

# FINAL

## Pierce County Parks and Recreation 2014 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan

Adopted February 2014



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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## INTRODUCTION

This Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan creates a vision for an innovative, inclusive, and interconnected system of parks, recreation facilities, programs, and services that promotes recreation, health, and environmental conservation as integral elements of a livable community. It addresses the recreation needs of residents countywide, while reflecting diverse community priorities within Pierce County. This Plan establishes specific goals, objectives, recommendations, and actions for developing, conserving, and maintaining quality parks, trails, facilities, and open space. It recommends a strategy for the implementation of capital and non-capital projects that will most benefit the community based on an extensive public involvement process.

The Plan has been updated over several years to provide additional chapters and to revise information. Following the adoption of the PROS Plan in 2008, Pierce County Parks and Recreation (PCPR) began further work on regional trails, one of the highest community priorities identified in the PROS planning process, and a Trails element was added in 2009.

The 2014 PROS Plan provides revised inventories, demographic conditions, growth projections, needs

analysis, revenue forecasts, and capital project phasing. In 2014, the PROS Plan was also amended in order to add a new Habitat component using the foundation of Pierce County's extensive work on critical areas, shorelines, watersheds, and biodiversity plans over the last decade. Based on the 2013-2014 public outreach and needs analysis, the 2014 PROS Plan updates parks and recreation conditions and strategies, but affirms fundamental vision, plan concepts, and policies of the 2008 PROS Plan.

## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

To develop a solid foundation for the PROS Plan and understand resident recreation preferences and needs, the PROS Plan has incorporated community input through a variety of activities described below and in Chapter 4. In 2013 and 2014:

- the PROS Plan involved a statistically valid telephone survey; and
- public meetings, briefings, and meetings with advisory bodies and interest groups.

The outreach validated the findings of the 2008 PROS Plan, which also involved questionnaires, public meetings, and advisory groups.

# PLANNING PROCESS

The development of the PROS Plan involved four phases, which are noted in Figure 1-1. The PROS Plan compiled inventories, conducted outreach, refined strategies, and developed the Plan to meet local needs. Each phase is described in greater detail below.

**Figure 1-1. Planning Process**



Source: Pierce County PROS Plan, MIG; 2008



- **Phase I: Identify Assets and Opportunities.**  
The purpose of Phase I was to take inventory of the current recreation resources in Pierce County, focusing on PCPR's parks, facilities, and programs. Efforts also included an analysis of the planning context (geographic, historical, and cultural setting), local government and park providers, demographics and population growth, land use and development, and natural resources. In 2008, this phase also included a park evaluation and condition assessment, a park operations review, and an assessment of recreation programming. In 2014, the planning context was revised and augmented with more extensive demographic and habitat data.
- **Phase II: Create A Vision and Assess Community Needs.** With a foundation of information, Phase II was launched to provide public involvement activities. These activities helped to identify public preferences, core values, and community needs for parks and recreation. This information, along with staff and advisory group feedback, was used to refine PCPR's mission and vision for the future park system. In 2008, this information was incorporated into a Needs Assessment Scenario Review, where three different approaches to the provision of parks, facilities, and programs were evaluated. The 2014 needs assessment validated the Adaptive System Scenario. In 2014, a more thorough phased level of service analysis was conducted to better implement the system within available funding resources.
- **Phase III: Develop Strategies and Actions.**  
Phase III involved the development of specific strategies and actions for improving the park and recreation system to implement the vision determined in Phase II. In the 2014 PROS, specific goals and objectives were identified to support the community's vision and to create a strategy for implementation. Recommendations for the Adaptive Park System were developed in 2008 and validated in 2014, including a list of capital projects within a 15-year planning horizon. This long-term list supports a Capital Improvement Plan with prioritized projects. A Revenue Analysis was integrated in 2014 to identify funding strategies to implement these projects.
- **Phase IV: Develop and Implement Plan.**  
Staff, committee, and public comments were important components in the preparation of a Draft and Final Plan. In addition to an internal review by key staff, review sessions were held with the advisory committees, Planning Commission, and County residents, before presenting the Plan to the County Executive and County Council. The Final Plan was modified and incorporated the views of each of these groups.

# PLAN ORGANIZATION

The PROS Plan is organized into eight chapters and nine appendices:

- **Chapter 1: Introduction** describes the purpose of the Plan, the involvement of County residents in the Plan preparation, phases in the planning process, the organization of the Plan, and the relationship between this Plan and other planning documents.
- **Chapter 2: Planning Context** provides background relevant to the plan, such as the County's geographic context, population and development patterns, land use, natural resources and habitat, and park agencies and jurisdictions.
- **Chapter 3: Existing Resources** defines the current inventory of PCPR parks and recreation facilities in the context of a park classification system that will facilitate park planning in the future. The chapter also describes opportunities and challenges related to recreation programming within the current park system.
- **Chapter 4: Needs Assessment** presents key findings from the public involvement process and summarizes community needs for parks, recreation facilities, and programs based on a desired level of service and the community's vision for their ideal, future park system. The 2014 PROS Plan tests and affirms the fundamental Adaptive System plan concepts.
- **Chapter 5: Vision, Goals, and Objectives** states the vision PCPR has in providing parks and recreation services. Based on a set of community core values, this chapter presents residents' vision for parks, open space, and recreation services, along with the primary goals and objectives for this Plan.
- **Chapter 6: Implementation** notes the strategies that will be used to implement improvements for the PCPR park system. It also identifies specific capital projects for new park development, renovation of existing sites, conservation of natural areas and habitat, the development of trails and pathways, and improvements for recreation facilities.
- **Chapter 7, Sections 7.1 through 7.3: Regional Trails Plan, Existing Trails, and Regional Trail System** provides a planning framework for the development of a regional trails network throughout Pierce County.
- **Chapter 8** includes a **Bibliography and Glossary**.
- **Appendix A: Map Folio** illustrates current and planned parks and recreation facilities in Pierce County as well as demographic and park system analysis maps in a series of maps.
- **Appendix B: Park and Facility Inventory** includes a tabular inventory of PCPR parks by classification, including the facilities within those parks.

- **Appendix C: Habitat Inventory** includes a summary of habitat types and conditions considered in the formation of the Habitat components of the PROS Plan.
- **Appendix D: Trails Inventory** lists each existing and proposed trail alignment according to its jurisdiction and classification.
- **Appendix E: Trail Providers, Advocates and Plans** lists each trail provider, advocate and plan by jurisdiction, planning area and organization.
- **Appendix F: Trail Planning Framework** provides an overview of multiple planning efforts within Washington State and Pierce County related to trails.
- **Appendix G: Trail Permitting Process** provides an overview of planning considerations and types of regulatory review that may be involved in the planning and development of trails.
- **Appendix H: Trail Design Guidelines** provides design guidelines for regional trails, trailheads and trail amenities.
- **Appendix I: Public Involvement** presents some decision support tools for involving the public in the process of planning and developing the PROS Plan in 2009 (Trails) and 2014 (PROS Plan).

## RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER DOCUMENTS

This 2014 PROS Plan guides the Pierce County parks and recreation system through the year 2030. It is an update of the 2008 PROS Plan. This update is required every six years to maintain eligibility for grants administered by the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO). RCO requires jurisdictional applicants to have a current parks, recreation, and open space plan as a criterion for grant applications. This PROS Plan is intended to comply with all RCO requirements.

The adopted Plan is also designed to meet the requirements of the State of Washington Growth Management Act (GMA), which is codified as Chapter 36.70A Revised Code of Washington. GMA requires counties to:

- Designate the general location and extent of land uses including recreation and open space lands;
- Identify lands useful for recreation, including wildlife habitat, trails and connection of critical areas;
- Estimate park and recreation demand for at least a ten-year period; and
- Develop a capital facilities plan (CFP) identifying funds necessary to implement the plan for at least a six-year period.

The GMA also specifies that adopted plans should ensure that strategies for maintaining adopted levels of service are put in place to accommodate

planned future development. Strategies to maintain and enhance the current level of service are addressed in Chapters 4 and 6 of this document.

The Pierce County Comprehensive (Land Use) Plan discusses parks, recreation, and open space issues in Sections 19A.030.160 and 19A.030.170 of the Pierce County Code (PCC). This PROS Plan supplements and implements the Comprehensive Plan. The goals, objectives, and policies presented in this PROS Plan reflect and amplify the goals, objectives, and policies that are referenced in the Comprehensive Plan.

Several communities have been identified in various geographic urban, suburban, and rural areas of unincorporated Pierce County. Eleven of these communities have developed plans that include strategies for identified park locations. Once adopted, Community Plans are considered to be part of the Pierce County Comprehensive Plan. Community Plans take a community-oriented approach to park and recreation planning, which is different from the regional park perspective and benefits-based approach in this Plan. While many of the recommendations from the Community Plans regarding parks and recreation have been incorporated into this PROS Plan, future local jurisdictions will have the primary responsibility to implement the objectives and policies noted in individual Community Plans. However, Community Plans do provide valuable local planning tools for the implementation of parks, recreation, and open space policies that reflect community priorities. While this PROS Plan incorporates some of the

policies and objectives of the Community Plans, it only includes those that are consistent with PCPR's role in providing services, which is defined within the Pierce County Comprehensive Plan. As noted in the Comprehensive Plan (Title 19A.30.160 Recreation, LU-Rc Objective 55):

- a. The County should only assume direct responsibility for the development, operation, and maintenance of facilities that have a regional benefit...
- b. The County should not assume responsibility for new local park sites. Pierce County should continue to land-bank local park sites and move the properties to local control when feasible.
- c. The County should provide technical assistance to local jurisdictions and the citizens of Pierce County for the development, operation, and maintenance of local parks and facilities. Such assistance may include technical planning, help in the formation of local recreation service areas, service districts, city/county service area agreements (joint ventures) and self-help agreements with other user organizations.

Therefore, this PROS Plan is intended to establish a mechanism for the development of local parks *within a regional vision* for the park system that *can be implemented* by PCPR. The role that PCPR plays in achieving the actions and policies that are recommended in Community Plans should be *prioritized based on the countywide vision* for parks and recreation facilities as presented in this Plan.



Until the time when communities have the capacity to implement their proposed standards and guidelines, PCPR should acquire parks, provide recreation facilities, and conserve open space and natural resources in a manner that provides the greatest benefit to residents countywide as well as in individual communities. This benefits-based approach helps ensure that PCPR can achieve the innovative, inclusive, and interconnected system of parks, recreation facilities, programs, and services that residents desire.

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# 2. PLANNING CONTEXT

## INTRODUCTION

An understanding of Pierce County's planning context is a key component of a successful planning process. This chapter of the Pierce County Park, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan summarizes the context in which Pierce County Parks, and Recreation (PCPR) operates. Specifically, this chapter:

- Provides an overview of the Pierce County planning area;
- Discusses population growth and development in the region, with their implications for park and recreation services;
- Briefly notes changes in land use patterns that have been caused by this rapid growth;
- Highlights the area's natural resources and habitats that can be conserved through parks and open space planning; and
- Notes the various governmental jurisdictions within Pierce County that are involved in providing park and recreation services.

## PLANNING AREA

Pierce County is located in west central Washington, in the south Puget Sound region. It encompasses approximately 1,800 square miles including about 130 square miles of water; the total area is larger than the State of Rhode Island. The County landscape varies widely, from the summit of Mount Rainier, to the steep foothills of the Cascades, to the rolling uplands, flat plains, and shores of the Puget Sound. Although Pierce County ranks 23rd in size out of Washington's 39 counties, it is the second most populated county in Washington State.

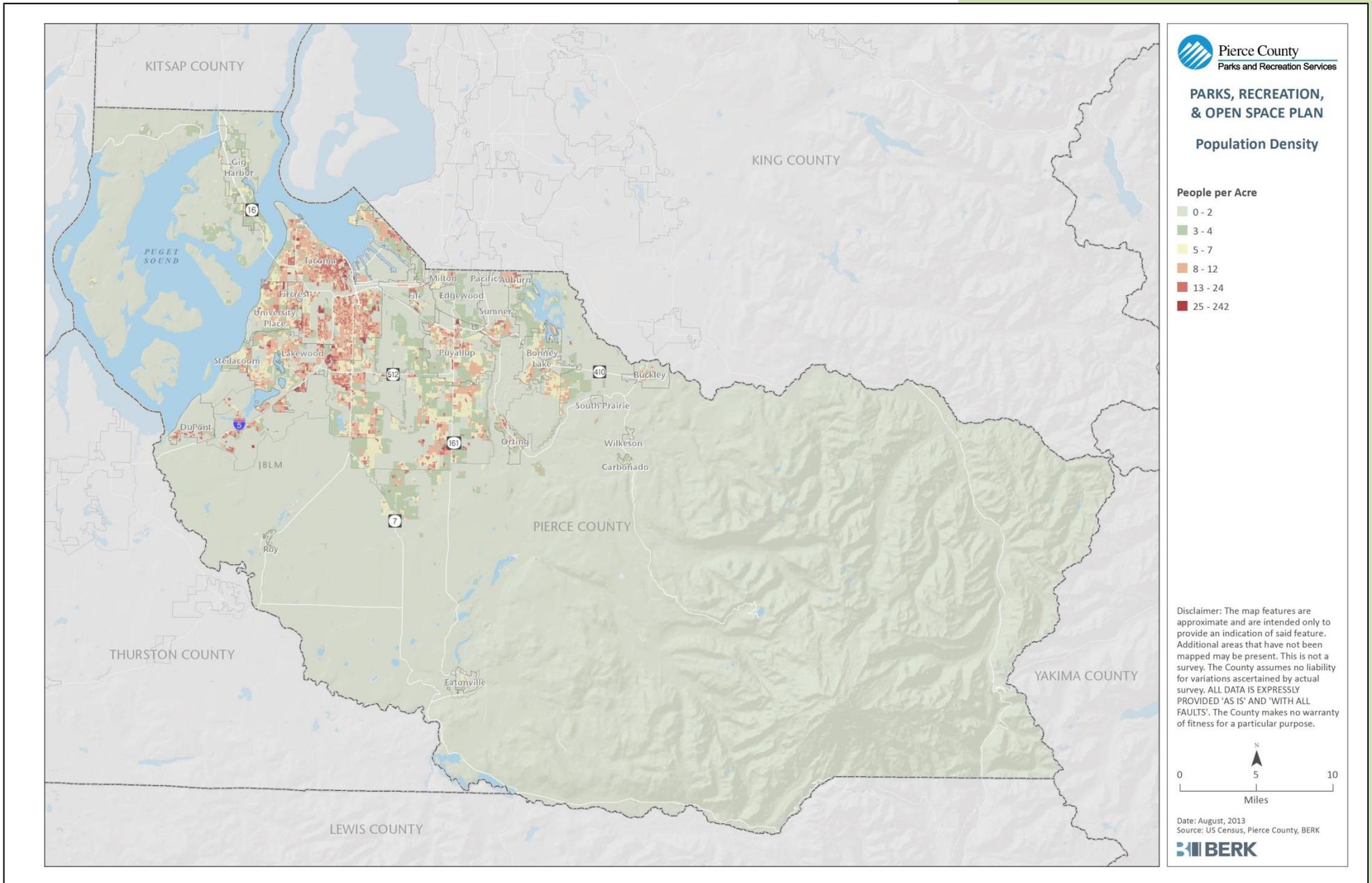
## POPULATION

Between 2000 and 2010 the population of the county grew by nearly 100,000 persons to reach 795,225 persons. As of 2013, about 814,500 residents live in Pierce County.

The majority of Pierce County's population and development is concentrated in cities in the central portion of the county along the Interstate-5 corridor, such as Tacoma, Lakewood, Puyallup, and University Place. Figure 2-1 shows the 2010 population density within the county by Census Block.



**Figure 2-1. Population Density**





Most cities in Pierce County provide park and recreation opportunities for residents, or the needs in these areas are met by park and recreation districts or metropolitan park districts. However, nearly half of all residents (367,894 or 46.3%) live outside of cities in unincorporated urban growth areas (UGAs), such as South Hill, Graham, Spanaway, and Frederickson, or rural areas, or Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM). Unlike incorporated cities, most of these areas do not have other primary recreation providers at this time.

Pierce County grew by almost 100,000 people from 2000 to 2010. Table 2-1 shows the change in population from 2000 to 2010 in the county by type of jurisdiction. The largest share of this growth took place in unincorporated UGAs. This growth in unincorporated UGAs is important for the PROS Plan, because population growth increases the demand for park and recreation services. Moreover, growth in unincorporated Pierce County places an even greater burden on PCPR, the primary provider of regional, County, and local parks in most unincorporated areas.

**Table 2-1. Change in Population, 2000-2010**

Population	2000	2010	Change 2000-2010	Average Annual Growth Rate 2000-2010
Incorporated City	390,191	427,331	37,140	0.91%
Unincorporated UGA	143,879	191,783	47,904	2.92%
Federal Base JBLM	23,458	16,420	-7,038	-3.50%
Rural (including National Park)	143,292	159,691	16,399	1.09%
<b>Total Pierce County</b>	<b>700,820</b>	<b>795,225</b>	<b>94,405</b>	<b>1.27%</b>

Sources: US Census Bureau

Based on population estimates developed by the State Office of Financial Management (OFM), and allocated by Pierce County in consultation with cities and towns, population is projected to grow at a similar rate countywide from 2010 to 2030 as it did from 2000 to 2010. Table 2-2 shows that the total County population is expected to grow by almost 220,000 in the next 20 years.

Most of this growth (66.2%) is projected to occur in incorporated areas. Unincorporated areas are projected to see much less growth over this period. Unincorporated UGAs are projected to grow at just over 1.0% annually, compared to almost 3.0% annually from 2000 to 2010. Rural areas are projected to grow at half the rate they did from 2000 to 2010.

**Table 2-2. Estimated Growth 2010-2030**

Area	2010	2030 Allocated	Estimated 20-Year Growth	Average Annual Growth Rate, 2010-2030
Incorporated City	427,331	572,715	145,384	1.47%
Unincorporated UGA	191,783	234,965	43,182	1.02%
Federal	16,420	30,300	13,880	3.11%
Rural	159,691	176,992	17,301	0.52%
Total Pierce County	795,225	1,014,972	219,747	1.23%

Source: US Census Bureau, Pierce County Council Ordinance 2011-36s.

## Demographics

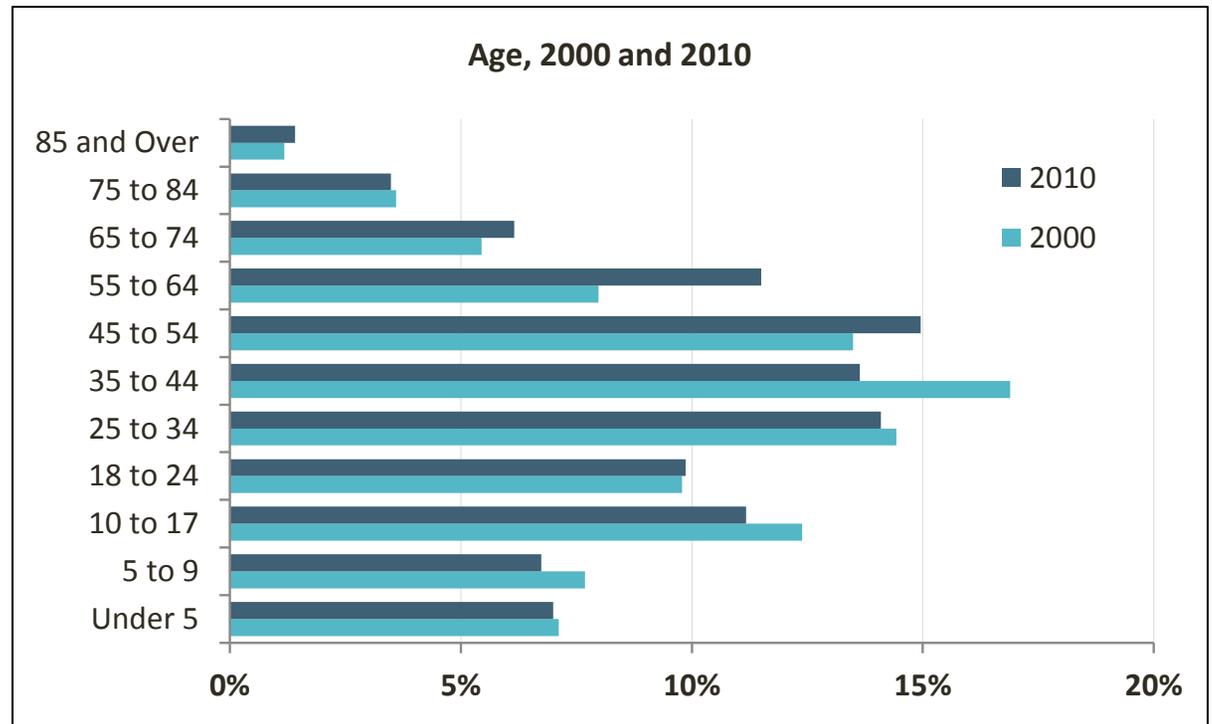
In addition to an increasing population, Pierce County has also experienced demographic shifts since 2000. Two areas of changing demographics are the age distribution of the population and ethnic make-up of the county, including the immigrant population.

## Age Distribution

The changing age breakdown of the county's population impacts the types of facilities that are used and needed for those facilities within the county. Figure 2-2 shows the change in the breakdown of the population by age. Since 2000, the county has experienced an aging of the population. The share of the population 45 years of age and older has increased while the share under 45 years of age has decreased.



Figure 2-2. Age Distribution, 2000-2010

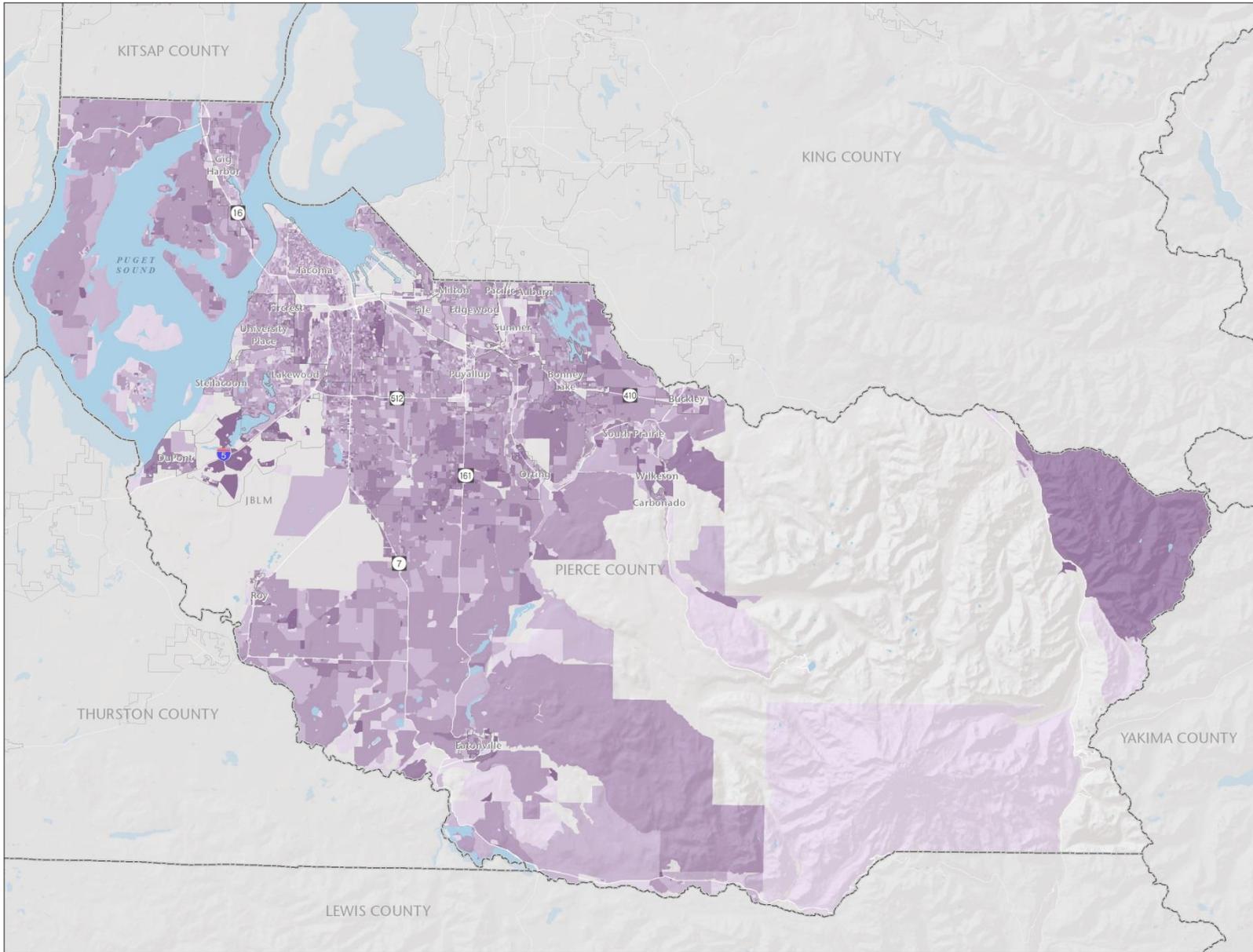


Source: US Census Bureau

The largest amount of growth occurred among those 45 to 64 years of age, increasing by almost 60,000 since 2000. Children under 18 years of age grew by approximately 7,500 since 2000, but decreased as a share of the population. Children in the age range 5 to 9 years actually slightly decreased.

Figure 2-3 shows the geographic concentration of the population under 18 years of age. Overall, there are few areas that stand out as having a higher percent of the population under 18 years of age. The unincorporated UGAs and rural areas do have a somewhat higher percentage of children. These areas also have less total population as well.

**Figure 2-3. Population under 18 Years Old**



**PARKS, RECREATION,  
& OPEN SPACE PLAN**

**Population Under 18**

**Percent Under 18, 2010**

- 0% - 10%
- 11% - 20%
- 21% - 30%
- 31% - 40%
- 41% - 80%

Disclaimer: The map features are approximate and are intended only to provide an indication of said feature. Additional areas that have not been mapped may be present. This is not a survey. The County assumes no liability for variations ascertained by actual survey. ALL DATA IS EXPRESSLY PROVIDED 'AS IS' AND 'WITH ALL FAULTS'. The County makes no warranty of fitness for a particular purpose.



Date: August, 2013  
Source: US Census, Pierce County, BERK

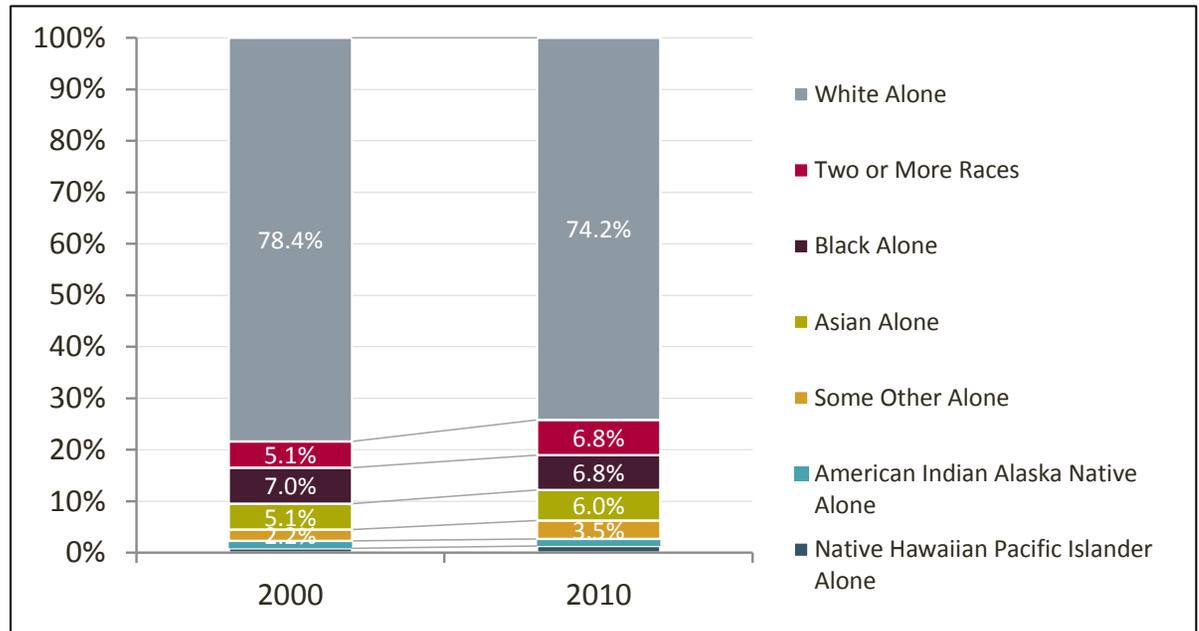


## Ethnicity

In addition to growing older, the population in Pierce County has become more diverse. The population identifying themselves with an ethnicity other than only white has increased from 21.6% percent of the population in 2000 to 25.8% in 2010. Figure 2-4 depicts the breakdown of ethnicity in

2000 and 2010. People identifying as white alone accounted for the largest number of new residents with an increase of 40,671. Besides white alone, the largest increase in ethnic identity were in individuals of two or more races (an increase of 18,504) and those identifying as some other race alone (an increase of 12,462 people).

**Figure 2-4. Ethnicity, 2000-10**

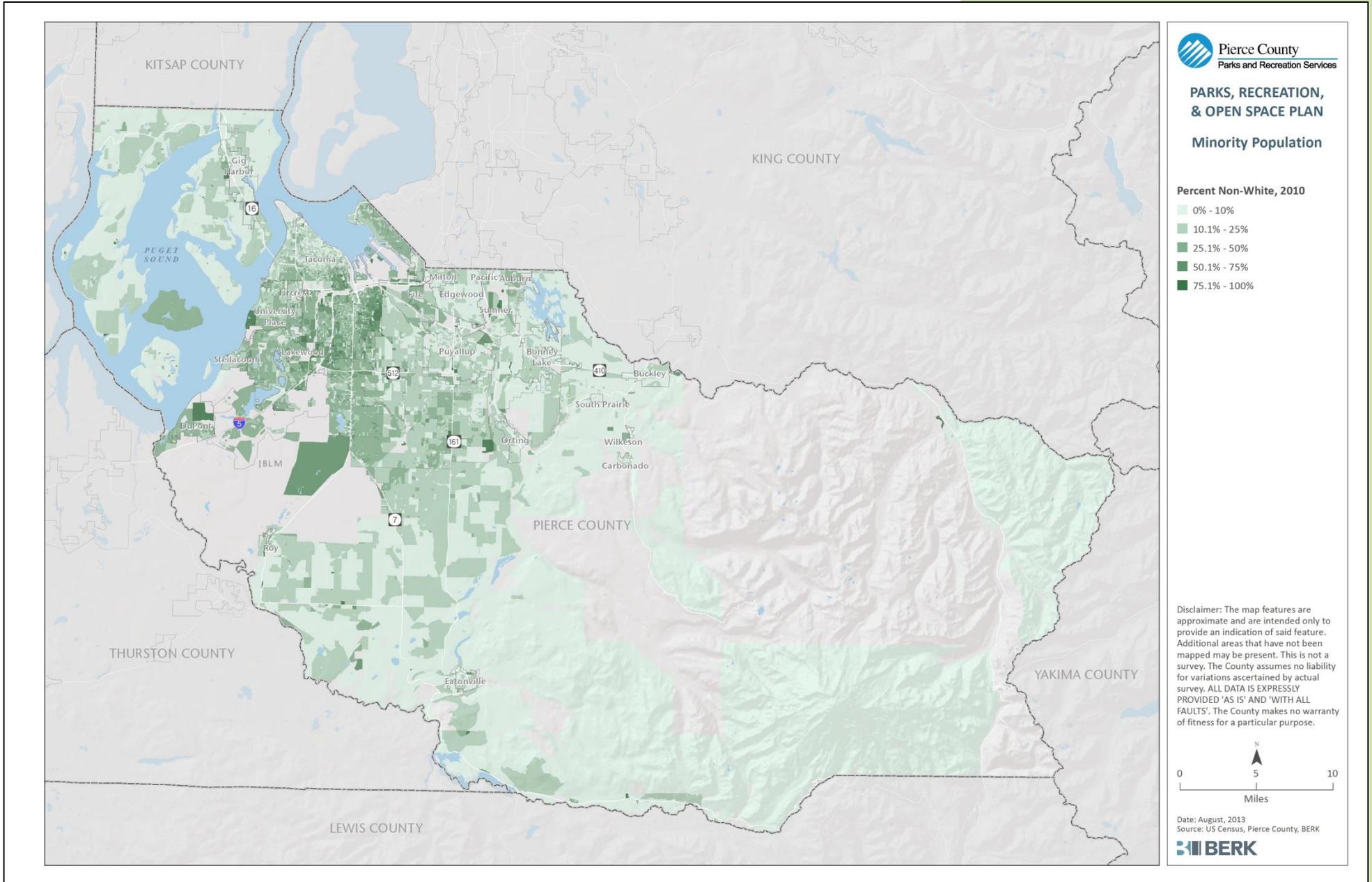


Source: US Census Bureau

Figure 2-5 shows the distribution of the minority population within the county. The highest concentration of minority populations is in communities along the I-5 corridor such as Lakewood, Tacoma, and the unincorporated areas around Parkland and Spanaway.

Not included in Figure 2-4 is the Latino and Hispanic population, who may be included in multiple categories. In 2000, 5.5% of the population (of all races) identified as Latino or Hispanic. By 2010, 9.2% of the population identified as Latino or Hispanic. Over one third of the population growth since 2000 identifies as Latino or Hispanic (34,228 people).

**Figure 2-5. Minority Population Density**





## LAND USE

As noted earlier, Pierce County is the second most populated county in the state. It is also the fourth most densely-populated county, with 484.09 persons per square mile (OFM, 2012). This calculation, however, does not reflect the fact that nearly half of the land area (46%) in Pierce County is held in public ownership by jurisdictions such as the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Departments of Army and Air Force, and Washington Department of Natural Resources. This makes the incorporated and several unincorporated areas of Pierce County more densely populated than data suggests. For this reason, population density and growth are rapidly changing the character and land use patterns of several areas within the county.

Some areas that were once characterized by small communities, productive farmland, and harvestable and protected forests are now facing unprecedented development. Pierce County finds itself in a predicament where more people, who are moving into unincorporated urban and rural areas, are in need of recreation facilities and services. Increasing density, smaller lot sizes, and disappearing open space has increased pressure to find close-to-home places to play. Open space and developed parks and recreation facilities will be critical as these areas continue to develop.

Rural areas face their own challenges in terms of growth and increasing development. In some cases, residents in areas such as the Key Peninsula have anticipated growth and pushed for park and recreation zones to encourage and streamline new park development. On the Gig Harbor Peninsula, citizens supported the development of active recreation in rural areas where sport fields could be established. On the other hand, in some more rural areas of the County, highly developed parks, sport complexes, etc., do not fit the character of these communities. Where land use is predominately rural farms, agricultural resource areas, and rural sensitive resources, parks that both conserve and provide access to open space and natural resources are desirable.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

The diverse topography and natural resources in Pierce County including forested mountainous areas, river valleys, marine shorelines, freshwater lakes, and other critical areas and habitat contributes to a variety of plants, animals, and ecological systems in the area. Many sensitive environments are not suitable for development, but can provide significant open spaces, wildlife habitats, conservation preserves, scenic parks, trail corridors, and passive recreation opportunities.

## Ecoregions

Pierce County contains 1,800 square miles of territory including marine waters. The County's 1,670 square miles of land extend from Puget Sound marine shorelines, through river valleys, to the Cascade Range, including Mount Rainier at 14,410 feet, the highest natural point in Washington State (ESD 2012). The glaciers of Mount Rainier feed large rivers (NPS 2013) including the Puyallup, Carbon, White and Nisqually Rivers. Mountains and foothills support forests, including forests managed for commercial harvest. Oak and prairie lands, wetlands, streams, lakes, agricultural lands are found in Pierce County valleys and plains.

Pierce County lies in two ecoregions – areas of broad ecological patterns that have been mapped for the Pacific Northwest:

The **Puget Trough Ecoregion** in the western portion of the county below 1,000 feet in elevation contains deepwater and nearshore marine habitats, riparian habitats, oak woodlands, and prairies and other habitats. Puget Sound is considered a globally important estuary. (LandScope Washington 2008)

The **West Cascades Ecoregion** in the eastern portion of the county above 1,000 feet contains natural and semi-natural conifer forests and in some locations alpine meadows and heath fields. Mount Rainier is “home to 890 vascular plants, amounting to 30% of the flora found in Washington” (LandScope Washington 2008).

## Habitat

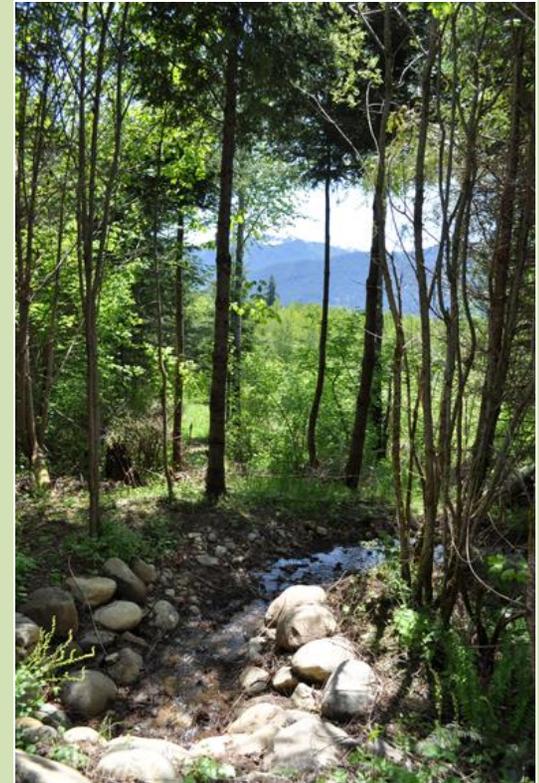
Habitats – environments where plants, fish, and wildlife normally live and grow – vary in the county:

**Marine:** There are 179 linear miles of marine shorelines in unincorporated county jurisdiction (ESA 2007). Based on a nearshore habitat assessment of unincorporated shorelines, there are about 2,378 acres of marine shoreline critical salmon habitat (See Table 2-3). Marine habitats and shoreforms along county shorelines include feeder bluffs, gravel/cobble beaches, sand and mud flats, large and small estuaries, lagoons, and large and small bays. Marine habitats support marine mammals (e.g. harbor seal), fish (e.g. salmon), seabirds (e.g. loons), and invertebrates (e.g. clams, oysters, and geoduck) (WDFW 2008). Important plant species include eelgrass and kelp.

The Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP) has identified protection and restoration strategies for the nearshore. Areas identified as high priority for restoration are along Kitsap Peninsula north of Gig Harbor, and parts of Key Peninsula, Fox Island, Anderson Island, and McNeil Island. Areas identified as a high priority for enhancement include the marine shoreline from Point Defiance to the Nisqually Delta. Areas identified as high priorities for protection include parts of Key Peninsula, Fox Island, and Anderson Island.

**Estuarine Habitats:** Estuaries are transition areas where freshwaters meets marine waters such as at the confluence of a river and the Puget Sound or seeps providing inputs into bays. Pocket estuaries are associated with smaller bays and streams.

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Estuarine habitats can support a variety of mammals, fish, seabirds, and invertebrates noted for marine habitats, but are particularly important for the feeding, refuge, and migration of juvenile salmonids (ESA 2007). A highly important estuarine habitat supporting a wide variety of priority and special status plant and animal species is the Nisqually River Delta since it has not been heavily altered with urban growth and development (ESA 2007). See also the discussion of the Puget Sound Nearshore above.

**Freshwater Habitats:** Freshwater habitats include wetlands, streams, and lakes. Major lakes include Alder Lake, American Lake, and Lake Tapps among others. Within unincorporated county territory, excluding state and federal lands, streams

extend 734 miles and wetlands cover about 36,450 acres (See Table 2-3). Freshwater habitats support fish, amphibians, birds, and mammals.

**Terrestrial Habitats:** Terrestrial habitats include forests and grasslands. Washington has one native oak species, the Garry oak, which is found on 1,616 acres of unincorporated land excluding state and federal lands; however, 47% of the Garry oak in unincorporated territory is mapped in unincorporated urban growth areas (UGAs) where urban growth is likely to occur (See Table 2-3). Garry oak is often associated with grasslands. The county contains prairies considered priority habitats, and areas that are valuable ecologically and culturally, supporting rare and threatened species (Noland and Carver, 2011).

**Table 2-3. Summary of Selected Marine, Freshwater, and Terrestrial Habitats in Pierce County**

Subarea	Marine Shoreline Critical Salmon Habitat <sup>1</sup>	Wetlands	Streams	Oak Presence
	Acres	Acres	Miles	Acres
Incorporated City	Not studied	1,754	72	1,823
Unincorporated UGA	103	2,971	32	760
Joint Base Lewis McChord	0 <sup>2</sup>	258	39	37
Rural Total	2,275	33,899	1,338	864
Rural Unincorporated, General	2,197	33,479	702	855
Mount Rainier National Park	0	0 <sup>2</sup>	351	0
Other State, Federal Lands	78	420	285	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,378</b>	<b>38,882</b>	<b>1,480</b>	<b>3,484</b>

Note:

<sup>1</sup>According to the description of this data by Pierce County GIS, the information includes parcels that are considered within a 100 foot buffered area of "high quality salmon habitat shoreline areas," and used the Nearshore Salmon Habitat-Assessment which is considered "Best Science Available" for Unincorporated Pierce County.

<sup>2</sup> These habitats are likely present but not included in GIS mapping.

Source: Pierce County GIS; BERK 2013

## Biodiversity

In 2004, Pierce County partnered with a variety of agencies including the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), University of Washington, MetroParks Tacoma, Tahoma Audubon Society and the Puyallup River Watershed Council to develop the Pierce County Biodiversity Network Assessment (Brooks et al. 2004). The study aimed to “evaluate and map the lands within Pierce County that provide for the greatest biological diversity of terrestrial species (mammals, birds, amphibians and reptiles) and

provided special consideration for salmonids.” The study identified 17 connected habitat areas with a richness of species important for protection as shown in Figure 2-6.

