

APPENDIX G
Sections from the King County Open Space System, 2004 Plan

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ATTACHMENT A

June 3, 2004

**King County's Open
Space System
Plan: Parks, Trails,
Natural Areas and
Working Resource Lands**

2004



King County

Department of Natural Resources and Parks
Parks and Recreation Division
King Street Center, KSC-TR-0700
Seattle, WA 98104

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	ES-1
I. Introduction to King County.....	I-1
II. Open Space in King County.....	II-1
III. The Future	III-1
IV. The Systems	IV-1
Natural Systems	IV-2
Cedar River	IV-2
Sammamish River	IV-4
Green River	IV-6
Snoqualmie River	IV-7
White River	IV-8
Vashon/Maury and Saltwater Shoreline and Lakes	IV-10
Functional Systems.....	IV-11
Regional Trail System	IV-11
Wildlife Habitat.....	IV-13
Active Recreation	IV-15
King County Fairgrounds.....	IV-16
Aquatics.....	IV-16
Working Resource Lands	IV-17
V. Recreation	V-1
VI. Open Space Classification System.....	VI-1
VII. Open Space Inventory	VII-1
VIII. Standards	VIII-1
IX. Planning, Acquisition and Development.....	IX-1
X. Stewardship and Maintenance.....	X-1
XI. Property Management	XI-1
XII. Public Outreach	XII-1
XIII. Partnerships.....	XV-1
XIV. Funding.....	XIII-1

List of Reference Documents

Executive Summary

This plan for King County's Open Space System of parks, trails, natural areas, and working resource lands provides vision and direction to the system in the early 21st Century.

The plan takes a new approach. As annexations and incorporations, a declining economy and voter passed initiatives constricted the county's general fund, the King county open space system, which was funded almost completely from general revenue funds, was challenged to restore stability to the system and required to eliminate its dependence on the county's general fund.

King County Executive Ron Sims appointed a citizen task force to recommend strategies for achieving long-term stability in parks. The recommendations issued by the task force in 2002 were adopted by the Metropolitan King County Council and are reflected in this updated plan for King County's Open Space System.

The plan calls for continued environmental stewardship through management of resource and ecological lands, a renewed focus on regional recreation assets, generating new revenue through entrepreneurial initiatives and it encourages partnerships as a way to strengthen relationships with stakeholders and continue to enhance recreation facilities without budget impacts.

This approach requires a new commitment to the county's regional role and permits new kinds of activities in parks that will enhance users' park experiences while also generating new revenue for parks.

King County will continue its transition to becoming a different open space provider than today. King County's primary role will be as a regional provider of open spaces and a facilitator of recreation programs with a major focus on systems of open space corridors that conserve natural resources and provide recreation opportunities, fish and wildlife habitat, and scenic beauty. Active recreation facilities will have services and amenities that help support parks financially and parks users will be more involved in the maintenance and improvement of parks facilities. Local parks and open space in the urban area will become the responsibility of cities, and in the rural area the county will continue to maintain local parks. King County will have a regional trail network that links cities and communities, and offers recreation, alternative commuting routes and migration corridors for wildlife. Valuable agricultural lands and forests will be conserved and continue as viable working resource lands.

This plan for King County's Open Space System establishes the recreational, environmental and community defining functions of open space. The Plan proposes a future of regional greenways and waterways, a comprehensive regional trail system,

major regional athletic complexes, and a range of recreational and aquatic opportunities.

The plan recognizes that federal, state and local governments, schools, private individuals and non-profit organizations play an important role in providing recreation and open space. The plan proposes a cooperative effort and calls for the county to play a leadership role in that effort.

King County's role as steward of our region's natural heritage requires policies directed toward stewardship of our significant natural resources. To accomplish a balance between natural resource protection and recreation, the plan proposes a classification system, which defines sites as regional or local, their role in the system, and identifies park use areas within individual sites.

The plan also sets park service levels and describes how the county will provide those services in the early 21st Century. To measure our success in providing local parks, recreation and open space to residents of unincorporated King County, the plan proposes park service goals, which account for facilities and services provided by others.

This plan acknowledges the valuable open space benefits provided by other types of county lands not covered in this plan and outside of those traditionally considered as parks or open space. Examples of these include flood hazard reduction lands, drainage facilities, and lands associated with wastewater treatment facilities.

Agriculture and forestry provide significant contributions to the quality of life in King county through their economic, scenic and cultural values. They are important elements of the county's open space inventory.

New programs are being developed today as part of a recently expanded county role. In the future, new policies and programs that result from this work will be incorporated into this plan.

Stabilizing parks operationally and financially has required a new approach that alleviates reliance on general revenue fund dollars. The Parks and Recreations Division's operating budget is now generated primarily through a voter approved property tax levy, entrepreneurial initiatives and fees.

This plan builds upon the 1996 Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan and the extensive recent efforts of the Metropolitan Parks Task Force, Active Sports and Youth Recreation Commission (ASpYRe), Parks Business Plan, the extensive public outreach activities associated with these plans as well as the outreach for this plan.

II. Open Space in King County

Open space has a number of meanings. Some people consider it to be recreation areas, others consider only the natural and environmental features, while still others think of open space as any vacant or leftover land.

The King County Comprehensive Plan (KCCP) calls for an open space system to include lands which provide for outdoor recreation and preserve natural areas and environmental features, wildlife habitat, cultural or scenic value, provide visual enjoyment and preserve physical and visual buffers between land uses. It also supports county action to maintain the viability of working farms and forests.

The Recreational Function. Recreational open space includes areas for active and passive recreational activities and opportunities to enjoy natural areas. There is a wide range of use and development associated with this function.

Recreational open space is provided by a combination of public sites and schools, and privately owned recreational facilities such as golf courses, campgrounds and resorts.

The Environmental Function. Open space for environmental purposes is usually identified by its physical characteristics, which might include geologic features, plant communities, fish and wildlife habitat, hydrologic and biologic characteristics, as well as its cultural, scientific and scenic value. These lands can also be important for their recreational and educational value. This may include such activities as hiking, picnicking, wildlife viewing and outdoor education. However, there may only be a limited range of use on some sites to ensure valuable natural resources are conserved.

Environmental open space is provided through both public and private efforts. These include public parks and natural areas, private holdings and areas regulated to preserve their environmentally sensitive resources.

The Community Shaping Function. These open spaces provide relief from development in urban and suburban areas, preserve the natural character of an area, strengthen neighborhoods and communities, and separate differing land uses. A green corridor, the urban/rural greenbelt along the urban growth boundary will provide both physical and visual separation.

Greenways, waterways and large open space sites, as well as topographical features such as river valleys, hills and mountains, contribute to this shaping function. The combinations of these open space lands with their variety of attributes and often overlapping functions make up an extensive system of open space in King County. Together, they preserve the character of the area and provide for recreational enjoyment, environmental quality and the health and well-being of county residents.

Permanence and Public Access

King County's current and future open spaces may be described by two factors; permanence and public access. These two factors point out that our open space resources that appear to be abundant, are largely temporary, without guaranteed public access and can be expected to decrease in the future.

Permanent open space with public access: These open spaces consist of publicly owned open space lands with dedicated public access.

Permanent open space with limited public access: These open spaces might include public school sites and open spaces within residential developments that have been dedicated for the benefit of homeowners, but not the general public. It may also include portions of publicly owned open space sites with limited access to preserve sensitive natural areas.

Permanent open space with no public access: These open spaces include sites with development rights purchased such as through the Farmlands Preservation Program or transfer of development credits, conservation easements dedicated for open space preservation as a condition of land use actions such as sensitive areas and their buffers, and lands preserved for drainage ways.

Open space that is not permanent and has no public access: These lands, which add to our perception of open space, include lands in the Agricultural Production District, Forest Production District, regulated sensitive areas and rural areas. Also included are privately owned open spaces such as golf courses, private parks and campgrounds; properties enrolled for ten year periods in the Current Use Taxation Program; and growth reserve tracts in subdivisions which may be held for future development.

Park and Open Space Providers

King County's open spaces are a combination of the efforts of federal, state, and local public agencies and the private sector.

Federal Role

Federal agencies such as the National Park Service and National Forest Service, control a sizable portion of land providing open space and recreational opportunities in Washington State, including wilderness areas. Recreational opportunities include trails, camping, picnicking, boat launching and mooring, and skiing. Most of these lands are in large holdings and much of it is roadless and accessible only by trail.

State Role

State agencies provide recreational lands statewide. The majority of their lands are undeveloped and in a natural condition with developed areas providing access and support facilities for camping and passive recreation. Two agencies are prominent in providing parks and open space: Washington State Parks and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). State Parks are managed for a variety of recreational opportunities, while DNR manages land for forest production as well as conservation areas, both of which support some recreational activities.

Local Role

Local agencies include the traditional park and recreation departments found in counties, cities and towns. Other local agencies such as ports, utility districts and schools often provide some recreation and open space as a secondary benefit. These agencies provide the majority of public sites for active and passive recreation close to home. Cities generally provide smaller developed sites serving nearby city residents, while counties provide larger less developed sites that serve a countywide population base.

Private Sector

Private sector involvement is diverse, ranging from preservation of open space to provision of specific recreational facilities. It includes owners of private lands and facilities, and private non-profit land trusts that protect areas for their natural features and recreational use. Many of the open space lands in this category cannot be considered to have open public access or permanency.

III. The Future

The King County Comprehensive Plan (KCCP) establishes the importance of King County's open space system of active, passive and multi-use parks, trails, natural areas and working resource lands. The system is valued for conserving environmental quality and scenic beauty; offering social, educational and recreational opportunities; and for its contribution to the economic health of the region.

The role of King County has changed over time. The future of the King County Open Space System reflects the broad changes in the role of King County. The County can no longer afford to be all things to all people and must focus its energy and resources. The Metropolitan Parks Task Force was created to assist the county in defining its vision for the future and recommend strategies and institutional changes necessary to reflect current funding limitations.

This plan endorses the vision set forth by the Metropolitan Parks Task Force for the future of the King County Open Space System and builds upon their recommendations and those of the ASpYRe Commission (Active Sports and Youth Recreation Commission). These have been further set forth in the King County Parks Business Plan and the (Omnibus Parks) Ordinance No. 14509 adopted by the King County Council to increase the ability of the division to support its operating revenue needs through entrepreneurial strategies and refocusing services.

F-101 King County will continue the transition to a regional provider of open spaces with a major focus on systems of open space corridors that conserve natural resources and provide recreation, education and interpretative opportunities, fish and wildlife habitat, and scenic beauty.

