

## Samish Crest Trail

### Description

This trail project is situated in the 113-acre Samish Hill Open Space adjacent to the Puget and Samish Neighborhoods. The trail improvement generally followed an existing north-south foot path beginning at the foot of Racine Street.

Funding allowed the improvement of 2230 lineal feet of trail. Future improvements will extend the trail south to Lake Padden Park with connecting trails to adjacent neighborhoods.

The trail is 4' wide with 1' shoulders and surfaced with crushed limestone. Other improvements included a pet waste station, new wayfinding and native growth protection signage, drainage, wetland buffer enhancement planting and monitoring.

### Trail Design

Permits for the project required installation of a stabilized construction access, consisting of quarry spall rocks, which shakes off sediment before it is tracked on to the street. This minimizes the runoff of sedimentation into creeks and streams. The quarry spalls were removed when the trail project was completed.

2" angular crushed rock was used under the walking surface of the trail to allow for movement of surface storm water under the walking surface of the trail. This is especially useful where the trail passes through wetland buffer areas to help keep the trail surface dry. A 3" layer of crushed limestone was placed on the ballast. Both sides of the trail were covered with forest duff, topsoil and plants. We also mitigated for disturbance with wetland buffer enhancement planting.

### Overall Plan

The project is an element of the City's Comprehensive Plan. ([Chapter 6, page 49 of the 2008 Parks Recreation & Open Space Plan](#)) A trail on Samish Crest between Whatcom Falls Park and Lake Padden Park was first envisioned with the original 1990 voter approved Greenway Levy and the City has been working to acquire land for a greenway trail corridor and preservation of forested backdrop ever since.

The current construction project is the first phase and will extend 2200 feet south.

### Trail Footprint Reduction

The trail design reused an existing trail as much as possible, and new trail construction was limited to areas that reduced steep grades. The finished trail is 4' wide with 1' shoulders. This narrow, forest trail standard reduced the amount of clearing and land disturbance.

### Other Similar Trail Examples

Portions of Northridge Park, Big Rock Park-Klipsun trail connector, Laurelwood Trail, and the Barkley Trail just north of Barkley Blvd. at Racine St.

## Funding

Beyond Greenway Levy: \$400,000

## Status

Complete

## Reference

- [Trail Alignment Map \(PDF\)](#)

## Chapter 6: *Recommendations*

### Overall Vision

- natural environment
- flexibility
- extreme/new sports
- variety

The following recommendations concerning park, recreation and open space facilities in Bellingham are based on the results of existing conditions and inventories, need analysis (trends, population, level-of-service), workshop planning sessions, and surveys of resident households in Bellingham. The recommendations outline the vision developed for the park system within the Bellingham urban growth area through the year 2022, although this plan is scheduled to be updated in 2014. A detailed list of each proposed facility is included in *Appendix C. The recommendations, proposals and projects outlined in this plan are conceptual and subject to further study, feasibility and funding. It is specifically NOT the intention of this plan or chapter that any recommendation included here limit the city's ability to act on an opportunity that may arise provided the opportunity supports the overall vision, goals or objectives of the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Department in Bellingham as previously discussed in this plan.* Coordination with other public and/or private participants that may be affected by or interested in the final outcome of any particular project, such as adjacent residents or funding partners, may and generally do affect the final outcome or overall validity of any particular recommendation. As a result, all recommendations presented here are done with the understanding that they will only be implemented as opportunity, funding, and feasibility allow.

### **Overall Vision**

Throughout the process to develop this 2008 plan, several overall concepts emerged reflecting the high value Bellingham residents place on the park system and how they see themselves using parks, recreation and open space facilities in the years ahead. These include:

- **the natural environment** – a strong recognition of the value of and access to the natural environment as a core component of the Bellingham park system, including trails, open space and the waterfront;
- **flexibility** – a need for a flexible system to respond to changing community interests;



- ***extreme or newly emerging sports*** – recognition that Bellingham residents pride themselves on living outside the “recreation box” with strong interests in more extreme or newly emerging sports, such as rugby, rock climbing, bocce ball, disc golf and similar sports;
- ***variety*** – the desire for the system to continue to offer the variety of choices, both within the city and in the region, for recreational activities of all types, for all ages and abilities. Some specific ideas suggested during the planning process to increase the variety of activities in the system include more spray parks, a wave pool, underwater park, rock climbing or bouldering, and a whitewater kayak course.

