



## **CITY OF KIRKLAND**

**Department of Parks & Community Services**

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### **MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Planning Commission

**From:** Michael Cogle, Deputy Director, Parks & Community Services

**Date:** May 13, 2014

**Subject:** Kirkland PROS Plan Update

#### **Recommendation**

That the Planning Commission receives a report on the Draft 2014 Kirkland Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan (PROS Plan).

#### **Background**

The Parks and Community Services Department has been working on an update to the City's Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan since fall of last year. The PROS Plan received a nominal update prior to the 2011 annexation in order to maintain City eligibility for certain grant programs, but the Plan has not been fully updated since 2003. An update to the PROS Plan is timely in that it provides the City an opportunity to engage the entire larger community (post-annexation) while coinciding with the broader Kirkland 2035 Comprehensive Plan update.

The completed Draft Plan can be found on the City's website [here](#). Both an Executive Summary and the Goals and Policies section of the Plan are included as attachments to this memorandum. The City Council is scheduled to review the PROS Plan on June 3.

Staff will attend the Commission's May 22 meeting to present the Draft Plan and answer questions.

Attachments:

- 1 – Executive Summary
- 2 – Goals & Policies





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan is a six-year guide and strategic plan for managing and enhancing park and recreation services in Kirkland. It establishes a path forward for providing high quality, community-driven parks, trails, open spaces and recreational opportunities. The Plan provides a vision for the City's park and recreation system, proposes updates to City service standards and addresses departmental goals, objectives and other management considerations toward the continuation of high quality recreation opportunities to benefit the residents of and visitors to Kirkland.

This Plan was developed with substantial input and direction of Kirkland residents. The Plan inventories and evaluates existing park and recreation areas, assesses the needs for acquisition, site improvements and operations and offers specific policies and recommendations to achieve the community's goals.

## Mission

The mission of the Parks and Community Services Department is to support a healthy and sustainable community by providing high quality parks and recreation services, ensuring a collaborative community response to basic human needs and protecting our natural areas.

*We will preserve and maintain park lands and open spaces to create safe places for people to visit. We will conserve and sustain natural areas for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future generations. We will provide comprehensive year-round recreation opportunities to enhance physical, mental and social well-being. We will establish partnerships to ensure a comprehensive system of programs, facilities and services are available to meet the recreation and human service needs of the Kirkland community.*

This mission provided the foundation for the goals, objectives, recommendations and guidelines found throughout the Plan.

## Kirkland's Park and Recreation System

Kirkland's diverse park system includes over 588 acres of parkland and open spaces, including community and neighborhood parks and natural areas. In addition, other public parks and open spaces, such as Big Finn Hill Park and school partnership sites, add another 366 acres of diverse parkland. The City's 12.8 miles of trails and park paths connect people to parks, neighborhoods and other community destinations. The City also offers a diverse array of recreation, sports, fitness, arts, music and self-improvement classes and programs for all ages.

Kirkland is fortunate to have a number of large parks owned by other public agencies that are within, or adjacent to, the city limits. These parks help meet local recreation needs and contribute significantly to the overall quality and diversity of parks and recreation in Kirkland. These sites include Saint Edward State Park, Bridle Trails State Park, Totem Lake Park, Big Finn Hill Park, OO Denny Park and a number of school facilities with sport fields and indoor gymnasiums.

Kirkland is a stable and maturing community with many families and children. As the City responds to the needs of its new residents and the operating demands of its existing facilities, new investments in parks and recreation will be necessary to meet the needs of the community, support youth development, provide options for residents to lead healthy active lives and foster greater social and community connections.

## Goals and Policies

This Plan includes goals and objectives intended to guide City decision-making to ensure the parks and recreation system meets the needs of the Kirkland community for years to come. These goals and objectives were based on community input and technical analysis. They include:

### Community Engagement

- Encourage and support active and ongoing participation by diverse community members in the planning and decision-making for parks and recreation.

### Neighborhood & Community Parks

- Acquire additional parklands necessary to adequately serve the City's current and future population based on adopted service levels.

- Improve park sites to meet the active and passive recreational needs of Kirkland residents.
- Maintain and enhance Kirkland’s waterfront parks to connect residents with the water and provide unique recreational experiences.

### Trail Network

- Develop a network of shared-use pedestrian and bicycle trails to enable connections within parks and between parks, nearby neighborhoods, public amenities, and major pedestrian and bicycle routes identified in the Active Transportation Plan.
- Develop, enhance and maintain signature greenways and trails that stretch across the community and that connect residents to the City’s many parks, natural areas, recreation facilities and other amenities

### Recreation Facilities & Programming

- Provide a variety of recreational services and programs that promote the health and well-being of residents of all ages and abilities.
- Maintain and enhance Kirkland’s community centers to provide recreational opportunities, community services and opportunities for residents to connect, learn and play.
- Provide opportunities for aquatic recreation through the City’s pools and lakefront facilities.
- Provide programming and services that support recreation and learning for target populations, including youth, teens, adults and older adults.
- Strive to reduce barriers to participation and provide universal access to facilities and programs.
- Establish and operate specialized recreational facilities (e.g. action sports facilities, off leash areas, skateparks, community gardens) to respond to identified public needs, as appropriate.

### Athletics

- Provide a citywide system of sports fields and programs to serve field sport needs of the community, in partnership with the Lake Washington School District, local sports organizations, and other regional providers.
- Provide and enable access to a citywide system of indoor and outdoor sports courts, gymnasiums and programs for Kirkland residents.

