

King County

Open Space Plan: Parks, Trails, and Natural Areas

2022 Update



September 2022



 King County

PARKS

Your Big Backyard

King County Open Space Plan: Parks, Trails, and Natural Areas 2022 Update

King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks
Parks and Recreation Division
201 South Jackson Street
KSC-NR-5700
Seattle, WA 98104

King County Executive
Dow Constantine

Department of Natural Resources and Parks
Christie True, Director

Parks and Recreation Division
Warren Jimenez, Director
Doug Hodson, Deputy Director

Report Production

Parks and Recreation Division – Content

Eli Brownell, Parks and Recreation Division – Photography

Megann Devine, KCIT DCE – Design

Wendy Gable Collins, KCIT DCE – Cartography

Gavin Gray, King County GIS Center – GIS



King County

PARKS

| **Your Big Backyard**

CONTENTS



Frequently Used Abbreviations and Acronyms	IV
Definitions and Terminology	V
2022 Open Space Plan Executive Summary	1
Chapter One: Introduction	3
1.1 Purpose of this Document	3
1.1.1 Strategic and Functional Plan	3
1.1.2 Growth Management Act Requirements	4
1.1.3 Recreation and Conservation Office Requirements	5
1.2 How to Read this Document	5
1.3 Planning Context	5
1.3.1 King County's Pro-Equity Agenda	6
1.3.2 Land Conservation Initiative and Opportunity Areas	6
1.3.3 Strategic Climate Action Plan	8
1.3.4 Clean Water Healthy Habitat	8
1.3.5 30-Year Forest Plan	9
1.3.6 Community Service Area Subarea Planning	9
1.3.7 State of Play: Seattle-King County	9
1.3.8 2020-2025 King County Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Space Levy	10
1.4 How the Public Informed This Plan	10
1.4.1 Customer and Partner Satisfaction Surveys	10
1.4.2 Equitable Parks Access Project Community Engagement	12
1.4.3 Safety and Belonging in King County's Parks and Trails Engagement	12
1.5 Plan Adoption	13
Chapter Two: Existing Conditions in King County	14
2.1 Population and Demographics	14
2.2 Recreational Trends and Implications	15
2.3 Community Setting: Natural Landscape	16
2.3.1 Snoqualmie/Skykomish Watershed	17
2.3.2 Cedar/Sammamish/Lake Washington Watershed	19
2.3.3 Green/Duwamish Watershed	22
2.3.4 White River Watershed	24
2.3.5 Vashon-Maury Island Watershed	25
Chapter Three: King County Parks and the Open Space System	27
3.1 King County's Role as a Parks Agency	27
3.1.1 Organizational Structure and Funding	27
3.1.2 Parks' Mission, Vision, and Values	28
3.1.3 Parks' Goals and Objectives	29
3.2 Classification of King County's Open Space System	30
3.2.1 Level 1 Classification: Regional or Local Open Space, Park, or Trail	31
3.2.2 Level 2 Classification: Role in the System and Primary Purpose	32
3.2.3 Working with Other Jurisdictions	35
3.3 Regional Facilities	35
3.4 Open Space Inventory	35

Chapter Four: Public Involvement and Engagement	44
4.1 How Parks Engages the Public	44
4.1.1 Context and Approach	44
4.1.2 Engagement Practices and Tools	44
4.1.3 Advisory Boards	45
Chapter Five: Partnerships and Community Investments	46
5.1 Introduction	46
5.2 Types of Partnerships	47
5.2.1 Jurisdictions, Agencies, and Tribes	47
5.2.2 Community and Corporate Partnerships	49
5.3 Community Investments and Grantmaking	51
5.3.1 Community Programs	51
5.3.2 Grantmaking	52
Chapter Six: Operations and Stewardship	55
6.1 Operations	55
6.1.1 Funding	55
6.1.2 Maintenance, Management, and Monitoring	56
6.1.3 Resource Conservation and Management	58
6.1.4 Property Management	60
6.2 Stewardship	61
6.2.1 Systemwide Stewardship	62
6.2.2 Regional Trails	62
6.2.3 Natural Areas	62
6.2.4 Forested Areas	63
6.2.5 Working Forests	64
6.2.6 Multi-Use Sites	64
6.2.7 Backcountry Trails	64
Chapter Seven: Capital Improvement Program	66
7.1 Funding	66
7.2 Acquisition	67
7.3 Planning, Design, and Development	69
7.3.1 Planning	70
7.2.3 Design and Development	73
Figures	
Figure 1.1 King County's Open Space System Opportunity Areas	7
Figure 3.1 2020-2025 Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Space Levy Funding Distribution	30
Figure 3.2 King County Parks Open Space System Classifications	30
Figure 3.3 Comparison of Active and Passive Recreation	31
Tables	
Open Space Inventory Tables	
Local Parks	36
Regional Parks	37
Regional Trails	42
Pools	43
Appendices	76
Appendix I King County Initiatives and the Open Space Plan	77
Appendix II Source Documents	79
Appendix III King County Parks History	82
Appendix IV Six-Year Capital Improvement Program	86
Appendix V Maps	87

Frequently Used Abbreviations and Acronyms

APD	Agricultural Production District
AI/AN	American Indian and Alaska Native
BIPOC	Black, Indigenous, and People of Color
CFT	Conservation Futures Tax
CIP	Capital Improvement Program
CPG	Community Partnerships and Grants Program
DLS	King County Department of Local Services
DNRP	Department of Natural Resources and Parks
ESA	Endangered Species Act
ESJ	equity and social justice
FLAT	Forest Landscape Assessment Tool
GIS	Geographic Information System
FPD	Forest Production District
IPM	integrated pest management
LCI	Land Conservation Initiative
Metro	King County Metro
OFM	Office of Financial Management
Open Space Plan	King County Open Space Plan: Parks, Trails, and Natural Areas 2022 Update
Parks	King County Parks and Recreation Division
PSRC	Puget Sound Regional Council
RCO	Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office
RCW	Revised Code of Washington
REET	Real Estate Excise Tax
RSRA	Regionally Significant Resource Area
RTNR	Regional Trails Needs Report
SCAP	Strategic Climate Action Plan
SEPA	State Environmental Policy Act
WADNR	Washington State Department of Natural Resources
WCTP	White Center Teen Program
WLRD	King County Water and Land Resources Division
WSDOT	Washington State Department of Transportation

Definitions and Terminology

Active Recreation	Characterized by organized, scheduled activities and / or a variety of recreational uses, such as a highly developed athletic field complex with lights and extensive support facilities
Conservation Easement	An acquired interest in a real property restricting future land use to protect its conservation value. The grantor of the easement continues to own the underlying land, and may occupy and use the property per the easement conditions.
Easement	An acquired interest in a real property that allows the use of that property for a specific purpose (e.g., a trail or public access). The grantor of the easement continues to own the underlying land, and may occupy and use the property per the easement conditions.
Fee ownership	Also called “fee simple absolute,” this term refers to absolute real estate land ownership. The owner of a property in fee has full and irrevocable ownership of the real property, and can do with it what they wish subject to local zoning ordinances and encumbrances like easements or liens.
Local Open Space	Smaller site serving close-to-home park and recreation needs of a community or neighborhood
Multi-Use Site	Site classification for park that has natural areas of ecological value and that may also accommodate active and passive recreation
Natural Area	Site classification for ecological lands managed almost exclusively for environmental protection and enhancement
Open Space	The five categories of lands in King County’s open space system, including recreation sites, regional trails, natural areas, working forest lands, and multi-use sites
Opportunity Areas	Locations where households lack adequate open space and simultaneously fall in the bottom third of census tracts for household income and in the top third of ZIP codes for hospitalization rates due to asthma, diabetes, and heart disease. A household “lacks park access” if it is more than 0.25-miles from a park in an urban area or a two-mile drive in a rural area.
Passive Recreation	Characterized by low-impact, individually oriented activities, such as informal play, hiking, walking, jogging, horseback riding, and biking. Capital improvements are generally minimal, such as picnic tables, park furniture, signage, grass fields or meadows, or backcountry trails.
Priority Populations	Black people, Indigenous people, people of color, people with low incomes, limited- or non-English speaking communities, and immigrants and refugees who face historical and ongoing disadvantages due to systemic issues built around power and decision-making. King County also defines “opportunity areas” (see definition above) to prioritize improved park and recreational access.
Recreation Site	Site classification for parks supporting a prevalence of organized, scheduled activities and / or a variety of recreational uses

Regional Open Space	Larger site or facility that serves as a destination from longer distances and multiple jurisdictions
Regional Trail	Shared use path that provides recreational, transportation, and commuting opportunities. When referring to King County's Regional Trail network, the term is capitalized to remain consistent with King County's Comprehensive Plan.
Service-Learning	An opportunity to meet learning objectives while providing service to a community
Stewardship	Responsible management of a site to ensure public safety, provide appropriate public access and use, and protect ecological, recreational, and cultural values through maintenance, monitoring, enhancement, and restoration
Watershed	An area of land delineated by hills and mountains in which all rainwater runs to the same body of water, usually a river or lake
Working Forest	Site classification for land managed to balance sustainable timber production with conservation, ecological restoration, and public use. These sites also support research related to forestry practices.



2022 OPEN SPACE PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The King County Parks and Recreation Division (Parks) plays a unique role in the provision of parks, trails, and open space, providing regional facilities while also serving as a direct service provider in unincorporated areas. The *King County Open Space Plan: Parks, Trails, and Natural Areas 2022 Update* (Open Space Plan) provides a framework guiding King County in expanding, planning, developing, stewarding, maintaining, and managing its complex system of 205 parks, 175 miles of regional trails, and 32,000 acres of open space.

Purpose

This Open Space Plan:

- Updates Parks' 2016 plan, reflecting the current factors that influence how King County provides parks and recreation service.
- Reconfirms the agency's mission and goals of stewarding regional and local parks, regional and backcountry trails, natural areas, and forests to provide recreation and environmental benefits.
- Addresses the King County Strategic Plan's goals of achieving environmental and social justice, public engagement, environmental and financial sustainability, quality local government, and regional collaboration.

This update also coincides with Parks' increasing focus in two areas:

1. Providing more equitable service and access to parks, trails, and open space.
2. Framing Parks' work – and the benefits of its many natural assets – in the larger context of King County's environmental goals and objectives.

Centering Equity

Everyone deserves and benefits from ready access to a parks, trails, and green space. As such, Parks is working with other King County agencies and many partners to further define and accelerate progress towards addressing disparities in park distribution and access. The global pandemic further increased demand for safe outdoor spaces, particularly in urban areas. Record high temperatures, shown to impact frontline and vulnerable communities more significantly, further emphasized the need for green, shady spaces to escape the heat and cool urban areas.

Approaching this work through a racial and social equity lens has helped prioritize investments where they are needed most. Convening the **Play Equity Coalition** and **Leafline Trails Coalition** are two examples of how Parks is providing regional leadership to center equitable access to recreational opportunities. In recent years, Parks has also begun implementing recommendations of the **Land Conservation Initiative Advisory Committee** and **Open Space Equity Cabinet**, prioritizing green space acquisitions in areas identified as needing more park access and investment.

Delivering (Multiple) Benefits Where They Matter Most

Forests and natural lands are the largest asset that Parks manages, delivering significant environmental and public health benefits across King County. In the last five years, new and updated county-wide initiatives have helped align and emphasize Parks' contribution in these arenas. As such, this Open Space Plan update builds on important work the county has done to strategically frame and advance environmental efforts.

For example, this plan directly supports King County's **Clean Water Healthy Habitat** strategic plan by aligning Parks' work with shared environmental goals. Parks aims to achieve better, faster results by:

- Achieving the best environmental outcomes possible
- Delivering benefits to humans from clean water and healthy habitat, when and where they need them
- Eliminating racial inequities and increasing equitable environmental outcomes and benefits

In addition, Parks played a significant role in developing ambitious conservation, forestry, and recreational goals in the **2020 Strategic Climate Action Plan, Land Conservation Initiative, and 30-Year Forest Plan**. This plan describes those efforts in more detail, and outlines Parks' commitment and policies to achieve them through thoughtful planning and dedicated environmental stewardship.

The Need for Robust, Sustained Parks, Trails, and Open Space Investment

As noted above, demand for public parks, natural areas, and outdoor recreation continues to increase as the region's population grows, which has been further exacerbated by the pandemic. To respond at this crucial moment, King County is committed to expanding the open space system and removing barriers to access, while simultaneously respecting tribal treaty rights and protecting tribal sacred lands and cultural resources. However, it will be essential that the resources to operate, maintain, and steward this growing system keep pace with expansion and more intense use.



Land Acknowledgment and King County Treaty Obligation to Tribes

We acknowledge that the parks, trails, and open spaces that are the focus of this plan are in the traditional territory of the Coast Salish people and we express gratitude for their stewardship of the land and its resources. As King County carries out the work outlined in this plan, we do so with our obligation to Tribal Treaty Rights and sovereignty at the forefront. The actions outlined herein require King County to maintain and further develop our government-to-government relationships with regional Tribes, and to honor the natural and cultural resources that Tribal people rely upon to meet their spiritual, subsistence, and economic needs.

KING COUNTY PARKS

Mission

Steward, enhance, and acquire parks to inspire healthy communities

Vision

Parks, trails, and natural lands for all, sustained with the cooperative efforts of our community

Goal 1: Take care of King County's existing system of parks and trails, ensuring the system remains clean, safe and open.

Goal 2: Grow and connect regional open space and natural lands, in order to protect habitat important for fish and wildlife and to provide recreation opportunities.

Goal 3: Improve regional trails and mobility, to ensure that essential connections are completed and existing trails are maintained.

Goal 4: Make parks, green spaces, and recreation opportunities more accessible for all King County residents to enjoy.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of this Document

King County has prepared the *King County Open Space Plan: Parks, Trails, and Natural Areas 2022 Update* (Open Space Plan) to establish both a strategic and functional plan and to comply with the Washington State Growth Management Act and Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) requirements. These requirements are described in more detail below. This plan must be adopted by the King County Council, has undergone State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) review, and is updated at least every six years.

1.1.1 Strategic and Functional Plan

The Open Space Plan is a strategic plan guiding the goals and activities of the Parks and Recreation Division (Parks), one of four divisions that make up King County's Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP). The plan also applies to the Water and Land Resources Division (WLRD) where work overlaps, primarily related to natural resource conservation and restoration.

The Open Space Plan is also a functional plan that implements the *King County Comprehensive Plan*. The *Comprehensive Plan* is a long-range plan developed in response to the Growth Management Act, which addresses:

- Urban and rural land use
- Transportation
- Housing
- Economic development
- Open space and recreation



- The natural environment
- Facilities and services
- Cultural resources
- Resource lands
- Energy
- Telecommunications

Policies established in the *King County Comprehensive Plan (2016)* serve as a blueprint for growth through 2022 and beyond. As emphasized in the *Comprehensive Plan*, “Healthy communities provide opportunities for people to be physically active and socially engaged as part of their daily routine and include access to open space and parks.” (pp. 2-2) The policies most applicable to the Open Space Plan are found in:

- Chapter Two – Urban Communities
- Chapter Three – Rural Legacy and Natural Resource Lands
- Chapter Four – Environment
- Chapter Seven – Parks, Open Space and Cultural Resources

1.1.2 Growth Management Act Requirements

The Open Space Plan complies with the Growth Management Act, which requires a jurisdiction to include a Park and Recreation Element in its comprehensive plan that (1) is consistent with the Capital Facilities Element and (2) provides estimates of park and recreation needs and demand for a ten-year period. The Open Space Plan addresses the Growth Management Act’s planning requirements that relate to parks and resource lands, which include the following (RCW 36.70A.020):

- **Open space and recreation.** Retain open space, enhance recreational opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks and recreation facilities.
- **Environment.** Protect the environment and enhance the state’s high quality of life, including air and water quality, habitat, and the availability of water.
- **Natural resource industries.** Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries, including productive timber, agricultural, and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive forests and productive agricultural lands and discourage incompatible uses.
- **Property rights.** Private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation having been made.
- **Citizen¹ participation and coordination.** Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts.
- **Public facilities and services.** Ensure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time the development is available for occupancy and use without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum standards.
- **Historic preservation.** Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures, that have historical or archaeological significance.

¹ While RCW 36.70A.020 uses the term “citizen,” King County interprets this term broadly to include all King County residents and community members.

1.1.3 Recreation and Conservation Office Requirements

The Open Space Plan ensures that King County remains eligible for funding from the RCO, which administers state and federal grant funds for recreation and conservation projects in Washington State. The RCO requires that plans include the following information²:

1. Goals and objectives
2. Inventory
3. Public Involvement
4. Demand and Need Analysis
5. Capital Improvement Program
6. Plan Adoption

1.2 How to Read this Document

The Open Space Plan is organized into seven chapters that provide an overview of King County, its landscape, and the parks, trails and natural lands that fall under its jurisdiction.

- Chapter One provides background and context, including a summary of the public involvement and other efforts that informed this plan.
- Chapter Two presents an overview of the service area, including population, other demographics, and the natural landscapes that make up the county.
- Chapter Three specifically addresses the existing inventory of parks, trails and natural areas that comprise King County's open space system.
- Chapters Four, Five, Six, and Seven outline the policies and practices that define how King County operates, maintains, and invests in the open space system.

Parks is the primary responsible agency for stewarding the open space system, and the Open Space Plan largely reflects the policies and practices of that agency. Other agencies of the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, specifically WLRD, also take direction from the policies and practices described herein.

1.3 Planning Context

Many planning and public involvement processes shape King County's understanding of existing and future open space needs and of the public's interests. This Open Space Plan was developed within a countywide context of public service delivery and—most importantly—to deliver equitable service in response to community needs and preferences.

This section describes the many planning and public involvement processes that influence King County's understanding of open space needs and how the county is integrating services across the landscape to:

- Deliver greater benefits to King County residents and communities
- Achieve the best environmental outcomes
- Eliminate disparities in access to parks and recreation

Please see Appendix I for more detail about how Parks' work contributes to the success of King County initiatives and strategic plans.

² RCO. [Manual 2: Planning Policies and Guidelines](#). (July 2021).

Within each chapter, policy statements are numbered and highlighted, a style similar to the King County Comprehensive Plan. The Open Space Plan also uses the same definitions of "should" and "shall" as the King County Comprehensive Plan. "Shall" and "will" in a policy mean that it is imperative and non-discretionary, even if a timeframe is not included. The use of "should" and "may" in a policy reflect non-compulsory guidance where there is discretion in implementation.



The Open Space Plan was informed by and is aligned with many other recent County planning efforts and public processes including:

- King County Rural Forest Commission Strategic Priorities (2022)
- King County Parks Equity and Social Action Plan (2021)
- King County 30-Year Forest Plan (2021)
- King County Comprehensive Plan (2020 update) and Subarea Plan (on-going)
- Clean Water, Healthy Habitat Strategic Plan (2020)
- King County Land Conservation Initiative (2020 Update)
- King County Strategic Climate Action Plan (2020 update)
- King County Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Space Levy Ordinance 18890 and Motion (2019)
- State of Play Seattle-King County (2019)
- King County Strategic Plan (2017 update)
- King County Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan (2016)
- Regional Trails Needs Report (2016)
- King County Flood Management Plan (2013 Update)
- King County Historic Preservation Program Strategic Plan (2013)
- King County Countywide Planning Policies (2012)
- Water Resource Inventory Areas 7, 8, 9 and 10 Salmon Recovery Plans (ongoing)
- King County Local Food Initiative (ongoing)
- King County Best Starts for Kids (ongoing)
- King County Wastewater Treatment Division Clean Water Plan (in development)



1.3.1 King County's Pro-Equity Agenda

In 2010, the King County Council passed Equity and Social Justice legislation – Ordinance 16948 – that codifies fourteen determinants of equity that create the conditions for a fair and just society where all can thrive. “Parks and Natural Resources” and “Built and Natural Environment” are two of several determinants that relate to King County’s open space system.

King County is advancing pro-equity policies, decision-making, planning, operations, services, and practices through actions and outcomes affirmed in the *King County Equity and Social Justice (ESJ) Strategic Plan* (2016). In 2021, Parks established its first *Equity and Social Justice Action Plan*, operationalizing the values and strategies of the county’s *ESJ Strategic Plan* at the division level.

Those values and strategies are reflected in the policies throughout this Open Space Plan and can be summarized into the following themes:

- Improving access to parks and trails by removing barriers
- Addressing structural inequities in distribution, access, and opportunity
- Expanding access to decision-making and information
- Improving pathways to green jobs

1.3.2 Land Conservation Initiative and Opportunity Areas

The Land Conservation Initiative (LCI) is a key driver spanning the next 30 years (through 2050) and helps the county set acquisition goals and priorities. To develop the LCI, Parks, WLRD, and other partners identified 65,000 acres for protection in six land categories: urban green space, regional trails, natural lands, rivers, farmlands, and forests.

Based on recommendations from the King County LCI Advisory Group, King County formed the Open Space Equity Cabinet in 2018. The cabinet, which included 21 residents representing twelve community-based organizations located throughout King County, spotlighted the need to address disparities in access to parks and open spaces. The cabinet issued recommendations for a pro-equity approach to acquisition funding decisions and established “opportunity areas,” priority locations where public green space is needed most. Projects located outside of mapped opportunity areas can also qualify for additional support by using other qualitative measures (e.g., the percentage of free and reduced-price meals at a nearby school) to demonstrate how people who would be served by a project have disproportionately experienced limited access to open space.

This type of prioritization has empowered Parks to plan for and acquire additional open space in urban unincorporated areas, such as North Highline, Skyway-West Hill, and East Federal Way.

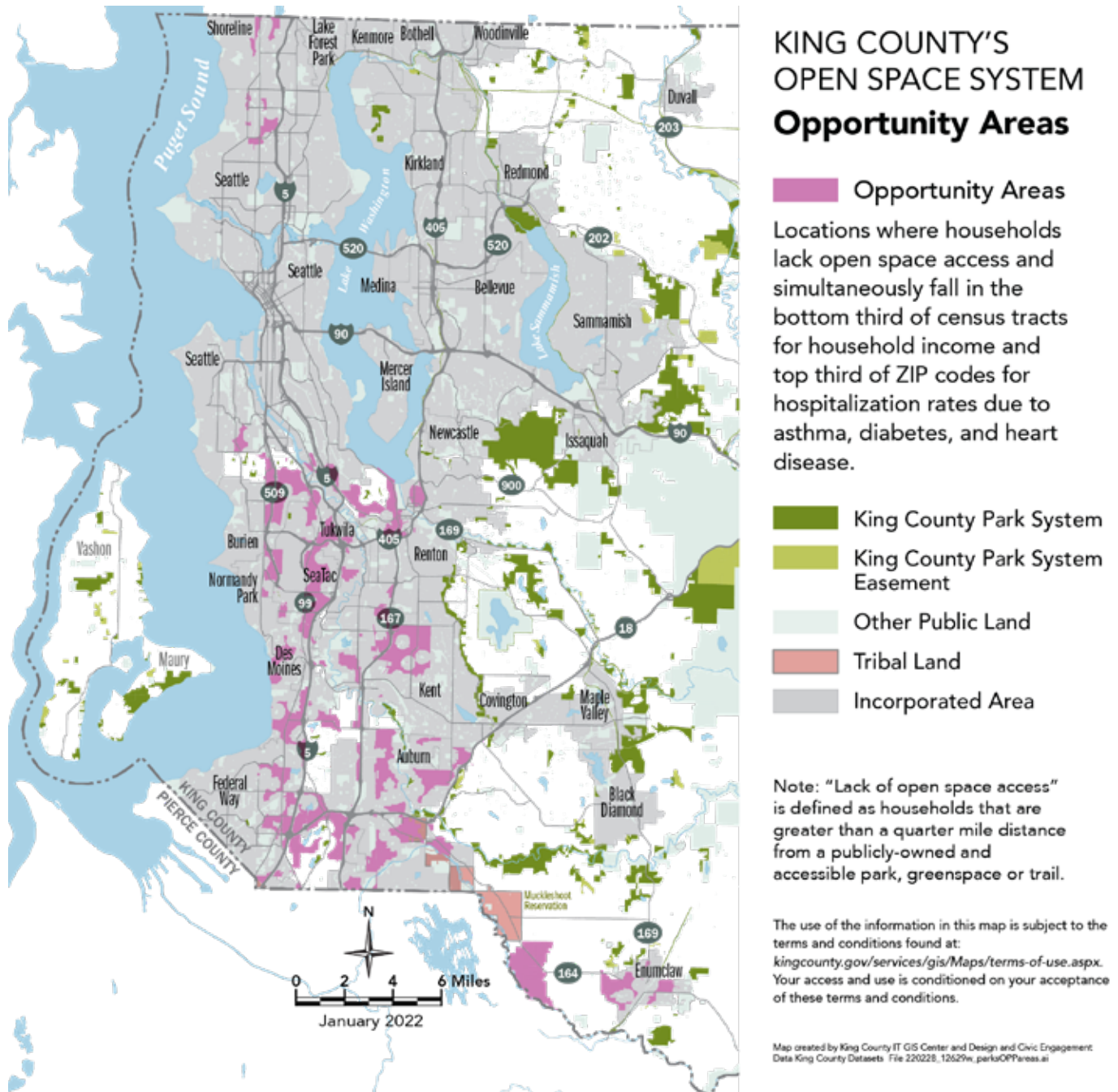


Figure 1.1 King County's Open Space System Opportunity Areas

1.3.3 Strategic Climate Action Plan

Updated in 2020, the *Strategic Climate Action Plan (SCAP)* is King County's road map for climate action. The SCAP emphasizes reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for the effects of a changing climate, focusing on county operations and in the county's collaboration with other public entities, community organizations, partners, and residents. The 2020 SCAP also includes a section on sustainable and resilient frontline communities, acknowledging the complex, intersectional challenges posed by climate change, particularly for those communities that face historical and current inequities.

As part of public involvement for the 2020 update, King County formed a Climate Equity Community Task Force to develop the section addressing sustainable and resilient frontline communities. This represented the first climate justice framework for King County, as well as the first community-driven policy-making process for climate work. The Climate Equity Community Task Force led an involvement process that resulted in eight focus areas and associated actions that prioritize climate equity in the county's approach to combatting climate change.

King County's climate commitments developed for the SCAP frame priorities and actions at the division level, such as Parks' approach to community engagement, developing pathways to green jobs, and investments in healthy, climate-resilient forests.

1.3.4 Clean Water Healthy Habitat

King County's *Clean Water Healthy Habitat Strategic Plan* aligns work across the entire county enterprise so that all departments are advancing clearly defined environmental goals. This plan guides the work of both Parks and WLRD in terms of:

- Healthy forests and more green space
- Cleaner, controlled stormwater runoff
- Functional river floodplains
- Better fish habitat
- Resilient marine shorelines

Successful implementation of Clean Water Healthy Habitat will achieve better, faster results, incorporate equity practices, and yield higher returns on public investments. The priorities described in Clean Water Healthy Habitat are reflected in this Open Space Plan through the policies that shape Parks' and WLRD's approaches to environmental stewardship.





1.3.5 30-Year Forest Plan

In 2021, King County released its *30-Year Forest Plan*, a blueprint to guide efforts from 2020 to 2050 to maintain and enhance forest cover. Recognizing the multiple benefits of tree canopy and resilient forests, the plan lays out forest protection goals and strategies that span all forested areas and forest landowners across the county. The plan helps align King County and its partners in efforts to improve forest conditions, mitigate climate change by increasing carbon sequestration, and support sustainable timber.

King County developed the *30-Year Forest Plan* with input from non-profit organizations, other public agencies, tribes, forest landowners and managers, and King County residents. Input was gathered through surveys, meetings, community events, and other consultations. Findings were then synthesized into seven priority goal areas, including climate, forest health, urban forest canopy, human health, salmon habitat, water quality and quantity, and sustainable timber. Within each priority area, King County established goals related to forest and tree cover, cultural resources, and equity, and identified potential pilot projects.

The *30-Year Forest Plan* reinforces and expands upon the priorities and goals of the LCI, SCAP, and Clean Water Healthy Habitat. As a result, Parks and WLRD have a more refined list of strategic actions to implement on county-managed forested lands, and a better understanding of how to facilitate and empower partners to pursue this important work.

1.3.6 Community Service Area Subarea Planning

King County's Department of Local Services (DLS) prepares detailed local plans for each King County subarea, which includes six rural Community Service Areas and five urban Potential Annexation Areas. Subarea plans establish a vision, goals, and policies to guide community development and land use decisions. These plans are being developed in partnership with community members, and once adopted, become part of the *King County Comprehensive Plan* and the King County Code.

As part of this process, community desires for future services, programs, facilities, and capital improvements are captured in detailed community needs lists. DLS shares these community-identified needs with agencies such as Parks and WLRD, which are participating in all subarea planning processes, tracking community interests, and reflecting those needs in the divisions' ongoing planning and project implementation.

1.3.7 State of Play: Seattle-King County

Parks partnered with the University of Washington's Center for Leadership in Athletics and the Aspen Institute's Project Play to publish the *State of Play: Seattle-King County* in September 2019. This assessment analyzed the landscape of youth physical activity through sports, play, and outdoor recreation in King County. Among its many findings, the research revealed that 81 percent of youth in King County do not meet the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendation of 60 minutes of daily physical activity. An advisory board of local leaders in youth services helped guide and inform the research, which later evolved into the King County Play Equity Coalition, a collaboration of more than 60 members from non-profit organizations, school districts, businesses, government agencies, and professional sports teams.

Parks is a founding member and financial supporter of the coalition. The coalition has helped Parks build and strengthen relationships with partners across the county, leverage greater benefits through collective action, and improve approaches to providing recreational opportunities and access.

1.3.8 2020-2025 King County Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Space Levy

In 2019, King County voters approved a measure to renew the property tax levy supporting parks, trails, and open space in King County, which replaced a levy that expired at the end of 2019. To understand how best to plan, operate, and fund King County's open space system beyond 2019, Parks conducted an engagement process, which involved individual meetings with more than 55 stakeholders, public agencies, and other partners. Parks also conducting an online customer satisfaction survey that garnered 1,900 responses.

This engagement helped shape the levy proposal that ultimately became the ballot measure, which was approved by King County voters by 70 percent in August 2019.

Public engagement highlighted strong support for Parks to continue investing in the goals set forth in the previous levy:

- Keep parks and trails clean, safe, and open
- Make parks and recreation more accessible
- Improve regional trails and mobility
- Grow and connect regional open space

Parks also learned that cities and other partners needed more support and resources to invest in active recreation facilities and programming. There was also a high level of support to target those investments in ways that address inequities, especially for historically underserved populations and communities. Overall, respondents expressed a high level of satisfaction with their experience in King County Parks' parks, trails, and natural areas and felt that they were a worthy investment of public resources. Please see Chapter 3 for more information about the current Parks Levy.



1.4 How the Public Informed This Plan

As outlined in Section 1.3, this plan is built upon a strong foundation of recent community engagement, research, and planning, spanning across many program areas and topics. In 2021, Parks carried out additional engagement that helped shape this Open Space Plan. These efforts and findings are outlined below.

1.4.1 Customer and Partner Satisfaction Surveys

King County Parks issued two surveys in fall 2021 to inform development of the Open Space Plan. The findings from both:

- Reinforce Parks' commitment to a pro-equity agenda
- Highlight the importance of working in concert with other public agencies and organizations in this region to deliver services and tackle systemic inequities
- Fortify Parks' role as a regional grantmaking agency
- Address how King County consults and collaborates with tribes and tribal organizations
- Support Parks' commitment to engagement with and accountability to King County residents



General customer satisfaction survey. This survey was similar to others conducted in 2011 and 2018 so that responses could be compared over time.

Participants	1,007
Comments	3,300
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 97 percent highly value parks, trails, and natural areas and how they protect wildlife, recreation, and environmental benefits (strongly agreed or agreed) • Top priority: Keep parks clean, safe, and open (same as 2018) • Second priority: Repair aging park and trail infrastructure (ranked fourth in 2018)
Trends to Watch	Satisfaction declined in some areas compared to previous years. The largest decline related to facility conditions (21 percent decline from 2018 to 2021). Facilities include athletic fields, paved trails, natural surface trails, restrooms, picnic shelters, etc.