King County will have a regional trail network that links cities and communities, and offers recreation, alternative commuting options and migration corridors for wildlife.

Regional active, passive and multi-purpose parks will be available to all citizens of the county.

Local open space sites in the urban area will become the responsibility of cities, and in the rural area the county will maintain local parks.

Valuable agricultural lands and forests will be conserved and continue as viable working resource lands.

The role of King County has evolved and expanded through distinct periods, reflecting shifts in county government, growth and economic trends. The State Growth

Management Act supports this shift by reinforcing the role of cities as providers of local services and counties as providers of regional services. Recent years have seen the county's open space focus shift toward preservation of natural areas and working resource lands, provision of active and multi-purpose regional parks and the regional trail system. This direction is emphasized in the King County Comprehensive Plan.

Open Space Systems

King County will focus on regional corridors linking natural areas and recreation sites, wildlife and waterway systems. These linked regional open space corridors along the county's major river systems and the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway provide recreational and interpretive opportunities, scenic beauty, environmental quality and habitat value. They preserve the character of the area and help shape neighborhoods and communities.

The systems approach to preservation provides values beyond the traditional focus of a parks agency. This may include additional benefits such as stormwater detention and water quality protection, as well as fish and wildlife habitat corridors and incorporating scenic, cultural and historical features. Integral to the systems approach are activities in the uplands that can affect the quality of the linear river corridors. All activities in the watershed are important to maintaining the natural resource values of the open space system.

In addition to the identified open space systems, there are natural areas or features that could be considered of regional significance.

F-102 King County should consider adding significant natural areas not directly associated with the major open space systems, if they include regionally significant features and improve the distribution of open space within the county.

F-103 King County will work with a variety of public and private groups to identify and protect significant open space systems.

The realization of this future requires the county to embrace a new way of doing business, an entrepreneurial approach that includes a fundamental philosophical change by King County and the public.

IV. The Systems

Prior generations invested wisely in preserving open space in King County. A vast system of recreation and natural areas, trails, and working resource lands has been preserved through county purchase of sites and conservation easements. King County recognizes that connecting open spaces into contiguous systems or corridors increases the environmental and recreational value of these lands

Systems may be natural or functional or contain a variety of elements. Natural systems are based on geography, natural features and ecological functions. Functional systems are identified by their purpose or a relationship of similar characteristics or type of facilities and program use, such as athletic complexes. Both these systems provide multiple benefits and together contribute to open space environmental and recreational goals.

The Open Space Concept Map adopted in the 1989 King County Open Space Plan identified the county's major open space systems. The 1996 King County Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan built upon the concept map and aggressive implementation efforts helped further the goals. This plan provides the status of the implementation of the previous plans and further reinforces the open space system concept and implementation strategies. The natural systems are based on linear elements, in most cases river corridors and include preservation of uplands within the respective watersheds that are important to maintain the health of the system. The system of recreational facilities is distributed throughout the unincorporated county and is focussed on user patterns and needs. Natural areas, working resource lands, trails and recreation sites frequently complement and enhance mutual goals within the systems,

- S-101 King County will focus its regional open space efforts on the following natural systems: Cedar, Green, Snoqualmie, White, and Sammamish river corridors, and the Vashon/Maury Island and Saltwater Shoreline.**
- S-102 King County will focus its functional open space efforts on the following regional systems: Regional Trail System, Mountains to Sound Greenway, King County Fairgrounds complex, wildlife habitat network and regional recreation parks that include athletic complexes, multi-use sites and the aquatic system.**

This chapter includes an overview of these systems. More detailed information may be found in other county inventories, plans, reports and studies. These include the Regional Trails Plan, individual park master plans, programmatic plans for forest and farmlands, drainage basin plans, water quality plans, lake management plans and Waterways 2000 planning reports.

14966

These systems are the focus for the county's open space implementation actions. Implementation will include a variety of actions by the county, and other agencies and organizations.

S-103 Future research and planning efforts should focus on the protection and enhancement of the systems identified in S-101 and S-102. This work should result in planning, acquisition, development and management plans and strategies for each system that coordinates recreation and public use with resource conservation.

The following sections of the plan are an overview of each of the major systems.

Natural Systems

Snoqualmie River Watershed

Originating in the Cascade range, the Snoqualmie River is the largest drainage basin in King County flowing through King and Snohomish Counties. Its three major tributaries, the South, Middle and North Forks join at King County's Three Forks Natural Area in the upper Snoqualmie Valley. Two miles downstream from Three Forks Natural Area the river plunges over a cliff creating the 268-foot high Snoqualmie Falls. The Falls are a natural wonder, an important Native American cultural site, and a source of hydroelectric power. The Snoqualmie River then winds approximately 40 miles through the agricultural valley and rural cities of Carnation and Duvall to its confluence with the Skykomish River. The Snoqualmie and Skykomish join to form the Snohomish River that flows north through Everett to Puget Sound. Other important tributaries include the Raging River, and Patterson and Griffin Creeks.

The watershed supports wild runs of coho, chinook, pink, chum salmon and steelhead, rainbow and cutthroat trout and native char (Dolly Varden and bull trout). Anadromous fish do not travel above Snoqualmie Falls. However, resident populations of cutthroat, rainbow, and brook trout can be found above the falls. In both the upper and lower valleys, the river meanders through rich farmland in tight curves. Remnants of former channels, called oxbows, provide rich habitat for wildlife. Deer, elk, mountain lion, coyote, bear and other large mammals are often seen in Snoqualmie Valley. The Middle Fork Snoqualmie River—which in part is protected by acquisitions through the Waterways 2000 program—is one of the last remaining truly wild areas of King County. Large mammals can still be found within this basin, including elk, bear and bobcat.

Approximately 75 percent of the Snoqualmie Watershed lies within King County's Forest Production District (FPD). This largely undeveloped headwaters area helps to protect water quality and to maintain hydrologic, sediment, and large woody debris functions in waterbodies downstream from the FPD.

Most of the Snoqualmie River floodplain downstream of Snoqualmie Falls is zoned for agriculture and is within the Snoqualmie Agriculture Production District (APD). Significant acreage of farmland in the Snoqualmie Watershed has been protected through the Farmland Preservation Program

The Snoqualmie offers a variety of recreational uses including fishing, boating, and swimming. The Snoqualmie Valley Regional Trail is highly valued as a recreational corridor providing opportunities for users to walk or bike along the valley and experience its rich natural beauty and agriculture history. The trail links existing county parks such as Tolt/McDonald Park, that integrates natural resource preservation and recreation in its management, and Griffin Creek Natural Area and Chinook Bend Natural Area, that protect critical salmon habitat as well as bald eagle nesting sites.

The Snoqualmie Valley is the nearest settled valley to forestlands and the Cascade Mountains, and as such is subject to development pressure from a rapidly growing population in the watershed. King County has found unique opportunities to partner with cities, developers and non-profits to conserve natural resources while compensating for growth. An example is the Snoqualmie Preservation Initiative that preserves critical forestlands, view sheds and regional trail corridors near the City of Snoqualmie. The county will continue to strive for connectivity along the Snoqualmie River to protect critical habitats and nearby forestlands through future partnerships, acquisitions, easements or tax-incentives.

Functional Systems

King County's Trail System

King County residents are fortunate to have one of the largest trail systems in the country. The King County Regional Trail System now includes 200 miles of paved and unpaved trails connecting urban areas of the county with rural valleys and mountains, linking cities and parks along the way. This system serves as the backbone of a far more extensive system that includes local trail networks in cities and unincorporated communities of King County. Several regional trails cross county boundaries to the north and south and connect to the cross-state Iron Horse Trail. These trails carry users through residential and commercial neighborhoods to distant farming areas, along lake shores and riverfronts and through dense forests. Users may travel on abandoned railroad grades, water pipeline and powerline corridors, linear parks or river levees. In addition to these trail systems, many county and city parks include internal trails within their site boundaries.

Regional Trails

The King County Regional Trail Plan was adopted in 1992 to provide guidance for continued acquisition and development of the regional trail system. The 2004 Regional

Trail Plan is forthcoming. These plans identify a regional network of trails that are a major element of the county's open space system. The 1989 Open Space Bond funds contributed significantly toward making this system a reality.

S-104 King County should complete a regional trail system, which includes connections between trail corridors to form a countywide network.

Many trail corridors will accommodate several types of uses while others may serve a single purpose. Trail types range from a dual corridor of accessible paved level trail combined with a parallel soft-surface trail, like the Sammamish River Trail that is suitable for multiple users to the primitive and challenging foot paths of Cougar Mountain. Many trail corridors also provide a route for wildlife migration throughout the county.

S-105 Regional trails should be planned and designed to accommodate all users on alignments and surfaces appropriate to their use.

S-106 Plans should be prepared for the regional trail corridors in King County. These plans should identify users, trail designs, access points, support facilities and maintenance costs.

Local Trails

Local trails provide recreation, circulation within the local community and access to the regional trail system. Many of the local trail systems in the county consist of existing trails that have been informally developed through years of use by the local community. The interests of the community are best met by identifying and preserving the current trails and the trail uses and enhancing them by adding trail mileage, improving trail access to local destinations, linking them to the regional trail system and providing for maintenance. Local trails are frequently referred to as community trails.

S-107 King County should identify and preserve existing local trails to maintain important linkages within communities to form a local trail system that provides recreation, local circulation and access to the regional trail system. Local trails should provide opportunities for a wide range of trail users.

S-108 King County will maintain trail rules and a Trail User Code of Conduct to direct the safe and enjoyable use of the county's trail system.

Mountains to Sound Greenway

The Mountains to Sound Greenway is many things: an historic road, a visual corridor stretching along Interstate-90; a network of parks and recreational trails, rest areas and wildlife corridors; and a landscape of working farms, forests and communities. It is a special combination of history, scenery, nature and recreation.

Greenway efforts began in 1991 and major building blocks of the corridor exist today, the National Forest and Cedar River Watershed, state and local parks and the Alpine Lakes Wilderness. State scenic highway easements, land purchases and exchanges by the State Department of Natural Resources added to the initial Greenway inventory.

King County is an active participant in Greenway efforts. County parks along the corridor contribute significantly to the Greenway. These include: Three Forks Park near North Bend, major holdings connecting Cougar, Squak, and Tiger Mountains, the 2800 acre Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park, Coal Creek Park and Luther Burbank Park. The county and the State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) jointly own and manage 1786 acres on Rattlesnake Ridge.

Numerous County trail corridors and networks are wholly or partially located within the Greenway. These include the Cougar, Squak and Tiger Trail corridor, Preston-Snoqualmie Trail, Snoqualmie Valley Trail, Cedar River Trail and East Sammamish Plateau Trail.