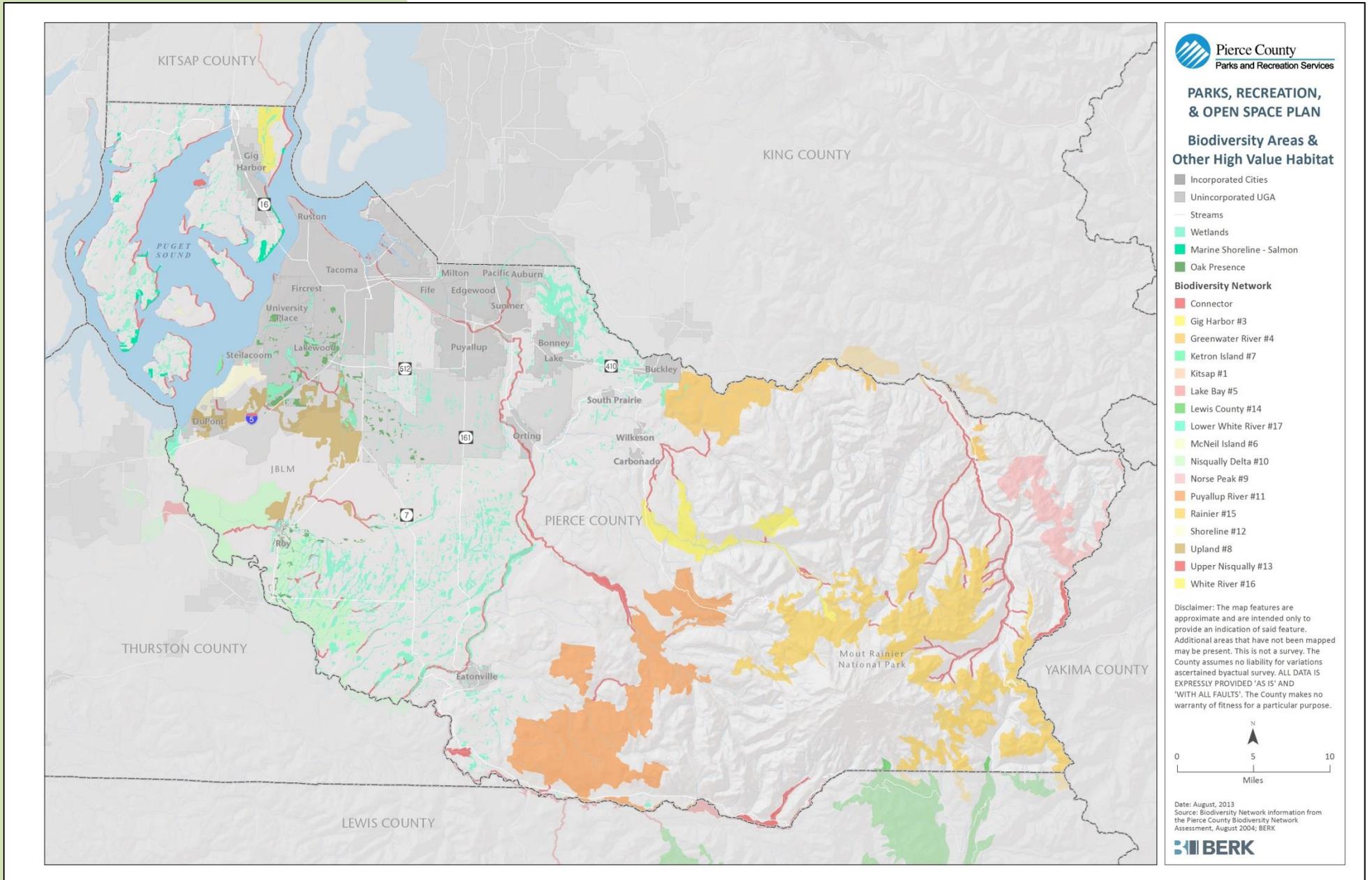
Biodiversity Management Area acres within Pierce County total 210,125 acres. The total biodiversity acres including lands inside and outside Pierce County boundaries is about 267,784 acres. Most biodiversity acres are in unincorporated rural lands as shown in Table 2-4 and displayed on Figure 2-6 on the following page.

**Table 2-4. Pierce County Biodiversity Network**

<b>Biodiversity Network</b>	
<b>Subarea</b>	<b>Acres</b>
City	3,981
Unincorporated UGAs	1,800
Joint Base Lewis McChord	23,714
Rural Total	180,631
Rural Unincorporated, General	84,081
Mount Rainier National Park	58,729
Other State, Federal Lands	37,821
<b>Total County</b>	<b>210,125</b>

Source: Pierce County GIS; BERK 2013

Figure 2-6. Biodiversity Network and Other High Value Habitat



## Priority Habitats and Species

WDFW's Priority Habitats and Species (PHS) program lists and maps unique or significant habitats, and specific fish and wildlife species that require protection including those considered by the State of Washington to be endangered, threatened, and sensitive or candidate species. WDFW also provides management recommendations. The mapping and management recommendations may be useful to PCPR and other departments in considering potential acquisitions, master planning sites, and managing lands. There are about 14 priority habitat types and 201 priority fish and wildlife species in Pierce County.

## Open Space and Habitat

Pierce County has an adopted Open Space Element of its GMA Comprehensive Plan including policies and a map of Open Space Corridors. The intent of the map is to identify lands that serve as buffers within and between UGAs, as well as to provide general guidance for open space preservation efforts. See Figure 2-7. The open space corridors are primarily made up of habitats as well as resource lands including:

- Critical Salmon Habitat
- Agricultural Lands
- Fish and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Areas
- Marine Waters
- Streams
- Wetlands, Estuaries, and Tidal Marshes

- Wooded Areas
- Prairie Land
- Tracts that provide linkage and access to said open space areas
- Biodiversity Network

The definition of fish and wildlife habitat conservation areas includes all the significant ecological areas and species including: *areas with which endangered, threatened, and sensitive species have a primary association; habitats and species of local importance; commercial and recreational shellfish areas; kelp and eelgrass beds; herring and smelt spawning areas; naturally occurring ponds, ... state natural area preserves, natural resource conservation areas; and land located within the Pierce County Biodiversity Network...*

On the following pages are two maps showing the relationship of the Open Space Corridors to the Biodiversity areas and public ownership. Figure 2-8 shows the Open Space Corridor in relation to BMAs, marine shoreline salmon habitat, and oak presence. BMAs make up a large share of the Open Space Corridors. Figure 2-9 shows the Open Space Corridor in relation to current ownership patterns. In some areas there is substantial public and non-profit ownership such as south of Eatonville and in the Carbon River Valley. This helps to provide a basis for identifying potential future targeted acquisitions and conservation efforts.



Figure 2-7. Open Space Corridors Map

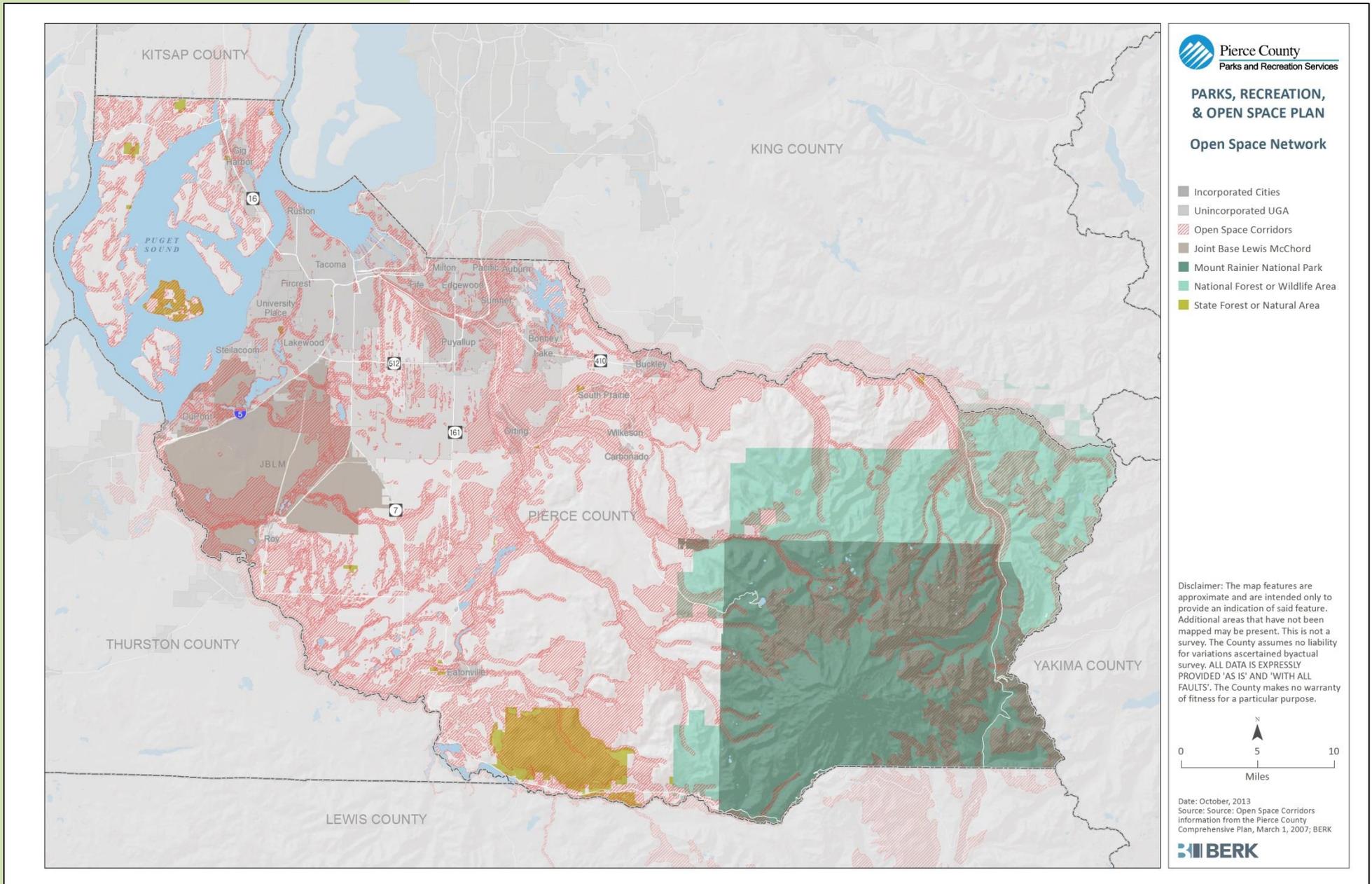


Figure 2-8. Open Space Corridors, Biodiversity Network, and Other High Value Habitat

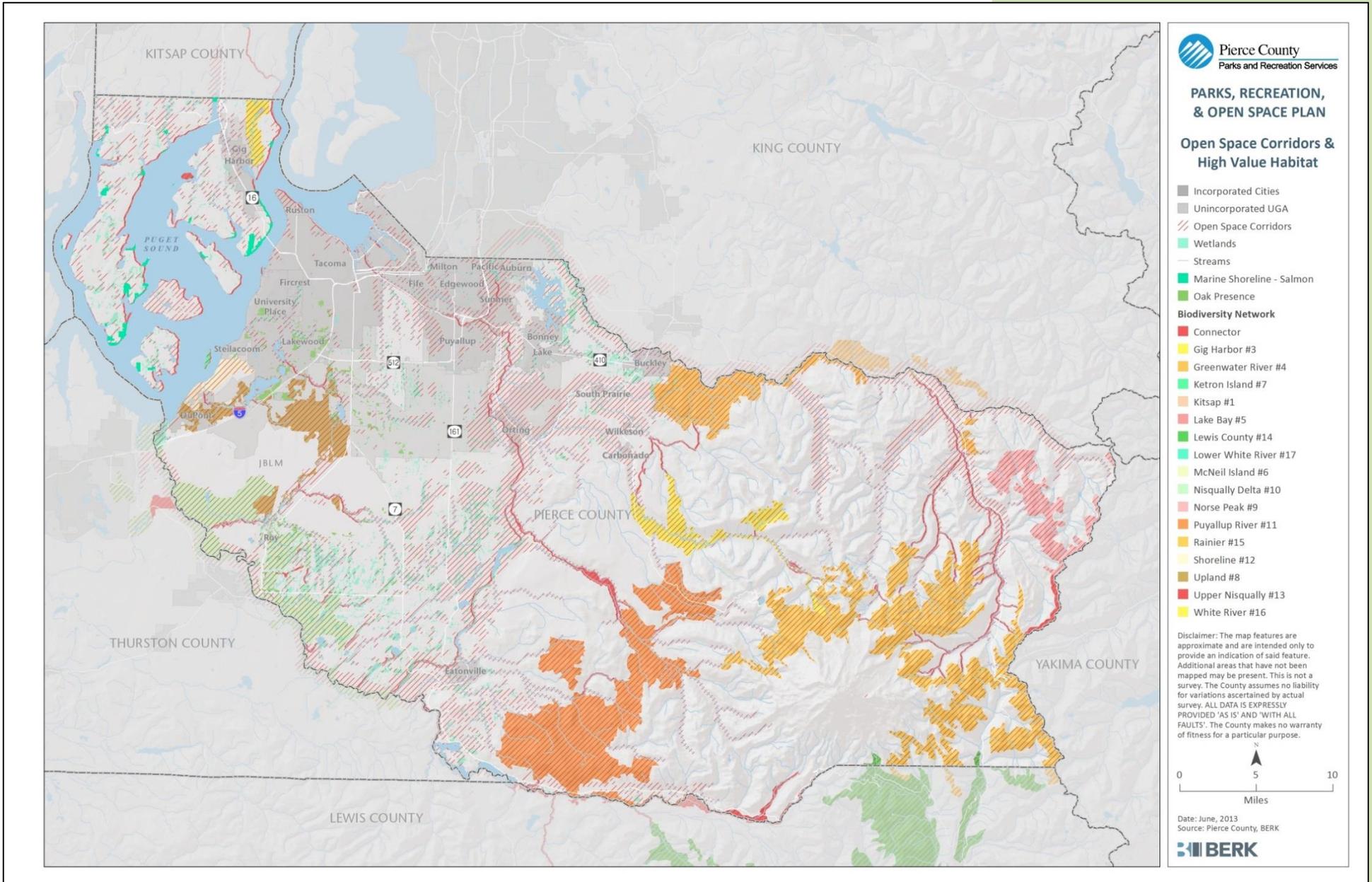
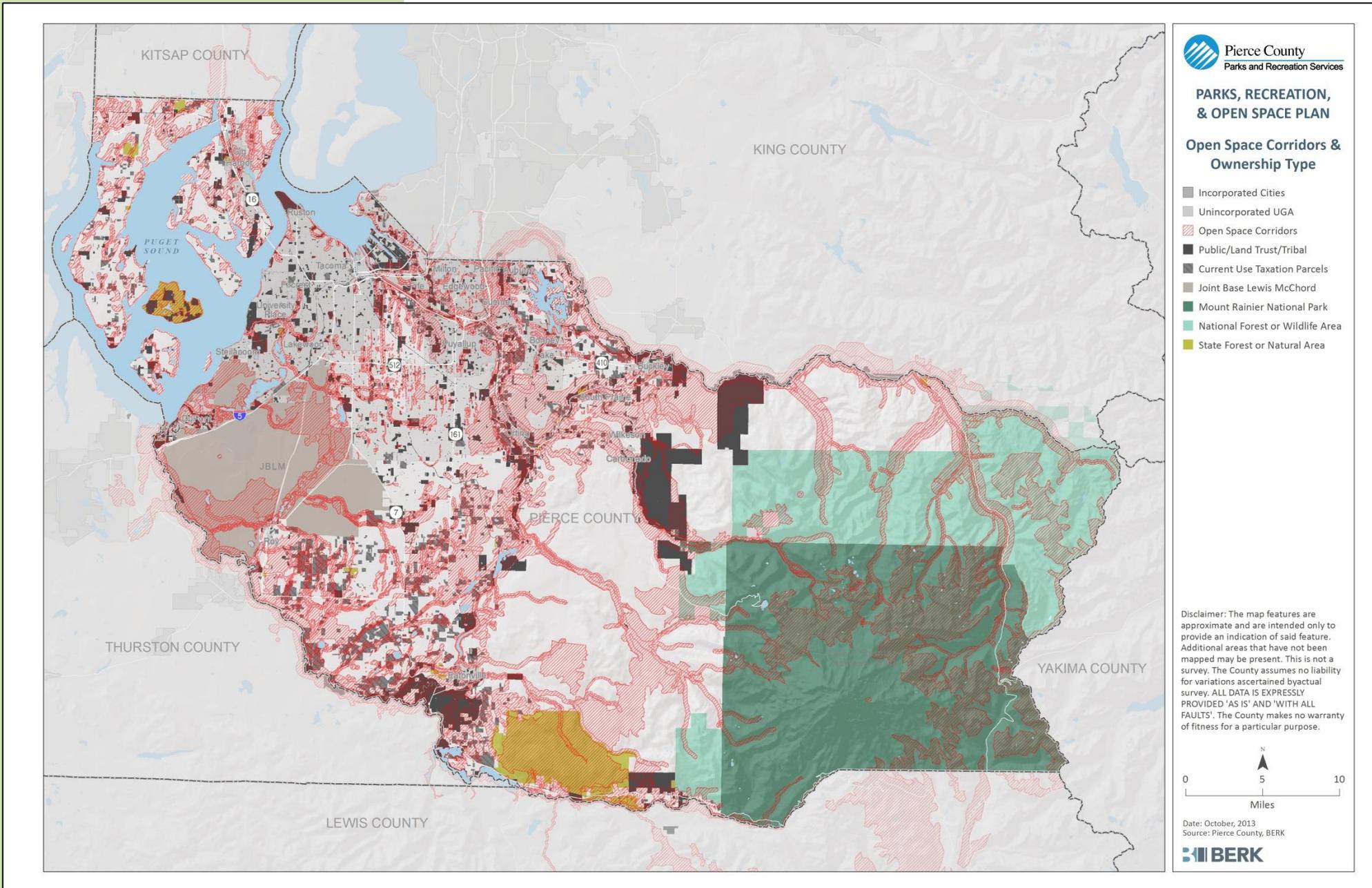


Figure 2-9. Open Space Corridors and Ownership Patterns



## LOCAL PARK PROVIDERS

In Pierce County, there are many different cities, districts, agencies, departments, non-profit, and private groups involved with the provision of parks, open space, and recreation facilities on local, county, regional, state, and federal levels. Overlapping jurisdictions, goals, and strategies have helped create a patchwork of parks, trail corridors, and natural open space areas in the County. In this context, PCPR fills an important role in providing parks, recreation, and open space facilities, programs and services. Figure 2-10 illustrates the different political jurisdictions in the County. In Appendix A inventory maps indicate the location of park and recreation sites in Pierce County, based on available GIS data.

### Pierce County Parks and Recreation (PCPR)

Created in 1958, PCPR provides public parks and recreation services to the residents of Pierce County, focusing especially on the unmet needs of residents living in unincorporated areas. The

department is divided into four divisions: Resource Stewardship, Parks, Recreation Division, and Administrative Services. PCPR supports approximately 60 full-time staff, supplemented by volunteers and temporary and seasonal employees to assist with programming and maintenance primarily in the summer.

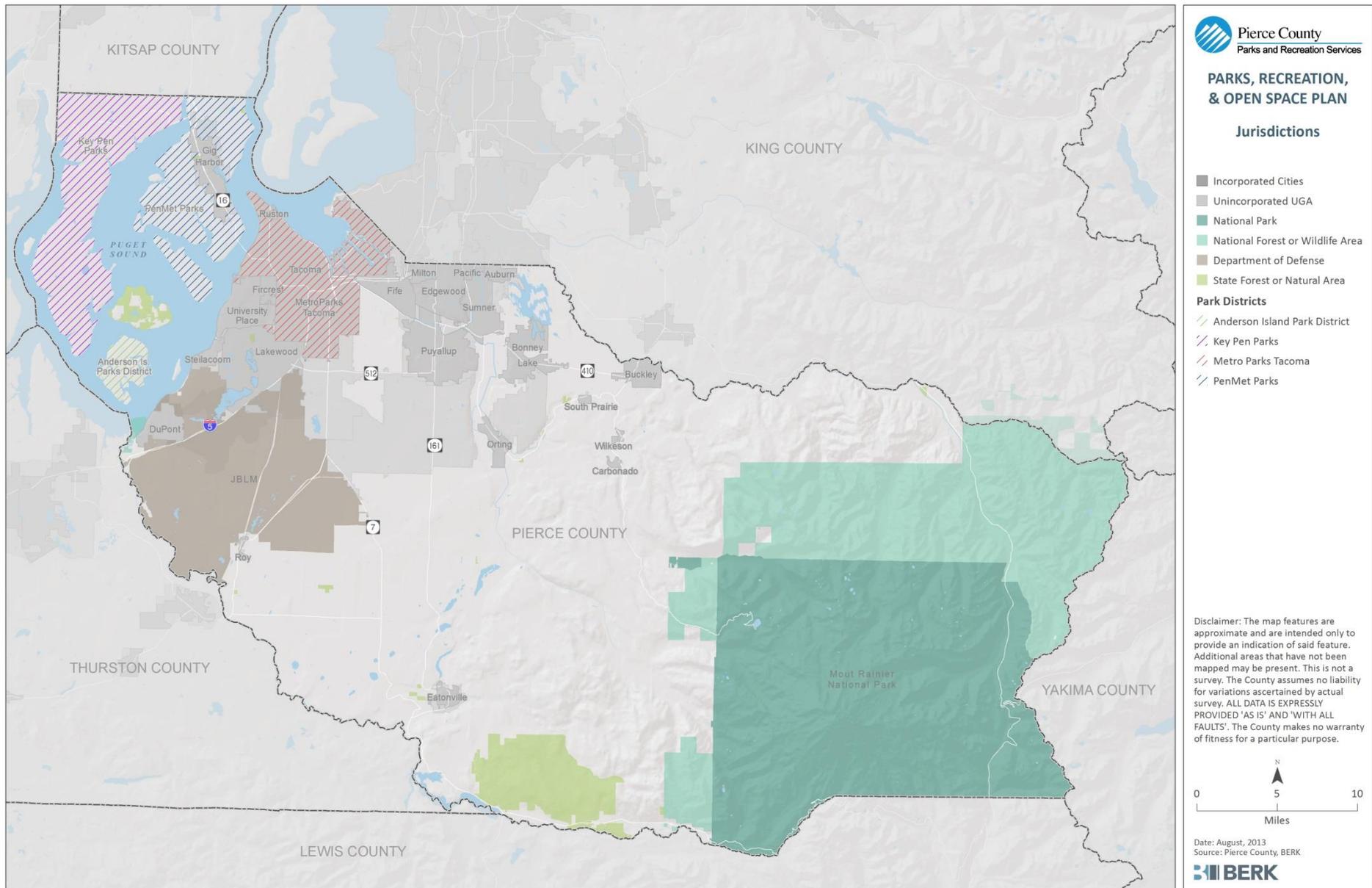
PCPR manages approximately 5,039 acres of park land at about 52 sites. The inventory of parks and facilities is described in Chapter 3. The full inventory appears in Appendices A and B.

### City Parks and Recreation

There are 23 incorporated municipalities in Pierce County (a 24<sup>th</sup> city, Enumclaw, has parkland in the county limits but no population in Pierce County). Cities and towns range in size from South Prairie (population 435) to Tacoma (population 199,600), which is Pierce County's largest and principal city (OFM 2012). Most cities oversee their own parks or community services departments and provide parks, recreation, and open space facilities and programs within their boundaries.



Figure 2-10. Jurisdictions



## Other Park Districts

PCPR works closely with four independent park and recreation districts or metropolitan park districts in Pierce County. These districts provide numerous recreation opportunities on local, community, and regional scales:

- Metro Parks Tacoma (MPT)
- Key Peninsula Metropolitan Park District (KPMPD)
- Peninsula Metropolitan Park District (PenMet)
- Anderson Island Park and Recreation District

PCPR relies on these districts—as it will with any new park and recreation districts or metropolitan park districts that form in unincorporated areas—for the provision of local parks and recreation programming. As specified in the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan, where PCPR has land-banked local park sites, it should move these properties to local control when feasible.

## National Forests and Parks

The southeastern section of Pierce County includes portions of the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest and all of Mount Rainier National Park. Mount Rainier National Park includes 368 square miles and provides recreation opportunities, such as hiking, camping, mountain climbing, picnicking, lodging, and interpretative programs. Besides providing important resources in the area, the National Park Service (NPS) and Forest Service (USFS) offer opportunities for collaboration

and coordination, particularly with regards to plans for undeveloped PCPR parks in that vicinity.

## Washington State

The State of Washington is involved in providing parks, recreation, and open space in Pierce County through several different departments, including the Departments of Natural Resources (DNR), Fish and Wildlife, Parks and Recreation, Transportation, and Agriculture. There are several significant state parks in Pierce County, including Dash Point Park (north of Tacoma), Kopachuck Park (on the Gig Harbor Peninsula), and Penrose Point and Joemma Beach (both on the Key Peninsula). These sites contribute significant opportunities for camping, nature interpretation, and water access, such as fishing, boating, swimming, beachcombing, clamming, and crabbing. There are also tentative plans for a new State park in southern Pierce County, as well as many DNR parcels distributed throughout the County, which offer opportunities for collaboration.

## Educational Institutions

Pierce County has a variety of educational institutions that contribute to the supply of open space, community facilities, and recreational and educational programming within the county. Fifteen different school districts, nearly 50 private schools, and 11 two-year, four-year, and technical colleges and universities help meet community recreation needs.



## **Military Institutions**

Pierce County is also home to Joint Base Lewis McChord, which provides open space, recreation opportunities, and sport and recreation facilities in the region. The base also offers a variety of recreation programs for military personnel, their families, and civilian employees.

## **Private Providers**

Private providers contribute many recreation facilities and programs within the County.

Significant providers include organizations such as the YMCA and Boys and Girls Club, which provide multiple indoor and outdoor facilities, along with additional programs through partnerships at several school sites. Additionally, sports leagues, clubs, and organizations manage sports facilities and provide diverse sporting events, programs and leagues throughout Pierce County.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

As described in this chapter, Pierce County's geography, population growth, land use and development, natural resources and habitat, and overlapping political jurisdictions all affect the provision of parks, recreation, and open space, facilities and programs. The information in Chapter 2 on the planning context provides important context for the description of PCPR's inventory, which appears in Chapter 3.

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# 3. EXISTING RESOURCES

## INTRODUCTION

The park system within Pierce County consists of a variety of parks, natural areas, and recreation facilities owned by both public and private providers. Pierce County Parks and Recreation (PCPR) contributes approximately 5,039 acres of parks and open space to this system. These parks provide a variety of recreation experiences for people who live, work, visit, and play in Pierce County.

This chapter of the Pierce County Park, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan summarizes the context in which PCPR operates. Specifically, this chapter:

- Presents the park classification system;
- Reviews the existing park and facility inventory; and
- Outlines current recreation programming.

## PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

Within the context noted above, PCPR provides a variety of recreation opportunities at several different types of parks. Some of these parks are locally oriented, while others serve residents on a larger community scale. Still others are regionally focused, providing festival space and facilities that draw users from throughout the entire county and region. For this reason, a classification system was developed to help PCPR plan more effectively for future park, recreation, and open space needs. Park types include Regional Parks, County Parks, Local Parks, Special Use Facilities, Resource Conservancy Parks, Linear Parks/Trails, and unclassified sites. These park categories are defined on the next several pages.

This inventory reflects current information for the park system as of June 2013. The entire inventory is depicted on maps in Appendix A. Appendix B includes a table classifying each park. Reclassifications between 2008 and 2014 PROS Plan include changing undeveloped parks into developed categories where a new park was completed (e.g. Ashford County Park), or reclassifying undeveloped lands that are likely to remain in a more natural state as Resource Conservancy Parks.

## Regional Parks

Regional Parks provide access to significant ecological, cultural, or historical features or unique facilities that attract visitors from throughout the entire region (including incorporated and unincorporated areas). These parks often exceed 200 acres in size and draw users from throughout the region with a variety of recreation facilities such as a boat launch and rentals, swimming beach, picnic shelters, golf course, playground, indoor ice rink, indoor/outdoor tennis courts, meeting and classroom space, skate park, climbing rock, sport fields, urban forest, and trails. Pierce County's regional parks are detailed in Table 3-1.

**Table 3-1. Regional Parks**

Park	Site Acreage	Total Acre
<b>Regional Park</b>		
Chambers Creek Regional Park		730.1
Chambers Bay Golf Course	340.5	
Chambers Creek Properties	185.0	
Chambers Creek Canyon	204.6	
<i>Chambers Creek Canyon - Davis (28.10)</i>		28.1
<i>Chambers Creek Canyon - Dyer (86.70)</i>		86.7
<i>Chambers Creek Canyon - Hartley (8.60)</i>		8.6
<i>Chambers Creek Canyon - Lakewood (43.50)</i>		43.5
<i>Chambers Creek Canyon Park-Baldwin (1.30)</i>		1.3
<i>Chambers Creek Canyon (Park) (43.90)</i>		43.9
<i>Chambers Creek Canyon (WH) (1.30)</i>		1.3
Spanaway Regional Park		327.3
Bresemann Forest	65.9	
Lake Spanaway Golf Course	128.8	
Spanaway Park	88.9	
Sprinker Recreation Center	43.8	
Subtotal		1,057.4
<b>Regional/Resource Conservancy</b>		
Carbon River Valley		488.3
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,545.7</b>

Source: Pierce County PCPR, BERK, 2013

Chambers Creek Regional Park and Spanaway Regional Park typify the Regional Park definition with a wide variety of active recreation and natural

amenities that attract visitors regionally. Carbon River Valley is considered a "Regional Resource Conservancy Park", with significant ecological features; following appropriate master planning, there may be opportunities in the future for recreational uses on specified portions of the site.

## County Parks

While all PCPR parks and facilities are part of the Pierce County Park System, "County Parks" are a type of park that support a wide range of recreation interests and typically attract residents from one or more nearby communities. These parks provide active and passive recreation opportunities and may incorporate natural open space. County Parks typically range from 40 to 200 acres in size. County Parks are detailed in Table 3-2 below.

**Table 3-2. County Parks**

Park	Total Acreage
<b>Developed County Parks</b>	
Ashford County Park	84.0
Frontier Park	64.4
Heritage Recreation Center	46.9
Lake Tapps Park	79.9
Meridian Habitat Park	35.7
Subtotal	310.8
<b>Undeveloped County Parks</b>	
Buckley-Bonney Lake	80.0
Cross Park	64.0
Orangegate	146.6
Rimrock	139.3
Subtotal	429.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>740.7</b>

Source: Pierce County PCPR, BERK, 2013

County Parks provide facilities to support a variety of activities, such as County fairground buildings, an equestrian arena, Quarter Midget race track, lodge, swimming beach, boat launch, trails, sport



fields, and community center. Developed County Parks have facilities and features in place, whereas undeveloped County Parks are anticipated to be developed as County Parks in the future according to master plans developed with community input.

## Local Parks

Local Parks include playfields, neighborhood parks, and small community parks that have more limited facilities than Regional or County Parks. These parks typically include a playground, a sports field, tennis or basketball courts, internal pathway, and supporting amenities. They typically draw users from nearby neighborhoods or a single community rather than multiple communities or the region. Local parks typically range from 5 to 40 acres.



**Table 3-3. Local Parks**

Park	Total Acreage
Dawson Playfield	5.1
Gonyea Playfield	12.4
Hopp Farm	38.8
Lidford Playfield	9.8
Mayfair Playfield	4.6
South Hill Community Park	39.6
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>110.2</b>

Source: Pierce County PCPR, BERK, 2013

As shown in Table 3-3 above, PCPR manages six Local Parks in the existing system, containing a total of 110.2 acres.

## Special Use Facilities

Special Use facilities include stand-alone recreation facilities not located within larger parks. These include single-purpose sites that generally serve a regional audience, such as golf courses, marinas, boat ramps, fishing piers, outdoor theaters, and historical landmarks. Special Use Facilities are shown in Table 3-4.

**Table 3-4. Special Use Facilities**

Park	Total Acreage
Fort Steilacoom Golf Course	81.9
Herron Point (Undeveloped)	0.3
Lakewood Community Center	3.7
Purdy Sand Spit	64.0
Riverside Park	36.1
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>186.1</b>

Source: Pierce County PCPR, BERK, 2013

See also the Other County-owned Parks for nine road ends that provide for water access, a feature of many Special Use Facilities in the County.

## Resource Conservancy Parks

Resource Conservancy Parks are conservation areas designed to protect unique or significant natural features, such as rivers and streams, wetlands and marshes, environmentally sensitive areas, and wildlife habitats. Where appropriate, Resource Conservancy Parks may secondarily support passive, nature-oriented outdoor recreation.

PCPR manages 11 Resource Conservancy Parks in Pierce County, shown in Table 3-5.

**Table 3-5. Resource Conservancy Parks**

Park	Total Acreage
Buckley Forestland Preserve	200.0
Devils Head	94.1
Fairfax Properties	1,080.0
Fairfax Town Site	155.5
Lake Tapps Habitat	27.2
Nisqually River Interpretive Center	68.5
Parkland Habitat	4.9
Puget Creek Beach	1.9
Seeley Lake Park	46.0
South Pierce Wetland	156.4
Swan Creek Park (Inc. Waller Property)	60.0
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>1,894.4</b>

Source: Pierce County PCPR, BERK, 2013

## Linear Parks/Trails

Linear Parks and Trails include built or natural corridors that provide recreation or non-motorized transportation connections within the county, and green buffers between communities. Recreational use is generally passive or trail-related. Linear trail corridors may also include supporting facilities, such as viewing areas, interpretive areas, picnic tables, or trailheads. Table 3-6 shows the Linear Parks and Trails owned and operated by PCPR.

**Table 3-6. Linear Parks and Trails**

Park	Total Acreage
<b>Developed Linear Parks/Trails</b>	
Foothills Trail	519.9
Nathan Chapman Memorial Trail	1.6
Puyallup River Levee Trail	1.5
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>522.9</b>
<b>Undeveloped Linear Parks/Trails</b>	
Ohop Trail Extension	13.7
Half Dollar Park	2.4
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>16.1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>539.0</b>

Source: Pierce County PCPR, BERK, 2013

Chapter 7.2 provides an inventory of existing PCPR and other agency trails and trailheads. Based on that inventory, there are about five existing PCPR trailheads along the Foothills Trail; they are located in the vicinity of Puyallup, Orting, South Prairie, and Buckley.

## Unclassified Sites

Unclassified sites include land that has been acquired by PCPR. PCPR will consider how these sites fit into the park system, and may determine whether to retain or surplus them. These sites receive minimal maintenance and are not managed as conservation areas (Resource Conservancy Parks). See Table 3-7, for a list of unclassified sites and their acreage.

**Table 3-7. Unclassified Sites**

Park	Total Acreage
Milton Freeway Tracts	8.6
Wales Property	2.5
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>11.1</b>

Source: Pierce County PCPR, BERK, 2013



## Cemeteries

Four cemeteries are included in the parks classification system. These add 11.8 acres to the PCPR inventory. Based on the Revised Code of Washington (RCW), cemeteries without caretakers become the responsibility of PCPR. The cemeteries managed by PCPR are detailed in Table 3-8, below.

**Table 3-8. Cemeteries**

Park	Total Acreage
265 Ave E Cemetery	6.3
Lake Tapps Cemetery	1.0
Old Settlers Cemetery	4.2
Roy Cemetery	0.3
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>11.8</b>

Source: Pierce County PCPR, BERK, 2013

## Other County-Owned Properties

In addition to the parks and open space areas managed by PCPR, there are other County-owned lands that are managed by other County departments. The Naches Trail Preserve totaling 49.56 acres is managed Pierce County Public Works and Utilities, Surface Water Management Division.

Public Works and Utilities Roads Division manages 9 road ends that provide both fresh and saltwater

access across the county. Road ends are places where County road right-of-way intersects waters of the state. By state law, these road ends cannot be vacated and are typically used for public access to shorelines. Most of these road end boat ramps have little parking space and lack boating amenities.

Vaughn Bay and Longbranch boat ramps have been replaced in 2012. Home and 37th Street boat ramps are being replaced in 2013, and Purdy Spit and Gig Harbor are scheduled for replacement in 2014. The 10th Street boat ramp is scheduled for replacement in 2015-16 as an elevated ramp due to the changing beach conditions with costs estimated to be around one million dollars.

**Table 3-9. Pierce County Boat Ramps**

Area	Road Name
Purdy Spit	Along SR 302, between Purdy Drive NW and Goodrich Drive NW
Vaughn Bay	Hall Rd KN
Gig Harbor	Randall DR NW
Home	8 <sup>th</sup> Home Ave KN
Longbranch	72 <sup>nd</sup> Street KS
Horsehead Bay	36 <sup>th</sup> Street NW
Wollochet Bay	37 <sup>th</sup> Street NW
Pt. Fosdick	10th Street NW
Toehead Island	Fox Island Bridge Rd

Source: Pierce County PCPR, BERK, 2013



# EXISTING PARK INVENTORY

This section summarizes the park and facility inventory. The complete inventory is presented in Appendix B.

PCPR owns 5,039 acres of parks at 52 sites, ranging from the 1,061.4-acre Fairfax property on the Carbon River to the 0.26 acre Roy Cemetery. The park system inventory is summarized in Table 3-10. Resource Conservancy Parks account for more than one-third (38%) of the park system. Two Regional Parks and one Regional Resource Conservancy site combined are about another third (31%). Developed and undeveloped County Parks equal 15% of total acres. The fourth most prevalent are Linear Parks/Trails accounting for 11% of the acres owned by PCPR.

**Table 3-10. PCPR Park Inventory Summary by Classification**

Park Type	Number of Sites	Acres of Park Land	% of Park System <sup>1</sup>
Regional	3 parks, 8 sites	1,545.7	31%
Regional Parks	2 parks, 7 sites	1,057.4	21%
Regional Resource Conservancy	1	488.3	10%
County Parks	9	740.7	15%
Developed Sites	5	310.8	6%
Undeveloped Sites	4	429.9	9%
Local Parks	6	110.2	2%
Special Use Facilities	5	186.1	4%
Resource Conservancy Parks	11	1,894.4	38%
Linear Parks/Trails	5	539.0	11%
Developed Sites	3	522.9	10%
Undeveloped Sites	2	16.1	0%
Unclassified Sites	9	11.1	0.2%
Cemeteries	4	11.8	0.2%
<b>PCPR Subtotal</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>5,038.79</b>	<b>100%</b>
Other County-Owned Properties	1	49.6	
<b>Other Subtotal</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>49.6</b>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>5,088.3</b>	

<sup>1</sup> Represents the percentage of the parks and facilities operated by PCPR for each park category.

Source: Pierce County PCPR, BERK, 2013





## FACILITY INVENTORY

PCPR offers a variety of sport, recreation, and support facilities within its parks. These facilities add to the variety of recreation opportunities and experiences provided in the county. Significant

facilities provided by PCPR include golf courses, sport complexes, recreation centers, swimming beaches, boat ramps, and an indoor ice skating rink. Table 3-11 summarizes some of the existing PCPR facilities in Pierce County. A complete list of facilities can be found in Appendix B.

**Table 3-11. PCPR Facility Inventory Summary**

<b>Recreation Facilities</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Playgrounds	11
Basketball Courts	7.5
Gymnasium	1
Ice Sheet	1
Tennis Courts	8
Soccer Fields	17
Baseball Fields	6
Softball Fields	19
Other Sport Fields <sup>1</sup>	14
Boat Ramps	3
Swimming Beaches <sup>2</sup>	3
<b>Park Structures</b>	
Recreation/Community Centers	4 sites

<sup>1</sup> Other sports fields include 1 Ultimate Frisbee field, football fields, T-ball fields, and multi-use backstops.

<sup>2</sup> These 3 beaches are located at two sites: Spanaway Park and North Lake Tapps Park.

Source: Pierce County PCPR, BERK, 2013

# RECREATION PROGRAMMING

PCPR offers a wide variety of recreation programs for diverse age groups and interests. Programs provided by PCPR vary seasonally, ranging from athletic leagues to special events to day camps.

## Program Service Areas

PCPR programs and events are designed to serve a variety of county residents. While the majority of programming focuses on youth and adults, specific programs target seniors, teens, preschool age children and people with disabilities. Recreation programs are provided in seven major areas:

**Special Events and Activities:** One of PCPR's programming strengths is in the provision of unique special events and activities. Events such as Fantasy Lights draw an estimated 156,000 spectators annually. Other popular events include Tour de Pierce, Foothills Dash, Fun Run/Walks (4-per year) Classic Car Show, Youth Fishing Derby, Family Movie Nights, Woof Woof Walks, Tree Lighting Ceremonies, the Daddy Daughter Dances, Monster Mash Dash, Kite Festival, Chambers Bay 5K Challenge, Touch-A-Truck, a large variety of leisure classes and activities for all age groups (exercise, cooking, music, performing arts etc.), and various ice shows and competitions.

**Youth Sports and Recreation:** Youth programs are another major service area for PCPR. This service area includes sport camps and clinics, track and field events, team sports, tennis competitions, martial arts, leisure classes, teen

trips and adventures, day camps, and summer camps. PCPR also encourages passive play in parks, playgrounds, and trails as part of health and wellness programs.

**Adult Sports and Recreation:** PCPR also provides a number of adult sports and recreational activities, including exercise classes, drop-in programs, team sports, sport clinics, tennis competitions, tournaments, and recreation/leisure classes.

**Ice Skating:** The ice skating facility at the Sprinker Recreation Center is the focus point for numerous skating-related programs and activities, including classes, performances, recreational skating, ice shows and competitions, birthday parties, and school year-end parties.

**Golfing:** Three PCPR golf courses help make golf a notable program area. Besides recreational play, the course support lessons, driving ranges, tournaments, and junior golf camps.

**Specialized Programs:** Companionship programs, camps and tours for children and adults with disabilities, and cooperative play programs help fill an important need in the community.

**Volunteer Programs:** Volunteerism is a leisure activity that provides benefits both to PCPR and to the volunteers themselves. Volunteers can contribute through programs such as Parks Appreciation Day, Adopt-A-Park and Adopt-A-Trail, and through opportunities to become youth recreation coaches, and special event assistants.



PCPR also organizes environmental programming in cooperation with local school districts and Pierce County's Solid Waste Division. Environmental education and outdoor programming complement the Department's management of open space lands.

Usage data for many of these recreation activities is maintained by the county and shown in Table 3-12. Ballfields, facility/room rentals, and special event participation have increased. Companionship program, leisure classes are declining.

