

# X. PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE



CHARTING A FUTURE COURSE

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## ◆ RELATIONSHIP TO THE FRAMEWORK GOALS ◆

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The **Parks, Recreation and Open Space Element** highlights the following Framework Goals:

- ✓ **FG-1 Maintain and enhance Kirkland’s unique character.**
  - FG-2 Support a strong sense of community.
  - FG-3 Maintain vibrant and stable residential neighborhoods and mixed-use development, with housing for diverse incomes, ages, and lifestyles.
  - FG-4 Promote a strong and diverse economy.
- ✓ **FG-5 Protect and preserve environmentally sensitive areas and reduce greenhouse gas emissions to ensure a healthy environment.**
  - FG-6 Identify, protect and preserve the City’s historic resources, and enhance the identity of those areas and neighborhoods in which they exist.
  - FG-7 Encourage a sustainable community.
- ✓ **FG-8 Maintain and enhance Kirkland’s strong physical, visual, and perceptual linkages to Lake Washington.**
- ✓ **FG-9 Provide safety and accessibility for those who use alternative modes of transportation within and between neighborhoods, public spaces, and business districts and to regional facilities.**
  - FG-10 Create a transportation system which allows the mobility of people and goods by providing a variety of transportation options.
- ✓ **FG-11 Maintain existing park facilities, while seeking opportunities to expand and enhance the current range and quality of facilities.**
  - FG-12 Ensure public safety.
- ✓ **FG-13 Maintain existing adopted levels of service for important public facilities.**
  - FG-14 Plan for a fair share of regional growth, consistent with State and regional goals to minimize low-density sprawl and direct growth to urban areas.
  - FG-15 Solve regional problems that affect Kirkland through regional coordination and partnerships.
  - FG-16 Promote active citizen involvement and outreach education in development decisions and planning for Kirkland’s future.
  - FG-17 Establish development regulations that are fair and predictable.

# X. PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE

## A. INTRODUCTION



*“Puddle Jumpers” sculpture at Marina Park*

Parks and other open spaces make an important distinct contribution to the landscape and quality of life in Kirkland. Imagine Kirkland without its distinctive waterfront parks and other parks and open spaces dotted throughout the City. Over the past several decades, Kirkland has had the vision to aggressively pursue land acquisition and park development for the public’s enjoyment. An outstanding mosaic of parks and facilities has evolved.

The City continues to be faced with the challenge of meeting the park and recreation needs of a diverse range of age groups and interests throughout the entire City. At the same time, the window of opportunity to acquire available land suitable for parks and open space is shrinking. Consequently, the City must strategically and creatively position itself to deal with the open space demands of those areas within its urban growth boundaries. Renovation of certain parks is important to keep them safe and functional and to reduce unnecessary maintenance costs.

Looking at current City parks and recreation services through the year 2022, the following important issues and opportunities face Kirkland:

- (1) Acquiring and developing additional parkland in areas of the City where parkland and recreational opportunities are deficient, by

providing neighborhood parks, community parks, and open space.

- (2) Providing additional pedestrian and bicycle trails and linkages, including the acquisition of greenways, between parks, open spaces, and neighborhoods.
- (3) Developing facilities such as restrooms and additional benches in new and existing parks.
- (4) Meeting City indoor recreation needs for fitness, athletics, recreation classes, and meeting space.
- (5) Enhancing and expanding recreational opportunities at existing waterfront parks.
- (6) Providing ongoing renovation and maintenance of parks and facilities.
- (7) Continuing and enhancing “partnerships” with the Lake Washington School District, King County, and neighboring cities in the mutual use and development of parks and recreation facilities.
- (8) Encouraging healthy lifestyles by providing a variety of opportunities for physical exercise.
- (9) Providing diverse and affordable recreation programs to meet citizen needs and interests, particularly those of youth, teens, older adults and residents with special needs, and complement programs offered by other recreation providers in the community.
- (10) Promoting habitat conservation through acquisition and preservation of important natural areas, and continuing development of interpretive education programs.