## 6.2 ***Neighborhood Park (NP)***

Neighborhood parks should be developed on a local basis to provide both active and passive recreation for neighborhood residents, children and families. Neighborhood parks should be located within easy walking distance of residential development with a service area of approximately a one-half mile radius. Neighborhood parks may include playgrounds, picnic facilities, trail systems, natural areas, and other amenities as outlined in *Appendix A*, to create an accessible neighborhood service system in the Bellingham urban area.

Neighborhood parks may be sited as independent properties or as portions of other sites that include trail corridors, community parks, multi-use centers or other public facilities.

### ***Specific Recommendations***

As a result of the public process and the needs analysis, specific recommendations for neighborhood parks in Bellingham include:

- Acquire and develop eleven new neighborhood parks to be located in the general vicinity shown on the following map,

### ***General Park Guidelines***

- *promote activities for all ages and interests,*
- *provide passive and active recreation,*
- *create flexibility for changing community dynamic,*
- *acquire land prior to development,*
- *partner with local schools,*
- *develop unique features for variety of recreation types,*
- *provide lighting where feasible to improve safety and security of park sites,*
- *respond to specific site context, such as history or neighborhood identity,*
- *utilize sustainable practices.*



- Improve or add restrooms at neighborhood parks where feasible and provide a general guide to restrooms that are available during winter months,
- Develop master plans and/or subsequent improvements for Cordata Park, Elizabeth Park, Franklin Park, North and South Samish Crest Parks, and Sunset Pond Park, and
- Provide more small gathering spaces, especially in the urban area and as infill occurs, potentially accomplished through development regulations and guidelines.

### 6.3 Community Park (CP)

Community parks provide a wide variety of active and passive recreational opportunities. In general, community parks are larger in size and serve an area of at least a 1 mile radius. Community parks may also provide indoor facilities and competitive athletic courts and fields including soccer,

football, rugby, lacrosse, softball, and baseball. Community parks should also consider other amenities as outlined in *Appendix A*. A community park will often serve a neighborhood park function as well, increasing the use of the park and the overall efficiency of the system.



PERSPECTIVE SKETCH:  
VIEW LOOKING NORTH EAST TOWARDS THE PROPOSED  
RESTROOM AND CONCESSION BUILDING  
NO SCALE



#### Specific Recommendations

As a result of the public process and the needs analysis, specific recommendations for community parks in Bellingham include:

- Acquire and develop four new community park sites located generally in the areas shown on the following map,
- Provide better control and/or user fees for boat launch sites,
- Replace natural field surfaces with synthetic surfaces to maximize use, where feasible, especially when this can be accomplished jointly with school sites,
- Improve drainage conditions in all areas at Lake Padden Park (off-leash area, trails, lawns, etc.),
- Improve restrooms and allow winter access at selected park sites with a guide to those restrooms available in winter months,
- Implement master plan improvements at Northridge Park and Squalicum Creek Park
- Improve and add off-leash dog areas, perhaps with time-restricted use, in existing or new parks to provide a variety of dog areas (fenced, open, water),
- Provide larger event spaces as enclosed meeting rooms and outdoor shelters suitable for corporate events, family gatherings or reunions, weddings, festivals, charity events.

- Provide some covered activity areas, such as benches, playgrounds or courts for more year round use,
- Improve swimming areas at Lake Padden Park and Bloedel Donovan Park,
- Develop parking and transportation alternatives, such as shuttle routes, safer and more visible bike or trail routes, more convenient public transportation – especially during group events, festivals, the waterfront or other special activities,
- Develop a master plan for Cornwall Park expansion area,
- Develop improvement plans to enhance and add capacity at existing community parks, such as expanding play areas or installing synthetic surfacing on existing fields.

#### **6.4 Special Use Site (SU)**

Special use facilities may be acquired or developed to provide special activities for a variety of ages or interests. Special use facilities may include historic or natural interpretive centers, marina and boating activities, golf courses and driving ranges, or similar facilities. Special use sites also include maintenance yards, plant nurseries, and administrative offices necessary to support park, recreation and open space programs and facilities.

