

# SOOKE OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN



BACKGROUND RESEARCH REPORT  
VERSION 1.0

October 2020



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There are countless ways to describe the qualities of a community, and they cover diverse realms that include natural systems, social and economic aspects, buildings, infrastructure, public spaces, and more. This document begins to build a baseline for Sooke, focusing on key factors that are important to understand in creating Official Community Plan policies and to tackling community priorities at the local level. The baseline will be an important reference point against which future urban growth and structure scenarios will be developed and tested.

Part 1 offers a brief history of Sooke, beginning with Time Immemorial.

Part 2 provides a snapshot of existing conditions, including: population and demographics; jobs; housing; current land use inventories; land use mix including access to daily needs and amenities; population and employment densities; urban form including connectivity; streets and movement for walking, cycling, transit, vehicles, and goods movement; environment and ecology; climate change considerations; and human-made infrastructure. Part 2 also offers a brief overview of existing plans and strategies that relate to and will influence and/or be influenced by the new OCP.

Part 3 begins to look ahead, identifying early opportunities for growth based on existing land use and related factors. It also summarizes the overall baseline analyses in terms of “emerging themes”.

The emerging themes are not intended to be all encompassing. However they do begin to capture some of the important trends and big picture challenges/opportunities that this OCP process might consider as it embarks on a plan to deliver on an array of other community goals. The emerging themes are:

- Local habitats offer unique beauty, access to nature, and vital ecological services
- Growth patterns call into question whether Sooke ought to be characterized as “city, country, or suburbia”
- Sooke is a place for living and playing, but not a lot of working
- The availability of housing choices varies depending on household needs
- The climate is changing and will affect life in Sooke
- Many community destinations are not near residents’ homes
- Transportation, including walkability, is a challenge in Sooke
- Land use policy – and this OCP process – offers an exciting opportunity to connect the dots between growth decisions and climate action, community and individual health, community cohesion, and more.

These themes will continue to be shaped by the community’s input on aspirations, challenges, and opportunities. They will be further evolved as additional analysis and planning are undertaken in future phases of the OCP process.

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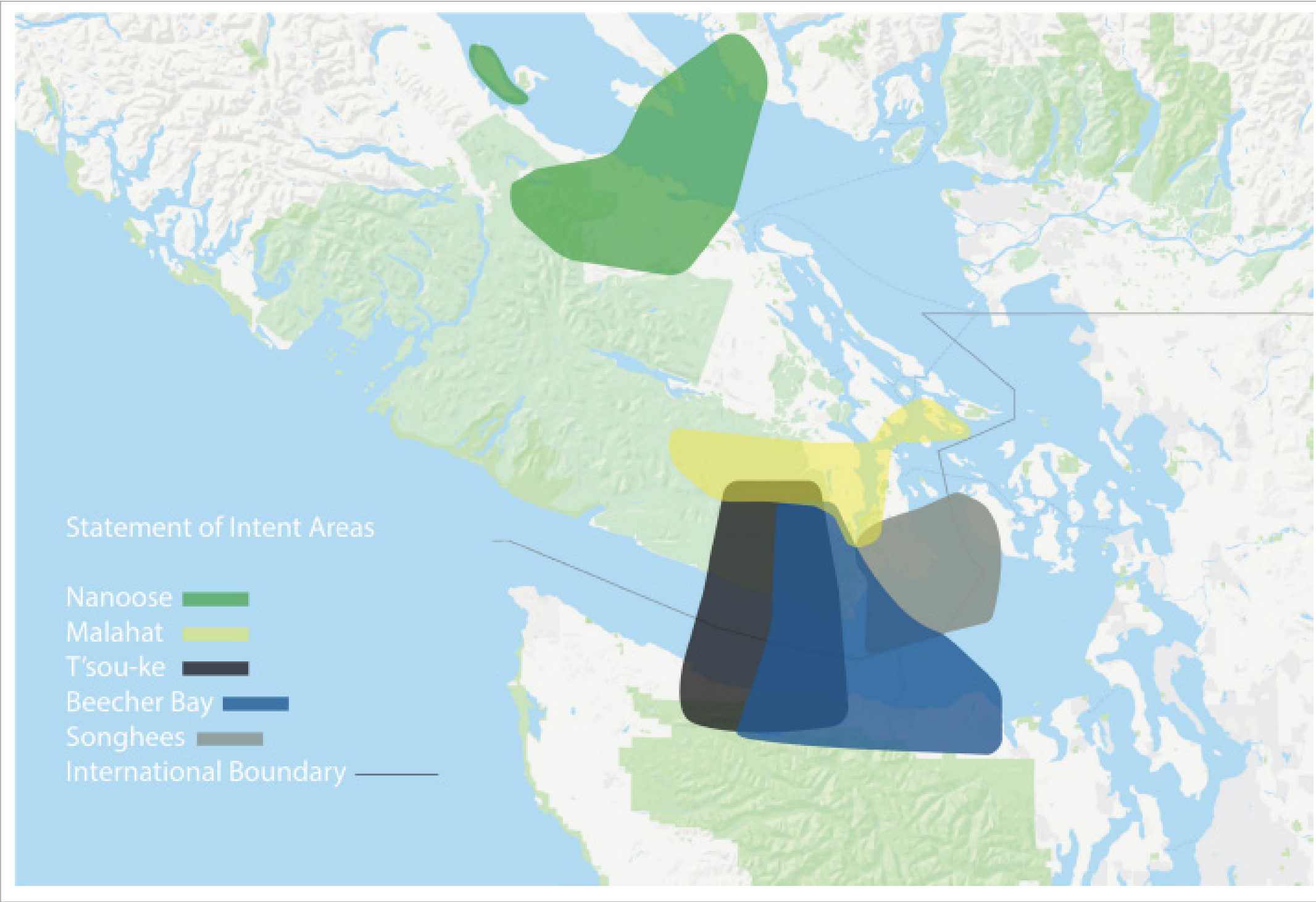
**SOOKE  
YESTERDAY**

1.1 Historical Context

The following section offers a few of the many narratives that form Sooke's historical context - this is not intended to be an exhaustive account, but rather an initial starting point for further discussion.

Central to Sooke's history is the acknowledgement that Sooke occupies the unceded traditional territories of T'Sou-ke First Nation and Sc'ianew First Nation, and acknowledgement of these Nations' ongoing presence, influence, and rights within the community.

T'Sou-ke First Nation and Sc'ianew First Nation are both members of the Te'mexw Treaty Association, a non-profit society formed of five Coast Salish Nations – Beecher Bay, Malahat, Snaw-Naw-As, Songhees and T'Sou-ke. The Te'mexw member Nations support one another and work together under one organization to negotiate five Nation-specific modern treaties with the federal and provincial governments in the British Columbia treaty process.



[Figure 1.1] Map of Statement of Intent Areas.  
Credit: Te'mexw Treaty Association.





## TIME IMMEMORIAL



Grant's Mullachard Estate



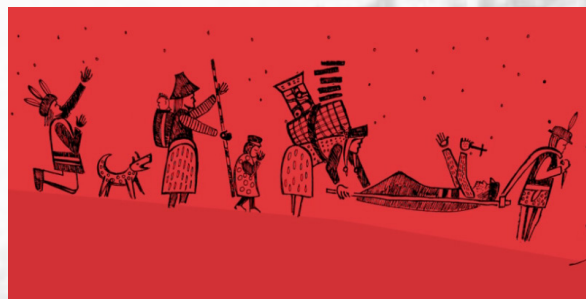
Muir's Sooke Sawmill



J.R. Todd Cannery  
at Maple Avenue



Woodside  
B.C.'s Oldest Farm



Smallpox Epidemic  
"Blood on the Rocks" M. Nicholson



Willow Grouse  
Copper Mine



Sooke Army Reserve Corp 1944



Butler Bros. Mark V Hauler

1849

1851

1855

1862

1902

1915

1930's -40's

1950s

1970's

## T'SOU-KE FIRST NATION AND SC'IANEW FIRST NATION

The land upon which Sooke has been established has been stewarded by the T'Sou-ke and Sc'ianew peoples since Time Immemorial.

In the SENĆOTEN language, the word "**T'Sou-ke**" is the name of the **stickleback fish** that lives in the estuary of the river. The word "**Sc'ianew**" (pronounced CHEA-nuh) translates from the Klallum language as "**the place of the big fish**". These names reflect the richness of the land and waters that have sustained Indigenous communities with food, shelter, medicine and clothing.

## SALMON AS CENTRAL TO A WAY OF LIFE

Archaeological evidence and oral histories confirm that salmon have been central to the subsistence, economic, and cultural practices of coastal Indigenous peoples for thousands of years. Salmon are seen as "gift-bearing relatives" who are similar, but spiritually superior, to people.

Salmon fishing is deeply embedded in T'Sou-ke and Sc'ianew culture, identity, and existence and has provided a source of food, wealth, and trade.

Traditional fishing techniques such as reef netting were highly specialized. The timing and level of harvest was carefully regulated to ensure sustainability of the catch for future generations.

## COLONIALIZATION

The **Colony of Vancouver Island** was established in 1849. **Captain Walter Colquhoun Grant** of the Royal Scots Greys was the **first colonist** to settle on the island, buying 200 acres from the Hudsons Bay Company at £1/acre. The land was named **Mullachard** after the estate in Scotland from which he came. Grant is recognized for having introduced the sport of cricket to Vancouver Island, as well as Scotch Broom - now considered a noxious, invasive plant.

Grant's property was sold to **John Muir who, along with his wife Anne and their four sons, had significant impact on the development of the area**. Muir founded the region's first steam-powered sawmill, established a productive farm and eventually became a magistrate and member of the first Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. The Muir legacy is still present in Sooke; two of the three grand homes built by the family in **1884** still stand, at Woodside and Burnside.

## RESOURCE EXTRACTION AND ECONOMY - establishing a global presence - a tradition of innovation and influence.

### FORESTRY

In **1850**, Grant established the second sawmill in BC.

In **1855**, **Muir and Company** built the **region's first steam-powered sawmill**, fashioned from the engines, boilers, and machinery from a wrecked steamship.

By **1859**, Muir and Company was exporting 40,000 board feet from its wharf, and had the largest privately-owned fleet of ships in the Northwest. Muir **opened lumber markets** from San Francisco to South America, the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii) and Australia, spurring local economic development that prompted the opening of many local businesses to serve this industry.

The importance of forestry to the area persisted into the following century. In the 1970's and 1980's, the Butler Brothers Logging Company developed an off-road log hauler with a hauling capacity of 150 tonnes, believed to be world's largest double-axle logging truck.

### MINING

#### *Gold Rush and Smallpox*

Gold fever in the mid-1800s led to a period of instability and unrest, as settlers uprooted their lives to seek their fortunes. Migration associated with the gold rush led to a smallpox epidemic as the disease was spread by miners bound for the Cariboo Gold Rush. The epidemic devastated First Nations communities, **killing over 30,000, or 60 per cent of Indigenous people in B.C**

#### *WWI and local mines*

The arrival of World War I instigated a renewed interest in mining in the region, as copper ore was required for smelting and use in manufacturing munitions and electrical components.

### WWII INVOLVEMENT

Sooke and the neighbouring community of Otter Point served as **significant regional army training camps** during WWII, leading to an influx of hundreds of temporary residents from across Canada. Edward Milne Community School is located near the site of the historic Milne Landing Camp.

### FISHERIES

#### *Industrial Fish Traps and Canning*

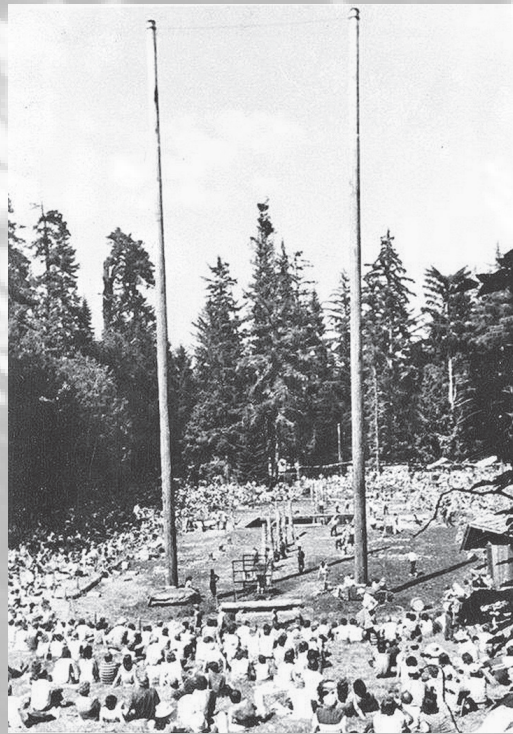
In **1902** the Canadian government permitted canneries to construct "fish traps" along southern Vancouver Island, **while banning Indigenous fish traps**.

**J. H. Todd's** five fish traps near Sooke provided the foundation of **one of the most durable salmon businesses** in B.C.'s history. Todd capitalized upon lucrative markets for canned salmon in England and secured canned salmon's place in standard rations in the British army. Todd's canneries included the Sooke Harbour Fishing and Packing Co. Cannery **until 1958**.

#### *Commercial Fishing*

When WWII soldiers returned from serving overseas, many began operating commercial fishing boats, seiners and trollers and gillnetters. These soon **overtook the monopoly of the fish traps industry**.





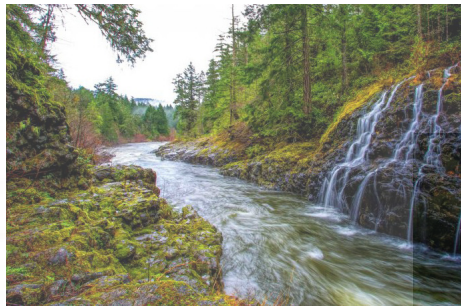
Sooke All Day Festival

1934



Sooke Region Museum

1977

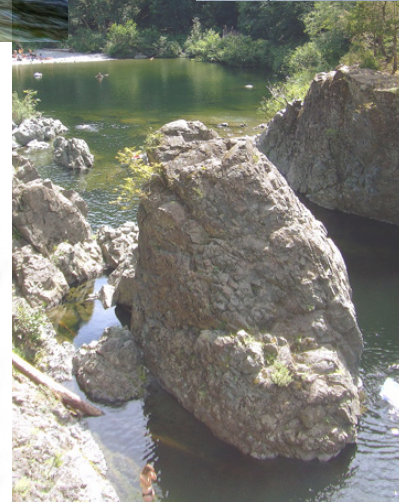


Sooke River



Sooke Philharmonic Orchestra & Chorus

1997



Sooke Potholes Provincial Park



Sooke Downtown, circa 1916 – at the intersection of Otter Pt Rd and Grant – site of the original Throup store structure (built in 1912) that still stands today.

Sooke Today, looking from Otter Pt Rd and Grant - toward the Town Centre and Sooke Harbour.



## TOURISM AND RECREATION

### All Day Sooke Festival

Started in the Great Depression as “**the Progress of Sooke**,” this festival celebrated the 70th anniversary of the discovery of gold and 1864 origin of metal mining in the region.

The festival's origins were as a humble community picnic on the Sooke Flats. It evolved to **become significant in the culture of Vancouver Island**, drawing thousands of international tourists annually to experience championship logging sports competitions.

### Parks and Recreation

In addition to sport-fishing and whale-watching, Sooke's natural setting have provided recreational opportunities for locals and visitors alike for generations.

#### Sooke Potholes Provincial Park

Adjacent to the Sooke River, this park features a series of **deep, naturally carved and polished rock pools** and is a popular destination for many local and regional residents.

The nearby **Sooke River** is an important **coho and chinook salmon spawning location**. It is a favourite place to view this annual event, and has opportunities for catch and release fishing.

The **Gallopig Goose Regional Trail** is a converted rail trail that traverses through Sooke along the Sooke River, connecting multiple Western Communities. This trail is popular for a variety of activities, including commuting and recreation. Other area trails, roads and reservoirs support back country recreation and mountain biking.

## COMMUNITY ARTS AND CULTURE

### Sooke Region Museum

Since **1977**, the Sooke Region Museum, operated by the Sooke Region Historical Society, has profiled the human and natural heritage of the area. The museum, which receives over 40,000 visitors per year, also operates the area's official Visitor Information Centre and features a temporary exhibit space.

One of the Museum's most notable attractions is a lighthouse that was originally built on Triangle Island, located off the north tip of Vancouver Island.

The museum hosts special tours and events, including salmon BBQs and the **annual Sooke Summer Night Market**.

The first curator of the museum was **Elida Peers**. For this and other work, she received the Order of British Columbia.

### Sooke Fine Arts Society

The Sooke Fine Arts Society, launched in **1986**, is a not-for-profit organization **created to encourage and promote the arts**.

Its showcase event is the annual, adjudicated **Sooke Fine Arts Show** which brings artists, volunteers, visitors, and art patrons together for an 11-day celebration of the arts.

The Society also provides **public learning opportunities** to facilitate artistic technique and expertise.

### Sooke Philharmonic Orchestra, Chamber Players & Chorus

The Sooke Philharmonic Orchestra is a community orchestra that was founded by Norman Nelson in 1997. With the subsequent introduction of the Sooke Philharmonic Chamber Players and the Sooke Philharmonic Chorus, the concert season now features four programs (eight concerts) plus the ever-popular “Philharmonic Fling”, an open air pops concert performed each summer. In addition, small ensembles perform regularly at community events and fundraisers.

#### Sooke Arts Council

The Sooke Arts Council is a non-profit organization founded in 1987 and dedicated to encouraging participation and excellence in the arts, the development of art performance and exhibition opportunities, and the promotion of local artists.

The Council hosts a gallery space, classes, art shows, and supports the growth of Sooke's art community.

## DISTRICT EVOLUTION

### Incorporation

While several incorporation studies had taken place since 1963, it was only in 1999 that the residents of the District of Sooke voted to become a municipality and, upon incorporation, elected their first Mayor and Council. This first Council began the ongoing task of establishing bylaws and policies for the planning for the community's future and for the provision of services.

Since incorporation, the District of Sooke has received several requests from neighbouring property owners to be included within the municipality. Accordingly, through the boundary extension process, these properties are now included in the District of Sooke.

Notable incorporations include the Silver Spray neighbourhood (2004) and west-east District boundary extension (2006).

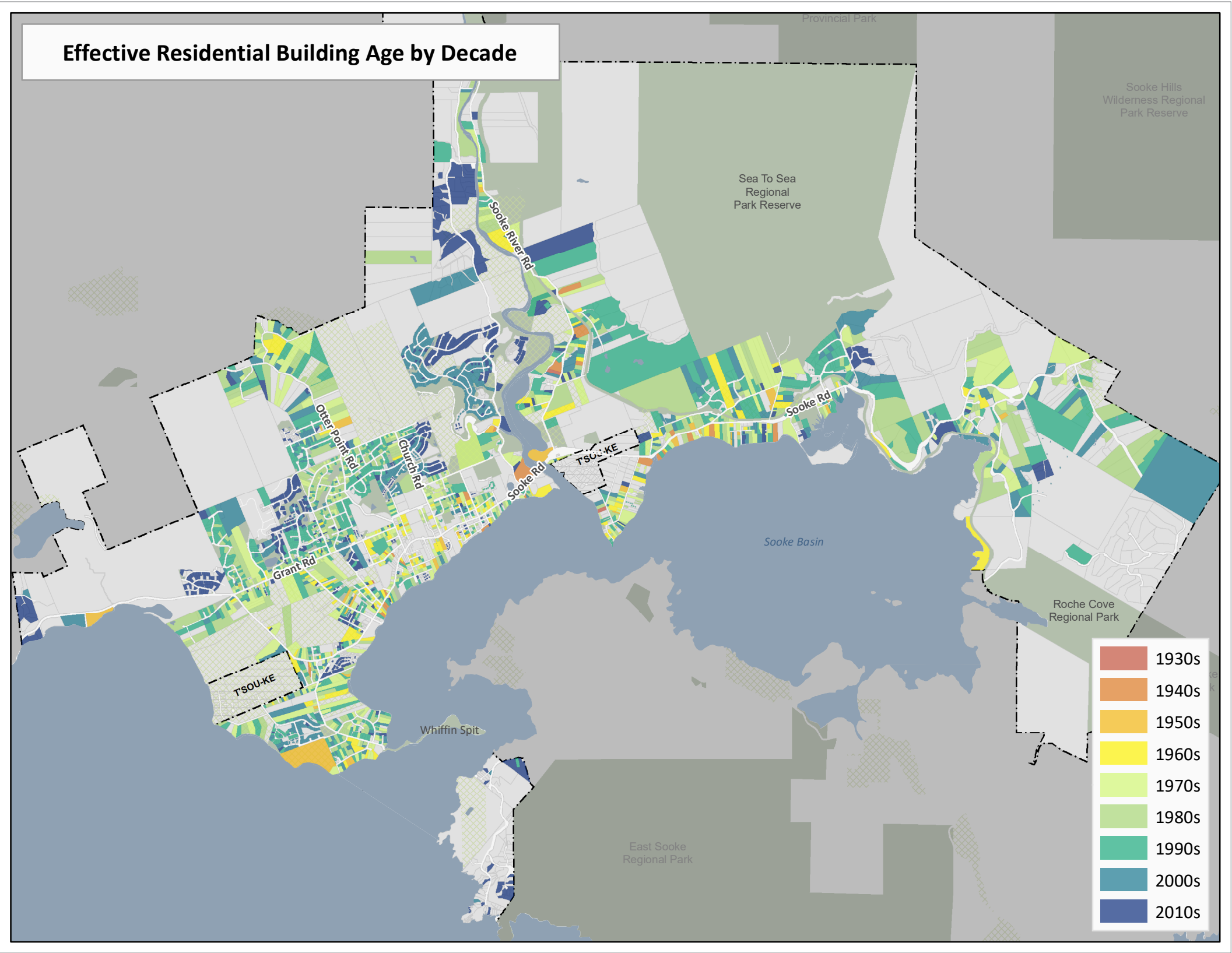


# 1.2 Residential Building Age

The distribution of age of homes in Sooke highlights a diversity of eras of development. Although Figure 1.2 does not offer a strong spatial correlation, newer residential buildings tend to be located in North Sooke, while older buildings tend to be concentrated along Highway 14 (Sooke Road and West Coast Road) closer to the waterfront.

As also evidenced in Figure 2.1.11 (Sooke Housing Statistics) on page 24, the bulk of physical growth has occurred in recent decades, with newer homes accounting for significant expansion at the District's periphery. The majority (63 percent) of Sooke's homes were built since the 1980s and only eight percent of Sooke's housing stock was built prior to the 1960s.

Newer residential development also appears to favour smaller suburban style lot sizes and curvilinear streets, while older rural homes tend to be characterized by larger, longer lots perpendicular to roadways. This influence on street patterns and walkability is further explored in Section 2.4.



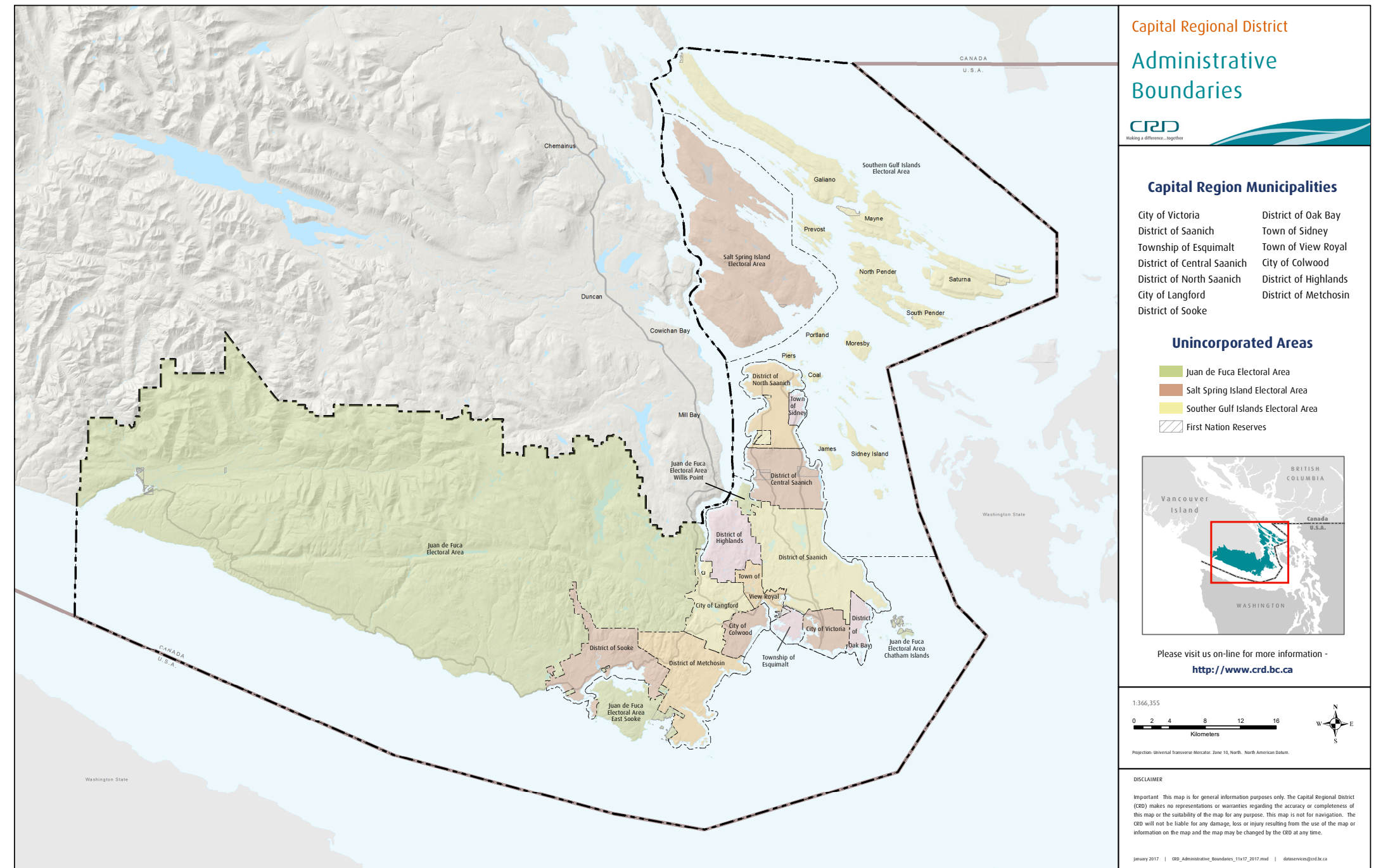
[Figure 1.2] Sooke's Residential Building Age.

### 1.3 Regional Context

The District of Sooke is within the Capital Regional District (CRD).

The CRD was originally formed in 1966 as a federation of 7 municipalities and 5 electoral areas. Today, the CRD is a federation of 13 municipalities that are located on the southern tip of Vancouver Island, including Central Saanich, Colwood, Esquimalt, Highlands, Langford, Metchosin, North Saanich, Oak Bay, Saanich, Sidney, Sooke, Victoria and View Royal.

Included in this federation are also 3 electoral areas, including Juan de Fuca, Southern Gulf Islands and Salt Spring Island. The CRD provides regional governance and services for the entire Capital Region, such as distributing water supply, disposing of sewage and managing garbage and recycling. The CRD creates partnerships between a combination of member municipalities and electoral areas for services or projects that are specific to only a portion of the region.



**[Figure 1.3]** Capital Regional District Administrative Boundaries.  
Source: CRD.

**SOOKE  
TODAY**



# 2.1 - People, Employment, and Housing

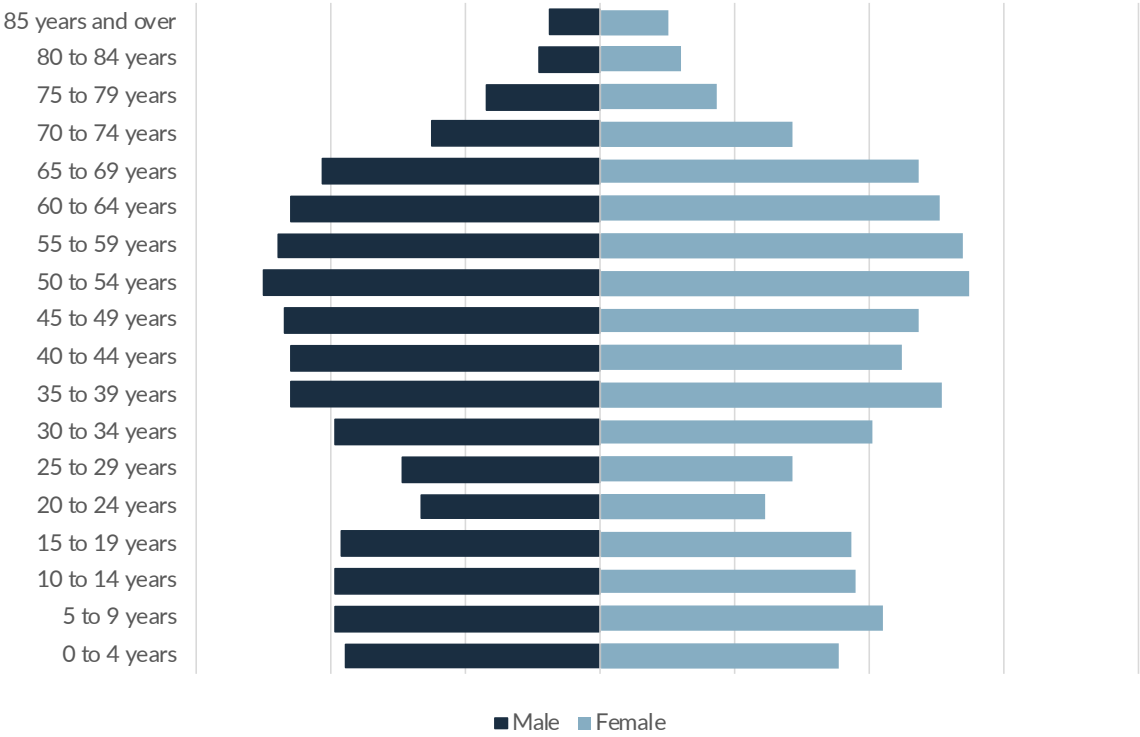
## 2.1.1 Population

The District of Sooke (Sooke) had an estimated population of 13,060 as of the 2016 Statistics Canada Census with an average age of 41.4. By 2050, the population is expected to grow at an estimated annual rate of 2.9% to reach a total of 18,521 by 2030, 22,065 by 2040, and 25,792 by 2050. As displayed below, the population is expected to continue aging, with substantial growth among those aged 65 and over. Although the entire province is expected to age during the projection period, it is expected that Sooke will continue to have a slightly older average age and decreasing working age population ratio when compared to larger urban centres on Vancouver Island such as Victoria which consistently attracts a younger demographic due to more employment and education opportunities.

