

SALTAIR CENTENNIAL PARK – REVITALIZATION PLAN

Based on Community Engagement 2018-2021



BACKGROUND

Existing Park

Saltair Centennial Park is a 5.85 hectare community park located in Electoral Area G – Saltair/Gulf Islands, between South Oyster School Road and Mountain View Drive. The park is managed by the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD). The park was established in 1979 with a number of land additions over the years, with the most recent being the former Mount Brenton elementary school property acquired in 2014. The park has been developed over the years with various park amenities: tennis courts (late 1970's to early 1980's), concession and washroom buildings (1991), original playground (1990's), roller hockey court (1998), north parking lot (1999), picnic shelter (2000), and replacement of the playground in 2009. Additional upgrades to the park over the last 10 years include parking lot upgrades and landscaping.

The park is well used by the community, and as indicated by the project surveys, is visited by users living elsewhere as well. Visitor counters show 31,844 visits in 2021, up 27.3% from 2020.

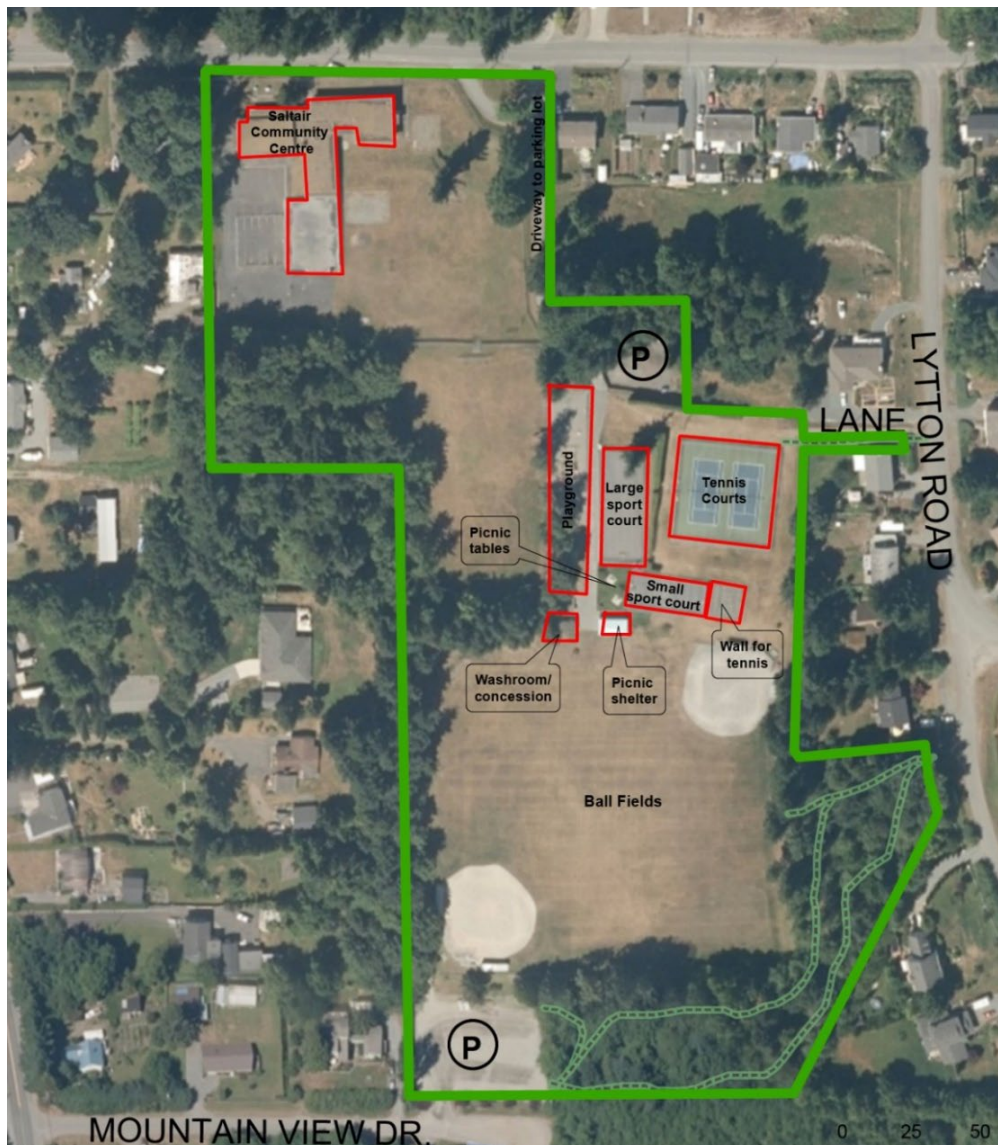


Figure 1- Existing Park Amenities

Park System Context

Saltair Centennial Park is one of several local parks, pathways and beach accesses in Saltair maintained by the Cowichan Valley Regional District through local taxpayer funding. In 2021 the annual tax requisition for capital development, operations and maintenance of local parks, pathways and beach accesses in Saltair was \$140,170, or \$18.70 per \$100,000 household property value for Saltair residents. The funds go toward the CVRD Area G Community Parks budget, which covers all community park operations, maintenance, and minor and major capitol projects.

Saltair's other community parks, Diana Princess of Wales Park and Stocking Creek Park, primarily offer nature trail experiences. Saltair Centennial Park offers the most diverse range of recreational activities.

Demographics

