



Covington Parks, Recreation & Open Space (PROS) Plan

Promoting Community Fitness & Active Living

MAY 2010



Covington Parks, Recreation & Open Space (PROS) Plan

Promoting Community Fitness & Active Living

MAY 2010

“In addition to being a place to experience beauty in nature and preserve the ecological health of the community, parks can play a key role in the promotion of healthy and active lifestyles. Parks are an important public resource and careful thought should be devoted to determining how they should be modified to improve the health of our population. The current evidence suggests that there is enormous potential for parks to increase physical activity across the United States.”

*President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports Research Digest
Series 9, No.1, March 2008*

Andrew Mowen, PhD; The Pennsylvania State University
Andrew Kaczynski, PhD; University of Waterloo
Deborah Cohen, MD, MPH; RAND Corporation



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

City Council

Mayor Margaret Harto
Mayor Pro-Tem Jeff Wagner
Councilor Marlla Mhoon
Councilor Mark Lanza
Councilor David Lucavish
Councilor Wayne Snoey
Councilor Jim Scott

Parks & Recreation Commission

Kollin Higgins, Chair
Liz Fast, Vice-Chair
Conni Elliott
Martin Larson
Dave Aldous
Bryan Higgins
Steve Pand

City Staff

Derek Matheson, City Manager
Scott Thomas, Parks & Recreation Department Director
Pat Patterson, Recreation & Aquatics Manager
Ethan Newton, Aquatics Supervisor
Rachel Bahl, Senior Lifeguard

Consultant Team



Steve Duh, *CPRP*, Project Manager



Mary Stewart
Kim Voros
Hannah Kapell



Su Midghall
Rebecca Ball



Gordon Wilson

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	V
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Setting & Context	1
Parks & Recreation Department Overview.....	1
Community Visioning.....	1
Community Demographics.....	3
Social Networks	6
Review of Other Community Plans.....	6
Contents of the Plan	9
CHAPTER 2. DEFINITIONS & INVENTORY.....	11
Definitions & Standards	11
Facility Inventory.....	17
Other Recreation Resources	33
CHAPTER 3. PUBLIC OUTREACH	47
Community Survey.....	47
Teen Focus Group Discussion.....	48
Public Meetings.....	49
Stakeholder Discussions	50
Other Outreach.....	51
CHAPTER 4. POLICIES & OBJECTIVES.....	53
Community Engagement.....	53
Health, Wellness & Programming.....	54
Parks	55
Natural Areas & Greenspaces	56
Trails & Pathways.....	57
Concurrency	58
Management & Operations.....	58
CHAPTER 5. NEEDS ASSESSMENT.....	61
Overview of Community Feedback.....	61
System Growth: Parkland Acquisitions.....	66
Park Development, Enhancement & Renovations	79
Trail & Bikeway Facilities.....	81
Recreation Facilities & Programming.....	87

Departmental Communications92

CHAPTER 6. CAPITAL FACILITIES PLAN 93

CHAPTER 7. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES..... 101

 Implementation in Context..... 101

 Volunteer & Community-Based Action..... 101

 Interagency Coordination & Collaboration..... 101

 Local Funding..... 102

 Park Impact Fees..... 102

 Grants..... 103

APPENDIX A. REFERENCES..... 105

APPENDIX B. TELEPHONE SURVEY RESULTS 107

APPENDIX C. TEEN FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY 143

APPENDIX D. PUBLIC MEETING SUMMARIES 163

APPENDIX E. STAKEHOLDER SUMMARIES..... 171

APPENDIX F. MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS CONSIDERATIONS 183

 Park and Trail Design Considerations..... 184

APPENDIX G. FUNDING OPTIONS & INCENTIVES 189

 Local Funding Options..... 190

 Federal & State Grants and Conservation Programs..... 192

 Other Methods & Funding Sources 197

 Acquisition Tools & Methods 199

 Other Land Protection Options..... 201

APPENDIX H. MEDIA MATERIALS..... 203

APPENDIX J. ADOPTING ORDINANCE 213

List of Tables

Table 1. Population Characteristics in Covington, Kent, Maple Valley & King County	3
Table 2. Age Group Characteristics.....	4
Table 3. Household Characteristics	5
Table 4. Amenities for Developed Neighborhood Parks	12
Table 5. Amenities for Developed Community Parks.....	13
Table 6. Existing Inventory: City-owned Parks & Natural Areas	17
Table 7. Other Public Natural Areas by Owner.....	33
Table 8. Greenspace Acreage of Existing School Facilities.....	34
Table 9. Privately-Held Parks & Natural Areas by Type	35
Table 10. Existing Trails & Pathways by Type.....	37
Table 11. Community Survey Demographics as Compared to US Census Data.....	48
Table 12. Allocation of \$100 on Parks & Recreation Facilities (Phone Survey)	62
Table 13: Allocation of \$100 on Parks & Recreation Facilities (Teens)	64
Table 14. Washington SCORP: Ranking of Major Activity Areas (2006-7).....	65
Table 15. Current and Projected Levels of Service by Park Classification.....	68
Table 16. Current and Projected Levels of Service for Public and Private Trails.....	83
Table 17. Current and Projected Levels of Service for Bikeways.....	84
Table 18. Aquatic Program Options	89
Table 19. Recreation Program Options	91
Table 20. Capital Facilities Plan Expenditures Summary.....	93
Table 21. 6-Year Capital Improvements Plan.....	95

List of Maps

Map 1. Existing City Park & Recreation Facilities Map.....	19
Map 2. Non-City, Public Parks & Greenspaces	41
Map 3. Privately-Held Parks & Greenspaces	43
Map 4. Existing Trails, Paths & Bike Routes	45
Map 5. Existing Service Areas: Public Parks	71
Map 6. Existing Service Areas: Private Parks.....	73

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Map 7. Composite Service Areas: Public & Private 75

Map 8. Potential Acquisition Areas..... 77

Map 9. Proposed Trail Network 85

Map 10. Capital Improvements Plan Map..... 99

Executive Summary

Introduction

Imagine Covington in 10 years, a walkable community with many options for healthy activity and facilities that serve as exceptional public gathering places and foster a sense of stewardship and pride. Consider a downtown plaza that acts as the community's living room and is the focal point for events and entertainment. Consider a pedestrian and bicycle friendly trail network that connects public facilities, such as the library, schools and parks, and that is built with safe routes, clear signage and access to the regional trails nearby. Consider expanded and accessible natural areas framed by local creeks and with environmental interpretive stations for outdoor education.

As a strategic road map for the future, this Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan envisions a city park system that will provide high-quality recreational opportunities for residents and visitors during the next decade and beyond. In addition to renovating and developing existing park lands, the plan calls for developing a system of interconnected shared-use trails and bikeways and enhancing recreation programming to serve a growing population. To provide planning and policy framework to support these efforts, the 2010 Covington PROS Plan includes:

- Goals and objectives for providing and maintaining services as the City continues to grow
- Summary of public outreach and community feedback
- Assessment of community and recreational needs
- Detailed analyses of the existing inventory including current conditions and management issues, along with a service area assessment and park gap analysis
- Capital improvements plan with projects ranked in order of priority
- Review of funding and implementation strategies

Major Challenges

Parks, trails, greenspaces, natural areas – these are essential elements of long-term community sustainability and a legacy for Covington's future. The fast pace of recent development and population growth reinforces the need to take seriously the City's role as an environmental steward and as a social steward, with the fundamental responsibilities to protect, maintain and enhance its natural resources, while also providing a rich environment to foster healthy, active and engaged citizens. In an effort to meet its vision for the future, several known challenges must be considered.

- **Funding Issues.** Expectations for parks and recreation services remain high in the minds of residents, and deservedly so, but operating and capital revenues are generally inadequate to meet public demand. The department must secure alternative funding to

enhance maintenance and renovate existing parks, establish a network of interconnected trails, acquire additional park land, and provide recreation opportunities to serve an ever growing community.

- **Maintaining Existing Facilities.** Residents voiced concerns with current maintenance levels, vandalism and surveillance. The need to reinvest in existing parks, specifically Jenkins Creek Park, was a recurring theme in public meetings. Any inability to address these issues will likely erode citizen support for the park and recreation system over time.
- **Active-Use Parks.** During the planning process, residents voiced a desire for more community park space to provide more sport fields, picnicking facilities and active recreation, in addition to smaller neighborhood parks with better geographic distribution. While site planning for Covington Community Park progresses, the City currently does not have a developed community park.
- **Increased Population.** By 2020, Covington's population is expected to exceed 20,000 people. Growth and development, while vital to the health of the local economy, place a strain on limited public funds for services and the availability of land for parks, trails and natural areas. While recent residential development projects have provided private parks throughout the City, larger areas of Covington are still unserved with parks within short walking distances.
- **Obesity-related health issues.** While statistics are not specifically available for Covington, increases in the rate of obesity are spurring a growing health epidemic - affecting recreation programming and the need to provide opportunities for active lifestyles. In the US, 66% of adults over 20 years of age are obese or overweight; for children between the ages of 6 and 11, 19% are overweight. In a 2007 report by the Washington State Department of Health, 60% of adults were obese or overweight, and 25% of 10th graders were overweight or at risk for becoming overweight.
- **Identity & Information.** While residents and local business people expressed their general support for Covington's nascent parks and recreation system, they voiced frustration about not knowing what the City has to offer in terms of programs and places to play, and they encouraged the City to more actively promote their offerings and support community events and activities.

While these challenges exist, they also provide a context to a set of new opportunities for enhancing Covington's park, trails and natural areas system and for expanding its recreation and health programming.

Major Recommendations

The key recommendations applied to the overall park and recreation system include the following:

- Establish a combined service standard for neighborhood and community parks of 8 acres per 1,000 people and an overall parks and natural areas service standard of 14 acres per 1,000.

- Acquire additional parkland to meet future demand, including one proposed community park and six neighborhood parks, along with a downtown plaza and natural area expansions.
- Explore partnership opportunities with regional healthcare providers and services to promote wellness activities, healthy lifestyles and communications about local facilities and the benefits of parks and recreation.
- Explore options with Maple Valley, Black Diamond and King County for the development of a joint community facility for recreation, fitness and leisure activities
- Develop and implement minimum design and development standards for park and recreation amenities within private developments.
- Review and consider long-term, stable funding sources, to include analysis of support for new sources of revenue by the voting public. Revise and re-enact the park impact fee program as a means to finance new park and trail acquisition and development.

Bringing the Plan to Life

Specific near-term actions include the following:

- Providing routine maintenance on all park properties and on the Aquatic Center to keep them safe and enjoyable
- Constructing phase 1 of Covington Community Park
- Renovating and re-opening Jenkins Creek Park
- Providing high priority open swim programs, swim instruction and aquatic activities
- Pursuing partnerships to provide community events and festivals, health and fitness programs and informational and educational programs
- Updating and publishing the parks brochure and map; enhancing web site content
- Acquiring land for Town Square Park

This plan is a road map for providing high-quality, community-driven parks, trails, open space and recreation facilities in Covington during the next 20 years. It articulates the City's vision for parks and recreation, provides tangible support for policies in the City's comprehensive plan and sets reasonable priorities. It is also a repository of critical data and analyses that will serve as a valuable benchmark in all future planning efforts.

This page is intentionally left blank.

Chapter 1. Introduction

Setting & Context

Incorporated in 1997, the City of Covington is situated in King County, between the cities of Kent and Maple Valley. The City maintains a modest system of neighborhood and community parklands, along with providing an aquatic center and aquatics programming. Through the residential development of the past ten years, a significant number of small, private pocket parks and greenspaces have been added in the city. Additionally, current discussions regarding the redevelopment of the downtown core create opportunities for new trail connections and a civic plaza in support of expanded community activities and economic redevelopment.

Covington's landscape character includes rolling foothills divided by three major creek drainages: Soos Creek, Little Soos Creek and Jenkins Creek. These drainage courses and forested slopes are among some of Covington's most striking features. With the exception of the commercial town center, most of the community retains natural greenbelts, and the vegetation and topography of these greenspaces offer a variety of recreational, aesthetic and educational opportunities. Additionally, views of Mount Rainier are spectacular from the upland areas north of State Highway 18.

Parks & Recreation Department Overview

At the present, the Covington Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for the planning, acquisition, design and construction of city parklands. The City also operates the Covington Aquatic Center and associated aquatics programs, such as instruction, fitness, recreation and safety training, and the aquatics program is the core and anchor of the City's recreation offerings. The department also includes recreation and special event functions that strive to provide non-athletic classes and programs along with community events, arts and cultural opportunities for residents and visitors. The department has 4 full-time staff and is funded through several sources, including user fees, sales tax revenue and the utility tax revenue. Additionally, the park maintenance division is funded through the department's budget, and staff are shared with the Public Works. The total budget for fiscal year 2009 was slightly less than \$1.2 million.

Community Visioning

During the development of its Comprehensive Plan in 2003, city leaders adopted a vision statement providing the framework for the future planning of Covington, and it reads as follows:

“The City of Covington is a place where community, businesses and civic leaders are partners in building a city that is family-oriented, safe and pedestrian-friendly. A community that proudly invests in enhancing our small town character and natural environment, and provides diverse recreational opportunities, as well as remaining financially responsible.”

To supplement this vision, City Council periodically adopts a set of goals to direct and refocus city priorities and investments. The Council goals for 2008-2013 are:

Economic Development: Encourage and support a business community that is committed to Covington for the long-term and offers diverse products and services, family wage jobs, and a healthy tax base to support public services.

Downtown: Establish Downtown Covington as a vibrant residential, commercial, social, and cultural gathering place that is safe, pedestrian-friendly, well-designed, and well-maintained.

Youth and Families: Provide city services, programs and facilities such as parks and recreation and human services that emphasize and meet the needs of Covington’s youth and families.

Neighborhoods: Establish and maintain neighborhoods that offer a variety of housing options that are diverse, safe, accessible, and well-designed.

Municipal Services: Plan, develop, implement, and maintain high quality capital infrastructure and services that reflect the needs of a growing community.

Customer Service: Recruit, support, and retain a professional team of employees, volunteers, and stakeholders who offer outstanding customer service, ensure stewardship of the public’s money, and promote the City.

Each of these Council goals can be met, in part, through the provision of parklands and recreation services. Covington adopted its first Parks Recreation and Open Space Plan in 1999, later updated in 2003 as part of the Comprehensive Plan, and prepared a mission statement for its Parks and Recreation Department, which is to “build a great community together through people, parks and programs.”

Through these goals and statements of purpose, a **future vision** for Covington’s park and recreation system begins to emerge.

*Covington is **responsive to community needs**. The City will establish specialized recreation services and acquire additional parkland to meet the needs of its growing and diverse community. Partnering with other agencies, Covington will pursue opportunities and innovative solutions for new facilities and inclusive access to services.*

*Covington promotes **active lifestyles, personal fitness and a greater sense of place and community**. Through joint marketing efforts and partnership development with regional health and fitness providers, Covington will strive to be one of the healthiest cities in Washington.*

*Covington is a **walkable community with an expanded trails network** connecting parks and natural areas with neighborhoods and downtown. This includes a comprehensive system of on-road bicycle routes as well as off-road trails, so people have alternative transportation options and access to passive recreation opportunities for wellness and exploration.*

***Safe, attractive, well-kept parks and natural areas** will be a key contributor to the city’s health and economic prosperity. Community outreach and education will build awareness of the benefits of*

parks, trails and recreation, along with encouraging residents to participate in improving their park system.

With a rapidly growing population and a relatively high proportion of families with children, Covington consistently strives to promote community pride and inclusion through festivals and activities. The City hosts the Covington Days community festival each year, which brings residents and community agencies together to enjoy food, fun and family activities. The City also partnered with MultiCare and Valley Medical Center to develop the *Cruzin' Covington* recreation passport program, which is an awareness campaign geared toward encouraging kids and families to eat healthy and stay active.

While the City is young, its residents are generally proud of what has been accomplished on the nascent park system, but they are also interested in certain facility and program enhancements. This plan documents those desires and provides a framework for addressing capital development and funding in the near-term.



Figure 1. Community activities bring families together

Community Demographics

Since incorporation, the City of Covington has experienced a 40% increase in population from 12,500 in 1997 to 17,530 in 2009, according to the Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM). As illustrated in the table below, Covington's growth rate has outpaced that of King County as a whole and nearby Kent, but lags behind the rapid growth of Maple Valley. Covington's growth rate over the last 10 years in Covington has averaged 2.7% per year, which is approximately double the growth rate attributed to the State of Washington over the same time period.

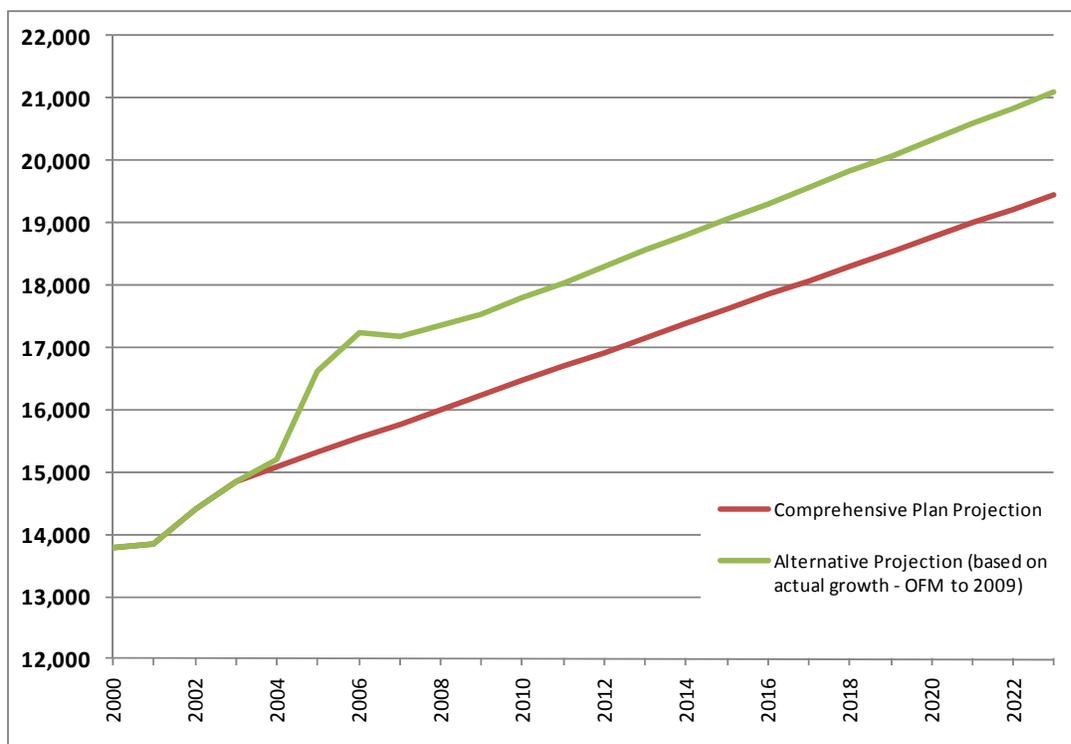
Table 1. Population Characteristics in Covington, Kent, Maple Valley & King County

Demographics	Covington	Kent	Maple Valley	King County
<i>Population Characteristics</i>				
Population (2000)	13,783	79,524	14,209	1,737,034
Population (2009)	17,530	88,380	20,840	1,909,300
Percent of Change (2000-09)	27%	11%	46%	10%
Language Other than English	6.9%	21.8%	5.1%	18.4%
Hispanic / Latino	4.5%	8.1%	3.6%	5.5%
Persons w/ Disabilities	1,606	12,626	1,502	259,843
Persons w/ Disabilities (%)	12.7%	17.4%	11.6%	16.1%

Source: US Census 2000; American FactFinder (factfinder.census.gov); WA OFM for 2009 population estimates

With regard to forecasted population estimates, two sources were reviewed. The 2003 Comprehensive Plan estimated the City’s population through the year 2023 at a 1.3% annual growth rate, which equates to adding approximately 230 persons each year and a forecasted 2023 population of 19,454. In using the annual population figures from OFM between 2000-2009, a new base was used to forecast an alternative 2023 population of 21,100 based on the same growth rate. This figure is also in line with the median population growth rate forecasted by OFM for King County as a whole (Figure 1).

Figure 2. Population Forecast to 2023



According to Census 2000, the age group characteristics for Covington, Kent, Maple Valley and King County are very similar, with the primary exception that Covington and Maple Valley have larger percentages of residents under the age of eighteen (Table 2). Additionally, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that in 2000 the statewide percent of seniors (65 years and over) was 11.2%. Covington and its neighboring cities have a significantly lower percentage of seniors as compared to the state and to King County.

Table 2. Age Group Characteristics

Demographics	Covington	Kent	Maple Valley	King County
<i>Age Groups</i>				
Median Age	32.1	31.8	32.3	35.7
Population < 5 years of age (0-5)	7.9%	8.4%	9.2%	6.1%
Population < 18 years of age (0-18)	33.8%	27.7%	33.8%	22.5%
Population > 65 years of age	3.7%	7.3%	4.5%	10.5%

Source: US Census 2000; American FactFinder (factfinder.census.gov)

The OFM reports that the population in the state is aging. In 2009, the statewide population of persons 65 years and over makes up 12% of the overall population, which is 0.08% increase from the census figures reported in 2000. The OFM states that although the growth in this age group has been slow up until now, growth in this age group will accelerate after 2011. By 2030, the senior population will account for about 20% of the state's total population.

Household characteristics, such as income, housing types and size, also provide insight into the community. The median household income in Covington was \$63,711 as reported in Census 2000 and is slightly less than that of Maple Valley (\$67,159). However, Covington residents are generally more affluent than households in Kent and in King County. The number of households below the poverty level comprise of 2.1% of Covington's households. This is the same as that of Maple Valley, but much less than the reported percentages in Kent (11.6%) and in King County (8.4%). The average household size in Covington is 3.1 persons per household, with an average family size of 3.37 persons per household. Compared to Maple Valley, Kent and King County, Covington's residents tend to have larger families and households.

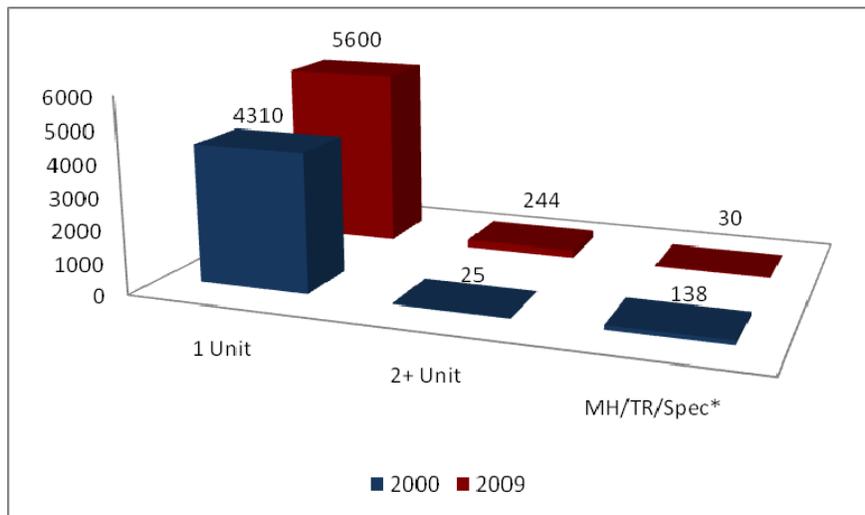
Table 3. Household Characteristics

Demographics	Covington	Kent	Maple Valley	King County
<i>Household Characteristics</i>				
Median Income	\$63,711	\$46,046	\$67,159	\$53,157
Families Below Poverty Level	2.1%	11.6%	2.1%	8.4%
Average Household Size	3.13	2.53	2.95	2.39
Average Family Size	3.37	3.15	3.26	3.03
Home Ownership Rate	89.9%	48.8%	87.1%	59.8%

Source: US Census 2000; American FactFinder (factfinder.census.gov)

Note: Income figures in 1999 dollars

By in large, the most prominent housing type in Covington is the single-family (or one-unit) household. The two-or-more-units and the manufactured housing/trailer/special unit housing categories comprise the remaining housing types tracked by OFM. The latter category consists of unusual living quarters that are not intended for permanent living (e.g. travel trailers, recreational vehicles, boats, boxcars). This housing type dramatically decreased in 2009 from 2000 (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Covington Housing Types

*Manufactured Housing, Trailers and Special Units

Social Networks

A wide array of civic, volunteer and faith-based organizations exist within Covington that offer residents ways to be involved and help promote the City. Boy scout and girl scout troops, along with several Kentwood High School clubs such as DECA and Key Club, offer structured activities and opportunities for leadership for local youth. Similarly, the Covington Chamber of Commerce provide leadership for local entrepreneurs in an effort to support and strengthen the business community serving residents and area employees. Five independent youth sport organizations provide local access to team-based sports, including soccer, baseball, softball and basketball. Covington is also home to 8 churches, many of which encourage and organize community-building projects. Additionally, city government seeks to engage residents through a variety of commissions. These groups, and the volunteers they foster, provide critical support to the community fabric and also may be available to assist the City in expanding, maintaining, promoting or enhancing its park and recreation offerings in the future.

Review of Other Community Plans

To supplement community outreach, eight community plans were reviewed for past policy direction and goals as they pertain to the provision and planning for parks, natural areas and recreation in Covington. The development of each involved public input and final adoption by the responsible legislative body.

2006 City of Covington Parks and Recreation Department Strategic Plan

This comprehensive strategic plan is based in the department's mission, vision, values and goal and has three major purposes: present a long-term vision of success to direct planning and management efforts; create a priorities list to direct funding and budgeting;

develop a management process that considers existing commitments when new requests and initiatives are presented. The plan outlines the annual process for implementing the strategic plan through the budget process and the four-year update procedure.

It should be noted that key sources of input into the strategic plan came directly from a number of public surveys and meetings conducted between 2002 and 2006 to measure public use, interest, satisfaction, goals and needs with regards to city services and facilities, with a special focus on parks and recreation.

2003 City of Covington Comprehensive Plan

The 2003 Comprehensive Plan update provides the legally recognized decision framework about land use, transportation, public facilities, parks and open space in the City. The plan is consistent with the Growth Management Act to include greenbelt and open space areas, state planning goals, countywide planning policies, and the Endangered Species Act. There are eleven plan components, including Parks and Community Services (Element 6.0) and the Capital Facilities Plan (Element 10.0).

2003 City of Covington Comprehensive Plan: Park and Community Services Element (6.0)

The Parks and Community Services Element provides goals and sets the policies to guide the acquisition and development of parks, open space, trails, recreation, culture and art, and human services facilities and programs. This element provides for the recreational needs of residents, supports regional open space and trail facilities, and establishes policies for the coordination of funding and level of service requirements set forth in the Capital Facilities Plan Element.

2003 City of Covington Comprehensive Plan: Capital Facilities Plan Element (10.0)

The Capital Facilities Plan Element is mandated by the Growth Management Act. The Capital Facilities Plan forecasts what public facilities or capital improvements will be needed during the six year period from the date the Comprehensive Plan is adopted. In addition, a Concurrency Management System (CMS) is required to ensure that proposed development does not reduce the level of service of public facilities below the adopted standards. ***The Capital Facilities Plan is required to be fully financed*** (emphasis added). To meet that requirement, the location, costs, and dependable funding source must be noted for every facility identified. The facilities listed in the plan must also be based on quantifiable, objective measures of capacity (i.e. acres of park per capita). The Parks and Recreation adopted levels of service are:

- Neighborhood Parks - 2 acres developed park acres per 1,000 population
- Community Parks – 5 acres of developed park acres per 1,000 population
- Regional Parks – 6 acres of developed park acres per 1,000 population.

City of Covington Walkway Evaluations

This document provides a priority list of sidewalk and school walkway improvement projects. Prioritizing trail and bikeway projects should correspond with the sidewalk and walkway projects.

2001 City of Covington Comprehensive Plan: Parks, Trails and Open Space Element

The 2001 Parks, Trails and Open Space Element has eight components documenting the existing facilities (no city owned facilities), the public involvement process, demand and needs assessment, goals and policies, park implementation plan, open space, park funding and acquisition, and capital facilities strategy. The relative planning documents of the City of Kent, Maple Valley and King County were taken into consideration, with the Washington's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Planning program to construct the regional framework of this plan.

2006 Arts Comprehensive Plan

This six year plan outlines the goals, objectives and performance measures for the Arts Commission and the Parks Department. The Arts Plan promotes the use and appreciation of the arts in the city's activities and facilities, while assisting the City in meeting the planning requirements for potential funding sources (i.e. The National Endowment of the Arts). Objectives that directly relate to Parks and Recreation planning are: promoting cultural tourism and art based community events; assuring that all programs and facilities are in accessible locations and affordable priced; pursue relationships with agencies involved in community health and recreation; and providing art in public places.