Partner satisfaction survey. For the first time, Parks also surveyed the satisfaction of its approximately 300 partner organizations, entities that:

- Parks provides with services
- Collaborate with Parks to serve King County residents, and/or
- Have a contractual relationship with Parks

Participants	97 (44 percent direct recreation providers, 32 percent event producers, 27 percent grantees, 25 percent promote use and stewardship), 20 percent participate in volunteer events). Participants could select more than one answer, and these categories received the most responses.
Comments	More than 3,000
Areas of High Satisfaction	Customer service, responsiveness, ease of doing business with Parks, parks, trail, and facilities to serve respective constituencies
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 percent highly value parks, trails, and natural areas and how they protect wildlife, recreation, and environmental benefits (strongly agreed or agreed) • Top priority: Keep parks clean, safe, and open • Other priorities: Funding other organizations' and agencies' programs; acquiring more natural areas or forests, especially in parts of the county most deficient of tree canopy and/or green space
Trends to Watch	When asked why constituencies may not visit King County parks and trails, common responses reflect concerns about safety, accessibility/travel (getting to parks and trails), and information gaps (knowing where to go and what to do)

1.4.2 Equitable Parks Access Project Community Engagement

A 2019 study by The Wilderness Society, *Connecting People to Parks in King County*³, showed that just 46 percent of King County residents can reach a local park within a half-mile of home, which is especially pronounced in south King County. The study also showed that only 29 percent of large parks throughout the county are accessible via frequent transit and on weekends. In short, the study highlighted a disconnect between existing parks and King County residents' ability to visit them, particularly by way of public transit.

In an effort to explore these findings further, King County Parks partnered with The Wilderness Society and ECOSS (formerly known as the Environmental Coalition of South Seattle) in 2021 on a project to identify:

- Barriers to parks, trails, and natural area access
- Community solutions for addressing those barriers
- Parks and trails in King County for which people would like better access

The priority audiences included people living in south King County and residents who identified as Black, Indigenous, and/or People of Color (BIPOC). Parks worked with five community organizations to co-design and hold roundtable discussions, which involved some sixty residents. Additionally, six more community organizations helped to co-create and promote the community survey, which generated 400 respondents. In addition to The Wilderness Society and ECOSS, supporting organizations included Golden Bricks Events, Living Well Kent, Y-We, GirlTrek, Latino Outdoors, Outdoor Asian, Partners in Employment, Aydepi, YMCA Bold & Gold, and Disabled Hikers.

The themes common across the conversations and survey responses touched on topics such as:

- How riding transit to parks and green spaces is difficult
- How feeling safe in parks and on transit can be a barrier, and investing in park and transit infrastructure, education, and involvement can help address some of those concerns
- How someone's identity affects how they use – or do not use – parks and transit, and how involvement and inclusion of the communities most affected in the project or decision-making processes can help better address some of those concerns
- How lack of communication and transparency in government decisions can reinforce barriers to accessing services, and how sustained, non-transactional engagement, in-person time with decision-makers, and accountability can help address some of those concerns
- How better coordination between those doing community engagement both inside and outside of King County could reduce the burden on community-based organizations and increase the efficacy of tackling complex societal issues through collaborative work

1.4.3 Safety and Belonging in King County's Parks and Trails Engagement

Parks staff recognize that feeling a sense of safety and belonging affects how people use and benefit from parks, trails, and natural areas. For this reason, Parks launched an engagement effort in 2021 to develop a better understanding of what safety means to community members and to assess approaches to keeping parks and trails safe and welcoming for all residents to enjoy.



³ The Wilderness Society. [Connecting People to Parks in King County](#). (2019).

Priority audiences included BIPOC residents, youth, King County residents who speak Spanish, people with disabilities, people who have experienced housing instability, and people new to King County and/or outdoor recreation. Parks worked with a consultant to conduct five focus groups with external participants, two of which were held in Spanish, and two focus groups involving Parks employees.

The focus group results were that the following aspects help people feel safe and welcome in parks and on trails:

- Presence of employees or other park visitors
- Activities, programs, and events
- Well-maintained, accessible infrastructure and visibly clean facilities
- Easy-to-access information, such as about emergency support, wayfinding, and trip planning
- Social services and other support for unhoused residents
- Cultural awareness and acceptance, such as through in-language resources and signage

Safely getting to parks and trails was another common theme, referring to safe and reliable public transit or walking/biking access, as well as vehicle safety in parking lots and trailheads.



1.5 Plan Adoption

This Open Space Plan update goes through a public review process under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). Parks sent this document to cities, tribes, agencies, and other organizations based on years of experience issuing SEPA documents and per regular communication with Parks' stakeholders. In addition, Parks released a public review copy of the draft Open Space Plan and received additional feedback during a public meeting on February 2, 2022, which was held virtually due to COVID-19 restrictions. King County revised this plan based on feedback that was received.

The final Open Space Plan was transmitted to King County Council, whose review and approval process included a public hearing.



CHAPTER TWO: EXISTING CONDITIONS IN KING COUNTY

This chapter provides an overview of King County's population, demographic and recreational trends, and natural landscape, all of which influence how Parks manages, stewards, and expands the open space system.

2.1 Population and Demographics

King County is the state's urban center and economic engine. As King County government contemplates the need and demand for conservation and recreation assets to serve the public, demographic trends help inform Parks' approach to growth. Rapid population growth also presents challenges, potentially requiring additional revenue sources to meet increasing recreational demand, balanced with protecting and conserving ecological resources.

King County covers 2,130 square miles, and while unincorporated areas (those outside of any city) cover 80 percent of the county's land area, more than 89 percent of the population resides within one of King County's 39 cities. Approximately 250,000 residents live in unincorporated King County, where King County provides local government services; roughly 120,000 live in urban unincorporated areas, and 130,000 in rural area.

King County population⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.26 million inhabitants • Thirteenth most populous county in the country • Most populous county in the state • Expected to grow by an additional 872,000 persons by 2050⁵
Regional population (King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Kitsap counties)⁶	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4.3 million inhabitants in 2021 • Among the fastest-growing regional populations in the country • Growth expected to continue well into the future
King County race and ethnicity⁷ (totals more than 100% due to rounding)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 54 percent non-Hispanic white • 20 percent Asian • 1 percent Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander • 11 percent Hispanic or Latino • 7 percent Black or African American • 1 percent Native American • - 7 percent of two or more races
Languages spoken in King County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 120 different languages⁸ • 29.5 percent speak a language other than English at home⁹

⁴ Office of Financial Management. (2020).

⁵ Puget Sound Regional Council. VISION 2050. (2020).

⁶ Office of Financial Management. (2021).

⁷ U.S. Census Bureau. Decennial Census. (2020)

⁸ U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey, Public Use Microdata Sample (ACS PUMS), 2015-19.

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey. (2019)



King County employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.5 million workers employed within its borders¹⁰
King County income¹¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Median annual household income is about \$102,500, well above state and national levels • Income disparity has increased since 2000; the gap between those earning less than 50 percent of the median income and those earning over 180 percent of the median income is becoming wider • Trends show a shift in where people experiencing poverty reside, with high concentrations of poverty outside of Seattle

2.2 Recreational Trends and Implications

This Open Space Plan describes many ways that King County is responding to regional recreational trends, including increasing overall demand exacerbated by the pandemic. Continuing to increase the amount, distribution, and equitable access to parks, trails, and open space will be essential, while honoring tribal treaty rights and continuing to maintain an existing system that is safe, clean, and open.

Population growth. As noted above, the quickly growing regional population creates added demand for parks, trails, and open space, and intensifies the use of existing public recreational spaces. Recent data has also shown that the number of Seattle-area residents participating in outdoor recreation has outpaced population growth, with the number of hikers increasing seven times faster than the overall population between 2008 and 2018.¹²

The 2019 State of Play: Seattle-King County report¹³ also noted that regional population growth and scarce access to recreational facilities has increased the pressure that organized sports place on play fields and community centers. This demand leaves others (especially low-income youth) with less opportunity to share these recreational spaces.

Pandemic pressure. Demand for outdoor recreation has increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with many new participants seeking outdoor activities. The Outdoor Industry Association prepared a *2021 Special Report: The New Outdoor Participant (COVID and Beyond)*¹⁴ to better understand new recreational trends driven by the pandemic, and potential long-term opportunities to sustain increased participation.

¹⁰ PSRC. (2019).

¹¹ U.S. Census Bureau. [American Community Survey](#). (2019).

¹² Balk. "[Instagram Effect?](#)" (2018).

¹³ The Aspen Institute. *State of Play Seattle-King County*. (2019).

¹⁴ Outdoor Industry Association. [2021 Special Report: The New Outdoor Participant \(COVID and Beyond\)](#). (2021).

Significantly:

The pandemic has attracted more diverse outdoor participants, and there is an opportunity to increase the diversity of the outdoor participant base long term. Compared to those who participated in outdoor activities in 2019, new participants are more likely to be female, younger, slightly more ethnically diverse, more likely to live in urban areas, and in a slightly lower income bracket. (pp. 5)

Other key report findings include the following, and support King County's effort to prioritize equity and improve access to parks across the region:

- How people spend their free time during the pandemic is largely motivated by what is available to do close to home and alone or with others in their household.
- More than 60 percent of those who started or resumed walking, bicycling, fishing, or running/jogging intend to continue once restrictions lift. The top barriers to continuation include travel, resuming other activities, and family demands.
- Those who participated in an outdoor activity for the first time alone did so close to home and chose an activity with a low barrier to entry (e.g., walking, running, biking, hiking, etc.).



Tribal treaty rights. When responding to increased demand for public open space and outdoor recreational opportunities, King County must also honor tribal treaty-reserved rights and consult with its neighboring sovereign nations. As noted in the Tulalip Tribes' 2021 literature summary on the impacts of recreation on traditional territory, Pacific Northwest Tribes continue to express "concerns over growing recreation and its negative and accumulating effect on wildlife, the environment, and on Tribes' ability to access and exercise treaty-reserved rights."¹⁵ In 2021, the Snoqualmie Indian Tribe also launched the Snoqualmie Tribe Ancestral Lands Movement, highlighting the significant ecological impacts that regional population growth and outdoor recreation have had on ancestral lands.¹⁶

2.3 Community Setting: Natural Landscape

Within King County are mountain ranges, forests, farmlands, waterways and shorelines that define the natural beauty and character of the region's landscape. An active geological history created this varied landscape, including advancing and retreating glacial ice sheets, volcanic activity and constant erosion by wind and water. From the Cascade foothills to the Puget Sound, King County's natural lands offer scenic beauty, provide a wide range of outdoor recreational opportunities, create critical habitat for fish and wildlife, help maintain air and water quality, support natural resource economies such as forestry and agriculture, and provide many other benefits.

The following sections detail the major watersheds of King County's open space system. Because water flow and water quality are tempered by forests, fields, and marshes, open space planning is best approached at a landscape level. This requires long-term integrated and comprehensive land stewardship, described in more detail in Chapter 6. Maps of each watershed are also provided in Appendix V.

¹⁵ The Tulalip Tribes. "[The 'Recreation Boom' on Public Lands in Western Washington.](#)" (2021). Pp. 26.

¹⁶ The Snoqualmie Tribe. "[Snoqualmie Tribe Ancestral Lands Movement Launched as Trail Traffic Increases.](#)" (2021).



A watershed is defined as an area of land delineated by hills and mountains in which all rainwater runs to the same body of water, usually a river or lake.

More detailed information about King County's watersheds, fish and wildlife, natural features, and recreational opportunities may be found in other County inventories, plans, reports, and studies. These include individual park management and master plans, regional trail planning documents, programmatic plans for King County's natural area parks and forests, Salmon Recovery Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) plans, drainage basin plans, and water quality plans. See Appendix II for a list of source documents that contributed to this plan.

Land uses and population. Within King County, approximately 75 percent of the land in the Snoqualmie/Skykomish Watershed is classified as Forest Production District (FPD), including both public and private forest. There are a few King County owned working forest sites within this watershed, including a 90,000-acre forest conservation easement on the Snoqualmie Tree Farm, a 4,000-acre conservation easement on the Raging River Forest, and the 440-acre King County's Mitchell Hill Forest. Downstream of the Snoqualmie Falls, most of the flood plain is zoned for agriculture and lies within the 14,500-acre Snoqualmie Agriculture Production District (APD). Almost 5,000 acres of farmland within the Snoqualmie APD has been protected through King County's Farmland Preservation Program.

Bisected by the jurisdictional border between King and Snohomish counties, urban land use is currently concentrated near the Snohomish River estuary and is largely outside the boundaries of King County. Population in the basin is expected to increase from over 430,000 in 2020 to over 500,000 in 2030, a 59 percent increase over 30 years, though this will largely occur in the parts of the basin outside of King County. In 2020, the population in King County's portion of this watershed was just under 77,000; the population in this same area is expected to grow by approximately 15,000 by 2044.

2.3.1 Snoqualmie/Skykomish Watershed

Overview. The Snoqualmie/Skykomish watershed extends from the crest of the Cascade Mountains to Puget Sound, and includes the lands draining to the Snoqualmie and Skykomish Rivers. The Snoqualmie and Skykomish Rivers join to form the mainstem Snohomish River in Snohomish County, which flows northwesterly approximately 20 miles to Puget Sound. The landscape includes many smaller tributary streams, numerous lakes and wetlands, and two reservoirs that are operated for municipal water supply. The watershed also includes the Snoqualmie Falls, a 268-foot-high cultural heritage site and sacred tribal site federally designated as a Traditional Cultural Property. The eastern mountainous portion of the watershed generally consists of private and public forestland. Land uses shift to rural developments and small urban centers in the Cascade foothills. Agriculture lands are widespread within the lower Skykomish, Snoqualmie, and Snohomish River valleys.

The Snoqualmie Indian Tribe has a 56.5-acre homeland reservation located in the upper Snoqualmie River basin in King County near Snoqualmie Falls, and recently acquired a 12,000-acre Snoqualmie Tribe Ancestral Forest in the Tolt River watershed. The Tulalip Tribes have a 22,600-acre homeland reservation located in the lower Snohomish River basin in Snohomish County on the shores of Tulalip Bay. The entire Snohomish River Basin is located with the treaty-reserved federally-adjudicated usual and accustomed fishing places of the Tulalip Tribes.

Snoqualmie/Skykomish Watershed at a Glance

- **Area:** 680 square miles (within King County)
- **Major Rivers:**
 - Snoqualmie River: Originates in the Cascades near Snoqualmie Pass and flows northwesterly approximately 45 miles (40 miles in King County)
 - Skykomish River: Originates in the Cascades near Stevens Pass and flows westerly for approximately 29 miles (13 miles in King County)
- **Fish species:** The watershed provides habitat to native char, bull trout, coastal cutthroat trout and six species of anadromous salmon: Chinook, chum, coho, pink, sockeye, and steelhead



Recreation. There is growing interest in recreation opportunities within the watershed on federal, state, county, and local government lands. Much of the recreational focus is located on and along the Snoqualmie and Skykomish Rivers and their tributaries. In the South Fork Skykomish headwaters, the town of Skykomish offers lodging and other amenities to skiers and visitors recreating in the area. The U.S. Forest Service manages large swaths of public land in the watershed including Wild Sky and Alpine Lakes Wilderness Areas. King County's Snoqualmie Valley Regional Trail is highly valued as a recreational corridor providing opportunities to ride horses, walk or bike along the valley and experience its rich natural beauty and agriculture history.

The Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie is recognized as a top whitewater kayaking destination, drawing river enthusiasts from across the region. A collaborative effort involving federal, state, county and local agencies and community groups has been working to expand recreational opportunities in this area, including expanding and formalizing public access to the river.

The Middle Fork Snoqualmie Natural Area is located along the Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie River, about nine miles east of the city of North Bend. At nearly 5,658 acres, it contains primarily forested lands and wetlands, and its tributary streams provide important habitat for terrestrial and aquatic wildlife. River access for kayak launching and fishing is also possible from the Middle Fork Snoqualmie Natural Area, along with the 40-acre Tanner Landing Park. These opportunities, combined with the state's popular Mount Si Natural Resources Conservation Area and Middle Fork Natural Resource Conservation Area (Washington State Department of Natural Resources [WADNR]) just miles away, are quickly developing a "destination recreation" reputation for the Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie River.



County-owned upland sites offer hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding and include sites such as Soaring Eagle (600 acres), Duthie Hill (130 acres) and portions of the 1,300-acre Grand Ridge Park (also part of Sammamish watershed). King County provides additional recreational opportunities at Preston Park and Athletic Fields, and the historic Jim Ellis Preston Community Center. Passive recreation, such as hiking and nature viewing, can be enjoyed at numerous riverfront natural areas dotted along the lower Snoqualmie River and its tributaries such as Tolt River, Patterson Creek and Fall City Natural Areas. In total, King County manages more than 4,300 acres of parks and natural areas in the Snoqualmie basin.



2.3.2. Cedar/Sammamish/Lake Washington Watershed

Overview. The Cedar/Sammamish/Lake Washington watershed extends from the crest of the Cascade Mountains to Puget Sound and is located in King and Snohomish counties. Lake Washington discharges to the Lake Washington Ship Canal which subsequently discharges to Puget Sound at the Chittendon Locks. The watershed includes many smaller tributary streams, numerous lakes and wetlands, and several reservoirs (one of which is operated for municipal water supply).

The eastern mountainous portion of the watershed generally consists of private and public forestland and protected municipal watershed. Land uses shift to suburban developments and urban centers in the Cascade foothills.

The western lowland portion of the watershed is highly urbanized, characterized by a combination of residential, industrial, commercial, transportation, communication, and utility land covers. It is the most densely populated watershed in Washington state, with over 50 percent of its area located within a city or designated urban growth area. Although there are no Indian reservations located within it, the entire watershed is located within the treaty-reserved federally-adjudicated usual and accustomed fishing places of the Muckleshoot Tribe.

Land uses and population. The Cedar/Sammamish/Lake Washington watershed is the most densely populated watershed in Washington, with approximately 55 percent of the watershed's population inside the urban growth area. The watershed's 2020 population is 1.3 million.¹⁷ Two subbasins, the Cedar River and the Sammamish River, are highlighted below.

Recreation. Additional information is included below about King County's recreational sites and opportunities.

2.3.2.1 Cedar River

Overview. The Cedar River is the largest tributary to Lake Washington and drains an elongated basin of 188 square miles that flows approximately 50 miles from its headwaters in the Cascade Mountains to Lake Washington.

The Cedar River can be divided into two reaches:

- The Upper Cedar River, from the Cascade Crest to the Landsburg Diversion Dam
- The Lower Cedar River, from the Landsburg Dam to the mouth at the City of Renton

¹⁷ OFM Small Area Estimates Program. (2020).

Cedar/Sammamish/Lake Washington Watershed at a Glance

- **Area:** 692 square miles (within King County)
- **Major Rivers:**
 - Cedar River: Originates in the Cascades near Yakima Pass and flows northwesterly approximately 51 miles to Lake Washington
 - Sammamish River: Originates at Lake Sammamish and flows northwesterly for approximately 14 miles to Lake Washington
- **Fish species:** The watershed provides habitat to cutthroat trout, rainbow trout, bull trout, kokanee, and three species of anadromous salmon: Chinook, coho, and sockeye. Steelhead may now be functionally extirpated from this basin.



Lake Sammamish kokanee have a rich history as a food and cultural resource for native peoples, specifically the Snoqualmie People in this region. Based on historical records and oral history, Lake Sammamish kokanee were an important resource for tribal members and supported a large regional fishery. Kokanee were once found in tributaries to Lake Washington, the Sammamish River, and the Lake Sammamish watershed. Today, they are only found in Lake Sammamish and primarily three streams.



The Upper Cedar River watershed contains roughly 79,951 acres, most of which are owned by the City of Seattle to provide a major part of the area's water supply. The municipal watershed is almost entirely coniferous forest and is governed by a Habitat Conservation Plan. The Lower Cedar River contains 42,240 acres of land with an extensive hydrological system that includes 15 named tributaries, and many high value wetlands, lakes, and aquifers. Most of the lower basin remains forested, with less than half the land use classified as low- to medium-density development.

The Cedar River corridor provides a network for fish and wildlife migration. Chinook, coho, and sockeye salmon, winter steelhead, bull trout, and coastal cutthroat are known species to inhabit the Cedar River system. The Lower Cedar River mainstem and four main fishbearing tributaries (Lower Rock Creek, Walsh Lake Diversion, Peterson Creek and Taylor Creek) provide spawning habitat for Chinook, sockeye and coho salmon and steelhead and cutthroat trout. The Cedar River's Chinook population is one of the native stocks that comprise the evolutionarily significant unit of Puget Sound Chinook salmon, which is

listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The Cedar River also provides habitat for Puget Sound steelhead, which are listed as a threatened species under the ESA.

Recreation. Within the Cedar River watershed is the multiuse Danville-Georgetown Open Space (341 acres) with a network of well-kept trails that are popular with equestrians. There are multiple natural area parks along the Cedar River with river access, including Belmondo Reach Natural Area and Cedar Grove Road Natural Area.

Ravensdale Park is in Rock Creek Valley, a few miles east of Maple Valley between Kent-Kangley Road and Ravensdale Way. The historic mining town of Ravensdale sits adjacent to the park's southeast corner, and the small community of Georgetown borders the north side of the park. The facilities in the park, consisting of six athletic fields, a community center, parking, a picnic area, and restrooms serve many of the rural residents of Rock Creek Valley, as well as the City of Maple Valley. Aside from the Tahoma School District's fields, there are no public athletic fields in the valley other than those at Ravensdale Park.

The Cedar River offers fishing and whitewater recreation. In addition, the river corridor provides recreation opportunities offered at the local and regional levels. The 16-mile Cedar River Trail, owned and maintained by King County, follows a former railroad right-of-way alongside the river from King County's 37-acre Landsburg Park to downtown Renton, and continues along a city trail to the shores of Lake Washington. The Cedar River Trail links many King County-owned park sites, providing a scenic natural setting in addition to recreation, educational, and interpretive experiences for those passing along on foot, bicycle or horse. Future interagency agreements may establish links between the Cedar River Trail, the county's Snoqualmie Valley Regional Trail, and Iron Horse State Park.





2.3.2.2 Sammamish River

Overview. The Sammamish River basin covers approximately 240 square miles and encompasses the land area that drains to Lake Sammamish, the Sammamish River and out into Lake Washington. The Sammamish River stretches 13.8 miles from its origin at the north end of Lake Sammamish to its mouth at the northern tip of Lake Washington.

Over the past century, the Sammamish River (previously a slough) has been significantly altered by human activities. In the 1960s, the river channel was deepened and straightened to increase its flood-flow capacity and to drain the surrounding wetlands for farming and development. Ongoing restoration and enhancement efforts are helping to mitigate these actions and improve water quality and habitat.

The Sammamish River Valley is known for its farming history, and approximately 1,100 acres of the valley have been designated as an Agricultural Production District (APD).

Through the Farmland Preservation Program, King County has acquired development rights on more than 70 percent (800 acres) of that APD, which has been instrumental in retaining agricultural production in the scenic valley.

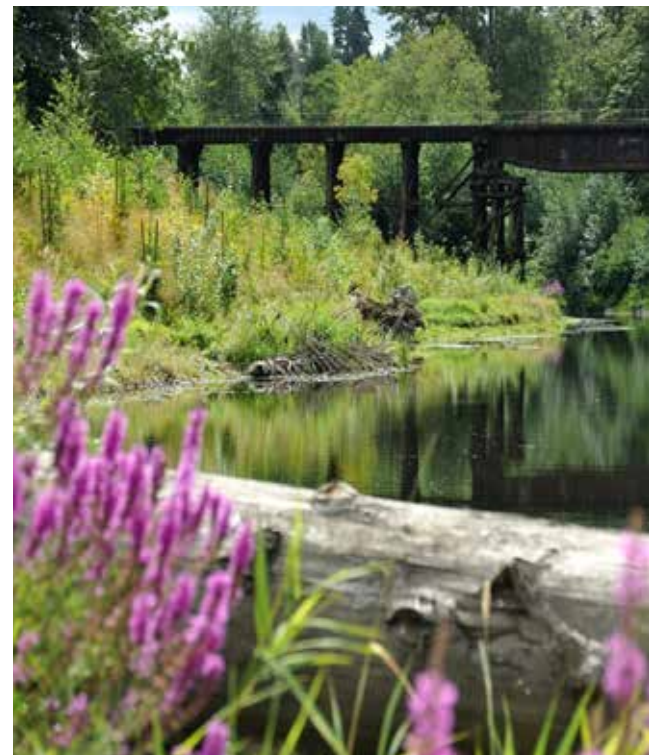
The Sammamish River is primarily a migratory corridor for Chinook, coho, sockeye and kokanee salmon and steelhead trout that spawn in Issaquah Creek, Bear Creek, Little Bear Creek, North Creek and Swamp Creek. However, warm river temperatures in the summer and early fall can create a barrier to salmon migration, and sometimes even be lethal to salmon.

Issaquah Creek Basin. The Issaquah Creek Basin is an important ecological basin in urbanized King County. Issaquah Creek is the main tributary to Lake Sammamish with headwaters originating from the steep slopes of Cougar, Squak, Tiger and Taylor mountains. The basin encompasses about 61 square miles, over 75 percent of which is forested, with the remainder in wetlands and pastures. Less than 10 percent is urban or cleared areas. More than 40 percent of the land is in public ownership by the WADNR, Washington State Parks, King County, and the City of Issaquah.

The upper and middle Issaquah Creek Basin is identified as a Regionally Significant Resource Area (RSRA) because of its exceptional fisheries habitat and undeveloped character. RSRAs are portions of watersheds that contribute to the resource base of the entire Puget Sound region because they contain exceptional species and habitat diversity and may support rare, threatened or endangered species. Eight species of salmonids (six anadromous) are known to utilize the Issaquah Basin, including Chinook salmon listed as threatened under the ESA. The Issaquah Creek Hatchery currently produces Chinook, coho, and Lake Washington steelhead.

Recreation. The Sammamish River Basin includes a significant amount of public open space for conservation and recreation purposes. King County manages several sites within the basin:

- The multi-use Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park (approximately 3,200 acres)
- Cougar-Squak and Squak-Tiger Corridors (970 acres)



- Preston Ridge Forest (190 acres)
- A portion of the multi-use Grand Ridge Park (1,300 acres)
- Taylor Mountain Forest (1,900 acres)

King County's Taylor Mountain Forest and WADNR's Tiger Mountain Forest are managed as working forests, protecting and conserving important salmon habitats, providing sustainable timber production, and providing passive recreation opportunities. The County also owns almost 6,000 acres of forest easement land in the Upper Raging River area. In addition, King County has acquired land for ecological purposes, including the 120-acre Log Cabin Reach Natural Area and the 212-acre Middle Issaquah Reach Natural Area.

At the north end of Lake Sammamish, Marymoor Park began as a prehistoric Indian site that was homesteaded in 1876 and eventually turned into a dairy farm and country estate.¹⁸ King County acquired the site in 1962 to prevent its development, growing the facility into a regional hub for public recreation that is recognized for its rich natural setting. Today, the 620-acre Marymoor Park offers many year-round recreational opportunities, including 15 natural and six artificial athletic fields (soccer, baseball, cricket, lacrosse, and rugby), a velodrome, tennis courts, walking/biking trails, nature trails, a community garden, a rowing launch, an off-leash dog park, a climbing rock, a foot reflexology path and a model airplane flying field. Marymoor Park is also home to outdoor summer concerts and movies and the historic Clise Mansion, which is used for weddings and other events.

Several regional trails link various parts of the Sammamish River watershed. The Sammamish River Trail runs along both sides of the river with a hard-surface trail on one side and a soft-surface trail along the other. The trail links numerous King County park sites and parks in the cities of Bothell, Woodinville and Redmond. The trail links with the Burke-Gilman Trail to the west and offers more than 20 miles of paved trail for bicyclists and walkers along waterways in urban and suburban King County. The Marymoor Connector Trail links the Sammamish River Trail to the East Lake Sammamish Trail, extending the trail connection into the city of Issaquah.

2.3.3 Green/Duwamish Watershed

Overview. The Green/Duwamish watershed includes all land drained by the Green/Duwamish River. The Green/Duwamish River is the longest river in the county, flowing for 93 miles from the Cascade Range to Elliott Bay in Seattle. The watershed includes many smaller tributary streams, numerous lakes and wetlands, and several reservoirs (two of which are operated for municipal water supply).

The eastern mountainous portion of the watershed consists mainly of public forestland and protected municipal watershed. Land uses shift to agriculture, suburban developments, and small urban centers in the Cascade foothills. The northwestern lowland portion of the watershed is highly urbanized, characterized by a combination of residential, industrial, commercial, transportation, communication, and utility land covers. Approximately 30 percent of the watershed is within a city or designated urban growth area.

Green/Duwamish Watershed at a Glance

- **Area:** Nearly 500 square miles (all within King County)
- **Major Rivers:**
 - Green River: Originates in the Cascades near Tacoma Pass and flows northwesterly 82.5 miles before becoming the Duwamish River at the historical confluence with the Black River near the City of Tukwila
 - Duwamish River: Transitions from the Green River near the City Tukwila, flowing through highly channelized conditions northwesterly for 11.5 miles before emptying into Elliott Bay
- **Fish species:** The watershed provides habitat to cutthroat trout, rainbow trout, bull trout, steelhead and four species of anadromous salmon: Chinook, chum, coho, and pink. There is no established run of sockeye salmon within the watershed, though stray individuals have been observed in the basin.

¹⁸ Stein. "[Marymoor Park](#)." (2002).





Approximately 310 acres of the Muckleshoot Tribe's homeland reservation is located within the southern edge of the watershed near Auburn. Two tribes have overlapping treaty-reserved federally-adjudicated usual and accustomed fishing rights in the Green/Duwamish watershed, including: (a) the Muckleshoot Tribe for the entire watershed; and (b) the Suquamish Tribe for the estuary of the Duwamish River.

Current salmon habitat restoration efforts in the watershed are focused on creating more off-channel rearing habitat for juvenile salmon in the Middle and Lower Green River basins and revegetating the banks of the river and tributaries to moderate high summer water temperatures which negatively impact salmon survival.

Land uses and population. The population of the watershed is approximately 792,000 in 2020.¹⁹ There are four subbasins in the watershed, described in more detail below:

- The mountainous headwaters of the Upper Green River are largely undeveloped and within the forested Tacoma Municipal Watershed, which supplies most of the drinking water for the city of Tacoma. Timber harvesting is the most active land use.
- The Middle Green River includes the two largest tributaries of the Green/Duwamish River: Soos and Newaukum Creeks. Land use in the Middle Green is primarily agriculture, forestry, residential, and preserved open space.
- The river becomes more urban within the Lower Green River, starting at the city limits of Auburn. This subbasin is heavily developed with commercial, industrial, and residential property and has an extensive levee system on both sides of the river.
- The Duwamish River flows for the lower eleven miles, which begins at its confluence with the remnant Black River in Tukwila. The Duwamish River has been heavily developed and more than 98 percent of its historical tidal wetlands have been transformed into commercial and industrial land uses.

Recreation. There are three regional trails in the watershed, including the:

- Southern segment of the 15-mile Interurban Trail
- 7.5-mile Soos Creek Trail
- 19-mile Green River Regional Trail

The Green River Regional Trail traverses the upper Duwamish River and portions of the Lower Green River, providing excellent views and access to the river and surrounding valley. Active recreation opportunities are predominantly provided by cities such as Seattle, Tukwila, Kent, and Auburn. For example, the 97-acre North Green River Park offers recreation amenities such as soccer fields and a community garden.

The Green/Duwamish Watershed contains a significant amount of public land managed for conservation (natural lands) and nature-based passive recreation (hiking, biking). Washington State manages three popular state parks that provide river and lake access for whitewater rafting, kayaking and boating, and for shoreline activities like birdwatching, fishing, picnicking and hiking.

King County owns many open space sites in the watershed ranging from a five-acre park to a 45,000-acre forest conservation easement in the upper watershed. Within the watershed is the 1,100-acre Black Diamond Open Space, located just south of Maple Valley. This site is very popular with mountain

¹⁹ OFM Small Area Estimates Program. (2020).

bikers and equestrians, and also provides habitat to a variety of wildlife. The 105-acre Auburn Narrows Natural Area is a popular fishing site, the 1,400-acre Green River Natural Area is used by equestrians, and the 30-acre Whitney Bridge Park offers picnicking and boat access to the river.

2.3.4 White River Watershed

Overview. The Puyallup/White River watershed extends from the crest of the Cascade Mountains to Puget Sound, with portions in King and Pierce counties. The Puyallup River has two main tributaries, the White and Carbon Rivers. Only a portion of the White River watershed is within King County; the Carbon River originates from the Carbon Glacier on Mt. Rainier and flows westerly for approximately 33 miles (all in Pierce County). The White River joins the Greenwater River at the town of Greenwater and together they form the boundary between Pierce and King Counties. The White and Carbon rivers join the Puyallup River near Sumner, and from there the mainstem Puyallup flows northwesterly approximately 10 miles (all in Pierce County) to Commencement Bay.