Sooke Population Projections (2006 - 2050)							
Age Group	2006	2011	2016	2030	2040	2050	Annual Growth 2016-2050
Under 15	1,870	2,215	2,325	2,928	3,243	3,430	1.40%
	19%	19%	18%	16%	15%	13%	
15 to 64	6,620	7,770	8,525	10,954	12,400	13,592	1.70%
	68%	68%	64%	59%	56%	53%	
Over 65	1,210	1,455	2,210	4,639	6,421	8,769	8.70%
	12%	13%	17%	25%	29%	34%	
Total	9,700	11,440	13,060	18,521	22,065	25,792	2.90%

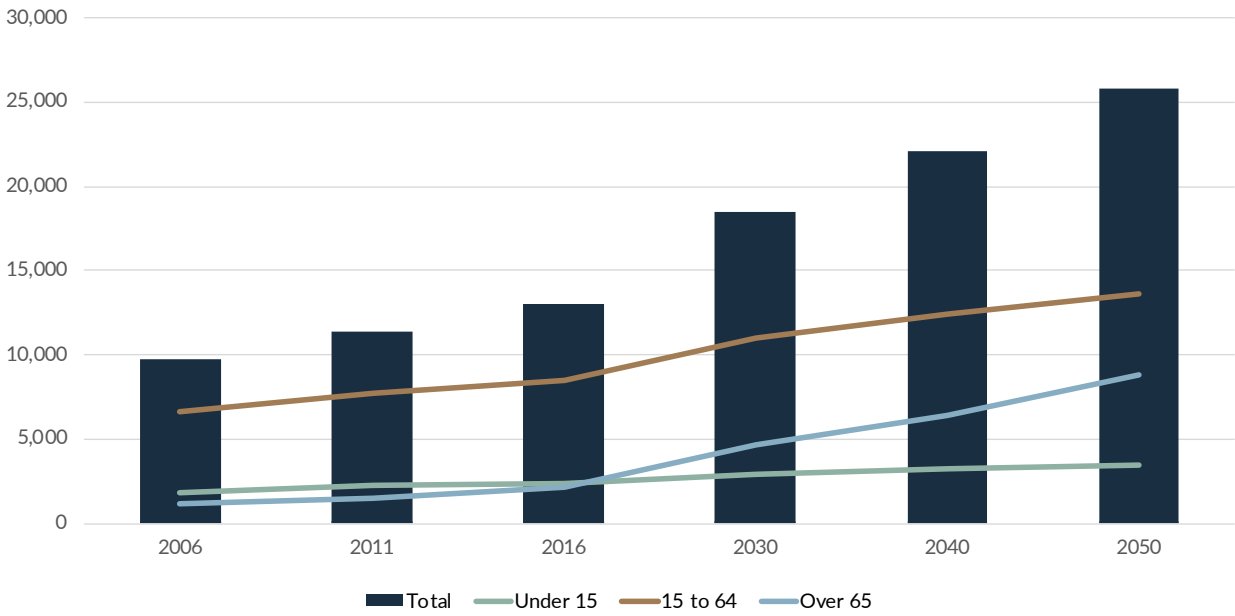
[Figure 2.1.1] Sooke Population Projections 2006-2050.

Sooke Population by Age Cohort (2016 Census)



[Figure 2.1.2] Sooke Population by Age Cohort (2016 Census).

Sooke Population Projections (2006-2050)



[Figure 2.1.3] Sooke Population Projections (2006-2050).



2.1.2 Household Structure

The average household size of Sooke is estimated at 2.5 which is slightly higher than the provincial average of 2.4. Approximately 62.7% of total households have either one or two residents, a trend which is expected to continue due to the projected aging of the population. This is also reflected when assessing the total number of families along with family sizes, which currently are in line with the provincial average of 2.8 people per family.

The average household income within Sooke was \$81,455 as of the 2016 Census. The average total income of one-person households was \$44,312, whereas the average total income of two or more person households was \$93,654. These figures are lower than respective provincial averages of \$46,696 and \$108,010. Sooke has a relatively even distribution of incomes, with 46% of households earning between \$20,000 and \$80,000 per year.

2.1.3 Immigration

Sooke is experiencing a slowly increasing reliance on in-migration, primarily from other areas of the Province, which mitigates declining births and youth cohort age totals. Additionally, there has been a small amount of immigration from those born outside of Canada. As outlined below, approximately 11.9% of the population can be defined as immigrants, 7.6% of which are from Europe, 2.2% from the Americas, and 1.4% from Asia.

Sooke Household Structure (2016 Census)		
	Total	%
Total Number of Households	5,250	
One Person Households	1,295	24.70%
2 Person Households	1,995	38.00%
3 Person Households	840	16.00%
4 Person Households	705	13.40%
5 or More	410	7.80%
Average Household Size	2.5	
Total Number of Families	3,850	
2 Person Families	2,080	54.00%
3 Person Families	820	21.30%
4 Person Families	675	17.50%
5 of More	275	7.10%
Average Family Size	2.8	

[Figure 2.1.4] Sooke Household Structure (2016 Census).

Sooke Total Households by Income Bracket (2016 Census)		
Income Bracket	Households	%
Under \$20,000	465	8.90%
\$20,000 to \$40,000	885	16.90%
\$40,000 to \$60,000	835	15.90%
\$60,000 to \$80,000	735	14.00%
\$80,000 to \$100,000	700	13.40%
Over \$100,000	1,620	30.90%
Average Household Income	\$81,455	
Median Household Income	\$71,296	

[Figure 2.1.5] Sooke Total Households by Income Bracket (2016 Census).

Sooke Total Households by Number of Bedrooms (2016 Census)		
Number of Rooms	Households	%
No bedrooms	30	0.60%
1 bedroom	395	7.50%
2 bedrooms	1,285	24.50%
3 bedrooms	2,250	42.90%
4 or more bedrooms	1,290	24.60%

[Figure 2.1.6] Sooke Total Households by Number of Bedrooms (2016 Census).

Sooke Population by Immigrant Status (2016 Census)		
Immigrant Status	Population	%
Non-Immigrants	11,315	88.10%
Immigrants	1,525	11.90%
Americas	285	2.20%
Europe	980	7.60%
Africa	45	0.40%
Asia	185	1.40%
Oceania and Other	25	0.20%

[Figure 2.1.7] Sooke Population by Immigrant Status (2016 Census).



2.1.4 Employment Structure and Projections

Sooke is expected to continue being a tertiary employment market primarily consisting of locally serving industries. This is evident from the high proportion of jobs in the retail trade (13.3%), healthcare and social assistance (13.2%), and public administration employment sectors (11.9%). As such, the expected growth of the working age population within Sooke is likely to mirror growth in demand for jobs and related office space within the municipality. The total working age population is expected to grow from 8,525 in 2016 to 10,954 by 2030, 12,400 by 2040, and 13,592 by 2050. Under the assumption that the participation rate and unemployment rate will remain relatively steady over the projection period, along with an analysis of the constant and shift share projections provided by Urbanics, this is expected to result in approximately 81 new jobs per year.

It is worth noting that these employment statistics are tied to Sooke residents and do not necessarily reflect employment opportunities within the District of Sooke; as of 2016, 54% of Sooke residents commute outside of the District for employment. Employment density is further explored in Section 2.3.2.

Sooke Employment Composition and Projections					
Employment Statistic	2016	2030	2040	2050	Annual Growth
Working Age Population	8,525	10,954	12,400	13,592	149
In the Labour Force	5,045	6,482	7,339	8,044	88
Employed	4,615	6,080	6,713	7,359	81
Unemployed	430	402	455	499	2
Not in the Labour Force	3,670	4,472	5,062	5,548	55
Participation Rate	59.20%	59.20%	59.20%	59.20%	
Employment Rate	91.50%	91.50%	91.50%	91.50%	
Unemployment Rate	6.20%	6.20%	6.20%	6.20%	

[Figure 2.1.8] Sooke Employment Composition and Projections.

Sooke Employment by Category (2016 Census)		
Industry	Current	%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing	75	1.50%
Mining, oil, and gas extraction	35	0.70%
Utilities	15	0.30%
Construction	575	11.60%
Manufacturing	225	4.50%
Wholesale trade	140	2.80%
Retail trade	660	13.30%
Transportation and warehousing	180	3.60%
Information and cultural	90	1.80%
Finance and insurance	110	2.20%
Real estate	100	2.00%
Professional and scientific	305	6.20%
Administration and support	275	5.50%
Educational services	270	5.40%
Healthcare and social assistance	655	13.20%
Arts, entertainment, recreation	70	1.40%
Accommodation and food services	390	7.90%
Other services	185	3.70%
Public administration	590	11.90%

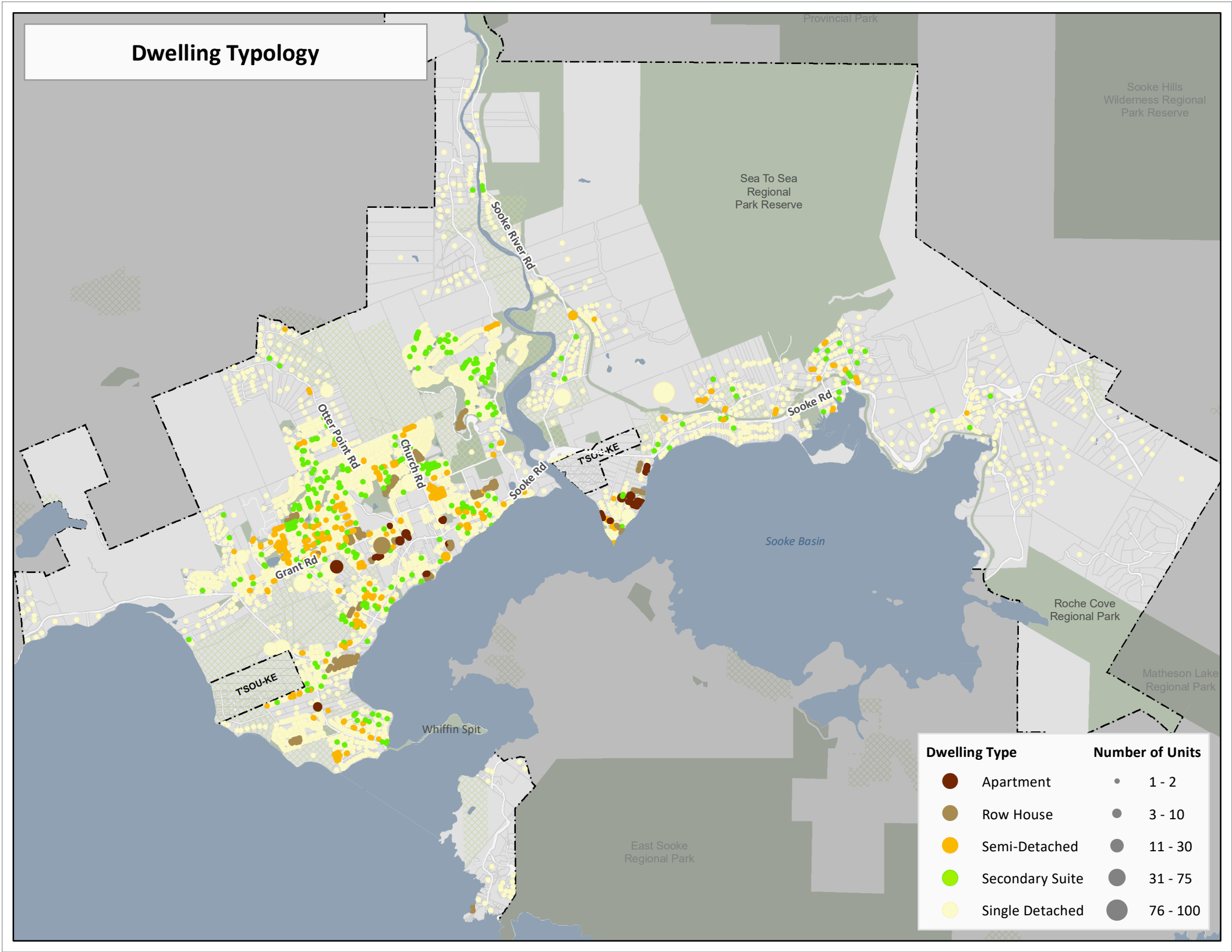
[Figure 2.1.9] Sooke Employment by Category (2016 Census).

### 2.1.5 Current and Upcoming Housing

As estimated by CMHC and the 2016 Census, there is a total of approximately 5,250 dwelling units within Sooke, 4,105 (78%) of which are owned and 1,150 (22%) are rented. There are 3,440 (66%) single-detached houses, 260 (5%) units in apartments under 5 storeys, 275 (5%) row houses, 375 (7%) semi-detached houses, and 490 (9%) duplex apartments.

In 2016, the average value of owned private dwellings ranged from \$341,246 for semi-detached houses, up to \$442,606 for single-detached houses. Among all dwelling types, CMHC estimated an average value of \$412,192. Approximately 35% of the total housing stock was built since 2001, which is higher than the CRD at 17%. Conversely, although 37% of the housing stock was built prior to 1980, the majority of this stock is expected to be in relatively good condition as only 6% of Sooke's total housing stock is in need of major repairs.

Since the 2016 Statistics Canada Census, there has been additional residential development throughout Sooke. Based on the most recent BC Assessment data from 2019, there have been approximately 641 new residential units completed and absorbed between 2017-2019.



[Figure 2.1.10] Sooke Dwelling Typology by Number of Units.



Sooke Housing Statistics (2016 Census)				
Structure Type	Total	Owners	Renters	Average Value
Occupied Private Dwellings	5,250	4,105	1,150	\$412,192
Single-Detached House	3,440	3,041	399	\$442,606
Semi-Detached House	375	301	74	\$341,246
Row House	275	145	130	\$343,843
Apartment, Duplex	490	258	232	\$444,437
Apartment < 5 Storeys	260	95	165	\$347,607
Apartment > 5 Storeys	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Other	360	317	43	n/a
Period of Construction	Total	%		
1960 or Before	415	8%		
1961 to 1980	1,515	29%		
1981 to 1990	670	13%		
1991 to 2000	800	15%		
2001 to 2005	445	8%		
2006 to 2010	800	15%		
2011 to 2016	615	12%		
Condition of Dwelling	Total	%		
Needs only Regular Maintenance	2,765	68%		
Needs Minor Repairs	1,060	26%		
Needs Major Repairs	240	6%		

[Figure 2.1.11] Sooke Housing Statistics (2016 Census).

The opposing page highlights a few of the recent forms of development, ranging from single-detached houses, row houses, townhouses, and a co-housing development.



[Image 2.1.1] Single-detached House in Sunriver Estates.  
Image Credit: Toby Parsons.



[Image 2.1.2] Rowhouse in Sooke's Broomhill Neighbourhood.  
Image Credit: Rick Turcotte Real Estate.



[Image 2.1.3] Harbourside Cohousing.  
Image Credit: Sooke Pocket News



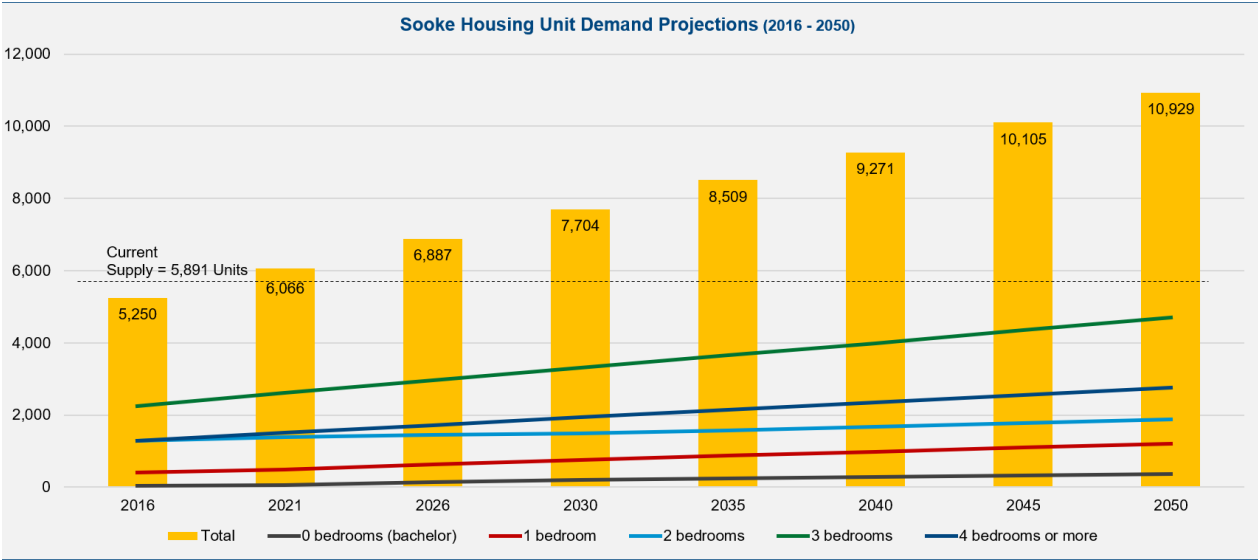
[Image 2.1.4] Townhouse at Mariner's Village.  
Image Credit: Realtor.ca

2.1.6 Housing Demand Projections

To project the future demand for housing units within Sooke, Colliers assessed the household maintainer model used by Urbanics within the recent Housing Needs Assessment which estimates future residential demand based on a variety of factors including age-specific population projections, housing preferences by age of primary maintainer, and slowly decreasing household sizes. This model projected housing demand up until 2031, and Colliers utilized the same methodology to extend the projections until 2050 while subtracting supply built since 2016.

It is estimated that Sooke will experience demand for an additional 1,813 residential units by 2030 and an additional 1,567 units between 2030 and 2040, and 1,658 units between 2040 and 2050. On an annual basis, Sooke is expected to demand an average of 133 new owner-occupied units and 29 new renter-occupied units over the projection period.

In addition to further exploring under construction and recently constructed residential units within Sooke, the OCP process will need to evaluate both in-stream and approved development applications, to accurately understand surplus housing demand over the next 10 years.



[Figure 2.1.12] Sooke Housing Unit Demand Projections (2016-2050).

Sooke Housing Demand Projections					
Total Bedrooms by Bedroom Size	2016	2030	2040	2050	Annual Growth
	30	202	278	372	10
0 Bedrooms (Bachelor)	0.60%	2.60%	3.00%	3.40%	10
1 Bedrooms	395	744	983	1,202	23
	7.50%	9.70%	10.60%	11.00%	
2 Bedrooms	1,285	1,490	1,669	1,880	17
	24.50%	19.30%	18.00%	17.20%	
3 Bedrooms	2,250	3,319	3,994	4,709	70
	42.90%	43.10%	43.10%	43.10%	
4+ Bedrooms	1,290	1,949	2,345	2,764	42
	24.60%	25.30%	25.30%	25.30%	
Total	5,250	7,704	9,271	10,929	162
Owner Occupied Units	4,090	6,105	7,388	8,749	133
Renter Occupied Units	1,160	1,599	1,883	2,180	29
Estimated Units Built Since 2016	641				
Surplus Unit Demand		1,813	1,567	1,658	

[Figure 2.1.13] Sooke Housing Demand Projections Summary Table.



2.1.7 Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Using the internationally recognized Global Protocol for Cities (GPC) framework, the Capital Regional District (CRD) has facilitated the delivery of BASIC+ greenhouse gas inventories, which provide the basis for trending GHG emissions in Sooke and the capital region.

These inventories represent the best available information and improve upon previous Community Energy and Emissions Inventories conducted by the Province of BC.

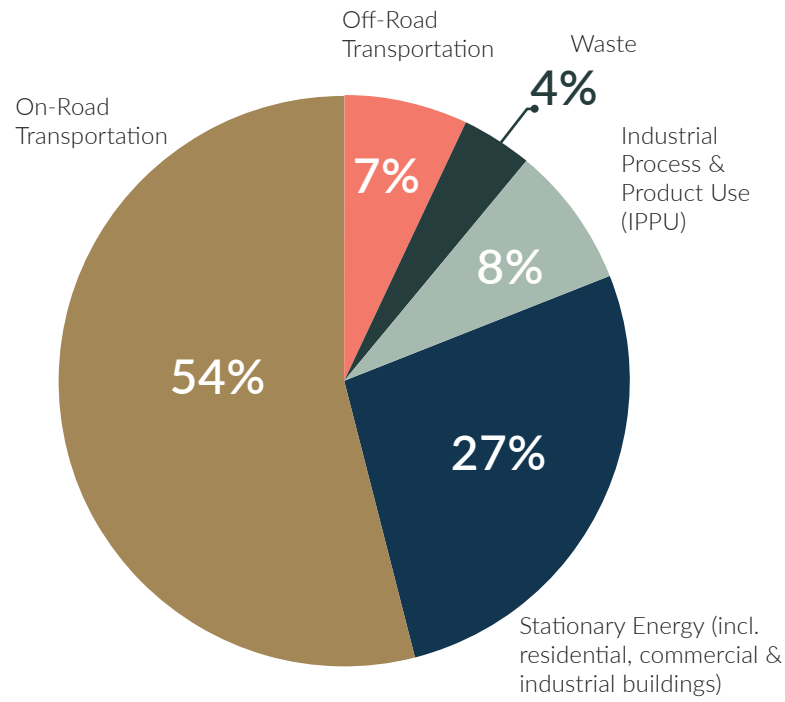
Following the requirements of the GPC Protocol, the GHG inventories considered emissions from all reporting sectors, including Stationary Energy, Transportation, Waste, Industrial Process and Product Use (IPPU), and Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU).

Figure 2.1.14 outlines Sooke's greenhouse emissions profile for the year 2018. Please note that this figure does not include emissions sequestered by various land use types.

Figure 2.1.15 on the opposing page outlines a more detailed summary of Sooke's energy and greenhouse gas emissions for the 2007 baseline and most recent 2018 data.

On-road transportation accounted for approximately 54% of Sooke's 2018 greenhouse gas emissions.\*

*\*This value does not consider greenhouse gas emissions sequestered by various land use types.*



[Figure 2.1.14] Sooke's 2018 BASIC+ GHG Emissions Profile (Excluding Land-Use).  
Source: Capital Region District – Municipalities and Electoral Areas 2007 Base Year and 2018 Reporting Year Energy & GHG Emissions Inventory.

16.1 2018 Profile

Profile	
Population	14,300
Dwellings	5,715
Registered Vehicles	9,498
Energy (Thousands of GJ)	1,141
GHG Emissions (tCO <sub>2</sub> e)	46,574

16.2 Energy & GHG Emissions

Table 20 presents a summary comparison of the District of Sooke's 2007 and 2018 energy and GHG emissions.

Table 20. Estimated Energy and GHG Emissions By Reporting Source

Source	Type	2007 Energy (GJ)	2018 Energy (GJ)	Change (%)	2007 GHG Emissions (tCO <sub>2</sub> e)	2018 GHG Emissions (tCO <sub>2</sub> e)	Change (%)
Stationary Energy							
Residential Buildings	Electricity	257,386	290,702	12.9%	1,787	862	-51.8%
	Natural Gas	13,108	43,147	229.2%	654	2,152	229.2%
	Fuel Oil	56,455	68,789	21.8%	3,860	4,704	21.8%
	Propane	9,744	9,197	-5.6%	594	562	-5.3%
	Wood	21,667	20,680	-4.6%	509	486	-4.6%
	Diesel	7,358	7,405	0.6%	569	537	-5.6%
Commercial & Industrial Buildings	Electricity	68,790	82,948	20.6%	478	246	-48.5%
	Natural Gas	16,506	33,344	102.0%	823	1,663	102.0%
	Fuel Oil	0	0	-	0	0	-
	Diesel	13,268	15,917	20.0%	1,026	1,155	12.5%
Energy Industries	LFG Combustion			-	0	0	-
Agriculture, Forestry And Fishing Activities	Diesel	35,100	39,844	13.5%	2,715	2,891	6.5%
Natural Gas Fugitive Emissions				-	13	31	142.3%
Total		499,382	611,972	22.5%	13,028	15,287	17.3%
On-Road Transportation							
Electric Vehicles	Electricity	-	1	-	-	3	-
Passenger Vehicles	Gasoline + Diesel + Propane	141,887	157,500	11.0%	10,099	10,113	0.1%
Light Trucks, Vans, SUVs	Gasoline + Diesel + Propane	201,042	267,290	33.0%	14,166	17,140	21.0%
Heavy Duty Vehicles	Gasoline + Diesel + Propane	73,397	50,131	-31.7%	5,152	3,272	-36.5%
Motorcycles	Gasoline	1,490	1,109	-25.6%	103	76	-25.6%
Total On-Road Transportation		417,817	476,031	13.9%	29,520	30,605	3.7%
Off-Road Transportation							
Marine, Aviation and Other Off-Road Vehicles	Marine Gasoline + Marine Diesel + Jet Fuel	46,184	52,988	14.7%	3,498	3,908	11.7%
Total Off-Road Transportation		46,184	52,988	14.7%	3,498	3,908	11.7%
Waste							
Wastewater					0	0	-
Composting					0	0	-
Solid Waste					3,252	2,243	-31.0%
Total Waste					3,252	2,243	-31.0%
Agriculture Forestry & Other Land Use (AFOLU)							
Land-Use					-5,018	-10,105	101.4%
Livestock, Aggregate Sources and Non-CO <sub>2</sub> Emission Sources on Land					75	60	-19.9%
Total AFOLU					-4,943	-10,044	103.2%
Industrial Process & Product Use (IPPU)							
Process Use Emissions					2,261	4,575	102.3%
Total IPPU					2,261	4,575	102.3%
TOTAL		963,383	1,140,991	18.4%	46,616	46,574	-0.1%

[Figure 2.1.15] Sooke Energy & GHG Emissions Summary Table.  
Source: Capital Region District – Municipalities and Electoral Areas 2007 Base Year and 2018 Reporting Year Energy & GHG Emissions Inventory.



## 2.2 Land Use

Land use policy shapes the types of buildings and homes in a community. It dictates the composition of residential buildings, ranging from single-detached homes to an array of multi-family homes. With shared walls and other efficiencies, multi-family buildings produce significantly lower per capita greenhouse gas emissions.

Urban form goes hand in hand with land use. It includes the quality, distribution, and integration of buildings and other physical elements such as open spaces, transportation networks, natural features and ecological systems, and community facilities. A more compact urban form, in which growth is carefully managed and concentrated, also has a tremendous beneficial impact on a community’s carbon footprint.

As such, the importance of land use in reducing greenhouse gas emissions at the local level cannot be overstated. This also means that land use policy and regulation, including Official Community Plans and Zoning Bylaws, comprise one of the most powerful tools at the disposal of local governments.

Other ways in which land use, urban form, and growth management influence a District's success include:

**Servicing** – This includes civic infrastructure, ranging from roads to sewers to transit. The efficiency of providing these services to citizens across the District is influenced by the distribution and intensity of development.

**Municipal Finances and Taxes** – Servicing efficiency in turn impacts the cost of providing services, which affects the District's financial bottom line and ultimately taxes paid by residents and businesses.

**Community Character** – This refers to the “look and feel” and overall attractiveness of a place. The height and type of buildings, and the uses within them, influence street life and help shape a distinguishable visual identity that creates a unique sense of place. Establishing infill and redevelopment guidelines – something that will be undertaken as part of this OCP process – is an important means in maintaining and enhancing community character.

**Housing Choices** – Different building types offer different housing choices, including the types of homes (e.g. single family house, townhouse, apartment) available for individuals and families. Land use policies also influence housing affordability.

**Transportation Choices** – As already noted, the intensity and distribution of buildings, along with land use and transportation infrastructure, greatly impact how people choose to move around. Some forms of development make it convenient, safe, and desirable to move around on foot, by bike, or by transit, while other forms of development effectively limit transportation choices to travel by car. Transportation choice in turn influences an individual’s level of physical activity, and thus their health and safety.

**Protection of Agricultural Land and Natural Areas** – The physical footprint of a District and the degree to which growth is managed within existing built up areas greatly influences a community’s ability to protect its surrounding natural areas and agricultural lands from encroaching development.

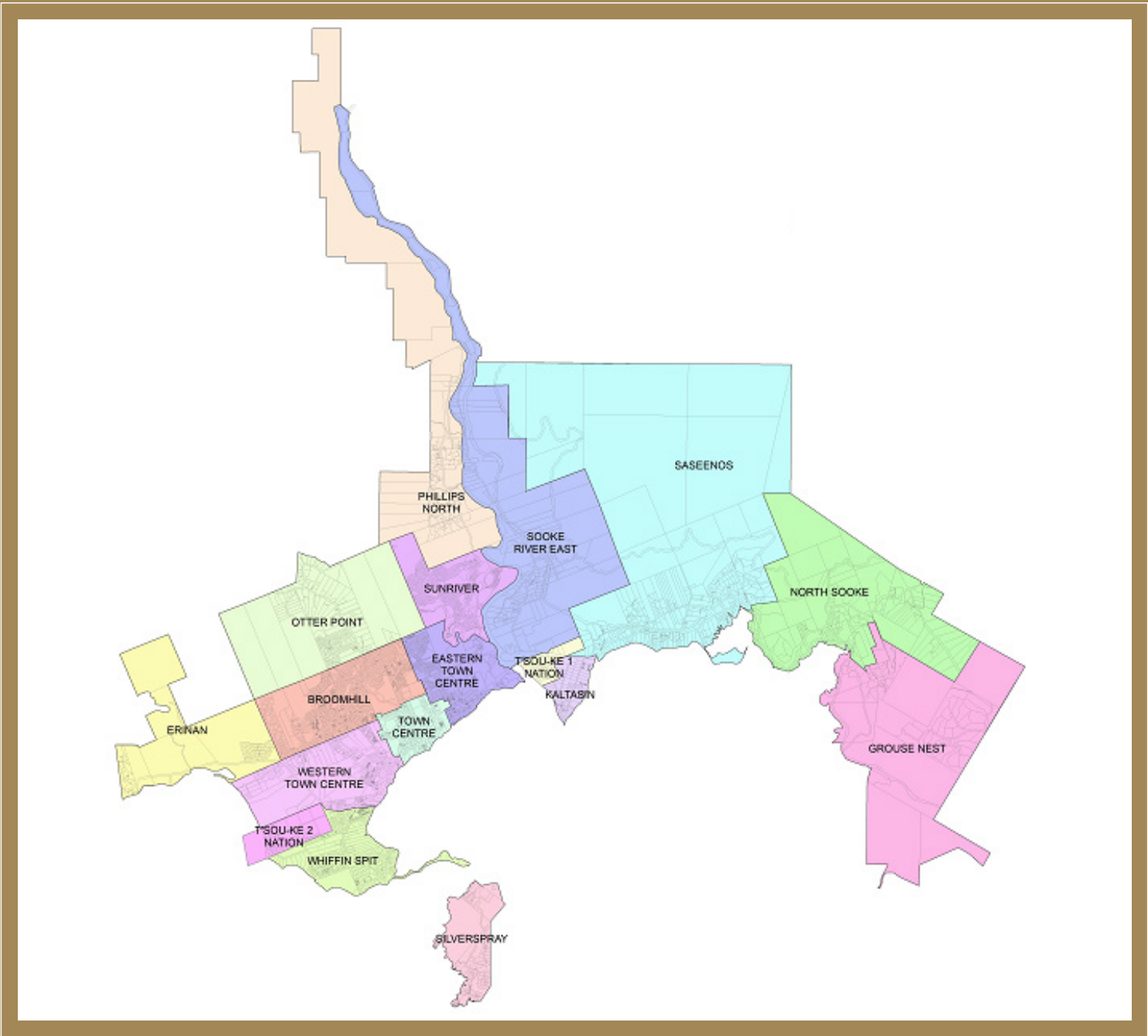


Image 2.2.1 outlines Sooke's neighbourhood boundaries as presented through the 2017 OCP engagement process. These neighbourhood boundaries are not officially adopted; however, they are referenced throughout the rest of this report to help orient readers.

