

A scenic landscape photograph of a lake with autumn foliage and mountains in the background. The foreground shows a sandy beach with fallen yellow leaves. The lake reflects the surrounding trees and the clear blue sky. In the background, there are forested mountains under a bright blue sky with a few wispy clouds.

OYAMA ISTHMUS PARK CONCEPT DESIGN REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2020

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The District of Lake Country Oyama Isthmus Park project team would like to thank the 800+ respondents who participated in the Oyama Isthmus Park planning phase.

District of Lake Country Residents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Concept Design Report illustrates the 20 year vision for Oyama Isthmus park. An incremental and phased approach will be used to achieve the concept over time in balance with other initiatives in the District’s Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Oyama Isthmus Park is one of the Okanagan’s most unique publicly-accessible waterfronts. This 8 hectare parcel of land stretches for nearly one kilometre along the north end of Wood Lake, and possesses the highly desirable qualities of having a gently-sloped, south-facing pebble beach, as well as direct access to the recently-built Okanagan Rail Trail. The Rail Trail has quickly become one the region’s most significant and well-used recreational amenities, and on peak summer days, it is estimated that more than 1500 pedestrians and cyclists may use the section of the trail that runs through Oyama. Even in its current, undeveloped state, the park site provides some of the best access to beach-front recreation in Lake Country, and also encompasses several small remnants of rare plant communities with extremely high ecological value.

The Oyama Isthmus Park Concept Design endeavours to balance waterfront access for recreation with the protection and enhancement of threatened riparian ecosystems. At first glance, the park may appear to be a natural site, but in fact, it is a post-industrial landscape that has been

heavily disturbed by human activity for well over a hundred years. The fragments of rare, intact native riparian plant communities that do exist on the site are actively being degraded by uncontrolled recreational access, and are at risk of being ‘loved to death’ if lake access is not organized to direct people away from these sensitive zones. These rare, biodiverse plant communities are also under threat of being choked out by aggressively-spreading invasive species that have already colonized much of the site.

The plan strives to address the site’s current informal nature that has led to a variety of problematic and anti-social behaviours by some users. These behaviours stem from the absence of signage and defined park spaces, and include overnight camping, illegal dumping of solid and liquid waste, conflict between motorized and non-motorized boaters, soil compaction and erosion from uncontrolled vehicle and pedestrian access, and disorganized and inefficient parking resulting in loss of usable park space. Defining park spaces provides a chance to not only preserve the precious

riparian ecosystem, but also to improve the safety and quality of existing recreational uses.

The Guiding Principles for future park development established in the District of Lake Country’s 2018 Parks and Recreation Master Plan underpin the Project Goals set out for the Oyama Isthmus Park site. Direction from the community received via an open house, survey and several stakeholder engagement events in February 2020 illuminated emergent Public Priorities for the park site, and informed the establishment of four Park Values and a Vision Statement for the project, which were used to guide decisions about the type, character and organization of amenities, spaces and materials that form the design concept.

In August 2020, the proposed Oyama Isthmus Park Design Concept was released to the public via the Let’s Talk – Lake Country website, and feedback in the form of an online survey was requested. Feedback was reviewed, summarized and incorporated into the design report.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Oyama Isthmus Park site is the parcel of waterfront land located between Oyama Road and Wood Lake that stretches from Trask Road in the west to the Wood Lake boat launch in the east. The property was largely acquired by the District of Lake Country through the purchase of the CN Rail corridor in 2015 and is the remnant of a heavily disturbed industrialized landscape.

The success of the Okanagan Rail Trail has led to the opportunity to improve the site and create a

permanent public amenity. The project is intended to formalize and enhance the existing waterfront through the development of a new park. The new park design will celebrate and enhance the unique characteristics and features of the site that people value and utilize today, while allowing the park to sustainably accommodate the increased volume of users who are anticipated to access the site via the Okanagan Rail Trail. Preservation of a natural waterfront character and the ecological restoration of the highly disturbed riparian ecosystem have been identified as priorities for the project.

1.2 CONCEPT TIMELINE

The Oyama Isthmus Park design project was initiated by the District of Lake Country in October of 2019 with the selection of a consulting team to carry out the design work. The first phase of the project included site inventory and analysis activities and desktop background research about the history of the site, existing conditions and its cultural significance. As part of this process, an archaeological overview assessment (AOA), a preliminary study of parking capacity and traffic considerations, and a preliminary environmental

assessment of the park site were undertaken. Environmentally sensitive areas (ESAs) were also mapped, and an inventory of native and invasive plant species was completed, as was an assessment of aquatic resource values. In February 2020, these findings were presented at a public open house in Oyama, as well via an online presentation through Let's Talk - Lake Country, the District's public engagement website. Community members were asked to provide input regarding their priorities for the future of the park through a survey available at the February open

house and other locations in the community, as well as via the online public engagement portal. Using the feedback received during the public consultation process, a project vision and a list of project priorities were established to guide the concept development of the park, which took place between March and July 2020.

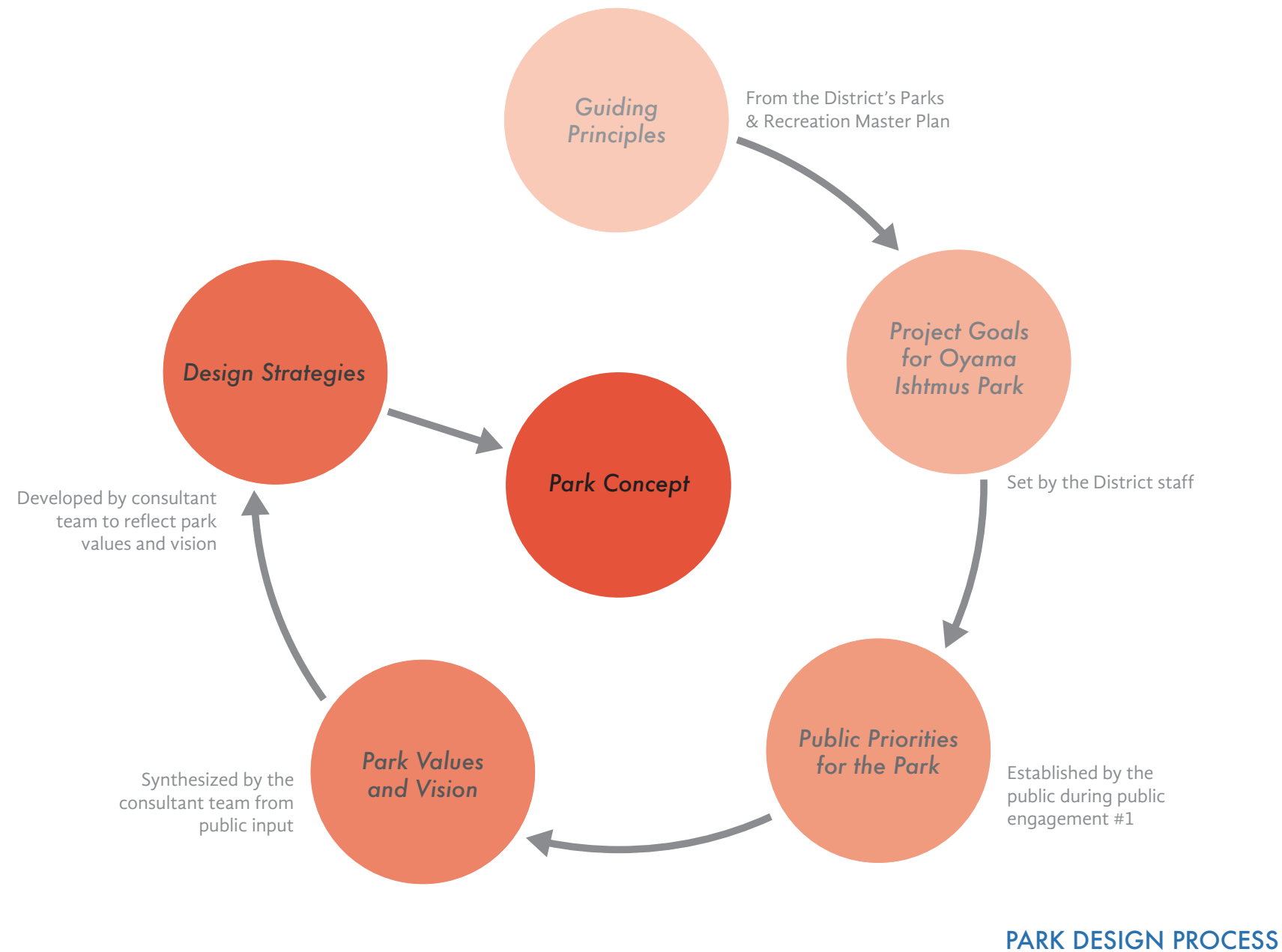
Upon completion of a draft design concept for the park, the proposed plan was presented for a second time to the public through the Let's Talk - Lake Country website, and feedback via an on-line

survey was again requested. Due to public health restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, no in-person presentation or open house events were possible.

Finally, the design report was developed by incorporating the major findings identified through the design process and responding to the feedback received from the public engagement process.

PARK CONCEPT TIMELINE





1.3 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The District of Lake Country's 2018 Parks and Recreation Master Plan sets out guiding principles for the future development of significant park projects such as the Oyama Isthmus. The following principles are specifically relevant to this project:

- Improve and increase access to shorelines and lakes;
- Protect and enhance natural habitats;
- Support active living to improve the health of Lake Country citizens;
- Provide contact with nature and outdoor experiences for all, especially youth;
- Improve accessibility by incorporating universal design principles into new and existing facilities;
- Improve safety and connectivity for walking, cycling, and other non-motorized transportation modes;
- Connect and celebrate Lake Country by recognizing the unique opportunities, needs and histories of each neighbourhood; and,
- Help community groups work together and celebrate their accomplishments.

1.4 PROJECT GOALS

Applying these guiding principles to Oyama Isthmus Park, District of Lake Country staff prepared the following project-specific goals:

- To create an accessible and inclusive place where Lake Country residents and visitors of all ages and abilities can participate in a variety of recreational and social activities;
- To provide a unique and memorable experience along the Okanagan Rail Trail;
- To contribute to the excellence, quality and economic development of the Oyama neighbourhood, Lake Country and adjacent communities;
- To celebrate the unique sense of place, history and culture of the area; and,
- To encourage community members to work together towards an accomplishment that will build upon the legacy of the Okanagan Rail Trail.

2 PROJECT CONTEXT & SITE ANALYSIS

2.1 SITE HISTORY

The syilx People of the Okanagan Nation were the original inhabitants of the region in which this park project is situated. To the syilx, this area was of geographic significance as a stopping point along north-south waterways used to transport bulk goods.

During the last 200 years, the Wood Lake waterfront has been disturbed by road and railroad construction activities, and industrial development related to the transport of agricultural goods.

Prior to the District of Lake Country’s purchase of this land in 2014, this site was privately owned by Canadian National Railway, but was used by the public to gain access to the Wood Lake waterfront, which was used as an informal recreational area.



2.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL & CULTURAL OVERVIEW

An archaeological overview assessment of the Oyama Isthmus Park site was completed by Ursus Heritage Consulting in February 2020. Significant changes to this area began in the late 1800s. The following historic features were identified in this assessment.

SYILX TRADITIONAL TERRITORY

The park site is located in the heart of the traditional territory of the syilx (Okanagan) Nation. Given its southern exposure, access to water, and central location between Wood and Kalamalka Lakes, there are several areas of high archaeological potential on the site.

RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION

The Canadian National Railway (CNR) line between Vernon and Kelowna was completed in 1925. The railway bed was raised 1 to 2 metres above the natural elevation of the site. The park area has been significantly modified by industrial use, road and railway construction activities over the past 100 years.

The large excavated area on the southeastern end of the site was a main supply of aggregate for track ballast for the CNR when completing the railway from Vernon to Kelowna. The low lying section of track from Oyama to Kelowna required a significant amount of aggregate to raise the rail bed to a consistent elevation.

CHANNEL CONNECTING THE TWO LAKES

A channel between Wood and Kalamalka Lakes was completed in 1908. This resulted in the water level in Wood Lake dropping between 90 and 120cm, and in Kalamalka Lake increasing 30cm, and discontinued the old creek that historically connected the two bodies of water. The old creek was eventually filled in and would have been located where the Oyama Community Hall and Balls Field are situated today.

PREVIOUS STRUCTURES

Many different structures existed on this site to service the local economy over the years; at one time there were large packing houses; at another, there was a train station.



Looking west down the track from east side of Wood Lake

Credit: David Davies Railway Collection

2.3 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Natural Resource Biologists from Ecoscape Environmental Consultants Ltd. completed an overview environmental assessment of the Oyama Isthmus Park site in February 2020, and a vegetation survey in May 2020. The following site features and conditions were identified through these assessments.

BLACK COTTONWOOD ECOSYSTEM

The Black Cottonwood riparian ecosystem is found along the edges of lakes and is commonly associated with active floodplains. The canopy is composed of black cottonwood with interior Douglas-fir and paper birch. The understory is typically diverse and shrubby, often dominated by common snowberry, Douglas maple, Nootka rose, saskatoon, tall Oregon-grape and red-osier dogwood.

This riparian ecosystem is intact along the east side of the park, but it has been degraded along the northern boundary of Wood Lake, due to understory disturbance and the presence of invasive species, such as Siberian Elm. Given that this ecosystem is rare and at risk of becoming lost in the Okanagan region, restoration and enhancement is a priority.

SPREAD OF INVASIVE SPECIES

Dozens of foot paths and cleared areas providing public access from the Okanagan Rail Trail to the shoreline of Wood Lake have resulted in the spread of invasive species, the loss of native vegetation and a reduction of the intrinsic value of the riparian ecosystem. Ongoing weed management and maintenance is critical to effectively restore and enhance the natural shoreline areas.

NO KOKANEE SPAWNING

The northern shoreline of Wood Lake is not a Kokanee spawning zone, as there has been no recent or historic shore spawning that is known to have occurred in this area.

