



PARKS, RECREATION, & OPEN SPACE PLAN 2020-2030

Adopted February 11, 2020



Pierce County

Office of the County Executive

930 Tacoma Avenue South, Room 737
Tacoma, Washington 98402-2100

(253) 798-7477 • FAX (253) 798-6628
www.PierceCountyWA.gov

BRUCE F. DAMMEIER

Executive
(253) 798-7477

Bruce.Dammeier@PierceCountyWA.gov

Greetings!

As a cyclist, I have ridden many miles on our award-winning Foothills Trail. I am always amazed at the natural beauty of the farmland, forests and majestic views of Mt. Rainier found along this trail. It's no wonder doctors are prescribing nature as medicine. A ride or a walk on the Foothills Trail isn't just good for your physical health – it's good for your psyche, too!

Efficiently managing a regional trail system - as well as 5,200 acres of parks - requires focused, proactive planning. That's why I am pleased to present the 2020 Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan to you.

This fiscally-responsible plan clearly demonstrates that our Parks and Recreation Department is intentional about taking care of our current investments, increasing capacity to keep pace with growth, and diversifying the system with active and passive recreation opportunities. The plan also demonstrates that Parks is diversifying its programming to match the needs of all of Pierce County's residents. And, it is doing so in a responsible and effective manner to create more vibrant communities. Lastly, the plan reflects Pierce County's values of integrity, partnership, respect, innovation and accountability.

I am a big believer in the power of transparency to help ensure our residents understand and have confidence in the work we do. To that end, the 2020 PROS Plan details how the Parks department is leveraging new technologies for more cost-effective decision-making and activating partnerships for community investment.

As you will see in the pages that follow, the PROS Plan tells an important story. From an inventory of Parks properties to a carefully considered list of future Parks projects, every part of it has been informed by data collected from you, our customers, through a thorough Demand and Needs analysis.

Our parks are key to Pierce County being a great place to live and raise a family. Last year alone, over 2 million people participated in Parks programs, and our trails were used more than 1 million times. And that number will continue to grow!

Please join me in celebrating Parks' past progress as we look forward to an exciting future!

I'll see you on the trail,

Bruce F. Dammeier
Pierce County Executive



Pierce County *Parks*

2020-2030 Parks, Recreation, & Open Space Plan

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document is the result of the input and collaboration of many people. Pierce County Parks wishes to acknowledge and thank the many Pierce County residents whose input, through surveys and interviews, forms the foundation of this plan. We thank the Pierce County Parks Citizen's Advisory Board for their commitment to understanding the complex issues and challenges associated with addressing the needs and demands identified through public outreach.

Local park, trail and open space advocacy organizations are critical partners in Pierce County's efforts to grow and improve its system of parks, trails and open space. The County extends its gratitude to organizations such as Alchemy Skateboarding Tacoma, the Backcountry Horsemen of Washington, Chambers Creek Foundation, Coastal Conservation Association, Evergreen Mountain Biking Alliance, Foothills Rails to Trails Coalition, ForeverGreen Trails, Forterra, Friends of the Carbon Canyon, Friends of Cross Park, Great Peninsula Conservancy, Nisqually Land Trust, PCC Farmland Trust, Puyallup Watershed Initiative's Active Transportation Community of Interest, Tacoma South Sound Sports Commission and Tacoma Washington Bicycle Club for their knowledge, advocacy and support of the County's efforts to expand recreational opportunities and conserve open space in Pierce County.

The department extends our extreme gratitude to BERK Consulting, Inc. along with HBB Landscape Architects, whose professional collaboration was crucial to developing this plan. Additional thanks go to the many staff members from various departments who reviewed and commented on this document.

We also appreciate the continued interest and support of the Pierce County Executive and Pierce County Council throughout this important planning effort.

Pierce County Executive

Bruce Dammeier

Pierce County Council

Doug Richardson, Chair, District #6

Dave Morell, District #1

Pam Roach, District #2

Jim McCune, District #3

Connie Ladenburg, District #4

Marty Campbell, District #5

Derek Young, District #7



Pierce County Parks Citizens' Advisory Board

Joan Cross, District #2

Candace Sundsmo, District #3

Aaron Burt, District #4

Rick Clousing, District #5

TJ Stevenson, District #6

Caleb Heimlich, At Large

Mary Brickle, At Large

BERK Consulting, Inc.

Lisa Grueter, Principal

Michele Eakins-TeSelle, Senior Coordinator

Kevin Gifford, Senior Associate

Jason Hennessey, Senior Associate

Jessie Hartmann, Associate

HBB Landscape Architecture

Juliet Vong, President

Photos

Provided by Pierce County Parks



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ACRONYMS AND GLOSSARY

Acronyms

AASHTO	American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
ACS	U.S. Census American Community Survey
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
BMI	Body Mass Index
CAB	Citizens Advisory Board
CIP	Capital Improvement Plan
CPTED	Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design
CWA	Cascade Water Alliance
DNR	Washington Department of Natural Resources
EAM	Enterprise Asset Management
FTE	Full-Time Employee
FFTF	Floodplains for The Future
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
GIS	Geographic Information System
GMA	Growth Management Act
JBLM	Joint Base Lewis McChord
KeyPen	Key Peninsula Metropolitan Park District
LAG	Local Agency Guidelines
LOS	Level-of-service
LUAC	Land Use Advisory Commission
MAP	Maintenance and Asset Plan
MOPIA	Maintenance, Operations, Preservations, and Improvements Administration
MPT	Metropolitan Park District of Tacoma
MUTCD	Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices
MVFT	Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax
NIH	National Institutes of Health
NPS	National Park Service
NMTP	Non-motorized Transportation Plan
NRPA	National Recreation and Park Association
OFM	Washington State Office of Financial Management
OS	Open Space
PBRS	Public Benefit Rating System
PCC	Pierce County Code
PenMet	Peninsula Metropolitan Park District
PLU	Pacific Lutheran University
PPW	Pierce County Planning & Public Works Department



PROS	Parks, Recreation, and Open Space
PSRC	Puget Sound Regional Council
RCO	Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office
RCW	Revised Code of Washington
REET	Real Estate Excise Tax
SCORP	Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Planning
SR	State Route
SWM	Surface Water Management Division of Planning and Public Works Department
TBD	To Be Determined
TDR	Transfer of Development Rights
TPCHD	Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department
UGA	Urban Growth Area
USFS	U.S. Forest Service
WCC	Washington Conservation Corps
WDFW	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
WSC	Washington Service Corps
WSDOT	Washington State Department of Transportation
WTA	Washington Trails Association
YOES	Year of Expenditure Dollars

Glossary of Terms

Active Recreation Uses include sites that offer courts, fields, courses, or equipment for structured individual or team activity or other muscle-powered recreation.

Cemeteries are included in the parks classification system, because they become the responsibility of the County when they are without caretakers, per state law.

Chronic Disease refers to a health condition that persists over a long period of time or recurs.



Community Centers or Facilities refers to building spaces offering indoor recreation opportunities. Examples include Lakewood Community Center, Meridian Habitat Park Community Center, Sprinker Recreation Center, and others.

Connector Trail Classification refers to those trails that provide convenient connections through urban areas and from neighborhoods and link to regional trails or destinations.

County Park Classification is designated for parks that serve more than one community and are designed to accommodate many activities and people of a wide variety of ages, abilities, and interests. They are developed for both formal and informal recreation activities and for protecting habitat. Recreation features vary by park. County Parks are generally 40 to 200 acres in size.



Family Activities include facilities that are flexible and informal areas for play and gathering. They include, but are not limited to, playgrounds, picnic areas, sports courts and fields when less than four are on a site, and open lawns.

Feasibility Study means an evaluation of park site opportunities and constraints, development of alternative concepts and their suitability, and determination of costs and funding strategies. A demand and usage analysis may be part of the study. Site feasibility studies are completed in preparation for engineering, design, and construction to inform decisions.

Improvement Study means development of schematic designs for improvements to a park site, which explores the park concepts in more detail. Improvement studies help define features that are responsive to the complexities of each individual site, adaptable/flexible for a variety of ages and uses, provide for ease of maintenance, are sustainable and consider life-cycle costs, and show a minimum park standard or include potential phasing.

Incorporated Areas references cities and towns that derive their existence from the state, with specific boundaries and taxing powers and that regulate the local or internal affairs of the territory.

Intrapark Trail Classification refers to trails located within park boundaries and consist of nature trails, footpaths, and multimodal trails.

Investment per Capita means investment in the Pierce County park system at a similar rate per capita as current residents enjoy ensuring that the current system can be improved to meet demand for parks and recreation caused by new growth.

Level of Service (LOS) refers to the amount and quality of park and recreation facilities provided that fit a community's vision and resources.

- The **minimum LOS** is based on the County's adopted Fiscal Policy, which identifies an "investment per capita" that allows the park system to provide at least the same LOS per resident as population grows as was in place when the policy was adopted in 2016. The minimum LOS also includes parks, trails, open space, sports courts and fields, and family activities rates similar to today's rate.
- The **target LOS** provides a rate of service that the department aspires to meet through grant funding, donations, and partnership opportunities with the goal of providing a park system that is 20% above the minimum LOS and makes progress toward the average of benchmarked communities.

Linear Parks and Trails Classification is used for built or natural corridors that provide recreation or non-motorized transportation facilities and green buffers between communities. Recreational use is generally passive or trail-related. Linear trail corridors may also include supporting facilities, such as interpretive areas, picnic tables, or trailheads. Trail classifications are included in Chapter 6, Regional Trails Plan.



Local Park Classification is used for parks that serve neighborhoods and communities and are designed to accommodate varying activities and people with a wide variety of ages, abilities, and interests. Recreation features will vary by park and include formal and informal activities. Local Parks are generally 5 to 40 acres in size.



Master Plan refers to a site-level planning process that considers the long-term improvement of park properties to reflect community needs and concerns and identify costs, phasing, and implementation strategies. Master plans are adopted by the County's legislative body through a public process and depict overall park objectives and general site design.



Open Space is any parcel or area of land or water which is devoted to a functional open space use as defined by any one of the following categories:

- **Habitat** is open space for the preservation of plant and animal habitat and may include habitat for fish and wildlife species; rivers, streams, bays, and estuaries; and coastal beaches, lakeshores, and banks of rivers and streams.
- **Working Lands** are open space used for the managed production of working lands, and may include forest lands, agricultural lands, and areas of economic importance for the production of food or fiber.
- **Outdoor Recreation** is open space for outdoor recreation that may include athletic fields, recreation facilities, playgrounds, picnic areas, meadows, wooded areas, and trails; and access to beaches and shorelines for swimming, fishing, boating, and beachcombing.
- **Community-Defined Values** is open space for community-defined values, and may include areas used for buffers between communities, respites from the built environment, and for connecting with nature; and areas of outstanding scenic, historic, and cultural value.
- **Public Health and Safety** is open space for public health and safety, and may include areas used for stormwater management, flood control, water quality for public use, air quality, and carbon sequestering.

Park System refers to all parks, open spaces, trails, facilities, and recreation programs managed by Pierce County Parks.

Passive Recreation Uses are recreational activities that offer informal and less structured recreation opportunities compatible with open space or environmental functions and values. Examples include paths and trails, water access, open lawn for flexible gatherings and informal sports opportunities, picnic facilities, and others.



Preservation refers to repair or replacement of a parks asset after it has reached its useful life to accomplish the same overall function. Preservation improvements are considered non-capacity investments in parks.



Regional Park Classification is used for parks that serve the whole county, providing a variety of unique recreation facilities that attract visitors from the entire region, which may include formal and informal recreation areas, specialty facilities, and significant habitat and historical resource protection areas. Generally, Regional Parks are greater than 200 acres in size.

Regional Trail Classification refers to those trails that form the spine of the trail network. Regional Trails link parks, open spaces, public facilities, cities and towns, and other destinations of interest. These trails are a non-motorized, multi-modal network extending into neighboring counties and jurisdictions, serving as recreational and commuter corridors. These routes will be advanced for inclusion in the State Trails Plan.

Regions Pierce County Parks divides the park system into regions to help manage the system. Regions follow Community Plan boundaries allowing the Department to serve communities cohesively through programming and events and managing parks, trails, and open spaces efficiently. The four Regions are:

- The **West Region** includes lands west of I-5 and Puget Sound, the peninsulas, and islands.
- The **North Region** includes the river valleys, plateau, Lake Tapps, and the access to Mount Rainier National Park via State Route (SR)-410.
- The **South Region** includes unincorporated communities of South Hill, Frederickson, Graham, and the access to Mount Rainier National Park via SR-706.
- The **Central Region** includes the area east of I-5, JBLM, and the unincorporated communities of Parkland, Spanaway, Midland, Summit-Waller, and North Clover Creek Collins.

Resource Conservancy Lands Classification is used for 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 Lands may support passive, nature-oriented outdoor recreation, such as trails and picnic areas.

Special Use Park Classification is used for stand-alone recreation facilities not located within larger parks. These include single-purpose sites for special uses that generally serve a regional audience, such as community centers, BMX tracks, and golf courses.

Special Uses are unique uses that often require special care and management and that often have a regional appeal. These uses may standalone in a Special Use Park or be within a larger park. Examples include: Community centers, senior centers, ice rinks, amphitheaters, golf courses, disc golf courses, bike recreation areas, water parks or water trails, equestrian facilities, dog parks, model airplane fly fields, community gardens, and others.

Specialized Recreation are programs that provide affordable, accessible, adaptive recreation programs for youth and adults with disabilities.



Sport Courts and Fields include facilities designed for organized sports including, but not limited to, baseball, football, soccer, basketball, tennis, volleyball, pickleball, and others.



Sports Complexes include sports facilities with four or more courts/fields.



Trail/Walking Path includes all Regional, Connector, and Intrapark trails that are designed for walking, running, jogging, biking, equestrian use, or other modes of non-auto travel.

Unclassified Classification is used for sites that have been acquired by Pierce County Parks, but which may not meet Pierce County Parks mission. These properties may eventually be transferred to a more appropriate custodian, such as a local parks district or other County department.

Unincorporated lands are those governed by counties without a local municipal corporation, such as a city or town.



Water Activities include formal and informal features designed to allow access to rivers, lakes, ponds, and marine waters, including, but not limited to, boat ramps, swimming beaches, piers, and other waterfront access.



VISION

Pierce County Parks' vision of, “a county of healthy people living happy lives,” isn’t out of reach in Pierce County, where mountains, forests, prairies, and waterways serve as playgrounds for residents. Pierce County Parks manages over 5,200 acres and about 40 miles of trails, ensuring that there are ample spaces for residents to “connect with nature, live healthy lifestyles, enjoy vibrant community spaces, and learn about sustainable practices.”

Pierce County Parks contributes to a community where people choose to live, work, and raise a family by creating vibrancy. Vibrancy happens when a community is balanced with healthy environments that inspire play, social connection, and healthy activity – in short, it happens when there are ample parks, trails, and open spaces.

The Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan directs the development and management of the park system effectively and strategically, using resources to strengthen families and connect community through unique and engaging parks and programs that inspire play, exploration, relaxation, and appreciation of nature. There is a connection between healthy and happy, and that connection comes most naturally when we step outside and play together in public parks and programs. In developing this plan, the values and aspirations of Pierce County residents are the guiding force.



WHY PLAN?

The 2020 PROS Plan establishes goals, objectives, and recommendations for developing, conserving, and maintaining the parks, trails, and open space that allow Pierce County Parks to attain its mission. The 2020 PROS Plan provides an update to previous plans to guide projects and programs that meet the needs of residents as the County grows. This plan will guide the Pierce County park system through the year 2030.

The 2020 PROS Plan is guided by adopted County policies and the State of Washington Growth Management Act (GMA). These documents provide policy guidance for the maintenance and development of parks, recreation, and open space.

An update of the PROS Plan is required every six years to maintain eligibility for grants administered by the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO). This PROS Plan is intended to comply with all RCO requirements.

This plan is an update to previous PROS Plans and builds off of those plans to achieve an improved park system. Since adoption of the 2014 PROS Plan, Pierce County Parks has completed several major projects and expanded funding available to continue to grow the park system. The following are highlights of some of the major accomplishments since adoption of the 2014 PROS Plan:

- Adoption of an increased Park Impact Fee that will provide funding to increase the capacity of the Pierce County park system as population grows – collection of the increased fee began in 2017.
- Development of the ADA Transition Plan for the Pierce County park system – identified improvements will be completed by 2027.
- Master planning of significant improvements to Sprinker Recreation Center and North Lake Tapps Park – improvements will be completed in the next five years.
- Significant improvements to Meridian Habitat Park – additional improvements will be completed in the next five years.
- Expansion of the Foothills Trail from South Prairie to Buckley – additional expansions are planned in the 2020-2030.
- Installation of the first turf ballfields in the Pierce County park system at Heritage Recreation Center – additional turf fields are planned at Sprinker and in the South Region.
- Development of the Parkland Prairie Nature Preserve.
- Beginning development of Cross Park – development of Phase 1 will be complete in 2020 with funding for Phase 2 in identified 2026-2029.
- Planning and improvements to Dawson Playfield (to be completed 2020) and Mayfair Playfield (completed 2016).



- Master plan update and completion of new event lawn at Chambers Creek Regional Park.

PROS PLAN ORGANIZATION

The PROS Plan inventories the existing park system and programming and analyzes demand and needs within the system to determine the most effective ways to use available resources to serve the residents of Pierce County. The plan is organized according to the following chapters:

Chapter 1: Executive Summary - Provides an overview of the plan.

Chapter 2: Vision, Goals and Objectives - Provides the policies and guiding principles that drive Pierce County's park system as adopted in the Pierce County Comprehensive Plan.

Chapter 3: Current Parks and Recreation Inventory - Provides an inventory of lands currently managed by Pierce County Parks and the role of Pierce County and other service providers.

Chapter 4: Demand and Needs Assessment - Provides an overview of the demand and needs for the park system based on a data-driven analysis for family activities, sports complexes, trails, and open space. This analysis includes public feedback, recreation trends, demographics, geography, and benchmarks. This chapter also establishes a minimum and target level of service to guide investments in the Pierce County park system.

Chapter 5: Capital Improvement Action Plan - Provides an overview of funding sources, projected revenues, and a 2020-2030 Capital Improvement Plan for the park system that is fiscally-constrained based on projected revenues within the planning period.

Chapter 6: Regional Trails Plan - Updates the 2014 Regional Trails Plan and provides maps and information about the planned trail network through Pierce County, including short-term projects and long-term goals to create a connected trail system serving County residents and visitors.

Chapter 7: Strategic Plan and System Management - Outlines key strategic actions and performance measures to focus department resources on what matters most to residents. Explains how Pierce County Parks is organized and manages the resources.

Chapter 8: Recreation Programming - Outlines programs offered, funding sources, challenges, and partnerships.

Chapter 9: Open Space Plan - Provides an overview of Pierce County's open space conservation programs and discusses potential future actions to create a more coordinated and strategic approach to open space preservation in Pierce County.



ADOPTION PROCESS

In September 2019, Pierce County released a draft 2020 PROS Plan for public review. A website and online open house with survey were provided to capture feedback from Pierce County residents. The release was advertised to Pierce County residents via social media, press release, and emails to an interested parties list and community organizations.

Special outreach was completed to special use groups, such as equestrian riders, skateboarders, paddle sports, and others, to better understand needs for special use facilities and opportunities for future partnerships.

Pierce County Parks' staff attended meetings, upon the request of meeting organizers, to share information about the content of the plan and to encourage public involvement.

The plan was adopted by the Pierce County Council on February 11, 2020.

SUMMARY

As Pierce County continues to grow and change, Pierce County Parks will rely on the PROS Plan as a resource and guide, continuously measuring progress, adjusting where needed, and celebrating success. With adequate resources and the continued, dedicated effort of County leadership, staff, and community partners, Pierce County Parks can adapt and expand the park system to meet the needs and challenges of this growing and diverse community.

Investments made by previous generations created a great system of parks, trails, open spaces, and programs that offer a highly valued mix of opportunities for people to play and enjoy their community. Parks, trails, open spaces, and recreation opportunities play a critical role in the identity of Pierce County, its communities, and the residents that call it home. If places and opportunities for people to gather, play, and build community are neglected, the soul of the community is also neglected.

The successful implementation of the 2020 PROS Plan means valued investments made by previous generations will be maintained, and current and future Pierce County residents will have opportunities to play in new and creative ways. They will be able to connect with nature, live healthy lifestyles, enjoy vibrant community spaces, and learn about sustainable practices in the Pierce County park system. Accomplishing the vision laid out by this plan will ensure current residents continue to have a great place to live, work, and raise a family and can be proud to call Pierce County home.



2. VISION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

OVERVIEW

This chapter outlines the adopted guiding principles and policies that drive the Pierce County park system. These principles and policies provide a framework that guides decision-making, management, use, and investments in the park system.

VISION, MISSION, AND VALUES

The values and aspirations of Pierce County residents are the guiding forces for the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan (PROS) Plan. After extensive public outreach and input, Pierce County Parks developed Vision and Mission statements that represent feedback received from Pierce County residents. The Vision, Mission, and Values act as guiding forces for decisions made by Pierce County Parks. They also represent the link between public feedback and adopted policy. Pierce County Parks' Vision

Vision

"A County of healthy people living happy lives."

Mission

"by providing opportunities for people to connect to nature, live healthy lifestyles, enjoy vibrant community spaces, and learn about sustainable practices."



statement illustrates a broad picture of success for meeting residents' expectations. Pierce County Parks' Mission defines how the department invests in facilities and programs that reach the goals for the park system as laid out by residents' feedback and adopted policies.

Values

Pierce County Parks' Values define how Pierce County Parks makes decisions and prioritizes work to achieve the vision and mission.



Equity

We provide a park system that is geographically dispersed, culturally responsive, and inclusive of all people and incomes.



Accessible

We encourage everyone to use and enjoy our park system. Our park system can be reached by foot, bicycle, transit, boat, and car.



Stewardship

We wisely manage a well-maintained park system for the enjoyment of future generations. We are transparent and accountable in our decision-making and practices.



Active Lifestyle

We provide a park system that makes it easy for people to be active year-round. Our park system supports people in their efforts to maintain and improve their health and well-being.



Engagement

We actively collaborate with the community we serve. We provide ways for residents to volunteer, learn about sustainability and influence decisions related to the care, growth and use of our park system.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN POLICIES

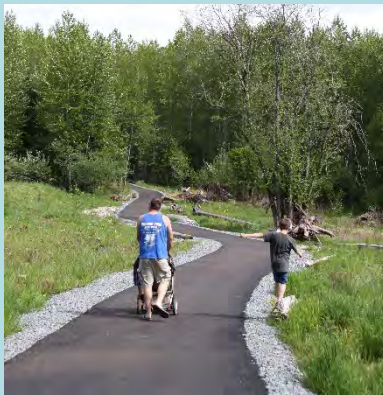
The Pierce County Comprehensive Plan, originally adopted in 1994, is a policy document that guides growth and policy direction for Pierce County services. The Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) requires jurisdictions of Pierce County's size to adopt a Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is required to be updated every eight years, and the last major update was completed in 2015. There is a biennial amendment cycle to make changes to the Comprehensive Plan between major updates.

The following policies are those adopted in the 2015 version of the Comprehensive Plan. Goals define the broad outcomes to be produced by implementing the PROS Plan. Policies guide decision-making and set forth clear directions on how the County will provide park services to advance and maintain the park system.

Pierce County Parks Policies

The following policies, which are guided by Pierce County Parks Vision, Mission and Values, are found in the [Pierce County Comprehensive Plan](#), Parks & Recreation (PR) Element.

Park System



GOAL PR-1

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

PR-1.1 Assume direct responsibility for the development, operation, and maintenance of facilities that have regional benefits and align with Pierce County Parks' vision and primary role as a regional service provider.

PR-1.1.1 Support countywide sports, recreation programs, and special events through the provision of facilities.

PR-1.1.2 Support objectives in adopted Community Plans that align with the role of a regional park provider and meet identified countywide needs.



- PR-1.2** Plan for the annexation or incorporation of unincorporated Urban Growth Areas (UGAs).
- PR-1.2.1** Land-bank sites for local parks identified in Community Plans if capital funding is designated for that purpose.
 - PR-1.2.2** Land-bank sites should only be developed in partnership with a local jurisdiction as part of an agreement to transfer the site to the local jurisdiction.
 - PR-1.2.3** Establish a list of *transitional properties* that are not part of the regional system and may be transferred to other jurisdictions.
 - PR-1.2.4** Actively seek opportunities to transfer local parks to jurisdictions associated with potential annexation areas.
- PR-1.3** Ensure the park system is integrated with and complements other park and recreation service providers in Pierce County.
- PR-1.3.1** Forge partnerships for park development with local jurisdictions or park districts when regional facilities are consistent with meeting the needs of city and county residents.
 - PR-1.3.2** Develop where appropriate a select number of regional facilities that are oriented to the highest competitive playing standard for multi-agency use.
 - PR-1.3.3** Focus development of new ball fields on field complexes developed in partnership with a school district or other service provider.
- PR-1.4** Ensure land acquisitions, donated property and land-banked sites are consistent with the vision set forth in this Plan.
- PR-1.5** Ensure an equitable distribution of park facilities across the County.
- PR-1.6** Develop new facilities only if on-going operation and maintenance funding is provided at a level necessary to safely operate and maintain the facility at adopted levels of service.
- PR-1.7** Implement a whole system management approach to improving and maintaining the park system through integration of long-term sustainability; promoting flexibility of uses and activities; ensuring equity across the system; providing a variety of activities; ensuring adequate support facilities; and, designing with cost effective methods and partnerships.

“Transitional properties” (PR-1.2.3):
Those properties that are better served by a local jurisdiction.



GOAL PR-2

Promote active, healthy lifestyles through the development of park system facilities and programs that reduce obesity and enhance the health of County residents.

- PR-2.1** Ensure facilities and programs are available for all people regardless of ability, age, race, ethnicity, or income.
- PR-2.2** Ensure healthy food and snacks choices when provided at events and within park facilities.
- PR-2.3** Prohibit the use of tobacco within the park system.
- PR-2.4** Work toward an interconnected system of parks and trails in the urban area that safely connects to schools, civic facilities, shopping, and recreational facilities.

Prioritization of Facilities and Projects



GOAL PR-3

Prioritize the use of park capital facility funding sources.

- PR-3.1** Capital projects should be prioritized based on:
 - PR-3.1.1** First maintain the system by preserving the quality and capacity of the existing facilities.
 - PR-3.1.1.1** Capital replacement decisions should be based on safety, loss of function, regulatory upgrades, end of useful life and a balance of cost benefit.
 - PR-3.1.2** Second, increase the capacity at existing park sites by upgrading or adding new facilities to flexibility for multiple uses or increase public use.
 - PR-3.1.3** Third, increase system capacity by developing new park facilities at new park sites.
- PR-3.2** Prioritize development of new park sites based on:
 - PR-3.2.1** Demonstrated need.
 - PR-3.2.2** Population served.
 - PR-3.2.3** Ability to implement programming which advances Pierce County Parks vision.



PR-3.2.4 Improves equity of service.

Location Criteria



GOAL PR-4

Pierce County Parks sites will be located in consideration of the following:

- PR-4.1** Readily accessible via public roads or where roads can be reasonably extended to access the site.
- PR-4.2** Located close to prospective users.
- PR-4.3** Within the Urban Areas of the County, sewer, potable water and other utilities should be available within reasonable distance from the site.
- PR-4.4** Sites should be suitable for the type of recreation proposed.

Development Standards



GOAL PR-5

Develop facilities that exemplify sustainable practices, connect to surrounding neighborhoods, universally accessible, safe, and cost effective to maintain.

- PR-5.1** Provide attractive, vibrant community facilities and spaces that promote opportunities for citizens to learn about sustainable practices.
- PR-5.2** Incorporate sustainability practices into the development, management, and maintenance of the park system.
- PR-5.3** Development of facilities should contribute to community identity.
- PR-5.4** Provide facilities that are accessible for all populations and are adaptable to changing recreational, demographic, and economic trends.



- PR-5.5** Provide park system properties that are connected to the surrounding communities through safe pedestrian and bicycle routes.
- PR-5.6** Incorporate scenic viewpoints.
- PR-5.7** Buffer facilities from incompatible uses.
- PR-5.8** Develop and manage the park system to maximize opportunities for recreation, public access, and participation without high cost capital investments.
- PR-5.9** Design recreation facilities with the flexibility and capacity to support increased programming, respond to changing needs, and provide year-round opportunities.
- PR-5.10** Develop and implement unified standards to minimize future design and maintenance costs and to promote an identifiable image for the park system.
- PR-5.11** Use Master Plans to guide park development and ensure public support. Plans should identify types of uses and development, public access, stewardship, and restoration.
 - PR-5.11.1** Ensure capital projects are consistent with the Master Plan in type of use and intensity.

Stewardship



GOAL PR-6

Manage the park system in a sustainable and environmentally beneficial manner that contributes to a healthy, livable community, and a rich natural park experience.

- PR-6.1** Stewardship management plans should be prepared for all park system properties.
 - PR-6.1.1** Management of park properties and open space lands should be based on the purpose for which they were acquired and consider the regional context of ecosystems and adjacent land uses.
 - PR-6.1.2** Management of individual open space lands should follow good stewardship practices that protect and preserve natural and cultural resources.
- PR-6.2** Develop minimum park standards that would allow public access to undeveloped properties on a limited basis.



Funding



GOAL PR-7

Develop secure funding strategies to adequately build, maintain, operate, and promote the park, recreation, and open space system.

- PR-7.1** Develop partnerships with public and private agencies to increase park and recreation benefits for County citizens.
- PR-7.2** Establish protocol for accepting donations for the park system.
- PR-7.3** Periodically evaluate Park Impact Fees and other revenue sources to meet increased system demands due to growth.
- PR-7.4** Implement asset management system to support cost-effective, long-term maintenance of the park system.
 - PR-7.4.1** Implement and fund maintenance protocols that maximize the life of park assets.
 - PR-7.4.2** Invest in preventative maintenance and upgrades to the park system to maximize long-term benefits.
- PR-7.5** Ensure operation and maintenance costs are included when acquiring, developing, or renovating parks facilities and open space lands.
 - PR-7.5.1** Adjust the operating budget accordingly to maintain clean, safe, and inviting parks.

Regional Coordination



GOAL PR-8

Serve as a regional coordinator, leading the effort to forge partnerships and foster opportunities for countywide collaboration for parks, open space, trails, water access, programs, and services.

- PR-8.1** Provide leadership in the joint planning and provision of programs with other park and recreation providers to meet County recreation needs.
- PR-8.2** Coordinate with other park agencies and districts to provide a range and supply of formal recreation facilities and programs in Pierce County.



- PR-8.3** Lead efforts to coordinate and partner with county departments, cities and other agencies to define, identify, retain, and conserve open space lands and recreational opportunities.
- PR-8.4** Provide technical assistance to local jurisdictions for the conservation, development, operation and maintenance of parks and recreational facilities of interest to local communities.

Education and Outreach



GOAL PR-9

Engage Pierce County residents in the planning, stewardship, and programming of the park system.

- PR-9.1** Provide effective community outreach and marketing to increase public awareness and support of recreation services.
- PR-9.2** Promote Pierce County as a recreation and tourist destination by increasing name recognition and marketing the region's system of open spaces, park facilities and activities.
- PR-9.3** Increase public awareness of the County amenities, location, and value of the park system.
- PR-9.4** Enhance customer service by making information and registration more accessible to the community.
- PR-9.5** Promote volunteerism to enhance community ownership and stewardship of the County's park system.
- PR-9.6** Provide opportunities for public input in park planning and design decisions.

Trails



GOAL PR-10

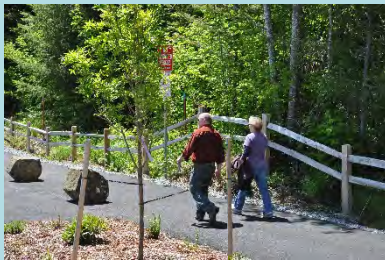
Provide a connected system of trails that link communities to parks, open spaces, public facilities, and areas of interest and provide nonmotorized transportation and recreation opportunities.

- PR-10.1** Create healthy communities by promoting active lifestyles, reducing reliance on the automobile and offering opportunities for recreation through the trail system.



- PR-10.2** Accommodate nonmotorized transportation modes safely and comfortably.
- PR-10.3** Improve transportation by completing the regional interconnected trail system and encouraging its use for commuting.

Design



GOAL PR-11

Develop regional trail routes, crossings and trail facilities that are accessible to all.

- PR-11.1** Reduce accessibility barriers and provide safe crossing of streets and other transportation routes.
- PR-11.2** Ensure safety of all users through the provision of well maintained, visible, and well signed trail corridors with adequate emergency access.

Design should take into consideration (PR-11.1):

- Visibility
- Pavement markings
- Signage
- Intersection angle
- Pavement texture
- Use of color
- Lighting

If deemed necessary, use techniques such as (PR-11.2):

- Emergency call boxes
- Geographic positioning identifiers (GPS)
- Lighting
- Security vehicle access
- Landscaping



GOAL PR-12

Incorporate design techniques that offer a variety of experiences while minimizing impacts to the natural environment and neighboring uses.



GOAL PR-13

Provide access for equestrian use in the rural area on routes that serve public stables or other equestrian pathways and do not limit other transportation uses in the corridor.



GOAL PR-14

Develop planting standards that prohibit vegetation from negatively impacting the long-term maintenance of the trail network.

Facilities and Services



GOAL PR-15

Provide facilities and trail support services to accommodate the needs of trail users.

- PR-15.1** Provide rest stations, restrooms, seating, picnic tables, water fountains, bike racks and recycling/trash receptacles at reasonable distances.
- PR-15.2** Site trailheads in areas that allow for shared parking and infrastructure with other community facilities or major destination points such as libraries, schools, community centers, and shopping complexes.
- PR-15.3** Provide for wildlife or scenic viewing opportunities where appropriate.



Maintenance



GOAL PR-16

Provide trail maintenance that is responsive, cost effective and resourceful for the long-term success of the regional trails system.

Regional Connectivity



GOAL PR-17

Provide and enhance connectivity to important County and regional destinations, between multiple jurisdictions, and to neighboring counties.



GOAL PR-18

Coordinate with cities and local communities, federal agencies, tribes, park districts, user groups, and neighboring counties to develop a successful regional trail system.

- PR-17.1** Create connections between key community destinations.
- PR-17.2** Connect to trails in neighboring counties and to trails in local jurisdictions.
- PR-17.3** Work with Federal, State, and local agencies to identify and procure public property to further the regional trail system.
- PR-18.1** Coordinate and cooperate with surrounding jurisdictions and providers to create a seamless regional trail system.
- PR-18.2** Encourage special purpose districts, cities, towns, ports, tribes, and community plan areas to provide trail connections and provide access to the regional trail system.
- PR-18.3** Encourage developers and private land owners to provide trail connections through developments to the regional trails system.



- PR-18.4** Promote public/private partnerships in development, implementation, operation, and maintenance trail projects.

Water Access



GOAL PR-19

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

- PR-19.1** Cooperate with other agencies to acquire and preserve shoreline access.
- PR-19.2** Enhance the existing system of water trails to support recreation opportunities for nonmotorized watercraft users.
- PR-19.3** Provide access to shorelines in a manner that is aesthetically compatible with the adjacent properties and sensitive to ecological function.
- PR-19.4** Provide for increased shoreline and water access in concert with increased demand from growth and development.
- PR-19.5** Promote appropriate water access to help inspire appreciation and stewardship of aquatic resources and habitat.
- PR-19.6** Support the development of the Kitsap Peninsula Water Trails Management Plan in collaboration with jurisdictions in Kitsap and Mason Counties.
- PR-19.7** Explore implementation of the Kitsap Peninsula Water Trails Management Plan as applicable to facilities in Pierce County.

Recreation Programming



GOAL PR-20

Provide recreation programs that serve regional needs and encourage greater participation in areas not served by other providers.

- PR-20.1** Focus on core program areas that support Pierce County Parks' vision of encouraging active, healthy lifestyles, connecting people to nature, supporting vibrant communities, and providing opportunities to learn about sustainability practices.
 - PR-20.1.1** Provide or collaborate with multidisciplinary health partners in developing programs that support improved physical activity, health, and well-being.
 - PR-20.1.2** Provide environmental programming that accommodates direct exposure to nature as a means of contributing to physical and emotional health.
 - PR-20.1.3** Educate the public about how they may achieve health and wellness.
- PR-20.2** Provide innovative, facility-based special events to provide social and cultural recreation opportunities.
- PR-20.3** Tailor programs and services to the demographics and needs of the community.
- PR-20.4** Identify and reduce physical and financial barriers to participation.
- PR-20.5** Ensure equitable programming for all regardless of age, abilities, race, ethnicity, or income.



Open Space



GOAL PR-21

Provide a system of open space experiences and corridors to support livable communities, offer relief from the built environment, allow people to connect with nature, and ensure the long-term health of the natural environment and citizens.

- PR-21.1** Provide leadership for the planning, coordination and conservation of open space corridors that include unique environmental systems and scenic vistas on a countywide basis.
- PR-21.2** 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.
- PR-21.3** Provide open space corridors within the unincorporated UGA to protect wildlife corridors, provide open spaces for people to enjoy, and to create buffers between communities.
- PR-21.4** Coordinate and support open space identification, acquisition, and management with other County departments and agencies to look for opportunities to leverage resources and reduce expenditures.
- PR-21.5** Protect property valued for plant, fish, and wildlife habitat rarity, diversity, or connectivity.
 - PR-21.5.1** Preserve opportunities for people to observe and enjoy fish and wildlife.
 - PR-21.5.2** Prioritize acquisition of habitats that are considered unique in the Puget Trough or West Cascade ecoregion, are identified biodiversity management areas, contain listed species, or provide habitat connection to these areas.
 - PR-21.5.3** Prioritize the acquisition of habitat that completes an interconnected network of corridors or spaces.
- PR-21.6** Acquire habitat that is supported by multiple county goals in adopted county or inter-jurisdictional plans.
- PR-21.7** Develop partnerships with public agencies and jurisdictions, private organizations and businesses for implementation of habitat conservation across the county.



PR-21.8 Manage, restore, and maintain publicly owned habitat and open space lands.

PR-21.8.1 Develop and implement stewardship management plans for open space properties.

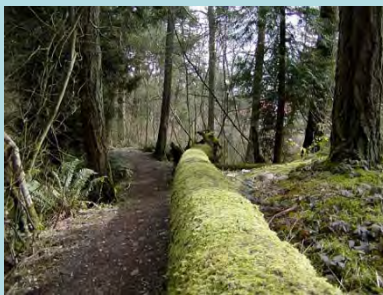
Pierce County Parks Policies

The following policies, which are guided by Pierce County Parks Vision, Mission and Values, are found in the [Pierce County Comprehensive Plan](#), Open Space (OS) Element.

