Chapter 7: Implementation

Priorities and proposed recommendations implemented may change over time based on new interests, feasibility and/or opportunities that may arise.

A Bellingham parks and recreation financial strategy for the next 6 to 14-year period should generate sufficient revenue to maintain existing facilities, provide recreational program services, renovate facilities, and implement priority projects from the proposed recommendations. The following forecasts are based on the average trends in capital facility fund expenditures by the city during recent years. However, it should be noted that priorities shift over time, often responding to new interests, opportunities, and community decision making processes. The City's six year Capital Facilities Plan (CFP) is updated annually in part to reflect these types of changes.

The total estimated capital cost of all proposed plan recommendations outlined in the *Chapter 6* base plan option is approximately $150 million. This includes improvements to existing facilities, as well as additions to serve new growth. Existing revenue sources for park system improvements through the year 2022 could reach over $150 million with traditional funding sources as estimated with the assumptions shown on the following table. Funds associated with revenues and expenditures shown in this plan are total values and are not adjusted to reflect the differences between improvements to serve new growth and existing facility improvements. This distinction is described in the park impact fee calculation documentation. Detailed costs for proposed recommendations are included in *Appendix C*. The 2008 approved six year Capital Facilities Plan is included in *Appendix E.*

7.1 Revenue and Expenditures

The following table outlines four options for capital revenue sources and projected expenditures through the year 2022 corresponding to the four options included in the level of service discussion in Chapter 4. The recommended Base Plan Option would fund all projects listed in Chapter 6. The Priority Option would fund only the highest priority projects as listed under section 7.2. The Existing UGA Option would retain the same level of acres per 1000 population ratio which currently exists in the UGA, and the Existing City option would maintain the existing City population acres per 1000 population ratio. A detailed description of the projects and costs for each of the options is in Appendix C. A description of the funding sources and assumptions made for each item in the tables is listed on the following pages. As this is a long range strategic plan and not a financing plan, both revenues and expenditures are in estimated 2008 dollars only and do not include inflation, assuming that both expenditures and revenues will increase

over time and that projects will be implemented as funding becomes available rather than through any specific financing system. As each project is scheduled for implementation, costs and revenues will be updated. Project improvements (acquisition or facilities) will be adjusted as needed to match available revenue sources concurrent with the annual Capital Facilities Plan budget process. Also, this plan is updated every 6 years with an updated forecast of revenues and expenditures.

Any potential difference between the total revenue and the actual cost of improvements could be made up through a variety of means including an increase in the park impact fee up to the maximum amount allowable, bonding for specific project improvements, decreasing the level of service, or through the use of additional development agreements requiring land dedications or improvements as a condition of annexation or rezones.

The additional park acres and improvements associated with the recommendations will also require additional maintenance and operations costs. The existing 3026 acres of parks, open space and trails is maintained by 22 full time and 25 seasonal field staff. Using general numbers, in 2008 the ratio of park acreage to maintenance staff is 67.26 acres per full time equivalent staff member. Similarly, using the 2008 total maintenance budget of $3,685,121, the cost to maintain parkland is $1217.42 per acre per year and the estimated additional annual overall cost for maintenance and operations by the year 2022 for the Base Option Plan is estimated to be $777,931 (639 acres x $1217.42) expressed in 2008 dollars.

An additional 9.5 staff members would be needed to maintain service levels for the Base Option parks and facilities. The estimates are based on a general analysis of the 2008 budget. An increase or decrease in the intensity of maintenance needed based on the type of park or facility would affect the actual costs.

7.1.1 REET 1 and 2

REET is the Real Estate Excise Tax. Of the first and second quarter REET funds, the average annual amount applied towards the park system over the last five years has been approximately $1.5 million. This amount includes the transfer of sewer funds that have been used for public restrooms.

7.1.2 Subdivision Fund

The remaining balance currently in the Subdivision Fund is $250,000. This fund has been replaced by the Park Impact Fee and no additional revenue is expected after 2008.

7.1.3 Greenway Levies

Bellingham citizens have approved three levies at a rate of $0.57 per thousand property valuation. See notes on chart for the assumptions used

4 Options for 2008 PRO Plan - Funding and Expenditures

Note: All figures in millions

Revenue	Priority Projects Option[1]			Base Plan Option[2]			Existing UGA Land Ratio Option[2]			Existing City Land Ratio Option[3]		
REET			14.0			18.0			18.0			21.0
Subdivision Fund			0.3			0.3			0.3			0.3
Beyond Greenway Levy			4.1			4.1			4.1			4.1
Greenway III Levy			33.2			33.2			33.2			33.2
4th Greenway Levy			0.0			22.0			22.0			22.0
Grants			10.0			12.0			12.0			14.0
CAO/SEPA			3.0			4.0			4.0			5.0
Donations			3.0			4.0			4.0			5.0
Park Impact Fees[8]	35%	$1897 /capita	43.1	43%	$2330/capita	53.6	63%	$3414/capita	78.6	80%	$4335 /capita	99.8
Total			**110.7**			**151.2**			**176.2**			**204.4**

