



Island Lake Park

# KITSAP COUNTY

## PROS Plan Update

March 2025

County of Kitsap

614 Division Street

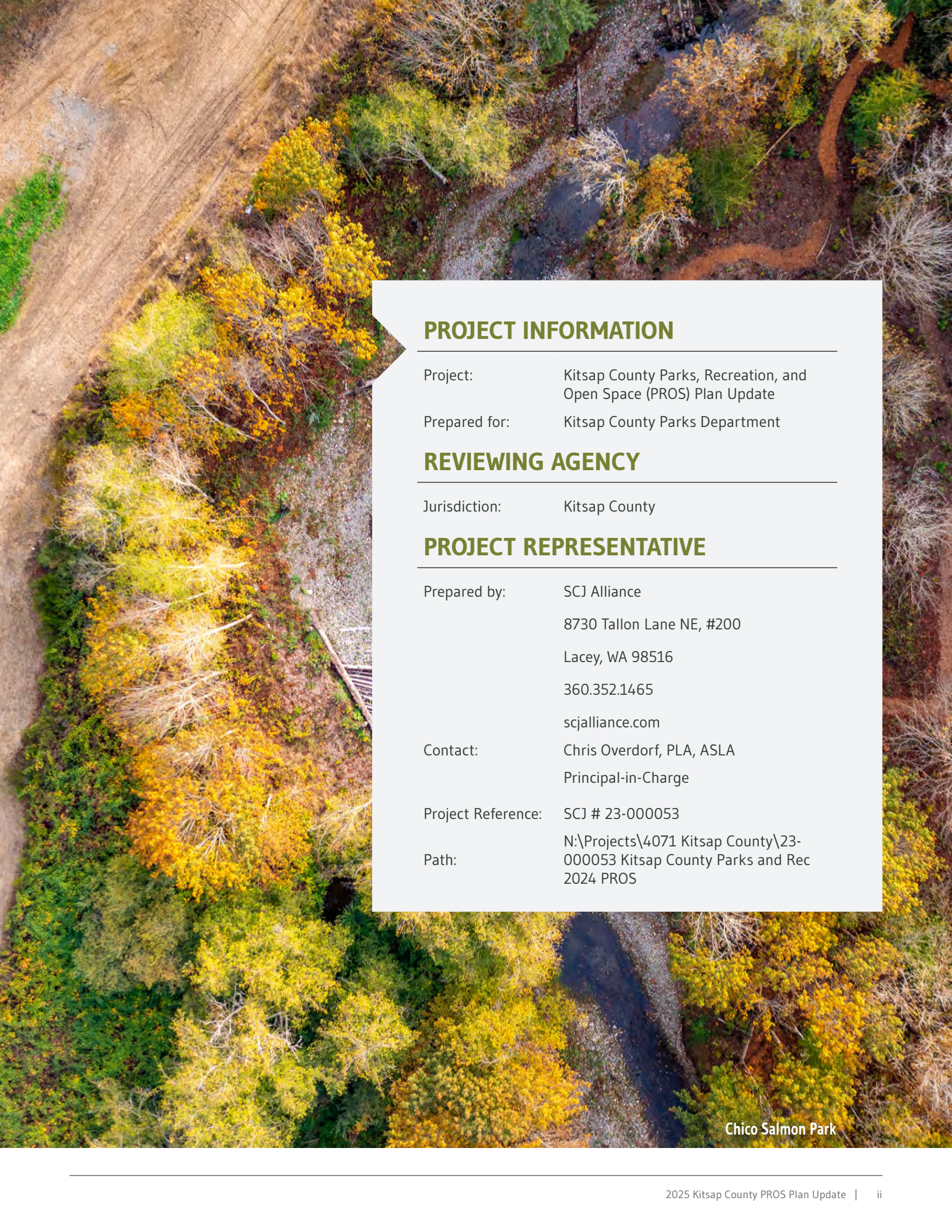
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## PROJECT INFORMATION

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Project: Kitsap County Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan Update

Prepared for: Kitsap County Parks Department

## REVIEWING AGENCY

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Jurisdiction: Kitsap County

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Chico Salmon Park



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Long Lake Park



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## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

**The Kitsap Peninsula is the home of sovereign Indian nations, namely the Suquamish and Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribes.**

Kitsap County is located on 396 square miles of land within the ancestral territory of Native American Tribes named under three separate Treaties.

### Medicine Creek Treaty – December 26, 1854

- Puyallup, Nisqually, and Squaxin Island Tribes

### Point Elliot Treaty – January 22, 1855

- Muckleshoot, Snoqualmie, Suquamish, Tulalip, Stillaguamish, Swinomish, Sauk-Suiattle, Upper Skagit, Samish, Lummi, and Nooksack Tribes

### Point No Point Treaty – January 26, 1855

- Jamestown S'Klallam, Skokomish, Elwha Klallam, and Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribes

All tribes who signed their specific treaties maintain their hunting, fishing, and gathering rights on “usual and accustomed” grounds which include land, shorelands, and waterways within Kitsap County.

With a deep historical connection and legacy of respect for the land and natural resources, these Tribal nations enrich Kitsap County through environmental stewardship, cultural heritage, and economic development, as well as collaboration with local governments to shape Kitsap County's future.

J.A. & Anna F. Smith Children's Park



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# Summary

The Kitsap County Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan is a forward-looking framework designed to enhance and sustain the county's parks and recreational amenities to meet the needs of its growing and diverse population. This comprehensive update, spanning the years 2024 to 2030, builds upon the foundation of the 2018 plan, incorporating extensive community input and strategic analysis to align with evolving priorities and opportunities.

Central to the plan is its vision for a resilient, inclusive, and accessible park system that balances active recreation, environmental stewardship, and cultural preservation. It sets forth ambitious goals to expand recreational facilities, improve connectivity through trails, conserve natural habitats, and foster community health and well-being. The plan emphasizes inclusivity, ensuring that all residents, regardless of ability or location, have equitable access to vibrant outdoor spaces.

Engagement efforts revealed key priorities, including a strong desire for accessibility improvements, enhanced safety measures, expanded trail networks, upgraded recreational amenities, and conservation of natural areas. The community also emphasized the importance of investing in core infrastructure like restrooms, parking, and drainage to improve park usability and long-term maintenance.

A robust Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is at the heart of the PROS Plan, detailing a strategic roadmap for parkland acquisitions, facility enhancements, and sustainable management practices. Key projects include ADA-compliant upgrades, new trail networks, and expanded community parks to address both immediate and long-term recreational needs. The plan also prioritizes environmental resilience, with initiatives to protect wetlands, manage forests, and mitigate climate impacts.

Funding strategies outlined in the plan leverage local, state, and federal resources, including grants and partnerships, to maximize community investments. Regular reviews and adaptive management ensure that the plan remains dynamic, reflecting changing community preferences and fiscal realities.

Through this visionary blueprint, Kitsap County reaffirms its commitment to fostering a high quality of life, supporting environmental sustainability, and creating cherished spaces where residents can connect, play, and thrive for generations to come.

The plan also addresses funding challenges through a mix of local, state, and federal resources, including grants, partnerships, and innovative funding models. It emphasizes the importance of leveraging community input and volunteer support to maximize resources while fostering a sense of ownership and stewardship among residents.

In essence, the Kitsap County PROS Plan is a testament to the county's commitment to creating vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable parks and recreational spaces that reflect the community's aspirations and enhance quality of life for generations to come.





Point No Point Park



J.A. & Anna F. Smith Children's Park



Chico Salmon Park



Silverdale Waterfront Park



Kitsap County Fairgrounds





# Overview

Erlands Point Preserve





Anderson Point Park



Silverdale Waterfront Park



Silverdale Waterfront Park

## Introduction & Purpose

Welcome to the Kitsap County Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan Update (PROS Plan). This plan aims to refresh and update the County's 2018 PROS Plan for adoption by the Board of Commissioners. Once adopted, it will be integrated into the County's Comprehensive Plan and submitted for approval to the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) as a requirement for future grant funding opportunities.

This plan is built on extensive community engagement through public surveys, open house forums, stakeholder interviews, and other opportunities for public input. It recognizes the strengths of our park operations and management, identifies areas for improvement, and introduces new approaches and ideas to ensure that the department's direction aligns with the sentiments of the Kitsap County community.

The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan (PROS) is a vital element of Kitsap County's Comprehensive Plan. The plan provides a six-year strategic framework and a 20-year vision for the County park system, outlining the steps

necessary for developing and improving park facilities, acquiring new park properties, and expanding recreational opportunities based on public demand. Updating the 2018 PROS Plan is essential to complying with the Growth Management Act (GMA), which promotes the wise use of limited land and resources to help conserve open space and enhance recreational opportunities. The GMA also calls for the development of parks and recreation facilities to improve the community's quality of life. Moreover, the PROS Plan is a prerequisite for state and federal grant eligibility, administered by the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO). Upon adoption by the County Commissioners, the plan is submitted to the RCO for approval.

This plan serves as a dynamic six-year strategic guide and aspirational framework for managing and enhancing Kitsap County's parks, trails, open spaces, and recreation services. It establishes an actionable plan, subject to funding availability, to meet the community's quality of life expectations regarding parks, trails, open spaces, and recreational opportunities. Additionally, this plan provides a vision for the County's parks consistent with community values, proposes updates to level-of-service standards for park and facility classifications, and addresses departmental and community-wide goals, objectives, and other management considerations to maintain high-quality recreation opportunities for the community.





Long Lake Park

Developed collaboratively with input from Kitsap County residents, County staff, the County Board of Commissioners, and the Parks Advisory Board, this plan inventories and evaluates existing parks, trails, and open spaces, assessing their integration with other local and regional parks and recreation assets. It also examines conditions for acquisition, site development, financing options, and operational considerations.

In Washington State, PROS Plans serve as crucial roadmaps for the growth, development, and preservation of outdoor spaces. These plans are essential for balancing growth with environmental protection and enhancing residents’ quality of life. For Kitsap County, the PROS Plan plays a pivotal role in ensuring compliance with the GMA, promoting thoughtful planning to accommodate growth while protecting the environment.

However, this PROS Plan extends beyond mere compliance. It embodies a vision and commitment by the County to community engagement, offering a platform for residents to express their needs and desires for parks, trails, and recreational areas. Through surveys, outreach, interviews, and other tools, the County has gathered valuable input to ensure the plan is a true reflection of the diverse interests and aspirations of its residents.

The PROS Plan sets ambitious goals for improving access to recreational amenities, enhancing existing facilities, and expanding green spaces. These goals represent actionable steps toward creating a community where residents can live, work, and play.

The PROS Plan includes the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), a strategic blueprint for translating vision into action. The CIP outlines specific projects and improvements designed to enhance services for Kitsap County residents over the next six years and beyond. These projects align with the community’s goals and values, ensuring that every dollar spent brings tangible benefits.

In essence, the PROS Plan is Kitsap County’s promise to its residents: a commitment to vibrant parks, thriving green spaces, and abundant opportunities for community gathering, special events, and outdoor adventure. It is a testament to the county’s dedication to building a sustainable future where nature and community flourish together.

# Regulatory Requirements

## Growth Management Act Requirements

RCW 36.70A.140, known as the Growth Management Act (GMA), is crucial to all Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plans in Washington State. This law mandates that local governments, such as cities and counties, plan for growth through comprehensive plans that consider natural resources, economic development, and residents’ quality of life.

Specifically, the GMA requires local governments to adopt comprehensive plans that address various aspects, including parks and recreation. Additionally, it outlines the requirements for a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that includes:

- 1. An inventory of existing public facilities, including green spaces.
- 2. Forecasts for future needs of these facilities.
- 3. Plans for expanding or building new facilities.
- 4. A six-year funding plan with identified public funding sources.
- 5. A requirement to reassess plans if funding falls short, ensuring all elements are coordinated.

The Parks and Recreation element of the GMA further specifies that the plan should include:

- 1. Estimates of park and recreation demand for at least ten years.
- 2. An evaluation of existing facilities and service needs.
- 3. Exploration of opportunities for regional collaboration on park and recreation services.

In the context of a PROS Plan, RCW 36.70A.140 provides the legal framework for integrating parks, recreation, and open space considerations into overall planning. The PROS Plan becomes a specific component of the County's broader Comprehensive Plan, focusing on developing, maintaining, and enhancing these aspects within the community.



By adhering to RCW 36.70A.140, counties like Kitsap ensure their PROS Plans align with state goals for sustainable growth and development. Finally, compliance with the GMA is essential for Kitsap County to access state funding and effectively manage its parks, recreation, and open spaces.

## Washington Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) Requirements

The Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) is a state agency that manages several grant programs to create outdoor recreation opportunities, protect the state's best wildlife habitats and farmlands, and help restore salmon populations. The RCO awards more than 450 grants annually, totaling approximately \$209 million, across various categories, including salmon recovery, farmland protection, habitat conservation, boating, and outdoor recreation, including parks and trails. To be eligible for grant funding, a municipality or agency must have an adopted recreation or conservation plan that meets specific requirements. The methodology, organization, and content of this PROS plan are designed to address RCO eligibility guidelines.

The RCO promotes outdoor recreation and conservation in Washington State through grants and technical assistance, ensuring that all residents have access to well-maintained parks and protected natural spaces. Their role extends beyond funding. The RCO recognizes the importance of well-planned park systems, which not only serve local communities but also contribute to a statewide network of parks and open spaces. A well-implemented Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan acts as a roadmap for a county's park system, communicating the current state of parks, recreation facilities, budgeting, and programs to the RCO. It identifies gaps in current and future service levels and develops an actionable vision for the

community's future. This roadmap assures the RCO that grant money will be used effectively to meet community needs aligned with statewide goals.

The RCO requires a PROS Plan, updated every six years, to comply with the Growth Management Act (GMA). These plans should cover the following key elements:

- ♦ **Existing Conditions & Baseline Analysis:** Establishes the groundwork by reviewing past plans, demographics, and park system trends.
- ♦ **Community & Systems Needs Assessment:** Identifies gaps and needs in park infrastructure, assesses facility conditions, and sets service level benchmarks.
- ♦ **Priorities, Strategies, and Implementation Plan:** Compiles the analyses and proposes recommendations, prioritizes goals, outlines implementation strategies, and establishes a potential capital improvement plan for park development.

The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) outlined in this document is not intended to be the final guide for all park development, acquisition, and maintenance needs that Kitsap County will undertake over the next six years and beyond.

Instead, it is a visionary, needs-based look at potential projects, agreements, and programs developed through a public involvement process designed to capture the community's needs and wishes for its parks and trails system. Due to funding changes, procurement challenges, staffing needs, and political priorities, many projects may not be implemented within a specific order. However, the projects reflected in the CIP have been developed so that if Kitsap County decides to pursue a specific project, it will have a well-prepared plan in place.

By following RCO's guidelines and creating a strong PROS Plan, Kitsap County can secure grant funding, improve its park system, and enhance the quality of life for its residents. To ensure compliance with RCO's framework and alignment with the GMA, communities must submit the PROS Plan along with the RCO's Self-Certification Form. By adhering



Veterans Memorial Park

to this framework, Washington communities can develop a robust vision for their parks and recreation systems and strengthen their grant applications by demonstrating clear vision and strategic priorities.

More information can be found in RCO's Manual 2: Planning Guidelines (January 2024), available at: <https://rco.wa.gov/recreation-and-conservation-office-grants/grant-manuals/>.

## Kitsap County Requirements

Kitsap County is required to adopt and amend its Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan through a structured process grounded in local, state, and federal regulations, including GMA and RCO already referred to, ensuring comprehensive community engagement and legal compliance. The process requires several key steps:

1. The process begins with adherence to the Growth Management Act (GMA), specifically RCW 36.70A.140, which mandates the development of comprehensive plans addressing land use, environmental protection, and public facilities. The PROS Plan must include a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) as stipulated by the GMA, detailing an inventory of existing public facilities, future needs forecasts, and a six-year funding strategy.
2. Public participation is integral to this process, as required by Kitsap County Code § 2.110.040. This involves conducting surveys, holding public meetings, and utilizing online platforms to gather input on recreational needs and preferences.
3. The Parks Department drafts the plan, ensuring it meets the requirements of RCW 36.70A.070 and aligns with the County's Comprehensive Plan and Kitsap County Code § 17.520.010.
4. The draft is then submitted to the Kitsap County Planning Commission as mandated by Kitsap County Code § 21.08.100. The Planning Commission reviews the plan and holds public hearings to gather additional feedback and make necessary revisions.
5. Upon the Planning Commission's approval, the final draft is presented to the Kitsap County Board of Commissioners. The Board reviews the plan, considering public feedback and legal requirements, and adopts the plan through a formal resolution as per Kitsap County Code § 21.08.110.

For amendments to the PROS Plan:

1. Amendments can be initiated by the County, the Planning Commission, or by public petition according to Kitsap County Code § 21.08.040. Any proposed amendments must be consistent with the GMA and the County's Comprehensive Plan.
2. Public notice and participation are required under Kitsap County Code § 21.08.080, which involves publishing notices in local newspapers, posting on the County's website, and sending notifications to interested parties. Public hearings are held to discuss proposed amendments, ensuring transparency and community involvement.
3. The Planning Commission reviews the proposed amendments, considering public input and ensuring consistency with the GMA and County Code, as outlined in Kitsap County Code § 21.08.090. The Commission then makes recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners.
4. The Board reviews the Planning Commission's recommendations, holds additional public hearings if necessary, and makes the final decision to adopt, modify, or reject the proposed amendments through a formal resolution, as specified in Kitsap County Code § 21.08.110.
5. This thorough process ensures that the PROS Plan is comprehensive, legally compliant, and reflective of community needs, fostering effective planning and public trust.

## Process

The methodology used to develop Kitsap County's PROS Plan Update is modeled after six minimum elements outlined in RCO Manual 2: Planning Policies & Guidelines. While there are no specific requirements for the number of pages, chapters, or format for comprehensive parks plans, it is essential that the plan captures the needs of the organization and, more importantly, the quality of life desired by the community.

Whether this plan supports a grant application for a capital project (facility development and land acquisition) or a non-capital project (architectural, engineering, planning, etc.), the organization of this plan and the processes followed are purposefully designed to capture the elements expected by RCO.

The first section of the plan is the project overview. Following this, the plan is structured around six primary sections or elements needed for an effective comprehensive parks plan:



## Existing Conditions (Systems Inventory)

A description of the planning or service area, including the physical setting, the community profile, other mutually supportive planning efforts, and a summary of conditions of the complete inventory of each existing outdoor recreation asset or program.

## Public Involvement

A description of how the planning process gave the public ample opportunity to be involved in plan development and adoption.

## Demand & Needs Analysis

An analysis that takes the inventory work and public involvement into consideration, balancing public demand with the organization's current capacity and future expectations.

## Goals and Objectives

The plan must support the applicant's park and recreation mission, including the current project, with broad statements of intent, or goals that capture a community's desired outdoor recreation resources.

## Capital Improvement Program

A list of the desired capital improvements or capital facility programs of at least 6 years that lists and prioritizes desired land acquisition, development, renovation, and restoration projects.

## Approvals

A resolution, ordinance, or other adoption instrument showing formal approval of the plan and planning process by the governing entity.

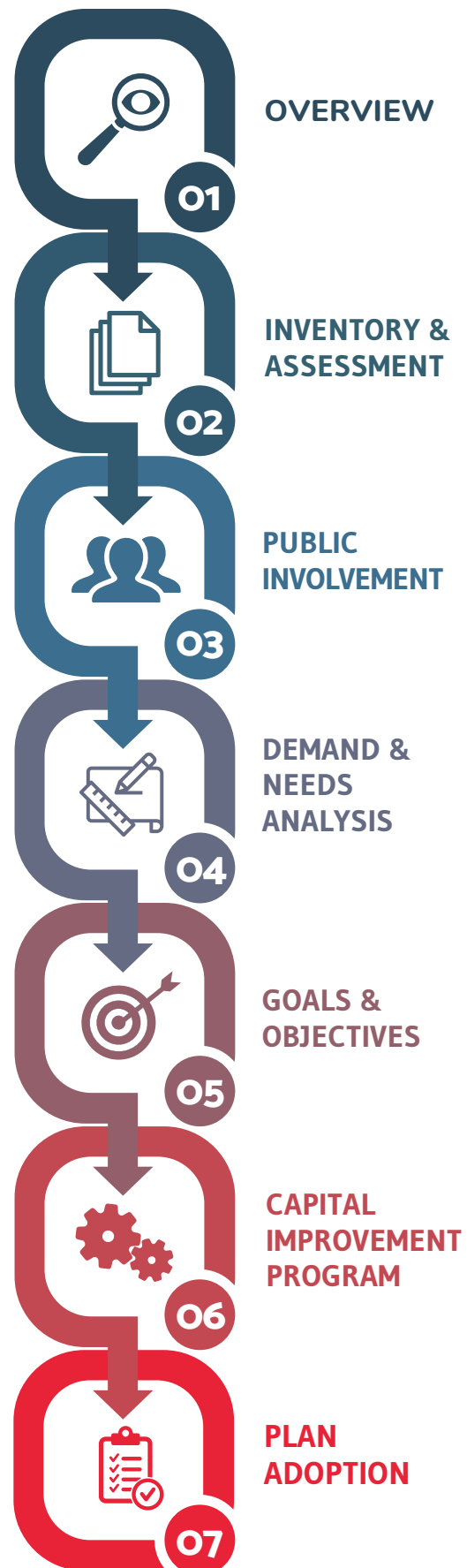


Figure 1-1: PROS Plan Process

# Inventory & Assessment



Norwegian Point Park





Harper Park



Norwegian Point Park



Old Mill Park

## Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to gain a broad understanding of the current conditions of Kitsap County's parks, recreation facilities, open spaces, and trails. It aims to provide insights into the demographics of the population served by these amenities and to situate these resources within the broader regional context and ongoing planning efforts that shape the system. This understanding is critical for informed decision-making and strategic planning to enhance the quality and accessibility of recreational opportunities in the county.

Currently, Kitsap County manages over seventy parks, open spaces, and special use areas, totaling more than 11,000 acres and 138 miles of trails. These areas offer a diverse range of active and passive recreation opportunities for the community. From the extensive eventing venues at the Fairgrounds and Events Center to the rich forest habitats and hiking trails in the six Heritage Parks, and the ecological preservation at Nick's Lagoon Preserve, Kitsap County's recreational areas cater to a wide array of interests and needs.

The inventory and assessment section is assembled across the following four distinct contexts: an overview of the physical and ecological characteristics of Kitsap County as a whole, an overview of the regional planning framework that

influences park management and development, an analysis of the community profile that uses the park's system, and an overview of the existing recreational amenities and facilities available. By exploring these contexts, this chapter aims to provide a detailed and foundational overview of Kitsap County's parks and recreational resources, identifying strengths, opportunities, and ultimately, setting the stage upon which the community's quality of life desires are being addressed.

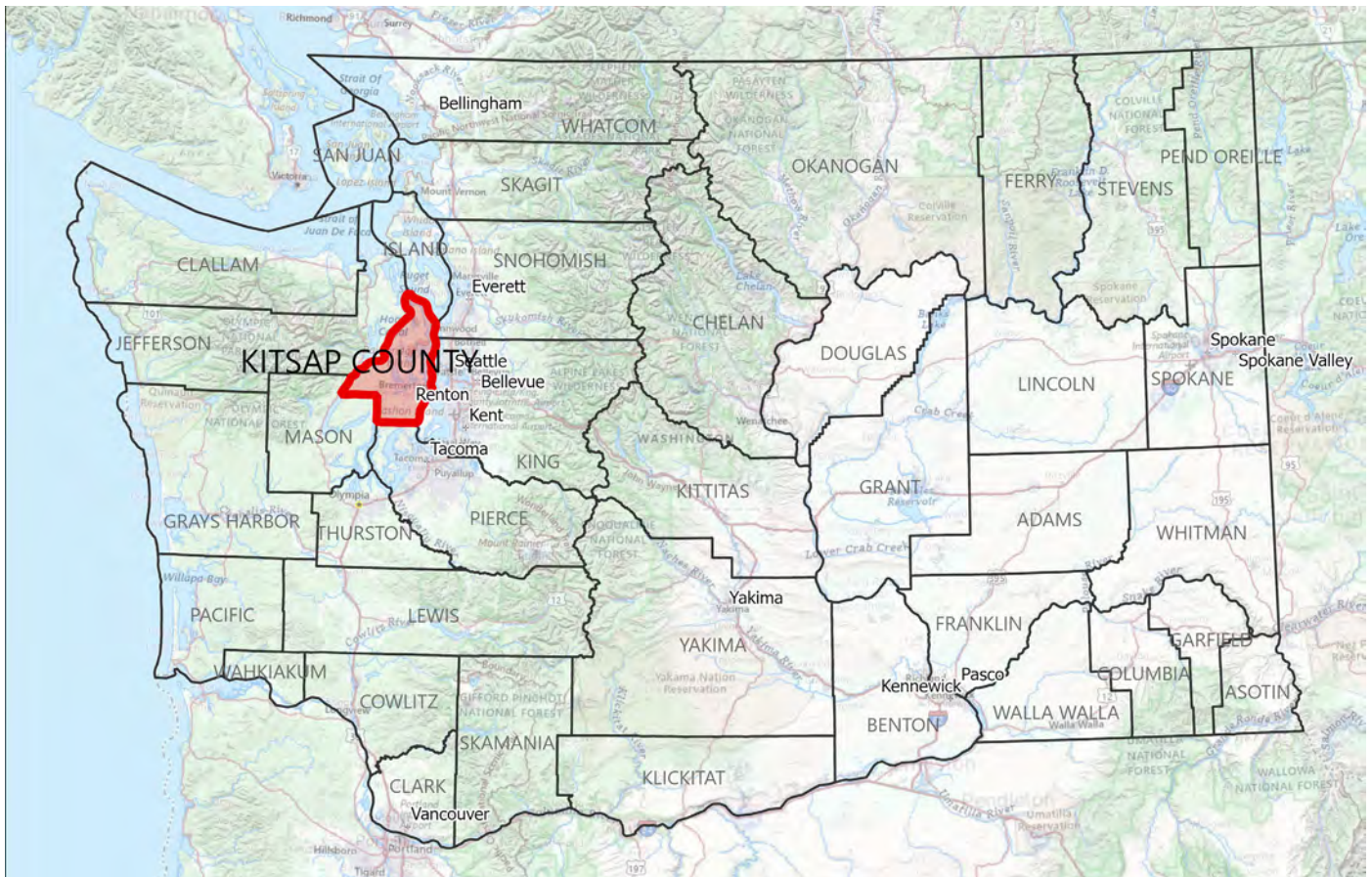
1. *Physical Context*
2. *Planning Context*
3. *Demographic Context*
4. *Existing Systems Context*
5. *Operations & Governance*

## Physical Context

### Overview

Located on the Kitsap Peninsula in the Puget Sound region, Kitsap County is a diverse and dynamic area known for its unique blend of coastal, urban, and rural landscapes.





**Figure 2-1: Map of Washington State**

Covering approximately 396 square miles, the county includes major urban centers like Bremerton, as well as numerous smaller communities and expansive natural areas. This physical diversity supports a vibrant mix of human activities and natural environments.

## Topography

Kitsap County's diverse topography plays a crucial role in shaping its natural landscapes and supporting a wide array of recreational opportunities. The county's terrain varies from rolling hills and lowland plains to rugged shorelines and forested uplands, creating a rich environment for outdoor activities.

Prominent features like the elevated terrain in areas such as Green Mountain offer opportunities for hiking, mountain biking, and enjoying panoramic views. In the eastern part of the county, the landscape is characterized by gently rolling hills and coastal bluffs, providing scenic vistas and access to shorelines.

The central lowlands, which are generally more level, are interspersed with wetlands and small hills. These areas support extensive trail networks and wildlife habitats, offering accessible green spaces for the community. The

northern region of the county combines forested areas with agricultural lands, adding to the variety of outdoor experiences available.

However, the county's varied topography also presents challenges for connectivity and accessibility. Rugged terrain can limit movement between recreational areas, and steep bluffs in certain regions require careful management to prevent erosion and protect natural habitats.

Overall, Kitsap County's topography significantly influences its recreational landscape, providing a diverse range of natural experiences. Strategic planning is vital to address the challenges posed by this varied terrain, ensuring that all recreational areas remain accessible, connected, and environmentally sustainable.

## Hydrology

Kitsap County, situated on a peninsula surrounded by Puget Sound, Hood Canal, Sinclair Inlet, and Dyes Inlet, has a geography that heavily influences its hydrological character and enhances its recreational offerings. The county's extensive shorelines are crucial for activities such as boating, fishing, and swimming, while also supporting rich marine ecosystems.





Old Mill Park

Beyond its saltwater environments, the county's rivers and streams, like the Union River and Chico Creek, are vital for salmon spawning and sustaining aquatic life. Numerous lakes and ponds offer freshwater recreation, including swimming, fishing, and kayaking.

Groundwater, replenished by precipitation and surface water, is critical for the county's drinking water supply. Abundant wetlands play key roles in water filtration, flood control, and habitat preservation, with areas like the Carpenter Creek Estuary being popular for bird watching and nature walks.

With 40-60 inches of rainfall annually, the county supports lush forests and vibrant ecosystems, but also faces challenges like flooding and water management. This hydrological richness provides ample opportunities for boating, sailing, and fishing, supported by well-maintained marinas and boat launches. Scenic trails enhance experiences for hikers and wildlife enthusiasts.

However, managing the county's parklands presents challenges. Heavy rainfall and occasional flooding can limit access to recreational sites, and poor weather can deter outdoor activities. While many areas are well-developed, remote or sensitive regions may lack infrastructure, affecting accessibility. Maintaining trails, boat launches, and campgrounds requires ongoing resources, and environmental regulations can restrict certain activities. Additionally, water quality issues can pose health risks and impact the appeal of recreational waters.

Balancing access with conservation is key to sustaining Kitsap County's ecological integrity and recreational value.

## Forest and Tree Canopy

Kitsap County's forests are deeply rooted in its history, recreationally, ecologically and economically. Many of today's public parks were once active tree farms, integral to the county's legacy in commercial forest harvesting. This history is especially visible in areas like Newberry Hill Heritage Park, North Kitsap Heritage Park, and Coulter Creek Heritage Park, which, while non-contiguous, collectively reflect Kitsap's evolution from timber production to conservation and recreation. The 2021 Tree Canopy

Coverage data from Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) highlights Kitsap County's 54.1% tree canopy cover, making it the third-highest in the state and reinforcing its identity as one of the most heavily forested counties in the Puget Sound region. This expansive canopy supports diverse outdoor activities such as hiking, wildlife observation, and camping, while contributing to the ecological health of the region.

Key forested areas in Kitsap County include Green Mountain State Forest, Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park, Banner Forest Heritage Park, and Coulter Creek Heritage Park. Green Mountain State Forest and Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park are particularly significant for their dual roles in providing recreational opportunities and supporting sustainable timber management. These forests, primarily composed of Douglas fir, western red cedar, and western hemlock, are vital habitats for wildlife and highly valued by both residents and visitors.

Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park, the county's largest County-owned forested tract, spans over 3,000 acres and is a hub for outdoor recreation, offering trails, wildlife habitats, and Puget Sound shoreline access. Other parks like Banner Forest Heritage Park and Coulter Creek Heritage Park contribute to the county's green infrastructure by supporting mixed forests that fulfill ecological functions and offer recreational opportunities.

In urban areas, parks like Old Mill Park provide valuable forested pockets within more developed settings. While these urban green spaces offer vital canopy cover and ecological services, they are often fragmented by roads and urban development, which limits their connectivity with larger forested regions. Enhancing these urban forests through targeted planting and green space preservation initiatives remains essential for boosting connectivity and supporting urban biodiversity.

Kitsap County's forests, from active timberlands to urban parks, form a critical part of the region's ecological network and recreational amenities. While Green Mountain and Port Gamble foster a strong balance between economic and ecological goals, other areas, like the county's former tree farms, contribute to the landscape's diversity, underscoring the need for strategic planning to connect fragmented habitats and sustain Kitsap's forests for future generations.

## Wildlife

Kitsap County is home to a diverse array of wildlife, supported by its varied habitats, including forests, wetlands, streams, and marine environments. These natural landscapes are essential for sustaining a wide range of species, making the county a vital area for biodiversity.

Forests in the county provide habitats for mammals like black-tailed deer, black bears, bobcats, beavers, and coyotes, as well as smaller mammals such as raccoons and squirrels. Wetlands and streams are important habitats for amphibians like Pacific tree frogs, rough-skinned newts, and long-toed salamanders, as well as reptiles such as garter snakes, providing vital resources for breeding, foraging, and shelter.

Birdlife is abundant, with resident and migratory species thriving in these habitats. Bald eagles, ospreys, and great blue herons are common, benefiting from the county's aquatic environments. Shorebirds and waterfowl, including harlequin ducks and western sandpipers, are frequently seen along the coastline.

The marine and intertidal zones support marine life like orcas, harbor seals, and fish species such as salmon and steelhead, which depend on the county's streams for spawning. The health of these ecosystems is key to maintaining regional biodiversity.

Sensitive species rely on increasingly rare old-growth forests, emphasizing the need for ongoing conservation efforts. Salmon populations, especially Chinook and steelhead, are also threatened by habitat degradation. Kitsap County actively works to protect and restore habitats through conservation initiatives, habitat restoration, and water quality improvements. These efforts are crucial for preserving the natural landscapes and the wildlife they support.

Overall, Kitsap County's rich wildlife diversity and varied habitats highlight the ongoing need for conservation to protect the county's natural heritage.

## Soils

Kitsap County, situated in the Puget Sound Lowlands, boasts a diverse geological profile shaped by glacial history and marine influences. The county's geology is marked by a mix of glacial till, outwash deposits, and marine sediments, resulting in various soil types, from well-drained sandy and gravelly soils in upland areas to poorly drained silty and clayey soils in low-lying regions. These soils are generally acidic, with varying fertility and drainage capacities that influence vegetation and land use.

The county's glacial past has created a landscape of rolling hills, ridges, and valleys, interspersed with lakes, wetlands, and streams. These geological features contribute to Kitsap County's natural beauty and play a significant role in land use planning. Understanding the region's geology and soils is crucial for managing land resources, mitigating natural hazards like erosion and landslides, and guiding sustainable development.

Kitsap County's diverse terrain and abundance of parks, trails, and water bodies provide ample opportunities for outdoor recreation, including hiking, cycling, boating, and wildlife observation. A solid understanding of the area's geology and soils is essential for maintaining and enhancing these spaces, ensuring that recreational facilities are sited to minimize environmental impact and preserve natural habitats. Additionally, it informs stormwater management and erosion control, protecting water quality and the integrity of natural landscapes.

The county's geology and soils play a pivotal role in shaping the environment, guiding land use planning, and supporting outdoor recreation. Comprehensive assessment of these factors is key to sustainable development and environmental conservation, ensuring the county's natural resources are preserved for future generations.

## Climate

Kitsap County has a temperate maritime climate that plays a significant role in shaping its public recreation opportunities.



Kingston Salt Marsh



The climate is characterized by mild, wet winters and cool, dry summers, influenced by the proximity of the Pacific Ocean and surrounding bodies of water such as Puget Sound and Hood Canal.

In the winter, temperatures typically range from the mid-30s to mid-40s Fahrenheit. While frost is common, significant snowfall is rare at lower elevations, allowing for year-round outdoor activities like hiking, bird watching, and coastal exploration. However, the frequent rainstorms and overcast skies from October to April can limit certain recreational activities, particularly those that require dry conditions.

Summers are marked by cool, comfortable temperatures, generally between the mid-50s and mid-70s Fahrenheit, with daytime highs occasionally reaching the low 90s. The dry summer months, particularly July and August, are ideal for a variety of outdoor activities, including boating, fishing, kayaking, and camping. The moderate temperatures and low humidity make this season a peak time for recreation, drawing both residents and visitors to the county's parks, trails, and waterfronts.

Kitsap County's diverse topography and extensive coastline create various microclimates, with milder and more consistent weather near the water and slightly more variation inland, especially at higher elevations. This variety offers a range of recreational environments, from shaded forest trails to sunny waterfront areas.

Wind patterns also influence recreation in the county. In winter, prevailing winds from the southwest bring moist air and storms, enhancing activities like storm watching along the coast but potentially deterring other outdoor pursuits. In summer, winds shift to a northwesterly direction, contributing to the dry and stable weather perfect for sailing, cycling, and other outdoor activities.

Overall, Kitsap County's climate provides diverse recreational opportunities throughout the year, with each season offering unique benefits and challenges. The mild summers are ideal for water-based activities and hiking, while the cooler, wetter winters are suited for peaceful forest walks and storm watching, making Kitsap County a year-round destination for outdoor enthusiasts.

## Climate Change Impacts

Kitsap County's rich ecological setting makes it particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, which could significantly alter its natural systems, affect local communities, and impact public recreation options.

### Temperature and Precipitation Changes

One of the most immediate effects of climate change in Kitsap County is expected to be shifts in temperature and precipitation patterns.





Howe Farm Park

Warmer temperatures are likely to extend growing seasons, which could influence native vegetation and agricultural practices. However, these temperature increases also raise the risk of more frequent and intense heatwaves, posing stress on both wildlife and human populations. Climate warming is expected to exacerbate tree mortality in the county's forests. Longer periods of hot, dry weather in forests that have been historically overstocked may result in additional stress to trees, reducing their capacity to endure periods of drought, pests and pathogens, or survive wildfire. These changes could significantly alter forest structure and health, disrupt wildlife habitats, and increase the likelihood of large-scale tree die-offs, with cascading effects on ecosystems and biodiversity.

Precipitation is expected to become more variable, with an increase in the frequency and intensity of heavy rainfall events. This could heighten the risk of flooding, particularly in low-lying areas and near rivers and streams. Increased runoff and erosion could destabilize soils, leading to landslides and sedimentation in waterways, which would negatively affect water quality and aquatic habitats. Wetlands, which are crucial for maintaining biodiversity, could be particularly vulnerable to these changes.

## Sea Level Rise and Coastal Impacts

Sea level rise presents a significant threat to Kitsap County's extensive coastline. As sea levels rise, coastal erosion, saltwater intrusion, and increased storm surges could damage infrastructure, natural habitats, and properties along the shorelines. Intertidal zones, estuaries, and wetlands, which are essential for fish, birds, and other wildlife, are at risk of being lost. These changes could have profound effects on economically important species like salmon and shellfish, which are vital to both the local ecosystem and economy.

## Ocean Acidification

Ocean acidification, driven by increased atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> levels, poses another threat to Kitsap County's marine environments. Shellfish, including oysters and clams, are particularly vulnerable as changes in water chemistry can impair their ability to form shells and reproduce. This could have significant economic repercussions for the county's fishing and aquaculture industries, which are important to the local economy and cultural heritage.

## Community and Infrastructure Impacts

The effects of climate change will also extend to Kitsap County's human communities. Infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, and stormwater systems, may need to be adapted or upgraded to cope with increased risks of flooding and erosion. Public health could be challenged by more frequent heatwaves and shifts in disease patterns. Additionally, the county's recreational opportunities, which depend heavily on its natural landscapes, may be altered as habitats and weather patterns change.

In summary, Kitsap County faces multiple challenges from climate change, including increased temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, sea level rise, and ocean acidification. These changes threaten the county's forests, marine environments, and infrastructure, and could have far-reaching effects on its economy and the well-being of its residents. Addressing these challenges will require proactive management and adaptation strategies to protect the county's natural and human systems.

## Critical Areas

Kitsap County's critical areas - including wetlands, fish and wildlife habitats, geologically hazardous zones, frequently flooded areas, and aquifer recharge zones—are essential not only for maintaining the region's ecological health but also for shaping public recreation. These areas offer unique recreational opportunities while requiring careful management to balance environmental protection with public access.

Several Kitsap County parks and other properties play crucial roles in flood control and water filtration while providing habitats that enhance opportunities for bird watching, nature photography, and educational walks.

These areas also support fisheries, contributing to the popularity of recreational fishing. However, due to their ecological sensitivity, access is often limited to designated trails and observation points to prevent habitat disturbance and degradation.

Fish and wildlife habitats, like those in Dyes Inlet and Green Mountain State Forest, are vital for preserving biodiversity and supporting species that attract recreational fishing,



wildlife viewing, and hunting. These habitats contribute to the county's natural appeal but also require restrictions on activities to protect sensitive species and ecosystems.

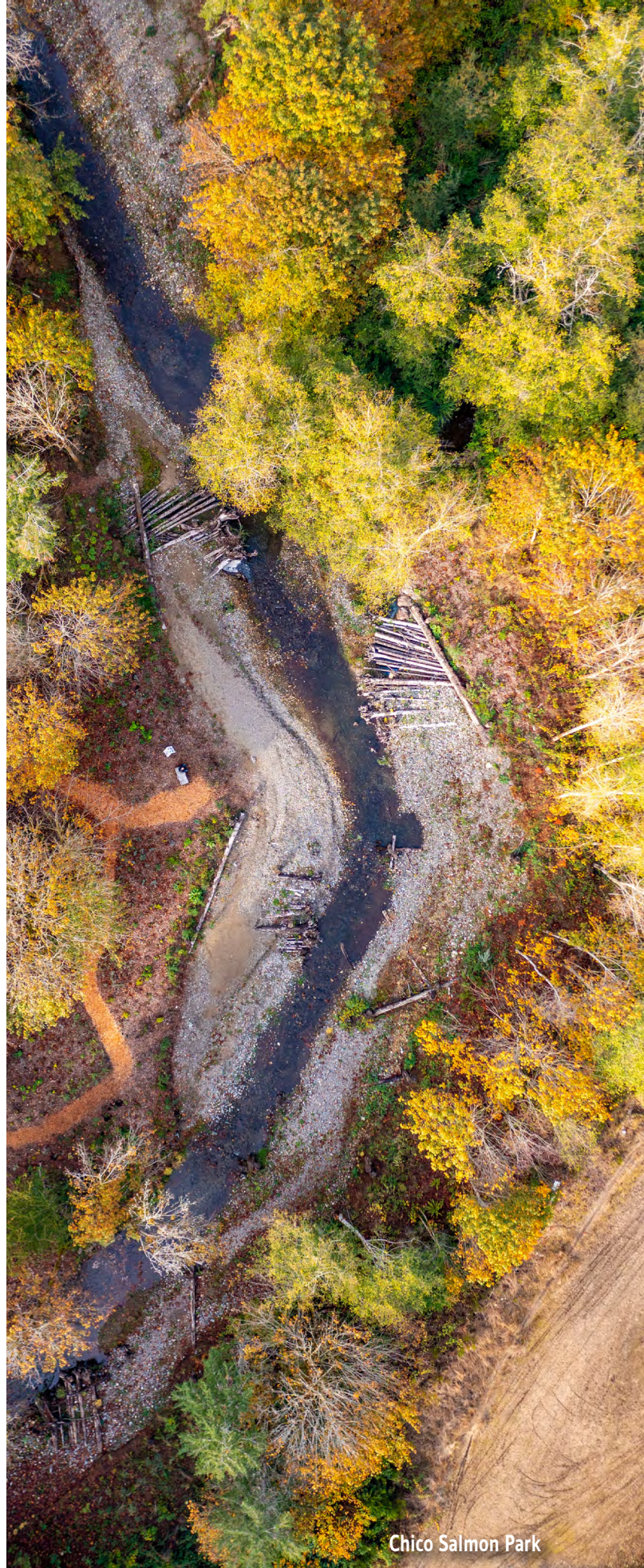
Geologically hazardous areas, such as the landslide-prone slopes along the Hood Canal, Guillemot Cove, and Anderson Point, offer rugged and scenic landscapes that attract hikers and outdoor enthusiasts. However, the inherent risks of these areas, including erosion, landslides, and potential seismic activity, underscore the importance of carefully planned trail systems and robust public awareness efforts. Thoughtful management and safety measures are essential to enable recreational use while minimizing risks to visitors and preserving these fragile landscapes.

Frequently flooded areas, particularly in the county's low-lying coastal parks, pose challenges for recreation while also offering unique opportunities for adaptive use and ecological resilience. While flooding can limit access to certain sites during wet seasons, these areas can be designed with resilient infrastructure, such as elevated boardwalks and flood-tolerant trails, allowing for continued recreational use even in varying conditions.

Aquifer recharge zones, which are critical for sustaining the county's drinking water supply, influence land use decisions that often limit intensive recreational development. Protecting these areas ensures clean groundwater for the community, while also preserving open spaces that can be used for low-impact activities like hiking and nature observation.

However, public recreation and critical areas are not always mutually supportive. The need to preserve sensitive habitats and protect ecological functions can sometimes limit the extent or type of recreational activities allowed in these areas. In such cases, balancing access with conservation becomes crucial to maintaining the quality and sustainability of both the county's natural resources and its recreational opportunities.

In summary, Kitsap County's critical areas are vital to its environmental health and recreation, offering natural settings that enrich visitor experiences. Thoughtful planning is essential to safeguard ecological functions and public safety, with a balance between access and conservation ensuring the longevity of resources and recreational opportunities.



Chico Salmon Park



# Planning Context

## Vision for Kitsap County

The following vision statements are from the approved 2024 Kitsap County Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan vision statements were formed by key themes in the community engagement process. It can be seen in the vision statements that economic development, inclusive government, and natural resource protection are important to Kitsap County residents. This PROS plan aims to identify ways to continue to reach the vision set by the comprehensive plan, while taking a closer look at parks and how to reach established goals.



