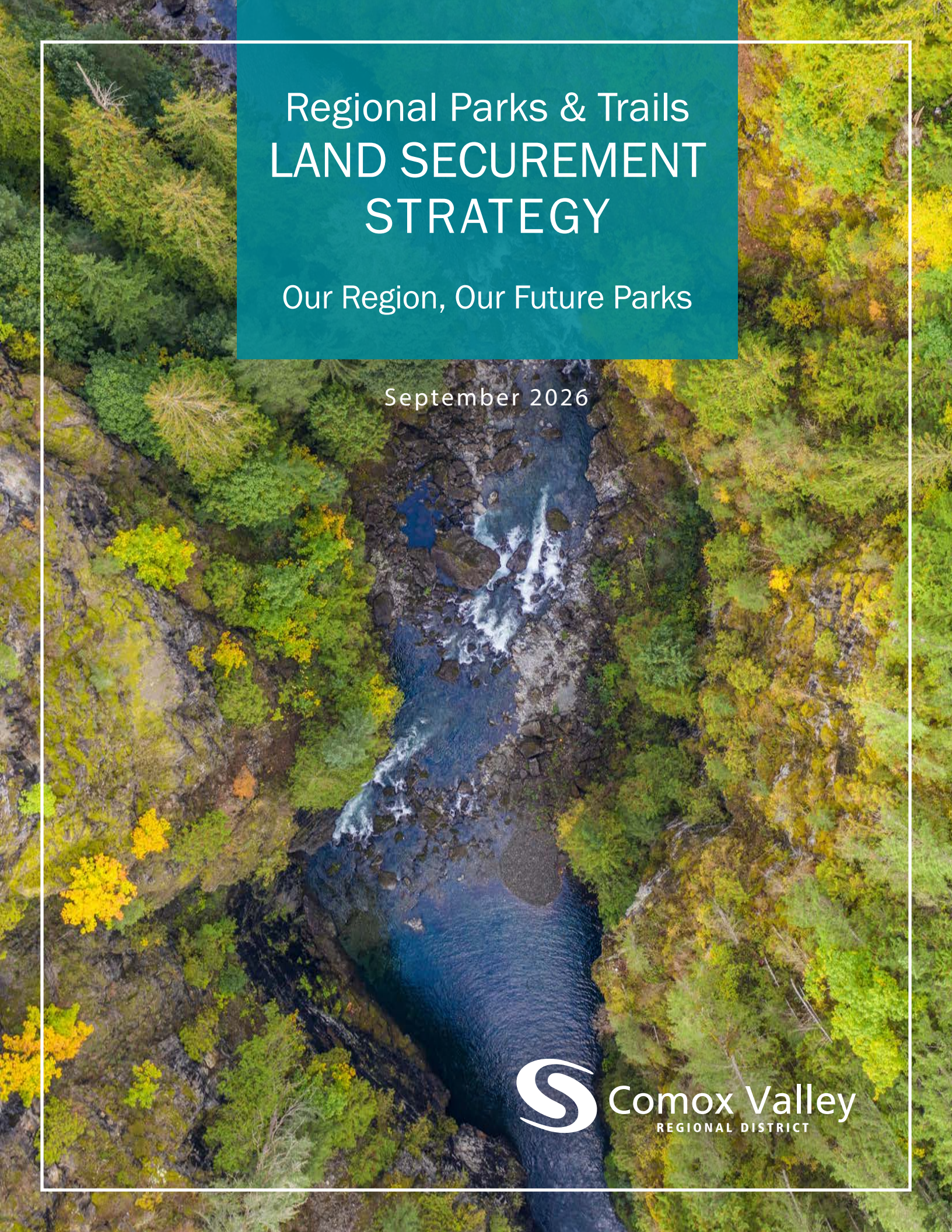


Regional Parks & Trails
LAND SECUREMENT STRATEGY

Our Region, Our Future Parks

September 2026

Comox Valley
REGIONAL DISTRICT

Why '*Land Securement*'?

During the development of this Strategy, the document title was updated from the *Regional Parks and Trails Land Acquisition Strategy* to the *Regional Parks and Trails Land Securement Strategy*. While land acquisition remains an important means of expanding the Regional Parks and Trails System, the term *land securement* more accurately reflects the broader range of approaches available to achieve long-term conservation, stewardship, and public benefit. These approaches may include fee-simple acquisition, land donations, long-term agreements, and land acquisition or stewardship led by partner organizations. The term *land securement* also better reflects the Strategy's emphasis on collaboration with K'ómoks First Nation and other partners in achieving shared land conservation and stewardship objectives that extend beyond Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) ownership.

Definition of Key Terms

- **Area of Interest** – A geographic area identified as having potential to contribute to the vision and goals of the Regional Parks and Trails System. An *area of interest* may include one or more properties or portions of properties and does not imply that all lands within the identified area are intended for *land securement*.
- **Contributor** – An organization or individual that assists with or leads the development of a nomination of an *area of interest*. *Contributors* may include a First Nation, community organization, non-governmental organization, property owner, resident, or other interested party.
- **Land Acquisition** – A specific form of *Land Securement* involving the fee-simple purchase and direct ownership of land.
- **Land Securement** – The long-term protection of land through a range of approaches, including fee-simple *land acquisition*, land donation, *long-term agreements*, and securement by partner organizations. The term reflects the Strategy's emphasis on collaborative approaches with K'ómoks First Nation and other partners that extend beyond CVRD ownership.
- **Local Jurisdiction** – The governing body with jurisdiction over an *area of interest*. For the purpose of this Strategy, this may be K'ómoks First Nation, the City of Courtenay, Town of Comox, Village of Cumberland, or, for lands outside municipal boundaries, the Electoral Area Services Committee (EASC).
- **Long-List** – An aspirational, long-term planning tool that identifies *areas of interest* with elevated potential to contribute to the vision and goals of the Regional Parks and Trails System. Inclusion on the *Long-List* does not imply that identified lands will—or should—be secured. The *Long-List* includes two parts: Part A – Regional Parks and Part B – Regional Trails.
- **Long-Term Agreement** – A form of *Land Securement* that provides for the long-term protection, stewardship, or public use of land without fee-simple *land acquisition* or CVRD ownership. *Long-Term Agreements* may include leases, licences of occupation, statutory rights-of-way, or other similar legal agreements.
- **Nominating Authority** – The *Local Jurisdiction* authorized to submit a nomination for an *area of interest* through Pathway B of the Land Securement Process. A *Nominating Authority* may be K'ómoks First Nation, the City of Courtenay, Town of Comox, Village of Cumberland, or, for lands outside municipal boundaries, the Electoral Area Services Committee (EASC).
- **Regional Parks and Trails Committee (RPTC)** – The CVRD committee of elected officials responsible for governance and decision-making for the Regional Parks and Trails Service, in accordance with the applicable CVRD bylaws.
- **Working Group (WG)** – A staff-level advisory group comprising representatives from the CVRD and member municipalities (City of Courtenay, Town of Comox, and Village of Cumberland) that supports planning and implementation for the Regional Parks and Trails Service. The *Working Group* provides technical input and advice but does not have decision-making authority.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and Objectives

This CVRD Regional Parks and Trails Land Securement[1] Strategy (LSS) builds on the Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan (2024), approved by the Regional Parks and Trails Committee (RPTC). The LSS provides the RPTC and the CVRD Regional Board with a roadmap for securing land to support the development of the Regional Parks and Trails system. The LSS is intended to supplement the CVRD's Property Acquisition Policy (P106).

The Strategy establishes a consistent and transparent framework for evaluating opportunities, identifying priorities, and guiding land securement decisions to ensure available funding and partnership opportunities are directed toward the highest-value opportunities. Specifically, the LSS defines the:

- Land Securement Principles (adding to the framework of Vision, Goals, and Objectives from the Strategic Plan)
- Land Securement Process (refined and updated from the Strategic Plan) including the two Pathways to Land Securement (Long-List and Nomination)
- Detailed Evaluation Criteria and Rating Framework (refined and updated from the Strategic Plan)
- Long-List of Regional Parks and Trails Areas of Interest

The LSS also establishes the process for reviewing and refining securement priorities over time.

