CHAPTER 4.3 RECREATIONAL TRAILS

The Recreational Trails classification categorizes park land that has recreational trails. Recreational Trails are primarily off-road, soft surface, non-motorized trails intended primarily for enjoyment and exercise, and include:

- Trails through natural areas,
- Trail corridors within parks,
- Trails that connect parks to parks,
- Trails that connect neighborhoods to parks, especially where a walking route provides closer access than via existing roads
- Trails that connect parks to the shoreline
- Trails that connect parks to points of interest
- Trails that connect parks to public spaces
- Trails that connect parks to transportation corridors

The Park District is responsible for the planning, development, operation, and maintenance of recreational trails, including water trail facilities and infrastructure. The District will continue to collaborate with other public and private agencies to assure that multi-jurisdictional trail to trail and road to trail connections are well coordinated and cost-effective.

The following Trails Vision Plan outlines the future direction for expansion of recreational trail inventory and how these recreational trails connect to other jurisdictional trail systems. Included as part of the Trails Vision Plan are several attachments that indicate the existing trail inventory, possible future recreational trails, water access trails, trails standards and trail details.

This plan has been drafted by Park District Staff in coordination with the Trails Advisory Committee, as well as in consultation with the City of Bainbridge Island, Bainbridge Island Parks Foundation, and citizen input through the comprehensive plan public engagement process.
Bainbridge Island Metropolitan Park & Recreation District

Recreational Trails Vision Plan

March 6, 2020

Introduction

This Trails Vision Plan serves as a guiding document for the Bainbridge Island Metropolitan Park & Recreation District (BIMPRD) to use in acquiring, planning, developing and maintaining recreational trails on Bainbridge Island.

Purpose

The purpose of the Trails Vision Plan is to provide the District and the community with a guide for the future growth of recreational trails on the island.

Vision Statement

Develop community through a system of interconnected trails, and trail infrastructure, that offer prescribed, healthy, outdoor experiences, within a rich variety of landscapes and natural habitats.

Goals of the Trails Vision Plan

- Promote health and wellness for community members with nature trails for pedestrian, bicycling, and equestrian use.
- Provide access/educate the community about conservation and preservation of our natural resources through a system of prescribed trails, carefully laid out to minimize impacts to sensitive areas and routed to avoid significant tree removal.
- Provide for community connections to highlight our unique historical venues, park landscapes and the island’s natural beauty.
- Increase community connections between the Winslow core, parks, recreation centers, schools and neighborhoods by linking to other publicly maintained non-motorized corridors.
- Partner and collaborate with other agencies and non-profits on opportunities, as they arise, for key connections and trail system development and expansion.
- Develop and implement a trail classification system that meets the needs of a large variety of user types and abilities.
- Develop trail connections by integrating multi-jurisdiction trails, such as District recreational trails and the City of Bainbridge Island’s non-motorized transportation corridors, to create long distance routes north and south, and east and west.
- Promote education of trail use that include trail etiquette, conservation, preservation, and leave-no-trace principles.
- Design trails that protect, conserve, and blend in with the natural landscape by maintaining tree canopy and minimize impacts to natural stormwater flows.
- Design multi-use trails for public use that carefully consider the impacts to wildlife.
- Enhance and support the volunteer program for citizens and organizations to assist with trail maintenance activities.

Community Benefits of an Interconnected Trail System

Trails provide numerous quality of life, environmental, and economic benefits to the individuals they serve and the communities in which they are located.

Examples of the benefits of a well-developed trail system:

- Increases recreational and health opportunities.
• Satisfies the high local public expectation for quality trails, parks, open space and outdoor recreation.
• Provides benefits to the environment by connecting people with the natural environment.
• Preserves important natural areas and habitats.
• Provides protection of sensitive landscapes, natural areas, and habitats by allowing education and access to these landscapes.
• Provides social benefits by connecting people with neighbors and generating a stronger sense of community.
• Provides a sense of spiritual, mental, and emotional well-being through immersion in nature, as well as moments of peace and tranquility in an increasingly noisy world.
• Increases public access to historical, cultural and natural environment.
• Provides interconnected trail systems that encourage active transportation.
• Provides for non-motorized options of travel
• Increases tourism.
• Increases property value.
• Reduces green house gas emissions by providing alternatives to automobile travel.
• Provides fish and wildlife viewing opportunities.

**Trail Development**

The Park District assumes the major responsibility for the planning, development, and operation of a variety of recreational based trails. Trail types primarily include off-road multi-use (hike/bike/equestrian) soft surface trails, and water trails.

