

***CITY OF SEQUIM -  
PARKS BLUE RIBBON  
TASK FORCE***

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***REPORT ON  
TASK FORCE  
FINDINGS AND  
RECOMMENDATIONS  
August 2007***

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**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

**City Council Members**

**Mayor, Walter Schubert**

**Bob Anundson**

**John Beitzel**

**Ron Farquhar**

**Don Hall**

**Bill Huizinga**

**Paul McHugh**

**Blue Ribbon Task Force Members**

**Walter Schubert, Chair**

**Hattie Dixon**

**Nancy Esteb**

**Liisa Fagerlund**

**Ron Farquhar**

**Larry Freedman**

**Sue Jacobs**

**Arlyn Nelson**

**Monty Sampson**

**City of Sequim Staff**

**Dennis K. Lefevre, AICP, Planning Director**

**James E. Bay, Public Works Director**

**Bobbie Usselman, Deputy City Clerk**

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## **A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report presents a record of the work performed by the Parks Blue Ribbon Task Force. The task force utilized the existing City of Sequim's Comprehensive Land Use Plan, Parks Master Plan and Sequim/Dungeness Valley Non-Motorized Transportation Plan to guide the process of identifying potential park sites and funding mechanisms for park acquisition and facility development.

Site and facility needs were reviewed, a resident survey was conducted and funding alternatives were discussed. Based on this information, the task force focused on the citywide pathway system and parcels of land which may be suitable for parks located along this system. The general locations of proposed sites are on West Hendrickson Road, South Seventh Avenue, Cedar Street (City Hall property) and the Keeler property.

A detailed analysis of facilities to be located within these parks was not conducted, however, the task force felt these sites would be more passive in nature by providing trail user amenities such as picnicking, benches, and restrooms. The task force agreed that the Parks Master Plan adequately addressed the need for active recreational facilities such as tennis courts and soccer fields.

The proposed citywide pathway system coordinates with the Towncenter Plan's goal of creating a pedestrian friendly downtown. The four high density residential components proposed in the Towncenter Plan are interconnected to the commercial core as well as the rest of the pathway system and ODT. A key component of this report is the recommendation for completion of the Olympic Discovery Trail (ODT) through the City. The task force recommendation is to use Spruce Street west of Carrie Blake Park to N. Sequim Avenue then north to the existing ODT terminus at Hendrickson Road.

Funding alternatives reviewed include: general fund revenue; bonds; grants; sales and property taxes; impact and in-lieu fees; user fees; donations and dedications. Task force funding recommendations include the creation of a parks in-lieu fee to replace the 10% open space set-aside required of major subdivisions. The task force also recommends that the in-lieu fee be applied to all new lots created. It was also noted that multiple funding sources should be pursued for applicable projects.

In conclusion, this report identifies implementation strategies for the recommendations included in this report. Assuming a positive direction to create an in-lieu fee formula, an ordinance will be necessary to revise the Sequim Municipal Code. Other strategies include amending the Sequim/Dungeness Non-Motorized Transportation Plan to reflect the revised pathway system.

## **B. HISTORY**

### **Task Force Formation and Purpose**

On February 12, 2007, the Sequim City Council authorized the Mayor to form a Blue Ribbon Task Force to identify potential sites for parks and open space and investigate potential funding mechanisms for the purchase of these lands. Key to a functional and productive task force was the inclusion of a broad membership representing local and regional public interests and the general public. Groups represented on this task force include: Sequim City Council; Sequim Planning Commission; Sequim Parks Advisory Board; Chamber of Commerce; Clallam County Planning Commission; Sequim Aquatic Recreation Center and residents.

### **Guiding Documents**

The task force reviewed the Sequim Parks Master Plan, the Sequim/Dungeness Valley Non-Motorized Transportation Plan, and the Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

The Sequim Parks Master Plan was adopted by the Sequim City Council on March 13, 2006 and subsequently certified by the Recreation and Conservation Office (formerly known as the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation). The Parks Plan sets forth goals and policies for public decisions related to parks and recreation. It includes guidance for the acquisition, development, management and funding of public parks and recreation facilities throughout the city. The Parks Plan included recommended projects, such as:

- Complete the proposed trail system throughout the city and urban growth area, according to the *City of Sequim Non-Motorized Transportation Plan*;
- Complete the Olympic Discovery Trail from the Water Reuse Demonstration Site to North Sequim Avenue; and,
- Investigate potential candidate sites for parks and open space, for each neighborhood area.