2006 Community Forestry Plan

This draft document is intended to support the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan by providing detailed information and guidance with regards to tree resources within parks and open space areas. The draft plan includes the City's tree ordinance, tree establishment and maintenance procedures, a park and open space tree inventory and a 2007 to 2013 action plan. The Arbor Day program and the annual application to the Tree City USA membership program are part of the educational component of the action plan.

2002 Comprehensive Recreation Program Plan

The Parks department was created in 2002 and constructed the Comprehensive Recreation Program Plan to outline a specific focus for city services and to codify policies and practices. The plan lists the vision, guiding principles, goals, implementation strategies and a pricing policy for recreational programming. Specific program objectives were established for six population groups. These groups include those in the "five stages of life and persons with disabilities."

2008 King County Comprehensive Plan Update: Transportation Chapter

The Transportation Chapter outlines numerous goals for the county's public transportation, roadway and arterial and air transport systems. Additionally, this chapter identifies and supports the role of non-motorized transportation in the context of the larger transportation system. Nine discrete policy statements are listed that will guide land use planning and interagency coordination. Separately, King County developed a Regional Trails Map, which is an illustrative brochure that identifies existing and planned regional trail corridors. The three corridors (existing and proposed) that are located in the Covington area are the Soos Creek Trail, SR-18 Trail and the Cedar River Trail.

2008 King County Comprehensive Plan Update: Parks, Open Space and Cultural Resources Chapter

With significant references to the King County Park, Recreation, and Open Space Plan that was adopted in 2004, the King County Parks, Open Space and Cultural Resources Chapter outlines 32 policy statements pertaining to the provision of regional parks, natural areas and resource lands. The plan notes the need for cooperation, coordination and partnerships with public agencies, private groups and individuals to develop the regional parks and open space system.

Contents of the Plan

The remainder of the Covington PROS Plan is organized as follows:

- **Chapter 2:** Definitions & Inventory, describes the existing park and recreation system in Covington and other nearby recreation opportunities.
- **Chapter 3:** Public Outreach, highlights the methods used to engage the Covington community in the development of the Plan.
- **Chapter 4:** Policies & Objectives, provides a policy framework for the Covington parks system grouped by major facility type or activity.
- **Chapter 5:** Needs Assessment, discusses survey results and other recreation trend data and provides context to the identification of potential system improvements.
- **Chapter 6:** Capital Improvements Plan, details a 6-year program for addressing park site enhancements and park and trail system expansion projects.
- **Chapter 7:** Implementation Strategies, describes a range of strategies and alternatives to consider in the implementation of the Plan.
- **Appendices:** Providing technical or supporting information to the planning effort and includes a summary of the community survey, stakeholder notes, funding options and user fee assessment, among others.

This page is intentionally left blank.

Chapter 2. Definitions & Inventory

This chapter is segmented into two sections. The first section defines the various facility classifications in use in Covington, and the second is an inventory and assessment of existing facilities and includes a discussion of other recreation opportunities within or near the city.

Definitions & Standards

There are six basic park and greenspace facility types in Covington:

- Pocket Parks
- Neighborhood Parks
- Community Parks
- Natural Areas & Greenspaces
- Trails, Bikeways & Paths
- Special Facilities

Pocket Parks

Pocket parks are very small and serve a limited radius (up to ¼-mile) from the site; they provide passive and play-oriented recreational opportunities. Examples of pocket parks can include a tot lot with play equipment such as a climber, slide or swings; a viewpoint; or waterfront access areas such as at street ends. A small urban plaza or civic recognition project may also be considered a pocket park. Parking is not provided at pocket parks, although lighting may be used for security and safety. This Plan proposes a combined acreage standard for neighborhood and pocket parks of 3 acres per 1,000 residents.

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are generally considered the basic unit of traditional park systems. They are small park areas designed for unstructured play and limited active and passive recreation. They are generally 3-5 acres in size, depending on a variety of factors including neighborhood need, physical location and opportunity, and should meet a minimum size of 2 acre in size when possible. This Plan proposes a combined acreage standard for neighborhood and pocket parks of 3 acres per 1,000 residents.

Neighborhood parks are intended to serve residential areas within short walking distance (up to ½-mile radius) of the park and should be geographically distributed throughout the community. Access is mostly pedestrian, and park sites should be located so that persons living within the service area will not have to cross a major arterial street or other significant natural or man-made barrier, such as ravines and railroad tracks, to get to the site.

Additionally, these parks should be located along road frontages to improve visual access and community awareness of the sites.

Generally, developed neighborhood parks typically include amenities such as pedestrian paths, picnic tables, benches, play equipment, a multi-use open field for youth soccer and baseball, sport courts or multi-purpose paved areas, landscaping and irrigation. Restrooms are not provided due to high construction and maintenance costs. Parking is also not usually provided; however, on-street, ADA accessible parking stall(s) may be included.

Recognizing that neighborhood park development may proceed in phases, Table 4 identifies the minimum park amenities required for neighborhood parks, along with other park elements that may be installed based on specific site uses, community input or the site master plan.

Table 4. Amenities for Developed Neighborhood Parks

Minimum Amenities Provided	Other Acceptable Amenities
Playground (preferred size: 5,000 - 6,000 sq. ft.; serving ages 2-5 and 5-12)	Community gardens
Picnic shelters, tables and benches	Natural areas and interpretive elements
Pathways, paved or other ADA-compliant hard surface	Sport fields for practice (i.e., soccer, baseball, softball)
Open lawn area	Sports courts (i.e., basketball, volleyball, tennis)
Signage: park name, rules, wayfinding	Dedicated on-street or off-street parking
Other site furnishings (i.e., trash receptacles, bike racks, barbeques, etc.)	Other active recreation elements (i.e., BMX, skateboard park or spots, horseshoe pits, etc.)
Irrigation & Landscaping	

Community Parks

Community parks are larger sites developed for organized play, contain a wider array of facilities and, as a result, appeal to a more diverse group of users. Community parks are generally 20 to 50 acres in size, should meet a minimum size of 20 acres when possible and serve residents within a 1-mile radius of the site. In areas without neighborhood parks, community parks can also serve as local neighborhood parks. This Plan establishes an acreage standard of 5 acres per 1,000 residents for community parks.

In general, community park facilities are designed for organized or intensive recreational activities and sports, although passive components such as pathways, picnic areas and natural areas are highly encouraged and complementary to active use facilities. Since community parks serve a larger area and offer more facilities than neighborhood parks, parking and restroom facilities are provided. Community parks may also incorporate community facilities, such as community centers, senior centers or aquatic facilities. Table 5 identifies the minimum park amenities required for community parks, along with other typical or acceptable elements that may be developed.

Table 5. Amenities for Developed Community Parks

Minimum Amenities Provided	Other Acceptable Amenities
Playground (preferred size: 10,000 - 12,000 sq. ft.; serving ages 2-5 and 5-12)	Community gardens
Picnic shelters (minimum 1 large and 1 small per park)	Natural areas and interpretive elements
Picnic tables and benches	Shared-use bicycle/pedestrian trails
Sports courts (i.e., basketball, volleyball, tennis)	Water play feature or Sprayground
Athletic fields for practice and/or games (i.e., soccer, baseball, softball, football, lacrosse)	Sports complex
Open lawn area	Concessionaire's facility
Pathways, paved or other ADA-compliant hard surface	Lighting
Restrooms (minimum 4 stalls)	Stage or community performance area
Off-Street or Dedicated Parking	Other active recreation elements (i.e., BMX, skateboard park or spots, climbing feature, etc.)
Irrigation & Landscaping	Dog Park or off-leash dog area
Signage: park name, rules, wayfinding	Maintenance or storage facilities
Other site furnishings (i.e., trash receptacles, bike racks, barbeques, etc.)	

Natural Areas & Greenspaces

Natural areas

Natural areas are those which are preserved to maintain the natural character of the site and are managed to protect valuable ecological systems, such as riparian corridors and wetlands, and to preserve native habitat and biodiversity. In managing for their ecological value, these natural areas may contain a diversity of native vegetation that provides fish and wildlife habitat and embodies the beauty and character of the local landscape. Low-impact activities, such as walking, nature observation, and fishing are allowed, where appropriate, and horseback riding is also permitted on certain sites.

Greenspaces

Greenspaces are passive-use open spaces and turf areas without developed amenities or structured functions.

This plan establishes a combined acreage standard of 6 acres per 1,000 residents for natural areas and greenspaces.

Trails & Bikeways

Trails are non-motorized transportation networks separated from roads. Trails can be developed to accommodate multiple uses or shared uses, such as pedestrians, in line skaters, bicyclists, and equestrians. Trail alignments aim to emphasize a strong relationship with the natural environment and may not provide the most direct route from a practical transportation viewpoint.

Bikeways are different than trails in that their principal focus is on safe and efficient non-motorized transportation. Bikeways serve distinctly different user groups than trail users. Typical bikeway user groups would include bicycle commuters, fitness enthusiasts and competitive athletes. Their emphasis is on speed, which can create conflicts with recreation-type trails and their respective user groups.

For shared-use trails, it is important that the alignment and cross sections be designed with flexibility to accommodate higher speeds, passing zones and greater widths. Surfaces will vary with intended use and environmental considerations. Additionally, parking, consistent signage (wayfinding, access, use hierarchy) and interpretive markers or panels should be provided as appropriate.

Shared-use trails, soft-surface paths, bike lanes and shared roadways are defined as follows (*derived from the 2001 Covington Parks, Trails and Open Space Element*).

Shared-Use Trails

Shared-use trails are separated from the public rights-of-way and, when paved, may have two-way traffic separated by a centerline. Shared-use trails are generally paved with asphalt or concrete, and the preferred width is 12 feet with a 10 foot minimum width. A wider trail (12 to 14 feet) is desired when substantial use by both bicyclists and pedestrians is expected. If maintenance vehicles will use the trail as an access road, then a width of 12 to 14 feet is required to prevent cracking and wear of the path edges. When equestrians are present, a separate bridle trail along a shared-use trail should be provided to minimize conflicts with horses.

An existing path with a width of 8 feet may remain when all of the following conditions apply:

- Bicycle traffic is expected to be low.
- Pedestrian use is not expected to be more than occasional.
- The horizontal and vertical alignments provide frequent passing opportunities.
- Normal maintenance activities can be performed without damaging the pavement edge.

The desirable horizontal clearance from the edge of path pavement to an obstruction (such as signs, bridge piers or guardrail) is 2 feet minimum. A vertical clearance of 10 feet or more should be provided from bikeway pavement to overhead obstructions.

Soft-Surface Paths

A path is an informal, soft-surface trail connection through or between neighborhoods, within natural areas of parklands and may be appropriate for pedestrian, equestrian or off-road bicycle use. Depending on use, location, and underlying conditions, the surface material may be native soil, forest duff, wood chips or crushed rock and the width ranges ranging from 1-½ to 4 feet.

Bike Lanes

Bike lanes are typically paved, one-way bikeways designated by signage and/or pavement markings for preferential bicycle use. Bike lanes are established along streets in corridors where there is current or anticipated bicycle demand and where it would be risky for bicyclists to ride in the travel lane. Bike lanes should be considered in and around schools, parks, libraries, and other locations where young cyclists are present. Bike lanes delineate the rights of way assigned to bicyclists from that of motorists and provide for movements that are more predictable by each. Bike lanes can be provided by reducing the number or width of lanes or prohibiting on-street parking.

Bike lanes are typically 5 feet wide (4 feet minimum). When a gutter is present, the width may need to be increased to provide a minimum width of 3 feet from the edge of the gutter. Additional width is desirable, particularly where motor vehicle operating speeds exceed 40 mph. Where parallel roadway parking is also permitted, bike lanes are a minimum of 12 feet wide.

Bike Routes & Shared Lane Markings (Sharrows)

Signed bike routes are shared roadways on which bicyclists and motorists share the same travel lane. These shared roadways are designated and signed as bicycle routes and provide continuity to other bicycle facilities or designate a preferred route on low traffic speed and volume streets where greater separation is not warranted. As with bike lanes, signing shared roadways as bike routes is an indication to bicyclists that there are advantages to using these bike routes as compared with alternative routes.

Shared lane markings or “sharrows” are high-visibility pavement markings that help position bicyclists within a shared vehicle/bicycle travel lane. These markings are typically used on streets where dedicated bike lanes are desirable but are not possible due to physical or other constraints. They are used on roadways that have a speed limit less than 35 mph, and pavement marking placement is dependent upon street design and use. If used in a shared lane with on-street parallel parking, lane markings should be centered at least 11 feet from the face of the curb, or from the edge of the pavement where no curb exists. If used on a street without on-street parking that has an outside travel lane that is less than 14 feet wide, lane markings should be centered at least 4 feet from the face of the curb, or from the edge of the pavement where no curb exists. Lane marking should be placed immediately after an intersection and spaced at intervals not greater than 250 feet thereafter. Additionally, shared roadway lane markings offer the following benefits:



Figure 4. Shared lane markings increase visibility and awareness

- Assist bicyclists with lateral positioning in a shared lane with on-street parallel parking in order to reduce the chance of a bicyclist's impacting the open door of a parked vehicle
- Encourage safe passing of bicyclists by motorists
- Reduce the incidence of wrong-way bicycling

Design Guidance

Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways, USDOT, FHWA; as adopted and modified by Chapter 468-95 WAC "Manual on uniform traffic control devices for streets and highways" (MUTCD)

Selecting Roadway Design Treatments to Accommodate Bicycles, USDOT, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), 1994

Standard Plans for Road, Bridge, and Municipal Construction (Standard Plans), M 21-01, WSDOT

Understanding Flexibility in Transportation Design – Washington, WSDOT, 2005

Design Manual, Chapter 1520 Bicycle facilities, M 22-01, WSDOT, June 2009

Special Facilities

Special facilities include single-purpose recreational areas such as skateparks and display gardens, along with community centers, aquatic centers and public plazas in or near the downtown core. Additionally, publicly-accessible sport fields and play areas of public schools are classified as special facilities; while they often serve as proxies to public parks, school sites have restricted daytime access and offer limited recreational use during non-school hours. No standards are proposed concerning special facilities, since facility size is a function of the specific use.

Facility Inventory

The park and open space inventory identifies the recreational assets within Covington. Covington provides nearly 170 acres of public parkland and natural areas distributed among 24 city-owned sites. Additionally, a number of other public and private open spaces exist throughout Covington and add to the city's recreation resources. The following table summarizes the available land inventory in Covington. Maps 1 through 4 locate the existing park, trail and natural area resources within and around Covington.

Table 6. Existing Inventory: City-owned Parks & Natural Areas

Park Name	Classification	Acreage
Covington Community Park	Community Park	29.85
Jenkins Creek Park	Community Park	22.13
	<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>51.98</i>
Crystal View Park	Neighborhood Park	2.2
Evergreen Park	Neighborhood Park	1.66
Friendship Park	Neighborhood Park	0.6
N Channing Park Pocket Park	Pocket Park	0.39
	<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>4.85</i>
Covington Aquatic Center	Special Facility	1.25
Gerry Crick Skate Park	Special Facility	0.16
	<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>1.41</i>
Covington Legacy Greenspace	Greenspace	10.15
Covington Park Drainage	Greenspace	1.05
Foxwood Greenspace	Greenspace	3.38
Green Valley Park Greenspace	Greenspace	0.27
Meridian Trace Open Space	Greenspace	1.22
S. Jenkins Creek Open Space	Greenspace	10.07
Shire Hills Drainage	Greenspace	0.76
Tall Timbers Greenspace	Greenspace	0.33
Unnamed Open Space (166th Ave SE)	Greenspace	2.82
Unnamed Open Space (NW corner 256th/180th)	Greenspace	1.2
Cedar Creek Park	Natural Area	32.02
Cedar Valley Park	Natural Area	6.75
Emerald Downs Open Space	Natural Area	4.52
Jenkins Creek Trail	Natural Area	4.22
Rainier Vista Open Space	Natural Area	23.93
Wingfield Open Space	Natural Area	7.06
	<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>109.75</i>
	Total Acreage	167.99

In addition to city-owned park land, Covington residents benefit from a variety of public parks, private parks and natural areas. The major non-city, public open space is Soos Creek Park, a 731-acre regional park which partially lies within the western edge of the City's boundaries. This park forms a greenbelt that separates Covington from Kent and includes the Soos Creek Trail, a 1.4-mile multi-purpose trail and parallel equestrian trail. Lake Meridian Park, operated by the Kent Parks Department, is located immediately west of Soos Creek Park and is also heavily used by Covington residents.

City residents are also served by several small parks operated by homeowner associations as private parks. The largest privately-owned, publicly-accessible open space is Camp McCullough, a 38-acre Christian campground, located on the western shore of Pipe Lake.

Schools of the Kent and Tahoma School Districts provide additional open space and active recreation opportunities for the city's youth through athletic fields, tennis courts, basketball courts and playgrounds. Since the City does not own or operate any athletic fields, individual sports leagues work with each school district via use and maintenance agreements to facilitate practice and game play for the area's youth sport teams.

The inventory on the following pages addresses site-specific recommendations for public parks managed by the City of Covington. Inventory data was gathered from field assessments completed in the summer of 2009. The management issues and recommendations are the result of site assessments, previous inventory efforts, staff and project team considerations and public comments. A summary of other area recreation facilities and service providers is provided at the end of the chapter.



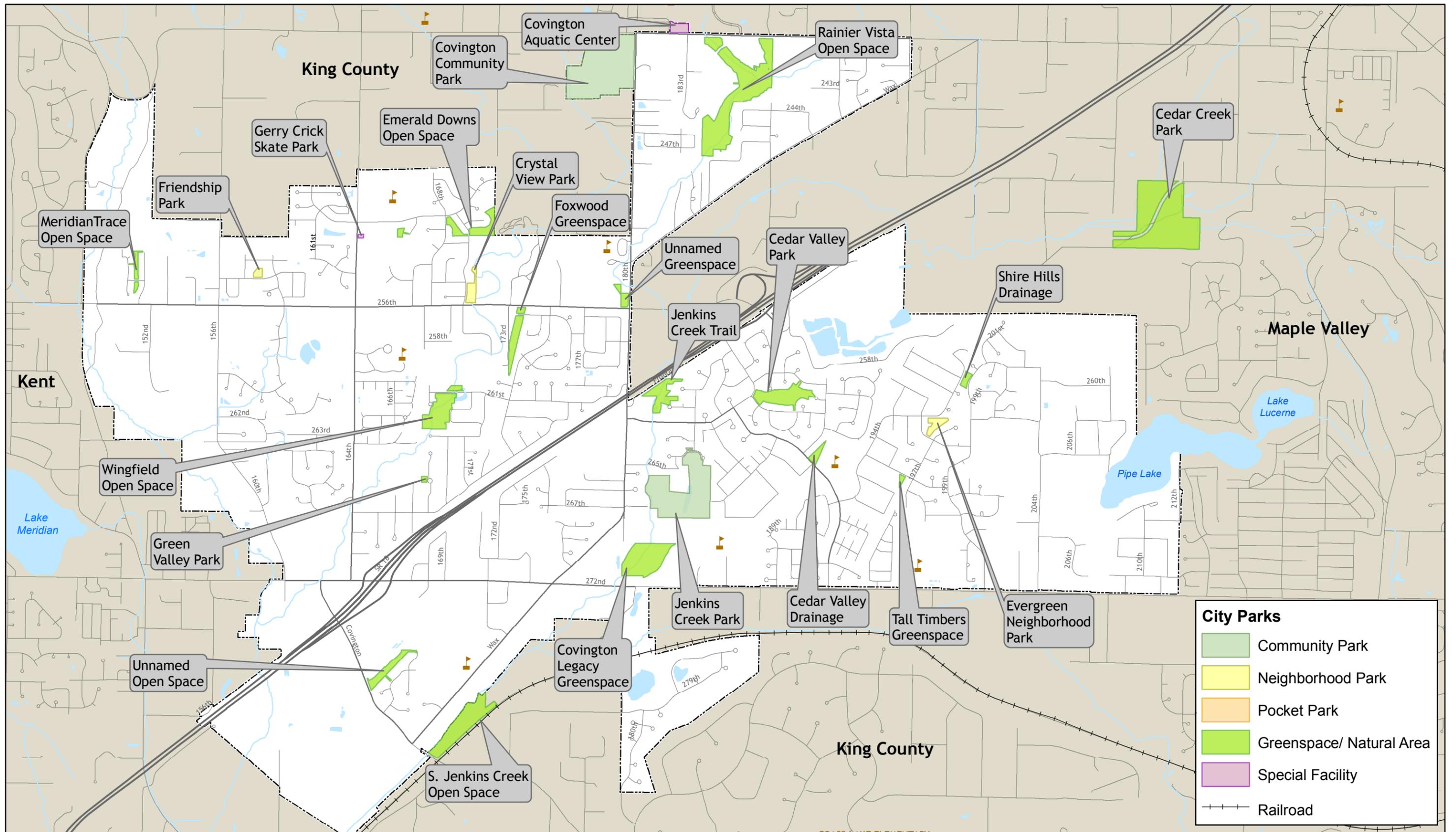
Figure 5. Lake Meridian offers nearby water access



Figure 6. Cyclists travel along Soos Creek Regional Trail



Figure 7. School district and youth athletic groups share field space



Map 1. Existing City Park & Recreation Facilities Map

Covington Aquatic Center

Special Facility :: 1.25 acres

Covington Aquatic Center is located at 18230 SE 240th Street. The aquatic center was acquired from King County in 2004 and is the only public pool in Covington, making it an important and heavily used facility. The Covington Aquatic Center offers a variety of recreational opportunities, attracting large numbers of people of all ages. Recreational activities include recreational swims, water exercise classes, swimming lessons and swimming pool rentals.

Inventory

- 100-foot, six-lane indoor lap pool
- 1-meter diving board
- 6 starting block platforms
- Water slide
- Restrooms/changing rooms
- Bike rack
- Picnic table
- Trash receptacles
- Drinking Fountains
- Bleachers
- Open lawn
- Planting beds
- Large inflatable toy and aquatic play equipment

Management Issues and Recommendations

- Renovate locker rooms and restrooms
- Install shower in family changing room
- Provide additional shallow water play equipment



Figure 8. Vicinity Map



Figure 8. Covington Aquatic Center, exterior



Figure 10. Covington Aquatic Center, interior

Gerry Crick Skate Park

Special Facility :: 0.16 acres

Gerry Crick Skate Park is located at 25064 164th Avenue SE. Covington's only skate park opened in 2004. The park is named in honor of a former member of the Parks and Recreation Commission who passed away in 2007.

Inventory

- Above ground skate ramps
- Restroom
- Picnic table
- Bench
- Trash receptacle
- ADA accessible

Management Issues and Recommendations

- Monitor park vandalism and replace or clean any damaged furnishings, signs, or building facades as soon as any vandalism occurs.



Figure 11. Vicinity Map



Figure 9. Gerry Crick Skate Park, street frontage



Figure 13. Gerry Crick Skate Park, skate ramps

Covington Community Park

Community Park :: 29.9 acres

Covington Community Park, formerly known as 180th/240th Street Park, is located at the southwest corner of 180th Avenue SE and SE 240th Street. The property features rolling pastures with mature forest and footpaths. The master plan for the park was adopted in February 2009. Design for the phase one soccer field is underway. Construction is planned for 2011.



Figure 10. Vicinity Map

Inventory (current)

- Open meadow and forest

Inventory (planned)

- Play area (2-5 age group & 5-12 age groups)
- Picnic tables
- Picnic shelters Benches
- Basketball and tennis courts
- Baseball and soccer fields
- Paved and soft surface trails
- Boardwalk
- Outdoor stage
- Terrace with water feature
- Restroom / concessions
- Interpretive areas
- Teen activities area
- Open lawn
- Wetlands
- Automatic irrigation system
- Parking lot



Figure 11. Covington Community Park, Master Plan

Management Issues and Recommendations

- Provide wayfinding signage from 180th Avenue SE and SE 240th Street to the park.

Jenkins Creek Park

Community Park :: 23 acres

Jenkins Creek Park is located at 18400 SE 267th Place. Access to the park is from SE 267th off 180th Avenue SE on the west, SE 267th Place in the Timberlane development to the east and SE 264th Place from the north. There is limited parking at these three entrances. The park is adjacent to a natural area/wetland that provides habitat for wildlife. The park was transferred from King County to the City of Covington in 2003. Many of the park features are in disrepair or have been vandalized over the years. Due to the poor condition of the park, the lower meadow on the west side of the park is currently closed to public access. The upper meadow and park features on the east side of the park are still open to the public.

Inventory

- Jenkins Creek
- Spring fed three-acre pond (*artificial, constructed*)
- Natural areas
- Wetland
- Meadow
- Woodlands
- Earthen and asphalt walking trails
- Wood footbridges (damaged)
- Wood overlook at pond edge (heavily vandalized)
- Entry signs
- Picnic tables
- Interpretive signs (heavily vandalized)
- Benches
- Trash receptacles

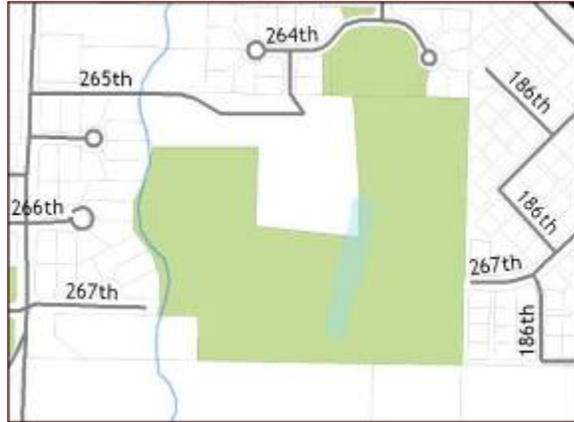


Figure 16. Vicinity Map



Figure 17. Park, entry sign



Figure 18. Picnic Bench in upper meadow

Management Issues and Recommendations

- Monitor park vandalism and replace or clean any damaged furnishings, signs, or structures as soon as any vandalism occur. Provide regular surveillance within the park.
- Conduct a wetlands and critical areas delineation to identify development constraints.
- Prepare a park master plan.
- Provide wayfinding signage from SE 180th Avenue SE and SE Timberlane Way to the park.
- Provide rules and regulations signs at park entrances.
- Add ADA-compliant detectable warning surfaces where accessible routes cross traffic areas.
- Repair or replace wood bridges and interpretive signage.



Figure 12. Damaged overlook at pond

Crystal View Park

Neighborhood Park :: 0.5 acres (developed)

Crystal View Park is located at 25412 170th Place SE (near the corner of 170th Place and 256th Street). Crystal View Park was Covington's first park. The 2.2 acre parcel was acquired from King County in 2000 and constructed in 2003. The park is surrounded on three sides by tall trees and tucked in between open space, private property and an electrical substation. A worn path leads from the play area past the substation to a nearby creek.

Inventory

- Concrete walkways
- Play structure (2-5 age group)
- Basketball half-court
- Open lawn
- Picnic tables
- Benches
- Entry sign
- Park rules sign
- Planting beds
- Trash receptacles
- Limited on-street parking

Management Issues and Recommendations

- Repair or replace faded or damaged park signs.
- Safety inspection of the play equipment and surfacing should be performed by a certified playground safety inspector. Maintain safety surface material to the extent and frequency needed to adhere to NPSI safety requirements and ADA Accessibility requirements.
- Install an ADA ramp into the play area.



Figure 13. Vicinity Map



Figure 14. Crystal View Park, entry sign



Figure 15. Crystal View Park, basketball half court

- Provide wayfinding signage from SE 256th Street to the park.
- Provide barbeque grills, 1 per picnic table.
- Repair irrigation system or if not used in summer months, post 'No Summer Watering' notice.



Figure 16. Crystal View Park, play area

Evergreen Park

Neighborhood Park :: 1.66 acres

Evergreen Park is located at between 197th Place SE and SE 262nd Street. The park was obtained from King County in 2000. When completed, it will feature pre-school age appropriate play equipment, natural areas and a walking path. Currently the park is an open space/natural area and is used as a BMX course.



Figure 24. Vicinity Map

Inventory

- Natural areas
- Worn footpath

Management Issues and Recommendations for the Future Park

- Prepare a park master plan to guide the development of this site.
- Provide wayfinding signage from 194th Avenue and SE 262nd Street to the park.
- Monitor park vandalism and replace or clean any damaged fencing as soon as any vandalism occurs.
- Develop an initial phase to include age appropriate play equipment for 2-12 year olds, signage and a pathway.



Figure 25. Evergreen Park, BMX trail

Friendship Park

Neighborhood Park :: 0.6 acres

Friendship Park is located at the 15808 SE 254th Place. The Park opened in 2004. The park is a converted storm water pond.