### *EXISTING CONDITIONS*

The existing City-owned park system contains 554 acres, of which about 209 acres are developed. Much of the developed park system consists of 10 waterfront parks, 22 neighborhood parks, seven community parks and five nature parks. The balance of the City’s

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# X. PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE

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park acreage can be classified as natural/open space areas and underdeveloped community and neighborhood parkland.

In addition to City-owned parks, other public parks in Kirkland include the King County-owned Big Finn Hill Park (220 acres) and Juanita Woodlands (37 acres); O.O. Denny Park (46 acres), which is owned by the city of Seattle; and Totem Lake Park (17 acres) which is owned by the King Conservation District.

A detailed inventory and classification of existing parks, open space, and recreational facilities is contained in the parks functional plan, titled Kirkland's Comprehensive Park, Open Space, and Recreation Plan. That inventory is adopted as background for this Element as though set forth herein.

## Waterfront Parks

Kirkland's waterfront parks (both city and non-city owned) are a distinctive part of the City's park system. They bring identity and character to the park system and contribute significantly to Kirkland's charm and quality of life. The 14 waterfront parks (two of which are classified officially as nature parks) stretch from the Yarrow Bay Wetlands on the south, to O.O. Denny Park on the north, providing Kirkland residents year-round waterfront access. Kirkland's waterfront parks provide citizens a diversity of waterfront experiences for different tastes and preferences. Citizens can enjoy the passive and natural surroundings of Juanita Bay and Kiwanis Park as well as the more active swimming and sunbathing areas of Houghton and Marsh Parks. These parks truly identify Kirkland as a waterfront community.

The high visibility and use of Kirkland's waterfront parks require high levels of maintenance, periodic renovation, and security. Swimming beaches, docks, recreational moorage facilities, boat ramps, and shoreline walkways, where issues of liability are very important, must be kept safe and in good condition for the public's enjoyment and use.



*Marina Park in Downtown Kirkland*

## Natural Park Areas

The natural park areas, such as Juanita Bay Park, Yarrow Bay Wetlands, Heronfield Wetlands, Totem Lake Park, and Watershed Park provide residents with important natural open space and critical urban wildlife habitat. They are part of providing a balanced park system for citizens. Passive recreation uses such as walking, bird watching, interpretive educational programs and signage, and nonmotorized trail systems are appropriate for these sites.

## Community Parks

Community parks are usually 15 to 30 acres in size and are generally defined as larger, diverse recreation areas serving both formalized active recreation needs as well as recreation use benefiting the neighborhood surrounding the site. The City currently has a shortage of developed community parks. Community parks are where the majority of active recreation occurs. Community parks often include recreation facilities such as sport fields and/or community centers.

## Neighborhood Parks

Kirkland's major need in parkland is in neighborhood parks. Neighborhood parks serve both limited active and passive recreation needs of a residential neighborhood within a quarter-mile radius and are usually no more than 15 acres and no less than 0.5 acres in size.

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# X. PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE

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## *RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER ELEMENTS*

The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element supports the Community Character Element by establishing policies to ensure continued provision of the parks and open space amenities that help establish Kirkland's character. The Element functions in concert with the Natural Environment Element by establishing policies for the acquisition, development, and preservation of City-owned natural areas. The Land Use Element is supported through policies to ensure continued provision of facilities and services to support anticipated growth. In addition, this Element establishes policies for the coordination of funding and level of service requirements set forth in the Capital Facilities Element. Finally, this Element works in tandem with the Shoreline Area Chapter by establishing policies for the acquisition, development, and preservation of City-owned shoreline recreation, open space, and natural areas.