The Comprehensive Land Use Plan update was completed in 2006 with City Council adoption of Resolution R-2006-09 on August 28, 2006. Chapter 11 of this plan established goals and policies for the Parks and Recreation element of the plan. A project list was also prepared to assist in implementing the goals and policies. This project list included:

- Evaluate opportunities to acquire lands in each of the eight geographic regions for parks and recreational purposes for the residents in those areas; and,
- Establish additional sources of funds for operating and maintaining the park system through recreational activities.

It should be noted that during the task force initial review, it was clear that some opportunities for walking paths and parks have been lost due to development and that time is of the essence in approving a plan if the city wants to preserve current opportunities.

## **C. IDENTIFICATION OF NEEDS**

### **Site and Facility Needs**

The task force began with a review of the Parks Master Plan, focusing on the eight geographic areas identified within the City's urban growth area, the existing inventory of recreation sites and facilities, park site classification system (Chapter 4) and the projected site and facility needs (Chapter 5).

The park classification system and facility list were refined to the types of parks and facilities the task force felt would most likely fulfill the assignment. The park types included community and neighborhood parks and the pathway/trail system. Underscoring the purpose of the task force, a shortfall in community park acreage is anticipated between 2015 and 2025 while neighborhood park acreage and pathway system miles are expected to be deficient by 2015. The facility list was refined to reflect facilities that provide opportunities to local residents versus regional serving facilities. All selected local facilities are anticipated to be deficient by 2015. Table 1 (following page) is a refined version of Table 5-5 included in the Parks Master Plan and is shown below.

Mapping was prepared to show the location of existing parks within the community and neighborhood classification as well as the eight geographic regions of the city (see Map 1). A mapping exercise was also used to identify parcels of vacant land greater than five acres both within the City limits and within the urban growth area. Map 2 shows those parcels which helped create a graphic distribution of parcels which may be suitable for locations of potential parks.

The five-acre threshold was thought to be adequate in size to accommodate passive and minor active recreational facilities, i.e. playground, picnicking, etc.

### **Survey**

The task force agreed that a brief survey would be useful in determining what the public perception was on providing additional parks and funding mechanisms. The 3 question survey was included in the City's June newsletter distributed to all city utility users and 400 surveys were distributed to members of the Chamber of Commerce. A copy of this survey is included as Appendix A.

A summary of the 369 responses indicates 73.4% would like to see the City acquire additional park land. 72.3% of respondents listed walking trails/pathway system as the most desired facility to be provided followed by: picnic/benches (59.8%); playground/playfield (34.5%); other facilities were identified on 26.8% of the returned surveys; tennis (22.3%); soccer (18.6%); and, baseball/softball fields (14.6%).

The last survey question asked the respondents to prioritize their recommended funding mechanism. Five funding strategies were given: impact/in-lieu fees, bonds, user fees, property tax and sale tax increases. Table 2 identifies each funding method with the respective percent as highest and lowest priority.

**Table 1**

APPLICATION OF PER CAPITA ACREAGE STANDARD TO THE 2005 AND ESTIMATED YEAR 2015 and 2025 RESIDENT POPULATION IN THE CITY OF SEQUIM AS REFINED BY THE BLUE RIBBON TASK FORCE

