



COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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**COMMUNITY PLANNING &  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

Joshua Cummings, Director

*Creating Solutions for Our Future*

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Thurston County Planning Commission

**FROM:** Maya Teeple, Senior Planner

**DATE:** March 4, 2020

**SUBJECT:** Comprehensive Plan Update: Chapter 9 – Parks Level of Service

### **Background**

The Comprehensive Plan includes level of service (LOS) specifications throughout the plan for topics like utilities, transportation, sewer, parks and more. In May of 2019, the scope of work for the Comprehensive Plan Periodic Update was separated into core and continuing components in an effort to allow additional time and public review for several continuing items, while still processing required core elements that were ready to proceed. An update to the Level of Service for Thurston County Parks and Trails was identified as a continuing item to ensure consistency with other updates currently underway by the Thurston County Parks Department. In 2019 and 2020, the Thurston County Parks Department has been updating the Parks Plan, and conducting a parks impact fee study. Both items are underway at this time and expected to be adopted in 2020.

### **What was the process for updating the County Parks & Trails Level of Service?**

As part of the update to the *Parks, Open Space and Trails Plan ("POST") (2020 draft)* a demand and needs evaluation was conducted to establish an appropriate level of service (LOS) standard for Thurston County Parks and Trails based on the recreation needs of the community. A demand and needs evaluation is the investigation and measurement of how well the parks and recreation needs of the community – how people like to spend their recreation time, what types of activities they choose to pursue, and how often they participate – are being met.

LOS standards are quantifiable measures of the parkland and recreation facilities that are provided to the community, often expressed on a per capita basis (e.g., the number of park acres per 1,000 residents). The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), a non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of public parks, recreation, and conservation,

established a set of LOS standards in the 1980s to help communities evaluate their recreation needs. Since then, LOS has been used as a planning tool to compare a local community's facilities against those of other communities, agencies, and national standards.

However, because the vision, values, and needs of each community are different, planners have acknowledged that simply quantifying local LOS to a national standard is not an effective means of evaluating a community's needs. Accordingly, NRPA's LOS standards have evolved in recent decades. Current methodology calls on jurisdictions to determine their own LOS based on the blend of natural, social, and economic characteristics and to define a LOS that's achievable within available land and financial resources.

The demand from municipalities on county parks, though not quantifiable, is significant; thus the entire population of Thurston County is factored into current estimates. While LOS provides a helpful benchmark for comparison, a community that relies solely on LOS for determining recreation needs fails to identify community-specific issues such as a facility's quality, or residents' satisfaction with the existing facilities. Therefore, a variety of methods were used to help determine Thurston County's demand and need for parks, open space, and trail facilities.

### **What has changed in regards to Parks Level of Service?**

The Parks Level of Service and parks acreages have been revised in Chapter 9 – Environment, Recreation, and Open Space to ensure consistency with the *Parks, Open Space and Trails Plan (2020, draft)*. Based on this evaluation, in addition to citizen input and proper stewardship responsibilities, Thurston County has determined a LOS of 3.0 developed acres per 1,000 residents and the per capita LOS as described in the 2020 Park Impact Fee Study. Goals and policies within Chapter 9 have also been updated for consistency with the revised *Parks, Open Space and Trails Plan (2020, draft)*.

In addition to an update to the Level of Service for Parks in Chapter 9, other chapters also have proposed changes to include references the new *Parks, Open Space and Trails Plan (2020)* and to update acreages for consistency with the revised *POST plan (2020, draft)*:

- Chapter 1 – Introduction (reference change, not attached in this memo but available on [www.Thurston2040.com](http://www.Thurston2040.com))
- Chapter 2 – Land Use (reference change, not attached in this memo but available on [www.Thurston2040.com](http://www.Thurston2040.com))
- Chapter 6 – Capital Facilities (reference and acreage changes)

**Attachments: (full versions of all chapters are available at [www.Thurston2040.com](http://www.Thurston2040.com))**

Attachment A – Chapter 9, clean and redline

Attachment B – Chapter 6, clean and redline

ATTACHMENT A:

CHAPTER 9 - ENVIRONMENT,  
RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

Proposed Amendments in Clean and  
Tracked Changes

For a full version of the chapter, visit  
[www.Thurston2040.com](http://www.Thurston2040.com)

land. Generally, property owners retain ownership and continue to reside on their lands under the PDR program.

- ❖ **Fee Simple Purchase:** This tool is the acquisition of land by a land trust or conservation agency. The land may be leased or sold to farmers who agree to use the land for agricultural purposes. Land trusts own the land in a fee simple purchase and have the greatest control over how the land is managed. Some tools to create affordable access include allowing long-term leases or sale of land in exchange for an agreement to use sustainable agricultural practices.
- ❖ **Conservation Easements:** A conservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust. It may permanently limit the use of the land in order to protect conservation values. Conservation easement agreements specifically define restrictions or limitation on what will be attached to the property. They allow the owner to continue to own, and perhaps to occupy and use the land, including to sell or pass it on to their heirs. The owner profits by selling the easement to a land trust, or may receive a tax break by donating it. Because of its lower market value, land with an easement can be more affordable for conservation.

Different funding opportunities exist to aid some of the conservation tools mentioned above. Several of these tools often compete for the same funding sources, excluding the Open Space Tax Program. Funding and availability of funding varies with the type of conservation method being used. Some of the different funding options include:

- ❖ Conservation Futures
- ❖ Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program
- ❖ USDA Natural Resource Conservation Services – Agricultural Conservation Easement
- ❖ USDA Regional Conservation Partnership Program
- ❖ Real Estate Excise Transfer Tax
- ❖ Individual Impact Investors
- ❖ Portion of recording fee for farmland preservation

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## B. COUNTY PARKS, TRAILS AND OPEN SPACES

The Growth Management Act requires that the County include a parks and recreation element in its Comprehensive Plan. An inventory with existing park acreages and the means for financing improvements and acquisitions is shown in the County's Capital Improvement Program (Appendix G). The Capital Improvement Program is updated on an annual basis with the County's budget.

The *Parks, Open Space, and Trails Plan (POST) (2020)*, adopted separately from the Comprehensive Plan, provides a coordinated approach for the County's park and trail development, natural resource preservation, and provision of recreation services. The *Parks, Open Space, and Trails Plan*

identifies need and priorities of county residents' for additional parks, recreation facilities, trails, greenways, and natural resource preservation. Some of the critical issues projected over the next 20 years for parks, trails, recreation and open space include:

- ❖ Acquire, develop and maintain parkland to account and accommodate for projected growth of the county;
- ❖ Identify sustainable funding to support maintenance of existing and new parks;
- ❖ Improved coordination with health and wellness;
- ❖ Improved connectivity of major trail corridors, and improved connectivity of smaller corridors to access major trails;
- ❖ The need for additional non-motorized trails and open space;
- ❖ Environmental preservation in parks and trails, and good stewardship in operations.

