6 PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE

INTRODUCTION

Parks, recreation and open space are essential to a high quality of life in a community. Since incorporation in 1959, the City of Lynnwood has acquired and developed many park and open space lands and established an excellent recreation program. As Lynnwood and the Puget Sound region grow and change, it is vital to be prepared to accommodate new growth and diversity while maintaining and enhancing the quality of life we have grown to enjoy.

This element of the Comprehensive Plan includes a summary of the existing conditions and issues relevant to the City’s parks, recreation and open space system. The element includes a demand and needs assessment and concludes with the goals, objectives and policies for the City’s parks, recreation and open space system.

PLANNING CONTEXT

The Parks, Recreation and Open Space Element of the Comprehensive Plan is optional under the Growth Management Act (GMA), but the City is choosing to incorporate this element into the Plan because it is a vital part of a high quality community.

The GMA goals pertaining to the parks, recreation and open space element are:

Open Space and Recreation: Encourage the retention of open space, development of recreational opportunities, conserve wildlife habitat and increase access to natural resource lands.

Environment: Protect the environment and the state’s high quality of life.

Regional Planning: Lynnwood’s Comprehensive Plan is consistent with VISION 2040’s policies related to parks, recreation, and open space. The Plan calls for preservation, acquisition, and development of parks, recreation, and open space facilities, including multi-modal, non-motorized facilities, consistent with the regional vision.

County-Wide Planning Policies: Countywide planning policies do not specifically address neighborhood or community parks and recreation issues within cities or their urban growth areas. It is, however, the County’s policy to provide greenbelts and open space to provide separation from adjacent urban areas, and regional park facilities within urban growth areas. Snohomish County’s Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan states that “parks are necessary for development.” This policy provides the opportunity for cities to work with the County to provide park land within urban growth areas.

City Vision: The Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Department supports the City’s Vision to invest in preserving and expanding parks, recreation, and community programs, by developing a network of pedestrian and bike trails, encouraging partnerships and participation in community events, creating civic pride, promoting healthy lifestyles, providing senior services, and promoting parks and cultural arts for economic growth.
SUMMARY OF ISSUES

The following is a summary of issues relating to parks, recreation and open space in the City. It is the intent of the Comprehensive Plan to propose solutions to these issues through the implementation of programs and policies in this element.

Mission: Creating a Healthy Community

Lynnwood is not immune to the obesity epidemic and other health issues. In 2005, 31 percent of Lynnwood residents were overweight, and an additional 26 percent were obese. Only 37 percent of Lynnwood residents meet national recommendations for moderate physical activity. Eighty-one percent of Lynnwood adults consume less than five servings of fruits and vegetables daily. These statistics can be discouraging, but there is hope.

Healthy Communities is about health equity. A healthy community promotes well-being and offers a high quality of life. Its efforts rely on a combination of policy, infrastructure improvements and programming to help make the healthy choice the easy choice. The Healthy Communities Program works to identify and advocate for policies and environmental changes that make healthy food more available and affordable, increase access to safe opportunities for physical activity, and provide residents with information they can use to find their own ways to practice healthy living with a long term goal of impacting obesity rates and preventing chronic disease. Lynnwood Healthy Communities is working towards safer sidewalks, trails, and bicycle lanes making it easier, safer and more convenient for people to move about. Healthier food choices in school cafeterias and restaurants, well-supported food banks, and local farmers markets offer options for healthier food. A healthy community is one where people have good physical and emotional health. A healthy community has strong social networks and provides individual community members with opportunities for personal growth and improvement.

Policies and environments that shape and define a community will also affect the health outcomes of its citizens. Policy and infrastructure improvements have some of the greatest impact on the health of our community as opportunities to “level the playing field” for all members of a community including disproportionately-impacted populations. Local policies and the physical environment influence daily choices that affect our health. A Healthy Community makes the healthy choice the easy choice.

Level of Service Need

Other services provided by the City of Lynnwood, such as transportation and utilities are able to quantify performance through counts, calculations and future-oriented modeling. The nature and variety of services provided by Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts makes quantification and performance measurement rather difficult.

In 1983, level of service guidelines were published by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) based upon providing a set number of park acres and park facilities per thousand persons. Yet, these guidelines go to great lengths to distance themselves from becoming “standards.” Rather, the guidelines are a suggested model and local adjustments are encouraged.

As to service measure, communities have the flexibility to use any system that is perceived to be of value to the community. Historically, the City has used 10 acres/1,000 population as its standard. In 2014, the City retained a consultant to create revisions to the adopted LOS. Specifically, there will be an emphasis on acquisition needs, capital development, preservation, connectivity/mobility needs as well as indoor facility needs. The current Level of Service need will be outlined in the updated Parks, Arts, Recreation & Conservation (PARC) Comprehensive Plan due to be completed in 2015.

