

DATE: July 26, 2018

FILE: 6120-01

TO: Chair and Directors
Electoral Areas Service Committee

FROM: Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer

Supported by Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer

R. Dyson

RE: Denman Island - Piercy Road Beach Access

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to pursue a Licence of Occupation from the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MOTI) for the Piercy Road beach access on Denman Island and to include this beach access in the Denman Island Parks and Greenways Service.

Recommendation from the Chief Administrative Officer:

THAT staff be directed to pursue a Licence of Occupation for the Piercy Road beach access on Denman Island from the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure for the establishment of a Comox Valley Regional District park;

AND FURTHER THAT staff be directed to add the Piercy Road beach access to the Parks and Greenways Service function 619 upon receipt of a Licence of Occupation.

Executive Summary

The Piercy Road beach access has been maintained on an ad hoc basis by residents over the years and used informally as a neighbourhood green space. This beach access offers views of Baynes Sound/Vancouver Island and has an established trail to the ocean.

In June of 2018, the Denman Island Residents Association (DIRA) officially requested that the CVRD consider adding this beach access to the Denman Island parks service.

Report highlights:

- This report seeks approval to apply for a Licence of Occupation from MOTI for the beach access.
- The DIRA parks committee would manage the park operations under the guidance of the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD).
- Initial capital costs are estimated at approximately \$18,000 and maintenance costs are projected to be approximately \$500/year.

Prepared by:

M. Harrison

Mark Harrison
Parks and Active
Transportation Planner

Concurrence:

D. DeMarzo

Doug DeMarzo, RPP, MCIP
Manager of Parks

Concurrence:

T. Ian Smith

T. Ian Smith, MCE
General Manager of
Community Services

Stakeholder Distribution (Upon Agenda Publication)

Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure	✓
Denman Island Residents Association Parks Committee	✓

Background/Current Situation

Located on the western shore of Denman Island (see Appendix A), the Piercy Road beach access was established at time of subdivision and is classified as an unopened road dedication under the provincial jurisdiction of MOTI. The beach access is unique in that it is 70 metres in width (a typical beach access is 20 metres in width) and was created in lieu of multiple beach accesses.

To date the beach access has served as an unofficial neighbourhood park for local residents. Across from the beach access is a farm which serves food from Thursday to Sunday during the months of April to November.

The landscape of the beach access is sloped towards the ocean and largely consists of grassy open space with some mature second growth fir and big leaf maple trees along the foreshore and southern property line. An informal trail winds its way along the southern property line to the top of the foreshore bank and then heads north along what appears to be a man-made cut bench feature to the beach below. The beach consists of small pebbles and bedrock. See site photos in Appendix B.

The grassy open space has been mowed in the past and the trail to the beach has been cleared over the years by local residents and volunteers. The native soils trail is presently 0.3 to 0.6m wide and is largely 12 to 15 per cent grade with some sections of the trail along the foreshore bank exceeding 20 per cent grade.

In June of 2018, DIRA sent an official letter of support to the CVRD parks department asking that the beach access be established as a neighbourhood park (see Appendix C). This letter was the result of a proposal brought forth by local residents who canvassed the Piercy Road neighbourhood to ensure a majority of neighbourhood residents supported the initiative.

Policy Analysis

The Denman Island Community Parks and Greenways Service Establishment Bylaw No. 386, 2015, enables the CVRD to plan for, acquire and develop community parks on Denman Island.

The Denman Island Parks and Greenways Master Plan, 2011, identifies trails to the waterfront within undeveloped road dedications as a priority item. It also identifies obtaining licences or permits from MOTI for appropriate road ends for the development of trails and beach accesses.

The Denman Island Parks and Greenways Priorities Conceptual Parks Plan (see Appendix D) identifies the Piercy Road beach access as a priority location for a trail to the waterfront and as a terminus for a trail to the village centre.

Planning on Hornby Island is done through Islands Trust.

Options

The following options are available for the board's consideration:

1. Proceed with securing a Licence of Occupation for the Piercy Road beach access from MOTI and subsequently add the beach access to the Denman Island parks and greenways service.

2. Proceed with securing a road closure for the Piercy Road beach access from MOTI in favour of the CVRD and subsequently add the beach access to the Denman Island parks and greenways service as fee simple park land.
3. Do not proceed with engaging MOTI and instead direct DIRA to work with a local land conservancy to secure the land as park.

Generally, MOTI has not been receptive to road closure applications and land conservancy agencies tend to focus on land preservation rather than greenway connections.

Staff recommend the board pursue option 1 at this time.

