

CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING AGENDA



City of Lake Stevens Vision Statement

By 2030, we are a sustainable community around the lake with a vibrant economy, unsurpassed infrastructure and exceptional quality of life.

April 7, 2026 - 6:00 PM

City Council Workshop Meeting

In person: The Mill, Sawyers Room, 1808 Main Street, Lake Stevens

or Join Zoom Meeting: [Zoom Link](#)

or call in at (253) 215-8782

Meeting ID: 87541430102 Passcode: 513774

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Council Business**
 - A. Thank you to Mayor Brett Gailey (Break for refreshments)
- 3. Discussion Items**
 - A. Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan Jill Meis
 - B. Review of Council Procedures (Role of the Mayor Pro Tem) and Upcoming Mayor Vacancy Process Gene Brazel
- 4. Executive Session - Confidential Session of the Council**
 - A. Potential Litigation-No Action to Follow
- 5. Adjourn**

THE PUBLIC IS INVITED TO ATTEND

The City of Lake Stevens strives to provide accessible opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Please contact Human Resources, City of Lake Stevens ADA Coordinator, (425) 622-9400, 48 hours prior to this council meeting if any accommodations are needed. For TDD users, please use the state's toll-free relay service, (800) 833-6384, and ask the operator to dial the City of Lake Stevens City Hall number.

NOTICE: All proceedings of this meeting are audio recorded, except Executive Sessions.

CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT



Agenda Date: 4/7/2026

Subject: Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan

Contact Person/Department: Jill Meis, Parks Department

Budget Impact: N/A

Legal Review: No

RECOMMENDATION(S)/ACTION REQUESTED:

Review and provide feedback for future adoption at 4/14/2026 Council Meeting

SUMMARY/BACKGROUND:

City Council approved a budget request for the Parks and Recreation Department to hire a consultant to help draft the first Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan for Lake Stevens. The 2026 PROS Plan is an update to the City's previous parks and recreation planning documents (2015 and 2024) in the Comprehensive Plan and serves as a blueprint for the management, enhancement, and growth of Lake Stevens' park and recreation system. The Plan was developed over a ten-month period with robust community engagement, including surveys, open houses, stakeholder interviews, and public meetings. Key contributors to the plan include the community, stakeholders, Parks & Recreation Planning Board, City staff, and a consultant team led by Conservation Technix, Inc. and Consor for public outreach.

On October 21, 2025, staff and the consultant presented initial findings and took input from the City Council. The Parks and Recreation Planning Board received regular updates and have forwarded a recommendation to City Council for adoption.

Plan Purpose and Vision:

The PROS Plan establishes a vision for an innovative, inclusive, and interconnected system of parks, trails, and open spaces that promote recreation, health, and environmental conservation as integral elements of a thriving, livable Lake Stevens.

Community Engagement and Priorities:

Community input was central to the development of the plan. Key priorities identified by residents and stakeholders include:

- **Maintaining existing facilities:** Upgrading and preserving current parks, trails, and amenities.
- **Developing and improving parks:** Investing in new amenities, accessibility, and usability.
- **Expanding recreation options:** Adding new parks, trails, and facilities to meet the needs of a growing and diverse population.

Plan Highlights:

System Overview

- 22 City-owned parks, over 265 acres of parks and open space, 5.5 miles of trails, and multiple waterfront facilities.
- Recent acquisitions and improvements include Cavalero Hill Park, Eagle Ridge Park expansion, and new amenities at North Cove, Lundeen, and Sunset Beach Parks.

Goals and Policies

- **Diverse Experiences:** High-quality, diversified recreation for all ages and interests.
- **Strategic Investments & Acquisitions:** Targeted expansion and equitable distribution of parks and amenities.
- **Design & Maintenance:** Sustainable, accessible, and attractive facilities.
- **Recreation, Events & Culture:** Broad programming and community events.
- **Trails:** Interconnected, accessible trail network.
- **Open Space & Conservation:** Protection and enhancement of natural resources.
- **Engagement & Communications:** Ongoing public involvement and outreach.
- **System Management & Resources:** Partnerships, funding, and operational excellence.

Capital Projects and Implementation

The Plan includes a ten-year Capital Improvements Program (CIP) with prioritized projects such as:

- Community recreation center and sports complex at Cavalero Hill Park

- Park enhancements (inclusive playgrounds, splash pad, sport courts, ADA upgrades)
- Acquisition of new neighborhood and community parks to fill service gaps
- Expansion of trail connections, including the Bayview Trail
- Upgrades to restrooms, parking, signage, and wayfinding

Funding and Implementation Tools

The Plan identifies funding strategies including Park Impact Fees, Real Estate Excise Taxes, grants, donations, and consideration of a Metropolitan Park District.

Alignment with City Goals

Adoption of the PROS Plan will:

- Ensure eligibility for state and federal grants
- Guide future investments and policy decisions
- Support the City's Comprehensive Plan and Growth Management Act requirements
- Respond to community needs and demographic trends
- Position Lake Stevens as a leader in parks, recreation, and open space management

Next Steps

Upon adoption (preliminary scheduled for April 14), staff will:

- Integrate the PROS Plan into the City's Comprehensive Plan
- Pursue funding opportunities and partnerships
- Continue community engagement and periodic plan updates.

APPLICABLE CITY POLICIES:

ATTACHMENTS:

1. RESOLUTION 2026-03 (1)
2. LakeStevens_2026PROS_v6-031326lowres

RESOLUTION 2026-03

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF LAKE STEVENS ADOPTING THE LAKE STEVENS PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN.

WHEREAS, the city of Lake Stevens recognizes the need for a Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan to provide goals, level of service, needs assessments, standards, recommendations and strategies for implementation over a six-year period in an effort to provide for and continually improve and develop park and recreation facilities, provide trail opportunities and preserve open space; and

WHEREAS, the adoption of a new Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan every six years is vital to the city's ability to remain competitive for outside funding for improvements, renovations and maintenance of the City's park system, including funding from state and local agencies including the Recreation and Conservation Office; and

WHEREAS, the city hired Conservation Technix to prepare its Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan starting with a needs assessment and audit of the current Parks Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, Conservation Technix developed a robust public outreach program to solicit input from diverse stakeholders - this included targeted stakeholder meetings, two open houses, surveys and outreach on the city's website as well as at Aquafest; and

WHEREAS, staff and the consultant have briefed the Parks and Recreation Planning Board and City Council at project milestones over the last year; and

WHEREAS, the city's Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan is a comprehensive plan that includes demographic data, national and local trends, and best practices for the management and acquisition of parks and recreation; and

WHEREAS, the Parks, Recreation and Open Space plan provides recommendations on acquisition sites to meet the level of service determination; and

WHEREAS, in taking the actions set forth in this resolution, the city will need to refine its Comprehensive Plan Parks Chapter to ensure Lake Stevens is current with best practices for parks and recreation for all residents of Lake Stevens.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LAKE STEVENS, WASHINGTON AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Adoption. Consistent with the Growth Management Act of Washington, the Lake Stevens City Council hereby adopts the Lake Stevens Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan in its entirety.

Section 2. Adoption. The Lake Stevens Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan is attached hereto as Exhibit "A" and is incorporated herein by this reference.

Section 3 Severability. If any section, sentence, clause or phrase of this resolution should be held invalid or unconstitutional by a court of competent jurisdiction, such invalidity or unconstitutionality shall not affect the validity or constitutionality of any other section, sentence, clause or phrase of this resolution.

Section 4. Effective Date. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon passage by the Lake Stevens City Council.

PASSED by the City Council of the City of Lake Stevens and APPROVED by the Mayor this _____ day of _____ 2026.

Anji Jorstad, Mayor Pro Tem

ATTEST:

Kelly Chelin, City Clerk



CITY OF LAKE STEVENS

Parks, Recreation & Open Space Plan



DRAFT

MARCH 2026

Acknowledgements

CITY COUNCIL

Brett Gailey, Mayor

Sabina Araya, Council Position #1

Brian McManus, Council Position #2

Ryan Donoghue, Council Position #3

Kymm Shipman, Council Position #4

Anji Jorstad, Council Position #5

Tosha Edwards, Council Position #6

Nathan Packard, Council Position #7

PARKS & RECREATION PLANNING BOARD

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Conсор Engineering

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan is a six-year guide and strategic plan for managing and enhancing park and recreation services in Lake Stevens. It establishes a path forward for providing high quality, community driven parks, trails, open spaces, and recreational opportunities. The Plan addresses departmental goals, objectives and other management considerations toward the continuation of quality park, recreation and cultural services to benefit the residents of Lake Stevens.

Park & Recreation System Overview

Recreation amenities available within Lake Stevens are a major community asset and support the physical, mental, and social health of community members. The Lake Stevens Parks and Recreation Department serves as the community's key resource for providing parks, trails, recreation facilities, and community events. The Department supports local tourism and economic development – providing an enhanced quality of life for its residents. Thousands of participants and visitors join the many activities offered each year, especially those taking place at the lakefront. The City's system of parks supports a range of active and passive recreation experiences and includes 22 City-owned parks, over 265 acres of parks and open space, 5.5 miles of trails and park paths, and several piers and docks located on Lake Stevens.

This PROS Plan was developed with the input and direction of Lake Stevens residents. The Plan inventories and evaluates existing park and recreation areas, assesses the needs for acquisition, site development, and operations, and offers specific policies and recommendations to achieve the community's goals.

New investments in parks and recreation will be necessary to meet the needs of the community,

support youth development, expand opportunities for inclusion, provide options for residents to lead healthy, active lives, and foster greater social and community connections. Through a robust engagement process, community feedback can be synthesized into three core, community priorities:

- Maintain existing facilities,
- Develop and improve existing parks, and
- Expand recreation options.

Future Improvements

MAINTAIN EXISTING FACILITIES

Minor improvements are necessary to maintain and upgrade existing parks and include pier and dock resurfacing, improving parking areas, enhancing park signage and wayfinding, and upgrading accessibility to conform to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Other improvement projects include the installation of soft-surfaced trails and boardwalks through existing open spaces to expand trail experiences and improve connectivity.

DEVELOP AND IMPROVE EXISTING PARKS

Serving existing and future residents will require improvements to existing parks and additional investments in the park, trail, and recreation system. To ensure existing and new parks provide desired recreational amenities and offer safe and accessible opportunities to play and gather, the PROS Plan recommends investments throughout the park system to enhance accessibility, parking, and usability of park features (refer to Chapter 9 for more information).

EXPAND RECREATIONAL OPTIONS

Through recent park site master plans, the City is poised to implement phased development

of multiple parks that will offer residents a more diverse range of recreational experiences, while creating destinations that attract and engage park users. Proposed improvements to Eagle Ridge and Frontier Heights Parks will include the following amenities:

- Multi-use synthetic sport field,
- Pickleball courts
- Amphitheater & outdoor classroom
- Sensory garden
- Outdoor fitness stations

Additionally, the recent acquisition of Cavalero Hill Park from Snohomish County sets the stage for the City to add additional outdoor recreation amenities and build a new recreation community center to enable expanded recreation programming. The PROS Plan recommends the acquisition of more parkland to serve as future neighborhood parks to fill existing gaps across the city. Also, the planned development of the Bayview Trail north toward Marysville will create a significant off-street, regional trail. Other future improvements include the development of a pump track, bike skills course and mountain bike trails.

Goals & Policies

This PROS Plan includes goals and objectives intended to guide City decision-making to ensure the parks, trails, and open space system meets the needs of the Lake Stevens community for years to come. These goals and objectives were based on community input and technical analysis. They include:

- **Diverse Experiences:** Provide a high-quality, diversified parks, recreation and open space system that provides recreational and cultural opportunities for all ages and interest groups.
- **Strategic System Investments & Acquisitions:** Expand the City's park and recreation system through targeted investments to meet the needs of current and future residents and ensure a more equitable distribution and availability of park and outdoor recreation opportunities.
- **Design & Maintenance:** Design and maintain park facilities to maximize life of the facilities and to provide an attractive and pleasing environment for users.
- **Recreation, Events & Culture:** Support and provide a variety of recreation programs, services,

and facilities that promote the health and well-being of residents of all ages and abilities.

- **Trails:** Provide an interconnected system of high-quality, accessible trails and greenways corridors.
- **Open Space & Conservation:** Conserve, enhance and provide access to natural resource lands for conservation, recreation, and environmental education.
- **Engagement & Communications:** Encourage and support public involvement in park and recreation issues and enhance communications.
- **System Management & Resources:** Provide leadership through partnerships, collaborations and agreements and sufficient resources to maintain and operate the parks, recreation, and open space system.

Implementing the Plan

The City currently relies on Park Impact Fees (PIF), Real Estate Excise Taxes (REET), grants, donations, and general funds to finance individual projects or programs. Periodically updating the existing PIF program, which assesses fees on new development to meet the increased demand for parks, will allow the City to obtain future acquisition and development funding from residential development. State and federal grant programs offer additional potential opportunities to leverage available local revenues to fund specific projects. However, the recommendations for park and recreation services noted in this Plan may trigger the need for funding beyond current allocations and for additional staffing, operations and maintenance responsibilities.

Municipalities across Washington have favored the creation of Metropolitan park districts (MPD) to meet the recreational needs of residents, while also being sensitive to the set of demands placed on general purpose property tax funds. The City should examine and study the feasibility of establishing an MPD and conduct an assessment of the legal parameters and political factors affecting the decision to establish a new voter district. Establishing such a funding mechanism will require both political and public support.

BENEFITS OF PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE

A number of organizations and non-profits have documented the overall health and wellness benefits provided by parks, open space and trails. The Trust for Public Land published a report called *The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space*. This report makes the following observations about the health, economic, environmental and social benefits of parks and open space:

- Physical activity increases with access to parks.
- Contact with the natural world improves physical and physiological health.
- Value is added to community and economic development sustainability.
- Benefits of tourism are enhanced.
- Trees are effective in improving air quality and assisting with stormwater control.



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY BENEFITS

Residents in communities with increased access to parks, recreation, natural areas and trails have more opportunities for physical activity, both through recreation and active transportation. By participating in physical activity, residents can reduce their risk of being or becoming overweight or obese, decrease their likelihood of suffering from chronic diseases, such as heart disease and type-2 diabetes, and improve their levels of stress and anxiety. Nearby access to parks has been shown to increase levels of physical activity. According to studies cited in a 2010 report by the National Park and Recreation Association, the majority of people of all ages who visit parks are physically active during their visit. Also, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that greater access to parks leads to 25% more people exercising three or more days per week.



COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Park and recreation facilities provide opportunities to engage with family, friends, and neighbors, thereby increasing social capital and community cohesion, which can improve residents' mental health and overall well-being. People who feel that they are connected to their community and those who participate in recreational, community and other activities are more likely to have better mental and physical health and to live longer lives. Access to parks and recreational facilities has also been linked to reductions in crime, particularly juvenile delinquency.



ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Parks and recreation facilities can bring positive economic impacts through increased property values, increased attractiveness for businesses and workers (quality of life), and through direct increases in employment opportunities.

In Washington, outdoor recreation as a whole generates \$26.2 billion in consumer spending annually, \$7.6 billion in wages and salaries, and \$2.3 billion in state and local tax revenue. Preserving access to outdoor recreation protects the economy, the businesses, the communities and the people who depend on the ability to play outside. According to the Outdoor Recreation Economy Report published by the Outdoor Industry Association, outdoor recreation can grow jobs and drive the economy through management and investment in parks, waters and trails as an interconnected system designed to sustain economic dividends for citizens.

CHAPTER 1

ACTIVE. GROWING. THRIVING.

INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

Plan Purpose

The City of Lake Stevens 2026 Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan is an update to the 2015 and 2024 Parks and Recreation Elements of the City's Comprehensive Plan and serves as a blueprint for the management, enhancement and growth of Lake Stevens' park and recreation system.

This Plan creates a vision for an innovative, inclusive and interconnected system of parks, trails and open space that promotes recreation, health and environmental conservation as integral elements of a thriving, livable Lake Stevens. It assists in guiding decisions related to planning, developing and maintaining parks, open space and recreational facilities. This Plan also identifies priorities for recreation programs, community events and activities.





The 2026 PROS Plan provides updated system inventories, community profile, needs analyses, and a comprehensive capital project list. The Plan identifies parks and recreation goals and establishes a long-range plan for the Lake Stevens parks and recreation system, including action items and strategies for implementation over the next six to ten years. The recommendations in this Plan are based on community input, evaluations of the existing park system, operating conditions and fiscal considerations.

The PROS Plan is part of the City's broader Comprehensive Plan and is consistent with the guidelines established by the Growth Management Act. The PROS Plan, intended to be updated approximately every six years, will allow Lake Stevens to remain current with community interests and retain eligibility for state grants through the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO), which administers grant programs for outdoor recreation and conservation efforts.

Planning Process

This PROS Plan represents the culmination of a ten month long planning effort and reflects the community's interests and needs for parks, open space, trails and programming. Following a minor update to the Parks Element in the 2024 Comprehensive Plan, the PROS Plan planning process, which included a variety of public outreach activities to inform the development of the priorities and future direction of Lake Stevens' park and recreation system. Community members expressed their interests through surveys, public meetings, stakeholder discussions, online outreach, tabling events and board meetings.

In addition to community engagement, the actions identified in this Plan are based on:

- An inventory and assessment of the City's existing park and recreation facilities to establish the system's current performance and to identify needed maintenance and capital repair and replacement projects,
- Service level assessments to quantify the system's ability to serve current and future residents,
- Review of on-going and past planning efforts that guide investments in Lake Stevens' parks, trails, and open space, and
- An evaluation of community needs and a 10-

year demand assessment consistent with RCW 36.70A.070(8) that inform capital planning.

The Plan's capital improvements section and accompanying implementation strategies are intended to sustain and enhance, preserve and steward the City's critical parks and recreation infrastructure.

Park System Overview & Organization

The Parks and Recreation Department is committed to providing well maintained parks and recreational opportunities that are desirable, safe, and accessible to the community. The park system consists of 22 parks managed by the Department with a variety of amenities, including sports courts, picnic shelters, playgrounds, trails, docks, boat ramps, a community garden, and a disc golf course.

The Department has 12 full-time employees (FTEs) plus seasonal, temporary staff in two core functions: administration and recreation, and park maintenance.

The administrative and recreation staff are responsible for:

- Park planning and project management
- Recreation programming (teen/youth recreation services).
- Special event coordination (internal and external events).
- Funding for parks through grants and other sources.
- Reservations for facilities (including shelters, open areas, garden beds, and The Mill).
- Marketing and public engagement, including public meetings and surveys.
- Organizing volunteer opportunities, including managing the adopt-a-street and adopt-a-park programs.

The park maintenance crew is responsible for:

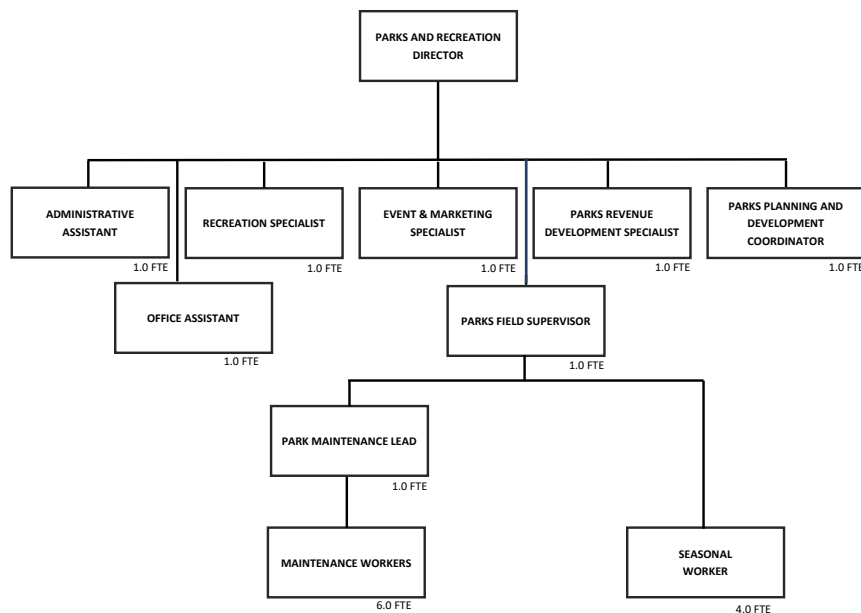
- Performing facility and ground maintenance, including landscaping, irrigation, trail maintenance and smaller construction projects.
- Inspect and repair facilities, including restrooms, docks and playgrounds.
- Placing buoys, maintaining swim lines and assisting with lake safety.
- Providing events and recreation support.

The Parks and Recreation Department was established in August 2022. Prior to this date, parks and recreational needs were a shared responsibility between the Planning & Community Development and Public Works Departments. Additionally, the Parks and Recreation Department plays a vital role in many aspects of community life, with staff support to the Parks and Recreation Planning Board.

PARKS & RECREATION PLANNING BOARD

The seven-member Parks and Recreation Planning Board focuses on the functionality and accessibility of the City's parks and outdoor spaces and advises the City Council regarding park acquisition, recreation programming and development, and the design and operation of parks and recreation facilities. Board members are appointed by the City Council for four-year terms.

Figure 1. Department Organizational Chart (2026)



Accomplishments Since the 2015 Plan

The 2015 Parks and Recreation Element from the Comprehensive Plan guided City officials, management and staff in making decisions about planning, operating and implementing various parks and recreation services. The following represents a short list of the major accomplishments realized following the adoption of the previous Plan.



Accomplishments since 2015

Within the organization of City services, the formation of Parks and Recreation Department in August 2022 represented a major shift in focus and commitment by City Council toward more wholly meeting the recreational needs for Lake Stevens.

- 1: Cavalero Hill Park acquired from Snohomish County in 2025
- 2: Phase 1 of the Bayview Trail installed, and future phases will connect to Marysville
- 3: Eagle Ridge Park expanded in 2025 and community gardens installed in 2017.
- 4: Redevelopment of West Lake Park included trailhead, parking, dog park and picnic areas.
- 5: The Mill was renovated in 2020 as a multi-purpose venue for programs and rentals.



1



2



3



4



5



Acquired in 2006, Lundeen Park was improved with two new playgrounds, the Visitor Information Center, and upgraded parking.

Sunset Beach was acquired from Snohomish County in 2020 and renovated to include BBQ grills, shade structures, swim dock, swimming area with beach access, and parking



North Cove Park redeveloped in 2019 to include all-inclusive playground, beach access, dock improvement, and shelter.



Oak Hill Park acquired in 2019.



Centennial Trail connection created to link to Old Town.



South Lake Stevens Trail completed in 2020.



Davies Beach acquired in 2020 and improved with new docks.



Frontier Heights Park acquired in 2017, with renovations underway in late 2025.



North Lakeshore Beach renovated with new swim dock decking.



Woodland Hills Park acquired in 2019.

Current Challenges & Future Considerations

As with any city-wide strategic planning effort, current community challenges provide a context for developing and assessing strategies for the future. The following macro trends are anticipated to be important priorities over the next decade.

GROWTH, DEVELOPMENT & DENSITY

The City of Lake Stevens has experienced significant growth over the last several years due to annexation and new development. The City's growth rate of 3.2% per year was double Snohomish County's average rate of 1.6% per year. The Countywide Planning Policies project a population of 48,565 residents by 2044, and more residents and new development will increase the use of existing parks and facilities and increase the need for recreational spaces and experiences across the City. Rapid growth also will intensify existing community needs for safe and accessible walking and biking routes, as well as the preservation of open space and natural resources. In response, this Plan outlines several projects and policies to improve parks and recreation facilities to adapt to emerging needs, complete important connections in the City's burgeoning trail network, and acquire or preserve open space in strategic areas, consistent with the requirements in the RCW Chapter 36.70A related to growth management.

ACCESSIBILITY & INCLUSION

Maintaining and enhancing social equity across recreational facilities and programs should be a core function of municipal park and recreation systems. Through this Plan, the City of Lake Stevens makes a concerted effort to connect with and engage the diversity of local communities. Prioritizing accessibility and inclusion is essential, particularly in adaptive recreation and accessibility upgrades for parks and amenities. The City must continue finding solutions that provide safe and equitable access for users of all abilities to parks, trails, activities and recreational opportunities.

ACTIVE FAMILIES

Census data from the 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates for Lake Stevens indicates that 62% of households have members aged 19 to 64, and 29% of households have members under 18 years old. Both of these rates are higher than those of Snohomish County and Washington State as a whole. This reinforces the need for active recreation opportunities for school age children and their families. To meet the needs of active families, Lake Stevens will need to consider how the City's park and recreation facilities, programming, and partnerships can continue to meet the needs of this growing group.

CONTINUED INVESTMENTS IN PARK & RECREATION SYSTEM

From accessible playgrounds to splash pads to connected trails to natural areas, the range of play experiences offered by the City will need to change and diversify over time. Also, the character of the Lake Stevens community will influence the needs for different or expanded recreational experiences, such as more waterfront access, space for extended family gatherings, community and social events, and cultural arts, among others. The demand for new amenities also must be balanced against preserving and maintaining existing parks and natural areas. The development of new amenities may require the use or re-use of existing parkland, and more parkland, especially along the Lake Stevens waterfront, may be required to support the community's evolving, future needs.

Research on recreation also provides information on how park distribution, park proximity, park facilities, and site conditions have an impact on people's desire to engage in physical activity. It will be valuable to re-evaluate current park designs and maintenance policies to ensure barrier-free, engaging park environments, and operational efficiencies. The City will continue to play a major role in enabling healthy lifestyles for Lake Stevens' residents and should continue to adapt the park system and recreational offerings.

STEWARDSHIP & ASSET MANAGEMENT

Established park systems require ongoing maintenance in order to safely and effectively serve the community. Public recreation providers across the country consider maintaining existing

park facilities to be a key management issue. Poorly maintained assets – from benches to playgrounds to restrooms to shelters – can fail, either structurally or operationally, posing safety risks and reducing their recreational value. Aging infrastructure also may fail to meet community expectations or need capital upgrades to adapt to changing community interests. However, recreation providers often struggle to establish adequate funding mechanisms for routine and preventative maintenance and repair of facilities, as well as the major rehabilitation of existing outdoor recreation facilities at the end of their useful life.

This Plan includes an assessment of City parks to provide a baseline of current conditions to inform facility, maintenance, and operations policies and improvements. Proper maintenance of recreation assets will prevent deterioration, thereby reducing long-term capital and operating costs, maintaining safety, improving public perception, and facilitating extended community use.

FISCAL CHALLENGES

The Parks and Recreation Department was established in August 2022. Prior to this date, parks and recreational needs were a shared responsibility between the Planning & Community Development and Public Works Departments. With this clear distinction of roles and responsibilities, the City can focus its support for the identified capital investments needed to ensure the park system continues to contribute to the character of the community and its quality of life. As a growing city with a strong appeal, pressure exists on capital and operating funding sources for the maintenance and expansion of City services and amenities. This Plan is structured with these constraints in mind and considers listed capital projects with their estimated development costs for their potential to address priority needs first, leverage other funding sources, as well as the impacts to future maintenance and operations demands.

Guiding Documents

This PROS Plan is one of several documents that comprise Lake Stevens' long-range planning and policy framework. Past community plans and

other relevant documents were reviewed for policy direction and goals as they relate to parks, open space, trails, recreation and cultural opportunities across the city.

- Comprehensive Plan (2024)
- City-Wide 5-Year Strategic Plan 2025-2030
- Trails Master Plan (2020)
- Climate Sustainability Plan (2023)
- Strategic Staffing Update (2024)
- Multiple park design plans, construction plans, and reports

Plan Contents

The remainder of this PROS Plan is organized as follows:

- Chapter 2: Community Profile – provides an overview of the City of Lake Stevens and its demographics.
- Chapter 3: Community Engagement – highlights the methods used to engage the Lake Stevens community in the development of the Plan.
- Chapter 4: Classifications & Inventory – describes the inventory and classifications for existing park system.
- Chapters 5: Parks, Open Space & Trails – describes community feedback, trends, local needs and potential improvements for parks, open space and recreational trails.
- Chapter 6: Recreation Programs & Events – describes community feedback, trends, local needs and potential improvements for recreation services, facilities and events.
- Chapter 7: Operations & Maintenance – describes current and projected operational demands related to the maintenance and care of parks and open space.
- Chapter 8: Goals & Policies – provides a policy framework for the park and recreation system grouped by major program area.
- Chapter 9: Projects & Implementation Strategies – describes a range of strategies to consider in the implementation of the Plan and details a ten-year program for addressing park and facility enhancement or expansion projects.
- Appendices: Provides technical or supporting information to the planning effort and includes a summary of the community survey, stakeholder notes, funding options, among others.

CHAPTER 2

COMMUNITY
PROFILE

This chapter offers a brief overview of the City of Lake Stevens and its demographics. Addressing population growth, diversity, and accessibility is essential for future park system planning to ensure facilities and programs meet the needs of a changing community. Considering these factors helps create an equitable, inclusive park system that serves residents of all ages and abilities.



Aquafest is the premier festival in Lake Stevens, drawing over 30,000 people over the course of a hot summer weekend. The Lake Stevens Chamber of Commerce started Aquafest in 1969 to raise money for the reconstruction of the Community Hall that was partially destroyed by fire. Today, Aquafest is managed by its own board and is a three-day event with parades, a carnival, water sport contests, live music, street vendors and more.

Lake Stevens is a growing city of approximately 42,000 residents located in western Washington. Originally settled in the late 19th century, the city developed around its namesake lake, which remains the heart of the community today. Over the past two decades, Lake Stevens has transformed from a quiet lakeside town into a thriving suburban city, with continued residential and commercial growth projected for the coming years.

Families and professionals are drawn to Lake Stevens for its scenic setting, quality schools, proximity to major employment centers, and the abundance of outdoor recreational opportunities. The City's focus on community development and its ongoing investments in parks, trails, and infrastructure have made it one of the most desirable places to live in Snohomish County.

Location

Lake Stevens is located in the greater Seattle metropolitan area, in the Puget Sound region of northwestern Washington, just east of Everett and about 35 miles north of Seattle. The city sits at an elevation of roughly 200 feet and is defined by its central feature, Lake Stevens — a 1,000-acre freshwater lake surrounded by neighborhoods, parks, and open spaces.



The region has a temperate marine climate with mild, wet winters and warm, dry summers, contributing to the region's forests and lush vegetation. The city sits between the Cascade Mountains to the east, which offer hiking, skiing, and year-round recreation, and the waters of Puget Sound to the west.

State Route 9, a major north-south corridor, links Lake Stevens to Arlington in the north and Snohomish and Woodinville to the south. State Route 204 provides direct access west to Everett and Interstate 5, placing regional job markets and services within easy reach. This connectivity makes Lake Stevens an increasingly important suburban hub within the greater Seattle area.

History

Native American tribes, including the Coast Salish and Snohomish peoples, originally inhabited the area now known as Lake Stevens. These tribes lived in permanent villages along rivers and lakes, including around the shores of the lake, relying on fishing, hunting, and seasonal gathering. The

arrival of European American settlers in the 19th century resulted in disease and displacement among these indigenous communities. Treaties such as the Treaty of Point Elliott in 1855 resulted in the forced relocation of many native people to reservations, altering their way of life dramatically.

The Lake Stevens area was first settled by European Americans in the 1880s, as timber harvesting and mining expanded in the area. Settlers established logging camps, using the lake to transport logs to sawmills built along the shoreline. The area's dense forests and its proximity to expanding rail networks made it a prime location for logging. A small town began to grow around these operations in the early 1900s, as a growing population of workers and their families established schools, churches, and businesses. Although the town remained unincorporated for much of its early development, it hosted local organizations and events that fostered a civic identity. Logging continued to dominate the local economy for until the 1920s when the Rucker Mill was closed after two significant fires.

For a few decades, the community centered on public and private resorts along the lakeshore. However, by the mid-20th century, Lake Stevens began to transition a bedroom community for Everett and the Seattle region as the post-war housing boom, improved automobile access, and the area's scenic beauty spurred residential development.

Lake Stevens was officially incorporated in 1960, and suburban development accelerated in the decades that followed. Today, Lake Stevens is one of the fastest-growing cities in Snohomish County, and the City has evolved into a vibrant suburban community known for its family-friendly neighborhoods, quality schools, and scenic location. The lake continues to serve as a focal point for the community, surrounded by trails, parks, and waterfront access.

Economy

Lake Stevens' economy centers on the professional, educational and health services, manufacturing, and retail sectors – which together employ nearly 60% of workers. Major employers

include the Lake Stevens School District and major manufacturing facilities including Cobalt Enterprises. The Frontier Village commercial area is also a key contributor to local employment.

Community members are generally well-employed - over seven in ten residents over 18 are employed, less than 3.5% are unemployed, and 29% are out of the work force. Incomes are also high - at approximately \$118,290, the median income in Lake Stevens is 10% higher than the average in Snohomish County (\$107,982). More information can be found in the Economic Development Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan.

Demographics

Lake Stevens is a rapidly growing community whose population has increased more than 75% over the past twenty years, and the land area of city has expanded significantly due to annexation. It is home to many families with children, making up nearly half of households, who enjoy the recreational opportunities provided by the City's parks and open spaces.

Table 1. Population Characteristics: Lake Stevens, Snohomish County, and Washington State

Demographics	Lake Stevens	Snohomish County	Washington
Population Characteristics			
Population (2025) ¹	42,180	873,800	8,115,100
Population (2020) ²	35,630	827,957	7,705,281
Population (2010) ³	28,069	713,335	6,724,540
Percent Change (2000-25)	75.9%	44.1%	37.7%
Average Annual Growth Rate (2000-2024)	3.2%	1.8%	1.6%
Persons with Disabilities (%) ⁴	9.9%	12.0%	12.3%
Household Characteristics (2019-23) ⁵			
Households	13,414	311,825	3,020,558
Percent with children	47.2%	33.4%	29.8%
Median Household Income	\$118,290	\$107,982	\$94,952
Average Household Size	2.94	2.64	2.51
Average Family Size	3.26	3.13	3.07
Owner Occupancy Rate	75.3%	68.4%	63.9%
Age Groups (2019-23) ⁵			
Median Age	34.8	38.4	38.2
Population < 5 years of age	8.0%	6.1%	5.7%
Population < 18 years of age	29.0%	22.4%	21.6%
Population > 65 years of age	8.7%	14.4%	16.3%

76% population increase*



* 2000-2025

47% households with children



substantially higher than county and state-wide rates

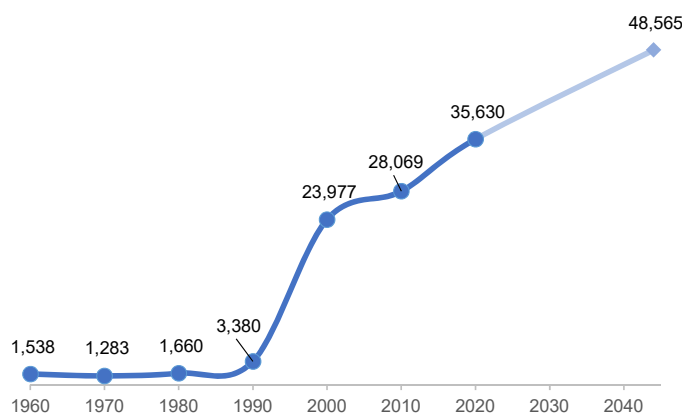
POPULATION

After decades of modest population growth in much of the second half of the 20th century, Lake Stevens experienced rapid growth beginning in the 1990s, see Figure 2. This growth mirrored broader growth in the Seattle area generally and Snohomish County particularly. According to the U.S. Census, Lake Stevens grew from a population of just over 6,000 in 1990 to over 28,000 by 2010. Large annexations in the 2000s also brought residents into the community and added capacity for future growth.

Since then, Lake Stevens has continued to attract residents with its lakefront, suburban feel, quality schools, relative affordability, and easy commuting distance to job centers in Everett and beyond. Today, Lake Stevens is home to 42,180 residents, a 50% increase in population since 2010. The 2044 Comprehensive Plan anticipates Lake Stevens will grow to 48,565 residents by 2044.

The size of a community and its anticipated growth over time are key indicators of whether existing park and recreation facilities will be sufficient to meet future needs. Population growth can also result in increased residential density and/or the development of currently vacant land within a city, potentially increasing the need for away-from-home recreation opportunities while simultaneously reducing potential locations for park and open space acquisition. Planning for parks and recreation facilities can help ensure residents can enjoy sufficient, conveniently located parks, open space, and recreation facilities while the community grows and evolves.

Figure 2. Population Change – Actual and Projected: 1960 – 2044



AGE GROUP DISTRIBUTION

Lake Stevens' population has a median age of 34.8 (2023), much lower than both the Snohomish County (38.4) and statewide (38.2) averages. Adults between the ages of 25 and 44 make up the city's largest 20-year population group, comprising 34% of the overall population in 2023. This has important implications for park and recreation needs.

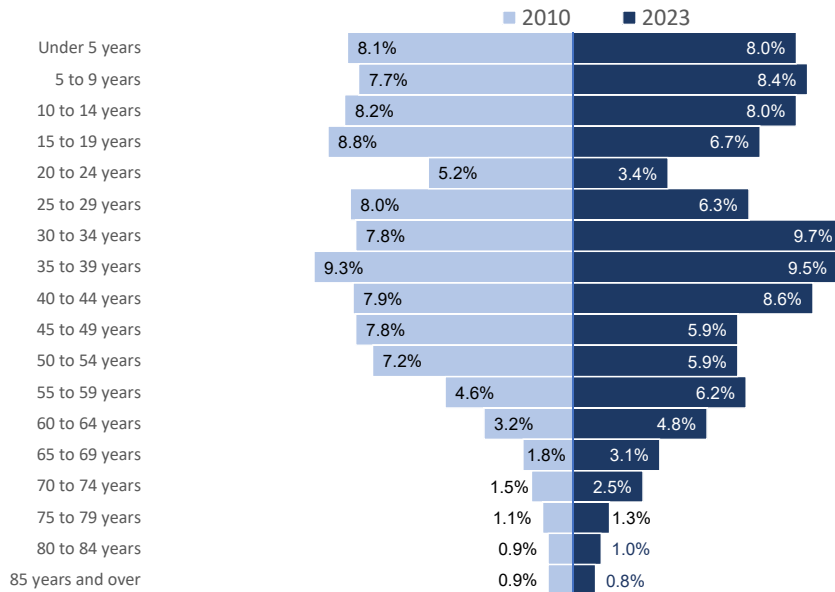
- Approximately 8% of Lake Stevens' population are youth under 5 years old. This group represents users of preschool and tot programs and facilities, and as trails and open space users, are often in strollers. These individuals are the future participants in youth activities.
- Children 5 to 14 years make up current youth program participants. Approximately 16% of the city's population falls into this age range, see Figure 3.
- Teens and young adults, age 15 to 24 years, are in transition from youth program to adult programs and participate in teen/young adult programs where available. Residents of this age group are often seasonal employment seekers. About 10% percent of the city's residents are teens and young adults.
- Adults ages 25 to 34 years are users of adult programs. About 16% of residents are in this age category. These residents may be entering long-term relationships and establishing families. About 47% of households in the city are families with children.
- Adults between 35 and 54 years of age represent users of a wide range of adult programs and park facilities. Their characteristics extend from having children using preschool and youth programs to becoming empty nesters. This age group makes up 30% of Lake Stevens' population.

Sources

- 1: April 1, 2025 Population of Cities, Towns and Counties - WA Office of Financial Management
- 2: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Decennial Census.
- 3: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Decennial Census.
- 4: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.
- 5: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023.
- 6: U.S. Census Bureau, 2023.
- 7: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Decennial Census.
- 8: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Decennial Census.
- 9: Data on the health status of Snohomish County and Washington State residents taken from: University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. "Washington Rankings Data". County Health Rankings. Available at <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/health-data/washington/snohomish?year=2024>. Accessed May 2025.

- Older adults, ages 55 years plus, make up 20% of Lake Stevens' population. This group represents users of adult and senior programs. These residents may be approaching retirement or already retired and may be spending time with grandchildren. This group also ranges from very healthy, active seniors to more physically inactive seniors.

Figure 3. Age Group Distributions: 2010 & 2023



HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS ⁶

In 2023, the average household in Lake Stevens was 2.94 people, significantly higher than the state (2.51) and county (2.64) average. The average family is larger, at 3.26 people. Of the 13,414 households in the city, 47% were families with children under 18, and 16% were individuals living alone. Most city households own their home (75%), higher than the average throughout Washington (64%), while 25% rent.

EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION ⁶

The 2023 work force population (16 years and over) of Lake Stevens is 29,315 (74%). Of this population, 68% percent is employed, 3.4% is unemployed, and 29% is not in the labor force. Residents work in a wide variety of industries - about 17% of employed residents work in education and health care, 16% work in manufacturing, 12% work in professional and management fields, and 12% work in retail trade.

The vast majority (95%) of Lake Stevens residents over 25 years of age have a high school degree or higher, a rate higher than the statewide average

(92%). However, only about 34% of city residents have a Bachelor's degree or higher, lower than statewide rates (39%).

Higher levels of employment and educational attainment positively correlate with both the income and health status of a community – both of which have further impacts on the use and need for park and recreation facilities, as described in the next two sections.

INCOME & POVERTY ⁶

A community's household income level can impact the types of recreational services prioritized by community members and their ability to pay for them. In 2023, the median household income in Lake Stevens was \$118,290. This income level was about \$10,300 (10%) higher than the median income for Snohomish County households. Higher income households typically have an increased capacity to pay for recreation and leisure services and often face fewer barriers to participation. Approximately 61% of Lake Stevens households have household incomes in the higher income brackets (\$100,000 and greater), higher than the county average (54%).

Also, it is essential to consider the needs of lower-income residents, who may encounter barriers to recreational, physical, and wellness activities due to reduced access to parks and recreational facilities, a lack of transportation options, a lack of time, and poor health. Lower-income residents may also be less financially able to afford recreational service fees or pay for services like childcare that can make physical activity possible. In Lake Stevens, 4% of households earn less than \$25,000 annually and 3% of local families live below the poverty level (\$27,750 for a family of four), significantly lower than county (9%) and statewide (11%) rates. Poverty affects 8% of youth under 18 and 4% of adults.

RACE AND ETHNICITY

Lake Stevens has historically had a less diverse population compared to the more urban parts of the greater Seattle metropolitan area. However, Lake Stevens has become more diverse over time, especially as it has grown rapidly in recent decades. As it plans for future park and recreational opportunities, the City should explore ways to best meet the recreational needs of all community members.

As of 2020, most of Lake Stevens’ population identified as White (74%), but the city has seen an increase in the number of residents of other racial and ethnic backgrounds. Multiracial community members make up the largest racial minority group in Lake Stevens, at about 12% of the population. In addition, 11% of community members identify as Hispanic or Latino. Smaller percentages of residents identify as Asian (5.8%), Black or African American (2.4%), or some other race not listed on U.S. Census forms (4.1%), see Table 2.

Table 2. Changes in Racial Composition - 2010 to 2020

Racial Identification	2010 ⁸	2020 ⁷
White	85.1%	74.3%
Some other race	3.2%	4.1%
Two or more races	5.1%	12.3%
Asian	3.6%	5.8%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.9%	0.7%
Black or African American	1.7%	2.4%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.4%	0.5%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	9.3%	11.0%

While nearly all residents speak English, approximately 14% of Lake Stevens’ residents speak a language other than English at home, primarily Asian languages and Spanish. About 4% of residents speak English less than very well.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ⁴

The 2023 American Community Survey reported 10% of Lake Stevens’ population (about 3,900 people) have a disability that interferes with life activities. This is lower than county and state averages (approximately 12% each). About 2.5% of youth under 18 years of age, 10% of adults 18 to 64, and 35% of residents over age 65 live with a disability, signaling a potential need to design inclusive parks, recreational facilities, and programs.

Planning and operating a park system that facilitates participation by residents of all abilities will help ensure compliance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In addition to ADA, there are other accommodations that people with disabilities may need to access parks and participate in recreation programs. Lake Stevens should consider community needs for inclusive and accessible parks, recreational facilities, programs, marketing, and communications.

HEALTH STATUS

The overall health of a community’s residents can impact their ability to participate in recreation and other physical activity and may also reflect, in part, the locality’s level of access to appropriate and convenient green spaces, recreation opportunities, and active transportation facilities.

The availability of places for physical activity can contribute to a community’s physical and mental health. In Snohomish County, 87% of residents have access to adequate physical activity opportunities, which is higher with the average for all Washington residents (85%).⁹ Approximately 18% of Snohomish County adults aged 20 and older report getting no leisure-time physical activity – a rate on par with the statewide average of 18% and lower than the nationwide average of 23%. This suggests that the County has a reasonable number of places where residents can participate in physical activity, including parks, trails, and public or private community centers, gyms, or other recreational facilities.



CHAPTER 3

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

This chapter highlights the methods used to engage the Lake Stevens community in the development of the PROS Plan.

This chapter highlights the methods used to engage the Lake Stevens community in the development of the PROS Plan.

Community engagement played an essential role in developing the 2026 PROS Plan. Several outreach methods were used to connect with the community, seek their input, and provide information about the Plan through convenient in-person and online activities. Public outreach methods were varied and included:

- Mail and online community-wide survey
- Two in-person open house meetings
- Stakeholder focus group meetings and interviews
- Tabling and outreach at community events
- Meetings with the Parks and Recreation Planning Board and City Council
- Lake Stevens city website and project-specific webpage with plan information and feedback opportunities
- Posting notices in high-traffic areas
- Multiple social media postings

Community Survey

A community-wide, mail and online survey was conducted to assess the recreational needs and priorities of Lake Stevens residents. The survey was mailed to a random sample of 2,500 households within the city limits of Lake Stevens on June 17, 2025, and reminder postcards were mailed to the 2,500 households on July 1st. An online version of the survey was posted to the City's website on June 25th. The mail survey included a unique QR code to complete the survey online. Residents who did not receive a mail survey were able to complete the survey in the online format only. The survey was closed on August 3rd, and the full dataset was compiled and reviewed.

Overall, 323 surveys from the random sample mailing were completed and returned (13% response rate, 5% margin of error). An additional 288 surveys were completed from the general, community-wide online survey. In all, 611 surveys were collected.

The survey measured current levels of satisfaction and which facilities were primarily being used by residents. Residents were asked about future improvements and the types of recreational amenities they would like to see considered for the park system. Survey respondents were asked about:

- Performance and quality of programs and parks;
- Usage of City parks and recreation facilities;
- Overall satisfaction with the value of services being delivered by the City;
- Opinions about the need for various park, recreation, and trail improvements; and
- Priorities for future park and recreation services and facilities.

Significant survey findings are noted below, and a more detailed discussion of results can be found in the needs assessment chapter covering parks and open space, trails, and recreation.

Major Survey Findings:

- **Livability:** Nearly all respondents (97%) feel that public parks and recreation opportunities are important or essential to the quality of life in Lake Stevens.
- **Usage:** Park visitation is high, with 78% of respondents visiting parks or recreation facilities at least monthly. Respondents visit local parks and recreation facilities for a variety of reasons, but the most popular reason is to walk or run or to relax. Other top reasons for visiting parks included to attend a community event or concert, use to a playground, or visit a beach.
- **Park Amenity Priorities:** More than two-thirds of respondents would like to see more walking and biking trails in Lake Stevens. Roughly half of respondents would like to see more sports courts for basketball, pickleball, and tennis, community events, and picnic areas. Renovating existing parks and adding new recreational options and acquiring additional land for future parks were moderate priorities.
- **Recreation Programs:** Regarding future recreation program options, special events garnered the most support. Younger residents, particularly those under 45, were more likely than older residents to express interest youth and teen-oriented activities, while adults over 55 were more supportive of senior activities. A large majority of respondents, approximately 85%, are either very or somewhat supportive of the City developing additional indoor recreation facility space.

The complete survey summary is provided in Appendix B.



EXPAND WALKING TRAILS

64% Support & Top Priority



EXPAND INDOOR RECREATION OPTIONS

84% Support



PROVIDE MORE SPORT COURTS

53% Stated there are not enough



RENOVATE EXISTING PARKS

2nd Highest Priority





City of Lake Stevens:
PROS Plan Fact Sheet

The City of Lake Stevens is preparing the city's first Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan! This plan will provide a 10-year vision for the city's parks, open space, and trails. The 2026 PROS Plan will serve as the 'North Star' for the improvement and expansion of City recreation facilities, amenities and parks for the next ten years. It will provide a long-range vision for the City, clear action items, and strategies for implementation.

Did you know?

The city has **122 acres** of public parks, **93 acres** of open space, **5 miles** of the Centennial trail, and **5 miles** of park trails!



We want to hear from you about your priorities, needs, and ideas. Your feedback will help the city understand service needs, identify gaps and opportunities for recreation programming and park types, and a plan to add new parks.



Open House #1

The City hosted an in-person public meeting on Thursday, July 17, 2025 from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. at The Mill. For the open house, 12 display boards were mounted on easels with project information based on park and recreation topics relevant to City services, which included existing park service areas, recreational trails, recreation programming, and park system investment ideas.

Attendees were encouraged to talk to project team members and record their comments on the displays. City staff and project team staff engaged with participants to identify project recommendations and ideas for park and recreation in Lake Stevens. Approximately 12 people attended the meeting to review materials and provide comment.

A summary of responses to the first open house is provided in Appendix C.

Open House #2

The City hosted a second open house on Monday, November 10, 2025. The project team prepared informational displays, which included project overview, parks and outdoor recreation enhancements, and potential park project and investment ideas, among others. Through an introductory presentation, attendees received an overview of community engagement findings and

were briefed on how to participate during the open house. Attendees also utilized post it notes, play money, and sticky dots to identify priority amenities and projects and contribute additional comments or ideas.

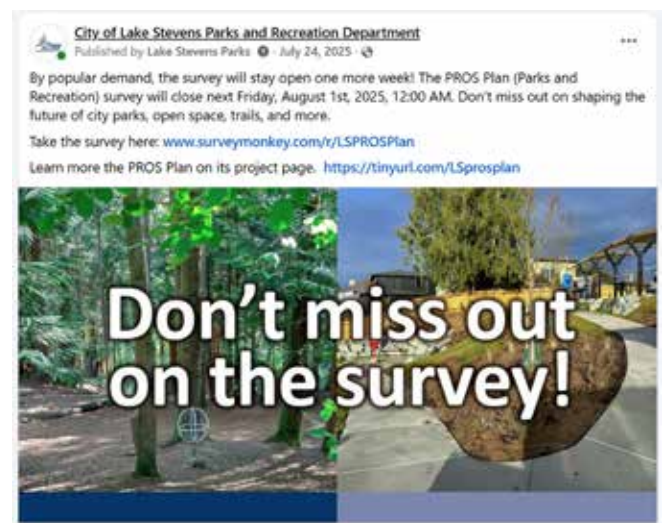
A summary of responses to the second open house is provided in Appendix D.

Stakeholder Focus Group Discussions & Interviews

The City conducted three stakeholder group discussions and six individual stakeholder interviews between July and September 2025 as part of the efforts to engage a variety of community voices in the PROS Plan process. To capture a range of perspectives, the group discussions were organized to gather feedback from a broad range of community needs with more specialized insights into programming, facility use, and future priorities. The three categories for the group sessions included:

- Park Enrichment
- General Users
- Youth Athletics

The interviews also were structured to include a diverse range of perspectives from individuals with experience in local governance, sports organizing and advocacy, arts and cultural representation, and community service.



These facilitated discussions allowed stakeholders to build a dialogue off each other's perspectives, offering insight into key themes that translated into priorities, needs, and opportunities commonly expressed among their peers.

Stakeholders shared their aspirations for park and recreation facilities and programs, and provided ideas on possible improvements during the listening sessions. While each group had different responses to many of the questions, several interests held by all groups emerged. Key themes shared across groups include:

- **Accessibility and inclusivity:** Families, youth, seniors, and people with disabilities all need facilities and programs designed for easy access and meaningful use.
- **Recreation and sports identity:** Lake Stevens' strong sports culture is central to community life, with a need for facilities and programs that support both competitive and recreational activities.
- **Cost and affordability:** High rental fees and permitting costs limit community organizations and families from fully utilizing spaces.
- **Safety and maintenance:** Concerns around vandalism, youth supervision, and upkeep of restrooms, trails, and neighborhood amenities exist.
- **Communication barriers:** With limited local news and reliance on social media, many residents are unaware of available facilities, events, or rental opportunities.

Specific recommendations are incorporated in the needs assessment sections (Chapters 5 – 7), and a full summary is provided in Appendix E.

Community Event Tabling

The City promoted the PROS Plan and community survey during tabling activities in June and July 2025 including Aquafest and School District Community Night. This effort helped to build awareness of the PROS Plan and solicit input on recreation options and preferences.

Board Meetings

The Parks and Recreation Planning Board provided feedback on the development of the PROS Plan during multiple, regularly scheduled public sessions. The first session occurred in June 2025 as a joint session with City Council and the Board to review the project timeline and explore future opportunities and challenges. At subsequent sessions, the Board reviewed and commented on community survey results, project priorities, and strategies to implement improvement projects.

Other Outreach

In addition to the direct outreach opportunities described above, the Lake Stevens community was informed about the planning process through a variety of media platforms. The following methods were used to share information about the project and provide opportunities to participate and offer their comments:

- City website home page
- PROS Plan project page
- Social media via X (Twitter) and Facebook
- Media releases



CHAPTER 4

CLASSIFICATIONS & INVENTORY

This chapter is segmented into two sections. The first section defines the various facility classifications in use in Lake Stevens, and the second is an inventory of existing facilities.

Classifications

Parkland classification helps guide the planning of recreational needs for the community. These classifications also reflect standards that inform future acquisitions and development decisions and operations and maintenance expectations of developed park facilities or natural areas. Classifying parkland by function allows the City to evaluate its needs and plan for an efficient, cost-effective, and usable park system that minimizes conflicts between park users and adjacent land uses.

The Lake Stevens park system is composed of a mixture of park types, each offering different recreational opportunities and natural environmental functions. Separately, each park type may serve only one function, but collectively the system will serve the full range of community needs. The classification characteristics serve



as general guidelines addressing the intended size and use of each park type. In addition to the traditional park facilities, special use and school parks, open spaces, and trails expand the variety of recreation areas available to the community.

Table 3 provides a brief description of the type of facilities within or nearby to the City of Lake Stevens. More detailed descriptions for the various park classifications with their range of amenities and community service areas follow.