A community or recreation center is another type of special use, as are many other types of indoor recreation facilities. Community centers may be developed to provide indoor activities on a year-round basis to Bellingham residents for day and evening use. They may utilize the investments that have already been made in existing municipal, county, and school facilities and programs, by providing space for gymnasiums, physical conditioning, arts and crafts, class and instruction rooms, meeting facilities, teen and senior center, and other resource activities for special populations. Community centers may also incorporate museums, visual or performing arts, interpretive exhibits, and other specialized activities and be developed as stand alone facilities or jointly with administrative or maintenance activities.

#### **Specific Recommendations**

As a result of the public process and the needs analysis, specific recommendations for special use sites in Bellingham include:

- Implement existing master plan for Big Rock Garden,
- Develop master plan for Woodstock Farm to include parking and access plan, maintenance plan, hand-carry boat landing site (no launching) and other improvements as feasible,

*Special use sites may be independent properties or portions of other sites that include trail corridors, neighborhood parks, community parks, open spaces or regional facilities.*

- Provide additional environmental education opportunities including a bird guide, native plant guide, interpretive signage, natural history, and/or other educational and stewardship related activities or programs to promote the value of the natural environment throughout the park system, distributed primarily in select open space areas or in conjunction with specific unique habitat features,



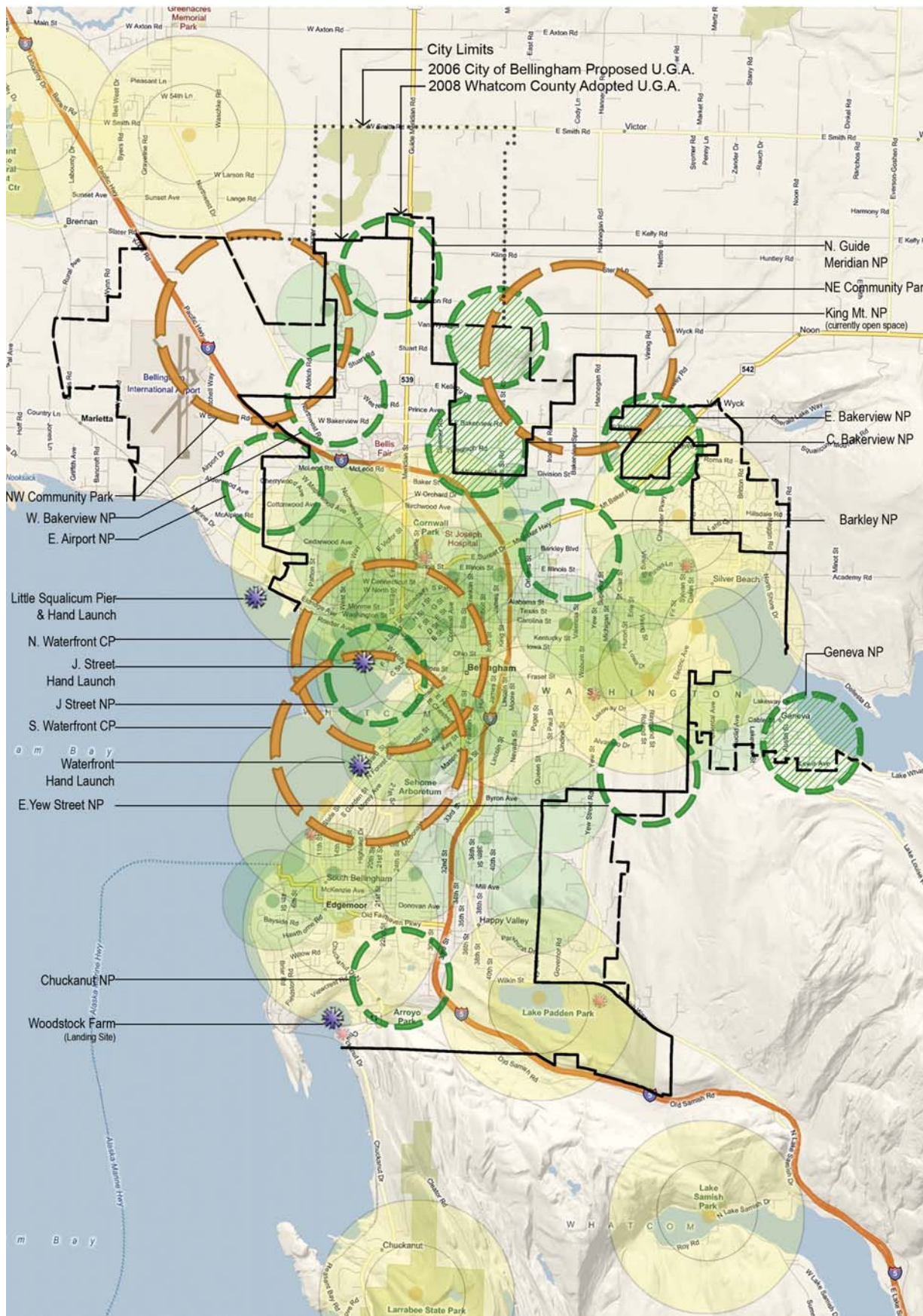
- Support development of the park system improvements at the Waterfront District,
- Coordinate improvements to the existing fish hatchery, primarily to be accomplished through public/private partnerships by other agencies,
- Conduct a feasibility study to determine public support, cost and opportunity of a new centralized community center, administration offices and maintenance/shop area, jointly or as separate facilities,
- Acquire or develop new or improved plaza space at Old Town Train Depot Plaza,

