

STAFF REPORT

2026 Comprehensive Plan Amendment: Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element and Capital Facility Plan

DATE: September 15, 2026

TO: Kitsap County Planning Commission

FROM: Heather Cleveland, AICP, Long Range Planner, with support from Carmen Smith, Parks Planner

SUBJECT: 2026 Comprehensive Plan Amendment: Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element and Capital Facility Plan Updates

EXHIBITS:

1. Gap Analysis
2. SEPA Determination and Environmental Checklist

OVERVIEW

Kitsap County's Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan was most recently adopted in July 2025 by Resolution No. 133-2025. In June 2026, the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) received a work study briefing regarding a proposed docket amendment to include an update to the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

In July 2026, the Department of Community Development (DCD) completed a gap analysis of the Comprehensive Plan's PROS Element. Based on the analysis, DCD recommended updates to the PROS Chapter to restore the appropriate hierarchy between the Comprehensive Plan and the PROS Plan and to update the Parks and Recreation component of the 2024 Capital Facilities Plan.

BACKGROUND

In 2024, Kitsap County completed a periodic update of its Comprehensive Plan, which was adopted by Ordinance 637-2024. An annual amendment followed in 2025 via Ordinance 643-2025 with a mid-2026 update to address a Growth Management Hearings Board remand via Ordinance 646-2026.

The PROS Plan provides the County's long-term framework for parks, recreation, and open space planning and was last adopted in July 2025 through Resolution No. 133-2025. The Comprehensive Plan's PROS Element establishes the policy framework for these topics within the County's overall growth management planning framework.

The July 2026 gap analysis identified where the Comprehensive Plan's PROS Chapter should be updated to better reflect the relationship between the Comprehensive Plan and the PROS Plan and to ensure that the appropriate hierarchy of planning documents is maintained. The analysis also identified the need to update the Parks and Recreation portion of the 2024 Capital Facilities Plan to ensure consistency with the updated planning framework.

Department Recommendation

Having analyzed the proposed amendment and other alternatives, where applicable, the Department recommends:

- ☒ Adoption of the amendment:
 - ☒ as proposed above
 - ☐ as described in Alternative below
 - ☐ with revisions described below
 - ☐ with conditions described below
 - ☐ deferral of the amendment to a future docket
 - ☐ denial of the amendment

Substantive Findings

Comprehensive Plan - Parks, Open Space, and Recreation Element Update

1. The proposed Comprehensive Plan is consistent with the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA), including the fifteen statewide planning goals contained therein and the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA).
2. The Comprehensive Plan update is consistent with PSRC's Vision 2050 and the Kitsap Countywide Planning Policies.
3. The Comprehensive Plan update reflects local circumstances and bears a

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substantial relationship to the public's general health, safety, and welfare.

4. The previously adopted PROS Plan is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan; however, incorporating much of the PROS Plan into the PROS Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan and the Capital Facilities Plan would increase clarity, improve implementation, and restore the appropriate hierarchy of implementation with the Comprehensive Plan. See Gap Analysis in **Exhibit 1**.
5. Heritage Park is no longer a park classification and is accounted for under Natural Resource Areas and Regional Park Areas.

Procedural Findings

- **Community Engagement and Public Review.** Kitsap County Parks conducted broad community and stakeholder engagement throughout the PROS Plan Update, including surveys, stakeholder interviews, Tribal coordination, public meetings, and outreach through multiple County communication channels. The Draft PROS Plan was made available for public review, with opportunities for written and verbal comment and a dedicated project webpage providing project materials and responses. The Plan also underwent review by the Parks Advisory Board, Planning Commission, and Board of County Commissioners, as well as SEPA review. Public input received throughout these processes informed revisions to the Plan prior to its adoption in 2025.
- **SEPA Determination – Comp Plan PROS Element.** On August 25, 2026, the County issued a *Programmatic Determination of Non-Significance*. A Notice of Availability was posted in the Kitsap Sun newspaper, sent to the SEPA Register, and properly noticed to agencies, Tribes and interested parties.
- **Docket Update – Comp Plan PROS Element.** On August 24, 2026, Kitsap County adopted *Resolution XX-2026 Amending Resolution 008-2026 regarding the Kitsap County 2026 Long Range Planning Docket* – “to update the PROS Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan to restore the appropriate hierarchy of implementation with the Comprehensive Plan.”
- **Department of Commerce Review – Comp Plan PROS Element.** On August 31, 2026, the County issued a 60-day NOIA to Commerce. A Commerce letter of acknowledgement of receipt was received on **XX, 2026**.

