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**CHAPTER 9 PARKS AND RECREATION**

**I. Introduction**

**A. PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Parks and Recreation planning element is to provide a balanced and creative set of policies, goals, and strategies based on assessed needs of the community. This element will direct city decision makers and staff regarding acquisition, development and management of park lands, the costs involved in maintaining and/or improving open space, trails and park facilities, the provision of recreational services, and coordination of community services (such as cultural arts, senior services, and neighborhood outreach) during the next twenty years.

**B. QUALITY OF LIFE**

The quality of Parks and Recreation facilities and services directly affects how satisfied Everett residents are with community life. Surveys (Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan Surveys 2016, Strategic Plan Household Survey 2006, Strategic Plan Community and Stakeholder Survey 2006, Community Survey 2004, Everett 2000, Hebert and Youth Surveys) have repeatedly shown over the years that Everett residents enjoy existing park and recreation amenities, want their parks effectively maintained, and would like more. The provision of adequate facilities and services during the next twenty years is considered integral to maintaining and enhancing the quality of life in Everett for its residents, businesses, and visitors.

**II. Demand for Parks and Recreation**

The Growth Management Act requires that the City of Everett complete a comprehensive plan. Parks and Recreation is viewed as an optional element of the plan based on the Act’s requirements. Parks and recreation is, however, a critical issue regarding quality of life in Everett and an essential part of the City’s comprehensive plan. Everett has grown since the last PROS Plan was adopted in 2007, and programs and services must be properly planned and funded to meet growth.

The Parks, Recreation & Community Services Department is dedicated to managing and enhancing existing programs, facilities and services and pursuing long-term goals through the cost-effective acquisition and development of new park land, programs, facilities, and services based on recommended standards, assessed needs, and resource availability.

It is the vision of the Parks, Recreation & Community Services Department to be viewed as a best-in-class provider that is centered on meeting the community values that support Everett citizens’ and visitors’ needs and desires for cost effective and accessible parks, recreation facilities, and programs for people of all ages. The mission of the Parks, Recreation & Community Services Department is to bring all Everett citizens and visitors together on the City’s common grounds and facilities. This is done through a wide variety of quality recreational and park experiences that welcome everyone. Success is measured by customer satisfaction, efficiency, and community development of public spaces and recreation services that meet the values and needs of Everett’s citizens and visitors. The Parks, Recreation & Community Services Department provides parks, play fields, centers, recreation amenities, trails, and pools that are attractive, clean, safe, and accessible. The development of parks and recreational facilities in the Everett area is guided by the City of Everett’s Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan (2016-2035), which includes open space and facility standards based on National Recreation and Parks Association standards, and the 2013- 2018 Washington State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).

**A. LEVEL OF SERVICE (LOS)**

One aspect of fulfilling the community’s recreational needs is providing enough facilities and services to adequately support the population. This ratio of unit per population is expressed as level of service (LOS). Levels of service are established through the analysis of the following:

1. Inventory of existing park facilities and recreation services;
2. Community surveys and analysis, and
3. Professional guidelines identified within the Washington State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), and by the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO), and National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA).

LOS, along with research, analysis and evaluation, forms the foundation for determining policy and implementing measures such as development regulations, capital improvement plans, impact fee assessments, and other applicable public programs.

**B. RECREATION NEEDS STUDY (DEMAND ANALYSIS)**

The community’s recreational needs or demand analysis is based on information derived from and analysis of the following sources of information:

- Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan 2016-2035
- PROS Plan Web-based surveys of city adult and youth residents to determine park use practices, condition assessments, and recommendations
- Public workshops and forums with neighborhood residents across the City of Everett to determine their condition assessments and project proposals
- Web-based survey of registered voters to determine final project and program priorities and resolve financing preferences
- Trends Analysis
- Parks and Recreation Historical Demand
- User Groups and recreation participant surveys
- Other City Department Policies and Procedures

- Regulatory and Public Law Requirements
- Washington State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

This analytical work is used to determine what programs, services, and facilities are most needed and desired by city residents and to establish policies, goals, and strategies for the Everett Parks, Recreation & Community Services Department for the near term. The Parks, Recreation & Community Services Department actively updates its decision data to identify changing recreational needs of the community.