SENSITIVE FORESHORE PLANT ZONE

An occurrence of a rare plant, peachleaf willow, was historically documented in the park area. Although this species was not encountered during the May vegetation survey, there is potential for peachleaf willow to occur within the park. With portions of the northern shoreline designated for restoration, native vegetation will regenerate and rare foreshore plants, such as peachleaf willow, will have a greater likelihood of establishing.

POCKETS OF REMNANT VEGETATION

There are remnants of the riparian ecosystem along the northern shoreline of Wood Lake, that are isolated and degraded due to historic industrial and current recreational disturbance.

Although these pockets are highly disturbed and disjointed, they still provide important vegetation and riparian habitat. With enhancement through restoration, there is potential to greatly improve their ecological function.



General Legend

- 15m floodplain setback
- High water line
- Trails fragmenting vegetation

Environmental Sensitivity

- Very high
- High
- Moderate
- Low

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

2.4 SITE INVENTORY

The Oyama Isthmus Park project project aims to formalize and enhance the current condition of the site by developing it into a new waterfront park. The site extends along the northern shore of Wood Lake from the existing dog park in the east to the Oyama Community Hall in the west. It is approximately 8 hectares in size and 1 kilometre in length. Existing features and current uses have been identified through site inventory, background research, and site analysis.

EXISTING PARKING

Park visitors are currently parking in a variety of gravel areas in the park off of Oyama Road and in the newly developed parking area in the old ballast pit that provides standard vehicle parking and oversized stalls for vehicles with boat trailers near the boat launch.

BEACH

The waterfront at this site is very popular due to its southern exposure and pebble beach. Along the shore, there are numerous small, individual beaches accessed via many rough, informal foot paths from the Okanagan Rail Trail.

BOAT LAUNCH

This is Lake Country’s main public boat launch for Wood and Kalamalka lakes, making it heavily used during the boating season.

DOG PARK

A new dog park located on the southeastern end of the site is within the future park boundary. Connections to this amenity should be considered, however the dog park itself will not be redeveloped at this time.

OKANAGAN RAIL TRAIL

The site is bisected by the Okanagan Rail Trail for its entire length. This busy trail is a corridor for the movement of cyclists and pedestrians. The trail runs along the raised decommissioned CN railway bed. Oyama is a popular place from which to access the Okanagan Rail Trail.

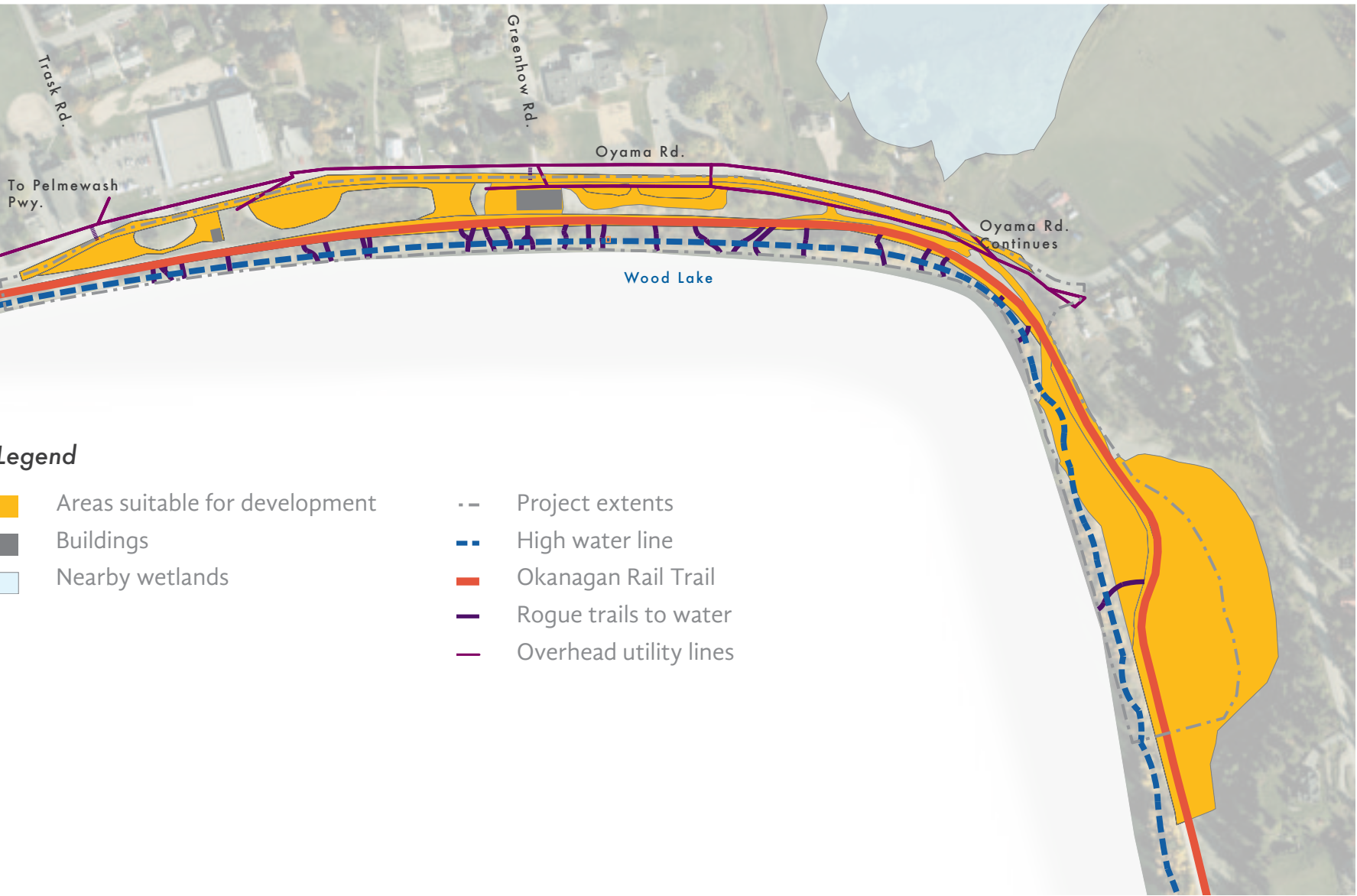
STRUCTURES

A few building currently exist on the site; they are:









- an old packinghouse,
- an existing storage structure, and
- an abandoned storage structure with only the footing remaining.

OYAMA ROAD FRONTAGE

Oyama Road is a rural 2-lane road directly adjacent to the site that includes a 1.5m sidewalk on the north side. A school zone with a speed limit of 30 km/h is enforced for a portion of this road frontage. Vehicles can directly access the site off of Oyama Road by pulling into any of its informal gravel parking areas, while pedestrians and cyclists can use the crosswalk at Trask Road, although many cross informally elsewhere along the frontage.



Legend

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|---|------------------------|
|  | Areas suitable for development |  | Project extents |
|  | Buildings |  | High water line |
|  | Nearby wetlands |  | Okanagan Rail Trail |
| | |  | Rogue trails to water |
| | |  | Overhead utility lines |

SITE INVENTORY

2.5 SITE OPPORTUNITIES

The following is a list of opportunities that were identified through inventory, background research and site analysis, and which could be incorporated, protected, or enhanced as part of the design of the park.

UNIQUE WATERFRONT

The sand beaches, southern sun exposure and clean water make this waterfront unique both locally and regionally. With the close proximity of Oyama Road to the lake and the relatively flat topography of the site, access to the water is very good. These characteristics could be protected and enhanced with complimentary amenities that allow for additional use while minimizing the impact on the site’s unique character.

UNIQUE AND SENSITIVE ECOSYSTEM

The presence of intact sensitive ecosystems make this site unique from an ecological perspective. Outdoor learning opportunities could be provided to educate current and future generations of why these features are rare and important to protect.

HISTORIC STRUCTURES

The packinghouse structure that remains on site represents one of the historic uses and activities that have taken place on the site. This structure could be either upgraded and enhanced, or referenced architecturally in a new structure to help form the future character of the park.

UNIQUE INDUSTRIAL AND CULTURAL HISTORIES

The geographic importance of Oyama, which sits between Wood and Kalamalka Lakes, is evident in its rich history. It was often utilized by the indigenous people and, later, settlers as a stopping point along their respective transportation routes. These historical uses could be enhanced and represented in the future character of the park.

BEAUTIFUL VIEWS

The views looking south down the Okanagan Valley are beautiful and are a dominant feature along the majority of the site. Important view corridors could be protected and enhanced.

INCREASE IN PARK AREA

With the purchase of the CN Rail corridor, there are pieces of land that have now been consolidated into one large 8 hectare waterfront site. This large area create an opportunity to provide more space for new park programs and amenities.

ACCESS TO TRAILS

With the Okanagan Rail Trail running through the site and with the new Pelme wash Parkway trail now linked to it, pedestrian and cyclist access to the site has increased significantly during the past several years. Improving circulation and providing amenities that support these popular recreational uses could be provided.



Bird's eye view of the existing packing house looking west along the Okanagan Rail Trail

Credit: TerraSense Analytics

2.6 SITE CHALLENGES

The following is a list of challenges that were identified through inventory, background research and site analysis, and which could be addressed in the park design.

ACCOMMODATE HIGH-USE

As the Okanagan Rail Trail brings more and more visitors to the site, especially during the trail's peak season (July-August), it will become increasingly important for park features and amenities to be multi-functional, durable and be easy to maintain.

OFF-SEASON PARK USE

The number of visitors to the site declines significantly between October and April. Amenities that support the local neighbourhood and attract and encourage use during these lower demand months could be provided.

MINIMIZE USER CONFLICT

Increased visitor volume and diversity of recreational user groups (e.g. cyclists, pedestrians, boaters, beach enthusiasts, and dog owners) is anticipated. Special attention could therefore be given to the layout of the site to pair compatible uses and minimize conflict zones where active users intersect.

EFFICIENT AND ADEQUATE PARKING

There is currently high demand for parking in the area, but the existing parking is informal and inefficient. The parking could be consolidated and refined to improve efficient, circulation and reduce conflict with other motorists, cyclists and pedestrians.

RAISED TRAIL BARRIER

The raised Okanagan Rail Trail bed currently acts a physical barrier between the waterfront and the road, limiting visibility, impacting accessibility to the water for all ages and abilities, and taking up valuable space for waterfront recreational activities. The realignment of the Okanagan Rail Trail and the removal of the trail bed could be considered.

BOAT LAUNCH

Due to the high demand for use of the existing boat launch, upgrades to layout and infrastructure could be considered to improve launching efficiency, improve user safety, and reduce the impact on the sensitive lake edge.

INVASIVE PLANT MANAGEMENT

Sensitive areas of the park area are currently being heavily impacted by the presence of invasive plants species. The early removal of these species and a robust maintenance program should be introduced to limit their future impact. Rare plant species present on the site must also be protected.

INCORPORATE PACKINGHOUSE STRUCTURE

The historic packinghouse structure that remains is centrally located on the site and could be incorporated into the site design if it is deemed feasible to do so.