## *RELATIONSHIP TO PARK, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN*

The Park, Recreation, and Open Space Comprehensive Plan is the City's long-range functional plan for Kirkland's parks, open spaces, and recreational uses. The Plan is prepared by the Department of Parks and Community Services and the Kirkland Park Board for City Council review and adoption. To remain eligible for certain State and County grant funding, the City is required to update the Plan every six years. The Plan was updated in 2012. That Plan is closely related to the Parks Element of the City Comprehensive Plan. The Park Board has relied heavily on the City Comprehensive Plan and, in turn, this Element relies heavily on the work of the Park Board in establishing goals and policies.

## **B. PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE CONCEPT**

The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element supports the continued provision of accessible and well-maintained facilities and services for current and fu-

ture residents. Levels of service are established for facilities. Policies are established for coordination with other service providers to ensure efficiencies in utilization of park and recreational facilities and services. The City will promote environmental conservation and education for publicly owned natural open space areas.

## **C. PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE GOALS AND POLICIES**

**Goal PR-1: To acquire, develop, and redevelop a system of parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces that is attractive, safe, functional, and accessible to all segments of the population.**

**Goal PR-2: Enhance the quality of life in the community by providing services and programs that offer positive opportunities for building healthy productive lives.**

**Goal PR-3: Protect, preserve, and restore natural resource areas.**

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**Goal PR-1: To acquire, develop, and redevelop a system of parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces that is attractive, safe, functional, and accessible to all segments of the population.**

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The basis of Kirkland's parks system is the provision of diverse recreation opportunities and experiences for all Kirkland residents. Specifically, the open space, parks, park facilities, and recreation programs serve the following purposes:

- (1) To contribute to the overall quality of life for Kirkland residents by providing facilities and programs for both active and passive recreation.
- (2) To improve the aesthetics of the City, including ornamental plantings, public art, and other beautification efforts.

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## X. PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE

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***Policy PR-1.1: Acquire parks, recreation, and open space facilities in those areas of the City facing population growth, commercial development, and in areas where facilities are deficient.***

A major component of this Element is the need to acquire more parkland. Specifically, this includes acquiring land suitable for parks in City neighborhoods with existing and projected deficiencies, based on the Land Use Element, and where opportunities arise to make key linkages in the park system.

Another component is to provide neighborhood parks within walking distance of every Kirkland resident. This is best accomplished by providing a system of neighborhood parks which are located within easy reach of Kirkland residents and which meet the diverse recreational needs identified by the community. It is critical that the City be prepared to take advantage of opportunities to obtain properties needed for park and open space purposes.

Although Kirkland is blessed with extraordinary waterfront parks, we should capture opportunities if additional waterfront becomes available. If privately held lakefront parcels adjacent to existing beach parks or at other appropriate locations become available, we should make an effort to acquire these pieces. The City should continue to pursue creative use of waterfront street ends.

***Policy PR-1.2: Develop pedestrian and bicycle trails within parks and linkages between parks and the city's major pedestrian and bicycle routes identified in the Active Transportation Plan (ATP) and between parks and nearby neighborhoods, commercial centers and public facilities, including schools.***

Trails provide people with valuable links between neighborhoods, parks, schools and other public facilities, commercial centers and other regional nonmotorized facilities. In some cases, public trails provide alternative transportation connections between communities. The citizens of Kirkland have consistently identified the need for more trails as a top priority.

The City's Active Transportation Plan (ATP) provides the City's strategic goals and policies related to comprehensive trail planning including route design,

classification, funding priorities, and design standards. The ATP Plan was developed by the City's Public Works Department, working cooperatively with the Department of Parks and Community Services, the Planning and Community Development, and the public.

One important goal for recreational and commuter trail planning noted in the Active Transportation Plan is the development of a recreational trail system within the Cross Kirkland Corridor. This trail is part of the Eastside Rail Corridor, a regional facility traveling through many Eastside cities and providing critical links to other existing regional trails such as the Sammamish River Trail. This project is visionary and requires an interjurisdictional effort for planning and implementation.