Buck Lake Park



## Existing Plans Working Together

In the formation of this plan, any plans that have already been completed that are relevant to Kitsap County Park's parks, recreation, and open space goals have been reviewed and incorporated as necessary. Park development plans completed within the last ten years were reviewed; older plans will be reviewed and updated as part of any future park development process. The plans that have been reviewed include:

- ♦ Kitsap County Comprehensive Plan
- ♦ Kitsap County Non-Motorized Facility Plan
- ♦ Kitsap County Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan
- ♦ Kitsap County Integrated Forest Stewardship Policy (see Appendix G)
- ♦ Kitsap County Forest Stewardship Plans (see Appendix G)
- ♦ Port Gamble Heritage Park Draft Framework (see Appendix G)
- ♦ Great Peninsula Conservancy Conservation Plan (see Appendix G)

In the review of existing plans that are relevant to Kitsap County's Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan, there are some key themes and priorities that have emerged, which are foundational in the development of the PROS Plan. These priorities include:

- ♦ **Creating a sustainable parks department** by strategically managing its facilities, ensuring adequate staffing, budgeting, and pursuing funding opportunities.
- ♦ **Prioritizing parks and recreation access for all**, as the beauty of the natural area is a consistent draw for tourists and residents of the area.
- ♦ **Preserving natural resources and enhancing natural open space** for long-term interests and benefits, including climate change resilience and statewide objectives.
- ♦ **Promoting fiscally responsible development** by pursuing RCO funding and strategically managing and budgeting for future improvements and enhancements.
- ♦ **Maintaining and enhancing the County's trail & greenway system, encouraging public recreation** and both **access to & preservation of the County's underlying ecological systems**.
- ♦ **Preparing and planning for the vulnerability of critical areas** like wetlands, aquifers, and fish and wildlife habitats. Existing policies support being strategic with open space to prepare for both public safety and environmental safety.
- ♦ **Increasing water access and preserving the natural character of shorelines of Kitsap County**

## Kitsap County Comprehensive Plan (2024)

The Kitsap County Comprehensive Plan (2024–2044) builds on previous versions, providing a visionary framework that aligns parks, recreation, and open space goals with broader county priorities. The plan emphasizes sustainability, climate resilience, equity, and public accessibility, reflecting community input and updated regional and state policies.

Key updates include a refined vision for a thriving and accessible park system that integrates diverse recreational opportunities with the preservation of natural and cultural resources. The goals and policies outlined in the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Element aim to meet current and future needs, foster partnerships, and promote environmental stewardship.

### Goals

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

Parks Goal 4. Water Access. 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 Goal 5. Environmental Compatibility. Provide regional parks and open space for passive recreation that preserves the ecological needs of wildlife

The 2024 Plan reflects Kitsap County's commitment to creating vibrant, resilient, and inclusive parks and open spaces while addressing future growth and environmental challenges.

## Kitsap County Non-Motorized Facility Plan (2013, maps amended 2018)

According to its executive summary, the Kitsap County Non-Motorized Facility Plan “strives to:

- ♦ Provide a region-wide vision for a connected system of off-road shared use paths and on-road facilities (paved shoulders/ bike lanes/shared lanes) and a process to prioritize such routes.
- ♦ Ensure facilities address the needs of multiple user groups (commuters, recreational bicyclists, pedestrians, equestrian, tourism, paddlers, etc.)
- ♦ Encourage dialogue and more coordinated planning among neighboring counties, cities and local entities; and
- ♦ Enhance partnerships and increase communication among cities, and local agencies regarding the implementation and operation (construction, maintenance, marketing, etc.) of non-motorized facilities.”

This plan establishes goals relevant to parks, recreation, and open space guidance. Those goals include designing a trail system for a diversity of ages, abilities, and activities (Goal 2), establishing trail routes which highlight natural landscapes and consider natural systems (Goal 3), encouraging preservation of open space with maintenance and etiquette protocols (Goal 4), integrating trail systems with schools and colleges and providing education and points of interest (Goal 5), connecting local trails with regional, county, and cross-state trail systems (Goal 6), promoting the trail system as a recreation destination (Goal 7), encouraging non-motorized transportation through multiple direct routes (Goal 8), promoting and supporting safe non-motorized opportunities (Goal 9), creating and maintaining non-motorized water trails (Goal 10), Improving system gaps by focusing on primary corridors (Goal 11), and encouraging best practices for non-motorized facilities (Goal 12).

The implementation section of the plan was formed by key themes found from public participation, current conditions, needs assessment, and facility standards and guidelines. It prioritizes funding opportunities toward Regional Routes, Safety Focus Area, Bicycle Routes, and Roads of Bicycle Use. It recommends the approaches of phasing projects by non-motorized segment and facility design (size and surface), relying on the commitment of groups dedicated to development implementation, and designating a Non-Motorized Citizens Advisory Committee (NMCAC). The NMCAC would collaborate with stakeholders to verify existing conditions, develop ways to maximize funding by considering flexible alternatives, evaluate regional routes, and secure public access for regional routes. The NMCAC would also create a process of prioritization for implementation on the basis of connectivity, safety, feasibility, potential use, and continuity.

Since this plan was adopted, Kitsap County has established the Non-Motorized Facilities Community Advisory Committee, which strives to provide a region-wide vision and process for safe, multi-use, and coordinated non-motorized facilities. As of November 21, 2023, the NMFCAC has drafted a Resolution in support of implementing Automated Speed Enforcement (ASE) and forming a task force to research, study, and propose a plan for implementation.

## Kitsap County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan (2018)

The 2018 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan established a strong foundation for this update by meeting all the requirements of the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO), ensuring the County’s eligibility for state outdoor recreation funding. However, as community needs and conditions have evolved, it is necessary to assess the plan’s effectiveness and update it to reflect current priorities.

Building upon the strengths of the 2018 PROS Plan while incorporating new insights and community input, the 2024 update provides a comprehensive framework for the future development and management of Kitsap County’s parks and recreation system. This approach ensures that the plan not only meets funding requirements but also aligns with the community’s changing needs and long-term vision.

From the 2018 PROS Plan, the updated PROS Plan updated park classifications to align with state frameworks (see Inventory & Assessment), reorganized goals to align with department program areas (see Goals & Objectives), and includes a more robust capital improvement program (see Capital Improvement Program).

## 2018 Policy Directions, Goals and Strategies

The 2024 PROS Plan builds upon the foundation of the 2018 plan, refining key goals and objectives that have guided Kitsap County’s parks, recreation, and open space system. Core commitments to accessibility, environmental stewardship, and community engagement remain central to the County’s parks mission. As a refresher, the 2018 goals and objectives are included here to provide context for the direction of the 2024 plan, which builds on this framework to address evolving community priorities. For further details, see the Goals & Objectives section of this report.

The 2018 PROS Plan goals included the following:



## EQUITY OF PARKS, TRAILS, AND OPEN SPACE

**Goal: Enhance access for all park facilities and provide for diverse interests, populations, and abilities.**

- ♦ **Objective:** Locate and design recreation facilities for underserved populations, and strive for optimum accessibility, and a spectrum of park settings and facilities.

**Goal: Support community health and safety in park environments.**

- ♦ **Objective:** Address safety concerns by locating and designing parks with safety elements and safety messages as a primary facility planning and design objective.

**Strategies: Areas of improvement for safe outdoor experiences include:**

- ♦ Implement emergency response alert systems (911) for trail locations in remote park areas.
- ♦ Create updated park orientations, way-finding signage, and e-maps.
- ♦ Provide safety and park behavior messages to educate and encourage proper park use.
- ♦ Design and build trail systems to minimize or avoid multi-use conflicts.
- ♦ Encourage citizen oversight and notification for resource protection and personal safety alerts.

## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

**Goal: Support the protection of native wildlife and flora.**

- ♦ **Objective:** Plan and develop parks and recreation facilities with natural resource protection and enhancement.
- ♦ **Objective:** Recognize the importance and role of parklands, open space, and greenways as managed protection of endemic (native) species of plants, insects, amphibians, fish, birds, mammals, and even microorganisms.

**Goal: Provide physical and visual public access opportunities for water-oriented recreation with regard to protecting adjacent private property rights, as well as stewardship of ecological functions and processes.**

- ♦ **Objective:** Identify opportunities to increase public access and foster environmental and economic benefits associated with Kitsap Peninsula National Water Trails, and the designation as part of the National Water Trails System.

## WILDLIFE AND HABITAT PROTECTION

**Goal: Protect wildlife habitat and native flora areas through acquisition programs and park resource stewardship.**

- ♦ **Objective:** Assess the need and specific opportunities for habitat preservation following priority criteria for acquisition and protection.
- ♦ **Objective:** Identify areas that provide habitat benefits for species of concern, as listed by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), or that address priority and sensitive habitats as defined by WDFW and reference those to park landscape holdings.

**Goal: Protect riparian corridors, watershed, and nearshore habitat.**

- ♦ **Objective:** Define the role of parklands, open space, and greenbelts to the overall protection of water resources; such as stream flow, groundwater, wetlands, aquifers, areas of recharge, and water quality throughout the County.

**Goal: Promote the creation of greenway corridors for the protection of native terrestrial species.**

- ♦ **Objective:** Identify priority landscapes that can be targeted for acquisition or other protective measures, with emphasis on the following criteria:

**Goal: Leverage cooperative agreements with other jurisdictions, organizations, land trusts and private landowners, to help provide valued habitat and ecosystem functions.**

- ♦ **Objective:** Establish a formalized, coordinated, acquisition priority within Kitsap County, and with other resource management agencies in the region.

## FOREST STEWARDSHIP

**Goal: Further develop the parks' collaborative forest restoration and natural resource stewardship program.**

- ♦ **Objective:** Reduce overly dense forests on parklands, with cooperatively planned and implemented natural forest restoration plans and processes.
- ♦ **Objective:** Develop and adopt a County-wide Integrated Forest Stewardship Program

## PARK TRAILS AND REGIONAL TRAIL SYSTEMS

**Park Trails Goal: Improve public access, orientation, and user experience with existing trail systems.**

- ♦ **Objective:** Develop quality orientation, communication, and interpretative resources to enhance visitor enjoyment and safety.
- ♦ **Objective:** Improve enforcement and public adherence to park rules and regulations.

**Park Trails Goal: Improve the quality of in-park trail planning, development, and stewardship.**

- ♦ **Objective:** Improve the overall system of trails, trail mapping, linkages to outside transportation systems, and enhance trail stewardship partnerships.

**Regional Trails Goal: Improve coordination with other trail plans and trail management systems throughout the County.**

- ♦ **Objective:** Plan a coordinated, interconnected non-motorized trail system with parks and regional trail systems.

**Regional Trails Goal: Address trail needs for specialized users.**

- ♦ **Objective:** Develop innovative trail opportunities to address underserved populations and specialist trail user's needs.

**Water Trail Goal: Increase the availability and management of the developing water trails sites throughout Kitsap County.**

- ♦ **Objective:** Support the acquisition, development, and management of water trail sites to improve and expand waterway access through the Regional Water Trails Alliance.

## DEVELOPED EVENT AND ATHLETIC FACILITIES

**Goal: Enhance event and athletic facilities, provide quality visitor services, and ensure long-term sustainability of facilities.**

- ♦ **Objective:** Upgrade event and athletic facilities, and ensure sustainability of those facilities.

**Goal: Enhance the operations, marketing, and service levels of the event complex.**

- ♦ **Objective:** Streamline facility management through operations efficiency and optimizing revenues.
- ♦ **Objective:** Expand the "footprint" of the Fairgrounds to include space to handle peak-season use demands.
- ♦ **Objective:** Increase efficiency and consistency in facility management.
- ♦ **Objective:** Update maintenance and facility replacement plan.

## MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS

**Goal: Ensure park maintenance and operations meet recognized standards for developed park facilities, and have appropriate resources to manage open space and legacy properties.**

- ♦ **Objective:** Set standards for the protection and responsible management of developed park facilities and undeveloped natural park settings



Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park



## VOLUNTEERS AND PARK STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

**Goal: Broaden and sustain the Volunteer Park Stewards Program.**

- ♦ **Objective:** Increase ways to broaden the capacity of this program, to recruit, train, support, and retain volunteers.
- ♦ **Objective:** Further develop and expand a park docent and interpretive program to enhance the public's awareness and enjoyment of natural, cultural, and historic sites.

## PARKLAND ACQUISITIONS

**Goal: Develop and implement land acquisition policies, and procedures to align with existing park priorities, support natural resource assets, and provide for anticipated new property management and stewardship needs.**

- ♦ **Objective:** Develop an evaluation process to assess the need and capacity for responsible management of undeveloped parklands.
- ♦ **Objective:** Set Acquisition Priorities

To effectively update the parks, trails, and open spaces plan, it is essential to revisit the community's goals and policies, which focus on accessibility, safety, environmental protection, and community engagement. The previous commitment to equity, particularly in enhancing access for underserved populations, remains a critical priority. Safety strategies, such as emergency response systems, wayfinding signage, and integrated safety messaging, are still vital but should be evaluated to ensure they meet current standards and community expectations.

Environmental stewardship continues to be a core focus, with goals centered on protecting native wildlife and flora. The previous plan emphasized the importance of safeguarding parklands, open spaces, and greenways as critical habitats for endemic species. As we update the plan, it's crucial to reassess these goals to reflect any changes in the local ecosystem, as well as new environmental challenges that may have emerged.

The plan's commitment to responsible forest stewardship through collaborative restoration efforts should be revisited to incorporate the latest best practices in forest management.

Similarly, the trail systems, which were highlighted for their importance in improving public access and regional

coordination, need a fresh assessment to ensure they meet the evolving needs of non-motorized trail users. The emphasis on water trails and waterway access remains relevant but should be expanded to include any new opportunities or challenges identified in recent years.

Event and athletic facilities, previously targeted for upgrades and sustainability improvements, must be re-evaluated to address current peak-season demands and future needs. Maintenance and operations standards should be reviewed to ensure they continue to protect both developed and undeveloped park areas effectively.

The Park Stewardship Program, which encourages volunteer involvement, has been a valuable asset in fostering community engagement. However, it's important to acknowledge that effectively managing and controlling this program demands significant staff time. Therefore, while the program should continue to be supported, any improvements should be considered carefully to avoid exacerbating existing staffing challenges. The focus should be on sustaining the program's success without overextending available resources.

Strategic parkland acquisition should remain a priority, with an emphasis on aligning with current priorities, supporting natural resource assets, and anticipating future management needs.

The 2018 PROS Plan, which was approved and met the basic requirements for Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) grant funding, serves as a solid foundation. However, the new PROS Plan should incorporate updates that reflect current conditions and community values. Specifically, the new plan should provide a more detailed inventory of existing facilities, establish Level of Service (LOS) standards aligned with current demands, involve the public to ensure the plan addresses community needs, and update the Capital Improvement Plan to account for current costs and improvement priorities.

By addressing these areas and recognizing the challenges in program management, the new PROS Plan will not only meet updated RCO requirements but also serve the evolving needs of the community more effectively while maintaining a realistic approach to staffing and resource allocation.



# Demographic Context

To create effective planning recommendations for Kitsap County, it is crucial to understand the community's demographic context.

This involves gathering detailed information on population, demographics, income, housing, education, employment, and transportation.

These data categories provide valuable insights into how residents interact with the parks and recreation system. It is important to consider how parks, trails, and open spaces can better serve both the majority and minority populations. Ensuring the parks system meets the needs of the majority who already frequent these spaces is essential, but it is equally important to identify and improve accessibility for minority and other underserved groups. This approach will increase park usage and ensure the system serves all community members equitably.

Understanding the demographics helps establish equity as a foundational principle of this comprehensive parks plan. Additionally, establishing a benchmark of the community's current demographic profile will enable future comparisons, allowing us to track progress and ensure that our parks and recreation system continues to meet the evolving needs of all community members.

## Key Takeaways

- Kitsap County's population was estimated to be 282,680 in 2023 and **the population projection for Kitsap County in 2050 is roughly 335,268**. This means that Kitsap County will need to accommodate roughly **52,588 new residents by 2050 – a 18.6% increase from 2023**. This includes implementing a parks plan to accommodate the level of service desired by the community.
- The **median age in Kitsap County is 39.4**, which is higher than that of Washington State (37.9). **28.3% of households have at least one person under 18, and 34.2% of households have at least one person 65 or older**. It is important that the parks plan takes these two populations into account.
- About **72.2% of Kitsap County residents are white alone**, 8.8% identify as Hispanic or Latino, 5.1% are Asian alone, 2.7% are Black or African American, 1.3% are American Indian or Alaska native, 1.0% are Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 0.6% are some other race, and 8.3% are two or more races. **27.8% of the Kitsap County population is an ethnicity that isn't white alone. 8.0% speak a language other than English**. Programming and recreational opportunities for Kitsap County should serve the uniqueness of this community.

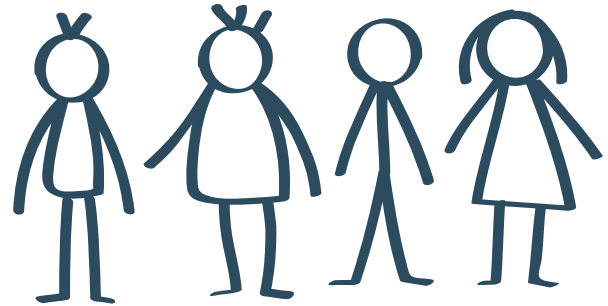




- ♦ Of the total population, **14.6% of the population have at least one disability**. 7.5% have difficulty with walking, 6.2% have cognitive difficulty, 4.3% have difficulty with hearing and 2.0% have difficulty with vision. These disability categories should be taken into consideration when planning public spaces.
- ♦ **13.8% of residents are living at or below 149% of the poverty level**, indicating that they likely have limited disposable income available for recreational activities.
- ♦ **75.3% of all housing units in Kitsap County are single-family units**, and 6.0% are mobile home units. Considering population density within Kitsap County would only benefit the parks plan.
- ♦ **4.4% of residents have no vehicle available**, and for parks to be accessible to all residents, walkability is a crucial factor.
- ♦ **75.7% of Kitsap County residents travel less than 25 miles to work**. Kitsap County PROS Plan considerations should accommodate those who both live and work within the

county, and it may be useful to use employment locations and concentrations to better serve the workforce with parks near local businesses.

- ♦ **Kitsap County is a higher income county, with a median income of \$84,600**—consistent with Washington statewide incomes (\$82,400). Considerations should be made within PROS recreation and programming to accommodate and serve the needs and demands of a higher-income community.



Silverdale Waterfront Park



# Community Profile

## Population

### Historic Trends

Kitsap County has experienced a largely stable population over the past 30 years, with a significant estimated population increase from 1990 to 2000. Kitsap County's population appears to be increasing at a similar rate to overall trends in Washington State. The table below shows a steady increase in Kitsap County's population from 2011 to 2023.

### Population Forecast

The population projections for Kitsap County are based on the Washington State Office of Financial Management's (OFM) countywide population projections. OFM publishes low, medium, and high population projections for all counties in Washington every five years, and the most recent projections were released in 2022. This plan will utilize the new OFM projections to project a population for Kitsap County through the year 2050.

This process utilizes the OFM medium-level projection as the forecasted population. The OFM medium-level projection for Kitsap County for 2050 is 335,268.

Table 2-1: Historic Population (via US Census)				
Year	Kitsap County		Washington State	
	Count	Growth Rate	Count	Growth Rate
1990	189,731	--	4,866,692	--
2000	231,969	22.26%	5,894,121	21.11%
2010	251,133	8.26%	6,724,540	14.08%
2020	275,611	9.75%	7,705,281	14.58%

Source: OFM Decennial Census Counts of Population for the State, Counties, Cities and Towns 1990-2020.

Table 2-2: Kitsap County Population by Year		
Year	Kitsap County	
	Population	Growth Rate
2010	249,213	--
2011	251,129	0.77%
2012	249,238	-0.75%
2013	251,400	0.87%
2014	252,687	0.51%
2015	253,614	0.37%
2016	255,551	0.76%
2017	257,488	0.76%
2018	258,903	0.55%
2019	262,475	1.38%
2020	265,882	1.30%
2021	275,611	3.66%
2022	277,700	0.76%
2023	280,900	1.15%

Source: ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, DP05 and OFM Population Projections for years 2020-2023.



Norwegian Point Park



This means that Kitsap County will need to accommodate roughly 52,588 new residents by 2050 – a 18.6% increase from 2023. Figure 2-1, right, shows the estimated historical population from 1990 to 2023 and the population projection growth until 2050.

## Population Demographics

### Age & Gender

Kitsap County has a higher percentage of male residents than female residents. The 2021 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates indicate the age categories with the highest populations in Kitsap County are 25 to 34 years (14.5%), 35 to 44 years (12.3%), and 45 to 54 years (11.6%). The median age in Kitsap County is 39.4, which is higher than that of Washington State (37.9). Approximately 20.4% of the population is under 18, and 18.0% of the population is age 65 or older. According to census data (specifically DP1), 28.3% of households have at least one person under 18, and 34.2% of households have at least one person 65 or older. It is important that the parks plan takes these two populations into account.

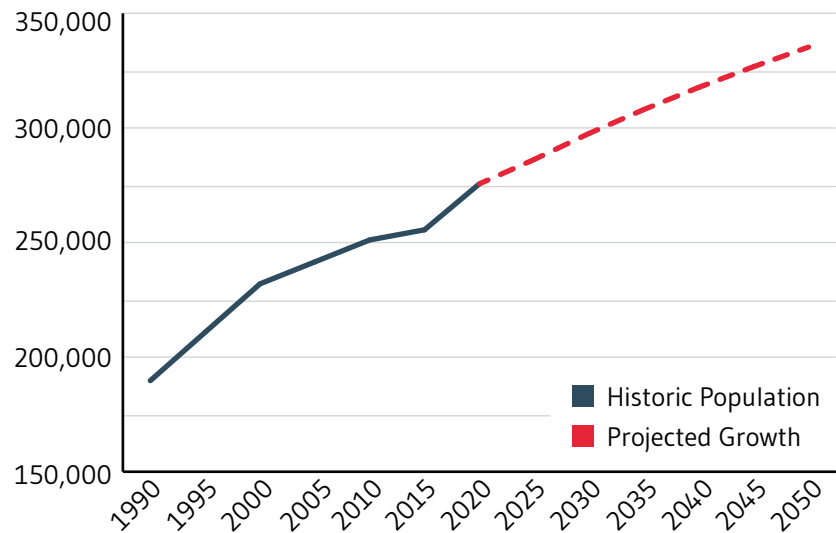


Figure 2-2: Population Projection

Source: US Census (2000, 2010, 2020) and OFM County Population Forecasts.

Table 2-3: Gender Distribution in Kitsap County		
Gender	Estimate	Percent
Male	140,306	51.4%
Female	132,766	48.6%

Source: American Community Survey 2021 5-year estimates, DP05.

Table 2-4: Age Distribution in Kitsap County Compared to Washington State			
Age	Kitsap County		Washington State %
	Estimate	%	
Under 5 years	15,197	5.6%	5.9%
5 to 9 years	15,602	5.7%	6.2%
10 to 14 years	15,537	5.7%	6.3%
15 to 19 years	15,079	5.5%	6.0%
20 to 24 years	20,102	7.4%	6.3%
25 to 34 years	39,521	14.5%	15.1%
35 to 44 years	33,714	12.3%	13.7%
45 to 54 years	31,553	11.6%	12.3%
55 to 59 years	18,914	6.9%	6.3%
60 to 64 years	18,651	6.8%	6.4%
65 to 74 years	31,112	11.4%	9.6%
75 to 84 years	13,782	5.0%	4.1%
85 years and over	4,308	1.6%	1.7%

Source: American Community Survey 2021 5-year estimates, DP05.

## Race & Ethnicity

About 72.2% of Kitsap County residents are white alone, 8.8% identify as Hispanic or Latino, 5.1% are Asian alone, 2.7% are Black or African American, 1.3% are American Indian or Alaska native, 1.0% are Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 0.6% are some other race, and 8.3% are two or more races. 27.8% of the Kitsap County population is an ethnicity that isn't white alone. Figure 2-2 to the right shows the race and ethnicity percentages of Kitsap County vs Washington State as a whole.

While understanding racial and ethnic demographics can help identify the need for incorporating languages other than English into parks planning, operations, and programming, it is even more critical to examine English proficiency and languages spoken at home, as Census data does not indicate cultural identities of populations. Increasing efforts to engage with residents in the languages represented by community members could help make planning efforts and parks more accessible to all.

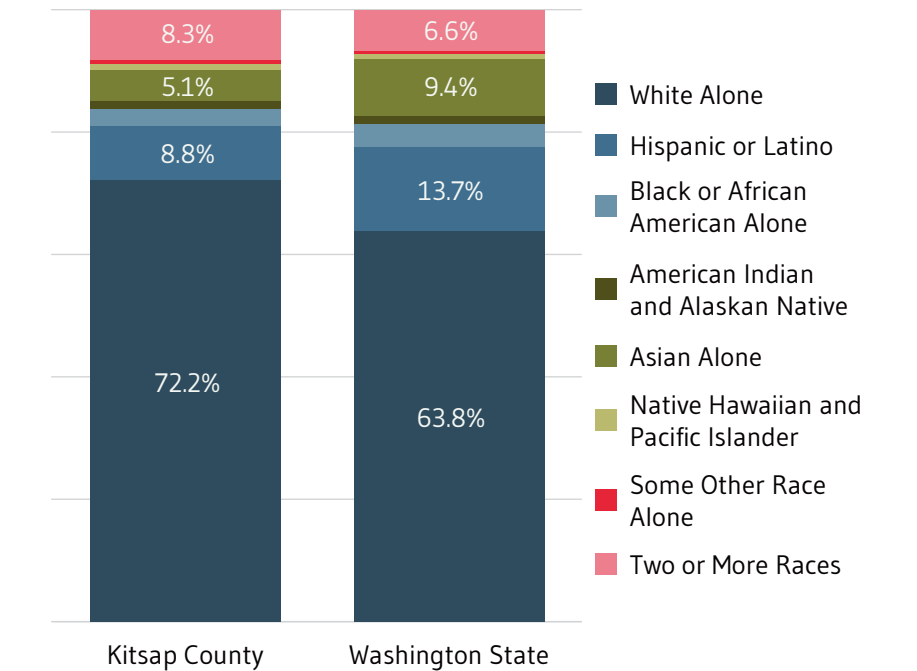
Of Kitsap County residents over the age of 5 who were included in the ACS data, 8.0% speak a language other than English. (2021: ACS 5-Year Estimates, S1601). 2.9% speak Spanish

at home. Of the roughly 20,724 residents who speak a language other than English, 30.1%, or 6,243, indicated that they speak English "less than very well." 2.9% of residents speak Spanish at home, 1.3% speak another Indo-European language, and 3.6% speak an Asian or Pacific Islander language (2021 ACS S1601). It is also worth noting that Census data and estimates often have an undercount of non-English speakers, as undocumented residents with the community do not feel safe filling out the surveys.

## Disability

Disability metrics for Kitsap County are important to understand, as they help in identifying the accessibility needs of the population and incorporating amenities within the parks system for greater access. This information also helps to determine how many people are likely to travel to parks and open spaces. According to the U.S. Census, 14.6% of the population have at least one disability. This is a higher percentage of the population that lives with a disability than Washington (12.7%). In further developing a parks plan for Kitsap County, it is important to consider amenities and accommodations which would serve the portion of the population who live with disabilities.

Figure 2-3 on the following page shows the percentage of residents within Kitsap County living with a disability according to the U.S. Census. Of the total population, 7.5% have difficulty with walking, 6.2% have cognitive difficulty, 4.3% have difficulty with hearing and 2.0% have difficulty with vision. These disability categories should be taken into consideration when planning public spaces. Additionally, 5.8% need assistance with independent living, and 2.5% need assistance with self-care. Disability impacts most people at some point in their lives, so the more accessible communities are, the more they will be able to benefit the whole population.

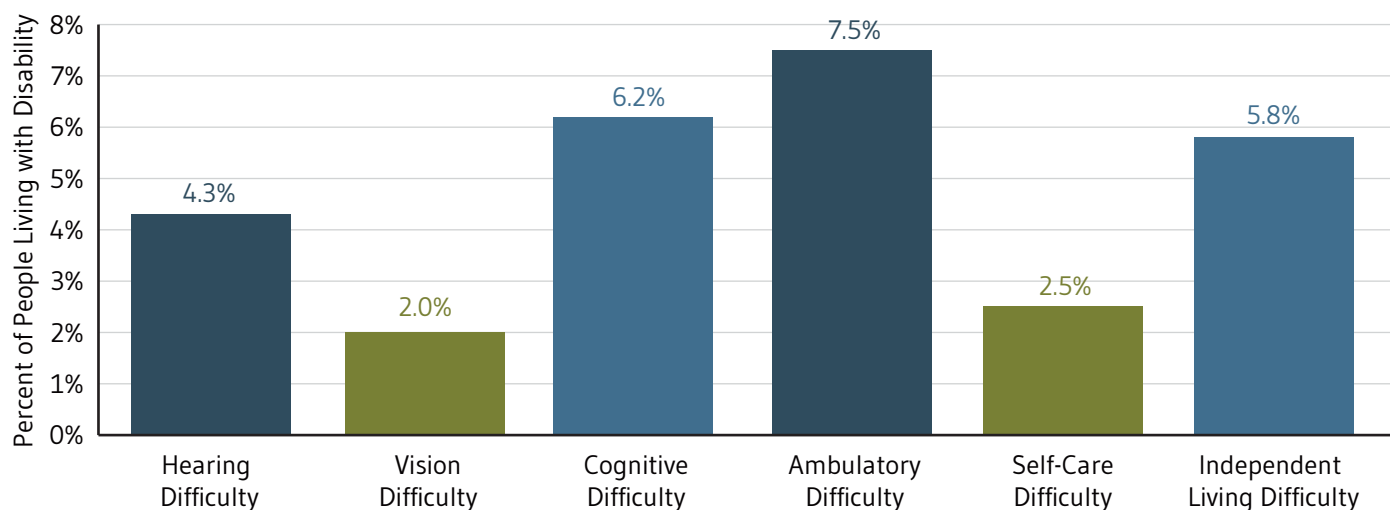


**Figure 2-3: Race/Ethnicity Percentages of Kitsap County versus WA**  
Source: 2020 Decennial Census, DP1.

Table 2-5: Ethnicity in Kitsap County Compared to Washington State			
Age	Kitsap County		Washington State %
	Estimate	%	
Hispanic or Latino (any race):	24,184	8.8%	13.7%
Not Hispanic or Latino:	251,427	91.2%	86.3%

Source: American Community Survey 2021 5-year estimates, DP05.





**Figure 2-4: Percentage of Kitsap County's Population Living with Disability**

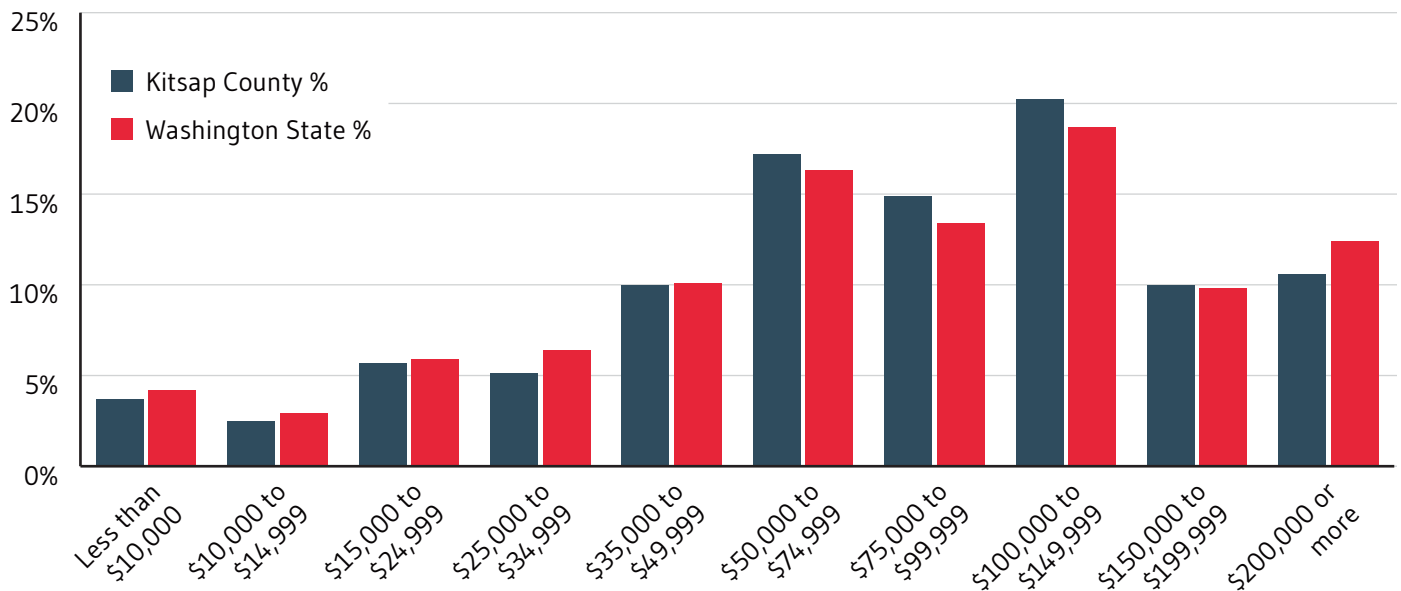
Source: 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates, S1810.

## Income

The median household income in Kitsap County per 2021 ACS estimates was approximately \$84,600 compared with Washington State at \$82,400. Overall, Kitsap County income brackets are consistent with statewide households. 27% of Kitsap County households make less than \$50,000 a year.

Table 2-6: Household Income in Kitsap County Compared to Washington State		
Household Income	Kitsap County Households	Washington State Households
Less than \$10,000	3.7%	4.2%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	2.5%	2.9%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	5.7%	5.9%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	5.1%	6.4%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	10.0%	10.1%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	17.2%	16.3%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	14.9%	13.4%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	20.2%	18.7%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	10.0%	9.8%
\$200,000 or more	10.6%	12.4%
Total Households	104,977	2,931,841
Median Income (in Dollars)	\$84,600	\$82,400

Source: American Community Survey 2021 5-year estimates, Table S1901.



**Figure 2-5: Kitsap County and Washington Household Income**

Source: 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates, S1901.

Table 2-7 identifies the number of residents over the age of one and their poverty status in 2021. For reference, according to the 2021 Federal Poverty Guidelines, being below the poverty level for a one-person household would earn less than \$12,880 or for a four-person household it would be \$26,500, with other amounts for other household sizes. 150% of the poverty level for a one-person household is \$19,320 or \$39,750 for a four-person household. This paints a picture of finances for all residents in Kitsap County – with a reminder that this includes both adults and children. It is important to note that 13.8% of residents are living at or below 149% of the poverty level, indicating that they likely have limited disposable income available for recreational activities.

Table 2-7: Poverty Status in Kitsap County Population	
Poverty Status	Percentage
# of People for Whom Poverty Status is Determined (Age 1 and over)	262,050
Below 100% of the poverty level	8.0%
100-149% of the poverty level	5.8%
At or above 150% of the poverty level	86.3%

Source: 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates, S0701



**Horseshoe Lake Park**



# Housing

## Housing Type

Table 2-8 presents the distribution of various housing unit types in Kitsap County, along with their corresponding percentages relative to the total housing within Kitsap County and the state of Washington. 71.4 % of all housing units in Kitsap County are single-family units, which is higher than Washington (63.0%). Kitsap County also has a lower percentage of structures with 20 or more units (6.0%) than Washington (11.7%). Otherwise, the distribution of housing types are generally consistent with Washington state percentages.

## Housing Tenure

Excluding vacancy rates, 69.1% of occupied units in Kitsap County are owner-occupied and 30.9% units are renter-occupied. The percentage of owner-occupied housing is consistent with Washington state (63.6%) percentages. This is consistent with Kitsap County's housing values and incomes. Figure 2-5 below shows owner vs. renter rates in Kitsap County Washington.

## Average Household Type

The average household size in Kitsap County is 2.60 people, which is a slightly smaller average household size than Washington State at-large (2.67 people). Table 2-9 provides a breakdown of the average number of households per type of household. This information is useful when considering what housing types might be best suited for people in Kitsap County with differing life circumstances. While a single-family home might be most suitable for certain family households, multi-family homes might create a greater sense of community for households with one parent present, and smaller units may be better suited for nonfamily households. This table shows that Kitsap County has a higher percentage of married households (54.1%) than statewide percentages (50.1%).

Housing Type	Kitsap County		Washington State %
	# of Units	%	
1, detached	80,457	71.4%	63.0%
1, attached	4,396	3.9%	4.1%
2	2,543	2.3%	2.3%
3 or 4	3,442	3.1%	3.6%
5 to 9	4,101	3.6%	4.4%
10 to 19	3,974	3.5%	4.8%
20 or more units	6,787	6.0%	11.7%
Mobile home	6,732	6.0%	5.9%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	286	0.3%	0.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>112,718</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>3,170,695</b>

Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, DP04.

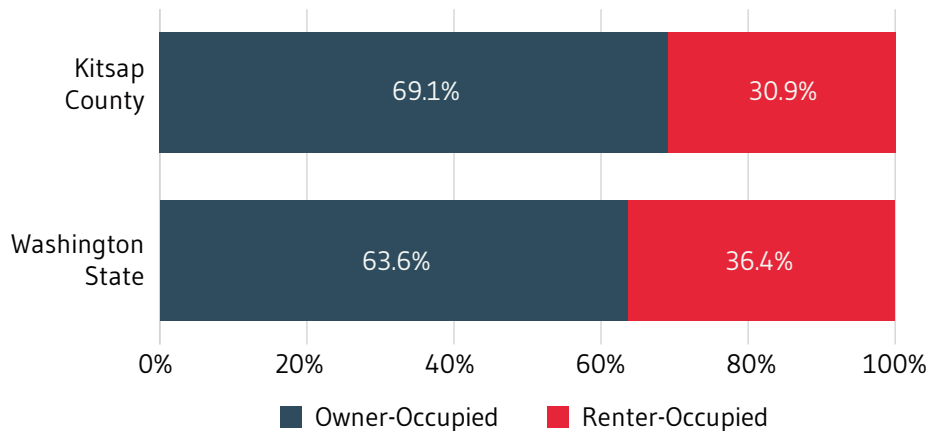


Figure 2-6: Owner vs Renter in Kitsap County and Washington

Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, DP04.

Household Type	Kitsap County		Washington State %
	# of Households	%	
Married-couple family household	56786	54.1%	50.1%
Male householder, no spouse present, family household	18368	17.5%	18.1%
Female household, no spouse present, family household	22449	21.4%	23.6%
Cohabiting couple household	7374	7.0%	8.2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>104,977</b>	<b>104,977</b>	<b>2,931,841</b>

Source: 2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, DP04.

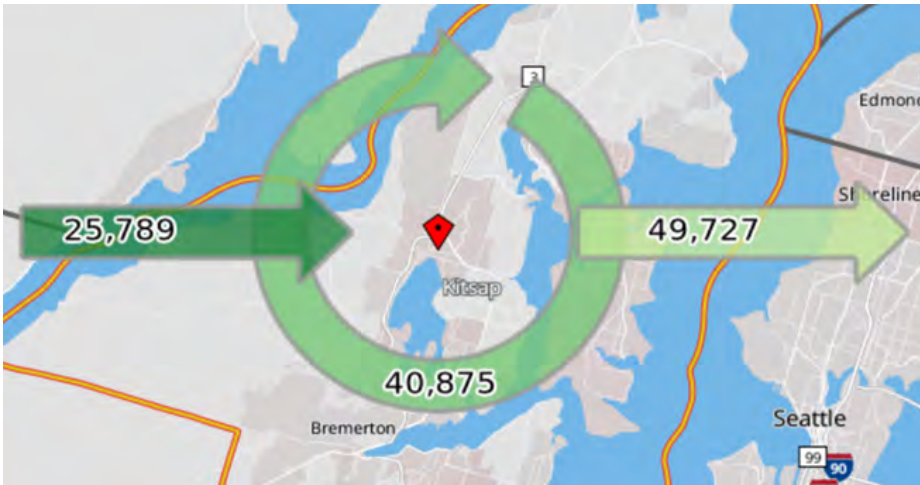
# Employment & Transportation

## Employment

The civilian employed population 16 years and over in Kitsap County is estimated to be 118,007, according to 2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates (DP03). The largest industry employment sectors in Kitsap County are educational services, health care and social assistance (21.2%) and professional, scientific, and management, administrative and waste management services (12.1%). Kitsap County’s public administration sector employs a higher percentage of the population than that of Washington, but is otherwise generally consistent with statewide percentages. Naval Base Kitsap, the county's largest employer, includes approximately 14,798 active-duty personnel and 23,389 civilian employees as of 2023. Approximately 13.8% of Kitsap residents are directly employed by the Department of Defense.

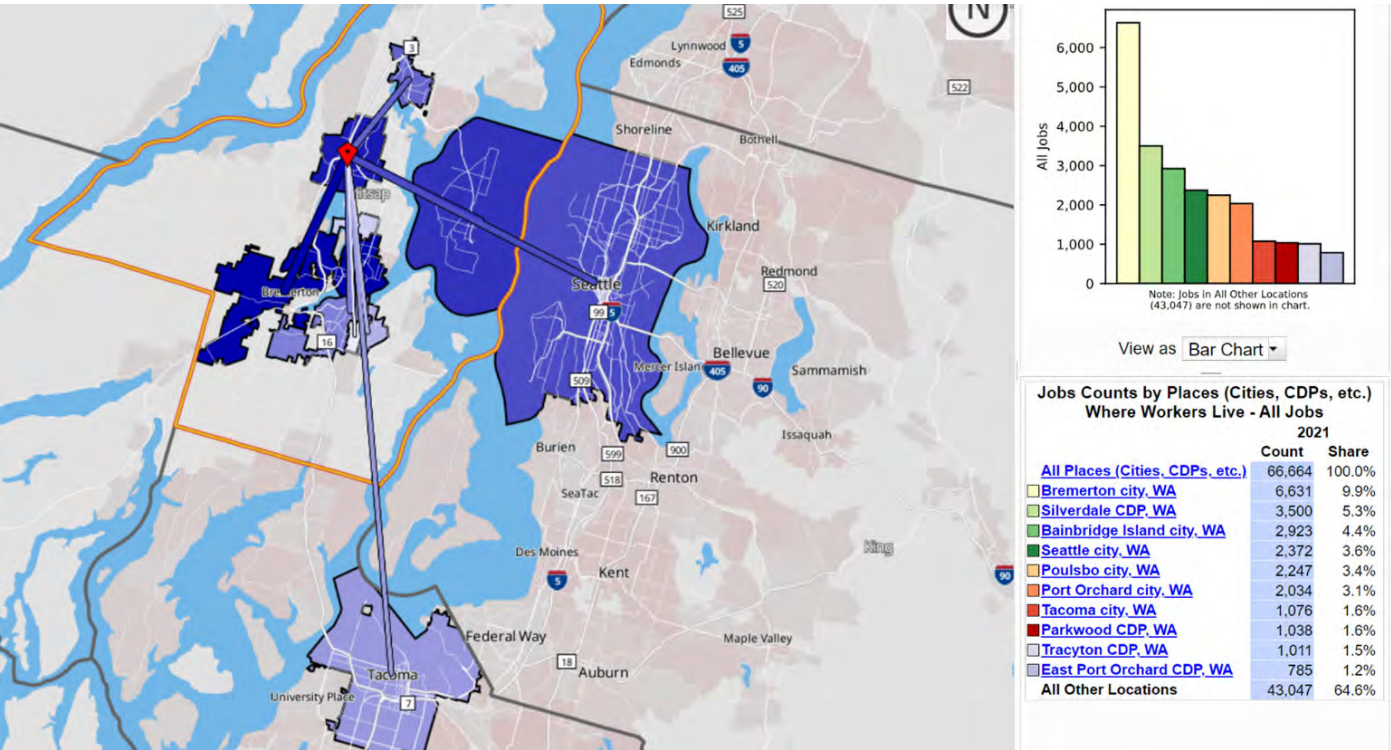
## Employment Inflow/Outflow

Figure 2-7, shows the US Census OnTheMap estimates for inflow and outflow of daily jobs in Kitsap County. This identifies that a greater number of people travel out of Kitsap County for employment (49,727) than travel into the county (25,789). 40,875 people remain in Kitsap County to live and work. It is important to note that employment has changed for many people since the 2020 Census, with many more people working from home. These numbers continue to change each year following the pandemic.



**Figure 2-7: Inflow/Outflow of Employment in Kitsap County**

Source: OnTheMap, 2021 Census Estimates.



**Figure 2-8: Employment Locations of Kitsap County Residents**

Source: OnTheMap, 2021 Census Estimates.



## Employment Locations

Figure 2-8 shows on the previous page a map of the top 10 employment locations of Kitsap County residents in 2021, emanating from the Kitsap County. According to the OnTheMap visualization, there are concentrations of employment in Bremerton, Silverdale, Bainbridge Island, and Seattle, with lower concentrations in other cities (Poulsbo, Port Orchard area, Tacoma, Parkwood, etc.).

## Distance Traveled to Work

Table 2-10 shows the distances residents travel to work and the percentage of the populations in Kitsap County and Washington. 52.2% of Kitsap County residents travel less than 10 miles for work, which is a higher percentage compared to statewide percentages (49.4%). About 75.7% of Kitsap County residents travel less than 25 miles to work, and 9.1% work greater than 50 miles away from home.

## Means of Transportation to Work

Table 2-11 shows the means of transportation for the populations of Kitsap County and Washington. 74.3% of Kitsap County residents travel by car/truck/van to work, which is a lower percentage compared to statewide (76.9%). 7.4% of Kitsap County residents take public transportation to work, and 10.5% of residents work from home according to 2021 estimates.