Financial Factors

On July 5, 2018 parks staff conducted a site visit to gain an understanding of likely upgrades required if the beach access were to be taken on as a park. These include: widening of the trail, building up sections of the trail, brushing of tree limbs, potentially some form of fall protection along the foreshore section of the trail, ditching, privacy fencing along the southern property line, construction of parking space within the Piercy Road dedication, removal of invasive plant species and installation of a picnic area.

Projected initial land improvements are estimated at:

Amenity	Quantity	Approximate Cost
Trail work	140 metres	8000
Privacy fencing	50 metres	2500
Parking	30 metres	1000
Tree work	--	1500
Picnic Table	1	2500
Signage (8x8 post)	2	1500
Invasive plant removal	--	1000
Total		18000

Annual maintenance costs are projected to be around \$500 and would likely involve trail maintenance, vegetative brushing and picnic table maintenance. Maintenance would be funded through the Denman Island parks and greenways (function 619) maintenance budget and a minor increase to the tax requisition is anticipated.

The board should be aware that adding this beach access to the parks service may result in future capital costs to meet ongoing community needs.

Legal Factors

Maintenance of the beach access and all inherent risks from use would become the responsibility of the CVRD. This exposure is similar to exposure present within existing parks that serve the benefit of the community.

Regional Growth Strategy Implications

Planning on Denman Island is completed by Islands Trust.

Intergovernmental Factors

This proposal would require the approval of MOTI because the beach access is under their jurisdiction. Preliminary discussions with MOTI staff indicate there are no immediate concerns with the proposal and that the beach access appears to be a good candidate for park improvements.

Preliminary discussions with Island Trust, the land use planning body, have indicated that the proposal aligns generally with policies in the Denman Island OCP Bylaw No.185. If the plan is supported, Islands Trust and the Local Trust Committee would receive a formal referral upon application for a licence of occupation from MOTI.

If the plan is supported, parks staff will reach out to the K’omoks First Nation for comment in accordance with our referral agreement.

Interdepartmental Involvement

Work proposed within this report has been and will be led by parks staff within the Community Services Branch. To implement the agreements, parks staff will work with Finance and Corporate Services.

Citizen/Public Relations

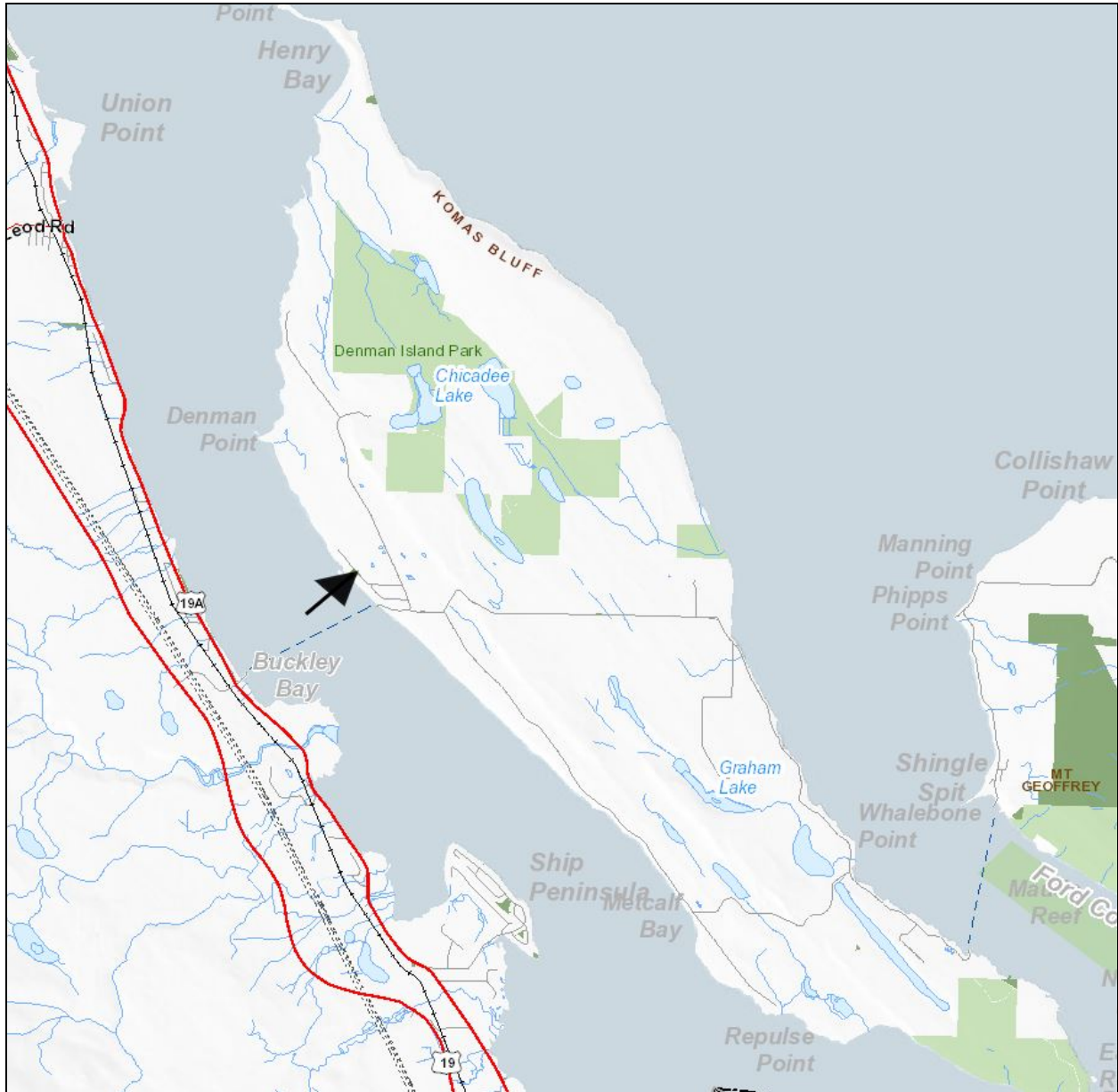
This proposal has been brought forth at the request of DIRA and neighbourhood residents who would like to see this beach access become a CVRD park.

