

# **CHAPTER XIII**

## **PARKS AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Parks and recreational facilities are important components of the City and add immeasurably to the quality of life. Generally considered the counterparts of residential, commercial and industrial development, these lands are typically owned by the public and operated for the benefit of the community at large. The intent of the Parks and Open Space Element is to present goals and policies to guide acquisition, development and implementation of the City's Parks and Open Space program. The content and format of this element is in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan criteria of the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office to ensure eligibility to apply for grants administered by that agency.

This element is also developed in accordance with the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA). Pursuant to the GMA, jurisdictions are required to adopt "mandatory" Comprehensive Plan elements. A Parks and Recreation Element is one of the elements required by the GMA. As an element of the Comprehensive Plan, the Parks and Open Space Element must be consistent with the other elements of the plan. Specifically, proposed park facilities and the Level of Service (LOS) standards set forth in this element must be consistent with the Land Use Element and the capital project funding levels adopted in the Capital Facilities Plan Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

The GMA also requires jurisdictions to identify lands that may be useful for public purposes. This element identifies the general location of properties that may be suitable for public park and open space uses on the Parks and Open Space Map. The parks and open space facilities identified in this element are also identified on the Land Use Element map and are addressed in the Capital Facilities Plan Element.

### **PARKS AND OPEN SPACE PLAN**

The Parks and Open Space Plan contains the Level of Service (LOS) standards and Facility Guidelines for parks and open space facilities, a list of existing, needed and proposed facilities, implementation strategies, and the Plan Maps. Information contained in the 2009 Parks and Open Space Assessment Survey, together with the goals and policies, provide the basis for the development of the park and recreation LOS Standards and Facility Guidelines, as well as the proposed facilities illustrated on the Parks and Open Space Map and the Trails/Pedestrian Facilities Map.

## Parks and Open Space Facilities Description

To guide the designation of planned parks and open space facilities, the following facility descriptions are presented. The descriptions have been tailored to the Municipal Urban Growth Area (MUGA) using nationally recognized criteria from the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA). The descriptions are intended to be general in their application, but should be considered by the City and private development community in the siting and designing of park and open space uses.

### **1. Regional Parks:**

Regional parks should contain a minimum of 50 acres and should ideally serve a population based on the standard of seven acres per 1,000 persons. Regional park facilities should contain both active and passive uses and siting requirements similar to those established for community parks.

Because of the large size, cost and service area of regional parks, multi-jurisdictional cooperation is often necessary for acquiring, developing and maintaining a regional park facility. In addition, opportunities exist for including additional public facilities such as schools, transit facilities, a performing arts center, a community center, regional drainage facilities, wildlife preserves and other uses considered compatible with the general scope or theme of a regional park.

### **2. Community Parks:**

Community parks should range between 5 and 35 acres and should ideally serve a population based on a standard of between five and eight acres per 1,000 persons. The desired service area for community parks is a one- to two-mile radius of several neighborhoods that would contain a population of up to 15,000 residents. In areas that lack sufficient park facilities, community parks will serve a much larger area and population. Community parks should provide opportunities for both active and passive recreation activities, and be large enough to provide room for organized sports such as soccer and baseball fields, a recreation center, basketball and tennis courts, a trail system, swimming pool and/or a group-use shelter.

Community parks should be within close proximity of the community served and be located on collector or arterial streets that provide easy vehicular access to the residents of the community. Since community parks may be surrounded in part by residential development, active organized sports should be planned in areas that will not detrimentally impact surrounding residences. Adequate provision for parking is required since many people would travel to the park by automobile.

Like regional parks, the relatively large size, high cost and extended service area of a community park often require multi-jurisdictional cooperation for the acquisition, development and maintenance of a community park facility.

### **3. Neighborhood Parks:**

Where possible, neighborhood parks should be sited near the center and within a 1/4 to 1/2 mile walking radius to the neighborhood population groups served. In areas that lack sufficient recreational facilities, neighborhood parks will serve a much larger area. Recreational activities related to neighborhood parks include both passive and active uses, as well as multi-purpose facilities designed to serve the needs of the adjacent neighborhood. Active uses usually include non-organized sports facilities (i.e., basketball, tennis and play equipment) and should be conducted in such a manner as to be compatible to the surrounding residential areas. Passive uses include open play areas, nature trails and picnic areas. Restroom facilities should be provided in neighborhood parks.

Neighborhood parks should emphasize convenient and safe access by pedestrians and bicyclists. These parks should generally be three to ten acres in size and serve a population consistent with the NRPA standard of two acres per 1,000 persons. Adequate space for open play fields and play equipment should be emphasized, and on street parking areas should be limited in size. During peak use times, on-street parking is necessary to serve the needs of park users that drive to the park.

### **4. Open Space - Greenway:**

Public/private open space/greenway uses should be planned in areas where natural amenities such as streams, wetlands, natural vegetation areas and large open spaces can be utilized for passive recreation purposes and pedestrian (hiker/biker) linkages. Open spaces/greenways can also be used to buffer potentially incompatible land uses.

### **5. Public/Private "Mini-Parks" and Open Space:**

Public/private open spaces would include the golf course, nature preserve, tot lots, mini-parks, urban plazas and other open space corridors within the City. Tot lots should be located within easy accessibility to surrounding neighborhood residences or within commercial centers. Passive open spaces such as natural preserves and greenbelts should be planned in areas to separate incompatibilities and provide for pedestrian and wildlife corridors.

