

#	Date Received	Citizen/ Group	Citizen Comments on: 2014 Park, Recreation & Open Space Plan Update Updated November 14, 2013	Notes/Status
1	06/20/13	Kathy Kendall Input form received at 06/20/13 public workshop	<p>"My husband (he is almost 90!) and I use the pool <u>constantly</u> (3-4 times a week). We are <u>very</u> satisfied with the pool. ☺</p> <p>We walk in Cornwall Park, Lake Padden, Whatcom Falls Park and <u>totally</u> enjoy these nearby parks. Wow!</p> <p>Thank you for our parks. <u>Great job.</u>"</p>	
2	6/20/13	Maggie Kinsella Input form received at 06/20/13 public workshop	<p>"I came because I was told this was a meeting to address needed improvements at Arne Hanna - the pool water qualify, temp control and air quality are really distressingly sub-par, inconsistent but always <u>bad</u>. This has been an ongoing problem for the entire 13 years I have lived here. I attended many meetings and participated in a process for change which did not happen. This is very frustrating."</p>	
3	7/1/13	Deborah Shaw Input form received following 6/20/13 public workshop	<p>I would like to have an ultraviolet filter installed for the pools in the Arne Hanna Aquatic Center, thus eliminating the need for chlorine.</p>	
4	7/1/13	Don Duffy Input form received following 6/20/13 public workshop	<p>I would like the PRO committee to look into the cost/benefit conditions of an <u>ultra-violet water treatment plan</u> for the Arne Hanna swimming pool. I have been told it would reduce or eliminate the need for so much chlorine, which some people find irritating or debilitating. I personally don't seem much inconvenienced, but find others who do. I am a regular, senior lap swimmer.</p>	
5	7/8/13	Diana Fewing Input form received following 6/20/13 public workshop	<p>Please remove chlorine from COB water system and switch to an ultra-violet system.</p>	
6	7/8/13	Michelle Daniels Input form received following 6/20/13 public workshop	<p>Chlorine is very unhealthy and not good for environment. People should not smell like swimming pools!</p>	
7	7/8/13	Kristie Marino Input form received following 6/20/13 public workshop	<p>My daughter would not come near me because I reeked of chlorine. I quit swimming.</p>	

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8	7/8/13	Teri Rexroat Input form received following 6/20/13 public workshop	Propose the new filter system to decrease chlorine.	
9	7/8/13	Colleen Wilson Input form received following 6/20/13 public workshop	Please improve chlorination system - don't like chlorine. I like the idea of a UV filter system!	
10	7/8/13	Caty Mack Input form received following 6/20/13 public workshop	Chlorine is hard on skin, eyes, hair. I would prefer swimming in a pool without chemicals. Thanks.	
11	7/8/13	Valerie Pennington Input form received following 6/20/13 public workshop	Yes I want to improve the pool and the new filtration system, which is more healthy for those who swim there. Chlorine is so unhealthy and discourages me from using the pool with my family.	
12	7/8/13	Gail McPherson-Kenny Input form received following 6/20/13 public workshop	There is such a difference in quality of swimming when chlorine isn't used for filtration purposes. I used to swim in an "ozone" cleaning pool at UCSC (Santa Clara), and it felt like swimming in a lake. I find swimming in chlorinated pools rough on my skin, hair and clothes. Please upgrade the system where so many children learn to swim.	
13	7/8/13	Karen Swanson Input form received following 6/20/13 public workshop	I would like to see the new ultra violet filter system in place at the pool. I would use this facility more often if chlorine free.	
14	7/8/13	Elaine Pace Input form received following 6/20/13 public workshop	I would like to see the filtration system changed to ultraviolet. My children have told me they won't swim at Arne Hanna because it has too much chlorine smell and gives them headaches after swimming.	
15	7/8/13	Christina Ashby Input form received following 6/20/13 public workshop	Would like to see a new pool filtration system that is less caustic to health.	

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16	7/8/13	Jan Ince-Miller Input form received following 6/20/13 public workshop	We need to get rid of chlorine. A new system would be much better than what is in place now.	
17	7/8/13	Ina O'Donnell Input form received following 6/20/13 public workshop	Would absolutely love to have the pool water be treated with something other than chlorine! I would love to swim at the pool and I don't now because of the chlorine.	
18	7/12/13	Jim Williams Input form received following 6/20/13 public workshop	I would favor a pool maintained with something other than chlorine. I have pretty much swam all my life and to date have given it up and in search of a sport I can do without itching. After swimming at Bellingham Aquatic Center I pay a high price for the activity. I find my skin very irritated and no matter what I try can't get it off of me. I also have sneezing fits. It takes a number of days before I even come close to feeling normal again. I've swam in pools elsewhere and do not go through all of this; most of them are in Canada.	