**III. Parks and Recreation Element – Policies, Goals, and Strategies**

The following section contains the policies, goals, and strategies for the Parks and Recreation Element of the Everett Growth Management Comprehensive Plan. The statements of “policies, goals, and strategies” are intended to guide the public and those who make decisions about our future.

Policies are plans or courses of actions designed to determine decisions. Goals are broad statements of the community’s desires and are supported by Parks and Recreation policies. The strategies are specific actions that are designed to help achieve goals.

**Growth Targets.** The Growth Management Act requires that counties plan for growth using the State Office of Financial Management’s (OFM) population forecasts for each county. Each county works with the cities within the county to accommodate the growth target it establishes from the low to high population range provided by OFM. Snohomish County’s Countywide Planning Policies provide

direction on how to allocate OFM’s countywide forecast to cities, urban growth areas (UGAs), and the rural areas of the County using the cooperative planning process of Snohomish County Tomorrow. (Snohomish County Tomorrow is a growth management advisory group consisting of city and county elected officials supported by County staff.) The updated comprehensive plans of all jurisdictions in the County must collectively be capable of accommodating the OFM forecasted population. In January 2002, OFM released new 2025 population forecasts for counties that included a low, high, and intermediate population. Snohomish County Tomorrow developed draft low and high population and employment forecasts, which were distributed throughout the County using the Puget Sound Regional Council’s forecast analysis zones (FAZs). Based on those, the City of Everett Planning Commission and City Council selected draft targets that are at the low end of the 2035 forecast range for population, and the high end of the 2035 range for employment. Depending on the specific growth alternative plan selected by the community, more definitive strategies will be developed to implement the chosen plan through the annual review process.

A. Policy #1

Meet the mandates of the community for quality maintained parks, accessible trails, inviting recreational facilities and amenities, and energizing recreation programs that position the Parks and Recreation Department as one of the best managed park and recreation agencies in the State of Washington.

Goal 9.1 Achieve the park and recreation facility standards in the Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan while improving existing parks and recreation facilities that will extend their useful asset life and provide a quality image of Everett’s neighborhoods and the community as a whole.

Strategy 9.1.1 Evaluate each park site to continually update long-term maintenance needs and include capital improvements for each site that will enhance the use and value to the community, the neighborhood, and customers of the park.

Strategy 9.1.2 Develop site Master Plans for all parks that are customized to the neighborhood and for the community it serves, and ensure a funding commitment to implement the plans in advance of planning efforts desired to build trust in the community.

Strategy 9.1.3 Increase the amount of parks and open space acreage in the City and improve the distribution of park access for all residents in Everett.

Strategy 9.1.4 Develop trails and greenways in the City to connect the community to parks, waterways and other attractions in the City that allows residents to move freely without interference of traffic.

Strategy 9.1.5 Continue the Green Everett Partnership with Forterra to complete the twenty-year plan to manage Everett park forested areas in a sustainable manner.

Strategy 9.1.6 Establish design standards and principles for each classification of park type to force park designers to design to specific outcomes when parks are updated or developed new.

Strategy 9.1.7 Remove underperforming equipment in parks and fund for replacement with amenities that provide high value and energize the park users in a positive manner.

B. Policy #2

Maintain best practices industry standards as it applies to maintenance of grounds, recreation facilities, greenways, and special use parks that creates strong community appeal and increases the value of living in Everett.

Goal 9.2 Implement park and facility maintenance standards that optimize the use of staff, volunteers, supplies, and equipment. Achieve parks and facilities that create strong citizen ownership of neighborhood and community park facilities and attractions.

Strategy 9.2.1 Implement maintenance standards for parks, trails, play fields, landscaped areas, forested areas, and recreation amenities as well as budget accordingly to meet the standards expected.

Strategy 9.2.2 Improve the signage to parks and trails in the City to encourage greater use and access to parks, recreation facilities, and attractions.

Strategy 9.2.3 Establish and maintain a preventive maintenance capital improvement program and equipment resource program to increase the efficiency of operations and extend the useful life of park resources.

Strategy 9.2.4 Develop a cost of service program for all tasks performed by maintenance staff to improve staff and equipment productivity and accountability.

Strategy 9.2.5 Make all parks, including playgrounds and restrooms, ADA accessible.

Strategy 9.2.6 Create revenue resources that the Department can depend upon to support ongoing operational and maintenance costs.