Based on CVRD 2021 Sub-regional Assessments, Electoral Area G – Saltair (which includes Thetis Island Trust Area) residents make up the oldest and fastest aging jurisdiction in the CVRD. Saltair has a higher share of population 65-84 years old, and a lower share of population under 14 years old. The aging trend is projected to continue, with the median age projected to grow from 59.8 to 62 in 5 years. A 2019 study of Long-Range Projections of Population, Housing and Employment in the CVRD provided a range of projections for Area G - Saltair's population in 2050. A baseline scenario projected an increase of 333 residents, while three alternative scenarios projected a range from a decrease of 413 to an increase of 2128 residents by 2050.

Purpose of the Revitalization Plan

In addition to staff monitoring of facility conditions, the CVRD commissioned a Facility Condition Assessment and Capital Plan for Saltair Centennial Park in 2017, and a Conditional Assessment of the sports courts in 2020. A number of existing park amenities within Saltair Centennial Park are expected to reach the end of service life in the coming years, with major repairs or infrastructure replacements required to maintain safety and functionality per CVRD's asset management policy. These amenities could either be removed or refurbished. There is also community interest in upgrading some of these existing amenities to higher standards as part of a refurbishment. Additionally, there is community interest in adding new facilities. Refurbishments, upgrades and new facility projects would require capitol and operational funding from limited budgets. Providing all refurbishments, upgrades, and new facilities within a 10-15 year period will require tax increases. Decisions need to be made on whether to decommission or remove existing amenities, refurbish or upgrade existing amenities, and/or provide new park amenities, and whether or not to facilitate those with a tax increase.

Existing Feature	Year of Install or Upgrade	Asset Management – Anticipated Required Updates Schedule
Tennis Courts	2007	2022/2023
Tennis ½/ Practice Court	Likely 1980's	2022/2023
Small Sport Court (basketball)	Likely 1980's	2022/2023
Picnic Shelter	2000	2025
Playground	2009	2026
Concession	1967	2035
Washroom Building	1967, 2015	2035
Large Sport Court	Likely 1980's	2022/2023

Table 1- Existing Park Infrastructure Service Life (Asset Management Schedule)

