

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bainbridge Island has continued to change since the last comprehensive planning effort in 2014. The choices that confront the island at the present time are significant and could alter the character and quality of park, recreation, and open space facilities and services if not adequately planned. This document outlines the choices that are available and the means for implementing preferred actions of most benefit to island residents.

An overarching purpose for this update to the comprehensive plan is to help guide Park District policy makers in making sound strategic decisions about the future course of the District.

Since the last comprehensive plan update, Bainbridge Island has continued to grow. Bainbridge Island's recent and continued future growth to the Winslow core area, neighborhood centers, and rural areas will present choices to island residents that will determine community livability, landscapes, and character.

This update of the Park District's comprehensive plan (referred to at times as PROS) is based on: 1) an assessment of existing program offerings and public, non-profit, and private property ownerships; and 2) the results from community surveys and public meetings.

DOCUMENT HIGHLIGHTS

This updated 2020 Comprehensive Plan of the Park District identifies additional land or facilities that are recommended to be added and are based on projected population and a level-of-service per 1,000 persons.

Ratio is expressed per 1,000 residents within the urban growth area (i.e. the island) and is based on the 2020 city population of 25,377. A forecasted ___% population increase is projected by 2040 with a total city population of 33,611 at that time.

Island residents continue to value parks, trails and open space as indicated in surveys conducted as part of this update.

The Park District currently owns 1,504.37 acres of parks, trails and open space properties distributed across the island, or 59.28 acres per 1,000 residents. There is a specific need now and in the future to increase parks, amenities, and open space properties across the island including Winslow and the other neighborhood centers.

An additional 1296.25 acres of land on the island that serves a recreational function is owned by other agencies and organizations such as the City of Bainbridge Island (COBI), the Bainbridge Island School District (BISD), the Bainbridge Island Land Trust (BILT) and IslandWood.

There is a projected shortfall of parkland, trails and open space, facilities, and programs on the island as the population continues to grow.

This PROS plan presents ways to meet the increased demands of population growth as summarized in the Level of Service (LOS) section. Highest areas of concern relate to maintaining levels of service for park acreage, shoreline access, and trail mileage, as well as levels of service for facilities such as playgrounds, courts, ballfields, and community facilities improvements. Other areas of concern include changing climate, sustainability and other environmental issues.

As lead agency on the island for parks and recreation, the Park District will take leadership in acquiring, developing, managing and conserving these additional resources. This does not preclude other jurisdictions from doing the same.

To meet future needs, the Park District will continue to provide recreational programs, and work in partnership with other agencies and organizations to generate a wide variety of offerings for the growing population. Increasing program offerings is dependent upon increasing acreage for parks and facilities. This PROS plan provides ways to meet this increased demand.

APPROACH

This plan analyzed the supply, demand, and need for public and recreation facilities and services within Bainbridge Island incorporated limits, i.e. the entire island. The enclosed inventory includes a comprehensive assessment of public and private land, facilities and services provided on the island. The Park District's Park Board of Commissioners and staff members has overseen this planning process. The proposals contained within this document represent community priorities and preferences.

INVENTORY STRUCTURE

The Park District and other public/private agencies have amassed a significant amount of acreage that is captured in this inventory and includes the following park classifications: 1) natural areas, 2) recreational shoreline, 3) recreational trails, 4) indoor facilities and community centers, 5) special purpose facilities, and 6) support facilities.

In addition to the above classifications, the inventory also indicates sub-categories as a way of providing a general description for each park property. These sub-categories identify parks as community, regional, neighborhood, open space, or special use park properties.

A portion of the inventory includes regional facilities that are used by populations who reside outside of Bainbridge Island's service area boundaries even though the maintenance and operation of these sites is performed and financed by the Park District.

OPPORTUNITIES

A valuable park, recreation, and open space system includes lands that are set aside or land banked for environmental purposes. This might include lands that provide unique preserves, habitats, or cultural purposes. The social and physical attributes these lands offer when combined with more active use parkland provides a balanced dimension to the park and recreation experience.

There are a number of unique and important sites on the island that are owned or controlled by other entities such as other public agencies and non-profit and private organizations that provide a variety of physical and socially valuable park, recreational, and open space characteristics.

