

STRATEGIC PLAN

Greenway Program Land Acquisition

City of Bellingham, Washington

January 13, 2009

Greenway Advisory Committee & Parks & Recreation Department

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Prepared by
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INTRODUCTION

In 2006, Bellingham voters approved a third Greenway property tax levy. Working with the City Council's adopted [Greenways III Capital Expenditure Guideline Summary](#) City staff and the Greenway Advisory Committee (the citizen body charged with initiating recommendations for expenditure of Greenway Funds) developed this strategic plan. The plan outlines project goals and funding levels for Greenway Levy III land acquisition efforts over the next several years. The plan is also based on community response to the 2007 Greenway III public input process and is consistent with the proposed [2008 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan](#), [North Bellingham Trail Plan](#) and the [2009 Capital Budget](#).

City Council approved the Northside and Whatcom Creek segments of the plan on January 12, 2009. They voted to delay further consideration of the Southside portion of the plan until at least 15 days after the Draft EIS for the Fairhaven Highlands development project has been issued.

The Ordinance that established the 2006 Greenways III Levy¹ divided Bellingham into separate north and south expenditure areas for major acquisitions with Whatcom Creek as the approximate dividing line between the two. The expenditure guideline also allocated acquisition funds for several project specific areas, including Whatcom Creek which is such an important part of the City's greenway system.

The City's developed parks and trails system is more extensive in the south, where the goal of new acquisitions is primarily to complete ongoing projects. In the City's northern neighborhoods, where there are few parklands and trails, the emphasis is primarily on building a system that is largely based on the North Bellingham Trail Plan.

The 2006 levy authorized \$26.4 million for land acquisition over the 10-year lifetime of the levy, 2007 through 2016. Of this total, \$12.1 million was allocated for northside property

¹ City of Bellingham, Ordinance 2006-03-033, "Greenways Levy Ordinance," March 13, 1996. See also City of Bellingham, Resolution 2006-06, "Greenway Resolution," March 20, 2006.

acquisitions, \$6.0 million for southside property acquisitions, and \$2.0 million for undesignated property acquisitions. The levy also authorized \$5.3 million for land acquisition “Project Completions” and \$1.0 million for Cornwall Park/Squalicum Creek Expansion. See Table 1 for details.

This Plan focuses on the basic goals guiding Greenway III land acquisition efforts as initially approved by the City Council. The plan indicates the amount of money designated for each acquisition project and includes a brief summary of project elements. Appendix II summarizes actual expenditures of Greenway III funds to date as well as the amount of money remaining in each project area as of the reporting date. Appendix II will be periodically updated to reflect expenditures and any reallocation of levy funds between the project areas or to new project areas.

Greenway III Levy development projects (e.g., construction or expansion of trails, and other park facility improvements) are very specific and are not included in this plan. However, they are listed in Table 1 for reference.

For additional information on Greenway Program goals, accomplishments, recent Program purchases and historical information see [The Greenway Land Acquisition Program \[future hyperlinked document to be created\]](#). For a city-wide map of Program acquisitions and a viewable summary of land parcel information see <http://www.cob.org/government/departments/parks/greenway/accomplishments.aspx> The [Table of Property Acquired](#) also includes 2006 levy-funded purchases to date.

To show how Strategic Plan allocations reflect the Council guidelines created when the 2006 levy was placed on the ballot, the description for each funded project references a line from the following table, excerpted from City of Bellingham Ordinance No. 2006-03-033.

1	Description (Values in \$ Millions)	Total	Acquisition	Development
2	Major New Greenway Acquisitions			
3	Northside Property Acquisitions	12.1	12.1	
4	Southside Property Acquisitions	6.0	6.0	
5	Undesignated Property Acquisitions	2.0	2.0	
6	Project Completions			
7	Complete Phase 2 Squalicum Creek Park	4.7		4.7
8	Complete Northridge Park	1.0		1.0
9	Future Waterfront Redevelopment Area Trail	4.0		4.0
10	Chuckanut/Interurban Trail Improvements	1.0		1.0
11	Extend Bay-to-Baker Trail	2.8	2.8	
12	Complete future Samish Crest Hiking Trail	1.5	1.5	
13	Whatcom Creek Trail Greenway	1.0	1.0	
14	Heritage Park Improvements			
15	Cornwall Park/Squalicum Creek Expansion	1.0	1.0	
16	Lake Padden Park trail & field improvements	1.0		1.0
17	Whatcom Falls Park trail improvements	0.5		0.5
18	Boulevard Park trail & beach improvements	1.5		1.5