Table 3. Lake Stevens Park System Classifications

Classification	Description	Size (Typ.)	Service Area
Community Park	Active & passive recreational amenities to serve the community	> 10 acres	2.5 mile
Neighborhood Park	Recreational amenities and greenspaces for local use	< 10 acres	1 mile
Mini-Park	Small public/private areas with limited park amenities	< 1 acre	¼ - ½ mile
Special Use Park / Facility	Facility providing specific recreation need or purpose	varies	varies
Open Space	Undeveloped, natural areas & greenbelts	varies	varies
Trail / Pedestrian Facility	Paved trails, natural trails, multi-use pathways	varies	1 mile
School Park	Sports fields, playgrounds & sports courts on school grounds	varies	varies

Community Parks



Size

10 to 50 acres

Service Area

Up to 2.5 miles

Existing Parks

- Eagle Ridge Park
- Cavalero Hill Park (photo, left)
- North Cove Park
- Lake Stevens Community Park (Snohomish County)
- Lundeen Park

Community parks typically are larger sites (10 acres or more) developed for a mix of organized play and passive recreation, contain a wider array of facilities and, as a result, appeal to a more diverse group of users. They are planned to provide active and structured recreation opportunities, as well as passive and non-organized opportunities for individual and family activities. Community parks can also serve as local neighborhood parks when considering equitable park distribution of outdoor recreation opportunities. Community parks are generally located on or adjoining a collector street and may be connected to schools or other community facilities.

In general, community park facilities are designed for organized or intensive recreational activities and sports, although passive components such as pathways, picnic areas and natural areas are highly encouraged and complementary to active use facilities. Since community parks serve a larger area and offer more facilities than neighborhood parks, parking and restroom facilities should be provided. The siting and design of community parks may benefit from multi-jurisdictional cooperation for facility planning, development, and maintenance.

AMENITIES TYPICAL FOR COMMUNITY PARKS*

Passive Recreation

- ☒ Seating
- ☒ Casual Use Spaces
- ☒ Community Gardens
- ☒ Internal Walking Trails
- ☒ Beach / Water Access
- ☒ Unique Landscape Features
- ☒ Natural Spaces

Active Recreation

- ☒ Biking Trails
- ☒ Outdoor Fitness / Exercise Facilities
- ☒ Creative Play Attractions
- ☒ Playgrounds
- ☒ Rectangular Fields
- ☒ Diamond Fields
- ☒ Basketball Courts
- ☒ Tennis / Pickleball Courts
- ☒ Volleyball Courts
- ☒ Water Play

Facilities

- ☒ Individual Picnic / Sitting Areas
- ☒ Group Picnic Areas
- ☒ Park Shelters
- ☒ Skateparks / Bike Skills
- ☒ Water Spray Feature
- ☒ Docks
- ☒ Watercraft Launch
- ☒ Outdoor Event Spaces
- ☒ Off-leash Areas
- ☒ Restrooms
- ☒ Parking

* Not all amenities might be provided or available within existing city parks. Selected amenities are intended to help define typical uses or activities for this park type.

Neighborhood Parks



Size

2 to 10 acres

Service Area

Up to 1 mile

Existing Parks

- Catherine Creek
- Davies Beach
- Frontier Heights Park
- Oak Hill (Photo, left)
- West Lake Park

Neighborhood parks are small parks designed for unstructured, non-organized play and limited active and passive recreation. They are generally under 10 acres in size, depending on a variety of factors including neighborhood need, physical location and opportunity, and should meet a minimum size of 2 acres in size when possible. Neighborhood parks are intended to serve residential areas within close proximity (up to 1-mile walking or biking distance) of the park and should be geographically distributed throughout the community. Access to neighborhood parks is mostly pedestrian, and park sites should be located such that people living within the service area can reach the park safely and conveniently. Park siting and design should ensure pedestrians do not have to cross a major arterial street or other significant natural or man-made barrier to get to the site, unless safe crossings are provided. Neighborhood parks should be located along road frontages to improve visual access and community awareness of the sites.

Neighborhood parks are generally developed for a range of activities. This park type often incorporates passive and active recreational opportunities as well as providing multi-purpose facilities. Developed neighborhood parks typically include amenities such as pedestrian paths, picnic tables, benches, play equipment, a multi-use open field for informal play, sport courts or multi-purpose paved areas and landscaping. Neighborhood parks should include restrooms and parking areas, wherever feasible.

AMENITIES TYPICAL FOR NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS*

Passive Recreation

- ☒ Seating
- ☒ Casual Use Spaces
- ☐ Community Gardens
- ☒ Internal Walking Trails
- ☒ Beach / Water Access
- ☐ Unique Landscape Features
- ☒ Natural Spaces

Active Recreation

- ☐ Biking Trails
- ☒ Outdoor Fitness / Exercise Facilities
- ☒ Creative Play Attractions
- ☒ Playgrounds
- ☒ Rectangular Fields
- ☐ Diamond Fields
- ☒ Basketball Courts
- ☒ Tennis / Pickleball Courts
- ☐ Volleyball Courts
- ☒ Water Play

Facilities

- ☒ Individual Picnic / Sitting Areas
- ☐ Group Picnic Areas
- ☒ Park Shelters
- ☐ Skateparks / Bike Skills
- ☐ Water Spray Feature
- ☒ Docks
- ☒ Watercraft Launch
- ☐ Outdoor Event Spaces
- ☒ Off-leash Areas
- ☒ Restrooms
- ☐ Parking

* Not all amenities might be provided or available within existing city parks. Selected amenities are intended to help define typical uses or activities for this park type.

Mini-Parks



Size

Under 1 acre

Service Area

Up to 0.5 miles

Existing Parks with Amenities

- Baker Vista
- Bryce Park
- Crossings at Catherine Creek
- Greenwood Village - 4th St NE
- Mandolin Court
- N. Shore Swim Beach
- Sunset Park (photo, left)
- The Reserve - 10th St NE
- The Reserve - 125th Ave NE
- Timberlake
- Woodland Hills

Mini-parks often referred to as “pocket parks” or “tot lots” are the smallest recreation sites within the park inventory and serve a limited radius (typically ¼-mile, but up to ½-mile) from the site. Mini-parks offer limited recreational options with constrained space. Mini-parks may be public or private, and many were created with neighborhood subdivisions. Mini-parks should connect neighborhoods or commercial centers by paths, trails, or sidewalks. Amenities are usually limited to small playground facilities, small (or no) open grass areas, and minimal site furnishings. Parking typically is not provided at mini-parks. Visitation times by park users are often fairly short since there are limited recreational activity options.

The City will continue to promote mini-parks in new neighborhoods and commercial areas as they develop, especially where service gaps exist.

AMENITIES TYPICAL FOR MINI-PARKS*

Passive Recreation

- ☒ Seating
- ☒ Casual Use Spaces
- ☐ Community Gardens
- ☒ Internal Walking Trails
- ☒ Beach / Water Access
- ☐ Unique Landscape Features
- ☐ Natural Spaces

Active Recreation

- ☐ Biking Trails
- ☐ Outdoor Fitness / Exercise Facilities
- ☐ Creative Play Attractions
- ☒ Playgrounds
- ☐ Rectangular Fields
- ☐ Diamond Fields
- ☒ Basketball Courts
- ☐ Tennis / Pickleball Courts
- ☐ Volleyball Courts
- ☒ Water Play

Facilities

- ☒ Individual Picnic / Sitting Areas
- ☐ Group Picnic Areas
- ☒ Park Shelters
- ☐ Skateparks / Bike Skills
- ☐ Water Spray Feature
- ☒ Docks
- ☒ Watercraft Launch
- ☐ Outdoor Event Spaces
- ☐ Off-leash Areas
- ☐ Restrooms
- ☐ Parking

* Not all amenities might be provided or available within existing city parks. Selected amenities are intended to help define typical uses or activities for this park type.

Special Use Parks / Facilities

Special use parks may be any facility (private or public) with a specialized amenity that provides a unique experience, a particular sport, or activity, and may provide a revenue income. Special use parks may include boat launches, cultural facilities, historical landmarks and structures, community centers, recreation centers/facilities, plazas, or public art. No standards are proposed concerning special facilities, since facility size is a function of the specific use.

Because demand for special use facilities is generated from within and outside the city limits, the City, County, and other recreation providers should cooperate on locating special use facilities. Commercial enterprises geared toward the lake such as non-motorized uses or the Centennial Trail could complement the City's inventory of special use facilities.

Open Space & Natural Areas

Open spaces are undeveloped lands primarily left in a natural state and typically places that are geographically or geologically unique, with passive recreation use as a secondary objective, such as trails. This type of conserved land often includes wetlands, wildlife corridors, shorelines, rivers, steep hillsides or other natural or environmentally sensitive spaces. Open spaces may serve as trail corridors, and low-impact or passive activities, such as walking, nature observation, and fishing may be allowed, where appropriate. Open spaces are usually owned or managed by a governmental agency or non-profit conservation organization and may or may not have public access.

Currently, the Lake Stevens land use code requires dedication of Native Growth Protection Areas on lands with critical areas such as wetlands, streams, and steep slopes during development. The City also requires the dedication or creation of open space as a condition of approval for some subdivisions and attached housing developments. These set asides form a large portion of the open space inventory for the city that must be managed cooperatively between the city, homeowners, homeowners' associations, other agencies and even non-profit land trusts.

Recreational Trails & Pedestrian Facilities

While not a traditional classification of parklands, trails offer a corridor of access and provide recreational and/or transportation functions. Trails are non-motorized recreation and transportation networks ideally separated from roadways. Trails can be developed to accommodate multiple or shared uses, such as pedestrians and bicyclists, or a single use. Walking routes may combine off-road and on-road facilities. Recreation trail alignments aim to link to natural systems, public and civic activity centers, neighborhoods, schools and commercial centers.

In 2020, the City adopted the first Trails Master Plan to guide development of new trails and provide level of service standards. Approximately six miles of public or semi-public trails exist in Lake Stevens. Many of the shorter trails link road segments. Some of the newer subdivisions include soft trails within the outer portions of critical area buffers or as paths between different areas. Chapter 6 includes additional information about trail system elements.

School Parks

School parks complement City-owned park facilities and add to the community's recreational lands inventory. While public access is typically restricted to non-school hours, school parks often provide needed recreational amenities or provide similar functions as other parks in alternative locations. Elementary school playgrounds may provide similar amenities commonly met by mini-parks or neighborhood parks, and middle schools and high schools may provide community-level or special-use park functions, such as sports fields and sport courts. Since schools typically are located within residential neighborhoods, they are easily accessible and evenly distributed throughout the community. The Lake Stevens School District (LSSD) owns the largest percentage of formal recreational/athletic facilities in the city.

Table 4 lists the LSSD's facilities including seven elementary schools, each with a playground and a mix of other amenities. There are two middle schools, one mid-high school, and one high school. Each school contains a different mix of athletic

fields and play courts. The high school also houses a swimming pool, which is open to the public and functions as a special use facility.

In addition to operating the indoor swimming pool, the LSSD offers evening and weekend classes in sports, hobbies, job skills, continuing education, and other recreational classes. The LSSD Community Education program currently provides recreation and leisure service programming, such as summer youth recreation programs and adult programs, in the fall, winter, and spring.

Table 4. Lake Stevens School District 'Park' Facilities

School Park Facilities	Recreation Amenities	Acres
Cavelero Mid High School	2 baseball fields, track, 8 tennis courts, 1 football field, 1 soccer field	37.6
Glenwood Elementary	baseball field, athletic field, playground, basketball court	12.0
Highland Elementary	baseball field, soccer field, 2 playgrounds	8.7
Hillcrest Elementary	baseball field, track, basketball court, playground	11.5
Lake Stevens High School	2 baseball fields, football field, track, 8 tennis courts	36.0
Lake Stevens Middle School / Skyline Elementary	2 baseball fields, basketball court, track, playground, trail	24.7
North Lake Middle School	baseball field, athletic field, track, trail	21.7
Mt Pilchuck Elementary	2 baseball fields, playground, basketball court, trail	10.6
Stevens Creek Elementary	ballfield, playground, basketball court	14.6
Sunnycrest Elementary	2 ballfields, basketball court, playground, basketball court, trail	13.7
Total		191.0

PARK INVENTORY

The park and open space inventory identifies the recreational assets within Lake Stevens. The City provides over 128 acres of public parks and recreation facilities distributed among 22 sites, and an additional number of open space parcels that comprises over 136 acres of conserved public open space. The following list depicts the available parkland inventory in Lake Stevens.

Appendix E includes site-specific inventory information and recommendations for public parklands managed by Lake Stevens. The following map shows the location of existing parks, open spaces and trails within the City. The last section provides an overview of other nearby recreational opportunities.

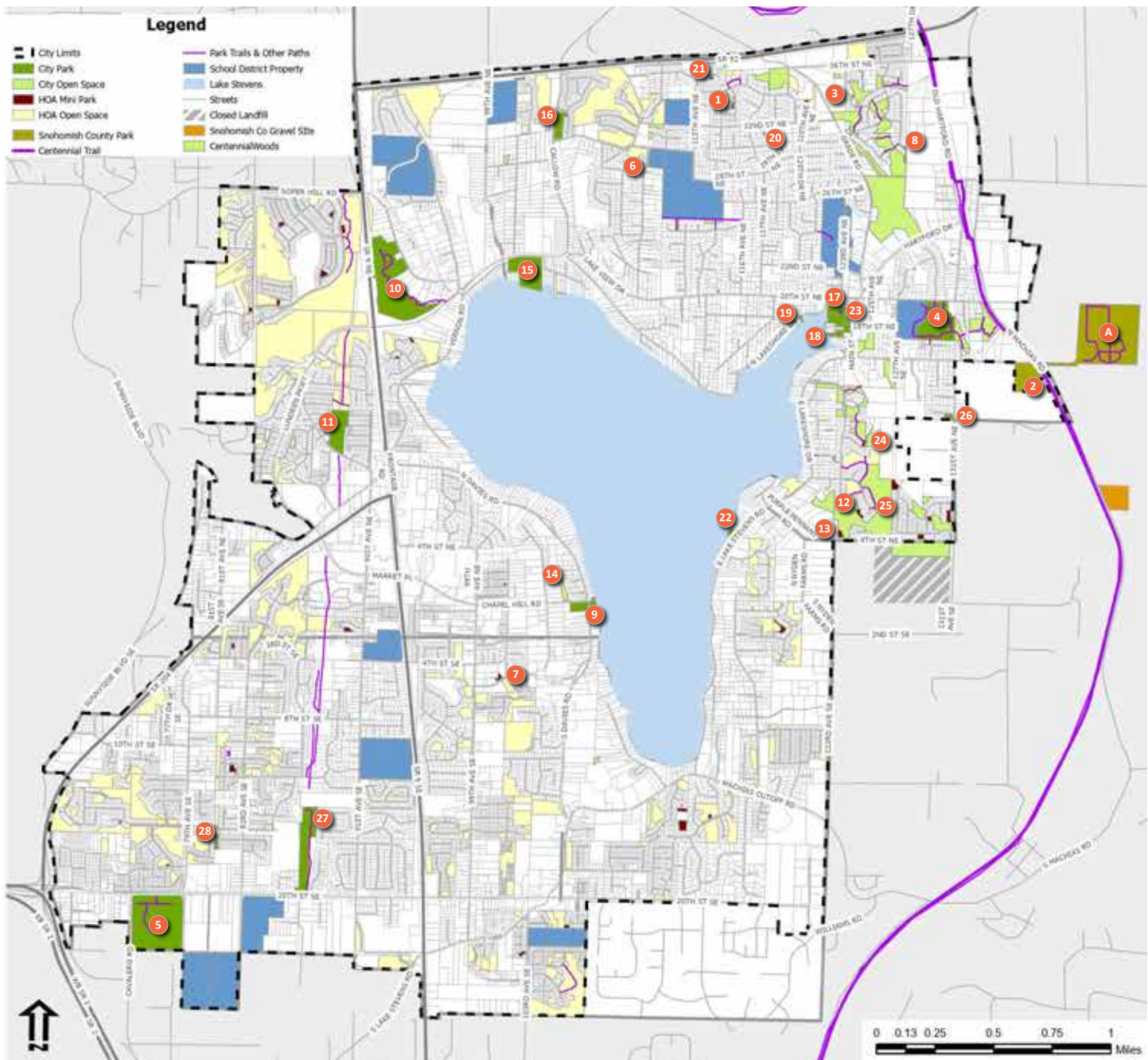
As Lake Stevens' park system continues to expand, modifications to park classification designations may become necessary. Since the 2015 Comprehensive Plan, several new parks have been acquired and constructed, and additional open space has been added to the City's inventory. Also, with the significant renovations that were made to North Cove Park, this PROS Plan recommends adjusting the classification of this park from neighborhood park to community park. While the park is smaller than a typical community park, North Cove Park functions as a community park with its range of uses, amenities and activities. Lundeen Park also has been reclassified from neighborhood park to community park.

Table 5. Existing Inventory: City-owned Park Lands

		Amenities																				
		Playground	Pickleball/Tennis Court	Basketball Court	Soccer Field	Baseball / Softball Field	Open Field / Area (Informal)	Pathways / Trails	Skate Park / Skate Element	Dog Park	Disc Golf	Community Gardens	Water Spray Feature	Splash Pad	Beach	Boat Ramp / Dock / Pier	Parking (dedicated & street)	Restrooms (building & portable)	Picnic Area	Picnic Shelter	Concessions	Natural Areas
Community Parks																						
Cavalero Hill Park	35.00	●		●			●	●	●	●							●	●	●	●		●
Eagle Ridge Park	28.20						●	●			●						●	●				●
Lundeen Park	10.05	●		●			●	●							●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
North Cove Park	4.02	●					●	●				●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Neighborhood Parks																						
Catherine Creek	16.55							●			●						●	●				●
Davies Beach	2.48							●						●	●		●	●	●			
Frontier Heights Park	7.20	●	●	●	●			●									●	●	●	●		●
Oak Hill Park	2.63	●		●			●	●									●	●	●	●		●
West Lake Park	12.36						●	●		●							●	●	●			●
Mini Parks																						
Baker Vista*	0.47	●																				
Bryce Park*	0.11	●																				
Cedar Road*	0.24																					
Crossings at Catherine Creek	0.51						●															
Greenwood Village - 125th Ave NE*	0.29																					
Greenwood Village - 4th St NE*	0.40	●																				
Lake View Park*	0.12																					
Mandolin Court	0.05						●															
North Shore Swim Beach	0.71													●	●	●	●					
Summer Hill Estates*	0.11																					
Sunset	0.60							●						●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
The Reserve - 10th St NE*	0.20			●																		
The Reserve - 125th Ave NE*	0.11	●																				
Timberlake	0.57	●																				
Woodland Hills*	0.66	●						●														
Special Use																						
Bonneville Field**	7.32					●											●	●				
Cedarwood	0.87																●					
North Cove Boat Launch	0.89														●		●	●				
The Mill	0.58																●	●				
Open Space																						
City Open Space (various sites)	136.84							●														●
Count of Parks with Each Amenity		11	1	5	1	1	8	12	1	2	1	1	1	0	5	6	14	14	8	6	1	8
CITY-MANAGED PARK ACREAGE	128.5																					

* Mini-Parks owned by City, but maintained by a Homeowners Association

** Operated by Lake Stevens Little League



ID #	Park Name	ID #	Park Name	ID #	Park Name
1	Baker Vista*	11	Frontier Heights Park	21	Summer Hill Estates*
2	Bonneville Field**	12	Greenwood Village - 125th Ave N	22	Sunset
3	Bryce Park*	13	Greenwood Village - 4th St NE*	23	The Mill
4	Catherine Creek	14	Lake View Park*	24	The Reserve - 10th St NE*
5	Cavalero Hill Park	15	Lundeen Park	25	The Reserve - 125th Ave NE*
6	Cedar Road*	16	Mandolin Court	26	Timberlake
7	Cedarwood	17	North Cove Boat Launch	27	West Lake Park
8	Crossings at Catherine Creek	18	North Cove Park	28	Woodland Hills*
9	Davies Beach	19	North Shore Swim Beach	A	Lake Stevens Community Park (County)
10	Eagle Ridge Park	20	Oak Hill Park		

* Maintained by an HOA

** Operated by Lake Stevens Little League

Map 1: Existing Parks & Open Space

Other Recreational Resources

BONNEVILLE FIELD BALL PARK

Owned by the City and operated by Lake Stevens Little League, this three-acre site includes a baseball field and parking, and it serves as informal parking for the Centennial Trail. The park is primarily used by organized little league teams during the summer.

LAKE STEVENS COMMUNITY PARK

A 43-acre Snohomish County Park just east of the city limits, this park provides an athletic complex with baseball/softball fields, soccer fields, basketball courts, a picnic shelter, playground, walking path, restrooms and parking.

LOCHSLOY FIELD

The Lake Stevens School District owns this 15-acre site, located north of SR- 92, between Lake Stevens and Granite Falls. Facilities include numerous soccer fields and a large parking area. Organized sport league teams use the park primarily during the spring, summer and fall.

CENTENNIAL TRAIL

The Snohomish County Centennial Trail is a 30-mile trail stretching between the Skagit County line to the north and the City of Snohomish to the south. The trail is planned to extend from the southern Snohomish/King County line to the northern Snohomish/ Skagit County line. The trail serves pedestrians, bicyclists, skaters, and equestrians. The Snohomish County Centennial Trail skirts the eastern city limits, 1.7 miles of which are managed by the City. Nearly five miles of the Centennial Trail is adjacent to the City between Centennial Middle School and the Rhododendron Trail Head.

SNOHOMISH COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION

The Snohomish County Parks & Recreation Division has over 11,000 acres, spread across 100+ park properties and miles of fresh and saltwater shorelines. Flowing Lake County Park and Campground is the closest county campground to Lake Stevens. Located on the northern shoreline of Flowing Lake, the park hosts cabins, RV camps sites, boat launch & dock as well as showers and restrooms. Lake Roesiger, approximately 12 miles

east of Lake Stevens, is a day-use park offering a swimming beach, picnicking, play areas and trails.

EVERGREEN ARBORETUM & GARDENS

Located in Everett's American Legion Park, about 12 miles west of Lake Stevens, the Evergreen Arboretum hosts 12 themed gardens within its 3.5 acres. ADA-accessible pathways connect over 20 outdoor sculptures and the Arboretum offers tours, educational classes and events. The Arboretum is open daily dawn to dusk.

SNOHOMISH WILDLIFE AREA

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) manages manages over 1,500 acres in the Snohomish River delta at the Ebey Island Unit and Spencer Island Unit, and miles of riparian and river habitat at the Stillwater, Crescent Lake and Cherry Valley Units. The Snohomish River watershed is the second largest drainage to Puget Sound and supports eight salmonid species, including Chinook Salmon and Bull Trout, as well as 25- 50% of all Coho Salmon in Puget Sound.

Along with salmon conservation, the Snoqualmie Wildlife Area units are also an important stop on The Pacific Flyway -- a major north-south flight corridor for migratory birds in America. Every year, birds travel during spring and fall months following food sources, head to breeding grounds, or travel to overwintering sites. The Snoqualmie Wildlife Area provides needed food and refuge for migratory birds during their stops in Washington, and is a vital source of quality habitat.

PRIVATE HOA PARKS

Private homeowner associations (HOAs) parks provide small-scale recreation opportunities for certain subdivisions and contribute to the community's access to outdoor recreation. Private HOA parks provide another 34 mini parks across the city, totaling 12.4 acres. These private HOAs parks are in addition to the conserved open space and dedicated Native Growth Protection Areas noted above. Although these private parks typically are not open to the general public, they still are considered an important element of the Lake Stevens park system. The City should remain committed to providing larger parks, especially for those residents not affiliated with private homeowner association amenities and resources.





CHAPTER 5

PARKS, OPEN SPACE & TRAILS

This chapter describes community feedback, trends, local needs, and potential improvements for the City's parks, open space, and recreational trails.

The park system planning process assesses recreational needs and priorities for park facilities, active use areas, and trails in Lake Stevens. The park assessment includes a discussion of specific local needs with consideration given to the City's broader park system. Public input and information on park inventory conditions also were heavily relied upon in the planning process.

Park & Recreation Trends

NATIONAL TRENDS

Park agencies refer to regional, state-wide and national recreation trends to help measure their service offerings and provide insights to opportunities for improvements or adjustments, and a review of various park and recreation research resources provides a background on trends, market demands, and agency comparisons. These outdoor recreation trends, combined with community interests in parks, trails and open space and an assessment of current conditions, help identify and shape recommendations for park system improvements. Examining current outdoor recreation trends can help inform potential park and facility improvements and opportunities that may enhance the community and create a more vibrant parks system as it moves into the future.

The following national and Washington state data highlights some of the current park usage trends and may frame future considerations for Lake Stevens' park system. Additional trend data and summaries are provided in Appendix F.

- 90% of U.S. adults believe that parks and recreation is an important service provided by their local governments. ⁽¹⁾
- 84% of U.S. adults seek high-quality parks and recreation when choosing a place to live. ⁽¹⁾
- Running, jogging, and trail running are the most popular outdoor activities across the nation, based on levels of participation, followed by hiking, fishing, biking, and camping. ⁽²⁾
- A significantly higher percentage of seniors (ages 55+) are participating in outdoor recreation. In 2022, the senior participation rate hit a record high of 35% and is rising. ⁽²⁾
- Participation nearly doubled for pickleball in 2022, increasing by 86% year-over-year. In 2022 for the first time in over seven years, every racket sport increased its total participation number compared to the previous year. ⁽³⁾
- Wildlife viewing and paddle sport participation increased statewide by 28% since 2017. ⁽⁴⁾
- Nationally, outdoor recreation economic activity increased 19% from 2020 to 2022, while the overall U.S. economy only saw a 5.9% increase. ⁽⁵⁾

According to the Sports and Fitness Industry Association, participation nearly doubled for pickleball in 2022, increasing by 85% year-over-year. In 2022 for the first time in over seven years, every racket sport increased its total participation number compared to the previous year. In terms of team sports, the overall participation rate approached, but did not exceed, the 2019 rate. Basketball, outdoor soccer, and flag football all posted three-year increases of over 4.5%, with basketball leading the way with a 13% increase since 2019. Lifestyle activities generally remained very popular. Golf and tennis have grown more than 20% since 2019, and yoga grew more than 10% in that same time period. Trail running and day hiking participation grew for the fifth straight year.

Sources

- (1) 2022 American Engagement with Parks Report, National Recreation and Park Association
- (2) 2023 Outdoor Participation Trends Report, Outdoor Foundation
- (3) 2023 Sports, Fitness, and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report, Sports and Fitness Industry Association
- (4) 2022 Assessment of Resident Demand, Washington State 2023 Recreation & Conservation Plan (draft)
- (5) 2022 Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account data, U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

STATE RECREATION TRENDS

A comprehensive trend assessment for the State of Washington is provided by the Recreation and Conservation Office's (RCO) 13th Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). This plan provides a common, state-wide vision for public investments in outdoor recreation and public land conservation based on assessments conducted on rates of participation in outdoor recreation activities. Most appropriate to the Lake Stevens park system are the survey responses from outdoor recreation participants when asked to indicate the most significant motivators that would increase the amount of time they spend recreating outdoors in Washington. The following were the top five identified factors:

- More opportunities near where I live (79.4%)
- Better facilities near where I live (64.2%)
- More parking (58.0%)
- Better neighborhood access (50.7%)
- More information about opportunities and requirements (48.6%)

The plan also reports on the top issues and challenges facing park providers and their resultant management priorities. For more in-depth evaluations, see Appendix F.

Community Interests

Beyond the broader perspectives of national and state recreation trends, local needs were explored through a community survey, two open houses, stakeholder discussions and online comments to gather feedback on priorities, interests, and future needs for Lake Stevens' park system.

COMMUNITY SURVEY

The community survey confirmed that Lake Stevens residents strongly value their local parks, recreation options and open space opportunities. Virtually all respondents (97%) feel that local parks and recreation opportunities are important or essential to the quality of life in Lake Stevens. Eighty-three percent of respondents overall feel that they are essential; while an additional 14% believe that they are important to quality of life, but not essential.

Residents visit Lake Stevens' parks frequently to participate in a range of activities and use the

Trends in Playgrounds

Lake Stevens residents strongly value their parks and recreation facilities and park playgrounds are an important element in outdoor recreation. Reported in Landscape Architect magazine, the top five playground industry trends for 2021 were compiled from data and feedback from parks professionals, landscape architects, and educators.

1. **Inclusive Playgrounds**, increasingly popular over the last few years, have been evolving beyond meeting basic ADA guidelines. Designers are seeking to expand accessible playground equipment, consider multi-generational play, and leverage inclusive play to help overcome societal barriers.
2. **Rope-based Playgrounds**, climbers and playground nets provide a technique for working around natural environments and unusual topography. Their flexibility in placement offers more options for connecting with the landscape rather than working around difficult topography.
3. **Outdoor Fitness** has increased importance during the COVID-19 pandemic as many gyms and indoor fitness centers closed and forced more people to seek outdoor options. Outdoor fitness spaces are being increasingly integrated into park and trail designs to encourage health and physical fitness for all ages.
4. **Outdoor Learning** has been implemented during the pandemic to replace or supplement indoor classrooms. Outdoor classrooms can encourage activity in children to counteract the reduction in recess time due to hybrid class schedules and remote learning. Seating, tables, shelters, hand sanitizer stations and other outdoor products are helping create outdoor classrooms.
5. **Human-powered Play** engages users to provide physical energy to “power-up” the activity, such as turning a handle, pressing foot pedals, rotating wheels. These products often relate to sensory experiences like lights and music, story-telling, or social games.

Spurred on by the social distancing of the pandemic, these five trends in playground design and development point to more human-to-human interactions that reinforce the value of social connections, even in a physically distanced environment.



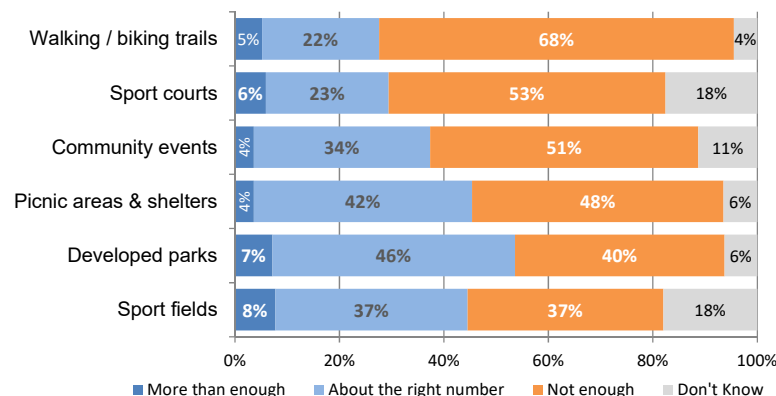
City's parks and recreation facilities, with about half visiting at least once a week, if not every day. The most common reasons for park visits included walking or running, relaxing, attending a community event or concert, or using a playground or beach.

When asked why they do not visit Lake Stevens' parks or open spaces more often, about one in five respondents do not visit more because they do not know what is offered. The following list highlights the top five reasons for not visiting more often:

- Do not know what is offered (22%)
- Too far away / Lack transportation (20%)
- Are not well maintained (19%)
- Age or physical limitations (14%)
- Barriers to physical accessibility (11%)

The survey asked if the number of existing park amenities meet residents' needs. Residents were split on whether they feel the City provides enough parks and recreation facilities. More than two-thirds of respondents would like to see more walking and biking trails in Lake Stevens, see Figure 4. Roughly half of respondents would like to see more sports courts for basketball, pickleball, and tennis (53%); community events (51%), and picnic areas (48%). Smaller, but still significant, numbers think the city needs more developed parks (40%) and sports fields for soccer, baseball, softball, etc. (37%).

Figure 4. Adequacy of Existing Amenities

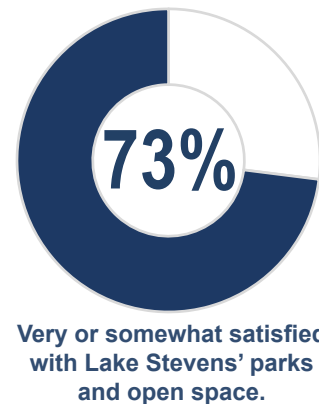
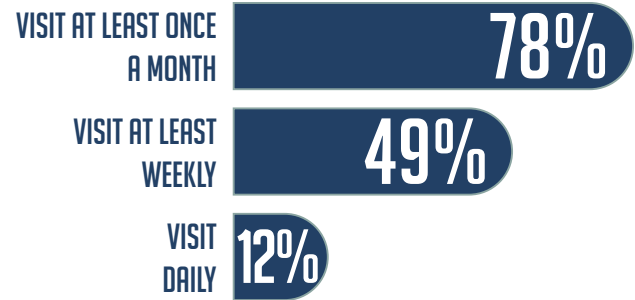


A different question gave respondents a much larger list of recreational improvements and asked them which were most important to them or their families. Walking trails in developed parks and hiking trails in natural areas were selected by the largest proportions of respondents (63% and 55%, respectively). Water access, an amphitheater or outdoor performing space, nature play areas, and an outdoor splash pad or water spray park

were preferred by between 30% and 40% of respondents.

A variety of other improvements, including pickleball courts, additional or upgraded playgrounds, community gardens, picnic shelters, and climbing structures were of interest to about one quarter of respondents. Less than 15% of respondents felt the remaining listed activities were the most important to them or their families.

Figure 5. Frequency of Visitation

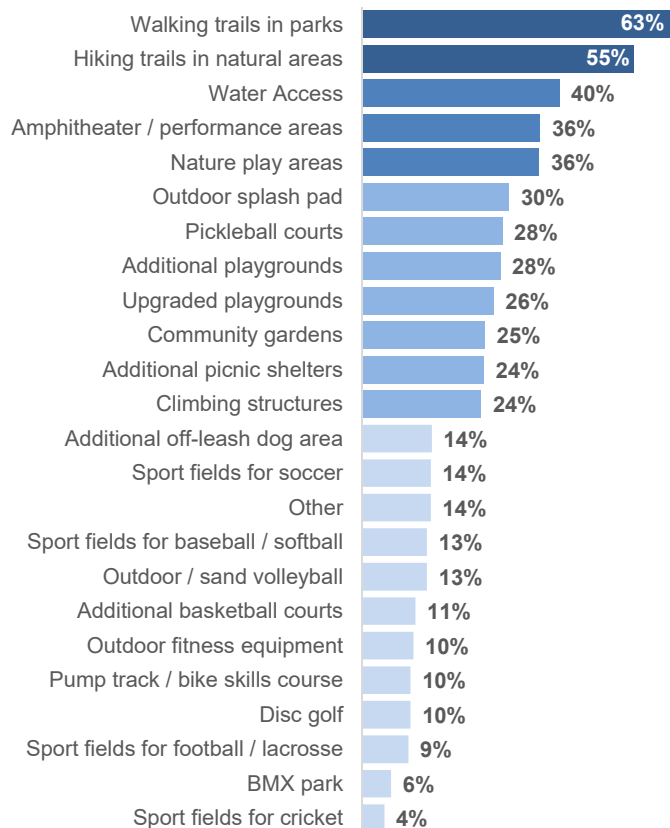


Respondents were asked to select their top five priorities from a variety of potential park system amenities. Overall, respondents identified expanding walking and biking trails as their top priority. Renovating existing parks and adding new recreational options and acquiring additional land for future parks were moderate priorities. Expanding recreation programs, classes and camps and expanding marketing and communication were ranked as the lowest priorities by respondents.

Respondents were asked to describe one thing that they would like to see the City of Lake Stevens do to improve parks, trails, and/or recreation programs. While respondents provided 420 specific comments and ideas, the following themes emerged:

- **Trails, sidewalks, and connectivity:** A top priority was improving walkability and connectivity. Respondents expressed strong interest in building a safe, continuous trail or sidewalk loop around the lake, expanding the citywide trail network for walking and biking, and creating better connections between neighborhoods, parks, schools, and the Centennial Trail. Respondents also asked for sidewalks, improved crossings, and traffic calming on busy streets to improve park access for families, seniors, and other pedestrians.
- **Balancing growth with open space and natural character:** Many respondents emphasized the importance of preserving open space and natural areas in the face of growth. Respondents called for acquiring additional land—especially lakefront property and large tracts—to secure space for future generations, prevent over-development, and maintain the community's natural and rural charm.
- **Park maintenance and amenities:** Many comments highlighted the need for consistent upkeep of existing facilities. Requests included better restroom facilities (with a strong preference for permanent, clean, well-maintained buildings), more trash cans and pet waste stations, improved seating and shaded areas, and timely repairs of broken equipment.
- **Safety and security:** Multiple respondents raised concerns about safety at Lake Stevens' parks. They called for better lighting, visible security patrols, security cameras, and more consistent enforcement of rules to address issues such as

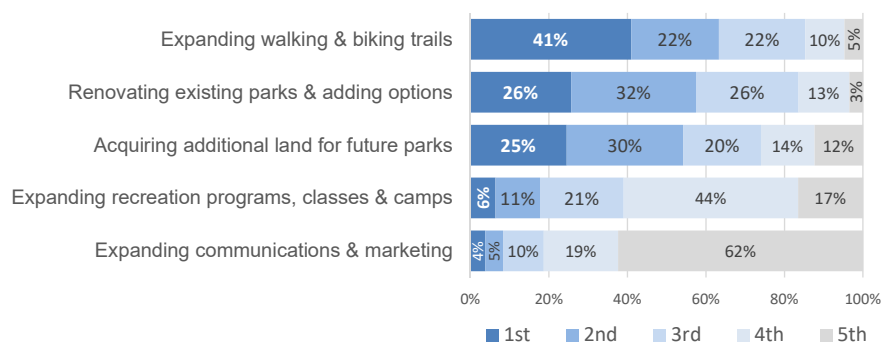
Figure 6. Top Park Amenities of Interest



bullying, theft, and aggressive or reckless behavior by teens in parks and at trailheads.

- **Communication and information:** Many residents spoke to a desire for better communication about what is already available. Respondents asked for more user-friendly online maps, calendars of events, newsletters or direct mail, and improved signage at facilities to help residents take advantage of existing parks, programs, and opportunities.

Figure 7. Investment Priorities by Amenity Type



Respondents were asked an open-ended question about why they leave the City of Lake Stevens for recreation activities or programs. Of those who answered (341 responses), the following common reasons emerged related to parks and trails:

- **Walking, hiking, and biking trails:** Many respondents expressed that they leave the City to use longer, safer, and more scenic walking and hiking trails, suitable for strollers, pets, and families, though multiple respondents appreciate the City's access to the Centennial Trail. Others cited concerns about the lack of safe infrastructure around the lake for walking or biking.
- **Larger and more diverse playgrounds and parks:** Multiple respondents leave the city to take children to larger or more diverse play areas, with more expansive playgrounds, splash pads, and equipment for older children. Some respondents mentioned that local parks are too small, crowded, or do not appeal to kids of multiple ages.

OPEN HOUSE & FOCUS GROUPS FEEDBACK

Comments from the two community open house meetings provided insights into investment priorities based on variety display materials. Among a selection of eight potential amenity improvements, the top priority was additional sports courts. Other investments, in order of preference, were sand/ beach volleyball, recreational trails, pickleball courts, dog park amenities, and an outdoor splash pad. Also mentioned among other priorities were exercise stations, sports fields, dodge ball, open space for picnicking and yard games, a mountain bike path or park and an obstacle course.

Other public feedback ranged from ideas on how to fill the gaps in the distribution of parks across the city to potential projects for expanding recreation options. Comments also included where and what trail connections should be considered, as well as recreational programming needs. One exercise solicited the priority ranking of amenities for future investment. Sports fields, recreational trails and exercise stations were the top three priorities expressed by participants. In determining how to allocate available funding resources, participants indicated that enhance existing park facilities was the top priority.

Three focus group discussions were organized to explore additional insights into recreation programming, facility use, and future priorities. The Park Enrichment group brought together a wide range of community organizations and representatives that participate in community programming, cultural opportunities, and overall community use. This group shared ideas for enhancing amenities and facilities to create space for encouraging community connection. The second focus group, General Park users, brought together community members who use parks for recreation, events, and daily activities. The third focus group, Youth Athletics, brought together representatives of local sports organizations and parents who are deeply involved in local athletics. Participants emphasized Lake Stevens' strong sports culture, while also noting significant challenges with field availability, coordination, and facilities. All three focus groups provided feedback on key priorities, challenges and concerns and offered ideas and opportunities for the future park system.

- Expand athletic and recreation facilities by developing multi-use sports facilities, adding fields and courts, and improving lighting, storage, and restroom infrastructure. The common sentiment was that parks and athletic fields are overused, under-sized, or not City-owned, which creates inequities and barriers to participation.
- Create safe and inclusive gathering spaces to ensure new and existing facilities are affordable, ADA-compliant, family- and senior-friendly, and equipped with multipurpose spaces for events and everyday use.
- Continue to strengthen partnerships by collaborating more closely with schools, community organizations, and local sport programs.
- Continue to focus on safety and maintenance. Concerns exist around vandalism, graffiti, youth supervision, and upkeep of restrooms, trails, and park amenities.

Park Conditions Assessment

The overall condition of park infrastructure and amenities is one measure of park adequacy and assurance of public safety. Proper stewardship of park infrastructure requires developing a long-term maintenance and capital plan to ensure the safety of park users that aligns with community needs and allocates limited funding resources properly. General park infrastructure include walkways, parking lots, restrooms, drainage and irrigation, lighting systems and vegetation. Amenities include picnic shelters, play equipment, site furnishings, sports courts, sports fields and other recreational assets. Deferred maintenance over a long time period can result in unusable amenities when perceived as unsafe or undesirable by park patrons. Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines also provide a measure of acceptable condition.

The current conditions of the Lake Stevens park system were assessed to identify existing site maintenance issues and opportunities for future capital improvements. In late June 2025, the consulting landscape architect conducted site visits to all the park, open space and trail facilities owned and managed by the City of Lake Stevens. These site visits provided visual observations of current conditions throughout the park system. The park assessment includes a discussion of specific local needs with consideration given to existing City park infrastructure. Assessments are documented for each individual park facility, features and amenities are rated based on visible condition (good, fair or poor), and a matrix of all sites with their ratings is created to help visualize system-wide considerations.

The assessment included walkways, parking lots, park furniture, drainage and irrigation, vegetation, and other amenities. The following conditions assessment matrix (Table 6) summarizes the results of these assessments. These inform developing project prioritization strategies for park improvements, identifying funding strategies, and updating the ten-year Park Capital Improvement Plan. Park amenity conditions were also averaged across park elements to indicate which types of elements are in greater need for significant upgrades, renovations or overall improvements.

The matrix on the following page indicates the types of amenities within each park facility, and park infrastructure and amenities are rated based on the following scale:

- 1 – Good Condition: Generally, amenities in ‘good’ condition offer full functionality and do not need repairs. Good facilities have playable sports surfaces and equipment, working fixtures, and fully intact safety features (railings, fences, etc.). Good facilities may have minor cosmetic defects and encourage area residents to use the park.
- 2 – Fair: In general, amenities in ‘fair’ condition are mainly functional, but need minor or moderate repairs. Fair facilities have play surfaces, equipment, fixtures, and safety features that are operational and allow play, but have deficiencies or periods where they are unusable. Fair facilities remain essential amenities for the community but may slightly discourage the use of the park by residents given the current condition.
- 3 – Poor: In general, amenities in ‘poor’ condition are largely or completely unusable. They need significant repairs to be functional. Some examples include athletic fields that are too uneven for ball games, irreparably broken features, buildings that need structural retrofitting, etc. Poor facilities discourage residents from using the park and may present safety issues if left open or operational.

Good conditions should be the goal for the management and stewardship of park facilities. Where infrastructure or amenities are rated as ‘fair,’ strategies should be developed for repair or restoration. Park features, structures, amenities, or landscapes rated as ‘poor’ should receive immediate attention and be prioritized for near-term maintenance, capital repairs, or a new capital project. Facilities in poor condition should also be evaluated and taken out of operation if they are deemed unsafe.

Table 6. Site Conditions Assessment Matrix for City-Managed Parks

Park Name	Average	Recreation Amenities										Site Amenities				Park Structures			Vegetation				ADA
		Playgrounds	Paved Courts: Basketball	Skate Park	Disc Golf	Off-Leash Dog Park	Pathways/Trails	Docks/Piers/Launches	Waterfront/Beaches	Community Gardens	Water Spray Feature	Site Furnishings	Lighting (Y/N)	Signage	Parking Areas	Restrooms	Picnic Shelters	Concession Building	Turf	Park Trees	Landscaped Beds	Natural Areas	Compliance
CATHERINE CREEK	1.8	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	2	N	2	2	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	2
CAVALERO HILL PARK	1.2	1	-	1	-	2	1	-	-	-	-	1	N	2	1	1	2	-	1	1	-	1	1
CROSSINGS AT CATHERINE CREEK	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	N	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
DAVIES BEACH	1.4	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	2	N	1	2	1	2	-	2	1	1	-	2
EAGLE RIDGE PARK	1.5	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	-	2	N	1	1	2	-	-	1	1	2	1	2
FRONTIER HEIGHTS PARK	1.5	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	2	Y	1	2	1	2	-	2	-	-	1	2
LUNDEEN PARK	1.3	1	1	-	-	-	2	-	1	-	-	1	N	-	-	2	1	1	1	1	1	-	2
MANDOLIN COURT	1.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	N	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
NORTH COVE BOAT LAUNCH	1.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	Y	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
NORTH COVE PARK	1.1	1	-	2	-	-	1	1	1	-	1	1	Y	1	2	1	1	-	1	1	1	-	1
NORTH SHORE SWIM BEACH	1.6	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	-	-	1	N	2	2	1	-	-	2	1	-	-	2
OAK HILL	1.1	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	N	1	1	1	1	-	1	1	1	-	2
SUNSET PARK	1.0	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	-	-	1	N	1	1	1	1	-	1	1	1	1	1
THE MILL	1.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
TIMBERLAKE	1.4	1	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	N	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	2
WEST LAKE PARK	1.1	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	Y*	2	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	1
AVERAGES	1.3	1.0	1.0	1.5	2.0	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.4	-	1.4	1.5	1.2	1.4	1.0	1.2	1.0	1.2	1.0	1.6

Conditions matrix data based on park site visits conducted on June 23 - 25, 2025, plus subsequent feedback from City staff following renovations conducted during the course of the PROS Plan process.

The following summary offers a collection of concerns and recommendations generated by the inventory and assessments of physical observations conducted during the end of June, 2025. The accompanying conditions matrix provides a quick look at needs for improvements by highlighting the park amenities that are in poor condition (red) that should be removed, replaced or addressed in some way.

In general, the City has a wonderful park system that provide numerous opportunities for its residents to interact with nature, explore natural areas and, especially, connect with water-based recreation on the Lake. Upgrades and improvements have been occurring in recent years and illustrate the City's commitment to providing a robust park system for its community benefit. The observations and comments below should be used to integrate needed repairs, replacements or renovations into the park system's future capital facility plan.

PARK PLAYGROUNDS

Play equipment in some playgrounds are popular and engaging, particularly at Lundeen and North Cove Parks. Oak Hill Park has brand new equipment as that park was only recently developed. Both Mandolin Court and Crossings at Catherine Creek mini-park sites are absent of any play piece in their empty play areas. It may be that those two sites are too small (or unseen) to provide reasonable outdoor recreation value. Mandolin Court is in a neighborhood where residences have adequate room to have their own play equipment.

Play safety surfacing such as engineered wood fiber should be refreshed or replaced on regular intervals to ensure meeting the specifications for fall safety.

DOCKS, PIERS & LAUNCHES

Most docks and piers were in very good condition with characteristics that allow good drainage, lighter conditions underneath, and no risk of splinters. The boat docks at the North Cove boat launch were considerably older with patches of repaired (or covered) decking. That dock should be replaced with the more environmentally-friendly decking style. The edging boards along the swim dock at



the North Lakeshore Beach are aging and need replacement. Also, pier decking at Davies Beach needs to be replaced in the near future.

PARK STRUCTURES

Picnic shelters, restrooms, docks, observation decks, storage buildings, and other park structures are highly varied in their ages, styles, function, appearance and condition. This planning process does not include evaluating architectural or engineering integrity for park structures. Rather, this Plan recommends separate and ongoing inspections of park structures, particularly as these elements get older. Older buildings may need roof replacements, painting, plumbing upgrades, and other predictable maintenance tasks that should be tracked through the city asset management program.

In all parks, restrooms and shelters should be individually assessed for ADA compliance in their interior spaces as well as any provided picnic tables, water fountains, or BBQ grills. In parks where restrooms are closed seasonally or only portable toilets are provided, those portable toilets should be handicapped accessible.



PARK & TRAIL PAVEMENTS

Overall, pavement conditions in the park system were good. The asphalt perimeter pathway at Lundeen Park contained a number of cracks and bumps from root upheavals that need to be addressed before becoming tripping hazards. The older concrete at the North Cove Park's skate park was rough and would hinder the smooth movement of skateboards and scooters with small wheels. Regular monitoring through pavement inspections can stay ahead of any serious cracks, gaps, holes and upheavals that could be either a safety hazard or access barrier for park users.

PARKING & ENTRANCES

Most parks and facilities that provided parking included designated spaces for handicapped parking. As noted in the individual park assessments, the handicapped signs were sometimes posted too low to meet ADA compliance guidelines that recommend a minimum 60" for sign heights. One of the signs at Eagle Ridge Park for the Senior Center is hidden by the hedge and should be displayed more visibly. For parks with gravel parking areas, such as Cavalero Hill Park, the City should designate handicapped spaces as those parking areas are improved with delineated parking stalls.

PARK SIGNAGE

Several park facilities lacked any identifying signage connecting it to the city park system. Park signs should have a unified and consistent appearance to convey the sense of welcome and belonging to the public spaces that are part of the public realm.



The public information kiosks in some of the parks seemed underutilized. As a way to respond to public comments for the need for additional information, the City should determine what messaging should be displayed in these park kiosks to expand and improve their use and utility. The City may also consider whether integrating a digital messaging system (e.g. links to park specific QR codes with maps, upcoming activities, etc.) might be a better long-term tool for some of the information in certain parks as it offers a more nimble and dynamic way to get information to the public.

SITE FURNISHINGS

There is great diversity in the range of site furnishings across the park system without a clear standard for site furnishings like picnic tables, benches, bike racks, lighting, signage, drinking fountains and bollards. Establishing a palette of standard site furnishings from reputable, trusted manufacturers with long-track records of durable performance will, in the long-term, help the City's parks department have consistent operations and maintenance. Care should be taken to think about complementary color palettes, replacement part availability, paint/powder-coating, number of moving parts, compliance with ADA, variety, etc.

NATURAL MOWN GRASS AREAS

Mown grass areas within parks were in varying conditions based on soil types and intensity of foot traffic. Sites where the grass cover transitions to sand beach or water's edge may naturally thin out as user wear patterns and the sandy soil's lower nitrogen levels prevent lush thick growth. Parks where regular irrigation was not being used to keep



the grass green for the summer had more weed content and browner grass. In places where park users are likely to want to active play in the grass or spread their picnic blankets, the grass should be irrigated and regularly fertilized to sustain grass growth. Avoid fertilizing grass areas immediately adjacent to the Lake's edges as this could impact water quality in the Lake.

TREES & LANDSCAPES

Park trees and landscape planting beds were noted as in good condition during the site visits. Summer growth can be hard to keep up with. Pathways and trails adjacent to dense growth of blackberries were susceptible to protruding growth that creates a hazard for trail users. Tracking the frequency of brush cutting needs can help preempt problems by getting ahead of intruding thorny growth into pathways.

On a side note, several parks have shrub plantings of Japanese barberry. While a few observers may find the red foliage to be ornamental, this shrub species does not belong in public spaces. The thorns are very sharp, easily break off in the skin and are non-native with the potential to become invasive species in natural areas. As improvements and landscape changes are planned, Japanese barberry should be removed from the parks' landscapes. More suitable native shrubs species should be substituted.

While some of the City's parks are not permitted to have shade trees due to the alignment of overhead power lines, planting more native canopy trees at Oak Hill Park would provide future shade to park users and help offset the feeling of open exposure that is characteristic of that park.



ACCESSIBILITY (ADA) COMPLIANCE

Public parks are required to provide reasonable universal access to avoid discrimination of persons with disabilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provides guidelines for compliance in places of public accommodation. While this park plan does not investigate ADA non-compliance in detail, some highlights are noted. Access to parks, playgrounds and restrooms are the highest priority for parks to provide use to all residents and visitors.

Since the site furnishings within parks were highly variable in age and style, standardizing these elements of park amenities (tables, benches, drinking fountains, etc.) could help the parks comply with the federal ADA guidelines. Those picnic tables on accessible routes should each have a wheelchair seating space to allow full participation of users with mobility devices. Park benches should have both backs and armrests to provide support for all types of users.

While it's not part of the ADA guidelines, drinking fountains should not only be accessible to all humans but should provide ground-level dog fountains to offer access to water for those frequent four-legged park users.

CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN (CPTED)

Principles of design to foster safe public spaces known as CPTED include maintaining good visibility across different active use areas to allow park users to see movement and occupancy and be able to anticipate encounters with other park users. Thick hedges, blind corners, hiding spots, and other landscape or structural elements that limit clear visibility should be avoided where feasible.

Levels of Service

Service metrics provide a benchmark for measuring the City's performance in meeting community expectations for the provisions of parks and outdoor recreation amenities. A level of service is a snapshot in time of how well the City is meeting an adopted standard or other metric in the park system. A review of current levels of service (LOS) guides the assessment of current quantities and qualities of park amenities in Lake Stevens, allowing for comparisons with other agencies across the country.

Traditionally, measurements have focused on acres of parkland per capita. While this metric is valuable, it should not be used exclusively. Instead, it serves as a starting point for exploring a range of customized and diverse approaches to evaluating the City's current LOS across various metrics. By considering a variety of factors, such as park accessibility, facility quality, amenity offerings, and community satisfaction, a more comprehensive understanding of park service provision can be achieved. This holistic approach ensures that the needs and preferences of the community are effectively addressed, and that parks and recreational facilities remain vital components of Lake Stevens' quality of life.

NATIONAL RECREATION & PARKS ASSOCIATION AGENCY PERFORMANCE REVIEW

The 2025 National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) Agency Performance Review and accompanying Park Metrics provide comprehensive park and recreation-related data to inform park and recreation professionals and key stakeholders about the state of the industry. The 2025 NRPA Agency Performance Review presents data from more than 1,000 unique park and recreation agencies across the United States, as reported between 2022 and 2024. These data provide guidance to inform decisions and demonstrate the full breadth of service offerings and responsibilities of park and recreation agencies across the United States. This comparison of nationwide data with Lake Stevens can provide guiding insights rather than target benchmarks.

The NRPA data are used to compare different park and recreation providers in communities across the country; however, the Park Metrics database relies on self-reporting by municipalities. Some agencies only include developed, active parks, while others include natural lands with limited or no improvements, amenities, or access. The comparative standards in the table on the following page should be viewed with this variability in mind.