View of the existing packing house from across Oyama Road looking south

Credit: BENCH Site Design

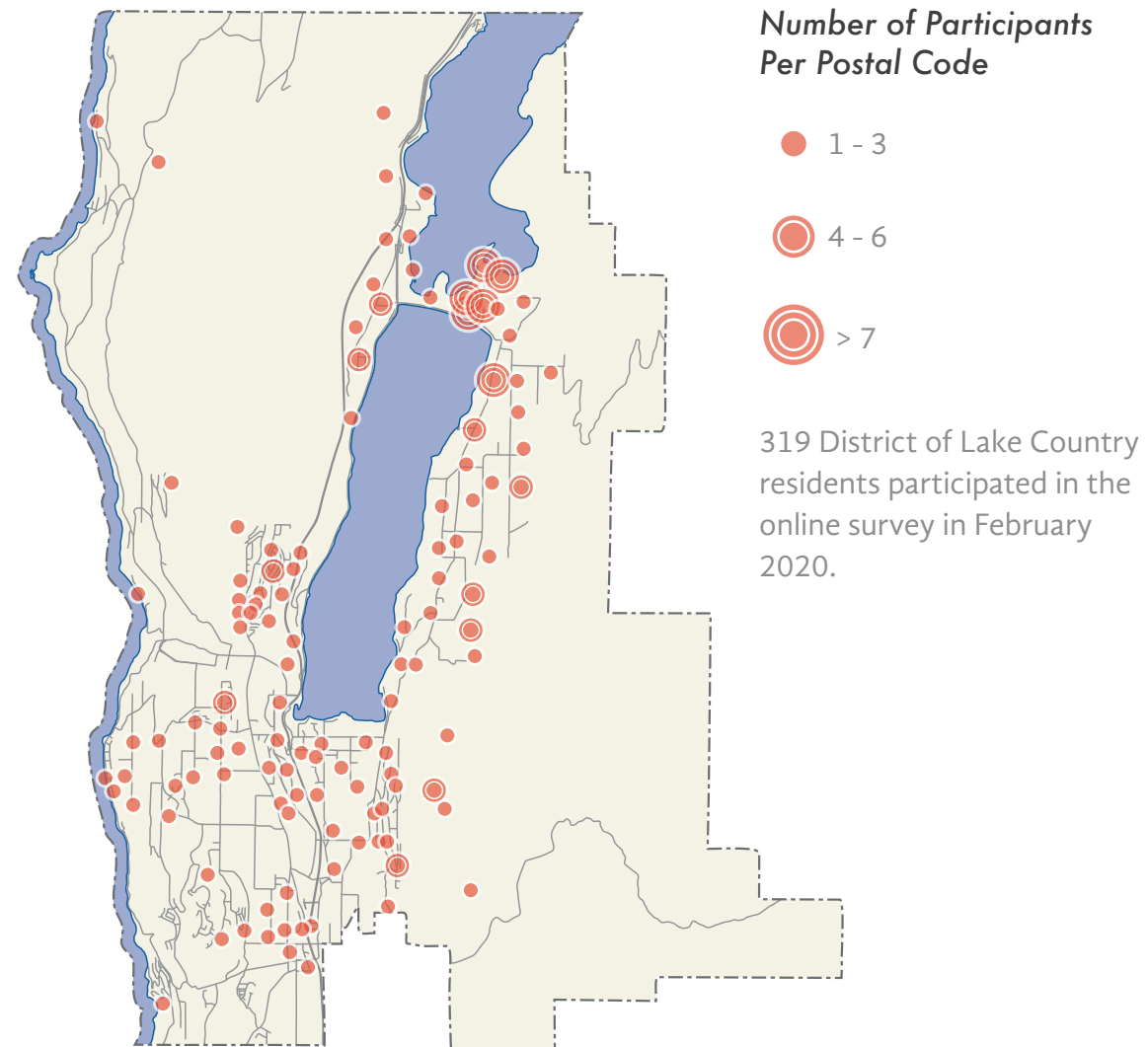
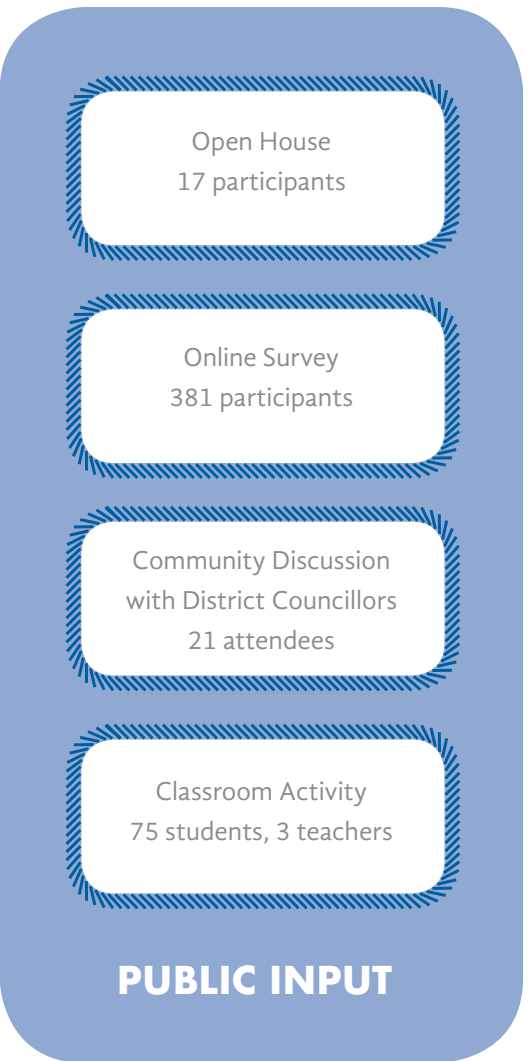
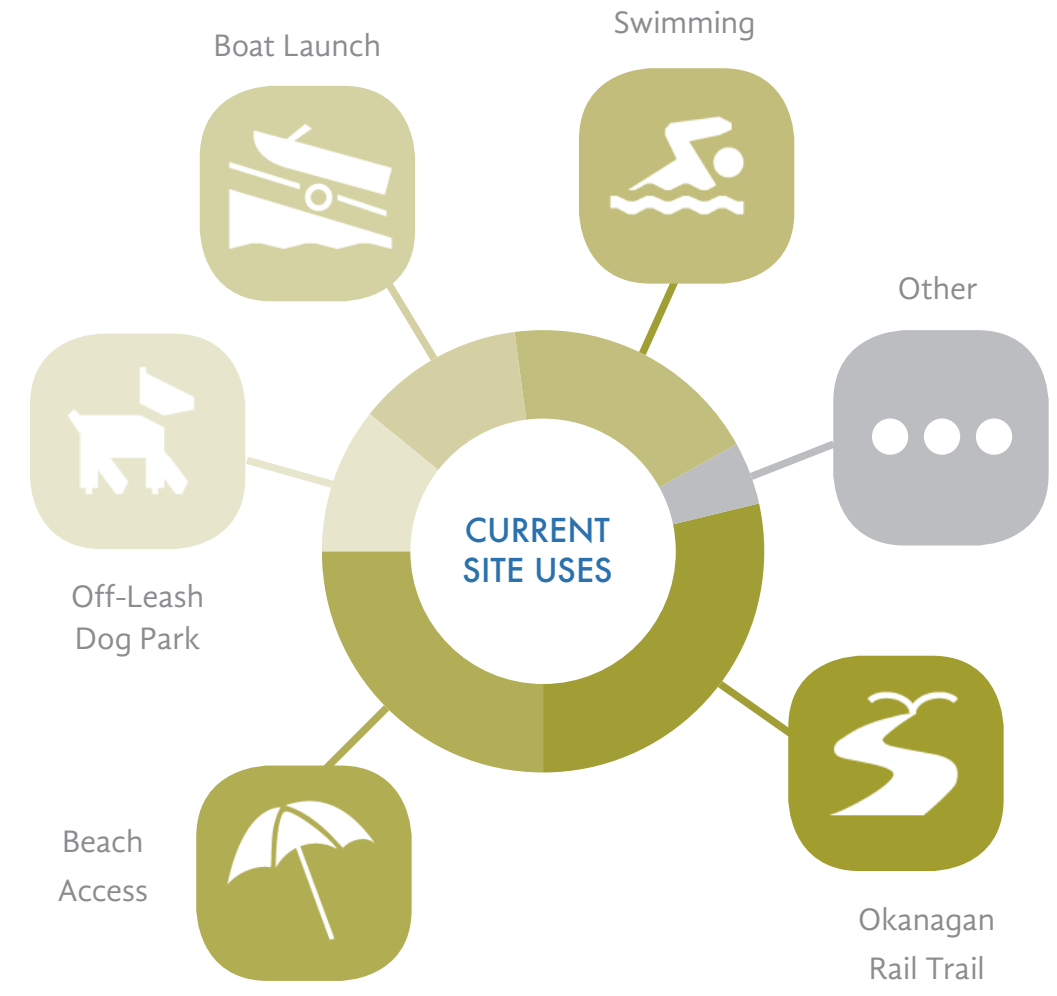
3 VISION & PRIORITIES

3.1 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT #1

The initial public engagement for Oyama Isthmus Park took place in February 2020 during the pre-design phase of the project. The purpose of this engagement was to offer the public a chance to learn about this project and solicit their input on priorities for enhancing the existing space.

The online survey collected information from residents throughout the Let's Talk - Lake Country website. Access to the beach and to the Okanagan Rail Trail were identified by survey respondents as being the most popular current uses of the Oyama Isthmus Park site.

Additionally, community members had the opportunity to meet with Lake Country Councillors and staff at two separate engagement events. This first was a questions-and-answer event with Councillors Todd McKenzie and Jeremy Kozub at the Lake Country Coffee House on February 13, 2020, and the second was at the Oyama Traditional School on February 14, 2020. At this event, teachers and students were asked what activities they currently enjoyed on the site and what they would like to see in the future.



3.2 PUBLIC PRIORITIES FOR THE PARK

The following types of park improvements were proposed by the consulting team to the public as possibilities for the Oyama Isthmus Park. Prioritization of these values by the community helped to guide the allocation of resources in the development of the park concept design.

PRIORITY BY PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS



3.3 PARK VALUES & VISION

Input received from stakeholders and the public during the initial Oyama Isthmus Park engagement process led to the development of four Park Values and a Vision Statement for this park project. It was determined that the park should be welcoming, inclusive and supportive, connected to nature, alive with activity and enriched with a sense of place.

Park Values were established from community input to help the design team make decisions about the type, character and organization of amenities, spaces and materials that form the park design concept.



WELCOMING, INCLUSIVE AND SUPPORTIVE

Improve the experience for people of all ages and abilities by providing a highly functional and enjoyable environment with the facilities and amenities that support use of the park.



CONNECTED TO NATURE

Enhance the natural systems of the site by protecting high-value ecological areas and habitat, removing invasive species, and planting new vegetation for a greener, more resilient and enjoyable place.



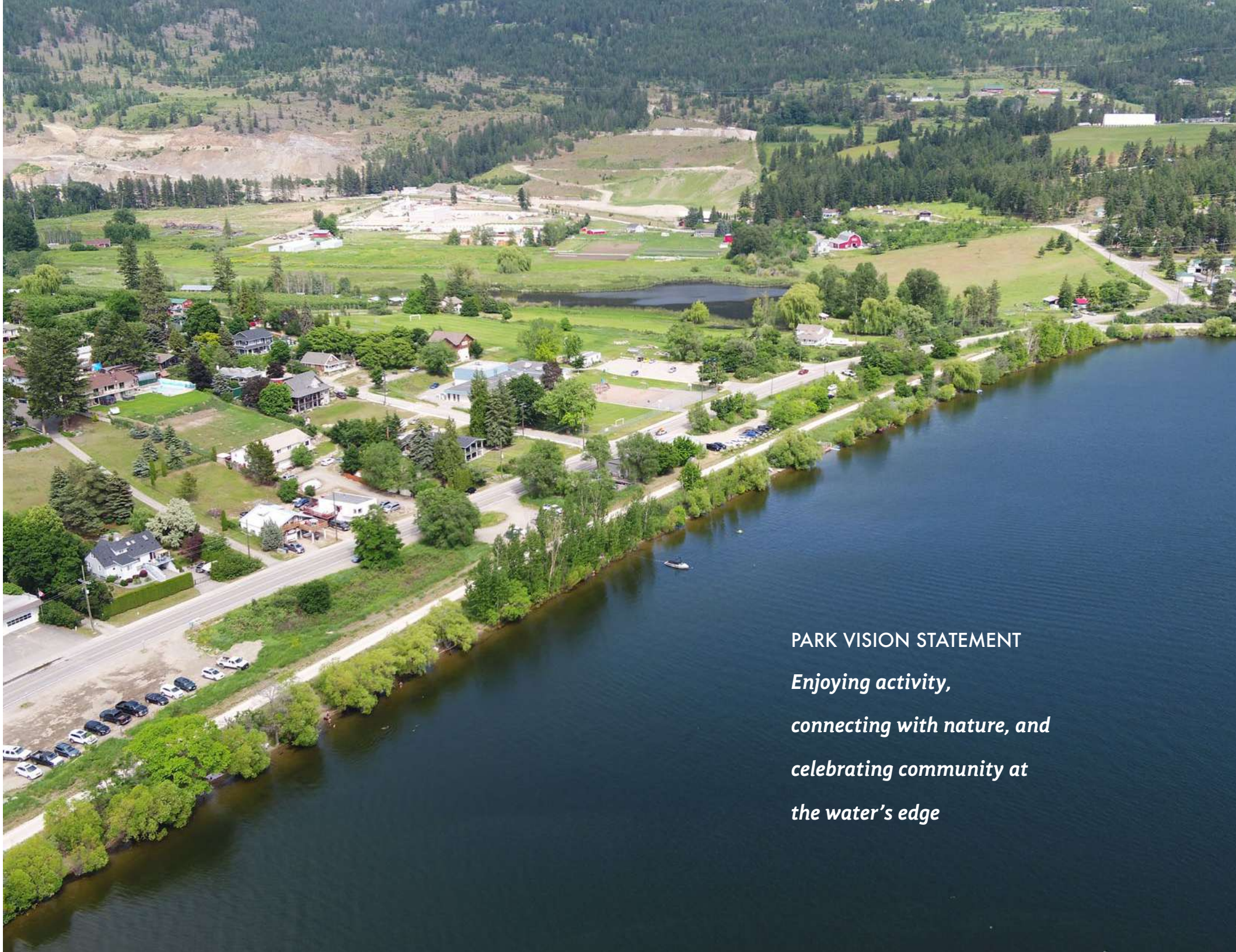
ALIVE WITH ACTIVITY

Support healthy living by providing diverse opportunities for people to use the park for a variety of recreational, cultural, and social activities in all seasons.



ENRICHED WITH A SENSE OF PLACE

Build upon Oyama's identity as the 'Jewel of the Okanagan' by recognizing and celebrating the unique character, qualities and history of the area and its meaning to the community.



PARK VISION STATEMENT

*Enjoying activity,
connecting with nature, and
celebrating community at
the water's edge*

4 DESIGN CONCEPT

4.1 DESIGN STRATEGIES

The Oyama Isthmus Park Design Strategies are the physical expression of the Park Values. Design Strategies are future-oriented principles that help the design team to translate values to action.

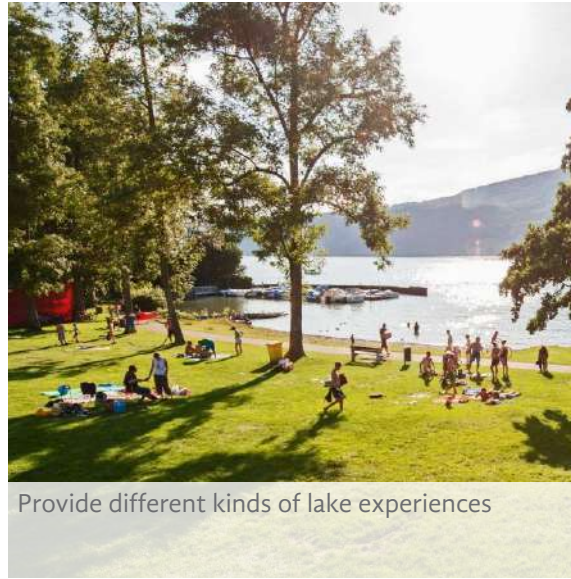




Restore and protect sensitive shoreline areas



Improve access to the water at all times of year



Provide different kinds of lake experiences

ENHANCE THE LAKE EXPERIENCE

Focus Beach Activity

The lake and beach are unquestionably the focal point of the Oyama Isthmus Park site, and will almost certainly have the highest demand for use by visitors. A balance must be struck between providing beach and lake access for recreation, and restoring and protecting the sensitive shoreline ecosystem. Beach improvements should take place in locations that are already disturbed and do not have any endangered plant or animal species. Use split rail fencing as a physical barrier to protect these areas, and signage to educate visitors about why access to these zones is restricted.

