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REPORT TO REGIONAL PARKS COMMITTEE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, MARCH 25, 2026

SUBJECT Enhanced Visitor Information by using the Google Maps Street View Platform

ISSUE SUMMARY

To provide the Regional Parks Committee with information on the use of Google Maps Street View to enhance accessibility and inclusion in Capital Regional District's (CRD) regional parks.

BACKGROUND

One of the main barriers for people with disabilities in using regional parks is the availability of detailed accessibility information. A national survey, conducted in 2023, identified that for people with disabilities, a lack of information was the single largest barrier to accessing trails and that details such as trail width, slope, and surface are critical for potential park visitors.

Building on the successful *CRD User-Friendly Trail Guide*, staff developed accessibility information resources in 2023 for four high-visitation regional parks: Thetis Lake, Elk/Beaver Lake, Francis/King, and Island View Beach. Recognizing the importance of providing information, staff have been working with several popular third-party websites and applications to share key information with park visitors.

Google Maps Street View is a widely used, free, and familiar feature of Google Maps that allows park visitors to preview terrain and facilities on desktop and mobile devices. Within a regional park context, Street View enables users to visually explore the overall terrain, facilities, and trails, which supports the critical planning phase of the visitor experience. Although Street View is not a source of comprehensive accessibility information, it enhances the range of details available to potential visitors and enables them to make more informed decisions aligned with their abilities and the physical characteristics of a location.

In 2025, staff used a 360° camera to capture Google Maps Street View imagery for 13 parking lots and day-use areas and approximately 20 km of park trails within eight regional parks (shown in Table 1). This imagery is now live and publicly accessible on Google Maps Street View. Regional parks were prioritized based on visitation, existing accessibility features, and the presence of user-friendly trails identified in the 2013 *CRD User-Friendly Trail Guide*. All imagery was captured in public outdoor spaces, and Google applies its standard privacy protections, including automatic blurring of faces and license plates. No personal information is collected or retained by the CRD as part of this process. Street View links for regional parks can be found on the CRD website <https://www.crd.ca/parks-recreation/regional-parks-trails/park-usage-and-rules/accessibility-regional-parks-and-trails>.

Table 1: Regional Park locations available on Google Maps Street View

Regional Park	Parking Lots, Day-Use Areas & Features	Trails
Coles Bay	Parking lot Day-use area	Nature Trail & Beach Trail
East Sooke	Aylard Farm: Parking lot Day-use area Pike Road: Parking lot	Creyke Point Trail Pike Road Trail
Elk/Beaver Lake	Beaver Beach Eagle Beach Filter Beds Fishing dock Hamsterly Beach Boat Launch Waterski Beach	10 km Trail
Francis/King	Parking lot & day-use area	Elsie King Trail
Island View Beach	Parking lot Day-use area	Coast Loop Trail
Mount Work	Durrance Lake: Parking lot Day-use area Fishing dock	Durrance Lake Trail (north of Durrance Lake)
Thetis Lake	Main Beach: Parking lot Day-use area	
Witty's Lagoon	Tower Point: Parking lot Day-use area	Tower Point accessible Trails Teaching Shelter access Trail

Continuing into summer 2026, staff will expand the Google Maps Street View imagery to include the parking lots, day-use areas and key trails within Sooke Potholes, Matheson Lake and Jordan River regional parks. In addition, staff are developing detailed accessibility information documents for Coles Bay, Jordan River, Matheson Lake, Sooke Potholes and Witty's Lagoon regional parks.

IMPLICATIONS

Social Implications

Outdoor recreation opportunities in regional parks contribute significantly to physical, mental, and emotional well-being, enhancing happiness and overall quality of life for those who can access them. However, many people face barriers—physical, environmental, social, and systemic—that limit their ability to experience and enjoy these spaces. The CRD is committed to identifying and reducing these barriers and to actively advancing a more inclusive and accessible regional parks system for all community members.

Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies

Goal 5 of the CRD Board-approved Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan 2022-2032 identifies: *Regional parks and regional trails are inclusive and accessible*. The provision of detailed information about the accessibility of regional parks supports individuals to make informed choices before they arrive at a park. Although physical barriers exist in regional parks, providing detailed information about those barriers addresses a key issue identified by people with disabilities and supports their ability to confidently visit regional parks.

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

Statistics Canada estimated that in 2018, 20.5% of BC's population aged 15-64 were living with one or more disabilities and that 41.7% of BC adults aged 65+ were living with disabilities. Based on current population statistics and projections, staff estimate that there may be up to 95,000 people aged 15 years or older in the CRD living with one or more disabilities.

Service Delivery Implications

With 34 regional parks in the system, a phased approach is essential to guide the development of additional information and the collection of Google Maps Street View imagery. Parks with high visitation, existing accessible features, or favorable topography have been prioritized in the initial phase. As the project advances, additional parks and trails will be identified using this same criteria-based approach. All work is being completed with existing staff resources and budgets, and no additional funding is currently required.

CONCLUSION

CRD staff are undertaking several projects to improve the information available to park visitors and helping to reduce barriers faced by people with disabilities in accessing regional parks. Enabling Google Map Street View in regional parks allows the public to visualize the terrain and environment before arriving at these parks and supports informed decision making based on personal abilities and desired experiences. This initiative complements the CRD's broader accessibility work and strengthens the availability of information that supports inclusive access to regional parks.

RECOMMENDATION

There is no recommendation. This report is for information only.

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ATTACHMENT

Presentation: Regional Parks Google Street View Accessibility Information