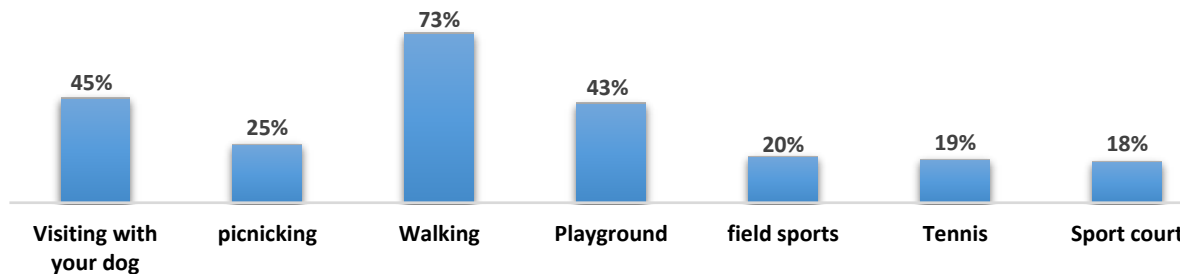
To aid in these decisions, the CVRD undertook a multi-stage public engagement process (2018-2021), engaging as many Saltair residents as possible. The engagement process took longer than planned due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020. The first and second round of community engagement took place in 2018/2019. The third round took place in spring 2021 and was completed by June 30, 2021.

This Revitalization Plan provides a summary of the input received on existing feature renovations/changes and the top requested feature additions, along with budget estimates (2021 costs). The plan concludes with recommendations for phasing, based on public feedback, asset management, and budgeting. The plan is intended to serve as a guide to inform budgetary decisions over the next 10-15 years.

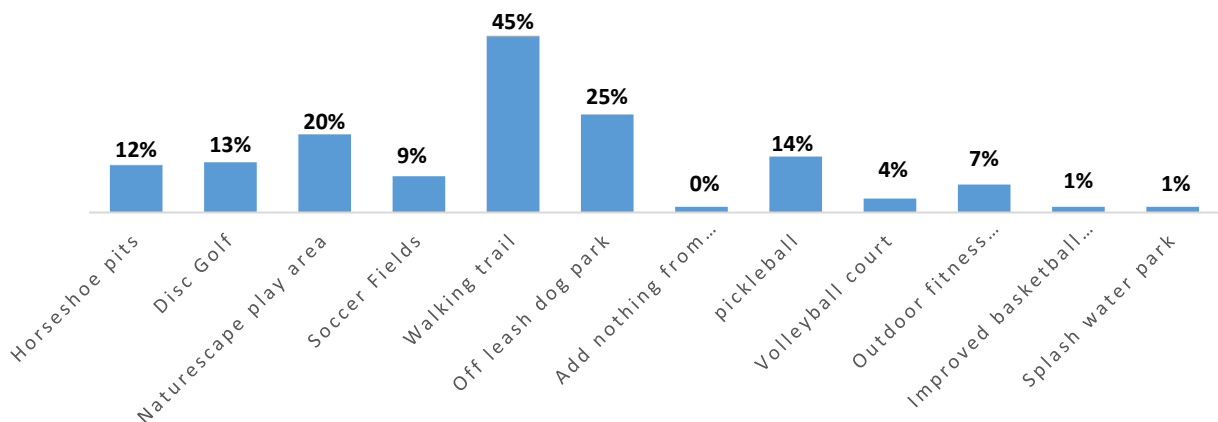
2018/2019 Engagement Summary

In the first two rounds of surveys, Saltair residents were asked what they usually do when they visit the park, and what they would like considered as new amenities for addition to the park. A summary of these responses is provided in the following graphs. A full summary report of the 2018/2019 community engagement feedback is included as Appendix A.

What Saltair respondents do in Saltair Centennial Park (2018/2019 feedback)



Amenities to consider adding to the park (Saltair resident responses in 2018/2019)



2021 Engagement

Based on the feedback of 2018-2019, a draft Revitalization Concept Plan (Appendix B) was developed, and presented for public feedback in the spring of 2021. This included an on-line Placespeak project page, information posted on the CVRD website and information posted within Saltair Centennial Park. All locations provided the same information to the public:

- story boards with summary of the previous surveys,
- a draft Revitalization Concept Plan of the park, with proposals for removed, renovated, and new facilities, and
- a final questionnaire for any further comments from Saltair residents.