[Image 2.2.1] Neighbourhood Map of Sooke.

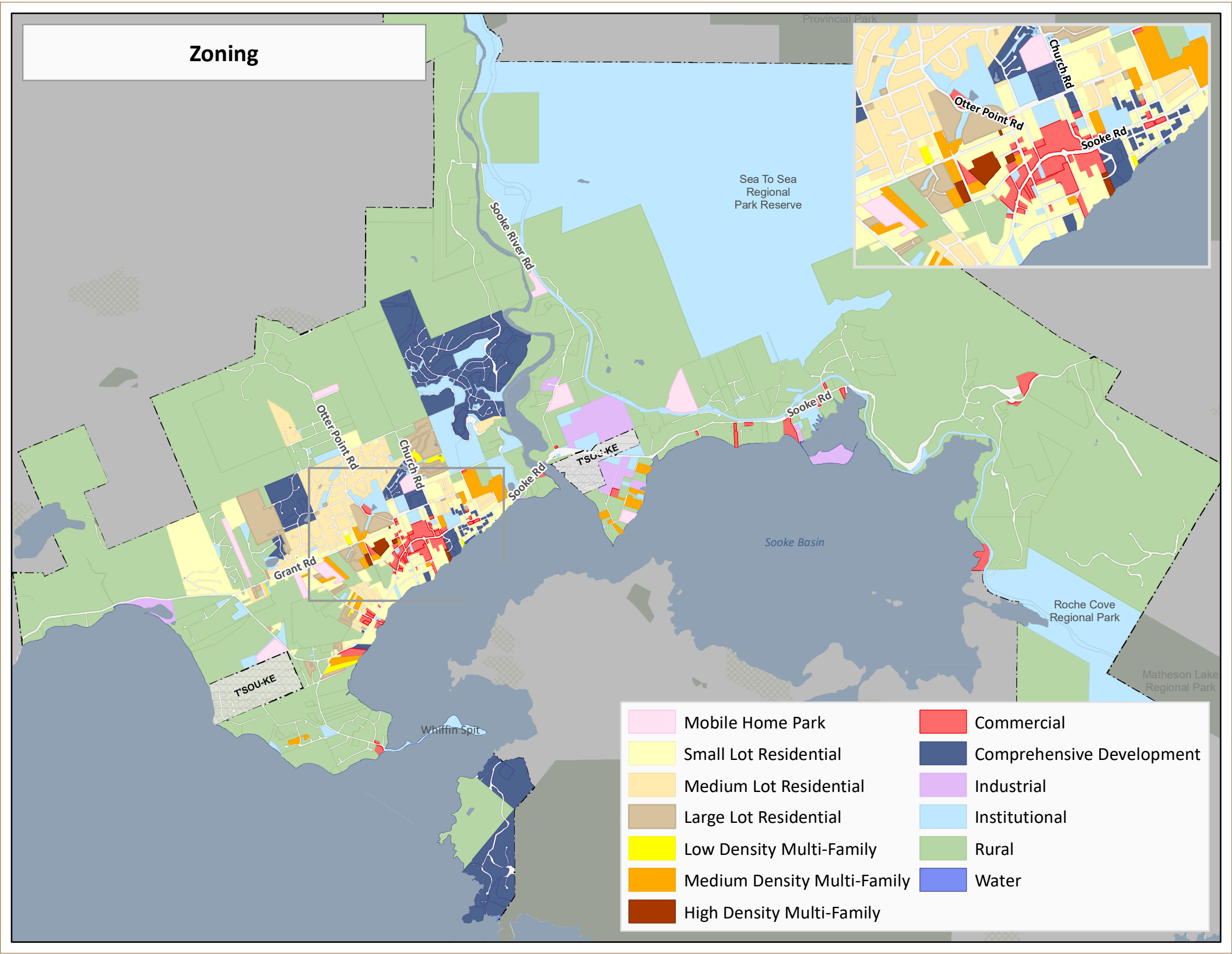
### 2.2.1 Inventory of Current Zoning

Current land use regulations – or zoning – are presented in Figure 2.2.1.

This zoning map highlights a few overarching spatial relationships:

- Sooke is characterized by a large, expansive land base;
- A large proportion of land within Sooke's boundary is either rural in nature or dedicated park land;
- Commercial activity is predominantly concentrated within the Town Centre, with some commercial uses 'dotted' along the waterfront;
- Multi-family development is concentrated within, or immediately adjacent to, the Town Centre;
- Sooke has several comprehensive development areas, the largest of which is Sunriver;
- Most residential areas are single family housing with a rural character;
- Newer developments in neighbourhoods, such as Sunriver, Broomhill, and Woodland Creek, have a more suburban character.

Since existing uses can be inconsistent with current zoning, retail and office inventories are outlined on the following pages. This is followed by a gap analysis of projected demand and a series of maps outlining access to a diversity of daily needs, establishing a baseline understanding of Sooke's current land use mix.



[Figure 2.2.1] Zoning Map of Sooke.



2.2.2 Existing Retail Inventory

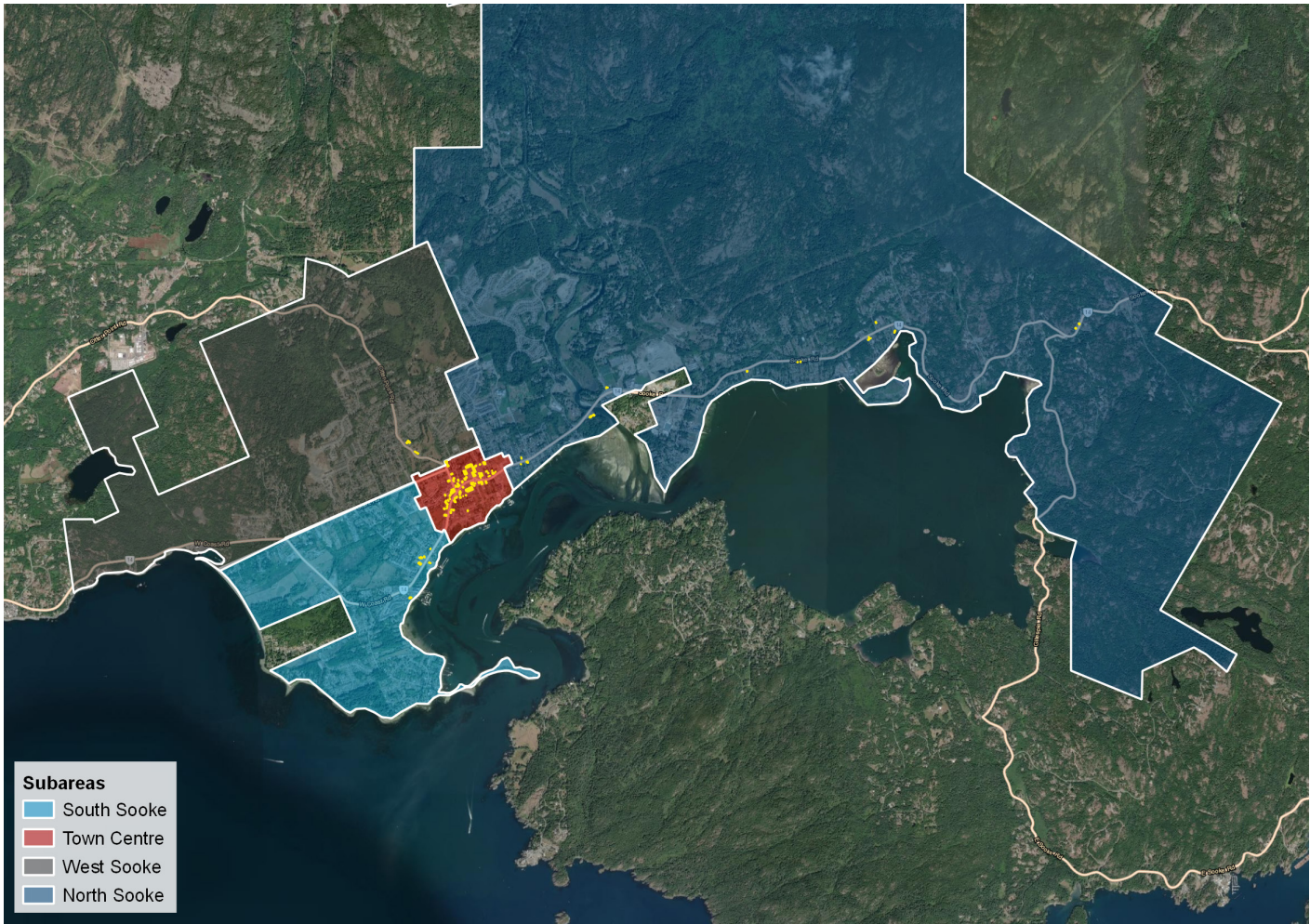
Figure 2.2.3 on the opposing page outlines the geographic subareas used in both the retail and office inventory analyses. Please note that the naming of these subareas is solely for the purpose of this section and does not reflect the conventionally accepted naming of Sooke's neighbourhoods. Please also note that Silver Spray was excluded from the analyses as there currently are no retail or office uses in the area.

Sooke currently has an inventory of approximately 370,000 square feet of retail floorspace with a vacancy rate of 3.4% which indicates a relatively healthy market for a municipality the size of Sooke. The majority of this retail floorspace is located within the Town Centre area (74%), followed by North Sooke (14%). Currently, there is only a limited amount of retail in West and South Sooke which could potentially be focus areas for future development due to the population growth and upcoming development outlined in Section 2.1.5 and the gap analysis outlined in 2.2.3.

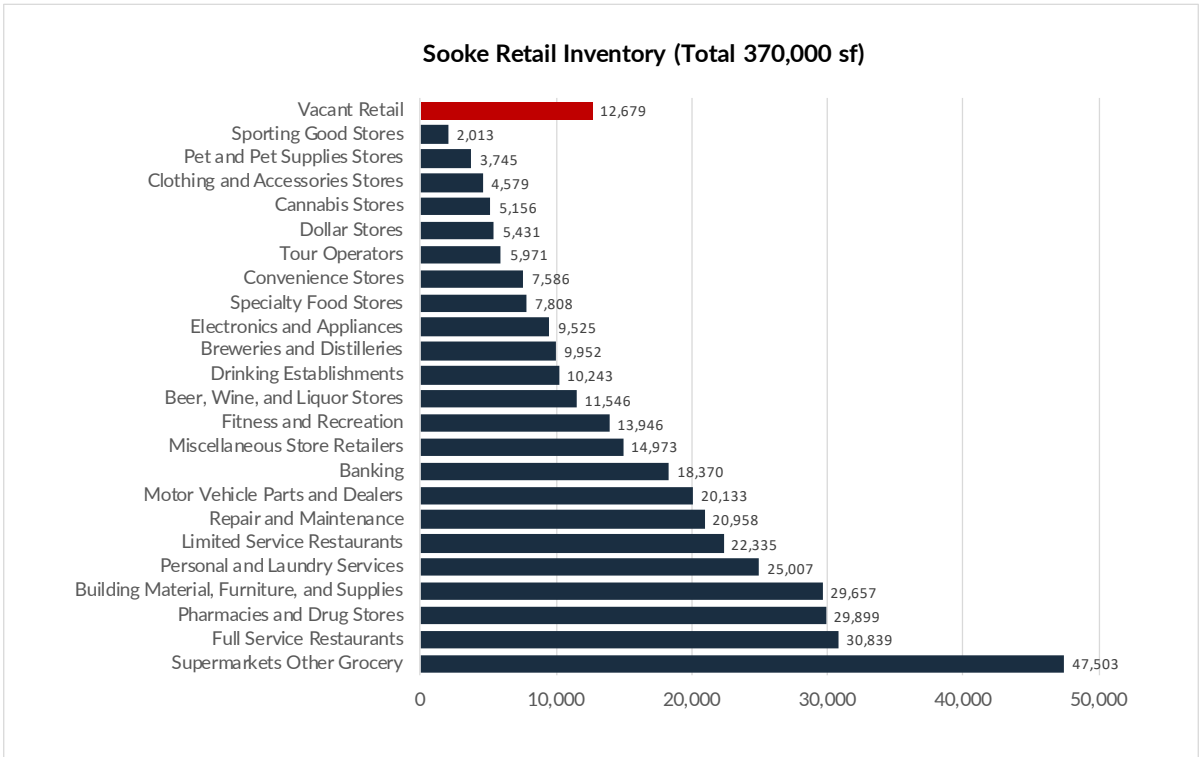
Sooke is a relatively captive market due to the distance and accessibility of other Western Communities, the closest major sources of retail competition. As can be expected in such a market, there is a notable amount of convenience and experience-oriented retail floorspace including two grocery stores, full service restaurants, limited service restaurants, pharmacies, and personal services. Consumers looking for comparison shopping categories such as clothing and electronics are more likely to choose to travel toward Victoria for their shopping needs. These patterns are expected to continue over the projection period of this report.

Sooke Retail Inventory by Subcategory		
Subcategory	Floor Area	%
Supermarkets Other Grocery	47,503	12.80%
Full Service Restaurants	30,839	8.30%
Pharmacies and Drug Stores	29,899	8.10%
Building Material, Furniture, and Supplies	29,657	8.00%
Personal and Laundry Services	25,007	6.80%
Limited Service Restaurants	22,335	6.00%
Repair and Maintenance	20,958	5.70%
Motor Vehicle Parts and Dealers	20,133	5.40%
Banking	18,370	5.00%
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	14,973	4.00%
Fitness and Recreation	13,946	3.80%
Beer, Wine, and Liquor Stores	11,546	3.10%
Drinking Establishments	10,243	2.80%
Breweries and Distilleries	9,952	2.70%
Electronics and Appliances	9,525	2.60%
Specialty Food Stores	7,808	2.10%
Convenience Stores	7,586	2.10%
Tour Operators	5,971	1.60%
Dollar Stores	5,431	1.50%
Cannabis Stores	5,156	1.40%
Clothing and Accessories Stores	4,579	1.20%
Pet and Pet Supplies Stores	3,745	1.00%
Sporting Good Stores	2,013	0.50%
Vacant Retail	12,679	3.40%
Grand Total	370,000	100.00%
Sooke Retail Inventory by Subarea		
Subarea	Floor Area	% of Total
Town Centre	272,433	73.70%
North Sooke	51,800	14.00%
West Sooke	31,215	8.40%
South Sooke	14,408	3.90%
Grand Total	370,000	100.00%

[Figure 2.2.2] Sooke Retail Inventory by Subcategory and Subarea.



[Figure 2.2.3] Map of Sooke Subareas.



[Figure 2.2.4] Sooke Retail Inventory by Subcategory.

2.2.3 Retail Growth Projections and Gap Analysis

Colliers assessed the demand for future retail floorspace within Sooke by first analyzing the growth in total retail expenditure potential by subcategory generated by the population projections outlined in Section 2.1.1. Local retail market dynamics were then examined to estimate the proportion of the category-specific potential expenditures that could realistically be captured within Sooke. For example, it is unlikely the Sooke residents will begin completing the majority of their comparison shopping purchases (clothing, electronics, etc.) in Sooke over the next 20 years when there is substantial preferential supply closer to Victoria. Conversely, it can be expected that most convenience-based expenditures (groceries, liquor, pharmacy, etc.) will be made within Sooke. Based on this analysis, Colliers estimates that Sooke could experience demand for an additional 18,035 square feet of retail floorspace by 2030, 110,717 square feet by 2040, and 230,832 square feet by 2050. With an average floor area ratio of 0.5, this would result in demand for an additional 5.1 acres of land by 2040 and 10.6 acres by 2050.

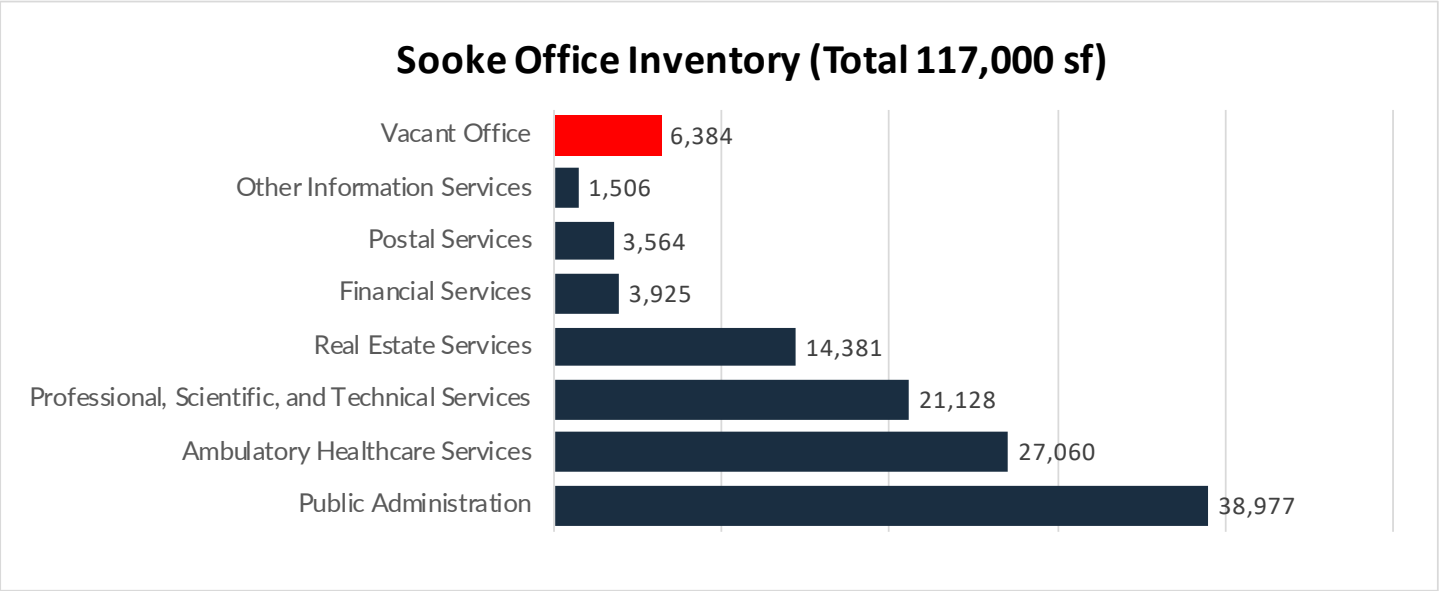
Retail Demand Projections	Supply	Additional GLA Demand (sf)		
Major Retail Category	2020	2030	2040	2050
Motor vehicle and parts dealers and repairs	41,091	0	0	0
Building Material, Furniture, and Supplies	29,657	2,624	11,691	23,440
Electronics and appliance stores	9,525	845	3,758	7,532
Supermarkets and other grocery stores	47,503	3,419	17,428	35,586
Convenience stores	7,586	546	2,783	5,682
Specialty food stores	7,808	594	2,905	5,901
Beer, wine, and liquor stores	11,546	793	4,187	8,587
Health and personal care stores	29,899	2,307	11,167	22,651
Clothing and clothing accessories stores	4,579	400	1,798	3,609
Sporting goods, hobby, book, and music stores	2,013	161	771	1,562
Miscellaneous store retailers*	35,276	122	9,912	22,600
Net Warranted Retail Floor Area (sf)	226,483	11,810	66,400	137,150
Full-service restaurants**	51,034	3,879	19,018	38,640
Limited-service restaurants	22,335	1,656	8,270	16,842
Net Warranted Food & Beverage Floor Area (sf)	73,369	5,535	27,288	55,482
Service Commercial***	57,323	690	17,029	38,200
Vacant	12,679			
Total Floor Area (sf)	369,854	18,035	110,717	230,832
Additional Land Demand at 0.5 FAR (sf)		36,069	221,435	461,664
Additional Land Demand at 0.5 FAR (ac)		0.8	5.1	10.6

[Figure 2.2.5] Sooke Retail Demand Projections.



2.2.4 Existing Office Inventory

The District of Sooke currently has an inventory of approximately 117,000 square feet of office floorspace with a vacancy rate of 5.5%. The office market within Sooke is small and almost entirely focused on serving the local population, and as such, the largest occupiers of floorspace are public administration services, ambulatory healthcare services (doctors, dentists, chiropractors, etc.), and professional services. Aside from the municipal hall and a few small office-only buildings, a large portion of this floorspace is located within commercial developments either on the ground floor or second floor above retail uses. This form of office floorspace is common in municipalities such as Sooke and expected to continue moving forward.



[Figure 2.2.6] Sooke Office Inventory by Subcategory.

Sooke Office Inventory by Subcategory		
Subcategory	Floor Area	%
Public Administration	38,977	33.30%
Ambulatory Healthcare Services	27,060	23.10%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	21,128	18.10%
Real Estate Services	14,381	12.30%
Financial Services	3,925	3.40%
Postal Services	3,564	3.00%
Other Information Services	1,506	1.30%
Vacant Office	6,384	5.50%
Grand Total	117,000	100.00%
Sook Office Inventory by Subarea		
Subarea	Floor Area	% of Total
Town Centre	75,970	65.00%
North Sooke	28,732	24.60%
West Sooke	10,727	9.20%
South Sooke	1,497	1.30%
Grand Total	117,000	100.00%

[Figure 2.2.7] Sooke Office Inventory by Subcategory and Subarea.



2.2.5 Office Growth Projections and Gap Analysis

Based on the employment projections outlined in Section 2.1.4 and on the opposing page, along with an assessment of the analyses conducted by Urbanics, Colliers has projected expected future demand for office space within Sooke. This demand model accounts for the fact that approximately 30% of employed Sooke residents currently have jobs within the District and that this ratio could slowly grow to approximately 40% by 2050 if the Town Centre matures into a more diverse mixed-use centre of commerce. This analysis also assumes that approximately half of the currently vacant units will be absorbed by 2030, with the remaining half being persistently vacant due to factors such as age, quality, location, and the competitive impact of new supply.

Based on this analysis, Colliers estimates that Sooke could experience demand for an additional 47,010 square feet of office floorspace by 2030, 86,073 square feet by 2040, and 125,836 square feet by 2050. The majority of this floorspace is expected to be accommodated in mixed-use developments with retail uses at the ground floor, and potentially residential uses above, as the achievable rental rates for office units in Sooke are unlikely to support the financially feasible development of major standalone office buildings.

Sooke Office Demand Projections	2016	2030	2040	2050
Total Working Age Population	8,525	10,954	12,400	13,592
In the labour force	5,045	6,482	7,339	8,044
Employed	4,615	6,080	6,713	7,359
Unemployed	430	402	455	499
Not in the labour force	3,670	4,472	5,062	5,548
Participation rate	59%	59%	59%	59%
Employment rate	91%	91%	91%	91%
Unemployment rate	6.20%	6.20%	6.20%	6.20%
Office Employment Rate (%)	33%	33%	33%	33%
Office Employment Total*	457	669	812	971
Square Feet Per Office Employee	256	250	250	250
Projected Office Floorspace Requirements (sf)	117,000	167,202	203,073	242,836
Additional Office Floorspace Requirements (sf)	-	47,010	86,073	125,836
Vacant (sf)**	6,384	3,192	3,192	3,192
Estimated FAR		1.5 - 2		
Additional Land Requirement (acres)***		0.5 - 0.7	1.0 - 1.3	1.4 - 1.9

[Figure 2.2.8] Sooke Office Demand Projections..



2.2.6 Land Use Mix

Land use mix refers to the diversity of land uses (e.g. residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, agricultural, etc) within a given area. Higher degrees of land use mixes are associated with “complete communities”, wherein residents have easy access to a variety of amenities and services within their neighbourhood. These include shops and restaurants, cultural and civic facilities (e.g. museums, libraries, galleries), employment opportunities, recreational destinations (e.g. parks, community centres), and more. This mix allows residents to live, work, shop, play, and learn close to home.

Land use mix is important for creating distinct, vibrant neighbourhoods that support businesses and offer housing and transportation choice. For example, with other variables such as residential density held as constants, the odds of a person walking are twice as high in areas with a high degree of mixed uses than in areas with a low degree of mixed uses. Residents living near multiple and diverse retail destinations also generally make more frequent and shorter shopping trips, and more by walking and cycling. A higher degree of land use mix also translates into a stronger sense of community, where residents are more likely to know their neighbours, participate politically, trust others, form community networks, and be socially engaged.

Importantly, a diverse land use mix also limits reliance on personal vehicle travel, **reducing one of the most significant sources of community generated greenhouse gas emissions.**

Figures 2.2.9 through 2.2.18 illustrate access to important destinations within a typical walkshed. Studies have shown that **people are much less likely to choose to walk as a mode of travel beyond a 5-10 minute walk, which is roughly 400-800 meters** (and based on an average walking speed of 5 km per hour). All of the walking distances presented in the maps in this section are based on real travel distance through the transportation network (e.g. sidewalks, trails, etc), rather than distance “as the crow flies”. This enables an accurate assessment of the actual travel experience of people in Sooke.



[Image 2.2.2] Sooke Potholes Provincial Park.



[Image 2.2.3] The Stick in the Mud Coffee House.  
Image Credit: Wild Mountain Dinners



[Image 2.2.4] Sooke Country Market.  
Image Credit: Sooke Pocket News.



[Image 2.2.5] Sooke Arts Council Gallery.  
Image Credit: Sooke Arts Council.



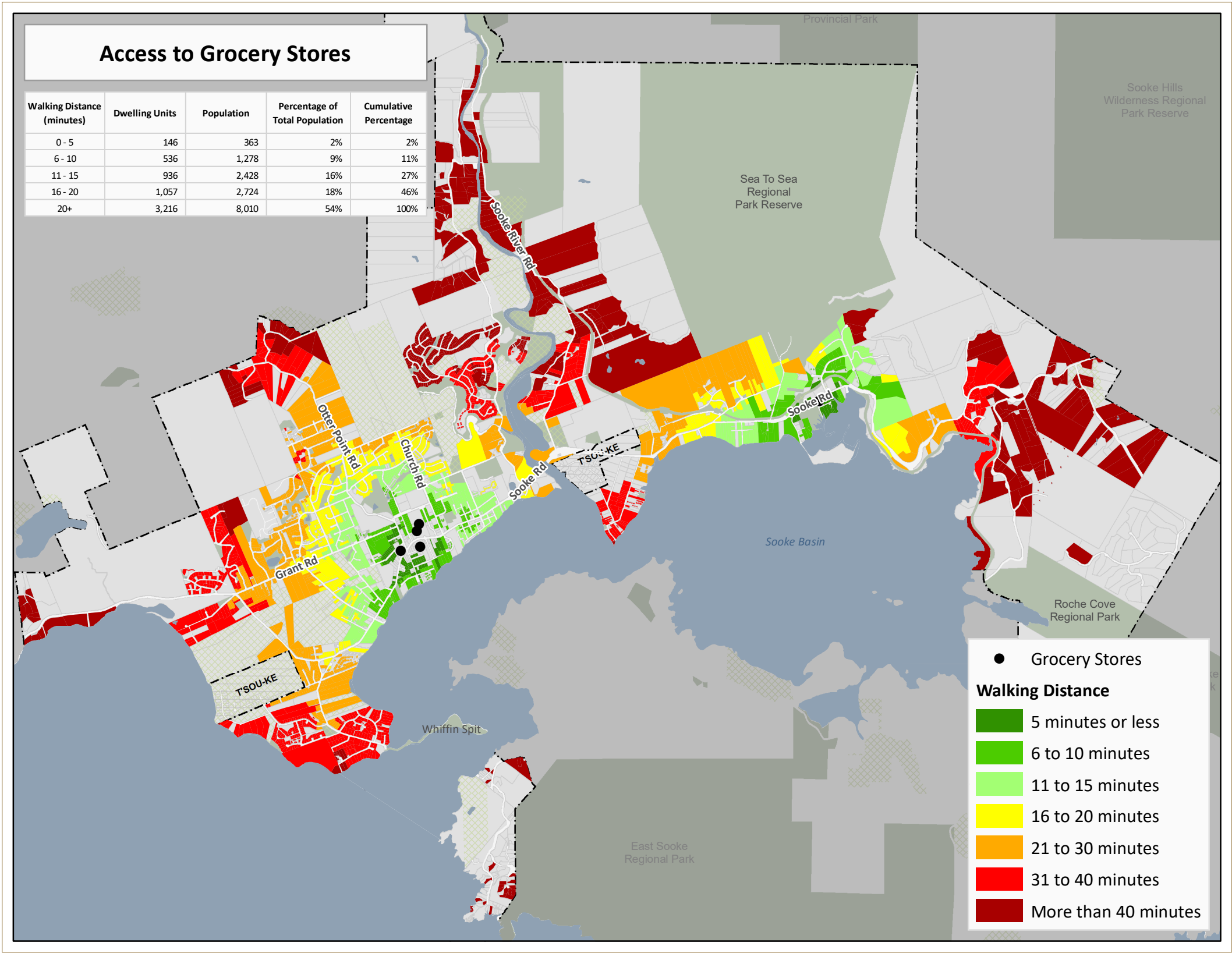
[Image 2.2.6] Sheringham Distillery.  
Image Credit: James Macdonald/Bloomberg News.



