



# City of Quesnel

## Parks, Green Spaces and Outdoor Recreation Master Plan

 **LEES+Associates**  
Landscape Architects and Planners

October 19, 2015

509-318 Homer St **Vancouver** BC Canada V6B 2V2 | p: 604.899.3806 | f: 604.899.3805  
51 Woseley Street **Toronto** ON Canada M5T 1A4 | p: 416.645.7033 | f: 416 645 7046  
[info@elac.ca](mailto:info@elac.ca) | [www.elac.ca](http://www.elac.ca)

# CONTENTS

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>The Purpose</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>The Process</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Community Profile</b> .....	<b>3</b>
Engagement.....	5
Best Practices and Trends.....	7
<b>Vision and Principles</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Parks</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Park System</b> .....	<b>12</b>
Park Classification.....	12
Provision of Parks.....	14
Spatial Analysis.....	18
<b>Park Acquisition</b> .....	<b>19</b>
Review of OCP Park Locations.....	19
New Parks.....	20
Divestment of Parkland.....	20
<b>Heritage and Memorials in Parks</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>Park Amenities</b> .....	<b>25</b>
Provision.....	25
Review of OCP Park Amenity Recommendations.....	27
Park Amenities.....	28
Playgrounds.....	28
Sports Courts.....	31
Sports Fields and Ball Diamonds.....	31
Places for Dogs.....	39
Community Gardens.....	40
Outdoor Fitness Circuit.....	40
Commercial and Organizational Signage in Parks.....	41
Public RV Park.....	41
Recommendations.....	41
<b>Green Spaces and Environmentally Sensitive Areas</b> .....	<b>53</b>
Stakeholders and Programming.....	54
Recommendations.....	56
<b>Trails</b> .....	<b>59</b>
Existing Conditions, Opportunities and Challenges.....	60
Community Forest.....	61

Recommendations .....	63
<b>Partnerships .....</b>	<b>71</b>
School District #28 .....	71
Cariboo Regional District .....	71
Educational Institutions .....	72
Private-Public Partnerships .....	72
Ongoing Community engagement .....	73
Recommendations .....	74
<b>Implementation Plan .....</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>Funding Strategies .....</b>	<b>76</b>
Ongoing Investment Goals .....	76
Core Funding .....	77
Grants .....	77
<b>Appendix A – Public Open House 1 Feedback.....</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>Appendix B – Public Questionnaire 1 Results .....</b>	<b>80</b>
<b>Appendix C – Public Open House 2 and public Questionnaire 2 Feedback</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>Appendix D – Parkland Acquisition Guidelines .....</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>Appendix E – Provincial Legislative Provisions for Exchange or Disposal of Parkland.....</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>Appendix F – Additional Cycling Feedback .....</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>Appendix G – Website Links for Funding Opportunities &amp; Programs .....</b>	<b>87</b>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Home to approximately 10,000 residents, the City of Quesnel includes a surrounding service area of over 23,000. Located at the confluence of the Fraser and Quesnel rivers, the City was developed as a gold mining and forestry hub. Today, forestry, mining, tourism and agriculture remain leading industries, although the City is facing contraction of the timber sector as a result of the Mountain Pine Beetle. While the City has the foundation of a robust parks and outdoor recreation system, optimizing the existing parks system, creating better trail linkages and promoting conservation of green spaces are key opportunities for the Parks, Green Spaces and Outdoor Recreation Master Plan.

The City has not previously developed a Master Plan of this kind, instead drawing direction from its Official Community Plan (OCP, 2007). In the face of an evolving economic profile, the City finds itself seeking additional guidance towards the management and protection of its parks, trails and green spaces as well as outdoor recreation amenities in order to meet the needs of the community over the next 10-year period. Developed collaboratively by consulting with City Staff, Council, stakeholders and the public, the plan sets clear directives to guide policy development and decision making towards a sustainable City-wide vision for parks, trails, green spaces and outdoor recreation amenities for City Council and Staff over the next ten years. An implementation plan prioritizes recommendations with associated provision of capital and ongoing operational and maintenance funding requirements. This Master Plan does not provide specific site plans or specific budget recommendations. All recommendations and plans outlined within this report will be vetted by Staff and Council in future planning processes, as well as evaluated relative to resource and budget requirements. It is intended as a working document to provide ongoing direction.

## VISION AND PRINCIPLES

The following vision and principles, developed with City Council, set the stage for the Master Plan, establishing a philosophical framework for use as touchstones for future evaluation of departmental plans and priorities.

### Vision

*Promote, celebrate and highlight local parks, green spaces and trails as a community success to draw and retain long term residents of all ages.*

### Principles

- § Facilitate aging in place
- § Consider potential of trails and outdoor recreation for community economic development
- § Provide opportunities for residents to be active from walking through involvement in team sports
- § Invest in retaining and maximizing, rather than expanding amenities
- § Maximize low investment, high yield amenity development
- § Focus on an incremental approach to improvements, remaining pragmatic and staying in tune with community needs

## PARKS

Quesnel has a wealth of parkland. The City's parks are a source of community pride – they are diverse, plentiful, and well maintained, showcasing the best that Quesnel has to offer. The Master Plan categorizes all parks as City, Community, Neighbourhood or Linear Parks.

The OCP included a number of proposed park development projects. Respecting the constraints of the City and the need for a sustainable future, these were discussed with City Staff and Council at the outset of this project to evaluate which have already been completed, and which remain most relevant today. The City has a number of undeveloped park sites in its inventory. These were reviewed, with three identified for low maintenance park development over the coming ten years and other sites retained as green space.

- § Quesnel is well served in quantity of parkland now, and is expected to remain so in the foreseeable future. Compared to other BC communities, the City of Quesnel (population 10,005) has **over 4 times more park land per capita** than the BC average (3ha/1000 residents vs 14ha/1000 residents).
- § When considering the Fringe Area of Quesnel, total population 24,067, Quesnel still has **3 times more parkland per capita** than the BC average (3ha/1000 residents vs 9 ha/1000 residents).
- § The majority of residents are within a 10, if not 5, minute walk of a park. School grounds further supplement the provision.
- § The Southills neighbourhood, as well as the eastern extents of Racing/Westland Rd do not include any formal parkland though the area does include one school which may provide some space for public use outside of school hours. Both areas are zoned as Country Residential which relate to larger park service areas than denser, more urban neighbourhoods. **A park in Southills was one of the most requested changes to the existing park system.**
- § The City is comparatively well supplied in its current quantity of all amenities and facilities studied.
- § Not including amenities provided by others in the Fringe Area, **the City of Quesnel inventory met or exceeded almost all per capita standards for not only City residents, but also Fringe Area residents.** The analysis showed comparable communities contain one additional **outdoor basketball court**. Additional basketball courts are provided on school grounds.

### *Playgrounds*

- § Questionnaire respondents referenced playgrounds as their most used park amenity.
- § North Quesnel, Riverview, Uplands, West Riverside, Carson Sub and Johnston Sub are well served by playground locations, but Southills and Racing/Westland Rd neighbourhoods are not within walking distance of a playground. A school site provides playground access to many of the residences in the Southills neighbourhood outside of school hours.
- § Respondents requested updated playgrounds (West Fraser Timber Park, Lebourdais Park, Johnston Park and Weldwood Park) and upgrades to the existing skateboard park, which is about 20 years old.

### *Soccer Fields*

- § Quesnel is well served in the number of indoor and outdoor soccer fields when compared to other BC communities of a similar size. The Quesnel Youth Soccer Complex is further supplemented by school soccer fields.
- § There is enthusiasm regarding the new soccer facility and the only issue is a minor drainage problem with a few of the fields.

### *Football Fields*

- § Quesnel's minor football currently plays informally at Cariboo fields. The recently acquired fields, would require increased maintenance to adequately function as a home field.

### *Ball Diamonds*

- § Overall, Quesnel is well served in the number of ball fields when compared to other similar sized communities. The City of Quesnel currently has 13 diamonds, while similar sized small communities in BC have approximately 5.
- § At present, many of the fields are underused, and there is little multi-use of diamonds between ball user groups.
- § A field booking system/management policy is needed to better match use to bookings.
- § At present, user fees are not charged for field use.

Three options for ball diamond reconfiguration have been developed for consideration. Each option includes a retraction in the total number of ball diamonds, with a move towards an increase in shared facilities between leagues. All options consider partial or complete closure of Albert Johnson fields, a range of options at Cariboo Field and possible use of an unused area at the Quesnel Youth Soccer Complex.

The options should be considered in conjunction with other recommendations regarding ball diamonds, which include: changes to the field allocation process and extending the outfield on two fields at West Fraser Timber Park to offer increased flexibility to a variety of user groups. Changes to the fields are expected to encourage discussion between staff and user groups for increased efficiency of field use. Specific needs i.e. softball vs slo-pitch are expected to emerge through this process. Moving forward, sharing of fields by different groups is expected.

### *Dog Parks*

- § Dog parks were a reoccurring theme throughout the development of the Master Plan.
- § Improved etiquette around dog walking was noted by questionnaire respondents, including picking up and disposing of dog waste. Many people let their dogs go off-leash on trails, which causes disturbance to on-leash dogs and other parks users.

Best practices and trends for a number of other park amenities are also assessed.



## **Key Recommendations**

45 Recommendations are made regarding the park system, ranging from over-arching policy recommendations to detailed recommendations regarding site amenities. Capital cost estimates and prioritization of each is included in the body of the master plan. Key recommendations include:

### *New Parks*

- § Develop Southills as a low maintenance neighbourhood park. Integrate nature play, an unpaved loop trail, small gravel parking area and park signage in a naturalized setting.
- § Pending levels of interest, support the South Quesnel BIA in their development of a rest stop along the highway. Ensure it is designed for use by residents as well as visitors.
- § Develop an informal, unfenced dog park at the Well #9 park site, making use of the site's natural topography and fencing to the riparian area to bound the area.
- § Work with the Legion to ensure that Legion Beach remains open for public water access.

### *Overall Park System*

- § Where possible, design planting areas with low maintenance landscape needs i.e. more naturalized plantings, low mowing requirements etc. Prioritize more heavily maintained planting areas only in high profile public locations.
- § Reflect and respect the natural and cultural history of Quesnel through interpretive signage, preservation of cultural and natural sites of significance in parks and use of local materials in parks.
- § Site future community memorials in well protected, dedicated parkland that cannot easily be encroached upon by other land owners or agencies, but not to contravene other park uses, including preserving needed open space.
- § Plan for seniors, and those with limited mobility in the integration of future park amenities. Ensure adequate and accessible seating, as well as relatively flat trails through parks, where possible.
- § As playgrounds are developed and gradually replaced over time, ensure that a variety of age ranges and skill levels are provided for across the system. Ensure playground equipment in parks includes a mix of traditional play equipment and "nature play" experiences.
- § Develop a Parks Committee with advisory responsibility to Council, as a community resource and advocate for parks to represent community interests and assist Council in maximizing public input into community decision making.
- § Divest Rolph St. Park and rezone as single family residential.

### *City Parks*

- § Better promote City Parks as resident and tourism amenities through an enhanced parks website and Leisure guide and integrate within the economic development strategy for Quesnel.
- § Preserve open space at Lebourdais Park. Consider existing and future community events, including Quesnel Billy Barker days and Canada day celebrations.



*Park Amenities*

- § Assess Baker Creek Skateboard Park for safety and undertake upgrades to ensure a broad range of ages and abilities are served.
- § Work with community bike groups to ensure a range of mountain biking and BMX opportunities to encourage a range of ages and abilities.
- § If hard courts (basketball, ball hockey etc.) are required in the future, develop multi-use courts. Integrate multi-use courts across the park system to allow for a range of activities including pickleball.
- § Monitor tennis usage in the long term to determine if additional courts are required. No new courts are currently recommended. Decommissioning of Cariboo Field courts is recommended.

*Sports Fields and Ball Diamonds*

- § Extend the outfield at 2 West Fraser Timber Park fields to allow for increased flexibility in use. Work with adjacent land owner to lease or access an easement where required.
- § Adopt a phased approach to close fields at Albert Johnson Park. In the short term, close the two northern fields. As use is absorbed at other ball diamonds, consider closing southern fields without replacing them elsewhere, building on shared use elsewhere.
- § In assessing the need for additional fields, monitor rates of use at stand-alone fields, such as Sugarloaf, which is in good condition. Consider usage levels at stand-alone fields.
- § Modify the existing field reservation system for all field use to better record actual use and practices.
- § Reinstate regular sport field user group meetings to discuss field bookings and allocation, field closures and maintenance concerns.
- § Convert one baseball field at Albert Johnson Park into a fenced off-leash dog park.
- § Following Albert Johnson Field closures: If additional fields are required after maximizing shared use at West Fraser Timber Park and existing stand-alone diamonds, consider Options 1 – 3 as outlined in the master plan.
- § Maintain open space for minor football at Cariboo Field, without significant field upgrades but provide on-site storage. If football at Cariboo Field is not a long term option, consider field location options at Quesnel Youth Soccer Complex - overlapping with the soccer fields, or as a stand-alone field.
- § Develop a comprehensive Fees and Charges Policy addressing outdoor recreation facilities such as sports fields and ball diamonds, and private events in parks.

## GREEN SPACES AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS

The City of Quesnel extends over approximately 3,940 ha, 1,500 ha of which is environmentally sensitive lands or natural forested areas. Of this, 61 ha are designated as City green spaces, and 72 ha within park land, all of which collectively adds to the character and quality of the community.

- § Without further, detailed assessments, all of the City's green spaces, identified within the recently completed ESAI as sensitive riparian, forested and wetland areas should remain in their natural state, with only light intervention and programming.
- § 4 undeveloped park sites (Lowe St. Park, James St. Park, Baker Dr. Commercial and John Stromberg Park), a total of 0.6ha, which have not been identified as sensitive environmental land, should be reduced to lightly maintained open meadow space. These spaces could one day become parkland, pending demand, or could be leased for park/recreation appropriate use (i.e. bike rental) but should otherwise remain in this more natural state with little intervention or maintenance. They act as visual relief within residential areas, and provide informal, unstructured, public play spaces. Signage, or information on the parks website could be utilized to highlight the rationale for these sites.

During the master planning process, the broad scale ESAI maps were overlain with the current parkland map to identify (1) environmentally sensitive areas not within parkland and (2) sensitivity evaluation of existing parks. This work is a broad level of interpretation and thus the results are preliminary. The five parks assessed as containing environmentally sensitive areas have concentrated developed areas with the remainder of the parks managed to preserve sensitive ecosystems. These areas include trails, but no other built park infrastructure.

This information should be used in order to continue to highlight areas in which to avoid the integration of more active programming such as sports fields, and also serves to highlight opportunities for protection, nature appreciation, passive outdoor recreation and interpretive programs for adults and children – including outdoor nature programming including a children's fishing program, signage, viewpoints, and sensitively designed trails. Further work is needed to more fully integrate the findings of the ESAI into a conservation strategy and to guide further park planning efforts including; ongoing surveys, synthesis of data to identify which ecosystems/ species are the most important for conservation, and establishing appropriate land designation and land uses within the natural areas.

### Key Recommendations:

- § Continue biophysical inventory work on City owned land.
- § Continue to work with local groups to identify, assess and protect valued open space.
- § Continue to ensure that the improvement and expansion of outdoor recreation amenities and facilities does not impact environmentally sensitive areas.
- § Consider species at risk. Highlight these areas through interpretive programs and signage, but avoid adjacent development of amenities.
- § Integrate signage to communicate the environmental benefits of low maintenance landscape principles, as well as more naturally maintained spaces i.e. riparian areas.

## TRAILS

Quesnel's trails, most notably the River Walk trail, are a well-loved and used amenity. Users include walkers, dog walkers, joggers, runners of all ages, skaters, those with mobility aids and cyclists. The scope of "trails" within this Master Plan focuses on off-road trails, first and foremost, but also includes reference to pathways and specific sidewalk connections in order to complete recreational loops and enhance the off-road trails system, primarily for pedestrians (walkers, dog walkers, joggers, runners of all ages, those with mobility aids), skaters, roller bladers and casual recreation cyclists. Where possible, connections are created that would also be beneficial for commuting by foot or bike, but do not include reference to on-road cycling facilities.

The Master Plan recommendations take into account the "8 to 80 Principle" and while there is a need for some advanced trails in the system to provide challenges to more advanced users, there should be a base of connected trails that are suitable for all ages and abilities. The network should be planned and designed to be safe, comfortable and convenient.

*A number of Quesnel residents are avid cyclists. Cyclists in Quesnel, as in most communities, fall into three categories – casual recreation, "exercise" and commuter cyclists. Many cyclists will fall into more than one category.*

*While Quesnel's trails serve all three groups of cyclist users, the consideration of cyclists within the scope of this Master Plan focuses on casual recreation cyclists. This does not preclude exercise cyclists and commuters from using the trails, or suggest that planning for their use is less of a City priority. However, both exercise cyclists and commuter cyclists tend to travel longer distances and rely on higher speed, on-road cycling facilities, rather than slower, off-road, or circuitous routes on quiet streets. The findings and recommendations within this section of the report speak primarily to this second category of cycling facilities. A limited number of findings and recommendations are geared more intentionally towards exercise and commuter cyclists, but it is recommended that these issues and concerns, where they do not overlap with casual recreational cyclists, be addressed outside the scope of this Master Plan.*

### Key Recommendations:

- § Develop a volunteer Active Transportation and Cycling Advisory Committee with a mandate to reduce transportation infrastructure and promote self-propelled activities as part of healthy living. This Task Force should:
  - § Consider the development of an Active Transportation Plan.
  - § Connect schools, parks, and other community destinations with residential neighbourhoods.
  - § Continue to advocate for improved on-road cycling and active transportation facilities with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.
  - § Improve trail safety at intersections between trails and high volume roads. Consider signage and simple surface treatments as a cost effective measure to denote safe crossing locations. These could become part of a broader signage and branding program for the trails system. See page 68 for some examples.
  - § Designate some streets as "pedestrian" streets through signage initiatives and paving treatments where sidewalks are impractical.

Undertake the same process for the designation of on-road bike routes.