Wildlife Habitat

King County is committed to conserving fish and wildlife resources in the county and to maintaining county-wide biodiversity. Biodiversity depends upon and is indicative of the health of natural ecosystems. When a region's natural or historic level of diversity and integrity is maintained, higher levels of system productivity are supported in the long run and the overall effects of disturbances may be decreased. It is a challenge to maintain King County's level of biodiversity as the county grows and develops. The King County Comprehensive Plan (KCCP) makes clear the commitment to preserve opportunities for people to observe and enjoy wildlife and wildlife habitats.

While fish and wildlife habitat exists throughout King County, the quality of this habitat often varies in relation to the level of development. In less-developed urban areas, critical areas may be more intact and support higher quality of wildlife habitat than in other areas. Rural and resource areas support most of the county's remaining high quality wildlife habitat and protection of resources may be most successful there. While critical areas within urbanized areas will be protected, the county places emphasis on protecting and enhancing critical areas and habitat in the rural and resource lands.

Threats to the quality of fish and wildlife habitat are numerous. Development and land use patterns present direct threats to wildlife habitat from the fragmentation and conversion of vegetation and wetlands to developed homes and roads; indirect threats include degraded water quality and quantity from runoff, pollution, or disturbance of remaining habitat. Growth and development are converting native vegetation to landscapes that do not provide the food and shelter that many native wildlife species require. Loss of native species and the introduction of non-native plant and animal species result in overall loss of wildlife habitats and increased competition from introduced species. Habitats such as second growth forest may be more common on

the landscape, but provide important wildlife habitat and may be more subject to development pressure and disturbance. Some of these more common habitats may have additional value as habitat linkages in an otherwise fragmented landscape.

The listing of several species of salmonids under the Endangered Species Act has made the conservation of the habitat of these and other listed species a priority for public and private land management. A primary benefit of protecting habitat for these rare or threatened species is that habitat for many other species is also protected. For example, the most effective way to protect and enhance native salmonid populations is through protection of those river and stream channels, riparian corridors, lakes, wetlands, headwaters, and watersheds that provide or impact spawning and rearing habitat, food resources, and fish passage. By protecting these areas, hundreds of other species will also benefit, and the result will be protection of entire ecosystems.

County-owned open spaces have a major role in conserving the county's biodiversity. Though King County parks, natural areas and working resource lands are often small properties in comparison to the stream reaches, terrestrial habitats, and/or watersheds they are associated with, these sites may be managed to help protect rare or high quality ecosystems, habitats, and species. The location of county lands within a landscape of private ownership highlights the importance of working with neighboring private or public landowners to expand the protection of ecological resources beyond the boundaries of publicly owned properties. The county trail network also serves as a linkage between habitat areas.

Action Program

King County supports a comprehensive wildlife protection program, which integrates wildlife and habitats into developments of all types. Wildlife protection goals may be achieved through acquisition, restoration, habitat management, and educational programs. Regulations, monitoring and interjurisdictional coordination efforts will be pursued. Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas have been designated by King County to protect critical habitat for a variety of species. Development review standards should include measures to protect priority species and habitats and integrate wildlife habitats into new development. Incentives include tax credits for habitat enhancement projects on private property and buffering existing protected properties. Management and development of county-owned land provides opportunities to demonstrate leadership in habitat protection and stewardship. Acquisition of land for regional parks, natural area and working resource lands in rural areas allows King County to focus its land protection efforts where wildlife habitat is more intact and relatively pristine.

W-101 King County will designate and protect important habitat areas, through a variety of measures such as regulations, incentives, capital projects, or purchase,

The King County Wildlife Habitat Network is a guide to identify and protect critical fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas, and to link those critical habitat areas and other

protected lands through a network system. The network is intended to provide a degree of landscape-level protection for wildlife species, to maintain wildlife as viable components of ecosystems, and to facilitate wildlife movement between large habitat patches by providing natural corridors through adjacent critical habitat, open space tracts, and wooded areas. Network width is related to requirements of desired wildlife species, length of network segment and other desired uses within the network (e.g. public access and trails). Within this designated network, native vegetation should be retained though no strict regulations are in place.

King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks maintains information about streams, wetlands, and general wildlife habitat. Watershed planning efforts in each of King County's watersheds have inventoried habitat conditions, limiting factors for salmonid populations, and other resource information.

Several county programs include habitat conservation as part of their goals. For example, the Waterways 2000 program worked with landowners in the Bear, Green, Cedar and Snoqualmie Basins for the purpose of habitat conservation and passive recreation opportunities. The goals of this program continue and are incorporated into many other county park and resource programs. Acquisition of land or development rights, and voluntary landowner enrollment in current use taxation programs help form large blocks of land and corridors to support wildlife. Site management guidelines for county-owned Natural area consider the surrounding landscape context and conservation principles when recommending management strategies and integrating public use into each site.

Active and Passive Recreation

Regional Recreation

Regional active park and recreation facilities include large single purpose facilities such as tournament quality athletic complexes, large multi-use parks like Marymoor that offer active, passive and natural areas. The county also manages regional single purpose facilities such as athletic complexes, the Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatics Center, and features such as the velodrome and climbing rock at Marymoor Park.

Active recreation sites provide for organized, scheduled activities. Active parks provide for a variety of recreational activities. These might include a highly developed athletic field complex with lights and extensive support facilities, or large picnic shelters and areas for organized group picnics. These recreation sites accommodate intensive use that requires a significant amount of development to accommodate them. Undeveloped areas may remain within these parks and provide additional benefits such as habitat value, environmental protection, and passive recreation.

Passive recreation sites provide informally developed areas to support independent and group activities such as informal play, hiking, walking, jogging, picnicking and bicycling. These activities may require some improvement or development to support them.

Examples include an open grassy meadow, picnic tables, playfields, children's play equipment, and trails.

Local Recreation

Local parks, including active and passive sites and facilities, and trails serve the close-by and more frequent recreation needs of the community. Local parks can provide for intensive active play or passive activities and include development such as play areas, open grassy fields, developed ball fields, tennis or sport courts, picnic areas and trails. These parks are often the informal meeting place for the neighborhood, providing a social function and a sense of community identity.

Working Resource Lands

Working Forests

Forests are an important part of King County's character, environment, and economy. Yet, development pressure in King County has resulted in a rapid decline in forested acreage. Since the value forests provide come at the landscape level, forest viability quickly erodes when fragmentation by conversion to residential development occurs. King County has undertaken a multi-faceted forestry program to encourage the conservation of forestland and economically viable forestry. The county is working cooperatively across agency and landowner boundaries to retain a viable forested landscape.

Forest lands have important ecological and environmental value in the retention and infiltration of stormwater, the elimination of runoff and replenishment of groundwater, serving as a source of water for rivers and streams that support fish populations, providing habitat for fish and wildlife, improving air quality, and sequestering and storing carbon dioxide. Forests also have important economic value as a source of revenue generated from harvesting both timber, and wood products. They support diverse passive recreational activities as well.

In recognition of the values provided by forestland, King County has determined that some properties in its open space inventory should be managed as working forestland. The lands were acquired to preserve contiguous tracts of forested property in the Rural Forest Focus Areas and the Forest Production District to retain lands in active forestry, to protect areas from development, and/or to provide a buffer between commercial forestland and adjacent residential development.

King County manages its working forest properties to sustain and enhance environmental benefits, demonstrate progressive forest management and research, and provide revenue for a self-supported management program. When managing working forests, King County balances sustainable timber production with conservation and restoration of resources, and with public use. Managing this balance will be most effective over time if done in the context of the surrounding regional landscape of each working forestland.

In recent years, King County has acquired approximately 3,000 acres of forestlands. These include 1,800-acre Taylor Mountain, which links the Tiger Mountain State Forest with the City of Seattle Watershed; 300-acre Ring Hill on the west slope of the Snoqualmie Valley; 630 acres on Mitchell Hill and along the Raging River near Preston; and 300 acres on Sugarloaf Mountain near Ravensdale. The county has also developed forest stewardship plans guiding short and long-term management of these sites. King County acquired these properties with funds from the federal Forest Legacy program, King County Arts and Natural Resources bonds, REET (Real Estate Excise Tax), King County Early Action ESA (Environmental Species Act) funds and the rural forest category of the King County Transfer of Development Rights Program.

The forestry program encompasses a cooperative approach with other agencies and landowners to retain a viable forested landscape. This includes partnerships with the Washington State Department of Natural Resources.

The county is acquiring open space areas, including forest lands, either through fee ownership or conservation easements as part of negotiated land use agreements. One example is Uplands Reserve, a rural forest demonstration project, which creates 213 acres of open space through conservation easements as an addition to the Rattlesnake Mountain Scenic Area. Through the Snoqualmie Preservation Incentive, King County has received a conservation easement on 2,800 acres of Weyerhaeuser land in the Raging River south of I-90. Negotiations are under way for up to 10,000 acres as part of the Snoqualmie Preservation Initiative. Much of this land will be retained in forest production use and implements the county's policy to preserve its working forest.

Key policies and goals for managing working forests in the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks land inventory are outlined in the Comprehensive Plan, Executive Order PUT-18: *Implementation of Forest Policies*, the Forest Programmatic Plan, and the 1996 *Farm & Forest Report*.

Working Agricultural Lands

The Farmland Preservation Program (FPP) was initiated in 1979 to acquire development rights from farmlands and open space lands as specified in Ordinance 4342 (codified in King County Code Title 26.04). The goal of the FPP was to maintain the agricultural and open space uses of lands located within the five King County Agricultural Production Districts (APD's). To date, nearly 13,000 acres have been preserved through this program.

In addition, the county owns and manages six agricultural resource properties totaling approximately 225 acres: Green River Farm (25 acres), Horseneck Farm (39 acres), Sammamish River Farm (18 acres), Mount Peak Farm (5 acres), South 277th Farm (22 acres), and South Park Farm (5 acres). These lands were acquired to serve as demonstration farms, assist new farmers by making farm land available for lease, exhibit the viability of agriculture in the APD, and encourage long-term farming of the property by selling (when practicable) the property, while retaining the development rights.

The 2004 King County Agricultural Programmatic Plan outlines key policies and goals for managing agricultural properties owned by King County.

V. Recreation

Recreational use appropriate to the county's open space system of parks, trails, natural lands and working resource lands provides healthy and enjoyable experiences and cultivates a better understanding and appreciation of the land, its habitat and connection to citizens. King County is no longer a direct provider of traditional recreation programs, but serves as a facilitator of program offerings held on the wide variety of county open space lands and in recreational facilities. Aquatic programs continue at the county's remaining pools.