If this report is supported, parks staff will create a communications plan to inform the Denman Island community of the addition of the beach access to the parks service.

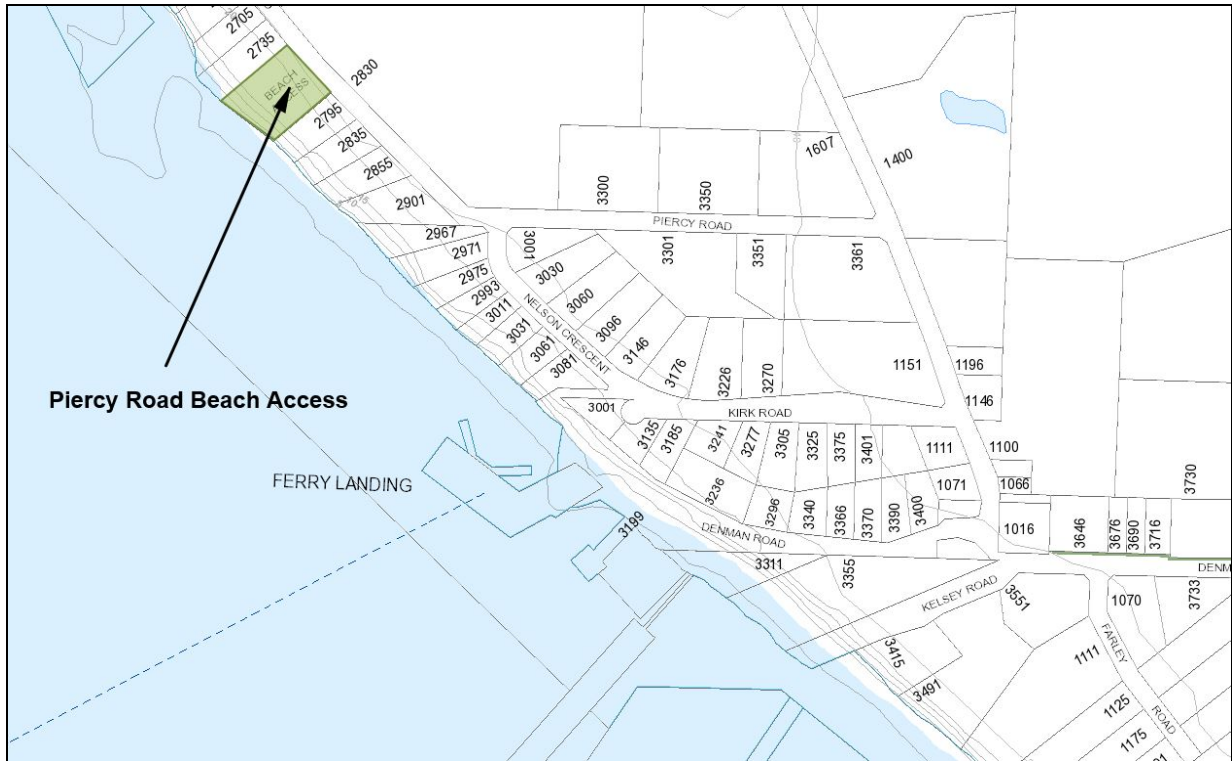
Attachments: Appendix A – “Piercy Road Beach Access - Location Map”
Appendix B – “Piercy Road Beach Access – Existing Conditions”
Appendix C – “Denman Island Residents Association - Letter of support”
Appendix D – “Denman Island Parks and Greenways Conceptual Parks Plan”