### **Parks and Recreation Vision**

Thurston County's attractive, well managed parks, trails, nature preserves, and recreation programs enhance the quality of life and nurture the health and wellbeing of our people, our community, our environment and our economy. In partnership with our citizens, we ensure that our parks, trails, preserves and programs are accessible and responsive to changing needs within our communities. We provide respite from urbanization; preserve the environment; foster understanding of our natural, cultural and historic assets; and provide opportunities for recreation that meet the needs of the community. The focus on preserving open space region-wide continues, with a strong emphasis on connecting people to the land, water, and each other.

Citizens have identified many values for Thurston County's parks and recreation programs. These include: access, health and well-being, community and family, and preservation. Responses from citizens on what they value in parks, trails and recreations programs are outlined in the county's *Parks, Open Space and Trails Plan (2020)*.

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### **C. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION**

Thurston County provides regional parks, natural resources, preserves, and recreational programming needs of county residents. The County recognizes the importance of coordinating its efforts with other municipalities, private industry and non-profits with similar missions in order to meet the service needs of the County. Parks development involves intergovernmental coordination to provide for parks and recreational facilities. This includes considerations like acquisition of new property, creating and maintaining regional park facilities, and park and facility financing. The joint plans for the cities' urban growth areas include park elements for providing parks in urban growth areas and at the neighborhood scale.

State and federal agencies manage nearly 50,000 acres in the county comprised of state parks, natural area preserves, such as the Woodard Bay Natural Resource Conservation Area on

Henderson Inlet, many recreational sites within the state's Capitol Forest, the state and federal Nisqually Wildlife Refuge, the Black River Wildlife Refuge, and other wildlife habitat mitigation and management sites. The state also owns or operates several boat ramps in the county. In addition, private and non-profit groups have purchased land and easements to preserve important natural areas in the county.

#### D. THURSTON COUNTY PARKLAND CLASSIFICATION

Thurston County's park system oversees 2,578 acres of parklands, comprised of 24 properties. These parks include a range of park types and are classified by the recreational opportunities they provide:

- ❖ **Regional Parks** (such as Burfoot Park) provide a combination of leisure recreation and active enterprise opportunities to residents and visitors. These parks also serve large geographic areas, tourists and visitors.
- ❖ **Trails**, such as the Chehalis-Western Trail, Yelm-Tenino trail, and Gate-Belmore Trail link urban and rural areas within the County, providing the ability to travel by non-motorized means. The County has 56 miles of trail.
- ❖ **Special Use Parks** meet the demands for a particular activity or special event. Examples include the five-acre off-leash dog park.
- ❖ **School Parks** (such as Griffin Athletic Fields) combine the resources of two public agencies to provide recreational, social, cultural and educational opportunities.
- ❖ **Historic Sites** are areas of historic significance or older cemeteries that are owned by Thurston County, such as Mima Pioneer Cemetery.
- ❖ **Open Space and Undeveloped Parks**, including trails, greenways, community gardens, or farmed areas that act as visual relief from urban environments and buffers between land uses.
- ❖ **Preserves and Natural Areas**, such as Glacial Heritage Preserve, focus on restoring wilderness, special natural habitat, and open space.

Thurston County's regional parks are complemented by community, neighborhood, and special-use parks owned and operated by the cities of Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater and other jurisdictions within the county. Thurston County collaborates with other local jurisdictions to offer a wide variety of park and recreation opportunities. Non-county park classifications within the county include:

- ❖ **Community parks** draw people from the immediate community (generally within a 10-15 mile radius).
- ❖ **Neighborhood parks** provide recreation space for an immediate neighborhood or cluster of neighborhoods (generally within a one mile radius).
- ❖ **Mini-parks** (or pocket parks) are typically play lots or playgrounds providing space for parental-supervised recreation for toddlers and young children.

- ❖ **Special Use Parks**, like dog parks, bike parks, swimming pools or disc golf courses that meet demands for particular activities.
- ❖ **Greenspaces**, like Capitol State Forest or the Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, which are state or federal managed parks, preserves and recreational sites.

E. LEVEL OF SERVICE

Thurston County currently oversees 2,578 acres of parklands, comprised of 24 properties. An inventory of existing park acreages and the means for financing improvements and acquisitions is shown in the County’s Capital Improvement Program, Appendix G.

Of the 2,578 acres of parkland, 972 acres (12 sites, which includes 3 developed trails) are developed parkland. Thurston County Park’s Level of Service (LOS) is 3.0 acres per 1,000 residents, and per capacity Level of Service as described in the 2020 Parks Impact Fee Study, as amended. Based on the 2040 population data, this 3.0 acre/1,000 residents LOS creates a need for 1,181 acres of operational park land. Since Thurston County currently has 972 acres of developed and operational parkland and trails, the net increase of developed land needed for park and trail purposes to meet the LOS standard is 210 acres (Table 9-1).

Based on public input, the county has identified the highest priorities as development and acquisition of multiple use trails, water access sites, picnic sites and natural resource preserves.

Table 9-1. LOS Standards for Parks

Facility	Level of Service (LOS) Units	Level of Service (LOS) Standard
<b>Parks &amp; Trails</b>	<p><b>LOS 1: Develop</b> all or part of previously acquired property, or complete development projects that are underway, focusing on those that fill deficiencies in priorities defined by the public, i.e., trails, water access, athletic facilities. Main emphasis is on development of existing undeveloped park properties.</p> <p><b>LOS 2: Acquire</b> additional park lands to ensure that a 3.0 acre/1,000 population of developed park and recreation facilities LOS can be maintained.</p>	<p><b>LOS 1: Development (by 2040):</b> An additional 210 acres will be developed to provide additional water access, and athletic facilities.</p> <p>The County continues to look for additional revenue sources to develop existing park sites.</p> <p><b>LOS 2: Acquisition:</b> Acquire opportunity properties to insure an adequate land base in the future for maintaining the 3.0 acres/1,000 population LOS. Currently, the inventory of undeveloped land is adequate to meet this LOS through 2040.</p>

13. The county should encourage the use of special incentives to preserve and protect high quality or sensitive environmental resources that regulations do not adequately protect or to minimize the burden of affected private property owners. The means to be used (in order of priority) include: open space taxation, the assistance of federal or state resource agencies, the initiatives of private conservation organizations and local land trusts, or public acquisition.

### COUNTY PARKS RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE

Action needs for parks are provided in the Capital Improvement Program and the Parks, Open Space and Trails Plan (2020).