R-100 King County shall facilitate provision of recreation and interpretive programs and activities consistent with its inventory of open space lands. This includes developing partnerships and coordinating with cities, school districts, community groups and non-profits to help meet program demands.

King County will continue to promote special events attracting regional participation and focusing on the regional resources of the open space system. Examples of special events include the King County Fair and Concerts at Marymoor, as well as regional competitive events and tournaments hosted at the county's pools and athletic facilities.

R-101 King County will promote and facilitate regional programs, activities and special events that are appropriate to the role and resources of individual sites and facilities.

Recreation partnerships will increasingly focus on the visitor's relationship to nature, natural features and processes, ecology, local history and appropriate use of natural areas. This programming can be carried out as partnerships with school outreach and non-profit programs.

Joint programs or service contracts may also be appropriate for some local programs and activities.

R-102 King County will regularly evaluate partnership programs for interest, attendance, effectiveness and cost, and will use this information to plan and focus its efforts.

R-103 King County will strive to facilitate accessible recreational programs that offer a diversity of activities to all ages, abilities and interests.

R-104 King County will continue to encourage volunteer programs to further maximize availability of recreation and interpretive programs.

14966

Appropriate use of all King County facilities is critical to ensure safe, equitable, and enjoyable experiences by the public and protection of the systems resources.

R-105 King County will balance recreational uses and preservation goals of open space sites and facilities to be appropriate to each site, serve a variety of users and minimize conflicts.

VI. Open Space Classification System

The King County Open Space System includes lands and facilities with a variety of open space resources and recreation functions. This classification system forms the framework for stewardship of park resources, while providing a system to define recreational and educational uses.

C-101 Open spaces in the King County system will be classified using a three level system; first identifying the site as regional or local, second identifying its primary role within the system and third, identifying use areas within a site.

C-102 New open spaces will be classified at the time of acquisition and through development of a site management or master plan.

Level One Classification: Regional/Local

Level one classifies a site as regional or local based on size, features and who it serves, and guides future use, development or preservation to be appropriately scaled to serve site purposes and identified users.

C-103 Regional sites and facilities are generally large in size, have unique features or character, and/or are important as part of a larger system. The sites may cross jurisdictions and/or serve users from multiple jurisdictions as evidenced by the type of facility, such as a regional trail, or they may provide a unique or high level of activity, facility or ecological or resource value.

Designating a site as regional does establish a presumption of county ownership and management responsibility, however cities and other agencies may negotiate with King County to assume ownership or partial ownership and/or management responsibilities through partnerships for regional sites and King County may pursue cost sharing arrangements with cities if a large percentage of the park users are from incorporated cities.

C-104 King County should retain ownership of the regional open space system. However, partnerships and cost sharing are encouraged to maximize opportunities and enhance levels of service.

- C-105** King County may transfer regional sites located within the unincorporated area to an adjacent city, park district, or other agency if the transfer makes service provisions more efficient and when the rights to access and use by all citizens of King County are protected.

Traditional local parks have active and passive recreation facilities including play areas, open grassy fields, developed ball fields, tennis or sport courts, small picnic areas and trails. Less developed local passive parks and natural areas provide for conservation of local community character and natural resources, and offer opportunities for passive recreation.

- C-106** Local sites and facilities are smaller in size and serve the close to home park and recreation needs of the community. These sites are predominantly used by nearby residents.
- C-107** King County will transfer local parks and other open space sites to the cities in which they are located. Transfer of local park and open space sites should be included as part of annexation or incorporation; interlocal agreements which cover other services and facilities.
- C-108** King County will encourage and promote the transfer of local parks in the urban growth area to the cities in whose potential annexation area (PAA) they are located.

The designation of local facilities within unincorporated King County is used to guide future ownership responsibility.

Level Two Classification: Role in the System

Level two classifies each site based on its primary intended purpose, while acknowledging that many sites may have multiple benefits of functions. This designation guides the site's future use, development, programming, management and conservation.

- C-109** All King County open space sites will be classified within the following categories: 1) recreation site, 2) multi-use site, 3) trail, 4) natural area (also known as ecological site), and 5) working resource site.
- C-110** Recreation sites are dominated by recreation facilities. They receive a higher level of public use, and are intended to accommodate developed areas for informal, organized or intense recreation. This may include both active and passive recreation activities.

14966

Active sites support independent, group and team activities that require a significant level of development and operations. This includes scheduled sports activities and large scale special events and tournaments. They support high impact forms of recreation. Site development, maintenance and programming will reflect this level of developed facilities and intensive use.

Passive recreation sites require a lower level of development and provide areas for informal, self-directed activities for individuals and groups. Uses may also include less formal levels of sports fields (playfields) or courts. These activities require some level of improvement or development to support them.

C-111 Multi-use sites include lands that have areas of environmental value, but also accommodate extensive public access, active and passive recreation opportunities.

Each portion of a multi-use site will be developed and managed to support the level of use or preservation appropriate to that portion of the site.

C-112 Trails provide non-motorized recreational and transportation opportunities and may serve a variety of user types or may be designed for a more limited user group.

Multi-purpose trails allow for a combination of users such as walkers, equestrians, bicyclists, joggers, or roller skaters. Single or limited purpose trails are developed to serve one or compatible types of users. Safety and enjoyment for trail users is important to the trail experience.

C-113 Regional trail corridors serve multiple users and should be designed to include separate surface areas to serve different modes of use. This includes a hard surface with shoulders with a parallel soft surface and adequate separation between them.

C-114 Regional trails should be developed using the most current information, guidelines and standards to ensure user safety and enjoyment.

C-115 Regional trails should be planned and developed to function effectively for a 20-30 year life span.

More specific information, standards and details about the regional trail system may be found in the 2004 Regional Trails Inventory and Implementation Guidelines.

C-116 Natural or ecological sites recognize areas valued for their important natural resource functions and character, including but not limited to benefiting and protecting natural drainage systems, drainage basins, flood control systems, ecosystems, water quality, ground water, fish and wildlife habitat, and other natural resource purposes.

Improvements and enhancements will focus on keeping the environment in a nearly undeveloped state. There may be little or limited public access to these sites.

- C-117 Appropriate uses of natural sites may include interpretive and educational programs, nature programs, and activities that emphasize the appreciation of the natural resources of the site and the outdoors.
- C-118 Public use and management activities should be allowed on natural sites when they are compatible with the natural resource values of these sites and when they do not significantly affect the long-term quality of the site or its resources. Development will be limited to making the site available for public enjoyment in a manner consistent with natural resource conservation.
- C-119 Natural sites require individual management plans to determine the site's ability to support public uses, and to determine the enhancement and preservation efforts needed. A site management plan will be developed for natural areas guided by the Site Management Plan Guidelines.
- C-120 Working resource lands include forests and agricultural lands that receive some degree of oversight or management by the county.

The county includes farm and forest lands in the open space inventory. These lands are preserved to help maintain the viability of farming and forest harvest activities along with other open space benefits such as habitat value.

Level Three Classification: Use Areas Within Open Space Sites

Finally, each open space site can be further described by use areas within the site.

- C-121 Site use area designations establish areas of development, use, restoration or enhancement, maintenance and stewardship. Their purpose is to organize uses within a site.
- C-122 The following categories may be used to identify the individual use areas within a site: 1) natural area, 2) passive recreation area, 3) active recreation area, 4) staging area, and 5) special management area.
- C-123 Natural area designates areas of natural character and natural resources. These areas may support little development and limited

VIII. Standards

Park standards are guidelines to evaluate park, recreation and other open space needs. Park standards provide a predictable measure of the level of service delivered by a park system and provide direction for acquisition, development and management. They provide a measure by which to evaluate development impacts.

ST-101 Park standards are guidelines to evaluate park, recreation and other open space needs, direct the planning, acquisition, development and management of the system and evaluate the impact of growth and development.

Need for Standards

The Growth Management Act encourages the retention of open space and development of recreational opportunities, conservation of fish and wildlife habitat, and increased access to natural resource areas and developed parks. Countywide Planning Policies require all jurisdictions to develop twenty-year growth plans based on locally adopted definitions and service levels. In addition, they call for jurisdictions to develop coordinated service standards for the provision of parks and open space.

State law requires counties to determine if appropriate provisions are made for open space, parks and playgrounds to insure that the public use and interest will be served by the platting of subdivisions (RCW 58.17.110). In addition, the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC), the State grant funding agency, requires jurisdictions to adopt measurable park standards.

Purpose of Park Standards

Park standards help:

- define the amount and distribution of parks, recreation facilities and other open spaces within the county,
- identify the need for parks and other open spaces to support new growth and development, consistent with the overall land use pattern of the county,
- provide guidance for future expenditures
- provide a benchmark which can help measure the quality of life within a community.

Basis for Standards

Park standards as a measure of service are accepted nationwide. The first standards can be traced to the early 1900's. During the 1930's the National Recreation Association, which later became the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), issued its first recommendations on standards for parks in neighborhoods. Over the years these standards have been evaluated and adjusted.

Recreation is increasingly viewed as an important factor in maintaining health—both physical and mental. Studies of children's behavior and development have documented the importance of play, especially informal and unstructured play, in children's physical, social, intellectual and creative development. The NRPA considers recreation as a "means to an end rather than simply as an end in itself".

The standards used by most local governments today are based on national standards established by the NRPA and adapted to the needs of individual communities. These population-based standards describe a goal of acres of land per unit of population. They are used to define the need for traditional local and active parks, such as neighborhood, community and major urban parks. The NRPA suggests these standards should be viewed as flexible planning guidelines and that they address "minimum, not maximum, goals to be achieved".

The NRPA standards also cover a range of facility types such as athletic fields, basketball and tennis courts, volleyball, field hockey, running tracks, golf courses, archery ranges, swimming pools and beaches. Some jurisdictions set population-based standards for additional park facilities and amenities, such as picnic tables, picnic shelters, playgrounds, campsites, horseshoe pits, community recreation centers, ice rinks or boat ramps.

Flexible standards are needed to meet the different needs of a jurisdiction and the role it serves as well as a population that varies geographically in age, income and interests. Flexibility allows for consideration of variables that are not easily quantified, but that influence the desirability and usability of a park. Some standards also include distribution guidelines that recommend distances between park facilities to ensure equitable geographic distribution. Standards should reflect the availability of other area facilities such as schools and regional parks.