19	Totals	40.1	26.4	13.7
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In general, this plan recommends purchase of land to conserve and preserve open space functions and opportunities, often complementing new residential developments. The recommendations are based on the committee’s [Acquisition Guidelines](#), shown in Appendix 1. The properties actually purchased with Greenway funds may differ from the projects identified here as planned acquisitions do not come to fruition or new, attractive opportunities arise. Any changes to the strategic plan must be approved by the City Council. Levy funds may be reallocated among these or other projects as opportunities change and matching resources are secured. All funding decisions are approved by City Council.

Because Greenway III funds are limited, they are often used in combination with other funding sources, including grants, Real Estate Excise Taxes, park impact fees, etc., in order to extend Greenways dollars as much as possible.

NORTHSIDE PLAN, See Map 1

The Greenway Program goal for this area is to assemble properties for several large, multi-purpose community park and forest sites to begin creation of a greenway system north and east of Interstate 5 and in the northwest corner of the urban area. These anchors will stimulate public and private developers to dedicate connecting linkages and amenity sites and encourage use of public funds to acquire smaller neighborhood park and resource sites along the planned greenway corridors. Four projects areas (N1-N4) have been designated with allocations totaling \$12.1 million.² Another project (N5) will complete missing links in the Squalicum Creek/Bay to Baker Greenway and another will expand Cornwall Park (N6). The planned greenway system initiated through these strategic “anchor” investments is extensive and involves regional connections as well as elements to overcome the barrier effects of I-5. [The Greenway Land Acquisition Program](#) [\[create hyperlink\]](#), the [General Map of Greenway System](#) and the [North Bellingham Trails Plan](#) contain detailed descriptions of the planned trail and greenway system north of Whatcom Creek.

The major goals of the northern greenways system plan are:

- Acquire several properties suitable for large community parks and/or as open space;
- Link these areas with trails across the city, running both east-west and north-south;
- Link the trails (east-west) into the Bay-to-Baker Trail and (north-south) into the Coast Millennium Trail and the southern neighborhoods of Bellingham.

These trail linkages will enable users to cross and link to all parts Bellingham in both directions.

N1 NORTHWEST BELLINGHAM/ALDERWOOD TO MARINE DRIVE (Funding reference: portion of Line 3, Table 1.)

\$2,000,000 was allocated to

- Create a trailhead and greenway-based park anchor along the west side of the Port’s airport open space,
- secure a neighborhood park in the underserved Birchwood/Alderwood area,
- Create a community park/open space site linking the Birchwood and Alderwood neighborhoods (including the Laurelwood Trail) with the Port parklands on the bluff south of the airport and with the Locust Drive beach access trail.

Future trail links could connect Port uplands with the beach, the Cliffside area tidelands, eastward along the beach to Little Squalicum Park and the Locust Drive trail and northward to Ferndale and Hovander Park along the west side of the airport. This project could benefit from matching funds for community development efforts and affordable housing.

² Of this \$12.1 million, over \$1.8 million has already been spent in these four areas, as of October 2008; see Appendix II for expenditure details.

N2 NORTH BELLINGHAM TRAIL SYSTEM ANCHOR SITE AND TRAIL CONNECTIONS (Funding reference: portion of Line 3, Table 1.)

\$4,500,000 was allocated for creation of a major, multiuse community recreation and forest site with greenway connections to Cordata Park and trails as proposed in the North Bellingham Trail Plan. A greenways system anchor here can set the stage for recreation, trails and private open space dedications extending north and west into rural Whatcom County.

N3 KING & QUEEN MOUNTAIN CORRIDOR SITE (Funding reference: portion of Line 3, Table 1.)