Other Alternative Considered

No official alternatives are considered as a part of this staff report.

Comprehensive Plan Consistency

The proposal is supportive of the Kitsap County Mission:

Kitsap County government exists to protect and promote the safety, health and welfare of our citizens in an efficient, accessible, and effective manner.

The proposal incorporates elements of the Kitsap County Vision Statement:

- A Resilient Community – Provide inclusive, accessible, and efficient government services that effectively inform and engage residents where they are, respecting local input in transparent decision making, acting always with professionalism and integrity.
- An Engaged and Connected Community - Establish strong connections with and among residents, community groups, neighborhoods, and organizations through timely, useful, inclusive, and responsive communication, outreach and events.

SEPA

The SEPA Programmatic Determination of Non-Significance (DNS) was issued on August 25, 2026. The DNS comment period will end September 8, 2026.

PUBLIC OUTREACH/PARTICIPATION

Public participation is an essential and required component for updating the Comprehensive Plan. The list below outlines the public participation events that occurred.

- **Community Engagement and Public Review.** Kitsap County Parks conducted a broad public engagement process for the PROS Plan Update, including community surveys, stakeholder interviews, public meetings, Tribal coordination, and outreach through multiple communication channels. The Draft PROS Plan was made available for public review, with 447 comments received during the initial five-week comment period. The Plan was subsequently reviewed by the Parks Advisory Board, Planning Commission, and Board of County Commissioners, with additional opportunities for public comment. The Plan also underwent SEPA review, and coordination occurred with the Suquamish Tribe and Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe. Public input received throughout the process informed revisions to the Plan prior to adoption by the Board of County Commissioners on July 28, 2025, through Resolution No 133-2025.
- **State Environmental Policy Act – Comp Plan PROS Element.** The Department of



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Community Development issued a SEPA DNS on August 25, 2026, which includes a 14-day public comment period that closes September 8, 2026.

- **Planning Commission – Comp Plan PROS Element.** The Planning Commission held a public hearing on the proposed amendments to the PROS Element and the Parks & Recreation portion of the Capital Facilities Plan on September 15, 2026. There will be a public comment period running from August 31, 2026 – September 15, 2026.

Exhibit 1: Gap Analysis

Item No.	Lead	PROS Plan Reference	Related Comprehensive Plan Reference	Observation	Staff Recommendation	Comp Plan Goal, Policy, Strategy	Edit	Notes
1	Heather	Goal PR-1, Objective 1.1, Action 1.1.1 – Evaluate and potentially divest park-owned properties that do not align with countywide objectives.	No corresponding goal, policy, or strategy.	Introduces a new policy direction regarding parkland divestiture. The Comprehensive Plan addresses acquisition, expansion, and preservation but does not discuss disposal of park properties.	Edit	Strategy 1.a - Carefully consider the acquisition of lands with characteristics that offer opportunities for diverse recreational uses while ensuring adequate resources are available to maintain and operate these facilities into the future.	Strategy 1.a - Carefully consider the acquisition or divestiture of lands to ensure adequate resources are available to maintain and operate these facilities into the future.	
2	Heather	Goal PR-1, Objective 1.1 Park System Optimization	Goal 3 (Efficiency)	Expands the concept of land acquisition strategy into broader portfolio management and optimization, including evaluating existing holdings.	Edit	Goal 3. Efficiency. Establish a land acquisition strategy, including the necessary funding, that will facilitate a more efficient service delivery model.	Goal 3. Efficiency. Establish a land acquisition strategy, including the necessary funding, and divestiture strategy that will facilitate a more efficient service delivery model.	