### Conservation & Stewardship

- Preserve significant natural areas to meet outdoor recreation needs, provide opportunities for residents to connect with nature, and meet habitat protection needs.
- Restore and manage City-owned or managed natural areas to protect and enhance their ecological health, sensitive habitats and native species.
- Restore Kirkland’s shoreline on Lake Washington in accordance with the Shoreline Restoration Plan to improve habitat, hydrology and recreational opportunities.
- Protect and improve the City’s natural systems or features for their value in providing ecosystem and infrastructure services.
- Promote environmental stewardship and education through informational signage, materials, programs and partnerships.

- Work cooperatively with resource management agencies and citizens to care for streams, enhance and protect urban forests and wetlands, improve wildlife habitat, and provide limited public access.

### Planning, Design & Maintenance

- Develop and maintain system-wide and site-specific plans for the development and management of the park and recreation system to guide future actions.
- Design and develop park sites and facilities to maximize recreational value and experience while minimizing maintenance and operational costs and negative environmental and community impacts.
- Actively manage Kirkland's park and recreation assets to ensure consistent service delivery, reduce unplanned reactive maintenance, and minimize economic, public health, and environmental risks.

### Administration & Management

- Provide leadership and management of the park, recreation and open space system throughout the City.
- Provide sufficient staff resources to maintain the overall parks and recreation system to the City's standards.
- Promote volunteerism to involve individuals, groups, organizations and businesses in the development and stewardship of the park and recreation system.
- Provide informative, convenient, timely and consistent signage, communication and informational materials to help residents engage with and fully utilize the City's many recreational resources.
- Use traditional and new funding sources to adequately and cost-effectively maintain and enhance the quality of Kirkland's park and recreation system.
- Pursue and maintain effective partnerships with neighboring cities, King County, Lake Washington School District, other governmental agencies, and private and non-profit organizations to plan and provide recreation activities and facilities and maximize opportunities for public recreation.

## Level of Service Standards

This Plan proposes adjustments to the City's service standards for parks and recreation facilities to achieve community goals within projected resources. These standards include:

- **Community Parks:** This Plan proposes an increase in the acreage standard for community parks to 2.25 acres per 1,000 people to emphasize the relative importance of community parks within the park system. The City is currently meeting this standard, but it will need to acquire an additional 14 acres of parkland to meet the needs of future residents.
- **Neighborhood Parks:** This Plan proposes to reduce the neighborhood park standard from 2.06 to 1.5 acres per 1,000 people. Although the standard is reduced, an existing and future acreage deficit remains; however, the City's primary focus should be toward the acquisition of new neighborhood park sites to fill the documented gaps in parkland distribution.
- **Natural Parks & Open Space:** This Plan also proposes the elimination of numeric standards for natural parks and open space. While numerical planning standards

are common for helping to determine a desirable number of neighborhood parks per thousand residents, they do not translate easily to natural parks because the uniqueness of the land base itself. While it is still important for the City to protect sensitive lands to set them aside as part of a greenspace system, priority should be focused toward either the acquisition of or negotiation for additional, adjacent natural park lands to ensure the protection of unique or special habitat areas and sufficient land is available to accommodate future trail connections.

- **Specialized Facilities:** This Plan includes standards for a variety of specific recreation facilities, such as athletic fields, pools and sport courts. The Plan proposes revisions to the standards for skateparks, tennis courts and pools to better align the existing demand for these facilities to the likely development of new facilities city-wide.

## Future Improvements

The City of Kirkland is anticipated to grow to approximately 94,000 residents over the next 20 years. Serving existing and future residents will require improvements to existing parks and expansion of the park, trail and recreation system. The 6-year Capital Facilities Plan proposes approximately \$11.5 million of investment in acquisition, development and renovation of the parks system over the next six years and identifies additional investment priorities for the future.

Figure ES1: Capital Facilities Plan Summary by Classification & Type

Project Type	Acquisition	Development	Renovation	Sum
Park Acquisition, Development & Improvement	\$ 6,550,000	\$ 19,124,500	\$ 2,198,000	\$ 27,872,500
Community Centers	\$ -	\$ 50,000,000	\$ 2,160,000	\$ 52,160,000
Athletic Fields & Facilities	\$ 1,500,000	\$ -	\$ 4,370,000	\$ 5,870,000
Trails & Greenway Connections	\$ -	\$ 19,680,000	\$ -	\$ 19,680,000
Natural Area Restoration & Stewardship	\$ -	\$ 265,000	\$ 10,370,000	\$ 10,635,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 8,050,000</b>	<b>\$ 89,069,500</b>	<b>\$ 19,098,000</b>	<b>\$ 116,217,500</b>

To ensure existing parks provide desired recreational amenities and opportunities, the Plan includes investments in the development and improvement of neighborhood and community parks. For example, development of Edith Moulton Park will greatly expand park access and resources for surrounding neighborhood and the community as a whole. Major improvements at the North Kirkland Community Center will prepare this popular center for enjoyment for decades to come. The Plan also proposes smaller improvements throughout the park system to enhance accessibility, safety and usability of park features.

The Plan includes a significant land acquisition program to ensure sufficient land for outdoor recreation in recognition of the City's new, larger boundary. It identifies target acquisition areas to secure parkland, gain access rights along key trail corridors and fill gaps in neighborhood park access.

To connect Kirkland's residents to destinations throughout the City and provide options for walking, biking and rolling, the Plan proposes development of a few signature trail corridors, such as the lakeway trail, bay to valley trail and an eastside

trail. These trail corridors will connect residents to the wealth of parks, natural areas, recreation facilities and other amenities the City has to offer.