\$3,100,000 was allocated for creation of one or more major, multiuse community recreational sites with greenway connections to surrounding areas. Ideally major activity nodes would be established on the east and west sides of King Mt. to match dedications indicated by prospective development. Greenway system anchors here can set the stage for public park and trail investments and private open space dedications extending east and west, toward the city center and outward into rural Whatcom County.

N4 DEWEY VALLEY GREENWAY AND PARK SITE (Funding reference: portion of Line 3, Table 1)

\$2,500,000 is allocated for creation of a major community forest and hiking site with an active park component. The site will be established to provide viable greenway connections to the Bay to Baker and Railroad Trails, Northridge Park, Big Rock Park, and to points north and east into rural Whatcom County.

N5 SQUALICUM CREEK GREENWAY/BAY TO BAKER TRAIL PROJECT (Funding reference: portion of Line 3, Table 1 and \$860,000 from the 1997 Beyond Greenways Levy)

\$2,800,000 is allocated in Greenway III Levy funds and **\$860,000** is allocated in 1997 Beyond Greenway Levy funds, both to acquire open space along Squalicum Creek for park amenities, wildlife habitat and construction of off-street trails between Roeder Ave and E. Bakerview Road. Segments of this corridor (at Meridian and between Birchwood Avenue and James Street) may be combined with street improvement projects.

N6 CORNWALL PARK EXPANSION PROJECT (Funding reference: Line 15, Table 1)

\$1,000,000 is allocated to expand Cornwall Park and the Squalicum Creek Greenway. A critical, off-street segment of the Bay to Baker/Squalicum Creek Trail is involved along Squalicum Creek. Community gardens, passive recreation, wildlife habitat enhancement and agriculture are allowed under the terms of the Whatcom Land Trust easement over the Deets Property.

WHATCOM CREEK CORRIDOR PLAN, See Map 2

This plan allocates funds to a potential park and trail system wayside at the intersection of James, Meador and Humboldt Street.

W1 CENTRAL WHATCOM CREEK PARK AND TRAIL WAYSIDE (Funding reference: portion of Line 13, Table 1)

\$1,000,000 is allocated for acquisition of a neighborhood and trail wayside park site(s) serving the York neighborhood, potentially at the Bellingham School District bus barn site, should the District decide to relocate. A project in this area could form a hub linking the Whatcom Creek Trail with the on street bicycle routes connecting to the York, Samish and Happy Valley neighborhoods.

Another potential site for a wayside park and trail hub is in the area of Ellis/Kansas/State/York Streets, possibly in conjunction with development projects, land exchanges and development incentives. This site is the intersection between Whatcom Creek Trail, the Railroad Trail and Railroad Avenue extending south to the Depot Market, South Bay Trail and Waterfront.

DRAFT SOUTHSIDE PLAN, See Map 3

The goal for expenditures south of Whatcom Creek is to preserve the visual backdrops provided by forested hill tops (S1, S4, S5) enhancing trail and wildlife corridor connections between urban neighborhoods and Chuckanut Mountain, the Interurban Trail corridor, Lake Padden Park, the Samish Hill Greenway and Lookout/Galbraith Mountain (S1, S2, S4, S5). One project (S5) would establish a community forest and park site to anchor a greenway on the edge of the urban area adjacent to Lookout Mountain. Other projects (S2, S3) will preserve critical riparian properties in ongoing shoreline greenway efforts. Several projects will help complete key segments in trail projects begun many years ago (S1, S2, S4, S5). Line 5 of Table 1, the City Council's 2006 [Greenways III Capital Expenditure Guideline Summary](#), established a \$6 million allocation for "Southside" properties in general and the Council's Resolution 2006-06 prioritized \$2 million for project S1. Another \$1.5 million was allocated for the ongoing Samish Hill project, also south of Whatcom Creek.³

S1 INTERURBAN BASIN TRAIL SYSTEM LINKS AND FAIRHAVEN PARK TO INTERURBAN BASIN GREENWAY (Funding reference: portion of Line 4, Table 1 and City Council's [2006-06 Resolution](#) in support of a satisfactory agreement with the owners of Fairhaven Highlands.)