**Table 3-12. Park and Recreation Program Usage**

Recreation Program	Type of Statistic	2009 Actual	2010 Actual	2011 Actual	2012 Actual	2013 Estimate	2014 Estimate
Athletics-Youth	Teams	116	88	89	81	85	90
Athletics-Adult	Teams	270	290	265	197	205	215
Ballfields	Participants	207,580	210,200	211,215	355,760	370,000	380,000
Companionship Program	Participants	7,305	8,692	13,976	5,881	4,500	3,500
Facility Rentals	Participants	205,300	203,000	209,530	270,632	280,000	290,000
Fantasy Lights	Participants	141,934	119,410	155,102	168,398	154,000	156,000
Gymnasium Rentals	Participants	34,000	43,399	31,688	35,700	37,000	38,000
Ice Arena	Participants	90,507	87,506	32,049	74,461	85,500	91,500
Leisure Classes	Participants	30,408	18,991	19,857	21,798	23,000	25,000
Meeting Room Rentals	Participants	56,270	62,231	76,349	129,664	132,000	135,000
Picnic Shelter Rentals	Participants	35,705	24,442	29,368	21,525	25,000	27,000
Tennis Courts	Participants	27,588	54,677	23,188	20,286	24,000	26,000
Skateboard Park	Participants	10,290	12,000	8,500	8,415	8,600	9,000
Special Events-Indoor	Participants	271	2,147	10,339	10,923	12,000	14,000
Special Events-Outdoor	Participants	3,276	33,457	39,228	36,014	40,000	42,000
Summer Camps/ Mobile Recreation	Participants	5,000	1,462	2,682	7,021	8,000	9,000

Source: PCPR



## Programs Organized by Others

PCPR's parks and recreation facilities area also used by volunteer and non-profit groups to provide additional programs and events for the community. Some events, like the Pierce County Fair, represent an area of on-going collaboration for the provision of facilities and facility use. Others, such as Quarter Midget Racing at Frontier Park, are the result of specific lease arrangements.

PCPR provides facilities to support a variety of programs, such as:

- Special events
- Organized sports
- Summer camps
- Senior Activity Center
- Quarter midget racing
- Equestrian arena/events

## Other Rental Facilities

PCPR also supports recreation opportunities through short-term rentals of specific facilities and equipment. Examples include:

- Picnic shelters
- Fairground buildings
- Auditorium/multi-purpose room
- Gymnasium
- Ice arena
- Athletic fields

- Tennis courts
- SPIRE climbing rock
- Game bags
- Boat rentals

## Programming Challenges

PCPR currently fills important programming gaps in various underserved areas by providing recreation opportunities at different locations and times than other local sport and recreation providers. PCPR's recreation centers provide a broad scope of activities to meet the needs of the surrounding community, by offering opportunities that are not provided nearby.

Currently, funding and staffing limit the number and scope of programs provided. Adding new programs often requires cutting some existing programs to free up sufficient funds and staff to offer something new. For this reason, program expansion poses a great challenge for PCPR.

PCPR will continue to face increasing challenges to meet regional and local programming needs as the population grows. The identification of programming priorities will help prioritize the distribution of funding, staffing and facilities needed to support PCPR recreation programs, activities, and special events. Future programming will likely require flexibility, focus, mobility, and partnerships. PCPR has developed successful partnership with other agencies, community groups, and local businesses, and through continued and new partnerships, programs can be added.



## MANAGEMENT ZONES

Currently, there are three management zones for PCPR parks. These zones are defined geographically, and further divided into management units called regional recreation areas (RRA) for the maintenance of parks:

- Zone 1: Northwest Pierce County. This zone includes the following regional recreation areas: Seeley Lake RRA, the Puget Sound RRA, the Chambers Creek RRA, the Spanaway Lake RRA, the Clover Creek RRA, and the Waller-Summit-Midland RRA. The central maintenance shop/dispatch area for this zone is the Spanaway Park Shop, located at Spanaway Park.
- Zone 2: Northeast Pierce County: This zone includes the Lake Tapps RRA, the White River RRA, the Carbon River Valley RRA, and the Foothills Trail Regional Trail. The central maintenance shop/dispatch area for this zone is currently located at North Lake Tapps Park. It will be moved to the Buckley-Bonney Park, when this site is developed.
- Zone 3: Southwest Pierce County: This zone includes the Heritage Regional Recreation Center, the Frontier RRA, and the Nisqually River Valley RRA. The central maintenance shop/dispatch area for this zone is located at Frontier Park.

A fourth zone can be created if needed to supplement the system, based on future park development (see Chapter 4 and 6).

## IMPLICATIONS

As described in this chapter, Pierce County's existing park, facility, and programming resources provide a number of opportunities and constraints for the development of the future park system. PCPR has a wealth of park land. Developed parks provide a variety of facilities in reasonably good condition. Similarly, a variety of different programs are offered, as PCPR aims to meet various unmet programming needs in many areas of the county, stretching available staff and funding in several directions. Some focus and refinement may be needed on provision of parks, facilities, and programs in the future. Developing design guidelines for parks and facilities, and identifying and focusing in on core program service areas will help PCPR meet these challenges. These strategies will also help PCPR meet community needs, which are discussed in Chapter 4.

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# 4. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Needs Assessment is to identify future needs for parks, recreation, and open space facilities and programs based on the community's vision for the park system. Specifically, this chapter:

- Summarizes the public involvement process and key findings that led to the development of a vision and core values for the community;
- Describes the Adaptive Park System Concept;
- Identifies level of service implications for the provision of parks, recreation, and open space facilities and programs; and
- Presents park standards to support the desired level of service for the park system.

Interpreting the vision for Pierce County Parks and Recreation (PCPR) involved multiple steps. First, existing documents—including the Pierce County Comprehensive Plan, Community Plans, PCPR Strategic Planning Reports, the 2008 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan, and other County plans—were reviewed to identify past and current directions for the park system.

Next, community feedback was synthesized and distilled to identify residents' needs and preferences for parks and recreation services. The 2014 PROS Plan public outreach efforts and results were compared to the 2008 PROS Plan outreach results, and largely validated prior input.

PCPR tested the “Adaptive System” concept in the previous 2008 PROS Plan considering public input,

integration of the Trails Plan, integration of a Habitat component, a “gap analysis” of existing and proposed parks, actual and projected levels of service, and current and future revenues. This 2014 PROS Plan carries forward the “Adaptive System” concept, but based on the testing provides revised level of service standards and implementation strategies.

## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT RESULTS

PCPR solicited feedback from a broad spectrum of County residents regarding their needs, preferences, attitudes, and visions for parks and recreation services. A variety of activities were conducted throughout the planning process to ensure participation from a cross-section of the community. Findings from these activities provided a foundation for the park system vision. The 2014 PROS Plan public outreach steps included:

- A statistically valid telephone survey,
- Comment page on County website with opportunities to review Draft Plan and provide feedback,
- Land Use Advisory Commissions Meetings,
- Parks and Recreation Citizens' Advisory Board Meetings, and
- Planning Commission and County Council Meetings and Hearings.

Also, as part of the PCPR Strategic Plan update, about 30 stakeholders were sent a questionnaire.



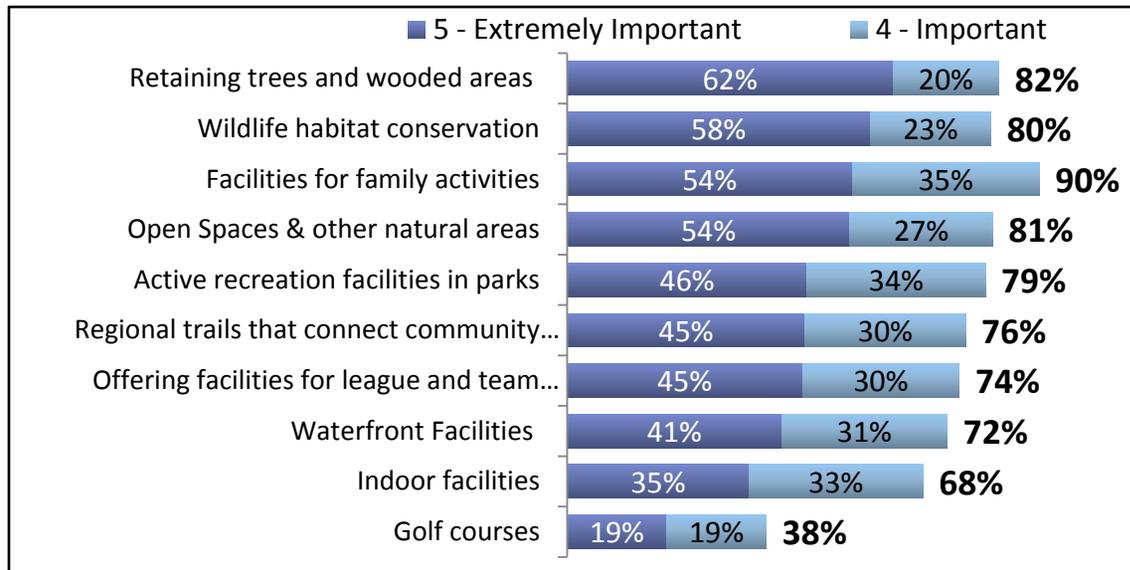
### Telephone Survey

A professionally administered computer assisted-telephone interview survey was conducted from June 9 to 12, 2013. Interviews were divided between incorporated (150) and unincorporated (250) Pierce County. Countywide results were based off of 283 usable interviews with a margin of error of +/- 5.8%, with minor weighting adjustments to match interview sample results to demographics. Major findings from the survey described below.

**1. At least two thirds think that all but one of the services PCPR offers is important. Conserving wooded, habitat, and natural areas and providing for family activities were ranked highest.**

Categories concerning conservation of natural areas and retention of wooded space occupy three of the top four categories, the other being related to family activities. The intensity of importance for the top four items is noticeably higher than the others. See Figure 4-1.

**Figure 4-1. Service Importance**



Source: EMC, 2013.

All but one of the items get two-thirds or more to say they are a 5 or a 4, the highest level of importance. This is an indication that the vast majority of items tested are important to a large proportion of residents. The least important item is golf courses.

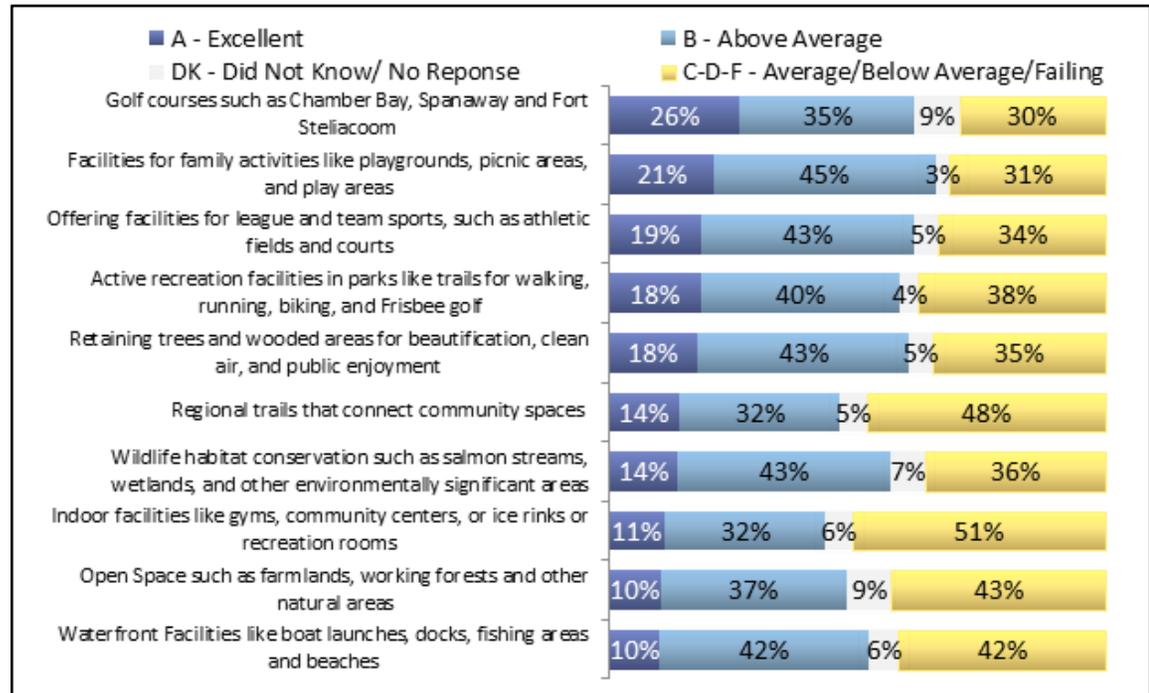




**2. PCPR performance on services is good, with the vast majority of items getting a majority of A or B ratings on an A-F scale.**

As shown in Figure 4-2, only two types of facilities “Regional Trails that Connect Community Spaces” and “Indoor Facilities like Gyms, Community Centers, or Ice Rinks, or Recreation Rooms” have average or below (C-F) ratings. Though golf courses are the least important item, they receive among the highest grade.

**Figure 4-2. Service Performance**

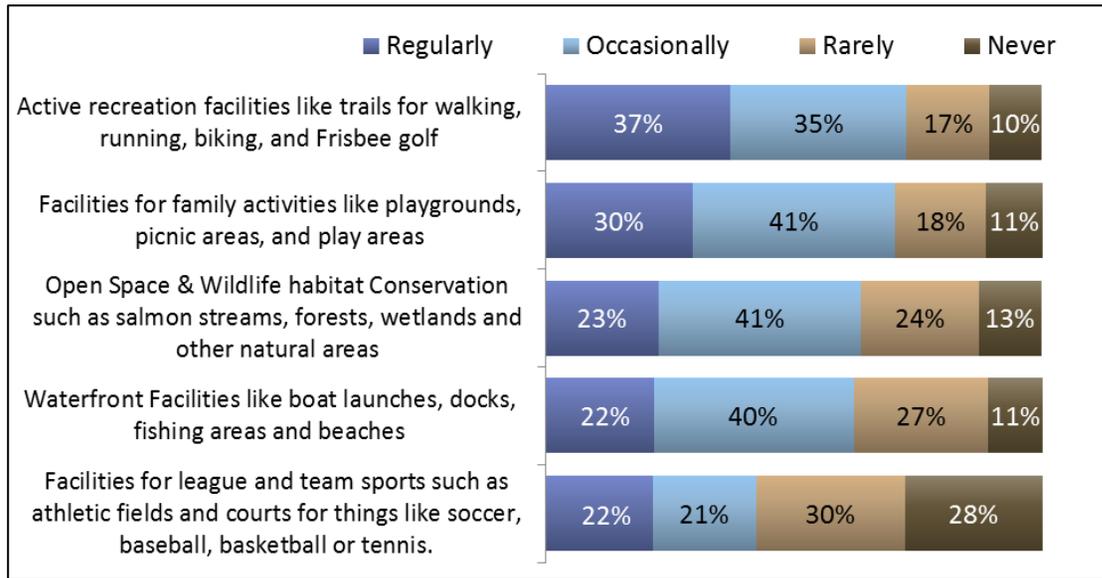


Source: EMC, 2013

**3. Large swaths of residents regularly use each type of parks facilities at least occasionally.**

According to the survey, residents are more likely than not to use all facilities, excluding “facilities for league and team sports” at least occasionally. See Figure 4-3.

**Figure 4-3. Usage of Facilities**



Source: EMC, 2013.

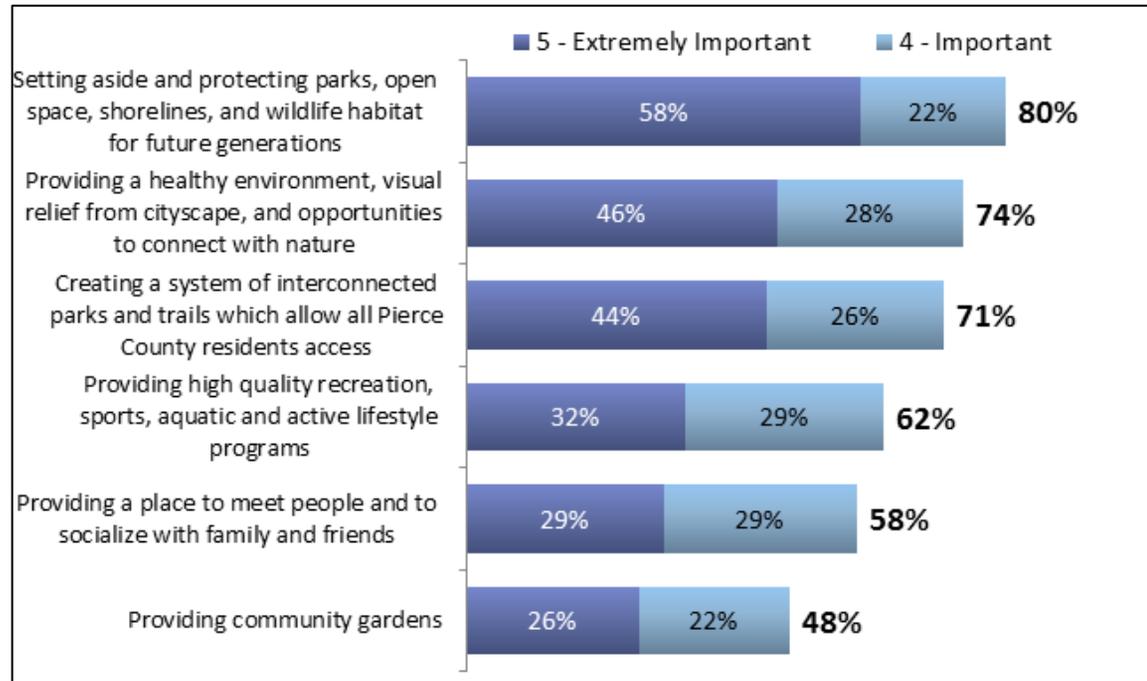




**4. In terms of goals and values, respondents placed the highest importance on environmentally related items followed by wide access to parks and trails.**

Considering the importance of goals and values, the highest importance is on environmentally related items, followed by wide access to parks and trails. This can help be a guide for allocating resources to future proposal. See Figure 4-4.

**Figure 4-4. Goal and Values – Importance**

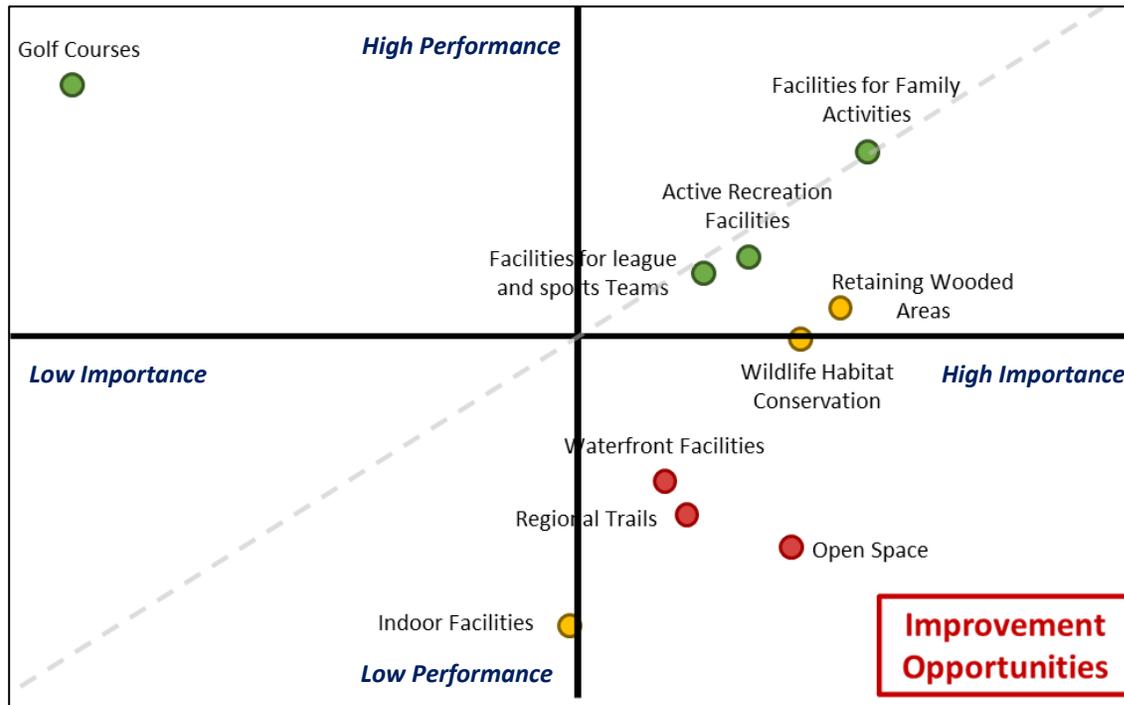


Source: EMC, 2013

**5. A performance-importance gap analysis shows that PCPR can improve performance on a variety of items.**

The diagonal line overlaying the chart represents where the ideal performance should be relative to the level of importance. Services falling on or near this line are performing optimally compared to how citizens value them. Items significantly left of the line may be potentially valuable improvement opportunities (even if they appear in quadrants 1 or 3) while items far right of the line may result in wasted resources if given too much focus. For residents overall, PCPR can improve on Open Space, Regional Trails, and Waterfront Facilities. See Figure 4-5. Retaining Wooded Areas, Wildlife Habitat Conservation, and Indoor Facilities are also areas for improvement. The items in green are performing close to their level of importance.

**Figure 4-5. Gap Analysis: Overall Respondents**



**Explanation of Quadrants**

Plotting the importance and performance on a quadrant chart allows items to be categorized as follows:

- ▶ High Importance and Performance (top-right quadrant) – These are the services that residents view as very important and that PCPR is doing best with.
- ▶ Low Importance, High Performance (top-left quadrant) – These are services that citizens think PCPR is doing well with but that are less important to most persons, though important to certain niche groups.
- ▶ Low Importance and Performance (bottom-left quadrant) – Services in this category are low-priority items for most residents.
- ▶ High Importance, Low Performance (bottom right quadrant) – Services falling into this category should be viewed as opportunities for improvement. These are the items that residents feel are very important but PCPR could be doing better with.

Source: EMC, 2013.



**Stakeholder Questionnaire**

As part of a process to update the PCPR Strategic Plan, about 30 stakeholders who work for other agencies that partner with PCPR or that use PCPR facilities were sent a questionnaire in spring 2013. About 31 persons responded. More than three quarters of participants supported the PCPR vision, mission, and values (see Chapter 5). PCPR meets or exceeds expectations for public parks in which to hold community activities and events also for over three-quarters of the participants. Most respondents, however, believed that PCPR was understaffed, and that marketing and advertising are not adequate, and that the County could do more to promote “healthy choices and improve the quality of life in Pierce County communities.”

In terms of where respondents would allocate financial resources (split \$10 as a theoretical choice), the following choices were made as shown in Table 4-1:

**Table 4-1. Stakeholder Resource Priorities**

Activity	Given \$10 dollars to spend on Parks and Recreation Services, how much would you spend on (average)
Maintaining current park assets	3.6
Protecting park land for future generations	3.2
Building new parks	3.1
Recreational Programs for all ages and abilities	2.6

Source: PCPR 2013

**Public Meetings and Comments**

The PROS Plan was the subject of a number of public meetings where citizen board members or the general public could provide informal or formal comments (public hearing testimony). These meetings included:

- Park Citizens’ Advisory Board:
  - Draft Plan Review: October 2013
  - Recommendation to County Council: November 2013
- Land Use Advisory Committees: October 2013
- Planning Commission:
  - Study Session: October 2013
  - Public Hearing and Recommendation to County Council: December 2013
- County Council:
  - Briefings: November 2013
  - Public Hearing and Adoption of Plan: February 2014

In addition, written comments were accepted through the project website in fall 2013. A State Environmental Policy Act Determination of Nonsignificance comment period allowed for public and agency comment in December 2013.

# KEY FINDINGS

Based on the feedback received throughout the planning process, both in 2008 and validated in 2014, five community values emerged. These core values and their components as identified during the public involvement process are:

## 1. Conservation

- Acquire and conserve active and passive recreation sites adequate to meet current and future needs.
- Acquire and conserve significant shorelines.
- Acquire and conserve significant natural areas.
- Maintain and enhance current levels of service.
- Support and enhance environmentally sustainable resource stewardship practices.
- Maintain the character and quality of rural areas by conserving open space and designing parks that reflect the agrarian and natural character of rural Pierce County.

## 2. Inclusiveness

- Provide service for urban, suburban, and rural residents.
- Provide service for people of all ages, abilities, and income levels.
- Include multiple levels of active and passive recreation opportunities for users.
- Encourage recreation participation from a variety of park users.

## 3. Access and Connectivity

- Connect parks, schools, neighborhoods, and commercial areas to each other and to the local community via trails.

- Form a network of trail connections that provides non-motorized transportation options to residents.
- Provide links to regional trails in other areas.
- Locate facilities in areas that are geographically and physically accessible by residents.
- Ensure that facilities can be reached by multiple modes—on foot, by bike, by transit, and by car.
- Provide waterfront access, including opportunities for motorized and non-motorized boating, swimming, wading, fishing, beach access, water and wildlife viewing and interpretation, etc.
- Provide access to natural areas for recreation activities, such as walking, hiking, biking, bird watching, wildlife viewing, nature interpretation and education, etc.
- Provide nearby recreation opportunities, including basic recreation amenities, for people living in unincorporated areas.

## 4. Quality of Life

- Enhance individual and community health and well-being.
- Provide educational programming and opportunities for life-long learning.
- Enhance community livability and the image of Pierce County.
- Support economic development in appropriate areas.
- Provide undeveloped, open space as an alternative to the built urban environment.
- Create a sense of place and community by fostering a sense of identity with our neighbors and the places where we live.
- Promote social interaction.
- Foster youth development.





### 5. Stewardship

- Honor and take care of existing PCPR park resources.
- Continue to provide safe, clean, well-maintained parks and recreation facilities.
- Involve residents in the planning and design of PCPR parks, facilities, and programs, and value previous community contributions and planned directions for existing sites.
- Operate with a strategic, targeted, and regional perspective to maintain physical, cultural, historical, and environmental resources.
- Provide parks and facilities that generate revenue for the County.
- Provide excellent customer service.
- Foster partnerships with other agencies and organizations to realize goals County-wide.

These five values have been integrated into the park system vision, concept, mission, concept, and goals and policies.

## THE ADAPTIVE SYSTEM

Based on the values of conservation, inclusiveness, access and connectivity, quality of life, and stewardship, PCPR developed the Adaptive System in the 2008 PROS Plan, and tested and refined it for the 2014 PROS Plan.

The Adaptive System is an approach that adapts to the needs of a diverse county. Instead of weighing larger-scale regional needs against the specific needs of local communities, it combines both systems to create a scenario that is more adaptable to changing recreation needs. This system would be more flexible in finding appropriate ways to serve communities with high population growth rates, where community needs may change radically by the time land can be acquired and developed.

This scenario creates a system based on regional parks, county parks, and trails, with local parks in urbanized or suburbanized, residential unincorporated areas. The provision of parks under this system considers population density and geographic distribution to identify park needs. In other words, it looks at the provision of regional parks from a broader perspective. It identifies rapidly-growing, underserved areas for the priority development of County parks. It aims to land-bank strategically located Local park sites in heavily developed unincorporated areas, such as South Hill, Frederickson, and Spanaway, which are not served by other providers. These local parks then could be transferred to local jurisdictions, when park and recreation service areas, park and recreation districts, or metropolitan park districts are formed to finance development and maintenance.

The Adaptive System provides significant recreation opportunities for many underserved residents by providing County parks in several locations. It also would retain smaller unique parcels in strategic locations to provide open space, close-to-home recreation opportunities, and diverse recreation experiences. This scenario would strategically land-bank specific park sites for residents in individual communities where needs are the greatest and where community preferences have been documented through the Community Plans. In this manner, this scenario is more likely to serve a variety of users, including all ages, abilities, income levels, and interests. This scenario also would link major parks and facilities (where possible) with a multi-use pathway to make them accessible by automobile, bicycle, and foot and to connect them to key destinations in the community. This scenario would operate with a more strategic, balanced perspective and vision to sustain parks and open space for future generations.

The Adaptive System scenario would:

- Provide more opportunities for preservation of significant parks, unique resources, and open space areas.
- Provide stronger customer service to meet the needs of many different user groups inclusively.
- Create a conceptual park system interconnected by community and regional trails.
- Help create a more livable community where PCPR would become a steward of valuable resources for the entire county.
- Balance the provision of regional and local parks and facilities in a way that best meets the park and recreation needs of residents in the county.

This scenario was further refined and used throughout the remainder of the Plan as a basis for the recommended level of service for Pierce County PCPR.

## Adaptive System Vision

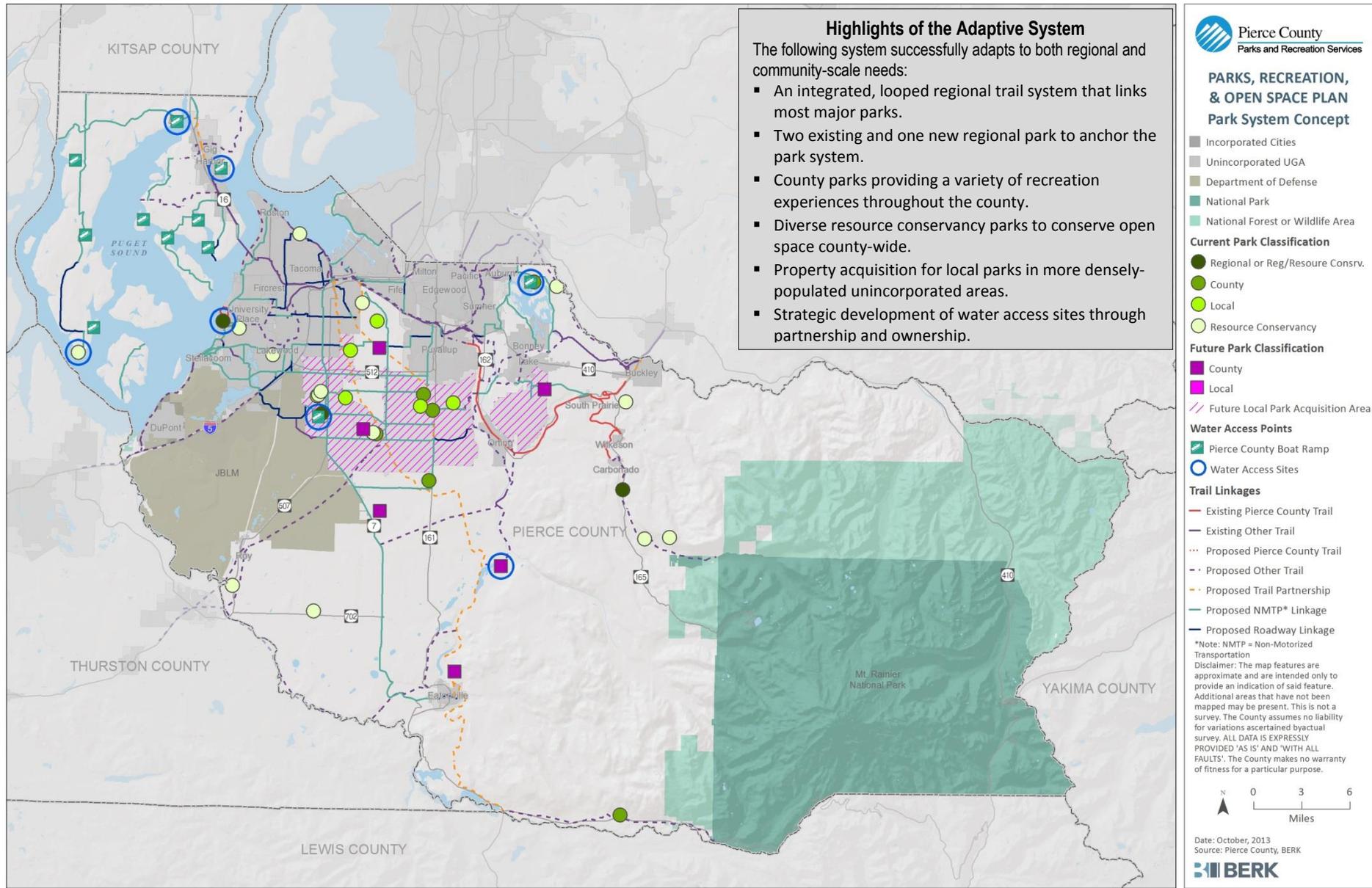
This section describes and illustrates the Adaptive System concept, which is refined in Chapter 6 to create a proposed park system, along with recommendations and strategies for implementation.

The Adaptive System bridges local and regional needs to present a balanced system of parks, facilities, and programs. Highlights of the adaptive park and recreation system are illustrated on Figure 4-6 and described below.

- An integrated, looped regional trail system that links most major parks.
- Two existing and one new regional park to anchor the park system.
- County parks providing a variety of recreation experiences throughout the county.
- Diverse resource conservancy parks to conserve open space county-wide.
- Property acquisition for local parks in more densely-populated unincorporated areas.
- Strategic development of water access sites through partnership and ownership.



Figure 4-6. The Adaptive System



## Regional Parks

The Adaptive System vision includes two existing Regional Parks and one Regional Resource Conservancy Park. Helping to integrate countywide park planning, these sites include:

- Spanaway Regional Park;
- Chambers Creek Regional Park, and
- Carbon River Valley Regional Resource Conservancy Park

The centrally located Spanaway Regional Park (Sprinkler Recreation Center, Spanaway Park, Bresemann Forest, and Lake Spanaway Golf Course) should be master-planned and managed as one site, adding innovative signature elements to inspire residents to view this park as a top-of-the-line regional attraction.

The Chambers Creek Regional Park would provide a regional anchor in western Pierce County to support the countywide park system.

The Carbon River Valley Park is a regionally significant Resource Conservancy Park; following future site planning, its ability to accommodate active as well as passive recreation can be determined.

## County Parks

The Adaptive System stresses the priority development of approximately eleven County parks of varying sizes, which should be distributed across Pierce County in various geographic and underserved areas. These include:

- Five existing County parks (North Lake Tapps Park, Frontier Park, Heritage Recreation Center, Meridian Habitat Park, and Ashford Park);
- Three sites that have preliminary master plans in place that can be used to help guide their

development as County parks (Orangegate Park, Buckley-Bonney Lake Park, CrossPark).

- One currently undeveloped site that could be developed as a County Park in the long-term (Rimrock Park); and
- Two proposed new parks in the Graham community (considering Lake Kapowsin and another site).

## Local Parks

The Adaptive System anticipates 10-15 land bank sites for local parks over the planning period. Figure 4-6 notes targeted local park acquisition areas. The role of PCPR in these regions is to land-bank appropriate sites while the opportunity still exists to do so. Specific sites should be conserved based on need. The highest need and level of service for local parks is found in areas of densely populated urban unincorporated areas. Moderate needs and a lower level of service are found in areas of medium density. Rural areas have unique park needs that may or may not require land-banking local parks. Parks of other types may be more appropriate for rural areas.

PCPR will not be the primary provider for local parks in areas served by other park and recreation agencies or jurisdictions (districts, cities, and towns). PCPR will focus on providing different types of recreation opportunities (e.g., regional trails and water access sites) in these areas through collaboration or coordination.

According to this vision, local park acquisition in targeted regions should correspond where appropriate to the potential park sites already identified in the Community Plans—where these sites fit the goals, and objectives set forth in the PROS Plan. PCPR should not be involved in land-banking sites that are inconsistent with the goals and objectives in this PROS Plan.





PCPR operates six local parks. PCPR should focus on the selective and strategic positioning of local park sites, using existing local parks and undeveloped sites, along with sites recommended in the Community Plans, where feasible. In general, Community Plans anticipate that, in time, park and recreation service areas, park and recreation districts, or metropolitan park districts will be able to take on the development and management of land-banked sites. Until that happens, PCPR should invest in the development of appropriate undeveloped sites as County parks, which will help alleviate some of the immediate needs for local park and recreation opportunities in various communities.

### **Resource Conservancy Parks**

Significant natural areas or open space areas should be identified for acquisition in this park system. PCPR should consider opportunities to develop nature trails with interpretive signage, or small information gazebos, and a nature center, in addition to the one already planned for the Nisqually Interpretive Center. See also Chapter 5 for habitat conservation policies including priorities.

### **Regional Trail Network**

The Adaptive System incorporates a significant network of regional trails and off-street pathways, designed to facilitate non-motorized transportation and connectivity throughout the County. It attempts to link all regional parks to other major parks and to key destinations in the county. See Chapter 7 for an in depth analysis of the trail system.

### **Water Access**

Water access is a priority in this system, and appropriate water access points should be identified for motorized and non-motorized boat launches, swimming, fishing, water viewpoints, and other types of water access. Since public desires have been expressed for a saltwater marina,

PCPR should consider partnerships with other County departments, parks districts, cities, Washington State Parks, and others to develop a marina and other water access sites.

### **LOS Standards**

Park and facility level of service (LOS) is a policy that determines the type, location, and number of parks and facilities that PCPR will offer residents of Pierce County. It is a measure of the minimum amount of land or facilities necessary to provide the desired amount of park recreation opportunities in a community. LOS measures can be expressed in terms of numerical standards or guidelines for specific types of parks and recreation facilities, but also through design guidelines. The difference between these is noted below.

### **Numerical Park Standards**

Proposed park standards can be expressed in terms of acres per 1,000 residents. For example, a park agency may strive to provide 5 acres of parkland for every 1,000 people living within the jurisdiction. In this Plan, numerical LOS standards are calculated based on the anticipated number of people living in Pierce County in 2030 (the planning horizon consistent with the Pierce County Countywide Planning Policy population allocations). These park LOS standards indicate how much acreage will be needed in the future park system to meet anticipated park and recreation needs at that time. These standards are calculated by park type, to show what types of parks and recreation experiences will be needed most. Park standards will allow PCPR to compare their level of service to others over time.

### **Numerical Facility Guidelines**

Proposed facility guidelines can be expressed as a ratio of one facility per number of people served. For example, an agency may set guidelines of 1 soccer field for every 1,500 people or 1 mile of trail

for every 4,200 people. Numerical guidelines are most valuable when these directives apply to facilities that can be developed by one agency alone, and where placement of these facilities is based on planned decision-making rather than opportunities for development. For this reason, numerical guidelines work well for cities trying to define how many outdoor basketball courts, for example, to provide in local parks. Numerical guidelines are less helpful, for example, for regional trail projects that require the anticipated collaboration of multiple agencies for implementation. Nor do these guidelines work well for opportunity-based facilities, such as water access points (swimming beaches, fishing piers, motorized and non-motorized boat launches), that can only be developed in waterfront areas. Numerical guidelines are not recommended either for amenities such as parking, which are likely covered by land use and development codes.

### **Park and Facility Design Guidelines**

In lieu of numerical standards and guidelines, level of service can also be gauged based on design and development guidelines for parks and facilities. General design and development guidelines can address system-wide planning and development issues for park land, such as providing consistent signage at all PCPR parks. In addition, specific design and development guidelines can be provided for each type of park in the classification system to provide guidance regarding park size, layout, recommended amenities and facilities, and other park planning and development concerns.

Design and development guidelines are intended to provide planning and site programming guidance and direction. They are particularly effective in areas where area-wide numerical standards or guidelines would not take into account community differences. Pierce County is an area of diversity,

and the Community Plans are evidence that residents have different preferences and values regarding how best to conserve unique local resources and provide community-specific recreation opportunities. For this reason, this PROS Plan does not propose area-wide design guidelines for facilities.

### **Population and Park System Planning**

The planning period for the 2014 PROS Plan is 2014-2030. Numerical park standards are calculated for this planning period using the following population allocations, provided by the Pierce County Planning and Land Service Department to maintain consistency with the Pierce County Comprehensive Plan:

- The current population is approximately 814,500 County-wide (2013 estimate).
- The future population (about a 17-year planning horizon) is estimated at 1,014,972 people countywide in 2030.

To maintain consistency with capital facility planning requirements under the Growth Management Act, a 6-year level of service is developed for the 2014 to 2019 time period and a long-term level of service is developed for remainder of the planning horizon – 2020 to 2030.

### **Park LOS Standards**

The current LOS for the year 2013 is 5.61 acres per 1,000 people considering all park types. Nearly half of the acres per 1,000 are Resource Conservancy Parks. Another large component consists of Regional Parks.

The 2008 PROS Plan proposed a LOS focused on developed Regional, County, Local, and Special Use facilities at 3.0 acres per 1,000 people, but excluded standards for Resource Conservancy and



Linear Parks/Trails. In contrast, the proposed 2014 PROS Plan promotes a comprehensive LOS; based on public values for natural areas, open space, recreation, and a connected trail system as described earlier in the public outreach results. Thus, an LOS is provided for each park classification. The LOS for Resource Conservancy Parks also supports Habitat conservation goals.

Table 4-2 summarizes the actual and proposed LOS for each park type. The LOS approach is illustrated in Figure 4-7.

The 2014 PROS Plan also recognizes the need to prioritize resources effectively in the near term while promoting the park system vision over the long-term. Thus, three LOS standards are proposed during the planning period:

■ **Year 2019 “base” LOS** of 5.2 acres per 1,000 population reflecting all *existing* classified parks in Chapter 3 – Regional, County, Local, Resource Conservancy, Special Use Areas, and Linear Parks/Trails. One programmed and funded project is included – an extension of the Foothills Trail in the 2014 to 2019 period. Until there is added funding the countywide LOS would dip by 2019 compared to 2013 results.

■ **Year 2030 “base” LOS** of 5.4 acres per 1,000 people. This 20-year base LOS reflects the Year 2019 projects, plus the development of one County Park site in the 2014 to 2030 period. The 20-year base LOS also assumes approximately 75 acres per year collectively of Resource Conservancy Parks and Linear Park/Trail facilities (a total of 750 acres between 2020 and 2030) to help implement the Habitat and Trails components of the PROS Plan.<sup>1</sup> This “base” LOS nearly maintains the 2013

LOS as the population grows to the year 2030. It is a LOS the County would commit to funding within projected available resources (see Chapter 6 for additional analysis).

■ **Year 2030 “target” LOS** of 6.6 acres per 1,000, increasing the total LOS by about 1.4 acres per 1,000 compared to the 2019 LOS (and 1.0 acre per 1,000 population above the current 2013 LOS). This anticipates the completion of the Adaptive System Concept in Figure 4-6. The County would pursue additional funding and partnerships to complete remaining important elements of the plan including County Parks (5 more County Park sites), Local Park land banks (10-15 land banked sites equaling about 100 acres), and other opportunities to create a linked park system with additional Resource Conservancy Parks and Linear Parks/Trails (another 50 acres conserved annually for a total of 500 acres between 2020 and 2030), and Water Access or other Special Use Facilities (about 140 acres of Special Use Parks).

By 2019 only about 4 acres would be added, under the base LOS. Under the 2030 base LOS, about 900 acres of parks would be added. If funding is successful park additions could rise to 2,100 acres under the Year 2030 Target LOS. See Chapter 6 for additional discussion of current and projected funding and the match to priority projects.

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<sup>1</sup> Since the Conservation Futures program began in 1991, about 160 acres/year have been conserved. The

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assumption is that nearly half of future awards would be added to the Park system annually (~75 acres per year).