## Access to Vehicles

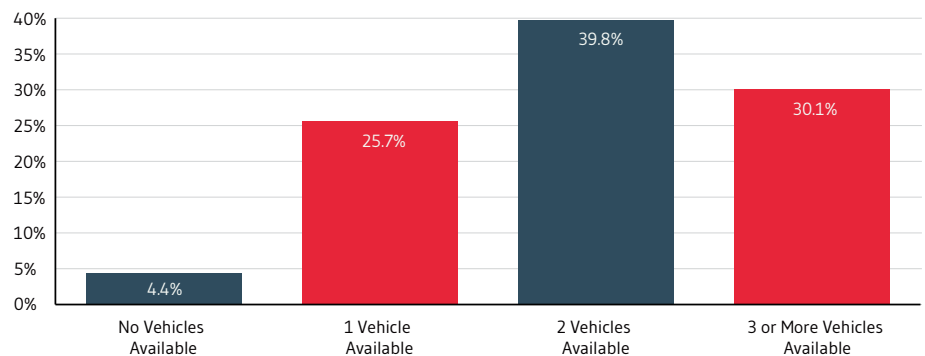
Figure 2-9 shows the access Kitsap County residents have to vehicles. 39.8% of people in Kitsap County have access to 2 vehicles, and 30.1% have access to 3 or more vehicles at any time. It is important to note that 4.4% of residents have no vehicle available, and for parks to be accessible to all residents, walkability is a crucial factor.

Table 2-10: Kitsap County Distance Traveled to Work vs. Washington		
Distance	Kitsap County %	Washington State %
Less than 10 miles	52.2%	49.4%
10 to 24 miles	23.5%	27.0%
25 to 50 miles	15.1%	10.4%
Greater than 50 miles	9.1%	13.2%

Source: 2020 Census.

Table 2-11: Kitsap County Means of Transportation to Work vs. Washington		
Distance	Kitsap County %	Washington State %
Car, truck, or van	74.3%	76.9%
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	7.4%	5.2%
Walked	5.4%	3.3%
Bicycle	0.6%	0.7%
Taxicab, motorcycle, or other means	1.9%	1.2%
Worked from home	10.5%	12.6%

Source: American Community Survey 2021 5-year estimates, Table S0801.



**Figure 2-9: Percentage of Kitsap County Vehicle Availability**

Source: 2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates, S2504.



Long Lake Park

## Existing Systems Context

### Existing Parks & Recreation Facilities

Kitsap County offers a wide range of recreational opportunities and park spaces for residents and visitors, providing a mix of smaller neighborhood parks and open spaces that reflect the community's values and recreation needs. The county's park system spans over 11,000 acres of primarily developed or partially developed parklands, along with nearly 140 miles of trail segments within its parks system. Anchoring the park system are six large Heritage Parks, which make up approximately 75% of the total park acreage, serving as cornerstone destinations within the county's diverse recreation offerings.

To determine necessary or desired improvements, the initial step in this plan involves cataloging and assessing the current conditions of all existing parks, open space areas, and trail resources. This section identifies the assets that Kitsap County owns, manages, and maintains, evaluating them to ensure they meet or exceed park development standards, safety criteria, liability and risk concerns, recreational trends, aesthetic appeal (placemaking), and have the capacity to support landscape and climate change resiliency objectives.

### Park Classification Updates

Park classification systems provide a structured framework for organizing, managing, and operating parks based on specific criteria. These criteria may include size, ecological significance, recreational opportunities, historical or cultural value, and contributions to placemaking, economic development, and conservation or climate resiliency goals. Such systems are essential for creating a balance between accessibility, sustainability, and the diverse needs of the community.

While Kitsap County had developed its own park classification system with seven distinct categories, there is an opportunity to align this system with the widely recognized Washington State Parks Classification System used by the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO). This state-level approach offers a standardized methodology that enhances consistency across jurisdictions, facilitates funding opportunities, and ensures that public spaces are managed to provide a high-quality mix of natural and structured environments.

Adopting or adapting the Washington State Parks Classification System would allow Kitsap County to integrate its local priorities with a broader, more uniform framework. This would streamline operations, improve grant competitiveness, and ensure alignment with state-wide conservation and recreation goals.

### Existing Kitsap County Park Classifications

Currently, Kitsap County organizes its parks into seven categories to reflect their unique features, functions, and community values:

#### Community Recreation Complexes (C):

These parks cater to local use and provide amenities such as sports fields, playgrounds, picnic areas, and open spaces for active and passive recreation.

#### Heritage Parks (H):

Large parks emphasizing conservation and recreation, preserving natural habitats, and offering extensive trail systems and multi-use spaces.

#### Legacy Parks (L):

Parks with historical, cultural, or landmark significance that host events, gatherings, and unique recreational amenities.

#### Open Space & Greenbelts (O):

Natural areas focused on conservation and environmental health with limited development to maintain their ecological integrity.



## Partnership Parks (P):

Parks developed or managed through partnerships with community organizations or other entities, offering shared-use facilities.

## Special Use Parks (S):

Parks designed for specialized activities such as skateboarding, golf, or dog recreation, catering to specific community interests.

## Waterway/Waterfront Parks (W):

Parks along water bodies that provide access to activities such as boating, fishing, and scenic viewing.

## Benefits of Adopting a Unified Classification System

The Washington State Parks and Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) Classification Systems provide structured frameworks for categorizing parks based on their primary purpose, features, and management goals. These systems ensure consistency across jurisdictions, align park planning with state-level priorities, and facilitate effective management of conservation, recreation, and public access. Together, these classifications provide a comprehensive approach to organizing and managing diverse park types. Below is a synthesis of the classifications, integrating typical RCO categories alongside the Washington State Parks framework.

While Kitsap County's current system effectively captures local needs, transitioning to the Washington State Parks Classification System—or integrating elements of it—can improve consistency, operational efficiency, and alignment with broader goals. By refining categories to mirror the state model, Kitsap County can ensure its system remains locally relevant while benefiting from state-wide standardization.

## Nature Parks

Focused on preserving ecological integrity, these parks protect natural habitats and biodiversity while offering opportunities for passive recreation, such as hiking, birdwatching, and interpretive education. Minimal development ensures low environmental impact.

## Waterfront Parks

Parks adjacent to water bodies that provide access to water-based recreation, including boating, fishing, swimming, and scenic viewing. These parks are often designed with facilities to support public use, such as docks, piers, and beach areas.

## Community Parks

Designed to meet the recreational needs of a larger population base, these parks feature amenities for active and passive recreation, such as sports fields, playgrounds, walking paths, and picnic shelters. They often serve as gathering spaces for community events.

## Neighborhood Parks

Smaller parks that provide close-to-home recreation opportunities for nearby residents. These parks typically include playgrounds, open spaces, and picnic areas, catering to families and local gatherings.

## Mini-Parks

Compact parks that address specific community needs, such as small play areas, gardens, or resting spaces. These parks are often located within high-density urban or residential areas for easy access.

## Regional Parks

Large parks serving the broader region, offering diverse recreational opportunities and natural or cultural attractions. These parks often include significant trail systems, unique landscapes, and facilities that draw visitors from outside the immediate community.

## Special Use Parks

Parks or facilities developed for specific purposes, such as skate parks, marinas, dog parks, golf courses, or event centers. These sites cater to niche recreational needs and often serve as destinations for specialized activities.

Expanded definitions for the updated classifications can be found in Appendix B.

## Rationale for the Updated Classifications

This combined classification system incorporates both the RCO's commonly used categories and the Washington State Parks framework. It reflects the diversity of park functions and management goals while aligning Kitsap County with state-level standards. These classifications allow for flexibility in meeting local needs, securing funding, and ensuring the county's park system remains accessible, sustainable, and adaptable to changing community priorities.

Transitioning to this classification system should involve updating park inventories to align with the new categories, revising management plans to reflect these changes, and educating stakeholders and the public on the purpose of each classification. This approach will enhance the county's ability to manage its parks effectively while maintaining alignment with state-wide conservation and recreation goals.

# Assessment Methodology

Modeled after RCO’s suggested Level-of-Service (LOS) grading system and NRPA’s “system level” approach, a custom assessment methodology was used in this study to inventory and assess the current range of recreation and open space opportunities within any particular area. The methodology used in this report is ranked on a scale of 5 to 0, from high to low, across a number of different criteria, including:

- ♦ Location
- ♦ Park Classification
- ♦ Facility Age
- ♦ History
- ♦ Funding Encumbrances or Regulatory Framework
- ♦ Condition of Individual Components & Amenities
- ♦ Maintenance / Known Issues

Please note that park areas developed by private entities e.g., a HOA, or and public or private schools were not included on the overall County Park System map, therefore they were not part of the assessment procedure.

## Assessment Ranking Scale

Based on the evaluations of each individual element, an overall assessment for each park was calculated by averaging the individual rankings. “0” ratings were excluded from the calculations, and open spaces were not assessed.

Each park assessment reflects a weighted analysis of structural integrity, user safety, aesthetic appeal, and maintenance status.

Higher rankings (4–5) indicate minimal intervention needs, while lower rankings (1–2) signal a need for significant repairs, safety measures, or possible closures to address liability concerns. Rankings are assigned based on a comprehensive aggregation of observations and maintenance notes, ensuring that each score accurately represents the park's current condition and required interventions.

Ranking (Low to High)	Description
0	n/a - Not Present
1	Facilities have critical structural failures or liabilities that pose imminent safety hazards, making closure necessary until significant repairs or reconstructions are completed. Quantification at this level includes severe issues like collapsed infrastructure, major erosion, or unsafe playground equipment that could result in injury if the park remains open.
2	Signifies poor condition, with major structural, cosmetic, and liability concerns that need immediate attention but do not require closure. This rating indicates the presence of substantial maintenance and safety issues, such as unstable walkways, extensive vandalism, severe wear and tear, or facilities that require significant repair. Parks with this score may still be used but need prioritized repairs to prevent further deterioration or safety risks.
3	Moderate condition, with a few significant cosmetic or maintenance issues creating minor liability concerns. This category quantifies issues like worn equipment, minor erosion, or faded signage, which could affect user experience or safety but are not immediately hazardous. Quantification at this level involves tallying moderate repairs, such as repainting, resurfacing trails, or minor structural reinforcements.
4	Denotes parks in very good condition, with only minor cosmetic or maintenance needs. Quantification includes elements like slightly worn benches, faded paint, or minimal litter that require routine maintenance but do not impact functionality or safety. Parks in this category are generally safe, with a long life cycle and no notable liabilities.
5	The highest rating of “5” is given to parks in optimal condition, with all structures and facilities well-maintained, showing no visible wear or cosmetic issues. Quantification at this level means that no significant maintenance is required, and all safety and aesthetic standards are met. Parks with a “5” rating demonstrate a long expected life cycle and provide a consistently high-quality user experience with no observable liability risks.



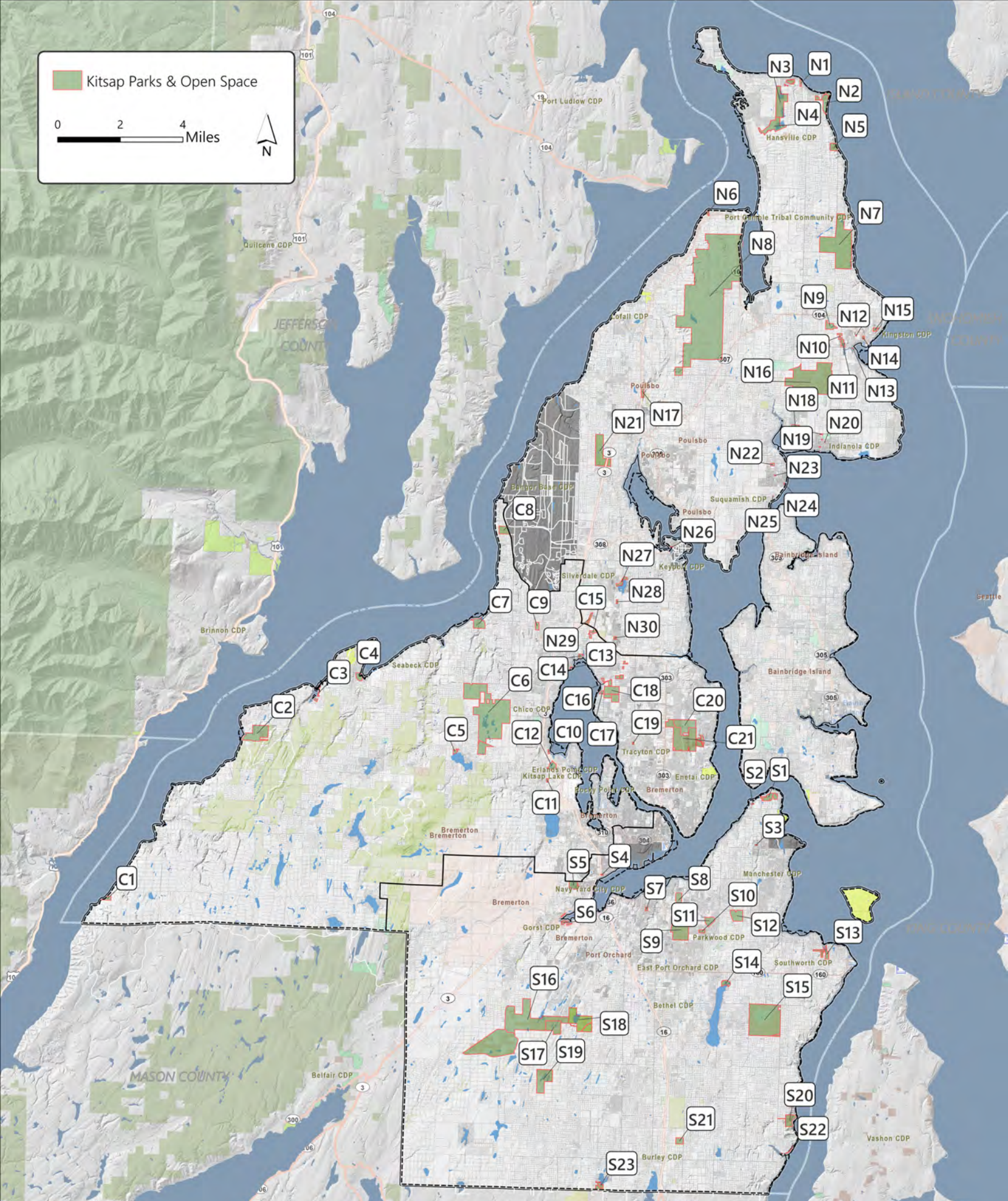


Figure 2-10: Park System Key Map



**Table 2-13: Existing Parks & Open Spaces**

Key	District	Name	Classification (Old)	Classification (New)	Acres	Rating
N1	N	Norwegian Point Park	Waterway/Waterfront Parks	Waterfront Park	6.76	3
N2	N	Point No Point Lighthouse & Park	Waterway/Waterfront Parks	Waterfront Park	20.56	3
N3	N	Buck Lake Park	Waterway/Waterfront Parks	Regional Park	160.79	3
N4	N	Hansville Greenway	Partnership Parks	Nature Park	135.66	4
N5	N	Pilot Point Park	Open Space & Greenbelts	Nature Park	34.13	**
N6	N	Salsbury Point Park	Waterway/Waterfront Parks	Community Park	5.09	3
N7	N	Eglon Forest	N/A	Nature Park	700.21	**
N8	N	Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park	Heritage Parks	Regional Park	3393.80	3
N9	N	Carpenter Lake Natural Reserve	Open Space & Greenbelts	Nature Park	38.71	**
N10	N	Kingston Nike Site	Open Space & Greenbelts	Nature Park	11.22	**
N11	N	Kingston Salt Marsh	Open Space & Greenbelts	Nature Park	14.85	**
N12	N	Billie Johnson Skate Park	Special Use Park	Special Use Facility	0.71	4
N13	N	Arness Roadside Park	Waterway/Waterfront Parks	Waterfront Park	0.71	3
N14	N	Kola Kole Park	Legacy Park	Community Park	3.30	3
N15	N	A Quiet Place Park	Open Space & Greenbelts	Nature Park	9.06	**
N16	N	North Kitsap Heritage Park	Heritage Parks	Nature Park	818.35	4
N17	N	Snyder Park	Partnership Parks	Special Use Facility	17.69	3
N18	N	Indianola Waterfront & Woodland	Waterway/Waterfront Parks	Nature Park	81.48	**
N19	N	Indianola Greenways	Open Space & Greenbelts	Nature Park	3.54	**
N20	N	Indianola Tennis Court	N/A	Special Use Facility	0	3
N21	N	Rude Road Site	Partnership Parks	Nature Park	16.20	**
N22	N	Suquamish Nature Preserve	Partnership Parks	Nature Park	5.49	**
N23	N	Suquamish Pathway Park	Open Space & Greenbelts	Mini Park	0.87	**
N24	N	Angeline Park	Partnership Parks	Mini Park	0.40	3
N25	N	Suquamish Sports Court	Partnership Parks	Neighborhood Park	0.27	2
N26	N	Keyport Saltwater Park	Waterway/Waterfront Parks	Neighborhood Park	2.02	3
N27	N	Island Lake Park	Waterway/Waterfront Parks	Community Park	22.21	4
N28	N	Ridgetop Park 2	N/A	Special Use Facility	4.00	**
N29	N	Silverdale Rotary Gateway Park	Special Use Park	Community Park	13.46	3
N30	N	Ridgetop Park 1	N/A	Special Use Facility	4.41	**
S1	S	Wynn-Jones Preserve	Open Space & Greenbelts	Nature Park	52.18	**
S2	S	Waterman Point Wetlands	Open Space & Greenbelts	Nature Park	1.61	**
S3	S	Kuhns Property	Legacy Park	Nature Park	0.89	**
S4	S	View Point Park	Partnership Parks	Neighborhood Park	1.86	2
S5	S	Navy Yard Open Space	Open Space & Greenbelts	Nature Park	41.42	**

\*\* Natural / Open Space - not assessed



**Table 2-13: Existing Parks & Open Spaces**

Key	District	Name	Classification (Old)	Classification (New)	Acres	Rating
S6	S	Sinclair Inlet Wildlife Restoration Area	Open Space & Greenbelts	Nature Park	18.88	**
S7	S	South Kitsap Little League Field	N/A	Special Use Facility	2.06	3
S8	S	Veterans Memorial Park	Legacy Park	Community Park	48.79	2
S9	S	South Kitsap Regional Park	Community Recreation Park	Regional Park	206.57	3
S10	S	Bill Bloomquist Rotary Park	Partnership Parks	Special Use Facility	12.82	3
S11	S	Village Greens Golf Course	Special Use Park	Special Use Facility	44.89	3
S12	S	Howe Farm Park	Legacy Park	Community Park	81.39	3
S13	S	Harper Park	Legacy Park	Community Park	45.37	4
S14	S	Long Lake Park	Waterway/Waterfront Parks	Community Park	20.43	3
S15	S	Banner Forest Heritage Park	Heritage Parks	Nature Park	635.63	4
S16	S	Coulter Creek Heritage Park	Heritage Parks	Nature Park	1197.42	3
S17	S	Calvinwood	Partnership Parks	Special Use Facility	114.89	2
S18	S	Square Lake Park	Waterway/Waterfront Park	Nature Park	233.25	4
S19	S	Wicks Lake Park	Open Space & Greenbelts	Nature Park	178.44	**
S20	S	Anderson Point Park	Waterway/Waterfront Park	Nature Park	63.08	**
S21	S	Bandix Dog Park	Special Use Park	Special Use Facility	30.28	3
S22	S	Olalla Beach	Waterway/Waterfront Park	Waterfront Park	6.55	4
S23	S	Horseshoe Lake Park	Waterway/Waterfront Park	Waterfront Park	27.72	3
C1	C	Laughlin Cove	Open Space & Greenbelts	Waterfront Park	14.79	**
C2	C	Guillemot Cove Nature Reserve	Open Space & Greenbelts	Nature Park	183.42	**
C3	C	Stavis Estuary	Open Space & Greenbelts	Nature Park	11.32	**
C4	C	Nicks Lagoon	Open Space & Greenbelts	Nature Park	26.80	**
C5	C	Wildcat Lake Park	Waterway/Waterfront Parks	Community Park	10.11	3
C6	C	Newberry Hill Heritage Park	Heritage Park	Nature Park	1042.16	4
C7	C	Anderson Landing Preserve	Open Space & Greenbelts	Nature Park	68.57	**
C8	C	Olympic View Park	Open Space & Greenbelts	Nature Park	47.45	**
C9	C	Anderson Hill Athletic Fields	Partnership Parks	Special Use Facility	18.46	3
C10	C	Chico Creek Estuary	Open Space & Greenbelts	Nature Park	3.53	**
C11	C	Chico Salmon Park	Open Space & Greenbelts	Nature Park	4.53	**
C12	C	Erlands Point Preserve	Open Space & Greenbelts	Nature Park	31.99	**
C13	C	Silverdale Waterfront Park	Waterway/Waterfront Parks	Community Park	1.97	2
C14	C	Old Mill Park	Waterway/Waterfront Parks	Community Park	8.51	4
C15	C	Silverdale Wetlands	Open Space & Greenbelts	Nature Park	15.62	**
C16	C	Barker Creek Corridor	Open Space & Greenbelts	Nature Park	43.59	**

*\*\* Natural / Open Space - not assessed*

Table 2-13: Existing Parks & Open Spaces

Key	District	Name	Classification (Old)	Classification (New)	Acres	Rating
C17	C	J.A. & Anna F. Smith Childrens Park	Waterway/Waterfront Parks	Community Park	749	4
C18	C	Kitsap Fairgrounds & Event Center	Community Recreation Park	Regional Park	131.95	3
C19	C	Tracyton Park	Partnership Parks	Special Use Facility	1.92	**
C20	C	Rolling Hills Golf Course	Special Use Park	Special Use Facility	139.06	3
C21	C	Illahee Preserve Heritage Park	Heritage Parks	Nature Park	383.72	4

\*\* Natural / Open Space - not assessed

# Operations & Governance

## Governance

### Kitsap County

Kitsap County operates under a governance structure led by a three-member Board of County Commissioners (BOCC), with each commissioner elected to represent one of the county's three districts. This board model enables a balanced approach to governance, addressing both the unique needs of individual districts and the overarching priorities of the county as a whole. Each commissioner participates in legislative and executive decision-making as part of the collective Board of County Commissioners. While they may focus on district-specific priorities to represent their constituents effectively, individual commissioners do not have unilateral authority to make decisions within their districts. All policy decisions, budget allocations, and development initiatives are deliberated and decided upon collectively by the Board to ensure accountability and adherence to county-wide objectives.

The commissioners collaborate to set county-wide policies, allocate resources, and ensure compliance with state and federal mandates. Each commissioner also serves as a direct link to their constituents, fostering community engagement. Additionally, they work closely with county departments, including Public Works, Parks and Recreation, and Community Development, to ensure that services and infrastructure align with community needs and meet quality standards.

### Parks Advisory Board

The Parks Advisory Board (PAB) is made up of nine volunteers from the community, three from each of the three Commissioner Districts. PAB members are appointed by the County Commissioner for their district. PAB members are intended to be a voice for their community, advise the Parks Department, and provide recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners.

### Kitsap County Parks Department

The Kitsap County Parks Department operates within a governance structure shaped by county administrative rules and state law, providing a balance of local oversight and alignment with broader legal frameworks. The top of this structure is the BOCC which has ultimate oversight authority over the Parks Department, establishing priorities and ensuring that the department's activities align with county-wide goals and strategic initiatives. The BOCC is responsible for approving strategic plans, setting major policies, and guiding department priorities in alignment with the needs and interests of Kitsap County's diverse communities.

The day-to-day management of the Parks Department is entrusted to the Director of Parks, appointed by the County Administrator. The Director's responsibilities include implementing the BOCC's policies, managing staff, and ensuring the maintenance and development of park facilities and services. The Director collaborates with other county departments, external agencies, and community partners to optimize resources and coordinate park services effectively. Supporting the Director is a professional team of managers and coordinators who oversee key functions such as maintenance, special events, community engagement, and environmental stewardship. These roles bring specialized knowledge and play a critical part in executing the department's goals and fulfilling its mandate to serve the community.

Decision-making within the department is grounded in governance principles that prioritize responsiveness to public needs, strategic alignment, and interdepartmental collaboration. The department engages in a structured planning process to establish annual objectives and operational plans that support long-term strategic goals. Public involvement is integral to this process, with the department actively seeking input through public meetings, advisory committees, and community surveys.



# Kitsap County Commissioner Districts

Boundaries and commissioners for the three commissioner districts of Kitsap County

- District 1
- District 2
- District 3
- Tribal Land
- Military

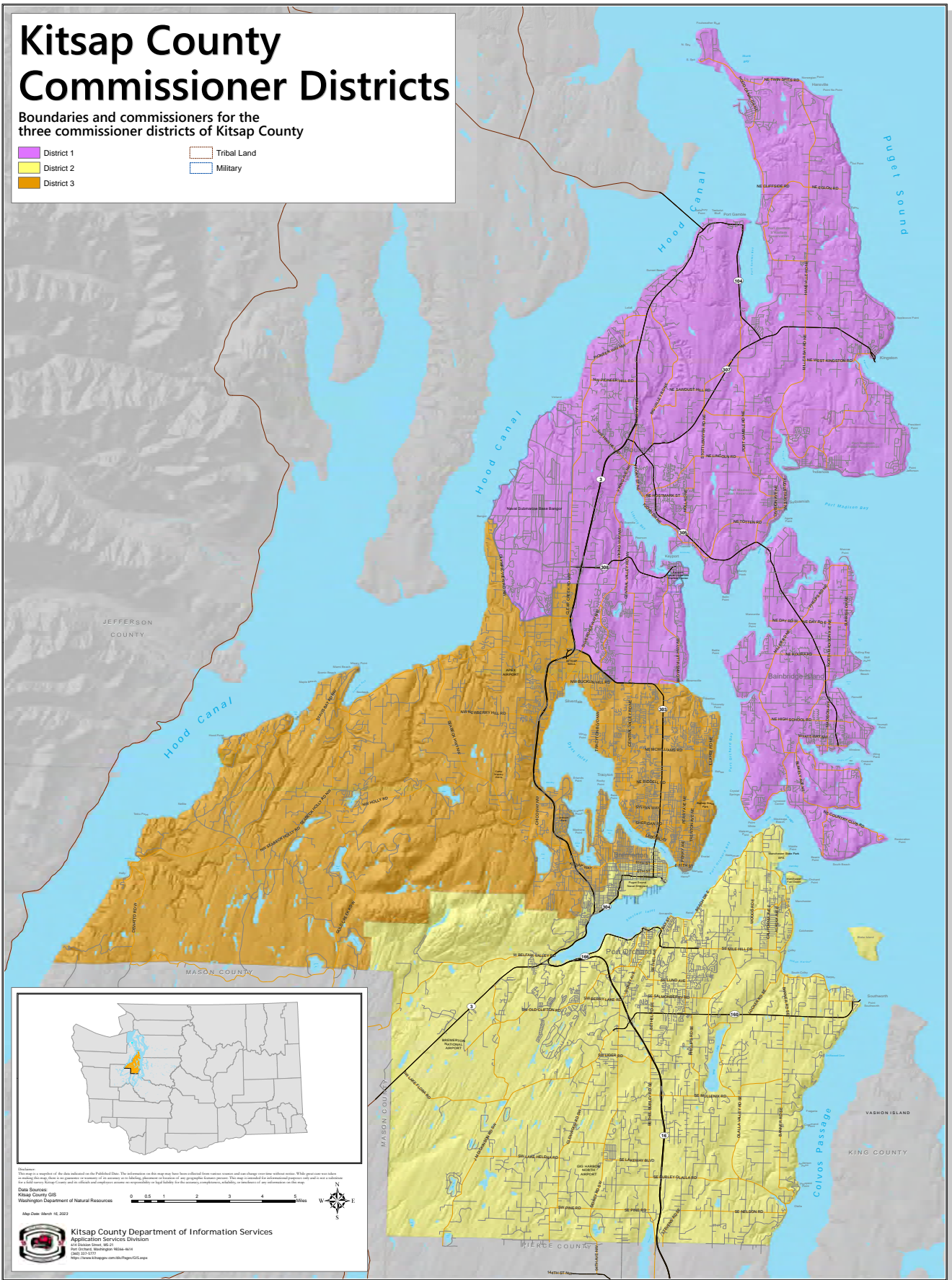


Figure 2-11: Commissioner District Map

This input helps shape priorities, guiding resource allocation and program development to ensure they reflect community interests and align with BOCC directives.

Budgetary decisions follow a structured process that reflects both departmental needs and governance oversight. The Director and senior staff develop a budget proposal, which is reviewed by the County Administrator and Budget Office before submission to the BOCC. The BOCC's review includes public hearings to enhance transparency and incorporate community feedback, further ensuring the budget aligns with public priorities.

Once the budget is approved, the Parks Department adheres to established financial and operational benchmarks, reporting regularly to the BOCC. This oversight promotes accountability, enabling periodic evaluations that assess the effectiveness of operations and alignment with community needs.

Overall, Kitsap County's Parks Department governance structure balances executive, legislative, and community input, fostering a collaborative approach that prioritizes transparency, efficiency, and responsiveness. Through a hierarchical yet community-focused framework, the department integrates professional expertise, public feedback, and legislative oversight to ensure that it operates effectively in serving Kitsap County's residents.

## Operations & Staffing

The Kitsap County Parks Department manages approximately 11,400 acres across more than 74 park sites, serving a population of approximately 282,000 residents. With a workforce of 40 full-time and 5 part-time seasonal employees, the department operates with a significantly lean staffing model. Table 2-13 benchmarks Kitsap County's staffing levels against other park agencies; however, it is critical to clarify whether the comparison is exclusively with other county park agencies or includes municipal and special district agencies. If the latter, the inclusion of agencies managing facilities such as recreation centers, pools, and organized programs may inflate staffing figures and skew the results. A more accurate benchmark would isolate

agencies with comparable scopes and operational focuses, ensuring an apples-to-apples comparison.

National standards from the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Park Metrics database offer additional perspective. The NRPA data reflect all types of park and recreation agencies (including municipal, county, and special district agencies) and indicate an average of 8.9 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees per 10,000 residents. By this measure, Kitsap County would typically require 251 FTEs to serve its population of 282,000 residents. However, the Parks Department operates with only 42.5 FTEs, resulting in one full-time employee per 275 acres and one per 6,875 residents, significantly below national averages.

Adding to these challenges, Kitsap's park system spans over 1,900 miles of cumulative driving distance, reflecting the dispersed nature of the county's rural and suburban landscapes. This geographic spread introduces operational inefficiencies and contrasts sharply with systems like Pierce County's, where parks are more centralized and total driving distance is under 1,000 miles.

While the department's lean staffing demonstrates operational efficiency, the current shortfall underscores the need for strategic investments in personnel and resources. To provide a clearer understanding of staffing adequacy, future analyses should refine comparisons by excluding agencies with unrelated facilities or broader scopes of services. Such refined benchmarking, combined with targeted resource allocation, would better position Kitsap County to meet national standards and address the needs of its growing and diverse community.



Guillemot Cove Nature Reserve



**Table 2-14: Staffing Levels Comparison (County Park Agencies Only)**

Metric	Kitsap County	National Average (Median)
Full-Time Employees	40	77
Part-Time Employees	5	171
Parkland (acres)	11,398	1,230
Park Sites	74	41
Population	282,000	--

**Table 2-15: Kitsap County Parks in Comparison (County Park Agencies Only)**

	Lower Quartile	Median	Upper Quartile	Kitsap County
Total Number of Parks	4	41	78	74
Total Park Acreage	n/a	1230	n/a	11,398
Acres of Parks per 1000 Residents	4.3	7.0	15.5	40.42
Number of Residents per Park	n/a	3,344	n/a	3,811
Total Miles of Trails Managed	18	27	52	140
Parks Operating Expenditures Per Acre	\$2,413	\$5,330	\$12,101	\$612.35
Operating Expenditures per Capita	\$39.69	\$87.10	\$160.75	\$24.75

## Comparative Analysis: Kitsap County Parks Department vs. National Parks Departments with Population Consideration

### Overview

#### Kitsap County Parks Department

- ♦ Manages approximately **11,400 acres of parklands across 74 park sites**.
- ♦ Employs **40 full-time (FT) employees** and **5 part-time (PT) seasonal employees**.
- ♦ **Kitsap County population: approximately 282,000.**

#### Comparison of Parks and Recreation Metrics

Table 2-14 presents benchmark data from the National Recreation and Park Association's (NRPA) Park Metrics database, a national repository of voluntarily reported data on park operations, finances, and facilities. While this

database provides a valuable reference for comparing park and recreation agencies of different sizes, participation is inconsistent, and updates are not standardized across jurisdictions. As a result, while these metrics offer insight into industry norms, variations in reporting and operational structures should be considered when interpreting the data.

Table 2-15 expands on this comparison by incorporating additional data specific to Kitsap County and other jurisdictions. It highlights key operational factors, including total park acreage, miles of trails, number of park sites, and financial benchmarks such as operating expenditures per acre and per capita. These figures provide a broader perspective on how Kitsap County's parks system compares in terms of service levels, financial investment, and parkland management. However, due to differences in reporting methodologies and funding structures, these comparisons should be viewed as general references rather than direct equivalents.

# Volunteer / Stewardship Programs

The Kitsap County Parks Department relies heavily on volunteer contributions to mitigate its low staffing levels. Recent data indicates that approximately 2,000 community volunteers collectively contribute over 45,000 hours annually, significantly supporting and enhancing the county's parks and recreational services. This extensive volunteer effort has been relied on considerably for park maintenance and management since the Great Recession, when the Parks Department experienced staffing levels losses. While this approach offered some relief and increased community engagement and stewardship, it has also presented some challenges.

According to *The Nature of Cities ("Opportunities and Challenges in Working with Volunteers in Local Parks")*, volunteer programs can significantly reduce costs, strengthen community ties, and expand the capacity of park departments, allowing them to accomplish more with limited resources.

Reports from the Urban Institute (*"Partnerships for Parks"*) and Resources for the Future (*"Paying for State Parks"*) further emphasize that while volunteers enhance public spaces, effective programs require consistent training, supervision, and coordination to maintain high standards.

The following benefits and challenges, identified in these sources, highlight the complexities of volunteer-supported park maintenance:

## Benefits

1. **Cost Savings:** Volunteers can help reduce the labor costs associated with maintaining parks and recreational facilities. This allows the parks department to allocate funds to other important projects and improvements.
2. **Community Engagement:** Volunteer programs foster a sense of community and ownership among residents. People who volunteer in their local parks are more likely to care about and advocate for these spaces.
3. **Skill Development:** Volunteering provides opportunities for community members to develop new skills and gain valuable experience. This can be particularly beneficial for youth and individuals seeking to build their resumes.
4. **Increased Capacity:** Volunteers can help expand the capacity of the parks department, allowing for the completion of more projects and the maintenance of higher standards in park upkeep.
5. **Diverse Perspectives:** Volunteers can bring diverse backgrounds and perspectives, which can lead to innovative solutions and improvements in park management and programming.



Hansville Greenway Trails





Newberry Hill Heritage Park

## Challenges

1. **Training and Supervision:** Effective volunteer programs demand significant investment in training and supervision to ensure tasks are completed safely and correctly. Maintaining a high-functioning program also requires adequate staffing to lead and manage volunteers effectively, fostering both program efficiency and long-term success.
2. **Consistency and Reliability:** Volunteers may have varying levels of commitment and availability. This inconsistency can make it difficult to rely on volunteers for ongoing, critical tasks.
3. **Quality Control:** Volunteers may lack the professional expertise and experience of paid staff, which can affect the quality of work performed. Ensuring high standards may require additional oversight and quality control measures.
4. **Liability Issues:** Managing volunteers involves addressing potential liability issues, such as supervising volunteers to ensure standards are met, trainings have been completed, and workplace expectations are being adhered to.
5. **Coordination Efforts:** Organizing volunteer activities can be time-consuming and requires effective communication and coordination to match volunteers with suitable tasks and ensure their efforts align with the department's goals, needs, and capacity.
2. **Trail Maintenance:** Volunteer groups have been organized to help maintain and improve the extensive network of trails throughout Kitsap County. These crews work on tasks such as clearing brush, repairing erosion, and enhancing trail signage.
3. **Invasive Species Removal:** Volunteers have participated in efforts to remove invasive plant species from parklands, helping to protect native ecosystems and promote biodiversity. These activities are often coordinated with local environmental organizations and experts.
4. **Tree Planting and Habitat Restoration:** The Parks Department has organized tree planting events and habitat restoration projects to enhance the natural environment within parks. These initiatives often involve community volunteers, schools, and local conservation groups.
5. **Environmental Education Programs:** The department organizes and hosts various educational programs aimed at raising awareness about environmental stewardship. These programs often involve hands-on activities and are designed to engage participants of all ages in conservation efforts.
6. **Park Ambassadors & Volunteer Park Rangers:** While not a current program offered by the Parks Department, volunteers could serve dual roles as park ambassadors and rangers, providing information to visitors, promoting park activities, and encouraging responsible park use. They could also assist with patrolling parks, reporting maintenance needs or issues, and gathering user feedback to inform future improvements. These combined efforts would extend the reach of Parks Department staff, enhance visitor experiences, and contribute to maintaining park standards.

## Volunteer Programs

The Kitsap County Parks Department supports a variety of volunteer programs designed to engage the community in maintaining and improving parks, trails, and natural areas. Activities typically performed by these volunteers includes:

1. **Adopt-A-Park/Trail Program:** This program encourages local community groups, businesses, and individuals to take an active role in the maintenance and enhancement of specific parks or sections of parks. Participants commit to regular clean-ups, minor repairs, and other improvement projects.

These volunteer programs not only contribute to park maintenance and improvements but also foster a deeper sense of community ownership and responsibility.

They provide residents with opportunities to engage with their local environment, develop new skills, and give back to their communities. However, to ensure their long-term success, these programs require dedicated



staffing and structured oversight. By addressing the challenges of volunteer management while leveraging the benefits of community engagement, the Kitsap County Parks Department can continue to maximize the impact of volunteer efforts while maintaining high standards of safety, sustainability, and functionality. Implementing comprehensive volunteer management practices, such as those recommended by the Urban Institute, including regular supervision, clear policies, and volunteer recognition, can enhance volunteer retention and program effectiveness. Additionally, fostering strong partnerships

with community organizations, as highlighted in the Urban Institute's *"Partnerships for Parks"* report, can further support and strengthen volunteer initiatives.

## Maintenance & Management Contracts

Due to limited staff capacity, the Parks Department contracts with other organizations to maintain and manage some park facilities. These contracts are shown in Table 2-16.

**Table 2-16: Kitsap County Parks Maintenance & Management Contracts**

Organization	Location		Contract Type		
	Park	Facility	Operations & Management	Facility Maintenance	Programming*
Rolling Hills Golf Course, LLC	Rolling Hills Golf Course	Rolling Hills Golf Course	X	X	X
LAC Golf Company, LLC	Village Greens Golf Course	Village Greens Golf Course	X	X	X
Kitsap Fair & Stampede Association	Fairgrounds & Events Center	Thunderbird Arena	X	X	X
Silver Spurs Club	Fairgrounds & Events Center	Boand Arena	X	X	X
West Sound Disc Golf Association	Gordon Park	Disc Golf Course	X	X	X
Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance	Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park	Mountain Bike Ride Park	X	X	X
Central Kitsap School District	Fairgrounds & Events Center	Lobe 2 & 3 Ballfields, Tennis Courts	X	X	X
Central Kitsap School District	Ridgetop #1 Property	Ballfield	X	X	
Central Kitsap School District	Ridgetop #2 Property	Ballfield	X	X	
Kitsap Fair & Stampede Association	Fairgrounds & Events Center	Kitsap Fair & Stampede Event	X	X	X
U.S. Lighthouse Society	Point No Point Park	Manage Vacation Rental Units	X	X	
REally Property Management	Various	Residential Houses	X		

\*May include hosting events, lessons, classes





# Public Involvement



Point No Point Park





Banner Forest Heritage Park



Howe Farm Park

## Introduction

The 2024 Kitsap County Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan Update is designed to guide the enhancement and management of the County's park and recreation services, ensuring eligibility for state outdoor recreation funding, while reinforcing an evolving aspirational vision for the future. Central to the success of this plan is robust public involvement, which is critical in shaping a parks system that reflects the community's desired quality of life. Through various engagement methods, residents and park users, including stakeholders and policy makers, were encouraged to share their ideas, goals, and aspirations for the parks system, ensuring it meets their needs and enhances their daily lives. The development and implementation of an effective parks system is grounded in active listening to the community's needs and suggestions. Recognizing that public engagement significantly influences decision-making, multiple opportunities were provided for Kitsap County's citizens and visitors to contribute to the planning process. This inclusive approach ensured diverse input, fostering a sense of ownership and community support.

The engagement strategy used to develop this plan was intentionally designed as a hybrid approach to maximize involvement and ensure broad participation. While many meetings and public events were conducted in person, some stakeholder interviews and engagement sessions

were held virtually as a deliberate effort to enhance efficiency and accommodate participants' schedules. This combination of in-person and virtual engagement ensured flexibility while maintaining a high level of community and stakeholder involvement.

## Engagement Goals

1. **Validate Public Sentiment from Previous Surveys:** This plan builds on previous surveys and informal public communication channels to gather the broadest range of community input. By reviewing past and ongoing planning efforts, including the goals from the previous parks plan, relevant data should be incorporated to understand the community's desired quality of life.
2. **Ensure Equitable Survey Distribution:** Surveys were conducted to capture diverse community needs and avoid demographic biases. A GIS-based tool was used to analyze the geographical distribution of responses, ensuring equitable representation across all neighborhoods in Kitsap County.
3. **Multiple Engagement Opportunities:** Various participation methods were deployed, including online and virtual surveys, paper surveys at key locations, and multiple engagement events. This approach catered to residents with different technological access and preferences, ensuring broad inclusivity.



4. **Action-Oriented Feedback:** An online map-based tool was implemented to allow residents to provide site-specific suggestions and actively participate in the design of their parks. This inclusive framework aimed to capture genuine ideas and concepts from the public, ensuring participant demographics reflected Kitsap County's community profile.

## Public Engagement Plan Overview

A diverse range of virtual and in-person events were scheduled to allow Kitsap County community members to contribute to the plan's development, including:

- Public Surveys
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Targeted Questionnaires, e.g., Youth Survey
- Online Mapping Tools
- Community Workshops
- Attendance at county board meetings

## Engagement Marketing

The County's engagement marketing plan centered on various virtual techniques, including online surveys for needs assessment, project visioning, and capital projects prioritization. All marketing materials and surveys were translated into multiple languages to ensure accessibility. A dedicated project webpage was created on Kitsap County's website, providing updates and links to engagement surveys, supplemented by social media boosts for broader outreach.

## Project Timeline & Engagement History

#1	Site Inventories & Assessments*	May-July 2023
#2	Staff Interviews*	June 29 <sup>th</sup> -July 2 <sup>nd</sup> 2023
#3	Needs & Assessment Survey*	July 6 <sup>th</sup> -Aug 30 <sup>th</sup> 2023
#4	Parks Advisory Board*	July 19 <sup>th</sup> 2023
#5	Kitsap County Commissioner Interviews*	July-Aug 2023
#6	Park Advisory Board Interview*	Sept 20 <sup>th</sup> 2023
#7	Stakeholder Interviews*	Sept-Oct 2023
#8	Project Visioning Survey*	Sept-Oct 2023
#9	Open House Events*	Nov 2023
#10	Capital Projects and Priorities Survey*	March 2024
#11	Draft PROS Plan*	August 2024 (Version 1), October 2024 (Version 2), and January 2025 (Version 3)
#12	Final Plan & Approvals**	Mid-2025

\* Completed.

\*\* To be completed.

*Imagine a place where sprawling green fields meet vibrant playgrounds, where serene walking trails wind through lush forests, and where community events bring neighbors together in joyful celebration. This is the essence of our parks and recreational spaces, the heart and soul of Kitsap County.*

*We believe that every corner of our county deserves to be embraced by nature's beauty, and that's why we have developed the Parks and Recreation Open Space Plan, lovingly known as the PROS Plan. This visionary blueprint will shape the future of our parks and guide us toward creating an even more enriching environment for you, your family, and future generations to come.*

*But what exactly is a PROS Plan, you may ask? It's a comprehensive strategy that outlines our goals, priorities, and actions to enhance and preserve our parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces. It's a roadmap that reflects the aspirations and dreams of our community, bringing together the collective voice of our constituents to craft a future we can all be proud of. This strategic plan is renewed/updated every 6 years to keep us eligible for State grants and, more importantly, to remain relevant, aligned with, and evolving in step with our growing community.*

*The PROS Plan is not just a document; it's a testament to our commitment to fostering healthier, happier, and more vibrant communities. It encompasses extensive research, thoughtful community engagement, and expert insights from planners, environmentalists, and recreation enthusiasts. Through this collaborative effort, we have identified key areas of focus and established a clear vision to guide our decisions.*

*With the PROS Plan, we aim to improve accessibility and inclusivity, ensuring that our parks are welcoming spaces for everyone. We will create new recreational opportunities, such as bike trails, picnic areas, and sports facilities, to cater to a wide range of interests. Our plan also prioritizes the preservation and restoration of our natural habitats, protecting the diverse ecosystems that make Kitsap County so unique.*

*But the success of the PROS Plan relies on your involvement. Your voice matters, and we want you to be an integral part of shaping the future of our parks and open spaces. Through community meetings, surveys, and public forums, we invite you to share your ideas, concerns, and aspirations. Together, we can build a future where our parks are thriving, where families make cherished memories, and where nature flourishes.*

**- Kitsap County Engagement Statement**

Point No Point Park



# Stakeholder Interview Summaries

The development of Kitsap County's Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan Update was informed by extensive engagement with a wide array of stakeholders. Table 3-1 provides a comprehensive list of groups invited to participate, though a few chose not to engage in the process. Key stakeholders, including the Board of County Commissioners, conservation groups, recreation providers, and school district representatives, offered valuable perspectives on their priorities, challenges, and aspirations for the county's parks and recreation system. These insights underscored the shared importance of enhancing infrastructure, fostering strategic partnerships, and securing sustainable funding to meet the evolving needs of Kitsap's growing population and its diverse communities.

