

## **Parks, Recreation and Open Space**

### **PURPOSE**

Tukwila's parks, recreation and open space system provides opportunities for all residents and workers, young and old, and across all cultures and language groups to enjoy nature, gather together and exercise. This system supports healthy lifestyles, community interaction and identity, while supporting economic vitality. This system also provides for interaction with nature, protection and conservation of the environment and a walking and biking network for physical activity and transportation.

The Parks, Recreation and Open Space Element establishes a basis for decision making that is consistent with Washington's Growth Management Act, community priorities and related planning efforts and policies, which are the basis for determining the future of Tukwila's parks, recreation and open space system. State requirements and local aspirations are fulfilled by the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Background Report and Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Comprehensive Plan, which is incorporated by reference in Tukwila's Comprehensive Plan.

The Tukwila Parks, Recreation and Open Space Element includes:

- 1) A description of the existing facilities and operations of the system and intergovernmental coordination;
- 2) A summary of issues; and,
- 3) The goals, policies and implementation strategies to guide development of the desired future system.

## **EXISTING SYSTEM AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION**

### **Park Lands**

There are 32 park properties in the City's inventory totaling 273 acres. The Existing System Map shows the location of all parks and recreation resources in the system, comprising developed and undeveloped park lands. Trails, schools and recreation sites owned by other providers are also part of this system and add to the number of resources available in the City... There are also nearly 29 acres of open space lands. (Figure 1)

### **Open Space Network**

Although not officially mapped, there is an informal and varied network of undeveloped land made up of the river channel and its banks, creek corridors, park land, landscaped yards and public street trees, and steep valley hills such as the state highway rights of way. This undeveloped land creates a green network that softens the impact of the urban environment in which we live and work. Much of this informal open space network exists and will be maintained due to community standards and environmental regulations.

### **Programs and Services**

The City of Tukwila provides a wide range of recreational programs and public services. The Tukwila Community Center serves a vital role by providing the majority of public recreation programming and support services in the city. Along with City-sponsored programs, neighboring communities, public schools, private providers and non-profits expand the number of park and recreation related opportunities available to Tukwila residents. Starfire Sports, SeaTac Community Center, Tukwila Pool and the Matt Griffin YMCA provide additional programs in and around Tukwila.

### **Intergovernmental Coordination**

Tukwila relies on partnerships with several organizations and local governments to provide services to area residents and to ensure

coordination with land use policies. At the crossroads of the regional trail system, Tukwila coordinates with the neighboring cities of Renton and SeaTac, and other governments including King County, for the planning, development and management of the regional trail system. Managing the city's Green/Duwamish River frontage also requires coordination with King County and local and statewide environmental policies and regulations.

The City partners with area schools to increase access to sport fields and playgrounds in areas that lack parks. The Highline and Tukwila School Districts partner with the City by leasing former school sites for park uses. In general, public schools also present an opportunity for access to recreation activities as they are well distributed in the City, especially in areas without access to park land.

In 2011 Tukwila residents voted to create the Tukwila Metropolitan Park District to fund and operate the Tukwila Pool. This independent entity provides aquatics programming at the pool facility located on Tukwila School District property. The City also partners with King County to expand park and recreation opportunities.

## **ISSUES**

Several key issues are considered in the development of the parks, recreation and open space system over the planning period.

### **Connection and Access**

**Connectivity.** The city's sloping terrain, the Green/Duwamish River and presence of busy streets and major highways all lead to physical barriers for pedestrians and cyclists.

**River Access.** Although there is untapped recreational potential in the Green/Duwamish River, there are limited connections to the waterfront and a need to expand river access opportunities.

These issues may be addressed either by creating additional and non-traditional opportunities in underserved neighborhoods and/or finding ways to increase transportation alternatives to serve existing recreational sites.

### **Disconnected and Limited Open Space Network**

Open spaces are parks that protect natural system benefits such as wildlife habitat and water quality or provide for public use such as trail activities and water access. These sites include riverfront lands, wooded areas and/or steeply sloped hillsides. The environmental benefits of open spaces are also discussed in the Natural Environment element.