As the City of Lynnwood continues to evolve, there will very likely be greater pressure to provide services that will not only meet the needs of our residents, but those that reside in the MUGA. If
annexation is successful, there will be considerable pressure to provide additional parks in the MUGA.
Additional population growth within existing boundaries is also a real concern. Examples include the
proposed population increases in the City Center, near Alderwood Mall, and along the Highway 99
corridor. Additional planning will be needed to develop recreation facilities needed to meet the expected
service demand.

**Ability to Meet Level of Service Need**
Perhaps the most significant component of the Department’s new PARC plan will focus on funding
strategies needed to meet the LOS, the long-standing list of deferred maintenance and capital renewal
needs. The Department will retain a consultant in 2015 to create a comprehensive list of funding sources
for capital improvements and deferred maintenance. It will be critical for the Department to find funding
sources to support maintenance and operations of the parks system.
When the study is complete, the Department will have the ability to create implementation and strategic
plans that will focus on addressing these critical issues: funding strategies and sources, deferred
maintenance demands, capital renewal needs, and future capital facilities development demands.
Refer to the Community Character Chapter for needs and priorities that address demographic changes,
arts, culture and historic preservation.
Social and demographic trends that affect service delivery are being regularly reviewed to identify and
address new recreational needs and to reposition those facilities and programs that are no longer relevant.
To anticipate and respond to the cultural diversity of the City’s population, new communication strategies
are being implemented to provide timely, accurate information to Lynnwood residents and visitors, and
non-English speaking populations.

As the City explores possible Municipal Urban Growth Area annexation both north and east of its
existing borders, the future need and demand for facilities and conservation will grow substantially.
Currently, there are no developed parks or recreation facilities within the MUGA area.

**EXISTING CONDITIONS**
The City’s current parks, recreation and open space inventory amounts to approximately 353 acres and
includes park facilities within the City and in the MUGA, that offer both active and passive recreational
opportunities. The park facilities within the City are categorized into the following functional
classifications for planning and programming purposes, according to size and function.

**Core Parks:** Core Parks (mini, neighborhood and community parks) traditionally provide a combination
of active and passive uses, including play equipment, picnic areas, athletic fields, and trails. The City
currently operates 13 developed parks in the Core Parks category, with 2 park properties undeveloped.
With the loss of the Lynnwood Athletic Complex, the Community Parks category shows a need for 45.7
additional acres to meet the minimum level of service. In the Core Parks category 62.7 acres need to be
acquired and developed within the City. Currently Core Parks account for 116.3 acres of park land, or
about 35% of the total park, recreation and open space inventory within the City.

**Special Use Areas:** Four facilities in Lynnwood are classified as “Special Use Areas” based on their
current purpose and/or activity - the Municipal Golf Course, the Recreation Center, the Senior Center and
Heritage Park - for a total of 81.8 acres. Because of its primary historical purpose, Heritage Park is
included in this category.

**Open Space:** The City’s Open Space classification includes large natural areas, environmental parks and
urban greenbelts. It is the City’s policy to preserve natural resources for the conservation of important
habitats and for passive recreational use whenever possible. 138.5 acres in and adjacent to Lynnwood are
preserved as Parks and Recreation-maintained open space. Scriber Lake Park, Scriber Creek Park and
Gold Park are included in this category because they are environmental parks that do not have active recreation elements.

Regional Parks: Regional Parks are not included in the City’s parks and open space inventory. Regional parks are typically large facilities that draw from multiple jurisdictions and are often located in unincorporated urban growth areas. These facilities are historically provided at the County level, whereas neighborhood and community parks are provided by cities, both within their boundaries and in their municipal urban growth areas. Meadowdale Beach County Park is an example of a regional park in unincorporated Snohomish County.

DEMAND AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Over the years, the City of Lynnwood has continued to improve and expand its inventory of recreational resources. Residents are well served by a variety of leisure opportunities, but with population growth comes an increasing demand for more parks, open space and recreation facilities in order to attain the adopted Parks Level of Service Standard (LOS).

Level of Service: The adopted Parks LOS Standard in Lynnwood is 10 acres/1000 population. This standard is expressed as minimum acres of park, recreation and open space recommended for each 1,000 persons, using the 2010 Census population of 35,836. The standard is further delineated as 5 acres/1000 population for Core Parks (mini, neighborhood and community parks), and 5 acres/1000 population for Other Park Land (open space and special use facilities). The City Center Sub-Area Plan recommends a separate Parks Level of Service Standard within the City Center area.