\$4,145,000 is allocated to acquire properties connecting the Interurban Basin park and forest lands and the Interurban Trail with surrounding neighborhoods, parks, public open spaces and trail corridors. Specific components include securing:

- a forest corridor between Fairhaven Park and the Interurban Trail through the property known as Fairhaven Highlands, serving as a visual backdrop for parts of the South Hill, Fairhaven and Happy Valley and Samish Hill neighborhoods and providing a habitat feature for wildlife.
- a public trail connection between the Interurban Basin and Chuckanut Mountain via the abandoned Fairhaven and Southern RR grade to the easterly end of Arroyo Park.
- additional open space along the 28th Street trail connecting Hoag Pond with the Happy Valley neighborhood, park and the Connelly Creek corridor.

S2 SOUTH CHUCKANUT BAY GREENWAY/INTERURBAN TRAIL CORRIDOR MISSING LINKS AND FOREST RESERVES (Funding reference: portion of Line 4, Table 1.)

\$1,310,000 is allocated for acquisitions to protect wildlife habitat, to enhance and provide trail connections between the Interurban Trail and Arroyo Park, Woodstock Farm and Chuckanut Mt and to preserve the rural and forest character of lands along the Interurban Trail and Chuckanut Drive. Specific objectives include:

- securing and conserving riparian tracts along Woodstock and California Creeks

³ Of the total \$9.5 million allocated south of Whatcom Creek, over \$.85 million has been spent as of October 2008; see Appendix II.

- reducing the effects of the “Interurban Gap” a challenging set of steep road and trail routes which act as a barrier for trail users between Lake Samish Road and the Interurban Trail south of California Street and protecting wetland forest and habitat.

S3 PADDEN CREEK GREENWAY MISSING LINKS AND RIPARIAN BUFFERS
(Funding reference: portion of Line 4, Table 1.)

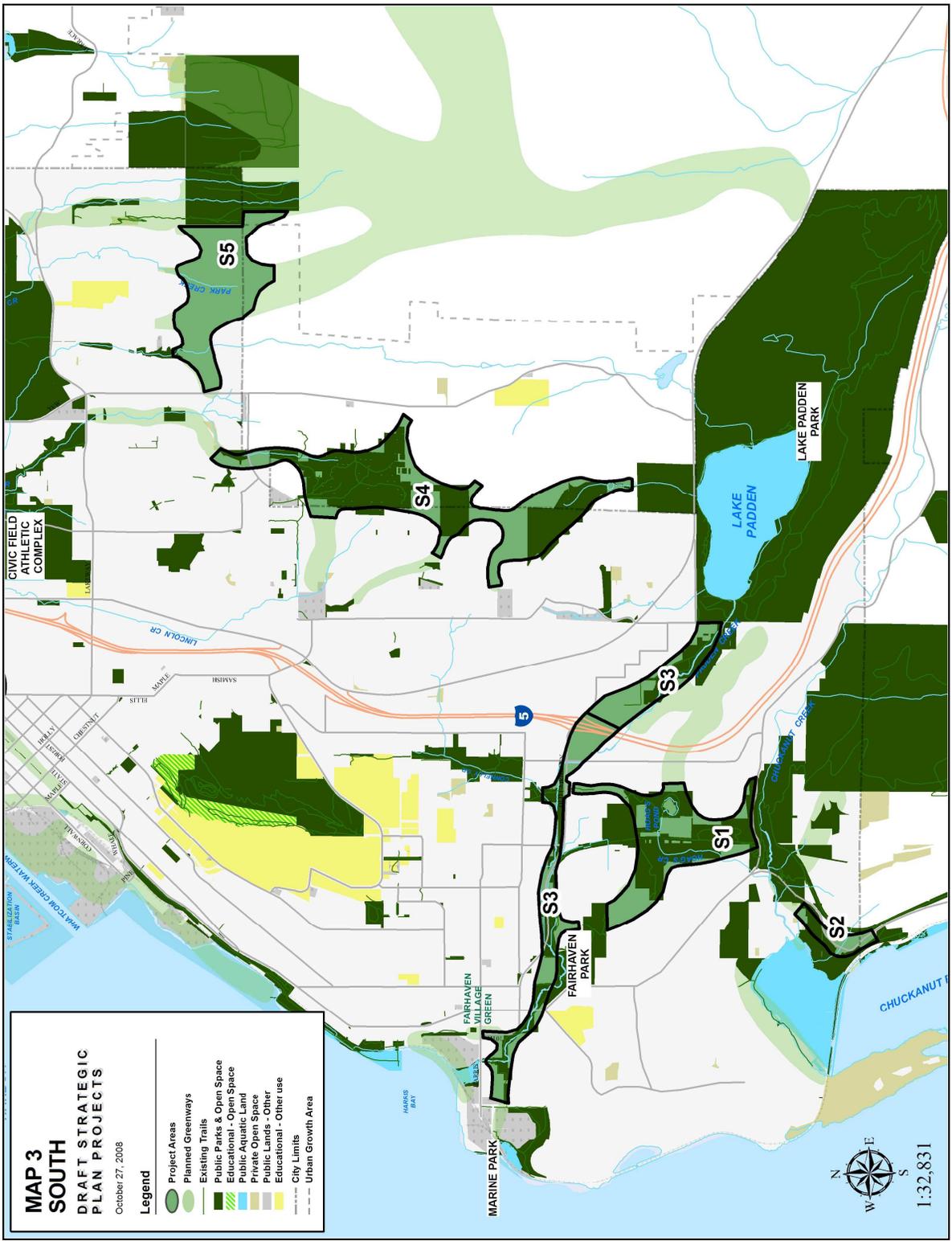
\$460,000 was allocated to purchase properties providing resource protection for this urban creek and to preserve and enhance aesthetic and recreational open space buffer and backdrop values.