Green spaces and waterways are important to the City's environmental and community health and residents value the protection of these resources. If and when acquisition of property is not appropriate, maintaining open space through regulation is an option. Encouraging and supporting voluntary community stewardship efforts to further restore and preserve these areas builds community and support for that network.

### **Community Gathering**

***Spaces to Gather.*** Many residents come from cultures that especially value community gathering places. Having open and welcoming places for small and large groups to come together fosters a sense of community. Activities could range from socializing and celebrating to farmers markets and even gathering places in the event of emergencies.

**Comment [RF1]:** Gathering spaces could be used as central meeting places during catastrophic emergencies.

There are currently limited areas that can accommodate large public gatherings within the park system. A large site acquisition could address this need, as well modifying existing parks to accommodate larger group activities. All the spaces will need to be well-located, safe and accessible for a wide range of ages and abilities, and contribute to the City's identity. A community-wide process could help identify the location of a large public gathering place.

## Population Growth and Changing Demographics

***Preparing for future growth.*** The City expects significant growth over the planning period, although exactly when the growth will occur is unknown. Change is likely happen slowly during the planning period and then increase in the urban and local growth centers when the tipping point occurs in the transformation of the suburban to urban setting. Major new development is planned for the Southcenter and Tukwila South areas. New residents and visitors will require additional services and recreation opportunities

***Celebrating diverse cultures.*** The City’s changing population base and its great cultural diversity mean that Tukwila must be able to anticipate and respond to the changing needs of its residents, in order to provide recreation services that fully serve many different backgrounds and demographics.

## Access, Awareness and Affordability

***Affordable and convenient opportunities.*** Tukwila residents desire recreational opportunities that are close to home. Residents—in particularly area youth—seek affordable places to play at convenient times and locations

***Expanding awareness.*** Many residents are unaware of existing opportunities and benefits and there is a need to strengthen participation and involvement from the public to improve the park system. The City’s traditional means of advertising its services will need to expand beyond the recreational brochure, City web site, and community signage to reach and engage Tukwila’s busy, diverse, multi-cultural and multi-lingual population.

***Maximizing capacity.*** Many of the City’s developed parks have limited capacity for additional features due to their small size. The open spaces are environmentally constrained and there is little land available for expanded or additional parks. Demand will continue to grow, so the

City will need creative ways of expanding recreation resources that do not require large land acquisitions.

**Partnerships.** Partnering with neighboring jurisdictions, private and public providers and other groups in Tukwila can be a means of increasing access to recreational opportunities and recreational capacity.

### **Healthier People and Places**

The residents of Tukwila, along with other South King County jurisdictions, have a lower expected life span and higher incidence of chronic disease than other areas of the County. Exercise, play and access to healthy foods are all needed to create happy and healthy lifestyles.

### **Sustainable Maintenance**

The City's park system is has a number of small facilities that are less economical to maintain and that provide less than optimal recreational function. Future improvements and acquisition decisions should be tied to maintenance needs to sustain the system.

## **GOALS AND POLICIES**

Goals and policies guide the desired future of the parks, recreation and open space system over the planning period. Policies reflect public needs, past and current planning efforts and priorities, as well as strategic planning, design and management principles. The Tukwila Parks, Recreation and Open Space System Concept Map is the graphic representation of these goals and policies. (Figure 2)

### **Goal 6.1: Convenient and Connected System**

**Comment [JP2]:** This goal is taken from Goal 1.11 (Community Image). Policies from this goal have been added where applicable.

Parks, recreation opportunities and open spaces that are close to home and/or work and that are interconnected by safe streets, off-street trails and public transportation.