The demand and need for parks, recreation and open space in Lynnwood has been assessed through analyses of existing conditions, potential park sites, available resources and level of service. Trends in recreation were considered and public input was obtained through surveys and community meetings. The existing and future demand and need for parks, recreation and open space within the City limits is reflected on Table 1.
Table 1: Parks, Recreation and Open Space

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Source: City of Lynnwood Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts Department, revised 3/2013.

Notes:
1 Includes both developed and undeveloped park facilities within the City limits only.
2 Demand reflects total park acres required to meet minimum level of service standard for each category.
3 Need reflects additional park land required to meet minimum level of service standard for each category.
4 City park property located outside the City in the MUGA is not included in the City’s demand and need analysis.
5 The 2025 population shown is an estimate that includes annexation of MUGA population and the new City Center population.

Population projections to 2025 were applied to determine future impacts on the City’s existing parks system. Both potential annexation of the MUGA population and the new City Center population are reflected in the 2025 population estimate. In addition to maintaining and improving the City’s existing facilities, additional park facilities will be needed to meet current and future demands and the adopted LOS within the City, and in the City’s urban growth areas.

**Within City Boundaries:** The adopted Parks Level of Service Standard is a minimum of 10 acres/1000 population. The current level of service for combined park classifications achieved is 9.4 acres/1000 population. There remains a need for an additional 62.7 acres in the Core Parks category to meet the demand for 179.2 acres of active park land. The inventory also shows a deficit of 1.9 miles in the Trails category to meet the demand for 9 miles of trails outside of parks.

By the year 2025, it is estimated that Lynnwood’s population will increase to approximately 86,000. This includes potential annexation of the MUGA population and also the estimated City Center population of 5,400. Continued park acquisition and development will be necessary to meet the demand for parks, open space and recreation facilities in 2025. Table 1 summarizes the existing and future demand and need within the City.

**Within Municipal Urban Growth Areas:** New residential and commercial development in Lynnwood’s MUGA is generating demand for parks, recreation facilities and open space. In future north annexation areas, approximately 93 acres of open space in the Swamp Creek corridor have been preserved jointly by Snohomish County and the City of Lynnwood. The City has also acquired a 9-acre future park site (Manor Way) adjacent to this annexation area, and a 7.7-acre future park site (Doc Hagerman Park) east of Interstate 5.77 acres of wetlands has been acquired adjacent to Lund’s Gulch for preservation of...
the headwaters of Lund’s Creek. The City currently is in negotiations to acquire an additional 13 acres
north of the Lund’s Gulch. If acquisition of this site is successful, the total wetlands preservation area
around Lund’s Gulch will total over 90 acres.

There are currently no active use park facilities in the City’s MUGA, which had an estimated 2011
population of 24,772. As a result, Lynnwood’s parks are over-burdened with non-resident use. Applying
our current Parks Level of Service Standard to today’s MUGA population would require approximately
248 acres of parks and open space. To provide park facilities needed by the growing population in the
MUGA, the City will continue to seek equitable methods of acquisition and development with Snohomish
County and other jurisdictions.

If annexation within the MUGA is approved by the voters, additional parkland and facilities will be
needed. The City will develop a comprehensive plan of funding options including park impact fees to
assist in this matter. NOTE: Snohomish County already has impact fees within the MUGA area the City
proposes to annex.

GOALS, POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

GOAL

Provide a comprehensive system of parks, open space and recreation facilities that serves the needs of current and future residents, and visitors to Lynnwood. To meet the recreational needs of the community, provide a park system that includes mini, neighborhood and community parks.

Policy P-1. Acquire park land in accordance with the Budget and Capital Facilities Plan for the
development of parks at the adopted level of service of 10 acres/1,000 population.

Policy P-2. Plan for the location of parks in the proximity of underserved neighborhood and/or
high-density developments.

Policy P-3. Design new parks and provide improvements to existing parks to promote public
safety and security, and provide accessibility to all in accordance with Americans
with Disabilities Act standards.

Policy P-4. Provide a variety of recreational opportunities to serve a diverse population.

Policy P-5. Manage and maintain parks, open space and recreation, through a regular schedule of
maintenance and capital renewal efforts, to optimize use and protect public
investment.

Strategy P-A. Conduct study, adopt and implement feasible funding method(s) for acquisition of
park lands including park impact fees, metropolitan park district, partnerships, grants,
user fees, City funding, interjurisdictional cost-sharing, land developer contributions
and other sources.