Approximately 3,600 acres of the 3,910-acre Muckleshoot Indian Reservation is located on the northern edge of the White River basin near Auburn in King County. The Puyallup Tribe of Indians has an 18,000-acre homeland reservation located along the lower Puyallup River and on the shores of Commencement Bay in Pierce County. The Muckleshoot and Puyallup tribes have treaty-reserved federally-adjudicated usual and accustomed fishing places that overlap within the White River watershed, but generally those areas located north of the White River (right bank) are associated with Muckleshoot and areas south (left bank) are associated with Puyallup.



White River Watershed at a Glance

- **Area:** Approximately 494 square miles (most of which is within Pierce County)
- **Major River:** The White River originates from the Emmons and Winthrop Glaciers on Mt. Rainier and flows northwesterly approximately 75 miles (68 miles in King County)
- **Fish species:** The White River watershed provides habitat to bull trout, steelhead, and five species of anadromous salmon: Chinook, chum, coho, pink, and sockeye. The spring run Chinook population is extremely rare; only two rivers in south Puget Sound contain this run, which is (according to fisheries ecologists) very vulnerable to extinction. The White River system is also home to native char (bull trout/Dolly Varden). Chinook, steelhead, and bull trout are all listed as “threatened” per the federal ESA



Land use and population. The White River watershed includes several glaciers, many smaller tributary streams, numerous lakes and wetlands, and one reservoir (which is operated for flood control purposes). The eastern mountainous portion of the watershed generally consists of private and public forestland and Mount Rainier National Park. Land uses shift to agriculture, suburban developments and small urban centers in the Cascade foothills. Approximately 14 percent of the watershed is within a city or designated urban growth area.

King County’s portion of the watershed has a 2020 population of approximately 83,000.²⁰ The description below focuses on the portion of the White River watershed that is within King County.

Recreation. Much of the White River’s headwaters are protected by Seattle and Tacoma Municipal Watersheds (where public access is regulated) and Mount Rainier National Park. Mud Mountain Dam is located about six miles upriver of the city of Buckley. Downstream of the dam, the river flows through agricultural areas, rural residential

²⁰ OFM Small Area Estimates. (2020).



properties, and private forestlands. Some public land, including King County's 314-acre Pinnacle Peak Park and the city of Enumclaw's Anderson Riverview Park, are within this reach. Further downstream, the river flows through portions of the cities of Auburn and Pacific before fully entering Pierce County. Pinnacle Peak is a volcanic cone that rises out of Enumclaw Plateau farmlands and descends to the White River. Pinnacle Peak is one of the most popular hiking areas for Enumclaw and South county families as there are not many nearby backcountry hiking opportunities in south King County. A one-mile-long forested trail climbs 1,000 vertical feet to the top of the 1,800-foot geological knob with several other associated trails. At the top, a lookout tower completed in 2021, similar to a tower decommissioned in 1966, provides spectacular views of the Mt. Rainier and the White River valley.

2.3.5 Vashon-Maury Island Watershed

Overview. The topography of Vashon-Maury Island varies from sea level to elevations above 460 feet. At these upper elevations the topography levels into gently rolling plateaus. The island watershed has five prominent perennial streams, as well as smaller streams, ponds, and wetlands, all of which drain to Puget Sound.

Vashon's freshwater environment includes more than 70 mapped streams and tributaries, which originate from upland seeps and wetlands and drop through the steep channels and bluff line that surrounds the island. The two primary stream basins which represent a substantial portion of the island's freshwater environment are Shinglemill Creek and Judd Creek. Vashon-Maury Island also has approximately 70 mapped and likely many more unmapped freshwater wetlands.

The Vashon-Maury Island nearshore accounts for 51 miles of the 92 miles of marine shoreline found within the boundaries of King County, and it represents the only marine shoreline under King County's jurisdiction. It supports a variety of ecosystem functions and is characterized by a combination of beaches, bluffs, lagoons, spits, pocket estuaries, and fringing eelgrass. In 2000, some of the state-owned aquatic lands along the Maury Island and Quartermaster Harbor were designated an aquatic reserve by WADNR.

Although there are no Indian reservations located on the island, the entire island is located within the treaty-reserved federally-adjudicated usual and accustomed fishing places of the Puyallup Tribe of Indians.

Land uses and population. Vashon-Maury Island has been altered significantly in the last 100+ years. Most of the original pre-settlement forested wetlands and upland forests were logged by the late 1800s. The resulting second-growth forest was heavily logged in the mid-1900s. Although forestlands have been regenerated on the island, land cover has changed from native, large spans of old-growth coniferous forests to younger, even-aged forests dominated by Douglas-fir and with a significant hardwood presence.

Today, the Vashon-Maury Island watershed has a rural character and generally consists of private and public forestland, agricultural land, and rural areas. The island is about 73 percent forestland,

Vashon-Maury Island at a Glance

- **Area:** Approximately 37 square miles (all within King County)
- **Perennial streams:** Judd Creek, Tahlequah Creek, Christensen Creek, Green Valley Creek, and Shingle Mill Creek
- **Fish species:** The watershed provides habitat to cutthroat trout, rainbow trout, and three species of anadromous salmon: Chinook, coho, and chum. Juvenile and adult coho, Chinook and coastal trout have been observed at numerous points along the marine shorelines, as well.





16 percent non-forested land, and 11 percent developed land. There are several rural neighborhood commercial centers and one rural townsite. The entire island is a federally designated sole source aquifer and is subject to county overlay protection for groundwater infiltration.

Vashon-Maury Island has a population of about 10,500.²¹ The population density is relatively sparse and concentrated along parts of the shoreline. The area does not include any incorporated townsites or urban growth areas.

Recreation. Approximately nine percent of Vashon-Maury Island is in public ownership. Additionally, the Vashon Maury Island Land Trust owns several nature reserve parcels and holds conservation easements on many more. King County and the Vashon Park District both offer passive recreational opportunities on natural lands and parks.

Located in the center of Vashon Island, Island Center Forest is a 350-acre working forest and nature preserve that is managed to demonstrate sustainable forest management while protecting and restoring the health of the site's habitat. Island Center Forest features various forest stands, Mukai Pond, and Meadowlake wetlands, and forms the headwaters of Judd Creek. It provides habitat for a variety of wildlife, including more than 70 bird species. There are over nine miles of backcountry trails used by hikers, equestrians and mountain bikers, and its wetlands are popular for bird watching and wildlife photography. A diverse site with a unique history, Island Center Forest is also used for scientific research.

King County's 320-acre Maury Island Marine Park and 275-acre Maury Island Natural Area offer close to 2.5 miles of Puget Sound shoreline and provide habitat for a diversity of marine species. Dockton Park (23 acres) lies along the eastern shoreline of Quartermaster Harbor and is primarily used as a marina, picnic and boat launch area, and summer swim beach. Dockton Forest is an 85-acres working forest that offers an extensive trail system used by hikers, equestrians, and mountain bikers. The County has acquired several hundred acres of natural area sites, such as Neill Point, Piner Point, and Raab's Lagoon, which are largely undeveloped and may provide public access to the shoreline as well as significant ecological value.

²¹ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey. (2019).

CHAPTER THREE:

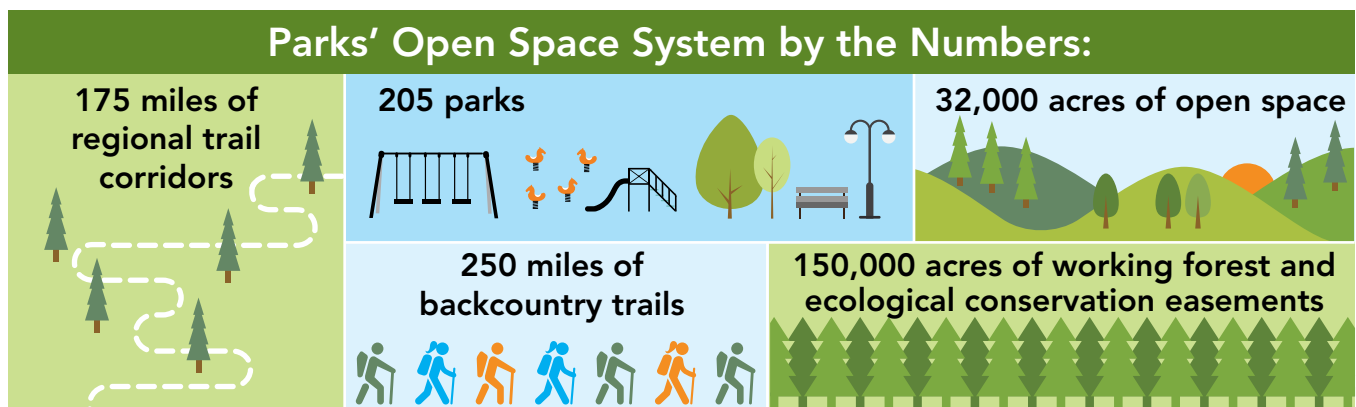
KING COUNTY PARKS AND THE OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

Since the early 1900s, King County's role in providing recreation and conserving natural lands and habitat has evolved through several distinct periods, largely driven by major shifts in funding. This chapter provides information about Parks' current period and the division's:

- Role providing open space, parks, and trails in King County
- Method of classifying sites and their purposes
- Open space inventory

While this chapter describes Parks' role and **what** King County's open space system is, future chapters describe **how** Parks prioritizes and delivers service.

3.1 King County's Role as a Parks Agency



Parks plays a unique role in the provision of parks, trails, and natural areas, providing regional facilities while also serving as a direct service provider in rural and unincorporated areas. The agency's open space system includes regional parks and recreation amenities, natural areas, forests, regional and backcountry trails, and local parks in unincorporated areas of the county. By cultivating strong relationships with partners, the division provides recreational opportunities for King County residents and protects the region's public lands, leaving a legacy for future generations.

Over the years, King County has expanded, shifted, and refined its role in the provision of park and recreation services (see Appendix III for more detail about King County Parks' history). As described below, a voter-approved levy anchors Parks' near-term work program and commitments. Countywide initiatives also shape Parks' priorities. For example, King County has added thousands of acres of open space to the inventory in the last 30 years, reflecting regional interests and, more recently, Parks' key role in implementing the Land Conservation Initiative. Parks has also shifted more attention to urban unincorporated areas where equitable access to open space is needed.

3.1.1 Organizational Structure and Funding

Parks is one of four sister divisions within the Department of Natural Resources and Parks, whose mission is to:

- Provide parks and trails
- Protect the region's water, air, land, natural habitats and historic properties, and
- Reduce, safely dispose of, and create resources from wastewater and solid waste

As of 2021, Parks consisted of 243 full-time employees, approximately 125 part-time seasonal employees, and 120-140 intermittent temporary employees, organized into eight sections.

Parks works closely with the Water and Land Resources Division, particularly in the areas of natural lands acquisition, river restoration/flood protection, and forest stewardship.

On August 6, 2019, King County voters approved a measure to renew the property tax levy that supports parks, recreation, trails, and open space in King County, including most of the division's operating and capital budgets. The measure replaced the levy that expired at the end of 2019 and will generate an estimated \$810 million over six years, costing approximately \$7.60 per month for the owner of a home with an assessed property value of \$500,000.

This is Parks' fourth levy, providing approximately 85 to 90 percent of the division's operating revenue as well as most of the division's capital funding. The enacting ordinance, Ordinance 18890, directs Parks to deliver specific projects and programs funded by the levy. In conjunction with this ordinance, the King County Council adopted Motion 15378, providing additional details and intent for how levy proceeds will be used.

Approximately 10 to 15 percent of the division's revenue comes from business activities, which include user fees, land use fees, concessions, and other types of entrepreneurial activities and public-private partnerships (outlined in greater detail in Chapter 5). Parks does not receive any King County General Funds. Funding for the Capital Improvement Program is described in Chapter 7.

3.1.2 Parks' Mission, Vision, and Values

The following mission, vision, and values guide Parks' work.

Mission: Steward, enhance and acquire parks to inspire healthy communities.

Vision: Parks, trails, and natural lands for all, sustained with the cooperative efforts of our community.

Values:

- **Regional and unincorporated area service.** Serve the county-wide population, as well as communities in rural and urban unincorporated King County, through parks, trails, and natural lands.
- **Safety.** Ensure that parks, trails and recreation facilities are safe for all visitors.
- **Equity.** Provide public open spaces and recreation opportunities that maximize accessibility, are welcoming and inclusive, and are equitably distributed.
- **Collaboration.** Pursue partnerships that leverage public dollars, enhance public recreation opportunities, and involve King County residents in the stewardship of open space and recreation assets.
- **Innovation.** Approach work creatively to improve service, maximize co-benefits, leverage resources, and drive towards best outcomes.
- **Conservation.** Protect and enhance the ecological values of open space assets, including fish and wildlife habitat, native biodiversity, critical areas, and air and water quality.
- **Treaty rights.** Honor, protect, and preserve the fish and other natural resources that Indian tribes reserved for themselves by the terms of the Treaty of Point Elliott.
- **Fiscal responsibility.** Maximize the value of public dollars through strategic management while respecting best environmental management practices.



3.1.3 Goals and Objectives

In addition to countywide guidance and the planning context described in Chapter 1, King County pursues the following goals and objectives based on priorities developed for the 2020-2025 Parks, Recreation, Trails and Open Space Levy (Ordinance #18890).

Goal 1: Take care of King County's existing system of parks and trails, ensuring the system remains clean, safe and open.

Objective 1.1: Sustain levels of service in the day-to-day operations and maintenance of King County's parks and trails by:

- o Increasing staffing resources for peak seasonal maintenance and the growing inventory;
- o Replacing and upgrading technology, equipment, and vehicles; and
- o Completing the new central maintenance shop.

Objective 1.2: Maintain the operation of existing park infrastructure by employing a system-wide approach to rehabilitating, repairing, or replacing elements such as play areas, restrooms, sports courts, ballfields, and bridges and trestles on the Regional Trails System.

Goal 2: Grow and connect regional open space and natural lands to protect habitat important for fish and wildlife and to provide recreation opportunities.

Objective 2.1: Prioritize acquisitions that build upon prior public land and conservation easement investments, connect to existing sites, provide multiple benefits (recreation, public access, habitat protection) and protect regional watersheds and streams.

Objective 2.2: Be a good steward of newly acquired open space by identifying goals and completing management plans to provide direction for maintaining and rehabilitating the sites.

Goal 3: Improve regional trails and mobility to ensure that essential connections are completed and existing trails are maintained.

Objective 3.1: Address missing trail connections, such as developing additional segments of the East Lake Sammamish Trail and planning and designing the Green-to-Cedar Rivers Trail.

Objective 3.2: Invest in planning, design, and construction of new major trail corridors, such as the Eastrail and the Lake to Sound Trail.

Objective 3.3: Preserve existing trail infrastructure by repairing and replacing aging bridges and trestles and making surface improvements throughout the system.

Objective 3.4: Identify and invest in regional trail connections in historically underserved communities.

Objective 3.5: Identify opportunities to invest in trail connections that improve nonmotorized mobility, especially connections to transit centers.

Goal 4: Make parks, green spaces, and recreation opportunities more accessible for all King County residents to enjoy.

Objective 4.1: Expand public access to existing parks by building and/or improving trailhead facilities, such as parking lots, restrooms, and signage.

Objective 4.2: Ensure parks and recreation facilities remain safe and open by completing major maintenance projects in all parts of the county.

Objective 4.3: Provide funding for recreational programs that serve historically underserved communities.

Objective 4.4: Cultivate partnerships that generate revenue, create efficiencies, and/or nurture goodwill.

Many of Parks' goals and objectives are informed by the Clean Water Healthy Habitat strategic plan, Land Conservation Initiative, Strategic Climate Action Plan, 30-Year Forest Plan, and Salmon Recovery Plans. These related efforts often include their own goals, objectives and targets that help Parks prioritize projects, programs, and investments.

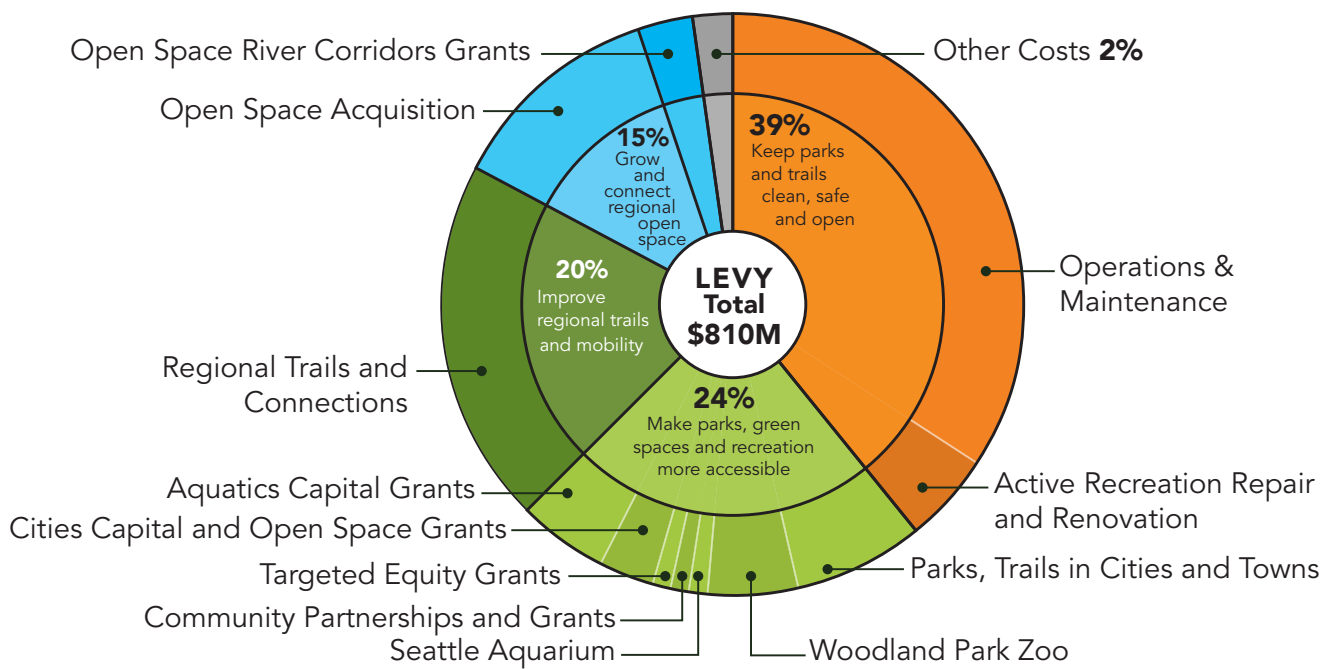


Figure 3.1 2020-2025 Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Space Levy Funding Distribution

3.2 Classification of King County's Open Space System

Parks uses a two-level classification system to define and manage its open space system, as summarized in Figure 3.2.

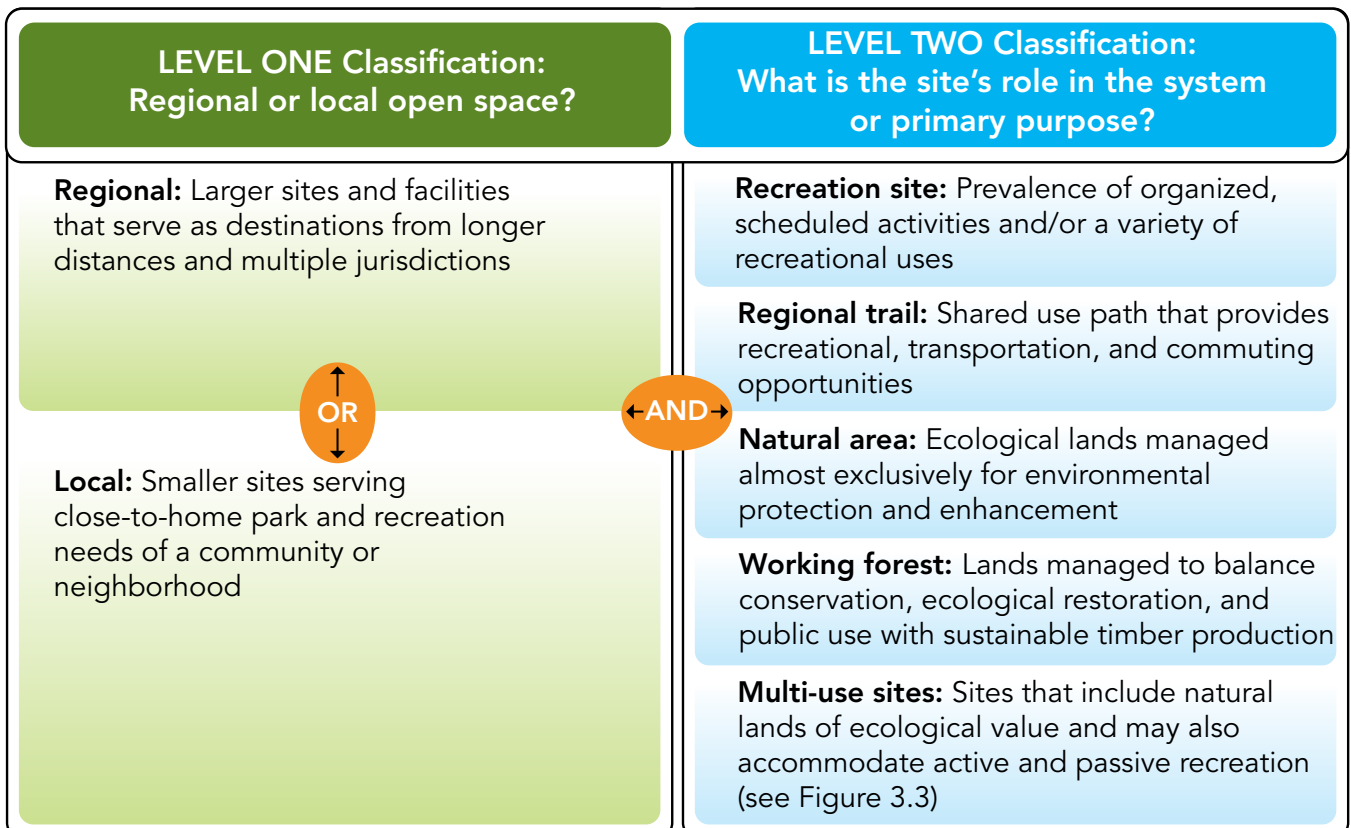


Figure 3.2 King County Parks Open Space System Classifications

These categories are further described in policy statements below. They reflect the evolution of King County government in the region and reinforce the vision set forth by key guiding documents described in Chapter 1.

King County’s open space system supports both active and passive recreations. Figure 3.3 compares the two designations in terms of infrastructure, typical activities, and intensity of use.

	Active Recreation	Passive Recreation
Infrastructure	Significant, highly developed	Minimal or undeveloped
Activities	Organized, scheduled, programmed (sports leagues, tournaments)	Informal, unscheduled (hiking, biking, frisbee, horseback riding, biking)
Intensity of use	High – many users are expected, requiring a corresponding level of maintenance and programming	Low – fewer visitors are expected than at active sites
Examples of amenities	Athletic field complex with lights and extensive support facilities	Picnic tables, park furniture, signage, grass fields or open meadows, backcountry trails

Figure 3.3 Comparison of Active and Passive Recreation

3.2.1 Level 1 Classification: Regional or Local Open Space, Park, or Trail

King County plays a unique role in the provision of parks, trails, and open space, providing regional facilities while also serving as a direct service provider in unincorporated areas. King County Parks works primarily in unincorporated areas and supports the efforts of incorporated cities.

OS-101 Open space sites in the King County system will be classified using a two-level system; first, identifying the site as regional or local (rural or within an urban growth area); and second, identifying its primary role within the system.

OS-102 New open space sites will be classified at the time of acquisition and documented through updates to the parks inventory database.

3.2.1.1 Regional Open Space

Designating a site as regional establishes a presumption of county ownership and management responsibility. For those regional sites that lie within multiple jurisdictions, single custodianship is more appropriate, thus ensuring consistent management and cost efficiencies.

Some sites with both regional and local characteristics may attract a significant number of users from a city, and these sites may best be owned and managed by a city or cities. Cities and other agencies may negotiate with King County to own or develop partnerships for these regional sites. King County may also pursue cost sharing arrangements with cities, where appropriate.

OS-103 King County will be a regional provider of open space with a major focus on systems of open space corridors that conserve natural and cultural resources and provide recreation, education, and interpretative opportunities, ecological value, and scenic beauty.

OS-104 King County will focus its regional open space efforts on the following functional roles: recreation, regional and backcountry trails, natural areas, forestlands, and multi-use sites.

3.2.1.2 Local Open Space

Local parks are often informal meeting places for the surrounding neighborhoods or communities, providing a social function and a sense of community identity. Traditional local parks may have active and passive recreation facilities including play areas, open grassy fields, developed ballfields, sport courts, small picnic areas and trails. Less developed local parks conserve local community character and natural resources and offer opportunities for passive recreation.

OS-105 King County will provide local parks for unincorporated areas of the county.

3.2.2 Level 2 Classification: Role in the System and Primary Purpose

King County's open space system includes lands and facilities with a variety of resources and functions. Level 2 classifies each site based on its primary intended purpose, while acknowledging that many sites may have multiple benefits and functions. This classification system forms the framework for stewardship and management of open space sites, while balancing elements such as recreational opportunities, public access, and ecological values.

OS-106 All King County open space sites will be classified within the following categories:
1) recreation site, 2) regional trail, 3) natural area, 4) working forestland, and 5) multi-use site.

3.2.2.1 Recreation Sites

Recreation sites generally support organized, scheduled activities and a variety of active and passive recreational uses. Site development, maintenance and programming will reflect this level of developed facilities and intensive use. Undeveloped or low development areas may exist on predominantly active recreation sites, providing additional benefits such as habitat value, environmental protection, and scenic views.

OS-107 Recreation sites include recreation facilities, receive a higher level of public use, and should be managed to accommodate developed areas for informal, organized or intense recreation. This may include either or both active and passive recreation activities.

3.2.2.2 Regional Trails

King County is home to one of the largest regional trail networks in the country. Together with partners, King County and its cities collectively offer more than 300 miles of multi-purpose paved and unpaved shared use paths connecting urban areas of the county with rural valleys and mountains, linking communities along the way. King County stewards approximately 175 miles of the overall network with several cities and other jurisdictions responsible for the remaining portions of the current network.

Regional trails are facilities primarily for nonmotorized use and may be paved or soft-surface (e.g., gravel or dirt) or a combination of both. Regional trails provide both recreational opportunities and mobility options, connecting users with dedicated routes to parks, work, school and other destinations. Trails can be used for walking, jogging, cycling, skating and, where appropriate, horseback riding.

Local trails, which may include safe routes to schools, local municipal paths, or official neighborhood connectors, are locally important facilities but are not part of the Regional Trails network. Connections from local trails that feed into the Regional Trails network are coordinated between King County and the relevant local jurisdictions.



Regional trails run through residential neighborhoods, commercial and business districts, and industrial areas, as well as farmlands, river valleys, lake shores, foothills, and dense forests. Routes often use abandoned railroad grades, water pipeline and power line corridors, linear parks, river levees and other special features. Some routes use innovative means such as sharing road rights-of-way to fill gaps or extend the network to important destinations. Wooded trail corridors provide routes for wildlife migration throughout the county. For example, Soos Creek Regional Trail parallels one of the largest wetland corridors in King County; this stream and wetland system provide habitat for hundreds of species of animals.

Several regional trails cross county boundaries to the north and south and connect with similar trails in Snohomish and Pierce counties and to the east with the cross-state Palouse to Cascades State Park Trail.

OS-108 King County will maintain a countywide Regional Trails network of shared use (multi-purpose) paths that link communities and offer recreation, active transportation, cultural opportunities, and migration corridors for wildlife.

OS-109 Regional trail corridors serve multiple users and should be designed to accommodate different modes of use. Trail corridors may include separate trail areas for different uses where feasible and practicable.

OS-110 Regional trails may be designated as primary or secondary for mapping or other purposes based on the trail's development condition and its ability to be used for multiple purposes such as bicycling, walking, skating, jogging, horseback riding, or other uses.

3.2.2.3 Natural Areas

Natural areas are characterized by a site's uniqueness or diversity of native vegetation and fish and wildlife habitat, embodying the beauty and character of the region's landscape. These lands often support wetlands, streams and rivers, riparian areas, small lakes and ponds, upland forests and vulnerable or rare habitats.

Natural areas are managed to conserve and enhance ecological value, including native biodiversity, and to accommodate passive recreation use that does not harm ecological resources. Natural areas provide an opportunity for the county to maintain and enhance the ecological value of the region by preserving, protecting, and enhancing ecological processes and habitat features. In the future, some natural areas are likely to provide refuge for certain species from the impacts of climate change.

OS-111 King County values natural areas, also known as ecological lands, and will manage these for their important natural resource functions and character, including but not limited to benefiting and protecting: ecosystems and critical areas such as wetland and riparian areas; air and water quality; fish and wildlife habitat; native biodiversity; healthy and diverse forest cover that promotes resiliency to changing climate conditions and sequesters carbon, reducing the impact of climate change; and other natural or scenic resource purposes.

A "**primary**" regional trail is defined as a shared-use (multi-purpose) regionally significant off-road facility that provides recreational opportunities and enhances regional mobility. Primary trails are facilities that meet regional trail development guidelines for size, grade, and other characteristics and are suitable for multi-purpose use (e.g., bicycling, hiking, jogging, skating, etc.). Some primary trails may also be appropriate for equestrian use.

A "**secondary**" regional trail is a regionally significant off-road facility that provides connections essential to the Regional Trails network, but which may not meet all criteria for shared-use, size, grade, surfacing, and other characteristics. While not being appropriate for all uses, secondary trails may provide important connections within the Regional Trails network. Some secondary trails may be appropriate for equestrian use.





OS-112 King County should provide interpretive and educational programs, nature programs, and activities that emphasize the enjoyment, understanding, and appreciation of the outdoors and natural resources in natural areas.

OS-113 Appropriate public access, use, and management activities should be allowed on natural areas as compatible with the natural resource values of these sites and consistent with 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 site resources. Improvements and enhancements will focus on keeping the site as a fully functioning natural ecosystem.

3.2.2.4 Working Forests

Forests are an important part of the character, environment, and economy that make King County unique. Yet, development pressure in King County has resulted in a

rapid decline in forested acreage and a decline in forest health. Since the values forests provide are best achieved at the landscape level, forest viability quickly erodes when fragmented by conversion to residential development or other land uses.

Healthy forests contribute significant ecological benefits to any open space system by:

- Retaining and infiltrating stormwater to reduce runoff and replenish groundwater
- Storing, filtering, and cooling water for rivers and streams that support fish populations
- Providing fish and wildlife habitat
- Improving air quality
- Reducing wildfire risk
- Sequestering and storing carbon dioxide to help mitigate the impacts of climate change

Forests can also provide economic value, both as a source of revenue generated from harvesting timber and other forest products and as a recreation destination. King County supports working forests, and as such classifies some forested properties as working forestlands. These lands preserve contiguous tracts of forested property (primarily in the Rural Forest Focus Areas and the Forest Production District) to retain active forestry, protect areas from development and/or provide a buffer between commercial forests and adjacent residential development.

King County's working forests were acquired for, and are managed to support, sustainable timber production in service to conservation and restoration objectives. These lands also provide for public use where appropriate. Forestry-related policies may also guide management of forested areas within sites with other Level 2 designations such as recreation, natural area, or multi-use sites.

OS-114 Forests should be conserved in key areas through land or easement acquisitions to provide a buffer between commercial forestland and adjacent residential development, to protect forested lands from development, and to retain lands in forest cover.

OS-115 Management goals for working forestlands should include enhancing ecological benefits and functions, demonstrating best forest management practices, providing passive recreation opportunities, and generating revenue to facilitate sustainable management of those sites.

3.2.2.5 Multi-Use Sites

King County multi-use sites include lands that have ecological value, but may also support both active and passive recreation, with less intensively developed facilities and natural resource areas. Many of

these sites are distinguished into informal levels of use “zones,” directing heavy public use to sections of the park to preserve and protect native habitat and natural resources in other areas. Thus, these sites can be more heavily used by hikers, horseback riders and mountain bikers while serving as key upland wildlife corridors. Forest management, restoration and stewardship activities may also be appropriate on these sites. Additionally, some multi-use sites are large enough to accommodate multiple fishbearing streams and essential wetlands and bogs.