3	Heather		Strategy 3.a		Add	--	Strategy 3.b. Evaluate and potentially divest existing park-owned properties that do not align with countywide park and recreation objectives to optimize resource allocation and management.	Conversations about divestiture is about shifting to alternative management, e.g. Kingston MPD Village Green or Suquamish Tribe - not development.
3	Heather	Goal PR-1, Objective 1.4, Action 1.4.4 – Establish service area standards such as neighborhood parks within a 10-minute walk and regional parks within a 30minute drive.	Policies 1.4 and 1.5; Strategy 1.h	Creates measurable access standards that are not currently included in the Comprehensive Plan.	No Edit	Parks Policy 1.4. Ensure geographic distribution and equitable access to park facilities. Parks Policy 1.5. Develop and redevelop County parks to provide equity of service and activities offered for all demographics and accessibility levels. Parks Strategy 1.h. Develop Park funding allocation criteria in a	--	Comp Plan provides high level policy direction regarding park access. The more specific language relating to "10-minute walk" is appropriately in the PROS Plan.
4	Heather	Goal PR-1, Objective 1.6 Resource Alignment & Strategic Partnerships	Goal 2 (Funding); Policies 2.1–2.6	Introduces a comprehensive staffing and resource-balancing framework beyond the funding direction contained in the Comprehensive Plan.	No Edit	Parks Goal 2. Funding. Provide appropriate and necessary funding and resources to support the management and maintenance of parks, facilities, and open space lands of the highest quality possible. Parks Policy 2.1. Establish stable funding sources to support the County's parks system.	--	The Comprehensive Plan and PROS Plan are aligned.

5	Heather	Goal PR-2, Objective 2.1, Actions 2.1.1–2.1.4 – Natural resource management plans, biodiversity assessments, wildlife corridors, and habitat mapping.	Goal 5; Policies 5.2, 5.4, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10; Strategies 5.c–5.f	Generally aligned but establishes specific management expectations and implementation requirements not explicitly identified in the Comprehensive Plan.	Edit	Parks Strategy 5.d. Develop individual forest management plans for regional and heritage parks.	Parks Strategy 5.d. Develop individual natural resource management plans for all park landscapes managed for conservation and preservation.	Note Policy 5.9 has a dated reference and should be updated (e.g. Salmon Recovery or WRIA 15). Policy 5.11 odd placement - appears to be a rule. What is this getting at.....
6	Heather	Goal PR-3, Objective 3.1 Sustainable Park Design	Policies 2.12, 3.2, 3.3; Strategy 2.e	Expands sustainable development concepts into specific design standards, green infrastructure, native landscaping, and energyefficient facility practices.	No Edit	Parks Strategy 2.e. Prioritize sustainability in all aspects of park planning, development, and maintenance, emphasizing resource efficiency, water conservation, carbon reduction, waste reduction, and environmental awareness.	--	Comp Plan provides high level policy direction regarding sustainability; PROS Plan has more detail.
7	Heather	Goal PR-3, Objective 3.2, Action 3.2.1 – Environmental assessments as a foundational planning requirement.	Strategy 1.e; Goal 5	Elevates environmental assessments from project-specific guidance to a countywide planning expectation.	Edit	Parks Strategy 1.e. Enhance the Port Gamble Heritage Park Framework with additional environmental and wildlife habitat assessments before planning new major projects within the Park.	Parks Strategy 1.e. Incorporate environmental assessments as a foundational step in park planning and development.	Broaden so Comp Plan provides high level policy direction for environmental assessments; PROS Plan has more detail. The wildlife assessment at Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park is nearing completion.

8	Carmen	Goal PR-3, Objective 3.4 Water Trails Development	Goal 4 (Water Access); Policies 4.1–4.4	Consistent with the Comprehensive Plan but includes specific facility development, launch site, and educational program commitments not identified in the Comprehensive Plan.	No Edit	Parks Goal 4. Provide physical and visual public access opportunities and space for diverse forms of water-oriented recreation in such a way that private property rights, public safety, and shoreline ecological functions and processes are protected in accordance with existing laws and statutes. Parks Policy 4.1. Support and promote the Kitsap Peninsula Water Trail.	--	Goal 4 and Policy 1.4 provide high level policy direction regarding water access and Kitsap Peninsula Water Trail; PROS Plan has more detail.
9	Carmen	Goal PR-4, Objective 4.1, Action 4.1.3 – Mobile applications, virtual tours, and technology solutions.	No corresponding goal, policy, or strategy.	Introduces a new operational and visitor engagement direction not addressed in the Comprehensive Plan.	Edit	Parks Goal 1. Equity. Provide equitable access to regional parks and open space to meet the recreational and diverse user needs for active healthy communities. Parks Policy 1.5. Develop and redevelop County parks to provide equity of service and activities offered for all demographics and accessibility levels. Parks Policy 2.8. Develop and redevelop County parks to accommodate the preferences and needs of all visitors and residents with particular attention to historically marginalized, elderly, persons with disabilities, young, and low-income populations.	Parks Goal 1. Equity. Provide equitable access to and enhance overall experience in parks and open space to meet the recreational and diverse user needs for active healthy communities. Parks Policy 1.5. Develop and redevelop County parks to provide equity of service and activities offered and enhance visitor amenities for all demographics and accessibility levels.	Comp Plan provides high level policy support regarding visitor amenities (PROS Plan Goal PR-4 & Objective 4.1). Edited to broaden to include experience.