King County Standards

In 1978, King County adopted Ordinance No. 3813 to set forth park acquisition and development policies which provide standards for local parks; identified as neighborhood, community and major urban. Standards for resource-based parks focused on amenities such as shoreline, forests, view sites or other special environmental features. The location and need for these parks was based on their unique or special physical characteristic, rather than a population based standard. Trail corridors were placed within the resource category.

Motion No. 3527 was also adopted at this time to establish targets, based on population, for athletic facilities to meet the needs of residents in unincorporated King County.

In the past, King County has been unable to meet these adopted standards. Analysis of the existing King County park system, the established standards and guidelines and their limitations, as well as the county's increasingly regional role, made clear the need for new park standards. The following standards address the role of the county as a regional provider and as the local provider in the rural area. Unincorporated urban areas are expected to annex to cities which will assume the responsibility of providing urban parks.

Local parks are typically developed with a combination of informal recreation areas and facilities such as ball fields, open grassy meadows, sport courts, picnic areas, children's play equipment and pathways or trails. Public elementary school playgrounds are generally available for public use outside of school hours and meet some neighborhood park and playground needs.

ST-102 One-half of public elementary school sites will be credited toward the park standard. Regional parks and other outdoor recreation spaces with public access could be used for additional credit toward the park standard, to be determined case by case.

Urban Standards

Projected population growth in urban areas requires adequate local public parks and other open spaces to support new development. The following standard can be used to evaluate the impacts of growth and development.

ST-103 Local park acres in the urban area should be provided at a ratio of 7.5 acres/1000 population. This acreage should be equitably distributed throughout the urban unincorporated areas of the county. Local parks should generally be available within 1/2 mile from all residents. Other factors that affect accessibility should be considered, such as topographical features, physical barriers, visibility and pedestrian and transportation circulation patterns.

Rural Standards

Local park standards in rural areas differ from urban standards. In rural areas, there is less need for close-to-home local public park space. Individual lots are larger and provide more outdoor recreation space than in urban areas. The character of the rural area with large size lots and low residential densities result in a need for fewer individual sites in the rural area.

- ST-104** Local parks in the rural areas should be provided at a ratio of 4 acres/1000 population. This acreage should be equitably distributed throughout the rural area. However, due to lower population densities there will be fewer individual facilities and users can expect to travel greater distances in the rural areas. Ideally, rural park facilities should be located near schools, rural cities or activity centers.

Site Selection Criteria for Local Parks

In addition to addressing acreage standards, there are a number of factors to be considered in selecting land for new local parks.

- ST-105** Size is a factor in the selection of sites for local parks. Ten acres is the recommended minimum size in the rural parts of the county. Larger sites allow for development of a range of recreational opportunities, as well as providing natural and landscaped area that serve as screening from adjacent residential or other land uses.
- ST-106** Local park sites should be accessible to pedestrians and bicycles. Parking should be available at each site based on individual park conditions, levels of use and the community served.

Facility Standards

The degree to which King County residents are served by the park and recreation system cannot be measured only by the amount of available park and other open space land. The number and type of facilities within these sites is also an important consideration.

Recreational activities and facilities can be measured by two factors. They may be separated into (1) those that are non-scheduled and informal and are best evaluated based on distance and availability to residents, and (2) those that are more formal and require specific facilities to serve a prescribed number of participants or teams and are often scheduled for use. They are best evaluated based on a facility per unit of population.

- ST-107** The county will use the most recent facility standards of the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) as guidelines for determining park development needs and will refine them based on community interests and input.

Regional Goals

- ST-108** King County's goal for the regional open space system is to preserve the county's valuable open space and natural resources, and provide a wide range of recreational opportunities to county residents. This goal is implemented based on the opportunity presented by the physical landscape and can be evaluated by degree of preservation of a system and its resources, features and processes.
- ST-109** King County's goal for location, size and distribution of regional active and multipurpose parks and facilities will be based on geographic distribution of sites, consideration of need, and public and partnership support for a facility.

Some recreational facilities may be considered regional because they require a specialized user group that may not be found within any one jurisdiction. Examples might include the velodrome and the climbing rock at Marymoor Park and the King County Fairgrounds at Enumclaw.

IX. Planning, Acquisition and Development

Planning, acquisition and design decisions for the development and enhancement of King County's open space system of lands and facilities provide the foundation for the county's stewardship efforts and recreation activities.

PAD-101 King County will plan, acquire, develop and enhance open space and recreation facilities including active recreation and multi-use parks, regional trails, natural areas and resource lands to further the vision and goals of the plan.

PAD-102 King County will plan and develop facilities that encourage multiple public uses and benefits and will work to minimize conflicts between them.

Planning

Planning establishes an organized approach for realizing King County's goals for its open space system. King County will pursue a variety of planning activities that coordinate and build upon each other to further the goals for the system. The county will use this plan as the framework for its planning, acquisition and design activities.

PAD-103 King County will evaluate and update the King County Open Space Plan when necessary to address changing conditions and remain eligible for grant opportunities.

PAD-104 King County will prepare a site management plan, project program plan, site master or development plan for each open space site prior to significant development or use. This plan should identify appropriate public access, necessary rules of use, and level of maintenance, stewardship, monitoring and enforcement needed for public enjoyment, resource conservation, safety and liability. If a detailed plan cannot be prepared immediately after acquisition, King County will prepare an interim or maintenance plan to address basic resource protection, access and safety.

PAD-105 Site Management Plans for natural areas and working resource lands will be guided by the King County Ecological Handbook for Natural Areas and the Programmatic Plans for Forestry and Agriculture for forests and farms.

PAD-106 Future decisions for recreation and multi-use sites, regional trails or natural areas or working resource lands will be based on consistency with their individual plans. Changes in conditions will require evaluation and periodic updating of these plans.

PAD-107 King County should periodically prepare assessments of open space sites to evaluate their intent and how they serve the public, and make recommendations to enhance or restore individual sites to increase their benefit to King County and the environment.

Redevelopment and enhancement of existing facilities is an especially important strategy in areas of the county that are highly developed and have a shortage of recreational lands. Restoration and enhancement are important to maximize the resource value of natural areas

PAD-108 King County should develop and implement a system for monitoring open space use patterns as background for future planning efforts.

Fish and wildlife planning efforts provide valuable information to the planning and management of open space sites and are requirements of the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC) to remain eligible for habitat grant funding.

PAD-109 King County will continue wildlife planning efforts through individual site management and maintenance plans to ensure fish and wildlife values are an integral part of open space decisions.

PAD 110 King County will maintain a comprehensive computerized site inventory data base in coordination with other county inventories, data bases and the Geographic Information System (GIS).

The inventory should include information such as purchase information, funding records, historic site development and survey information, master plans, site management guidelines, site plans and specifications, site conditions including site improvements and maintenance requirements. It will facilitate the county's planning, property management, development review, project development, property acquisition, maintenance and scheduling responsibilities.

PAD-111 King County will systematically apply the open space classification system and use area designations to county open space lands to clearly facilitate appropriate use, programming, development, maintenance and stewardship.

PAD-112 King County should prepare resource management strategies for individual sites within the system to maximize their specific resource value(s) through site management and maintenance plans. Site

14966

management strategies should describe each site use area and its associated management needs and recommended maintenance practices.

PAD-113 King County should work with athletic organizations and school districts to identify facility needs and coordinate funding strategies.

There is an increasing demand for athletic fields and active recreation facilities throughout the county. Service providers should work together to evaluate the specific needs of each area and strive to maximize the use of existing facilities. Evaluation should include: a) conducting surveys and initiating on-going coordination meetings with active recreation user groups to evaluate specific needs, i.e. practice vs. game quality fields, youth vs. adult requirements, etc., b) documentation of field use patterns and trends evaluating and monitoring scheduling activities to reflect changing facility use patterns to equitably and efficiently allocate use, and c) actively pursuing opportunities countywide for joint use and development of school facilities. The county continues to work with the Active Sports Youth Recreation Commission (ASpYRE) to gather and analyze this information.

Review

Outside activities can affect the open space system. These may result from new County ordinances or regulations, or from planning or development proposals of individuals and other agencies. Participation in the development and review of these actions is important to the future of the system.

PAD-114 King County will review legislation, codes, regulations and land use and development proposals, to ensure the full range of open space issues and impacts are addressed.

PAD-115 King County will pursue opportunities for participation with the private sector in the development process to further open space goals.

Early participation in review of development proposals can result in mutual benefits to the community and neighborhood, while providing predictability from the early stages of the review process.

Acquisition

The lands that are added to the open space system enrich the county's quality of life and contribute to the legacy to future generations. Expected growth in King County will bring additional pressures to preserve all types of open space opportunities. Limited public funds make every acquisition decision important. Acquisition decisions must consider the implications of future development, use and management.

PAD-116 King County's open space acquisitions should be consistent with the goals of this plan and the King County Acquisition and Land Management Strategies.

In 2004, King County will complete an Acquisition and Land Management Strategy. This vision will identify critical open space needs county-wide, to benefit multiple open space values, including: recreation, flood plain management, agriculture, forestry, and ecological health.

PAD-117 King County will emphasize acquisition and development of sites that provide for multiple benefits and functions.

PAD-118 King County should acquire open space properties that provide public benefit in proportion to the cost of acquisition, ownership, development and management.

PAD-119 King County will prepare a site acquisition evaluation before potential sites are acquired to ensure they are appropriate for the intended use and to evaluate short and long-term stewardship funding needs and availability.

The site acquisition evaluation will at a minimum consider the following:

- identification of future site role and classification (i.e. active park, trail, multi-use site, natural land or resource (farm or forest)).
- inventory and analysis of site conditions necessary to evaluate suitability for the proposed project (topography, geology, soils, hydrology, vegetation, sensitive areas, wildlife, infrastructure, access, visibility, zoning, adjacent land uses, etc.). This may include special studies as necessary to determine feasibility of the proposed project (wetland delineation, geotechnical studies, etc.).
- identification of boundary and any adjustments that may be needed to provide for access, use, management, and sustainability of the site resources.
- estimate of future costs of assuming ownership (site clean-up, removal of structures, securing of site, signage, maintenance, monitoring, recreational use, etc.).
- identification of relationship and/or linkage of proposed acquisition to sites in the open space system should Evaluate for acquisition of natural areas (i.e. ecological sites) are also based upon the following one or more criteria:
 - Provides ecologically important attributes;
 - Adjacent and on-site land uses do not significantly impact the sustainability of the resources of the natural area;
 - Adjacent to existing protected land (i.e. public ownership or conservation easement);
 - Of adequate size to sustain ecological function over time and provide diverse and complex habitat for fish and wildlife species;
 - Provide multiple benefits including recreation, habitat, aquifer protection and recharge and/or flood-hazard reduction

King County should acquire working resource lands (farms and forest) as directed in the King County Executive Order, Implementation of Forestry Policies (PUT 8-18) and King County Agriculture Programmatic Plan.