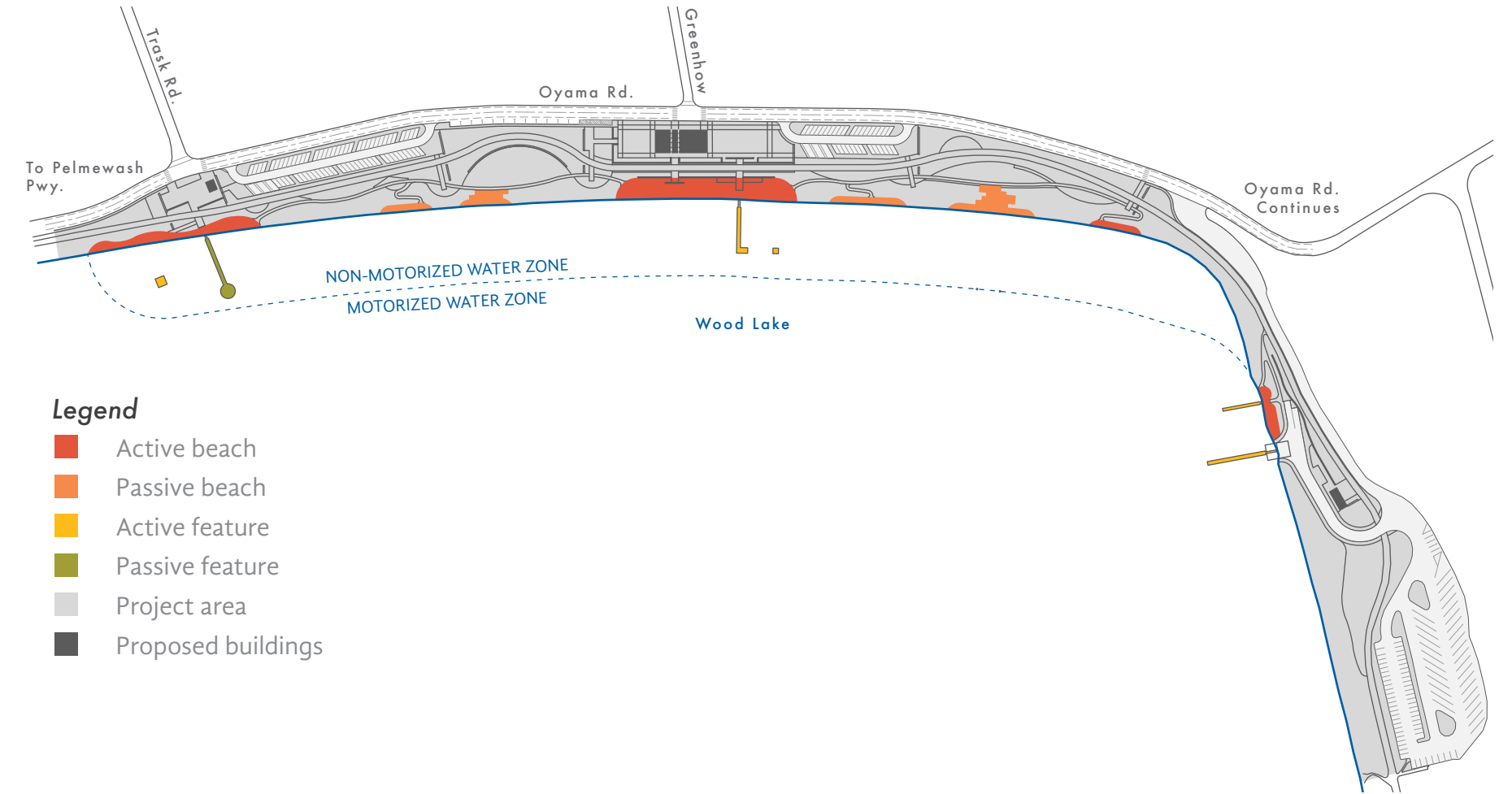
Improve Access to the Water

Right now the lake experience on the site mainly consists of small pocket beaches enjoyed by swimmers and sunbathers. There aren't many places where it feels comfortable to just sit and enjoy the view, or take a break from a bike ride to enjoy a picnic. The proposed park design should provide opportunities for park users to enjoy the lakefront experience in more ways than just the ones associated with hot summer beach days. Park visitors should be provided with opportunities to comfortably experience being near or on the water at all times of year.

Diversify Lake Experiences

Provide different kinds of lake experiences that allow people to enjoy exciting waterfront recreation away from the most sensitive shoreline habitat and vegetation zones.

The addition of a dock, pier, water play zone, and a lawn area set slightly back from the beach could help to accommodate the anticipated increased demand for waterfront recreation while reducing pressure in the fragile riparian zone.



PROPOSED LAKE FEATURES



Protect existing Black Cottonwood Ecosystem



Ecosystem restoration at work



Plan for periodic flooding

RESTORE & PROTECT THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Protect Sensitive Areas

While much of the Oyama Isthmus site is highly impacted by human activity, fragments of the red-listed Black Cottonwood Ecosystem type and blue-listed foreshore plant communities occur here.

Park development should be focused in parts of the site that have low existing environmental sensitivity; intact native ecosystems and plant communities should not be disturbed. These areas should be enhanced with new native planting from the reference biogeoclimatic ecosystem (Okanagan Very Hot Dry Interior Douglas-fir zone).

Restore Native Ecosystems

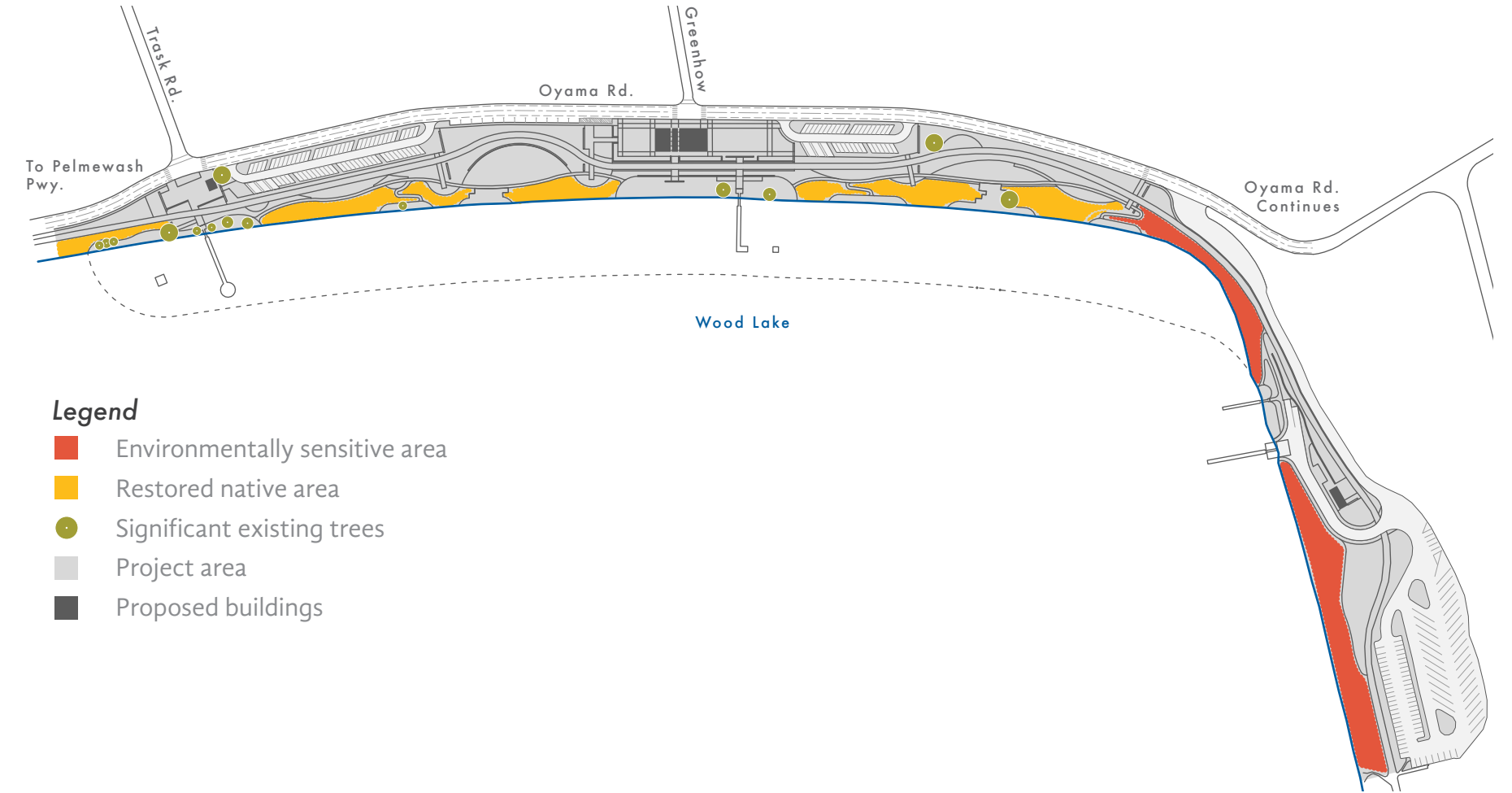
The restoration of habitat, biodiversity and ecological function should be prioritized. The preliminary environmental assessment of the park site completed in February and May 2020 makes numerous recommendations for restoration and mitigation measures to minimize impacts on species and ecosystems-at-risk, including the eradication of highly invasive plant species which have colonized some parts of the site.

Storm water should be managed passively on site, with bioswales to clean and infiltrate rainwater runoff.

Plan For Resiliency

The park should be designed to withstand periodic inundation during flood years. Soil blends should be selected to support biodiversity and minimize erosion and irrigation requirements.

Tree species should be chosen not just for their aesthetic value and ability to perform ecosystem services, but also their ability to adapt to a changing climate. Materials and features should be specified and designed thoughtfully, keeping the limited maintenance resources of a small municipality in mind.



Legend

- Environmentally sensitive area
- Restored native area
- Significant existing trees
- Project area
- Proposed buildings

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



A park for everyone



Accommodate many kinds of activities



Separated trail types

A SAFE AND ENJOYABLE PLACE FOR ALL

Design for All

Park circulation, furniture, play features, beaches, lake amenities, parking, and buildings shall be designed for equity, human diversity, and social inclusion.

Being located on the Okanagan Rail Trail and the #90 bus route means that a car is not required to access Oyama Isthmus Park. Comfortable and welcoming facilities for those travelling to the park by bike, foot, bus and paddlecraft should be provided.

Variety of Experience

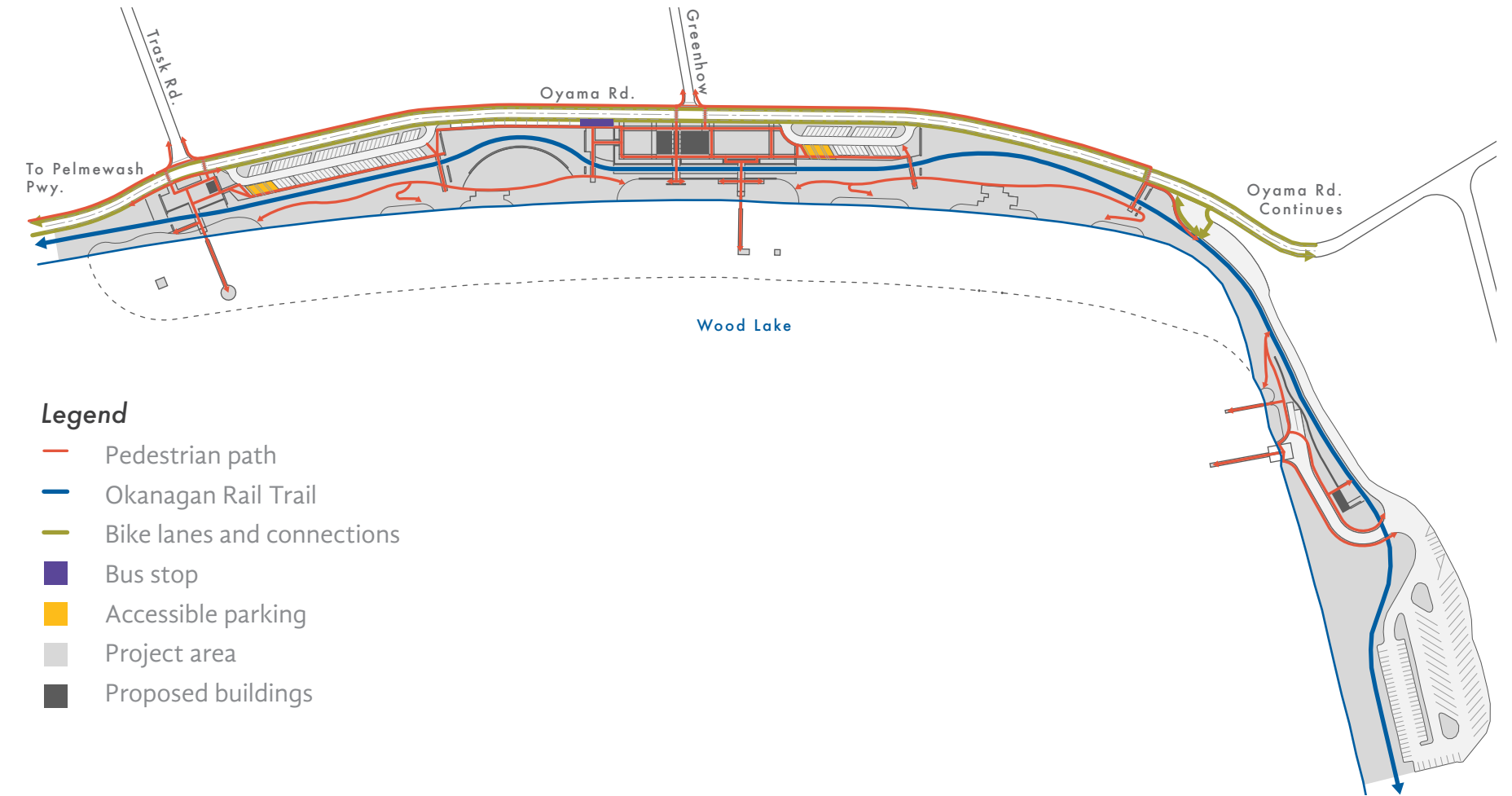
Spaces and features should be designed and organized so that at any time of year, users can have an active and energetic experience in the park, or a quiet and contemplative one.