**Table 4-2. Actual LOS and Projected LOS with Improvements**

Park Type	Current and Future Inventory: Acres of Parks				Levels of Service: Acres Per 1,000 Population				
	2013	2019	2030 Base	2030 Target	2008 PROS	2013	2019	2030 Base	2030 Target
	Countywide Population				N/A	814,500	882,922	1,014,972	1,014,972
Regional Parks/ Regional Conservancy	1,545.7	1,545.7	1,545.7	1,545.7	1.5	1.90	1.75	1.52	1.52
County Parks	310.8	310.8	460.8	944.1	1	0.38	0.35	0.45	0.93
Local Parks	110.2	110.2	110.2	210.2	0.25	0.14	0.12	0.11	0.21
Special Use Areas	186.1	186.1	186.1	326.1	0.25	0.23	0.21	0.18	0.32
Resource Conservancy Parks	1,894.4	1,894.4	2,456.9	2,831.9	0	2.33	2.15	2.42	2.79
Linear Parks/Trails	522.9	526.6	714.1	839.1	0	0.64	0.60	0.70	0.83
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,570.1</b>	<b>4,573.7</b>	<b>5,473.7</b>	<b>6,697.0</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>6.6</b>

**Park System Additions (in Acres)**

**Year 2019 Base LOS Addition:** Includes 2014-2019 Programmed Facilities adding a segment of the Foothills Trail: 3.6 acres

**Year 2030 Base LOS:** Develop one County Park (e.g. Orangegate or Cross Property):150 acres

- Add Resource Conservancy and Linear Parks/Trails at an average rate of 75 ac/year\*: 750 acres

\*The Conservation Futures program has conserved about 160 acres/year since 1991. The assumption is that about half annually would contribute to the PCPR system.

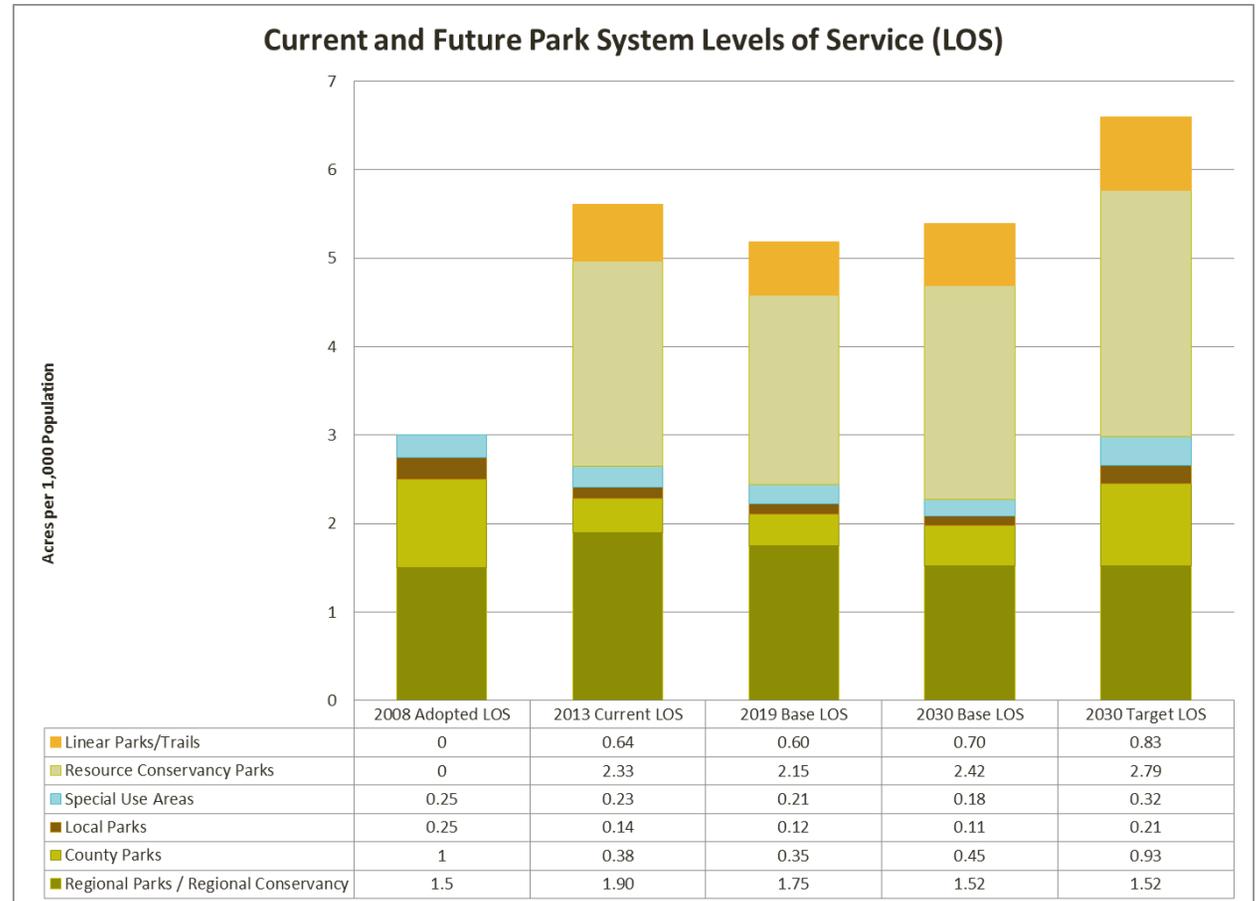
**Year 2030 Target LOS:**

20 Year Target LOS: Complete Adaptive System with Grants and Other Potential Funding

- County Parks: Buckley-Bonney Lake 80 acres; Cross Property 64 acres; Rimrock Park 139 acres; Proposed Lake Kapowsin Park 100 acres; Proposed County Park (Graham Community) 100 acres
- Local Parks: 100 acres on 10-15 land bank sites
- Special Use Areas: Proposed Waterfront Access Sites: 140
- Add Resource Conservancy and Linear Parks/Trails due to added funding at about another 50 ac/year on top of base: 500 acres

Source: Pierce County PCPR, BERK 2013

Figure 4-7. Illustrated Levels of Service



Source: BERK 2013

### LOS and System Analysis

The Adaptive System distributes active and passive parks in various geographic areas throughout the county. In addition, it addresses some local needs for parks in the unincorporated areas of Pierce County, particularly those with higher population densities where the demand for parks and recreation facilities is greater. This

approach is intended to create a more balanced system of parks and facilities to serve regional and local park users.

Current coverage of the 2013 park system is shown in Figure 4-8. The analysis assumes a 0.25 mile radius around Local Parks, 2.5 miles radius around County Parks, and 10 miles radius around Regional/Regional Conservancy Parks. This

analysis shows that the two existing Regional Parks in west and central Pierce County cover the vast majority of the existing and planned population in the County (see Chapter 2). In east County, the Carbon River Valley Park could possibly be improved with environmentally sustainable passive and active facilities.

Considering that County Parks are intended to be more geographically dispersed across the County and provide a wider variety of recreation opportunities, Figure 4-9 shows that location of proposed future County parks can help fill the gaps in south and east County. The figure also shows the potential for other park provider and school facilities to serve local populations in and near the cities and urban growth areas. Resource Conservancy Parks also provide unique open space and passive recreation opportunities.

### **Regional Parks**

Two existing regional parks – Spanaway Regional Park and Chambers Creek Regional Park – and the ecologically significant Carbon River Valley Regional Resource Conservancy Park provide a LOS of about 1.9 acres in 2013. The LOS for Regional Parks would decline in 2019 and in 2030. While showing a decline as the population increases, the facilities will still make up a large share of the countywide LOS, nearly 29%. Regional Park sites are located in proximity to population centers in western and central Pierce County. In eastern Pierce County, the Carbon River Valley Regional Resource Conservancy Park could be master planned, and if there are suitable areas, both passive and active facilities could be added. Alternatively, the need for active recreation could be met by County Parks and the need for passive recreation could be met by Resource Conservancy and Linear Parks/Trails.

### **County Parks**

To meet community expectations for large-scale recreation opportunities, eleven county parks are needed. These include five existing county parks. Four currently undeveloped sites under county ownership could be developed as county parks. Two additional sites of approximately 100-200 acres each are needed in the south and east parts of the County as shown in the Figure 4-9 County Park Gap Analysis. The 2013 LOS is at 0.38 acres per 1,000 people. It would slightly dip by 2019 to a rate of 0.35 acres. However, it would increase to 0.45 in 2030 with the base case and ultimately to 0.93 acres per 1,000 if the 2030 Target LOS is achieved with added funding.

### **Local Parks**

Currently, there are six existing PCPR local parks, totaling 110.2 acres. In this PROS Plan, the need for local parks has been calculated based on the desired service level for parks in medium- and high-density population clusters in unincorporated areas. Anticipated population growth and development suggests that approximately ten additional sites of 10-15 acres each will be needed to meet the needs in targeted acquisition areas noted on Figure 4-6. Existing local parks, small undeveloped park sites, and even schools with outdoor playgrounds, sport courts and fields may help meet identified park needs in these areas. See Figure 4-9.

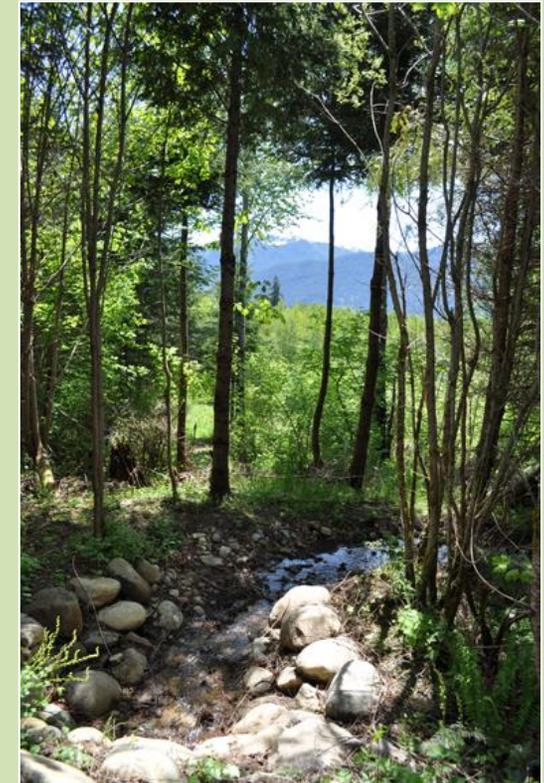


Figure 4-8. 2013 Park System Service Coverage

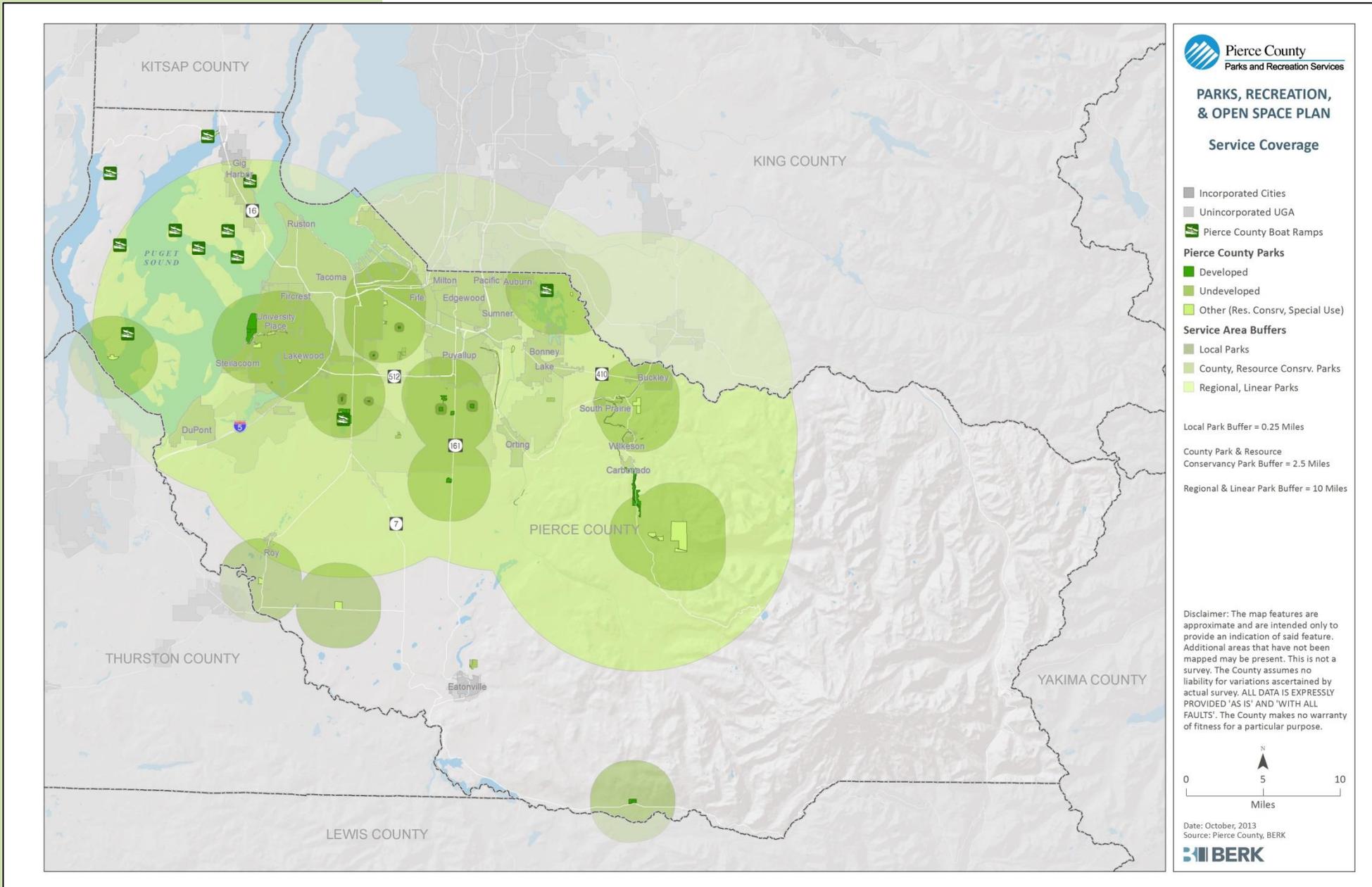
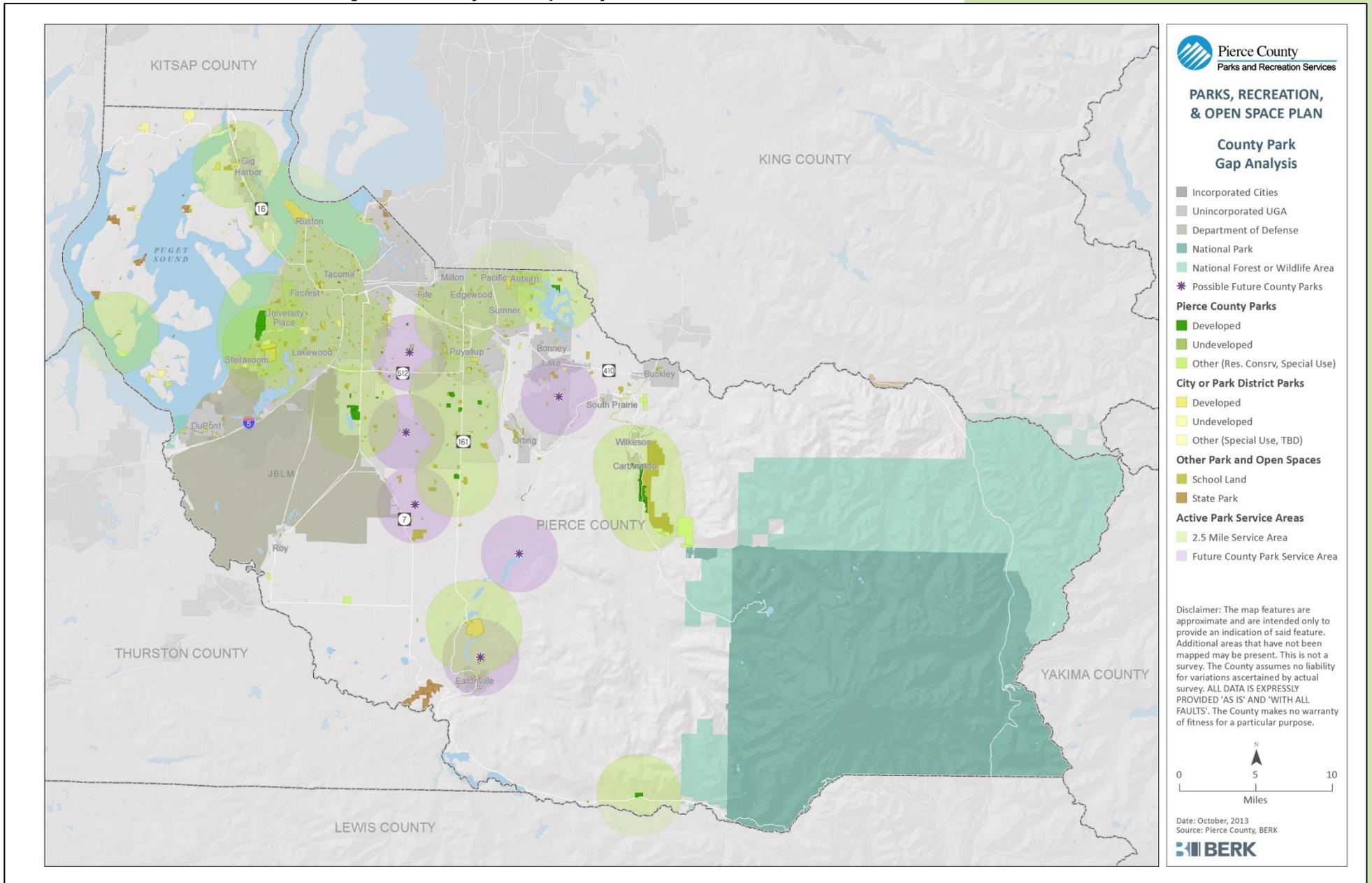


Figure 4-9. County Park Gap Analysis





### **Special Use Facilities**

Currently, there are five special use facilities owned and managed by PCPR, including one golf course, a community center, a fishing pier, and other specialty water- or river-front facilities.

To meet community desires for water access, additional Special Use facilities are needed. These may include swimming beaches, fishing piers, motorized boat docks, non-motorized boat launches, saltwater marinas, water viewpoint, and/or other types of water access opportunities.

There are many potential sites for water access that can be developed by PCPR alone or through partnerships. At least five sites (approximately 140 acres) should be identified for special use facilities. These may include opportunities to provide waterfront access or other uses. This need may be met through the reclassification and development of existing undeveloped parks, or new sites can be acquired—first considering any waterfront sites identified in adopted Community Plans. Waterfront sites should be distributed throughout the county, focusing on shoreline, riverfront, and lakefront opportunities.

Additional partnerships should be pursued with parks districts, the City of Tacoma, state and federal agencies and others for collaborative development of water access points where feasible.

### **Resource Conservancy Parks**

Resource conservation is important to residents in Pierce County. A variety of ecological areas within the County present many opportunities to conserve natural resources, maintain wildlife habitat, and create opportunities for passive recreation and environmental programming. About 41% of the 2013 LOS is made up of Resource Conservancy Parks. As the County has a large percentage of habitat and the public survey pointed to a need for

more of these areas, this type of open space conservation will continue to make up a large share of the park system in the future. See also Chapters 2 and 5 regarding the habitat inventory and habitat goals and policies.

### **Linear Parks/Trails**

Linear Parks/Trails are envisioned to connect the major elements of the park system, and represent a growing share of the total LOS. Per Chapter 7, an analysis of trails suggests that there is a greater need for trails of all types, including soft-surfaced and hard-surfaced trails (incorporating permeable surfacing where appropriate) for pedestrian, equestrian, bicycling, and other uses. According to public feedback, trail use is one of the most popular forms of recreation in Pierce County. The Adaptive System map broadly and Chapter 7 specifically illustrate a need for several additional regional trails to link parks and key destinations within the county, to connect various communities and jurisdictions, and to link to other regional trails in neighboring counties. Some of these trails are based on existing partnerships and plans for their development.

Individual Community Plans propose a number of local trails, linking proposed local parks to the regional trail system. Corridors for local trail development should be acquired and developed by local jurisdictions, rather than PCPR. The Community Plans anticipate that park and recreation service areas, park and recreation districts, or metropolitan park districts may be formed to fund the development of local and community trails that enhance the County's provision of regional trails.

### **Recreation Facilities LOS Guidelines**

The PROS Plan recommends that the development of facilities at new and renovated parks be consistent with a set of design guidelines

that defines what types of facilities are appropriate for each park type. Instead of numerical guidelines, design guidelines will provide better directions for the development of specific parks that achieve the vision and values of County residents for the future park system.

For example, facilities at local parks may include playgrounds, outdoor sport courts, multi-purpose backstops, sport practice fields, open space within neighborhoods, etc., as defined by community preferences in those areas. Appropriate facilities at Regional Parks and County Parks may include interpretive trails, picnic areas, nature centers, recreation centers, boat launches, swimming beaches, fishing piers, lodges and other revenue-generating facilities, sport/tournament complexes, campgrounds, viewpoints, etc., based on the identified function of each site. Special Use facilities may include highly-desired water access points, nature centers, or cultural centers.

Decision-making regarding facility development at specific sites will often be opportunity-based and driven by a balanced consideration of regional needs and site-specific opportunities and constraints.

The provision of regional trails and pathways, on the other hand, deserves special attention because of a clear public demand for countywide trail opportunities for both recreation and non-motorized transportation. See Chapter 7 for a discussion of regional trail facilities. Additional looped trails of a variety of surfaces in Regional Parks and County Parks will support walking, jogging, inline skating, biking, mountain biking, horseback riding, winter trail use, nature hikes and interpretation, wildlife watching, and other uses.

## **Programming LOS**

New opportunities for programming will be provided through the Adaptive Park System, which will also allow PCPR to continue to excel within certain program areas for which PCPR is well known. See Chapter 3 for a description and Chapter 6 for implementation strategies.

## **Special Events**

The Adaptive park system will allow PCPR to continue to excel at providing special events, such as fairs and festivals, tournaments, ice shows and competitions, rallies, bike tours, movies or concerts in the parks, and more. Additional regional-scale and revenue-generating facilities would allow PCPR to expand this service area.

## **Facility-based Programming**

Current programming strengths for PCPR are largely based on some of the specialized facilities within PCPR parks. PCPR could refine and strengthen its current facility-based programs, particularly at Sprinker Recreation Center, Lakewood Community Center, and Meridian Habitat Park. Golf, skating, and sports will remain programming strengths for PCPR.

In addition, this Plan envisions the continued development of environmental education and outdoor programming. Facilities to support nature interpretation, trail-use, water access, camping, and other types of outdoor recreation will support the emergence of this program area.





### **Mobile Recreation Programs**

A Mobile Games Recreation Unit could incorporate picnic games and play activities for large group activities at Regional, County, and Local park sites. Cooperative play workshops, family play nights, and similar recreation activities that can be exported to professional and/or special interest groups would be ideal in the Adaptive System.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

The analysis of community needs for parks, recreation, and open space facilities and programs helped refine the vision for the park system that was based on community feedback and prior planning efforts. This refined vision led to an overall discussion of the implications for the level of service at which parks, facilities, and programs should be provided. This vision is further refined and articulated in Chapter 5, where it provides a foundation for the development of specific goals and objectives for this PROS. The Adaptive System noted in this chapter supports the proposed park system in Chapter 6, which is presented with system-wide recommendations and a capital facilities plan for park improvements that should be implemented in order to achieve this vision.

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## Park system

Refers to all parks, open spaces, trails, facilities, and recreation programs managed by Pierce County Parks and Recreation.

# 5. VISION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

## INTRODUCTION

The values of Pierce County residents and their aspirations for the future are guiding forces for the Park, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan. This chapter defines the vision, goals, and objectives that illustrate the preferred future for the parks, open spaces, trails, facilities, and programs (park system) provided by Pierce County Parks and Recreation (PCPR). These elements also introduce a planning framework for the recommendations, strategies, and actions that appear in the next chapter of this Plan.

For consistency and clarity, the term *'park system'* will be used throughout this document to refer to all parks, open spaces, trails, facilities, and recreation programs managed by PCPR.

## VISION

A vision illustrates a broad picture of success for the community as served by parks and recreation opportunities. The Pierce County Vision is as follows:

*We envision an innovative, inclusive, and interconnected system of parks and recreation services that promote recreation, health, and environmental conservation as integral to a livable community.*

The vision provides a foundation for this plan's goals, objectives, strategies, and level of service standards. The vision is used as a guide for the development of the County's park system.

## GOALS

The vision for “an innovative, inclusive, and interconnected system of parks and recreation services that promote recreation, health, and environmental conservation as integral to a livable community” is implemented in a more specific way by goals and objectives.

Goals and objectives are statements describing how PCPR will carry out the County-wide vision for the park system. Goals define the broad outcomes to be produced by implementing the Park, Recreation, and Open Space Plan. Objectives set forth clear directions for providing services and for creating a visionary park system. Taken together, goals and objectives can be a means of measuring the performance of PCPR in delivering recreation services.

These goals and objectives were developed based on input from staff and community members. The recommendations presented in Chapters 6 of this document include specific actions that should be implemented to achieve the goals and objectives set forth here. All goals, objectives, recommendations, and actions flow from the vision for park and recreation services. These goals are numbered for reference only; numbers do not suggest a priority for implementation.

### **Goal 1: Park System**

Provide a quality park system that supports opportunities for active and passive recreation, and conserves and enhances significant environmental or historical resources.

### **Goal 2: Open Space**

Provide a system of protected open space areas and corridors to preserve the region's beauty, ensure the long-term health of the natural environment, and to provide outdoor recreation where appropriate.

### **Goal 3: Trails Network**

Provide a connected system of regional and local trails that offer diverse trail opportunities and experiences including non-motorized transportation, recreation, fitness, connecting with nature, and organized events and races. The trail network will provide links to parks, open spaces, significant environmental features, public facilities, and areas of interest.

### **Goal 4: Water Access**

Provide opportunities for all residents of Pierce County to access the freshwater and saltwater shorelines of the County through the provision of piers, beaches, boat launches, boat moorage, and water viewpoints.

### **Goal 5: Recreation Programming**

Promote, coordinate, facilitate or provide recreation programs that serve regional needs, support community health and wellbeing, connect the community with their parks, and encourage greater recreation participation in areas not served by other providers.

### **Goal 6: Development Standards**

Develop high quality facilities that are environmentally sustainable, appropriate for the site, connected to the surrounding neighborhood, universally accessible, safe, and easy to maintain for the long-term.

### **Goal 7: Stewardship**

Provide efficient and effective management of park system resources in a sustainable and environmentally beneficial manner that contributes to a healthy community and a beautiful landscape.

### **Goal 8: Funding**

Use effective and innovative funding methods to build, maintain, operate, and promote the park, recreation, and open space system.

### **Goal 9: Regional Coordination**

Serve as a regional coordinator, leading the effort to forge partnerships and foster opportunities for countywide collaboration among all major recreation providers in the provision of parks, open space, trails, facilities, and recreation programming.

### **Goal 10: Public Involvement**

Engage Pierce County residents in the planning, stewardship, and programming of the park system, and provide effective community outreach and marketing to increase public awareness and support of recreation services.

## **OBJECTIVES**

Objectives provide more specific directions for achieving the goals noted above. The objectives presented in this section are listed below the goal they support. Specific actions and recommendations to implement the goals and objectives are presented in Chapter 6.

## Goal 1: Park System

**Provide a quality park system that supports opportunities for active and passive recreation, and conserves and enhances significant environmental or historical resources.**

- 1.1 Provide parks that support the mission and vision of the County, providing a wide range of active and passive recreation experiences and meeting the needs of diverse age groups, recreation interests, and abilities.
- 1.2 Provide at least 5.2 acres of developed parks per 1,000 residents.
- 1.3 Evaluate all potential new land acquisitions; including conservation easements, donated property, and land-banked sites—to ensure that these sites are consistent with the vision set forth in this Plan.
- 1.4 Provide geographically accessible regional parks and County parks in strategic locations throughout Pierce County.
- 1.5 Balance regional and community park and recreation needs, supporting all objectives in adopted Community Plans that are aligned with the role of PCPR as a regional provider and help meet identified County-wide needs.
- 1.6 Land-bank sites for local parks in priority locations that meet an identified needs of un-served or under-served populations in unincorporated Pierce County. Transfer these properties to local control when feasible.
- 1.7 Ensure the County only assumes direct responsibility for the development, operation and maintenance of facilities that have regional benefits.

Source: Goal 1 and associated policies are based on the 2008 PROS Plan

## Goal 2: Open Space

**Provide a system of open space experiences and corridors to provide livable communities, allow people to connect with nature and enjoy outdoor recreation where appropriate, and ensure the long-term health of the natural environment.**

- 2.1 Incorporate natural areas and unique ecological features into the park system to protect threatened species, conserve significant resources and habitat, and retain migration corridors that are unique and important to local wildlife.
- 2.2 Provide leadership for the planning, coordination, and conservation of unique environmental systems,



and scenic vistas on a county-wide basis.

- 2.3 Protect significant environmental features, including unique wetlands, open spaces, woodlands, shorelines, waterfronts and other characteristics that support wildlife and reflect Pierce County's natural heritage.
- 2.4 Coordinate and support open space acquisition and management with other County departments and agencies.
- 2.5 Develop and enact best management practices for land stewardship on County park system and distribute information to other land stewards.
- 2.6 Provide open space corridors within the unincorporated Urban Growth Area (UGA) to protect wildlife corridors, nesting sites, and foraging areas, provide alternatives to the built environment, and to create buffers between communities.
- 2.7 Evaluate future land acquisitions or sales using the resource goals, policies and mapping included in this Plan. Acquisition through dedication or donation will strive to acquire the premier lands for preservation as open space and avoid those lands of marginal natural, cultural or recreational value.
- 2.8 Ensure park system properties, conservation easements, and Conservation Futures covenants are managed and maintained in a coordinated manner to provide long-term stewardship of the open space function and value.
- 2.9 **Protect Habitat.** Protect lands and waters valued for plant, fish, and wildlife habitat rarity, diversity, or connectivity.
  - 2.9.1 Prioritize acquisition of habitats that are considered unique in the Puget Trough or West Cascade ecoregions, or are species-rich biodiversity management areas, or support Endangered Species Act listed species, or protect state priority habitats and species, or provide habitat connection to these high priority areas.
  - 2.9.2 Preserve opportunities for people to observe and enjoy fish and wildlife in their habitats. Allow for context sensitive design of physical and visual access to habitats in order to promote educational, scientific, and recreational enjoyment while protecting environmental conditions.

### ***Aim of PROS Habitat Objectives and Policies***

*To ensure that our plant, fish, and wildlife and habitats are rich, healthy, and abundant, to promote community values for natural area conservation, and to provide opportunities for people to connect with nature.*

- 2.9.3** The Pierce County Open Space Corridors Map (see Chapter 2) illustrates priority habitat conservation corridors. The map should be used to create a connected, functional open space system and guide development of the County's park system through coordination of county programs.
- 2.9.5** Within the Pierce County Open Space Corridors Map (see Chapter 2), the following evaluation criteria should guide PCPR habitat and open space funding and acquisition efforts.
- A. The habitat is identified as high value regionally or locally. Within Pierce County, the following are considered high value. *The numeric listing is not intended to imply a rank order at this time.*
1. Habitat which supports or has the potential to support Endangered Species Act listed species, such as Chinook salmon. Habitats for listed species are considered important because these species are small in number and the species is at risk of extinction.
  2. Biodiversity management areas (BMAs). These habitats provide for the greatest biological diversity of terrestrial species (mammals, birds, amphibians and reptiles) and also give special consideration for salmonids.
  3. Prairie and oak woodlands. Prairie and oak woodland habitat is scarce and located in areas where there is potential development pressure. It is important to "connect the dots" of habitat remnants.
  4. Relatively undeveloped estuarine systems and riparian corridors.
  5. Marine and nearshore habitats. Puget Sound Nearshore Ecosystem Restoration Project (PSNERP) assessments show many segments of nearshore habitat that should be protected, restored, or enhanced.
  6. Large (>150 acres) tracts of relatively contiguous diverse conifer forests in order to manage for habitat. The Biodiversity Network Assessment noted the importance of these forest lands to regional conservation efforts.
  7. Priority habitats and species not otherwise listed above. These include unique or significant habitats and specific fish and wildlife species that require protection.
  8. Highly productive agricultural soils.
- B. Acquisition of the habitat is supported by multiple county goals in adopted County plans



or interjurisdictional plans, including, but not limited to:

1. The adopted Open Space Corridors Map
  2. Shoreline restoration or public access goals in the Shoreline Master Program
  3. Basin plans, salmon recovery plans, rivers flood management plans, and watershed plans
  4. Stormwater management plans
  5. Community Plans
- C. The habitat is under threat of conversion due to development pressures or other uses.
- D. Acquisition of the habitat fills gaps or completes an interconnected network in public ownership or conservation easements.
- E. The habitat acquisition provides an opportunistic “bargain” purchase of lands provided such a purchase meets other evaluation criteria and does not preclude acquisition of higher priority habitat areas in the short term or long term.
- F. The project facilitates partnerships with other governmental and non-governmental agencies that furthers the Counties habitat protection goals.

**2.10 Provide Water Access for Education and Appreciation.** Promote appropriate access to help inspire appreciation and stewardship of aquatic resources and habitat.

**2.10.1** Promote access to marine waters, lakes, and rivers for fishing, swimming, and boating where compatible with ecological conditions.

**2.10.2** Promote development of existing parks, recreation areas, and road ends as locations for physical and visual access to Pierce County waters and shorelines.

**2.10.3** Design water access to minimize environmental impacts in ecologically sensitive areas.

**2.10.4** Provide for increased shoreline and water access in concert with increased demand from growth and development.

**2.11 Public and Private Partnerships - Habitat.** Develop partnerships with public agencies and jurisdictions, private organizations and businesses for support, funding, and implementation of habitat conservation across the county.

- 2.11.1 Coordinate and cooperate with other jurisdictions, organizations, land trusts and private landowners to help provide and maintain habitat values and ecosystem functions.
- 2.11.2 Cooperate with other public and private agencies and with private landowners to set aside unique features or areas as publicly accessible resources.

**2.12 Habitat and Open Space Management.** Manage, restore, and maintain publicly owned habitat and open space lands.

- 2.12.1 Stewardship and management plans should be prepared for any publicly owned or publicly purchased habitat parcel.
- 2.12.2 Support the implementation of biodiversity stewardship plans.

Sources: Goal 2 and associated policies are based on the 2008 PROS Plan, and also reflect the Habitat component added to the PROS Plan. The Habitat objectives and policies draw from County Biodiversity Plans, Watershed Plans, and the overall Comprehensive Plan.

## Goal: 3 Trail Network

Provide a connected system of regional and local trails that offer diverse trail opportunities and experiences including non-motorized transportation, recreation, fitness, connecting with nature, and organized events and races. The trail network will provide links to parks, open spaces, significant environmental features, public facilities, and areas of interest.

- 3.1. **Healthy Communities.** Create healthy communities throughout the County by promoting active lifestyles, reducing reliance on personal motor vehicle travel and offering free opportunities for recreation and physical activity.
  - 3.1.1 Accommodate all non-motorized transportation modes safely and comfortably.
  - 3.1.2 Improve transportation demand management by encouraging use of the regional trails system for commuting.
  - 3.1.3 Encourage other County agencies to develop “Complete Streets” that incorporate regional trail routes.
- 3.2. **Accessibility.** Develop regional trail routes, crossings and trail facilities that are accessible to all.
  - 3.2.1 Follow or exceed Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) guidelines to ensure equal accessibility for all users.



- 3.4.3 Acquire trail segments that complete the regional trails system through a variety of methods including land dedication, purchase, use of vacated rail lines (rail-banking) and other rights-of-way, donation of land, and public easements and use agreements.
- 3.4.4 Work with Federal, State and local agencies to identify public property that could be used to further the regional trail system.

**3.5 Awareness and Education.** Strengthen the awareness of the regional trails network through a widespread promotional campaign, and promote trail safety and user education.

- 3.5.1 Provide current and easily accessible information about the regional trails system using multiple means of communications.
- 3.5.2 Provide information on the County's website and include items such as trail route and access information.
- 3.5.3 Provide interpretive and historical signage along the regional trails.
- 3.5.4 Hold public events that bring awareness and attention to the regional trails system.
- 3.5.5 Monitor trail use over time by conducting trail counts and seeking input from trail users.
- 3.5.6 Support and expand safety education programs for adults and children, as well as different user groups and motorists to increase knowledge of safe trail use, and encourage positive individual behavior change.
- 3.5.7 Work with area school districts to create trail use and safety education programs for students.
- 3.5.8 Work with area trail partner groups to promote trail use and provide safety education for the general public.

**3.6 Trail Design.** Incorporate design techniques that minimize impacts to the natural environment and neighboring uses. Develop trails that offer a variety of experiences.

- 3.6.1 Design trails that provide recreation opportunities, as well as transportation routes for pedestrians, bicyclists, equestrians and boaters.
- 3.6.2 Design trails that provide a variety of trail lengths and destinations, and offer loops that are interconnected.





- 3.6.3 Plan, size, and design trails in accordance with the County's Low Impact Development (LID) techniques, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) design guidelines, ADA and ABA guidelines, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) requirements and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) standards.
- 3.6.4 Provide trails signage in accordance with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, as published by the FHWA.
- 3.6.5 Develop planting standards and/or guidelines that prohibit vegetation or landscaping from negatively impacting the on-going and long-term maintenance of the regional trails network.
- 3.6.6 Locate trails outside natural hazards areas, such as flood zones, as much as practicable.
- 3.6.7 Equestrian Routes. Pierce County identifies and ensures maintenance of off road trails and shoulders for equestrian use on routes that serve equestrian travel needs to public stables, trailheads, and other equestrian activity centers when the equestrian projects do not limit other transportation modes' use of the corridor.

**3.7 Facilities and Services.** Offer sufficient facilities and trail support services to accommodate the needs of various trail users.

- 3.7.1 Provide clear signage, pavement markings, interpretive signs and historical markers for way-finding, education, points of interest rules and regulations, and traffic safety targeted to equestrians, bicyclists, pedestrians, boaters and motorists.
- 3.7.2 Provide rest stations, restrooms, seating, picnic tables, water fountains, bike racks and recycling/trash receptacles along the trail and trailheads where feasible.
- 3.7.3 Design centralized staging areas and trailheads for trail access. Trailheads should include parking, trail orientation and information, kiosks, and any necessary specialized unloading features (ADA accessibility, equestrian facilities, etc.).
- 3.7.4 Maximize the number and diversity of viewing and education opportunities.

- 3.8 Maintenance.** Provide routine trail maintenance that is responsive, effective and resourceful, to ensure the long term success of the regional trails system.
- 3.8.1** Maintain the regional trails system and related facilities so they provide safe and comfortable conditions for users, while preventing conflicts between users on shared routes.
  - 3.8.2** Respond to damaged trail sections quickly and provide effective trail repair and maintenance.
  - 3.8.3** Implement an on-line reporting system, with response time goals, for trail maintenance needs, safety concerns and general suggestions.
  - 3.8.4** Use appropriate and specialized maintenance equipment, durable and cost saving materials and effective maintenance products that have a low impact on the natural environment.
  - 3.8.5** Continue the adopt-a-trail maintenance program so organizations, groups or individuals can adopt trail segments or corridors by volunteering or providing donations for maintenance and development.

Source: Goal 3 and associated policies are largely based on the 2009 Trails Plan and to a lesser degree the Comprehensive Plan.

## Goal 4: Water Access

**Provide public waterfront access through the provision of public piers, swimming beaches, motorized and non-motorized boat launches, public boat moorage, and water viewpoints.**

- 4.1** Cooperate with other public and private agencies to acquire and preserve additional shoreline access for waterfront fishing, wading, swimming, non-motorized and motorized boating where appropriate, as well as other related recreational activities and pursuits.
- 4.2** Enhance the existing system of water trails in salt and freshwater bodies to support recreation opportunities for kayakers, canoers, paddle boaters, and other non-motorized watercraft users.
- 4.3** Provide linkages to the water trails network where possible.

Source: Policies are based on the 2008 PROS Plan and 2009 Trails Plan.

## Goal 5: Recreation Programming

**Promote, coordinate, facilitate or provide recreation programs that serve regional needs, support community livability, connect the community with their parks, and encourage greater recreation participation in areas not served by other providers.**

- 5.1 Focus on core program areas that support Parks and Recreation Services' niche and the preferred vision for parks, programs, and services.
- 5.2 Continue to provide innovative, facility-based special events to provide social and cultural recreation opportunities for County residents.
- 5.3 Expand mobile programming, identifying a market to provide recreation opportunities at regional parks and County parks.
- 5.4 Develop a programming strategy for providing services to underserved residents in unincorporated areas.
- 5.5 Expand environmental programming by focusing on new program development, partnerships, and development of facilities such as nature centers and interpretive trails.
- 5.6 Continue to support countywide sports, recreation programs, and special events through the provision of facilities.

Source: Goal 5 and associated policies are based on the 2008 PROS Plan.

## Goal 6: Development Standards

**Develop high quality facilities that are environmentally sustainable, appropriate for the site, connected to the surrounding neighborhood, universally accessible, safe, and easy to maintain for the long-term.**

- 6.1 Provide unique, innovative, state-of-the art, facilities to draw users from throughout the region and establish an identity/brand for PCPR.
  - 6.1.1 Create better curb appeal throughout the park system. Develop an action plan of small park improvements that address curb appeal and identity.
  - 6.1.2 At more developed sites, incorporate street tree planting, improved landscape maintenance, curbs, sidewalks and park signs to give a sense of arrival and pride.
  - 6.1.3 Incorporate site frontage improvements at more rural or conservation-oriented sites, ensuring that improvements are appropriate for the context.
- 6.2 **Context Sensitive Design.** Include elements in the design and development of facilities to contribute to community identity and reflect the local context, including the physical features on site, local history and culture, and neighbor and community preferences, including those specified in adopted Community



Plans where appropriate.