PARK OR FACILITY TYPE	MINIMUM PER CAPITA ACREAGE STANDARD	RECOMMENDED SERVICE RADIUS (NRPA)	Area/Facility Provided <sup>1</sup>	Area/Facility Required <sup>1,2</sup>	
			2005	2015	2025
Community	2.5 Ac/1,000	1 – 2 miles	55.3	45	70
Neighborhood	1.0 Ac/1,000	¼ - ½ mile	2.4	18	28
Pathway/Trail System	1/City	NA	5.4 mi (ODT)	11.1 mi <sup>3</sup>	16.9 mi <sup>4</sup>
Baseball (90')	1/5,000	¼ - ½ mile	1	4	6
Baseball (60')	1/2,500	¼ - ½ mile	6	7	11
Basketball	1/1,000	¼ - ½ mile	8	18	28
Camping <sup>5</sup>		NA	-	10	20
Picnic Area (Table)	6/1,000	¼ - ½ mile	16 <sup>6</sup>	108	168
Children's Playfield	1/1,000	¼ - ½ mile	3	18	28
Playground	1/1,000	¼ - ½ mile	4	18	28
Soccer	1/3,000	1 – 2 miles	3	6	9
Softball	1/2,500	¼ - ½ mile	3	7	11
Tennis	1/2,000	¼ - ½ mile	4	9	14

<sup>1</sup> All areas are represented in acreage.

<sup>2</sup> Required acreage is determined by multiplying the acreage standard by the existing and estimated population

<sup>3</sup> Includes: Carrie Blake Park to Washington Harbor Road; Johnson Creek trestle to John Wayne Marina; 7<sup>th</sup>/Silberhorn to River Road; Brownfield Road Pathway (Simdars to 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue); and, Zwicker Park to Brown Rd.

<sup>4</sup> Includes Bell Creek Corridor and West Sequim Bay Road (Washington Street to John Wayne Marina).

<sup>5</sup> Camp sites would be provided for trail users within recreation sites adjacent to the trail system.

<sup>6</sup> Identifies local tables only, picnic tables also exist at most regional and natural resource areas.

**Map 1**

**EXISTING PARK SITES AND GEOGRAPHIC AREAS AS IDENTIFIED IN THE  
CITY OF SEQUIM PARKS MASTER PLAN**

**Map 2**

**PARCELS OF VACANT LAND FIVE ACRES AND GREATER LOCATED WITHIN  
THE CITY OF SEQUIM URBAN GROWTH AREA**

**Table 2**

**SURVEY RESULTS FOR PRIORITIZED FUNDING METHODS**

<b>FUNDING METHOD</b>	<b>HIGHEST PRIORITY</b>	<b>LOWEST PRIORITY</b>
Impact/In-Lieu Fee <sup>1</sup>	59.5% (179)	6% (18)
Bond Issue	24.7% (69)	16.8% (47)
Park User Fee	17.1% (47)	42.2% (116)
Sales Tax	12.5% (35)	34.6% (97)
Property Tax	9.3% (26)	41.6% (116)

<sup>1</sup> Both Impact and In-Lieu fees are developer paid fees.

Based on the results of this survey and the increasing interest in walking as a trend nationwide, the task force focused on expanding the existing pathway system within the city and region. It was agreed that other active facilities, i.e. soccer fields and tennis have adequately been addressed in the Parks Master Plan.

**Citywide Pathway System Needs**

This system, originally established in the *Sequim/Dungeness Valley Non-Motorized Transportation Plan* (Macleod Reckord, November 1997), identified a network of proposed pathway and bike routes encompassing separated pathways, road shoulders and shared lanes. Integral to this system is the Olympic Discovery Trail (ODT) which is nearly complete through the City of Sequim.

The task force reviewed the recommendations within this Plan and provided new recommendations which included removal of some segments not now feasible and adding segments to create a series of looped systems while linking to the ODT whenever possible.

A very high priority was placed on the completion of the ODT through the City. A background discussion was provided to the task force regarding historic attempts to implement this connection. Substantive discussion focused on the ODT connection with a review of all potential alternatives. As a result of this review, Spruce Street surfaced as the most feasible alternative to provide this link.

Another key ingredient to the pathway system discussion was the current towncenter planning effort. This effort involves creating development guidelines for the historical downtown core. One of the primary goals of the Towncenter Plan is to enhance the towncenter to provide a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere. Pedestrian plazas and walkways, benches and landscaping are among the amenities proposed to create this ambience. In addition, the Towncenter Plan is proposing four areas for high density residential within walking distance of the core area. It is intended to provide well-defined pedestrian ways from these residential nodes to the towncenter.