Inventory

- Play structure (5-12 age group)
- Swings (2-5 age group)
- Basketball half-court
- Picnic tables
- Benches
- Open lawn
- Concrete walkways
- Trash receptacles
- Entry sign
- Park rules sign
- Limited on-street parking

Management Issues and Recommendations

- Safety inspection of the play equipment and surfacing should be performed by a certified playground safety inspector. Maintain safety surface material to the extent and frequency needed to adhere to NPSI safety requirements and ADA Accessibility requirements.
- Provide wayfinding signage from SE 256th Street and 156th Avenue to the park.
- Provide barbecue grills, 1 per picnic table.
- Provide shade trees near play equipment.
- Replace entry sign



Figure 17. Vicinity Map



Figure 18. Friendship Park, entry



Figure 19. Friendship Park, play area

Cedar Creek Park

Natural Area :: 32 acres

Cedar Creek Park is located at SE 248th Street, west of 214th Avenue SE. The City of Covington owns 32 acres of the 110 acre Cedar Creek Park. The site was acquired in 2003 with the assistance of a King County Conservation Futures Grant. The additional 78 acres of the park is currently owned by King County and is known as Cedar Downs Park.

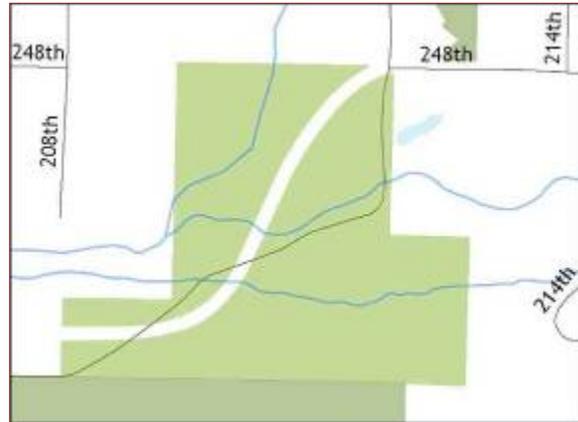


Figure 29. Vicinity Map

Inventory

- Asphalt trail (continuation of SE 248th Street)
- Natural areas/wetlands
- Salmon bearing creek
- Diverse habitat areas
- Worn footpaths/trails
- 2 residential structures

Management Issues and Recommendations for the Future Park

- Repair/resurface the existing asphalt trail (SE 248th street).
- Construct either soft surface or asphalt trails, to formalize the worn paths connecting SE Timberlane Boulevard and SE 248th Street.
- Provide a trail connection to the Lake Wilderness Trail.
- Remove or identify an appropriate adaptive re-use of the residential structures on site.
- Provide wayfinding signage from the Lake Wilderness Trail to the park.
- Provide wayfinding signage from Witte Road SE and SE 248nd Street to the park.



Figure 30. Interior bench and wetland

Cedar Valley Park

Natural Area :: 6.75 acres

Cedar Valley Park is located at 26020 186th Place SE. The natural area was acquired from King County in 2002.

Inventory

- Natural areas
- Worn paths/trails

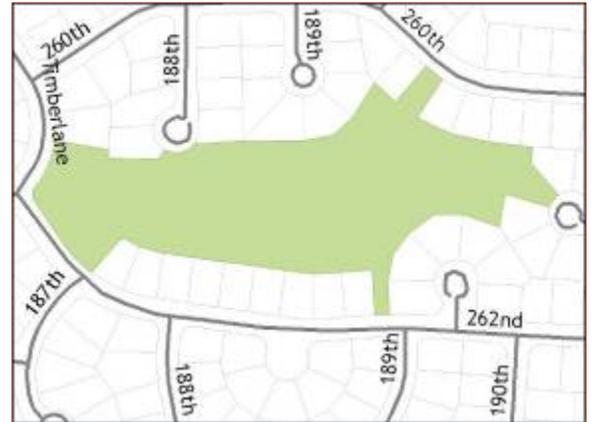


Figure 20. Vicinity Map

Management Issues and Recommendations

- Provide wayfinding signage from SE 262nd Place and SE Timberlane Boulevard to the park.

Jenkins Creek Trail

Natural Area :: 4.2 acres

Jenkins Creek Trail is located near SR 18 and 180th. The primary entrance is off of 261st. The trail and associated land was acquired in 2001 and is centrally located in the city. The trail is the first segment of a proposed greenway paralleling Jenkins Creek through the City wherever feasible.

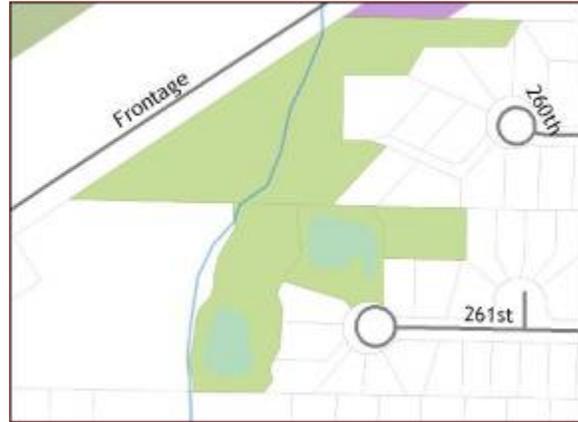


Figure 21. Vicinity Map

Inventory

- Jenkins Creek
- Pond (*artificial, constructed*)
- Natural areas
- Woodlands
- Asphalt walking trails
- Unimproved paths
- Wood footbridge
- Picnic table
- Horseshoe area
- Remnants of historic homestead
- Trash receptacle

Management Issues and Recommendations

- Monitor park vandalism and replace or clean any damaged furnishings, signs, or structures as soon as any vandalism occur.
- Evidence of illegitimate activities was apparent along the trail. Provide regular surveillance within the area.
- Provide wayfinding signage from SE 180th Avenue SE and SE Timberlane Way to the park.
- Provide rules and regulations signs at trail entrance.
- Conduct stream bank restoration to establish a natural condition
- Coordinate with King County and WSDOT for opportunities to provide a future trail to the north to connect with the County's land on the north side of SR-18.

Other Recreation Resources

In addition to the city-owned previously described, Covington residents also have access to a variety of public and private recreation facilities including lands owned by King County, privately held homeowners association lands, school sites and others.

Non-City, Public Parks & Natural Areas

Throughout Covington, a number of parks and natural areas exist managed by other public agencies. While these sites are not owned and operated by the city, they represent additional recreational opportunities for residents, even if these lands are held as natural areas or greenspaces without formal or authorized public access. As Table 8 below shows, King County is the largest non-city, public landowner within the immediate area.

Table 7. Other Public Natural Areas by Owner

Site Name	Site Owner	Acreage
Cedar Downs Park	King County	79.38
Natural Area (NE corner 180th/SR18)	King County	7.54
Natural Areas (W of Lake Winterwood)	King County	40.56
Soos Creek Greenway	King County	126.00
Open Space (NE corner 160th/272nd)	King County	23.02
Tahoma National Cemetery	US Dept of Veteran Affairs	185.30
	<i>Total Acreage</i>	<i>461.80</i>

King County owns a number of parcels of land within close proximity to Covington. The largest unimproved holding is the 80-acre Cedar Downs Park, located along the northeastern edge of the City. It was acquired by King County in 2001 from the WA Department of Natural Resources through the trust land transfer program. Site development likely would be limited to passive uses that would be sensitive to the property's natural resources and DNR's retained interest in timber value.

Washington State owns substantial rights-of-way associated with state highways within the City. This land is managed by the State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and is generally not suitable for recreation purposes. However, the southern portion of the State Highway 18 rights-of-way may become part of a major trail planned by King County that would parallel Highway 18 from Auburn to North Bend.

School Facilities

Covington is served by two school districts: Kent and Tahoma. As such, additional effort is required to coordinate for the use of school facilities for recreation and programming. Table 9 identifies the school facilities within Covington.

Table 8. Greenspace Acreage of Existing School Facilities

School Name	School District	Acreage (total)	Acreage (greenspace)
Cedar Heights Middle School	Kent School District	24.63	13.3
Cedar Valley Elementary School	Kent School District	10	3.3
Covington Elementary School (new)	Kent School District	33.36	TBD
Crestwood Elementary School	Kent School District	11.7	4.7
Jenkins Creek Elementary School	Kent School District	15	7
Kentwood High School	Kent School District	38	15.6
Mattson Middle School	Kent School District	24.3	11.6
Tahoma High School	Tahoma School District	40	22.4
<i>Total Acreage Available for Public Recreation</i>			<i>77.9</i>

As mentioned above, these school sites can serve as proxies to neighborhood parks for those residents without close access to a more traditional park; however, student safety concerns and use restriction policies during school hours limit the viability of these sites in fulfilling residents' needs for local park access and amenities.

Privately-Held Parks & Natural Areas

Over the past ten years, Covington has experienced significant growth in new residential development. Several platted subdivisions in the northern and eastern sections of the city include privately managed and maintained parks and natural areas, as identified below in Table 10. While these small parks and natural areas are privately held, they serve the residents of their respective subdivisions and alleviate some of the general need for parkland throughout Covington.

Table 9. Privately-Held Parks & Natural Areas by Type

Site Name	Classification	Acreage
Camp McCullough	Special Facility	38.15
	<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>38.15</i>
Coho Creek Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood Park	2.89
Crofton Hills Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood Park	4.61
Lake Winterwood	Neighborhood Park	43.04
Pearl Jones Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood Park	1.27
Tamarack Ridge Neighborhood Park	Neighborhood Park	0.58
The Reserve	Neighborhood Park	10.25
Aqua Vista at Pipe Lake	Pocket Park	0.75
Channing Park Pocket Park	Pocket Park	0.36
Crofton Hills Park	Pocket Park	0.29
N Rainier Vista Pocket Park	Pocket Park	0.05
N. Park Meadows Pocket Park	Pocket Park	0.48
Park Meadows Pocket Park	Pocket Park	0.45
Pioneer Ridge Pocket Park	Pocket Park	0.25
S Rainier Vista Pocket Park	Pocket Park	1.10
Savanna Pocket Park	Pocket Park	0.57
Stonefield Pocket Park S	Pocket Park	0.31
	<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>67.25</i>
Channing Park Greenspace	Greenspace	0.88
Crofton Hills Greenspace	Greenspace	1.05
Emerald Downs Greenspace	Greenspace	3.24
Foxwood Greenspace	Greenspace	0.79
Pioneer Ridge Greenspace	Greenspace	2.01
Pioneer Ridge Greenspace BPA Trail	Greenspace	2.01
Rainier Vista Greenspace	Greenspace	0.23
Stonefield Greenspace	Greenspace	2.23
Suncrest Park Greenspace	Greenspace	3.30
Tall Timbers HOA Greenspace	Greenspace	1.35
Tamarack Greenspace	Greenspace	1.55
Tamarack Ridge Greenspace	Greenspace	0.13
Timberlane Greenspace	Greenspace	53.77
Wingfield Greenspace	Greenspace	0.11
	<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>72.65</i>
	Total Acreage	178.05

Several of the more significant private facilities are detailed below.

Camp McCullough

This 38-acre site is the largest parcel of developed private open space in Covington. Camp McCullough is a private Christian camping facility owned and operated by the First Presbyterian Church of Tacoma. The camp features a large tract of natural wooded acreage combined with approximately 900 feet of shoreline on Pipe Lake, the only lake within the City. Recreational facilities include cabins, a ballfield, a basketball court, swings, picnic tables, a lodge, a swimming area and a large grass meadow that can accommodate a variety of activities such as soccer, softball and volleyball. When not being used by FPC, the camp is available for rental by other groups.

Aqua Vista Pocket Park at Pipe Lake

Also located along Pipe Lake, this fenced, private park is slightly more than one acre in size. It includes a swimming area and upland lawn area with picnic tables and benches.

Timberlane Community Center

The Timberlane development's community center includes a day care, meeting facility, outdoor swimming pool, restrooms/changing facility, play area with four separate swing apparatus, picnic tables and benches. The center is located within a larger wooded open space area and is immediately adjacent to Cedar Valley Elementary School.

The Reserve

The Reserve is a private open space operated on a City-owned, regional storm water facility. It has a maintenance access road surrounding the pond that serves as a half-mile loop walking trail. There are benches, picnic tables and play equipment along the trail, along with spur trails connecting the facility to local neighborhood streets.

Winterwood Lake

Similar to The Reserve, Winterwood Lake offers private recreational opportunities for residents of the development. Facilities include a walking path, water access, children's playground, bench, tables and a gazebo.

Crofton Neighborhood Park

This private park has large, open lawn areas, an asphalt walking path with benches, a children's play area and a basketball court.

Shared-Use Paths, Soft-Surface Paths, Bike Lanes & Shared Roadways

Table 11 identifies the existing shared-use paths, soft-surface paths, bike lanes and shared roadways within Covington based on an extensive review of existing connections. These facilities are illustrated on Map 4 on page 47.

Table 10. Existing Trails & Pathways by Type

Facility Type	Length (feet)	Length (miles)
Bikeways (On-Street)		
Bike Lane	18,254.8	3.5
Shared Roadway	19,036.4	3.6
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>37,291.2</i>	<i>7.1</i>
Trails		
Park Trail (City)	3,007.6	0.6
Primary Trail (Private)	9,952.2	1.9
Primitive Trail (City)	9,359.4	1.8
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>22,319.3</i>	<i>4.2</i>
Paths		
Private Path	2,230.0	0.4
Regional Path	825.5	0.2
Regional Trail	11,127.6	2.1
Unimproved Path	15,233.5	2.9
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>29,416.6</i>	<i>5.6</i>
TOTAL		16.9

Overall, Covington has access to over 9.5 miles of pathways, along with 7 miles of on-street bicycle corridors. The physical quality and condition of the numerous sections varies widely, from 2-foot wide earthen pathways, to 8-foot concrete shared-use paths, to striped and dedicated bike lanes. Many gaps in the trail system exist which limit the utility of these corridors. Additionally, many segments are located on private property and would require formal easements to facilitate future improvements.

Recreation Program & Activity Providers

Kent Parks & Recreation

The City of Kent Parks, Recreation and Community Services offers a wide array of indoor and outdoor activities, classes, services and facilities for all ages. (www.ci.kent.wa.us/parksandrecreation/index.aspx?id=1278)

Maple Valley Parks & Recreation

The City of Maple Valley Parks & Recreation Department was established in 2003 and has a year-around schedule of adult and youth activities and programs. Additionally, the City owns Lake Wilderness Golf Course and owns and operates the Lake Wilderness Lodge and Lake Wilderness Park. (www.ci.maple-valley.wa.us/index.aspx?page=50)

Covington Community Sports

Covington Community Sports, Inc. is a nonprofit corporation founded to give the families of Covington and the surrounding area access to local, quality athletics programs. They offer soccer, basketball, tennis and a range of summer sports camps. (www.covingtonsports.org)

Kent Little League

Kent Little League was established in 1984 and is a chartered local league of Little League International and a member of Washington state District 10. The boundary for Kent Little League is contiguous with the Kent School District boundary. (www.kentll.org)

Kent Youth Soccer Association

The Kent Youth Soccer Association operates within the Kent School district boundaries. It operates a Mod program for ages U5-U10 age group in the fall and spring, a Recreational program for ages U11-U18, a Select program for kids U11-U18 (Kent FC), a boys club, South County Futbol club (SCFC) that plays U10Dev to U18 and a PDL club (Dos FC Premier) that plays ages U10Dev to U18. (www.kysa.org)

Maple Valley Soccer Association

Maple Valley Soccer Association was formed in 1972. The association is a non-profit organization serving all children within the Tahoma School District. The association administers programs for all age levels (U6 - U19) and for all skill levels (Recreational, District, Select Competitive, and State Premier). (www.maplevalleysoccer.com)

Tahoma Little League

Tahoma Little League was established in 1999 and is the home of baseball and softball in Maple Valley. Tahoma Little League is part of District 10 and comprises the western half of the Tahoma School District boundary. Team play starts at age 5 and continues through age 16. (www.tahomall.org)

Boys & Girls Club - Auburn

The Boys & Girls Clubs of King County operates an extension site in Auburn for after-school and summer programs. Their mission is to enable all young people to reach their full potential as productive, responsible and caring citizens. (www.positiveplace.org)

LA Fitness

LA Fitness is a membership-based, national fitness franchise. The Covington gym opened in 2008 and currently serves approximately 5,500 members. The facility offers a range of equipment for strength and cardio training, classes and a lap pool. In 2009, LA Fitness acquired the locally operated Miekos fitness centers. (www.lafitness.com/Pages/clubhome.aspx?clubid=388&clubStatusID=1)

Raise the Bar

Raise the Bar is a private fitness clinic focusing on training, coaching and supporting triathletes. Raise the Bar also works with communities to produce events, such as the XTERRA Black Diamond off-road triathlon and the Lake Meridian Triathlon. (www.weraisethebar.com)

Curves

Curves is the largest fitness franchise in the world with nearly 10,000 locations worldwide. Curves is a fitness and weight loss facility dedicated to providing affordable, one-stop exercise and nutritional information for women. Curves operates facilities in Kent, Auburn and Maple Valley. (www.curveslocal.com)

Maple Valley Fitness

Maple Valley Fitness is a membership-based fitness facility and is part of Fitness 19, which was founded in 2003. (www.fitness19.com/locations.aspx?sid=62)

Lake Wilderness Golf Course

Lake Wilderness Golf Course is a public golf course, maintained by the City of Maple Valley and managed by Premier Golf Center, LLC. The 18-hole course offers short, narrow fairways that test all skill levels. (www.lakewildernessgc.com)

Meridian Valley Golf & Country Club

This member-only, 18-hole course and country club is open year round for the all weather golfers and tee times are only required for weekend play during peak summer months. The par 72, Ted Robinson designed course plays 6,652 yards and is an interesting mix of hills and flat tracts with over 50 sand bunkers and nine water hazards. The course is located east of Covington at 24830 136th Avenue SE. (www.meridianvalleycc.com)

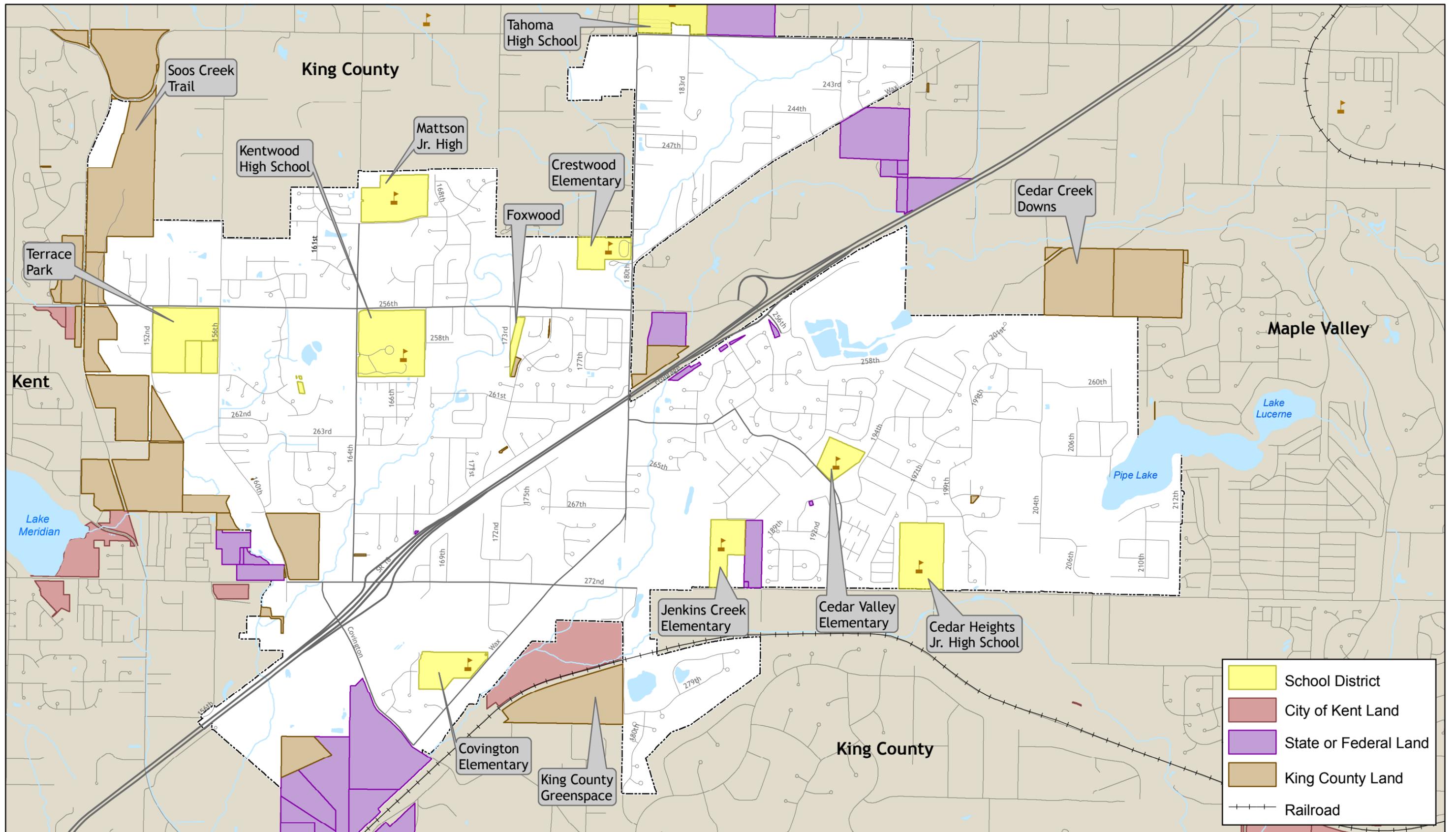
Druid's Glen Golf Course

Druids Glen Golf Club is an 18-hole (par 72) golf course located to the southeast of Covington at 29925 207th Avenue SE. Noted as an upscale public course, the 230-acre complex offers championship golf and scenic views of Mt. Rainier. (www.druidsglengolf.com)

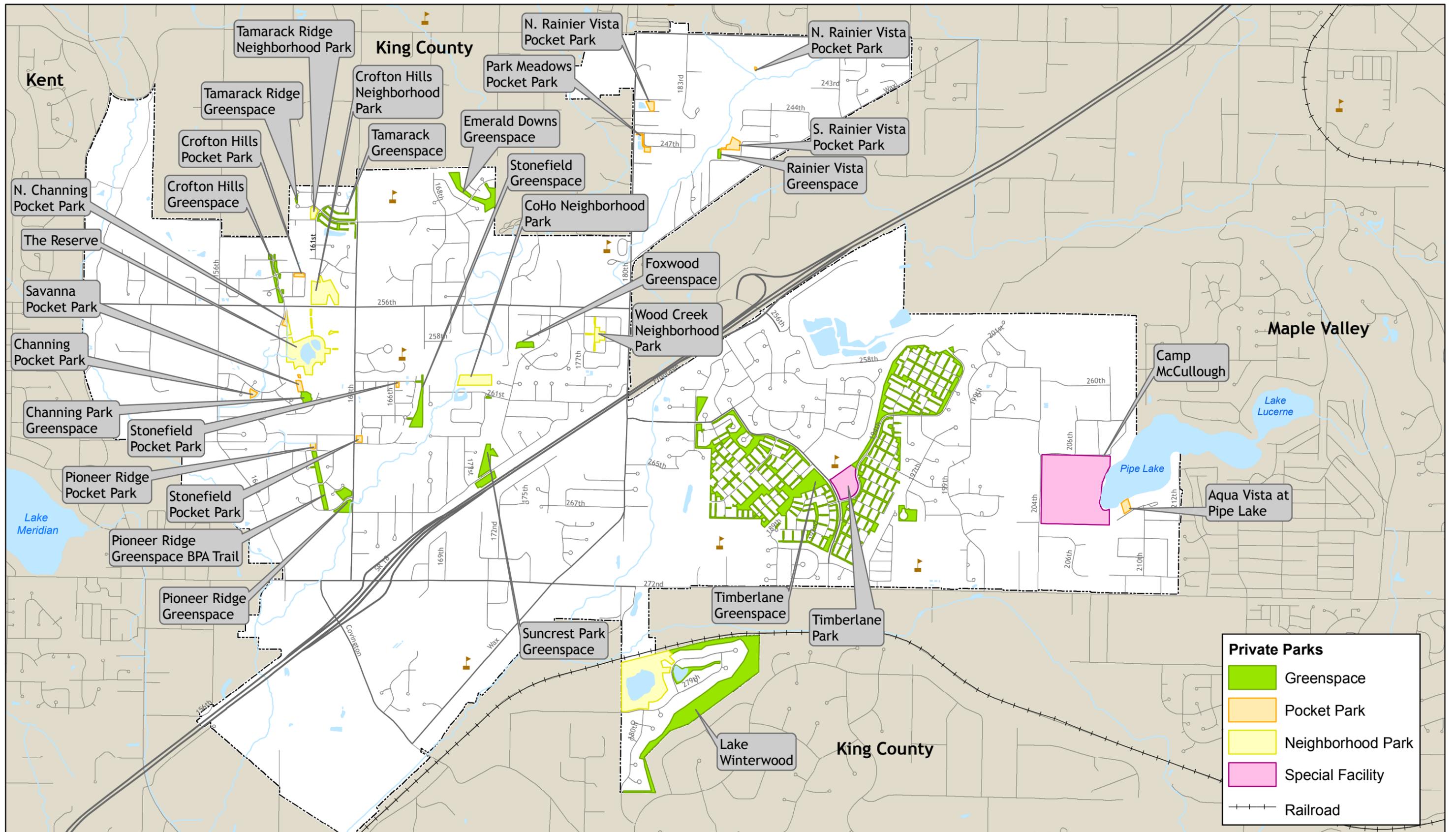
Elk Run Golf Course

Located on the southern edge of Maple Valley at 22500 S.E. 275th Place, Elk Run has two distinctive 9's and is open to the public. (www.elkrungolf.com)

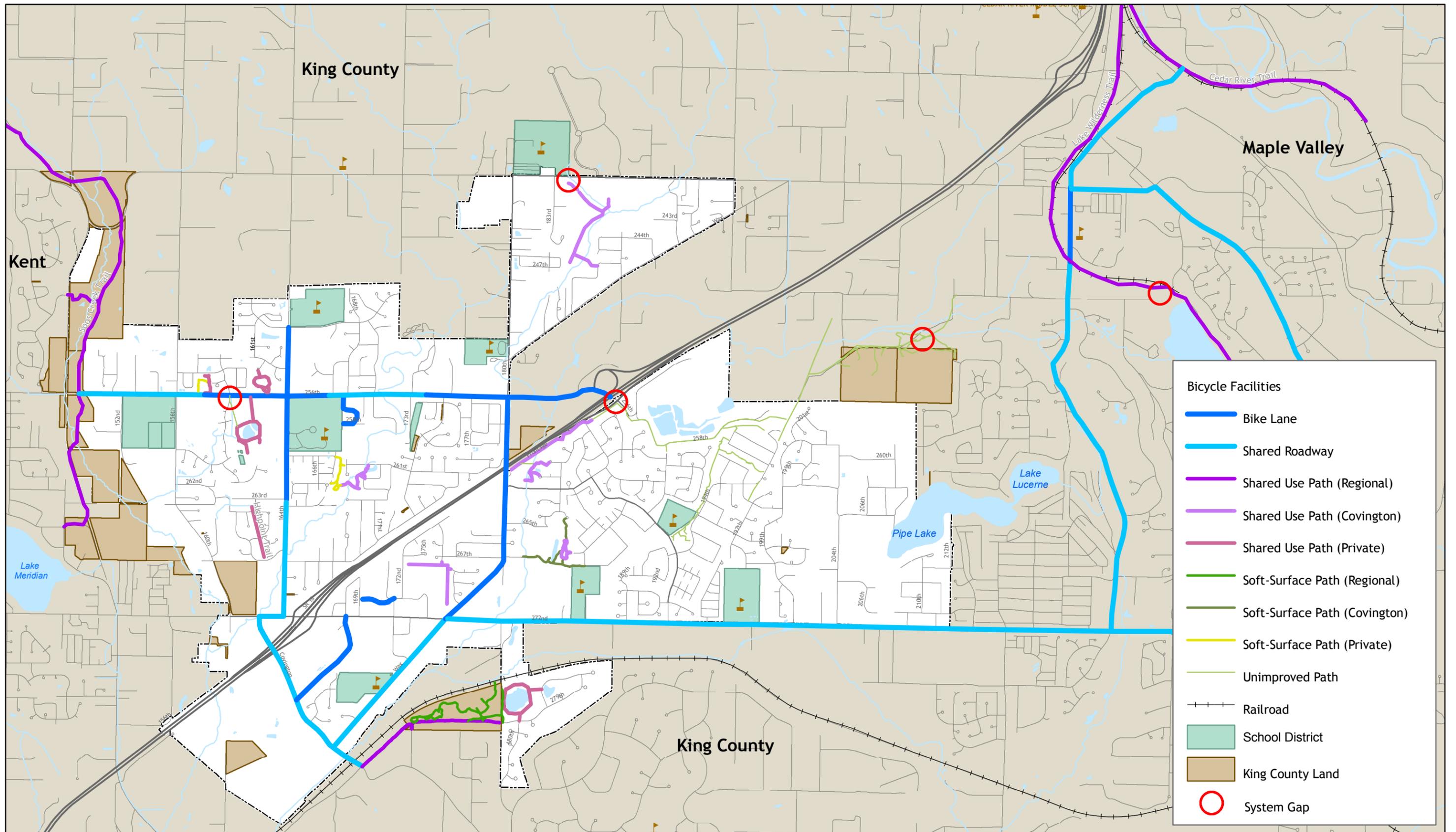
This page is intentionally left blank.