Acreage-based Metrics

The NRPA Agency Performance Review provides a comparative of parkland acreage metrics across a range of jurisdiction population sizes. Parkland refers to both maintained parks and open space areas, such as greenspaces and plazas. The current population of Lake Stevens fits within the category of communities with 20,000 to 49,999 people. For that population category, the median is 10.9 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. The current parkland acreage per 1,000 residents in Lake Stevens is 3.6 acres per 1,000 residents, which is lower than the median and below the lower quartile (5.7 acres/1,000) for comparably-sized communities. This ratio is based on a total parkland inventory of 128.5 acres and excludes the acreage of local homeowners' association open space.

Staffing & Investment per Capita Metrics

Another method for assessing park levels of service examines the investment in parks and facilities using population and budget allocations. The NRPA data provides a comparison of annual operating expenses with other agencies and jurisdictions with similar population sizes. Applying the City's budget data, the operating expense per capita is \$89.43 per resident, which is lower than the \$103.13 median for all agencies and the \$112.38 median for park providers in cities with 20,000 to 49,999 people, see Table 7. With 128.5 acres of parkland, Lake Stevens' operating expenses per parkland acre are higher than the median expenditures of all agencies in aggregate and lower than those of other similarly-sized jurisdictions.

Table 7. Comparison with NRPA Performance Investment Metrics

Performance Measure	All Agencies	Jurisdictions 20,000 to 49,999	Lake Stevens
Residents per Park (by jurisdiction size)	2,411	2,071	1,917
Annual Operating Expenses	\$7,225,000	\$3,683,000	\$3,772,084
Operating Expenses per Capita	\$103.13	\$112.38	\$89.43
Operating Expenses per Parkland Acre	\$8,577	\$8,979	\$29,355
Operating Expenses per FTE	\$118,150	\$116,895	\$314,340
5-Year Capital Budget Spending	\$12,650,000	\$7,971,000	\$5,173,349
Park & Recreation Staffing (FTEs)*	59.2	30.5	12
FTEs per 10,000 Residents	8.6	9.6	3.4
Acres of Parkland per 1,000 Residents	10.2	10.9	3.6
Miles of Trails	16	10	5.5

*Performance Measures updated May 31, 2025 w/ 2025 NRPS Agency Report

Table 8 provides the aggregate metrics and data of jurisdictions with a similar population range grouping to Lake Stevens. These five comparable park and recreation agencies also represent cities with similar population densities although their open space acreage is considerably higher than Lake Stevens. In several of the listed categories, the City's park system metrics are within the range of other agencies in terms of annual operating expenses and spending per resident. However, the number of full-time equivalent (FTEs) employees and the FTE ratio to population deviate from the NRPA median data, with Lake Stevens' FTEs lower

than comparable agencies. It should be noted that the communities with full recreation programming have much higher FTE quantities.

As the park and recreation system expands, the City will need to consider how best to balance the growing demands placed on park maintenance and operations staff to care for parks at the level desired by the community. With a predicted population expansion, pressure to provide more active recreational programming may warrant more FTEs to provide the desired level of services.

Table 8. Comparison with Similar-sized Cities

Performance Measure	Lake Stevens	Edmonds	Camas	Mercer Island	Bothell	Montlake Terrace	Lynnwood
Population (2025)	42,180	43,510	27,970	25,850	51,760	24,640	40,592
Park & Recreation Total Budget	\$3,772,084	\$5,294,031	\$2,836,706	\$4,872,793	\$8,689,264	\$1,504,809	\$19,415,333
Park & Recreation Expenses per Capita	\$89.43	\$121.67	\$101.42	\$188.50	\$167.88	\$61.07	\$478.30
Park & Recreation Staffing (FTEs)*	12	29.6	12	20.6	17	7.9	42.5
FTEs per 10,000 Residents	3	7	4.3	8.0	3.3	3.2	10.5
Total Developed Parks (acres)	132	131	161	260	135	68.2	250
LOS: Developed Parks (acres/1,000)	3.1	3.0	5.8	10.1	2.6	2.8	6.2
Parklands (parks & open space) (acres)	265	230	1,064	479	405	188	389
LOS: Total Parkland (acres/1,000)	6.3	5.3	38.0	18.5	7.8	7.6	9.6
LOS: Total Parkland (acres/FTE)	22.1	7.8	88.7	23.3	23.8	23.8	9.2
Land Area (sq. mi.)	8.9	8.9	14.1	6.4	14.4	4.1	7.9
Population density (pop./sq. mi.)	4,739	4,889	1,984	4,039	3,594	6,010	5,151
Park Facilities (#)	22	47	29	52	26	18	17

PARK AMENITY METRICS

The provision of recreational amenities within the park system offers another perspective on the adequacy of park level of service. From the NRPA Park Metrics data, 11 amenities were compared with the median values from an aggregate of all agencies across the country, as well as from similarly sized jurisdictions to that of Lake Stevens (see Table 9). Lake Stevens' park amenities of community gardens, dog parks, water features and disc golf courses sits within the range between comparable jurisdictions and all agencies. The recent incorporation of Cavalero Hill Park as a transfer from the County to the City improved the park system's amenity mix by adding one playground, a skate park, off-leash dog area and a basketball court. The comparisons also indicate that Lake Stevens has fewer playgrounds than comparable communities and is deficient in sports fields, tennis courts and pickleball courts compared to the median of agencies reporting. Additionally, the acknowledgment of the extensive collection of HOA mini parks with playgrounds improves the metrics for playgrounds per capita in the city, as does the recognition of school district sport fields and courts.

Also, based on the mapping analysis provided earlier in this chapter, several areas of Lake Stevens do not have easy access to existing recreational amenities, and residents have to drive

for access for various activities. The most gaps in available outdoor recreational parkland occur in the southern sections of the city where fewer nearby public parks limit the availability of park amenities.

BEYOND METRICS TO "UNIQUENESS"

Examining the quantity of parklands and developed park acreage, as well as the level of investment in the park system, are merely two approaches for evaluating the current LOS for park and recreation facilities. As the Lake Stevens park system matures, the City must strive toward a more diverse, unique, and universally accessible suite of outdoor recreation amenities, expanded trail network connections, and support facilities that provide an enhanced sense of place and quality of life for the community. One area where Lake Stevens rises above other park agencies is the recreational asset of the lake. With several locations across the lake perimeter where the public can get to the water, the City has provided a special outdoor recreational amenity. Community feedback and the clear concentration of park users during warm summer months strongly suggests the need for more public space along the lakefront, if and where feasible.

Through the PROS Plan process, community feedback has highlighted an interest in a more varied assortment of recreation experiences. In meeting these local interests, the City also should

Table 9. NRPA Park Metric for Amenities

Amenities	All Agencies	Jurisdictions 20,000 to 49,999	Lake Stevens	Lake Stevens (w/ pending parks*)	Lake Stevens (incl. pending parks*, schools & HOAs)
Number of People per Amenity					
Playgrounds	3,737	3,320	6,026	5,273	1,004
Diamond Fields	4,749	3,408	NA	NA	6,026
Rectangular Field	5,946	4,002	NA	42,180	14,060
Community Gardens	35,065	27,230	42,180	42,180	42,180
Dog Parks	47,247	26,534	42,180	21,090	21,090
Water Features	49,392	29,804	42,180	42,180	42,180
Tennis Courts (outdoor)	6,794	6,284	NA	NA	2,636
Pickleball Courts (outdoor)	10,419	7,333	NA	10,545	10,545
Basketball Courts (outdoor)	8,500	8,000	14,060	10,545	5,273
Disc Golf courses	66,923	32,519	42,180	42,180	42,180
Skate Park	55,772	35,000	42,180	21,090	21,090

 meet/exceed median comparables
 near median comparables
 below median comparables

* Cavalero & Frontier Parks

ensure an equitable distribution and quantity of common amenities – such as playgrounds, picnic shelters, sport courts, sport fields, and trails. This approach will help distribute park visitation across many sites and acknowledge that many park users, particularly families, seek a variety of amenities to support a range of recreational activities during each visit.

Park Distribution – Gap Analysis

Understanding the known gaps in the park system and evaluating the City's existing levels of service for parks will provide a foundation for strategic planning to ensure that tomorrow's residents have equitable access to a balanced distribution of parks, trails, and recreation amenities to stay healthy and active.

To better understand the distribution of existing recreation amenities and where acquisition efforts should be considered, a gap analysis of the park system was conducted to examine and assess the community's current access to various recreation opportunities across the City.

The gap analysis used travelsheds for each park classification, which represents a geographic area that can be reached from specific points for specific travel distances. Park system travelsheds are calculated as travel distances along the road network starting from known and accessible entry points at each park and defined as each park classification as follows:

- For mini parks, travelsheds were derived using a ¼-mile primary and ½-mile secondary service area with travel distances calculated along the road network starting from known and accessible access points at each park.
- For neighborhood parks, travelsheds were derived using a ¼-mile and ½-mile primary and 1-mile secondary service area with travel distances calculated from known and accessible access points.
- For community parks, travelsheds were derived using ¼-mile, ½-mile, 1-mile and 2½-mile travel distances to acknowledge that these park types (including athletic fields) serve a wider array of users and driving to such sites is typical.
- A composite map of these classifications illustrate the entirety of City parks to the 1-mile travelshed.

Maps 2 through 6 illustrate the application of

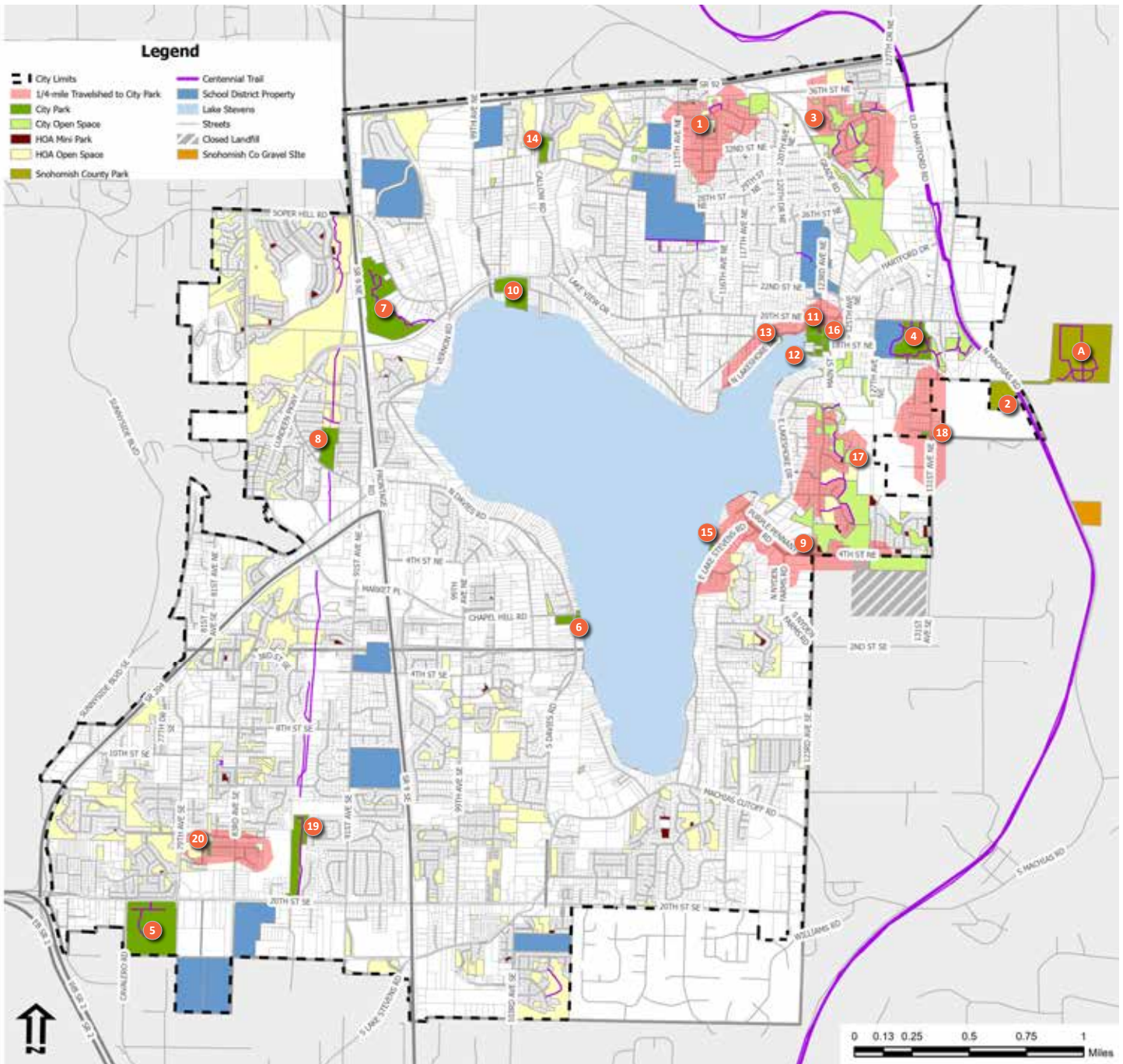
the distribution criteria from existing parks. The coverage of these zones, based on access along existing public rights-of-way, shows which neighborhoods are within reach or walking distance of a public park. The areas on the map where there is no walkable park (areas in white on the maps) reveal gaps in equitable distribution of public parkland.

Striving to provide a neighborhood park within a reasonable distance (e.g., 1-mile) may require acquiring new park properties in currently underserved locations or improving multi-modal transportation connections to allow local residents to safely and conveniently reach their local park.

The mapping of park distribution and 'travelsheds' helps to illustrate the underserved parts of the city. Several areas of southwest and south Lake Stevens have limited access to public parks or are in areas of future growth as indicated by white areas on Map 7. As Lake Stevens redevelops and acquisition opportunities become more limited, the City should consider taking advantage of acquisition opportunities in these targeted locations and as funding allows to fill gaps and ensure an equitable distribution of park facilities.

The asterisks on Map 7 suggest generalized areas where an additional city park would help fill the gap and provide a more effective level of service for Lake Stevens' residents. Nine potential acquisition targets are noted on the map, and while these generalized acquisition areas do not identify a specific parcel(s) for consideration, the area encompasses a broader region in which an acquisition would be ideally suited. Also, if the City's growth boundary or city limits are expanded in the future, the City should aggressively pursue the acquisition of a large, flat property to accommodate another community park that could contain a variety of recreation options including sport fields.

Gap analysis modeling also assessed the distribution of various recreation amenities, including playgrounds, sport fields, sport courts, and lake access areas, among others. Maps 8 through 15 illustrate the geographic distribution of these amenities, and this information is helpful in future park planning to improve access to the variety of recreation options desired by the community.

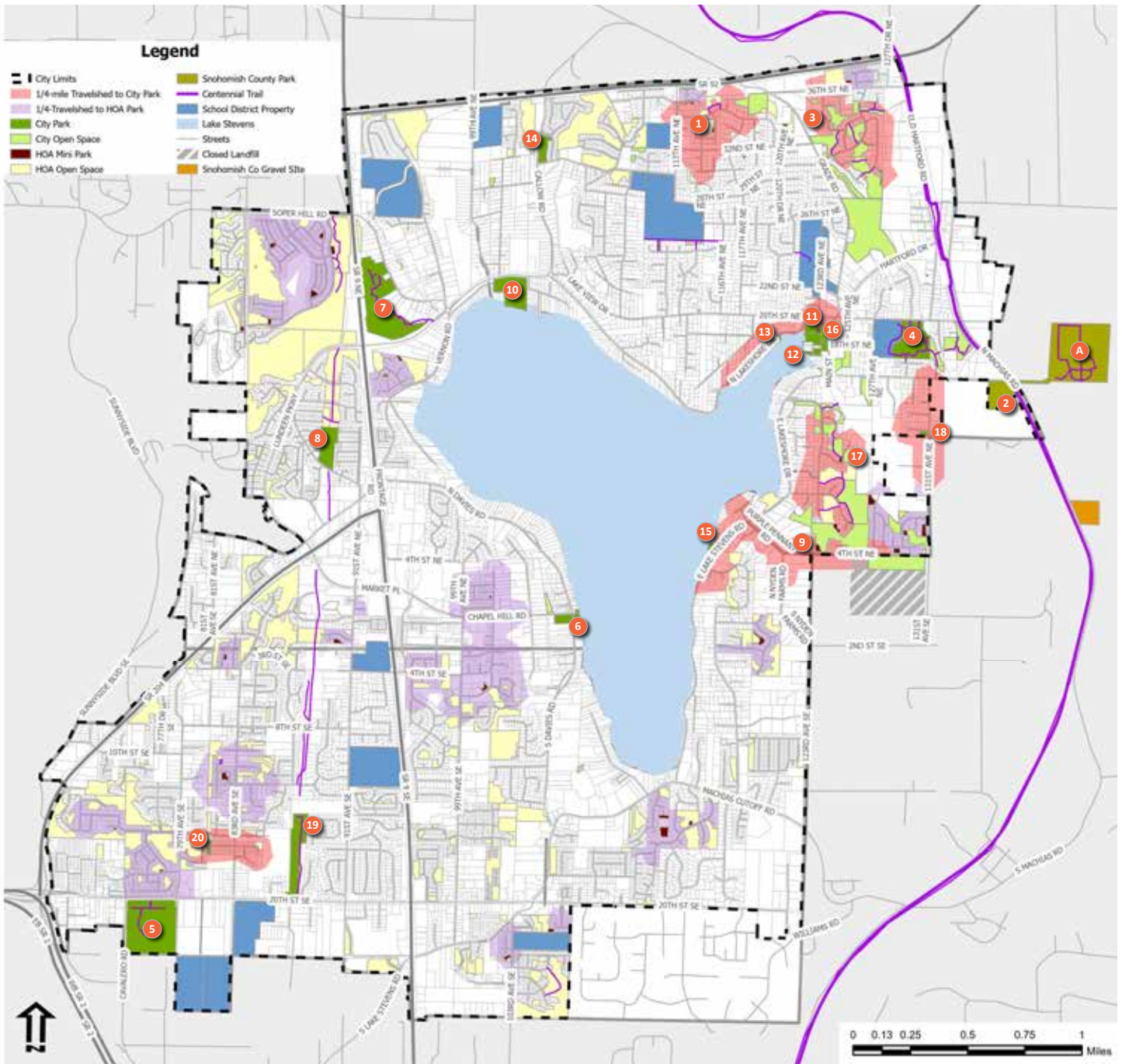


ID #	Park Name		
1	Baker Vista*	9	Greenwood Village - 4th St NE*
2	Bonneville Field**	10	Lundeen Park
3	Bryce Park*	11	North Cove Park
4	Catherine Creek	12	North Cove Boat Launch
5	Cavalero Hill Park	13	North Shore Swim Beach
6	Davies Beach	14	Oak Hill
7	Eagle Ridge Park	15	Sunset Park
8	Frontier Heights Park	16	The Mill
		17	The Reserve - 10th St NE*
		18	Timberlake
		19	West Lake Park
		20	Woodland Hills*
		A	Lake Stevens Community Park (County)

* Maintained by an HOA

** Operated by Lake Stevens Little League

Map 2: Travelsheds for Mini Parks (1/4-mile)



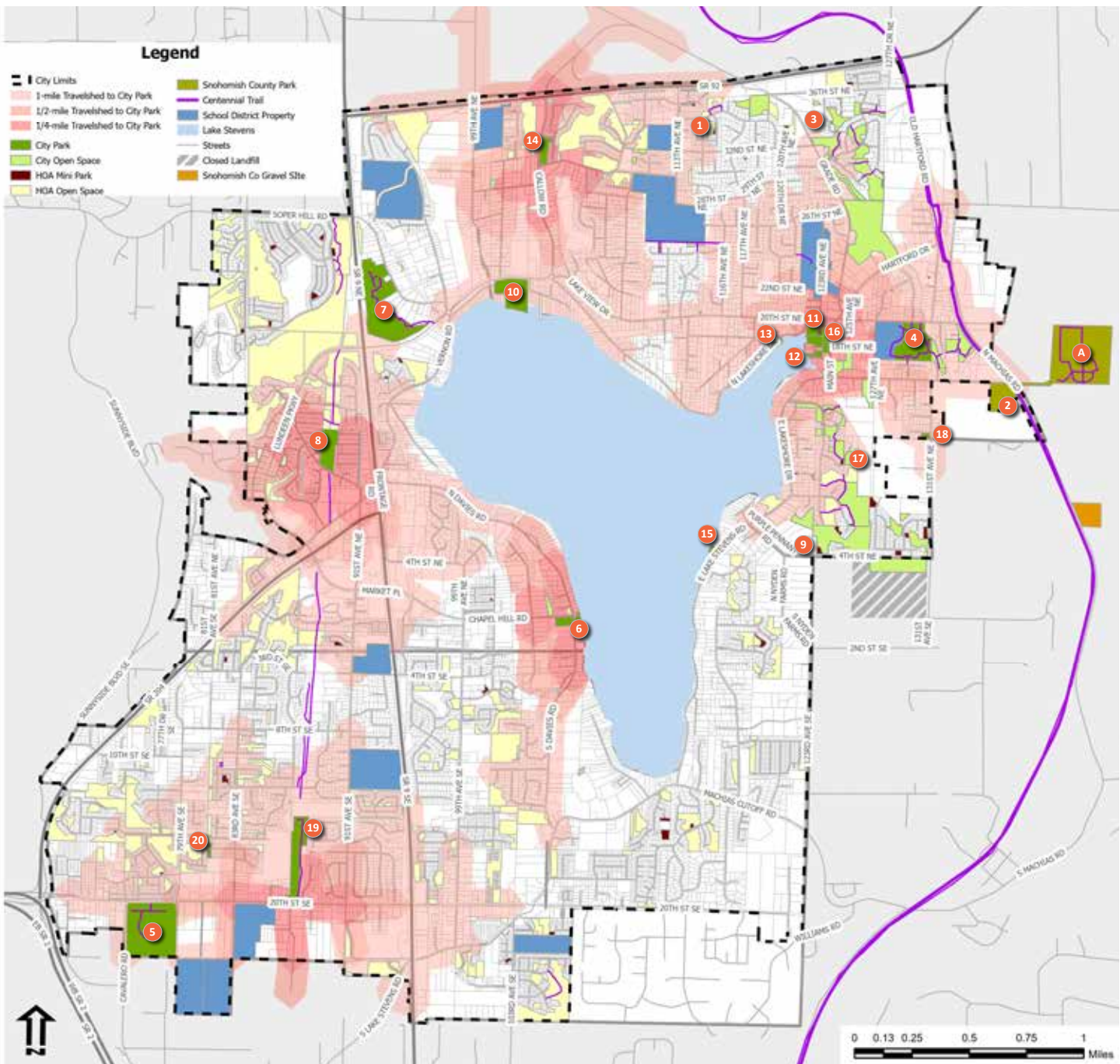
ID #	Park Name				
1	Baker Vista*	9	Greenwood Village - 4th St NE*	16	The Mill
2	Bonneville Field**	10	Lundeen Park	17	The Reserve - 10th St NE*
3	Bryce Park*	11	North Cove Park	18	Timberlake
4	Catherine Creek	12	North Cove Boat Launch	19	West Lake Park
5	Cavalero Hill Park	13	North Shore Swim Beach	20	Woodland Hills*
6	Davies Beach	14	Oak Hill	A	Lake Stevens Community Park (County)
7	Eagle Ridge Park	15	Sunset Park		
8	Frontier Heights Park				

* Maintained by an HOA

** Operated by Lake Stevens Little League

Map 3: Travelsheds for Mini Parks & Private HOA Parks (1/4-mile)

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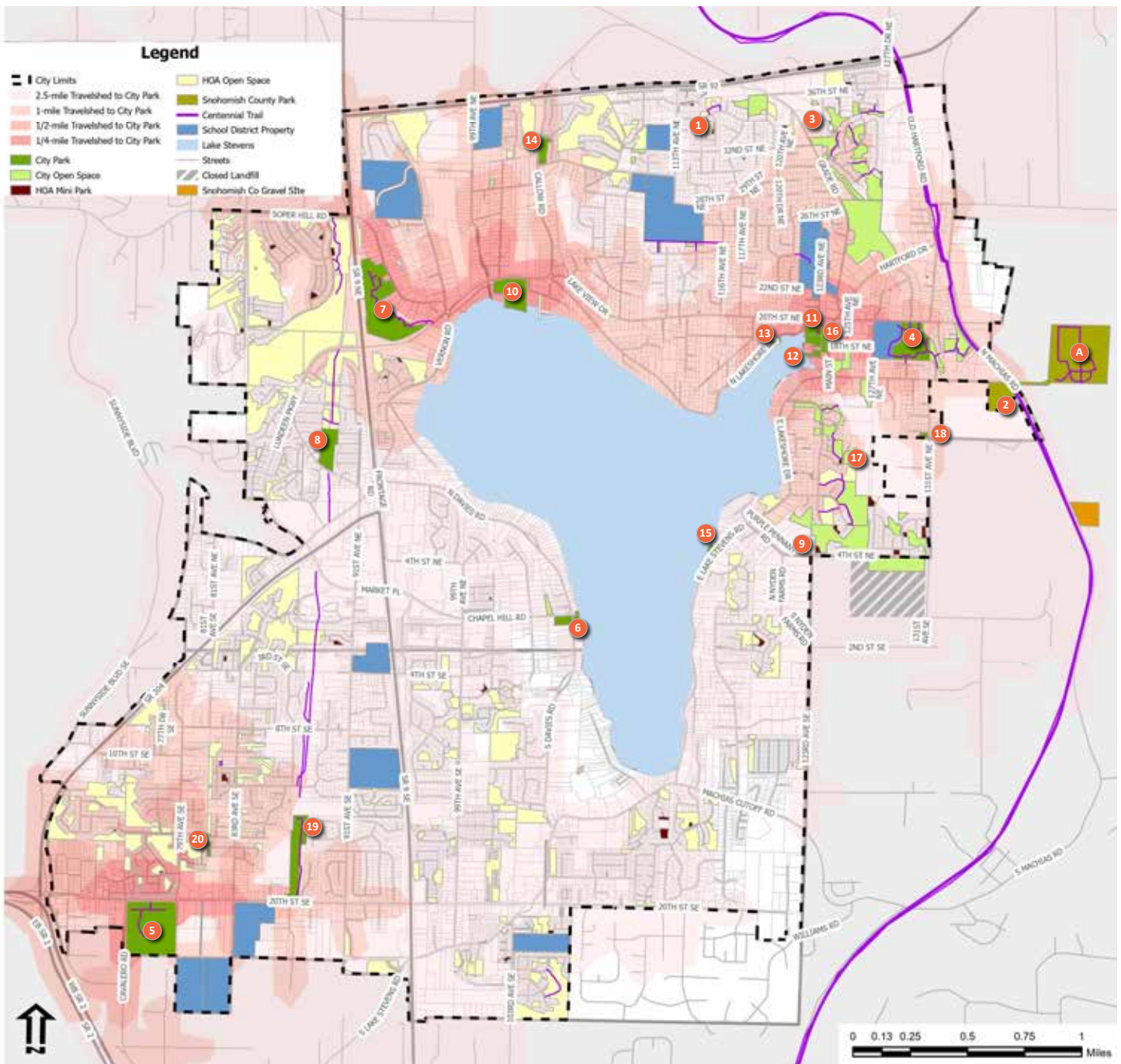


ID #	Park Name		
1	Baker Vista*	9	Greenwood Village - 4th St NE*
2	Bonneville Field**	10	Lundeen Park
3	Bryce Park*	11	North Cove Park
4	Catherine Creek	12	North Cove Boat Launch
5	Cavalero Hill Park	13	North Shore Swim Beach
6	Davies Beach	14	Oak Hill
7	Eagle Ridge Park	15	Sunset Park
8	Frontier Heights Park	16	The Mill
		17	The Reserve - 10th St NE*
		18	Timberlake
		19	West Lake Park
		20	Woodland Hills*
		A	Lake Stevens Community Park (County)

* Maintained by an HOA

** Operated by Lake Stevens Little League

Map 4: Travelsheds for Neighborhood Parks (1/4-, 1/2-, 1-mile)



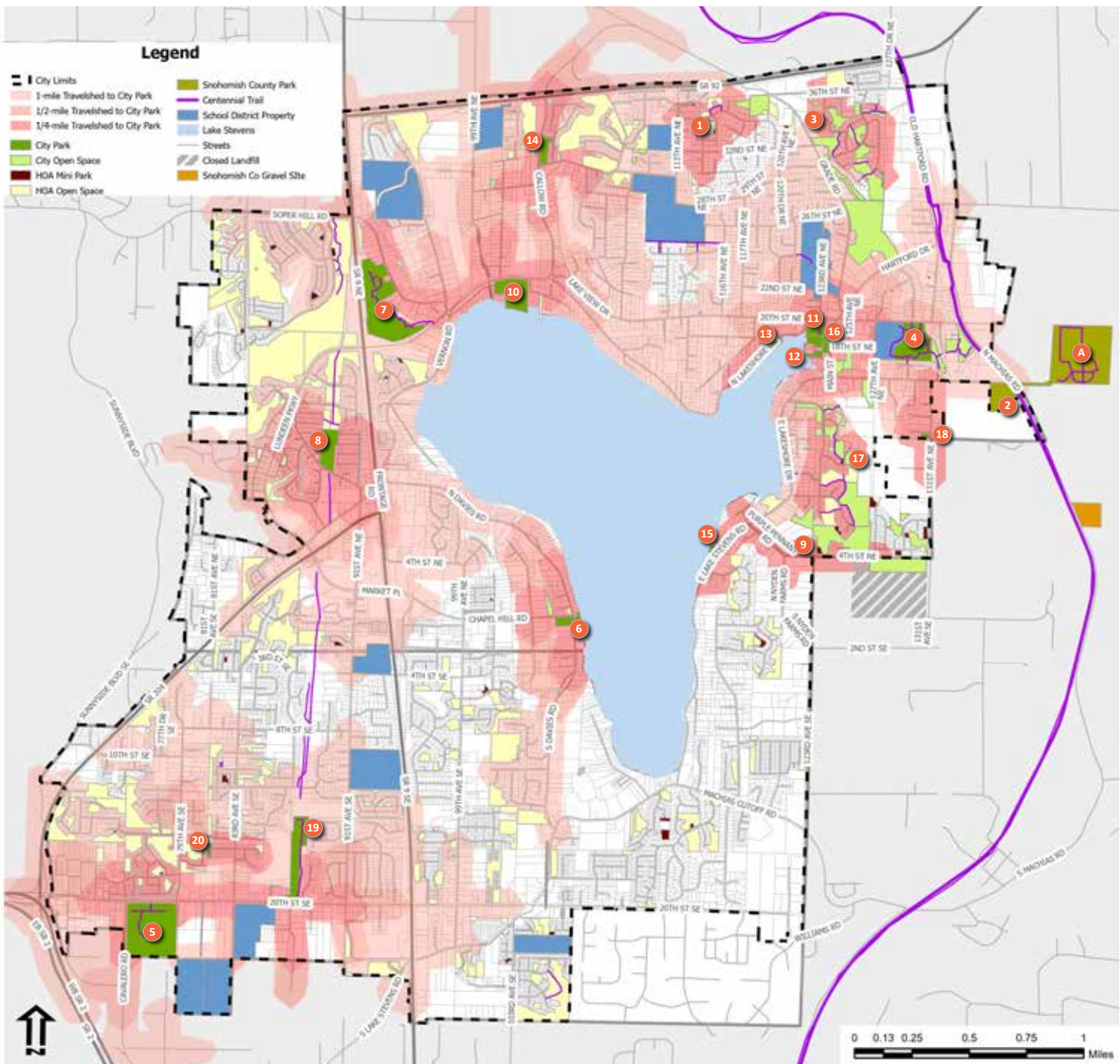
ID #	Park Name		
1	Baker Vista*	9	Greenwood Village - 4th St NE*
2	Bonneville Field**	10	Lundeen Park
3	Bryce Park*	11	North Cove Park
4	Catherine Creek	12	North Cove Boat Launch
5	Cavalero Hill Park	13	North Shore Swim Beach
6	Davies Beach	14	Oak Hill
7	Eagle Ridge Park	15	Sunset Park
8	Frontier Heights Park	16	The Mill
		17	The Reserve - 10th St NE*
		18	Timberlake
		19	West Lake Park
		20	Woodland Hills*
		A	Lake Stevens Community Park (County)

* Maintained by an HOA

** Operated by Lake Stevens Little League

Map 5: Travelsheds for Community Parks (1/4-, 1/2-, 1-, 2 1/2-mile)

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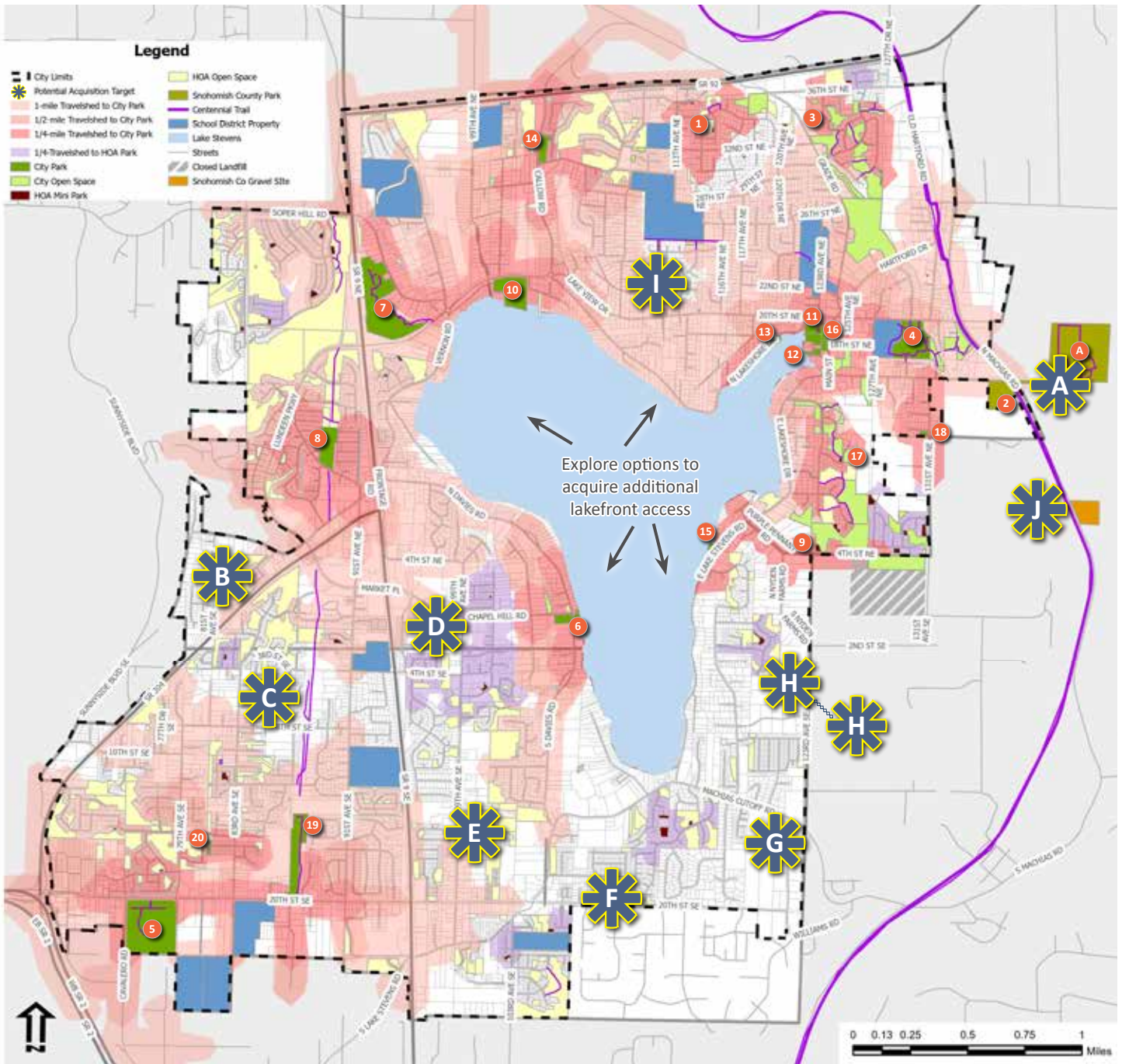


ID #	Park Name		
1	Baker Vista*	9	Greenwood Village - 4th St NE*
2	Bonneville Field**	10	Lundeen Park
3	Bryce Park*	11	North Cove Park
4	Catherine Creek	12	North Cove Boat Launch
5	Cavalero Hill Park	13	North Shore Swim Beach
6	Davies Beach	14	Oak Hill
7	Eagle Ridge Park	15	Sunset Park
8	Frontier Heights Park	16	The Mill
		17	The Reserve - 10th St NE*
		18	Timberlake
		19	West Lake Park
		20	Woodland Hills*
		A	Lake Stevens Community Park (County)

* Maintained by an HOA

** Operated by Lake Stevens Little League

Map 6: Composite Travelsheds for City Parks (1/4-, 1/2-, 1-mile)



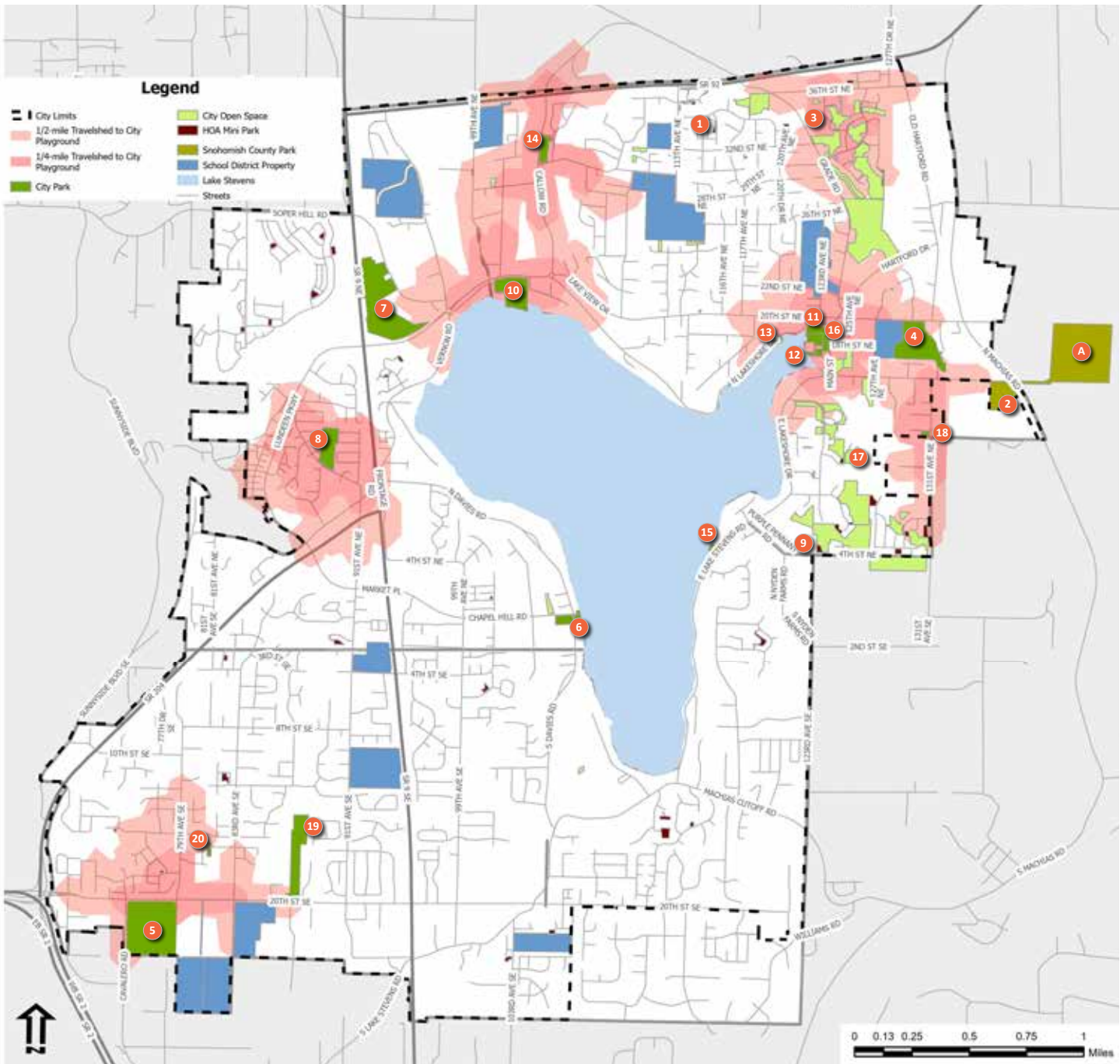
ID #	Park Name				
1	Baker Vista*	9	Greenwood Village - 4th St NE*	16	The Mill
2	Bonneville Field**	10	Lundeen Park	17	The Reserve - 10th St NE*
3	Bryce Park*	11	North Cove Park	18	Timberlake
4	Catherine Creek	12	North Cove Boat Launch	19	West Lake Park
5	Cavalero Hill Park	13	North Shore Swim Beach	20	Woodland Hills*
6	Davies Beach	14	Oak Hill	A	Lake Stevens Community Park (County)
7	Eagle Ridge Park	15	Sunset Park		
8	Frontier Heights Park				

* Maintained by an HOA

** Operated by Lake Stevens Little League

Map 7: Potential Target Acquisition Areas

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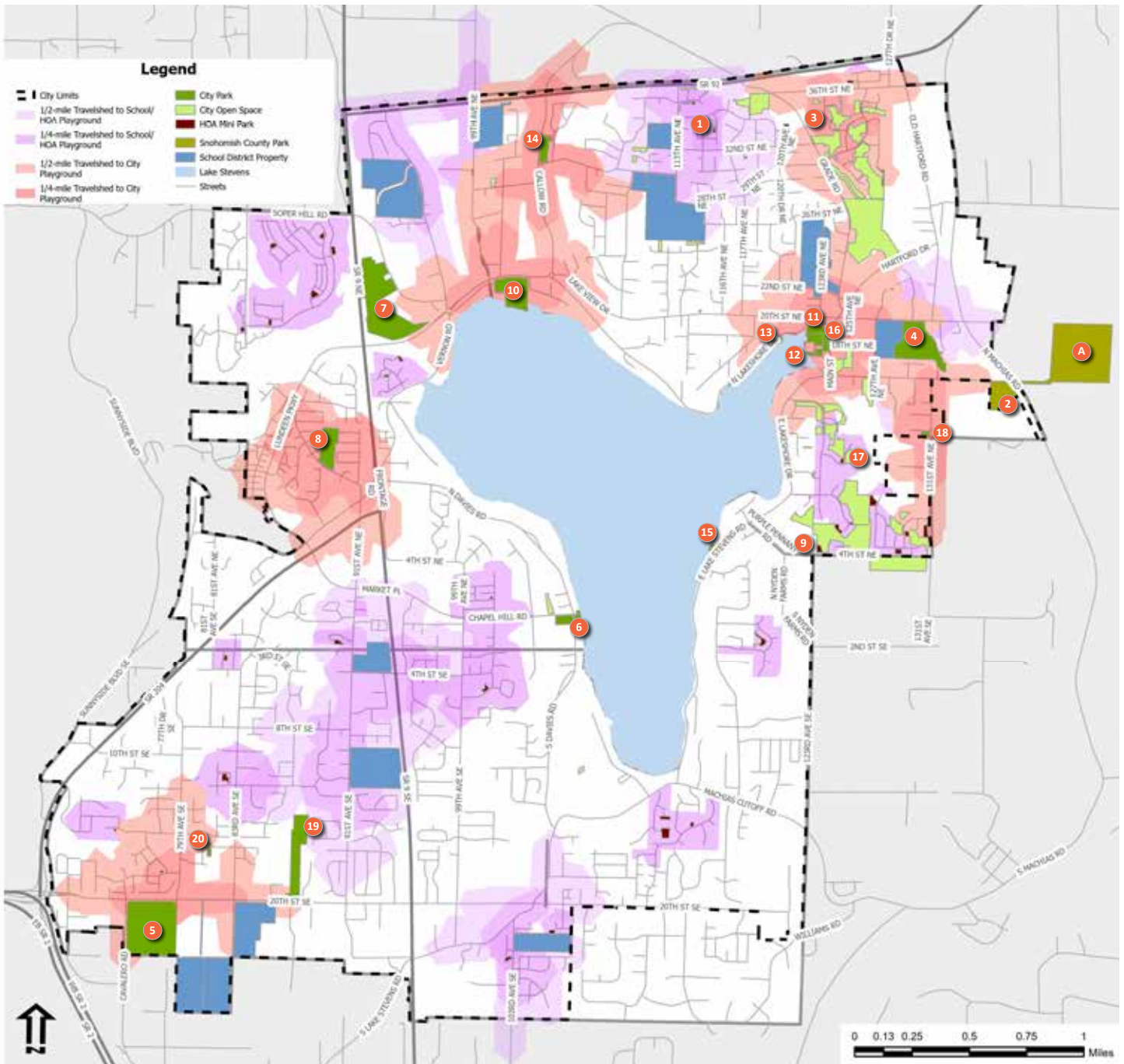


ID #	Park Name	ID #	Park Name	ID #	Park Name
1	Baker Vista*	9	Greenwood Village - 4th St NE*	16	The Mill
2	Bonneville Field**	10	Lundeen Park	17	The Reserve - 10th St NE*
3	Bryce Park*	11	North Cove Park	18	Timberlake
4	Catherine Creek	12	North Cove Boat Launch	19	West Lake Park
5	Cavalero Hill Park	13	North Shore Swim Beach	20	Woodland Hills*
6	Davies Beach	14	Oak Hill	A	Lake Stevens Community Park (County)
7	Eagle Ridge Park	15	Sunset Park		
8	Frontier Heights Park				

* Maintained by an HOA

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Map 8: Travelsheds to City-managed Playgrounds (1/2-mile)



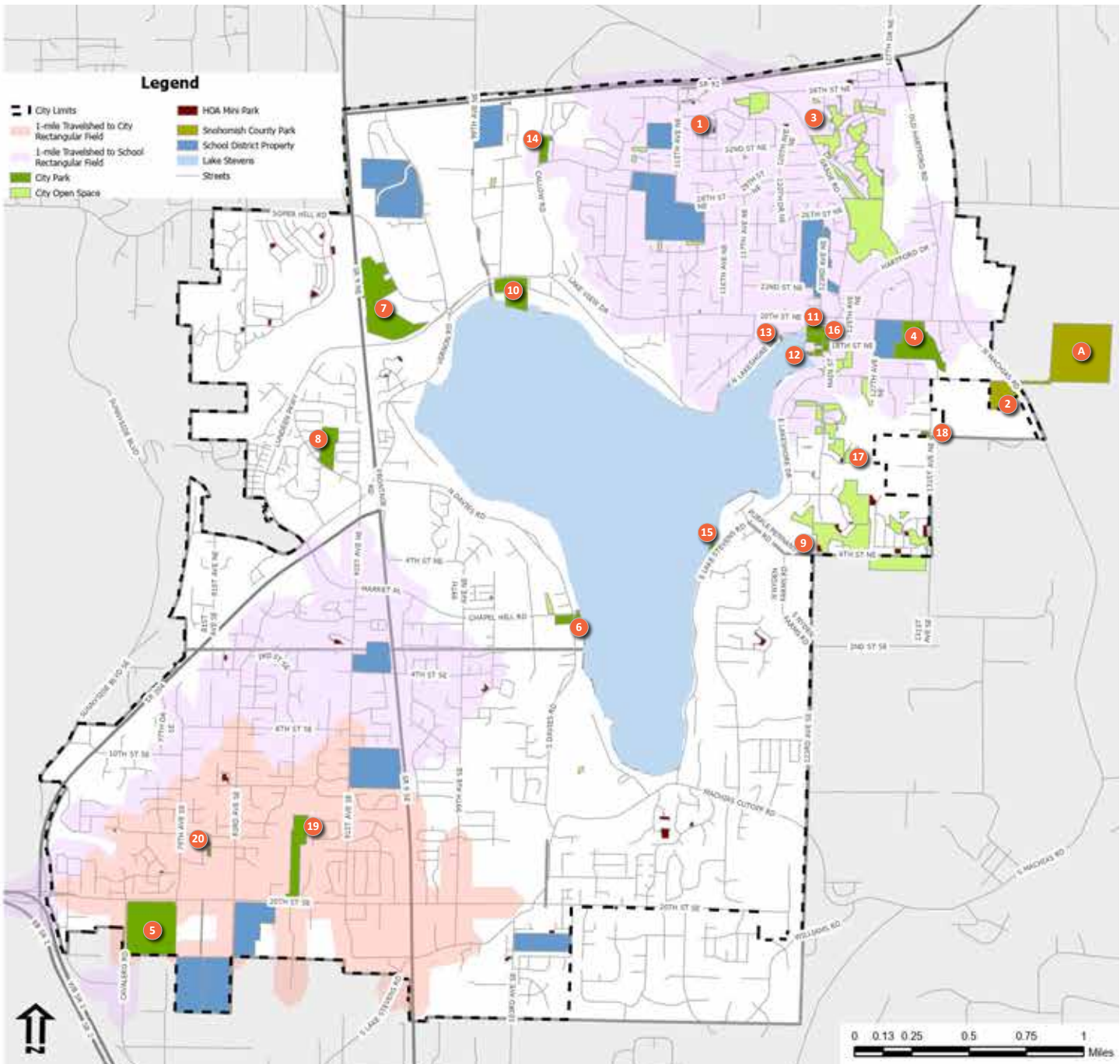
ID #	Park Name		
1	Baker Vista*	9	Greenwood Village - 4th St NE*
2	Bonneville Field**	10	Lundeen Park
3	Bryce Park*	11	North Cove Park
4	Catherine Creek	12	North Cove Boat Launch
5	Cavalero Hill Park	13	North Shore Swim Beach
6	Davies Beach	14	Oak Hill
7	Eagle Ridge Park	15	Sunset Park
8	Frontier Heights Park	16	The Mill
		17	The Reserve - 10th St NE*
		18	Timberlake
		19	West Lake Park
		20	Woodland Hills*
		A	Lake Stevens Community Park (County)

* Maintained by an HOA

** Operated by Lake Stevens Little League

Map 9: Travelsheds to City, School & HOA Playgrounds (1/2-mile)

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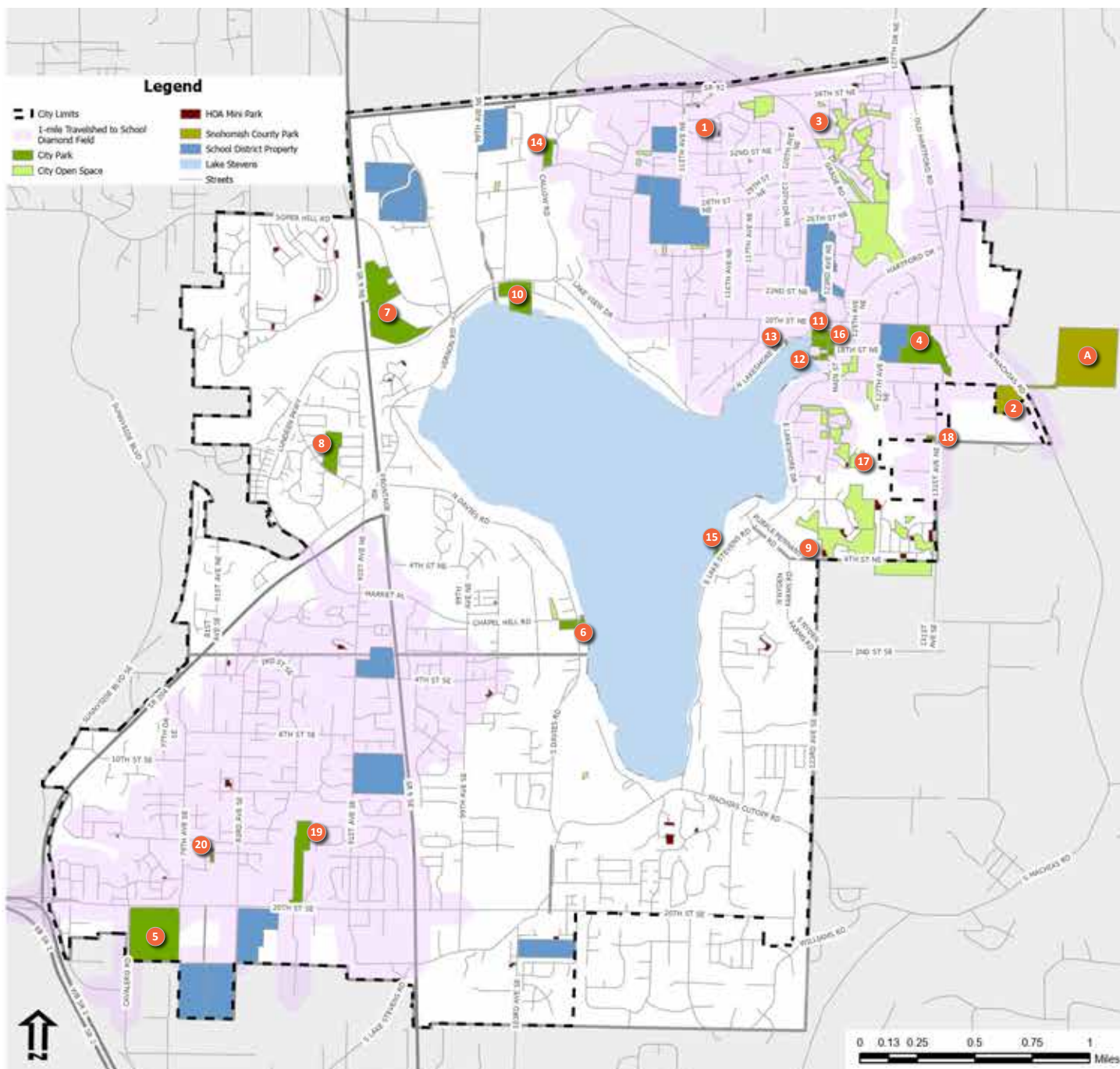


ID #	Park Name		
1	Baker Vista*	9	Greenwood Village - 4th St NE*
2	Bonneville Field**	10	Lundeen Park
3	Bryce Park*	11	North Cove Park
4	Catherine Creek	12	North Cove Boat Launch
5	Cavalero Hill Park	13	North Shore Swim Beach
6	Davies Beach	14	Oak Hill
7	Eagle Ridge Park	15	Sunset Park
8	Frontier Heights Park	16	The Mill
		17	The Reserve - 10th St NE*
		18	Timberlake
		19	West Lake Park
		20	Woodland Hills*
		A	Lake Stevens Community Park (County)