3.2.3 Working with Other Jurisdictions

King County often works with neighboring jurisdictions to develop shared visions and strategies, implement projects, and collaboratively grow and manage public parks, trails, and natural lands. Designating local facilities within unincorporated King County can also help guide future ownership responsibilities. Consistent with the State Growth Management Act and the Countywide Planning Policies, King County can also temporarily steward open spaces if they annex to cities in the future.

- OS-116** When appropriate, King County will transfer local parks and other open space sites to the cities in which they are located. Transfer of local open space sites should be included as part of annexation or incorporation interlocal agreements that cover other services and facilities.
- OS-117** King County will encourage and promote the transfer of local parks in the urban growth area to the cities in whose potential annexation area they are located upon annexation.
- OS-118** King County should retain ownership of regional open space system assets, including sites that lie within both urban and rural areas and those that serve as “urban separators” providing a buffer along the urban growth area boundary. However, partnerships and cost-sharing are encouraged to maximize opportunities and enhance levels of service.

3.3 Regional Facilities

Additional facilities and features are located throughout King County’s open space system, from backcountry trails to historic landmarks (discussed further in chapters 6 and 7. Parks also constructs and maintains many facilities throughout the open space system for public benefit, including parking lots, restrooms, and picnic and rest areas. The Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center has an Olympic-sized pool that hosts over 50 competitive events during a typical year and provides space for public lap swims and family swims. Throughout the Parks system, over 80 ballfields, 25 picnic shelters, a community center, and an outdoor concert venue are available to be reserved for private use.

- OS-119** One focus of King County’s efforts in aquatics will be the operation of the Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center as a venue for regional, national, and international competitive events and recreation programs.

3.4 Open Space Inventory

King County’s open space system inventory has experienced considerable change since its beginnings in the early twentieth century. Many of the system’s first parks were donated to the county, and early park facility development was prompted by the Works Progress Administration’s construction of community centers. Many initial county park sites and facilities are now owned and operated by cities that have expanded or incorporated in the ensuing years. The tables on the following pages describe King County’s open space system inventory, identifying each site by its primary role and classification as described earlier in this chapter. The classification system provides a method to describe the role of each site in the system and provides the framework for each site’s stewardship and management.

This inventory list provides a snapshot of King County’s open space lands and assets as of December 2021 and can be expected to change in the future as, for example, new sites are acquired. Please see “Definitions and Terminology” for more information about the terms fee and easement.

LOCAL PARKS			
Park Name	Open Space Classification	Fee (Easement)	Urban or Rural
Bingaman Pond Natural Area	Natural Area	17.18 (.76)	Urban
Boulevard Lane Park	Multi-use	30.31	Urban
Bridle Crest Trail Site	Recreation	1.51 (.56)	Urban
Bryn Mawr Park	Recreation	4.81	Urban
Camelot Park	Multi-use	18.08	Urban
Cedar Creek Park	Multi-use	117.52 (.17)	Rural
Coalfield Park	Multi-use	19.83	Rural
Cottage Lake Park	Multi-use	20.75	Rural
Dick Thurnau Memorial Park	Recreation	30.61	Urban
Dockton Park	Recreation	21.05	Rural
Duvall Park	Multi-use	23.96	Rural
Echo Lake Interchange Site	Natural Area	7.75	Rural
Fall City Park	Multi-use	29.26	Rural
Fall City Park West	Multi-use	33.36	Rural
Five Mile Lake Park	Recreation	25.16	Urban
Flaming Geyser Park*	Multi-use	104.34	Rural
Glendale Forest	Multi-use	4.84	Urban
Gold Creek Park	Recreation	34.69	Rural
Hamm Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	3.88	Urban
Hollywood Hills Equestrian Park	Recreation	7.29 (12.24)	Rural
Honeydew Park	Multi-use	.15	Urban
Hyde Lake Park	Multi-use	81.96	Rural
Instebo Park	Recreation	.67	Rural
Kathryn Taylor Equestrian Park	Recreation	25.96	Rural
Lake Desire 2 Natural Area	Natural Area	1.10	Urban
Lake Francis Park	Recreation	9.66	Rural
Lake Geneva Park	Recreation	18.78	Urban
Lake Joy Park	Recreation	.74	Rural
Levdansky Park	Recreation	17.27	Rural
Maple Valley Heights Park	Recreation	2.95	Rural
Maplewood Heights Park	Recreation	19.16	Urban
Maplewood Park	Recreation	44.61	Urban
Matsuda Farm	Multi-use	(12.23)	Rural

LOCAL PARKS			
Park Name	Open Space Classification	Fee (Easement)	Urban or Rural
May Creek Park- County	Natural Area	48.70	Urban
May Valley Park	Recreation	54.27	Rural
Mirrormont Park	Multi-use	10.82	Rural
Mukai Barreling Plant	Multi-use	1.88	Rural
North Green River Park	Multi-use	97.11	Urban/Rural
North Shorewood Park	Recreation	6.26	Urban
Northshore Athletic Fields	Recreation	19.10	Rural
Novelty Hill Little League Fields	Recreation	6.62	Urban
Ormes Hill Park Site	Multi-use	9.54	Urban
Preston Park	Recreation	.56	Rural
Quigley Park	Recreation	.35	Rural
Ravenhill Open Space	Multi-use	25.70	Rural
Ravensdale Park	Recreation	42.47	Rural
Redmond Ridge Park	Recreation	10.00	Urban
Renton Park	Multi-use	10.09	Urban
Sierra Heights Park	Recreation	8.30	Urban
Sixty Acres Park	Recreation	89.68	Urban/Rural
Skyway Park	Recreation	24.74	Urban
South County Ballfields	Recreation	21.16	Urban
Sunset Playfield	Recreation	13.95*	Urban
Wayne Golf Course Back 9 Conservation Easement	Natural Area	(37.02)	Urban
White Center Heights Park	Recreation	6.62	Urban
Whitney Bridge Park	Multi-use	49.83	Rural

*Managed by others

REGIONAL PARKS			
Park Name	Open Space Classification	Fee (Easement)	Urban or Rural
Ames Lake Forest	Working Forest	(425.38)	Rural
Auburn Narrows Natural Area	Natural Area	104.85	Urban/Rural
Bass Lake Complex Natural Area	Natural Area	600.56	Rural
Bassett Pond Natural Area	Natural Area	31.71	Rural
Bear Creek Forest	Natural Area	(4.54)	Rural
Belmondo Reach Natural Area	Natural Area	23.79	Rural
Big Bend Natural Area	Natural Area	101.37	Rural

REGIONAL PARKS			
Park Name	Open Space Classification	Fee (Easement)	Urban or Rural
Big Finn Hill Park	Multi-use	218.84	Urban
Big Spring/Newaukum Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	198.19 (80.57)	Urban/Rural
Black Diamond Open Space	Multi-use	1163.23 (81.85)	Rural
BN Peninsula Natural Area	Natural Area	23.69	Rural
Boxley Creek Site	Multi-use	146.63	Rural
Byers Bend Natural Area	Natural Area	.57	Rural
Camp Sealth Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	(99.19)	Rural
Canyon Creek Headwaters Natural Area	Natural Area	104.75 (4.77)	Rural
Canyon Creek Natural Area	Multi-use	(27.45)	Rural
Carey Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	(9.91)	Rural
Carnation Marsh Natural Area	Natural Area	186.71	Rural
Cavanaugh Pond Natural Area	Natural Area	62.25	Rural
Cecil Moses Memorial Park	Recreation	3.25	Urban
Cedar Grove Natural Area	Natural Area	74.92	Rural
Cedar Grove Road Natural Area	Natural Area	5.66	Rural
Cemetery Reach Natural Area	Natural Area	45.87 (.21)	Rural
Chinook Bend Natural Area	Natural Area	73.89 (2.73)	Rural
Christiansen Pond Natural Area	Natural Area	(19.17)	Rural
Cold Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	139.83	Rural
Corbin Beach Natural Area	Natural Area	3.38	Rural
Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park	Multi-use	3322.01 (6.19)	Urban/Rural
Cougar/Squak Corridor	Multi-use	729.32 (.80)	Rural
Covington Natural Area	Natural Area	55.84	Rural
Cross Kirkland Corridor	Recreation	(67.61)	Urban
Crow Marsh Natural Area	Natural Area	25.86 (100.05)	Rural
Danville-Georgetown Open Space	Multi-use	338.26	Rural
Dockton Forest	Working Forest	127.71	Rural
Dockton Natural Area	Natural Area	44.34	Rural
Dorre Don Reach Natural Area	Natural Area	94.34 (.85)	Rural
Duthie Hill Park	Multi-use	135.63 (49.22)	Rural
Ellis Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	3.25	Rural
Evans Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	38.22 (71.31)	Rural
Fall City Natural Area	Natural Area	71.86	Rural

REGIONAL PARKS			
Park Name	Open Space Classification	Fee (Easement)	Urban or Rural
Fisher Creek Forest	Working Forest	20.26	Rural
Flaming Geyser Natural Area	Natural Area	82.53	Rural
Forest Glen Natural Area	Natural Area	3.76	Rural
Fred V. Habenicht Rotary Park	Recreation	4.69	Rural
Frog Holler Forest	Working Forest	150.08 (5.02)	Rural
Grand Ridge Park	Multi-use	1296.23 (.88)	Urban/Rural
Green River Natural Area	Natural Area	1289.23 (.19)	Rural
Griffin Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	71.97 (2.58)	Rural
Hatchery Natural Area	Natural Area	49.65	Rural
Hazel Wolf Wetland Natural Area	Natural Area	(115.93)	Rural
Henry's Ridge Open Space	Multi-use	246.72	Rural
High Point Natural Area	Natural Area	(1.21)	Rural
Horsehead Bend Natural Area	Natural Area	34.91	Rural
Inspiration Point Natural Area	Natural Area	6.07 (6.62)	Rural
Island Center Forest	Working Forest	366.74	Rural
Island Center Forest Equestrian Trail	Recreation	(.43)	Rural
Island Center Forest Natural Area	Natural Area	81.90	Rural
Issaquah Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	48.79	Urban/Rural
Jenkins Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	7.26	Rural
Jones Reach Natural Area	Natural Area	2.54	Rural
Juanita Triangle Park	Multi-use	.62	Urban
Juanita Woodlands Park	Multi-use	36.37	Urban
Judd Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	(10.96)	Rural
Kanaskat Natural Area	Natural Area	197.78	Rural
Kathryn C. Lewis Natural Area	Natural Area	10.05	Rural
Lake Youngs Park	Recreation	4.81	Urban
Landsburg Reach Natural Area	Natural Area	87.66	Rural
Little Lake Forest	Working Forest	157.89 (.51)	Rural
Little Si Natural Area	Natural Area	28.39 (.38)	Rural
Log Cabin Reach Natural Area	Natural Area	118.18	Rural
Lost Lake Natural Area	Natural Area	15.24	Rural
Lower Bear Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	19.12	Rural
Lower Cedar River Natural Area	Natural Area	(10.90)	Rural
Lower Lions Reach Natural Area	Natural Area	9.88	Rural
Lower Newaukum Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	167.72 (78.59)	Rural

REGIONAL PARKS			
Park Name	Open Space Classification	Fee (Easement)	Urban or Rural
Lower Peterson Creek Corridor Natural Area	Natural Area	70.55	Rural
Manzanita Natural Area	Natural Area	28.96	Rural
Marjorie R. Stanley Natural Area	Natural Area	17.58	Rural
Marymoor Park	Recreation	618.43	Urban
Maury Island Marine Park	Multi-use	338.45	Rural
Maury Island Natural Area	Natural Area	275.87	Rural
May Valley 164th Natural Area	Natural Area	3.66	Rural
McGarvey Park Open Space	Multi-use	400.39	Rural
Middle Bear Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	121.15 (38.38)	Rural
Middle Boise Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	7.00 (4.40)	Rural
Middle Evans Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	(38.94)	Rural
Middle Fork Snoqualmie Natural Area	Natural Area	651.48 (79.35)	Rural
Middle Issaquah Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	244.54	Rural
Mitchell Hill Connector Forest	Working Forest	571.92 (30.97)	Rural
Mitchell Hill East Equestrian	Recreation	(.64)	Rural
Molasses Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	(14.40)	Urban
Moss Lake Natural Area	Natural Area	371.93	Rural
Mouth of Taylor Reach Natural Area	Natural Area	33.61 (2.78)	Rural
Neely Bridge Natural Area	Natural Area	36.88	Rural
Neill Point Natural Area	Natural Area	58.69	Rural
Northilla Beach Natural Area	Natural Area	6.16	Rural
Nowak Natural Area	Natural Area	8.08	Rural
Old Mill Trail	Recreation	(13.39)	Rural
Paradise Lake Natural Area	Natural Area	138.12 (95.37)	Rural
Paradise Valley Natural Area	Natural Area	4.72 (112.99)	Rural
Patterson Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	345.12 (49.13)	Urban/Rural
Patterson Creek Preserve Forest	Working Forest	(243.01)	Rural
Peterson Lake Natural Area	Natural Area	144.89	Rural
Petrovitsky Park	Multi-use	88.03	Urban
Piner Point Natural Area	Natural Area	18.40	Rural
Pinnacle Peak Park	Multi-use	347.56 (.22)	Rural
Pipeline Number 5 Trail Site	Recreation	(.93)	Urban

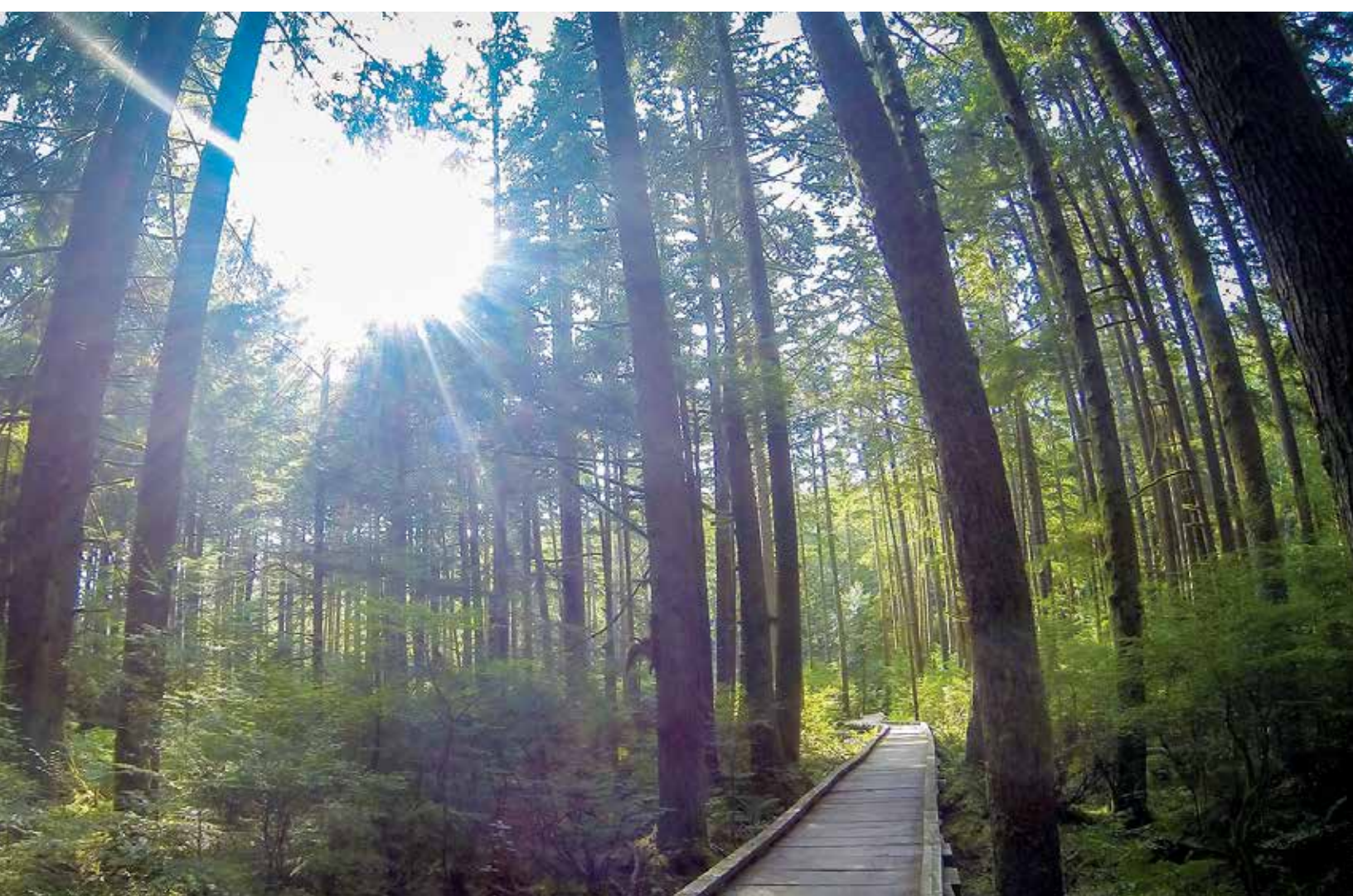
REGIONAL PARKS			
Park Name	Open Space Classification	Fee (Easement)	Urban or Rural
Point Heyer Natural Area	Natural Area	56.48 (21.54)	Rural
Porter Levee Natural Area	Natural Area	51.35	Rural
Preston Athletic Fields	Recreation	13.81	Rural
Preston Mill	Recreation	21.67	Rural
Preston Ridge Forest	Working Forest	224.58	Rural
PSE Trail Site	Recreation	.28	Rural
Raabs Lagoon Natural Area	Natural Area	17.07	Rural
Raging River Natural Area	Natural Area	81.31	Rural
Rattlesnake Mountain Scenic Area	Multi-use	1971.01 (18.21)	Rural
Ravensdale Retreat Natural Area	Natural Area	145.63	Rural
Redmond Ridge Trail Site	Recreation	.19 (9.73)	Urban
Redmond Watershed Addition Park	Recreation	2.47	Rural
Redmond Watershed Trail Site	Recreation	.56 (.34)	Rural
Ricardi Reach Natural Area	Natural Area	10.12	Rural
Ring Hill Forest	Working Forest	320.52	Rural
Rock Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	143.54	Rural
Shadow Lake Natural Area	Natural Area	41.64 (53.03)	Rural
Shinglemill Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	69.25 (45.00)	Rural
Snoqualmie Forest	Working Forest	(89632.10)	Rural
Soaring Eagle Regional Park	Multi-use	810.10 (2.70)	Rural
Spring Beach Natural Area	Natural Area	23.81	Rural
Spring Lake/Lake Desire Park	Multi-use	392.83 (.22)	Urban/Rural
Squak Mt/Tiger Mt Corridor	Multi-use	266.24	Rural
Steve Cox Memorial Park	Recreation	12.03	Urban
Stillwater Natural Area	Natural Area	45.39 (101.41)	Rural
Stossel Creek Forest	Working Forest	(52.27)	Rural
Sugarloaf Mountain Forest	Working Forest	292.54 (.32)	Rural
Tanner Landing Park	Multi-use	40.80	Rural
Taylor Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	5.62	Rural
Taylor Mountain Forest	Working Forest	1923.88	Rural
Tennant Trailhead Park Conservation Easement	Multi-use	(2.88)	Urban
Three Forks Park	Multi-use	290.20 (.71)	Rural
Tokul Creek Forest	Working Forest	158.51 (541.65)	Rural

REGIONAL PARKS			
Park Name	Open Space Classification	Fee (Easement)	Urban or Rural
Tollgate Farm	Multi-use	167.48	Rural
Tolt River – John MacDonald Park	Multi-use	522.10	Urban/Rural
Tolt River Natural Area	Natural Area	310.50	Rural
Uplands Forest	Working Forest	(506.13)	Rural
Upper Bear Creek Natural Area	Natural Area	32.27 (16.00)	Rural
Upper Green River Watershed Forest	Working Forest	(45041.38)	Rural
Upper Preston Natural Area	Natural Area	16.53	Rural
Upper Raging River Forest	Working Forest	(5837.43)	Rural
Vashon Golf and Country Club Conservation Easement	Natural Area	(44.47)	Rural
Wetland 14 Natural Area	Natural Area	66.13	Rural
Wetland 79 Natural Area	Natural Area	6.88	Rural

REGIONAL TRAILS			
Trail Name	Open Space Classification	Fee (Easement)	Urban or Rural
Burke-Gilman Trail Site	Recreation	31.12	Urban
Cedar River to Lake Sammamish Trail Site	Recreation	21.78 (2.21)	Urban/Rural
Cedar River Trail Site	Recreation	145.86 (30.39)	Urban/Rural
East Lake Sammamish Trail Site	Recreation	122.30 (.21)	Urban
East Plateau Trail Site	Recreation	27.33 (3.52)	Urban/Rural
Eastrail	Recreation	172.36 (13.49)	Urban/Rural
Eastrail – Woodinville	Recreation	(29.03)	Urban
Fall City to Snoqualmie Valley Trail Connector Site	Recreation	(.54)	Rural
Foothills Trail Site	Recreation	72.91 (.58)	Rural
Green River Trail Site	Recreation	25.82 (5.09)	Urban
Green to Cedar Rivers Trail Site	Recreation	131.89 (23.71)	Urban/Rural
Klahanie Trail Site	Recreation	(7.59)	Urban
Lake to Sound Trail Site	Recreation	.53 (.31)	Urban
Landsburg Kanaskat Trail Site	Recreation	21.46 (.28)	Rural
Marymoor Connector Trail Site	Recreation	(1.48)	Urban
Preston Snoqualmie Trail Site	Recreation	89.05 (.60)	Rural
Sammamish River Trail Site	Recreation	130.23 (.31)	Urban/Rural
Snoqualmie Valley Trail Site	Recreation	596.37	Urban/Rural

REGIONAL TRAILS			
Trail Name	Open Space Classification	Fee (Easement)	Urban or Rural
Soos Creek Park and Trail	Multi-use	895.86 (73.81)	Urban/Rural
Soos Creek to Lake Youngs Trail Site	Recreation	.48	Rural
Tokul Bypass Site	Recreation	(34.79)	Urban
Tolt Pipeline Trail East Norway Hill Site	Recreation	2.36	Urban
West Sammamish Trail Site	Recreation	56.44 (7.86)	Urban/Rural

POOLS		
Name	Open Space Classification	Urban or Rural
Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center Site	Recreation	Other





CHAPTER FOUR: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT

4.1 How Parks Engages the Public

As both a regional and local service provider, Parks is responsible for serving all King County residents. King County involves, engages, and informs the public about ways to explore and enjoy its open space system, while also creating avenues for participation in the acquisition, planning, design, development, activation, and management of its parks, trails, and recreation facilities.

4.1.1 Context and Approach

Public involvement and engagement is an ongoing practice that can range from educational efforts about the system and its benefits to informing the design of parks facilities to shared decision-making about policy priorities and budget investments.

- PIE-101** King County will encourage public understanding of, involvement in, and commitment to open space conservation and recreation and the associated health, environmental, and economic benefits.
- PIE-102** King County shall seek and encourage public input, advice and participation in decision-making on open space system issues consistent with King County's Strategic Plan, Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan, community engagement standards, and DNRP's Equity and Social Justice Policy.
- PIE-103** King County will provide equitable access for priority populations in public involvement and engagement activities.
- PIE-104** King County will facilitate, through translation, trans-creation, and interpretation, understanding and access to information and decision-making processes for persons who are non-English speaking or have limited English proficiency consistent with King County's language access policies.

4.1.2 Engagement Practices and Tools

In addition to its collaboration-oriented approach outlined in Chapter 5, King County uses a variety of practices and tools to communicate with and engage King County residents and other stakeholders in programs, projects, and decision-making processes. These practices and tools are informed by and consistent with King County's equity and social justice and language access policies.

Some examples include:

- **SeeClickFix.** Accessed via internet or mobile app, SeeClickFix is a customer service tool that allows an individual to report an issue – such as vandalism or a downed tree – directly to King County Parks by providing an incident description, geo-tag of the location, and photo. Progress to address the issue is tracked publicly, so that any user can see the issue's status and resolution.
- **King County Parks digital engagement.** By creating inclusive multi-media content and using a range of social media platforms and other electronic tools, King County Parks can effectively reach the public in timely and engaging ways.

- **Input gathering.** King County Parks gathers input directly through surveys (online, intercept), focus groups, and virtual and in-person meetings with park and trail visitors, residents, community partners, and other stakeholders.
- **Outreach events.** Although COVID-19 required the cancelation of in-person gatherings in 2020 and 2021, under normal circumstances King County Parks staff attend fairs, festivals, and other gatherings. Staff participation provides opportunities to interact directly with the public, answer questions, and distribute information about King County's parks, trails, and the open space system.

4.1.3 Advisory Boards

King County establishes advisory committees to provide input and recommendations on many different issues affecting the planning and management of its open space system. (Chapter 5 outlines examples of additional coalitions that support Parks' work, including the Play Equity Coalition, Leafline Trails Coalition, and Recreate Responsibly Coalition.)

Examples of current advisory committees include the following:

- **The Parks Levy Oversight Board** meets annually to review King County Parks' levy expenditures from the previous year and progress towards meeting levy commitments. The board is appointed by the King County Executive for the term of the levy period and consists of one representative from each council district.
- **The Conservation Futures Advisory Committee** makes annual recommendations for allocation of Conservation Futures Tax levy funds to King County jurisdictions and Parks Levy funds for King County-led acquisitions.
- **The Open Space Equity Cabinet** was formed in 2018 to help set new policy related to the Conservation Futures Program in order to accelerate more equitable investments in historically underserved unincorporated areas. Parks continues to implement the cabinet's recommendations, as well as consult with cabinet members when appropriate to inform new plans and policies.
- **Parks Levy Grant Advisory Committees** were established to advise on the development of four grantmaking programs funded by the 2020-2025 King County Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Space Levy. Committees include representatives from other parks agencies, school districts, tribal agencies, non-profit and community organizations, and subject matter experts. In addition to advising on program development, the committees also evaluate applications and provide funding recommendations to the County Executive. The King County Council has final authority on funding recommendations.
- **The King County Rural Forest Commission** represents a variety of rural forest interests and advises King County on policies and programs affecting rural forestry. The commission works to identify strategies to conserve and manage private and county forestlands and promotes the practice of forestry in rural areas of the county.
- **The King County Executive Horse Council** is an umbrella organization of equestrians that supports the horse industry and equestrian way of life by advocating for the protection and creation of equestrian trails and facilities.





CHAPTER FIVE: PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS

5.1 Introduction

Adopted in 2003 in response to a county budgetary crisis, the Parks Omnibus Ordinance (14509) gives Parks the authority and flexibility to pursue, evaluate, and enter into strategic partnerships that enhance King County's open space system and help meet the open space and recreation needs of residents and visitors. Since that time, King County Parks has evolved a partnership-based approach to achieving its mission, which engages public agencies, tribes, non-profit and community organizations, and the private sector to:

- Deliver recreation opportunities to King County residents
- Develop and enhance recreation facilities throughout King County
- Acquire and activate open space throughout King County
- Generate revenue for the operation and maintenance of King County's parks and trails

King County pursues these relationships through a variety of activities, including community outreach, requests for proposals, and by directly engaging with agencies, groups, and businesses to identify collaboration opportunities.

King County, its communities and residents, and public and private partners all benefit from this partnership-based approach by:

- Enhancing the capacity of all stakeholders to meet shared goals related to parks, recreation, trails, and open space
- Nurturing a sense of ownership and stewardship by empowering residents to invest in, connect with, and be knowledgeable about their open space system
- Amplifying public dollars by leveraging the contributions and expertise of partners

The following policies provide the framework for King County's partnership model. The overarching goal is to deliver more public benefit through strategic collaboration:

- PCI-101** King County shall encourage and pursue partnerships and mutually beneficial agreements with public agencies, tribes, non-profit and community organizations, and the private sector to fund, program, manage, and steward sites and facilities for public recreation and natural resource protection consistent with the classification, role, and use of said sites and facilities.
- PCI-102** King County will assess and prioritize partnerships to ensure they advance multiple public benefits and meet the greatest needs related to King County's open space system.
- PCI-103** When assessing potential concession agreements and business endeavors, King County will evaluate proposals based upon multiple factors, such as compatibility with site management goals, enhancement of recreation experiences (especially for priority populations), creation of stewardship opportunities for residents, effectiveness and efficiency in delivery of services, revenue generation, and potential for uncompensated costs to the county.
- PCI-104** King County will pursue partnership opportunities for capital improvements that enhance revenue generation and create additional public recreation opportunities in appropriate locations.

PCI-105 King County will advance awareness and appreciation of King County's open space system by engaging individuals in volunteer service that helps enhance and maintain parks, recreation facilities, trails, open space, and natural resources.

PCI-106 Depending upon funding availability, King County will award grants that protect and enhance parks, trails, and recreation facilities, increase access to and participation in physical activity programs, and improve the health and well-being of King County residents. Eligible applicants should include public agencies, tribes, and non-profit organizations serving residents of King County.

PCI-107 King County will use an equity lens in grantmaking to prioritize funding for programs and projects that improve health outcomes and reduce disparities in priority populations and communities.



5.2 Types of Partnerships

5.2.1 Jurisdictions, Agencies, and Tribes

5.2.1.1 Agency and Jurisdictional Coordination

In keeping with the Clean Water Healthy Habitat strategy to integrate work across departments and divisions, Parks partners with other King County agencies, such as the Water and Land Resources Division and King County Metro, to deliver services and grow and steward King County's open space system. Parks also forms partnerships with other public agencies and jurisdictions, such as school districts, cities, and parks districts, to coordinate system planning, programming, acquisitions, and development.

Examples of these partnerships include:

- **Trailhead Direct.** To address vehicle congestion at popular trailheads along the I-90 corridor and improve access to recreation opportunities, Parks and Metro collaborated with multiple community and corporate partners to offer Trailhead Direct, a seasonal recreation shuttle service that was launched in 2017.
- **Forest health.** Parks and the Water and Land Resources Division partner to provide expertise, staffing, and resources with the shared goal of maintaining and improving the health of King County-managed forests. Staff from both divisions collaborate to plan and implement a variety of forest health projects across King County's open space system every year.
- **Supported employment.** Parks works with the Department of Human Resources through its supported employment program to offer paid, competitive employment opportunities to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- **Downtown Redmond Link Extension.** Parks is partnering with Sound Transit to incorporate design and construction of the East Lake Sammamish Trail North Extension into Sound Transit's overall Downtown Redmond Link Extension Design-Build Project. This short segment of the East Lake Sammamish Trail extends through the busy SR 520/202 Intersection and over Bear Creek, creating a safe, off-street, paved pathway for people to cross the highway.
- **Supporting youth education and enrichment.** Through its White Center Teen Program, Parks collaborates with the Highline School District to provide local youth and their families with educational, nutritional, recreational and social development programs and opportunities year-round. Examples of these opportunities include access to free sports and nutrition programs (including daily meals), academic and enrichment tutoring and development, opportunities for



leadership development, community investment, youth employment, and visual and performing arts programming.

- **Service-learning and volunteerism.** Service-learning provides an opportunity to meet learning objectives while providing service to a community. Parks collaborates with school districts to provide service-learning, outdoor environmental education opportunities, and customized programming for students of all ages. Partners include (but are not limited to) Highline School District, Lake Washington School District, Tahoma School District, Renton School District, and Vashon Island School District.

- **Big Backyard Movies.** To enhance free summer programming for King County residents, Parks supports other park agencies, such as the Si View Metropolitan Parks District, to produce outdoor movie night events.

5.2.1.2 Tribal Consultation, Coordination, and Engagement

King County is located within the traditional territory of the Coast Salish People and continues to be home to these indigenous people. Tribes in King County are valuable partners and supporters of open space acquisition, restoration, and protection.

Ancestors of present-day members of the Tulalip, Suquamish, Snoqualmie, Duwamish, Muckleshoot, and Puyallup Tribes negotiated terms for ongoing co-existence with the United States in 1854-1855 and memorialized those terms by signing the Treaties of Medicine Creek and/or Point Elliott.

The Tulalip, Suquamish, Snoqualmie, Muckleshoot, and Puyallup Tribes are all federally recognized Indian tribes, each of whom retain sovereign rights to govern themselves; maintain discrete homeland reservations; and interact with the landscape to meet their spiritual, subsistence, and economic needs. King County maintains a relationship with each of these Tribes structured on government-to-government principles and embraces the concept of tribal self-determination.

King County is committed to following current law and will continue to update policies and practices according to court decisions. By the terms of the Treaties, the Tulalip, Suquamish, Muckleshoot, and Puyallup Tribes each reserved unto themselves: the right to take fish at their respective usual and accustomed fishing places (a right which has been adjudicated and reaffirmed in Federal courts); and the privilege to hunt and gather on open and unclaimed lands. Members of all of these Tribes have traditional fishing, hunting, and gathering places located within the County.

