

Chapter 6 - Parks, Recreation and Open Space



Discussion

Kitsap County is known for its many distinctive features including its glacier-carved rolling topography, evergreen forests, freshwater lakes, inlets, bays, and Puget Sound. Kitsap County's nature-oriented park system reflects this diversity of settings, and provides for developed recreation facilities to serve a population of diverse ages, ethnicities, abilities, and outdoor interests.



Nearly three quarters of all park and open space acreage is within six heritage parks. These heritage parks have become the foundation of Kitsap County's park

system. They are large enough to remain primarily undeveloped natural areas, with trails and environmentally sensitive areas preserved or enhanced. Some of these Heritage Parks may have a land base suitable to support more developed facilities and intense recreational use, while others encompass more natural, or historic-based resources and are more suitable for passive, less intrusive recreation and facilities.

The Kitsap Forest and Bay Project is an ongoing priority for Kitsap County, which will involve collaborating with conservation groups and recreation interests, working together to protect forested landscapes and shoreline in the northern section of the County. Together they have raised awareness and private funds for acquisition of several thousand acres of forestlands for the Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park. Incorporating a near-term "timber deed" reserved for a final harvest rotation for the owner or timber company, has largely increased the available holdings for the County. These lands will be reforested with a more natural mixed species restoration scheme, and grow a future heritage forest, while providing for compatible recreational use of those lands. Within this new park environment are ecologically important streams, springs, wetlands, beaver ponds, and more than two miles of undeveloped shorelines and tidelands. The project is unique in that it brought many partners to the table including a private landowner, conservancy and trails groups, local government and both the Port Gamble S'Klallam and Suquamish tribes.

Focusing on the inter-related nature of parks and open space to other Comprehensive Plan elements provide the guidance to do the following:

- Provide parks, recreation, and open space facilities, and services in an efficient and economical manner, and manage and maintain park and open space lands;
- Incorporate a network of trails and greenways, working with cities, other communities, and



conservation organizations, to connect population and employment centers, schools, and public facilities;

- Provide and manage parks in proximity to new and existing housing and manage environmental values; and
- Identify lands for possible acquisition to the County Park System.

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Guiding Directives

The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space goals and policies guide future planning and design decisions for unincorporated Kitsap County's passive and active parks. This chapter guides how and where opportunities for recreation are defined and distinguished in urban and rural areas.

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space goals and policies in this Comprehensive Plan are an integral part of the other elements including: *Land Use, Economic Development, Environment, Housing and Human Services, Transportation, and Capital Facilities and Utilities.*



Focusing on the inter-related nature of Parks and Open Space to other Comprehensive Plan elements provide the guidance to do the following:

- provide parks, recreation and open space facilities and services in an efficient and economical manner,
- manage and maintain park and open space lands, working with cities and other communities for park and open space acquisition projects,
- incorporate a network of trails and greenways through the County to connect population and employment centers, schools, and public facilities,
- manage parks when in proximity to new and existing housing,
- manage environmental values, and,
- identify lands for possible acquisition

The goals and policies recognize the County residents' interest in promoting pedestrian and bicycling through the provision of bicycle and walking trails in parks systems as well as the desire to institute management programs for habitat value, forest health, groundwater recharge, and safety for the County Heritage parks.

Technical documents used in development of Chapter 6- Parks, Recreation, and Open Space include the Buildable Land Report, reasonable measures included in the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, and review of all amendments to the Washington State Growth Management Act.

Parks, Recreation and Open Space Goals and Policies

Parks Goal 1. Provide regional parks, and open space to meet active and passive regional recreational needs, as well as the needs of wildlife.

Parks Policy 1. Continue acquisition of lands having characteristics providing opportunities for varied uses.

Parks Policy 2. Develop County park facilities to accommodate specialized activities, large special events, and athletic tournaments.

Parks Policy 3. Continue to support and maintain parks advisory board to include community involvement and conduct public outreach.

Parks Policy 4. Create new and foster current partnerships with local, state and federal government agencies and local and national organizations.

Parks Policy 5. Develop and redevelop County parks to accommodate multiple uses.

Parks Policy 6. Develop and redevelop County parks to provide equity of service and activities offered for all age groups.

Parks Policy 7. Develop and redevelop County parks in a manner that allows all-weather activity.

Parks Policy 8. Develop and redevelop certain County parks to become “destination parks”.

Parks Policy 9. Identify new and preserve existing open space in rural areas.

Parks Policy 10. Identify open space corridors and potential open space areas within and between urban growth areas.