Map 2. Non-City, Public Parks & Greenspaces



Map 3. Privately-Held Parks & Greenspaces



Map 4. Existing Trails & Bikeways

Covington
 Parks Recreation & Open Space (PROS) Plan
 Source: King County
 Author: KV and HK
 Date: April 2010



Chapter 3. Public Outreach

Public outreach and involvement played a vital role in establishing a clear framework for park, trail and recreation planning that reflects upon the current priorities of the community. Most residents care deeply about the future of Covington's parks and trail system and appreciated the opportunity to offer feedback in the development of this Plan. Community outreach methods were varied and extensive, including:

- A statistically-valid, scientific telephone survey
- A teen-oriented focus group session
- Three community meetings
- Four small group stakeholder meetings
- Two Parks and Recreation Commission meetings
- Web site content

The public provided information and expressed opinions about their needs and priorities for parks, trails and recreation facilities and programs in Covington. The response from citizens of all ages and interests areas was passionate, and this feedback played an important role in preparing and organizing policy statements and prioritizing the capital improvements plan contained within this Plan.

Community Survey

In close collaboration with staff, the project team designed a community survey to assess residents' recreational needs, preferences and priorities. Between September 11 and 15, 2009, Davis Hibbitts & Midghall conducted a telephone survey of 300 residents living in the City of Covington that took an average of 20 minutes to administer. The sample size accommodated survey findings to be reviewed and filtered by multiple subgroups including gender, age and length of residency.

Covington residents ages 18 years and older were contacted using random digit dialing (RDD) to include households with unlisted or unpublished telephone numbers. In addition to RDD, a listed sample was used to gather interviews from targeted age groups, specifically residents ages 18-34. Quotas were set by age and gender based on the total population of Covington to assure a representative sample.

The 2000 US Census placed Covington's population at 13,783, and residents ages 18 and older accounted for 9,122 (66%) of the total population. Although Covington's population has increased significantly in the past 9 years, this census information was used as a guide, not a strict requirement, for setting quotas on the community survey. The following table compares Covington's demographic information from the community survey to the 2000 US Census.

Table 11. Community Survey Demographics as Compared to US Census Data

Demographic Group	US Census (2000 Population)	Survey (N=300)
Gender		
Female	50%	52%
Male	50%	48%
Age		
18-34	32%	29%
35-54	53%	38%
55 and above	15%	31%
Refused	--	2%
Household Information		
Households with children under age 18	55%	44%
Length of residency		
5 years or less	n/a	14%
5-10 years	n/a	33%
11-20 years	n/a	28%
20 years or more	n/a	21%

Source: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc (DHM) and US Census Bureau

A detailed discussion of community survey results appear in the Needs Assessment chapter of this plan (starting on page 63). The survey instrument and a summary of the response data are provided in Appendix B.

Teen Focus Group Discussion

Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall (DHM) also conducted a focus group among teens (ages 14 to 17) living in Covington. The purpose of this group was to assess the opinions, ideas and priorities of youth for improving parks and recreation in the city. A total of 9 randomly recruited teens participated in a focus group session on November 21, 2009. The group represented a mix of gender, ages and grade levels. The discussion was 90 minutes in length and led by two professional moderators. Participants responded to questions during the discussion and in written exercises, and the session was video-taped.

Although research of this type is not designed to measure with statistical reliability the attitudes of a particular group, it is valuable in giving a sense of the attitudes and opinions of the populations from which the samples were drawn. The focus group was a measure of the values, beliefs and perceptions of young residents as they relate parks and recreation activities in their community and represents a step toward involving youth in City planning processes. Additionally, when combined with the telephone survey, the City has provided a large cross-section of community members the opportunity to have a meaningful impact on the development of this Plan.

Key findings from the teen focus group appear in the Needs Assessment chapter. A summary report of the focus group is provided in Appendix C, organizes the group discussion by major topic area and includes representative quotations along with evaluative commentary.

Public Meetings

Three public meetings were held during the planning process. Meeting flyers, paid newspaper ads, newspaper articles and e-mail announcements were used to publicize the events. Summary responses from each of the meetings are provided in Appendix D. Each meeting lasted approximately two hours and was organized as follows:

Community Open House Meeting #1 (September 29, 2009)

This session included an overview of the planning process and project purpose. The intent was to elicit local insights on the future vision for the parks system, begin to explore program and facility opportunities and identify any local, non-traditional recreation providers, associations or other interested parties who might provide critical information to plan development.

Held at Covington City Hall, approximately 10 people attended the first PROS Plan open house. Display stations provided nine graphic and narrative information boards for residents to review, comment and discuss. The stations covered the following topic areas: Visioning for the Future, Neighborhood & Community Parks, Natural Areas & Public Plazas, Trails, Aquatics Facilities & Programs and Recreation Programs. Comments were recorded at display stations and on comment forms, which were provided at the sign-in table.



Figure 22. Residents offering insights on the future system

Community Open House Meeting #2 (November 3, 2009)

The second public meeting provided residents with a project progress update, along with a summary of survey results and an opportunity to confirm field observations about park sites and facilities. The session was lightly attended, and over a dozen display stations provided graphic and narrative information boards for residents to review, comment and discuss. The stations covered the following topic areas: Summary results of the telephone survey, Park and trail inventory assessments by facility type and Recreation priorities. Attendees were asked to comment on the



Figure 23. Commenting on the use of HOA parks

findings to date, provide additional input and note any topic areas they would like to see explored in more detail. As with the first session, comments forms were recorded at display stations and on comment forms.

Community Open House Meeting #3 (February 3, 2010)

Approximately 30 people attended the third PROS Plan open house to review and comment upon proposed projects and priority areas for the parks and recreation system. Over a dozen display stations provided graphic and narrative information covering the following topics: existing parkland inventory & associated service area catchment zones, existing & proposed trail routes, aquatic center and program priorities, community recreation priorities and proposed capital projects. Residents provided significant comments on the proposed trail network, along with the proposed distribution of parkland throughout the City. Attendees indicated support for the proposed direction in capital project and programming priorities.



Figure 24. Identifying priorities, such as a teen gathering place

Stakeholder Discussions

To more broadly assess the opportunities for partnership and coordination, along with the challenges of programming expansion and capital project implementation, a series of external stakeholder interviews was conducted. The following individuals and local organizations provided insight to the Plan:

Youth Sport Providers

- Kent Little League
- Kent Youth Soccer Association
- Covington Community Sports
- Kent School District
- Maple Valley (staff)
- Black Diamond (staff)

Covington Economic Development Council

- Full commission with membership including:
 - Covington Chamber of Commerce
 - City of Covington
 - City Council

Health & Wellness Providers

- MultiCare
- Pinnacle
- Raise the Bar
- LA Fitness

Aquatic Center Users

- 11 individual users of the aquatic center and aquatic programs

Comments were often specific to the particular program area or perspective of the stakeholder group. Overall, comments were favorable toward the city, its staff and its quality of service and facilities offered. Stakeholders recognized the limited financial capacity of the city and were often quick to offer suggestions for partnerships or other means to accomplish specific projects. Suggested improvements ranged from downtown plaza development as an activity center, to broad regional connections for trail facilities, to affiliations with volunteer-based or civic organizations to expand the city's capacity for providing services. Specific recommendations are also reflected in the Needs Assessment chapter, and stakeholder discussion summaries are provided in Appendix E.

Other Outreach

A project webpage for the PROS Plan was prepared and posted on the city's website for residents to learn about the planning process and also including notice of public meetings, summary documents and a draft version of the plan. The page was updated periodically to keep residents informed of progress and alerted to opportunities for involvement during the process. Additionally, the planning project was highlighted in the Covington Reporter with full articles leading up to each of the three community open house meetings. News articles and sample meeting flyers are located in Appendix I.

This page is intentionally left blank.

Chapter 4. Policies & Objectives

Goals and objectives provide the policy framework for the Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan. The following goals have been derived by analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the park system as it exists in 2009 and identifying opportunities for strategic progress during the next 5 to 10 years.

The goals and objectives are also directed in large measure by the Washington State Legislature's adoption of the 1990 Growth Management Act. The Act identifies 13 planning goals to guide the development of comprehensive plans. Three of these goals are integral to this plan; they are to:

- Encourage the retention of open space and development of recreational opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks
- Protect the environment and enhance the state's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water
- Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures that have historical or archaeological significance

Also, the following goals are also influenced by the City's adopted Comprehensive Plan, which addresses natural resources, public facilities and transportation, among others.

Community Engagement

Goal 1: Encourage meaningful public involvement in park and recreation planning and engage residents through department communications.

- 1.1 Involve residents and stakeholders in system planning, park site facility design and recreation program development to solicit community input, facilitate project understanding and engender public support.
- 1.2 Use a variety of methods and media to increase resident awareness about Parks and Recreation Department activities via community events, interpretive tours, presentations to neighborhood, homeowner and civic groups and other venues.
- 1.3 Expand and update the city's web site to enhance citizen communication, expand access to information and improve public outreach and marketing.
- 1.4 Prepare and publish a comprehensive park and trail facilities map for online and print distribution to highlight existing and proposed routes and promoting Covington as an active-lifestyles community.
- 1.5 Host special events, festivals, concerts and cultural programming to promote wellness and community identity, foster civic pride and promote tourism and the benefits of recreation.

- 1.6 Expand community-based volunteer and stewardship development and improvements opportunities, such as planting and restoration activities, in conformance to established City standards.
- 1.7 Conduct periodic joint sessions between the Parks and Recreation Commission, City Council and other commissions to improve coordination and discuss policy matters of mutual interest.

Health, Wellness & Programming

Goal 2: Establish a varied and inclusive suite of recreation programs that accommodate a spectrum of ages, interests and abilities.

- 2.1 Leverage City resources by forming and maintaining partnerships with other public, non-profit and private recreation providers to deliver recreation services and secure access to existing facilities (e.g. schools) for field sports and other community recreation.
- 2.2 Emphasize service provision to children, teens, seniors, people with disabilities and other population groups with limited access to market-based recreation options.
- 2.3 Explore partnership opportunities with regional healthcare providers and services, such as MultiCare, Valley Medical Center and the King County Health Department, to promote wellness activities, healthy lifestyles and communications about local facilities and the benefits of parks and recreation.
- 2.4 Promote and expand special events and programming, such as summer programs and environmental education. Utilize the region's parks, trails, waterfronts and recreation facilities as settings to provide and/or facilitate a wider array programs and activities.
- 2.5 Continue to foster the partnership with the Kent and Tahoma School Districts to utilize school sites to provide active recreation facilities. Explore opportunities to co-develop facilities on school property or property adjacent to schools.
- 2.6 Explore options with Maple Valley, Black Diamond and King County for the development of a joint community facility for recreation, fitness and leisure activities.
- 2.7 Periodically undertake a comprehensive evaluation of existing recreation program offerings in terms of persons served, customer satisfaction, cost/subsidy and availability of similar programs via other providers.
- 2.8 Study and create cost recovery guidelines for existing and planned recreation programs and services.
- 2.9 Coordinate with the Covington Art Commission to encourage participation in, appreciation of and education in the arts and to improve the capacity of local arts agencies in providing art programs that benefit community residents.

Parks

Goal 3: Acquire and develop a high-quality, diversified system of parks, recreation facilities and open spaces that is attractive, functional, accessible and safe – providing equitable access to all residents.

- 3.1 All city residents should live within one-half mile of a developed neighborhood park and one mile of a developed community park.
- 3.2 Provide a combined service standard of 8 acres per 1,000 resident-equivalents of developed neighborhood and community parks.
- 3.3 Provide an overall parks and natural areas service standard of 14 acres per 1,000 resident-equivalents.
- 3.4 Preserve and protect parks and open space within Covington’s boundaries. Prepare and adopt a “no net loss” of public parks policy, such that the City will consider parkland losses only when converted parkland is replaced in equal to or better size and/or quality.
- 3.5 Designate parks, recreational areas, trails and natural areas to be of local or regional significance if they contain significant recreation or cultural opportunities or facilities, unusual or special botanical resources, environmentally sensitive areas that serve a significant role or provide a significant function in the natural systems within the City, or public art and are associated in a significant way with an historic event, structure or person with a significant effect upon the City, state or nation.
- 3.6 Adopt plans, development and building regulations, and review procedures to protect locally or regionally significant parks, urban separators, and recreation and open space areas from adverse physical and environmental impacts caused by incompatible land uses in the vicinity of these resources.
- 3.7 Develop and implement minimum design and development standards for park and recreation amenities within private developments to maintain minimally-acceptable standards of development and to address community facility needs, equipment types, accessibility and installation procedures.
- 3.8 Identify and protect areas of local or regional significance and increase and enhance public access to shoreline areas.
- 3.9 Pursue low-cost and/or non-purchase options to preserve open space and greenbelts, including the use of conservation easements, current use assessment and development covenants.
- 3.10 Actively plan and coordinate with King County, Kent, Black Diamond and Maple Valley for the acquisition of parks and open space within or in close proximity to the urban growth area.
- 3.11 Encourage and support the participation of community-based or non-profit conservation organizations, which offer options and alternatives to development in the interest of preserving desirable lands as a public benefit.

Natural Areas & Greenspaces

Goal 4: Protect and manage the City's environmentally-sensitive lands, remnant open spaces and natural and cultural resources to highlight their uniqueness and local history.

- 4.1 Retain as open space those areas having a unique combination of open space values, including the separation or buffering between incompatible land uses; visual delineation of the City or a distinct area or neighborhood of the City; aquifer recharge areas; floodwater or stormwater storage; stormwater purification; recreational value; aesthetic value; and educational value.
- 4.2 Retain and protect as open space those areas that provide habitat for rare, threatened or endangered plant or wildlife species, may serve as a corridor for wildlife movement, and may include and encourage public use for wildlife interpretation and observation.
- 4.3 Develop management plans for the City's larger natural areas and greenspaces and facilitate community-based volunteer restoration. Plan for and manage the use of natural areas in coordination with the City's Critical Areas Ordinance and other resource protection guidelines.
- 4.4 Manage vegetation in natural areas to support or maintain native plant species, habitat function and other ecological values; remove and control non-native or invasive plants as appropriate.
- 4.5 Coordinate with King County, Kent, Black Diamond and Maple Valley to explore opportunities to preserve and enhance the ecological function, habitat quality and recreational value of the Soos Creek, Little Soos Creek and Jenkins Creek corridors.
- 4.6 Coordinate with other public agencies and private landowners for the protection of valuable natural resources and sensitive lands through the purchase of development rights, easements or title and make these lands available for passive recreation, as appropriate.
- 4.7 Recognize that designating private property for open space uses does not establish or promote any public access rights to such property.
- 4.8 Revise and adopt the draft Covington Community Forestry Plan to articulate a long-term strategy for tree protection, urban forestry management and public education and outreach.
- 4.9 Consider creating community-based volunteer and stewardship opportunities as a ways to inform and engage residents about urban forestry issues, such as tree planting, tree care and management and the benefits of urban trees.
- 4.10 Analyze the City's existing tree canopy cover, establish canopy cover goals and promote urban forestry programs in order to maintain healthy atmospheric conditions.
- 4.11 Establish and promote a recognition program for the City's Heritage Trees.
- 4.12 Comply with the Evergreen Communities Act (RCW 35.105) and obtain and maintain Evergreen Community status.

- 4.13 Maintain Tree City USA status
- 4.14 Promote the installation and management of street trees as an extension of urban habitat and providing green infrastructure benefits.

Trails & Pathways

Goal 5: Develop a high-quality system of shared-use park trails and bicycle & pedestrian corridors that connect significant local landscapes, public facilities, neighborhoods and the downtown core.

- 5.1 Create a network of interconnected, shared-use trails for walking, hiking and cycling to promote connectivity between parks, neighborhoods and public amenities.
- 5.2 Provide a trails service standard of 0.75 miles per 1,000 resident-equivalents.
- 5.3 Integrate the siting of proposed trail segments into the development review process. Require development projects along designated trail routes to be designed to incorporate the trail as part of the project.
- 5.4 Work with local agencies, utilities and private landholders to secure trail easements and access to greenspace for trail connections.
- 5.5 Require development projects along designated trail routes to be designed to incorporate the trail as part of the project. Sensitive area buffers within proposed subdivisions and short-subdivisions shall be widened to accommodate additional open space and a public easement for future trails.
- 5.6 Designate publicly-owned trails and City-dedicated easements on private lands as community trails and manage the use, maintenance and operation of each trail accordingly.
- 5.7 Coordinate with Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad for a potential rail-with-trail opportunity.
- 5.8 Coordinate with King County, Kent, Black Diamond and Maple Valley for the joint planning, development and maintenance of a regional pedestrian-bicycle trail system, to include linkages to the Soos Creek Trail, Lake Wilderness Trail, Cedar River Trail and the proposed SR-18 Trail.
- 5.9 Address pedestrian safety and access across Kent-Kangley Road, SR-18 and the railroad tracks.
- 5.10 Provide trailhead accommodations, as appropriate, to include parking, wayfinding signage, restrooms and other amenities.

Concurrency

Goal 6: Ensure that new park and recreational services are provided concurrent with new development.

- 6.1 New development shall provide funds or parkland for concurrent park development and maintenance.
- 6.2 Require on-site (or nearby off-site) development of recreation facilities or appropriate and usable parkland in conjunction with the approval of any development project involving more than 20 new dwelling units. The development of recreational amenities shall conform to the City's minimum guidelines and the general needs outlined in this Plan. Fees in lieu of development may be accepted by the City if such mitigation is not practicable.
- 6.3 Mixed use development involving more than 20 new dwelling units in the downtown area shall be exempted from the requirement to develop on-site park, recreation or open space facilities. Instead, upon approval by the City, in lieu of fees may be accepted for such mixed-use developments, to be spent on designated park, recreation or open space resources within the City that serve the development.
- 6.4 New commercial development shall be responsible for financing and providing downtown amenities such as parks, open spaces and public art.

Management & Operations

Goal 7: Provide a parks, trails and open space system that is efficient to administer and operate, while providing a high level of user comfort, safety, aesthetic quality and protection of capital investment.

- 7.1 Provide sufficient financial and staff resources to maintain the overall parks system to high standards.
- 7.2 Maintain all parks and facilities in a manner that keeps them in safe and attractive condition; repair or remove damaged components immediately upon identification.
- 7.3 When developing new facilities or redeveloping existing facilities, review and consider the projected maintenance and operations costs prior to initiating design development. Emphasize the maintenance, enhancement and renovation of existing parks prior to the development of new facilities.
- 7.4 Formulate illustrative master plans for the development or redevelopment of each city park, as appropriate, to take maximum advantage of grant or other funding opportunities.
- 7.5 Design and maintain parks, trails and facilities to offer universal accessibility for residents of all physical capabilities, skill levels and age. All facilities shall conform to the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines and requirements.
- 7.6 Incorporate sustainable development and low impact design practices into the design, planning and rehabilitation of new and existing facilities. Prepare sustainability best management practices for grounds maintenance and operations.

Consider the use of non-invasive, native vegetation for landscaping in parks and natural areas to minimize maintenance requirements and promote wildlife habitat and foraging.

- 7.7 Standardize the use of graphics and signage to establish a consistent identity at all parks, trailheads and other facilities.
- 7.8 Standardize park furniture (trash cans, tables, benches, fencing, water fountains) to reduce inventory costs and improve appearance of, and maintenance consistency within, parks.
- 7.9 Coordinate park planning, acquisition and development with other City projects and programs that implement the comprehensive plan. Seek partnerships with other public agencies and the private sector to meet the demand for cultural and recreational facilities in the City.
- 7.10 Encourage volunteer park improvement and maintenance projects from a variety of individuals, service clubs, scouting organizations, churches and businesses.
- 7.11 Periodically evaluate user satisfaction and numerical use of parks, facilities and programs; share this information with staff, Parks and Recreation Commission and City Council as part of the decision making process to revise offerings or renovate facilities.
- 7.12 Pursue alternative funding options for the acquisition and development of parks and facilities, such as through private donation, sponsorships, partnerships, county, state and federal grant sources, among others. Place priority on maximizing grants and other external sources of funding, or inter-agency cooperative arrangements, to develop the City's park resources.
- 7.13 Promote professional development opportunities that strengthen the core skills and engender greater commitment from staff, Commission members and key volunteers, to include trainings, materials and/or affiliation with the National Recreation & Park Association (NRPA) and the Washington Recreation & Park Association (WRPA).

This page is intentionally left blank.

Chapter 5. Needs Assessment

The planning process culminated in articulating the community's needs for, and vision of, the park and recreation system. Assessing the latent and potential demand for services requires the consideration of the location, size and number of facilities by type and use, along with community interests. Through this review, a six year capital facility plan has been developed to identify and prioritize critical upgrades, improvements and expansions consistent with the needs expressed by residents. The following assessment relies heavily on public input from the survey, teen focus group and site inventories, along with stakeholder discussions and public meetings.

Overview of Community Feedback

The assessment of specific recreation needs for Covington is based on a range of data, including the telephone survey and focus group conducted as part of this Plan and state and national recreational trend information. The following summarizes these data and provides context for programming and facility recommendations and priorities.

Community Telephone Survey

As was noted in the Public Outreach chapter, a valid statistically-valid telephone survey of Covington residents 18 years of age and older was conducted in September, 2009. The following is a summary of the overall findings. Survey results specific to facility types (parks, aquatic center, etc) and programming are discussed later in this chapter and organized by topic areas.

In general, Covington residents have more need for outdoor parks and recreation infrastructure, such as trails, pathways and large community parks, than for recreation programs.

- With regard to specific park and recreation infrastructure, sixty-percent (60%) of residents said they had a need for an extended trail system for walking and cycling and, in addition, noted the need for a larger, 10-20 acre community park suitable for wide use including sports fields, picnic areas, and pathways. One-half (53%) of residents also think that smaller neighborhood parks with basic amenities such as play equipment, picnic tables, and open fields within a short walking distance from their homes serve their needs extremely well or well.
- Approximately one-third (32%) of households participated in recreation activities offered by the City of Covington. Slight majorities of residents have a need for certain programs, such as community events, fitness programs, swim instruction and aquatic activities, yet the level of need for these is notably less than that for outdoor parks infrastructure.

In addition to having more need for outdoor parks infrastructure than all other parks and recreation options, residents also may be more willing to pay for these types of improvements.

- When asked to allocate \$100.00 among a list of different parks and recreation facilities, over one-half of the money (\$58) was allocated to outdoor parks and recreation, including building walking and biking trails, building parks with playgrounds and picnic areas, building sports fields and purchasing land for parks and open space.
- Over one-half of residents would support an increase in taxes to fund recreation activities, programs and facilities in Covington, and a slight majority would also support an increase in taxes to fund the acquisition and construction of parks, open spaces and trails.

Table 12. Allocation of \$100 on Parks & Recreation Facilities (Phone Survey)

Parks and recreation facilities	Allocation of funds (Mean)
Build a community center for indoor recreation, including a gym, walking track, classes, and exercise room	\$17.60
Build walking and biking trails	\$15.60
Build parks with playgrounds and picnic areas	\$15.00
Build sports fields	\$14.40
Enhance the existing aquatic center	\$13.70
Purchase land for parks and open space	\$13.00
Build an indoor leisure pool with slides and water features	\$10.70
TOTAL	\$100.00

Source: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM), September 2009

Also, residents differ in the level of need they have for parks and recreation options based on age and/or length of residency.

- Residents living in Covington for 20 years or less and those ages 18 to 54 are similar in their parks and recreation needs and priorities and have a greater need for parks and recreation options than longer term and older residents. However, despite this difference, the ranking order of priorities is similar among all groups, even though younger and shorter term residents may be more passionate in their needs for parks and recreation in the City.

Representative comments about the overall park system include:

“More parks. I’d like to see a park with a pond, a place where you could attend and have events—a gathering place. And more sports fields.”

“More hiking and biking trails – I don’t think there are any. Also, a community center or facility in a central location and maybe a community bulletin or newsletter that goes out to everyone in the vicinity that details events and recreation options.”

“Maintaining them, keeping them safe so that people feel comfortable using them. There are times I wouldn’t go out to them on my own.”

“Well the only one I can speak for is Jenkins Creek Park. It could be nice if they could do something about vandalism. Also, more access is needed to view streams to look at fish when they are spawning.”

“Access, like parking access, and facilities like restrooms.”

“Having facilities like in Kent and activities for teenagers. Also, extending swimming times.”

Teen Focus Group

As with the survey, the teen focus group discussion yielded a range of insights regarding the current state of parks and recreation offerings in Covington, along with some clear suggestions for improvements to facilities and programs. In many respects, the teen discussion mirrored the comments garnered through the survey and reinforced the general sentiment that surfaced from the survey. Teens were asked what they believe are the three most needed improvements to parks and recreation in Covington. Three themes stand out:

- **Bigger Parks:** “openness,” “big fields,” “lots of space to run around,” “big parks”
- **Park Maintenance:** “Lights,” “not being too dark,” “there’s a lot of trash”
- **Park Activities:** “music events,” “community events,” “the play things for kids,” “baseball fields,” “a bigger skate park in a big park,” “BBQ areas,” “benches to sit on”

Teens like living in Covington; they have easy access to a variety of nearby activities and they feel safe in their community.

- Covington affords teens access to a variety of interesting settings – Covington Place, Kent Station and many restaurants, shops and nearby towns. Covington is also big enough that they are able to meet new people, but small enough that they feel safe being independent.
- Despite their satisfaction with living in Covington, recreation and social activities like shopping, movies and “just hanging out” are often in nearby towns such as Kent.

The ideal park for teens is one that is big, safe and has interesting things to do. It is a park that is for the entire community, not just for neighborhoods.

- Over one-half of participants think parks and recreation in Covington is the biggest issue city officials need to address, including the size of parks, the level of park cleanliness and the general awareness of parks and recreation in Covington.
- Teens want to see a large park in Covington with diverse facilities that include multiple sports fields, a large skate park, trails, benches and covered areas. They also want to see community events at parks, such as expanding Covington Days and having concerts and summer and after school camps.
- Feeling safe is essential to their use of parks. They want to see lights at parks so they can use them in the evenings after school or in the summer. They also want measures taken to ensure illegal activities such as drinking do not occur at night in parks.

There is potential for expanded use of the Covington Aquatic Center by teens. Teens may use the aquatic center more often with some basic improvements.

- Teens find features such as a spring diving board, spray features, and a shallow play area the most exciting additions to the aquatic center. There is some concern, however, that the existing pool is already too crowded and that there may not be enough room for more additions.

- Some reasons for not going to the aquatic center may be easily remedied. They are concerned about the cleanliness of the water in the pool and the bathroom, and some also feel the water is too cold.

Teens want to know more about Covington parks and recreation opportunities.

- Teens are excited by parks and recreation possibilities in Covington and want to attend events and go to parks. However, they do not have a consistent information source to learn about parks and recreation activities and events and think the City can do more to spread awareness, such as announcements at their schools. They are aware of parks in the area, but are not sure if the City has parks and recreation services.

Representative comments from teens about the overall park system include:

“I said it was safe but at the same time not small town safe. I know a couple of people here but not everyone. I like that there’s enough people in the town that we meet new people and at the same time it’s comfortable.”

“Everything is so close. Seattle is only 30 minutes away.”

“I lived in Las Vegas for 3 years and I never felt comfortable there. Here I feel really comfortable. I feel like I can go with my friends and do anything. It’s a nice little community.”

“Everything is pretty close. They have Covington Place right down there so I can walk to it and chill with friends.”

In an effort to mirror the telephone survey, teens also were asked to allocate a total of \$100 to a list of parks and recreation infrastructure improvements. The mean responses from the focus group and the community survey are illustrated in the table below.