- § Work with schools to develop a safe routes to schools program, integrating trails where possible. Work with the School District to optimize the “Safe Routes to School” toolkit (<http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/school-travel-planning-toolkit>) to ensure safe access to schools.
- § Expand the pedestrian network through West Quesnel, including a loop to the Quesnel Youth Soccer Complex. Utilize and sign the existing sidewalk.
- § Collaborate with regional groups and the Regional District to ensure City trails connect to trails in the Fringe Area, and to key recreation destinations such as Dragon Mountain.
- § Incorporate a consistent signage system. Post a trail map at all major trailheads, on the City website and in the Leisure Guide.
- § Improve trail safety at intersections between trails and high volume roads. Consider signage and simple surface treatments as a cost effective measure to denote safe crossing locations. These could become part of a broader signage and branding program for the trails system.
- § Ensure a range of steepness/abilities to ensure that all residents can access the trail system (children, those with limited mobility or strollers, seniors).
- § Promote use of community amenities by others: use of the existing 2km wheelchair trail at UNBC and rubberized track at Correlieu school. Work with the School District to formalize loop trails around school properties if demand increases.
- § Continue to encourage volunteers to report issues of disrepair.
- § Consider winter sports on trails, designate and maintain for winter sport use (snowshoeing, cross-country skiing), in addition to ploughing key pedestrian trails.
- § Encourage local groups to host learn to bike and hike programs for all ages and to host large scale cycling events at the local and regional level.
- § Explore options of developing a Community Forest, with a designated trail system, potentially as part of an overall economic diversification strategy to encourage recreation on nearby crown land.

#### *Improved Trail Connectivity*

- § Formalize the road through Healy Sub as a public trail through signage and promotion.
- § Create more visible crossings: North Fraser Road, from Toyota dealership to the skatepark and to the recreation centre.
- § Expand the trail network through West Quesnel, including a loop trail, utilizing sidewalk and signage where a formal trail is not feasible, to the Quesnel Youth Soccer Complex.
- § Ensure well marked trail connection to West Fraser Timber Park to Johnston Park and the Johnston Bridge.
- § Work with private land owners to develop a sanctioned trail along the Quesnel River. If this is not possible, create an on-road connection inland.

- § Work with private land owners to develop a sanctioned trail east from West Fraser Timber Park.
- § Complete the existing trail connection on N Star road by ensuring consistent sidewalk.
- § Recognizing the neighbourhood's rural character, integrate a shoulder/signage program on select roads in South hills neighbourhood as part of future routine upgrades. Ensure pedestrian connectivity from trailer park.
- § Work with Fortis to develop a more direct off-road trail connection from Carson Sub to the Quesnel Bridge.

## PARTNERSHIPS

In addition to the parks operated jointly with the Cariboo Regional District, the City of Quesnel operates its extensive park system through a number of partnerships and agreements. Such partnerships are critical, not only in delivering a robust, dynamic service but also in providing opportunities for community residents, institutions and businesses to support that service delivery. Maintaining and growing partnerships will strengthen the quality of facilities and services offered.

### Key Recommendations:

- § Continue promotion and cooperation with the Quesnel and District Sub Regional Recreation Commission, the Cariboo Regional District, School District #28, the BC Government and public and private voluntary associations in identifying and meeting park needs.
- § Consider reviewing the joint-use agreement with the Board of School Trustees (SD28) to give consideration to setting standards of maintenance, clarifying roles and responsibilities and consider approaching the Regional District to participate in a future joint use agreement if regional use of facilities is occurring.
- § Formalize an agreement with the Regional District regarding the allocation of joint funding for City owned parks with a sound rationale for the amount of funding provided by Regional District.
- § Consider approaching the two higher educational institutions to develop research agreements to support student research applied to city operations.
- § Continue supporting stakeholder and community groups in event hosting.
- § Develop a Volunteer Policy and Strategy that celebrates the value and benefits that volunteerism delivers to the community. This may be part of a broader City program.
- § Undertake periodic youth specific workshops to ensure sufficient youth programming and park amenities for those who are not engaged in traditional team sports.

## INTRODUCTION

Home to approximately 10,000 residents, the City of Quesnel includes a surrounding service area of an additional 14,000 residents. Located at the confluence of the Fraser and Quesnel rivers, the City was developed as a gold mining and forestry hub. Today, forestry, mining, tourism and agriculture remain leading industries, although the City is facing contraction of the timber sector as a result of the Mountain Pine Beetle. Quesnel is known as an active, green and connected community with a wealth of outdoor recreation opportunities including trails, parks, and formal athletic facilities, green space areas and access to the river environment.

Through its compact, mixed use neighbourhoods and mosaic of trails, parks and green spaces, the City offers a unique, high quality experience for residents and visitors. The City's recently completed Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP) sets some progressive goals for ecosystems, natural areas and parks.

Quesnel offers exceptional recreation opportunities for both residents and visitors including winter sports and water-based recreation such as fishing, kayaking and canoeing. Parks range from small neighbourhood parks to West Fraser Timber Park, the newest and largest of the city parks. Park amenities include passive areas focused on river views, play and picnic areas, to more active spaces such as water play, baseball diamonds, and soccer fields. The river corridor, including the Riverfront Trail system is a particularly widely used amenity and a source of community pride.

While the City has the foundation of a robust parks and outdoor recreation system, optimizing the existing parks system, creating better linkages and promoting conservation of green spaces are key opportunities for the Master Plan. Building on these, and other items in the OCP, the Master Plan creates priorities from a long term sustainability perspective.

The Parks, Green Spaces and Outdoor Recreation Master Plan is intended to provide strategic direction to the City for the next ten years. Developed collaboratively by consulting with City Staff, Council, stakeholders and the public, the plan sets clear directives to guide policy development and decision making towards a sustainable City-wide vision for parks and outdoor recreation services.

Developing better linkages between the parks and promoting conservation of natural areas and systems through a parks plan and expanded trail network are key opportunities for residents as well as visitors.  
- City of Quesnel ICSP



## THE PURPOSE

### *Why a plan?*

The City has not previously developed a Master Plan of this kind, instead drawing direction from its Official Community Plan (OCP, 2007). In the face of an evolving economic and demographic profile, the City finds itself seeking additional guidance towards the management and protection of its parks, trails and green spaces as well as outdoor recreation amenities in order to meet the needs of the community over the next 10-year period.

Since the adoption of the OCP the City has moved from a vision of constructing a 30 million dollar multi-centre to a 15 million dollar North Cariboo Arena Replacement project. The shift, in part, is due to caution as the community is currently facing a contraction of its primary industry (forestry) as a result of the Mountain Pine Beetle. The success of this Master Plan will be made possible through an innovative process geared at maintaining the high quality of life provided in the community through existing parkland, addressing issues such as accessibility, maintenance, ownership, and programming, and identifying appropriate locations for park and outdoor recreational investments or dispositions.

*Key benefits of parks and recreation include: enhanced social well-being, building strong families and communities, helping people connect with nature, providing economic benefits by investing in recreation.*

The Master Plan includes an inventory of all parkland, green spaces and trails within the City. It provides an overview of best practices and trends, and the development of a hierarchy of parkland categories. Further, the Master Plan identifies trail connections that would strengthen the existing trail network and provides recommendations regarding next steps.

## THE PROCESS

The Master Plan was completed in 6 phases. The first entailed the compilation and analysis of relevant reports and data. Spatial data was used in the second phase to assess the distribution and connectivity of the parks and to assemble an inventory of each park.

The third phase focused on preliminary engagement through consultation with Council, Staff, stakeholder groups and the general public through a series of in person meetings, a public open house event, and an online questionnaire (see Appendices A & B). Following the development of a Draft Master Plan in Phase 4, a subsequent open house was held to enable the public to comment on the draft recommendations (see Appendix C).

Following revisions based off Staff, stakeholder and public feedback, the Final Master Plan was presented to City Council.



Figure 1: Project Process



## COMMUNITY PROFILE

Historically a multicultural community, the City remains culturally diverse including First Nations, South Asian, Chinese and Filipino communities. The primary industry is forestry, providing employment in two pulp mills, three sawmills, a plywood plant and an MDF plant. Other important economic sectors in Quesnel include agriculture, wood-manufacturing, mining and tourism, areas of employment that contribute to a positive quality of life for residents and community economic development.

### Demographic Profile

The City of Quesnel has a population of 10,005 residents within City limits and a dispersed surrounding service area of approximately 14,000 additional residents. Population projections suggest that the population will remain relatively stable, with a 10 year projection of an additional 180 residents within the City and an increase of approximately 450 residents in the 'Quesnel Fringe' area<sup>1</sup>. It is believed that these projections do not factor in the downsizing of the City's primary industry (forestry) that is occurring as wood supply is becoming more difficult to access. It is feasible that without economic development in other primary industries there may be population declines with impacts on the populations of working adults and children.

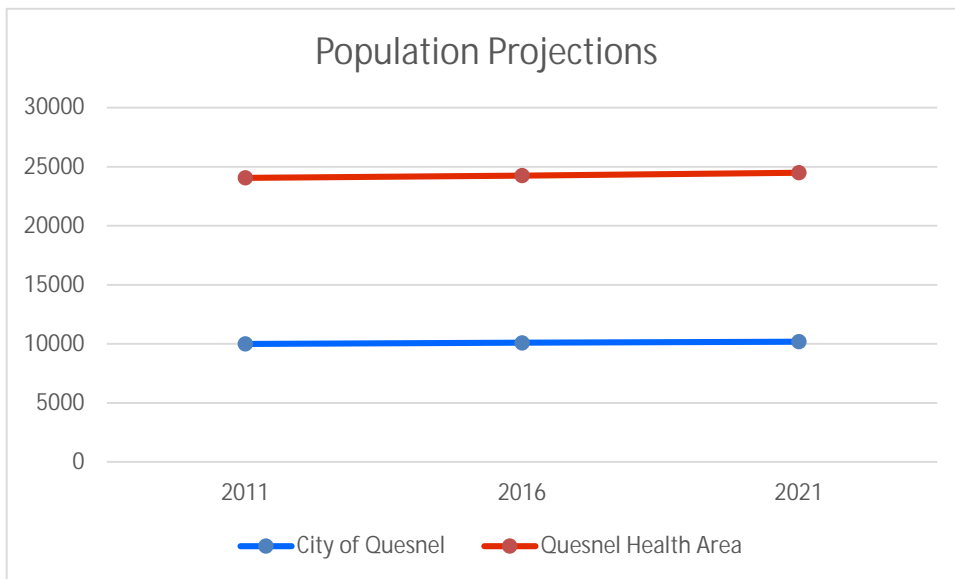


Figure 2: Population Projections

---

<sup>1</sup> Population projection source: Statistics Canada, 2011

The median age of Quesnel residents, 41.9, is comparable to Provincial statistics. Key differences in demographics include:

- § A higher proportion of children and youth.
- § A lower proportion of adults between the ages of 25 and 30.
- § A comparable proportion of younger seniors 60-80 years of age, but a higher proportion of residents over the age of 80.

Similar to most BC communities, despite a high number of youth and children, the City is experiencing an increase in its number of seniors.

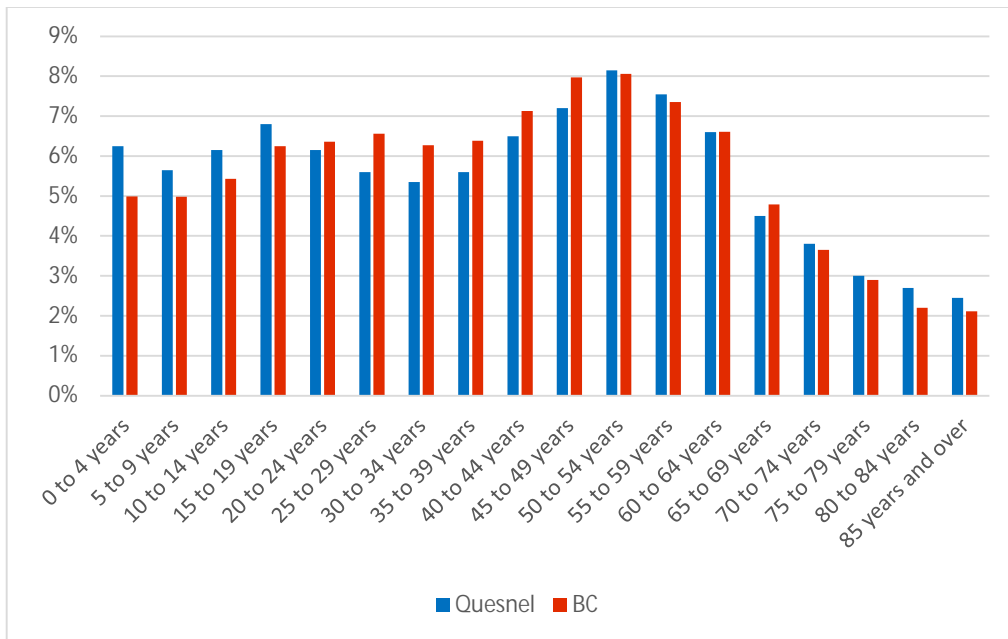


Figure 3: Total Population by Age Groups (Statistic Canada, 2011)

The demographic profile indicates that the City of Quesnel has a diverse population with residents of varying ages, both older adults as well as a significant number of youth and children. This is interesting for a smaller community, as smaller Canadian communities are typically seeing more drastically aging populations. The prevalence of young people and significant number of older adults indicates the need for a diversity of green spaces, parks and outdoor recreation opportunities and amenities that will meet the needs of a wide-range of users. Programming and facilities will need to serve a broad spectrum of seniors, recognizing that there is a range of age, interests and athleticism in “seniors,” and a general shift nation-wide to more integrated, multi-generational facilities and service delivery.

## **ENGAGEMENT**

The development of the Master Plan included direction from City Council and ongoing consultation with City Staff. The consulting team also met with stakeholder groups and the general public. This information was used to inform and support the key findings, analysis and recommendations.

### **Council**

On March 2, 2015, the consultants hosted a workshop with City Council. Identified priorities included:

- § An understanding of the inventory and how the public uses it: a snapshot with which to compare in the future.
- § Focus on trails to attract and retain residents and as a tourism draw.
- § Inexpensive enhancements to modernize the system and increase activity levels in the community, year round.
- § Pragmatic spending and investment in tune with community needs.

### **Staff**

Staff were engaged throughout the development of the plan through the provision of information, an information gathering workshop and ongoing consultation through the development of the Master Plan.

### **External Agencies**

The Cariboo Regional District and School District 53 participated on the Project Steering Committee, providing valuable information at key project intervals.

### **Stakeholder Groups**

Approximately 20 stakeholder groups were invited to attend group interview sessions. Information was summarized and used to help inform the recommendations. A list of invited stakeholder groups is found in Appendix A.

Stakeholders were also invited to attend a presentation to review and comment on the draft in order to provide feedback for consideration in the finalization of the Master Plan. Staff undertook additional engagement with groups that were not represented at the meeting.

## Public Questionnaire

An open access web questionnaire<sup>2</sup> was made available to interested citizens through a web link provided at open houses and through community publications and notices. A total of 360 on-line questionnaires were completed. Results are included in Appendix B. Results and comments have been considered throughout the drafting of the key findings and recommendations throughout the Master Plan.

Highlights from the public feedback are included below and additional feedback is found throughout the Master Plan. Full results are included in Appendices A & B.

- § Overall, more than 63% of residents are satisfied or very satisfied with the active recreation opportunities in Quesnel. Only 12% are dissatisfied. Similar response rates were found regarding passive recreation opportunities.
- § The Riverwalk Trail, West Fraser Timber Park and Lebourdais Park are the most visited and valued, primarily for their amenities, but also due to convenience, amenities available and community events.
- § Park visitation rates are high, but decline significantly in the winter.
- § Respondents requested improved accessibility in parks and playgrounds for strollers and wheelchairs, as well as individuals with disabilities.
- § Residents were asked if there are amenities or park improvements that they would like to see added to existing or new parks. Top responses included requests for: dog parks and parks in the south areas of Quesnel (South hills).
- § Most residents use trails in Quesnel for walking, dog walking, running and cycling. Respondents would like to see the development of trails in forest, wilderness and natural areas in close proximity to the City, for both commuting and recreation.
- § Most respondents were satisfied with trail conditions. Some of the key findings include requests for:
  - Improved winter maintenance of trails, especially in regards to ice.
  - Improved maintenance of shrubs and foliage along trails, as well as exposed tree roots along trails.
  - Better upkeep and repair of trail surfaces, due to a large number of bumps, cracks, and potholes.

The questionnaire results were analyzed for any significant differences in responses between respondents living within and outside of City limits:

- § There are no significant differences in satisfaction and usage of parks and trails.
- § The only significant difference was relating to willingness to pay higher taxes for new or improved park and trail facilities. 87% of City residents, compared to 76% of those living

---

<sup>2</sup> Note that as respondents were not randomly selected these results may not be representative of all community members.

outside of the City indicated a willingness to pay. Although 11% apart, both numbers represent tremendous willingness to pay.

### Public Open House Events

The public was engaged through two open house events. The first, hosted early in the process (March 2015), was held to identify key issues in the community. The format included informal discussion with Staff, members of Council and the consultant team, and the opportunity for attendees to review boards and provide feedback. Copies of the public questionnaire were also made available.

An additional open house event was hosted to review the draft recommendations and was attended by a small number of residents. Again, the public was invited to provide feedback via a hard copy and online questionnaire.

### BEST PRACTICES AND TRENDS

In May, 2015, the British Columbia Association of Parks and Recreation approved *A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing*, a joint initiative of the Interprovincial Sport and Recreation Council and the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association. The following provides a summary of the framework, as applicable to the City of Quesnel.

*Spending on recreation creates jobs, fosters tourism, and makes communities more attractive places in which to live, learn, work, play and visit. "Upstream" investments in recreation can lead to improvements in individual and community wellbeing, which helps to reduce costs in health care, social services and justice.*

The Framework theorizes that recreation and society have changed substantially over the past 50 years. While recreation was historically viewed as a public good, focusing on outreach to vulnerable people within a community, there has been a shift towards *an individual, facility focused, user pay model*. This shift, combined with a need to reaffirm historical values while meeting needs arising from rapid technological changes, economic, environmental, demographic and social changes, has resulted in a new shared definition of recreation:

*Recreation is the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing.*

Building on past research and agency collaboration, the Framework highlights a number of interrelated challenges and current trends for consideration across Canadian communities, as shown on the following page.

### **Demographic Changes**

Canadian communities are faced with an increase in older adults and decline in children. This, coupled with an increase in cultural diversity, decreased access to nature and decreased place making due to rapid urbanization all impact the face of recreation. Rural communities are facing increasing pressure due to limited funds and infrastructure, threats to the environment and traditional ways of life, limited numbers of volunteers to lead, and challenges in transportation and distance.

### **Challenges to Health**

Increased sedentary living and risk factors for disease (obesity, chronic diseases) and increased mental health concerns are impacting communities

### **Economic Inequities**

Family after tax income inequality rose by 41% between 1995 and 2011, with economic gains going primarily to higher income families. Those with lower incomes have fewer opportunities for recreation.

### **Social Challenges**

Changes associated with increasing inequities, unemployment, use of social media instead of face-to-face interaction and loss of traditional supports have compounded feelings of isolation for many, has impacted civic involvement, social connectedness, engagement and social cohesion.

### **New and Emerging Technologies**

The parks and recreation field is challenged to keep up with changing technologies, which offer opportunities for innovation, communication, improved efficiency, and enhanced connections, especially in young people. This same technology is resulting in greater time spent in sedentary pursuits, instead of active and unstructured play.