The Duwamish Tribe has not received federal recognition as an Indian tribe and does not have a designated reservation homeland. Alternatively, the Tribe continues to exist in the form of Duwamish Tribal Services, a non-profit organization that maintains the Duwamish Longhouse and provides social and cultural services to Tribal members while the Tribe continues to seek federal recognition and establishment of a federal reservation homeland.

Parks intends to timely consult and cooperate with each Indian tribe on actions that directly and tangibly affect a tribe, its rights, and/or its lands and resources. Consultation generally includes the following steps:

- Identify interested tribes and appropriate tribal officials with authority early in the consultation process
- Make initial contact with tribal officials to give notice of intended County action
- Determine, with tribal direction, whether an action requires consultation
- Meet with tribal officials to identify tribal interests and issues
- Integrate tribal input and coordination into planning, design, approval, and permitting processes
- Provide for tribal oversight of project implementation where reasonable and appropriate

5.2.2 Community and Corporate Partnerships

Parks has a range of formal and informal relationships with community-based and non-profit organizations, recreation groups, coalitions, and businesses to achieve specific objectives. These goals include delivering recreation programming, developing and maintaining recreation facilities, educating and engaging King County residents, and generating revenue that supports the operation and maintenance of King County's open space system. These partnerships vary in nature and complexity and often involve some level of volunteer commitment from the partner.

5.2.2.1 Community Partnerships

Some examples of community partnerships include the following:

- **Eastrail Partners** collaborates with Parks to convene and catalyze advocacy and community engagement for the trail and to establish community awareness that builds diverse support for the development, maintenance, and activation of the trail.
- **Forterra** supports innovative land-based solutions to advance conservation and address the climate crisis. The organization helps King County advance key environmental initiatives, assisting with open space acquisitions, providing strategic support for the Transfer of Development Rights program, and facilitating many other restoration and conservation activities across the county.
- **Washington Trails Association** works to preserve and promote hiking opportunities across the state. They collaborate with Parks in many ways, for example, constructing and maintaining natural surface trails at sites in King County's open space system, as well as educating and engaging people in hiking and enjoying the outdoors.
- **African Youth Dreamers Empowerment International's** mission is to create sustainable measures that build resilience in vulnerable immigrant youth through holistic investment. The group collaborates with Parks' Volunteer Program to deliver ongoing service-learning and nature exploration experiences for participants alongside staff.
- **Friends of Big Finn Hill Park Trails** is a community-based group that advocates for the development and protection of trails and the environment at Big Finn Hill Park. They collaborate with Parks to enhance the park's trail system, protect the park's natural resources, and educate visitors about the park.
- **Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance** works to preserve and promote mountain biking across the state. They collaborate with Parks in many ways, such as planning and constructing mountain bike trails and facilities, engaging volunteers in stewarding those trails, and offering programming at multiple sites in King County's open space system.
- **ECOSS** envisions thriving communities that are environmentally sustainable and equitable. The group delivers a range of culturally relevant environmental programs, collaborating with Parks to provide multi-cultural and community-level engagement in Parks' initiatives, particularly in south King County.
- **Trust for Public Land** creates parks and protects land for people, ensuring healthy, livable communities for generations to come. The organization partners with Parks to support natural lands acquisition, provides expertise related to equitable access and placemaking, and advocates for creative solutions to fund and advance strategic initiatives.





- **Mountains to Sound Greenway** collaboratively plans and implements the Greenway vision with local, state, and federal entities; tribes; non-profit organizations; the private sector; and community members. In 2019, the Greenway—which extends from Seattle to Ellensburg—was designated as a National Heritage Site. Parks partners with the organization across many projects and shared priorities, including strategic acquisitions, habitat restoration, and invasive weed control.
- **Vashon-Maury Island Land Trust** conserves land and protects the natural ecosystems and rural character of Vashon-Maury Island. They collaborate with Parks to acquire and conserve lands on the island.
- **GirlTrek** is a national organization that seeks to engage African American women and girls in a health movement, grounded in civil rights history and through walking campaigns, community leadership, and health advocacy. Their local chapter collaborates with Parks to engage African American women in recreation opportunities available at King County parks and trails.

Some examples of broader collaborations include the following:

- **The Leafline Trails Coalition** envisions an interconnected network of shared use trails across the Central Puget Sound region to improve health, community, quality of life, mobility, and access for all. Initiated by Parks in 2019, Leafline Trails Coalition is made up of more than 50 members, including businesses, community organizations, and government agencies across King, Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish counties. Leafline members maximize their collective impact by creating a shared map vision for trails, enhancing the trail visitor experience, promoting awareness of the Leafline’s trails, and advocating to fill gaps in the trails network.
- **The King County Play Equity Coalition** grew from the recommendations of the 2019 State of Play: Seattle-King County report, which found that 81 percent of youth in King County do not meet the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendation of 60 minutes of daily physical activity. The Coalition values centering communities of color, empowering play at all levels, collaborating across sectors, and disrupting systemic racism. The collective impact approach provides a structure for cross-sector collaboration, shared measurement, a common agenda, and mutually reinforcing activities. Parks was key a contributor to the report and founding member of the coalition, which is comprised of more than 100 members including park agencies, school districts, recreation groups, social service agencies, public health providers, community-based organizations, and businesses including the region’s professional sports teams. Current efforts are focused on supporting a safe return to play during the COVID-19 pandemic, equitable access to facilities, and a community-centered participatory grantmaking process.
- **The Recreate Responsibly Coalition** evolved in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, when land managers, recreation groups, and others in the outdoor recreation industry in Washington state came together and leveraged their collective expertise and impact to develop clear messages about and approaches to recreating outdoors during the pandemic. The movement has since become national, with chapters in seven states. The coalition continues to evolve, promoting all facets of responsible, inclusive outdoor recreation.

5.2.2.2 Corporate Partnerships

Consistent with the Parks Omnibus Ordinance (14509), King County cultivates and establishes corporate partnerships that increase recreation opportunities for King County residents and generate revenue to support King County’s open space system. Revenues generated from these public-private partnerships are necessary to ensure the continued maintenance and operation of the system.

King County prioritizes corporate partnerships that advance multiple benefits, including those that result in enhanced recreation opportunities for priority populations as defined in the county's equity and social justice policies. These public-private partnerships can take different forms, including concessions, sponsorships, special events and promotions, facility rentals, and public-private real estate development, among others.

Some examples of public-private partnerships include:

- **Special events and facility use agreements.** Cirque Du Soleil, Marymoor Park Concerts, Timber! Outdoor Music Festival, and the Cougar Mountain Trail Run Series generate revenue from the use of King County's parks and trails and provide programming for King County residents.
- **Hosting corporate events.** REI conducts many of their outdoor classes and events at King County's parks and trails.
- **Sponsorship opportunities.** Swedish Medical Center sponsored the Marymoor Park Concert Series, with proceeds going towards the maintenance and operation of King County's open space system.
- **Concession agreements.** Local businesses, such as Carnation Paddle Sports, the Wash Spot, and Fall City Floating, generate revenue for Parks and provide beneficial services to park and trail visitors.



5.3 Community Investments and Grantmaking

5.3.1 Community Programs

Parks largely relies on partners to provide recreation programming in its parks and facilities and on its trails. However, Parks operates several direct service programs that promote engagement with the open space system and expand access to recreation opportunities, especially for historically underserved populations.

5.3.1.1 Volunteer Program: Engaging Communities in the Health of King County Parks

Parks' Volunteer Program leads community members of all ages in high-quality outdoor service experiences with the goal of connecting and engaging participants in the health of King County's open space system. Together with partners, the Volunteer Program leads an average of 10,000 volunteers a year in performing restoration, enhancing park spaces, and building and maintaining trails. Volunteering and environmental education build a sense of place and belonging, serving both the individual and helping care for and support King County's parks, trails, and open spaces.

There are many ways for community members to be involved. Volunteer program staff lead public projects every weekend and collaborate with schools, corporations, non-profit organizations, and youth groups to design and lead custom service-learning projects throughout King County. Program staff also lead the Youth Conservation Corps and additional year-round opportunities for young people to engage in both service-learning and paid training.



The Volunteer Program values building connection between people and the land, commitment to service-learning, centering equity through all actions, relationship-focused partnership, and leading with a growth mindset.



5.3.1.2 Youth Conservation Corps: Supporting the Next Generation of Environmental Leaders

Consistent with King County Council Motion 15378, in summer 2021 King County Parks launched a pilot Youth Conservation Corps that engages high school-aged participants in a paid training and learning opportunity. The program strives to support the career interests of a new generation of environmental leaders who represent the diversity of King County's communities. Through this program, participants better understand the breadth and depth of environmental justice, conservation, environmental stewardship, and parks and recreation management practices while experiencing a work life environment. The program will continue to be offered each summer.

5.3.1.3 White Center Teen Program: Connecting Youth to Recreational and Enrichment Programs

The White Center Teen Program (WCTP) is based at the White Center Community Center in Steve Cox Memorial Park. The mission of WCTP is to serve youth ages 12-19

from the White Center area of unincorporated urban King County by providing free, year-round, recreational, educational, and enrichment programming in both structured and drop-in formats. With some 1,400 participants enrolled annually, the WCTP builds programming based upon the Developmental Assets Model, which focuses on activities that develop social, life, and leadership skills; offer youth opportunities to contribute to the community; enrich academic experiences; and provide quality time with caring adults.

With approximately 15,000 residents, White Center is one of the most economically and demographically diverse communities in King County, including Hispanic, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Samoan, East African, and African American residents (among many other ethnicities). English is often second language for White Center residents, where more than fifty languages and dialects are spoken.

According to social indicators, such as high school graduation rates, unemployment, children living in poverty, health outcomes, access to technology, and household income, White Center falls below King County averages. As an urbanized, built-out community, White Center has limited local recreational opportunities, many of which are provided at Steve Cox Memorial Park. There are currently limited structured outdoor educational or recreational opportunities serving middle and high school-aged youth in the community, and WCTP participants often do not have the financial and transportation resources to explore the region's and state's natural heritage at their own expense. These factors make WCTP a critical contributor to the community.

5.3.2 Grantmaking

Parks awards grants and other forms of support to public agencies, tribes, non-profits, fiscally-sponsored initiatives, and other organizations serving King County residents, which increases regional capacity to meet recreation and open space needs.





5.3.2.1 Community Partnerships and Grants Program

The Community Partnerships and Grants (CPG) Program empowers community partners, such as sports associations, recreation clubs, and other non-profit organizations to construct, develop, program, and/or maintain new or enhanced public recreation facilities on King County-owned lands.

King County contributes use of land and capital improvement seed grants, while community partners contribute the necessary additional capital, in-kind resources, and volunteer time to develop the new or enhanced facility. Community partners often take on an element of facility operations, maintenance, and programming through a long-term agreement.

As of 2020, more than 90 projects were in various stages of development and implementation, including preliminary discussion, initial negotiations, pre-planning, design development, permitting, construction, and on-going operations. Some examples of completed projects resulting from this type of partnership include the following:

- Bicycle playground at Dick Thurnau Memorial Park with Cascade Bicycle Club
- Outdoor pre-school program with Tiny Trees Preschool
- Fire lookout tower at Pinnacle Peak Park with Mt Peak Historical Fire Lookout Association
- Mountain bike trails and pump track (a looped sequence of rollers and berms to maximize momentum and minimize the need to pedal) at Dockton Forest with Vashon Mountain Bike Association

5.3.2.2 Youth and Amateur Sports Grants

Since 1993, King County's Youth and Amateur Sports Grants have been supporting fit and healthy communities by investing in programs and capital projects that increase access to physical activity. Funded by a one percent car rental sales tax, the program supports programs and capital investments identified through a competitive process, as well as smaller grants distributed according to King County Council district. Funding is available for entities serving residents of King County, including non-profit organizations, school districts, parks districts, public agencies, and tribes.

In 2021, King County Parks awarded \$2.4 million in grants supporting 40 programs and projects.

Examples of grantees include:

- The Service Board
- African Community Housing and Development
- City of Kent, West Fenwick Park Redevelopment
- Seattle Adaptive Sports
- Boys & Girls Clubs of King County

Youth and Amateur Sports Grants Program Goals

- Increase youth access to and participation in quality physical activity programs, facilities, and parks
- Reach priority populations of low-income youth, youth of color, immigrant and refugee youth, youth with disabilities, and unincorporated area residents
- Improve health outcomes and reduce health disparities in low-income communities



5.3.2.3 Parks Levy Grants

The 2020-2025 King County Parks, Recreation, Trails and Open Space Levy allocated approximately \$110 million over six years to fund programs and projects that support and enhance parks, recreation, and open space throughout the county. Funding categories include the following:

- **The Healthy Communities and Parks Fund** (previously referred to as Targeted Equity Grants) supports projects, programs and community-based organizations that provide new, increased, or enhanced access to recreation, parks, and open space in underserved and historically excluded communities. Program goals include reducing disparities and improving the health and well-being of King County residents in underserved and historically excluded communities, reducing barriers to funding, and expanding equitable community participation in funding decisions. Eligible applicants include tribal organizations serving residents of King County, non-profit organizations (or those with a fiscal sponsor), cities and towns in King County, and King County. Up to \$10 million is available during the 2020-2025 Parks levy period.
- **The Open Space – River Corridors Grant Program** funds projects that restore river habitat, reduce risks from flooding, and enhance recreation opportunities. The program's primary goal is to enhance river corridors in King County for their ecological and recreation benefits. Eligible applicants include non-profit organizations, tribal organizations serving the residents of King County, cities and towns in King County, King County, port districts, flood control districts, diking and draining districts, conservation districts, and salmon recovery forums. Up to \$22 million is available during the 2020-2025 levy period.
- **The Aquatic Facilities Grant Program** funds capital projects for new or existing aquatic facilities, including acquisition, planning, constructing new facilities, or renovating or expanding existing facilities. The program's primary goal is to conserve and expand access to aquatic facilities in King County. Eligible applicants include cities and towns in King County, park districts located in King County, school districts, and other public entities that own aquatic facilities. Up to \$44 million is available during the 2020-2025 levy period.
- **The Parks Capital and Open Space Grant Program** funds a range of parks initiatives, including land acquisition, park planning, and developing passive and active parks (including indoor and outdoor recreation facilities) and local trails. Program goals include protecting lands for public space that could otherwise be lost to future development and expanding recreation facilities to meet the needs of the region's growing population. Eligible applicants include cities and towns in King County and parks districts located in the county. Up to \$25 million is available during the 2020-2025 levy period.

CHAPTER SIX: OPERATIONS AND STEWARDSHIP

As of 2021, Parks manages 205 parks, 175 miles of regional trails, 250 miles of backcountry trails, and 32,000 acres of open space. King County also protects 150,000 acres through conservation easements. These parks, open spaces, and trails make King County an important regional public lands manager. As such, the principles and policies that guide King County's stewardship and management of public lands are critical to ensuring their continued contribution to the region's quality of life.

6.1 Operations

Parks' Operations section is responsible for a wide variety of tasks to keep all King County parks safe and enjoyable, including:

- Maintaining and repairing facilities
- Preparing and maintaining athletic fields
- Preserving and restoring ecological lands, including invasive weed control and vegetation management
- Other day-to-day activities to beautify, preserve and protect King County parks

The Operations section is organized into 12 maintenance districts, two business units, five specialty programs, six professional support teams, and two public service programs.

6.1.1 Funding

Today, Parks operates and maintains a vast parks and recreation system with most funding coming from the King County Parks Levy (see Chapter 3). Prior to the Parks Levy, operational funding for King County's open space system came from the county's general fund. General fund support for Parks was greatly reduced in 2002, and eventually eliminated in the 2008 Great Recession. In 2004, a four-year property tax Parks Levy largely replaced lost funding. Voters have continued to approve subsequent six-year Parks Levies (2008-2013, 2014-2019, and 2020-2025).

In addition to the Parks Levy, the county seeks financial sustainability through entrepreneurial efforts and community partnerships. Parks pursues opportunities to generate revenue from existing assets while balancing the ability to provide accessible and affordable recreation to the public. Business revenue provides 10 to 15 percent of the division's annual operating revenue and supports the entire system. Funding is generated from concessions, special event rentals, and user fees from ballfields, facility rentals, camping, swimming, and parking. Other revenue sources include, but are not limited to, grants, King County Park Foundation donations, park permit fees, and entrepreneurial revenues that include corporate sponsorships and major events such as the Marymoor Park Concert Series and Cirque du Soleil.

- SO-101** King County will continue to work with agencies, jurisdictions, tribes, and the public to develop new and creative funding sources and other strategies to build and support the open space system.
- SO-102** King County will maximize and leverage operational funds through public-private and nonprofit partnerships; pursuit of grant funds; volunteer engagement; development, use and management agreements; innovative funding concepts; and other funding opportunities.
- SO-103** King County will continue to pursue workforce efficiencies to help offset the growth in operation and maintenance costs.





SO-104 King County will continue to pursue sustainable and consistent funding for ongoing maintenance and stewardship of sites acquired or developed.

SO-105 A fiscal analysis should be prepared to evaluate potential acquisitions, significant development, and use of large-scale restoration to address stewardship needs of new projects. The analysis should identify the long-term operation and maintenance cost and the source of funds to support the project.

SO-106 King County will work to ensure that future funding strategies to acquire and develop land for all open space purposes include a funding source to cover stewardship and maintenance costs.

6.1.2 Maintenance, Management, and Monitoring

6.1.2.1 Maintenance Practices

Open space maintenance actions include habitat enhancement, restoration, and the day-to-day care of assets for which Parks is responsible. Rooted in the mission, vision, and values outlined in this Open Space Plan, the maintenance practices implemented by the division will follow the subsequent policies. Implementing these policies aims to maximize ecosystem services where possible and protect cultural resources.

SO-107 King County should strive to use locally adapted native species for landscaping, natural area restoration, rehabilitation, and erosion control wherever feasible. Where appropriate, King County should also coordinate with tribes to inform plant selection. Landscaping and habitat restoration projects should include provisions for adequate maintenance of plantings to prevent invasion of weeds and ensure survival of native plantings.

SO-108 King County will emphasize use of drought-tolerant plants and native vegetation in new site development to minimize the need for irrigation, reduce impact of non-native species, help mitigate the impacts of climate change, and will consider important traditional resources to local area tribes.

SO-109 Water conservation is an important consideration in managing the open space system. King County will incorporate low-water use principles and equipment in new construction and rehabilitation projects. Use of recycled water will be considered, when practical and effective.

SO-110 King County will promote recycling efforts in parks and will use recycled materials that are available and appropriate for park uses. King County will also salvage materials from structure demolitions when feasible.

SO-111 King County will protect the environment and the health and safety of staff and park users from the inappropriate use of hazardous or toxic materials and the use of those materials in the soils or structures. King County will develop safety plans when needed to further outline safety protocols and practices.

SO-112 King County will base its use of pesticides and fungicides on integrated pest management (IPM) principles, per Executive Order PUT 8-17 related to pest and vegetation management activities and Parks' Best Management Practices. The goal of this policy is to minimize the use of chemical pesticides to contribute to improved public health and the environment in King County, including the habitat, food, and sensitive life stages of threatened Chinook salmon and bull trout.

Management plan: Universal term for a tool King County uses to document the near- and long-term management, maintenance, stewardship, and/or development goals for a site, along with the plans to achieve those goals. Management plans should align with and support the outcomes desired by the county's broader environmental initiatives and strategies, for example the **Strategic Climate Action Plan, Clean Water Healthy Habitat, and 30-Year Forest Plan**. Management plans may identify the following, as appropriate:

- Resource conservation and performance objectives
- Stewardship needed for ecological benefit and public enjoyment (e.g., maintenance, restoration, monitoring and enforcement)
- Appropriate types and levels of development and public access
- Site restrictions, based on (for example) funding sources and sensitive areas
- Rules for use
- Safety and liability considerations

Examples of management plans include (but are not limited to):

- Site maintenance plans
- Site management guidelines
- Forest stewardship plans
- Acquisition coordination forms



6.1.2.2 Assessing and Planning for Maintenance Needs

Parks consistently and regularly assesses operations and maintenance needs to support King County's growing open space system. By assessing, monitoring, and developing management plans (where appropriate), Parks seeks to properly resource and staff these efforts. King County prepares interim maintenance plans for all new property acquisitions to address basic resource protection, public access, safety and liability issues, and budget and staffing needs.

King County strives to understand and strategically plan for current and future maintenance needs through the following policies:

- SO-113** King County will develop management plans to provide direction for the maintenance and stewardship of open space sites, incorporating current targets outlined in initiatives like the Strategic Climate Action Plan, 30-Year Forest Plan, and Clean Water Healthy Habitat. King County should use these plans to measure and evaluate effectiveness and inform future maintenance and management decisions.
- SO-114** King County will develop and maintain a plan for major maintenance needs and rehabilitation of open space sites and facilities to ensure safe and sustainable public use and to reduce lifecycle costs.
- SO-115** King County will steward and maintain lands and facilities within the park system in compliance with the Division's Best Management Practices Manual.

Parks also monitors the open space inventory to inform ongoing operations, maintenance, and enforcement activities:

- SO-116** King County will monitor how site maintenance is conducted to account for the changing needs of the system and identify and incorporate new procedures and tasks to address the conservation of ecological values, recreational assets, and cultural resources.
- SO-117** King County will track and monitor the ecological and forest conservation easements in its inventory to ensure conservation values are protected and that lands are being managed consistent with the terms and conditions of the individual recorded easement. Parks shall work with the King County Permitting Division to ensure conservation easement information is available in the County's permit system.

6.1.2.3 Regional Trail Maintenance

Regional trails provide linear parkland corridors that enhance the region's natural environmental character, provide environmental benefits, and create a pleasant alternative to increasingly dense urban landscapes. Safety and enjoyment are high priorities on King County's regional trails, where good conditions must be maintained to support millions of trips annually.

- SO-118** King County should maintain regional trails in a safe and secure manner. Ongoing maintenance should seek to ensure that trail surfaces are in good condition and that corridor landscaping is maintained to preserve trailside clearance, sight lines, and user enjoyment.
- SO-119** Landscaping along King County's regional trails should reflect the context through which each trail is developed or as determined by a professional landscape architect in conjunction with Parks' Operations. Appropriate native plantings are encouraged.

6.1.3 Resource Conservation and Management

As noted above, Parks plays a significant role in conserving and protecting natural and cultural resources. More detail is provided below related to forestry, biodiversity, and cultural resources.

6.1.3.1 Forest Conservation and Management

The county's approximately 25,500 acres of open space forests provide many regional benefits, but also pose a significant management challenge given growing environmental stressors resulting from climate change, drought, urban development, and increased fire risk. Prior to county ownership, most of Parks' forests were not managed for conservation purposes. They tended to be low-elevation second- or third-growth forests regenerated from clearcut harvests, with a wide range of management histories leading up to County acquisition. Due to these historical management activities, these forests are now dominated by relatively short-lived broadleaf tree species, have excessively dense or sparse stands, have low species diversity, or contain minimal understory vegetation. These site conditions make them susceptible to insects, diseases, drought and storm damage and negatively affect the forests' ecological values and recreational safety.

Historically, the Puget Sound region was predominantly covered in conifer forests in late seral stages, which are composed of a patchwork of very old forests, younger forests originating from natural disturbance, and low but important amounts of shrubby and non-forested areas. King County assessed Parks' open space forest conditions in 2012 using the Forest Landscape Assessment Tool (FLAT) and found conifer-dominated forests occupy 24 percent of Parks' open space forestlands, compared to 68 percent of forests across all King County. Only 6 percent of Parks' forests have trees larger than 20 inches in average diameter. King County plans to complete FLAT assessments for all newer Parks' properties (acquired since 2012) by 2023 and assess new acquisitions annually thereafter.

Two separate analyses of the FLAT data found that high proportions of County-managed forests are at high risk based on ecological and climate factors. A 2013 analysis²² focusing on ecological health found that approximately 80 percent of King County's forested open space lands are candidates for stewardship restoration within 20 years. A 2020 analysis²³ focused on forest carbon and climate resilience found around 25 percent of forestland was a high priority for management actions to meet climate action goals within the next 15 years, and an additional 20 percent will need management in 15 to 30 years.

Most Parks open space forest acreage is located adjacent to the urban/rural boundary and experiences heavy public use. These lands serve as a buffer along the urban growth boundary, enhance wildlife habitat, and provide recreational opportunities such as hiking and trail running, mountain biking, and horseback riding. In addition, King County holds forest conservation easements on more than 150,000 acres of land, including those secured as part of the Transfer of Development Rights Program. See Appendix III for more about this program.

Key policies and goals for managing forests in the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks inventory are outlined in the *King County Comprehensive Plan*, Executive Order for the Implementation of Forest Policies (PUT 8-18), the *Programmatic Plan for Management of King County-owned Working Forest Properties*²⁴ and the *Farm and Forest Report (1996)*.

²² Churchill. King County Parks Forest Assessment. (2013).

²³ Northwest Natural Resource Group. Forest Assessment to Inform Strategic Climate Action Plan Recommendations. (2020).

²⁴ King County DNRP. [Programmatic Plan for Management of King County-owned Working Forest Properties](#) (2003).



6.1.3.2 Preserving and Conserving Biodiversity

Biodiversity includes plant and animal species, their genetic diversity, the habitats they use, the ways that species and habitats interact with each other, and the physical environment and processes necessary for those interactions. Some major benefits of biodiversity include purifying air and water, soil fertility, and moderating floods, droughts, temperature extremes, and windstorms. Greater biodiversity also increases resiliency and adaptation in response to pests, disease, and a changing climate.

Parks encourages native plant and animal diversity through natural resource restoration, which may be implemented by King County or through other agencies or partnerships. For example, Parks works closely with ecologists and Basin Stewards in the Water and Land Resources Division to support preservation, conservation, and restoration. Parks is also committed to mapping, tracking, and monitoring restoration efforts.

- SO-120** As outlined in Clean Water Healthy Habitat, King County supports integrating conservation goals into management actions in order to conserve native biodiversity through land and water resource management policies, climate change planning, and fish and wildlife habitat conservation.
- SO-121** King County will strive to identify and conserve components of native biodiversity within its open space system that may be especially sensitive to the impacts of climate change. King County will work to conserve biodiversity through the protection and restoration of ecological processes that create and sustain habitats and species diversity.
- SO-122** The conservation principles presented in Clean Water Healthy Habitat and in the King County Comprehensive Plan provide broad guidance to focus and direct restoration activities to enhance natural and cultural resources and ecological value on open space sites. King County will strive to steward natural lands consistent with these principles.
- SO-123** On all open space sites, Parks will develop a coordinated strategy for preventing, monitoring, and controlling infestations of state-listed noxious weeds, and where feasible, other nonnative invasive weeds of concern.

Ponds created by beavers can also be an asset to ecosystems by helping retain and reduce runoff, and by trapping sediments and pollutants. Additionally, beaver ponds provide significant environmental benefits and functions including water storage, groundwater recharge, enhanced stream flow, salmon rearing locations, floodplain reconnection, wood inputs, increased complexity of aquatic systems, and biodiversity. However, beaver dams can cause upstream flooding, and as development expands into areas with an abundance of beaver habitat, there is an increased chance of private and public properties being affected by beaver activity.

- SO-124** Because beavers provide beneficial ecosystem functions, King County encourages the coexistence of beavers and humans. King County shall work on a case-by-case basis on park lands to reduce risk to public safety or public infrastructure or adverse impacts to neighboring properties caused by beavers on park lands, while minimizing removal of the beaver in favor of in-place management wherever possible.

6.1.3.3 Cultural Resources

King County has a rich cultural history going back at least 12,000 years, made evident in archaeological traces of hunting, fishing, gathering, stone tool creation, habitation, and other activities. Native people have lived in King County since time immemorial. Euro-Americans and other

immigrants arrived in the early 1850s to farm, log, fish, mine, and settle in new communities. This long and varied history is present in a wide variety of cultural resources including subsurface archaeological sites and above-ground buildings, structures, objects, and districts throughout the county.

King County's open spaces are rich in natural and cultural resources. People continue to be attracted to waterways and lowlands for many of the reasons assumed to be important thousands of years ago, including sustenance, transportation, views, recreation, and more. There is heightened probability for encountering both precontact and historical cultural materials on the flood plains and along waterfront areas that are common in recreation and open space lands.

Cultural resources attract visitors and often contribute character and identity to parks, as well as provide rich interpretive opportunities. Several King County parks contain significant historical resources, archaeological sites, or both, including Marymoor Park, White Center sites, Tolt-MacDonald Park, Fall City locations, and Jim Ellis Preston Community Center. It is highly likely that additional cultural resources are present in many other recreation and open space lands.



Many of these resources are recognized and protected through state registration, listing in the National Register of Historic Places, and/or with County landmark designation. The value of cultural resources is recognized in both *Comprehensive Plan* policies and the Executive Procedures for Treatment of Cultural Resources²⁵ Historic preservation is compatible with park and open space uses; compliance with local, state, and federal laws, regulations, and codes concerning cultural resources is required on public land.

SO-125 King County will preserve, steward, and highlight significant historic, cultural, and archaeological resources within its open space system, including those with facilities created and/or managed in partnership with other organizations.

6.1.4 Property Management

Good property management reinforces King County's commitment to sound stewardship of its open space system. As property custodian and manager of a large and complex open space system, Parks is responsible for guiding uses, supporting opportunities that achieve multiple benefits, and ensuring the value of this legacy for future generations.

SO-126 King County will encourage and allow the use of open space land that is compatible with its location and condition; consistent with Parks' Land Use Guidelines,²⁶ acquisition purpose, funding sources, and management goals; and can be demonstrated to appropriately provide public recreation opportunities and protect the land's natural and cultural resources.

SO-127 King County will evaluate requests to alter open space sites to ensure that they are consistent with park purposes, master plans, forest stewardship plans, site management guidelines, or other management plans and will not diminish open space values, public use, aesthetics and stewardship, or ecological value.

SO-128 King County will issue use permits or agreements for events sponsored by others when the use is consistent with site conditions and amenities, aesthetics, park purposes, and acquisition funding restrictions and will not deter from open space stewardship and other public use of the site.

²⁵ [Cultural Resources Procedures - King County](#). (2021).

²⁶ King County Parks. [Land Use Guidelines](#). (2020).



- SO-129** 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 identified or provided.
- SO-130** King County will monitor all existing agreements, easements, and use permits to ensure continued compliance with their terms and conditions, current county policies and codes, and to ensure that they remain in the best interests of the site and the public.
- SO-131** King County will clearly post signage with applicable rules and restrictions for open space sites in a manner that is easily understood by the public. Language(s) used on signage should reflect the predominant languages spoken in the community in which the site is located and those using the site, consistent with County policies regarding provision of services to populations with limited English proficiency.

- SO-132** King County will address unauthorized uses of open space land by working to abate and restore impacts resulting from encroachments, seeking voluntary compliance with park rules, and working with the Sheriff's Office on emphasis patrols and issuing citations.
- SO-133** King County will maintain guidelines for the naming of park, recreation, and other open space sites and features, including trails, and consistent with RCW 36.32.430.
- SO-134** King County will accept gifts or donations of equipment, materials, land, labor, or improvements for a site that are consistent with site purposes and conditions; enhance aesthetics and stewardship values; are consistent with site management guidelines, forest stewardship, master, maintenance, and development plans; reduce stewardship costs; provide additional resource protection; and/or improve efficiencies.
- SO-135** King County will work with nearby property owners, park users, volunteers, agencies, tribes, and the public to enhance and protect the character, function, and natural and cultural resources of the open space system.

6.2 Stewardship

For King County, the term 'stewardship' represents responsible management of each open space site to ensure public safety, provide appropriate public access and use, and protect ecological, cultural, and recreational values through maintenance, monitoring, enhancement, and restoration. Stewardship also implies the use of new techniques, skills, training and equipment; developing and implementing best management practices; identifying and maximizing opportunities to provide multiple benefits; and pursuing revenue and partnership opportunities that sustain sound stewardship and operations. In addition, the Parks Volunteer Program leads community members in restoring and caring for parks.

Classifying open spaces within King County Parks is described in Chapter 3. Each classification has different stewardship goals and expectations, which are described below.

6.2.1 Systemwide Stewardship

The following policies apply to all sites within King County's open space system.