[1] Throughout this document, the term *land securement* is used in place of *land acquisition* to reflect the broader range of mechanisms available to protect land, including collaborative approaches and long-term agreements in addition to fee-simple acquisition and ownership.

1.2 The Importance of Partnerships

The establishment of the Regional Parks and Trails Service in 2022 formalized the commitment of the CVRD's member municipalities and electoral areas to work together in planning, securing, and managing a Regional Parks and Trails system. This collaborative approach remains fundamental to the long-term success of the service.

Achieving the vision and goals of the Regional Parks and Trails Service will depend on building and strengthening partnerships with member municipalities, electoral areas, K'ómoks First Nation (K'ómoks), other levels of government, non-governmental organizations, community organizations, private landowners, and the broader community. These partnerships expand the collective capacity to meaningfully secure, protect, and steward Regional Parks and Trails by leveraging planning capacity, expertise, funding opportunities, land securement opportunities, and long-term management resources.

The Land Securement Strategy is intended to support these collaborative efforts by providing a consistent framework for identifying, evaluating, and pursuing land securement opportunities with partners.

1.3 Coordination with K'ómoks First Nation

The CVRD recognizes K'ómoks First Nation's interests in acquiring and stewarding lands within the region. Depending on the securement mechanism and legislative requirements, the CVRD will seek to recognize these interests through notification, collaboration, support for land transfers, and, where appropriate and feasible, partnership opportunities including co-ownership, co-governance, and co-management arrangements. Public assent may be required for local government parkland disposition as per the Local Government Act and Community Charter.

Treaty Considerations

Chapter 13 of the K'ómoks Treaty includes language that supports discussions between K'ómoks, the province and the federal government about co-management of lands located within K'ómoks Traditional Territory along coastal areas, including for coastal, estuarine, riparian and major riverine systems.

1.4 The Role of Confidentiality

To protect the integrity of the land securement process, evaluations of potential opportunities, nominations, and negotiations are handled confidentially. Confidentiality helps to protect the interests of landowners and the Regional District and supports respectful and meaningful discussions with partners. Confidentiality is necessary to protect sensitive information prior to decisions being finalized and then made public. Premature disclosure of potential opportunities could affect property values, negotiations, partnership discussions, and the willingness of landowners to participate.

1.5 Key Drivers for Land Securement

The need for strategic land securement in the Comox Valley is influenced by several long-term demographic, environmental, and economic trends. Together, the following five factors underscore the importance of acquiring and securing lands that protect natural ecosystems while meeting the growing recreational demands for regional parks and trails.

- **Protecting More of the Region through Large-Scale Parks and Conservation Areas**
  Outside of Strathcona Provincial Park, the region contains relatively few large protected natural areas. Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory (SEI) mapping illustrates significant fragmentation of the landscape and highlights opportunities to improve ecological connectivity. Currently, approximately 8.7% of the region's land base is protected through parks and conservation areas, with only 0.7% managed by the CVRD. In the context of Canada's commitment to conserve 30% of lands and waters by 2030, there is an opportunity to expand regional land protection through strategic land securement and partnerships.

- **A Growing and Active Population**
  The Comox Valley's population continues to grow, increasing demand for parks, trails, and nature-based recreation. Access to natural areas is an important factor in attracting new residents and supporting quality of life. At the same time, the region's population is aging, creating increased demand for accessible outdoor recreation opportunities that support healthy, active lifestyles.

- **Increasing Competition for Land**
  Continued population growth and development throughout the Comox Valley and Vancouver Island have contributed to rising land values and greater competition for available properties. As opportunities become more limited, securing suitable lands with high ecological, recreational, or strategic value becomes increasingly challenging and often more costly.

- **Loss of Sensitive Ecosystems**
  Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory (SEI) mapping completed by the Comox Valley Land Trust (CVLT) in partnership with the CVRD between 2012 and 2018 documents extensive loss and fragmentation of the region's sensitive ecosystems. The findings indicate that less than 5% of the region's formerly extensive and interconnected sensitive ecosystems remain intact. Protecting and restoring these remaining ecosystems is a key opportunity to conserve biodiversity, improve ecological resilience, and maintain ecosystem connectivity.

- **Climate Change**
  Climate change is increasing pressure on natural ecosystems through rising temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, drought, wildfire, flooding, and sea level rise. Protecting and connecting natural areas helps improve ecosystem resilience while supporting climate adaptation through flood attenuation, carbon storage, habitat connectivity, and the protection of natural processes. Strategic land securement can play an important role in helping the region adapt to a changing climate while supporting community well-being.

2 FRAMEWORK

2.1 Existing Guiding Framework

The guiding framework for the CVRD Regional Parks and Trails Service was developed by the Strategic Plan (2024). This existing framework of vision, goals, objectives, and actions directly informs this Land Securement Strategy.

Vision (2024 Strategic Plan)

For thousands of years the lands and waters of the Comox Valley have supported the Coast Salish, Kwakwaka'wakw, and Pentlatch peoples.

Our *are the special natural landscapes of the Comox Valley that warrant ongoing conservation or protection.*

Our *are the greenway connections between our communities that provide trails through natural surroundings and strengthen ecological and wildlife corridors.*

These places connect us with nature, with ourselves, and with each other. Here, we are in harmony with the natural world and our relationship to land and waters is strengthened. Here, Indigenous rights and culture are honoured.



2.2 Land Securement Principles

The Land Securement Principles build from the Vision and Goals of the Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan (2024). They provide guidance for evaluating and pursuing land securement opportunities for Regional Parks and Trails as they arise. The timing and sequence of land securement may differ from identified strategic priorities due to factors such as landowner willingness, funding availability, partnership opportunities, municipal planning initiatives, conservation initiatives, and actions of other levels of government.

The principles that guide land securement are:

1. **K'ómoks First Nation**
   Land securement shall recognize and consider the interests, rights, and capacity of K'ómoks First Nation and seek opportunities for collaboration.

2. **Strategic Alignment**
   Land securement shall support the Vision, Goals, and priorities of the Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan and other adopted plans and policies, while considering service delivery requirements and financial capacity.

3. **Partnership Opportunity**
   Land securement shall prioritize opportunities that involve partners with shared interests and the capacity to offer expertise and/or to contribute to funding for acquisition or management.

4. **Opportunistic and Responsive**
   Land securement shall remain flexible and responsive to market opportunities, development pressures, funding opportunities, partnership opportunities, and the priorities of other governments and organizations.

5. **Willing Seller**
   Land acquisition should be pursued through consensual transactions between a willing seller and willing buyer.

6. **Fiscal Responsibility**
   Land securement shall prioritize cost-effective securement approaches and leverage a range of tools, including partnerships, grants, donations, land transfers, and long-term agreements, where appropriate.

7. **Addition of New Protected Lands**
   Priority should be given to opportunities that increase the overall extent of protected parkland, trail corridors, and conservation lands within the Comox Valley.

8. **Urgency and Risk**
   Priority should be given to opportunities where significant conservation, recreation, connectivity, or trail values may be lost due to development, resource extraction, land use change, or other threats.

9. **Diversity and Balance**
   Land securement should contribute to a diverse portfolio of Regional Parks and Regional Trails, including a range of landscape types, ecological values, recreational opportunities, and geographic locations.

2.3 Land Securement Process

2.3.1 Introduction

The CVRD has an overall Property Acquisition Policy (P106) that provides a procedural framework for property acquisitions. This policy applies to all Regional Park and Trail acquisition considerations other than those undertaken as part of the subdivision process which follow a prescribed legislative process.

The following pages summarize the process for identifying, focusing, evaluating, and pursuing land securement opportunities specific to the Regional Parks and Trails Service. This process is adapted from the draft *Land Acquisition Process* in the Strategic Plan (2024) and was further refined through the *Land Securement Strategy* process from 2025 through 2026.