The following principles should guide trail development decisions:

- Purposely prescribe use of sensitive areas by carefully routing trails to minimize impact while providing for public access and educational opportunities.
- Consider and include trail corridors and trail infrastructure that enhance emergency access and wayfinding.
- Utilize “Best Management Practices”, techniques, and the latest industry trends in the development of recreational trail systems that create the least impact to natural areas in the planning phase of trails and during construction activities.
- Seek educational opportunities for staff and volunteers on the latest “Best Management Practices”, techniques, and trends in construction and maintenance of recreational trail systems.
- Consider potential user conflicts in the development of site-specific trail development. Special-use trail systems may need to be considered as community needs arise.
- Develop trail design and standards that are easy to maintain and access by maintenance, security, and other appropriate personnel, equipment, and vehicles.
- Trail development should include an island-circumnavigating water trail, and regional water trail designation for non-motorized small watercraft such as kayaks, canoes, etc. This could include designations such as the Cascadia Marine Trail. The trail may incorporate and improve a system of boat ramps, landings, and other general improvements to public facilities, such as drinking water, restrooms, picnic tables, etc., where practical.
- Coordinate with the City of Bainbridge Island to identify low-use roads and other sources when possible to increase connectivity.

**Trail Development Priorities**

Specific trail priorities will be set by the District Board of Commissioners, primarily during the annual budget development process, with the possibility of adjustments throughout the year.

The District will focus its trail resources on the priorities established by the District Board annually. Trail priorities are subject to change and may include the following, in no specific order:
• Trails between parks (e.g. Forest to Sky Trail).
• Trails within parks (e.g. Grand Forest Trails).
• Trails that lead to points of interest, such as shoreline access or viewpoints.
• Trails that connect neighborhoods to parks, especially where a walking route provides closer access than via existing roads.
• Cross-Island trails (East/West, North/South) independent of the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan, Core 40.
• Trail development that includes a series of trailheads, trailside rest stops, viewpoints, interpretive exhibits, and trail signage systems that integrate hike, bike, and horse trails with specific historical, cultural, environmental, and scenic points of interest.
• Trails linking parks to COBI’s Non-motorized Transportation Plan, Core 40 corridor. (See Appendix J).
• Trail projects that enhance emergency personnel’s access to trail users and ability to protect community assets.
• Trail projects that can increase accessible trail options.
• Trails that are likely to receive the heaviest usage, and as a result benefit the greatest number of users.

Acknowledgements

• The Park District acknowledges COBI as the lead agency for development and maintenance of road ends and on-road pedestrian and bicycle touring routes and scenic drives. The Park District may consider management, or transfer of ownership, of trails that meet the District’s established criteria of recreational trails in this plan.

• The Park District will, wherever feasible, connect recreational soft surface trails with other, publicly accessible, jurisdictional trails systems (including public, private, and non-profit entities) to provide public routes that can be utilized by a variety of users. Where these connections occur, there will be transitions from other jurisdictional trail standards to District recreational trail standards.

• The Park District will partner with public, private, and non-profit entities when available and applicable to expand, develop and maintain an integrated system of trails on Bainbridge Island.

• When consistent with the established criteria of recreational trails in this plan, the Park District may coordinate with other agencies to create a water trail around Bainbridge Island for non-motorized small watercraft utilizing park properties, road ends and other public properties.

Implementation

On an annual basis the Board, with input from staff, the Parkland Acquisition Committee, and the Trails Advisory Committee, and consultation with other jurisdictional planners (such as COBI) and non-profits (such as the Park Foundation) will determine through the budget development process, which trail projects to prioritize.

While plans will be set annually, the District should remain flexible to take advantage of unforeseen opportunities as they arise to improve, expand, or create connections across the Island within the Districts trail systems and to other public trail systems.

Inventory

The District strives to provide quality trails to all user types. Generally, the District’s priority is to provide inclusive, multi-use trails rather than exclusive, use-specific trails. However, community needs, and expectations may warrant the consideration of special use trails, or trail systems to avoid predictable user
conflicts. Special use options may include pedestrian-only trails, equestrian trails, off-leash dog trails, mountain bike trails, and water trails.

The District currently uses a trail classification system with 3 trail categories. Generally, trails are multi-use and any trail restrictions are posted on specific trails if applicable. This system consists of the following trail classifications and is inventoried on the attached map.

- **Class I** trails are wide enough for users to pass from opposite directions without leaving the trail or having to stop to make way for another user. Class I trails are the standard of choice for major trails in the park system.

- **Class II** trails are recreational trails that serve as secondary loops or trails within parks and are easily accessed by parking areas or other close points of entry.

- **Class III** trails are recreational trails that provide a more intimate experience through natural areas or trails that traverse difficult terrain and provide access to points of interest, such as shoreline access, scenic views, sensitive areas, or historic sites.

- An additional classification could be considered for transportation corridors that would need to be funded by COBI, other agencies, or donation/grant opportunities. These corridors would be vetted by the District and approved by the Board of Commissioners. Alternative hardened surfaces (such as a bonded wood or similar product) would be preferred over concrete or asphalt.

- The District should collaborate with COBI on a standard classification of trail where parks connects to the Sound to Olympics trail, or similar, regional shared-use paths traverse through park property. (up to 8 feet wide with a 12% maximum grade).

- Where approved by the Board of Commissioners, the City of Bainbridge Island will be allowed to construct sections of the Sound to Olympic Trail through District property to the 10 to 12 feet wide standard, similar to the existing completed sections of the STO.