Expenditures	Priority Projects Option[4]				Base Plan Option[5]				Existing UGA LOS Option[6]				Existing City LOS Option[7]			
		Cost				Cost				Cost				Cost		
	Acres	Land	Facilities	Total	Acres	Land	Facilities	Total	Acres	Land	Facilities	Total	Acres	Land	Facilities	Total
Neighborhood Park	27.0	2.4	5.8	8.2	40.5	3.7	11.1	14.8	95.0	8.6	11.1	19.7	120.0	10.8	11.1	21.9
Community Park	64.0	5.8	10.3	16.1	119.0	10.8	27.8	38.6	159.0	14.4	27.8	42.2	159.0	14.4	27.8	42.2
Special Use Site	1.0	0.1	2.0	2.1	1.6	0.1	2.1	2.2	1.6	0.1	2.1	2.2	1.6	0.1	2.1	2.2
Open Space	200.0	18.1	0.0	18.1	220.0	19.9	1.0	20.9	400.0	36.1	1.0	37.1	840.0	75.9	1.0	76.9
Trails	191.5	17.3	31.8	49.1	258.0	23.3	46.2	69.5	273.4	24.7	46.2	70.9	383.3	34.6	46.2	80.8
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.3	4.3	0.0	0.0	4.3	4.3	0.0	0.0	4.3	4.3
Total	483.5	43.7	49.9	**93.6**	639.1	57.8	92.5	**150.3**	929.0	83.9	92.5	**176.4**	1503.9	135.8	92.5	**228.3**
Existing Acres/1000 City	43.4				43.4				43.4				43.4			
Existing Acres/1000 UGA	38.3				38.3				38.3				38.3			
Proposed Acres/1000 UGA	34.4				35.8				38.3				43.4			

All Levy amounts assume no levy growth but includes interest earnings on fund balance

1 Assumes no Greenway Levy 4, park impact fee calculated at current 35% of value of total park system with 5% discounted for development prior to annexation and 20% reduction in all other expected revenue.

2 Assumes 4th Greenway Levy at current rate, PIF adjusted to % of existing value per person as shown with 5% discounted for development prior to annexation. Other revenues are average of high and low amounts.

3 Assumes 4th Greenway Levy, park impact fee calculated at approx. the maximum allowable (after discounting other revenues) and revenue from other sources will continue per the average of the last five years. PIF cannot be used to make up the current deficiency of UGA population.

4 Priority projects as identified in PRO Plan Update.

5 All PRO Plan Update recommended projects.

6 All PRO Plan Update projects with additional acreage as shown

7 All PRO Plan Update projects with additional acreage as shown

8 If PIF reduced, budget shortfall could be made up through a general bond or levy.

in each option. Included are existing levy balances as well as future revenues, with no growth in valuation assumed for the Priority Option. The three higher options assume voter approval of a fourth levy in 2017 at varying rates.

7.1.4 Grants

The city has received an average of $1 million annually over the last five years from various sources, including Washington Recreation and Conservation Office grant programs, federal transportation enhancement grants and Department of Ecology grants.

Priorities

Highest priority projects were determined to be those that were currently funded, trails and greenway projects and project centered on the north Bellingham area. Waterfront projects were also a high priority.

7.1.5 CAO/SEPA/Mitigation

Value of land or improvements as a result of the city's Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO), State Environmental Protection Act (SEPA) or associated mitigation are used by the city to help offset park system improvements. Based on past trends, the city has projected the estimated value of land or improvements as required through development process for protection of wetlands, state environmental protection act or impact mitigation based on historical trends to be approximately $5 million by the year 2022.

7.1.6. Donations

Donations include park system land and improvements received by the city from private individuals as well as other agencies or organizations. Based on historic trends, the city estimates the total value of future donations to be approximately $5 million over the next 14 years.

7.1.7 Park Impact Fee

In 2006 the city began assessing a park impact fee on new residential units. Future funding from park impact fees is estimated based on future city population projections. The city expects an additional population by the year 2022 of 24,217 new residents. This is the difference between the current and projected urban growth area population. This also assumes that all of the urban growth areas will incorporate into the city during that time frame. In this plan update, the existing park system value is $5419 per person and currently 35% is assessed by park impact fees. This results in projected revenues of approximately $46 million by the year 2022, which does not include any potential increase in the fee. It is anticipated, at a minimum, the fee will be adjusted for inflation in land and facility costs.