#### Goals:

- A. Secure adequate funding for the operation, maintenance, and improvement of the county's recreational programs, parks, trails, and nature preserves through the implementation of sustainable funding strategies.
- B. Operate and maintain the parks, trails, nature preserves, and recreation programs in a safe, clean, and environmentally responsible manner.
- C. Expand educational and interpretational opportunities of the natural, cultural, historical, and artistic heritage within the county's parks, trails, and nature preserves.
- D. Provide connectivity, where feasible, between open spaces, parks, preserves, trails and wildlife corridors.
- E. Promote community by expanding the county's regional trail system to connect the county's urban and rural communities.
- F. Promote community by providing opportunities for independent play as well as organized recreation, special events, and group/family activities.
- G. Coordinate county parks and recreation programs with the county Health Department's health and wellness programs to foster the well-being of our citizens.
- H. Improve public access to the county's freshwater and marine shorelines through acquisition, easements, and lease arrangements.
- I. Acquire and develop park lands to maintain a level of service that keeps pace with population growth and demographic change in the county.
- J. Be responsible stewards of the county's natural, historic, cultural and artistic resources for current and future generations by acquiring and protecting areas of significance.



- K. Work with other park, recreation and open space providers (including public, non-profits and private entities) to ensure a coordinated and cost-effective approach to meeting the region's recreation and natural resource preservation needs.
- L. Protect the recreational and environmental value of existing parks, trails and preserves.
- M. Create a safe, productive, and rewarding workplace which emphasizes teamwork, communication, and interdepartmental coordination.

#### Acquisition Policies:

1. Ensure that the ability to operate and maintain both existing and new assets is factored into decisions on acquisition of parkland, trails and greenways, cultural resources, nature preserves and other properties.
2. Acquire land and corridors proactively to deliver needed services. This includes acquiring the following:
  - a. Environmentally sensitive lands and resources that preserve wildlife habitat;
  - b. Sites of historical and cultural significance;
  - c. Marine shoreline and river access sites; and
  - d. Park land in configurations that maximize accessibility and minimize conflicts with surrounding land uses.
3. Maintain ability to react to property acquisition opportunities that emerge.
4. Use trails and greenways where practicable to link county, city, and regional parks and preserves.

#### Planning, Development, and Improvement Policies:

1. Assess county needs and demands through annual review of the POST plan. Update the plan every five years. During the five-year update of the plan, evaluate undeveloped properties to assess merits for meeting county needs and/or their sale/exchange value.
2. Use green design and low-impact methods in developing parks and facilities, including county adopted Integrated Pest Management principles.
3. Solicit community input in the development of parks, trails, facilities, programs and services.
4. Ensure park design and development guidelines conform to local ordinance and accepted state and federal standards.

5. Provide educational/interpretive signs to foster public stewardship of the environmental, historical and cultural features of parks, preserves and trails. Use universal design standards for signs and facilities.
6. Include environmental, historic and cultural education as integral components of park experience.
7. Work with other parks/recreation and open space providers (public, private and non-profit organizations) to ensure a coordinated and cost-effective approach to meeting the region's park, recreation and preservation needs.
8. In collaboration with other jurisdictions, explore potential recreational uses of undeveloped public lands.
9. Actively pursue opportunities that allow for the preservation of natural systems, critical landscapes, and other environmental assets.
10. Work with other jurisdictions to establish and protect open space and habitat corridors with linkages to regionally significant open spaces and areas of diverse habitat.

**Operation and Maintenance Policies:**

1. Develop a comprehensive program that identifies maintenance needs for all parklands, trails, nature preserves, facilities and equipment.
2. Maintain property and assets in a manner that:
  - a. Maintains safety and reduces public liability.
  - b. Supports ecological functions and minimizes disturbances to natural vegetation and wildlife habitats.
3. Manage and conserve natural preserves based on sound scientific principles. Manage vegetation through use of Integrated Pest Management Program.
4. Use on-site caretakers in park and recreation facilities as a security and maintenance resource whenever feasible. Encourage residents, community organizations and other volunteers to share responsibility for parks by giving them a role in park stewardship.
5. Define park use rules and regulations through the county's park ordinances. Park use rules and regulations should maximize access and ensure safety and the protection and preservation of public assets.
6. Follow training and safety awareness standards as prescribed by the American Public Works Association Manual adopted by Thurston County Public Works.

7. Expand cooperation with other parks/recreation agencies to operate and maintain facilities, including alignment of equipment purchases when practicable.

#### **Financial Resources and Regional partnership Policies:**

1. Ensure stable funding for parks and recreation services, operation and maintenance. Diversify revenue base by pursuing additional funding sources including enterprise initiatives, support from tribes and foundations, grants and partnerships. Work with regional partners to assess feasibility of creating a Metropolitan Park District.
2. Work with local, state and federal jurisdictions to evaluate impacts of proposed legislation on parks and recreation, and/or to draft new legislation that supports the Thurston County Parks and Trails' mission.
3. Work with other parks and recreation providers within Thurston County to identify opportunities for mutual gain. When feasible, use interagency agreements for financing acquisition, facility development, and operation and maintenance to reduce costs and retain financial flexibility.
4. Work with other public and private park and recreation providers to avoid duplication of services, improve facilities, and reduce costs through coordinated planning and development.

### **AIR QUALITY**

**GOAL 8: PROTECT AND IMPROVE THE COUNTY'S AIR QUALITY AND MINIMIZE OR ELIMINATE ODOR AND NOISE FROM NEW LAND USES THAT WOULD REDUCE THE LIVABILITY OF RESIDENTIAL AREAS OR SIGNIFICANTLY DEGRADE IMPORTANT WILDLIFE HABITAT.**

**OBJECTIVE:** To protect the livability of established neighborhoods and to protect sensitive wildlife habitats.

#### **POLICIES:**

1. The county should support federal, state, and regional clean air policies and air quality standards and regulations.
2. The county should assess the impacts of new land uses and activities on air quality, including pollution, particulate matter, odor and noise. The county should direct those uses that are likely to generate health or nuisance problems away from residential neighborhoods, schools, hospitals, and facilities housing residents who are particularly susceptible to air quality problems (e.g., long-term health care centers), and wildlife refuges.
3. The county should maintain the peace and quiet of residential neighborhoods by:

land. Generally, property owners retain ownership and continue to reside on their lands under the PDR program.

- ❖ **Fee Simple Purchase:** This tool is the acquisition of land by a land trust or conservation agency. The land may be leased or sold to farmers who agree to use the land for agricultural purposes. Land trusts own the land in a fee simple purchase and have the greatest control over how the land is managed. Some tools to create affordable access include allowing long-term leases or sale of land in exchange for an agreement to use sustainable agricultural practices.
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## B. COUNTY PARKS, TRAILS AND OPEN SPACES

The Growth Management Act requires that the County include a parks and recreation element in its Comprehensive Plan. An inventory with existing park acreages and the means for financing improvements and acquisitions is shown in the County's Capital Improvement Program (Appendix G). The Capital Improvement Program is updated on an annual basis with the County's budget.

