

Chapter 9

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

Existing Conditions

Parks, recreation, and open space are vital elements in an urban community. Parks, recreation facilities, and open space contribute significantly to a community's quality of life. 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 9.3-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 1998 *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 *Skagit County Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan* (June 1998), adopted by Ordinance #17030 is hereby adopted by reference. This plan recognizes Bayview Ridge as a growing urban area that lacks adequate parks and recreation facilities. The *Facility Plan* adopted as part of the *Skagit County Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan* specifically identifies the need for a Bayview Community Park. The 25-acre park is proposed to be located south of Peterson Road and west of the Bayhill development. This would allow for views from the park and would be convenient to both nearby residents and employees of the business park.

The *Facility Plan* also shows the proposed “Fishtown Loop Trail,” connecting La Conner with Mount Vernon, bordering the southeastern edge of the Bayview Ridge Subarea along SR 20.

Bayview Ridge Subarea Plan

The Subarea Plan integrates both parks and open space into the proposed development pattern.

While the 1998 *Skagit County Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan* recommends that the proposed 25-acre Bayview community park be located south of Peterson Road and west of the Bayhill development, the actual location of the 25-acre community park 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*.

The 1998 Skagit County Comprehensive Park and Recreation Plan recommends the following park improvements:

- Two softball fields (275 to 300-foot outfields)
- Two youth baseball fields (200 to 250-foot outfields)
- Children’s play structure
- Trails and viewpoints
- Three soccer fields
- Restroom building
- Parking for 50 cars
- Picnic area

Proposed open space within Bayview Ridge will consist of wetlands and their associated buffers, buffers between industrial and adjacent residential development, and the buffer around the community center area. 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 (p. 7-10 – 7-12).

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 the Bayview Ridge Community Park, including citizen involvement.

- Policy 9A-1.3 Develop a Comprehensive Open Space Plan that satisfies the need for open space for aircraft safety, parks, recreation and critical areas.
- 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.

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.