There were 99 questionnaires completed by Saltair residents through this third round, for a total of 276 survey responses through the 3-year engagement process. The results of the 2021 engagement process are discussed in the analysis section below.

ANALYSIS

Existing Features

Saltair Centennial Park has been developed over the years with a wide variety of recreational facilities. These include:

Baseball fields

There are two baseball fields within the park. Features include team dug-out shelters, bleacher seating, backstop fencing and picnic tables. They are used for league play and informal play.

Washroom Building

The washroom building was constructed in 1967 with upgrades in 2015. No further updates are anticipated to be required within the next 10-15 years.

Concession Building

The concession building was likely constructed at the same time as the washroom building. The roof was updated in 2015. The interior remains outdated for concession cooking use, as the costs and management to meet current health regulations are unfeasible. The building is used primarily for informal storage and as a serving area for pre-packaged foods

Former school soccer field

The former elementary school had an associated youth sized soccer field within what is now the park. It has no sport field drainage system and is very wet during the rainy season. The draft Revitalization Concept Plan explored developing an off-leash dog park on this field (see below). No upgrades or maintenance changes are planned for this grassy area at this time, beyond the low-maintenance scheduled mowing.

Saltair Community Centre

While technically within Saltair Centennial Park, the former Mount Brenton Elementary School building is now operated as a community centre by the Saltair Community Society, under a lease from the CVRD. The Saltair Community Centre is not addressed as part of the park's Revitalization Plan.

Existing Features Considered for Improvements and/or Changes

The following features are nearing ‘end of service life’ within the next 10 years, where major repairs will be required, or the feature must be decommissioned or removed per the CVRD asset management requirements. While some features (upper basketball/small court, and the tennis half court) were proposed as removed in the draft plan, public feedback in the third round of engagement indicates preferences to refurbishing them in order to keep the amenities.

Forest Loop Trail

As walking was the most common reason for visiting the park, and accessibility improvements was a common comment, in the 2021 survey, respondents were asked if they supported improvements to the existing forest trail pathway (**I** on Figure 2). This will involve laying gravel fines over the existing trail route to CVRD’s trail type 2 standards. 59% of Saltair respondents supported improvements.

- Resurfacing of forest trails is estimated at \$30,000.

Tennis courts

During the third round of engagement, 71% of Saltair respondents were in favour of refurbishing the surface of the existing tennis courts (**F** on Figure 2). An option was presented of converting the tennis court to a shared court with pickleball. 45% of the respondents were against this, compared to 27% in support (with 27% undecided). Pickleball players also voiced strongly against sharing a court with tennis players. The courts require minor crack repair annually, and recoating and long-term crack mitigation (surfacing refurbishment) will be required within the next few years, according to asset management criteria.

- The estimated costs (2021) for tennis court surfacing refurbishment is \$30,000

Practice Tennis half court

The practice tennis half court (**H** on Figure 2) is in deteriorated condition and requires a decision on refurbishment or decommissioning/removal in 2022. The draft plan proposed to remove this amenity. However, feedback in the final round of engagement indicated that 47% of Saltair respondents were in favour of keeping the practice tennis half court (32% were not in favour and 21% were undecided). There were a number of comments that this half court/wall is used by youth for various games and is an asset to the community.

- Practice tennis half court refurbishment is \$15,000.

Basketball Court

The basketball court (the small upper court, **G** on Figure 2) is in deteriorated condition. The court was decommissioned (locked and hoops removed) in early 2022 per asset management safety criteria, until funding is available for refurbishment. The draft plan proposed to remove this amenity. However, during the third round of engagement 68% of Saltair respondents were NOT in favour of removal of the basketball court. Many families and individuals use the court regularly and there were numerous comments about how this is one of the few amenities available in the park for youth. An upgrade option is to replace the hoops with regulation height hoops.

- The estimated cost for basketball court renovations and upgrade is \$30,000

Picnic Shelter

According to asset management criteria and assessments, the picnic shelter will need updates or reconstruction within a few years.

- The estimated cost for picnic shelter reconstruction is \$40,000.