### **Policies**

- 6.1.1 Create a system of close-to-home recreation opportunities, aiming for a  $\frac{1}{4}$ -  $\frac{1}{2}$ -mile travel distance between most residential uses and parks and recreation areas.
- 6.1.2 Create a system of close-to-work recreation opportunities, aiming for a  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile travel distance between most employment places and parks and recreation areas.
- 6.1.3 Link parks to neighborhood gathering spots and other destinations in the community and region such as schools, neighboring jurisdictions, regional parks and natural areas, and major employment centers.
- 6.1.4 Improve the pedestrian and bicycle environment by creating safe and efficient connections across busy streets, railways and the river.
- 6.1.5 Increase physical and scenic connectivity with the Green/Duwamish River.

6.1.6 Integrate linkages to recreation areas and open spaces when planning and designing the transportation system.

6.1.7 Include the availability of public transportation with the design and provision of parks and recreation programs and **services**.

**Comment [RF3]:** Consistent with KC Policy DP-38 "Identify in comprehensive plans local centers, such as city or neighborhood center, transit station areas, or other activity nodes, where housing, employment and services are accommodated in a compact form and at sufficient densities to support transit service and to make efficient use of urban land."

6.1.8 Strive for a safely designed and maintained trail system.

6.1.9 Distribute public recreational facilities throughout the City so that they are easily accessible to residents, visitors, and those who come to Tukwila to **work**.

**Comment [RF4]:** "Neighborhood gathering spots" added in 1.2 above to ensure that 7.5.2—deleted from Neighborhoods element—is covered

**Comment [RF5]:** Community Image policy 1.11.1

6.1.10 Create a trail system that links significant community focal points and links the lowland and upland trails at strategic **points**.

**Comment [RF6]:** Community Image policy 1.11.2

6.1.11 Connect concentrations of commercial and retail activity with the trail **network**.

**Comment [RF7]:** Community Image Policy 1.11.4

### Implementation Strategies

- Replace numerical park land level of service standard with an overall park land service area distance.
- Update the Public Recreation Overlay Comprehensive Plan designation to reflect the goals of this Element and of the Concept Map.
- Pursue trail easements in areas with natural amenities and incorporate them into a City-wide trail **system**.
- Seek trail easements from willing private property owners where no public right-of-way is available for a link in the **network**.

**Comment [RF8]:** Former Community Image Policy 1.11.3

**Comment [RF9]:** Moved from Community Image policy 1.11.16



- Consider the street sidewalk system as a link in the connecting network, when necessary.

Comment [RF10]: Formerly Community Image Policy 1.11.5

- Invest in bicyclist and pedestrian safety improvements identified in the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan and Walk and Roll Plan.

### Goal 6.2: A Network of Green Spaces

Recreational amenities, historical sites, rivers, wetlands, creeks, and other natural resources that are connected to each other and neighboring networks of lands. This network defines Tukwila as a northwest city and includes visually significant bands of vegetation that contrast with the built environment.

Comment [RF11]: Former Goal 1.10 Community Image

### Policies

6.2.1 Recognize that the City's open space network will be made up of public and private lands that provide or have the potential to provide the following functions:

Comment [RF12]: Implements MPP-En-8 &9.

- Passive recreational resources;
- Non-motorized transportation links between network lands;
- Flood control functions and stormwater detention;
- Water quality enhancement, such as biofiltration;
- Preservation of and public access to community landmarks that help make up the City's identity, including the river and historic sites;
- Urban forest preservation and enhancement, and vegetated corridors;
- Wildlife habitat and opportunities for salmon habitat enhancement; and/or
- Other public benefit.

6.2.2 Use the following as guidance to select and acquire for public purchase or donation land that:

Comment [RF13]: Adapted from Community Image Policy 1.10.5

- Provides public access to or along the river, other waterway, or a wetland;

- Provides a corridor for a trail network connection;
- Has potential to fill gaps in the park system, including under-served neighborhoods;
- Protects important natural resources;
- Would otherwise be developed for a use that will reduce the open space function of the property;
- Provides a buffer between residential areas and industrial areas, highways, and railways; and/or
- Provides other public benefit.