- SO-136** King County will steward its open space system and keep these lands in perpetuity for open space purposes. Other uses will be considered only if they can be demonstrated to be appropriate through a public process. Recommendations for disposing of any property shall be carried out in compliance with King County's codified surplus property provisions and based on the county's public recreation or open space needs. Surplus of open space sites must also be consistent with requirements associated with their funding sources and Section 897 of the King County Charter Amendment regarding the conveyance, surplus and use of high conservation value open space properties.
- SO-137** King County will manage open space sites to ensure that the land, facilities, and natural and cultural resources are protected and that appropriate public use is safe and enjoyable. The public is expected to have access to fee-owned properties within the open space system for recreational, educational, scientific, and traditional use, but access may be restricted when necessary to protect or restore resource values and processes, when deed or easement restrictions limit or prohibit public access, and/or when safety issues warrant limitations on public use. Restrictions on some types of recreation uses may be required to achieve management goals. Access strategies for each site will be identified through management and stewardship plans, and appropriate use determined via a public process and through government-to-government consultation with area tribes.
- SO-138** Priorities for restoration projects on open space sites should be based on priority recommendations in the Water Resource Inventory Area-based Salmon Recovery Plans, the Flood Hazard Management Plan, individual site management and stewardship plans, and/or other King County-endorsed planning documents.

6.2.2 Regional Trails

For more than 30 years, King County has played a leadership role in developing the overall vision of a countywide Regional Trails network, as well as in maintaining the regional trails that are under its direct jurisdiction. In 2019, Parks convened the Leafline Trails Coalition to collaborate with other County agencies, local jurisdictions, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), community partners, and area businesses to envision the overall trails network and ensure connectivity throughout the region, including Snohomish, Pierce, and Kitsap counties. King County also collaborates with community groups and trail users, such as the Cascade Bicycle Club and Friends of Soos Creek Park, who help maintain trails and advocate for the vision of the Regional Trails network.

Guidance documents like the [Programmatic Plan for Management of King County-Owned Ecological Lands](#) (2004) and the [King County Ecological Lands Handbook](#) (2003) inform King County's development of site management plans.

6.2.3 Natural Areas

King County supports passive recreation in natural areas, including hiking, horseback riding and mountain biking, so long as the use does not degrade a site's ecologically or culturally sensitive areas or negatively impact wildlife. Public use is planned and integrated into each site by evaluating adjacent public use patterns and identifying any areas that require protection from human impacts. Appropriate levels of public use in natural areas vary from site to site and may require minimal improvement to appropriately direct use. Parks also holds conservation easements on private properties; those easements restrict use and help protect the lands' natural resource values.

- SO-139** Natural areas should have individual management plans when over 200 acres to guide needed enhancement and restoration efforts and to support public uses. Smaller sites also benefit from management plans, which should be developed as appropriate to inform stewardship activities and projects.

- SO-140** King County will integrate habitat management and enhancement as a major component of its stewardship. Natural areas will be managed primarily to protect and restore ecological processes, conserve wildlife habitat, and foster native biodiversity. This focus may include management, enhancement, and restoration of degraded natural areas to increase their ecological, wildlife habitat, climate change adaptation and resiliency, and educational and traditional use values.
- SO-141** King County commits to preserving, protecting, and conserving native biodiversity and will demonstrate this in daily activities. King County will follow environmentally sensitive maintenance techniques and best management practices to the greatest extent possible at all open space sites.
- SO-142** 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.

What's the difference between a "forested area" and "working forest" in King County?

King County manages forested areas across all land use classifications, including working forests, multi-use sites and natural areas. Regardless of classification, King County's forestry actions are designed primarily to improve ecological conditions and climate resilience. Working forests have additional management objectives to support sustainable timber practices and research. Forest management actions may generate revenue on any land classification, though revenue generation is never the primary objective. Revenue from all forest management activities, including working forests and other open space lands, are reinvested to maintain, manage, and further conserve forested areas.



6.2.4 Forested Areas

Parks is developing and implementing an expanded forest stewardship program to meet several King County initiatives that apply to all land classifications, with special objectives in working forests. In February 2021, King County developed the *30-Year Forest Plan*, a shared countywide vision for rural and urban forest cover and forest health, including priorities and goals across seven thematic areas. The *2020 Strategic Climate Action Plan (SCAP)* also introduces forestry goals and targets associated with "3 Million Trees," an ambitious initiative that aims to plant trees, protect forests, and prepare them for a changing climate. In addition, the 2020 SCAP continues Parks' commitment to develop and implement forest stewardship plans for Parks-managed sites larger than 200 acres.

Parks has assessed the current state of forest composition and structure across large areas of its forested inventory and will continue as new lands are acquired. In addition, to inform the 2020 SCAP, Parks identified the highest-priority locations for forestry treatments to help sequence future projects. These assessments provide needed baseline data to inform ongoing stewardship planning.

- SO-143** King County will promote forest management and restoration in order to conserve and enhance forest ecosystem health and contribute to improved water and air quality, surface water management, fish and wildlife habitat, aesthetics, climate change adaptation, and energy conservation.
- SO-144** King County should be a leader in natural resource management by demonstrating environmentally sound and sustainable forest practices on County-owned open space sites that result in retention of forest cover and improved forest health. This may include adopting forest management practices that promote carbon sequestration.
- SO-145** King County will conserve and manage forested areas for the health of the forest ecosystem, and where appropriate, as viable working resource lands.

Guidance documents like the *Programmatic Plan for Management of King County-Owned Working Forest Properties* (2003) outline key policies and goals for managing working forests in King County's inventory.

SO-146 King County will continue to conduct forest assessments, develop stewardship plans, and implement forest restoration projects that will promote healthy forests throughout the park system. Forest stewardship plans shall be completed for each forest site greater than 200 acres, as well as sites supporting goals set forth in County strategies, such as the Strategic Climate Action Plan.

6.2.5 Working Forests

Parks manages more than 4,300 acres of working forest land across 11 properties, with objectives to sustain and enhance environmental benefits, demonstrate progressive forest management practices, support research, and generate (when appropriate) revenue for ongoing stewardship (PUT 8-18). When managing working forests, King County balances sustainable timber production with conservation, restoration, and public use, and works cooperatively across agency and landowner boundaries to retain a viable forested landscape.

SO-147 Working forests shall be managed consistent with the Strategic Climate Action Plan, the 30-Year Forest Plan and Clean Water Healthy Habitat, as well as the Executive Order for Implementation of Forestry Policies (PUT 8-18). Each working forest site will have a complete and current (within 10 years) Forest Stewardship Plan.

6.2.6 Multi-Use Sites

Each portion of a multi-use site will be developed and managed to support the level of use or conservation appropriate to that portion of the site. Many of King County's multi-use sites contain backcountry trail systems and are popular destinations for passive recreation. In addition, these sites contain natural resources such as streams, wetlands, rivers, and forests, and are managed and restored to achieve many environmental benefits, from protecting water quality to creating healthier forests for wildlife.

6.2.7 Backcountry Trails

King County maintains over 250 miles of natural surface, backcountry trails throughout its open space system that allow visitors to directly experience the vast and varying natural beauty found in the county's forests, meadows, and marine and freshwater shorelines. These trails are intended for passive

recreation and designed to take advantage of the natural terrain. Backcountry trails are generally narrow paths but may also include existing maintenance roads and former logging roads. They cross a variety of landscapes and terrain, can feature loops and single-track trails, and can provide connections between parks and other natural areas. Backcountry trail uses include hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking, running and nature observation. Designated allowable uses may differ by trail and site, though most backcountry trails in King County's jurisdiction are shared by all users noted above.

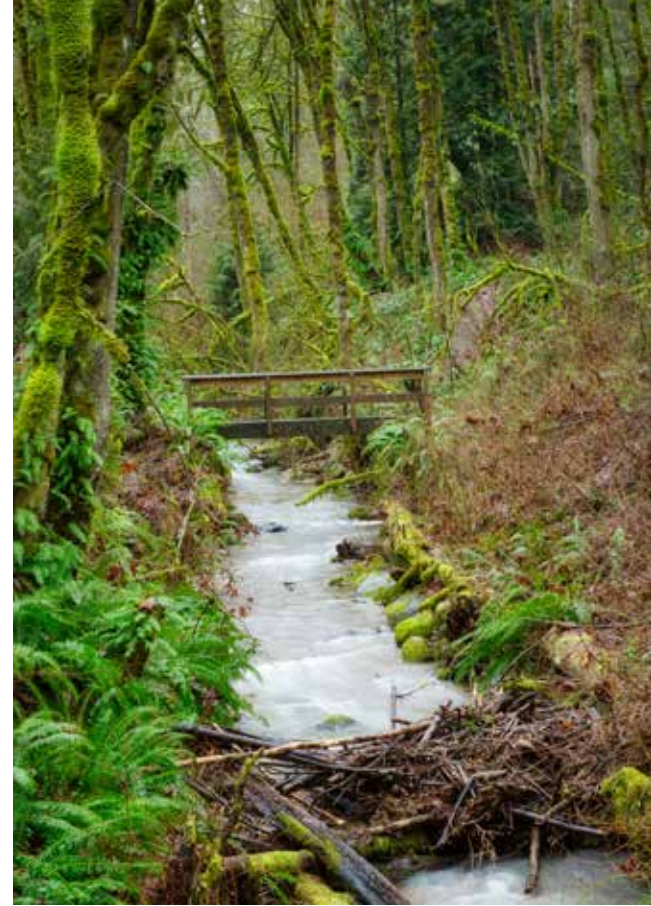
Many of the natural area parks, multi-use sites, and forests acquired by King County over the past 30 years contain existing networks of 'social trails,' which were originally created by local hikers, equestrians, and mountain bikers. King County formalized and improved some of these trails, which now serve as the backbone of its backcountry trail network.



King County's backcountry trails are maintained to United States Forest Service standards and any new trail development adheres to state and federal regulations to avoid wetlands, where possible, and allow access per the Americans with Disabilities Act, where feasible. Backcountry trails are managed in a manner that protects natural resources, ensures public safety, and requires minimal maintenance. As part of this work, King County also addresses informal and illegal trails, as they can negatively impact ecological, cultural, and traditional resources. King County monitors and responds to these issues by decommissioning trails, improving signage, and supporting way-finding to help visitors remain on appropriate trails. King County follows local, state, and federal regulations and codes when building additional trails.

King County also partners with trail users, community groups, and advocates to help maintain and improve existing trails, and to construct new trails to meet the growing demand for hiking, horseback riding and mountain biking. Partners include (but are not limited to) the Washington Trails Association, Evergreen Mountain Biking Alliance, Issaquah Alps Trails Club, Backcountry Horsemen – Tahoma Chapter, Enumclaw Forested Foothills Recreation Association, Friends of Rock Creek Valley, King County Executive Horse Council, Vashon-Maury Island Horse Association, and the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust.

Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park, purchased in the mid-1980s, was the first backcountry trail network developed and managed by King County in partnership with hiking and equestrian trail users. Other major backcountry trail sites in King County's inventory were once private timber holdings (Taylor Mountain Forest, Grand Ridge Park, Henry's Ridge and Black Diamond Natural Areas) or WADNR Trust Lands (Dockton Forest, Soaring Eagle, and Island Center Forest). The county has also established a destination mountain bike park at Duthie Hill Park that contains six miles of cross country and nearly two miles of freeride trails. Proposals for other enhanced mountain bike park areas on other sites within the park system are being considered.





CHAPTER SEVEN: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Parks' Capital Improvement Program (CIP) supports the construction and rehabilitation of regional and rural park facilities, and the development of regional and backcountry trails for the benefit of King County residents. The CIP is consistent with the direction set forth in the enacting ordinance for the 2020-2025 Parks, Trails and Open Space Levy (Ordinance #18890), and the King County Strategic Plan. The CIP aligns with the department's goals to be fiscally responsible, fostering community-building and healthy living, and being stewards of the environment.

As noted in Chapter 3, Parks' goals are the following:

Goal 1: Take care of King County's existing system of parks and trails, ensuring the system remains clean, safe and open

Goal 2: Grow and connect regional open space and natural lands, protecting habitat important for fish and wildlife and providing recreation opportunities

Goal 3: Improve regional trails and mobility to ensure that essential connections are completed and existing trails are maintained

Goal 4: Make parks, green spaces, and recreational opportunities more accessible for all King County residents to enjoy

Furthermore, the CIP reflects King County's emphasis on promoting equity and social justice and the county's "fair and just" principle by undertaking projects that reduce barriers to accessing park sites and trails and investing in major maintenance in underserved areas of the county.

7.1 Funding

Funding for park and trail development, recreation facilities and acquisition projects comes from a variety of revenue sources described in this section. The budget process for the operating budget and the development of a six-year CIP plan occurs biennially. These processes involve Parks staff, the King County Executive, and the Metropolitan King County Council.

The primary sources for Parks' CIP funding include:

- **Parks, Recreation, Trails and Open Space Levy.** King County uses voter-approved levies to primarily fund operations and capital improvements in its open space system. To date, voters have approved funding measures for regional parks and trails every occasion a levy has been on the ballot. On August 6, 2019, King County voters approved an 18.32 cent property tax levy lid lift indexed to local population growth and inflation for the period of 2020-2025. Approximately 40 percent of the revenue generated by this levy will fund regional trail development; open space and natural land acquisition, conservation and stewardship; and asset maintenance and improvement within King County Parks' CIP. The levy expires at the end of 2025. Parks will likely continue to pursue voter-approved funding measures after the expiration of the current levy.
- **Real Estate Excise Tax #1 (REET 1).** Under state law, and further refined by King County Code, REET funds may be spent on capital needs of the unincorporated area of King County. REET 1 funds may be spent on capital projects for planning, acquisition, construction, reconstruction, repair, replacement, rehabilitation, or improvement of a variety of facilities within the unincorporated area including parks, recreational facilities, and trails. Revenues are generated by a 0.25-percent tax applied to real property sales in unincorporated King County.

- **Real Estate Excise Tax #2 (REET 2).** Under state law, REET 2 funds may be spent on capital projects for planning, construction, reconstruction, repair, rehabilitation, or improvement of a variety of facilities within the unincorporated area including parks. REET 2 does not allow for open space acquisition or for regional trail development or repair. The King County Code further defines the use of REET 2, allowing only “planning, construction, reconstruction, repair, rehabilitation or improvement of parks located in or providing a benefit and open to residents of the unincorporated area of King County.” Revenues are generated by a 0.25-percent tax applied to real property sales in unincorporated King County.
- **Conservation Futures Tax (CFT).** *The Conservation Futures Program includes a countywide property tax of up to 6.25 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. Revenues may be used solely for acquisition of open space, agriculture, and timber lands. This funding source cannot be used to acquire park sites for active recreation.*
- **Partnerships.** The Community Partnerships and Grants (CPG) Program leverages county funds typically through a use agreement in which a community-based partner or sports organization contributes funding or in-kind donations toward the construction of a capital project.
- **Grants.** Grant funding typically comes from federal or state agencies and has included Federal Highway Administration transportation grants for nonmotorized mobility and the RCO’s various grant programs. Other federal and state programs may also offer grant opportunities.

As such, the following policy guides Parks’ effort to leverage funding:

CIP-101 King County will leverage its funding with external resources, including the pursuit of grants, outside funding sources, and partnerships.

7.2 Acquisition

Lands added to King County’s open space system enrich the quality of life in the county and contribute to a public lands legacy for future generations. King County’s population is one of the fastest growing in the country, which brings additional pressures to preserve all types of open spaces for the many benefits they offer, from conservation values and recreational opportunities to public health benefits.

Two recent King County initiatives provide a framework and guidance for open space and natural lands acquisitions. King County developed the Land Conservation Initiative (LCI), a collaboration between King County, jurisdictions, nonprofits, the private sector, and other partners to accelerate the protection of high conservation value natural lands and green spaces over the next 30 years. The LCI identifies priority acquisitions with respect to ecological benefits, equity, and recreational opportunities. Approximately 65,000 acres have been mapped and prioritized within six land categories:



Neighborhood green and open space to create more livable neighborhoods.



Land to connect trails and communities to increase livability and inspire healthy living.



Natural lands for wildlife, recreation, and resilience in an uncertain future.



River corridors to sustain salmon and reduce flooding.



Farmlands and community gardens for healthy local food.

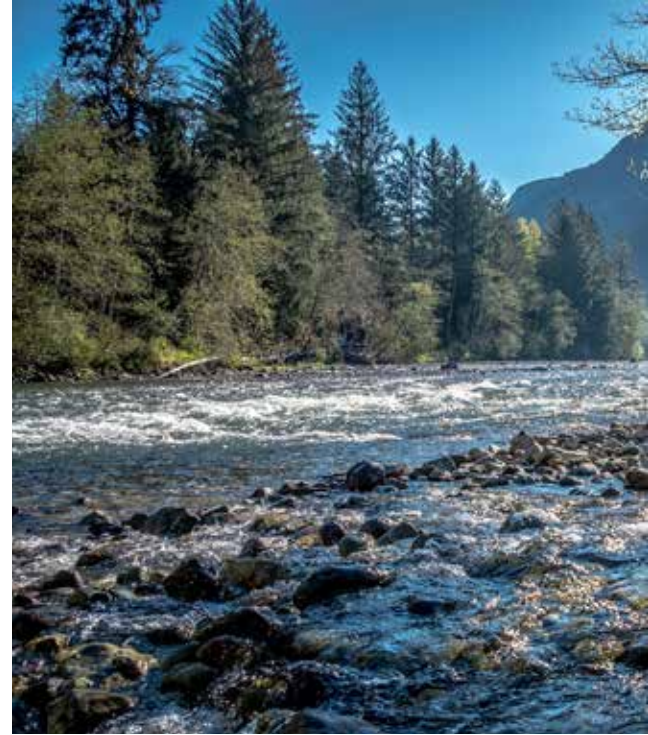


Forestlands to support clean air, clean water, cooler summers, and recreation.

In addition, King County's Clean Water Healthy Habitat initiative provides a 30-year strategic approach to ensuring the county invests in the right places to improve water quality and expand habitat, thereby supporting the region's people, fish, and wildlife.

Parks and the Water and Land Resources Division collaborate across many programs to acquire open space and natural lands. Most acquisitions become part of Parks' inventory where they are maintained, restored, and sometimes developed (e.g., building trails, trailheads, or other parks facilities).

CIP-102 King County will acquire lands in alignment with Clean Water Healthy Habitat and the Land Conservation Initiative. The Land Conservation Initiative prioritizes high conservation value acquisitions in six categories: natural lands, forests, trails, urban green space, rivers, and farmlands.



Many lands that Parks acquires provide multiple benefits to the community, including recreation opportunities as well as habitat conservation. Targeting acquisitions that balance these objectives is an essential part of growing a robust open space system.

CIP-103 King County Parks and the Water and Land Resources Division will emphasize acquisition of sites that provide for multiple benefits and functions.

CIP-104 Where possible, King County should work at a landscape scale with conservation organizations; local, state and federal governments; tribes; and landowners during the formation of acquisition strategies to identify acquisition priorities to advance system-wide goals.

CIP-105 Distribution, spatial structure, and diversity of native wildlife and vegetation, as well as potential climate change impacts, should be considered when acquiring conservation easements or land.

CIP-106 King County should consider cultural resources in its open space acquisitions and management and steward such resources in a manner that protects and enhances their traditional, educational, and scientific benefits while ensuring appropriate public use, appreciation, and enjoyment.

King County strives to use fiscally responsible decision making when determining potential land acquisitions.

CIP-107 King County should acquire open space properties that provide public benefit and recreational opportunities or resource protection in a fiscally responsible manner.

CIP-108 King County will acquire, protect, and conserve high-priority sites through a variety of means, including fee simple purchase, donations, and purchase of conservation easements and covenants, as well as through the use of the King County Transfer of Development Rights Program, Forest Carbon Program, and Current Use Taxation programs.

CIP-109 King County will evaluate potential open space land acquisitions to determine and document short- and long-term stewardship funding needs and availability and to ensure sites are appropriate for the intended use and contribute to larger open space goals.

7.3 Planning, Design, and Development

King County will use this Open Space Plan to guide planning, design and stewardship decisions for the enhancement and development of the open space system.

Critical Areas

Park lands with high ecological value are provided special protection under the county's Critical Areas Code and include (but are not limited to):

- Aquatic areas
- Wetlands including bogs and their buffers
- Marine shorelines, intertidal and subtidal habitat and riparian zones
- Lands that protect and conserve headwater and old growth upland forest
- Regionally Significant Resource Areas and Locally Significant Resource Areas
- Designated Wildlife Habitat Network
- Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas
- Priority Habitats and Species
- Critical Aquifer Recharge Areas
- 100-year flood plains
- Channel migration hazard areas



King County's Open Space Charter

In 2009, King County voters approved the Open Space Protection Amendment to the King County Charter. Properties owned by King County in fee or easement that are included in this "High Conservation Value Property Inventory" receive a higher level of protection to preserve natural or scenic resources and passive recreation opportunities.



CIP-110 King County will plan, acquire, develop, restore and enhance open space sites and recreation facilities as appropriate, including recreation and multi-use sites; regional trails; backcountry trails; natural areas; and forests to further the vision and goals of this plan.

CIP-111 King County will plan and develop facilities that encourage multiple public uses and benefits and will work to reduce user conflicts while minimizing impacts to natural resources.

CIP-112 King County will systematically apply the open space classification system to sites in its inventory, along with use area designations of county open space lands to clearly facilitate appropriate use, programming, development, maintenance, and stewardship.

CIP-113 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.

CIP-114 King County will acquire, plan for, steward, develop, and operate the park system consistent with the King County Strategic Plan's goals for healthy environment, economic vitality, health and human services, mobility, and safety and justice.

CIP-115 King County shall consider equity in the development and acquisition of its open space system to help in the reduction of health disparities and in the promotion of environmental justice.



7.3.1 Planning

Parks performs many planning activities that must be coordinated and sequenced to further the goals of the open space system. Parks coordinates with other county divisions and departments to engage in community-led planning decisions. These planning efforts aim to meet the needs of the community where King County is the primary service provider, and particularly in underserved areas. These planning efforts also address the climate crisis imperative to protect water quality and habitat, and to protect green spaces in areas experiencing the most harmful effects of rising temperatures.

CIP-116 King County will evaluate and update the King County Open Space Plan when necessary to address changing conditions such as system growth, respond to new initiatives, and remain eligible for grant opportunities.

CIP-117 King County will evaluate and update the Regional Trails Needs Report (RTNR) and engage in other regional trail planning efforts to respond to changing conditions and needs, provide a viable capital development program, and remain eligible for grant opportunities.

7.3.1.1 Site Planning

Site planning should consider the potential to develop, restore, and enhance park amenities at existing sites and facilities. This strategy can maximize the recreation and resource values and revenue-generating potential of existing park assets. Adaptive strategies for open space use and management also leverage and maximize long-term public and system benefits. Site planning is also informed by public engagement (Chapter 4), community needs and partnerships (Chapter 5), cultural relevance, and opportunities to maximize multi-benefits. Please see Chapter 6 for more information about site management plans and stewardship.

CIP-118 Management and stewardship plans will be guided by best available science and relevant programmatic plans and permits for ecological lands, working forests, and backcountry trails.

CIP-119 Future management actions for open space sites shall be consistent with their individual plans. Changes in conditions, such as increased public use or acquisition of new land, will require evaluation and periodic updating of these plans.

CIP-120 King County should monitor open space recreation use patterns as background for future planning efforts, including how open space sites benefit the public and tribes. Data should help guide subsequent recommendations that enhance or restore sites to increase their open space benefits.

7.3.1.2 Recreation Planning

Population growth, recreation assessments, and other demographic trends help indicate the need for both passive and active recreation facilities, and how they can be built and maintained to maximize resources and serve the greatest public benefit. King County currently identifies and resources needed facilities in part through partnership-based programs such as the Community Partnerships and Grants Program and Youth and Amateur Sports Facilities Grants Program. More recently, the Play Equity Coalition has provided a more formal opportunity to work collectively with partners to assess, plan and respond to regional recreational needs. New Parks Levy grants described in Chapter 5 provide additional resources to support these needs.

CIP-121 King County should work with athletic organizations, school districts, and the public to identify active recreation facility needs and coordinate funding strategies.

7.3.1.3 Regional Trails Planning

King County's long-term capital program for expanding and enhancing its Regional Trails network is found in the *King County Regional Trails Needs Report (RTNR)*. The RTNR provides guidance for developing King County's components of the overall Regional Trails network, and is based upon previous plans including the:

- Regional Trails System Network Vision (2012)
- King County Regional Trails Plan (1992)
- King County Urban Trails Plan (1971)

Regional trails planning is also informed by ongoing feasibility studies and related open space initiatives. Previous plans recognized the Regional Trails network as a major element of King County's open space system, and resulted from regional planning processes that identified trail routes, trail types, development policies and cost estimates.

Coordination and partnerships with local cities in planning for the Regional Trails network is essential, as these trails pass through city jurisdictions and play an important and growing role in the overall trails system. The Leafline Trails Coalition, established by King County, focuses on expanding the trail network to encourage economic growth, offer healthy transportation options, and provide equitable access to other open spaces.

CIP-122 King County should provide regional leadership and coordination for the planning, design, implementation, and maintenance of the countywide Regional Trails network to ensure regional trail connections between jurisdictions and linkages with other local trails.

7.3.1.4 Habitat Planning

Planning for the protection and conservation of water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, and healthy forests provides valuable information for effective open space management. This type of planning also informs decisions about how best to incorporate appropriate public access and recreational activities at a site. Specific targets have been outlined in King County's Strategic Climate Action Plan, the 30-year Plan, and the Clean Water Healthy Habitat Strategic Plan.

CIP-123 King County will continue fish and wildlife planning efforts through individual site management, stewardship, and maintenance plans that are consistent with salmon recovery and wildlife plans and to ensure biodiversity values are an integral part of open space decisions.

7.3.1.5 Backcountry Trails Planning

Parks complies with a backcountry trails programmatic permit, approved in 2019, to support efficient planning and implementation. Backcountry trails planning helps to ensure that such trails are properly located and constructed to accommodate and balance appropriate uses and avoid critical areas, where possible. Planning also helps identify the need for and location of support infrastructure such as trailheads, parking lots, kiosks, signage, and restrooms. Public involvement with trail user groups and coordinating with other agencies providing similar nearby recreational opportunities should be a critical part of the planning process.





CIP-124 King County should develop a backcountry trails programmatic plan that establishes protocols for and guides planning, design, construction, and maintenance of backcountry trails on King County's open space sites.

CIP-125 King County should strive to design, develop, and maintain backcountry trails in a manner that protects natural resources, ensures public safety, requires minimal maintenance, and provides passive recreation in a natural, rustic setting. The latest versions of the U.S. Forest Service Trails Management Handbook and U.S. Forest Service Specifications for the Construction of Trails should inform construction and management of King County's backcountry trails.

7.3.1.5 Planning Tools and Asset Management

To properly plan, steward, and grow the open space system, Parks uses a variety of information about park sites and the county's overall open space landscape. To properly manage the system, Parks employs database tools like Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and the Forest Landscape Assessment Tool.

King County also manages inventory information such as purchase documentation, funding records, historical site development and survey information, site management and stewardship plans, development plans, site conditions, and maintenance requirements. Such an inventory supports King County's property acquisition, planning, management, project development, stewardship, restoration, and scheduling responsibilities.

King County Parks recently implemented a GIS-based asset management system to integrate maintenance work orders with parks assets. Parks uses this system to store and manage a detailed inventory with condition assessments for existing parks assets. With thousands of park assets now in the system, the division will next develop a standardized process to assess the condition of these assets on a regular schedule. The asset management system allows the division to:

- View asset data in a spatial map or dashboard/tabular grid
- Improve the ability to plan, schedule, and implement major maintenance programs
- Track and report costs
- Improve long-term financial planning

With an aging, diverse and geographically dispersed open space system, an asset management system is an essential step to achieving the goals of protecting the public's investment and keeping King County's park system safe and open for all residents to enjoy.

CIP-126 King County will maintain an asset management system with a comprehensive asset inventory, in coordination with other county inventories, databases, and information provided by GIS tools.

King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP) is also developing a natural asset management system, which will track locations and conditions of natural features such as forests, wetlands, lakes, rivers and flood plains, and marine shorelines. The system will also catalog associated functions, values, and management needs. Once the system is established, divisions within DNRP will coordinate to manage and steward natural assets to maximize ecological and recreational benefits. For example, Parks may apply natural asset principles in its capital work, managing stormwater using natural features and green stormwater infrastructure rather than with vaults, pumps, and pipes. Such a natural asset management system may also inform capital project site selection, helping Parks avoid impacts on valuable natural assets or design projects that enhance benefits of nearby natural areas.

7.2.3 Design and Development

Parks designs and develops projects to ensure that proposals achieve an appropriate level of recreation development while also protecting natural resources. Safe, environmentally sensitive and cost-effective design is a major responsibility in public projects. The following policies demonstrate King County's commitment to developing and approving capital projects that best serve the public:

- CIP-127** 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. This is consistent with funding, project program plans, site management plans and guidelines, forest stewardship plans, and master plans.
- CIP-128** King County will design, develop, restore, and maintain sites to encourage the safe use and public enjoyment of the county's open space sites, while protecting and enhancing their natural resources.
- CIP-129** King County is committed to the design and development of accessible sites and recreation facilities, including removal of barriers to accessibility in existing sites and recreation facilities.
- CIP-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.

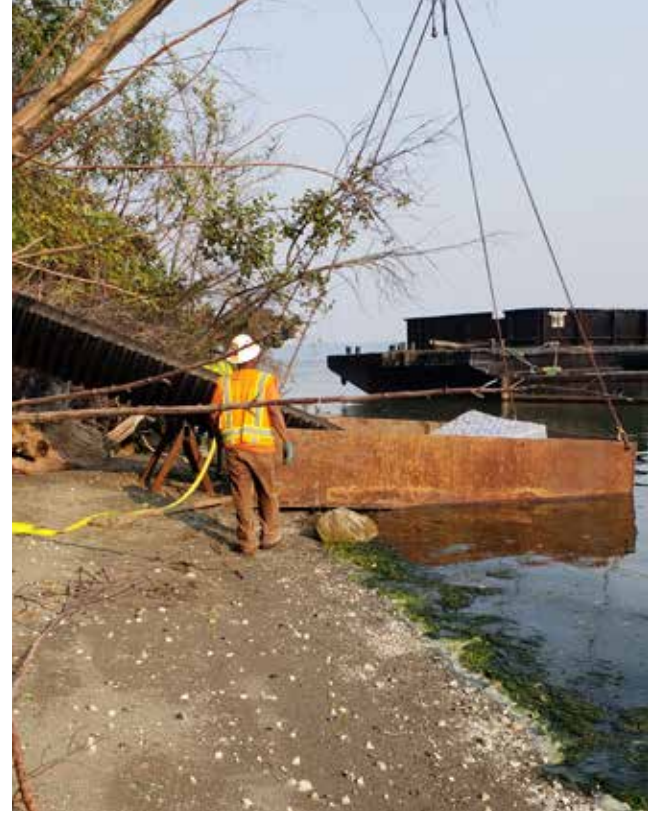
All projects must also comply with regulations intended to increase public safety and protect natural resources. For example, King County's backcountry trail programmatic permit facilitates consistent trail design and construction standards while ensuring compliance with critical area regulations. The programmatic approach also reduces permitting costs and staff labor hours. This approach has enhanced natural resource stewardship while increasing appropriate recreational use of open space sites.

- CIP-131** King County will maintain, develop, and restore open space sites consistent with all local, state and federal regulatory permit requirements. Programmatic permits, where allowed and appropriate, will be pursued when such permits increase cost effectiveness and increase project success.

7.2.3.1 Unified Design

A unified design program is cost effective because it minimizes future design and maintenance costs. Standardization minimizes replacement and repair costs, reduces part and supply inventories and simplifies maintenance. It also promotes an identifiable image for the system. However, these efficiencies should be balanced with creating culturally appropriate spaces specific to user group needs and the surrounding community.

- CIP-132** King County will develop and implement design standards and details that promote a unified, identifiable image of the county's open space system.
- CIP-133** King County will give high priority to green and environmentally sustainable building practices in the design and development of open space sites.
- CIP-134** King County will give high priority to aesthetic considerations in the design and development of open space sites. Designs will be evaluated based on aesthetics, 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.





CIP-135 When appropriate and feasible, open spaces should include educational and interpretive signage or other features which enhance a user's understanding and enjoyment of a site and its features and resources.

7.2.3.2 Regional Trails

Developing King County's Regional Trail network is driven by the goals of the system and the needs of its users, and framed by local, state, and regional guidelines.

CIP-136 The Regional Trails network will provide access to important regional destinations: urban centers, civic and commercial centers, regional transit, and important points of interest throughout King County.

CIP-137 Regional trail corridors should, to the extent possible, provide a network of linear parks and routes that enhance the natural environment of the region, encourage healthy lifestyles, and provide positive environmental benefits.