## Implementation Strategies

### Partnerships & Community Collaboration

Dedicated coordination and collaboration with other public divisions and agencies, as well as private and community organizations, businesses and Kirkland residents, will greatly enhance the City's ability to fulfill the community's aspirations and the goals of this Plan.

Through enhanced internal coordination, the City can pursue trail corridors that meet both recreation and transportation needs and utilize the development review process to identify trail easement and set-aside opportunities. Continued partnerships with the Lake Washington School District and nearby cities can improve recreation options for Kirkland residents through joint use, development and programming of park and recreation facilities. This is especially true regarding the potential for a new aquatics facility to replace the Juanita Aquatics Center.

The Kirkland community has a history of, and an expressed interest in, contributing to the development and stewardship of the City's park, natural areas and recreation resources. Enhanced partnerships with youth sports, service and civic organizations can capitalize on volunteer efforts to expand recreational programming and improve the condition of the City's parks, while also fostering a stronger sense of community pride and ownership in park facilities. Partnerships with regional healthcare providers can expand the community's access to recreation programs and services and enhance community health and social engagement. Finally, by engaging property owners, the City can open opportunities to expand the park and trail system, while protecting critical natural resources.

### Funding

The City of Kirkland currently relies on Park Impact Fees (PIF), Real Estate Excise Tax (REET), voter-approved levies and general funds to finance individual projects. Additional, dedicated funding may be required to finance upgrades to and growth in the parks and recreation system to meet community needs. Updating the existing PIF program, which assesses fees on new development to meet the increased demand for parks resulting from the new growth, will allow the City to obtain future acquisition and development funding from residential development. A short-term bond or levy could augment other revenues to support a new recreation center with aquatics, parkland acquisitions and development, trail development, waterfront opportunities and general park element upgrades. Such mechanisms would require both political and public support. State and federal grant programs offer additional potential opportunities to leverage available local revenues to fund specific development projects.



# 3

## GOALS & OBJECTIVES

### Overview

The goals and objectives described in this chapter define the park and recreation services that the Kirkland community aims to achieve. These goals and objectives were derived from input received throughout the planning process, from city staff and officials, the Park Board, community members and stakeholders.

### Service Philosophy

A Philosophy of Service, as described in the 2010 PROS Plan, provided a foundation upon which to expand and elaborate specific service policies and actionable objectives. Eleven key concepts have been identified which are fundamental to the delivery of parks and recreation services in the Kirkland community.

1. **Quality:** Providing high quality parks and recreational services to the community is a core value. It is very important to strive for excellence through efficient, accurate and skillful performance in every process, service and product the City delivers. To provide high quality services and products, employees must have the necessary means and support.

2. **Balance:** A parks and recreation system should provide its citizens a diversity of open space, parks and recreation facilities, and recreation service opportunities to meet the needs of different age groups, abilities and interests.
3. **Responsiveness:** Listening to, informing, educating and involving citizens in parks, recreation and service issues is vital to providing a responsive, effective and high quality parks system and recreation programs. Citizen participation in decisions that involve facilities and programs ensures that park facilities and recreation programs reflect community needs.
4. **Beauty:** Parks and open spaces provide settings for people to recreate, and they enhance the beauty and visual character of the City. As new parks are developed and older ones are renovated, it is important to create and retain natural beauty in the parks system for which the City is so well known.
5. **Health:** City parks and recreation services contribute significantly to the health and well being of a community by providing opportunities and settings for physical and mental health. Physical health needs can be met by fitness activities, organized and supervised recreation programs and safe and functional trails for walking, jogging and bicycling. Mental health demands can be satisfied with programs for life-long learning, and open spaces provide relief from stress.
6. **Future Orientation:** Admirable foresight on the part of Kirkland's past citizens, elected representatives and City officials created the waterfront and park system that we enjoy today. The City's park system adheres to a strong future orientation. Parkland should be acquired to meet the demands of a changing population and for future generations. In the distant future, it will be important that Kirkland citizens be able to reflect positively on the actions which were taken to acquire land for parks and facilities, for themselves and for their children. Kirkland has always demonstrated a spirit of vision and strives to keep that spirit alive.
7. **Environmental Stewardship:** Kirkland is fortunate to have many important natural areas, including wetlands, urban forests, sensitive slopes and wildlife habitat resources in our park system. The existence of these natural areas offers a variety of opportunities for aesthetic, recreational and educational activities. Wetlands serve as wildlife and recreation resources, and protect water quality by trapping sediments and absorbing pollutants as nutrients. Preserving wildlife habitat, water quality and forested areas is an important aspect of good park resource management. The City will continue its commitment to managing and protecting the park system's natural and fragile resources, as well as working to educate and inform the community as to their ecological and economic value.
8. **Efficiency:** Efficient management of available resources is important in retaining a high quality park system and recreation program. Efficient management also incorporates cost recovery for some parks and recreation services. Through cooperative efforts with the private sector and volunteer groups, greater efficiency and improvement of services can be realized.
9. **Opportunity:** A large segment of the population does not have the opportunity, financial resources or inclination to participate in private recreation. It is the City's responsibility to provide parks and recreation facilities and programs that are sensitive to the needs and resources of the community. People with limited financial resources, disadvantaged youngsters, the elderly, the disabled and others with special needs should have access to programs and facilities. Assistance to those most in need will improve the quality of their lives and also help prevent social problems such as delinquency and alienation.