Open Space

Any parcel or area of land or water which is devoted to a functional open space use as defined by any one of the following categories:

- **Habitat.** Open space for the preservation of plant and animal habitat may include habitat for fish and wildlife species; rivers, streams, bays, and estuaries; and coastal beaches, lakeshores, and banks of rivers and streams.
- **Working Lands.** Open space used for the managed production of working lands may include forest lands, agricultural lands, and areas of economic importance for the production of food or fiber.
- **Outdoor Recreation.** Open space for outdoor recreation may include athletic fields, recreation facilities, playgrounds, picnic areas, meadows, wooded areas, and trails; and access to beaches and shorelines for swimming, fishing, boating, and beachcombing.
- **Community-Defined Values.** Open space for community-defined values may include areas used for buffers between communities, respites from the built environments, and for connecting with nature; and areas of outstanding scenic, historic, and cultural value.
- **Public Health and Safety.** Open space for public health and safety may include areas used for stormwater management, flood control, water quality for public use, air quality, and carbon sequestering.



GOAL OS-1

County programs that provide for the acquisition and/or preservation of open space shall have established priorities.

OS-1.1 Priorities for the preservation of open space shall be in conformance with the policies established in [Chapter 19D.170](#), Pierce County Open Space Priorities.

OS-1.2 These priorities shall be coordinated with any subsequent updates of the Parks and Recreation Plan for the County.



OS-1.3 At a minimum, the priorities will be used for the following programs and regulations:

OS-1.3.1 Conservation Futures Program (open space acquisition);

OS-1.3.2 Current Use Assessment Program-Public Benefit Rating System (tax incentive); and

OS-1.3.3 Development Regulations-Zoning (density bonus incentive).



GOAL OS-2

Ensure that Pierce County open space properties, open space passive recreation parks, conservation easements, and conservation futures covenants are managed and maintained to provide long-term stewardship of the open space function and value.

OS-2.1 Publicly-owned or acquired open space properties may be transferred to a local land trust for long-term management and stewardship where appropriate.

OS-2.2 Pierce County should work closely with local and national land trusts and with other private and nonprofit organizations interested in open space in the management of Pierce County open space properties.

OS-2.3 Pierce County should review its land holdings to determine if any parcels fall within the adopted open space/greenbelt network that might be suitable for transfer to a local land trust.

OS-2.4 Linkages between open space and screening buffers occur, encourage the provision of public easements.

OS-2.5 Where possible, open spaces should be located contiguous to other open space areas creating the potential for open space corridors.

Pierce County Community Plans

The Pierce County Comprehensive Plan includes 11 community plans that provide local-level planning policies that build upon the Comprehensive Plan. Community plans contain policies related to parks and recreation but take a more local approach to park and recreation planning than the PROS Plan, which is designed to serve the County as a whole. While many of the recommendations from the community plans regarding parks and recreation have been incorporated into this PROS Plan, some of the smaller-scale objectives and policies will need to be implemented by a future local jurisdiction or community-led group. Based on current funding and capacity, Pierce County Parks must continue to provide recreation facilities and conserve



open space and natural resources in a manner that provides the greatest benefit to residents countywide.

Currently, four community plans are being updated, and policies are likely to change if updates are adopted. Adopted community plan policies can be found in the [Pierce County Comprehensive Plan](#).

FISCAL POLICY

In 2016, Pierce County adopted the Pierce County Parks Fiscal Policy (R2016-115s). See Exhibit 2-1. This policy provides guidance, direction and consistency in the spending of park revenues. The policy also provides the framework for the minimum level of service (LOS) discussed in Chapter 4, Demand and Needs Assessment. The Fiscal Policy included a project list guiding revenue expenditures, which is detailed in Chapter 5 Capital Improvement Action Plan

Exhibit 2-1. Adopted Fiscal Policies per Resolution R2016-115s

Subject	Pierce County Parks Fiscal Policies
Capital Priorities	1. Revenues collected through impact fees should be spent on capacity projects that serve the urban area. 2. Capital projects to increase park capacity should be linked to growth and demand. 3. Revenues collected through impact fees should be spent as follows: ▪ 38% to trails ▪ 32% to existing parks ▪ 30% to new parks
Park Revenue Accounts	General Fund: 1. Revenue support from the General Fund should be primarily for administration, maintenance and operations. 2. General Fund support for Parks should be adjusted annually to support maintenance and operation costs associated with new capacity projects and programs introduced to the system. 3. General Fund revenues should not be supplanted by revenues from impact fees or other sources. 4. Capital improvements should not be constructed unless accompanied by the necessary operation and maintenance funding. Park Sales Tax: 1. Park Sales Tax revenues should be used primarily for capital improvements and preservation of the park system with a portion available as needed for operations and maintenance. Second REET (REET2): 1. REET2 revenues dedicated to Parks should be used for capital improvements and preservation.



Subject	Pierce County Parks Fiscal Policies
	Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax (MVFT): 1. MVFT should be used primarily for operations and maintenance of trails. As new trails are added to the park system, the percentage of motor vehicle fuel tax used for trail operations and maintenance should be adjusted to support additional operations and maintenance costs. Impact Fees: 1. Impact fees should be used for capital improvements that add capacity to the park system
Planning and System Management	1. Planning and programming for the park system should ensure facilities and services are provided to the areas of greatest need and serve large populations. 2. Park improvements should be designed to maximize flexibility of space and provide maximum capacity. 3. Capital improvements should address user interests and recreational trends. 4. Utilize "MOPIA" terminology (Maintenance, Operations, Preservations, Improvements, Administration). 5. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) upgrades must be prioritized with revenues other than impact fees.
Cost Efficiency Measures	1. Pierce County Parks should maximize partnerships with defined parameters of cost sharing and equity for the County. 2. Pierce County Parks should maximize revenues through a proactive approach in seeking partnerships, sponsorships, working with volunteers, and revenue generating activities. 3. Savings achieved through sustainability and efficiency updates will be dedicated to preservation or ongoing maintenance.

Source: Pierce County Council R2016-115s.

SUMMARY

Pierce County Parks' Vision, Mission, Values, and Policies, developed after extensive public outreach and participation, drive decisions, actions, and management of the park system. Out of this collection of statements, Pierce County Parks has developed a list of strategic goals for the next 10 years. Policies referenced are listed behind each goal statement. Pierce County Parks will:

- Focus on regional services, prioritize existing parks, and land-bank for the future consistent with community plans (PR-1, PR-2, PR-8, PR-18, OS-1)
- Prioritize urban park investments that demonstrate partnership readiness (PR-3, PR-7, PR-8, PR-17, PR-18, PR-20)
- Advance public water access to marine and freshwater shorelines through a shared shoreline vision plan and shoreline access study partnerships (PR-19)
- Ensure cost recovery, maintenance and operations, and sustainability prior to construction (PR-5, PR-7, PR-11 through PR-16)
- Increase engagement efforts to the public about services and initiatives (PR-9)



- Align transportation efforts with the Regional Trails Plan to advance a non-motorized network (PR-10, PR-17)
- Create stewardship management plans for Resource Conservancy Lands and open more lands to the public (PR-6, PR-21, OS-2)
- Elevate open space planning for wider public benefit (PR-10, PR-19, PR-21, OS-1)
- Create a fiscally responsible 10-year capital facility list that advances equity across the park system (PR-3, PR-7)
- Determine mission-led programming appropriate for a regional system (PR-20).



3. CURRENT PARKS AND RECREATION INVENTORY

OVERVIEW

This chapter presents an overview of the Pierce County Parks' service area, an inventory and classification of the park system, and a delineation of how the park system is managed geographically.

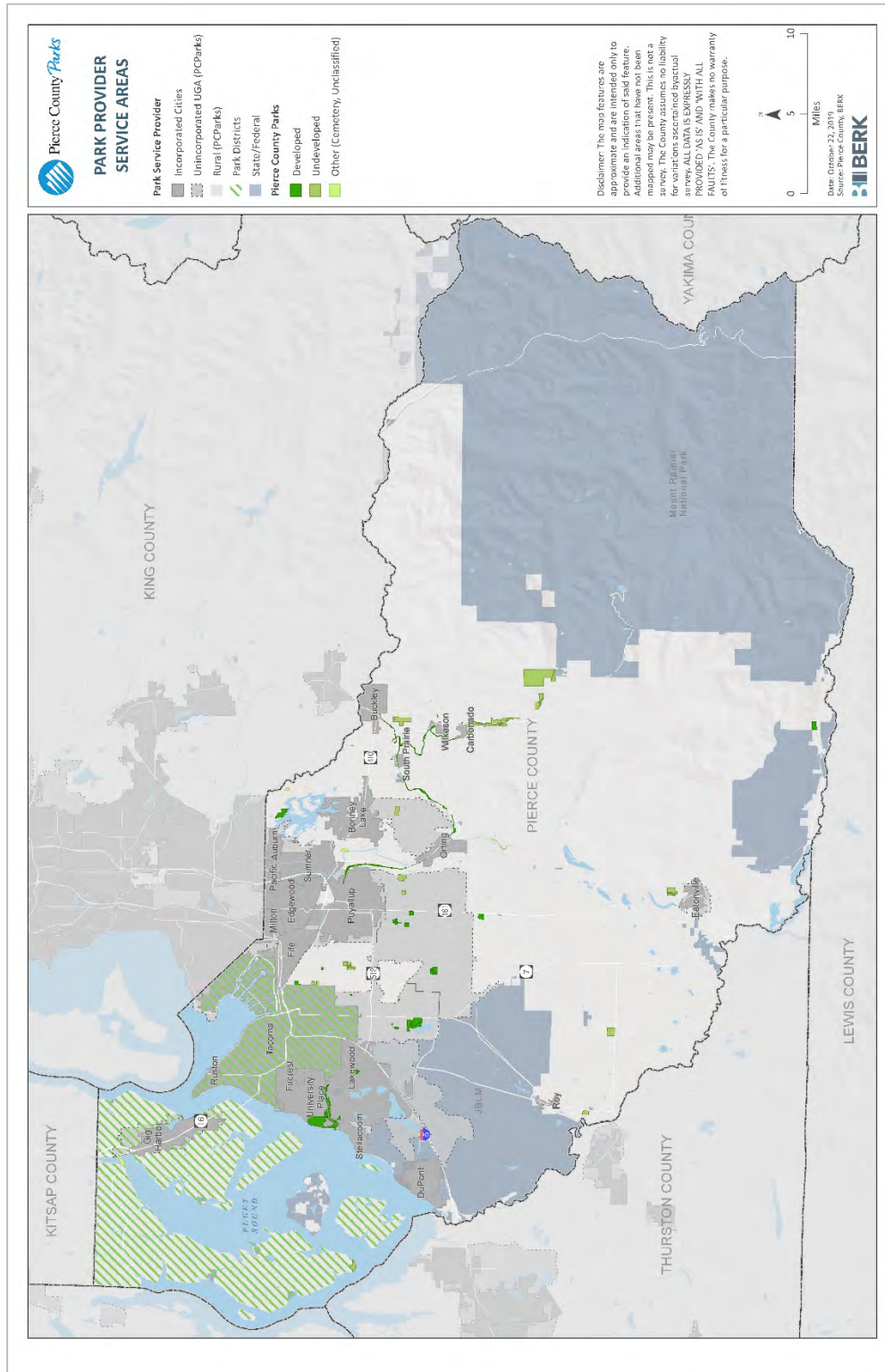
Pierce County Parks is a regional service provider for Pierce County, Washington. Pierce County Parks primarily serves unincorporated areas of the County; however, as a regional provider, the park system also includes regional facilities located within cities and park districts. Exhibit 3-1 illustrates service boundaries of all the park district and municipal service providers in Pierce County.

Pierce County Parks includes 5,183 acres of parks and open space properties and about 40 miles of developed trails. These facilities serve an estimated population of 888,300 and cover 1,794 square miles. Additional facilities used for recreation owned/managed by other County departments are also summarized in this chapter.

A map folio illustrates the park system at a smaller scale in Appendix A, Map Folio. More information about parks and their amenities are found in Appendix B, Park Inventory Detail.



Exhibit 3-1. Park Service Areas



Source: BERK, 2019.



SERVICE AREA

Pierce County Parks provides public parks, trails, open space, recreation facilities, and programs to the residents of Pierce County. Collectively, all properties are referred to as “the park system.”

In addition to Pierce County Parks, there are many other groups that provide parks and recreation in Pierce County at the city/town, park district, state, and national levels within county boundaries.

Pierce County Parks fills a unique role in relationship to these other park providers with a strong focus on:

- Regional trails,
- Regional parks,
- Multi-sport complexes,
- Regionally significant special use recreation facilities, such as an ice-skating arena, marine and freshwater shoreline access, golf courses, and other unique recreational offerings, and
- Serving unincorporated areas not covered by municipalities or park districts.

Regions

Pierce County Parks divides the park system into regions to help manage the system. See Exhibit 3-2. The four regions include:

- **West Region:** including lands west of I-5 and Puget Sound, the peninsulas, and islands.
- **North Region:** including the river valleys, plateau, Lake Tapps, and access to Mount Rainier National Park via State Route (SR)-410.
- **South Region:** including unincorporated communities of South Hill, Frederickson, Graham, and access to Mount Rainier National Park via SR-706.
- **Central Region:** including the area east of I-5, Joint Base Lewis McChord (JBLM), and the unincorporated communities of Parkland, Spanaway, Midland, Summit-Waller, and North Clover Creek Collins.

Exhibit 3-2. Regions



Source: Pierce County Parks, BERK 2019.



Regions follow community plan boundaries and split the county into sub-areas that provide efficiencies of staff and services. These boundaries allow efficient delivery of maintenance and programming services. See Appendix A, Map Folio, for a map of community plan areas and regions.

Land Use

Pierce County is the second-most populated county in the State of Washington, and the fourth-most-densely populated. Most of the population is concentrated in urban areas in the northwest portion of the County, with large rural areas dominated by natural resource and public ownership in the south and east portions of the County. Pierce County is one of the fastest-growing areas in the country. Population growth is predicted to be concentrated in the urban, unincorporated communities of Parkland, Spanaway, Midland, Frederickson, and South Hill (South and Central regions), and the urban unincorporated area on the Bonney Lake Plateau (North Region). With this large and growing urban, unincorporated population, Pierce County Parks is a significant service provider.

Other Providers

Within the County, Pierce County Parks provides more park acres than any other municipal provider. The following federal and state agencies also provide parks and open spaces:

- JBLM
- The National Park Service (NPS)
- The U.S. Forest Service (USFS)
- The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)
- The Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

Additionally, Pierce County includes 23 cities and towns, most of whom provide park services within their boundaries. Four park districts serve specific areas of the County:

- Anderson Island: Anderson Island Park and Recreation District
- Key Peninsula: Key Peninsula Metropolitan Park District (KeyPen)
- Tacoma: Metropolitan Park District of Tacoma (MPT)
- Gig Harbor Peninsula: Peninsula Metropolitan Park District (PenMet)

See Exhibit 3-1 for a map of provider service areas. Primarily, service providers other than Pierce County Parks serve the West Region and provide services within the cities in the North Region. The South and Central regions are primarily served by Pierce County Parks.



PIERCE COUNTY PARKS INVENTORY

Park Classifications

The Pierce County park system is as diverse as the people who use it and includes developed and undeveloped parks where people can participate in sports programs, enjoy a nature trail, climb a play structure, and much more.

Pierce County Parks properties are classified based on their uses and size. Each park class varies by its size and range of features with “Regional” being the largest and containing the greatest diversity of land and activities, and “Local” being the smallest and least diverse. A distribution of classified parks is shown on Exhibit 3-3. Parks are detailed by name and acres in Exhibit 3-4 and summarized by region in Exhibit 3-5.

Park Classification Descriptions

Regional Parks serve the whole County, providing a variety of unique recreation facilities that attract visitors from the entire region, and may include formal and informal recreation areas, specialty facilities, and significant habitat and historical resource protection areas. Generally, regional parks are greater than 200 acres in size.

County Parks serve more than one community and are designed to accommodate many activities and people with a wide variety of ages, abilities, and interests. They are developed for both formal and informal recreation activities and for protecting habitat. Recreation features vary by park. County Parks are generally 40 to 200 acres in size.

Local Parks serve neighborhoods and communities and are designed to accommodate varying activities and people with a wide variety of ages, abilities, and interests. Recreation features will vary by park and include formal and informal activities. Local Parks are generally 5 to 40 acres in size.

Special Use Parks include stand-alone recreation facilities not located within larger parks. These include single-purpose sites that generally serve a regional audience, such as community centers, BMX tracks, and golf courses.

Resource Conservancy Lands 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 Lands may support passive, nature-oriented outdoor recreation, such as trails and picnic areas.

Linear Parks and Trails include built or natural corridors that provide recreation or non-motorized transportation facilities and green buffers between communities. Recreational use is generally passive or trail-related. Linear trail corridors may also include supporting facilities,



such as interpretive areas, picnic tables, restrooms, or trailheads. Trail classifications are included in Chapter 6, Regional Trails Plan.

Unclassified sites include land that has been acquired by Pierce County Parks, but which may not meet Pierce County Parks' mission and may be transferred to a more appropriate custodian, such as a local parks district or other County department. These sites receive minimal maintenance and will be held by Pierce County Parks until future transfer.

Cemeteries are included in the park classification system, because they become the responsibility of the County when they are without caretakers, per the Revised Code of Washington (RCW).

Source: Pierce County Assessor, BERK, Pierce County Parks, 2019



**Exhibit 3-4. Pierce County Parks Inventory**

Park Class & Name	Acreage	Region	Park Class & Name	Acreage	Region
Regional Park	2,781		Resource Conservancy Lands	911.3	
Developed	1,058		Developed	101	
Chambers Creek Regional Park	730	West	Parkland Prairie Nature Preserve	5	Central
Chambers Bay Golf Course	340		Seeley Lake Park	46	West
Chambers Creek Park	185		Naches Trail Preserve	50	South
Chambers Creek Canyon*	205		Undeveloped	810.3	
Spanaway Regional Park	328	Central	Buckley Forestland Preserve	221	North
Bresemann Forest	66		Devil's Head	94	West
Lake Spanaway Golf Course	129		Hundred Acre Wood	109	South
Spanaway Park	89		Nisqually River Interpretive Center	68	Central
Sprinker Recreation Center	44		Parkland Addition	0.3	Central
Undeveloped	1,723		Rimrock Preserve	139	South
Carbon River Valley Regional Resource Conservancy	1,723	North	South Pierce Wetland Preserve	156	Central
Carbon River Valley	488		Swan Creek Park – Waller Road Nature Preserve	23	Central
Fairfax Properties	1,080		Linear Parks/Trails	533	
Fairfax Town Site	155		Developed	531	
County Park	664		Nathan Chapman Memorial Trail	2	South
Developed	437		Foothills Trail	529	North
Ashford County Park	84	South	Undeveloped	2	
Cross Park*	64	South	Half Dollar	2	South
Frontier Park*	71	South	Unclassified Sites	140.3	
Heritage Recreation Center	47	South	Developed	103	
Meridian Habitat Park*	36	South	Browns Point Lighthouse Parking Lot	1	West
North Lake Tapps Park*	135	North	Purdy Sandspit	64	West
Undeveloped	227		Riverside Park	36	North
Plateau Park	80	North	Puyallup River Levee Trail	2	North
Orangegate Park	147	Central	Undeveloped	37.3	
Local Park	72		Ellenswood Conservancy	1	Central
Dawson Playfield	5	Central	Herron Point	0.3	West
Gonyea Playfield	12	Central	Lake Tapps Habitat	17	North
Lidford Playfield	10	Central	Ohop Trail Extension	14	South
Mayfair Playfield	5	Central	Puget Creek Beach	2	West
South Hill Community Park	40	South	Wales Property	3	North
Special Use Park	120		Cemeteries	11.3	
Developed	44		265 th Ave Cemetery	6	North
Lakewood Community Center	4	West	Lake Tapps Pioneer Cemetery	1	North
Swan Creek Park – Pioneer Way*	40	Central	Old Settlers' Cemetery	4	West
Undeveloped	76		Roy Cemetery	0.3	Central
Hopp Farm	39	South	GRAND TOTAL	5,232.9	
Swan Creek Park – Waller Road	37	Central			

Exhibit 3-4 * Indicates properties that are partially developed. Developed park acres are calculated by property; however, in some cases only a portion of the property may be developed. Source: Pierce County Parks, BERK 2019.

**Exhibit 3-5. Pierce County Parks Park Acres by Region**

Region	West	North	South	Central	Total
Regional Park	730	1,723	—	328	2,781
County Park	—	215	302	147	664
Local Park	—	—	40	32	72
Special Use Park	4	—	39	77	120
Resource Conservancy Lands	140	221	298	252.3	911.3
Linear Parks and Trails	—	531	4	—	535
Unclassified Sites	66.3	56	14	2	138.3
Cemeteries	4	7	—	0.3	11.3
TOTAL ACRES	944.3	2,753	697	838.6	5,232.9

Source: Pierce County Parks, 2018; BERK, 2019.

Trails

Pierce County Parks manages a paved, multi-modal, regional trail system that is planned for continued expansion and connections. In addition, trails offering a variety of surfaces such as asphalt, woodchips or dirt footpaths, are included as amenities within many parks. See a summary of trail miles in Exhibit 3-6. See Chapter 6, Regional Trails Plan, for additional detail about trails and trail classifications. Detailed trail maps can be found in Appendix A, Map Folio.

**Exhibit 3-6. Pierce County Parks Existing Trail System**

Trail Classification & Name	Region	Miles
Regional Trails		21
Foothills Trail	North	21
Connector Trails		2.4
Nathan Chapman Memorial Trail	South	1.6
Pipeline Trail- Half Dollar to Heritage Recreation Center (managed by Planning and Public Works - PPW)	South	0.8
Intrapark Trails		17.2
Ashford County Park Trails	South	1.4
Buckley Forestland Preserve	North	1.8
Chambers Creek Regional Park Trails	West	6.4
Dawson Playfield Walking Path	Central	0.3
Frontier Park Trails	South	0.6
Lidford Playfield Walking Path	Central	0.3
Meridian Habitat Park Walking Paths	South	0.6
Parkland Prairie Nature Preserve Trail	Central	0.4
Seeley Lake Park Trail	West	1.0
Spanaway Park Trails	Central	2.3
Bresemann Forest Trails	Central	2.3
Swan Creek Park Trails	Central	0.4
GRAND TOTAL		41.2 miles

Source: Pierce County Parks, 2019; BERK, 2019.

Pierce County Parks has a combination of trails and walking paths in each region, with most of the mileage related to the Foothills Trail, in the North Region.

Other County-Owned Properties

In addition to the parks and open space areas managed by Pierce County Parks, there are other County-owned lands managed by other County departments that provide recreational uses.



Boat Ramps

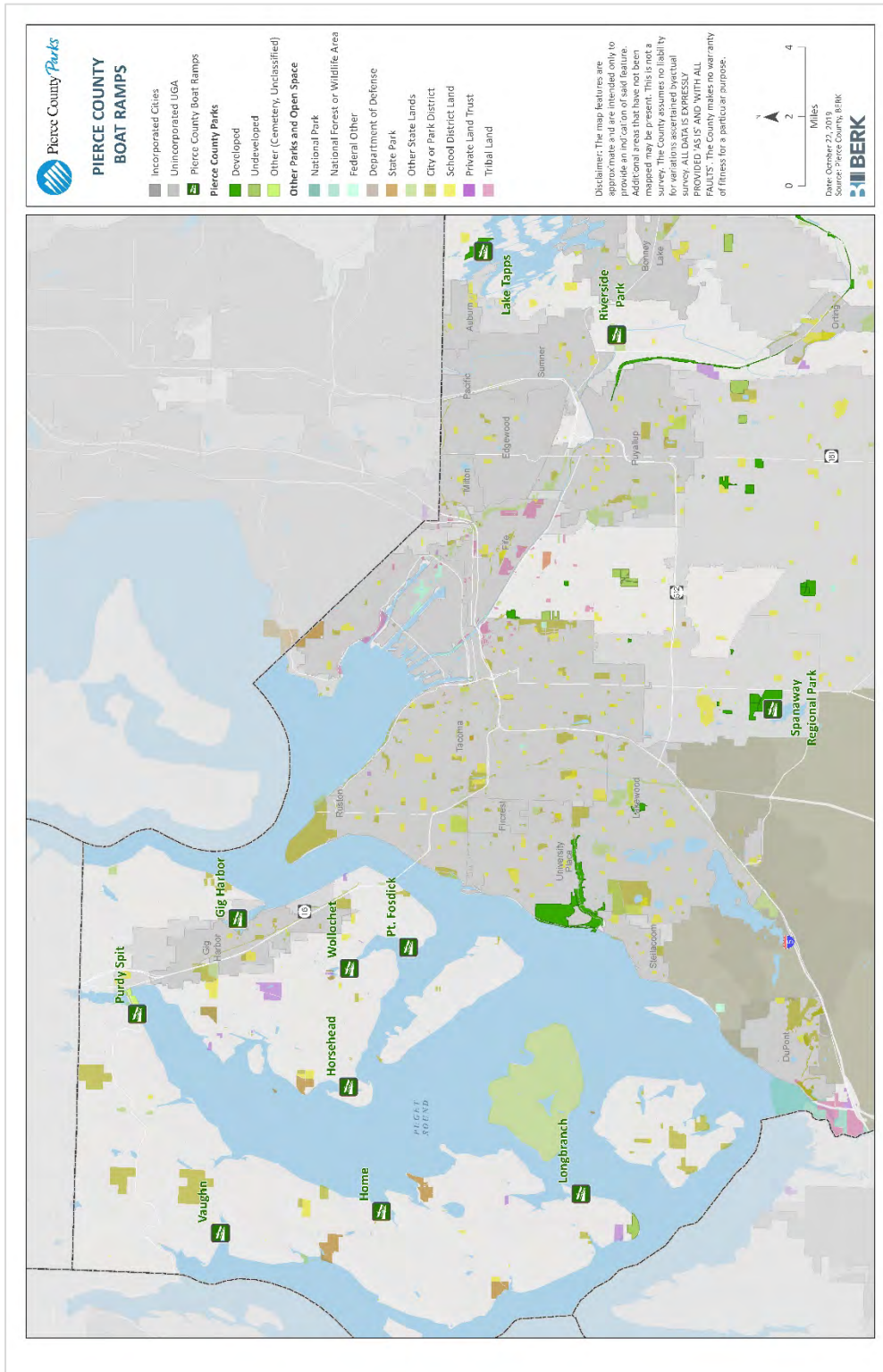
Pierce County Parks manages two boat launches at Spanaway Park and North Lake Tapps Park. A third human-powered boat slide on Pierce County Parks property is located at Riverside Park. The Planning and Public Works (PPW) Department also manages eight road-end boat ramps that provide saltwater access. Road-ends are places where County 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 or other amenities. See Exhibit 3-7 for a list of all Pierce County boat ramps. A map in Exhibit 3-8 provides the locations of boat ramps managed by Pierce County.

Exhibit 3-7. Pierce County Boat Ramps

Area	Road Name/Location	Pierce County Department
Gig Harbor	Randall Dr NW	PPW
Home	A St SW	PPW
Horsehead Bay	36 th Street NW	PPW
Lake Tapps	North Lake Tapps Park	Pierce County Parks
Longbranch	72 nd Street SW	PPW
Pt. Fosdick	10th Street NW	PPW
Purdy Spit	Along State Route (SR)-302, between Goldman Drive NW and Goodrich Drive NW	PPW/Pierce County Parks
Spanaway Lake	Spanaway Park	Pierce County Parks
Sumner/Puyallup	Riverside Park	PPW/Pierce County Parks
Vaughn Bay	Hall Rd NW	PPW
Wollochet Bay	37 th Street NW	PPW

Note: Access to the boat slide at Riverside Park is managed by Pierce County Parks, while the infrastructure related to it is managed by PPW. Similarly, the boat launch at Purdy Spit is owned by PPW but managed by Pierce County Parks.
Source: Pierce County Parks, BERK, 2019.

Exhibit 3-8. Map of Pierce County Boat Ramps



Source: Pierce County GIS, 2019; BERK, 2019.



Passive Recreation Uses

PPW, Surface Water Management Division (SWM), owns the following properties, which allow passive recreation access:

- The South Fork Preserve is an 85-acre salmon-habitat and floodplain restoration site along the Puyallup River, just north of the McMillin Trailhead. A gate from the Foothills Trail provides access to the property by special permission only.
- Woodland Pond is a 6.4-acre stormwater pond. During the dry season, the property functions as a neighborhood park and includes a walking trail.

Additional open space properties may be identified or transferred to meet level of service or service efficiency goals.

PARK SYSTEMS WITHIN PIERCE COUNTY

In Pierce County, there are many different cities, districts, agencies, departments, non-profit, and private groups that provide parks, open space, and recreation facilities. Overlapping jurisdictions, goals, and strategies have created a network of parks, trail corridors, and natural open space areas across the County.

Pierce County Parks overlaps the jurisdiction of many other providers. Residents do not exclusively recreate in the park nearest their home or in the service area they live in, so it is important to understand how different providers are serving residents.

Park Districts in Unincorporated Pierce County

Pierce County's unincorporated area is served primarily by Pierce County Parks, except where local park districts have formed. Park districts are formed by a vote of the people within the district and become a taxing authority. Park districts can be formed anywhere there is public support to do so. Formation of park districts often results in more investment in local parks and services within the park district boundaries.

In unincorporated Pierce County, Anderson Island is served by the Anderson Island Park and Recreation District, Key Peninsula is served by the KeyPen Parks, and the Gig Harbor Peninsula, including the City of Gig Harbor, is served by PenMet Parks. Pierce County Parks coordinates with these park districts, and in some cases, has transferred properties to their management to improve operations and maintenance efficiencies. Pierce County should actively pursue the transfer of County parks on the Key Peninsula to KeyPen Parks, similar to the County's successful transfer of surplus County parks to PenMet Parks, in 2010. See Appendix C, Peninsula Park Districts Inventory, for an inventory of park properties within park



districts in unincorporated Pierce County, and See Appendix A, Map Folio, for a map of park properties managed by other providers.

Roles of Pierce County and Other Providers

Pierce County Parks is among many park systems that serve the residents of Pierce County. Pierce County Parks generally plays a regional role in providing services in areas with other service providers. In areas where there are no other service providers, Pierce County Parks provides more local services.

Exhibit 3-9 summarizes the current facility types of major public and private providers to illustrate the types of roles played by all providers serving Pierce County. Inventory maps highlighting Pierce County Parks and other entity properties are included in Appendix A, Map Folio.

Exhibit 3-9. Current Roles

Facility Category	Federal		State*		Local Governments		Special Districts	
	JBLM	NPS/USFS	WA State Parks	WDFW	<i>Pierce Co. Parks</i>	Cities + MetroPark Tacoma	Peninsula/ Island Park Districts	School Districts
Athletic Facilities					Outdoor	Outdoor	Outdoor	Outdoor
General - Single Field, Court Sites								
General - Multi Field, Court Sites								
Tournament Ready Site								
Outdoor Recreational Facilities								
Family Activity Areas								
Golf								
Specialty or Alternative Sports (Disc Golf, BMX)								
Sprayground								
Wading Pool								
Water Access								
Indoor Recreational Facilities								
Gymnasium								
Ice Rink								
Swimming Pool								
Trails								
Connector Trails								
Regional Trails								

Legend					Countywide Role	Blank: Typ. No Role
	Primary Role	Moderate Role	Minor Role			

*State DNR owns Maple Hollow Trailhead but managed by Key Peninsula Metropolitan Park District

Source: BERK, 2014.

Exhibit 3-9 illustrates that while Pierce County Parks provides some programming and athletic fields, cities and park districts are the primary providers of neighborhood parks and formal, structured recreation. Cities and park districts also provide portions of the regional trail system.

Currently, Pierce County Parks is the primary provider of park services and amenities in unincorporated Pierce County, especially in the South and Central regions. Pierce County Parks is also the primary provider of the following services throughout the County:

- Regional parks and trails,
- Open space,
- Tournament-quality athletic fields, and
- Regional special use facilities, such as an equestrian center, golf and disc golf courses, an ice rink, and a BMX track.

SUMMARY

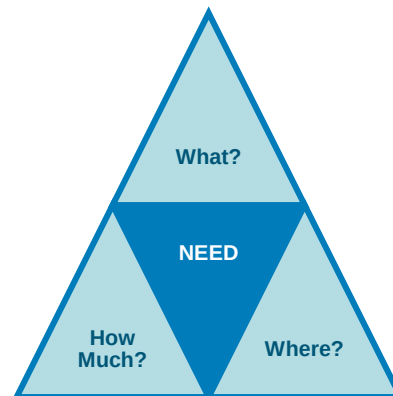
Parks in Pierce County are managed by a variety of jurisdictions, including cities, park districts, public and private agencies, other Pierce County departments, and non-profits. Within this network of parks, Pierce County Parks manages more than 5,200 acres and about 40 miles of trails. Pierce County Parks' service area includes parks in eight different classifications that provide active and passive recreation opportunities and open space. An inventory of the Pierce County Parks' service area shows that Pierce County Parks is the primary provider of park services and amenities in the unincorporated parts of the County, especially in the South and Central regions. Pierce County Parks focuses, county-wide, on providing large, regional parks and facilities that feature specialized activities.



Exhibit 4-1. Determining Demand and Need

OVERVIEW

The Demand and Needs Assessment Chapter analyzes a number of data points to help focus the needs of the park system and ensure Pierce County Parks stays on track for adding capacity as population grows. Chapter 5, Capital Improvement Action Plan aligns the needs identified in the Demand and Needs Assessment with projects that can be accomplished within the forecasted revenues.



Element	Information & Analysis
What?	Public Engagement Usage Patterns Trends
Where?	Population Demographics Inventory/Providers Access/Distance Gaps
How Much?	Persons per facility, miles, or acres Benchmarking



The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan is built upon a data-driven demand and needs assessment. The “needs triangle” graphic shown in Exhibit 4-1 is referenced throughout this Chapter to provide focus regarding the needs of the park system. The needs triangle is used to organize the data-points and clearly define the needs according to What, Where, and How Much. “What?” refers to understanding the community’s recreation activities and preferences and trends. “Where?” considers population growth, demographics and health, and location of parks in relation to communities served. “How Much?” reviews the relationship of population to facilities and benchmarks the County’s park system to other comparable systems.

The Demand and Needs Assessment gathers the following information to help Pierce County Parks develop a countywide and regional analysis:

- Public input,
- Participation and use of the current park system,
- Recreation trends,
- Demographic and health indicators,
- Distribution of facilities in relation to population,
- Safe and equitable access to facilities and services,
- Measurement of the existing system, and
- Comparisons to benchmark communities.

Based on this assessment, Pierce County Parks can better understand gaps in service within the system in terms of the types of facilities that are needed, the number of facilities that are needed, and where they should be located. This assessment considers the current system and benchmarks comparable communities. In addition, this chapter includes a discussion of a level of service (LOS) for Pierce County Parks. The LOS includes a minimum standard based on investment per capita, as identified in the Fiscal Policy, and a target standard that provides an aspirational goal for Pierce County Parks to strive for should additional revenue, such as grants and donations, become available.

Analysis Countywide and By Region

The Demand and Needs Assessment analyzes conditions and trends countywide and by region. This allows both countywide and community identification of gaps and opportunities. See Exhibit 4-2 for a map of regions. Findings are reported countywide and by region to ensure system improvements are made where there is a need.

Exhibit 4-2. Regions



Source: Pierce County Parks 2019; BERK 2019.

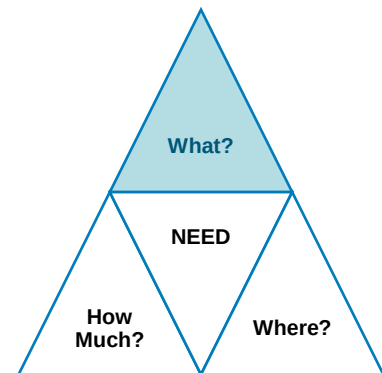
DEMAND AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

What?

This segment of the needs triangle is an assessment that determines what types of facilities are needed based on:

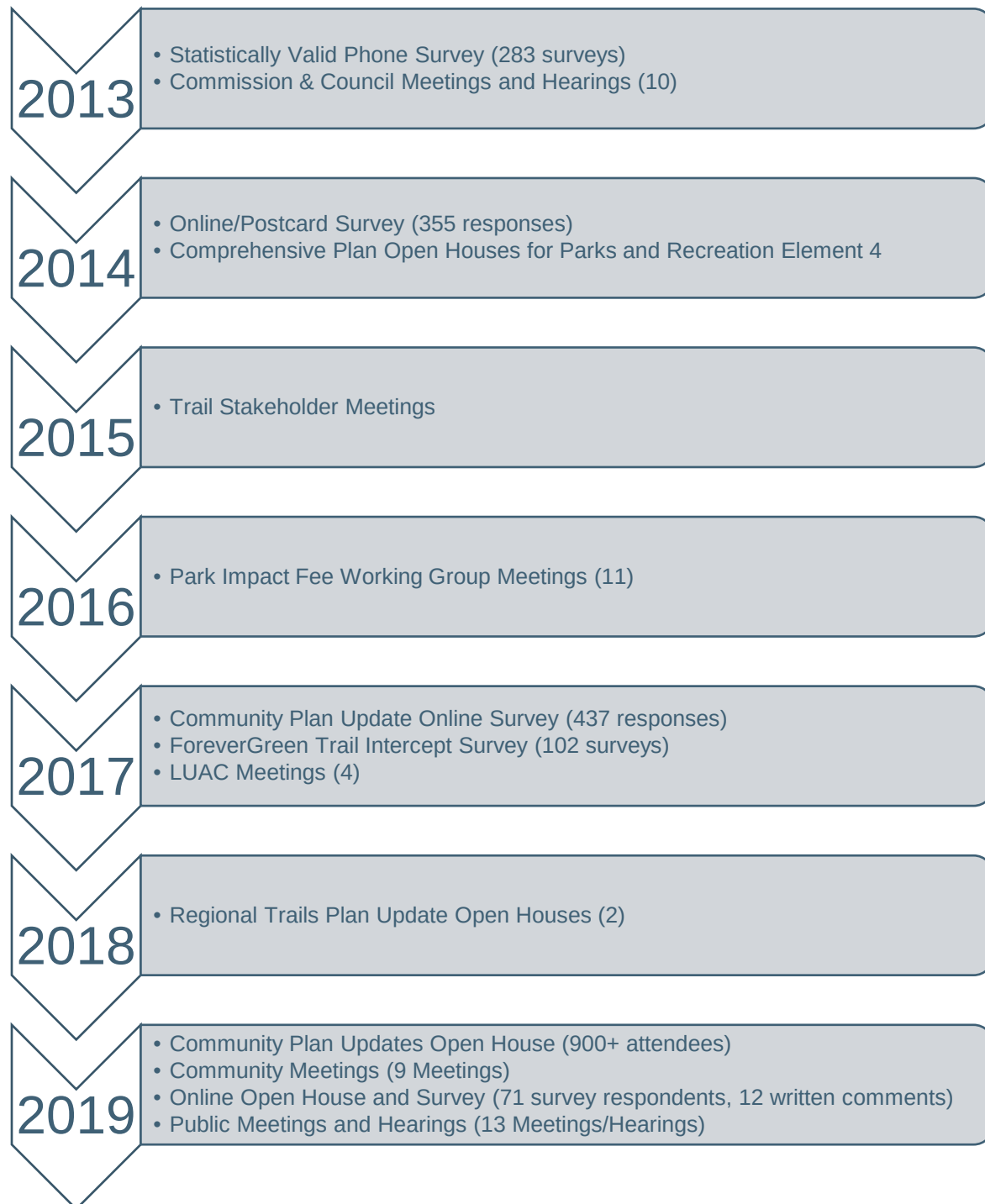
1. Public input,
2. Recreation trends, and
3. System usage.