S4 SAMISH HILL/SAMISH CREST TRAIL CORRIDOR MISSING LINKS
(Funding reference: Lines 4 and 12, Table 1.)

\$1,500,000 was allocated to complete elements of the Samish Crest Greenway, including future trail and park features. An additional **\$385,000** was allocated from available “Southside” funds earmarked on Line 4 of Table 1, the *Greenways III Capital Expenditure Guideline Summary*. When completed, the corridor will tie Lake Padden Park to San Juan Boulevard via a greenway trail system and then north to Whatcom Creek via neighborhood streets and additional foot trails. The Samish Crest Greenway will also include parks, trailheads and community forest sites.

S5 NORTHEAST LOOKOUT/GALBRAITH MOUNTAIN GATEWAY AND COMMUNITY PARK/FOREST (Funding reference: portion of Line 4, Table 1.)

\$1,700,000 is allocated to secure a major community forest and park site at the base of Lookout/Galbraith Mountain on the edge of the Whatcom Falls neighborhood. Pristine forestland would create a major trail gateway to an extensive system of recreational trails, including a potential permanent link to Lake Padden Park.



Appendix 1. Acquisition Guidelines

Greenway Advisory Committee

Adopted April 19, 2007

Overview

Acquisition Guidelines are a screening tool to ensure that properties that are suggested by the community or possible sellers satisfy the best and most effective use of limited Greenway levy funding. These guidelines will work in coordination with the Greenway III Levy Summary Revenue and Expense Guideline approved by voters, the Acquisition Decision Process (adopted Nov 16, 2006 by the Committee), and the Greenway III Acquisition List Framework (discussed Oct 19, 2006 by the Committee).

Acquisition Guidelines

All properties to be considered must be evaluated against the following issues and questions. These sections are not prioritized in any particular order or importance. It is essential to understand that the community has numerous and varied needs throughout Bellingham. No one ranking or other schedule of prioritization is possible without biasing one area of town over another in an unfair manner.

Outstanding, diverse or unusual environmental attributes:

- Are there wildlife corridors or other habitat/species protection issues?
- Are there diverse geographical/geological/hydrological features?
- Are there cultural features?
- Does this property contribute to the cityscape backdrop (the aesthetic attribute of tree line or other features in the city's surrounding skyline)?

Financial implications:

- Is property available at or below projected appraised value?
- If property is significantly above value, do overriding circumstances substantiate a presentation to Council for an exception?
- Is property within the levy line item budget and does not jeopardize other targeted future acquisitions within that line item?
- Are there creative trade or development opportunities?
- Are there grant, donation or match opportunities?
- Is this property a good choice for some other funding source, such as Park Impact Fees or Real Estate Excise Tax (REET)?