- 6.3 Accessibility.** Ensure that the location, design, development and redevelopment of park resources are accessible for all populations and are adaptable to changing recreational, demographic, and economic trends.
- 6.4 Scenic Views.** Incorporate viewpoints of local natural resources throughout the park system.
- 6.5 Interpretative Elements.** Incorporate opportunities for historical, cultural, and environmental interpretation into the park to inform and educate the public about its local and regional context.
- 6.6 Park Safety.**
  - 6.6.1** Consider innovative programs and the use of park design to increase park safety, security, and visibility.
  - 6.6.2** Incorporate Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) concepts and techniques in the design, development, and maintenance of the park system.
  - 6.6.3** Identify and prioritize park safety improvements that address park user safety, perceptions of safety, and safety for all personnel.
- 6.7 Sustainability Practices.** Incorporate sustainability practices into the design, development, and maintenance of park system.
  - 6.7.1** Incorporate low impact development techniques into park and trail designs, and be a leader in demonstrating sustainable building practices.
  - 6.7.2** Develop or retain native plant communities to provide habitat, reduce ongoing maintenance, conserve water, and to provide interpretive opportunities.
  - 6.7.3** Considering the use of recycled materials in the construction of park system facilities.
  - 6.7.4** Enrich the park system by facilitating sustainable building and land management practices and utilizing smart design.
  - 6.7.5** Develop and manage parks to protect and enhance wetlands, waterways, and water quality

## **6.8 Park System Maintenance.**

- 6.8.1** Consider the maintenance costs and staffing levels associated with acquisition, development, or renovation of parks or natural areas, and adjust the annual operating budget accordingly for adequate maintenance funding of the system expansion.
  - 6.8.2** Implement and fund maintenance frequency protocols that maximize the life of County park and recreation assets.
  - 6.8.3** Minimize impacts of park maintenance and operation practices through the use of environmentally sound methods such as Integrated Pest Management.
  - 6.8.4** Invest in preventative maintenance and upgrades to parks and facilities to maximize long-term benefits.
  - 6.8.5** Maximize operational efficiency to provide the greatest public benefit for the resources expended when park improvements are made.
- 6.9** Design indoor and outdoor recreation facilities with the capacity to support increased recreation programming and provide year-round recreation opportunities.
  - 6.10** Park system facilities should be buffered from incompatible uses.
  - 6.11.** Ensure park system properties are connected to the surrounding communities through safe pedestrian access.

Source: Based on the 2008 PROS Plan and 2009 Trails Plan.

## **Goal 7: Stewardship**

**Provide efficient and effective management of park system resources in a sustainable and environmentally beneficial manner that contributes to a healthy, livable community and a rich natural park experience.**

- 7.1 Stewardship and Management Plans.** Stewardship and management plans should be prepared for all park system properties that have been acquired by or dedicated to the county.
  - 7.1.1** The foremost management objectives of individual open space lands should follow directly from the purposes for which the land was acquired.

**7.1.2** Management of county open space lands should consider the regional context of ecosystems and adjacent land uses. Management plans may be prepared for a geographic area that is larger than an individual parcel.

**7.1.3** Management of individual open space lands, including those under agricultural easements, should follow good stewardship practices and other techniques that protect and preserve natural and cultural resources.

**7.1.4** Management Plans should address issues such as long-term maintenance, restoration, and permitted uses within the open space site, invasive weed removal, and appropriate public access.

**7.2 New Facility Priorities.** Prioritize new facility development, based on criteria such as demonstrated need, population served, a facility's regional draw, revenue-generating potential, innovation or uniqueness of services, and ability to increase programming options within identified core program areas.

**7.3 Project Priorities.** Use the following criteria to prioritize capital projects:

- Improve maintenance efficiency. Projects that improve maintenance efficiency or that will reduce life-cycle costs should be given high priority.
- Utilize alternative funding or partnerships. Projects that have potential to be funded through grants, donations, or partner contributions should receive higher priority than projects without other funding opportunities.
- Ensure equitable distribution. Priority consideration should be given to ensure that improvement projects are distributed equitably throughout the County, based on the Service Regions concept presented in this Plan.
- Provide the “biggest bang for the buck.” Projects where the cost/benefit ratio is favorable should have a high priority. In other words, projects that are less costly but serve a broader population are desired. In comparison, a project that is costlier, meets a localized need, or serves a limited number of residents would be assigned a lesser priority, even though these projects are still valuable.
- Implement existing master plans. Projects called for in adopted site master plans should be given a high priority.
- Strengthen the community. Proposed projects should be prioritized based on their ability to

strengthen community identity, foster interaction between citizens, and build true community. For example, projects that were also identified in community plans, would serve a diverse cross-section of the community or projects that support community events should be assigned a higher priority.

- Projects that meet more than one of the six criteria described above should be given preference.

**7.4 Natural Area Management Strategy.** Develop a natural area management strategy to ensure that resources are maintained and conserved. The management strategy should address issues such as invasive weed removal, restoration projects, limited access areas, etc.

Source: Goal 7 and associated policies are based on the 2008 PROS Plan and Comprehensive Plan.

## Goal 8: Funding

**Use effective and innovative funding methods to build, maintain, operate, and promote the park, recreation, and open space system.**

- 8.1** Develop and maintain diverse funding for the acquisition, development, and operation and maintenance of park land, recreation facilities, and trails to meet community recreation needs.
- 8.2** Actively seek innovative funding methods to retain financial flexibility, match user interests, and increase facility services.
- 8.3** Periodically evaluate park impact fees to ensure that rates are sufficient to meet increased recreation demands due to growth.
- 8.4** Develop partnerships with public and private agencies when advantageous to the County and which result in increased recreation opportunities for County residents.
- 8.5** Provide sufficient operations funding to support County residents' desired level of service.
- 8.6** Provide technical assistance or facilitate in the formation of local park and recreation service areas, park and recreation service districts, or metropolitan park districts where appropriate to implement the recommendations of adopted Community Plans.
- 8.7** Employ alternate service provision models, where feasible, to enhance efficient and effective operations.

Source: Goal 8 and associated policies are based on the 2008 PROS Plan.



## Goal 9: Regional Coordination

**Serve as a regional coordinator, leading the effort to forge partnerships and foster opportunities for countywide collaboration among all major recreation providers in the provision of parks, open space, trails, facilities, programs, and services.**

- 9.1 Create a comprehensive, balanced park and recreational system that integrates County facilities and services with resources available from other jurisdictions, organizations, and public and private agencies to meet the vision and goals set forth in this plan.
- 9.2 Cooperate with other public and private agencies, as well as with private landowners, to conserve land and resources necessary to provide high quality, convenient park and recreation facilities.
- 9.3 Cooperate with other county departments to define, identify, retain, and conserve open space within the County in order to better serve our citizens.
- 9.4 Coordinate with the cities, school districts, and other public and private agencies to avoid duplication, improve facility quality and availability, reduce costs, and represent local resident interests through joint planning and development efforts.
- 9.5 Serve as a provider of recreation facilities to support programming and recreation opportunities provided by other public and private groups in the community.
- 9.6 Where appropriate and economically feasible, assist local park districts in the conservation, development and operation of parks and recreational facilities of interest to the regional population, such as water access, trail-related recreation, and regional parks or County parks.
- 9.7 Where appropriate, initiate or participate in the joint planning and provision of programs with other public and private agencies to meet County recreation needs.
- 9.8 Coordinate with agencies countywide to conserve and provide public access to environmentally sensitive areas and sites that are especially unique to the Pierce County area, including shorelines.
- 9.9 Coordinate with other park agencies, park and recreation districts, metropolitan park districts, park and recreation service areas, and private providers to ensure there is an adequate range and supply of active recreation facilities and programs in Pierce County.

- 9.10 Trail Network Coordination.** Coordinate with cities and local communities, federal agencies, tribes, park districts, user groups and organizations, and neighboring counties to ensure the successful development of a regional trails system.
- 9.10.1** Coordinate and cooperate with surrounding jurisdictions and providers to create a seamless regional trails system.
  - 9.10.2** Encourage special purpose districts, cities, towns, ports, tribes and community plan areas to provide trail connections through their jurisdictions and provide access to the regional trails system.
  - 9.10.3** Encourage developers and private land owners to provide trail connections through their developments and provide access to the regional trails system.
  - 9.10.4** Promote public/private partnerships in development, implementation, operation and maintenance trail projects.
  - 9.10.5** Coordinate with local trail interest groups and advocates in development, implementation, operation and maintenance of trail projects.
  - 9.10.6** Enhance coordination for improved response time to trail maintenance issues.
  - 9.10.7** Coordinate with utility providers for scheduling maintenance along trail corridors to ensure user notification of disruptions, and anticipate opportunities for trail improvements.

Source: Goal 9 and associated policies are based on the 2008 PROS Plan and 2009 Trails Plan.

## Goal 10: Public Involvement

**Engage Pierce County residents in the planning, stewardship, and programming of the park system, and provide effective community outreach and marketing to increase public awareness and support of recreation services.**

- 10.1** Increase name recognition and establish an identity/brand for PCPR.
- 10.2** Promote Pierce County as a recreation and tourist destination, marketing the region's system of open spaces and natural resources as an economic driver and asset for the county.
- 10.3** Enhance customer service by making information and registration more accessible to the community.

- 10.4** Increase public awareness of the County park system.
- 10.5** Consider partnership opportunities for advertising parks, programs, and services County-wide to promote PCPR to a wider group of potential park and facility users.
- 10.6** Promote volunteerism to enhance community ownership and stewardship of parks, recreation programs, and services. In particular, encourage citizen involvement and participation in maintaining, improving, and restoring parks and natural areas.
- 10.7** Provide opportunities for public input in park planning and design decisions.
- 10.8** Balance the perspectives of nearby neighbors with community preferences, regional needs, staff knowledge, and County regulations to create effective plans and designs for parks, facilities, and programs.
- 10.9** Provide educational services and programs which increase public awareness of the county's irreplaceable and renewable resources and the stewardship practices for land or ecosystem conservation.

Source: Goal 10 and associated policies are based on the 2008 PROS Plan.

## IMPLICATIONS

The planning framework set forth in this chapter defines a position and outlines the approach PCPR will take in providing parks, recreation facilities, and programs. As noted in the mission and vision, this is a regional approach that strives to enhance community livability through the provision of parks and recreation services County-wide. As noted in the values, goals, and objectives, this approach has been designed inclusively to take into account local preferences, priorities, and resources, reflecting community values in a more place-specific way. This balance between local and regional aspirations for the park system will be reflected in the recommendations and projects noted in the Capital Facilities Plan in the next chapter. This vision will be carried through the implementation of the PROS Plan.



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# 6. IMPLEMENTATION

## INTRODUCTION

Chapter 6 notes strategies and recommendations to enhance the park and open space system in Pierce County. These strategies and projects support the vision of the adaptive system, as outlined in Chapter 4, and the values, vision, goals, and objectives that were presented in Chapter 5. Specifically, this chapter:

- Presents strategies and actions for implementing the goals and objectives in the Plan;
- Discusses the proposed park system in terms of four service regions, with varying levels of service based on local needs;
- Presents a proposed park system, which includes the reclassification of many undeveloped park sites;
- Identifies prioritization criteria to determine priorities for implementation of specific capital projects; and
- Identifies specific capital improvements needed to create the proposed park system that reflects a future vision for park and recreation services in Pierce County.

## STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The following strategies, organized by topic area, are high priority actions to implement the goals and objectives presented in the previous chapter.

### Customer Service

- Establish customer service protocols for all employees, including maintenance employees, and conduct in-house training.
- Use the website to highlight the location of Pierce County Parks and Recreation (PCPR) parks throughout the County.
- Develop and implement consistent user feedback methods for programs and classes.
- Establish a complaint procedure where residents can report maintenance issues, graffiti, and other issues easily and quickly by telephone or online. Set a response time goal, and report on performance.



## Capital Project Funding

- Expand or capitalize on existing sources of capital project funding to support park and facility development.
  - Continue to use the parks sales tax to fund park and facility improvements.
  - Continue to use REET as a funding source for parks improvements.
  - Evaluate impact fees to reflect the cost of expanding the system to support new development.
  - Continue to use Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax to fund path and trail projects.
- Explore bonding as a possible financing tool for priority projects.
- Continue devoting staff resources to securing outside grants, cash or in-kind donations, and other sources of capital project funding.
- Increase efforts to obtain land donations. Only accept donations that meet the goals and intent of this Plan, or sites that can be sold or exchanged to benefit the public.
- Consider a capital campaign or other fundraising method for special projects.
- Consider the appropriateness of creating Recreation Service Areas as referenced in RCW 36.68.400 as a mechanism to acquire, develop and operate recreation facilities throughout the County.
- Establishing partnerships around specific park or park facility projects.

## Operations Funding

- Implement a consistent system of data collection and tracking for programs and facilities, including operating costs, revenue generation, and participation.
- Develop a fee philosophy to determine pricing guidelines in consideration of cost recovery goals and public benefit. Review user fees and adjust them as needed according to this philosophy.
- Develop financial operations plans for major facilities (e.g., Sprinker Recreation Center, Heritage Recreation Center, Lakewood Community Center), including both cost recovery and participation goals. Regularly evaluate performance based on these metrics.
- Develop cost recovery targets for any major program areas not captured by the recreation facility operations plans, such as Special Events. Define direct and indirect costs and factor these into the cost recovery targets.
- Evaluate leases related to recreation services to establish a fair market cost for each. Identify operating and maintenance costs associated with the facilities. Develop a pricing structure that considers below cost, at cost, and above cost options in terms of recovering operating and maintenance costs. However, pricing decisions should also consider benefits such as community versus individual benefit, partnership opportunity, and programming opportunity (through programs offered by another provider). The discount policy should be consistent.

- Identify user fee opportunities for services, such as parking fees, concession, access or entry fees, etc. Before recommending any new fees, evaluate the administrative costs associated with the fee to ensure that the fee generates revenue and that the costs of administering it don't result in a cost.
- Continue seeking outside funding, such as sponsorships and cash or in-kind donations, from individuals, foundations, and corporations for recreation programs.
- Identify facilities, programs, and park improvements with revenue generating potential, and incorporate them into parks when consistent with the goals of this Plan.
- Consider partnerships or transferring responsibilities to other agencies as a means of reducing the cost of operating the park system.
- Provide technical assistance to groups or 501(c)(3) organizations that assist in supporting the park system or individual sites. The Foothills Trail Coalition is an example of such an organization.
- Continue to facilitate and encourage the formation of volunteer groups and adopt-a-park groups.
- Considering levy lid lift to establish dedicated maintenance and operations funding, as well as provide revenues for pay-as-you-go capital improvements

## Planning

- Vary the provision of parks and recreation services based on the strategies determined for the conceptual service regions described in the next section of this chapter. Note: These are not park and recreation service areas with taxing authority.
- Work with other County departments to evaluate all parks and open space owned by Pierce County, and consider how these sites fit into the community's vision and public use of parks and recreation, as well as the service regions described in this Plan.
- Take a leadership role to coordinate regional trail planning efforts within Pierce County. Completed. See Chapter 7.
- Work with Planning and Land Services (PALS) to streamline the permitting process for improvements to all existing parks.
- Work with PALS to revise land use requirements that small subdivisions supply a "neighborhood park" (the requirements for "on-site open space or recreation areas.") Consider establishing an "in-lieu" fee that developers would pay based on the number of houses or units. The fees would then be used to purchase land in accordance with this Plan. This will result in parks that contribute to a communitywide system of adequately sized parks that are easier and more efficient to maintain, and that can offer a greater variety of recreation facilities to residents.

- Expand collaboration with other County departments, so that 1) PCPR participates throughout all major planning efforts, as well as in development review and other land use processes; and 2) PCPR encourages Pierce County's Long Range Planning Division and other departments to be involved in the development of PCPR plans.
- Continue to pursue joint ventures with other recreation providers in the County, when opportunities arise that are consistent with this Plan.

## Design and Development

- Identify capital projects or upgrades that can reduce operating costs, and incorporate them into park sites when consistent with the site's master plan. Evaluate these on a "return on investment" basis.
- Develop a comprehensive park signage system for the park and trail system, in accordance with the recommendation in the Deferred Maintenance Plan.
- Implement a local park improvement program. This program should provide small amounts of funding or staff resources to assist with local park improvement initiatives. Funds should be awarded based on a competitive basis, and award criteria should include a requirement for matching funds or in-kind volunteer efforts, as well as consideration of Community Plan direction for the area.
- Use the criteria contained within this Plan when updating the PCPR Capital Improvement Plan each year.

- Incorporate natural resource enhancement into plans for park and facility development when appropriate.

## Operations

- Continue to implement the zonal management system to deliver park and recreation services more effectively and efficiently.
- Consider transferring appropriate sites to other jurisdictions or local park districts (as these develop) for management. Continue to maintain other existing sites as local parks or undeveloped open space.
- Invest in specialty maintenance equipment for field, trail, and facility maintenance.
- Establish a deferred maintenance account within the capital budget, and allocate funds annually to ensure that community assets are preserved for the long-term.
- Develop a routine and preventive maintenance program and protocol for PCPR facilities, equipment, vehicles, and other assets, including an annual budget allocation.
- Regularly assess long-term maintenance, repair and replacement needs for all PCPR assets.
- Anticipate increases in maintenance and operations funding as new parks are developed and new land is brought into the system.
- Increase natural resource management expertise through partnerships, staff development, and hiring.





## Marketing and Communications

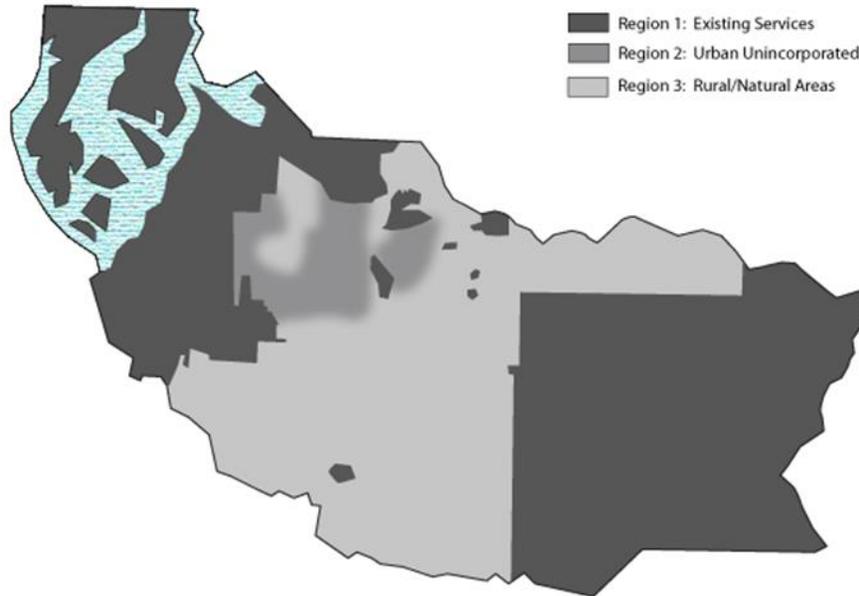
- Develop a “brand” for PCPR services, programs, and parks.
- Strengthen media relations.
- Increase efforts to inform residents about the benefits of parks and recreation and the value of PCPR parks and recreation resources.
- Implement a public information program to increase awareness of the PCPR “brand” and the parks, facilities and programs available.
- Devote resources to the promotion and marketing of revenue-generating programs and facilities.
- Track and evaluate the effectiveness of the public information program, and adjust as necessary to maximize effectiveness.
- Reference the website in all communications, and include information about transit routes and alternative transportation routes in event announcements.

## Proposed Service Regions

The preferred park system for PCPR reflects a different role in the provision of parks and recreation services within three service regions. Because of different opportunities and challenges in each of the three regions, PCPR will vary the

level of service accordingly to be able to meet the needs of residents countywide. This adaptive framework for delivering parks, recreation, and programming opportunities allows the County to respond more efficiently and strategically to the needs of Pierce County residents, equitably and in a context-sensitive manner.

**Figure 6-1. Service Areas**



Source: MIG 2008



## Region 1: Existing Services

PCPR is committed to providing recreation service to all residents of Pierce County. In many areas, however, incorporated cities, the Federal government, or existing parks districts are the primary providers of parks, recreation, and open space services. In these areas, PCPR has the following priorities:

- Provide regional-scale recreation opportunities, including regional parks and facilities, either alone or in partnership with other agencies or jurisdictions;
- Collaborate in the development of regional trails where appropriate, connecting to local trails where feasible;
- Collaborate to provide freshwater and saltwater access where appropriate; and
- Coordinate with existing providers of parks, facilities, and services, and serve as a clearinghouse for information across the county.

## Region 2: Urban Unincorporated

Many areas of Pierce County are rapidly urbanizing (or are already urbanized), but are not located within incorporated cities or existing parks jurisdictions. Located within identified Urban Growth Areas (UGAs), these areas have immediate parks, recreation, and open space needs that are not being met by other providers. In these areas, PCPR has a clear role in serving County residents in the following ways:

- Prioritize the development of regional parks, county parks, regional facilities, and open space to support the goals of this Plan. In Region 2, these parks should support a variety of recreation opportunities;
- Collaborate in the development of regional trails where appropriate, connecting to local trails where feasible;
- Provide freshwater and saltwater access where appropriate, either alone or through partnerships;
- Identify and acquire strategically-located local parks, with a goal of providing park access within 2-3 miles of all residents in this region (see criteria in Chapter 4). Utilize existing undeveloped parks and sites recommended in the Community Plans where appropriate;
- When property values show stable growth, consider the formation of park and recreation service areas, park and recreation districts, or metropolitan park districts. Provide technical assistance to these jurisdictions; and
- Coordinate with existing providers of parks, facilities, and services, and serve as a clearinghouse for information across the county.

## Region 3: Rural Areas

Large areas of Pierce County remain rural in character, including significant natural and forested areas mixed with agriculture and rural development. These assets require a different approach to service provision in order to conserve and enhance them in a way that allows for access

and recreation, while still balancing ecological needs. PCPR's priorities in Region 3 include:

- Prioritize the development of regional parks, county parks, regional facilities, and open space to support the goals of this Plan. In Region 3, the park system should primarily support passive and outdoor recreation and trail-oriented opportunities, land banking, environmental education, and interpretation;
- Explore opportunities for conservation of critical habitat, natural areas, and open space through partnerships or acquisition;
- Collaborate in the development of regional trails where appropriate, connecting to local trails where feasible;
- Provide water access where appropriate; and
- Coordinate with existing providers of parks, facilities, and services, and serve as a clearinghouse for information across the County.

## Proposed Park System

To achieve the vision, goals and objectives of this Plan, improvements are needed throughout the park system. The improvements include upgrades at existing sites, implementation of master plans, and new parks and high priority facilities. Some of these recommendations include the development of currently undeveloped parks as parks of other types, including Regional Parks, County Parks, Local Parks, Special Use Facilities, and Resource Conservancy Parks.

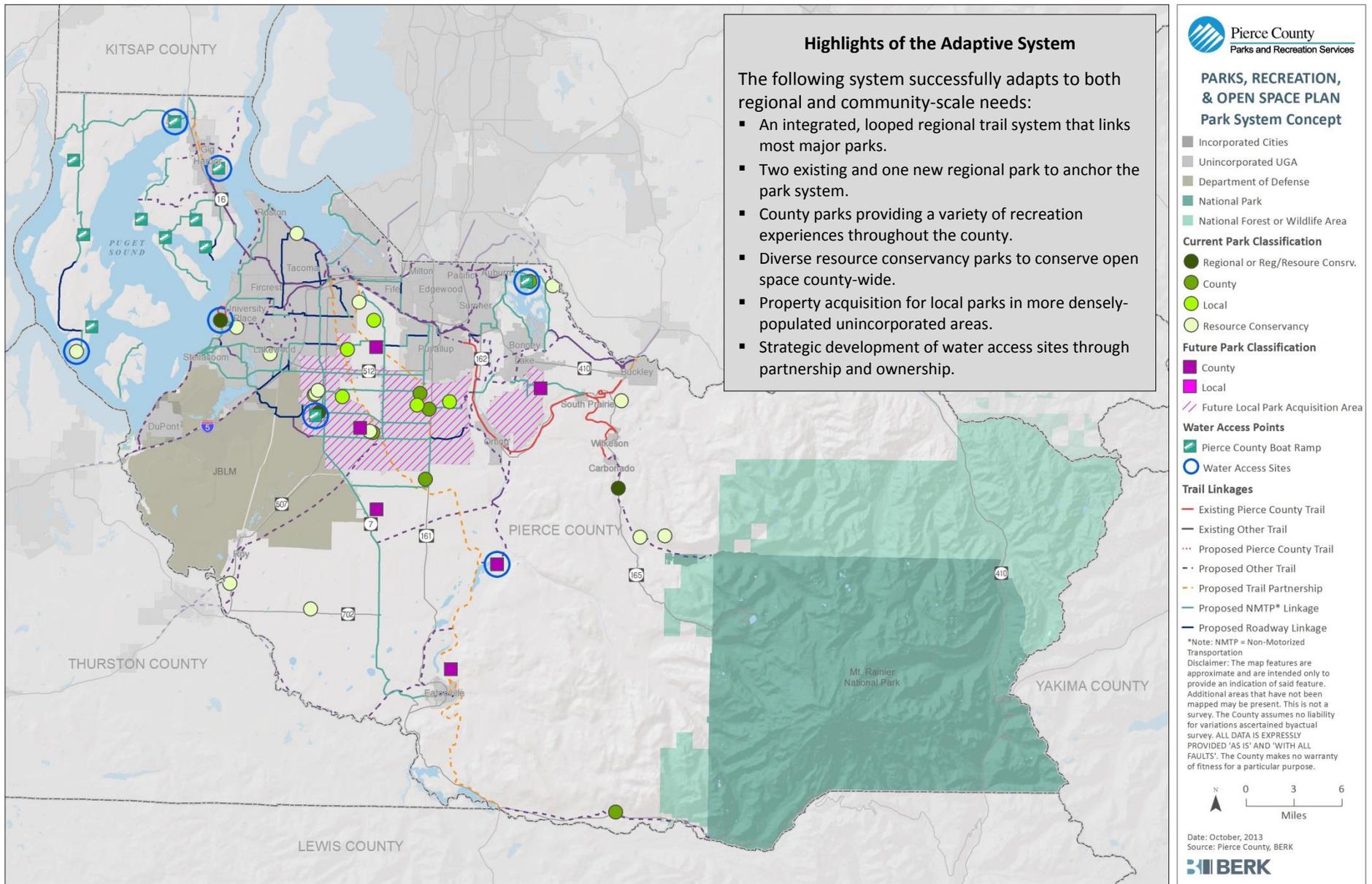
Figure 6-2 illustrates the proposed park system as it would be completed with projects identified in

Table 6-4 at the end of this chapter. Figure 6-2 identifies existing and proposed Regional Parks, County Parks, Resource Conservancy Parks, and Special Use Facilities. It shows a regional trail system, which is further detailed in Chapter 7. Figure 6-2 also illustrates the service area regions for targeted acquisitions of Local Park sites, as well as Special Use Facilities for water access.

Proposed parks included currently undeveloped park sites that should be reclassified and developed as specific park types, along with some of the proposed parks noted in the Adaptive Park system that will need to be acquired and developed.

As described in Chapter 4 several smaller, existing, undeveloped sites should be evaluated for their potential to meet local park needs in targeted service regions. All proposed local parks should be evaluated accordingly before these sites are land-banked to transfer to potential local jurisdictions.

Figure 6-2. Park System Concept



## Systemwide Improvements

A variety of specific park system improvements are needed to implement the Adaptive System described in Chapter 4 and this Chapter 6. A Capital Improvement Plan, presented at the end of chapter, notes specific capital improvements that are needed on a site by site basis. However, there are general improvements that are needed system-wide, which are noted below.

### Water Access Improvements

Water access, including visual as well as physical access, was identified as a high priority throughout the public involvement process. This includes access to saltwater, freshwater, and rivers and creeks. Currently, many sites with water access opportunities are managed by others, including other cities, park and recreation districts, and Pierce County departments, such as the Public Development Program in the Public Works and Utilities Department. County actions could include:

- Collaborate with other agencies and departments to utilize existing sites as opportunities to increase water access.
- Establish an opportunity fund so that funding is available to acquire or purchase easements for water access when sites become available.
- Pursue projects that address water access needs, such as public piers, public beach access, public boat moorage, and water viewpoints, and that have the carrying capacity to facilitate public use as well as a minimum of public use amenities such as appropriate traffic provisions, parking and restrooms.

- Work with partners to increase the public access to and opportunities for public participation in boating by building additional public boat launches, boat park facilities, and related amenities.

### Open Space Conservation

Community members indicated that open space is important for both resource conservation and recreation (public access). PCPR conserves open space through the parks it owns and maintains. However, it is only one of many agencies and non-profits working addressing conservation needs in Pierce County. PCPR should collaborate with other departments and groups to ensure that significant natural areas, open space corridors, and viewsheds are acquired or conserved in a manner consistent with the Open Spaces Corridors map.

### Cemeteries

PCPR maintains four cemeteries, including the Lake Tapps Cemetery, Old Settlers Cemetery, and Roy Cemetery. Recommendations include:

- Continue to maintain in compliance with RCW requirements.
- Actively pursue opportunities to partner with other groups or jurisdictions in the maintenance and management of these sites.

### Deferred Maintenance Initiatives

Deferred maintenance is an issue throughout the park system. Projects are needed at nearly every site in the system, representing a significant expenditure for PCPR to upgrade aging parks. A database of all deferred maintenance projects is



needed to manage the project load and define the scope of maintenance needs.

PCPR completed a Deferred Maintenance Review in 2007, identifying a series of overall initiatives as well as prioritized site-specific deferred maintenance improvements at nine sites: Dawson Playfield, Gonyea Playfield, Heritage Recreation Center, Lake Tapps Park, Lidford Playfield, Mayfair Playfield, Meridian Habitat Park, and South Hill Community Park.<sup>1</sup> Since 2007, PCPR has expanded the database of deferred maintenance and it should be reviewed periodically to ensure the list is complete and current.

Other maintenance initiatives needed throughout the entire park system are identified below.

- Develop a playground improvement program which will provide for the replacement, renovation and/or renewal of each play structure in the system on a timely basis. The program should be designed to have new play structures installed approximately every 5 years in each park while rotating out approximately one-third of the equipment in each park at the same time. This will lead to a refreshed look on a regular basis and assure that all playground equipment is given a 15-year life.
- Develop an ADA barrier removal plan/transition plan for implementation.

- Craft a program to upgrade all bleachers to current safety standards over the next five years.
- Upgrade all irrigation systems to current standards for water conservation, reduced staff operator time and better turf and plant care.
- Develop a plan for the replacement of sub-standard restroom facilities with family-style units and establish a timeline. Consider the use of automatic timer controlled locking devices.
- Develop a program to improve the quality of turf for athletic fields.
- Develop a program and policies that promote sustainability by expanding recycling, using recycled products in park furniture, and utilizing native plant materials in landscape areas.

## Specific Proposals

Later in this chapter, a table of projects is presented in a capital improvement plan that lists the planned improvements for the PCPR park system by park classification.

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<sup>1</sup> The total cost for the priority projects at these nine sites was \$4,594,155, as per cost estimates based on 2007 industry prices.

# REVENUE PROJECTIONS

This section discusses Pierce County's capital facilities revenues dedicated to parks, recreation, and open space. These funding sources are dedicated to parks-related spending, either through statutory requirements (park sales tax and impact fees) or by County policy (real estate excise tax and motor vehicle fuel tax). Grants are also typically designated to specific park-related projects. In addition, PCPR also administers Conservation Futures property tax levy funds that are designed to preserve open space in both the unincorporated and incorporated areas of the County.

The purpose of this financial analysis is to understand the fiscal constraints of the Pierce County parks-related capital facilities spending. These revenue estimates were developed to assist in project prioritization and planning, but are not intended to be precise forecasts. Exact funding levels are difficult to predict given the uncertainties of funding sources. The estimates discussed in this section are intended for planning purposes; actual revenues are highly sensitive to local, state, and federal policy decisions; personal choices of residents; and other market forces.

Estimated future revenues have been projected for the Plan's 2014-2030 time period in year of expenditure dollars (YOES\$).

Some of the funds discussed in this analysis may be used to fund the maintenance and operations of existing capital facilities or to construct new ones. However, if maintenance and operations costs of existing facilities increase faster than revenues, jurisdictions are confronted with difficult decisions regarding whether to fund these costs at the expense of building new capital, or to adjust level of service standards. Those decisions will be made by the County Council and the executive leadership of the County according to the County's needs and opportunities. Every effort has been made in this analysis to include only those revenues that the County currently chooses to use for parks capital investments.

Table 6-1 summarizes projected total capital revenues dedicated to parks projects available over the planning period, including fund balances. Estimated future revenues for the conservation futures tax are shown separately in Table 6-2, as these funds are available for all Pierce County jurisdictions and are subject to a number of restrictions.



Note: Year of expenditure dollars is abbreviated as YOES\$.

**Table 6-1. Projected Funds Available for Capital Expenditures: Special Revenue Funds and Grants, (2013-2030 in YOES\$)**

<b>Total Parks</b>	<b>Subtotal 2014-2019</b>	<b>Subtotal 2020-2030</b>	<b>Total 2014-2030</b>	<b>Total with 2013 Fund Balances</b>
<b>Estimated Revenues</b>				
Impact Fees	3,356,988	6,864,962	<b>10,221,950</b>	<b>10,268,185</b>
Park Sales Tax	15,645,527	35,285,931	<b>50,931,457</b>	<b>50,982,442</b>
REET 2	6,492,734	17,970,816	<b>24,463,551</b>	<b>24,493,439</b>
Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax	1,895,957	3,761,062	<b>5,657,018</b>	<b>5,657,018</b>
Grants	2,561,896	5,264,426	<b>7,826,322</b>	<b>7,826,322</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>29,953,102</b>	<b>69,147,197</b>	<b>99,100,299</b>	<b>99,227,407</b>
<b>Committed Funds</b>				
Administration	4,382,593	10,221,243	14,603,836	14,603,836
Maintenance & Operation	8,491,274	19,803,659	28,294,933	28,294,933
Debt Service	9,435,232	7,166,294	16,601,526	16,601,526
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,309,099</b>	<b>37,191,196</b>	<b>59,500,295</b>	<b>59,500,295</b>
<b>Available Revenues</b>	<b>7,644,003</b>	<b>31,956,001</b>	<b>39,600,003</b>	<b>39,727,111</b>

Source: Pierce County, 2013; and BERK, 2013.

**Table 6-2. Projected Funds Available for Capital Expenditures: Conservation Futures, (2013-2030 in YOES\$)**

	<b>Subtotal 2014-2019</b>	<b>Subtotal 2020-2030</b>	<b>Revenue Total 2014-2030</b>	<b>Total with 2013 Fund Balances</b>
<b>Estimated Revenues</b>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>24,521,858</b>	<b>47,887,327</b>	<b>72,409,185</b>	<b>73,405,420</b>
<b>Committed Funds</b>				
Administration	1,716,530	3,352,113	5,068,643	5,068,643
Maintenance & Operation	3,187,842	6,225,352	9,413,194	9,413,194
Debt Service	9,277,600	10,823,919	20,101,519	20,101,519
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,181,972</b>	<b>20,401,384</b>	<b>34,583,356</b>	<b>34,583,356</b>
<b>Available Revenues</b>	<b>10,339,886</b>	<b>27,485,943</b>	<b>37,825,829</b>	<b>38,822,064</b>

Source: Pierce County, 2013; and BERK, 2013.

## **Assumptions**

The revenue projections included in this analysis are based on many assumptions, most of which are detailed in the sections that follow. However, there are several high-level assumptions that are called out below.

### ***General Revenue Assumptions***

This analysis makes assumptions about the growth in assessed value of real estate, which affects both Real Estate Excise Tax (REET) revenues and the Conservation Futures Levy that supports Park capital projects. The analysis assumes that real estate assessed values will increase at an annual rate of 3.0%. This rate of increase reflects a level similar to but slightly lower than long-term historical average levels of growth. General inflation is estimated at 3.5%.

### ***Committed Funds***

To develop a clear understanding of the amount of capital revenues that would be available for parks capital projects, it is important to net out funds committed to administration, maintenance and operations, and debt service.

Administrative and maintenance and operations expenditures are based on average annual expenditures for 2009-2013 as share of total revenues:

- Special Revenue Funds: 16% for Administration, 31% for O&M
- Conservation Futures: 7% for Administration, 13% for O&M

Amounts committed to debt service are based on repayment schedules for existing debt obligations,

including a 2006 revenue bond for Heritage Recreation Center construction and the purchase of property on the Foothills Trail between McMillin and Meeker (paid from Parks Sales Tax), a second 2006 revenue bond for additional Conservation Futures property acquisition (paid from Conservation Futures), Sprinker Community Center improvement loan (paid from Second REET), and a 2013 Foothills Trail property Acquisition loan (paid from Parks Sales Tax).

## **Parks Impact Fees**

A County can impose impact fees on new residential developments to help fund needed capital parks projects to serve the new development. Impact fees can be used to pay the proportional share that each development benefits from public facilities, but cannot be used to correct existing deficiencies. Parks impact fees may only be charged on developments in unincorporated areas of the County.

Impact fees can be used on development, site acquisition, or debt service for projects that serve a new development. Pierce County currently imposes impact fees at the following rates (as updated in November 2013):

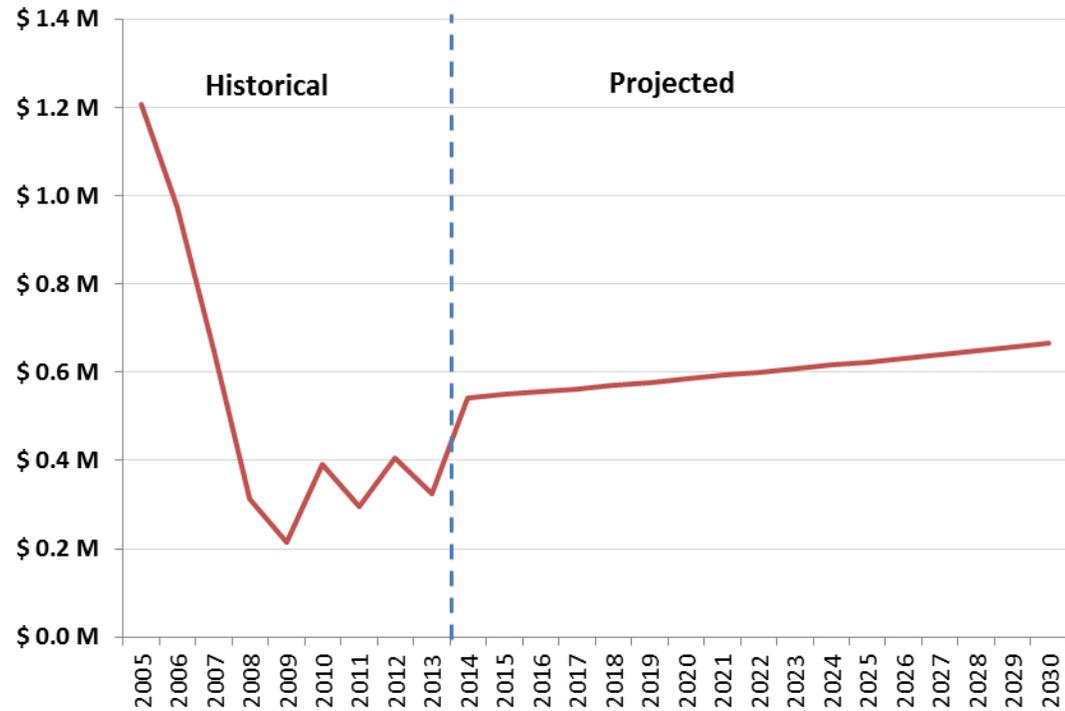
- Single family: \$375 per unit
- Multi-family: \$190 per unit

**Assumptions.** Since impact fees are related to new residential development, this analysis estimates future revenues based on projected residential construction in the unincorporated area of the county. The housing unit projections are based on the 2030 figures from Adopted Countywide Planning Policies for Pierce County.

The analysis does not assume any future impact fee rate adjustments, although rates are likely to be reviewed, and perhaps adjusted, by the County every few years based on future project needs.

Figure 6-3 shows historical park impact fee revenues to the left of the dotted line and estimated future revenues to the right.

**Figure 6-3. Actual and Projected Impact Fee Revenues (2005-2030 in YOES\$)**



Source: Pierce County, 2013; and BERK, 2013

## Conservation Futures Tax

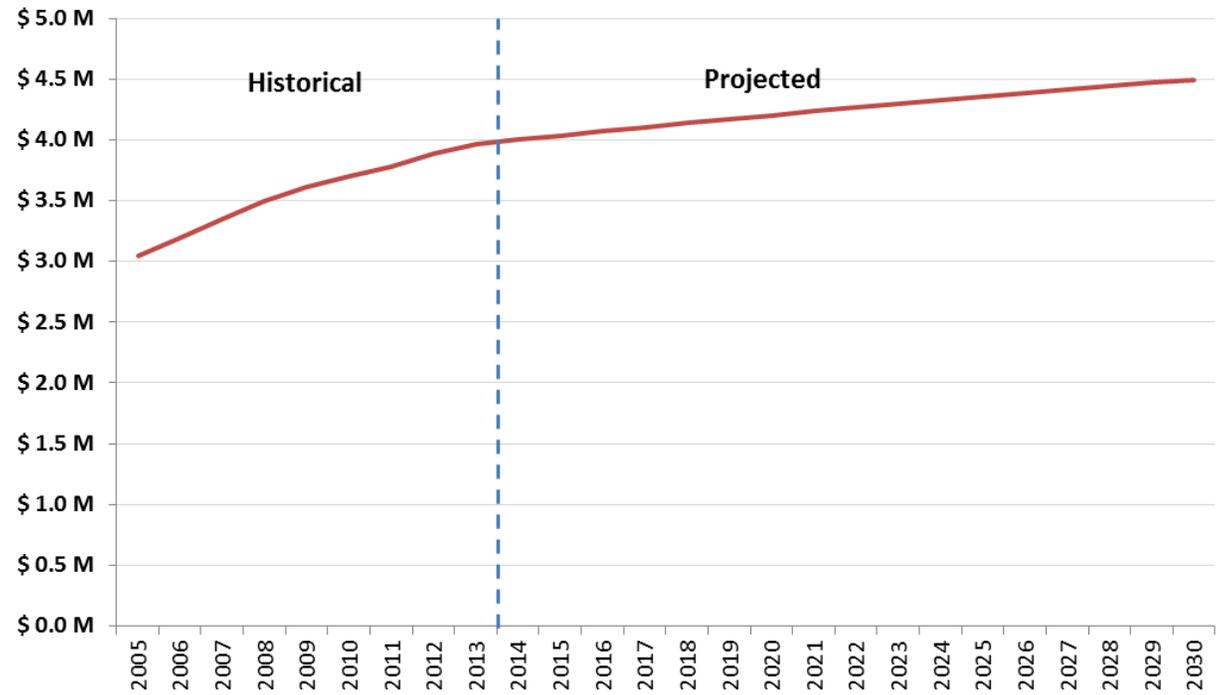
The Conservation Futures Tax is a property tax assessed on all taxable property in Pierce County, including both incorporated and unincorporated areas. According to state laws (RCWs 84.34.210 and 84.34.220) revenues from this tax may be used for acquisition of open space land, farm and agricultural land, and timber land.

Property tax revenues were significantly impacted by the passage of Initiative 747 in 2001, which limits property tax collections increases to 1.0% of the previous year's revenues plus new construction. In inflation-adjusted terms, revenues from property tax are actually declining, since the 1.0% allowable increase does not keep pace with inflation (which has averaged about 3.0% in the recent past) or with population growth.