### **Infrastructure Deficit**

Most communities in Canada face infrastructure deficits. These include the need for additional walking and cycling routes, and green spaces. Maintenance is an ongoing concern. Strengthening this infrastructure is key to enhancing community health, vitality and the economies of local communities.

### **Threats to the Natural Environment**

Growing threats, including extreme weather, decreasing biodiversity and new destructive species such as mountain pine beetle have made the role of environmental stewardship increasingly important to the recreation field.

The Framework sets 5 priority goals, reflecting these national trends and challenges.



Figure 4: A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015: Pathways to Wellbeing

In addition to other input, the made for Quesnel recommendations in this Master Plan respond to these high level goals and priorities.



## VISION AND PRINCIPLES

The following vision and principles, developed with City Council, set the stage for the Master Plan. They establish a philosophical framework for use as touchstones for future evaluation of departmental plans and priorities.

### Vision

*Promote, celebrate and highlight local parks, green spaces and trails as a community success to draw and retain long term residents of all ages.*

### Principles

The vision is supported by the following principles:

- § Facilitate aging in place
- § Consider potential of trails and outdoor recreation for community economic development
- § Provide opportunities for residents to be active from walking through involvement in team sports
- § Invest in retaining and maximizing, rather than expanding amenities
- § Maximize low investment, high yield amenity development
- § Focus on an incremental approach to improvements, remaining pragmatic and staying in tune with community needs







# PARKS

Quesnel has a wealth of parkland. The City's parks are a source of community pride – they are diverse, plentiful, and well maintained, showcasing the best that Quesnel has to offer.

Parks provide not only spaces for active recreation, but also provide passive recreation opportunities within neighbourhoods to allow for contemplation, access to green space and increased opportunities for informal socializing. This is important for all residents, but especially for those with limited mobility, those without inclination for strenuous physical activity, or those who work very physical jobs. In addition to organizations and user groups who rely on active parks space, others, including nature interpretive programs and walking groups, rely on more passive space. This further highlights the importance of retaining a diversity of park types including passive outdoor spaces, rather than focusing parks solely on active park infrastructure such as playing fields.



## PARK SYSTEM

### PARK CLASSIFICATION

The following table provides a classification system for the parkland owned by the City of Quesnel. Beyond City boundaries, additional parkland including Provincial Parks, sub-regional recreation properties, as well as Crown Land, offer additional access to nature and outdoor recreation opportunities. Note that green spaces (which are less formal than parkland) are discussed in a subsequent chapter.



Table 1: Parkland Classification System

Category	Purpose	Typical Size	Typical Amenities
<b>City Parks</b>	Destination parks	Typically greater than 12 hectares.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Special event sites for fairs, festivals.</li> <li>§ Gardens, nature centers.</li> <li>§ Large natural features/natural areas.</li> <li>§ Large outdoor sports facilities.</li> <li>§ Trails.</li> </ul>
<b>Community Parks</b>	Provide opportunities at the community or multi-neighbourhood level for play and recreation.	<p>Typically greater than 2 hectares.</p> <p>In some cases, they may be smaller than 2 hectares but provide a destination amenity, i.e. skateboard park.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Large scale open area.</li> <li>§ Large picnic and shade shelters.</li> <li>§ Washrooms.</li> <li>§ Large scale play areas.</li> <li>§ Sports amenities i.e. tennis courts, skateboard park.</li> </ul>
<b>Neighbourhood Parks</b>	<p>Provide small play and gathering spaces, ideally within a maximum 10 minute walk from each residence.</p> <p>It is essential that a neighbourhood park is properly configured to maximize usability, especially if it is only 0.5 hectares in size.</p>	Typically 0.5 – 4 hectares.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Playground or informal open space.</li> <li>§ Seating.</li> </ul>
<b>Memorial Parks</b>	Small parks whose primary purpose is to house a local memorial. Memorials may also be placed in larger parks.	Existing memorial parks are under 0.01 hectares	§ Memorial
<b>Linear Parks</b>	House a section of longer trails, while also providing additional width for park amenities.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>§ Seating.</li> <li>§ Trailhead.</li> <li>§ Historical artifacts.</li> <li>§ Gardens.</li> </ul>

**PROVISION OF PARKS**

The following table illustrates the amount of parkland per capita at present, and as projected, assuming no new parkland is acquired.

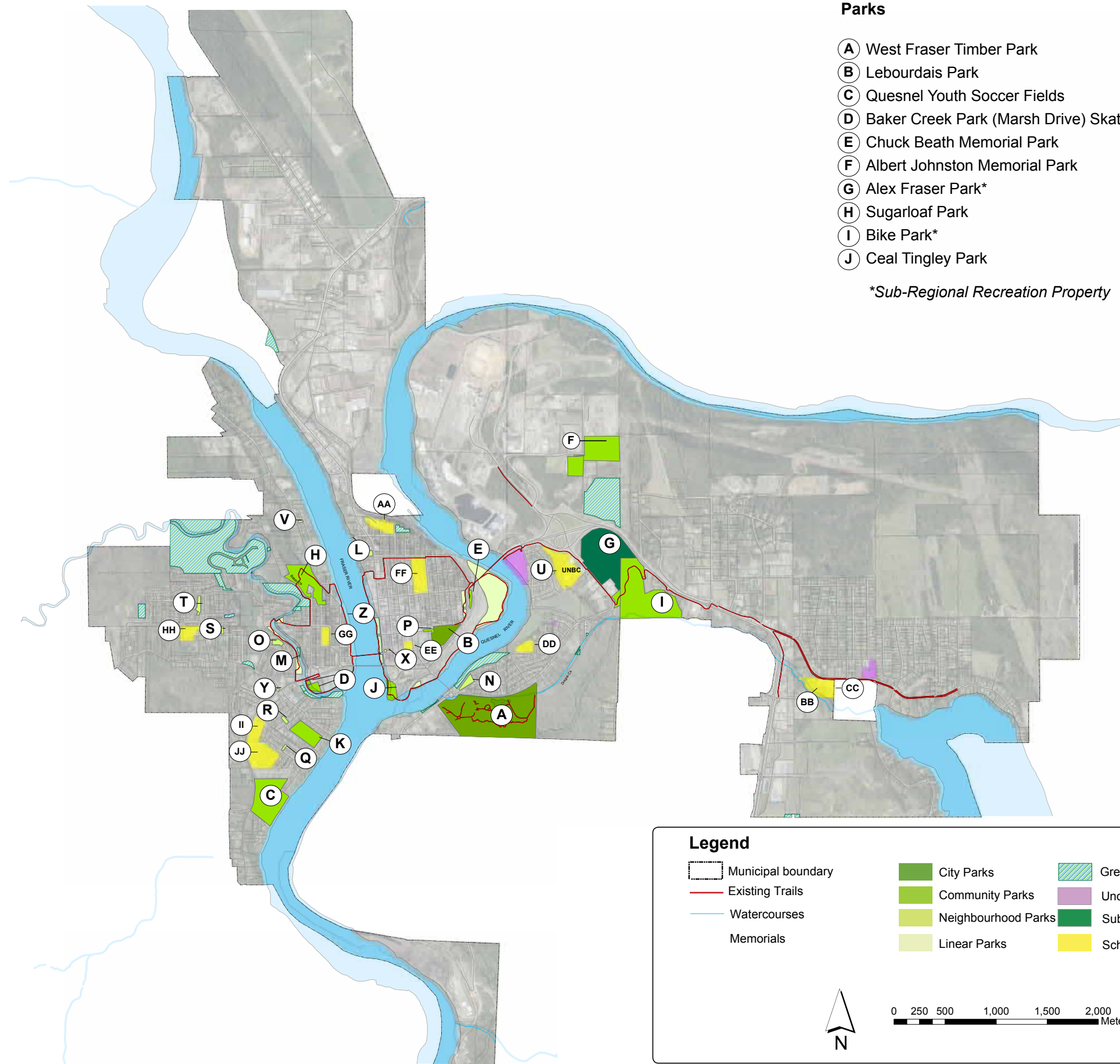
*Table 2: Current and projected parkland per capita.*

Year	Population	Basis of Parkland	Parkland (ha)	ha of Parkland per 1000 residents
<b>2015</b>	10,079	2015 Inventory	137.97	13.69
<b>2025</b>	10,259	2015 Inventory	137.97	13.45

*The above parkland hectares do not include land for indoor recreation facilities, such as arenas and the curling rink. The population estimates used here are extrapolated from the 2011 Census data and projections, included in the Context Chapter.*



Figure 5: Existing Parks



**Parks**

- (A) West Fraser Timber Park
- (B) Lebourdais Park
- (C) Quesnel Youth Soccer Fields
- (D) Baker Creek Park (Marsh Drive) Skateboard
- (E) Chuck Beath Memorial Park
- (F) Albert Johnston Memorial Park
- (G) Alex Fraser Park\*
- (H) Sugarloaf Park
- (I) Bike Park\*
- (J) Ceal Tingley Park

\*Sub-Regional Recreation Property

- (K) Cariboo Field
- (L) Weldwood Park
- (M) Wilma Hansen Memorial Park
- (N) Johnston Park
- (O) Lewis Rink
- (P) Civic Plaza
- (Q) Ritchie Ave Park
- (R) Wilkinson/Webster Ave Park
- (T) Pinchbeck St Park
- (S) Pentland Cres Park/Patchett
- (U) Tim's Park
- (V) Funn St Park

**Memorials**

- (X) John Strand
- (Y) Westside Memorial
- (Z) John Stromberg

**Schools**

- (AA) St. Ann's Catholic School
- (BB) Dragon Lake School
- (CC) Dragon Lake School
- (DD) Carson School
- (EE) Helen Dixon Center
- (FF) Quesnel Junior School/NcNaughton School
- (GG) Riverview School
- (HH) Voyageur School
- (II) Ecole Baker School
- (JJ) Correlieu Secondary School

**Legend**

- Municipal boundary
- Existing Trails
- Watercourses
- City Parks
- Community Parks
- Neighbourhood Parks
- Linear Parks
- Green Spaces
- Undeveloped Parkland
- Sub-Regional Recreation Properties
- Schools



0 250 500 1,000 1,500 2,000 Meters

### Fringe Area A and Cariboo Sub Regional Recreation Properties

Although the scope of this Master Plan is exclusively within, and owned by, the City of Quesnel, it is understood that many residents living in the Fringe Areas (outside City boundaries) make use of Quesnel parks. As such, per capita parkland is shown in the table below for both Quesnel, as well as the outskirts.

Table 3: Comparison of hectares of park space in Quesnel and the Metropolitan Area/Region to Provincial Average.

Hectares of park space per thousand residents	Provincial Average	Quesnel	Metropolitan Area/Region
<b>City Park (typ. &gt; 12ha)</b>	1.55	3.93	1.64
<b>Community Park (typ. 4 – 12ha)</b>	.98	7.78	3.24
<b>Neighbourhood Park / Linear Parks (typ. 0 - 4ha)</b>	.71	1.98	.82
<b>Cariboo Sub Regional Recreation Properties in the Quesnel Fringe (not including Provincial Parks)</b>			<b>3.06</b>
<b>Total Parks</b>	<b>3.24</b>	<b>13.69</b>	<b>8.76</b>

Open spaces and recreational facilities in the Fringe Area are operated by three Recreation Commissions, under the North Cariboo Recreation and Parks Commission, as well as not for profit societies. Public access is provided to Bouchie, Milburn and Dragon lakes via boat launch sites. The Quesnel Fringe Area OCP recommends that a Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan should be developed to establish a long term plan, inventory the lands and provide strategic direction to stakeholders involved in service delivery.

The City, jointly with the Cariboo Regional District, funds the North Cariboo Recreation and Parks (NCRP) function which extends its boundaries beyond the municipal boundary. The NCRP operates facilities such as the Quesnel and District Twin Arenas (including the new 'West Fraser Centre' arena project), Quesnel and District Arts and Recreation Centre, and Alex Fraser Park within the City boundary and several community recreation facilities just outside the City. The Regional District provides some funding to the City to maintain flagship parks.



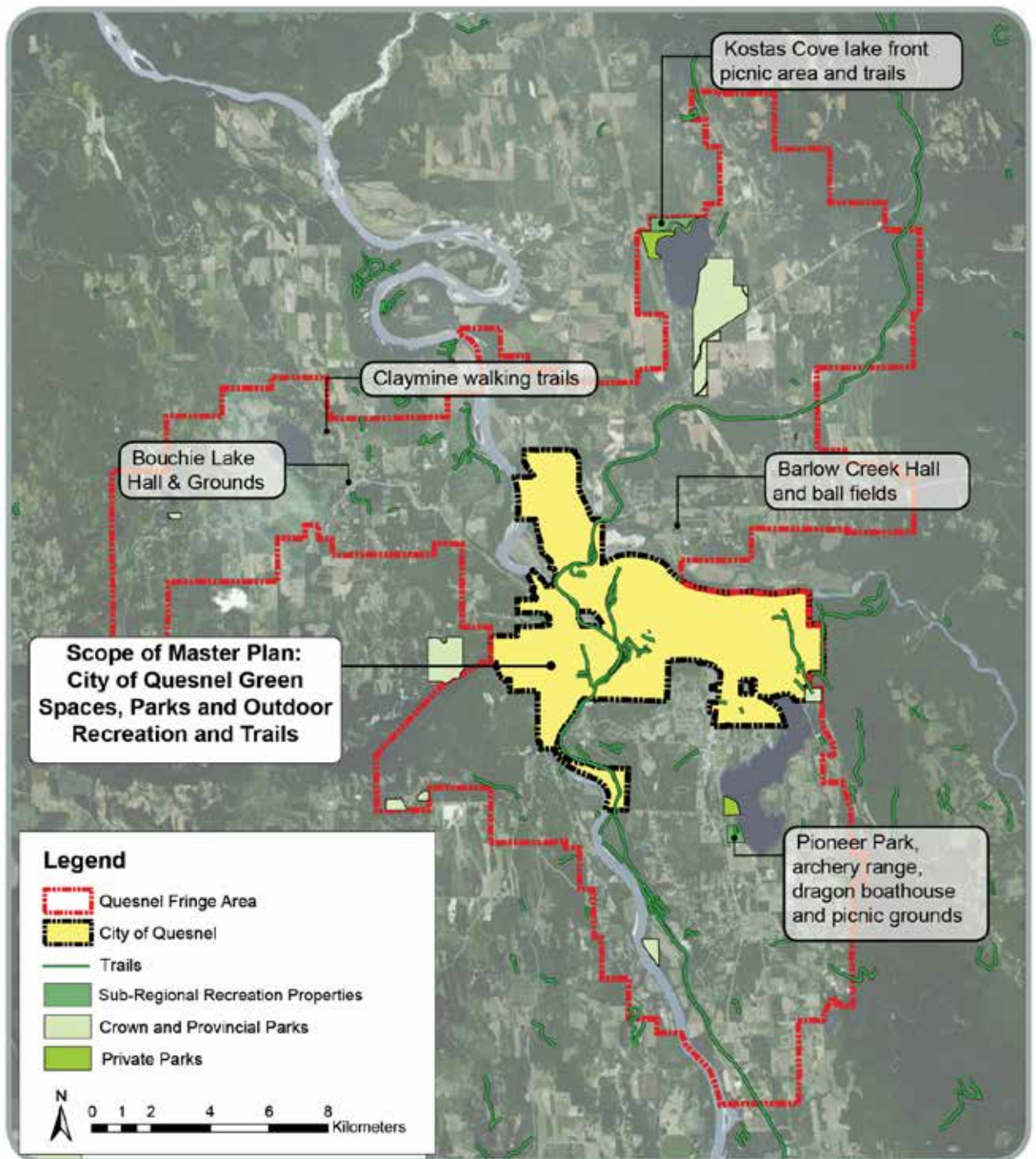


Figure 6: Geographic Scope and Context of the Master Plan

## SPATIAL ANALYSIS

The distribution of municipal parkland is nearly as important as the quantity of parkland when it comes to providing equal access to open space, daily opportunities for outdoor activities, enhancing the character of the community, and contributing to quality of life through positive place making.

One of the most commonly used metrics for assessing park distribution and possible barriers to park use is to assess the City's walkability in terms of resident proximity to park space. For the purposes of this analysis, a 10 minute walking distance was set at 800 meters—as a radius from parkland or “as the crow flies<sup>3</sup>.” The type and quality of the park was not included in this assessment, nor was the presence of safe pedestrian or cycling routes. The park service areas are shown in Figure 7.

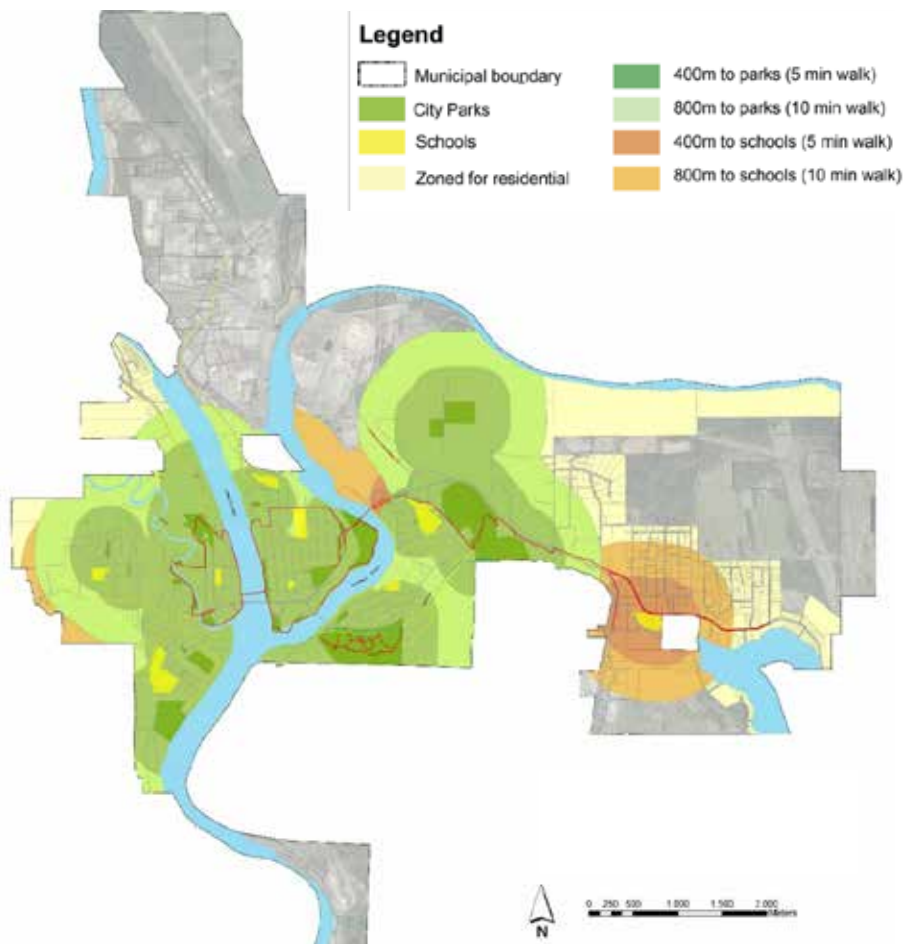


Figure 7: Park Service Areas and Walkability

<sup>3</sup> i.e. a straight line, not considering road and trail networks. More rural areas are often assessed with a ten minute driving distance to park space.