PARK DEVELOPMENT

Strategy P-B. Develop new neighborhood park, Rowe Park, in west Lynnwood, per master plan
completed in 2004, when funding is available.

Strategy P-C. Develop an off-leash dog park in an existing City park or an acquired site in the City.
Strategy P-D. Continue development at Meadowdale Neighborhood Park per the 2001 Master Plan with expanded parking and picnic shelters. Explore partnership for development and management of a pocket farm.

Strategy P-E. Develop the 188th St SW mini park in an underserved neighborhood.

Strategy P-F. Acquire site and develop Town Center Park in City Center area.

Strategy P-G. Continue Scriber Lake Park renovation per master plan completed in 2005. Seek funding for additional phases to fully develop the park as a safe and active community park.

Strategy P-H. Provide improvements to Gold Park including trail development, ethnobotanical garden and invasive plant removal to increase use and public safety in park. Support continuing volunteer efforts by Edmonds Community College and other volunteer groups.

Strategy P-I. Develop Master Plan for future public use of Lund’s Gulch in partnership with community stakeholders such as the Brackett’s Landing Foundation and Friends of Lund’s Gulch and environmental education organizations.

ACTIVITY CENTERS

Policy P-6. Work with Community Development to identify parks and open space sites, related improvements, and implementation strategies for the City Activity Centers, City Center plans, including the City Center Parks Master Plan, the City Center Streetscape Plan, the Highway 99 Subarea Plan, and Alderwood Transition Area.

MUNICIPAL URBAN GROWTH AREAS (MUGA)

Policy P-7. Pursue cooperative planning efforts with Snohomish County to fund acquisition of open space for conservation and future park development in the Municipal Urban Growth Area to meet the recreational needs of future annexation areas.

Policy P-8. Partner with Snohomish County to provide frontage and parking improvements to Doc Hageman Park.

OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

Policy P-9. Provide a system of open space to preserve and protect the area’s remaining native forests, wetlands, streams and wildlife habitats, and to provide natural buffers to the built environment at the minimum adopted level of service of 3 acres/1000 population for Open Space.

Policy P-10. Preserve and protect in public ownership areas with significant environmental features such as view corridors, landforms, steep slopes and plant and animal habitats from the impacts of development.

Policy P-11. Support volunteer and interjurisdictional efforts for restoration and preservation of the four major watersheds in South Snohomish County: Scriber Creek, Lund’s Gulch, Swamp Creek and Hall Creek.

Policy P-12. Continue acquisition of open space properties in the Swamp Creek, Scriber Creek and watersheds.
Policy P-13. Continue to encourage stewardship of open space and natural areas through the Park Stewards program.

Policy P-14. Preserve open space corridors and trail linkages between parks, neighborhoods, schools and commercial centers. Where possible, acquire key linkages between parks and trail segments to create connected trail system.

Policy P-15. Provide neighborhood access to natural areas with trailheads and parking, in accordance with Title 17 LMC and ESA regulations.

Policy P-16. Provide environmental educational opportunities in natural areas with interpretive signage, nature trails and overlooks.

Policy P-17. Acquire open space within urban areas to buffer and enhance the built environment.

Policy P-18. Provide passive recreational opportunities in acquired natural areas.

Policy P-19. Work with Public Works and community volunteers in the enhancement of City-owned stormwater detention areas for passive community appreciation.

**FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS**

Policy P-20. Provide the minimum adopted level of service of 2 acres/1000 population for Special Use facilities.

Policy P-21. Provide facilities and programs that promote a balance of recreational opportunities all age groups.

Policy P-22. Provide improvements to facilities that meet sustainability goals.

Policy P-23. Improve access to Community Gardens through acquisition, development and management of urban gardens for community use.

Policy P-24. Maintain staff development and certifications (e.g. CPR/First Aid, lifeguard certification, playground safety, etc.) to retain high safety standards in facilities and on play equipment.

Policy P-25. Coordinate the operation of Heritage Park facilities with the Heritage Park Partners Advisory Committee, including the Visitor Information Center, Heritage Resource Center, Genealogy Research Library, Interurban Car 55, Water Tower, heritage programming and demonstration gardens.

Strategy P-J. Plan for Recreation Center Phase II construction of a new community center that will provide programming space for youth/teen and senior activities, performing arts and sports. Develop a master plan for improvements to the Meadowdale Playfields athletic complex, including renovation of the soccer and softball fields, to meet the community’s demand for athletic fields, allow for year-round use, and provide a competitive athletic facility.

Strategy P-K. Complete phased development of Heritage Park, including renovation of all the historic structures including Water Tower, development of the Interurban Car 55 track and pulley mechanism, play area, trail, demonstration gardens, and development of museum programming in the park.