Grocery Stores

Grocery stores are an important proxy for land use mix, as they are among the top trip generators outside of work and school.

As shown in Figure 2.2.9, only two percent of Sooke residents live within a five-minute walk of a grocery store, and 11 percent of residents live within a 10 minute walk. Most of these residents live within the Town Centre area or Saseenos neighbourhood.



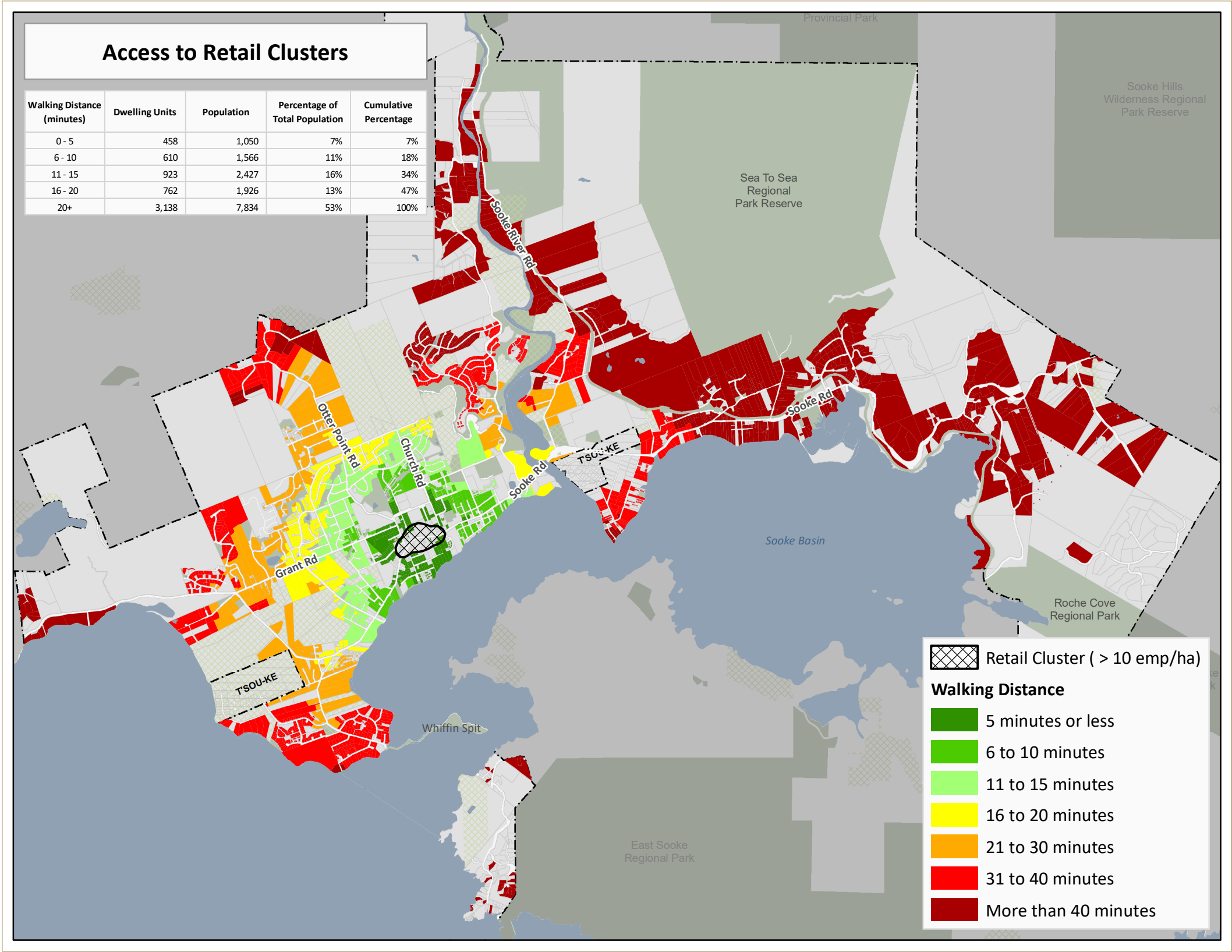
[Figure 2.2.9] Walking Distance to Sooke Grocery Stores.



Retail Clusters

Residents' proximity to other daily commercial needs is presented in Figure 2.2.10, which shows that almost a fifth (18%) of Sooke residents are within a 10 minute walk of retail areas. As only one retail cluster was identified in the Town Centre area, neighbourhoods generally perform better the closer they are to this area.

A retail cluster is defined as an area with 10 employees or greater per hectare.

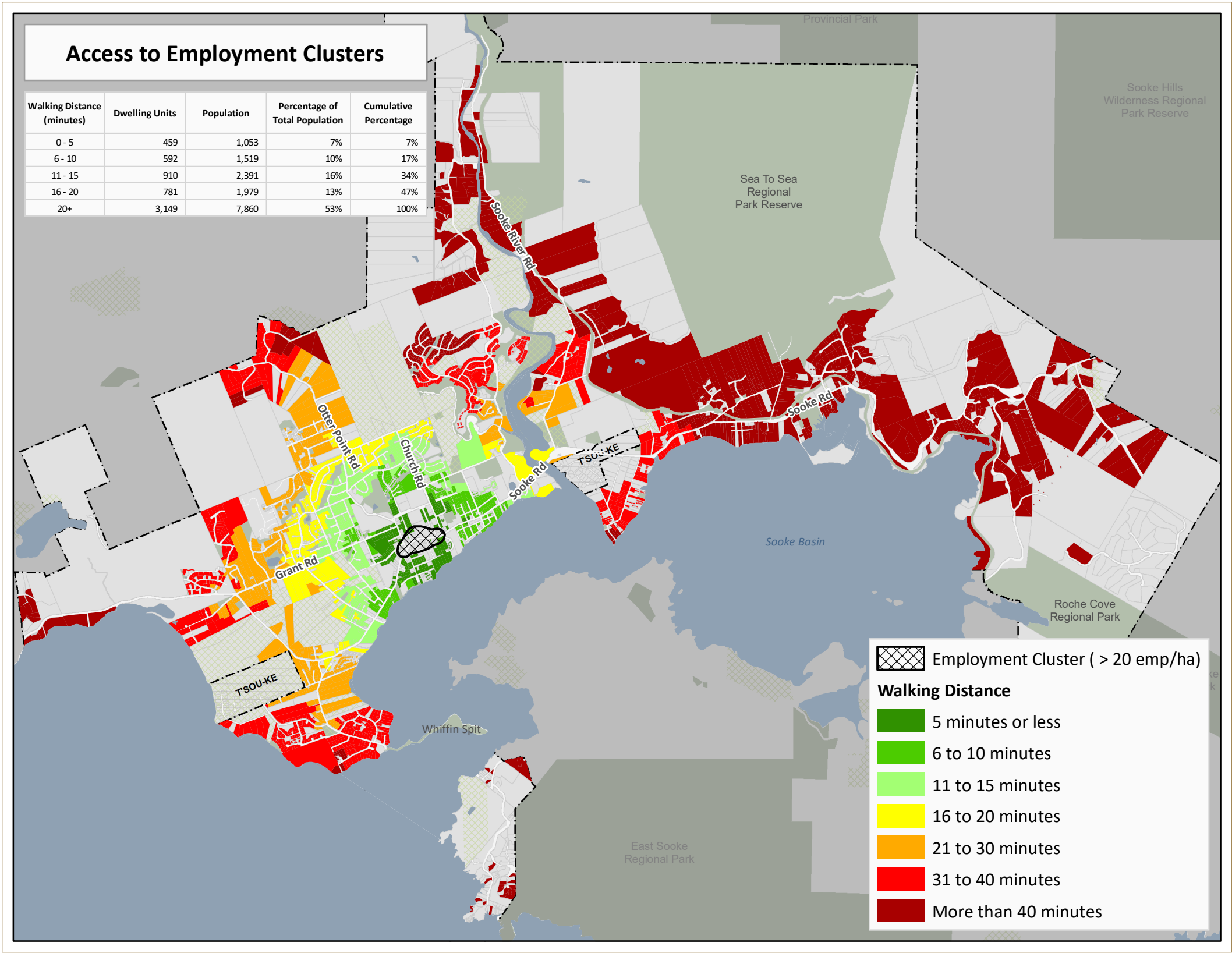


[Figure 2.2.10] Walking Distance to Sooke Retail Clusters.

Employment Clusters

Jobs are also a top trip generator. While comprehensive data linking individual residents with their job locations do not exist, Figure 2.2.11 nonetheless helps paint a picture of proximity to potential employment spaces. In this analysis, an employment cluster is defined as any area with greater than 20 employees per hectare.

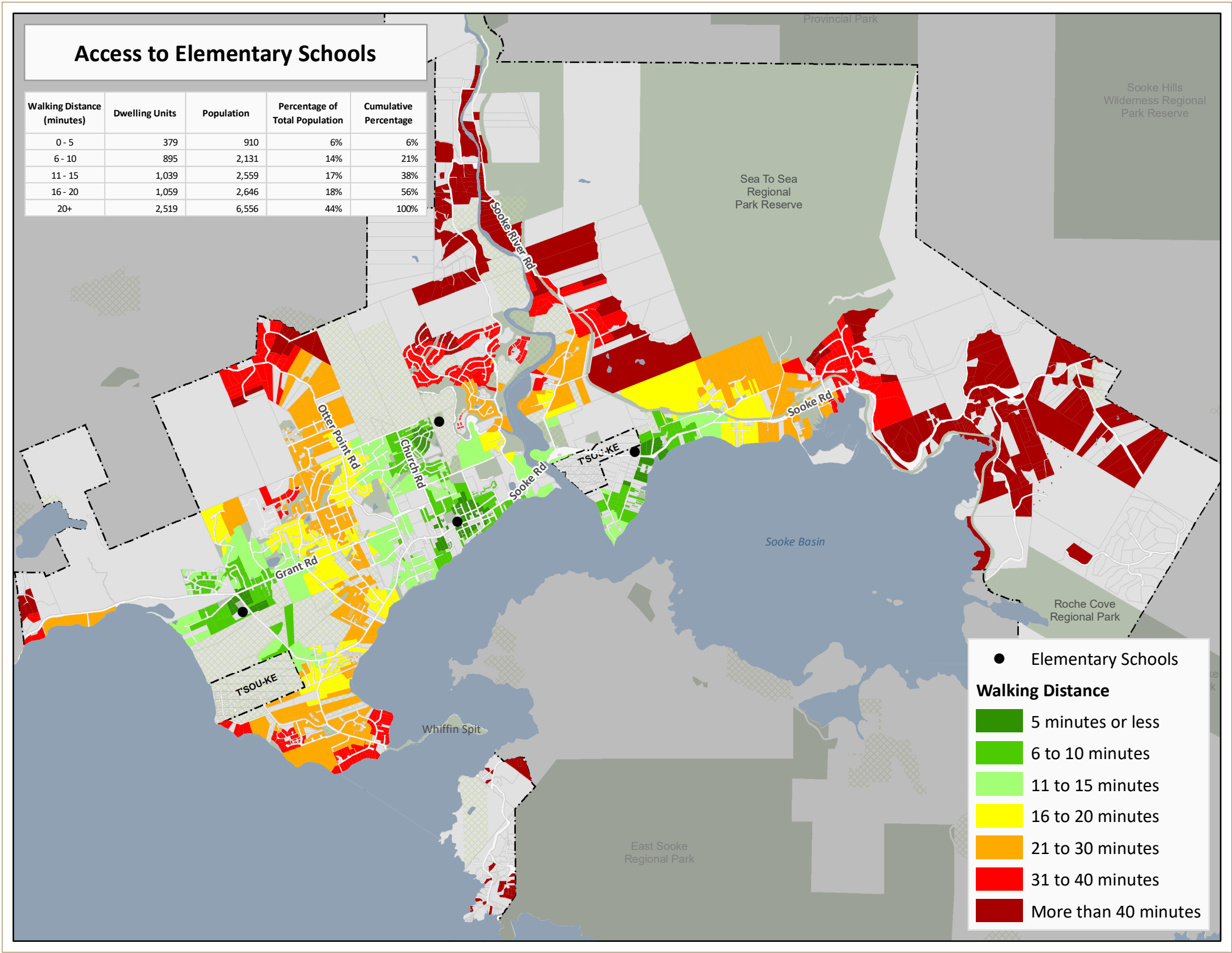
Only seven percent of residents live within a five-minute walk of an employment cluster, and 17 percent live within a 10 minute walk. Again – as only one employment cluster was identified in the Town Centre, neighbourhoods generally perform better the closer they are to this area.



[Figure 2.2.11] Walking Distance to Employment Clusters.

Elementary Schools

Elementary and secondary schools are also top trip generators. Figures 2.2.12 and 2.2.13 present residential proximity to the District's four elementary schools. Only six percent of residents live within a five-minute walk of an elementary school, and 22 percent within a 10 minute walk.



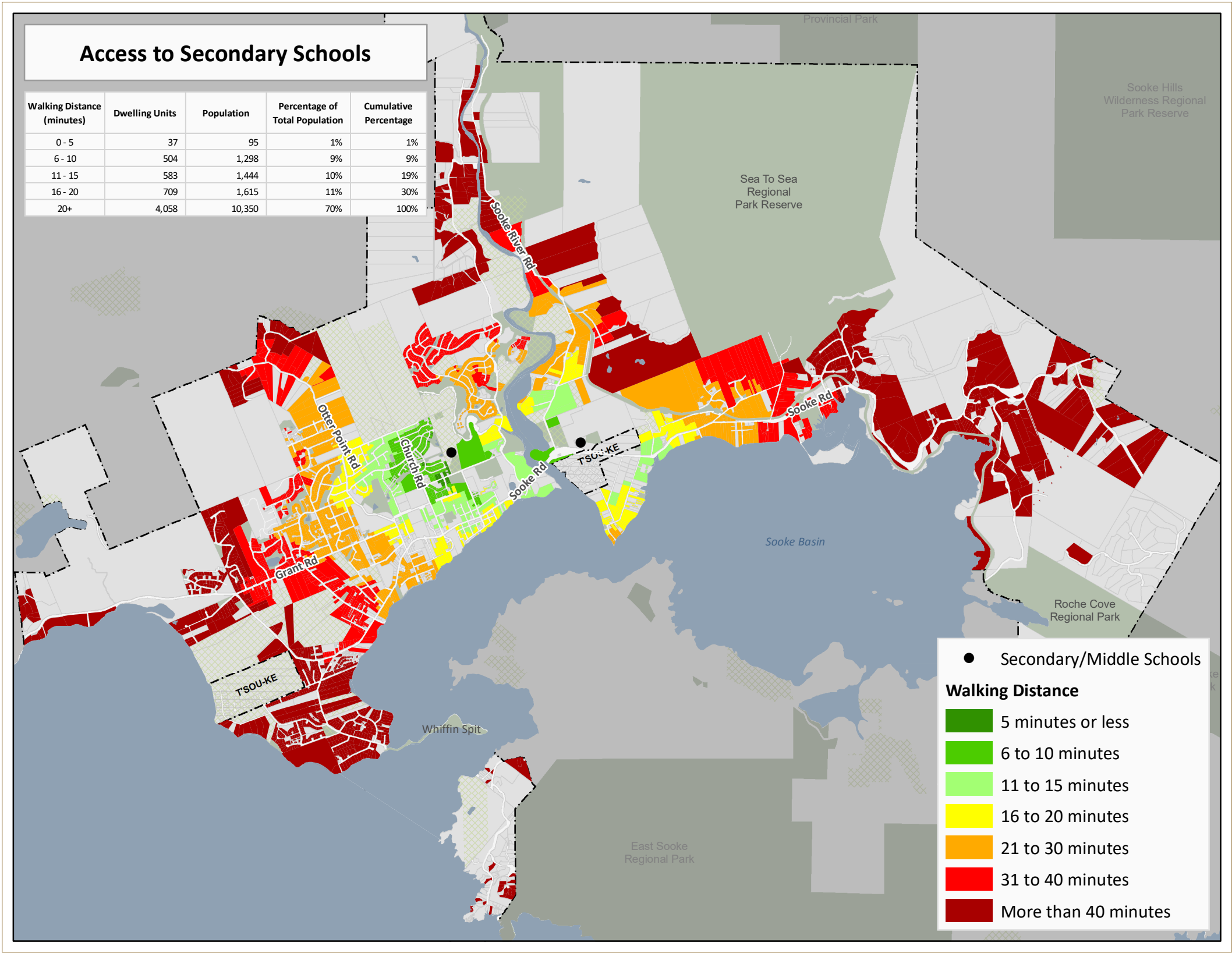
[Figure 2.2.12] Walking Distance to Elementary Schools.



Secondary Schools

One percent of residents live within a five-minute walk of one of Sooke's two secondary schools (including the middle school), and nine percent live within a 10 minute walk.

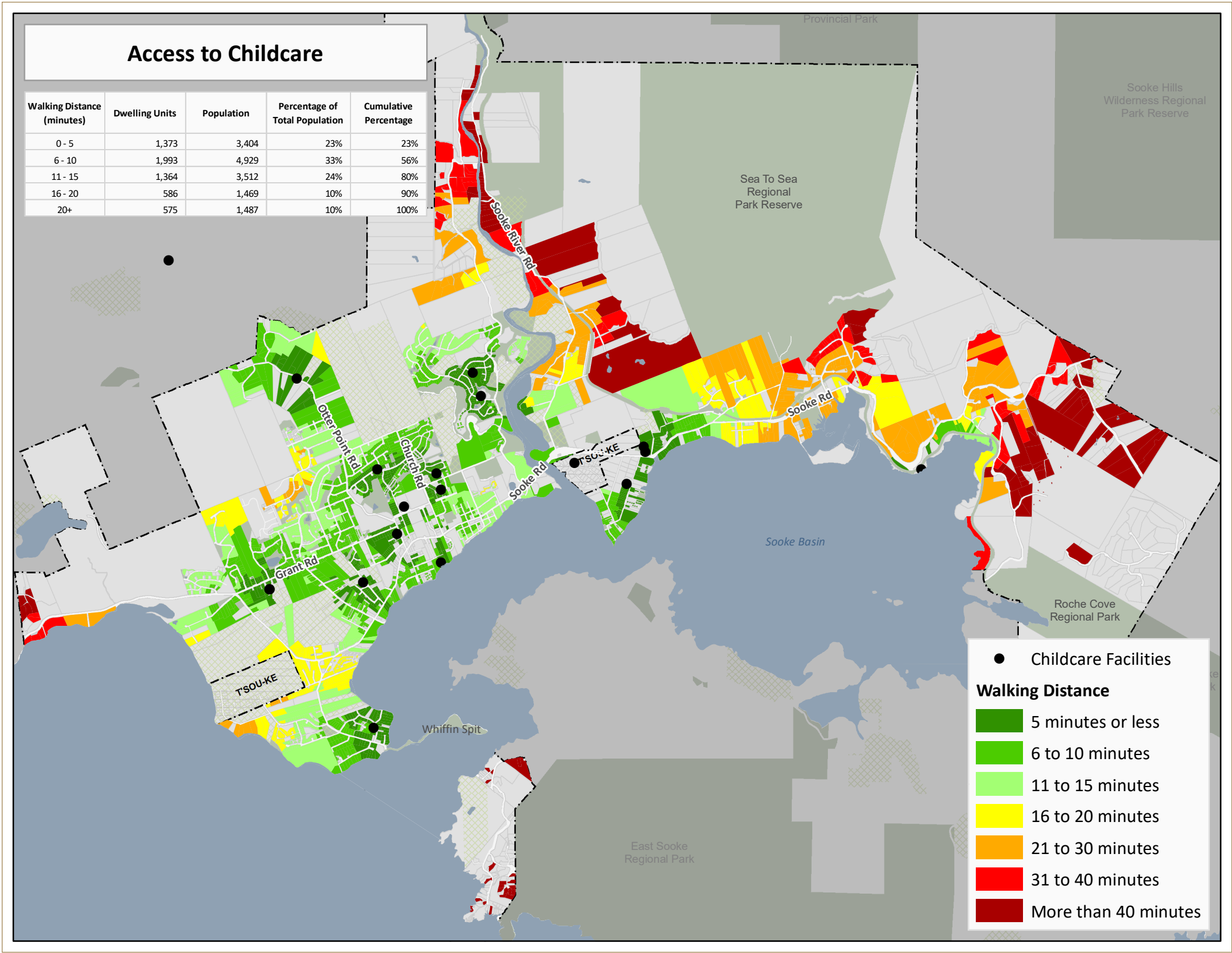
Since school sizes dictate the number of schools in a given community and are often outside the direct influence of land use policy, urban design – and specifically neighbourhood connectivity – have a major role to play in improving pedestrian access to schools.



[Figure 2.2.13] Walking Distance to Secondary and Middle Schools.

Childcare Facilities

Inclusive and equitable communities have childcare spaces distributed throughout a community. Providing proximity to this important use is also important for encouraging walking at the earliest ages, building a culture of active, low-carbon travel. Figure 2.2.14 shows that 23 percent of residents live within a five-minute walk of a childcare space, 56 percent within a 10 minute walk, and 80 percent live within a 15 minute walk. These are encouraging numbers as they also paint a positive picture in areas that do not perform as well with other land use metrics.



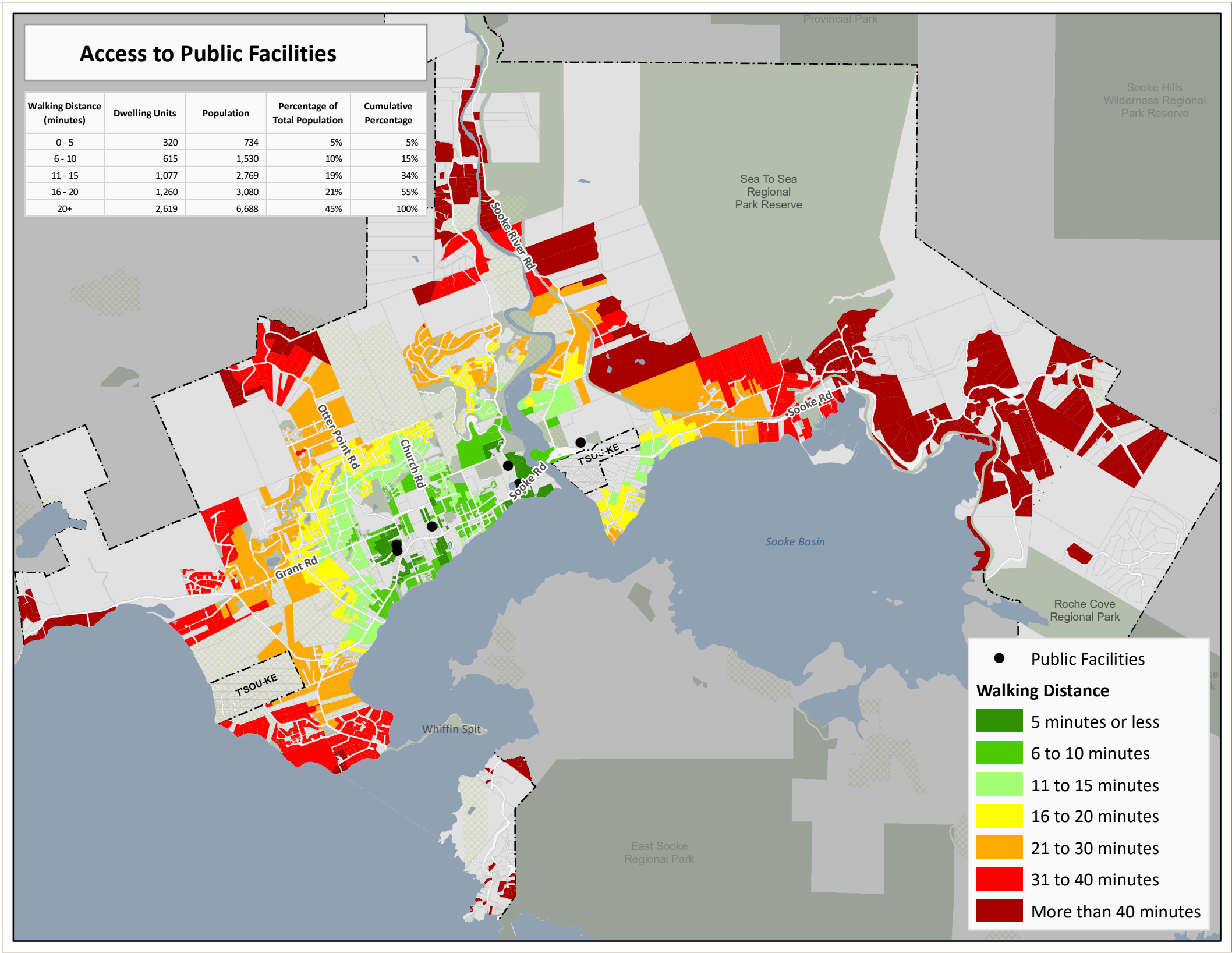
[Figure 2.2.14] Walking Distance to Childcare Facilities.



Public Facilities

Community centres and other public facilities are important social hearts and gathering spaces, bringing neighbours together and providing opportunities for recreation, culture, learning, and more. Figure 2.2.15 presents walking distance to these facilities, which include halls (community halls, lodges, clubs, etc) and recreational and cultural buildings. Fifteen percent of residents live within a 10-minute walk of public facilities, and 34 percent live within 15 minutes of such facilities.

As with many other destinations and services, public facilities concentrate in or adjacent to the Town Centre area. While it is important to have such facilities in every neighbourhood, a concentration of community spaces in a town centre adds character, creates a sense of shared identity, and establishes a draw to the District's centre and cultural heart.

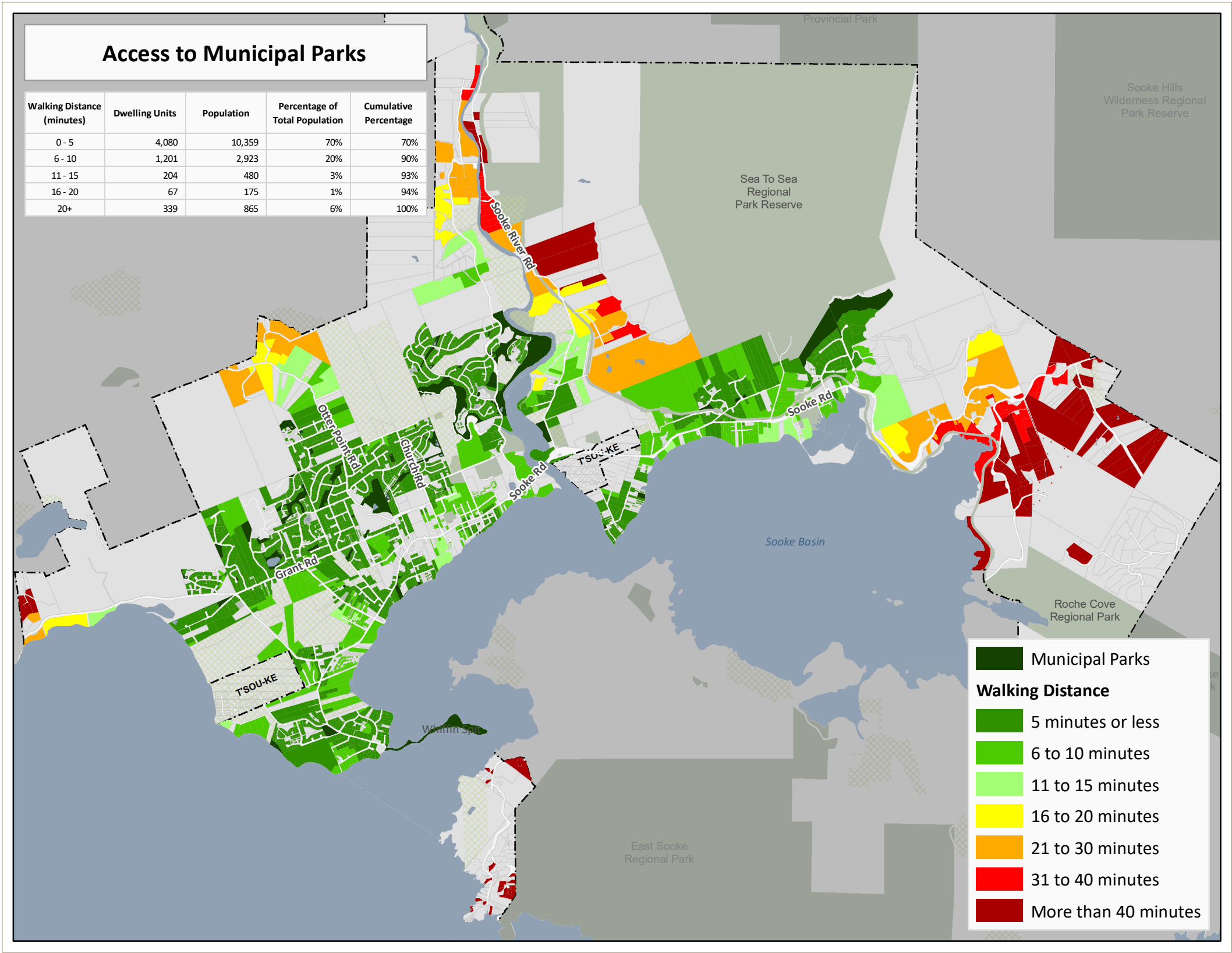


[Figure 2.2.15] Walking Distance to Public Facilities.

Parks and Open Spaces

Access to parks, green spaces, natural areas, and other open spaces is important to both individual health and community well-being. These spaces are unique and valuable in Sooke, and nearly all households – 90 percent of the population – are within a 10 minute walk of a park. Figure 2.2.16 highlights several areas in North and East Sooke that are potentially under-served by municipal parks. It is worth noting that these areas may have greater access to regional and provincial parks not captured through this analysis, including East Sooke Regional Park, Roche Cove Regional Park, Sea to Sea Regional Park, and Potholes Provincial Park.

Further discussion on parks and natural areas – including their role in ecological function – is included in Section 2.6: Ecology and Environment.