## KEY FINDINGS

- § Quesnel is well served in quantity of parkland now, and is expected to remain so in the foreseeable future. Compared to other BC communities, Quesnel has **over 3 times more park land per capita** than the BC average (3ha/1000 residents vs 14ha/1000 residents).
- § Based off Provincial averages, parkland per capita is met for all park categories, and exceeded in most cases.
- § The majority of residents are within a 10, if not 5, minute walk of a park. School grounds further supplement the provision.
- § 40% of questionnaire respondents are willing to walk more than 10 minutes to access parkland.
- § The South hills neighbourhood, as well as the eastern extents of Racing/Westland Rd do not include any formal parkland though the area does include one school. Both areas are zoned as Country Residential which relate to larger park service areas than denser more urban neighbourhoods.
- § Dragon Lake neighbourhood does not contain any City of Quesnel parkland, however, there are few residences within the City portion of Dragon Lake. A small portion is zoned as rural residential, but much of it is zoned as commercial.
- § Two Mile Flat does not have parkland, but does not include any residences within the City of Quesnel (several subdivisions exist in the Regional District). It is primarily comprised of industrial lands, and the airport.

## PARK ACQUISITION

### REVIEW OF OCP PARK LOCATIONS

A number of proposed park development projects were shown in the OCP. Respecting the constraints of the City and the need for a sustainable future, these were discussed with City Staff and Council at the outset of this project to evaluate which have already been completed, and which remain most relevant today. Those remaining most relevant are:

- § New Quesnel River Park adjacent to Quesnel River Bridge.
- § New Highway 97 rest stop (a private stop has been created for truck drivers north of the City, but an area in the south is now desired for visitors passing through).
- § South hills Park – designation and formalization of the existing green space as a park.

Although recommended in the OCP, no viable options exist for a new boat launch within City limits; however, the City continues to maintain a boat launch in the Regional District.

## NEW PARKS

The City has a number of undeveloped park sites. Those most suitable for developed parkland in the next ten years are reviewed below. Other sites are discussed as green spaces in a subsequent chapter.

Table 4: New Parks

Name	Size	Future Purpose
<b>South hills Park</b>	1.91 ha	Suitable as a neighbourhood park.
<b>Well #9</b>	5.01 ha	A portion to be developed as park.

Generally speaking, acquisition of additional parkland, not already held within the City’s extensive inventory, is not recommended at this time. Parkland acquisition guidelines are included in Appendix D, should the City choose to acquire any new parkland in the future.

## DIVESTMENT OF PARKLAND

**At this time, little divestment of parkland is recommended.** It is generally advisable that communities do not divest of parkland, in part to ensure adequate open space in case of future population increases. Quesnel acknowledges that they may be heading into a transition period, and will need to further prioritize their spending. The City contains significant tracts of parkland, including many small lots that have not yet been formally developed. At present, the lots in question have low monetary value – so would yield little for the City. Rather than attempting to divest of parkland, a priority should be placed on reduced maintenance. These lots have been classified as “green spaces – low maintenance” and are discussed further in the Green Spaces chapter.

The amount and type of parkland contributes to the preservation of open space by not only protecting sensitive land, but also by maintaining the character of the community. Of future note, due to the significance of parks to community values, there are special Provincial legislative provisions for the exchange or disposal of parkland by local governments, which are summarized in Appendix E. In the future, if Quesnel were to consider the question of divestment of parkland, the City will need to consider the energy and political will required to undertake this process. One exception, Rolph Park, is recommended for divestment as it is not suitable for park use, due to proximity to adjacent houses.

## EXISTING PARKS

Utilizing the parkland categories described above, the City’s existing parkland is inventoried below.

Table 5: Parks Inventory

MAP ID	Park Name	Size (ha)	Ball Diamonds	Tennis Courts	Playgrounds	Trails	Indoor Sports Fields	Outdoor Sports Fields	Water and Spray Parks	Skateboard Parks	Bike Parks	Basketball Courts	Benches	Picnic tables	Additional Notes/ More Facilities
<b>City Parks</b>															
B	Lebourdais Park	3.6956	1		x				1				x	5	Rotary Ball Park
A	West Fraser Timber Park	35.9123	5	4	1	x							x		volleyball, walking trails

City of Quesnel Parks, Green Spaces and Outdoor Recreation Master Plan

MAP ID	Park Name	Size (ha)	Ball Diamonds	Tennis Courts	Playgrounds	Trails	Indoor Sports Fields	Outdoor Sports Fields	Water and Spray Parks	Skateboard Parks	Bike Parks	Basketball Courts	Benches	Picnic tables	Additional Notes/ More Facilities
<b>Community Parks</b>															
F	Albert Johnston Memorial Park	11.2009	5												horseshoe pits, remote control cars, soccer use
D	Baker Creek Park (Marsh Drive)	0.9235				x				1			x	2	skateboard park
I	Bryce Trail/Open Space and Bike Park	22.7293				x									
K	Cariboo Field	3.8218	1	4											ball diamonds/2 more backstops, tennis courts in disrepair
J	Ceal Tingley Park	1.5445				x								3	trail connection, gardens, greenspace, stream, shovel
E	Chuck Beath Memorial Park	0.4175				x								2	
C	Quesnel Youth Soccer Fields	11.3091					2	5							
H	Sugarloaf Park	7.2819	1			x							x	1	women's softball diamond
P	Civic Plaza	0.2417											x		

City of Quesnel Parks, Green Spaces and Outdoor Recreation Master Plan

MAP ID	Park Name	Size (ha)	Ball Diamonds	Tennis Courts	Playgrounds	Trails	Indoor Sports Fields	Outdoor Sports Fields	Water and Spray Parks	Skateboard Parks	Bike Parks	Basketball Courts	Benches	Picnic tables	Additional Notes/ More Facilities
<b>Neighbourhood Parks</b>															
V	Funn St Park	0.0889			x										tot swing, belt swing (2), spring toy (2), climber, teeter totter (2), digger
N	Johnston Park	0.8220			x										tot swings (2), belt swings (2), slides (2), spring toy, play structure, digger
O	Lewis Rink	0.5202			x										
T	Pentland Cres Park/Patchett	0.5722			x							1			skateboard structure
S	Pinchbeck St Park	0.1450			x									1	
Q	Ritchie Ave Park	0.1256			x									1	
U	Tim's Park	0.0550			x										
L	Weldwood Park	0.4076			x									2	
R	Wilkinson/ Webster Ave Park	0.2413			x										



City of Quesnel Parks, Green Spaces and Outdoor Recreation Master Plan

MAP ID	Park Name	Size (ha)	Ball Diamonds	Tennis Courts	Playgrounds	Trails	Indoor Sports Fields	Outdoor Sports Fields	Water and Spray Parks	Skateboard Parks	Bike Parks	Basketball Courts	Benches	Picnic tables	Additional Notes/ More Facilities
<b>Memorials</b>															
X	John Strand Park	0.0506													
Z	John Stromberg Park	0.0455													
Y	Westside Memorial Monument Park	0.0609													
<b>Linear Parks</b>															
	Equipment Park (Front St Park)	0.2348				x									
	Equipment Park (Johnston Bridge Loop)	0.3641				x									cottonwood log
	Front Street Park	1.0826				x									
	Murphy Street Park	0.8169				x									
	Riverfront Trail - Harcourt	0.2889				x									
	Riverwalk Trail	11.3492				x									Benches/picnic tables: numerous sites Kiosks/signs Historic artifacts
M	Wilma Hansen Memorial Park	1.4160				x							x	5	
	WQ Roundabout & Trail	1.2519				x									Formerly Ministry property.

## HERITAGE AND MEMORIALS IN PARKS

Natural landscapes and heritage qualities in parks can be preserved and promoted by using interpretive signage to highlight local cultural and natural history, improving landscaping and maintenance to reflect “small town” values, recognizing the roots of the community by supporting and integrating culture and heritage resources and by using characteristic and locally-sourced materials (e.g. wood from local forests).

Parkland has the potential to become a “repository” for community and individual memorials. Community memorials are important elements that enrich public areas. Individual memorials in parks need to be carefully managed to ensure that they do not affect the role of parks as public, recreational places.

Quesnel has a number of highly valued and high profile memorials in parks. Historically, these have not always been sited where the City would retain full control of in the long term, such as highway rights of way. Siting memorials at high profile locations that are well protected through official parkland dedication can assist in maintaining appropriate commemorative spaces.

## PARK AMENITIES

### PROVISION

Quesnel’s park and amenity supply was compared to other similarly sized BC communities<sup>4</sup>. Although useful in terms of a rough comparison, it should be noted that each community has different needs for park amenities, depending on participation rates and interest in various sports and activities. Along with the Master Plan engagement process, these metrics informed the key findings and recommendations outlined further in the Master Plan.

Quesnel was compared to 9 BC communities of comparable size (populations between 7500 and 12,500). It should be noted that these metrics do not relate to the quality of park amenities, which should be a significant consideration in assessing the performance of the parks system.



---

<sup>4</sup> Based on 2014 data from CivicInfo BC, which conducts annual municipal surveys. It should be noted that this data has not been verified in the field and is provided only for municipalities that responded to the survey request.

Table 6: City of Quesnel Amenity Comparison.

Amenity/Facility	Standard based off other communities with 7500 - 12,500 population	City of Quesnel (Actual)	School Facilities
<b>Baseball and Softball Diamonds</b>	5	13	
<b>Outdoor Basketball Courts</b>	1	1	2
<b>Skateboard Parks</b>	1	1	
<b>Bike Parks</b>	0	1	
<b>Indoor and Outdoor Soccer Fields</b>	5	7*	10
<b>Outdoor Tennis Courts</b>	3.5	4**	
<b>Water and Spray Parks</b>	1	1	

An assumption has been made, based on the existing parks and facilities inventory, that there is one soccer field located at each school listed.

\*Soccer fields include indoor and outdoor fields. Football fields are not included in the comparative inventory information.

\*\*Additional courts at Cariboo Field, which are in disrepair, have not been included in the inventory.

Although the scope of this Master Plan is exclusively of parks and park amenities within, and owned by, the City of Quesnel, it is understood that many residents living in the Fringe Areas (outside City boundaries) make use of Quesnel park and recreation amenities. As such, additional per capita analysis was also undertaken to consider use of the City’s amenities by both residents of Quesnel, as well as the outskirts.

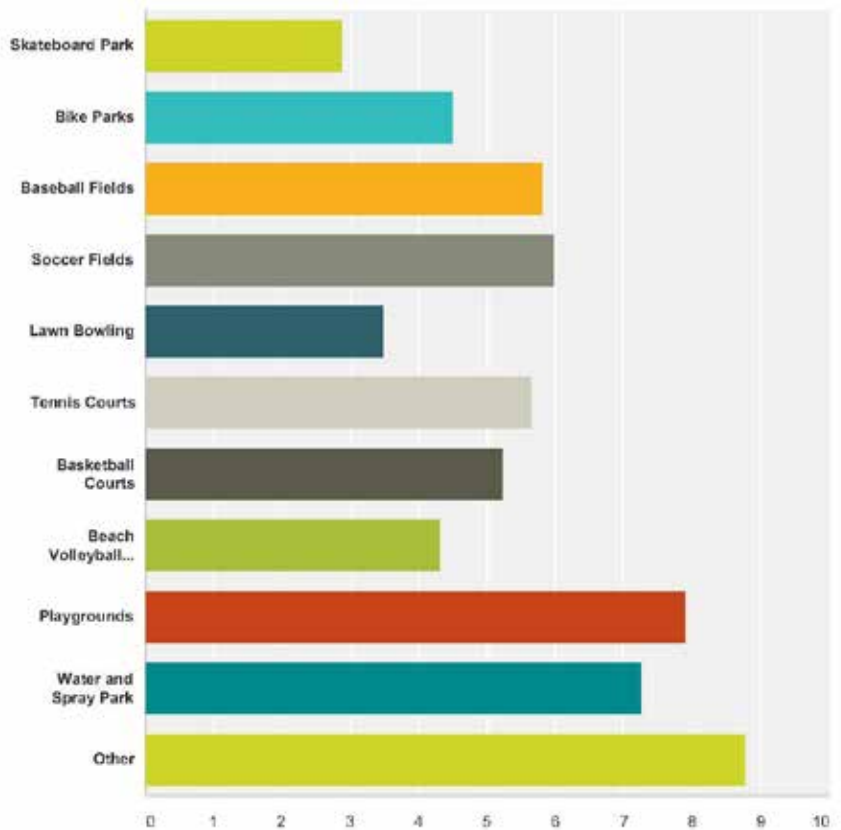
Table 7: Fringe Area Amenity Comparison

Amenity/Facility	Standard based off other communities with 18,000 - 28,000 population	City of Quesnel (Actual)	School Facilities
<b>Baseball and Softball Diamonds</b>	7	13	
<b>Outdoor Basketball Courts</b>	2	1	2
<b>Skateboard Parks</b>	1	1	
<b>Bike Parks</b>	0	1	
<b>Indoor and Outdoor Soccer Fields</b>	6	7	10
<b>Outdoor Tennis Courts</b>	4	4	
<b>Water and Spray Parks</b>	2	1	

*An assumption has been made, based on the existing parks and facilities inventory, that there is one soccer field located at each school listed.*

**Key Findings**

- § The City is comparatively **well supplied** in its current quantity of **all amenities and facilities studied**. The City contains **13 baseball and softball diamonds, compared to an expected 5**, based off other communities of this size.
- § When considering school ground amenities, the supply of soccer fields is significantly higher than would be expected based off other communities. Without considering school fields, Quesnel is sufficiently served.
- § **Not including other amenities** within the Fringe Area, the **City of Quesnel met or exceeded almost all standards**. The analysis showed that comparable communities contain one additional **outdoor basketball court**. Additional basketball courts are provided on school grounds.
- § Questionnaire respondents were asked to identify the amenities they use most often.
  - Playgrounds and water/spray park ranked the highest of the options presented.
  - Baseball diamonds, soccer fields and tennis courts followed.
  - The Skateboard park and lawn bowling were identified as lower priorities.
  - “Other” responses ranked highly and included 45 references to trails/walking (intentionally not included in the list).



**REVIEW OF OCP PARK AMENITY RECOMMENDATIONS**

A number of proposed park improvements were shown in the OCP. Respecting the constraints of the City and the need for a sustainable future, these were discussed with City Staff and Council at the outset of this project to evaluate which have already been completed, and which remain most relevant today. The most relevant recommendation is to enhance and improve Cariboo Field.

## PARK AMENITIES

### Playgrounds

As a general metric, all residents should be within a ten minute walk (about 800m) of a public playground in urban areas, and a ten minute drive in rural areas.

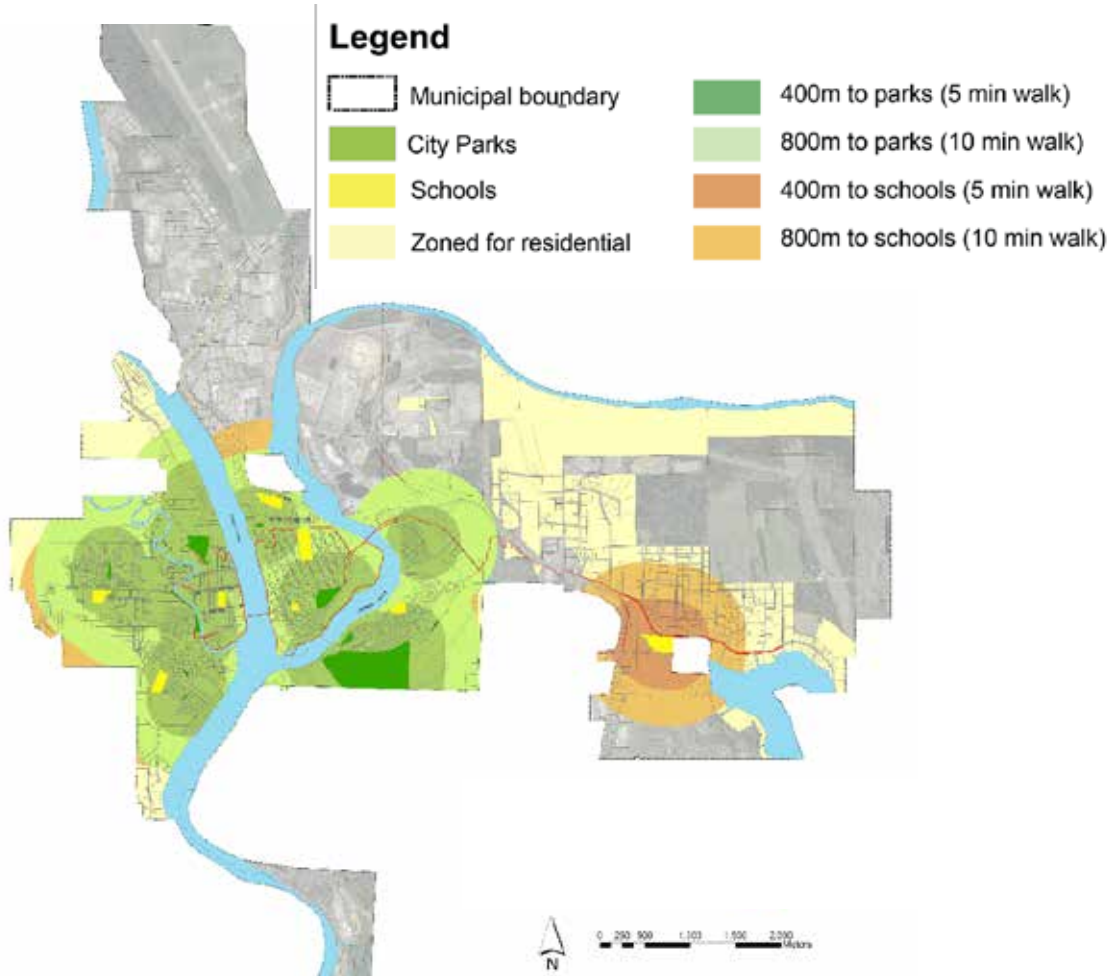


Figure 8: Playground Spatial Analysis

### Key Findings

§ Spatial analysis found that:

- North Quesnel, Riverview, Uplands, West Riverside, Carson Sub and Johnston Sub are well served by playground locations.
- Southills and Racing/Westland Rd neighbourhoods, which do not include any formal parkland, include residential areas that are not within walking distance

of a playground. However, there is a school site, which provides playground access to many of the residences in the Southhills neighbourhood.