Another goal is development of a north-south recreational trail under the Seattle City Light (SCL) power lines within the SCL easement and various access points to the future trail. This trail would also connect to other communities and neighborhoods.

***Policy PR-1.3: Ensure adequate maintenance and operation funding prior to development of parks and recreational facilities.***

Renovation and maintenance is a very high priority for parks and facilities. There is a significant public investment in developing parks, playgrounds, buildings, and special facilities such as the outdoor pool. Consequently, it is very important to provide adequate maintenance and operation support when new parks and other facilities are developed. By deferring maintenance and operation support and not practicing preventative maintenance, long-term maintenance and operation costs will rise, and facilities will deteriorate quicker, resulting in replacement or significant repair sooner than they should.

***Policy PR-1.4: Renovate parks and facilities in a manner that will conserve the use of energy and other resources and maximize efficient maintenance practices.***

As the City's park system matures and requires periodic renovation, emphasis should be placed on devel-

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# X. PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE

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oping improved methods of conserving energy, using better equipment and innovative practices, and designing park areas in such a manner as to reduce long-term maintenance and operating expenses.

To maintain efficiency in the areas of renovation and maintenance, the City's park maintenance program includes:

- ◆ A systematic inventory of parks system infrastructure, including site furniture, sports courts, park pathways, playgrounds, and buildings in order to project future budgeting and timing for replacement and repairs.
- ◆ Use of modern, efficient and certified equipment.
- ◆ Efficient and effective use of seasonal part-time employees.
- ◆ A scheduled preventative maintenance management system to efficiently allocate and plan maintenance activities.
- ◆ Supplementation of park maintenance with volunteer groups, students, neighborhood groups, and service organizations.
- ◆ Ongoing training provided for full-time maintenance staff.
- ◆ Use of contract maintenance in selected functions to meet peak demands and help maintenance staff respond to more specialized and urgent work needs.

Renovation is a key component to a healthy park system. As Kirkland grows, and park use increases in frequency and intensity, periodic renovation is essential to keep pace with recreational needs, changes in safety guidelines, demands on use, and the need for continued effective and efficient maintenance.

***Policy PR-1.5: Acquire, develop, and renovate park facilities using traditional and new funding sources while preserving high-level maintenance standards and program quality.***

The priorities for acquiring, developing, and renovating parks are intended to be fluid and dynamic. Priorities change continually as opportunities and needs arise. Those opportunities must be weighed against available resources.

Following is a brief description of each category of park capital improvements:

## **Acquisition**

A priority of the Kirkland parks system should be to capture opportunities to acquire unique park sites. Unique sites may be located near existing parks, be unusual in size, and/or exceptional in character.

The window of opportunity to acquire suitable parkland is shrinking rapidly. Surveys of the public have placed a top priority on acquisition of land for a park and trail system.

## **Development**

Kirkland's increasing population and recreation activity have increased the demand for active indoor and outdoor facilities. There is a real need to develop new neighborhood parks in certain areas of the City to provide playgrounds, picnic areas, playcourts, and playfields within walking distance. Additionally, there is a need to further expand the City's public trail system.

In determining when a park should be developed, several key factors should be considered:

- ◆ Will park resources be made more accessible?
- ◆ Will it respond to an opportunity or demand?
- ◆ Will it help to achieve a balance among park types?
- ◆ Will it make the site more accessible, interesting, and safer for the public's use?

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# X. PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE

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## Renovation

One of the most important things that must be done to a park system is to keep it in good condition. Practicing preventative maintenance and improving parks and facilities on a scheduled basis maintains user satisfaction, protects the public's investment, and is part of maintaining the community's positive image. Parks and facilities which are not regularly maintained and improved result in higher incidents of vandalism and other unwanted activities and security problems.

There are several key factors that influence the need to renovate parks including:

- ◆ Age and condition of facility;
- ◆ Changing use patterns;
- ◆ Safety and liability problems;
- ◆ Unnecessary maintenance costs.