Opportunity:

- Is this a current willing seller and if not, when?
- If the seller is not yet willing, what barriers need to be overcome?
- Is eminent domain necessary for critical acquisitions and under what public justification?
- Is this a critical property threatened by development or other factors that would make it a lost opportunity?
- What are potential regulatory set-asides?
- Are there potential low-cost access easements?

- What is the vision of the property’s natural and infrastructure improvements and the benefit to the community in the long-term (50-100 years)?

Recreational value:

Within the definitions of the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PRO) Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan;

- Does property contribute to trail corridors?
- Does property contribute to open space conservancy?
- Does property contribute to park and recreational opportunity?

System connection as a greenway element:

- Is this new anchor property identified in the PRO Plan?
- Is this part of a new or established corridor in the PRO Plan?
- Does this property augment planned anchors or corridors to create identified active use areas or buffers for recreational or open space needs?
- Does property size and configuration support program goals and objectives?
- For properties located outside of the UGA, does the property augment the City’s Greenway Program goals and objectives?

Strategy:

- Does the property reflect levy campaign specific and general objectives?
- What other acquisition or ongoing costs will the purchase require or encourage in the future?
- What other public properties does the acquisition support?
- What other purchases might be given up or precluded by a purchase?
- Does the property have a long-term strategic role?

Balancing level of service:

- Does the property help meet Level of Service (LOS) deficiencies in geographic areas or in the type of use as determined in the PRO Plan?
- How do we attempt to better equalize geographic and use imbalances and when does this happen?

Negative attributes and hazards.

- Does the property have qualities such as critical areas that inhibit or prohibit our desired use of the property, toxics, development barriers, community opinion, site improvement work prior to use (e.g. moving or demo a house), etc?

Prioritization of the acquisition of anchor and corridor properties

Properties that have been successfully screened through the Acquisition Guidelines for possible acquisition will be categorized in one of the following five options. Listings can be changed or updated from time-to-time given new circumstances:

- Acquisition of properties or areas to complete within the 1 year budget cycle
- Acquisition of properties or areas to complete within 3 years as a goal
- Acquisition of areas to complete within the life of the levy as a goal

- Acquisition of areas to list on PRO Plan in conjunction with alternative funding
- Acquisition of areas to archive for future planning

Appendix II

Greenways III Levy Land Acquisition Allocations and Expenditures to Date by Strategic Plan Project Area Last Updated October 28, 2008

SEE ALSO:

- **Strategic Plan for Greenway Program Land Acquisition**
- **Summary of Greenway Program Era Land Acquisitions** [Table of Property Acquired](#)
- **Recent Land Acquisitions by Site**
<http://www.cob.org/government/departments/parks/greenway/accomplishments.aspx>

Greenways III Project Allocations and Expenditures to Date

Strategic Plan project labels appear at the left; see the Strategic Plan document for maps showing the approximate extent of each project.

N1 **\$2,000,000** in 2006 levy funds was originally allocated for this project area. *These funds were derived from the Line 3 of Table 1, the City Council's 2006 Greenways III Capital Expenditure Guideline Summary.*

- \$620,190 was spent on the Lockwood tract
- \$125,992 was spent on the Potts tract

\$1,253,818 remaining is allocated to create an open space site linking the Alderwood School neighborhood and the Laurelwood Trail area with the Port parklands on the Klucketenus Bluff and the Locust Drive shoreline access.

N2 **\$4,500,000** in 2006 levy funds was originally allocated for this project. *These funds were derived from the Line 3 of Table 1, the City Council's 2006 Greenways III Capital Expenditure Guideline Summary.*

- \$224,020 was spent on the Durham property.

\$4,275,980 remaining is allocated for creation of a major, multiuse community recreational site with greenway connections to Cordata Park etc.

N3 **\$3,100,000** in 2006 levy funds was originally allocated for this project. *These funds were derived from the Line 3 of Table 1, the City Council's 2006 Greenways III Capital Expenditure Guideline Summary.*

- \$880,488 was spent on the Warner property

\$2,219,512 remaining is allocated for creation of one or more major, multiuse community recreational sites with greenway connections to surrounding areas, ideally east and west of King Mt.