Fountain Plaza, Old Town Territorial Courthouse Plaza and other yet to be identified sites in the urban area,

- Acquire and develop new hand-carry boat launch facility near the end of J Street, possibly in conjunction with a new neighborhood park,
- Acquire and develop new pier, fishing dock and/or hand-carry boat launch facility near the end of Little Squalicum Park on the waterfront.
- Acquire and develop new hand carry boat launch or landing sites in other locations shown on map.



# Recommended Facilities Plan • Parks and Special Use Sites



- 1 mile radius
- Existing Community Parks
- 1/2 mile radius
- Existing Neighborhood Parks
- Existing Special Use Sites
- park in UGA boundary
- Proposed Neighborhood Park
- Proposed Community Park
- Proposed Special Use Sites

## 6.5 Open Space (OS)

Open space areas generally preserve, restore, and may provide access to wetlands, woodlands, foraging and nesting areas, migration corridors, meadows, agricultural lands and other sensitive or unique ecological features. New open space areas should link to existing open spaces to

create wildlife migration corridors, greenways, and open space networks.

These linked areas will visually define and separate developed areas in accordance with the objectives of the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA). The linked areas should lead to open space anchors. These anchors are larger open space sites that help visually break up development patterns and preserve large tracts of ecologically important areas.

Open space areas may also include trails, and interpretive facilities as outlined in the Park Classification Appendix to increase public awareness and appreciation for significant and visually interesting ecological features. Some supporting services may also be developed, depending on site specific conditions and feasibility, including limited wildlife viewing areas, trailheads, parking lots, and restrooms.

Open space areas may be located on independent properties or include portions of other sites provided for parks, recreation, trail corridors or other public facilities. Open space areas may also be developed on other publicly-owned land subject to public use agreements or easements, or on land acquired for other public purposes including

stormwater management, and wastewater treatment sites.

### **General Open Space Guidelines**

- *preservation may occur through acquisition or easements, development rights and other similar non-fee simple arrangements,*
- *provisions for public access and interpretive use should be included where appropriate,*
- *conservation of wildlife migration corridors and critical habitats should be considered, and*
- *tax incentives, density bonuses, transfer rights and other methods should be encouraged.*

### **Specific Recommendations**

As a result of the public process and the need analysis, specific recommendations for open space in Bellingham include:

- Develop inventories and collect data to guide and support open space and conservation efforts,
- Acquire additional greenway corridors as identified in the table and map following this section,
- Acquire additional open space anchors in the general vicinity of the areas identified on the following map,
- Acquire additional salt waterfront land and tidelands whenever possible to expand the network of open space along Bellingham Bay, and
- Acquire additional lakefront and creekfront land whenever possible to provide increased access to all Bellingham water resources.



City Limits  
 2006 City of Bellingham Proposed U.G.A.  
 2008 Whatcom County Adopted U.G.A.

The map displays the city limits of Bellingham, Washington, and the proposed urban growth areas (U.G.A.) for 2006 and 2008. The 2006 U.G.A. is shown in yellow, and the 2008 U.G.A. is shown in green. The map includes major roads, water bodies, and various landmarks like Bellingham International Airport and Lake Padden Park. The 2008 U.G.A. is more extensive than the 2006 U.G.A., covering a larger area of the city and surrounding regions.