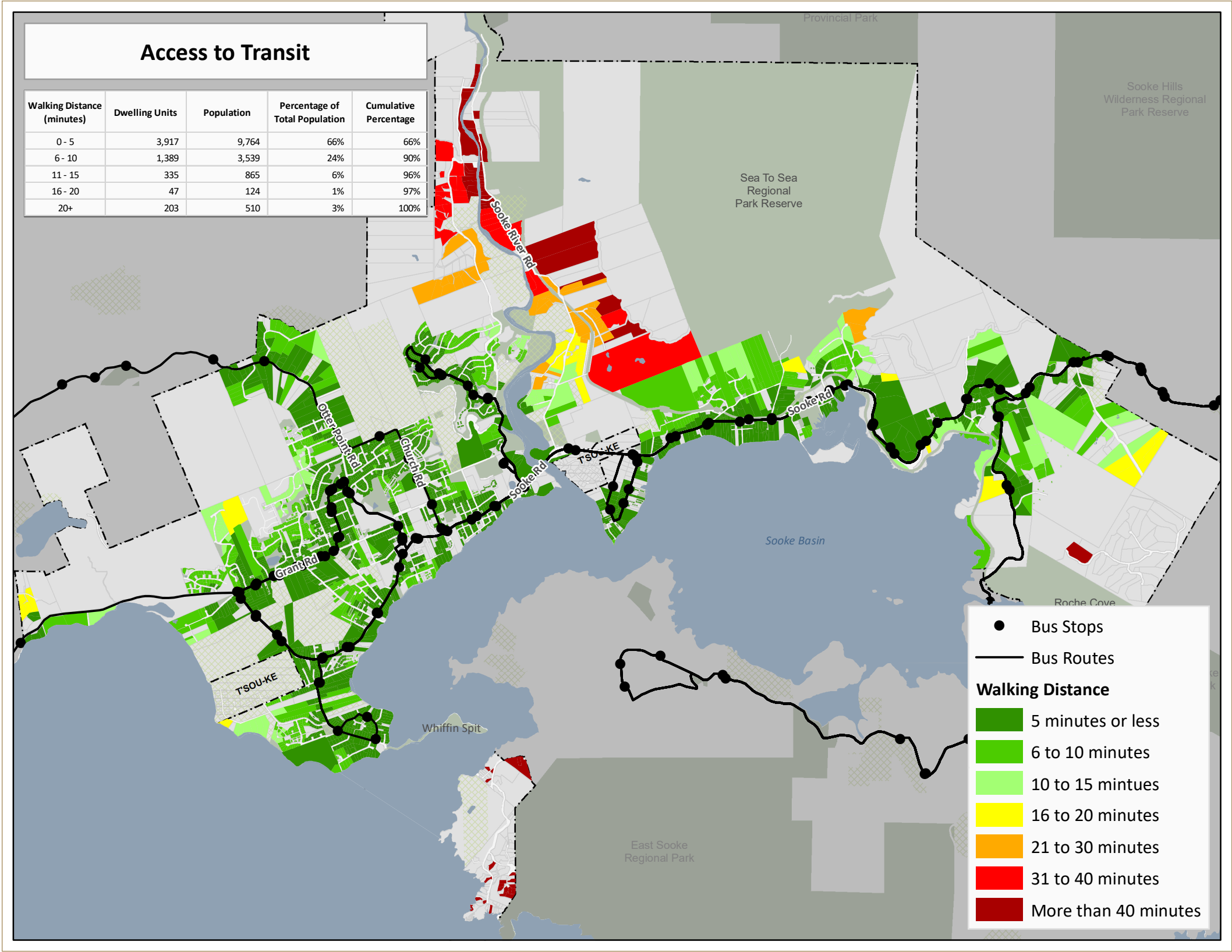
[Figure 2.2.16] Walking Distance to Municipal Parks.



Transit

Although the majority of Sooke residents (90%) are within a 10 minute walk of a transit stop – as Figure 2.2.17 illustrates – the District of Sooke's nearly completed Transportation Master Plan highlights ongoing challenges with the existing transit network, including limited transit service and lack of bus stop amenities (e.g., seating, shelters), resulting in low ridership despite relatively comprehensive local coverage.

Further discussion on the role of transit within Sooke can be found in Section 2.5.4.

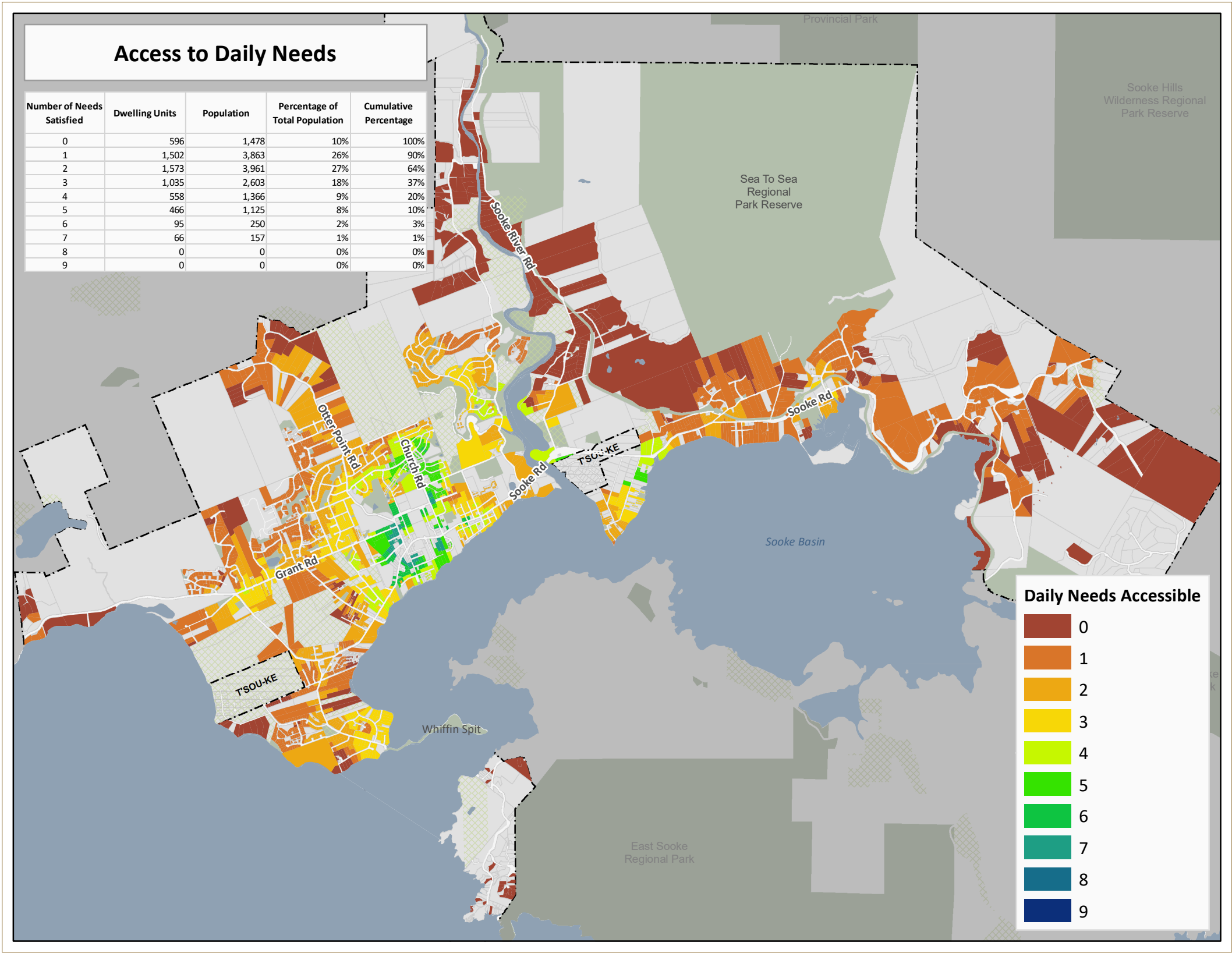


[Figure 2.2.17] Walking Distance to Transit Stops.

Land Use Mix Summary

Figure 2.2.18 brings together the components of land use mix analyzed in this section by summarizing access to daily needs. It reveals that the highest performing areas are located within and adjacent to the Town Centre, and generally the closer a neighbourhood is to this area, the better it performs.

Densities and urban design also play an important role in access to daily needs, and likelihood of travel by foot, bicycle, or transit. They are further explored in the sections that follow.



[Figure 2.2.18] Composite Map of Daily Needs Accessible to Sooke Residents based on Typical Walksheds.



2.3 Densities

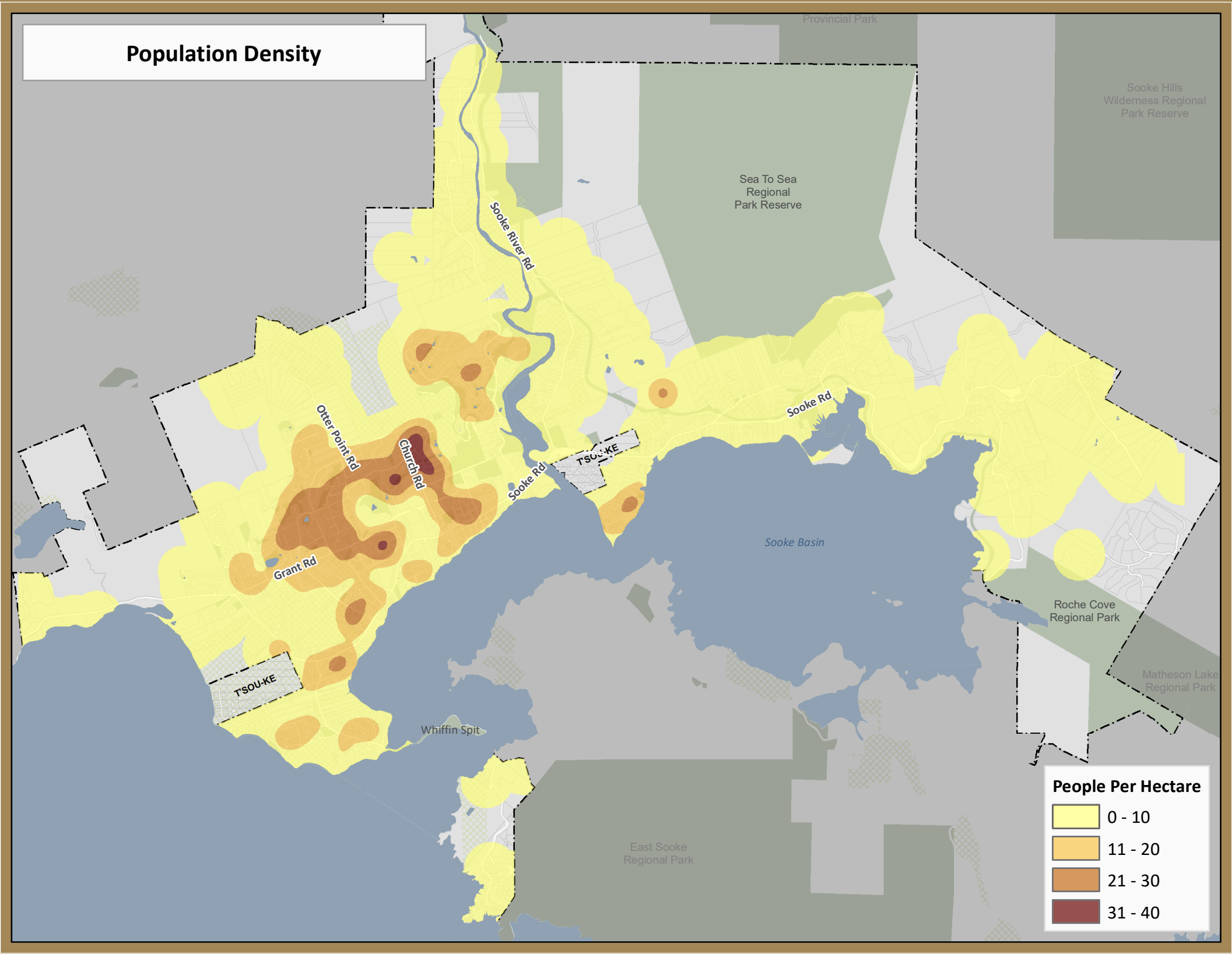
Density refers to the number of people, homes, or jobs within a certain area. Higher residential density, often in the form of multi-family housing, can result in: energy savings; lower per capita municipal infrastructure and service costs (e.g. roadways, water and sewer infrastructure, transit, municipal services like fire stations, recreation centres, and schools, etc); greater housing choices and affordability; more vibrant street life and public realm; a larger proportion of trips taken by foot, bike, and transit; and, as a result, reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

2.3.1 Population Density

Research shows that gross residential densities need to exceed approximately 32 people per hectare, before even a minor shift away from predominant vehicle use is seen. It is important to note, however, that this is considered a bare minimum, with even higher densities needed to support significant transportation choice and amenities.

Figure 2.3.1 presents population density in Sooke. It reveals that most areas (shown in yellow and orange) do not have residential densities that meet or exceed the minimum thresholds to be considered walkable or supportive of frequent transit service, which partly explains why the modal split currently favours vehicle use. Many of these residential densities are also insufficient to create the amount of customers needed to support neighbourhood-serving businesses like cafés and neighbourhood grocers, which in turn influences access to amenities, street life, overall vitality, and community generated greenhouse gas emissions.

At the same time, pockets of density (shown in dark red) that do meet and exceed these thresholds offer promising local precedents that can be modelled elsewhere in the District.



[Figure 2.3.1] Sooke's Population Density.

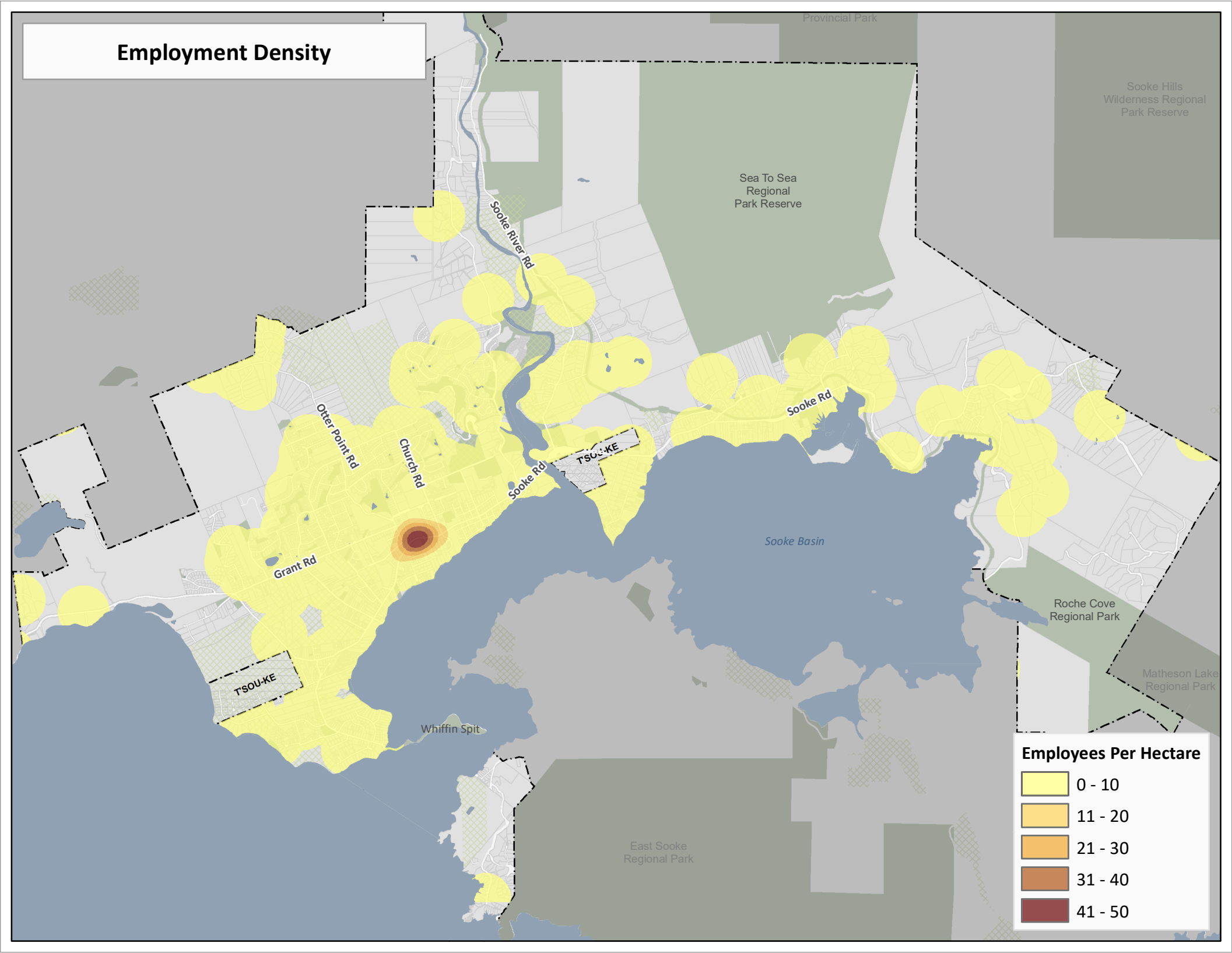
### 2.3.2 Employment Density

Employment density is also very important to reducing greenhouse gas emissions, as the concentration of jobs in a particular area can affect transit ridership even more strongly than the concentration of its residents. For employment, research shows that a minimum threshold of anywhere from 50 to 185 jobs per hectare is needed for a significant modal shift from single-occupancy vehicle use to walking and transit use. For activity centres and corridors, employment densities could be considered in tandem with residential densities, as they both contribute to transit viability (for example) in central/nodal urban areas.

Figure 2.3.2 presents employment density in Sooke. It shows that only one area in the Town Centre (shown as dark red) meets or exceeds the minimum threshold for transit supportiveness.

Ideally, areas of higher population density are also areas of higher employment density, suggesting that a large proportion of residents could walk to work. When compared with Figure 2.3.1 (Population Density), areas of residential density tend not to directly overlap or integrate with the area of employee density. This is likely due to the rarity of truly mixed use neighbourhoods. However a number of residential density nodes are immediately adjacent to the employment cluster, including East and West Town Centre.

As previously outlined in Section 2.1.4, 54% of Sooke residents commute to employment locations outside of the District. Reducing travel distances by personal vehicle is critical to reducing community greenhouse gas emissions.



[Figure 2.3.2] Sooke's Employment Density.



# 2.4 Urban Form

## 2.4.1 Connectivity

Street connectivity is a measure of travel directness and availability of alternative routes through a network, which influences the real distance traveled between a point of origin (e.g. home) and a destination (e.g. transit stop, retailer, etc).

In fact, **connectivity is one of the most significant factors in the frequency and quantity of walking trips, which in turn also supports transit.**

**Connected streets provide multiple route options throughout the community while ‘dead-end and loop streets’ serve adjacent properties only.**

As previously outlined, Sooke's newer suburban development reflects larger blocks and curvilinear streets with less connectivity. Many of these streets have the primary function of serving adjacent properties only, and wayfinding can be challenging. Establishing connectivity for walking and cycling in these areas depends more heavily on off-street pedestrian networks between property lines and along designated trail corridors.

## 2.4.2 Street Patterns

To the right are three examples of street patterns with varying levels of connectivity. Each circle's radius represents a five minute (400 metre) walk between two locations, while the pink solid line shows the actual distance required to travel.



Otter Point Road

5 MINS



Willowpark Way

9 MINS



Erinan Blvd.

19 MINS

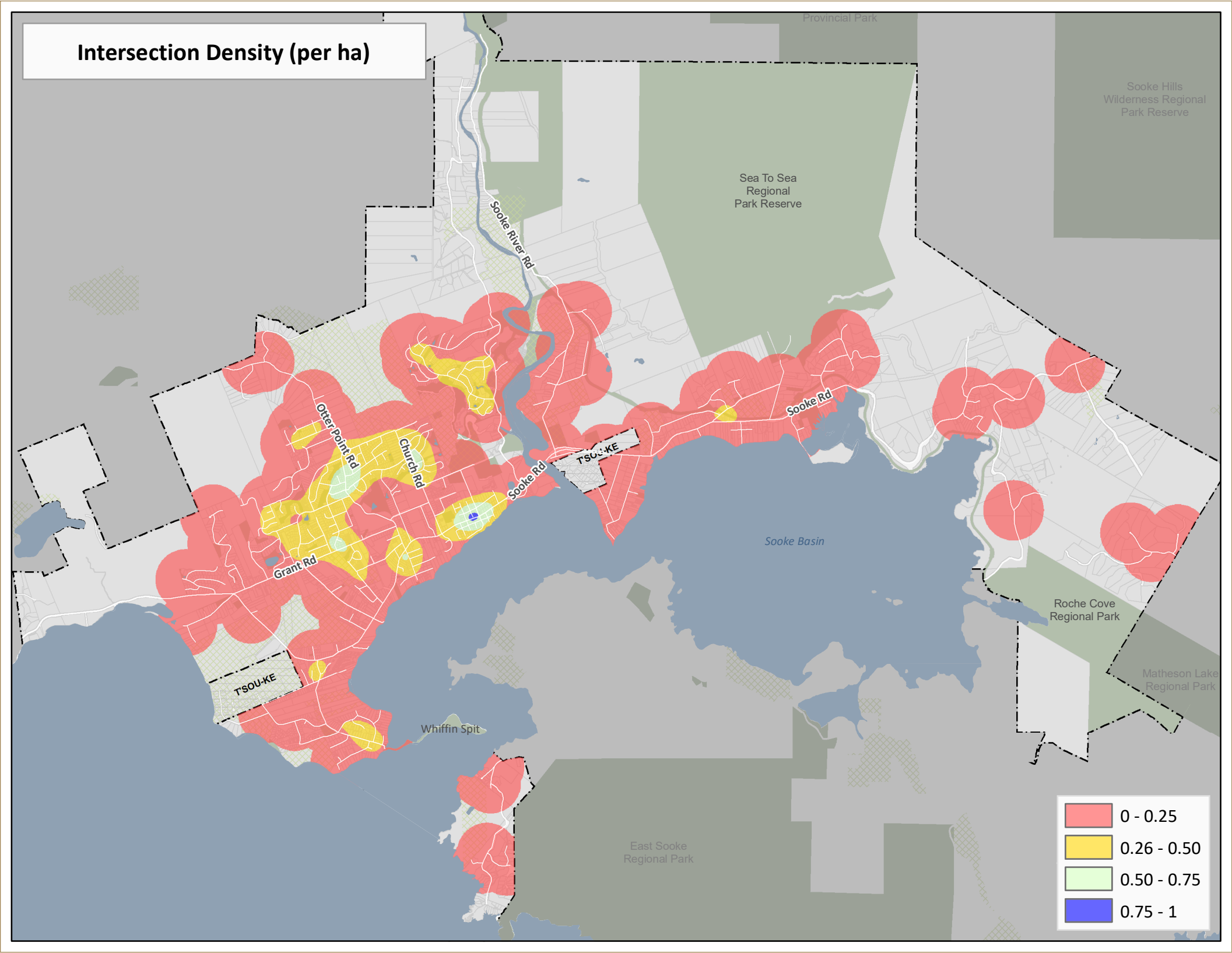
### 2.4.3 Intersection Density

The "street pattern" diagrams on pages 76 and 77 illustrate the significant difference between crow-fly distance and street network (i.e. actual travel) distance in poorly connected and well connected urban networks. Generally speaking, communities with smaller blocks – and therefore more opportunities to change direction while on foot – are considered highly connected.

However there are many ways in which to measure connectivity; one of the most common is intersection density, with research demonstrating that a minimum of 50 intersections per square kilometre – or 0.5 intersections per hectare – is needed before pedestrian travel becomes more commonplace.

Figure 2.4.1 presents connectivity across Sooke, as defined by the number of intersections with a minimum of three intersecting connections in a given area. Areas that meet or exceed the minimum threshold of 0.5 intersections per hectare in yellow/green/blue/violet. As is the case in most cities, these areas are often grid-like with smaller block sizes, and often found in the older, commercial nodes.

Currently, there are only several areas that exceed a threshold of 0.5, while only one small area in the Eastern Town Centre that has enough intersections to exceed 0.75 per hectare.



[Figure 2.4.1] Intersection Densities (Per Hectare) of Sooke.

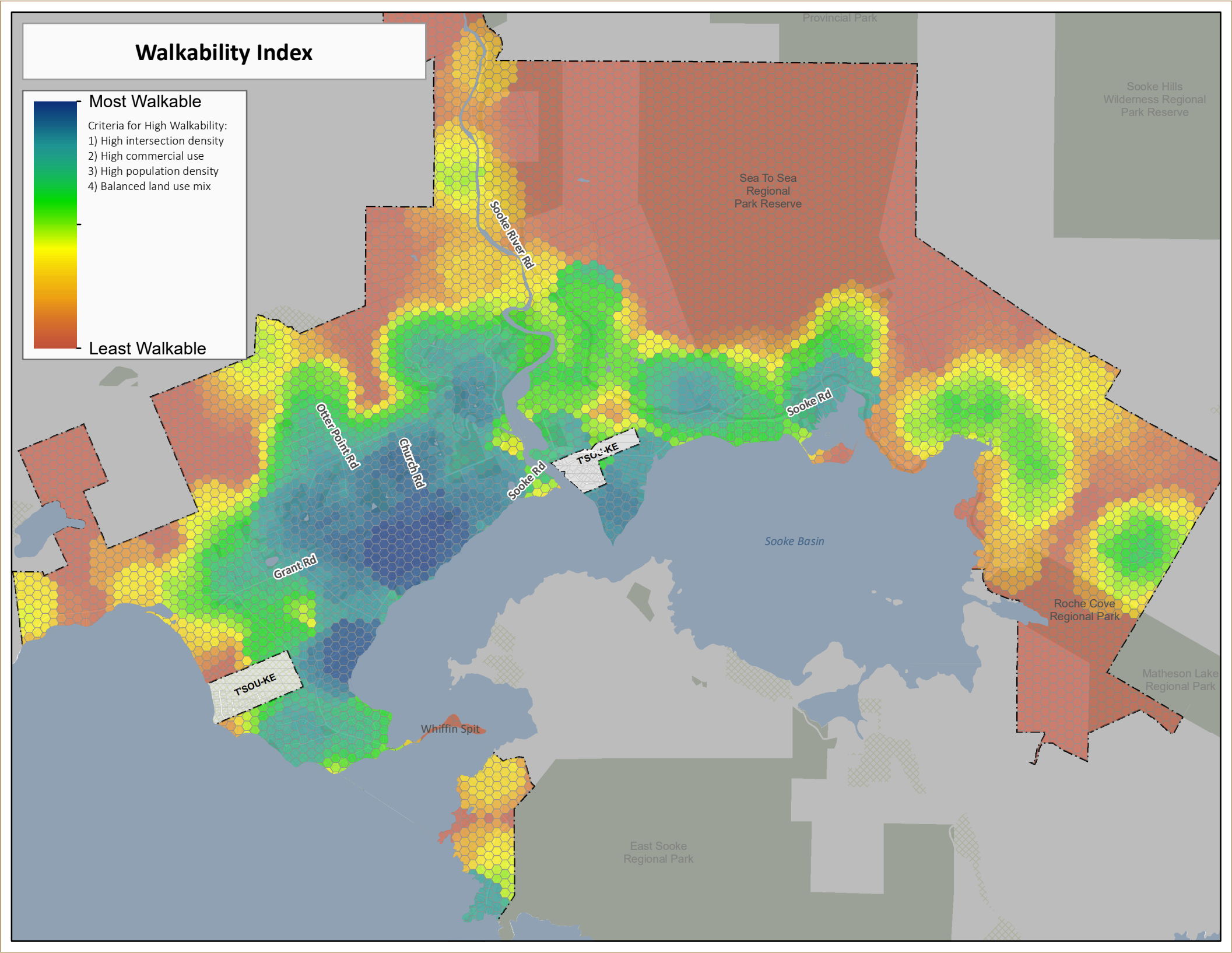


2.4.4 Walkability Summary

Figure 2.4.2 offers a summary snapshot of how land use and urban form are performing in Sooke from the perspective of walkability. It combines considerations for connectivity (intersection density), land use mix (commercial areas and more), and density (population density).

The map demonstrates how the Town Centre area is most walkable, followed by other areas immediately surrounding the Town Centre and across the river to the northeast. The least walkable areas are on the District's periphery to the north, and they offer opportunity for improvement once the scenario planning component of the OCP is underway.

It is worth noting that although this walkability index offers valuable insight in to the community's urban form and land use mix, it does not fully reflect the qualitative experience of walking in Sooke. More on streetscape character is found on the following pages.



[Figure 2.4.2] Walkability Index of Sooke.



2.4.5 Streetscape Character

Streets are public places. While they function as corridors in terms of moving people, they are equally important as places for sitting, playing, socializing, shopping, lingering, and more. They comprise an important part of the social fabric of the community, and help establish a sense of place and identity. Indeed, streets are places for people as much as are parks and community centres.

Streetscape quality – including relationships between buildings and public spaces like sidewalks – have significant influence on the experience and therefore desirability of walking and cycling in a city. As such, they also influence modal share and therefore are a part of strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Several examples of typical street conditions found in Sooke are captured on the opposing page. These precedents highlight a range of approaches to urban design and space allocation for different modes.

Image 2.4.1 (Eustace Road at Shields Road) highlights a 'back of house' condition, with no sidewalk, a large waste receptacle, and multiple parking spaces. Although dominated by vehicles, the reduced building setbacks frame an intimate pedestrian space.

Image 2.4.2 (Highway 14 at Evergreen Centre) offers an example of an improved highway road condition with a diversity of interventions intended to improve the pedestrian experience, including separated sidewalks, median buffers to calm traffic, and a priority crosswalk. Although an improvement in safety, the pattern of development framing this condition still places buildings away from the street, prioritizing parking spaces over an engaging pedestrian realm.

Image 2.4.3 (Grant Road West at Otter Point Road) demonstrates a rural and/or suburban street design, with edges dominated by hedges and driveways. This condition provides no buffer between travel lanes and sidewalk spaces, prioritizing efficient vehicle movement at the cost of pedestrian comfort, and makes the overall mobility network less efficient.

According to the draft TMP, about 80 percent of the streets in Sooke do not have a dedicated pedestrian facility, which limits the ability of all residents to move around their community by foot. This OCP process will seek opportunities to enable 'complete streets' that re-balance the needs of multiple users.



[Image 2.4.1] Eustace Road at Shields Road.



[Image 2.4.2] Highway 14 at Evergreen Centre.