When setting priorities for regional trail development, King County will use the following policies:

CIP-138 King County will ensure that equity is considered and appropriately prioritized in the development and operations of the Regional Trails network.

CIP-139 Regional Trails network development should prioritize filling important gaps in the planned trails network to enhance connectivity and overall network integrity.

CIP-140 King County should explore innovative partnerships and strategies to expand and better connect the Regional Trails network.

CIP-141 In-depth planning for development may be undertaken in potential high-use urban corridors where regional trails will be utilized most.

The Regional Trails network is intended to serve commuters and other alternative transit needs.

CIP-142 Regional trails should be accessible for both recreational use and for utility uses such as home-to-the work or other "commute" type trips.

CIP-143 King County should provide up-to-date mapping and consistent wayfinding throughout Regional Trails network to enhance user navigation and travel. Trail wayfinding programs should be consistent with nationally and regionally accepted wayfinding programs.

King County's Regional Trails network is designed in alignment with local, state, and national trail and transportation planning guidelines. These guidelines provide technical guidance and are updated periodically to incorporate best available engineering, design, and development practices. Following these guidelines encourages safe and cohesive expansions of the network.

CIP-144 Regional trails should be developed in accordance with the most recent edition of the King County Regional Trails System Development Guidelines, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, the U.S. Department of Transportation Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices, the National Association of City Transportation Officials Urban Bikeway Design Guide, and/or other appropriate state or national professional guidelines.



- CIP 145** Regional Trails network plans should be prepared based on the priority guidance provided by the most recent edition of the Regional Trails Needs Report. These plans may include feasibility studies, trail designs, construction programming, environmental studies, and other items. Plans for additional mobility connections between regional trails and important destinations such as transit centers may be based on local conditions and access feasibility analyses. New trail planning activities should include public outreach best practices to ensure important community involvement in the development of the Regional Trails network.
- CIP 146** Regional trails and mobility connections planning and development should consider all relevant trail plans, including the Regional Trails Plan (1992) and the Regional Trails System Network Vision (2012), along with applicable project-specific plans and studies to identify the most appropriate and sustainable approach to implementation.
- CIP-147** Regional trails development and related activities should be guided by the King County Strategic Plan, planning and development goals and strategies in the Regional Trails System Strategic Plan (2011), and guidance from the Regional Trails Strategic Plan Update (2017).
- CIP-148** Regional Trails network planning should be based on the most accurate data and information available, including accurate estimates of trail uses.

While regional trails development is generally consistent, each trail has its own character. King County emphasizes the uniqueness of each trail through art and aesthetic design.

- CIP-149** King County recognizes and fosters the unique character and environment of each regional trail corridor while ensuring the consistent development of regional trail facilities based on park design standards.
- CIP-150** The Arts Master Plan for the King County Regional Trails System (2015), which provides a vision and blueprint for the cultural and aesthetic development of the Regional Trails network, should provide a basis for implementing site-specific or temporary art and cultural activities on the trails network as well as for planning the aesthetic character of new regional trails.

APPENDICES

Appendix I King County Initiatives and the Open Space Plan

Appendix II Source Documents

Appendix III King County Parks History

Appendix IV Six-Year Capital Improvement Program

Appendix V Maps

APPENDIX I:

KING COUNTY INITIATIVES AND THE OPEN SPACE PLAN

The following table summarizes King County initiatives and efforts that create the current framework for open space planning.

Initiative/Plan	Relationship to Open Space Plan	Parks' Contribution to the Success of Initiative/Plan
King County Comprehensive Plan	A long-range plan developed in response to the Growth Management Act that addresses urban and rural land use, open space and recreation, the natural environment, facilities and services, cultural resources, resource lands, energy, telecommunications, transportation, housing, and economic development. Several of these topics are directly and indirectly addressed by the policies and content in the Open Space Plan.	The Open Space Plan is a functional plan that implements relevant elements of the King County Comprehensive Plan.
King County Strategic Climate Action Plan (SCAP)	Five-year blueprint for county climate action, integrating climate change into all areas of county operations, as well as into work with cities, partners, communities, and residents. Parks' Open Space Plan emphasizes and further details agency commitments described in the SCAP, particularly related to forestry, regional trails, equity, and best business and operational practices to minimize carbon emissions.	Parks' acquisition, management, and stewardship of forests and natural areas sequesters carbon. Parks also plans and delivers a regional multi-modal trail system that offers human-powered transportation alternatives to reduce the county's carbon emissions. The agency supports increased park access and tree canopy in areas that most improve the resilience of frontline communities. Parks also minimizes energy consumption through operational practices and at facilities, builds "green buildings" when possible, and uses other tools to reduce the agency's carbon footprint.
Land Conservation Initiative (LCI)	Regional collaboration between King County, cities, businesses, farmers, environmental partners, and others to preserve the last, most important natural lands and urban green spaces in 30 years. The LCI accelerates the pace of acquiring open space and natural lands and informs acquisition targets pursued by Parks.	Parks' Open Space and Regional Trails programs pursue and acquire hundreds of acres of open space per year in support of LCI's goals. Parks Operations Section also manages and stewards most of the land acquired by DNRP in perpetuity.

Initiative/Plan	Relationship to Open Space Plan	Parks' Contribution to the Success of Initiative/Plan
Clean Water Healthy Habitat (CWHH)	Thirty-year strategic approach to ensuring the county invests in the right places to improve water quality and expand habitats, improving the lives of the region's people, fish, and wildlife. CWHH also provides a shared county vision and overarching environmental architecture for the Department of Natural Resources and Parks. The Open Space Plan is a functional plan contributing to CWHH.	Parks' efforts to conserve and steward open space, as well as make natural spaces accessible to all, directly contributes CWHH. Parks' work directly supports several CWHH principles and goal areas, especially Healthy Forests and More Green Space.
30-Year Forest Plan	Thirty-year strategic plan that describes a shared countywide vision to increase forest cover and improve forest health in both rural and urban areas. Goals, strategies, and pilot projects provide a blueprint for action in seven goal areas, all of which overlap with Parks' mission and apply to natural lands acquired and managed by the agency. Priority goal areas include climate, forest health, urban forest canopy, human health, salmon habitat, water quality and quantity, and sustainable timber.	Parks co-led development of the 30-Year Forest Plan and is committed to implementing many actions on property managed by the agency. Parks' forested inventory and near-term activities are emphasized, as King County directly manages these areas and can highlight and advance relevant county and partner priorities. The 30-Year Forest Plan also aligns with many of the goals, strategies, and targets described in the LCI, CWHH, and SCAP (see rows above).
King County Pro-Equity Policy Agenda	Outlines King County's comprehensive "pro-equity" approach to expand access to the county's Determinants of Equity: child and youth development, economic development and jobs, environment and climate, health and human services, housing, information and technology, justice system, and transportation and mobility. The Open Space Plan affirms Parks' commitment to expanding access for several of these determinants.	Parks implements the recommendations of the Open Space Equity Cabinet to improve greenspace access across the county. In recent years, Parks has also initiated several programs that directly invest and contribute to expanded access per King County's Pro-Equity Policy Agenda, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parks Levy Healthy Community and Parks Fund grants • King County Parks Youth Conservation Corps • Leafline Trails Coalition • Trailhead Direct • Play Equity Coalition

APPENDIX II: SOURCE DOCUMENTS

- American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. *Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities*. 2012. <https://njdotlocalaidrc.com/perch/resources/aashto-gbf-4-2012-bicycle.pdf>
- The Aspen Institute Project Play. *State of Play, Seattle-King County*. 2019. <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/2019-SOP-Seattle-KingCounty-Web-FINAL.pdf>
- Derek Churchill, Stewardship Forestry, LLC. *King County Parks Forest Assessment*. December, 2013.
- Green/Duwamish and Central Puget Sound Watershed (WRIA 9). *Salmon Habitat Plan 2021 Update*. February 11, 2021. https://www.govlink.org/watersheds/9/pdf/2021_PlanUpdate.pdf
- HistoryLink. *Marymoor Park*, Alan Stein. December 10, 2002. <https://www.historylink.org/File/4044>
- King County. *2012 King County Countywide Planning Policies*. December 3, 2012. <https://kingcounty.gov/~media/depts/executive/performance-strategy-budget/regional-planning/CPPs/2012-CPPsAmended062516withMaps.ashx?la=en>
- King County. *2020 Local Food Initiative Annual Report*. 2020. <https://your.kingcounty.gov/dnrp/local-food/documents/2020-LFI-Annual-Report.pdf>
- King County. *30-Year Forest Plan*. February, 2021. <https://your.kingcounty.gov/dnrp/library/water-and-land/forestry/30-year-forest-plan/30-year-forest-plan-03-2021.pdf>
- King County. *Clean Water Healthy Habitat Strategic Plan, 2020-2025*. August, 2021. <https://your.kingcounty.gov/dnrp/library/water-and-land/cwhh/clean-water-healthy-habitat-strategic-plan.pdf>
- King County. *King County 2020 Comprehensive Plan Update*. August 20, 2020. <https://kingcounty.gov/depts/executive/performance-strategy-budget/regional-planning/king-county-comprehensive-plan/CurrentAdoptedPlan.aspx>
- King County. *King County's Equity and Social Justice Ordinance 16948*. October 11, 2010. <https://aqua.kingcounty.gov/council/clerk/OldOrdsMotions/Ordinance%2016948.pdf>
- King County. *King County Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan*. 2016-2022. <https://aqua.kingcounty.gov/dnrp/library/dnrp-directors-office/equity-social-justice/201609-ESJ-SP-FULL.pdf>
- King County. *King County Land Conservation Initiative*. November 25, 2020. <https://kingcounty.gov/services/environment/water-and-land/land-conservation.aspx>
- King County. *King County Strategic Climate Action Plan*. 2020. <https://kingcounty.gov/services/environment/climate/actions-strategies/strategic-climate-action-plan.aspx>
- King County. *King County Strategic Plan*. 2017. <https://kingcounty.gov/depts/executive/performance-strategy-budget/performance-strategy/Strategic-Planning/2015-strategic-plan-update.aspx>
- King County. *Regional Trails Needs Report, King County Comprehensive Plan (2016) and Updates, Technical Appendix C2*. 2016. https://kingcounty.gov/~media/council/documents/CompPlan/2016/FullCouncil/adoptedplan/Attachment_G_Appendix_C2_RegionalTrailsNeedsReport_2016KCCP_112216.ashx?la=en
- King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks Historic Preservation Program. *King County Historic Preservation Program Strategic Plan*. November, 2013. https://dahp.wa.gov/sites/default/files/KingCounty_final-hpp-strategic-plan2013-20.pdf
- King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, Parks and Recreation Division. *4Culture. Arts Master Plan, King County Regional Trails System*. 2015. <http://www.4culture.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Arts-Master-Plan-for-KC-Trails.pdf>

King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, Parks and Recreation Division. *King County Parks, Trails and Open Space Replacement Levy Ordinance 18890*. 2019. <https://aqua.kingcounty.gov/council/clerk/OldOrdsMotions/Ordinance%2018890.pdf>

King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, Parks and Recreation Division. *King County Regional Trails Plan*. October, 1992.

King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, Parks and Recreation Division. *King County Regional Trail System Draft Development Guidelines*. February, 2009.

King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, Parks and Recreation Division. *Parks Division ESJ Action Plan*. May, 2021.

King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, Parks and Recreation Division. *Regional Trails System Network Vision*. May, 2012.

King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, Parks and Recreation Division. *Urban Trails Plan*. 1971.

King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, Water and Land Resources Division. *2013 King County Flood Hazard Management Plan Update and Progress Report*. November, 2013. <https://your.kingcounty.gov/dnrp/library/2013/kcr826-2013.pdf>

King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, Water and Land Resources Division. *Farm and Forest Report*. 1996. <https://kingcounty.gov/services/environment/water-and-land/forestry/forest-policy/farm-and-forest-report-1996.aspx>

King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, Water and Land Resources Division. *Programmatic Plan for Management of King County-owned Ecological Lands*. January 2004. <https://aqua.kingcounty.gov/dnrp/library/2004/kcr1557.pdf>

King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, Water and Land Resources Division. *Programmatic Plan for Management of King County-Owned Working Forest Properties*. August, 2003. <https://aqua.kingcounty.gov/dnrp/library/2003/kcr985.pdf>

Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed Salmon Recovery Council. *Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed (WRIA 8) Chinook Salmon Conservation Plan, 10-year Update*. 2017. <https://www.govlink.org/watersheds/8/reports/pdf/wria-8-ten-year-salmon-conservation-plan-combined-10-25-2017.pdf>

National Association of City Transportation Officials. *Urban Bikeway Design Guide*. August, 2013. <https://nacto.org/publication/urban-bikeway-design-guide/>

Northwest Natural Resource Group. *Climate Adaptation Strategies for Western Washington and Northwest Oregon Forests*. 2020. <https://www.nnrg.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/ClimateAdaptationWhitePaper.pdf>

Office of Financial Management. *Small Area Estimates Program*. December 9, 2021. <https://ofm.wa.gov/washington-data-research/population-demographics/population-estimates/small-area-estimates-program>

Outdoor Industry Association. *2021 Special Report: The New Outdoor Participant (COVID and Beyond)*. 2021. https://outdoorrecreation.wi.gov/Documents/Research%20Library%20Page%20files/US%20-%20Demographics%20%26%20Participation/2021_OIA_New%20Outdoor%20Participant%20COVID%20and%20Beyond.pdf

Puget Sound Regional Council. *Vision 2050 A Plan for the Central Puget Sound Region*. October, 2020. <https://www.psrc.org/sites/default/files/vision-2050-plan.pdf>

Seattle Times. *Instagram Effect? Number of Seattle-area Hikers has Doubled in Less Than 10 Years, Data Shows*. Published April 2, 2018.

The Snoqualmie Tribe. *The Snoqualmie Tribe Asks the Public to Recreate Respectfully on its Ancestral Lands*. July 12, 2021. <https://snoqualmientribe.us/the-snoqualmie-tribe-asks-the-public-to-recreate-respectfully-on-its-ancestral-lands/>

State of Washington, Department of Ecology. *Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Plan WRIA 9- Duwamish/Green Watershed*. May, 2021. <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/documents/2111009.pdf>

State of Washington, Department of Ecology. *Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Plan WRIA 8- Cedar Sammamish Watershed*. November, 2020. https://www.ezview.wa.gov/Portals/_1962/images/WREC/WRIA08/PLAN/WRIA8-FinalDraftWREPlan-20201120.pdf

State of Washington, Department of Ecology. *Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Plan WRIA 7 – Snohomish Watershed*. January, 2021. https://www.ezview.wa.gov/Portals/_1962/images/WREC/WRIA07/Final%20Plan/WRIA%207-WRE%20Plan-Final%20Draft.pdf

The Tulalip Tribes. *The “Recreation Boom” on Public Lands in Western Washington: Impact to Wildlife and Implications for Treaty Tribes*. February 28, 2021. <https://nr.tulaliptribes.com/Base/File/NR-Tulalip-Recreation-Impacts-to-Wildlife-2-28-21-v2>

United States Census Bureau. *Data Releases*. Last updated November 19, 2021. <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/news/data-releases.html>

United States Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration. *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways*. May, 2012. <https://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/pdfs/2009r1r2/mutcd2009r1r2edition.pdf>

APPENDIX III: KING COUNTY PARKS HISTORY

King County's Evolving Role

Since the early 1900s, the role of Parks in providing recreation and open space opportunities has evolved and expanded through several distinct periods, largely driven by the major funding efforts that directed them.

1900 to 1950: Establishment of King County's Parks System

During this era, the need for a parks and recreational system for unincorporated areas of the county became apparent, and the first steps were taken to acquire land and provide recreation programs. King County successfully acquired its first park properties, and many others were donated. In 1938, King County managed 150 acres of park lands. Facilities added or built during this period include distinctive Works Progress Administration log community center buildings, two of which remain in King County's inventory and continue to be enjoyed by King County residents.

1951 to 1965: Focus on Recreation

The focus during this period shifted to providing innovative recreational programs and acquiring additional park lands. Acquisition became important as growth shifted to suburban areas on the Eastside and to the north and south of Seattle. Of particular interest to the government was lakefront access, as well as areas for playgrounds, games, sports, and parkways. The first countywide park bond issue was passed for \$1 million in 1956. King County acquired its first regional park, Marymoor Park, in 1962 for \$1.1 million.

1966 to 1980: The Forward Thrust Era

This was a period of unprecedented park expansion funded by Forward Thrust, a series of bond propositions that was approved by King County voters in 1968. What was then called the King County Department of Parks and Recreation acquired and developed recreation facilities and operated programs that were distributed widely throughout the growing county. Forward Thrust was a model interjurisdictional and interdisciplinary effort at the regional planning level. With \$49.2 million from the bond, the county government was able to leverage millions more in grants and matching funds from other state and national programs. King County's park system doubled in size, adding more than 4,000 acres, 53 miles of waterfront, and miles of trail rights of way. One of the most notable Forward Thrust park initiatives was the creation of the aquatics system of sixteen indoor pools and one outdoor pool. The **King County Comprehensive Plan**, the **Ten-Year Program for Open Space Acquisition** (1965), the **Urban Trails Plan and the General Bicycle Plan** (1976) all contributed to shaping the future of the system at this time.

1980 to 2000: The Open Space Era

By 1980, the focus shifted to regional parks, natural resources, and preserving open space. County residents, responding to dwindling open spaces, habitat loss, and decreasing public access, passed a \$50 million Farmlands Preservation Bond issue in 1979 to preserve agricultural open space, and a \$117 million Open Space Bond in 1989 to acquire other open space lands. In 1993, King County established a \$60 million Conservation Futures Bond Acquisition Program to purchase open space, parks and trails and initiated the \$14.8 million Waterways 2000 Program to conserve streams and rivers, protect salmon, and provide open space for recreation and education.

Two innovative open space conservation programs were also initiated during this era. Beginning in 1994, the Four-to-One Program provides a unique land use tool that supports the Growth Management Act goals of conserving a rural open space greenbelt and reducing urban sprawl by buffering the urban growth area boundary. Since the program's inception, approximately 1,400 acres of open space have been permanently conserved. In 1998, the Transfer of Development Rights Program also began offering a voluntary, incentive based and market-driven approach to preserving

land and steering development growth away from rural and resource lands into King County's urban area. Between 1998 and 2019, the program protected more than 144,500 acres of rural and resource lands.

During this period, King County developed regional facilities, such as the Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center, and acquired significant natural area parks, such as Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park, Moss Lake Natural Area, Spring Lake/Lake Desire Park, and Middle Fork Snoqualmie Natural Area. These parks and natural areas continue to protect ecological resources and provide passive recreation opportunities.

Another significant development during this period was the 1999 listing of Puget Sound Chinook salmon and bull trout as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act. As a result, the State of Washington passed several laws directing planning efforts to address habitat degradation in fresh and salt water on a watershed-scale. This led to the beginning of the Watershed Resource Inventory Area planning process that continues to shape open space planning and management today.

King County also led the way in building a regional trails network during this period. Developing and expanding active recreation parks was also emphasized, in particular delivering sports programs outside the incorporated areas of the county. Innovative programs such as the Youth Sports Facilities Grant program and the 101 Ballfields Initiative provided funds for construction and rehabilitation of many recreation facilities located on school sites throughout the county.

2000 to 2004: A Time of Transition

The Washington State Growth Management Act encourages the annexation or incorporation of urban unincorporated areas. Between 1990 and 2000, ten new cities formed in King County, shifting the responsibility for local parks and recreation services from King County to the cities. The cumulative impact of annexations and incorporations, coupled with a fiscal crisis in 2002, prompted King County to reevaluate the provision of all non-mandated services supported by its general fund, including the parks and recreation system.

After having to close many of its facilities, layoff a significant percentage of Parks staff, and transfer certain open space system functions to other King County agencies, King County launched an effort to investigate funding options to preserve its open space system. In spring 2002, the King County Executive appointed the Metropolitan Parks Task Force, a civic task force established to identify ways to keep the County's parks and recreation system open into the future, and to restore stability to the parks system by reducing dependence on the general fund.

The Metropolitan Parks Task Force issued its recommendations in June 2002 and called for King County to:

- Refocus its parks and recreation mission to provide regional trails, regional passive parks, regional resource and ecological lands, regional active recreation facilities, and rural parks
- Transfer all local facilities within cities and work to transfer local facilities in potential annexation areas
- Implement new entrepreneurial strategies to raise revenues to support the operations and maintenance of the county's open space system
- Facilitate the acquisition, development, and operation of active recreation facilities by empowering partners to leverage resources
- Seek voter approval for a property tax lid lift to support the county's regional and rural parks

These recommendations evolved into the Parks Business Transition Plan, which became the blueprint for the transformation of the county's open space system. A key element of the transition was a companion ordinance, referred to as the Parks Omnibus Ordinance (14509), which was approved by the King County Council and gave Parks the authority to implement its newly refocused mission and vision. In spring 2003, voters approved a four-year levy to support regional parks, trails, and recreation facilities maintained by King County. It was also during this time that the parks agency merged with the King County Department of Natural Resources, forming the Parks and Recreation Division of the Department of Natural Resources and Parks.

2004 to 2019: A Refocused Mission

After a tumultuous start to the decade, Parks evolved as an agency, creating a distinctive identity of “King County Parks - Your Big Backyard” and refocusing its mission and role on regional active and passive parks and recreation amenities, natural area parks, regional trails, working forests, and local rural parks. Later in this period, as it became clear that urban unincorporated areas were unlikely to annex to nearby cities in the near future, King County also increased its focus on urban local parks in these areas. This era was characterized by the need to diversify Parks’ revenue base and rebuild the agency as a model for a new way of doing business as a public land management agency.

In addition to property tax levy lid lift measures, the agency began pursuing public-private partnerships that generated revenue, created efficiencies, and nurtured goodwill among the public. These revenue sources became even more important after 2011, when the agency stopped receiving funding from the King County general fund. By 2019, nearly a quarter of the agency’s operations funding was now derived from a combination of entrepreneurial initiatives, competitively priced user fees, and gifts and grants. Public-private partnerships furthered the agency’s ability to leverage resources, creating new public recreation amenities and offering programs, events and other ways for the public to enjoy and benefit from King County’s open space system. Examples of successful and enduring public-private partnerships include the outdoor concert series and Cirque du Soleil performances at Marymoor Park, the Bethadaya Community Learning Space managed by the Technology Access Foundation at Dick Thurnau Memorial Park, the mountain bike trails system at Duthie Hill Park, and the trail running series at Cougar Mountain Regional Wildland Park.

Another step in refocusing its mission included transferring properties within the growth management boundary to cities or other entities, such as school districts and non-profit organizations. Since 2000, Parks has transferred more than 60 local parks and pools, comprising more than 1,500 acres of local park sites.

In 2007, King County voters renewed the original operations and maintenance levy for an additional six years and approved a companion, six-year capital expansion levy dedicated to support the acquisition of natural area parks and expansion of the Regional Trails network. In 2009, King County voters passed the “Open Space Protection Act,” an amendment to the County Charter, to strengthen protections against the sale or transfer of 96 specific open space properties, totaling nearly 156,000 acres. Updated every five years or so, as of 2022 the inventory is expected to total approximately 162,000 acres.

In 2013, King County voters renewed their support and approved the 2014-2019 Parks, Trails and Open Space Replacement Levy by more than 70 percent. This six-year levy focused on four goal areas:

- Taking care of King County’s existing system of parks and trails
- Improving regional trails and non-motorized mobility
- Growing and connecting regional open space
- Making parks and recreation more accessible

Due to increases in property values in the county, the 2019 levy rate was 12.92 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value. Similar to the 2008 levy, the 2014-2019 levy included distribution of levy proceeds to cities in King County (based upon a formula of city population and assessed value) and also to the Woodland Park Zoo.

Some of Parks’ accomplishments during this levy period included:

- Acquiring 2,810 acres of open space (in fee or easement)
- Designing or constructing 14 regional trail connections
- Rehabilitating 13 play areas
- Repairing 21 trail bridges and trestles
- Completing major repair at five park sites
- Improving 12 trailhead and parking lot facilities

During the latter portion of this period, Parks also began to rebuild and update its internal infrastructure, for example, investing in a new asset management system and re-establishing many job functions that were lost during the budget crisis in the early 2000s.

2020 to the Present: Parks and Open Space for All

In 2019, King County voters again demonstrated their commitment to parks, trails, and open space by renewing the levy for another six years. The 2020-2025 King County Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Space Levy, which was approved by 70 percent, is estimated to generate \$810 million over six years, costing approximately \$7.60 per month for the owner of a home with an assessed property value of \$500,000.

While the goals remain the same as the prior levy, this levy adds \$110 million in new grants to fund other public entities, tribes, and non-profit organizations according to four categories:

- Parks capital investments and open space
- Aquatic facilities
- Open space - rivers corridors
- Healthy communities and parks

The 2020 levy continues to distribute funds directly to cities in King County and to the Woodland Park Zoo; a new levy funding recipient is another regional facility, the Seattle Aquarium.

Although the agency has reduced its reliance on revenues generated from entrepreneurial and business activities, Parks remains committed to cultivating public-private partnerships, with a particular focus on partnerships that expand access to King County's open space system, such as Trailhead Direct, and partnerships that enhance recreation opportunities for the public on King County-owned lands. The agency also continues to play a key leadership role in regional collaborations, such as the King County Play Equity Coalition, the four-county Leafline Trails Coalition, and the statewide Recreate Responsibility Coalition.



APPENDIX IV: SIX-YEAR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

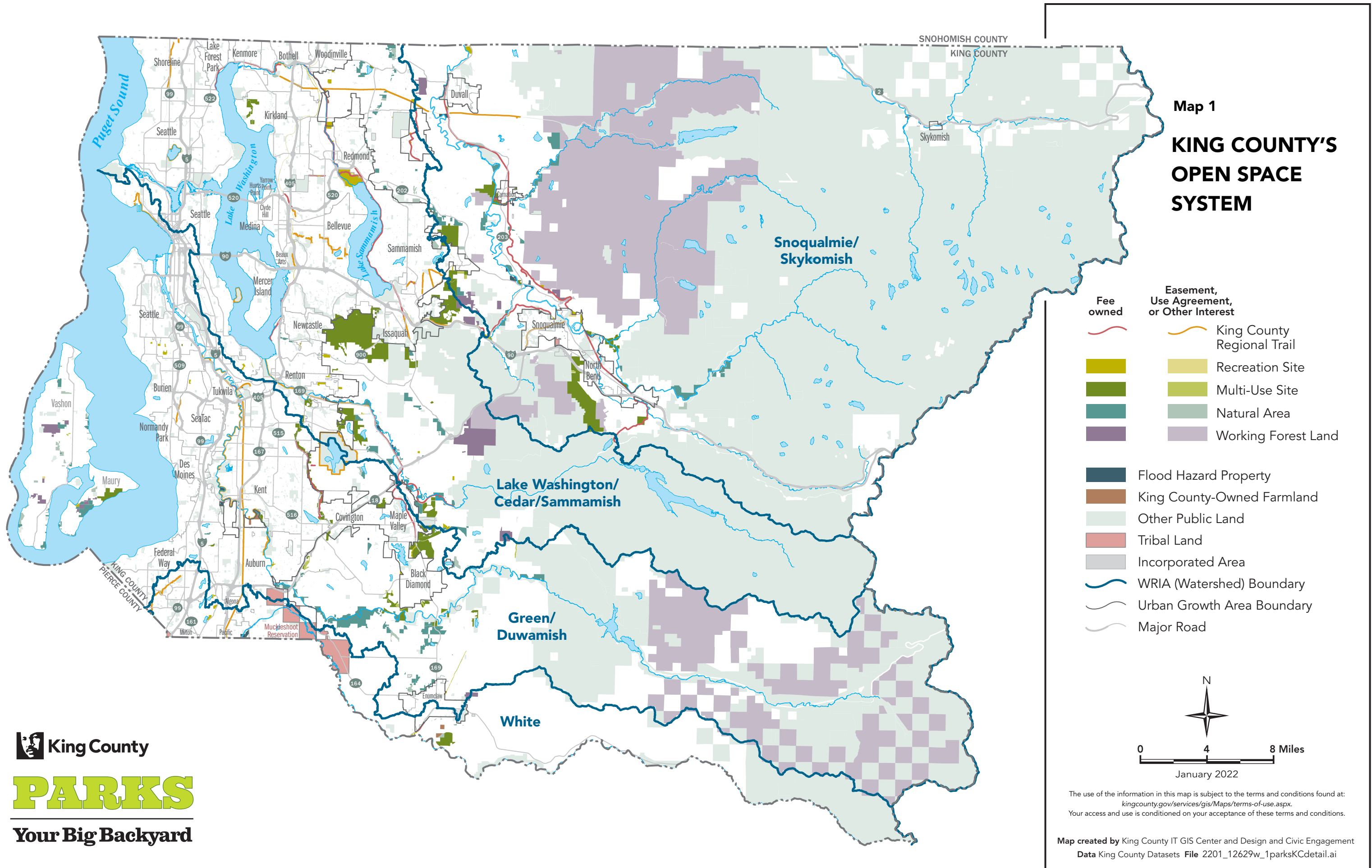
Portfolio	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Active Recreation Repair and Renovation						
Asset and Facility Improvement	\$9,600,000	\$10,100,000	\$10,100,000	\$9,800,000	\$3,700,000	\$3,700,000
Major Park Sites	\$5,800,000	\$6,100,000	\$6,100,000	\$5,900,000	\$2,200,000	\$2,200,000
Regional and Public Trails						
Large Trail Corridors	47200000	\$10,300,000	\$10,300,000	\$11,400,000		
Existing Trail System	\$3,800,000	\$3,800,000	\$3,800,000	\$4,200,000		
Other Trails	\$300,000	\$6,700,000	\$6,700,000	\$7,400,000		
Open Space Acquisition and Land Conservation	\$16,300,000	\$16,500,000	\$16,500,000	\$17,900,000		
Grants Program	\$15,700,000	\$17,200,000	\$17,200,000	\$18,800,000		
Administration	\$12,400,000	\$2,700,000	\$2,700,000	\$6,000,000		
Total	\$111,100,000	\$73,400,000	\$73,400,000	\$81,400,000	\$5,900,000	\$5,900,000

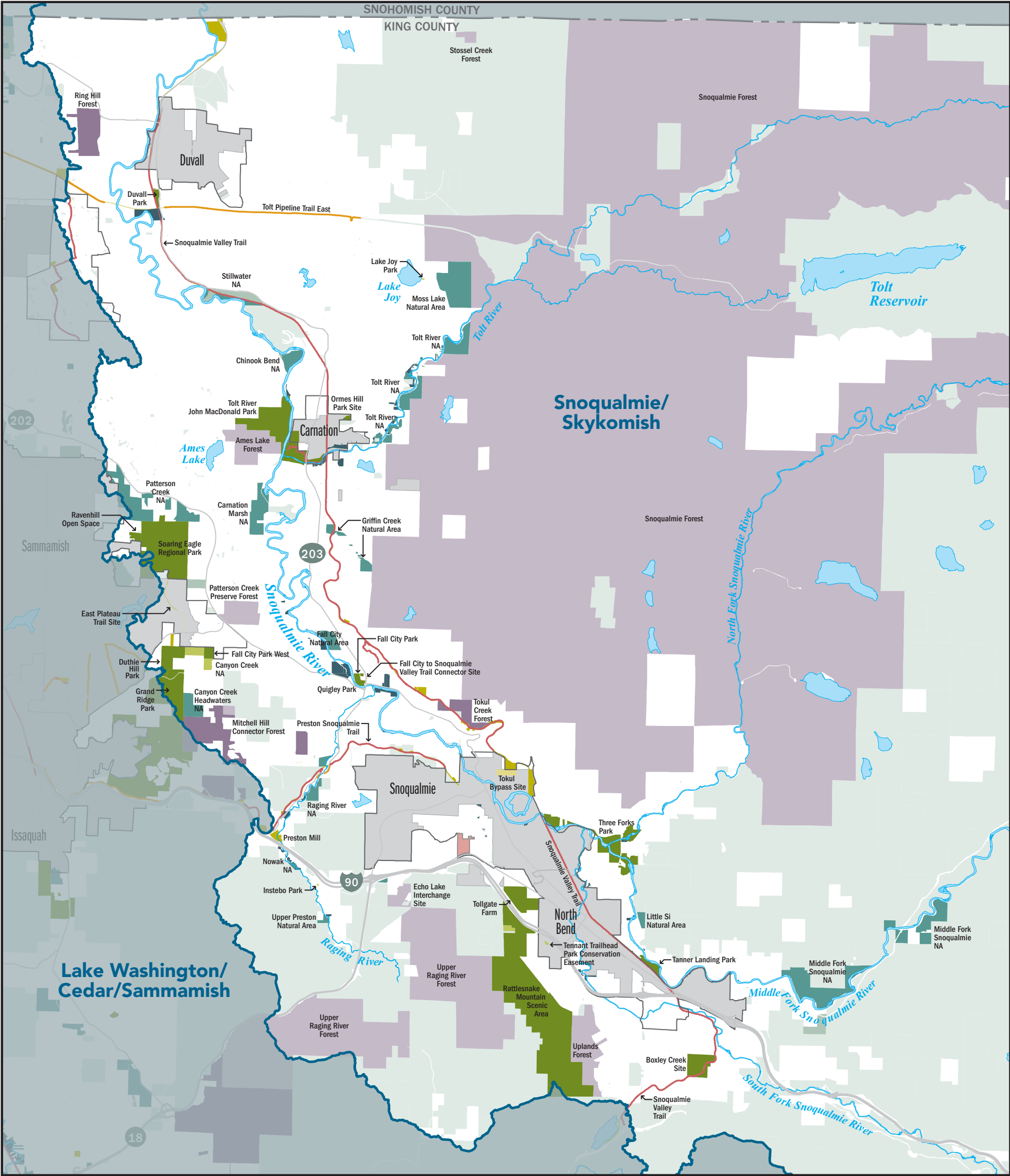
Notes:

1. Revenue sources for the six-year capital improvement program include Parks Levy, bond proceeds, Real Estate Excise Taxes (REET), and state and federal grants.
2. The 6-year Parks Levy expires on December 31, 2025.
3. Open Space Acquisition projects are determined each year through recommendations from a citizens committee.
4. All figures rounded to the nearest one hundred thousand.