10. **Partnerships:** The City should forge effective new partnerships and strengthen existing ties with public and private service providers. Partnerships allow the City and other agencies to share resources and avoid unnecessary duplication of service. Partnerships enable the use of unique and special areas of expertise. Partnerships with the Lake Washington School District, King County, neighboring cities and other service providers are essential to plan for future open space and recreational needs as land becomes more scarce and funding resources diminish.
11. **Security & Safety:** The public needs to feel safe and secure when visiting parks and recreational facilities. Effective signage and regulations lets users know of unwanted activities. Retaining visibility into parks through good maintenance and planting enhances overall safety and security. Cooperation with the Police Department provides safety through the identification of problem areas, and the display of visible signage enables effective police enforcement.

## Goals, Policies & Objectives

Taken together, the goals and objectives provide a framework for the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan. A goal is a general statement describing an outcome the City wishes to provide. Goals typically do not change over time unless community values shift. Policies are more specific, measurable statements that describe a means to achieving the stated goals. Objectives are specific actions intended to implement and achieve the goals and policies and are contained in subsequent chapters of the Plan. The Kirkland Comprehensive Plan outlined a number of policy statements pertinent to the provision of parks and recreation and for land stewardship and were a starting reference for the detailed policies and objective in this Plan.

### Goals

The three primary goals of the Parks and Community Services Department are to:

1. Acquire, develop, and renovate a system of parks, recreational facilities and open spaces that are attractive, safe, functional and available to all segments of the population.
2. Enhance the quality of life in the community by providing services and programs that offer positive opportunities for building healthy productive lives.
3. Protect, preserve and restore publicly-owned natural resource areas.

These goals are in alignment with the National Recreation and Parks Association's *Three Pillars*, which are foundational concepts adopted by the national organization in 2012. These core values (below) are crucial to improving the quality of life for all Americans by inspiring the protection of natural resources, increasing opportunities for physical activity and healthy eating and empowering citizens to improve the livability of their communities.

- **Conservation** – *Public parks are critical to preserving our communities natural resources and wildlife habitats, which offer significant social and economic benefits. Local park and recreation agencies are leaders in protecting our open space, connecting children to nature and providing education and programs that engage communities in conservation.*
- **Health and Wellness** – *Park and recreation departments lead the nation in improving the overall health and wellness of citizens, and fighting obesity. From fitness programs, to well-maintained, accessible, walking paths and trails, to nutrition programs for underserved youth and adults, our work is at the forefront of providing solutions to these challenges.*
- **Social Equity** – *We believe universal access to public parks and recreation is fundamental to all, not just a privilege for a few. Every day, our members work hard to ensure all people have access to resources and programs that connect citizens, and in turn, make our communities more livable and desirable.*

### Policies & Objectives

The following pages detail specific policies and objectives in support of the City's goals for its parks and recreation system.



## 1. Community Engagement

### Policy 1.1 - Community Involvement

*Encourage and support active and ongoing participation by diverse community members in the planning and decision-making for parks and recreation.*

#### Actions/Objectives

- Involve residents and stakeholders in park and recreation facility planning, design and recreation program development to solicit community input, facilitate project understanding and build public support.
- Employ innovative strategies to improve community involvement in park and recreation planning efforts.
- Support the Parks Board as the forum for public discussion of parks and recreation issues.
- Integrate park planning with the neighborhood planning process and pursue opportunities to partner with residents and neighborhood groups to improve, maintain and monitor local parks, natural areas and trails.
- Monitor the success of public involvement efforts over time.
- Identify underrepresented segments of the community and work to improve their capacity to participate in park planning and decision-making.
- Survey, review and publish local park and recreation preferences, needs and trends at least once every six years.

## 2. Neighborhood & Community Parks

### Policy 2.1 - Park Acquisition

*Acquire additional parklands necessary to adequately serve the City's current and future population based on adopted service levels.*

#### Actions/Objectives

- Provide a service standard of 1.5 acres per 1,000 persons of developed neighborhood parks and 2.25 per 1,000 residents of developed community parks.
- Proactively seek parkland identified within this plan, in both developed and undeveloped areas, to secure suitable locations for new parks to serve future residents. Evaluate acquisition opportunities based on criteria such as improvement to existing level of service, connectivity, preservation and scenic or recreational opportunities for residents.
- To provide equitable park distribution, prioritize park acquisition in underserved areas where households are more than ¼ mile from a developed park.
- Prioritize park acquisition in areas of the City facing population growth and residential and commercial development.
- Establish or improve urban public services in newly annexed areas, as funds are available, to meet established levels of service.
- Evaluate opportunities to acquire lands declared surplus by other public agencies for park and recreation use.
- Pursue low-cost and/or non-purchase options to preserve open space, including the use of conservation easements and development covenants.
- When considering vacation of any right-of-way, consider its appropriateness for use as public park or open space.



## Policy 2.2 - Park Improvement

*Improve park sites to meet the active and passive recreational needs of Kirkland residents.*

### Actions/Objectives

- Prioritize park development in areas where service level deficiencies exist (where households are more than ½ mile from a developed park).
- Prioritize development of existing park sites in areas of the City facing population growth and residential and commercial development.
- Develop park sites based on master plans, management plans, or other adopted strategies to ensure parks reflect local needs, community input, recreational and conservation goals, and available financial resources.
- Require that new development provide funds or parkland for concurrent park development and maintenance consistent with the City's standards for parks and facilities.

