

CHAPTER ELEVEN - PARKS AND RECREATION ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

A vital component in the fabric of any community is the leisure time opportunities that exist for its residents and visitors. These opportunities are provided, in most cases, through the active and passive recreation sites, facilities and programs within a community's park system, and its recreation programs.

"Parks and recreational areas are also classic examples of planned open space."

The City of Sequim's Citizens' Parks Advisory Board recognized the importance of this statement in the *City of Sequim's Comprehensive Plan (1996)* in its *Vision Statement*:

"To preserve Sequim's small town charm, the City of Sequim will continue to maintain and enhance its current level of park quality and the ratio of parkland and open space to[its] population. Parks will vary from small and cozy homeowner maintained type to larger City maintained neighborhood and community parks, and will include trail systems, natural areas and regional sport facilities."

The Park and Recreation program in the City of Sequim attempts to maintain a balance and variety of active and passive recreational alternatives for the broad range of interests that exist. This balance addresses established design and operations standards, geographic opportunities, and population expansion needs within reasonable budget constraints.

Following the guidelines, goals and policies of the City of Sequim's Park and Recreation Master Plan, the community continues to plan for and address the needs of a very diverse and active user group. The City Council, City staff and its Citizens Parks Advisory Board are well aware that although the City's population demographics indicate primarily a retirement age citizen group, they are very active and seek a multitude of recreational activities.

The City also relies on the regional natural attributes such as the Strait of Juan de Fuca, the Olympic Mountains and Sequim Bay to provide unique activities not provided within the city. Hiking, canoeing, kayaking, sailing, fishing, birdwatching, mountain biking, and digging for shellfish are only a few examples of local recreational activities within only a few minutes of the city limits.

As the community continues to grow, all supporting City-wide park and recreation programs need to expand to accommodate the growth. Park and recreation planning has to be

a continuous process changing in response to new social values, changing life-style patterns, technological advances, legislative requirements, as well as the availability of resources including land and funding.

The Park and Recreation Element's Goals and Policies focus on ensuring that the City's park and recreation system is proactive in its current and the future demands. They solidify the recreational philosophy that has been expressed and shared by the community's citizens, parks and recreation volunteers, Parks Advisory Board members, City staff and the City's elected officials.

The Growth Management Act requires that we identify and include open spaces throughout the City for parks and recreation and trails. The following policies are also designed to enhance the sense of open space within the Sequim area, which may provide parks and public recreation areas for citizens of all ages.

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PARKS AND RECREATION ELEMENT GOALS

“Goals” are measurable and observable outcomes that the *Comprehensive Plan* anticipates in conformance with the Growth Management Act.

P&RG-1

Establish and maintain an excellent park system, linked together by trails and connected to major activity centers where feasible (e.g., schools, community centers, employment and retail centers) as described in the Parks Master Plan - 2006.

P&RG-2

Ensure that the Parks and Recreation system shall be suitable for residents of all ages, and shall offer a variety of recreational activities and experiences, preferably convenient to their homes and neighborhoods, as provided for in the **Parks Master Plan - 2006**.

P&RG – 3

Examine and evaluate the opportunities to create new parks in each of the eight geographic regions of the City and its Urban Growth Areas.

P&RG – 4

Expand recreational programs to address the needs of a diverse population (age, capacity, activity-level and ethnicity) through coordination and the sharing of resources among existing recreation program providers, and by sponsoring the creation of new activities and programs.

P&RG – 5

Work with local social and sports organizations towards the development of special purpose recreation facilities (such as tennis courts; soccer fields; baseball fields; lacrosse courts; bocce courts; lawn bowling; open-air theatres; etc).

P&RG – 6

Seek public access to the City’s shorelines and for the potential development of water/aquatic parks and recreational facilities.

P&RG – 7

Investigate whether to assess “in lieu of fees” on all new large (five units and more) developments for the creation of new parks and expansions to the existing trail systems.

P&RG – 8

Require developers to consider alternatives to creating onsite parks, such as dedicating individual pieces of the proposed development for regional parks and trails.

P&RG – 9

Recognize and coordinate with the large number of community volunteers to assist in the maintenance, promotions, operations and education of park availability and potentials for recreational activities.

P&RG – 10

Require that individually-dedicated pieces of open space contribute meaningfully to the desired park and open space system, and provide means of linking to the areas described in the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan.