These factors provide an understanding of what people say they want in surveys, along with a summary of state and national recreation trends, and an overview of actual and estimated usage (based on Pierce County Parks observations and tracking) to better understand the demand for facilities and programs. These factors come together to assist in determining what types of investments are needed in the Pierce County park system. This “What?” data is used alongside factors considered in the “Where?” and “How Much?” categories to prioritize future system investments.



1. Public Input

Public input informs the demand and needs for the park system in Pierce County and drives decision-making for the PROS Plan. Foundational and additional outreach activities to gauge public interest are described below in Exhibit 4-3 which provides a timeline of outreach activities. Details are included in Appendix D, Public Involvement Details.

Exhibit 4-3. Outreach Efforts 2013-2019

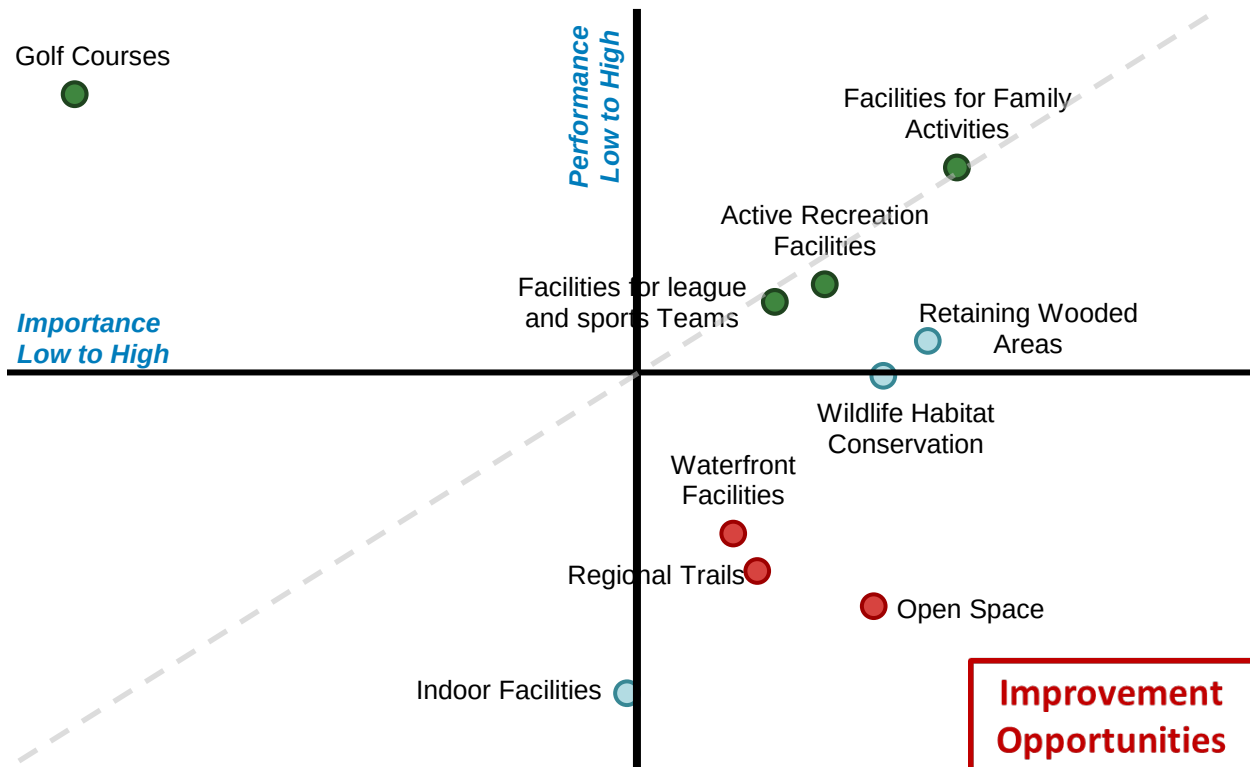


2013 Statistically Valid Phone Survey

A statistically-valid telephone survey of County residents was conducted in 2013. The survey largely addressed persons in unincorporated Pierce County, and results were tabulated by zip code. Survey respondents placed the highest importance on facilities for family activities, followed by retaining wooded areas, wildlife habitat, and open space.

The telephone survey also analyzed participants' responses regarding the importance of facilities and activities in relation to the County's performance in providing them. Exhibit 4-4 illustrates the results of measuring importance versus performance. In general, the Department performs well in active recreation, sports complexes, and family activities. Areas that need improvement are retaining wooded areas, wildlife habitat conservation open space and providing waterfront facilities, regional trails, and indoor facilities. As population continues to grow in urban areas, Pierce County anticipates that demand for access to facilities where people can recreate and connect with nature will continue to increase.

Exhibit 4-4. Chart of Community Parks and Recreation



Source: EMC, 2013.

Since 2013, Pierce County Parks has continuously solicited community feedback. The methods have varied, including telephone, online, and intercept surveys, focus groups, and public

meetings. These opportunities provide a method for individual feedback to be weighed against collective results. The feedback received has consistently aligned with the statistically-valid telephone survey. Appendix D provides a detailed summary of the statistically-valid telephone survey and results from other community outreach.

Across all years and efforts, some common themes have emerged consistently.

VALUES AND DESIRED FACILITIES

Survey respondents said:

"Pierce County needs more walking trails."

"I think a trail system connecting all parks to the communities would be awesome."

"I like walking trails and picnic tables. I enjoy keeping things natural."

"A good playground without wood chips... Lots of slides and swings. With covered areas too so it doesn't get too hot."

"As much preserved open space as possible."

High Ranking Values and Desired Facilities

- Extend regional trails and opportunities for walking and hiking; provide family activities; and conserve open space.

Park System Management Priorities

- Maximize the system, lower costs, recover costs, and prioritize facilities in areas with the greatest need.

Dedicated Capital Funding

- Focus on improving opportunities serving fast-growing urban areas.
- Allocate dedicated capital resources in this order: trails, existing parks, new parks.

Results by Region

Additional outreach was completed in 2017 in the South and Central regions during the updates to four community plans: Parkland-Spanaway-Midland and Mid-County in the Central Region and South Hill and Frederickson in the South Region. These plans comprise much of Pierce County's unincorporated Urban Growth Area (UGA). Approximately 437 people responded to an online survey indicating that community members value existing parks in their communities and desire more parks and improvements.

Respondents were surveyed about their desire for parks to include activities from an extensive list, and results were similar across all community plan areas. Walking paths in parks are highly rated across all the community plan areas, similar to other participation results. Nature trails, meadows/open lawn, playgrounds, and community event space are also rated in the top five, with some variation in the order. See Exhibit 4-5 for the top ten results by community plan area.

Exhibit 4-5. Top 10 Rated Facilities to Include in Area Parks by Community Plan Area

Activity	All Respondents Combined Results	Ranking for Frederickson (South)	Ranking for South Hill (South)	Ranking for Mid-County (Central)	Ranking for Parkland-Spanaway-Midland (Central)
Walking paths in parks	1	1	1	1	1
Nature trails	2	3	2	2	2
Playgrounds	3	2	3	5	3
Meadows/open lawn areas	4	5	4	3	4
Community event space	5	4	6	7	5
Trails connecting parks and schools	6	7	5	4	7
Spray parks	7	6	7	—	6
Community gardens	8	—	8	6	9
Swimming beach access	9	8	10	—	8
Off-leash dog areas	10	9	9	9	10
Climbing walls	—	—	—	8	—
Mountain bike trails	—	—	—	10	—
Ziplines	—	10	—	—	—

Of note: Mid-County and South Hill residents were interested in trails connecting to parks and schools. As described later in this Chapter, trails per capita are particularly lacking in the South and Central regions, where these communities are located. Proposed capital improvements identified in Chapter 5, Capital Improvement Action Plan, include proposed trails to meet this need. Source: Pierce County Parks, 2016; BERK, 2019.

2. Recreation Trends

The second data point analyzed in determining “What?” is recreation trends. Recreation trends, both locally and nationally, were studied to better understand how existing Pierce County facilities align with what other park providers offer and what is desired by the public. They can also help Pierce County Parks anticipate new trends where demands may not be filled by existing facilities.

Washington State and Southwest Region Participation Trends

Residents statewide are surveyed every five years about outdoor recreation demand. Results identify participation trends statewide and by region as part of the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Plan (Hedden, 2017) (Jostad, 2017) and are published in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Programming (SCORP) document. Within this document, Pierce County is identified as being in the “Southwest Region”. Findings for 2017 include:

- The activity with the highest participation rate is walking in a park or trail setting (82% statewide, 86% southwest region). This is true of respondents of all ages, genders, races, and incomes. Walking as an activity has seen an increase in participation since the last survey, in 2012. Adding trail miles is the number one thing Pierce County can do to improve service to communities.
- Boating and swimming are increasing in participation when comparing 2012 to 2017 results. In the Southwest region, swimming is a top 10 activity.

See Exhibit 4-6 for the top 10 results in the Southwest Region.

Exhibit 4-6. 2017 State of Washington Survey – Top-10 Outdoor Recreation Activities for the Southwest Region

Activity	Category	SW Region %
1 Walking in a park or trail setting	Walking	86%
2 Visiting rivers or streams	Nature Activities	69%
3 Visiting a beach or tide pools	Nature Activities	65%
4 Attending an outdoor concert or event (e.g., farmer's market, fairs, sporting events)	Leisure activities at a park	58%
5 Day-hiking	Hiking	55%
6 Gather or collect things in a nature setting (e.g., rocks, shells, plants)	Nature Activities	52%
7 Scenic or wilderness area	Sightseeing	52%
8 Wildlife or nature viewing	Nature Activities	51%
9 Visiting zoos, gardens, or arboretums	Nature Activities	49%
10 Swimming/wading at a beach – freshwater	Swimming	48%
10 Playing	Leisure activities at a park	48%

Source: (Jostad, 2017).

Pierce County's outreach results related to walking opportunities and nature-based activities are consistent with the high participation rates in state surveys.

As a regional provider of specialty recreation facilities, results from the state survey related to desire for specialty recreation activities are also considered. Exhibit 4-7 provides details of the most highly-ranked specialty recreation activities among respondents in the Southwest Region. This data can be used to identify those specialty recreation opportunities that may be of greatest interest to residents and should be considered for development, especially when opportunities for partnerships are available.

Special use park and recreation facilities include unique uses that often require special care and management and that often have a regional appeal. Examples include: Community centers,

senior centers, ice rinks, amphitheaters, golf courses, disc golf, bike recreation areas, water parks or water trails, equestrian facilities, dog parks, model airplane fly fields, community gardens, and others. Based on the state survey, there is interest in some specialty activities in the Southwest Region, as illustrated in Exhibit 4-7.

Exhibit 4-7. 2017 State of Washington Survey – Example Specialty Recreation Responses for the Southwest Region

Example Specialty Recreational Activity	% of 609 respondents
Attending an outdoor concert or event (e.g., farmer's market, fairs, sporting events)	58%
Visiting a dog park	18%
Golf – ball golf including pitch-n-putt, 3-par, 9 or 18-hole,	18%
Technology-based games (e.g., geocaching, Pokémon Go)	18%
Using a splash pad or spray park	14%
Mountain biking on paved or gravel trail	10%
Mountain biking on natural or dirt trail	8%
Inline skating, roller skating, or roller skiing	8%
Yard games (e.g., badminton, croquet, bocce, horseshoes)	7%
Gardening, flowers, or vegetables at a community garden	7%
Ropes course or zip line	7%
Golf – disc golf	6%
Horseback Riding: Mountain or forest trails	5%
Metal detecting	5%
Skateboarding or longboarding	5%
Flying drones, gliders, or model aircraft	4%
Obstacle course or adventure race (e.g., color runs, mud runs,	4%
Ultimate Frisbee	2%
Golf – Foot golf	1%
Parkour	<1%

Source: (Jostad, 2017).

National Recreation Facility Trends

A national survey of about 1,600 public, non-profit, and private recreation providers illustrates top planned facilities or programs in 2018; see Exhibit 4-8. According to our own data, there is a similar desire for improved play, sports, and specialty facilities in Pierce County communities, as well as for special events and sports activities.

Exhibit 4-8. Top Planned Facilities and Programs 2018

Top 10 planned facilities in 2018		Top 10 planned program additions in 2018	
1	Splash play areas (23.6%)	1	Fitness programs (25.9%)
2	Synthetic turf sports fields (17%)	2	Educational programs (25.7%)
3	Fitness trails / outdoor fitness equip. (16.4%)	3	Mind-body/balance programs (23.3%)
4	Fitness centers (16.3%)	4	Teen programs (22.7%)
5	Walking and hiking trails (15.5%)	5	Environmental education (20.7%)
6	Playgrounds (15.2%)	6	Day camps and summer camps (20.3%)
7	Park shelters (13.6%)	7	Special needs programs (18.9%)
8	Dog parks (13.5%)	8	Adult sports teams (18.5%)
9	Exercise studios (12.9%)	9	Holiday and other special events (18.3%)
10	Disc golf courses (12.9%)	10	Individual sports activities (17.5%)

Source: (Tipping, 2018).

While Pierce County already provides many of the top 10 planned facilities and program additions, this information helps Pierce County Parks consider options for new facilities or programming. New facilities and programming are defined in master planning processes.

3. System Usage

Pierce County Parks tracks usage of its programs and facilities, which provides local information about recreational demand and needs and further assists with determining “What?” is needed.

About 1.2 million persons participate in programs or rent facilities from Pierce County Parks on an annual basis. Facility rentals, league sports, and special events, like Fantasy Lights, are the top programs used.

Exhibit 4-9. Program Usage 2013-2018 Average

Program	Unit of Measure	Average 2013-2018
Athletics – Youth	Teams	75
Athletics – Adult	Teams	194
Ballfields	Participant	245,504
Companionship Program*	Participant	1,460
Facility Rentals	Participant	300,746
Fantasy Lights	Visitors	172,479
Gymnasium Rentals	Participant	43,365
Ice Arena	Participant	82,633
Leisure Classes	Participant	25,368
Meeting Room Rentals	Renters	148,641
Picnic Shelter Rentals	Participant	32,747
Tennis Courts	Participant	21,453
Skateboard Park	Participant	6,336
Special Events – Indoor	Participant	14,330
Special Events – Outdoor	Participant	53,177
Summer Camps/Mobile Rec	Participant	9,365
TOTAL		1,157,871

* The Companionship Program is designed to provide fully-inclusive recreation and leisure opportunities for individuals with special needs and their families. The program is a cooperative effort between Pierce County and Bethel, Clover Park, Eatonville, Peninsula, and Sumner School Districts.

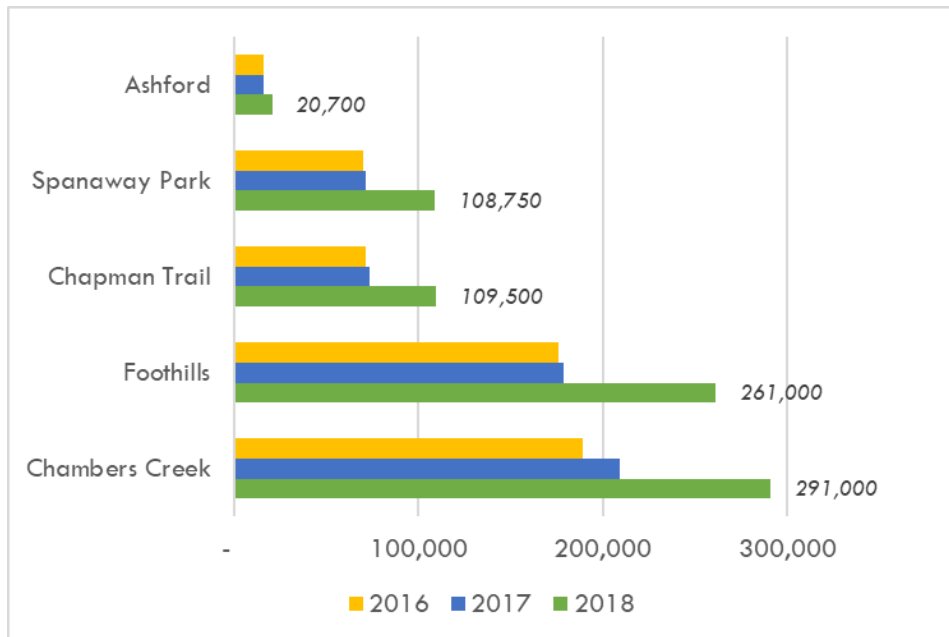
Source: Pierce County Parks, 2019.

Informal Park Use

Pierce County Parks estimates that program participants likely only account for about 20% of annual system use. Most park system visits are informal, such as walking on paths. The annual number of trail users at key parks shows an increase from over 522,000 to about 791,000 between 2016 and 2018. In particular, there has been greater use at Foothills Trail and Chambers Creek Regional Park. Exhibit 4-10 shows estimated trail usage for the years 2016-2018.



Exhibit 4-10. Trail Usage 2016-2018



Note: Observation and tracking methodologies may have been inconsistent over time. In 2019-2020, Pierce County Parks will install trail counters at key trail locations to provide a more accurate count of trail usage.
Source: Pierce County Parks, 2019.

Pierce County Parks will continue to consider usage and participation when designing facilities and programs to meet needs and trends.

Program Capacity

There are indications that demand for programs and rentals can outnumber supply, especially for sports fields, parking, and picnic shelters.

- **Athletics:** Annually, there are over 200,000 ballfield users. Pierce County Parks has turned away requests by leagues to rent fields due to lack of availability. Between five and 10 community groups ask to use Heritage Recreation Center and cannot be accommodated on a yearly basis. Sprinker Recreation Center is also well-used and sometimes takes overflow demand from Heritage Recreation Center. Based on field rentals and participation at Heritage Recreation Center and Sprinker Recreation Center, baseball and softball represent approximately 57% of ballfield use, soccer about 32%, and other rentals of the fields about 11%.



- **Parking:** Parking at some locations can overflow onto streets and needs to be managed with fees, especially during the summer season and special events. Parking at North Lake Tapps Park and Spanaway Park is in high demand during the summer due to swimming beaches and boat launches. Parking at trailheads along the Foothills Trail is also often filled to overflow on dry days. Parking improvements at some locations are needed to accommodate greater demand during peak seasons.
- **Picnic shelters:** Shelters are available to rent at several parks. Shelter reservations open on March 1 each year. Within a week, about 90% of the shelters are booked on weekends from May to September. Investment in additional picnic shelters at popular locations would alleviate this demand and provide revenue.

Summary of Findings for “What?” Category

The following are the key findings for the “What?” category that can be combined with findings from “Where?” and “How Much?” to understand needs within the Pierce County Park system.

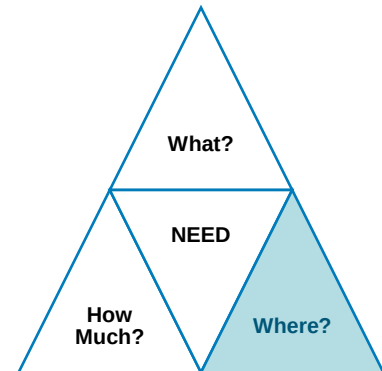
- Regional trails, family activities, open space, and water access were identified by Pierce County residents as top priorities.
- Trails and walking facilities, visiting natural areas, informal play areas, and water access are the most desired in state surveys.
- Walking paths, nature trails, and playgrounds are the highest priorities for urban residents in the Central and South regions.
- Splash parks, synthetic turf fields, trails, and playgrounds/informal play areas are construction trends for new facilities that park and recreation providers are investing in.
- Pierce County Parks’ usage observations indicate that trail use continues to grow each year, and user feedback confirms that providing trails is one of the highest priorities for Pierce County residents.
- Pierce County Parks usage trends indicate that sports fields, picnic shelters, and water access (as evidenced by parking) are in high-demand, and reservation and use requests are greater than available facilities or services.
- Types of and interest in recreation facilities changes over time.
- The PROS Plan addresses broad categories of recreation, while the master planning or park design process engages the community in decisions about the specific types of facilities that will be developed in a park shortly before design and construction take place. For example, the PROS Plan may indicate a need for family activities, while a master plan identifies that a playground and walking path is the specific facility that should be developed.

Where?

The “Where?” segment of the needs triangle determines where facilities need to be improved or located and is based on:

1. Population growth,
2. Demographics and health indicators,
3. Rate,
4. Access, and
5. Gaps and opportunities.

These factors help Pierce County Parks understand who is being served, where they live, where to expect population growth, and how people access facilities. “Where?” data is used alongside factors considered in the “What?” and “How Much?” categories to prioritize future system investments.



1. Population Growth

Pierce County is growing rapidly. Understanding both where people live today and where population growth will take place is important to ensuring programs and facilities are planned and provided to serve a growing and diversifying population of County residents.

Growth Projections

Pierce County forecasts population growth in collaboration with cities based on projections of countywide growth provided by the Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM). The process that apportions growth to each jurisdiction is completed by the Pierce County Regional Council. Population allocations for unincorporated Pierce County have historically underrepresented actual population growth.

Growth projections for 2010-2030 are slightly lower than actual growth (estimated 2010-2019), to date. The actual growth rate for 2010-2019 is 1.5%, and if population were to meet the projected growth, that rate would have to slow by two-thirds between 2019-2030 (0.5% growth rate instead of 1.5% growth rate). If growth continues at the current rate, population growth will exceed projected population growth, as it has in previous cycles. Exhibit 4-11 illustrates forecasted growth versus actual growth-to-date and projects growth through 2030 based on adopted targets.

Exhibit 4-11. Adopted Population Growth Targets

Location	2010 Census	2019 Actual	2030 Projected	2019-2030	Actual Growth Rate 2010-19	Projected Growth Rate 2019-2030
Unincorporated	366,738	420,000	442,257	22,257	1.5%	0.5%
Incorporated	428,487	468,300	572,715	104,415	1.0%	1.8%
PIERCE COUNTY	795,225	888,300	1,014,972	126,672	1.2%	1.1%

Source: Pierce County, 2011; OFM, 2016; BERK, 2019.

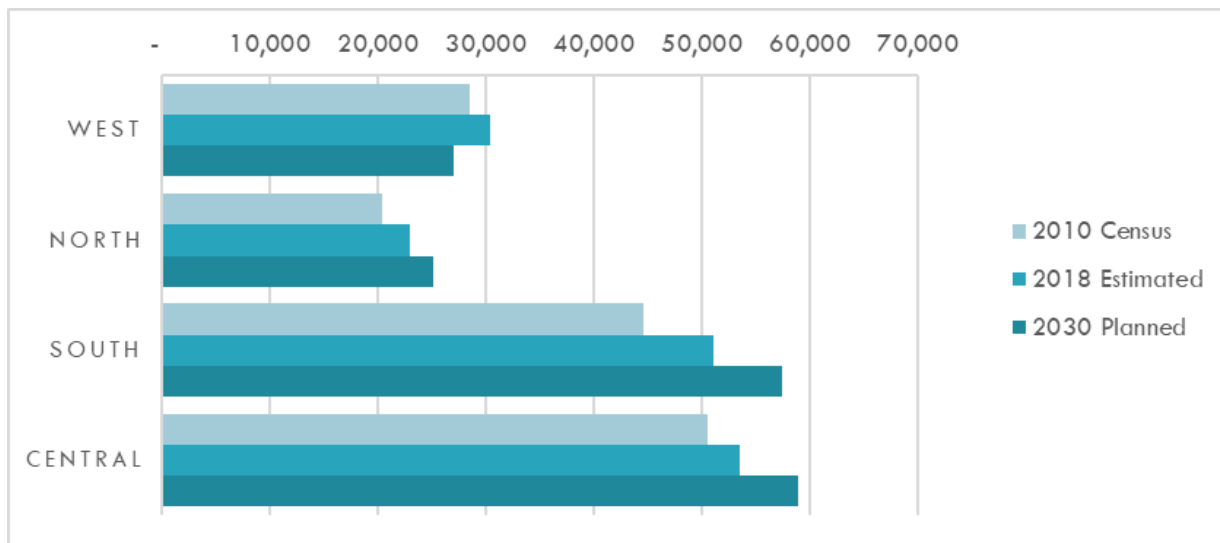
Unincorporated Pierce County is expected to grow by more than 22,000 people and incorporated cities by about 105,000 people between 2019 and 2030.

Growth in cities, especially those in the West Region, could attract use to regional facilities, such as Chambers Creek Regional Park and Spanaway Regional Park, or Special Use Facilities, such as the Lakewood Community Center. Growth in unincorporated areas creates greater demand to expand the Pierce County park system.

Growth by Region

In the West Region, unincorporated areas are generally rural, yet both urban and rural areas of this region are served by park districts. In the West Region, the unincorporated housing unit growth, as of 2018, has exceeded 2030 adopted growth targets.

As seen in Exhibit 4-12, The South and Central Regions are anticipated to experience the greatest growth in unincorporated Pierce County. Growth is most likely to take place within the urban unincorporated communities of Parkland, Spanaway, Midland, Frederickson, and South Hill. Housing in the South Region is expected to increase by 46%, and in the Central Region, housing is expected to increase by 39%, drastically outpacing growth in the other regions. In addition, most of the new unincorporated population growth in the North Region is expected to take place on the Bonney Lake Plateau.

Exhibit 4-12. Total Housing by Region 2018 and 2030 – Unincorporated Areas


Source: US Census, 2010; OFM, 2018; Planning and Public Works (PPW), 2030; BERK, 2019. Note: Population growth in the West Region has surpassed projected population growth as of 2018, and as such is showing a reduction in growth that is unlikely to take place.

Park Demand and Land Use

Parks serve all residents, no matter what their housing situation may be. In urban areas, parks provide opportunities for healthy, active living and the chance to get outside, relax, and enjoy nature. When high-density developments, such as apartments and townhouses, have less on-site open space, access to public parks and green spaces is increasingly important to those residents' quality of life.

Zoning allowing multifamily dwellings is most prevalent in the South and Central regions. See Exhibit 4-13.

Exhibit 4-13. Acres of Zoning in Unincorporated Pierce County Allowing Multifamily Development Countywide and by Region

Recreation Management Region	Acres of Zoning Allowing Multifamily	Share of Zoning Acres Allowing Multifamily
West Region	182	3%
North Region	199	3%
South Region	3,163	51%
Central Region	2,633	43%
COUNTYWIDE TOTAL	6,177	100%

Source: Pierce County GIS, 2019; BERK, 2019.

In 2020, the Pierce County Council will consider adoption of updates to four community plans. These updates may include significant changes to urban areas in the Central and South regions to allow higher residential development densities than are currently allowed in those areas. If these changes are adopted, growth patterns may shift to within approximately one-quarter mile of the following major transportation corridors within the South and Central regions:

- Pacific Avenue/State Route (SR)-7 (Tacoma city limits to approximately 206th Street East)
- 112th Street East (Pacific Avenue to Meridian Avenue)
- 176th Street East (Pacific Avenue to Meridian Avenue)
- Canyon Road East (SR-512 to 176th Street East)
- Meridian Avenue (Puyallup city limits to 176th Street East)
- Portland Avenue (Tacoma city limits to 100th Street East)

An increase in multifamily and high-density housing will result in increased demand for natural spaces and recreation opportunities. These proposed changes that would increase residential densities are proposed within one-mile (as the crow flies) of the Pierce County Parks properties identified in Exhibit 4-14.

Exhibit 4-14. Parks in Proximity to Areas Proposed for Increased Density

South Region	Central Region
Cross Park	Dawson Playfield
Half Dollar Park	Gonyea Playfield
Heritage Recreation Center	Parkland Prairie Nature Preserve
Hopp Farm	Mayfair Playfield
Meridian Habitat Park	Spanaway Regional Park
Nathan Chapman Trail	
Pipeline Trail	
South Hill Community Park	

Source: Pierce County Parks, 2019.

All of these properties, except South Hill Community Park, are planned for improvements within the next decade, due to high demand for facilities. See Chapter 5, Capital Improvement Action Plan, for details on planned investments. Pierce County Parks will consider impacts of these changes as part of the next update to the PROS Plan.



2. Demographics and Health Indicators

Demand for park facilities and programs can differ by age, language, and cultural preferences. Understanding resident demographics helps Pierce County Parks determine what types of facilities and recreational programs to include for the people most likely to use them.

Demographics

Since 2000, Pierce County has become older and more diverse, with more people living in poverty. These trends are expected to continue. See Exhibit 4-15 for a summary of how countywide demographics have changed since 2000.

Exhibit 4-15. Pierce County Demographics, US Census Bureau: 2000-2018

Characteristic	2000 Census	2010 Census	2013-2017*	2018**
Population, Countywide, July 1 est.	700,820	795,225	845,193	891,299
White Alone, percent	78.4%	74.2%	73.8%	75.2%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino	76.1%	70.2%	68.0%	67.0%
Hispanic, any race, percent	5.5%	9.2%	10.4%	10.9%
Persons Under 18 years, percent	27.2%	24.9%	23.8%	23.6%
Persons over 65 years, percent	10.2%	11.0%	12.9%	13.4%
Persons in poverty, percent	7.5%	11.6%	12.2%	10.2%

Sources: *US Census American Community Survey (ACS), 2013-2017; **US Census Quick Facts, 2018.

People living in poverty are more likely to need access to free and low-cost programs. Often, health outcomes are worse in low-income, high-diversity communities. Ensuring investments are being made that are accessible to those populations factor into improving quality of life and health outcomes in these Pierce County communities.

Access to facilities and programs can be more challenging for some demographic groups due to limited resources, abilities, or lack of infrastructure. The following pages review the share of older and younger persons, persons of color, and household income countywide and by region.



Age

Across the County, the greatest share of residents 65 years and older is found in the West Region.

It appears that the share of young people is relatively evenly spread across regions, with the most in the Central Region.

Those areas with a greater concentration of older residents or youth should have facilities and programming suited to them and for those elements to be nearby and accessible, as transportation options may be more limited for these populations. Access to facilities and programming that encourages physical activity and connections to nature can improve the physical and mental health outcomes for both older residents and youth and may continue to provide a higher quality of life throughout their lifetimes.

Refer to Exhibit 4-16 for a summary of youth and aging population by region. See Appendix A, Map Folio, for a map folio illustrating the distribution of census blocks with age characteristics.

Where park and recreation agencies can make a real, lasting difference is in providing evidence-based chronic disease prevention and/or management programs that keep older adults healthy and active for years to come (Roth, 2017).

Only one in three children are physically active every day. Providing opportunities for children to be active early on puts them on a path to better physical and mental health. (President's Council on Sports, Fitness & Nutrition, 2017)

Diversity

Persons of color (race other than white) tend to live in block groups in cities in the West Region and in unincorporated urban areas in the Central Region. See Exhibit 4-16 for a summary of demographics by region.

Statistics show that areas with higher concentrations of non-white populations have less access to recreation facilities, negative health outcomes, and increased poverty. The Central Region has the highest concentration of non-white population, the lowest rate of trail miles per 1,000 population, the lowest share of population with access by foot to parks, the second lowest developed park acres per 1,000 population, and high chronic disease, obesity, and poverty.

People of color are more likely to have chronic diseases, such as obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, to have poorer mental health, and to be physically inactive compared with Caucasians. Parks have the power to address these disparities by ensuring that all community members have access to the benefits of parks and recreation. (NRPA, 2017)

As park facilities are developed, it is important to increase the availability of facilities and programming to meet the needs of populations where adequate infrastructure is lacking and to ensure that new services match the communities needs and desires. For example, if Pierce County Parks determines a need for sports fields where a gap exists, the type of sports field can be determined through community surveys which include questions about types of sports enjoyed by park users.

See Appendix A, Map Folio, for a map illustrating the distribution of census blocks with demographic characteristics.

Poverty

Households earning less than 80% of the area's median income tend to be found in unincorporated Pierce County in the Central Region or in cities in the West Region. See Exhibit 4-16 for demographics by region.

The location of people living in poverty is important, because it can be a factor in determining pricing for programming, need for transportation to access facilities, and the types of facilities needed.

Urban outdoor recreation spaces are few and far between and usually require a drive. As a result, it's often hardest for those living in low-income neighborhoods to access parks. (Gloria Dickie, *Outside Online*, 2017)

Access to parks and green space may also help reduce health disparities. Populations with low socioeconomic status in urban settings are likely to be deprived of such access and contact with nature has the potential to disproportionately improve health outcomes for these populations. (Barrett MA, 2014)

Another important characteristic about poverty is the predominant type of housing. For example, if people in poverty are living in the urban area, they are more likely to be living in multifamily or small-lot developments with less open space and recreation in close proximity; whereas, people living in poverty in a rural area are more likely to live on larger properties and may have greater access to open space, but less access to programming.

About half of the low-income population in the Central Region live in cities and about half in unincorporated areas, predominately in the unincorporated urban area.

See Appendix A, Map Folio, for a map illustrating the distribution of census blocks with demographic characteristics. See Exhibit 4-16 for demographics by region.

**Exhibit 4-16. Demographics by Region**

Demographic	West Region	North Region	South Region	Central Region	Countywide
Age: Percent of County Population in Census Blocks with Greater than County Average Share of Age Group (Under 18 – 22.2% 65 and Older – 13.9%)					
65+ years old	19.0%*	6.6%	3.6%	9.7%	39.0%
<18 years old	14.6%	12.9%	12.3%	18.1%	57.9%
Race: Percent of County Population in Census Blocks with Greater than County Average (32.1%) of Persons of Color					
Persons of Color	16.4%	2.1%	5.0%	21.9%	45.4%
Income: Percent of County Population in Census Blocks Earning Less than 80% Area Median Income (\$52,414)					
Low-income households	10.8%	2.3%	1.2%	12.3 %	26.6%

*The majority of this population is served by a municipality or park district.
Source: ACS 2013-2017, BERK 2019.

Health Indicators

Health condition data, such as Body Mass Index (BMI), cardiovascular disease mortality rates, and other health indicators can help Pierce County Parks prioritize the type and location of its investments in the park system to benefit the health and well-being of residents.

BMI

BMI is a person's weight divided by the square of a person's height (expressed as kilograms divided by meters, kg/m²). Higher BMI indicates overweight condition or obesity and is strongly correlated with diet-related diseases. A BMI under 25 is considered healthy, according to the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Obesity and sedentary lifestyles are linked to a host of chronic diseases, including diabetes, heart disease, cancer, hypertension, arthritis, stroke, depression, and sleep disorders, which account for more than 20% of total US health care costs. Access to outdoor space is associated with initiating and maintaining physical activity and reducing obesity, especially when that space is well maintained, safe, and accessible and offers attractive facilities and programs. (Barrett MA, 2014).

Based on the census tract level data for adults 20 years and older, the Central Region has the greatest number of census tracts exceeding a healthy BMI. The urban areas of the West, South, and Central regions have greater shares of adults with high BMI. See Exhibit 4-17 for counts of census tracts exceeding healthy BMI levels. See Appendix A, Map Folio.

Teenagers and young adults ages 16 to 19 exceed the BMI benchmark in similar locations as older adults, but particularly in the Central and West regions. However, few census tracts exceed the BMI considered to be overweight. See Exhibit 4-17 for a summary of BMI by region and county-wide. See Appendix A, Map Folio, for maps of census blocks that exceed healthy BMI.

Cardiovascular Disease

Cardiovascular disease rates are mapped by census tract. Individuals with pre-existing heart disease are at higher risk of mortality when exposed to various environmental stressors. The Central and West regions, in particular, have a higher cardiovascular mortality rate, which may be related to age. See Exhibit 4-17 for a summary of cardo mortality rates by region and county-wide.

Exhibit 4-17. Summary of Demographics Findings by Region and Countywide

Health Indicators	West Region	North Region	South Region	Central Region	Countywide
Census Tracts ¹	62	33	24	52	170
BMI – 20+ years old: Census tracts with greater BMI than State (> BMI 26.32)	30	25	22	48	125
BMI – 20+ years old: Census tracts with greater BMI than level considered overweight (>BMI 24.9) ²	61	33	23	52	169
BMI – 16-19 years old: Census tracts with greater BMI than State (>BMI 22.94)	28	16	18	45	107
BMI – 16-19 years old: Census tracts with greater BMI than level considered overweight (>BMI 24.9) ¹	1	0	0	4	5
Cardiovascular Mortality – rate per 100,000 persons greater than State (>188.24)	37	25	22	42	126
Cardiovascular Mortality – rate per 100,000 persons greater than Pierce County (>241.89)	16	13	14	25	68

Notes: 1 Census tracts generally have a population size between 1,200 and 8,000 people, with an optimum size of 4,000 people.

2 A BMI of 25-29.9 is considered overweight. Levels above 30 indicate obesity. (NIH National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, 2019)

Note: Although the West Region identifies as high in multiple categories, it is not highlighted, because those census blocks identified as high are located within a park district or municipality.

Sources: ACS, 2013-2017; BMI, Washington Tracking Network, Washington State Department of Health, June 2015; Cardiovascular, Washington Tracking Network, Washington Department of Health, 2018.BERK, 2019.

3. Rate

Pierce County Parks measures the rate of parks, trails, and other facilities to better understand the ratio of Pierce County facilities to population served. Rate is calculated by dividing the acreage, miles, or facilities by the population and multiplying by 1,000 to get the Rate per 1,000 population.

This Rate is established for total park acres, developed park acres, trail miles, and other facility types by region and countywide. The Rate provides data about where additional services are needed to serve the population and indicates where investments need to be prioritized.

Pierce County Parks has about 5,183 total acres. Of this, about 2,294 acres are developed, and 2,877 acres are undeveloped (the remaining 12 acres are cemeteries). Undeveloped properties are predominantly classified Resource Conservancy Lands and contain open space, critical areas, and habitat. Some of these properties are planned for future development, and some are inaccessible due to natural terrain features, such as wetlands or steep slopes.

Rates are calculated by region, as well as countywide. Region-based population is available as of 2017 from the U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS) at the block group scale, which could be more easily assigned into regions.¹ Each region includes an urban area and a rural area, and the greatest demand in the region is within the urban area given the greater density of population there.

As illustrated in Exhibit 4-18, the North Region has the highest total and developed park acres per 1,000 population. However, most of that area is undeveloped and without public access. Considering only developed acreage, all regions drop in acres per 1,000 population. The South and Central regions, which include the majority of the County's unincorporated population and Pierce County's central UGA, have a significantly lower rate of total acres and developed acres than the West and North regions.

“Developed park acres” are the portion of the overall park system acres that allow public access. This access can be to formal facilities, like ballfields and playgrounds, or to informal facilities like walking trails.

“Undeveloped park acres” are the portion of the overall park system acres that are not developed for public access, such as future parks or open space properties either not appropriate for public access, such as wetlands or steep slopes, or properties that have no developed areas for people to access the property like parking and trails.

¹ Later in this Chapter, countywide population for the year 2019 is considered. However, 2019 population is not yet available at the block group level, which is used for the Region-based analysis. Additionally, demographic information is available at the census block group level for the year 2017 but not for 2019.