To be effective, the Regional Parks and Trails LSS needs to account for opportunistic acquisition of important lands that arise outside of the regular review process. Land securement priorities should be reviewed and amended as needed when new information or opportunities arise. Identified land securement priorities are not required to be carried out in sequence. The actual timing and sequence of land securement will be affected by several factors including funding partnership opportunities and willingness of an owner to sell.

It is important that the CVRD work collaboratively with K'ómoks First Nation throughout the land securement process, while recognizing K'ómoks' interests in independently securing lands for its own purposes.

2.3.2 The Long-List

The **Long-List** summarizes the key areas across the region that have been identified as having elevated potential to contribute to the vision and goals of the Regional Parks and Trails System. It is an aspirational, long-term planning tool and does not imply that all identified lands will—or should—be secured. The Long-List was developed through an iterative process from 2023–2026 involving input and review from the general public, interest groups, Working Group, CVRD staff, RPTC, and K'ómoks First Nation. The Long-List includes 19 Regional Park interest areas and 10 Regional Trail interest areas (see for the Long-List and Map).

Figure 1 LAND SECUREMENT PROCESS
SUMMARY DIAGRAM



STAGE 1

Land securement opportunities may enter the Land Securement Process through one of two confidential pathways:

- A – Long-List
- B – Nomination

(See Stage 1 Pathways diagrams for more information.)

RPTC Direction Requires an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds (2/3)

Milestone | Negotiation mandate

Confidential notification of the RPTC direction is sent to K'ómoks

STAGE 2

Negotiate *Securement*

- Detail legally described area of interest
- Obtain professional studies (e.g., land survey, appraisal)
- Prepare a detailed financial plan
- Complete legal and environmental due diligence
- For acquisition, negotiate with landowner to sign an option to purchase

Milestone | Detailed land securement package

STAGE 3

Authorize *Securement*

Report to the RPTC on the outcome of negotiations and any recommendation for securement (including the financial implication).

RPTC Vote Real property acquisition requires an affirmative vote of at least 75%

Milestone | Securement authorized

Confidential notification of the RPTC vote is sent to K'ómoks

STAGE 4

Complete *Securement*

Complete the securement transaction (e.g., conveyance of lands or execution of long-term agreement), remove all conditions, and execute all related documents. After securement and documents are finalized, the CVRD (and partners, where appropriate) deliver the announcement publicly.

Milestone | Securement completed

Upon completion of Stage 4, the Land Securement Process is no longer confidential.

STAGE 5

Commission Lands

Newly secured lands are classified as ***Inactive Areas*** until a *Management Direction Statement* or *Management Plan* has been completed and the lands are commissioned for public use.

2.3.3 Pathways to the Land Securement Process

There are two confidential pathways for land securement opportunities to be brought before the RPTC for direction through Stage 1 of the *Land Securement Process*:

- **Pathway A – Long-List**
- **Pathway B – Nomination**

See Section 1.4 for more information on the role and importance of confidentiality with this work. See the following sections for further information on each process.

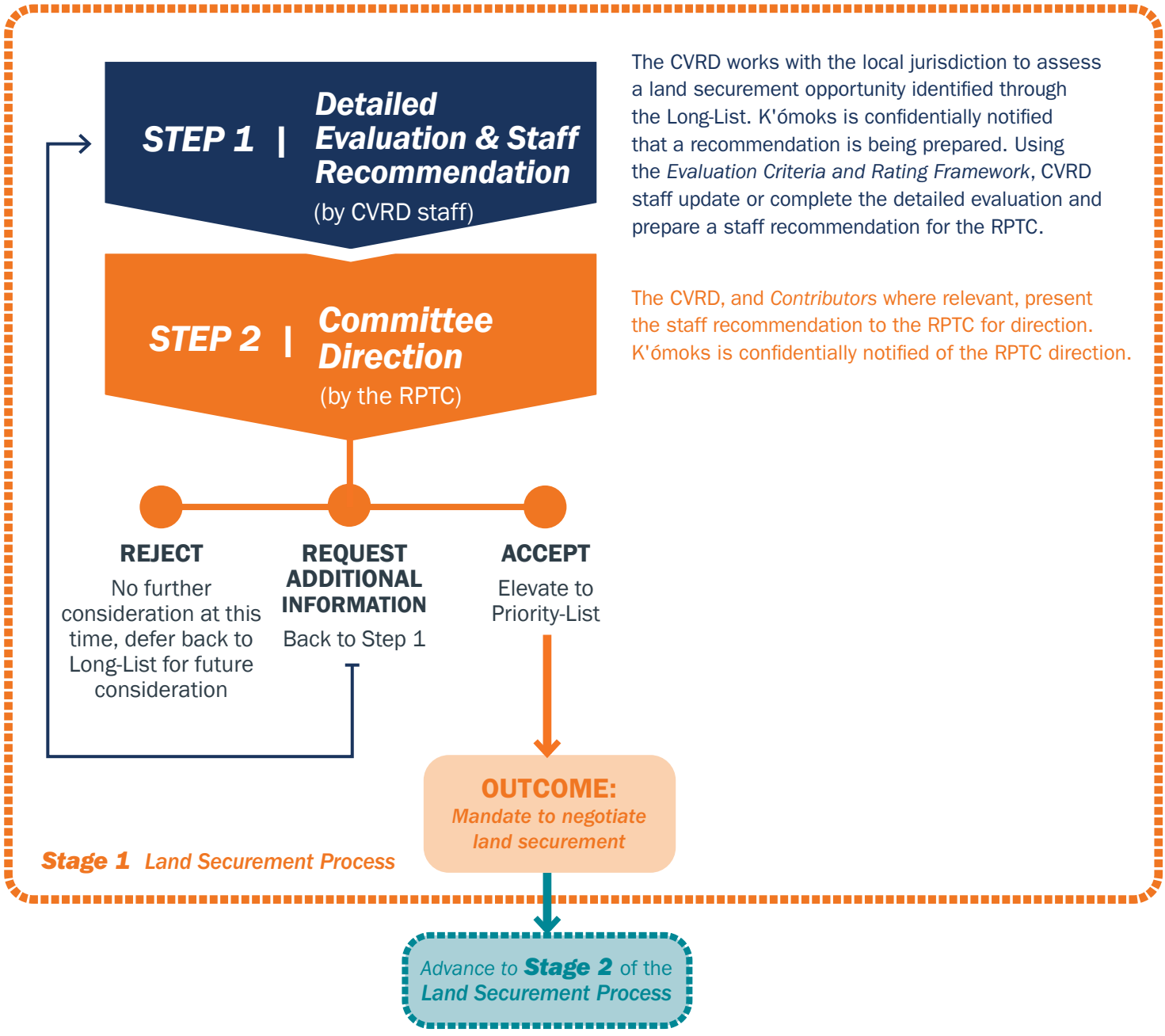
2.3.4 Pathway A – Long-List

Purpose

This pathway provides a process for bringing land securement opportunities *already identified* on the Long-List forward to the RPTC for direction. Figure 2 summarizes *Pathway A – Long-List* (see next page).

Figure 2

STAGE 1 | *PATHWAY A*
LONG-LIST



The CVRD works with the local jurisdiction to assess a land securement opportunity identified through the Long-List. K'ómoks is confidentially notified that a recommendation is being prepared. Using the *Evaluation Criteria and Rating Framework*, CVRD staff update or complete the detailed evaluation and prepare a staff recommendation for the RPTC.

The CVRD, and *Contributors* where relevant, present the staff recommendation to the RPTC for direction. K'ómoks is confidentially notified of the RPTC direction.