Playground

According to asset management schedules and assessments, the playground is estimated to require updates in 2026. Updated conditional assessments will be done over the next few years to reassess.

- The estimated cost for updating the playground at a similar scale as existing is \$75,000-\$100,000.

NEW PARK AMENITIES

In the 2018-2019 engagement period, respondents were asked if there were new park amenities they would like to see added to Saltair Centennial Park. The top four new amenities were a perimeter walking trail, off-leash dog area, nature play area, and pickleball. During the third round of engagement, Saltair residents were asked to prioritize between these features for development, subject to available funds in future years:

Amenity	2018/2019 Responses – top requested amenities		2021 Ranking	2021 – Combined Number of Rank 1 and 2 responses
Pickleball	4	14%	1	38
Perimeter walking trail	1	45%	2	42
Nature play area	3	20%	3	40
Dog off-leash area	2	25%	4	33

Table 2- Top ranked new amenities

Comparing between 2018/2019 and 2021 engagement, pickleball went from the fourth top requested amenity to the top ranked priority, reflecting the rapidly growing popularity of the sport over the past few years. However, if combining the top two ranks numbers from 2021, a perimeter walking path remains the most requested new amenity from both rounds of engagement.

1. New Park Perimeter Walking Path

Throughout the 3-years of community engagement, Saltair respondents consistently valued the walking trails within Saltair Centennial Park. Walking was the top reason Saltair respondents visit the park (73%). A new perimeter walking path (**B** on Figure 2) was the top requested amenity in the 2018/2019 surveys. It was also ranked the top 2nd priority in 2021, and was the top ranked new amenity in 2021 if respondents' number 1 and number 2 rankings are combined. There were some comments that trail projects should not be a priority within Saltair Centennial Park, due to the numerous trails available in other Saltair parks (Stocking Creek Park, Diana Princess of Wales Park), and that Saltair Centennial Park should focus on the more active park amenities (tennis, playground, sport courts etc.). However, there were also multiple comments promoting the need for accessible pathways within the park.

- The estimated cost for construction of a new accessible surface park perimeter walking path, to CVRD trail type 2 standards is \$75,000 – 100,000

2. Pickleball

Over the past few years popularity of Pickleball has increased immensely throughout BC and is a growing activity/sport on Vancouver Island. During the first two rounds of community engagement 14% of Saltair respondents were in favor of adding pickleball courts. In 2021, it was the top ranked potential new amenity. The most common choice of location was a portion of the paved lower sport court adjacent to the tennis courts (**D** on Figure 2). The second choice was to have shared pickleball/hockey in the multi-use court (**E** on Figure 2). Respondents were *not in favour* of having shared pickleball/tennis.

The estimated costs for modification of the existing paved court spaces to pickleball are:

- Option D - One court (fence and net) = \$20,000, Two courts = \$40,000 (expand asphalt, add fence and net)
- Option E - Shared multi-use court = \$25,000

3. Nature Playground

There were few comments provided regarding the proposed nature scape playground, although it was ranked as the third highest priority for new amenities.

- Estimated costs for construction of a naturescape playground or playscape addition are \$40,000 - \$80,000

4. Off-Leash Dog Park

During the first and second round of engagement, an off-leash dog park was the second most selected potential new amenity, with 25% of Saltair respondents in favor of constructing an off-leash dog park. During the third round of engagement, it was ranked as the fourth priority. Respondents were also asked whether they supported having an off-leash dog park, and if so, in which of the two locations proposed on the concept plan (the old school soccer field, or the open grassy area in front of the community centre). Forty eight percent (48%) were **NOT in favour** for either location, 33% were in favour of one or both locations and 19% did not answer.

- Estimated costs for construction of an off-leash dog park is between \$40,000 - \$50,000.

Funding

Comparatively speaking, Saltair Centennial Park has been developed with more recreational facilities and to higher standards than a typical electoral area community would be willing or able to fund. However, the park is well used and appreciated, and through the third round of engagement, concerns were expressed for removing facilities instead of renovating them. As a result, renovations of those features have been included in the list of potential improvement projects.