**Exhibit 4-18. Rate in Acres per 1,000 Unincorporated Population by Region**

Region	Unincorporated Population 2017	Total Acres	Total Acres per 1,000 population	Developed Acres	Developed Acres per 1,000 population
West	71,491	944	13.2	844	11.8
North	57,950	2,754	47.5	702	12.1
South	127,629	696	5.5	393	3.1
Central	141,706	838	5.9	405	2.9
TOTAL	398,776	5,233	13.1	2,344	5.9

Note: Boxes circled in blue indicate regions with the lowest rate.

Sources: Pierce County Parks, 2018; BERK, 2019.

Rates are also established for types of facilities to provide a greater understanding of the types of recreation activities that exist within the developed park acres.

As illustrated on Exhibit 4-19, the Central Region has the most facilities for both sports and family activities/informal recreation, followed by the South Region. The South and Central regions currently have the greatest rates of sports facilities and family activities per 1,000 unincorporated population. As noted above, these regions have the lowest developed acres; thus, the facilities are located on small properties and within areas of higher population density and demand.

The North Region has the lowest rate of sports and family activity areas and the highest rate of total acres.

The South and Central regions have the majority of the County's unincorporated population and are anticipated to have high rates of growth in the future. More park acres and associated facilities need to be added in the urban areas of the South and Central regions. More facilities to meet specific needs are needed in the urban, unincorporated area of the North Region.

**Exhibit 4-19. Number and Rate of Pierce County Parks Facilities by Region and Countywide**

Region	West	North	South	Central	Total
Sport Courts and Fields	4	0	15	52.5	71.5
Rate per 1,000 Population 2017	0.06	-	0.11	0.37	0.18
Paved Courts: Basketball	0	0	0	7.5	7.5
Paved Courts: Tennis	0	0	0	8	8
Soccer Fields	1	0	7	9	17
Baseball Fields	1	0	1	4	6
Softball Fields	0	0	4	15	19
Other Sport Fields ¹	2	0	3	9	14
Family Activities and Informal Recreation	3	1	12	14	30
Rate per 1,000 Population 2017	0.04	0.02	0.09	0.10	0.08
Playgrounds	1	0	7	5	13
Open Lawn Area	1	1	3	3	8
Picnic Shelters	1	0	2	6	9
Water Features	4	3	2	3	12
Rate per 1,000 Population 2017	0.06	0.05	0.02	0.02	0.03
Boat Ramps on Pierce County Parks Properties	1	2	0	1	4
Beach (Swimming or Waterfront Access)	2	1	0	1	4
Pond	1	0	2	1	4
Specialty Recreation	3	2	3	3	11
Rate per 1,000 Population 2017	0.04	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.03
Recreation Center	1	0	2	1	4
Ice skating rink	0	0	0	1	1
Off-Leash Dog Area	1	0	1	0	2
BMX Track	0	1	0	0	1
Disc Golf Course	0	1	0	0	1
Golf Course	1	0	0	1	2

¹ Other sports fields include T-ball fields, multi-use backstops, and Ultimate Frisbee field.
 Sources: Pierce County Parks, 2018; BERK, 2019.

The North Region, which includes the Foothills Trail, has the most trail and path miles per 1,000 unincorporated population. The Central and South regions have the highest unincorporated populations and the lowest rate of trail and path miles per 1,000 population. Only the North and South regions have Regional and Connector Trails. See Chapter 6, Regional Trails Plan, for more information about trail classifications.

Exhibit 4-20. Trails

Region	Unincorporated Population	Total Miles of Developed Trails and Paths	Rate per 1,000 Population 2017	Miles of Developed Regional and Connector Trails	Rate per 1,000 Population 2017
West Region	71,491	7.4	0.10	0	0
North Region	57,950	22.8	0.39	21.0	0.36
South Region	127,629	5.0	0.04	2.4	0.02
Central Region	141,706	6.0	0.04	0	0
TOTAL	398,776	41.2	0.10	23.4	0.06

Sources: Pierce County Parks, 2020; BERK, 2020.

4. Access

The ability to easily access parks by multiple transportation modes is important for meeting the recreation and health needs of the County's population. This data can be compared to information about age and poverty to identify areas where investments in safe, non-motorized access would provide greater access to facilities for those whose mobility options may be limited.

A transportation network analysis of urban census blocks within one-mile of facilities was conducted to determine the level of access. The analysis considers actual road or sidewalk routes, rather than a direct "as the crow flies" route. See Appendix A, Map Folio, for maps of driving and walking routes analyzed.

In general, Pierce County's urban area lacks safe pedestrian facilities, including trails, walking paths, and sidewalks, features which provide access to recreational opportunities and transportation options. Even when residents live in close proximity to parks, they are significantly more likely to be reliant on vehicles to access the park when there is no safe pedestrian access. Transit service in Pierce County is limited to major routes, and few facilities are located on those routes, further limiting access to those without a personal vehicle.

All regions need improved sidewalk access, as none have a majority of households served within a one-mile, safe walking distance. Focusing investments in non-motorized improvements, such as trails, and distributing additional park and recreation opportunities in areas where there are barriers to access should be priorities. At this time, Pierce County Parks has not adopted a LOS related to safe walking distance to parks, because the areas served have a lack of walking facilities. As the County continues to urbanize and redevelop, more walking paths will be added, so this is something that could be considered for inclusion in future PROS Plans.

5. Gaps and Opportunities

The current inventory of Pierce County Parks' developed properties and the location of other providers' facilities was analyzed to identify geographic gaps in service. This analysis does not include other important data points, such as population or density, and should not be used as a stand-alone measure of where investments should be made first but should be included as one of many considerations.

A gap analysis does not represent where additional acreage may be needed based on Rate, but instead, provides an idea of where areas exist that have a great distance between facilities. In areas where population is low, a greater distance between facilities is acceptable. Areas with a high population density, low rate of facilities, and existing geographic gaps between facilities are locations where investments are prioritized.

The inventory of Pierce County Parks was combined with other providers' properties to identify which areas may be served by other providers and where opportunities might exist for partnership on new facilities or expanded facilities, such as co-management of sports fields with a school district. In some cases, an existing Pierce County Parks or other provider's property can be developed to fill a gap. Where a need is identified, and no existing properties or partnership opportunities are available, new property acquisition may be prioritized and pursued.

Regional Facilities

Pierce County Parks provides regional facilities that serve the countywide population and beyond. Regional facilities include:

- Carbon River Valley Resource Conservancy (undeveloped)
- Chambers Creek Regional Park
- Foothills National Recreation Trail
- Spanaway Regional Park

For regional facilities, a 10-mile radius is used to calculate the service area. Using that 10-mile radius, the Pierce County Parks' regional facilities cover the County's urban area and beyond into rural areas in all regions. See Exhibit 4-21 for a map illustrating the service area for Regional Parks.

Pierce County Parks

**PARK SYSTEM SERVICE
COVERAGE - REGIONAL
PARKS AND TRAILS**

Legend:

- Incorporated Cities
- Unincorporated UGA
- County Boundary
- Recreation Management Regions
- Pierce County Parks
 - Developed
 - Undeveloped
- Park Service Areas (10 Miles)
- Developed
- Undeveloped
- Other Parks and Open Space
- Federal Lands
- State Lands

Regions: West Region, North Region, Central Region, South Region

Scale: 0 2 4 Miles

Disclaimer: This map features are approximate and are intended only to provide an indication of land ownership. The County does not warrant the accuracy of the information presented on this map. The County does not assume any liability for any use of the information presented on this map. The County does not assume any liability for any use of the information presented on this map. The County does not assume any liability for any use of the information presented on this map.

Source: Pierce County, BERK

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County Parks

County Parks serve more than one community and accommodate many activities to appeal to a wide variety of ages, abilities, and interests. Developed County Parks include:

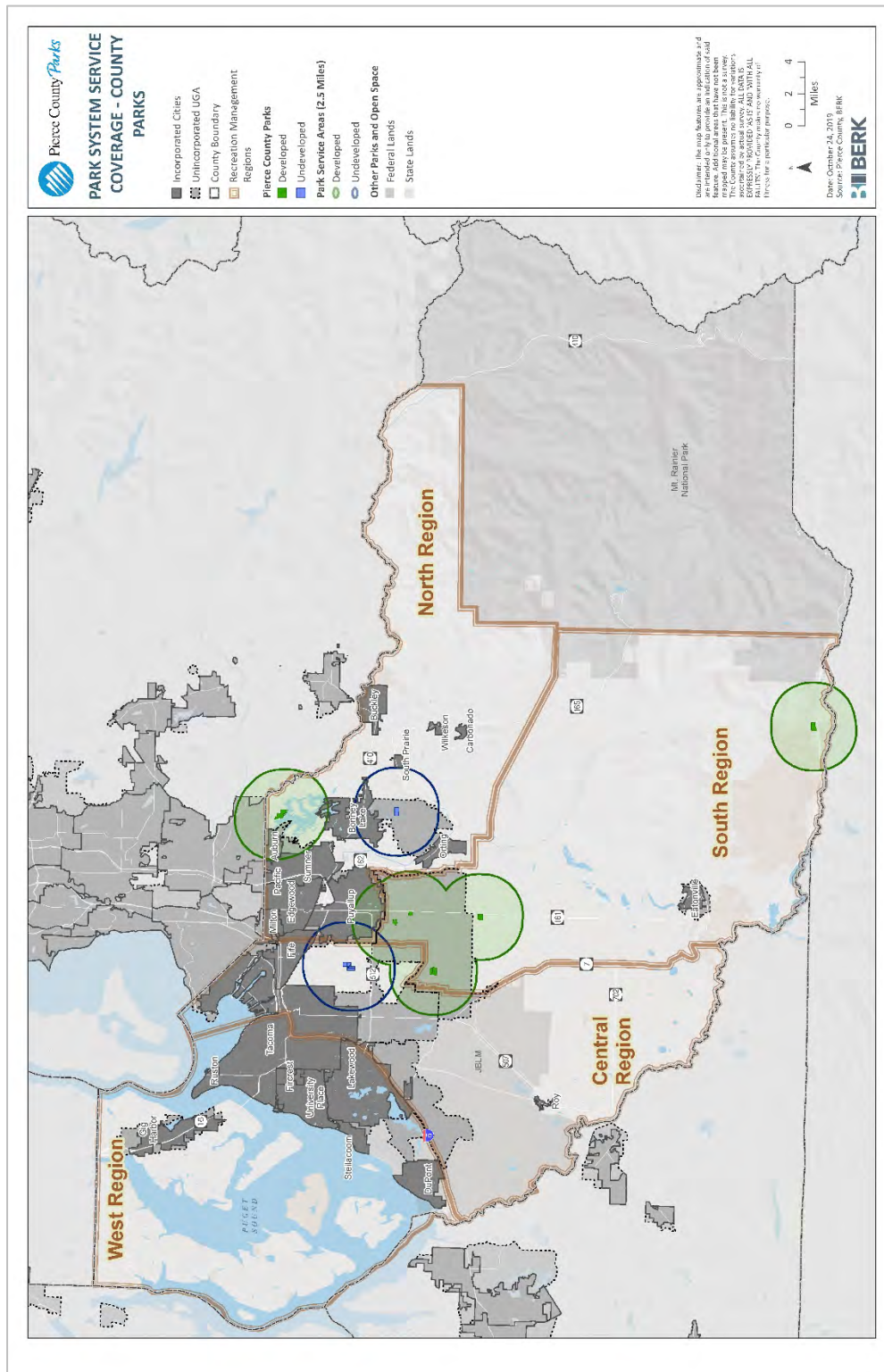
- Ashford County Park
- Cross Property (developed 2020)
- Frontier Park
- Heritage Recreation Center
- Meridian Habitat Park
- North Lake Tapps Park

Most County Parks are in the urban areas of the county, except for Frontier Park, Ashford County Park, and North Lake Tapps Park. See Exhibit 4-22 for a map illustrating service area for developed and undeveloped County Parks, which shows that when using a 2.5-mile buffer, there is County Park coverage in the urban populated areas of the county, as well as gaps in the North, South and Central regions.

Gaps in these regions can be filled when undeveloped Pierce County Parks' properties, such as Orangegate and Plateau parks, are improved, and when additional amenities are added at existing developed parks, like those planned for Sprinker Recreation Center and Meridian Habitat Park.

If undeveloped parks are developed, and if parks are added to meet levels of service gaps described later in this chapter, there would be added coverage in urban and rural areas.

Exhibit 4-22. County Parks Coverage



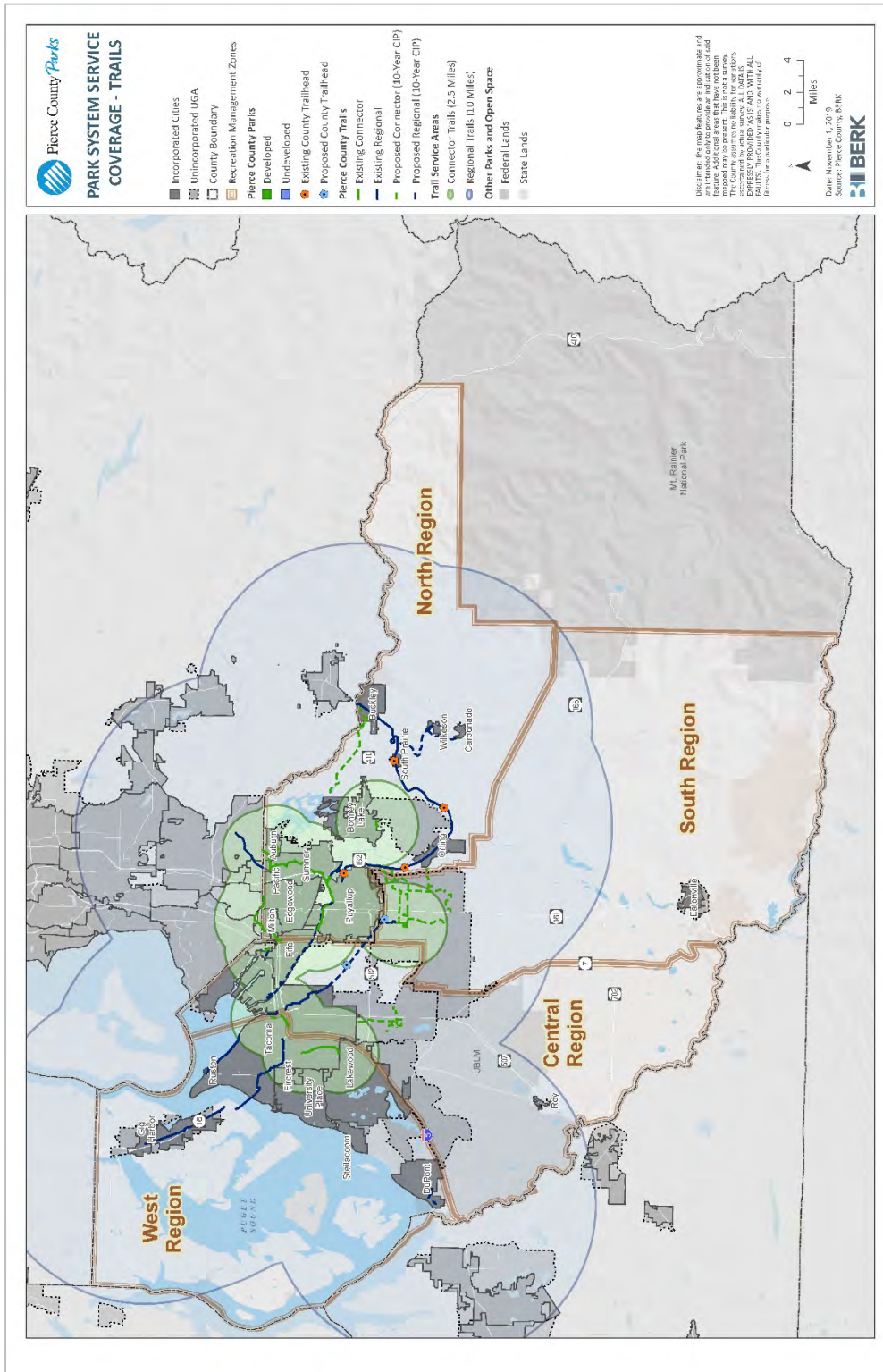
Source: Pierce County Parks, BERK 2019.



Trails

The Foothills Trail is part of an interconnected regional trail system managed by Pierce County Parks, cities, and other providers. The majority of the County's population is within 10 miles of the regional trail system. The regional trail system is not continuous and there are gaps in the Central and South regions that will be filled by development of the Pipeline Trail, the South Hill Community Trail, and the Parkland Community Trail. There are also extensions of the existing regional trail network that can connect outlying communities in the North Region. Future connections outside of the County are also discussed in Chapter 6, Regional Trails Plan. See Exhibit 4-23 for a map of existing and planned trail service areas.

Exhibit 4-23. Existing and Planned Trail Service Area Coverage



Source: Pierce County Parks, BERK 2019.

Other Provider Evaluation

Facilities within cities may serve surrounding unincorporated areas. However, city facilities may not serve the same regional or unique functions, such as large gathering spaces, large sports complexes, or equestrian facilities, that Pierce County parks provides.

Within unincorporated areas, schools are another supporting provider of recreation facilities. However, school properties are not open to the public for as many hours as public parks and typically require formal agreements for increased access. For example, Pierce County Parks has an agreement with the Puyallup School District regarding joint management of the Heritage Recreation Center, which allows greater access to the facility outside of school hours and for non-school affiliated groups.

Facilities

Gaps in facility types are measured based on the distance between different facilities types that residents have identified as important to the Pierce County Park system. These facility types can be measured against the populations most likely to use them. For instance, the location and density of sports fields can be compared to areas with the highest density of youth population.

Walking Facilities

Walking facilities are heavily used and highly valued by people of all ages, as described under “Usage.” Older and younger residents who do not have access to a car may be more dependent on walking facilities to recreate or conduct errands. Walking facilities, including sidewalks, running tracks, and trails, are mapped in relation to the population under 18 and over 65 years of age. There is a need to extend walking facilities in areas with a higher share of these populations.

See Appendix A, Map Folio, for maps of walking facilities overlaid with those census blocks with the highest concentration of older and younger residents.

Urban areas in the South and Central regions have the greatest need for additional walking facilities and trails. The communities of Parkland, Spanaway, Midland, South Hill, and Frederickson are a high priority for investment in both trails and sidewalks.

Sports Fields

Pierce County, cities, school districts, and park districts maintain a database of recreation facilities. Using this database, sports fields (athletic, baseball/softball, football, soccer, or other) were mapped in relation to census blocks with a greater than average share of persons under 18 years old. There are more sports fields in the West Region and parts of the Central Region, while sports fields are lacking in areas close to the highest concentrations of youth populations

in the North and South regions. See Appendix A, Map Folio, for maps of sports fields overlaid with census blocks with the highest youth population.

Family Activities

Family activities, such as playgrounds and picnic areas, were identified by Pierce County residents as a high priority. Ideal locations for family activities can be identified by comparing the current locations of those facilities with those census tracts with the largest household size.

Considering all park and recreation providers and the location of census block groups with average household size above the county average, the South Region has the lowest density of family activity facilities and many census blocks with higher-than-average household sizes. The North and Central regions also have blocks with higher household sizes and no family activities. See Appendix A, Map Folio, for a map of family activities overlaid with census blocks with the greatest household size.

Open Space

As Pierce County continues to grow, it is important to provide access to open space and green space for residents. Open space was identified as a high value by Pierce County residents. Gaps in open space were identified by comparing existing protected open space areas with population density. As illustrated in Appendix A, Map Folio, the County's Resource Conservancy Lands provide open space in each region. However, in the areas of highest population density in the Central Region and portions of the North and South regions, there are gaps.

Summary of Findings for "Where?" Category

The following are the key findings for the "Where?" category that can be combined with findings from "What?" and "How Much?" to understand needs within the Pierce County park system.

- Parkland, Spanaway, Midland, Frederickson, South Hill, and the urban area of the Bonney Lake Plateau will experience the greatest population growth.
- The South and Central regions have the greatest need for park acres and trail miles based on population.
- The urban areas of the Central Region have a greater need than other areas for developed recreation facilities due to negative health outcomes, high poverty rates, greater diversity, and a lower rate of parks and trails per 1,000 population, and a low share of the population with safe, walkable access to parks and trails.
- Trails and walking facilities are in high-demand countywide due to even distribution of youth and older populations across unincorporated areas.
- Geographic gaps for developed parks exist in the Summit-Waller area, South Spanaway/West Graham area, and in the urban area of the Bonney Lake Plateau.

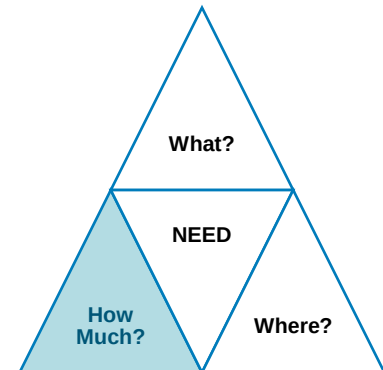
- Sports complexes are needed in the urban area of the North Region, where youth populations are high. The South Region will need additional sports complexes as population continues to grow.
- Family activities are needed in the urban areas of the North Region.

How Much?

The third segment of the Need Triangle analyzes “How Much,” which is measured by considering:

1. Benchmarking, and
2. Level of Service (LOS)

These factors come together to determine a minimum LOS that is consistent with Pierce County Parks Fiscal Policy and sets a target LOS as a goal to expand the system if additional funds or opportunities are available. This data is used alongside findings from the “What?” and “Where?” categories to prioritize future system investments.



1. Benchmarking

Benchmarking compares the Pierce County park system to peer communities or to communities that offer aspirational park systems. While Pierce County Parks forms its own plans to meet Pierce County residents’ needs, comparisons to other communities can offer valuable perspectives and insights. Whereas much of the region-based demographic analysis relied on the available 2017 ACS data, this section uses countywide information that is available up to the year 2019 from the OFM.

Pierce County Parks analyzed benchmarks for these five data points as a representation of the overall park system and public priorities:

- Total and developed park acres
- Trail miles
- Open space acres
- Sports fields and courts
- Family activities including playgrounds, picnic shelters, open lawn facilities
- Playgrounds (a subset of family activities desired in nearly all park classifications)
- Dog parks (as a representation of a common special use facility)

Pierce County Parks is compared to other counties with relatively high population densities per square miles both in the Puget Sound Region – Kitsap and Snohomish Counties – and Spokane

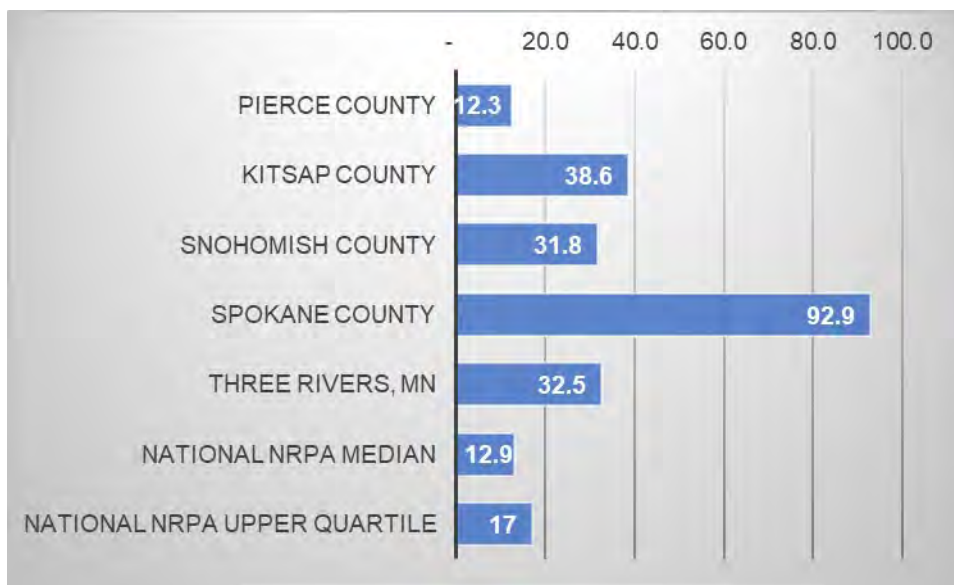


County in Eastern Washington. Pierce County Parks is also compared to Three Rivers Park District, Minnesota, as an aspirational measure, because the Minneapolis-St. Paul region has been consistently ranked top in the nation (Gloria Dickie, Outside Online, 2017) for providing public park and recreation services; the Three Rivers Park District serves the county that contains Minneapolis.

Additionally, a comparison is made to other park systems across the nation that serve populations over 250,000 persons. Median results represent the average number of units per provider, while upper quartile results represent the average number of units being provided by the highest 25% of those jurisdictions.

Pierce County has less than half of the total park acres compared to benchmarked Washington state counties, and less than national examples. See Exhibit 4-24 for a comparison of the rate of total park system acres.

Exhibit 4-24. Total Park System Acres per 1,000 Unincorporated Population 2019

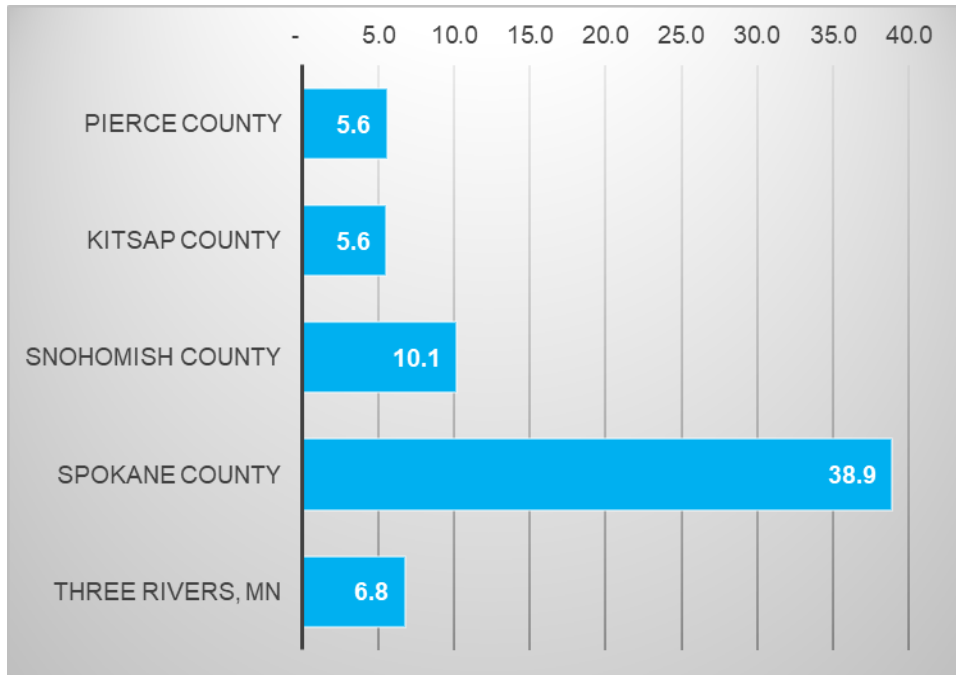


Source: Provider Plans; (National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), 2019); BERK, 2019.



Pierce County Parks also has less developed acres than most other example communities and is similar to Kitsap County's amount. See Exhibit 4-25 for a comparison of the rate of developed park acres.

Exhibit 4-25. Developed Park Acres per 1,000 Unincorporated Population 2019

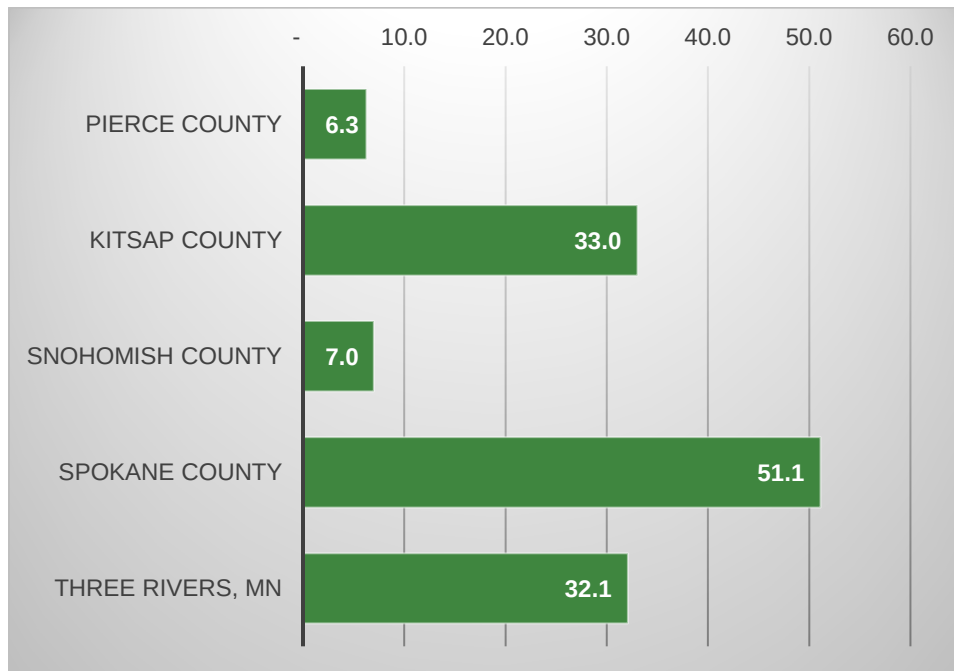


Source: Provider Plans; BERK, 2019.



Each park agency reviewed provides parks classified as open space, natural area, or resource lands. Pierce County's inventory results in about 6.3 acres of open space per 1,000 population and is lower than reviewed counties. Open space calculations for the Pierce County park system do not include open space managed by other organizations purchased through the Pierce County Conservation Futures program. See Chapter 9, Open Space Plan, for a summary of Conservation Futures properties. See Exhibit 4-26 for a comparison of the rate of open space acres.

Exhibit 4-26. Open Space Acres per 1,000 Unincorporated Population 2019

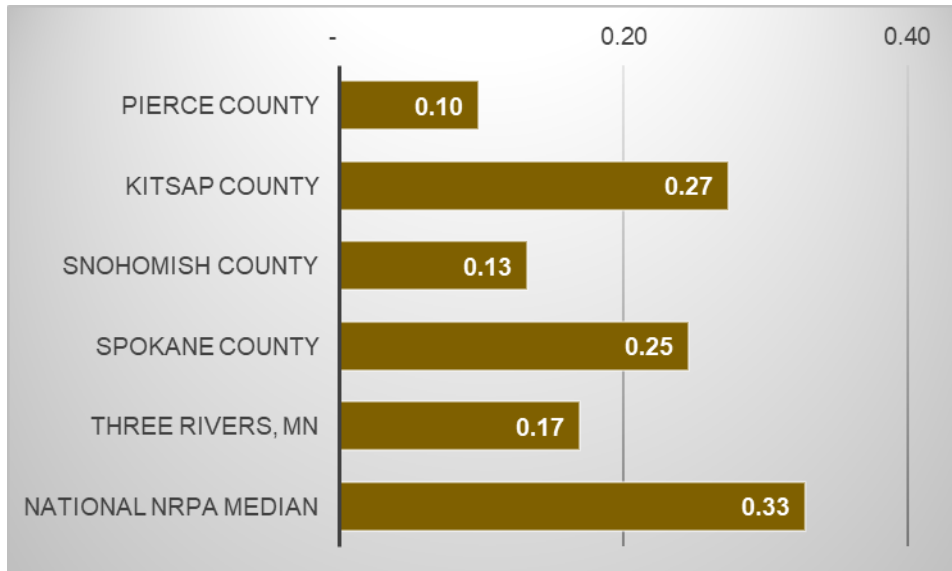


Source: Provider Plans; BERK, 2019.



Pierce County has a lower rate of trail miles than reviewed agencies. See Exhibit 4-27 for a comparison of the rate of trail miles.

Exhibit 4-27. Trail Miles per 1,000 Unincorporated Population 2019

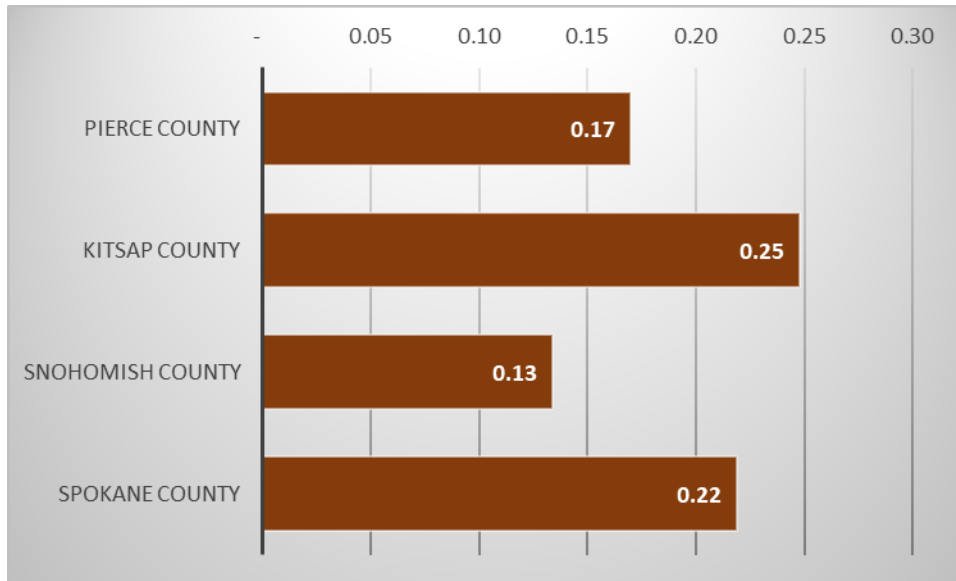


Note: NRPA Upper Quartile Figure not available. Some counties sum all trail facilities in parks and in dedicated rights of way and some consider partial trail information on parks and all trails on dedicated rights of way. Regardless, the best-case sum of Intrapark, Connector, and Regional miles for Pierce County is less than other counties. | Source: Provider Plans; BERK, 2019.



Pierce County has a similar rate of sports courts/fields in the range of other counties. See Exhibit 4-28 for a comparison of the rate of sports fields/courts.

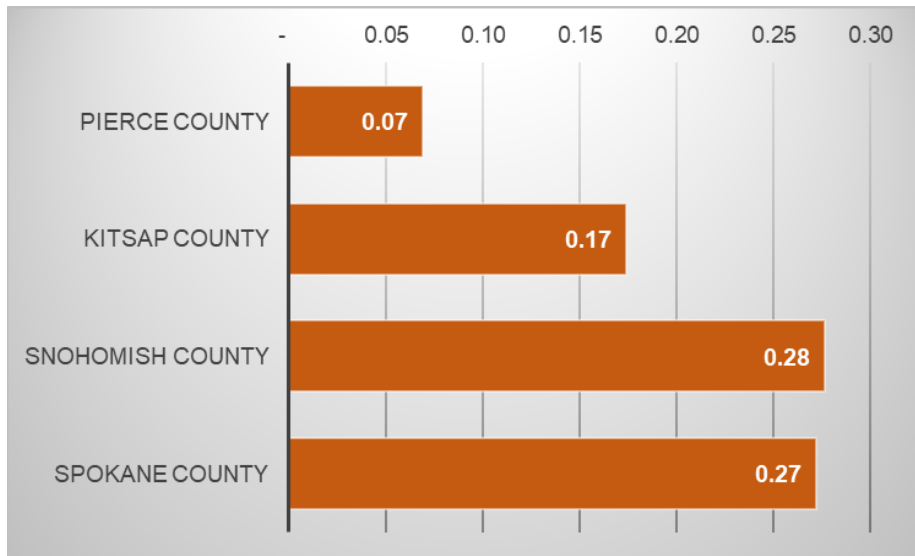
Exhibit 4-28. Sports Courts and Fields per 1,000 Unincorporated Population 2019



Source: Provider Plans; BERK, 2019.

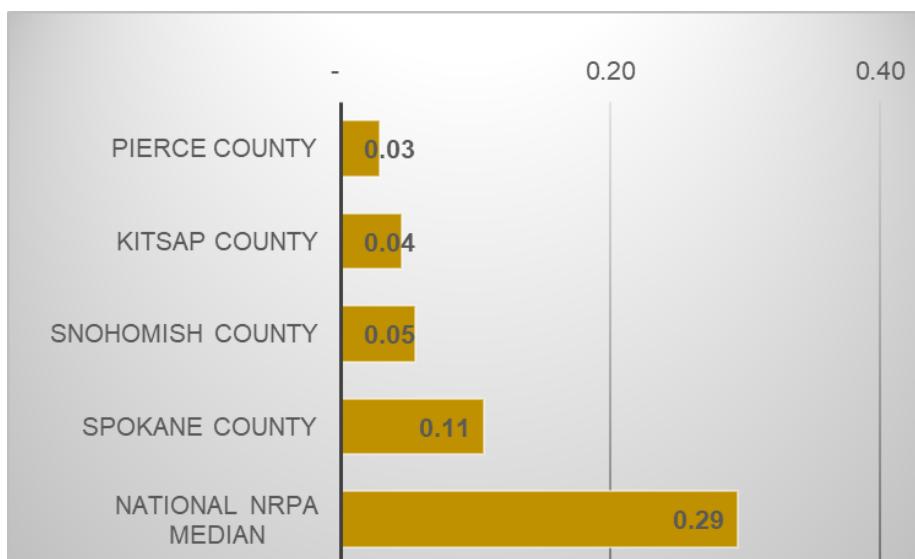
Pierce County's rate of family activities, and playgrounds specifically, is lower than reviewed agencies. See Exhibit 4-29 and Exhibit 4-30 for a comparison of the rate of family activities. As an example of common family activities, a benchmark for playgrounds is provided in Figure 4-32. Pierce County provides a similar rate of playgrounds to other Puget Sound region jurisdictions.

Exhibit 4-29. Family Activities per 1,000 Population 2019



Note: Family activities include: Playgrounds, Picnic Shelters, and Open Lawns | Source: Provider Plans; BERK, 2019.

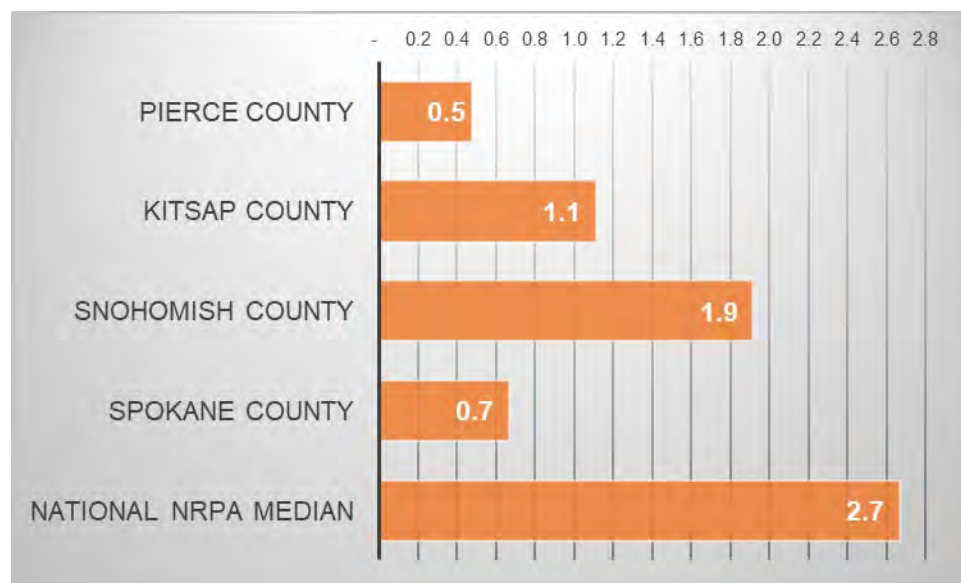
Exhibit 4-30. Playgrounds per 1,000 Unincorporated Population 2019



Source: Provider Plans; BERK, 2019.