### **6. Trails/Pedestrian Facilities**

Trails provide linkages between neighborhoods, parks, schools, transit facilities and commercial areas. Within the context of this element, trails include both multi-use facilities such as the North Creek Trail and on-street sidewalks. Future trails, whether constructed by the City or private developer, should provide connections to the existing public trail system and/or activity areas such as parks, schools, transit, and shopping. Trails are sometimes located on private property with easements granted to the public to allow access.

## Parks and Open Space Level of Service Standards and Facility Guidelines

The purpose of this section is to establish the criteria and standards for the amount, size, and type of park facilities needed for the population. The parks and open space needs have been separated into two categories, "Level of Service (LOS) standards" and "Facility Guidelines." These standards and guidelines were established by the NRPA in 1983 to help cities plan for park and recreation facilities.

Table 1 identifies the adopted public park and recreation facility LOS Standards and guidelines for the City of Mill Creek and its Municipal Urban Growth Area (MUGA). The table also indicates existing facilities as well as projected facility needs for the planning period (2025). A brief description of these standards and guidelines is contained in Table 1.

### 1. LOS Standards:

The LOS Standards are applicable to the City and are intended to reflect the recreation facilities required to serve the anticipated population of the City and immediate surroundings, as well as the City's ability to provide those facilities.

LOS Standards are subject to the concurrency requirements adopted by the City of Mill Creek consistent with the provisions of the Growth Management Act. Future development proposals and annexations will be analyzed to determine their impact on the parks and open space facilities. If a proposed development or annexation will lower the parks and open space facilities below the adopted standards, it cannot be approved, unless it can be demonstrated that additional facilities needed to meet the standards will be in place within six years. Implementation strategies for obtaining the facilities necessary to meet the adopted LOS Standards are contained later in this element. In addition, the Capital Facilities Plan Element contains a financing plan for park facilities needed to meet the adopted LOS Standards and is thereby consistent with this element.

#### *Neighborhood Parks*

The City of Mill Creek has determined that the Parks and Open Space Level of Service (LOS) Standards for neighborhood parks is two (2) usable acres of park land for every 1,000 citizens. In applying this standard, the term "usable park land" can be defined as land area suitable (e.g., not dominated by wetlands, steep, slopes or other critical areas) for active and passive recreation uses. Based upon criteria established by the National Recreation and Parks Association, active uses within neighborhood parks include non-organized facilities such as basketball, tennis and play equipment. Passive uses include open play areas, picnic areas and nature trails.

The City currently has 40.6 acres of neighborhood parks with a corresponding Level of Service Standard of 2.3 acres/1,000 persons. However, most of the neighborhood parks are situated in the eastern and southeastern neighborhoods of the City, with

gaps in the northeastern (including areas annexed into the City in 2005) and western neighborhoods. Thus, additional neighborhood parks to serve these neighborhoods have been identified on the Plan Map and are discussed under Proposed Facilities.

In the long run, the City will need to identify an additional 99 acres of neighborhood park land to meet the Level of Service Standard for the targeted 2025 population (75,417) within Mill Creek and its MUGA.

Potential sites identified for neighborhood parks are shown on the Parks and Open Space Map.

## **2. Facility Guidelines:**

Facility guidelines are to be used by the City in guiding the design and development of neighborhood and community parks, and in working with other jurisdictions in encouraging park and open space acquisition and facilities development within the City's Municipal Urban Growth Area (MUGA). Facility Guidelines, unlike LOS Standards, are not intended to be used as design criteria for calculating the exact capacity of individual parks and are not subject to the concurrency requirement. In addition, the Facility Guidelines should not overshadow the role that good quality facilities, regular maintenance and good programming play in the provision of a well-balanced park and recreation system.

As can be seen in Table 1, the City has adopted Facility Guidelines for numerous recreation facilities, including community parks (3 acres/1,000 population). Although these facilities are not subject to concurrency at this time, the City recognizes the need for these facilities in the Mill Creek vicinity. If adequate funding sources are identified through the annual Capital Facilities Plan process, the Parks and Open Space Element may be amended to classify these facilities as an LOS Standard, subject to concurrency.

## **Existing Parks, Trails/Pedestrian Facilities, and Open Space Inventory**

### **1. Regional Parks:**

#### **McCollum Park**

McCollum Park consists of 78 acres and is located just west of Dumas Road on the south side of SR 96. The park has an outdoor swimming pool, picnic facilities, a caretaker's residence, play equipment, trails, open play fields and houses the Washington State University Extension Facilities.

#### **North Creek Park**

North Creek Park is located south of Mill Creek city limits and is owned and maintained by Snohomish County. This park is approximately 80 acres in size and consists of an extensive wetland system. Improvements include play equipment, a boardwalk, restroom facilities, and interpretive signs.

**Table 1**

## 2. Community Parks

### Mill Creek Sports Park

The City completed construction of the Mill Creek Sports Park in January 2004. This park, located at Trillium Boulevard and SR 527, is 4.8 acres in size and includes a lighted ball field (designed to accommodate Little League baseball, youth softball, and youth soccer), a skateboard park, restroom facilities, concession stand and parking.

### Tambark Creek Park

The City and County jointly own a 40-acre parcel located in the Tambark Creek corridor (east of 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE and north of 180<sup>th</sup> Street SE). Currently there are natural surface trails within the park that are used by surrounding residents. A master plan has been adopted and construction is expected to begin as soon as funds allocated for the park are released.