Strategy P-L. Work with the Lynnwood Parks and Recreation Foundation and community volunteers to complete Phase II renovation of the historic water tower.
### TRAIL SYSTEM

#### Policy P-26.
Design and construct trails to required standards to serve a variety of users at varying skill levels to the adopted minimum level of service standard of 0.25 miles/1000 population for trails outside parks.

#### Policy P-27.
Support other City departments in the implementation of the “Multi-Choice Transportation System Plan,” which proposes a comprehensive City-wide “skeleton system” of sidewalks, walkways, bike paths and trails. The Plan would link parks, schools, community facilities, transit centers, commercial centers, neighborhoods and adjacent regional trail systems.

#### Policy P-28.
Develop additional non-motorized pedestrian trails outside of parks to meet the adopted minimum level of service to promote Lynnwood as a “walkable City.”

#### Strategy P-M.
Plan and construct the northward extension of the Scriber Creek Trail to generally follow the creek route, from Scriber Lake Park north to the Meadowdale area and Lund’s Gulch (also known as Center to Sound Trail).

#### Strategy P-N.
Coordinate development of the South Lund’s Gulch Trail with Snohomish County, Brackett’s Landing Foundation and volunteers. The trail is planned to begin in north Lynnwood, continue north into Lund’s Gulch, cross Lund’s Creek and connect with the existing Meadowdale Beach Park county trail, giving Lynnwood residents access to Lund’s Gulch open space and a walkable connection to Puget Sound.

#### Strategy P-O.
Coordinate with Public Works to provide a seamless Interurban Trail corridor through Lynnwood by completing “missing links” in the Interurban Trail, specifically segments located at 212th St SW to 63rd Ave W to 211th St SW. The objective is to remove trail users from automobile traffic where possible, providing a continuous trail route through the City.

#### Strategy P-P.
Master plan Interurban Trail corridor upgrades and improvements including landscape and beautification, additional bench and picnic table amenities, improved directional signage, and upgraded trailheads. Provide improvements to the Interurban Trail to include trailheads, enhanced landscaping, signage and historic markers. Support interjurisdictional efforts to provide consistent and aesthetic improvements along the length of the Interurban Trail.

#### Strategy P-Q.
Develop a master plan for Wilcox Park, Scriber Lake Park and the adjoining School District property, reflecting how these facilities can be connected for pedestrian access and related activities. With Public Works, coordinate a feasibility assessment of sidewalk and crosswalk needs (safe routes to schools) for schools that have been impacted by the reduction of Edmonds School District busing.

#### Strategy P-R.
Partner with Public Works on the implementation of the BikeLink Project which will provide 10 new miles of connected bicycle facilities and promote trail/bike safety through signage and educational activities for pedestrians and bicyclists.

### INTERJURISDICTIONAL COORDINATION

#### Policy P-29.
Coordinate parks, open space and facility planning and development with appropriate jurisdictions and agencies for mutually beneficial partnerships.
Policy P-30. Work with other agencies or service providers to provide adequate recreational programs, facilities and special events for community use.

Policy P-31. Work with non-profit organizations and other community volunteers on parks, trails and open space service projects.

Policy P-32. Create sponsorship opportunities for entrepreneurs, both non-profit and for-profit, to enrich the park experience and implement innovative approaches to revenue generation for parks and recreation facilities, events and programs.

Policy P-33. Partner with Edmonds School District to improve access to existing school recreation sites for shared school/park use. Partner with ESD, the City of Edmonds and other potential funding partners to improve Meadowdale Playfields.

Policy P-34. Pursue cooperative planning efforts with Snohomish County to provide parks and open space in future annexation areas.

Policy P-35. Work with local businesses, land owners and other agencies, to enhance and further strengthen the Farmers Market in Lynnwood.

Policy P-36. Work with Edmonds Community College and support volunteer efforts to make improvements to Gold Park.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Policy P-37. Monitor, evaluate and update parks, recreation facilities and open space to ensure balanced, efficient and cost-effective programs.

Policy P-38. Encourage community input by providing opportunities for public involvement in park, recreation and open space planning.


Policy P-40. Continue public information programs to increase public awareness of the City’s parks, recreation and open space system.

Policy P-41. Develop the 2015-2025 Lynnwood Parks, Arts, Recreation and Conservation (PARC) Comprehensive Plan to help guide the planning, acquisition and development of parks, facilities, open space and recreation programs.

Policy P-42. Annually update the Capital Facilities Plan with capital projects that reflect the recreational needs of the community.
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