Long-List Pathway Requirements (Checklist)

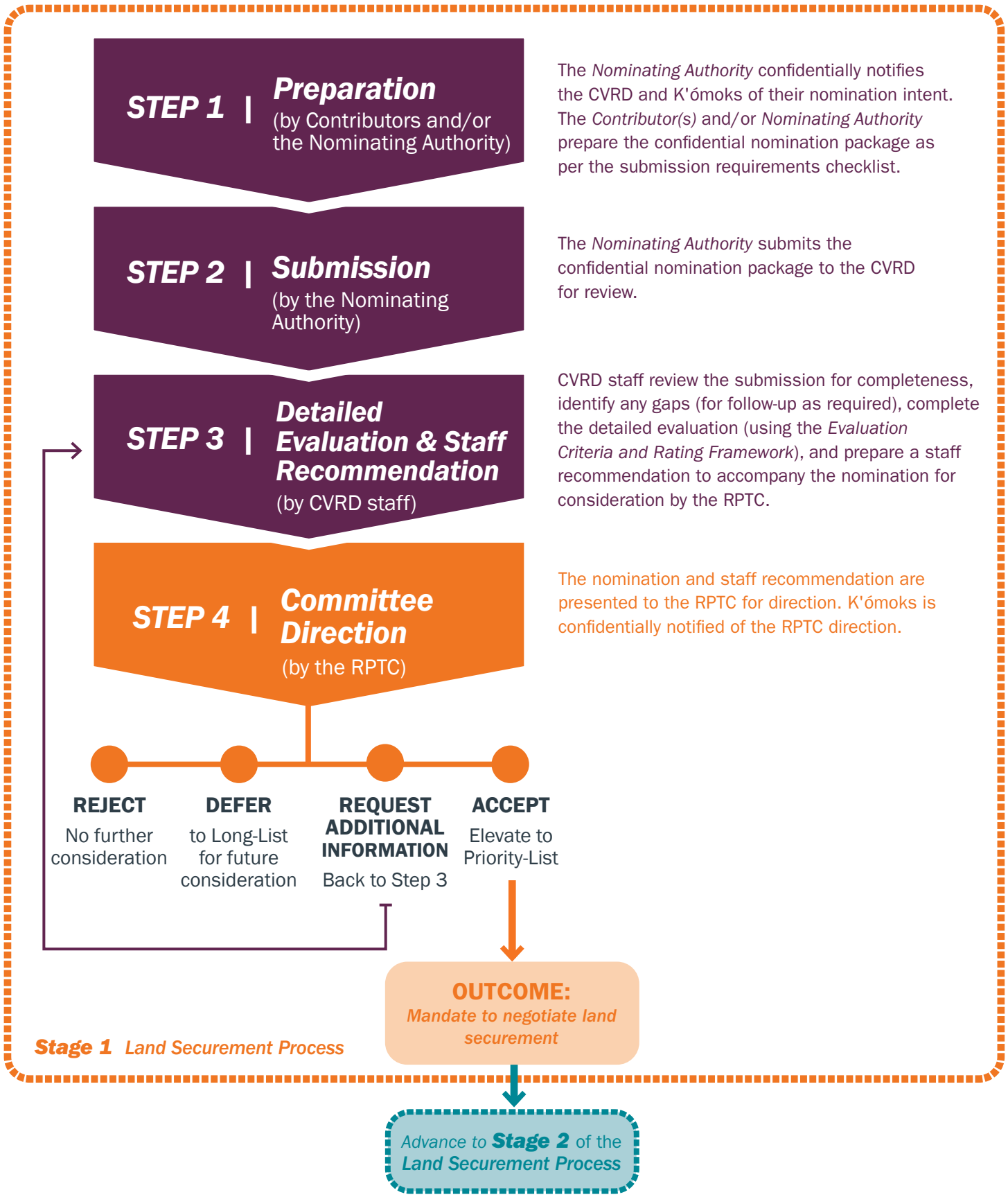
A *Long-List* referral brought forward for RPTC consideration shall be accompanied by relevant supporting information within the staff report. The supporting information should generally address the applicable items in the Nomination Submission Requirements checklist, recognizing that a formal nomination is not required for opportunities already identified on the Long-List.

2.3.5 Pathway B - Nomination

Purpose

The nomination pathway provides a process for bringing land securement opportunities not identified on the Long-List forward to the RPTC. This pathway establishes the roles for nomination as well as the submission requirements to ensure nominations are sufficiently developed to support informed decision-making by the RPTC. Figure 3 summarizes *Pathway B – Nomination* (see next page).

Figure 3 STAGE 1 | *PATHWAY B*
NOMINATION



Areas Eligible for Nomination

The following types of areas are eligible for nomination and consideration:

- New areas, regardless of ownership, that are not currently parkland, protected areas, or conservation lands.
- Existing protected areas, or conservation lands owned or managed by a non-governmental organization.
- Existing parks, protected areas, or conservation lands owned or managed by K'ómoks First Nation or a local government (CVRD electoral area, City of Courtenay, Town of Comox, Village of Cumberland).

Areas Not Eligible for Nomination

The following areas are not eligible for nomination:

- Areas previously rejected unless significant new information is provided.
- Areas outside the Regional Parks and Trails Service area.
- Designated British Columbia Provincial Parks.

Nomination Roles

The following are the key roles for the nomination process:

- **Nominating Authority**

  The governing body where an area of interest is located is responsible for authorizing and submitting the nomination. This could be K'ómoks First Nation, the local government with jurisdiction over the area, including the City of Courtenay, Town of Comox, Village of Cumberland, or, for areas outside municipal boundaries, the Electoral Area Services Committee (EASC).

- **Contributor**

  Organizations and individuals that assist or lead in developing a nomination and providing supporting information. Contributors may include a First Nation, community organizations, non-governmental organizations, property owners, residents, or other interested parties.

- **Administrative Review**

  CVRD staff coordinate an administrative review of the nomination to confirm completeness, identify information gaps, and prepare a report brief and recommendation to accompany the nomination for consideration by the Regional Parks and Trails Committee (RPTC).

- **Decision-Maker (RPTC)**

  In Stage 1, the Regional Parks and Trails Committee receives staff recommendations and nominations and provides direction on whether to accept, defer, or reject them for continuation in the Land Securement Process. In Stage 3, the RPTC votes on whether to authorize land securement (which requires a 75% affirmative vote).

Nomination Submission Requirements (Checklist)

A nomination shall include the following information:

B1. Nominating Authority and Contributors

(a) Name of the Nominating Authority.

(b) Name and contact information of the authorized representative.

(c) Names and roles of any Contributors involved in preparing the nomination.

B2. K'ómoks Notification

(a) The Nominating Authority is to confidentially notify K'ómoks of the intent to nominate.

B3. Land Identification

(a) Map identifying the location and extent of the nominated area.

(b) Approximate area (hectares).

(c) Property Identification Number(s) (PID), where applicable.

(d) Current ownership information, where known.

B4. Pre-Nomination Filter Form

(a) Completed Pre-Nomination Filter Form (Appendix B)

B5. Nomination Review Form (Regional Park or Regional Trail)

(a) Completed Nomination Review Form (Appendix C)

B6. Rationale for Nomination

(a) Brief summary statement describing why the area is being nominated.

(b) Expanded rationale describing the significance of the area and its potential contribution to the Regional Parks and Trails Service.

(c) Description of how the nomination supports one or more Strategic Plan goals and applicable Land Securement Principles.

(d) Supporting maps, photographs, reports, or other documentation, where available.

B7. Securement Considerations

(a) Proposed form of securement (select all that apply and explain):

- ☐ Transfer of ownership;
- ☐ Long-term agreement;
  - Lease, licence, statutory right-of-way (SRW)
  - Maintenance and operations
- ☐ Fee simple purchase;
- ☐ Donation or gift (in part or in full);
- ☐ Other securement mechanisms.

(b) Identify the assessed value for the nominated area.

(c) Is there an established fair market value determined by appraisal? If so, please provide.

(d) Describe the funding opportunities for the nominated area and any additional information regarding potential acquisition or securement arrangements, where known.

B8. Management Considerations

(a) Identify any known or potential management partners.

(b) For existing local area parks or protected areas, provide a summary of available information regarding current operations, maintenance responsibilities, and annual operating costs.