September, 2008



## 6.6 Trails (TR)

While trails may be categorized into many different types, for the purpose of this plan trails are generally limited to off-road trails. Trails should be developed for a variety of uses including walking, biking, and horseback riding. Developed trail widths and surfacing may vary depending on the type of use and location. While not all trails are appropriate for all uses, multipurpose trails are generally preferred. Multipurpose trails may be developed to link, park and recreational facilities, open spaces, community centers, neighborhoods, commercial and office centers, schools, and other major destinations in the Bellingham area. Generally, multipurpose trails should be developed to provide for one or more modes of non-motorized travel.

Multipurpose trails should be developed within corridors separated from vehicles or other motorized forms of transportation. Multi-purpose trails may be located in separate easements or within parks and greenways. In some instances, when other alternatives are not available, trails may be developed within the right-of-way of vehicular or other transportation corridors, but separated by vegetation or other features.

Multipurpose trails should generally be developed to Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and American Association of State Highway & Transportation Officials (AASHTO) trail standards. The trails may be concrete, asphalt or a fine crushed rock base, provided the material meets the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements and is usable by all age and skill groups. Select trail corridors, including those within the Waterfront District, should be concrete or asphalt to allow for a greater flexibility of use, such as rollerblading, long-boarding and other uses that are not as viable on a softer surface material.

Off-leash dog use should not be allowed on multi-purpose trails but designated only on trails specifically developed for that use. This may be accomplished through physical designations (i.e., only certain trail corridors) or through time limitations (i.e., late evenings or other non-peak times).

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### **General Trail Guidelines**

- *conserve natural features,*
  - *define urban identities,*
  - *link community facilities,*
  - *insure safety/security along trail corridors,*
  - *provide identification, wayfinding and directional signage along routes,*
  - *serve persons with varied abilities,*
  - *promote commuter and other non-motorized transportation methods, and*
  - *serve as an integral planning tool in developing new roadway corridors or neighborhood developments.*
-

Trail corridors may be improved with trailhead services including benches, parking lots, restrooms, drinking water or other facilities as outlined in the Park Classifications Appendix. Where the trail is located in association with another park and recreation improvement or public facility, the trailhead may be improved with picnic, playgrounds and informal lawn areas.

Shoreline trails may be unimproved and may cross over tidelands. Trails may also include boardwalks developed over wetlands, other water bodies or on top of jetty breakwaters to provide access to waterfront activities and viewpoints along lakes, natural areas or Bellingham and Chuckanut Bays.

Multipurpose trail corridors may be independent properties or include portions of other sites provided for parks, open space or other public facilities. Linked with open space areas and greenways, multipurpose trails create a system of corridors to integrate and define the developed portions of the urban area from each other in accordance with the Growth Management Act's (GMA) provisions for urban separators.

Multipurpose trail corridors may also be developed on other public or privately owned lands using public use agreements or easements. They may also be developed on lands owned as portions of a stream corridor, wetland area, or associated buffers.

