
Chapter 5: *Goals and Objectives*

Our Mission:

“Support a healthy community by promoting high quality parks and recreation services.”

The mission of the Bellingham Department of Parks & Recreation is to *“Support a healthy community by promoting high quality parks and recreation services.”*

The following goals and objectives are based on an analysis of existing park, recreation, open space and trail conditions and the community input. Goals are broad statements of intent that describe a desired outcome. Objectives, on the other hand, are both measurable and more specific. Objectives should help define when a goal has been met.

5.1 Parks & Recreation

GOAL: Provide a high quality, diversified parks, recreation and open space system that provides for all age and interest groups.

OBJECTIVE #1: *Neighborhood and community parks.*

- a. Provide a system of neighborhood and community parks that are within walking distance of residents.
- b. Provide parks with activities for all age groups and abilities, equally distributed throughout the community.
- c. Add capacity at existing parks by expanding facilities to accommodate increased population.
- d. Work with developers to identify additional park opportunities in redeveloping areas.
- e. Cooperate with other public and private agencies, and with private landowners to set aside land and resources necessary to provide high quality, convenient park and recreation facilities before the most suitable sites are lost to development.
- f. Acquire additional shoreline access for waterside trails, waterfront fishing, wading, swimming, boating and other related recreational activities.
- g. Develop athletic facilities that meet the highest quality competitive playing standards and requirements for all age groups, skill levels, and recreational interests.
- h. Provide a mix of court and field activities like skateboard, basketball, tennis, volleyball, handball, soccer, baseball, and softball that provide for the largest number of participants.
- i. Develop, where appropriate, a select number of facilities that provide the highest competitive playing standard in conjunction with the Bellingham School District, Western

Parks & Recreation

Develop a high quality, diversified system that provides for all ages and interest groups.

- Washington University, and other public and private agencies.
- j. Develop new or improved multi use facilities to increase flexibility of use for new activities, such as disc golf, cricket, rugby or other new trends as there is a demonstrated need in the community.
- k. Where appropriate and funding is available, incorporate art into park facility features, such as railings, benches, buildings and other park amenities.
- l. Provide operation and maintenance to insure safe, serviceable, and functional parks and facilities.

OBJECTIVE #2: *Special use sites.*

- a. Where appropriate and economically feasible, develop and operate specialized and special interest recreational facilities like aquatic centers, ice arenas, and golf courses for these interests in the general population.
- b. Where appropriate, initiate joint planning and operating programs with other public and private agencies to provide for special activities like golf, aquatic facilities, marinas, and camping on a regional basis.
- c. Develop indoor community spaces that provide arts and crafts, music, video, classroom instruction, meeting facilities and other spaces for all age groups on a year-round basis.
- d. Maintain and expand multiple use indoor recreational centers that provide aquatic, gymnasiums, physical conditioning, recreational courts, and other athletic spaces for all age groups, skill levels, and community interests on a year-round basis.
- e. Support the continued development and diversification by the Bellingham School District and other organizations of special meeting, assembly, and other community facilities that provide general support to school age populations and the community-at-large at elementary, middle, and high schools within the Bellingham urban growth area.
- f. Develop and operate special indoor and outdoor facilities and programs that enhance and expand music, dance, drama, and other opportunities for the community-at-large.
- g. Develop a mixture of watercraft access opportunities including canoe, kayak, and other non-power boating activities on Lake Whatcom, Lake Padden, and Bellingham Bay.
- h. Provide adequate funding to operate and maintain existing and new special use sites.

5.2 Open Space

GOAL: Provide a high quality, diversified open space system that preserves and enhances significant environmental resources and features to protect threatened species, preserve habitat, retain migration corridors, preserve agricultural lands or natural meadows, and protect water resources.

OBJECTIVES:

Open Space

Develop a high quality, diversified system that preserves and enhances significant environmental resources.