## 3. Waterfront Parks

### Policy 3.1 - Waterfront Parks

*Maintain and enhance Kirkland's waterfront parks to connect residents with the water and provide unique recreational experiences.*

### Actions/Objectives

- Pursue opportunities to acquire additional privately held waterfront parcels as available; particularly sites that might create needed connections for a more continuous lakefront corridor or will provide lake access in underserved areas.
- Consider opportunities to retain and repurpose street ends to create water access points and explore opportunities for cooperative or joint use ventures.
- Encourage non-motorized small craft water-oriented activities/programs along the shoreline where appropriate and consistent with public interest and needs.
- Strive to design, develop, and operate waterfront facilities in ways that limit negative environmental impacts.
- Develop Forbes Lake and Totem Lake Parks to expand water-related recreation, including walking trails, wildlife viewing, and interpretive opportunities in eastern portions of the City.

## 4. Trail Network

### Policy 4.1 - Trail System

*Develop a network of shared-use pedestrian and bicycle trails to enable connections within parks and between parks, nearby neighborhoods, public amenities, and major pedestrian and bicycle routes identified in the Active Transportation Plan.*

#### Actions/Objectives

- Coordinate trail system planning and development with the City's Action Transportation Plan to provide a comprehensive pedestrian and bicyclist network.
- Facilitate and provide for a high degree of trail connectivity from core signature trails, such as the Cross Kirkland Corridor, to neighborhood, park and waterfront destinations.
- Partner with local utilities, public agencies and private landowners to secure trail easements and access to open space for trail connections.
- Provide trailhead accommodations, as appropriate, to include parking, signage, restrooms and other amenities.
- Integrate the siting of proposed trail segments into the development review process; require development projects along designated trail routes to be designed to incorporate trail segments as part of the project.
- Implement trail signage standards, route and wayfinding signage for trails and associated facilities and informational maps and materials identifying existing and planned trail facilities.
- Work with Metro Transit to provide transit service to trailheads, parks, and recreation facilities.

### Policy 4.2 - Signature Trails & Connections

*Develop, enhance and maintain signature greenways and trails that stretch across the community and that connect residents to the City's many parks, natural areas, recreation facilities and other amenities.*

#### Actions/Objectives

- Kirkland Waterfront: Strive to create a continuous pedestrian and bicyclist greenway along the lakeshore through parks, neighborhood greenway improvements, and trail easements.
- Cross Kirkland Corridor: Participate in the planning and development of the Cross Kirkland Corridor, to create a signature, multi-modal, green transportation and recreation corridor through Kirkland.
- Develop or improve parks adjacent to the Cross Kirkland Corridor to provide additional amenities and create pleasant destinations or stopping points along the trail.
- Bay to Valley Connection: Build on the City's existing parks and natural areas along Forbes Creek and NE 100th Street to create an east-west trail that connects users from Juanita Bay through central Kirkland and into the Sammamish Valley.
- Finn Hill Connection: Consider protection and development of a greenway and trail corridor from Forbes Creek to Juanita Heights and Saint Edward State Parks to connect existing trail systems and provide additional recreational amenities.
- Eastside Powerline Corridor: Explore opportunities to develop a north-south trail under the Seattle City Light (SCL) power lines to link eastside neighborhoods to Bridle Trails State Park and other existing parks, the Cross Kirkland Corridor, major retail and employment destinations, and to other neighborhoods.
- Lakes-to-Locks Water Trail: Support the continued implementation of the Lakes-to-Locks Water Trail to provide water trails along Lake Washington and adjoining waterbodies.



## 5. Recreation Facilities & Programming

### Policy 5.1 - Recreation Services

*Provide a variety of recreational services and programs that promote the health and well-being of residents of all ages and abilities.*

#### Actions/Objectives

- Enhance the diversity of programs offered, focusing on programs that are in high demand or serve a range of users.
- Design programming and services to meet the needs diverse users, including at-risk communities or those with special needs.
- Improve the accessibility of programs, by holding classes and activities at locations throughout the community and at affordable rates; and
- Maintain and enhance program scholarships and other mechanisms to support recreation access for low-income residents.
- Monitor local and regional recreation trends to ensure community needs and interests are addressed by available programming.
- Evaluate and improve recreational services and programs to meet identified cost recovery goals.
- Continue to expand partnerships with the School District, private non-profit agencies such as the Boys and Girls Club and YMCA, private fitness clubs and the local businesses to provide recreation services.
- Promote and coordinate recreational opportunities provided by partners to help connect residents with options to learn and recreate.

### Policy 5.2 - Community Centers

*Maintain and enhance Kirkland's community centers to provide recreational opportunities, community services and opportunities for residents to connect, learn and play.*

#### Actions/Objectives

- Manage Kirkland's existing community centers to provide a diverse array of recreational programs, services and experiences for all City residents.
- Examine the need for additional community recreation facility space to meet indoor recreation needs for athletics, recreation classes, and meeting space.
- Consider development of an additional multi-use indoor facility that provides space to provide a comprehensive recreation program to Kirkland residents.
- Assess the financial feasibility prior to development of any new community center.
- Consider partnerships for joint facility acquisition, development, and maintenance.

### Policy 5.3 - Aquatic Facilities & Programs

*Provide opportunities for aquatic recreation through the City's pools and lakefront facilities.*

#### Actions/Objectives

- Maintain and enhance aquatics facilities and programs at existing outdoor and lake sites.
- Explore opportunities to develop an indoor aquatic facility, potentially in partnership with other organizations or agencies. Consider financial feasibility and long term operations needs prior to construction of any new facility.

