

Our Natural Connections

Parks, protected areas, and shorelines



WHAT'S YOUR VIEW? - FACT SHEET SERIES

Our parks and protected areas

View Royal has an abundance of natural amenities including Thetis Lake Park, Millstream Creek, Craigflower Creek, Esquimalt Harbour, and Portage Inlet. Our natural environment enhances the health of the community, provides valued recreational opportunities to residents and visitors, and supports diverse ecosystems.

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The rich variety of saltwater, freshwater, and terrestrial ecosystems in View Royal provide for an abundance of species, including those that are threatened or endangered.

It is critical that we ensure the protection of these ecologically sensitive areas and work to maintain the integrity and beauty of our natural amenities.

Parks and natural spaces are also integral to the health of our community and the quality of life in View Royal. As our population continues to grow, protecting our natural environment and increasing public access to natural and recreational amenities is vital. Since our last OCP, we have developed a Parks Master Plan that recognizes the importance of connecting people to nature and recreation.

With ongoing development, growth and climate change, we know that environmental stewardship will become both more important, but also more challenging. We will need to plan for and adapt to unavoidable sea level rise, while also working to maintain access to the shoreline and stewarding critical coastal habitats.

We recognize that we need to continue growing our urban tree canopy to help mitigate summer heat, better manage urban stormwater, and help mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. We also understand how important it will be for View Royal to continue providing and improving access to nature for the health and wellbeing of View Royal residents and visitors.

Planning for parks and protected areas

Our current OCP outlines some parks and protected areas actions. These have been supported and updated by additional actions in our Council Strategic Plan 2019-2022 and our 2017 Parks Master Plan. Key actions from these include:

- Maintain and enhance existing parks and recreation trails while improving accessibility for all users
- Integrate pedestrian and cycling routes throughout the community and ensure



connectivity to regional parks and trail systems

- Develop opportunities for waterfront access while minimizing impacts on residential privacy and sensitive ecosystems
- Support and enhance the health of ecosystems by protecting natural areas and managing invasive species
- Establish a range of amenities that fit current needs and are flexible for future populations (i.e., washroom facilities, benches, picnic tables, off-leash areas, parking)
- Ensure funding and investment supports appropriate levels of maintenance and safety

- Update the Tree Protection Bylaw to recognize a loss of tree canopy in land development
- Identify opportunities to plant food trees and new community gardens

What's your view?

- *What should View Royal do to promote the restoration and protection of our natural environment in the face of climate change and sea level rise?*
- *What barriers are there to accessing View Royal's recreational and natural amenities?*

Watch for opportunities this fall to provide feedback on these questions and others. To learn about other OCP update issues visit the OCP project website or send us an email.

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

We are updating our Official Community Plan (OCP). Last updated in 2011, the Plan provides a long-term vision for the community and provides guidance on future planning and development.

The current OCP has served the Town of View Royal well, so this work will be an update and not a major re-write. Still, there are some important issues and topics that require attention, feedback from the community, and focus in the updated OCP. Some of the key areas that Council and staff identified for additional review include:



Housing Matters. View Royal housing needs, diversity, and options



Placemaking. Neighbourhood centres and urban design



Preparing for Change. Climate change and resilience



Moving Around. Transportation and the ways we get around



A Healthy Local Economy. A more resilient and diverse local economy



Our Natural Connections. Parks, protected areas, and shorelines

The OCP update process is an opportunity to explore these areas (and others) in more detail and to get community feedback on how we can best direct and prepare for change. While this fact sheet provides an overview of just one area, we know that the six additional topics listed above are interconnected and will require a coordinated and integrated approach in the updated OCP.

Want more information?

Please visit our OCP Update web page: www.viewroyal.ca

Send us an email: planning@viewroyal.ca