Many of the parks and facilities acquired when the system was first developed are in need of renovation now, and others will have to be renovated in the future to extend their usefulness to the public. The City's recent renovation work to the restrooms, docks, and other facilities has proven to stabilize or reduce maintenance and operation costs through improved design and use of better materials.

## Financing

The City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and Capital Facilities Plan contain capital project needs and funding sources for parks projects. Capital project financing comes from a variety of sources including current operating funds, reserve funds, impact fees, grants, private sector support, and voter-approved general obligation bonds. Additional funding sources should be explored to finance the Comprehensive Park, Open Space, and Recreation Plan.

*Policy PR-1.6: Ensure that parks are provided using the following standards to determine the need for parks.*

**Table PR-1**  
**Park and Open Space Levels of Service**

Facility	Standard
Neighborhood Parks	2.1 acres/1,000 persons
Community Parks	2.1 acres/1,000 persons
Nature Parks	5.7 acres/1,000 persons

The "concurrency" requirement does not apply to the facilities identified in Table PR-1 (i.e., new development will not be denied based on these identified standards). However, mitigation, impact fees, or other development contributions are required to meet the standards for desired level of service found in Table PR-1.

## RECREATION

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*Goal PR-2: Enhance the quality of life in the community by providing services and programs that offer positive opportunities for building healthy productive lives.*

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Recreation provides individuals in the community with opportunities for satisfying use of their leisure time and for engaging in daily physical exercise. Participation in recreation activities enriches lives, prevents social isolation, and increases the sense of community. It also helps people maintain a healthy weight and heart which can reduce the risk of many diseases and health conditions. People may enjoy exposure to a wide variety of recreation skills and experience. A significant share of demand for recreation services is met by the private sector and nonprofit agencies and organizations.

However, a large segment of the population does not have the opportunity or inclination to participate in private recreation. It is the responsibility of the City to provide recreation facilities and programs and City-wide wellness events which are sensitive to the needs of the community and resources of the parks system.

# X. PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE

It is the intent of the City to offer diverse, accessible, and affordable recreation opportunities.

The City plays both a primary and supportive role in recreation. In certain instances, the City’s role is to provide facilities and coordination, while in other cases, the City assumes a direct operating role. For example, the City’s role in youth baseball and soccer is to provide, schedule, and maintain ballfields within the City’s park system, while the City assumes direct responsibility for offering recreation programs and services to the elderly.

***Policy PR-2.1: Examine the need for additional community recreation facility space to meet indoor recreation needs for athletics, recreation classes, and meeting space.***

At present, Kirkland has two Community Centers and a Teen Center. The Parks and Community Services Department has been extremely fortunate in being able to use Lake Washington School District indoor facilities for City-sponsored recreation activities and programs. The use of school district facilities has enabled the City to provide a much higher level of service than would otherwise have been possible. Factors including increased demand for City and school district facilities, and limited availability of school district facilities continue to fuel the need for additional City-managed public recreation facility.

***Policy PR-2.2: Ensure that recreation facilities are provided using the following standard to determine the need for recreation facilities.***

**Table PR-2  
Recreation Space Levels of Service**

Facility	Standard
Indoor (Non-Athletic) Recreation Space	700 sq. ft./1,000 persons
Indoor (Athletic) Recreation Space	500 sq. ft./1,000 persons

The “concurrency” requirement does not apply to the facilities identified in Table PR-2 (i.e., new development will not be denied based on these identified stan-

dards). However, mitigation, impact fees, or other development contributions may be required to meet the standards for level of service found in Table PR-2.

***Policy PR-2.3: Encourage nonmotorized small craft water-oriented activities/programs along the shoreline where appropriate and consistent with public interest and needs.***

Kirkland has miles of waterfront with major portions in publicly owned parks. The City should strive to maximize its use to the continued benefit of its citizens. In the future, providing programs for small craft such as canoeing/kayaking, sailing, rowing, and sailboarding should be encouraged. Programs oriented around nonmotorized boating activities provide excellent opportunities to teach lifelong recreation skills in addition to emphasizing water and boating safety.