### Policy 5.4 - Recreation Programs for All Ages

*Provide programming and services that support recreation and learning for target populations, including youth, teens, adults and older adults.*

#### Actions/Objectives

- Continue to expand and diversify its popular youth programs to meet the growing need for engaging, affordable, safe options for children.
- Partner with the Lake Washington school district, community partners, recreation providers, and sports organizations to offer both drop-in and structured programs in sports; art, music and dance; and educational and environmental activities for youth.
- Build on existing partnerships with the YMCA and local sports organizations to expand teen programming to include additional individual athletics, fitness, and alternative sports programs.
- Explore options to expand the quantity and breadth of adult programs offered, in partnership with other recreation providers and organizations.
- Continue to provide and expand opportunities for seniors to engage in social, recreational, educational, nutritional, and health programs designed to encourage independence, in partnership with community agencies.

### Policy 5.5 - Universal Access & Inclusion

*Strive to reduce barriers to participation and provide universal access to facilities and programs.*

#### Actions/Objectives

- Design future improvements to parks, recreation facilities and trails in compliance with the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act and with universal accessibility in mind.
- Develop an ADA transition plan to improve accessibility in parks and facilities.
- Explore options to develop highly accessible, barrier-free facilities and trails.
- Continue to develop and offer recreational programs for youth and adults with special needs and support inclusion opportunities in all programs.
- Explore and cultivate partnerships with community organizations and regional providers to improve services and accessibility of recreation opportunities.
- Continue to outreach and provide accessibility information for people with disabilities to increase awareness of recreation opportunities.

## Policy 5.6 - Specialized Recreational Facilities

*Establish and operate specialized recreational facilities (e.g. action sports facilities, off leash areas, skateparks, community gardens) to respond to identified public needs, as appropriate.*

### Actions/Objectives

- Provide facilities for alternative or emerging sports, such as skateboarding, BMX, mountain biking, ultimate frisbee, disc golf, climbing and parkour, to offer residents a more diverse range of recreational experiences.
- Consider local needs, recreational trends, and availability of similar facilities within the City and region when planning for specialized recreational facilities.
- Encourage the development of specialized facilities that generate revenues to offset the cost of their operation and maintenance.
- Explore opportunities to partner with local organizations to develop and manage specialized facilities.
- Design and manage special facilities to accommodate compatible, multiple purposes and uses, when appropriate.
- Consider siting additional off leash areas in suitable parks, where off-leash use is safe and would have limited environmental impacts.
- Strengthen partnerships with KDOG to develop and manage addition off leash areas.
- Maintain and enhance signage and enforcement of leash laws in parks or natural areas where only on-leash activities are allowed.
- Provide community gardens at suitable sites to provide opportunities for gardening, healthy eating, and social connections.
- Consider developing and managing community and experiential gardens in partnership with community organizations or educational programs, such as the Environmental Horticulture program at Lake Washington Institute of Technology.

## 6. Athletics

### Policy 6.1 - Field Sports

*Provide a citywide system of sports fields and programs to serve field sport needs of the community, in partnership with the Lake Washington School District, local sports organizations, and other regional providers.*

### Actions/Objectives

- Prove sport fields to the service standards noted in Chapter 10.
- Enhance maintenance, investments and safety of sports fields to better serve recreation users and extend playing seasons.
- Assess overall sports fields needs on a regular basis, based on existing inventories and local participation trends.
- Explore options to use existing sites more efficiently and/or acquire additional field space to meet capacity needs.
- Evaluate opportunities to include sports fields in the development of new community parks.
- Consider resurfacing existing or new fields to artificial turf to allow more intensive use of field space, extend field seasons, and limit play cancellations due to rain and muddy conditions.
- Continue active partnerships with the Lake Washington School District and other recreation providers and actively explore opportunities for greater joint use of facilities.

- Cooperative agreements between the agencies should identify opportunities and define responsibilities regarding field planning, acquisition, development, improvement, maintenance and operations; as well as clarify scheduling, decision-making and revenue sharing objectives and structures.
- Explore partnership opportunities with other public and private agencies and organizations, including King County and Northwest University to meet long-term field needs.
- Continue and enhance partnerships with local sports organizations to provide sports programs for youth and adults.
- Consider development of a larger field complex or tournament site, to increase field capacity and serve as a regional destination.
- Monitor the condition, investment needs and usage rates of various field facilities to plan for long-term maintenance and capital needs.
- Assess field usage policies on a regular basis to ensure they continue to meet the needs of the City, user groups, and neighbors.
- Update field usage fees periodically and when significant field improvements are made to address cost recovery and equity objectives.

### Policy 6.2 - Indoor & Outdoor Court Sports

*Provide and enable access to a citywide system of indoor and outdoor sports courts, gymnasiums and programs for Kirkland residents.*

#### Actions/Objectives

- Consider installing basketball, volleyball, and/or tennis courts in future community parks or community centers.
- Explore options to develop half-court basketball courts in neighborhood parks, as appropriate, particularly in underserved areas or where there is expressed neighborhood interest.
- Maintain and enhance the City's partnership with the Lake Washington School District for use of their gymnasiums and athletic fields for organized recreation and sports activities.
- Provide and enhance tennis, basketball and volleyball programs for youth and adults.





## 7. Conservation & Stewardship

### Policy 7.1 - Natural Area Preservation

*Preserve significant natural areas to meet outdoor recreation needs, provide opportunities for residents to connect with nature, and meet habitat protection needs.*

#### Actions/Objectives

- Preserve high resource value, significant, or connected natural resource areas through acquisition or other protection (e.g. conservation easements) as they become available.
- Prioritize particularly high value resources, or those that create important wildlife and recreation connections within the existing system for preservation.
- Preserve and enhance greenways and other corridors that provide wildlife habitat connectivity.
- Explore opportunities to convert underutilized active recreation areas to natural areas.