Specialty facilities, such as dog parks, are in high demand. As illustrated in Exhibit 4-31, Pierce County has a lower rate of dog parks than compared counties, and when compared nationally.

Exhibit 4-31. Dog Parks per 100,000 Unincorporated Population 2019



Note: The NRPA rate is based on residents per square mile of 500 to 1,500 (Pierce County's population density is approximately 522 per square mile based on OFM data for 2018).

Source: Provider Plans; NRPA Performance Review, 2019; BERK, 2019.

2. Performance Measurement

Both a minimum and target rate of facilities are described below.

- The minimum LOS is based on the County's adopted Fiscal Policy and Park Impact Fee, which identifies an "investment per capita" that allows the park system to provide at least the same LOS per resident as population grows as was in place when the policy was adopted in 2016.
- The target rate provides a rate of service that Pierce County Parks aspires to meet through grant funding, donations, and partnership opportunities with the goal of providing a park system that is 20% above the current rate of developed parks, trails, open space, sports courts and fields, and family activities

The facility types measured were chosen based on public feedback about the park system. This feedback tells us that people value developed parks, open space, trails, sport courts and fields, and family activities. These are elements that should be found throughout the park system.

The categories selected are broad and include many different specific uses and park amenities. Before developing or improving a park, a public process, usually a master plan, determines the exact uses, amenities, and other improvements that will be included in a park.

Open space rate calculations consider only open space properties held by Pierce County Parks. For a more complete description of open space, see Chapter 9, Open Space Plan.

Water access and special use facilities are also prioritized, but because they require special placement, partnerships, or sponsorships, a LOS has not been established for these facilities. Instead, these facilities should be located in areas that make the most sense based on safety and public interest. This section provides guidance on placement of those facilities. As with other facility types described above, master planning would determine water access and special uses. For example, special uses could vary between a disc golf course and a dog park, depending on community preferences determined during master planning.

Minimum Level of Service (LOS)

A Level of Service (LOS) refers to the amount and quality of parks and recreation facilities provided that fit a community's vision and resource. LOS policies or standards are locally established and vary by jurisdiction. The County's adopted Minimum LOS is based on a minimum investment per capita.

Investment: Invest in the system at a similar rate per capita as current residents enjoy and ensure that the current system can be improved to meet demand for parks and recreation caused by new growth. Pierce County Code (PCC) 4A.10.130 directs this rate to be adjusted annually based on the cost of construction and every five years based on a revaluation of the park system, and as such, this rate is anticipated to change over time.

Target Rate

Pierce County Parks establishes a target rate of facilities as a guiding measure to improve the park system beyond the adopted minimum LOS by leveraging existing revenues with other opportunities, such as grants and donations, thus increasing the investment per capita through indirect sources.

The target per capita investment is based on the estimated percent increase in funding needed to achieve the system improvements identified in Chapter 5, Capital Improvement Action Plan, which are based on the needs identified in this chapter. The percentage increase in per capita investment is then applied to each of the facility measures to reach a target facilities rate.

Investment: Increase the per capita investment by 20%, the same percentage as is anticipated in additional system investment via grants and donations.

Facility Types: Provide new capacity for the following facilities at the same rate as is targeted for investments, 20%. Exhibit 4-32 identifies the base and target facility rates based on facilities per 1,000 population. The base rate is the rate of facilities in 2019 and the target rate is the base rate plus 20 percent.



A comparison of the rate of facilities currently provided as guiding measures in the minimum LOS and target rate based on the goal to increase the rate of facilities by 20% is provided in - Exhibit 4-32.

Exhibit 4-32. Comparison of Park, Trail, Open Space, and Facility Current and Target Rate

Description	Current Amount	Current Rate	Target Rate
		2019 Population	20% increase
Unincorporated Population	See right	420,000	NA
Developed Park Acres	2,344 acres	5.6	6.7
Open Space Acres	2,636 acres	6.3	7.5
Trail/Walking Path Miles	41.2 miles	0.10	0.12
Sport Courts and Fields	71.5 count	0.17	0.20
Family Activities	30 count	0.07	0.09

Sources: Pierce County Parks, 2019; 2013-2017 American Community Survey by census block, 2019 Washington State Office of Financial Management; BERK 2019.

LOS Applied

If the County were to achieve the minimum LOS and target rate to serve the expected population growth from 2020-2030 (approximately 22,257), the resulting need would include the mix of facilities, acres, and miles identified in Exhibit 4-33.

Exhibit 4-33. Current and Target Rate Applied to Growth 2020-2030

Type	Current Rate	Target Rate*	Unit – Rounded	Overall Minimum Need	Overall Target Need
Developed Park Acres	5.6	6.7	Acres	124	149
Open Space Acres	6.3	7.5	Acres	140	168
Trail and Walking Path Miles – Developed Rate	0.10	0.12	Miles	2	3
Sport Courts and Fields	0.17	0.20	Number	4	5
Family Activities	0.07	0.09	Number	2	2

*Per capita amount is based on the minimum amount multiplied by 20%. Rate is calculated in Units per 1,000 population and reflects progress toward the average rate of benchmarked communities. Target rates are rounded up to the whole number.
Source: BERK, 2019.

3. Measuring Special Uses

Water Access

Public input identified water access as a high priority. Pierce County includes more than 1,100 miles of saltwater, lake, and river shorelines; however, these shoreline resources are not found in each region.

Pierce County has a significant need for additional boat ramps for both motorized and human-powered watercraft. The majority of boat ramps in the unincorporated area are located at public road ends and lack adequate parking, restrooms, garbage disposal, and other infrastructure necessary for the boating public. Opportunities to further develop these existing County boat launch sites should be evaluated and pursued, if feasible. Identifying new locations for launches into saltwater is a challenge in the County due to the railroad along the east shoreline of Puget Sound. Pierce County is currently partnering with City of Tacoma and the Port of Tacoma in developing a new boat launch facility in the vicinity of the Thea Foss Waterway in the City of Tacoma. Additional opportunities for new boat launch locations should be explored and pursued, when feasible. Specifically, Chambers Creek Regional Park and the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife property adjacent to the City of Sumner's wastewater treatment plant, should be evaluated for feasibility.

Due to cold saltwater temperatures, tides, and glacier-fed rivers, water access can pose a risk. Shoreline access to accommodate recreational swimming should only be provided in locations where it can be done safely. Because of these risk factors, water access was not included in the LOS. Instead, Pierce County determines the appropriate type of water access facilities at existing and new sites as they are developed and provides amenities for water access where it is safe to do so based on anticipated use and where information can be provided to boaters, swimmers, and other users about the skill-level needed to access the site.

Specialty Facilities

Specialty facilities are unique uses that often require special care and management and that often have a regional appeal such as community centers, ice rinks, golf courses, and alternative sports facilities. These facilities are provided when there is a partnership opportunity with a group interested in locating the facility and in an area appropriate for that facility. For example, Pierce County Parks currently provides a BMX track in partnership with River Valley BMX and a disc golf course in partnership with Pierce County Disc Golf Players Association at Riverside Park in Sumner. These specialty activities are the primary users of the park and Pierce County provides minimal services to the property.

These facilities are only be provided when partnerships are in place for the ongoing maintenance of the facility or when revenues can be generated by the facility, such as the ice rink at Sprinker Recreation Center or Chambers Bay Golf Course. Additionally, property

appropriate to the activity must be available, and the specialized use of the property cannot create conflicts with other users.

Summary of Findings for “How Much?” Category

The following are the key findings for the “How Much?” category that can be combined with findings from “What?” and “Where?” to understand needs within the Pierce County park system.

- Pierce County provides parks and trails at a lower rate than peer communities.
- Pierce County’s adopted minimum LOS is based on investment per capita. A rate of facilities can be used to measure progress on maintaining the current level of facilities. A target rate of a 20% increase in investment per capita and rate of facilities provided has been identified based on the goal of receiving a 20% match to capital funds through grants and donations.
- The facility types measured are those that are most-used and most-desired by residents including: developed park acres, trail miles, open space, sports fields and courts, and family activities.
- Water access is not included in the target, because it is site specific and should only be provided where it can be done safely. Special uses are not included in measurements, because they require partnerships for establishment and maintenance. While these uses are in high demand and should be prioritized, their measurements should be qualitative, not quantitative.

SUMMARY

Overall Findings

The following summarizes countywide findings from the Demand and Needs Assessment Chapter. Findings by region are summarized in the next section.

- Regional trails, family activities, open space, and water access are Pierce County residents’ top priorities for park facilities.
- Pierce County has a lower rate of parks and trails than peer communities.
- Parkland, Spanaway, Midland, South Hill, and Frederickson are expected to receive the majority of population growth in 2020-2030.
- Investments in walking and hiking facilities should be prioritized, especially in urban areas where population is concentrated, because walking is a high participation activity for all ages.



Findings, Needs, and Opportunities by Region

The following summarizes findings, needs, and opportunities specific to each region. These findings will guide the types of investments made in the Pierce County park system in Chapter 5, Capital Improvement Action Plan.

Central Region

Findings

- Pierce County Parks is the primary provider in the Central Region, as most of the population is unincorporated.
- Parkland, Spanaway, and Midland are expected to experience the second greatest population growth and housing densities, which is likely to lead to a greater demand for developed parks, trails, and open space.
- The Central Region has the greatest need based on age, income, health, and race.
- The Central Region has the highest population of the regions and the lowest rate of developed park acres, as well as the lowest rate of trail miles and open space.

Needs

- Developed park acres, trails, and open space are needed in the urban areas.
- Spanaway Regional Park is an important regional facility located in the Central Region. Continued investments in preservation and capacity improvements to the park are important.
- Walking and hiking facilities to serve urban areas are needed. The Central Region has the lowest share of population located within walking distance to parks.

Opportunities

- Water access opportunities are currently provided at Spanaway Lake and should continue to be preserved and improved to serve existing and future populations.

North Region

Findings

- The North Region is served by municipal providers and has the lowest unincorporated population of all regions. Pierce County Parks is the primary provider for unincorporated areas.
- The Bonney Lake Plateau will experience the majority of unincorporated growth in the North Region.



- The North Region has the greatest number of overall park acres and trail miles, as well as the highest rate of developed park acres and trail miles per population.

Needs

- Family activities and sports courts/fields are needed.
- Foothills Trail is an important regional facility in the North Region. Pierce County Parks should continue to invest in preserving and expanding the trail to serve residents in all regions.

Opportunities

- The North Region has a large amount of properties classified as Resource Conservancy Lands without public access. Pierce County Parks will identify opportunities to open access and provide passive recreation opportunities, such as trails and picnic areas.
- Water access opportunities at Riverside Park and North Lake Tapps Park should be preserved and improved to serve existing and future populations. Additional opportunities for water access along streams and rivers and should be explored if it can be provided safely.

South Region

Findings

- Pierce County Parks is the primary provider in the South Region, as most of the population is unincorporated.
- South Hill and Frederickson are expected to experience the greatest population growth and housing densities, which is likely to lead to a greater demand for developed parks, trails, and open space.
- The South Region has the second-highest unincorporated population of the regions and the second lowest rate of developed park acres and of open space, and lowest rate of trail miles.
- Opportunities for water access in the South Region includes lakes, rivers, and streams. Parks and trails which provide access to these shorelines may be pursued when properties become available.

Needs

- The urban areas of the South Region need developed park acres, trails, and open space.
- Investment in walking and hiking facilities to serve these communities is needed.
- As population continues to grow over the next decade, eventually there will be additional need for sport courts/fields in the urban area.

West Region

Findings

- The West Region is primarily served by cities and parks districts and has the second-lowest unincorporated population, which is mostly located in rural areas.

Needs

- Chambers Creek Regional Park is an important regional facility, and continued investments in this facility are important to serve all regions.

Opportunities

- The West Region has the most opportunities for saltwater access to serve all regions.

Data Summary by Region

The tables below summarize the data findings by topic, by region, and countywide. Regions illustrating the highest or lowest characteristics are identified with a cell border. Findings are bulleted with each table.

- The Central Region has a higher share of housing and population today and is planned for the second highest share of housing units by 2030.
- The South Region has the highest share of future housing unit growth by 2030.

Exhibit 4-34. Summary Population and Housing by Region

Feature	West Region	North Region	South Region	Central Region	Countywide
Total Population 2017 US Census	298,921	163,907	130,579	251,786	845,193
Incorporated Population	227,430	105,957	2,950	110,080	446,417
Unincorporated Population	71,491	57,950	127,629	141,706	398,776
Share of Unincorporated Population	18%	15%	32%	36%	100%
Unincorporated Households 2018: Share of 157,854 households	19%	15%	32%	34%	100%
Unincorporated Housing Unit Growth: 2018-2030; share of 13,977 housing units	<1%	16%	46%	39%	100%

Source: BERK, 2019.

- The West Region has a higher share of persons over 65 years old.
- The Central Region has the highest share of persons under 18 years old, the highest share of persons of color, and the highest share of low-income households.

**Exhibit 4-35. Summary Demographics by Region**

Demographic Feature	Region West	Region North	Region South	Region Central	Countywide
65 years +: Percent of County Population in Census Blocks Exceeding 13.9% County Average Age 65 Years +	19.0%	6.6%	3.6%	9.7%	39.0%
< 18 Years: Percent of County Population in Census Blocks Exceeding 22.2% County Average under 18 years Old	14.6%	12.9%	12.3%	18.1%	57.9%
Persons of Color: Percent of County Population in Census Blocks Exceeding County Average of 32.1% Persons of Color	16.4%	2.1%	5.0%	21.9%	45.4%
Low-Income Percent of County Households: Population in Census Blocks with Median Household Income Less than 80% Area Median Income (\$52,414)	10.8%	2.3%	1.2%	12.3%	26.6%

Source: BERK, 2019.

- The Central Region has a high number of census tracts with high BMIs for both adults and teenagers, and a higher rate of mortality from cardiovascular diseases. The West Region has the second-highest number of census tracts with similar conditions.

Exhibit 4-36. Summary Health Indicators by Region and Countywide

Demographic	West Region	North Region	South Region	Central Region	Countywide
Census Tracts	62	33	24	52	171
BMI – 20+ years old: Census tracts with greater BMI than State (> BMI 26.32)	30	25	22	48	125
BMI – 20+ years old: Census tracts with greater BMI than level considered overweight (>BMI 24.9) ¹	61	33	23	52	169
BMI – 16-19 years old: Census tracts with greater BMI than State (>BMI 22.94)	28	16	18	45	107
BMI – 16-19 years old: Census tracts with greater BMI than level considered overweight (>BMI 24.9) ¹	1	0	0	4	5
Cardiovascular Mortality – rate per 100,000 persons greater than State (>188.24)	37	25	22	42	126
Cardiovascular Mortality – rate per 100,000 persons greater than Pierce County (>241.89)	16	13	14	25	68

Notes: 1 Per the NIH National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, a BMI of 25-29.9 is considered overweight. Levels above 30 are considered obesity. (NIH National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, 2019)

Sources: ACS, 2013-2017; BMI, Washington Tracking Network, Washington State Department of Health, June 2015;

Cardiovascular, Washington Tracking Network, Washington Department of Health, 2018.BERK, 2019.

Source: BERK, 2019.

- The South Region has the smallest share of total park acres and lowest rate of total acres per 1,000 population, and the second-lowest rate of developed park acres per 1,000 population.
- The Central Region has the lowest rate of developed park acres per 1,000 population and second-lowest total park acres per 1,000 population.
- The South and Central regions also have low rates of trails and walking paths and low rates of open space acres per 1,000 population.

**Exhibit 4-37. Summary Distribution of Facilities by Region**

Pierce County Parks Facilities Share and Distribution	Region West	Region North	Region South	Region Central	Countywide
Park Acres	944	2,754	696	838	5,233
Share of Total Pierce County Parks Acres	18%	53%	13%	16%	100%
Rate of Park Acres per 1,000 Population Unincorporated 2017	13.2	47.5	5.5	5.9	13.1
Park Acres Developed	844	702	393	405	2,344
Share of Developed Park Acres	36%	30%	17%	17%	100%
Rate of Developed Park Acres per 1,000 Population Unincorporated 2017	11.8	12.1	3.1	2.9	5.9
Trail and Walking Path Miles Developed*	7.4	22.8	5.0	6.0	41.2
Share of Trail and Walking Path Miles	18%	55%	12%	15%	100%
Rate of per 1,000 Population Unincorporated 2017	0.10	0.36	0.04	0.04	0.10
Trail Miles Developed*	0	21.0	2.4	—	23.4
Share of Trail Miles	0%	90%	10%	0%	100%
Rate per 1,000 Population Unincorporated 2017	0	0.36	0.02	—	0.06
Open Space Acres: Resource Conservancy and Regional Resource Conservancy	140	1,945	299	253	2,586
Share of Open Space Acres	5%	75%	11%	10%	100%
Rate of Open Space Acres per 1,000 Population Unincorporated 2017	2.0	33.6	2.3	1.8	6.5

Source: BERK, 2020. * Trail and Walking Path Miles are calculated using mileage from all trail types: Regional, Connector, and Intrapark. Trail Miles are calculated using mileage from only Regional and Connector trails.

- The Central Region has the lowest share of population in the urban area with access to parks by walking.
- The North Region has the lowest share of population in the urban area within a one-mile drive of developed parks.
- Because Pierce County Parks facilities in the West Region are located either in cities or in rural areas, there are no unincorporated urban area populations in proximity to Pierce County Parks.

**Exhibit 4-38. Population (2017) within One-Mile Driving or Safe Walking Distance of a Developed Pierce County Park**

Regions	West	North	South	Central	Countywide
Total Population 2017	298,921	163,907	130,579	251,786	845,193
Unincorporated Population 2017	71,491	57,950	130,579	142,521	402,541
Unincorporated <u>Urban</u> Population 2017	8,090	19,003	86,686	101,284	215,063
Urban Share within 1-mile driving 2017 ¹	0% ²	32%	67%	50%	53%
Urban Share within 1-mile walking 2017 ¹	0% ²	27%	27%	7%	16%
Urban Share within 0.25-mile walking 2017 ¹	0% ²	21%	13%	7%	10%

Notes: ¹ Calculated based on actual routes on existing roads and sidewalks, not as the crow flies.

²The unincorporated Urban population in the West Region is not located near Pierce County Parks facilities.

Source: PPW, 2015; Pierce County Parks, 2018; BERK, 2019.



OVERVIEW

The Pierce County Parks Capital Improvement Action Plan is designed to meet the needs of a diverse and growing population for the next ten years, 2020-2030. In this chapter, funding and partnership resources are identified which marry projected funding to meet the needs identified in Chapter 4, Demand and Needs Assessment and established park policies. This chapter includes:

- Revenue Sources
- Guiding Principles and Priorities
- 2020-2030 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

REVENUE SOURCES

This section discusses Pierce County's revenues dedicated to the park system and potentially applicable to capital improvements. These funding sources are dedicated to parks, either through statutory requirements (Park Sales Tax and Park Impact Fees), or by County policy (Second Real Estate Excise Tax [REET2]) and Washington State Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax (MVFT). Grants are also typically designated to specific park-related capital projects.

General Fund

The General Fund receives undesignated revenues which can be used for any appropriate County purpose. This fund finances the majority of the traditional services associated with County government, such as law enforcement, the judicial system, parks, recreation programs, and general governmental services. Pierce County Parks utilizes these funds mainly for operations, maintenance, and administration. Pierce County Parks currently receives about 3% of the County's General Fund.

Fees and Permits

Pierce County Parks collects fees for some recreational programs, events, and activities. Fees generated go into the General Fund and offset expenses as part of the Department's General Fund allocation.

Park Sales Tax

In September 2000, Pierce County voters approved a sales and use tax equal to one-tenth of 1% to be used for parks, accredited zoos, aquariums, and wildlife preserves. Park Sales Tax receipts are allocated 50% for the Zoo/Trek Authority Board and 50% for the cities and Pierce County Parks. The cities/county portion is distributed between 23 cities, four park districts, and the county in shares proportionate to the most recent state certified population figures. These funds can be used for financing, acquisition, capital construction, administration, maintenance, and operations. Park Sales Tax funds cannot be used to replace or supplant existing capital funding per the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 82.14.400.

Park Impact Fees

Impact fees are a one-time charge on new residential development to ensure that growth pays for its fair share of the park system. Park Impact Fees must be used to add capacity to the park system and must be expended within 10 years of collection. Park Impact Fees were established in Pierce County in 1996 (Ordinance 96-122s). Between 1996 and 2016, Park Impact Fees remained stagnant while population grew tremendously. In 2016, an increase to the Park Impact Fee brought funding to a level that could sustain Pierce County's park system at its 2016 level (Ordinance 2016-51s). The current fee is based on investment per capita. The new Park Impact Fee rate was phased in and reached the full rate in July 2018. Pierce County Code, Chapter 4A allows for annual inflationary adjustments of the rate to ensure the fee keeps pace with inflation and a revaluation of the fee every five years based on the park system's value.



Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax (MVFT)

As of July 1, 2016, the State levies 49.4 cents per gallon on motor vehicle fuel under RCW 82.36.025. A portion of the collected tax is distributed to counties. In 2019, Pierce County received approximately 7.5% of the statewide MVFT revenues (\$11,232,179 estimated). Counties and cities are required per RCW 47.30.050 to spend a minimum of 0.42% of their gas tax receipts on paths and trails. In Pierce County, the majority of the MVFT goes to Planning and Public Works (PPW) to provide sidewalks and bike routes on roads. Pierce County distributes 3% of its MVFT allocation to Pierce County Parks. Pierce County Parks uses its allocation of MVFT for trail maintenance.

Real Estate Excise Tax 2 (REET2)

A real estate excise tax (REET1) is levied on all real estate sales in Pierce County. All cities and counties may levy one-quarter of 1% of the full sale price of real estate (RCW 82.45). Cities and counties that are planning under the Growth Management Act (GMA) have the authority to levy a second one-quarter of 1% excise tax, REET2, pursuant to RCW 82.46. Pierce County initially imposed REET2 through Ordinance No. 2001-99s with an effective date of January 1, 2002. Counties can collect REET2 revenues only on transactions in the unincorporated area of Pierce County. Currently, Pierce County allocates 75% of REET2 to transportation projects and 25% for park and recreation projects. All REET2 funds must be used for capital projects specified in the Capital Facilities Plan. Pierce County has determined that 25% of REET2 funds should be spent on planning, construction, reconstruction, repair, rehabilitation, or improvement of parks.

Conservation Futures Fund

Conservation Futures is funded through property tax revenue. The State permits a levy of up to 6.25 cents per \$1,000 assessed value (RCW 84.34.230). Pierce County charges approximately 4.44 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value countywide. In 2018, this equated to about \$4.49 million in revenue. Conservation Futures funds are used to acquire interests in open space, habitat areas, wetlands, and farm, agricultural, and timberlands throughout Pierce County. A portion of the funds may be used for maintenance of Conservation Futures properties. Several Pierce County Parks' properties were acquired and are maintained with Conservation Futures' funds.

Conservation Futures is a revenue source Pierce County Parks, cities, and park districts can use to acquire additional park and trail properties. Because Conservation Futures is a competitive granting program to eligible jurisdictions and organizations countywide, Pierce County must compete for Conservation Futures resources to acquire properties. Once acquired, no more than 25% of Conservation Futures resources can be used to maintain and operate the properties acquired by the County. The County's historic success in being awarded Conservation Futures funding is included in the Grants and



Outside Contributions section below. Conservation Futures funding is discussed further in Chapter 9, Open Space Plan.

Chambers Creek Regional Park Fund

The Chambers Creek Regional Park Fund is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the Chambers Bay Golf Course (currently operated under contract by Kemper Sports Management), and the operation, recreational programming, and landscape maintenance of the recreational properties contained within the Chambers Creek Properties Master Site Plan, as well as landscape maintenance within the Chambers Creek Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant. The site is owned and subsidized by the Sewer Utility division of Planning & Public Works (PPW).

Golf Course Enterprise Fund

The Golf Course Enterprise Fund was created to provide funding for operation of Pierce County golf courses (Ordinance 82-133). Currently, Pierce County Parks owns the Lake Spanaway Golf Course, a 160-acre, 18-hole championship play course, located in Spanaway. Revenue generated from the golf course is used for maintenance and operations. Kemper Sports Management is contracted as the concessionaire of the pro shop and general operations, while maintenance and improvements are done by Pierce County Parks. While Chambers Bay Golf Course is owned by Pierce County, it is not supported under this funding source, because it is funded by the Chambers Creek Regional Park Fund.

Grants & Outside Contributions

Activities, new capital construction, property purchases, and conservation can all be funded through grants. A variety of Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) grant programs are used to leverage funds for the Pierce County park system. Pierce County Parks also utilizes several federal funds, particularly transportation funds and County road funds, to leverage the trail system. Historically, the County has leveraged resources at a rate of about \$1.25 to \$4.80 per capita. Since it is not a secured funding source, outside funding is projected at the moderate point observed from 2006-2018 (\$1.90 per capita). Park Impact Fees can be used as a match for grants, and as such the recent increase in Park Impact Fees may allow for greater success in competing for grants.

Revenue Forecasting

Historic Revenues

Pierce County Parks' revenues have changed over time. Exhibit 5-1 provides a snapshot of Pierce County Parks revenues by fund source over the past 10 years.

Exhibit 5-1. 2008-2018 Revenues by Fund

Year	Park Impact Fees	Park Sales Tax	REET2	MVFT	General Fund	Grants
2008	\$312,795	\$2,473,083	\$1,176,614	\$350,760	\$1,831,333	\$2,477,500
2009	\$213,628	\$2,180,893	\$897,544	\$307,736	\$2,009,669	\$0
2010	\$390,533	\$2,233,733	\$756,697	\$320,425	\$2,183,292	\$1,645,248
2011	\$294,334	\$2,209,732	\$742,670	\$319,911	\$1,998,280	\$1,000,000
2012	\$405,528	\$2,243,654	\$803,708	\$313,006	\$2,368,148	\$0
2013	\$470,871	\$2,504,796	\$1,186,661	\$322,034	\$2,044,821	\$1,116,268
2014	\$416,800	\$2,669,393	\$1,205,528	\$320,181	\$2,077,939	\$397,324
2015	\$548,425	\$2,866,269	\$1,617,099	\$328,827	\$2,072,519	\$557,304
2016	\$609,917	\$3,082,174	\$1,964,381	\$326,155	\$2,374,273	\$1,071,694
2017	\$1,295,414	\$3,348,515	\$2,370,236	\$333,192	\$2,282,037	\$1,547,750
2018	\$3,978,599	\$3,371,849	\$2,728,543	\$348,264	\$2,234,877	\$1,385,042
2019 (est.)	\$3,273,570	\$3,417,030	\$2,600,000	\$406,460	\$2,424,380	\$2,905,000

Note: In 2017-2018, Park Impact Fees increased significantly due to the adoption of a new fee rate, which went into effect in 2017 and reached its full potential in 2018.

Source: Pierce County Parks, 2019.

Revenue Forecasts

Revenue sources used for capital improvements (including preservation) include REET2, Park Impact Fees, and a portion of Park Sales Tax. These funds are referred to as Special Revenue Accounts, because the accounts are dedicated to parks and have restrictions on use. While MVFT can be used for capital improvement funding, it is presently used for trail maintenance and operations.

To understand the fiscal constraints of Pierce County Parks' special revenue accounts, revenue forecasts are developed to assist in project and park system planning. The forecasts are not intended to be precise but represent a reasonable estimate of anticipated revenues. Forecasting revenues allows Pierce County Parks to anticipate upcoming projects for the 2020-2030 CIP.

Estimated future revenues have been projected for the CIP's full 2020-2030 period. Revenues are expressed in year of expenditure dollars (YOE\$).



Generally, the projections are based on a consideration of historic trends and expected growth in population or dwellings (Park Impact Fees), assessed value (REET2), and taxable retail sales (Park Sales Tax). For the purposes of revenue projections, this chapter assumes that the County would grow in a similar fashion to the 2030 Comprehensive Plan targets. If the County were to grow more consistently with recent trends, there could be additional revenues.

Exhibit 5-2 summarizes projected total capital revenues dedicated to park and trail capital projects available over the planning period. Details of the revenue forecast are provided in Appendix E Capital Revenue Projections. The share of funds is shown in Exhibit 5-3.

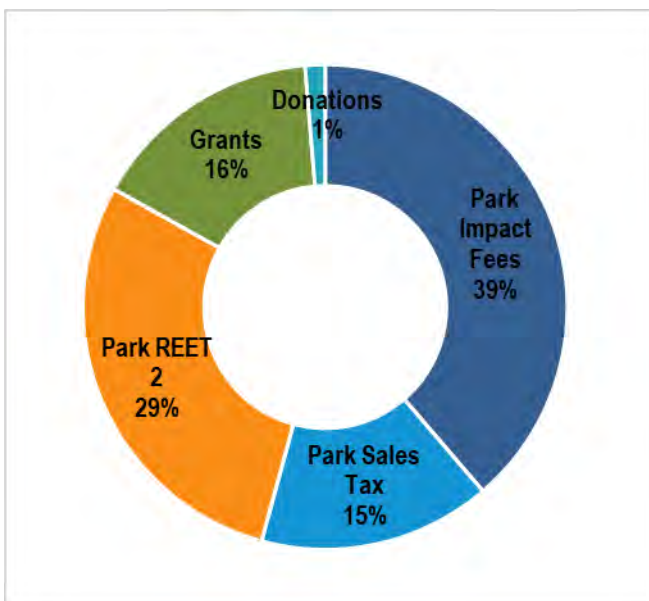
Estimated future revenues for the Conservation Futures Fund are shown separately and found in Chapter 9, Open Space Plan.

Exhibit 5-2. Projected Funds Available for Parks Capital Expenditures: Special Revenue Funds and Grants (2020-2030 in YOE\$)

	2020-2025	2026-2030	2020-2030
Park Impact Fees	\$24,806,000	\$24,127,000	\$48,933,000
REET2	\$16,275,000	\$20,217,000	\$36,492,000
Park Sales Tax	\$7,148,000	\$12,470,000	\$19,618,000
Sum Special Revenues for Capital	\$48,229,000	\$56,814,000	\$105,043,000
Grants	\$10,404,000	\$9,272,000	\$19,676,000
Donations	\$1,683,000	To Be Determined (TBD)	\$1,683,000
Sum of Other Potential Sources	\$12,087,000	\$9,272,000	\$21,359,000
GRAND TOTAL	\$60,316,000	\$66,086,000	\$126,402,000

Notes: All figures rounded to 1,000's and are estimates.
Source: Pierce County Parks, 2019; BERK, 2019.

Exhibit 5-3. Share of Projected Funds



Source: Pierce County Parks, 2019; BERK, 2019.

The revenue projections in Exhibit 5-2 are based on an evaluation of historic trends and changes in the drivers of each revenue type.

- Park Impact Fee projections are based on anticipated housing growth.
- Park Sales Tax projections are based on historic average growth rates of taxable retail sales, and revenues available for capital improvements are determined by projecting forward historic non-capital expenses, such as administration and maintenance needs considering continued growth of the park system.
- REET2 projections are based on historic changes in assessed value and budget information.
- Grant projections are based on historic per capita averages.

The horizon year for the projections is 2030 consistent with the Pierce County Comprehensive Plan. For more details, please see Appendix E, Capital Revenue Projections.

As represented in Exhibit 5-2, Pierce County Parks is forecasted to have approximately \$105 million available for capital funding in special revenue accounts, and if successful with grants and donations, about \$126 million for capital improvements from 2020 to 2030. Capital improvements include new park and trail infrastructure, property acquisitions, and preservation of existing infrastructure.

Special revenues available for both operational and capital purposes, like Park Sales Tax, are opportunities for expense reduction to leave more funds available for capital improvements. This would also fulfill the adopted Fiscal Policy that indicates Park Sales



Tax revenues should be used primarily for capital improvements and preservation of the park system with a portion available, as needed, for operations and maintenance, and that General Fund should be used for administration, maintenance, and operations. For this to be possible, General Fund, MVFT, and other operating funding needs to increase at greater rates than currently allocated.

Pierce County Parks has had variable experience with its share of special revenue accounts used for administration, maintenance, and operations. In the last 10 years (2008-2018) the share was about 40% considering the special revenues projected in Exhibit 5-2 as well as MVFT. From 2014-2018 the share of administration, maintenance, and operations from these funds was lower at 31%.

Additional information about revenue generation opportunities is provided in Chapter 7, Strategic Plan and System Management.

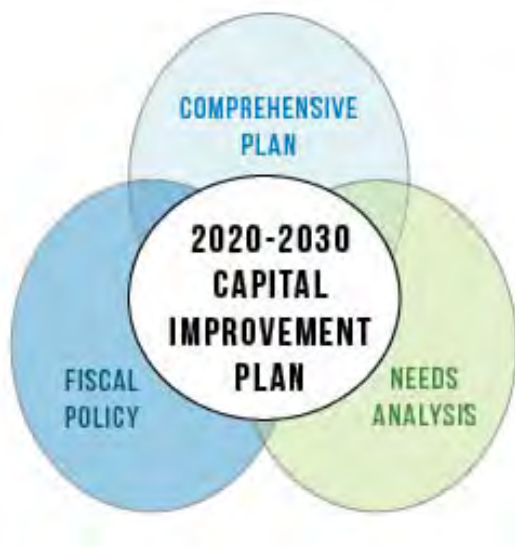
GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES

Chapter 4, Demand and Needs Assessment, identifies needs both countywide and by region. This chapter establishes a 2020-2030 CIP which addresses identified, data-driven needs. The proposed CIP considers current project commitments, funding requirements, capital preservation needs, and partnerships necessary to meet the needs of a growing park system.

The CIP includes near-term (2020-2025) and long-term (2026-2030) capital projects. The plan also identifies those projects that are partially or wholly unfunded in revenue projections. These projects should be prioritized if extra funding is available.

The CIP takes into consideration current and future revenues and restrictions, findings from the Demand and Needs Assessment, Pierce County Comprehensive Plan policies, the Department's Fiscal Policy, and Pierce County Parks' Vision, Mission, and Values as referenced in Chapter 2. Chapter 4, Demand and Needs Assessment, identified a number of conditions and trends which have influenced these plans, as summarized in Exhibit 5-4 and CIP and Level of Service (LOS).

Exhibit 5-4. Relationship of Policies and Findings to C



Guiding principles influence the proposed system recommendations, projects, and priorities. These principles are based on the County's adopted Fiscal Policy and Comprehensive Plan. These guiding principles are used to develop the CIP and to determine projects and phasing.

Fiscal Policy

In 2015, the County Council recognized the Park Impact Fee established in 1996 was too low to support population growth and established an 'Impact Fee Working Group' to consider a new fee rate. The Working Group's task was to, "address the adequacy of the existing fee to meet future demand from growth; recommend a new fee and calculation methodology; recommend capital projects to be realized with the new fee; recommend a potential phasing plan; and, consider the relevance of recreational area dedication associated with new residential development."

In 2016, the working group determined more capital revenues were needed to build facilities on land currently owned by Pierce County Parks. To increase capacity within the urban area or in areas that serve the urban populations, the working group recommended the County Council adopt a Fiscal Policy to provide guidance, direction, and consistency in spending of park revenues. The Fiscal Policy (R2016-115s) establishes the following priorities:



1. Revenues collected through Park Impact Fees should be spent on capacity projects that serve the urban area.
2. Capital projects to increase park capacity should be linked to growth and demand.
3. Revenues collected through Park Impact Fees should be spent as follows: 38% to trails, 32% to existing parks, 30% to new parks. Exhibit 5-5 illustrates the shares dedicated to these project types.

The Fiscal Policy also established a recommended capital project list for Park Impact Fee revenues, which is used to guide development of the CIP. Exhibit 5-6 represents the projects adopted in the Fiscal Policy.

The Fiscal Policy's capital project list is not intended to be precise, but represents a reasonable estimate of potential allocations, costs, revenue generation, and anticipated capacity. The policy guides decisions and determines the projects needed to accommodate growth. Sequencing of projects is based on equity, capacity, funding restrictions, readiness, and, in some cases, the ability to leverage partnerships and matching resources.

Exhibit 5-5. Fiscal Policy: Allocation of Impact Fees by Project Type



Source: Resolution R2016-115s; BERK, 2017.



Exhibit 5-6. Fiscal Policy Capital Project List

FISCAL POLICY: ADOPTED CAPITAL PROJECT LIST (R2016-115S)

Minor changes incorporated to reflect project renaming, as proposed in 2020 PROS Plan

RATIO ESTIMATE	POTENTIAL IMPACT FEE AMOUNT	TOTAL PROJECT COST ESTIMATE	EXAMPLE PROJECT LIST	PRIORITY Near 1-5 YRS Mid 6-10 YRS Long 11-15 YRS	New Capacity % Estimate	Projected # of New Usages	Projected Annual Revenue	Total Annual Maintenance Cost Estimate (# FTEs included in cost estimate)
New Parks (30%)	\$6.1M	\$6.7M	Cross Park – Develop trails, parking, restroom, play area, meeting room, and trailhead as identified in Phase 1 of the park master plan.	Near-term	29%	89,493	\$121,874	\$170,000
	\$6.45M	\$7.2M	Plateau Park (formerly Buckley-Bonney Lake Park) – Develop new park site to include great lawn/open field, picnic & play areas, sports courts, parking & internal circulation, restrooms, and trails. Final park features will be determined through a public outreach process.	Mid-term	21%	106,522	\$36,684	\$480,000
	\$3.3M	\$3.7M	Orangethicket Park – Develop new park site to include playground, walking trails, play area, trailhead for Pipeline Trail, parking and restroom. Final park features will be determined through a public outreach process.	Long-term	28%	66,281	\$6,114	\$170,000
New Trails (38%)	\$6.7M	\$7.4M	Pipeline Trail (formerly Cross County Connector Trail) – 5.5 miles of paved multi-use trail.	Near-term	18%	112,646	\$0	\$96,000
	\$1.3M	\$3.4M	Foothills Trail Connections to the Riverwalk Trail and Summer Link Trail - 2.4 miles of trails completing connections to the Riverwalk Trail and Summer Link Trail.	Near-term	8%	49,154	\$0	\$42,000
	\$4.0M	-	Parkland Community Trail (formerly Parkland Urban Core Trail Network) – 1.2 miles of trail network connecting schools and parks.	Mid-term	11%	30,722	\$0	\$53,000
	\$1.4M	-	Regional Trail Partnership with Peninsula Park Districts	Mid-term	TBD	TBD	\$0	Provided by Park District
	\$4.0M	-	South Hill Community Trails – 1.2 miles of trail network connecting schools and parks.	Long-term	12%	30,722	\$0	\$53,000
	\$1.7M	\$2.1M	Trailhead at Half Dollar Park for Pipeline Trail	Long-term	*	*	\$0	\$40,000
New Capacity at Existing Parks & Trails (32%)	\$2.8M	\$10.2M	North Lake Tapps Park – Develop new parking area, playground, waterfront promenade, picnic areas, restroom, and walking trails as identified in Phase 1-3 of the park improvement study.	Near-term	20%	88,854	\$87,146	\$95,000
	\$5.2M	\$7.1M	Sprinkler Recreation Center – Develop new multipurpose softball/soccer field, spray park, 2 basketball courts, playground, walking trails, & picnic areas as identified in Phase 1-4 of the park improvement study.	Near-term	16%	115,492	\$40,253	\$95,000
	\$0.8M	-	Regional Park Partnership with Peninsula Park Districts	Near-term	TBD	TBD	\$0	Provided by Park District
	\$4.95M	-	Heritage Recreation Center – Upgrade 3 soccer fields & 3 baseball fields upgrade to artificial turf to increase the amount of use for are sports teams.	Mid-term	32%	75,833	\$131,466	\$95,000
	\$2.5M	\$4.4M	Frontier Park – Develop new north entrance to park, paved event parking, off-leash dog area, amphitheater, and walking trails as identified in Phase 1-3 of the park improvement study.	Long-term	17%	75,577	\$0	\$95,000
TOTAL	\$51.0M	\$69.6M					\$0.42 M	\$1.48 M

Source: Pierce County Council R2016-115S



The Park Impact Fee is collected for new dwellings constructed in the unincorporated area of Pierce County, including unincorporated areas on the Gig Harbor Peninsula and Key Peninsula, which are served by Metropolitan Park Districts. A portion of these Park Impact Fees are allocated to regional park and regional trail projects located in the Peninsula Metropolitan Park District (PenMet Parks) and Key Peninsula Metropolitan Park District (KeyPen Parks).