[Image 2.4.3] Grant Road West at Otter Point Road.



2.4.6 Views

Views, particular in scenic places like Sooke, help shape community identity and sense of place, and connect residents with natural landscapes and the broader bioregion.

Some areas of Sooke enjoy beautiful waterfront and mountain views. These views contribute to the character of Sooke and take advantage of the natural beauty of the District's geographic setting. In some areas, however, views are obstructed by complex topography, lot layout, mature tree canopy and other vegetation, and street orientation.

The opposing page offers a few, non-exhaustive examples of views both within and from Sooke. This OCP process will help to further identify cherished views that should be carefully considered, as well as explore opportunities to expand and enhance view corridors.



[Image 2.4.4] View of Harbour from Maple Avenue South.



[Image 2.4.5] View of Sooke Basin, District of Sooke, and Surrounding Mountain Range from Whiffin Spit.



[Image 2.4.6] View of Sooke River from Sooke River Bridge.



## 2.5 Streets and Movement

This section builds from and adapts the information from the District of Sooke Draft Transportation Master Plan (TMP). The draft TMP was presented to Council at the June 23, 2020, Committee of the Whole meeting and is anticipated to be adopted in fall 2020.

Sooke’s existing transportation network is primarily oriented toward private vehicles. There are numerous challenges facing the pedestrian, cycling, and transit networks that require attention. The District’s Draft Transportation Master Plan currently identifies mobility targets that will reduce trip distances, gradually shift more trips to low emissions transportation, and evolve to more electric transportation in the future. In order to achieve these broad mobility targets, a number of actions will need to be implemented from the draft TMP and can be further supported through the OCP review process.



[Image 2.5.1] Cyclist on Galloping Goose Trail in Sooke.  
Image Credit: HikeBikeTravel.



2.5.1 How We Get Around

As shown in Figure 2.5.1 on the opposing page, the majority of trips both inter-regionally and locally are by private vehicles and auto passengers. The figure illustrates the share of inter-community (i.e., trip starts or ends outside of Sooke) and internal trips within Sooke. The data indicate that the share of sustainable transportation (walking, cycling, transit) trips within the District represent less than 10 percent in the PM peak period.

However, data on commuting patterns tell a different story. According to Statistics Canada census data, the District witnessed a 3 percent decrease in the number of residents commuting to work by car from 2006 to 2016. Among West Shore communities, Sooke has the highest percentage of commutes by active travel at 15.6%, which exceeds the average of West Shore communities (11%). That said, due to Sooke’s more rural location and higher share of trips commuting into Victoria, the District has the highest percentage of commutes over 45 minutes among all communities in the Capital Region at 43.6%.

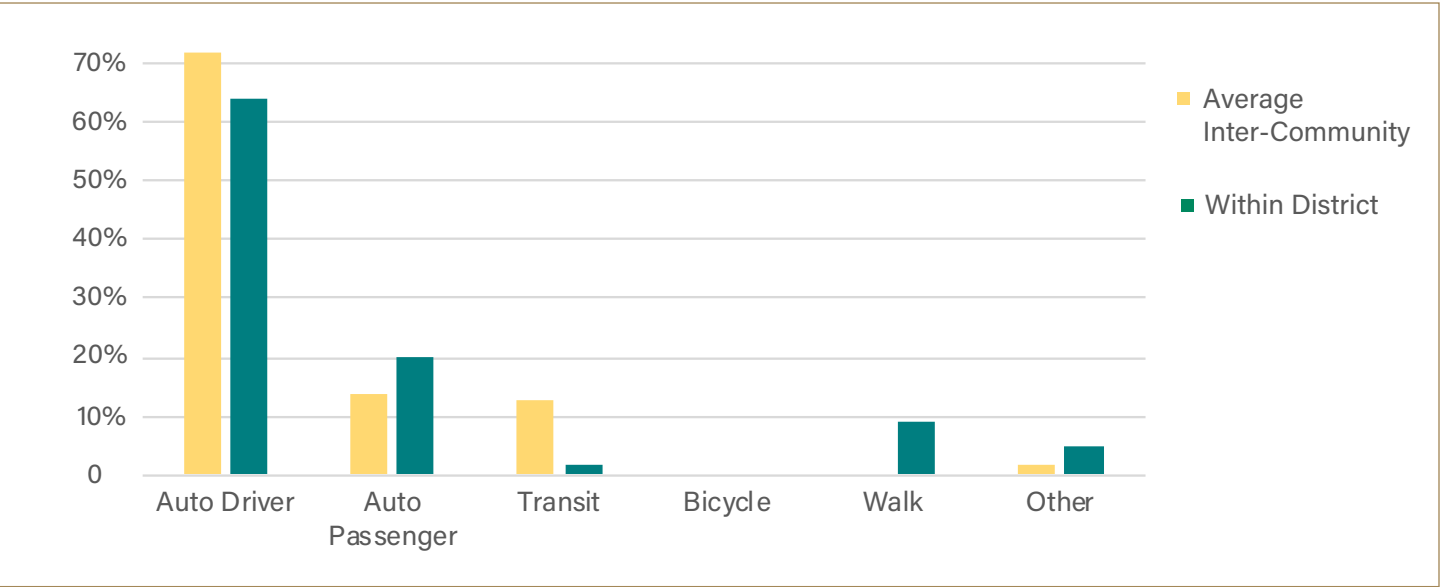
Sooke, by the numbers...

6.11	Daily Trips Per Household
1.88	Vehicles Per Household
1.27	Bicycles Per Household
\$15,102	Average Annual Household Transportation Cost
43.6%	Percentage of Population Spending >45 Minutes on Commute
4.77 tCO <sub>2</sub>	Average Annual Household Transportation Emissions*

*\*Estimated using CRD's 2018 greenhouse gas emissions data for passenger vehicles, light trucks, vans, and SUVs.*

The data presented in Figure 2.5.1 and other available information about Sooke’s travel patterns from the CRD 2017 Origin Destination Household Travel Survey indicate the following:

- Bicycle mode share is less than 1 percent, which may be attributed to a number of existing barriers in the active transportation network (see Section 1.4). Sooke also has the second lowest bicycle ownership per household (1.27) among West Shore communities after Langford.
- Transit mode share is significantly higher for inter-community trips compared to trips within the District.
- Among trips to/from work, trips to destinations outside of Sooke represent nearly four-times the number of work trips to destinations within Sooke.



[Figure 2.5.1] From and To District, Within District (Sooke) Travel Mode, CRD 2017 Origin Destination Survey Report. Source: District of Sooke Transportation Master Plan.

2.5.2 Summary of Key Transportation Challenges

The Draft TMP summarizes the critical transportation challenges facing the District, which were identified and confirmed by residents, local stakeholders, District staff and Council. The key challenges are summarized as follows (for more information, see Section 2.5 of the Draft TMP):

- **Street Network Connectivity** | The lack of connectivity within the street network results in poor walkability, longer travel distances for pedestrians and cyclists, greater congestion at the limited intersections available, and fewer routing options for public transit.
- **Walking + Cycling Continuity** | Sooke’s relatively low walking and cycling mode share may be attributed to the lack of sidewalks in the network. Further, the lack of overall connectivity within the active transportation network results in bike lanes that do not connect, sidewalks often being located along a new development frontage, and crosswalks and bus stops in some cases being isolated from pedestrian facilities.
- **Low Density Development Patterns** | Sooke’s residential development can be broadly characterized as low-density neighbourhoods, which make it challenging for most residents to walk to day-to-day destinations.
- **The Highway Corridor** | Sooke, like many communities in BC, has a provincial highway that runs directly through its centre. As a result, and due to limited jurisdictional authority, the highway prioritizes vehicle travel and there are limited opportunities to enhance pedestrian facilities and bus stop infrastructure.
- **Rural Road Design** | While some streets within the District have been recently repurposed to accommodate pedestrian and cyclists, most streets in the District were designed and constructed to a rural standard with paved shoulders of varying widths.
- **Regional Commuting** | A survey conducted as part of the TMP found that about 75% of commute trips among Sooke residents are to communities outside of the District. This makes it challenging to increase the share of commute trips by walking and/or cycling.
- **Local Transit Service** | The combination of limited transit service within the District and the lack of bus stop amenities (e.g., seating, shelters) result in low transit ridership. This has and continues to result in a barrier to expand local transit service.

2.5.3 Transportation Goals & Mobility Targets

The Draft TMP identifies six goals to guide the future of transportation in Sooke. They include:

- **Multi-Modal Options** | Create convenient, safe multi-modal travel options.
- **Connectivity** | Improve connections within Sooke and elsewhere in the Capital Region.
- **Sustainable Transportation** | Minimize greenhouse gas emissions and environmental impact.
- **Livelihood** | Preserve Sooke’s character and enhance the local economy.
- **Investment** | Balanced, equitable investments in Sooke’s transportation infrastructure and services.
- **Partnerships** | Enhance transportation conditions in partnership with land development, service providers and adjacent jurisdictions.

The Draft TMP also includes four mobility targets that broadly align with the District’s Community Energy and Emissions Plan. More specifically, the TMP identifies a transportation hierarchy that prioritizes transportation infrastructure projects based on their ability to decrease energy and emissions.

1. **Trip Distance Reduction** | Reduce the need to travel by vehicle through urban form and transportation demand management.
2. **Mode Shift** | Shift remaining kilometres travelled to cycling, walking, public transit, ride-sharing, and out of the single-occupant vehicle.
3. **Vehicle Efficiency** | Reduce the size of vehicles and improve engine efficiency, right-size vehicles to the need they fulfill, and minimize the quantity of steel moved to move a person.
4. **Electrify** | what is left of the passenger fleet and/or consider biofuels and natural gas for the heavy-duty fleet



2.5.4 Today's Transportation Network

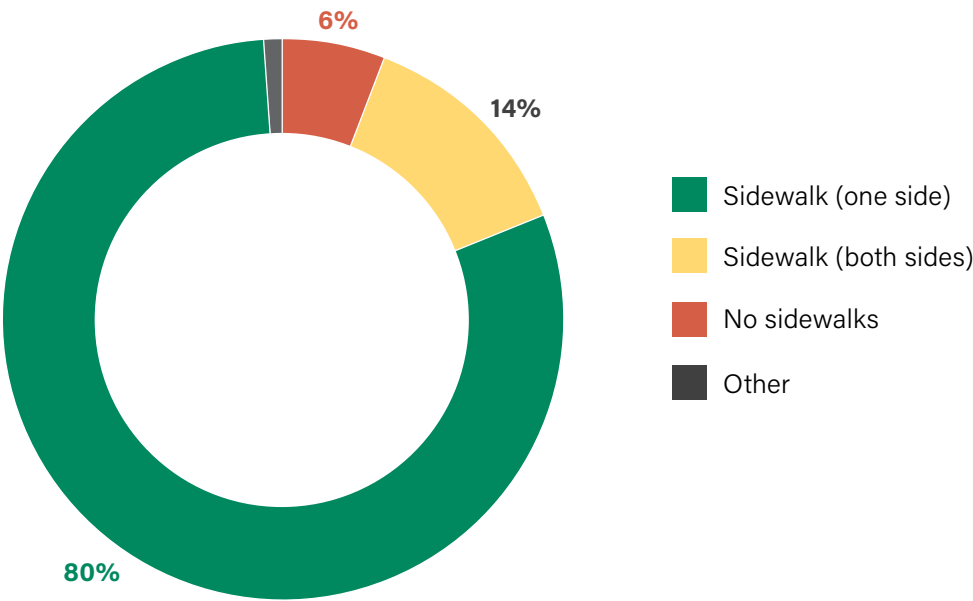
Pedestrian Network

Walking, including using a mobility device, is fundamental to all forms of transportation. It is a part of every trip, whether travelling by car, transit, or bicycle. Ensuring people can freely, safely, and comfortably move by foot or by wheel ensures an equitable community that is accessible to people of all ages and abilities.

Walking currently accounts for nine percent of all trips within Sooke. According to the draft TMP, about 80 percent of the streets in Sooke only have a sidewalk on one side of the road, which limits the ability of all residents to move around their community by foot. Approximately 14 percent of all streets have a sidewalk on both sides with 6 percent having no sidewalk at all.

Some of the key challenges facing Sooke's pedestrian network are summarized as follows:

- Walking and cycling trips that begin or end west of the Sooke River must cross the River to access the Galloping Goose Regional Trail, which results in an unsafe and uncomfortable connection to the community.
- The Sooke River, Highway 14 and Otter Point Road, and busy intersections within the District act as barrier for people walking and cycling.
- Many streets throughout Sooke have minimal to no lighting during dark hours. This presents safety concerns for people seeking walking or other means of active transportation as their regular, preferred mode.



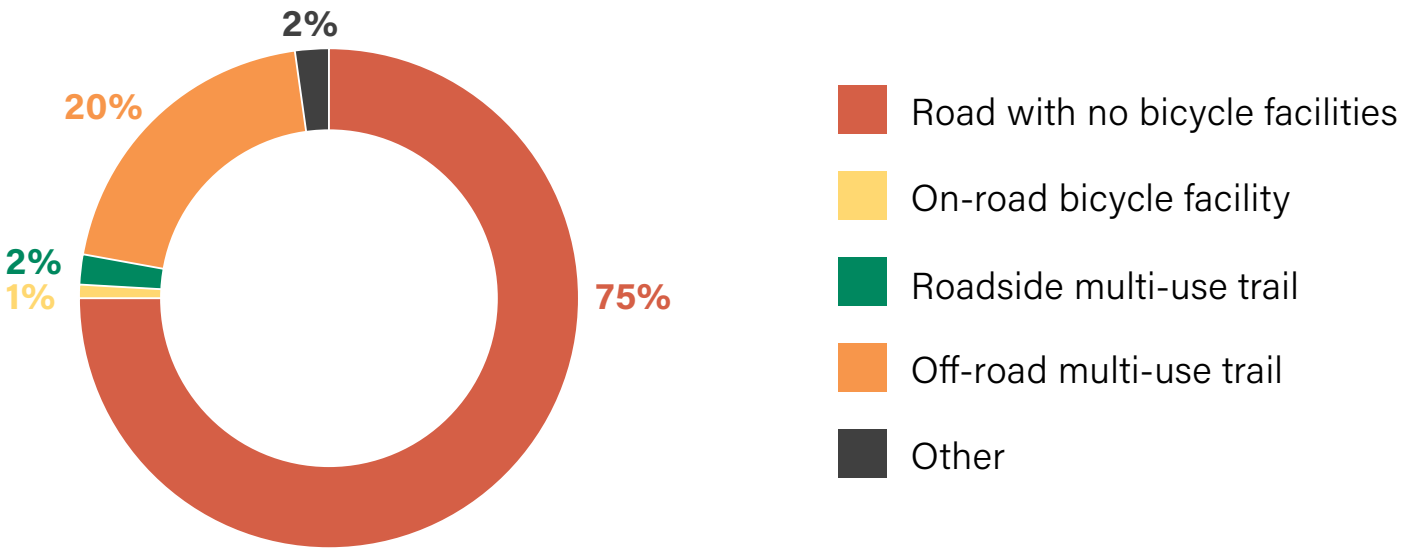
[Figure 2.5.2] Sidewalk Coverage, % of Sooke Streets with Sidewalks. Source: District of Sooke Transportation Master Plan.

Cycling Network

Cycling can be an enjoyable, relatively low cost, healthy, and sustainable form of transportation. According to the Draft TMP, improving the District' cycling network is a critical component of achieving several community objectives including environmental sustainability, health and well-being, and community connectedness. Cycling currently accounts for less than 1 percent of all trips within Sooke. Sooke's low cycling mode share may be attributed to its limited cycling facilities, poor connectivity, and steep topography. About 75 percent of its roads do not have a cycling facility. Its overall cycling network is about 5 kilometres comprising 2km of on-street bike lanes and 3km of on-road multi-use pathways (see Figure 2.5.3).

Key challenges for the cycling network include:

- There are few protected and off-street cycling routes that connect to key destinations including commercial areas or to other key destinations like schools.
- According to community feedback, providing better connection to existing pathways and building more pathways is desired.
- Similar to the pedestrian network, any cycling trip from areas east of the Sooke River must cross via Highway 14 to access the Town Centre, which makes cycling less attractive.



[Figure 2.5.3] Summary of Existing Bicycle Facilities Coverage. Source: District of Sooke Transportation Master Plan.

Transit Network

Public transit is a critical component of a successful transportation network. It often serves as the primary alternative to driving for longer trips, especially for those who do not own a vehicle. A well connected, reliable, and frequent transit system can help a community reduce its reliance on private vehicle travel. While transit mode share is low within the District, about 12 percent of all trips to/from Sooke are by transit.

Sooke is currently served by four transit routes with two providing regional service and two as local route (see Figure 2.5.4). The main regional route is the 61 (Langford / Downtown / Sooke), which provides regional services between Sooke and downtown Victoria via Highway 14, and Highway 1. There are 59 trips per weekday. The local routes provide anywhere from 4 to 8 trips per weekday.

Key challenges for the transit network include:

- Transit service has not kept up with population growth / demand. Sooke residents have reported Route 61 buses near or at capacity, creating an unpleasant ride and occasional pass-ups.
- Limited local service. Routes 63 and 64 offer limited service frequency and experience low ridership, with an average of between four and seven passengers per trip.
- Poor access to service. Some neighbourhoods within the District including Sunriver and Broomhill have little to no access to transit, which is largely attributed to their [a] low-density residential character and [b] poor street connectivity impacting transit routing options.



[Figure 2.5.4] Existing Transit Routes. Source: District of Sooke Transportation Master Plan.



Road Network

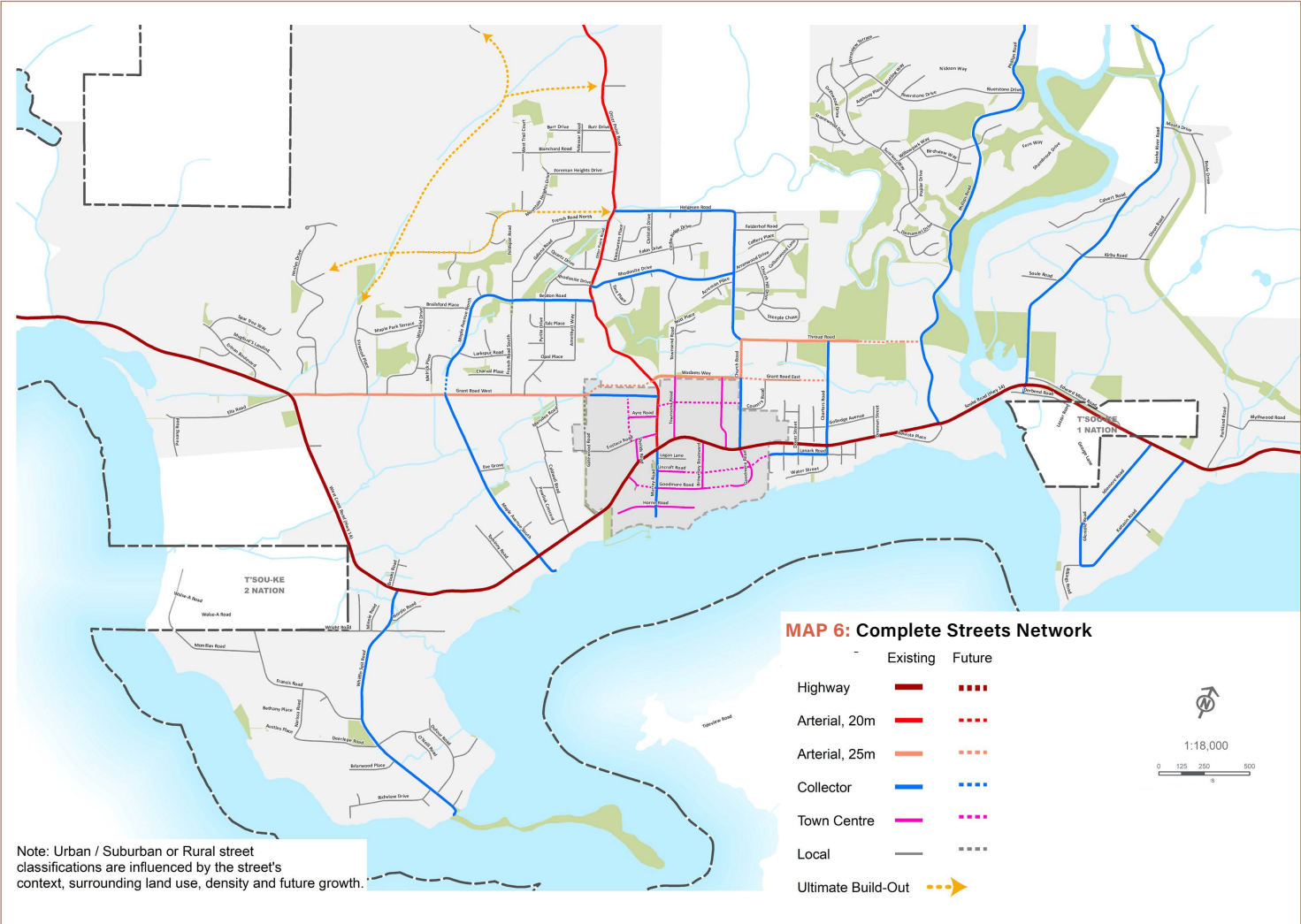
The road network forms the skeleton of a community's transportation system. Highway 14, a provincial highway, serves as the primary access to Sooke from the rest of Greater Victoria. The road network includes 20 kilometres of collector streets and a number of local streets that provide access to residential neighbourhoods (see Figure 2.5.5). Traffic volumes range across the District with Highway 14 experiencing the greatest volumes at 20,000 vehicles per day; 9,500 vehicles per day on Otter Point Road, which is the busiest Collector Road in Sooke; and all other streets seeing less than 9,500 vehicles per day.

Key challenges for the road network include:

- Poor street network connectivity resulting in increased traffic on major roads, congestion at a limited number of intersections, and challenges with increased travel distances, public transit routing limitations and emergency response.
- The Highway 14 corridor prioritizes highway traffic through intersections and results in limited opportunities for new pedestrian and cycling infrastructure. Further, intersections along the corridor including Highway 14 / Otter Point Road and Highway 14 / Phillips Road, will continue to operate at a poor level of service over the next 20 years due to population growth and development, which will further add congestion and delay.
- Streets constructed before 1999 were designed to a rural standard, which include paved shoulders of varying widths to accommodate walking and cycling.

The CRD's 2018 energy & GHG emissions inventory calculated Sooke's total community annual GHG emissions to be approximately 46,574 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e. **54% of Sooke's emissions were released through on-road transportation.\***

\*This value does not consider greenhouse gas emissions sequestered by various land use types.



[Figure 2.5.5] Complete Streets Network.  
Source: District of Sooke Transportation Master Plan.

2.5.5 Emerging Transportation Trends

Transportation is a rapidly evolving sector with new technologies and systems being introduced on a frequent basis. While gas powered vehicles and single-occupancy vehicle travel dominated the 20th century, advances in technology and telecommunications along with societal changes have resulted in a number of new mobility services ranging from carsharing, ride-hailing, micromobility vehicles (e.g., e-bikes/e-scooters), and more. There has also been increasing interest in electric transportation from electric vehicles to e-bikes and e-scooters.

Given Sooke’s transportation context, there are three emerging transportation trends that are particularly relevant and summarized below:

- Electric vehicles
- Electric bikes
- Telecommuting

Electric Vehicles

Electric vehicles are a class of vehicles that run fully or partially on electricity. These vehicles have a battery instead of a gasoline tank, and an electric motor instead of an internal combustion engine. Electric vehicles and other types of zero-emission vehicles can play an important role in reducing community greenhouse gas emissions.

According to data from the CRD, as of 2017, there were approximately 1,900 electric vehicles within the Capital Region representing 0.7% of the total number of registered vehicles. Within the District, about 1% of all vehicles are electric. Even though EVs represent a fraction of all vehicles on the road, data indicate that EV ownership has increased in Greater Victoria since 2011 and sales are generally increasing across the province. As of 2019, 10 percent of all new passenger vehicles sold in BC were electric vehicles, which was above the national average of 3.5 percent.

There are currently five Level 2 charging stations in Sooke at the following locations:

- Sooke Harbour House, 1528 Whiffin Spit Road
- Prestige Oceanfront Resort, 6929 West Coast Road
- Seaparc Leisure Complex, 2168 Philips Road
- Village Food Market, 6661 Sooke Road
- T’Sou-ke Nation, 2154 Lazaar Sooke

The Draft TMP along with the CRD Capital Region Local Government Electric Vehicle + Electric Bike Infrastructure Planning Guide identify other potential locations for EV charging infrastructure, which can help the District accelerate EV adoption and thereby lower GHG emissions and range anxiety for commuters using Highway 14.



[Image 2.5.3] Electric Vehicle Charging Station Outside Seaparc Leisure Complex. Image Credit: Plugshare.com



[Image 2.5.4] Electric Vehicle Charging Station Outside Evergreen Centre. Image Credit: Plugshare.com



Electric Bicycles

Electric bicycles (e-bikes) are bicycles with an electric motor of 500 watts or less, and functioning pedals that are limited to a top speed of 32 km/h without pedaling. Electric bicycles make cycling more attractive for a greater diversity of the population, particularly for seniors, women, and people with disabilities, as they increase the maximum length of bicycle trips, minimize the impact of hills and other terrain challenges, and allow people to bike with heavier cargo loads. Further, electric bicycles can help communities achieve their GHG emission reduction targets. With supportive cycling infrastructure in place, e-bikes have the potential to substitute for, or completely replace, almost all trips taken by a gasoline powered car, which could address congestion issues within urban areas.

As electric bikes are an emerging form of mobility, there is limited research that has quantified the impact of these bikes on vehicle ownership. A recent study presented results of a North American survey of electric bike owners. The study reported that e-bikes have the capacity to replace various modes of transportation commonly used for utilitarian and recreational trips including motor vehicles, public transit, and regular bicycles. Specifically, the study reported that 62% of e-bike trips replaced trips that otherwise would have been taken by car. Of these trips previously taken by car, 45.8% were commute trips to work or school, 44.7% were other utilitarian trips (entertainment, personal errands, visiting friends and family, or other), and 9.4% were recreation or exercise trips. The average length of these previous car trips was 15 kilometres.

As an emerging mobility form, there is limited ownership data available in Sooke. However, according to the Capital Region Local Government Electric Vehicle and Electric Bicycle Infrastructure Backgrounder, a number of bike shops within the Capital Region have reported increases in e-bikes sales over the last two years with some shops reporting 20% growth in one year alone. Further, as identified in the draft TMP, e-bikes can be especially attractive in Sooke due to [a] longer travel distances [b] the hilly terrain and topography and [c] access to the Galloping Goose Regional Trail.



[Image 2.5.5] Electric charging station outside T'Sou-ke Communtiy Hall.  
Credit: T'Sou-ke First Nation.

Telecommuting

Telecommuting or teleworking (more simply referred to as working from home), is the act of completing work assignments from a location other than an office via an internet and phone connection. Telecommuting allows employees to work from wherever they are located, instead of having to commute to work via a transportation mode.

Telecommuting has been a phenomenon for over 20 years and has been witnessing an upward trend. According to data from Statistics Canada, more than 1.7 million paid employees worked from home in 2008 at least once a week, which was an increase of 23 percent from the 1.4 million in 2000. More recently, telecommuting has become even more popular due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Data from Statistics Canada indicate that nearly one-third of businesses reported 10 percent or more of their workforce was teleworking or working remotely on May 29, 2020. This represents a doubling of the rate since February 1, 2020, when close to 17 percent of businesses reported 10 percent or more of their workforce was teleworking or working remotely.

Data on telecommuting is limited in Greater Victoria and within Sooke specifically. However, based on national trends and data indicating that telecommuting will continue to increase once the COVID-19 pandemic is over, working from home may become more commonplace within the District. Further, as a more remote community with longer commute distances, it is likely that some Sooke residents are already telecommuting, especially during COVID-19.

A report by Statistics Canada found that telework capacity varies substantially across industries. The industries where telecommuting is most feasible include finance and insurance, educational services, and professional, scientific and technical services—all of which are industries that are expected to see employment growth in Sooke according to the District of Sooke Economic Analysis. The report found that sectors such as finance and insurance, information and cultural industries, real estate and rental and leasing, and scientific and technical services are all projected to increase in Sooke by 2036.

Based on Sooke's employment projections in job sectors that have higher telework capacity, it is anticipated that Sooke will see higher rates of telecommuting in the coming years.



# 2.6 Environment and Ecology

## 2.6.1 Geological & Climatic Context

The District of Sooke sits on the South West coast of Vancouver Island, and is located within the traditional territory of the T’Sou-ke Nation. For thousands of years they have occupied and influenced a region described recently as “where the rainforest meets the sea.” Much of the underlying geology of the area was formed over 42 million years ago, when the Metchosin Igneous Complex formed as a northerly exposure of the Crescent Terrane – a geological formation underlying portions of Vancouver Island down to Western Oregon state. In the intervening ages rocks of the Sooke Formation and glacial sediment were deposited, and after the ice sheets of the last ice age retreated around 15,000 years ago numerous mountains, hills, and water courses came to define the area.

The climate of the District is characterized as a warm-summer Mediterranean climate, and according to the Köppen-Geiger classification system shares similarities with other climate groups on marine, western sides of continents. Spring, Fall, and Winter seasons are wet, with high levels of precipitation mainly in the form of rain (snow is infrequent but more common at higher elevations). Summers tend to be dry, and average yearly precipitation levels for the past 30 years have been above 1400mm. Temperatures historically average between 4.3°C in December and 14.6°C in August. Climate change is anticipated to change these normals with longer, hotter summers showing less precipitation, and winters characterized by higher temperatures and more varied storm occurrences.



[Image 2.6.1] Sooke's Ecologically Diverse Coastline.  
Image Credit: Goldstream News Gazette.



2.6.2 Geographical and Regional Ecological Classification

The District of Sooke and its neighbouring East Sooke collectively encompass the Sooke Basin and its connection through Sooke Harbour, Inlet, and Bay out to the Juan de Fuca Strait. This maritime feature defines the geography of the area, with much of the community stretched along a large waterfront. The Sooke River flows down through the centre of the District and empties into the harbour, and between these waterbodies the area has plentiful access to both marine and freshwater environments. Whiffin Spit extends out at the mouth of the harbour, granting further maritime protection and accessibility for the community. Inland the terrain rises through the Sooke Hills to join the Vancouver Island Ranges, and the generally South facing slopes provide a sheltered backdrop for the District.