Appendix A:

Piercy Road Beach Access – Location Map



Location Cadastral Map (beach access location indicated by black arrow)



Zoomed Cadastral Map with contours



Zoomed Ortho-imagery Map

Appendix B:

Piercy Road Beach Access – Existing Conditions

Photos taken July 5, 2018 by CVRD Parks staff MH

Ortho image of site (2016):



Piercy Road:



Photo #1 – View of Piercy Road facing northwest. Beach access is located to the left of the photo roughly between the vehicle and the first hydro pole. Parking for the park would likely be proposed within the Piercy road dedication on the right hand side of the photo where 2.5m of width exists between the paved road edge and the ditch.



Photo #2 – View of Piercy Road facing southeast. Photo highlights the location of the potential parking area.

General Site Photos:



Photo #3 – View of the Piercy Road beach access with Baynes Sound and Vancouver Island in the background. Photo taken facing southwest. Photo highlights the grassy open area and the line of trees present along the foreshore. This would be the view offered from a potential picnic area site.



Photo #4 – Photo of grassy slope facing northwest. Part of the grassy field could be mowed to create a picnic table area.



Photo #5 – View of grassy slope and informal trail close to the southern property line. Photo taken facing southwest.



Photo #6 – View of beach area. Photo taken facing southwest.

Trail:



Photo #6 – View of informal trail as it enters the beach access property off Piercy Road. Photo taken facing southwest.



Photo #7 and #8 – View of informal trail as it descends the foreshore bank. Photos taken facing northwest.

Denman Island Residents Association

PO Box 17, Denman Island, B.C. V0R 1T0
dira@denmanresidents.com

June 15, 2018

Mark Harrison
Comox Valley Regional District
600 Comox Road
Courtenay, B.C., V9N 3P6

Dear Mr. Harrison;

On May 14, 2018 the members of the Denman Island Residents Association voted in favour of establishing a neighborhood park on a MOT right of way on Piercy Road opposite Piercy Farm. The DIRA Parks Committee and the majority of the immediate neighbors also support the proposal.

The proposed park overlooks Baynes Sound and Vancouver Island. It provides pedestrian access to the shoreline and Denman West Ferry Terminal.

Amenities required are three or four picnic benches so that residents and visitors can sit and enjoy the views.

Thank you for considering this proposal. Please let me know if you require further information.