The Fiscal Policy also contains policies for the use of other revenues. Park Impact Fees are not intended to provide support for the entire park system, but to address new growth and ensure the system keeps pace with growth by providing new recreational amenities. The adopted Fiscal Policy addresses park revenue accounts, including:

- use and leveraging of existing revenues,
- planning and system management, which addresses how funds should be utilized to provide maximum service to the greatest number of people, and
- cost efficiency measures which are intended to reduce costs and generate revenues and partnerships to further leverage the system.

The proposed 2020-2030 CIP prioritizes adding capacity by extending new trails, adding capacity at existing parks, and adding new parks in that order.

Applying Pierce County Parks' Values

Pierce County Parks' values influence the proposed system recommendations, design guidelines, and projects and priorities. Along with Pierce County Parks' adopted Comprehensive Plan Policies and the Fiscal Policy, these values can be used to add new projects to the list or to revise phasing as Pierce County Parks updates its CIP, or as measurable objectives to track.

- **Equity:** Ensuring the park system is geographically dispersed, culturally responsive, and inclusive of all peoples and incomes.
- **Accessibility:** Encouraging everyone to use and enjoy the park system in the way that is most accessible, whether by foot, bicycle, transit, boat, or car.
- **Active Lifestyle:** Providing a park system that makes it easy for people to be active year-round. Supporting people in their efforts to maintain and improve their health and well-being.
- **Engagement:** Actively collaborating with the community and providing opportunities for residents to volunteer, learn about sustainability and influence decisions related to the care, growth and use of their park system.
- **Stewardship:** Wisely managing a well-maintained park system for the enjoyment of future generations with complete transparency and accountability in decision-making and practices.



These guiding principles, demand and needs, available resources, and the Fiscal Policy were considered in developing project priorities. Additional guidelines for determining whether projects meet the guiding principles are provided in Exhibit 5-7.

Exhibit 5-7. Values and Prioritization Indicators

Values	Indicators
Equity	- Serves urban areas or large populations. - Improves access or services for users older than age 64 and/or users younger than age 18. - Improves access or services within areas having a higher share of households in poverty or persons of color.
Accessible & Active Lifestyle	- Improves accessibility by multiple modes of transportation. - Leverages existing system, adds developed acres, extends trail miles, or improves usability in multiple seasons. - Improves access or services in locations where health indicators illustrate a need. - Improves access to parks in high-density residential regions.
Stewardship	- Supports Pierce County Parks' Fiscal Policy. - Capital funding could be available. - Long-term sustainable maintenance resources are available. - Revenue generation or cost recovery potential.
Engagement	- Supports Pierce County Parks' Vision and Mission. - Leverages other County plans or priorities. - Reflects public feedback, need, or trend. - Supports long-term engagement (e.g. volunteerism, learning).

Source: Pierce County Parks, 2019; BERK, 2019.

2020-2030 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP)

The 2020-2030 CIP includes a list of priority projects that the County should be able to accomplish in the planning period (2020-2030) based on revenue projections. Those projects receiving full funding are the highest priorities. Those projects with portions unfunded are secondary priorities and should be funded next should additional resources become available.

Exhibit 5-8 illustrates the share of Park Impact Fees expended by project type since 2017, as well as the planned ratio of Park Impact Fee expenditures through 2030, in the pie-chart on the left. Exhibit 5-8 also illustrates the ratio of proposed 2020-2030 capital improvement program expenditures intended for capacity improvements and reservation projects in the pie chart on the right. Estimated project costs included in the CIP should be considered project allocations, as investments shown are based on project estimates completed at different times. Actual project costs are likely to vary from the estimates provided. Most funding would be expended to add capacity to the system, whether at new or existing parks or trails. Those projects identified within the planning period are designed to meet the Vision in Chapter 2, Vision, Goals, and Objectives, and the Level of Service (LOS) standards in Chapter 4, Demand and Needs Assessment.

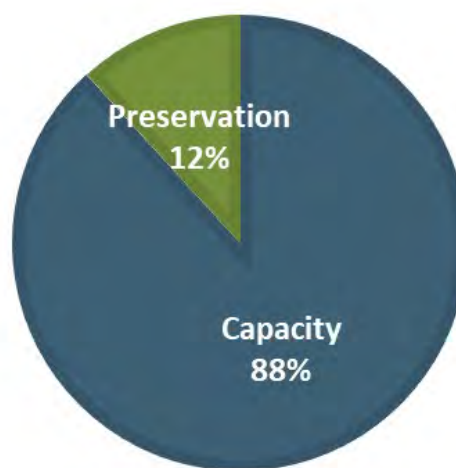


Exhibit 5-8. 2020-2030 CIP by Type

Impact Fee Share by Project Type 2017-2030



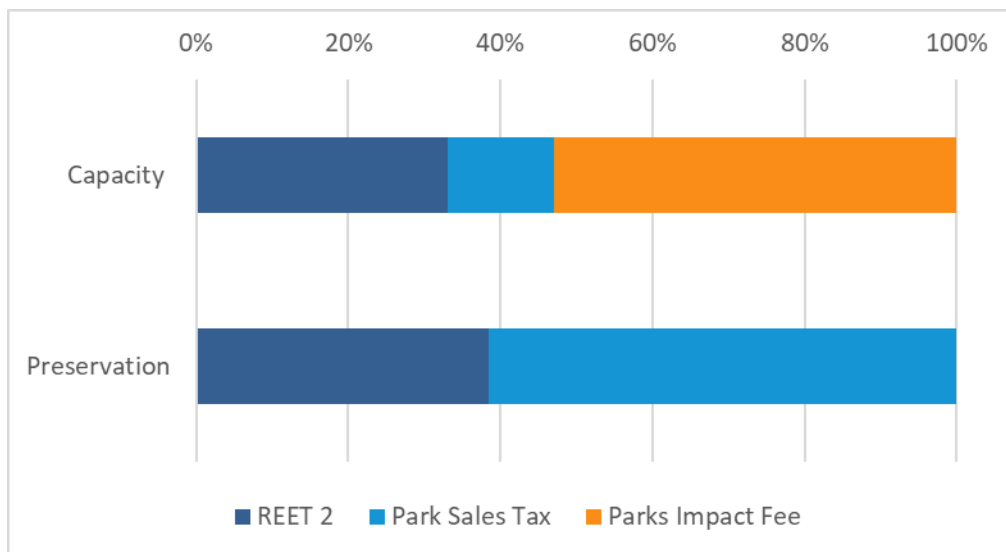
Capacity and Preservation Spending 2020-2030



Source: Pierce County Parks, BERK 2020.

In terms of special revenues, capacity projects are primarily supported by impact fees, as well as REET 2 and Park Sales Tax. Preservation projects are supported by Park Sales Tax and REET 2; see Exhibit 5-9.

Exhibit 5-9. Special Revenue Share 2020-2030 by Type



Source: Pierce County Parks, BERK 2019.

Capacity and preservation projects are planned in relation to the fiscal policy, values, and demand and need results. Projects identified as a Capital Improvement Plan spending priority does not guarantee funding nor create any budgetary obligation or



budgetary commitments on the part of Pierce County. Capital projects identified within the PROS Plan will be considered for funding as a component of Pierce County's Capital Facilities Plan and biennial budget. Detailed maps with capital projects by region are found in Exhibit 5-10 through Exhibit 5-13. A table with projects and costs by region and maps are also found in Appendix F, Capital Improvement Plan Spending Priorities.

Exhibit 5-10. Pierce County Parks 2020-2030 PROS Capital Improvement Project Locations: Central

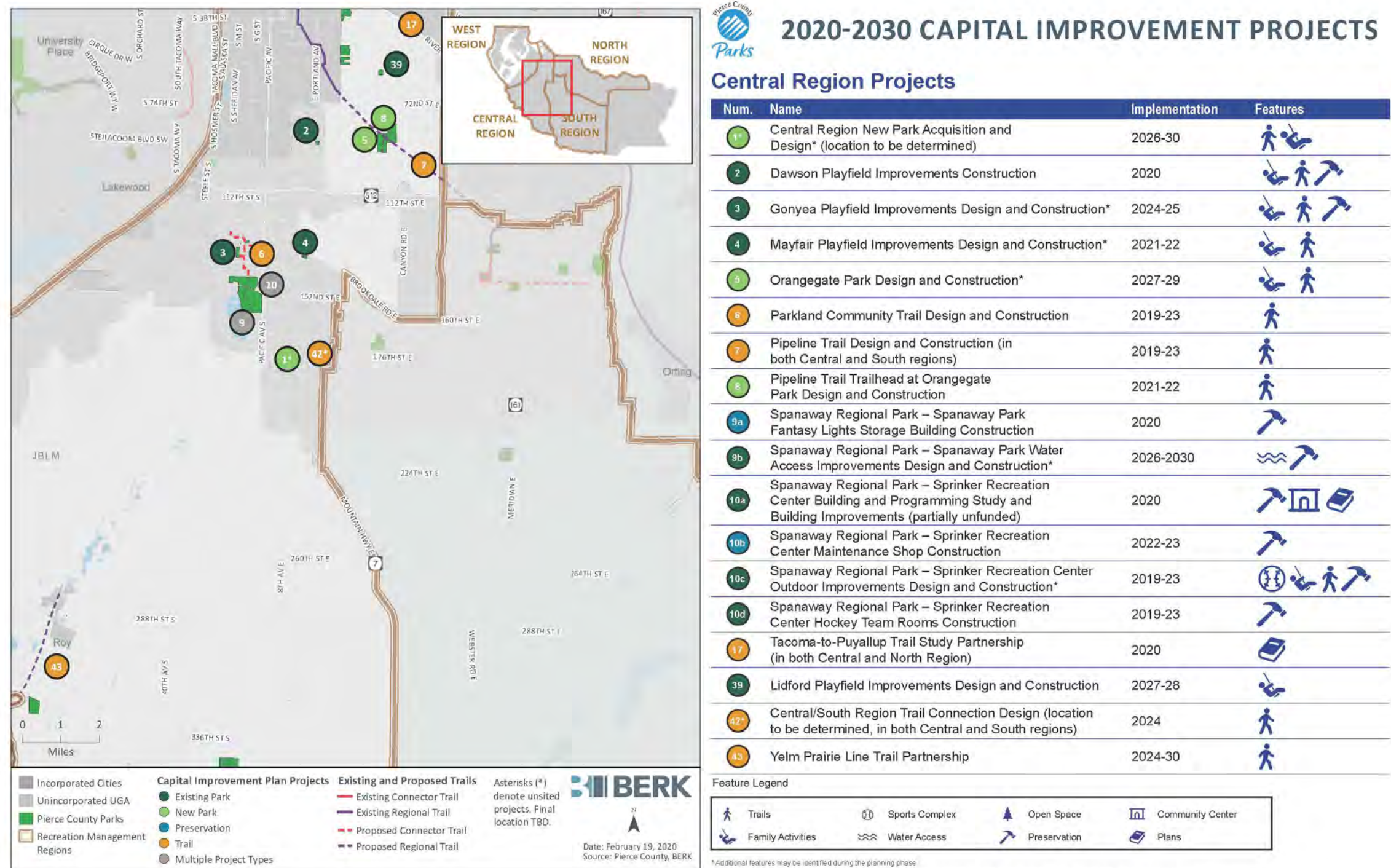
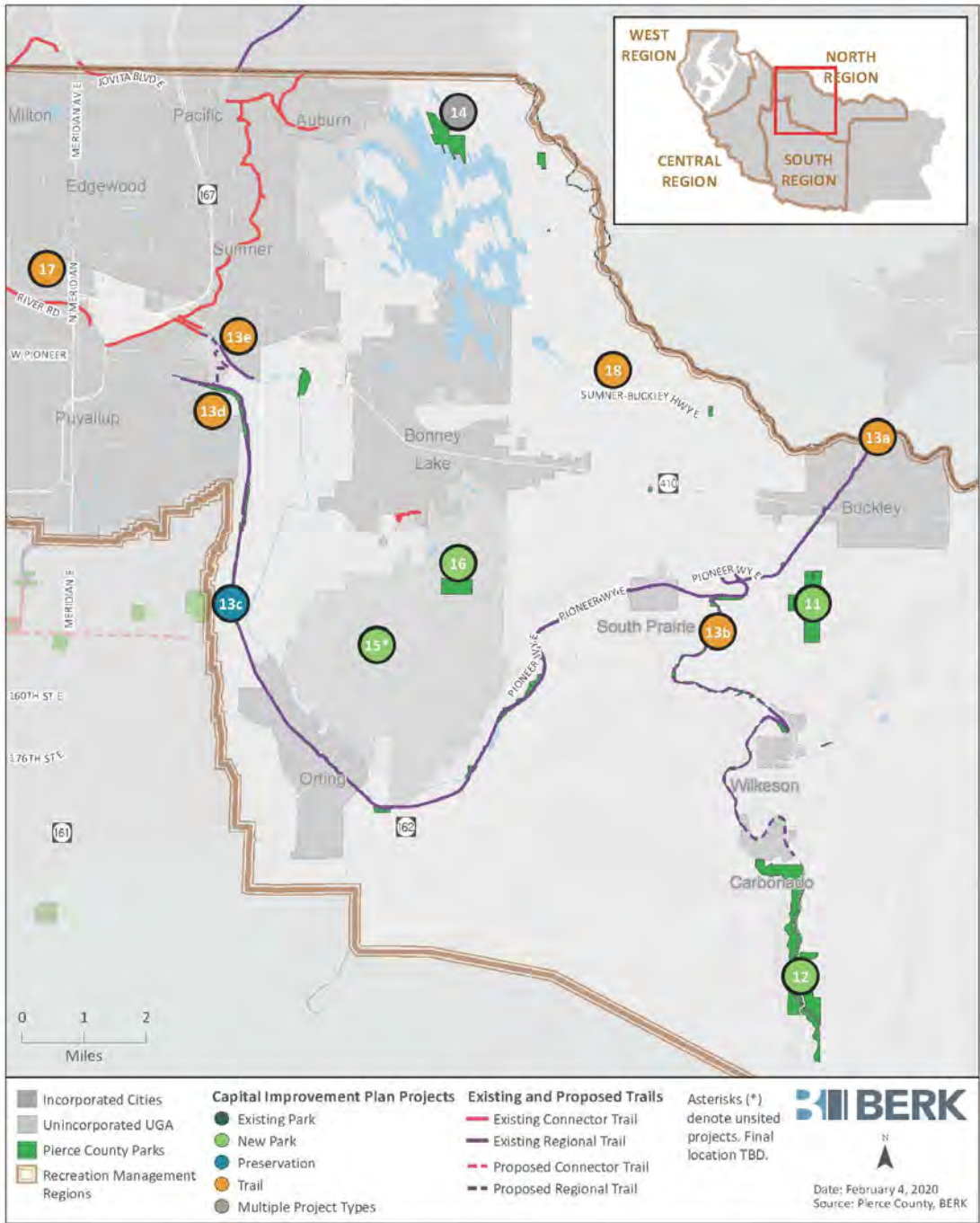


Exhibit 5-11. Pierce County Parks 2020-2030 PROS Capital Improvement Project Locations: North



2020-2030 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

North Region Projects

Num.	Name	Implementation	Features
11	Buckley Forestland Preserve Public Access	2019-21	
12	Carbon River Valley Master Plan	2020	
13a	Foothills Trail - Bridge at White River Construction Partnership with King County	2021	
13b	Foothills Trail – Cascade Junction to Carbonado Extension Design and Construction (partially unfunded)	2020-30	
13c	Foothills Trail – Preservation and Safety Improvements Construction (location to be determined)	2023-25	
13d	Foothills Trail – Puyallup Trailhead Expansion Design and Construction	2021-23	
13e	Foothills Trail – Riverwalk Trail Connection Design and Construction	2029-30	
14a	North Lake Tapps Park – Restroom and Bulkhead Replacement Construction	2019-20	
14b	North Lake Tapps Park – Parking and Water Access Improvements Design and Construction	2022-25	
15*	North Region New Sports Complex Design and Construction (location to be determined)	2028-30	
16	Plateau Park Design and Construction*	2022-26	
17	Tacoma-to-Puyallup Trail Study Partnership (in both Central and North Region)	2020	
18	White River Flume Trail Public Access Design Partnership	2020-21	

Feature Legend

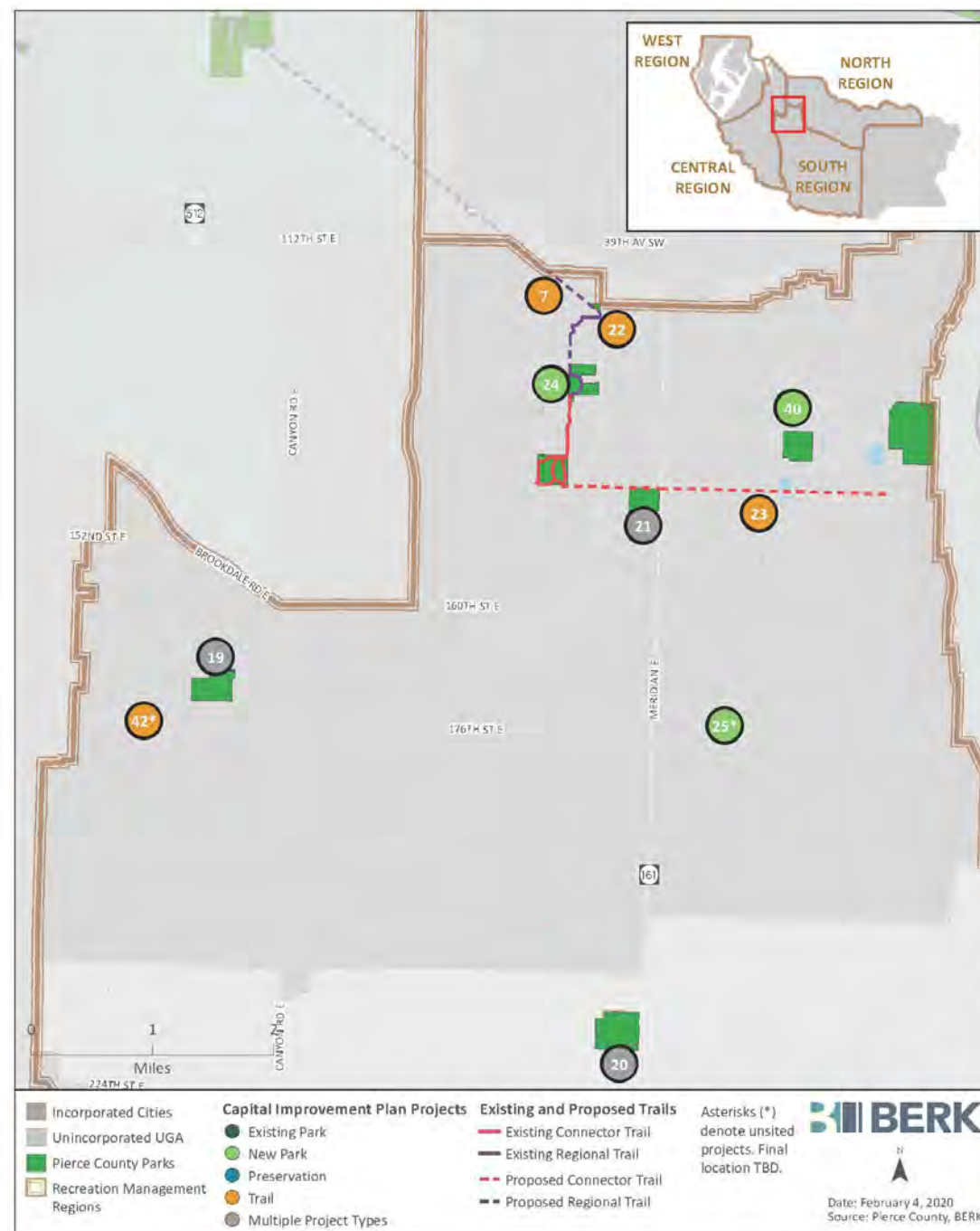
Trails	Sports Complex	Open Space	Community Center
Family Activities	Water Access	Preservation	Plans

*Additional features may be identified during the planning phase.

Note: Special uses may be included based on master plans, community interest, and partnership opportunities. Additional detail can be found in Appendix F.

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.

Exhibit 5-12. Pierce County Parks 2020-2030 PROS Capital Improvement Project Locations: South



2020-2030 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

South Region Projects

Num.	Name	Implementation	Features
7	Pipeline Trail Design and Construction (in both Central and South regions)	2019-23	
18a	Cross Park Phase 1 Construction	2019-20	
18b	Cross Park Phase 2 Design and Construction*	2026-29	
20a	Frontier Park Preservation and Construction including Goat Barn Restoration and Horse Arena Cover	2020-21	
20b	Frontier Park Improvements Design and Construction*	2028-30	
21a	Meridian Habitat Park Community Center Improvements (partially unfunded)	2022-25	
21b	Meridian Habitat Park – Outdoor Improvements Design and Construction	2020-21	
22	Pipeline Trail Trailhead at Half Dollar Park Design and Construction*	2021-24	
23	South Hill Community Trail Design and Construction	2026-30	
24	South Region Turf Ballfields Design and Construction (location to be determined)	2028-30	
25*	South Region New Park Acquisition and Design* (location to be determined)	2026-30	
40	Hopp Farm Park Design and Construction*	2026-28	
42*	Central/South Region Trail Connection Design (location to be determined, in both Central and South regions)	2030	

Feature Legend

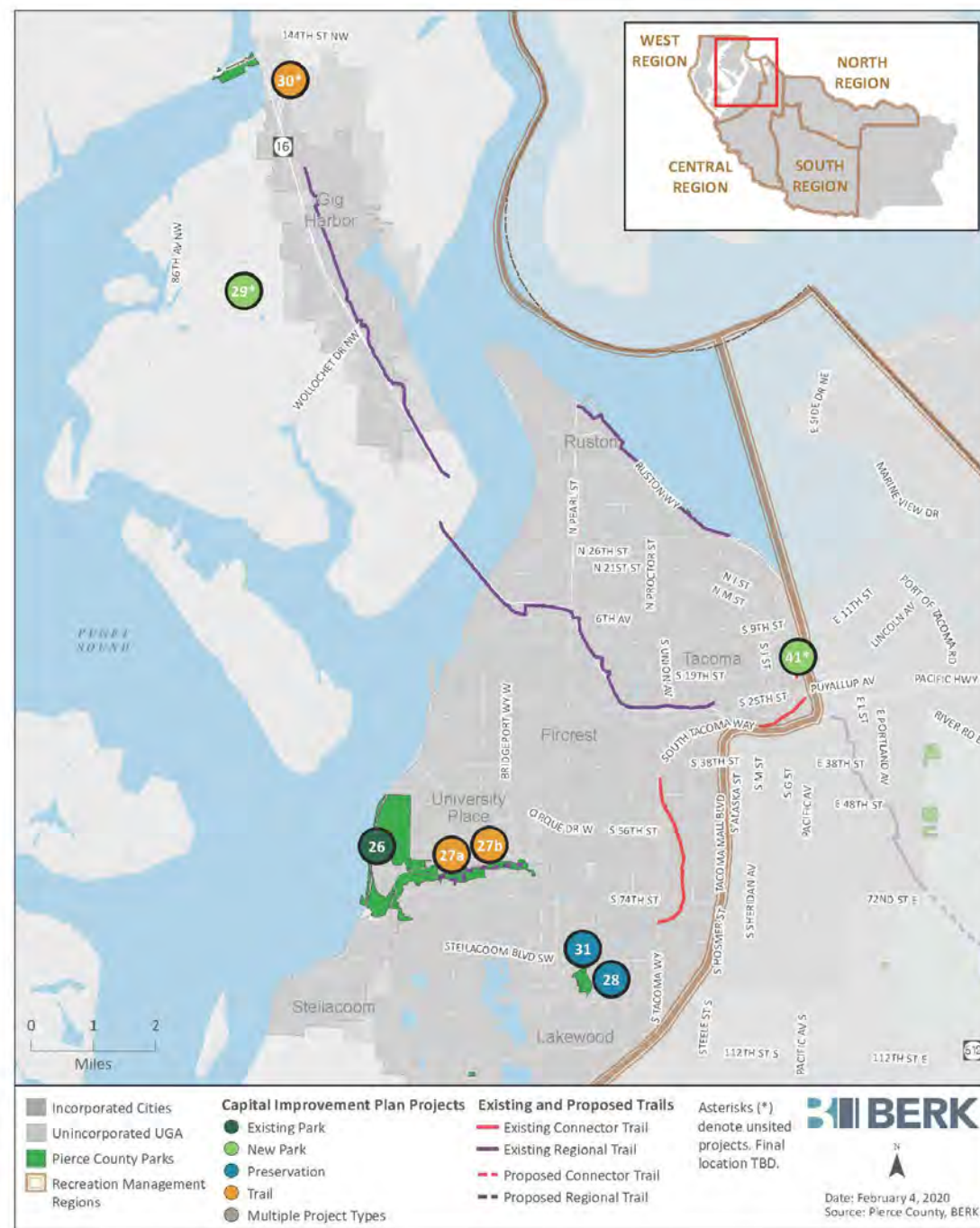
Trails	Sports Complex	Open Space	Community Center
Family Activities	Water Access	Preservation	Plans

* Additional features may be identified during the planning phase.

Note: Special uses may be included based on master plans, community interest, and partnership opportunities. Additional detail can be found in Appendix F.

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.

Exhibit 5-13. Pierce County Parks 2020-2030 PROS Capital Improvement Project Locations: West



2020-2030 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS			
West Region Projects			
Num.	Name	Implementation	Features
26	Chambers Creek Regional Park – Central Meadow Improvements Design and Construction (partially unfunded)	2020-22	
27a	Chambers Creek Regional Park – Chambers Creek Canyon Trail Expansion Design and Construction Phase 1	2019-21	
27b	Chambers Creek Regional Park – Chambers Creek Canyon Trail Expansion Design and Construction Phase 2	2027-30	
28	Lakewood Community Center Building Improvements Construction	2020	
29a	KeyPen/PenMet Park Districts Regional Park Partnership* (location to be determined)	2020-2023	
30a	KeyPen/PenMet Park Districts Regional Trail Partnership (location to be determined)	2027-30	
31	Seeley Lake Park Improvements Construction	2020	
41*	Thea Foss Boat Launch Study	2020	

Feature Legend

Trails	Sports Complex	Open Space	Community Center
Family Activities	Water Access	Preservation	Plans

* Additional features may be identified during the planning phase.
Note: Special uses may be included based on master plans, community interest, and partnership opportunities. Additional detail can be found in Appendix F.
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.

Source: Pierce County Parks, 2020.



System-wide Improvements

System-wide improvements are identified in the CIP that will be implemented at different facilities throughout the park system. Further detail about funding for these projects is found in Appendix F, Capital Improvement Plan Spending Priorities. The following section provides an overview of what these improvements are and how they will be distributed throughout the park system during the planning period.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan Improvements

These improvements are driven by projects identified in the 2017 ADA Transition Plan. ADA projects have been identified as those that can be accomplished as routine maintenance or through the Planned Maintenance Program (PMP), or those that will be capital projects. Projects identified as maintenance are not included in the CIP but are completed using the maintenance budget. Projects that have been identified as capital improvements are scheduled through the CIP as projects are completed within a park, or as their own capital project. For example, when completing improvements at Dawson Playfield in 2020, the ADA improvements will be included in the capital construction project.

Master Plans and Site Feasibility Studies

Master plans and site feasibility studies are completed based on when capital improvements are planned for a property. Generally, a master plan or site feasibility study will take place at least one year prior to planned design and construction.

Master plans are completed through a public process to develop overall park objectives and general site design. While the PROS Plan provides general direction on where investments will be made over time and general categories of the types of facilities that will be included in an improvement, the master planning process works with the users of a site to determine exactly what improvements will be made to a property. As an example, the master plan update for Frontier Park will include coordination with the Pierce County Fair Board so the Pierce County Fair can continue to be successful. Some projects have been identified separately for master plans in the CIP, while others are included in the system-wide budget. Master plans are adopted by the County's legislative body prior to implementation.

Site feasibility studies are completed in preparation for engineering, design, and construction to inform decisions. Generally, site feasibility studies are included in a project-specific budget. If a site feasibility study is needed that was unforeseen in order to accomplish a project, system-wide funding may be used.



Exhibit 5-14 provides a list of master plans or site feasibility studies proposed for the 2020-2030 timeframe. This list includes master plans that are identified as part of a specific project and those that will be funding in the system-wide improvements overall category. Plans are identified as short-term (2020-2023), medium-term (2024-2026), and long-term (2027-2030). Timing is contingent upon site needs, staff capacity, funding availability, and potential partnerships. The specific projects that these funds will be used for will be identified during the adoption of the County's biennial budget.

Exhibit 5-14. Estimated Master Plan and Site Feasibility Study Timeline

Property/Project to be Master Planned/Studied	Anticipated Timeline	Region
Buckley Forestland Preserve	Short-term	North
White River Flume Trail Public Access Partnership	Short-term	North
Plateau Park	Short-term	North
Half Dollar Park and Trailhead	Short-term	South
Orangegate Park and Trailhead	Short-term	Central
Carbon River Valley	Short-term	North
Foothills Trail – Cascade Junction to Carbonado	Short-term	North
Mayfair Playfield	Short-term	Central
Swan Creek Park – Pioneer Way	Short-term	Central
Countywide Open Space Plan	Short-term	System-wide
Hopp Farm	Medium-term	South
Devil's Head	Medium-term	West
Gonyea Playfield	Medium-term	Central
Regional Trail Plan Update	Medium-term	System-wide
PROS Plan Update	Medium-term	System-wide
Chambers Creek Regional Park Master Site Plan	Long-term	West
Cross Park Phase 2	Long-term	South
Shoreline Access Study Partnership	Long-term	System-wide
Frontier Park	Long-term	South
Spanaway Park Water Access Improvements	Long-term	Central
Central Region New Park	Long-term	Central
South Region New Park	Long-term	South

Source: Pierce County Parks, 2020.

Paving Repairs and Replacements

Paving repair and replacement funds are used to provide funding for large paving projects that are likely to exceed routine and planned maintenance budgets. These major repairs are identified by region managers and programmed in the biennial budget, at least one year in advance of construction. Examples of major projects that would use

this funding source include: Sprinker Recreation Center parking lot replacement and major paving repairs to trails.

Picnic Shelters

Picnic shelters in the park system are well-used, as evidenced by high reservation rates. They also generate revenue for the park system. Additional picnic shelters are desired at most park properties. Funding allows picnic shelters that are aging to be replaced, or new shelters to be built, where a need has been identified. Funding may also be used to supplement an existing capital project to add a picnic shelter, if desired. Generally, projects in this category are identified at least one year in advance of fund use to allow for planning, permitting, and construction.

Playgrounds

Playgrounds in the park system are well-used and require regular replacement. These funds may be used to replace or expand existing playgrounds or to provide playgrounds at new parks. This funding may be used as a stand-alone within an existing park, or to supplement funding within a capital project to add or enhance a planned playground. Projects in this category are identified at least one year in advance by capital project managers and region managers.

Signage

Park signage is provided on all properties with public access. Signage needs include park identification, rules, wayfinding, education, and more. Signs are required to be replaced at the end of their useful life or when changes take place. New sign standards for the park system were adopted in 2016, and signs are slowly being replaced as capital projects take place or signs reach the end of their useful life. Generally, this funding is used as part of a large signage project, such as a capital project, or to replace a large grouping of signs, such as wayfinding signs on the Foothills Trail.

Public Access Improvements

Pierce County Parks owns more than 5,200 acres, but less than half of that area is open to the public. Access to open space and nature trails are in high demand by Pierce County residents. Public access improvements at existing and unopened parks will be funded with this system-wide item. Improvements at existing parks, such as Bresemann Forest and Seeley Lake, may include safety and drainage improvements to increase accessibility. Improvements at unopened parks, such as Buckley Forestland Preserve and Carbon River Valley Regional Resource Conservancy, may include vehicle and parking access, restrooms, and footpath construction.



Parks planned for public access are identified in Exhibit 5-15. These properties are currently being considered but could be replaced with other properties if site feasibility shows that it is dangerous or too expensive to add public access improvements. Due to high demand in urban areas and a lower number of unopened properties, Pierce County Parks may consider partnerships with other County departments, agencies or private landowners to improve public access to open space properties, such as those held by other County departments, land conservation organizations, or state and federal agencies. Exhibit 5-15 is based on the ability to meet demand and need, Fiscal Policy, and community partners. Timing is contingent upon site needs, staff capacity, funding, and partnerships.

Exhibit 5-15. Properties Being Considered for Public Access and Anticipated Completion

Property Being Considered for Public Access	Anticipated Schedule	Type of Improvements Being Considered	Region
Lakebay Marina Acquisition Partnership	2020	Access to Puget Sound, boat fueling station, pump out station, infrastructure improvements, boat moorage, concessionaire	West
Seeley Lake	2020	Signage, vegetation trimming, trails, invasive species removal, stormwater improvements	West
Spanaway Regional Park - Bresemann Forest	2020	Signage, vegetation trimming, trails, trail decommissioning, invasive species removal	Central
Orangegate Park	2021	Signage, vegetation trimming, forest management, trails, invasive species removal	Central
Buckley Forestland Preserve	2022	Access road, parking, trails, forest management	North
Meridian Habitat Park	2022	Construct trails per master plan	South
Frontier Park	2023	Construct trails and additional parking	South
Hundred Acre Wood	2023	Access, parking, and trails	South
Parkland Prairie Addition	2023	Trails	Central
Plateau Park	2024	Access, parking, signs, forest management, and trails	North
Mayfair Playfield	2024	Construct trail along Clover Creek	Central
North Lake Tapps Park	2024	Construct trails per master plan	North
Devil's Head	2025	Access, parking, and trails	West
Carbon River Valley Regional Resource Conservancy	2030	Parking, forest management, and trails	North

Source: Pierce County Parks, 2019.



Capital Improvement Plan and Demand and Needs

Many of the improvements in the 2020-2030 Capital Improvement Plan are included to meet needs to grow the park system as population grows as discussed in Chapter 4, Demand and Needs Assessment. Exhibit 5-16 summarizes the key findings from the Demand and Needs Assessment by region and identifies what capital projects will move Pierce County Parks toward meeting identified needs. Needs are shown based on maintaining the current rate of park facilities.

The capital improvements identified in these tables do not include all projects, because some projects are needed to meet other park system needs, such as property management and preservation.

Exhibit 5-16. Parks and Recreation Need Summary and Associated Projects by Region

**A. Central Region**

The Central Region has the lowest rate of developed parks and open space acres and the second-lowest rate of trail miles of all regions. Needs are greatest in unincorporated urban areas of Parkland, Spanaway, and Midland. The Central Region also has the greatest need for facilities based on demographic factors such as poverty, health, age, and race. Pierce County Parks will continue to invest in Spanaway Regional Park. All of the projects identified in the Central Region are located within or serve the urban areas that are experiencing rapid growth and high demand for park and recreation services.

Central Region Needs and Capital Projects Summary								
Population (2017 ACS): 248,836 (110,080 incorporated, 141,706 unincorporated)								
2010-2018 Share of Housing Unit Growth: 21% Anticipated 2020-2030 Share Housing Unit Growth: 39%								
Parks: 838 acres								
Trails: 6 miles								
Other Providers: 3 cities, 1 park district								
Proposed Capital Project Contributing to Meeting LOS								
Project	Regional Facility	Developed Park Acres	Open Space Acres	Trail Miles	Sport Courts /Fields	Family Activities	Water Access	Special Uses
Spanaway Regional Park (SRP) - Sprinkler Recreation Center Outdoor Improvements	X			X	X	X		TBD
SRP - Spanaway Park Water Access Improvements	X						X	
Orangegate Park		X		X	TBD	X		TBD
Dawson Playfield Improvements					X			
Gonyea Playfield Improvements				TBD	TBD	TBD		
Lidford Playfield Improvements						X		
Mayfair Playfield Improvements				X		TBD		
Central Region New Park		X		X	TBD	X		TBD
Central/South Region Trail Connection	X			X				
Parkland Community Trail				X				
Pipeline Trail	X			X				



Yelm Prairie Line Trail Partnership	X			X				
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B. North Region

The North Region has the highest rate of developed parks and trails and the lowest unincorporated population. The North Region lacks family activities and sports courts and fields. Needs are greatest in unincorporated urban areas on the Bonney Lake Plateau. Pierce County should continue to invest in planning and building the Foothills Trail and planning in the Carbon River Valley Regional Resource Conservancy, regional facilities. The projects identified in the North Region will invest in regional facilities, expand and preserve the regional trail system, and provide facilities that are needed in the region, including family activities, sports courts/fields, and improved water access.

North Region Needs and Capital Projects Summary								
Population (2017 ACS): 163,907 (105,957 incorporated, 57,950 unincorporated)								
2010-2018 Share of Housing Unit Growth: 18% Anticipated 2020-2030 Share Housing Unit Growth: 16%								
Parks: 2,754 acres								
Trails: 21 miles								
Other Providers: 12 cities/towns								
Proposed Capital Project Contributing to Countywide LOS								
Project	Regional Facility	Developed Park Acres	Open Space Acres	Trail Miles	Sport Courts /Fields	Family Activities	Water Access	Special Uses
Foothills Trail (FHT) - Cascade Junction to Carbonado Extension	X			X				
FHT – Bridge at White River	X			X				
FHT - Riverwalk Trail Connection	X			X				
FHT - Puyallup Trailhead Expansion	X							
Plateau Park		X		X	TBD	X		TBD
White River Flume Trail	X			X				
Buckley Forestland Preserve		X		X				TBD
North Region New Sports Complex		X			X	TBD		
North Lake Tapps Park Parking and				X		X	X	



Water Access Improvements								
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C. South Region

The South Region has the lowest rate of developed park acres, open space, and trail miles and will need additional sports courts and fields as population grows. Needs are greatest in unincorporated urban areas of South Hill and Frederickson. All of the projects identified in the South Region are located within or serve the urban areas that are experiencing rapid growth and high demand for park and recreation services.