PAD-120 King County will classify the role of acquisitions as recreation, regional trails, multi-use sites, natural areas (ecological sites) or working resource lands (i.e. farm or forest) prior to ownership.

PAD-121 King County will identify the method of site acquisition appropriate to each site to achieve the desired level of protection, use and public benefit. Deed conditions and restrictions should not preclude or diminish future intended use, management or public benefit.

The method of acquiring park, recreation and open space lands must consider the value being protected. These methods may include fee simple and less-than fee simple acquisition such as dedications, easements, or other mechanisms.

Design and Development

Safe, environmentally sensitive and cost effective design of site development, restoration or enhancement projects is a major responsibility in public projects. The following policies demonstrate King County's commitment in the development and approval of capital projects.

PAD-122 King County will prepare site designs and specifications for the development, enhancement or restoration of an open space site to ensure consistency with the goals and policies of this plan and individual site plans.

PAD-123 King County will design, develop and maintain sites to encourage the safe use and public enjoyment of the county's open space sites, while protecting their natural resources.

PAD-124 King County is committed to the design and development of accessible sites and recreation facilities.

PAD-125 King County will develop and enhance or restore open space sites in accordance with their project program plans, site management plans and guidelines, forest stewardship plans or master plans.

PAD-126 High priority will be given to aesthetic considerations in park design and development. Designs will be evaluated based on color, scale, style, and materials appropriate for their proposed use. Development should be consistent with the site's role and purpose in the system and blend with surroundings and the natural environment.

PAD 127 Priorities for development, restoration or enhancement of natural areas and working resource lands will vary by site.

PAD-128 King County will develop and implement design standards and details which promote a unified, identifiable image of the county's open space system.

A unified design program is cost effective in terms of minimizing future design and maintenance costs. Standardization minimizes replacement and repair costs, reduces part and supply inventories and simplifies maintenance. It will promote an identifiable image for the system.

PAD-129 When appropriate, open spaces will include educational and interpretive signage or other features which enhance the users understanding and enjoyment of a site and its features and resources.

PAD-130 King County will demonstrate fiscal responsibility in its review and approval of design and development to balance development costs with long-term operational costs and public benefits.

X. Stewardship and Maintenance

Stewardship expresses the values that guide how we use, care for and appreciate the county's open space system of parks, trails, natural areas and working resource lands.

In 2004, King County is the caretaker of nearly 25,000 acres of combined open space lands and 200 miles of trails. Stewardship of these lands gains importance as the effects of the county's growth in population, rate of development, and diminishing natural resources become more evident. Use of both recreational parks and natural areas will increase. It is important that the county take an active role in promoting stewardship values throughout the system for county staff, and park users.

The term stewardship represents the responsible management of the open space system and its resources. All sites need some level of management to ensure the safety of the public, provide appropriate public access and use of the site, and protect site resources. Management actions include enhancement, restoration, and traditional maintenance. Stewardship will include use of new techniques, skills, training and equipment, in addition to developing and implementing good management practices to protect open space resources and promote recreation, revenue and partnership opportunities.

As stewards of this significant resource, the county will focus on stewardship values as the basis for the management of the open space system's valuable and sensitive natural resources.

SM-101 King County will be stewards of its open space system and keep these lands in perpetuity for open space purposes. Other uses will be considered only if it can be demonstrated through a public process and adopted criteria that they are surplus to the county's public recreation or open space needs.

SM-102 King County will maintain open space sites to ensure the public investment is protected, and appropriate public use is safe and enjoyable. The public is expected to have access to the majority of lands in the open space system, but access may be restricted when necessary to protect or restore natural resource values and processes. Access strategies for each site will be developed and monitored.

SM-103 King County will integrate habitat management and enhancement as a major component of its stewardship. Natural areas will be managed to conserve wildlife habitat and to foster native species. This may include management, enhancement and restoration of degraded natural areas to increase their ecological, and wildlife habitat and educational values.

Stewardship principles to be incorporated into the direct care of sites will include measures addressing conservation along with environmentally sensitive management practices and techniques.

- SM-104** King County commits itself to preservation and conservation and will demonstrate this in daily activities. Environmentally sensitive maintenance techniques and best management practices will be followed.
- SM-105** King County will work with other agencies to maintain the necessary quality and quantity of water in its streams and lakes to provide for plant communities, suitable fish and wildlife habitat, and recreational use.
- SM-106** King County will promote reforestation in order to preserve vital natural areas with forest canopy to assist with water and air quality measures, temperature cooling and energy conservation.
- SM-107** Water conservation is an important consideration in management of the system. New construction, and the reconstruction of older facilities, will incorporate low water use equipment. Use of recycled water will be considered, when practical and effective.
- SM-108** Use of drought tolerant plants and native vegetation in site development and restoration projects will be emphasized to minimize the need for irrigation and reduce damage caused by non-native species.
- SM-109** Recycling efforts in parks will be promoted along with use of recycled materials available and appropriate for park uses.
- SM-110** The environment and the health and safety of staff and park users will be protected from the inappropriate use of hazardous or toxic materials.
- SM-111** Use of pesticides and fungicides will be based on integrated pest management.

Integrated pest management (IPM) is a strategy to prevent or suppress outbreaks of pests while minimizing impacts to human health and the environment. IPM strategies include appropriate use of plants, installation of natural barriers to pests, use of organic or least toxic pesticides, timing of application and encouragement of natural predators.

Plans for site stewardship are necessary to direct activities and monitor results.

- SM-112** King County will prepare Park Resource Section work plans, emphasizing clear goals for resource preservation and enhancement of all types of open space.

- SM-113** King County will develop measurable site maintenance plans and objectives to evaluate effectiveness and provide guidance and historical data for future maintenance decisions.
- SM-114** King County will follow the stewardship guidelines in the site maintenance plans prepared for parks and trails and site management goals to provide direction for the stewardship of natural areas.
- SM-115** King County will monitor, review and evaluate how site maintenance is conducted to account for the changing needs of the system, and identify and incorporate new procedures and tasks to address emphasis on natural areas and resource preservation.
- SM-116** King County will develop and maintain a schedule for major maintenance and rehabilitation of park sites and facilities to insure safe public use and to reduce lifecycle costs.
- SM-117** King County will maintain an inventory and financial plans for the addition or replacement of equipment to best and most efficiently maintain the open space system.
- SM-118** King County will evaluate long-term maintenance costs during the review of new capital and restoration projects using a life-cycle analysis approach to balance initial cost with long term operating, stewardship and maintenance costs.

Stewardship of the open space system extends to its relationship with its neighbors. It is important to minimize adverse impacts to open space lands and resources from activities on nearby property.

- SM-119** King County will work with nearby property owners, agencies and the public to protect the character, function and natural resources of the open space system.

XI. Property Management

Property management reinforces the county's commitment to land stewardship. As property manager, King County is responsible for guiding the use of open space sites and ensuring the value of this legacy for future generations.

PM-101 King County will encourage and allow the use of open space land that is compatible with the site, consistent with its open space purposes, funding source and can be demonstrated to serve the public and site resources.

King County will achieve these goals by encouraging activities compatible with each site and preventing uses that may cause site degradation or loss of public benefit.

PM-102 King County will encourage and promote mutually beneficial agreements with school districts, other agencies and private groups for the use and management of sites and facilities for recreation and revenue generating activities.

PM-103 King County will evaluate requests for alterations to open space sites to ensure they are consistent with park purposes, park and natural area site management plans and conditions and will not diminish open space values, use, aesthetics and stewardship.

PM-104 King County will issue use permits or agreements for events sponsored by others when the use is consistent with park purposes and site conditions, will not deter from open space stewardship and aesthetics, and is compatible with designated open space uses and users.

PM-105 King County will not allow alterations or enter into agreements or permit uses that incur future obligations to the county for maintenance, replacement, rehabilitation or removal until a thorough analysis of the long-term cost has been prepared, risks and liabilities to the county clearly identified and supportive funding is identified or provided.

PM-106 King County will evaluate all agreements, easements and use permits to ensure they continue to be in compliance with their terms and conditions, current county policies and codes, and remain in the best interests of the site and the public.

PM-107 King County will consider concessions and business endeavors that are compatible with and enhance the park experience by providing an

14966

opportunity for increased public use, education, stewardship and enjoyment of the site.

- PM-108** King County will review concession and business operations for effectiveness and efficiency in delivery of services, as well as revenue generation. The county will grant concession and business agreements that do not result in uncompensated cost to the county.
- PM-109** King County will clearly post sites with applicable rules and restrictions for the sites in language that is easily understood by the public.
- PM-110** King County will maintain a policy and procedure for the naming of park, recreation and other open space sites and features.
- PM-111** King County will accept gifts or donations of equipment, materials or improvements for a site that are consistent with site purposes and conditions, enhance aesthetics and stewardship, are consistent with the site management, maintenance, development or master plans, reduce stewardship costs or improve efficiencies.

XII. Public Outreach

King County is committed to public involvement and coordination in open space planning, acquisition, restoration, development and management. The following policies encourage public participation in the planning and delivery of services and programs to balance the diverse and competing needs and priorities of King County residents:

- PO-101 King County will seek and encourage public input, advice and participation in open space system issues.**
- PO-102 King County will use a variety of methods to obtain public involvement, including public meetings, focus groups, surveys, email and advisory committees, or established park advisory committees appropriate to the size and complexity of the site or issue**

The citizen oversight commission created by the parks levy, which was approved by voters in May of 2003, will play an integral role in ensuring citizen input and oversight as the county continues to implement its new way of doing business.

The King County Agricultural Commission was established to advise the county on agricultural policies and programs, including ways to preserve farmlands, make agriculture more environmentally friendly and enhance and promote commercial agriculture and agricultural products in the region.

The King County Rural Forest Commission is an advisory group representing a variety of rural forest interests. The commission advises the county on policies and programs affecting rural forestry, works to identify strategies to conserve forestlands, and promotes the practice of forestry in rural areas of the county.

- PO-103 King County will design and conduct a public participation process appropriate to the site when preparing master plans, park project program plans, site development or management plans.**
- PO-104 New funding initiatives for open space should be based on a county-wide planning and public involvement process to identify community needs and regional opportunities.**
- PO-105 King County will encourage appropriate public use of the open space system, provide awareness of the opportunities it offers and increase public knowledge of the system.**

PO-106 King County will emphasize clear, concise and timely communication with the public.