### Martha Lake Park

Snohomish County owns and maintains this 6-acre park that is adjacent to Martha Lake. The park is east of Interstate 5 and north of 164<sup>th</sup> Street SE. The park includes three fishing docks, lake access/beach including a swimming area with handicapped access, a playground, picnic tables and shelters, and a wetland boardwalk.

### Martha Lake Airport Park

Snohomish County is developing Martha Lake Airfield Park. This former airfield is located just north of Martha Lake and east of Interstate 5. The site is 28.76 acres in size and has an approved master plan that includes a soccer field, a Little League baseball field, and a skate park. Completion is expected in spring 2010.

## 3. Neighborhood Parks

The City currently has nine neighborhood parks within the city limits, and there is one neighborhood park in unincorporated Snohomish County within the City's MUGA. A brief description of each neighborhood park facility follows:

### Heron Park

Heron Park consists of 3.8 acres and is located at the northeast corner of Village Green Drive and 155th Street SE. Amenities include a picnic shelter, restroom facilities, a playground with a play structure, picnic tables, a tennis court, walking paths and a two-acre passive use area with a path surrounding a wetland/detention pond.

### Highlands Park

Highlands Park consists of 3.5 acres and is located within the Highlands neighborhood on Highlands Boulevard SE. Amenities include restroom facilities, a

playground with a play structure, swings, picnic tables, a tennis court, a basketball court and walking paths.

#### Library Park

Library Park consists of 1.2 acres and is located adjacent to the Hammit Public Library on the east side of SR 527 at 156th Street SE. Amenities include a playground with a play structure, picnic tables, stage area, benches and a walking path. A Veterans monument was constructed at Library Park in the spring of 2010.

#### Nickel Creek Park

Nickel Creek Park consists of 19.75 acres and is located along the Nickel Creek corridor west of Seattle Hill Road. Amenities include a playground with play structure, a half basketball court, swings, and picnic tables.

#### Pine Meadow Park

Pine Meadow Park consists of 4.5 acres and is located south of 158th Street SE, on the west side of 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE. Amenities include restroom facilities, playground with play structure, picnic shelter a half basketball court and grassy play area.

#### Pine Meadow Park West

Pine Meadow Park West consists of 1.5 acres of mostly wooded property located on the west side of 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Southeast at approximately 155<sup>th</sup> Place Southeast. The park is not developed but is planned for a trail and a picnic area.

#### Cougar Park

Cougar Park consists of 5 acres and is located at 32<sup>nd</sup> Drive SE and 148<sup>th</sup> Street SE. Improvements include restroom facilities, playground, play structure, climbing rock, picnic shelter, and open grass play area.

#### Hillside Park

Hillside Park consists of 1.2 acres and is located within the Vineyards at Mill Creek subdivision on 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE. Amenities include a playground, play structure, picnic tables, and half basketball court.

#### Silver Crest Park

Silver Crest Park is .61 acres in size and is located within the Silver Crest subdivision on 28<sup>th</sup> Drive SE. Amenities include a full basketball court, playground, picnic tables, and a grassy play area.

#### Mill Creek East Park

Mill Creek East Park is 1 acre in size and was dedicated to the City in July 2006 in conjunction with final plat approval of the Mill Creek East development (now known as North Pointe). The park has not been officially named. Potential amenities include restroom facilities, playground, play structure, and picnic tables.

### Silver Creek Park

Silver Creek Park is 10.11 acres in size and is located south of the City near the intersection of 180<sup>th</sup> Street SE and 20<sup>th</sup> Drive SE. The park includes a stream, a meadow, walking trails, bridges, and a children's play area.

## 4. Trails and Pedestrian Facilities

The City of Mill Creek and its MUGA have an extensive system of sidewalks and trails. Many of the trails are private trails located in neighborhoods throughout the City and provide connections to public trails and sidewalks. Primary and secondary public trails have been identified on the Trail Plan map and include the following:

### **Primary Trails/Pedestrian Facilities:**

North Creek Trail - At the present time, approximately 2.5 miles of the North Creek Trail are constructed between McCollum Park and 164<sup>th</sup> Street SE. Upon completion, the North Creek Trail will connect McCollum Park with North Creek Park and will be approximately 3-5 miles in length. The trail was designed to accommodate a variety of uses such as walking, jogging, and cycling. The North Creek Trail can be accessed from the Interurban Trail, and in the future, will be extended to the south and connect to the Sammamish River Trail.

Bothell-Everett Highway - With minor exceptions, sidewalks are available on both sides of the Bothell-Everett Highway. In many places, the sidewalks are separated from the street by landscaping and meander through the 35-foot roadway buffer. They provide access to the Mill Creek Town Center, the existing commercial/business core, neighborhoods on both sides of the highway, and the North Creek Trail.

Dumas Road - The City completed improvements to Dumas Road in 2005, including a 10-foot separated sidewalk to accommodate a variety of uses such as walking, jogging, and cycling. This sidewalk provides connections between 128<sup>th</sup> Street SE and the North Creek Trail and Bothell-Everett Highway.

Mill Creek Boulevard - Mill Creek Boulevard connects 164<sup>th</sup> Street SE to Main Street, and the Bothell-Everett Highway and provides an important link between the existing commercial/business core and the Town Center. With minor exceptions, sidewalks are available on both sides of the street with connections to the North Creek Trail.