The complex geological history of the area, including the significant shaping of terrain caused by the retreat of the last ice age, has carved the land into a series of foothills, mountains, and valleys with numerous watersheds scattered throughout. Twenty-eight watersheds empty into Sooke Bay, Inlet, Harbour, and Basin, with sixteen of these within District boundaries. While a number of the smaller ones occupy the shoreline and lower lying areas, the largest of the group is the Sooke River watershed which encompasses most of the uplands in the District. Most of these watersheds provide numerous ecological services – including habitat provision, flood relief, and drainage – but as with much of Vancouver Island have been heavily altered by urbanization, agriculture, or resource production somewhere along their courses. Ecologically the District is within the Strait of Georgia/ Puget Lowland ecoregion and is defined by the Coastal

Western Hemlock zone – a forested area of western hemlock, Douglas fir, and western redcedar. Red alder, bigleaf maple, and an understory of salal, ferns, and mahonia are common, along with a well-developed ground-moss layer. Much of the land has been cleared, however, and human uses include residential, industrial, recreational, and transportation developments. Land classified in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) also occupies a significant footprint within the District.

2.6.3 Terrestrial and Freshwater Habitats

The area of the Coastal Western Hemlock zone that encompasses the District of Sooke belongs to the very dry maritime (CWHxm1) biogeoclimatic (BGC) subzone. This ecosystem classification helps to define the terrestrial habitat of the area – one characterized by a mix of forested, wetland, meadow, and dry/outcrop zones. Forested areas tend to be mostly younger, with select areas of mature stands, and many of the dry upland and wetland ecosystems include a diverse vegetation mix with unique species such as Hairy manzanita and Labrador tea. A number of red-listed and blue-listed sensitive species also grow within the area, including the Pacific waterleaf and Nevada marsh fern.

The forests of the Sooke Hills and Mount Wells Regional Parks to the North contain important wildlife habitat, and form one of the largest continuous areas of remaining habitat on South-East Vancouver Island. These forests provide important refuge considering the proximity of nearby urban areas, and support species such as Columbian black-tailed deer, black bears, pileated woodpeckers, and marbled murrelets. Vegetation and wildlife corridors linking down through Sooke therefore become even more important, as wildlife can use the zone to traverse from higher altitude refuges, down to low-lying foraging zones. Common to many communities throughout the lower mainland, the urban and agricultural areas around Sooke tend to favour smaller mammal species and urban friendly birds, with frequent visitors including moles, various hawks, gulls, and introduced species such as the Norway rat and European starling.

Freshwater habitat in the area is located in the Sooke River, as well as in many of the other creeks throughout the District. These zones are important for semi-permanent species as well as those that return from the ocean to feed and spawn. One of these - the three-spined stickleback (*Gasterosteus aculeatus*) - in the SENĆOTEN language is called “T’Sou-ke,” and helped to give the area its name. Salmon runs are also common, and a hatchery exists to help restore the health and vitality of local populations. Streamflows in the Sooke River are highly influenced by upstream drinking-water capture for the Greater Victoria Water Supply, and this has become one of the defining elements ruling downstream habitat. Other impacts to freshwater environments are heavy urban development and channel reconfiguration, along with altered stormwater patterns in the area.

2.6.4 Shoreline and Coastal Habitats

Sooke is unique – wrapped by coastline on multiple sides, it also has access to a surprisingly large number of shoreline types: fronting on a basin, harbour, inlet, bay, and strait. The Sooke River is a large source of inland nutrient transport, and although modified by stream flow impacts over the years, still forms a productive estuary in Sooke Harbour. Traditionally the T'Sou-ke Nation harvested shellfish in this as well as other coastal areas, and many species still return from the ocean to travel upstream. The water flow from Sooke Basin and Sooke Harbour out to the Juan de Fuca Strait passes through a narrow inlet formed to the East of Whiffin Spit. Historically the spit would periodically split on the Western edge, and this would have allowed more flushing and water turnover in the inner harbour areas. Now reinforced, the spit acts as an important recreational amenity, but its alteration has affected foreshore sediment transport processes. As tides now flow around the Eastern point of the spit, they push water into the relatively shallow harbour before dropping into the deeper inner basin. The exchange of freshwater and salt water in this area, as well as the depth and weak circulation patterns in the basin, make it favourable for recreational uses as well as the potential for reintroducing activities like the cultivation of oysters (dependent of water quality levels and fisheries closures, but an important future goal).

These coastal zones provide marine habitat for a number of marine mammals such as seals and otters. A variety of nesting and foraging space is provided for both resident bird populations as well as those that stopover on the Pacific Flyway. The salmon hatchery on the river helps to restore oceanic populations of Chinook and Coho which make returns to the area in May and June respectively. Future development pressures will need to balance with the ecological health of these shoreline zones, as well as contend with the realities of climate change and sea level rise. Creating new intertidal habitat, planted riparian zones, and even ‘managed retreat’ may help to solve larger issues in low-lying areas.

2.6.5 Parks, Open Spaces, and Trail Networks

The District of Sooke has plentiful access to nature – both a well-established urban park network, as well as access to a variety of regional park and backcountry areas. A Parks and Trails Master Plan will be completed in 2020 with the aims of documenting the existing network and laying out short, medium, and long-term actions towards further developing this key community resource. The vision is laid out in six key goals:

- Quality and Inclusivity: High quality parks and amenities for all ages, abilities, and cultures
- Connectivity: Connected trail system linking to parks, destinations, and regional trails
- Future Lands and Connections: Desirable parks and trails in new developments
- Waterfront: Public access to and along the waterfront
- Environment: Environmental protection and enhancement in parks and urban areas
- Efficiency: Streamline implementation of parks and trails planning, development and operations

The goals listed have been formulated from extensive resident and stakeholder consultation, as well as from building upon existing strategic plans and policies. The hope is that the document will help guide future investment and action to build a healthy future for the parks and trails in Sooke.

Parkland is currently categorized into eight category types: community parks, neighbourhood parks, nature parks, shoreline access parks, linear parks, school sites, special purpose locations, and other remaining open spaces. Locations are extensive and in general park spaces are well distributed throughout the community. Future challenges relate to a comprehensive acquisition strategy (particularly related to new developments), creating more large scale ‘neighbourhood’ parks, and more parks to be created on the West side of Sooke. Trails are similarly grouped according to category: off-road multi-use paths, roadside multi-use paths, urban pathways, and nature trails. These include both local and regional connections – the ‘Galloping Goose’ being a great example. Where trails systems can be improved on include issues of connectivity (gaps are present throughout the system), being impeded by certain features (eg. Highway 14), and similar to parks a lack in the Western edges of the community.

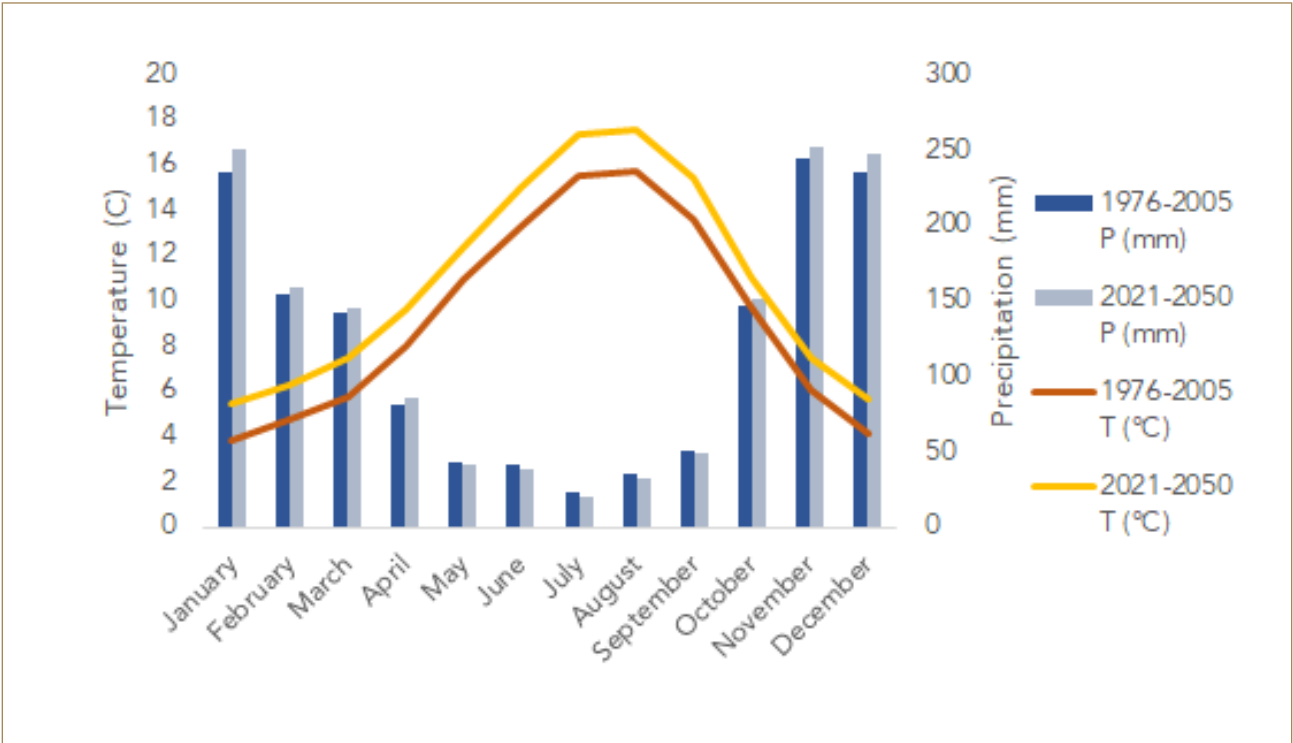
A final piece of the open-space picture in Sooke is the urban forest system. The Parks and Trails Master Plan identifies the need for an Urban Forest Strategy “that evaluates the existing tree canopy in the urban area and establishes a target and measures to improve the tree canopy.” This piece of work will be crucial in allowing the District to a) understand the great amenity it already has, and b) effectively continue to protect and grow this amenity. An urban forest does much more than just shade streets and provide aesthetic benefits – it also provides important habitat for a variety of species, demonstrates a cultural view that where we live is not separate from nature, and offers a variety of ecosystem services in the form of erosion protection, rainwater management, and carbon sequestration.



### 2.6.6 Estimated Climate Changes for District of Sooke

Climate change modelling estimates a median increase of 1.55°C to the annual mean temperature in Sooke by 2050, relative to the 1993-2013 climate period. Extreme heat days above 30°C are anticipated to increase in prevalence, from less than 1 day per year, to 2-3 days per year. This is accompanied by a 9-14% increase in annual precipitation, although dry spells are expected to increase. Annual snowfall in the region is expected to decrease substantially, resulting in much reduced winter snowpack. The median heating degree days will decrease by 609 to 733 degrees by 2050. Growing degree days (above 10°C) are anticipated to increase, and frost days are anticipated to decline to 11 frost days per year.

Seasonally, monthly temperatures are anticipated to increase for all months of the year. Winter precipitation is expected to increase, while summer precipitation is expected to decline, increasing drought and fire risk (Figure 2.6.1).



[Figure 2.6.2] Sooke historical and projected climograph under a high warming scenario (RCP8.5).

	Historical (1983-2013)	Low Warming (2050)	High Warming (2050)
		Ensemble Median RCP4.5	Ensemble Median RCP8.5
Growing Degree Days (above 10C)	650.78	1006	1114
Frost Days	28.83	11	10
Heating Degree Days	3137.63	2528	2404
Mean Temp (deg C)	9.45	11	11
Days above 30C	0.59	2	3
Total precipitation (mm)	1312	1430	1491

[Figure 2.6.1] Summary of projected climate change for District of Sooke. Data Source: Climate Atlas of Canada. Sooke Climate Data.

Local climate impacts expected to accompany these changes include:

- Fewer heating degree days will decrease heating demand in winter months;
- Increased growing degree days and fewer frost days will result in longer growing seasons;
- Wetter winters and springs will increase flood risk frequency and severity as well as landslide risk;
- Decreased snowpack will mean less water for the summer months, increasing drought risk;
- Warmer temperatures and more humid air from increased rainfall in the winter and spring months will result in greater air front variances, resulting in more frequent and intense storms;
- Expected sea level rise will increase coastal erosion rates and seawater ingress to low-lying areas, with a risk of salinating agricultural soils and impacting crop production;
- Expected sea level rise will result in higher storm surges; and
- Increased drought will increase wildfire risk and wildfire smoke presence and airborne particulate pollutants, as well as impact agriculture and food security.

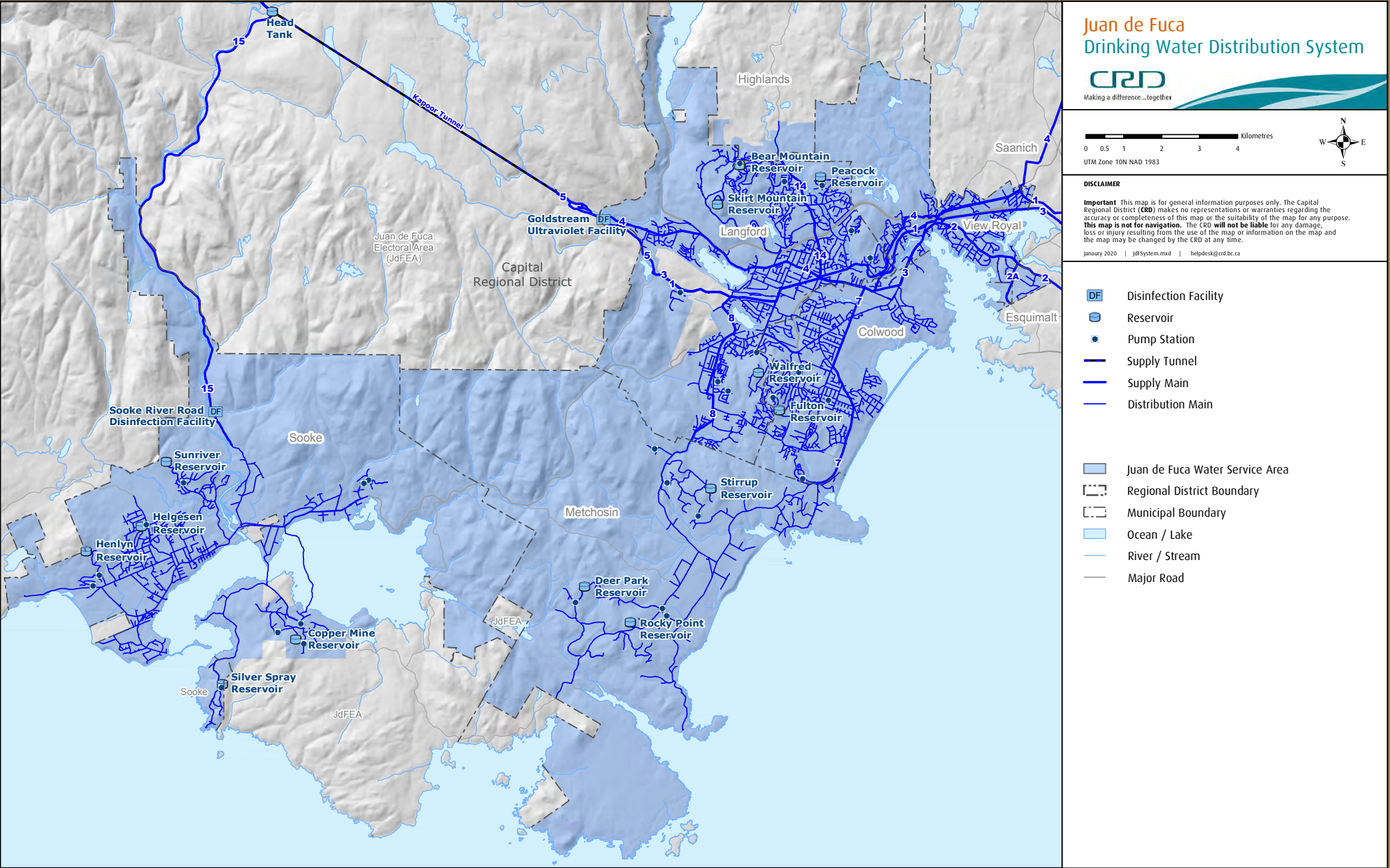
# 2.7 Human Made Infrastructure

## 2.7.1 Water

### Water Supply

Sooke’s water supply is predominantly sourced from the Juan de Fuca Water Distribution System, which draws in water provided by the Capital Regional District from their operation of the Sooke Reservoir.

Some residents in the District of Sooke rely on water provided directly from wells or surface sources, such as rivers or lakes, or are reliant on hauling in water using bulk water services. The expansion and financing of water supply within the District of Sooke is currently a complex system, as the CRD requires any extension to the existing lines to service new areas to be paid for solely by the customers benefiting from the extension.



[Figure 2.7.1] Juan de Fuca Drinking Water System.  
Source: CRD.



Rainwater Management

Twenty-eight significant watersheds drain into Sooke Bay, Inlet, Harbour and Basin with 16 of these watersheds within the District of Sooke's boundary.

Storm drainage consists mainly of open ditches, culverts and natural drainage courses. Some newer subdivisions, strata subdivisions and the Town Centre commercial core consist mainly of underground storm drains; however, most also have rainwater detention systems incorporated in the designs.

The District's Liquid Waste Management Plan (Rainwater) promotes a watershed-based management approach that prioritizes low-impact development strategies and green infrastructure opportunities, with the goal of ensuring healthy watercourses and a healthy near shore marine environment.

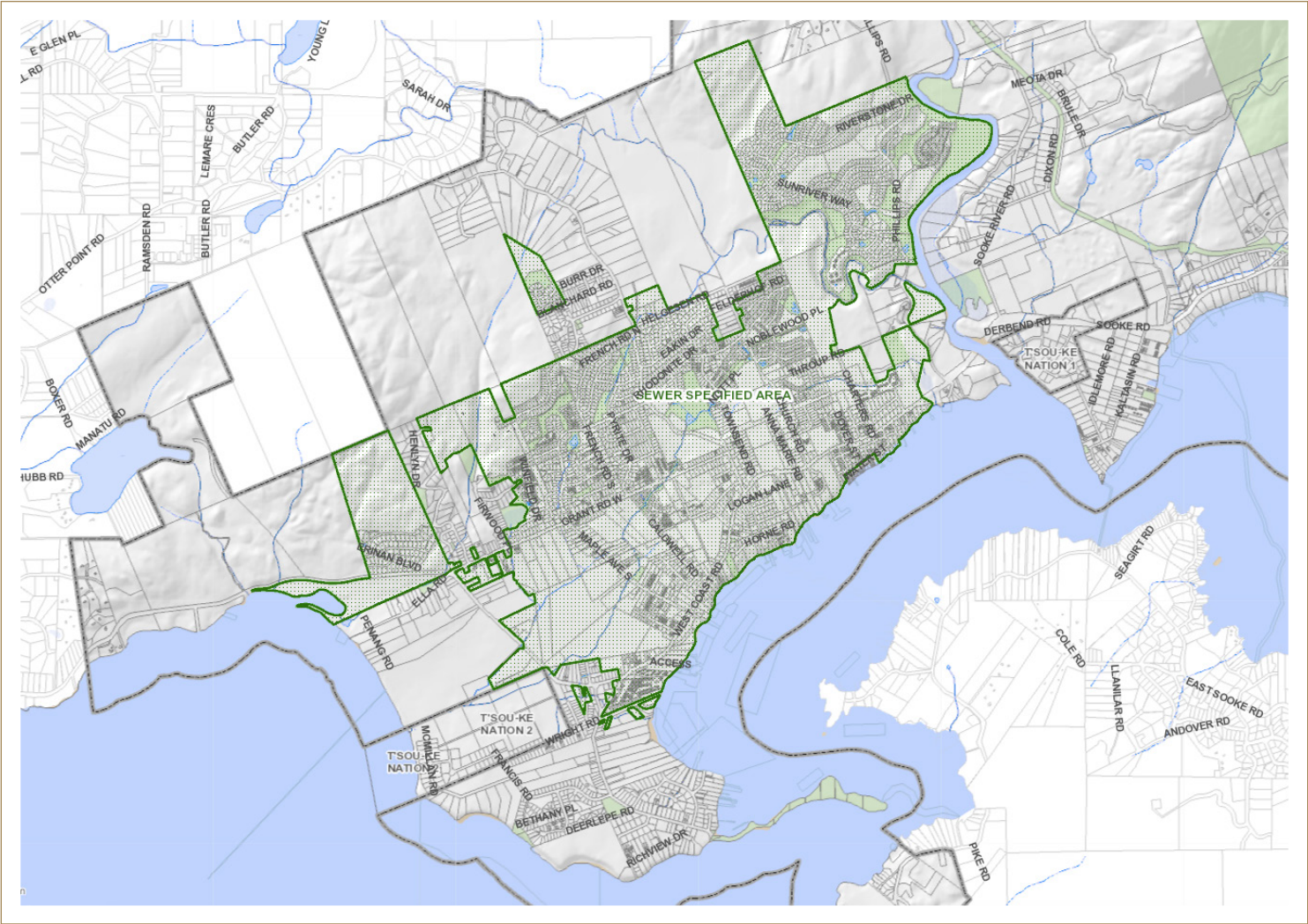
The District's website further identifies opportunities and built precedents for innovative rainwater management design strategies, including permeable surfaces, green roofs, bioswales, rain gardens, and rainwater harvesting and reuse, and underground storage and slow release.

2.7.2 Sewer

The Sooke wastewater collection and treatment system is owned and operated by the District of Sooke. The system services a core area of approximately 5,500 residents.

The project consists of a 51 kilometre collection system, 7 lift stations (Seven pump lift stations (Sooke Road, West Coast Road, Helgesen Road, Sunriver, Prestige, Mariner's Village and treatment plant) and a secondary wastewater treatment facility. The system uses secondary sewage treatment which typically removes 90% of the total suspended solids and high levels of other contaminants, providing significant environmental benefits to the District of Sooke.

The sewer system is an integral part of the environmental remediation and protection of Sooke Harbour and Basin. Prior to the development of the system, residents in the core area were served by more than 1,000 individual septic systems. Leakage from these systems was seeping into the Sooke Harbour and Basin, creating serious environmental problems for marine ecosystems. An additional goal of the project is to allow the return of safe shellfish harvesting in Sooke Harbour and Basin by the T'Sou-ke Nation.



[Figure 2.7.2] District of Sooke Sewer-Specified Area. Source: District of Sooke GIS.



2.7.3 Solid Waste

Individual property owners are responsible for arranging garbage pick-up and recycling within the District of Sooke. Garbage disposal and composting companies provide service contracts to residents and commercial operations and drop off facilities exist for all recycling and garbage services.

Residential user pay garbage collection system limits the amounts of refuse each household may place out for collection to the equivalent of a single can per week. Additional cans or bags are only collected if residents purchase and attach garbage tags.

All solid waste diversion programs are funded through tipping fee revenues from Hartland Landfill and from the sale of recyclable materials. A recycling fee is currently drawn by the CRD from Sooke resident's individual property taxes which helps to operate the curbside blue box recycling program provided through the CRD.

In January 2015, a landfill ban on kitchen scraps (food waste and soiled paper products) was implemented by the CRD. Individual property owners within the District of Sooke are responsible for arranging for kitchen scrap disposal, with optional methods of reducing, reusing or recycling their kitchen scraps. Currently, residents have the choice of hauling their source separated yard and garden material for composting and reuse at the Hartland Depot, composting in backyard compost bins, or hiring a collection service to pick it up.

Community Initiatives

In support of a "clean(er), green(er), and wholly realistic dream of a hometown region that reduces and manages its ecological footprint in the most practical and common sense ways possible," Zero Waste Sooke (ZWS) champions the 5Rs of the international Zero Waste movement — Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Rot, "advocating for action at a personal level while also calling for community initiatives that will speed Sooke's evolution into a model Zero Waste community."

ZWS has outlined series of priorities going forward, ideally in partnership with local schools, the District of Sooke, the Capital Regional District and Sooke's waste-removal operators:

- Educate the next generation about the importance of waste reduction (and, through them, their parents)
- Turn local waste resources into jobs
- Find a property and support the establishment of a recycle depot, free store, yard-waste depot and composting centre
- Encourage reduced plastic use (including a ban on single-use plastic bags)



[Image 2.7.1] Zero Waste Sooke Roadside Cleanup. Credit: Sooke Pocket News/ Jeff Bateman

2.7.4 Food Systems

Indigenous Food Systems

Since Time Immemorial, Indigenous peoples including the T'Sou-ke and Sc'ianew First Nations have stewarded the lands encompassing the District of Sooke through traditions of hunting, fishing, harvesting, and cultivation.

Given the presence of a diversity of water bodies, including the Sooke River, Sooke Basin, and Salish Sea, a relationship of respect for marine and aquatic environments has been central to Indigenous ways of life on this land. Salmon fishing and shellfish harvesting are key to the subsistence, economic, and cultural practices of coastal Indigenous people.

Today, the T'Sou-ke Nation is engaged in a diversity of food production initiatives, including the Ladybug T'Sou-ke Nation Garden and Greenhouse, an 82-hectare oyster farm operated in Sooke Basin, and several greenhouses that produce Wasabi for export. These initiatives exemplify T'Sou-ke Nation's focus on four pillars of sustainability that are central to their collective vision: energy, autonomy, food self-sufficiency and cultural renaissance.



[Image 2.7.2] T'Sou-ke Greenhouse. Credit: Darren Stone/ Times Colonist

Agricultural History

Sooke's agricultural roots were fostered by the area's rich soils and large pockets of terrain suitable for production. Today, much of this land is protected by the provincial Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), a zone where agricultural uses are the priority.

As of Sooke's 2010 OCP, approximately 50% of Sooke's original ALR lands had been removed from the reserve to allow for development and economic investment, or due to lack of suitability for farming. The reduction in ALR lands has created challenges for access to healthy, local foods and has brought attention to tensions between competing land uses, including residential development.

Though this industry is not a main economic driver, the area's many working farms and community agri-food organizations contribute greatly to its culture and diversification. The area's farms produce a wide range of agricultural products including fruit and vegetables,



Sooke Region Food CHI Society

The Sooke Region Food Community Health Initiative Society (Food CHI) is a non-profit society of producers and consumers from the Sooke District, Otter Point, East Sooke and Shirley that advocates for local food production and consumption.

Rooted in viable local production, historical and First Nations’ knowledge and environmental stewardship, Food CHI fosters the knowledge of growing food. Food CHI currently hosts many community programs, including a fruit tree gleaning program, community gardens including the Sunriver Community and Allotment Garden, as well as events and networking, such as the annual Sooke Seedy Saturday and Apple festival.

Recently, Food CHI, Transition Sooke and the Sooke Garden Club have partnered with Food Eco District to extend the My FED Farm initiative to Sooke. This program started as a Greater Victoria food security initiative by the Food Eco District, providing residential food garden kits using simple and affordable supplies.

Sooke Country Market and Sooke Fall Fair

Sooke Country Market, a farm-focused Saturday Market, has provided a communal space for local farmers and artisans to sell their produce and products since 1994. The market operates every Saturday from May to October in John Phillips Park.

The Sooke Fall Fair, started in 1913, takes place at the Sooke Community Hall and offers an opportunity for residents to congregate in the spirit of the “Rural Fair” philosophy.

Sooke Region Farmland Trust

The Sooke Region Farmland Trust Society is a non-profit land trust dedicated to preserving farm acreages. The Trust is guided by the following purpose:

- to promote agriculture in the Sooke Region by acquiring, managing and leasing land to farmers;
- to educate farmers and the public about the benefits and practices of locally produced agriculture;
- to promote, encourage and facilitate the production and distribution of food for those in need.

And the following objectives:

- Protect and preserve the remaining farmland in the Sooke region.
- Encourage new and young farmers to grow food in and for our community.
- Support and strengthen the existing farming community in the Sooke region.



[Image 2.7.3] Silver Cloud Farm's produce stall at Sooke Country Market. Credit: BC Farmers' Market Trail & Jessi Clark.