Table 13: Allocation of \$100 on Parks & Recreation Facilities (Teens)

Parks and recreation facilities	Teen Focus Group (Mean)	Community Survey (Mean)
Build an indoor leisure pool with slides and water features	\$36.67	\$10.70
Build a community center for indoor recreation, including a gym, walking track, classes, and exercise room	\$16.11	\$17.60
Enhance the existing aquatic center	\$15.55	\$13.70
Purchase land for parks and open space	\$12.22	\$13.00
Build parks with playgrounds and picnic areas	\$11.67	\$15.00
Build sports fields	\$7.77	\$14.40
Build walking and biking trails	\$2.77	\$15.60
TOTAL	\$100.00	\$100.00

Source: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM), September and November 2009

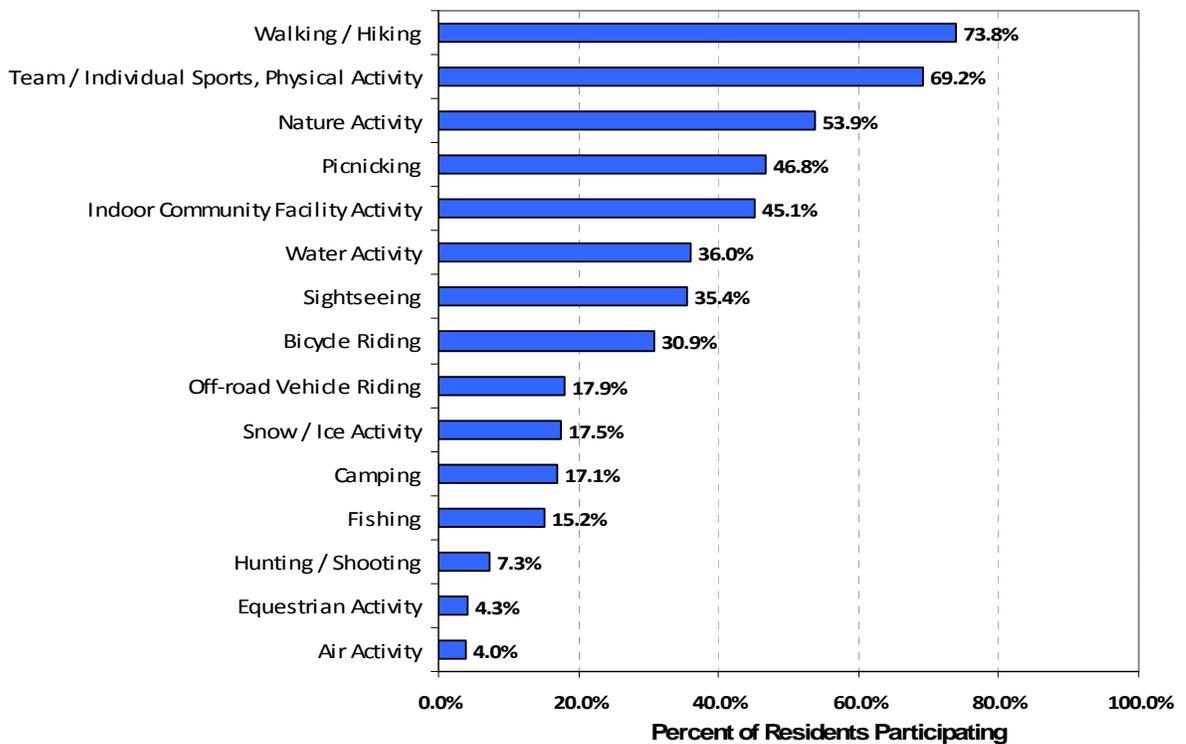
Over one-half of teen funds (\$52.22) are allocated towards aquatics, including an indoor leisure pool and enhancing the aquatic center. In the community survey, a lower amount (\$24.40) is allocated to aquatics. Teens gave a combined \$34.43 toward outdoor parks and recreation, while residents in the community survey allocated \$58.00.

While teens allocated a majority of funds for aquatics, it is worth noting that aquatics are not top of mind for them. It was not mentioned unprompted in the group discussion as a top needed improvement or priority for parks and recreation in Covington, unlike a large community park with trails, pathways, sports fields, and play equipment.

Washington SCORP

The 2008 Washington State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Planning (SCORP) document guides decision-makers in better understanding statewide recreation issues and is required to help maintain Washington's eligibility for federal Land and Water Conservation Fund dollars, which are administered through the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) grant programs. The SCORP included a listing of outdoor activities by frequency, as shown below in Table 15. Broad similarities exist between the most popular statewide activities and those documented in the telephone survey, such as the popularity of walking/hiking, nature activity and picnicking.

Table 14. Washington SCORP: Ranking of Major Activity Areas (2006-7)



Other National Recreation Data

Additionally, three recent recreation studies were reviewed to compare to the local, community data and gain an understanding of participation trends occurring at the national level. These studies included:

- National Sporting Goods Association sports participation, 2008
- “2008 Outdoor Recreation Participation Report”: The Outdoor Foundation
- “Outdoor Recreation Participation in 2003”: The Recreation Roundtable

These sources also supported hiking and walking as the most popular form of outdoor recreation. Additionally, bicycling, swimming, fishing and camping consistently appeared in the list of top ten activities.

System Growth: Parkland Acquisitions

Acquisition Gap Analysis

To better understand where acquisition efforts should be directed, a gap analysis of the park system was conducted to examine and assess the current distribution of parks throughout the city. The analysis reviewed the locations and types of existing facilities, land use classifications, transportation/access barriers and other factors as a means to identify preliminary acquisition target areas. In reviewing parkland distribution and assessing opportunities to fill identified gaps, residentially zoned lands were isolated, since neighborhood and community parks primarily serve these areas. Additionally, primary and secondary service areas were used as follows:

- Community parks: ½-mile primary & 1-mile secondary service areas
- Neighborhood parks: ¼-mile primary & ½-mile secondary service areas
- Pocket parks: ⅛-mile primary & ¼-mile secondary service areas

The service areas of public parks were reviewed separately from those of private parks to better understand specific needs. Map 5 on page 74 illustrates the application of the distribution standards from existing, publicly owned neighborhood and community parks, and it shows that much of the city is unserved with reasonable access to public parkland. Significant gaps appear in the west-central and eastern areas of the city.

The coverage of private parks shown on Map 6 partially fills the distribution gaps noted above. However, these parks are not opened to the general public and only serve the residents of the unique homeowner associations in which they sit. Coverage is most extensive in the area of The Reserve and Lake Winterwood. Also, while the Timberlane area contains a significant reserve of greenspace lands as tree corridors, the only significant park site with amenities is the Timberland community center. The service area map shows this site with regard to community access.

A composite service area map is shown as Map 7 and more accurately represents those areas with existing access to public or private “active” park lands. As this map indicates, significant gaps remain in the central and eastern sections of the city.

Resulting from this assessment, a total of nine potential acquisition areas are identified on Map 8. The greatest documented need is for additional community park sites to provide the land base for a blend of passive and active recreation opportunities, such as sport fields, picnicking and walking. The City should consider an acquisition along Pipe Lake to provide for these recreational needs and to also provide water access. Secondly, new neighborhood parks are needed to improve overall distribution and equity, while promoting recreation within walking distance of residential areas. Map 8 identifies six potential neighborhood park acquisition areas for consideration. Lastly, the map identifies the need for an urban plaza in the downtown core, in support of recent planning efforts focusing on that district, and the acquisition of natural area to connect current ownership south of Jenkins Creek Park.

While the targeted acquisition areas do not identify a specific parcel(s) for consideration, the area encompasses a broader region in which an acquisition would be ideally suited. These acquisition targets represent a long-term vision for improving parkland distribution throughout Covington.

Level of Service Assessment

In addition to and in support of the gap analysis, a level of service (LOS) review was conducted as a means to understand the distribution of parkland acreage by classification and for a broader measure of how well the city is serving its residents with access to parks and natural areas.

Table 15. Current and Projected Levels of Service by Park Classification

Neighborhood Parks	2010	2020
Population	17,785	20,335
Parkland Acreage*	39.7 acres	39.7 acres
<i>Proposed Acreage Service Standard</i>	3 acres/1000	3 acres/1000
Current Level of Service (LOS)	2.2 acres/1000	2.0 acres/1000
Net LOS to Standard	-0.8 acres/1000	-1.0 acres/1000
Attainment of Standard	74%	65%
Acreage Surplus / (Deficit)	(13.6) acres	(21.3) acres

* includes private parks

Community Parks	2010	2020
Population	17,785	20,335
Parkland Acreage	52.0 acres	52.0 acres
<i>Proposed Acreage Service Standard</i>	5 acres/1000	5 acres/1000
Current Level of Service (LOS)	2.9 acres/1000	2.6 acres/1000
Net LOS to Standard	-2.1 acres/1000	-2.4 acres/1000
Attainment of Standard	58%	51%
Acreage Surplus / (Deficit)	(36.9) acres	(49.7) acres

Greenspace & Natural Areas	2010	2020
Population	17,785	20,335
Parkland Acreage	109.8 acres	109.8 acres
<i>Proposed Acreage Service Standard</i>	6 acres/1000	6 acres/1000
Current Level of Service (LOS)	6.2 acres/1000	5.4 acres/1000
Net LOS to Standard	0.2 acres/1000	-0.6 acres/1000
Attainment of Standard	103%	90%
Acreage Surplus / (Deficit)	3.0 acres	(12.3) acres

Using the proposed service standards discussed in this Plan, Table 16 illustrates the current and projected levels of service for parkland and natural areas for the city. Today, the current level of service for community parks is 2.9 acres per 1,000 residents, which includes the undeveloped properties of the Covington Community Park and Jenkins Creek. The current deficit of 37 acres is expected to grow to approximately 50 acres by 2020. A small current deficit exists for neighborhood parks, which is expected to grow to approximately 20 acres. The current level of service for natural areas is meeting the standard, but it is also expected to grow modestly in the coming 10 years. The proposed capital projects noted in the next chapter ameliorate the projected acreage needs and maintain service levels to meet the proposed standard.

Community Parks

At present, Covington does not have developed community parkland. A master plan for the new Covington Community Park has been developed, and construction for that park is scheduled for 2011. Also, Jenkins Creek Park remains underdeveloped and is partially closed.

Public comment about Jenkins Creek Park was the most pointed and passionate. This 22-acre, former county property includes deteriorating trails, an unsafe bridge and damaged signage and benches. Based on community feedback, there is strong support for the renovation and re-opening of this park. Also, as the City's second largest park, it is well-positioned, from a physical location perspective and from a resource perspective, to play a significant role in Covington's park system. The City should make a focused effort to update and renovate this site to expand and enhance the interior trail network, provide for picnicking, disc golf and/or off-leash dog areas, along with environmental education opportunities in relation to the pond and lowlands.

As noted above, the acquisition of a community park is suggested for the southeast quadrant of the City near Pipe Lake to serve residents east of Timberlane and for water access opportunities.



Figure 25. Graffiti and damaged equipment at Jenkins Creek Park

Neighborhood Parks

With 3 neighborhood parks (2 developed and 1 undeveloped) and 15 private HOA parks, small park spaces comprise the bulk of the Covington's park system in terms of quantity. With a reasonably-priced housing stock and proximity to the greater Seattle metropolitan area, Covington continues to attract couples and young families, and access to neighborhood-based recreation opportunities are vitally important to these new residents. While private HOA parks provide more small-scale, recreation opportunities than City facilities, the City should remain committed to providing neighborhood parks, especially for those residents not affiliated with private, homeowner association amenities and resources.

To that end, six neighborhood park acquisitions are recommended throughout the City as noted above. The identification of these acquisition areas will help direct the City's resources toward filling existing distribution gaps and also provide direction to future residential developments with regard to the need for and potential locations of neighborhood parks.

Additionally, the City should consider placing wayfinding signage around town to help orient people to available public parkland. Also, any future acquisition or residential development agreement should include significant street frontage for neighborhood parklands, which is critical for a sense of safety and bearing.

Natural Areas & Greenspaces

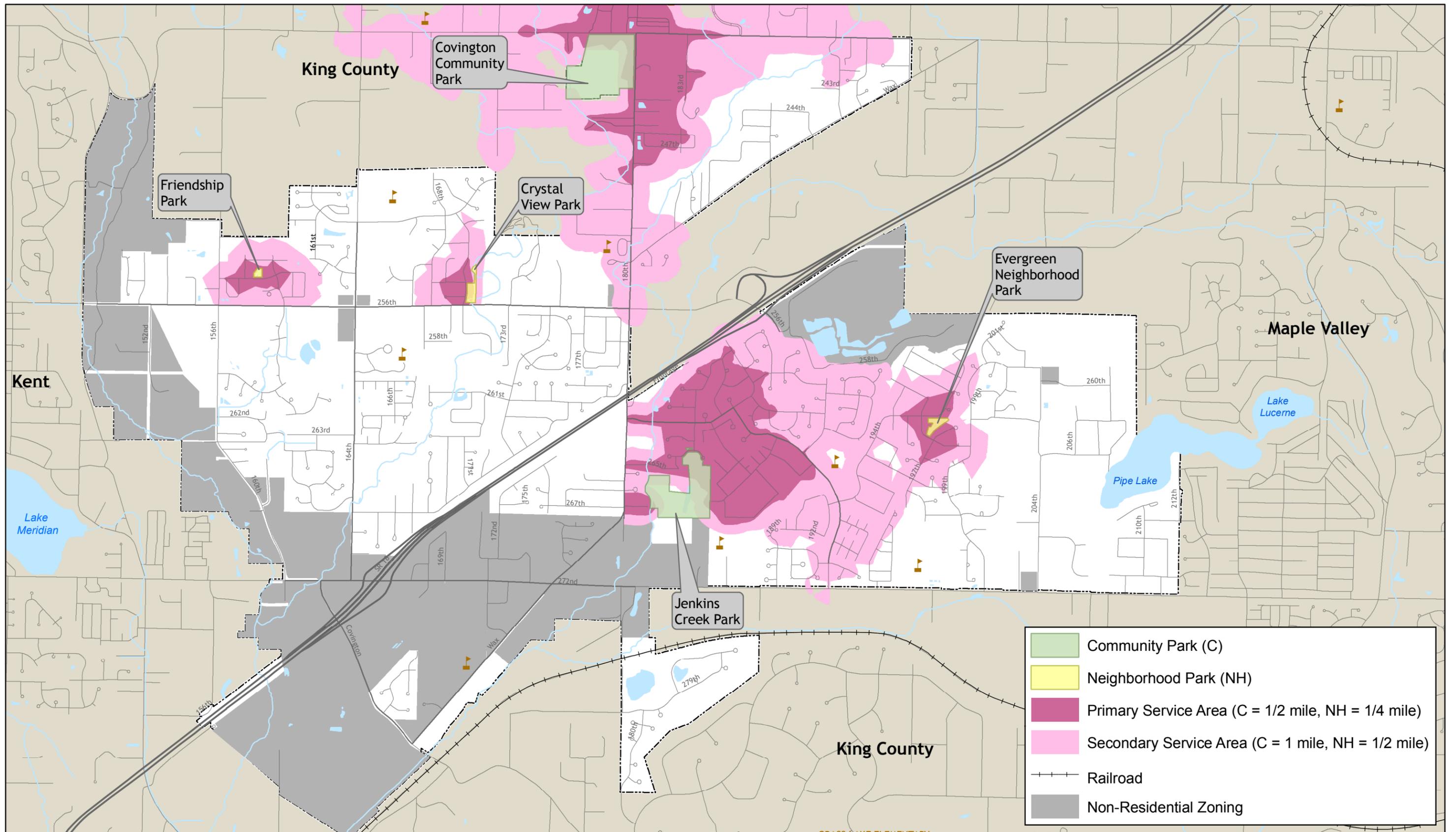
Through past acquisitions and transfers from King County, along with proximity to the Soos Creek Greenway and other non-city tracts of open space, Covington is fortunate to have retained several significant natural areas across the city. While many of the sites managed by the City do not currently accommodate formal, public access, many of these properties will serve as the backbone for future trail corridors.

Public sentiment favored the further protection of natural areas and greenspaces throughout the city, but these responses were also somewhat weak in relation to community desire for trails and other park development and enhancement projects. Additionally, the City is currently meeting its level of service standard for greenspace and natural areas, and this level of service is expected to decline slightly in the coming ten years. While the Plan recommends the acquisition of select natural areas, the City's efforts should be more discretely focused toward the purchase of access easements or greenspace corridors in support of the expansion of the trail network. Such purchases should be initially directed toward other public or quasi-public entities, such as BPA and PSE.

Also the City should consider developing an environmental interpretive and signage program to increase public awareness of the role of natural areas within the urban environment. Specifically, the wooded area of Covington Community Park, Cedar Creek Park, the lower section of Jenkins Creek Park, Jenkins Creek Trail greenspace and the greenspaces associated with the Wingfield and Rainier Vista subdivisions can provide prominent locations for such interpretive information, along with wildlife viewing stations and other outdoor education elements.



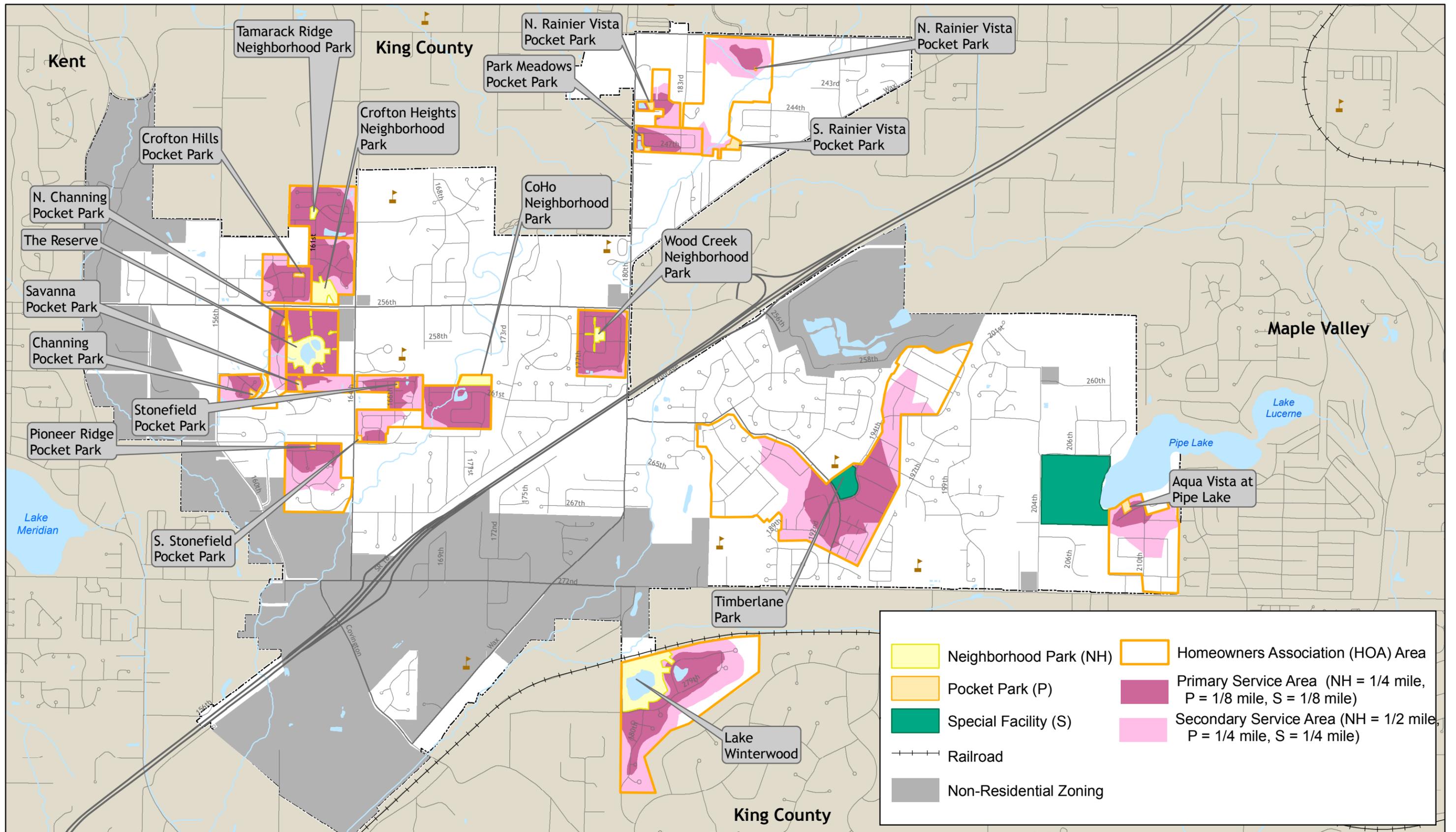
Figure 26. Interpretive panels can provide on-site environmental education



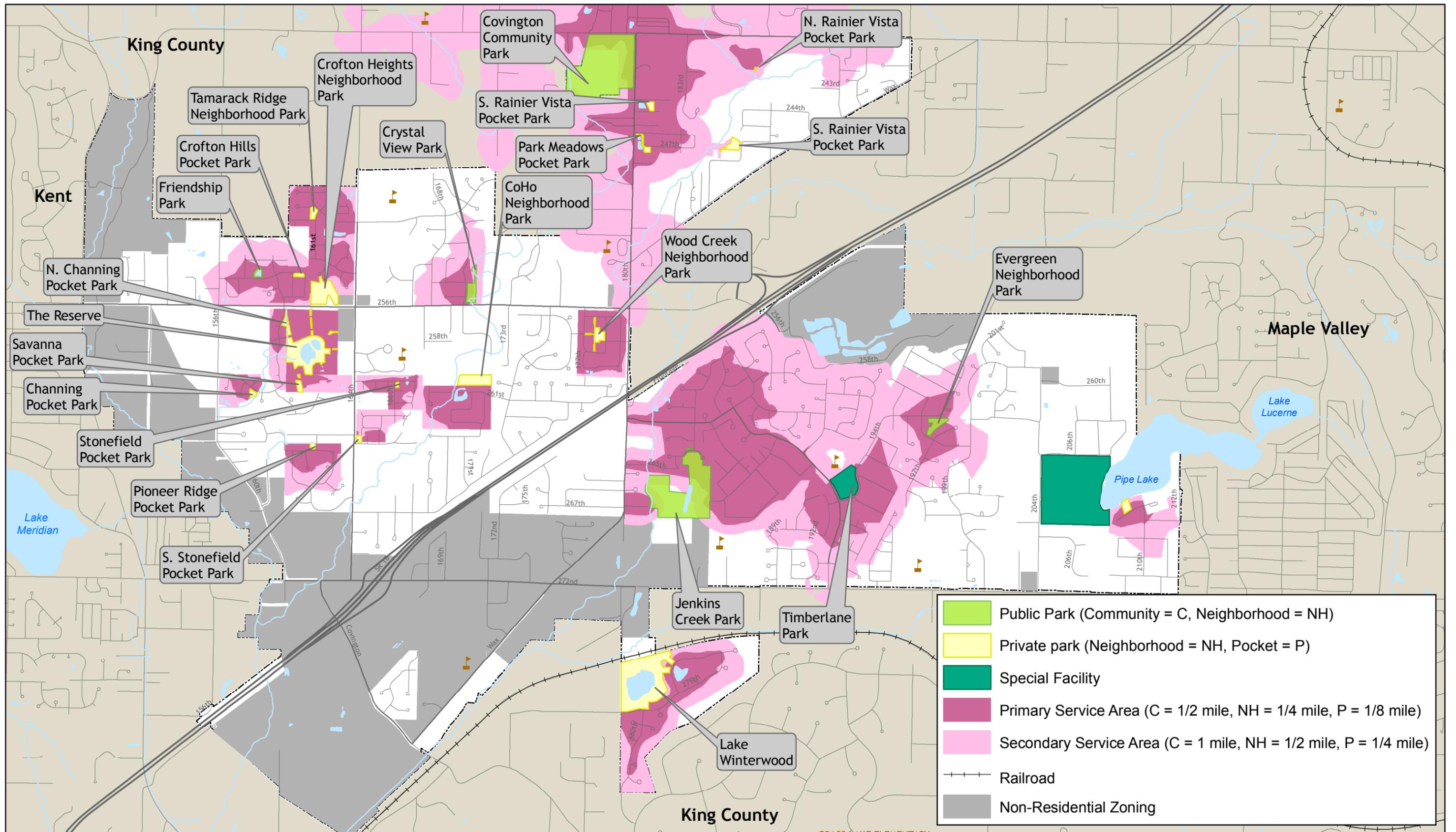
Map 5. Existing Service Areas: Public Parks

Covington
 Parks Recreation & Open Space (PROS) Plan
 Source: King County
 Author: KV and HK
 Date: April 2010

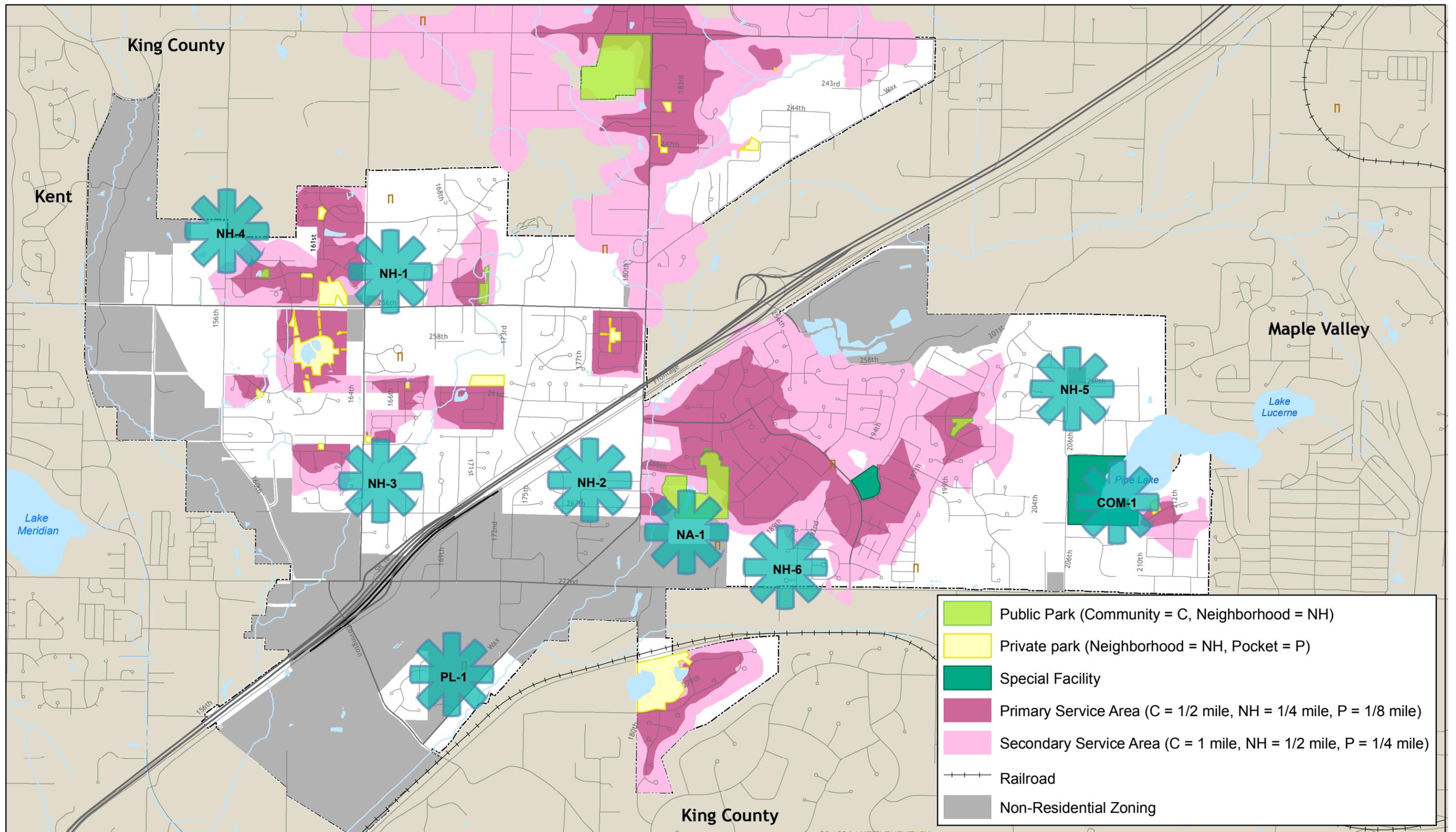




Map 6. Existing Service Areas: Private Parks



Map 7. Composite Service Areas: Public & Private



Map 8. Potential Acquisition Areas

Covington
 Parks Recreation & Open Space (PROS) Plan
 Source: King County
 Author: KV and HK
 Date: April 2010



Park Development, Enhancement & Renovations

Downtown Core - Community Plaza

The recently adopted Downtown Plan and Zoning Study reiterated the concept of a community plaza or public space in the downtown core of Covington. The plan also included the plaza as a critical element in the brand identification for downtown and supports the creation of a ‘living room’ to the community that can be programmable for events and activities, while also providing trail connections. To further reinforce the themes and goals from the Downtown Plan, the City should continue to work with the Chamber of Commerce, Planning Commission and Parks Commission to identify and seek funding for the acquisition and development of the downtown plaza and the nearby trail connections along Jenkins Creek.