Village Green Drive - With minor some exceptions, sidewalks are located on both sides of Village Green Drive and are popular walking routes for City residents. They also provide access to many of the City's neighborhoods and shopping areas. In many places, the sidewalks meander through a 50-foot roadway buffer. Connecting sidewalks include those along Trillium Boulevard, which connect Village Green Drive

with the Bothell-Everett Highway and those along 148<sup>th</sup> Street SE, which connect Village Green Drive and 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE.

Seattle Hill Road - Sidewalks along Seattle Hill Road between the Bothell-Everett Highway and 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE provide access to the Village Green Drive Loop and to many of the secondary trails that connect to Pine Meadow, Highlands, and Nickel Creek parks.

132<sup>nd</sup> Street SE - With minor exceptions, a sidewalk extends the entire length of the city limits along 132<sup>nd</sup> Street SE (between Dumas Road and Seattle Hill Road) and provides pedestrian access to commercial and residential uses along this corridor. As the East Gateway Village Center area (south of 132<sup>nd</sup> Street SE, east of 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE and west of Seattle Hill Road) is developed, interior sidewalks and trail connections shall be provided between the existing sidewalks and future development.

35<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE - Sidewalks are available on both sides of 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE between Seattle Hill Road and 132<sup>nd</sup> Street SE. This sidewalk connects residential neighborhoods with the Thomas Lake shopping center. The sidewalk will also enable residents to walk to the neighborhood park located in the North Pointe development.

Seattle City Light Transmission Line Right of Way - Located in unincorporated Snohomish County in the City's South Planning Area, these properties include the Olympus Meadows and the Transmission Line/Misty Manor properties. This linear open space is situated mainly under the Seattle City Light transmission line corridor. A pedestrian trail utilizes an existing service road.

### **Secondary Trails/Sidewalks:**

A series of secondary trails and sidewalks has been identified on the Trail Plan map and consist primarily of sidewalks through residential neighborhoods that provide access to primary trails, parks, and schools. Secondary trails/sidewalks in commercial areas include Main Street in the Mill Creek Town Center and the Nickel Creek Trail between the Bothell Everett Highway and 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE.

## **5. Public Open Space Facilities:**

### Rhody Ridge Arboretum

Rhody Ridge Arboretum is owned by Snohomish County, is 11 acres in size, and features a botanical garden. The property is located at 17427 Clover Road just west of the city limits. The facility is a private/life estate facility. Tours are available by appointment only.

## **Condition of Parks, Trails/Pedestrian, and Open Space Facilities**

The City of Mill Creek maintains all of its park, trail/pedestrian, and open space facilities on a regular basis. Thus, existing facilities are in excellent condition and do not pose any limitations on their use.

The majority of the North Creek Trail has been constructed in conjunction with residential development in the SR 527 Subarea and the Mill Creek Town Center. The trail provides continuous access between McCollum Park and 164<sup>th</sup> Street SE. The final section along 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue between 164<sup>th</sup> Street SE and North Creek Park is planned for future construction, primarily by private developers in conjunction with land development. City participation in completion of the trail may also be appropriate if funding sources can be identified. In the interim, pedestrians can walk along 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE between 164<sup>th</sup> Street SE and North Creek Park.

## **Community Needs Assessment**

In 2009 the City conducted a needs assessment survey in order to identify the recreational needs and interests of Mill Creek residents and patrons of the City's recreation programs (detailed results can be found in the Parks and Open Space Needs Assessment Survey, December 2009). The survey results indicated that residents and patrons rank preschool activities, youth classes and activities, youth organized sports, teen programs and senior classes and activities as very important. The survey results also indicated that park users are very satisfied with the City's existing parks and open space facilities in terms of maintenance, quantity, quality, and variety.

With respect to the City's park and open space facilities, the following needs were identified to be most important:

- Preservation of greenways and open spaces
- Further development of citywide trail system
- Development of city-owned undeveloped park land, and
- Development of a community/senior center

User groups, including the Silver Lake Soccer Association and the Mill Creek Little League, identified a need for additional athletic fields.

## **Proposed Facilities**

Through application of the adopted parks and open space LOS Standards and Facility Guidelines, the following public park and recreation facilities are needed to serve the population within the City of Mill Creek MUGA:

- Expansion of/or additional community park;
- A recreation/community center;
- Additional neighborhood parks;
- Hiking, bicycle and jogging trails; and
- Mini-parks.

In order to help meet the Level of Service Standards and Facility Guidelines during the planning period, several parks, trail/pedestrian, and open space facilities were identified. These facilities are designated on the Parks and Open Space and Trail Plan maps.

The general locations of these facilities (not in priority order) include the following:

#### **1. Regional Parks/Open Space:**

- Thomas Lake Nature Preserve - east of 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE and south of 132<sup>nd</sup> Street SE.

#### **2. Community Parks:**

- SR 527 Subarea (in conjunction with the expansion of Mill Creek Sports Park)
- East of 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE and North of 180<sup>th</sup> Street SE (Tambark Creek Park)

#### **3. Neighborhood Parks:**

- SR 527 Subarea (in conjunction with the expansion of Mill Creek Sports Park)
- South of 132<sup>nd</sup> Street SE, east of 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE and west of Seattle Hill Road in the East Gateway Urban Village.
- At the south end of the East UGA Subarea, near 180<sup>th</sup> Street SE and Sunset Road
- Near Sunset Road and 156<sup>th</sup> Street SE

#### **4. Mini-parks:**

Within each new residential development not within a one-half mile of an existing or planned neighborhood park.