- § Questionnaire respondents referenced playgrounds as their most used park amenity.
- § Respondents requested increased number of playgrounds and updates to existing playground equipment (specifically: West Fraser Timber Park, Lebourdais Park, Johnston Park and Weldwood Park)
- § Upgrades to the existing skateboard park, which is about 20 years old were requested.

### Nature Play

In addition to location of playgrounds, quality and variety need to be assessed in an ongoing manner. The community's playgrounds and play spaces should provide a range of opportunities for play both in terms of ages served, but also in the type of play experience, whether it be a more static playground, or less formal play such as "nature" or "adventure" play.

Quesnel's natural environment is generally not reflected in the existing children's play areas. Unlike many traditional playgrounds, which focus on manufactured structures, nature play areas typically include rocks, plants, water, loose materials such as sand, and even small habitat features such as logs, providing children with dynamic places to play. Nature-oriented playgrounds often include site-specific opportunities for children to manipulate materials found in the local environment, and therefore offer creative environments for the play, exploration of concepts and mastery of skills that are crucial to healthy child development. Since such play areas include an assemblage of natural materials, they do not detract from their surroundings when incorporated into the larger landscape. Heritage and cultural features and interpretation (forest resources, First Nations) could also be more widely integrated into the playgrounds. Nature play areas can be designed to variable levels of complexity and cost.



Nature and adventure play (a. Balhama Play Landscape, Trossachs National Park b. Terra Nova, Richmond BC, c. Maya Lin Wavefield (playscapes.com))



“Wacky Posts” provide structure to less formal nature play. Children can incorporate additional built and soft elements which can change over time, but on top of a structure that is approved by a play specialist, and meets a municipality’s risk management protocol.

*(Images source from: [www.zumkukuk.de](http://www.zumkukuk.de), [www.naturalplaygrounds.ca](http://www.naturalplaygrounds.ca))*



## Sports Courts

Based off other similar communities, Quesnel is adequately served in outdoor sports courts. Quesnel's inventory includes one outdoor basketball court (in addition to two school courts) and four outdoor tennis courts at West Fraser Timber Park. Cariboo Field has courts that are in disrepair – these have not been included within the inventory.

### Key Findings:

- § A small number of questionnaire respondents requested additional tennis courts.
- § Not formally counted in the inventory due to their state of disrepair, respondents requested upgrades to tennis courts at Cariboo field, where the tennis courts are outdated, have chain link fences for nets, and whose practice walls are in disrepair
- § Many residents also desired an outdoor rink which could double as a ball hockey or basketball court in the summer. The City already has an outdoor rink at Lewis Rink.

Multi-use courts are an ongoing trend, allowing for seasonal and even hourly shifts in programming. They are particularly desirable where there is interest in a flexible and adaptable system. More facilities are being designed as multi-purpose with greater flexibility to accommodate a greater variety of uses and different sizes of groups, provide for less structured activities, and to be able to respond to ever-increasing demands for new activities, without major retrofits. Multi-use courts in diverse communities often help to highlight new or emerging recreation trends.

Pickleball participation is rapidly growing across North America, including in small to mid-size BC communities. Most commonly played by older adults, as a low cost sport it is developing as an accessible, social, dynamic activity across the spectrum of ages. Courts are often integrated within existing tennis, basketball or multi-use courts with removable nets, however, with growing popularity many communities are moving towards stand-alone pickleball courts. Quesnel added pickleball to West Fraser Timber Park's tennis courts following the development of the draft Master Plan.

## Sports Fields and Ball Diamonds

The City of Quesnel is well-served in sports fields and ball diamonds.

### *Soccer Fields*

The Quesnel Indoor Sports Centre is BC's largest freespan indoor turf building, and provides a training center year round. The facility is owned by the City, and managed and maintained by the Quesnel Youth Soccer Association. In addition to the indoor complex, the site includes a complex of outdoor fields of varying sizes for different levels of play, used primarily for youth soccer. This is an outstanding facility, and is in excellent condition.

### Key Findings:

- § Quesnel is well served in the number of indoor and outdoor soccer fields when compared to other small BC communities. There are currently 7 soccer fields in the City of Quesnel, where most similar sized communities have 5 soccer fields on average.
- § There is enthusiasm regarding the new soccer facility and the only issue is a minor drainage problem with a few of the fields.
- § The fields at the soccer complex are further supplemented by school soccer fields which are used by school teams and adult leagues.



### *Football Fields*

Quesnel's minor football currently plays informally at Cariboo field. The field, recently acquired, would require increased maintenance to adequately function as a home field. Other requests from users include equipment building repair, change rooms and washrooms and lighting.

### *Ball Diamonds*

The City's parks include a significant number of baseball and softball diamonds, ranging from:

- § High profile single diamond (Lebourdais Park)
- § Well maintained but underutilized single diamond (Sugarloaf Park)
- § Diamond acquired from the School District, but in disrepair (Cariboo Field)
- § Complex of 5 diamonds adjacent to the land fill (Albert Johnson Park)
- § Complex of 5 well maintained diamonds (West Fraser Timber Park)

### *Key Findings:*

- § Overall, Quesnel is well served in the number of ball diamonds when compared to other similar sized communities. The City of Quesnel currently has 13 diamonds, while similar sized small communities in BC have approximately 5<sup>5</sup>.
- § At present, many are underused, and there is little multi-use of diamonds between ball user groups.
- § A field booking system/management policy is needed to better match use to bookings.
- § At present, user fees are not charged for field use.
- § Boy's baseball is spread out, without a home field or central tournament location.
- § West Fraser Timber Park: Fields sit empty after July 1<sup>st</sup> – is there an opportunity for other users.
- § Albert Johnson: There are concerns regarding ball diamonds (slo-pitch) at the landfill – they are immediately adjacent to the active landfill, and there are significant safety concerns, including garbage on the outfield and uneven ground.
- § Cariboo Field: only one diamond has been maintained, but has some issues with the infield and pitch mound.

---

*5 Softball and slo pitch are not differentiated*

### Ball Diamond Reconfiguration Options

Three options have been developed for consideration in the medium to long term. Each of these options includes a retraction in the total number of ball diamonds, with a move towards an increase in shared facilities between leagues. All options consider closure of Albert Johnson diamonds, and a range of options at Cariboo Field. As Cariboo Field is located within a residential area, diamonds should be situated to allow adequate distance between the field and street.

The options that follow should be considered in conjunction with other recommendations regarding ball diamonds (see recommendations at the end of the parks chapter for additional detail and recommendations), which include: changes to field allocation process, extending the outfield on two diamonds at West Fraser Timber Park to offer increased flexibility to a variety of user groups, and closing a diamond at Albert Johnson for use as a fenced off-leash dog park (discussed in subsequent section).

Future decisions to develop or close additional diamonds should be balanced with available City resources and demand, which should be based in part on the number of teams:

- § The hours and days to be played in the season;
- § The need to “rest” fields so that they are not damaged by over- use;
- § Time for tournaments (usually weekends);
- § The need for practice facilities or use of game fields for practices, and
- § The life cycle of the community’s program relative to whether it is growing, stable, or declining in participation.

These options all assume greater shared use between leagues, which is common in BC communities of all sizes. Multi-use of diamonds can be achieved through measures such as:

- § Sharing between softball and slo-pitch, or baseball and slo-pitch. Baseball and softball do not mix well due to the baseline dimensions and baseball’s elevated pitcher’s mound.
- § Fields can be set up with moveable 1st, 2nd & 3rd bases, and portable/moveable outfield fencing systems.
- § From a maintenance and cost perspective, shared use of fields is worth considering. However, the wear and tear factor should not be overlooked. Over-use of any natural turf field will create long term problems with turf damage, compaction and drainage issues. A few high quality fields and particularly one or two synthetic turf fields can replace a greater number of poor fields, because they can be programmed more intensively.

Actual field needs (i.e. softball vs slo-pitch vs baseball) are expected to become more apparent throughout the process of reconfiguration and reallocation of fields, as shown in the short term recommendations. Future decision making should assume shared use of diamonds.



Figure 9: West Fraser Timber Park Softball Outfield Expansion

The following matrix describes the various options for consideration in the medium to long term. All options assume greater shared use of fields between leagues, determined need for additional fields, and sufficient funding.

Table 8: Ball Diamond Reconfiguration Comparison

Elements	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
West Fraser Timber Park: softball field extension	x	x	x
Albert Johnson Park: Convert stand-alone field into a fenced off-leash dog park.	x	x	x
Albert Johnson Park: Close all fields.	x	x	x
Cariboo Field: Repair existing ball diamond, construct a second ball diamond.	x		
Cariboo Field: Relocate existing ball diamond to floodplain and construct a second ball diamond.		x	
Cariboo Field: Repair existing ball diamond, construct two additional ball diamonds.			x
Cariboo Field: retain portion of site for other park uses i.e. community gardens, multi-use sports court, or other public functions as determined by the planning department.	x		
Cariboo Field: retain portion of site for other park uses or other public functions as determined by the planning department.		x	



Figure 10: Option 1 - Cariboo Field: Retain existing ball diamond and construct one additional ball diamond



Figure 11: Option 2 - Cariboo Field: Two softball diamonds - decommission existing ball diamond, relocate ball diamonds to floodplain





Figure 12: Option 3 - Cariboo Field: Retain existing ball diamond and construct two additional ball diamonds

### *Fees and Charges*

At present, the City does not charge for sport field and ball diamond use. Many communities charge at minimum a nominal fee to ensure maximum use of fields, and to prevent teams and leagues from booking large blocks of time, without making full use of their booked time. The fees assist in optimizing field use and sharing, and also assist in supplementing field related operational improvements.

Other communities across BC of a similar size take on varied approaches to field fees:

- § A small number of communities do not charge. However, many charge a per person or per team fee. Fees vary considerably, a number of communities charge \$12 - \$15 an hour for adult teams.
- § Some charge a per season fee per team.
- § Some charge a lower fee for practice time than game time.
- § These communities generally charge a subsidized rate for youth teams – ranging from no fee, to half of adult rates.

38% of questionnaire respondents were in favour of increasing user fees to field users in order to pay for new or improved fields or ball diamonds. 30% were not sure which funding mechanism they preferred. Only 5% indicated a preference in reduced services/facilities and 11% indicated an increase in taxation. Most other respondents either suggest there is no need for improvements or additional fields or that they should be undertaken with fundraised money.

### **Places for Dogs**

North American demand has grown for the establishment of "dog parks" and/or off-leash dog areas within parks in recent years. The City of Quesnel does not currently have any designated off-leash dog parks.

- § Many communities around North America have established size classifications in order to appropriately plan and design their community's dog parks. Most view 0.4ha as a minimum size.
- § Support for specialized dog-friendly public venues is strong, but controls and safeguards need to exist to minimize use conflicts.
- § Locating off-leash dog areas in less-sensitive areas can help keep off-leash dog activity out of more sensitive natural areas.

Recognizing that some people do not like dogs or are uncomfortable when dogs are permitted to run loose in public parks, it is important that dog-friendly parks and off-leash areas be properly designed, constructed, signed and maintained. Where dog-friendly parks have low levels of infrastructure (i.e. are not fenced) proper segregation from other park uses is a consideration.

### **Key Findings**

- § Dog parks were a reoccurring theme throughout development of the Master Plan.
- § 7% of respondents (26) noted a desire for a safe and fenced, off-leash dog park, where residents can take their dogs to socialize and get exercise.



- § Improved etiquette around dog walking, including picking up and disposing of dog waste was referenced as was concern that many people let their dogs go off-leash on community trails, which causes disturbance to on-leash dogs and other park users.

### Community Gardens

A number of positive benefits have been associated with community gardens including promoting community building, increasing opportunities for physical activity, reducing crime and of course providing healthy and local produce. Municipalities around BC are locating community gardens in city parks, school yards, and in some cases, on municipal hall lands. In the majority of cases, municipalities have little involvement in the operation of community gardens. Volunteer commitment and leadership is expected.

#### Key Findings

- § Quesnel currently has two co-operative community gardens. Participants come from a broad range of ages across genders, range of mobility levels and include those with mental health concerns.
- § The groups anticipate that with additional participants, more space will be required.
- § Other neighbourhoods have expressed an interest in community gardens, but will require dedicated volunteers to champion any future gardens.
- § Edible Quesnel, a community group promoting permaculture and environmentally sustainable landscapes in public spaces promotes edible landscaping in a variety of public spaces including community parks to promote food security.
  - Short-term goals are to support beneficial plants and insects and promote environmentally friendly practices in City landscaping to follow the philosophy of permaculture.
  - Long-term goals are to promote food security for public use and to contribute to improved air quality.

### Outdoor Fitness Circuit

Municipalities are seeing mixed results with outdoor fitness circuits. The most successful adult fitness parks tend to be part of high use community centres, playing field and playground complexes where all age groups can recreate together. Quesnel has an outdoor fitness circuit at West Fraser Timber Park. Usage rates are not available. Should the City consider reconfiguration or rebuilding the circuit in the long term:

- § The circuit should be located in close proximity to family oriented areas to allow for multi-generational recreation.
- § Circuit features should be located close together.
- § Consideration should be given to anticipated use, location and proximity to other amenities.

### **Commercial and Organizational Signage in Parks**

Parks are generally non-commercial spaces. They offer a reprieve and visual relief. In many communities, only commercial ventures (restaurants etc.) within a park are permitted to advertise within the park. Even then, many are under restriction in terms of visibility from adjacent sidewalks.

Some municipalities will allow same day event signage for events occurring in the park. In this case the requirements are quite specific regarding aesthetics, size and must face inward to the park.

A more recent trend, some municipalities allow advertising and sponsorship on sport structures such as baseball diamond outfield fences. Where permitted, a very clear set of guidelines is required regarding signage size and aesthetics, as well as access to advertising space.

### **Public RV Park**

The City of Quesnel has long considered developing a public RV park in an accessible location.

If the City chooses to develop a public RV park, consideration should be given to RV park proximity to parks and outdoor event spaces to facilitate visitors attending tournaments and events. Other factors, including anticipated demand, capital and operating fees and adjacent land uses should also be considered.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The table below outlines park related recommendations, by category. Cost estimates are high level only, and do not include cost estimates for low cost items, or initiatives solely covered with staff time. Efforts have been made to ensure recommendations respect the need for maintaining reasonable staff workloads, without the expectation for additional staff. Cost estimates represent the austerity measures requested by the City – for example, costing playgrounds at lower than current spending levels to curb spending through the integration of simpler, less custom elements.

Recommendations are shown as a 1 – 3 timeline priority, or are indicated as “ongoing policy” measures.

				<b>Priority</b>
				1 = short term (1-3 years) 2 = medium term (3-7 years) 3 = long term (7+ plus years)
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Priority (1-3)</b>	<b>Capital Budget</b>	<b>Operating Budget</b>	
<b>Overall Parks System</b>				
1. <i>Work with the community to officially name all of Quesnel's parks to improve wayfinding and park identity.</i>	1			
2. <i>Provide consistent park signage (entry, informational and interpretive) in all City, Community, and Neighbourhood parks.</i>	1 - 3	\$30,000 (annually)	\$4000	
3. <i>Ensure a map of Quesnel parks is available on the website and in hard copy at key community locations.</i>	1			
4. <i>Where possible, design planting areas with low maintenance landscape needs i.e. more naturalized plantings, low mowing requirements etc. Prioritize more heavily maintained planting areas only in high profile public locations.</i>	Ongoing policy		Can reduce or stabilize parks maintenance budget	
5. <i>Consider biodiversity, connectivity and habitat objectives in the establishment of horticultural palettes and patterns within parks and public spaces.</i>	Ongoing policy			

<p>6. <i>Follow best management practices for Conserving Sensitive Ecosystems and Green Infrastructure <a href="http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/BMP/bmpintro.html">http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/BMP/bmpintro.html</a> or <a href="http://www.greenbylaws.ca/images/greenbylaws_web1207.pdf">http://www.greenbylaws.ca/images/greenbylaws_web1207.pdf</a></i></p>	<p>Ongoing policy</p>		
<p>7. <i>Develop demonstration gardens with signage to showcase low maintenance landscaping methods.</i></p>	<p>2</p>	<p>Signage budget shown elsewhere</p>	
<p>8. <i>Develop an integrated pest management program to reduce pesticide use in parks.</i></p>	<p>2</p>	<p>\$20,000</p>	
<p>9. <i>Reflect and respect the natural and cultural history of Quesnel through interpretive signage, preservation of cultural and natural sites of significance in parks and use of local materials in parks.</i></p>	<p>Ongoing policy</p>	<p>Signage budget shown elsewhere</p>	
<p>10. <i>Site future community memorials in well protected, dedicated parkland that cannot easily be encroached upon by other land owners or agencies, but not to contravene other park uses, including preserving open space.</i></p>	<p>Ongoing policy</p>		
<p>11. <i>Establish a commemoration and memorialization policy.</i></p> <p><i>This will help guide the type, number and appearance of memorials in public spaces and create memorialization that is relevant to the community at large.</i></p>	<p>2</p>		
<p>12. a. <i>Engage with the Quesnel Museum and Heritage Commission to inventory existing outdoor heritage assets, including those in parks.</i></p> <p>b. <i>Collaborate to develop an outdoor heritage asset policy to guide ongoing stewardship and management.</i></p>	<p>2 - 3</p>	<p>Joint Initiative</p>	

<p><i>c. Collaborate to develop an interpretive plan for the layout and interpretation of Quesnel's natural and cultural history and heritage in parks and public spaces.</i></p> <p><i>d. Consider developing a heritage tree inventory program.</i></p>			
<p>13. <i>Plan for seniors, and those with limited mobility in the integration of future park amenities. Ensure that there is adequate and accessible seating, as well as relatively flat trails through parks, where possible.</i></p>	Ongoing policy		
<p>14. <i>As playgrounds are developed and gradually replaced over time, ensure that a variety of age ranges and skill levels are provided for across the system.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Ensure playground equipment in parks includes a mix of traditional play equipment and "nature play" experiences.</i></li> <li>- <i>Consult with neighbourhoods at time of replacement, considering broader picture of diversity of play spaces in mind.</i></li> <li>- <i>Ensure playgrounds provide accessible options. Ensure adequate "fall zones" around all playground equipment.</i></li> </ul>	Ongoing policy	\$45,000 – 85,000 per playground	\$2500
<p>15. <i>Establish a Parks Committee with advisory responsibility to Council, as a community resource and advocate for parks to represent community interests, and assist Council in maximizing public input into community decision making.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Should have a high level of responsibility to support Council and Staff.</i></li> <li>- <i>Key matters should be referred to the Committee for recommendation to Council, especially for long term strategic planning issues.</i></li> <li>- <i>Should include senior's and youth advocacy representatives.</i></li> <li>- <i>Publish committee minutes on the city webpage as with other Committees of Council, for the benefit of all residents.</i></li> <li>- <i>Terms of reference should clarify how the committee will effectively work with staff and council.</i></li> <li>- <i>Include one or more members of Council as voting members.</i></li> <li>- <i>Elect Committee Chair by open committee vote.</i></li> </ul>	1		
<p>16. <i>Divest Rolph St. Park and rezone as single family residential.</i></p>	1	Will generate revenue	

