

DRAFT 8/23/19

Principles

These six principles demonstrate the collective community values regarding Bellingham's park system:

- **Protective:** Preserves habitat and open space, enhances native species and creates opportunities to learn about and interact with nature.
- **Connected:** Supports connectedness and cohesion of the community by enhancing physical and mental health and well-being and protecting natural corridors.
- **Playful:** Inspires imagination and joy.
- **Equitable:** Quality and quantity of amenities equally distributed and easy to safely use year-round and access by all modes of travel.
- **Sustainable:** Stewards a park system that endures for the long term and supports adaptable spaces that accommodate traditional, emerging and future uses.
- **Inclusive:** Responsive to the entire Bellingham community: all ages, abilities, languages, genders, cultures and levels of income.

Goals and Objectives

These seven goals and their corresponding objectives reflect the community's desired outcomes and provide a strategic framework for recommendations in the PRO Plan.

Goal 1: Provide high-quality facilities and services that are accessible, inclusive and distributed equitably across Bellingham.

Objectives:

- a. Provide a system of parks, trails and open space so that all residents live within one half mile safe walking distance of a developed park or trail.
- b. Proactively upgrade and restore existing facilities to improve resiliency and protect long-term health of park assets.
- c. Provide adequate staff year-round to maintain and enhance park facilities and services.
- d. Target new park acquisition and development in areas that are under-served.

Goal 2: Enhance the capacity, quality and variety of uses of the existing system of parks, recreation and open space facilities and services.

Objectives:

- a. Evaluate park facilities and infrastructure to ensure adequate capacity is available to support appropriate uses.

- b. Incorporate art into park facilities as funding and opportunities arise.
- c. Design system upgrades that respond to community vision and preferences and use best available science to protect the environment.

Goal 3: Create environments that encourage regular active and passive activities to support health, sense of safety, wellness and social connections.

Objectives:

- a. Conduct a Community Recreation Needs Assessment and implement recommendations.
- b. Participate in Parkscriptions programs and other organized activities that activate underserved populations.
- c. Work with other City departments and organizations to discourage illegal camping.

Goal 4: Preserve and integrate nature, natural systems and ecological principles throughout Bellingham.

Objectives:

- a. Preserve and enhance a system of open space, habitat corridors and trails.
- b. Protect environmental features that reflect Bellingham's natural character.
- c. Participate in development of Urban Forestry Master Plan to proactively assess and protect urban tree canopy.
- d. Expand dog-waste program and provide additional trash receptacles to improve self-maintenance and litter control.
- e. Implement low impact development measures and integrated pest management to reduce environmental impacts.
- f. Steward and protect open spaces from invasive species, illegal activity, and inappropriate use.

Goal 5: Develop innovative programs, services and strategies for expanding the system and improving accessibility.

Objectives:

- a. Involve the community in habitat restoration and maintenance activities through the Parks Volunteer Program.
- b. Explore partnerships that expand services or leverage support for specific projects.
- c. Evaluate scholarship program for low income families with the goal of expanding participation.
- d. Ensure new development invests in and dedicates new parks, trails, street trees and open space.
- e. Target improvements that connect trails with transit stops, key destinations, bike routes and sidewalks to improve non-motorized transportation options.

Goal 6: Connect and unify the community with trail and greenway corridors.

Objectives:

- a. Provide an interconnected system of trails so that all residents are within a one-half mile safe walk of a trail.
- b. Balance the demand for public access and interpretive education with protection of environmentally sensitive areas and historic sites.
- c. Implement the Greenways Strategic Plan and pursue recommended future trails.
- d. Provide safe street crossings and improve wayfinding.

Goal 7: Manage Bellingham's park land and programs effectively, efficiently and sustainably utilizing quantitative and qualitative measures.

Objectives:

- a. Design and develop facilities that reduce overall maintenance, operation requirements and costs, while improving resiliency and efficiency.
- b. Establish baseline conditions and maintenance standards for park assets and evaluate progress towards meeting standards and improving conditions.
- c. Prioritize capital improvements based on safety, condition, socio-economic factors and population served.
- d. Analyze options for long-term financial sustainability.
- e. Explore options to improve enforcement of park rules.
- f. Provide staff with adequate training, resources and equipment to increase productivity and efficacy.