* Maintained by an HOA

** Operated by Lake Stevens Little League

Map 10: Travelsheds to City & School Rectangular Sport Fields (1-mile)



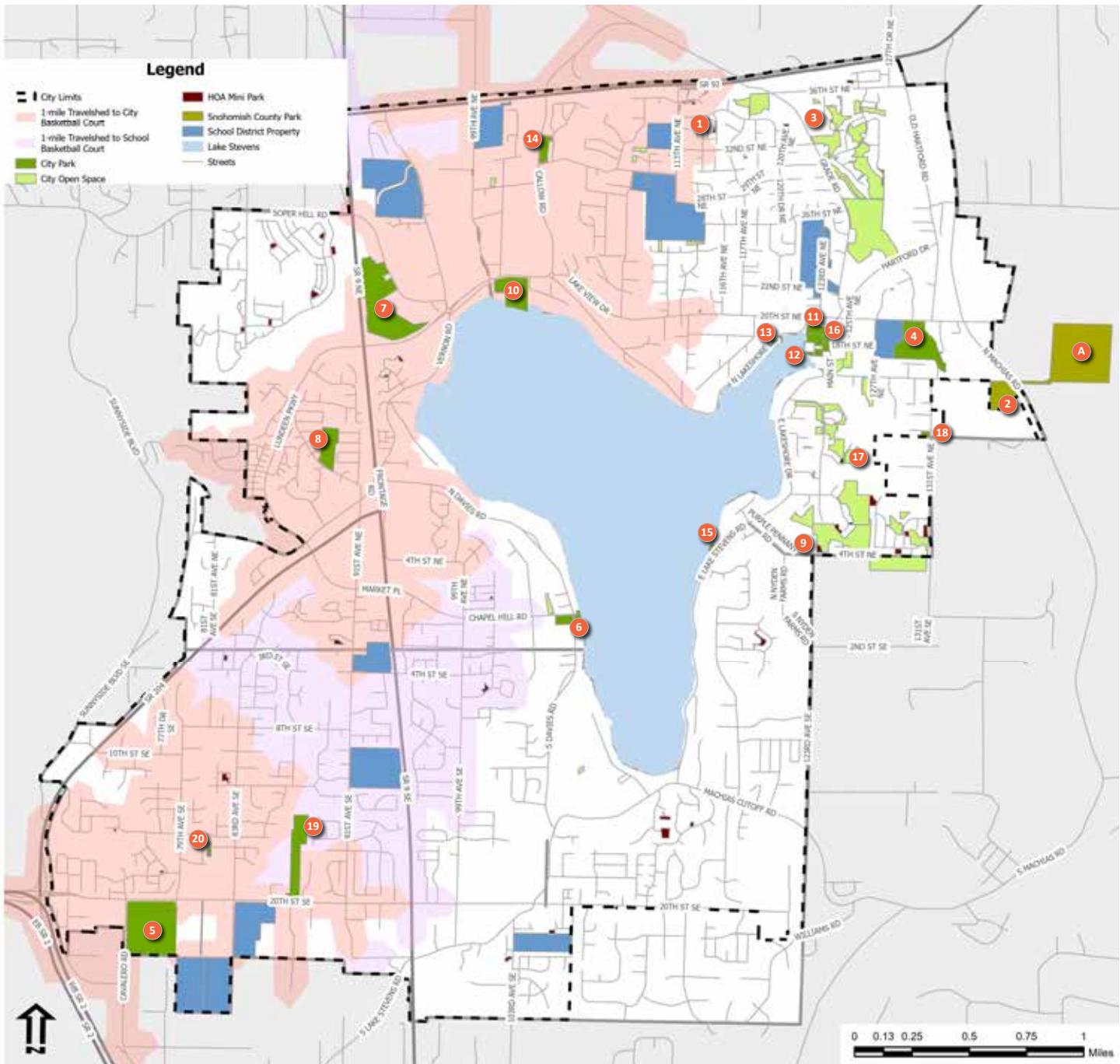
ID #	Park Name		
1	Baker Vista*	9	Greenwood Village - 4th St NE*
2	Bonneville Field**	10	Lundeen Park
3	Bryce Park*	11	North Cove Park
4	Catherine Creek	12	North Cove Boat Launch
5	Cavaleiro Hill Park	13	North Shore Swim Beach
6	Davies Beach	14	Oak Hill
7	Eagle Ridge Park	15	Sunset Park
8	Frontier Heights Park	16	The Mill
		17	The Reserve - 10th St NE*
		18	Timberlake
		19	West Lake Park
		20	Woodland Hills*
		A	Lake Stevens Community Park (County)

* Maintained by an HOA

** Operated by Lake Stevens Little League

Map 11: Travelsheds to City & School Diamond Sport Fields (1-mile)

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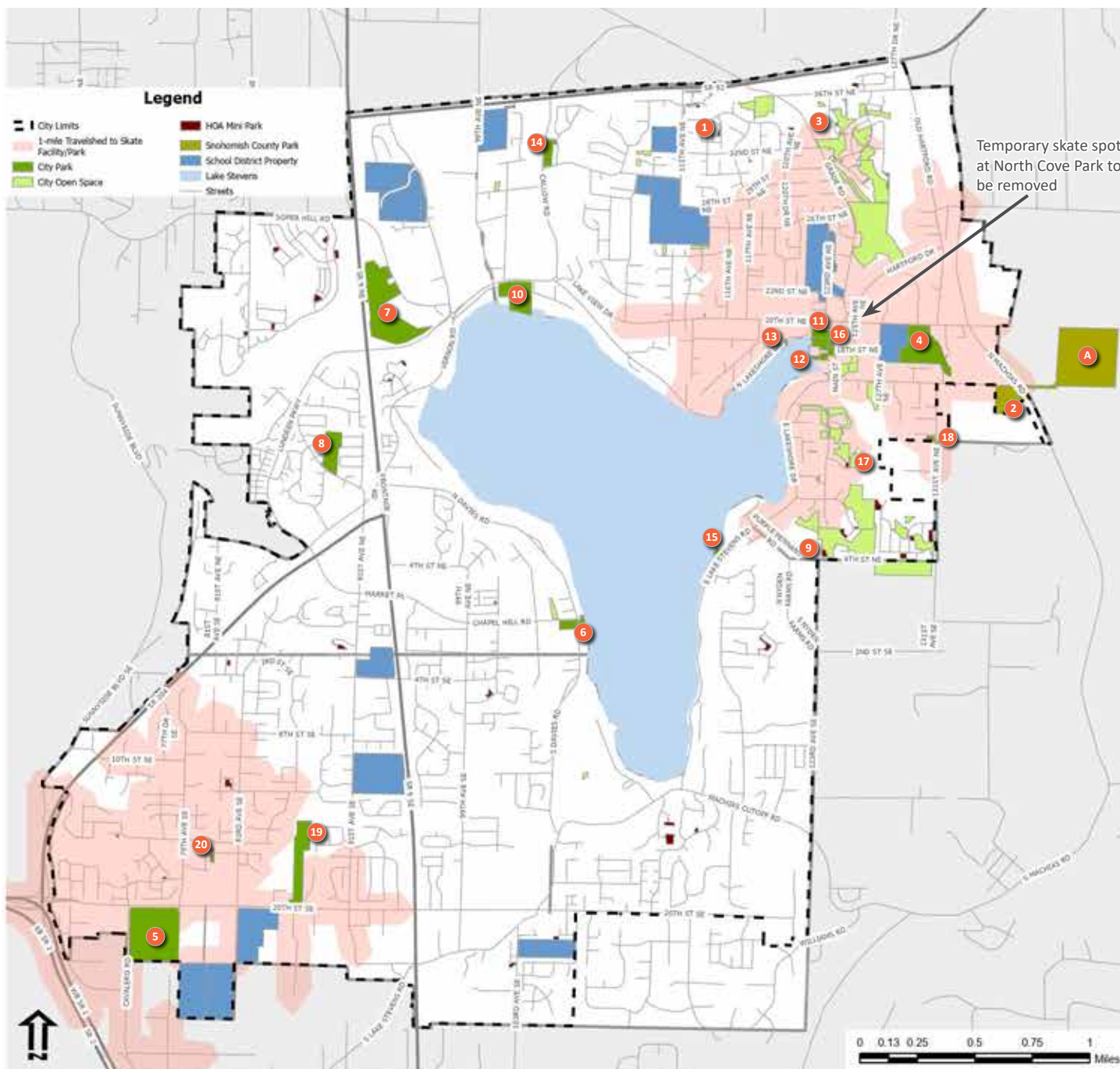


ID #	Park Name		
1	Baker Vista*	9	Greenwood Village - 4th St NE*
2	Bonneville Field**	10	Lundeen Park
3	Bryce Park*	11	North Cove Park
4	Catherine Creek	12	North Cove Boat Launch
5	Cavalero Hill Park	13	North Shore Swim Beach
6	Davies Beach	14	Oak Hill
7	Eagle Ridge Park	15	Sunset Park
8	Frontier Heights Park	16	The Mill
		17	The Reserve - 10th St NE*
		18	Timberlake
		19	West Lake Park
		20	Woodland Hills*
		A	Lake Stevens Community Park (County)

* Maintained by an HOA

** Operated by Lake Stevens Little League

Map 12: Travelsheds to City & School Basketball Courts (1-mile)



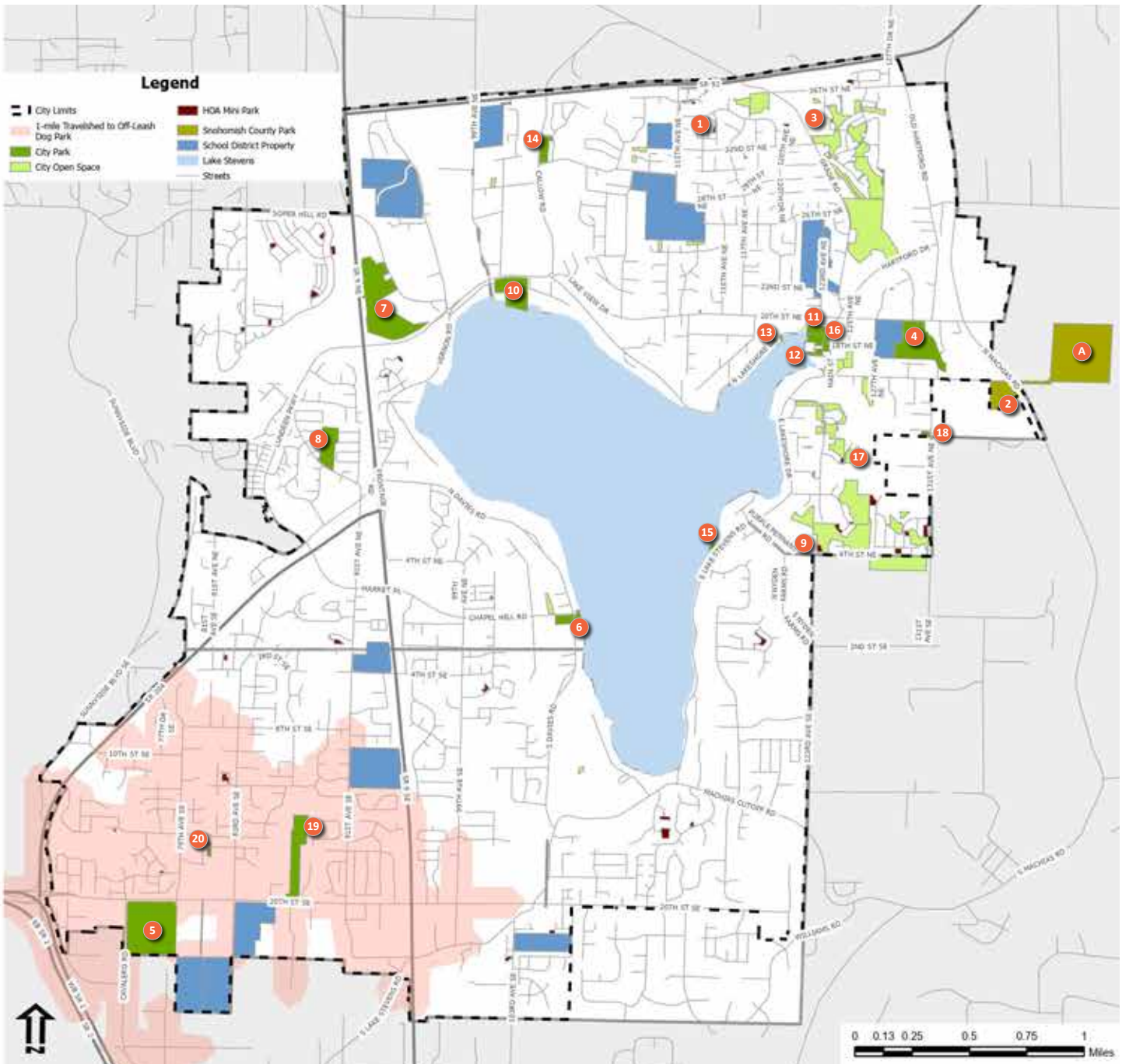
ID #	Park Name		
1	Baker Vista*	9	Greenwood Village - 4th St NE*
2	Bonneville Field**	10	Lundeen Park
3	Bryce Park*	11	North Cove Park
4	Catherine Creek	12	North Cove Boat Launch
5	Cavalero Hill Park	13	North Shore Swim Beach
6	Davies Beach	14	Oak Hill
7	Eagle Ridge Park	15	Sunset Park
8	Frontier Heights Park	16	The Mill
		17	The Reserve - 10th St NE*
		18	Timberlake
		19	West Lake Park
		20	Woodland Hills*
		A	Lake Stevens Community Park (County)

* Maintained by an HOA

** Operated by Lake Stevens Little League

Map 13: Travelsheds to City Skate Park or Skate Spot (1-mile)

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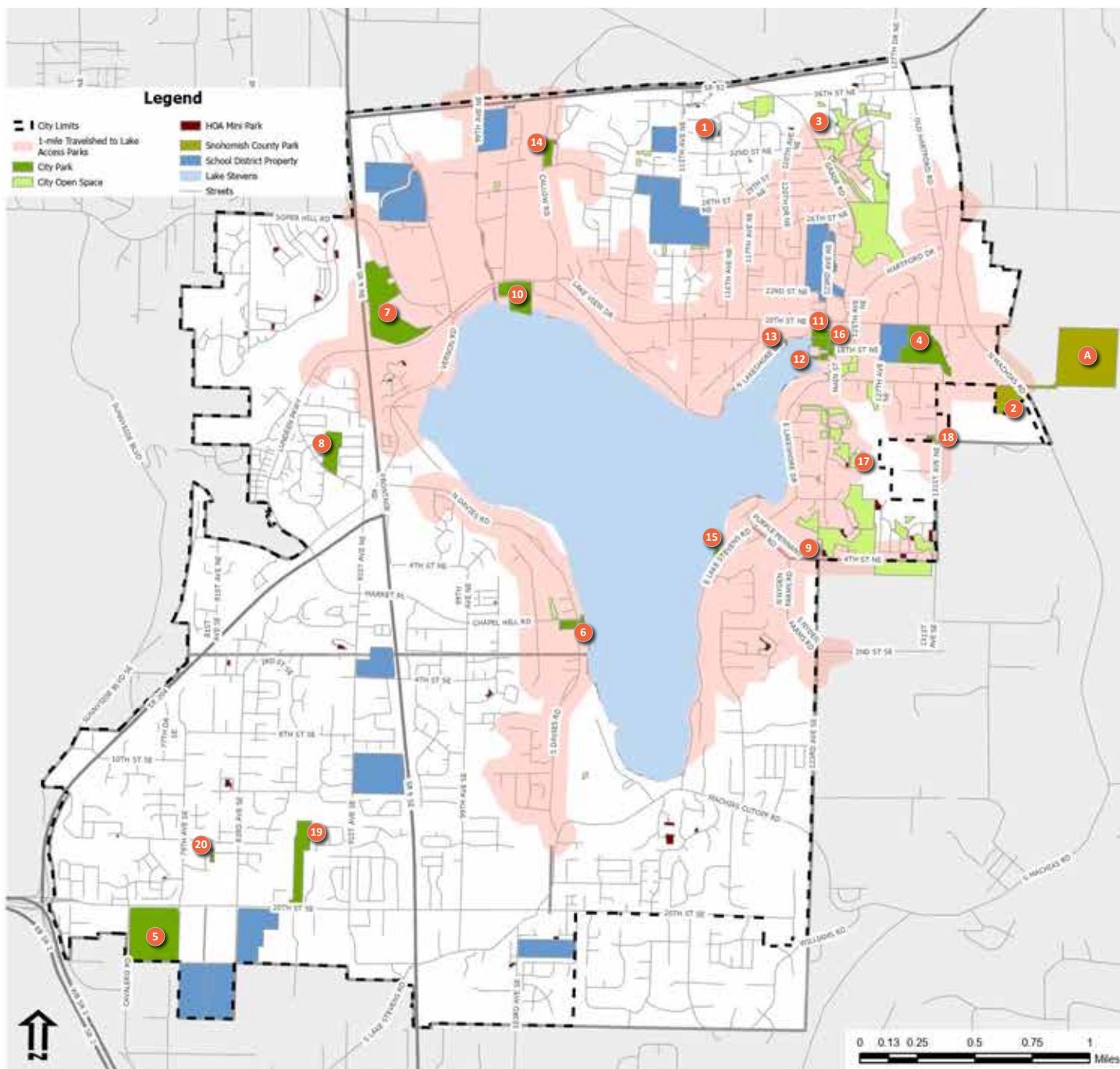


ID #	Park Name		
1	Baker Vista*	9	Greenwood Village - 4th St NE*
2	Bonneville Field**	10	Lundeen Park
3	Bryce Park*	11	North Cove Park
4	Catherine Creek	12	North Cove Boat Launch
5	Cavalero Hill Park	13	North Shore Swim Beach
6	Davies Beach	14	Oak Hill
7	Eagle Ridge Park	15	Sunset Park
8	Frontier Heights Park	16	The Mill
		17	The Reserve - 10th St NE*
		18	Timberlake
		19	West Lake Park
		20	Woodland Hills*
		A	Lake Stevens Community Park (County)

* Maintained by an HOA

** Operated by Lake Stevens Little League

Map 14: Travelsheds to City Off-Leash Dog Park (1-mile)



ID #	Park Name		
1	Baker Vista*	9	Greenwood Village - 4th St NE*
2	Bonneville Field**	10	Lundeen Park
3	Bryce Park*	11	North Cove Park
4	Catherine Creek	12	North Cove Boat Launch
5	Cavalero Hill Park	13	North Shore Swim Beach
6	Davies Beach	14	Oak Hill
7	Eagle Ridge Park	15	Sunset Park
8	Frontier Heights Park	16	The Mill
		17	The Reserve - 10th St NE*
		18	Timberlake
		19	West Lake Park
		20	Woodland Hills*
		A	Lake Stevens Community Park (County)

* Maintained by an HOA

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Map 15: Travelsheds to City Park Lake Access Sites (1-mile)

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Recommendations

The Parks and Recreation Department has made significant progress in upgrading and enhancing the City park system through its operations and capital programming, see Table 10. These efforts provide a valuable foundation for the addition of new improvements and enhancements that have been identified through the PROS Plan process. Over the last ten years, Lake Stevens has accomplished several land acquisitions, new park developments, park improvements, trail connections and enhanced waterfront access.

The community survey identified desired improvements including restrooms, shaded seating, playgrounds, picnic areas, and sports courts. The existing Parks Capital Improvement Plan already lists pickleball courts, synthetic turf sports field and exercise stations in the next phase of improvement for Frontier Heights Park (currently underway).

The combination of infrastructure assessments and project ideas from public comments provide additional direction to guide future park investments. The following recommendations present the focused project actions to achieve the expressed needs for the park system.

ACQUISITIONS FOR A COMPLETE PARK SYSTEM

Lake Stevens' park system has been expanding as the City grows, yet the need for more facilities triggers additions of both parkland and recreational amenities. The City is expected to continue its growth as a desirable place to live and, thus, must press forward to acquire more parkland and

develop more amenities within existing parks. The 'travelshed' mapping of existing parks illustrated the need for more strategically located park sites to ensure reasonable access to parks, with the bulk of those acquisition targets located in the southern section of the city.

PARK DEVELOPMENT & IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

Eagle Ridge, West Lake and Frontier Heights are parks with master plans that have identified future phases of park improvements and will add significant recreational amenities to the park system. Public feedback identified several categories of desired park amenities, and the top three focused on more trail connections, sport fields, and sport courts. A multi-use synthetic sport field and pickleball courts are already planned for Frontier Heights. Additional facilities can be sought as opportunities arise with new acquisitions.

Additionally, aging infrastructure, wear and tear, and any amenities in poor condition always require attention to keep the park system in good and safe condition. Docks, piers, lighting, restrooms, paving and other park infrastructure can be planned as their end of their life cycle approaches.

Table 10. Park System Accomplishments over Past 10 Years

Acquisitions	Park Development	Park Enhancements	Trail Connections
Cavalero Hills Park	Davies Beach rowing dock	Davies Beach	Bayview Trail - phase 1
Cedarwood recreation facility	North Cove Park	Eagle Ridge community gardens	Centennial Trail connection
Davies Beach	Oak Hill Park	Frontier Heights amenities	West Lake Park
Eagle Ridge Park expansion	Sunset Beach Park	Lundeen Park playgrounds	Woodland Hills
Sunset Beach	The Mill	North Cove non-motorized boat dock	
	The Mill Spur	North Lakeshore swim dock decking	
	West Lake Park	Timberlake climbing structure	

EXPANDING RECREATION OPTIONS

Splash Pads / Spray Parks

Spray parks are water play features that are very popular and provide a means of integrating aquatics into parks at a relatively low cost. Lake Stevens currently does not have a splash pad in the park system, and public support exists for this feature. The water feature at North Cove Park is attractive and a well-used option for small children, but the City should consider at least one spray park to serve residents as an option for summertime water play that doesn't require lifeguarding. This special use amenity typically is supported by parking and restrooms, since it draws users from a wider area. Any future spray park facility should be designed to support sustainable infrastructure such as recycling water, if practical.

Alternative Sports

Providing additional facilities for alternative or emerging sports, such as disc golf, skateboarding, BMX, mountain biking, climbing, and fitness courses (i.e., parkour or ninja warrior style), can offer residents a more diverse range of recreational experiences, while creating destinations that attract local and regional visitors. Lake Stevens currently has an outdoor, concrete skatepark located at the Cavalero Hill Park and a small, temporary skate spot at North Cove Park, and opportunities for other alternative sport facilities should be considered as new parks are designed and developed.

Engaging older youth, teens, and adults in more intense physical activity within parks requires amenities that support challenging active movement. The City should plan for a pump track and connecting flow track in a visible location that can accommodate parking and can enable a synergy with other park uses. These features would add new challenges for riders and add to the range of outdoor recreational opportunities across older youth and teens.

All-Inclusive Playgrounds

Upgrading play areas for ADA-accessibility will be necessary to ensure compliance and universal access; however, providing for ADA-accessibility should not be the City's only goal. As new parks or playground replacements are planned, Lake Stevens should consider opportunities for additional fully-accessible, all-inclusive play areas to provide for users of all abilities.

Off-Leash Dog Area

Walking with a dog is a very popular recreational activity, and off-leash areas have become desired amenities for dog owners living in urban environments who may otherwise have limited opportunities to exercise their pets. With two existing dog parks in the southwest portion of Lake Stevens, the City should consider a future dog park in the northeast or eastern edge of the city to improve the distribution of this amenity. Appropriate sites should be safe, not isolated, and noise impacts on neighbors should be considered. Ideally, a dog park would be a component to a larger (future) community park, where infrastructure (e.g., parking, restrooms and garbage collection) exists and supports multiple activities. The City also should also grow community support for self-policing for behavioral issues and waste pick-up and encourage the users of these facilities to form a grassroots or non-profit organization to formally support the ongoing operations and maintenance of such facilities.

USER CONVENIENCES

Parking

Lake Stevens has several park assets that are heavily used during the summer, especially those that are adjacent to water or have access to water-oriented recreation such as North Cove Park. The City should evaluate such locations for parking and transportation constraints and needs and consider improvements to add capacity for heavy seasonal uses.

Restrooms

Supporting park and trail use through the provision of restrooms is a critical element in any park system. Based on the park site assessments, the restroom at Lundeen Park should be replaced or upgraded; and where possible add new permanent or seasonal bathrooms to add capacity for seasonal demands.

Accessibility & ADA compliance

The conditions assessments for park facilities noticed a few locations where ADA upgrades should be installed, mostly in terms of better outdoor recreation accessible routes (ORAR), ADA-compliant benches and ADA-compliant picnic

tables. These ADA upgrades can be tackled as a cohesive project, or associated with other projects being achieved nearby. Minor improvements to access, such as providing ramped entrances, for site amenities are necessary to ensure universal accessibility. Also, the City should evaluate the play equipment and its signage for code compliance and replace outdated equipment, as appropriate. The Capital Planning section includes a line item for covering small upgrades and improvements to remove barriers and improve universal access. In general, the City should continue to make improvements to existing parks as needed to ensure proper maintenance, usability, and quality of park features and grounds.

Signage & Wayfinding

The City of Lake Stevens can benefit from enhanced wayfinding and signage supporting its overall park and trail system. Opportunities exist to help visitors navigate and inform them about the public spaces they are entering. A good wayfinding system can provide a consistent identity and display valuable and accessible information to orient the user. This guidance system ensures efficient use of the trail, park, or other public space and conveys safety to the user by translating the environment into a known geography. Signs, symbols, mapping, color, and standardized site amenities combined with good design of the physical environment (i.e., trail or park) help the user navigate the space and stay comfortably oriented.

Recreational Trails

Trails and paths provide people with valuable links between parks, schools, and other destinations. Expanding trail system connections was identified as one of the top priorities during the community engagement process, and survey respondents indicated strong support for expanding, improving, and maintaining walking and nature trails, especially the Bayview Connector Trail and Centennial Trail. Investing in trails is essential to maintaining a healthy and livable community by enhancing walking and biking opportunities.

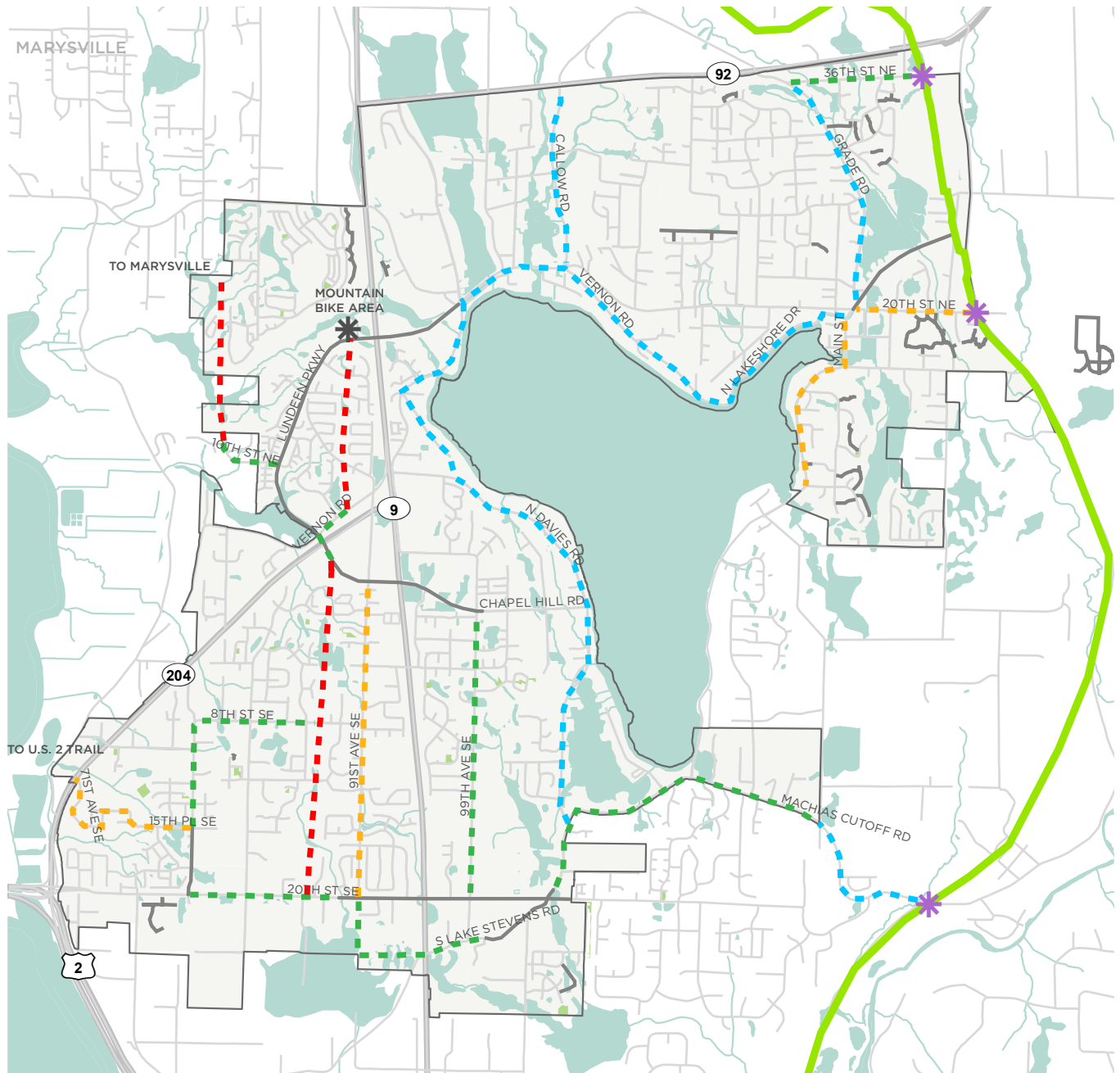
Walking and hiking remain the most popular recreational activities both nationally and regionally. Over the past decade, national recreation studies have consistently ranked walking and hiking as the top form of outdoor recreation (see Appendix F for recreation trends). The 2019 COVID pandemic significantly impacted outdoor recreation, with trail use surging as many people turned to walking and bicycling for their daily exercise. This shift led to increased usage and crowded trailhead parking, challenging local and regional park agencies. The annual study from the National Recreation and Parks Association of how Americans use their parks determined that people who live near parks and recreation facilities are more likely to arrive at that park by walking, biking or running, with walking being the most common method of transport.

Additionally, with the rapid increase in electric-assist mobility devices and the potential for user conflicts due to increased speeds, Lake Stevens should stay informed on best management practices to ensure safety for all trail users and promote trail etiquette on any existing or future shared-use trails.

2020 TRAILS MASTER PLAN

In 2020, Lake Stevens adopted a trails master plan to guide the development of an interconnected system of trails that provide multi-modal, non-motorized options for both travel and recreation. The Plan followed the 2015 Comprehensive Plan where the need was identified for more trails and walking paths. A level of service goal was established for having at least one trail within one mile of all residential areas. The Trails Master Plan guides the coordination and implementation of trail segments and future trail investments. Proposed trail network alignments and connections are designated along with detailed information about the major trail connections. The Plan also describes best practices for trail facilities and amenities. Since the adoption of the 2020 Trails Master Plan, the trailhead at West Lake Park and initial phase of the Bayview Connector Trail have been completed.

Map 16. Proposed Trail Facilities from 2020 Trails Master Plan



LAKE STEVENS PROPOSED TRAIL FACILITIES

EXISTING & PROPOSED TRAILS

- Bike Facility & Sidewalk
- Off Street Trail
- Multiuse Trail
- Sidepath
- Existing Trail Facility
- Existing Centennial Trail

BACKGROUND

- ✱ Centennial Trail Connection
- City Boundary
- Streets
- Highways
- Water



0 0.5 1 MILES



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PROPOSED TRAIL NETWORK

Guided by the adopted Trails Master Plan, the proposed trail network focuses on trail routes and the preferred facility types for each of those routes. The Trails Master Plan establishes the trail classifications and locates the proposed trail alignments.

The proposed trail network consists of the north-south and east-west trails that make up the core spines of the network, as well as the major neighborhood-level connections. The major off-street trail proposed for Lake Stevens is the Bayview Trail (formerly known as two segments: the Marysville Connector Trail and the Westside Trail). The proposed Bayview Trail, to be constructed in phases, will become a signature trail for the community, connecting numerous residential neighborhoods, parks and recreation facilities, and commercial centers, and linking Lake Stevens to Marysville.

The proposed trail along Lakeshore Drive provides a direct east-west connection. The alignment goes between the Bayview Trail, through Lundeen Parkway's bike lanes and downtown Lake Stevens, to the Centennial Trail. This trail alignment was preferable to 20th Street NE because it has less traffic and meets the goal of having a route along the lake.

The Lakeshore Drive Trail and Bayview Trail provide the north-south and east-west spines of the proposed trail network within Lake Stevens. In addition to these major contributors to the Lake Stevens trail network, there are a series of neighborhood trails that connect to these major trails as well as other destinations such as parks and businesses.

TRAIL RECOMMENDATIONS

The strong community feedback in support of additional trail connections and routes, along with the adopted Trails Master Plan, clearly convey the need for the City to continue its efforts in expanding its trail network.

Additional trail connections are needed, as well as sidewalk and bike lanes improvements, to help link destinations across the community and park system to offer more walkability and promote healthier outdoor lifestyles. Acquisitions of easements, corridors and parcels will be needed to create the comprehensive linkages for Lake Stevens' future trail system. The Public Works and Parks and Recreation Departments will need to collaborate on the project planning to ensure the most appropriate links that improve the park and trail system. This should also include coordination with the Trails Master Plan and Capital Improvement Plan (and subsequent updates), as well as coordination with local subdivision and site development projects.

For specific trails, the Parks Capital Improvements Plan has identified the phasing of implementation for segments of the Bayview Trail. Additional improvements to the Centennial Trail's segment within the City also are planned.

Beyond the extensions of existing trails, the City should also continue its plans for trails and paved pathways within parks and open spaces. The phase 2 improvements planned for Eagle Ridge Park include a trail system. Frontier Heights planned enhancements will require more paved pathways linking new recreational amenities. Proposed improvements for the future development of the Cedarwood property should incorporate walking opportunities as much as feasible. Future new park acquisitions should consider trail connections and walking path loops as important amenities to include in their eventual development. While not specifically a trail improvement, ADA accessibility should be incorporated into renovations, enhancements and all future park developments to ensure universal access to park and trail users.

CHAPTER 6



RECREATION & EVENTS

This chapter describes community feedback, trends, local needs, and potential improvements for recreation programs and events.

Various recreation options are available through a range of public and private recreation, health and fitness providers and facilities. At the present, the City provides nearly all of its programming through partnerships and program contractors and does not provide a full suite of ‘traditional’ recreation offerings, such as fitness and youth programs, due to limited facility space and staffing.

Recreation Trends

The following national and state data highlights some of the current trends in recreation and may frame future considerations in Lake Stevens’ current and future recreation offerings, activities

and partnerships. Additional trend data are provided in Appendix F.

- Nearly all (93%) park and recreation agencies provide recreation programs and services. The top three most commonly offered programs include summer camps (83%), older adult programming (77%), and programs for people with disabilities (67%). ⁽¹⁾
- More than eight in ten agencies provide themed special events (91% of agencies), social recreation events (88%), team sports (86%), health and wellness education (82%), and fitness enhancement classes (82%). ⁽²⁾
- America's children are spending more time outdoors over the past decade, and the COVID pandemic accelerated that trend. Overall, the percentage of children participating in outdoor recreation was high in 2021, at just over 70%. ⁽³⁾
- Over the past two years, participation rates are up across the board for America's youth, with strong growth in participation for youth ages 6 to 12 (+5.6%). ⁽⁴⁾
- Pickleball and yoga continued to have the largest gains in fitness activities. ⁽⁵⁾
- Activities with the highest 3-year increase in participation include pickleball (+311%) and Pilates training (+32%). ⁽⁵⁾
- People who say their neighborhood has easy access to quality arts and cultural activities tend to be more satisfied, identify more with local lifestyle and culture, and invest more time and resources in their communities. ⁽⁶⁾

PROGRAMMING TRENDS

Recreation Management magazine's 2025 Report on the State of the Managed Recreation Industry summarizes information provided by a wide range of professionals working in the recreation, sports, and fitness industry. Regarding program options, respondents from community centers, park departments, and health clubs reported that they plan to add programs over the next few years. The

ten most commonly planned program additions in 2025 were:

1. Fitness programs (planned by 24.6% of those who indicated they will expand their program options, up from 22.5% in 2024)
2. Adult sports teams (23.5%, up from 22.2%)
3. Teen programming (23.2%, up from 22.2%)
4. Group exercise programs (21.8%, up from 20.6%)
5. Mind-body balance programs (21.5%, down from 22.2%)
6. Functional fitness programs (20.1%, up from 18%)
7. Educational programs (19.8%, down from 24.1%)
8. Environmental education programs (19.3%, down from 26.4%)
9. Individual sports activities (19%, up from 15.8%)
10. Youth sports teams (17.6%, up from 14.1%)

According to the 2025 Outdoor Participation Report, published by the Outdoor Foundation, the outdoor recreation participant base grew 3% in 2024 to a record 181.1 million Americans (59%) ages 6 and older. The number of outdoor participants has grown as new and more casual participants began hiking, biking, camping, running and fishing.

Recreation departments now often serve as a coordinating agency and a clearinghouse for multiple recreation organizations and providers, in an effort to bring a comprehensive scope of recreation programs to a community. This has also increased the number of partnerships that are in place to deliver a broader base of programs in a more cost-effective manner. There is a greater emphasis on a fee-for-service concept, especially for more specialized programming, and these services are supported by a formal fee policy.

- Programming continues to emphasize the needs of youth and seniors, but also focuses more on adults and the whole family unit. Specific programming development trends include:
- Developing programs that are single day or no more than four sessions in length.
- Developing programs for youth during non-school days, plus holiday, spring break, and other extended breaks.
- Offering a variety of summer camps with different areas of interest.
- More Saturday programs and the introduction of some Sunday programming (especially in adult sports leagues).
- Senior programming that occurs in the evening or on the weekends to appeal to seniors who are still in the work force.

Sources

- (1) 2025 NRPA Agency Performance Review
- (2) 2025 NRPA Agency Performance Review
- (3) 2025 Outdoor Participation Report
- (4) 2025 Outdoor Participation Report
- (5) 2025 Sport & Fitness Industry Association Sports, Fitness, And Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report
- (6) Knight Foundation Community Ties survey Community-Ties-Final-pg.pdf (knightfoundation.org). Builds off Soul of Community Longitudinal Study (2008-2010) conducted by the Knight Foundation found key drivers of community attachment to be social offerings, openness, and aesthetics. <https://knightfoundation.org/sotc/overall-findings/>



- Introducing programs that are oriented toward specific ethnic groups or cultural opportunities.
- Developing a baseline of programs that appeal to the family unit.
- Staggering the days and times of similar programs that are offered at multiple locations.
- Expanded senior programming to include a greater focus on the Baby Boomer generation, which often means programs and services that are available in the evenings and on weekends and those that have a more active orientation.

According to the National Sporting Goods Association, the top ten activities based on participation are highlighted in the following chart.

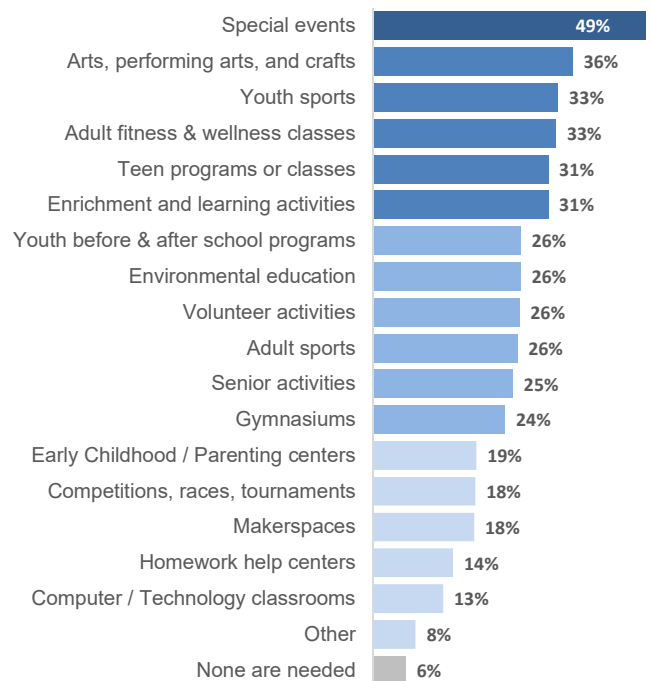
Figure 8. Top Recreation Activities by Overall Participation (millions)



Community Interests

The community survey provided insights into local program interests, preferences and priorities. Survey respondents were asked about their level of interest in a variety of recreational programs and activities that the City of Lake Stevens does, or could, offer. Less than half of respondents were interested in seeing any of the listed recreation and educational opportunities. Special events garnered the most support, at 49%, but all other options were selected by less than 36% of respondents.

Figure 9. Recreation or Educational Experiences to Expand or Improve



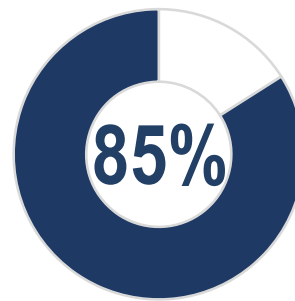
Respondents were asked an open-ended question about why they leave the City of Lake Stevens for recreation activities or programs. Of those who answered (341 responses), the following common reasons emerged:

- **Recreational activities and facilities:** Respondents also frequently leave Lake Stevens to participate in sports, including pickleball, golf, and organized soccer, baseball, and basketball. Some respondents expressed a desire for more sports fields and facilities as well as local youth sports leagues.
- **Indoor recreation:** Respondents also leave Lake Stevens to participate in indoor recreation, including for swimming, skating, bowling, and movies. Respondents often mentioned a desire for more covered or indoor recreational options for rainier months.
- **Arts, culture, and community events:** Many respondents enjoy attending the cultural and community events put on in nearby towns like Everett and Marysville. They mentioned attending concerts, festivals, performing arts, movies in the park, and farmers markets, and other events.

Recreation programming has been limited for Lake Stevens due to having limited space for indoor recreation. Residents were asked whether they are supportive to the City developing additional indoor recreation facility space. The space could be used for youth programs, sports courts, and a makerspace. A large majority of respondents, approximately 85% are either very or somewhat supportive.

Feedback from the open house meetings and stakeholder discussions provided additional insights. Meeting participants offered their ideas for future program options the City should consider:

- **Youth Activities:** elementary school camps; activities and programs for special needs; and teen activities, programs, clinics, trainings, including internship programs for high school students
- **Adult Sports:** soccer; basketball tournaments; unified sports (special needs)
- **Adult Classes:** Adult sports, arts, games; trail running club; live music; makerspace activities; dance and yoga classes; community lake/trail cleanups; art and glass classes (partnerships with local studios); master gardener classes; foraging/plant identification; Ninja warrior / obstacle course
- **Senior Activities:** Aquatic exercises at the lake; art classes (partner with local studios); bingo; park meet-up programs



**Very or somewhat
supportive of developing
additional indoor recreation
facility space.**

Another suggestion was for the City to enhance community programming by broadening offerings to include cultural activities, educational programs, and senior-friendly recreation and sports.

Community feedback also highlighted existing limitations. There is a sentiment that athletic fields are overused, under-sized, or not City-owned, which creates inequities and barriers to participation for local youth and leagues. Regarding the use of City parks and facilities (namely The Mill), rental fees and permitting costs limit community organizations and families from fully utilizing City spaces more often.

Programs & Facilities

PROGRAM PARTNERS

The City currently relies on several third-party providers and co-sponsors for its recreation services. The Department coordinates and promotes a limited selection of programs and services that are being provided by other organizations. The Boys & Girls Club and the Lake Stevens School District are the primary providers of most programs and services that are associated with indoor recreation, aquatics, and youth services. There are also a significant number of youth sport organizations that serve the needs of the community. In addition to the programs offered by other organizations, the City contracts directly with some individuals and businesses for a small number of programs that are promoted directly in the City's Recreation Guide. The following is a list of the primary providers of recreation services.

Other recreation service providers, such as the nearby communities of Marysville and Everett, offer a wide range of recreation programs and services. Beyond these, there are numerous private providers within the greater Everett-Seattle region including dance studios, martial arts studios, fitness centers, and specialty facilities such as tennis facilities and gymnastics studios.

Table 11. Recreation Program Partners & Providers

Organization	Program Types
Skyhawks Sports	flag football, golf, multi-sport camps, basketball, baseball, soccer, tennis
Just Kids Skills Camp	sport training in variety of sports (football, basketball, baseball, soccer, speed/agility training)
Creator Zone	makerspace, arts, science & crafts, robotics, design
Mahad Yoga	yoga
Snohomish Regional Fire & Rescue	kids water safety camp
Elevate Music Together	infant, toddler & preschooler music learning

OTHER PROVIDERS

Lake Stevens Senior Center

The Senior Center operates as a non-profit organization with the mission to promote the well-being of people over the age of 55 through physical, emotional, intellectual and economic

opportunities. The Center offers a variety of programs and services, including health and wellness, games, fitness, arts and crafts, book club, and other activities. The facility is also available as a rental.

Boys & Girls Club of Snohomish County

The Bargreen Lake Stevens Boys & Girls Club, established in 2004, has a large computer lab with a smart board for movies and interactive instruction, a multimedia/ technology room with popular games and a full sized gym. Youth sport programs include NFL flag football, volleyball, basketball and indoor soccer. The Club offers a before and after school childcare program that includes transportation to and from school.

Lake Stevens School District

The District's Community Education Program offers a range of educational opportunities, including sports, cheer, chess, music, and enrichment. The District also offers group and private swim lessons for children as young as 6 months to adults. The pool also schedules time for lap swim and water aerobics, in addition to school-based programming and team sports.

Youth Sport Organizations

Many of the youth and sport programs in the Lake Stevens area are handled by outside organizations not affiliated with the City and include the following organizations.

- Lake Stevens Lacrosse Club
- Lake Stevens Little League
- Lake Stevens Rowing Club (LSRC)
- Lake Stevens Soccer Club
- Lake Stevens Water Ski Club
- Lake Stevens Junior Athletic Association
- North Cascades Crew (Rowing Club)

Sno-Isle Library

Aside from providing access to books and periodicals, the Lake Stevens branch of the Sno-Isle Libraries also serves as a venue for limited programs and events for children and adults. These include story times, gaming, homework help, and Little Science Lab interactive learning.

COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTER PLANNING

The City does not have a community recreation center that provides adequate space for indoor recreational activities. Interest in the City providing recreation programs appears to be strong; however, the number and types of activities the City can offer is very limited due to the lack of staffing and indoor facility capacity. A full-service community center, including a gymnasium, workout room, multi-purpose rooms and teen center, would provide space for a variety of fitness, educational and community programming. Former guidelines from the National Recreation and Parks Association suggested a service standard of one community center per 20,000-40,000 people, and while that standard is no longer in use, it suggests that a certain population density is required to support such a facility. While public sentiment exists for a community center, a cautious approach should be taken and consideration given to the development of a new facility.

To meet this need, the City should pursue the development of a multi-use indoor recreation facility to enable comprehensive recreation programs for Lake Stevens residents. Such a facility would allow the City to control facility design, programming, scheduling and fees to more effectively meet community needs. Development of an indoor recreation facility requires extensive planning, including a feasibility analysis and management and operation plans, as well as exploration of potential financial and programming partnerships. The facility should include gymnasiums, classrooms and multi-functional rooms and fitness rooms. The facility analysis also should consider the inclusion of civic space (i.e., city service center/offices, etc.) or other leasable office space depending on the potential to secure funding partners with interest in co-locating at the facility. Partnerships may be necessary to offset development and operational costs.

With a new community center, the City will be poised to expand recreation program offerings. Doing so will require advance program planning to determine the range of potential programs, scheduling, and the needs for full-time and temporary staff for programming and facility operations. Comments from public outreach indicate a latent demand for additional program

options for teen programs, youth sports, adult classes (fitness, art, etc.), and enrichment and learning activities. Considerations about existing and planned programs should gauge performance and priority offerings based on a mix of criteria that include:

- Community interest or deficiencies
- Potential for increased participation
- Fill rates for programs (registrants compared to program capacity)
- Rate of program cancellations
- Availability of qualified and knowledgeable staff or contractors to provide consistency and reliability for program delivery
- Financial performance of individual programs (operating expenses vs. revenues)
- Program life cycle assessment to balance the suite of new, mature, and declining programs
- Revenue potential, affordability, and accessibility
- Cost of service policy metrics

Special Events

The Parks and Recreation Department either leads or is a strong partner in the coordination of several community and special events throughout the year. These public events provide gathering opportunities, celebrations and activation of the downtown and City parks. While not every event is hosted or run by the City, these special events draw the community together, attract tourists and visitors from across the region, and are popular with residents. A selection of recent community events include the following.

Opportunities to connect are clearly crucial to Lake Stevens' residents. Survey and public meeting responses showed strong interest for additional community events. Additionally, the City could explore ideas for events that draw from the growing diversity of the community, such as festivals or activities celebrating Latin American, Asian or Native American traditions. City parks and facilities also could be promoted for quinceañeras and other family celebrations. Also, if a new community center is constructed, it can provide another venue to promote cultural gatherings and other family celebrations.

Table 12. Special Events throughout the Year

Winter	Spring	Summer	Fall
Freeze in the Trees*	Earth Day Community Clean Up	Aquafest*	Akiban Gaming Event*
Polar Bear Plunge	Gaming by the Lake	Chamber of Commerce 4th of July*	Autumn Market*
Valentines Disc Golf*	Great Egg Hunt	Lake Stevens Farmers Market*	Bull Trout Regatta*
	Kiwanis Easter Egg Hunt*	Lake Stevens Triathlon*	Fall Community Garage Sale
	Lotus Run (CRH Memorial)*	Movies in the Park	Festival of Trees*
	Memorial Day Service*	Music in the Park*	Going a Viking
	Spring Community Garage Sale		HarvestFest
	Spring Sprints Regatta*		WinterFest

* Note: Hosted by partner organization

Community gathering and special events should continue to be an area of emphasis; however, the overall number and breadth of City-sponsored special events should be carefully managed to align with the availability of resources and impacts to general park and facility use. This will ensure the City can adequately invest in its overall recreational offerings and maintain high-quality special events. Other community groups should be encouraged to be the primary funders and organizers of as many community-wide events as possible. A structured approach will help the City manage the growth of these popular offerings; ensure high-quality, adequately resourced events; and enlist community sponsorships, partnerships and support.

Communications & Marketing

Feedback from the community survey suggested some limited awareness of the recreation options and park amenities available to Lake Stevens residents. The City should continue to take a strong role in coordinating and promoting parks and recreation services to improve awareness and inclusion for residents. Stronger marketing efforts will be needed to inform and promote the current and future recreation programs and should continue to focus on the following areas:

- Website enhancement to better promote programs and services in addition to the periodic program guide, including searchable program offerings, mobile-friendly functionality, and services offered by other providers;

- Social media, email, flyers, and signage promotions of program registration options;
- Cross marketing and/or promotional opportunities with other organizations, such as the school district, local sport leagues and others; and
- Using appropriate communication channels to effectively market to various demographic segments.

Future Programming Considerations

Going forward, the City will need to determine the areas of focus for future recreation programming efforts based on the level of financial and resource commitment that it wants to make to recreation programs and services.

PROGRAMMING PHILOSOPHY

The City should review and refresh its overall basic programming philosophy to guide future programming decisions, especially if a new recreation center becomes operational and the City has participant data to drive a refinement of programming objectives and targets. This should be a simple, straight forward document that includes the following objectives:

- Serve as the primary provider of certain recreation program areas, but coordinate these efforts to ensure there are opportunities for additional recreation services for all age groups and abilities.
- Maintain, expand and develop partnerships with other providers to bring a full spectrum of recreation programs and services to the community.

- For recreation programs and services that occur at City facilities, develop an approach that relies on:
 - City staffed programs in key program areas.
 - Contractor provided programs where revenues are shared.
 - Rental of space to other providers for their programs, as appropriate.
 - Ensure that recreation program and service opportunities (regardless of who provides them) are available to all ages, incomes, and abilities in an equitable and inclusive manner.
 - Ensure that recreation program and service opportunities are available in areas of interest that are identified as a need in the community.
 - Continue to explore options to provide recreation opportunities geographically across the city, as practical.

OVERALL PROGRAM & LIFE CYCLE PLANNING

To assist with future program planning, staff periodically should request and review participant data from providers to stay abreast of class and program utilization and consider the available program mix. Also, staff should periodically review data from the following sources to determine community needs for programs and services:

- Historical registration trends/success of current programs and services
- Surveys and questionnaires
- Washington Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
- Suggestions provided by current or prospective instructors and current employees

Staff should evaluate programs on an annual basis to determine the overall program mix. If participation levels are still growing, then continue to provide the program. When participation growth is slow to no growth, or competition increases from other providers, staff should look at modifying the program to re-energize their customers to participate. When program participation is consistently declining, staff should terminate the program and replace it with a new program based on the public's priority ranking, in activity areas that are trending, while taking into consideration the anticipated percentage of local participation, facility or staff demands and pricing potential.

Based on the programming philosophy, an updated program plan should define the general direction of recreation programming for the next five+ years. This also should be a simple document that includes the following elements to determine which programs will be primarily offered by City staff:

- Define the roles of the Parks and Recreation Department, such that the City does not need to be the actual source of all programmed activities, but working with other providers through partnerships or referrals will be important to providing a broad range of recreation program opportunities to the community.
- Ensure that recreation programs are available for specific demographic groups including:
 - **Youth** – Programs that serve a variety of interest areas beyond sports, including arts, enrichment, after-school and summer camps.
 - **Teens** – Activities designed specifically for teens that are both organized and drop-in in nature.
 - **Adaptive/Inclusion** – Provide programs to meet the needs of specific groups of participants with disabilities, as well as ensuring programs provide opportunity to allow full participation with adaptations and support if necessary.
 - **Intergenerational/Multi-generational** – Offering programs and services that have an appeal to multiple generations or across generations.
- For other organizations and recreation providers in the area, clearly identify areas of programmatic responsibility to ensure that there is not overlap in resource allocation.

PROGRAM METRICS

The City should track program trends on a regional and national basis to ensure that program offerings are current and reflect the opportunities that are available. Basic performance measures will need to be established to track recreation programming effectiveness. This includes the following for both City programs, as well as those that are contracted:

- Rates of fill for programs and activities (capacity vs. actual numbers).
- Participation numbers and comparisons to past years/seasons.
- Rate of program cancellations.
- Financial performance including cost per participant.
- Evaluations from participants.



OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE

The City faces pressure to manage and maintain a high-quality system of park, open space, trail and recreation facilities that contribute greatly to the character of Lake Stevens. The demand for both outdoor and indoor recreation facilities will continue to require sports facilities and trail connections. These needed expansions of the park system will require additional staffing to ensure sufficient and continual care for the existing facilities and their regular renovations and upgrades necessary to keep the park system a viable community asset. Older infrastructure will continue to trigger the need for repairs or complete replacements to keep the facilities safe and secure. New ideas, trends and acquisitions should be considered on a reasonable cycle to ensure that Lake Stevens continues to provide exemplary park and recreation resources for its residents.

To effectively plan, develop, maintain and operate a high-quality park and conservation lands system, the City will need to continually reassess

and reinvest in its park and recreation staffing resources. This assessment examines some agency resource comparisons, identifies trends in park operations and perspectives from park leadership.

The management of the park system also adheres to goals directed by the City's Strategic Plan and general park and recreation best practices. The City-Wide 5-Year Strategic Plan 2025-2029 specifically aligns the Environmental Stewardship priority and the city's green infrastructure with goals for protecting natural habitats and Lake Stevens watershed health, as well as promoting climate sustainability and enhanced access to public spaces. Policies and practices that minimize impacts to the natural environment, while maximizing the service life of any recreational asset, can be integrated into park administration, planning, development and operations.

Performance Benchmarks

National performance data provides a benchmark for park and recreation agencies to compare their administration, operations and programming with other providers across the country. However, while comparisons can be helpful, no two agencies are exactly alike. History, culture, landforms, hydrology, climate, demographics and other local variables all contribute to how effectively any park and recreation provider can perform in the community.

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) 2025 Agency Performance Review provides metrics that offer perspectives on comparisons for the Lake Stevens park system. Selected findings from this nationwide

benchmarking tool illustrates comparison metrics with national medians and with park and recreation provider jurisdictions within similar population size brackets. Comparison with agencies reporting from across the country offers a snapshot of how Lake Stevens compares with other peer agencies. It should be noted that park and recreation providers can vary greatly across the country in terms of services, infrastructure, and system-wide parklands. Using NRPA metrics provides a "first flush" at examining how Lake Stevens currently is providing for and operating park and recreation facilities.

Chapter 5 (Park, Open Space & Trails) highlighted a selection of NRPA agency comparisons with other agencies. For this discussion related to operations, the staffing levels based on population size in the NRPA Agency Performance Report show the median for communities with 20,000 to 49,999 residents employ 30.3 full-time equivalent staff for their provision of park and recreation services, of which approximately 46% are involved in operations and maintenance. Lake Stevens' 12 full-time park employees and 4 seasonal employees is less than other similar-sized communities.

Comparing the ratio of park FTEs with population size, the NRPA median for similar sized communities is 9.6 FTEs per 10,000 residents. Lake Stevens employs 3 park FTEs per 10,000 residents. As noted in Chapter 5, the comparison to other Pacific Northwest park and recreation agencies in similar-sized communities also indicated the lower staffing numbers for park services. Communities with full recreation programming services typically have higher FTE counts.

Table 13. NRPA Parks and Recreation Agency Staffing Comparison based on population sizes.

	All Agencies	Less than 20,000	20,000-49,999	50,000-99,999	100,000-250,000	250,000 - 499,999	500,000 or more
Median	59.2	13.8	30.0	74.4	130.5	217.9	338.8
Lower Quartile	20.5	6.0	18.3	45.1	58.8	110.9	203.2
Upper Quartile	161.4	32.1	61.3	128.1	195.9	323.2	697.3

Table 14. NRPA Parks and Recreation Agency Staffing Comparison based on FTEs per 10,000 residents.

	All Agencies	Less than 20,000	20,000- 49,999	50,000- 99,999	100,000- 250,000	250,000 - 499,999	500,000 or more
Median	8.6	13.7	9.6	10.0	8.2	6.2	3.6
Lower Quartile	5.0	7.0	5.4	6.6	4.0	3.7	1.8
Upper Quartile	15.9	26.6	20.1	16.4	12.2	10.2	6.2

Lake Stevens’ park and recreation services make a significant contribution to the high quality of life for its residents. With the important contributing role in the quality of community life comes the related requirement to invest strongly and consistently in the infrastructure and services that have created and must continue to maintain that park and recreation system. The professional staff and labor resources hold the park and recreation system together and ensure the continuing provision of quality facilities, natural resources and programming. Waterfront infrastructure and its continual upkeep and renovation needs represent a significant cost both with their initial development and with any repairs, renovations or replacements. As a lakefront community that values its public lakefront amenities, Lake Stevens should expect higher than average capital and operating costs for sustaining its waterfront infrastructure.

Staffing Considerations

EXISTING STAFFING RESOURCES

The Parks & Recreation Department was established in August 2022, shifting park and recreation responsibilities from the Planning & Community Development Department and Public Works Department. The administrative and recreation staff are responsible for recreation programming, special event coordination, and facility reservation management. Staff organize volunteer opportunities that include the adopt-a-street and adopt-a-park programs.

The Parks Crew is responsible for performing facility and ground maintenance tasks that include landscaping, irrigation, trail maintenance and smaller construction projects. Regular inspections

and repairs are conducted for restrooms, playgrounds and docks and piers. The Crew place buoys and maintain swim lines for waterfront parks and assist with lake safety. These staff also provide event and recreation support.

FUTURE STAFFING RESOURCES

The Department has identified its immediate staffing needs for the City to ensure adequate provision of a quality park and recreation system as its population continues to grow and the need for park and recreation services increases. Proposed staffing increases and reclassification of a few positions were articulated for 2025, 2026 and 2027 as part of the city-wide Strategic Staffing Update for 2025-2029. The proposed additional staff positions are in response to future build-out expectations with HOA and County parks and the demand for more recreational programming and city-wide events.

In 2025, the Staffing Scenario includes the addition of a maintenance worker to ensure retaining the level of service for parks and increasing maintenance needs due to the addition and improvements of existing city parks. The establishment of an office assistant to handle customer service needs, booking recreational facilities and increased clerical tasks also was proposed for 2025. In addition to the two positions outlined above, a parks revenue specialist could be added to write department grants, expand sponsorship opportunities, public-private partnerships and to develop general revenues.

By 2026, an additional maintenance worker, as well as a 0.5 seasonal worker, is warranted to help support park maintenance as the park system expands. With the anticipated growth in the Recreation Division, the establishment of

a recreation/office manager can help support the Department Director. Also, the addition of a recreation assistant staff could help expand programming and events.

In 2027, the organizational adjustments predict the needs for an additional maintenance worker, office assistant and two to four recreation assistants. A restructure of the maintenance crew to split into Grounds and Operations will further refine staff roles and responsibilities.

STAFF TRAINING

Park maintenance tasks can vary greatly in their requirement for certain skills, knowledge, and experience. With adopted maintenance standards, park operations staff can be cognizant of work that needs to be addressed and work tasks can be prioritized. The City could support the training of a crew member to be a Tree Risk Assessment Qualified (TRAQ) International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) Certified Arborist. This specific arboricultural expertise is essential to ensure that the community forest and individual park trees are managed to protect their value as capital assets and contributors to environmental health. Additional horticultural knowledge can be invaluable in identifying the best timing for certain landscape tasks to ensure effective practices and good results. Training on basic turf management, horticulture, arboriculture, integrated pest management, and environmental practices is recommended for all permanent staff. Providing and supporting attendance in workshops and training for optimum approaches to park maintenance can increase productivity and reinforce the value of park workers in their role of providing a safe and viable public park system.

Maintenance & Operations Standards

The establishment of maintenance and operations management standards for the Parks and Recreation Department was an identified goal expressed in the 2025 City Budget. The Grounds Operations and Maintenance Standards prepared by the Department describe the four levels of maintenance that have been established to determine service levels for locations within the park system. Some parks may have more than one level of maintenance assigned due to a site's physical character and intended uses. The levels of maintenance are considered as guidelines that may be adjusted based on community needs or available resources. Across these four levels, the Level 1 designation requires the most intensive labor as it is typically for well-developed park areas with heavy recreational use. In comparison, Level 4 are typically passive park spaces, undeveloped and may include wetlands and Native Growth Protection Areas (NGPA). Level 4 spaces are only subject to annual inspections and on-demand repairs, when needed.

The Grounds Operations and Maintenance Standards include guidelines for turf management, tree care, irrigation, graffiti/vandalism responses, restrooms, shelters, playgrounds and trails. Litter control, fencing, pavement management, site furnishings, beaches and swim areas, and signage also are discussed with recommended levels of upkeep. Within the Standards document, an inventory of park facilities assigns the level of maintenance for each site, including HOA locations.

Staff time will be required to maintain the desired maintenance standards. To ensure that adequate staffing resources are being allocated to park operations, the tracking of time for the various tasks helps provide the data for predicting staffing needs when additional facilities and amenities are added to the system. One park system in Washington was able to predict their future labor needs for new neighborhood and community parks by tracking labor hours necessary to maintain current parks based on type of park and acreage. Table 15 illustrates that system's direct labor requirements based on type of park facility.

Table 15. Park Maintenance Labor based on Park Type

Park Maintenance Labor	Annual Labor*
Open Space Labor Hours per Acre	21
Neighborhood Park Labor Hours per Acre	152
Community Park Labor Hours per Acre	111

* based on a 5-year average from a Pacific Northwest park agency

The information can be extrapolated to predict number of FTE’s necessary to reasonably maintain and operate developed urban parks. As Lake Stevens integrates its asset management system with tracking labor allocations, a predictive model could be developed for staffing needs associated with future acquisitions, improvements and/or programming.

Asset Management

With limited budgets and on-going maintenance needs, many cities struggle to provide adequate maintenance and operation support. This often results in situations where proactive maintenance is deferred, and assets are repaired, rehabilitated or replaced only when there is an urgent need. This can result in a loss of services, such as when a facility is closed due to a lack of funding for needed repairs; higher long-term maintenance costs, as assets in worse condition may degrade more quickly and be more difficult and costly to fix; and a loss of public confidence. Consequently, the City must consider and plan for long-term asset management needs.

The foundation of a holistic asset management program is a comprehensive inventory and assessment of existing facilities and unmet needs. The City should continue to maintain standardized and systematic inventory documentation of park system infrastructure, including quantity, location and condition. By tracking installation and the expected useful life of assets, the City can plan for proactive maintenance and replacement of assets in the future. This life cycle planning should be further supplemented by on-going condition assessments of assets – particularly those with a high consequence of failure. The City does this regularly with playground equipment inspections and this practice can be replicated across the

other site amenities and improvements. Such assessments can highlight urgent repair needs and can help the City fine-tune maintenance practices for Lake Stevens’ weather, wear and usage patterns. Such information can aid in future budgeting for capital repairs and overall asset management, as well as for predicting staffing requirements. Going forward, the City could refine their data management and utilize life cycle planning to help predict capital repairs and future capital projects.

Americans with Disabilities Act Compliance

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. Titles II and III of the ADA require, among other things, that newly constructed and altered state and local government facilities, places of public accommodation, and commercial facilities be readily accessible to, and usable by, individuals with disabilities. Recreation facilities, such as play areas, are among the types of facilities covered by Titles II and III of the ADA.

The U.S. Department of Justice 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design provide guidelines that are intended to address design conditions to ensure that barriers or obstacles blocking outdoor recreation facilities are prevented or removed, such that all park patrons have reasonable access to site amenities. As older facilities are in the process of renovations and replacements and new facilities are added to the system, Lake Stevens will need to ensure compliance with ADA accessibility requirements.

Volunteer Resources

Volunteer efforts – through volunteer groups, students, neighborhood groups, or sport and service organizations – can contribute to both site improvements and environmental stewardship. An engaging volunteer program can allow community members to gain a sense of ownership in the parks and recreation system. Volunteer contributions from sport organizations can be the key ingredient in the development, maintenance and operation of specialized facilities, such as sport fields,

skate parks and mountain biking facilities. Any volunteer program requires constant coordination and management that implies the investment in the necessary staffing to manage a successful volunteer in order to capitalize on the enhanced resources and community connections. Although volunteers require effective management at the City's expense, their contribution can readily result in a net gain for the City and community. The Department should continue to coordinate with volunteer opportunities and specifically call out the need for volunteers on the website in advance of major events or activities.

Role in Climate Resilience

Park operations across the country have been changing their approach to park maintenance as a response to the need for water conservation, flood resilience, stormwater best management practices, wildfire management, and forest restoration. Cities realize that their park system plays an important role in helping to provide contributions to climate resilience through reducing heat islands, cooling waterways, protecting habitat, and many other ecosystems services.

Community forestry and the addition of more shade trees in public spaces is an active pursuit of the City. As noted in the 2023 Climate Sustainability Plan, the City aims to protect tree canopy and prevent tree loss by developing urban forestry and tree preservation guidelines. These efforts could include tree-awareness campaigns, community education, and tree planting demonstration programs. Parks and natural open spaces should be managed to restore, maintain, and where feasible, expand the canopy coverage for the City. As part of its tree planting program, the City should rely on native and adaptive tree species that are appropriate for the Pacific Northwest.

Green Stormwater Infrastructure

Green stormwater infrastructure investments to reduce and treat stormwater flooding and pollutants has been on the rise across the country. These nature-based methods apply permeable pavements to reduce runoff, bioswales to slow

and treat draining waters, stream restorations to stabilize banks and improve aquatic resources and tree canopy cover to alleviate heat impacts and reduce stormwater quantity. Many cities and towns fail to coordinate their stormwater management efforts with their park system operations, missing a valuable opportunity to improve surface water resources and inform the community about the importance of stormwater management and value of green infrastructure applications.

As part of its city-wide environmental stewardship, the City of Lake Stevens has identified a strategic goal to acquire additional open space that can contribute to the green space providing water quality benefits. In addition to lake and shoreline erosion monitoring, the Surface Water Division is tasked with acquiring additional open spaces for restoration projects. This environmental stewardship effort can dovetail with park open spaces, potential trail connections and public access to the Lake.

Associated with regulatory requirements for the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) and Environmental Education Initiatives, Parks can provide opportunities to illustrate best practices for managing rain water runoff and reducing stormwater impacts. Interpretive signs about reducing runoff, installing rain gardens and using native and naturalized plantings are located in several different parks. Parks maintenance practices and Surface Water's restoration activities can help mitigate runoff volume or improve water quality. Forest management within parks and open spaces sites help infiltrate and reduce stormwater impacts.

New park capital projects should be designed to incorporate green infrastructure techniques that improve rather than impact existing stormwater runoff quality. Green stormwater infrastructure should become a park design standard practice to ensure that future park projects, upgrades and ongoing restoration activities continue to promote a healthy lake environment, conserve and protect natural ecosystems and maintain low-impact park environments. Parks planning and management should be in collaboration with stormwater utility planning to capture opportunities for financing and implementing coordinated projects and programs.



CHAPTER 8

GOALS & POLICIES

The goals and objectives described in this chapter define the recreation and park services that Lake Stevens aims to provide and are an outgrowth of the park system needs assessment and public feedback.

An analysis of existing park, recreation and open space facilities along with community input provide the basis for establishing goals and policies within the PROS Plan. Goals are stated within functional areas related to the planning, development and administration of the Lake Stevens park and recreation system. A goal is a general statement that describes the overarching direction for the park and recreation system. Policies are listed under each goal and are more specific and describe an outcome or a means to achieve the stated goals. Near-term recommendations are specific and measurable actions or projects intended to implement and achieve the goals, and are contained within the needs assessment and capital planning chapters of the PROS Plan.

The goals and policies that follow are organized by topic and are not provided in a particular hierarchy or order of significance.

Diverse Experiences

GOAL 1: Provide a high-quality, diversified parks, recreation and open space system that provides recreational and cultural opportunities for all ages and interest groups.

- 1.1 Provide a balanced mix of active recreational facilities including court and field activities, skateboard/BMX areas, and multi-use trails and passive recreation facilities that accommodate hiking/walking, shoreline access and picnicking accessible to the largest number of participants.
- 1.2 Promote balanced lake access for pedestrians and motorized and non-motorized watercraft, so all segments of the population can enjoy the lake and have access to its recreational opportunities.
- 1.3 Evaluate existing parks for opportunities to upgrade, add capacity and increase amenities to expand outdoor recreation experiences and serve wider user types. Revive aging park infrastructure to improve current facilities.
- 1.4 Plan for sport fields, courts and specialized recreational facilities, such as pump tracks, off-leash dog areas and indoor facilities, with consideration of local needs, partner support/capacity, recreational trends, and availability of similar facilities within the City and region.
- 1.5 Incorporate and expand alternative sport opportunities for youth and adults in the park system such as disc golf, futsal, bouldering, parkour, and other non-team physical activities.
- 1.6 Provide environmental education opportunities in open space areas with creative and interactive interpretation strategies, such as hands-on displays, self-guided walks, and other engaging experiences.
- 1.7 Identify appropriate locations within parks and public spaces for the installation of public art, interpretive signs or cultural displays to reflect the character, culture and history of Lake Stevens.
- 1.8 Track and evaluate recreation trends, park use patterns, and park user needs.

Strategic System Investments & Acquisitions

GOAL 2: Expand the City's park and recreation system through targeted investments to meet the needs of current and future residents and ensure a more equitable distribution and availability of park and outdoor recreation opportunities.

- 2.1 Provide a distributed park and open space system accessible to all residents that strive to meet the following levels of service:
 - Community Parks – one park within a 2.5-mile radius of all residential areas.
 - Neighborhood Parks – one park within a one-mile radius of all residential areas and
- 2.2 Refine the Land Acquisition Program/Strategy to prioritize property acquisition to meet the identified future parks, trails, open space, and facility needs of the Lake Stevens community.
- 2.3 Identify and prioritize lands for inclusion in the park and open space system based on factors such as contribution to level of service, known service gaps, connectivity, preservation and scenic or recreational opportunities for residents.
- 2.4 Acquire additional shoreline lands for trails, public docks, water access and other water related recreational activities.
- 2.5 Explore the opportunity to improve existing, undeveloped street ends to enhance public access to the lake.
- 2.6 When evaluating the vacation of any right-of-way, the City shall consider its appropriateness for use as a public park, trail corridor or open space.
- 2.7 Periodically coordinate with Snohomish County and adjacent cities to strategize for the acquisition of parks and open spaces within or in close proximity to the Lake Stevens urban growth boundary.
- 2.8 Cooperate with public and private agencies and with private landowners to set aside land and resources necessary to provide high-quality, convenient park and recreation facilities and trail corridors before the most suitable sites are lost to development.
- 2.9 Work with developers to identify additional parks, recreation and open space opportunities in redeveloping areas with priority for areas currently without available park facilities.
- 2.10 Plan for additional or renovated community center and facility space to meet needs for recreation, educational classes, community and cultural events, and meeting space.

Design & Maintenance

GOAL 3: Design and maintain park facilities to maximize life of the facilities and to provide an attractive and pleasing environment for users.

- 3.1 Design and develop facilities, which reduce overall facility maintenance and operations requirements and costs. Design new and renovated facilities using appropriate technology, construction materials and maintenance procedures to gain cost efficiencies and conserve resources.
- 3.2 Develop a maintenance management system to estimate and plan for life cycle maintenance in addition to replacement costs.
- 3.3 Provide operation and maintenance to ensure safe, serviceable, and functional parks and facilities. Provide adequate funding to operate and maintain existing and new special use sites.
- 3.4 Repair acts of vandalism immediately to discourage park property and city recreation facilities from becoming targets for further such acts.
- 3.5 Track and monitor costs of maintaining parks and recreation facilities, including quantity, location, condition, and expected useful life. Conduct life cycle planning for all parks infrastructure to ensure implementation of timely capital replacement programming for park structures, play equipment, furnishings and surfaces.
- 3.6 Establish creative methods to efficiently expand park and trail maintenance services, such as encouraging volunteer efforts, continued use of the State Department of Corrections crews and mutual coordination with other local agencies.
- 3.7 Design and maintain parks and facilities to offer universal accessibility for residents of all physical capabilities, skill levels, and ages as appropriate and in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Standards for Accessible Design. Seek opportunities to eliminate access barriers, and where possible exceed ADA requirements, at existing facilities and allocate resources to address known gaps.
- 3.8 Integrate public art and park design from the onset of facility planning to create compelling, engaging, and captivating public places.
- 3.9 Incorporate sustainable building practices, low-impact development and energy-efficient components into the design, development, and maintenance of the park system.
- 3.10 Develop city-owned or maintained park sites based on site-specific master plans or other adopted strategies to ensure parks reflect local needs, community input, recreational and conservation goals, and available financial resources.
- 3.11 Develop a master plan to enhance park amenities at Cavalero Hill Park as a newly acquired City park facility.
- 3.12 Develop a master plan for Centennial Woods Park to formalize its use as a passive park and connection to Catherine Creek Park.
- 3.13 Evaluate older, existing parks for opportunities to upgrade and increase amenities to expand outdoor recreation experiences and serve wider user types. Revive aging park infrastructure to improve current facilities.

Recreation, Events & Culture

GOAL 4: Support and Provide a variety of recreation programs, services, and facilities that promote the health and well-being of residents of all ages and abilities.

- 4.1 Endeavor to provide parks, programs and events that are inclusive, welcoming and reflect the diversity of the Lake Stevens community.
- 4.2 Expand the City's role as a key provider of recreation programs and services and increase programming, as facility space allows, to meet changing demographics and growing community needs.
- 4.3 Leverage City resources by forming and maintaining partnerships and cooperatively plan for joint-use facilities, meeting and classrooms, athletic fields, and other facilities with other public, non-profit, and private organizations that are of mutual benefit to each agency and the users/ participants in the city and its Urban Growth Area.
- 4.4 Provide and develop additional amenities, multi-purpose facilities, and centers that support and accommodate broad introductory and recreational usage.
- 4.5 Assess existing active recreation and athletic facilities and investigate sites for new athletic facilities that will help meet anticipated growth in the city and region efficiently and sustainably.
- 4.6 Establish interlocal agreements between to provide for athletic facilities to serve the needs of the city and the Urban Growth Area.
- 4.7 Strategically expand recreation programs that complement services of other providers as facilities, staffing levels and partner opportunities allow.
- 4.8 Support continued cooperation between the city, non-profit organizations, the Lake Stevens School District and other agencies for continuation and development of recreation programming to avoid duplication, improve facility quality and improve program availability.
- 4.9 Support the use of indoor community spaces for arts and crafts, music, video, classroom instruction, meeting facilities and other spaces for all age groups on a year-round basis.
- 4.10 Monitor local and regional recreation trends to ensure community needs and interests are addressed by available programming.
- 4.11 Establish and enhance fee assistance programs and other mechanisms to support recreation access for low-income residents.
- 4.12 Identify recreational and cultural needs opportunities for special needs populations.
- 4.13 Support community events that create pride and provide for economic development.
- 4.14 Support the Lake Stevens Historical Society in their efforts to inventory significant historical and archaeological resources and to provide information to the community on its history.

Trails

GOAL 5: Provide an interconnected system of high-quality, accessible trails and greenways corridors.

- 5.1 Develop trail improvements using the Trails Master Plan design and development standards that facilitate maintenance, security and other appropriate personnel, equipment and vehicles.
- 5.2 Establish and implement a standard for trail signage including interpretive, safety and regulatory signs.
- 5.3 Coordinate construction of trail projects with other capital improvement projects including utility and transportation projects.
- 5.4 Establish a multi-use trail around the lake utilizing a combination of temporary facilities supplemented with longer-term capital facility planning.
- 5.5 Continue the phased development of the Bayview Trail Connector (Lake Stevens Trail).
- 5.6 Establish an east/west sidewalk trail along 24th Street SE and South Lake Stevens Road to connect to the Centennial Trail as identified in the 20th Street SE Corridor subarea plan.
- 5.7 Develop additional soft surface trails, where practicable.
- 5.8 Establish, expand and/or improve nature trails and boardwalks through open spaces with an emphasis on Eagle Ridge Park, Catherine Creek Park, Centennial Woods, Mill Cove Reserve, and the Grade Road Open Space.
- 5.9 Where appropriate, locate trailheads at or in conjunction with park sites, schools, and other community facilities to increase local area access to the trail system and reduce duplication of supporting improvements.
- 5.10 Furnish trail systems with appropriate supporting trailhead improvements that may include interpretive and directory signage systems, rest stops, drinking fountains, restrooms, parking and loading areas, water, and other services.

Open Space & Conservation

GOAL 6: Conserve, enhance and provide access to natural resource lands for conservation, recreation, and environmental education.

- 6.1 Preserve open space corridors and buffers to provide separation between natural areas and urban land uses and maximize climate resilience benefits, with a goal of maintaining five percent of the city as open space.
- 6.2 Plan, locate and manage park and recreation facilities so that they enhance wildlife habitat, minimize erosion, complement natural site features and create linkages within the developed area.
- 6.3 Support the implementation of other applicable City plans that can be achieved through park and natural area management and operations, such as the Climate Sustainability Action Plan and Stormwater Management Action Plan, among others.
- 6.4 Allow use of natural areas, open space corridors and sensitive habitats at a level that will not compromise the environmental integrity of the area.
- 6.5 Facilitate the creation of open space corridors along Lake Stevens' water resources, shorelines, and local streams to provide for passive recreation and wildlife habitat.
- 6.6 Actively work to maintain and improve the condition of City-owned parks, trails, and natural areas through invasive species removal, planting of native species, and restoration of urban forests, creeks, wetlands, and other habitat areas.
- 6.7 Utilize, as appropriate, native and lower resource requiring vegetation for landscaping in parks and City-owned properties to minimize maintenance requirements, conserve water, reduce the need for fertilizer, and provide native habitat for wildlife.
- 6.8 Establish sustainability metrics that evaluate climate change adaptation, resiliency, water conservation, and tree canopy coverage within the parks and recreation system.
- 6.9 Improve tree management policies and practices and promote tree retention and succession.
- 6.10 Expand community education opportunities and interpretive materials on topics such as environmental conservation, invasive species management, and the importance of sustainability to foster a sense of community stewardship and responsibility.
- 6.11 Work cooperatively with property owners, HOAs and developers to preserve habitat, manage native vegetation, and advocate for community education on invasive species, especially when these provide visual or physical linkages to publicly-owned natural resource lands.

Engagement & Communications

GOAL 7: Encourage and support public involvement in park and recreation issues and enhance communications.

- 7.1 Involve residents and stakeholders in park and recreation facility planning and design and recreation program development in order to solicit community input, facilitate project understanding and engender public support. Look for ways to engage and support community members of color, low incomes and historically underserved communities.
- 7.2 Continue to support and promote the Parks and Recreation Planning Board as the forum for public discussion of park and recreation issues.
- 7.3 Conduct periodic joint sessions between the Parks and Recreation Planning Board and the Planning Commission, and with the City Council to improve coordination and discuss policy matters of mutual interest pertaining to recreational resources, opportunities and funding.
- 7.4 Communicate the value of the City's investment in parks, open spaces, and recreational opportunities and provide information to the public about park and recreation funding and the stewardship of tax dollars.
- 7.5 Promote the use of local parks through the media, Aquafest, other festivals and by providing information as to their availability, such as publishing maps showing park locations and their available facilities.
- 7.6 Develop an evaluation process for marketing media such as newspaper, seasonal brochures, website, direct mail, targeted emails, radio, and television advertising to continuously determine effectiveness of marketing dollars.
- 7.7 Encourage and promote volunteer park improvement and maintenance projects from a variety of individuals, service clubs, local non-profits, faith organizations and businesses.
- 7.8 Facilitate community involvement, stewardship and environmental education.
 - a. Continue and expand the volunteer work party program.
 - b. Continue and expand the Adopt-a-Community program.
 - c. Develop interlocal management agreements.
 - d. Encourage participation in community trail events.
 - e. Expand on existing relationships with schools, business and non-profit organizations to integrate environmental education and a sense of stewardship via local educational programs and volunteer events.
- 7.9 Where appropriate, use adopt-a-park programs, neighborhood park watches, park police patrols and other innovative programs that will increase safety and security awareness and visibility.
- 7.10 Have intentional engagement with diverse community groups to create and partner on new diverse events and community celebrations.
- 7.11 Promote environmental protection as part of providing a successful park and recreation program by establishing a permanent celebration promoting Earth Day activities
- 7.12 Provide historic and natural interpretation opportunities throughout the city's park system.

System Management & Resources

GOAL 8: Provide leadership through partnerships, collaborations and agreements and sufficient resources to maintain and operate the parks, recreation, and open space system.

- 8.1 Develop and update long-term financial strategies that address the funding needs for future capital projects, acquisition, facility improvement needs, and maintenance and operations.
- 8.2 Advocate for funding options and adequate budgetary resources to maintain and operate parks and recreation programs.
- 8.3 Investigate innovative available methods or the financing of maintenance and operating needs to reduce costs, retain financial flexibility, match user benefits and interests and increase facility services.
- 8.4 Explore non-traditional sources including, but not limited to, volunteers, dedication of benches or other amenities for fundraising, interlocal agreements, donations, foundations, interjurisdictional partnerships and other appropriate mechanisms.
- 8.5 Encourage donations and dedications, conservation easements, innovative land use contractual agreements and other methods involving foundations, organizations, associations, trusts, developers, landowners, others from the private sector and neighboring and regional governments.
- 8.6 Promote commercial recreation opportunities along the Centennial Trail and on and near the lake.
- 8.7 Periodically review and update the Park Impact Fee rates and methodology approximately and utilize impact fees to accommodate growth through the expansion of the parks system.
- 8.8 Support and work with the Lake Stevens Arts and Parks Foundation to facilitate the receipt of grant funds and to conduct other fundraising activities.
- 8.9 Stay abreast of best practices in technology and implement systems and tools to improve customer service and support efficient operations.
- 8.10 Regularly evaluate existing park and trail rules and policies to ensure they are reflecting changing community needs and interests.
- 8.11 Invest in professional development opportunities that strengthen the core skills and commitment from staff, Board members and key volunteers, to include trainings, materials and/or affiliation with relevant national and regional associations.
- 8.12 Periodically update the Parks Capital Improvement Plan to address facility improvement needs.
- 8.13 Update the PROS Plan periodically and approximately every six years to ensure facilities and services meet current and future community needs and maintain eligibility for State grants.



CAPITAL PROJECTS & IMPLEMENTATION

This chapter describes a range of strategies to consider in the implementation of the Plan and details a 10-year program for addressing park and amenity enhancement projects.

The preceding chapters provided an overview of Lake Stevens' park, trail, and open space system, along with goals and policies to guide future planning, development, and operations. This chapter focuses on specific project actions, including the proposed 10-year capital project list, and offers recommendations on additional strategies for successful implementation.

Key Project Recommendations

The following is a summary of key project recommendations which will require commitment from the City and its residents for the continued support a healthy park and recreation system that preserves and enhances the safety, livability and character of the Lake Stevens community.

COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTER AND SPORTS COMPLEX

Building on the momentum from the recent acquisition of Cavalero Hill Park from Snohomish County, the City and its residents are poised to include a future community center as a central feature in the City's park system. The City initiated a public bidding process to identify and select a potential partner to construct and operate the facility. The City should continue to pursue financing options to facilitate the design and construction for the facility in the near-term. The new complex will greatly expand the City's capacity to provide athletics and indoor recreation for athletics, fitness, classes and community activities for all ages and abilities.

PARK ENHANCEMENTS

Considering both the local needs and national trends for types of park facilities, renovations and upgrades to existing parks should include some of the following amenities, in addition to always supporting walking trails:

- Inclusive playgrounds
- Splash pad/water play feature
- Picnic shelters for small group gatherings
- Additional sport courts, including pickleball
- Lighted athletic fields, especially soccer
- Pump track, bike skills areas, and mountain bike trails
- Additional off-leash dog parks

Providing additional facilities for alternative or emerging sports, such as disc golf, skateboarding, BMX, mountain biking, climbing, and fitness courses (i.e., parkour or ninja warrior style), can offer residents a more diverse range of recreational experiences, while creating destinations that attract local and regional visitors. Fitness amenities, natural play, and more creative play experiences can provide more outdoor opportunities for physical health, fun, and social interaction.

A few City parks have aging infrastructure that warrants upgrades. For example, this includes dock resurfacing at Davies Beach, restroom replacement at Lundeen Park, and constructing a marina at North Cove to replace existing dock infrastructure. As older site furnishings, such as benches and tables, are replaced, they should be re-installed with ADA-compliant versions that also include accessible routes to at least half of the furnishings per park. Other projects may include adding amenities to existing parks, such as picnic shelters for small gatherings and paved pathway connections to improve user circulation and ADA-compliant routes. A general consideration for the public is to create a park system that provided year-round facilities for all ages and all abilities to gather and recreate in diverse range of safe, clean and well-maintained park facilities that also balance fiscal stability.

ACQUISITIONS TO FILL PARK SYSTEM GAPS

The acquisition of additional neighborhood parks and one community park are necessary to address existing and projected gaps in park services across Lake Stevens. As land development continues, opportunities to acquire sufficiently large park sites will be more difficult and require Lake Stevens to follow an intentional acquisition program, as well as think creatively and foster partnerships to provide desired public parkland with sufficient room for park amenities. The City should implement a focused Land Acquisition Strategy and budget funds to secure additional acquisitions to address existing and projected gaps in park services across Lake Stevens. To implement the acquisition program, the City may need to actively search for potential locations and property owners to secure future park sites, ahead of or concurrent with anticipated new development. Additionally, the City should continue to coordinate with local residential developers to include publicly-accessible parks in new subdivisions and consider tools, such as park impact fee credits, to facilitate the process.

TRAIL CONNECTIONS

Additional trail connections are needed, as well as sidewalk and bike lanes improvements led by Public Works, to help link destinations across Lake Stevens to offer more walkability and promote healthier outdoor lifestyles. The Public Works and Parks and Recreation Departments will need

to collaborate on the project planning to ensure the most appropriate links that improve the park and trail system. The City also should continue to review, comment and coordinate with the Planning and Community Development Department on local land development applications to facilitate the inclusion of pedestrian and bicycle routes that connect to the conceptual trail network. The Parks Capital Improvements Plan includes the phasing for several segments of the Bayview Trail. The City should continue to install trails and paved pathways within other parks and open spaces, and acquiring additional lands, easements and/or rights-of-way will be needed to create the comprehensive linkages for Lake Stevens' future trail system.

ADA & OTHER ACCESSIBILITY ENHANCEMENTS

The City should continue to make improvements to existing parks as needed to ensure proper maintenance, usability, and quality of park features and grounds. Minor improvements to access, such as providing ramped entrances, for site amenities are necessary to ensure universal accessibility. The site assessment summaries and the capital project list identified and includes upgrades to remove barriers and improve universal access. Also, the City should evaluate the play equipment and its signage for code compliance and replace outdated equipment, as appropriate.

WAYFINDING & SIGNAGE

Parks, trails, and other public open spaces are the primary opportunities for unifying an urban environment into a cohesive, accessible, and connected community through an identifiable wayfinding program. Lake Stevens should continue to implement a wayfinding program that includes both visual graphic standards. Colors, sign types, and information can help users navigate the outdoor recreation experiences offered by the City. Signage should be installed at key trail nodes and at all City parks (primary and secondary entry points); signage should include directional and mileage information, site and system maps, unique features, and user etiquette information.

COMMUNICATIONS

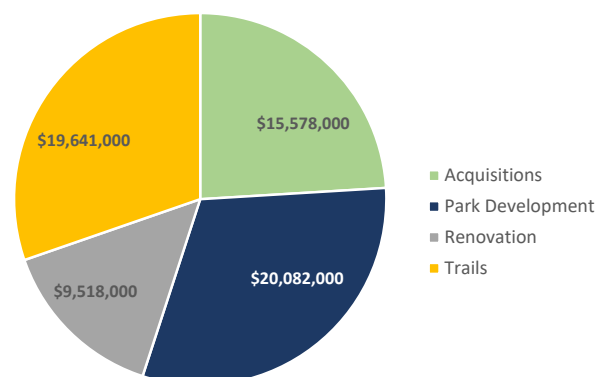
To broaden public awareness, the City's website should be expanded to facilitate quick links to popular destinations and be designed with mobile

users in mind. Communications should include social media, email blasts, and improved access to park system maps, trail maps, and an up-to-date listing of park sites and amenities. The City should introduce and utilize QR codes or comparable technology on signage or in kiosks as a means to share with or receive information from visitors about maintenance, restoration, or monitoring data. The City may also consider whether integrating a digital messaging system (e.g. links to park specific QR codes with maps, upcoming activities, etc.) might be a better long-term tool for some of the information in certain parks as it offers a more nimble and dynamic way to get information to the public.

Capital Improvements Plan

The Parks and Recreation Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) identifies capital projects considered for the next ten years. It assigns proposed time frames and estimated costs for specific projects. The majority of these projects entail the maintenance, acquisition, and development of parks, recreational amenities, and trails. Based on survey results and other feedback, Lake Stevens residents have indicated an interest in park renovations, facility development, and enhanced trail connections as priorities, and the Capital Improvements Plan is reflective of that desire. Figure 10 summarizes the aggregate capital expenditures by project category for the next 10 years.

Figure 10. Summary of 10-Year Capital Program Expenditures



The Capital Improvements Plan on the following page provides brief project descriptions and sequencing to assist staff in preparing future capital budget requests.

Table 16. Parks Capital Improvements Plan

Inflation factor of 5% added to outgoing years to address rising rates and construction costs (rounded to \$1000).																	
ID#	Project Name	Description	Project	Type	Funding Source	2025 Cost Opinion	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	10-Yr Totals
PARK IMPROVEMENTS																	
	Cavalero Hill Park Community Center	Design & development of multi-purpose recreation center	P/D		B, Pt	TBD											TBD
PR-104	Cedarwood Property	Redevelop site with covered outdoor recreation space (i.e., sport courts), playground, picnic area & water play feature	P/D		P,Gr,GF	\$2,455,859	\$525,000	\$2,156,000									\$2,681,000
PR-113	Davies Beach Pier Resurfacing	Resurface public dock.	R		GF	\$180,000	\$189,000										\$189,000
PR-130	Davies Beach Restroom Building	Remodel or replace the restrooms to meet ADA accessibility.	R		GF	\$950,000					\$191,000	\$1,072,000					\$1,263,000
PR-102	Eagle Ridge Park Phase II	Phase 2 - playground, walking trail, amphitheater, parking.	D		P	\$3,332,387	\$3,499,000										\$3,499,000
PR-100	Frontier Heights Phase II	Phase 2 - multi use synthetic field, pickleball courts, parking, other amenities.	D		P	\$2,350,000	\$2,468,000										\$2,468,000
	Frontier Heights Restroom	Install restroom and storage building	D		R,GF	\$150,000		\$165,000									\$165,000
PR-126	Lundeen Park Restroom Building	Remodel the Lundeen Park restroom building, including the concession area.	R		GF	\$950,000				\$182,000	\$1,021,000						\$1,203,000
PR-207	North Cove Parking Lot	Remove one of the administrative buildings, repurpose the other and construct new parking lot.	R		GF	\$1,300,000	\$315,000	\$1,103,000									\$1,418,000
PR-201	N Cove Marina Feasibility & Marine Unit Relocation	Construct a marina to replace motorized, non-motorized and first responder's dock.	P/R		GF,Gr	\$4,125,000	\$1,061,000	\$3,434,000									\$4,495,000
PR-106	West Lake Park Recreation Amenities	Plan amenities for West Lake Park consistent with the powerline easements.	D		P	\$100,000	\$105,000										\$105,000
	Pump track & bike skills course	Location TBD	D		P,R,GF	\$250,000			\$289,000								\$289,000
	Mountain Bike Trail Development	Install trails, support infrastructure and signage along Bayview Connector Trail	D		P,R,GF	\$500,000				\$608,000							\$608,000
	Off-leash Dog Park #3	Location TBD	D		R,GF	\$250,000								\$352,000			\$352,000
	Sport Field Renovation Collaboration	Synthetic turf installation at middle schools or with other organizations for community use (cost-sharing)	D		R,GF	\$900,000						\$1,206,000					\$1,206,000
	New Neighborhood Park (Area C)	Site master plan & park development	P/D		P,R,Gr	\$1,800,000								\$2,659,000			\$2,659,000
	New Neighborhood Park (Area E)	Site master plan & park development	P/D		P,R,Gr	\$1,800,000									\$2,792,000		\$2,792,000
	New Neighborhood Park (Area G)	Site master plan & park development	P/D		P,R,Gr	\$2,000,000										\$3,258,000	\$3,258,000
PR-117	System-wide: Mini Park Restorations	Restoration program for mini-parks throughout the City	R		GF	\$50,000		\$55,000		\$61,000		\$67,000		\$74,000		\$81,000	\$338,000
	System-wide: Signage & Wayfinding	Install & upgrade signage	R		GF	\$50,000			\$58,000			\$67,000				\$81,000	\$206,000
	System-wide: Accessibility Upgrades	Renovate accessible routes, ADA-compliant benches & tables	R		GF	\$60,000		\$66,000		\$73,000		\$80,000		\$89,000		\$98,000	\$406,000
Total Park Improvements						\$23,553,246	\$8,162,000	\$6,979,000	\$347,000	\$924,000	\$1,212,000	\$2,492,000	\$352,000	\$2,822,000	\$2,792,000	\$3,518,000	\$29,600,000
PARK ACQUISITIONS (* Acquisition target areas are estimations and will require due diligence & negotiation with current landowners)																	
	Community Park Acquisition	Property transfer from Snohomish County; Gap Area A	A		P,Pt,B	TBD											\$0
	Neighborhood Park Acquisition	Acquisition in Gap Area B (2-2.5 acres)	A		P,Gr	\$862,500								\$1,274,000			\$1,274,000
	Neighborhood Park Acquisition	Acquisition in Gap Area C (1.5-2 acres)	A		P,Gr	\$1,150,000		\$1,268,000									\$1,268,000
	Neighborhood Park Acquisition	Acquisition in Gap Area D (1-2 acres)	A		P,Gr	\$920,000					\$1,174,000						\$1,174,000
	Neighborhood Park Acquisition	Acquisition in Gap Area E (1-2 acres)	A		P,Gr	\$1,035,000			\$1,198,000								\$1,198,000
	Neighborhood Park Acquisition	Acquisition in Gap Area F (1-1.5 acres)	A		P,Gr	\$920,000						\$1,233,000					\$1,233,000
	Neighborhood Park Acquisition	Acquisition in Gap Area G (1.5-2 acres)	A		P,Gr	\$1,150,000			\$1,331,000								\$1,331,000
	Neighborhood/Community Park Acquisition	Acquisition in Gap Area H (3-20 acres)	A		P,Gr	\$4,025,000							\$5,664,000				\$5,664,000
	Mini Park Acquisition	Acquisition in Gap Area I (0.5-1.25 acres)	A		P	\$450,000					\$574,000						\$574,000
	Park Acquisition	Acquisition in Gap Area J (7 acres)	A		P,Gr	\$1,200,000									\$1,862,000		\$1,862,000
	Lakefront Access Acquisitions	Pursue opportunities for additional lakefront access areas, including street ends	A		P,R,Gr,Pt	TBD											\$0
Total Park Acquisitions						\$11,712,500	\$0	\$1,268,000	\$2,529,000	\$0	\$1,748,000	\$1,233,000	\$5,664,000	\$1,274,000	\$1,862,000	\$0	\$15,578,000
TRAILS																	
PR-110	Centennial Woods Trail Improvements	Improve trails and signage.	D		R,GF	\$200,000				\$243,000							\$243,000
PR-203	Lake Stevens Bayview Connector Phase 1	8th St SE to SR 204, coordination with City of Marysville for Bayview Connector.	P/D		P,GR	\$2,700,000	\$525,000		\$2,547,000								\$3,072,000
PR-108	Lake Stevens Bayview Connector Phase 1A	12th St to 8th St trail, realign 12th Street and connect to Phase 0 project	D		P,GR	\$800,000	\$840,000										\$840,000
PR-204	Lake Stevens Bayview Connector Phase 2	SR 204 to 17th St NE, coordination with City of Marysville for Bayview Connector.	P/D		P,GR	\$2,800,000		\$551,000	\$2,663,000								\$3,214,000
PR-205	Lake Stevens Bayview Connector Phase 3	17th St NE to Soper Hill Rd, coordination with City of Marysville for Bayview Connector.	P/D		P,GR	\$5,100,000				\$608,000	\$5,871,000						\$6,479,000
PR-109	Lake Stevens Bayview Connector Phase 4	20th & 83rd Ave NE to Marysville Connection	P/D		P,GR	\$1,700,000			\$579,000	\$1,945,000							\$2,524,000
	Mill Cove Reserve Feasibility	Plan low impact boardwalks through Mill Cove in Downtown	P		P,GR	\$200,000			\$232,000								\$232,000
	Grade Road Open Space	Boardwalk trail and interpretive area	D		P,GR	\$1,200,000										\$1,955,000	\$1,955,000
	Trail System Acquisitions/Easements	Additional acquisitions or easements to support trail alignments	A		P,GR	\$100,000		\$110,000		\$122,000		\$134,000		\$148,000		\$163,000	\$677,000
	Trail System Management	Surfacing & structure repairs or rehabilitations	R		GF	\$100,000			\$116,000			\$134,000			\$155,000		\$405,000
Total Trail Projects						\$14,900,000	\$1,365,000	\$661,000	\$6,137,000	\$2,918,000	\$5,871,000	\$268,000	\$0	\$148,000	\$155,000	\$2,118,000	\$19,641,000
Total CIP Projects						\$50,165,746	\$9,527,000	\$8,908,000					\$6,016,000	\$4,244,000	\$4,809,000	\$5,636,000	\$64,819,000

Project Types		Funding Sources	
Acquisition	A	Park Impact Fees	P
Planning/Permitting	P	Real Estate Excise Tax	R
Renovation/Repair	R	General Fund	GF
Development/Expansion	D	Grant	Gr
		Bond / Levy	B
		Partner Support	Pt

NOTES:
This list identifies planning-level cost estimates and does not assume the value of volunteer or other non-City contributions.
Detailed engineering, design and/or costing may be necessary for projects noted.
This list is not an official budget and is intended as a guiding document for City staff in the preparation of departmental budgets.

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POTENTIAL FUNDING & IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

Several strategies can enhance and expand park and recreation services for the City of Lake Stevens. However, clear decisions must be made amidst competing interests and limited resources. Strong community support is essential to bring many projects in this Plan to life, and the Lake Stevens City Council has previously demonstrated its commitment to supporting parks, trails, open space, new land acquisitions, and maintaining a high quality of life.

The recommendation in this Plan may necessitate funding beyond current allocations, as well as adding staffing, operations, and maintenance responsibilities. With finite operating and capital budgets for park services, securing extra resources may be required to implement the proposed objectives, initiatives, and projects. While grants and other efficiencies can provide support, they will not suffice to realize all the ideas and projects in this Plan.

The following recommendations and strategies offer near-term direction to achieve these projects and encourage ongoing dialogue between City leadership, residents, and partners. Additionally, Appendix H includes a review of potential implementation tools, addressing local financing, federal and state grant and conservation programs, acquisition methods, and more.

ENHANCED LOCAL FUNDING

The City of Lake Stevens maintains reserve debt capacity for local bonds and voter-approved debt according to the City budget. Bundling multiple projects from the CIP or capitalizing on unexpected opportunities, such as acquiring land for parks or trail corridors, may necessitate reviewing the debt implications and operating costs for the City. This review might include polling voter support for such projects.

PARK IMPACT FEES & REAL ESTATE EXCISE TAX

Park Impact Fees (PIF) are levied on new development to meet the increased demand for parks due to growth. PIFs are assessed at the time of the building permit and can only be

used for parkland acquisition, planning, and development—not for operations and maintenance. The improvements financed from impact fees must be reasonably related to and reasonably benefit the new development. The City of Lake Stevens currently collects impact fees, but a review and update of the PIF ordinance, methodology, and rate structure is advisable to ensure future acquisition and development financing aligns with community growth. The City should prioritize using PIFs to finance park and trail development as outlined in this Plan.

The Washington State Department of Revenue imposes Real Estate Excise Taxes (REET) upon most real property transactions. In addition to the state REET, cities and counties may impose local REET. The two options for cities and counties are:

- REET 1, the “first quarter percent” – a 0.25% REET which may be imposed by any city, town, or county primarily for capital projects and limited maintenance; and
- REET 2, or the “second quarter percent” – an additional 0.25% REET which may be imposed by any city, town, or county fully planning under the Growth Management Act, to be used primarily for capital projects and limited maintenance.

REET funds are an allowable revenue to finance park capital improvements. Through annual budgeting and with discussions with City Council, REET funds should continue to be utilized for the Park Capital Improvements Plan projects that are desired by the community to enhance the overall park system.

METROPOLITAN PARK DISTRICT

Metropolitan Park Districts (MPD) can manage, control, improve, maintain, and acquire parks and related spaces. Several Washington municipalities favor MPDs to address recreational needs while managing property tax funds. The establishment of an MPD for Lake Stevens could provide additional revenue to support a growing park system, enhanced maintenance, and recreation program options. Also, an MPD could be structured to be geographically larger than city limits in recognition of the regional nature of Lake Stevens’ park services, especially lake access parks, and solicit support from residents in the greater Lake Stevens area. The City could study the feasibility of establishing an MPD, considering legal parameters,

governance models, tax implications, and political factors to support expanding parks, trails, and open space systems. See Appendix H for more information.

Two other variations exist for specialized park and recreation taxing authority: a Park and Recreation District and a Park and Recreation Service Area. The principal difference between these two options and an MPD relate to the durability of property tax based revenues. Both the Park and Recreation District and the Service area are limited by a 6-year regular property tax levy, whereas an MPD is a regular property tax. Also both of these options are subject to elimination from the tax rolls as first priority cuts in the event that the local aggregate levy rates exceed the state-mandated \$5.90 per \$1000 assessed value cap.

CONSERVATION FUTURES

Conservation Futures is a land preservation program within Snohomish County that protects open spaces, timberlands, wetlands, habitat areas, and farmlands. Funded by an excise fee, the program offers cities access to funding through a competitive grant process. The City should pursue grant support via Conservation Futures funds for open space projects and to expand the trail network.

PARKLAND DONATIONS & DEDICATIONS

Private individuals or conservation organizations can donate additional parkland to complement the City's acquisitions. Gift deeds or bequests from landowners can transfer land to City ownership, offering tax-deductible benefits. Developers may dedicate property for park use in exchange for PIF credit as part of planned developments. The City should evaluate potential dedications to ensure they meet community needs and can be developed appropriately.

GRANTS & APPROPRIATIONS

Competitive state and federal grant programs, such as the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account, and Land Water Conservation Fund, can provide funding but often require significant local matching. Lake Stevens should continue leveraging local resources by pursuing grants independently and in collaboration with partners. Additionally,

appropriations from state or federal sources can supplement projects, especially those involving regional transportation, where collaboration increases funding likelihood.

PROJECT COORDINATION, COLLABORATION, & PARTNERSHIPS

- **Internal Departmental Coordination & Collaboration:** Ongoing coordination within the Public Works and Community Development Departments can enhance the implementation of the proposed trail and path network. This includes reviewing development applications for potential property acquisitions, planned trail corridors, and easement requests.
- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Public-private partnerships can help local agencies provide community parks and recreation services. Examples include corporate sponsorships, health organization grants, conservation programs, and non-profits. The City should continue to explore and expand partnerships for potential recreation program providers and with the Washington Trails Alliance to support trail planning and development through volunteer efforts.
- **Sport Facility Coordination:** The City should continue to work closely with the School District to actively explore opportunities for greater joint use and development of facilities. Agreements between the agencies should identify opportunities and define responsibilities regarding field planning, acquisition, development, improvement, maintenance and operations; as well as clarify scheduling, decision-making and revenue sharing objectives. Additionally, the City should expand its role in coordinating field scheduling with local sport leagues and the School District to ensure a balanced use of fields during peak and non-peak seasons.
- **Volunteer & Community-based Action:** Volunteers and community groups have already contributed significantly to Lake Stevens' park and recreation services through events and projects like park clean-ups. The City should expand its list of potential volunteer projects on the website and connect with the School District for student involvement. Continuing to promote and expand the Adopt-A-Community program can engage the community further. To fully utilize community support, resources may be needed for a volunteer coordinator to manage these efforts effectively.

APPENDIX A

Community Survey Summary

To: Jill Meis, Parks Planning and Development Coordinator
From: Steve Duh, Conservation Technix, Inc.
Date: August 27, 2025
Re: **Lake Stevens Park, Recreation, and Open Space Plan**
 Community Survey Summary Results

Conservation Technix is pleased to present the results of a survey of the general population of the City of Lake Stevens that assesses residents' recreational needs and priorities.

KEY FINDINGS

Lake Stevens residents strongly value their parks and recreation facilities.

Nearly all respondents (97%) think parks and recreation are important or essential to quality of life in Lake Stevens. Very few, about 3%, feel they are useful, but not necessary, or not important at all.

Residents visit Lake Stevens parks frequently to participate in a range of activities.

Residents of Lake Stevens frequently use the city's parks and recreation facilities, with about half visiting at least once a week, if not every day. The most common reasons for park visits included walking or running, relaxing, attending a community event or concert, or using a playground or beach.

Residents would like to see the City maintain existing parks and facilities, while expanding walking and biking options, access to the lake, and the availability of various recreational options.

Nearly three quarters of residents are satisfied with Lake Stevens's parks and facilities. However, they recognize that the City is growing and would like the City to continue to grow and maintain the park system. Overall, survey respondents would like to see the City prioritize:

- **Trails, sidewalks, and connectivity:** A top priority is expanding walking and biking trails, with strong demand for a safe, continuous loop around the lake, improved connections to neighborhoods and the Centennial Trail, and safer sidewalks and crossings.
- **Upgrading existing parks:** Residents would like to see the City maintain, renovate and improve current parks. Desired improvements include restrooms, improved security, shaded seating, playgrounds, picnic areas, and sports courts.
- **Lake & beach access:** Many residents called for improved docks, beaches, and public access to the shoreline, which is seen as overcrowded and inaccessible.
- **Community events & recreation programming:** Residents would like to see more community and cultural events like concerts, festivals, and farmers markets, as well as programs specifically geared towards youth, teens, and seniors.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

In close collaboration with City of Lake Stevens staff, Conservation Technix developed the 18-question survey that was estimated to take about ten minutes to complete.

The survey was mailed to a random sample of 2,500 households within the city limits of Lake Stevens on June 17, 2025, and reminder postcards were mailed to the 2,500 households on July 1st. An online version of the survey was posted to the City's website on June 25th. The mail survey included a unique QR code to complete the survey online. Residents who did not receive a mail survey were able to complete the survey in the online format only. The survey was closed at midnight on August 3rd, and the full dataset was compiled and reviewed.