Exercising, resting, picnicking, playing, strolling, running, cycling, gathering, swimming, floating, sunset-watching, wildlife-viewing, paddling, reading, meditating, and listening should all be possible at this park, simultaneously.

Minimize Mode Conflict

Carefully plan site circulation in order to minimize the potential for conflict between pedestrians, cyclists and drivers. Provide a clearly delineated pedestrian pathway network for park users that is separate from the Okanagan Rail Trail. Use low fencing and vegetation to direct pedestrians to cross the Rail Trail in a handful of marked locations with good sight lines.

Maintain and provide safe connections to the existing bike lanes on Oyama Road for cyclists wishing to bypass the park.



Legend

- Pedestrian path
- Okanagan Rail Trail
- Bike lanes and connections
- Bus stop
- Accessible parking
- Project area
- Proposed buildings

PROPOSED CIRCULATION



Spaces that bring the community together



Rural character of Oyama



Oyama's unique history



Oyama pink granite crusher chip surfacing



Board form concrete



Galvanized steel

CELEBRATE COMMUNITY IDENTITY

Foster a Sense of Community

The park should feel friendly, informal, intimate, natural, and accessible. It should be a comfortable place for gathering, recreating, and relaxing. Its character should be uniquely of Oyama; the park should feel as if it could be no where else in the world.

The park design should highlight the special qualities of the site, such as the extensive south-facing shoreline, expansive views, proximity to agricultural lands, intact fragments of indigenous riparian plant communities, and favourable location along the Okanagan Rail Trail.

Maintain Rural Character

Select materials and design treatments that are consistent with the rural character of Oyama. Looking to local construction for inspiration, consider utilizing Pink Oyama crusher chip paving, granite walls, fir decking, board form concrete, glacier rock and galvanized steel.

Prioritize the adaptive re-use of the existing packing house. If re-use is not possible, the building should be carefully dismantled so that heavy timber and other materials can be salvaged for new construction on the site.

Acknowledge History

The development of Oyama Isthmus Park presents opportunities to express the unique natural and human history of the site. Enrich the experience of park visitors by providing inclusive historical context to what the site is like today and how this may influence what it will become in the future.

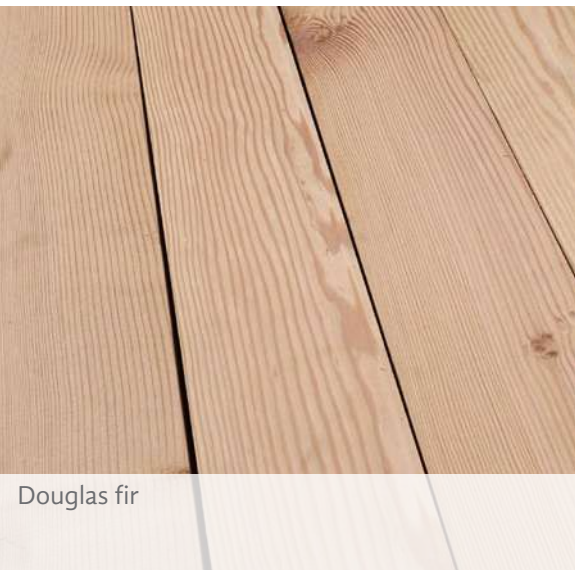
The site's history may be interpreted subtly in design details or public art, or more explicitly in text-based elements.



Local granite



Local glacier rock



Douglas fir

4.2 PARK CONCEPT
















The new park design concept enhances the unique qualities of the site that people value and utilize today, while allowing the park to sustainably accommodate the increased volume of users who are anticipated to access the site via the Okanagan Rail Trail.

Oyama Isthmus Park provides a backdrop for vibrant human activity and rich cultural experiences. It repairs and reveals ecological processes, and can be used as a teaching tool to support ecological literacy. The recreational opportunities provided in the park support the improvement of the physical health and mental well-being of the visitors and residents alike.





ACTIVITIES

- BIKING
- CANOEING
- FISHING
- FLOATING
- KAYAKING
- PADDLE BOARDING
- COMMUNITY GATHERING
- LAKE PLAY
- SCENIC VIEWING
- SKATING
- SWIMMING
- SMALL PERFORMANCES
- ART SHOWS
- LEARNING
- COMMUNITY MARKETS
- QUIET SOLITUDE

FEATURES

- BEACH ACCESS
- BIKE LANES
- BIKE PARKING
- BIKE REPAIR
- BOAT LAUNCH
- KAYAK LAUNCH
- BOTTLE FILLING
- CHANGE ROOM
- DOCK / PIER
- FOOD TRUCKS
- OFF-LEASH DOG BEACH
- OFF-LEASH DOG PARK
- OKANAGAN RAIL TRAIL
- OPEN LAWN
- OUTDOOR FITNESS
- PARKING
- PEDESTRIAN TRAILS
- PICNIC TABLES
- PLAYGROUND
- PROTECTED AREA
- SEATING
- UNIVERSAL ACCESSIBILITY
- WASHROOM
- WASTE / RECYCLING

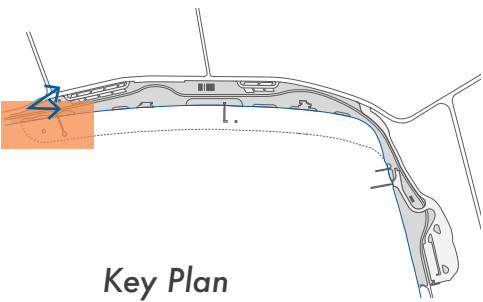
WEST ENTRANCE & DOCK

From the western entrance of the park off of Oyama Road, you immediately get the sense that you are entering a vibrant beach park. You are welcomed by a locally-sourced granite entry sign that frames the entry plaza at the intersection of Oyama and Trask Roads. As you enter the plaza, you catch a glimpse of cyclists and walkers actively moving along the Okanagan Rail Trail or taking a break from their long journey. You may choose to take stroll out onto the dock to take in the vista back toward the park to the east, or to find out if the fishing is good today. In the distance, people are relaxing on the sandy beach or experiencing being out on Wood lake.

Activities




Features





GREAT LAWN & POCKET BEACH


Proceeding east along the shoreline pathway, you will encounter a large lawn on your left, and a pocket beach on your right. On the beach, you see that people have found their very own natural beach nooks, nestled up against logs that also serve to stabilize the shoreline and prevent erosion. You can see that people are taking in the expansive views across Wood Lake, while being serenaded by the songs of warblers, catbirds, grosbeaks and flycatchers from the nearby riparian woodland. On the sunny lawn, you see people reading on beach towels, taking a break from a ride on the Rail Trail for a picnic, or throwing a frisbee around. If you time your visit just right, you may experience a local artist performing your favourite summer music to a group of eager listeners lounging on the grass.


Activities



SCENIC VIEWING


COMMUNITY GATHERING


FLOATING


PADDLE BOARDING


SWIMMING


QUIET SOLITUDE

Features


OPEN LAWN


PEDESTRIAN PATHS

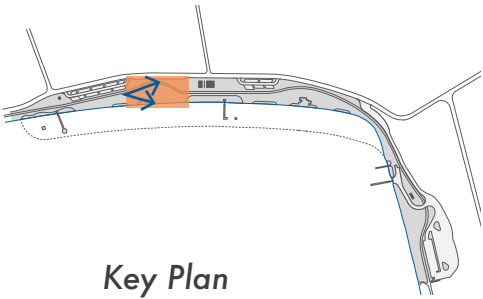

PICNIC TABLES


PROTECTED AREA

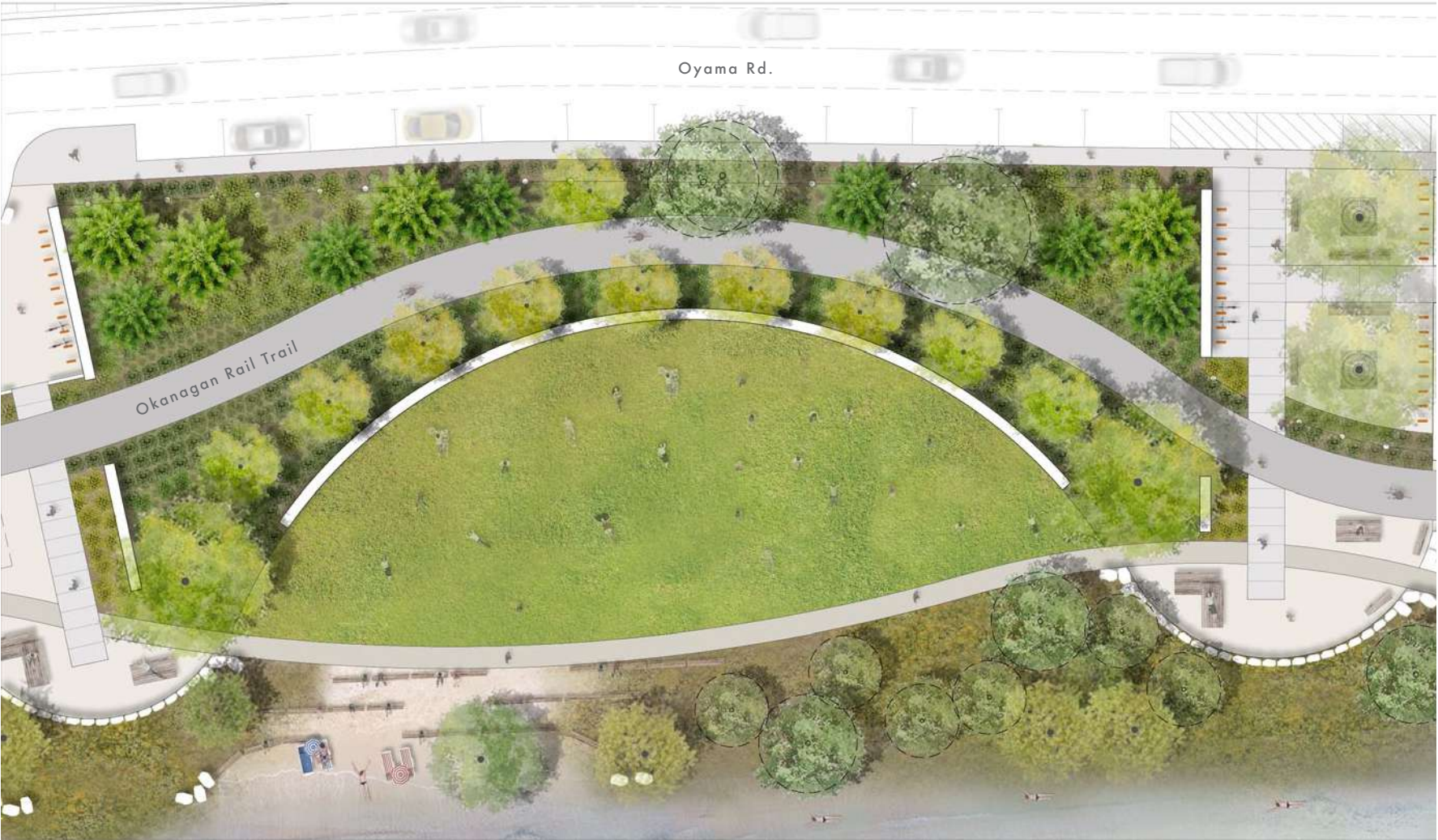

UNIVERSAL ACCESSIBILITY


SEATING


WASTE / RECYCLING



Key Plan



0 5 10 20m


NORTH

PACKING HOUSE SQUARE






At the heart of the park is a more formal community square that is full of vibrant activity. In the summer and shoulder seasons, this space will be used by people taking refuge from the sun, resting from their journey on the ORT or enjoying a cold beverage, ice cream or meal that was purchased from a food truck, Packing House concession, or vendor at the weekly Farmers’ Market. During the cooler months, this space will be a place where local residents can congregate to display local art and warm up by the indoor/ outdoor fireplace with a cup of hot chocolate.