N4 **\$2,500,000** million in 2006 levy funds was allocated for creation of a major community forest and hiking site, an active park area on Dewey Road and a key element of the Bay to Baker/Squalicum Creek Trail. *These funds were derived from the Line 3 of Table 1, the City Council's 2006 Greenways III Capital Expenditure Guideline Summary.*

N5 **\$2,800,000** in 2006 levy funds was originally allocated to this project. *These funds were derived from the Line 3 of Table 1, the City Council's 2006 Greenways III Capital Expenditure Guideline Summary.*

An additional **\$860,000** of reallocated 1997 levy funds for a present total of **\$3,660,000** is allocated to acquire open space along Squalicum Creek for park amenities, wildlife habitat and construction of off-street trails between Roeder Ave and E. Bakerview Road.

N6 **\$1,000,000** in 2006 levy funds is allocated to expand Cornwall Park open space amenities, notably a trail corridor, eastward onto the Deets open space. *These funds were derived from the Line 15 of Table 1, the City Council's 2006 Greenways III Capital Expenditure Guideline Summary.*

W1 **\$1,000,000** in 2006 levy funds is allocated for acquisition of a neighborhood and trail wayside park site, at the Bellingham School District bus barn site, but potentially farther east or west. *These funds were derived from the Line 13 of Table 1, the City Council's 2006 Greenways III Capital Expenditure Guideline Summary.*

S1 **\$4,145,000** in 2006 levy funds is allocated to acquire properties connecting the Interurban Basin park and forest lands and the Interurban Trail with surrounding neighborhoods, parks, public open spaces and trail corridors, and to create an open space corridor between the public lands of the Interurban Wetland and Fairhaven Park. *These funds were derived from the Line 4 of Table 1, the City Council's 2006 Greenways III Capital Expenditure Guideline Summary and the City Council's [2006-06 Resolution](#) in support of a satisfactory agreement with the owners of Fairhaven Highlands.*

S2 **\$1,310,000** in 2006 levy funds is allocated for acquisitions to protect wildlife habitat, to enhance and provide trail connections between the Interurban Trail and Arroyo Park, Woodstock Farm and Chuckanut Mt. and to preserve the rural and forest character of lands along the Interurban Trail and Chuckanut Drive. *These funds were derived from the Line 4 of Table 1, the City Council's 2006 Greenways III Capital Expenditure Guideline Summary.*

S3 **\$460,000** in 2006 levy funds was originally allocated for the Padden Creek Greenway. *These funds were derived from the Line 4 of Table 1, the City Council's 2006 Greenways III Capital Expenditure Guideline Summary.*

- \$115,583 was expended for a portion of the Kolesnikov lots at the Padden Creek Daylight project
- \$147,320 was used to purchase the Mischaikov property on the Padden Creek Gorge. **\$197,097 remaining** is allocated to purchase additional properties providing resource protection for this urban creek and to preserve and enhance aesthetic and recreational open space buffer and backdrop values.

S4 **\$1,885,000** total is allocated for this *project including \$1,500,000 in 2006 levy funds derived from the Line 12 of Table 1, the City Council's 2006 Greenways III Capital Expenditure Guideline Summary and an additional \$385,000 from the \$6,000,000 sum established for south side properties in general, from the Line 4 of Table 1, the City Council's 2006 Greenways III Capital Expenditure Guideline Summary for*

- \$1,424,131 was used to fund the Muljat, et al assembly in this project area
- \$30,218 was used to fund purchase of the Skeers tract.

\$430,741 in 2006 levy funds is remaining to complete elements of the Samish Crest Greenway, including future trail and park elements.

S5 **\$1,700,000** in 2006 levy funds is allocated to secure a major community park and forest site at the base of Lookout/Galbraith Mountain on the edge of the Whatcom Falls neighborhood. *These funds were derived from the Line 4 of Table 1, the City Council's 2006 Greenways III Capital Expenditure Guideline Summary.*

**Table 1. Greenways III Capital Expenditure Guideline Summary,
City of Bellingham Ordinance No. 2006-03-033**

1	Description (Values in \$ Millions)	Total	Acquisition	Development
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