(c) For existing local area parks or protected areas, please describe the proposed transition of management and operations.

(d) Describe any known considerations related to transition, ownership, management, or operations.

B9. Site Considerations and Declarations

(a) Is any portion of the area located within a Cultural Heritage Permit Area or known area of interest for K'ómoks First Nation?

○ Yes ○ No ○ Not sure Notes: _____

(b) Are there any known encumbrances, legal interests, covenants, environmental liabilities, or contamination concerns?

○ Yes ○ No ○ Not sure Notes: _____

(c) Is the area subject to heritage designation, inclusion on a heritage registry, conservation agreement, or similar protection mechanism? If yes, please provide documentation.

○ Yes ○ No ○ Not sure Notes: _____

(d) Please identify any other known constraints or considerations that may affect acquisition or management.

2.4 Evaluation Criteria and Rating Framework

2.4.1 Development of the Tool

The Evaluation Criteria and Rating Framework was initially developed through the Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan (2024) and was further reviewed, tested, and refined through the Land Securement Strategy process (2025–2026). The revised framework was approved by the RPTC in May 2026. The revision process created separate frameworks to evaluate potential Regional Parks (Appendix D) and Regional Trails (Appendix E).

A wide range of potential criteria can be used to evaluate the suitability of lands for inclusion in the CVRD Regional Parks and Trails System. However, not all criteria are equally relevant or significant. Some directly support the vision and goals of the Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan, while others provide additional context to inform decision-making.

2.4.2 Functions of the Tool

The Evaluation Criteria and Rating Framework is intended to:

- Support a transparent and consistent evaluation of Regional Parks and Trails opportunities using established criteria that reflect the vision and goals of the CVRD Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan.
- Provide a key step in the Land Securement Process to support decision-making.
- Support the identification of priorities and inform recommendations for land securement (alongside other information).

2.4.3 Use and Limitations of the Tool

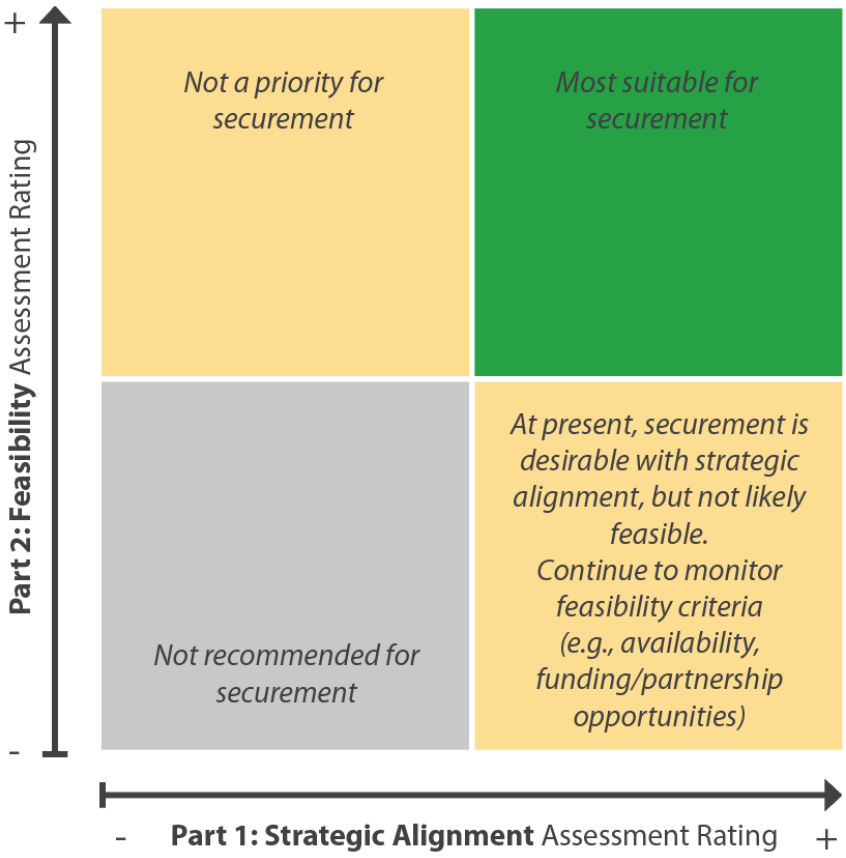
While ratings should be based on the best available information at the time of review, applying the criteria will require informed professional judgment. Evaluation results are expressed as quantitative scores but are not intended to be interpreted as automatic rankings. For example, a lower-scoring area of interest may still represent an important opportunity due to factors such as urgency, ecological connectivity, ownership circumstances, or partnership opportunities.

The Evaluation Criteria and Rating Framework is intended to support decision-making and prioritization; it does not replace professional expertise and judgment, due diligence, financial analysis, community engagement, or consideration of timing and partnership opportunities.

2.4.4 Reviewing Rating Outcomes

The ratings provide an indication of *relative* suitability and priority. For example, the highest rating score may not be recommended for active securement efforts if feasibility is low due to an unwilling owner.

Figure 4 illustrates the structure for CVRD staff to review the rating outcomes from the Evaluation Criteria and Rating Framework. Ratings for Part 1 Strategic Alignment and Part 2 Feasibility are reviewed separately (not combined). Opportunities most viable for land securement will generally have high assessment ratings for both strategic alignment and feasibility.



2.4.5 Criteria and Structure of the Framework

Separate evaluation frameworks have been developed for Regional Parks and Regional Trails. Each framework includes two parts.

PART I: STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

The strategic alignment criteria evaluate how well a prospective park or trail opportunity aligns with the vision and goals of the CVRD Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan. The criteria consider the potential contribution of a land securement opportunity to the Regional Parks and Trails system and are organized under three headings.

PARKS Evaluation Criteria

Category 1: Environmental Values
1. Landscape Value / Representation
2. Conservation Priority
3. Environmental Connectivity
4. Sensitive Ecosystem Protection
5. Endangered / Threatened Species Conservation
6. Unique Natural Features
Category 2: Recreational & Cultural Values
7. Recreation Features
8. Appropriate Recreation Potential
9. Community Connectivity
10. Multiple User Benefits
11. Cultural Value
12. Ease of Access
13. Unique Educational Opportunity
Category 3: Community & Social Values
14. Future Focused
15. Community Interest
16. Level of Threat
17. Ecosystem Services
18. Climate Change Resiliency
19. Scenic Value

TRAILS Evaluation Criteria

Category 1: Environmental Values
1. Landscape Condition
2. Environmental Connectivity
Category 2: Recreational & Cultural Values
3. Nature Access
4. Community Connectivity
5. Multiple User Benefits
6. Cultural Value
7. Ease of Access
8. Unique Educational Opportunity
Category 3: Community & Social Values
9. Community Interest
10. Level of Threat
11. Climate Change Resiliency
12. Scenic & Experiential Value

PART II: FEASIBILITY

The following six criteria are relevant for evaluating the relative feasibility of securing a prospective area:

PARKS/TRAILS Evaluation Criteria

Feasibility & Management
A. Owner Support
B. Partnership and Stewardship
C. Acquisition Cost (Affordability)
D. Development Cost
E. Management Cost
F. Free of Encumbrances (risk/liability)

For the complete *Evaluation Criteria and Rating Framework*, see **Appendix D** for Regional Parks, and **Appendix E** for Regional Trails.

3 IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 Existing Financial Capacity

3.1.1 Status of Funding Reserves

The Regional Parks and Trails Service has two reserves: a *Future Expenditure Reserve* and a *Capital Works Reserve*. The reserve balances summarized below provide a snapshot of the current 2026 financial capacity available to support future implementation. Reserve balances and annual reserve contributions are discussed and updated annually through the budget process at the RPTC. This informs land securement planning and funding priorities.

FUTURE EXPENDITURE RESERVE

The Future Expenditure Reserve is established to provide working capital, fund one-time expenditures of an operating nature or to provide stabilization as a result of unforeseen events and emergencies.