A quality park and recreation system does not have to be developed or managed strictly through public monies or purchase. It can also utilize the interplay of public and private market resources using a variety of techniques including leases, easements, tax incentives, design and development innovations, and private property donations. Park, recreation, and open space acquisition strategies may use traditional purchase options as well as cost effective alternatives.

FUTURE GROWTH IMPLICATIONS

The WA State Office of Budget & Management projects the island's population to increase from 25,377 persons in 2020 to an estimated 33,611 persons by the year 2040 (i.e. ___% more persons).

This forecasted population increase will create significant requirements for all types of park, recreation, and open space lands and facilities. This will especially affect the Park District which provides the majority of park, recreation, and open space facilities on the island.

The population forecasts do not include the expected increases in off-island residents and tourists from Seattle or elsewhere who also use Park District parks, recreational facilities, trails, and open spaces. The forecasts also do not account for the impact of off island park use on local residents such as overuse and crowding of parks and facilities.

The following chart illustrates the existing supply outlined in this plan.

Existing Level-Of-Service

	2020 Supply
Land acres	1504.37
Facility units sq ft	90,671

The chart below illustrates a summary of proposed levels-of-service that encapsulate standards, public sentiment and policy direction. Details are included in Chapter 6 Levels-of-Service.

Proposed Level-Of-Service Requirement (2020-2040)

	2020 Supply	2040 Add	2040 total
Land acres	1,504.374	488.46	1992.83
Facility units sq ft	90,671	156,034	***246,705

***To be determined: additional facility units determined by phase development of Sakai Park concept plan, selection of Ray Williamson Pool replacement option, and site design for playgrounds, picnic shelters, courts, ballfields, off leash dog areas, skate furnishings, etc.

The proposed level-of-service (PLOS) for the forecasted population increase will create an island-wide proposal for an additional 488.46 acres of land and an increase in square footage of at least 156,064 facility units (square feet) by the year 2040.

Limitations to Public Enjoyment

If no action is taken and the District fails to expand park facilities as outlined in these proposals, the present trend of population growth may:

- Encroach upon or preclude the preservation of and public accessibility to the more sensitive and aesthetic environmental sites, particularly those proposed for cross island trail corridors, sensitive land along riparian corridors, and saltwater shoreline, all for the purpose of recreation, preservation or restoration purposes.
- Preclude the purchase and development of suitable lands for playgrounds, picnic shelters, waterfront access, and other neighborhood center park development, such as in Winslow and Rolling Bay.

Consequently, island residents would suffer a degradation of services over time, such as having to:

- Use overcrowded park facilities on the island (parks, trails, playgrounds, etc.).
- Commute off the island to utilize park facilities and programs of other jurisdictions.
- Face a reduction in available park services and programs due to island facilities reaching their maximum capacity.

Such actions would be to the detriment of island residents who have paid for the costs of developing and operating these facilities.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The levels of facility investment required to achieve the PLOS of projected needs will not be possible if financed solely with the Park District's resources using traditional funding/financing methods. To develop, manage and maintain a comprehensive, independent park, recreation, and open space system, additional funding sources will be needed.

Meeting the projected needs will require an island-wide financing approach by the Park District and where appropriate involve partnerships with other public and non-profit or for-profit agencies such as the City of Bainbridge Island, WA State, the federal government, Bainbridge Island Land Trust, and the Rotary Club of Bainbridge Island. An island-wide approach may use a combination of shared user fees, excise taxes, donations, joint grant applications, voter approved property tax levies/bonds, and possible impact fees to maintain and improve facilities in the face of continued island population increases.

ROLE RECOMMENDATIONS BY FUNCTION

This plan recommends that the Park District undertake a modified strategic approach to island services where the Park District assumes responsibility for those functions, and helps coordinate or support those functions and activities that have other viable sponsors. For example:

Lead & Coordinating Activities

The primary function and responsibility of the Bainbridge Island Metropolitan Park & Recreation District is to serve as the lead agency and primary provider of park and recreation services for Bainbridge Island. As a single-purpose government agency, the Park District maintains legal authority to levy local taxes for the sole purpose of parks and recreation.

The City of Bainbridge Island (COBI), a separate public jurisdiction, serves in a general purpose government role and affects the Park District with its regulatory policies and procedures. In addition, while the Bainbridge Island School District's (BISD) main function is education, it coordinates with the Park District in recreation programming and facility sharing.