Activities




ART SHOWS COMMUNITY GATHERING COMMUNITY MARKET LEARNING SMALL PERFORMANCES

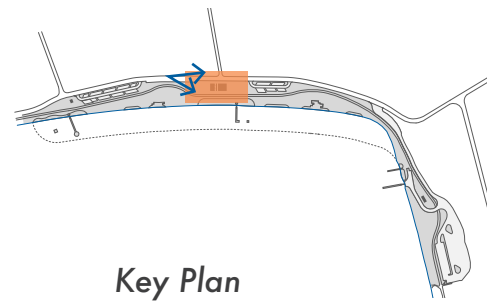
Features



BEACH ACCESS BIKE PARKING FOOD TRUCKS PICNIC TABLES SEATING UNIVERSAL ACCESSIBILITY



WASTE / RECYCLING



Key Plan



0 5 10 20m


NORTH

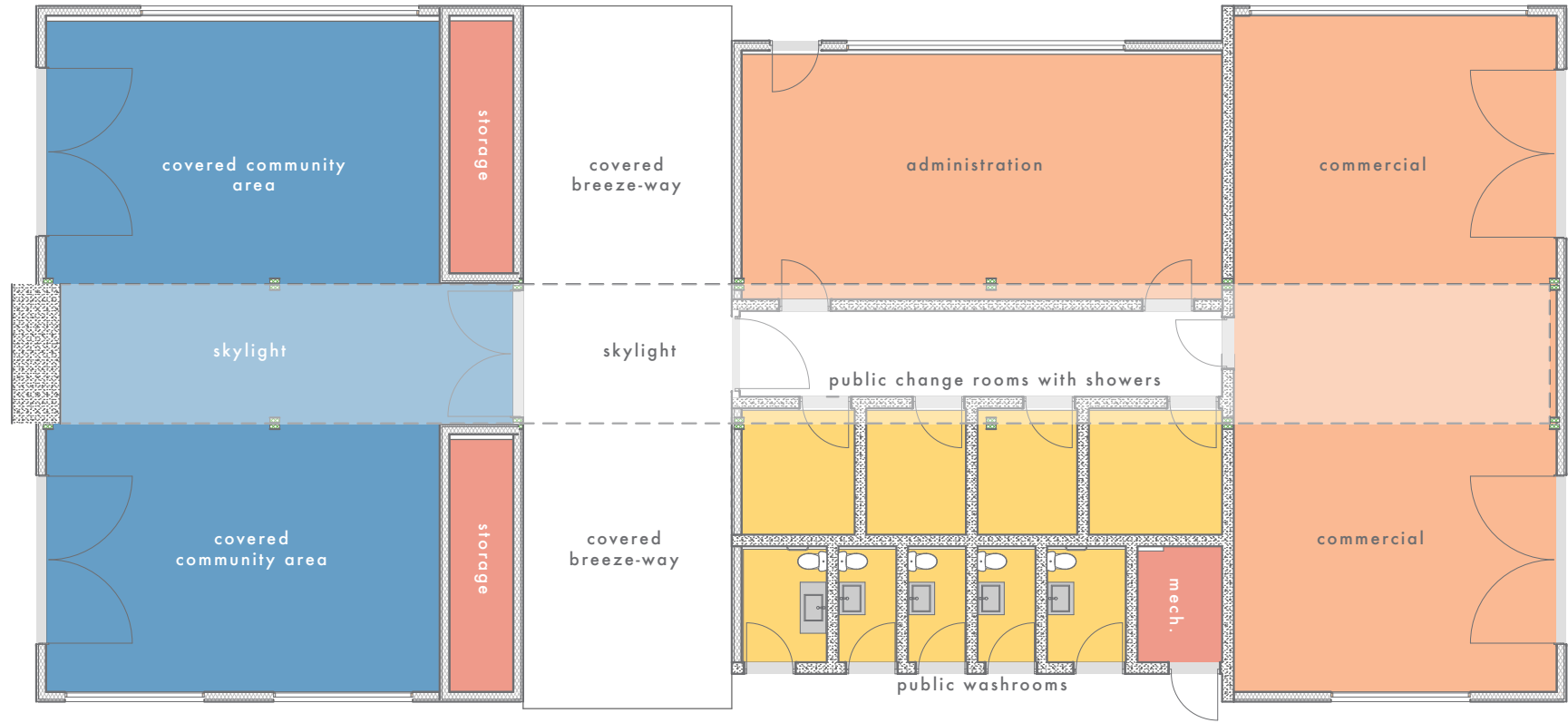
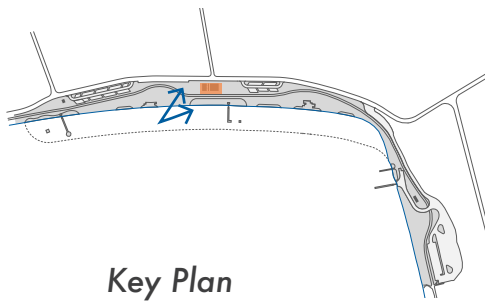
PACKING HOUSE BUILDING

As you walk through the square, it becomes obvious that the Packing House building is the central hub of the community. Its historic use and connection to the agricultural activities of Oyama, as well as the presence of locally-sourced landscape materials like pink granite and Okanagan softwood lumber, put local culture and character front and centre. The view through the building’s covered breeze-way from Greenhow Road provides a glimpse of Wood Lake’s scenic foreshore and the silhouette of Little White Mountain on the distant horizon. At the end of a hot summer day, beach users take advantage of the change rooms to freshen up before heading out on their journey home.

Activities



Features




Schematic Community Building Plan





CENTRAL BEACH AND PLAY PIER


Walking down from the Packing House and crossing the Rail Trail, you will have a expansive view of the sandy beach and play pier, which is lively and active at all times of the year. During the warmer months, the lake edge on the western side of the pier is full of swimmers, paddle boarders and sunbathers. In the colder months, this spot becomes the skating area. The smaller beach to the east is where you will see families set up for a day at the beach, where parents can enjoy the shade of riparian trees or soaking up the sun while watching their children challenge themselves on the zipline, diving boards and rope swing that run parallel to the beach.


Activities



BIKING



FLOATING


LAKE PLAY



PADDLE BOARDING



SCENIC VIEWING



SKATING



SWIMMING


Features



BEACH ACCESS



DOCK / PIER

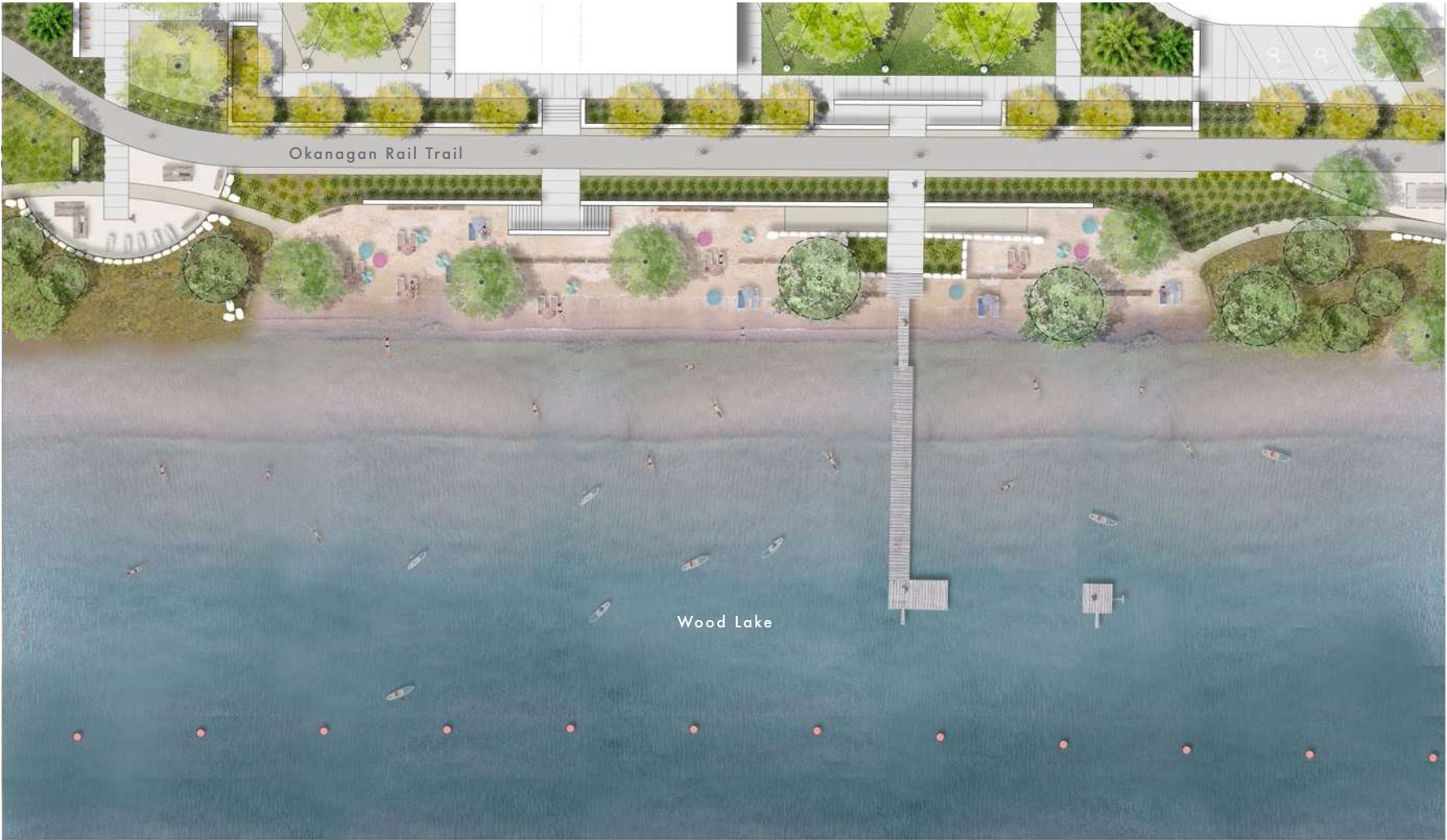
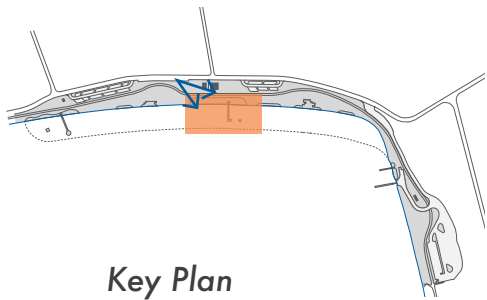
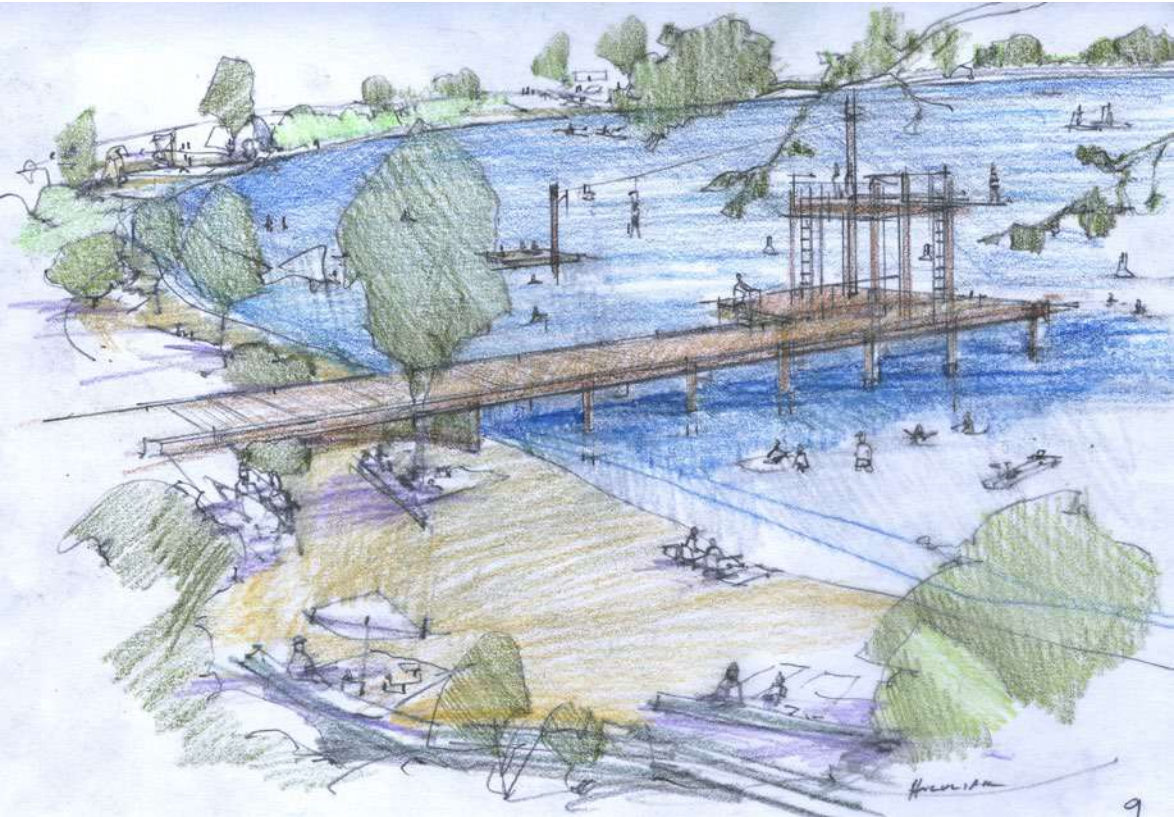

OKANAGAN RAIL TRAIL


PEDESTRIAN PATHS


SEATING


UNIVERSAL ACCESSIBILITY


WASTE / RECYCLING



PARKING

If you choose to arrive by vehicle, as soon as you turn off Oyama Road into one of the designated parking areas, it will feel like you have entered the park. The parking areas will be separated from the road with buffer planting, and several vegetated islands within the parking area accommodate broad deciduous trees to provide shade during the hot summer months.

Traffic flow in the parking areas is one-way to simplify turning movements of vehicles on to and off of Oyama Road, and the surface of the drive aisle is asphalt for ease of winter maintenance. 60 degree angled parking is present on both sides of the drive aisle. The parking stalls nearest to the active park areas are paved with concrete for optimized accessibility, while the remaining stalls are a permeable, compacted gravel surface that blends into the natural character of the park.

Bioswales, like the one in the foreground of the adjacent image, collect, clean and infiltrate any stormwater runoff generated from the parking surfaces.