The Board of County Commissioners emphasized the Parks Department's central role in improving Kitsap's quality of life through safety, community health, and environmental stewardship. They highlighted the unique governance structure of the County and its emphasis on comprehensive community planning, which places significant responsibility on the Parks Department to align with broader County objectives. The Commissioners noted that to effectively fulfill its mission, the department would require increased funding and clear performance metrics within the PROS Plan to track progress over the next six to ten years. Through community feedback, they acknowledged recurring concerns about insufficient funding and maintenance needs, challenges further complicated by budget constraints and a rapidly growing population.

Table 3-1: Stakeholder Outreach Matrix		
Category	Organization Name	Type
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board of County Commissioners</li> <li>Parks Advisory Board</li> <li>Parks Department Staff</li> </ul>	Individual Interviews Group Invites
School Districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>North Kitsap School District</li> <li>Central Kitsap School District</li> <li>South Kitsap School District</li> </ul>	Group Invite
Environmental Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kitsap Environmental Coalition</li> <li>Great Peninsula Conservancy</li> <li>Stillwaters Environmental Center</li> </ul>	Group Invite
Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alliance Soccer Club</li> <li>Tracyton Soccer Club</li> <li>Tracyton Fastpitch Association</li> <li>South Kitsap Soccer Club</li> <li>North Kitsap Little League</li> <li>South Kitsap Little League</li> <li>South Kitsap Girls Softball</li> <li>Kitsap County Rebels</li> <li>Westsound Pickleball</li> <li>North Kitsap Pickleball</li> <li>West Sound Disc Golf Association</li> <li>Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance</li> <li>Kitsap Aircraft Radio Control Society</li> </ul>	Group Invite
Events / Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kitsap Fair &amp; Stampede Association</li> <li>Silver Spurs Club</li> <li>Kitsap Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>Visit Kitsap</li> </ul>	Group Invite
Stewards / Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hansville Greenway</li> <li>North Kitsap Heritage Park</li> <li>Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park</li> <li>Illahee Preserve Heritage Park</li> <li>Banner Forest Heritage Park</li> <li>Newberry Hill Heritage Park</li> <li>Coulter Creek Heritage Park</li> <li>Kingston Parks, Trails, and Open Space</li> </ul>	Separate Meetings
Cultural / Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Port Gamble S'klallam Tribe</li> <li>Suquamish Tribe</li> </ul>	Separate Meetings

The Kitsap County Parks Advisory Board played a critical role in shaping the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan by providing insight and identifying community priorities. The PAB expressed the need for improved park connectivity and better pedestrian and cyclist access to parks. The PAB also identified opportunities to improve safety, particularly on trails, by reducing conflicts between different user groups. PAB members also underscored the need to make sure the PROS Plan and the parks system addresses accessibility and provides opportunities for users of all abilities. The PAB also provided suggestions for engagement during PROS Plan development, such as advertising opportunities for engagement early and in multiple ways to reach a broad audience, providing ample time to participate, and including questions that ask participants to prioritize between multiple interests.

Conservation groups expressed pride in their collaborative efforts with the County, particularly in areas critical to natural resource preservation and community identity. They advocated for continued partnerships with the Parks Department to advance shared environmental goals, emphasizing the importance of Kitsap's natural landscapes as integral to local quality of life and economic and cultural identity. These groups voiced concerns over limited funding and urged strategic prioritization of park resources, particularly in response to development pressures. They also highlighted the potential of environmental education initiatives to foster a stronger stewardship ethic within the community, positioning it as a strategic opportunity for the Parks Department.

Recreation providers underscored the need for increased access to sports fields and well-maintained facilities to meet growing demand from youth leagues and community activities. Soccer clubs highlighted specific challenges, including field availability, maintenance issues, and limited space, often competing with school sports for access. Disc golf advocates emphasized the need for additional courses in underserved areas. Recreation providers also noted that the County's complex land use planning and allocation processes sometimes hindered operations. They called for long-term use agreements and enhanced field maintenance, recognizing that achieving these goals would require coordination across multiple County departments to address broader planning and infrastructure needs.

Disability organizations raised concerns about accessibility within Kitsap's park facilities, emphasizing the importance of inclusive and universally designed spaces. They noted that many park infrastructures needed updates to better serve residents with varying levels of mobility. These groups advocated for close collaboration with the Parks Department to systematically address accessibility challenges, acknowledging the need to navigate regulatory standards and budgetary constraints. Their feedback reinforced the importance of consistent maintenance and proactive upgrades to ensure all residents can fully enjoy park facilities.

School district representatives stressed the importance

of a strong partnership between the Parks Department and local schools, particularly regarding the shared use of sports facilities and community event spaces. Schools were identified as critical community hubs that required support from the Parks Department to meet growing recreational demands. Representatives highlighted infrastructure issues, such as outdated fields and the lack of synthetic turf, which limited youth sports program availability. They emphasized the need for joint planning efforts to align school and park resources, noting that the County's governance and planning context sometimes complicated coordination. By synchronizing their planning initiatives, district representatives believed both entities could maximize the use of community resources and address escalating needs in both education and recreation.

Volunteer stewardship groups involvement helped highlight key challenges and opportunities in supporting volunteer efforts across Kitsap County's park system. They emphasized the need for better support and resources to sustain their contributions. Volunteers play a critical role in maintaining trails, managing erosion, and conducting routine upkeep, but they require more tools, training, and funding to remain effective. Many groups also expressed a desire for formalized agreements with the county to clarify roles, responsibilities, and long-term commitments. To ensure continued volunteer engagement, stewardship groups recommended increased recognition and incentives for long-term participants. They stressed that protecting, maintaining, and preserving natural areas must remain a priority in the county's parks management strategy and that park stewards can help foster this need.

In summary, stakeholders across these diverse sectors voiced a unified call for improved infrastructure, strategic partnerships, and sustainable funding. They emphasized that the County's governance structure and fiscal policies present unique challenges to achieving these goals. Clear metrics within the PROS Plan will be essential for tracking progress and fostering enhanced collaboration between the Parks Department and community organizations. By aligning with the County's broader planning objectives, the Parks Department can advance shared priorities related to quality of life, environmental stewardship, and community health.

## Public Survey #1: Needs & Assessment Summary

A needs assessment survey was first held in the summer of 2023 to understand how residents and visitors currently use Kitsap County's parks facilities and what they think is lacking within the county's parks system. This survey was followed up with an online visioning and mapping workshop in which participants were asked to describe the



community’s needs more specifically and to locate their comments and concerns on a county map.

## Survey Details

To gather public feedback on the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan, an online survey was created in the Alchemer platform, and was available to the public for eight weeks in the summer of 2023, from July 6 to August 30.

The survey was posted on the city’s website, and notification was provided via postings via social media outlets (e.g., Facebook and Instagram) and email. Hard copies of the survey were provided at the park’s office, county locations, and at specific parks. The intent of this online survey was to gain public input on how current facilities are used, and to solicit preferences for park improvements. The survey comprised 17-18 questions. A total of 2,397 people participated in the online survey, and about 70% of respondents answered every question.

## Demographics

### Geographic Location of Respondents

Respondents were asked to describe where they lived. Amongst the participants, 837 indicated that they live in unincorporated Kitsap County, and the rest were divided amongst Bainbridge Island, Bremerton, Port Orchard, and Poulsbo, or visit Kitsap County for recreation but live elsewhere.

Of those who live in unincorporated areas of the county, Kingston and Silverdale had the most survey participants, with 152 and 156, respectively.

Figure 3-1 shows the percentages of respondents overall, and Figure 3-2 shows the percentages of respondents within unincorporated Kitsap County.

### Age of Respondents

The survey also asked about respondents’ age. The majority of respondents were aged 55 to 69 (35.4%). The smallest response rate was from participants between the ages of 12 and 19 (0.6%).

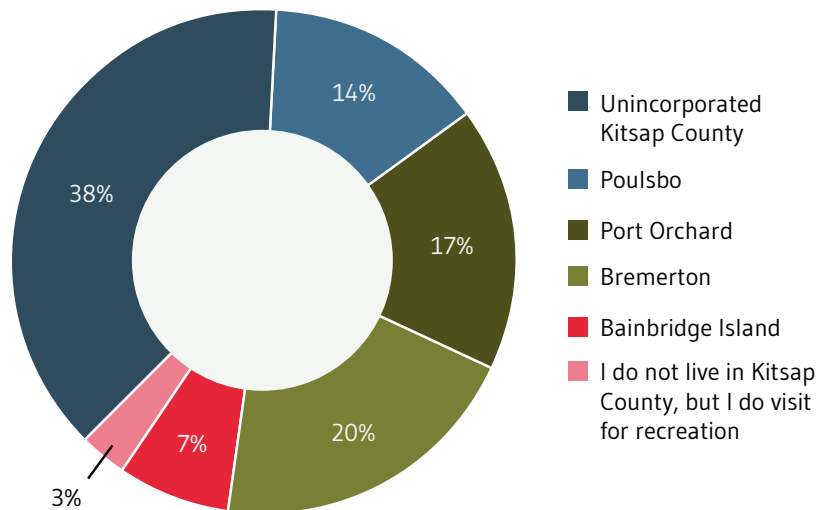


Figure 3-1: Geographic Locations of Survey Respondents Overall

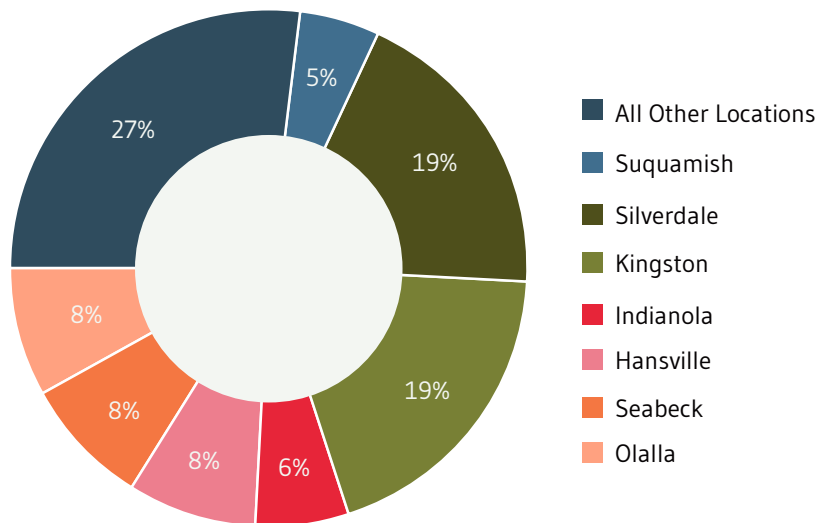


Figure 3-2: Geographic Locations of Survey Respondents Within Unincorporated Kitsap County

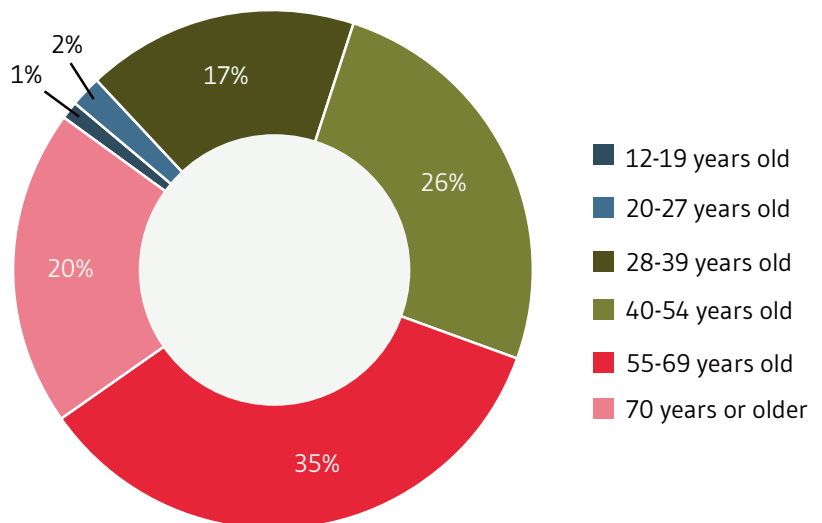
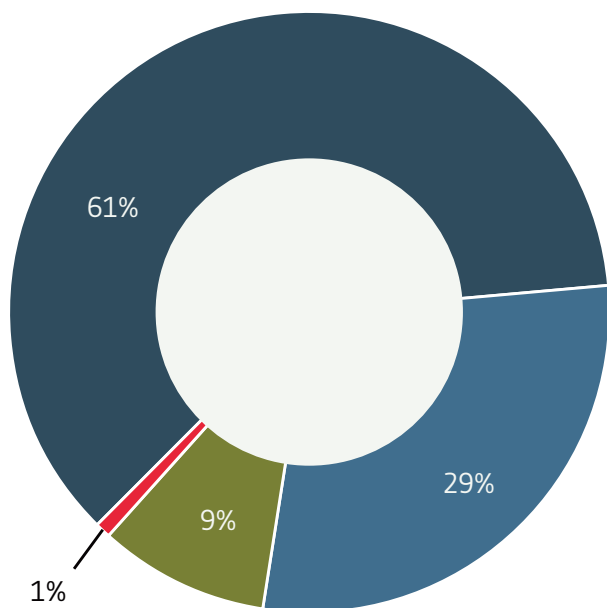
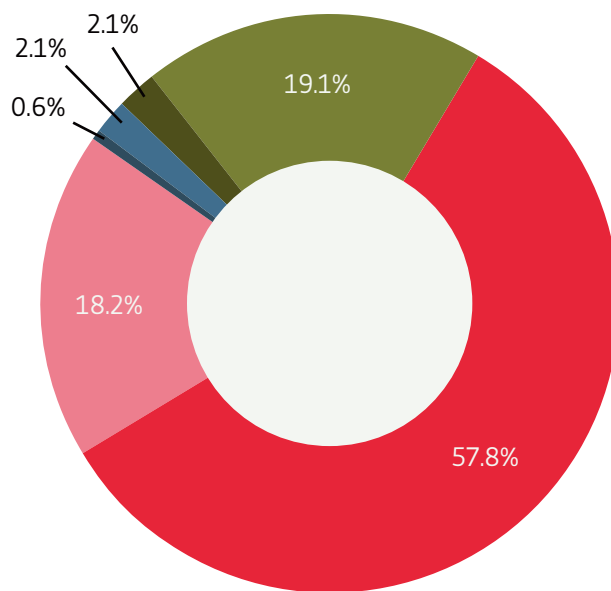


Figure 3-3: Age of Survey Respondents



- 1-2 people
- 3-4 people
- 5-6 people
- 7 or more people

**Figure 3-4: Household Information - Household Size of Survey Respondents**



- I am a student in elementary, middle, or high school
- Prefer not to answer
- None of these apply to me
- I am retired
- I am an adult with no children at home
- I am a parent or guardian with a child/children 18 or younger at home

**Figure 3-5: Household Information - Household Makeup of Survey Respondents**

## Household Information

The majority of survey respondents (61.0%) live in a household with 1 to 2 people. Just over a quarter of respondents (28.7%) live in a household of 3 to 4.



**Chico Salmon Park**

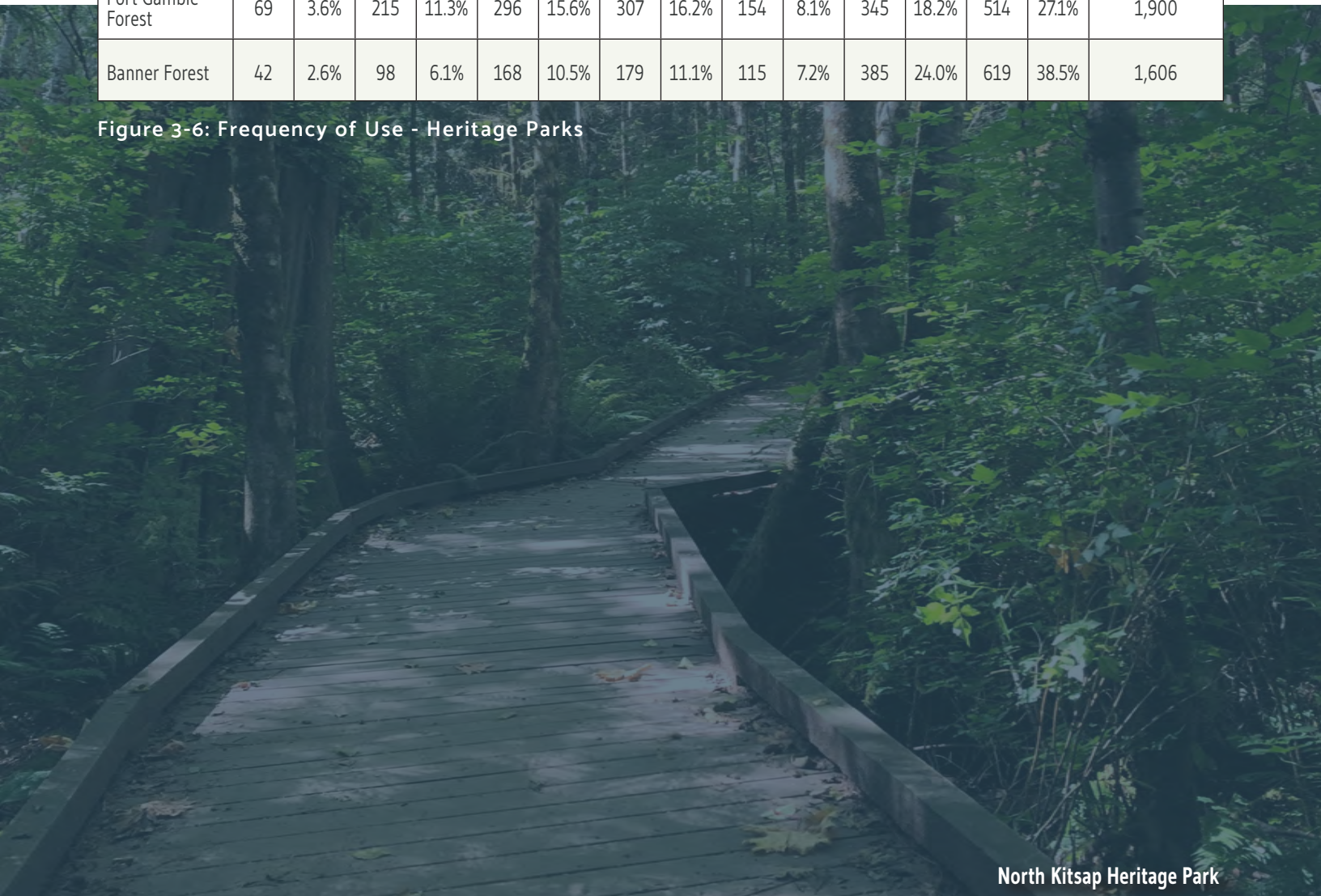


## Frequency of Use - Heritage Parks

Participants were asked to indicate how frequently they used Kitsap County's heritage parks. The figure below indicates that the parks identified are rarely or never used by the majority of respondents, but that they each have visitors at varying levels of regularity.

	Daily		Weekly		Monthly		Semi-Annually		Annually		Rarely		Never		# of Responses
	Count	% Row	Count	% Row	Count	% Row	Count	% Row	Count	% Row	Count	% Row	Count	% Row	
Newberry Hill	54	2.9%	195	10.5%	276	14.9%	271	14.6%	108	5.8%	385	20.8%	565	30.5%	1,854
Coulter Creek	16	0.9%	65	3.6%	110	6.0%	122	6.7%	72	3.9%	389	21.3%	1,052	57.6%	1,826
Illahee Preserve	31	1.7%	107	5.8%	175	9.5%	274	14.8%	186	10.1%	451	24.4%	625	33.8%	1,849
North Kitsap	56	3.0%	236	12.5%	286	15.1%	273	14.4%	120	6.3%	378	19.9%	546	28.8%	1,895
Port Gamble Forest	69	3.6%	215	11.3%	296	15.6%	307	16.2%	154	8.1%	345	18.2%	514	27.1%	1,900
Banner Forest	42	2.6%	98	6.1%	168	10.5%	179	11.1%	115	7.2%	385	24.0%	619	38.5%	1,606

Figure 3-6: Frequency of Use - Heritage Parks



North Kitsap Heritage Park

## Frequency of Use - Waterways and Waterfront Parks

Participants were asked to indicate how frequently they used Kitsap County's waterways and waterfront parks. The figure below (Figure 3-7) indicates that the parks identified are rarely or never used by the majority of respondents, but that they each have visitors at varying levels of regularity.

	Daily		Weekly		Monthly		Semi-Annually		Annually		Rarely		Never		# of Responses
	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	
Buck Lake County Park	16	0.9%	86	4.6%	166	8.9%	231	12.4%	152	8.1%	396	21.2%	820	43.9%	1,867
Anna Smith Park	8	0.4%	20	1.1%	69	3.8%	115	6.3%	72	3.9%	401	21.9%	1,146	62.6%	1,831
Arness Roadside Park	14	0.8%	49	2.7%	101	5.5%	91	4.9%	69	3.8%	326	17.7%	1,189	64.7%	1,839
Horseshoe Lake County Park	7	0.4%	33	1.8%	89	4.8%	170	9.3%	161	8.8%	460	25.0%	917	49.9%	1,837
Indianola Waterfront & Woodland	25	1.3%	57	3.1%	128	6.9%	219	11.8%	169	9.1%	414	22.2%	849	45.6%	1,861
Island Lake County Park	11	0.6%	48	2.6%	129	7.0%	221	11.9%	177	9.6%	474	25.6%	790	42.7%	1,850
Long Lake County Park	13	0.7%	39	2.1%	119	6.5%	192	10.4%	147	8.0%	470	25.5%	864	46.9%	1,844
Norwegian Point Park	17	0.9%	69	3.7%	137	7.4%	157	8.5%	116	6.3%	318	17.2%	1,030	55.9%	1,844
Olalla Beach	20	1.1%	73	4.0%	107	5.8%	154	8.4%	119	6.5%	384	20.9%	981	53.4%	1,838
Old Mill Park	11	0.6%	40	2.2%	119	6.5%	188	10.3%	138	7.5%	383	20.9%	954	52.0%	1,833
Point No Point Lighthouse & Park	20	1.0%	135	7.1%	330	17.3%	531	27.8%	313	16.4%	292	15.3%	290	15.2%	1,911
Salsbury Point County Park	7	0.4%	35	1.9%	136	7.4%	208	11.3%	145	7.9%	364	19.8%	942	51.3%	1,837
Silverdale Waterfront Park	27	1.4%	138	7.3%	348	18.4%	468	24.8%	224	11.9%	332	17.6%	353	18.7%	1,890
Wildcat Lake County Park	10	0.5%	47	2.6%	131	7.1%	266	14.4%	204	11.1%	444	24.1%	740	40.2%	1,842

**Figure 3-7: Frequency of Use - Waterways and Waterfront Parks**



	Daily		Weekly		Monthly		Semi-Annually		Annually		Rarely		Never		# of Responses
	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	
Kitsap Fairgrounds & Events Center	48	2.5%	130	6.7%	191	9.9%	526	27.1%	352	18.2%	401	20.7%	291	15.0%	1,939
South Kitsap Regional Park	39	2.1%	103	5.5%	168	8.9%	188	10.0%	124	6.6%	379	20.1%	887	47.0%	1,888

**Figure 3-8: Frequency of Use - Community Recreation Complexes**

## Frequency of Use - Community Recreation Complexes

Participants were asked to indicate how frequently they used Kitsap County's community recreation complexes. The figure above (Figure 3-8) indicates that the Kitsap Fairgrounds and Events Center are frequented by most respondents on a semi-annual basis, and nearly half the participants (47.5%) have never used the South Kitsap Regional Park.

## Frequency of Use - Specialty Parks

Participants were asked to indicate how frequently they used Kitsap County's specialty parks, which include skate parks and golf courses. The figure (Figure 3-9) below indicates that the majority of respondents have never used any of the facilities.

	Daily		Weekly		Monthly		Semi-Annually		Annually		Rarely		Never		# of Responses
	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	
Silverdale Rotary Gateway Skate Park	15	0.8%	43	2.3%	76	4.0%	90	4.7%	53	2.8%	262	13.8%	1,356	71.6%	1,895
Billie Johnson Kingston Skate Park	11	0.6%	22	1.2%	32	1.7%	45	2.4%	34	1.8%	234	12.4%	1,510	80.0%	1,888
Rolling Hills Golf Course	6	0.3%	21	1.1%	49	2.6%	73	3.8%	83	4.4%	245	12.9%	1,428	75.0%	1,905
Village Greens Golf Course	5	0.3%	16	0.8%	30	1.6%	68	3.6%	61	3.2%	238	12.6%	1,472	77.9%	1,890

**Figure 3-9: Frequency of Use - Specialty Parks**

## Frequency of Use - Legacy Parks

Participants were asked to indicate how frequently they used Kitsap County's legacy parks. The figure below (Figure 3-10) indicates that the majority of respondents have never used any of the facilities.

	Daily		Weekly		Monthly		Semi-Annually		Annually		Rarely		Never		# of Responses
	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	Count	Row %	
Veteran's Memorial Park	15	0.8%	29	1.5%	59	3.1%	129	6.8%	111	5.8%	401	21.1%	1,159	60.9%	1,903
Howe Farm	14	0.7%	42	2.2%	79	4.2%	121	6.4%	98	5.2%	350	18.4%	1,195	62.9%	1,899
Kola Kola Park	13	0.7%	19	1.0%	58	3.1%	75	4.0%	55	2.9%	291	15.4%	1,379	73.0%	1,890

Figure 3-10: Frequency of Use - Legacy Parks



Village Greens Golf Course

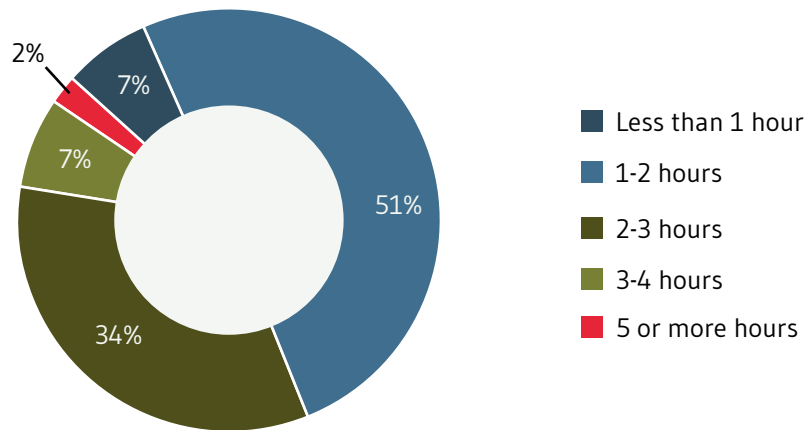


# Duration of Use

About half of the survey respondents said their average park visits lasted 1 to 2 hours (51.0%). The next most popular timeframe was 2 to 3 hours (33.6%). About 7% reported spending an average of 3-4 hours per visit, and about 6.5% said they typically spent less than one hour.

# Time of Year

Respondents were asked to rank their favorite and least favorite seasons to visit Kitsap County’s parks and recreational facilities. The largest number of respondents ranked summer as their favorite season to visit the parks, followed by spring and fall. Most respondents ranked winter as their least favorite season to visit.



# Park Sentiment

## Most Popular Amenities

Survey participants were asked which park amenities they use most frequently. The top three options that were indicated as currently used were nature trails, open space, and natural habitats (1,455 responses); trails or paths for walking, hiking, biking, or running (1,380 responses); and picnic shelters and covered or shaded structures (689 responses).

Figure 3-11: Duration of Park Use by Survey Respondents



Figure 3-12: Preferred Time of Year to Visit by Survey Respondents

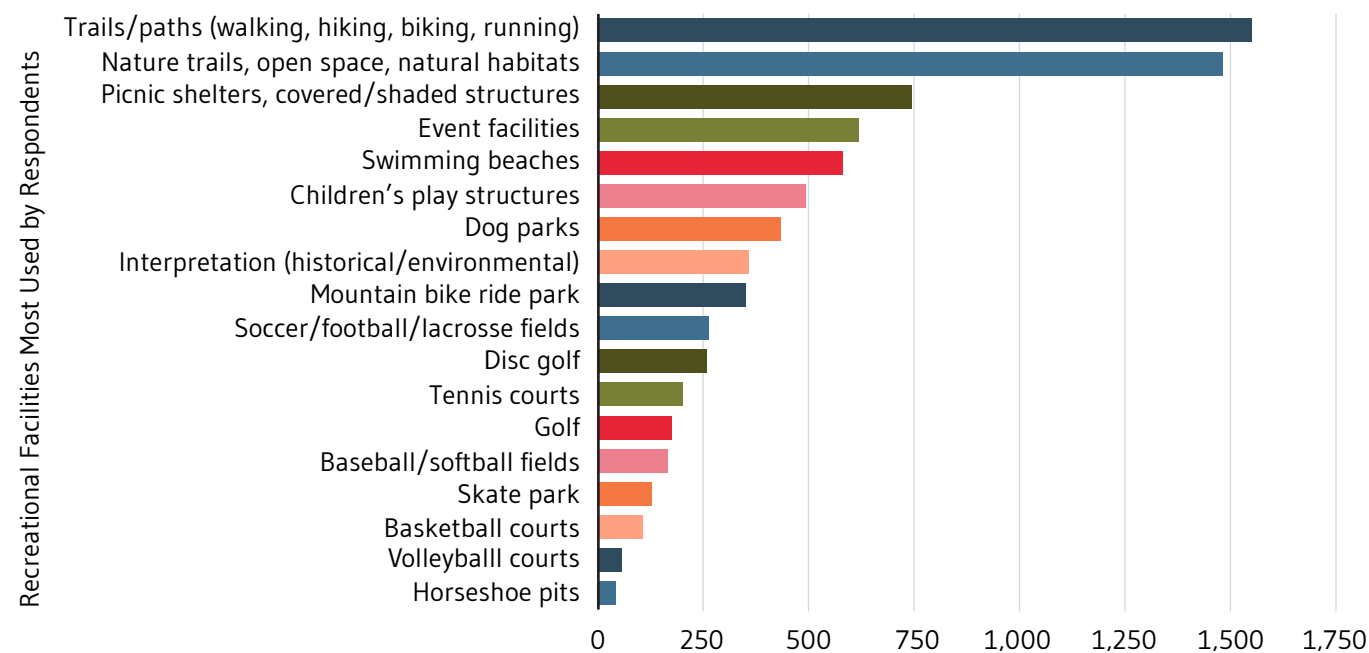


Figure 3-13: Most Popular Amenities for Survey Respondents

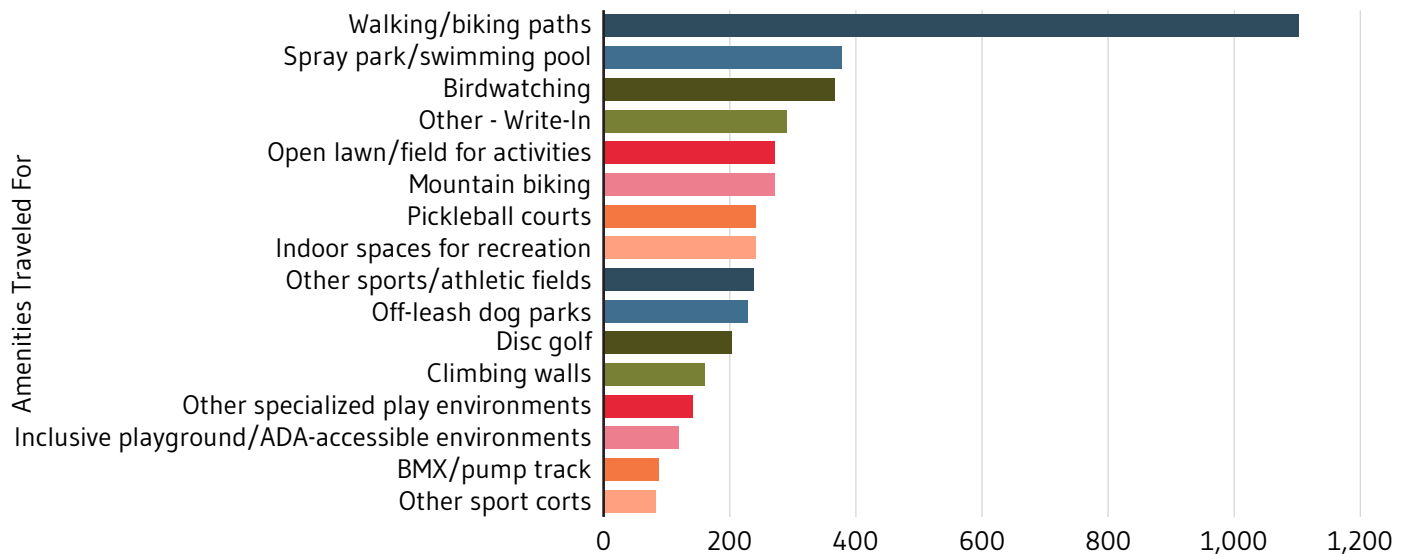


Figure 3-14: Most Used Activities and Facilities outside of Kitsap County by Survey Respondents

## Park Uses outside of Kitsap County

The survey asked what kinds of activities or facility types were most used outside of Kitsap County. The top four responses, as illustrated in Figure 3-14 above, were for walking or biking paths (1,031 responses), birdwatching (351 responses), spray park or swimming pool (340 responses), and other - write in (270 responses).

People provided a wide variety of activities within the write-in option that were not already listed, including

camping, equestrian activities, trails specifically for hiking, open water swimming and other water activities, playgrounds, and skate parks.

## Barriers to Park Use

When asked about the barriers to using the county's parks and trails, the top three responses, as illustrated in Figure 3-15 below, were uncertainty of what parks and recreation programs are available (575 responses), security or safety issues with the parks (534 responses), and a need for restrooms (527 responses).

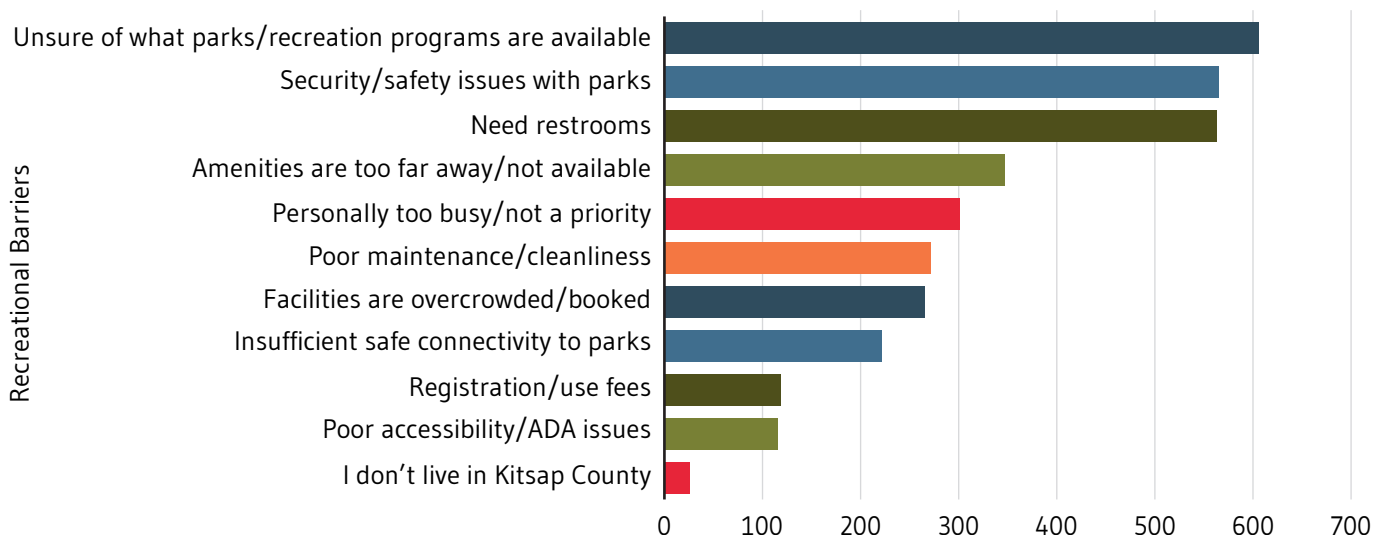


Figure 3-15: Barriers to Park Use by Survey Respondents



## Activities Needed in Kitsap County

Participants were asked to identify the types of programs and activities most needed in Kitsap County. The top responses from the “agree” and “strongly agree” side were for waterfront access (1,197 responses), parking at parks and trailheads (1,173 responses), increased habitat diversity in undeveloped natural areas/open spaces (1,090 responses), and picnic areas/shade structures (1,064 responses).

## Public Survey Results Summary

Based on the survey results and comments received, several key priorities emerged for enhancing Kitsap County's parks. Concerns about park accessibility and safety were frequently mentioned, with recommendations for improved signage, maps, and better trail maintenance. There is a strong desire for the development of more trails and improved connectivity within the trail networks. Specific suggestions included adding trailheads and repairing bridges.

Respondents highlighted the need for additional recreation facilities, such as pickleball courts, BMX tracks, pump tracks, indoor basketball courts, turf fields, and swimming pools. There was also significant support for more youth and adult sports facilities. The preservation of natural habitats and open spaces was emphasized, with concerns about the impact of development on wildlife and the importance of conserving forests.

Safety concerns, particularly related to homeless encampments, were raised, with calls for increased security measures and enforcement within parks to ensure safe experiences for all users. Requests were made for the development of more soccer fields and turf fields, along with the equitable distribution of field access and improvements to existing facilities.

Better community engagement and outreach were suggested, along with improved communication about park programs and offerings. Involving local non-profits and volunteers in park activities was also recommended. There were numerous requests for upgraded and better-maintained restroom facilities, with concerns about cleanliness and the need for improvements to existing bathrooms.

Respondents emphasized the importance of environmental preservation and carbon sequestration, with concerns about sprawl and development. There were calls for setting aside open spaces and conserving forests. Opposition was noted for specific development projects, such as the Raydient rezone and YMCA complex, due to traffic, road safety, and accessibility concerns. The preservation of natural spaces in these areas was also stressed.

Maintaining and improving current parks was supported, with requests for additional facilities such as splash parks. A balance between developed and natural spaces was seen as essential. There were concerns about the maintenance and upkeep of park facilities, highlighting the need for upgrades to existing amenities, particularly bathrooms.

These priorities will guide the strategic planning and implementation efforts to ensure the parks and recreation services in Kitsap County meet the community's needs and expectations.



Anderson Point Park



# Public Survey #2: Project Visioning/ Community Mapping Summary

Following the Needs & Assessment Survey, a project visioning survey was deployed using an online mapping tool called Maptionnaire. Additionally, community workshops were held in each Commissioner District, allowing participants to review the entire park system and suggest improvements. The mapping survey received responses from 223 participants, capturing 0.53% of Kitsap County's population. In total, respondents identified 1,506 locations where they would like to see conservation efforts and specific amenities within the county.

These results were categorized into four themes: Conservation and Landscape Resiliency, Connectivity, Access and Safety, and Recreation Facilities. These four categories were premised on themes that emerged from the initial Needs & Assessment Survey, creating a linear connection across the surveys and aligning priorities throughout the engagement process. In addition to this survey, the public open houses were organized around these same four categories. The feedback gathered from these open houses was incorporated into the overall survey results to ensure a comprehensive representation of community priorities.

## Conservation and Landscape Resiliency

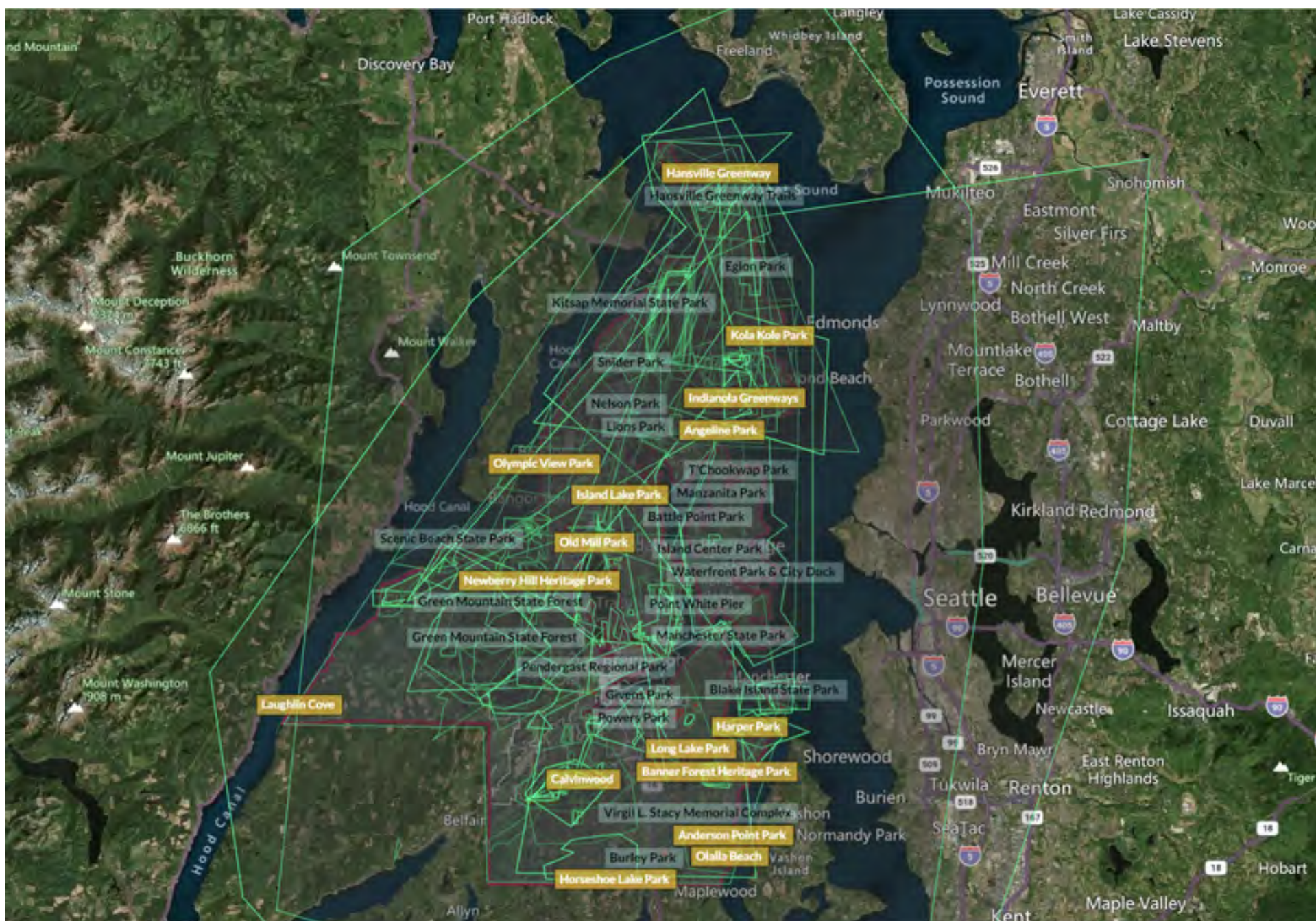
### Conservation

Participants were asked to identify parks, forested areas, or other critical areas to be conserved as open space or buffers to protect habitat and wildlife (Figure 3-16). There were 164 comments, which included protection for tree buffers and animal through-ways near the Anderson Landing Preserve and Silverdale Wetlands; requests for conservation and restoration, specifically at the Illahee Preserve Heritage Park, Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park, and Buck Lake Park; and a suggestion for master gardeners native plant parks or p-patch parks in the Port Orchard/Fernwood/Bethel area.



Guillemot Cove Nature Reserve







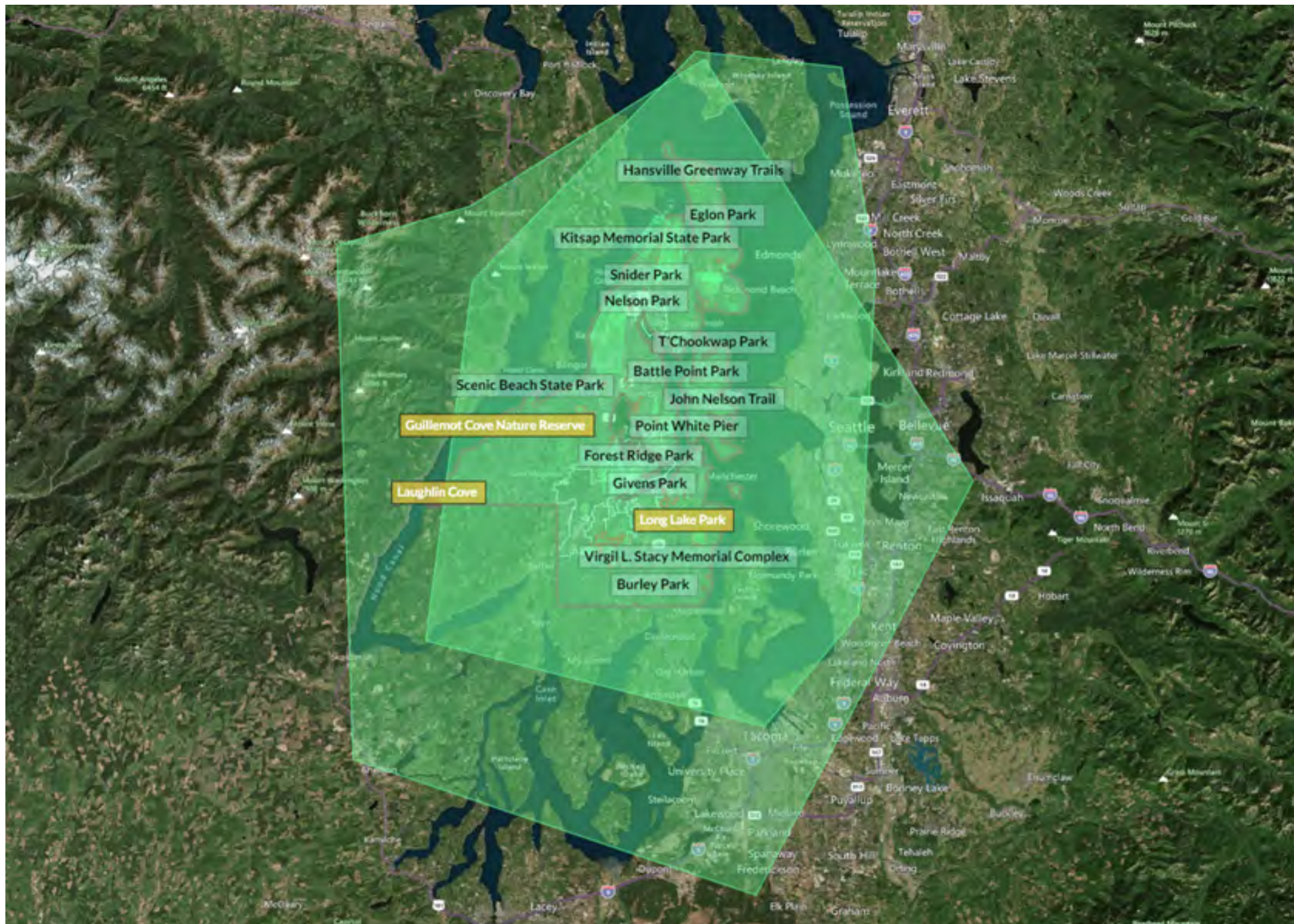


Figure 3-17: Kitsap County Limited Access Result Map (55 total points)



## No Access

Survey participants drew boundaries around areas in Kitsap County where public access should not be allowed (Figure 3-17 on the previous page). These included Kitsap Memorial State Park, North Kitsap Heritage Park, Olympic View Park, Illahee Preserve Heritage Park, View Point Park, Navy Yard Open Space, and Coulter Creek Heritage Park. The 25 comments identified areas for wildlife and wetland protection, and requests for limited access to eroding areas and beaches with military installations.