South Region Needs and Capital Projects Summary								
Population (2017 ACS): 130,579 (2,950 incorporated, 127,629 unincorporated)								
2010-2018 Share of Housing Unit Growth: 47% Anticipated 2020-2030 Share Housing Unit Growth: 46%								
Parks: 696 acres								
Trails: 5 miles								
Other Providers: 1 city								
Proposed Capital Project Contributing to Countywide LOS								
Project	Regional Facility	Developed Park Acres	Open Space Acres	Trail Miles	Sport Courts /Fields	Family Activities	Water Access	Special Uses
Cross Park Phase 1		X		X		X		X
Cross Park Phase 2		X		X	TBD	TBD		TBD
Meridian Habitat Park Outdoor Improvements				X		X		
Hopp Farm Improvements		X		TBD		TBD		TBD
Hundred Acre Wood Public Access Improvements		X		X		TBD		TBD
Frontier Park Improvements				X		X		TBD
South Region New Park		X		X	TBD	X	TBD	TBD
Pipeline Trail Trailhead at Half Dollar Park		X		X		TBD		TBD
Pipeline Trail	X			X				
South Hill Community Trail				X				
South Region Turf Ballfields		TBD			X	TBD		

**D. West Region**

The West Region is primarily served by other providers. Pierce County Parks will continue to invest in Chambers Creek Regional Park. No additional specific needs for the West Region were identified. Because Pierce County acts as a regional service provider in the West Region, most of the capital investments identified are focused on partnerships with other providers, preservation of existing facilities, and investments of regional facilities.

West Region Needs and Capital Projects Summary								
Population (2017 ACS): 298,921 (227,430 incorporated, 71,491 unincorporated)								
2010-2018 Share of Housing Unit Growth: 14% Anticipated 2020-2030 Share Housing Unit Growth: <1%								
Parks: 944 acres								
Trails: 7.4 miles								
Other Providers: 8 cities/towns, 4 park districts								
Proposed Capital Project Contributing to Countywide LOS								
Project	Regional Facility ²	Developed Park Acres	Open Space Acres	Trail Miles	Sport Courts /Fields	Family Activities	Water Access	Special Uses
Chambers Creek Regional Park – Chambers Creek Canyon Trail Phase 1	X			X			X	
Chambers Creek Regional Park – Chambers Creek Canyon Trail Phase 2	X			X			X	
KeyPen/PenMet Park Districts Regional Trail Project	X			X				
KeyPen/PenMet Park Districts Regional Park Project	X			TBD	TBD	X	TBD	TBD
Devil's Head Public Access		X		X			X	

Source: Pierce County Parks, BERK, 2020.

Cumulatively, each region contributes to meeting the LOS and provides new developed acres, open space acres, trail/path miles, family activity facilities and sports facilities. See Exhibit 5-17.

**Exhibit 5-17. Capital Improvement Projects and Fit with Target Level of Service Categories
(Counted in Number of Projects, not including TBD)**

	Developed Acres	Open Space Acres	Trail/Path Miles	Sport Courts and Fields	Family Activities	Water Access
Central	2	0	8	2	4	1
North	3	0	7	1	2	1
South	5	0	9	1	4	0
West	1	0	4	0	1	2
Total	11	0	28	4	11	4

Source: Pierce County Parks, BERK 2020.

SUMMARY

In order to provide for the recreation and open space needs of Pierce County residents, Pierce County Parks must develop both a plan for delivering projects to meet those needs and a plan to fund them. This chapter identified Pierce County Parks' revenue sources including taxes, fees and permits, as well as funds received from grants and donations. Forecasting revenues has resulted in a budget-constrained CIP that identifies capital project investments from 2020 to 2030. Projects are prioritized based on available funding, revenue forecasts, adopted policy, and the findings of the Demand and Needs Assessment. Pierce County Parks strives to deliver park services in a cost-effective and efficient manner to those locations and to those people that need them most by implementing the projects identified in this chapter.



6. REGIONAL TRAILS PLAN

OVERVIEW

Pierce County Parks manages about 40 miles of trails and walking paths. Trails offer a lifelong opportunity for people of all ages and abilities to recreate and connect to nature while providing access to parks, schools, services, and cultural destinations. Well-designed, well-connected trails can also serve as non-motorized commuter routes and tourist attractions. Trails enhance the county's economy and make Pierce County a great place to live, work, and raise a family.

Pierce County Parks provides trails both as a part of the regional trail system and as amenities within park facilities. Intrapark trails and walking paths provide access to forests, creeks, and marine and lake environments. These trails, like those in Chambers Creek Regional Park and Spanaway Regional Park, help people to live healthy lifestyles and connect with nature. Regional trails, like the Foothills Trail, make up the spine of a trail system, connecting residents to neighboring towns and counties, giving access to services such as transit, commercial, and community services, and providing alternative transportation options.

Pierce County Parks seeks to expand the regional trail system by adding miles to the existing network, building on jurisdictional partnerships, and finding new opportunities through connections within and outside Pierce County. This expansion is driven by the local knowledge, advocacy, and on-the-ground support brought by local jurisdictions and non-profit trail groups



that are working to guide the development of a strong network of trails serving residents throughout Pierce County.

This Chapter presents the following components of Pierce County Regional Trails Plan, which is an update to the Regional Trails Plan presented in the 2014 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plans:

- Vision
- Program Framework: Guidelines and Partnerships
- Trail Inventory
- Project Prioritization
- Program Improvements

VISION

Chapter 4, Demand and Needs Assessment, identified walking and trail use as the recreational activity most desired by county residents and visitors. In a statistically valid survey conducted in 2013 and in public feedback since, Pierce County residents have consistently identified investment in regional trail and opportunities for walking and hiking as their highest priorities. Pierce County Parks is dedicated to building a system of walking paths, nature trails, and trails that connect parks, schools, cities, and community destinations throughout Pierce County. Access to nature, habitat, and open space are also highly valued. Trails are a valuable way to provide access to properties creating opportunities for people to connect with nature.

The Regional Trails Plan vision supports a robust trails system consistent with public needs and desires and in alignment with adopted Pierce County goals and policies.

GOAL PR-10

Provide a connected system of trails that link communities to parks, open spaces, public facilities, and areas of interest and provide nonmotorized transportation and recreation opportunities.

GOAL PR-17

Provide and enhance connectivity to important county and regional destinations, between multiple jurisdictions, and to neighboring counties.

Regional Trails Plan Vision

Pierce County Parks trail system provides:

- *An accessible and seamless trail network used by people of all ages and abilities.*
- *Practical transportation options.*
- *Opportunities to connect with nature.*



- *Links to parks, open spaces, significant environmental features, public facilities, and areas of interest.*
- *Diverse trail opportunities and experiences including non-motorized transportation, recreation, fitness, connecting with nature, and organized events and races.*
- *Connections to major developed areas and attractions within the County as well as connections to the greater region.*

The vision complements the Washington State Trails Plan goal of “building a connected network to accommodate use within neighborhoods, connecting communities together, and providing access to the backcountry and wilderness areas.”²

Pierce County Park’s Regional Trails Plan seeks to coordinate with federal, state, local, and tribal recreation providers to develop a comprehensive and connected network of trails that supports recreation, contributes to healthy lifestyles and local economies, links transportation routes, and conserves wildlife corridors.

PROGRAM FRAMEWORK

Guidelines

The Regional Trails Plan is designed to be consistent with federal, state, and local guidelines and policies. The following section describes the guidelines that Pierce County relies on when designing the trail system.

Federal

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) regulates trail design through 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.

² <https://www.rco.wa.gov/StateRecPlans/specific-recreation-plans/state-trails-plan/>



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, headroom, surface textures, slope, and other design considerations for all publicly accessible areas.

Because some facilities were developed prior to ADA guidelines, Pierce County Parks developed an ADA Transition Plan in 2017. The ADA Transition Plan provides a phased retrofit schedule for the deficits identified in the access audit reports. The Department uses the ADA Transition Plan to prioritize ADA improvements to bring the park system into compliance with the ADA.

AASHTO design guidelines for bicycle transportation facilities and shared use paths provide parameters for facility development. Compliance with AASHTO guidelines for improvements is required by most grantors.

State

The Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA), originally enacted in 1990, requires cities and counties to develop multi-modal transportation options (Revised Code of Washington [RCW] [36.70A.108](#)), and to set aside land for recreational uses such as trails (in RCW [36.70A.160](#)) as Pierce County's population and the need for housing increases. In addition, trail planning and design should closely follow the Washington State Regional Trails Plan and Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) guidelines and specifications.

Washington's Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) develops statewide recreation policy including the Washington State Trails Plan. The Washington State Trails Plan is an element of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Planning (SCORP) program and was adopted by the National Parks Service (NPS) in 1991. Washington State Trails Plan recommendations include:

- Improving Trail Equity: Locate and build trails for underserved populations; connect more people to trails; provide trails where people like to use them; address safety.
- Linking Trails with Transportation: Ensure recreational trails complement and link with multi-modal transportation systems to provide a seamless experience.
- Creating Regional Partnerships to facilitate a connected trail system across jurisdictions.

GOAL PR-11

Develop regional trail routes, crossings and trail facilities that are accessible to all.

GOAL PR-14

Develop planting standards that prohibit vegetation from negatively impacting the long-term maintenance of the trail network.

GOAL PR-15

Provide facilities and trail support services to accommodate the needs of trail users.



WSDOT provides two primary publications related to federally funded transportation projects.

- Local Agency Guidelines (LAG) Manual: This manual identifies specific design standards related to bicycle and pedestrian facility installations.
- Construction Manual and Standard Specifications for Road, Bridge and Municipal Construction: This 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.

GOAL PR-18

Coordinate with cities and local communities, federal agencies, tribes, park districts, user groups, and neighboring counties to develop a successful regional trail system.

Regional

The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) developed the Regional Open Space Conservation Plan in 2018. The Plan addresses regional trails as a type of open space:

Regional trails are active transportation corridors that provide access to the region's open spaces and connect communities and other important regional destinations. Often, trails are interconnected with rivers, floodplains, and farmlands.

The PSRC Plan is designed to document information and work by multiple entities toward open space conservation and to guide collaborative efforts.

Local

Locally, Pierce County has developed a Non-Motorized Transportation Plan (NMTP) to facilitate transportation options that can improve air quality, reduce conflicts between users, provide alternatives to travel in a single-occupant vehicle, and contribute to active, healthy communities.

Pierce County Parks also collaborates with and considers the plans of other local entities, such as park districts, cities, towns, and neighboring counties, when planning connections for the regional trail system.

Partnerships

Pierce County is growing rapidly. Expansion of the regional trail network relies on partnerships between public and private organizations to create an efficient, interconnected system that serves residents. Expanding the regional trail system requires crossing jurisdictional boundaries. Often, Pierce County serves in a leadership capacity bringing partners together to leverage resources.

Jurisdictional Responsibilities

Cities, towns, and park districts provide trails within their boundaries. State and federal agencies provide trails on their lands or rights of way.

Within unincorporated Pierce County, Pierce County Parks is the primary provider of non-motorized transportation and trail network. Within Pierce County government, Planning and Public Works (PPW) and Parks coordinate to develop this system. Typically, Pierce County Parks plays the lead role in developing off-road trails, while PPW is responsible for on-road non-motorized projects. This partnership provides cost and skill-sharing between the two departments. The two departments also work closely together to coordinate planning for an overall non-motorized transportation system that serves the community through a network of on- and off-road facilities.

Overlapping jurisdictions, goals, and strategies create complexity in planning for the network of trail corridors and non-motorized transportation in a region-wide system. Coordination with stakeholders and advocacy groups provides outreach, volunteer trail maintenance, and legislative guidance to assist in and encourage Pierce County Parks' efforts in creating a trail network that meets the needs of all residents.

Pierce County Parks works with other jurisdictions, partner agencies and advocacy groups to apply for grants to RCO. Pierce County Parks acts as a coordinator and facilitator for trail project grants that represent regional interests. The Regional Trails Plan is intended to comply with all RCO requirements and serves as a foundation to seek additional regional, state, and federal funding opportunities for non-motorized improvements.

TRAIL INVENTORY

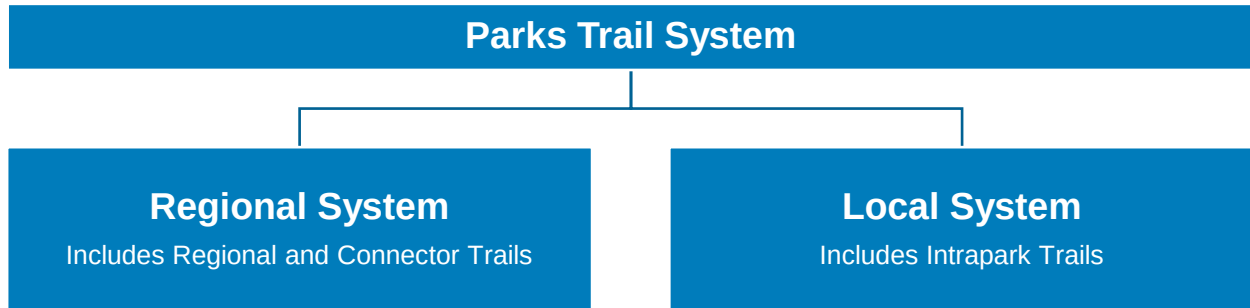
Trail Classifications

Systemwide, Pierce County Parks manages about 40 miles of trails. These trails are classified into categories based on their function. Exhibit 6-1 illustrates the classifications system for trails in Pierce County.



Appendix G, Trail Inventory Detail, provides a detailed inventory of the existing and proposed trail system in Pierce County.

Exhibit 6-1. Trail Classifications Under the Parks Trail System



Regional trails form the spine of the trail network. Regional trails link parks, open spaces, public facilities, cities and towns, and other destinations of interest. These trails are a non-motorized, multi-modal network extending into neighboring counties and jurisdictions, serving as recreational and commuter corridors.

Connector trails provide convenient connections through urban areas and from neighborhoods and link to regional trails or destinations.

Intrapark trails are located within park boundaries and consist of nature trails, footpaths, and multimodal trails.

Existing Trails

Pierce County Parks' about 40 miles of trails span the park system, providing regional recreational opportunities and local park amenities. The majority of the trail system is made up of the Foothills Trail (21 miles); the balance includes Connector Trails (2.4 miles) and Intrapark trails (15.8 miles) that are managed within parks. Exhibit 6-2 provides an inventory of the existing trail system.

Exhibit 6-2. Existing Pierce County Trails

Trail Classification & Name	Region	Miles
Regional Trails		21
Foothills Trail	North	21
Connector Trails		2.4
Nathan Chapman Memorial Trail	South	1.6
Pipeline Trail- Half Dollar to Heritage Recreation Center (managed by PPW)	South	0.8
Intrapark Trails		16
Ashford County Park Trails	South	1.4
Buckley Forestland Preserve	North	1.8
Chambers Creek Regional Park Trails	West	6.4
Dawson Playfield Trails	Central	0.3
Frontier Park Trails	South	0.6
Lidford Playfield Trails	Central	0.3
Meridian Habitat Park Trails	South	0.6
Parkland Prairie Nature Trail	Central	0.4
Seeley Lake Park Nature Trail	West	1.0
Spanaway Park Trails	Central	2.3
Bresemann Forest Trails	Central	2.3
Swan Creek Park Trails	Central	0.4
GRAND TOTAL		41.2miles

Source: Pierce County Parks, 2020; BERK, 2020.

Many other providers maintain Intrapark, Connector, and Regional trails within Pierce County. Pierce County does not actively maintain a complete inventory of other providers' trails.

Proposed Trails

Trails, walking paths, and hiking footpaths are the recreational activity most desired by residents and visitors. To meet the evolving needs and interests of Pierce County trail users, trails are being planned for both recreation and commuting. Trails should be designed to accommodate hikers, cyclists, and equestrians, as appropriate. Certain trails should be designed for all user groups, while other trails may be more appropriate for specific user groups (i.e. equestrians). New connections will be made between existing trail sections and brand-new trails will be

constructed. Trails will connect communities to transit, services, jobs, and recreational opportunities.

Pierce County has worked with jurisdictions and trail advocates to develop a long-term list of proposed trails that would complete the regional trail system. These projects cannot be completed in the 2020-2030 timeframe but will be prioritized over time.

2020-2030 Pierce County Trail Projects

Regional and Connector trail projects are prioritized based on short-term (6-year) and long-term (10-year) Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) funding. Project prioritization considers the Demand and Needs Assessment to ensure new trails will be constructed where there is the greatest possibility of improving the quality of life for Pierce County's residents. Exhibit 6-3 identifies 2020-2030 projects.

Exhibit 6-3. 2020-2030 Pierce County Trail Projects

2020-2030 Trail Priorities	Estimated Timeline	Estimated Funding
Regional Trails		
Foothills Trail – North Region: Work will begin to extend and connect the Foothills Trail. Connections will be made north to the Riverwalk trail, north across the White River at Buckley into Enumclaw, and south through Wilkeson to Carbonado. Additional investments to expand the East Puyallup Trailhead and improve paving and bridges along the trail that will not increase trail mileage are also included.		
Bridge at White River: A bridge crossing the White River will extend the trail by 1-mile into King County. Partnership with King County, Enumclaw, Buckley.	Construction: 2021	\$266,000 (Pierce County share)
Cascade Junction to Carbonado: Approximately 6-mile trail connection to Wilkeson and Carbonado, including trail alignment study in Gale Creek Canyon.	Planning/Design: 2020 Construction Begin: 2026	\$6,900,000
Riverwalk Trail Connection: Build an approximately 1-mile connection between the East Puyallup Trailhead and the Riverwalk Trail in Puyallup.	Construction: by 2030	\$2,940,000
Central/South Region Trail Connection: This trail connection is intended to provide a link with the Washington Cross State trail providing a Pierce County connection between the "Palouse to Cascades trail" and the "Willapa Hills Trail" and will be built in the Central and/or South regions. Trail alignment and length are undetermined and will be identified during the update to the Regional Trails Plan.		
	Planning/Design: 2024	\$500,000
Pipeline Trail – Central & South Region: The Pipeline Trail will be extended 5.5 miles from its terminus at 72 nd Street East and Waller Road East to connect with Nathan Chapman Memorial Trail on South Hill. This trail will connect multiple parks and communities and provide an alternative transportation option for those traveling between South Hill and Tacoma.		
	Planning & Design: 2019-2021 Construction Begin: 2022-2023	\$8,400,000
White River Flume Trail Public Access Partnership: Partner with Cascade Water Alliance and City of Buckley to plan public access improvements to the approximately 6.5-mile White River Flume Trail.		



2020-2030 Trail Priorities	Estimated Timeline	Estimated Funding
	Planning & Design: 2020-21	\$250,000
Yelm Prairie Line Trail Partnership: Design and construct a trail between the City of Roy and the Nisqually River.		
	Planning & Design: 2024 Construction Begin: 2026	\$600,000
Connector Trails		
Parkland Community Trail – Central Region: This approximately 3-mile urban trail project will provide safe, multimodal, non-motorized connections between four public schools, Pacific Lutheran University, and three parks.		
	Planning & Design: 2019-21 Construction Begin: 2022	\$4,835,000
South Hill Community Trail: Build an approximately 3-mile community trail in the vicinity of 144 th Street East connecting parks and schools.		
	Planning & Design: 2026-2027 Construction Begin: 2028	\$4,400,000
Intrapark Trails		
Chambers Creek Canyon Trail – West Region: This project will improve a trail constructed through the Chambers Creek Canyon, including bridges over the Chambers and Peach creeks and construction of additional trails between Kobayashi Park and Chambers Creek Road. This trail project is a partnership between Pierce County and the Cities of Lakewood and University Place.		
Chambers Creek Canyon Trail Phase 1: The project includes two clear-span bridges over Chambers Creek, a smaller bridge over Peach Creek, and a boardwalk extending the trail 2.5 miles from Kobayashi Park.	Planning & Design: 2019-2020 Construction Begin: 2021	\$1,701,000
Chambers Creek Canyon Trail Phase 2: This phase will construct Bridge 4 across Chambers Creek and build a loop trail connecting to Chambers Creek Road. This project is contingent upon removal of Chambers Creek Dam and replacement of Chambers Creek Road bridge.	Planning & Design: 2027-2030	\$500,000
2019-2030 GRAND TOTAL		\$33,692,000

Source: Pierce County Parks, 2019.

With the completion of the projects outlined in Exhibit 6-3, Pierce County Parks will have a total of at least 70 miles of trails. Additional trail miles may be constructed as Intrapark Trails, further adding to the total trail miles however, the distance of these trails is not yet known.

Regional Trails: Partnerships and Other Jurisdictions

Pierce County is one of many trail providers in the region. Other jurisdictions, organizations, and partners work together to collectively manage the existing regional trail network and plan for the future.

As a regional trail provider, Pierce County actively partners with and supports other jurisdictions' efforts to extend and connect to the regional trail network. Pierce County works with partners to identify means to expand the regional trail system. Additional projects may be considered if they do not divert staff capacity or resources from those identified in this plan.

The projects below represent partnerships Pierce County anticipates moving forward in the next 10 years:

- **Cushman Trail Extension.** Extend the existing 6.2-mile trail to create connections between Pierce and Kitsap counties. *Key Partners: Gig Harbor, Kitsap County, Peninsula Metropolitan Park District (PenMet).*
- **Cross-State Trail.** Continue to explore route options through Pierce County connecting a cross-state recreational trail system. *Key Partners: Rails to Trails Conservancy, Washington State Parks, local jurisdictions, local trail organizations*
- **Tacoma to Puyallup Connection.** The Tacoma to Puyallup Connector will link Tacoma to Downtown Puyallup along the Puyallup River. *Key Partners: WSDOT, Tacoma, Fife, Puyallup, Tribes, local trail organizations*
- **White River Canyon Trail.** Continue to explore trail route options in the vicinity of the White River Canyon between the City of Buckley and the City of Auburn. *Key Partners: Puget Sound Energy, Cascade Water Alliance, City of Auburn, City of Buckley.*

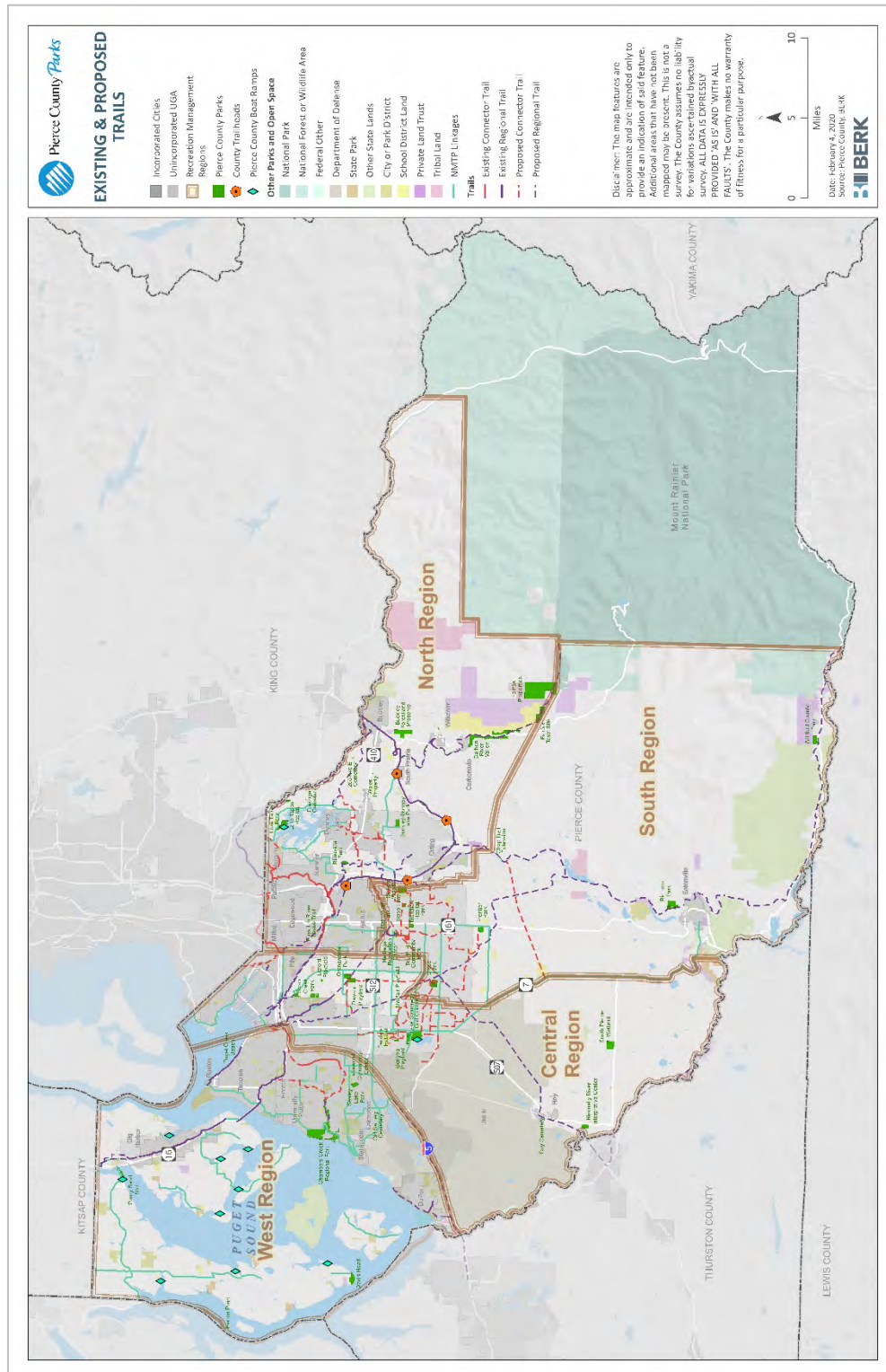
Many other efforts exist to expand trails in Pierce County and state-wide. Exhibit 6-4 overlays the proposed community connections, cross-county routes, and links to cross-state trails that make up the long-term plan for the Pierce County Parks' regional trail system.

Trail System Beyond 2030

Pierce County worked with jurisdictions and trail advocates to develop a regional trail system map. The map is accompanied by a list of projects that would build-out the regional trail system. The list includes Regional Trails that would form the spine of the regional system and Connector Trails that would provide links between trails, jurisdictions, and major destinations.

When fully implemented, the regional trail system would include over 285 trail miles. See Appendix G, Trail Inventory Detail, for complete list of proposed trails that would complete the regional trail system. See Exhibit 6-4 for a map of the regional trail system, include existing and proposed trails.

Exhibit 6-4. Existing and Proposed Trail System



Source: Pierce County Parks, 2019; BERK, 2019.

PROJECT PRIORITIZATION

Growing Pierce County's trail system from about 40 miles to 285 miles is a long-term vision that requires balancing competing priorities. Pierce County Parks acts as a regional and local trail provider in its role as a county-wide lead and as the primary provider for unincorporated areas. These dual roles necessitate balancing the need for improvements that serve rapidly growing unincorporated areas with the demand for broader regional connections.

The main sources of funding for this work comes from Park Impact Fees and grants. Prioritizing trail projects is necessary to match projects with partnerships and resources to ensure an achievable plan. Pierce County Parks prioritizes trail projects based on the following:

- 1. Demand and Need Assessment.** Prioritize projects where there is the greatest need for trail connections. Exhibit 4-20 shows that the Central and South regions have the highest unincorporated populations and the lowest rate of trail and path miles per 1,000 population.
- 2. County Policy.** Adopted County policies direct prioritization of investment. The Fiscal Policy requires that 38% of revenue from Park Impact Fees be spent on new trails and call for investments in Cushman, Parkland, South Hill, and Pipeline.
- 3. Capital Funding Availability.** Align projects that support growing demographics within fiscal constraints.
- 4. Regional Trail Criteria.** When the first three criteria above have been fulfilled, prioritize those projects that grow the regional trail system, as shown in Exhibit 6-5.
- 5. Strategic Partnerships.** Projects may also move forward when strategic partnerships can be formed with other agencies and jurisdictions that bring substantial financial and technical resources to projects that provide for planned capacity improvements within the system. These partnerships should ensure parties bring equitable resources to the project and do not divert capacity or funding from existing priorities.

Exhibit 6-5. Regional Trail Plan Prioritization Criteria

Priority	Criteria
High	Expand existing trail network to destination point(s) Expand existing trail network in partnership with other jurisdiction(s) Connect two or more destination points in partnership with other jurisdiction(s)
Medium	Expand existing trail network Connect two or more destination points Trails within parks that connect to the regional trail system
Low	All other trails
Other Factors	Used to adjust project rankings within categories: - Value/Cost Effectiveness - Grant Potential - Proximity to Population

Source: Pierce County Parks, 2019.

PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS

Development of the trail system illustrated in Exhibit 6-4 would require an increase in capacity to meet the demand and needs of Pierce County trail users. Construction of new trails and completion of the proposed trail system would:

- **Grow trail system capacity** through partnerships with other providers, advocacy groups, and agencies.
- **Close gaps and expand the regional trail system** with more connections between communities and key destinations looking at links beyond Pierce County. This includes a cross-state trail vision with connections through Pierce County.
- **Strengthen links to the NMTP**, further developing alternative commuter route infrastructure.
- **Improve Intrapark trails** that support local communities and provide opportunities to live healthy lifestyles and connect to nature.

Strategic Actions

To ensure sustainable management of the system, the Regional Trails Plan must be updated to reflect current priorities and best practices. Coordinated updates to the Regional Trails Plan will provide opportunities for partners and the public to provide input. The following strategic actions will lead Pierce County Parks and partners closer to realizing a completed regional trail system.

Additional Code and Funding Strategies for Implementation

Pierce County development regulations could require developers to incorporate links to planned trails and non-motorized routes that intersect with private development.

Strategic Planning

With the 2016 adoption of an increase to the Park Impact Fee, Pierce County has dedicated funding to accomplish major trail system expansion and improvements over the next decade to keep pace with residential development. This funding offers an opportunity to accomplish long-standing regional trail goals and meet the needs of a growing trail community.

As the needs of trail users and trends in trail use evolve, a strategic planning process will focus the efforts of trail and non-motorized transportation advocates, stakeholders, and jurisdictions to make the most of available resources. A cooperative, strategic effort addressing the following needs will offer Pierce County partners a consistent, strategic vision for the Regional Trails System:

- **Inventory:** Update existing trail data, including current classification, mileage, and alignments. Compile jurisdictional data into Geographic Information System (GIS) layers and maps available to the community, partner agencies, and stakeholders. Create a process for regular inventory updates.
- **Standards:** Develop countywide standards for a cohesive trail system usable by residents of all ages and abilities including:
 - Innovative options for safe, multimodal travel through established urban neighborhoods to make connections to transit and community destinations.
 - Consistent signage and wayfinding to provide users with the tools to navigate the trail system.
 - Design trails based on anticipated use with an emphasis on multi-use trails. Recognize certain trails may be more appropriate for specific user groups (i.e. equestrians).
 - Design standards that recognize evolving use of the trail system by skateboards, scooters, electric bicycles and other users. Update policies to reflect the RCW [46.61.710](#) regulating motorized scooters and bicycles on shared use paths.
- **Priorities:** Identify key gaps in the existing system and set a vision for long-term connections.
- **Process:** Create a transparent nomination process for trail projects that offers an opportunity for community members and partners to have meaningful input in the development of the Pierce County trail system.



Coordination

Work with trail advocacy groups, local jurisdictions, and the state to encourage an update to the State Trails Plan to be inclusive of Pierce County's regional trail system, especially as cross-state and Puget Sound Region trail routes are considered.

SUMMARY

Local and national surveys show that the most desired way for Pierce County residents to realize mental and physical health benefits and meet their recreational needs is by providing trails and walking facilities. By continuing to expand the regional trail system, Pierce County Parks will give residents and visitors more opportunities to explore the County's open spaces and to take in the County's amazing views. In addition, planning for more trails will increase commute options for residents to get to work, to school, and to businesses in adjoining towns.

In expanding the existing regional trail system, Pierce County Parks will consider state and national guidelines, partnership opportunities, funding availability and the Demand and Needs Assessment while building the trail projects identified in the CIP and partnering with other jurisdictions on their trail projects. The Regional Trails Plan ensures that new trail miles are constructed where there is the greatest possibility of helping residents to connect with nature and to live healthy lifestyles.



7. STRATEGIC PLAN & SYSTEM MANAGEMENT

OVERVIEW

Parks, trails, and the natural environment are central to Pierce County Parks' identity and are key ingredients to the quality of life that makes living here so special. If Pierce County is to remain among the most desirable places to live in the country, Pierce County Parks must find ways to not just maintain existing facilities and properties, but to improve the park system to meet the needs of a growing community.

This chapter presents a 6-year Strategic Plan to ensure the system is improved, maintained, and programmed in accordance with public priorities and addresses internal functions of Pierce County Parks to deliver results in the most efficient manner. The chapter discusses other important aspects of Pierce County Parks, including:

- 2020-2025 Strategic Plan,
- Pierce County Parks organization,
- Maintenance and asset management,
- Natural lands management and stewardship,
- Partnerships and grants, and
- Revenue generation.



2020-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

Pierce County Parks manages a large and diverse park system spread over urban and rural Pierce County. The 2020-2025 Strategic Plan implements the Mission of the department by providing specific, measurable actions to ensure department leadership and staff remain focused, provide accountability, and increase efficiency toward delivering the park system envisioned by the public. The Strategic Plan ensures the department will concentrate on the delivery of capital, maintenance and programming to meet the needs of the growing population. It also contains performance measures to help track progress.

How the Plan will be Used

This Strategic Plan establishes a blueprint for operations and improvements through 2025 and informs the development of Pierce County Parks' budget and Capital Facilities Plan. The Strategic Plan, as an implementation tool for the PROS Plan, will inform staff work programs and priorities in the upcoming 6 years.

The Strategic Plan also provides a guideline and prioritization document for collaboration with stakeholders across the community to enhance existing parks, develop new park and trails, and to establish new programs and partnerships. These actions are necessary to meet the needs of a growing and diverse population while keeping the park system vibrant, accessible, affordable and relevant to all.

Strategic Action Plan and Performance Measures

Pierce County Parks' Vision statement illustrates a broad picture of success for meeting residents' expectations for the park system, *"A County of healthy people living happy lives."*

Pierce County Parks' Mission defines how investments in facilities and programs should be made to reach the goals for the park system as laid out by residents' feedback and adopted policies, *"by providing opportunities for people to connect to nature, live healthy lifestyles, enjoy vibrant community spaces, and learn about sustainable practices."*

As illustrated in Exhibit 7-1, the Strategic Actions are based on public priorities for the park system. Strategic Actions identified in the Strategic Plan are categorized by elements of the Department's Mission and accompanied by performance measures. Performance measures are things the Department will achieve in the near term to improve the park system in accordance with public priorities.

**Exhibit 7-1. Strategic Plan Actions and Performance Measures****Goal: Connect with Nature**

Pierce County residents place a high priority on expanding opportunities to connect with nature in their community. Pierce County Parks aims to expand opportunities by opening more natural areas for hiking, walking, and wildlife viewing and by offering more nature-based programming and events.

Strategic Action	Performance Measure
Increase public access to natural areas and Resource Conservancy Lands	Provide hiking/walking trails to 200 acres of natural areas in the park system
Conserve significant open space properties for a healthier environment	# of acres conserved through the Conservation Futures program to preserve public benefits
Increase nature-based programming	Pilot 2 new programs
Provide park identification and interpretive signage to increase public awareness of opportunities for hiking and walking	Add identification and interpretive signs to 4 sites
Manage natural areas and Resource Conservancy Lands to maximize healthy native ecosystems and visitor safety	- Develop stewardship management plans for 3 sites - Evaluate properties to determine consistent forest or habitat management standards

Goal: Healthy Lifestyles

Parks are a place where people go to recreate, play, and exercise. Pierce County Parks will expand opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy a variety of activities that promote active, healthy lifestyles.

Expand active lifestyle programs	- Complete 1 outdoor gym - Increase program participation by 2% per year
Increase trail miles and connections to park facilities	Advance 10-20 miles of trails
Develop regional partnership to cost-effectively improve sports complexes, regional trails, and regional recreation services	1 partnership completed with executed agreement expanding service in unincorporated Pierce County
Complete planned preservation and expansion of park system as outlined in the Capital Facilities Plan (CFP)	- Complete construction of Cross Park Phase 1 and design of Sprinker Recreation Center outdoor improvements # of people using the park system
Ensure healthy food and snacks at events and programs	2 programs and 2 events converted to healthy snacks

**Goal: Vibrant Community Spaces**

Parks are places where people go to relax, enjoy family and friends, and come together as a community. Pierce County provides stewardship of parks, trails, and open spaces to maximize a healthy natural environment and to provide access to nature in an increasingly urban landscape.

Evaluate and update design plans to meet ongoing community need	Complete master plans at 2 sites
Increase access to parks and trails through improvements in compliance with the ADA Transition Plan	Resolve 50% of the ADA Transition Plan findings
Increase opportunities for family and community gatherings	- Increase picnic shelter capacity by 50% - Increase reservable gathering space for group events at 2 sites
Establish landscape design guidelines to create park spaces that are safer, attractive, engaging, and low maintenance	- Adopt system-wide landscape design guidelines and practices - Complete landscape renovations at 2 parks
Evaluate all community centers for future use and necessity	- Complete building assessments for Lakewood Community Center and Meridian Habitat Center - Complete 90% of preservation projects within planned lifecycle replacement window
Activate park spaces with community, social, and cultural events	Double participants at special events
Improve planning and collaboration on countywide open space programs	Work with partners to develop a strategic Pierce County open space plan

Goal: Sustainable Practices and Administration of System

Pierce County Parks practices all aspects of sustainability: social, environmental, and economic, by ensuring the park system is managed effectively and equitably by being fiscally responsible and by offering opportunities for the public to learn about sustainable practices.