19	10/29/13	Gillian Brightwater Letter received following 10/24/13 public meeting	<u>Park Dept. Ideas</u> Lake Padden: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretive sign (remove in winter?) Animals to see & hear (with photos): ducks, geese, eagles, osprey, dragon & damsel flies, giant yellow swallowtail butterflies, water snails, turtles, muskrats, raven. Plants & trees? • Have section where people can write animals they've seen with a marker • Encourage nature classes at Padden "Swim with Dragonflies" • Don't feed or harass ducks/geese (I see it most of my summer outings). • Fall clean-up community wide: anglers leave trash, picnickers too. The GP Site: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put in habitat with pollution-eating snails & plants that also would attract birds. Add a viewing platform & interpretive sign. Habitat would be off limits to foot traffic of humans. Leave some log booms for seals needed warming sessions. • Create a cormorant rookery with vertical posts with cavities in 	

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			them. Anacortes ferry dock is such a marvel - you can see Pelagic Corm. in breeding colors busy building/sitting on nests & nestling in together, 10 ft. from your car - they've acclimated to living closely with humans.	
20	10/29/13	Gillian Brightwater Letter received following 10/24/13 public meeting	City Parks, I just sent a letter with ideas for the parks. Here's another idea. If the Parks has any say in the old GP site, here's another idea...an interpretive cultural center similar to the upcoming Heron Interpretive Center in Birch Bay State Park - small and beautifully designed. BP sponsors it and Friends of Birch Bay organized it and fundraised. "Friends of Bellingham Bay" could do similarly. Lummi and Nooksack Tribes could be involved.	
21	11/07/13	Wendy Harris Email received 11/06/13	<p>Subject: public comment on PRO Plan for 11.7.13 hearing</p> <p>The PRO Plan may be unable to meet open space goals for protection of habitat and species as currently drafted. It is a goal of both the greenway levy program and the PRO Plan to preserve open space and habitat, and the Parks Department has influence over use of greenway levy funds. Protecting wildlife against habitat fragmentation and degradation is also required under the city Critical Area Ordinance and the Shoreline Master Program, and is a strong community value. Thus, this is a city legal obligation.</p> <p>My suggestions and concerns with regard to open space are as follows:</p> <p><u>No Park Projects Focus on Habitat</u></p> <p>The open space goal is reflected in the Park PRO Plan as an unfunded, nonspecific goal, with an emphasis on education and acknowledgment ("recognizing" the issue.) Education is important but does not replace the need to set aside land for preservation of local species. I see no specific projects in the PRO Plan that are identified for the protection of habitat and species. (Perhaps they exist, but they are not set out in the PRO Plan, and if so, this should be corrected.) The only reference to increased open space, at Barkley Park, is to extend the lawn.</p> <p>As the city continues to grow, greater amounts of habitat are destroyed through shoreline redevelopment, removal of forest cover, and drainage of wetlands. Land that remains for development is increasingly composed of</p>	

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			<p>critical areas crucial to wildlife, such as habitat conservation areas, wetlands and steeply sloped forest lands. Local wildlife is dependent upon public land and sound planning for survival. It is our moral and legal obligation to compensate species for the habitat that we have taken from them. City owned park land should be reflected in the PRO Plan as an important means by which the city achieves “no net loss” in net habitat and biodiversity.</p> <p>The PRO Plan should more clearly reflect the Parks Department’s obligation to plan parks and open space on behalf of human <i>and wildlife species</i>, with the understanding that this will sometimes result in land remaining undeveloped, with restricted access. This is not currently reflected in the PRO Plan.</p> <p>The PRO Plan needs to be amended to reflect funded, specific projects intended to protect habitat and local species. Lofty conservation goals are nice, but ultimately meaningless without concrete actions. Without dedicated, funded projects, the PRO Plan open space goals, and the public’s intent reflected in greenway levy funding, will not be implemented.</p> <p><u>Parks Need to Avoid and Mitigate Habitat Impacts</u></p> <p>Habitat protection does not happen by accident. It requires research, analysis and deliberate planning, which appears to be missing here. For example, the city has no quantifiable, data-driven baseline standard with which to monitor changes in ecological function. While the PRO Plan contains a map reflecting general habitat corridors, the Parks Department continues to develop parks, reflected in the proposed facilities chart, irrespective of wildlife issues.</p> <p>And habitat issues need to be considered NOW, before the Parks Department goes ahead with all of the park development reflected in its plan. In particular, the Parks Department needs to analyze the various migration corridors in the city, (air, land and water) to ensure that park development does not create harmful barriers that isolate species populations and prevent genetic exchange. Roads and barriers poorly placed create habitat sinks that are extremely harmful to local species.</p>	