Residents were asked in the 2018-2019 survey what new amenities should be considered as additions to the park, subject to available funds. Information on the topped ranked new amenities can be found in Appendix A. Notably, 0% of Saltair residents said they would like nothing new added. However, in the final round of engagement, there were a number of comments expressing a preference to renovate existing assets over removing them and/or adding new facilities. A further budgetary consideration for adding new amenities is they will also increase operational and asset management costs that must be accommodated within the Area G Community Parks budget.

Current funding limits mean that choices must be made between renovating existing amenities and adding new amenities, and how to phase those over time. The other option is to support desired improvements with a tax increase. Those residents surveyed in 2019 were asked whether a tax increase would be supported to fund park improvements and if so, how much of a tax increase would be supported. Fifty-seven percent (57%) (50 out of 87 question answers) of Saltair respondents were not supportive of a tax increase of any kind to fund park improvements to Saltair Centennial Park.

The question was again asked in 2021 and of the 99 Saltair respondents, approximately 64% (62 of 96 question answers) were supportive of a tax increase in the amount of \$30,000/year, or approximately \$4 per \$100,000 household property value. The park improvements could be completed over a 10-year period (2022-2031) in

order to keep the tax increase to a minimum. The tax increase would add funds to Area G's community park budget. While this Revitalization Plan provides a proposed schedule for expenditure on Saltair Community Park projects, annual budget decisions will consider all of Saltair's community parks, trails, and beach access needs.

Note that the cost estimates noted below are based on current 2021 construction costs, and are Class D estimates. These are preliminary estimates of approximate magnitude based on recent similar projects, +/- 50%, for budgeting purposes. Updated cost estimates will be required as part of capital project planning.

Revitalization Concept Plan

LEGEND

Existing Features

- 1 - Playground
- 2 - Central Pedestrian Walkway
- 4 - Concession
- 5 - Washroom Building
- 6 - Ball Diamonds

Existing Features - Considered for Improvements

- (E) Multi-Use Sport Court
- (F) Tennis Courts
- (G) Basketball Court
- (H) Practice Tennis Half Court
- (I) Forest Path
- (J) Picnic Shelter

Proposed New Features

- (B) Park Perimeter Walking Path
- (C) Nature Playground
- (D) Dedicated Pickleball Court(s)



Figure 2 - Revitalization Concept Plan

Based on feedback from the third round of engagement, the park Revitalization Concept Plan was updated as shown above, as a summary of park feature renovations, upgrades, and additions with significant community support.

Features that had been proposed for removal in the draft plan (small/basketball court, tennis half court) have been reinstated in the concept plan as potential renovation projects in response to public feedback.

This Revitalization Concept Plan offers a visual of potential park projects with demonstrated community support. It is important to note that all of these projects are dependent on funding. While this report offers recommendations for phasing, the actual spending decisions will be made by the CVRD Board during annual budget processes, and in consideration of all Area G community park budget needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This Revitalization Plan will inform budgeting and improvement decisions in Saltair Centennial Park for the next 10-15 years. The existing community parks tax fund requisition is insufficient to deliver most of the improvements supported by the community. Additional tax requisition, or other funding sources, will be required to provide all the priorities. Delivering most of the desired improvements will likely require a tax increase, unless grants or volunteer fundraising can provide the funds. A \$30,000 annual increase for Saltair Centennial Park improvements was supported by 64% (62 of 96 question answers) of those surveyed in 2021. This funding source is assumed in the proposed schedule of improvements (Table 3). At the same time, asset management standards mean that some existing amenities must be decommissioned or removed in the near term, unless or until budget funds become available.

The following recommendations/actions are based on asset management needs, community priorities, and annual budget limitations. Reflective of community comments, refurbishment of existing amenities is recommended as prioritized over adding new amenities (which would also add to operational and asset management costs.)