### Policy 7.2 - Natural Area Restoration & Management

*Restore and manage City-owned or managed natural areas to protect and enhance their ecological health, sensitive habitats and native species.*

#### Actions/Objectives

- Actively work to improve the condition of City-owned natural areas through invasive species removal; planting of native species; restoration of urban forests, creeks, wetlands and other habitat; and improvement of hydrological conditions.
- Utilize integrated pest management (IPM) techniques.
- Maintain a system-wide natural area management plan which integrates with the City's urban forestry management planning.
- Pursue opportunities to enhance natural habitat and features within developed parks.
- Pursue opportunities to provide appropriate public access (e.g. trails, viewpoints wildlife viewing areas, and boat landings) within natural areas to support passive recreation and environmental education.
- Continue to strengthen the Green Kirkland Partnership to engage the local community in the restoration and care of natural areas in City parks.
- Develop restoration and management plans for Yarrow Bay Wetlands and Heronfield Wetlands to guide future restoration and enhancement work.



### Policy 7.3 - Shoreline Restoration

*Restore Kirkland's shoreline on Lake Washington in accordance with the Shoreline Restoration Plan to improve habitat, hydrology and recreational opportunities.*

#### Actions/Objectives

- Pursue opportunities to remove bulkheads and other impervious surfaces along the Lake Washington shoreline that impede natural habitat functions and increase stormwater flows into the lake.
- When developing or improving waterfront parks, consider opportunities to restore degraded shorelines, increase riparian vegetation and other habitat features, and provide for additional pervious surfaces and green infrastructure.

### Policy 7.4 - Ecosystem Services

Protect and improve the City's natural systems or features for their value in providing ecosystem and infrastructure services.

#### Actions/Objectives

- Manage forested areas for invasive species and to encourage the establishment and succession of conifers and other native plants, in accordance with the Urban Forestry Management Plan.
- Partner with the City's Public Works and Transportation departments to identify opportunities to coordinate park, greenway, green infrastructure, stormwater and active transportation planning and projects.
- Design and restore parks to naturally capture and filter stormwater to improve watershed health.

### Policy 7.5 - Environmental Education

*Promote environmental stewardship and education through informational signage, materials, programs and partnerships.*

#### Actions/Objectives

- Integrate interpretive signage that reflects Kirkland's history, culture, natural assets, and wildlife populations into parks and natural areas to support learning.
- Explore opportunities to develop an environmental education center in partnership with local environmentally focused organizations and agencies.
- Enhance partnerships to create opportunities for educational programs and recreational opportunities in the City's natural area parks and other local resources.

### Policy 7.6 - Conservation Partnerships

*Work cooperatively with resource management agencies and citizens to care for streams, enhance and protect urban forests and wetlands, improve wildlife habitat, and provide limited public access.*

#### Actions/Objectives

- Strengthen the Green Kirkland Partnership to extend its reach and ensure continued and enhanced care of the City's natural areas.
- Enhance partnerships with the Eastside Audubon, King County, King Conservation District and the Lake Washington School District to pursue opportunities for additional community restoration activities, wildlife monitoring, and environmental education.



## 8. Planning, Design & Maintenance

### Policy 8.1 - Planning

*Develop and maintain system-wide and site-specific plans for the development and management of the park and recreation system to guide future actions.*

#### Actions/Objectives

- Update this comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan periodically to ensure park and recreation facilities and services meet current and future needs.
- Develop capital improvement plans and prioritization criteria to address park improvement needs.
- Prepare master plans for park sites prior to development or major improvement to ensure development meets community needs, is within available resources and is consistent with the City's park and recreation objectives.
- Develop and maintain a financial plan that assists the City in obtaining and managing funds for capital improvements, maintenance, and operations

### Policy 8.2 - Site Design and Development

*Design and develop park sites and facilities to maximize recreational value and experience while minimizing maintenance and operational costs and negative environmental and community impacts.*

#### Actions/Objectives

- When developing new facilities or redeveloping existing facilities, review and consider the projected maintenance and operations costs prior to initiating design development.
- Establish and utilize design standards to provide continuity in furnishings (trash cans, tables, benches, fencing) and construction materials to reduce inventory and maintenance costs, standardize maintenance practices, and improve park appearance.
- Design, improve and maintain parks and facilities in a manner that will conserve the use of energy and other resources and maximize efficient maintenance practices.
- Design and maintain parks and facilities to offer universal accessibility for residents of all physical capabilities, skill levels and age.
- Incorporate sustainable development and low impact design practices into the design, planning and rehabilitation of new and existing facilities.
- Consider the use of native vegetation for landscaping in parks to minimize maintenance requirements.

## Policy 8.3 - Asset Management

*Actively manage Kirkland's park and recreation assets to ensure consistent service delivery, reduce unplanned reactive maintenance, and minimize economic, public health, and environmental risks.*

### Actions/Objectives

- Establish park maintenance standards and a routine preventative maintenance program to ensure parks, facilities and equipment is maintained in a manner that keeps them in safe and attractive condition; repair or remove damaged components immediately upon identification.
- Estimate the maintenance costs and staffing levels associated with acquisition, development, or renovation of parks or natural open space areas, and ensure adequate long-term maintenance and operation funding is available prior to action.
- Develop and update asset management plans for major assets to support improved stewardship, reduce costs, and increase maintenance and replacement efficiency.
- Encourage and promote volunteer park improvement and maintenance projects from a variety of individuals, service clubs, churches and businesses.
- Maintain a standardized and systematic inventory and assessment of park system infrastructure, including quantity, location, condition, and expected useful life.
- Monitor the costs of maintaining City-owned facilities by their function, including public buildings, infrastructure, parks and natural areas.
- Continue to improve the City's comprehensive risk management program to ensure regular safety inspections and assess the likelihood and consequence - in terms of financial, community, and environmental impact – of the failure of its assets.
- Examine opportunities to relocate the Parks maintenance facility to a more suitable site.