## Additional Comments

The survey asked participants to describe improvements to the county's park system that could increase landscape and climate change resiliency. Some of the main themes included removal of invasive plant species, support for stewardship groups, funding native plants for restoration, limiting development and impermeable surfaces, increased environmental education for residents and visitors, equitable access to county parks, support for active transportation trails, and balancing wildlife habitat protection with human recreation.

## Trails

Participants were asked to draw suggestions for new trails and improved connectivity on the map (Figure 3-18). Some of the main themes included:

- ♦ Emphasis on accessible trails and park entrances
- ♦ Requests for safe routes to school and neighborhood connectivity
- ♦ Improvements for existing trails (especially connections), signage, and maintenance
- ♦ Concerns for unsafe biking routes, and suggestions for dedicated paths and shared use trails
- ♦ Support for Sound to Olympics route from Kingston to Port Gamble

## Trailheads

The survey asked participants to indicate points on the map that would be suitable for new trailheads for easier access (Figure 3-19). The highest densities of points were found near the following locations:

- ♦ Hansville Greenway
- ♦ Salisbury Point Park
- ♦ Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park
- ♦ North Kitsap Heritage Park
- ♦ Coulter Creek Heritage Park

## Bridges

Survey participants identified existing bridges that could be improved and potential new crossings that could be developed (Figure 3-20). The points were scattered across the county, with denser points near the following locations:

- ♦ Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park
- ♦ Newberry Hill Heritage Park
- ♦ Illahee Preserve Heritage Park
- ♦ Harper Park
- ♦ Coulter Creek Heritage Park

## Access and Safety

### Safety Concerns

Participants were asked at which parks they perceived the most safety concerns (Figure 3-21). Of the 195 points identified, the main themes included:

- ♦ Homeless encampments near Silverdale and Port Orchard
- ♦ A need for bicycle and pedestrian lanes near North Kitsap Heritage Park
- ♦ Sidewalks needed near Kola Kola Park
- ♦ Reductions to speeding traffic near Harper Park

## Kiosks

Thirty-three points were identified across the county for new or updated information kiosks (Figure 3-22). The densest areas were near Bill Blomquist Rotary Park, near Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park, and around Bremerton.

## Safety Improvements

There were many requests for improved parking facilities, safer bicycle routes, reduced vehicle speeds, and removal of vegetation to improve sightlines and visibility for bicyclists and pedestrians (Figure 3-23). Specifically at the Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park, there were suggestions to include no-bike areas to increase pedestrian safety.



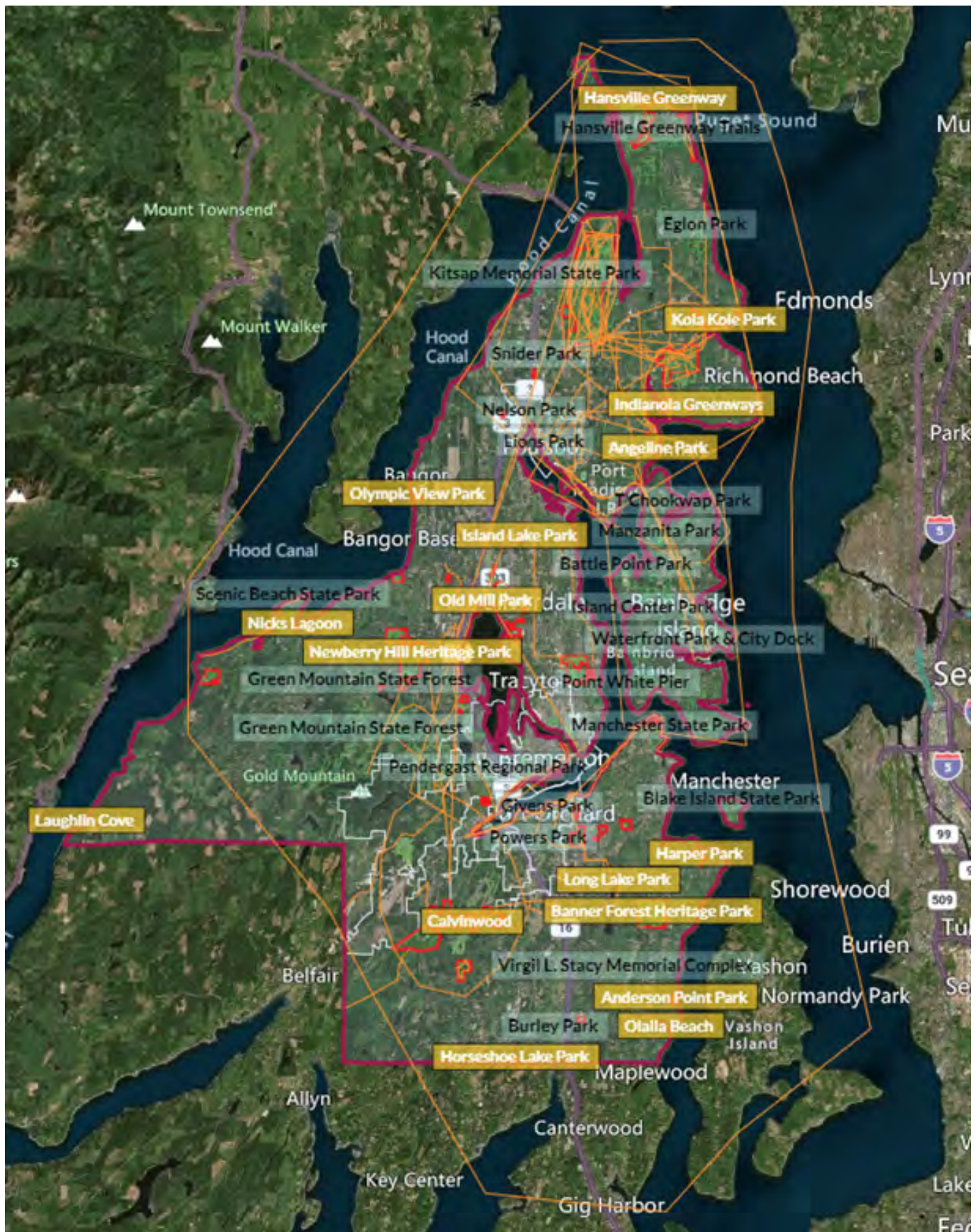


Figure 3-18: Kitsap County Trails Result Map (170 total points)



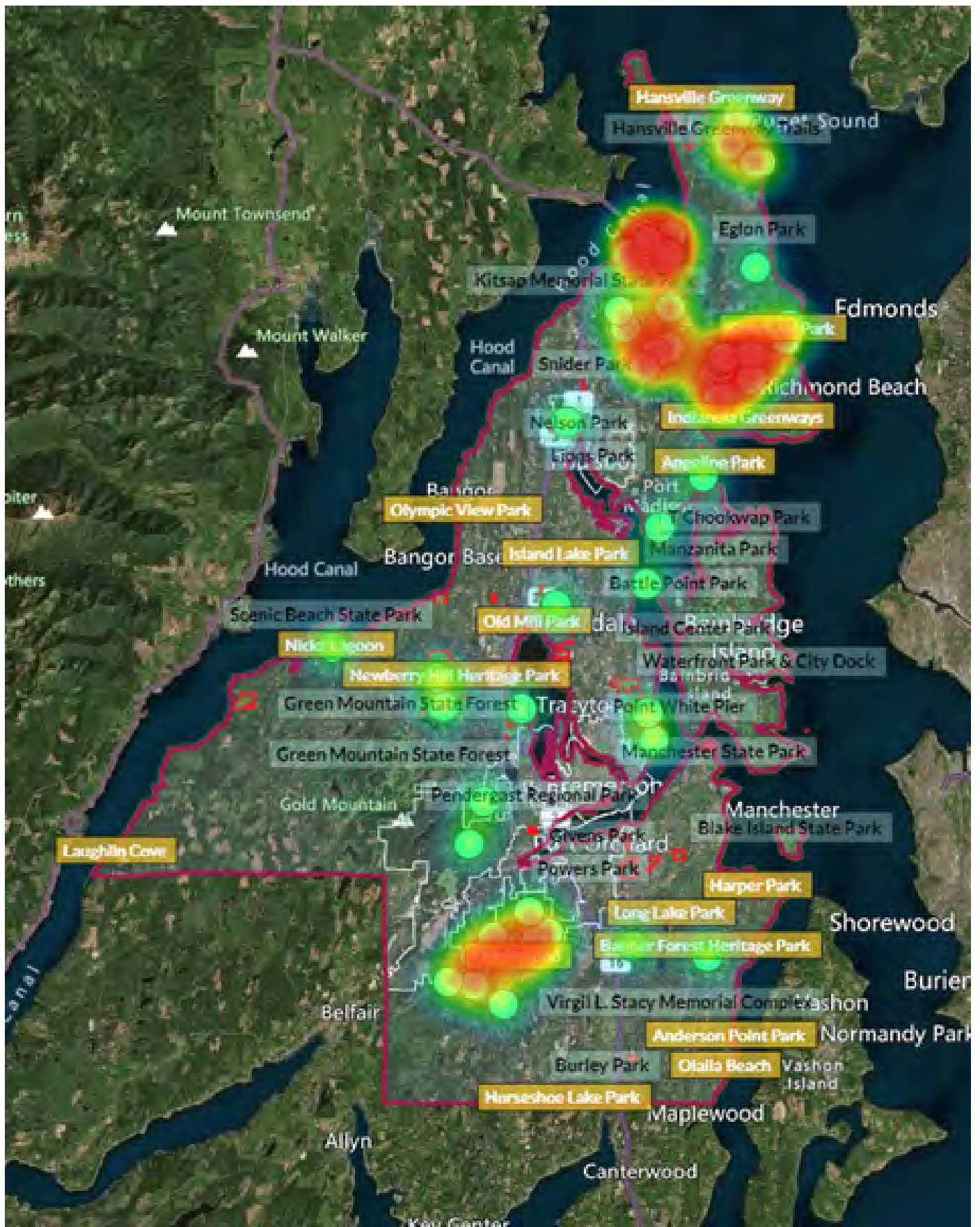


Figure 3-19: Trailheads Result Heat Map (71 total points)

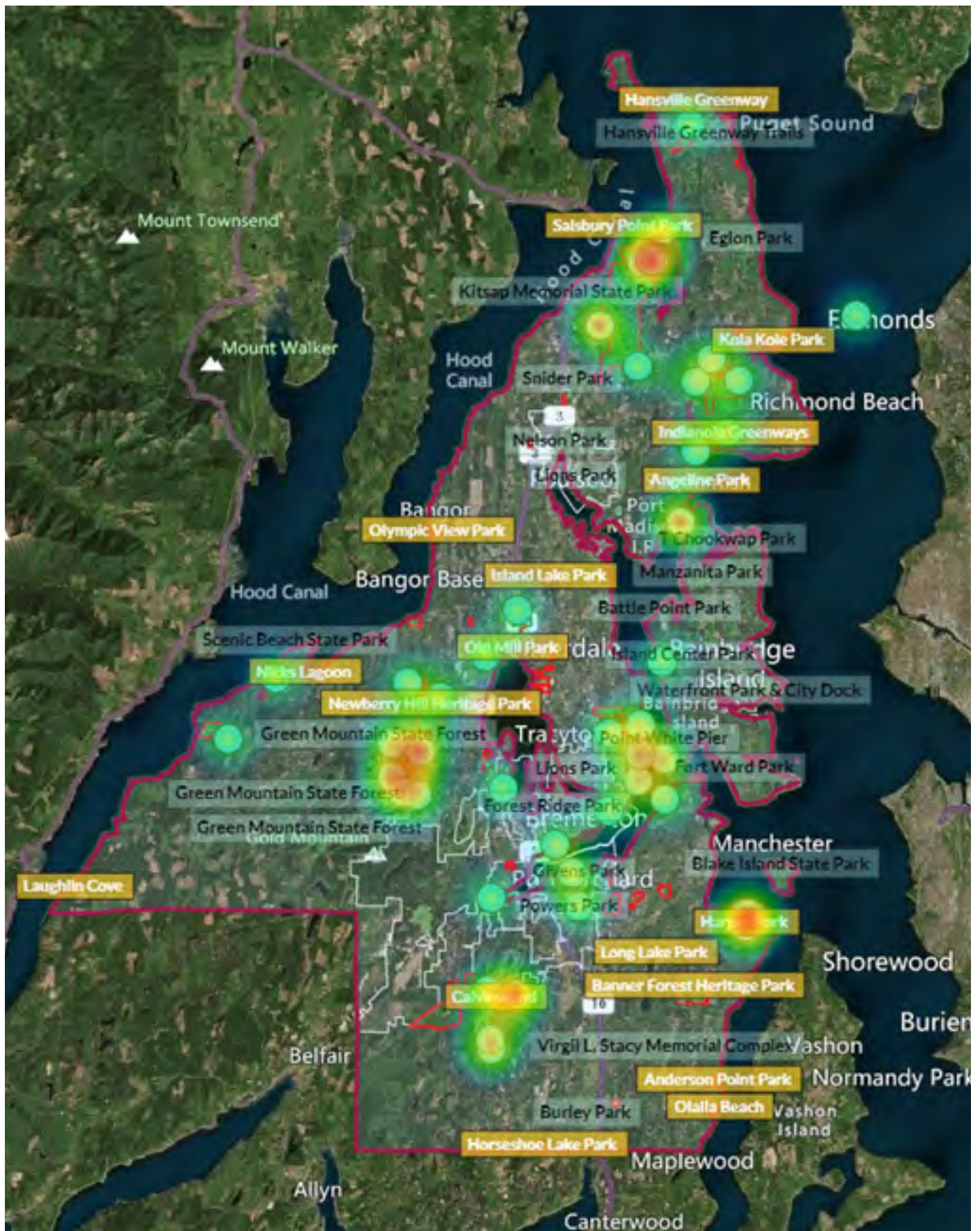


Figure 3-20: Bridges and Crossings Result Heat Map (30 total points)



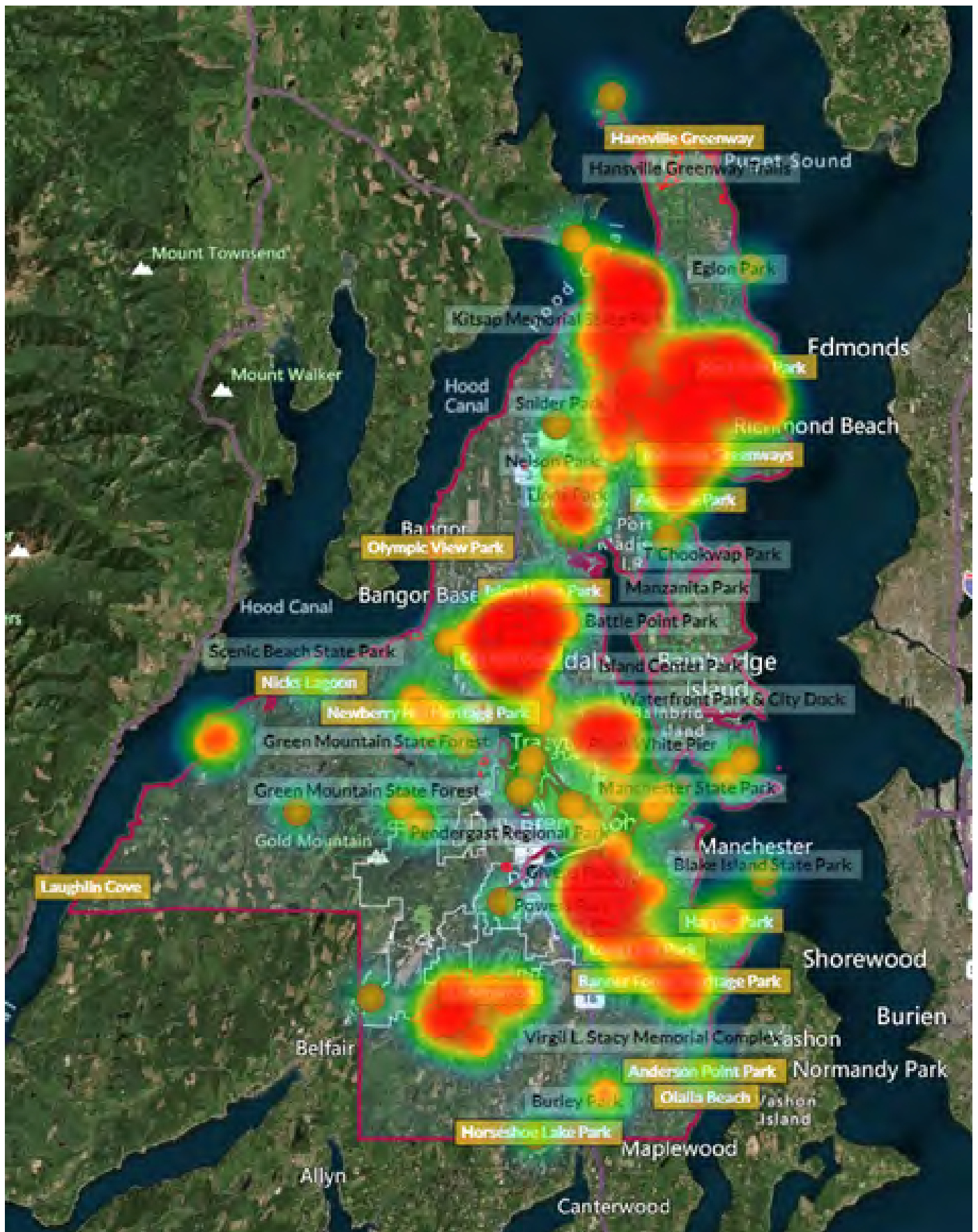


Figure 3-21: Safety Concerns Result Heat Map (195 total points)

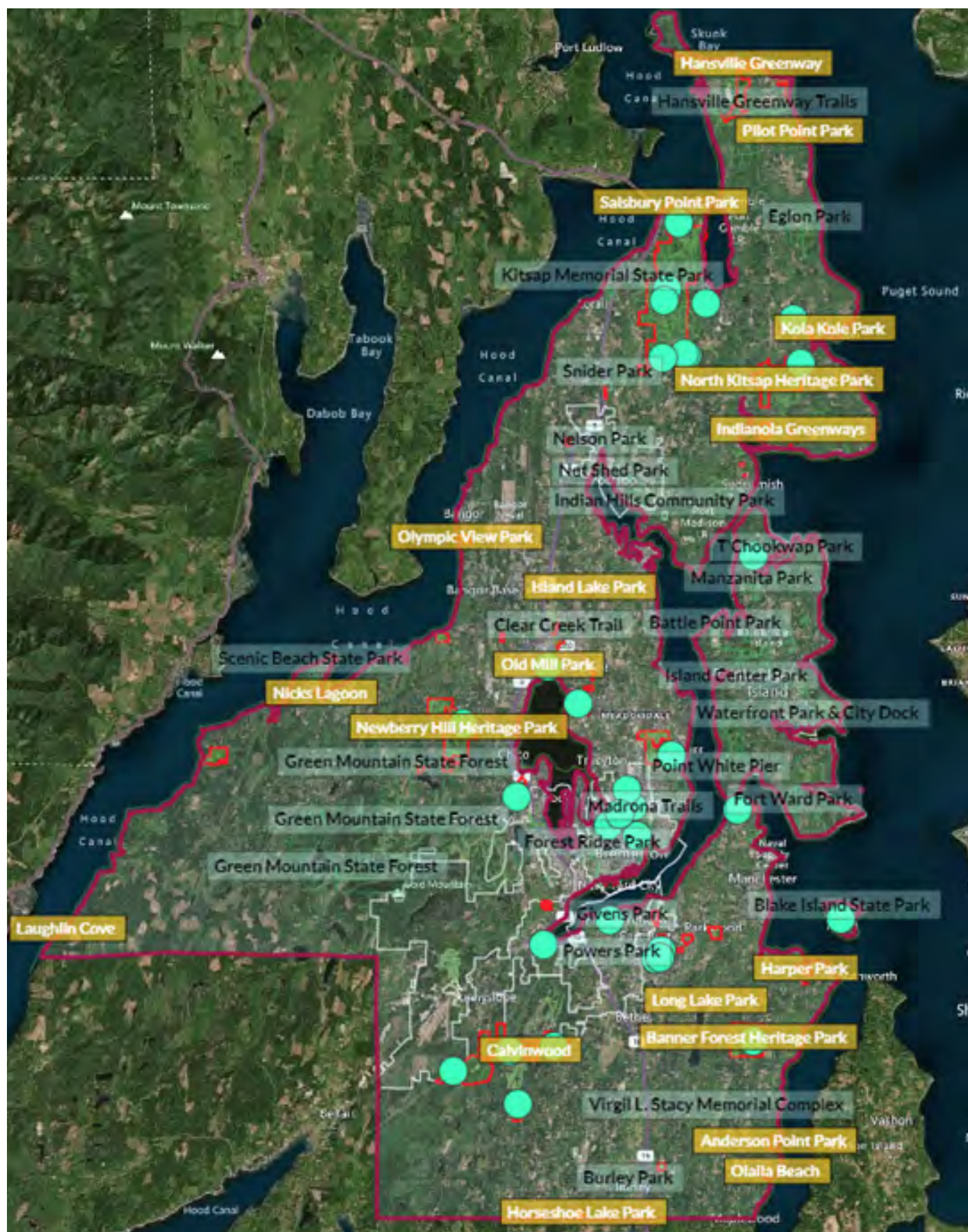


Figure 3-22: Park Information Kiosks Result Heat Map (33 total points)



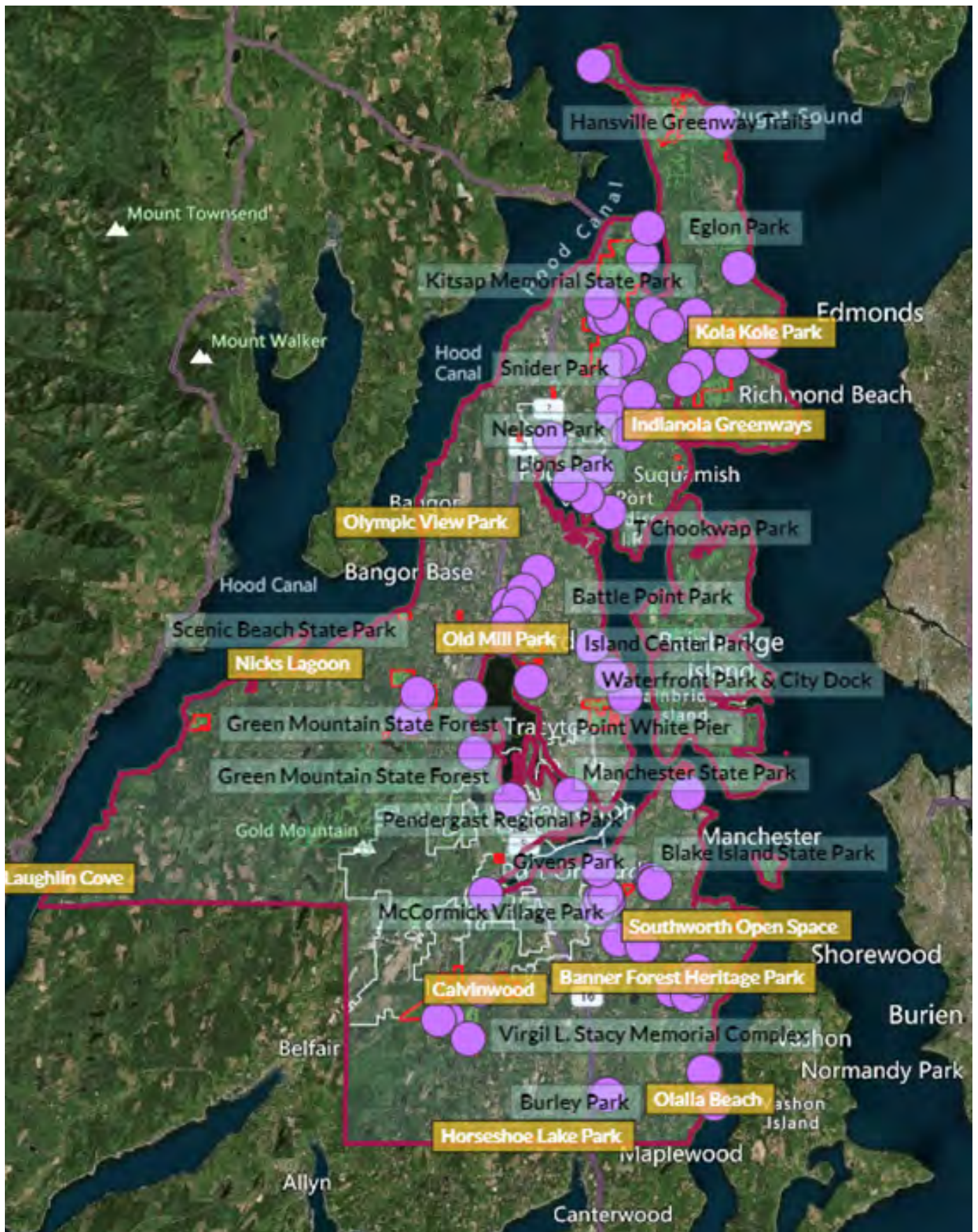


Figure 3-23: Safety Improvements Result Heat Map (78 total points)

## Recreation Facilities

### New Facilities

Survey respondents were able to add locations for where they would like to see new recreational facilities (Figure 3-25 on the following page). The top five responses were for disc golf, pickleball court, soccer field, baseball/softball field, and off-leash dog park (Figure 3-24, right).

- ◆ Disc golf was requested across the county, with the densest spots near the Kitsap Fairgrounds & Events Center and Square Lake Park.
- ◆ Pickleball courts were requested most in the central part of the county, with the densest spots near Bill Blomquist Rotary Park and Old Mill Park.
- ◆ Soccer fields were mostly requested near Veterans Memorial Park, Kingston Nike Site, and Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park.
- ◆ Off-leash dog parks were primarily requested near Bremerton, Kingston, and the Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park.

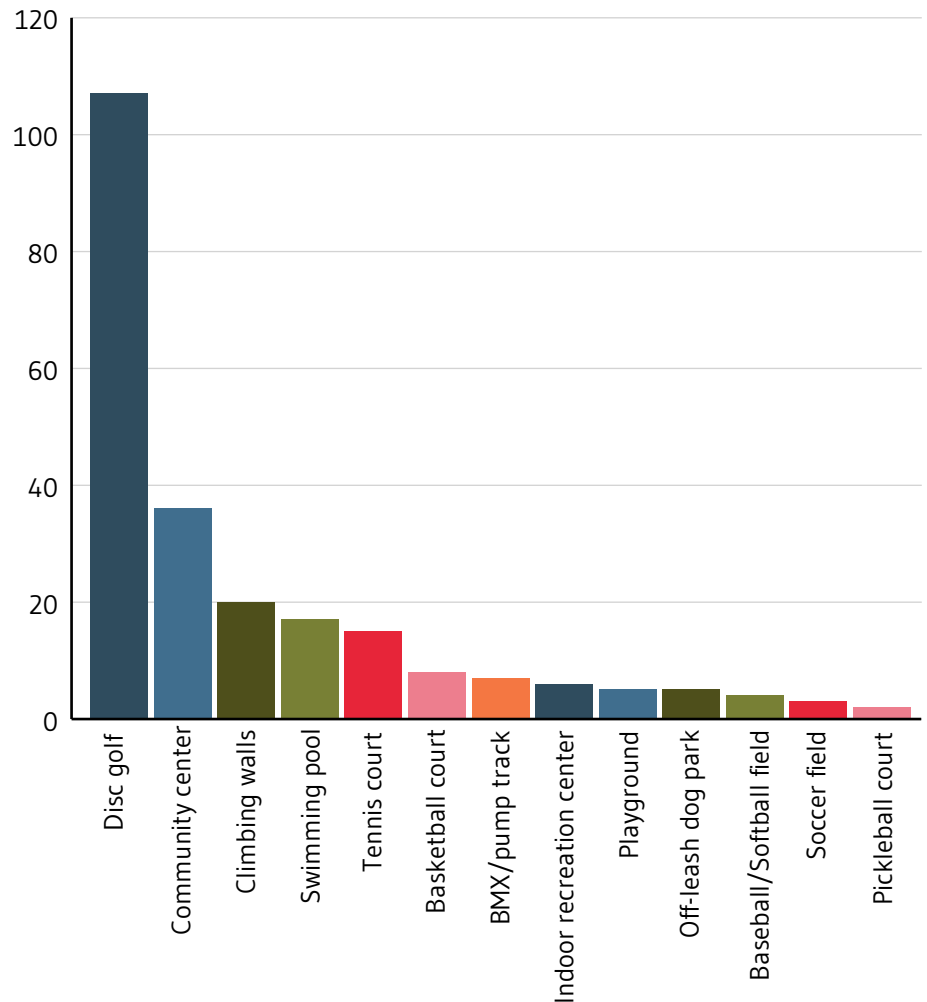


Figure 3-24: Most Requested New Facilities by Survey Respondents

### New Amenities

Participants identified locations where they would like to see restrooms, picnic areas or shade structures, and benches or sitting areas (Figure 3-26).

- ◆ Restroom: 104 points at or near Banner Forest Heritage Park, Coulter Creek Heritage Park, Rolling Hills Golf Course, Kitsap Fairgrounds & Event Center, Illahee Preserve Heritage Park, North Kitsap Heritage Park, Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park, and Kola Kola Park
- ◆ Picnic area or shade structure: 21 points at or near Howe Farm Park, Waterman Point Wetlands, Long Lake Park, and Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park
- ◆ Benches or sitting areas: 17 points at or near Anderson Point Park, Long Lake Park, and Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park

### Picnic and Shade Structures

Participants were able to provide additional details regarding the locations they identified as suitable for picnic and shade structures (Figure 3-27). Common themes included providing picnic tables near parking and beach/water access and having these types of amenities at community and recreational centers.



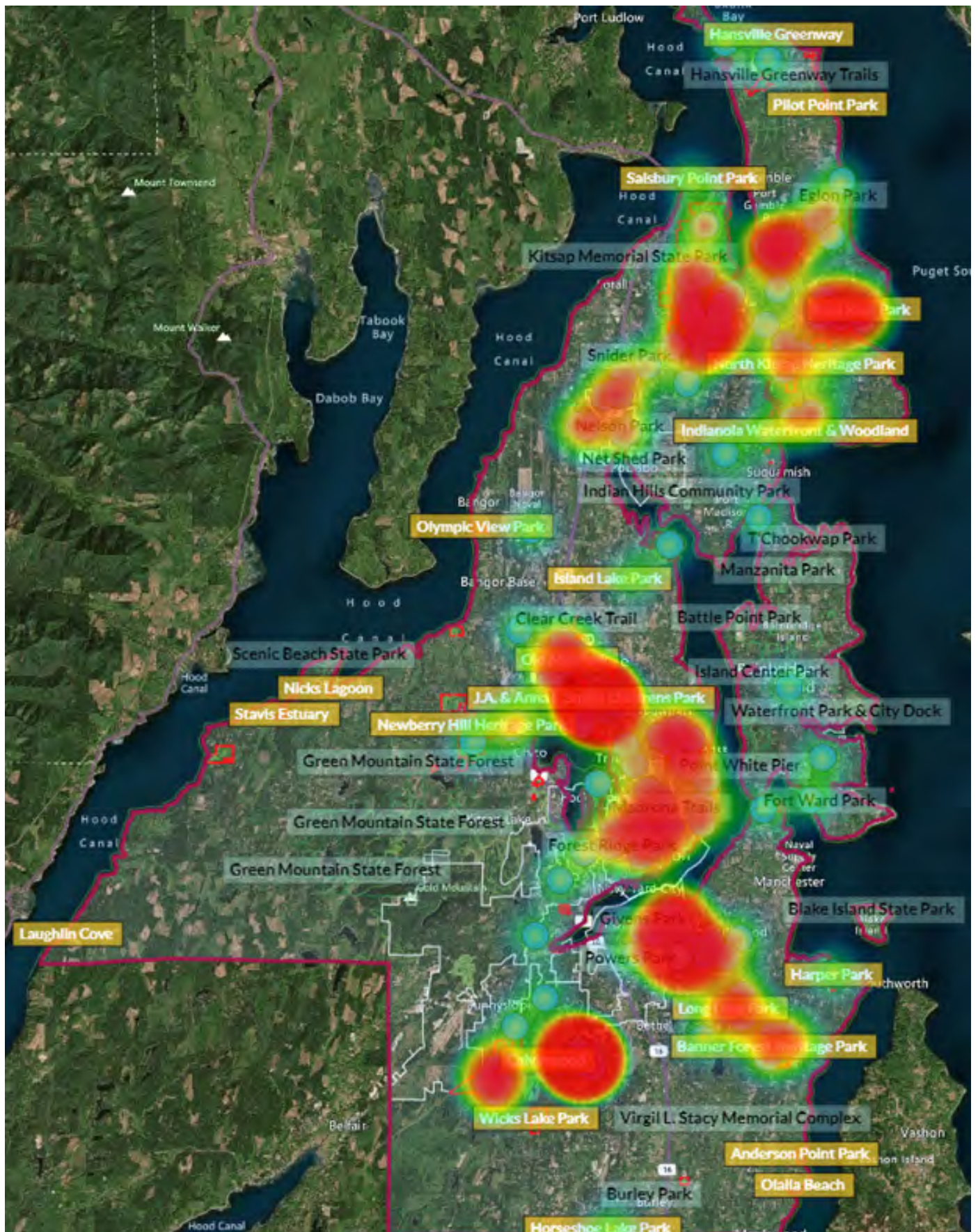


Figure 3-25: New Facilities Result Heat Map (255 total points)

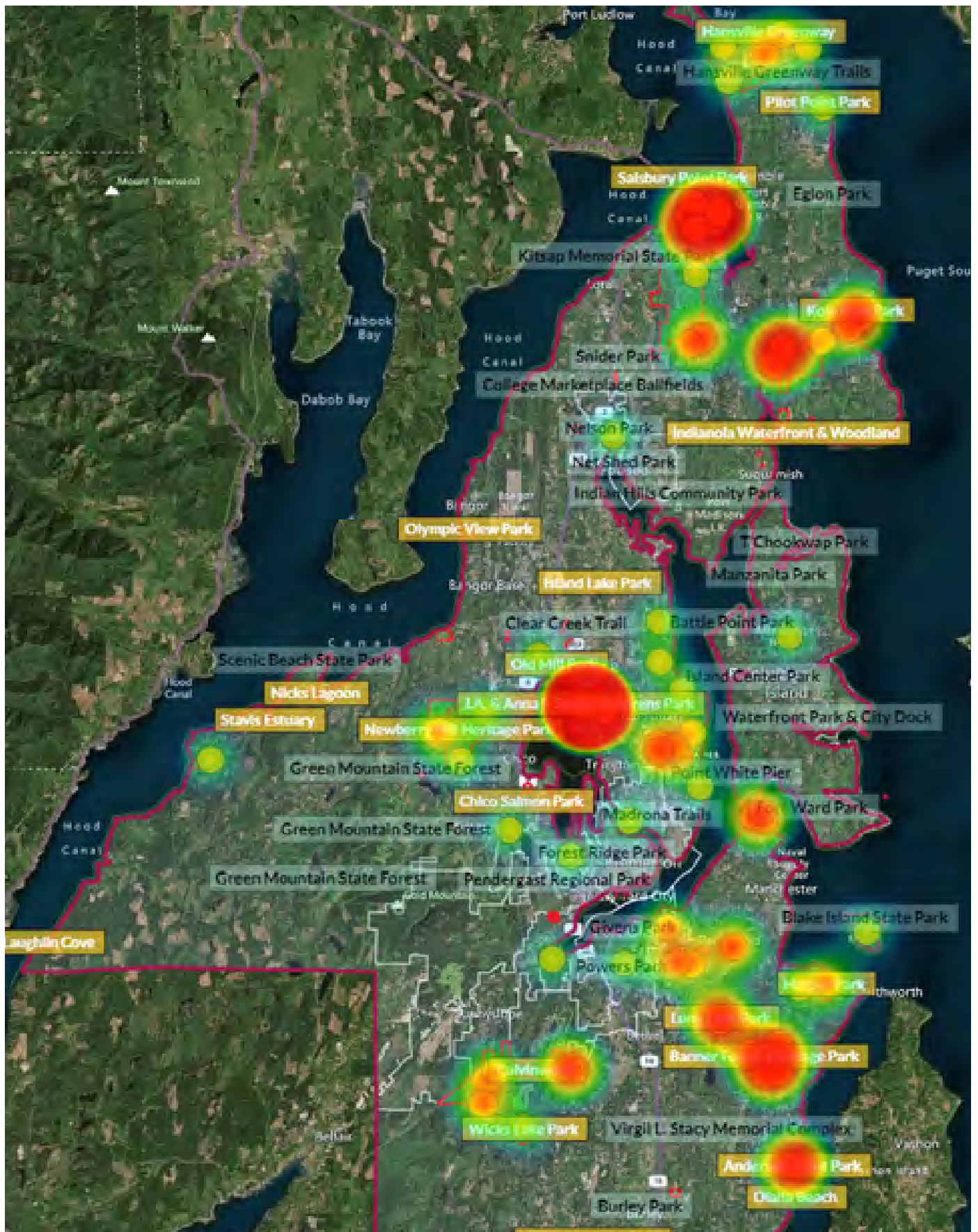


Figure 3-26: New Amenities Result Heat Map (154 total points)



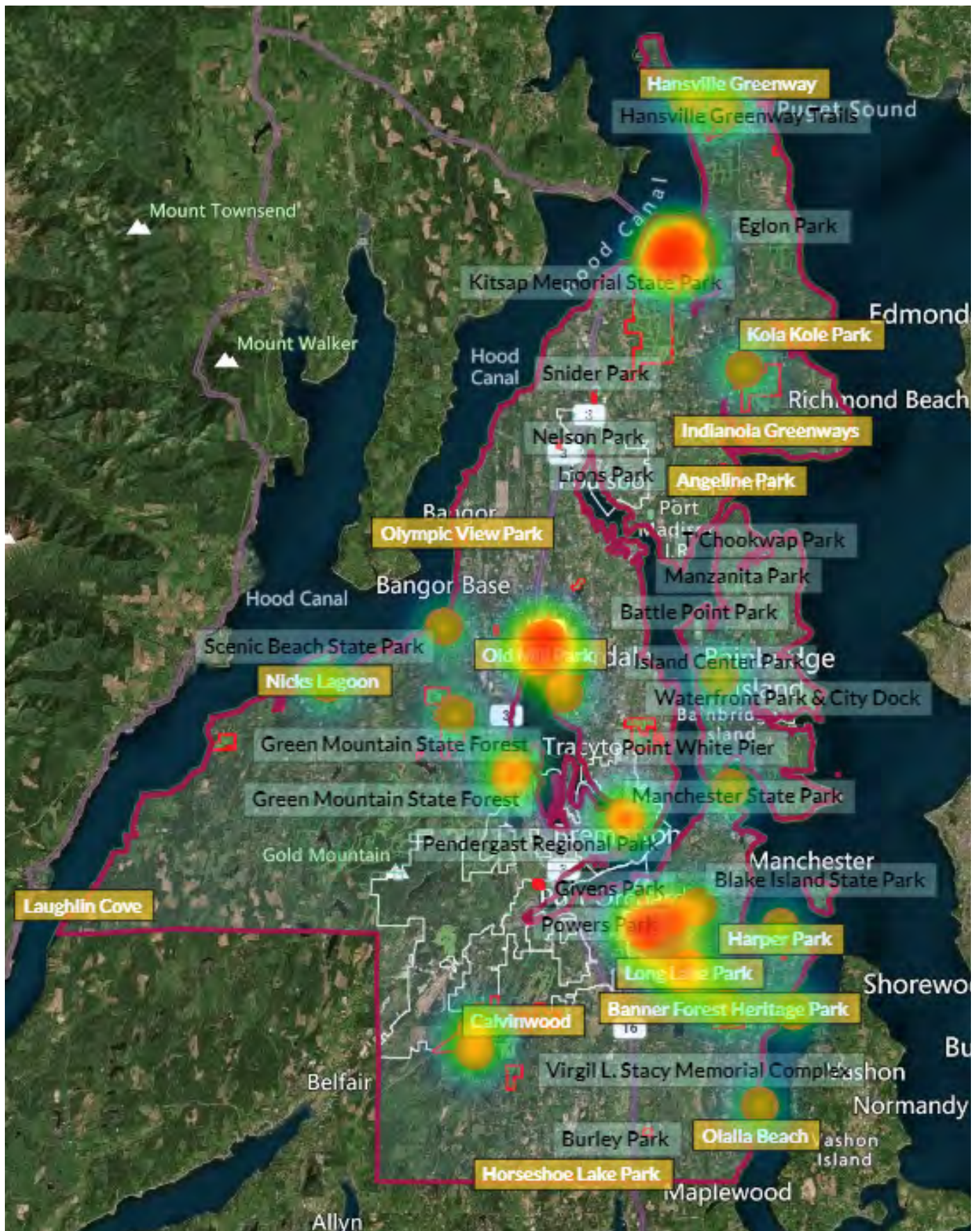


Figure 3-27: Picnic Areas and Shade Structures Heat Map (35 total points)





## Public Survey #3: Capital Projects & Prioritization Summary

The third main touchpoint for public involvement centered around gathering community input to identify key priorities for parks, recreation, and open space development over the next six years. The survey collected a total of 1,238 responses, with 725 complete responses and 513 partial responses. It focused on several key areas, including trails, trailheads, parking lots, access projects, recreation facilities, and new facility development to address a broad spectrum of community needs within the parks system.

### Question 1: Top TEN Trails, Trailheads, Parking Lots, and Access Projects

Respondents were asked to select the top ten projects for development across all three districts. Key projects identified include:

- ♦ Newberry Hill Heritage Park: Adding a parking lot off Seabeck Highway (35.3%).
- ♦ Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park: Adding parking and access, making trails barrier-free and wheelchair-friendly, and improving the Bay View Trailhead off Highway 104.
- ♦ Hansville Greenway: Improving the connection from Buck Lake Park parking lot and restrooms to Hansville Greenway trails.
- ♦ Banner Forest Heritage Park: Enhancing parking and access, and making some trails barrier-free and wheelchair-friendly.
- ♦ Eglon Forest: Developing a trail network and making some trails barrier-free and wheelchair-friendly.

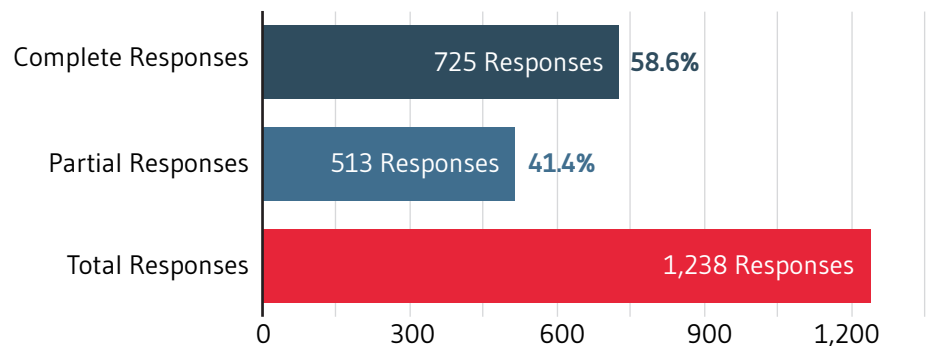


Figure 3-28: Survey Response Statistics

### Key Trail(head)s, Parking, & Access Projects

- #1 Newberry Hill Heritage Park:** Adding a parking lot off Seabeck Highway (35.3%).
- #2 Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park:** Adding parking and access, making trails barrier-free and wheelchair-friendly, and improving the Bay View Trailhead off Highway 104.
- #3 Hansville Greenway:** Improving the connection from Buck Lake Park parking lot and restrooms to Hansville Greenway trails.
- #4 Banner Forest Heritage Park:** Enhancing parking and access, and making some trails barrier-free and wheelchair-friendly.
- #5 Eglon Forest:** Developing a trail network and making some trails barrier-free and wheelchair-friendly.