SHORT-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS (2022)

1. **Forest trail upgrades** – the 2022 budget includes funds for community trails in Saltair, including the upgrades to the forest trail.
2. **Tennis half court closure/decommissioning**– The tennis half court is in poor condition which must be addressed in 2022 for safety reasons. No funds have been allocated in the 2022 budget for refurbishing this amenity. As the community has indicated a desire to retain this amenity, staff will remove the deteriorated pavement in 2022, but leave the sub-base to support future resurfacing if funds are identified.
3. **Basketball court (small court) closure** – The upper small court, used for basketball, is in poor condition and was decommissioned in early 2022 for safety reasons. No funds have been allocated in the 2022 budget for refurbishing the court. As the community has indicated a desire to retain this amenity, the court has been decommissioned until funds are made available for refurbishment and upgrades. The hoops have been removed and the access gate is locked pending funding.

MEDIUM-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS (2022-2027+)

1. **Basketball court refurbishment** – The basketball court was decommissioned and closed (hoops removed, gate locked) in early 2022. Once funds are available, resurfacing the court and upgrading to a regulation height basketball is the next recommended priority, due to the likely complaints of an inaccessible amenity, and because of community support for its appeal to youth. Resurfacing and a new hoop is estimated at \$30,000 (2021 costs).
2. **Tennis courts surfacing refurbishment** – there is strong support for surfacing refurbishment of the tennis courts. Asset management criteria indicate the refurbishment should occur within the next few years. 2021 estimates indicate a \$30,000 budget is required.

3. **Picnic shelter updates** – asset management scheduling indicates that updates/reconstruction will be required in the next few years. Reconstruction is estimated at \$40,000 (2021 costs).
4. **Playground updates** – asset management projections indicate that the playground will need updating in 2026. A budget requirement of \$75,000 - \$100,000 (2021 costs) is estimated.
5. **Tennis half court resurfacing** – the tennis half court will be decommissioned (pavement removed) in 2022. Resurfacing the retained subgrade is estimated at \$14,650 (2021 costs).

LONGER-TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **New perimeter walking path** – a new perimeter walking path is the top recommended new amenity when funds are available. Costs are estimated at \$75,000 (2021 costs).
2. **Pickleball courts** – adding new pickleball court(s) on the existing multi-use sport court is the next top recommended new amenity when funds are available. Costs are estimated at \$20,000-30,000 (2021 costs).
3. **Nature playground** – adding a new nature play area beside the existing playground is the next recommended new amenity when funds are available. Costs are estimated at \$40,000-80,000.

Off-leash dog park – due to the mixed responses to the idea of adding an off-leash dog area in the park, it is recommended this be revisited in later years and include a new round of public engagement.

PROPOSED FUNDING SCHEDULE

The following table summarizes the recommended schedule for park revitalization projects, based on the community engagement results. The schedule assumes approval of an additional \$30,000 in annual tax requisition to address these capital costs. Additional tax funds may be required to address any increases in operation costs for the Area G community parks service. As noted, actual funding decisions will be made during budgeting processes, and may reflect new information or needs. This proposed funding schedule and Revitalization Plan is intended as a decision-making tool and guide.

Proposed Funding Schedule for Saltair Centennial Park Revitalization										
	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031+
Existing Park Amenities										
Forest loop trail upgrade (budgeted 2022)	\$ 30,000									
Tennis court resurfacing			\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000						
Picnic shelter updates							\$ 30,000	\$ 10,000		
Basketball court refurbishment		\$ 30,000								
Playground updates				\$ 15,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000				
Tennis half court resurfacing			\$ 15,000							
New Park Amenities										
Perimeter walking path								\$ 20,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 25,000
Pickleball courts (2)										\$ 40,000
Nature playground										\$ 50,000
<i>Annual Budget Requirement</i>	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 115,000
<i>Potential new annual tax funds</i>		\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 30,000	
<i>Balance</i>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	

Table 3 - Proposed Revitalization Schedule

APPENDICES

Appendix A – 2018/2019 Engagement Report

Appendix B – Draft Revitalization Concept Plan

Appendix C – 2021 Questionnaire Results and Comments