## 9. Administration & Management

### Policy 9.1 - Administration

*Provide leadership and management of the park, recreation and open space system throughout the City.*

#### Actions/Objectives

- Assess the effectiveness of the organization on a regular basis and make structural changes and improvements as appropriate.
- Document Department policies to guide future decisions.
- Implement a project management system to support acquisition, construction and maintenance projects.
- Develop and maintain a business plan or strategic plan to help focus the direction of the Department and support funding requests.

### Policy 9.2 - Staff Resources

*Provide sufficient staff resources to maintain the overall parks and recreation system to the City's standards.*

#### Actions/Objectives

- Assess the Department's staffing needs on a regular basis and hire adequate staff to manage the City's park and recreation system.
- Assign staff responsibilities, resources and timeframes in annual work plans as necessary to progress on the goals and policies of the Plan.
- Ensure the Department's work environment supports trust, communication, respect and teamwork.
- Promote professional development opportunities that strengthen the core skills and commitment from staff, Board members and key volunteers, to include trainings, materials and/or affiliation with the National Recreation & Park Association (NRPA) and the Washington Recreation & Park Association (WRPA).
- Explore opportunities to improve staff capacity to manage construction of capital improvement projects.
- Continue to allocate staff time and resources to programs and activities that can leverage existing resources (e.g. managing volunteer programs, the Green Kirkland Partnership and partnerships with local schools and organizations, and grant development and administration).
- Use part-time, seasonal, and contract employees for select functions to meet peak demands and respond to specialized or urgent needs.

### Policy 9.3 - Volunteers

*Promote volunteerism to involve individuals, groups, organizations and businesses in the development and stewardship of the park and recreation system.*

#### Actions/Objectives

- Engage volunteers in park and facility education, outreach, maintenance and enhancement.
- Cooperate with the City-wide Volunteer Program for a coordinated volunteer recruitment, training, management, and recognition program for park and open space projects.
- Develop "Friends" or "adoption" programs to promote the maintenance of all significant parks, trails, recreation and open space facilities.

## Policy 9.4 - Communication

*Provide informative, convenient, timely and consistent signage, communication and informational materials to help residents engage with and fully utilize the City's many recreational resources.*

### Actions/Objectives

- Strive to adapt the City's communications program to accommodate and reflect new, and more diverse residents, new means of communication, and a growing and changing park and recreation system.
- Implement a comprehensive approach for wayfinding, directional and identification signage to park and trail facilities.
- Provide clear maps of City parks, trails and recreation facilities online, in the parks and recreation catalog, at trailheads and public counters, and in newspaper articles or notices.
- Use a diverse set of communication and informational materials including in-person meetings and events, signage, print programs and materials, and electronic communication (e.g. website, newsletters, social media)
- Provide public information to educate the community about park stewardship, rules and regulations, and safety.
- Continue to promote and distribute information about recreational activities, education programs, community services and events, and volunteer activities sponsored by the City and partner agencies and organizations.
- Continue to outreach to recently annexed residents to ensure they are aware of, and can take advantage of, the City's many park and recreation resources.
- Prepare and update informational materials in multiple languages to reach out to the City's diverse population.

## Policy 9.5 - Funding

*Use traditional and new funding sources to adequately and cost-effectively maintain and enhance the quality of Kirkland's park and recreation system.*

### Actions/Objectives

- Maintain general fund support of parks, recreation programs, and maintenance.
- Pursue alternative funding options and dedicated revenues for the acquisition and development of parks and facilities, such as through private donation, sponsorships, partnerships, state and federal grant sources, among others.
- Place priority on maximizing grants and other external sources of funding, or inter-agency cooperative arrangements, to develop the City's park resources.
- Utilize voter-approved initiatives, such as bonds and serial levies, to finance future improvements.
- Consider developing additional rental facilities, such as reservable picnic areas, wedding sites and meeting rooms, to meet community needs and generate additional operating resources.
- Update use and rental fees on a periodic basis to reflect market rates.

## Policy 9.6 - Partnerships

*Pursue and maintain effective partnerships with neighboring cities, King County, Lake Washington School District, other governmental agencies, and private and non-profit organizations to plan and provide recreation activities and facilities and maximize opportunities for public recreation.*

### Actions/Objectives

- Partner with King County, the State of Washington and other providers to provide regional facilities.
- Partner with the King Conservation District to improve community access to natural areas, improve trail connectivity and coordinate seasonal and annual events.
- Enhance partnerships with the Lake Washington School District to maximize public use of recreation facilities on school sites, especially athletic fields and gymnasiums, and to encourage provision of community education programming at schools.
- Coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions and King County to provide a regional greenway network and coordinated trail alignments that provide continuous walking and biking access between regional parks and other key destinations.
- Coordinate with public, private and non-profit providers, such as organized sports leagues, to plan for projects to expand facilities for athletic fields.
- Explore partnership opportunities with local hospitals and businesses to develop, fund, or promote park and recreation activities, programs and amenities.
- Encourage private development and operation of recreational facilities or programs that meet identified public need and the City's recreational objectives.
- Encourage collaboration among local art, business, education, tourism, city beautification and recreation interests.
- Maintain written partnership agreements that specify roles and responsibilities as well as legal, financial and other terms.