APPENDIX V: MAPS

- Map 1. King County Open Space System
- Map 2. Snoqualmie/Skykomish Watershed
- Map 3. Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed (Southeast)
- Map 4. Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed (Northwest)
- Map 5. Green/Duwamish Watershed (Northwest)
- Map 6. Green/Duwamish Watershed (Southeast)
- Map 7. White River Watershed
- Map 8. Vashon-Maury Island
- Map 9. Regional Trail System
- Map 10. Backcountry Trail Sites
- Map 11. Wildlife Habitat Network





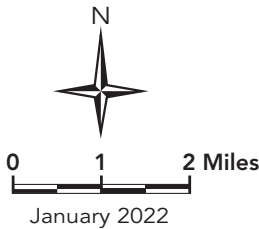
Map 2

KING COUNTY'S OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

Snoqualmie/Skykomish Watershed

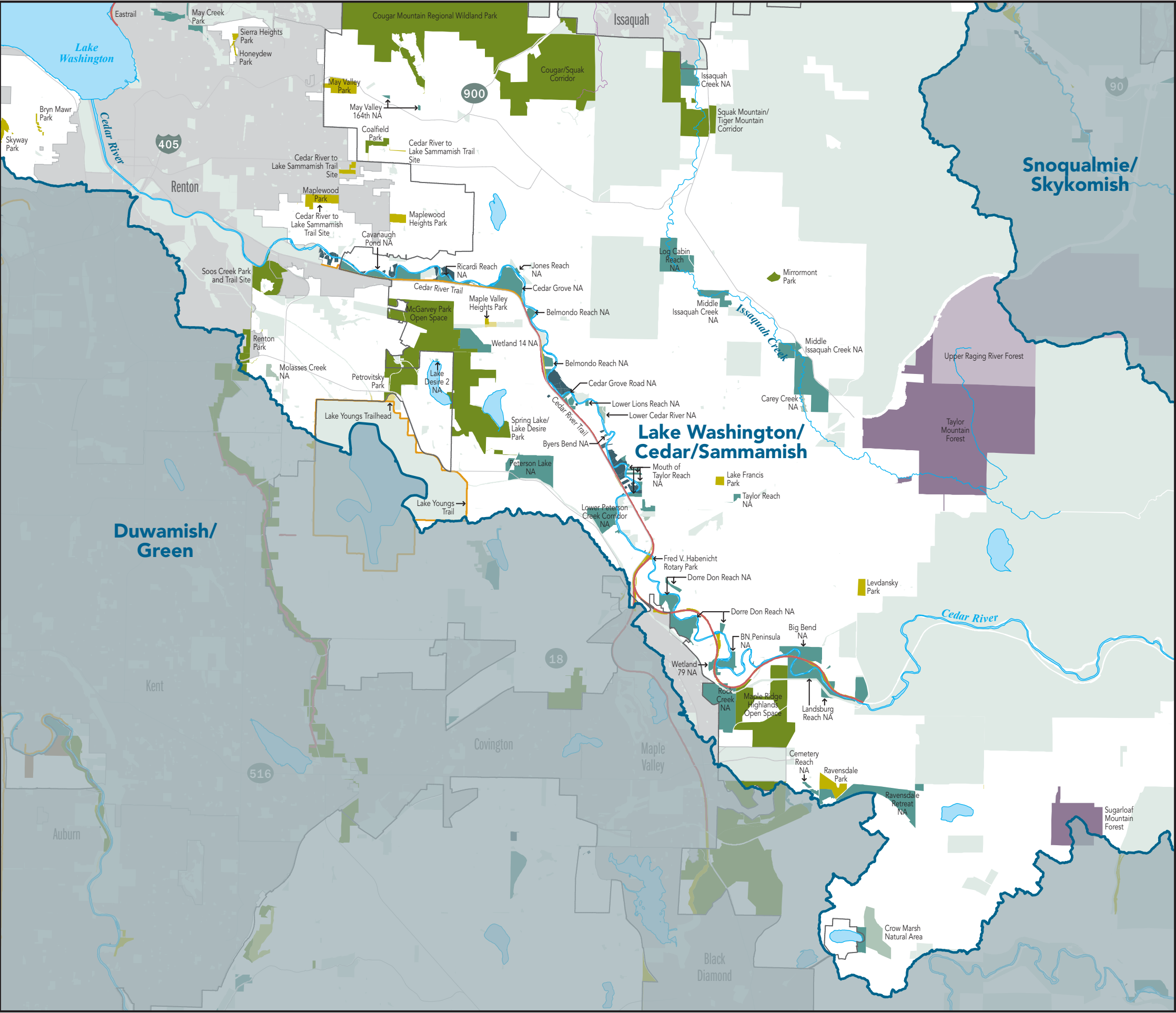
- Fee owned**
- King County Regional Trail
 - Recreation Site
 - Multi-Use Site
 - Natural Area
 - Working Forest Land

- Flood Hazard Property
- King County-Owned Farmland
- Other Public Land
- Tribal Land
- Incorporated Area
- WRIA (Watershed) Boundary
- Urban Growth Area Boundary
- Major Road



The use of the information in this map is subject to the terms and conditions found at: kingcounty.gov/services/gis/Maps/terms-of-use.aspx. Your access and use is conditioned on your acceptance of these terms and conditions.



















Map created by King County IT GIS Center and Design and Civic Engagement
Data King County Datasets File 2201_126295w_2parksSNOQmap.ai

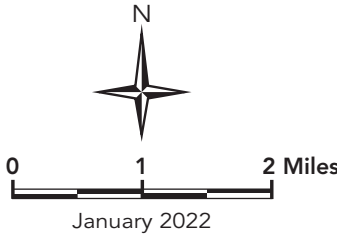


Map 3

**KING COUNTY'S
OPEN SPACE SYSTEM**

**Lake Washington/
Cedar/Sammamish
Watershed (Southeast)**

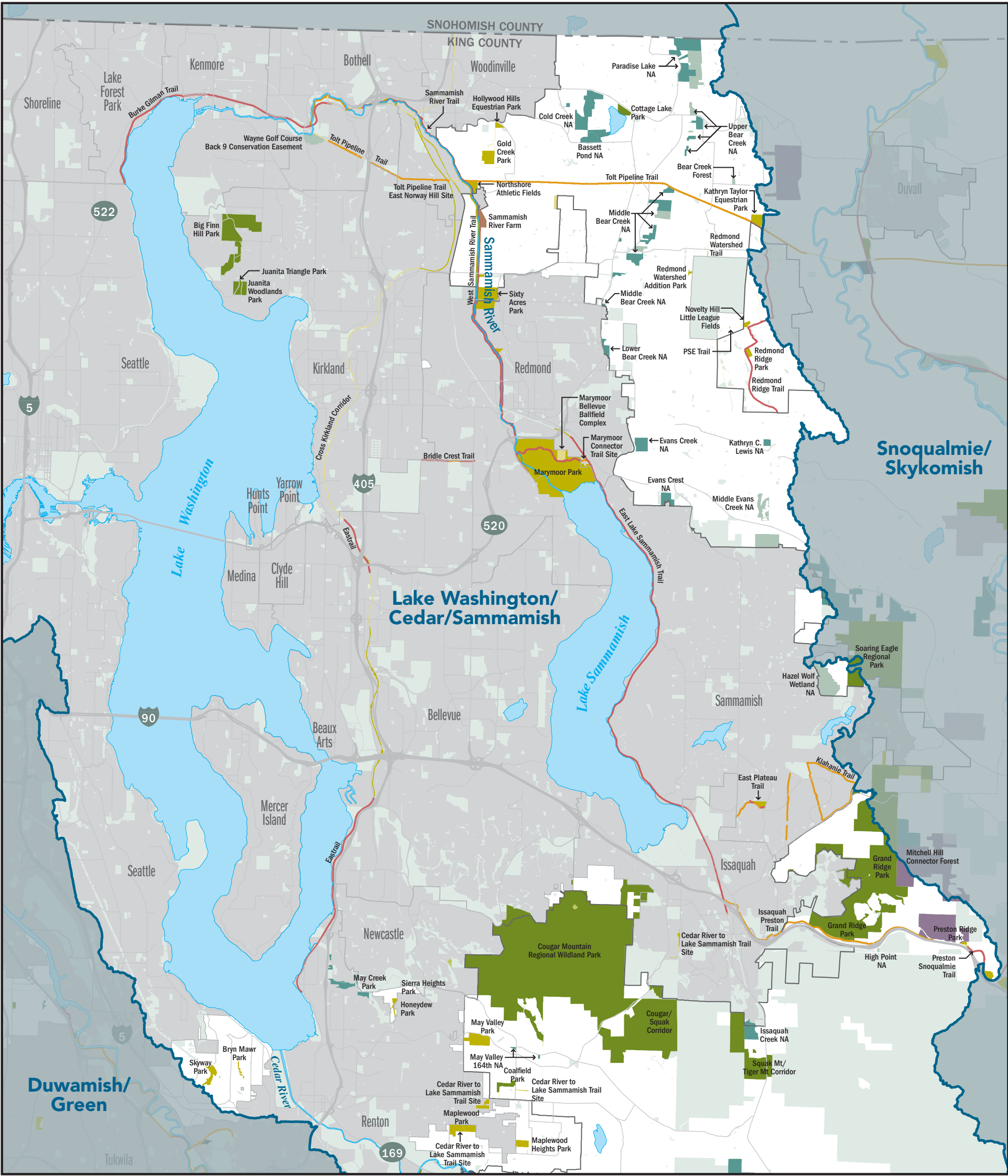
- | | |
|---|--|
|  Fee owned |  Easement, Use Agreement, or Other Interest |
|  Recreation Site |  King County Regional Trail |
|  Multi-Use Site |  Recreation Site |
|  Natural Area |  Multi-Use Site |
|  Working Forest Land |  Natural Area |
-
- | | |
|--|---|
|  Flood Hazard Property |  King County-Owned Farmland |
|  Other Public Land |  Incorporated Area |
|  WRIA (Watershed) Boundary |  Urban Growth Area Boundary |
|  Major Road |  Major Road |



The use of the information in this map is subject to the terms and conditions found at: kingcounty.gov/services/gis/Maps/terms-of-use.aspx. Your access and use is conditioned on your acceptance of these terms and conditions.

Map created by King County IT GIS Center and Design and Civic Engagement
Data King County Datasets File File 2201_12629w_3parksCED_Smap.ai





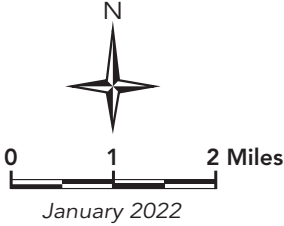
Map 4

KING COUNTY'S OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed (Northwest)

- Fee owned**
- King County Regional Trail
 - Recreation Site
 - Multi-Use Site
 - Natural Area
 - Working Forest Land

- Easement, Use Agreement, or Other Interest**
- Flood Hazard Property
 - King County-Owned Farmland
 - Other Public Land
 - Incorporated Area
 - WRIA (Watershed) Boundary
 - Urban Growth Area Boundary
 - Major Road



The use of the information in this map is subject to the terms and conditions found at: kingcounty.gov/services/gis/Maps/terms-of-use.aspx. Your access and use is conditioned on your acceptance of these terms and conditions.

Map created by King County IT GIS Center and Design and Civic Engagement
Data King County Datasets File 2201_12629w_4parksCED_Nmap.ai





Map 5


KING COUNTY'S OPEN SPACE SYSTEM


Duwamish/Green Watershed (Northwest)


Fee owned
















Easement, Use Agreement, or Other Interest




















 Flood Hazard Property


 King County-Owned Farmland


 Other Public Land


 Tribal Land

 Incorporated Area

 WRIA (Watershed) Boundary

 Urban Growth Area Boundary

 Major Road




0

1

2 Miles

January 2022



King County

PARKS

Your Big Backyard

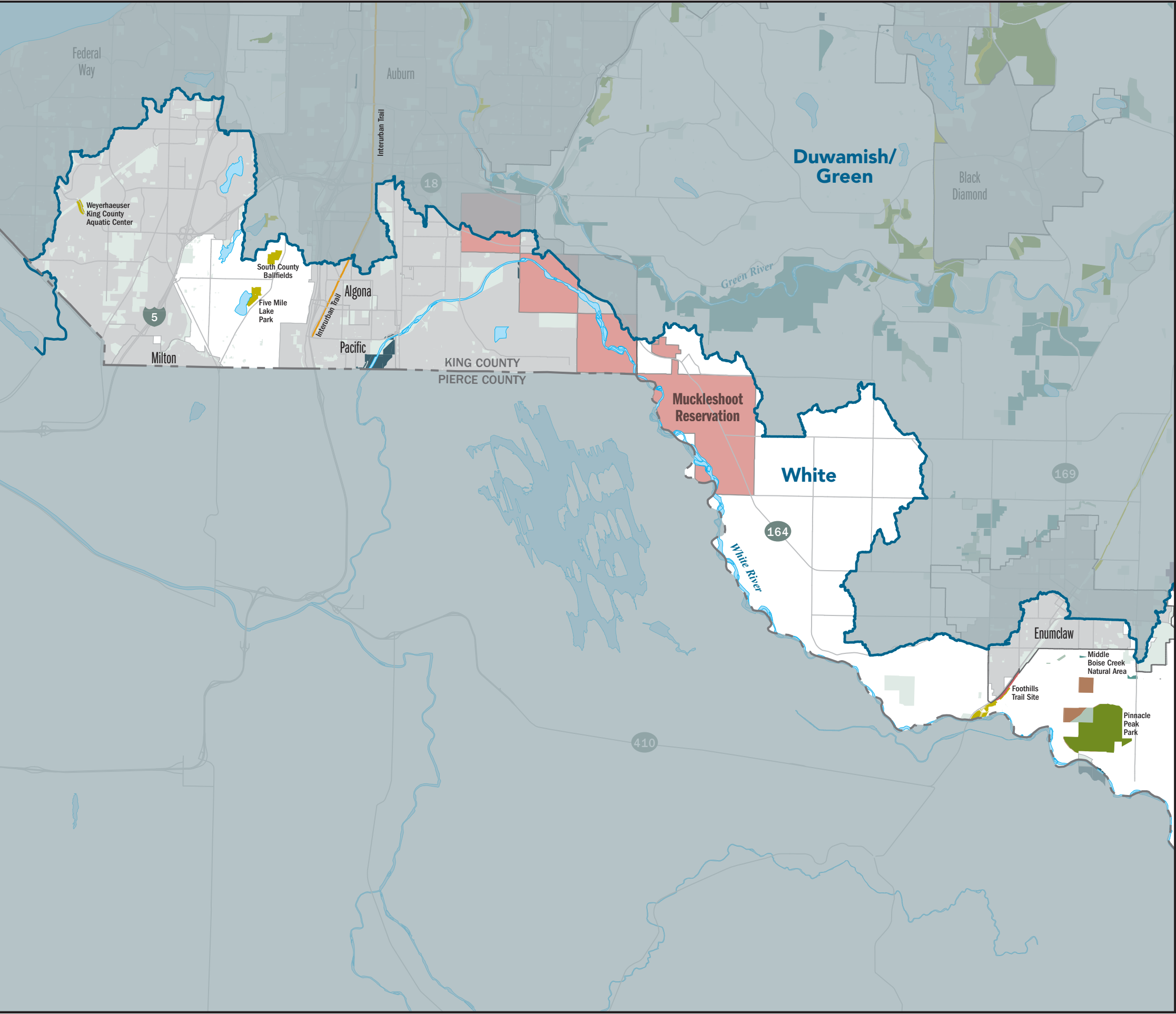
The use of the information in this map is subject to the terms and conditions found at: kingcounty.gov/services/gis/Maps/terms-of-use.aspx. Your access and use is conditioned on your acceptance of these terms and conditions.

Map created by King County IT GIS Center and Design and Civic Engagement

Data King County Datasets File 2201_12629w_5parksGREEN_NWmap.ai

92

King County Open Space Plan 2022 Update | Appendices

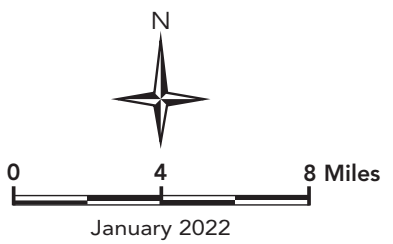


Map 7

**KING COUNTY'S
OPEN SPACE SYSTEM**

White River Watershed

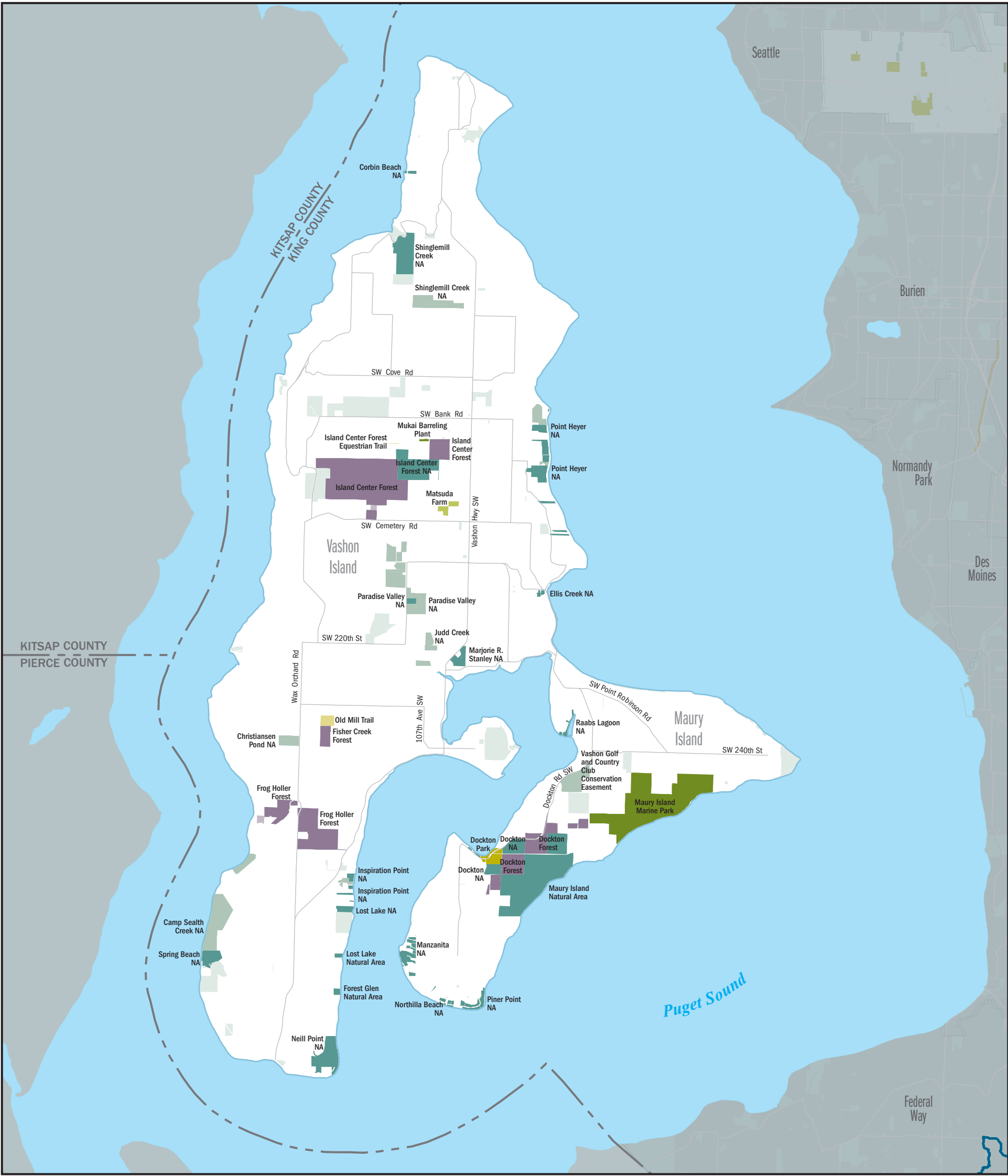
- | | |
|------------------|---|
| Fee owned | Easement, Use Agreement, or Other Interest |
| | King County Regional Trail |
| | Recreation Site |
| | Multi-Use Site |
| | Natural Area |
| | Working Forest Land |
-
- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| | Flood Hazard Property |
| | King County-Owned Farmland |
| | Other Public Land |
| | Tribal Land |
| | Incorporated Area |
| | WRIA (Watershed) Boundary |
| | Urban Growth Area Boundary |
| | Major Road |



The use of the information in this map is subject to the terms and conditions found at: kingcounty.gov/services/gis/Maps/terms-of-use.aspx. Your access and use is conditioned on your acceptance of these terms and conditions.

Map created by King County IT GIS Center and Design and Civic Engagement
Data King County Datasets File 2201_12629w_7parksWHITEmap.ai







Map 8


KING COUNTY'S OPEN SPACE SYSTEM


Vashon – Maury Island

Fee owned














Easement, Use Agreement, or Other Interest














Flood Hazard Property




King County-Owned Farmland




Other Public Land




Incorporated Area




WRIA (Watershed) Boundary



Urban Growth Area Boundary




Major Road

 King County

PARKS

Your Big Backyard



0

1

2 Miles

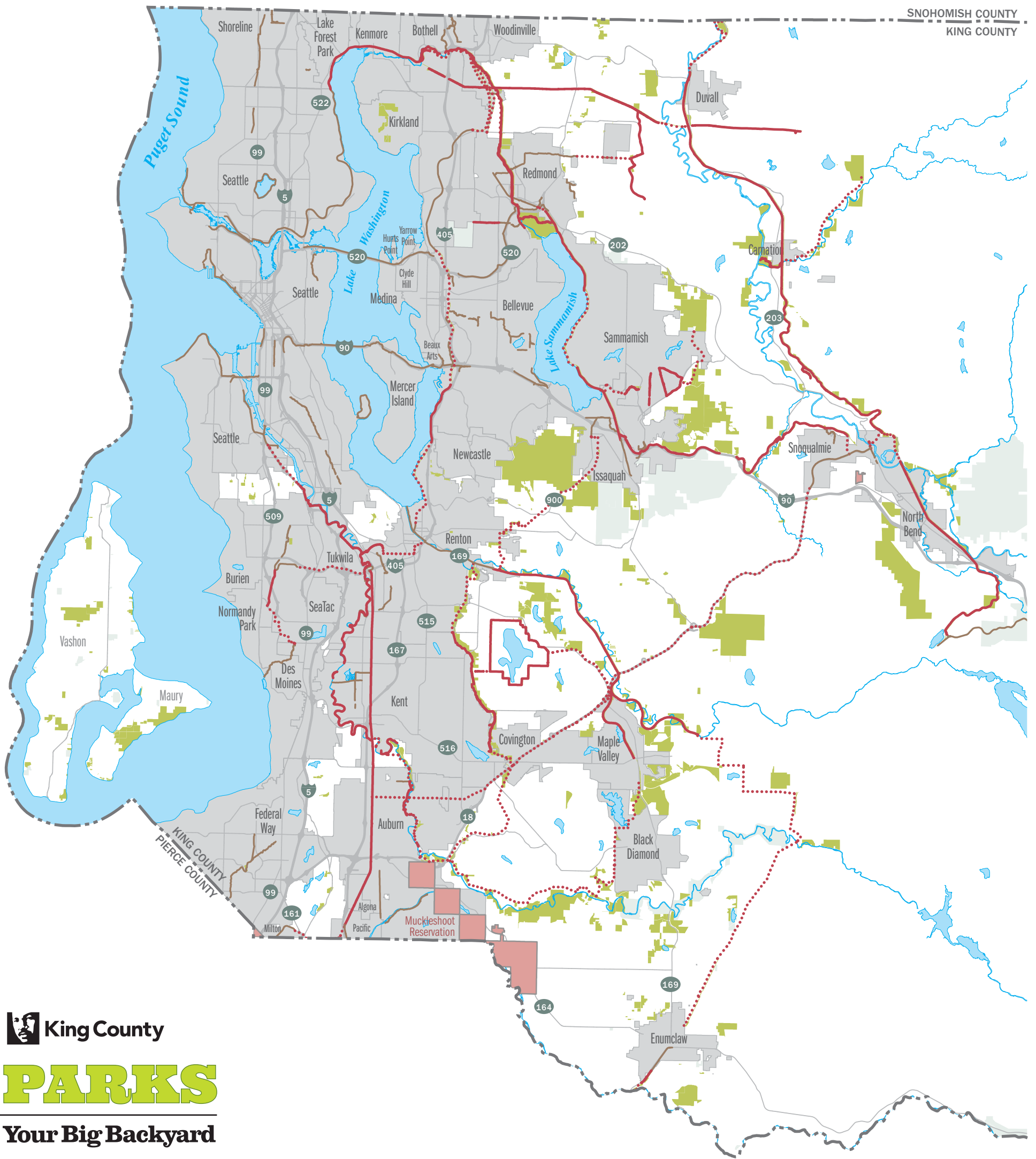
January 2022

The use of the information in this map is subject to the terms and conditions found at: kingcounty.gov/services/gis/Maps/terms-of-use.aspx.
Your access and use is conditioned on your acceptance of these terms and conditions.

Map created by King County IT GIS Center and Design and Civic Engagement
Data King County Datasets File 2201_12629w_8parksVASHONmap.ai

95

King County Open Space Plan 2022 Update | Appendices



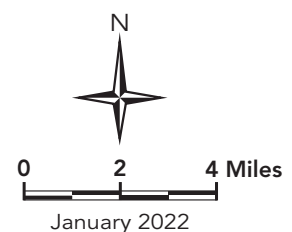
King County

PARKS

Your Big Backyard

Map 9 KING COUNTY'S OPEN SPACE SYSTEM Regional Trails System

- King County Regional Trails*
- King County Future Trail Project
- Other Regional Trails
- King County Park System
- Other Parks
- Tribal Land
- Incorporated Area
- Major Road

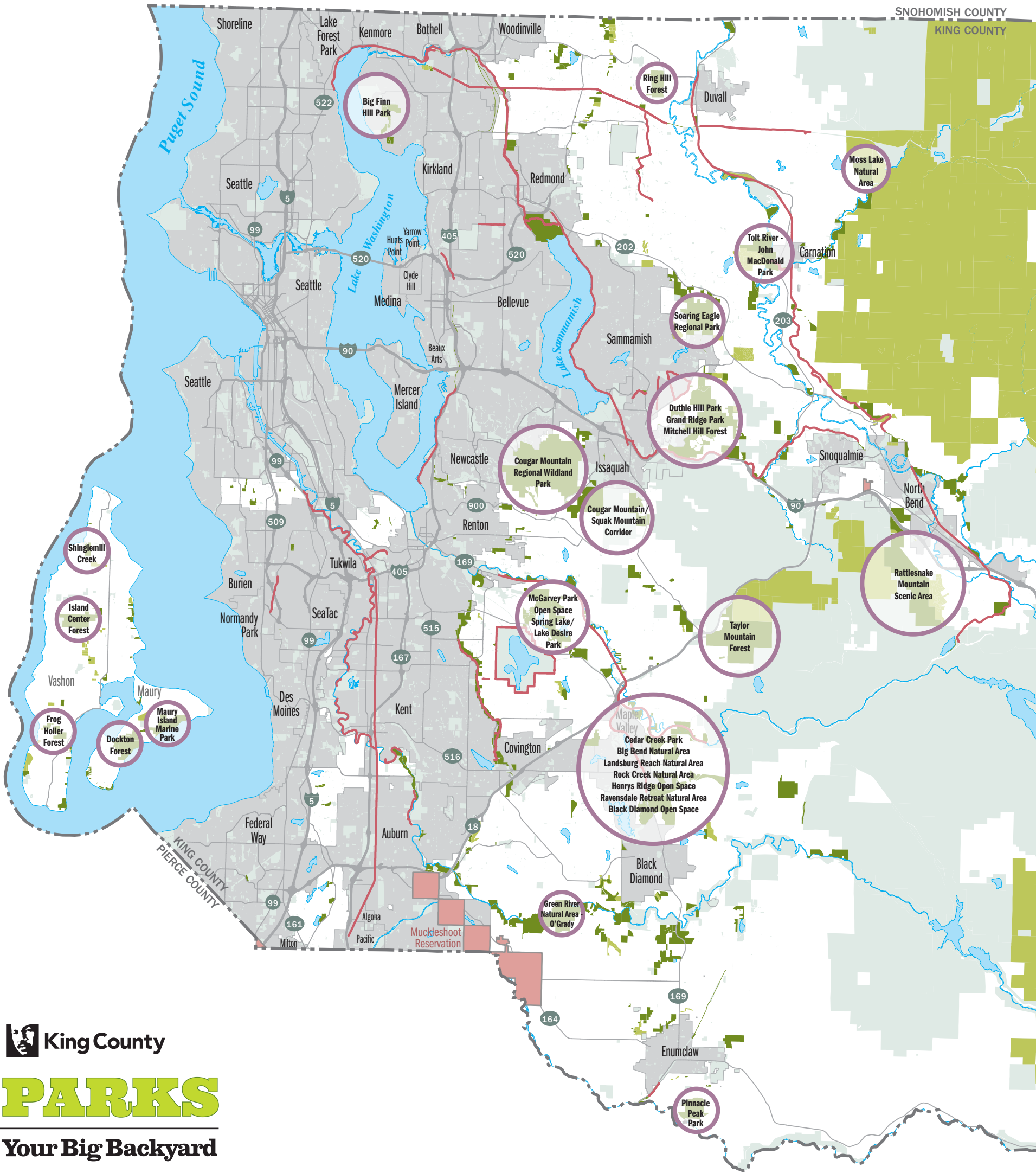


* Includes trails with historical and/or ongoing King County involvement

Details regarding King County Future Trail Projects can be found in the Regional Trails Needs Report in the Appendices of the King County Comprehensive Plan.

The use of the information in this map is subject to the terms and conditions found at: kingcounty.gov/services/gis/Maps/terms-of-use.aspx. Your access and use is conditioned on your acceptance of these terms and conditions.

Map created by King County IT GIS Center and Design and Civic Engagement
Data King County Datasets File 2201_12629w_9parksREGtrails.ai



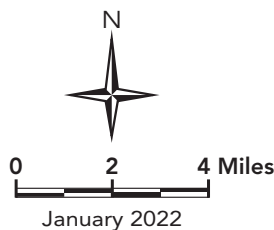
King County

PARKS

Your Big Backyard

Map 10 KING COUNTY'S OPEN SPACE SYSTEM Backcountry Trail Sites

- Backcountry Trail Site
- King County Regional Trail
- King County Park System
- King County Park System Easement
- Other Public Land
- Tribal Land
- Incorporated Area
- Major Road



The use of the information in this map is subject to the terms and conditions found at: kingcounty.gov/services/gis/Maps/terms-of-use.aspx. Your access and use is conditioned on your acceptance of these terms and conditions.

Map created by King County IT GIS Center and Design and Civic Engagement
Data King County Datasets File 2201_12629w_11parksKCwildlife.ai