Figure 3-29: Question #1 - Key Points



## Question 2: Top TEN Recreation Facility Projects (District 1)

Respondents were asked to select the top ten recreation facility projects for development over the next six years. Key projects identified include:

- ♦ Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park: Developing a new park area at the north parking lot, which may include a playground, picnic shelter, benches, and uncovered picnic tables (47.1%).
- ♦ Buck Lake Park: Improving restrooms and adding a picnic shelter.
- ♦ North Kitsap Heritage Park: Adding a picnic area with a picnic shelter, benches, and uncovered picnic tables.
- ♦ Location TBD: Adding ADA-accessible and inclusive playgrounds, pickleball courts, a disc golf course, off-leash dog parks, and athletic fields.
- ♦ Island Lake Park: Adding a playground near the picnic shelter and restrooms, as well as a picnic shelter.
- ♦ Norwegian Point Park: Adding a fishing pier, picnic shelter, and renovating fishing cabins.

Additional comments included suggestions for meditation walks/labyrinths, native plant trails, and field house facilities.

## Question 3: Top TEN Additions to Existing Recreation Facilities (District 3)

Respondents were asked to select the top ten additions to existing recreation facility projects for development over the next six years. Key projects identified include:

- ♦ Newberry Hill Heritage Park: Add restrooms (50.0%).
- ♦ Illahee Preserve Heritage Park: Add restrooms .
- ♦ Wildcat Lake Park: Renovating the park by improving restrooms, replacing the playground, or adding a picnic shelter.
- ♦ Fairgrounds & Event Center: Adding an outdoor open lawn space for festivals and special events.
- ♦ Fairgrounds & Event Center: Developing a new park area that would include amenities such as a new playground, picnic shelter, and restrooms.
- ♦ Chico Salmon Park: Add outdoor classroom shelter.

Additional comments included suggestions for the addition of more restrooms, BMX/pump tracks or covered skateparks, and additional sports fields.

## Key Recreation Facility Projects

- #1 Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park:** *Developing a new park area at the north parking lot, which may include a playground, picnic shelter, benches, and uncovered picnic tables (47.1%).*
- #2 Buck Lake Park:** *Improving restrooms & adding a picnic shelter.*
- #3 Location TBD:** *Adding ADA-accessible and inclusive playgrounds, pickleball courts, a disc golf course, off-leash dog parks, and athletic fields.*

Figure 3-30: Question #2 - Key Points

## Key Addition Projects

- #1 Newberry Hill Heritage Park:** *Adding restrooms (50.0%).*
- #2 Illahee Preserve Heritage Park:** *Adding restrooms.*
- #3 Wildcat Lake Park:** *Renovating the park by improving restrooms, replacing the playground, or adding a picnic shelter.*
- #4 Fairgrounds & Event Center:** *Adding an outdoor open lawn space for festivals and special events.*
- #5 Fairgrounds & Event Center:** *Developing a new park area.*

Figure 3-31: Question #3 - Key Points



South Kitsap Regional Park

## Question 4: Top TEN Improvements to Existing Facilities (District 2)

Respondents were asked to select the top ten improvements to existing facilities to develop over the next six years. Key projects identified include:

- ◆ Banner Forest Heritage Park: Adding restrooms (44.5%).
- ◆ Long Lake Park: Renovating the park to include improved restrooms, replacing playground equipment, and adding a picnic shelter and benches.
- ◆ South Kitsap Regional Park: Improving restrooms near the playground.
- ◆ Anderson Point Park: Adding restrooms and benches.
- ◆ Horseshoe Lake Park: Renovating the park to include improved restrooms, replacing playground equipment, and adding a picnic shelter.
- ◆ Howe Farm Park: Adding pea patches/community gardens and renovating the barn for special events.
- ◆ Coulter Creek Heritage Park: Adding restrooms and renovating Calvinwood cabins and lodge.

Additional suggestions included the development of additional walking trails, BMX/pump tracks, and improvements to existing sports fields and disc golf courses.

## Question 5: Top TEN Safety Improvements

Respondents were asked to select the top ten safety improvements to develop over the next six years. Key projects identified include:

- ◆ Silverdale Waterfront Park: Repairing damage to undercut headwall (39.9%).
- ◆ Silverdale Wetlands: Improving safety measures to reduce crime.
- ◆ Point no Point Park: Adding a handrail to the bluff stairs.
- ◆ Anderson Point Park: Improving trail to beach for walkability and sustainability.
- ◆ Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park: Improving safety measures to reduce crime.
- ◆ Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park: Improving safety measures for multi-use trails and user conflicts.
- ◆ Illahee Preserve Heritage Park: Improve safety measures to reduce crime.

Additional suggestions included the addition of safety lighting and the improvement of trails for better rainy weather sustainability.

## Key Improvement Projects

- #1 Banner Forest Heritage Park:** Adding restrooms (44.5%).
- #2 Long Lake Park:** Renovating the park to include improved restrooms, replacing playground equipment, and adding a picnic shelter and benches.
- #3 South Kitsap Regional Park:** Improving restrooms near the playground.
- #4 Anderson Point Park:** Adding restrooms and benches.
- #5 Horseshoe Lake Park:** Renovating the park to include improved restrooms, replacing playground equipment, and adding a picnic shelter.

Figure 3-32: Question #4 - Key Points

## Key Safety Improvements

- #1 Silverdale Waterfront Park:** Repairing damage to undercut headwall (39.9%).
- #2 Silverdale Wetlands:** Improving safety measures to reduce crime.
- #3 Point no Point Park:** Adding a handrail to the bluff stairs.
- #4 Anderson Point Park:** Improving trail to beach for walkability and sustainability.
- #5 Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park:** Improving safety measures to reduce crime.
- #6 Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park:** Improving safety measures for multi-use trails and user conflicts.

Figure 3-33: Question #5 - Key Points



## Question 6: Top FOUR Conservation and Landscape Resilience Projects

Respondents were asked to select the top four conservation and landscape resilience projects to be prioritized over the next six years. Key projects identified include:

- ♦ Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park: Construct bridge over creek on Springs trail (57.7%).
- ♦ All Parks: Decommission or remove trails that cross wetlands and other critical areas.
- ♦ Indianola Woodlands: Replace bridge over creek near beach.
- ♦ Eglon Forest: Develop natural resource management plan for new park.
- ♦ Coulter Creek: Create wetland and pond management plan including hydrologic analysis, beaver habitat, and recreation impacts analysis.
- ♦ Guillemot Cove: Remove boardwalk and bridge from estuary and relocate trail crossing.

Additional comments included suggestions for the building of raised boardwalks over wetland areas, the addition of dedicated areas for fishing access, and the addition of sound barrier shrubbery and trees along busy roads to combat noise.

## Question 7: Top FOUR Conservation and Landscape Resilience System-Wide Priorities

Respondents were asked to select the top four conservation and landscape resilience system-wide priorities to be focused on over the next six years. Key projects identified include:

- ♦ Acquire new land for natural resource protection and conservation (54.9%).
- ♦ Develop a vegetation management plan, including invasive species management, define priority projects, and implement.
- ♦ Prioritize protection of waterways and wetlands within Parks properties.
- ♦ Develop wildlife conservation plan, define priorities, and implement.
- ♦ Prioritize protection of rare or endangered species and ecosystems within Parks properties.
- ♦ Develop a forest management plan, define priority projects, and implement.

Additional comments included suggestions for the development of a conservation plan for open space and wildlife corridors, as well as the expansion of resources for property and homeowners who live on impact the waterways.

## Key Conservation and Landscape Resilience Projects

- #1 Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park:** Construct bridge over creek on Springs trail (55.7%).
- #2 All Parks:** Decommission or remove trails that cross wetlands and other critical areas.
- #3 Indianola Woodlands:** Replace bridge over creek near beach.
- #4 Eglon Forest:** Develop natural resource management plan for new park.
- #5 Coulter Creek:** Create wetland and pond management plan including hydrologic analysis, beaver habitat, and recreation impacts analysis.

Figure 3-34: Question #6 - Key Points

## Key Conservation and Landscape Resilience System-Wide Priorities

- #1 Acquire new land for natural resource protection and conservation (54.9%).**
- #2 Develop a vegetation management plan, including invasive species management, define priority projects, and implement.**
- #3 Prioritize protection of waterways and wetlands within Parks properties.**
- #4 Develop wildlife conservation plan, define priorities, and implement.**
- #5 Prioritize protection of rare or endangered species and ecosystems.**

Figure 3-35: Question #7 - Key Points

## Question 8: Priorities Exercise - Distribution of \$100 of "Park Bucks"

Respondents were asked to consider how the Kitsap County Parks' CIP and operational budget is limited and often requires choosing to fund specific projects over others. Respondents were told to imagine they had \$100 in "Park Bucks" to spend on future park projects and to indicate how they would distribute the funds. Respondents were encouraged to spend the most money on the areas that were most important to them. These "Park Bucks" were distributed as follows:

- ♦ Trails (\$428).
- ♦ Restrooms (\$386).
- ♦ Open Spaces (\$331).
- ♦ Playgrounds (\$327).
- ♦ Park Access (\$286).
- ♦ Athletic Fields with Lights (\$274).
- ♦ Picnic Shelter (\$277).
- ♦ Sport Courts (\$236).
- ♦ Disc Golf Course (\$219).
- ♦ Recreation Building (\$217).

## Question 9: Funding Methods

Respondents were asked to select all funding options that they were in favor of. The most selected options were as follows.

- ♦ Apply for grants to leverage and increase public dollars for park projects (66.7%).
- ♦ Partner with other public agencies and/or private businesses to operate recreation programs, manage facilities, and make the needed capital investments in County parks to reduce the burden on Kitsap County Parks.
- ♦ Explore alternative funding mechanisms and governance models, such as a Metropolitan Park District, to increase operational budget capacity.
- ♦ Create facilities that attract use, events, and provide revenue-generating opportunities.
- ♦ Use general obligation bonds as a funding tool to pay for capital projects.
- ♦ Divest or lower the number of County Park properties to better focus resources

Additionally, 28.9% of respondents selected "All of the above, use every tool available," and 4.9% of respondents selected "None of the above, operate within existing budgets."

The following tables present the final public voting results and rankings for the proposed capital improvement projects, both across Kitsap County as a whole and within each district. These prioritized projects reflect the community's input and highlight the areas of greatest public interest and support.

## "Park Bucks" Priorities

- #1** Trails (\$428).
- #2** Restrooms (\$386).
- #3** Open Spaces (\$331).
- #4** Playgrounds (\$327).
- #5** Park Access (\$286).
- #6** Athletic Fields with Lights (\$274).
- #7** Picnic Shelter (\$277).
- #8** Sport Courts (\$236).
- #9** Disc Golf Course (\$219).
- #10** Recreation Building (\$217).

Figure 3-36: Question #8 - "Parks Bucks" Priorities

## Top 3 Funding Methods

- #1** Apply for grants to leverage and increase public dollars for park projects (66.7%).
- #2** Partner with other public agencies and/or private businesses to operate recreation programs, manage facilities, and make the needed capital investments in County parks to reduce the burden on Kitsap County Parks.
- #3** Explore alternative funding mechanisms and governance models, such as a Metropolitan Park District, to increase operational budget capacity.

Figure 3-37: Question #9 - Top 3 Funding Methods



**Table 3-2: Top Trails, Trailheads, Parking Lots, and Access Projects across Kitsap County**

Project*	Priority Ranking / Percent Interest
<b>Newberry Hill Heritage Park</b> – Add parking lot off of Seabeck Highway	1 (35.30%)
<b>Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park</b> - Add parking and access	2 (33.10%)
<b>Hansville Greenway</b> - Improve connection from Buck Lake Park parking lot and restrooms to Hansville Greenway trails	3 (31.20%)
<b>Banner Forest Heritage Park</b> - Improve parking and access	4 (29.30%)
<b>Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park</b> - Improve some trails to be barrier-free and wheelchair friendly	5 (27.80%)
<b>Newberry Hill Heritage Park</b> – Improve some trails to be barrier-free and wheelchair friendly	6 (27.80%)
<b>Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park</b> - Improve parking at Bay View Trailhead off of Highway 104	7 (26.90%)
<b>Eglon Forest</b> - Develop trail network in park and improve some trails to be barrier-free and wheelchair friendly	8 (26.20%)
<b>Banner Forest Heritage Park</b> - Improve some trails to be barrier-free and wheelchair friendly	9 (25.70%)
<b>Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park</b> - Add park access at west side of park	10 (25.60%)
<b>Fairgrounds &amp; Event Center</b> - Parking Lot Improvements	11 (25.30%)
<b>Illahee Preserve Heritage Park</b> – Improve some trails to be barrier-free and wheelchair friendly	12 (25.20%)
<b>Chico Creek Estuary</b> - Improved Entrance/Parking Lot	13 (24.20%)
<b>Illahee Preserve Heritage Park</b> – Improve parking and access	14 (23.40%)
<b>Wicks Lake Park</b> - Develop park to include trail network in park, parking lots, and access	15 (23.30%)
<b>North Kitsap Heritage Park</b> - Improve some trails to be barrier-free and wheelchair friendly	16 (23.10%)
<b>Chico Salmon Park</b> - Improve Parking Lot	17 (21.30%)
<b>North Kitsap Heritage Park</b> - Improve access at south side of park	18 (20.10%)
<b>North Kitsap Heritage Park</b> - Improve parking lot off of Miller Bay Road	19 (16.70%)
<b>Anderson Point Park</b> - Expand Parking Lot	20 (15.40%)
<b>Veterans Memorial Park</b> - Improve Parking Lot	21 (15.30%)
<b>Eglon Park</b> - Improve Parking & Access	22 (14.30%)
<b>North Kitsap Heritage Park</b> - Improve parking lot off of Norman Road	23 (13.50%)
<b>Coulter Creek Heritage Park</b> - Improved Entrance/Parking Lot, utilities at SW trailhead	24 (13.40%)
<b>Coulter Creek Trailhead Park</b> - Add trailhead to McCormick Village	25 (13.40%)
<b>Bandix Dog Park</b> - Pave parking lot and entrance road	26 (12.80%)
<b>A Quiet Place Park</b> - Improve Parking	27 (10.90%)
<b>Pilot Point Park</b> - New Trailhead at southern entrance	28 (10.80%)
<b>Coulter Creek Heritage Park</b> - Add trailhead at Calvinwood Lodge	29 (10.70%)
<b>Anderson Hill Athletic Fields</b> - Improve Parking Lot	30 (10.00%)
<b>Coulter Creek Heritage Park</b> - Improved Entrance/Parking Lot @ W side	31 (8.10%)
<b>Wynn-Jones Preserve</b> - Improve parking	32 (6.00%)

\* Write-in responses are detailed in the Appendices



Hansville Greenway

**Table 3-3: Top Recreation Facility Projects in Northern Kitsap County (District #1)**

Project*	Priority Ranking / Percent Interest
<b>Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park</b> – Develop new park area at north parking lot (may include: playground, picnic shelter, benches, uncovered picnic tables)	1 (47.10%)
<b>Buck Lake Park</b> – Improve restrooms	2 (41.90%)
<b>North Kitsap Heritage Park</b> – Add picnic area (may include: picnic shelter, benches, uncovered picnic tables)	3 (35.50%)
<b>Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park</b> – Add a picnic shelter at mountain bike ride park	4 (34.80%)
<b>Location TBD</b> – Add ADA accessible and inclusive playgrounds	5 (34.20%)
<b>Island Lake Park</b> – Add a playground near picnic shelter and restrooms	6 (33.40%)
<b>Norwegian Point Park</b> – Add fishing pier	7 (32.10%)
<b>Location TBD</b> – Add pickleball courts	8 (30.30%)
<b>Norwegian Point Park</b> – Add a picnic shelter	9 (29.20%)
<b>Location TBD</b> – Add a disc golf course	10 (29.00%)
<b>Location TBD</b> – Add off-leash dog park	11 (28.60%)
<b>Location TBD</b> – Add athletic fields (soccer, baseball, softball, lacrosse, etc.)	12 (28.50%)
<b>Buck Lake Park</b> – Add a picnic shelter	13 (27.70%)
<b>Island Lake Park</b> – Add a picnic shelter	14 (26.80%)
<b>Norwegian Point Park</b> – Renovate fishing cabins	15 (24.80%)
<b>Buck Lake Park</b> – Add off-leash dog park	16 (20.10%)

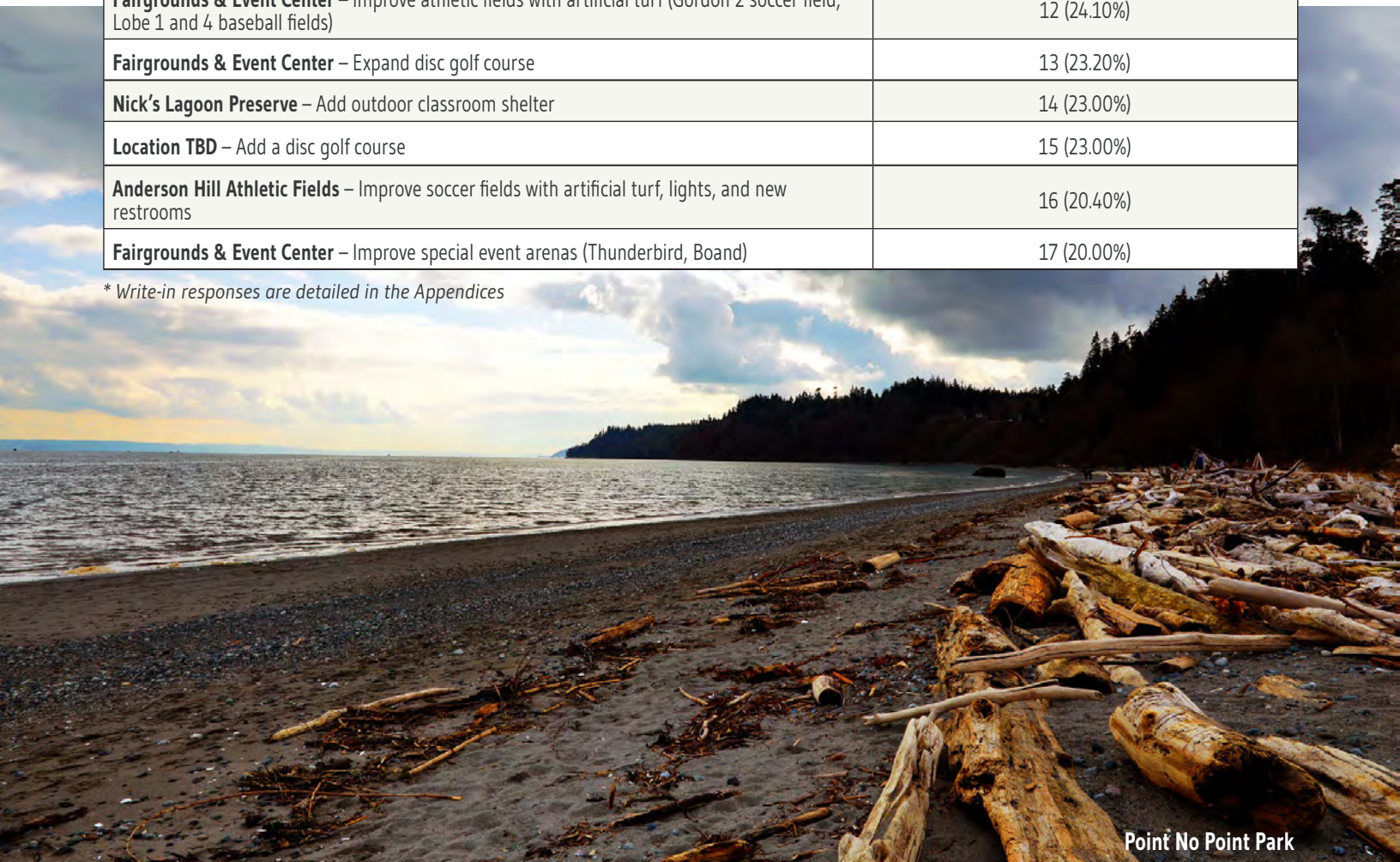
\* Write-in responses are detailed in the Appendices



**Table 3-4: Top Recreation Facility Projects in Central Kitsap County (District #3)**

Project*	Priority Ranking / Percent Interest
<b>Newberry Hill Heritage Park</b> – Add restrooms	1 (50.00%)
<b>Illahee Preserve Heritage Park</b> – Add restrooms	2 (47.90%)
<b>Wildcat Lake Park</b> – Renovate park (may include: improve restrooms, replace playground, add a picnic shelter)	3 (44.90%)
<b>Fairgrounds &amp; Event Center</b> – Add outdoor open lawn space for festivals and special events	4 (41.40%)
<b>Fairgrounds &amp; Event Center</b> – Develop new park area (may include: new playground, picnic shelter, restrooms)	5 (39.20%)
<b>Chico Salmon Park</b> – Add outdoor classroom shelter	6 (36.20%)
<b>Fairgrounds &amp; Event Center</b> – Improve special event buildings (Pavilion, President’s Hall, Eagle’s Nest, barns)	7 (29.60%)
<b>Location TBD</b> – Add ADA accessible and inclusive playgrounds	8 (27.20%)
<b>Location TBD</b> – Add pickleball courts	9 (26.20%)
<b>Kitsap Fairgrounds Event Center</b> - Add BMX/Pump track	10 (26.10%)
<b>Newberry Hill Heritage Park</b> – Add picnic area (may include: picnic shelter, benches, uncovered picnic tables)	11 (24.50%)
<b>Fairgrounds &amp; Event Center</b> – Improve athletic fields with artificial turf (Gordon 2 soccer field, Lobe 1 and 4 baseball fields)	12 (24.10%)
<b>Fairgrounds &amp; Event Center</b> – Expand disc golf course	13 (23.20%)
<b>Nick’s Lagoon Preserve</b> – Add outdoor classroom shelter	14 (23.00%)
<b>Location TBD</b> – Add a disc golf course	15 (23.00%)
<b>Anderson Hill Athletic Fields</b> – Improve soccer fields with artificial turf, lights, and new restrooms	16 (20.40%)
<b>Fairgrounds &amp; Event Center</b> – Improve special event arenas (Thunderbird, Boand)	17 (20.00%)

\* Write-in responses are detailed in the Appendices



**Point No Point Park**

**Table 3-5: Top Recreation Facility Projects in Southern Kitsap County (District #2)**

Project*	Priority Ranking / Percent Interest
<b>Banner Forest Heritage Park</b> – Add restrooms	1 (44.50%)
<b>Long Lake Park</b> – Renovate park (may include: improve restrooms, replace playground, add a picnic shelter, benches)	2 (36.20%)
<b>South Kitsap Regional Park</b> – Improve restrooms near playground	3 (34.60%)
<b>Anderson Point Park</b> – Add restrooms and benches	4 (33.80%)
<b>Horseshoe Lake Park</b> – Renovate park (may include: improve restrooms, replace playground, add a picnic shelter)	5 (32.70%)
<b>Howe Farm Park</b> – Add pea patch/community gardens	6 (29.40%)
<b>Coulter Creek Heritage Park</b> – Add restrooms	7 (28.90%)
<b>Banner Forest Heritage Park</b> – Add picnic area (may include: picnic shelter, benches, uncovered picnic tables)	8 (24.80%)
<b>Location TBD</b> – ADA accessible and inclusive playgrounds	9 (24.70%)
<b>Howe Farm Park</b> – Renovate barn for special events	10 (24.20%)
<b>Veteran's Memorial Park</b> – Develop park (may include: restrooms, playground, picnic shelter, benches)	11 (23.00%)
<b>Location TBD</b> – Add pickleball courts	12 (21.50%)
<b>Location TBD</b> – Add a disc golf course	13 (20.90%)
<b>South Kitsap Regional Park</b> – Add BMX/Pump Track	14 (20.10%)
<b>South Kitsap Regional Park</b> – Improve soccer fields with artificial turf, lights, and new restrooms	15 (20.00%)
<b>Wicks Lake Park</b> – Develop park (may include: restrooms, playground, picnic shelter, benches)	16 (20.00%)
<b>Bandix Dog Park</b> – Renovate park (may include: new restrooms, picnic shelter, benches)	17 (19.20%)
<b>Coulter Creek Heritage Park</b> – Renovate Calvinwood cabins and lodge	18 (17.10%)
<b>Harper Park</b> – Add a playground	19 (15.40%)
<b>Coulter Creek Heritage Park</b> – Add picnic area (may include: picnic shelter, benches, uncovered picnic tables)	20 (14.90%)
<b>South Kitsap Regional Park</b> – Add additional picnic shelters	21 (14.50%)
<b>Veteran's Memorial Park</b> – Improve soccer fields with artificial turf and lights	22 (13.50%)
<b>Wicks Lake Park</b> – Add a disc golf course	23 (12.40%)
<b>Bill Bloomquist Rotary Park</b> – Renovate park (may include: improve softball fields, restroom)	24 (12.30%)
<b>Harper Park</b> – Add sport courts	25 (9.60%)
<b>Wynn-Jones Preserve</b> – Add picnic area (may include: picnic shelter, benches, uncovered picnic tables)	26 (9.10%)

\* Write-in responses are detailed in the Appendices





South Kitsap Regional Park

# Conclusion

The survey results provide a comprehensive view of the community's priorities for Kitsap County's parks, recreation, and open spaces over the next six years. Respondents across all districts emphasized the need for improved accessibility, enhanced safety, and thoughtful conservation practices, highlighting a vision for parks that are inclusive, sustainable, and well-maintained. The priorities identified by survey participants reflect a deep commitment to balancing active recreation spaces with the preservation of natural areas, underscoring the value of Kitsap's natural resources in enhancing quality of life.

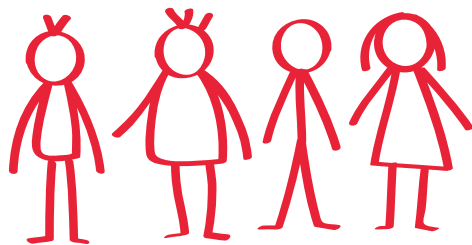
Key themes that emerged include the desire for:

## Accessible and Inclusive Spaces

Projects focusing on barrier-free trails, ADA-compliant restrooms, and inclusive playgrounds reflect the community's commitment to making parks welcoming for people of all abilities. This aligns with broader goals of equity and access, ensuring that all residents, including those with mobility challenges, can enjoy Kitsap's parks.

## Enhanced Safety and Crime Prevention

Safety improvements, including better lighting, surveillance, and accessible pathways, were frequently cited. Concerns about safety in specific parks highlight the community's call for environments where visitors feel secure, reflecting a need for continued investment in park infrastructure and crime deterrence.



## Expanded Recreational Facilities and Community Spaces

Participants showed strong interest in new and improved recreational amenities, such as sports fields, picnic areas, and gathering spaces. This interest aligns with Kitsap County's role as a hub for outdoor activities, catering to families, youth, and diverse community groups. Requests for facilities like disc golf courses, sports courts, and event lawns underscore a need for spaces that foster community engagement and provide diverse recreational opportunities.

## Conservation and Landscape Resilience

Conservation-focused projects were highlighted as essential to maintaining Kitsap's natural heritage. Respondents stressed the importance of protecting sensitive ecosystems, including wetlands and wildlife habitats, and called for projects that enhance landscape resilience to address long-term environmental sustainability.

## Infrastructure Upgrades and Maintenance

Investments in core infrastructure, such as restroom facilities, drainage systems, and parking, were recognized as fundamental to improving park usability and upkeep. Routine maintenance and strategic upgrades are essential for long-term sustainability, ensuring parks meet the needs of a growing population without compromising environmental health.

The survey's insights offer clear, actionable guidance for Kitsap County Parks, setting a foundation for future planning that aligns with the community's values and vision. By addressing these key themes, Kitsap County Parks can enhance the overall park experience, promote environmental stewardship, and ensure that facilities remain vibrant, accessible, and safe for generations to come.



An aerial photograph of Island Lake Park, showing a mix of green grass, trees with yellow and orange autumn foliage, and a paved area with playground equipment. A large, white, stylized letter 'K' is overlaid on the left side of the image, partially obscuring the park's features.

# Demand & Needs Analysis

Island Lake Park





Newberry Hill Heritage Park



Illahee Preserve Heritage Park



Kitsap County Fairgrounds

The purpose of the demand and needs analysis is to evaluate, quantify, and understand both the facility and recreational demand and identify the existing and future needs for providing parkland, facilities, and open spaces now and into the future. The definition of needs includes both the preservation of existing services/resources as well as the desired needs that are projected into the future based on population forecasts and economic outlooks. The current update, presented here, reflects the needs, desires, and recommended priorities that set the foundation for the next 6 to 10 years, as well as provides some aspirations for the next 15 to 20 years.

## Quantifications vs Qualifications

Quantitative standards have been traditionally used to assess the need and identify potential actions to acquire or develop additional parks and recreation elements. Based on the National Recreation and Park Association's (NRPA) guidelines and online database "Park Metrics," simple comparisons of adequate land based on normalized averages across the country were the traditional way of determining what the minimum amount of parkland needed to address effective parks & recreation services should be. While this plan is primarily focused on the needs identified

by the public, it also assesses the recreational demands of Kitsap County, starting with traditional level-of-service (LOS) standards, recreation trends, and a gap analysis of access to the current park system.

However, while quantifiable metrics allow for easy comparisons to be made, they are analytically and programmatically weak compared to understanding the "quality" of life a community expects or demands. The only way to develop strong strategies and a set of potential improvements is to engage with community members through surveys, public meetings, and other forms of public consultation. The previous section in this report describes this process in detail.

This section ends with a comparison of the quantitative and the qualitative to refine a methodology that can be used to test and ultimately, select, the kinds of improvements that will enhance County resident's quality of life that is aligned with its demonstrated values and preferences.

## Level-of-Service (LOS)

To effectively assess how different types of parks meet a community's desires, the National Recreation & Park Association (NRPA) has developed demand standards as potential guidelines to determine the appropriate level of service of a community's parks system.



These standards, originally focused on comparing population size to the number and types of parks or recreational amenities offered, have evolved over time. While traditional measures like acres per thousand people provide a basic evaluation, they offer a limited perspective on a park system's overall quality. A comprehensive approach to determining service standards considers factors such as equitable distribution of land and facilities, per capita value of the park system, availability of programs for diverse demographics, user base characteristics, facility quality and maintenance, and public perception as an indicator of quality of life.

Recognizing that each community's vision, values, and needs are unique, planners understand that merely applying national standards for Level of Service (LOS) may not effectively capture local nuances or community aspirations. NRPA now encourages communities to develop their own LOS standards tailored to local goals, priorities, and conditions. These standards quantify the provision of parkland and recreational facilities per capita, offering a benchmark for evaluating local needs. However, relying solely on LOS metrics may overlook critical factors such as facility quality, resident satisfaction, and the distinct cultural and historical attributes that shape a community's recreational landscape.

Therefore, determining realistic LOS demands and park facility needs requires a nuanced approach that considers local context and community-specific factors alongside established benchmarks. This ensures that parks and open space planning effectively aligns with the unique character and aspirations of each community.

## National Recreation Guidelines as A Quantitative Measure

Comparing the County's parks and recreational spaces to those across the nation provides a quantitative benchmark and a starting point to measuring the performance of its park system. NRPA studies national recreation trends and frequently publishes support documents and recommendations for public municipalities.

The NRPA level of service guidelines originally developed in 1983 offered guidance suggesting that "a park system, at minimum, be composed of a core system of parklands, with a total of 6.25 to 10.5 acres of developed open space per 1,000 population". While this has since become a relatively accepted target benchmark, it is important to note that NRPA offers this range of ratios as a comparative guide only. Since the development of some statistical baselines, various publications have updated and expanded upon possible park standards, several of which have also been published by NRPA.

In 2023, the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) published an updated performance review of park agencies across the nation. This review revealed that the typical U.S. park agency offers one park for every 2,386 residents and provides 10.6 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. However, these figures can vary based on the population size of the jurisdiction served. For instance, agencies serving populations between 100,000 and 250,000 residents manage approximately 8.9 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. Given that Kitsap County's population is estimated to be around 277,658 as of 2023, it falls into the category of jurisdictions serving more than 250,000 residents. NRPA data indicates that agencies in this category typically manage about 10.2 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. Rather than adhering to a one-size-fits-all standard, NRPA recommends that each community develop its own benchmarks based on local goals, priorities, and conditions to best meet the needs of its residents.

## Washington State Recreation Guidelines

Washington State's Recreation Conservation Office (RCO) offers additional insights on how to enact level of service standards to guide parks and recreation planning.

The RCO level of service guidelines focus on a community's success in setting and meeting its recreation and open space goals and proposes that jurisdictions measure level of service based on several criteria, including distance, means of access, support of "muscle-powered" recreation, condition of facilities, sustainability, and public satisfaction.



Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park





Additionally, the RCO releases a Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Programming (SCORP) document every five years, which includes survey results identifying recreation demand and trends, both statewide and by region; the document was last updated in 2017. These survey results clarify broader recreation trends and understanding how the County's needs fit into a larger picture.

## Kitsap County Growth Projections

Kitsap County's growth projections for the next 20 years are based on a comprehensive methodology that incorporates demographic trends, economic factors, housing development patterns, and regional planning data. This approach is crucial for informed planning and resource allocation to accommodate future growth while maintaining residents' quality of life.

The methodology for projecting growth involves analyzing historical data such as birth rates, death rates, migration patterns, and economic indicators. Key demographic forecasts provided by the Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM) form the foundation for local projections. These forecasts are supplemented by insights from the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) on regional economic conditions and housing market trends.

Kitsap County's Comprehensive Plan further refines these projections with local data including building permits, housing starts, and school enrollment figures. Public input and stakeholder consultations ensure that the projections align with community expectations.

According to the Kitsap County 2024 Comprehensive Plan, the county's population is projected to grow significantly over the coming decades. As of 2022, the population was approximately 277,000, with a forecasted increase to around 346,358 by 2044. This reflects an annual growth rate of approximately 1.1%, driven by the county's strategic location, economic opportunities, and relatively affordable cost of living compared to nearby metropolitan areas. These projections account for expected growth across urban growth areas (UGAs) and rural regions, emphasizing the importance of aligning land use, housing, transportation, conservation, and PROS elements with anticipated demographic changes.

Understanding these projections is critical for planning necessary infrastructure, housing, and parks and recreation services to support the growing population. By anticipating future needs, the county can ensure sustainable development and uphold its residents' high quality of life.

Kitsap County, despite being one of the smallest counties in Washington with a land area of about 395 square miles, ranks third in the state for population density, with approximately 636 people per square mile. This demographic density underscores the importance of planning adequate parkland and facilities to meet future demand, especially as open space continues to be developed for residential and other uses.

## Park Equity & Access

To complement the insights gathered during the engagement process, a comprehensive service area map was created to quantify the need for park access as a key quality-of-life attribute. This analysis focused on safe and easy access to parks, providing a measurable framework to support community priorities and inform planning decisions. The map identified the current service areas for existing parks and highlighted new service areas that would be created through proposed improvements. By integrating local methodologies with data from the Trust for Public Land's (TPL) ParkServe platform, the analysis reinforced public feedback with robust, data-driven findings.

The maps were developed using a combination of Open Street Map data and the County's transportation grid. Open Street Map data identified and verified "safe access routes," defined as sidewalks and dedicated non-motorized trails that ensure walkable connections to parks. These routes were augmented with TPL's ParkServe data, which provided national benchmarks and geospatial tools to identify gaps in park access and support equitable planning efforts.

All access points to existing parks and trail spaces were digitized as part of the analysis. A network analysis was conducted to map service areas within a 10-minute walking distance (approximately ½ mile) using safe walking routes. The analysis identified interruptions in connectivity, such as where sidewalks ended before the 10-minute threshold was reached. These gaps in the walkshed were flagged as actionable opportunities to improve access by extending safe routes.

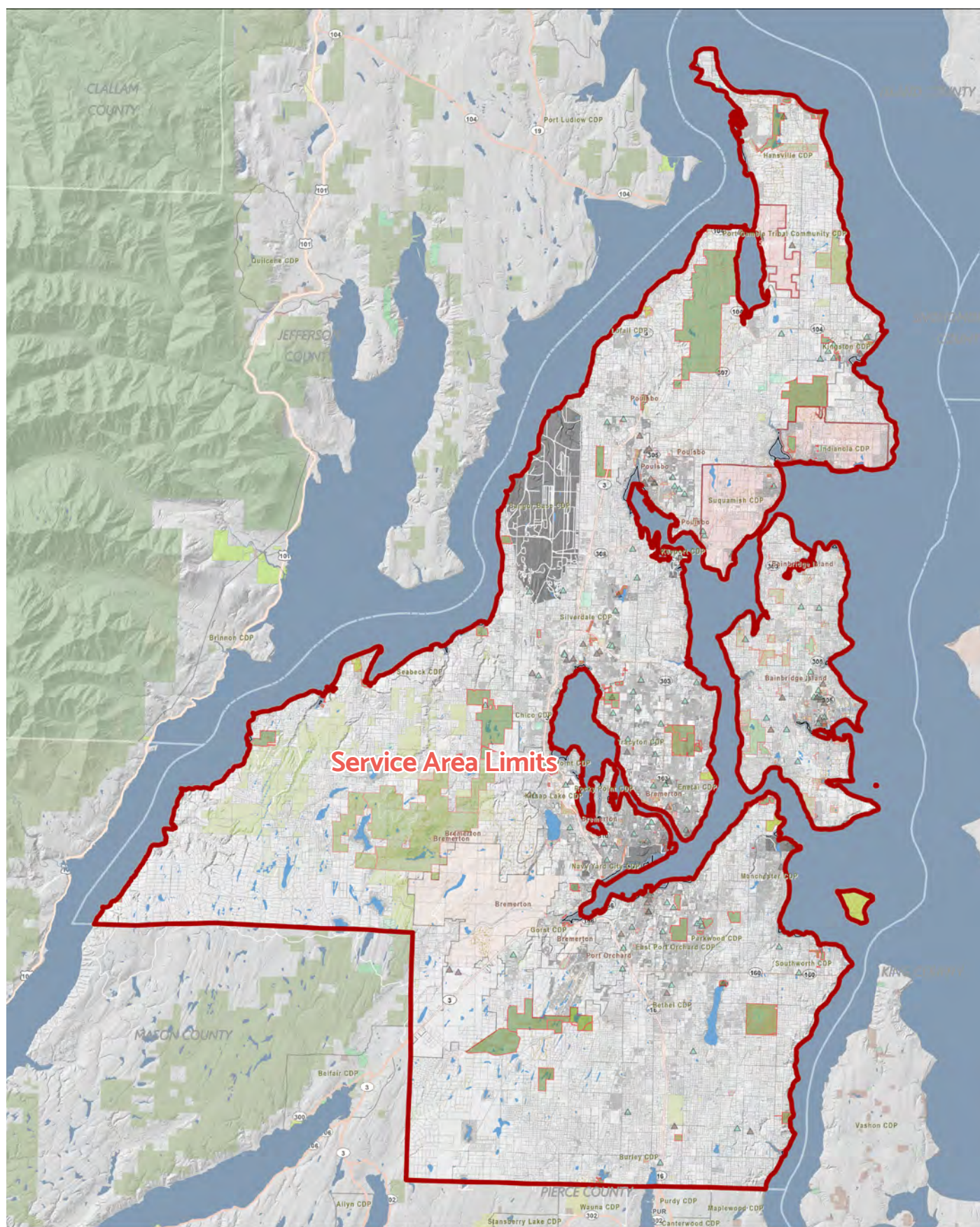


Figure 4-1: Kitsap County Service Area



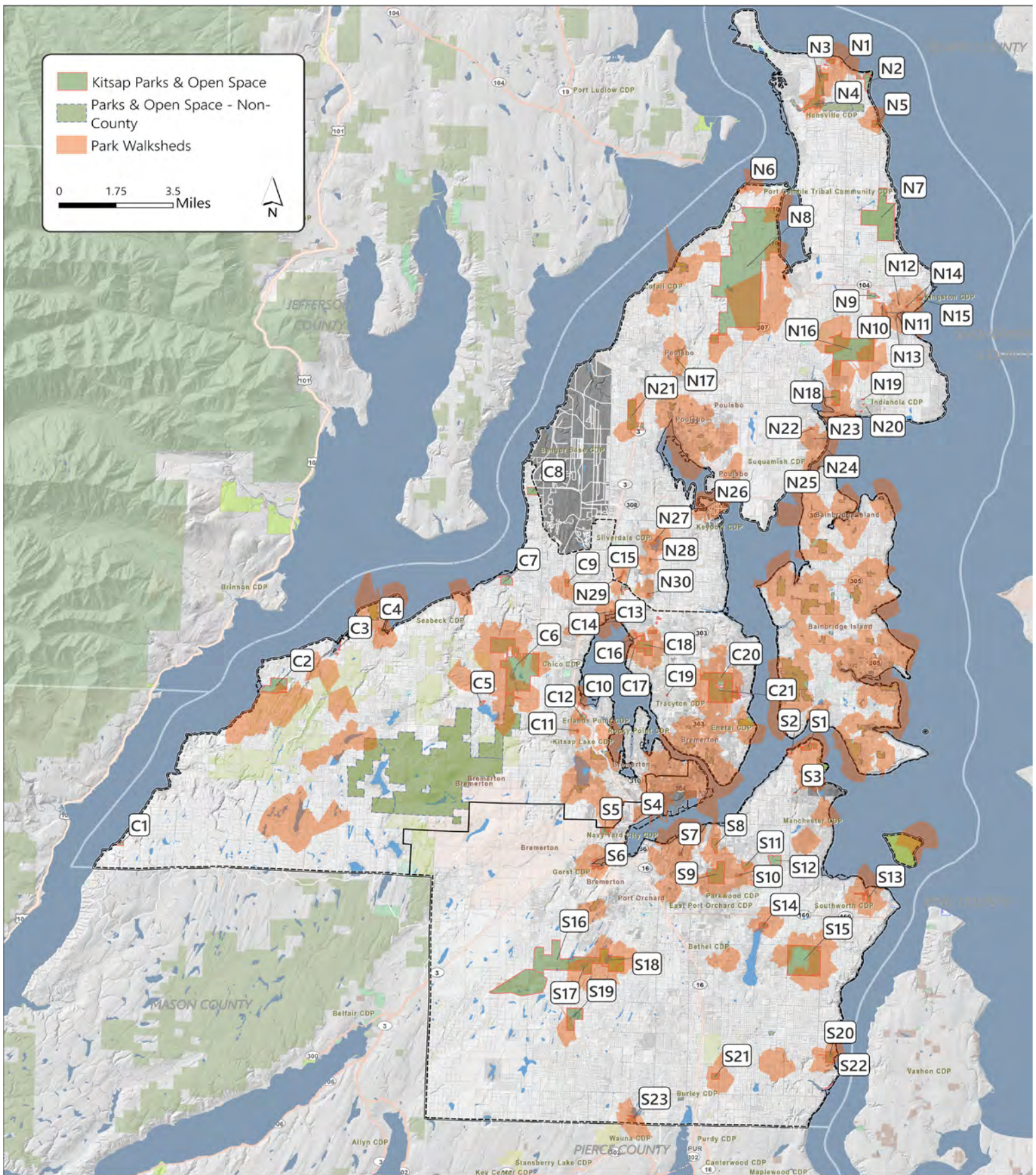


Figure 4-2: Parkland Walkshed Service Areas & Gaps



A second analysis evaluated the County's entire transportation grid, including areas without sidewalks or trails, to identify additional gaps in connectivity. This broader approach pinpointed areas where constructing or extending sidewalks, trails, or other non-motorized infrastructure would significantly enhance access. Comparing the two analyses provided a clearer picture of the most critical needs for improving connectivity and ensuring equitable access.

By integrating these findings with the themes identified during public engagement, the analysis underscored the importance of safe and easy park access as a fundamental quality-of-life metric. This quantifiable approach augments community input, aligning with broader goals to enhance equity, accessibility, and sustainability in Kitsap County's parks system.

## Recreation Trends

Outdoor recreation is on the rise nationwide, and Washington State and all its communities is no exception. Since 2019, and especially throughout the Covid pandemic, outdoor recreation equipment sales saw a significant increase across all major product categories. In Washington, there has been a notable surge in the participation rates of 20 outdoor activities since 2017. Among these activities, non-motorized trails, nature and wildlife viewing, camping, paddling, winter recreation, and leisure activities in nearby parks are consistently in high demand among Washington residents. With an expected statewide population increase of 2 million residents in the next 25 years, it's more critical for counties such as Kitsap County to plan for the future demand on outdoor recreation facilities.

Outdoor recreation not only supports local economies but also connects people with the natural world, promoting physical and mental well-being. With the rise of work-from-home arrangements post-pandemic and housing shifts from larger cities to smaller communities, residents are increasingly seeking convenient access to a variety of outdoor experiences, both developed and primitive, that allow them to integrate nature-based recreation into their busy schedules while avoiding crowds and traffic.

However, striking a balance between providing access to outdoor recreation and safeguarding natural and cultural resources remains a significant concern statewide. The heavy concentration of outdoor recreation at popular sites has led to resource degradation and reduced user satisfaction. Many communities face disparities in access to meaningful outdoor recreation opportunities, and residents often struggle with the time, cost, and information needed to support their outdoor pursuits. As the state aims to promote equitable access to the social, health, and economic benefits of outdoor recreation, a careful approach to outdoor recreation management is essential to ensure the protection of natural and cultural resources.

## 2023 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

The 2023 Recreation and Conservation Plan, or commonly referred to as the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), is a comprehensive document outlining the state's vision for outdoor recreation and public land conservation. Developed by the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO), the plan guides investments for the next 5-10 years. It considers challenges and benefits of outdoor recreation, assesses current demand, and inventories existing opportunities.



Kitsap County Fairgrounds



By establishing statewide priorities and goals, the plan serves a crucial role in securing funding, guiding investments strategically, and fostering collaboration between land managers. Public input through surveys and outreach ensures the plan reflects the needs of Washington residents. Ultimately, the WA State RCO SCORP Plan serves as a blueprint for a sustainable future where outdoor recreation and public lands are preserved and accessible for all.