10	Carmen	Goal PR-4, Objectives 4.24.4 – Volunteer stewardship, docent programs, certification, training, and recognition programs.	Strategy 2.c; Strategy 1.c; Policy 5.6	Significantly expands volunteer and stewardship programs beyond the level of direction provided in the Comprehensive Plan.	Edit	Parks Strategy 2.c. Form partnerships with community groups to maintain natural areas and trails collaboratively and effectively.	Parks Strategy 2.c. Maintain a robust volunteer program to assist the Parks Department in park, open space, and trail maintenance.	Proposed edits are to make the strategy consistent with the Parks Department's volunteer program.
11	Carmen	Goal PR-4, Objective 4.5 Cultural Heritage Preservation	Policies 1.12, 5.3; Policy 1.3	Consistent overall, but establishes specific heritage interpretation and cultural programming initiatives.	No Edit	Parks Policy 1.3. Restore, manage, and protect the natural and cultural resources within Kitsap County Parks for the benefit of the greater community and for future generations to safely enjoy.	--	Comp Plan provides high level policy direction for cultural heritage preservation; PROS Plan has more details.
12	Carmen	Goal PR-5, Objective 5.2 Recreation Tourism Development	Goal PR-5, Objective 5.2 Recreation Tourism Development	Supports destination tourism and recreation-based economic development but places greater emphasis on marketing and event attraction than the Comprehensive Plan.	Edit	Parks Policy 1.8. Design and develop facilities that will encourage tourism.	Parks Policy 1.8. Design, develop, maintain, market, and manage facilities that will encourage tourism and attract events.	
13	Carmen	Goal PR-5, Action 5.2.1 –Recreation tourism marketing campaigns.	Policy 1.8; Policy 1.9	Establishes a new decision-making framework for evaluating tourism and event investments.	No Edit	Parks Policy 1.8. Design and develop facilities that will encourage tourism.	--	Revised Comp Plan Policy 1.8 provides high level policy direction for tourism and events; PROS gets into the specifics.

14	Carmen	Goal PR-5, Objective 5.3 Adaptive Event Support	Policies 1.1, 1.2, 1.7–1.9	Introduces ongoing event trend monitoring, equipment expansion, and event support planning not addressed in the Comprehensive Plan.	No Edit	Parks Policy 1.8. Design and develop facilities that will encourage tourism.	--	Revised Comp Plan Policy 1.8 provides high level policy direction for tourism and events; PROS gets into the specifics.
15	Carmen	Goal PR-6, Objective 6.1 Standardized Management Practices	Goal 2 (Funding); Goal 3 (Efficiency)	Introduces operational field manuals, maintenance protocols, and service standards not identified in the Comprehensive Plan.	Add	NEW	Parks Policy 2.1. Ensure high standards in park maintenance and operations by establishing standardized management practices and effectively allocating resources to sustain park facilities and natural settings.	Add under Parks Goal 2; note the numbering is intentional to put this policy at the topic.
16	Carmen	Goal PR-6, Objective 6.2, Action 6.2.1 – Park Management Prospectus.	No corresponding goal, policy, or strategy.	Creates a new park management and asset evaluation framework.	No Edit		--	Newly added Policy 2.1 provides high level policy direction for maintenance; PROS Plan gets into more detail on specific maintenance topics.
17	Carmen	Goal PR-6, Objective 6.3 Trail Management Enhancement	Policies 5.1 and 5.8	Adds detailed trail safety, monitoring, emergency response, and conflict management requirements.	No Edit		--	Newly added Policy 2.1 provides high level policy direction for maintenance; PROS Plan gets into more detail on specific maintenance topics.