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PARKS AND RECREATION ELEMENT POLICIES

“Policies” are the guidelines as to how the staff and the readers of the *Comprehensive Plan* shall achieve the goals of the Parks and Recreation Element of this *Comprehensive Plan*.

P&RP-1

Preserve open space, which includes developed and undeveloped parklands and water areas such as shorelands, creeks, and irrigation ditches, for passive recreational uses.

P&RP-2

Create open space to provide land for parks, trails, walkways and areas for picnicking and recreation.

P&RP -3

Strive to acquire, develop, operate and maintain parks and recreation areas that will serve the expanding needs of the growing Sequim community and the residents of its Urban Growth Area that are within the City’s budget resources and are in cooperation with Clallam County and appropriate agencies.

P&RP -4

Seek involvement of local governments, public and private organizations and the City’s citizens at all levels of discussion relating to the preservation, acquisition, expansion, protection, maintenance and recreational uses of the City’s parks, trails and open spaces.

P&RP --5

Continue to encourage volunteer citizen participation in the planning, design, development, and implementation of recreation lands, facilities, and programs.

P&RP --6

Strive for the most efficient use of public and private funds to ensure appropriate development, maintenance, and operation of public parks and recreation facilities and related programs.

P&RP --7

Promote expansion of recreational programs to address the needs of a diverse population through coordination and sharing of resources among existing providers, and by sponsoring new programs.

P&RP --8

Continue to promote improvement of existing parks to meet current and projected demand and to monitor existing parks and facilities to ensure that they meet acceptable Levels of Service (LOS) standards for safety and performance.

P&RP --9

Encourage developers, through incentives or other means, to incorporate public open space and recreation facilities within their development proposals.

P&RP --10

Coordinate efforts with Sequim School District #323 to promote the public use of existing public recreational facilities including school gymnasiums, school stadium, ball-fields, and other facilities.

P&RP --11

Work with private organizations and service clubs to encourage the development of special purpose recreational facilities; e.g. in-line skating, skateboarding, skating arenas, indoor soccer fields, swimming pools, golf courses, theaters, etc.

P&RP -12

Develop projects that are located adjacent to identified pedestrian, bicycle or recreational trail systems and provide connections to that trail system, including both the City's Walking-Bike Trail System and the regional Olympic Discovery Trail.

P&RP – 13

Strive to acquire, develop, expand and maintain the City's parks and recreation areas to serve the needs of the growing Sequim community and the region around it.

P&RP – 14

Plan, implement and fund a variety of year-round activities for our citizens and the area youth, whether sponsored by the City, schools, sporting associations or others.

P&RP – 15

Require proposed developments within the City and its UGA to conform to the Parks Master Plan by providing land for parks, trails, walkways and open space or the developer should be required to pay "in lieu of fees."

P&RP – 16

Determine, during the SEPA process, whether a developer should pay for publicly-accessible parks within their proposed development or pay "in lieu of fees."

P&RP – 17

Encourage development of regional recreational opportunities by coordinating with the County, State, National Parks and the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe.

P&RP – 18

Use "Best Management Practices" and the "Best Available Science" in its efforts to design, develop, expand, operate and maintain the City parks, recreational facilities and its trail system.

P&RP – 19

Continue to advocate for a community of healthy and active residents of all ages and capabilities.

P&RP – 20

Provide wholesome recreational and cultural opportunities that are open to the public for the use and interaction of all age groups in the region at clean, safe, and accessible facilities.

P&RP – 21

Continue a variety of year-round organized recreation activities for our children, families and our visitors and guests of the community.

P&RP – 22

Reduce maintenance and operating costs by upgrading existing park facilities in a manner that will maximize the long-term efficiencies of best management practices, while conserving existing resources.

P&RP – 23

Require that new development provide for significant active [and passive] public recreational facilities by constructing such facilities, or by paying “in lieu of fees” commensurate with the costs of establishing such facilities.

P&RP – 24

Place a priority on more fully developing existing park facilities and acquiring those facilities defined as high priorities by the community and that are not currently or adequately provided or available in the County.

P&RP – 25

Encourage the expanded use of the City’s recreational facilities into the evening hours by providing for a user fee for night lighting of the sports areas such as tennis, soccer and baseball.