

## CHAPTER 9 - Parks

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

Parks, recreation, and open space are vital elements in an urban community. Parks, recreation facilities, and open space contribute to a community's quality of life significantly. Open space can also protect environmentally sensitive areas and provide buffers between incompatible land uses.

Existing park and recreation facilities within Bayview Ridge are limited. No public parks or recreation facilities currently lie within the Subarea, although the large Bayview State Park and Padilla Bay trail and estuarine research complex lie just west of Bayview Ridge. The Skagit Golf and County Club is located in the southeastern portion of the Subarea, but this privately owned 18-hole golf course is open only to members and their guests.

The Port of Skagit County has developed a 10.4-mile non-motorized trail system linking its north and south leaseholds within the Subarea. The trails are surfaced with gravel and are approximately 8 feet in width. It is anticipated that these trails will ultimately provide connections to Josh Wilson and Farm to Market Roads, as well as SR 20.

Existing open space within Bayview Ridge consists of the numerous wetlands and their buffers, tracts of vacant land (encompassing both pasture grass and evergreen and/or deciduous trees) and the hillside along the eastern and northeastern edges of the Subarea. Environmentally sensitive areas (i.e., wetlands, steep slopes) are protected under the Skagit County Critical Area Regulations.

The 2004 Skagit County Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan addresses park, recreation, and open space needs throughout the County and within individual communities such as Bayview Ridge.

### RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS

#### *Countywide Planning Policies*

Countywide Planning Policy 9 (GMA Goal 9) encourages the retention of open space, development of recreational opportunities, conservation of habitat, increased access, and development of parks. Pertinent specific policies include:

- 9.1 Open space corridors within and between urban growth areas shall be identified. These areas shall include lands useful for recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, trails, and connection of critical areas.*
- 9.2 To preserve open space and create recreational opportunities, innovative regulatory techniques and incentives such as but not limited to, purchase of development rights, transfer of development rights, conservation easements, land trusts and community acquisition of lands for public ownership shall be encouraged.*
- 9.3 The use of Open Space Taxation Laws shall be encouraged as a useful method of land use control and resource preservation.*
- 9.4 Expansion and enhancement of parks, recreation and scenic areas and viewing points shall be identified, planned for and improved in shorelands, and urban and rural designated areas.*
- 9.5 Property owners shall be encouraged to site and design new construction to minimize disruption of visual amenities and solar resources of adjacent property owners, public road ways, parks, lakes, waterways and beaches.*
- 9.6 Development of new park and recreational facilities shall adhere to the policies set out in this Comprehensive Plan document.*
- 9.8 Incompatible adjacent uses including industrial and commercial areas shall be adequately buffered by means of landscaping, or by maintaining recreation and open space corridors.*
- 9.9 A park and recreation system shall be promoted which is integrated with existing and planned land use patterns.*
- 9.10 Indoor and outdoor recreation facilities shall be designed to provide a wide range of opportunities allowing for individual needs of those using these facilities.*

9.12 In planning new park and recreation facilities, Skagit County shall take into consideration natural features, topography, floodplains, relationship to population characteristics, types of facilities, various user group needs and standards of access including travel time.

## *Skagit County Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan*

The 2004 Skagit County Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan recommends the following park facilities in the Bayview Ridge UGA:

### **Proposed Bayview Community Park Development**

#### **Level 2**

The Bayview Ridge area is unincorporated but designated by Skagit County as an area of urban growth. It is located on the hill west of I-5 and is being developed at a much higher density than neighboring unincorporated lands. To provide park services in this area, a community park site is proposed. The timeline for the development of this park should parallel the timeline for other Bayview sub area infrastructure. The park should therefore be completed as the subarea reaches capacity.

(Chapter 11, page 16)

## **BAYVIEW RIDGE SUBAREA PLAN**

This plan update revisits the parks component based on the decision to allow schools in the outermost airport safety zone, zone 6, due to the important role that schools play in building a cohesive community. While the Skagit Regional Airport Land Use Compatibility Study recommends that schools be prohibited in all six airport safety zones (p.13), it also acknowledges that except for FAA regulation of the runway and close-in runway protection zones, "the question of underlying land use and acceptable risk is still ultimately one of what is acceptable to the local community." p.12

This update re-assesses the overall recommendation of a 25-acre community park with several other park and open space criteria:

- Need for school playfields; and desirability of sharing public facilities;
- Requirement for 10-15% airport safety open space in the residential areas;
- Recommended open area every 1/4 to 1/2 mile (Table 1.1, safety zone 6); and.
- Open space separators between urban and rural areas.