The proposed pathway system provides interconnectivity from these residential areas to not only the retail and services of the towncenter but also to the ODT.

## **Funding Alternatives**

A variety of funding mechanisms were discussed. Most of these methods are defined in the Implementation chapter of the Parks Master Plan (Chapter 7). Revenue sources discussed included: general fund revenue; bonds; grants; sales and property taxes; impact and in-lieu fees; user fees; donations and dedications.

Due to the complexities of each alternative, assistance was requested of the City Attorney and a consultant to provide guidance. The task force reviewed the various options and also discussed the regional aspect pertaining to geographic scope of funding. It was felt that utilizing the Park and Recreation District #1 area would provide a broad funding platform and include many users of City facilities located outside the City. Concern was raised over historical non-support of bonds within the District.

The task force discussed the Sequim Municipal Code Section 17.28 which requires major subdivisions and binding site plans to provide a minimum of 10% open space in a project. Section 17.28.050(B)(3) currently allows major subdivisions located within 600 feet of an existing municipal recreation facility to provide a contribution in lieu of establishing an active open space. The task force agreed that the 10% recreation set-aside in major subdivisions generally does not provide long-term recreational benefit to the residents of the subdivision, is typically not maintained and do not serve the general public.

The task force reviewed the difference between impact fees and in-lieu fees. Impact fees are required to be expended within 6 years in the vicinity of impact and have the potential to be pass-through fees making affordable housing more difficult to create. In-lieu fees would not be required to be spent within a certain timeframe and do not have the impact to housing costs.

It was noted by staff that an alternative to the 10% open space requirement has been successfully used. Staff has worked with a couple of subdivision applicants to transfer the 10% open space into developable lots while contributing an in lieu fee to the city. The accepted fee was based on 50% of the appraised value of the created lots. Further discussion involved the expansion of this in lieu fee concept to all created lots including minor subdivisions (divisions into 9 lots or less). City Attorney direction has indicated that a study would need to be done to create a defensible formula establishing the in-lieu fee.

Fiscal coordination with Clallam County on park land acquisition within or near the City's urban growth area was also discussed. While the regional park concept is functional, it was agreed that the City had more localized facility needs and would not actively pursue this alternative.

## **D. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TASK FORCE**

### **Site Recommendations**

Geographic, accessibility and per capita needs and standards were assessed as well as an existing parcel analysis. Also factored into this analysis was the recent generous donation of a 7.6-acre parcel located in the south-central geographic area near the intersection of Reservoir Road and South Third Street and the current efforts to secure land within the City's southeast geographic area. This southeast park is the Keeler property and has been supported for acquisition by the

Parks Advisory Board, Planning Commission and City Council. Future development of these new parks will be in passive uses and include facilities such as trails, restrooms, benches and picnic areas. The Keeler acquisition would be developed for interpretive and wildlife viewing areas as well pathway connection to the Olympic Discovery Trail.

*Site recommendations include:*

- Continue to pursue acquisition of the 45.07-acre Keeler property.
- Acquire acreage near the intersection of Hendrickson Road and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue in the northwest geographic area for passive recreational opportunities associated with the Olympic Discovery Trail.
- Recommend that the western portion of the Burrowes property is dedicated to park/open space purposes. The significance of this area is the continuation of the Bell Creek Trail and other natural amenities.
- Pursue acquisition of land near the intersection of McCurdy Road and South 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue to satisfy anticipated neighborhood park needs.
- Pursue acquisition of land along South 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue for neighborhood park needs and to provide amenities associated with a proposed pathway along South 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
- Pursue acquisition of land near the intersection of South Sequim Avenue and W. Brownfield Road for continuation of the Bell Creek Trail.
- Pursue development of the Cedar Street city hall property into an urban park plaza.

**Citywide Pathway System Recommendations**

Using the recommendations and pathway system identified in the Non-Motorized Trail Plan, the task force recommends revisions to this system.

The primary recommendation is to complete the Olympic Discovery Trail (ODT). Other recommendations involve creating a system of pathways providing safe movement into and out of the towncenter area and throughout the city to the ODT. A common theme was to propose small loops within the system to allow shorter routes while providing connectivity to the regional trail.