Volunteers

Many county residents support the efforts of King County through fundraising and volunteer time to support park, recreation and open space activities. These efforts maximize county resources and allow the county to provide a higher level of service than county funds would allow.

PO-107 King County will encourage volunteer efforts to enhance and support programs and facility enhancement .

PO-108 King County will seek volunteers to implement community watch programs to increase security on open space lands.

Interagency Coordination

Partnerships are key to the future of King County's open space system. During this time of severe budget constraints, partnerships allow those invested in the future of King County Parks – the parks users themselves – to play a role in enhancing facilities and recreational opportunities. By partnering with local organizations, King County can operate within its budget while continuing to improve facilities and expand recreational opportunities.

PO-109 King County will provide regional leadership in open space efforts and encourage public understanding, involvement and commitment to regional goals and resources.

PO-110 King County will work to bring together a diversity of agencies, groups and individuals to advocate and support the region's open space goals.

PO-111 King County will share its knowledge and provide technical assistance to local agencies, groups and individuals to further open space goals.

Coordinating with local jurisdictions, school districts, community groups, the general public and volunteers is key to maximizing the regions resources. This can result in a greater scope and number of recreational opportunities than an individual agency can provide. Future annexations and incorporations will continue to change the open space and recreation responsibilities of the county and local agencies and create opportunities to forge new partnerships. Stewardship of the county's extensive open space system goes beyond the efforts of any one agency or group.

14966

PO-112 King County will coordinate open space planning, acquisition and development with other county projects and programs and with other agencies and organizations that may provide mutual benefits.

PO-113 King County will promote partnerships with public and private organizations and others, to increase the range of facilities and programs in the space system.

Recommendations for specific outreach strategies and implementation programs may be found in the 2003 King County Parks and Recreation Division Business Plan .

XIII. Partnerships

Since the late 1960's, King County Parks has realized that developing partnerships encourages a sharing of not only resources and responsibilities, but ideas and visions for the future. These partnerships promote the region's goals of providing open space lands and recreational facilities and services to current and future generations of county residents.

The county has formed partnerships with the state, cities, schools, community groups, non-profit organizations and individuals to share the costs and responsibilities of acquiring sites and developing recreation facilities and providing maintenance, stewardship and programming at these facilities.

Partnerships both maximize the value of public funds and are often a catalyst for substantial levels of additional community-based investments and resources. Partnerships ultimately can result in a greater scope and number of recreational and conservation opportunities than any one entity can achieve alone. Presently, and for the foreseeable future, entrepreneurial, community based, inter-jurisdictional partnerships will be major tools by which new open space lands, sports and recreation facilities and amenities are acquired, enhanced, developed, operated and maintained.

This chapter describes King County's commitment to these partnerships and provides an overview of the types of programs in place to support, fund, and ultimately embrace the partnership philosophy.

Values and Benefits of Partnerships

The value and benefits of partnerships are recognized throughout the plan. There are many benefits to King County, its partners and county residents in establishing these partnerships.

- Partnerships enable the county and its partners to leverage their fiscal and human resources to provide facilities and services greater than any one partner could achieve.
- Partnerships, such as those with schools, encourage optimal use of public facilities.
- Partnerships enable the county and its partners to draw on the expertise of each other to steward and maintain the region's park, recreation and open space resources.
- Partnerships provide opportunities to bring together agencies, individuals, and interests to work toward achieving common goals.

- Partnerships empower community groups to invest in their open space system.

As a regional government, King County is committed to providing leadership and actively pursuing and facilitating partnerships to provide regional open space sites, recreation facilities, programs and services in the county. The following policies provide a solid foundation on which to build these partnerships.

PT-101 King County will encourage and pursue partnerships with public agencies and jurisdictions, private organizations and businesses for support and funding of the open space system and its resources to increase the range of sites, facilities and programs available to the public.

Types of Partnerships

Agreements and partnerships are varied and site specific, depending on the site, the parties involved and the type of acquisition, development, use, and stewardship being considered. However, partnerships may generally be categorized within the following areas:

Entrepreneurial Partnerships

As a result of the economic pressures being exerted on county government, King County developed the Parks Division Business Plan with a mandate to develop "a new way of doing business," based on the Metropolitan Parks task force recommendations.

In the summer of 2003 the Parks and Recreation Division began implementing an internal Parks and Recreation Division Revenue Enhancement Strategic Plan. The plan employs a multi-faceted and multi-layered approach to revenue production. Parks is building and maintaining effective community relations; creating sustainable revenue streams based on short-term, mid-term and long-term goals; developing quality marketing collateral in support of our initiatives; and fostering corporate partnerships that enhance our ability to serve the public while supporting our corporate partner's strategic goals.

The Parks and Recreation Division has embraced this "new way of doing business" and is expected to generate \$1.2 million in entrepreneurial revenues in 2004. Developing "naming rights" opportunities; creating new and innovative spaces such as "yurt camping villages; negotiating land leases for new concessions, vending and business operations within parks; and encouraging corporate investment through specialty and mainstream advertising are creating the partnerships and generating the revenues necessary to keep King County Parks thriving.

The Concerts at Marymoor and the Cougar Mountain Running Series are the latest examples of successful entrepreneurial partnerships.

Community-based Partnerships

The Active Sports and Youth Recreation Commission and the Metropolitan Parks Task Force both recommended a proactive and prioritized effort to encourage, develop, and implement more community-based partnerships throughout the King County park system. It is believed that one of the best applications of public funds for parks is to use it to leverage and encourage the investment of community resources, sweat equity, and passion into new or enhanced parks, sports, and recreation facilities. These partnerships can dramatically increase the efficiency of public spending, while at the same time, engage the community groups in a manner that results in long term programmatic, financial, political, and emotional support for their parks system. Some examples of successful community-based partnerships within the King County park system include the 60 Acres Soccer Complex, the SODA Off-leash Dog Park, and the Sammamish Rowing Program.

King County has two major tools for encouraging, developing, and implementing community-based partnerships, the Association Development and Operations Partnership Program (ADOP) and the Youth Sports Facility Grant (YSFG) Program.

The ADOP Program

The Association Development and Operations Partnership (ADOP) Program is a proactive, dedicated effort to support the ongoing and future development of new or enhanced parks, sports, or recreation facilities without encumbering associated operations and maintenance costs.

The program was recommended by the Active Sports and Youth Recreation (ASpYRE) Commission and was jointly developed with, and ultimately implemented by King County as a critical tool for meeting current and future active recreation facility needs.

The ADOP Program has three goals:

1. Address present and future regional and rural parks, sports, and recreation facility needs by creating new site, facilities, and amenities without adding new tax funded operations and maintenance costs.
2. Empower user groups, sports associations, and other community-based organizations to leverage their commitment, passion, and resources into new long-term, high quality, self-sustaining parks and sports, and recreation facilities
3. Develop a region-wide network of partners consisting of user groups, sports organizations, and individuals whose success is interconnected with the political, financial, and operational success of the county parks, sports, and recreation system.

The ADOP Program essentially provides a platform for community-based partners to develop, construct, operate, and maintain parks and recreation facilities and amenities on King County park lands. The program is designed to be easily accessible to sports groups, community organizations, and other non-profits, yet has strong protections that address public recreation need, stewardship, neighborhood relations, organizational standing, and many other tenets that assure the maximum public benefit and highest probability for long term success.

Capital grants, up to \$100,000 each are available to the potential partners for successful ADOP proposals.

Youth Sports Facility Grant (YSFG) Program

The Youth Sports Facility Grant Program provides matching grant funding to renovate, expand, or develop sports fields and facilities serving youth, ages 21 and under in King County. The program was initiated in 1993 and creates roughly 15 new or renovated sports facilities throughout the county each year with about a \$650,000 annual budget. The program requires that a partnership be established between community or youth sports organizations and a public entity on whose land the field or facility is located. The partners provide a match to the county grant and agree to the long-term maintenance of the site. Past projects include athletic fields, ball courts, playgrounds, skateboard parks, climbing walls, a rowing center facility, and gymnasiums.

Successful YSFG projects rely upon good planning and cooperation between parties. The ability to demonstrate community need and impact of the project, strong partnerships, and the ability to manage and complete the project in a timely fashion within budget are key elements of a strong application.

Other Community Partners

Partnerships are also valued in the Adopt-a-Park and Park Ambassador Programs that benefit from volunteer efforts of groups and individuals in providing stewardship and maintenance. Groups such as Friends of Marymoor Park and Friends of Taylor Mountain Forest have organized to provide input and support for these sites.

- The SODA (Serve Our Dog Area) organization assists the county in the management and maintenance of an off-leash dog area at Marymoor Park. They provide both labor and funds to support this portion of the park.
- The Sammamish Rowing Club has restored a boathouse along the Sammamish River in Marymoor Park and offers rowing programs.

Inter-jurisdictional Partnerships

King County has formed several partnerships to acquire and/or develop park and recreation sites. School districts and cities or other public agencies are typical partners in these ventures. Some examples of these types of partnerships include:

14966

- Rattlesnake Ridge, an 1,800 acre parcel, was purchased and is managed through a joint effort of King County and the Washington State Department Natural Resources.
- The Field of Dreams program was a cooperative effort between the Parks Division and school districts throughout King County, to acquire and develop athletic fields or make improvements to existing fields, allowing both the schools and community to benefit.
- King County and the City of Bellevue jointly funded development of athletic fields on Bellevue property adjacent to Marymoor Park. The partnership also includes shared responsibilities for maintenance and operations.
- The Squak, Cougar and Tiger (SCAT) Committee partners King County, the city of Issaquah, Seattle Water Department, State Parks and the Department of Natural Resources to plan for and coordinate the management of the extensive holdings of these agencies in the Mountains to Sound Greenway.
- The county actively participates with the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust and other non-profit organizations and public agencies to plan for and implement an open space corridor of forests, farms, parks, rivers and lakes along I-90.

Other partnerships continue to develop and expand with non-profit groups such as the Cascade Land Conservancy, Northwest Parks Foundations and the Trust for Public Lands.

Stewardship Partners

The county has a number of partnerships which include various forms of use in exchange for contributions to the development and stewardship of sites and their resources. Stewardship activities may include enhancement, restoration, capital improvements or traditional maintenance activities. These agreements save the county from incurring some of the costs associated with managing these sites and provide levels of service beyond what the county could normally afford.

Although use and stewardship agreements come in many different forms, the key element is the linkage between the site and the obligation of stewardship and accommodation of the general public. Some use agreements are simple exchanges in which the county permits extended non-exclusive use of a site or facility and the user group is responsible for regular maintenance or contribution to capital improvements. Other stewardship agreements focus on the conservation or enhancement of natural areas and their resources. Conservation organizations, other public agencies and community groups are typical of the groups who enter into these agreements with the

county and they often provide stewardship solely as a service to the public and the environment.