6.2.3 Retain and expand the open space network through acquisition, donation, easements, partnerships, and regulation.

Comment [RF14]: Former Community Image policy 1.10.2

6.2.4 Coordinate with other regional and local plans to complement and enhance the Tukwila open space network.

Comment [RF15]: From Community Image element

6.2.5 Integrate natural features, such as day lighting streams, and adding trees, shrubs and other plants into the built environment, including residential, commercial and industrial areas.

Comment [RF16]: Per CPP Urban Design and Historic Preservation Goal Statement: The built environment in both urban and rural settings achieves a high degree of high quality design that recognizes and enhances, where appropriate, existing natural and urban settings.

6.2.6 Pursue efforts that increase the public's awareness and stewardship of the City's open space resources and benefits such as volunteer events and development and distribution of information.

### Implementation Strategies

- Apply a range of measures to preserve and protect the open space network, including:
  - Sensitive areas regulations;
  - Shoreline regulations;
  - Land altering regulations;
  - Landscaping regulations and
  - Tree regulations.
  - Parks Impact Fees

- Pursue acquisition and development of the high priority needs through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) as guided by the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan.
- Develop property sale and review procedures with local public and private agencies for potential open space acquisition sites.
- Maintain and protect undeveloped rights-of-way within or adjacent to parks and the open space network.
- Work with property owners and encourage non-purchase options, including conservation easements, current use assessment, and development covenants. Accept donations of properties where public benefit is anticipated or planned.
- Design site planning and subdivision standards that offer flexibility and reflect the purpose of open space network areas.
- Develop a comprehensive vision for recreation along the Green/Duwamish River Corridor.
- Update tree protection and clearing regulations that achieve open space network goal and policies.
- Pursue an urban forestry program to implement policies in the Natural Environment element of the Comprehensive Plan
- Conduct a city-wide tree inventory, and identify ways to improve and increase the urban tree canopy.
- Maximize external funding opportunities and seek matching funds from other sources for the purchase of open space lands identified for acquisition.

Comment [JP17]: Relocated from policy 1.10.9 Community Image

Comment [RF18]: Former policy 1.10.10 Community Image

Comment [RF19]: Former policy 1.10.6 Community Image

Comment [RF20]: Former policy 1.10.8 Community Image

Comment [RF21]: The vision for the Green/Duwamish river is not in the PROS Plan, but the intention to develop the plan is there. (p. 4-13)

Comment [RF22]: Tree protection and urban forestry strategies support urban forestry policies in the Natural Environment element.

Comment [RF23]: From Community Image policy 1.10.3

- Continue to work with businesses, private property owners, and volunteers to maintain and foster stewardship of open space areas.

### **Goal 6.3: A Sense of Community**

Tukwila’s parks and recreation opportunities build community cohesion by providing places and programs for social interaction and gatherings of all sizes, with designs that strengthen community identity.

**Comment [JP24]:** This goal replaces Residential Neighborhoods element Goal 7.5 and adds policies from this goal as applicable.

#### **Policies**

6.3.1 Design parks and recreation facilities that encourage social interaction, and gathering of large and small groups.

6.3.2 Design parks and recreation facilities that celebrate unique features of Tukwila and that contribute to quality of life and neighborhood needs. These features should reflect neighborhood height, bulk, and scale and a small-town residential style of architecture.

**Comment [JP25]:** Adapted from Policy 7.5.1

6.3.3 Sponsor community events that encourage interaction between neighbors and celebrate the diversity of Tukwila.

6.3.4 Interpret local culture, history and environment throughout the system.

6.3.5 Work with Tukwila Arts Commission to integrate art throughout the City.

6.3.6 Support plans, policies, projects and programs to expand and improve the park and open space system in the Southcenter, Tukwila South and Tukwila International Boulevard areas, and seek opportunities to develop new facilities and programs that enhance the overall experience of residents, while also considering the needs of employees, business owners and visitors.

**Comment [RF26]:** Per 2014 Community Conversations

### 6.3.7 Where feasible, acquire parks to serve as buffers between residential uses and industrial areas, highways or railways.