Incorporate sustainable design principles into new parks, develop sustainable maintenance practices, and offer education and training to staff and the public to highlight sustainable practices at park sites (recycling, renewable energy, water conservation, low impact development, integrated pest management)	- Develop sustainability standards for all park classifications - Install signage explaining practices at 2 sites - Elevate and highlight sustainable capital investments through media (e.g. website, press releases)
Leverage Pierce County Parks' funding, implement adopted fiscal policy, and develop cost-recovery targets	- Secure a 10% match from non-County revenues - Expand special event and regional tourism marketing for Spanaway and Chambers Creek regional parks - Achieve a system-wide cost recovery rate of 25%
Expand volunteer opportunities for stewardship	Establish Site Stewards at 3 parks Increase of # volunteer hours annually



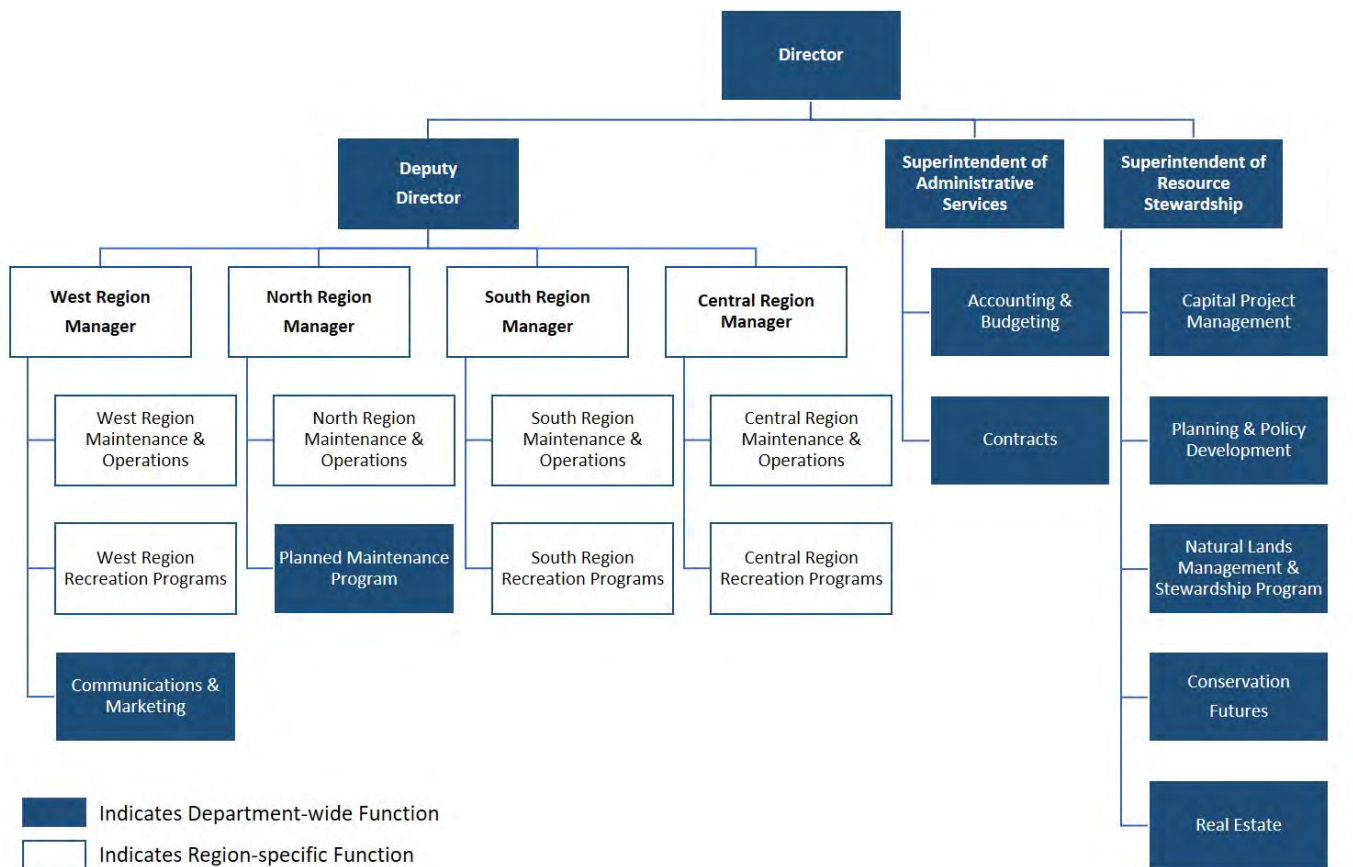
Improve planning and coordination for regional trails

- Update the Regional Trails Plan

PIERCE COUNTY PARKS ORGANIZATION

Pierce County Parks staff are organized into three work groups as shown in Exhibit 7-2. Most staff are assigned to one region, unless their function is department-wide.

Exhibit 7-2. Department Organization Chart



MAINTENANCE AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

Pierce County Parks has more than 5,200 acres of property spread throughout Pierce County. Chapter 3, Current Parks and Recreation Inventory, contains an inventory of the facilities and properties that make up the park system. The park system must be maintained on a regular and ongoing basis for the public to benefit from it and to ensure facilities achieve their longest lifespan. Additionally, assets must be tracked, scheduled, and funded for repair and

replacement. Pierce County Parks strives to maintain the system in a cost-effective and efficient manner.

Routine Maintenance

Maintenance crews provide a wide range of services to ensure parks are clean, safe, and functional. Routine maintenance includes duties, such as garbage pick-up, lawn and landscape care, preparation of ballfields, set up for events, cleaning and general maintenance of play areas, beaches, waterfronts, trails, pathways, parking lots, and athletic courts. In addition to performing maintenance work, daily presence in parks provides a measure of security and the ability to respond to customer requests in a timely manner. Maintenance staff also support special events and volunteer projects.

PR 1.6

Develop new facilities only if on-going operation and maintenance funding is provided at a level necessary to safely operate and maintain the facility at adopted levels of service.

Regional Parks (Chambers Creek Regional Park and Spanaway Regional Park) and sports complexes have a higher level of service (LOS) than County or Local parks due to the increased programming at these sites. Parks are open to the public from sunrise to sunset year-round.

Maintenance staff are assigned based on the park classification. Regional parks with ballfields, courts, golf courses, family events, and activities have more maintenance staff for daily operations and facility maintenance than Resource Conservancy Lands, which staff visit less frequently for general maintenance.

Asset Management and Deferred Maintenance

Pierce County Parks utilizes an Enterprise Asset Management (EAM) database to cost-effectively manage the system of assets to increase facility lifecycle, reduce costs, and schedule maintenance and replacement in a timely manner. EAM allows the department to quickly identify system safety issues and prioritize projects efficiently, balancing needs with available resources.

Pierce County Parks strives to preserve the quality and capacity of existing facilities, extending useful life for as long as practicable. Maintenance staff review the physical condition of park assets annually. Each asset receives a rating condition as good, fair, or poor. A condition rating is used to determine needed maintenance, repair, or replacement. Items that need repair are assigned an estimated cost to replace or repair and are placed in the Maintenance and Asset Plan (MAP).

The MAP is divided into capital replacements and planned or routine maintenance. Capital replacements are scheduled in the CIP. The planned maintenance items are handled by Planned Maintenance Program (PMP) staff with special carpentry, mechanical, plumbing, and other skills that allow the department to complete the repair or replacement quickly. Smaller projects are handled by the on-site, routine maintenance staff. Pierce County Parks schedules all planned lifecycle improvements and known repairs within a four-year window.

Projects included in the MAP are prioritized and executed based on the following criteria identified in the Pierce County Comprehensive Plan:

- Addresses a public safety or environmental health issue,
- Promotes intended usage by the public and reduces loss of function,
- Increases park capacity or benefit to public, and
- Promotes cost benefit and generates return to the park system.

Per the Fiscal Policy (R2016-115s), sufficient staffing and maintenance resources should be considered with new capital facilities to avoid stretching current resources thinner. Regular review of the MAP is completed by Pierce County Parks managers to ensure the list is manageable and implemented efficiently.

Accessibility

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 is a civil rights law prohibiting discrimination based on disabilities and ensuring that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else. Under Title II of the ADA, a public entity is required to perform a self-evaluation of its current services, policies, and practices for ADA compliance. The self-evaluation includes surveying the existing facilities and identifying barriers to access and/or communication. Following this self-evaluation, municipalities are required to create a plan to make “reasonable modifications” where necessary to avoid discrimination and to ensure their facilities and activities are accessible to all.

In 2017, Pierce County Parks conducted an access audit with the assistance of an accessibility consultant. The consultant’s findings lauded Pierce County as a provider of “excellent service to the community” and found that the recommended improvements would make “what is already good, better.” In 2017, Pierce County Parks adopted the ADA Transition Plan based on the findings of the access audit. The goal of the ADA Transition Plan is to ensure structural and programming deficits impacting persons with disabilities are corrected in a timely manner. In addition, the Transition Plan addresses design standards for facilities altered or constructed after March 15, 2012, that must be designed to adhere to the U.S. Department of Justice’s 2010 Standards for Accessible Design.



Pierce County Parks utilizes the ADA Transition Plan to prioritize future maintenance and construction projects and to bring all programs into compliance with the ADA. As part of the access audit, Pierce County Parks also reviewed department policies regarding employee training, communications and interactions with the public, and ways to provide modifications in programs for people with disabilities. Access audit reports for 17 park sites in all four regions and a Program and Policy Accessibility Audit Report were completed. Together, these reports satisfy the “self-evaluation” requirement of [Title II of the ADA, section 35.105](#).

The ADA Transition Plan is a phased retrofit schedule for every deficit identified in the access audit reports. (Pierce County Parks, 2017)

ADA improvements have been scheduled to achieve full compliance in all park facilities by 2027. Many of these projects are currently underway, and new construction projects are being designed in compliance with the 2010 Standards for Accessible Design.

Pierce County Parks is committed to making parks, programming, and communications welcoming and accessible to all.

NATURAL LANDS MANAGEMENT AND STEWARDSHIP

Natural areas in existing parks and Resource Conservancy Lands preserve forests, streams, prairies, and other natural and cultural resources. Though natural areas have fewer built amenities and are maintained less frequently than active recreation parks, stewardship of these areas increases opportunities for people to connect to nature, particularly in urban communities.

In 2016, Pierce County Parks established the Natural Lands Management and Stewardship program to manage and maintain natural areas and Resource Conservancy Lands. The program conducts site assessments, develops stewardship and maintenance plans, works with partners to ensure sites are properly and safely managed or stewarded, as appropriate, opened to the public.

Stewardship and Maintenance Plans

Prior to opening any property to the public, staff complete a Site Assessment. Site Assessments analyze conditions on properties; with a priority on assessing trees in frequently used areas to ensure public safety and protection of infrastructure. Site Assessments include inventorying:

- Individual trees or tree stands,
- Critical areas,
- Cultural resources,
- Site use restrictions, and

- Potential trails and public access locations.

The Site Assessment is used to prioritize resources. For example, declining trees or trees with hazardous defects in a publicly high-use area are first prioritized for removal or pruning. Then, other safety concerns are addressed, such as fuel reduction of thick brush accumulations near structures and diversifying monocultures of even-aged trees by thinning and/or planting new trees to reduce the stand's susceptibility to disease and decline. For more information about these activities see Chapter 9, Open Space Plan.

Stewardship and Maintenance Plans are created using the findings from the Site Assessments. The Stewardship and Maintenance Plan serves as a management tool and resource for region managers, maintenance staff, and volunteer stewards.

These plans address routine stewardship and maintenance work, such as invasive species control, irrigation, native plant installation, and best management practices. Importantly, they also identify critical areas and other site restrictions which may interfere with maintenance activities and the development of properties for public access. Plans can also be used to acquire permits for work in critical areas.

Stewardship and Maintenance Plans may include vegetation control using crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) techniques. The plans and associated stewardship and maintenance work plans are uploaded and managed in EAM.

A Public Access Plan may be developed when the Stewardship and Maintenance Plan is complete. This process relies on coordinating proposed public access and trails with community members and interest groups. The construction of trails, primarily consisting of footpaths, leverages partnerships with community volunteers, non-profit organizations, such as the Washington Trails Association (WTA), and service corps, such as the Washington Conservation Corps (WCC). Depending on the type of access needed, engineering may be necessary.

PARTNERSHIPS & GRANTS

Partnering with volunteers and other agencies, such as community groups, non-profits, government agencies, and other County departments allows Pierce County Parks to leverage resources and to engage the broader community in improving and maintaining the park system. Pierce County Parks has several types of partnerships. Grant funding allows Pierce County Parks to extend and diversify resources and investments. Grant funding comes from a variety of sources, both public and private, to support different functions of the Department.

Partnerships

Pierce County Parks staff actively expand on the relationships and formal partnerships that forward the goals of the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan and diversify recreation options within the park system. Specifically, the Department looks for partners who can provide input and guidance toward filling gaps identified in the Demand and Needs Assessment.

Pierce County works with targeted internal and external partners to open properties, leverage funding, build trails, expand services, engage the community, and share projects. Pierce County Parks will continue to strategically partner with other organizations where the partnerships offer cost sharing and equity (Fiscal Policy Resolution). However, Pierce County Parks needs to closely monitor contributions from its partners to ensure that investments and resources align with expected outcomes and benefits, advancing the goals, needs, policies, and recommendations of the PROS Plan.

Stewardship Partnerships

There are two established Pierce County Parks stewardship programs for volunteers to assist in improving natural areas in the park system: Pitch-in-for-Parks and Site Stewards. Volunteers in these programs devote their time at various parks to remove invasive species, maintain landscaping, and plant trees and shrubs for habitat restoration and park beautification.

Pitch-In-For-Parks is open to all volunteers. The program is sponsored by McClendon's Hardware who provides volunteers with gloves and tools to pitch-in with Pierce County Parks staff at a select park site each month.

Site Stewards are trained and approved Pierce County Parks volunteers. They conduct their own volunteer events and assist with park planning at a designated park or natural area.

Pierce County Parks frequently partners with community groups, non-profit, and government agencies to support stewardship and public access. WTA specializes in building and maintaining hiking trails and connecting people to the outdoors. They assist Pierce County Parks with the planning, construction, and repair of soft-surface trails in natural areas, often through difficult terrain.

The WCC and Washington Service Corps (WSC) provide AmeriCorps members service opportunities to conserve and enhance natural resources. Pierce County Parks sponsors members and crews to support noxious weed removal, trail construction, and habitat restoration.



Recreation Partnerships

Partnerships, including donations of goods and in-kind services, are integral to the success of recreational programming. The importance of community partners, from individual volunteers to school administrations and private businesses, is paramount.

Volunteers donate their time to assist with events and programming. Obtaining and maintaining these important partnerships and donations with internal and external partners requires Pierce County Parks staff facilitation and coordination. Staff work includes building knowledge of partner organizations, exploring ways to connect with new groups of potential donors and volunteers, managing on-the-ground projects, and coordinating grants.

See the Chapter 8, Recreation Programming, for more information about recreation partnerships.

Grants

Pierce County Parks also leverages capital projects and recreation programs with grants, partnerships, and donations. Supporting existing relationships while being flexible and creative in exploring relationships with new partners allows Pierce County Parks to extend and diversify resources and investments. Working with partners at the federal, state and local level has benefits beyond the financial. Engaging partners increases access and community buy-in, leads to innovative design ideas, facilitates communication and makes projects more cost-effective for all parties.

In the past 10 years, capital budgets have been leveraged with successful federal, state and local grants. Significant grants have come from the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) and the Pierce County Lodging Tax. Exhibit 7-3 illustrates the capital grants received 2010-2019. From 2016-2018, about one-third of Pierce County Parks net revenues available for capital investments came from grants. Pierce County Parks looks to continue to leverage capital dollars with grant dollars.

Exhibit 7-3. 2010-2019 Grant Funding Received

Grant Type	Total Funds 2010-2019
Federal	\$724,153
State	\$5,663,696
Local	\$2,239,824
TOTAL	\$8,627,673

Source: Pierce County Parks 2019.



Grants have also been received in support of Pierce County Parks recreation programs. Long-term relationships with numerous charitable foundations and the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department (TPCHD) have led to scholarships and program improvements which make programming more accessible to all Pierce County residents.

REVENUE GENERATION & OPPORTUNITIES

Parks are a public good supported in large part by public monies. Some facilities or events are subject to user fees (e.g. ice-skating rink use, recreation programs, parking). Where programs provide mostly community benefits, fees are lower than the cost of the service to allow broad access. If programs mostly benefit individuals, or are competitive or exclusionary in nature, fees are set to more fully recover costs. Pierce County Parks utilizes the framework in Exhibit 7-4 to guide expectations for cost recovery and revenue generation. Revenues generated are driven back to the park system for improvements and usage.

Exhibit 7-4. Cost-Recovery Pyramid



Modified from GreenPlay, LLC, 2013.

Exhibit 7-5 addresses the level of individual or community benefit, provides example park and recreation facilities and programs that fit the definition, and scales the cost recovery accordingly.

Exhibit 7-5. Parks and Recreation Cost Recovery Matrix

Levels	Parks	Facilities	Programs	Cost Recovery Range
Highly Individual Benefit: A special interest that benefits one or a small group, often to the exclusion of others (enterprise or profit center)	Specialty Amenities / Private and Restricted Use on Public Property/ Non-Resident Usage	Private Party Rentals / Concessions / Retail	Private Lessons or Invitation Only Groups	100%+
Mostly Individual Benefit: Requires an advanced skill that limits access or restricts open public usage (potentially competitive with the marketplace)	Specialty Amenities that provide a Public /Resident Experiences / Picnic Rentals	Tournaments / Ongoing Community Group Rentals	Competitive Adult Sports Leagues / Advanced or Premier Class / Trips	75-99%
Individual / Community Balanced Benefit: A program or service that is desirable for health, development, and human interest of the community, yet requires an individual commitment to participate	Non-profit partnership (BMX, Disc Golf, Sport Clubs) that serve residents	Classes, Lessons (fitness, dance, arts)	Youth Sport Leagues/General Enrichment Classes	50-75%
Mostly Community Benefit: An experience offered to individuals that the community strongly supports providing for social justice reasons or access to a premier public asset	Water Access (Gate fees and boat launch)	Drop-in Center / Program Access	Programs for persons with disabilities	25-50%
High Community Benefit: A public asset that is available and accessible to all for equitable benefit	Trails, Open Space & General Park Access	X	Special Events	0-25%

Source: Pierce County Parks, 2017.

Data Collection & Analysis

Implementing cost recovery policies is a data-driven, multistep process. As new programs are introduced, targets for cost recovery are set and monitored.

The following steps help Pierce County Parks gather sufficient information to assess it and to set a cost-recovery policy for each program:

1. Develop a data framework for understanding level of access and demand for each discrete facility, activity, and service and the direct and indirect costs of the activity.
2. Use the data framework to generate at least a two-year baseline measurement of trends in access, demand, and cost.



3. Identify and assess the feasibility of specific cost recovery targets for each discrete facility, activity, and service.
4. Calibrate fees paid by individuals to minimize changes in access to and demand for services.

Other Funding Opportunities

In addition to revenue generation that allows Pierce County Parks to recover costs at adopted policy levels that will help sustain the system, other funding sources should be critically analyzed to determine feasibility of further supporting the park system:

- An increase in Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax (MVFT) allocation could be used to support the growing trail system.
- General Fund could support operations and maintenance at new parks.
- Conservation Futures funding could be increased to the authorized levy amount to increase open space opportunities.

GROWING THE PARK SYSTEM

Pierce County Parks has a lower rate of park acres and assets than similar providers. While this PROS Plan identifies funding to acquire some new park properties, there is a need to continue to expand the park system, especially in urban areas, or areas that could serve urban areas. Expansion should be considered when it can be achieved in a cost-effective manner or through partnerships. Expansion should only be considered in areas where it will serve the needs of the Pierce County Park system and where opportunities exist. The Department should use the findings of the Demand and Needs Assessment to determine whether expansion opportunities meet these needs.

Expansion of the park system is possible both via land acquisition, or through land sharing or partnership agreements. Organizations that should be considered include other County departments, other park providers, land trusts, and school districts.

Properties that should be considered for expansion of the park system when opportunities in funding and property availability arise include, but are not limited to:

- Puget Sound Energy-owned property adjacent to North Lake Tapps Park
- Property to the east of Mayfair Playfield
- Property surrounding Frontier Park
- Planning and Public Works (PPW) Department properties between Parkland Prairie and Parkland Addition
- PPW property adjacent to Meridian Habitat Park



- PPW property adjacent to Hopp Farm
- Properties identified in community plans

SUMMARY

To effectively and efficiently manage Pierce County Parks' more than 5,200 acres and about 40 miles of trails, systems must be in place to coordinate the efforts of staff and to ensure that park system assets are maintained and available for use. Systems to collect and analyze data about the park system make Pierce County Parks more responsive as needs and issues arise.

Specific areas of focus for the next ten years are bringing park assets into compliance with ADA requirements, managing forests in the face of a changing climate, finding new and creative ways to generate revenue so that parks programming can be expanded to meet the needs of a diverse and growing population, and expanding the park system. Pierce County Parks will rely on rigorous data collection and on the actions and performance measures identified in the Strategic Plan to make sure that the department is responsive to changing demographic, economic and environmental conditions.



OVERVIEW

Pierce County Parks provides programming that appeals to a growing, increasingly diverse audience. These programs are focused on advancing the mission of Pierce County Parks by delivering events and activities that are accessible to all residents.

This chapter provides an overview of the primary program areas provided by Pierce County Parks which allow residents to connect with nature, live healthy lifestyles, enjoy vibrant community spaces, and, learn sustainable practices.

This chapter includes information about:

- Recreation Programs,
- Recreation Program Funding, and
- Program Challenges.

RECREATION PROGRAMS

Recreation programming ensures that Pierce County Parks provides a variety of community and family events to contribute to vibrant communities for residents. Whether a run, dance, class, or

community movie, Pierce County's parks are vibrant places to meet up with family, friends, and neighbors to relax, play, or learn.

Pierce County Parks programs and events are designed to serve residents of all ages, abilities and interests. While Pierce County Parks programs vary with the seasons, residents can find programs year-round focusing on the needs of seniors, youth, families, and people of different abilities. Between 2013-2018, recreation program participation averaged more than 600,000 participants per year.

To meet the diverse needs and demands of residents, recreation programs, as well as community events and engagement activities, can be categorized as follows:

- Children and Youth Activities
- Adult Activities
- Specialized Recreation
- Special Use Facilities and Activities
- Facility Rentals
- Community Events
- Volunteer Engagement

General recreation refers to activities that contribute to healthy lifestyles. Opportunities for all ages and abilities to move, learn, and connect are provided. Classes, camps, and trips are offered in multiple locations throughout the park system. Details about general recreation are provided below:

Children and Youth Activities. Pierce County Parks focuses on providing programs after school and when school is not in session. A wide range of activities, such as sports, dance, and recreation camps, clinics, and classes, are offered that can be both instructional and competitive with a focus on development and the benefits of participation.

Adult Activities. These programs provide a variety of activities for adults of all ages such as drop-in and scheduled exercise, league play, trips, and social recreation to support active lifestyles for health and social benefits.

Specialized Recreation. These programs provide affordable, accessible and adaptive recreation programs for individuals with special needs and their families. Programs are designed with built-in accommodations to fit participants' wide-ranging needs—from basic social interactions and communication to skills for living independently. All year, Companionship Programs provide fully-inclusive outings and special interest clubs. During the summer, Camp Lots of Fun and Camp Pierce provide summer day camp experiences for children and adults with special needs that include activities designed to promote social skills and civic participation through field trips, sports, crafts, cooking, and volunteer activities.



Special Use Facilities and Activities. Pierce County Parks is an important regional provider of special use facilities, such as golf courses, lakes, an ice rink, and dog parks. Associated activities are held in spaces designed for a single-use recreational purpose for all ages, with or without an access fee. Recreational programming in these spaces includes lessons and camps based on a single sport (tennis, ice skating, golf), and unique team sports, such as ice hockey and water/boating safety.

Facility Rentals. Reservable gathering spaces, such as picnic shelters, meeting rooms, indoor and outdoor lawn areas, athletic fields, and recreational spaces, are available for residents to celebrate and remember special occasions. Pierce County Parks' wedding venues have been promoted in local magazines and spaces for birthday parties are often booked several months in advance.

Community Events. Events promote vibrant community spaces by providing accessible recreational experiences. Pierce County Parks hosts and supports a variety of community events throughout the year. The variety of events and geographic distribution of these events supports Pierce County Parks' overall place-making efforts by offering activities that connect families, neighbors, and the larger community. Events are generally free and remove obstacles to participation. Examples of community events include organized runs and walks, dances, leisure classes, community fairs, shows, and competitions.

County-sponsored events take place throughout the year and are typically one-day, annual functions or a series that feature a specialty or general interest opportunity.

More premier events requiring advance registration or fees are also part of the regional park system. Festivals, fairs, and multi-day or seasonal experiences, like Fantasy Lights, are offered with the potential of full-cost recovery.

Volunteer Engagement

Volunteer Engagement provides opportunities for residents to learn about sustainable practices while delivering and supporting the primary program areas of the department.

Volunteer programs are focused and sized to support delivery of services. Pierce County Parks maintains a volunteer program to support recreational programs (specialized recreation volunteers, youth coaches, special event production support), natural lands stewardship (Pitch In for Parks, Park Stewards, Parks Appreciation Day), and education programs (art, engineering, sports, and environmental camps and classes).

Pierce County Parks has more than 500,000 annual participants in specialized recreation and youth sports; these programs are reliant on volunteers. In 2018, 1,870 volunteer hours were dedicated to these programs.

Over half of the acreage managed by Pierce County Parks is open space. In 2018, 2,245 volunteer hours were dedicated to open space stewardship. Additional volunteer programs related to the Natural Lands Management and Stewardship Program are discussed in Chapter 7, Strategic Plan & System Management.

RECREATION PROGRAM FUNDING

Over the years, generous grants have been received in support of Pierce County Parks' recreation programs. Long-term relationships with numerous charitable foundations and the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department (TPCHD) have led to scholarships and program improvements that make recreational programming more accessible to all Pierce County residents. Exhibit 8-1 provides a summary of grant funding awarded to Pierce County Parks since 2015.

Exhibit 8-1. Recreational Programming Grantors

Granting Organization	Funding Since 2015
Baker Foundation	\$16,000
Forest Foundation	\$16,000
The Thomas Cross Endowment	\$7,600
Woodworth Family Foundation	\$7,000
Bamford Foundation	\$20,000
Ben F. Cheney Foundation	\$3,000
Comcast Foundation	\$2,377
TPCHD	\$25,500
UP Cares	\$3,000

PROGRAMMING CHALLENGES

Many local jurisdictions provide youth and adult sports and other recreation and educational programs. Local services are primarily provided by cities, towns, and park districts. Pierce County Parks' role is to be a regional program provider; therefore, the priority is to develop recreational programming that complements local offerings.

Pierce County Parks fills important programming gaps in various underserved areas by providing recreation opportunities where and when other providers do not. Currently, funding and staff limit the number and scope of programs provided. Adding new programs requires



cutting some existing programs to free up funds and staff if the program does not fully recover costs. For this reason, expansion of recreational programming poses a challenge.

Pierce County Parks' short-term rentals of many of its facilities and equipment to support un-programmed recreational opportunities and special events have been very popular. Between 2013-2018, facility rentals averaged more than 500,000 per year. Each year, many rental requests fill up quickly and early in the year, resulting in people being turned away.

Future programming and facility-use decisions will be dependent on funding, staffing, and the ability to find and work with current and future partners. Successful partnerships with other agencies, community groups and local businesses will allow Pierce County Parks to expand popular existing programs and add new programs.

SUMMARY

Residents' engagement with their parks is an important indicator of a park system's success. For Pierce County Parks, that means providing opportunities for residents to connect with nature, live healthy lifestyles, enjoy vibrant community spaces, and learn about sustainable practices. Besides offering local, organized activities and facility rentals for all user groups in neighborhoods across the County, Pierce County Parks also provides community events and special use facilities which draw visitors from across the region. Pierce County Parks' programs are supported by volunteer labor and by generous grants and partnerships from public and private organizations. As Pierce County grows in diversity and population, the park system will build on its previous successes to broaden its recreational programs and increase engagement.



OVERVIEW

From the Cascade foothills to the Puget Sound marine shorelines, Pierce County contains a diversity of open space area. Protection and management of open space not only conserves wildlife habitat, but also creates a healthier environment and supports better health outcomes for Pierce County residents. However, as development expands throughout Pierce County, pressure increases to build more homes and businesses, which in turn depletes the open space communities depend on.

In a statistically valid phone survey and public feedback, Pierce County residents stated that one of their highest values is preservation of wooded and environmentally sensitive areas. Pierce County has open space conservation programs and an inventory of open space managed by Pierce County departments. Once acquired or protected, the level of management and enforcement varies.

Goal PR-21

Provide a system of open space experiences and corridors to support livable communities, offer relief from the built environment, allow people to connect with nature, and ensure the long-term health of the natural environment and citizens.

A countywide open space program, coordinated by Pierce County, could work toward a common vision of creating a vibrant Pierce County where people choose to live, work, and raise a family.

Definitions for language used throughout this chapter are provided below and in the Glossary:

Open Space

Any parcel or area of land or water which is devoted to a functional open space use as defined by any one of the following categories:

- **Habitat.** Open space for the preservation of plant and animal habitat may include habitat for fish and wildlife species; rivers, streams, bays, and estuaries; and coastal beaches, lakeshores, and banks of rivers and streams.
- **Working Lands.** Open space used for the managed production of working lands may include forest lands, agricultural lands, and areas of economic importance for the production of food or fiber.
- **Outdoor Recreation.** Open space for outdoor recreation may include athletic fields, recreation facilities, playgrounds, picnic areas, meadows, wooded areas, and trails; and access to beaches and shorelines for swimming, fishing, boating, and beachcombing.
- **Community-Defined Values.** Open space for community-defined values may include areas used for buffers between communities, respites from the built environments, and for connecting with nature; and areas of outstanding scenic, historic, and cultural value.
- **Public Health and Safety.** Open space for public health and safety may include areas used for stormwater management, flood control, water quality for public use, air quality, and carbon sequestering.

OPEN SPACE INVENTORY

The total amount of open space land conserved through all of Pierce County open space conservation programs, public and private, is unknown. Directly, Pierce County manages more than 7,200 acres of open space. Each department owns and manages these properties, often independently, for different uses and benefits. See Exhibit 9-1.

Exhibit 9-1. Lands Managed by Pierce County Parks and Other Providers

Provider	Land (Acres)
Pierce County Parks	5,183
Planning and Public Works (PPW), Surface Water Management (SWM) Division*	3,711
Pierce County Facilities Management (Forest Management Properties)	1,153
Metropolitan Park District of Tacoma (MPT)	2,960
Washington State Parks**	2,035
Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) (Uplands)**	34,729
Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)**	3,109
Federal (National Park Service [NPS] and National Forest Service [NFS])**	405,239



Source: *Based on Pierce County GIS data; **From Washington Public Lands Inventory.

Over 2,500 acres of Pierce County Parks' property is classified as Resource Conservancy Lands. Most of these properties are large tracts of protected open space, and some of these properties include public access, such as walking trails, for passive recreational use.

PPW owns open space property not included in Exhibit 9-1 associated with Pierce County roadways and rights-of-ways. PPW SWM, manages property for stormwater treatment, habitat preservation, floodplains, levees, and levy setbacks.

Though Pierce County Facilities Management Department owns forested land as part of their facilities inventory, most of these properties do not allow public access.

Pierce County has identified open space corridors countywide, which are large interconnected areas with natural values, such as wetlands, streams, forests, and habitat. See Appendix A, Map Folio for maps of open space corridors.

OPEN SPACE CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

Programs intended to conserve open space in Pierce County range from grants to acquire property to regulatory approaches enforced during land development permitting. Programs are administered by various Pierce County departments and relied on by incorporated cities, park districts, non-governmental agencies, and private property owners to ensure that requirements for open space found in the Growth Management Act (GMA) and in other Washington State laws are met.

Goal OS-1

County programs that provide for the acquisition and/or preservation of open space shall have established priorities.

These programs include:

- Conservation Futures,
- Floodplains for the Future (FFTF),
- Transfer of Development Rights (TDR),
- Public Benefit Rating System (PBRs) Tax Programs, and
- Development Regulations.

Conservation Futures

Conservation Futures, authorized through the Revised Code of Washington (RCW), Chapter 84.34.210-240, allows any county in the state to establish a fund to acquire land or interest in land for open space, agriculture, and timber. In 1991, the Pierce County Council adopted Conservation Futures and authorized funding at the state-allowed rate of up to six and one-

quarter cents per thousand dollars of assessed value. The funds are distributed through a grant process administered by Pierce County Parks.

Conservation Futures is a property tax. Each property is assessed at a rate of \$0.0406 per \$1,000 of assessed value (2019). Based on the current rate, a \$100,000 house contributes \$4.06 per year.

The maximum permitted rate is \$0.0625 per \$1,000 of assessed value; however, Pierce County does not collect contributions at this rate, because all property taxes are subject to a restricted growth cap which is less than the rate of inflation. This results in a declining rate of collection. Despite these factors, actual revenue through the program has increased steadily, with approximately \$2 million dollars per year available to conserve properties in the 2020-21 grant cycle. Pierce County Parks anticipates that revenue will continue the trend of slow, steady increases each year.

Since inception of Conservation Futures in Pierce County, the program has purchased approximately 5,640 acres of land through 120 projects. Over that time, 14 cities and towns, four park districts, and several non-profits have participated in the program. About 80% of the properties purchased through Conservation Futures are owned by public entities, with many projects offering public access.

Estimated future revenues for the Conservation Futures program are approximately \$13 million in 2020-2025 and \$17 million in 2026-2030. These funds are available for all Pierce County jurisdictions and are subject to competitive review and several restrictions.

Floodplains for the Future (FFTF)

Administered by SWM, FFTF recovers floodplain functions and protects the health and safety of communities around them. The program is active in a variety of conservation sectors and is supported by the Washington Department of Ecology's Floodplains by Design program.

FFTF works to balance farm, fish, and flood management values to provide a safe place to voice varied opinions and needs and to advance integrated floodplain management solutions in the Puyallup, White, and Carbon river watersheds. The program is aimed at five primary tasks within the watersheds:

- Acquisition of floodway and construction of measures to improve habitat, flood protection, and to support agriculture;
- Increasing the understanding of agricultural viability and analyzing the impact of proposed changes to flood and hydrology systems on farmlands through the Farming in the Floodplain Project;
- Monitoring floodplain health; and

- Promoting habitat science.

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)

Pierce County adopted the TDR program in 2007 (Ordinance 2007-91s). Administered by PPW, TDR is a market-based program that allows landowners to sell the right to develop their land (“sending sites”) and transfer those development rights to a different parcel of land located within the UGA or a city (“receiving sites”). Development rights can be purchased to protect habitat for endangered species, agricultural land, forestland, and trails.

A permanent conservation easement is placed on the sending site when rights are transferred. The conservation easement limits future development of the land by prohibiting further subdivision or building of residential homes. Persons who buy development right certificates from a sending site are generally allowed to build on their own property within the UGA at a higher density or height than ordinarily permitted by the base zoning.

Public Benefit Rating System Tax Programs (PBRs)

PBRs allow a reduction in property tax rate for properties that protect open space, forests, and agricultural lands. The PBR Tax Program is authorized by RCW 84.34 and Pierce County Code (PCC) Chapter 2.114 (Ordinance 98-114s) and administered by the Pierce County Assessor-Treasurer’s Office.

The PBR Tax Program ranks various open space features composed of high-, medium-, and low-priority resources. A minimum of three priority resource points is necessary to qualify for the program. Priority resources include:

- High priority: critical salmon habitat, fish and wildlife habitat, marine waters, streams, wetlands, estuaries and tidal marshes, wooded areas, agricultural lands, prairie lands.
- Medium priority: aquifer recharge areas, flood hazard areas, lakes, private open space passive recreation, privately owned and operated recreational facilities, private trails and corridors, archaeological sites, historic landmark sites.
- Low priority: landslide hazard areas, private parks and private golf courses with developed facilities, scenic viewpoints and corridors, seismic hazard areas, volcanic hazard areas.

Properties designated in these programs are subject to back-tax payments should the use of the properties change such that they are no longer eligible for the program.

Development Regulations

Pierce County’s Development Regulations, outlined in PCC, Chapter 18 Series, place restrictions on development in critical areas or densities in certain zones.



PCC, Chapter 18E, Critical Areas, includes requirements for the protection of critical areas, such as erosion, landslide, seismic, volcanic, mine, and flood hazard areas; streams; wetlands; certain fish and wildlife species and habitat; and aquifer recharge areas. These protections generally require set-aside of critical areas with applicable buffers and may require mitigation to offset direct impacts.

PCC, Chapter 18A, Zoning, allows for increases in allowed densities in some rural zones when at least 50% of a subdivision area is protected as open space. For example, the Rural 10 zone allows only one dwelling unit per 10 acres; however, an applicant may subdivide the 10 acres at a rate of two dwelling units per 10 acres if they set aside 50% (5 acres) as open space.

PIERCE COUNTY PARKS OPEN SPACE MANAGEMENT

From agricultural lands to recreational areas, open space management varies with its uses and intended benefits. Pierce County Parks manages its open space through its Natural Lands Management and Stewardship program and the Conservation Futures program. The Natural Lands Management and Stewardship program assesses and opens natural areas for passive recreation while providing stewardship for wildlife habitat and natural resources.

The program accomplishes this through:

1. **Site Assessments:** Initial site assessment of the open space to identify habitat types, critical areas, priority species and wildlife, forest health, cultural resources, use restrictions, and potential passive recreational use.
2. **Stewardship and Maintenance Plans:** Address management actions, such as habitat preservation and restoration, reduction of fuels, and tree and forest management.
3. **Stewardship Plan Implementation:** Use available resources and partnerships to complete activities for effectiveness, apply adaptive management, and update the Stewardship Plan, as needed.
4. **Passive Recreation Plans:** Create plans for passive recreation by surveying and assessing existing trails and potential trail locations. Coordinate trail plans with community organizations and the public input. Initiate trail construction through capital construction process or volunteers, as appropriate.
5. **Community Education:** Coordinate with partners on educational programming and opportunities to connect the community with the site.

Goal OS-2

Pierce County's public and private stewards of open space properties, open space passive recreation parks, conservation easements, and Conservation Futures covenants manage and maintain open space for long-term function and value.

6. Continuous Coordination and Improvements: Continue coordination for infrastructure and habitat improvements as resources and site use increase.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, Pierce County Parks also administers the Conservation Futures program, working with cities and non-profit organizations to steward purchased properties.

SUMMARY

Countywide Open Space

As illustrated in this chapter, Pierce County has a number of tools and programs that conserve open space. Yet, with a growing population and more housing and businesses, Pierce County residents have expressed interest in balancing the built environment and the natural environment. To achieve this balance, Pierce County needs to analyze available open space programs to determine where programs are overlapping, where gaps exist, and where incentives may be utilized to achieve the goal.

Additional collaboration between Pierce County's departments, the 23 cities and towns within Pierce County, tribes, and other organizations should explore:

- Prioritizing acquisition of habitats that are considered unique in the Puget Trough or West Cascade ecoregion, are identified biodiversity management areas, contain listed species, or provide habitat connection to these areas.
- Prioritizing the acquisitions of habitat that complete an interconnected network of corridors or spaces.
- Acquiring habitat that is supported by multiple County goals in adopted County or interjurisdictional plans.
- Developing partnerships with public agencies and jurisdictions, private organizations, and businesses for implementation of habitat conservation across the County.
- Managing, restoring, and maintaining publicly-owned habitat and open space lands.
- Developing and implementing stewardship management plans for open space properties.
- Providing targeted outreach, specifically to private property owners, regarding available open space programs.



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A. MAP FOLIO

B. PARK INVENTORY DETAIL

Park Inventory Worksheet

C. PENINSULA PARK DISTRICTS INVENTORY

D. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT DETAILS

Outline of public involvement activities and summary of results. Include detail of surveys received, etc.



E. CAPITAL REVENUE PROJECTIONS

F. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN SPENDING PRIORITIES

G. TRAIL INVENTORY DETAIL