The ~~Parks, Recreation, Trails and Natural Resource Preserve Plan~~ Parks, Open Space, and Trails Plan (POST) (2020), adopted separately from the Comprehensive Plan, provides a coordinated approach for the County's park and trail development, natural resource preservation, and provision of

**Commented [MT1]:** This is currently under review and anticipated to be adopted in early 2020. Clause may be updated if needed.

recreation services. The [Parks, Open Space, and Trails Plan](#) ~~Parks, Recreation, Trails and Natural Resource Preserve Plan~~ identifies need and priorities of county residents' for additional parks, recreation facilities, trails, greenways, and natural resource preservation. Some of the critical issues projected over the next 20 years for parks, trails, recreation and open space include:

- ❖ Acquire, develop and maintain parkland to account and accommodate for projected growth of the county;
- ❖ Identify sustainable funding to support maintenance of existing and new parks;
- ❖ Improved coordination with health and wellness;
- ❖ Improved connectivity of major trail corridors, and improved connectivity of smaller corridors to access major trails;
- ❖ [The need for additional non-motorized trails and open space:](#)
- ❖ Environmental preservation in parks and trails, and good stewardship in operations.

#### **Parks and Recreation Vision**

Thurston County's attractive, well managed parks, trails, nature preserves, and recreation programs enhance the quality of life and nurture the health and wellbeing of our people, our community, our environment and our economy. In partnership with our citizens, we ensure that our parks, trails, preserves and programs are accessible and responsive to changing needs within our communities. We provide respite from urbanization; preserve the environment; foster understanding of our natural, cultural and historic assets; and provide opportunities for recreation that meet the needs of the community. The focus on preserving open space region-wide continues, with a strong emphasis on connecting people to the land, water, and each other.

Citizens have identified many values for Thurston County's parks and recreation programs. These include: access, health and well-being, community and family, and preservation. Responses from citizens on what they value in parks, trails and recreations programs are outlined in the county's [Parks, Recreation, Trails and Natural Resource Preserve](#) ~~Open Space and Trails Plan (2013-2020)~~.

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#### **C. INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION**

Thurston County provides regional parks, natural resources, preserves, and recreational programming needs of county residents. The County recognizes the importance of coordinating its efforts with other municipalities, private industry and non-profits with similar missions in order to meet the service needs of the County. Parks development involves intergovernmental coordination to provide for parks and recreational facilities. This includes considerations like acquisition of new property, creating and maintaining regional park facilities, and park and facility financing. The joint plans for the cities' urban growth areas include park elements for providing parks in urban growth areas and at the neighborhood scale.

State and federal agencies manage nearly 50,000 acres in the county comprised of state parks, natural area preserves, such as the Woodard Bay Natural Resource Conservation Area on Henderson Inlet, many recreational sites within the state’s Capitol Forest, the state and federal Nisqually Wildlife Refuge, the Black River Wildlife Refuge, and other wildlife habitat mitigation and management sites. The state also owns or operates several boat ramps in the county. In addition, private and non-profit groups have purchased land and easements to preserve important natural areas in the county.

D. THURSTON COUNTY PARKLAND CLASSIFICATION

Thurston County’s park system ~~oversees 2,578 acres of parklands, comprised of 24 properties currently includes 33 park sites, totaling 2,646 acres.~~ These parks include a range of park types and are classified by the recreational opportunities they provide:

- ❖ **Regional Parks** (such as Burfoot Park) provide a combination of leisure recreation and active enterprise opportunities to residents and visitors. These parks also serve large geographic areas, tourists and visitors.
- ❖ ~~Trails, such as the Chehalis-Western Trail, Yelm-Tenino trail, and Gate-Belmore Trail link urban and rural areas within the County, providing the ability to travel by non-motorized means. The County has 56 miles of trail.~~
- ❖ ~~Special Use Parks meet the demands for a particular activity or special event. Examples include the five-acre off-leash dog parks, skateboard parks, farmers markets, and sports complexes.~~
- ❖ **School Parks** (such as Griffin Athletic Fields) combine the resources of two public agencies to provide recreational, social, cultural and educational opportunities.
- ❖ ~~Developed Parks, Historic Sites and Preserves~~ are ~~small parks, monuments and areas of historic significance or~~ older cemeteries that are owned by Thurston County, ~~such as Mima Pioneer Cemetery.~~
- ❖ ~~Open Space and Undeveloped Parks, including trails, greenways, community gardens, or farmed areas that act as visual relief from urban environments and buffers between land uses.~~
- ❖ ~~Preserves and Natural Areas, such as Glacial Heritage Preserve, focus on restoring wilderness, special natural habitat, and open space.~~

Thurston County’s regional parks are complemented by community, neighborhood, and special-use parks owned and operated by the cities of Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater and other jurisdictions within the county. Thurston County collaborates with other local jurisdictions to offer a wide variety of park and recreation opportunities. Non-~~regional county~~ park ~~classifications~~ within the county include:

- ❖ **Community parks** draw people from the immediate community (generally within a 10-15 ~~mi~~ mile radius).

**Commented [MT2]:** This section has been revised and updated based on the most recent draft (2-12-2020) of the parks, open space, and trails plan. May be revised depending on outcome of that plan, which is anticipated to be adopted in early 2020.

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PC Draft March 4 2020

- ❖ **Neighborhood parks** provide recreation space for an immediate neighborhood or cluster of neighborhoods (generally within a one mile radius).
- ❖ **Mini-parks** (or pocket parks) are typically play lots or playgrounds providing space for parental-supervised recreation for toddlers and young children.
- ❖ **Special Use Parks**, like dog parks, bike parks, swimming pools or disc golf courses that meet demands for particular activities.
- ❖ **Greenspaces**, like Capitol State Forest or the Billy Frank Jr. Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge, which are state or federal managed parks, preserves and recreational sites.
- ~~❖ **Special Use Parks** meet the demands for a particular activity or special event. Examples include dog parks, skateboard parks, farmers markets, and sports complexes.~~
- ❖ **Preserves**, such as Glacial Heritage Preserve, focus on restoring wilderness, special natural habitat, and open space.
- ❖ **Trails**, such as the Chehalis Western Trail, Yelm Tenino trail, and Gate Belmore Trail link urban and rural areas within the County, providing the ability to travel by non-motorized means. The County has 54.5 miles of trail; 87 acres of trail is developed.

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#### E. LEVEL OF SERVICE

Thurston County currently oversees 2,578 acres of parklands, comprised of 24 properties, has 33 park sites, accounting for a total of 2,646 acres. An inventory of existing park acreages and the means for financing improvements and acquisitions is shown in the County's Capital Improvement Program, Appendix G.

Of the 2,578 acres of parkland, 972 acres (12 sites, which includes 3 developed trails) are developed parkland. These sites include 12 active parks (631 acres), five of which are fully or partially developed (288 acres), six preserves and three historic sites (1,158 acres) and 12 trail properties, of which approximately 34.3 miles of trail are developed.