Sport Fields

The City currently does not provide youth athletic programs, but it works in support of the various youth leagues and organizations with regard to field access and broad dialogue about long-term needs and facility planning.

Kent Little League serves Covington residents and currently has 500 players (7-13 yr old), which is down from the recent high of 800 with recent enrollment down due to recent economic downturn. With the current, lower enrollment, KLL’s need for field space has stabilized, and they continue to lease and program fields from King County, Kent School District and local churches. The future of one of the two fields located at the Covington Christian Fellowship Church is in question with a pending development of a portion of the church property.

Kent Youth Soccer Association also serves Covington residents and has had an 8% increase in registration over the past year and now serves approximately 1,700 youth from the greater Covington area. The league recently signed a 30-yr lease agreement with King County for field space at North Green River (the “Pea Patch”) and will be responsible for the upkeep and maintenance. KYSA is particularly interested in transitioning fields to artificial turf and installing field lighting to extend play for the shoulder season.

Covington Community Sports (CCS) hosts approximately 800 youth in its Fall flag football and soccer programs. At the present, their access to field space is adequate for their organization’s demand, and they are interested in coordinating with Kent School District to



Figure 27. Youth athletics in Covington engages over 3,000 kids per year

upgrade additional fields and possibly add lighting. CCS also has access to school gyms for basketball, baseball and indoor soccer through partial assignment of an agreement between the City and KSD.

In addition to local practice and game play, both KLL and KYSA have voiced interest in hosting seasonal tournaments, but access to quality fields are a prerequisite. Tournaments present the potential to generate income for the league and local area. Generally, parents and teams stay between 4-6 nights for tournaments, which in turn promote local economic development through lodging and food services revenue.

The City should continue to facilitate discussions with area leagues and staff from Maple Valley and Black Diamond for the purposes of field planning and coordination, addressing geographic proximity of fields to the player base and with respect to league boundaries and for strategizing about long-term financing opportunities. In addition to the needs of the existing leagues, other field demands exist for rugby, football and lacrosse which also should be considered.

Sport Courts

In addition to field sport needs, a current deficiency and limited distribution of sport courts exist. Again, school sites provide limited access to basketball courts. Numerous “street” hoops were noted during the inventory process and reinforced the demand for sport courts. No public tennis or volleyball courts exist within the City.



Figure 28. Impromptu, street-side basketball hoop

Repair, Renovation & Safety

A major theme from the survey, the focus group and the public meetings was that the maintenance and upkeep of public parklands is paramount to residents’ use and enjoyment of the facilities. Covington residents are keenly interested in the renovation of their parks and natural areas system. The desire for better and more consistent maintenance of parks and facilities, along with a variety of suggestions for specific site upgrades and enhancements suggests that the City’s park system must improve its facilities to establish the respect and patronage of its citizens. Numerous comments were offered regarding the need for repairs to damaged amenities, more frequent patrolling to enhance safety and graffiti removal. Concerns with the levels of maintenance exist, and this issue will erode public support for the park system over time if left unchecked. Specific recommendations for upgrades and enhancements are listed in the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) section of this Plan.



Figure 29. Missing interpretive panels at Jenkins Creek Park

Design Continuity & Standards

Upon review of the City's existing developed parks and the privately-held homeowner association (HOA) parks, it was noted that a general lack of design continuity exists throughout the city. For example, neighborhood park playgrounds and furnishings vary considerably from park to park. In some cases, the installed play equipment does not meet current ADA or safety compliance standards for accessibility, safety fall zones or fall zone cushioning.

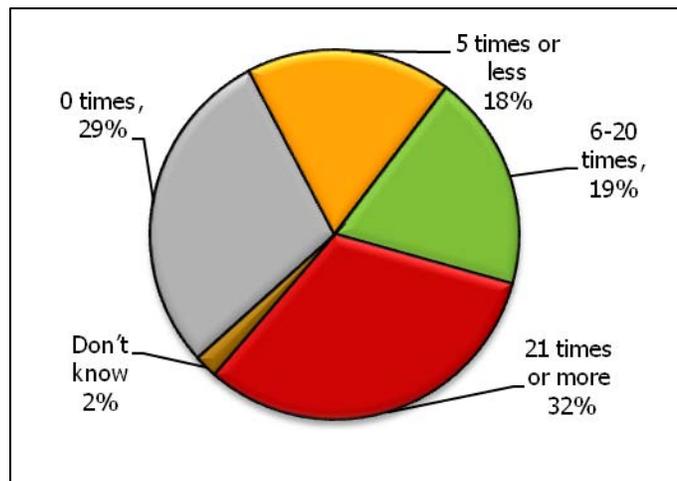
The adoption and implementation of updated design standards will benefit the City in several ways. By providing continuity in furnishings and construction materials, there will be consistency in the methods used to maintain, repair and replace them as they become worn or are vandalized. Parks will be more efficiently maintained, more aesthetically appealing and more safe.

Separately, specific attention should be placed on the privately-held parks with regard to minimum design criteria or standards as new facilities are permitted and constructed. While these parks are neither owned nor operated by the City, public perceptions about their appearance and level of development might become an issue in the future. One near-term approach to address privately developed park sites is to prepare and adopt city design standards to be placed on the site development at the time of development review, with minimally-acceptable maintenance requirements placed either on the tract title or in a written development agreement with the City. Additionally, these steps are more crucial in the event the developer is building the park in lieu of paying system development charges; such agreements and design criteria will help ensure that the broader goals of the city's parks system are met.

Trail & Bikeway Facilities

In 2009, Washington State was named the nation's number one "Bicycle Friendly State" by the League of American Bicyclists for the second year in a row. Bicycle commuting in Washington has increased over 75% in the last ten years. Statewide, walking and hiking have become the most popular outdoor recreation activity with almost 74% of residents participating. Similarly in Covington, interest in walking and cycling has grown. Covington is a comparatively new city with few built paths, but is fortunate to be situated in the heart of an existing regional trail network. The City has a unique opportunity to provide an alternative to driving,

Figure 30. Usage of Walking & Biking Trails in Covington



Source: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM), September 2009

while providing access to a variety of public amenities city-wide.

Currently many of the existing bicycle and pedestrian pathways are limited in length and few connect to the regional trail network, schools, parks or other key destinations. The pathway system is further hindered by physical barriers, such as SR-18, which bisects the city. The proposed system will provide logical pathway connections to key destinations, and these pathways should be comfortable and convenient for the community to use.

In recognition of the popular demand for trails, the City's current inventory of pathway segments and the physical limitations caused by the road network, this Plan proposes an increase to the trail standard from 0.5 miles per 1,000 residents to 0.75 miles per 1,000 residents. Using this standard, the current level of service indicates a deficiency of over 8 miles of pathways and over 6 miles of bikeways; however, the pathway system expansion offered below will help ameliorate much of the projected deficit and create a dynamic network of on-street and off-street pathways linking major destinations throughout Covington.

Paved Trails

Public shared-use paths exist along the northern edge of Little Soos Creek, in the Coho Creek development, behind the Wal-Mart along Jenkins creek just south of SR 18 and within Jenkins Creek Park. The proposed system of shared-use paths would make the following connections:

- Northern reach of Little Soos Creek Trail to the future Phase 7 of the Soos Creek Trail
- North City Trail west to Soos Creek Trail and east to BPA Trail
- BPA Trail south to Little Soos Creek Trail
- Soos Creek Connector Trail from 156th west to Soos Creek Trail
- Jenkins Creek Trail south to Covington Way and north to Cedar Creek Downs
- Pipeline Trail north to the northern reach of the Jenkins Creek Trail, and south to the Lake Winterwood development
- Highpoint Trail north to 256th and south to Little Soos creek Trail
- 194th Trail between Timberlane and Pipeline Trails
- Timberlane Trail north to Jenkins Creek (via a small segment of shared roadway) and south to 272nd

Survey respondents commented that there is little information about trails within the city, and this Plan recommends the development of more detailed trail signage standards, route and wayfinding signage for parks, trails and facilities and an informational brochure identifying existing and planned trail facilities.

Soft-Surface Paths

Internal soft-surface paths currently exist in the Jenkins Creek Park and connect to Jenkins Creek Trail. Private soft-surface trails are also found in the Coho Creek development and the Crofton Hills development. Unimproved paths created by residents follow the vegetated buffer between the Timberlane neighborhood and the quarry following the Pipeline easement to Cedar Creek Park. There are also unimproved paths in various King County properties, but access is limited by no trespassing signs. Maintenance of soft-surface trails is time consuming but can be accomplished by volunteer groups. Due to the limited size of the maintenance staff, no additional soft-surface trails are proposed at this time.

Table 16. Current and Projected Levels of Service for Public and Private Trails

Shared Use Paths

	2010	2020
Population	17,785	20,335
Trail Mileage	4.7 miles	4.7 miles
<i>Proposed Mileage Standard</i>	0.75 miles/1000	0.75 miles/1000
Current Level of Service (LOS)	0.3 miles/1000	0.2 miles/1000
Net LOS to Standard	-0.5 miles/1000	-0.5 miles/1000
Attainment of Standard	35%	31%
Mileage Surplus / (Deficit)	(8.6) miles	(10.6) miles

Bike Lanes

An initial improvement to the city's bike route system is the continuation of striped bike lanes along 256th Street, 180th Avenue and Wax Road. While for the most part outside the City's boundaries, 240th Street is an important connection for the northern part of the city to Soos Creek Trail and should be evaluated in partnership with King County for possible bike lanes. As development continues, additional lanes should be added to connect the downtown to the surrounding neighborhoods, Jenkins Creek Park and across SR-18 to that future pathway system. As new schools and parks are planned, pathways and bike lanes should be incorporated into their designs.

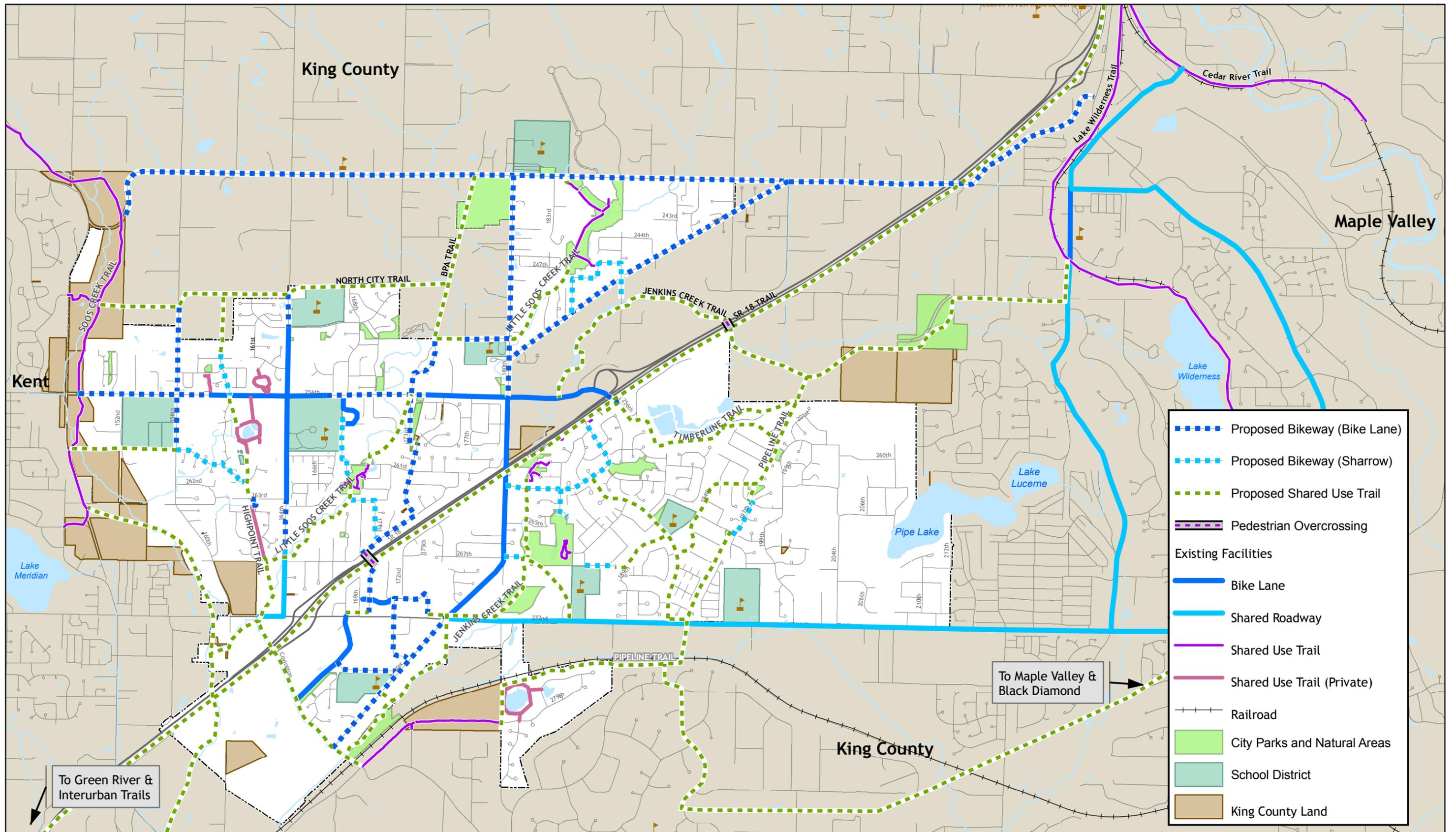
Shared Roadways

The traffic levels along the existing shared roadways on 256th Street, 164th Avenue and 272nd Street should be evaluated for suitability and safety. Shared roadways typically follow lower volume residential streets, while arterial connectors with higher traffic counts and adequate shoulder room would require striped/signed lanes for safety. The shared roadways recommended in this Plan are on residential streets and provide connections to parks, schools or trails. Once these systems are in place, the installation of additional shared roadways should be evaluated.

Table 17. Current and Projected Levels of Service for Bikeways

Bicycle Lanes & Shared Roadway

	2010	2020
Population	17,785	20,335
Trail Mileage	7.1 miles	7.1 miles
<i>Proposed Mileage Standard</i>	0.75 miles/1000	0.75 miles/1000
Current Level of Service (LOS)	0.4 miles/1000	0.3 miles/1000
Net LOS to Standard	-0.4 miles/1000	-0.4 miles/1000
Attainment of Standard	53%	46%
Mileage Surplus / (Deficit)	(6.3) miles	(8.2) miles



Map 9. Proposed Trails and Bikeways

Recreation Facilities & Programming

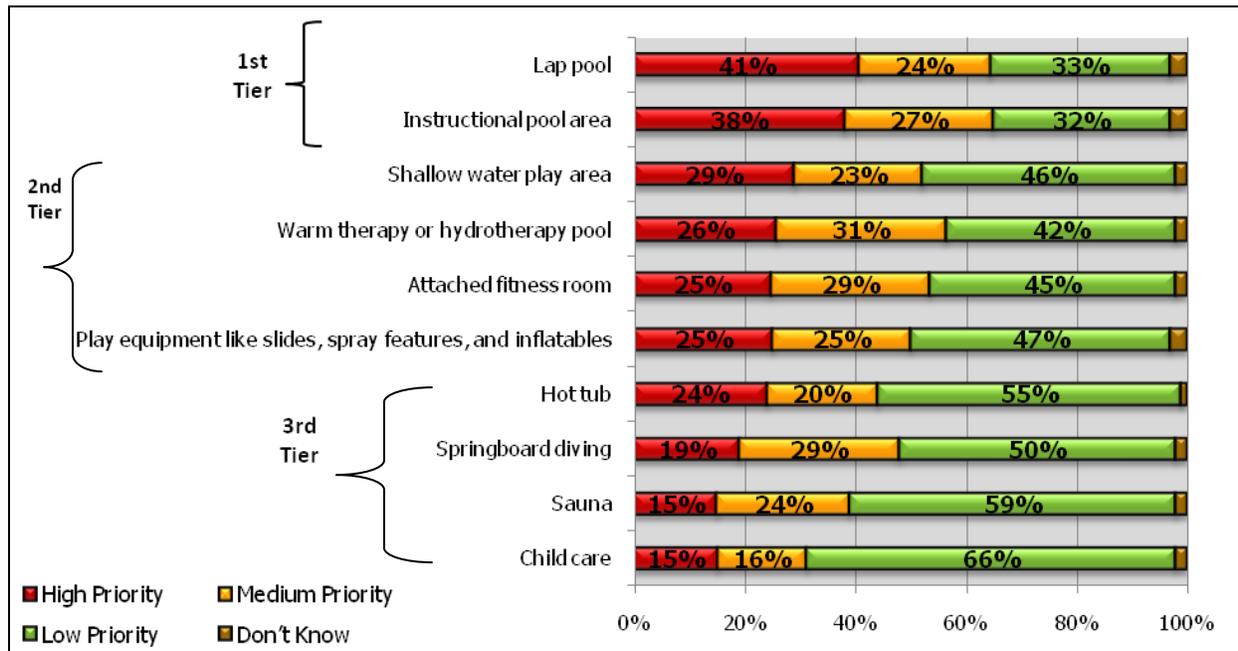
Aquatic Center

With City operation of the pool (*formerly the King County Taboma Pool*) in 2005, the Covington Aquatic Center serves approximately 80,000 visits per year and draws from the greater Covington area. Approximately 30% of its users come from Maple Valley and another 30% from the nearby, unincorporated King County area. The facility recently was remodeled to include energy efficiency upgrades (air handling system and lighting), interior paint and re-plastering the pool and deck.

Public comments about the Aquatic Center were often positive about the general appearance, maintenance and upkeep, especially in light of the recent renovation. A number of users participated in a stakeholder discussion about the center and its programs and voiced certain concerns about the quality of the restrooms and changing areas. Specifically, they commented on cold water in the showers, rusty lockers and problems with toilets and sinks. They also mentioned that providing a child care facility would be useful, along with a hot tub and fitness room. The users also suggested the installation of a shower in the family changing room to encourage greater use of that room for families with small children and especially during the summer when the facility is busiest.

During the telephone survey, residents were asked how they would rate the priority of certain aquatic features. As noted in the chart below, no aquatic feature was viewed as a high priority by a majority of residents, however a lap pool, instructional, and shallow water play area are high priorities to pluralities of residents. The lap pool and instruction areas were noted as the highest priority features. Other priority features such as a therapy pool, fitness room and sauna are currently unavailable at the Center. Residents' highest need is for open public swims, which also serves their aquatic needs extremely well or well.

Figure 31. Priorities for Aquatic Center Features



Source: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM), September 2009

With regard to other improvements to the Center, the City should consider expanding its allocation of handicapped parking stalls, since many of its patrons for aerobic deepwater class have health or physical limitations.

Aquatics Programs

With regard to aquatics programs, participants of the users stakeholder group felt that the City, overall, offers good equipment and reasonable hours. Regarding pool hours, one participant voiced a comment that the City seems to under-serve local working adults, inasmuch as scheduled classes held at 8 p.m. are generally too late in the evening and that consideration should be given to adding program times on early mornings midweek and on Saturdays. Also, the City should consider options for new classes, such as shallow water yoga, to draw new users and add freshness to its program schedule.

To better serve youth, participants also suggested that the City seek partnerships with the school districts for opportunities to backfill the 4th grade instructional classes that have been cut from the budget. Special swims days should also be considered on days of scheduled school closures (i.e., teacher in-service days) to provide another option for active recreation. Also, the City should continue to reach out to local daycare providers (Children’s World and La Petite Academy) to expand group usage of the pool during the daytime.

During the phone survey, residents were asked if they or members of their household had a need for a variety of different aquatic options and how well those programs serve their aquatics needs (extremely well, well, not too well, or not well at all). These aquatic options were grouped into tiers based on programs in which there is the greatest need and that serve the needs of residents extremely well or well.

Table 18. Aquatic Program Options

Aquatic Option	Yes Need	Serves Needs Well (Extremely well/well)	Does Not Serve Needs (Not too/Not at all well)
1st Tier			
Open public swims	60%	60% (19%/42%)	31% (9%/23%)
2nd Tier			
Water exercise classes	50%	46% (13%/34%)	45% (14%/31%)
Lap swimming	46%	45% (14%/32%)	45% (15%/30%)
Swimming lessons	43%	47% (14%/33%)	45% (16%/29%)
3rd Tier			
Pool rentals for parties and events	40%	38% (8%/30%)	52% (16%/36%)
Springboard diving	20%	26% (5%/20%)	65% (20%/45%)
Competitive swimming	19%	22% (6%/16%)	67% (20%/47%)
Masters swimming	12%	17% (3%/14%)	71% (21%/50%)
Triathlon training	11%	17% (4%/13%)	73% (22%/51%)
Synchronized swimming	4%	10% (1%/9%)	79% (21%/57%)

Source: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM), September 2009

The responses provided by survey participants reinforced the direction of staff toward the programming of the Center. Specifically, open swims, classes, lap swims and lessons were noted as the highest priority programs, which is consistent with current scheduling.

As is further noted in the Departmental Communications section below, the City should expand its communications and advertising about the Aquatic Center and programs via the Kent Reporter, Covington/Maple Valley Reporter and Voice of the Valley. Other ways to promote the Center and programs include hosting more special events, offering a complementary day pass, publicizing when classes change (instructor or routine detail) and direct outreach to the offices of local doctors, physical therapists and clinics.

Community Center

The development of a community recreation center was previously identified in the 1999 Parks Plan as a stand-alone facility to provide an indoor swimming pool, gymnasium, workout room, handball courts, multi-purpose room, teen center and meeting rooms. With the acquisition of the Aquatic Center, the needs for a community center shifted slightly. While an Aquatic Center was drafted to accommodate a second story for fitness, an expansion of this center would still not be large enough to accommodate extensive recreation programming or a teen center. Recent discussions by city officials have expanded the concept of a recreation center to discuss the potential of a multi-jurisdictional facility to

support residents of Covington, Maple Valley and Black Diamond. Such a facility would be jointly funded by the cities and/or require voter support from the wider area.

Former guidelines from the National Recreation and Parks Association suggested a service standard of 1 community center per 15,000-25,000 people, and while that standard is no longer in use, it suggests that a certain population density is required to support such a facility. While public sentiment exists for a community center, a cautious approach should be taken and consideration given to acquisition and development of a new facility versus the purchase (or lease) and renovation of an existing building in the three-city region.

New or retrofitted facilities not only add to maintenance and operating costs, but they must be conceived with consideration given to the flexibility of programming, intended uses and services, along with cost recovery goals. Furthermore, voters are generally more supportive of paying for expanded services when the shared use of facilities can be demonstrated; it is generally more difficult to secure voter support for single-purpose facilities.

Given the interest in recreation facility space for programming, this Plan recommends an additional review of alternatives for providing recreation center “services” while addressing the initial financial considerations, understanding and modeling user demand and analyzing options for facility and program cost recovery. Additionally, it is recommended that the City approach recreation services incrementally through interagency agreements with other public or non-profit partners to build resident trust in programming and to gain deeper insights into specific recreation needs.

Recreation Programs & Community Activities

At the present, Covington only offers aquatics programs, arts programming, a few health and fitness programs and participates in two major community events: Covington Days and the community tree lighting ceremony. As part of the community outreach program, the City invited representatives from the major health and fitness providers to attend a stakeholder session. Overall, these local providers see a role for the City in offering recreation, promoting events and providing accessible information about fitness opportunities throughout the community. It was noted that there is very little activity in Covington currently and that part of the way forward will rely on expanding the level of public awareness about recreation opportunities. This group was excited about the potential of having more regularly scheduled activities for the community, to include summer programs and events, along with education courses, such as babysitting and bike safety.

Also a series of questions were posed in the phone survey in which residents were asked if they had a need for specific recreation programs and how well those programs serve their recreational needs. As shown in the following table, the various programs were grouped into tiers based on greatest need and serving the needs of residents extremely well or well.

Table 19. Recreation Program Options

Parks and Recreation Option	Yes Need	Serves Needs Well (Extremely well/well)	Does Not Serve Needs (Not too/Not at all well)
1st Tier			
Community events and festivals	66%	48% (14%/54%)	30% (15%/15%)
2nd Tier			
Health and fitness programs	56%	53% (10%/43%)	42% (20%/22%)
Swim instruction and aquatic activities	51%	53% (15%/37%)	45% (18%/27%)
Informational and educational classes	51%	45% (9%/35%)	49% (21%/28%)
3rd Tier			
Sports programs for youth	44%	48% (13%/35%)	48% (15%/33%)
Sports programs for adults	43%	40% (8%/32%)	56% (25%/31%)
Summer programs for youth	42%	40% (8%/32%)	53% (16%/37%)
4th Tier			
Arts and craft classes	42%	38% (7%/31%)	58% (25%/32%)
Activities and programs for seniors	37%	32% (7%/25%)	59% (23%/37%)
Before and after school programs for youth	29%	32% (11%/21%)	59% (20%/39%)
Activities and programs for disabled participants	32%	22% (8%/14%)	67% (20%/47%)
Programs for preschool children	25%	25% (7%/18%)	62% (16%/46%)

Source: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM), September 2009

Community events, fitness programs and educational classes were ranked as the most desired programming options. While the City participates in Covington Days and other community events, such as the tree lighting and run/walk events, the City should consider expanding its role in this arena. One stakeholder from the health and fitness providers group commented that the City should partner with local non-profits and event sponsors to address specific issues such as traffic control/management and safety to facilitate additional events. Additionally, the City should consider incremental growth in recreation services to focus on programs not currently offered by local or regional providers, such as health and fitness education for youth and fall prevention programs for seniors. As the City considers offering more events, it should seek to share costs with private sponsors and develop a series of seasonal activities.

Other Specific Recreation Facilities

Survey respondents also voiced interest in a range of other, specific (single-use) facilities, such as dog parks, community gardens and others. National recreation trends support the expansion of the Covington system to accommodate these interests; however, these uses must be considered in relation to other demands on the city's parks system and for the dedicated space often required to support them.

With regard to dog park (or off-leash areas), it is recommended that the city provide a minimum, 2-acre site for this use within the next five years. Ideally, a dog park would be a component to a larger community park, where infrastructure (parking, restrooms, garbage collection) exists and supports multiple activities. Additionally, the development of a dog park will require specific code revisions, the development of rules and policies and community support for self-policing for behavioral issues and waste pick-up. Communities throughout the Northwest have relied on grassroots or non-profit organizations for the on-going operations and maintenance of such facilities.



Figure 32. Dedicated off-leash areas can help reduce user conflicts at other locations and offer an opportunity grassroots or non-profit management

Departmental Communications

Through discussions with stakeholders and from the information gathered through the telephone survey, the issues of communication, visibility and brand identity were frequently cited. For example, 17% of survey respondents mentioned that they were not aware of the aquatics center. While the data do not specify the reason for this misunderstanding (i.e., respondents may think of the facility as the Tahoma School Pool or the former King County Tahoma Pool, rather than being operated and owned by the City), it does reinforce the need for more focused or direct marketing and branding efforts to improve public understanding.

To broaden the public perception of the suite of services related to parks and recreation, it is recommended that the City reframe its services around the notion of health, fitness and activity. At first glance, it might be hard for someone to think of fitness or wellness within the construct of parks and recreation. In developing new materials, the City should prepare visually attractive materials (print or electronic) that have consistency of graphic style and theme. Additionally, the website should be re-organized to facilitate quick links to popular activities or topics and also be redesigned with mobile internet users (Blackberry and iPhone) in mind. This includes posting park system and trail maps to enhance the experience of the on-the-go user. The City should also consider enhancing the graphic quality and presentation of email blasts and refocus efforts toward a quarterly e-newsletter geared toward local fitness opportunities.

Finally, the City should consider acting as the local hub of information about recreation, programs, events and activities in the community. This may include information about the benefits of active lifestyles and available recreation resources, but it may also include information about high school sports, the *Cruzin Covington* passport program and other general fitness or health information. The City should continue to strengthen its partnerships with local businesses, sport leagues, schools and the Chamber of Commerce to facilitate the promotion and distribution of this information to the community. Also, the City should consider inviting groups or businesses to present to staff and/or city commissions about local services, health trends and opportunities in an effort to expand awareness of services and to encourage and promote opportunities to cross-market programs and events.

Chapter 6. Capital Facilities Plan

The following Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) lists all park and facility projects considered for the next six years. The majority of these projects entail the acquisition and development of trail segments to improve linkages, renovating or repairing existing facilities and expanding parkland holdings. Based on survey results and other feedback, Covington residents have indicated an interest in park facility upgrades and expansion as short-term priorities, and the proposed CIP is reflective of that desire. The following table summarizes the aggregate capital estimates by park types for the next six years.