PT-102 King County will encourage and promote mutually beneficial agreements with school districts, other agencies and private groups for the joint use, stewardship and management of sites and facilities for public recreation and natural resource protection consistent with the planned purposes for each site and facility.

There is increasing interest in the county's Adopt-a-Park program which has enlisted the assistance of partners in the care of an increasing number of park sites. Some examples of the county's stewardship partners include groups that have assumed responsibilities for Saddle Swamp, Carnation Marsh and Whispering Firs Bog.

Recreation Program Partners

King County Parks has a variety of partnerships with other organizations that increase the range and scope of recreational and educational activities. Typical of these partnerships are cooperative arrangements with other public agencies or entities to provide and schedule a variety of program activities.

PT-103 King County will encourage and pursue partnerships with public agencies, organizations and individuals to increase the range and scope of recreational, interpretive and educational opportunities of the open space system.

Strategies To Develop Future Partnerships

Outreach Program

This plan directs the county to establish partnerships for planning, acquisition, development or preservation of open space lands and their management and stewardship.

The county will support an active outreach effort to identify potential opportunities for the formation of partnerships. Partnerships will be pursued through a variety of activities including publications, community meetings and direct contact with other agencies and groups to identify opportunities for partnerships.

Evaluation of Partnerships

Several considerations must be addressed in the evaluation and prioritization of potential partnerships. These include public benefits and costs, as well as the legal framework which defines the county's ability to enter into partnership agreements and the conditions of those agreements. This framework includes federal laws, Washington

14966

State laws, and the King County Code and ordinances, including land use zoning codes and development regulations, deed restrictions, and funding source restrictions.

Each partnership opportunity may offer different and unique benefits to the public and each of the partners.

PT-104 King County will evaluate partnerships to insure the success for each of the partners and the public.

XIV. Funding

This plan defines the county's support of a regionally significant open space system. It also maintains the county's on-going commitment to providing appropriate levels of local park and recreation services in rural unincorporated areas.

The county, similar to most governments today, is experiencing the challenges of increasing public expectations and cost of services with decreasing levels of revenue. Annexations and incorporations, a declining economy and voter passed initiatives limiting general property taxes have challenged the county's ability to fund mandated and discretionary services. Parks is considered a discretionary service by state code making open space funding for maintenance operations and recreation programming especially vulnerable. Challenges in providing appropriate levels of service have resulted in the county's need to explore new ways of doing business that are historically non-conventional for many park and open space agencies.

The funding policies in this plan are based on these challenges and derive guidance from extensive previous efforts such as the work of the Metropolitan Parks Task Force, Active Sports Youth Recreation (ASpYRe) Commission, and the King County Parks Division Business Plan, as well as the public input into this plan.

F-101 King County will promote awareness of the role King County's open space system plays in the quality of life in the region and in the recreation industry and its economy.

Operational Funding

Operational funding supports a wide range of activities associated with the stewardship, management and operation of the open space system. In recent times, operational funding needs for the growing open space system continued to increase while revenue sources decreased with losses of revenue due to annexations and incorporations and ballot measures setting tax limitations. Funding of the county's open space system by the general fund has steadily decreased over several years until reaching a near crisis situation in 2003 challenging the stability of the system. This same issue impacts every area of county government.

As a result of the critical challenges in the year 2003, the King County Executive appointed a task force comprised of leaders of both the private and public sector. The task force examined the existing funding of King County's open space with an eye towards shaping a system that could successfully move forward in a strained economy.

The Metropolitan Parks Task Force

The Metropolitan Parks Task Force was established to provide recommendations to the King County Executive and Metropolitan King County Council to enable the county to manage the system and restore stability by removing it from dependence on the county's decreasing general fund.

After extensive research, analysis and public input, the task force made several recommendations calling for the county to refine and refocus its long-term vision for the system, and develop new and creative ways of generating revenue and reducing costs. A successful voter approved levy, increased user fees, funds from entrepreneurial partnerships and increased use of volunteers all contribute to this new way of doing business.

The work of the task force led to development of the 2003 King County Parks Business Plan. This called for additional cost cutting within the parks budget and identification of efficiencies within all programs and work units. Park and pool facilities located within cities were recommended to be either transferred to that city or mothballed short term until a long-term solution could be identified. The following additional recommendations came from the task force:

- Create an Enterprise Fund to support the entrepreneurial approach to business that must be adopted for all fee-generating programs and facilities.
- Create a capital innovations fund dedicated to new revenue-generating projects in the parks system - and selecting these projects using employee input.
- Allow the county to select and impose user fees based on the cost of providing facilities and services and the demand for service, incorporating "needs based" rates or scholarships, and subsidies of youth recreation programs.
- Secure new revenue from naming rights, advertising, and corporate sponsorships.
- Increase use of volunteers and other mechanisms to enhance the system.
- Expand numbers and types of concessions.
- Develop new management approaches.
- Pursue creation of a nonprofit foundation to support parks.
- Creatively manage assets for new revenue opportunities.

The final recommendation of the task force was to approach the voters of King County for their support of a levy to fund regional and local rural unincorporated parks as well as resource and ecological lands. Both the King County Executive and the King County Council concurred with this direction and the Council submitted a four-year property tax levy of 4.9 cents per \$1,000/AV. This levy was presented to voters in May of 2003 and passed with an approval rate of 57 percent.

Funds generated from this levy will begin at \$11.5 million in 2004 and increase to approximately \$12.2 million in 2007. These levy funds will comprise roughly 55 percent of the total annual budget needed to operate and maintain the open space system. The

remaining will include approximately 6 percent from miscellaneous revenues and fees and 14 percent from the county's current expense or general fund, along with 25 percent from parks business revenues. The business revenues include program fees, ballfield use fees, permits for use of park lands, major events, sponsorships, etc. Partnerships and volunteers will also contribute toward maintaining the system.

The funds generated annually will provide for a base level of services within parks to maintain regional facilities such as Marymoor Park and the Fairgrounds, regional trails such as the Burke Gilman, Green River and East Lake Sammamish Trails. It will fund local rural parks such as Ravensdale Park and Moss Lake and pools remaining within the county's inventory, including the Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center and five local pools currently in the unincorporated area. Additionally, annual levy increases will allow funds for approximately 1000 acres of new open space and 5 miles of regional trail development each year. An inflation factor is also built into the financial plan for parks to account for yearly increases in utilities, insurance, and cost of living expenses.

The financial plan for the Parks and Recreation Division also incorporates expected efficiencies in operations as well as the creation of new programs, projects or partnerships that generate revenue. Staff within the division have embraced this entrepreneurial approach and have already implemented new revenue producing projects and partnerships as well as cost efficiencies.

- F-102 King County will continue to work with agencies, jurisdictions and the public to develop new and creative funding sources and other strategies to support the system.**
- F-103 King County will maximize and leverage operational funds through public-private partnerships; use of volunteers; joint acquisition, development, use and management agreements; and other means.**
- F-104 King County will continue to pursue workforce efficiencies to help offset the growth in operation and maintenance costs.**
- F-105 King County will continue to pursue use of a portion of open space capital revenue sources, such as REET or CFT, for ongoing maintenance and stewardship of sites acquired or developed with these funds.**

Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is the vehicle for the acquisition, development and rehabilitation of open space lands and facilities. There are four primary sources of funding for Parks CIP:

- Real Estate Excise Tax #1 – A real estate sales tax of .25 percent is collected in unincorporated King County. This revenue can only be used in unincorporated King County and/or for regional projects. It can be used for acquisition or development.
- Real Estate Excise Tax #2 -- An additional .25 percent levied in 1994. This revenue can only be used for park development and rehabilitation. It cannot be used for acquisition.
- Conservation Futures Tax – countywide property tax of \$0.625 per \$1,000 of assessed value. For acquisition of open space, agriculture, and timber lands. This source cannot be used to acquire park sites for active recreation.
- Grants -- Matching funds from Federal or State agencies. Grantors have included the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC) and the Federal Transportation Enhancement Fund's Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), Transportation Act for the 21st Century (T-21) and similar future programs.

Revenue support for the Parks Division Capital Program has decreased significantly over the last 2-3 years resulting from both a recessed economy and large number of incorporations and annexations within King County. While the economy is expected to continue its recovery, there are significant annexations which are expected to occur over the next 5 to 10 years which will continue to impact the amount of revenues collected through both REET #1 and REET #2, the primary sources of CIP funds. Generally speaking, it is anticipated that CIP revenues from current sources may drop up to 30 percent in the next 5 years and up to 50 percent by year 10.

The reduction in long-term revenues may severely affect the ability of the Parks Division to provide additional recreational facilities as significant resources will need to be dedicated to maintain current assets. Examples include improvements to update restrooms, replacement of aging and outdated play areas, ensuring bridges and trestles on the trail system are in good structural condition.

The 2004 capital budget development process focused on four high priority criteria. This criteria, as identified below will be carried over into the Six Year Capital Improvement Program and will provide a tool in which capital projects are evaluated and funded in the short term.

- Projects which address safety related issues
- Projects which generate additional revenue to support operations
- Projects which provide partnerships that enhance park operations
- Projects which allow for implementation of new programs/activities without new maintenance costs

Acquisitions and new development will be evaluated in the context of available capital and operating revenue, and consistency with the goals of this plan and other related plans.

- F-106 King County will encourage and pursue partnerships with other agencies, jurisdictions and the private sector to maximize funding of the park, trail and open space system and its resources.**
- F-107 King County will leverage its funding through outside resources, including the aggressive pursuit of grants, outside funding sources and partnerships.**

Future Costs

Despite the transfer of parks, pools and open space lands and facilities as the result of annexations and incorporations, the county's regional and rural open space systems will continue to grow and so will the cost to maintain it. The recently approved operating levy includes a growth factor to support maintenance for new acquisitions of approximately 1,000 acres of open space land per year. It includes enhanced maintenance for existing active recreation sites, but does not include a growth factor for new active recreation facilities such as ball fields, restrooms and picnic areas. To address impacts of new projects, a fiscal note should accompany all CIP proposals. This note shall identify the long-term operation and maintenance cost and source of funds to support the CIP project.

- F-108 A fiscal note should accompany all capital project proposals to address impacts of new projects. It should identify the long-term operation and maintenance cost and the source of funds to support the project.**
- F-109 King County will work to insure that future funding efforts to acquire and develop land for open space purposes include a funding source to cover stewardship and maintenance costs.**

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