Strategy 9.2.7 Measure the operational impact of new capital improvements prior to development to secure maintenance and operating funding commitment so as to not deplete existing funding levels or overextend staff and equipment.

Strategy 9.2.8 Improve the quality and access to recreational amenities throughout the community.

Strategy 9.2.9 Provide an equitable distribution of recreational facilities and amenities in parks to close the gaps in services across the City.

Strategy 9.2.10 Maintain and develop recreation and community complexes to

meet the core recreation program needs of residents.

Strategy 9.2.11 Create design and maintenance standards that include environmental stewardship associated with the resource.

Strategy 9.2.12 Create design standards for safety and security in the design and renovation of facilities.

C. Policy #3

Identify and develop core recreation program businesses of the parks, recreation & community services system that serve all age segments and creates lifetime customers.

Goals 9.3 Manage all core recreation program businesses to the highest level of productivity and efficiency. Demonstrate quality and professional management so that customers have a positive experience.

Strategy 9.3.1 Establish core recreation programs and management program competences by evaluating the market and service mix in the City, and address gaps in services where they exist.

Strategy 9.3.2 Develop tiered levels of service that will create wide age segment appeal and create lifelong customers in the core programs desired.

Strategy 9.3.3 Improve coordination of service providers by leading the coordination efforts to not over saturate the market but carve out roles for each agency.

Strategy 9.3.4 Enhance information services for all programs offered to the community.

Strategy 9.3.5 Increase special events in the community to bring the community together and celebrate living in Everett.

Strategy 9.3.6 Improve online registration procedures to improve customer convenience and access to services provided.

Strategy 9.3.7 Implement customer service standards into program design to gain feedback and build customer loyalty.

Strategy 9.3.8 Develop a marketing plan for the Department to position the core recreation services appropriately in the City and the region.

D. Policy #4

Create and implement new funding sources needed to meet the community’s vision for parks and recreation services, and to maintain a quality park and recreation system in a sustainable manner.

Goal 9.4 Financially fund the Parks and Recreation System through effective use of all available revenue resources.

Strategy 9.4.1 Develop and manage a financial plan for the parks, recreation & community services system.

Strategy 9.4.2 Develop a cost of service pricing strategy for all programs and services that meet the community’s value system.

Strategy 9.4.3 Seek a non-tax supported funding source to help support the operations of the Parks, Recreation, & Community Services Department.

Strategy 9.4.4 If appropriate, seek funding through park impact fees and a Levy proposal to support needed park and recreation facility and annual maintenance and operations improvements and meet the future needs of residents.

Strategy 9.4.5 Develop an earned income strategy for the Department.

Strategy 9.4.6 Develop an effective marketing strategy to communicate with users the true cost of the services provided and seek adjustments to prices based on level of benefit the customers receive over and above the general taxpayer.

Strategy 9.4.7 Seek the total Real Estate Excise tax monies available to support upgrading existing parks and recreation assets to bring them up to standards.

E. Policy #5

Develop strong and equitable partnerships.

Goal 9.5 Create effective partnerships to build parks, facilities, and programs that maximize the community’s resources to the highest level possible.

Strategy 9.5.1 Develop partnerships with not-for-profit and private non-profit organizations that are equitable to all parties.

Strategy 9.5.2 Improve coordination and communications with existing sports groups to increase their financial support in providing maintenance to facilities they use.

Strategy 9.5.3 Update all partnership agreements so that they are written equitably and hold all partners accountable.

Strategy 9.5.4 Improve community access to school sports facilities through enhanced partnership development.

Strategy 9.5.5 Seek private partnerships for managing elements of the parks, recreation & community services system that help support an efficient operation.

Strategy 9.5.6 Continue to develop existing school districts partnerships and evaluate the possibility of developing schools parks targeted to support neighborhood needs.

F. Policy #6

Govern the Parks, Recreation & Community Services system in a manner that allows it to manage efficiently based on a business management approach of a social service.

Goal 9.6 Develop the most efficient organizational model that is based on performance outcomes for each Division and staff in the organization and consistently demonstrates high productivity and efficiency of resources.

Strategy 9.6.1 Design and update the organization of the department, as needed, to operate in the most efficient manner and develop matrix teams to solve key issues and create the greatest efficiency.

Strategy 9.6.2 Use performance measures for all staff that are measurable and use work plans that create the highest level of productivity.

Strategy 9.6.3 Use flow charts for appropriate systems to ensure consistency and reduction of bureaucracy.

