

Framework for the Future

The principles of Imagine Kelowna are: Responsible, Connected, Smarter, and Collaborative (Figure 34). To align with this overall city direction, the Parks Master Plan must distill Imagine Kelowna's vision, principles, and goals into specific direction for the municipal parks system. The following vision and principles are recommended for the parks system to ensure it is designed and managed responsibly, collaboratively, and in a smart and connected way. Engagement feedback and priorities learned from Phase 1 are also a critical ingredient in the vision and principles.



Figure 35: Imagine Kelowna Vision, Principles and Goals

Vision and Principles

The vision sets out the aspirational future for the parks system and what it should look like in 40-50 years. The suggested vision for Kelowna's parks is:

Kelowna's parks celebrate and protect the unique landscapes and people of the Okanagan Valley. From the lake to the mountains, they connect our communities through a network of vibrant destinations that bring people together and foster responsible stewardship. Our parks support a resilient and active city by providing equitable access to diverse recreational and cultural experiences.

To guide the park system moving forward, seven principles are proposed. These principles were created to satisfy several different 2040 OCP objectives as well as integrate feedback from Phase 1 engagement.

Table 3: Guiding Principles



Stewardship: Natural areas are protected and managed to support ecological health and to provide natural experiences for present and future generations.

Official Community Plan Objectives

- Objective 10.3. Ensure parks reflect their unique natural and cultural context.
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- Objective 14.2. Protect and expand a healthy and viable urban forest.
- Objective 14.3. Preserve Okanagan Lake for its environmental, traditional, cultural, spiritual, and recreational values.
- Objective 14.4. Preserve and enhance biodiversity and landscape diversity, integrating and connecting ecological networks through the city.
- Objective 14.5. Protect and restore environmentally sensitive areas from development impacts.

Public & Stakeholder Engagement Feedback

- Environmental sustainability priorities most highly ranked in the survey
- 70% of participants felt 'protecting and/or restoring natural areas/ habitat' and 'preserving alignments of our natural creeks and surrounding native forests' were very important.
- Key benefit of parks was access to nature (habitat, nature connection, water access, fresh air)
- Top park activity was connecting with nature



Equity: Parks and amenities are provided and designed inclusively for the safety and enjoyment of everyone, including equity-seeking groups (Indigenous people, people experiencing homelessness, women, racialized communities, LGBTQ2+ communities, veterans and people with disabilities).

Official Community Plan Objectives

- Objective 9.1. Incorporate equity into planning decisions and resource allocation in our community.
- Objective 9.2. Strengthen the relationship with the syilx/Okanagan people through initiatives and processes to advance and support reconciliation in Kelowna.
- Objective 9.4. Ensure that all community members are safe and included.
- Objective 10.2. Ensure parks and public spaces are connected to each other and accessible for all citizens.
- Objective 10.4. Increase public access to water.
- Objective 10.1. Acquire new parks to enhance livability throughout the city.

Public & Stakeholder Engagement Feedback

- 'universal access' and 'clean & safe' key themes for what makes a great public space
- 'safety: I don't feel safe in parks' was the number one barrier to accessing parks
- "focusing on neighbourhoods that are underserved by parks" was ranked as the third highest acquisition & park development priority
- Inclusivity and accessibility major themes from stakeholder engagement
- Amenity gaps a key challenge identified through stakeholder discussions



Connectivity: Parks are walkable and connect our communities by providing recreational and leisure routes to support active living.

Official Community Plan Objectives

- Objective 10.2. Ensure parks and public spaces are connected to each other and accessible for all citizens.

Public & Stakeholder Engagement Feedback

- Second highest park activity was "walking / running / travel by wheelchair"
- 'easy to get to' was a top theme for what makes a great public space
- 52% of survey participants said they walk / wheelchair less than 15 minutes to get to parks
- Neighbourhood parks were most selected as visited "very often" out of the park types
- Parking challenges were noted as a barrier to accessing parks
- Access (parks too far away) was the 4th highest barrier
- "New waterfront parkland to create a continuous waterfront experience" and "new parks in growth areas" were ranked as the top two acquisition & park development priorities
- Interconnected trail network was a key topic in stakeholder discussions



Adaptability: Parks and amenities are managed adaptively to respond to changing needs, ensure resiliency, and respond to future opportunities.

Official Community Plan Objectives

- Objective 12.1. Design the community to be more resilient to a changing climate.
- Objective 12.8. Invest in ecosystem services and green infrastructure to mitigate and adapt to a changing climate.
- Objective 12.9. Support the community to prepare for and become resilient to the impacts of climate change.