#### Implementation Strategies

- Add places for social gathering by adding features in parks with existing capacity and in new facilities.
- Increase access to places for social gathering in identified focus areas of the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan.
- Identify and secure a suitable location for a larger scale public gathering space including but not limited to the Southcenter/Tukwila Urban Center area and the Tukwila International Boulevard area per the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan.
- Develop design guidelines to ensure that uses and structures adjacent to parks recognize and complement open spaces and public amenities.
- Prepare standards and guidelines for parks and open spaces that ensure access to sunlight, a sense of security, seating, landscaping, accessibility, and connections to surrounding uses and activities.
- Work with public agencies to incorporate public spaces as an important element of major public transportation, utilities, and facilities **projects**.
- Develop strategies for public-private partnerships that will result in public open spaces to serve as focal points and settings for special events and other activities.
- Examine alternative spaces for each neighborhood in identified park access gap areas that could be used to create a neighborhood gathering **spot**.

Comment [RF27]: From Community Image policy 1.10.7

Comment [RF28]: From Community Image policy 1.6.5

- Consider locating parklets in commercial areas, such as in the vicinity of Tukwila International Boulevard and the Tukwila Urban Center/Southcenter area.
- Partner with Tukwila Village to provide a social gathering space

### **Goal 6.4: Opportunities for All**

Tukwila’s parks, recreation opportunities and public services offer something for all ages, abilities and cultures, in settings, locations and times that are convenient to as many as possible.

#### **Policies**

- | 6.4.1 Offer flexible recreation programming that is constantly improving and responding to current trends and community desires.
- 6.4.2 Provide programs that embrace Tukwila’s many cultures, customs and interests.
- 6.4.3 Design accessible parks, facilities and programs for all ages and abilities.
- | 6.4.4 Increase the capacity at existing parks and recreation facilities to maximize use and expand public access.
- 6.4.5 Provide indoor and outdoor spaces designed for increased access and flexibility of use.
- 6.4.6 Consider future growth needs and planned density when providing recreation opportunities.
- 6.4.7 Expand program options through enhanced partnerships with businesses, organizations and through volunteerism.

## **Implementation Strategies**

- Use innovative outreach strategies to determine community desires and priorities in developing and locating program offerings
- Add places for unstructured play by adding features in parks with existing capacity as identified in the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan.
- Increase access to unstructured play in identified focus areas of the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan.
- Continue to seek locations for new sports fields and ball courts at sites with adequate capacity as identified in the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan.
- Partner with local school districts including Highline, Tukwila, and Seattle; Tukwila Metropolitan Park District; King County, neighboring jurisdictions, and other providers to improve community access to programs and services during non-school hours.
- Identify locations and funding for a facility serving the Tukwila International Boulevard area.

## **Goal 6.5: Inviting and Affordable**

Parks and facilities that are safe, well maintained and clean, and programs and services that are welcoming and accessible for all people.

## Policies

6.5.1 Design parks and public spaces using accepted public safety standards such as Crime Prevention through Environmental Design Principles (CPTED) or Defensible Space.

6.5.2 Reflect the highest standard of design quality in public developments to enhance neighborhood quality and set a high design standard for private development.

Comment [RF29]: From Residential Neighborhoods element

6.5.3 Develop park master plans or site designs that guide all major park improvements and that achieve cohesive design and efficient phasing of projects.

6.5.4 Involve the community in all aspects of project and program planning and implementation.

6.5.5 Involve community partners and volunteers in the construction and maintenance of parks to increase the sense of public ownership and reduce City costs.

6.5.6 Increase access to affordable, free or reduced cost programs and services.

6.5.7 Expand awareness of the full range of program offerings and recreation options made available by the City and others.

6.5.8 Maintain parks and public spaces so that they are safe, clean, and welcoming.

## Implementation Strategies

- Develop and implement updated park design guidelines and policies.
- Expand recreation programming and services in identified focus areas of the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan, using a combination of



mobile programming, classes and activities held at City-owned and school district-owned locations, and other sites as appropriate.