Strategy 9.6.4 Use a management strategy for the Board of Park Commissioners that allows it to achieve measurable outcomes in obtaining and providing citizen communication and policy oversight.

Strategy 9.6.6 Ensure that all policy and procedure manuals are as up-to-date as possible and provide the highest level of flexibility for the Department to operate in the most effective manner.

Strategy 9.6.7 Train all advisory boards and committees on communication and management practices of boards to achieve the highest level of productivity.

**IV. Action Plan for the Parks and Recreation Department**

**A. REAL PROPERTY ACQUISITION**

1. Pursue implementation of the Capital Improvement Plan with highest priority to high demand issues including walking, biking and nature trails, athletic fields, neighborhood parks, and waterfront access.
2. Pursue an acquisition strategy that combines strategic acquisition of parcels with joint use agreements for land already in public and/or private ownership that can provide recreational opportunities for the community. The acquisition/joint use emphasis is in areas with significant shortfall of parks and facilities.
3. Identify, record and monitor all remaining useful undeveloped properties in Everett with a property inventory system.
4. Pursue cost-efficient acquisition and development of those properties that fully satisfy current or future park system needs.
5. Identify and pursue all reasonable funding sources for land acquisition.
6. Acquire and preserve special or unique lands for future generations.
7. Acquire and/or secure use rights for waterfront land as opportunities arise.
8. Establish policy and procedures on private property dedication to the parks system.
9. Develop and implement policy and procedures for using grants, mitigation, foundations, land trusts to meet our acquisition requirements.
10. Use policy developed in cooperation with the Planning Department to encourage private developers to include on-site recreational facilities in their development plans, or park impact fees in lieu of on-site facilities.

**B. PARK ADMINISTRATION**

1. Maintain and update interagency agreements with school districts, Port of Everett, Snohomish County, Boys and Girls Club, YMCA, Everett

- Community College, and other appropriate organizations to facilitate joint use of resources and facilities for public use.
2. Maintain, update, and implement the ADA transition plan.
  3. Develop annual work program goals, objectives, strategies, and performance metrics with staff in order to meet goals of the department’s comprehensive plan.
  4. Pursue increased funding for department functions including facility rehabilitation, ADA compliance, land acquisition and development, structural and grounds maintenance, and recreational services. Include necessary equipment, vehicles, office, and storage space for maintenance and operations.
  5. Maintain and leverage working relationships with other local parks, recreation & community services departments and stakeholders to promote the acquisition and development of high demand facilities such as athletic fields.
  6. Establish additional neighborhood or community friends groups to help support the maintenance of parks.
  7. Pursue strategies that will help to improve the department’s cost recovery ratio.
  8. Install new signage throughout the parks and recreation system based on the department’s signage plan and as resources allow.
  9. Utilize the department’s marketing plan to create a strong image and identification for users and visitors to the City.

**C. PARK PLANNING**

1. Ensure all master plans include a life cycle cost analysis.
2. Ensure that design principles are established for every park before master plans are updated to outline the desired outcomes for the park.
3. Use Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design( CPTED) principles to enhance park safety.
4. Develop Urban Forest Management Plan.

**D. TRAIL DEVELOPMENT**

1. Complete development of master plans for trail development along significant corridors and seek to eliminate trail gaps .
2. Create interpretive trails within appropriate settings to provide educational opportunities related to the natural environment.
3. Where appropriate, establish loop trails in community parks, including the planned loop trail around Silver Lake.

**E. PUBLIC ACCESS**

1. Encourage public access along Everett waterfronts that provide a greater enjoyment of the water, and link park facilities through a trail system.
2. Continue the effort with Public Works to manage Silver Lake’s water quality to allow for greater use of the lake by the public.
3. Implement, where and when feasible, park elements of the City Council adopted Shoreline Public Access plan.



F. RECREATION DEVELOPMENT

1. Develop and manage an age segment program approach to each core recreation program to develop a lifetime user.
2. Develop and manage business plans for each core recreation program to also include marketing and promotional plans.
3. Utilize a cost benefit approach to pricing of fee based recreational programs.
4. Maintain a special events calendar that has wide distribution within Everett.
5. Continue to improve program registration processes and participant use analyses in order to increase classes' utilization rates (registrations versus capacity) and modify program offerings as justified.

