Chapter 7: Off-Street Greenways Multiuse Recreation Trails - 2023

(Provide less direct and mostly unpaved alternate, or secondary, routes than on-street transportation network)

In 2009, City staff amended BMC 13.70 Multimodal Transportation Concurrency Ordinance to change Urban Village Concurrency Service Areas and incorporate a select inventory of bike-friendly multiuse recreational trails to the performance measures. ***The inclusion of the bike-friendly multiuse recreational trails was not to declare them as an integral part of the citywide transportation network, but rather to acknowledge that some bicyclists do use these recreational trails as indirect and/or alternative routes to the on-street bicycle network.***

Most recreational trails are not suitable for road/racing bicycles because they are primarily crushed limestone gravel surfaces, vary in width and steepness, and often do not connect to major destinations. However, these multiuse trail connections can be very appealing to less confident and "interested, but concerned" bicyclists.

These bicycle-friendly trail routes were identified and field verified for ride-ability over many years by individual members of City and County Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committees, the Mt. Baker Bicycle Club, as well as City staff and Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and Greenways Committee members involved in an effort called "Green Streets." Technical data came from the City's GIS layers for trails and bicycle routes, digital air photos, and digital terrain models.

The criteria that staff used to add select bike-friendly multiuse recreational trails to the list of BMC 13.70.020 Definitions Specific to Concurrency Management include:

1.) Off-street multiuse trails that can serve a clear transportation function, in addition to the recreational benefits that they provide, and a safe alternative to unmarked bicycle routes on arterial streets

2.) Prepared gravel/crushed rock surface trails, or smooth dirt with adequate drainage, and smooth even surface facilitating safe travel by cyclists. Trails with stairs, large roots, rocky sections, off-camber cross-sections, or areas with persistent standing water/puddles are generally not included

3.) Trails that average at least 5-feet, but preferably 8-feet, in width to facilitate safe bi-directional passage of cyclists and pedestrians

4.) Trails with slopes/grades of generally < 6% average with maximum grades of generally < 12%.

The bike-friendly multiuse recreational trails identified in the multimodal transportation concurrency inventory generally adhere to the specified criteria above. Some exceptions exist where lack of an alternative on-street route and the need for a critical connection dictates use of trail network sections that may have sub-standard surfaces, narrow widths, or steep grades.

Bike-friendly multiuse recreational trails are credited person trips to each Concurrency Service Area based on each comparative 1% of the total planned Primary Bicycle Network identified in the 2014 BMP. Ten (10) rather than twenty (20) person trip credits are awarded for each 1% of the total planned on-street Primary Bicycle Network in recognition that not all bicyclists will be able to use off-street gravel trails as alternatives to on-street bike routes. It should be noted, however, that several regional multiuse trails, such as the South Bay Trail, Whatcom Creek Trail, Railroad Trail, and Squalicum Creek Trail are included in the citywide bicycle network.