### **Specific Recommendations**

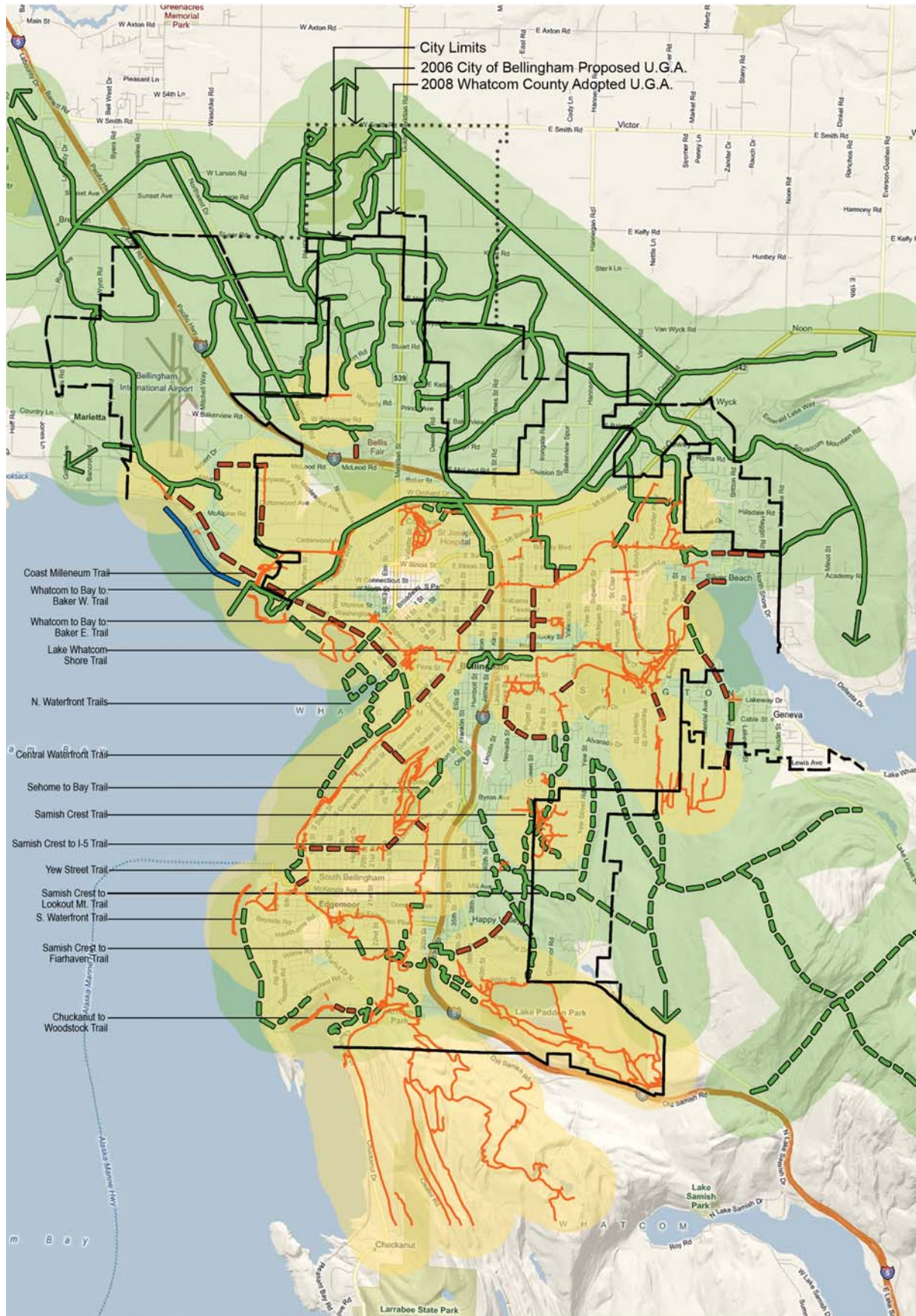
As a result of the public process and the needs analysis, specific recommendations for multi-purpose trails in Bellingham include:

- Acquire and/or develop new trail connections as shown on the following table and map,
- Conduct a trail surfacing pilot project to explore new trail surface alternatives that balance the natural character of Bellingham's existing trail system with accessibility requirements, long-term maintenance, sustainable development practices and availability of local materials,
- Institute a specific boardwalk and stair replacement program to monitor, maintain, improve and/or replace these features throughout the park system,
- Acquire and/or develop trailheads (parking, signage, restrooms, picnic areas, etc.) at N. Chuckanut area, Whatcom Falls Park, Hoag Pond, Galbraith Mountain area, Euclid Park, Waterfront District area, and Little Squalicum Park,
- Develop neighborhood trail connectors to the regional multiuse trail system in order to provide an off-street trail within ½ mile of every resident in Bellingham,
- Acquire and develop safe multimodal crossings of Guide Meridian and the Interstate 5 corridor in key locations generally located on the following map.