- Refine the cost-recovery framework to increase affordability of all programs.
- Pursue alternative service delivery models, such as mobile programming at employment areas, to enhance programming options and convenience.
- Partner with Highline, Seattle and Tukwila school districts, Tukwila Metropolitan Park District, King County, neighboring jurisdictions and other providers to improve community access to programs and services.
- Expand and enhance volunteer programs and opportunities
- Expand and diversify outreach efforts to increase awareness of and involvement in parks programs.

### **Goal 6.6: Healthy People and Places**

Parks and recreation opportunities that promote healthy, active lifestyles are designed and managed to engage and enhance the natural environment and the local economy.

**Comment [RF30]:** Reflects focus on healthy living and food access that is expressed in Puget Sound Regional Council's Vision 2040/Multi-County Planning policies and the King County Planning Policies. Food access policies adapted from Federal Way. Healthy food access requested by City Council during 2013 Comp Plan review, and at 2014 Community Conversations.

#### **Policies**

- 6.6.1 Provide services for all ages to encourage community members to try new activities and build a habit of healthy living.
- 6.6.2 Promote healthy food choices and active living programs as a central focus for community education
- 6.6.3 Ensure that projects and programs create a social, economic and environmental benefit to the community.

6.6.4 Leverage the park, recreation and open space system to meet the needs of the residents while considering economic development and needs of visitors, business, and employees.

6.6.5 Provide public education resources and volunteer opportunities to promote understanding and appreciation of Tukwila's natural environment and river ecosystem while building an environmental stewardship ethic in the community.

6.6.6 Encourage and support the use of public lands for urban agriculture activities.

6.6.7 Promote urban agriculture activities through existing and new programming and partnerships.

6.6.8 Consider long-term management, operations and maintenance needs when implementing new projects and programs.

6.6.9 Employ best practices in managing facilities, parks and open space areas and provide continuing education for City staff on these practices.

### **Implementation Strategies**

- Provide accessible programs and classes that promote healthy activity and food choices for residents of all ages.
- Develop a volunteer project database to serve as a clearinghouse for citywide volunteer opportunities.
- Work with volunteer organizations and the City of Tukwila Park Commission to identify ways to strengthen the park system.

- Continue to provide a variety of volunteer programs, nature walks and interpretive services, as well as use of social media and public outreach, to foster long-term support and stewardship.
- Create an environmental stewardship staff position to coordinate with other City Departments and volunteer organizations.
- Increase environmental stewardship and awareness by offering food system and urban agriculture programs and classes. Identify joint-use agreements for publicly or privately-owned sites for uses such as urban farms, community gardens and pea patches.
- Seek development incentives, grants, and other funding sources to support development of urban agriculture sites and programming.
- Review development regulations for barriers to implementing urban agriculture activities.
- Identify the preferred location for an additional community garden, which may include a children’s learning garden.
- Encourage and support farmers’ market opportunities that are accessible to all residents.
- Develop and implement system-wide environmental strategies for management and operations.
- Co-locate public infrastructure, environmental and recreational projects where practicable.
- Conduct maintenance efficiency improvements to better align smaller parks with the way these sites are used by the public.