**Assumptions.** This analysis assumes a 3.0% annual growth in assessed values, which is in line with historical averages. The current levy rate for the Conservation Futures Tax is 6.25 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value countywide. Because assessed value increases each year faster than 1.0% while levy revenues are only allowed to increase at 1.0% plus new construction, the levy rate necessarily declines each year. Pierce County has historically collected the maximum revenue each year at its current rate, including the 1% growth, but elected not to pass the 1% increase in 2013. The only way it could receive additional revenues beyond what is projected below is to pass a voter-approved levy increase.

Figure 6-4 shows historical Conservation Futures Tax revenues to the left of the dotted line and estimated future revenues to the right with no levee increase for a conservative analysis.

**Figure 6-4. Actual and Projected Conservation Futures Revenues  
(2005-2030 in YOE\$)**



Source: Pierce County, 2013; and BERK, 2013.

### Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax

Counties and cities receive a portion of the Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax (MVFT) levied by the State, based on a complex reimbursement formula based largely on road miles within the jurisdiction.

Counties are required to spend 0.42% of their gas tax receipts on paths and trails, unless that amount in any year is \$3,000 or less. These funds may be accumulated in a reserve fund for up to 10 years before spending (RCW 47.30.030 and .050)

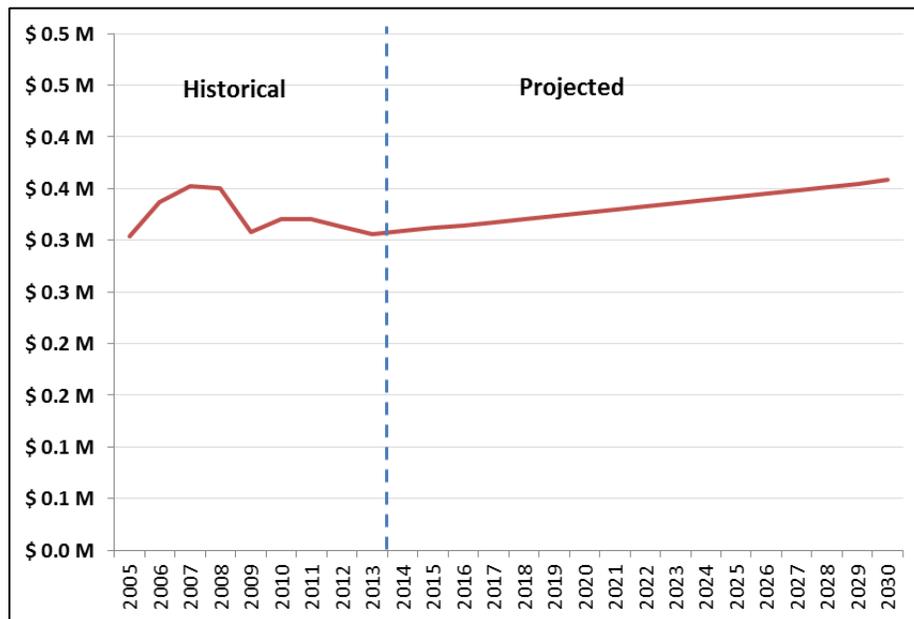
Pierce County dedicates 3 percent of the MVFT to paths and trails.

**Assumptions.** State MVFT rates saw a series of voter-approved increases in past years. Most of those additional funds, however, were earmarked

for specific transportation projects throughout the State, and local jurisdictions did not see a noticeable increase in average revenues. In addition, the last increase was in 2008 and no increase in the state rate is expected again in the near future. In 2013, the County has received about \$0.81 per capita in MVFT revenues dedicated to paths and trails (0.42% of total gas tax receipts). This ratio is held at \$0.81 per capita in the future so MVFT revenues increase in proportion to countywide population increases.

Figure 6-5 shows historical motor vehicle fuel tax revenues for paths and trails to the left of the dotted line and projected future revenues to the right.

**Figure 6-5. Actual and Projected Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax Revenues for Paths and Trails (2005-2030 in YOES)**



Source: Pierce County, 2013; and BERK, 2013.

## Grants

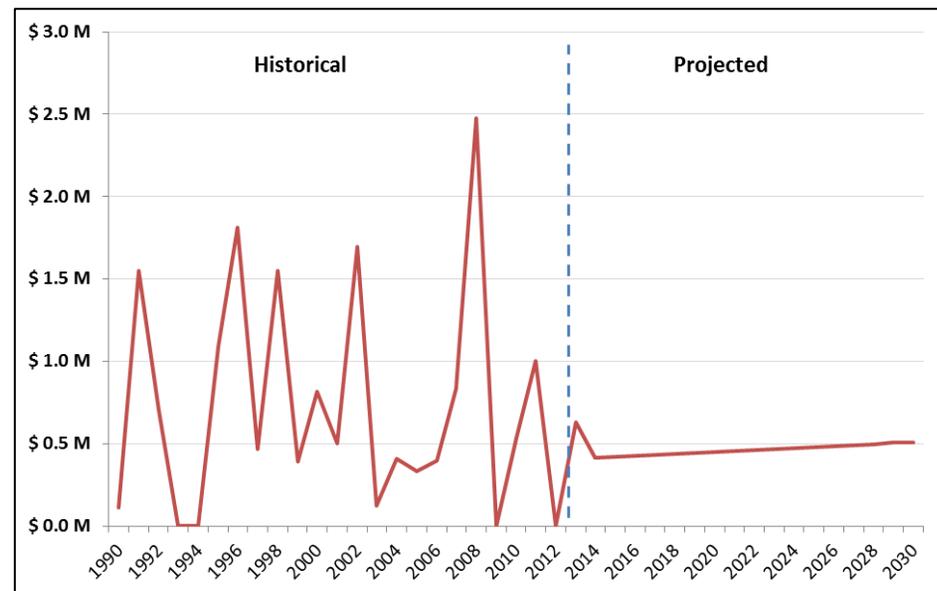
Additional revenues for parks capital projects and acquisitions generally comes from state and federal grants. State grants, which usually come from the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO), make up the largest of these sources.

**Assumptions.** Because grants are competed for on a state or national level, this analysis estimates these revenues on a per capita basis on the assumption that over time a jurisdiction will generally receive its “fair share” of available grant revenues. Over the last decade (2000-2013), the County has received about \$0.91 per capita in combined state and federal grant revenues. However, over the last five years (2009-2013), the

per capita amount declined to about \$0.54. To be conservative, this ratio is held at \$0.50 per capita in the future so grant revenues increase in proportion to countywide population increases.

Figure 6-6 shows historical revenues to the left of the dotted line and estimated future revenues to the right. An average annual dollar amount is assumed in each year for this analysis. However, in reality these dollars will vary greatly from year to year and will likely resemble the trend of peaks and valleys shown in historical data. While using an annual average does not fully represent the County’s future cash flow of grant dollars, it approximates how many total dollars will be received over the study period.

**Figure 6-6. Actual and Projected Grant Revenues (1990-2030 in YOES\$)**



Source: Pierce County, 2013; and BERK, 2013.

## **Parks Sales Taxes**

Unique to Pierce County, the parks sales tax equal to one tenth of one percent was approved by County voters in 2000. The tax is to be used for regional and local parks, accredited zoos, aquariums, and wildlife preserves. The allocation of the tax receipts was established as 50% for the Zoo/Trek authority and 50% for the cities and Pierce County. The second 50% is in turn allocated to the cities (or Metro Park Districts) and the County based upon the most recent state certified population figures.

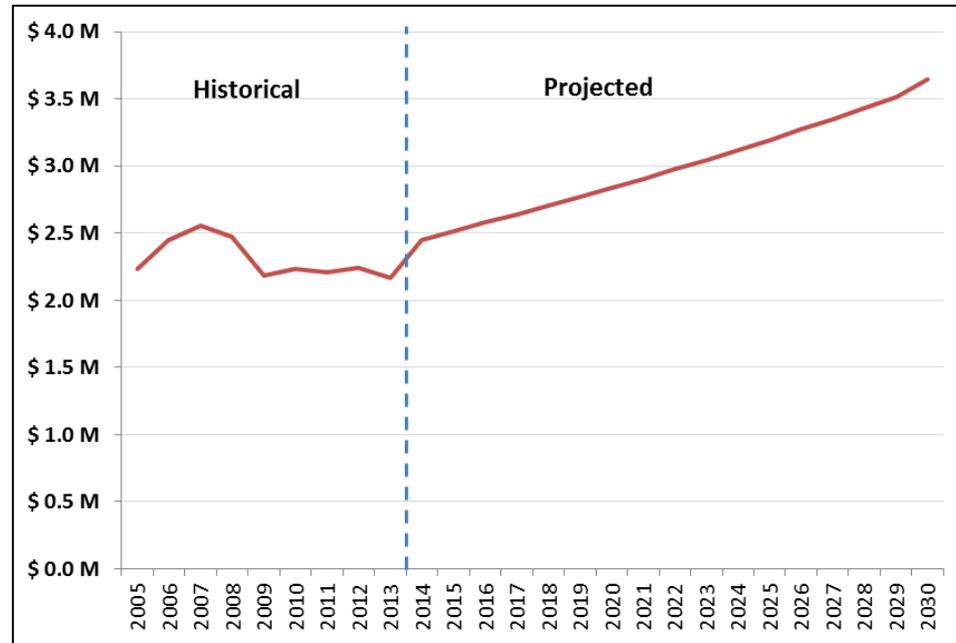
These revenues can be used only to fund costs associated with financing, acquisition, construction, and maintenance and operations of parks located within Pierce County. The funds cannot be used to replace or supplant existing per capita funding.

**Assumptions.** The estimates of parks sales tax revenues are based on growth in Taxable Retail

Sales (TRS) over the planning period. TRS fluctuates from year to year, based on the business cycle and consumer confidence, making it difficult to project into the future. Pierce County TRS peaked in 2007, and have seen steep declines since then due to the economic downturn; however, the retail spending and new construction have increased in the recent years, bringing an uptick in TRS. Because of recent economic recovery, this analysis assumes higher growth in TRS for 2013 through 2015, decreasing to 3.5% annually by 2016, which is more in line with statewide historical averages. The estimates are further calculated based on proportion of the County's population living in unincorporated areas.

Figure 6-7 shows historical revenues to the left of the dotted line and estimated future revenues to the right.

**Figure 6-7. Actual and Projected Park Sales Tax Revenues (2005-2030 in YOES\$)**



Source: Pierce County, 2013; and BERK, 2013

**Real Estate Excise Tax (REET)**

A real estate excise tax (REET) is levied on all real estate sales measured by the full selling price, including the amount of any liens, mortgages, and other debts given to secure the purchase. All cities and counties may levy a 0.25% of the full sale price of real estate (described as "the first quarter percent of the real estate excise tax" or "REET 1"). Cities and counties that are planning under the Growth Management Act (GMA) have the authority to levy a second quarter percent tax (REET 2). Counties can collect REET revenues only on transactions in the unincorporated portions of the jurisdiction.

Because this funding may be used for different types of capital and is not restricted to parks only, it is up to the discretion of each jurisdiction as to how they choose to spend these funds. Pierce County currently allocates 75% of REET 2 to transportation projects and 25% for parks and recreation projects.

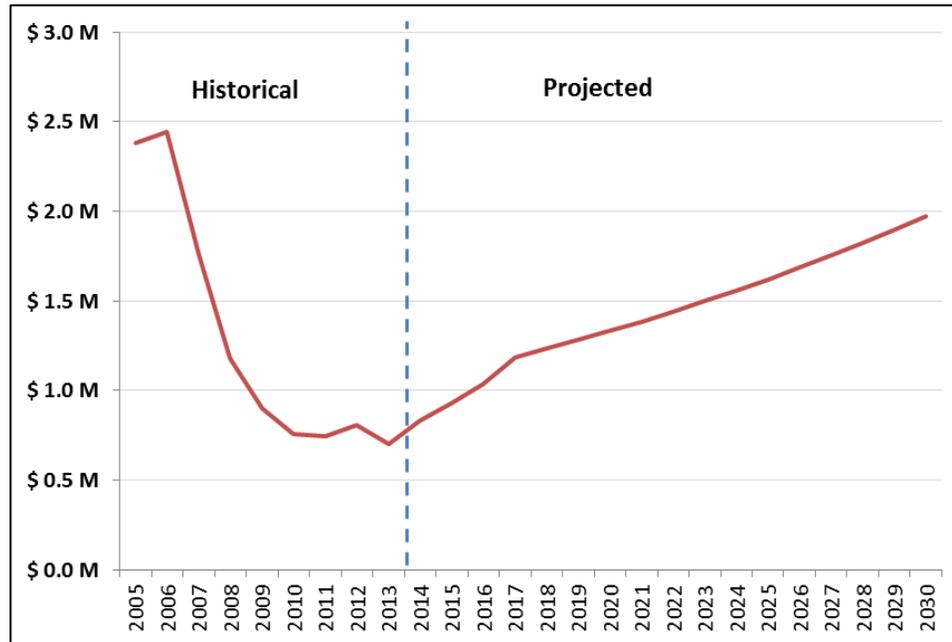
Since REET is based on the total value of real estate transactions in a given year, the amount of REET revenues a county receives can vary substantially from year to year based on the normal fluctuations in the real estate market. During years when the real estate market is active, revenues are high, and during softer real estate markets (as demonstrated in the last several years), revenues are lower.

**Assumptions:** Because REET dollars are directly related to the sale and value of real estate, this analysis calculates REET revenues as share of total assessed value (AV) for unincorporated Pierce County. Because of recent economic recovery, this analysis assumes gradual growth in the share of AV between 2014 and 2016,

increasing to 0.003% annually by 2017, which is more in line with the average over the past 8 years (2006 through 2013).

Figure 6-8 shows historical revenues to the left of the dotted line and estimated future revenues to the right.

**Figure 6-8. Actual and Projected REET 2 Revenues (2005-2030 in YOES\$)**



Source: Pierce County, 2013; and BERK, 2013.

## CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Based on the Adaptive Plan concept in Figure 6-2 a Capital Improvement Program (CIP) has been developed for the 2014-2030 period. Table 6-4 indicates whether each project involves acquisition, planning, or development. A brief description is given for each project, along with a preliminary priority and a planning-level project cost in 2008 dollars, the original year the Adaptive System Plan was developed. Project costs will need to be updated to the appropriate year by a factor to adjust for inflation. In addition, cost projections should be refined and revised as implementation moves closer and more site-specific information is known. "N/A" is noted for Not Applicable in cases where no cost is needed, and "NIC" is noted for Not Included in Cost in cases where costs will be developed as part of future planning efforts. The CIP includes projects that are needed to support the vision, goals, and objectives in this PROS Plan. Some can be implemented immediately, but others will need to be carried out over the long term, within the 15-year timeframe for this Plan, or in some cases, even beyond. For example, while residents will soon be enjoying the recreational benefits offered by many of the proposed parks on Figure 6-2 other parks may not feasibly be completed by 2030, particularly those subject to additional funding or acquisition.

The total cost of the Adaptive System plan is \$325.1 million. In addition to the Resource Conservancy projects in Table 6-4, there are other habitat-related capital projects associated with salmon recovery, flood hazard reduction, and

shoreline restoration described in Chapter 8 and Appendix D. In contrast to the total cost of the Adaptive System, the above revenue analysis projects \$39.7 million in special revenues and grants and \$38.8 million in Conservation Futures funds, not all of which would be awarded to Pierce County. With the difference in revenues and costs prioritization of the projects is important.

Beyond the park system improvements, the following plans are hereby incorporated by reference in order to facilitate habitat-related capital improvements:

- Rivers Flood Hazard Management Plan: 2013
- Salmon Habitat Protection and Restoration Strategy, WRIA 10 and 12: 2012
- Shoreline Master Program 2014
- Watershed Basin Plans: 1995-2012

See also Appendix D for a summary of habitat capital improvement projects and costs, where available.

### Prioritization

All projects discussed within this Plan assist in meeting Plan goals and objectives. However, not all of these projects can be implemented within the next six years, given the County's limited funding resources. A set of criteria was developed to assist in the CIP decision-making process. By applying these criteria, PCPR can make decisions about which projects should move forward first in alignment with the community values and visions as put forth in the Plan.

The 2008 PROS Plan used the following criteria to prioritize projects, and these criteria have been

validated in the 2014 PROS Plan as still relevant for project prioritization (see Chapter 5 for the related policy):

- Improves maintenance efficiency.
- Utilizes alternative funding or partnerships.
- Ensures equitable distribution.
- Provides the “biggest bang for the buck.”
- Implements existing master plans.
- Strengthens the community.
- Projects that meet more than one of the six criteria described above should be given preference.

Based on these criteria, the planning team assigned a priority of 1-3 for each project in Table

6-4, with Priority 1 being those projects with the highest priority for implementation, and which should be implemented as soon as possible. Priority 2 projects are also important, but either as a second step in a series or to be completed in the next few years. For example, a site master plan should be in place prior to construction or development at a specific park. However, in some cases, where a master plan has already been initiated, park development may also be noted as Priority 1. Priority 3 projects are long-term projects (six plus years in the future) that should only be implemented if special funding, such as a donation or specialized grant, is available to support them. Priority 2 and 3 projects remain important to the park system; if special funding opportunities arise, these should be reprioritized.

In addition to the base prioritization process in 2008, the 2014 PROS Plan considers an additional “priority screen”: “public priority” based on public outreach in Chapter 4. As shown in Table 6-3, top

public priorities include conservation of natural and resource areas and family oriented recreation. These priorities are aligned with the 2008 PROS Plan values too.

**Table 6-3. CIP Prioritization Criteria: Public Priorities**

Priority Rank	Priority – 2013 Statistically Valid Telephone Survey	2013 Survey % Extremely Important Mean Score	2008 PROS Plan Value
1	is retaining trees and wooded areas for beautification, clean air, and public enjoyment	62% 4.36	Quality of Life Conservation
2	are wildlife habitat conservation such as salmon streams, wetlands, and other environmentally significant areas	58% 4.29	Quality of Life Conservation
3	are facilities for family activities like playgrounds, picnic areas, and play areas	54% 4.40	Access and Connectivity
4	are open space such as farmlands, working forests, and other natural areas	54% 4.28	Quality of Life Conservation
5	are active recreation facilities in parks like trails for walking, running, biking, and Frisbee Golf	46% 4.20	Access and Connectivity Inclusiveness
6	are regional trails that connect community spaces that can be used for commuting, exercising, or getting around without a car	45% 4.10	Access and Connectivity
7	is offering facilities for league and team sports, such as athletic fields and courts for things like soccer, baseball, basketball, or tennis	45% 4.12	Access and Connectivity Inclusiveness
8	are waterfront facilities like boat launches, docks, fishing areas, and beaches	41% 4.06	Access and Connectivity
9	are indoor facilities like gyms, community centers, or ice rinks or recreation rooms	35% 3.90	Access and Connectivity Inclusiveness
10	are golf courses such as Chamber Bay, Spanaway, and Fort Steilacoom	19% 3.05	Access and Connectivity Inclusiveness

Source: EMC 2013

Based on the various priority screens, key projects include those that:

- Promote open space and habitat conservation
- Support family friendly activities such as picnic areas and playgrounds
- Preserve and enhance current facilities

To stretch dollars, combinations of proposals in different six year periods could include:

- **Community Values and Wise Investments.** Emphasis on Resource Conservancy Parks such as acquisition of lands for preservation, education, and trail access. Secondary focus to develop County Parks on existing undeveloped sites. Continue to tackle deferred maintenance annually.
- **Distributed Parks and Recreation Investments:** Make progress on all categories of parks and recreation – Regional, County, Local, Special Use, Linear Parks/Trails, and Deferred Maintenance.

## Recommended Levels of Service and Priorities

Given the difference in revenues compared to the cost of the plan, the 2014 PROS Plan proposes to prioritize resources effectively in the near term while promoting the park system vision over the long-term with three levels of service (LOS) standards described more fully in Chapter 4:

■ **Year 2019 “base” LOS** of 5.2 acres per 1,000 population. One programmed and funded project is included in the 2014 to 2019 period, particularly the Foothills Trail - Buckley to South Prairie segment.

■ **Year 2030 “base” LOS** of 5.4 acres per 1,000 people. This 20-year base LOS reflects the Year 2019 projects, plus the development of one County Park site. The 20-year base LOS assumes approximately 75 acres per year collectively of Resource Conservancy Parks and Linear Park/Trail facilities to help implement policies and goals for habitat conservation.<sup>2</sup> It is a LOS the County would commit to funding within projected available resources.

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<sup>2</sup> Since the Conservation Futures program began in 1991, about 160 acres/year have been conserved. The assumption is that nearly half of future awards would be added to the Park system annually (~75 acres per year).

■ **Year 2030 “target” LOS** of 6.6 acres per 1,000, increasing the total LOS by about 1.4 acres per 1,000 compared to the 2019 LOS (and 1.0 acre per 1,000 population above the current 2013 LOS). This anticipates the completion of the Adaptive System Concept in Figure 6 2. The County would pursue additional funding and partnerships to complete remaining important elements of the plan including County Parks (5 more County Park sites), Local Park land banks (10-15 land banked sites equaling about 100 acres), and other opportunities

to create a linked park system with additional Resource Conservancy Parks and Linear Parks/Trails (another 50 acres conserved annually for a total of 500 acres between 2020 and 2030), and Water Access or other Special Use Facilities (about 140 acres of Special Use Parks). By 2019 only about 3 to 5 acres would be added, under the base LOS. Under the 2030 base LOS, about 900 acres of parks would be added. If funding is successful park additions could rise to 2,100 acres under the Year 2030 Target LOS.

**Table 6-4. PCPR Capital Improvement Plan 2014-2030**

Parks	Action						Project Description <sup>1</sup>	Project		Cost Estimate
	Unique ID (inhouse)	Habitat & Associated Passive Recreation	Maintain	Acquire	Plan	Develop		Original Priority	Public Priority	
<b>SYSTEM-WIDE IMPROVEMENTS</b>										
Park Signage			x			x	Improve park signage throughout the system	2		560,000
Trail Signage			x			x	Add trail mileage and directional signage where appropriate	2	6	150,000
Playground Renovations			x			x	Implement playground replacement program as recommended in the Deferred Maintenance Plan	2	3	1,400,000
<b>Subtotal</b>										<b>2,110,000</b>
<b>REGIONAL PARKS/ REGIONAL RESOURCE CONSERVANCY PARKS</b>										
Spanaway Regional Park					x		Create a new master plan that addresses all four sites. This will result in a new project cost.	1		250,000
Bresemann Forest (Spanaway Regional Park)	1					x	Implement Phase I of new master plan	2	1	10,000,000
Lake Spanaway Golf Course (Spanaway Regional Park)	2				x		LSGC Master Plan	1	10	110,000
Spanaway Park (Spanaway Regional Park)	3				x		Implement Existing Spanaway Park Master Plan, Phase 2	1	8	80,000
Spanaway Park (Spanaway Regional Park)						x	Build boat ramp	1	8	230,000
Chambers Creek Regional Park	86		x			x	Remove old dock from site and replace with new dock just south of the existing location	1	8	3,000,000
Chambers Creek Properties			x			x	Complete ped. bridge to new pier and dock and other site improvements	1	10	3,000,000
Chambers Creek Properties & Golf Course			x			x	Collaborate on other site improvements	2	10	1,000,000
Chambers Creek Canyon		x	x			x	Create forest management plan and Implement plan for site revegetation	2	2	250,000
Chambers Creek Canyon			x			x	Improve trailheads; replace boardwalk; improve water access and parking	2	8	1,000,000
Sprinker Recreation Center (Spanaway Regional Park)	4					x	Implement Sprinker renovations	1	9	21,500,000
Carbon River Valley		x			x		Create a master plan to develop site along with Fairfax Town site and Fairfax	3	2	350,000
Carbon River Valley		x				x	Begin Phase I of park development	3	2	2,000,000
<b>Subtotal</b>										<b>42,770,000</b>
<b>COUNTY PARKS</b>										
Ashford Park						x	Complete Phase 2 improvements	3		5,000,000
Buckley-Bonney Lake Park	36				x		Complete site master plan	1	3	50,000
Buckley-Bonney Lake Park					x		Design, construction permitting, and preparation	1	3	150,000
Buckley-Bonney Lake Park						x	Implement master plan to develop site as a county park	1	3	47,000,000
Cross Park	45				x		Complete park master plan, linking site to Naches Trail Preserve as appropriate	1	5	100,000
Cross Park					x		Design, construction permitting, and preparation	1	5	380,000
Frontier Park						x	Implement master plan improvements	1	3	35,000,000
Heritage Recreation Center	6		x			x	Implement high-priority projects from Deferred Maintenance Plan	1	7	440,000
Heritage Recreation Center			x			x	Implement the long-term recommendations noted in the Deferred Maintenance Plan	3	7	900,000
North Lake Tapps Park	7		x			x	Implement high-priority projects from Deferred Maintenance Plan	1	8	1,120,000
North Lake Tapps Park			x			x	Implement the long-term recommendations noted in the Deferred Maintenance Plan	1	8	2,250,000
Meridian Habitat Park	8				x		Complete site master plan	1	3	100,000
Meridian Habitat Park					x		Design, construction permitting, and preparation	1	2	200,000
Meridian Habitat Park						x	Implement master plan to develop site	1	3	15,000,000
Meridian Habitat Park							Renovate the community center building as noted in the Deferred Maintenance Plan only if new master plan is	3	9	100,000
Meridian Habitat Park			x			x	NOT implemented			
Orangegate Park	61				x		Complete park master plan	1	3	100,000

**Table 6-4. PCPR Capital Improvement Plan 2014-2030**

	Action						Project Description <sup>1</sup>	Project		Cost Estimate
	Unique ID (inhouse)	Habitat & Associated Passive Recreation	Maintain	Acquire	Plan	Develop		Original Priority	Public Priority	
<b>Parks</b>										
Orangegate Park					x		Design, construction permitting, and preparation	1	3	450,000
Orangegate Park						x	Implement master plan to develop site as a county park	1	3	16,000,000
Rimrock Park	64				x		Create master plan to develop site as a county park	2	3	150,000
Rimrock Park						x	Develop site according to master plan	3	3	8,000,000
Proposed Lake Kapowsin Park				x	x	x	Acquire, plan, and develop 100-200 acres for a county park	3	8	50,000,000
Proposed County Park (Graham Community)				x	x	x	Acquire, plan, and develop 100-200 acres for a county park	3	3	50,000,000
<b>Subtotal</b>										<b>232,490,000</b>
<b>LOCAL PARKS</b>										
Dawson Playfield	9		x			x	Implement high-priority projects from Deferred Maintenance Plan	1	7	90,000
Dawson Playfield			x			x	Implement the long-term recommendations noted in the Deferred Maintenance Plan	3	7	180,000
Gonyea Playfield	10		x			x	Implement high-priority projects from Deferred Maintenance Plan	1	7	860,000
Gonyea Playfield			x			x	Implement the long-term recommendations noted in the Deferred Maintenance Plan	3	7	1,750,000
Hopp Farm	54						Landbank as local park	3	3	NIC
Lidford Playfield	12		x			x	Implement high-priority projects from Deferred Maintenance Plan	1	7	980,000
Mayfair Playfield	13		x			x	Implement high-priority projects from Deferred Maintenance Plan	1	7	300,000
South Hill Community Park			x			x	Implement high-priority projects from Deferred Maintenance Plan	1	5	110,000
South Hill Community Park			x			x	Implement the long-term recommendations noted in the Deferred Maintenance Plan	3	5	250,000
Local Park Sites				x			Acquire new local park sites of 10-15 developable acres in targeted regions	2-3	3	15,000,000
<b>Subtotal</b>										<b>19,520,000</b>
<b>SPECIAL USE FACILITIES</b>										
Fort Steilacoom Golf Course	15		x			x	Upgrade efficient irrigation system and other course improvements, including clubhouse replacement	2	10	2,000,000
Herron Point	52				x	x	Landbank for transfer to other agency	3	8	NIC
Lakewood Community Center	17		x			x	Implement landscaping and general facility upgrades	3	9	200,000
Purdy Sand Spit	63				x	x	Consider improvements to provide water access	3	8	500,000
Proposed Waterfront Access Sites				x	x	x	Create an opportunity fund to acquire sites to provide water access	1-2	8	5,000,000
Proposed Waterfront Access Sites					x		Create master plans for these sites	1-2	8	200,000
Proposed Waterfront Access Sites						x	Develop sites according to master plans	2-3	8	5,000,000
<b>Subtotal</b>										<b>12,700,000</b>
<b>RESOURCE CONSERVANCY PARKS</b>										
Buckley Forestland Preserve		x			x		Create a master plan to develop site	3	1	100,000
Fairfax	48	x	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	See Carbon River Valley	N/A	N/A	N/A
Fairfax		x				x	Preserve remainder of site for resource conservation	2	2	500,000
Fairfax		x				x	Add interpretive and/or nature trails	3	5	250,000
Fairfax Town Site	49	x	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	See Carbon River Valley	N/A	N/A	N/A
Fairfax Town Site		x				x	Preserve remainder of site for resource conservation	2	2	5,000
Lake Tapps Habitat	55	x				x	Develop interpretive trails in this resource conservancy area	3	5	500,000
Parkland Habitat	18	x					Landbank for transfer to local jurisdiction	2	2	NIC
Parkland Praire Addition	19	x					Landbank for transfer to local jurisdiction	2	2	NIC

**Table 6-4. PCPR Capital Improvement Plan 2014-2030**

	Action						Project Description <sup>1</sup>	Project		Cost Estimate
	Unique ID (inhouse)	Habitat & Associated Passive Recreation	Maintain	Acquire	Plan	Develop		Original Priority	Public Priority	
<b>Parks</b>										
Puget Creek Beach		x					Landbank for transfer to local jurisdiction	3	8	NIC
Seeley Lake Park	21	x	x			x	Trail improvements/blackberry removal	2	5	250,000
South Pierce Wetland	22	x				x	Consider development as resource conservancy park (interpretive trails, etc.)	3	2	NIC
Swan Creek Park	67				x		Create Master Plan for site, including the Waller Property	2	1	250,000
Waller Property	82				x	x	Consider improvements to link site to Swan Creek Park - See Swan Creek Park master plan	3	1	NIC
Wetland Replacement	23	x				x	Continue to conserve for wetland mitigation	2	2	100,000
<b>Subtotal</b>										<b>1,955,000</b>
<b>LINEAR PARKS/TRAILS</b>										
Foothills Trail - 2014 to 2019						x	Buckley to S. Prairie, Phase 2 (2014-2019 CFP)	1	5	5,657,230
Foothills Trail Segments 2020 to 2030										
Foothills Trail					x		Pre-engineering, Cascade Junction to Carbonado	1	5	200,000
Foothills Trail						x	Trail development, Cascade Junction to Carbonado	1	5	3,000,000
Foothills Trail				x	x	x	Foothills Trail Extension, Other Extensions from Proposed Trail Plan	3	5	3,000,000
Carbon River Valley (Foothills Trail)	76					x	Implement site improvements to connect site with Foothills Trail	3	5	250,000
Wilkeson Creek Park (Foothills Trail)	70					x	Develop as part of Foothills Trail for water viewpoint (creek access)	3	5	500,000
Gale Creek Trail (Foothills Trail)			x		x		Construction permitting and preparation to address washout	1	5	300,000
Half Dollar Park	51						Landbank as local park	3	3	NIC
Nathan Chapman Memorial Trail	24		x				See improvements noted with South Hill Community Park in the Deferred Maintenance Plan	1	5	N/A
Nathan Chapman Memorial Trail							Integrate with Cross County Commuter Trail	2	5	N/A
Puyallup River Levee Trail	77						Work with Puyallup to encourage continued development of Puyallup River Trail	1	5	NIC
<b>Other Trails</b>										
Cross County Commuter Connector--Tacoma Rail Trail					x		Create master plan	1	5	50,000
144th Street Trail					x		Pre-engineering	1	5	150,000
144th Street Trail						x	Develop trail	1	5	300,000
144th Street Trail							Integrate with Cross County Commuter Trail	2	5	N/A
Ashford to Elbe Trail				x			Acquire trail corridor as needed	2	5	NIC
Ashford to Elbe Trail					x		Create a plan for trail corridor development	2	5	NIC
Ashford to Elbe Trail						x	Develop corridor according to trail plan	2	5	NIC
Eatonville Rimrock Park--Rail Trail					x		Create trail plan to link Rimrock Park to Eatonville	1	5	50,000
Eatonville Rimrock Park--Rail Trail						x	Develop corridor according to trail plan	2	5	NIC
Tacoma Rail Trail--Cross Park Link					x		Create trail plan	1	5	100,000
Tacoma Rail Trail--Cross Park Link						x	Develop corridor according to trail plan	2	5	NIC
Fennel Creek Trail Corridor					x	x	Coordinate with Bonney Lake for trail development along Fennel Creek	2	5	N/A
Proposed Regional Trails					x		Identify trail routes through regional trails plan	2	5	NIC
Proposed Regional Trails					x	x	Link regional trails to trail systems in other counties	2	5	NIC
Proposed Regional Trails						x	Coordinate with other providers to develop trail connections	3	5	NIC
Tacoma Rail w/Trail					x		Support Tacoma Rail w/ Trail project	2	5	NIC
Tacoma Rail w/ Trail							Coordinate efforts to approve and implement Tacoma Rail w/ Trail	3	5	NIC

**Table 6-4. PCPR Capital Improvement Plan 2014-2030**

	Action						Project			Cost
	Unique ID (inhouse)	Habitat & Associated Passive Recreation	Maintain	Acquire	Plan	Develop	Project Description <sup>1</sup>	Original Priority	Public Priority	Estimate
<b>Parks</b>										
<b>Subtotal</b>										<b>13,557,230</b>
<b>UNCLASSIFIED SITES</b>										
Wales Property	69						Landbank/maintain site for transfer to local jurisdiction	3	3	NIC
<b>Subtotal</b>										<b>0</b>
<b>CEMETERIES</b>										
265th Street Cemetery							Pursue partnerships to maintain and manage site	2		NIC
Lake Tapps Cemetery	72		x				Pursue partnerships to maintain and manage site	2		NIC
Old Settlers Cemetery	74		x				Pursue partnerships to maintain and manage site	2		NIC
Roy Cemetery	75		x				Pursue partnerships to maintain and manage site	2		NIC
<b>Subtotal</b>										<b>0</b>
<b>OTHER COUNTY-OWNED PROPERTIES</b>										
Naches Trail Preserve	73				x		Link site to Cross Park development	2	5	NIC
<b>Subtotal</b>										<b>0</b>
<b>OTHER SITES</b>										
Fort Steilacoom Park	79						Continue to coordinate efforts with the City of Lakewood	2	3	NIC
<b>Subtotal</b>										<b>0</b>
<b>OTHER PLANS AND PROJECTS</b>										
<b>Subtotal</b>										<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>										<b>325,102,230</b>

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# 7.1. REGIONAL TRAILS PLAN



Pierce County Parks and Recreation (PCPR) plans for and develops the regional trails system throughout Pierce County. PCPR seeks partnerships with other County departments, state and federal agencies, and other cities and towns within the County. The regional trails element of the PROS Plan takes into account the issues, needs and opportunities identified during the planning process regarding on- and off-street trails. It also presents a vision, regional trail concept and a set of trail design guidelines that will assist the County and its departments, as well as other jurisdictions within the County, in creating a regional trails system; improving connectivity between major destinations and throughout the County's extensive park and recreation system. This section provides an overview of the regional trails planning process.

## TRAILS PLANNING PROCESS

The trails planning process involved a four-step approach for developing the plan.

- **Phase I: Trails Planning Context.** The first phase of the planning process included a review of existing County policies and

planning documents that address trails as well as trail planning efforts conducted by multiple jurisdictions and organizations within the County as well as the planning efforts of neighboring counties. This phase of also involved a review of federal, state and local regulations that relate to trail planning, design and construction of trails.

- **Phase II: Trails Inventory and Analysis.** Using information and data collected from the previous phase, the planning team created and refined a countywide regional trails inventory, analyzed the existing and planned trails network for gaps, presented alternative trail alignments to close the gaps, classified alignments into a regional trails classification and presented a regional trails system concept.
- **Phase III: Trails Plan Development.** Based on the first two phases, the planning team developed the core elements of the Regional Trails Plan, including the regional trail network, trail goals and policies, trail design guidelines and amenities and costs for development. This phase also included the development of trail project prioritization criteria and the development of a public involvement model

that will provide guidance for future trail project implementation.

- **Phase IV: Trails Plan Refinement and Adoption.** The final phase of the planning process involved the County’s formal review of the revised Draft Plan. This includes Technical Working Group (TWG) meetings and, a meeting of the Parks and Recreation Citizen Advisory Board. The Draft Plan was then forwarded to the County Council for inclusion in the PROS Plan. The final Regional Trails Plan was adopted by the County Council on October 27, 2009. Citizens’ support for regional trails and a connected has been affirmed in the 2014 PROS Plan outreach (see Chapter 4).

## TRAILS PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The planning team gathered public input for the plan from the following primary sources.

- **Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan (PROS) 2008.** The Regional Trails Plan is a continuation of the PROS Plan process. Through the PROS planning effort, the public indicated a need for trail facilities for both recreation and transportation purposes. Key findings from the recreation questionnaire indicate that trails are popular among Pierce County residents. The Regional Trails Plan has incorporated several of the findings from the PROS Plan public involvement process.
- **Technical Working Group (TWG).** The TWG met at key project milestones to provide review, technical advice and input on plan directions. This group included County staff and representatives of other agencies including: PCPR staff, Planning and Land Services, Public Works Transportation, Public Works Surface Water Management Program, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, City of Tacoma Transportation Planning, the National Park Service, the Foothills Trail Coalition, the Tacoma Wheelmen, the Washington Water Trails Association and other trail advocates and community leaders. The TWG members provided firsthand information regarding the existing and proposed trail alignments, as well as desired

linkages to meet existing deficiencies in the trail system.

- **Project Website.** A project website was developed. The Pierce Regional Trails Plan website ([www.piercetrailsplan.org](http://www.piercetrailsplan.org)) served as a resource for information about the Plan and was specifically designed for communication between the project team and the TWG.

## TRAILS PLAN VISION

The desired future of the regional trails system has been condensed into a statement that summarizes the vision for the preferred regional trails system. The vision reflects the preferences of Pierce County residents and decision makers, and builds on the efforts of the State of Washington Trails Plan, Goal 2 of Chapter 5 and the strategies outlined in Chapter 6.

*The Pierce County Regional Trails System will be an accessible and seamless trails network used by people of all ages and abilities for recreation and transportation. Pierce County trails will provide users with the opportunity to experience recreation, solitude or companionship, and provide a practical transportation option. It will offer connections to major developed areas and attractions within the County, provide opportunities for appreciation of nature, and connect the County to the greater region.*

The primary goal for the system is:

*Provide a connected system of regional and local trails that offer diverse trail opportunities and experiences including non-motorized transportation, recreation, fitness, connecting with nature, and organized events and races. The trail network will provide links to parks, open spaces, significant environmental features, public facilities, and areas of interest.*

Policies implement this vision and goal and are shown in Chapter 5. The policies are primarily directed towards the development of the off-street trails network, but in order to develop a comprehensive and seamless trail system on-street trails are included. The vision, goal, and policies are based on needs and trends discussed throughout this Plan, as well as the direction of the trails planning Technical Working Group. Along with local desires, trail policies must comply with Washington State guidelines.

## PLANNING FOR TRAILS

Well planned and designed trails offer several significant benefits to Pierce County and its surrounding communities. Along with recreational opportunities, trails promote healthier lifestyles and provide non-motorized connections to destinations in and around the County. This section discusses trail-related benefits and public interest in trails, provides a description of the County and its land uses and physical characteristics, and summarizes trail providers and advocates within the County. The Planning Context Report (November 2008)

available under separate cover from the County, provides additional information in greater detail.

## Benefits of Trails

With changes in the economy including increasing gas prices and the downward trend of discretionary dollars, the provision of outdoor recreation and trails close to home has become increasingly more important. The current mainstreaming of active outdoor lifestyles is characterized by wellness and quality time with family and friends. To meet this new and changing demand people are looking for ways to be outdoors yet close to home, while connecting to these areas by non-motorized means. Due to time demands of family and jobs, convenience and accessibility to recreational opportunities are important considerations. If the County can deliver a quality recreational experience by connecting its unique open spaces and allowing access to rivers and other water bodies, all while providing functional options for commuters, it will have a competitive advantage in retaining residents and businesses and attracting tourists.

**Health.** Trails provide an opportunity for physical activity and promote healthy lifestyles. Trail facilities can provide safe locations for activities such as running, walking and bicycling. Communities with convenient access to trails offer residents low cost options to get active and enjoy the benefits of physical activity. The health benefits of physical activity include a reduced risk of premature mortality and reduced risks of cardiovascular disease, hypertension, stroke, some cancers and diabetes. Active lifestyles and regular

physical activity can also reduce obesity, depression, stress and anxiety. Trails and trail related activities also create healthy families by offering places parents can bicycle or walk with their children.

**Transportation.** Transportation systems in counties and cities today are tasked not only with efficient and effective circulation networks, but with promoting a community's livability. A well designed trail system reduces reliance on personal vehicle travel and reduces traffic congestion. An approach to transportation planning that is gaining popularity is the concept of 'Complete Streets' which safely incorporates pedestrian, bicycle and transit modes of travel into the design and development of all roadways. Complete Streets create an inviting environment for cyclists and pedestrians with separated wide sidewalks and marked street shoulders for cyclists. The development of complete streets can contribute to creating connections in urban areas to off-street trail corridors, while at the same time making active transportation—bicycling and walking—a viable option for residents.

**Environment.** The two major non-fuel consuming and non-polluting forms of transportation are bicycling and walking. Increasing non-motorized transportation modes can decrease the cumulative effects of motorized transportation on the environment. Vehicle exhaust and carbon monoxide impact air quality and can lead to respiratory disease symptoms. Diesel particulate matter has acute short-term impacts and a disproportionate effect on the elderly, children and



persons with illness. Storm water runoff collects motor oil, metals and other chemicals from streets and parking lots and pollutes water systems, negatively impacting drinking water quality and wildlife habitat. With motorized transportation accounting for one-third of the U.S. carbon dioxide emissions—impacting climate and air quality<sup>1</sup>—communities are implementing trail programs and educational campaigns encouraging active transportation and individual and environmental health.

**Economic.** Trails are a desirable amenity as they provide inexpensive transportation options and increase property values. With the continued and projected rise of gas prices and the desire to saving money, individuals and families are turning to less expensive modes of transportation. Trails can also increase property values<sup>2</sup>. According to the National Association of Home Builders trails have become the top ranking outdoor community asset. Their study found that 57% of prospective homebuyers would like to see trails in their new community. This could be attributed to the recreation, transportation, property and aesthetic value trails can bring to a community. Well planned and designed trails can also benefit local businesses with increased tourism by attracting bicyclists, equestrians and other outdoor enthusiasts.