## 5. Open Space Corridors:

### Penny Creek

This corridor extends from Thomas Lake to North Creek. A large portion of this corridor runs through the nature preserve owned by the Mill Creek Community Association.

### North Creek

This corridor extends from McCollum Park to Snohomish County North Creek Park at the south end of 9th Avenue SE.

### Mill Creek

This corridor extends from the stormwater detention facility, south of Sweetwater Ranch on the east side of SR 527, to North Creek. The westerly portion of this corridor runs through the Mill Creek Town Center. The City recently partnered with the Adopt-A-Stream Foundation to demolish a structure encroaching on the creek and restore a portion of the creek's bank. According to the terms of the partnership, the City has taken possession of the property and will maintain the site as permanent open space.

### Nickel Creek

This corridor extends from Seattle Hill Road near the Chatham Park development to North Creek.

## 6. Bicycle System:

Separate system to connect with regional paths along SR 527, 35th Avenue SE, SR 96, Dumas Road, 164th Street SE and Seattle Hill Road. Internally, it will connect recreation, school and commercial activities within the City and MUGA. Paths within individual subdivisions or developments should connect to this system.

## 7. Trails/Pedestrian Facilities:

Construct new facilities to eliminate gaps in the existing network, as depicted on the Trails/Pedestrian Facilities map, including along 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE, Seattle Hill Road, and in the Thomas Lake area.

## Implementation Strategies

The implementation of the proposals within the Parks and Recreation Plan requires the acquisition and development of public park facilities by the City as well as other jurisdictions. The preservation of open space corridors can also occur through the dedication of conservation easements and/or setting aside, in perpetuity, critical areas and buffers in protected tracts on private and public property.

As noted earlier, the City currently exceeds the Level of Service Standard for neighborhood parks. However, this standard is being met for the City's overall population, but not for specific areas such as the East Neighborhood and the SR 527 Corridor Subarea. Thus, the following implementation strategies include the acquisition and development of land for neighborhood parks, as well as community parks, a community center, open space greenways and pedestrian and bicycle paths. The funding for the acquisition and development of neighborhood and community parks will occur primarily through the City's Capital Facilities Plan, together with applications for other grant opportunities.

## **1. Regional Parks:**

Existing regional parks in the Mill Creek MUGA include McCollum Park and North Creek Park. McCollum Park contains active uses such as a swimming pool, picnic facilities, play equipment, BMX track and youth baseball field. North Creek Park contains wetlands and is limited to open space and passive park uses including a boardwalk with interpretive signage.

The City's level of participation in the development of these parks should, at a minimum, include involvement in the planning processes and the establishment of interlocal agreements defining respective roles and responsibilities.

## **2. Community Parks:**

The City has taken steps to provide community park facilities for City and MUGA residents. Construction of the Mill Creek Sports Park was completed in January 2004. This park is located in the SR 527 Subarea and contains a lighted active use field, concession stand, restrooms, skateboard park and parking. In addition, the City recently purchased 10 acres of property adjacent to the Mill Creek Sports Park. All or a portion of this property could be used to expand the Mill Creek Sports Park.

Tambark Creek Park is located east of 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE and North of 180<sup>th</sup> Street SE and has an approved master plan including a multipurpose athletic field and an activity center, however, the park is currently undeveloped.

Additional community park facilities in the East UGA Planning Area are needed to fulfill the active park needs of the residents of the entire City and MUGA. Thus, the acquisition and development of community park land is a high priority. It is anticipated that the City may act independently and/or participate with other jurisdictions in the acquisition of a site, as well as pursue an agreement as to the role of the City and other jurisdictions in designing, constructing, programming and maintaining the improvements and programs. Mitigation fees assessed on adjacent developments and contributions from other developments in the community will assist in the acquisition and development of the property. Once the City determines the type, amount, and source of resources that will be required, the financial commitments will need to be included in the Capital Facilities Plan Element.

It is especially important to acquire the land for a community park(s) before the most suitable locations are committed to other uses. Development of the community park could occur over time as resources become available.

### 3. Neighborhood Parks:

The City has an overall level of service of 2.3 acres of neighborhood park per thousand population. However, these parks are primarily situated in the south and southeast neighborhoods of the City, leaving gaps in the SR 527 Subarea and the East and Northeast neighborhoods.

The SR 527 Corridor Subarea Plan assumed a population target of 3,852 new residents in the Subarea, with a corresponding need for 7.7 acres of neighborhood park. Because of the rapid development within this Subarea, there is an immediate need for a neighborhood park to meet the recreation needs of the community. This need has partially been met with the construction of the Mill Creek Sports Park, which functions primarily as a community park. A neighborhood park with play equipment and picnic shelter is also needed to serve the needs of nearby residents.

Portions of the East and Northeast neighborhoods were annexed into the City in 2005, adding 2,690 new residents to the City's population. With the exception of an existing .61 acre park in the Silver Crest neighborhood and the 1 acre park in the North Pointe neighborhood, there are no other park facilities to serve these areas. Thus, additional park land should be identified to better meet the City's level of service standards for neighborhood parks in the East and Northeast neighborhoods

The following neighborhood park projects are of high priority for acquisition and/or development:

#### *East Neighborhood Park*

A one-acre park in the North Pointe development, located west of 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE, at 138<sup>th</sup> Place SE will be developed in accordance with a park site development plan to be reviewed and approved by the City Council with input from the immediate neighborhood and the Parks and Recreation Board. Funding for improvements to this park is included in the seven-year Capital Facilities Plan.