Thurston County Park's Level of Service (LOS) is 3.53.0 acres per 1,000 residents, and per capacity Level of Service as described in the 2020 Parks Impact Fee Study, as amended. Based on the 2040 population data, this 3.53.0 acre/1,000 residents LOS creates a need for 4,378,181 acres of operational park land. Since Thurston County currently has 288,972 acres of developed and operational parkland and trails, the net increase of developed land needed for park and trail purposes to meet the LOS standard is 4,089,209.210 acres (Table 9-1).

When the proposed land acquisitions and park development in the county's six-year Capital Improvement Program are added to current acreage, an adequate LOS is maintained to address the

Commented [MT3]: Based on 972 developed acres, the County has enough developed acres to meet the 6 year needs (CIP Appendix G), which is an approximate need of 855 acres. (Surplus of 117 acres)

Commented [MT4]: This is updated based on the most recent draft (2-12-2020) parks, open space, and trails plan. May be revised depending on outcome of that plan.

needs of an increasing population. To ensure proper planning for specific needs through the planning period, the County will monitor the adequacy of County park facilities by reviewing the Parks Plan annually and fully updating it every five years. As part of this long-range planning process, the county will explore acquisition of valuable active park, preserve or other properties that may become available on an “opportunity to acquire” basis. It is anticipated that the County will spend approximately \$40 million on various park and trail projects throughout the planning period (see Chapter 6).

Based on public input, the county has identified the highest priorities as development and acquisition of multiple use trails, water access sites, picnic sites and natural resource preserves.

**Commented [MT5]:** This language is verbatim from language already captured in Chapter 6. Removed from this section to leave in that chapter. For future updates:  
-Level of service in appropriate chapter  
-Chapter 6 – 20-year financing/planning  
-Appendix G – 6-year financing plan

Table 9-1. LOS Standards for Parks

Facility	Level of Service (LOS) Units	Level of Service (LOS) Standard
<b>Parks &amp; Trails</b>	<p><b>LOS 1: Develop</b> all or part of previously acquired property, or complete development projects that are underway, focusing on those that fill deficiencies in priorities defined by the public, i.e., trails, water access, athletic facilities.</p> <p>Main emphasis is on development of existing undeveloped park properties.</p> <p><b>LOS 2: Acquire</b> additional park lands to ensure that a 3.53.0 acre/1,000 population of developed park and recreation facilities LOS can be maintained through 2021.</p>	<p><b>LOS 1: Development (by 2040):</b> An additional 1.08920910 acres will be developed to provide additional water access, and athletic facilities.</p> <p>The County continues to look for additional revenue sources to develop existing park sites.</p> <p><b>LOS 2: Acquisition:</b> Acquire opportunity properties to insure an adequate land base in the future for maintaining the 3.53.0 acres/1,000 population LOS. Currently, the inventory of undeveloped land is adequate to meet this LOS through 2040.</p>

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**Commented [MT6]:** This is updated based on the most recent draft (2-12-2020) parks, open space, and trails plan. May be revised depending on outcome of that plan.

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VI. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

GEOLOGIC HAZARD AREAS

**GOAL 1:** MINIMIZE THE LOSS OF LIFE AND PROPERTY FROM LANDSLIDE, EARTHQUAKE, VOLCANIC, OR OTHER GEOLOGICAL EVENTS, AND



13. The county should encourage the use of special incentives to preserve and protect high quality or sensitive environmental resources that regulations do not adequately protect or to minimize the burden of affected private property owners. The means to be used (in order of priority) include: open space taxation, the assistance of federal or state resource agencies, the initiatives of private conservation organizations and local land trusts, or public acquisition.

### COUNTY PARKS RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE

Action needs for parks are provided in the Capital Improvement Program and the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan ~~Open Space and Trails Plan (2020)~~.

**Commented [MT9]:** Parks goals and policies are updated to be consistent with the 2020 parks plan.

#### Goals:

- A. Secure adequate funding for the operation, maintenance, and improvement of the county's recreational programs, parks, trails, and nature preserves through the implementation of sustainable funding strategies.
- B. Operate and maintain the parks, trails, nature preserves, and recreation programs in a safe, clean, and environmentally responsible manner.
- C. Expand educational and interpretational opportunities of the natural, cultural, historical, and artistic heritage within the county's parks, trails, and nature preserves.
- D. Provide connectivity, where feasible, between open spaces, parks, preserves, trails and wildlife corridors.
- E. Promote community by expanding the county's regional trail system to connect the county's urban and rural communities.
- F. Promote ~~and celebrate~~ community by providing opportunities for independent play as well as organized recreation, special events, and group/family activities.
- ~~G. Provide opportunities for recreation, learning, and growth for individuals with developmental and/or physical disabilities through Specialized Recreation.~~
- ~~H.G.~~ Coordinate county parks and recreation programs with the county Health Department's health and wellness programs to foster the well-being of our citizens.
- ~~H.H.~~ Improve public access to the county's freshwater and marine shorelines through acquisition, easements, and lease arrangements.
- ~~H.I.~~ Acquire and develop park lands to maintain a level of service that keeps pace with population growth and demographic change in the county.

- ~~K.I.~~ Be responsible stewards of the county's natural, historic, cultural and artistic resources for current and future generations by acquiring and protecting areas of significance.
- ~~L.K.~~ Work with other park, recreation and open space providers (including public, non-profits and private entities) to ensure a coordinated and cost-effective approach to meeting the region's recreation and natural resource preservation needs.
- ~~M.L.~~ Protect the recreational and environmental value of existing parks, trails and preserves.
- ~~N.M.~~ Create a safe, productive, and rewarding workplace which emphasizes teamwork, communication, and interdepartmental coordination.

**Acquisition Policies:**

1. Ensure that the ability to operate and maintain both existing and new assets is factored into decisions on acquisition of parkland, trails and greenways, cultural resources, nature preserves and other properties.
2. Acquire land and corridors proactively to deliver needed services. This includes acquiring the following:
  - a. Environmentally sensitive lands and resources that preserve wildlife habitat;
  - b. Sites of historical and cultural significance;
  - c. Marine shoreline and river access sites; and
  - ~~d. Lands surrounding parks, preserves and trails to protect natural, recreational and cultural values, and~~
  - ~~e.d.~~ Park land in configurations that maximize accessibility and minimize conflicts with surrounding land uses.
3. Maintain ability to react to property acquisition opportunities that emerge.
4. Use trails and greenways where practicable to link county, city, and regional parks and preserves.

**Planning, Development, and Improvement Policies:**

1. Assess county needs and demands through annual review of the ~~Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan~~ POST plan. Update the plan every five years. During the five-year update of the plan, evaluate undeveloped properties to assess merits for meeting county needs and/or their sale/exchange value.

