mixed deciduous and Coastal Douglas Fir – as important natural assets.
- Consider the size-connectivity continuum for ecological systems, with large-connected parcels being better than small-disconnected. A large node is better than a corridor, but quality may trump size in some cases, especially in densely developed areas.
- Acknowledge that sites requiring restoration will increasingly need to be considered in the future, and potential impacts of climate change will need to be taken into account.
- Balance the spatial distribution of regional parks relative to large population centres and across the region with the protection of important natural areas where they are located.
- Protect and provide views and viewpoints, and access to waterfronts, mountains and forests.
- Acquire enough land to accommodate access, staging and parking, and take public safety and security into account. Maintain flexibility to respond to unanticipated strategic opportunities.

FINAL ENGAGEMENT

In the final phases of the Regional Parks Land Acquisition 2050 project, Metro Vancouver engaged in a focused manner with key internal and external stakeholders. This included an internal review by the Regional Parks Service and other Metro Vancouver departments. The planning team also sought the input of Metro Vancouver's Regional Parks Municipal Advisory Group a number of times through the course of the project and followed up with key individual municipal jurisdictions to review strategy details.

ENGAGEMENT CONTACTS

The following is a list of the local governments and agencies included in the engagement phase of the regional parks land acquisition strategy project. Members of the planning team met with staff representatives over the course of the project to obtain their feedback.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT JURISDICTIONS

- Anmore, Village of
- Belcarra, Village of
- Bowen Island Municipality
- Burnaby, City of
- Coquitlam, City of
- Delta, City of
- Electoral Area "A"
- Langley, City of
- Langley, Township of
- Lions Bay, Village of
- Maple Ridge, City of
- New Westminster, City of
- North Vancouver, City of
- North Vancouver, District of
- Pitt Meadows, City of

- Port Coquitlam, City of
- Port Moody, City of
- Richmond, City of
- Surrey, City of
- Tsawwassen First Nation
- Vancouver, City of
- West Vancouver, District of
- White Rock, City of

PROVINCIAL AND FEDERAL AGENCIES

- BC Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations
- BC Parks, Ministry of Environment & Crown Lands
- Environment Canada and Canadian Wildlife Service
- BC Hydro (Reservoir Recreation Division)
- Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure
- Parks Canada
- Port Metro Vancouver
- Translink

NGO'S AND LAND TRUSTS

- Coastal Douglas Fir Conservation Partnership
- Ducks Unlimited
- Fraser Valley Conservancy Land Trust
- Nature Conservancy of Canada
- Nature Trust of BC
- Pacific Parklands Foundation