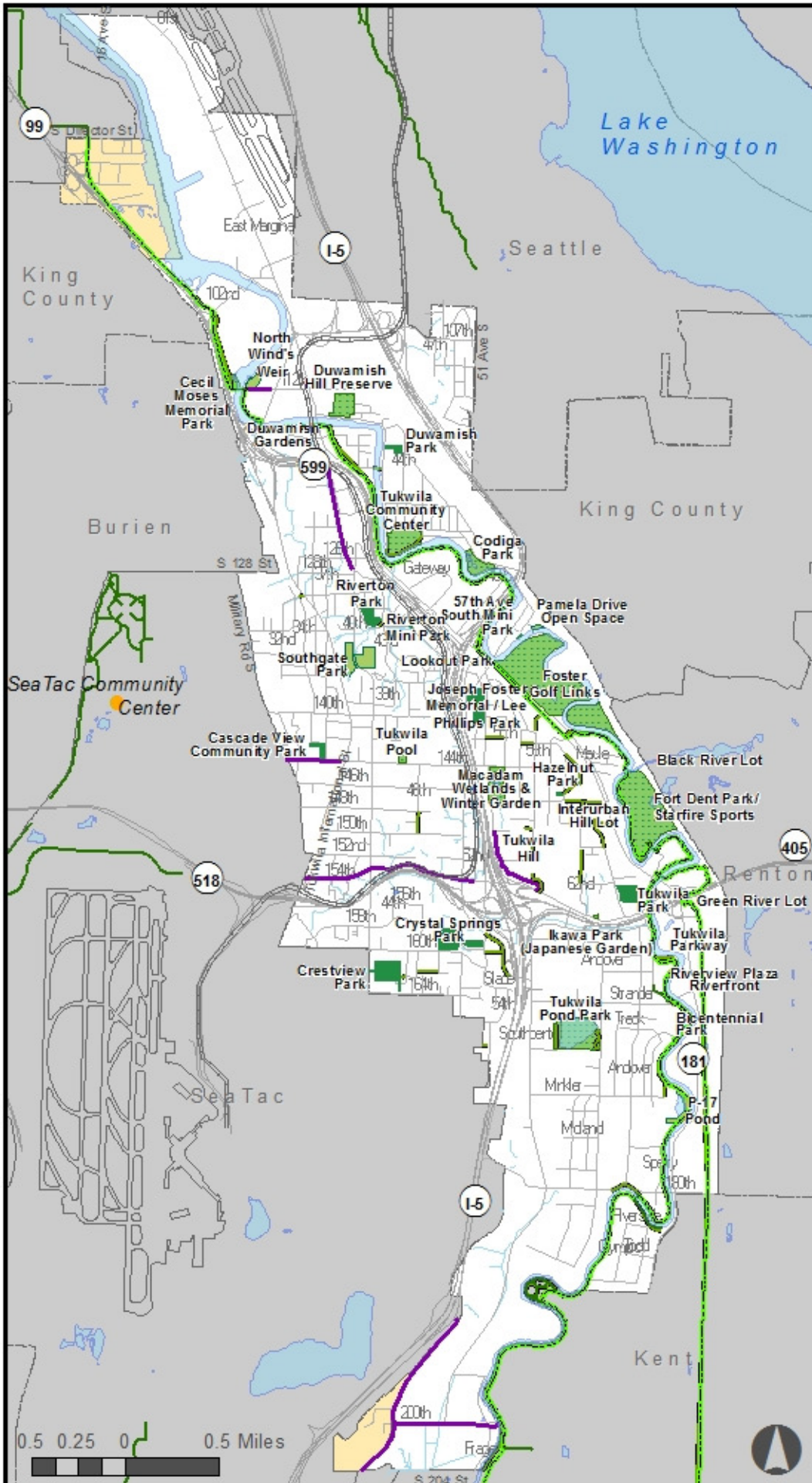
Comment [RF31]: Adapted from Multi-County Planning Policy-En-1

- Develop and use integrated pest management plans for all parks with the least hazard to people, property and the environment.
- Regularly maintain and monitor natural areas to control invasive species and other impacts.
- Incorporate designs with green infrastructure, water and energy efficiency, recycling, waste prevention and low impact design storm water management that reduce environmental impacts.
- Implement recycling opportunities at all parks and facilities.