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			<p>Compensatory mitigation needs to be provided for harmful park development impacts. The city continues to pretend that parks and trails result in habitat improvement, such that no mitigation is required. This is contrary to science and common sense. Habitat value is destroyed by the intensified use of land by people and pets. Landscape changes have many negative impacts, such as noise, lights, glare, loss of vegetative cover, increased impervious surface, application of chemicals and fertilizers, creation of new roads, increased pedestrian, road and boat traffic, drainage of wetlands and creeks, and habitat fragmentation.</p> <p>I recommend a specific policy in the PRO Plan that acknowledges that development of parks, and the intensified use that follows, has generally harmful impacts on wildlife species, and that these impacts require mitigation. The PRO Plan should also reflect the use of science based habitat buffers within city parks to adequately protect local species.</p> <p><u>Comprehensive Conservation Strategy</u> Protecting wildlife requires creation of a comprehensive conservation strategy that identifies and protects important habitat and establishes buffers and connectivity links between habitat patches. This conservation strategy is needed before the city blindly develops future parks without understanding the impacts on local wildlife.</p> <p>This should have been reviewed pursuant to a SEPA Environment Impact Statement (EIS). Instead, the city issued a SEPA Determination of Nonsignificance (DNS). I urge you to reconsider the need to conduct an EIS that can be used to craft a comprehensive conservation strategy. This would address many needs, including the wildlife and habitat analysis needed for the waterfront, and identification of areas too sensitive to develop, as well as areas appropriate for offsite mitigation, providing greater certainty and less expense for developers.</p> <p>The city should consult with a field wildlife biologist (terrestrial species and birds) and follow up on the data gaps that were set out in the 1995 and 2003 COB wildlife and habitat study by Ann Eissinger of Nahkeeta</p>	
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			<p>Northwest. The city's habitat restoration master plan efforts, which are on-going, leave dangerous and inexcusable habitat connectivity gaps. (Lake Whatcom watershed is excluded, as are some shoreline areas and streams.) It also fails to create a quantifiable baseline standard for local species from which to measure biodiversity, which is the entire purpose for protecting habitat.</p> <p><u>Current Park Plans Are Harmful To Wildlife</u></p> <p>I ask the city to consider the harmful impacts of projects reflected in the PRO Plan, and make revisions accordingly. Currently, many planned park projects will have an extremely harmful affect on local wildlife, in contradiction of the open space goal. In particular, the Parks Department is developing shorelines without concern for wildlife impacts and without providing compensatory mitigation. Public access and habitat are not compatible goals, and each must be planned for separately.</p> <p>Instead, the Parks Department is restoring the shorelines of Bellingham Bay from Boulevard Park to the end of the Waterfront District to allow access for people, pets and recreational watercraft. It is pretending this has habitat value. Intensified human use of shorelines is associated with loss of biodiversity and ecological degradation, and at a minimum, requires compensatory mitigation, although the Parks Department is providing none.</p> <p>It is proceeding with a large ½ mile over water bridge, which has been established by science to be one of the most ecologically damaging forms of development. Concerns over the harmful impacts on ecological function led Washington to adopt Aquatic Habitat Guidelines. Unfortunately, these guidelines are voluntary, which has allowed the Parks Department to proceed with an expensive park project despite the ecological damage it can be expected to cause.</p> <p>New parks planned in the northern part of town will have particularly harmful impact as it will destroy forested cover, riparian corridors and wetlands in undeveloped parts of town. The city must provide compensatory mitigation for any impacts and the new PRO Plan should</p>	
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			<p>provide clearly stated policies linking various land use elements and park activities to specific wildlife requirements. New parks should not be sited in areas of high habitat value, or in travel corridors, and this analysis must be done before land is purchased and selected for park development.</p> <p>Thank you for considering my comments on the updated PRO Plan.</p> <p>Sincerely, Wendy Harris</p>	
22	11/14/13	Gaythia Weis	<p>Overview:</p> <p>A city is more than a sum of a series of component parts. If handled correctly, it is more like a woven tapestry than a bundle of disconnected threads. If poorly conceived, narrowly executed and then managed in a sectarian, compartmentalized fashion, the tapestry is never constructed. The strength, and the sense of connectedness of the community disintegrates, or is never created, just as threads might end up as nothing but snarls and tangles.</p> <p>Viewed in isolation, in the limited box created for the plan objectives, the City of Bellingham Parks and Recreation Department's "ProPlan" is a good enough plan. Apparently one of the goals here is to serve as a vehicle for applying for parks related grants. The plan is reasonably well written and I can accept Park Design and Development Manager, Leslie Bryson's word that it serves the City of Bellingham well as the city competes against communities of similar size for grant monies. It is, after all very much like the previous plan and that plan apparently worked effectively for this purpose. But the plan lacks an overarching conception of its role in the city's future. It does not seem to be designed to fit as one key component of an analysis of city operations and planning on a systems wide basis.</p> <p>I think that the 2014 ProPlan fails to convey the exceptional and uniquely wonderful attributes of our city. In focusing on a narrow set of threads, it fails to describe, define determine the future of the wonderful breadth of Parks and Recreational related assets available to citizens and visitors to</p>	