## RCO's 2022 Assessment of Resident Demand

In the 2022 Assessment of Resident Demand report, participation rates for 45 activities were compared to 2017. All but two of those activities (Technology-based games and Collecting or Gathering Things in Nature) showed an increase in participation.

**Table 4-1: 2023 Top 20 Outdoor Recreation Activities in Washington State\***

Activity	Activity Category	%	N
Walking or Using Mobility Device on Roads or Sidewalks	Trail- and Road-Based Activities	91%	5,390
Walking or Day Hiking or Using Mobility Device on Trails	Trail- and Road-Based Activities	90%	5,331
Wildlife and Nature Viewing	Nature- and Culture-Based Activities	85%	4,812
Scenic Driving (Sightseeing)	Nature- and Culture-Based Activities	85%	4,767
Hanging Out	Leisure Activities in Parks	70%	3,679
Picnic, Barbecue, or Cookout	Leisure Activities in Parks	68%	3,639
Community Garden or Farmers' Market	Leisure Activities in Parks	66%	3,556
Visiting Outdoor Cultural or Historical Facility **	Nature- and Culture-Based Activities	62%	3,413
Swimming in Natural Settings	Water-Based Activities	61%	3,374
Paddle Sports (Whitewater, Canoes, Kayaks, Stand-Up Paddle Boards, Rowing)	Water-Based Activities	52%	2,910
Outdoor Concert or Special Event	Leisure Activities in Parks	49%	2,602
Gathering or Collecting Anything in Nature	Nature- and Culture-Based Activities	49%	2,635
Tent Camping (Developed Campground)	Camping Activities	44%	2,510
Backpacking	Trail- and Road-Based Activities	42%	2,349
Playground	Leisure Activities in Parks	41%	2,148
Tent Camping (Undeveloped Area)	Camping Activities	41%	2,247
Road Cycling	Trail- and Road-Based Activities	40%	2,240
Yard Games (Beanbag Toss, Horseshoes, etc.)	Leisure Activities in Parks	38%	1,966
Volunteering (Restoration Projects, Citizen Science, etc.)	Nature- and Culture-Based Activities	37%	1,984
Jogging or Running on Roads or Sidewalks	Trail- and Road-Based Activities	35%	1,944
Snowshoeing	Snow and Ice Activities	35%	1,821

\* By Participation Rate - % of Population, N = Number of Responses

\*\* Includes Attending Cultural Events

Source: [2023 WA RCO SCORP](#), page 41.



Activities that had the greatest increase in participation include the following:

- ♦ Wildlife or nature viewing increased by 28%
- ♦ Paddle sports increased by 28%
- ♦ Visiting outdoor cultural or historical facility increased by 27%
- ♦ Tent camping (undeveloped area) increased by 26%
- ♦ Backpacking increased by 25%
- ♦ Playing yard games (in a park) increased by 25%
- ♦ Snowshoeing increased by 23%
- ♦ Tent camping (developed area) increased by 19%
- ♦ Hanging out (in a park) increased by 19%
- ♦ Mountain biking increased by 18%

The SCORP document classifies Kitsap County within the "Peninsula" region in Washington State's planning framework. It identifies "walking in a park or trail setting" as one of the most popular recreational activities statewide, with a participation rate of approximately 82%. While specific regional data for Kitsap County is not provided, this high statewide participation rate indicates that walking is a favored activity across diverse demographics, including age, gender, race, and income groups.

An interesting trend noted in the SCORP planning outreach document is the sustained popularity of walking as a recreational activity, which remains one of the most widely enjoyed pursuits across Washington State. While specific comparative data from the 2012 survey is not detailed, activities like walking, swimming, and boating continue to attract significant participation. Swimming has grown in prominence and now ranks among the top recreational activities statewide. Other favored pursuits include nature-based activities such as visiting rivers, streams, and beaches, wildlife viewing, attending outdoor events like farmers' markets and fairs, and day hiking. These findings align with state-level trends, underscoring the importance of walking, hiking, and nature-based recreation opportunities in Kitsap County.

## Trails

Trails, both within parks and as connections between parks, schools, shops, and other destinations, remain one of the top recreational demands nationwide. Providing these connections enhances community walkability and encourages active lifestyles. Trail usage has experienced a notable increase in recent years, with data indicating a surge beginning in 2020. Studies by organizations such as American Trails report usage increases ranging from 79% to 171%, attributed largely to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. With traditional exercise facilities and leisure options restricted due to closures and safety concerns, many people turned to outdoor recreation—particularly hiking and other trail-based activities—as safe and accessible alternatives.



This trend has continued even after pandemic restrictions eased, as people increasingly recognize the physical and mental health benefits of trail use. Evidence from the National Park Service and the Washington State SCORP suggests that trail use has either maintained its elevated levels or continues to rise. This underscores the growing importance of investing in and maintaining robust trail networks, not only within parks but also as connectors between parks, open spaces, and other community destinations. Meeting this demand requires additional infrastructure and thoughtful planning to ensure these spaces remain accessible, sustainable, and enjoyable for all.

## Canines

The trend of dog ownership in the United States is experiencing a significant upswing, with estimates suggesting a population exceeding 89 and 94 million canine companions nationwide. This surge translates to a parallel rise in demand for designated dog parks across the country. These parks, particularly larger facilities, have become popular destinations, attracting dog owners and potentially boosting agency revenue through user fees and contributing to tourism.

In Washington State, the growing human-canine bond is likely influencing public land use plans. With dogs increasingly viewed as cherished family members, especially in urban environments, families are actively seeking opportunities to include their furry companions in outdoor activities. Cities are likely taking note of this trend, potentially leading to the inclusion of designated dog walking areas or off-leash spaces within their planning strategies.

## Pickleball & Padel

The participation in pickleball has witnessed a remarkable surge, growing by 159% in just three years, reaching 8.9 million participants in 2022, as reported by the Sports & Fitness Industry Association.

This swift expansion has presented challenges for public parks and recreation departments, which must strike

a balance between the competing interests of diverse recreational activities while working within constraints of limited space and budgets. Parks agencies are becoming more confronted with the task of accommodating pickleball enthusiasts, who favor this tennis-like sport with a smaller court, without causing discomfort or inconvenience to others. The noise and disruption generated by pickleball is becoming more a source of frustration for some neighbors, tennis enthusiasts, parents with young children, and other community members.

In various towns and cities, homeowners' associations and local residents have begun to impose restrictions on pickleball activities and thwart the construction of new courts. They have initiated petitions, pursued legal actions, and voiced their concerns at council and town hall meetings, all in an effort to temper the widespread enthusiasm for pickleball and its unique auditory characteristics.

Similar to pickleball, Padel is a racket sport of Mexican origin gaining popularity across the United States. This game is a cross between tennis, racquetball, and squash. It's currently estimated that Padel has over 100,000 players in the United States, and the number of courts has more than doubled in the last two years, expecting to grow to 30,000 courts by 2030. It is expected that the sport will grow substantially in communities with growing Hispanic populations, including Kitsap County.

## Youth Sports

Participation in youth sports leagues has undergone a complex transformation in recent years. While traditional team sports remain popular, data suggests a decline in children (ages 6-12) consistently playing on teams. The Aspen Project reports a drop from 45% in 2008 to 38% in 2018, and the Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) confirms this trend with a 6% decline in core participation (ages 6-17) between 2019 and 2022. This translates to roughly 1.2 million fewer participants. Several factors may contribute to this decline, including the financial burden of participation fees, equipment, and travel expenses, concerns about over-specialization leading to burnout, and time constraints due to competing academic and extracurricular demands.





Horseshoe Lake Park

This changing landscape has potential implications for the need for large regional sports facilities. While the decline in regular participation suggests a decreased demand for facilities solely focused on traditional team sports, total team sports participation (including those playing at least once a year) remained stable between 2019 and 2022, suggesting a potential shift towards less structured forms of sports involvement. Basketball continues to be the most popular sport, with nearly a quarter of youth (ages 6-17) participating at least once in 2022.

Multi-sport facilities catering to a wider range of activities and hosting tournaments or events attracting teams from a broader area are expected to see continued use. Well-designed facilities could also become community hubs, offering recreational activities for all ages and potentially incorporating amenities like fitness centers or indoor walking tracks that would not be affected by inclement weather.

The future of youth sports will require adaptation in programs. Focusing on fun and inclusivity, offering flexible scheduling and shorter seasons, implementing strategies to reduce financial barriers, e.g. developing parks districts to help cover long-term operating & maintenance costs, and promoting foundational athletic skills applicable to various sports are all crucial considerations. By adapting to these trends, youth sports programs can ensure they continue to play a vital role in promoting physical activity, social development, and positive health outcomes for children.

## Playground Trends

Modern playground design reflects a growing emphasis on inclusivity, fostering connections with nature, and catering to a wider range of users. A key trend to note is the creation of inclusive playgrounds, ensuring accessibility for children with various abilities through features like ramps, sensory panels, and equipment that accommodates different physical and cognitive needs.

Playgrounds are also increasingly designed to mimic natural environments, incorporating elements like logs, boulders, and water features. This reconnection with nature encourages open-ended and imaginative play.

The concept of multigenerational playgrounds is also gaining traction, offering adult fitness equipment and interactive features that promote intergenerational play within families and communities. Grant programs such as AARP's FitLot program is a great example.

Sensory play experiences are being actively integrated through musical instruments, textured panels, and fragrant plants. These elements stimulate different senses, enriching the play experience and catering to children with special needs.

While still emerging, some playgrounds are exploring seamless technology integration through augmented reality or interactive elements, adding a new layer to physical play.

Recognizing the limitations of shrinking green spaces in downtown cores or within communities, there's a growing focus on "playgrounds within reach." This involves maximizing the play value of smaller spaces through multifunctional equipment, innovative design, and better integration with surrounding areas.

Overall, these trends highlight a shift towards playgrounds that are not just fun, but also inclusive, educational, and promote holistic development in children.

## Electrification

As electric technology develops, maintenance equipment, vehicles, mowers, and other equipment used in parks and recreation are transitioning from gas powered resources to electric assets. This transition provides long-term cost savings, environmental benefits, and decreased noise. Additionally, parks and trailheads should consider the addition of EV charging stations in parking lots, as the number of EV cars on the road continues to grow. Washington State has led this transition to electric vehicles, with over 18% of new cars sold in the first half of 2023 being fully electric or plug-in hybrids according to the Seattle Times. Vehicle chargers located at park facilities enable drivers to engage with park facilities while waiting for a full charge.

## Heat

Rising temperatures and prolonged heatwaves are significantly altering how people access and enjoy outdoor spaces. Many recreational activities are shifting away from the peak summer months to cooler seasons, such as spring and fall. Even within summer, the timing of outdoor activities has changed, with a preference for early morning or late evening hours to avoid the intense midday heat. Water-based activities, like swimming and boating, are experiencing increased demand as people seek relief from the heat, while indoor recreational facilities are becoming more popular as safe and comfortable alternatives during extreme weather.



Health concerns associated with extreme heat are a primary driver of these behavioral shifts. Heat-related illnesses, such as heat exhaustion and heatstroke, pose serious risks, particularly for vulnerable populations such as children, older adults, and individuals with preexisting health conditions. These challenges highlight the need for thoughtful park and recreation planning to mitigate the impacts of heat on outdoor activities.

Communities are responding by investing in infrastructure improvements, including shaded areas, water features, and cooling stations, to provide more comfortable and accessible environments during hot weather. Climate-adaptive strategies, such as drought-resistant landscaping, reflective surfaces, and designs that enhance airflow, are also being incorporated into park designs to ensure their usability and appeal in hotter conditions.

## Smoke

Wildfire smoke is an increasing concern for outdoor recreation, especially in the Puget Sound Basin and the Western U.S. In recent years, fires from British Columbia, eastern Washington, and nearby regions have led to more frequent poor air quality during summer. These events blanket the region with fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>), posing health risks and limiting outdoor access.

Meteorologists now recognize a growing “smoke season,” driven by rising temperatures, prolonged droughts, and more intense wildfires. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency links climate change to longer wildfire seasons and larger burned areas, worsening smoke events.

Smoke presents challenges for outdoor recreation, particularly for vulnerable groups like children, older adults, and those with respiratory conditions. Even healthy individuals often avoid outdoor spaces during heavy smoke, reducing park use.

In response, both adaptive infrastructure and natural systems play key roles. Indoor recreation facilities with air filtration can provide safe alternatives, while forests, urban tree canopies, and green infrastructure help filter pollutants and improve air quality. Reforestation and urban greening, such as planting trees that absorb particulate matter, create natural air quality buffers.

Public awareness campaigns on minimizing health risks and integrating green infrastructure into park planning further support long-term climate resilience. Recognizing “smoke season” underscores the need for proactive planning and investment in resilient infrastructure and nature-based solutions. By incorporating forests, green spaces, and innovative facilities, communities can improve air quality, ensure safe outdoor access, and protect public health amid growing environmental challenges.

## Climate Resiliency

As climate change leads to more frequent and severe weather events, including extreme heat, storms, and droughts, there is a growing recognition of the need to design and manage parks to withstand these challenges. This emerging trend encompasses several key aspects:

- ♦ **Infrastructure Adaptation:** Parks are being designed with climate-resilient infrastructure, including stormwater management systems, flood-resistant facilities, and drought-tolerant landscaping. These adaptations help parks remain functional and safe during adverse weather conditions, ensuring they continue to serve the community even in the face of climate-related disruptions.
- ♦ **Natural Solutions:** Incorporating natural solutions such as wetlands, green roofs, and permeable pavements helps manage stormwater, reduce urban heat islands, and enhance biodiversity. These features not only make parks more resilient to climate impacts but also provide additional environmental benefits, such as improved air and water quality.
- ♦ **Shaded and Cooling Areas:** As extreme heat becomes more common, parks are being equipped with shaded areas, cooling stations, and water features to provide relief for visitors. These amenities make parks more comfortable and safe for recreation during hot weather, thereby maintaining their attractiveness and usability.
- ♦ **Community Engagement and Education:** Parks are increasingly seen as platforms for educating the community about climate change and sustainability. Through programs and initiatives, park systems can engage the public in climate action and resilience-building activities, fostering a sense of stewardship and collective responsibility.
- ♦ **Flexible Use Spaces:** Designing parks with flexible spaces that can accommodate a variety of activities ensures that they remain relevant and useful as community needs and climate conditions change. These multipurpose areas can be adapted for different recreational uses, events, and emergency responses.
- ♦ **Resilient Funding and Management:** Ensuring that parks have resilient funding mechanisms and management practices is critical. This includes diversifying funding sources, investing in regular maintenance and upgrades, and planning for long-term sustainability to ensure that parks can continue to serve the community despite economic and environmental challenges.

The trend toward climate resiliency in park systems reflects a broader understanding that parks are vital community assets that must be protected and enhanced in the face of climate change. By integrating resilience into the planning and management of parks, communities can ensure these spaces remain vibrant, accessible, and beneficial for all residents, now and in the future.

## Investments in Parks

Recent years have seen a significant rise in parks and recreation investments, fueled by federal programs like the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. These initiatives have enabled state and local governments to address long-standing needs, funding playground upgrades, trail expansions, and facility renovations. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, spending on recreation infrastructure has grown steadily, reflecting the increasing recognition of parks as essential to community well-being and economic vitality.

As the nation transitions to a new federal administration, this upward trend may shift, creating both opportunities and challenges. Continued infrastructure-focused policies and expanded support for climate resilience and community development could unlock new funding opportunities, enhancing parks as hubs for health, tourism, and local economies. Federal initiatives aimed at improving equity and access might also prioritize underserved communities, further addressing disparities in public space availability.

However, uncertainties remain. A shift away from infrastructure investment or reduced federal budgets could hinder progress, especially in regions dependent on external funding. Economic factors, including rising interest rates and tax policy changes, may limit the ability of governments to sustain capital improvements. Additionally, competing priorities for public funds could delay or diminish resources allocated to parks and recreation projects.

To navigate these challenges, local governments and park agencies must remain adaptable. Diversifying funding sources through grants, public-private partnerships,

and voter-approved measures will be key to maintaining momentum. Integrating parks into broader infrastructure and climate adaptation strategies will also bolster their relevance and funding potential.

Despite uncertainties, parks and recreation investments are likely to remain a priority for communities that value their role in enhancing quality of life and driving economic growth.

## Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA Certification)

As Kitsap County Parks Department seeks to enhance its functionality and meet the evolving expectations of the community, pursuing CAPRA (Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies) certification is emerging as a critical strategy. This accreditation process involves adhering to 154 rigorous standards covering all aspects of parks and recreation management, including administration, planning, and operations. Achieving CAPRA certification would not only improve service quality and operational efficiency but also build greater community trust and confidence in the department. By integrating these high standards into its technical planning, Kitsap County Parks Department can ensure greater transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement. Embracing this trend will position the department to deliver exceptional services, align with best practices, and better meet the needs of its residents.



Wildcat Lake Park



# Summary of LOS Demand & Need

## National and State LOS Metrics

Using benchmarks from the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) and Washington State’s Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO), the following tables compare current levels of service to these common standards. NRPA recommends 10 acres per 1,000 residents, with 2-3 acres designated for neighborhood parks and 5-8 acres for community parks, while other specialized classifications are typically not included. Similarly, RCO suggests 9-12 acres per 1,000 residents, emphasizing accessibility and a balance between recreational and natural spaces. These benchmarks are derived from a broad range of park systems of varying sizes, types, and conditions. While not prescriptive, they provide valuable reference points to evaluate performance and guide the development of equitable and locally tailored park systems.

Kitsap County’s park system, with a total of approximately 11,400 acres providing an overall level of service (LOS) of 40.43 acres per 1,000 residents, significantly exceeds the typical standard of 9-12 acres per 1,000 residents recommended by organizations like NRPA and RCO. This achievement reflects the county’s strong emphasis on large conservation lands, regional parks, community parks, and special-use facilities - classifications that align with the broader mission and capacity of a county-level parks system.

However, a closer examination reveals potential gaps and opportunities for improvement:

- Community Parks (524.11 acres, 1.86 acres per 1,000 residents) fall below the recommended standard of 5-8 acres per 1,000 population, suggesting a need for expanded facilities and amenities to support recreational programs and community-focused activities.
- Regional Parks (3,723.22 acres, 13.2 acres per 1,000 residents) far exceed the suggested standard of 5 acres per 1,000 residents, highlighting the county’s commitment to providing large-scale recreation areas for both residents and visitors.
- Special-Use Facilities (387.85 acres, 1.38 acres per 1,000 residents) and Nature Parks (6,758.05 acres, 23.96 acres per 1,000 residents) are not bound by specific LOS targets but represent a robust inventory of conservation-focused lands and specialized recreation spaces.

While the county has successfully acquired and preserved significant open spaces and regional assets, public engagement highlights an opportunity to strategically improve the existing system compared to national and state LOS metrics by focusing on:

- Enhancing Community Parks: Increasing acreage and improving amenities in underserved areas to better support countywide recreation and programming needs.
- Investing in Special-Use Facilities: Expanding unique offerings such as sports complexes, event spaces, or waterfront parks to meet evolving community interests.
- Maximizing Nature and Regional Parks: Integrating trail systems, outdoor education programs, and low-impact infrastructure to enhance accessibility and passive recreation opportunities in existing natural areas.

Table 4-2: Level of Deficiency/Need by Park Classification			
Park Classification	Existing Acres	Acres/1000 Population	NRPA/RCO Guideline
		2024	
Mini Parks	1.1	.004 acres / 1000 population	No Standard
Special Use Parks	387.85	1.38 acres / 1000 population	No Standard
Neighborhood Parks	3.67	.013 acres / 1000 population	2-3 acres / 1,000 population
Community Parks*	524.11	1.86 acres/ 1000 population	5-8 acres / 1,000 population
Regional Parks	3723.22	13.2 acres / 1000 population	5 acres / 1,000 population
Nature Parks**	6758.05	23.96 acres / 1000 population	No Standard
TOTAL	11398	40.42 acres / 1000 population	9-12 acres / 1,000 population

\* Also includes Waterfront Park classification  
\*\* Includes Open Space, a term used interchangeably with Natural Areas or Nature Parks

# Local LOS Metrics

Using adopted levels of service (LOS) from Kitsap County’s 2024 Capital Facilities Plan, the following tables compare the current network of parks and recreation facilities, trails, and shoreline access with current and projected populations. As in the 2024 Capital Facilities Plan, this LOS analysis includes both County and non-County owned properties, as a variety of public agencies and private organizations also provide parks and recreation facilities within Kitsap County, including Washington State Parks, Washington State Department of Natural Resources, cities, schools, and conservation organizations.

Kitsap County has adopted LOS standards for Natural Resource Areas, Regional Parks, Heritage Parks, Community Parks, Trails, and Shoreline Access. For this analysis, the updated park classifications, as discussed in Inventory and Assessment, have been grouped to align with the adopted LOS standards, as originally defined in the 2012 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan.

The Parks Department intends to review and update the LOS standards in the future to ensure the Department is providing parks and recreation facilities, trails, and shoreline access at a level necessary to meet community need and support growth. At the same time, the County will also update the inventory of non-County owned facilities to ensure LOS calculations are accurate.

As shown below, Kitsap County currently meets LOS standards across all park classifications for current and projected populations, with the exceptions of Natural Resource Areas and Community Parks for the 2044 projected population.

Table 4-3: Kitsap County LOS Park Classifications	
Park Classification	Classifications Included
Natural Resource Areas	Nature Parks
Regional Parks	Regional Parks and Waterfront Parks
Community Parks	Community Parks, Neighborhood Parks, Mini Parks, and Special Use Parks*

\* Does not include Village Greens Golf Course, Rolling Hills Golf Course, or Snider Park

Table 4-4: Kitsap County LOS Analysis By Park Classification				
Park Classification	Existing Acres/Miles	Acres/Miles per 1000 Population		Kitsap County Adopted LOS
		2024	2044	
Natural Resource Areas	23,457 acres	83.18 acres / 1000 population	67.72 acres / 1000 population	71 acres / 1,000 population
Regional Parks	6,254 acres	22.17 acres / 1000 population	18.05 acres / 1000 population	16 acres / 1,000 population
Community Parks	1,319 acres	4.68 acres / 1000 population	3.81 acres / 1000 population	4.65 acres / 1,000 population
Trails	197 miles	0.70 miles / 1000 population	0.57 miles / 1000 population	0.2 miles / 1,000 population
Shoreline Access	26.5 miles	0.09 miles / 1000 population	0.08 miles / 1000 population	0.061 miles / 1,000 population





# Goals & Objectives

Long Lake Park





Village Greens Golf Course



Banner Forest Heritage Park



Kitsap County Fairgrounds

As the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan Update was being developed, Kitsap County simultaneously worked to update its Comprehensive Plan. Balancing the public's desires and vision with the evolving goals of comprehensive planning, the following mission, vision, goals, and objectives should be seamlessly integrated into the Parks & Open Space Element of the County's Comprehensive Plan. These elements are foundational to the County's aspirations and will play a vital role in guiding development and enhancement efforts for parks, recreation, and open spaces.

## A New Vision for Kitsap County

The intended vision for Kitsap County's Parks and Recreation System emphasizes the intrinsic connection between the county's natural setting and the community's values and desired identity. Recognizing this relationship, a set of core goals and objectives has been developed to align parks, recreation, and open space policies with the broader spectrum of county objectives, enhancing the quality of life for residents and visitors alike.

This vision is achieved by:

- ♦ Providing a succinct overview of the goals & objectives set forth in the previous 2018 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan.
- ♦ Referencing ongoing capital improvement initiatives associated with park features.
- ♦ Discussing parks-related insights garnered from community input during the current plan update process.
- ♦ Summarizing the policy framework outlined in the previous PROS Plan.

## All Staff Meeting

The renewed vision for Kitsap County Parks began with an all-staff meeting in November 2023, marking a pivotal moment in shaping the future of the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan Update. This meeting provided an opportunity for staff at all levels to share their perspectives on the department's strengths, challenges, and opportunities for growth. Recognizing that frontline staff play a crucial role in the daily operations and long-term success of the parks system, the County sought to integrate their insights into a strategic framework that would inform the department's mission, vision, goals, and objectives.





Kitsap County Fairgrounds

Following the meeting, an online survey was distributed to all Parks Department staff to formalize and expand on key discussion points. This survey was designed to identify operational priorities, refine strategic goals, and assess needs related to staffing, park maintenance, and capital improvements. Staff responses provided valuable input on how to improve processes, enhance service delivery, and address long-standing challenges within the department. The results also reinforced the importance of aligning the Parks Department's mission and vision with broader countywide planning efforts, ensuring that parks and open spaces remain central to Kitsap County's growth and sustainability.

The survey posed four central questions to formalize and build upon the discussions from the meeting:

### What do we do?

This question aimed to identify the most important aspects of staff roles to help refine the county's mission statement. Staff were asked to share the top five elements they considered essential to their work, such as maintaining park facilities, ensuring public safety, enhancing quality of life, and supporting mental and physical health.

### What do we strive to be?

To shape the county's vision statement, staff were asked what they most wanted Kitsap County Parks to achieve in the future. Responses centered on aspirations like sustainability, fostering community relationships, and improving staff well-being and retention.

### How can we improve?

This question focused on identifying the top priorities for enhancing countywide processes and standards. Staff highlighted the need for consistent policies, increased professional development opportunities, and standardization of maintenance and procurement practices across the parks system.

### What projects should we implement?

Staff perspectives were gathered on high-priority projects to guide future investments. Suggestions included securing equipment, improving park facilities, ensuring ADA compliance, and developing new amenities like athletic fields and picnic shelters.

These questions and the insights they generated provided a foundation for refining the department's strategic direction and aligning its mission and vision with staff expertise and priorities.

## Summary of Key Themes

The survey results revealed key themes and priorities for Kitsap County's Parks Department. These themes reflect the department's collective commitment to improving operational effectiveness, supporting community needs, and planning for a sustainable future. Drawing from the survey and discussions, the following insights emerged, emphasizing mission priorities, a forward-looking vision, opportunities for countywide process improvements, and project prioritization.

### Mission Priorities

The survey underscored staff's focus on providing and maintaining high-quality public spaces and parks that are safe, accessible, and clean. Staff ranked "cleaning and maintaining outdoor spaces" as their highest priority, reflecting pride in their work and dedication to enhancing quality of life for residents. Other priorities included supporting physical and mental health through accessible recreational spaces, protecting green and open areas, and investing in staff development and training. Staff also emphasized the importance of fostering a sense of community by offering spaces for special events, gatherings, and educational programs, while ensuring affordability and equitable access for all residents.

Environmental stewardship emerged as a central theme, with a strong commitment to protecting and restoring natural environments for future generations.

### Vision for the Future:

The department's vision focuses on sustainability, innovation, and fostering community engagement. Staff aspire for the parks system to be a leader in environmental sustainability, incorporating green infrastructure and climate-resilient practices. They highlighted the importance of modern, state-of-the-art facilities that balance recreation with environmental stewardship, while also promoting inclusivity and cultural recognition. Building long-term relationships with the community and retaining a talented workforce were seen as vital to the department's success. Staff also emphasized the importance of exceeding public expectations by creating vibrant, welcoming spaces that inspire future generations, enhance community trust, and provide educational opportunities about history and environmental practices.

### Countywide Process and Standards Improvement:

Staff identified opportunities to enhance countywide processes and standards by creating consistent policies and practices across all facilities, including trails, athletic fields, and play areas. A key recommendation was to develop uniform maintenance and development standards to ensure a high level of quality and efficiency. Professional development and autonomy for team leads across districts were highlighted as critical areas for improvement, with a call for increased training opportunities and the integration of preventative maintenance into regular operations.

### Project Prioritization:

Staff emphasized the need to secure park equipment, expand multi-use facilities, and develop a Kitsap County Fairgrounds Master Plan. Other high-priority projects included a natural resource master plan, additional outdoor athletic fields, and aesthetic upgrades to park venues. Improving ADA compliance, enhancing drainage for sports fields, increasing lighting, and modernizing restrooms were also identified as crucial areas for improvement. These projects align with staff's overarching goal to create accessible and inclusive spaces that meet the diverse needs of Kitsap County residents.

### Summary Conclusion

The survey results and subsequent discussions at the All-Staff Meeting highlighted a shared vision for the Parks Department: one that prioritizes sustainability, community engagement, and operational excellence. By aligning these

priorities with actionable goals and strategies, the Parks Department is well-positioned to preserve Kitsap County's natural assets, enhance recreational opportunities, and serve the evolving needs of its community.

## Mission & Vision

The values and aspirations of Kitsap County residents, along with the dedicated County staff who serve them, are foundational to this plan. Through extensive public outreach, focused work sessions with Parks staff, and robust community input, Kitsap County Parks has reviewed and refined its Vision and Mission statements. These statements reflect the collective feedback received from residents and staff, shaping a forward-looking strategy to enhance quality of life and community well-being.

During this review process, key findings from staff and community discussions highlighted the need to emphasize inclusivity, accessibility, sustainability, and stewardship. The revised Mission Statement underscores the department's commitment to managing and maintaining outdoor spaces, parks, and facilities in ways that enrich the community's quality of life. It focuses on practical efforts such as facilitating reservations, hosting events, and supporting diverse community groups and educational programs, while prioritizing cleanliness, safety, and environmental stewardship. The Mission also recognizes the essential role these spaces play in promoting physical and mental well-being for both current and future generations.

The revised Vision Statement outlines an aspirational future where Kitsap County's parks contribute to a thriving, resilient community. It emphasizes environmental sustainability, preserving green spaces, and fostering community involvement to create enduring connections between people and the natural world. The vision calls for innovation and adaptability, promoting modern facilities and green infrastructure that enhance climate resilience. Staff well-being and retention are recognized as integral to long-term success. The Vision Statement aspires to inspire future generations through educational initiatives, meaningful engagement, and sustainable practices, balancing recreation with environmental stewardship to serve as a model of community-focused green leadership.

The refined Mission and Vision statements, together with the department's core values, represent a holistic, inclusive, and forward-thinking approach to park management. These guiding principles bridge the gap between community input and adopted policies, ensuring alignment with residents' expectations and aspirations. They collectively broaden the scope of Kitsap County Parks' role, moving beyond operational management to leadership in environmental stewardship and community enrichment.





Arness Roadside Park

### Revised Mission Statement

*We enrich Kitsap County's quality of life by stewarding parks, outdoor spaces, and facilities that are inclusive, safe, and accessible for all. Through community events, educational programs, and environmental protection, we foster connections, promote well-being, and create enduring opportunities for current and future generations to enjoy and thrive.*

### Revised Vision Statement

*We envision a thriving and resilient Kitsap County where everyone connects with nature, enjoys inclusive recreation, and shares in the stewardship of our parks and open spaces. By embracing sustainability, innovation, and community engagement, we aim to inspire pride, foster well-being, and set an example of environmental leadership for generations to come.*

These concise and aspirational statements reflect the collective input and shared aspirations of residents and staff, positioning Kitsap County Parks as a leader in community-focused and sustainable park management.

## A County-Wide Vision

The values and aspirations of Kitsap County residents and staff are the driving forces behind the PROS Plan. Through extensive public outreach and meaningful community input, Kitsap County Parks has crafted a new vision that aligns seamlessly with the broader County vision. This vision serves as a guiding principle for the Parks Department's decisions, bridging public feedback with established policies to ensure that community voices play a central role in shaping the future of Kitsap County Parks.

## VISION

-  **An Engaged & Connected Community**
-  **A Safe Community**
-  **A Healthy & Livable Community**
-  **A Resilient Community**
-  **A Vibrant Community**
-  **A Well-Governed Community**

Figure 5-1: The Kitsap County Vision



# Foundational Values

Kitsap County's Parks Department operates under the County's overarching mission, which is grounded in a core set of countywide values. While these values reflect the broader principles guiding all County operations, they also shape and inform the Parks Department's specific actions and priorities. By aligning with these values, the department ensures its work supports the County's dedication to community well-being, sustainability, and stewardship.

- ♦ **Integrity:** Upholding integrity ensures that all actions and decisions of Kitsap County government are transparent, ethical, and in the best interests of County residents. Integrity fosters trust among residents and stakeholders, demonstrating a commitment to honesty and ethical conduct in all governmental operations.
- ♦ **Welcoming:** A welcoming approach ensures that all County residents feel included and valued. It promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion in service delivery, fostering a community where everyone feels respected and supported regardless of background or circumstances.
- ♦ **Professionalism:** Professionalism in County operations ensures that services are delivered with expertise, competence, and courtesy. It reflects a commitment to high standards of conduct, competence in job performance, and respect for residents' needs and concerns.
- ♦ **Responsiveness:** Responsiveness means being attentive and timely in addressing the needs and concerns of County residents. It involves listening to community feedback, promptly addressing inquiries and requests, and adapting services to meet changing community needs.
- ♦ **Accountability:** Accountability ensures that County government is responsible for its actions, decisions, and use of resources. It involves transparency in decision-making processes, adherence to laws and regulations, and being answerable to residents for the outcomes of governmental actions.
- ♦ **Efficiency:** Efficiency in County operations means maximizing resources to deliver effective services in a cost-effective manner. It involves streamlining processes, minimizing waste, and optimizing service delivery to achieve the best outcomes for County residents with available resources.

These values collectively support Kitsap County's mission to protect and promote the health, safety, and well-being of all residents. By embracing these principles, the Parks Department creates a governance environment that prioritizes community welfare, fosters trust, and ensures services are delivered with excellence and equity. Together, these values also advance the County's commitment to sustainability and the rights of nature, reinforcing the critical connection between environmental stewardship and human well-being.



Carpenter Lake Park





Guillemot Cove Nature Reserve

## 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.

## A Safe Community

Engender a feeling of safety for all residents by promoting public and traffic safety through careful planning and intentional public facilities and infrastructure. People are protected and secure, have a sense of community, and care about their neighborhoods.

## A Healthy and Livable Community

Enhance our quality of life through protection of our air quality, water quality, and natural systems and promote open spaces, walkable communities, accessible health care, and educational and recreational opportunities that are welcoming to all people.

## A Resilient Community

Improve our ability to prepare for and adapt to population growth, economic shifts, and climate changes through environmental safeguards, robust community-focused emergency preparedness and response, sustainable local food systems, diverse housing choices, expanded health care options, and a strong social safety net.

## A Vibrant Community

Support a thriving local economy with a skilled workforce and successful entrepreneurs and small businesses, and provide expanded access to technology, innovative programs, and a welcoming, understandable regulatory environment.

## A Well-Governed 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.

## PROS Plan Goals, Objectives, and Actions

The following pages are the Goals, Objectives, and Actions, which are intended to guide Department decision making in managing and enhancing parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces. These goals build on and carry forward the goals and priorities included in the 2018 PROS Plan and were informed by:

- ♦ Public Involvement
- ♦ Inventory Analysis
- ♦ Demand & Needs Analysis

The updated goals have been reorganized to align with the Department's program areas: Administration, Natural Resources, Planning & Capital, Events, and Maintenance & Operations.



Harper Park

## 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.**

### Objective 1.1: Park System Optimization

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.

- ♦ **Action 1.1.1:** Evaluate and potentially divest existing park-owned properties that do not align with countywide park and recreation objectives to optimize resource allocation and management.
- ♦ **Action 1.1.2:** Prioritize acquisition of parcels that enhance connectivity between existing parks, provide equitable access to green spaces, enhance public recreation, protect natural resources, and preserve cultural heritage sites.
- ♦ **Action 1.1.3:** Conduct comprehensive land assessments to identify suitable parcels for acquisition based on community input and ecological assessments.
- ♦ **Action 1.1.4:** Expand existing parks and trail systems to improve public access and provide recreational opportunities for diverse user groups.

### Objective 1.2: Land Acquisition Policies and Procedures

Develop and implement clear policies and procedures for parkland acquisition that prioritize underserved areas lacking access to parks, aligning acquisitions with county park priorities and natural resource conservation goals.

- ♦ **Action 1.2.1:** Establish evaluation criteria to assess potential parkland acquisitions based on park planning and community recreation interests.
- ♦ **Action 1.2.2:** Develop a pre-acquisition assessment process to evaluate parcels for suitability, environmental impact, and community benefit.
- ♦ **Action 1.2.3:** Pursue funding opportunities and partnerships to support parkland acquisition initiatives and enhance countywide recreational opportunities.
- ♦ **Action 1.2.4:** Inventory privately-owned properties suitable for park and open space needs to support strategic acquisition efforts.
- ♦ **Action 1.2.5:** Develop partnerships with conservation organizations and government agencies to leverage funding opportunities for land acquisition.

### Objective 1.3: Park Development and Infrastructure

Develop and enhance park facilities and amenities to accommodate diverse recreational activities and visitor needs.

- ♦ **Action 1.3.1:** Conduct feasibility studies and community surveys in conjunction with partnering entities, e.g., school districts, state, and local agencies, to determine demand for specific amenities (e.g., sports fields, playgrounds, trails).
- ♦ **Action 1.3.2:** Implement phased development plans for new parks, prioritizing essential infrastructure such as parking, habitat connectivity & preservation, restroom facilities, and interpretive signage.
- ♦ **Action 1.3.3:** Establish maintenance protocols to ensure ongoing upkeep and safety of park facilities.

### Objective 1.4: Accessibility Improvements

Enhance park & trail accessibility for all users, including those with disabilities, through design improvements and accommodations.

- ♦ **Action 1.4.1:** Conduct accessibility assessments and implement ADA-compliant upgrades such as accessible trails, parking, and facilities.
- ♦ **Action 1.4.2:** Provide educational resources and training for trail users and volunteers on inclusive trail etiquette and accessibility guidelines.
- ♦ **Action 1.4.3:** Collaborate with disability advocacy groups and community organizations to ensure equitable access to trail experiences for all individuals.
- ♦ **Action 1.4.4:** Identify and prioritize areas within Kitsap County that lack access to parks and recreation facilities based on the standards defined by park classifications (e.g., neighborhood parks within a 10-minute walk, regional parks within a 30-minute drive). Develop and implement strategies to create new parks or enhance facilities in these underserved locations.

### Objective 1.5: Trail Network Expansion

Support the development of a comprehensive network of multi-use trails and greenways by collaborating on planning efforts for trails running through County Parks.

- ♦ **Action 1.5.1:** Collaborate with municipalities, agencies, and private landowners to establish trail easements and rights-of-way when necessary to achieve connection to parks.
- ♦ **Action 1.5.2:** Support the development of trails for diverse user groups, including pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians, and people with disabilities.
- ♦ **Action 1.5.3:** Improve trail signage and wayfinding systems to enhance safety, navigation, and user experience.



## Objective 1.6: Enhance Resource Alignment & Strategic Partnerships

Ensure the sustainable management and growth of Kitsap County's park system by balancing funding and staffing resources with the size and demands of the system. Strengthen financial capacity, increase staffing to align service delivery with community expectations, and leverage strategic partnerships to efficiently meet the community's recreational and environmental needs.

- ♦ **Action 1.6.1:** Explore and implement innovative funding opportunities such as a Metropolitan Park District (MPD), grants, sponsorships, and other revenue-generating initiatives to support park system operations, maintenance, and development.
- ♦ **Action 1.6.2:** Assess and adjust staffing levels to match the scope of the park system and ensure the delivery of high-quality services, maintenance, and programming that meet community expectations.
- ♦ **Action 1.6.3:** Build and strengthen partnerships with other agencies, nonprofit organizations, businesses, and community groups to share resources and responsibilities, enhancing service delivery without placing undue burden on County resources.

## GOAL PR-2.

**Develop and implement natural resource management plans to protect biodiversity and cultural resources, establish buffer zones and wildlife corridors, adopt sustainable land management practices, and preserve cultural heritage sites through interpretive signage, educational programs, and collaboration with local tribes and cultural experts.**

## Objective 2.1: Natural Resource Management Planning

Develop and implement natural resource management plans for all park landscapes managed for conservation and preservation, including but not limited to Heritage Parks, to protect biodiversity, cultural resources, and ecological integrity.

- ♦ **Action 2.1.1:** Conduct biodiversity assessments and habitat mapping to prioritize conservation efforts.
- ♦ **Action 2.1.2:** Establish buffer zones and wildlife corridors to enhance habitat connectivity and resilience.

- ♦ **Action 2.1.3:** Implement sustainable land management practices to mitigate the impacts of climate change on park ecosystems.
- ♦ **Action 2.1.4:** Analyze parklands to identify natural resource values, critical areas, and wildlife habitats to guide management practices and recreation facility development.

## Objective 2.2: Conservation and Stewardship

Establish & enhance comprehensive stewardship programs to protect and manage natural resources within parklands.

- ♦ **Action 2.2.1:** Engage community volunteers in habitat restoration projects, invasive species removal, and monitoring of sensitive ecosystems.
- ♦ **Action 2.2.2:** Collaborate with educational institutions to conduct ecological research and promote environmental education programs.
- ♦ **Action 2.2.3:** Develop partnerships with local tribes and cultural organizations to integrate Indigenous stewardship practices, preserve cultural heritage, and promote traditional ecological knowledge in park management.

## GOAL PR-3.

**Integrate sustainable design into park planning and development to minimize environmental impact and enhance resource efficiency by incorporating green infrastructure, adopting native landscaping, and implementing energy-efficient practices.**

## Objective 3.1: Promote Sustainable Park Design and Management

Integrate sustainable design principles into park planning and development to minimize environmental impact and enhance resource efficiency.

- ♦ **Action 3.1.1:** Incorporate green infrastructure (e.g., rain gardens, permeable surfaces) to manage stormwater and improve water quality.
- ♦ **Action 3.1.2:** Adopt native landscaping practices to enhance biodiversity and reduce maintenance needs.
- ♦ **Action 3.1.3:** Implement energy-efficient and environmentally friendly practices in park facility construction and operation.
- ♦ **Action 3.1.4:** Identify and reduce potential recreational conflicts during park planning to ensure compatible uses and enhance user experience.

## Objective 3.2: Environmental Assessments for Sustainable Planning

Incorporate environmental assessments as a foundational step in park planning and development to ensure sustainable and informed decision-making.

- ♦ **Action 3.2.1:** Conduct environmental assessments, including wildlife habitat studies, vegetation surveys, and critical area evaluations, to guide park planning, park uses, and recreation development while minimizing environmental impact.

## Objective 3.3: Trail Accessibility and Design

Improve the accessibility and safety of park trails for diverse user groups through inclusive design and infrastructure improvements by conducting accessibility audits, constructing accessible trail segments and amenities, and providing accessible trail maps, signage, and educational materials.

- ♦ **Action 3.3.1:** Conduct accessibility audits of park trail systems and prioritize improvements based on ADA guidelines and user feedback.
- ♦ **Action 3.3.2:** Design and construct accessible trail segments, trailheads, and amenities to accommodate visitors with mobility challenges.
- ♦ **Action 3.3.3:** Provide accessible trail maps, signage, and educational materials to enhance visitor experience and navigation.
- ♦ **Action 3.3.4:** Develop and implement a trail classification system to establish design standards and guide maintenance practices, ensuring trails meet the needs of diverse user groups and enhance long-term sustainability.

## Objective 3.4: Water Trails Development

Expand and promote the Kitsap Peninsula Water Trail System to enhance marine recreation opportunities and ecotourism.

- ♦ **Action 3.4.1:** Designate and develop launch sites and day-use facilities along the water trail to improve access and safety for paddlers.
- ♦ **Action 3.4.2:** Partner with Ports and other jurisdictions to establish parking areas and amenities for hand-launch vessels.
- ♦ **Action 3.4.3:** Provide educational programs and interpretive signage to promote environmental stewardship and marine conservation along the water trail.

## GOAL PR-4.

**Enhance visitor amenities and services to improve accessibility and overall experience in County parks by upgrading trail signage, expanding parking and accessibility features, and implementing technology solutions for better engagement.**

## Objective 4.1: Visitor Services Enhancement

Enhance visitor amenities and services to improve accessibility and overall visitor experience.

- ♦ **Action 4.1.1:** Upgrade trail signage, maps, and interpretive displays to provide clear navigation and educational information.
- ♦ **Action 4.1.2:** Expand parking facilities and improve accessibility features to accommodate diverse visitor needs.
- ♦ **Action 4.1.3:** Implement technology solutions (e.g., mobile apps, virtual tours) to enhance visitor engagement and accessibility.

## Objective 4.2: Community Engagement

Foster community stewardship and support through volunteer programs and public outreach initiatives.

- ♦ **Action 4.2.1:** Recruit and train volunteer docents to lead educational programs and assist with park maintenance tasks.
- ♦ **Action 4.2.2:** Establish partnerships with local schools and youth organizations to promote environmental education and outdoor recreation.
- ♦ **Action 4.2.3:** Partner with and host community events and cultural festivals to celebrate local heritage and foster civic pride.
- ♦ **Action 4.2.4:** Partner with and host youth programs and clinics in collaboration with sports leagues and educational institutions to foster athletic development at key regional facilities.
- ♦ **Action 4.2.5:** Host community events and cultural festivals at event facilities to celebrate local heritage and promote tourism.

## Objective 4.3: Trail Outreach Programs

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.

- ♦ **Action 4.3.1:** Develop interpretive signage, educational displays, and multimedia resources to inform visitors about local flora, fauna, and cultural history.



- ♦ **Action 4.3.2:** Partner with schools, community groups, and nature centers to offer field trips, workshops, and nature walks focused on environmental education.
- ♦ **Action 4.3.3:** Organize community events, guided hikes, and outdoor workshops to promote trail use, health, and wellness benefits among residents.

## Objective 4.4: Volunteer Stewardship and Educational Programs

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.