Recommendations	Priority (1-3)	Capital Budget	Operating Budget
<b>New Parks</b>			
<p>17. <i>Develop South hills as a low maintenance neighbourhood park.</i></p> <p><i>Integrate nature play, an unpaved loop trail, small gravel parking area and park signage in a naturalized setting.</i></p>	1	\$100,000	\$3000
<p>18. <i>Pending levels of interest, support the South Quesnel Business Improvement Area (BIA) in their development of a rest stop along the highway. Ensure it is designed for use by residents as well as visitors.</i></p>	2	\$5,000	
<p>19. <i>Develop an informal, unfenced dog park at the Well #9 park site, making use of the site’s natural topography and fencing to the riparian area to bound the area.</i></p> <p><i>Officially name the park, and install signage, waste containers and bag dispenser.</i></p> <p><i>Consider other complimentary uses for the site over time, if the need arises, such as an RV park.</i></p>	1	\$5,000	\$800
<p>20. <i>Continue to work with the Legion to ensure that Legion Beach remains open for public water access.</i></p>	Ongoing		
<p>21. <i>In the long term, ensure that any parkland acquisition follow the Park Acquisition Guidelines (Appendix D) and focus on the acquisition of “useable” parkland for community park, neighbourhood park and trail use. Consider cash contributions where parkland is not needed.</i></p>	Ongoing		



Recommendations	Priority (1-3)	Capital Budget	Operating Budget
<b>Improvements to Existing Park</b>			
<i>City Parks</i>			
22. <i>Better promote City Parks as resident and tourism amenities through an enhanced parks website and Leisure Guide and integrate within the Economic Development Strategy for Quesnel.</i>	1		
23. <i>Preserve open space at Lebourdais Park. Consider existing and future community events, including Quesnel Billy Barker Days and Canada Day celebrations within site planning.</i>	Ongoing		
24. <i>Formalize land easement where West Fraser Timber Park encroaches onto adjacent property.</i>	2	TBD	
<b>Park Amenities</b>			
25. <i>Assess Baker Creek Skateboard Park for safety and undertake upgrades to ensure a broad range of skill levels and ages are served.</i>	1	\$80,000	\$2500
26. <i>Work with community bike groups to ensure a range of mountain biking and BMX opportunities are available, to encourage a range of ages and abilities.</i>	2	Volunteer built	
27. <i>If hard courts (basketball, ball hockey etc.) are required in the future, develop multi-use courts. Integrate multi-use courts across the park system to allow for a range of activities including pickleball.</i>	1-3	\$100,000 *does not include significant grading or	

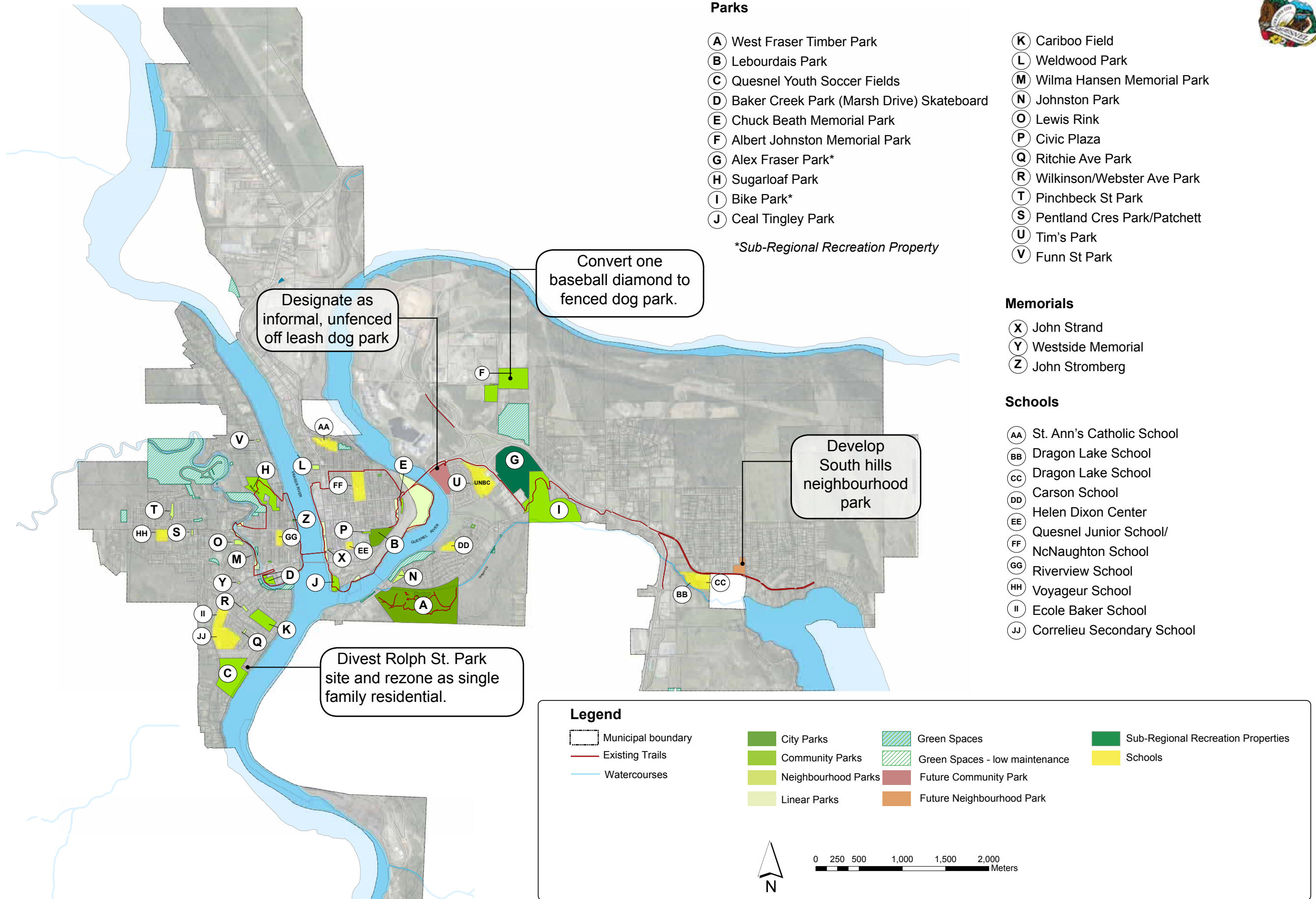
<i>Candidate parks for a future multi-use court: Cariboo Field (pending other site development), Sugar Loaf Park, Lebourdais Park (ensuring adequate open space is preserved).</i>		spectator seating.	
<i>28. If pickleball reaches high levels of participation, integrate a stand-alone pickleball court.</i>	3	\$100,000 – 200,000	
<i>29. No new courts are currently recommended. Monitor tennis court usage at West Fraser Timber Park in the long term to determine if additional courts are required.</i>	3	TBD depending on scale - \$150,000 per court	
<i>30. Decommission and demolish Cariboo Field tennis courts, which are in disrepair. Undertake in tandem with other Cariboo Field projects.</i>  <i>Advertise the intention to demolish the courts prior to doing so.</i>	2	\$40,000	
<b>Sports Fields and Ball Diamonds</b>			
<i>31. Modify the existing field reservation system for all field use, to better record and track actual use and practices.</i>  <i>In doing so, work with annual users to establish better protocol for reporting actual levels of use.</i>	1		
<i>32. Reinstate regular sport field user group meetings to discuss field bookings and allocation, field closures and maintenance concerns.</i>  <i>Actual field needs (i.e. softball vs. baseball vs. slo pitch) are expected to become more apparent throughout the process of reconfiguration and reallocation of fields.</i>	1		

<p>33. <i>Extend the outfield at two West Fraser Timber Park diamonds to allow for increased flexibility in use. Work with adjacent land owner to lease or access an easement where required.</i></p>	<p>1</p>	<p>\$15,000 per field, not including land access (price TBD, required for one field)</p>	
<p>34. <i>Adopt a phased approach to close fields at Albert Johnson Park. In the short term, close the two northern fields, which are in poor condition, converting one into a fenced off-leash dog park.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Officially name the dog park, and install signage, waste containers and bag dispenser.</i></li> <li>- <i>As use is absorbed at other ball diamonds, consider closing southern fields without replacing them elsewhere, building on shared use elsewhere.</i></li> <li>- <i>Monitor use at improved Albert Johnson Park and Well #9. Retain only one location in the future, if does not warrant both.</i></li> </ul>	<p>1</p>	<p>\$5000</p>	<p>Will reduce parks maintenance budget</p>
<p>35. <i>Maintain open space for minor football at Cariboo Field, without significant field upgrades but provide on-site storage i.e. a used shipping container.</i></p> <p><i>Consider a joint partnership to leverage additional funding opportunities and volunteer fundraising.</i></p>	<p>1</p>	<p>\$8000</p>	
<p>36. <i>If football at Cariboo Field is not a long term option, consider field location options at Quesnel Youth Soccer Complex - overlapping with the soccer fields, or as a stand-alone field.</i></p> <p><i>Consider a joint partnership to leverage additional funding opportunities and volunteer fundraising.</i></p>	<p>2 - 3</p>	<p>\$20,000 - \$30,000 for shared field; \$800,000 for a new stand-alone field</p>	
<p>37. <i>Following Albert Johnson Field closures: If additional fields are required after maximizing shared use at West Fraser Timber Park and existing stand-alone diamonds, consider Options 1 – 3 at Cariboo Field.</i></p>	<p>2 - 3</p>	<p>Option 1: \$100,000</p>	<p>\$10,000 - \$15,000</p>

<p>Considers costs of upgrading fields, and the construction of new fields, per options.</p>		<p>Option 2: \$230,000</p> <p>Option 3: \$220,000</p> <p>*costs do not include irrigation or lighting</p>	
<p>38. <i>Develop a comprehensive Fees and Charges Policy addressing outdoor recreation facilities such as sports fields and ball diamonds and private events in parks.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Establish a philosophy for a recovery rate for each program and outdoor facility;</i></li> <li>- <i>Focus on gradually increasing the recovery rate over time;</i></li> <li>- <i>Identify and establish the true hourly break-even rate for each facility and ensure that the facility rental rates reflect the desired level of subsidy;</i></li> <li>- <i>Implement a two-tier fee system for out of town use of sports fields;</i></li> <li>- <i>Implement a public communication strategy to inform residents about user fees and why changes to fees are required over time;</i></li> <li>- <i>Review all parks and recreation services provided to the community to determine where fees should be charged for additional services;</i></li> <li>- <i>Where recovery rates cannot be met, consider facility reduction (i.e. reducing number of ball fields) and further maximizing use of remaining facilities;</i></li> <li>- <i>Develop a fee policy to provide financial assistance to low income families.</i></li> </ul>	<p>2</p>	<p>\$15,000</p>	
<p>39. <i>Encourage additional community gardens in Quesnel <u>only</u> if there are sufficient volunteer resources to build and maintain the program. Ensure sufficient agreements are in place.</i></p>	<p>Ongoing policy</p>	<p>TBD depending on scale</p>	
<p>40. <i>Prohibit commercial and regulate organizational signage in parks, except for advertising for same day events, in parks and on ball field backstops and outfield</i></p>	<p>Ongoing policy</p>		<p>Potential to create revenue.</p>

<p><i>fencing. Develop a written policy with guidelines regarding allowable size, location and duration for the signage.</i></p>			
<p><i>41. Undertake a business analysis and feasibility study to determine whether the City should develop a public RV park and if so, to determine the appropriate scale and level of servicing.</i></p> <p><i>If a public RV park is feasible, develop in close proximity to parks/outdoor event spaces to facilitate use during community events and tournaments.</i></p>	<p>2</p>	<p>\$15,000 for feasibility study</p> <p>RV Park development: \$15,000 - \$20,000 minimum per serviceable site</p>	

Figure 13: Proposed Parks









# GREEN SPACES AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS

The City of Quesnel extends over approximately 3,940 ha, 1,500 ha of which is environmentally sensitive lands or natural forested areas. Of this, 61 ha is designated as City green spaces, and 72 ha within park land, all of which collectively add to the character and quality of the community. In response to strong community expectations, the City's OCP identifies clear objectives to preserve and protect these natural areas along with 25 objectives to guide their management and land-uses. In particular, a Water Corridor Development Permit area protects riparian areas while flexibility in zoning facilitates further environmental protection where warranted. The OCP acknowledged that further detailed inventory and analysis of natural areas was required.

In 2015, a high level Environmentally Sensitive Areas Inventory (ESAI) was undertaken at the City wide scale. This document is at a broad scale, with limited data, in one season only and without detailed site specific investigations. However, it did incorporate previous sensitive ecosystem inventory data and will be useful in providing high level guidance to the City regarding protection and management of natural resources. 17.2%, or 677.8ha of the City of Quesnel should be considered Sensitive Ecosystems, including riparian, wetland, mature forest and old forest. An additional 21.0%, or 827.5ha are natural forested areas.

## Green Spaces

The City's 61 ha of green spaces have been classified into one of two categories:

Table 9: Green Space Classification

Category	Purpose and Description	Typical Size
<b>Green Spaces</b>	§ Those identified within the ESAI as sensitive riparian, forested and wetland areas. These sites should remain in this more natural state, with only light intervention and programming, without further detailed assessment. Almost all of the 61 ha falls into this category.	n/a
<b>Green Spaces – low maintenance</b>	§ Small undeveloped park sites that are lightly maintained as open meadow space throughout the community.  These sites have not been identified as environmentally sensitive within the ESAI.  This category of green spaces could one day become parkland, pending demand, but should otherwise remain in this more natural state with little intervention. They act as visual relief within residential areas, and provide informal, unstructured, public play spaces. Only 0.6 ha, across 4 sites is included in this category.	n/a – as small as 0.35 ha

### **Environmentally Sensitive Areas in Parks**

During the master planning process, the broad scale ESAI maps were overlain with the current parkland map to identify (1) environmentally sensitive areas not within parkland and (2) sensitivity evaluation of existing parks. This work is a broad level of interpretation and thus the results are preliminary. This map (Figure 14) indicates:

- § Considerable portions of West Fraser Timber Park is comprised of riparian and mature forest.
- § Sugar Loaf Park is comprised of mature forest.
- § The eastern portion of Albert Johnson Park is mature forest.
- § The majority of Bryce Trail/Open Space is comprised of mature forest.
- § Two linear parks (Wilma Hansen Memorial Park, River Front Trail – Harcourt), and two community parks (Baker Creek Park/Skatepark, Ceal Tingley Park) are comprised of riparian areas. These parks feature sections of the River Walk Trail.

More developed areas within the parks listed above are currently concentrated, with the remainder of the parks managed to preserve sensitive ecosystems. These areas include trails, but no other built park infrastructure.

The ESAI information should be used to continue to highlight areas in which to avoid the integration of more active programming such as sports fields, and also serves to highlight opportunities for nature appreciation, passive outdoor recreation and interpretive programs for adults and children – including outdoor nature programming such as a children’s fishing program, signage, viewpoints, and sensitively designed trails.

Recreation within any green spaces should be sited carefully in order to reduce fragmentation and habitat degradation. These lands should be highlighted for their benefits to both humans as well as their role in larger environmental and ecosystem services including habitat.

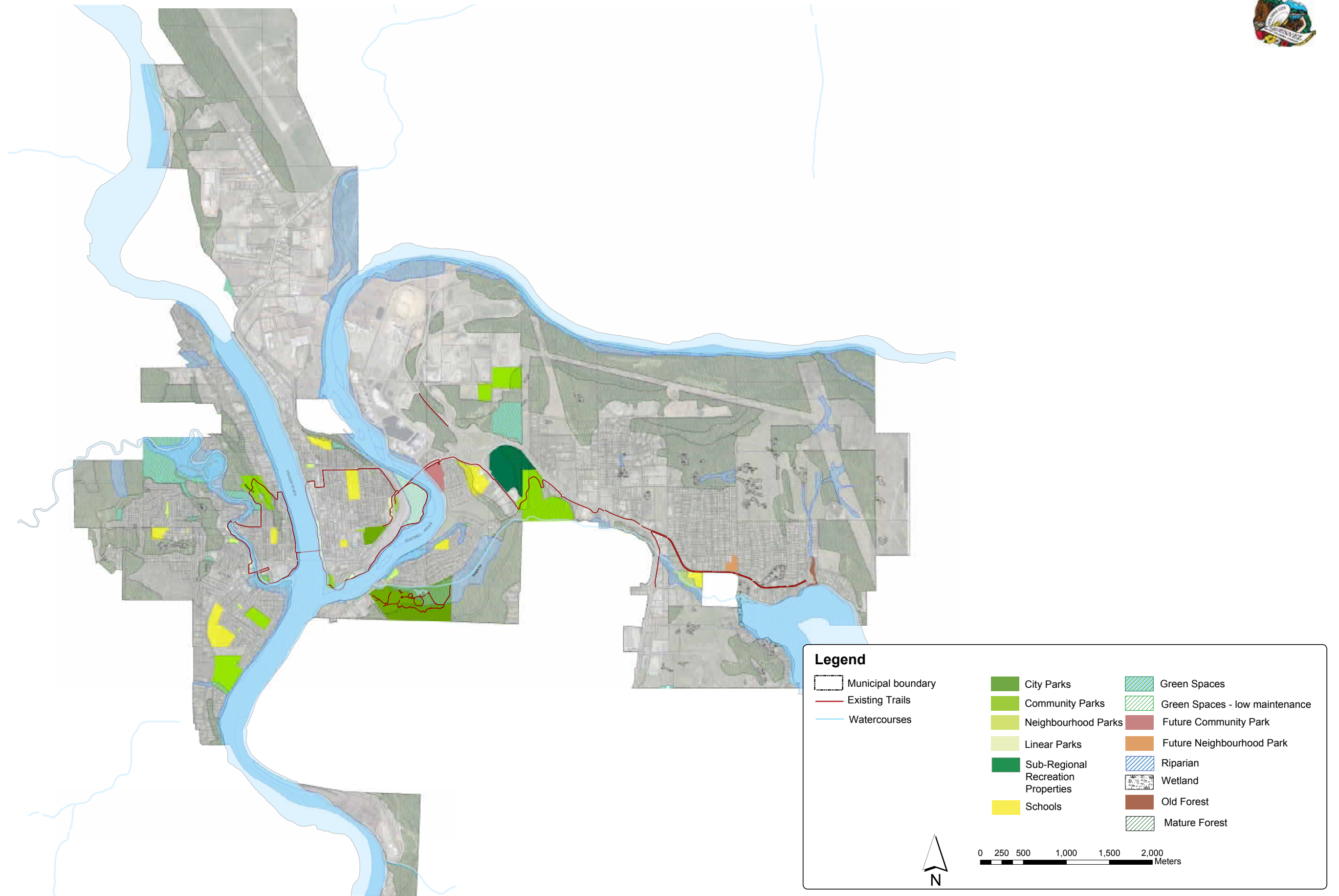
Further work is needed to more fully integrate the findings of the ESA into a conservation strategy and to guide further park planning efforts including; ongoing surveys, synthesis of data to identify which ecosystems/ species are the most important for conservation, and establishing appropriate land designation and land uses within natural areas.