2. Use green design and low-impact methods in developing parks and facilities, including county adopted Integrated Pest Management principles.
3. Solicit community input in the development of parks, trails, facilities, programs and services.
4. Ensure park design and development guidelines conform to local ordinance and accepted state and federal standards.
5. Provide educational/interpretive signs to foster public stewardship of the environmental, historical and cultural features of parks, preserves and trails. Use universal design standards for signs and facilities.
- ~~6.~~ Include environmental, historic and cultural education as integral components of park experience.
- ~~6.7.~~ Work with other parks/recreation and open space providers (public, private and non-profit organizations) to ensure a coordinated and cost-effective approach to meeting the region's park, recreation and preservation needs.
- ~~8.~~ In collaboration with other jurisdictions, explore potential recreational uses of undeveloped public lands.
- ~~9.~~ Actively pursue opportunities that allow for the preservation of natural systems, critical landscapes, and other environmental assets.
- ~~7.10.~~ Work with other jurisdictions to establish and protect open space and habitat corridors with linkages to regionally significant open spaces and areas of diverse habitat.

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**Recreational Programming Policies:**

- ~~1.~~ Ensure county recreation programs offer recreational and leisure opportunities for citizens with physical and/or developmental disabilities.
- ~~2.~~ Operate recreation facilities and programs under county control in an entrepreneurial manner when possible.
- ~~3.~~ Meet recreation needs and avoid duplication of services through sound planning and coordination with other recreation providers in our community.
- ~~4.~~ Promote community and regional events that use county park facilities as a base for county sponsored events and activities.
- ~~5.~~ Include environmental, historic and cultural education, and opportunities for the arts, as integral components of the park and recreation experience. Provide special events that celebrate the cultural heritage of Thurston County.
- ~~6.~~ Promote health and wellness through Parks and recreation programs.

- ~~7. Collaborate with the local hospitality community to promote local events and activities and enhance outreach in support of Thurston County's Agri-Tourism efforts.~~

**Operation and Maintenance Policies:**

1. Develop a comprehensive program that identifies maintenance needs for all parklands, trails, nature preserves, facilities and equipment.
2. Maintain property and assets in a manner that:
  - a. Maintains safety and reduces public liability.
  - b. Supports ecological functions and minimizes disturbances to natural vegetation and wildlife habitats.
3. Manage and conserve natural preserves based on sound scientific principles. Manage vegetation through use of Integrated Pest Management Program.
4. Use on-site caretakers in park and recreation facilities as a security and maintenance resource whenever feasible. Encourage residents, community organizations and other volunteers to share responsibility for parks by giving them a role in park stewardship.
5. Define park use rules and regulations through the county's park ordinances. Park use rules and regulations should maximize access and ensure safety and the protection and preservation of public assets.
6. Follow training and safety awareness standards as prescribed by the American Public Works Association Manual adopted by Thurston County Public Works.
7. Expand cooperation with other parks/recreation agencies to operate and maintain facilities, including alignment of equipment purchases when practicable.

**Financial ~~resources~~ Resources and ~~regional~~ Regional partnership Policies:**

1. Ensure stable funding for parks and recreation services, operation and maintenance. Diversify revenue base by pursuing additional funding sources including enterprise initiatives, support from tribes and foundations, grants and partnerships. Work with regional partners to assess feasibility of creating a Metropolitan Park District.
2. Work with local, state and federal jurisdictions to evaluate impacts of proposed legislation on parks and recreation, and/or to draft new legislation that supports the ~~department~~ Thurston County Parks and Trails' mission.
3. Work with other parks and recreation providers within Thurston County to identify opportunities for mutual gain. When feasible, use interagency agreements for financing

acquisition, facility development, and operation and maintenance to reduce costs and retain financial flexibility.

4. Work with other public and private park and recreation providers to avoid duplication of services, improve facilities, and reduce costs through coordinated planning and development.

#### AIR QUALITY

**GOAL 8: PROTECT AND IMPROVE THE COUNTY'S AIR QUALITY AND MINIMIZE OR ELIMINATE ODOR AND NOISE FROM NEW LAND USES THAT WOULD REDUCE THE LIVABILITY OF RESIDENTIAL AREAS OR SIGNIFICANTLY DEGRADE IMPORTANT WILDLIFE HABITAT.**

**OBJECTIVE:** To protect the livability of established neighborhoods and to protect sensitive wildlife habitats.

#### POLICIES:

1. The county should support federal, state, and regional clean air policies and air quality standards and regulations.
2. The county should assess the impacts of new land uses and activities on air quality, including pollution, particulate matter, odor and noise. The county should direct those uses that are likely to generate health or nuisance problems away from residential neighborhoods, schools, hospitals, and facilities housing residents who are particularly susceptible to air quality problems (e.g., long-term health care centers), and wildlife refuges.
3. The county should maintain the peace and quiet of residential neighborhoods by:
  - a. limiting noisy, polluting, or heavy traffic generating land uses and activities in close proximity to such areas;
  - b. through the use of screens, open space, or other buffers; and
  - c. through enforcement of noise and air emission standards.
4. The county should minimize the noise impacts from noise-producing sources, such as airports and military firing ranges, by designating noise impacted lands for use as forestry, agriculture, public reserves, industrial and, as a last priority, low density residential. Require that the deed, title, or covenants for lots in new residential subdivisions contain statements notifying prospective purchasers that the property will be affected by noise.
5. The county should continue to coordinate with local and regional government agencies to reduce air pollution by adopting land use and transportation plans that help reduce the amount of vehicle emissions.

ATTACHMENT B:

## CHAPTER 6 - CAPITAL FACILITIES

Proposed Amendments in Clean and  
Tracked Changes

For a full version of the chapter, visit  
[www.Thurston2040.com](http://www.Thurston2040.com)

Thurston County plans for, reviews, and permits rural and urban development that depend upon multiple local entities for support infrastructure. These other public entities include school districts, fire districts/authorities, water supply, wastewater and treatment facilities, and transit entities. Providing infrastructure support is the responsibility of the other public entities. Thurston County cannot control the planning or construction of capital facilities by other public entities within its borders, all of which have their own legislative bodies and operate independently from the County government. However, the capital facilities planned by these other entities should be, under the Growth Management Act, addressed in the County's Capital Facilities chapter.

Inclusion of capital facilities planning by these other entities will promote consistent and unified capital facilities planning throughout the County. However, the inclusion of their plans does not imply County approval or disapproval of the plans or the levels of service, which they adopt. Rather, their inclusion insures compliance with the GMA and enables a consistent approach to capital facilities planning throughout the County, taking into consideration the Capital Facilities plans of all public entities in the County. Most of the public entities have adopted their own 6- and 20-year Capital Facilities Plans. For more information, please refer to the Six-year Capital Improvement Program (Appendix G) for Thurston County and the other public entities' adopted Capital Facilities Plans. For goals and policies related to schools and coordinated planning with other public entities, see Section III of this plan.