18	Carmen	Goal PR-6, Objective 6.5 Facility Upgrades and Maintenance	Policies 2.4, 2.6, 2.7	Establishes lifecycle management, condition assessments, usage tracking, and public/private management evaluation processes beyond existing Comprehensive Plan direction.	No Edit		--	Newly added Policy 2.1 provides high level policy direction for maintenance; PROS Plan gets into more detail on specific maintenance topics.
Consistency Review Audit - Review areas in goals and strategies where there was "No Conflicts Found"								
Item #	Lead	PROS Plan	Comp Plan Alignment	PROS Plan Description	Staff Recommendation	Comp Plan Goal, Policy, Strategy	Edit	Notes
1		Goal PR-1	No Conflicts Found	Goal PR-1. Promote a sustainable parks system that fosters opportunities for both active and passive recreation, encourages healthy lifestyles, safeguards natural habitats, and preserves and enhances significant environmental and historical resources.	No Edit	Parks Goal 1. Provide equitable access to regional parks and open space to meet the recreational and diverse user needs for active healthy communities.	--	Both goals are focused on the entire parks system and providing diverse rec opportunities. PROS Plan goal adds environmental and historical resources, which Comp Plan provides high level policy direction for (covered in line items 5-7 & 11 above).

2		Objective 1.1	No Conflicts Found	Objective 1.1. Reorganize the County's parks portfolio to prioritize properties and projects that enhance habitat and trail connectivity, preserve open spaces, conserve critical areas, and promote sustainability.	No Edit		--	Covered in item numbers 1-3 in above table with proposed revised policies regarding acquisition and divestiture.
3		Objective 4.3	No Conflicts Found	Objective 4.3. Enhance visitor engagement and education by developing interpretive signage and multimedia resources, partnering with local organizations for educational programs, and organizing community events and guided hikes.	No Edit		--	Covered in item number 9 with proposed revised policy regarding visitor experience, etc.

4		Objective 4.4	No Conflicts Found	Objective 4.4. Foster a robust volunteer network to support park stewardship, trail maintenance, visitor education, and the promotion of natural, cultural, and historic resources. Expand interpretive and docent-led programs to enhance public awareness, engagement, and appreciation of Kitsap County's diverse landscapes and heritage.	No Edit		--	Covered in item number 10 above with proposed revised policy regarding volunteer program.
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5		Objective 5.1	No Conflicts Found	Objective 5.1. Optimize service delivery and revenue generation by streamlining facility management operations through facility management programs, enhanced reservation systems, improved customer service, and exploring sponsorship and marketing opportunities.	No Edit		--	Objective 5.1 is in regards to events. Newly revised Parks Policy 1.8 (item number 12) discusses developing and managing facilities for tourism and events, providing high level policy direction. Objective 5.1 gets into more detail.
6		Objective 5.3	No Conflicts Found	Objective 5.3. Track trends in community needs and recreational events to enhance Kitsap County's ability to provide appropriate services, facilities, and support equipment, ensuring the County remains a premier recreation destination.	No Edit		--	Objective 5.3 is in regards to events. Newly revised Parks Policy 1.8 (item number 12) discusses developing and managing facilities for tourism and events, providing high level policy direction. Objective 5.3 gets into more detail. Additionally, Parks Policy 1.1 also provides high level policy direction.

7		Objective 6.1	No Conflicts Found	Objective 6.1. Establish and implement standardized management practices for park facilities and natural settings by developing and updating field manuals, conducting regular facility assessments, and integrating management prescriptions into staffing and funding levels.	No Edit		--	Proposed new Parks Policy 2.1 (item number 15 above) mentions ensuring high standards in parks maintenance and operations, providing high level policy direction. Objective 6.1 gets into more specifics.
8		Objective 6.2	No Conflicts Found	Objective 6.2. Effectively allocate resources to manage open spaces and diverse parkland facilities by developing a Park Management Prospectus, establishing maintenance standards, and implementing green infrastructure solutions.	No Edit		--	Proposed new Parks Policy 2.1 (item number 15 above) mentions ensuring high standards in parks maintenance and operations, providing high level policy direction. Objective 6.2 gets into more specifics.

9		Objective 6.3	No Conflicts Found	Objective 6.3. Ensure safe and sustainable trail experiences through comprehensive maintenance programs and the use of technology.	No Edit		--	Proposed new Parks Policy 2.1 (item number 15 above) mentions ensuring high standards in parks maintenance and operations, providing high level policy direction. Objective 6.3 gets into more specifics.
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