### **STAKEHOLDERS AND PROGRAMMING**

Not-for-profits, including the Baker Creek Society, provide a community resource and host events and activities including day long events such as Earth Day, Rivers Day, Clean Air Day, Open House for Winter Festival and watershed events. Ongoing events include interpretive walks, tours and involvement in print articles and signage.

The Baker Creek Society operates the Nature Education and Resource Centre and provides environmental education to over 4,000 participants a year. The Society provides environmental representation on the majority of planning initiatives in Quesnel at the community, regional and provincial levels including a role on the Environmental Advisory Committee. The Society has a close working relationship with the City of Quesnel, staff and Council.

Figure 14: Green Spaces and Environmentally Sensitive Areas in Parkland



**RECOMMENDATIONS**

			<b>Priority</b>
			1 = short term (1-3 years) 2 = medium term (3-7 years) 3 = long term (7+ plus years)
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Priority (1-3)</b>	<b>Capital Budget</b>	<b>Operating Budget</b>
<p><i>42. Continue the biophysical inventory work on City owned land:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Synthesize the data in the ESAI and develop a conservation ranking to identify which ecosystems are the most important for conservation.</i></li> <li>- <i>Identify the “hotspots” of biodiversity as areas of greatest importance to protect.</i></li> <li>- <i>Identify possible missing habitats which serve as a network of wildlife corridors.</i></li> <li>- <i>Review the land zoning and appropriate land uses, particularly identifying opportunities for recreational access without environmental impacts.</i></li> <li>- <i>Integrate the findings with the Cariboo Regional District conservation efforts.</i></li> <li>- <i>Provide interpretive and educational material in parks/ greenspaces and on the city website to increase awareness of the unique ecological resources in the region.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Revise the OCP to reflect the findings in the ESAI inventory report.</i></p>	1	\$25,000, less if supported by a post secondary student.	
<p><i>43. Continue to work with local groups to identify, assess and protect valued open space.</i></p>	Ongoing, policy		
<p><i>44. Work with local groups to monitor and develop conservation and restoration plans for parks and green spaces containing significant sensitive ecosystems.</i></p>	Ongoing, policy		

<p>45. <i>Continue to ensure that the improvement and expansion of outdoor recreation amenities and facilities does not impact environmentally sensitive areas.</i></p> <p><i>Parks containing areas identified in the ESAI should be assessed at a more detailed level prior to significant development, increase in “active” programming, or clearing of the site.</i></p>	<p>Ongoing, policy</p>		
<p>46. <i>Consider species at risk. Highlight these areas through interpretive programs and signage, but avoid adjacent development of amenities.</i></p>	<p>Ongoing, policy</p>	<p>Signage budget shown elsewhere</p>	
<p>47. <i>Integrate signage to communicate the environmental benefits of low maintenance landscape principles, as well as more naturally maintained spaces i.e. riparian areas.</i></p>	<p>2</p>	<p>Signage budget shown elsewhere</p>	
<p style="text-align: right;"><b>1 = short term (1-3 years)</b>  <b>2 = medium term (3-7 years)</b>  <b>3 = long term (7+ plus years)</b></p>			





## TRAILS

The trails in Quesnel, most notably the River Walk trail, are a well-loved and used amenity. Users include walkers, dog walkers, joggers, runners of all ages, skaters, those with mobility aids and cyclists.

A number of Quesnel residents are avid cyclists. Cyclists in Quesnel, as in most communities, fall into three categories – casual recreation, “exercise” and commuter cyclists. Many cyclists will fall into more than one category.

While Quesnel’s trails serve all three groups of cyclist users, the consideration of cyclists within the scope of this Master Plan focuses on casual recreation cyclists. This does not preclude exercise cyclists and commuters from using the trails, or suggest that planning for their use is less of a City priority. However, both exercise cyclists and commuter cyclists tend to travel longer distances and rely on higher speed, on-road cycling facilities, rather than slower, off-road, or circuitous routes on quiet streets. The findings and recommendations within this section of the Master Plan speak primarily to this second category of cycling facilities. A limited number of findings and recommendations are geared more intentionally towards exercise and commuter cyclists, but it is recommended that these issues and concerns, where they do not overlap with casual recreational cyclists, be addressed outside the scope of this Master Plan.

The scope of “trails” within this Master Plan focuses on off-road trails, first and foremost, but also includes reference to pathways and specific sidewalk connections in order to complete recreational loops and enhance the off-road trails system, primarily for pedestrians (walkers, dog walkers, joggers, runners of all ages, those with mobility aids), skaters, roller bladers and casual recreation cyclists. Where possible, connections are created that would also be beneficial for commuting by foot or bike, but do not include reference to on-road cycling facilities.

Trails are recommended to provide a network that is safe, comfortable and convenient. Both recreational sightseeing and faster paced exercising/commuting are appropriate activities in a community trail network, however, conflicts arise when users try to share narrow spaces, especially during peak use times.

The Master Plan recommendations take into account the “8 to 80 Principle” and while there is a need for some advanced trails in the system to provide challenges to more advanced users, there should be a base of connected trails that are suitable for all ages and abilities.



## EXISTING CONDITIONS, OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The following includes a number of key findings: existing conditions, opportunities and challenges within the trail system. An additional series of key findings, all of which are location specific, are included in Figure 15, which also illustrates proposed trail connections previously under consideration by the City.

- § Trails were identified as a priority across all consultation platforms and audiences.
- § Key trails are ploughed for year round use – providing citizens with walking access year round.
- § Many residents provided positive feedback regarding the Riverwalk Trail, noted as providing opportunities for users of all ages: seniors, young parents and school groups. Most residents use trails in Quesnel for walking, dog walking, running and cycling.
- § Questionnaire respondents are moderately satisfied with *trail connectivity* in Quesnel – a key concern was missing/unsafe highway crossings to reach key destinations.
- § A majority of online questionnaire feedback pertained to additional sidewalks/trails adjacent to roads and signage showing entrances to trails, improved wayfinding and trail maps.
- § Rivers act as pinch points for the trail system.
- § Seniors currently walk indoor at the soccer complex.
- § A 2km long wheelchair trail exists at UNBC.
- § Most residents are satisfied with *trail conditions*. Some concerns were raised around a desire for improved:
  - Winter maintenance of trails, especially in regards to ice.
  - Maintenance of shrubs and foliage along trails, as well as exposed tree roots along trails.
  - Upkeep and repair of trail surfaces, due to a large number of bumps, cracks, and potholes.
- § Trails are desired for a greater range of skill, age and mobility – from double green diamond to double black diamond.
- § Questionnaire respondents seek additional trails in forest, wilderness and natural areas in close proximity to the City, for both commuting and recreation.
- § Questionnaire respondents were asked to prioritize a series of system wide trail goals: many prioritized connecting neighbourhoods to each other (including residential to commercial properties and schools), residents also requested the creation of “loops” of different lengths within the City.
- § Increased maintenance and resurfacing of River Walk Trail was mentioned frequently by stakeholders and the public, in addition to updated bathrooms and signage.
- § Some respondents commented on feeling unsafe sitting along some areas of the trail.

*“Fantastic venues such as the Riverwalk and West Fraser Timber park make getting outside and active easy.” – online questionnaire respondent*

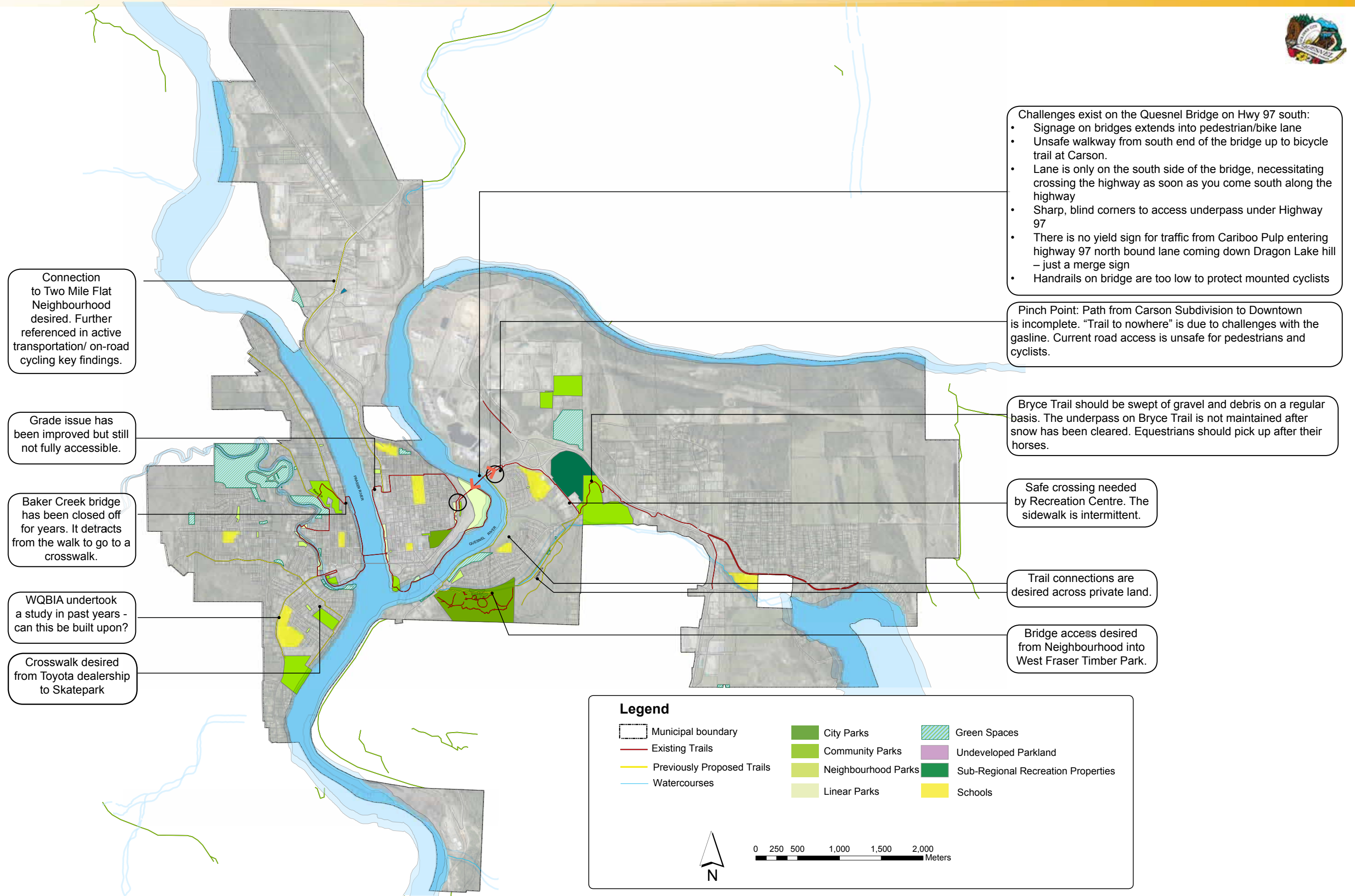
A number of community and stakeholder comments fell outside the scope of this Master Plan. These should be brought forward to future on-road cycling and active transportation planning and advocacy. A number of these concerns will require collaboration with the Ministry of Transportation. A list of comments and a map of identified challenge areas is included in Appendix F.



### Community Forest

At a broader scale, the City is considering the development of a Community Forest, described by the BC Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations as any forestry operation managed by a local government, community group, or First Nation for the benefit of the entire community. Community forests are an important and growing opportunity for communities, supporting new options in recreation, wildlife and watershed management, as well as ongoing harvesting operations. Properly developed, marketed and managed, a community forest could provide an additional tourism draw to the community and could leverage trails as an economic development generator.

Figure 15: Trails - Key Findings and Public Feedback



**RECOMMENDATIONS**

			<b>Priority</b> 1 = short term (1-3 years) 2 = medium term (3-7 years) 3 = long term (7+ plus years)
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Priority (1-3)</b>	<b>Capital Budget</b>	<b>Operating Budget</b>
<p>48. <i>Develop an Active Transportation and Cycling Advisory Committee to Council with a mandate to reduce transportation infrastructure and promote self-propelled activities as part of healthy living.</i></p> <p><i>Consider the development of an Active Transportation Plan.</i></p> <p><i>Within the committee and/or Active Transportation Plan:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Connect schools, parks, and other community destinations with residential neighbourhoods.</i></li> <li>- <i>Continue to advocate for improved on-road cycling and active transportation facilities with the Ministry of Transportation.</i></li> <li>- <i>Improve trail safety at intersections between trails and high volume roads. Consider signage and simple surface treatments as a cost effective measure to denote safe crossing locations. These could become part of a broader signage and branding program for the trails system. See page 68 for some examples.</i></li> <li>- <i>Designate some streets as “pedestrian” streets through signage initiatives and paving treatments where sidewalks are impractical. Undertake the same process for the designation of on-road bike routes.</i></li> <li>- <i>Work with schools to develop a safe routes to schools program, integrating trails where possible. Work with the School District to optimize the “Safe Routes to School” toolkit (<a href="http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/school-travel-planning-toolkit">http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/school-travel-planning-toolkit</a>) to ensure safe access to schools.</i></li> </ul>	1	<p style="text-align: center;">\$50,000 for Active Transportation Plan</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Other recommendations TBD in Active Transportation Plan</p>	



				<b>Priority</b>
				1 = short term (1-3 years) 2 = medium term (3-7 years) 3 = long term (7+ plus years)
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Priority (1-3)</b>	<b>Capital Budget</b>	<b>Operating Budget</b>	
- <i>Expand the pedestrian network through West Quesnel, including a loop to the Quesnel Youth Soccer Complex. Utilize and sign the existing sidewalk.</i>				
49. <i>Collaborate with regional groups and the Regional District to ensure City trails connect to trails in the Fringe Area, and to key recreation destinations such as Dragon Mountain.</i>	Ongoing, policy	Committee Time		
50. <i>Incorporate a consistent signage system. Post a trail map at all major trailheads, on the City website and in the Leisure Guide.</i>	1 – 2	\$40,000 over several years	\$4,000	
51. <i>Ensure a range of steepness/abilities to ensure that all residents can access the trail system (children, those with limited mobility or strollers, seniors).</i>	Ongoing, policy			
52. <i>Promote use of community amenities provided by others: i.e. existing 2km wheelchair trail at UNBC and rubberized track at Correlieu school. Work with the School District to formalize loop trails around school properties if demand increases.</i>	1	Committee Time  TBD		
53. <i>Continue to encourage volunteers to report issues of disrepair.</i>	Ongoing, policy			
54. <i>Consider winter sports in parks, designate and maintain for winter sport use (snowshoeing, cross-country skiing), in addition to continuing to plough key pedestrian trails.</i>	Ongoing, policy	Committee Time		

				<b>Priority</b>
				1 = short term (1-3 years) 2 = medium term (3-7 years) 3 = long term (7+ plus years)
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Priority (1-3)</b>	<b>Capital Budget</b>	<b>Operating Budget</b>	
55. <i>Encourage local groups to host learn to bike and hike programs for all ages.</i>	1			
56. <i>Encourage local groups to host large scale cycling events at the local and regional level.</i>  <i>Consider working with Williams Lake on a joint Grand Fondo cycling event, as well as hosting smaller local events to promote cycling and bicycle safety.</i>	2	Committee Time		
57. <i>Explore options of developing a Community Forest, with a designated trail system, potentially as part of an overall economic diversification strategy to encourage recreation on nearby crown lands.</i>	2 - 3	TBD  Strategy Development Required		
<b>Improve Trail Connectivity, as shown in Figure 16. Details below</b>				
58. <i>Formalize the road through Healy Sub as a public trail through the use of signage and promotion.</i>  <i>Assess feasibility of a footbridge to cross Baker Creek to connect back into primary trail network.</i>  <i>Assess opportunities for additional nature trails within the green space.</i>	2 - 3	Signage budget shown elsewhere Feasibility study of foot bridge: \$5000  Nature trails cost: assume 1500m of trail without significant grading work - \$100,000		
59. <i>Create a more visible crossing of North Fraser Road.</i>	1	\$5000		

				<b>Priority</b>
				1 = short term (1-3 years)
				2 = medium term (3-7 years)
				3 = long term (7+ plus years)
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Priority (1-3)</b>	<b>Capital Budget</b>	<b>Operating Budget</b>	
<i>Utilize paving marking, as described above.</i>				
<i>60. Seek easement to allow more direct access to Uplands neighbourhood.</i>	3	Trail cost: \$40,000 for gravel footpath, not including access arrangement.		
<i>61. Improve crossing from Toyota dealership to skatepark.</i>	1	\$2500		
<i>62. Ensure well marked trail connection to West Fraser Timber Park to Johnston Park and the Johnston Bridge.</i>	2	Signage budget shown elsewhere		
<i>63. Work with private land owners to develop a sanctioned trail along the Quesnel River. If this is not possible, create an on-road connection inland.</i>	2	Off road trail construction, not including access arrangement: \$80,000 for 2m wide gravel trail, pending extent to which informal trails can be used, and extent of regrading required.		
<i>64. Work with private land owners to develop a sanctioned trail east from West Fraser Timber Park.</i>	2	Cost TBD, depending on extent to which informal trails can be used		
<i>65. Complete the existing trail connection on N Star road by ensuring consistent sidewalk.</i>	1	As part of road operating budget.		
<i>Improve crossing to the Recreation Centre.</i>				