Reserve Balances	2023 Actuals	2024 Actuals	2025 Actuals	2026 Budget
Opening Balance	$0	$5,321	$25,791	$78,698
Contributions to Reserve	$5,202	$19,882	$51,414	$24,988
Interest earned on Reserve	$119	$589	$1,492	
Withdrawals from Reserve	--	--	--	--
Closing Balance	**$5,321**	**$25,791**	**$78,698**	**$103,686**

CAPITAL WORKS RESERVE

The Capital Works Reserve is established to fund expenditures of a capital nature including replacement, upgrades, construction of new infrastructure, and the acquisition of parkland. Capital reserves are intended to fund new capital assets and life-cycling needs.

Reserve Balances	2023 Actuals	2024 Actuals	2025 Actuals	2026 Budget
Opening Balance	$0	$0	$178,753	$311,723
Contributions to Reserve	--	$175,478	$125,666	$457,484
Interest earned on Reserve	--	$3,275	$7,304	--
Withdrawals from Reserve	--	--	--	--
Closing Balance	**$0**	**$178,753**	**$311,723**	**$769,207**

3.1.2 Existing Sustained Revenue

Annual **property value tax** requisition is the primary source of sustained revenue for the Regional Parks and Trails Service. An initial tax rate was introduced following the establishment of the Regional Parks and Trails Service in 2022. The table below summarizes the *existing annual property value tax revenue* for CVRD Regional Parks and Trails, determined by the tax rate of $1.38/$100,000 of assessed value resulting in total annual revenue of $438,000 (2025 figures).

CVRD Regional Parks and Trails
Existing Property Value Tax Requisition (2025)

TAX RATE per $100,000 Assessed Value	2025 Average Household Assessed Value	Average Household Tax Contribution	TOTAL ANNUAL TAX REVENUE
$1.38	$825,866	**$11.40**	**$438,000**

3.2 Funding Strategies

The Regional Parks and Trails Strategic Plan (2024) identifies nine funding strategies available to support implementation, including both internal (CVRD) and external funding sources. These strategies provide a range of opportunities to build financial capacity and fund individual land securement opportunities.

FUNDING STRATEGIES

INTERNAL (CVRD)

1. Borrowing
2. Property Value Tax
3. Parks Reserve Fund
4. Parcel Tax (Levy)
5. Coordination with Infrastructure Upgrades
6. User / Private Enterprise Fee Programs

EXTERNAL

1. Partnership Contributions
2. Donations & Fundraising
3. Senior Government Funding

3.2.1 Funding Individual Land Securement Opportunities

Individual land securement opportunities are expected to draw on a combination of CVRD funding and external contributions. The proportion from each source will vary depending on the nature of each land securement opportunity, available funding programs, partnership opportunities, and landowner circumstances. External contributions in the range of approximately 25–50% of total project costs may be achievable; however, contributions at the higher end of this range would likely require significant senior government funding, philanthropic support, landowner donations, partner contributions, or public donations.

Some funding opportunities may only be accessible through eligible partner organizations. For example, organizations such as conservation trusts may be eligible to apply for funding programs from senior government that are not available directly to local governments. In these circumstances, partnerships can expand access to external funding and further help to achieve a viable funding plan.

3.3 Growing Financial Capacity for Implementation

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

As summarized in *Section 3.1,* the Regional Parks and Trails Service holds approximately **$870,000 in reserves** (2026) and generates approximately **$438,000 in annual revenue** through property value tax requisition (2025). While this provides a financial starting point, substantially greater financial capacity will be required over the next 5–10 years to pursue the priority land securement opportunities and support the implementation of the Regional Parks and Trails System. Closing this gap will require a combined approach—growing sustained CVRD revenue, maximizing external contributions, and strategically using reserves and borrowing.

The following are three near-term financial considerations:

1. **Maximize external funding**
    - Leverage partnerships, donations, grants, and other external contributions for individual land securement opportunities to maximize the value of CVRD funds.
2. **Increase sustained CVRD revenue**
    - Consider increasing the **property value tax** requisition to build reserves and provide the sustained revenue necessary to support land securement, and, where applicable, repay borrowing.
3. **Use borrowing strategically**
    - Where CVRD reserves and external contributions are insufficient to complete a priority land securement opportunity, consider borrowing to bridge the timing gap between when the funds are required and when sufficient CVRD revenues are available.

3.4 Planning for Ongoing Land Management Costs

The financial implications of a land securement opportunity extend well beyond the upfront costs of land acquisition and one-time capital investments. Ongoing funding is required to support park planning, operations, maintenance, asset management, capital replacement, and staff capacity. These costs represent long-term obligations that will continue in perpetuity for as long as the lands remain part of the Regional Parks and Trails System.

Increasing staff capacity is essential for the continued development of the Regional Parks and Trails System. Staff resources are required throughout the land securement process to undertake property evaluation, due diligence, negotiations, partnership coordination, project management, and implementation. As the Regional Parks and Trails System expands, additional capacity is also required to manage natural resources, maintain infrastructure, coordinate volunteers and partners, respond to public inquiries, undertake capital planning, and operate the growing network. Expanding the Regional Parks and Trails System without a corresponding investment in staffing and operational funding is not sustainable.

Accordingly, each land securement opportunity brought forward for RPTC consideration should include a preliminary assessment of the anticipated long-term management, operational, staffing, and asset management requirements, together with their associated financial implications. This information will support informed decision-making and help ensure the Regional Parks and Trails System can be sustainably managed over the long term.

3.5 Project Financial Planning

Building on the funding approach outlined in Section 3.2.1 and the financial considerations in Section 3.3, a project-specific financial plan should be developed to identify the anticipated project costs, external funding potential, required CVRD contribution, and potential implications for taxpayers. The project financial planning process should include:

1. Establish Project Budget
2. Identify Partnership Opportunities
3. Determine External Funding Potential
4. Determine CVRD Funding Level & Plan

3.6 Strategy Review and Updates

This Strategy is intended to guide land securement decisions over the long term while remaining responsive to changing opportunities, funding, and community priorities. The Strategy should be reviewed every five to ten years, or sooner if significant land securement opportunities, First Nation inputs, legislative changes, or system updates warrant revisions. Annual reporting to the Regional Parks and Trails Committee should summarize securement activities, funding status, and implementation progress.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – Long-List Areas of Interest Map (public)

REGIONAL PARKS AND TRAILS LAND SECUREMENT STRATEGY

LONG-LIST
AREAS OF INTEREST

SPRING 2026

Comox Valley REGIONAL DISTRICT

LEGEND

AREAS

- P# Regional Park Interests
- Existing Parkland or Conservation Area

TRAILS

- T# Regional Trail Interests
- Existing Regionally Significant Trails

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0 1 2 4 6 8 10 Kilometres

LONG-LIST

PART A

REF. #	REGIONAL PARK INTERESTS
P1	Puntledge River Corridor
P2	Wolf Lake and Constitution Hill
P3	Maple Lake
P4	Seal Bay South
P5	"Queen's Ditch" Comox
P6	Oyster River Corridor
P7	Beaufort Range (Alpine Areas)
P8	Cook Creek Recreation Area
P9	Arden Piercy Wetlands
P10	Brooklyn Creek North
P11	Denman Island North
P12	Whaling Station Bay
P13	Trent River Corridor
P14	Browns River Corridor
P15	Forbidden Plateau
P16	Langley Lake
P17	Tsolum River Watershed
P18	Black Lake to Bevan and Vortex Network
P19	Tsable River Corridor

PART B

REF. #	REGIONAL TRAILS INTERESTS
T1	Courtenay to Cook Creek*
T2	One Spot Trail Expansion
T3	Comox Logging Rail Trail
T4	Royston to Cumberland Expansion
T5	Courtenay to Cumberland**
T6	Vancouver Island Spine Trail
T7	Seaside Trail Expansion
T8	Comox to Courtenay**
T9	Rosewall Creek Trail to Waterfall & Waterloo Creek
T10	Buckley Bay Mainline Trail

* Not identified on map. Multiple routes available to connect Courtenay to Cook Creek

** Active Transportation (on-road) overlap

APPENDIX B – Pre-Nomination Filter (Suitability Review)

The purpose of this form is for the *Nominating Authority* and any *Contributors* to efficiently complete a preliminary review for suitability of an area of interest prior to preparing a full nomination. This review is intended to be brief, high level, and use existing information (does not require commission of new studies or outside professional expertise).

