

**M E M O R A N D U M**

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DATE: June 19, 2013

TO: Michael Drollinger, Planning Commission Chair  
Members of the Planning Commission

FROM: Vanessa Dolbee, Senior Planner  
Leslie Betlach, Parks Planning and Natural Resources Director

**SUBJECT: Comprehensive Plan Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and  
Trails Element**

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ISSUE

What should be updated in the Comprehensive Plan Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Element?

RECOMMENDATION

Reformat the Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Element to reflect the work completed for the Parks, Recreation and Natural Areas Plan and the Trails and Bicycle Master Plan, with a goal of simplifying and consolidating policy language, in addition to amending the sections title to maintain consistency between the adopted sub-plans and the City's Comprehensive Plan.

BACKGROUND SUMMARY

The Renton Comprehensive Plan Update is due to the Washington State Department of Commerce (DOC) in June 2015. The function of the Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Element in the Comprehensive Plan is to plan for where, when, and how parks, recreation opportunities and facilities, and natural areas will be developed, expanded, and maintained. Pursuant to RCW 36.70A.070(8) the Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Element shall be consistent with the Capital Facilities Plan Element as it relates to park and recreation facilities. The Element is required to include an estimate of park and recreation demand for at least a 10 year period, an evaluation of facilities and service needs, and an evaluation of intergovernmental coordination opportunities to provide regional approaches for meeting park and recreation demand.

Trail policies span across two different Elements of the Comprehensive Plan, the Transportation Element and the Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Element. Trail policies included in the Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails Element focus on separated trails, such as the Cedar River Trail and soft surface trails. In addition, these policies emphasize creating

connections to and through other trail systems, developed parks, recreation facilities, and natural areas.

Based on the requirements of the Growth Management Act (GMA) as outlined above, the recently adopted Parks, Recreation and Natural Areas Plan evaluated all the required components and provides recommendations for where, when, and how parks and recreation facilities should be developed, expanded, and maintained for a 20 year period. When developing the Parks, Recreation and Natural Areas Plan, the City conducted a thorough public involvement process which included many types of community outreach activities. The activities ranged from a quantitative statistically valid survey to friendly community workshops each conducted in an effort to engage as many people as possible in the planning process. More than 1,500 people participated in the many forms of engagement. Overall, the recommendations and policies included in the Parks, Recreation and Natural Areas Plan reflect the community’s needs and desires and are supported by statistical data and a specific Community Needs Assessment. As a result, the objectives for updating the Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails Element include the following:

- Integrate applicable policies from the adopted Parks, Recreation and Natural Areas Plan and the Trails and Bicycle Master Plan
- Ensure consistency with state, regional, and county planning efforts
- Update the existing Element to streamline the policies to provide clear direction for City decision making that are easily understood and communicated
- Amend the Element title to be consistent with terminology of the Parks, Recreation and Natural Areas Plan

The following table summarizes the DOC, GMA requirements and how the adopted Parks, Recreation, and Natural Areas Plan (Parks Plan) and the Trails and Bicycle Master Plan (Trails Plan) address these requirements:

Comprehensive Plan Provision	Page # and how addressed in Plan	Update action, if needed
<p><b>Goals and policies to guide decisions regarding facilities.</b> <a href="#">WAC 365-196-440(2)(b)</a> recommends a visioning process to engage the public in identifying needs, evaluating existing recreational opportunities, and developing goals for the parks and recreation element.</p>	<p>Parks Plan, Pages 3 – 10, Vision, 7 Goals, and a number of objectives below each goal.</p> <p>Trails Plan, page 9 Vision Statement and page 15 – 16 goals and objectives</p>	<p>Update using both visions and 7 goals of the Parks Plan as policies and objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. Adopt the Parks, Recreation and Natural Areas Plan and the Trails and Bicycle Master Plan by reference.</p>
<p><b>Estimates of park and recreation</b></p>	<p>Parks Plan, page 54 -74,</p>	<p>Adopt the Parks,</p>

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<p><b>demand for at least a ten-year period based on adopted levels of service and population growth.</b> <a href="#">RCW 36.70A.070(8)(a)</a>. <a href="#">WAC 365-196-440(2)(c)</a> recommends establishing levels of service standards that reflect community goals. LOS should focus on those aspects that relate most directly to growth and development.</p>	<p>includes a community needs assessment and a gaps analysis. The assessment utilized a statistically valid survey tool to identify community needs and priorities which was combined with a GIS analysis to identify gaps in service. The GIS analysis utilized a ¼ mile and ½ mile service radius and analyzed developed parks, sports fields, playgrounds, indoor programmable space, specialized facilities, and natural areas. This section of the Parks Plan, recommends a LOS standard on page 62, which is identified in Table 4.2 as 5.07 acres per 1,000 population of developed park land, 6.14 acres per 1,000 population for natural areas and a total minimum of 11.21 acres per 1,000 population.</p>	<p>Recreation and Natural Areas Plan by reference.</p>
<p><b>An evaluation of facilities and service needs over the planning period.</b> <a href="#">RCW 36.70A.070(8)(b)</a>. <a href="#">WAC 365-196-440(2)(d)</a> lists factors to consider when estimating demand for parks, open space and recreational services.</p>	<p>See response above</p>	<p>Adopt the Parks, Recreation and Natural Areas Plan by reference.</p>
<p><b>An evaluation of intergovernmental coordination opportunities to provide regional approaches for meeting park and recreational demand.</b> <a href="#">RCW 36.70A.070(8)(c)</a>. <a href="#">WAC 365-196-440(2)(f)</a> recommends identifying other local, statewide and regional recreation plans for future facilities and opportunities for public and private partnerships to meet regional demand.</p>	<p>Parks Plan, pages 12 – 37, the existing conditions analysis included an evaluation of access to schools, other jurisdiction park land and trail systems, and other agencies such as PSE.  Goal C, of the Parks Plan identifies “Building Partnerships” on page 6.</p>	<p>Adopt the Parks, Recreation and Natural Areas Plan and the Trails and Bicycle Master Plan by reference.   <i>May need to update the Capital Facilities Element; however this will be</i></p>

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<p><b>The element is consistent with and is a part of the Capital Facilities Element as it relates to park and recreation facilities.</b> <a href="#">RCW 36.70A.070(3)(e)</a>. <a href="#">WAC 365-196-440(2)(e)</a> recommends identification of future facilities and services consistent with the land use and capital facilities elements. <a href="#">WAC 365-196-440(2)(g)(iii)</a> recommends identifying strategies for financing in the parks and recreation element, a separate parks plan, or the capital facilities element.</p>	<p>Trails Plan, Project Sheets pages 100 – 156 and a system improvement plan map identifying connections to neighboring jurisdictions including in section “Recommended Improvement Maps”.</p>	<p><i>completed under a separate time line from the Park, Recreation, Open Space and Trails Element.</i></p>

Attached is a draft of what the new Parks, Recreation, Natural Areas and Trails Element may look like in a new format that staff has considered for the 2015 Comprehensive Plan update. This format organizes each element around general themes, which are supported by applicable goals and policies. Associated plans or other key documents are adopted by reference, allowing the policies to provide high-level summaries that link the Comprehensive Plan to other works that offer more specifics. Call out boxes in the center of each page allow for the ideas in the plan to be illustrated with photos, drawings, diagrams, or key words and phrases.