Features


BIKING
PARKING

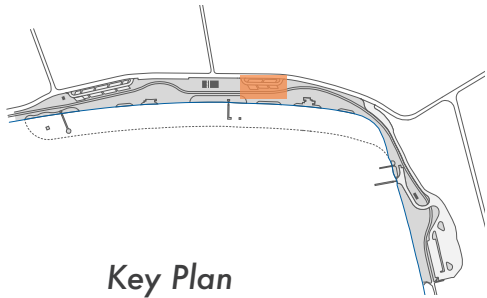

PARKING


UNIVERSAL
ACCESSIBILITY


WASTE /
RECYCLING



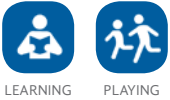
Parking lot with bioswale, permeable paving and planting islands



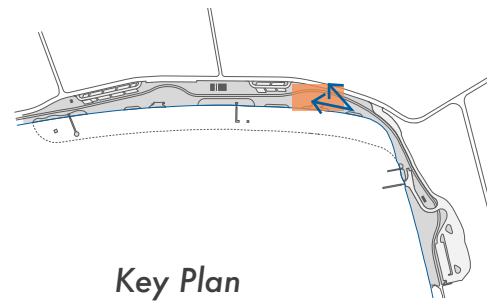
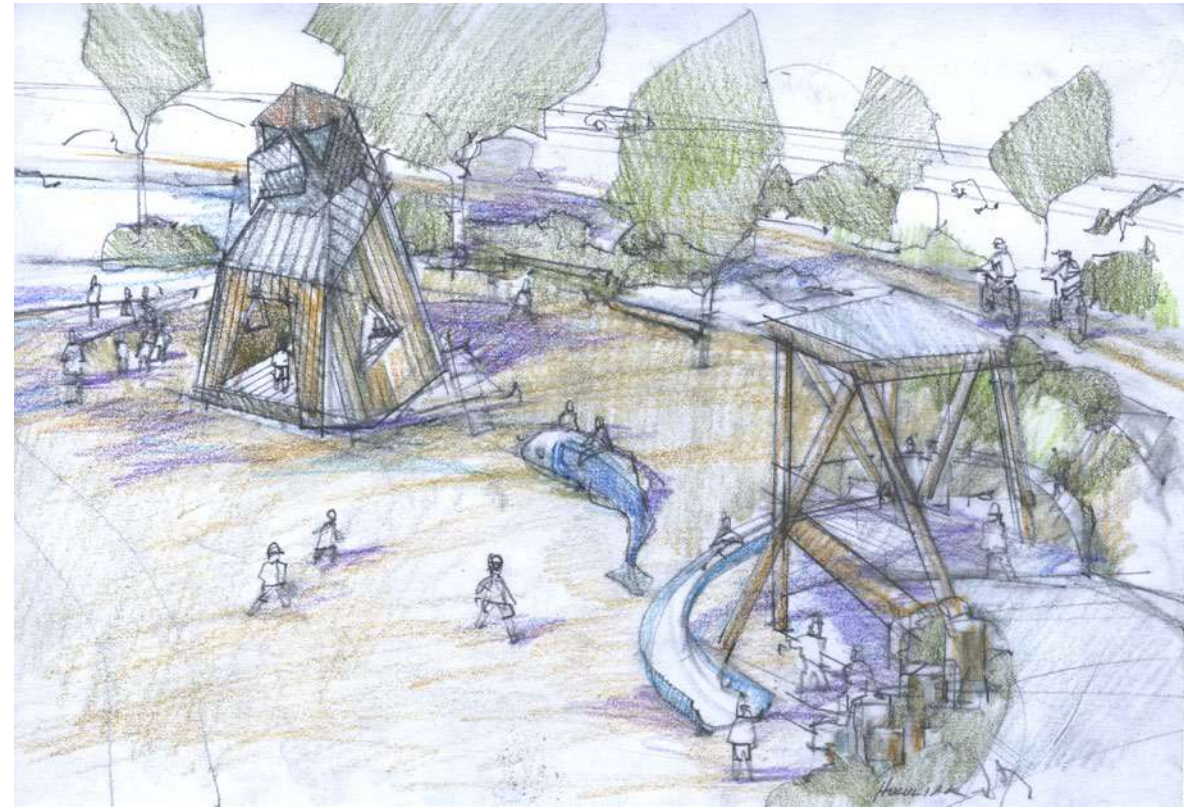
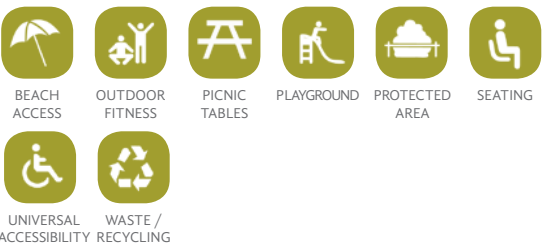
PLAY AREA & OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

Travelling further to the east along the ORT or shoreline pathway, you will come across a nature-inspired play area and outdoor classroom that is anchored by a large-scale Osprey nest play feature that no child can resist. The play area will be buffered from the Rail Trail by a vegetated slope and a row of deciduous trees which will provide shade as well also safe separation between speedy cyclists and playing children. The play elements are for kids of all ages and abilities, and are constructed of wood and other natural materials in keeping with the rural character of the park. The play area is linked to the nearby beach where terraced log seats form a small natural amphitheatre and classroom.

Activities



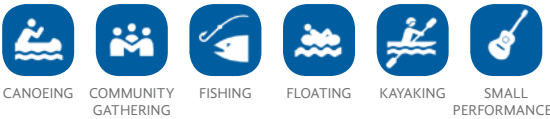
Features



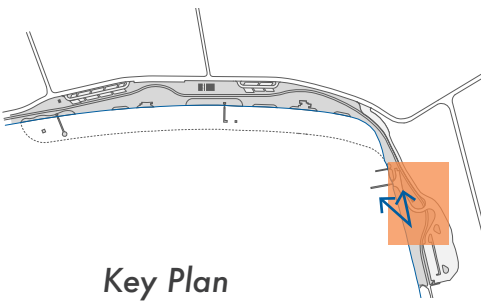
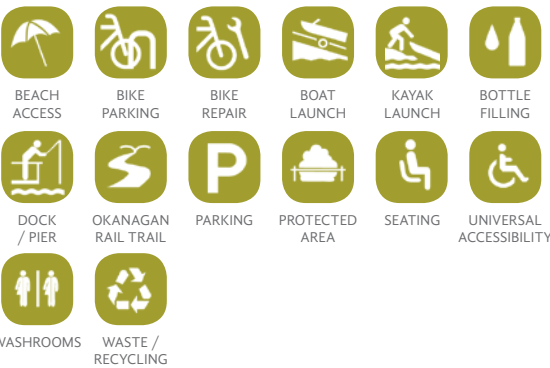
BOAT LAUNCH AREA

As the park bends to the south at the northeastern corner of Wood Lake you will enter into a designated access area to Wood Lake for motorized and non-motorized boats. A small amenity building provides services for boaters and ORT users. On hot summer days, trucks will be lined up to launch their boats quickly and efficiently from the formalized launch and dock. North of the launch area for motorized boats, you will see kayakers and canoeists taking off from a dock and beach launch dedicated to non-motorized crafts, on their way enjoy the newest segment of the Wood Lake Paddle Trail.

Activities



Features



SHORELINE PROTECTION & ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION

Throughout your journey in the park you will experience a number of protected shoreline areas that are critical to its beautiful natural character, and to its success as a model for the net improvement the highly threatened riparian ecosystems along the Okanagan Valley bottom.

These areas of natural vegetation have been carefully selected to protect remnant cottonwood trees and specialized native plant communities. They have been enhanced to increase biodiversity, protect rare and endangered wildlife and plant species, provide shelter and food for wildlife, and to provide users of the park with an up-close connection with nature. These areas are protected with a rustic split-rail fence, which will allow newly-planted restoration species to establish effectively.

The restoration of natural ecosystems provides direct human benefits such as flood mitigation, purification of water and air, and carbon sequestration, as well as cultural, spiritual, recreational and educational ecosystem services.



Cottonwoods provide essential roosting habitat for bald eagles



The northern flicker and other woodpeckers nest in cavities in mature cottonwoods



Black cottonwood
Populus trichocarpa



Peachleaf willow
Salix amygdaloides



Saskatoon
Amelanchier grandiflora



Red osier dogwood
Cornus sericea



Oregon grape
Mahonia aquifolium



Snowberry
Symphoricarpos alba

PARK AMENITIES



Beach ramp



Lounge Seating



Group Seating



View-framing architecture



Osprey nest natural play feature



Accessible play tower



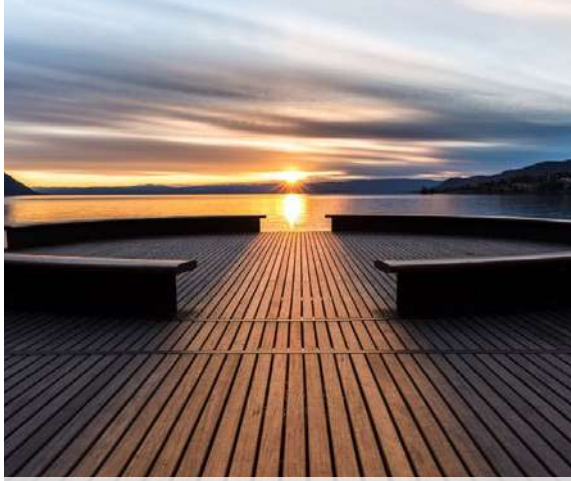
Bike parking



Paddlecraft storage



Picnic pod



Floating pier



Diving dock and zipline

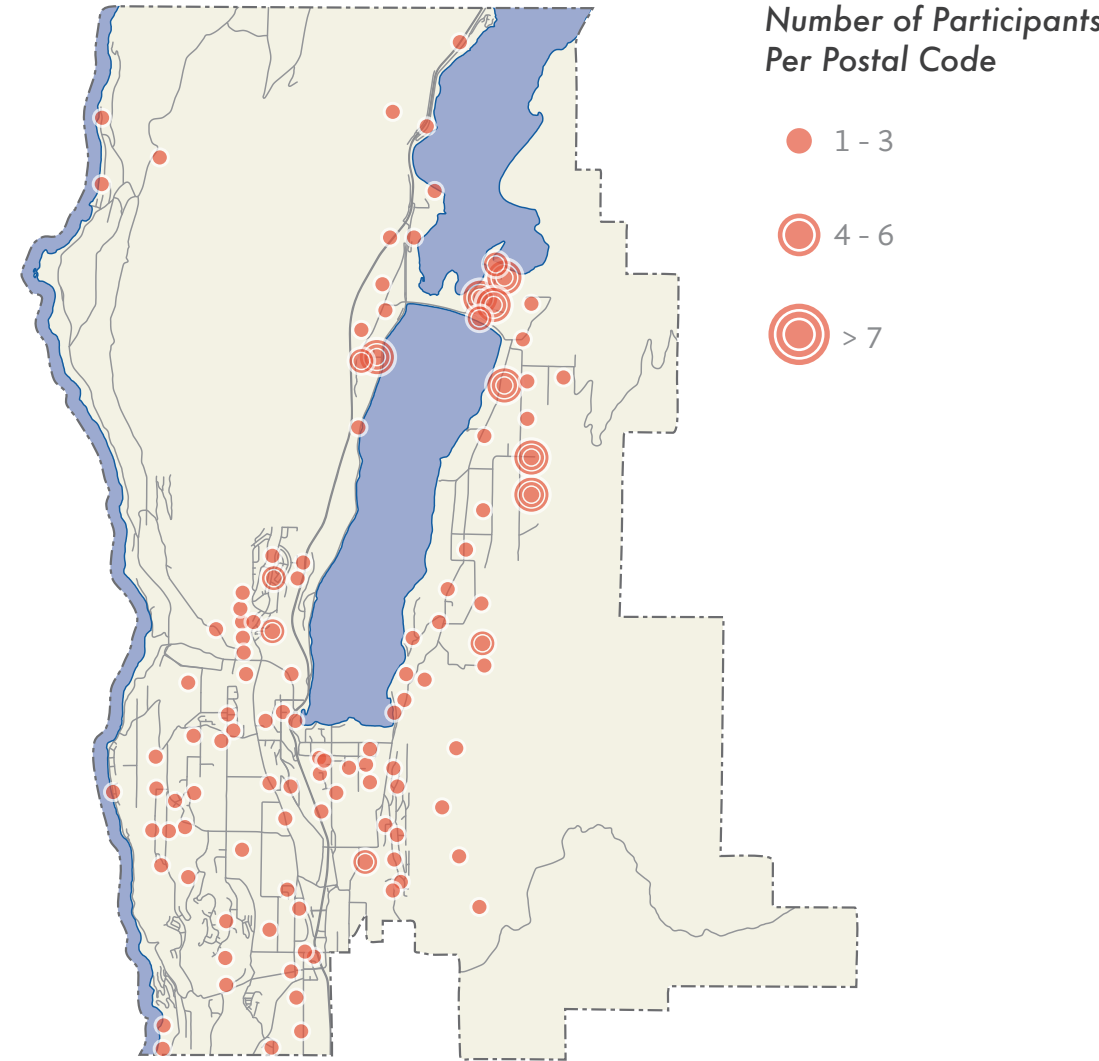


Outdoor fitness area

4.3 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT #2

In summer 2020, the public was invited to review and provide feedback on the proposed design concept prior to the finalization of the design report to Council. An online design concept presentation and survey were used to explain the design and solicit comments.

The online survey ran from mid-August to early-September, 2020. There were a total of 321 survey participants who left a diverse range of comments in response to the design concept. The public was equally divided in their satisfaction with the proposed design concept. The public responses identified both areas of support as well as area of concern about the proposed design concept.



85% of the online survey participants were residents of the District of Lake Country

POPULAR IMPROVEMENTS

Comments left by online survey participants identified numerous aspects of the proposed park concept as valuable improvement to the existing site. The following themes and improvements received the most support from respondents.

● Indication of the relative number of supportive comments on these topics

Improved Water Access



"Formalized parking and docks allowing water access, viewing and play opportunities"

Cleaner, Safer more Usable Space



"[The design has] a bit more intentional and organized spaces; restoration of some degraded areas, increased safety and cleanliness."

New Restrooms



"Real restrooms instead of a portapotty!!"

Balancing Nature & Recreation



"Great variety, use of natural space, protection of natural space."

Community Space



"I love the packing house as a central part of the plan. I believe an improvement to what is there now would benefit the local community."

Parking Improvements



"Organized parking will create more space"

Accessibility & Variety of Uses



"[The design] increases accessibility to the lake front for people with diverse abilities."

"[The design has a] variety of spaces for relaxation and activity."

Designated Non-Motorized Zone




"no motorized water zone... between ski-boats. jet skis, swimmers and paddle boards ..accidents are inevitable as it stands now."

AREAS OF CONCERN

Several areas of concern were identified from the comments left by online survey participants. These concerns are summarized in this section, and are illustrated by specific, representative comments collected in the survey.

Public feedback relating to traffic congestion, continued parking shortages, and the increasing numbers of visitors has been noted as the site is already a popular destination for water play, beach activities and boaters.

Other concerns related to the loss of both the small town feel and private pocket beaches on the existing site could be interpreted as a response to the formalization of this park space. Formalization, to some extent, however, is required as a means to protect the park site through the addition of such things as designated parking areas, protection of rare ecosystems, and provision of safe access to the water across Oyama Road and the Rail Trail. Other survey participants left comments in support of creating healthier, cleaner, safer and more usable park space through formalization and restoration.