**Attachments**

1. Attachment 1: Graphic - Trail Vision Plan
2. Attachment 2: Graphic - Trail Inventory
3. Attachment 3: Graphic - Water Access/Trail
4. Attachment 4: Chart - Trail Standards
5. Attachment 5: Trail Details (a: standard trail, b: multipurpose trail, c: multi-jurisdictional corridor trail connection, d: accessible trail)

This plan serves as an update to the Bainbridge Island Metropolitan Park & Recreation District's 2020 Comprehensive Plan.

Any changes to this Trails Vision Plan including attachments will require a formal process to amend the Comprehensive Plan.
Legend
- Class I Trails
- Class II Trails
- Class III Trails
## Trail Standards

**Trail Classification System**  
Bainbridge Island Metro Park & Recreation District  
March 6, 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trail Attributes</th>
<th>Trail Class 1</th>
<th>Trail Class 2</th>
<th>Trail Class 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trail Attributes</strong></td>
<td>Main Trails or Loops, Multi-Modal connections</td>
<td>Secondary Loops, Long Distance connections</td>
<td>Periphery loops, Nature trails, and difficult terrain trails</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Recreational Useage** | Multi-use unless specifically signed  
More frequent 2-way traffic  
Standard used when linked to Non-Motorized trail system | Multi-use unless specifically signed  
Less frequent 2-way traffic  
Through connections and connections to trailheads | Multi-use unless specifically signed  
Connector trails within larger trails  
Less frequent 2-way traffic |
| **Tread** | Tread width, 5-6ft, may be reduced for short distances to avoid significant features  
Corridor width 7 to 8 feet  
Permeable native and non-native soft surface materials | Tread width 3-4ft, may be reduced for short distances to avoid significant features  
Corridor width 5 to 6 feet  
Native soils and non-native materials | Tread width, 3 ft maximum  
Corridor width 4 feet  
Typically, native materials |
| **Obstacles** | Few obstacles  
Few exposed roots  
Generally moderate grades  
1st priority after winter storms  
As barrier free as feasible  
Machine built and maintained | More obstacles than Class 1  
2nd priority after winter storms  
Machine built and maintained | May be sizeable roots  
3rd priority after winter storms  
Some steep grades  
Narrow trail corridor  
Typically, hand built and maintained |
| **Structures and Trail Elements** | May be several built structures: steps, bridges, boardwalks, signage, culverts | May be several built structures: steps, bridges, boardwalks, signage, culverts | Natural materials preferred  
3rd priority after winter storms  
Built structures as needed  
Typically, hand built and maintained |
| **Management** | Seasonal pruning of trail corridor  
Routine inspections of trail conditions  
Proactive approach | Seasonal pruning of trail corridor  
Annual inspections of trail conditions  
Proactive approach | Seasonal pruning of trail corridor  
Annual inspections of trail conditions  
Proactive approach |
WHERE NATIVE SOIL IS NOT SUITABLE - I.E. LOW OR WET AREAS

2" MIN. TOP COURSE
- NATIVE SOIL
- 1/4 MINUS MULCH

1-1/2" MIN. AGGREGATE

CORRIDOR WIDTH
(SEE TABLE 1)

TREAD WIDTH

WHERE NATIVE SOIL TRAIL TREAD WILL BE USED BY REMOVING ORGANIC DUFF.

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**TABLE 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASS</th>
<th>TREAD WIDTH</th>
<th>CORRIDOR WIDTH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>5-6 FEET</td>
<td>7-8 FEET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>4 FEET</td>
<td>6 FEET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>2-3 FEET</td>
<td>4-5 FEET</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10' MIN. CLEARANCE

TREAD (SEE TABLE 1)

CORRIDOR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASS</th>
<th>TREAD WIDTH</th>
<th>CORRIDOR WIDTH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>5-6 FEET</td>
<td>7-8 FEET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>4 FEET</td>
<td>6 FEET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>2-3 FEET</td>
<td>4-5 FEET</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Tread Width</th>
<th>Corridor Width</th>
<th>Hardened Surface</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1A</td>
<td>6-8 FEET</td>
<td>8-10 FEET (2 FOOT SHOULDERS)</td>
<td>OTHER THAN ASPHALT OR CONCRETE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STO</td>
<td>10-12 FEET</td>
<td>14-16 FEET (2 FOOT SHOULDERS)</td>
<td>ASPHALT OR CONCRETE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8' Minimum Clearance

**Figure Description:**
- **HARDEDENED SURFACE** (See Table 1)
- **Corridor (See Table 1)**
- **Shoulder**
- **Tread (See Table 1)**
A. Section shown is for typical conditions, trail may be modified to accommodate site specific requirements.
B. Crushed surfacing base course depth and size of aggregate is minimum requirement. Actual depth of aggregate may vary per site specific conditions
C. Stake trail alignment and trail clearing limits in the field before clearing
D. Trail is shown with minimum width. May vary with site specific requirements.
E. All organic materials shall be removed down to native material.
F. Accessible trail layout and construction shall utilize Forest Service Trail Access Guidelines (FSTAG)