#### *SR 527 Corridor Neighborhood Park*

A neighborhood park to serve the western portion of the community should be developed. One option is to incorporate neighborhood park features such as a play structure into an expansion of the Mill Creek Sports Park. An important feature in the development of a western neighborhood park is to provide safe and efficient access to existing neighborhoods east of SR 527 as well as to the Mill Creek Town Center, the North Creek Trail and the sports park. Improvements will be implemented consistent with a park site development plan to be reviewed and approved by the

City Council with input from the immediate neighborhood and the Parks and Recreation Board.

#### **4. Mini Parks:**

Individual, small tot lot parks within residential developments may be privately developed, owned and maintained by homeowners' associations. Mini parks located in areas that are accessible to the general public may be either privately or publicly developed, owned and maintained.

#### **5. Pedestrian/Bicycle/Greenway:**

Noted in the following sections are the key components to connect the existing Mill Creek system with the expansion of additional greenways and pedestrian-bicycle paths within the region.

#### **6. Regional Paths:**

##### SR 527

With the widening to five lanes and channelization of SR 527, bike lanes were constructed to an urban standard between 132nd Street SE on the north to approximately 208th Street to connect to the county's bikeway system.

##### 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 180th Street and Seattle Hill Road

These bicycle paths will be commuter oriented and be placed within the right-of-way upon the improvement and channelization of the various roadway sections.

#### **7. Greenway and Pedestrian Bicycle Paths within the City of Mill Creek and Municipal Urban Growth Area:**

##### North Creek Greenway

Greenway and pedestrian/bicycle path connecting McCollum Park to the North Creek Park.

##### Nickel Creek Greenway

From the bicycle path on SR 527 to the North Creek Trail along 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE.

##### Penny Creek Greenway

From the bicycle path on SR 527 to the North Creek Trail along 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue SE.

##### East Side Neighborhood Park Connections

Greenway and pedestrian/bicycle path connecting the future North Pointe park, Cougar Park, Pine Meadow Park, Heron Park, Silver Crest Park and Highlands Park.

## **GOALS**

Seven general goal statements are provided below, representing the direction that the City and residents should assume in pursuing and, where appropriate, participating in the acquisition and development of additional park lands available for use by City residents. Under each general goal are specific policies that identify courses of action to implement the goal. These goals and policies are based on those originally prepared by the Citizen Advisory Committee in 1988, and updated in 1992, based upon review and approval by the Parks and Recreation Board and the Planning Commission. In 2005, and again in 2009, the City conducted needs assessment surveys to verify the applicability of these goals and policies. Based on results obtained from the surveys, the goals and policies contained in the following section are still applicable.

### **Goal A - Natural Resources Protection**

**Development of the City's park and open space system shall complement and enhance Mill Creek's natural resources.**

The park and open space system shall emphasize and protect the environmental qualities and natural amenities within the City. Park locations, features, signs and designs should be compatible with the capability of the site to sustain the anticipated recreational uses.

Greenbelts and open space can help to buffer incompatible land uses from each other, emphasize the entryways to and edges of the City, enhance property values and tax bases, create a more comfortable environment in the City and strengthen the civic pride and identity of the City with the natural environment.

#### *Policy 1.01*

The City should promote increased public awareness of natural resources within the City and its MUGA, and the value of these resources to the community. This can be accomplished through a variety of methods including the installation of interpretive signage along nature trails, designating wildlife habitat areas, providing observation points or nesting boxes. Where parks include natural areas such as wetlands, streams and wildlife habitat, these elements should be incorporated into the park design and identified with interpretive signage to foster understanding of the natural environment.

Opportunities for cooperation with the Lively Environmental Center operated by the Everett School District No. 2 should be pursued.

#### *Policy 1.02*

A trail system shall be planned and developed that joins the existing public/private trail system with future trail systems both inside and outside the city limits.

A network of public accessible bicycle and pedestrian trails and paths shall be developed to link planned neighborhood and community parks to each other and to provide access between neighborhoods and community activity centers. The trail system shall tie into the planned Snohomish County trail systems and extend between

McCollum Park and North Creek Park. In this manner, the trail system can serve both as a recreational amenity and a transportation facility.

*Policy 1.03*

The City shall encourage the retention of natural vegetation around park perimeters consistent with the planned use and safety of the park.

Vegetative buffers should be included in development and park design to define park boundaries, provide visual relief, reduce perceived noise and visual intrusion and buffer recreation activities from incompatible uses.

*Policy 1.04*

The City should continue to develop and implement its long-term open space and parks acquisition, dedication, development and management program.

Areas of open space should be encouraged as an important component of private developments as well as the park and recreation system. These areas serve to protect unstable slopes or sensitive areas, enhance water quality or wetlands, preserve wildlife habitat or migration routes, provide visual relief, enhance the streetscape along City streets, reduce noise levels or provide other site amenities. Open space areas shall emphasize the protection of designated greenways such as North Creek and its tributaries, as well as large wetland features such as Thomas Lake and North Creek Park.

Active recreation use of these open space areas may not be appropriate in all cases, and passive recreation use should be secondary to the other functions they serve.