- ♦ **Action 4.4.1:** Expand recruitment efforts to attract a diverse pool of volunteers, including youth, seniors, and corporate groups.
- ♦ **Action 4.4.2:** Recruit and train volunteers from diverse backgrounds to support trail and park maintenance, environmental conservation, and visitor education efforts.
- ♦ **Action 4.4.3:** Provide ongoing training, certification, and professional development opportunities for volunteers to enhance skills in park management, stewardship ethics, and interpretive programming.
- ♦ **Action 4.4.4:** Recognize and reward volunteer contributions through appreciation events, certification milestones, and commendation programs to encourage retention and morale.
- ♦ **Action 4.4.5:** Collaborate with environmental education groups, historical societies, and community organizations to expand interpretive and docent-led programs that highlight natural, cultural, and historic resources.
- ♦ **Action 4.4.6:** Recruit and train volunteers for existing docent programs to lead interpretive tours and educational programs in parklands.
- ♦ **Action 4.4.7:** Encourage the development of interpretive docent programs by environmental education groups, historical societies, and community organizations to diversify educational offerings in parks.

## Objective 4.5: Cultural Heritage Preservation

Preserve and interpret cultural heritage sites within Heritage Parks to educate the public about local history and indigenous cultures.

- ♦ **Action 4.7.1:** Develop interpretive signage and educational programs to highlight the historical significance of park landmarks.
- ♦ **Action 4.7.2:** Collaborate with local tribes and cultural experts to ensure respectful stewardship of ancestral lands and archaeological sites.

- ♦ **Action 4.7.3:** Promote public engagement through heritage tours, workshops, and community events celebrating cultural diversity.

## GOAL PR-5.

**Enhance event and athletic facilities through infrastructure improvements, efficient management, and revenue-generating strategies to support local recreation and attract regional events. Position Kitsap County as a premier recreation destination by showcasing its unique assets, supporting local businesses, and promoting sustainable practices.**

### Objective 5.1: Facility Management Efficiency

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.

- ♦ **Action 5.1.1:** Develop and implement an facility management program to track facility inventory, condition, and lifecycle costs.
- ♦ **Action 5.1.2:** Enhance reservation systems and customer service protocols to improve user experience and maximize facility usage.
- ♦ **Action 5.1.3:** Explore sponsorship and marketing opportunities to increase revenue streams and support facility upgrades and programs.

### Objective 5.2: Recreation Tourism Development

Position Kitsap County as a destination for recreation tourism through strategic marketing and event management.

- ♦ **Action 5.2.1:** Create marketing campaigns highlighting Kitsap County's unique recreational assets, e.g., the birthplace of pickleball, and event venues to attract regional and national events.
- ♦ **Action 5.2.2:** Collaborate with tourism agencies, chambers of commerce, and local businesses to promote lodging, dining, and retail opportunities for event attendees.
- ♦ **Action 5.2.3:** Evaluate economic impacts and return on investment for major events and tourism initiatives to inform future planning and decision-making.
- ♦ **Action 5.2.4:** Establish eco-friendly guidelines and best practices for local outfitters, tour operators and visitors to minimize environmental impact.

## Objective 5.3: Adaptive Event Support and Community Engagement

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.

- ♦ **Action 5.3.1:** Conduct regular assessments of recreational trends, community preferences, and event demands to inform planning and resource allocation.
- ♦ **Action 5.3.2:** Expand the County's inventory of event support equipment and facilities to accommodate a wider range of events and activities.
- ♦ **Action 5.3.3:** Develop partnerships with event organizers, businesses, and community groups to align services with emerging needs and attract diverse events.
- ♦ **Action 5.3.4:** Monitor event satisfaction and community feedback to identify areas for improvement.

## GOAL PR-6.

**Ensure high standards in park maintenance and operations by establishing standardized management practices and effectively allocating resources to sustain park facilities and natural settings.**

### Objective 6.1: Standardized Management Practices

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.

- ♦ **Action 6.1.1:** Develop and update operational field manuals and maintenance protocols based on best practices and industry standards.
- ♦ **Action 6.1.2:** Conduct regular assessments of park facilities and recreational areas to ensure compliance with maintenance standards and visitor expectations.
- ♦ **Action 6.1.3:** Integrate management prescriptions into staffing and funding levels to support sustainable park operations and visitor services.

### Objective 6.2: Resource Allocation and Management

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.



Point No Point Park



- ♦ **Action 6.2.1:** Develop a Park Management Prospectus to identify property assets, public access determinations, and resource management needs.
- ♦ **Action 6.2.2:** Establish maintenance and operation standards to optimize facility longevity and enhance visitor experiences across park facilities.
- ♦ **Action 6.2.3:** Seek partnerships with stormwater programs.

## Objective 6.3: Trail Management Enhancement

Ensure safe and sustainable trail experiences through comprehensive maintenance programs and the use of technology.

- ♦ **Action 6.3.1:** Establish regular trail maintenance schedules and protocols for vegetation management, erosion control, and infrastructure upkeep.
- ♦ **Action 6.3.2:** Train and deploy volunteer trail stewards to assist with trail monitoring, maintenance, and emergency response.
- ♦ **Action 6.3.3:** Utilize technology such as GPS trail markers and mobile apps to improve trail monitoring, emergency response, and visitor safety.
- ♦ **Action 6.3.4:** Develop and implement management practices to improve trail safety and reduce user conflicts.

## Objective 6.4: Trail Maintenance and Sustainability

Implement sustainable trail management practices to preserve natural resources and ensure long-term trail viability.

- ♦ **Action 6.4.1:** Develop a trail maintenance plan with scheduled inspections, routine maintenance tasks, and volunteer engagement opportunities.
- ♦ **Action 6.4.2:** Utilize environmentally friendly trail construction materials and techniques to minimize ecological footprint and erosion risks.
- ♦ **Action 6.4.3:** Collaborate with conservation organizations and volunteer groups to conduct habitat restoration and invasive species management along trail corridors.

## Objective 6.5: Facility Upgrades and Maintenance

Upgrade and maintain event and athletic facilities to attract regional events and support local recreation programs through condition assessments, proactive maintenance schedules, cost-effective management strategies, and improved data tracking systems.

- ♦ **Action 6.5.1:** Conduct facility condition assessments and prioritize infrastructure upgrades based on safety, usability, and market demand.
- ♦ **Action 6.5.2:** Implement a proactive maintenance schedule for buildings, fields, and equipment to extend their operational lifespan.
- ♦ **Action 6.5.3:** Evaluate cost-effective strategies for facility management, including outsourcing services and exploring public-private partnerships.
- ♦ **Action 6.5.4:** Explore options to re-build usage data on key regional facilities, including implementing new data tracking systems.

By implementing these structured goals, objectives, and actions, Kitsap County can effectively plan, manage, and steward its park system to meet current and future community needs while preserving natural and cultural resources for generations to come.



Harper Park



# Capital Improvement Program

Buck Lake Park





Kitsap County Fairgrounds



Point No Point Park



Square Lake Park

## Introduction

The vision outlined in this PROS Plan for Kitsap County is not only a requirement of the Growth Management Act but also essential for enhancing the quality of life and supporting economic development across the county. This plan addresses the immediate needs of Kitsap's diverse communities while preparing the parks system to meet future demands, delivering significant economic, social, and environmental benefits.

This plan update serves as a pivotal blueprint, profoundly impacting residents' quality of life through the County's Parks & Recreation system. The administration of these services, overseen by the County's limited staff within the department, necessitates a strategic allocation of resources from the County's budget. Annual investments in staff, equipment, and supplies are crucial for providing and maintaining a diverse array of outdoor recreational opportunities, ensuring safety, and meeting public expectations.

In harmony with Kitsap County's strategic goals and woven into the Comprehensive Plan's principles, this plan promotes a safe, healthy, and walkable community, cultural appreciation, and environmental preservation, reflecting the aspirations and desired quality of life of the County's residents.

## Public Feedback As a Foundation to the CIP

Kitsap County is committed to addressing public feedback and improving deficiencies within the parks system through a comprehensive Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). This program outlines specific park projects and broader strategies to close service gaps and enhance recreational opportunities. The plan includes both short-term improvements scheduled for implementation over the next six years and long-term visionary projects, ensuring the County can take advantage of funding opportunities and evolving community needs.

The plan's recommendations are designed to tackle current challenges, anticipate future demands, and maximize funding flexibility while aligning with public priorities. By taking a balanced and sustainable approach, Kitsap County aims to enhance its parks system in a way that serves both present and future generations.

Through the Maptionnaire community mapping survey and broader public engagement efforts, key themes emerged that reflect residents' priorities and concerns regarding parks, recreation, and open space planning. These themes, shaped by community input, form the foundation for future improvements and strategic investments in Kitsap County's parks system.

A summary of desired improvements as determined by the public engagement process, included the following:

## Conservation and Landscape Resiliency

Preserving natural areas and promoting environmental resilience were central themes among survey respondents. Residents expressed strong support for protecting forests, wetlands, and critical habitats, particularly at sites such as the Illahee Preserve Heritage Park, Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park, and Buck Lake. Conservation priorities included:

- ♦ Protecting tree buffers, wildlife corridors, and sensitive ecosystems.
- ♦ Expanding stewardship programs, native plant restoration, and invasive species removal.
- ♦ Limiting impervious surfaces and reducing development impacts.
- ♦ Enhancing climate resilience through land conservation and sustainable park design.
- ♦ Establishing designated areas where public access should be restricted to preserve sensitive habitats and protect wildlife.

These efforts align with community desires to balance recreational access with environmental preservation, ensuring that Kitsap County's open spaces remain viable for future generations.

## Connectivity and Trail Development

Residents emphasized the importance of enhancing trail networks to improve connectivity between parks, neighborhoods, and community destinations. Specific concerns and suggestions included:

- ♦ Expanding accessible trails and improving existing trail conditions.
- ♦ Developing safer bike and pedestrian routes, particularly around North Kitsap Heritage Park.
- ♦ Adding new trailheads at locations such as Hansville Greenway, Salisbury Point Park, and Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park.
- ♦ Prioritizing safe routes to schools and local destinations to encourage non-motorized travel.
- ♦ Improving wayfinding, signage, and maintenance on existing trails.
- ♦ Addressing bridge conditions and adding new crossings at high-priority locations such as Newberry Hill Heritage Park and Illahee Preserve Heritage Park.

By improving connectivity and ensuring safe, well-maintained trails, Kitsap County can enhance outdoor recreation opportunities while promoting active transportation and community access.

## Access and Safety

Concerns about park safety and accessibility emerged as a recurring theme. Survey participants identified key areas where safety improvements are needed, including:

- ♦ Addressing homeless encampments and enhancing security near Silverdale and Port Orchard parks.
- ♦ Installing pedestrian and bicycle lanes to improve safety, especially near Kola Kola Park.
- ♦ Reducing speeding and enhancing traffic controls near Harper Park.
- ♦ Increasing park visibility through vegetation management and sightline improvements.
- ♦ Upgrading parking facilities to improve access and reduce safety risks.

Additional community input highlighted the need for better information kiosks at key parks, particularly near Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park and Bill Blomquist Rotary Park, to improve visitor orientation and enhance the user experience.

## Recreation Facilities and Amenities

The community expressed strong support for expanding and enhancing recreation facilities to meet growing demand. Key priorities included:

- ♦ Adding new recreational amenities such as pickleball courts, BMX tracks, pump tracks, and disc golf courses.
- ♦ Expanding indoor sports facilities, including basketball courts, swimming pools, and turf fields.
- ♦ Increasing the number of off-leash dog parks, with strong interest in sites near Bremerton, Kingston, and Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park.
- ♦ Enhancing field access and ensuring equitable distribution of sports facilities across the county.
- ♦ Residents also identified a need for additional park amenities, including:
  - Restroom facilities, with major requests for upgrades at Banner Forest Heritage Park, Kitsap Fairgrounds, and Rolling Hills Golf Course.
  - Picnic shelters and shade structures, particularly near beach access points and recreation centers.
  - Benches and seating areas to improve park comfort, particularly at Anderson Point Park and Long Lake Park.



Expanding these facilities will improve the overall park experience and provide residents with more diverse recreational opportunities.

## Environmental Concerns and Open Space Protection

Community members emphasized the importance of environmental sustainability and the need to balance development with conservation. Key concerns included:

- ♦ Protecting open spaces from urban sprawl and encroachment.
- ♦ Implementing carbon sequestration initiatives through reforestation and sustainable landscaping.
- ♦ Strengthening policies to preserve forests, wetlands, and native ecosystems.
- ♦ Incorporating environmental education programs to increase awareness of conservation efforts.
- ♦ Expanding partnerships with local organizations, including master gardeners and environmental groups, to promote sustainable practices.

By prioritizing open space conservation, Kitsap County can enhance biodiversity, improve climate resilience, and ensure long-term environmental stewardship.

## Community Engagement and Communication

Improving outreach and engagement was a key recommendation from the public engagement process.

- ♦ Enhancing communication about park programs, upcoming projects, and public input opportunities.
- ♦ Expanding partnerships with community organizations, historical societies, and environmental groups.
- ♦ Strengthening volunteer stewardship programs to support park maintenance and conservation efforts.

Improving signage, online resources, and information-

sharing to increase public awareness of park opportunities. By fostering greater community involvement, Kitsap County can ensure that its parks reflect the needs and priorities of residents.

## Maintenance and Facility Upgrades

A consistent theme throughout public feedback was the need for ongoing maintenance and infrastructure improvements. Community concerns focused on:

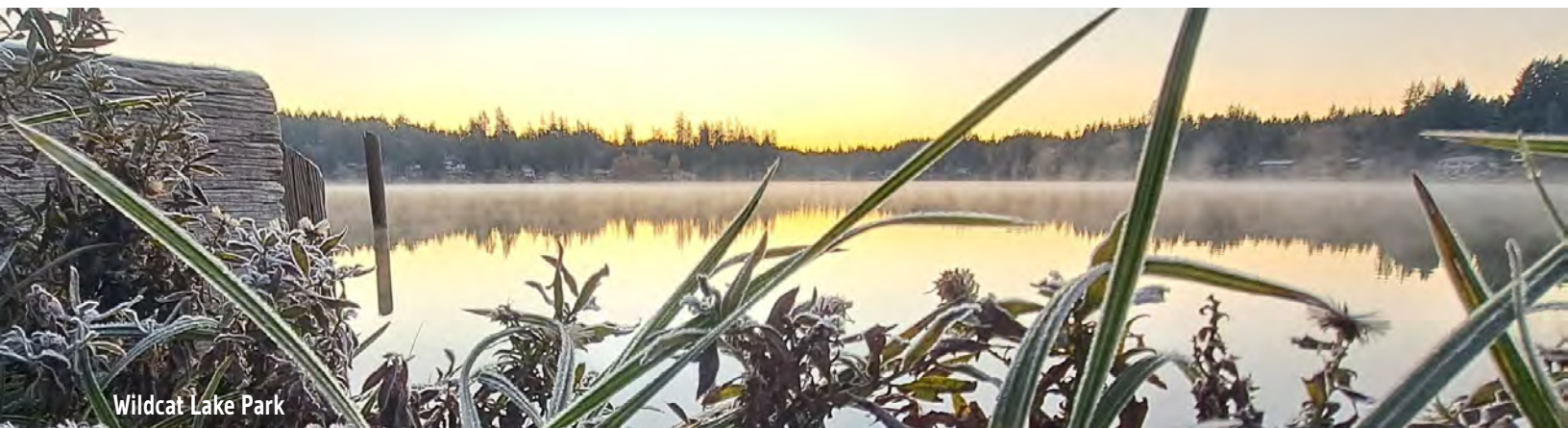
- ♦ Enhancing routine maintenance, particularly for heavily used parks and trails.
- ♦ Upgrading outdated restrooms and ensuring regular cleaning and upkeep.
- ♦ Improving drainage, lighting, and accessibility at sports fields and recreational facilities.
- ♦ Developing standardized maintenance protocols to improve efficiency and service levels.

Addressing these concerns will ensure a higher-quality park experience and extend the lifespan of county park assets.

## Developing The Capital Improvement Program

Spanning 2024 to 2030, this plan provides a strategic framework for park and recreation improvements, designed to be flexible and adaptable to evolving needs. Recognizing that funding availability, public priorities, and policy directions may shift over time, the plan ensures the County can respond to emerging opportunities that enhance park facilities and services.

Capital improvement projects are categorized as short-term (6-year) and long-term (20-year) initiatives, with implementation timelines influenced by factors such as



design and permitting processes, department priorities, grant cycles, budget constraints, and staff capacity. As a living document, the plan will be updated to reflect changing conditions, ensuring continued alignment with community needs and available funding.

Improving Kitsap County's parks system requires a collaborative approach, leveraging not only county funds but also grants, donations, and external partnerships. Strategic project development should align with Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) programs, such as Land and Water Conservation Fund grants, while trail and access projects can integrate with Safe Routes to School grants and other transportation funding sources. By leveraging local, state, and federal resources, the County can maximize investment in parks and recreation while maintaining financial flexibility.

## Kitsap County's Financial Sources

Kitsap County's parks budget is supported by a diverse range of funding sources. The County's General Fund, which includes revenue from property and sales taxes, serves as the primary funding source for the Parks Department's operational budget. Additional funding comes from facility rentals, events, and leases and contracts.

For capital projects, the County utilizes four primary funding sources: Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) II, park impact fees, grants, and the County's General Fund. Occasionally, voter approved bonds may be issued for park development or land acquisition. Additional resources come from donations, sponsorships, and partnerships with businesses, non-profits, and other governmental agencies. Additional capital funding options are discussed in Table 6-2.

## Estimate Of Probable Cost

The CIP provides preliminary cost estimates as a general range for proposed improvements across Kitsap County parks. These estimates serve as a planning and budgeting tool for future design and construction projects and are subject to change based on site conditions, final design, and market fluctuations. Project costs account for inflation, contingencies, permitting, and other soft costs, but do not include staff time.

## Develop Strategic Projects To Maximize Funding Opportunities

Improvements to the parks system is not entirely on the County itself to fund. The County should become more aggressive in pursuing grants and donations from all available funding sources in order to maximize its public investment in County parks, recreation, and open space facilities and services. The County should specifically pair specific improvements with the appropriate Recreation Conservation Office program that have a long history of being funded, such as the Youth Athletic Field or Land Water Conservation Fund grants. In addition, many trail and access projects can be integrated with Safe Route to School grants and other transportation-related projects. Combining park projects with transportation projects will also increase project implementation flexibility and funding opportunities from other County, State, and Federal programs.

## Performance & Monitoring

Kitsap County's plan addresses park, recreation, open space, and trails level of service and needs identified at the time of the plan's creation.

To monitor progress and adapt to changing circumstances, including new grant and funding sources, the following actions should be taken in each annual capital improvement budgeting cycle to verify and confirm the improvements to be implemented:

- ♦ **Annual prioritization review:** An annual evaluation by County staff and Kitsap County's Parks Advisory Board should be undertaken to determine if any changes to the park system, funding availability or demographic shifts will impact the recommendations outlined in this report.
- ♦ **Funding source review:** Anticipated vs. actual funding should be reviewed, particularly related to target grant funding, recognizing competition for grants, likelihood for success based on past grant application performance, and the reality that not all grant applications will be successful.
- ♦ **Maintenance and operational review:** Prior to implementing a park improvement or pursuing funding, maintenance and operational costs should be evaluated and budgeted accordingly.



- ♦ **Coordination with other County projects:** Recognizing that the County has transportation and other public works projects proposed each year, each park and open space improvements should be evaluated and adjusted to provide mutually beneficial efforts that contribute to Kitsap County's desired quality of life.

## Primary Funding Source Key

The proposed CIP project matrix (Table 6-3) includes a keyed set of secured and unsecured funding options, which are also outlined in Table 6-2. Depending on the specific characteristics of each capital improvement project, multiple funding sources may be available to finance its implementation. These funding options are additional options that the County may use to complement other capital project funding sources previously discussed (such as REET II and park impact fees).

Secured funding includes financing mechanisms such as municipal bonds, which may be backed by a dedicated revenue source (revenue bonds) or secured by the County's taxing authority (general obligation bonds). In some cases, projects may be funded directly through the County's parks budget or general fund.

Unsecured funding primarily consists of grant programs, with a particular focus on outdoor recreation grants available through the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) and other competitive funding sources. These grants play a critical role in supplementing local funding and expanding opportunities for capital improvements across the parks system.

## CIP Project Categories

The Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) is a crucial component of Kitsap County's Comprehensive Plan, serving as a strategic guide for the development and maintenance of the county's infrastructure and facilities over a 20-year horizon. The CFP encompasses a wide range of projects, including transportation systems, parks, utilities, and public buildings, ensuring that the county can accommodate anticipated growth and meet the evolving needs of its residents.

In alignment with the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA), Kitsap County is mandated to periodically update its Comprehensive Plan, including the CFP, to address changing conditions and project future requirements. The most recent update was formally adopted on December 2, 2024, with all changes set to take effect on April 1, 2025.

This PROS Plan supports the CFP by outlining the county's vision, goals, and policies, which in turn inform the prioritization and implementation of capital projects. Conversely, the CFP operationalizes the Comprehensive Plan by detailing specific projects and investments that align with the county's strategic objectives. By integrating public input and adhering to the guidelines established in the Comprehensive Plan, the CFP ensures that infrastructure development is both responsive to community needs and consistent with long-term planning goals.

As part of this effort, the PROS Plan organizes its projects into the following categories, reflecting the county's commitment to a connected, accessible, and sustainable park system. These categories provide a focused framework for guiding park improvement initiatives and ensuring that investments address diverse community needs:



Kitsap County Fairgrounds

## Land Acquisition

Expanding the park system through strategic land acquisition ensures the availability of green spaces for future generations. This category includes the purchase of new land parcels to connect existing parks, create new recreational opportunities, and protect critical natural areas from development. Land acquisition efforts prioritize expanding public access, preserving ecologically significant sites, and enhancing recreational connectivity.

## Park Access

Improving park access is essential for ensuring that all visitors can easily and safely reach recreational spaces. This category covers the development and enhancement of parking facilities, including expanding existing lots, adding new ones, and ensuring accessible parking for all users. It also includes road safety improvements, and the creation of new entrances and trailheads to enhance connectivity and ease of access.

## Park Amenities

Enhancing park amenities improves the overall visitor experience and usability of public spaces. This category includes adding and upgrading features such as picnic areas, shade structures, benches, playgrounds, restrooms, and security lighting. These improvements make parks more welcoming, comfortable, and accessible for visitors of all ages and abilities.

## Athletic Facilities

Providing high-quality sports and recreation facilities is key to meeting the growing demand for both casual play and organized sports. This category includes developing new athletic fields, upgrading existing fields with synthetic turf, installing lighting for extended use, and expanding sports offerings such as disc golf, pickleball, and BMX biking. These enhancements ensure that facilities are safe, well-maintained, and capable of supporting a variety of athletic activities and community events.

**Table 6-1: Project Categories**

Key	Category	Description
1	Land Acquisition	Purchase of property for management by the Parks department. Purpose may be to protect natural resources or develop park and recreation facilities.
2	Park Access	Improving access to park lands through parking lot, trailhead, or other ingress/egress development.
3	Park Amenities	Repairing, replacing, or adding new singular park features. May include picnic shelters, restrooms, playgrounds, or other facilities.
4	Athletic Facilities	Repairing, replacing, or adding new a facilities that supports athletic use. May include soccer fields, baseball or softball fields, tennis courts, pickleball courts, or other facilities.
5	Event Facilities	Repairing, replacing, or adding new special event facilities or venues. May include existing building like the Pavilion, President's Hall, Fairgrounds, community buildings, or other facilities.
6	Trails	Repairing, replacing, or adding new significant trails or trail improvements. May include trails constructed to ADA standards.
7	Natural Resources	Projects focused on restoration, improving sustainability, or enhancing the protection of natural environment elements. May include wildlife habitat, shorelines and waterways, or vegetation and forests.
8	Park Development	New park development or re-development of existing parks. Projects generally will consist of multiple project types (listed above) in the same project scope.
9	Other	Project categories not listed above. May include projects that are an emergency response to an unforeseen situation, community needs, major repairs to existing facilities, or opportunities.





Harper Park

## Event Facilities

To better accommodate community gatherings, festivals, and large-scale events, this category focuses on improving event infrastructure. Projects include developing dedicated event spaces, expanding seating and spectator areas, and installing amenities to support concerts, markets, and public celebrations. These investments strengthen the county's ability to host cultural, recreational, and tourism-based events that benefit residents and local businesses.

## Trails

Expanding and improving the trail network enhances both recreation and transportation options. This category includes developing new trails, repairing and upgrading existing ones, improving trailheads, and adding wayfinding signage. Projects prioritize multi-use connectivity, accessibility, and safety while integrating trails with regional networks, schools, and transit hubs. Additionally, trail expansions support active lifestyles and improve non-motorized transportation options throughout the county.

## Natural Resources

Preserving and restoring the natural environment is essential for ecological health and long-term sustainability. This category focuses on habitat restoration, invasive species removal, reforestation, and the creation of greenways and ecological corridors. These efforts help protect biodiversity, improve water quality, and enhance climate resilience while maintaining the county's commitment to environmental stewardship.

## Park Development

Planning and design are essential for ensuring that future park improvements are strategic, well-coordinated, and aligned with community needs. This category includes updating master plans, conducting feasibility studies, and developing site-specific designs for new parks and major renovations. Thoughtful planning ensures that park projects are efficiently executed and financially sustainable.

## Other

This category includes miscellaneous projects that do not fit within the other defined categories but are essential to enhancing the park system. These may involve specialized initiatives, pilot programs, or innovative projects that address unique community needs, major repairs to existing facilities, or other unforeseen opportunities.

**Table 6-2: Capital Improvement Project Cost & Funding Key**

Abbreviation or Denotation		Description
Cost Rating		
\$		\$0-\$50K
\$\$		\$50-\$200K
\$\$\$		\$200K-\$500K
\$\$\$\$		\$500K+
Possible Funding Options		
<b>A</b>	ALEA	Grants may be used for the acquisition, improvement, or protection of aquatic lands for public purposes. They also may be used to provide or improve public access to the waterfront.
<b>B</b>	BFP	Boating Facilities Program provides grants to acquire, develop, and renovate facilities for motorized boats and other watercraft, including launching ramps, guest moorage, and support facilities.
<b>BI</b>	BIG	Develop and renovate boating facilities targeting guest recreational boats twenty-six feet and larger. Grants also may be used for boater education.
<b>BO</b>	BONDS	Councilmanic or General Obligation Bonds
<b>C</b>	CFC	Capacity Program for Forests & Communities . New grant program for collaboration-based activities that aim to benefit forests and grasslands that are currently managed by the US Forest Service through the National Forest System.
<b>CF</b>	CFP	Grant program to buy and restore working forests while creating recreational opportunities in forests.
<b>F</b>	FARR	Program to acquire, develop, and renovate firearm ranges and archery training and practice facilities.
<b>FE</b>	FED	Federal Programs via EPA, Commerce, USFW
<b>L</b>	LWCF	Funding to preserve and develop outdoor recreation resources, including community parks, trails, and wildlife lands.
<b>LO</b>	LOCAL	Other Local Funding Options
<b>N</b>	NOVA - TRAILS	Program to develop and manage recreation opportunities for such activities as cross-country skiing, hiking, horseback riding, mountain bicycling, hunting, fishing, sightseeing, motorcycling, and riding all-terrain and four-wheel drive vehicles.
<b>NC</b>	NCLI	Grants for a wide range of outdoor education and recreation activities including environmental education, leadership development, outdoor recreation and adventure, stewardship activities, and camp programs.
<b>O</b>	OLG	Grant program to fund hands-on environmental education, nature-based learning, STEM, habitat restoration, and field research activities.
<b>OT</b>	OTHER	Gift deeds, conservation / access easements, landowner/Incentives, land trusts, etc.
<b>R</b>	RTP	Recreational Trails Program provides federal funds to rehabilitate and maintain trails that provide a backcountry experience.
<b>T</b>	TRANS	Surface And safety transportation improvements grants via HSIP, STBG, TAP, DOT, MURSA, TIB, and WTSC
<b>W1</b>	WWRP - REC	Funding for a broad range of land acquisition, protection and outdoor recreation, including local and state parks, trails, water access, and the conservation and restoration of state land.
<b>W2</b>	WWRP - HAB	Funding for a broad range of land conservation efforts.
<b>Y</b>	YAF	Grants to buy land and develop or renovate outdoor athletic facilities such as ball fields, courts, swimming pools, mountain bike tracks, and skate parks that serve youth through the age of eighteen.
<b>CO</b>	COAF	Currently one-time programs that are not accepting any more applications. May be recurring grant programs, but funding and frequency is unknown.
<b>LM</b>	LPM	
<b>P</b>	PRA	



Table 6-3: Capital Improvement Project (CIP) List - Matrix

District	Project Name	Description	Project Category	Priority / Year		Cost Rating	Funding Options
				1-6 Years	6+ Years		
Trails, Trailheads, Parking, and Access							
C	Newberry Hill Heritage Park	Add parking lot off of Seabeck Highway	2	X		\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
N	Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park	Add parking and access	2	X		\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
N	Hansville Greenway	Improve connection from Buck Lake Park parking lot and restrooms to Hansville Greenway trails	2	X		\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	Banner Forest Heritage Park	Improve parking and access	2	X		\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
N	Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park	Improve some trails to be barrier-free and wheelchair friendly	6	X		\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
C	Newberry Hill Heritage Park	Improve some trails to be barrier-free and wheelchair friendly	6	X		\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
N	Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park	Improve parking at Bay View Trailhead off of Highway 104	2	X		\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	Banner Forest Heritage Park	Improve some trails to be barrier-free and wheelchair friendly	6	X		\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
C	Illahee Preserve Heritage Park	Improve some trails to be barrier-free and wheelchair friendly	6	X		\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	Wicks Lake Park	Develop park to include trail network in park, parking lots, and access	2	X		\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
N	North Kitsap Heritage Park	Improve access at south side of park	2	X		\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	Anderson Point Park	Expand Parking Lot	2	X		\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
N	North Kitsap Heritage Park	Improve parking lot off of Norman Road	2	X		\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	Coulter Creek Heritage Park	Improved Entrance/Parking Lot, utilities at SW trailhead	2	X		\$\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	Coulter Creek Heritage Park	Add trailhead at Calvinwood Lodge	6	X		\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	Wynn-Jones Preserve	Improve parking	2	X		\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
N	Eglon Forest	Develop trail network in park and improve some trails to be barrier-free and wheelchair friendly	6		X	\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
N	Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park	Add park access at west side of park	2		X	\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
C	Fairgrounds & Event Center	Parking Lot Improvements	2		X	\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
C	Illahee Preserve Heritage Park	Improve parking and access	2		X	\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
N	North Kitsap Heritage Park	Improve some trails to be barrier-free and wheelchair friendly	6		X	\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
C	Chico Salmon Park	Improve Parking Lot	2		X	\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
N	North Kitsap Heritage Park	Improve parking lot off of Miller Bay Road	2		X	\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO

**Table 6-3: Capital Improvement Project (CIP) List - Matrix**

District	Project Name	Description	Project Category	Priority / Year		Cost Rating	Funding Options
				1-6 Years	6+ Years		
S	Veterans Memorial Park	Improve Parking Lot	2		X	\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
N	Eglon Forest	Improve Parking & Access	2		X	\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	Coulter Creek Heritage Park	Add trailhead to McCormick Village	2, 6		X	\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	Bandix Dog Park	Pave parking lot and entrance road	2		X	\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
N	A Quiet Place Park	Improve Parking	2		X	\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
N	Pilot Point Park	New Trailhead at southern entrance	6		X	\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
C	Anderson Hill Athletic Fields	Improve Parking Lot	2		X	\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	Coulter Creek Heritage Park	Improved Entrance/Parking Lot @ W side	2		X	\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
Recreation Facilities (District #1)							
N	Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park	Develop new park area at north parking lot (may include: playground, picnic shelter, benches, uncovered picnic tables)	2, 3, 4	X		\$\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
N	Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park	Add a picnic shelter at mountain bike ride park	3	X		\$	BO, W1, L, LO
N	Location TBD	Add ADA accessible and inclusive playgrounds	3	X		\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
N	Island Lake Park	Add a playground near picnic shelter and restrooms	3	X		\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
N	Norwegian Point Park	Add fishing pier	3	X		\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
N	Location TBD	Add pickleball courts	3	X		\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
N	Norwegian Point Park	Add a picnic shelter	3	X		\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
N	Location TBD	Add a disc golf course	3	X		\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
N	Island Lake Park	Add a picnic shelter	3	X		\$	BO, W1, L, LO
N	Norwegian Point Park	Renovate fishing cabins	3	X		\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
N	Buck Lake Park	Improve restrooms	3		X	\$\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
N	North Kitsap Heritage Park	Add picnic area (may include: picnic shelter, benches, uncovered picnic tables)	3		X	\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
N	Location TBD	Add off-leash dog park	3		X	\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO



**Table 6-3: Capital Improvement Project (CIP) List - Matrix**

District	Project Name	Description	Project Category	Priority / Year		Cost Rating	Funding Options
				1-6 Years	6+ Years		
N	Location TBD	Add athletic fields (soccer, baseball, softball, lacrosse, etc.)	4		X	\$\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
N	Buck Lake Park	Add a picnic shelter	3		X	\$	BO, W1, L, LO
N	Buck Lake Park	Add off-leash dog park	3		X	\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
N	All Parks	Pursue acquisition of parcels that improve equitable access to parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces.	1	X	X	\$-\$\$\$\$	A, L, W1, OT
N	All Parks	Conduct audits and improve energy efficiency at park facilities	9	X	X	\$-\$\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
Recreation Facilities (District #3)							
C	Newberry Hill Heritage Park	Add restrooms	3	X		\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
C	Illahee Preserve Heritage Park	Add restrooms	3	X		\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
C	Wildcat Lake Park	Renovate park (may include: improve restrooms, replace playground, add a picnic shelter)	3	X		\$\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
C	Fairgrounds & Event Center	Add outdoor open lawn space for festivals and special events	3	X		\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
C	Fairgrounds & Event Center	Develop new park area (may include: new playground, picnic shelter, restrooms)	3	X		\$\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
C	Fairgrounds & Event Center	Improve special event buildings (Pavilion, President's Hall, Eagle's Nest, barns)	3,5	X		\$\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
C	Location TBD	Add ADA accessible and inclusive playgrounds	3	X		\$\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
C	Location TBD	Add pickleball courts	3	X		\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
C	Newberry Hill Heritage Park	Add picnic area (may include: picnic shelter, benches, uncovered picnic tables)	3	X		\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
C	Fairgrounds & Event Center	Improve athletic fields with artificial turf (Gordon 2 soccer field, Lobe 1 and 4 baseball fields)	4	X		\$\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
C	Fairgrounds & Event Center	Expand disc golf course	3	X		\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
C	Nick's Lagoon	Add outdoor classroom shelter	3	X		\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
C	Rolling Hills Golf Course	Improve golf course facilities (may include irrigations, grounds, and clubhouse)	3	X		\$\$\$\$	
C	Anderson Hill Athletic Fields	Improve soccer fields with artificial turf, lights, and new restrooms	4	X		\$\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO

**Table 6-3: Capital Improvement Project (CIP) List - Matrix**

District	Project Name	Description	Project Category	Priority / Year		Cost Rating	Funding Options
				1-6 Years	6+ Years		
C	Chico Salmon Park	Add outdoor classroom shelter	3		X	\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
C	Location TBD	Add a disc golf course	3		X	\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
C	Fairgrounds & Event Center	Improve special event arenas (Thunderbird, Boand)	5		X	\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
C	All Parks	Pursue acquisition of parcels that improve equitable access to parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces.	1	X	X	\$-\$\$\$\$	A, L, W1, OT
C	All Parks	Conduct audits and improve energy efficiency at park facilities	9	X	X	\$-\$\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
Recreation Facilities (District #2)							
S	Banner Forest Heritage Park	Add restrooms	3	X		\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	Long Lake Park	Renovate park (may include: improve restrooms, replace playground, add a picnic shelter, benches)	3	X		\$\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	South Kitsap Regional Park	Improve restrooms near playground	3	X		\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	Horseshoe Lake Park	Renovate park (may include: improve restrooms, replace playground, add a picnic shelter)	3	X		\$\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	Location TBD	ADA accessible and inclusive playgrounds	3	X		\$\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	Howe Farm Park	Renovate barn for special events	3	X		\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	Veteran's Memorial Park	Develop park (may include: restrooms, playground, picnic shelter, benches)	3	X		\$\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	Wicks Lake Park	Develop park (may include: restrooms, playground, picnic shelter, benches)	3	X		\$\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	Coulter Creek Heritage Park	Renovate Calvinwood cabins and lodge	3	X		\$\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	South Kitsap Regional Park	Improve soccer fields with artificial turf, lights, and new restrooms	4	X		\$\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	Veteran's Memorial Park	Improve soccer fields with artificial turf and lights	4	X		\$\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	Location TBD	Add pickleball courts	3		X	\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	Village Greens Golf Course	Improve golf course facilities (may include irrigations, grounds, and clubhouse)	3		X	\$\$\$\$	
S	Anderson Point Park	Add restrooms and benches	3		X	\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO



**Table 6-3: Capital Improvement Project (CIP) List - Matrix**

District	Project Name	Description	Project Category	Priority / Year		Cost Rating	Funding Options
				1-6 Years	6+ Years		
S	Howe Farm Park	Add pea patch/community gardens	3		X	\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	Coulter Creek Heritage Park	Add restrooms	3		X	\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	Banner Forest Heritage Park	Add picnic area (may include: picnic shelter, benches, uncovered picnic tables)	3		X	\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	Location TBD	Add a disc golf course	3		X	\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	South Kitsap Regional Park	Add BMX/Pump Track	3		X	\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	Bandix Dog Park	Renovate park (may include: new restrooms, picnic shelter, benches)	3		X	\$\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	Harper Park	Add a playground	3		X	\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	Coulter Creek Heritage Park	Add picnic area (may include: picnic shelter, benches, uncovered picnic tables)	3		X	\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	South Kitsap Regional Park	Add additional picnic shelters	3		X	\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	Wicks Lake Park	Add a disc golf course	3		X	\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	Bill Bloomquist Rotary Park	Renovate park (may include: improve softball fields, restroom)	3		X	\$\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	Harper Park	Add sport courts	3		X	\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	Wynn-Jones Preserve	Add picnic area (may include: picnic shelter, benches, uncovered picnic tables)	3		X	\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	All Parks	Pursue acquisition of parcels that improve equitable access to parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces.	1	X	X	\$-\$\$\$\$	A, L, W1, OT
S	All Parks	Conduct audits and improve energy efficiency at park facilities	9	X	X	\$-\$\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
Safety Projects & Enhancements							
C	Silverdale Waterfront Park	Repair damage to undercut headwall	9	X		\$\$\$\$	A, BO, W1, L, LO
C	Silverdale Wetlands	Improve safety measures to reduce crime	9	X		\$	LO
N	Point No Point Park	Add a handrail to the bluff stairs	2	X		\$	LO

**Table 6-3: Capital Improvement Project (CIP) List - Matrix**

District	Project Name	Description	Project Category	Priority / Year		Cost Rating	Funding Options
				1-6 Years	6+ Years		
N	Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park	Improve safety measures to reduce crime	9	X		\$\$	LO
N	Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park	Improve safety measures for multi-use trails and user conflicts	6, 9	X		\$\$	LO
C	Illahee Preserve Heritage Park	Improve safety measures to reduce crime	9	X		\$\$	LO
N	Silverdale Rotary Gateway Park	Improve safety measures to reduce crime	9	X		\$\$	LO
S	Horseshoe Lake Park	Improve safety measures to reduce crime	9	X		\$\$	LO
S	South Kitsap Regional Park	Improve safety measures to reduce crime	9	X		\$\$	LO
C	Old Mill Park	Improve safety measures to reduce crime	9	X		\$\$	LO
C	Newberry Hill Heritage Park	Improve parking	2	X		\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	Howe Farm Park	Fix fencing in off-leash dog park	3	X		\$	BO, W1, L, LO
N	Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park	Improve parking at Bay View Trailhead off of Highway 104	2	X		\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
C	Fairgrounds & Event Center	Improve buildings for better ADA access	2	X		\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	Howe Farm Park	Improve maintenance of off-leash dog park	3	X		\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	Long Lake Park	Add lighting to the parking lot	2	X		\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
C	Fairgrounds & Event Center	Replace playground	3	X		\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
N	Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park	Increase accessibility	2, 9	X		\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	South Kitsap Regional Park	Fix pavement at park entrance off of Jackson Avenue	2	X		\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	Veteran's Memorial Park	Add safety lighting	3	X		\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	Veteran's Memorial Park	Improve drainage near ballfields	4	X		\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	Wicks Lake Park	Add a parking area	2	X		\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	South Kitsap Regional Park	Add a new gate to the park entrance off of Lund Street	2	X		\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	Coulter Creek Heritage Park	Add lighted signs	3	X		\$	BO, W1, L, LO
N	Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park	Add areas for bike parking	3		X	\$	BO, W1, L, LO



**Table 6-3: Capital Improvement Project (CIP) List - Matrix**

District	Project Name	Description	Project Category	Priority / Year		Cost Rating	Funding Options
				1-6 Years	6+ Years		
S	Anderson Point Park	Improve trail to beach for walkability and sustainability	6		X	\$\$	LO
C	Fairgrounds & Event Center	Add lighting to parking lots	2		X	\$\$\$	LO
C	Fairgrounds & Event Center	Add safety lighting	2		X	\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	South Kitsap Regional Park	Improve trails for better rainy weather sustainability	6		X	\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
N	Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park	Add lighting to the Bay View parking lot	2		X	\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
Conservation / Landscape Resilience							
N	Port Gamble Forest Heritage Park	Construct bridge over creek on Springs trail	6	X		\$	BO, W1, L, LO
N, C, S	All Parks	Decommission or remove trails that cross wetlands and other critical areas	6	X	X	\$\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
N	Indianola Woodlands	Replace bridge over creek near beach	6	X		\$	BO, W1, L, LO
N	Eglon Forest	Develop natural resource management plan for new park	7	X		\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
S	Coulter Creek Heritage Park	Create wetland and pond management plan including hydrologic analysis, beaver habitat, and recreation impacts analysis	7	X		\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
C	Guillemot Cove	Remove boardwalk and bridge from estuary and relocate trail crossing	6	X		\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
C	Guillemot Cove	Remove cabin and headwall on south side of estuary	7	X		\$\$\$	BO, W1, L, LO
N, C, S	All Parks	Pursue acquisition of parcels that align with natural resource conservation goals.	1	X	X	\$-\$\$\$\$	A, L, W1, OT



**Wildcat Lake Park**



# Plan Adoption



Island Lake Park





## Adoption Process

In order for this Plan to be formally adopted, it must undergo a thorough review process involving several entities, including opportunities for public input. The adoption process culminates in a resolution, ordinance, or similar instrument demonstrating formal approval of the plan and planning process by the governing entity. This Plan is designed to align closely with the recently approved Comprehensive Plan and Capital Facilities Plan (CFP), ensuring consistency with broader community goals and priorities.

In Kitsap County, the regulatory procedures to approve this Plan involve multiple steps. First, the Plan must be reviewed by the Parks Advisory Board, which provides recommendations based on public feedback and staff input. Next, the Plan is presented to the Planning Commission for further review and recommendations to ensure alignment with county policies, including the Comprehensive Plan and CFP. Following these steps, the Plan undergoes review by the Board of County Commissioners, who conduct a public hearing before adopting the Plan through a formal resolution. These steps ensure compliance with state and local regulations and provide transparency throughout the process.

Following formal adoption by the governing body, the Plan must be submitted to RCO for approval. Only after receiving RCO approval can the organization apply for grants, which remain available for up to six calendar years from the date of the governing body's adoption of the Plan.

With the depth of public and staff involvement throughout the execution of this planning process, the following reviews and approvals have been incorporated to ensure alignment with the Comprehensive Plan, the CFP, and community priorities:

1. Parks Advisory Board Recommendation
2. Planning Commission Recommendation
3. Board of County Commissioners Resolution
4. RCO Self-Certification Checklist

# Parks Advisory Board Recommendation

Placeholder for PAB



# Planning Commission Recommendation

Placeholder for Planning  
Commission

# Council Recommendation

Placeholder for Council  
Resolution



# RCO Self-Certification Checklist

Planning Eligibility Self-Certification Form		
Use this form to certify that the need for any grant projects have been developed through an appropriate planning process. Provide the completed form with the subject plans and adoption documentation to RCO via e-mail or other means of electronic access (i.e. Web link, Box.com, etc.).		
Organization Name:		
Contact Name:		
Adoption Date of Submitted Documents:		
Seeking Eligibility for: <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation Grants <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation Grants <input type="checkbox"/> Both		
Initial Each to Certify Completion	Plan Element Certification	Document and Page Number Location of Information
	1. <b>Goals, objectives:</b> The attached plan supports our project with broad statements of intent (goals) <i>and</i> measures that describe when these intents will be attained (objectives). Goals may include a higher level of service.	
	2. <b>Inventory:</b> The plan includes a description of the service area's facilities, lands, programs, and their condition. <i>(This may be done in a quantitative format or in a qualitative/narrative format.)</i>	
	3. <b>Public involvement:</b> The planning process gave the public ample opportunity to be involved in plan development and adoption.	
	4a. <b>Demand and need analysis:</b> In the plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An analysis defines priorities, as appropriate, for acquisition, development, preservation, enhancement, management, etc., and explains why these actions are needed.</li> <li>The process used in developing the analysis assessed community desires for parks, recreation, open space, and/or habitat, as appropriate, in a manner appropriate for the service area (personal observation, informal talks, formal survey(s), workshops, etc.).</li> </ul>	
	4b. <b>Level of Service assessment (optional):</b> An assessment of the criterion appropriate to your community. Possibly establish a higher level of service as a plan goal (above).	
	5. <b>Capital Improvement Program:</b> The plan includes a capital improvement/facility program that lists land acquisition, development, and renovation projects by year of anticipated implementation; include funding source. The program includes any capital project submitted to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board for funding.	
	6. <b>Adoption:</b> The plan and process has received formal governing body approval ( <i>that is, city/county department head, district ranger, regional manager/supervisor, etc., as appropriate</i> ). Attach signed resolution, letter, or other adoption instrument.	

# RCO Self-Certification Checklist

**Certification Signature**

I certify that this information is true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

Print/Type Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature (Hand Written or Digital): \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_