# PROS Existing System Map

Figure 1



## Legend

### Existing Trails

- Other City
- King County
- Tukwila
- Bike Routes

### Parks

- Local Park
- Open Space
- Special Use Park

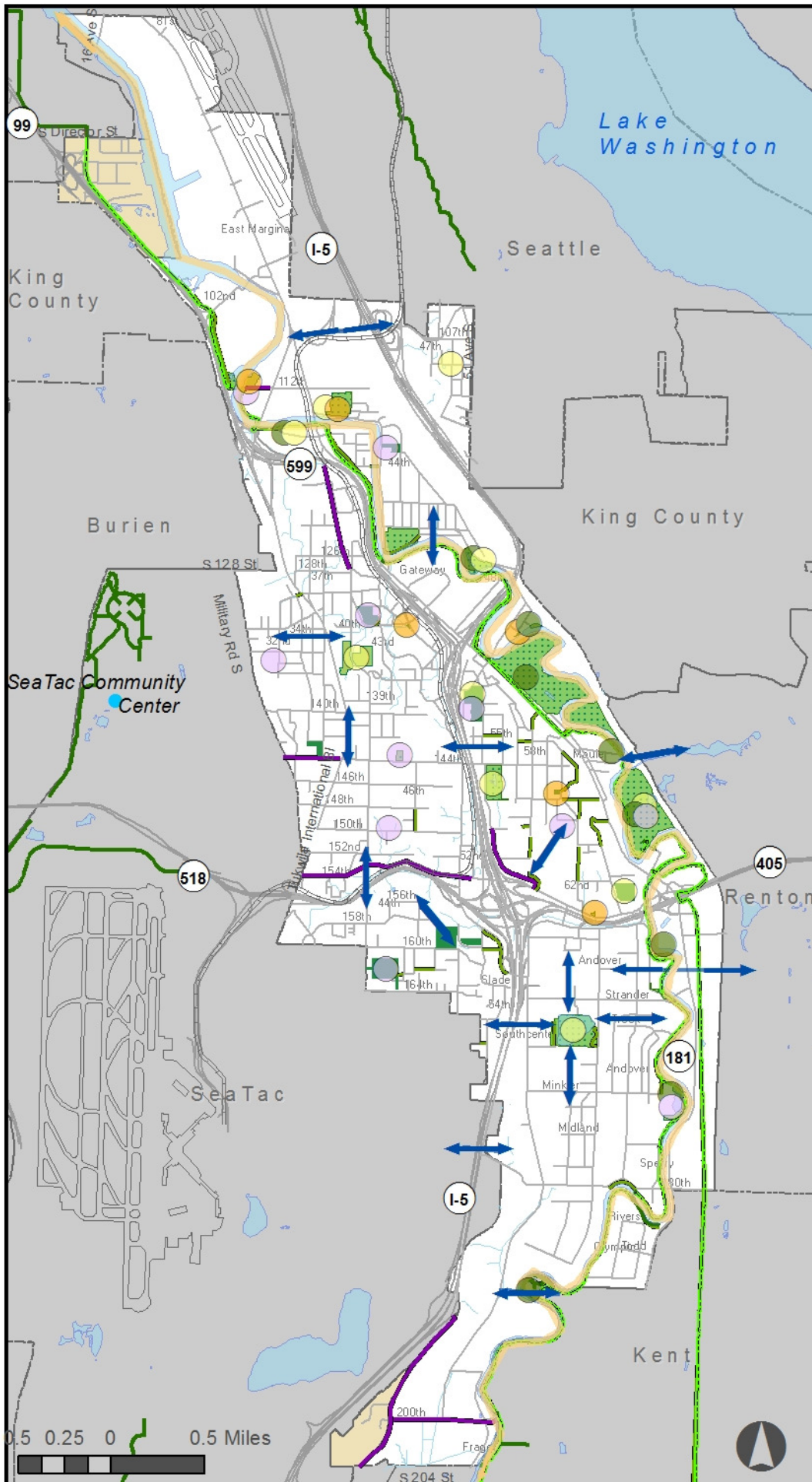
### Roads

- Roads
- River / Streams
- Annexation



# PROS System Concept Map

Figure 2



## Legend

### Project Type

- Expanded Capacity
- Partner Sites
- Riverfront Projects
- Sustainable Stewardship

### Connections

- Connections
- Corridor Plan

### Existing Trails

- Other City
- King County
- Tukwila
- Bike Routes

### Parks

- Local Park
- Open Space
- Special Use Park

### Roads

- Roads
- River / Streams
- Annexation