*Policy 1.05*

Park and recreation facilities should be sited, designed and developed with consideration given to the long-term maintenance, operation and renovation or replacement costs.

**Goal B - Park Safety and Convenience**

**The City shall pursue and, where appropriate, participate in the acquisition and development of parks that are both convenient and safe.**

The park and recreation system should incorporate a variety of park types and sizes, including mini-parks, neighborhood parks and community parks that are easily accessible to the population they are intended to serve. Safety (e.g., natural surveillance for crime reduction and well designed play equipment to reduce the risk of injuries) should be a prime consideration in designing and developing parks.

### *Policy 2.01*

To encourage safety as a prime consideration in the design and development of park and recreation facilities, park designs, facilities and fixtures should be encouraged to incorporate measures that reduce the exposure of users to unsafe conditions. Fixtures that are able to withstand wear while remaining safe and functional should be used. Appropriately-placed landscaping should enhance natural surveillance to reduce the risk of crime. The ability of the City to maintain the facilities in a safe condition should be a consideration in design development and equipment selection.

### *Policy 2.02*

Park designs should incorporate adequate on-site and off-site parking for vehicles and bicycles according to the function, type, size and location of the park facility. This should include consideration of the access, size and turning radii of maintenance or emergency vehicles that might be required at the site and the traffic volumes experienced on the adjacent roadway.

### *Policy 2.03*

Park and facility designs shall meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by incorporating designated spaces for barrier-free parking, curb cuts, hard surface trails, low gradient ramps and inclines, recreational equipment, plumbing fixtures and any other improvements required by the Act that ensure that parks are accessible to all persons.

### *Policy 2.04*

When considering the acquisition of park land, the City should consider sites that are easily accessed off of collector or arterials streets, and can also be safely reached by pedestrians and cyclists.

Park and recreation facilities should be located along or near proposed or existing bicycle and pedestrian trails to provide convenient access within the park's service area.

Where possible, community parks and athletic facilities should be located so that they are accessible from the North Creek Trail, as well as pedestrian and bicycle facilities along nearby roads. Adequate provision for access by bicyclists and pedestrians could promote healthy lifestyles, reduce overall traffic volumes within the commercial and residential areas of Mill Creek, and could limit the need to devote scarce recreational resources to parking.

Spur trails connecting these recreation facilities directly to regional trails should be provided.

## **Goal C - Parks and Recreation Programming**

**The City's recreational programs shall be developed to serve the needs of all ages.**

The parks and recreation program should provide programming and facilitate educational and skill classes to serve the diverse age groups and interests of Mill Creek

residents. Class offerings should take advantage of both public and private facilities and resources within the community. Adventure sports offerings that rely on natural physical features located outside of the community may be facilitated through qualified, private outfitters and instructors.

*Policy 3.01*

Develop a parks and recreation program that offers a broad range of courses to enhance the quality of life for Mill Creek residents.

The selection and quality of program offerings should be consistent with area residents' willingness to support them. The offerings should make use of park facilities, natural areas and environmental education opportunities within Mill Creek.

*Policy 3.02*

The City shall develop and maintain a list of both public and private recreational facilities and programs in the area that are generally available to the public to ensure a balanced recreational system.

The parks and recreation program shall maintain a current index of recreational offerings provided by the City, Snohomish County and other public and private recreation providers in the area. The intent of this index is to identify programming needs and define the different roles played by the public and private sectors, while also helping to identify facilities for potential users. In order to keep abreast of changing population needs and community characteristics, program evaluations and surveys of community interests should be conducted periodically.

*Policy 3.03*

Develop a cooperative relationship with Snohomish County, the state, the City of Everett and neighboring communities. The City shall identify ways in which its recreation goals, needs and resources complement or overlap with those of other jurisdictions and recreation providers in the area.

Cooperation with other jurisdictions is especially important in relationship to regional recreation facilities, such as McCollum Park and North Creek Park, which serve the population of a broad area including Mill Creek, Bothell, Everett and unincorporated Snohomish County.

*Policy 3.04*

The City should identify additional opportunities for cooperating with the Everett School District No. 2, the Northshore School District, the Edmonds School District and the Mukilteo School District No. 6 to increase the use of park facilities by the local schools and increase the use of schools for active recreation use and programming.

Cooperative use of schools during afternoons, evenings and the summer could reduce the costs to both the City and the school district of maintaining and operating separate facilities.

## **Goal D - Park Uses and Types of Facilities**

**The City shall encourage the development of active and passive recreational facilities in future neighborhood, community and regional parks within the Municipal Urban Growth Area (MUGA).**

### *Policy 4.01*

The park and recreation system should emphasize the provision of opportunities for active recreation activities since there is currently a deficit of these opportunities. Public facilities for which there is a special need include adult and youth softball/baseball and full size soccer fields, tennis courts, volleyball courts, a multiple-use recreation/community center with gym, bicycle trails, and jogging or fitness trails. The Mill Creek Sports Park, completed in January 2004, includes a skateboard park, modified soccer field and Little League field. These facilities help fulfill the need for active recreation activities in the City, however, additional facilities would be needed to meet the recreation needs of the community.

These and other recreation facilities should be provided considering public need using the Level of Service (LOS) Standards and Facility Guidelines for recreation and park facilities as adopted in this element and funding available to the City. These LOS Standards and Facility Guidelines should be reviewed and, if necessary, revised as a part of the Comprehensive Plan update process to incorporate the changes in the supply of public and private recreation opportunities and in the needs of the population.