Sincerely,

R. Shepherd

President: Denman Island Residents Association

Denman Island Official Community Plan Bylaw 185 Schedule G

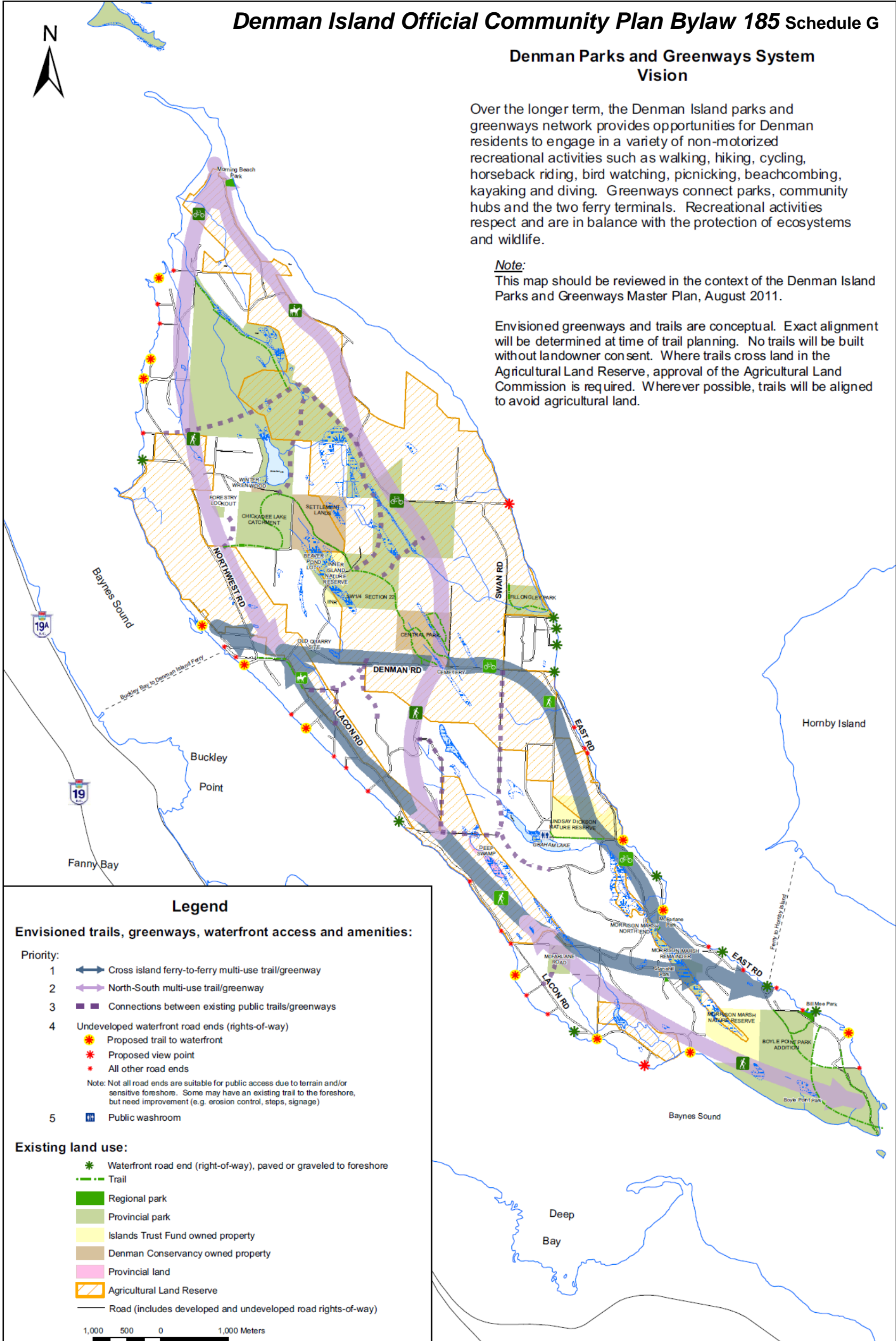
Denman Parks and Greenways System Vision

Over the longer term, the Denman Island parks and greenways network provides opportunities for Denman residents to engage in a variety of non-motorized recreational activities such as walking, hiking, cycling, horseback riding, bird watching, picnicking, beachcombing, kayaking and diving. Greenways connect parks, community hubs and the two ferry terminals. Recreational activities respect and are in balance with the protection of ecosystems and wildlife.

Note:

This map should be reviewed in the context of the Denman Island Parks and Greenways Master Plan, August 2011.

Envisioned greenways and trails are conceptual. Exact alignment will be determined at time of trail planning. No trails will be built without landowner consent. Where trails cross land in the Agricultural Land Reserve, approval of the Agricultural Land Commission is required. Wherever possible, trails will be aligned to avoid agricultural land.



Legend

Envisioned trails, greenways, waterfront access and amenities:

Priority:

- 1 Cross island ferry-to-ferry multi-use trail/greenway
- 2 North-South multi-use trail/greenway
- 3 Connections between existing public trails/greenways
- 4 Undeveloped waterfront road ends (rights-of-way)
 - Proposed trail to waterfront
 - Proposed view point
 - All other road ends

Note: Not all road ends are suitable for public access due to terrain and/or sensitive foreshore. Some may have an existing trail to the foreshore, but need improvement (e.g. erosion control, steps, signage)
- 5 Public washroom

Existing land use:

- Waterfront road end (right-of-way), paved or graveled to foreshore
- Trail
- Regional park
- Provincial park
- Islands Trust Fund owned property
- Denman Conservancy owned property
- Provincial land
- Agricultural Land Reserve
- Road (includes developed and undeveloped road rights-of-way)

1,000 500 0 1,000 Meters

Date map plotted: July 28, 2011

This map was prepared by the CVRD for planning purposes only and is not a legal document. This map is a composite of different data sets that were developed from different methods and dates. The map should be used with caution. The CVRD is not responsible for any damages resulting from any omissions, deviations or errors.

DENMAN ISLAND PARKS AND GREENWAYS PRIORITIES CONCEPTUAL PARKS PLAN