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			<p>Bellingham. In limiting itself to its defined six year contextual time frame it lacks vision. There is little sense here, for example, that the City of Bellingham is on the cusp of developing a rejuvenated waterfront. Or that the acquisition by Whatcom County of lands along Lake Whatcom might drive demands for trail usage heading in that direction. This failure to fully describe and define these attributes also is an indication of trouble ahead. Some cities, sited on a flat prairie for example, might do well with a plan that simply delivers a set formula of parks within a half mile of residents. And this strong sense of local neighborhood is important for Bellingham also. But Bellingham has so much more than that. Our stupendous natural surroundings are a key economic asset.</p> <p>Not spelling out how key linkages, such as neighborhood feeder trails, water absorbing and purifying forests and wetlands or wildlife habitat corridors are to be protected going forward sadly guarantees that much will be lost as development continues.</p> <p>Trails and Pedestrian Connectivity. The use of the major trails requires access from neighborhoods. Much of this access is by way of smaller feeder trails. There is a disconnect between the Parks ProPlan and the City's Pedestrian Plan http://www.cob.org/documents/pw/transportation/pedestrian-planning/bpmp-final-plan-7-16-12.pdf. Some pathways, depicted in the pedestrian plan, are not shown in the Parks ProPlan. Some of these are on vacated street right of ways and thus fall under Public Works rather than Parks. Some are informal and not maintained by anyone. As pointed out in a comment by someone at the Parks presentation held on October 24th, this leads to situations in which there is uncertainty as to whether or not a pathway is public. In my opinion, this also leads to non-egalitarian access. Those of us who are insiders, and familiar with area pathways use them, others may be hesitant to use an unlabeled trail. Signage is desirable but expensive. There should be a commitment to post signs over time. But in the meantime, the public uses maps within documents such as the ProPlan to plan walks and hikes. They may be seeking ways to get from "here" to "there". Or they may be interested in just getting out for a little exercise, perhaps with their dog, in an interesting circular loop. Either way, maps</p>	

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			<p>should give all of the options. The public views this as one city. If departments want to retain turf rights, different colors could be used. I think that some city employees fear that if unmaintained trails are shown this will precipitate demands for servicing them. I believe that this should be viewed as an opportunity, rather than a threat. Identification of potential improvements helps to point out the importance of paying for government services and also aids in the solicitation volunteer auxiliary support. The Bellingham Parks Department already has an excellent program for volunteer efforts, spearheaded by Rae Edwards. But sometimes departmental turf considerations get in the way of efforts of citizens to volunteer support. Again, a one city approach is needed.</p> <p>Habitat Corridors. The Parks ProPlan has a map showing swaths of Habitat corridors crossing the city. These are somewhat dishonest in ways that have both positive and negative impacts on the image and reality of the city. Again, department divisions seem to be getting impeding the process. The Plan fails to highlight key breaks, as at major roadways or housing and commercial developments. Pointing these breaks out would provide incentive for mitigation of effects. With wildlife crossing warning signage, perhaps. Or explanations regarding streams draining to the Bay, and the importance of avoiding contamination of the waters. And, by preservation of mini refuges and corridors. And, these designations can inspire and provide public support for more major improvements. Also, very significant work that has already been done could be highlighted, as for example, the enhancements of Padden Creek at Fairhaven Parkway. This work enhances parks habitat connectivity even if roads are under the jurisdiction of Public Works.</p> <p>The 2014 ProPlan also fails to highlight that the City actually is in the process of developing a habitat master plan. This process, like road culvert work, just happens to fall within the Public Works Department: http://www.cob.org/services/environment/restoration/plan.aspx. Those attending various Parks meetings or reading the ProPlan might reasonably conclude that the city is doing little detailed work in this area. The public rightly views Bellingham as a unified city, not a series of isolated departments. A circumscribed approach within the city as to which turf</p>	