## **Goal E - Acquisition and Development of Future Parks**

**The City shall pursue and, where appropriate, participate in acquisition of public lands to meet the recreational needs of the community in order to provide high quality and convenient recreation facilities and to provide for the City's anticipated growth.**

This Parks and Open Space Element, together with the Capital Facilities Plan Element and the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan, will direct and coordinate the acquisition, development and expansion of a public park and recreation system, coordinated with existing private facilities, to serve the diverse needs and interests of people living within the community. The park system will provide accessible park lands and open space for both active and passive recreation activities; natural reserves and areas with developed recreation facilities; pedestrian and bicycle trails; and opportunities for educational and leisure programming.

Funding for system acquisition and development of open space, parks and recreation areas will depend both on the residents' willingness to pay for them (e.g., through voter approved bonds or property taxes) and on funding from the following potential sources:

- Application to the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office for participation in the Grant-In-Aid Program of matching monies;

- Dedication of land to the City through the processes of annexation and subdivision;
- Dedication and/or purchase of conservation easements or development rights;
- Revenues from the Real Estate Excise Tax (REET)
- Direct purchase from private parties utilizing General Fund resources;
- Park impact fees through the subdivision permitting process, including voluntary contribution agreements between the City and private sectors;
- Acquisition and development with other jurisdictions or service districts;
- Land trades for other public property and implementation of impact fees for park improvements;
- Private donation of property to the City as a gift; and
- Funds available through the creation of and/or participation with a Metropolitan Park District or Recreation Service Area.

*Policy 5.01*

Residential developers shall contribute to the park and recreation system to offset the impact of proposed residential projects upon the City's parks and recreation system.

Contributions to the City can take many forms including donation of land, dedication of conservation easements or development rights, payment of mitigation fees to the City, direct funding or development of park and recreation facilities and provisions for public use.

*Policy 5.02*

The City shall require appropriate dedications to the planned park system during the annexation, subdivision and/or the development permit process. In addition, mitigation for identified adverse impacts to the City's park system will be required under SEPA, GMA concurrency or the development impact ordinances.

The subdivision ordinance shall contain regulations to guide land or impact fee contributions to the park and recreation system. Contributions of land will be dedicated to the City or held in common ownership for specific park purposes. The identified impact fees will be paid to a park and open space account to provide for park acquisition or facility development at appropriate locations within the community.

The City's SEPA ordinance, GMA concurrency ordinance and mitigation ordinance shall be used, as appropriate, to identify the impacts of annexation, subdivision, multiple

family or commercial development and the associated increases in population on park and recreation facilities and programs within Mill Creek. Where adverse environmental impacts upon the park and recreation system are anticipated, project mitigation measures will be required by the City. The formulas for recreation mitigation are based upon the City's LOS Standards and Facility Guidelines for parks and recreation facilities. Mitigation measures will be monitored and enforced as a condition of final development approval.

*Policy 5.03*

A well dispersed system of mini-parks shall be developed to serve the needs of community residents, primarily provided through participation by developers and the private sector.

Mini-parks may be public or private facilities and shall be located within neighborhoods, residential areas or planned unit developments, in close proximity to apartment complexes, townhouse developments, housing for the elderly and commercial centers. These parks should support active and/or passive recreation activities depending upon the specific needs of the local residents. Parking areas generally would not be necessary for these facilities.

*Policy 5.04*

The City shall pursue and, where appropriate, participate in the acquisition of a large community park site and appropriate neighborhood park sites before the most suitable sites are committed to other uses.

The Parks and Open Space Map identifies potential locations for acquiring land to develop a community park and additional neighborhood parks within the City's Urban Growth Area.

*Policy 5.05*

To ensure quality development of future parks that meet the needs of the residents within the City and complement the character of the community, a park master plan will be prepared for each park site, with input from the community and the Parks and Recreation Board. Following preparation of the proposed park master plan, the Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on the Conditional Use Permit for the park plan and formulate a recommendation to the City Council. Following action by the City Council, the Design Review Board will review the final landscape plans, as well as any signage and/or structures for compatibility with the surrounding neighborhood and the community as a whole.

*Policy 5.06*

In reviewing proposals to annex developed property lacking adequate public park and recreation facilities to the City, the City may consider appropriate mitigation measures to offset impacts to the existing and planned public park system as a condition of annexation.

*Policy 5.07*

The City's Level of Service Standards and Facility Guidelines for parks and recreation facilities should be periodically evaluated to ensure that they continue to reflect the community's needs and the City's ability to provide such facilities.

**Goal F - City Park Identification and Public Use**

City park facilities should be clearly identifiable as facilities that are open for use by the general public.

*Policy 6.01*

City park facilities shall be designed to be welcoming to the public. In addition, appropriate signage shall be utilized to clearly identify City of Mill Creek park facilities.

**Goal G - Private Open Space**

**Residential development shall provide adequate private open space within the development to meet the recreational and health and safety needs of the occupants.**

*Policy 7.01*

Residential development shall provide useable private open space sufficient for the health and enjoyment of its occupants. The amount of private open space required shall be based upon standards and criteria that take into account the specific needs of the occupants of the development, including, but not limited to, such factors as healthful environment, recreational needs, proximity to public recreational facilities, gross land area of the development, the zone district in which the development is located, and the expected density of the development. The criteria and standards shall be determined and adopted by action of the City Council.