Open space stemming from the airport safety zones alone amounts to approximately 45 acres. The basis of this estimate is ten percent of the approximately 450 acres of land in the BR-R and URv zones that is also in the Airport Environs Overlay and is undeveloped or underdeveloped.

The previous *Skagit County Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan, adopted in 1998*, recommended that a 25-acre Bayview community park be located south of Peterson Road and west of the Bayhill development. The specific location and size of community parks, open space, and trails should be re-examined by the Skagit County Parks and Recreation Department in light of the land use recommendations in this Subarea Plan and the recommendations of the *Skagit Regional Airport Land Use Compatibility Study*. Chapter 7, the Capital Facilities Plan, identifies \$46,000 for this work, which will be accomplished in parallel with development of the Planned Unit Development regulations.

Open space is a broad term that includes numerous components. Under the Growth Management Act, it includes, but is not limited to:

- Recreation lands,
- Wildlife habitat
- Trails
- Critical areas

In the case of Bayview Ridge, open space is required for airport safety, and to separate the UGA from the surrounding rural and resource lands. Visual open space is provided by protected land adjacent to the airport

runway. The 400-plus acres of protected wetlands and buffers in the Port of Skagit WIN program are a key element of the UGA's open space system.

Buffers between industrial and adjacent residential development and the buffer around the community center area are another element of the open space system and can be used for trails. Another potential location for open space is the residentially zoned area in and near Safety Zone 4S.

Open space will also be retained along the northeast edge of the Subarea, along the hillside. This open space will be used primarily for wildlife habitat and aesthetics/visual separation. The extent to which any open space will be used for passive recreation and trails must be determined on a case-by-case basis, based on potential impacts to environmentally sensitive areas.

Further discussion of parks, recreation and open space levels of service (LOS) can be found in Chapter 7.

## GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

### **Goal 9A To provide (and facilitate the provision of) a range of park and recreational services and open space areas to meet the needs and interests of the Bayview Ridge community.**

**Objective 9A-1** Provide parks, recreational open space, trails, and other recreation facilities that will meet the county's interests and needs in a cost-effective manner.

*Policy 9A-1.1 Acquire and develop lands and facilities that will be particularly attractive and cost efficient to maintain.*

*Policy 9A-1.2 Develop a master plan for Bayview Ridge Community Parks, including citizen involvement.*

*Policy 9A-1.3 Develop a Bayview Ridge Open Space Plan that satisfies the need for open space for aircraft safety, parks, trails, and recreation.*

*Policy 9A-1.4 Provide public open space opportunities scattered throughout Bayview Ridge.*

*Policy 9A-1.5 Preserve and protect significant environmentally sensitive areas and incorporate these areas into an open space system.*

*Policy 9A-1.6 Require that usable open space be within walking distance of all residents. Small neighborhood parks and tot lots will be owned and maintained by a Homeowners' Association, unless otherwise approved by Skagit County.*

**Objective 9A-2** Use a variety of innovative land use techniques to maintain the character and quality of parks and open space, including but not limited to conservation and open space easements, public trust, public lands, transfer and purchase of development rights and other means.

*Policy 9A-2.1 Encourage shared use of public and quasi-public facilities.*

*Policy 9A-2.2 Work with non-profit entities to ensure long-term preservation of parks and open space.*

*Policy 9A-2.3 Utilize park standards as established in the Skagit County Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan to ensure that as land development occurs, adequate land is set aside within new development for parks and open space and that the impacts on neighborhood and community parks are assessed and mitigated appropriately.*

**Objective 9A-3** Create a comprehensive system of multi-purpose trails for recreational hikers and walkers, joggers, bicyclists and Bayview Ridge residents and employees.

*Policy 9A-3.1 Develop a trail system that links the residential, community center and airport/industrial portions of the Subarea.*

*Policy 9A-3.2 Develop design standards for the multi-purpose trail system.*

*Policy 9A-3.3 Include standards for trails (number of miles per resident/employee) in the adopted park standards.*