Schools and Fire Districts create their own capital facilities plan, and thus are not included within the summary of Capital Facilities, in Section IV. The County collects impact fees for 4 of the 8 school districts and 1 of the 13 fire districts. Each individual Capital Facilities Plan for these 5 districts that the County collects impact fees from, is adopted by reference by the County. The CIP includes a list of projects and funding sources for other entities.

- Other County Plans**
- ❖ Regional Transportation Improvement Program
  - ❖ Solid Waste Management Plan (2009)
  - ❖ Thurston County Hazardous Waste Management Plan (2014)
  - ❖ Stormwater Management Program Plan (2018)
  - ❖ Parks, Open Space, and Trails Plan (2020)
  - ❖ Thurston Regional Trails Plan (2007)
  - ❖ Drainage Design and Erosion Control Manual (2016)
  - ❖ Joint City/County Plans
  - ❖ Subbarea Plans

Table 6-1. Interjurisdictional Shared Needs for Public Purpose Lands

Project Serving Shared Needs	County Department & Jurisdictions	Project Serving Shared Needs	County Department & Jurisdictions
Beneficial Re-Use of Closed Landfill (Park & Ride Facility)	Thurston Public Works Lacey WSDOT	Yelm - Tenino Trail (coordinated recreation use/ stormwater retention/utility corridor/highway access/potential future rail use)	Thurston Public Works Yelm Rainier Tenino WSDOT TRPC
Mallard Pond Phase II	RS-SWU Lacey	Gate to Belmore Trail (coordinated recreation	Thurston Public Works Tumwater

- 3. Efficiency in design, sustainability, and use should be a goal for new facility development. Building design and function must promote flexibility to accommodate a variety of uses and interior spatial changes. New facilities should be built for a 50-year life span.
- 4. Alternatives to construction of new space should include such considerations as innovative use of alternative hours, telecommuting, night court, kiosks, distributed service locations, and pursue technologically feasible alternative.
- 5. Public-private partnerships should be examined for their potential to offset costs and improve efficiency.
- 6. Building condition assessments should be initiated and sustained to inform the major maintenance program.
- 7. Evaluation of capital costs and maintenance and operation costs should give priority to long-term energy efficiencies achieved through design and construction.
- 8. Costs, including capital expenses, amortization, depreciation, and maintenance and operation costs, should be funded through a Capital Reserve Fund and through charging space in County Buildings.

IV. CAPITAL FACILITIES SUMMARY

Many of the sections below have individual chapter elements with the appropriate goals and policies, detailed inventories, and Level of Service Standards. Those sections are adopted by reference in each applicable section.

**Level of Service (LOS):** These are established by applying national standards, regional averages, or service-level assessments for a particular facility or service.

A. REGIONAL PARKS, TRAILS, OPEN SPACES, AND PRESERVES

**Overview:**

Recreation, the pursuit of leisure activities, enjoyment of the outdoors, preservation of open space and habitat, and the natural environment are essential elements in maintaining a balance in the quality of life throughout Thurston County.

See Chapter 9, Environment, Recreation and Open Space for information on Level of Service standards for parks.

**Existing Inventory:**

Thurston County currently has 24 properties, accounting for a total of 2,578 acres. Of the 2,578 acres of parkland, 972 acres (12 sites, which include 3 developed trails) are developed parkland. That developed parkland includes 5 regional parks (381 acres), 2 trails (582 acres, or 40.5 miles of trails), 1 special use park (5 acres), and 3 historic sites (4 acres). Additionally, there are 1,606 acres more of undeveloped/open space parkland (220 acres) and preserves and natural areas (1,134 acres). A current list of all existing facilities is located in Appendix G.

**Future Needs:**

Thurston County citizens have expressed a high level of interest in preserving open space and



unique natural areas and insuring there are adequate park and recreation facilities in the county to meet the needs of a diverse and growing population. The highest priority needs have been defined as interconnecting trail systems, water access sites, picnic areas, and nature preserves. Park classifications, details of park development and establishment of level of service standards are found in the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan (Chapter 9) Parks, Recreation, Trails and Natural Resource Preserve Section.

When the proposed land acquisitions in the Six-Year Capital Improvement Program for Thurston County Facilities are added to the current acreage, an adequate LOS is maintained to address the needs and demands of an increasing population. To insure proper planning for specific needs through the planning period, the County will monitor the adequacy of County park facilities by reviewing the Parks Plan annually and fully updating it every five years. As part of this long-range planning process, the county will explore acquisition of valuable active park, preserve, or other properties that may become available on an "opportunity to acquire" basis. Parklands to be acquired will be focused on meeting specific needs for types of park facilities not met by other jurisdictions and/or the private sector. The size and amount of specific recreational facilities will vary from area to area, and for a specific park sub-classification.

#### **Capital Projects and Funding:**

It is anticipated throughout the planning period that approximately \$40 million would be spent on various park and trail projects. These costs would be paid from park impact fees, and real estate excise tax funds. See Section V for descriptions of these funds. Specific park and trail projects anticipated in the six-year planning period including their associated funding sources, are shown in the Six-Year Capital Improvement Program for Thurston County, in Appendix G.

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## **B. SOLID WASTE**

### **Overview:**

RCW 70.95.080 states that: "Each county within the state, in cooperation with the various cities located within such county, prepare a coordinated, comprehensive solid waste management plan." Thurston County coordinated with local jurisdictions to develop the Thurston County Solid Waste Management Plan of 1993 and subsequent plans of 2001 and 2009 and is currently revising the 2009 plan.

See Chapter 7, Utilities for information on Level of Service standards for solid waste.

This Solid Waste Capital Facilities plan identifies those capital projects required to: 1) meet the policy goals and objectives in the Thurston County Solid Waste Management Plan and Thurston County Comprehensive Plan; 2) comply with federal and state law; and 3) address facility safety, operational, capacity and obsolescence issues.

### **Existing Inventory:**

Includes the Thurston County Waste and Recovery Center (WARC) formerly known as Hawks Prairie Landfill, and two transfer locations; Rainier Drop Box and Rochester Drop Box. Further details about capacity and location of current solid waste facilities can be found in Appendix G.

### **Future Needs:**

**Capital Facilities** THURSTON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Adopted November 2019 PC Draft, March 4 2020

Thurston County plans for, reviews, and permits rural and urban development that depend upon multiple local entities for support infrastructure. These other public entities include school districts, fire districts/authorities, water supply, wastewater and treatment facilities, and transit entities. Providing infrastructure support is the responsibility of the other public entities. Thurston County cannot control the planning or construction of capital facilities by other public entities within its borders, all of which have their own legislative bodies and operate independently from the County government. However, the capital facilities planned by these other entities should be, under the Growth Management Act, addressed in the County's Capital Facilities chapter.