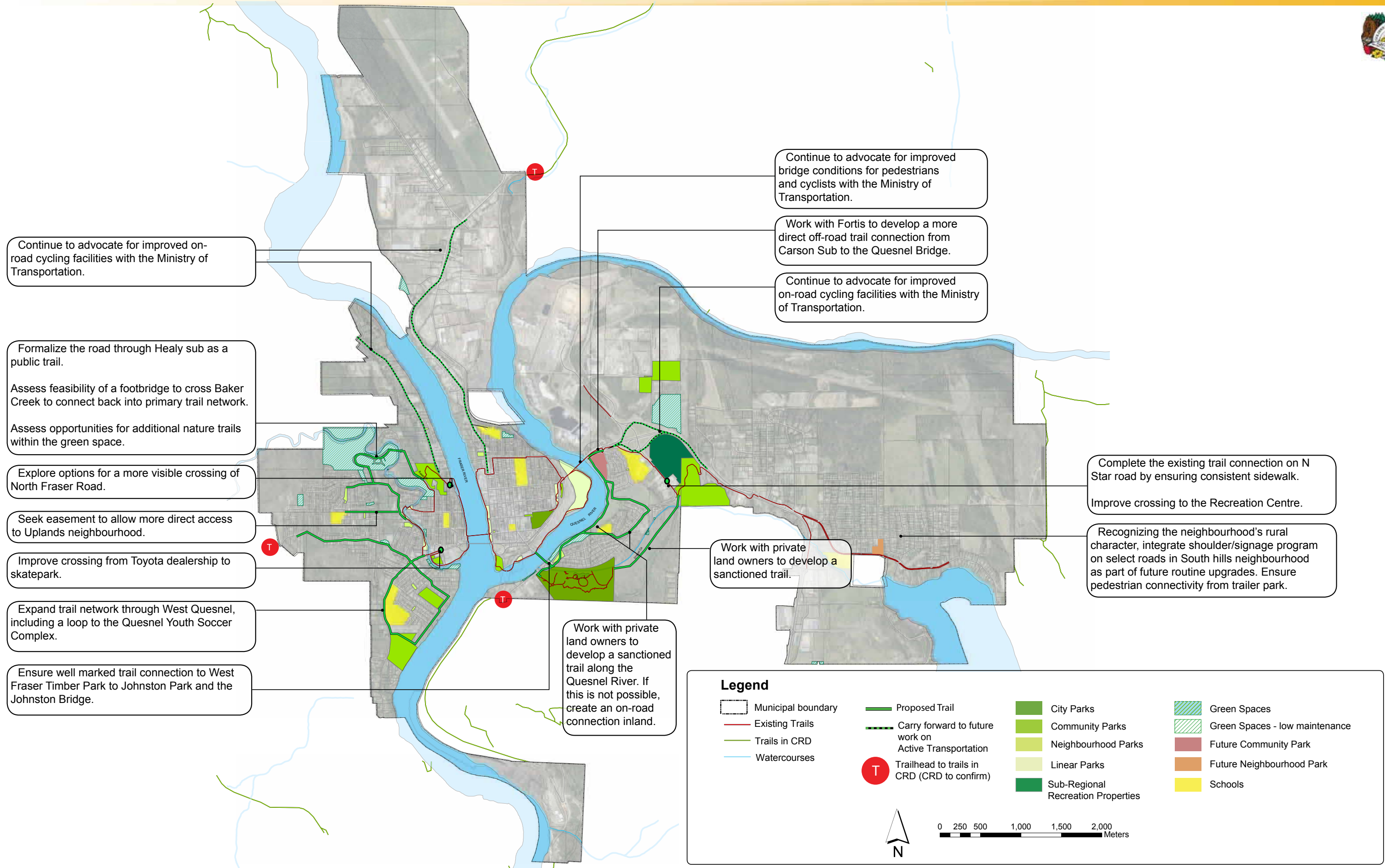
<b>Priority</b> 1 = short term (1-3 years) 2 = medium term (3-7 years) 3 = long term (7+ plus years)			
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Priority (1-3)</b>	<b>Capital Budget</b>	<b>Operating Budget</b>
<i>66. As part of routine upgrades, integrate shoulder/signage program through South Hills neighbourhood. Ensure pedestrian connectivity from trailer park to trail/sidewalk system.</i>	1 - 3	As part of road operating budget	
<i>67. Work with Fortis to develop a more direct off-road trail connection from Carson Sub to the Quesnel Bridge.</i>	1	Consultation with Fortis required prior to estimating implementation cost	
<b>1 = short term (1-3 years)</b> <b>2 = medium term (3-7 years)</b> <b>3 = long term (7+ plus years)</b>			

### Trail-Road Marking Examples



Images source from: [www.behance.net/gallery/494549/Dorthea-Dix-Park-Bike-Trail-System](http://www.behance.net/gallery/494549/Dorthea-Dix-Park-Bike-Trail-System), [www.thisbigcity.net](http://www.thisbigcity.net), [www.usrtownsquare.org](http://www.usrtownsquare.org), <http://www.cnv.org/Parks-Recreation-and-Culture/Parks-and-Greenways/Greenways/North-Shore-Spirit-Trail/Lonsdale-Quay-Area>

Figure 16: Proposed Trails and Trail Improvements







## PARTNERSHIPS

In addition to the parks operated jointly with the Cariboo regional District, the City of Quesnel operates its extensive park system through a number of partnerships and agreements. Such partnerships are critical not only in delivering a robust, dynamic service, but also in providing opportunities for community residents, institutions and businesses to support that service delivery. Maintaining and growing partnerships will strengthen the quality of facilities and services offered.

### SCHOOL DISTRICT #28

The City of Quesnel and School District #28 have a positive working relationship and a Joint Use Agreement formalized in 2001. Formerly a tripartite agreement including the Regional District, it shifted to a two-partnered agreement a number of years ago.

- § The City pays \$50,000 per year for use of school facilities. The Regional District does not make a contribution, although regional parks and recreation needs are met in part through the use of school board facilities. There is no provision for reviewing or confirming the validity of the annual payment amount.
- § The City does not outwardly advertise that it subsidizes community use of school district facilities.
- § The agreement focuses mostly on recreational use of indoor school facilities but does acknowledge use of the school's outdoor facilities
- § From a parks perspective, the joint agreement does not provide significant detail. There is no commitment or obligation on the part of the school district to:
  - Achieve any set standard of maintenance on fields or playgrounds, or reflect level of play (practice, game, child, youth, adult).
  - Retain or protect fields.
  - Give the City the first right to acquire any land the school district may consider redundant, although point 3 requires joint consultation.
  - No indication how to proceed in the event that the City may want to upgrade a school field, perhaps by adding lights.

The agreement does not list the actual outdoor facilities covered, which may help ensure their protection. For example, there is no recognition that school playgrounds are included.

### CARIBOO REGIONAL DISTRICT

The City of Quesnel and Cariboo Regional District have a positive working relationship. Both agencies are party to a 2011 Management Agreement for the delivery of specified recreation and leisure services.

- § The Cariboo Regional District contributes to jointly owned park, Alex Fraser, within City boundaries. Shown as a district category on the maps, this park is not included in the inventory. It is managed by a non-profit group.

- § The NCRP Service provides an allocation of \$160,000 to the City for parks and recreation amenities used by City and rural residents.
  - It is intended to principally support the Riverfront Trail, Lebourdais Park, West Fraser Timber Park and youth oriented parks and sports fields (not including the soccer facility).
  - The financial arrangements are somewhat arbitrary and have not been verified by an actual accounting of expenses.

## EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Two institutions for higher learning exist in the City of Quesnel: UNBC and the College of New Caledonia. There are currently no formalized research/educational agreements with either institution. Agreements would create an ongoing cooperative mutually beneficial relationship for students to assist in real, meaningful research in areas of interest to the operation of the City. Areas of common interest could include: environmental research, sustainability planning, communications, economic evaluations and tourism surveys.

## PRIVATE-PUBLIC PARTNERSHIPS

- § Historically, the business community has played a strong role in the development of parks in the community. For example, West Fraser Timber donated the land for the flagship park and corporate donations have assisted in hosting events, parks and trail maintenance and environmental enhancements.
- § Even in times of economic downturn, corporations, citizens and stewardship groups alike will search for opportunities and ways to support their communities however strong marketing, promotions and support may be required from the City to facilitate and encourage this support.
- § While the City allows vendors in parks for special events and any revenues go to support non-profit groups, such as the Billy Barker Festival, allowing more vendors in parks on a routine basis may increase City revenues, create business opportunities for individuals, improve the park experience and support tourism.
- § Some of Quesnel's key events, such as Billy Barker Days are run as a partnership between the City and an organization or user group, in this case the Billy Barker Days Society. The City provides services such as garbage pick-up and additional washroom maintenance for events, as well as staff for barricades and cleaning during the parade, fireworks and space within parks. Corporate sponsors provide cash and in-hand support, there are approximately 200 sponsors - including the City, which provide a total of \$150,000 to help fund the event.
- § A formalized Parks Donation Program would help raise awareness of the City's ongoing need for support and inform the community about opportunities for donations and bequests.

## **ONGOING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Opportunities to provide input on policy development or department direction helps further develop community leaders and can take many forms from short term working groups to long-standing committees. Special attention should always be paid to ensure the inclusion of seniors, youth, minority populations, and other hard to reach residents in community consultation processes.

Development of ongoing, meaningful and effective community engagement needs to be flexible, nimble, and creative which will require the use of a range of techniques. Trial and error is inevitable in this process, but the following are some suggested tools that can be tested.

### **Volunteer Engagement**

Many local outdoor recreation programs rely on a high level of volunteer engagement but there is always a danger of deterioration of volunteerism due to competing demands for time and general volunteer burnout. A strong support system for the existing volunteer base can help to alleviate these pressures by formally recognizing the value and benefit that volunteerism delivers to the community and to provide direction on how the City can nurture and support volunteer organizations. Stakeholder and user groups are currently actively engaged in running recreation and parks programs and events.

Relative to a community desire for upgraded park and trail amenities, volunteer availability and interest is low. For example, only 20% of questionnaire respondents showed an interest in volunteering to assist with trail and park maintenance in the community.

Opportunities for adopt a trail or park, and trail and dog bylaw ambassador programs, and a number of opportunities for stakeholder and user groups to spearhead the development of new amenities or events, are included within the parks and trails recommendations. The green spaces and environmentally sensitive areas section build on those recommendations with opportunities for monitoring and developing conservation and restoration plans. In addition, consideration could be given to broader based stewardship events such as control of invasive species, garbage collection on trails, monitoring, outreach or single day events for activities such as a trail build, which could utilize large groups of interested but formerly untrained volunteers or a corporate group.



**RECOMMENDATIONS**

				<b>Priority</b>
				1 = short term (1-3 years)
				2 = medium term (3-7 years)
				3 = long term (7+ plus years)
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Priority (1-3)</b>	<b>Capital Budget</b>	<b>Operating Budget</b>	
<p>68. <i>Continue promotion and cooperation with the Quesnel and District Sub Regional Recreation Commission, the Cariboo Regional District, School District #28, the BC Government and public and private voluntary associations in identifying and meeting park needs.</i></p>	<p>Ongoing, policy</p>			
<p>69. <i>Consider reviewing the joint-use agreement with the Board of School Trustees (SD28) to give consideration to the following parks-related items:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>List the actual outdoor school facilities covered in the agreement to ensure long term protection.</i></li> <li>- <i>Set standards of maintenance on sports fields and playgrounds, which reflect the intended level of use (practice, game, child, youth, adult).</i></li> <li>- <i>Clarify roles and responsibilities in regards to upgrading facilities such as the addition of sports field lighting.</i></li> <li>- <i>The City should be consulted before any consideration is given to dispose of any SD lands or joint-use facilities.</i></li> <li>- <i>Consider approaching the Regional District to participate in a future joint use agreement if regional use of facilities is occurring.</i></li> </ul>	<p>2</p>			
<p>70. <i>Formalize an agreement with the Regional District regarding the allocation of joint funding for City owned parks with a sound rationale for the amount of funding provided by Regional District.</i></p>	<p>2</p>			

<b>Priority</b> 1 = short term (1-3 years) 2 = medium term (3-7 years) 3 = long term (7+ plus years)			
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Priority (1-3)</b>	<b>Capital Budget</b>	<b>Operating Budget</b>
<i>71. Consider approaching the two higher educational institutions to develop research agreements to support student research applied to City operations.</i>	3		
<i>72. Continue supporting stakeholder and community groups in event hosting.</i>	Ongoing, policy		
<p><i>73. Develop a Volunteer Policy and Strategy that celebrates the value and benefits that volunteerism delivers to the community. This could be part of a broader City program.</i></p> <p><i>Develop a Volunteer Leadership Development program to help support partners and community groups and to build volunteer capacity.</i></p> <p><i>Provide key staff with training in volunteer coordination and facilitation.</i></p>	2	Part of a broader City program	
<i>74. Undertake periodic youth specific workshops to ensure sufficient youth programming and park amenities for those who are not engaged in traditional team sports.</i>	1, ongoing every 3 years		
<b>1 = short term (1-3 years)</b> <b>2 = medium term (3-7 years)</b> <b>3 = long term (7+ plus years)</b>			

## **IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

An implementation plan, shown at the end of each chapter, prioritizes recommendations with associated provision of capital and ongoing operational and maintenance funding requirements where significant. The plan will provide direction for City Council and Staff over the next 10 years. This Plan does not provide specific site plans or specific budget recommendations. All recommendations and plans outlined within this report will be vetted by Staff and Council in future planning processes, as well as evaluated relative to resource and budget requirements.

Each recommendation in this report has been assessed as a short (1-3 years), medium (3-7 years) or long term (7+ years) priority. While short term projects will rely chiefly on existing infrastructure, focusing on user experience, long term projects may include major construction – considering needs, locations, schedules and financial strategies.

## **FUNDING STRATEGIES**

The capital and operating investment recommended in this Master Plan presents a challenge for municipal financing, and will require a range of different strategies. The City of Quesnel, along with all other municipalities in BC, will have to use a combination of conventional and non-conventional methods to address its parks and recreation renewal challenges and to meet the needs of its population. The funding strategies below will be key components to implementing this Plan.

It should be recognized that Staff require dedicated time to build partnerships and resource development, establish volunteer committees, as well as time for building new required skills. Many of the funding avenues described here will require ongoing attention to identify opportunities and establish and maintain productive partnerships.

Quesnel is a small community with limited public resources. In order to provide quality park services and meet expectations, the City must harness all the energy and resources within and around the community. The role of the City is to be a facilitator and communicator, collectively drawing together the strengths, talents and resources of its residents, leveraging partnerships with multiple agencies and businesses, building connections with surrounding communities and continuing to work with all levels of governments.

## **ONGOING INVESTMENT GOALS**

Most municipalities fail to adequately provide for asset renewal, and the result of this shortfall is a progressive infrastructure deficit. Ideally, a municipality should invest enough annually in its facility and infrastructure assets to sustain them over the long term. Actual spending might be incremental, in the form of ongoing upgrades and major maintenance projects, or it might be all at once, in the form of end-of-life-cycle replacement.

In relationship to parkland and park amenities achieved through local development the City should always be careful to only accept land which is desirable for park purposes and facilities built to a high standard to avoid an ongoing burden of maintenance responsibility with little benefit to the community.

## CORE FUNDING

Conventionally, the funds to create, sustain and renew park and outdoor recreation assets are drawn from the local property tax base, either within annual budgets or, for large ticket items, through capital plans. This core funding may be supplemented by user fees. While user fees are rarely enough to offset capital costs, they can cover a proportion of operating expenses.

Some external funding can be realized through such sources as senior government infrastructure renewal and economic stimulus programs, although such provision is intermittent and can rarely be anticipated. Plans should be developed in advance so that they are on hand when grant opportunities arise.

Finally, Development Cost Charges (DCCs) are an essential resource for providing municipal services to a community. These are likely to be limited in Quesnel, which has a low growth projection. If Quesnel should see an increase in development in the future, DCCs can be collected and applied to park acquisition and park improvement projects, including recreation buildings (i.e. washrooms, accessibility upgrades, change rooms, etc.) and outdoor recreation facilities (i.e. sport fields, playgrounds, trails, fencing, landscaping, drainage and irrigation).

## GRANTS

The City should continue to monitor for grant opportunities to assist with the development of park and trail amenities. With the current economic climate, funding opportunities are limited; however, maintaining contact with local MLAs and MPs helps raise awareness and communicate the needs in the community.

Because grants can be quite beneficial, it is worth ensuring that staff are monitoring for grant opportunities and have the time and resources to develop applications, including those which support local associations and non-profit societies. Partnership grant applications either with another government agency or a non-profit group often gain more support. The best resource is the [CivicInfo BC](#) website. As well, membership to [Big Online](#) a privately owned on-line resource providing a comprehensive source of fundraising information, opportunities and resources for charities and non-profits may be beneficial if staff or volunteers have the time to monitor for relevant opportunities.

Community members should be encouraged to lead or assist with relevant grant applications such as community grants whose funds are only available to residents and not municipal governments. Examples of community grants include the [Kraft celebration tour](#) which makes available up to \$25,000 for awarded Community Projects, or the [ParticipACTION Teen Challenge](#) which provides resources for encouraging teens to be active, including equipment or other funding. In addition, the City should encourage community groups to offer in-kind contributions and volunteer hours, where appropriate.

Funding opportunities through other agencies and government programs should also be sought, including:

- § The [Northern Development Initiative Trust](#) which has a variety of funding programs that would be appropriate to Quesnel, including a grant writing support program, economic development capacity building, and economic diversification and infrastructure funding.
- § The [Federal Gas Tax Fund](#) is a Federal program providing funding for Canadian municipalities to help build and revitalize public infrastructure.

- § [ICBC](#) for safety upgrades.
- § Funding through the [Tire Stewardship BC](#) Community Grant Program. This grant program provides financial support to municipalities who have decided to utilize recycled tire products in their projects. This grant may be applied to projects including rubber tile surfacing for playgrounds, water parks or fitness areas, walkways, running tracks or playing fields. This program is offered as a matching grant, to a proposed maximum of \$30,000.
- § Tourism grants.
- § Partnership funding from regional government, and cost sharing from adjacent municipalities.
- § [BC Economic Development](#) is a provincial government website specifically geared towards helping small communities with economic development. This website offers a wide variety of funding and grant opportunities, as well as research tools.
- § [Federation of Canadian Municipalities: Green Municipal Fund](#) allocates funding through five sectors including transportation, focusing on modal shifts i.e. sidewalks and bike paths, pedestrian and cyclists crossings and other complete street improvements.
- § [Mountain Equipment Coop](#) sponsors a number of programs that help to conserve ecologically and recreationally important places, and inspire and enable Canadians to be active outside. The land acquisition program provides grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$100,000, to organizations dedicated to conserving ecologically and/or recreationally significant landscapes both in cities and wilderness areas.

Private funding programs, including [TD Friends of the Environment Foundation](#) who offer registered Canadian charities a Charitable Registration Number, as well as educational institutions (primary/secondary/post-secondary schools), Municipalities and Aboriginal groups with support for a wide range of environmental initiatives, with a primary focus on environmental education, urban greening and enhancing biodiversity, and energy conservation. Links to the above mentioned programs and funding opportunities can be found in Appendix G.