- a. Define and preserve a system of open space corridors and buffers to provide separation between natural areas and urban land uses within the Bellingham developing area.
- b. Provide natural area and open space linkages within the developed area.
- c. Preserve environmentally sensitive areas as natural area linkages, habitat corridors and urban buffers.
- d. Preserve and protect significant environmental features including unique wetlands, woodlands, prairies, meadows, shorelines, waterfronts, wooded hillsides, and other characteristics that support wildlife and reflect Bellingham's resource.
- e. Balance the desire for public access and interpretive education with preservation of environmentally sensitive areas and sites that are especially unique to the Bellingham area where appropriate.
- f. Identify and conserve wildlife habitat including nesting sites, foraging areas, and migration corridors within or adjacent to natural areas, open spaces, and the developed urban area.
- g. Preserve and protect habitat sites that support threatened species and urban wildlife.
- h. Preserve unique environmental features or areas in future land developments and increase public use and access. Cooperate with other public and private agencies and with private landowners to set aside unique features or areas as publicly accessible resources.
- i. Provide operation and maintenance resources for forestry management, habitat protection and code enforcement in existing and new open space areas.

Trails

Develop an interconnected system of high quality, accessible multi-use trails and greenway corridors.

5.3 Trails

GOAL: Provide an interconnected system of high quality, accessible multi-use trails and greenway corridors that offer diverse, healthy outdoor experiences within a rich variety of landscapes and natural habitats, accessing significant environmental features, public facilities and developed local neighborhoods and business districts.

OBJECTIVE #1: *Connect and unify the community with trail and greenway corridors.*

- a. Provide a comprehensive system of multipurpose off-road trails using alignments through public landholdings as well as cooperating private properties where appropriate
- b. Link residential neighborhoods to community facilities like parks, special use areas, the waterfront, downtown and other unique or special destinations.
- c. Expand existing trail systems into growing neighborhoods.
- d. Promote links to neighboring communities.
- e. Work with Whatcom County, WADNR, private landowners and other appropriate parties to link and extend trails around Bellingham and with King, Stewart, Lookout, and Chuckanut Mountains.
- f. Provide adequate funding to maintain existing and new trails.

- and to take advantage of access to existing restrooms and drinking water thereby reducing duplication of supporting improvements.
- e. Utilize native vegetation in planted areas where possible.

OBJECTIVE #7: *Preserve functioning natural habitats and corridors.*

- a. Develop trails and greenway corridors that protect natural resources, including plant and animal habitats.
- b. Extend trails along natural area corridors like Squalicum, Whatcom, and Padden Creeks that will provide a high quality, diverse sampling of area environmental resources.

OBJECTIVE #8: *Provide a safe trail environment.*

- a. Provide lighting in high-use areas and where appropriate.
- b. Provide safe parking areas.
- c. Avoid blind corners on trails.
- d. Provide for natural surveillance.
- e. Provide safety education for trail users.
- f. Provide safe crossings of roads, including grade separated crossings of major corridors such as I-5 and Guide Meridian Road.

OBJECTIVE #9: *Facilitate community involvement and stewardship.*

- a. Continue and expand the volunteer work party program.
- b. Continue and expand the Adopt-a-trail program.
- c. Develop inter-local management agreements.
- d. Encourage participation in community trail events.
- e. Expand on existing relationships with schools, business and non-profit organizations.

5.4 Recreational Programs

GOAL: Provide high quality recreational programs and services throughout the community that provide fun, educational, accessible and safe environments for people of all ages and abilities.

Recreational Programs

Develop high quality recreational programs and services that meet all community group needs.

OBJECTIVES:

- a. Support arts and crafts, classroom instruction in music and dance, physical conditioning and health care. Provide meeting facilities, daycare, after school, and other program activities for all cultural, age, physical and mental capability, and income groups in the community.
- b. Support basketball, volleyball, tennis, soccer, baseball, softball, and other instruction and participatory programs for all age, skill level, and income groups in the community.
- c. Assist with programs and exhibits that document

and develop awareness of Bellingham's heritage.

5.5 Design and Access Standards

GOAL: Design and develop facilities that are sustainable, accessible, safe, and easy to maintain, with a consideration of long-term costs and benefits.

OBJECTIVE #1: *Accessibility.*

- a. Design outdoor picnic areas, trails, playgrounds, courts, fields, parking lots, restrooms, and other active and supporting facilities to be accessible to individuals and organized groups of all physical capabilities, skill levels, age groups, income and activity interests.
- b. Design indoor facility spaces, activity rooms, restrooms, parking lots, and other active and supporting spaces and improvements to be accessible to individuals and organized groups of all physical capabilities, skill levels, age groups, income and activity interests.

OBJECTIVE #2: *Maintenance.*

- a. Design and develop facilities that reduce overall facility maintenance and operation requirements and costs.
- b. Where appropriate, use low maintenance materials, settings or other value engineering considerations that reduce care and security requirements, and retain natural conditions and experiences.
- c. Develop a maintenance management system to estimate and plan for life cycle maintenance and replacement costs.