Table 20. Capital Facilities Plan Expenditures Summary

Park Type	Acquisition	Development	Renovation	Sum
Community Park	\$ 3,646,519	\$ 1,760,727	\$ 98,398	\$ 5,505,644
Neighborhood Park	\$ 1,052,932	\$ 119,484	\$ -	\$ 1,172,416
Natural Area	\$ 957,211	\$ 202,163	\$ -	\$ 1,159,374
Special Facility	\$ 882,000	\$ -	\$ 33,075	\$ 915,075
Bikeway	\$ -	\$ 624,782	\$ -	\$ 624,782
Trail	\$ 1,784,874	\$ 9,475,092	\$ 534,215	\$ 11,794,182
TOTAL	\$ 8,323,536	\$ 12,182,248	\$ 665,688	\$ 21,171,473

Also, the CIP adds a significant land acquisition program to ensure that sufficient lands are available for outdoor recreation as the Covington area continues to grow in population. Acquisition target areas have been identified and ranked in priority. Emphasis has been placed on securing a community park acquisition to serve the greatest population and then on filling gaps in neighborhood parkland distribution within the city limits and for securing trail rights-of-way (fee simple ownership or easement) for trail development and trail support facilities, such as parking and restrooms.

Discussion of a community center and space for recreation programs was identified in the Needs chapter. The CIP does not specifically recommend either the acquisition of a new property or redevelopment of an existing facility to accommodate these programming needs, since this Plan recommends a more detailed review and study to assess and explore partnership opportunities for a flexible and cost-effective arrangement for the provision of these services.

The following CIP project list provides brief project descriptions and priority ranking to assist staff in preparing future capital budget requests.

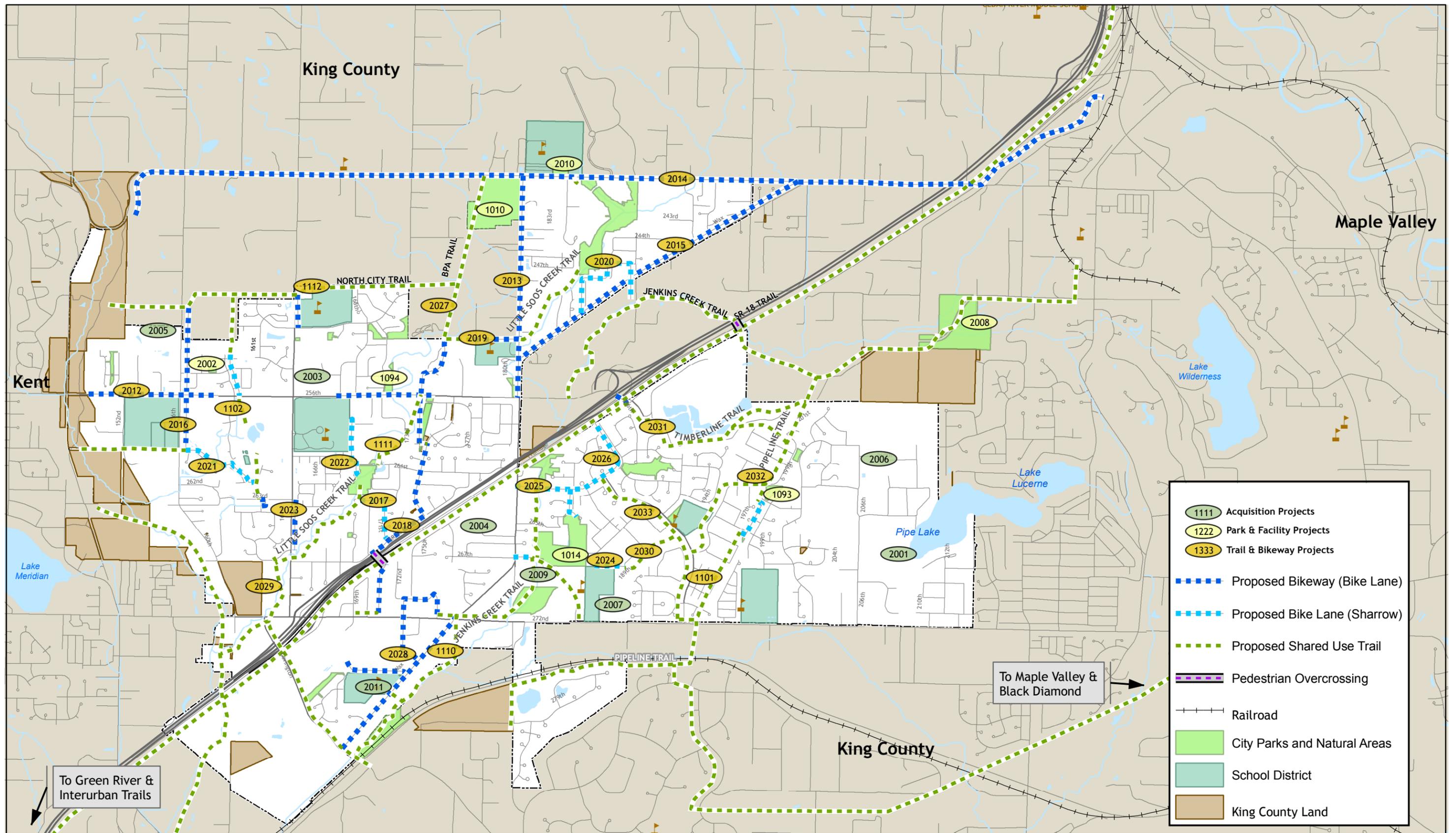
This page is intentionally left blank.

Covington PROS Plan
6-Year Capital Facilities Plan
2010-2015

Park Type	CIP #	Park Site	Project Description	Activity	Funding	Priority	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016-29	
Community	1010	Covington Community Park	Develop phase-1 improvements per Master Plan	D	GF, G	H	\$ 178,000	\$ 1,600,000						
			Develop phase-2 improvements	D	GF, G	M							\$ 13,000,000	
Community	1014	Jenkins Creek Park	Park Site Master Plan Design	D	GF	H			\$ 150,000					
			Repair/Replace bridge, damaged signs and tables	R	GF	L				\$ 85,000				
			Develop phase-1 improvements per Master Plan	D	GF	L							\$ 1,250,000	
Community	2001	Pipe Lake	Property Acquisition near Pipe Lake, 40 acres	A	PIF, GF, D, G	H							\$ 3,000,000	
			Prepare Park Master Plan	D	GF	M							\$ 175,000	
Neighborhood	1094	Crystal View Park	Upgrade Automatic irrigation system	D	GF	L								\$ 60,000
			Repair or replace faded or damaged park signs	D	GF	H		\$ 2,500						
			Install an ADA ramp into the play area	D	GF	H		\$ 3,000						
			Provide wayfinding signage from SE 256th Street to the park	D	GF	H		\$ 1,500						
			Update playground and park furnishings	D	GF, G	M								\$ 60,000
Neighborhood	2002	Friendship Park	Install automatic irrigation system	D	GF	L							\$ 50,000	
			Provide wayfinding signage from SE 256th Street and 156th Avenue to the park	D	GF	H		\$ 1,500						
			Provide shade trees near play equipment	D	GF	M		\$ 2,500						
			Update playground and park furnishings	D	GF, G	M							\$ 60,000	
Neighborhood	1093	Evergreen Park	Prepare Park Master Plan	D	GF	M						\$ 25,000		
			Develop phase 1 to include play equipment, signage, pathway	D	PIF, GF, G, D	M							\$ 450,000	
Neighborhood	2003	Neighborhood Park NH-1	Acquisition: North of 256th Street and East of 164th Ave	A	PIF, GF, G, D	M						\$ 450,000		
Neighborhood	2004	Neighborhood Park NH-2	Acquisition: South of SR18 and West of 180th Ave	A	PIF, GF, G, D	M						\$ 375,000		
Neighborhood	2005	Neighborhood Park NH-3	Acquisition: North of 256th Street and West of 156th Ave	A	PIF, GF, G, D	L						\$ 300,000		
Neighborhood	2006	Neighborhood Park NH-4	Acquisition: East of 240th Ave at 260th Street	A	PIF, GF, G, D	L						\$ 400,000		
Neighborhood	2007	Neighborhood Park NH-5	Acquisition: Adjacent Jenkins Creek Elementary School	A	PIF, GF, G, D	L						\$ 1,250,000		
Natural Area	2008	Cedar Creek Park	Repair/resurface the existing asphalt trail (SE 248th street)	D	GF	M						\$ 158,400		
			Provide a trail connection to the Lake Wilderness Trail.	D	GF, G	L							\$ 703,125	
			Construct either soft surface or asphalt trails to formalize the worn paths connecting SE Timberlane Boulevard and SE 248th Street	D	PIF, GF, G, D	M							\$ 875,000	
Natural Area	2009	Natural Area NA-1	Acquisition: South of Jenkins Creek Park	A	PIF, GF, G, D	M						\$ 750,000		
Special Facility	2010	Covington Aquatic Center	Renovate lockers and restrooms	D	GF	H			\$ 30,000					
Special Facility	2011	Downtown Plaza PL-1	Acquisition: Northeast of Covington Way and West of Wax Road	A	PIF, GF, G, D	H			\$ 800,000					
Trail	2012	256th St Bike Lane	Coordinate with Public Works to install bike lane between Soos Creek & 156th Ave	D	GF, G	H							\$ 85,500	
			Coordinate with Public Works to install bike lane between 167th Ave & 176th Ave	D	GF, G	H							\$ 57,000	
Trail	2013	180th Ave Bike Lane	Coordinate with Public Works to install bike lane between 256th St and 240th St	D	GF, G	H						\$ 114,000		
Trail	2014	240th St Bike Lane	Coordinate with Public Works and King Co to install bike lane between Soos Creek Trail and Wax Rd	D	GF, G	L						\$ 427,500		
Trail	2015	Wax Rd Bike Lane	Coordinate with Public Works to install bike lane between 240th St and 180th Ave	D	GF, G	L						\$ 171,000		
			Coordinate with Public Works to install bike lane between 272nd St & Covington Way	D	GF, G	H						\$ 91,200		
Trail	2016	156th Ave Bike Lane	Coordinate with Public Works to install bike lane between 260th Ave and North City Trail	D	GF, G	L					\$ 85,500			
Trail	2017	173rd - 176th Aves to 264th St Bike Lanes	Coordinate with Public Works to install bike lane between BPA Trail and SR 18 along 173rd Ave, 176th Ave and 264th St with bike/pedestrian SR 18 overcrossing	D	GF, G	H						\$ 3,625,400		
Trail	2018	Downtown Bike Lanes	Coordinate with Public Works to install bike lanes between bicycle/pedestrian SR 18 overcrossing and Wax Rd along 171st Ave, 171st Ave/275th St, 270th Pl, 276th St	D	GF, G	H					\$ 159,600			
Trail	2019	252nd St Bike Lane	Coordinate with Public Works to install bike lane on 252nd St between Little Soos Creek Trail North and BPA Trail	D	GF, G	L					\$ 39,900			

Park Type	CIP #	Park Site	Project Description	Activity	Funding	Priority	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016-29
Trail	2020	184th Pl, 247th Pl, 246th Pl, 188th Ave Shared Roadway	Coordinate with Public Works to install shared roadway markings between Little Soos Creek Trail North and Jenkins Creek Trail North along 184th Pl, 247th Pl, 246th Pl, 188th Ave	D	GF, G	H							\$ 11,500
Trail	2021	260th Ave Shared Roadway	Coordinate with Public Works to install shared roadway markings between Soos Creek Connector Trail and Highpoint Trail North	D	GF, G	L							\$ 11,500
Trail	2022	168th Ave Shared Roadway	Coordinate with Public Works to install shared roadway markings between Coho Creek Trail and Kentwood High School	D	GF, G	H							\$ 9,200
Trail	2023	264th St to 171st Ave Shared Roadway	Coordinate with Public Works to install shared roadway markings between Little Soos Creek Trail South and southern SR 18 bike/pedestrian overcrossing along 264th St to 171st Ave	D	GF, G	L							\$ 5,750
Trail	2024	267th Pl and 268th St Shared Roadways	Coordinate with Public Works to install shared roadway markings between the western entrance of Jenkins Creek Park and 180th Ave and between the eastern entrance of Jenkins Creek Park and 268th St	D	GF, G	H							\$ 8,050
Trail	2025	262nd Pl Shared Roadway	Coordinate with Public Works to install shared roadway markings between 180th Ave and Timberlane Way	D	GF, G	H							\$ 18,400
Trail	2026	184th Ave and 264th Pl Shared Roadways	Coordinate with Public Works to install shared roadway markings between 262nd Pl and the Northern entrance of Jenkins Creek Park	D	GF, G	H							\$ 3,400
Trail	1110	Jenkins Creek Trail	Jenkins Creek Trail North, 256th St to Cedar Creek Downs with bike/pedestrian SR 18 overcrossing	D	PIF, GF, G, D	M							\$ 5,140,625
			Jenkins Creek Trail South to Covington Way	A / D	PIF, GF, G, D	H							\$ 2,812,500
Trail	1112	North City Trail	From Soos Creek Trail to BPA Trail along utility corridor	D	PIF, GF, G, D	H							\$ 1,650,000
Trail	2027	BPA Trail	Along BPA utility corridor to Tahoma High School	D	PIF, GF, G, D	H							\$ 1,750,000
Trail	1102	Highpoint Trail	Highpoint Trail North (to North City Trail)	D	PIF, GF, G, D	M							\$ 1,312,500
			Highpoint Trail South to BPA substation	A / D	PIF, GF, G, D	H							\$ 750,000
Trail	1111	Little Soos Creek Trail	Connection to Tahoma High School	A / D	PIF, GF, G, D	L							\$ 609,375
			Connection to Crestwood Elementary School and BPA Trail	A / D	PIF, GF, G, D	L							\$ 328,125
			Little Soos Creek South, between Highpoint Trail and BPA Trail	A / D	PIF, GF, G, D	M							\$ 1,406,250
			Little Soos Creek South, between Soos Creek Trail and BPA Trail	A / D	PIF, GF, G, D	L							\$ 843,750
Trail	2028	272nd Ave Downtown Connection	168th Ave - 169th Ave and 174th Ave - Wax Rd (.23 miles)	A / D	PIF, GF, G, D	H							\$ 253,125
Trail	2029	260th Ave Soos Creek Connector Trail	Along 260th St from 156th Ave to Soos creek Trail (.4 miles)	A / D	PIF, GF, G, D	M							\$ 300,000
Trail	1101	Pipeline Trail	Pipeline Trail North (1.5 miles)	A / D	PIF, GF, G, D	M							\$ 1,406,250
			Pipeline Trail South to Lake Winterwood development (1.15 miles)	A / D	PIF, GF, G, D	M							\$ 1,078,125
Trail	2030	Jenkins Creek Trail Connector	Along greenspace between 266th St and 268th St, connecting Cedar Valley Elem and Jenkins Creek Elem	D	PIF, GF, G, D	M							\$ 80,000
Trail	2031	Timberline Trail (old quarry trail)	Along greenspace between Timberlane neighborhood and the old quarry	A / D	PIF, GF, G, D	M							\$ 875,000
Trail	2032	194th Ave Trail Widening	Widen the existing detached sidewalk to a minimum 8', paved shared-use path	R	GF	L							\$ 240,000
Trail	2033	Timberlane Way Trail Widening	Widen the existing detached sidewalk to a minimum 8', paved shared-use path	R	GF	L							\$ 190,000
Subtotal							\$ 178,000	\$ 1,611,000	\$ 980,000	\$ 85,000	\$ -	\$ 1,433,400	\$ 47,908,150
Cumulative 6-Yr Total							\$ 4,287,400						

Activity Key:	Funding Key:	Priority Key:
A = Acquisition	GF = General Fund	H = High Priority
D = Development	G = Grant	M = Medium Priority
R = Renovation / Restoration	D = Donation / Dedication	L = Low Priority



Map 10. Capital Improvements Plan Map

Chapter 7. Implementation Strategies

Implementation in Context

A number of strategies exist to improve service delivery for the Covington Parks and Recreation Department; however, clear decisions must be made in an environment of competing interests and limited resources. A strong community will is necessary to bring many of the projects listed in this Plan to life. The following considerations are presented to offer near-term direction on implementation and as a means to continue dialogue between the City and its stakeholders.

Given that the operating and capital budgets for the Department are limited, the implementation measures identified below look primarily to non-General Fund options. Additionally, a review of likely funding options is attached as Appendix G and includes local financing, federal and state grant and conservation programs, acquisition methods and others.

Volunteer & Community-Based Action

The public process for this Plan has demonstrated that many residents want to be involved in improving the City's park system and want to have their energies guided through coordination with the Department. Community sponsored park clean-ups, beautification and planting projects, and park patrols should be considered to engage citizens and create a stronger sense of identity and ownership. The parks program can benefit from on-going coordination and involvement from the Rotary, local scout troops and other area service and civic groups. The City should also prepare a revolving list of potential small works or volunteer-appropriate projects to post on its website, while also reaching out to the high school to encourage student projects.

Interagency Coordination & Collaboration

Specific projects and goals identified in this Plan demand a high degree of coordination and collaboration with other city divisions and outside agencies. Internal coordination with the Public Works and Community Development departments can increase the potential of discrete actions toward the implementation of the proposed trail network, which relies heavily on street right-of-way enhancements, and in review of development applications with consideration toward potential parkland acquisition areas, planned trail corridors and the need for easement or set-aside requests. However, to more fully extend the extent of the park system and recreation programs, additional partnerships and collaborations should be sought.

The City should discuss and potentially pursue an intergovernmental agreement with the Kent School District for shared facility development at the District's new elementary school property located along 156th Street. This site or adjoining property developed in concert with the school development could provide for a small neighborhood park to serve residents in

the immediate area, who are currently unserved by public facilities and do not have access to private homeowner association parks.

Additionally, the City should continue to engage local health care service providers, such as MultiCare and Valley Medical, along with private fitness clubs and others for support and funding to promote active and healthy lifestyles. For example, this group could more directly cross-market services and help expand resident understanding of local wellness options. In addition to recent support in the passport program, local health care providers could sponsor a series of organized trail walks throughout Covington as a means to expand public awareness of local trail opportunities and encourage residents to stay fit. In Pierce County, MultiCare helped fund the Tacoma-Pierce County Walking Guide that highlights the health benefits of walking and includes 25 trails maps and descriptions.

The City should continue to facilitate discussions with area leagues and staff from Maple Valley and Black Diamond for the purposes of sport field planning and development. This coordination should include further discussion of potential funding alternatives for on-going field maintenance and new field development in support of the six youth leagues in the region.

As with sport field planning and development, coordination with Maple Valley and Black Diamond will be important regarding an expansion of services into recreation programming or the development of a community or fitness center. Through this dialogue, the City could explore a potential niche in the recreation market and attempt to fulfill unmet needs.

Local Funding

Although a variety of approaches exist to support individual projects or programs, the broader assessment of community needs suggests that additional, dedicated funding will be required to finance growth in the parks system. A short-term bond or levy could be structured to maximize voter support to include parkland acquisitions and development, trail development, downtown plaza development and general park element upgrades. This will require additional review for the compilation of a specific funding package, along with an assessment of potential revenue, political willingness and potential voter support. Either a voter approved levy lid lift or a general obligation bond may be suitable for this purpose. At today's assessed value, the City could generate approximately \$940,000 via a lid lift to the maximum allowable rate. In either case, a 60% majority of voters will be required to approved the measure.

Separately and as noted above, the City could jointly plan for the development and programming of a recreation center and for sport field development and maintenance with the nearby communities of Maple Valley and Black Diamond. Consideration should be given to the establishment of a metropolitan parks district for either or both of these purposes, but special attention should be paid to the impact of district boundaries on voter sentiment and revenue potential, along with coordination with King County.

Park Impact Fees

Park Impact Fees (PIF) are imposed on new development to meet the increased demand for parks resulting from the new growth. PIF can only be used for parkland acquisition,

planning, and/or development. They cannot be used for operations and maintenance of parks and facilities. Although the City has an adopted ordinance in place to collect PIF, fees are not currently being assessed. The City should review its PIF ordinance and update the methodology and rate structure as appropriate to be best positioned to obtain future acquisition and development financing from renewed residential development. Once revised, the methodology and rates should be forwarded to City Council for review and approval.

Grants

Several state and federal grant programs are available on a competitive basis, including WWRP, ALEA, USDA, SAFETEA-LU. Pursuing grants is not a panacea for park system finance, since grants are both competitive and often require a significant percentage of local funds to match the request to the granting agency, which depending on the grant program can be as much as 50% of the total project budget. Covington should continue to leverage its local resources to the greatest extent by pursuing grants independently and in cooperation with other City departments.

This page is intentionally left blank.

Appendix A. References

References

- City of Covington. Arts Comprehensive Plan. 2003.
- City of Covington. Community Forestry Comprehensive Plan. 2006.
- City of Covington. Covington Comprehensive Plan. 2003.
- City of Covington. Covington Comprehensive Plan: Parks, Trails and Open Space Element. 2001/1999.
- City of Covington. Covington Downtown Plan and Zoning Study. 2009.
- City of Covington. Covington Municipal Code.
- City of Covington. Parks Strategic Plan. 2006.
- City of Covington. Recreation Comprehensive Plan 2002.
- National Sporting Goods Association sports participation, 2008
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Adolescent Time Use, Risky Behavior and Outcomes: An Analysis of National Data. Nicholas Zill, Christine Winquist Nord, and Laura Spencer Loomis. 1995.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture. Forest Service. The National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE). 2000. www.srs.fs.fed.us/trends/nsre.html
- The Outdoor Foundation. "2008 Outdoor Recreation Participation Report"
- The Recreation Roundtable. "Outdoor Recreation Participation in 2003"
- Washington State Department of Health. The Health of Washington State: A statewide assessment of health status, health risks, and health care services. July 2002.
- Washington State Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation. Defining and Measuring Success: The Role of State Government in Outdoor Recreation. A State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Planning Document. 2008.
http://www.rco.wa.gov/documents/rec_trends/SCORP_2008.pdf

Appendix B. Telephone Survey Results

The following report provides an overview of the community survey conducted as part of this Plan.



October 5, 2009

To: Steve Duh, Alta Planning
From: Su Midghall & Rebecca Ball, Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM)
Re: Covington Parks and Recreation Resident Survey

I. INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY

Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM) is pleased to present the results of a telephone survey of the general population of the City of Covington assessing residents' recreational needs, preferences, and priorities. This assessment will inform the development of the City of Covington's Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan.

Research Methodology. Between September 11 and 15, 2009 DHM conducted a telephone survey of 300 residents living in the City of Covington that took an average of 20 minutes to administer. This is a sufficient sample size to assess residents' opinions generally and to review findings by multiple subgroups including gender, age, and length of residency.

Covington residents ages 18 years and older were contacted using random digit dialing (RDD) to include households with unlisted or unpublished telephone numbers. In addition to RDD, a listed sample was used to gather interviews from targeted age groups, specifically residents ages 18-34. In gathering responses, DHM employed a variety of quality control measures, including questionnaire pre-testing and validations. Quotas were set by age and gender based on the total population of Covington to assure a representative sample.¹

Computer abstracts for the survey accompany and are referenced throughout this report, and the annotated questionnaire is appended for exact wording of questions. Percentages in the report may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Statement of Limitations. Any sampling of opinions or attitudes is subject to a margin of error, which represents the difference between a sample of a given population and the total population (here, Covington residents). For a sample size of 300, if the respondents answered 90% one way and 10% the other, the margin would be +/- 3.4%. If they answered a particular question in the proportion of 50% each way the margin of error would be +/- 5.6%.²

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, Covington City, Washington, 2000 data

² The reason for the differences lie in the fact that when response categories are relatively even in size, each is numerically smaller and thus slightly less able-on a statistical basis-to approximate the larger population. These plus-minus error margins represent differences between the sample and total population at a confidence interval, or probability, calculated to be 95%. This means that there is a 95% probability that the sample taken for this study would fall within the stated margins of error if compared with the results achieved from surveying the entire population.

II. SUMMARY & OBSERVATIONS

Covington residents have the most need for outdoor parks and recreation infrastructure, especially infrastructure that pertains to trails.

- Majorities of residents make use of *walking and biking trails* in Covington 6 times or more a year. Additionally, an extended trail system for walking and cycling and a large community park suitable for wide use including sports fields, picnic areas, and pathways within a short drive from their home was reported to serve the parks and recreation needs of six in ten residents or more. One-half of residents also expressed that smaller neighborhood parks with basic amenities such as play equipment, picnic tables, and open fields within a short walking distance from their homes served their parks and recreation needs extremely well or well.
- In addition to park infrastructure needs, residents also want to see more community events, festivals, health and fitness programs, and aquatics activities. This demonstrates an opportunity to grow and provide these services in the community. Roughly 56% of residents said they had participated in recreation programs in Covington at least once over the past year.

In addition to having more need for outdoor parks and recreation infrastructure than all other parks and recreation options, residents also may be more willing to pay for these types of infrastructure improvements.

- When asked to allocate \$100.00 among a list of different parks and recreation facilities, the highest single portion (\$58.00) was allocated to outdoor parks and recreation, including building walking and biking trails, building parks with playgrounds and picnic areas, building sports fields, and purchasing land for parks and open space. It should also be noted that when asked open-ended what improvements were most needed to parks and recreation in Covington, many suggestions were related to these types of improvements or additions to parks. Other top responses were targeted at beautification and maintenance, including equipment maintenance, cleaning up graffiti, and adding more garbage cans.
- Over one-half (56%) of residents would support an increase in taxes to fund recreation activities, programs, and facility maintenance in Covington, and a slight majority (50%) would also support an increase in taxes to fund the acquisition and construction of parks, open spaces, and trails.

Residents have a need for aquatics and there is an opportunity to offer more swim instruction and open swims.

- Approximately one-half of residents said they had a need for swim instruction and aquatic activities generally. The highest need for aquatics included open public swims, water exercise classes, lap swimming, lessons, and pool rentals for parties. Although one-third of residents reported using the Covington Aquatic Center at least once in the past year, the expressed need suggests an opportunity to offer more aquatic activities.
- Forty-five percent of residents were satisfied with the Covington Aquatics Center, only 12% reported dissatisfaction, and the remaining 42% answered “don’t know.” This uncertainty can be accounted for by the 65% of residents who had not used the aquatic center over the past year—over 80% of users said they were somewhat or very satisfied.

Younger and newer residents are most passionate about their need for parks and recreation options.

- Residents living in Covington for 20 years or less and those ages 18 to 54 are similar in their parks and recreation needs and priorities, and expressed a greater need for parks and recreation options than those living in Covington for 21 years or more and those ages 55 and above. This does not mean that parks and recreation activities are not important to longer term or older residents, simply that their passion level is not as high as their counterparts. In addition, despite differences in passion levels, the ranking order of parks and recreation needs and priorities is similar among all groups. It should also be noted that residents with children under the age of 18 living in their home generally rated a greater need for all parks and recreation options.

III. DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY

The 2000 US Census placed Covington’s population at 13,783, and residents ages 18 and older accounted for 9,122 of the total population. As Covington’s population has increased significantly since the 2000 US Census, this information was used as a guide, not a strict requirement, for setting quotas on the community survey on parks and recreation preferences and priorities.

According to the City of Covington website, in 2009 the estimated population of all residents in the City was 17,530 (an increase of approximately 27% since the 2000 US Census), with approximately 85% of Covington households being families.³ Family households, according to the US Census Bureau, are defined as “consisting of a householder living with one or more individuals related to him or her by birth, marriage, or adoption. The householder and all the people in the household related to him or her are defined as family members.”⁴ It is important to note the community survey did not ask about families, but rather if children under the age of 18 lived in the household.

The following table compares Covington’s demographic information from the community survey and the 2000 US Census.

Demographic Table		
Demographic Group	US Census (2000 Population)	Survey (N=300)
Gender		
Female	50%	52%
Male	50%	48%
Age		
18-34	32%	29%
35-54	53%	38%
55 and above	15%	31%
Refused	—	2%
Household Information		
Households with children under age 18	55%	44%
Length of residency		
5 years or less	n/a	14%
5-10 years	n/a	33%
11-20 years	n/a	28%
20 years or more	n/a	21%

Source: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc (DHM) and US Census Bureau

³ City of Covington, <http://www.ci.covington.wa.us/covingtonlife/history.cfm>

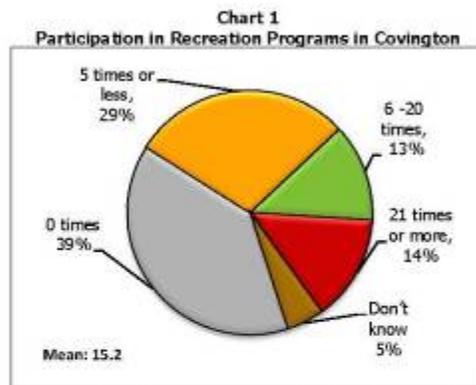
⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, Fertility & Family Statistics Branch. (2004). *Current Population Survey: Definitions and explanations*. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/population/www/cps/cpsdef.html>

IV. KEY FINDINGS

A. PUBLIC USE OF PARKS AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES

i. Participation In Recreation Programs

Residents were asked how many times in the past year they or a member of their household had participated in recreation programs in Covington including sports, cultural, senior, and other activities (Q11). A majority of residents had participated in recreation programs at least once in the past year.