Kirkland’s two public boat launch facilities provide important access to Lake Washington. A small facility in Houghton Beach Park provides for hand launching of nonmotorized boats, and at Marina Park in the Downtown area, a one-lane facility exists for trailerable boats. However, this facility has several problems including poor traffic circulation and congestion, and inadequate and insufficient parking. To address these concerns, new regulations went into effect in 1989. The City should cooperate with other jurisdictions to assure that this regional need is addressed with regional participation and resources. Such facilities are best located where there is an opportunity for adequate on-site parking and where intrusions into neighborhoods can be kept to a minimum.

***Policy PR-2.4: Coordinate with neighboring cities, King County, Finn Hill Park and Recreation District, Northshore School District, and Lake Washington School District in the planning and provision of recreation activities and facilities.***

## **Partnership with Lake Washington School District**

For years, the City has enjoyed a cooperative relationship with the Lake Washington School District in the use of their indoor facilities for a variety of organized recreation and sports activities. The use of these facilities has enabled the City to provide a much higher level of service than would otherwise have been pos-

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## X. PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE

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sible. The City reciprocates with priority use of its facilities for school activities and by providing scheduling services for outdoor facilities.

Currently the Parks and Community Services Department provides field coordinating and scheduling services for the school district and community sports organizations. These sites range in character from open lawn areas at public schools and parks (originally not intended for sports activities) to formal athletic fields with complete facilities.

The school system is a major partner in the provision of the City's park and recreation services in terms of open space acreage and recreation facilities. There continues to be high demand and insufficient supply for facilities such as practice and game fields. Increase in population growth will aggravate this situation. Conditions will not improve without effective partnerships between sports organizations, the City, the school district, and subregional providers of recreation.

To ensure that school district facilities will continue to be available for City-sponsored recreation programs, in 2000, the City and school district entered into a joint-use agreement setting forth the conditions and understandings necessary for reciprocal use of recreation facilities and joint development of capital projects.

In the future, the City should work more closely with the school district to actively explore opportunities for greater joint use of facilities. A cooperative effort on the part of the school district and the City to renovate existing playing fields on school sites should be continued as a step to providing additional needed ballfield space for soccer, softball, and baseball. Independent sports organizations are experiencing a shortage of practice times and space. With facility upgrades and ongoing maintenance, facilities can be more playable and safer to use.

### **Partnership with King County**

As the Eastside continues to urbanize, the role of King County parks becomes more important in acquiring, developing, and maintaining the larger land holdings

for the region. In the future, there will be an increasing need for regional parks. The role of King County in providing parks is also changing with a major focus on systems of open space corridors that conserve natural resources, and agriculture lands that provide recreation opportunities, fish and wildlife habitat, scenic beauty, and regional trails that link cities and communities.

***Policy PR-2.5: Provide Kirkland citizens of all ages and abilities the opportunity to participate in diverse, challenging, and high-quality recreation programs and community wellness events that are both accessible and affordable.***

Comprehensive recreation opportunities are a major ingredient of a successful community. By providing services that are creative, educational, and responsive to the needs of the public, the City can significantly enhance the quality of life in Kirkland and encourage a healthy lifestyle.

As demand for recreation activities grows, emphasis will be placed on programs, activities, and events that are safe, appropriately priced, and held at convenient locations and times. It is the intent of the City to closely monitor local and national trends so as to offer the most diverse, accessible, and affordable recreation opportunities possible to Kirkland citizens.

Kirkland citizens are served by other recreation providers as well. The City should continue to act as a resource agency for the community in promoting, coordinating, developing, and maintaining community leisure activities and wellness events. Innovative methods of service delivery can be developed through continued arrangements with the school district, private nonprofit agencies such as the Boys and Girls Club and Kirkland Arts Center, and the local business community.