The Park District will take the lead role in providing information and coordinating services for parks, open space, recreational trail facilities, and recreation program activities on an island-wide basis. The Park District's role will include inventories of existing and proposed park land and facility developments, identification of probable island-wide and local neighborhood facility and program needs, and proposals of island-wide facility and program solutions.

Planning and Development

The Park District will provide detailed planning and development functions when:

- The recognized need falls within the Park District's mission statement,
- The activity involves site impacts or environmental consequences related to the Park District's mission statement.

Development, Operation and Maintenance

The Park District will develop, operate or maintain park, open space, trail, recreational facilities and recreation program activities provided:

- The facility will have broad benefits for a large proportion of the island-wide population and will be financed using approved methods, or
- Facility development and operating costs will be recaptured from direct charges of the populations who use the facility, or
- Facility development and operating costs will be compensated in some manner through interlocal agreements with the using agency or benefiting user group, or
- The site or facility has intrinsic value apart from traditional operation and maintenance needs, such as a passive natural area or wetland preservation.

RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING

The Park District will provide a comprehensive recreation program that includes a wide variety of activities accommodating the interests of island residents, regardless of age, skill level, income.

Recreation program offerings will include activities providing recreation, health, education, social, and other welfare activities for children, teens, adults, seniors, and special populations.

These programs will be conducted by Park District staff or contractors. However, when practical and consistent with the Park District's mission and depending on demand, cost, and feasibility, the Park District will also coordinate with programs conducted by other public, non-profit, or for-profit organizations and vendors.

The Park District program offerings will include activities that will be conducted in Park District parks, facilities, aquatic center, outdoor activities and trails. When appropriate, Park District program offerings may also be conducted in schools, other public facilities, non-profit and for-profit sites/facilities as well as occasional off-site locations.

CURRENT PARKS AND DEVELOPMENT PLANS

The proposals described in this plan refer to sites that provide a significant type of park, recreation, or open space addition or improvement. Any particular site may include one or all of the described element plan features. The proposals in the following chapters describe the improvements that may be accomplished under each major type of plan element.

For a composite description of plan elements, see Chapter 4. To see what is currently available in the Park District's parks as well as possible future improvements, see Chapter 5. For overall existing land classifications and ownership, see the inventory at the beginning of Chapter 4.

SURVEY

To determine resident sentiment on Bainbridge Island for recreation, park and open space needs and priorities, in May 2019, the Park District contracted with the firm EnviroIssues to conduct community meetings, survey and online forum resulting in 1557 responses from the community. These responses provide for this PROS plan an overview of community preference, participatory use, and satisfaction with parks and facilities. Key themes are identified. For the EnviroIssues summary report and data, see Appendix ___.

The community's priorities include water-based and trail-based recreation as the highest priorities. Indoor/outdoor facilities for court uses are of high interest. The community's concerns relate to conflicting use on trails and mountain bike conflicts. Preference was shown for expanded off-leash dog opportunities. While there was substantial acknowledgement of the breadth and depth of park programs, many requested expanded hours to accommodate more people, work and life schedules.

The 2017 National Citizen Survey, which the City of Bainbridge Island periodically participates in, provides another survey source and indicates the following satisfaction levels for the island: recreation opportunities 87%; recreation centers 85%; open space 75%; paths and walking trails 68%. This concurs with the sentiment learned from the EnviroIssues report in that it indicates a generally high satisfaction level in the community with a desire for expanded opportunities. (Reference: The National Citizen Survey, Bainbridge Island, WA "Trends Over Time" 2017).

FINANCING

The Capital Improvement Plan with potential funding sources is included in Chapter 7 and shows priorities in for a 6-year and 20-year timeframe. To achieve what is called out in the CIP and implement the plan elements, a number of financial strategies will be needed. Major projects such as a recreation community center at Sakai Park or the replacement of the Ray Williamson Pool will require multiple funding sources including an island-wide property tax levy or bond.

It should be noted that some of the financial resource options mentioned in Chapter 7 as funding possibilities are dependent upon agreements with other public agencies since not within the authority of the Park District, such as real estate related tax mechanisms known as REET and park growth impact fees.