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			<p>belongs within which department not only inhibits the ability to grasp city processes, it impedes the ability of the city itself to function well. Unity of purpose here within the various city departments is essential for habitat protection.</p> <p>What specific relationship is there between the planning process currently going on for our waterfront development and the fact that the waterfront in its entirety is under a green swath of habitat corridor according to this ProPlan?</p> <p>Planning and Development: Too much of the city's planning and development work is taking place by disconnected bits and pieces .</p> <p>Waterfront planning, as cited under habitat above, seems to be an area where potential for creation and preservation of aquatic and near-shore habitat is in danger of being lost. Pocket beaches with heavy human use are not wildlife habitat. Sea level rise may obliterate those areas set aside for both habitat and human recreation. Perhaps very little, if any of the waterfront parks development will take place within the next 6 years. But much advance planning is needed. Wildlife habitat planning requires a broad overarching vision, as well as detailed studies of individual areas of significance. Impacts from sea level rise and sedimentation patterns require much detailed scientific analysis and planning. It is hard to see how this can be accomplished with barriers between the departments, and sections of departments, that do planning, those that control development, those that control natural lands, those with pollution and contamination control concerns, and those writing habitat plans.</p> <p>Wildlife habitat and natural water quality are components that seems likely to fall victim to this hemmed in thought process. Another is the relationship between forested hillsides and lowland wetlands that are a key asset of urban flood control. How will the genetic diversity of wildlife within Sehome Hill Arboretum fare as this refuge is surrounded by neighborhoods driven by a policy of aggressive urban infill? Can the city storm water system, or the remaining creeks and wetlands handle increased runoff from future increases in impervious and non-transpiring paved and built areas as</p>	
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			<p>city development continues towards the outskirts? Will the amounts and the quality of these runoff waters impair fish habitat?</p> <p>New housing projects need to be accompanied by provisions for parks. The 2014 ProPlan appears to be doing a reasonable job at playing catchup with north side city development by the provision of new parks and trails. But right now, there are new housing developments in the planning process. In my neighborhood, Puget, for example, these involve an additional 1000 or more units in an area far from parks services. Provision for small parks should be an integral part of large scale development planning.</p> <p>Open Space Our open space is a tremendous environmental and economic asset that sets Bellingham above and apart from almost all other similar cities of its size. It is in the best interest of Bellingham to enhance these assets and to use them wisely.</p> <p>I believe that this plan is seriously remiss in not designating the beach and tidelands of areas such as Locust Beach as open space in the ProPlan. This is an utterly amazing stretch of natural lands for a city to have at its boundaries. There should be, or by the time this is approved, should have been, public opportunities for discussion of tidelands city lands surplus as part of the waterfront development plan with an eye towards how these properties might or might not affect habitat and recreation opportunities.</p> <p>Similarly, the potential open space of the “conveyance” lands along Lake Whatcom should also be shown and considered in context with the 2014 ProPlan. Even though the lands are owned by the county, their presence should affect how trails and pathways in the nearby portions of the city are planned and designed for access. And it will serve as a key asset for our city, in terms of recreation, habitat accessible by wildlife residing in and moving through city wildlife corridors and for city water quality.</p> <p>The city also owns many smaller bits and pieces of land. Many of these play important roles in preserving our forest canopy and providing small refuges for wildlife. They also enhance the envelope of nature surrounding humans in our city. Because these are not always designated as public with signage,</p>	
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			<p>they frequently are usurped by owners of neighboring properties. At the very least an inventory of such properties should be available online. If actively managed as truly public lands, these properties can increase public support for the Parks department and for Greenway initiatives. There is little incentive to support the funding of Greenway purchases if the public sees that some such lands end up being privatized either formally or informally at later times.</p> <p>Recreation I believe that the city is doing a good job overall in provision of standard city parks amenities. We have good programs for many recreational activities and the Parks Department has done a good job at adapting to changing interests and use patterns.</p> <p>But again, I feel that we are failing to highlight our exceptional setting and potentials. Sure, we have an aquatic center, skateboard park and athletic fields. The Parks Department is flexible and can add new activities, as residents organize to request them, such as pickle ball or lacrosse, or off leash dog parks.</p> <p>But how many cities could provide sailboarding, skim boarding or sea kayaking? Or ready access to serious mountain bike trails? Some of us who may never do these activities ourselves can still recognize their importance in making Bellingham a unique and a very vibrant place.</p> <p>Conclusion:</p> <p>Overall, I believe that the 2014 ProPlan can do much more to accentuate, enhance and protect the exceptional nature of Bellingham.</p>	