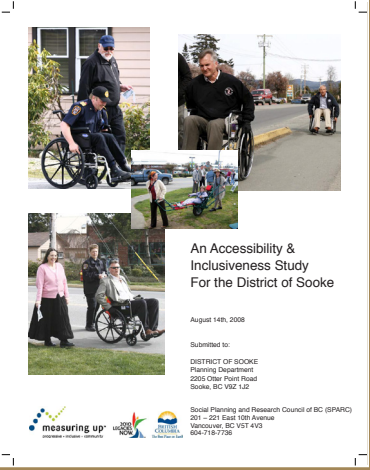
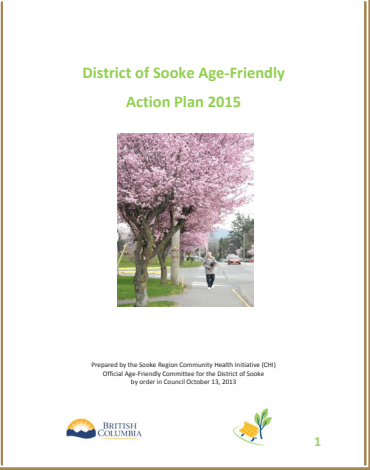
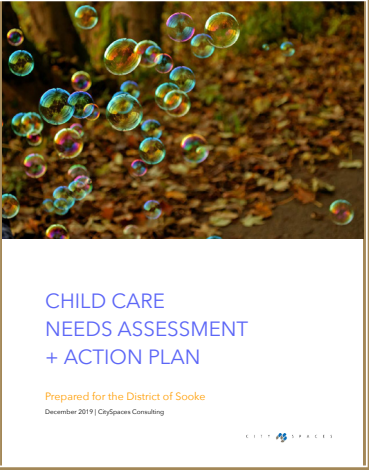
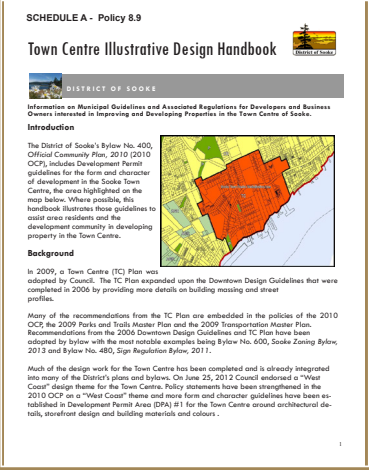
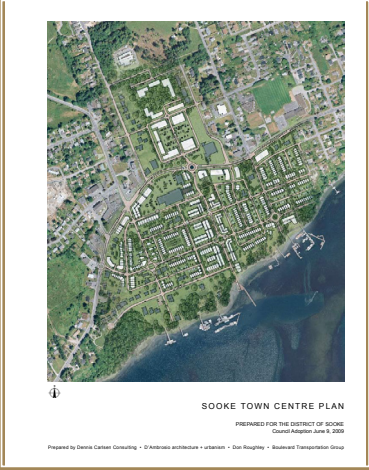
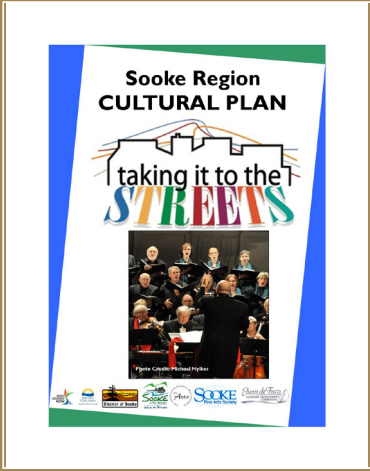
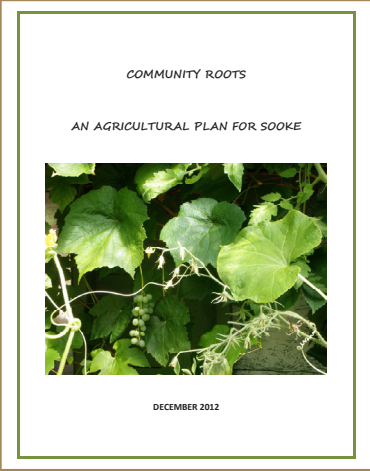
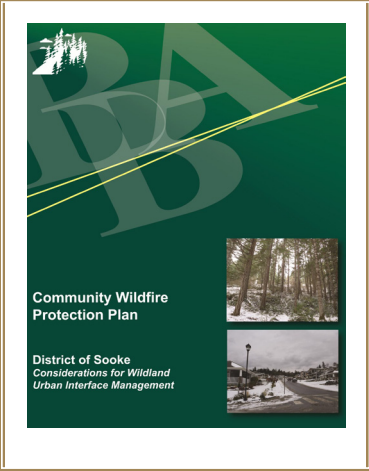
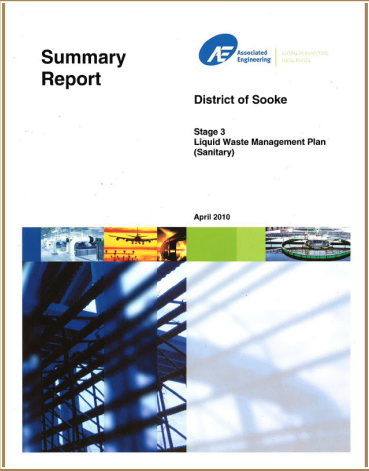
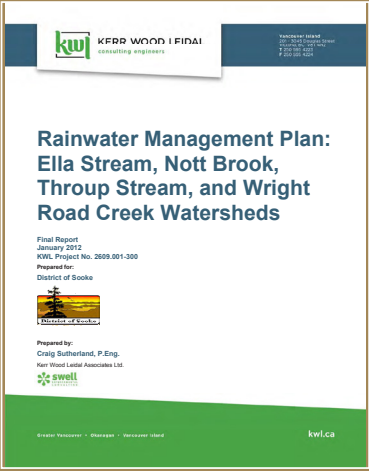
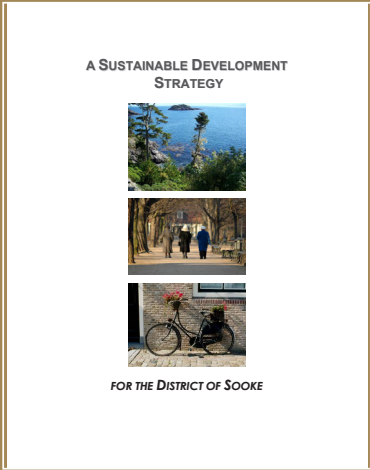
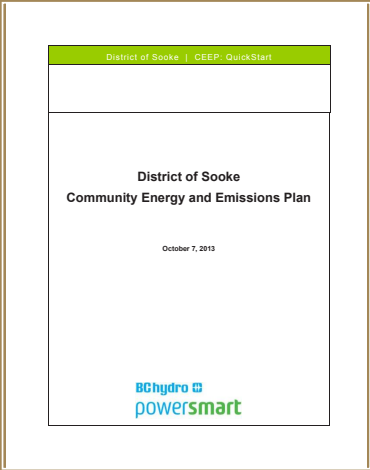
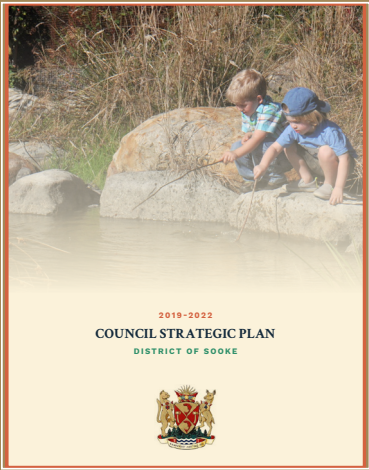
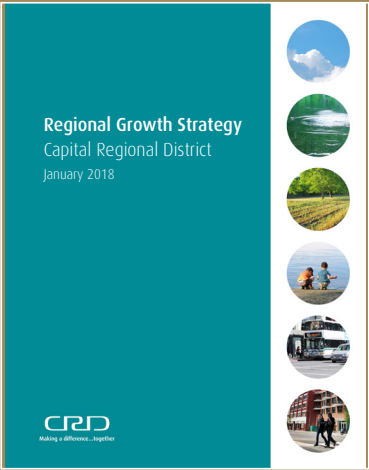
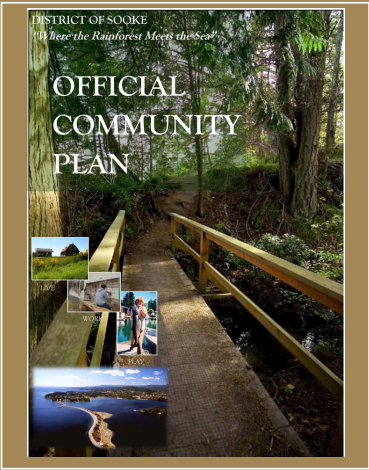
[Image 2.7.4] Sunriver Community and Allotment Garden. Credit: BC Local News.



# 2.8 Existing Plans and Strategies

The District of Sooke is guided by a series of policy frameworks, ranging from local plans to District-wide, regional, and provincial policies. The following section provides an overview of key policy documents that will inform and support the development of the OCP.

To view the full documents online, please click the images to the right to be re-directed to their respective website locations.





Existing Official Community Plan (2010)

The District of Sooke's current Official Community Plan (OCP) was adopted in 2010, establishing the long term vision, supportive goals, objectives, and policies to guide the future of the community.

The OCP outlined the following vision:

*The people of Sooke are proud of their community and its natural setting. Sooke's historic ties with the T'Sou-ke Nation are creating strong economic partnerships, social bonds, and development opportunities, which have strengthened the cultural integrity of both communities. Sooke's friendly people, diversity of culture, history, character, working class roots and small town atmosphere make it very attractive for people to visit and call home. Sooke is a great place for families, children, seniors, and others who appreciate a quiet, less complicated lifestyle with the amenities of a complete yet sustainable community.*

*Sooke has a vibrant, sustainable, well defined commercial core with pedestrian linkages, mixed land uses, higher densities and an appealing Town Centre character and design. The Town Centre has been linked to surrounding neighbourhoods through an integrated trail and pedestrian network. Sooke has also developed a number of sustainable, mixed use areas to complement the Town Centre and existing residential areas. The Town Centre is now the hub of vibrant pedestrian activity with many people living, working and shopping in the area. There are many small shops and galleries clustered in quaint buildings within this urban environment, which attract both visitors and new residents.*

*There is a strong sense of character within the Town Centre, with narrow streets, public gathering places and attractive landscaping. A sea-walk extends along the harbour waterfront of the community, linking the mouth of the Sooke River to the Town Centre and Whiffin Spit Park, and which has become a main attraction for residents and visitors. Sooke is a small town surrounded by rural agricultural lands, natural forests and water. The community is a safe, inviting place to live, linked to surrounding communities by a variety of transportation modes.*

*The community creates shared sustainable economic development through a thriving economy. The existence of a variety of housing types in conjunction with affordable housing has attracted a wide variety of demographics and income levels. Tourism is an important economic driver combined with a well established visual and performing arts scene. Marine and waterfront businesses support tourism as well as a mix of commercial and appropriate industrial activities. Innovations and flexibility in zoning has made Sooke a food security hub, created a friendly development environment, and which respects the rural cultural character and sense of place of the community.*

This vision is supported by a series of guiding principles:

- Sooke's "Thriveability"
- Sustainability in Sooke
- Environmental Stewardship
- Economic Diversification
- Sooke Smart Growth (SSG)
- Culture of the Arts, Leisure and Recreation
- Community Inclusion
- Regional Collaboration
- Preserving Sooke's Character

Capital Regional District Regional Growth Strategy (2018)

The Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) provides a vision for the future of the capital region, guiding decisions on regional issues such as transportation, population growth and settlement patterns. The RGS promotes the long term livability of the region with policy intended to enhance social, economic and environmental performance. The current RGS was adopted in 2018 and establishes the following long term vision:

*In 2038, Capital Regional District residents enjoy a healthy and rewarding quality of life. We have a vital economy, livable communities and steward our environment and natural resources with care. Our choices reflect our commitment to collective action on climate change.*

This vision is supported by a series of objectives:

- Significantly reduce community-based greenhouse gas emissions;
- Keep urban settlement compact;
- Protect the integrity of rural communities;
- Protect, conserve and manage ecosystem health;
- Deliver services consistent with RGS objectives;
- Create safe and complete communities;
- Improve housing affordability;
- Increase transportation choice;
- Strengthen the regional economy; and,
- Foster a resilient food and agriculture system.

The District of Sooke's current Official Community Plan (2010) sets community reductions targets at 33% total emissions reduction by 2020 compared to 2006.

In addition, the Provincial Climate Change Accountability Act has updated legislated targets for reducing greenhouse gases. Under the Act, B.C.'s GHG emissions are to be reduced by at least 40 per cent below 2007 levels by 2030, 60 per cent by 2040, and 80 per cent by 2050, which could be used as a guideline for the District when redefining its GHG reduction targets.

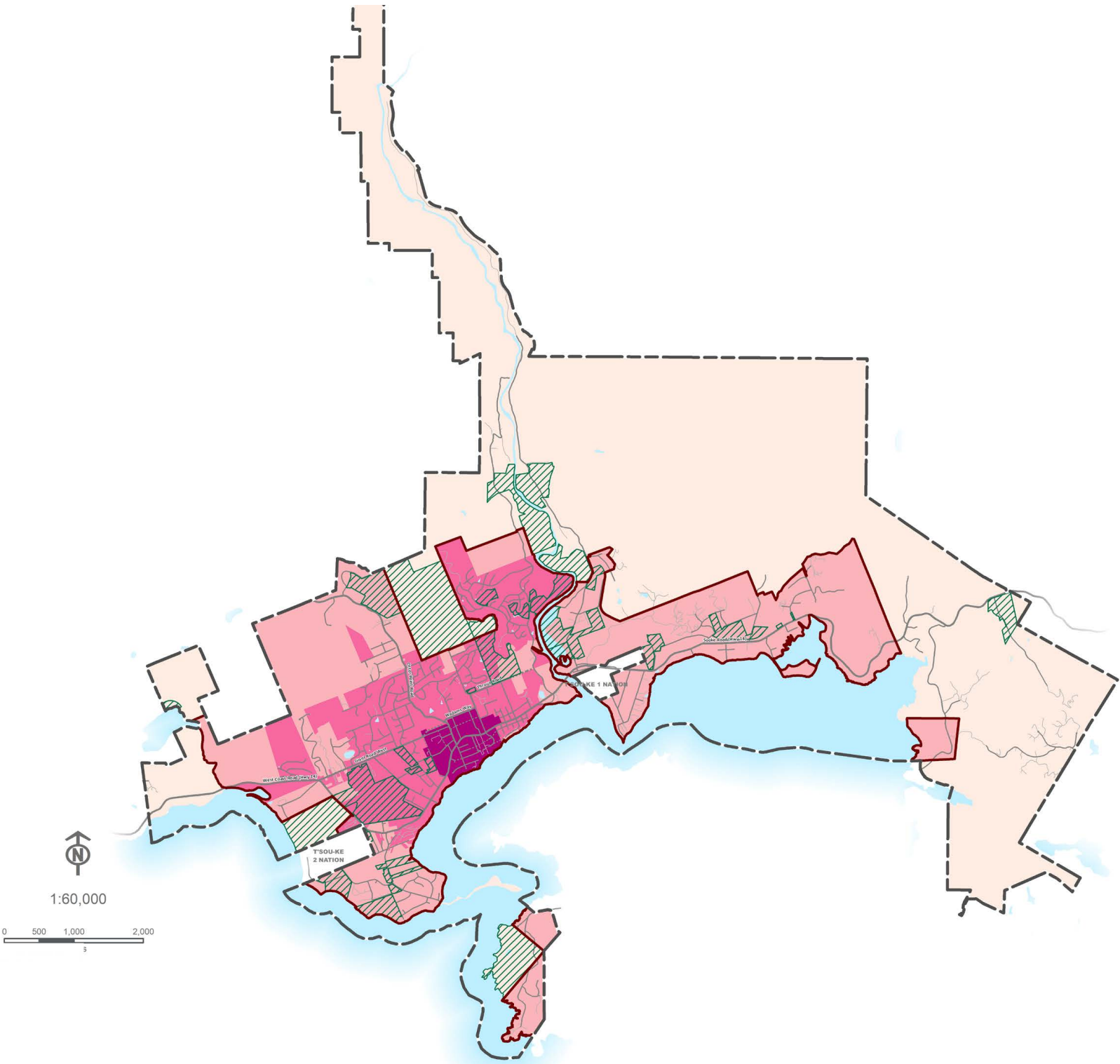
# Future Growth Potential

As identified through the District's Transportation Master Plan and Parks and Trails Master Plan, future development in Sooke is intended to surround the Town Centre within a defined community growth area (CGA), which is tied to the Regional Growth Strategy (Figure 2.8.1).

The map of future growth potential is based on the following:

- High Growth Potential – Town Centre
- Moderate Growth Potential – Sewer Specified Area (SSA)
- Low Growth Potential – outside SSA, in CGA
- Very Low Growth Potential – outside CGA

MAP 1: Future Growth Potential



[Figure 2.8.1] Future Growth Potential Identified in District of Sooke's Transportation Master Plan and Parks and Trails Master Plan.



2019 – 2022 Council Strategic Plan

The District of Sooke's Council Strategic Plan establishes long-term direction and specific, achievable actions to guide the governance and operations of the municipality. The following vision, mission, core values, guiding principles, and goals underpin this framework:

Vision:

*An inclusive, healthy, and self-sufficient community where the rainforest meets the sea.*

Mission:

*The District of Sooke strives to be a compassionate, engaged, and effective organization providing excellent public services to its citizens by:*

- *Maintaining our strong sense of identity;*
- *Managing our growth for generations to come; and,*
- *Making our local economy diverse and resilient.*

Core Value and Guiding Principles:

**Effective Governance**

- Provide accountable, responsive, and connected leadership
- Maintain effective relationships with our residents, the T'Sou-ke Nation, other orders of government, and community partners and agencies
- Steward a healthy, respectful organization

**Community Well-being & Safety**

- Promote health and well-being of residents and employees
- Improve the safety and accessibility of roads, trails, and public spaces
- Strengthen emergency preparedness, access to housing, and food security

**Community Vibrancy**

- Enhance quality of life, sense of place, and community pride
- Champion arts, culture, and recreation
- Develop sustainable infrastructure and connected neighbourhoods

**Long-term Thinking**

- Consider the costs and benefits to future generations in all decision-making and action
- Set long-term goals to guide current initiatives and short-term planning

**Effective & Consistent Communication**

- Maintain effective communication between Council and staff
- Use proactive, positive public communication and community engagement

**Environmental Leadership**

- Respond to climate change boldly
- Redefine and implement Sooke Smart Growth
- Become a leader in ecologically-sustainable corporate practices

Goals:

- *Build a reputable organization.*
- *Demonstrate leadership in climate action.*
- *Manage long-term growth while enhancing community identity, vitality, and safety.*

Community Energy and Emissions Plan (2014)

The District of Sooke passed its Community Energy and Emissions Plan in 2014. The CEEP proposes annual emissions decline by 1% to meet the 2020 emission target in Sooke's OCP. The CEEP focuses on promoting demand side management and incentive programs offered by BC Hydro and the provincial and federal governments, sustainability checklists, and local education and capacity building and networking for various sectors.

The CEEP recommends some OCP and bylaw tools for climate action, including: mixed-use zoning in the downtown, development permit areas for renewable energy systems, energy performance requirements through rezoning, density bonuses, transit-oriented development zoning, street design guidelines for walkability, and improved walking and cycling infrastructure and planning. These tools should be considered in the OCP update.

Climate Emergency Motion (2019)

The District of Sooke passed a climate emergency motion in April 2019. The motion requires that climate be a top priority in the planning process. This has direct relevance for the OCP.

Sustainable Development Strategy

The District's Sustainable Development Strategy is one its first strategies related to climate action. The Strategy establishes what sustainable prosperity looks like in Sooke, highlighting key opportunities and objectives as the municipality plans for future growth. Climate change is identified as an important action area. The following eight strategies are the backbone for future sustainable development:

- Create neighbourhood centres and a downtown waterfront that are compact and complete;
- Develop a transportation system that provides viable opportunities for non-automobile transportation and transit use;
- Support low impact, energy efficient, healthy buildings in which to live, work and play;
- Celebrate cultural and ecological assets through programming and managing open spaces and the public realm;
- Develop low-impact, efficient and green infrastructure;
- Foster a healthy, resilient, and supportive community;
- Promote jobs and businesses that contribute to a locally-oriented, green economy; and
- Promote a healthy, sustainable, local food system.

Liquid Waste Management Plans  
(Sanitary)

The Stage 1 (Sanitary) LWMP involved a series of studies concerning solutions to the District’s wastewater issues, primarily related to problems and limitations resulting from reliance on septic tank systems as well as the District’s higher density “Urban Containment Area” and the Downtown “Core Area”. These studies resulted in a \$22 million project to provide sewers and secondary wastewater treatment to the Core Area.

The Stage 2 (Sanitary) LWMP evaluated questions related to wastewater management options for the District for the areas that are currently outside of the Sewer Specified Area (SSA). The District completed its Stage 2 LWMP (Sanitary) in October 2005, and it was approved by the British Columbia Ministry of Environment (MoE) in December 2007.

The Stage 3 (Sanitary) LWMP used the information developed in both Stage 1 and Stage 2 to help refine sanitary wastewater management options and costs and to develop an implementation plan for the sanitary wastewater portion of the LWMP. The three most important aspects resulting from the Stage 3 (Sanitary) LWMP work are:

- Satellite Treatment Plant Effluent Standards
- Treatment Options for Areas Around Sooke Basin and Harbour
- On-Site Septic System Management
- Priority Assessment for Sewering Catchment Areas

Liquid Waste Management Plans  
(Rainwater)

The LWMP process required the development of planning strategies for the long-term management of rainwater. Enhanced rainwater management will have direct effects on the environment (watercourses and watersheds), public health and well-being and the ways in which municipal infrastructure and private land is developed. The LWMP provides clear direction to the District of Sooke as it implements the plan over the next decade to ensure that:

- Municipal rainwater infrastructure is developed in a manner that will result in healthy watercourses and a healthy near shore marine environment;
- Watershed based management approaches implemented to protect the District of Sooke’s watersheds;
- Low impact development techniques are employed to maintain, and where possible restore the pre-development hydrologic regime of urbanized and developing watersheds;
- Biological and chemical contaminants do not enter rainwater flows in the first place (rainwater source control);
- A green infrastructure approach to rainwater management is taken to provide for cleaner air through well treed riparian zones and streetscapes;
- Education and training activities are undertaken and community involvement is supported;
- Rainwater, on-site sewage treatment and groundwater recharge are not viewed in isolation;
- Spills are prevented and response and reporting protocols are in place;
- Annual monitoring and reporting of rainwater flows is undertaken;
- Methods to fund rainwater activities are investigated; and
- Regulatory policies, guidelines and options are discussed on an ongoing basis.

Wildfire Protection Plan (2010)

The Wildfire Protection Plan provides Sooke with a framework to assess the District’s fire risk. Additionally, the information contained in this report helps guide mitigation strategies that will best address wildfire risk in the community.

Action Plan across four categories: Communication and Education, Structure Protection, Vegetation Management, and Emergency Response.

Of direct relevance to the OCP, the Plan identifies the following recommendation within Communication and Education:

- Statement of support for initiatives, Development Permit Exemptions, Wildfire Hazard Development Permit Area Guidelines (with checklist and requirement for a professional report assessing developments for FireSmart vegetation and access/ egress).

The Minister of Environment approved Stage 2 & 3 (Rainwater) LWMP in May, 2011. The District of Sooke is the first community in British Columbia to integrate both Sanitary and Rainwater LWMP’s.

Rainwater Management Plan: Ella Stream, Nott Brook, Throup Stream, and Wright Road Creek Watersheds (January 2012)

To further guide watershed-scale rainwater management planning, the District's Rainwater Management Plan: Ella Stream, Nott Brook, Throup Stream, and Wright Road Creek Watersheds (January 2012) offers “on-the-ground” solutions to rainwater management issues at the watershed scale.

The three primary objectives of this RWMP are to:

1. Protect public safety and private property from flood damage;
2. Protect and enhance ecological health and function of the watersheds, riparian areas and watercourses; and
3. Improve water quality in watercourses and receiving waters.



COMMUNITY ROOTS – An Agricultural Plan for Sooke (2012)

An Agricultural Plan is a strategy and policy framework that can be used to guide agricultural-related decision making within the District of Sooke.

Sooke's Agricultural Plan evaluated existing OCP policies and actions and offered recommendations developed through community engagement.

Sooke Region Cultural Plan

Sooke Region's Cultural Plan offers the following vision, guiding principles, and strategic directions:

Vision

*Creating a healthy and vibrant arts, cultural, and heritage sector in the Sooke Region that will encourage everyone to participate, support and appreciate.*

Guiding Principles

- 1. Communication – support respectful, open, and honest communication amongst all community partners;
- 2. Diversity – respect equitably all elements of artistic, cultural and heritage initiatives in our community which are valuable sources of ideas, perspectives and talents;
- 3. Collaboration – work together in building partnerships and broadening dialogue with all community partners to advance mutual interests;
- 4. Community Ownership – ensure community input is sought, valued and recognized throughout the planning and implementation of the Cultural Plan;
- 5. Inclusiveness and Accessibility – where possible make cultural opportunities accessible to citizens and visitors across all part of the Sooke Region and relevant through all stages of life.

Strategic Directions

- 1. Strengthen arts, cultural and heritage organizations;
- 2. Encourage community celebrations and festivals;
- 3. Expand youth opportunities in the arts;
- 4. Strengthen cultural infrastructure;
- 5. Secure greater connection with and visibility for First Nations artists and local regional artists.

Town Centre Plan (2009)

The District of Sooke completed a Town Centre Plan in 2009, which outlined the following goals:

- To establish a Sooke Town Centre that will:
- 1. Be a well defined, compact, mixed-use ‘village core’
  - 2. Provide a strong “heart” for the community
  - 3. Reflect Sooke’s distinct cultural heritage
  - 4. Reinforce its unique geographic location and spectacular natural setting

The Town Centre Plan provides recommendations across land use, streets, urban design, height and density, as well as development standards. These recommendations are guided by a series of high level 'transformations' that support the overall vision for the Town Centre as a compact, walkable, mixed-use area:

- 1. Heal the Highway
- 2. Re-establish the Centre
- 3. Concentrate Development
- 4. Shape the Streets
- 5. Arts and Culture
- 6. Provide Additional Public Access to the Waterfront
- 7. A New Coordinated Promotion

Town Centre Illustrative Design Handbook

In support of the Town Centre Plan, the Illustrative Design Handbook guides development through recommended design considerations, including:

- Materials
- Building Massing
- Building Design
- Site Design & Layout
- Landscaping
- Awnings and Canopies
- Signs
- Parking
- Waterview Street
- Sooke Road & Otter Point Road
- Streetscape Improvements

Child Care Needs Assessment and Action Plan (2019)

Sooke's Child Care Needs Assessment assesses child care need, identifies targets for child care space creation, and outlines strategic directions. The Action Plan includes recommendations and tools to create new child care spaces based on the gaps identified in the Needs Assessment.

Vision

*To prioritize access to suitable, affordable child care that meets the diverse and changing needs of the community.*

Actions

1. Draft and adopt child care policies into the OCP that provide clear and consistent direction to Council,staff and non-profits.

2. Amend zoning regulations to facilitate the development of child care centres in residential zones.

3. Consider revisions to the parking requirements for child care to address the need for staff parking.

4. Review the Development Procedures Bylaw to identify opportunities to fast-track child care projects.

5. Explore the possibility of providing permissive tax exemptions for child care facilities.

6. Identify opportunities to transfer licensing requirements into the Zoning Bylaw to provide for greater consistency.

7. Establish a Child Care Reserve Fund.
8. Build partnerships that can lead to the development of child care facilities in Sooke.

9. Provide information and outreach to community members.

10. Advocate to Senior Government for additional capital funding for child care projects.

11. Continue to liaise and facilitate dialogue with key stakeholders and community groups regarding childcare issues.

Age-Friendly Action Plan (2015)

Building on a long history of volunteer initiatives, Sooke's Age-Friendly Action Plan formalized the District's approach to fostering an age-friendly community. This Plan identifies a list of recommended actions across a series of goals, including housing, engagement through volunteer activities, accessibility, and healthy and safety.

Accessibility & Inclusiveness Study (2008)

The purpose of this study was to develop a comprehensive strategy to make the District of Sooke accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities. In particular, this study:

- Inventories the existing conditions in the District of Sooke's built environment as they relate to accessibility and inclusion;
- Identifies issues and opportunities to improve accessibility and social inclusion in the District; and
- Presents a plan and implementation strategy for making the District of Sooke a model community for accessibility and inclusiveness.

This plan identifies a series actions across short (1-2 years) medium (2-5 years) and long (5+ years) time frames.



**SOOKE  
TOMMOROW**



# EMERGING THEMES

A tremendous amount of information is contained in this document. The following is a preliminary list of emerging themes or “takeaways” from the overall technical analysis, focusing on matters that are directly related to the OCP (i.e. land use and urban form). The themes are not intended to be comprehensive, but rather to begin a conversation with the community about values, aspirations, challenges, and opportunities that the OCP must embrace.

## Local Habitats Offer Unique Beauty, Access to Nature, and Vital Ecological Services

Sooke is uniquely surrounded by coastline on multiple sides, with access to diverse shoreline types. These shoreline and coastal habitats, as well as local freshwater habitats and mix of forest, wetland, and meadows, characterize Sooke as a community immersed in natural beauty. Along with Sooke’s well-established urban park network, these areas provide residents exceptional access to green and blue spaces – which have intrinsic and recreational value – while at the same time providing habitat to other beings and free services of nature such as flood relief. In fact, Sooke is surrounded by the largest continuous area of remaining habitat in South-East Vancouver Island.

## City, Country, or Suburbia?

Sooke is characterized in part by its rural-like setting, including natural and agricultural areas. At the same time, it is home to a concentration of homes and businesses that unquestionably make it an urban area. However since its incorporation, physical growth has become less efficient over time. Central areas tend to be more compact than newer residential areas situated at the community’s periphery. There seems to be a trend toward suburban land use and urban form, which influences everything from transportation choices to infrastructure costs. With this new OCP, Sooke is at a crossroads and has opportunity to determine which type of growth pattern ought to characterize it in the decades to come.

## A Place for Living and Playing, but Not a Lot of Working

In the way that urban growth patterns inform the character of a community as ‘city, country, or suburbia’, so does the balance of people living and working within that community. The majority of residents in Sooke work outside of the District, and workers have the longest commutes in the Capital Region. This suggests that, for many, Sooke can serve as somewhat of a bedroom community, which influences quality of life, transportation choices, sustainability, and more.

## Housing Choices Vary Depending on Needs

With housing costs that are more affordable than in other communities in the region, residents have access to more housing options in Sooke. This makes the community appealing for families and other households. At the same time, the large majority of homes are single-detached houses, with some areas comprised entirely of this residential type. This means that residents who need different housing types, such as people who would like to downsize to a smaller home, may have to leave their neighbourhood or even their community to do so. This is an important consideration as Sooke’s demographic continues to gradually age.

## A Changing Climate

Along with the rest of the world, Sooke is facing a climate emergency. With a projected increase of 1.5 degrees Celsius in the region by 2050, Sooke can expect to experience higher flood risk, sea level rise, more summer droughts, increased wildfire risks, and more. Adapting to these changes – and mitigating the greenhouse gas emissions that cause them – will soon be a part of the way of life in Sooke.

## Many Destinations Far From Home

Sooke is rich with cultural and recreational destinations, and an enviable network of parks and open spaces. Almost every household is within a short walk of a park or natural area, and these valuable assets set Sooke apart from other communities. At the same time, very few residents have access to important daily needs within walking distance of home, including groceries, shops and services, and even schools.

## Transportation – including Walkability – is a Challenge

Sooke is car dependent, with more than 90% of all trips taken by private vehicle. Shifting to active modes and transit offers opportunities for not only GHG emission reductions, but also for community well-being and vibrant public life. The inherited Provincial highway that bisects the community, as well as the lack of pedestrian facilities and connected transportation network, are parts of the challenge that must be creatively overcome.

## Land Use Policy is Climate Policy, Health Policy, Social Policy, and More

While transportation may be a challenge, land use is a solution. The most important drivers of transportation behaviour are land use and urban form, both of which are within the jurisdiction and influence of local governments like the District of Sooke. This is important because land use greatly influences greenhouse gas emissions, physical activity and health, social cohesion, public life, and more. There is much room to increase Sooke’s land use mix, population and employment densities, and physical connectedness to thresholds that support walking, cycling, and transit use. This OCP process offers an opportunity to open this exciting conversation with the community.