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# X. PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE

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**Policy PR-2.6:** *Enhance the quality of life for the older adult population by providing opportunities to engage in social, recreational, educational, nutritional, and health programs designed to encourage independence.*



*Pedestrian bridge through Juanita Bay Park wetlands*

Kirkland has a significant older adult population, and activities offered at the Peter Kirk Community Center are increasingly popular. Trends in older adult programming for the next decade will include a demand for:

- ◆ Lifelong learning activities;
- ◆ Health and fitness programs;
- ◆ Diverse programs that address the expanding age range of the older adult population and its subsequent variety of activity levels;
- ◆ Programs that provide for transportation to and from the activities.

It is important that the City recognize these trends and focus attention on programs that meet these changing needs.

**Policy PR-2.7:** *Determine the need and provide access to recreation programs for citizens with physical and developmental disabilities.*

Specialized recreation programs for mentally and physically challenged individuals will continue to grow and take on a regional significance. The City

will need to continue to work with other recreation providers in serving Kirkland citizens with special needs.

## *NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION*

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**Goal PR-3:** *Protect, preserve, and restore natural resource areas.*

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Natural areas and open spaces are a vital component of the health and well being of the community. Conservation and enhancement of the ecological resources found within the City is a key component of its land use and park planning. In surveys and workshops, Kirkland citizens have consistently identified natural areas as being a key component of park planning.

Bodies of water in Kirkland, other than Lake Washington, include Forbes Lake, Forbes Creek, Juanita Creek, Cochran Springs Creek, Yarrow Creek, Everest Creek, Totem Lake, and numerous smaller streams and tributaries. These resources provide valuable habitat for wildlife and contribute to water quality. Totem Lake Park is owned by the King County Conservation District. Important portions of Forbes Lake, Forbes Creek, Cochran Springs Creek, Yarrow Creek, and Everest Creek are under City ownership.

Open space corridors serve many important functions, including recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and the connection of individual features that comprise a natural system (e.g., wetlands linked by a stream within a watershed). Kirkland's open space corridors are composed of parks and other publicly owned land, along with sensitive areas and their buffers.

**Policy PR-3.1:** *Work cooperatively with numerous resource management agencies and citizens to care for streams, enhance and protect wetlands, improve wildlife habitat, and provide limited public access.*

Recognized impacts associated with an ever increasing urban population include the loss of privately owned open spaces, an increase in ornamental and invasive plants which threaten native vegetative com-

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## X. PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE

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munities, and an increase in competitive pressure upon native wildlife by nonnative species and domestic pets.

The City has the opportunity to continue to participate with both State and federal agencies and a variety of citizen groups to maintain and enhance existing resources, provide valuable educational opportunities, and provide a level of public use appropriate for the area.