Overall, 323 surveys from the random sample mailing were completed and returned (13% response rate, 5% margin of error). An additional 288 surveys were completed from the general, community-wide online survey. In all, 611 surveys were collected.

Information about the survey was promoted through several channels, including on the City's website, the Parks and Recreation project page, through multiple social media postings, and through direct outreach to partner organizations and program participants.

Although households were randomly chosen to receive the mail survey, respondents were not necessarily representative of all city residents. Mail survey responses underrepresent residents under 35 years of age and over-represent residents over the age of 35. See Figure 1 below for age demographics for the mail and online surveys, as well as comparative percentages for Lake Stevens's population. See page 14 for other demographic subgroup data comparisons.

Figure 1. Age demographics of survey respondents

Age group	Survey Respondents			Lake Stevens	
	Mail	Online-only	Combined	All	Over 20
Under 20	0%	2%	1%	31%	--
20 to 34	13%	13%	13%	19%	28%
35 to 44	29%	35%	32%	18%	26%
45 to 54	20%	17%	19%	12%	17%
55 to 64	15%	14%	15%	11%	16%
65 to 74	17%	15%	16%	6%	8%
75 and older	6%	5%	5%	3%	4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

This report includes findings of community opinions based on the combined responses from the mail survey and online. Each section also notes key differences between different demographic groups, where applicable. Percentages in the report may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

DETAILED FINDINGS

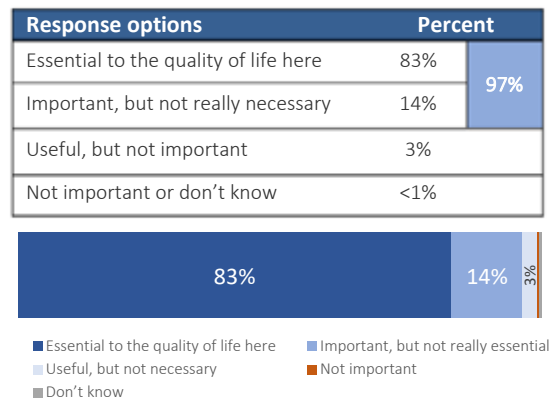
Usage and satisfaction of parks and recreation facilities

How much do residents value parks and recreation?

Virtually all respondents (97%) feel that local parks and recreation opportunities are important or essential to the quality of life in Lake Stevens. Eighty-three percent of respondents overall feel that they are essential; while an additional 14% believe that they are important to quality of life, but not essential, see Figure 2. Only about 3% of respondents believe parks are useful, but not important, or not important.

Residents of all ages value parks and recreation, however those between the ages of 45 and 54 were significantly more likely today they are important but not really necessary. There were no significant differences based on where respondents live or whether they had children in their home.

Figure 2. When you think about what contributes to the quality of life in Lake Stevens, would you say city parks and recreation opportunities are...

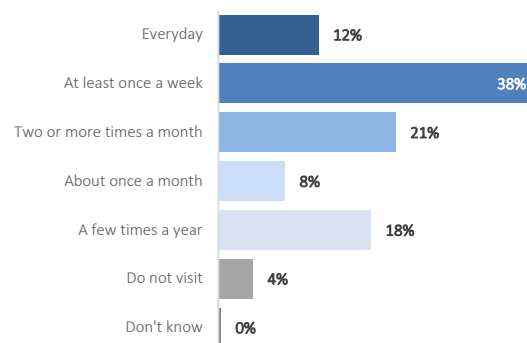


How often do residents use City parks and recreation facilities?

Respondents were asked how often they visit a City park or open space in a typical year. Nearly half of respondents (49%) visit at least once a week, if not every day, see Figure 3. Another 29% visit one to three times per month, while about 18% visit a few times per year. Very few respondents (4%) do not visit a park at all.

Survey respondents showed a high use of parks regardless of age and location of residence. Respondents with children at home were significantly more likely to visit at least once a week.

Figure 3. In a typical year, how often do you visit or use City of Lake Stevens parks or open spaces?



Why do residents visit Lake Stevens’s parks and recreation facilities?

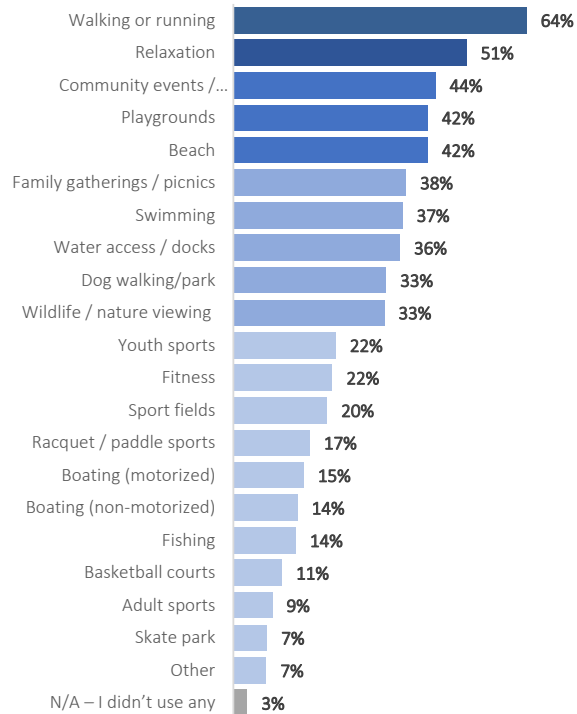
Respondents visit local parks and recreation facilities for a variety of reasons, but the most popular reasons are to walk or run (64%) or relax (51%), see Figure 4. More than four in ten visit to attend a community event or concert (44%), use to a playground (42%) or a beach (42%). Approximately one third of respondents visit for family gatherings (38%), swimming (37%), water access (36%), dog walking or a dog park (33%), or wildlife or nature viewing (33%). Fewer than one in four respondents chose sports, fitness, boating, fishing, or the skate park as a primary reason why they visit local parks.

Approximately seven percent of respondents identified an ‘other’ reason for visiting parks, such as to play disc golf, ride a bike, or visit a farmers market.

Respondents under the age of 45 were more likely than older residents to visit for playgrounds, family gatherings, the beach, and sports fields while older residents were more likely to visit to view wildlife or experience nature or attend a community event. Many activities, including running and walking, fitness or exercise, relaxation, dog walking, and water access are similarly popular across all age groups.

When compared to households with no children, those with children are more likely to visit parks for playgrounds, youth sports, swimming and beach access, or to use the skate park. There were no significant differences in responses based on where the respondent lives.

Figure 4. What would you say are the main reasons your household visits Lake Stevens parks and recreation facilities?



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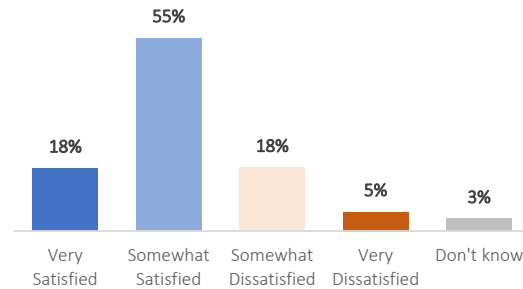
Satisfaction with existing recreation and parks

Are residents satisfied with Lake Stevens's parks and open spaces?

A large majority of respondents rate their satisfaction with Lake Stevens's parks and open spaces as excellent (18%) or good (55%). However, more than one in five survey respondents (23%) are rate their satisfaction with the city's park and recreation system as fair or poor, see Figure 5.

Residents between 35 and 44 years of age were significantly more likely to say they are somewhat dissatisfied with the city's parks than residents of other ages. There were no significant differences in satisfaction between those with versus those without children at home, or between residents living in various areas of the city.

Figure 5. Rate your household's satisfaction with City of Lake Stevens's parks and open spaces.



How would residents rate the condition of parks they have visited?

Survey respondents have varying views on the condition of Lake Stevens's parks. Notably, a majority of respondents stated that they were unsure or had no opinion about the condition of most of the parks listed, see Figure 6A. The sole exception was West Lake Park, where about three quarters of respondents rated the condition.

Figure 6A. How would you rate the condition of each of the following larger City parks and facilities in Lake Stevens?

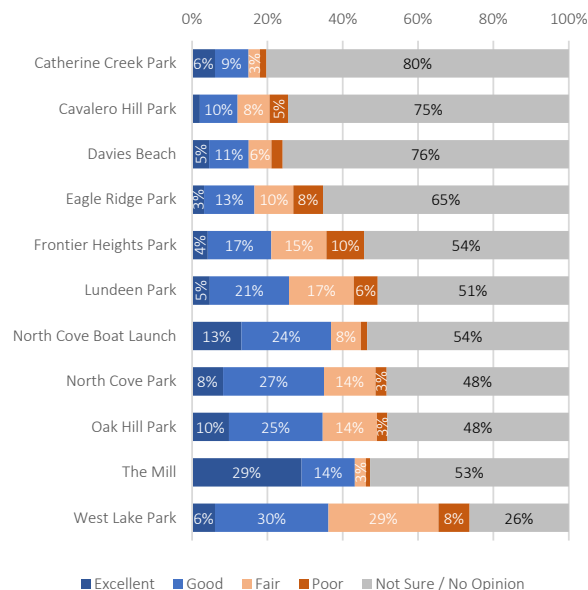
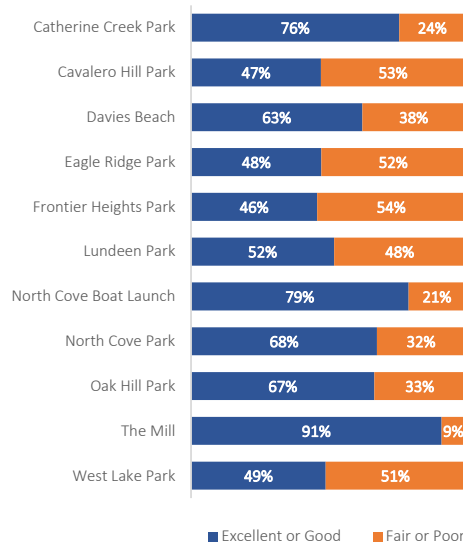


Figure 6B. Combined responses with "Not Sure / No Opinion" excluded



Looking at just the ratings for respondents who stated an opinion, many were satisfied with the condition of The Mill (91% rating it as excellent or good), the North Cove Boat Launch (79%), and Catherine Creek Park (76%), see Figure 6B. Roughly two-thirds rated the condition of North Cove Park, Oak Hill Park, and Davies Beach as excellent or good. Respondents had more mixed reviews about the condition of all other parks listed (Lundeen Park, West Lake Park, Eagle Ridge Park, Cavellero Hill Park, and Frontier Heights Park), with approximately half rating their condition as excellent or good and half as fair or poor.

There were no significant differences in responses from residents of various ages or location in the city. There were no consistent different in how respondents with and without children in the home rated the condition of Lake Stevens's parks.

Why don't residents visit more often?

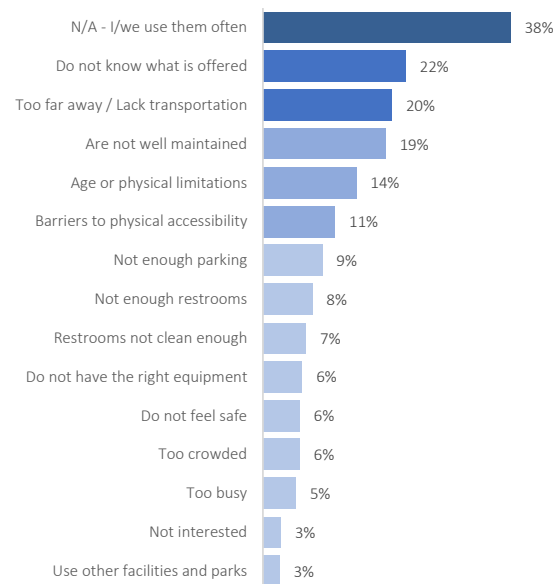
When asked why they do not visit Lake Stevens's parks or open spaces more often, over one-third (38%) responded that they do visit often. However, about one in five respondents do not visit more because they do not know what is offered (22%) or live too far away or lack transportation (20%), see Figure 7.

Smaller percentages of respondents noted that parks are not well-maintained (19%), present accessibility barriers (11%), or do not have enough parking (9%) or restrooms (8%) preventing them from visiting local parks more often. Fewer than 8% of respondents cited restroom cleanliness, available equipment, safety, or crowding as reasons. Some residents face age or physical limitations (14%), are too busy (5%), are generally not interested (3%), or use parks or facilities provided by other cities or organizations (3%) suggesting that further improvements may not increase their use of parks.

Eighty-three respondents wrote-in an 'other' reason for not visiting including lack of sidewalks to get to parks, a desire for more trails, a lack of shade (trees or picnic shelters), and concerns about user behavior particularly from unsupervised teens and dog owners who let dogs off-leash.

Respondents with children at home were more likely than those without to cite concerns about maintenance, a lack of preferred equipment, a lack of restrooms, and parks being too crowded as a reason they do not visit parks more frequently. There were no significant differences in responses from residents of various ages. Residents who live in West Lake Stevens / Frontier Village and South Lake Stevens / Cavallero were more likely to be concerned about safety than residents of other areas.

Figure 7. Check ALL the reasons why your household does not use Lake Stevens's parks or open spaces more often.



Why do residents leave Lake Stevens for recreation?

Respondents were asked an open-ended question about why they leave the City of Lake Stevens for recreation activities or programs. Of those who answered (341 responses), the following common reasons emerged:

- **Walking, hiking, and biking trails:** Many respondents expressed that they leave the City to use longer, safer, and more scenic walking and hiking trails, suitable for strollers, pets, and families, though multiple respondents appreciate the City's access to the Centennial Trail. Others cited concerns about the lack of safe infrastructure around the lake for walking or biking.
- **Recreational activities and facilities:** Respondents also frequently leave Lake Stevens to participate in sports, including pickleball, golf, and organized soccer, baseball, and basketball. Some respondents expressed a desire for more sports fields and facilities as well as local youth sports leagues.
- **Larger and more diverse playgrounds and parks:** Multiple respondents leave the city to take children to larger or more diverse play areas, with more expansive playgrounds, splash pads, and equipment for older children. Some respondents mentioned that local parks are too small, crowded, or do not appeal to kids of multiple ages.
- **Indoor recreation:** Respondents also leave Lake Stevens to participate in indoor recreation, including for swimming, skating, bowling, and movies. Respondents often mentioned a desire for more covered or indoor recreational options for rainier months.
- **Arts, culture, and community events:** Many respondents enjoy attending the cultural and community events put on in nearby towns like Everett and Marysville. They mentioned attending concerts, festivals, performing arts, movies in the park, and farmers markets, and other events.

A full list of responses can be found in Attachment 2.

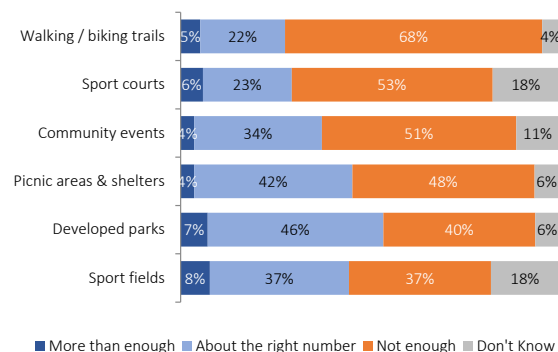
Does the number of existing park and recreation amenities meet residents' needs?

Residents were split on whether they feel the City provides enough parks and recreation facilities.

More than two-thirds of respondents would like to see more walking and biking trails in Lake Stevens, see Figure 8. Roughly half of respondents would like to see more sports courts for basketball, pickleball, and tennis (53%); community events (51%), and picnic areas (48%). Smaller, but still significant, numbers think the city needs more developed parks (40%) and sports fields for soccer, baseball, softball, etc. (37%).

Residents with children in their home were more likely than those without to believe there are not enough of every listed amenity. Respondents who live in East Lake Stevens were significantly more likely than those in other areas to feel the City did not have enough developed parks with

Figure 8. When it comes to meeting the needs for park or recreation facility needs, how would you rate the availability of each of the following?



■ More than enough ■ About the right number ■ Not enough ■ Don't Know

playgrounds. Respondents between the ages of 35 and 44 were more likely than other age groups to say the city does not have enough developed parks with playgrounds, sports fields, and sports courts.

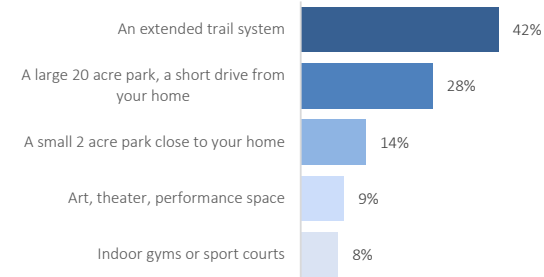
Investment Priorities

Which park and recreation improvements are of interest to residents?

Respondents were asked two questions about their preferences for various types of park system improvements.

In the first question, they were asked which one of five park improvements would best meet their needs, given that the City will need to make choices on how to spend limited resources. Approximately four in ten respondents stated that an extended trail system would best meet their needs, see Figure 9. A similar percentage would like to see an additional developed park, including 28% who preferred a larger 20-acre park within a short drive and 14% who preferred a smaller 2-acre park closer to home. Less than 10 percent of respondents stated that arts/theater/performing spaces or indoor gyms and sports courts would best meet their needs.

Figure 9. The City of Lake Stevens is expected to grow significantly in coming years, and budgeting for park maintenance may need to be re-assessed with the demands of a growing park system. Which ONE of the following best fits your needs:



Younger residents, particularly those under the age of 45 were more likely to prefer a large developed park than older residents, who were more likely to prefer an expanded trail system. Those with children in the home were more likely than those without to prefer a large developed park or indoor recreation areas.

A second question gave respondents a much larger list of recreational improvements and asked them which were most important to them or their families. Walking trails in developed parks and hiking trails in natural areas were selected by the largest proportions of respondents (63% and 55%, respectively), see Figure 10. Water access, an amphitheater or outdoor performing space, nature play areas, and an outdoor splash pad or water spray park were preferred by between 30% and 40% of respondents.

A variety of other improvements, including pickleball courts, additional or upgraded playgrounds, community gardens, picnic shelters, and climbing structures were of interest to about one quarter of respondents. Less than 15% of respondents felt the remaining listed activities were the most important to them or their families.

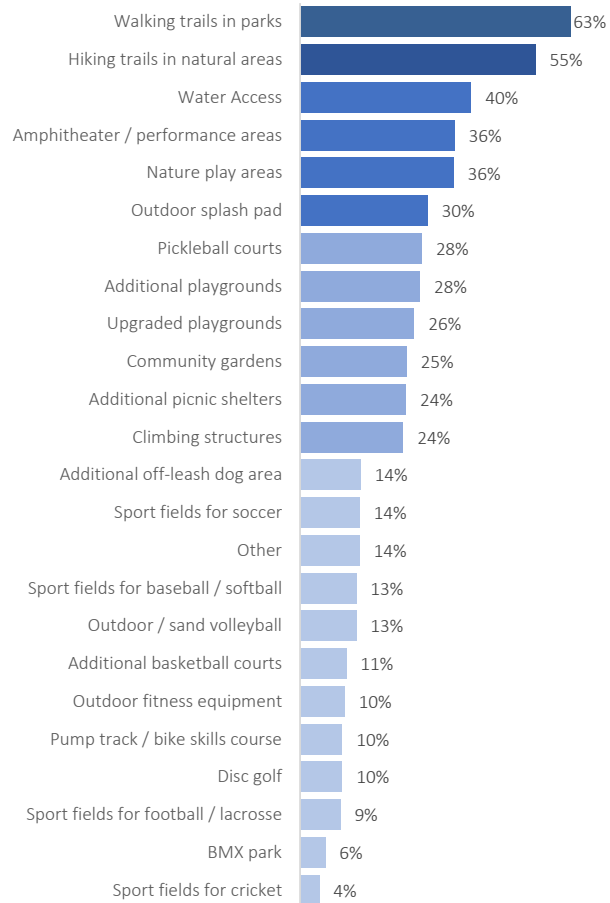
In open-ended comments, respondents frequently cited a desire for increased and improved lake and beach access, more sidewalks and trails for walking and biking, more parking at parks and boat launches, improved docks, playground equipment for older kids, more trees and increased shade at parks, and improved security.

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Younger residents, particularly those under the age of 45, were more likely than older residents to prefer additional basketball courts, additional or improved playgrounds, climbing structures, nature play areas, sports fields, a pump track, and outdoor splash pad.

Figure 10. The City of Lake Stevens makes choices every year about how best to invest funding in renovating, enhancing, maintaining, or activating the park and recreation system. Which of the following are most important to you or your family?



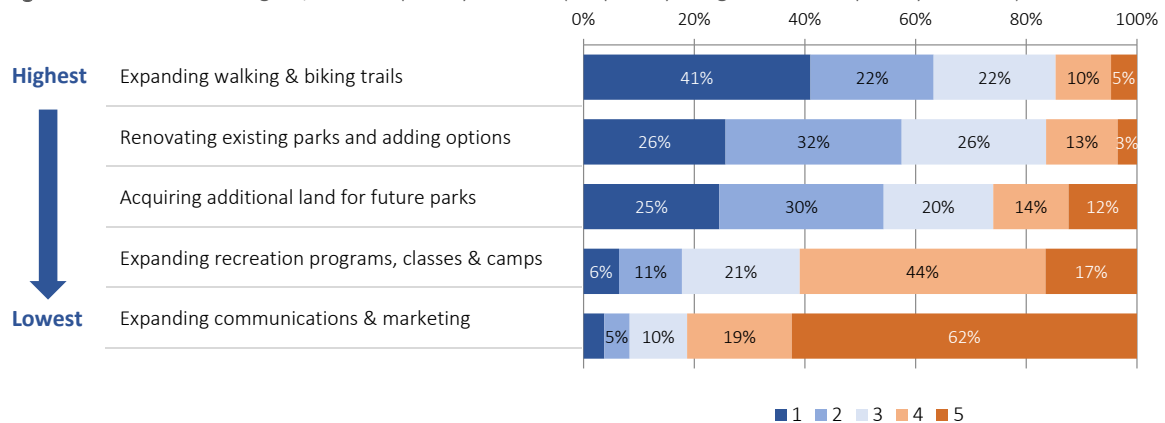
What park and recreation investments would residents prioritize?

The survey asked respondents to rank a list of potential park system investments. In aggregated survey data, respondents identified expanding walking & biking trails as their top priority, see Figure 11. Renovating existing parks and adding new recreational options and acquiring additional land for future parks were moderate priorities. Expanding recreation programs, classes and camps and expanding marketing and communication were ranked as the lowest priorities by respondents.

Similar to trends in other questions, respondents under the age of 45 more strongly support renovating and improving existing parks while older residents prefer expanding walking and biking trails.

There were no significant differences in priorities based on children in the home or location of residence.

Figure 11. For the following list, rank the priority for each (1st priority is highest and 5th priority is lowest).



Which recreation programs and activities are of interest to residents?

Survey respondents were asked about their level of interest in a variety of recreational programs and activities that the City of Lake Stevens does, or could, offer. Less than half of respondents were interested in seeing any of the listed recreation and educational opportunities. Special events garnered the most support, at 49%, but all other options were selected by less than 36% of respondents, see Figure 12.

Younger residents, particularly those under 45, were more likely than older residents to express interest youth and teen-oriented activities, while adults over 55 were more supportive of senior activities.

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Park, Recreation, and Open Space Plan

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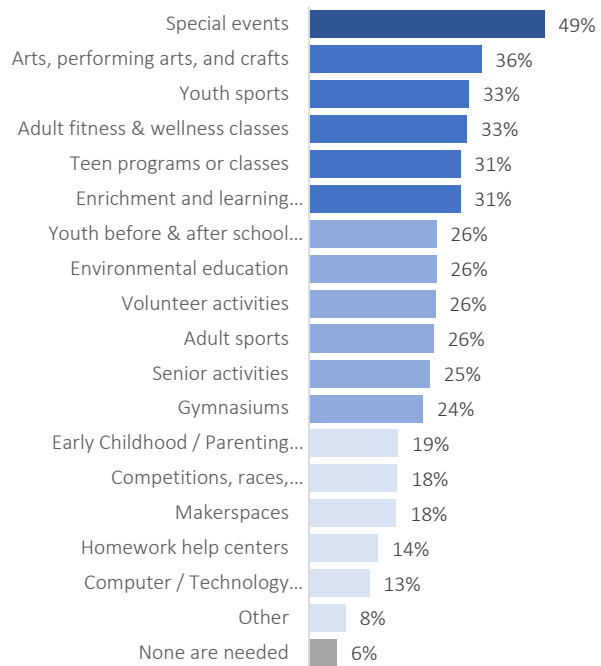
Survey respondents with children at home were more likely than those without to note interest in youth sports, teen programs, indoor gymnasiums, and after school care. Those without children were more likely to prioritize senior and volunteer activities.

Do residents have specific improvements they would like to see?

Respondents were asked to describe one thing that they would like to see the City of Lake Stevens do to improve parks, trails, and/or recreation programs. While respondents provided 420 specific comments and ideas, the following themes emerged:

- Trails, sidewalks, and connectivity:** A top priority was improving walkability and connectivity. Respondents expressed strong interest in building a safe, continuous trail or sidewalk loop around the lake, expanding the citywide trail network for walking and biking, and creating better connections between neighborhoods, parks, schools, and the Centennial Trail. Calls for both paved multi-use paths and unpaved natural trails were common, along with amenities such as lighting, rest areas, and water stations. Respondents also asked for sidewalks, improved crossings, and traffic calming on busy streets to improve park access for families, seniors, and other pedestrians.
- Balancing growth with open space and natural character:** Many respondents emphasized the importance of preserving open space and natural areas in the face of growth. Respondents called for acquiring additional land—especially lakefront property and large tracts—to secure space for future generations, prevent overdevelopment, and maintain the community’s natural and rural charm. Residents also asked for tree preservation, more shade in parks, and opportunities to access nature through minimally developed open space and natural trail systems.
- Park maintenance and amenities:** Many comments highlighted the need for consistent upkeep of existing facilities. Requests included better restroom facilities (with a strong preference for permanent, clean, well-maintained buildings), more trash cans and pet waste stations, improved seating and shaded areas, and timely repairs of broken equipment. Respondents also noted a desire for additional parking at popular parks, beaches, and trailheads, along with better management of crowded facilities.
- Recreation facilities and specialized amenities:** While maintaining current parks is a priority, many respondents expressed interest in expanded recreational opportunities. Many respondents expressed a strong desire for improved aquatics facilities, including a community pool, splash pads, and safe public swimming options beyond the lake. Others called for improved and expanded public access to the lake through beaches, docks, boat launches, and waterfront trails, noting that much of the shoreline is

Figure 12. Are there types of recreation or educational opportunities that you think the City should expand or improve in Lake Stevens?



currently privatized and inaccessible. Other common requests included pickleball courts (indoor and outdoor), turf sports fields, upgraded baseball/softball fields, basketball and tennis courts, additional playgrounds (including shaded and toddler-friendly equipment), disc golf, dog parks, and multipurpose indoor recreation facilities or a YMCA-style center. There was also strong interest in year-round use facilities such as indoor play areas for children and safe spaces for teens.

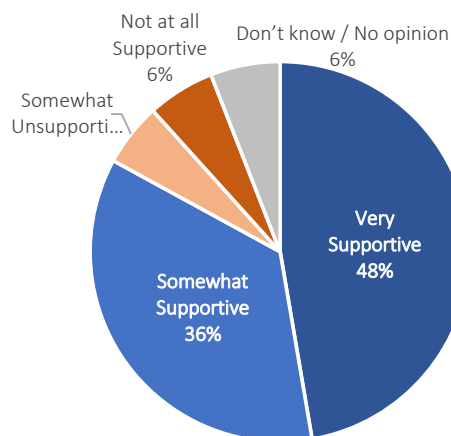
- **Community events and programming:** Many residents would like to see more community events, such as concerts, outdoor theater, farmers markets, and festivals, and expanded recreational programming for all ages. Several requested more youth programs (sports, classes, indoor activities) and senior programs, as well as spaces designed for teens.
- **Safety and security:** Multiple respondents raised concerns about safety at Lake Stevens's parks. They called for better lighting, visible security patrols, security cameras, and more consistent enforcement of rules to address issues such as bullying, theft, and aggressive or reckless behavior by teens in parks and at trailheads.
- **Communication and information:** Many residents spoke to a desire for better communication about what is already available. Respondents asked for more user-friendly online maps, calendars of events, newsletters or direct mail, and improved signage at facilities to help residents take advantage of existing parks, programs, and opportunities.

A compilation of write-in comments is on file with the Lake Stevens Parks and Recreation Department.

Indoor Recreation

Lake Stevens has limited space for indoor recreation. Residents were asked whether they are supportive to the City developing additional indoor recreation facility space. The space could be used for youth programs, sports courts, and a makerspace. A large majority of respondents, approximately 85% are either very or somewhat supportive, see Figure 13. Residents with children are significantly more supportive than those without. There is no significant difference in support between respondents of different ages or location in the city.

Figure 13. Currently, indoor space for recreation programs is limited. With additional indoor space, the City of Lake Stevens could expand services to include options for youth programs, multi-purpose sport courts, and makerspace. How supportive would you be of the City developing additional indoor recreation facility space?



Communication preferences

How do residents want to hear about Lake Stevens's parks and amenities?

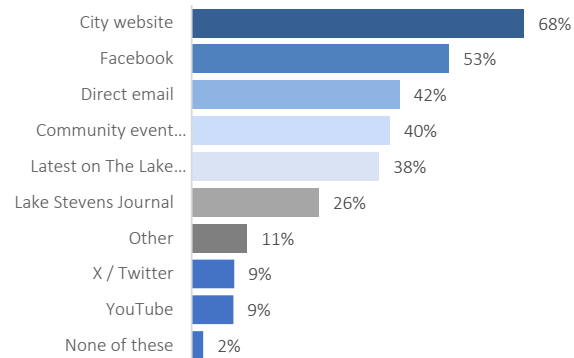
A majority of respondents prefer to learn about City parks and amenities through the City's website (68%) and Facebook (53%), see Figure 14.

Direct email, community event signs, and the Latest on the Lake Newsletter were also popular ways of learning about city parks and amenities, each preferred by roughly 40% of respondents. The Lake Stevens Journal was chosen by 26% of respondents. X/Twitter and YouTube were significantly less popular sources, preferred by about 9% of respondents each. Some residents wrote in other preferred methods of contact, predominately direct mail and Instagram.

Multiple respondents also commented that they were not aware of the Latest on the Lake newsletter or the Lake Stevens Journal or thought these publications were defunct.

Residents over the age of 65 were unlikely to prefer social media as a source of information but were similarly interested in getting information through other digital formats, including the City's website and direct email, as younger residents. There were no significant differences in communication preferences between residents with and without children and those living in different areas of the city.

Figure 14. Please check ALL the ways you would prefer to learn about Lake Stevens's parks and amenities.

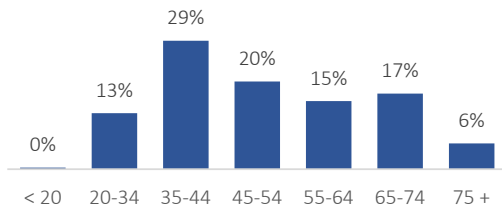


Demographics

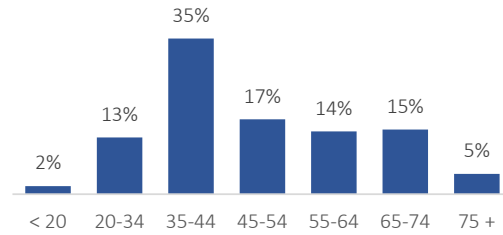
Age groups

Overall, about 42% of mail respondents were between the ages of 20 and 44, 35% were between 45 and 64 years of age, and one-quarter were above 65 years of age. Online-only survey respondents tended to be slightly younger than mail respondents – 50% were under 44 years and 19% were over 65.

Mail survey responses



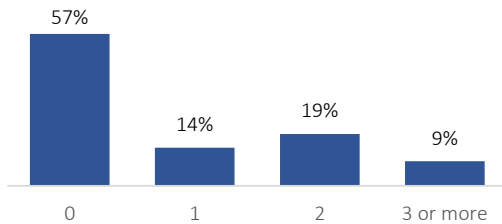
Online-only survey responses



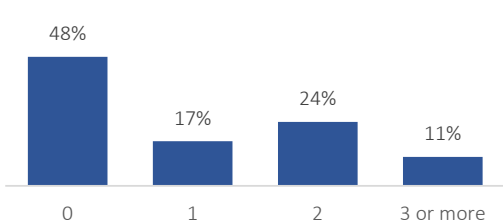
Number of children in household

More than half (57%) of respondents to the mail survey live in households with no children under 18, while roughly forty percent live in a household with either one (14%), two (19%), or three or more (9%) children. Online-only survey respondents were significantly more likely to live in households with children than respondents to the mail survey – fifty-two percent had children in the home. Approximately 47% of Lake Stevens's households include one or more people under the age of 18.

Mail survey responses



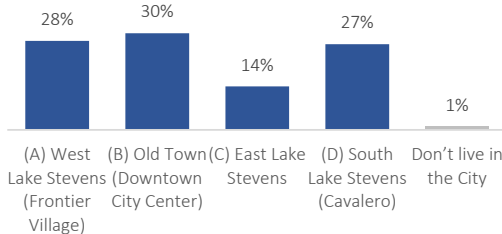
Online-only survey responses



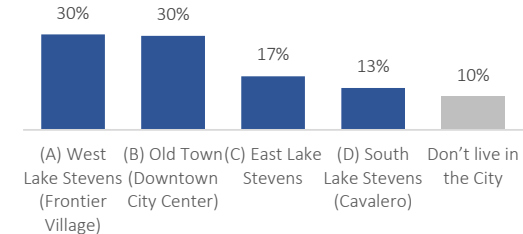
Location of residence

Nearly all survey respondents live within the City of Lake Stevens. Roughly 25-30% of mail survey respondents live in either West Lake Stevens / Frontier Village (28%), Old Town / City Center (30%), or South Lake Stevens / Cavalero. About 14% of mail respondents live in East Lake Stevens. Approximately 10% of online respondents live outside the City of Lake Stevens.

Mail survey responses



Online-only survey responses



ATTACHMENT 1. SURVEY INSTRUMENT



Community Survey on Parks and Recreation

Hurry! Survey
closes July 25!

Dear Lake Stevens Resident:

The City of Lake Stevens has started a community-led process for its first citywide Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan. We need your help to determine how to prioritize projects and where we should focus to keep our parks and activities thriving into the future. As an initial step, the City is conducting this short survey to assess the community's recreation needs, and your household was randomly selected for input. We ask that you consider your needs for the future as you evaluate recreation amenities. Your opinions are important to the City.

The survey has 18 questions and will only take a few minutes to complete.

Save a stamp; use the link or QR code to take this survey online at

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LakeStevensParks>



1. When you think about what contributes to the quality of life in Lake Stevens, would you say that city parks and recreation opportunities are...

- ☐ Essential to the quality of life here ☐ Useful, but not necessary ☐ Don't Know
☐ Important, but not essential ☐ Not important

2. In a typical year, how often do you visit or use City of Lake Stevens parks or open space?

- ☐ Everyday ☐ A few times over the year
☐ At least once a week ☐ Do not visit facilities / parks / open spaces
☐ Two or more times a month ☐ Don't know
☐ About once a month

3. Rate your household's satisfaction with the City of Lake Stevens's parks or open space.

- ☐ Very Satisfied ☐ Somewhat Dissatisfied ☐ Don't Know
☐ Somewhat Satisfied ☐ Very Dissatisfied

4. When it comes to meeting the needs for park and recreation facilities, how would you rate the availability of each of the following. (Check only one box in each row)

	More than Enough	About the Right Amount	Not Enough	Don't Know
Developed parks with playgrounds	☐	☐	☐	☐
Walking / biking trails	☐	☐	☐	☐
Picnic areas & shelters	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sport fields (soccer, baseball, softball, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sport courts (basketball, tennis, pickleball, etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Community events (such as summer concerts)	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. The City of Lake Stevens is expected to grow significantly in coming years, and budgeting for park maintenance may need to be re-assessed with the demands of a growing park system. Which ONE of the following best fits your needs:

- ☐ a smaller, 2 acre, park with basic amenities, such as play equipment and open fields, within a short distance from your home
☐ a larger, 20 acre, more broadly developed park with sport fields, sport courts and space for other activities within a short drive from your home - no more than three miles
☐ an extended trail system that connects across the city and to existing parks
☐ indoor recreation gymnasiums or sport courts
☐ arts, theater and performance space

Save a stamp! Use the QR code and take this survey online:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LakeStevensParks>

Or send it back in the enclosed Return-Reply envelope provided. Thanks for participating!



6. How would you rate the condition of each of the following, larger City parks and facilities in Lake Stevens?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Not Sure / No Opinion
Catherine Creek Park	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cavalero Hill Park	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Davies Beach	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Eagle Ridge Park	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Frontier Heights Park	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Lundeen Park	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
North Cove Boat Launch	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
North Cove Park	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Oak Hill Park	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The Mill	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
West Lake Park	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

7. What are the main reasons your household visits Lake Stevens parks or recreation facilities? (Check all)

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Playgrounds | ☐ Fitness |
| ☐ Walking or running | ☐ Youth sport programs |
| ☐ Dog walking or dog park | ☐ Adult sport programs |
| ☐ Family gatherings / picnicking | ☐ Skate park |
| ☐ Community events / concerts | ☐ Sport fields |
| ☐ Swimming | ☐ Basketball courts |
| ☐ Beach | ☐ Racquet / paddle sport courts (tennis, pickleball) |
| ☐ Water access / docks | ☐ Wildlife viewing / Experience nature |
| ☐ Boating (motorized) | ☐ Relaxation |
| ☐ Boating (non-motorized) | ☐ N/A – I didn't use any Lake Stevens facilities |
| ☐ Fishing | ☐ Other: _____ |

8. Please CHECK ALL the reasons why your household does not use Lake Stevens's parks or open spaces more often. (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ N/A - Does not apply; I/we use them often | ☐ Restrooms not clean enough |
| ☐ Do not know what is offered | ☐ Do not have the right equipment |
| ☐ Too far away / Lack transportation | ☐ Do not feel safe in park or open space |
| ☐ Are not well maintained | ☐ Too crowded |
| ☐ Age or physical limitations | ☐ Too busy to go to parks or open spaces |
| ☐ Barriers related to physical accessibility | ☐ Not interested in park or recreation activities |
| ☐ Not enough parking | ☐ Use facilities and parks provided by another city, organization, or private club |
| ☐ Not enough restrooms | ☐ Other: _____ |

9. What types of programs or activities are you or your household leaving Lake Stevens for?



Community Survey on Park & Recreation

Survey closes July 25!

10. The City of Lake Stevens makes choices every year about how best to invest funding in renovating, enhancing, maintaining, or activating the park and recreation system. Which of the following are most important to you or your family? (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Additional basketball courts | ☐ BMX park |
| ☐ Additional off-leash dog area (dog park) | ☐ Pump track / Rolling bike skills course |
| ☐ Additional picnic shelters | ☐ Community gardens |
| ☐ Additional playgrounds | ☐ Disc golf |
| ☐ Upgraded or renovated playgrounds | ☐ Hiking trails in natural open spaces |
| ☐ Climbing structures / boulders | ☐ Walking trails in parks |
| ☐ Nature play areas | ☐ Pickleball courts |
| ☐ Sport fields for baseball / softball | ☐ Outdoor / sand volleyball |
| ☐ Sport fields for soccer | ☐ Outdoor fitness equipment |
| ☐ Sport fields for football / lacrosse | ☐ Outdoor splash pad / water spray park |
| ☐ Sport fields for cricket | ☐ Water Access |
| ☐ Amphitheater / Outdoor performance areas | ☐ Other: _____ |

11. Are there types of recreation or educational opportunities that you think the City should expand or improve in Lake Stevens? (Check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Youth sports | ☐ Computer labs / Technology classrooms |
| ☐ Teen programs or classes | ☐ Early Childhood / Parenting centers |
| ☐ Adult sports | ☐ Youth before and after school programs |
| ☐ Gymnasiums for indoor sports | ☐ Senior activities and socials |
| ☐ Competitions, races and tournaments | ☐ Adult fitness and wellness classes |
| ☐ Enrichment and learning activities | ☐ Environmental education or nature interpretation |
| ☐ Homework help centers | ☐ Volunteer activities |
| ☐ Special events (movies in the park, fun runs, etc.) | ☐ No additional programs or events are needed |
| ☐ Arts, performing arts, and crafts | ☐ Other: _____ |
| ☐ Makerspaces (creative do-it-yourself spaces; FabLabs) | |

12. For the following list, rank the priority for each (1st is highest and 5th is lowest). Use each ranking only once.

	Select each priority <u>ONLY ONCE</u> .					Don't know / No opinion
	Highest priority	→ Lowest priority				
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	
Renovating existing parks & adding new recreational options	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Acquiring additional land for future parks	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Expanding walking & biking trail opportunities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Expanding recreation programming, classes & camps	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Expanding communications & marketing about existing amenities	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

13. Currently, indoor space for recreation programs is limited. With additional indoor space, the City of Lake Stevens could expand services to include options for youth programs, multi-purpose sport courts, and makerspace. How supportive would you be of the City developing additional indoor recreation facility space?

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| ☐ Very Supportive | ☐ Somewhat Unsupportive | ☐ Don't know / No opinion |
| ☐ Somewhat Supportive | ☐ Not at all Supportive | |

14. Please check ALL the ways you would prefer to learn about Lake Stevens's parks and amenities.
(check all that apply).

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ City website | ☐ Direct email |
| ☐ Latest on The Lake Newsletter | ☐ Lake Stevens Journal |
| ☐ Facebook | ☐ Community event signs |
| ☐ X / Twitter | ☐ None of these |
| ☐ YouTube | ☐ Other: _____ |

15. If you wanted the City of Lake Stevens to do just one thing to improve parks, trails, and/or recreation options, what would it be?

The following questions help us understand whether we have gathered responses from a broad segment of the community. It's important that you provide a response to each question.

16. How many children under age 18 live in your household?

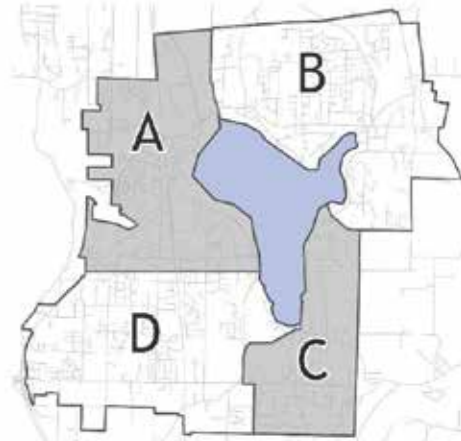
- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ☐ 0 | ☐ 2 |
| ☐ 1 | ☐ 3 or more |

17. What is your age?

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| ☐ Younger than 20 | ☐ 55 to 64 |
| ☐ 20 to 34 | ☐ 65 and 74 |
| ☐ 35 to 44 | ☐ 75 and older |
| ☐ 45 to 54 | |

18. Using the map, in which section of Lake Stevens do you live?

- ☐ (A) - West Lake Stevens (Frontier Village)
☐ (B) - Old Town (Downtown City Center)
☐ (C) - East Lake Stevens
☐ (D) - South Lake Stevens (Cavalero)
☐ Don't live within City of Lake Stevens



Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey!

Your input will help guide the development of Lake Stevens's 2026 PROS Plan.

Save a stamp! Take this survey online with the QR code or at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LakeStevensParks>

Learn more about Lake Stevens parks and recreation and stay informed about the PROS Plan process at <https://lakestevenswa.civillspace.io>



**Survey closes
July 25!**

The City of Lake Stevens is using the services of a consultant team who specializes in park and recreation planning.
Please return your completed survey in the enclosed Return-Reply Envelope addressed to:
Conservation Technix Inc., PO Box 12736, Portland, OR 97212

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APPENDIX B

Open House #1 Summary



MEETING SUMMARY

PROJECT NUMBER: #24-163PLN ISSUE DATE: July 29, 2025
 PROJECT NAME: Lake Stevens PROS Plan

RECORDED BY: Steve Duh
 TO: FILE
 PRESENT: Members of the public
 City staff
 Project team members from Conservation Technix & Consor

SUBJECT: PROS Plan: Open House #1 Meeting Notes (July 17th)

Community members were invited to an open house for the Lake Stevens Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan on Thursday, July 17, 2025 from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. at The Mill. For the open house, 12 display boards were mounted on easels with project information based on park and recreation topics relevant to City services, which included existing park service areas, recreational trails, recreation programming, and park system investment ideas. Attendees were encouraged to sign-in upon arrival, provide written comments, and take the ongoing community survey.

Attendees were encouraged to talk to project team members and record their comments. City staff and project team staff engaged with participants to identify general needs and interests for park and recreation services for the City. Twelve people attended the meeting, including seven teens, to review materials and provide comment.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The following represents a summary of the comments received during the evening meeting.

Comments from Map Displays

- More bike trails by LSHS and NLMS
- Can we add trails at Eagle Ridge Park? We would volunteer to re-expose existing trails and help build up!
- More greenspace by Tom Thumb
- Could the City buy some of the forested acreage (near Glenwood Elementary) and turn it into a park instead of having it get clearcut for 50 new houses?
- Too many houses (near Glenwood Elementary)! More parks needed
- More trails
- Park by water with swings, slides, etc. – near southeast edge of Lake Stevens

Trails

- Rustic trails (x4)
- No one-way multi-use trails

PROS Plan: Open House #1 Meeting Notes (July 17th)

Lake Stevens PROS Plan

Project Number #24-163PLN

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- Group walks and community events
- Boardwalks through stormwater areas?
- Is there potential to partner with Snohomish County Conservation District to make an educational nature trail?
- Group walks would be cool! But [we] don't have nice rustic trails like in the photo. Long, roaming and interesting trails would be lovely
- Paved and unpaved (gravel) trails
- Rustic trails – less wildlife disturbance

Programming Comments

- Youth Activities: elementary school camps; activities and programs for special needs; programs for high school students
- Adult Sports: soccer; basketball tournaments; unified sports (special needs)
- Adult Classes: Master gardener classes; trail running club; live music; yoga classes; community lake/trail cleanups; art classes (partnerships with local studios); foraging/plant identification
- Senior Activities: Aquatic exercises at the lake; art classes (partner with local studios); bingo

Investment Priorities (dot exercise)

- 9 - Additional sport courts
- 6 - Sand / beach volleyball
- 4 - Recreational trails
- 2 - Pickleball courts
- 2 - Dog park with amenities (path, shelter, trees, etc.)
- 2 - Outdoor splash pad / water spray park
- 1 - Exercise stations
- 1 - Sport fields
- 4 - Other
 - Dodge ball
 - Open space for picnicking, yard games
 - Gravel/dirt bike paths or mountain bike park
 - Obstacle course (instead of exercise stations)

If the City could do one thing, what would it be... Comments

- Cool unique parks
- Bike trails in nature surrounded by trees
- Water fountains
- Less concrete, more nature
- Less homeless; programs to help instead
- More garbage clean up
- Colorful everywhere
- Buy land for parks (instead of developing)

PROS Plan: Open House #1 Meeting Notes (July 17th)

Lake Stevens PROS Plan

Project Number #24-163PLN

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Other Comments

- What are the City's plans to develop Cedarwoods? (x3)
- More community brunches like the one last week at Fire Station
- Community gardens (x5)
- Roundabouts – too many
- Exit 194 backups??
- Appreciate existing features; aim at all ages
- Potential additions: mtn bike park, rock wall/boulder, tennis/pickleball courts, obstacle course, unpaved trails.
- More shade in parks and trails





Every effort has been made to accurately record this meeting. If any errors or omissions are noted, please provide written response within five days of receipt.

-- End of Notes --

cc: Jill Meis, Parks Planning and Development Coordinator
 File

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Open House #2 Summary



MEETING SUMMARY

PROJECT NUMBER: #24-163PLN ISSUE DATE: November 17, 2025
 PROJECT NAME: Lake Stevens PROS Plan

RECORDED BY: Steve Duh
 TO: FILE
 PRESENT: Members of the public
 City staff
 Project team members from Conservation Technix & Consor

SUBJECT: PROS Plan: Open House #2 Meeting Notes (November 10th)

Community members were invited to an open house for the Lake Stevens Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan on Monday, November 10, 2025 from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. at The Mill. This event was used as a way to inform people about the PROS Plan project and gather community feedback for potential park system enhancements. The project team prepared informational displays, which included project overview, parks and outdoor recreation enhancements, and potential park project and investment ideas, among others. Through an introductory presentation, attendees received an overview of community engagement findings and were briefed on how to participate during the open house. Using sticky notes, participants commented on potential projects and shared ideas by writing or drawing on the displays. Attendees also utilized post it notes and sticky dots to identify priority amenities and projects and contribute additional comments or ideas.

Attendees were encouraged to talk to project team members and record their comments. City staff and project team staff engaged with participants to identify general needs and interests for park and recreation services for the City. Approximately 12 people reviewed the materials and provided comments.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The following represents a summary of the comments received during the evening meeting.

Comments from 'Filling Gaps' Map Display

- More bike trails by LSHS and NLMS
- Yes to acquisition site near 8th St SE and 83rd Ave SE; also shift the 'target' more eastward; also add trails in this area
- Yes to acquisition site near 2nd St SE and 99th Ave SE
- Yes to acquisition site near 81st Ave NE
- Park shortage near 18th St ES and 108th Dr SE
- New development here (near Machias Cutoff and 121st Ave SE) could use a park!

Expanding Recreation Options: Potential Project Ideas

- Davies Beach – shade trees just planted. Thank you!
- Yes to West Lake Park pump track idea
- Cavalero Hill Park – community center should serve all ages; need indoor affordable flex space for local non-profits, etc. to use
- North Cove Park – day use boat parking?
- Add pedestrian sidewalks to downtown (along east side of lake)

Trails: Creating Connections

- Lake access is not safe for pedestrians to Davies nor Sunset. Could be improved with a trail to/from, perhaps a bus stop?
- Bike skills park and pump track
- Yes to rustic trails
- Yes to bike skills areas
- Safe access to Sunset Beach by car and walking
- Add winding trails to extend the length of the trail in small space (parks)
- More trails in nature, and education programming about nature
- Pedestrian safety around Sunset Beach; pedestrian lanes

Programming Comments

- Youth Programs & Camps:
 - Yes, internship programs for high school students
 - Teen activities, clinics, trainings
 - Teen programs; having open space with lighting
- Adult Sport Leagues:
 - Agree, need for all
- Adult Programs & Classes:
 - Adult clinics – sports, arts, games, meet ups (not in bar)
 - Makerspaces (x3)
 - Hot shop (glass) – partner with Pilchuck Glass
 - Dance classes – see Dance Church for reference
 - Ninja warrior training / obstacle course
- Senior Activities & Programs:
 - Park meet up programs

Investment Priorities: Amenities (dot exercise)

- 9 - Sport fields
- 7 - Recreational trails
- 6 - Exercise stations
- 3 - Sand / beach volleyball
- 3 - Additional sport courts
- 2 - Pickleball courts

PROS Plan: Open House #2 Meeting Notes (November 10th)

Lake Stevens PROS Plan

Project Number #24-163PLN

Page 3

- 0 - Dog park with amenities (path, shelter, trees, etc.)
- 0 - Outdoor splash pad / water spray park
- 3 - Other
 - Obstacle course; ninja course
 - We desperately need more separated space at parks for different age groups. Parents of small children do not feel safe at playgrounds . Give kids/teens age 12+ their own spaces where small kids won't be near an device versa

Investment Priorities: Specific Projects (dot exercise)

- 9 - Cavalero Hill Park (\$\$\$)
- 8 - Eagle Ridge Park Phase 2 (\$\$\$)
- 6 - Bayview Trail Extension (\$\$\$)
- 6 - Parkland Acquisitions (\$\$\$\$)
- 3 - West Lake Park Improvements (\$\$)
- 2 - Park Restroom Renovations/Upgrades (\$\$)
- 1 - Feasibility Study for Additional Indoor Space (\$)
- 0 - North Cove Marina Facility (\$)
- 0 - Dock, Pier & Boat Launch Restorations (\$\$)

Investment Priorities (Allocating Play Money)

Using play money, participants were given five \$100-dollar bills (each representing \$100,000) to place under project types they deemed most important. The following summarizes the money allocations and specific comments received.



TARGETING FUTURE NEEDS

ALLOCATING RESOURCES TO PRIORITY PROJECTS

Use the play money you were handed at the welcome table to help "pay for" the basket of projects most important to you or your household. **Be specific! Write on a post-it note** to indicate the projects you support! You can spread money across different baskets or place it all in just one! Project costs are general estimates.

ACQUIRE	ENHANCE	EXPAND	CONNECT
Acquire additional local parklands as future parks to serve current and future residents to provide more walkable access for outdoor recreation opportunities. \$2-\$4 million for neighborhood park \$5-\$20 million for community park 	Add pickleball courts & synthetic sports field to Frontier Heights Park: \$2.3M Renovate restrooms at multiple parks: \$700K each Add a pump track: \$500K - \$1M Add climbing walls: \$300,000 each Add pump track (bike skills course) at West Lake Park: \$75,000 Improve trails & signage at Centennial Woods Trail: \$75,000 	Design & develop additional amenities for Cavalero Hill Park: \$710,000 Design & develop two future (to-be-acquired) neighborhood parks: \$2M - \$3M each Implement Phase 2 of Eagle Ridge Park master plan (playground, amphitheater, walking trail & parking): \$3.4M Plan for future development of Cedarwood property: \$7M Conduct feasibility study for community recreation center: \$200,000 	Extend Bayview Connector Trail segments north of West Lake Park to Marysville: Phases: \$2M - \$5.5M Construct a marina to replace North Cove docks: \$4M Resurface pier at Davies Beach Park: \$200,000 Add or improve pathways within city parks: varies (Note: citywide bicycle and pedestrian routes are being planned separately as part of City transportation planning.) 