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<sup>1</sup> Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, August 2007

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

## PUBLIC INTEREST AND TRENDS

Interest in trail activities and trail development has increased nationwide. Communities across the country are building trails along waterways, rail corridors, and greenways and vacated rights-of-way. Communities are recognizing that trails provide opportunities to improve quality of life and individual health. Trail advocates and organizations have a wide base of support and have been successful in securing funding, implementing trails projects and active transportation programs. Trends in the State of Washington and Pierce County indicate that trails and trail related activities are desirable throughout the region.

**State and County Trends.** Trails and trail-related activities are popular in the State of Washington and the County. Trail activities including walking, jogging or running and observing or photographing wildlife or nature are the most frequently occurring outdoor activities in the state. According to the Washington State Outdoor Recreation Survey, the activity with the most participation is walking. Walking in a park or on a trail is the most popular setting, second to walking on a sidewalk. Trails are also popular for jogging or running, second to streets and sidewalks.

**Pierce County.** As the fourth most densely populated county in Washington State, population growth is rapidly changing the character and land use patterns within Pierce County. The increase in population has triggered the need for a regional

trail system that connects communities and destinations across the County.

Pierce County encompasses a large area and includes a complex mix of urban and rural environments, urban centers, small towns, suburban communities, scenic natural areas and widely varied topography. At 1,680 square miles of land, Pierce County stretches from the Puget Sound to the north and west, to Mt. Rainier in the east, and includes portions of Kitsap Peninsula, as well as several islands in the Sound.

Pierce County is surrounded by several counties with existing trail systems and trail plans –see

Figure 7.1-1. These include King and Kitsap Counties directly to the north, Yakima County to the east, Lewis County to the south and Thurston and Mason County to the west. While planning for a regional trail system, it is important to consider trail connections to these surrounding areas. Not only can a regional trail system link communities in Pierce County to one another, but it can also provide opportunities to connect with larger regional destinations such as Seattle and Olympia. Several of these outer-county trail segments already exist.

**Figure 7.1-1. Regional Context**



As noted in Chapter 1, Pierce County is required to develop its planning under the state's Growth Management Act (GMA). Therefore, the Pierce County Regional Trails Plan must consider and coordinate with the counties outside of Pierce County. Thurston, Kitsap, King, Pierce and Yakima Counties and their respective trail plans are addressed in greater detail in Appendix E:

## TRAIL PLANNING CONTEXT

The impacts of growth are evident near urbanized areas and are felt by rural land owners, and residents living near newly built subdivisions. Among more urbanized communities, increasing density, smaller lot sizes and disappearing open spaces create a demand for places for recreation and interaction with the natural environment. At the same time many people living in rural areas want assurance that new development will not affect their way of life. The central county area, beyond existing municipalities, anticipates a majority of higher density residential development and master planned communities. This area is also planned for employment, activity centers and urban villages. New development will require new transportation infrastructure to connect with the existing system. Trail planning in this area should be a priority to prepare for this new growth. Once new development has taken place, trail planning and development becomes increasingly more complex and costly.

**Land Ownership.** Understanding land ownership patterns helps identify potential partnerships, as well as lands that may require heightened regulatory review. Development in the southeastern portion of the County is generally scattered and sparsely populated. This area is predominantly reliant on agriculture and forestry. The southeastern portion includes privately-owned forests and parts of three nationally protected wilderness or wildlife areas; Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Nisqually National Wildlife Refuge and Mt. Rainier National Park. These three unique areas present numerous opportunities for trail expansion and improvement of connectivity throughout the county's abundant natural areas.

**Topography.** Topography is a critical consideration in the design and construction of a trail. Gradual or flat terrain is also popular and can provide interest and challenge when incorporating other natural or even built features. Pierce County is fortunate to have a variety of physical terrain. From Mt. Rainier and the foothills of the Cascades to the east, to the flatter areas of west-central Pierce County, topography plays an important role in the design and construction of trails in the county. The County's diverse topography will require creative and environmentally sensitive solutions unique to each setting. Drainage patterns in the various topographies will be an important factor in the engineering and construction of proposed trails.

**Geology and Soils.** Like topography, geology and trail surface composition are other important design components. Pierce County is located geologically

in the Seattle Fault zone, which creates a seismic hazard for the populated regions in the Puget lowland. The County has created a seismic activity map as well as Hazard Mitigation Plan that includes sections on earthquakes and tsunamis among other natural disasters. The County has established evacuation requirements in the event of a lahar, debris flow, flood, and/or avalanche affecting the area's major waterways, including the Nisqually, Puyallup, Carbon and White Rivers. Some existing trails are already located along the Carbon and Puyallup Rivers.

**Water Resources.** Water resources are popular for recreation, nature and wildlife observation and photography among other activities. Waterways in the County include both saltwater and freshwater bodies, and range from large rivers and lakes to creeks and wetlands. To the west, the Puget Sound is the most prominent water feature in Pierce County. The Sound is a significant regional resource with ecological, environmental, economic and recreational value. Freshwater resources, including lakes, wetlands, rivers and streams, all provide great settings for trails. Several cities and towns in the County have rivers that flow in close proximity. The four major rivers in Pierce County—the Nisqually, White, Puyallup, Carbon—all are fed by the glacial melt waters of Mt. Rainier and flow through Pierce County into the Puget Sound.

## TRAIL RESPONSIBILITY

There are two County departments responsible for trail operations and maintenance in unincorporated areas of Pierce County:

- PCPR provides public parks and recreation services to the residents of unincorporated Pierce County. The Parks Department maintains over 5,000 acres at over 50 park sites. Additionally, the Pierce County Conservation Futures system administers the acquisition of passive open space areas.
- Pierce County Public Works and Utilities. This Department is responsible for non-motorized transportation facilities within County road right-of-ways and maintains the on street bikeways. Public Works and Utilities only performs trail maintenance work when requested by PCPR.

Overlapping jurisdictions, goals and strategies create complexity in planning for the network of trail corridors, parks and natural open space areas in the County. As a region-wide system, there are a number of stakeholders involved in the provision of trails on local, county, regional, state and federal levels. The following section provides a summary of important trail providers and advocates.

**Cities and Towns.** Pierce County has 24 cities and towns. A successful regional trail system takes into account and enhances the unique physical and cultural characteristics of these communities. Some Pierce County cities such as Tacoma, Gig Harbor and Steilacoom overlook the Puget Sound, while others such as Eatonville and Carbonado are



located further inland in more agricultural and forested areas. Most of the larger cities including Lakewood, University Place and Puyallup are located in close proximity to the Tacoma area.

**Park Departments and Districts.** Park and recreation departments and metropolitan park districts play an important role in the provision of local and regional trails. Of the 24 cities and towns in Pierce County, six have a parks department, 12 assign park and recreation responsibilities to other city departments and six do not have park responsibilities assigned to city staff. Pierce County's Metropolitan Park Districts (Metro Park Districts) are another important partner in trail development. Metro Park Districts are separate and distinct governments that have taxing and other funding available to them that PCPR does not. There are four Metro Park Districts in Pierce County: Metro Park District of Tacoma; Key Peninsula Metropolitan Park District; Peninsula Metropolitan Park District; and Anderson Island Park and Recreation District.

**Advocacy Groups and Organizations.** A variety of different organizations and agencies are involved with trails planning and trail-related issues. These entities are active in lobbying for a variety of issues related to trails and trail corridor acquisition. Seven major entities that are actively or have previously been involved with trails planning and development in Pierce County include:

- Green Tacoma Partnership. The goal of the partnership is to “promote a viable, healthy network of natural spaces throughout Tacoma.”
- Forterra. This organization develops strategies for land acquisition and collaborative relationships with other agencies, jurisdictions and organizations.
- ForeverGreen Council. The Council is dedicated to “facilitating the implementation of a system of multi-use trails which links each community and jurisdiction in Pierce County.”
- Foothills Rails to Trails Coalition. The mission of the Coalition is to “assist Pierce County communities in the creation, maintenance and usage of a connected system of non-motorized trails for healthier people from Mt. Rainier to Puget Sound.”
- Tacoma Wheelmen's Bicycle Club. The Club's mission is “to promote and develop safe bicycling for recreation, health and alternative transportation.”
- Washington Wildlife and Recreation Coalition. The Coalition works to protect wildlife habitat and secure public access to parks, trails, shorelines and other outdoor recreation areas.
- Washington Water Trails Association. The mission of the Association is to promote advocacy, education and stewardship of public access to Washington's waterways for people in human and wind powered beachable watercraft.

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# 7.2. EXISTING TRAILS

## EXISTING TRAILS

Pierce County has several trail segments managed by multiple jurisdictions that provide important bicycle, pedestrian and watercraft linkages to communities as well as recreational opportunities. There are approximately 75 miles of existing trails within Pierce County, which are managed by multiple jurisdictions. The trails are a mix of continuous alignments and discrete segments. The mix of trail alignments and discrete segments is due to the fact that Pierce County has multiple jurisdictions: 24 cities and towns, four park districts, eleven community planning areas and numerous trail interest organizations. Figure 7.2-1 depicts the developed trails within Pierce County. Appendix D: Trails Inventory provides a more detailed listing of trails.



## EXISTING PIERCE COUNTY TRAILS

As of 2008, Pierce County Parks and Recreation (PCPR) currently manages approximately 31 miles of trails. The trails are the Foothills Trail, the Nathan Chapman Memorial Trail, the Grandview Trail and Soundview Trail (on Chambers Creek properties).

Table 7.2-1 summarizes the mileage for each trail alignment based on the 2009 Trails Plan efforts.

When measured in acres in 2013 (excluding trails on Chambers Creek Regional Park which is included in the Regional Park acres), the total acres of Linear Parks/Trails is about 539.0, including the Foothills Trail, Nathan Chapman Memorial Trail, and a small segment of the Puyallup River Trail (owned by the County but maintained by Puyallup). Other potential trail extensions could occur on the Ohop site and Half Dollar Park site. (See Appendix B)

**Table 7.2-1. Existing Pierce County Trails – 2009**

<b>Trail Name</b>	<b>Approx. Miles</b>
Foothills Trail	26.1
Grandview Trail	1.2
Nathan Chapman Memorial Trail	1.6
Soundview Trail	2.0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>30.9</b>

Note: Mileage is approximate and has not been derived from a survey.

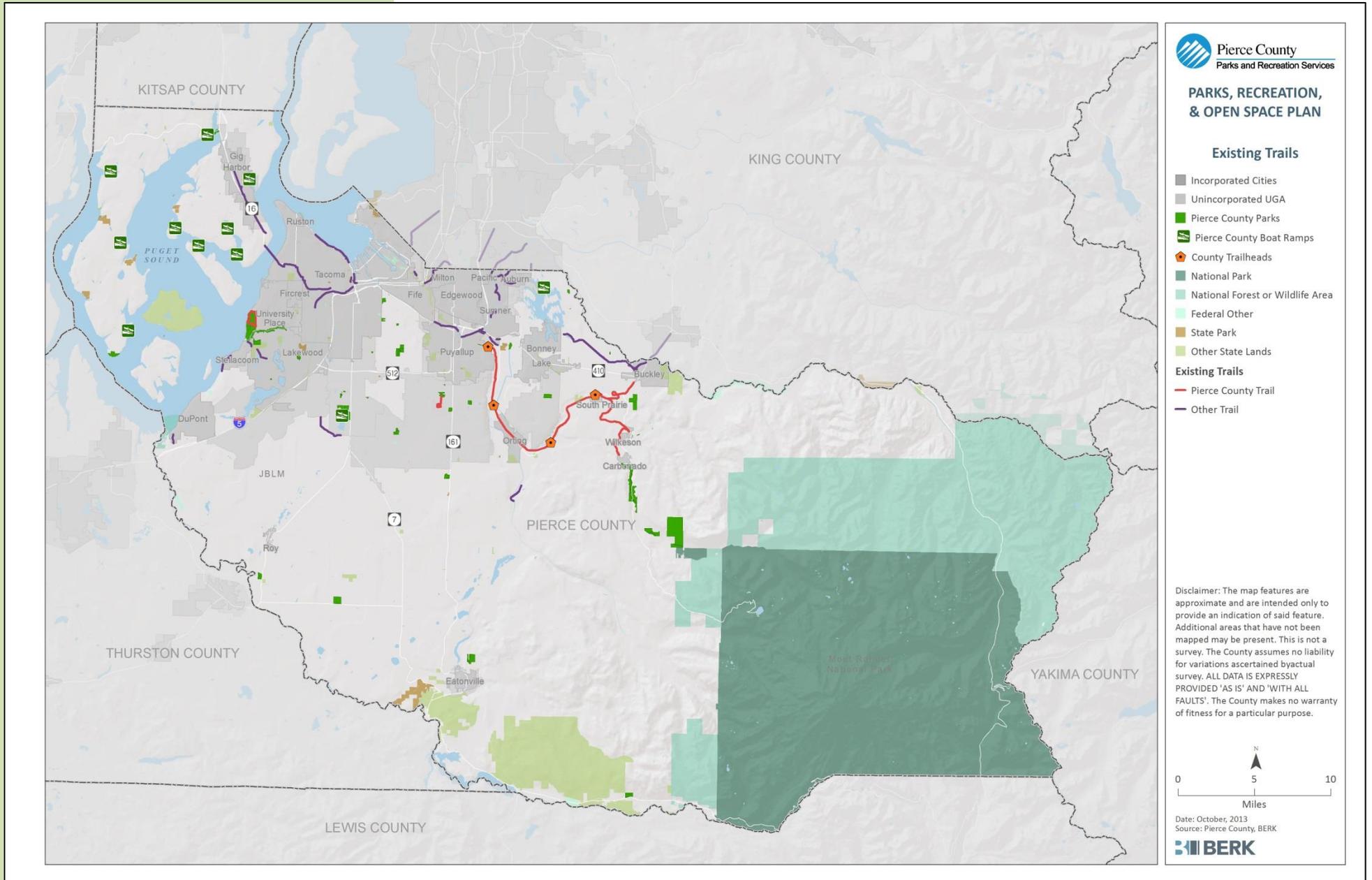
**Foothills Trail.** The Foothills Trail is a 12-foot wide rails-to-trails corridor with approximately 26 miles of paved and unpaved trail segments. The trail is suitable for bicycles, walking, in-line skates and wheel chairs. It also has a soft shoulder path for equestrians. Completed paved sections include 15 miles from Meeker to the South Prairie Creek in the Town of South Prairie and a 1.8 mile section in the City of Buckley. The future plan is to continue the trail to the City of Sumner where it will connect with the Interurban Trail that now extends through the cities of Kent and Auburn. The trail in Buckley will continue east to the City of Enumclaw and King County. There are four trailheads and one rest area located along the trails length.

**Nathan Chapman Memorial Trail.** The Nathan Chapman Memorial Trail is a 1.6 mile trail located in South Hill Community Park. The trail is dedicated to the memory of Sgt. Nathan Chapman and connects the Heritage Recreation Center with the park. This trail provides a connection between the Heritage Recreation Center and South Hill

Community Park and will eventually connect to the future Cross County Commuter Collector Trail that will run parallel to 94th Street. The link is being planned along 144th Street to link the Nathan Chapman Trail to the future Cross County Commuter Collector Trail.

**Grandview and Soundview Trails.** The Grandview and Soundview Trails connect amenities at the Chambers Creek Properties site managed by the County's Public Works and Utilities Department. The properties are located in the cities of University Place and Lakewood, Washington. The Grandview Trail is a 1.2 mile paved trail that provides views of Puget Sound and surrounding islands, the Chambers Bay golf course, and runs adjacent to the County's Environmental Services Building. The Soundview Trail is a two mile trail that connects the south and north ends of the Grandview Trail and creates a recreational loop through the Chambers Bay Golf Course.

Figure 7.2-1. Existing Trails



## OTHER TRAILS

As of 2008, there are 21 trail alignments managed by other jurisdictions and private organizations totaling approximately 44 miles. Table 7.2-2 below

summarizes the existing trails maintained by other jurisdictions and identifies the corresponding map identification number for identifying the alignment in Figure 7.2-1.

**Table 7.2-2. Existing Other Jurisdiction Trails – 2009**

Trail Name	Approx. Miles	Map ID
Cushman Power Line Trail <sup>1</sup>	4.9	13
Flume Trail	7.4	20
Fort Steilacoom Trails	1.4	2
Hylebos Trails	0.3	10
Lakeland Hills Trail	2.4	15
Link - Foothills Trail to Train to the Mountain RWT	1.4	21
Link - Schuster Parkway Trail to S Stadium Way	0.1	7
Milton Interurban Trail	1.4	12
Narrows/Grandview Trail	1.9	1
North Puyallup River Trail	0.7	19
Perimeter Rd to 176th St S Trail	2.1	14
Prairie Line Trail	0.3	8
Puyallup River Trail (Puyallup River Walk)	3.3	11

<sup>1</sup> The Cushman Power Line Trail was developed as joint partnership with the Peninsula Metropolitan Park District and the Pierce County Parks and Recreation Department.

<b>Trail Name</b>	<b>Approx. Miles</b>	<b>Map ID</b>
Ruston Way	1.5	5
Schuster Parkway Sidewalk/Trail	1.4	6
Scott Pierson Trail	6.3	4
Sumner Confluence Trail - Stuck and Puyallup	0.6	17
Sumner Trail	0.2	18
Thee Foss Esplanade	0.8	9
Water Ditch Trail	3.2	3
White River Trail	2.6	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>44.2</b>	

Note: Mileage is approximate and has not been derived from a survey.

# PROPOSED AND PLANNED TRAILS

As of 2008, there are approximately 259 miles of proposed trails within Pierce County. Proposed trails may be included in the local jurisdiction or private organization plans, but have not gone through a formal planning process. These alignments are conceptual in nature and will need further public input, alignment assessment, and planning. Planned trails are alignments included in adopted plan documents, such as: community plans, parks and open space plans, trails master plans and capital facility plans. These trail alignments typically have gone through a public involvement and design process, and may have funding identified for development. Figure 7.2-2

depicts the proposed trail alignments identified during the project.

## Proposed County Trails

Pierce County has about a half mile of proposed trails that will add to the existing trail network. A new trail alignment is planned between Cross Park and the future Train to the Mountain Rail with Trail. Table 7.2-3 summarizes the mileage for the trail alignments.

The County has in the past partnered with a number of agencies for joint trail planning and development. Additional partnerships could be established for the trail projects summarized in Table 7.2-4, which would create an additional 65 miles of trail.

**Table 7.2-3. Proposed Pierce County Trails**

Trail Name	Approx. Miles	Map ID
Link - Cross Park to Train to the Mountain RWT	0.1	t1
Stewart Road Trail	0.4	w
Total	0.5	

Note: Mileage is approximate and has not been derived from a survey.

**Table 7.2-4. Proposed Trail Partnership Opportunities**

<b>Trail Name and Partner</b>	<b>Approx. Miles</b>	<b>Map ID</b>
Cross County Commuter Collector Trail – Tacoma Public Utilities, Water Division	12.6	o
Cushman Power Line Trail	3.3	a
Eatonville to Rim rock Park Trail, Town of Eatonville	1.5	t3
Link-Foothills Trail – Enumclaw Connector	1.8	z
Trail Linkage Tacoma Dome Station/Freight house Square, City of Tacoma Public Works	0.6	j1
Train to the Mountain Rail with Trail - Port of Tacoma, Tacoma Rail Division	45.1	t
<b>Total</b>	<b>64.9</b>	

Note: Mileage is approximate and has not been derived from a survey.

## OTHER TRAILS

The other proposed trail alignments are at various stages of planning. Some are more conceptual while others are actively being pursued for funding. Table 7.2-5 summarizes the proposed trail

alignments within Pierce County, but not managed by the County or its departments. The alignments have been given a map id for locating the trail on Figure 7.2-2. A complete trails inventory is provided in Appendix D: Trails Inventory.

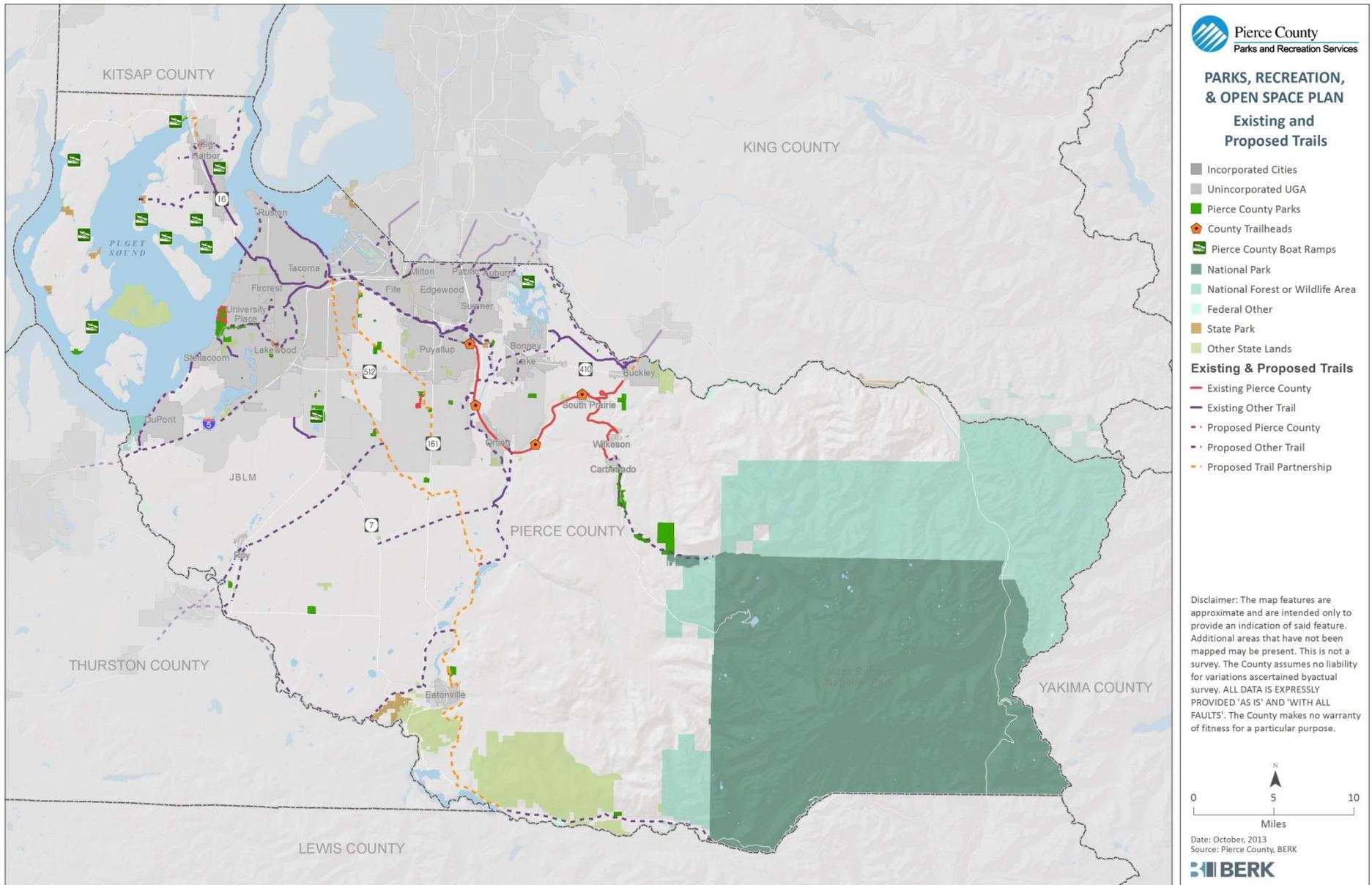
**Table 7.2-5. Proposed Other Trails**

Trail Name	Approx. Miles	Map ID
Ashford to Elbe Trail	8.1	u
Ashford to Rainier	6.4	v
Chambers Creek/Lakewood Trail	4.5	f
Cushman Power Line Trail Spur North	7.1	ii
Cushman Power Line Trail Spur South	6.0	hh
DuPont/Nisqually Trail	9.8	e
Edgewood Interurban Trail	1.8	aa
Fennel Creek w/Loops	9.0	ff
Graham Trail	7.7	q
Hylebos Trails	2.8	l
JEB III Trail - Dixie Gatchel Trail	0.9	dd
Lake Tapps Trail	0.3	ff1
Link - 134 Ave E to the Puyallup River Trail	0.7	y
Link - 144th St E to Foothills Trail	2.0	ee
Link - Foothills Trail to JEB III Trail – Dixie Gatchel Trail	0.8	Jj
Link - Foothills Trail (Mt. Rainier Connector)	11.4	Ll
Link - Foothills Trail to Train to the Mountain RWT	7.6	kk
Link - Train to the Mountain RWT to North Levee Trail	1.4	t2
Link - Univ. Place/Lakewood to Prairie Line Trail (east)	0.1	g1
Link - Univ. Place/Lakewood to Prairie Line Trail (west)	0.3	g1

<b>Trail Name</b>	<b>Approx. Miles</b>	<b>Map ID</b>
Narrows/Grandview Trail	6.0	d
Nisqually River Trail	13.2	s
North Levee Trail	9.1	n
North Levee Trail Connector	0.3	n
North Puyallup River Trail	0.5	n1
NW Trek Wildlife Park to Nisqually-Mashel State Park	8.5	r
Orting Bridge For Kids - Link to Foothills Trails	0.8	x
Pacific Trail	1.1	bb
Prairie Line Trail	2.0	i
Puyallup River Trail	19.4	m
Ruston Way	2.5	b
Shoreline Trail	4.3	c
Tacoma's Julia's Gulch Trail	1.1	k
Thea Foss Esplanade	0.9	j
Trail to McKenna	15.2	p
University Place/Lakewood Trail	2.1	g
Water Ditch Trail	3.4	h
White River Trail	12.9	cc
Williams Trail	1.5	gg
<b>Total</b>	<b>193.7</b>	

Note: Mileage is approximate and has not been derived from a survey.

Figure 7.2-2.Existing and Proposed Trails



## REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Multiple planning documents and regulations guide growth and development in Pierce County. State, county, city and local planning efforts create layers of goals and policies. To prevent contradiction or conflict, the Regional Trails Plan should be designed to complement and strengthen the goals and policies of other documents. This section provides an overview of the existing regulatory framework in Pierce County. A more detailed review of the regulatory framework and permitting process is provided in Appendix E: Trail Providers, Advocates and Plans, Appendix F: Trail Planning Framework, and Appendix G: Trail Permitting Process.

### Federal

The Federal Government hands down federal transportation requirements from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to individual state transportation agencies. FHWA bases federal transportation requirements on two primary sources that regulate trail design: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Guidelines and American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Design Guidelines. The FHWA also publishes the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), which provides consistency in standards for traffic control devices.

**Americans with Disabilities Act.** The ADA guidelines require that facilities are readily accessible and usable by individuals with disabilities. The guidelines outline minimum dimensions and standards for width, passing space, head room, surface textures, slope and other design considerations for all publically accessible areas.

**American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials.** The AASHTO design guidelines for bicycle transportation facilities and shared use paths provide development parameters for facility development. Compliance with AASHTO guidelines is required for most transportation funding sources and reduces the County's exposure to liability. In general, AASHTO guidelines exceed ADA accessibility guidelines. The Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities (commonly referred to as the "AASHTO Bike Guide") is currently underway and may be released by spring 2010.

**Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.** The MUTCD defines the standards used by road managers to install and maintain traffic control devices on all streets and highways. Traffic control devices are critical for the safe and efficient transportation of people and goods. The MUTCD sets minimum standards and provides guidance and ensures uniformity of traffic control devices. Part 9 of the MUTCD addresses traffic controls for bicycle facilities and applying these guidelines to trail traffic controls can encourage uniformity throughout the County's transportation system.

## State

The State of Washington's Growth Management Act (GMA) sets forth legislation that all planning and development in the state must follow. Based on federal and state legislation, trail planning and design should closely follow the Washington State Trails Plan and Washington State Dept. of Transportation (WSDOT) guidelines and specifications.

**Washington's Growth Management Act.** Pierce County is required to develop its plans in accordance with the State's GMA. In 2005, the State of Washington amended mandatory elements of comprehensive plans, requiring communities to address health through their transportation network. Through the transportation element of a comprehensive plan, counties and cities must address pedestrian and bicycle facilities and corridors, and encourage enhanced community access and promote healthy lifestyles. The intent of the amendments is to promote policy and planning efforts that increase access to inexpensive or free opportunities for regular exercise. Along with transportation benefits, trails also provide valuable recreation opportunities for a number of users. Based on the intent of the amendments, the responsibility for providing a regional trail network is the combined responsibility of transportation departments and parks and recreation departments.

**Washington State Trails Plan.** The State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) is responsible for the Washington State Trails Plan. Accepted by the National Park Service in 1991, the Plan is an element of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Planning (SCORP) program. The Plan establishes a number of trail related goals and identifies different trail users. Specific goals related to the Pierce County Regional Trails Plan include:

- Develop new trails and paths in city and county jurisdictions;
- Connect trail systems and populated areas via trails and paths; and
- Increase the miles of trail available in semi-primitive and other remote settings.

**Washington State Department of Transportation.** WSDOT provides two primary publications related to federally funded transportation projects. These include the Local Agency Guidelines (LAG Manual) and Construction Manual and Standard Specifications for Road, Bridge and Municipal Construction. The manual provides information and advice on public works project design and construction management. Both documents are based on federal transportation guidelines. Consistency with WSDOT guidelines is also important for securing grant support for project development. The WSDOT Design Manual was updated and reformatted in June 2009; the information regarding shared-use path design is available in Chapter 1520 (previously in Chapter 1020).

## Local

Within Pierce County there are multiple layers of regulatory review. County plans and regulations, park districts, cities, towns, and neighboring county planning efforts should all be considered when planning and designing the regional trail system.

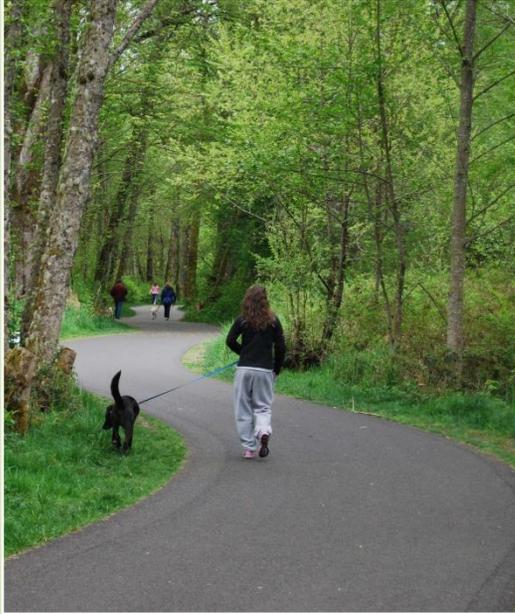
**Pierce County.** There are a number of County planning documents that are relevant to the regional trail plan. These include the County-wide Planning Policies, the Pierce County Comprehensive Plan, the Pierce County Code, the Pierce County Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan and the Pierce County Non-Motorized Transportation Plan. Pierce County also identifies several community areas with adopted plans that include strategies for providing and maintaining parks and open space. All of the adopted community plans have specific goals, objectives or action items that address a regional network of trails. Based on the intent of the amendments, the responsibility for providing a non-motorized regional trail transportation network is the combined responsibility of the Transportation and PCPR. As noted in the Pierce County Non-motorized Transportation Plan, PCPR plays the lead role in developing off-road trails while Pierce County Public Works and Utilities is responsible for on-road non-motorized projects. The County's Low Impact Development (LID) techniques also provide information related to environmentally responsible and effective stormwater management techniques.

**Park Districts.** All of Pierce County's park districts have adopted a park and recreation related plan. Similar to city, town, and county plans, park district plans contain policies and goals related to connectivity to neighboring communities, and coordination among affected agencies and user groups.

**Cities and Towns.** Several cities and towns in Pierce County have adopted trail specific plans, recreation plans or have existing or planned trails within their jurisdictions. Of the County's cities and towns, ten have adopted a plan related to trail development and four have either drafted a trail related plan or are in the process of trail development. Several of these communities have identified specific trail classifications as well as trail design standards. All of these communities identify the need for a regional trail network, or trail connectivity to neighboring destinations.

**Neighboring Counties.** Pierce County is surrounded by six counties. King, Mason, Thurston and Yakima Counties all have adopted County-wide trail master plans. Kitsap County has an area specific trail plan and a bicycle plan, as well as non-motorized transportation planning efforts through the Kitsap Regional Coordinating Council. Lewis County does not currently have an adopted plan related to trail planning.

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# 7.3. REGIONAL TRAIL SYSTEM

## REGIONAL TRAIL SYSTEM

The concept of the regional trail system is to link all major developed areas and neighboring counties with a network of non-motorized routes that serves both recreation and transportation purposes. This chapter identifies specific types of trail users and corridors, provides a regional trail classification system and illustrates the regional trail system concept.

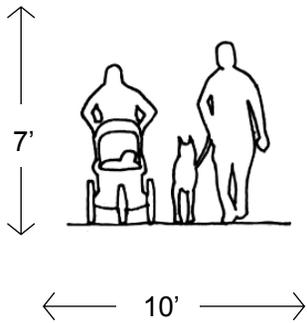
## TRAIL USERS AND CORRIDORS

Trails can attract different types of users who have different preferred trail settings, or corridors. This Chapter describes trail users and corridor characteristics drawing from popular and widely referenced sources and existing plans. These sources include the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's Trails for the Twenty-First Century, the Washington State Trails Plan and other county trail plans within western Washington.

### Trail Users

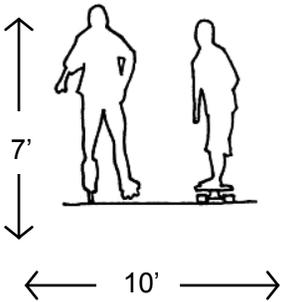
Trail users ultimately determine trail design. While cyclists, skaters and walkers need a paved surface that is free from irregularities, equestrians and joggers prefer a softer or unpaved surface. User characteristics related to speed and ability should also be considered to create successful environments that limit conflict. The following provides a description of potential trail users including an overview of important design considerations. Potential trail users include:

- Pedestrians;
- In-line skaters and skateboarders;
- Cross-country skiers and snowshoers;
- Road cyclists;
- Mountain bikers;
- Equestrians; and
- Non-motorized watercraft users (water trails).



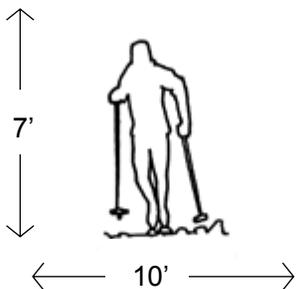
### **Pedestrians**

Pedestrians include walkers, hikers, joggers and runners. Pedestrians also include people with disabilities who may be dependent on wheelchairs or other mobility devices. Pedestrians typically travel at slower speeds and may travel side-by-side. This has important implications when considering other users such as bicyclists who generally travel at faster speeds. Other design considerations include users with baby strollers who need a smoother surface, and pedestrians with pets that need additional width. Some pedestrians prefer softer surfaces that have less impact on legs and feet, while others prefer to walk or run on harder surfaces. Two-way pedestrian traffic needs at least a 6' to 8' wide travel lane with a 7' vertical clearance.



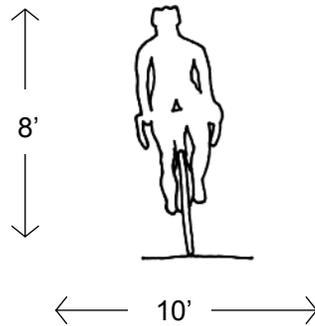
### **In-line Skaters and Skateboarders**

In-line skaters and skateboarders need a smooth, mostly level surface. Skaters require a 10-foot minimum trail width (two-way) and a seven-foot vertical clearance. Benches or sitting areas to put on skates are helpful at trail heads.



### **Cross-Country Skiers and Snowshoers**

During the winter, trails make excellent routes for cross-country skiers and snowshoers in areas that have snowfall. While most snowshoes are designed for deeper snow, as little as six inches of snow can provide adequate depth for skiing. A one-way trail used exclusively for skiing should be a minimum of four feet wide; a two-way trail requires a minimum of seven feet.



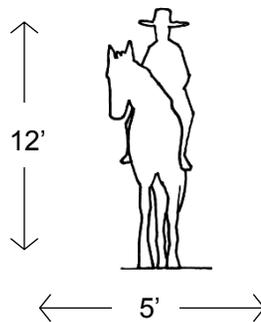
### Road Cyclists

Road cyclist may use trails for commuting, recreation and touring. Like pedestrians, road cyclist may also travel side-by-side or in larger groups. Because cyclist can reach higher speeds, the design needs for these users are more specific. The AASHTO Guidelines described in Chapter 4 are the definitive source for cycling trail design. Two-way road cyclist traffic needs at least a 10' wide travel lane with an 8' vertical clearance and 150' sight distance. Because speed is a major design consideration for cyclist, trail design should account for minimum sight and stopping distance, speed control measures and grade. Trail surfaces should be paved and free from any rough or irregular surfaces.



### Mountain Bikers

Because mountain bikes can be used on- and off-road, the preferred trail design is varied. Mountain bikers need the same design considerations as road cyclist when used on the road or paved trails. For off-road riding mountain bikers prefer narrower (two to four-foot) single track trails composed of natural/compacted earth. Unpaved trail sections should be designed to reduce speed and prevent erosion.



### Equestrians

Equestrian trail users have specific needs, because hard surfaces and granular stone can injure horses' hooves. Separated equestrian trails can be designed alongside hard surfaced sections of trail. Trail design for equestrians should include a stabilized dirt surface with a well-constructed sub-base, and a 5' minimum width. Vertical clearance for equestrians should be at least 12' and sight distance should be at least 100'. Appropriate trailhead facilities including horse trailer staging, parking, signage, mounting and dismounting blocks, and water should also be provided.

## Non-motorized Watercraft (Water Trails)

Canoeing, kayaking, and other small, non-motorized watercraft are all popular for use on Pierce County's rivers, lakes and marine settings. Water trail users require safe beach or dock landings and launch sites, access to support facilities such as restrooms and day use or overnight camping areas, staging and parking areas, and signage and clear connections to the regional trail.

## Trail Corridors

The physical landscape of Pierce County offers extraordinary trail settings that range from Mt. Rainier National Park, rural farmland, cities, towns and Puget Sound. This diversity requires a variety of trail design standards to accommodate development of regional trails throughout the county. Trail corridor classifications help define these diverse settings. These include:

- Rail corridors;
- Park and public land corridors;
- Greenway corridors;
- Utility corridors;
- Dike and levee corridors;
- Street right-of-way corridors;
- Water trail corridors; and
- Military/tribal/private lands

As trails are planned, the identification of trail corridor types will assist in accounting for environmental considerations, property ownership and public access and development time and cost. In order to develop and maintain trail that are adaptive to the landscape, this section describes the potential trail corridors that are found in Pierce County

### Rail Corridors

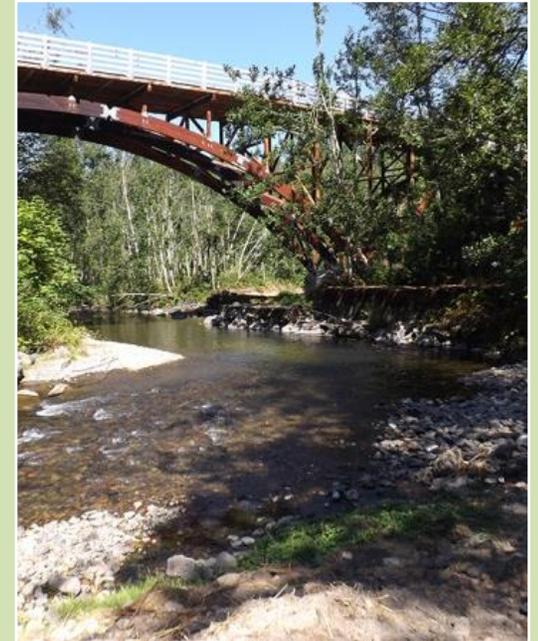
Thousands of miles of abandoned and active railroad tracks throughout the nation provide ample opportunity for trails. Rail trails include rail-to-trail developments, in which trails replace unused rail lines; and rail with trail developments, in which trails are built within the right-of-way of a rail line that continues to be used.

#### *Attributes and Assets*

- Rail lines provide vast networks of linear clearings for trails.
- Trains require relatively flat terrain (often under 3% slope), so additional grading for trails is minimal for ADA-accessible trails.
- The historical significance of rail lines—and their tendency to pass through diverse landscapes—presents exciting opportunities for narrative trail networks, which can be a particular draw for tourists.

#### *Commuter Value*

- The flat nature of rail trails makes them ideal for bicycle commuting. Trails alongside commuter rails provide logical connections for commuters.





### *Challenges*

- Often include structures, overpasses and trestles that may be in need of extensive repair or replacement.
- Property ownership of abandoned lines maybe uncertain and require expensive investigation.
- Abandoned railways may also have unseen environmental contaminants from prior use, and may require costly redevelopment measures and mitigation if adjacent to wetlands or steep slopes.

### **Park and Public Land Corridors**

Though often not linear in form, parks are common venues for trail networks because of their public ownership and use for outdoor recreation. A trail may simply traverse a park site or provide access to play structures and other amenities. Vast networks for hiking, biking or horseback riding are often included in larger parks. Public lands also include sites such as maintenance facilities and water storage and treatment facilities. These facilities can serve dual use as recreational hubs with some creative planning and design. Parks provide many examples of trail networks—from narrow winding foot trails to extensive paved networks.

### *Attributes and Assets*

- Park trails are often designated for specific uses including hiking, biking and horseback riding, and provide access to park amenities, including play structures, sports facilities, public art, community centers and restrooms.

- Park trail networks provide valuable opportunities for humans to observe and interact with functions of nature.
- Trails can connect individual parks to form a comprehensive regional network.

### *Commuter Value*

- Parks and other public lands are destinations in and of themselves. A regional trail network that connects parks to each other and to residential neighborhoods will provide alternatives to motor vehicle travel.

### *Challenges*

- Potential conflicts between users.
- Multi-use trails within parks can become crowded on weekends.
- Often park and public facility pathways are not built to regional trail standards.
- Existing corridors may not meet ADA guidelines, and retrofit may be costly.
- Utility corridors may require similar environmental considerations as abandoned railways.

## Greenway Corridors

A greenway is a linear corridor that winds through and connects a variety of habitats and communities. Greenways generally maintain or restore ecological function by connecting habitat patches within a fragmented landscape. As another form of linear infrastructure, greenways are often planned with human use (parks and trails) in mind. Greenways are an essential form of green infrastructure—a term that is coming into widespread use as we begin to recognize the value of the services that functioning ecosystems provide us, such as clean air, water, food, energy and building materials.