7.2 Priorities

The funding strategy proposed is based on a major assumption that current funding sources will continue into the future at or near their current

rate. While this may be a reasonable assumption, there is no guarantee of future funding or sources of funding. As such, the community determined the following general priorities for park system improvements in Bellingham. In all cases, the highest priority identified was to complete the currently funded elements and improvements in the north Bellingham area. Beyond that, trail improvements, in general, were identified as a higher priority than parks and recreation or open space elements. A summary of the cost of priority improvements is included in Appendix C.

7.2.1 Parks & Special Use Facilities

The following priorities have been identified and categorized into relative order from highest (priority 1) to lowest (priority 3), though items identified within each category are listed in no particular order.

Priorities Currently Funded

- Cordata Park (improvements)
- Northridge Park (improvements)
- Cornwall Park (expansion)
- Squalicum Creek Park (Phase 2 improvements)

Priority 1

- East Airport Neighborhood Park (Alderwood/Birchwood area)
- Central Bakerview Neighborhood Park
- East Bakerview Neighborhood Park
- Lake Padden Park (improvements)
- Woodstock Farm (improvements)
- North and South Waterfront Community Parks
- Squalicum Creek Park final completion
- Sunset Pond Park expansion and development

Priority 2

- Little Squalicum Pier & Hand Launch
- Renovate existing parks as appropriate to improve capacity and/or generate multi-use functions
- Urban plazas and gathering spaces in downtown areas, generally in combination with new or redevelopment opportunities

Priority 3

- Improvements to North Samish Crest Park
- East Yew St. Neighborhood Park

7.2.2 Open Space

The following priorities have been identified and categorized into relative order from highest to lowest priority, though items identified within each category are listed in no particular order.

Priorities Currently Funded

- Open space corridors associated with funded trail priorities below

Priority 1

- Open space corridors associated with trail priorities below
- Open space anchors in north Bellingham, generally in combination with new community park acquisitions
- Open space anchor between Samish Crest Open Space and Lookout Mountain
- Open space connection between Arroyo Nature Area and the Lower Padden Open Space

7.2.3 Trails

The following priorities have been identified and categorized into relative order from highest to lowest priority, though items identified within each category are listed in no particular order.

Priorities Currently Funded

- Bay to Baker Greenway & Trail (complete missing links)
- Samish Crest Trail corridor
- Chuckanut to Woodstock Trail corridor
- Whatcom Creek Greenway & Trail (complete missing links)

Priority 1

- North/south trail corridor in north Bellingham area
- East/west trail corridor through north Bellingham area
- All waterfront trail connections
- Central Waterfront Trail corridor
- Whatcom Creek to Bay to Baker Trail corridor

Priority 2

- Trail connection from Little Squalicum Park northwest to Alderwood/Airport area
- Trail connection from Cordata Park north to Bear Creek Area

Priority 3

- Samish Crest to Lookout Mt. Trail corridor
- Lake Whatcom to Bay to Baker Trail corridor
- Northridge Park to Bay to Baker Trail connection

7.3 Revenue Source Description

A general description of the different types of revenue resources that may be used to fund park, recreation and open space programs or facilities is presented in Appendix F. Some are restricted to development only while others may be used for operations and maintenance. These are listed in no particular order and with no reference to the feasibility or recommendation of implementing each revenue source. Included are:

General fund
Special revenues

Debt service funds

- *Councilmanic (limited or non-voted) bonds*
- Limited general obligation bonds
- *Unlimited general obligation bonds*

Enterprise funds

Special legislation

Unlimited general obligation bonds

General levy rate referendums

Environmental impact mitigation – subdivision regulations

Growth impact fees

Inter-local agreements

User fees and charges

Special funding sources

- *REET (Real Estate Excise Tax)*
- *Greenway Funds*

State grants

- *Washington Wildlife Recreation Program (WWRP)*
- *Aquatic Lands Enhancement Act (ALEA)*
- *Endangered Species Act (ESA)*
- *Capital Projects Fund for Washington Heritage*
- *Boating Facilities Program*
- *Washington State Public Works Commission*
- *Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF)*
- *Non-Highway & Off-Road Vehicle Activities Program (NOVA)*
- *Firearms and Archery Range Recreation Program (FARR)*

Federal grants

- *NPS (National Park Service) grants*
- *Transportation Enhancement Grants*
- *National Recreational Trails Program (NRTP)*
- *Boating Infrastructure Grant Program (BIG)*

Recreation service districts (RCW Chapter 36.69)

Metropolitan park districts (SB 2557)

Special use agreements

Public/private service contracts

Public/private concessions

Public/private joint development ventures

Self-help land leases

Self-help contract agreements