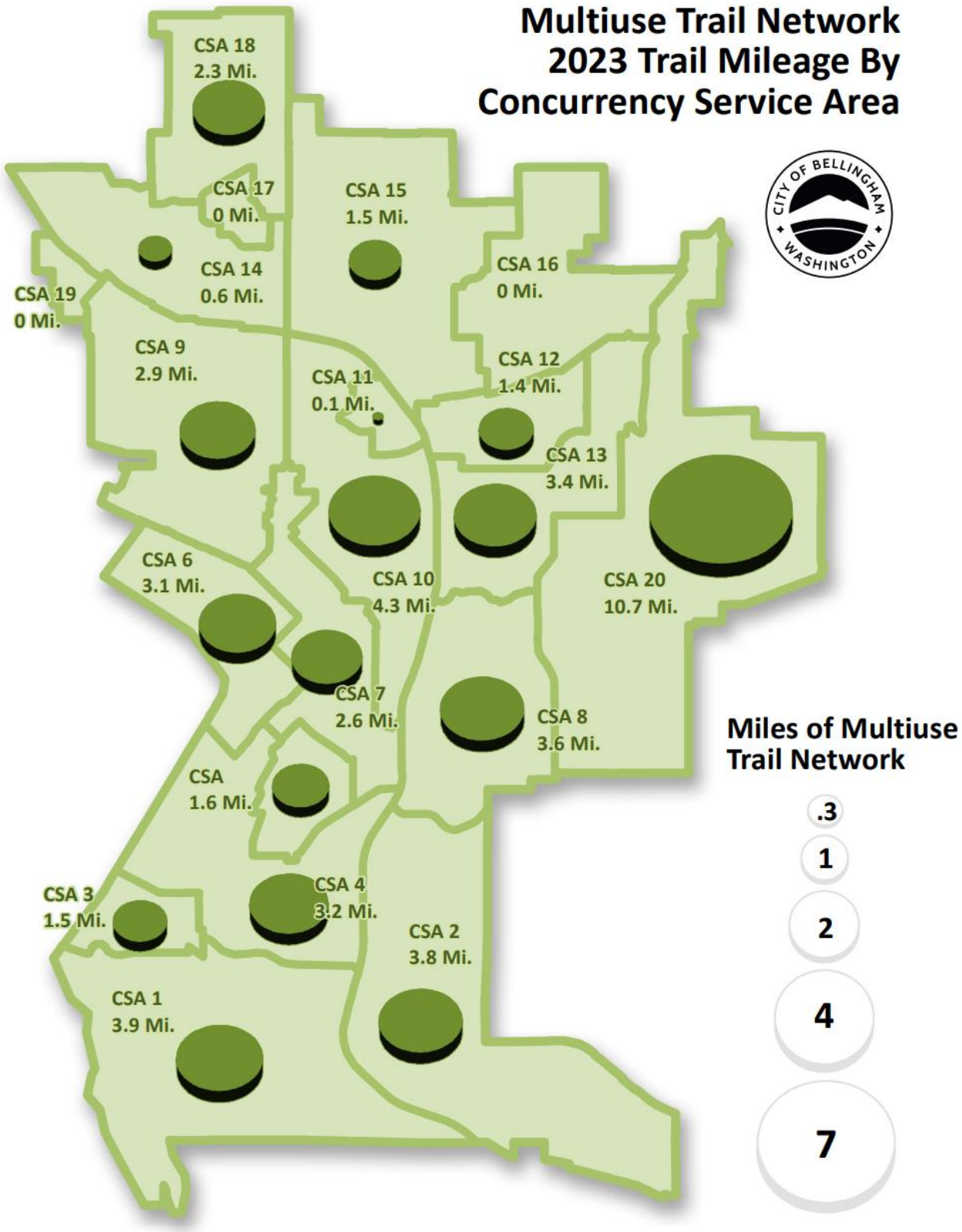
Table 7.1.

2023

Mutiuse Trails Mileage by Concurrency Service Area

CSA	Multiuse Trails Network (Miles)
CSA 1	3.9
CSA 2	3.6
CSA 3	1.5
CSA 4	3.2
CSA 5	1.7
CSA 6	3.1
CSA 7	2.6
CSA 8	3.6
CSA 9	2.9
CSA 10	4.3
CSA 11	0.1
CSA 12	1.5
CSA 13	3.5
CSA 14	0.6
CSA 15	1.4
CSA 16	0.0
CSA 17	0.0
CSA 18	2.7
CSA 19	0.0
CSA 20	10.6
Total	**50.8**

Figure 7.1.


Multiuse Trail Network
2023 Trail Mileage By
Concurrency Service Area
CITY OF BELLINGHAM
WASHINGTON
CSA 18
2.3 Mi.
CSA 17
0 Mi.
CSA 15
1.5 Mi.
CSA 14
0.6 Mi.
CSA 16
0 Mi.
CSA 19
0 Mi.
CSA 9
2.9 Mi.
CSA 11
0.1 Mi.
CSA 12
1.4 Mi.
CSA 13
3.4 Mi.
CSA 6
3.1 Mi.
CSA 10
4.3 Mi.
CSA 20
10.7 Mi.
CSA 7
2.6 Mi.
CSA 8
3.6 Mi.
CSA
1.6 Mi.
CSA 3
1.5 Mi.
CSA 4
3.2 Mi.
CSA 2
3.8 Mi.
CSA 1
3.9 Mi.
Miles of Multiuse
Trail Network
.3
1
2
4
7