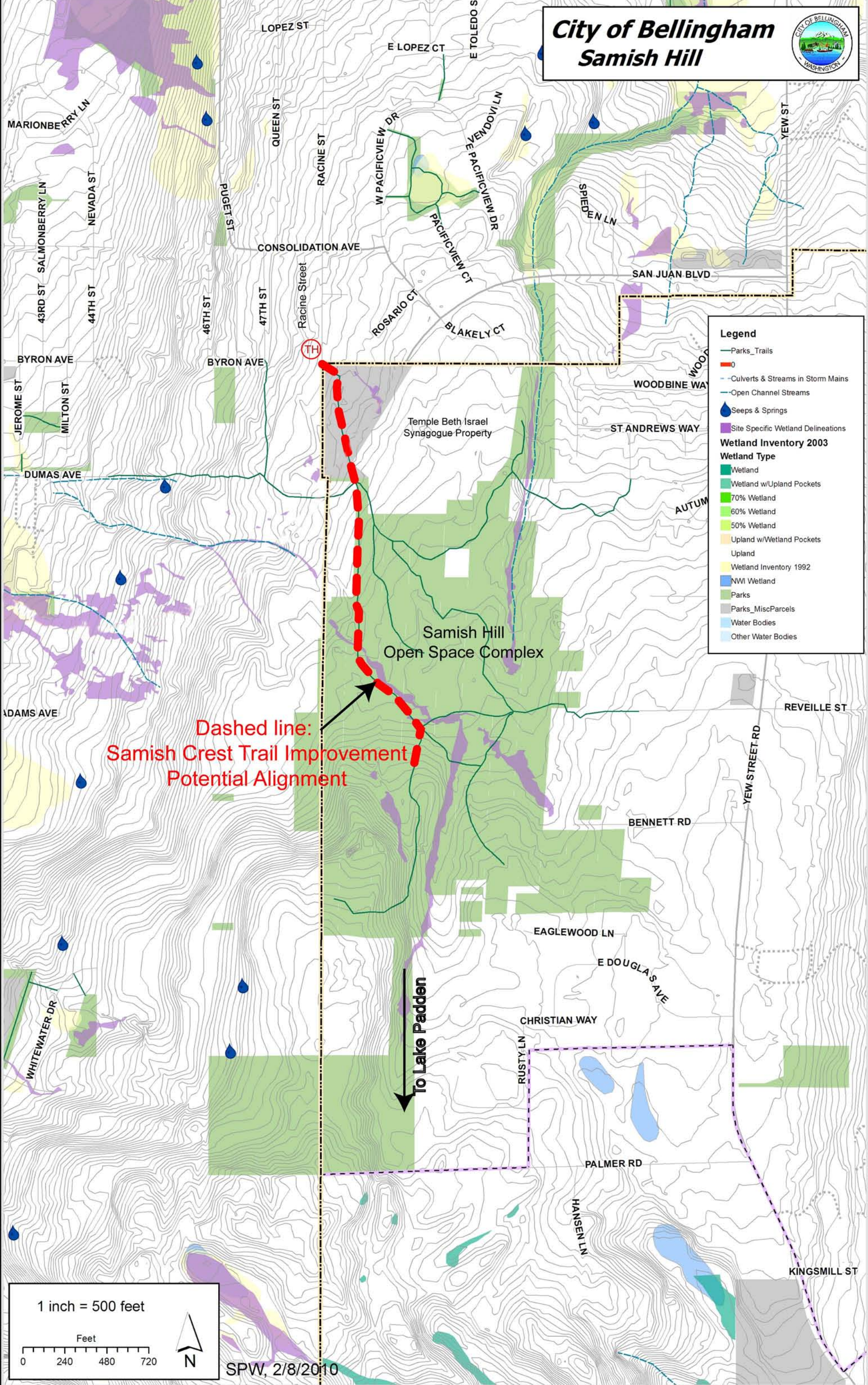
# Recommended Facilities Plan • Trails



- Existing Trail
- Existing 1/2 mile radius
- Proposed Trail
- Proposed North Bellingham Trails Master Plan
- Proposed On-street Connection
- Proposed Beach Walk
- Proposed 1/2 mile radius







**Legend**

Parks\_Trails

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Culverts & Streams in Storm Mains

Open Channel Streams

Seeps & Springs

Site Specific Wetland Delineations

**Wetland Inventory 2003**

Wetland

Wetland w/Upland Pockets

70% Wetland

60% Wetland

50% Wetland

Upland w/Wetland Pockets

Upland

Wetland Inventory 1992

NWI Wetland

Parks

Parks\_MiscParcels

Water Bodies

Other Water Bodies

Dashed line:  
Samish Crest Trail Improvement  
Potential Alignment

To Lake Padden