***Policy PR-3.2: Preserve opportunities for people to observe and enjoy wildlife and wildlife habitats.***



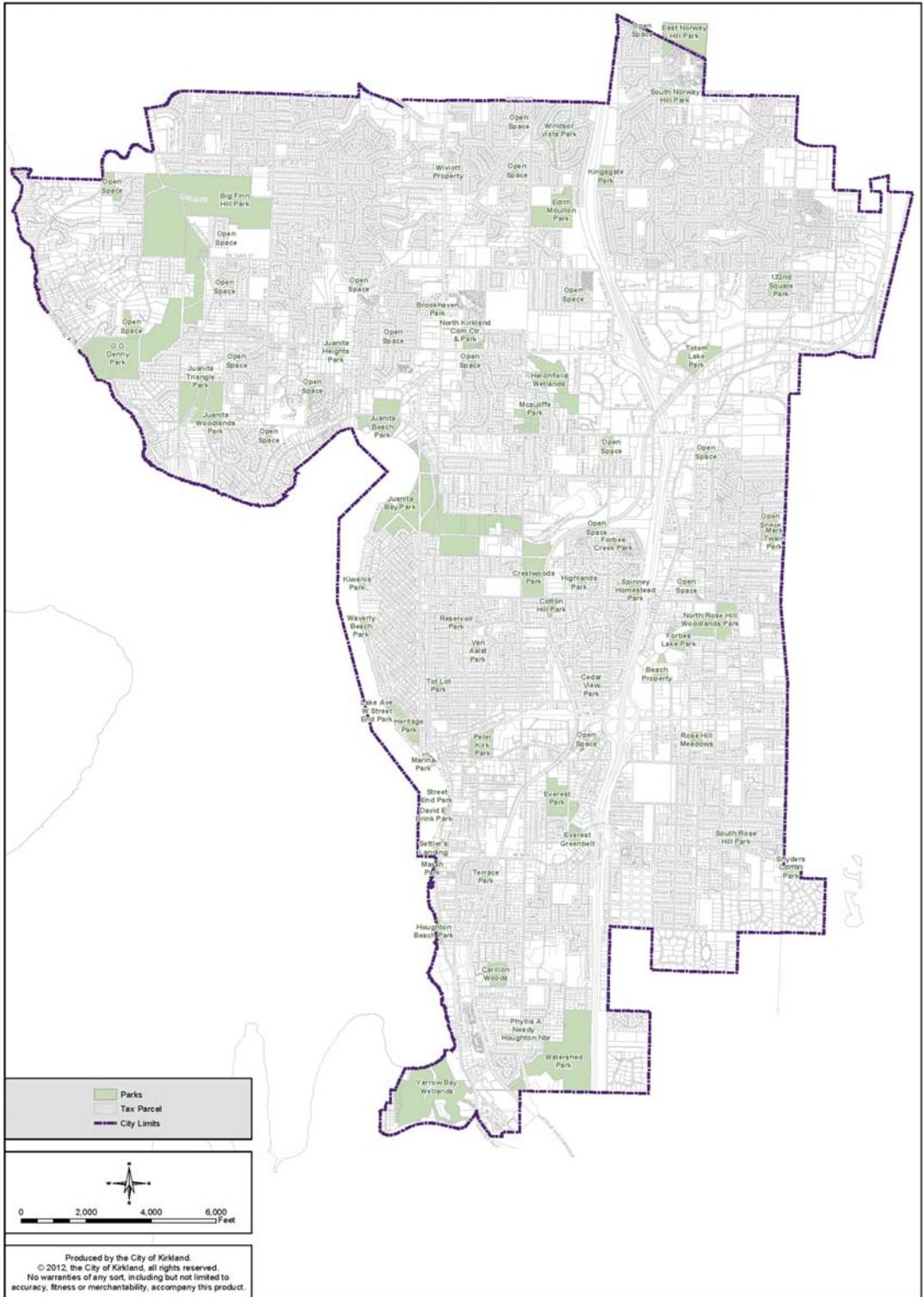
*Educational sign and boardwalk at Juanita Bay Park*

Over 60 percent of the City's parkland inventory provides valuable habitat for urban wildlife. In many cases, these parks also provide opportunities for interpretive education. The City must continue to balance the public benefits of providing access to these areas while limiting potential adverse impacts.

Acquisition is a key component to protection of valuable habitat. The City should review key parcels of land as they become available for inclusion into the existing network of parks and open space. The inclusion of these lands should be prioritized based on the following factors:

- ◆ Areas which are intrinsically biologically critical by virtue of their continuity with other, existing natural areas.

- ◆ Areas which provide benefits to the greater community, including water quality functions, hydrologic management, and erosion control.
- ◆ Areas of unique scenic quality.
- ◆ Areas which are culturally significant.
- ◆ Areas which provide significant fish and wildlife habitat.
- ◆ Areas located in neighborhoods with identified deficiencies in open spaces and parks.



**Figure PR-1: Kirkland Parks**