PROS Plan: Open House #2 Meeting Notes (November 10th)

Lake Stevens PROS Plan

Project Number #24-163PLN

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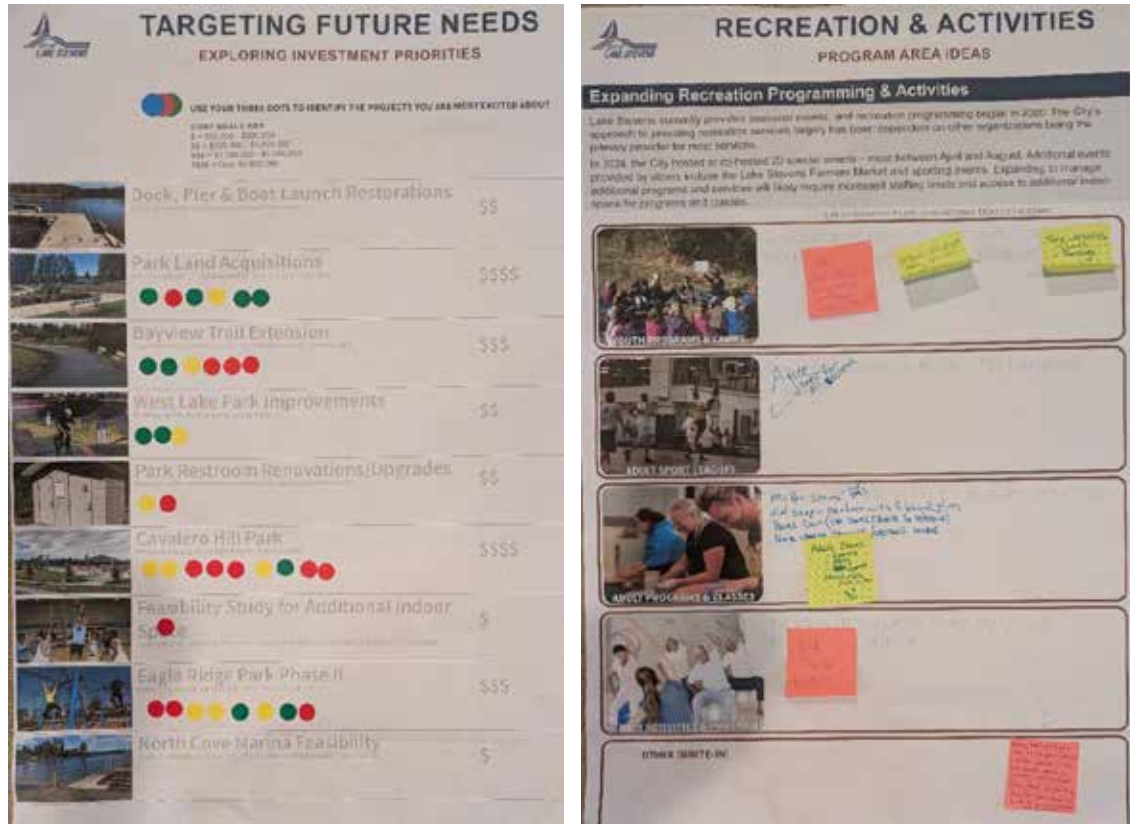
- Acquire - \$1,100,000 (17% of total)
 - Monies for land acquisition on south end of lake
- Enhance - \$3,600,000 (55% of total)
 - Yes to adding climbing walls
 - Pump track & jumps at Cavalero by old dog park
 - Centennial Woods Trail
- Expand - \$1,600,000 (25% of total)
 - Yes to implementing Phase 2 of Eage Ridge Park
 - Make amenities at Cavalero Hill Park multi-generational
- Connect - \$200,000 (3% of total)
 - Yes to extending the Bayview Connector Trail
- Other comments: Add slides at Frontier Heights

Other Comments

- Make a map of all trails available
- Have covered/indoor sport courts
- Have day use boat parking at North Cove
- Add a large outdoor climbing boulder at library
- Soccer fields at West Lake Park
- Please ID fundign strategies
- Multi-generational communtiy center (YMCA)
- Slide, climbing wall or similar attractions at Frontier Heights Park for younger age children
- More events; diverse events, including music, food, cultural events
- A children or young persons pump track is needed at Cavelero Hills Park
- Indoor activities for fall/winter PNW weather
- Climbing walls – all ages, obstacle courses, arts, concerts
- Adequate lighting for new outdoor projects
- One of the reasons for people to leave Lake Stevens for other places was cultural events. What cultural events should PROS target?



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Every effort has been made to accurately record this meeting. If any errors or omissions are noted, please provide written response within five days of receipt.

-- End of Notes --

cc: Jill Meis, Parks Planning and Development Coordinator
 File

Stakeholder Discussion Summaries



City of Lake Stevens: PROS Plan

Focus Groups Summary

Introduction

The City of Lake Stevens is developing their first Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan. This plan encompasses guidance for decision-making on the City's parks, open spaces, and trails for the next 10-years. Lake Steven's PROS Plan addresses improvements and expansion of the City's recreation facilities, amenities, and parks, providing long-range visioning with clear and actionable steps for implementation.

The focus groups provided an opportunity for dialogue with the community from the lens of how different groups utilize the parks and recreational amenities. To capture a range of perspectives, the discussions were organized into three categories to gather feedback from a broad range of community needs with more specialized insights into programming, facility use, and future priorities. The three categories included:

- Park Enrichment,
- General Users,
- Youth Athletics.

The interviews occurred between July 29 to September 10. These facilitated discussions allowed stakeholders to build a dialogue off each other's perspectives, offering insight into key themes that translated into priorities, needs, and opportunities commonly expressed among their peers.

The following section highlights themes and key points emerged from participant responses.

Focus Groups

Park Enrichment

The park enrichment group brought together a wide range of community organizations and representatives that participate in community programming, cultural opportunities, and overall community use. This group shared ideas for enhancing amenities and facilities to create space for encouraging community connection. Some included how North Cove has evolved from a dirt hill into a centerpiece park, reflecting the kind of investment they value. Community members spoke with pride about growing up in Lake Stevens, learning to swim in the lake or attending dances in the park, reinforcing the importance of protecting the small-town character.

Key Priorities

Participate expressed gratitude for the preservation of the small-town feel of Lake Stevens while supporting a growing, sports-oriented community. North Cove, Lundeen, and Davies Beach were repeatedly highlighted as well-loved park. Accessibility, including families and children with disabilities, was a consistent priority.

Challenges and Concerns

Accessibility and affordability: Participants expressed concern that many facilities feel either cost-prohibited or not welcoming for families and community organizations. Specific needs included:

- Lower-cost or dynamic pricing providing for rental spaces for gatherings and events
- More picnic tables and covered/sheltered areas that don't require permits
- Greater accessibility for children with disabilities and average families
- Family-oriented amenities that feel inclusive and easy to use
- The Mill is described as too expensive for community organizations, limiting gathering space.

Outreach and communication: The loss of the local community newspaper, limited reach of social media, and some respondents found difficulty in navigating the City website were cited as barriers to effective communication and awareness with residents.

"How do we ensure we use them? (parks)".

Safety and maintenance: Many expressed concerns about personal safety in parks and inconsistent upkeep of walking paths and restrooms.

"I want to feel safe."

Opportunities & Ideas

Participants identified several ways to enhance park access and strengthen community connections. Suggestions focused on affordability, inclusive programming, and park design improvements.

Expand affordable and multipurpose spaces for families, nonprofits, and community events.

“A place that is affordable to use.”

Introduction **of sensory programming and educational activities** such as,

- Nature walks
- Environmental learning specific to the local parks and natural spaces in the community
- Partnership with the local library, supporting programming for children with disabilities
- Amenities tied to history; adding features that engage youth in learning about community heritage such as kiosks, interpretive signage, interactive play structures (e.g., Marysville’s historical cabin model).

Increase covered shelters and shaded areas to support year-round activities.

Add **active-use amenities** like workout stations and regional sport facilities with adequate parking.

Outreach ideas included:

- Reader board near Cavalero Park
- Volunteer fair to connect community-based organizations and expand City partnerships
- Increased use of local connection (e.g., chamber of commerce networks)
- Engagement tailored for newer residents

General Users

This group brought together community members and organizational representatives who use parks for recreation, events, and daily activities. Similarly to the park enrichment group, participants highlighted the value of the small-town feel, while also pointing to growing demands for water access, sports facilities, and improved park management as the community continues to grow.

Key Priorities

Well loved parks such as Lundeen, North Cove, and Davies Beach were frequently mentioned as parks the community values.

- ✓ Preserve and enhance lake access, docks, and boat facilities
“Seeing less people on the Lake – accessibility is difficult as population grows.”
- ✓ Expand sports and recreation options, including courts for basketball and baseball.

- ✓ Ensure multi-generational use where facilities also serve seniors and families across generations.

Challenges and Concerns

Accessibility and safety: An expressed concerns among participants which included:

- Sidewalk access to beach parks
- Walkability between hotspots (e.g., library to farmers market)
- Enhanced signage for lake rules was noted as missing
- Safety concerns about graffiti and electric bikes
- Youth supervision in North Cove

Parking and space availability: Lundeen and North Cove, were consistent frustrations among participants related to access and usability

Programming and event logistics: Participants highlighted the complexity surrounding permitting processes and event organizing in the community. Lack of designated meeting event spaces and limited affordable venues hindered community programming for many.

Maintenance: There was a mutual understanding among participants that oversight was a priority for facilities such as the trails, restrooms, and community garden.

"Portion of the Centennial trail in Lake Stevens is well maintained."

Opportunities & Ideas

Connectivity and infrastructure were highlighted as a need, improving access to and between parks and trails. Additional boat parking and continuous improvement to docks (participants noted the new docks at Davies improved accessibility after railing removal at North Cove).

"Would like trails that connect the parks and hotspots in the community."

"Accessibility to the lake is difficult – as population of Lake Stevens is growing."

Participants emphasized the need for **additional recreation spaces** and year-round programming to serve all ages.

- Sports courts, particularly basketball and baseball, to attract young families
- Create city-led recreation opportunities such as yoga in the parks, arts, and community clubs
- Explore both outdoor and sheltered spaces to make recreation possible in all seasons

Improved **community communication** was seen as critical for engaging residents.

- Expand communications beyond social media through mailed newsletters, bulletin boards in stores/markets, and through schools

- Wayfinding and information signage to provide guidance on what can be used and how to use parks and amenities
- Simplify permitting processes and dynamic pricing, accessible meeting/event locations
- Establish a community mailer list, advertised through community networks such as local businesses

Making parks **inclusive and welcoming** for all residents was an important focus.

- Increase supervision and monitoring of parks, especially youth-heavy spaces like North Cove.
- Ensure parks accommodate seniors as well as families with children.
- Evaluate underused amenities (e.g., community garden) and expand or repurpose them to serve more residents.
- Balance investments in neighborhood parks vs. lakefront parks.
- Add shaded areas and shelters to support family use.

Youth Athletics

The Youth Athletics focus group brought together representatives of local sports organizations and parents who are deeply involved in community athletics. Participants emphasized Lake Stevens' strong sports culture, while also noting significant challenges with field availability, coordination, and facilities. The conversation highlighted both immediate barriers and long-term opportunities to expand recreation for a growing, sports-focused community.

Key Priorities

Participants identified the following as central to supporting youth athletics in Lake Stevens:

- ✓ Preserve the community's **sports-centric identity**, which participants said is highly valued for families and newcomers
- ✓ Ensure **access to quality fields and courts** that can serve soccer, lacrosse, and other growing sports.
- ✓ Provide **inclusive facilities** with handicap access, ramps, nearby parking, and all-abilities design.
- ✓ Strengthen **partnerships with schools and organizations** to share facilities, space, and maintenance responsibilities.

Challenges and Concerns

The group emphasized major barriers limiting youth athletics today.

Limited facilities: Most usable fields are owned by the school district or county; City-owned options are scarce. Community Park fields are sand-based and too small to meet demand, especially for tournaments.

Access and cost: Fees for using high school fields are prohibitively expensive, and scheduling conflicts with schools are common.

Infrastructure gaps: Lack of lighting, fixed restrooms, and storage make fields less usable, particularly for evening and tournament play.

Maintenance and staffing: Concerns about the City's capacity to maintain new fields given its small parks team; issues with scheduling at Cavalero also cited.

Competition for space: Leagues often compete with each other for limited field time, creating inequities in access.

Opportunities & Ideas

Participants shared ideas around expansion of **athletic facilities**.

“If there is available land to create a sports complex, the community would go wild and support that.”

Some ideas included:

- Develop a multi-field sports complex (similar to Redmond's 60-acre park) to host tournaments and centralized activities
- Improve playability to reduce weather-related cancellations – common issue among sports programming in Lake Stevens
- Additional soccer and lacrosse fields, along with multi-use courts for pickleball, basketball, tennis to keep pace with community demand.
- Develop pavilions, bleachers, and spectator spaces for events

Many offered ideas surrounding **improve of infrastructure and amenities**.

- Lighting is needed in fields for extended use and safety
- Add fixed restroom facilities and nearby parking at major parks
- Provide equipment storage and improve field lining, including multi-sport, inclusive field markings
- Ensure handicapped accessibility and inclusive design across facilities (e.g., ramp entrance, ADA compliance, inclusive restroom seating, sheltered areas)

Strengthening partnerships and coordinating with the City was an opportunity believed to be worth exploring further among participants.

“We would be absolutely all over partnering with the City for tournaments.”

- Formalize collaboration with the school district to improve space demand in the community
- Create communications on which fields/parks are City-owned and available to use

- Streamline permitting processes for local leagues to secure spaces
- Explore partnerships for co-hosted tournament with the City to raise visibility and funding

Overall Key Takeaways

Priorities

- **Preserve community character**
Residents highly value the “small-town feel” of Lake Stevens and want to see it carried forward even as the city grows.
- **Accessibility and inclusivity**
Families, youth, seniors, and people with disabilities all need facilities and programs designed for easy access and meaningful use.
- **Recreation and sports identity**
Lake Stevens’ strong sports culture is central to community life, with a need for facilities and programs that support both competitive and recreational activities.

Challenges and Concerns

Facility limitations: Parks and athletic fields are overused, under-sized, or not City-owned, creating inequities and barriers to participation.

Cost and affordability: High rental fees and permitting costs limit community organizations and families from fully utilizing spaces.

Safety and maintenance: Concerns around vandalism, graffiti, youth supervision, and upkeep of restrooms, trails, and neighborhood amenities persist.

Communication barriers: With limited local news and reliance on social media, many residents are unaware of available facilities, events, or rental opportunities.

Opportunities & Ideas

Strengthen partnerships by collaborating more closely with,

- Schools
- Community organization
- Sports programs

Enhance community programming by broadening offerings to include,

- Cultural activities
- Educational programs,
- Senior-friendly recreation, alongside sports.

Improve outreach to engage with newer and long-time residents by,

- Establishing a promoted newsletter
- Bulletin boards
- Reader boards
- Wayfinding signage to share park opportunities and events beyond social media channels.

Expand athletic and recreation facilities by developing,

- Multi-use sports facilities
- Adding fields and courts
- Improve lighting, storage, and restroom infrastructure

Create safe and inclusive gathering spaces to ensure new and existing facilities are,

- Affordable
- ADA-compliant
- Family-friendly
- Senior-friendly
- Equipped with multipurpose spaces for events and everyday use.



City of Lake Stevens: PROS Plan

Stakeholder Interviews Summary

Introduction

The City of Lake Stevens is developing their first Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan. This plan encompasses guidance for decision-making on the City's parks, open spaces, and trails for the next 10-years. Lake Steven's PROS Plan addresses improvements and expansion of the City's recreation facilities, amenities, and parks, providing long-range visioning with clear and actionable steps for implementation.

A critical element of the plan incorporates meaningful community engagement, including hearing from a variety of stakeholders through a combination of focus groups and stakeholder interviews. There were 6 interviews that encompassed a diverse range of perspectives, including individuals with experience in local governance, sports organizing and advocacy, arts and cultural representation, and community service. Participants brought deep local roots and a strong history of civic engagement, with many actively utilizing Lake Stevens' parks and facilities in their work.

The 6 stakeholder interviews occurred between July 23 to August 8. These interviews provided an opportunity to hear directly from community partner about their priorities, challenges, and ideas for the future of parks and recreation.

The following sections highlight themes and key points emerged from participant responses.

Key Themes

Current Community PROS Engagement

High usage and event participation are common among community members.

Participants and their networks of family, friends, and colleagues regularly attend park events such as *Movies in the Park* and community concerts. Parks like North Cove and Lundeen were highlighted as popular, highly trafficked destinations for youth and families.

"All our family and friends are heavily engaged in events and using the parks."

"...use the Centennial trail and go to events (movies in the park)."

Improvements in communications can build public awareness of amenities

according to participants. Long-term users noted that newer visitors often lack the information needed to navigate park facilities and take advantage of available amenities. Participants emphasized that clearer, more accessible communications can help the general public better utilize the park system and its amenities

Event coordination processes present challenges. Participants involved in organizing and hosting events expressed that permitting, rentals, and event coordination processes can be difficult to navigate. Many suggested a more accessible system and improved information sharing between City and community organizations.

What Makes a PROS System Great

When asked to think about what a great parks, recreation, and open space system looks like, participants shared a variety of qualities. Participants offered feedback, emphasizing **accessibility, enhanced recreation, and consistent cleanliness and maintenance** as their top priorities.

Accessibility – Ensuring convenient locations, ease-of-use, and serve all community needs and meet demand for spaces.

“Ease of getting reservation to use facilities -sometimes difficult due to the amount of use it gets.”

Recreation – Participants shared variety of recreation opportunities that they would like to see in their local parks. Desired amenities included:

- Baseball fields
- Biking days
- Designated picnic areas
- Enhanced play structures
- Games in the park
- Multi-use athletic fields
- Pickleball courts
- Picnic tables
- Public tennis courts
- Soccer fields
- Tournaments

Maintenance and Cleanliness – Facility upkeep was viewed as a mark of quality. Clean restrooms, litter-free grounds, and well-maintained play equipment all contributed to a positive park user experience. Some described implementing a set of maintenance and cleanliness standards for all amenities.

Primary Challenges and Issues

Participants were asked to identify the most important challenges in their opinion. The most common themes include:

Safety and facility security – Ensuring well-lit areas, safe lake access, monitoring for vandalism, and addressing concerns around unhoused individuals were highlighted as critical for a secure park environment.

Open space and covered areas – Participants emphasized the need for additional open space, covered or indoor areas for organized sports and community gatherings, and opportunities to repurpose underused land.

Parking and access limitations – Parking is a common interest among all participants.

Other areas in which participants identified as challenges were:

- Open engagement between City and community-based organizations.
- Cost of permits and reservations for facility use.
- Maintenance and upkeep of facilities (cutting grass, picking up trash, etc.)

What is Going Well

Participants were asked to identify positive qualities of the parks and recreation system.

Successful programming and events – Participants praised the variety of family-friendly activities offered, noting that these events create valuable opportunities for community connection. Seasonal programming, particularly during the summer, was appreciated.

“Offerings are great (outdoor movies, biking day, outdoor music).”

Good maintenance of trails and parks – Well-maintained trails and park facilities were frequently cited as a strong point. Trails, especially the Centennial Trail, were often mentioned as popular and well-cared-for community assets.

“The trail system is maintained well and utilized very often among the community.”

Strong community utilization was a quality that was appreciated by participants and North Cove was an example of a park seen as a positive indicator of community connection.

“North Cove does a really great job on bringing the community together – farmers market, beach access, and Davies Beach as well.”

Opportunities for Improvement

Taking a closer look at what participants considered as opportunities for improvement three key themes emerged.

Communication with the community – Ideas were shared about expanding engagement efforts to the community beyond the traditional methods of social media. A more holistic and direct approach was viewed favorably. These included:

- Sending materials with children going home from school
- Paper mailing in addition to social media
- Communication specific to newer community members
- Promotion of available amenities, (e.g., *“Bringing attention to the Centennial trail.”*)

Expanded sports and activities – From activity-specific facilities to a more robust approach with events held in parks, participants were interested in broadening current offerings to create a more active, year-round community experience that appeals to all ages and interests such as:

- Basketball court
- Indoor recreation spaces for inclement weather – “for when the weather is not great.”)
- Monthly events (second week of every month – live music, sports, movies in the park, etc.)
- Pickleball courts

Space development and amenities – Cleanliness and functional amenities were highlighted as priorities, particularly regarding restrooms, covered areas, and shelters. Several participants noted challenges with current facilities and limited gathering spaces, and suggested site acquisition.

“Bathrooms are an ongoing issue – often not open. Not great for walkers or runners.”
“Next door to Lake Stevens, there is a sanitary landfill that was closed some time ago, looking ahead in the future, that should be targeted as an eventual site.”

PROS Vision

Participants were asked to describe what they'd like to see in the future for parks and recreation. This included questions surrounding recreation options for youth, teens, and adults as well as park spaces and trail connections.

Diverse recreation and programming opportunities – Through a broad mix of recreational offerings including:

- Arts and crafts
- Athletic tournaments
- Music classes
- Sport and multi-use facilities
- Wildlife education focused on the parks and surrounding areas

Improved park spaces and trail connectivity – Connections between parks, expanded bike and pedestrian routes, and opportunities to repurpose underused land were highlighted.

“Full sidewalk and shoulder around the lake – not safe in some areas to go around the lake currently.”

Welcoming and practical community spaces – This included covered areas, more vegetation, community programming (arts, crafts, music, etc.), and better supervision of amenities in youth heavy areas such as North Cove, creating spaces that are both welcoming and functional.

“Covered structures and shelters.”

“Some parks have room to add more picnic tables.”

“Continue having green space available.”

Main Themes

Stakeholder feedback highlights priorities for Lake Stevens' Parks, Recreation, and Open Space system that will guide the PROS plan. Overall key themes emerging from the interviews are summarized below:

- ✓ **Diverse Recreation Opportunities** – Offer a wide mix of sports, arts, education, and events to engage all ages.
- ✓ **Welcoming Community Spaces** – Create inclusive, supervised parks with shelters, picnic areas, and green spaces for gathering.

- ✓ **Effective Communication** – Provide clear, consistent, multi-channel information about programs, facilities, and events.
- ✓ **Cleanliness, Safety, and Maintenance** – Keep parks safe, well-maintained, and equipped with functional amenities like restrooms, play structures, and lighting.
- ✓ **Accessible and Connected Parks** – Improve trail networks, bike/pedestrian routes, and park connections for mobility and community use.

Appendix

Stakeholder Interview List

Amy Lewandowski
Andrea Wright
Lindley Latham
John Spencer
Dian Hale
Lisa Tollefson

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Site Assessments of Existing Parks



Catherine Creek Park

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

12708 20th St. (16.55 acres)

Description

Catherine Creek Park is an 8-acre park that the City leases from the Lake Stevens School District. The park is mostly a “natural” park with a network of unpaved trails that provide public access to Catherine Creek. The park also has picnic facilities in a grassy meadow. A unique feature of this park is a scenic, wooded 18-hole disc golf course that attracts players from around the region.

Design Opportunities

- Upgrade tee signs. Add numbers to cages.
- Formalize and add wayfinding for trail connecting to Centennial Woods Park & Centennial Trail.

Management Considerations

- Tee signs have some graffiti and/or broken glass. Some signs are missing. Consider upgrading to more vandal-resistant signage.

Amenities

- Disc golf course
 - Par 4 18-hole course or
 - Par 3 19-hole course
- Walking trails
- Mature native forest



Cavalero Hill Park

COMMUNITY PARK

7708 20th St. SE. (35.0 acres)

Description

Transferred from the County in 2025, this community park contains a skate park, basketball court and playground, natural protected area and an off-leash dog park. The park has room for additional recreational amenities.

Design Opportunities

- Add park identification signs at both entries & off 20th St SE.
- Gravel parking for OLA limits ADA access. No designated spaces in gravel. Add some paved area to incorporate paved handicap space(s) and add paved path to dog area entries.
- Fencing along “all dog” area will need repair.
- Bleachers at skate park should have safety rails (IBC regulation).
- Park has room for further recreational amenities. Master plan for enhancements and consider site for potential for recreation center.

Management Considerations

- Dead trees at playground should be removed and replaced.
- Play safety surfacing (wood fiber) may need refreshing.
- Graffiti in skate park could be covered. Consider an art program for skaters & art students to “decorate” portions of the skate park (to discourage further unauthorized graffiti).
- Create grass-less rings around shade trees to avoid more mower & string trimmer damage.
- Remove dumpsters located at park entrances & replace with numerous trash cans to provide better litter control & discourage household trash dumping.

Amenities

- Basketball court
- Bleachers at skate park (no rails)
- Skate park
- Paved parking lot with handicap spaces
- Paved pathways
- Playground (wood fiber)
- Portable handicap toilet
- Shade structures (2)
- Shade trees
- Grass areas

Dog Park

- Gravel parking with kiosk
- Picnic tables
- All & “shy” dog areas
- Benches
- Trash cans
- Fencing
- Double gate (all dog area)
- Grass & shade trees
- Portable toilet



Centennial Woods

OPEN SPACE

1801 131st Dr. NE (8.61 acres)

Description

This passive recreation park includes trails throughout the site connecting the Centennial Trail with Catherine Creek Park.

Design Opportunities

- Future trail improvements including wayfinding signage and trail improvements for connection to Catherine Creek – Centennial Trail.

Management Considerations

- None noted.

Amenities

- Natural area
- Walking trails



Crossings at Catherine Creek

MINI PARK

2905 127th Ave. NE (0.51 acres)

Description

This is a small undeveloped site with no amenities.

Design Opportunities

- No measurable public value to this space as homeowners have reasonably-sized yards and this space is not large enough to support large gatherings or recreational activities.

Management Considerations

- Site will be used as open space in the future, and the playground will not be replaced.

Amenities

- No recreation amenities
- Empty play area (in triangular space).
- No ADA access to former play area
- No park identification sign



Davies Beach

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

20 S. Davies Rd. (2.48 acres)

Description

Located four miles from downtown, across the lake, this neighborhood park is on Davies Road. Facilities include a public boat launch, a motorized and non-motorized day-use mooring dock a fishing pier, a swimming area, restrooms, picnic tables, and 80 parking spaces. This park is especially busy during summer weekends. A row house is located on the property offering rowing programs for the community.

Design Opportunities

- Of the four picnic tables along the paved pathway, only one (with a wheelchair seating space) has an accessible route. Consider adding a paved connection to the other picnic table that has a wheelchair seating space.

Management Considerations

- Recently restriped parking area and newly added signs better define ADA parking stalls.
- Pier will need re-decking in the near future.

Amenities

- Bike rack
- Boat dock
- Boat launch
- Boat-trailer parking
- Concrete ramp to swim area
- Drinking fountain (not working)
- Fencing along roadway
- Landscape planters
- Life jacket cabinet
- Open grass
- Park identification sign
- Parking
- Parking fee station
- Paved pathways
- Picnic area
- Picnic tables
- Restrooms
- Sand 'beach'
- Shade shelter
- Shade trees in parking lot
- Swim beach
- Swim dock with ladders & railing
- Trash cans
- Tree plantings (young)



Eagle Ridge Park

COMMUNITY PARK

2420 Soper Hill Rd. (28.2 acres)

Description

The 2010 master plan includes details for park development and proposed amenities and recreational opportunities. The overall vision for the park is that of an 'outdoor classroom' with both passive and active recreational activities that embrace and enhance the natural beauty of this park. Eagle Ridge currently houses the Lake Stevens Senior Center, soft trails, and open spaces. Phase 1 has been completed, adding a community garden parking and picnic areas. This park is notable for its eagle habitat. The master plan for this park envisions picnic shelters; an amphitheater; interconnected trails and educational features such as an interpretive center, outdoor classrooms and interpretive signage. The plan promotes the use of Low Impact Development in design and construction.

Design Opportunities

- Implement next phase of master plan development.

Management Considerations

- Septic drainfield behind Senior Center has vents in grass that are not visible and a potential tripping hazard.
- Community garden parking area would benefit from designated parking spaces and painted handicap spaces. Once handicap spaces are located, transition the portable toilet to an accessible model.
- Senior Center handicap parking sign is not very visible due to hedge.

Amenities

- Parking (undesignated pavement – no handicap spaces)
- Park identification sign
- Portable toilet (not handicap)
- Fencing
- Entry gate
- Garden shed
- Picnic shelter
- Planter boxes
- ADA access
- Compost bins
- Security light

Senior Center

- Parking with handicap spaces
- Park identification sign
- Shade trees
- Landscape plantings
- Open grass area
- Natural trail into ravine
- Bench
- Flagpole
- Bike rack



Frontier Heights Park

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

8801 Frontier Circle (7.20 acres)

Description

A multi-use park located in the Lake Stevens Center Subarea, Frontier Heights Park was acquired by the city in 2017 from the homeowner's association of the adjacent neighborhoods. A Master Plan was developed in 2019. In 2020, phase 1 improvements included walking path, basketball court, parking and playground. Phase 2 improvements were started in late 2025.

Design Opportunities

- Handicapped parking spaces are located on either side of the park identification sign, far from either paved entrance pathway and toilet. Consider moving those spaces to either end of parking area for more appropriate universal access.
- Future phase of park development underway and will add significant amenities to the park including a multi-use all-weather sports field, exercise stations and pickleball courts.

Management Considerations

- None noted.

Amenities

- Basketball court with 4-square
- Benches with backs (no armrests)
- Cornhole 'court'
- Dog waste bag dispensers
- Multiple entry points
- Open grass area
- Park identification Sign
- Parking
- Paved pathways
- Playground – large
- Portable (handicap) toilet with enclosure
- Small picnic shelters (one with table)
- Solar lighting on poles
- Trash cans



Lundeen Park

COMMUNITY PARK

10020 Lundeen Pkwy. (10.05 acres)

Description

The park has 500 feet of shoreline and contains a salmon-spawning creek with interpretive stations. The Lake Stevens Chamber of Commerce maintains a Visitor Information Center at the park.

Design Opportunities

- Future plans include replacing restroom.
- Improve ADA access into swim beach area.

Management Considerations

- None noted.

Amenities

- Basketball courts
- Beach shower & foot wash
- BBQ grills with ash disposal cans
- Benches
- Bike rack
- Dog waste bag dispensers
- Drinking fountain
- Interpretive signs
- Open grass lawn
- Paddleboard rental concession
- Park identification sign
- Parking with handicap spaces
- Paved pathways
- Picnic shelter with 6 picnic tables
- Picnic tables
- Playground
- Restrooms
- Rinse-off shower
- Shade trees
- Swimming beach
- Swimming dock/pier
- Trash cans
- Visitor Information Center
- Watercraft shore launch



Mandolin Park

MINI PARK

3105 Mandolin Court (0.06 acres)

Description

A mini-park with a picnic table and a bench.

Design Opportunities

- This mini park has limited value and restricted park value. Neighborhood has large houses, and this park's small size restricts its potential for a gathering space or outdoor recreation amenities.

Management Considerations

- None noted.

Amenities

- Play space (empty)
- Open grass
- Bench
- Picnic table



North Cove Boat Launch

SPECIAL USE FACILITY

17th Pl. & 124th Ave. (0.89 acres)

Description

The North Cove Boat Launch is a 1-acre facility that the City leases from the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, with a boat ramp, dock, and parking lot, located on the eastern shore of North Cove.

Design Opportunities

- Construct a marina to replace motorized, non-motorized and first responder's dock.

Management Considerations

- None noted.

Amenities

- Boat Ramp
- Docks
- Parking for boat trailers (1 handicap trailer space)
- Parking for cars
- Fee Station
- Restrooms



North Cove Park

COMMUNITY PARK

1806 Main Street (4.02 acres)

Description

North Cove Park is a four-acre waterfront park at the northeast end of the lake, next to City Hall, offering easy access to downtown Lake Stevens. North Cove Park is home to the Lake Stevens War Veterans Memorial and The Mill on Lake Stevens and the setting for annual community events including the Lake Stevens' Farmers' Market and Aquafest. A fully inclusive playground with synthetic surfacing, wheelchair accessibility, and sensory features allows all abilities to enjoy this space.

The Mill Spur, a festival street, contains parking and a flexible space for events.





Design Opportunities

- Newly developed park with good accessibility and amenities.
- The temporary skate park has rough paved surfaces, which are not good for small skateboard wheels. Consider removal of skate elements.
- Remove one of the administrative buildings, repurpose the other and construct new parking lot.

Management Considerations

- Very popular park on a warm sunny day.
- Parking is at a premium and forcing local merchants to have signs stating "customer parking only."

Amenities

- Benches
- Bike racks
- Dog waste bag dispensers
- Landscape plantings
- Life jacket cabinet
- Open grass area
- Parking for cars
- Paved pathways with path lighting
- Picnic areas
- Picnic shelter with restrooms
- Picnic tables
- Playground (Inclusive)
- Public art (historic 'relics')
- Restrooms at boat launch
- Skate spot (temporary)
- Water feature
- Swim dock
- Swimming beach
- The Mill center
- Trash cans
- Veterans Memorial
- Watercraft dock
- Watercraft shore launch



North Shore Swim Beach

MINI PARK

11909 N. Shore Dr. (0.71 acres)

Description

A popular waterfront park providing lake access for summertime swimmers on North Cove. This park is located approximately 0.2 miles west of downtown on North Lakeshore Drive. Facilities include 560 square feet of usable beach, a 600 square foot municipal swimming dock, a portable restroom, and 10 parking spaces.

Design Opportunities

- Adding parking space designation through wheel stops or painted lines could make parking more efficient allowing more users to have access.
- Designate ADA parking when parking area is restriped or improved.

Management Considerations

- Swim dock's ledger boards are deteriorating and need replacement.

Amenities

- Bench
- Life vest cabinet
- Parking
- Portable toilet
- Swim dock
- Swimming area
- Watercraft shore launch



Oak Hill Park

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

10300 33rd St. NE (2.63 acres)

Description

This neighborhood park includes a playground, restroom, picnic shelters, basketball court and a walking trail.

Design Opportunities

- New park carved on former sloping forest space. Steep side slopes are vegetated with 'new' plantings.
- The park's central area is devoid of any shade trees and looks rather bleak. Play equipment gets hot on sunny summer days.

Management Considerations

- Southern park entrance could use a park identification sign
- Pathways from parking lot need tactile warning strips.

Amenities

- Basketball court
- Bus shelter
- Open grass area
- Park identification signs
- Parking lot (also a park & ride lot)
- Paved pathways
- Picnic shelters (2) with 1 table each
- Picnic tables (3) one has an outdoor recreation access route & wheelchair seating
- Play area with "tire" swing
- Playground with structure
- Portable handicap toilet with enclosure
- Shade trees (young) at parking lot



Sunset Beach Park

MINI PARK

410 E. Lake Stevens Rd. (0.60 acres)

Description

This waterfront mini-park's primary use is water access and picnic shelters. It is located 0.3 mile south of downtown on East Lake Stevens Road. Facilities include a public dock, picnic tables, portable restroom and nine parking spaces. This park is especially busy during the summer season. The park underwent a full redevelopment in 2023.

Design Opportunities

- New park with good ADA access and amenities. When benches age out, replace with ADA-compliant style bench.

Management Considerations

- None noted.

Amenities

- BBQ grills
- Benches (no armrests, 1 with back)
- Bike rack
- Charcoal ash can
- Grass slope
- Landscape plantings
- Parking (8 reg. & 1 handicap)
- Paved pathway (accessible)
- Picnic tables
- Portable handicap toilet
- Rock retaining wall
- Rock steps
- Swim dock
- Trash cans



The Mill

SPECIAL USE FACILITY

1808 Main Street (0.58 acres)

Description

The Mill on Lake Stevens (The Mill) is a multi-use building located at North Cove Park in Lake Stevens. It is a versatile rental space with two levels, and it is available for a variety of city, community, and private events.

Design Opportunities

- None noted.

Management Considerations

- None noted.

Amenities

- 3 indoor, rentable rooms
- Bike racks
- Public art
- Covered outdoor plaza



Timberlake Park

MINI PARK

1192 131st Ave. NE (0.57 acres)

Description

This mini park features an open grass area with a playground and climbing boulder.

Design Opportunities

- Limited ADA access to park or within park.
- Park could use a few more amenities, such as picnic table and bench.

Management Considerations

- None noted.

Amenities

- Boulder play area
- Open grass area
- Playground
- Shade trees
- Fenced-off stormwater detention basin



West Lake Park

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

8629 20th St. (12.36 acres)

Description

This neighborhood park recently underwent improvements to extend the Bayview Trail Connector that aligns with the overhead powerlines. New dog off-leash parks opened in early summer 2025.

Design Opportunities

- Park is beneath overhead power lines that restrict development opportunities.
- New Dog Park areas opened on June 25, 2025.

Management Considerations

- None noted.

Amenities

- Benches
- Bike racks
- ½ mile paved trail
- Handicap portable toilet
- 3-rail fence at parking lot
- Lighting in parking lot
- Parking lot (new) with 2 handicap spaces
- Picnic tables
- Trash cans

Dog Park

- Fencing
- Benches
- Woodchip paths
- Dog obstacles

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Recreation Trends

The following summaries from recognized park and recreation resources provide background on national, state and local park and recreation trends. Examining current recreation trends may inform potential park and recreation improvements and opportunities to enhance programs and services.

2025 NRPA Agency Performance Review

In the 2025 National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) Agency Performance Review and its accompanying Park Metrics share comprehensive park and recreation-related data collected and analyzed to inform park and recreation professionals and key stakeholders about the state of the industry. The 2025 NRPA Agency Performance Review presents data from more than 900 unique park and recreation agencies across the United States as reported from 2022 to 2024. These resources provide guidance to inform decisions and demonstrate the full breadth of service offerings and responsibilities of park and recreation agencies throughout the United States. This data can offer a perspective for Lake Stevens Parks and Recreation to compare their service provision to other agencies across the country. However, every park and recreation agency has its own unique characteristics, combination of responsibilities and community composition. This comparison of nationwide data with the City of Dayton can provide guiding insights rather than target benchmarks.

KEY FINDINGS & CHARACTERISTICS

Park facilities and operations vary greatly across the nation. Park facilities also have a range of service levels in terms of acres of parkland per population and residents per park. These metrics are categorized by the agency's population size.

Park Facilities

The typical park and recreation agency has:

- One park for every 2,411 residents
- 82% of agencies offer fee based programs
- 10.2 acres of park land for every 1,000 residents in its jurisdiction
- \$103.13 operating expenditures per capita
- 8.6 full-time equivalent employees per 10,000 residents
- 94% of agencies have playgrounds
- An average of 17 miles of trails across all agencies

Figure 11. Median Residents per Park Based On Population Size

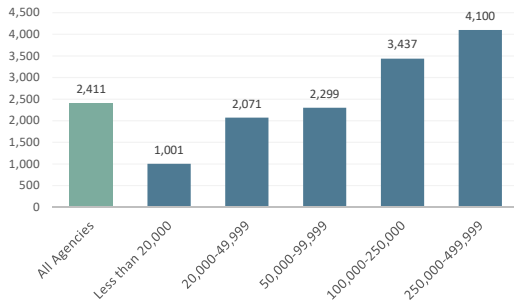
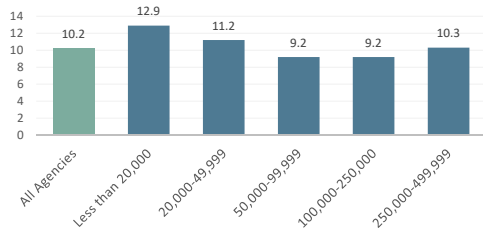


Figure 12. Acres of Parkland per 1,000 Residents based on Population Size



A large majority of park and recreation agencies provide playgrounds (94%) as their most common facility in their portfolio of outdoor assets. Eighty percent have diamond fields (baseball, softball), 85% have standalone basketball courts, and 77% have rectangular fields (soccer, field hockey, lacrosse). Other common facilities include tennis courts (74%) and dog parks (70%).

The breakdown of the most common types of outdoor facilities includes:

- One playground/play structure for every 3,737 residents
- One diamond field for every 4,749 residents
- One basketball court for every 8,500 residents
- One rectangular field for every 5,946 residents
- One tennis court for every 6,794 residents
- One dog park for every 47,247 residents

Most agencies (three in five) offer community and/or recreation centers. Recreation centers (63%) are provided more often than community centers (60%). senior centers (41%), performance amphitheaters (43%) and nature centers (35%) are also common.

Currently, 45 percent of agencies report providing pickleball courts in their inventory. National trends indicate pickleball as the fastest growing sport so it is expected that this percentage will rapidly change in the future.

The typical park and recreation agency that manages or maintains trails for walking, hiking, running and/or biking has 17 miles of trails. Agencies serving more than 250,000 residents have a median of 63 miles of trails under their care.

Park and recreation agencies often take on responsibilities beyond their core functions of operating parks and providing recreational programs. Other responsibilities may include tourist attractions, golf courses, outdoor amphitheaters, indoor swim facilities, farmer's markets, indoor sports complexes, campgrounds, performing arts centers, stadiums/arenas/racetracks, fairgrounds and/or marinas.

Programming

At least nine in ten agencies provide themed special events (91% of agencies), social recreation events (88%), team sports (86%), youth summer camps (83%), fitness enhancement classes (82%), and health and wellness education (82%).

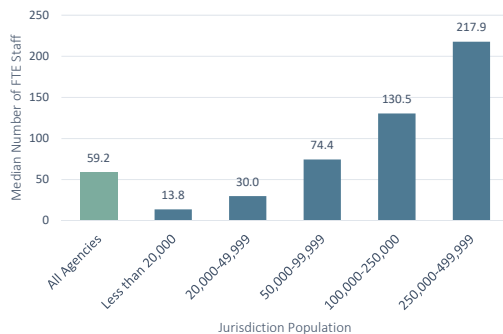
Staffing

Park and recreation employees are responsible for operations and maintenance, programming and administration. The typical park and recreation agency has:

- 59.2 full-time equivalent staff (FTEs) on payroll
- 8.6 FTEs on staff for every 10,000 residents in its jurisdiction

Median FTE counts also positively correlate with the number of acres maintained, the number of parks maintained, operating expenditures, and the population served. For example, agencies that serve populations between 20,000 and 49,999 residents employ an average of 30.5 FTE, while agencies that serve 50,000 to 99,000 people employ an average of 74.4 FTE.

Figure 13. Park and Recreation Agency Staffing: Full-Time Equivalents (By Jurisdiction Population)



Another way of comparing agency staffing across different park and recreation agencies examines number of staff per 10,000 residents. These comparative numbers hold fairly steady across population sizes with the median for all agencies at 8.6 FTEs.

Figure 14. Park and Recreation Agency FTEs Per 10,000 Residents



Capital and Operating Expenses

For capital expenses, the typical park agency:

- Dedicates about 65% to renovation projects and 35% to new development projects.
- Seventy percent of improvement dollars go to parks, while 30% are allocated to buildings.
- Plans to spend about \$12.6 million on capital expenditures over the next five years.

For operations, the typical park agency spends:

- \$7.2 million per year on total operating expenses
- \$8,577 on annual operating expenses per acre of park and non-park sites managed by the agency
- \$103.13 on annual operating expenses per capita
- \$118,150 in annual operating expenditures per employee
- 55% of the annual operating budget on personnel costs, 38% on operating expenses, and 6% on capital expenses not included in the agency's capital improvement plan (CIP)
- 38% of its operating budget on park management and maintenance, 35% on recreation, 19% on administration and 8% on other activities

Agency Funding

The typical park and recreation agency:

- Derives 63% of their operating expenditures from general fund tax support, 20% from earned revenues, 8% from dedicated taxes or levies, 4% from other dedicated taxes, 2% from grants, and the remaining 4% from sponsorships, private donations and other sources
- Generates \$28.63 in revenue annually for each resident in the jurisdiction

2025 State of the Industry Report

Recreation Management magazine's 2025 Report on the State of the Managed Recreation Industry summarizes the opinions and information provided by a wide range of professionals with the majority of respondents in leadership positions working in the recreation, sports, and fitness industry. While the respondents came from a wide range of sports-related entities, 42.5% were from park and recreation providers. The vast majority of respondents from parks—98.4%—were with public or governmental organizations. Park respondents manage the most facilities, with an average of 13.1, up from 9.4 in 2024, but in line with 2023.

PARTNERSHIPS

The 2024 report indicated that most (87.2%) recreation, sports, and fitness facility owners form partnerships with other organizations as a means of expanding their reach, offering additional programming opportunities or as a way to share resources and increase funding. Local schools are shown as the most common partner (60%) for all facility types. Youth-serving organizations (Ys, JCC, Boys & Girls Clubs) and park and recreation organizations were the most likely to report that they had partnered with outside organizations, at 98.5% and 94.1% respectively.

FACILITIES & IMPROVEMENTS

A majority of park respondents (81.2%) said they had plans for construction, up from 74.6% in 2023. More than half (61%) of park respondents were planning renovations to their facilities, and 44% of park respondents were planning additions. The top planned features in 2025 for all facility types include:

- Splash play areas (23.2% of respondents with plans to add features were planning to add splash play)
- Synthetic turf sports fields (19.1%)

- Playgrounds (17.4%)
- Park shelters (14.2%)
- Park restroom structures (13.5%)
- Outdoor sport courts (13.3%)
- Fitness trails and outdoor fitness equipment (12.5%)
- Dog parks (12%)
- Community center or multipurpose center (11.6%)
- Indoor sports courts (11.4%)

PROGRAMMING

Nearly all respondents (96.9%) offer programming of some kind. The top 10 most commonly offered programs include: holiday events and other special events (63.1% of respondents host holiday activities and special events); day camps and summer camps (56.8%); group exercise programs (55.9%); fitness programs (55.6%); educational programs (55.4%); youth sports teams (52.7%); mind-body balance programs such as yoga, tai chi, or Pilates (47.9%); arts and crafts (46.4%); programs for active older adults (44.4%); and swimming programs (42.3%).

There was no increase in the number of respondents offering any type of program covered by the survey. While some program types were offered by similar numbers of respondents to 2024, most saw decreases. Park respondents were the most likely to host arts and crafts programs, adult sports teams, festivals and concerts, sport training such as tennis or golf lessons, and trips.

The 10 most commonly planned program additions in 2025 were:

1. Fitness programs (planned by 24.6% of those who indicated they will expand their program options, up from 22.5% in 2024)
2. Adult sports teams (23.5%, up from 22.2%)
3. Teen programming (23.2%, up from 22.2%)
4. Group exercise programs (21.8%, up from 20.6%)
5. Mind-body balance programs (21.5%, down from 22.2%)
6. Functional fitness programs (20.1%, up from 18%)
7. Educational programs (19.8%, down from 24.1%)
8. Environmental education programs (19.3%, down from 26.4%)
9. Individual sports activities (19%, up from 15.8%)
10. Youth sports teams (17.6%, up from 14.1%)

GENERAL CHALLENGES

Over the past five years, staffing troubles has dominated the list of top industry challenges. Filling positions with qualified staff creates a challenge for recreation providers to meet the demanding needs of their members or visitors. In 2025, 60% of respondents identified equipment and facility maintenance as their top challenge, while staffing was the next most common concern with 53% calling it a top issue.

2025 Outdoor Participation Report

According to 2025 Outdoor Participation Trends Report, published by the Outdoor Foundation in Boulder, Colorado, the outdoor recreation participant base grew 3% in 2024 to a record 181.1 million Americans (58.6%) ages 6 and older. The number of outdoor participants has grown as new and more casual participants began hiking, biking, camping, running and fishing.

Since 2019, the participant base has grown by 22 million participants and the total number of outings has increased by about 900 million, but the average participant experiences five fewer outings per year. The relatively low growth in the number of outings compared to the growth in the number of participants demonstrates the transition to a more “casual” (less frequent participation) participant base overall. Significant growth cohorts include the following:

- Youth (aged 6–12): +5.6%
- Seniors (aged 65+): +7.4%
- High-Income Households (\$100K+): +10.7%
- High School Graduates (no college): +11.2%
- Black Participants: +12.8% (2.3 million more)
- Hispanic Participants: +11.8% (2.8 million more)

2025 Sports, Fitness & Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report

Prepared by a partnership of the Sports and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) and the Physical Activity Council (PAC), this nationwide study represents 18,000 individual interviews conducted in 2024 that summarize levels of activity and identifies key trends in sports, fitness, and recreation in the US. The 2025 report provides a high degree of statistical accuracy using strict quotas for gender, age, income, region, and ethnicity. The study looked at more than 124 different team and individual sports and outdoor activities. The overall aim of the survey is to establish levels of activity and identify key trends in sports, fitness, and recreation participation.

In 2024, activity levels among Americans reached a historic high, with 80% of Americans aged 6+ being classified as active.

Compared to 2023, participation has grown with both CORE and Casual activity. Activity in the U.S. continues to increase for the seventh consecutive year. This CORE participation (seriously committed athletes) made up 41.2% of participants with Casual participants hitting 58.8% of all participants in 2024. This widening gap points to an evolving trend in how Americans approach their engagement with activities.

Pickleball is still the fastest growing sport in America with 45.8% growth year-over-year and an extraordinary 331% over three years. Other activities also experienced notable growth with Yoga, snowboarding, and wrestling recording year-over-year increases of 9.9%, 9.3% and 8.6% respectively, reflecting a diverse set of interests among participants.

Figure 15. 2023 Total Actives (U.S. population, ages 6+)

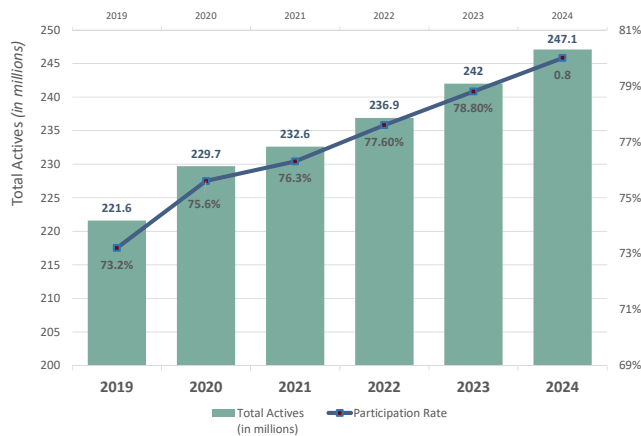
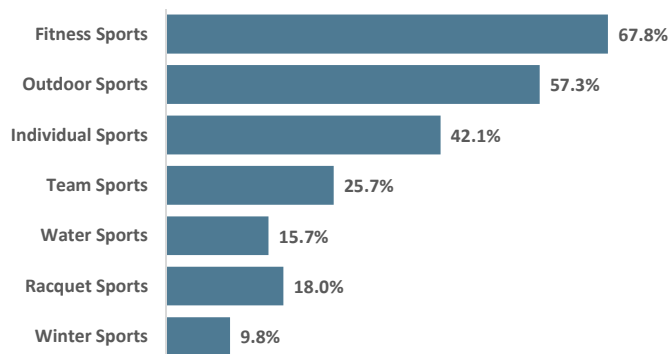


Figure 16. 2023 Total Participation Rate by Activity Category (U.S. population, ages 6+)



Health club-based activities (Treadmill, Stair-Climbing Machine, Stationary Cycling, and Rowing Machine) all had good participation increases from 2022. Class-based fitness activities (Barre, Pilates, Aquatic Exercise, Boot Camp Style Training, Dance, and Yoga) all had good gains in participation from 2022 to 2023. Trail Running and Hiking (Day) both continued to grow their sport's participation. Trail Running grew 12.3% from 2022 to 2023 while Hiking (Day) grew 3.1% from 2022. Golf (on-or-off course) continues its momentum, increasing participation by 3.9% from 2022. This was driven by an 18.8% increase in off course golf, though on course golf showed a modest increase of 9.6%

Washington State 2023 Recreation & Conservation Plan

The 2023 Recreation and Conservation Plan for Washington State outlines a strategic direction for state investments in the conservation of public lands and the development of outdoor recreation opportunities to help meet the needs of Washington State residents. For 2023, RCO's thirteenth SCORP builds upon concepts and updates priorities from the 2018-2022 Washington State Recreation and Conservation Plan. The plan provides a common, statewide vision for public investments in outdoor recreation and public land conservation. It is the key to unlocking critical federal and state funding and serves as a guide for allocating that funding across the state.

The plan identifies four core values that weave through four strategic priorities using a framework of the Outdoor Action Compass. The four core values act as the four cardinal directions: Equity, Resiliency, Connection, and Collaboration. These core values are RCO's top-tier standards and weave through each of the four priorities, acting as touch points for each goal. The core values, strategic priorities, and goals identified in the Outdoor Action Compass will guide the prioritization and distribution of RCO's funding programs for outdoor recreation and conservation.

Each priority has a series of goals that collectively set a course for addressing the most important outdoor recreation and conservation challenges and opportunities in Washington State. The four priorities are

- Priority 1 Provide meaningful access to outdoor recreation for all
- Priority 2 Protect natural and cultural resources while managing demand
- Priority 3 Demonstrate the essential nature of parks, natural areas and recreation infrastructure
- Priority 4 Support healthy, adaptable and connected communities

The 2023 Washington SCORP conducted assessments of outdoor recreation demand to determine rates of participation across ten activity categories. Twenty outdoor recreation activities showed double-digit increases in participation rates since 2017. Non-motorized trials, nature and wildlife viewing, camping,

paddling, winter recreation, and leisure activities in close-to-home parks are consistently cited as the opportunities Washington residents want more access to. Increasingly, residents are looking for close-to-home access to a variety of developed and primitive experiences that enable the integration of nature-based recreation into busy work and family schedules while avoiding crowds and traffic congestion.

The top four activities with the highest rates of participation were consistent across the state: Walking or Using a Mobility Device on Roads or Sidewalks, Walking or Day Hiking or Using a Mobility Device on Trails, Scenic Driving (Sightseeing), and Wildlife or Nature Viewing.

Participation trends since 2017 were measured in the 2022 Assessment of Resident Demand showing increases in participation in most activities:

- Wildlife or nature viewing increased by 28%
- Paddle sports increased by 28%
- Visiting outdoor cultural or historical facility increased by 27%
- Tent camping (undeveloped area) increased by 26%
- Backpacking increased by 25%
- Playing yard games (in a park) increased by 25%
- Snowshoeing increased by 23%
- Tent camping (developed area) increased by 19%
- Hanging out (in a park) increased by 19%
- Mountain biking increased by 18%

Survey participants were asked what types of outdoor recreation opportunities they would like more of. More non-motorized trail access (79 percent of respondents), camping (61 percent of respondents), and winter activities (42 percent of respondents) led the list of higher demanded infrastructure and activities.

Participants were also asked to indicate the most significant motivators that would increase the amount of time they spend recreating outdoors in Washington. The following were the top five identified factors:

- More opportunities near where I live (79.4%)
- Better facilities near where I live (64.2%)
- More parking (58.0%)
- Better neighborhood access (50.7%)
- More information about opportunities and requirements (48.6%)

As part of the assessments and analysis of outdoor recreation trends and needs, RCO surveyed park and recreation providers, public land managers, and non-governmental organizations that provide volunteers to land managers. The survey results aggregate the responses from land management agencies or organizations (federal, state, county, and city/town respondents), land trusts, and private or other (mostly volunteer) organizations.

MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES

Participants were asked about the most important issues for outdoor recreation and conservation in their service areas in the next 3-5 years:

- Maintaining existing recreation resources (97.6%)
- Coordination with other organizations that manage outdoor recreation (94.0%)
- Capacity of facilities to serve a growing population (91.6%)
- Adapting to changing user expectations (89.2%)
- Engaging partners for programming; (85.5%)
- Improving access for people with a disability (85.5%)

BIGGEST CHALLENGES

Participants were asked about the biggest challenges for their organizations to address the issues they identified. The following are the top five identified challenges:

- Competing demands for limited funds (89.2%)
- Not enough staff capacity (81.9%)
- Ability to raise local funds for projects (78.3%)
- Lack of political or management support (49.4%)
- Ability to create and coordinate partnerships (47.0%)

MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES

Participants were asked: Looking ahead at demand over the next five years, what types of outdoor recreation sites or activities will be a priority for your agency/organization to provide?

- Expanding community trail systems (79.5%)
- Connecting regional trail systems (79.5%)
- Renovating aging infrastructure (74.7%)
- Expanding the amount of public lands (67.5%)
- Developing nature-based parks (55.4%)

TRAIL-RELATED PRIORITIES

Participants were asked about their trail-related priorities for the next 5 years and the themes are as follows:

- Maintaining existing trails (91.6%)
- Planning and coordination with partners (86.7%)
- Providing connections between existing trails (83.1%)
- Re-routing or improving trails to modern, sustainable design (74.7%)
- Creating new opportunities for non-motorized trail users (e.g., hikers, equestrians, mountain bikers) (73.5%)

Americans Engagement with Parks Survey

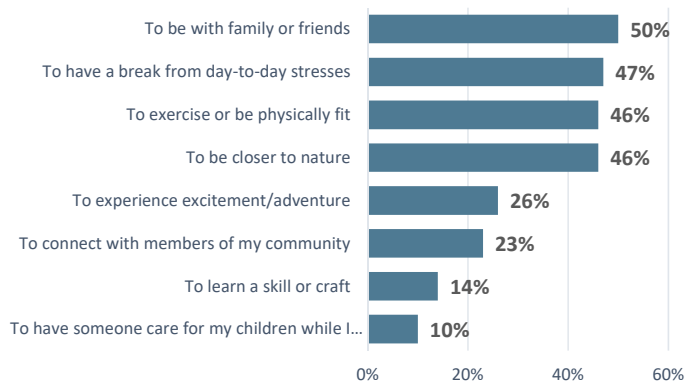
This annual study from the National Park and Recreation Association (NRPA) probes Americans' usage of parks, the key reasons that drive their use, and the greatest challenges preventing greater usage. Each year, the study examines the importance of public parks in Americans' lives, including how parks compare to other services and offerings of local governments. The survey of 1,000 American adults looks at frequency and drivers of parks/recreation facilities visits and the barriers to that prevent greater enjoyment. Survey respondents also indicate the importance of park and recreation plays in their decisions at the voting booth and their level of support for greater funding. Key findings include:

- Eighty-four percent of U.S. adults seek high-quality parks and recreation when choosing a place to live.
- Nearly 3 in 4 U.S. residents have at least one local park, playground, open space or recreation center within walking distance of their homes.
- Nine in ten people agree that parks and recreation is an important service provided by the local government.
- Nearly 3 in 4 adults agree that equity should be an extremely or very important goal for their local park and recreation agency.

People who live near parks and recreation facilities are more likely to be park and recreation users. Individuals living near at least one park are much more likely to arrive at that park by an "active" means (e.g., walking, biking, running), with walking being the most common method of transport. Conversely, 80 percent of U.S. adults who do not live within a walkable distance to parks or recreation opportunities travel

to those amenities by car. The typical adult in the United States visits their local parks or recreation facilities every other month. Four main reasons for visiting local parks and recreation facilities stand out: being with family and friends, exercising and being physically fit, taking a break from day-to-day stresses, and being closer to nature. Park and recreation agencies can customize their offerings to the specific needs, wants and desires of their community members by knowing their motivation for visiting parks.

Figure 17. NRPA Park Engagement: Key Reasons for Park Visits



According to the Americans Engagement with Parks report,

“Parks and recreation’s success results from its vast offerings of parks, trail networks and other recreation facilities that deliver critical programs for every segment of a community. Each person’s relationship with parks and recreation is unique. Some people flock to their local park to stay physically fit, meet with friends and family, or reconnect with nature. Others depend on their local park and recreation agency for indispensable services that improve their lives.

But there remains much work to do. One-hundred million people do not live within a walkable distance of at least one park or recreation facility. Further, many survey respondents indicate they have felt unwelcome at a park or recreation facility or say the infrastructure and programming are not inclusive. Parks and recreation is for everyone — regardless of age, income, race, ethnicity, ability, gender identity or sexual orientation. Professionals, advocates and political leaders have the opportunity to narrow any accessibility or inclusivity gaps through greater community engagement and addressing inequitable funding and infrastructure investments that have deprived millions of people of access to parks and recreation.”

Special Report on Paddlesports & Safety

In 2019, the Outdoor Foundation produced a report focused on paddlesports data based on a participation survey (over 20,000 online interviews with a nationwide sample of individuals and households). In 2018, 22.9 million Americans (approximately 7.4% of the population) participated in paddle sports. This represents an increase of more than 4 million participants since the study began in 2010. Over the last five years, there continues to be an increase in paddlesports popularity among outdoor enthusiasts, with significant portions of the nationwide growth occurring in the Pacific region.

Recreational kayaking continues to grow in popularity but may be driving some of the decline in canoeing. The popularity of stand-up paddling has soared, increasing by 1.5 million participants over the past five years, though it does not have nearly as high a participation rate as either recreational kayaking or canoeing.

One in eight paddlers have been participating in the sport for 21 years or more. However, many participants

– between 30%-60%, depending on the discipline – tried a paddlesport for the first time in 2018. Such high levels of first-time participation may produce longer term growth in paddling, assuming participants continue to enjoy the sport.

Among adult paddlers, most participate for excitement and adventure, for exercise, or to be close to nature. Kayakers, rafters, canoers and stand-up paddlers often enjoy, or would be willing to try, other paddlesports. Many also enjoy similar outdoor “crossover” activities such as hiking, camping, walking, and nature viewing.

Outdoor Recreation Economy

In November 2024, the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) released its annual report on the economic impact of the outdoor recreation industry at national and state levels. The gross economic value added output for the outdoor recreation economy was \$639.5 billion in 2023, accounting for 2.3% of the gross domestic product that year.

The GDP contribution from outdoor recreation economic activity increased by 3.6% in 2023, compared with a 2.9 percent increase for the overall U.S. economy. In Washington State, people finding employment in the outdoor recreation industry increased by 2.6% from 2022 to 2023. Outdoor recreation remains a significant sector of the U.S. economy. A wide range of activities—from hiking, boating, and hunting to golf and tennis—result in outdoor recreation jobs in a wide variety of industries.

Trends in Playgrounds

Across multiple communities, residents strongly value their parks and recreation facilities and park playgrounds are an important element in outdoor recreation. Reported in Landscape Architect magazine, the top five playground industry trends for 2021 were compiled from data and feedback from parks professionals, landscape architects and educators.

1. Inclusive Playgrounds, increasingly popular over the last few years, have been evolving beyond meeting basic ADA guidelines. Designers are seeking to expand accessible playground equipment, consider multi-generational play, and leverage inclusive play to help overcome societal barriers.
2. Rope-based Playgrounds, climbers and playground nets provide a technique for working around natural environments and unusual topography. Their flexibility in placement offers more options for connecting with the landscape rather than working around difficult topography.
3. Outdoor Fitness has increased importance during the COVID-19 pandemic as many gyms and indoor fitness centers closed and forced more people to seek outdoor options. Outdoor fitness spaces are being increasingly integrated into park and trail designs to encourage health and physical fitness for all ages.
4. Outdoor Learning has been implemented during the pandemic to replace or supplement indoor classrooms. Outdoor classrooms can encourage activity in children to counteract the reduction in recess time due to hybrid class schedules and remote learning. Seating, tables, shelters, hand sanitizer stations and other outdoor products are helping create outdoor classrooms.
5. Human-powered Play engages users to provide physical energy to “power-up” the activity, such as turning a handle, pressing foot pedals, rotating wheels. These products often relate to sensory experiences like lights and music, story-telling or social games.

Spurred on by the social distancing of the pandemic, these five trends in playground design and development point to more human-to-human interactions that reinforce the value of social connections, even in a physically distanced environment.

Inclusion & Universal Access

Across the country, local municipalities and park and recreation providers with older public infrastructure have been upgrading their facilities to comply with the outdoor recreation guidelines for universal access and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The removal of existing architectural barriers in park facilities has been ongoing and should continue until renovations, upgrades and newer construction provide barrier-free access to all users. Access and inclusion in public parks extends beyond the physical amenities and incorporates considerations of language, technology, wayfinding, program equity and equitable geographic distribution of facilities.

Park and recreation agencies are in a unique position to champion efforts that advance diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). By assuring representation of diverse life experiences and voices, park and recreation professionals will better reflect the communities their agencies serve. Inequity is the ultimate challenge facing the nation, and parks and recreation can make a profound difference.

Parks for Climate Resiliency

Numerous studies have been documenting the contributions of parks and public lands to better climate resiliency. Parks, open space and natural lands can cool urban heat islands, buffer flood impacts, improve water quality and improve air quality. Urban tree canopy in parks can remove air pollution and sequester carbon. Parks and greenways along storm-affected coastlines are being created to help buffer impacts of anticipated flooding due to sea level rise, storm surges, and increased precipitation. Climate resilience strategies involving parks can focus on resilient shoreline development, green stormwater infrastructure and increased tree groves.

As the climate changes, outdoor recreation opportunities and availability can become more inconsistent. Wildfires, flooding, reduced snowpack and other environmental impacts from climate changes can directly and indirectly affect visitor-use patterns. Recreation planners and managers play a role in climate resiliency by protecting vulnerable resources that can impact outdoor recreation opportunities.

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Land Acquisition Strategy

The purpose of establishing a Land Acquisition Program is to standardize and streamline the evaluation process by which City staff screen properties for City Council consideration and to provide consistency in the acquisition process. It is intended to be a living document that will be amended to incorporate the goals and objectives of other planning documents as they are implemented. The Land Acquisition Program seeks to implement the goals of the City and its park system to meet the needs of the community today and as it grows in the future.

Furthermore, an increase in land under City ownership will necessitate a proportionate increase in resources to plan, manage, and maintain these properties in the future. A subsequent outreach program should be developed to educate the community about the goals of the land acquisition program. Outreach may include information sessions, handouts, social media outreach and the opportunity for individual meetings to talk about land acquisition.

Planning Policies

Numerous planning documents adopted by the City Council address the City's approach to the growth of public assets. A brief summary of these plans as they relate to park and open space acquisition follows.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT ACT

The Washington State Growth Management Act intended to guide local planning. Per Chapter 36.70A of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW), local jurisdictions can manage growth and develop goals and policies to guide development. One of the 15 planning goals is to encourage retention of open space and development of recreational opportunities. The City Comprehensive Plan contains a mandatory planning element for parks and recreation. RCW 36.70A.160 requires jurisdictions to "identify open space corridors within and between urban growth areas. They shall include lands useful for recreation, wildlife habitat, trails and connection of critical areas as defined in RCW 36.70A030."

Cities and counties adopt growth management policies, land use regulations and impact fee programs (RCW 82.02) to ensure overall public health, safety and welfare. Planning for an appropriate system of parks, trails open space and recreation facilities helps provide a healthy and sustainable community. As communities grow in population, their needs for park and recreational facilities will also increase often requiring active acquisition programs.

2024-2044 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The City's Comprehensive Plan (Chapter 4, Environment and Natural Resources), envisions that the City of Lake Stevens will provide effective and ongoing investment to ensure water quality protection and environmental stewardship for current and future generations by protecting fish and wildlife species and

their habitat, critical areas and open space corridors; conserving land, air, water and energy resources; planning for the potential impacts of climate change on the natural environment; and integrating the shoreline management of Lake Stevens into land use decisions. The Plan recognizes Lake Stevens, encompassing approximately 1,040 acres, as the most prominent environmental features in the community. The Lake provides obvious social, recreational and aesthetic values and is an important regional habitat for several fish, mammal, reptile, amphibian, and bird species. Uses along its shoreline are subject to the Shoreline Management Act.

Chapter 5, the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Element of the Comprehensive Plan, proposes that the City of Lake Stevens will create diverse recreational opportunities for all ages to enjoy parks, trails and activities and local events throughout the community and with expanded access to Lake Stevens. This parks element establishes goals and policies to guide decision-making related to acquisition, development and improvement of facilities and lands. The parks element incorporates a six-year capital improvement program (CIP) that includes proposed acquisitions to meet existing and future needs of the community. The Needs Assessment within the parks element proposed pursuit of acquisition of

- a new neighborhood park in the southeastern part of the city;
- additional shoreline properties on Lake Stevens for public access; and
- rights-of-way/easements for multi-use trails throughout the city with an emphasis on lakefront locations, the powerline corridor and connections to the Centennial Trail and downtown.

The acquisition targets identified in the Needs Assessment were also included in the six-year CIP.

PARK IMPACT MITIGATION FEE PROGRAM

Described in the Municipal Code (Section 14.120), the park impact fee program was adopted to help implement the capital facilities element in the Lake Stevens comprehensive plan. Development fees are collected to provide revenues needed to pay for park, recreation, open space and trail facilities needed to accommodate growth. The Code cites several considerations in the calculation of the impact fee (Section 14.120.080).

Acceptable uses for expenditures of collected impact fees include:

- 14.120.130(b) Park impact fees shall be used for park planning, architectural and/or engineering design studies, land surveys, land acquisition, engineering, permitting, financing, administrative expenses, construction, site improvements, necessary off-site improvements, applicable application or impact fees, required mitigation costs, and capital equipment pertaining to recreation facilities, relocatable improvement costs previously incurred by the City to the extent that new growth and development will be served by the system improvements, and any other expenses which could be capitalized and are consistent with the capital facilities element.

SHORELINE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Lake Stevens' Shoreline Management Program (SMP) provides the guidelines for the City to comply with the Washington State Shoreline Management Act (SMA). The SMA gives preference to uses that preserve and enhance public access or increased recreational opportunities for the public along shorelines. The City's SMP provides a comprehensive guide for how shoreline areas will be used and developed over time. Overall, the SMP aims to preserve the public's opportunity to enjoy the physical and aesthetic qualities of Lake Stevens, Catherine Creek and Little Pilchuk Creek while protecting the functions of the shorelines to achieve no net loss of ecological functions as required for shorelines of the State.

Land Acquisition Criteria

The primary goal of the land acquisition evaluation process is to determine the suitability of potential properties for providing future public park land to fulfill needs in equitable park distribution and gaps in available outdoor recreational amenities. The criteria will guide site evaluation and help prioritize eligible properties. The evaluation criteria are not intended to preclude the acquisition of any other lands that the City determines to be in the public interest. Also, the criteria are not intended to control the outcome of acquisition efforts, rather they serve as an initial screening tool to meaningfully distinguish between properties. The attributes of a property in one or two criteria may be so compelling that those alone support an acquisition.

Criteria to provide screening of site/land/property attributes:

- Adequate legal public access or adjacency to existing public land.
- Existing utilities available at property perimeter
- Accessible location to fill known gaps in the distribution of city parks to improve equity
- Waterfront access suitable for developing public water-based recreation
- Suitable for future sports field development (of appropriate size and topography)
- Fulfills implementation goals of adopted plans
- Adjacent or nearby connection existing trails or accommodates proposed trail system expansion
- Contains environmentally sensitive habitats (high ecological value) that should be protected/preserved
- Grant funding or partnering organization available to participate in site acquisition

Park System Mapping

Geographical information systems (GIS) allow existing park facilities to be mapped with layers of information (transportation system, zoning, hydrology, environmentally sensitive areas, schools, and other relevant locational context). Each park is then defined with its associated service areas or “travelshed” appropriate to each park classification (See Chapter 5).

The City comprehensive plan contains the goal for an interconnected and supporting system of parks, trails and greenways throughout the community with increased access to the lakefront. The travelshed mapping in Chapter 5 illustrates the level of geographic coverage for the park system, along with clear identifications of where the gaps exist. Residential areas that are outside these mapped travelsheds are considered ‘underserved’ and could be targeted for potential future acquisition to ensure distribution equity for access to parks in the community.

Additional criteria can be incorporated into the search for feasible acquisition targets following the identification of service gaps in the system. Since parks are meant for the residents within the urban areas, overlays of zoning applied to the service area gaps can narrow the targets to residential areas and eliminate the commercial properties that have a prohibitively higher acquisition cost per acre. Additionally, GIS layers showing vacant and built/buildable land can be added to highlight any larger potential properties that could stand alone as a future park or be combined with adjacent vacant sites. Mapping should be further refined through the addition of critical environmental constraints to reveal those lands where future park development will not be feasible, but some other public value may be captured, such as clean water, habitat restoration, and riparian corridor conservation.

An important distinction should separate lands for potential active and developed parks from conservation sites where sensitive environmental characteristics are being protected but park development would be inappropriate. Conservation lands are purchased primarily for their conservation value, rather than for recreation and general public use and access. Adding conservation lands to the park inventory has value for protecting natural resources but should not be credited towards reaching a public park and recreation level of service goal or standard.

Applying aerial photography into the search for potential sites reveals specific land characteristics and neighborhood character. The pattern of urbanization and, thus, the imminent need for park land, is readily apparent when aerial photography is added to the mapping used to justify the acquisition targets. The process for park land acquisition proceeds well beyond the application of GIS to narrow the selection. Field verification, site suitability confirmation, inquiries with property owners, contacting and securing willing sellers, and eventually negotiation and final purchase can take many months, but the incorporation of GIS has clarified the process for planning staff, the interested public, as well as the policy makers who ultimately approve the park property purchase.

Specific Site Suitability

As noted earlier in the PROS Plan, the minimum size for a typical community park is at least 10 acres to accommodate a wide range of active and passive recreational amenities. Neighborhood parks are considered the “backbone” of the City’s park inventory, and mini-parks are the smallest recreation sites which provide limited recreation amenities accessible to nearby residential areas. While existing neighborhood parks range from 2.5 to 16 acres in size (averaging about 7.5 acres), some common location and land characteristics influence how accessible, “developable” and convenient a potential site might be for a future public park. Evaluating a potential parcel for a future city park should include consideration of the following property features.

- Access and visibility to the property: An adequate amount of public right-of-way is needed to allow for creating bike/pedestrian pathways, at a minimum, and either on-street parking or a parking lot for park visitors who must drive a vehicle.
- Existing publicly owned lands, easements and right-of-way: Are there existing lands under public ownership that could be converted to public park use? What other public amenities are proximate and complimentary to a future park development? (schools, police stations, etc.)
- Connectivity to trails, schools, parks, neighborhoods and connectivity of the trail links: Connections to and from related land uses can add value to a potential park location. The availability of other transportation modes (such as public transit) or utility corridors (with ROWs that could be shared) can foster additional connectivity.
- Environmental constraints, field assessment (does not include Environmental Assessment level detail), regulatory and permitting requirements and GIS data for critical areas, wetlands and streams: Sensitive environmental lands should be protected but often are not the best sites for development of recreational amenities for public parks. Protected and conserved lands can provide complimentary value to public parks while the public park land can create a buffer for the conserved land.
- Topography/hypsography: Existing landforms, whether flat or hilly, will influence the park’s design and best fit for provision of recreational facilities.
- Developability: Technical analysis of park standards and development costs should be evaluated to help provide realistic site development costs. For example, existing road improvements within the public right-of-way or lack of public water and sewer may trigger additional park development costs.

Within identified neighborhoods that may lack or have limited access to public parks, potential properties should be evaluated for suitable site conditions for the development of future recreational amenities and/or access to natural resources & water.

Neighborhood/Community Park Site Suitability Criteria:

- Access / visibility
- Parcel size / configuration
- Contiguous public land / connectivity
- Extent of sensitive areas
- Cost factors (acquisition, development & maintenance.)
- Compatibility with surrounding uses
- Vacant land preference

Trail Site Suitability Criteria:

- Development feasibility
- Continuity / connectivity (“safe routes”)
- Natural, cultural, historic value
- Public ROW access
- Land costs / value

Urban Open Space Site Suitability Criteria:

- Ecological, cultural, historic value
- Continuity / connectivity
- Public right of way access
- Development pressure (threat of conversion)
- Acquisition costs, donations, grants, third-party support (i.e., land trusts), etc.

Site Specific Concerns

Once a targeted park land acquisition has been identified and evaluated with consideration to its potential suitability as a future public park, more specific assessments should be conducted to ensure a measure of known development variables for future park use.

- A boundary survey and review of the title is important to identify an existing encroachments, encumbrances or entitlements that need to be addressed or corrected prior to closing. Where property encroachment appears to remain an ongoing issue, future fencing should be planned to ensure boundary integrity.
- Environmental constraints, such as wetlands, waterways, other sensitive habitats and any associated buffers, should be identified to determine their impact on developable park spaces.
- An environmental site assessment should be conducted to identify environmental conditions that could have resulted from a past release of hazardous substances and determine any potential mitigation requirements to protect public health. Additionally, environmental law typically leaves the burden of responsibility on the property owner, so conducting an environmental site assessment is important to protect the City’s liability.
- An archaeological assessment to review potential cultural resources may also help bring to light future park development costs and variables.
- Any underground tanks, wells, septic systems and existing structures should be evaluated for the need to remove, decommission, or demolish after closing of land sale.

Environmental Site Assessments

Considering a current use of a property is typically not sufficient for evaluating potential environmental concerns. For example, a vacant lot may previously have been used for agricultural purposes and may contain pesticide residues in the soil, or a current retail building formerly may have housed an auto repair business with underground tanks. Additionally, properties that are considered low-risk, such as a residence, could have a leaking underground heating oil tank or other concerns. Therefore, conducting an environmental site assessment is an important step in purchasing and managing property.

Prior to purchasing or accepting ownership of a property, the City should conduct an environmental site assessment to determine if contaminated soil, sediment or groundwater could be present. This process typically begins with a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) per ASTM E1527-13 to identify environmental conditions or other business risk issues that could impact site development, pose a liability to the City, or present a risk to human health or the environment. Depending on the results of the Phase I ESA, a subsequent Phase II ESA may be warranted to sample and test soil, sediment or groundwater for the presence of contamination.

For property currently owned by the City, conducting an ESA prior to redevelopment can help to identify issues that could affect building design or result in construction delays.

For property that will be leased by the City, conducting a baseline environmental assessment may be warranted to establish initial conditions prior to the City occupying the site.

Preserving Funding Eligibility

Public outdoor park and recreation areas and facilities are eligible for funding assistance through the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office Grant Program. Two funding sources support land acquisition projects for parks, Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (LWCF-ORLP). Land acquisition projects must be consistent with the outdoor recreation goals and objectives contained in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) or the recreation elements of local comprehensive plans and local master plans. The acquisition of land and waters for public outdoor recreation areas and facilities, including new areas or additions to existing parks, forests, wildlife areas, open spaces and other similar areas dedicated to outdoor recreation, are eligible for assistance through either LWCF or LWCF-ORLP. Both grant programs require 50% matching funds with grant limits based on the size of the grantee jurisdiction. Funding for developing and improving local parks and trails, and providing access to the waterfront can be pursued through the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program's (WWRP) Recreation Projects. Another WWRP program supports habitat conservation through acquisition of conservation lands. To be eligible for RCO grants, the acquisition procedures set forth by the RCO (Manual 3) should be closely followed, including the completion of a Waiver of Retroactivity.

Partnerships & Other Opportunities

Partnerships and coordination with other city and county departments, agencies, school districts, organizations and individuals may provide opportunities for donations, matching funds, or lower acquisition, development and/or maintenance costs. Capturing the value of multiple benefits for property use or harnessing the synergies from coordinated efforts can further the acquisition process and leverage available (often limited) funds to cover more territory. Potential partners could include:

- County conservation plan –potential targets with matching criteria
- County comprehensive plan –desired expansions or connections that create potential targets with matching criteria
- Regional trail – transportation synergy
- Future trail heads with new parks
- Health providers/housing authorities/child care businesses/schools

Acquisition Tools & Methods

DIRECT PURCHASE METHODS

Market Value Purchase

The City purchases land at the present market value based on an independent appraisal through a written purchase and sale agreement. Timing, payment of real estate taxes and other contingencies are negotiable.

Partial Value Purchase (or Bargain Sale)

In a bargain sale, the landowner agrees to sell for less than the property's fair market value. A landowner's decision to proceed with a bargain sale is unique and personal; landowners with a strong sense of civic pride, long community history or concerns about capital gains are possible candidates for this approach. In addition to cash proceeds upon closing, the landowner may be entitled to a charitable income tax deduction based on the difference between the land's fair market value and its sale price.

Life Estates & Bequests

If a landowner wishes to remain on the property for an extended period of time or until death, several variations on a sale agreement exist. In a life estate agreement, the landowner may continue to live on the land by donating a remainder interest and retaining a "reserved life estate." Specifically, the landowner donates or sells the property to the city but reserves the right for the seller or any other named person to continue to live on and use the property. When the owner or other specified person dies or releases their life interest, full title and control over the property will be transferred to the city. The landowner may be eligible for a tax deduction when the gift is made by donating a remainder interest. In a bequest, the landowner designates in a will or trust document that the property will be transferred to the city upon death. While a life estate offers the city some degree of title control during the landowner's life, a bequest does not. Unless the intent to bequest is disclosed to and known by the City in advance, no guarantees exist concerning the property's condition upon transfer or to any liabilities that may exist.

Gift Deed

When a landowner wishes to bequeath their property to a public or private entity upon their death, they can record a gift deed with the county assessor's office to ensure their stated desire to transfer their property to the targeted beneficiary as part of their estate. The recording of the gift deed usually involves the tacit agreement of the receiving party.

Option to Purchase Agreement

This type of agreement is a binding contract between a landowner and the city that would only apply according to the conditions of the option and limits the seller's power to revoke an offer. Once in place and signed, the Option Agreement may be triggered at a future, specified date or upon completing designated conditions. Option agreements can be made for any time duration and can include all of the language pertinent to closing a property sale.

Right of First Refusal

In this agreement, the landowner grants the city the first chance to purchase the property once the landowner wishes to sell. The agreement does not establish the sale price for the property, and the landowner is free to refuse to sell it for the price offered by the city. This is the weakest form of agreement between an owner and a prospective buyer.

Conservation and/or Access Easements

Through a conservation easement, a landowner voluntarily agrees to sell or donate certain rights associated with their property (often the right to subdivide or develop), and a private organization or public agency agrees to hold the right to enforce the landowner's promise not to exercise those rights. In essence, the rights are forfeited and no longer exist. This type of easement is a legal agreement between the landowner and the city that permanently limits land uses to conserve a portion of the property for public use or protection. The landowner still owns the property, but the use of the land is restricted. Conservation easements may result in an income tax deduction and reduced property taxes and estate taxes. Typically, this approach provides trail corridors where only a small portion of the land is needed or for the strategic protection of natural resources and habitat. The city purchases land at the present market value based on an independent appraisal through a written purchase and sale agreement. Timing, payment of real estate taxes, and other contingencies are negotiable.

Park or Open Space Dedication Requirements

Local governments have the option to require developers to dedicate land for parks under the State Subdivision Law (Ch. 58.17 RCW) and the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) (Ch. 43.21C RCW). Under the subdivision law, developers can be required to provide the parks/recreation improvements or pay a fee in lieu of the dedicated land and its improvements. Under the SEPA requirements, land dedication may occur as part of mitigation for a proposed development's impact.

LANDOWNER INCENTIVE MEASURES

Density Bonuses

Density bonuses are a planning tool used to encourage a variety of public land use objectives, usually in urban areas. They offer the incentive of being able to develop at densities beyond current regulations in one area, in return for concessions in another. Density bonuses are applied to a single parcel or development. An example is allowing developers of multi-family units to build at higher densities if they provide a certain number of low-income units or public open space. For density bonuses to work, market forces must support densities at a higher level than current regulations.

Transfer of Development Rights

The transfer of development rights (TDR) is an incentive-based planning tool that allows landowners to trade the right to develop a property to its fullest extent in one area for the right to develop beyond existing regulations in another area. Local governments may establish the specific areas in which development may be limited or restricted and where development beyond regulation may be allowed. Usually, but not always, the "sending" and "receiving" property are under common ownership. Some programs allow for different ownership, which, in effect, establishes a market for development rights to be bought and sold.

IRC 1031 Exchange

If the landowner owns a business or investment property, an IRC Section 1031 Exchange can facilitate the exchange of like-kind property solely for business or investment purposes. No capital gain or loss is recognized under Internal Revenue Code Section 1031 (see www.irs.gov for more details). This option may be a useful tool in negotiations with an owner of an investment property, especially if the tax savings offset to the owner can translate to a sale price discount for the City.

Current Use (Open Space) Taxation Programs

Property owners whose current lands are in open space, agricultural, or timber uses may have that land valued at their current use rather than their "highest and best" use assessment. This differential assessed value, allowed under the Washington Open Space Taxation Act (Ch.84.34 RCW), helps to preserve private properties as open space, farm, or timberlands. If the land is converted to other non-open space uses,

the landowner is required to pay the difference between the current use annual taxes and the highest/ best taxes for the previous seven years. When properties are sold to a local government or conservation organization for land conservation/preservation purposes, the required payment of seven years' worth of differential tax rates is waived. The amount of this tax liability can be part of the negotiated land acquisition from private to public or quasi-public conservation purposes. Snohomish County has a current use taxation program that offer this property tax reduction to incentivize landowners to voluntarily preserve open space, farmland, or timberland on their property.

OTHER LAND PROTECTION MEASURES

Land Trusts & Conservancies

Land trusts are private non-profit organizations that acquire and protect unique open spaces and are traditionally not associated with any government agency. Forterra (formerly called the Cascade Land Conservancy) is the regional land trust serving the Lake Stevens area. Its efforts have led to the conservation of more than 234,000 acres of forests, farms, shorelines, parks, and natural areas in the region (www.forterra.org). Other national organizations with local representation include the Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Land, and the Wetlands Conservancy.

Regulatory Measures

A variety of regulatory measures are available to local agencies and jurisdictions. Available programs and regulations include State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA); Shorelines Management Program; and Hydraulic Code, and Washington State Department of Fisheries and Department of Wildlife.

Public/Private Utility Corridors

Utility corridors can be managed to maximize the protection or enhancement of open space lands. Utilities maintain corridors to provide services such as electricity, gas, oil, and rail travel. Some utility companies have cooperated with local governments to develop public programs such as parks and trails within utility corridors.

IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

Local Funding Options

The City of Lake Stevens possesses a range of local funding tools that could be accessed for the benefit of growing, developing and maintaining its parks and recreation system. The sources listed below represent likely potential sources, but some also may be dedicated for numerous other local purposes which limit applicability and usage. Therefore, discussions with City leadership are critical to assess the political landscape to modify or expand the use of existing City revenue sources in favor of park and recreation projects and programs.

COUNCILMANIC BONDS

Councilmanic bonds may be sold by cities without public vote. The bonds, both principal and interest, are retired with payments from existing city revenue or new general tax revenue, such as additional sales tax or real estate excise tax. The state constitution has set a maximum debt limit for councilmanic bonds of 1½% of the value of taxable property in the city.

GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND

For the purposes of funding capital projects, such as land acquisitions or facility construction, cities and counties have the authority to borrow money by selling bonds. Voter-approved general obligation bonds may be sold only after receiving a 60% majority vote at a general or special election. If approved, an excess property tax is levied each year for the life of the bond to pay both principal and interest. The state constitution (Article VIII, Section 6) limits total debt to 5% of the total assessed value of property in the jurisdiction.

EXCESS LEVY – ONE YEAR ONLY

Cities and counties that are levying their statutory maximum rate can ask the voters, at any special election date, to raise their rate for one year (RCW 84.52.052). As this action increases revenue for one-year at a time it is wise to request this type of funding for one-time uses only.

REGULAR PROPERTY TAX - LID LIFT

Cities are authorized to impose ad valorem taxes upon real and personal property. A city's maximum levy rate for general purposes is \$3.375 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. Limitations on annual increases in tax collections, coupled with changes in property value, causes levy rates to rise or fall; however, in no case may they rise above statutory limits. Once the rate is established each year, it may not be raised without the approval of a majority of the voters. Receiving voter approval is known as a lid lift. A lid lift may be permanent, or may be for a specific purpose and time period.

A levy lid lift is an instrument for increasing property tax levies for operating and/or capital purposes. Taxing districts with a tax rate that is less than their statutory maximum rate may ask the voters to "lift" the levy

lid by increasing the tax rate to some amount equal to or less than their statutory maximum rate. A simple majority vote of citizenry is required.

Cities and counties have two “lift” options available to them: Single-year/basic or Multi-year.

Single-year: The single-year lift does not mean that the lift goes away after one year; it can be for any amount of time, including permanently, unless the proceeds will be used for debt service on bonds, in which case the maximum time period is nine years. Districts may permanently increase the levy but must use language in the ballot title expressly stating that future levies will increase as allowed by chapter 84.55 RCW. After the initial “lift” in the first year, the district’s levy in future years is subject to the 101% lid in chapter 84.55 RCW. This is the maximum amount it can increase without returning to the voters for another lid lift.

The election to implement a single-year lift may take place on any election date listed in RCW 29A.04.321.

Multi-year: The multi-year lift allows the levy lid to be “bumped up” each year for up to a maximum of six years. At the end of the specified period, the levy in the final period may be designated as the basis for the calculation of all future levy increases (in other words, be made permanent) if expressly stated in the ballot title. The levy in future years would then be subject to the 101% lid in chapter 84.55 RCW.

In a multi-year lift, the lift for the first year must state the new tax rate for that year. For the ensuing years, the lift may be a dollar amount, a percentage increase tied to an index, or a percentage amount set by some other method. The amounts do not need to be the same for each year. If the amount of the increase for a particular year would require a tax rate that is above the maximum tax rate, the assessor will levy only the maximum amount allowed by law.

The election to implement a multi-year lift must be either the August primary or the November general election.

The single-year lift allows supplanting of expenditures within the lift period; the multi-year lift does not, and the purpose for the lift must be specifically identified in the election materials. For both single- and multi-year lifts, when the lift expires the base for future levies will revert to what the dollar amount would have been if no lift had ever been done.

The total regular levy rate of senior taxing districts (counties and cities) and junior taxing districts (fire districts, library districts, etc.) may not exceed \$5.90/\$1,000 AV. If this limit is exceeded, levies are reduced or eliminated in the following order until the total tax rate is at \$5.90.

1. Parks & Recreation Districts (up to \$0.60)
Parks & Recreation Service Areas (up to \$0.60)
Cultural Arts, Stadiums & Convention Districts (up to \$0.25)
2. Flood Control Zone Districts (up to \$0.50)
3. Hospital Districts (up to \$0.25)
Metropolitan Parks Districts (up to \$0.25)
All other districts not otherwise mentioned
4. Metropolitan Park Districts formed after January 1, 2002 or after (up to \$0.50)
5. Fire Districts (up to \$0.25)
6. Fire Districts (remaining \$0.50)
Regional Fire Protection Service Authorities (up to \$0.50)
Library Districts (up to \$0.50)
Hospital Districts (up to \$0.50)
Metropolitan Parks Districts formed before January 1, 2002 (up to \$0.50)

SALES TAX

Paid by the consumer, sales tax is a percentage of the retail price paid for specific classifications of goods and services within the State of Washington.

Governing bodies of cities and counties may impose sales taxes within their boundaries at a rate set by state statute and local ordinances, subject to referendum.

Until the 1990 Legislative Session, the maximum possible total sales tax rate paid by purchasers in cities was 8.1%. This broke down as follows: state, 6.5 cents on the dollar; counties, 0.15 cents; cities, 0.85 cents; and transit districts, a maximum of 0.6 cents (raised to 0.9 cents in 2000). Since then multiple sales tax options were authorized.

Counties and cities may also form public facilities districts, and these districts may ask the voters to approve a sales tax of up to 0.2%. The proceeds may be used for financing, designing, acquisition, construction, equipping, operating, maintaining, remodeling, repairing, and reequipping its public facilities.

Revenue may be used to fund any essential county and municipal service.

If a jurisdiction is going to change a sales tax rate or levy a new sales tax, it must pass an ordinance to that effect and submit it to the Department of Revenue at least 75 days before the effective date. The effective date must be the first day of a quarter: January 1, April 1, July 1 or October 1.

IMPACT FEES

Development impact fees are charges placed on new development in unimproved areas to help pay for various public facilities that serve new development or for other impacts associated with such development. Both cities and counties may impose this tax through legislative action.

Counties that plan under the GMA, and cities, may impose impact fees on residential and commercial development activity to help pay for certain public facility improvements, including parks, open space, and recreation facilities identified in the county's capital facilities plan. The improvements financed from impact fees must be reasonably related to the new development and must reasonably benefit the new development. The fees must be spent or encumbered within ten years of collection. Lake Stevens currently assesses a parks impact fee.

REAL ESTATE EXCISE TAX

Excise tax levied on all sales of real estate, measured by the full selling price, including the amount of any liens, mortgages, and other debts given to secure the purchase. Both cities and counties may impose this tax through legislative action.

Counties and cities may levy a quarter percent tax (REET 1); a second quarter percent tax (REET 2) is authorized. First quarter percent REET (REET 1) must be spent on capital projects listed in the city's capital facilities plan element of their comprehensive plan. Capital projects include planning, acquisition, construction, reconstruction, repair, replacement, rehabilitation, or improvement of parks, recreational facilities, and trails.

The second quarter percent REET (REET 2) must also be spent on capital projects, which includes planning, construction, reconstruction, repair, rehabilitation, or improvement of parts. Acquisition of land for parks is not a permitted use of REET 2. Both REET 1 and REET 2 may be used to make loan and debt service payments on projects that are a permitted use of these funds. The City of Lake Stevens currently assesses both REETs and uses this funding for various capital project needs.

BUSINESS AND OCCUPATION TAX

Business and occupation (B&O) taxes are excise taxes levied on different classes of business to raise revenue. Taxes are levied as a percentage of the gross receipts of a business, less some deductions. Businesses are put in different classes such as manufacturing, wholesaling, retailing, and services. Within each class, the rate must be the same, but it may differ among classes.

Cities can impose this tax for the first time or raise rates following referendum procedure.

B&O taxes are limited to a maximum tax rate that can be imposed by a city's legislative body at 0.2% (0.002), but grandfathered in any higher rates that existed on January 1, 1982. Any city may levy a rate higher than 0.2%, if it is approved by a majority of voters (RCW 35.21.711). Beginning January 1, 2008, cities that levy the B&O tax must allow for allocation and apportionment, as set out in RCW 35.102.130.

ADMISSIONS TAX

An admissions tax is a use tax for entertainment. Both cities and counties may impose this tax through legislative action. Cities and/or counties may levy an admission tax in an amount no greater than five percent of the admission charge, as is authorized by statute (cities: RCW 35.21.280; counties: RCW 35.57.100). This tax can be levied on admission charges (including season tickets) to places such as theaters, dance halls, circuses, clubs that have cover charges, observation towers, stadiums, and any other activity where an admission charge is made to enter the facility. If a city imposes an admissions tax, the county may not levy a tax within city boundaries.

The statutes provide an exception for admission to elementary or secondary school activities. Generally, certain events sponsored by nonprofits are exempted from the tax; however, this is not a requirement. Counties also exempt any public facility of a public facility district for which admission is imposed. There are no statutory restrictions on the use of revenue.

LODGING TAX

The lodging tax is a user fee for hotel/motel occupation. Both cities and counties may impose this tax through legislative action. Cities and/or counties may impose a "basic" two percent tax under RCW 67.28.180 on all charges for furnishing lodging at hotels, motels and similar establishments for a continuous period of less than one month.

This tax is taken as a credit against the 6.5 percent state sales tax, so that the total tax that a patron pays in retail sales tax and hotel-motel tax combined is equal to the retail sales tax in the jurisdiction. In addition, jurisdictions may levy an additional tax of up to two percent, or a total rate of four percent, under RCW 67.28.181(1). This is not credited against the state sales tax. Therefore, if this tax is levied, the total tax on the lodging bill will increase by two percent.

If both a city and the county are levying this tax, the county must allow a credit for any tax levied by a city so that no two taxes are levied on the same taxable event. These revenues must be used solely for paying for tourism promotion and for the acquisition and/or operating of tourism-related facilities. "Tourism" is defined as economic activity resulting from tourists, which may include sales of overnight lodging, meals, tours, gifts, or souvenirs; there is no requirement that a tourist must stay overnight.

CONSERVATION FUTURES TAX (SNOHOMISH COUNTY)

The Snohomish County Conservation Futures Program (the "SCCFP") was started in 1988 as a mechanism for distributing Conservation Futures Property Tax Funds for the preservation of open space land, farm and agricultural land, and timberland as authorized by RCW 84.34.230. Snohomish County imposes a Conservation Futures levy at a rate of \$0.0625 per \$1,000 assessed value to acquire open space lands, including green spaces, greenbelts, wildlife habitat, and trail rights-of-way proposed for preservation for public use by either the county or the cities within the county. Funds are allocated

annually, and cities within the county, citizen groups, and citizens may apply for funds through the county's process. The SCCFP program provides grants to cities to support open space priorities in local plans and encourages matching funds from other sources.

Federal & State Grants & Conservation Programs

RIVERS, TRAILS AND CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, also known as the Rivers & Trails Program or RTCA, is a technical assistance resource for communities. The program is administered by the National Park Service and federal government agencies to conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. The RTCA program implements the natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation mission of NPS in communities across America.

RECREATION AND CONSERVATION OFFICE GRANT PROGRAMS

The Recreation and Conservation Office was created in 1964 as part of the Marine Recreation Land Act. The RCO grants money to state and local agencies, generally on a matching basis, to acquire, develop, and enhance wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation properties. Some money is also distributed for planning grants. RCO grant programs utilize funds from various sources. Historically, these have included the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, state bonds, Initiative 215 monies (derived from un-reclaimed marine fuel taxes), off-road vehicle funds, Youth Athletic Facilities Account, and the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program.

Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA)

This program, managed through the RCO, provides matching grants to state and local agencies to protect and enhance salmon habitat and to provide public access and recreation opportunities on aquatic lands. In 1998, DNR refocused the ALEA program to emphasize salmon habitat preservation and enhancement. However, the program is still open to traditional water access proposals. Any project must be located on navigable portions of waterways. ALEA funds are derived from the leasing of state-owned aquatic lands and from the sale of harvest rights for shellfish and other aquatic resources.

Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP)

Funding sources managed by the RCO include the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program. The WWRP is divided into Habitat Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Accounts; these are further divided into several project categories. Cities, counties, and other local sponsors may apply for funding in urban wildlife habitat, local parks, trails, and water access categories. Funds for local agencies are awarded on a matching basis. Grant applications are evaluated once each year, and the State Legislature must authorize funding for the WWRP project lists.

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) provides grants to buy land and develop public outdoor facilities, including parks, trails, and wildlife lands. Grant recipients must provide at least 50% matching funds in either cash or in-kind contributions. Grant program revenue is from a portion of Federal revenue derived from selling or leasing off-shore oil and gas resources.

National Recreational Trails Program

The National Recreational Trails Program (N RTP) provides funds to maintain trails and facilities that provide a backcountry experience for a range of activities, including hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, motorcycling, and snowmobiling. Eligible projects include the maintenance and re-routing of

recreational trails, development of trail-side and trail-head facilities, and operation of environmental education and trail safety programs. A local match of 20% is required. This program is funded through Federal gasoline taxes attributed to recreational non-highway uses.

Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF) Program

The YAF provides grants to develop, equip, maintain, and improve youth and community athletic facilities. Cities, counties, and qualified non-profit organizations may apply for funding, and grant recipients must provide at least 50% matching funds in either cash or in-kind contributions.

Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration Fund

Grants are awarded by the Salmon Recovery Funding Board for acquisition or restoration of lands directly correlating to salmon habitat protection or recovery. Projects must demonstrate a direct benefit to fish habitat. There is no match requirement for design-only projects; acquisition and restoration projects require a 15% match. The funding source includes the sale of state general obligation bonds, the federal Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund, and the state Puget Sound Acquisition and Restoration Fund.

Boating Facilities Program (BFP)

The program pays for projects that acquire, develop, and renovate facilities for motorized boats and other watercraft, including launching ramps, guest moorage, and support facilities. Typical projects include renovating boat launches, adding guest moorage facilities and building parking, restrooms, and other boating amenities. Local agencies and special purpose districts must provide 25% match for each project, and at least 10% of the total project cost must be from a non-state, non-federal contribution.

PUGET SOUND REGIONAL COUNCIL

Surface Transportation Program Funding

The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) helps communities secure federal funding for transportation projects. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (also referred to as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act or IIJA) is the current federal transportation bill. It continues or expands the core funding programs authorized under the FAST Act, while also establishing several new programs for transportation, broadband, drinking water, energy and the environment. Funding is authorized through 2026.

Every two years, the PSRC conducts a competitive grant program to award FHWA Surface Transportation Program (STP) and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funds. For the Countywide STP/CMAQ competitions, the policy focuses on providing transportation improvements to a center or centers and the corridors that serve them. Centers are defined as regional growth and regional manufacturing/industrial centers, centers designated through countywide processes, town centers, and other local centers.

Other Methods & Funding Sources

METROPOLITAN PARK DISTRICT

Metropolitan park districts may be formed to manage, control, improve, maintain, and acquire parks, parkways, and boulevards. In addition to acquiring and managing their own lands, metropolitan districts may accept and manage park and recreation lands and equipment turned over by any city within the district or by the county. Formation of a metropolitan park district may be initiated in cities of five thousand population or more by city council ordinance, or by petition, and requires majority approval by voters for creation.

PARK AND RECREATION DISTRICT

Park and recreation districts may be formed to provide leisure-time activities and recreation facilities (parks, playgrounds, pools, golf courses, paths, community centers, arboretums, campgrounds, boat launches, etc.). They must be initiated by petition of at least 15% of the registered voters within the proposed district. Upon completing the petition process and review by county commissioners, a proposition for district formation and election of five district commissioners is submitted to the voters of the proposed district at the next general election. Once formed, park and recreation districts retain the authority to propose a regular property tax levy, annual excess property tax levies, and general obligation bonds. All three of these funding types require 60% voter approval and 40% voter turnout. With voter approval, the district may levy a regular property tax not to exceed sixty cents per thousand dollars of assessed value for up to six consecutive years.

PARK AND RECREATION SERVICE AREA (PRSA)

A quasi-municipal corporation with independent taxing authority whose purpose is to finance, acquire, construct, improve, maintain or operate any park, senior citizen activities center, zoo, aquarium, or recreation facilities; and provide a higher level of park service.

BUSINESS SPONSORSHIPS/DONATIONS

Business sponsorships for programs may be available throughout the year. In-kind contributions are often received, including food, door prizes, and equipment/material.

INTERAGENCY AGREEMENTS

State law provides for interagency cooperative efforts between units of government. Joint acquisition, development, and use of park and open space facilities may be provided between Community Development, Public Works, and utility providers.

PRIVATE GRANTS, DONATIONS & GIFTS

Many trusts and private foundations provide funding for park, recreation, and open space projects. Grants from these sources are typically allocated through a competitive application process and vary dramatically in size based on the organization's financial resources and funding criteria. Philanthropic giving is another source of project funding. Efforts in this area may involve cash gifts and include donations through other mechanisms such as wills or insurance policies. Community fundraising efforts can also support park, recreation, or open space facilities and projects. The Community Foundation of Snohomish County also offers small grants to qualified non-profit organizations (501(c)(3)) or public agencies such as local government, schools, libraries or parks.



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CITY COUNCIL STAFF REPORT



Agenda Date: 4/7/2026

Subject: Review of Council Procedures (Role of the Mayor Pro Tem) and Upcoming Mayor Vacancy Process

Contact Person/Department: Gene Brazel, Administration

Budget Impact: n/a

Legal Review: No

RECOMMENDATION(S)/ACTION REQUESTED:

Discussion.

SUMMARY/BACKGROUND:

Staff has provided the relevant sections below of the Lake Stevens Municipal Code defining the role of the Mayor Pro Tempore (aka Mayor Pro Tem). The Mayor Pro Tem will assume the duties of Mayor on Monday, April 13, 2026, and will serve in that capacity until the City Council appoints a new Mayor to complete the remainder of the term, ending in mid-November, 2027 (when the General election is certified).

Current Lake Stevens Municipal Code Language

2.08.040 Council President - Mayor Pro Tempore

- (a) At the first regular meeting in January of each year, the members of the City Council shall elect, from their number, a Council President who shall hold office at the pleasure of the Council.
- (b) In the absence of the Mayor, the Council President shall become **Mayor pro tempore** and perform the duties of the Mayor except that he/she shall not have the power to appoint or remove any officer or to veto any ordinance. If a vacancy occurs in the office of the Mayor, the City Council, at their next regular meeting, shall elect from their number a Mayor, who shall serve until a Mayor is elected and certified at the next municipal election.
- (c) The Council President shall also preside over all workshop meetings and shall have the following responsibilities:

- (1) Keep track of agenda items and work programs of the Council in conjunction with the Mayor and City Administrator.
- (2) Plan work programs to implement priority projects of the Council during each calendar year, with the City Administrator.
- (3) Assist the Mayor in assignment of functions or coordination of Council work programs.
- (4) On behalf of the Council, encourage the use of and coordination of citizen committee groups for specific projects.
- (5) Coordinate and call for workshops in accordance with the directions of the City Council, Mayor or City Administrator, or at such other times as said person shall determine, in the event the Mayor or City Administrator is absent or temporarily disabled.
- (d) The Council President - Mayor pro tempore is appointed as an aid to the City Council and aid to the Mayor and is appointed primarily to serve in the Mayor's absence and shall not serve for more than one consecutive full year.

Vacancy Process Review

The Council's established procedure for filling vacancies has been successfully used in the past and may be applied to the mayoral vacancy (see procedures below). This process will be discussed further at the April 14, 2026 Council meeting as well as the following questions:

1. **Department Head Input:** Would the Council like to gather feedback from Department Heads on the leadership qualities they believe are important in a new Mayor? This could be collected through a staff survey and provided to the Council for consideration.
2. **Position Classification:** Should the Mayor position remain full-time or revert back to a part-time status? Consistent with standard practice, the classification should be reviewed as part of the vacancy process.
3. **Process Review:** Should the current vacancy procedure be used as-is, or should revisions be considered? While the existing process is legally sound, fair, and transparent, a review may help ensure completeness and effectiveness in appointing a new mayor.

Current language from the Council Procedures

SECTION 21. FILLING CITY COUNCIL VACANCIES

21.1 PURPOSE

To provide guidance to the City Council when a Lake Stevens Councilmember position becomes vacant before the expiration of the official's elected term of office. Pursuant to state law, a vacancy shall be filled only until the next regular municipal election, wherein the person elected will serve the remainder of the unexpired term.

21.2 REFERENCES

RCW 42.30.110(h) - Executive Session Allowed to Consider Qualifications of a Candidate for Appointment to Elective Office
RCW 42.30.060 - Prohibition on Secret Ballots
RCW 42.12 - Vacant Position
RCW 35A.12.050 - Vacancies - Filling of Vacancies in Council/Mayor Form of Government

21.3 APPOINTMENT PROCESS

1. A Council position shall be officially declared vacant upon the occurrence of any of the causes of vacancy set forth in RCW 42.12.010, including resignation, recall, forfeiture, written intent to resign, or death of a Councilmember. The Councilmember who is vacating his or her position cannot participate in the appointment process.

2. The City Council shall authorize staff to begin the Councilmember appointment process and establish a notice, application, interview and appointment schedule, so that the position is filled at the earliest opportunity.

3. The City Clerk's Office shall prepare and submit to the City's Official Newspaper, with courtesy copies to all other local media outlets, a Notice of City Council Vacancy, which announces the vacancy consistent with the requirements necessary to hold public office. The City's web page and other social media may also be used to announce the Council vacancy.

4. The City Clerk's Office shall prepare an application form which requests appropriate information for City Council consideration of the applicants. Applications will be available at Lake Stevens City Hall, on the City web site, and such other locations that the City Council deems appropriate. Copies of the advertisement will be provided to current members of City of Lake Stevens' boards and commissions.

5. Applications received by the deadline date and time will be copied and circulated, by the City Clerk's Office to the Mayor and City Council. Packets may also contain additional information received such as endorsements, letters of reference and other pertinent materials.

6. The City Clerk's Office shall publish the required public notice(s) for the meeting scheduled for interviewing applicants for consideration to the vacant position. This meeting may be a regularly scheduled City Council meeting, or a special session City Council meeting.

7. The City Clerk's Office shall notify applicants of the location, date and time of City Council interviews.

8. Prior to the date and time of the interview meeting, the Mayor shall accept one interview question from each Councilmember.

9. Prior to the date and time of the interview the City Clerk or designee will make inquiry of each applicant to determine eligibility to hold office and to

fill the Council vacancy in the City.

21.4 INTERVIEW MEETING

Depending on the number of applicants to be interviewed, each interview of an applicant/candidate shall be approximately 15 minutes in length as follows:

1. The City Council shall ask the predetermined set of questions which must be responded to by the applicant. Each applicant will be asked and will answer the same set of questions.
2. An informal question and answer period in which Councilmembers may ask and receive answers to miscellaneous questions.
3. The applicants' order of appearance will be determined by a random lot drawing performed by the City Clerk.
4. The Council may elect not to interview all of the applicants if the number exceeds six (6) candidates. The decision as to which applicants to interview will be based on the information contained in the application forms.

21.5 VOTING

Upon completion of the interviews, Councilmembers may convene into Executive Session to discuss the qualifications of the applicants. However, all interviews, nominations and votes taken by the Council shall be in open public session.

1. The Mayor shall ask for nominations from the Councilmembers.
2. In the case of one vacancy to be filled, balloting will continue until a nominee receives a majority of four (4) votes.
3. At any time during the balloting process, the City Council may postpone balloting until a date certain or regular meeting if a majority vote has not been received.
4. Nothing in this policy shall prevent the City Council from reconvening into Executive Session to further discuss the applicant/candidate qualifications.
5. The Mayor shall declare the nominee receiving the majority vote as the new Councilmember. The new Councilmember shall be sworn into office by any person authorized under state law to administer oaths, at the earliest opportunity or no later than the next regularly scheduled City Council meeting.
6. In the case of a tie vote, the Mayor may cast a vote.
7. If the City Council does not fill the vacancy within 90 days of the declared vacancy, the Revised Code of Washington delegates appointment powers to Snohomish County.

APPLICABLE CITY POLICIES:

ATTACHMENTS:

None