Public & Stakeholder Engagement Feedback

- About 46% said that their use of parks increased because of COVID-19
- Climate change resiliency was a key theme from stakeholder engagement
- Keeping up with new recreation trends was an important priority identified through stakeholder engagement



Vibrancy: Parks contribute to community vibrancy by supporting a variety of year round activities, experiences, and needs in shared spaces.

Official Community Plan Objectives

- Objective 10.1. Acquire new parks to enhance livability throughout the City.

Public & Stakeholder Engagement Feedback

- 'room for many activities' a key theme for what makes a great public space
- Desire for both 'retreat / relaxation spaces' and 'active spaces'
- Lack of amenities was the #2 greatest barrier to accessing parks
- Connecting with nature, walking / running / travel by wheelchair, relaxing in park, and socializing / connecting with others were top park activities



Celebration: Parks bring people together, foster a sense of place and community, and express the diverse culture and histories of our region.

Official Community Plan Objectives

- Objective 9.2. Strengthen the relationship with the syilx/Okanagan people through initiatives and processes to advance and support reconciliation in Kelowna.
- Objective 10.3. Ensure parks reflect their unique natural and cultural context.
- Objective 11.2. Identify, conserve and protect historic places

Public & Stakeholder Engagement Feedback

- 'gathering spaces' were an important amenity
- Social connection (community, family, friends, etc) was an important benefit of parks and a top activity
- Park connections and celebration of unique landscapes and history (Indigenous and settler) was a key priority from stakeholder discussions



Collaboration: The city works with regional partners, community organizations, and the private sector to fund, acquire, develop, and program parks.

Official Community Plan Objectives

- Objective 10.5. Encourage partnerships to acquire and deliver parks and public spaces.

Public & Stakeholder Engagement Feedback


















































- Collaboration and increasing volunteer opportunities was a key theme from stakeholder feedback
- 'more stewardship opportunities for volunteers' was highest ranked priority under maintenance and operations




















































Goals

The Parks Master Plan will provide a series of tangible goals and outcomes to achieve over the next 10 to 50 years. These goals will serve to realize the vision for the park system while adhering to the seven guiding principles. The goals must be measurable with the clear ability to track and demonstrate success. The following 14 goals are proposed. These are presented in Table 5 along with the guiding principles that they fulfill.

Table 4: Goals

GOAL	DESCRIPTION	GUIDING PRINCIPLES
1	Strive to provide equitable local access to neighbourhood & community level amenities across the city.	      
2	Design communities and parks to support walkability and improve the pedestrian experience through high quality pathway design and wayfinding in parks.	      
3	Acquire additional parkland to protect natural areas and ecological diversity within Kelowna.	      
4	Preserve and enhance the urban forest, waterbodies and riparian areas through restoration of native vegetation.	      
5	Recognize Lake Okanagan as the central feature of the parks system and improve connectivity along and access to the waterfront for the use and enjoyment of all. Develop splash pads and water parks in locations without equitable access to the Lake.	      
6	Acquire additional parkland to provide active parks and associated amenities, with a focus on supporting growth within urban centres and responding to existing gaps in park and amenity provision.	      
7	Secure and maintain sustainable sources of funding for park acquisition, development, and ongoing operations.	      

GOAL	DESCRIPTION	GUIDING PRINCIPLES
8	Foster truth and reconciliation in parks and recognize and celebrate Indigenous Peoples' cultures and important relationships to the land through partnerships, placemaking, events, and interpretation.	      
9	Partner with local organizations to provide cultural experiences in parks to celebrate our diverse community.	      
10	Design and retrofit parks to be universally accessible, safe, and inclusive through increased programming, pedestrian friendly design, well maintained public washrooms, and accessible parking and amenities.	      
11	Provide a spectrum of play experiences in parks for all ages and abilities, including structured / unstructured play, accessible playgrounds, and play opportunities for different risk levels.	      
12	Implement an equitable approach to park and amenity design that is welcoming for all citizens, including those who are most vulnerable, incorporating a wellness and community connections perspective in addition to meeting basic needs.	      
13	Program parks to provide more cultural events, heritage interpretation, public art, and other educational experiences unique to Kelowna.	      
14	Ensure that parks contribute to the overall physical and emotional health and wellbeing of the city and its people.	      

Next Steps

This phase 1 report provides a high-level overview of the current inventory and relative access levels of Kelowna's parks system. Subsequent work will provide a more detailed view of the park system, focusing on the established 'Core Area' and 'Urban Centres' defined in the 2040 OCP. This will allow for practical and responsive acquisition, development, and programming recommendations that are informed by detailed public engagement with residents and visitors to each urban centre. This will allow for identified gaps in access to be evaluated and prioritized to ensure that the park system continues to adapt and grow in a way that responds to the needs of the local community, and the unique constraints of each location.