OBJECTIVE #3: *Security and Safety.*

- a. Implement the provisions and requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other design and development standards that will improve park facility safety and security features for park users, department personnel, and the public-at-large.
- b. Develop and implement safety standards, procedures, and programs that will provide proper training and awareness for department personnel.
- c. Define and enforce rules and regulations concerning park activities and operations that will protect user groups, department personnel, and the general public-at-large.
- d. 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.

Design and Access Standards

Design and develop facilities that are sustainable, accessible, safe and easy to maintain with life-cycle features that account for long term costs and benefits.

5.6 Sustainable Practices

GOAL: Meet the needs of the present without compromising the needs of future generations. Make decisions today that sustain our activities for the future.

OBJECTIVES:

- a. Promote sustainable landscapes to increase the ecological functions of natural areas. Protect open space and park lands by reducing adverse impacts to the environment during initial development and long term use.
- b. Reduce emissions, pollution, and toxic materials to protect water and other natural resources. Mitigate the use of fossil fuels by reducing energy and vehicle use. Promote multi-modal transportation by developing trails and locating parks on bus routes or within walking distance of homes.
- c. Foster environmental stewardship through education programs and activities. Provide safe and convenient access to public lands, conservation areas, and water. Instill a love of nature and a commitment for caring for our resources through the Park Volunteer program.
- d. Choose durable products to promote human health in a safe environment and consider life-cycle analysis of material options. Incorporate green building technology including nontoxic materials and sustainable development practices. Select local products where feasible. Consider environmental as well as economic impacts.

Sustainable Practices

Make decisions today that sustain our activities for the future.

5.7 Financial Resources and Coordination

GOAL: Create effective and efficient methods of acquiring, developing, operating and maintaining facilities and programs that accurately distribute costs and benefits to public and private interests.

Financial Resources

Create effective and efficient methods of acquiring, developing and maintaining systems that accurately distribute costs and benefits to public and private interests.

OBJECTIVE #1: *Finance.*

- a. Investigate innovative available methods or the financing of maintenance and operating needs in order to reduce costs, retain financial flexibility, match user benefits and interests, and increase facility services.
- b. Consider joint ventures with other public and private agencies such as the Bellingham School District, Whatcom County, Port of Bellingham, regional, state, federal, and other public and private agencies including for-profit concessionaires, where feasible and desirable.

OBJECTIVE #2: *Public and private resource coordination.*

- a. Create a comprehensive, balanced park, recreation, and open space system that integrates Bellingham facilities and services with resources available from Bellingham School District, Whatcom County, Port of Bellingham and other state, federal, and private park and recreational lands and facilities in a manner that will best serve and provide for area residents' interests.
- b. Cooperate with Bellingham School District, Whatcom County, Port of Bellingham and other public and private agencies to avoid duplication, improve facility quality and availability, reduce costs, and represent area resident's interests through joint planning and development efforts.

OBJECTIVE #3: *Cost/benefit assessment.*

- a. Create effective and efficient methods of acquiring, developing, operating, and maintaining park and recreational facilities in manners that accurately distribute costs and benefits to public and private user interests - including the application of growth impact fees where new developments impact existing level-of-service (ELOS) standards.
- b. Develop and operate lifetime recreational programs that serve the broadest needs of the population, recovering program and operating costs with a combination of registration fees, user fees, grants, sponsorships, donations, scholarships, volunteer efforts, and the use of general funding.
- c. Where appropriate, provide recreational programs, like golf and boating facilities, for those interested user groups who are willing to finance the cost through donations, registration fees, volunteer efforts or other means and methods.

5.8 Human Resources

GOAL: Develop, staff, train, and support a professional Parks and Recreation Department that effectively serves the community in the realization of the above listed goals and objectives.

OBJECTIVES:

- a. Employ a diverse, well-trained work force that is knowledgeable, productive, courteous, responsive and motivated to achieve department and citywide goals.
- b. Encourage teamwork through communications, creativity, positive image, risk taking, sharing of resources, and cooperation toward common goals.
- c. Where appropriate, provide staff with education, training, and modern equipment and supplies to increase personal productivity, efficiency, and pride.
- d. Monitor work load and staffing needs to maintain an adequate, efficient work force.

Human Resources

*Support a professional staff
that effectively serves the
community.*