An area should meet the three criteria outlined in the table below to be suitable for nomination.
Please provide a brief rationale comment for each response.

TABLE 1: Pre-Nomination Filter (Suitability Review)

Preliminary Review Criteria	Description	Y/N (Yes/No)
A. Regional Significance	Is this area of clear regional scale interest and significance (meaning it has unique characteristics within the overall context of the CVRD)? (If not, an area may be more appropriately aligned for another service/role within the spectrum of conservation and protected lands: e.g., community parks service, provincial park, conservation lands)	
B. Appropriate Size	Does this provide a size of area that fits on the parkland spectrum between Community Parks and Provincial Parks? Considerations for size: • Areas ~50-500 ha (~125-1250 acres) are desirable for Regional Parks to fill their role within the overall spectrum of parklands. • Smaller sites <50 ha may be better suited as Community Parks, and larger sites >500 ha may be better suited for Provincial Park. • Considerations for smaller sites <50 ha to be warranted for Regional Park/Trail consideration: the site provides access to a waterfront area (river/lake/ocean); the site expands/directly relates to an existing protected area/trail (provides a larger cumulative area); or the site is one portion of a long-term strategic acquisition plan that will include a series of properties (e.g., for a continuous Regional Trail).	
C. Conservation and/or Recreation Values	Does this area provide good potential for regional conservation or protection of valuable ecological and/or cultural features? And/or Does the area offer regional nature-based recreation opportunities (e.g., desirable area for hiking, biking, non-motorized water sports, or other nature-based activities)? Considerations: • Has it been identified as a priority area by other processes/organizations? • **Ecological Value:** Does the area contain valuable natural assets (e.g., intact mature forest, sensitive ecosystems, waterfront riparian area, coastal area or bluffs, wetlands)? • **Cultural or Heritage Value:** Does the area hold documented cultural importance, spiritual value, or unique cultural/historical/heritage features?	
	Outcome: Suitable to proceed with nomination?	

APPENDIX C – Nomination Review Form

Prior to completing this form, refer to the descriptions of each item (criterion) within the Evaluation Criteria and Rating Frameworks (**Appendix D** and **Appendix E**).

PART I – STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Category 1: Environmental Values	Strong Alignment	Moderate Alignment	Poor Alignment	Don't Know	Notes
1. Landscape Value / Representation	○	○	○	○	
2. Conservation Priority	○	○	○	○	
3. Environmental Connectivity	○	○	○	○	
4. Sensitive Ecosystem Protection	○	○	○	○	
5. Endangered / Threatened Species Conservation	○	○	○	○	
6. Unique Natural Features	○	○	○	○	
Category 2: Recreational & Cultural Values					
7. Recreation Features	○	○	○	○	
8. Appropriate Recreation Potential	○	○	○	○	
9. Community Connectivity	○	○	○	○	
10. Multiple User Benefits	○	○	○	○	
11. Cultural Value	○	○	○	○	
12. Ease of Access	○	○	○	○	
13. Unique Educational Opportunity	○	○	○	○	
Category 3: Community & Social Values					
14. Future Focused	○	○	○	○	
15. Community Interest	○	○	○	○	
16. Level of Threat	○	○	○	○	
17. Ecosystem Services	○	○	○	○	
18. Climate Change Resilience	○	○	○	○	
19. Scenic Value	○	○	○	○	

PART II – FEASIBILITY

Feasibility & Management					
A. Owner Support	○	○	○	○	
B. Partnership and Stewardship	○	○	○	○	
C. Securement Cost (Affordability)	○	○	○	○	
D. Development Cost	○	○	○	○	
E. Management Cost	○	○	○	○	
F. Free of Encumbrances (risk/liability)	○	○	○	○	
TOTAL COUNT					

APPENDIX D – Parks Evaluation Criteria and Rating Framework

5-Point Rating System

Each prospective area is rated against each criterion using a 5-point scale ranging from 0 to 5, where:

Level to which the area meets a criterion:					
No Value	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
0	1	2	3	4	5

Weighting by Category

The evaluation framework includes weightings by category to reflect the relative importance of each category to the Service and ensure that categories with fewer criteria continue to have an appropriate influence on the overall evaluation outcome. The weighting is as follows:

Category 1 Environmental Values	40%
Category 2 Recreational & Cultural Values	40%
Category 3 Community & Social Values	20%
Total	100%

PARKS PART I EVALUATION – STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Category 1: Environmental Values		Point Rating (0-5)
1. Landscape Value / Representation	To what extent does this area represent a landscape type or natural setting that is unique or underrepresented within the Regional Parks System? Consider whether the area includes more than one of the following: oceanfront, lakefront, rivers/streams, mountain/alpine, forest (especially older forest or forest with old-forest attributes), wetlands/estuary.	
2. Conservation Priority	Has the area been identified as an environmental or conservation priority through existing plans, studies, or the work of other organizations? Examples may include the CVLT confidential list of conservation interests, the 2011 Rural Comox Valley Park and Greenways Strategic Plan, Project Watershed, Nature Trust of BC, or Expert Nominated Sites.	
3. Environmental Connectivity	To what extent could the area maintain, buffer, restore, or improve ecological connectivity, including connectivity between ecosystems, habitats, wildlife corridors, or adjacent environmentally protected areas?	
4. Sensitive Ecosystem Protection	To what extent would securing the area protect sensitive ecosystems identified through available mapping or expert opinion (e.g., CVLT)? Examples may include coastal bluffs, terrestrial herbaceous ecosystems, older forest, woodlands, cliffs, dunes, spits, and wetlands. *Refer to Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory (SEI) mapping, where applicable.*	
5. Endangered / Threatened Species Conservation	Are blue- or red-listed species known to occur within or near the area, or is the area likely to provide habitat for endangered or threatened species based on the best available information at time of evaluation? *Refer to the BC Species & Ecosystems Explorer online database tool, where applicable*.	
6. Unique Natural Features	To what extent does the area contain unique or regionally significant natural features such as significant trees, rock formations, or water features?	
	Points Subtotal =	
	Category Weighting 40%	
	Category 1 TOTAL =	

Category 2: Recreational & Cultural Values		Point Rating (0-5)
7. Recreational Features	To what extent does the area contain existing recreational features or opportunities that are regionally significant, desirable, and compatible with the Service (e.g., a popular swimming hole, rock-climbing area, hiking trail, etc.)?	
8. Appropriate Recreation Potential	To what extent can the area support appropriate nature-based, low-impact recreation (e.g., non-motorized) while maintaining the natural and cultural values of the site? Consider the area's capacity to accommodate recreational use without unacceptable impacts and within a sustainable carrying capacity.	
9. Community Connectivity	To what extent does the area strengthen connections between core communities, existing parklands, or protected areas? Does it connect, or have strong potential to connect, to an existing or planned Regional Trail?	
10. Multiple User Benefits	To what extent could the area serve nature-based recreation users with a range of skills, ages, abilities, and interests? Consider whether it can support multiple compatible recreation activities (e.g., hiking, rock-climbing, swimming, or fishing).	
11. Cultural Value	Is the area located within a recorded K'ómoks Cultural Heritage Permit (CHP) Area or Archaeological Site, or is it known to contain Indigenous cultural values or features? Does the area contain significant historical or heritage features? *Review available mapping, statements of significance, heritage registers, or other information.*	
12. Ease of Access	How accessible is the area for maintenance, management, and recreational use? Consider factors such as existing road, trail, or other practical access.	
13. Unique Educational Opportunity	To what extent does the area provide distinctive opportunities for interpretation, education, or sharing information about the natural or cultural context of the region?	
	Points Subtotal =	
	Category Weighting 40%	
	Category 2 TOTAL =	