*Pathway recommendations include:*

- Pursue feasibility of providing the connecting ODT segment through the City of Sequim along Spruce Street from Carrie Blake Park to Sequim Avenue then north to Hendrickson Road.
- Utilize existing natural corridors associated with Bell and Johnson Creeks for separated pathways. Segments of both corridors will be secured through conditioning development proposals of adjacent properties. In most cases, the pathway locations are within the buffer areas required for both stream corridors.

- Incorporate into the site acquisition and facility development plan restroom facilities which provide pathway and trail users the opportunity to stop along the trail.
- Revise the existing non-motorized trail plan map as shown on Map 3. A variety of pathway and trail segments are available with separated ten-foot wide paved pathways the preferred alignment.

### **Funding Recommendations**

The task force agreed that the likelihood of citywide bond issues or property tax increase would not be successful. Survey respondents indicated strong support for funding revenue being generated by developers. It was also agreed that multiple sources of revenue could/should be pursued.

*Funding recommendations include:*

- Contract with a consultant with expertise in recreation funding to create a formula establishing a parks and recreation in lieu fee for the city.
- Amend the Sequim Municipal Code to remove the 10% open space requirement in major subdivisions and add the in lieu fee requirement to all residential land divisions in the City.
- In addition to the in-lieu fee, other funding alternatives should be explored for parcel acquisition and development. These alternatives include: grants and general fund revenue. The task force also implied that donations and dedications by private land owners to the City of Sequim would be gratefully accepted.

## **E. IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

In order to fully implement the recommendations listed above, additional steps will be necessary. Those steps and anticipated timeframes for completion are listed below.

### **Blue Ribbon Task Force Report**

This report requires review by all applicable groups including: Peninsula Trails Coalition; City of Sequim Parks Advisory Board; Planning Commission and City Council. Additional opportunities for public involvement will also be scheduled throughout this process. This process could be complete by the end of October.

### **In-Lieu Fee Consultant**

Securing a consultant to assist with the creation of an in-lieu fee begins with Council authorization to expend budgeted funds. The scope of work includes: review of existing parks and open space inventories, levels of service analysis, create alternative formulas, review and report preparation. Completion of this task will take an estimated four months and will include Planning Commission and City Council presentations.

**Map 3**

**PROPOSED NON-MOTORIZED PATHWAY SYSTEM AND POTENTIAL PARK SITES  
FOR THE CITY OF SEQUIM AS RECOMMENDED BY THE PARKS BLUE RIBBON  
TASK FORCE**

### **Amend Sequim Municipal Code**

During the final phases of the In-Lieu Fee Report, staff will initiate the process to amend the Sequim Municipal Code (SMC) where affected by the parks in-lieu fee. Chapter 17.28 (General Design Standards), in particular, Section 17.28.050 (Open space and recreation) will be amended. This process will be accomplished through Planning Commission and City Council review and passage of an Ordinance.

This effort will be coordinated and conclude concurrently with the Council approval of the in-lieu report establishing the formula for the fee.

### **Amend Sequim/Dungeness Valley Non-Motorized Transportation Plan**

As identified in this Plan, periodic re-evaluation of routes and priorities was understood. The recommended citywide pathway system plan, Figure 4 of that plan, will need to be amended. Analysis and revisions to the project list and associated costs (Table 3-8) will also be required. Planning Commission and City Council review will be necessary for this amendment. This process will start near the end of the Blue Ribbon Task Force Report approval process.

### **City of Sequim Parks Master Plan**

The Sequim/Dungeness Valley Non-Motorized Transportation Plan is referenced in the Parks Master Plan as appendix D. Amendment of the non-motorized transportation plan will serve to, simultaneously, amend the Parks Master Plan.

Review and revision of the Capital Improvement Program (Table 7-1) may be necessary to reflect acquisition and/or development of potential park sites or pathway segments not currently identified in this CIP.

### **Six-Year Transportation Improvement Program**

This annual task identifies transportation improvement projects proposed for the City. Various projects integral in completing key segments of the citywide pathway system should be added to this program.

End