 Indication of the relative number of apprehensive comments on these topics

Lose Small Town Feel



“Design seems a bit too urban for the rural character of Oyama. Seems more of an urban park that would be suited to Kelowna and not as in keeping with natural environment.”

Response: The proposed design strives to reflect the natural character of this rural waterfront site through the use of native plants and simple materials. In order to support a variety of recreational opportunities, provide access for people of all abilities, and protect environmentally sensitive areas of the site from a growing number of users, it is necessary to design spaces for different uses throughout the site. Although formal use of space is often found in urban settings, this site will retain its natural and rural aesthetic.

Traffic Congestion & Parking Shortages



“I don’t know that we’ll ever have enough parking in peak season without a giant parking structure. The boat launch parking which looked massive to me when initially built, is now filled to the brim by 8 am on weekends, and folks are parking on the road or in the bike lanes.”

Response: The proposed park concept improves the efficiency, accessibility, and year-round use of the site’s existing parking. A parking lot with marked stalls will reduce user conflict, and providing a more organized and efficient parking lot layout into the park design will create more usable park space for activities for people of all abilities.

Already Too Crowded



“Already too crowded where I don’t even go to certain parts of Oyama on a Saturday. I can’t even enjoy the community I’ve lived in for many years.”

Response: The formalizing of this park space is intended to preserve and protect this sensitive site from unfettered access and overuse. Currently the number of people using this informal space is creating issues. Clearly defining areas of use will accommodate more people and reduce conflict between users. Providing basic amenities like washrooms, water stations, shelter from the sun, and garbage cans is essential to maintaining a clean and safe park space.

Not a Priority for Tax Payer Funds



“We already pay huge taxes, what is this going to cost? Consideration should be given to providing income without burdening local property owners.”

Response: This park space can be developed in phases to spread the cost of its improvement over the next twenty years. Alternative funding sources will be pursued to alleviate the burden of the cost of park improvements on the local tax base.

Loss of Pocket Beaches



“The beach has private little pockets of beach and water. That’s what makes it so special. You can go and claim your own little space of beach that feels like it’s all your own. We’re going to loose all of that in this design.”

Response: The highest priority set by the public for the development of this park space was to protect and enhance the natural environment. This includes preserving and restoring pockets of existing native vegetation identified as being of high ecological value. The proposed park concept aims to balance recreational use and the protection of the natural environmental. To do this, five pocket beach area have been proposed to be enhanced in order to maintain access to these kinds of spaces as much as possible, while access to particularly sensitive riparian areas of high ecological value would be controlled.

5 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Significant, complex park projects like the Oyama Isthmus are often advanced in a phased development approach, and may take years to fund and implement. A carefully-planned implementation strategy which anticipates and prioritizes the current and future needs of the community will allow the District of Lake Country to efficiently and effectively meet park development goals, one phase at a time. Partnership with volunteers, institutions, governmental agencies, and private funders can help with providing innovative funding methods, and may speed up the implementation process.

5.1 CONSIDERATIONS FOR PHASE SELECTION

The following criteria were developed by the consulting team in collaboration with District of Lake Country staff to guide the refinement and selection of the individual park phases and larger park zones.

ECOLOGICALLY SENSITIVE & SUSTAINABLE

The development of the park does not negatively impact existing intact ecosystems, and all new ecological restoration work that takes place must be able to be maintained and managed sustainably in the long term.

FUNCTIONAL & COST EFFECTIVE

Phasing should be ordered in a functional way to improve construction efficiencies which will result in cost-effective implementation solutions.

MAINTAIN PARK & SHORE ACCESS

Maintain access to the shoreline and other areas of the park to the maximum extent possible, in order to allow park users to continue to enjoy the park during construction.

MAINTAIN RAIL TRAIL ACCESS

Maintain a clear, safe path of travel for Okanagan Rail Trail users and ensure access to key locations within the park when other phases of the park are in construction.

MINIMIZE IMPACTS TO OYAMA ROAD & SURROUNDING USES

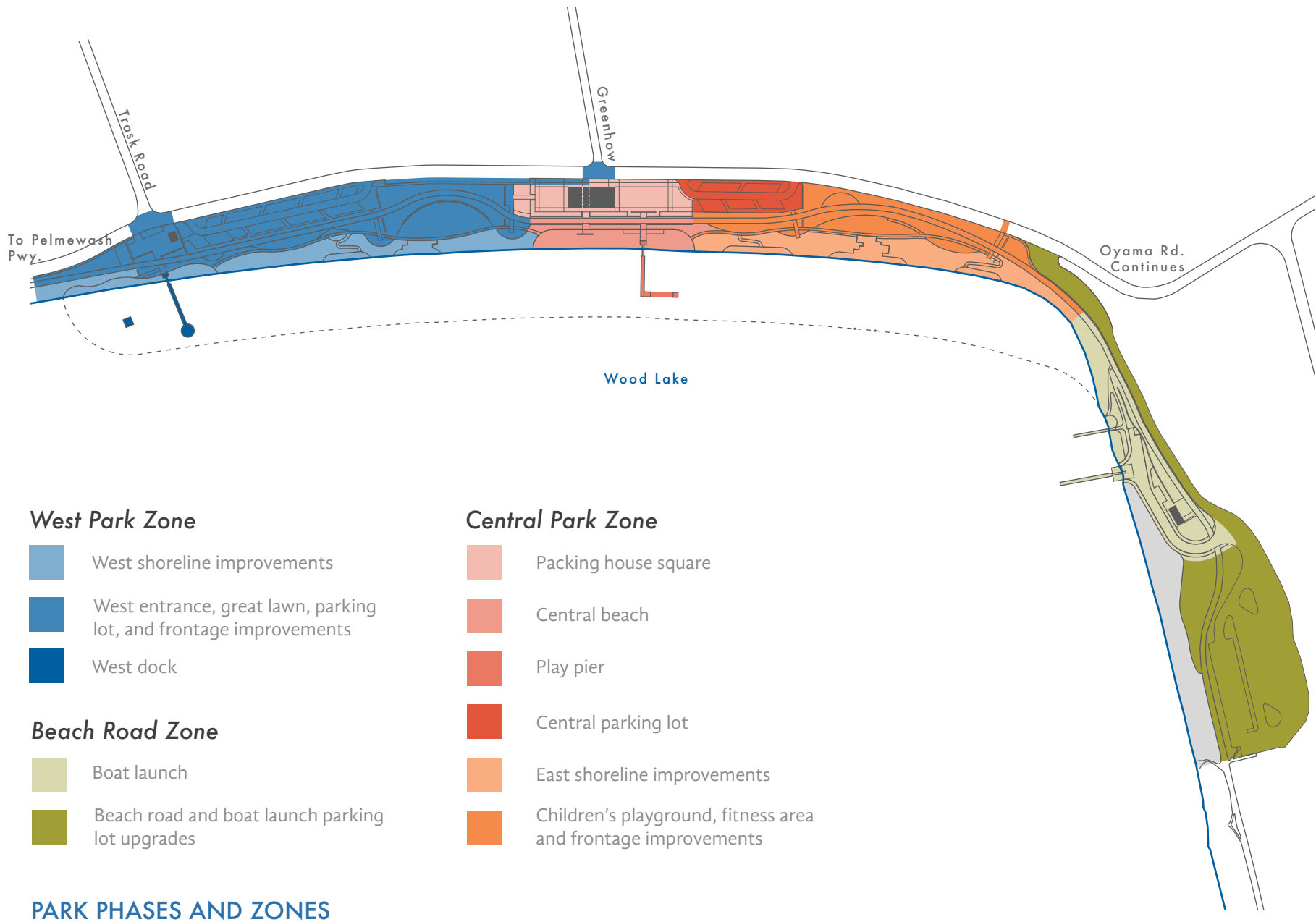
Minimize impacts to vehicle circulation along Oyama Road as well as the residential, commercial, institutional and industrial uses surrounding the park.

AVOID DISTURBANCE OF EXISTING INFRASTRUCTURE

Minimize disturbance to existing infrastructure and utilities during construction.

COMBINE AREAS WITH HIGH ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

Where feasible, combine areas that have been identified by the Archaeological Overview Assessment to have high Archaeological potential so that these areas do not become fragmented and can be evaluated and monitored at the same time.



PARK PHASES AND ZONES

5.2 PHASES

Using the phasing considerations as a guide, the site has been broken down into small, individual phases that could be implemented on their own or grouped into the larger West Park, Central Park and Beach Road zones. The decision regarding whether to implement the park in zones rather than phases will mainly depend on the availability of funding.

PARK PHASES

West Shoreline Improvements

This phase runs from the western park boundary to the central beach area and consists mainly of the restoration of the Wood Lake shoreline. Work includes the removal of invasive species and the enhancement of native vegetation, while expanding and improving the existing pocket beaches.

West Entrance, Great Lawn, Parking Lot, and Frontage Improvements

This large phase runs from the western park boundary to the packing house square and is mainly focused on providing formalized spaces. The work includes the development of the west entry plaza, along with amenity building, great lawn and west parking lot areas, as well as the realignment of the rail trail and improvements to the park frontage along Oyama Road.

West Dock

This phase adds a wood dock structure onto Wood Lake from the west entrance plaza. The work includes the dock abutments, transition ramp, piles, floating dock and a viewing area at the end of the dock.

Packing House Square

This phase is located at the centre of the park and is the main community gathering space, designed to accommodate the highest intensity of users and amenities. The work includes the restoration or reconstruction of the packing house building, a flexible community plaza space on the west side of the building, and an information open lawn on the east side of the building. This site also links users from the Oyama Road and Greenhow Road intersection to the expanded central beach area.

Central Beach

This phase is located in front of the Packing House Square and is the the largest beach in the park. Work includes the removal of invasive species and the restoration of native vegetation along the shoreline, and the improvement and expansion of the larger beach that already exists in this location.

Play Pier

This phase adds a wood play pier structure onto Wood Lake at the central beach. The work

includes the pier abutments, transition ramp, piles, floating dock and water play features such as a zipline, diving boards and rope swings.

Central Parking Lot

This phase is located just east of the packing house square and is intended to service the entire central park area. Work includes construction of a dedicated, organized parking with one-way vehicle circulation. The lot is intended to blend into the natural character of the park and will manage storewater through a bioswale system.

East Shoreline Improvements

This phase runs from the central beach area to the northeast corner of Wood lake and is mainly the restoration of the shoreline along this portion of the site. Work includes the removal of invasive species and the enhancement of native vegetation as well as the expansion and improvement of the existing pocket beaches. One of the pocket beaches may be used as a natural outdoor classroom and another as a dog beach.

Children's Playground, Fitness Area and Frontage Improvements

This phase is located in the centre of the east end of the park and its main focus is to provide outdoor leisure, play and fitness activities. Improvements to the park frontage are also part

of this phase. The work includes the construction of a playground, outdoor fitness area, picnic pods and buffer planting to help separate the park from Oyama Road.

Boat Launch

This phase is located on the eastern shoreline of Wood Lake, and exists with the objective of improving the functionality of the existing boat launch area for both motorized and non-motorized crafts. The work includes the construction of a motorized boat launch and dock, a non-motorized boat dock and beach, and an amenity building that has washroom facilities and non-motorized boat storage.

Beach Road and Boat Launch Parking Lot Upgrades

The basic elements of the phase currently exist, however would be upgraded with an asphalt surface to tie into the upgraded boat launch area. The work includes the regrading of the current surface, the addition of stormwater management infrastructure, and the addition of a top layer of asphalt paving.

5.3 SEQUENCING

Implementation sequencing will be up to District of Lake Country Council and staff to establish and will depend on the current and future needs of the community. It is recommended that the park is developed is a sequence that is ecologically sensitive, functional and cost effective, maintains park, waterfront and Rail Trail access, and minimizes impacts to Oyama Road, surrounding properties, and infrastructure.

5.4 COSTING

The associated costs of construction will vary depending on available funding, economic conditions, phase selection, phase size, sequencing, design and construction timing. It is recommended that cost estimates be developed as and when required based on future phasing and scope of work. Budgets for detailed design and construction will be established through the 5-year capital plan as part of the annual budgeting process.

5.5 FUNDING

To achieve the long-term vision of this design concept without significant financial impact on the general tax base, the District will pursue innovative methods to fund the capital construction and ongoing operations and maintenance related to the development of Oyama Isthmus Park.

CAPITAL FUNDING

There are a variety of possible non-taxation funding sources and mechanisms available to implement the concept as proposed. Development Cost Charges (DCCs) have the potential to fund a significant portion of the capital costs, as the need for additional waterfront park space is largely driven by growth. Donations and fundraising programs present a great opportunity for people to contribute, building upon the community-driven success of the Okanagan Rail Trail and the continued efforts of the Friends of the Okanagan Rail Trail (FORT). Senior government grants can also provide a large source of funding for parks, and are regularly targeted toward projects of this nature involving active transportation, environmental enhancements, and recreation infrastructure.

OPERATIONS, MAINTENANCE AND RENEWAL FUNDING

In addition to the up-front capital costs, ongoing costs related to increased operations and maintenance, as well as lifecycle replacement must be addressed. Property tax is the District’s main source of revenue for park services. As such, for the long-term viability and affordability of this plan, it will be important to phase construction incrementally along with growth of the community’s tax base. User fees and commercial leasing revenue can also provide funding to assist with the costs of operations and maintenance. As a principle, the District’s park system should aim to provide affordable public use, so a careful balance is required between the provision of parks and revenue recovery to ensure that recreation can continue to be effectively provided.

APPENDIX

COMPANION DOCUMENTS

Background documents prepared to inform the Design Concept:

- Archaeological Overview Assessment , Ursus Heritage Consulting Ltd., January 2020
- Parking Preliminary Review, Urban Systems, January 2020
- Overview Environmental Assessment, Ecoscape Environmental Consultants Ltd., January 2020

Documents prepared during the course of developing the Design Concept:

- Public Engagement #1 Open House Presentation Boards, BENCH, February 2020
- Public Engagement #1 Summary Report, BENCH, February 2020
- Public Engagement #2 Design Concept Report, BENCH, August 2020
- Public Engagement #2 Summary Report, BENCH, September 2020

RELATED DOCUMENTS

Lake Country 2018 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, 2019