Category 3: Community & Social Values		Point Rating (0-5)
14. Future Focused	To what extent would securing the area expand the amount of protected land in the region or strengthen the long-term protection of an existing area that is not adequately protected?	
15. Community Interest	What level of community interest or support exists for the area based on previous engagement, other planning processes, demonstrated public use, or other available information?	
16. Level of Threat	What is the extent and immediacy of risk that the area's values could be irreversibly affected if it is not protected (e.g., land may be developed, sold, subject to land-use change, or damaged through misuse)?	
17. Ecosystem Services	To what extent could the area protect or provide important ecosystem services such as drinking water protection, water quality improvement, water storage, erosion reduction, flood attenuation, or carbon sequestration? *Refer to the CVRD Climate Action Carbon Sequestration Plan, where applicable.*	
18. Climate Change Resilience	To what extent could securing the area improve regional resilience to climate change impacts, such as sea level rise, flooding, drought, or wildfire?	
19. Scenic Value	To what extent does the area provide significant scenic value through views, vistas, viewpoints, or its role as a landscape backdrop visible from surrounding areas?	
	Points Subtotal =	
	Category Weighting 20%	
	Category 3 TOTAL =	

PARKS PART II EVALUATION – FEASIBILITY

Feasibility & Management		Point Rating (0-5)
A. Owner Support	To what extent is the landowner supportive of land securement, including willingness to sell, donate, or enter into a long-term agreement?	
B. Partnership and Stewardship	To what extent does the opportunity support partnerships or collaborative stewardship, including potential involvement by partner organizations, community groups, or volunteers in funding, stewardship, or management? (e.g., CVLT, streamkeeper groups, trail groups, etc.)	
C. Securement Cost (Affordability)	How affordable is the anticipated securement cost, considering the estimated purchase price, potential unusual or additional costs, available partner funding, cost-sharing opportunities, and potential land donations? (*Higher price and/or low potential for cost sharing = lower rating).*	
D. Development Cost	How affordable is the anticipated investment required to prepare the area for its intended Regional Park function (e.g., providing or restricting access, constructing or decommissioning trails, installing signage or gates, or addressing other site requirements)? *(Higher anticipated cost = lower rating; lower anticipated cost = higher rating)*	
E. Management Cost	How manageable are the anticipated ongoing staffing and financial requirements relative to planned budgets, service levels, and the facilities anticipated for the Regional Park? *(Higher relative cost = lower rating; lower relative cost = higher rating).*	
F. Free of Encumbrances (risk/liability)	To what extent is the area free of legal encumbrances, environmental liabilities (e.g., contamination), incompatible adjacent land uses, safety hazards, or other constraints that could limit its securement, management, or use as Regional Park or Trail?	
	Points Subtotal =	
	Total Weighting 100%	
	Part II Feasibility TOTAL =	

APPENDIX E – Trails Evaluation Criteria and Rating Framework

5-Point Rating System

Each prospective area is rated against each criterion using a 5-point scale ranging from 0 to 5, where:

Level to which the area meets a criterion:					
No Value	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
0	1	2	3	4	5

Weighting by Category

The evaluation framework includes weightings by category to reflect the relative importance of each category to the Service and ensure that categories with fewer criteria continue to have an appropriate influence on the overall evaluation outcome. The weighting is as follows:

Category 1 Environmental Values	40%
Category 2 Recreational & Cultural Values	40%
Category 3 Community & Social Values	20%
Total	100%

TRAILS PART I EVALUATION – STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Category 1: Environmental Values		Point Rating (0-5)
1. Landscape Condition	To what extent is the area's natural vegetation intact and the landscape relatively undisturbed? Where disturbance has occurred, what is the potential for natural regeneration or for restoration (e.g., intact soils, or adjacency to natural areas)?	
2. Environmental Connectivity	To what extent could the trail corridor width provide ecological connectivity beyond the trail surface, including habitat, ecosystem or wildlife corridor functions? Consider corridor widths using the following thresholds: **Corridor Width Thresholds** <10 m = 1 point (very low) 10–29 m = 2 points (low) 30–59 m = 3 points (moderate) 60–100 m = 4 points (high) >100 m = 5 points (very high)	
	Points Subtotal =	
	Category Weighting 40%	
	Category 1 TOTAL =	

Category 2: Recreational & Cultural Values		Point Rating (0-5)
3. Nature Access	To what extent would the area improve access to natural areas, green spaces, or waterfronts?	
4. Community Connectivity	To what extent does the area strengthen connections between core communities, improve access to regional destinations or facilities, close a gap in the Regional Trails network, or improve opportunities for future trail extensions and connections?	
5. Multiple User Benefits	To what extent could the area serve nature-based recreation users with a range of skills, ages, abilities, and interests? Consider whether it can support multiple compatible recreation activities (e.g., hiking, biking, running).	
6. Cultural Value	Is the area located within a recorded K'ómoks Cultural Heritage Permit (CHP) Area or Archaeological Site, or is it known to contain Indigenous cultural values or features? Does the area contain significant historical or heritage features? *Review available mapping, statements of significance, heritage registers, or other information.*	
7. Ease of Access	How accessible is the area for maintenance, management, and recreational use? Consider factors such as existing road, trail, or other practical access.	
8. Unique Educational Opportunity	To what extent does the area provide distinctive opportunities for interpretation, education, or sharing information about the natural or cultural context of the region?	
	Points Subtotal =	
	Category Weighting 40%	
	Category 2 TOTAL =	

Category 3: Community & Social Values		Point Rating (0-5)
9. Community Interest	What level of community interest or support exists for the area based on previous engagement, other planning processes, demonstrated public use, or other available information?	
10. Level of Threat	What is the extent and immediacy of risk that the area's values could be irreversibly affected if it is not protected (e.g., land may be developed, sold, subject to land-use change, or damaged through misuse)?	
11. Climate Change Resiliency	To what extent could securing the area improve regional resilience to climate change impacts, such as sea level rise, flooding, drought, or wildfire?	
12. Scenic & Experiential Value	To what extent does the area provide significant scenic value through views, vistas, viewpoints, or landscape setting? To what extent do the natural surroundings contribute to a high-quality trail experience?	
	Points Subtotal =	
	Category Weighting 20%	
	Category 3 TOTAL =	

TRAILS PART II EVALUATION – FEASIBILITY

Feasibility & Management		Point Rating (0-5)
A. Owner Support	To what extent is the landowner supportive of land securement, including willingness to sell, donate, or enter into a long-term agreement?	
B. Partnership and Stewardship	To what extent does the opportunity support partnerships or collaborative stewardship, including potential involvement by partner organizations, community groups, or volunteers in funding, stewardship, or management? (e.g., CVLT, streamkeeper groups, trail groups, etc.)	
C. Securement Cost (Affordability)	How affordable is the anticipated securement cost, considering the estimated purchase price, potential unusual or additional costs, available partner funding, cost-sharing opportunities, and potential land donations? (*Higher price and/or low potential for cost sharing = lower rating).*	
D. Development Cost	How affordable is the anticipated investment required to prepare the area for its intended Regional Trail function (e.g., providing or restricting access, constructing or decommissioning trails, installing signage or gates, or addressing other site requirements)? *(Higher anticipated cost = lower rating; lower anticipated cost = higher rating)*	
E. Management Cost	How manageable are the anticipated ongoing staffing and financial requirements relative to planned budgets, service levels, and the facilities anticipated for the Regional Trail? *(Higher relative cost = lower rating; lower relative cost = higher rating).*	
F. Free of Encumbrances (risk/liability)	To what extent is the area free of legal encumbrances, environmental liabilities (e.g., contamination), incompatible adjacent land uses, safety hazards, or other constraints that could limit its securement, management, or use as Regional Park or Trail?	
	Points Subtotal =	
	Total Weighting 100%	
	Part II Feasibility TOTAL =	