Inclusion of capital facilities planning by these other entities will promote consistent and unified capital facilities planning throughout the County. However, the inclusion of their plans does not imply County approval or disapproval of the plans or the levels of service, which they adopt. Rather, their inclusion insures compliance with the GMA and enables a consistent approach to capital facilities planning throughout the County, taking into consideration the Capital Facilities plans of all public entities in the County. Most of the public entities have adopted their own 6- and 20-year Capital Facilities Plans. For more information, please refer to the Six-year Capital Improvement Program (Appendix G) for Thurston County and the other public entities' adopted Capital Facilities Plans. For goals and policies related to schools and coordinated planning with other public entities, see Section III of this plan.

Schools and Fire Districts create their own capital facilities plan, and thus are not included within the summary of Capital Facilities, in Section IV. The County collects impact fees for 4 of the 8 school districts and 1 of the 13 fire districts. Each individual Capital Facilities Plan for these 5 districts that the County collects impact fees from, is adopted by reference by the County. The CIP includes a list of projects and funding sources for other entities.

- Other County Plans**
- ❖ Regional Transportation Improvement Program
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  - ❖ Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Natural Resource Preserve Plan (Open Space and Trails Plan) (2013, 2020)
  - ❖ Thurston Regional Trails Plan (2007)
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Mallard Pond Phase II	RS-SWU Lacey	Gate to Belmore Trail (coordinated recreation)	Thurston Public Works Tumwater

**Capital Facilities** THURSTON COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

*Adopted November 2019 PC Draft, March 4 2020*

3. Efficiency in design, sustainability, and use should be a goal for new facility development. Building design and function must promote flexibility to accommodate a variety of uses and interior spatial changes. New facilities should be built for a 50-year life span.
4. Alternatives to construction of new space should include such considerations as innovative use of alternative hours, telecommuting, night court, kiosks, distributed service locations, and pursue technologically feasible alternative.
5. Public-private partnerships should be examined for their potential to offset costs and improve efficiency.
6. Building condition assessments should be initiated and sustained to inform the major maintenance program.
7. Evaluation of capital costs and maintenance and operation costs should give priority to long-term energy efficiencies achieved through design and construction.
8. Costs, including capital expenses, amortization, depreciation, and maintenance and operation costs, should be funded through a Capital Reserve Fund and through charging space in County Buildings.

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Many of the sections below have individual chapter elements with the appropriate goals and policies, detailed inventories, and Level of Service Standards. Those sections are adopted by reference in each applicable section.

**Level of Service (LOS):** These are established by applying national standards, regional averages, or service-level assessments for a particular facility or service.

**A. REGIONAL PARKS, TRAILS, OPEN SPACES, AND PRESERVES**

**Overview:**

Recreation, the pursuit of leisure activities, enjoyment of the outdoors, preservation of open space and habitat, and the natural environment are essential elements in maintaining a balance in the quality of life throughout Thurston County.

See Chapter 9, Environment, Recreation and Open Space for information on Level of Service standards for parks.

**Existing Inventory:**

Thurston County currently has 33-24 park sites/properties, accounting for a total of 2,645-2,578 acres. Of the 2,578 acres of parkland, 972 acres (12 sites, which include 3 developed trails) are developed parkland. That developed parkland includes 5 regional parks (381 acres), 2 trails (582 acres, or 40.5 miles of trails), 1 special use park (5 acres), and 3 historic sites (4 acres). Additionally, there are 1,606 acres more of undeveloped/open space parkland (220 acres) and preserves and natural areas (1,134 acres). These sites include twelve active parks (631 acres), only five of which are fully or partially developed; six preserves and three historic sites (1,158 acres); and 12 trails/trail properties, accounting for 47.8 miles of planned 58-mile recreational trail system. Approximately 34.3 miles of the trail system have been developed. The rest of the trail system is

**Commented [MT1]:** The CIP, Appendix G will need to be updated for consistency with the new inventory numbers from Parks Plan.

~~Adopted November 2019~~ PC Draft, March 4 2020

~~currently undeveloped.~~ A current list of all existing facilities is located in Appendix G.

**Future Needs:**

Thurston County citizens have expressed a high level of interest in preserving open space and unique natural areas and insuring there are adequate park and recreation facilities in the county to meet the needs of a diverse and growing population. The highest priority needs have been defined as interconnecting trail systems, water access sites, picnic areas, and nature preserves. Park classifications, details of park development and establishment of level of service standards are found in the Thurston County Comprehensive Plan (Chapter 9) Parks, Recreation, Trails and Natural Resource Preserve Section.

~~Thurston County has 288 acres of parkland and trails developed and operational. The net increase of land dedicated for park and trail purposes that meets the Level of Service (LOS) standard is 590 acres. This LOS standard amounts to a total of 406 acres of Urban/Regional Park land, 61 acres of Public/Private Enterprise Park land, and 123 acres of Greenways/Trail lands.~~

**Commented [MT2]:** Removed, as this is covered in Chapter 9 and the CIP.  
  
If retaining, this may need to be revised, dependent on the CIP, Appendix G. Consistent with version adopted late 2019.

When the proposed land acquisitions in the Six-Year Capital Improvement Program for Thurston County Facilities are added to the current acreage, an adequate LOS is maintained to address the needs and demands of an increasing population. To insure proper planning for specific needs through the planning period, the County will monitor the adequacy of County park facilities by reviewing the Parks Plan annually and fully updating it every five years. As part of this long-range planning process, the county will explore acquisition of valuable active park, preserve, or other properties that may become available on an "opportunity to acquire" basis. Parklands to be acquired will be focused on meeting specific needs for types of park facilities not met by other jurisdictions and/or the private sector. The size and amount of specific recreational facilities will vary from area to area, and for a specific park sub-classification.

**Capital Projects and Funding:**

It is anticipated throughout the planning period that approximately \$40 million would be spent on various park and trail projects. These costs would be paid from park impact fees, and real estate excise tax funds. See Section V for descriptions of these funds. Specific park and trail projects anticipated in the six-year planning period including their associated funding sources, are shown in the Six-Year Capital Improvement Program for Thurston County, in Appendix G.

**B. SOLID WASTE**

**Overview:**

RCW 70.95.080 states that: "Each county within the state, in cooperation with the various cities located within such county, prepare a coordinated, comprehensive solid waste management plan." Thurston County coordinated with local jurisdictions to develop the Thurston County Solid Waste Management Plan of 1993 and subsequent plans of 2001 and 2009 and is currently revising the 2009 plan.

See Chapter 7, Utilities for information on Level of Service standards for solid waste.

This Solid Waste Capital Facilities plan identifies those capital projects required to: 1) meet the policy goals and objectives in the Thurston County Solid Waste Management Plan and Thurston