Parks Policy 11. Support development of a regional trail system throughout the County and recognize that trails, when built, must be sensitive to impact on natural environment.

Did You Know?



Through the Forest Stewardship Plan, Kitsap County will realize the full range of benefits and values of the

North Kitsap Heritage Park in a manner consistent with the County’s overarching goal of a growing community where natural resources

and systems are sustained for the benefit of current and future generations.

Parks Policy 12. Kitsap County shall incorporate the Local Habitat Assessment completed by Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife to assist in identifying crucial corridor areas that may not necessarily be identified in the Shoreline Master Program or the Critical Areas Ordinance.

Parks Policy 13. When implementing the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan ensure that coordination with Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife and local Tribes occurs to ensure protection of treaty reserved natural and cultural resources.

Parks Policy 14. Kitsap County’s Parks Department will strive to decrease conflict between wildlife and humans and decrease impact on habitat by improving identification of protected areas.

Parks Policy 15. Kitsap County Parks Department will continue to improve educational efforts regarding the importance of limiting contact with wildlife and the value of habitat preservation.

Parks Policy 16. Locate trail corridors to also serve wildlife when possible.

Parks Policy 17. Ensure that the County’s Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan is consistent with habitat inventories and habitat protection and restoration programs.

Parks Policy 18. Consider and identify opportunities to increase public access and foster environmental and economic benefits associated with Kitsap Peninsula National Water Trails and designation as part of the National Water Trails System.

Parks Policy 19. Work with qualified tourism and business entities to consider and identify current and future opportunities for public access to natural recreation assets and potential economic benefits that respect county goals and policies.

Parks Goal 2. 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 20. Provide visitor accommodations including trailheads, parking and restrooms.

Parks Policy 21. Establish stable funding sources to support the County's parks system.

Parks Policy 22. Provide funding to institute a formal, ongoing capital maintenance program.





Parks Policy 23. Facilitate partnerships to promote and maintain neighborhood and pocket parks. Encourage homeowner associations and property owners to work with parks agencies and land trusts to effectively maintain buffers and open space within and around developments, and form partnerships with community groups to effectively maintain natural areas and trails.

Parks Policy 24. Implement the adopted Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan to plan, acquire, and develop open space, greenways, and wildlife habitat to the greatest extent possible with funds provided.

Parks Policy 25. Recognize parks as an important component of Kitsap County's economy.

Parks Goal 3. Establish a land acquisition strategy including the necessary funding that will facilitate a more efficient service delivery model.

Parks Policy 26. Purchase lands along the lower mainstream of Chico Creek Watershed as recommended in the Chico Creek Main stem Restoration Plan.

Parks Policy 27. Work towards acquiring trail corridors to connect parks, schools, residential and urban areas.

Parks Policy 28. Develop a land acquisition method that requires a review process for the acquisition of land that is not adjacent to present land holdings or planning areas.

Parks Policy 29. Coordinate with Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program, as needed, for the development of non-motorized trails in rural areas through acquisitions or easements.

Would you like to be more involved?



The Kitsap County Park Volunteer program is dedicated to preserving, protecting, and restoring the natural and cultural resources within Kitsap County Parks for current and future generations. Volunteers are encouraged to work as a team with the Kitsap County Parks Department to contribute to the quality of the parks, facilities, and programs that serve our entire community. Please email parks@co.kitsap.wa.us to learn more about getting involved!



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 30. Prioritize acquisition of properties that provide access to public tidelands, to maximize public access.

Parks Policy 31. Support and promote the Kitsap Peninsula Water Trail.

Did You Know?



Kitsap County Parks are a great place to hold events, such as weddings or birthday parties. Please visit

<http://www.kitsapgov.com/parks/> for more information.

Parks Recreation and Open Space Strategies

Strategies

- The strategies located on pages 23-39 of the 2018 Parks and Recreation Open Space Plan are adopted by reference. <https://www.kitsapgov.com/parks/Pages/PROSPlanUpdates.aspx>

References

- 2018 Parks and Recreation Open Space (PROS) Plan
<https://www.kitsapgov.com/parks/Pages/PROSPlanUpdates.aspx>
- Newberry Hill Heritage Park Master Plan
<https://www.kitsapgov.com/parks/Pages/NewberryHillHeritagePark.aspx>
- South Kitsap Regional Park Plan
<https://www.kitsapgov.com/parks/Pages/SouthKitsapRegionalPark.aspx>
- Forest Stewardship Plan <https://www.kitsapgov.com/parks/Pages/ForestStewardship.aspx>