### *Attributes and Assets*

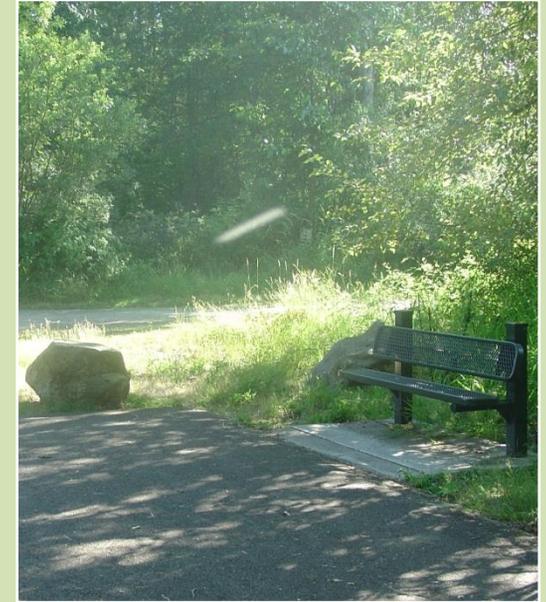
- Greenways are designed for ecological value, so trails within them present an ideal opportunity to expose users to ecosystem functions and local vegetation and wildlife.
- Trails should be planned as an integrated part of the greenway network in order to avoid the need to clear vegetation for later trail installation.
- Trails can also be built alongside streams and rivers as long as appropriate riparian buffers are in place.

### *Commuter Value*

- Urban greenways restore habitat corridors and/or buffer streams that would otherwise be threatened by urban development. Greenway trail networks that weave through residential and commercial developments provide alternative routes for bikers and pedestrians.

### *Challenges*

- Inherent conflict between ecological conservation objectives and encroachment on habitats.
- Landscape disturbance in greenway for trail construction can result in invasive species spread to natural habitats.
- Disturbance of natural areas due to trail development may require extensive mitigation.





## Utility Corridors

Utility corridors are linear in nature (above-ground or below) and are dedicated to the delivery of utility services, including water, sewer, electric, natural gas, telephone, internet and cable. The linear nature of utility corridors—and the need to keep them clear for maintenance—makes them useful as part of a trail network.

### *Attributes and Assets*

- Building trails along utility corridors, which already require periodic clearing for maintenance, avoids additional disturbance to existing vegetation.
- Preserving existing vegetation and new landscaping provided with trail development enhances wildlife habitat along utility corridors.
- Trail segments and amenities can easily be replaced if underground utility maintenance is required.
- Trails can aid service crews in accessing utilities for maintenance.

### *Commuter Value*

- Utilities service all forms of human infrastructure (homes, commercial districts, employment zones, transit...), so these corridors provide logical connections for commuting purposes.

### *Challenges*

- Often lack aesthetic features.
- Often go straight up and down steep slopes, which make them too steep for a trail.
- Limited re-vegetation options due to height restrictions or root issues.
- May be difficult to reach agreement with utility companies and service providers for trail development on utility corridors.

## Levees and Revetments Corridors

Levees and revetments are barriers that protect the inland from seawater or the flow of water from a river or other water body. Levees and revetments are constructed earthen walls built along the edge of the water body and require regular maintenance. The linear nature of dikes and levees—and the need to keep them clear for functionality—make them useful as part of trail networks. Many levees and revetments have trails or roads on them and, in some parts of the country, levee trail systems are very extensive.

### *Attributes and Assets*

- The trail alignment provides clear visibility.
- Levees and dikes provide scenic views of water features.
- The design of levees and dikes provides good drainage for trails.

### *Commuter Value*

- The flat nature of the trail along the dike or levee makes them ideal for bicycle commuting.

### *Challenges*

- Limited vegetation and opportunities to grow trees for shade.
- Ownership of levee may be private and County would have an easement for the levee and not a trail. Also, the details of property ownership along the river can be very difficult to determine because some are very old.
- Public access and safety is an issue during flood events.
- Potential conflict with levee maintenance and repair.





### **Street Right-of-Way-Corridors**

Urban street and freeway rights-of-way (ROWS) serve to provide vehicle access throughout the urban environment, and between points of interest. Bike and pedestrian trails can be planned within these ROWs to maximize the utility of transit corridors for commuters of all types.

#### *Attributes and Assets*

- Urban streets and freeways provide convenient connections for cars, but if there is no associated trail or dedicated lane for bikes and pedestrians, these corridors are barriers to human-powered commuters.
- Planning a trail within a street or freeway ROW allows for multiple means of transportation without the added overhead of purchasing a separate ROW.
- Maximizing the use of planned infrastructure such as freeways, reduces the need to disturb additional land to create separate networks for each mode of transportation.

#### *Commuter Value*

- Nationwide, single-passenger motorized vehicles are the most common commuter choice. By making the extensive network of freeways and streets accessible and passable by bicycle and foot, human-powered options for commuters will become available that may have otherwise been dangerous or prohibited.

#### *Challenges*

- Insufficient width to accommodate all functions.
- Need to provide safety at intersections.
- Varying speeds of cars, bicycles and pedestrians.
- Lack of street skills of younger cyclists.
- Limit of some trail users (i.e. horses).

## **Water Trail Corridors**

Waterways should not be forgotten as corridors that provide valuable transportation and recreational infrastructure. Swimming, paddling, fishing, and camping are just a few of the activities that take place along these corridors.

### *Attributes and Assets*

- Waterways themselves serve as trails for swimmers, rafters and paddlers.

### *Commuter Value*

- Water travel and connections to the regional trail offer transportation alternatives for residents that have access to destinations along water bodies and docking facilities.

### *Challenges*

- Signage and way-finding can be difficult to maintain.
- Limited to those with water craft.
- There is a need for safe and secure docking, launch and storage facilities, access areas with parking, restrooms, and overnight camping.

## **Military/Tribal/Private Ownership**

There are a number of land uses in Pierce County that can make trail development challenging. Some sections of the regional trail may be located on or near military, tribal or private lands. Because some of these land uses can present barriers to the regional trail system, it is important to identify some of the challenges related to other corridors. Security is one of the fundamental priorities to consider when developing trails near or on military lands. Tribal areas and private lands are also unique and require early coordination and sensitive design to allow public access while avoiding conflicts with land owners.

## REGIONAL SYSTEM

Chapter 4 illustrates a conceptual regional trail alignment and depicts regional and county parks connected by the regional trail system. Chapter 4 illustrates the preliminary conceptual spine for a regional trails system, which has been further analyzed and refined as part of the regional trails planning effort in this Chapter 7.3. This section summarizes the findings of the Needs Assessment Summary Report (May 2009), which analyzed the existing and proposed trails network, presented a trail classification system and a regional trail concept.

### Identifying the Regional System

A review of the existing and proposed off-street trails in (Chapter 7.2) reflects a lack of continuous off-street trail alignments. Trail alignments are fragmented and, in general, there is a lack of west-east trail connections. Of particular note is the lack of off-street connections in the western portion of the County and the greater Tacoma Metro area. An ideal regional trail system would provide off-street access throughout the County with few barriers.

**Trail Gaps.** A gap analysis of the existing and proposed trails network within the County was conducted as part of the analysis. Trail gaps are missing segments within a trail's alignment. Gaps are identified by reviewing the breaks in the existing and proposed trail alignments, assessing the connections to key destinations and reviewing the directness to key destinations. Using these three criteria, observations were made regarding

Pierce's existing and proposed trails network during the analysis phase of the planning process.

**Origins and Destinations.** As part of the analysis, key destinations were identified for assessing regional trail connections and access to trails. These locations include regional and county parks, recreation centers, residential areas, schools, universities and major employers. The locations are depicted on Figure 7.3-1. Most schools and major employers are located in urbanized areas where off-street corridors may be difficult to acquire.

**Park Access by Trails.** The examination of the trail connections to county and regional parks revealed that Heritage Recreation Center is the only park currently served by an existing off-street trail: the Nathan Chapman Memorial Trail. The trail's function is to connect the Heritage Recreation Center with South Hill Community Park. It is envisioned that this trail will eventually connect with the proposed Cross County Commuter Collector Trail. Future connections to county and regional parks will be made by three main trail alignments: the Train to the Mountain Rail with Trail, Cross County Commuter Collector and Foothills Trail. These three trails will connect Meridian Habitat, Frontier, Cross Park, Carbon River Valley and Orangegate Parks to create a greater regional trail system.

**Trail Linkage Opportunities.** As noted previously, Pierce County has many overlapping jurisdictions and the northwestern and central portions of the county are highly urbanized. It may not be realistic for the PCPR or other jurisdictions to develop off-street trails in the urbanized areas; for example,

land acquisition for a separated trail may be cost prohibitive. As an alternative, existing infrastructure such as sidewalks and utility rights-of-way could be used to establish links within the regional trails network. Through the inventorying process, the TWG noted multiple on-street alignments. Some of the on-street alignments could be upgraded to provide safe connections between the fragmented off-street alignments and could be outfitted with both cycling and pedestrian facilities, way-signs, and if room allows, equestrian facilities. Figure 7.3-1 incorporates the on-street alignments identified by the TWG and highlights alignments that were adopted in the 1997 Non-motorized Transportation Plan (NMTP) and road segments that could close the gaps in the regional trail network. (The 2009 linkage opportunity map with additional employment and other information is included in Appendix F. Primary park, trail, and educational facility information is shown both on Figure 7.3-1 and Appendix F.)

## TRAIL CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

Establishing a regional trail classification system allows Pierce County Parks and Recreation (PCPR) to implement the goals of the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan, prioritize trail development as proposals are brought forward, establish a framework for trail design and provide local jurisdictions and organizations with the vision for linking their local trail plans to the region as a whole. The regional trail classification system includes three trail

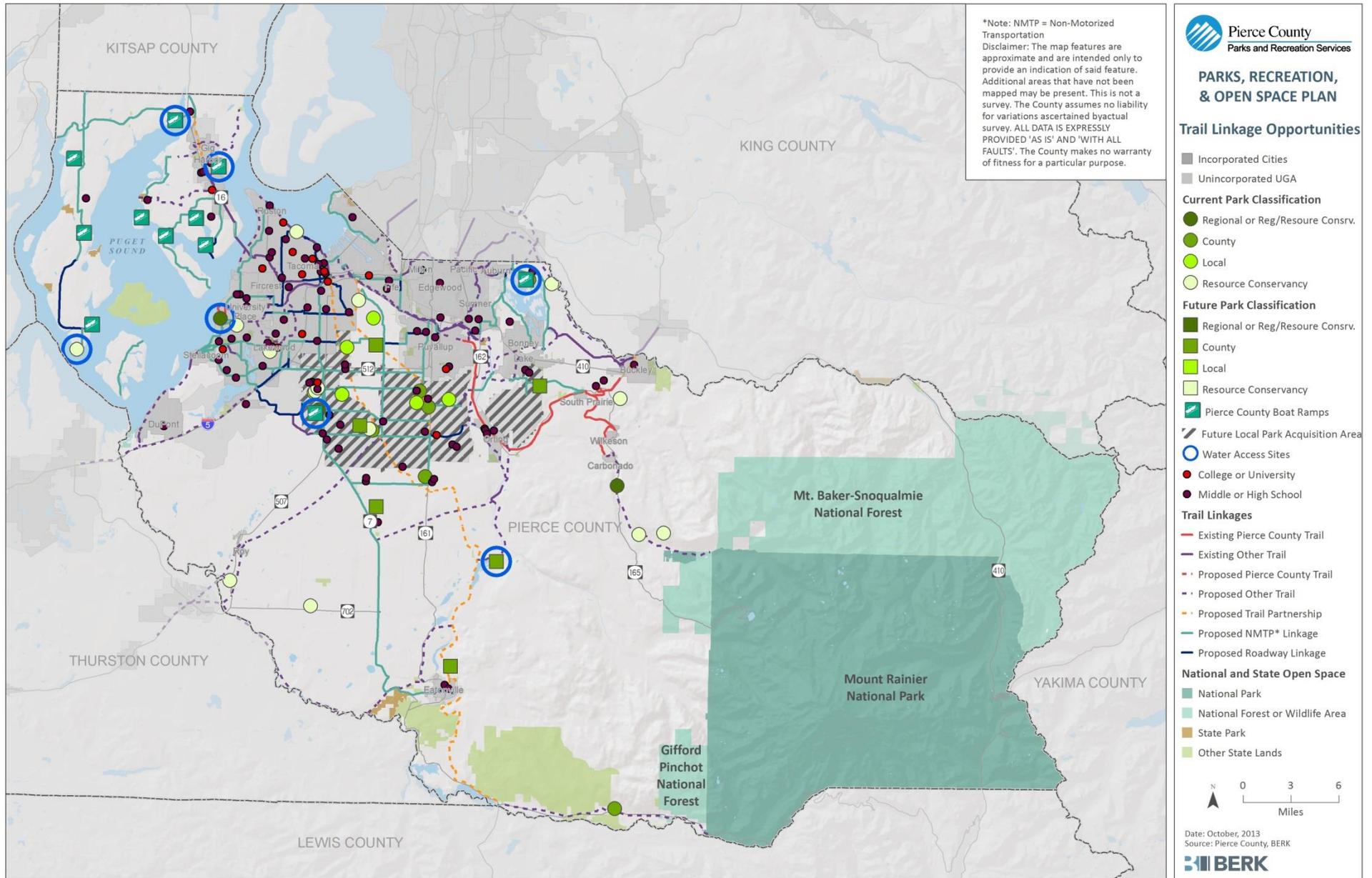
categories: regional, sub-regional and connector trails. Similar to a street network hierarchy, the regional trail network is based on a tiered classification system. While some sections of trail will accommodate higher volumes of traffic and provide regional connections, other sections may rely on the local street network and be designed to link local destinations. The regional trail classification for each jurisdiction's trail alignments is specified in Appendix D: Trails Inventory.

**Regional Trail.** Regional trails are intended to meet the goals and objectives of outlined in Chapter 5 and to provide the spine for the trail network. Regional trails link parks, open spaces, significant environmental features, public facilities and areas of interest. These trails are provided by local jurisdictions and PCPR. These trails extend beyond the borders of Pierce County and will serve as a continuous recreational and commuter corridor.

**Sub-regional Trail.** Sub-regional trails provide transportation and recreational benefits by linking two or more regional trails. Sub-regional trails provide connections between cities, towns and key destinations. Sub-regional trails also create recreation loops to county and regional parks, natural areas and other environmental features.

**Connector Trail.** Connector trails provide convenient connections through urban areas and from neighborhoods to the regional and sub-regional trails.

Figure 7.3-1. Trail Linkage Opportunities



# PROPOSED CLASSIFIED NETWORK

Figure 7.3-2 illustrates a comprehensive trails system with a clear hierarchy of trails that creates connections between regional trail alignments, key destinations, communities and the region. The alignments identified as regional trails follow the Adaptive System Map concept and go one step

further by identifying the existing and proposed off-street trail alignments, NMTP on-street alignments and roadway linkage opportunities, which are summarized in Table 7.3-1. This is followed by Table 7.3-2 which summarizes the trail classifications by pathway type: off-street trail (county, partnership and other jurisdiction), NMTP on-street alignment and roadway linkages.

**Table 7.3-1. Summary of Trail Classifications**

Total by Classification	Approximate Miles
Regional Trail	282.4
Sub-regional Trail	183.2
Connector Trail	126.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>551.92</b>

Note: Mileage is approximate and has not been derived from a survey. This total includes NMTP on-street alignments and roadways, which are not included in Appendix D: Trails Inventory, these alignments provide additional 258 miles of possible trail linkages. More information is available under separate cover in the Needs Assessment Summary Report, May 2009.

**Table 7.3-2. Summary of all Trail Classification Mileage by Pathway Type**

Trail Classification	Regional	Sub-regional	Connector	Total
County off-street trails	27.4	0.0	4.0	31.4
Partnership off-street trails	63.0	0.4	1.5	64.9
Other jurisdiction off-street trails	154.2	63.8	20.0	238.0
Roadway linkages	5.8	101.2	79.7	186.7
NMTP on-street alignments	32.0	17.8	21.1	70.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>282.4</b>	<b>183.2</b>	<b>126.3</b>	<b>591.9</b>

Note: Mileage is approximate and has not been derived from a survey.

## PROPOSED REGIONAL TRAIL CONCEPT

The proposed regional trail network would primarily be comprised of off-street trails with NMTP on-street alignments and roadway linkages filling the gaps in the network. The trails composing the spine of the system would total approximately 282 miles. The spine would contain 245 miles (87%) of off-street trails, 32 miles (11%) of NMTP on-street alignments and six miles (2%) of roadway. This core alignment of pathways would be considered the spine of the regional trails system. Figure 7.3-3 illustrates the proposed spine of the regional trail network.

Table 7.3-3 summarizes the existing and proposed trail alignments that comprise the spine of the regional trails system (Figure 7.3-3) managed by the PCPR or as a trail partnership project. The principal interest of the County's Parks Department is the completion of the spine of the regional trail network through its own actions or partnerships, and support of the completion of local jurisdiction trail alignments when feasible. Pierce County, City of Buckley, City of Enumclaw in King County and King County (as the principal lead) are jointly pursuing the construction of an extension of the Foothills Trail across the White River outside the City of Buckley. This extension will connect the Pierce County Foothills Trail to King County's Foothills Trail that extends into the City of Enumclaw. The plans are to replace the Burlington Northern Railroad trestle that was removed some time ago with a new 250' long, 14' wide elevated trail over the White River.

**Figure 7.3-2. Trail Classifications**

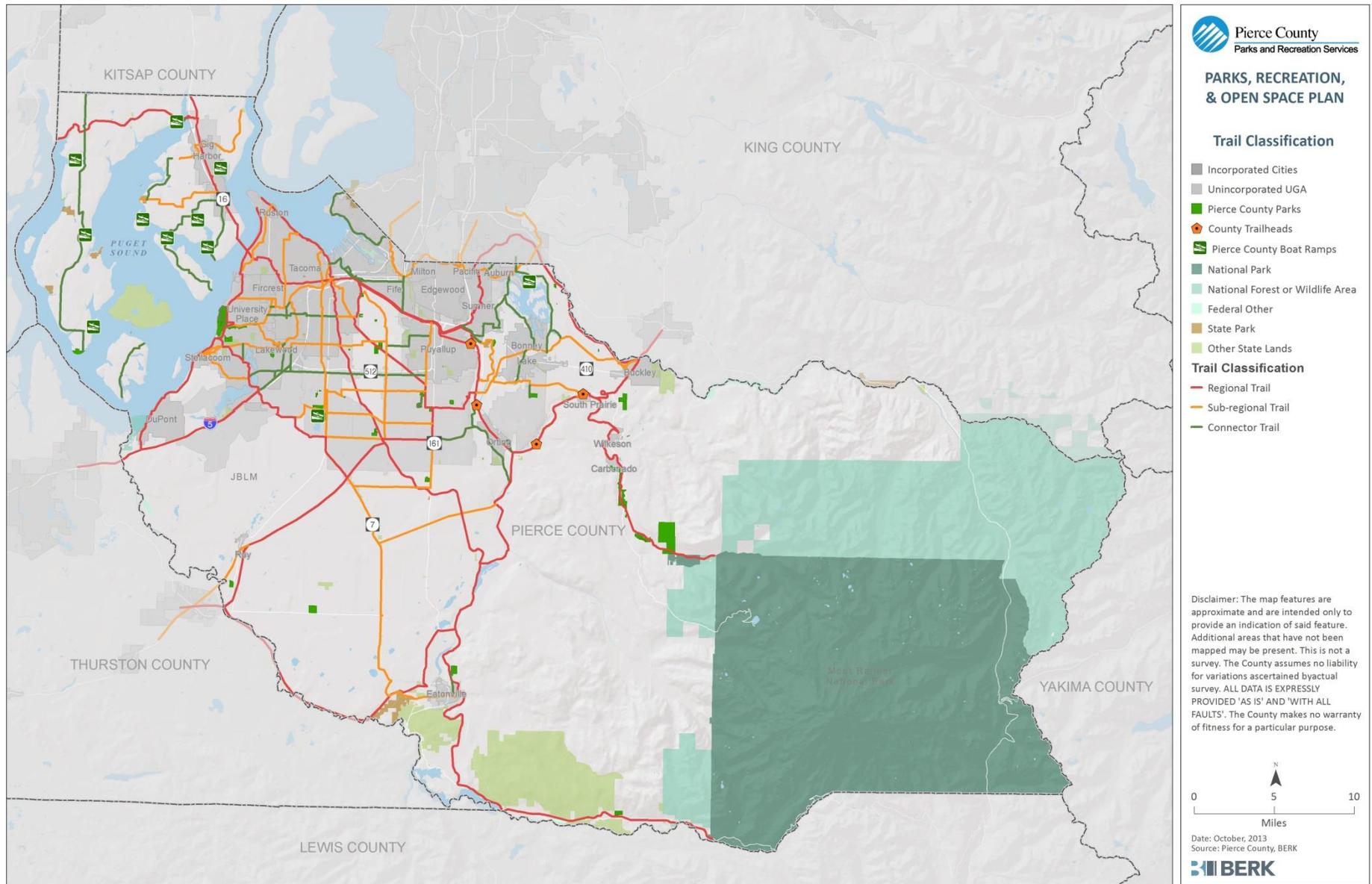
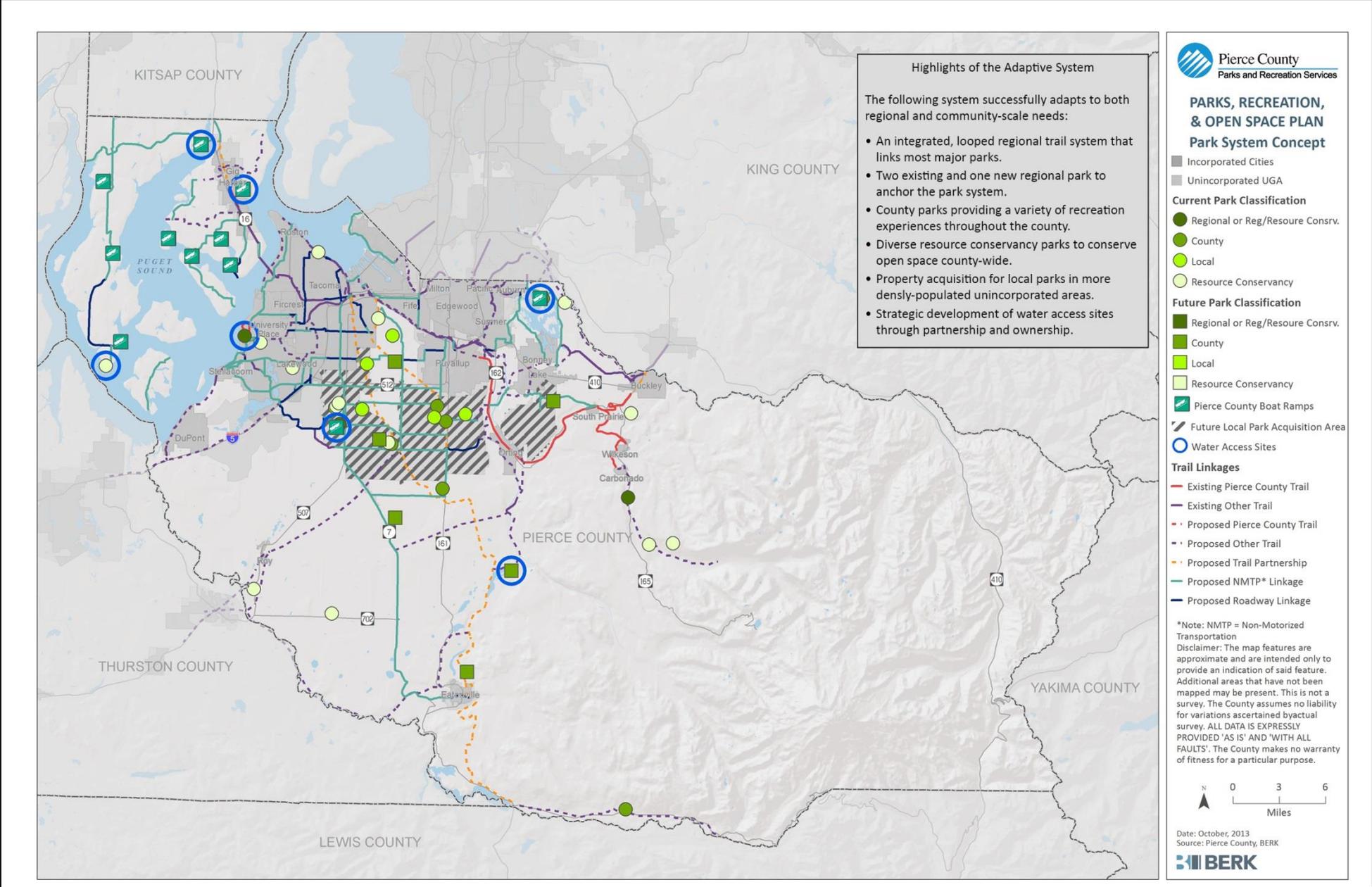


Figure 7.3-3. Regional Trails Concept



**Table 7.3-3. Summary of County and Partnership Trails Classifieds Regional Trail**

<b>Pierce County Trail</b>	<b>Approx. Miles</b>
<i>Foothills Trail</i>	26.1
Foothills Trail - Carbonado to Cascade Junction (Wilkeson Section)	1.1
Foothills Trail - Carbonado to Cascade Junction (Wilkeson to Carbonado)	2.1
Foothills Trail - Carbonado to Cascade Junction (Wilkeson to Cascade Junction)	3.7
Foothills Trail - McMillin to Orting	3.1
Foothills Trail - Merker Junction to McMillin	4.6
Foothills Trail - Orting to South Prairie	7.3
Foothills Trail - South Prairie to Buckley (Buckley)	0.3
Foothills Trail - South Prairie to Buckley (Phase I)	1.3
Foothills Trail - South Prairie to Buckley (Phase II)	1.6
Foothills Trail - South Prairie to Buckley (Phase III)	1.1
<i>Grandview Trail</i>	0.9
Grandview Trail - Cirque Dr to 64th St.	0.9
<i>Stewart Road Trail</i>	0.4
Stewart Road Trail I - Stuck River to Sumner Meadows Park	0.4
Pierce County Total	27.4
<b>Trail Partnership</b>	-
Cross County Commuter Collector Trail – Tacoma Public Utilities, Water Division	12.6
Cushman Power Line Trail - Purdy to 96th St NW	3.3
Link - Foothills Trail - Enumclaw Connector	1.8
Trail Linkage Tacoma Dome Station/Freighthouse Square (north)	0.2
Train to the Mountain Rail with Trail - Port of Tacoma, Tacoma Rail Division	45.1
Trail Partnership Total	63.0
<b>County and Partnership Project Total</b>	<b>90.4</b>

Mileage is approximate and has not been derived from a survey.

The regional class county and trail partnership projects total an approximate 90 miles and of this total 27 miles are developed off-street trails and 63 miles are proposed. The remainder of the regional trail network within the county is approximately 192 miles of trails that are a combination of existing and proposed off-street trail alignments managed and conceived by other jurisdictions and organizations, or are on-street NMTP alignments or other roadway opportunities<sup>1</sup>.

**Table 7.3-4. Summary of Other Trails Classified as Regional Trails**

<b>Other Trails</b>	<b>Approx. Miles</b>
Ashford to Elbe Trail	8.1
Ashford to Rainier	6.4
Cushman Power Line Trail – 96th St NW to Narrows	4.9
DuPont/Nisqually Trail	9.8
Fort Steilacoom Trail	1.4
JEB III Trail - Dixie Gatchel Trail	0.9
Link - 144th St E to Foothills Trail	2.0
Link - Foothills Trail to JEB III trail – Dixie Gatchel Trail	0.8
Link - Foothills Trail to (Mt. Rainier Connector)	11.4
Link - Foothills Trail to Train to the Mountain RWT	9.0
Link - Train to the Mountain RWT to North Levee Trail	1.4
Narrows/Grandview Trail	7.9
Nisqually River Trail	13.2
North Levee Trail	8.2

<sup>1</sup> Information regarding the NMTP and roadway alignments are provided under separate cover in the Needs Assessment Summary Report, May 2009.

<b>Other Trails</b>	<b>Approx. Miles</b>
NW Trek Wildlife to Nisqually-Mashel State Park	8.5
Perimeter Rd to 176th St S	2.1
Puyallup River Trail	4.6
Puyallup River Walk	5.1
Ruston Way	4.1
Schuster Parkway Sidewalk/Trail	1.4
Scott Pierson Trail	6.3
Shoreline Trail	4.3
Thea Foss Esplanade	1.7
Trail to McKenna	15.2
White River Trail	15.5
Total	154.2

Note: Mileage is approximate and has not been derived from a survey.

Approximately 154 miles of the trails illustrated in Figure 7.3-3 are alignments managed or proposed by other jurisdictions or agencies with an existing 27 miles of off-street trails and 127 miles of proposed off-street trail alignments, which are summarized below in Table 7.3-4. The remaining 38 miles of regional trail alignments is a combination of NMTP on-street alignments and roadway linkages.

## **TRAILS IMPLEMENTATION**

This Chapter puts forth trail policies, guidelines, and a regional trail concept that are intended to guide the implementation of the mission and vision of PCPR, as well as support the advancement of the County's Non-motorized Trail Plan. The following presents some decision support tools for prioritizing trail projects, planning costs of future trail projects and involving the public in the process as the County continues to plan and develop regional trails.

## EVALUATING AND PRIORITIZING TRAIL PROJECTS

Pierce County has been effective at building trails, but there are many other jurisdictions and trails organizations planning and developing trails within the County. Establishing prioritization criteria for trail development will assist the County and its partners in implementing the regional trails plan and in supporting the development of a connected regional trails network. Agency staff can use the criteria to help select trail projects for development and assists in balancing the needs of the region, with the availability of land, funding, and support for regional trail development.

The criteria can also be used by the County in managing requests by trail project advocates. Trail groups and advocates can respond to the list as a step in getting a trail project through the funding and development process. The criteria respond to the goals and principles outlined in Chapters 5 and 6, applicable regulatory documents, design standards and funding opportunities. It is assumed that if a project is under project review it is in regulatory compliance with federal, state, and local regulations. The criteria have been organized into five categories:

- Access and connectivity;
- Urgency;
- Costs and benefits;
- Support; and
- Design and maintenance.

Because the criteria address a wide range of considerations, it will ultimately be the responsibility of County decision makers to determine whether a project has adequately addressed the evaluation criteria. As a result, it is possible that desired projects will not meet all of the criteria. In addition, these criteria are not exhaustive; regional priorities may change over time and the importance of some criteria may need adjustment in the future. Ultimately, the County can use the criteria to balance the desires of the region with a number of considerations outlined on the following pages.

## ACCESS AND CONNECTIVITY

Projects that improve non-motorized transportation access and connectivity throughout the region should be given a high priority. This is especially critical in areas where non-motorized transportation is constrained or limited by heavy vehicle traffic or busy intersections. Proposed projects should connect to regional-scale recreation opportunities and water access where available. Projects that connect County parks and facilities directly support goals of this plan (see Chapter 5). To determine whether projects improve access and connectivity in the region, projects should address the following criteria:

- The project creates a connection within the regional trail network. The alignments classified as regional trails provide a spine for the trails network. Development of regional trails provides opportunities for local jurisdictions to connect to the regional network of trails.
- The project will provide safe access for trail users. A safe trails network provides multiple access locations, and continuous and unobstructed paths of travel.
- The project will increase access and provide low cost transportation and recreation options for low income and underserved populations.
- The project improves access to regional and county parks and recreation facilities.
- The project improves access to major commercial and employment centers.
- The project improves access to public schools and universities.
- The project improves access to transit centers, bus stops, park-and-ride lots, ferry landings and train stations.
- The project creates access to sites of natural, scenic or historic interest.

## Urgency

Projects should be prioritized that are time sensitive, opportunity based or ready to develop. Acquiring rights-of-way or reaching an agreement to acquire land by all affected property owners can be a lengthy process. However, projects within an existing right-of-way, or project sites with property owners willing to dedicate rights-of-way should be given a high priority. To determine the urgency of a project, projects should address the following criteria:

- There is an imminent threat to lose the project opportunity.
- The project corridor is under public ownership or is currently accessible for public use.
- The project does not require complex or lengthy acquisition process.
- The project does not require a complex or lengthy permitting process.
- The project is within an existing corridor such as transmission lines and railroad grades where it may be feasible to negotiate public access without needing to acquire the land.
- The project site is owned outright, or can be used through easement, use agreement, or lease.
- The project has funding available through grants, donations or partner contributions.
- The project finishes a segment of an already existing trail alignment.

## Costs and Benefits

Projects that have a favorable cost to benefit ratio should receive a higher priority. Proposed projects should be evaluated based on benefit to the community, available funding, and initial costs, maintenance and operations, health and safety, and impacts to surrounding uses. To determine whether the benefits of a project outweigh the costs, the project should address the following criteria:

- The project will provide varied settings and experiences that can be enjoyed by a diversity of users, including people of all ages and abilities.
- The project will benefit underserved user groups.
- The total estimated project and maintenance costs have been identified including acquisition, materials, construction, enhancements, road crossings, structures, mitigation, planning, and permitting.
- Alternatives to the project have been examined as part of the trail's planning.
- There are no significant environmental impacts created by the project.
- Project funding is available to match the costs of the project.
- There are donations or other outside funding support for the project.

## Support

Projects that have significant support and meet the identified needs of the region should receive a high priority. Projects should have support from the community as well as non-governmental agencies. Projects should strengthen new and existing partnerships and use the support of volunteers and/or special service programs where possible. To determine whether projects have support and meet the needs of the region projects should address the following criteria:

- Projects that will link other sections of completed trail and coincide with other planning and development activities.
- The project has been prioritized in other adopted plans.
- The project has volunteer and/or partner organization support.
- The project has the support of the other jurisdictions.
- The project is a collaborative effort of multiple stakeholders.
- The project does not have measurable opposition.

## Design and Maintenance

Projects should be able to meet minimum design standards and require relatively low maintenance in the future. To determine whether projects will meet minimum design standards and require minimal maintenance, projects should address the following criteria:

- The project will comply with ADA accessibility guidelines.
- The project is physically separated from streets and roadways where possible.
- The project meets minimum standards for grade, width, vertical clearance, intersection and crossing design, speed, alignment, cross section and drainage.
- The project design considers low impact development techniques that protects and enhances significant environmental features.
- The project improves maintenance efficiency or reduces life-cycle costs.
- The project design incorporates Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) concepts and techniques; providing open and visible trail corridors for both users and public safety services and personnel.

Costs for building trails are influenced by local conditions, the availability of land and a need to develop low-maintenance and long lasting trail facilities. Planning level costs incorporate pricing for higher quality building materials, but does not include cost assumptions regarding associated labor, professional fees and environmental mitigation requirements. This chapter provides planning level estimates that should not be used to estimate actual costs for the design and build of specific projects, but for calculating linear feet and unit costs of trails, trailheads and crossings similar to those illustrated in Appendix H: Trail Design Guidelines.

## Trail Surface

Trail surfaces may vary depending on site conditions and constraints. Some sections of trail may require bridge crossings or boardwalks. Estimates for asphalt and concrete both assume use of porous materials to minimize storm water run-off. The costs below provide general linear foot costs for typical trail construction

**Table 7.3-5. Trail Surface Cost Summary**

Improvement	Units	Unit Price
Standard porous asphalt pathway (assume 16' wide)	LF	\$ 112
Standard porous concrete pathway (assume 16' wide)	LF	\$ 140
Stand non-porous asphalt pathway (assume 16' wide)	LF	\$ 96
Crushed rock pathway (assume 10' wide)	LF	\$ 50
Boardwalk (assume 12' wide) includes minimum impact footings	LF	\$ 120
Bridge (assume 12' x 100' span) prefabricated including footings	LF	\$ 2,000

## Urban Trailhead

The urban trailhead consists of a parking area, restroom, landscaping, and other site amenities. The site feature costs below include one bike rack, two benches, two trash receptacles, and signage. The size of parking area and amount of landscaping will vary the total cost for development. The costs below include an estimate based on a 10,000 square foot parking area and 2,500 square foot plaza.

**Table 7.3-6. Urban Trailhead Cost Summary**

Improvement	Units	Unit Price
Restroom	EA	\$150,000
Parking area	EA	\$ 10,000
Plaza area	EA	\$ 2,500
Site features	LS	\$ 10,500
Plantings	LS	\$ 10,000

## Equestrian Trailhead

The equestrian trailhead requires slightly more space to accommodate horse trailers and a staging area. Cost estimates are slightly higher than the urban trailhead. The site features cost is based on the same amenities as the urban trailhead in addition to a corral. The costs below include an estimate based on a 10,000 square foot parking area and 2,500 square foot plaza.

**Table 7.3-7. Equestrian Trailhead Cost Summary**

Improvement	Units	Unit Price
Restroom	EA	\$ 150,000
Parking area	EA	\$ 10,000
Plaza area	EA	\$ 2,500
Site features	LS	\$ 15,500
Plantings	LS	\$ 10,000

## Signal Crossing

Street crossing treatment may vary considerably based on street classification, width, and design standards. The paving assumes construction of a 12' wide crossing using concrete pavers for a two-lane road. Costs for the median island include a 20' by 10' curbed area and 80' tapers.

**Table 7.3-8. Signal Crossing Cost Summary**

Improvement	Units	Unit Price
Special crossing paving (assume 12' wide)	LF	\$ 150
Median islands (widening)	LS	\$ 10,000
Signalization	LS	\$ 160,000
Directional signs	EA	\$ 250
Stripping/reflectors/tactile warning/etc.	LS	\$ 7,500

## Site Features

There are several site features that may be added along the regional trail, and within individual trailheads. The cost for signs may vary depending on design, size, and material. The table below provides general costs for common site features that can be included throughout the regional trail system.

**Table 7.3-9. Site Features Cost Summary**

Improvement	Units	Unit Price
Bench	EA	\$ 1,200
Trash receptacle	EA	\$ 500
Sign - directional	EA	\$ 250
Sign - informational	EA	\$ 5,000
Standard bollard	EA	\$ 500
Removable bollard	EA	\$ 1,200
Curb stop	EA	\$ 150
Bike rack (5 spaces)	EA	\$ 600

## Landscaping

New landscaping will be required along the regional trail system, and at each trailhead. The number and type of tree and plant species will vary depending on location, soil condition, and other site specific characteristics. Site mitigation and irrigation will also vary depending on the final design of the project.

**Table 7.3-10. Landscaping Cost Summary**

Improvement	Units	Unit Price
Trees	EA	\$ 500.00
Shrubs	SF	\$ 1.50
Groundcover	SF	\$ 1.00
Seeding areas	SF	\$ 0.20
Mitigation	Acre	\$ 25,000.00
Irrigation (temporary)	Acre	\$ 20,000.00

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## GLOSSARY: TRAILS

AASHTO (American Association of State Highway  
and Transportation Officials) – Organization that  
provides transportation related guidelines and  
provides technical services to support states in  
their efforts to efficiently and safely move people  
and goods.

Accessibility – The extent to which facilities are  
barrier free and useable by persons with  
disabilities, including wheelchair users.

ABA (Architectural Barriers Act) – The  
Architectural and Transportation Barriers  
Compliance Board (Access Board) is proposing to  
issue accessibility guidelines for outdoor developed  
areas designed, constructed, or altered by Federal  
agencies subject to the Architectural Barriers Act of  
1968. The guidelines cover trails, outdoor  
recreation access routes, beach access routes,  
and picnic and camping facilities.

ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) – Federal  
civil rights legislation for disabled persons passed  
in 1990; calls on publicly accessible facilities to be  
accessible for disabled users.

Arterial Street – A major thoroughfare, used  
primarily for through traffic rather than for access to  
adjacent land, that is characterized by high  
vehicular capacity and continuity of movement.

Bikeable – Facilities, such as trails, that are  
designed to safely and efficiently accommodate  
bicyclists.

Complete Street Standards (complete streets) –  
Incorporates pedestrian, bicycle and transit modes  
of travel into the design and development of all  
roadways.

Corridor – Land that is dedicated for the trail  
alongside the trail that may accommodate other a  
general directional flow connecting major sources  
of trips that may contain a number of streets,  
highways and transit route alignments.

CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental  
Design) – "CPTED is the proper design and  
effective use of the built environment which may  
lead to a reduction in the fear and incidence of  
crime, and an improvement of the quality of life." -  
National Crime Prevention Institute

FHWA (Federal Highway Administration) – Federal  
agency that provides financial and technical  
support to state, local, and tribal governments for  
constructing, improving and preserving America's  
highway system.

GMA (State of Washington's Growth Management  
Act) – This agency requires state and local

governments to manage Washington's growth by identifying and protecting critical areas and natural resource lands, designating urban growth areas, preparing comprehensive plans and implementing them through capital investments and development regulations.

LID (Low Impact Development) – An approach to land development (or re-development) that works with nature to manage stormwater close to its source. LID employs principles such as preserving and recreating natural landscape features to create functional and appealing site drainage. LID can be applied to new development, redevelopment, or as retrofits to existing development.

MUTCD (Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices) – defines the standards used by road managers nationwide to install and maintain traffic control devices on all streets and highways. The MUTCD is published by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) under 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 655, Subpart F.

On-Street – Located within the roadway/street paving.

Off-Street – Separated from roadway/street paving.

RCO (State Recreation and Conservation Office) – This office creates and maintains opportunities for recreation, and protects wild lands and promotes salmon recovery.

PROS Plan (Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan) – The Plan creates a vision for an innovative, inclusive, and interconnected system of parks, recreation facilities, programs, and services that promotes recreation, health, and environmental

conservation as integral elements of a livable community. The Pierce County Regional Trails Plan serves as Chapter 7 of the PROS Plan.

RCO (State Recreation and Conservation Office) – This office creates and maintains opportunities for recreation, and protects wild lands and promotes salmon recovery.

ROW (Right-of-Way) – Land owned by a government entity for transportation purposes, such as for a street, rail line, or highway.

SCORP (Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Planning program) – Report that provides statewide recreation data to provide guidance, information and recommendations for federal, state, and local units of government, as well as the private sector, in making policy and planning decisions.

Trail Classification System – Pierce County's three tiered regional trail system. The system includes:

Regional Trail – The spine of the trail network that links destinations and communities;

Sub-regional Trail – Branch of the regional trail that links two or more regional trails; and

Connector Trail – Connects regional and sub-regional trails through urban areas and neighborhoods.

Transportation Demand Management – Techniques that reduce traffic congestion such as trail development and bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Walkable – Facilities, such as trails, that are designed to safely and efficiently accommodate pedestrians.

WSDOT (Washington State Department of Transportation) – State agency that constructs, maintains, and regulates the use of the state's transportation infrastructure. WSDOT is responsible for more than 20,000 lane-miles of roadway, nearly 3,000 vehicular bridges and 524 other structures.