Source: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM), September 2009

Of these residents, 29% participated 5 times or less, 13% between 6 and 20 times, and 14% 20 times or more. It should be noted that almost four in ten (39%) had not participated in these recreation programs within the past year.

Residents ages 18-34, those with children over the age of 5, residents of 5 to 20 years, and males used parks and recreation in Covington the most.

Residents who had participated in recreation programs in Covington 5 times or less (n=205) reported being busy or having no time (34%) or not being interested in available activities (30%) as the top reasons for their lack of participation (Q12). Not being aware of programs (10%) and the attitude that the quality of programs is poor (9%) were also reasons given for lack of participation.

Representative Comments:

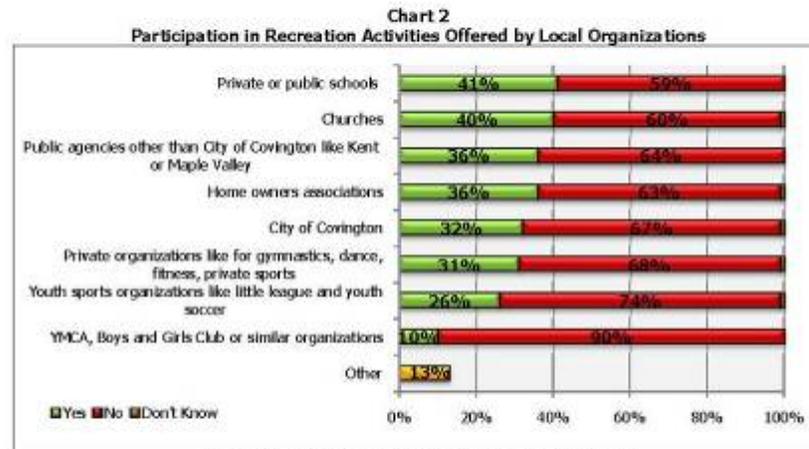
"We just moved here and are still settling in."

"There are not enough of them and there are not programs for my child's age, like for teenagers. There's not much variety."

"It's geared more for younger kids."

"We were not interested in what they offered."

Residents were asked if they or members of their household participated in recreation activities offered by eight different organizations (Q1-Q9).



Source: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM), September 2009

Private or public schools (41%) and **churches** (40%) were at the top of the list of organizations residents use for recreation activities (Q1, Q2).

Households with children ages 5 and older (79%) were most likely to report they participated in recreation activities offered by public or private schools. Residents ages 18-54 (50%) were more likely than those ages 55 and above (21%) to participate in recreation activities offered by private or public schools, as were newer residents living in Covington for 20 years or less (46%) compared to those who have lived in Covington for more than 20 years (19%).

Households that participated in recreation activities offered by churches were slightly older and had a longer period of residency in Covington. They were more likely to be ages 35 and older (43%) than between ages 18 and 34 (30%), and lived in Covington for five years or more (43%) than those who have less than five years of residency (21%).

In addition to schools and churches, a number of residents had participated in recreation activities offered by public agencies (like Covington, Kent or Maple Valley) and HOA's. Thirty-six (36%) percent said they participated in recreation activities offered by **public agencies other than the City of Covington like the City of Kent or Maple Valley** (Q8), especially those ages 18 to 54 (41%), residents living in Covington for 20 years or less (39%), and households with children between the ages of 11 and 13 (69%).

Thirty-six (36%) percent of households participated in recreation activities offered by **homeowners associations**, with no significant differences across demographic groups (Q4).

About one-third (32%) of households participated in recreation activities offered by the **City of Covington** (Q7). While not a significant difference, those ages 18 to 34 (39%) were more likely than those ages 35 and above (29%) to report using activities offered by the City. Residents of 10 years or less (41%) were also more likely to participate in City recreation activities than those living in Covington 11 years or more (26%).

Thirty-one percent (31%) of residents reported that their households participated in recreation activities offered by **private organizations like for gymnastics, dance, fitness, or private sports**, with similar findings in each subgroup (Q5). Next, one-quarter (26%) said their households participated in **youth sports organizations like little league and youth soccer** (Q3), especially those ages 18 to 54 (32%) and residents living in Covington between 5 and 20 years (32%).

At the bottom, 10% of residents reported using recreation activities offered by the **YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, or similar organizations** (Q6).

Sixteen percent (16%) said they had not participated in any activities offered by any of the eight organizations.

ii. **Use of Walking and Biking Trails**

Almost seven in ten (69%) residents had used walking and biking trails at least once in the last year (Q15).



Source: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM), September 2009

One-third (32%) had used them 21 times or more, 19% said they used trails between 6 and 20 times, and 18% used them 5 times or less. Twenty-nine (29%) percent said they had not used walking and biking trails in the past year. Those ages 55 and above (44%) and residents of more than 20 years (47%) were more likely than others in their subgroups to say they had not used trails.

B. PARKS & RECREATION MAINTENANCE & IMPROVEMENTS

i. Maintenance

Residents gave the importance of having well maintained parks, trails, and recreation facilities in Covington at a mean rating of 8.0 on a 1=not at all important, 10=very important scale (Q13). In addition, almost one-half (48%) gave it a top "9" or "10" rating, and fewer than one in ten (8%) residents rated it below a "5."

While having well maintained parks, trails, and recreation facilities were important to all residents, those ages 18-54 (mean: 8.3), women (mean: 8.3), and newer residents of 20 years or less (mean: 8.1) were most passionate.

ii. Improvements

Residents were asked what they believed were the three most needed improvements to parks and recreation in Covington (Q15).

Representative Comments:

"Maintaining them, keeping them safe so that people feel comfortable using them. There are times I wouldn't go out to them on my own."

"Keeping them cleaner and repaired, like the sidewalks and bushes need to be trimmed. One park needs to have the coyotes taken out—our neighbor's dog was attacked while walking by a creek on a walking and bike trail."

"Well the only one I can speak for is Jenkins Creek Park. It could be nice if they could do something about vandalism. Also, more access is needed to view streams to look at fish when they are spawning."

"More hiking and biking trails—I don't think there are any. Also, a community center or facility in a central location and maybe a community bulletin or newsletter that goes out to everyone in the vicinity that details events and recreation options."

"More parks. I'd like to see a park with a pond, a place where you could attend and have events—a gathering place. And more sports fields."

"Stopping graffiti and maintaining the parks."

"Access, like parking access, and facilities like restrooms."

"Having facilities like in Kent and activities for teenagers. Also, extending swimming times."

Table 1
Most Needed Improvements to Parks and Recreation in Covington

Response Category	N=300
Maintenance of park and equipment	23%
Clean up graffiti/trash	17%
Police patrol/park safety	15%
More parks	12%
Sports fields	8%
Better lighting	7%
More trails	6%
Parking	6%
Land development	5%
Playground equipment	4%
Bathroom facilities	4%
More walking paths	4%
Access to park	3%
Community/ recreation center	3%
Recreational activities/events	3%
Dog park	3%
Marketing/ more information	3%
More bike trails	3%
Garbage/ trash cans	2%
Kid friendly	2%
Skate park	2%
Family oriented	2%
All other	1% or less
Nothing	13%
Don't Know	13%

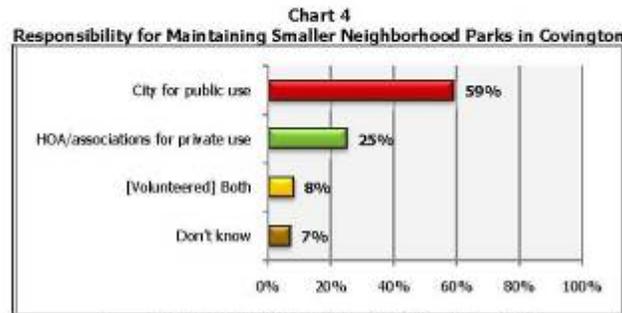
Source: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM), September 2009

Many suggestions were related to improvements or additions to parks. The most mentioned needed improvement pertained to park repair and maintenance, which accounted for 42% of responses, including maintenance of park and equipment (23%), cleaning up graffiti and trash (17%), and adding more garbage cans (2%). Other infrastructure improvements included better lighting (7%), more parking (6%), and the addition of bathroom facilities (4%).

Suggestions for additions to parks consisted of trails and pathways, including trails generally (6%), walking paths (4%), and bike trails (3%), community and sports infrastructure, including sports fields (8%) and a skate park (2%), and community or recreation center (3%), playground equipment (4%), community recreation center (3%), and dog park (3%).

Other suggestions were targeted toward more parks (12%) and land development (5%), safety issues such as police patrol and park safety (15%), access generally (3%), and making the parks oriented toward households with families including being kid friendly (2%) or family oriented (2%).

Residents were asked whether the smaller neighborhood parks in Covington should be maintained by the City for public use or by associations like HOA's for private use by homeowners and members (Q14).



A solid majority (59%) said they should be maintained by the City, one-quarter (25%) said HOA and other associations, 8% said both, and 7% answered "don't know." Opinions on this were similar with little to no variations across demographic subgroups.

Residents were asked to allocate \$100.00 among seven different parks and recreation facilities (Q17).

Table 2
Allocation of \$100 on Covington Parks & Recreation Facilities

Parks and recreation facilities	Allocation of funds (Mean)
Build a community center for indoor recreation, including a gym, walking track, classes, and exercise room	\$17.60
Build walking and biking trails	\$15.60
Build parks with playgrounds and picnic areas	\$15.00
Build sports fields	\$14.40
Enhance the existing aquatic center	\$13.70
Purchase land for parks and open space	\$13.00
Build an indoor leisure pool with slides and water features	\$10.70
TOTAL	\$100.00

Source: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM), September 2009

The highest single portion of the \$100.00 was allocated to building a **community center for indoor recreation, including a gym, walking track, classes, and an exercise room** (\$17.60). Women (\$20.70) allocated significantly more money to this than men (\$14.20).

Over one-half (\$58.00) of the \$100.00 budget was allocated to outdoor parks and recreation. This included **building walking and biking trails** (\$15.60)—something which men (\$18.40) allocated more money to than other groups— **building parks with playgrounds and picnic areas** (\$15.00), and **building sports fields** (\$14.40). In addition, \$13.00 was allocated to **purchasing land for parks and open space**. Those ages 55 and above (\$17.00) were especially likely to allocate a higher portion of the budget to purchasing more land for parks and open space compared to those ages 18 to 34 (\$9.90) and 35 to 54 (\$12.70).

A total of \$24.40 was allocated to aquatics - \$13.70 for *enhancing the existing aquatic center* and \$10.70 to *build an indoor leisure pool with slides and water features*. Women (\$17.10) allocated more money to enhancing the aquatic center than men (\$10.00). Residents ages 18 to 34 (\$13.80) allocated a higher portion of the budget to build a leisure pool than those ages 35-54 (\$10.80) and ages 55 and above (\$7.60).

**Table 3
Combined Allocation of \$100 on Covington Parks & Recreation Facilities**

Parks and recreation facilities	Allocation of funds (Combined Mean)
Outdoor parks and recreation spaces (walking and biking trails, parks with playgrounds and picnic areas, sports fields, land for parks and open space)	\$58.00
Aquatics (enhance the existing aquatic center, build an indoor leisure pool with slides and water features)	\$24.40
Build a community center for indoor recreation, including a gym, walking track, classes, and exercise room	\$17.60
TOTAL	\$100.00

Source: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM), September 2009

C. PARKS & RECREATION PRIORITIES , NEEDS, & FUNDING

A series of questions were posed in which residents were asked if they had a need for recreation options in the City (Q18-Q22) and how well those options serve their own and their household’s recreational needs (Q23-Q27).

It should be noted that while a combined majority said each option served their households’ recreational needs extremely well or well, only one-quarter or fewer said each option served their households’ recreational needs “extremely well.” Starting with the greatest need, the following groups recreation options into tiers and describes response characteristics within each tier.

It should also be noted that in general, residents ages 54 and younger, newer residents, and those with children under 18 in the home had a higher need for each option.

I. Parks and Recreation Infrastructure Options

First Tier: *60% of residents or more had a need for each recreation option in the first tier, AND said they served the recreational needs of their household extremely well or well.*

Options in the first tier consisted of a larger or extended park and recreation infrastructure that includes trails and pathways, both of which Covington residents reported using more often than other recreation activities (Q15). In addition, trails and pathways (\$15.60) and playgrounds with picnic areas (\$15.00) were given one-third of the \$100.00 budget (Q17).

Table 4
First Tier Parks and Recreation Options

Parks and Recreation Option	Yes Need	Serves Needs Well (Extremely well/well)	Does Not Serve Needs (Not too/Not at all well)
1st Tier			
Extended trail system for walking and cycling	60%	68% (24%/44%)	29% (15%/14%)
Larger, 10-20 acre community park suitable for wide use including sports fields, picnic areas, and pathways, within a short drive from your home	60%	60% (18%/42%)	37% (18%/18%)

Source: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM), September 2009

Sixty-percent (60%) of residents said they had a need for an **extended trail system for walking and cycling**; at least 53% of residents across all subgroups related this need (Q20).

Almost seven in ten (68%) residents said this option served their needs extremely well or well (Q25), especially those ages 18 to 54 (74%) compared to those ages 55 and above (56%), as well as those with 20 years of residency or less (74%) compared to residents living in the City for more than 20 years (47%).

Six in ten (60%) residents also reported the need for a **larger, 10-20 acre community park suitable for wide use including sports fields, picnic areas, and pathways within a short drive from their home** (Q19). One-half of residents or more reported this as a need, especially those ages 35 to 54 (62%).

Sixty-percent (60%) of residents said this option served their needs extremely well or well (Q24), with those ages 18 to 34 (76%) and residents of 20 years or less (64%) the most likely subgroups to be of that opinion.

Second Tier: *Fewer than 60% but more than 50% of residents had a need for this recreation option in the second tier AND said it served the recreational needs of their household extremely well or well.*

Table 5
Second Tier Parks and Recreation Options

Parks and Recreation Option	Yes Need	Serves Needs Well (Extremely well/well)	Does Not Serve Needs (Not too/Not at all well)
2nd Tier			
Smaller, 3-5 acre neighborhood park with basic amenities such as play equipment, picnic tables, and open fields, within walking distance from your home	53%	59% (16%/43%)	40% (20%/19%)

Source: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM), September 2009

Fifty-three percent (53%) said they had a need for **smaller, 3 to 5 acre neighborhood parks with basic amenities such as play equipment, picnic tables, and open fields within walking distance from their homes** (Q18). Close to the same percentage (59%) said this option met their recreational needs extremely well or well (Q23), especially the newest residents (77%) and men (65%). It should be noted that this option served the parks and recreation needs of residents ages 55 and older more than any other option (52% need, 59% serves needs extremely well or well).

Third Tier: Fewer than 50% of residents had a need for each recreation option in the third tier AND said they served the recreational needs of their household extremely well or well.

Table 6
Third Tier Parks and Recreation Options

Parks and Recreation Option	Yes Need	Serves Needs Well (Extremely well/well)	Does Not Serve Needs (Not too/Not at all well)
3rd Tier			
Park with water access for swimming, fishing, and boating	46%	53% (15%/38%)	44% (22%/22%)
Undeveloped and natural open spaces with limited or no improvements	42%	49% (12%/37%)	47% (28%/19%)

Source: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHMI), September 2009

Forty-six percent (46%) of residents said their household had a need for a **park with water access for swimming, fishing, and boating** (Q22). While not statistically significant, residents ages 18 to 34 (56%) were more likely than those ages 35 and above (43%) to be of this view. Slightly over one-half (53%) said this served the recreational needs of their household extremely well or well (Q27), with those ages 18 to 34 (72%) and residents of 10 years or less (61%) the most likely to be of this opinion.

Last in this final tier, 42% of residents said they had a need for **undeveloped and natural open spaces with limited or no improvements** (Q21). Women (48%) were more likely than men (36%) to have this need. This option met the needs of 49% of households extremely well or well (Q26), especially for those ages 18 to 34 (63%).

ii. Parks and Recreation Program Options

A series of questions were posed in which residents were asked if they had a need for recreation programs in the City (Q28-Q39), and how well those programs serve their own and their households' recreational needs (Q40-Q51). Programs are grouped into tiers based on greatest need and serving the needs of residents extremely well or well.

First Tier: 60% residents or more had a need for this recreational program in the first tier AND said it served the recreational program needs of their household extremely well or well.

Table 7
First Tier Parks and Recreation Program Options

Parks and Recreation Option	Yes Need	Serves Needs Well (Extremely well/well)	Does Not Serve Needs (Not too/Not at all well)
1st Tier			
Community events and festivals	66%	68% (14%/54%)	30% (15%/15%)

Source: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHMI), September 2009

Alone in the first tier, two-thirds (66%) said they or their households had the need for **community events and festivals** (Q28), especially those under the ages 18-34 (83%) compared to their counterparts (age 35+: 58%), or residents of 20 years or less (72%) compared to those living in the City for 21 years or more (43%).

More than two-thirds (68%) also reported that this option served their households' recreational needs extremely well or well (Q40). Those under the age of 55 (18-34: 84%, 35-54: 66%) and with 20 years of residency or less (74%) were also more likely than their counterparts ages 55 and above (56%) or 21 year plus residents (49%) to have said that community events or festivals met their households' recreational needs extremely well or well.

Second Tier: *Fewer than 60% but more than 45% of residents had a need for each recreational program in the second tier AND said they served the recreational needs of their household extremely well or well.*

Table 8
Second Tier Parks and Recreation Program Options

Parks and Recreation Option	Yes Need	Serves Needs Well (Extremely well/Well)	Does Not Serve Needs (Not too/Not at all well)
2nd Tier			
Health and fitness programs	56%	53% (10%/43%)	42% (20%/22%)
Swim instruction and aquatic activities	51%	53% (15%/37%)	45% (18%/27%)
Informational and educational classes	51%	45% (9%/35%)	49% (21%/28%)

Source: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM), September 2009

Fifty-six percent (56%) of residents said they had a need for **health and fitness programs** (Q34), with women (61%) more likely than men (50%) to report a need for these programs, as well as those residents living in Covington for 20 years or less (61%) compared to residents of 21 years or more (41%).

Close to the same percentage (53%) said health and fitness programs met their recreational needs extremely well or well (Q48). This was especially so among women (58%), residents living in the City for less than 5 years (72%), and those ages 18 to 34 (67%) compared to their counterparts (men: 49%, 5 year plus residents: 50%, ages 35 and above: 48%).

Next, 51% of residents said they had a need for **swim instruction and aquatic activities** (Q36). Residents ages 18 to 34 (55%) and women (54%) were slightly more likely than their counterparts to have this need (55 and above: 43%, men: 47%).

Fifty-three percent (53%) of residents said their needs were met extremely well or well by swim instruction and aquatic activities (Q48), especially residents ages 18 to 34 (67%) and 35 to 54 (53%) compared to residents ages 55 and above (40%). Women (57%) were also more likely than men (48%) to be of this opinion.

One-half (51%) said they had a need for **informational and educational classes** (Q37), with women (58%), residents ages 18 to 54 (58%), and those with 20 years of residency or less (55%) most likely to report a need.

Just under one-half (44%) said their recreational needs were met extremely well or well by informational and educational classes (Q49), with the same subgroups—ages 18 to 54 (49%) and 20 years or less (49%) the most likely to have this opinion (Q49). Approximately three in ten residents ages 55 and above (35%) and those living in Covington for more than 20 years (33%) held this view.

Third Tier: *More than 40% but fewer than 50% had a need for each recreational program in the third tier AND said they served the needs of their household extremely well or well.*

Table 9
Third Tier Parks and Recreation Program Options

Parks and Recreation Option	Yes Need	Serves Needs Well (Extremely well/well)	Does Not Serve Needs (Not too/Not at all well)
3rd Tier			
Sports programs for youth	44%	48% (13%/35%)	48% (15%/33%)
Sports programs for adults	43%	40% (8%/32%)	56% (25%/31%)
Summer programs for youth	42%	40% (9%/32%)	53% (16%/37%)

Source: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM), September 2009

Forty-four percent (44%) of residents said they had a need for **sports programs for youth** (Q32), with those ages 18 to 54 (49%) and households with children ages 5 to 13 (85%) the most likely to have this need.

Almost one-half (48%) of residents said this served their recreational needs extremely well or well, especially those ages 18 to 54 (56%) and households with children between the ages of 5 and 13 (83%). A majority of residents living in Covington for 10 years or less (56%) also said this served their needs extremely well or well.

Next, 43% of residents said they or their household had a need for **sports programs for adults** (Q33). Those ages 18 to 34 (58%) and newer residents living in Covington for less than 5 years (56%) were more likely than their counterparts to report this as a need (35-54: 43%, 55 and older: 27%, 5 years plus residency: 41%).

Four in ten (40%) residents said this served their recreational needs extremely well or well (Q45), with those between 18 and 34 years of age (54%) and living in Covington for less than 5 years (52%) or between 5 and 10 years (45%) more likely to be of this opinion than residents ages 55 and above (33%) or those living in Covington for 11 years or more (34%).

Forty-two percent (42%) of residents said they had a need for **summer programs for youth**, with those ages 18 to 54 (46%) and households with children under 13 (70%) most likely to report a need for these programs.

Four in ten (40%) said this met their recreational needs extremely well or well (Q43) with those ages 18-34 (55%) more likely to be of that opinion than residents ages 35 to 54 (40%) or 55 and above (26%).

Fourth Tier: Fewer than 40% of residents had a need for each recreational program in the fourth tier AND said they served the needs of their household extremely well or well.

Table 10
Fourth Tier Parks and Recreation Program Options

Parks and Recreation Option	Yes Need	Serves Needs Well (Extremely well/well)	Does Not Serve Needs (Not too/Not at all well)
4th Tier			
Arts and craft classes	42%	38% (7%/31%)	58% (25%/32%)
Activities and programs for seniors	37%	32% (7%/25%)	59% (23%/37%)
Before and after school programs for youth	29%	32% (11%/21%)	59% (20%/39%)
Activities and programs for disabled participants	32%	22% (8%/14%)	67% (20%/47%)
Programs for preschool children	25%	25% (7%/18%)	62% (16%/46%)

Source: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM), September 2009

Arts and craft classes were noted as a need by 42% of residents (Q35), with over one-half of those ages 18 to 34 (54%) and women (51%) who reported this as a need.

Almost four in ten (38%) said these classes met their recreational needs extremely well or well, with those ages 18 to 34 (52%) and women (42%) more likely to be of that opinion than other subgroups (Q47).

Next, 37% of residents said their households had a need for **activities and programs for seniors** (Q39), with majorities among those ages 55 and older (58%) who reported a need for this. Thirty-two percent (32%) said programs for seniors met their needs extremely well or well, with those ages 55 and above (45%) the most likely to have that opinion (Q51).

Before and after school programs for youth were a need by 29% of residents; those households with children between the ages of 5 and 10 (61%) had the highest need (Q30). Thirty-two percent (32%) of residents reported this served their household's needs extremely well or well (Q42), especially those ages 18 to 34 (44%) and with children between the ages of 5 and 10 (57%).

Thirty-two percent (32%) of residents said they had a need for **activities and programs for disabled participants**, with all demographic groups reporting similar levels (Q38). Just over two in ten (22%) said this served their needs extremely well or well (Q50), with findings similar across subgroups (Q50).

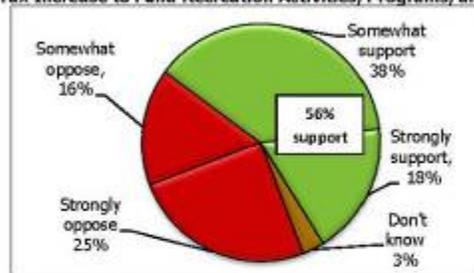
Last, one-quarter (25%) of residents had a need for **programs for preschool children** (Q29). A high majority (77%) of households with children under the age of 5 said they had this need, compared to three in ten or fewer among all other subgroups.

Twenty-five percent (25%) of residents said this served their household's needs extremely well or well (Q41). Households with children under age 5 (65%) were most likely to say this served their needs extremely well or well.

iii. Parks and Recreation Funding

Residents were told that maintaining existing parks and providing additional recreation activities, programs, and facilities in Covington to meet the needs of residents would increase costs, and funding would have to come from taxes and user fees. They were then asked if they would strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose an increase in taxes (Q87).

Chart 5
Support Tax Increase to Fund Recreation Activities, Programs, and Facilities



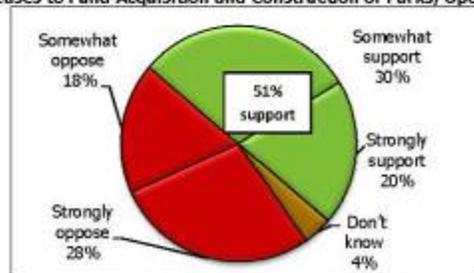
Source: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM), September 2009

A combined majority (56%) of residents said they would support an increase in taxes to fund recreation activities, programs, and facilities in Covington, with a plurality (38%) supporting it “somewhat” and 18% “strongly.” Forty-one percent (41%) of residents said they would strongly (25%) or somewhat (16%) oppose a tax increase.

With the exception of residents living in Covington for 21 years or more (42%), majorities of all subgroups were in support of an increase in taxes to fund parks and recreation.

Residents were also told that buying land for future parks and natural spaces, building new parks, and building trails would require funding through additional taxes and asked as of today if they would strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose an increase in taxes to fund acquisition and construction of parks, open space, and trails (Q88).

Chart 6
Support Tax Increases to Fund Acquisition and Construction of Parks, Open Spaces, and Trails



Source: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM), September 2009

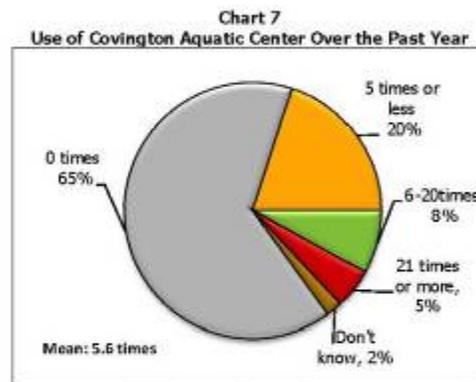
A slight majority (51%) of residents supported this proposal – 20% supported it “strongly” and 30% “somewhat.” Forty-six percent (46%) were in opposition to this, with 28% “strongly” opposed and 18% “somewhat.”

Support was similar across subgroups with the exception of residents living in Covington for 21 years or more (36%) supported this least of all subgroups.

D. AQUATICS—USE, SATISFACTION, PRIORITIES, & NEEDS

i. Use and Satisfaction

When asked how many times residents or members of their households had used the Covington Aquatic Center over the past year (Q52), approximately one-third reported using the aquatic center at least once.



Source: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM), September 2009

Twenty percent (20%) used the aquatic center 5 times or less, 8% between 6 and 20 times, and 5% 21 times or more. Almost two-thirds (65%) of residents reported they had not used the aquatic center at all in the past year.

Residents with children under age 18 living at home reported using the aquatic center more times than all other residents. Those using the aquatic center least included older and longer term residents.

Those who had used the aquatic center fewer than 6 times (n=252) reported not having time (30%) as the top reason for their lack of use (Q54). Other reasons included lack of interest in available activities (21%) and not being aware of the facility (17%).

Representative Comments:

"We are busy doing other sports and doing things for the kids. We use the parks more."

"We have no need for the aquatic center because we already have a gym membership so we just go to the gym."

"I have a membership somewhere else where it also has a pool I can use."

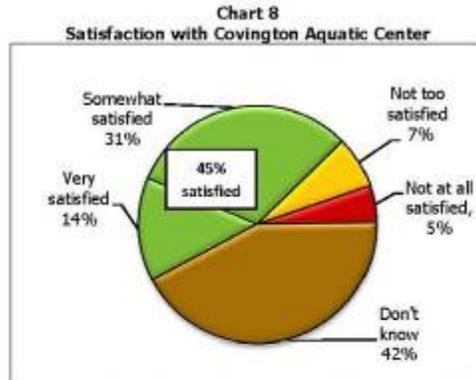
"We don't have an aquatic center."

**Table 11
Reasons for Not Using the Covington Aquatic Center**

Response Category	N = 252
Busy/no time	30%
Not interested in available activities	21%
Not aware of facility	17%
Cost/expensive	7%
Location inconvenient	7%
Quality of facility is poor	6%
Not aware of programs	4%
Lack child care	2%
Times are inconvenient	2%
Quality of programs is poor	2%
Programs are full	1%
Other (specified)	15%
Don't swim/dislike water	4%
Health reasons	2%
Too cold	2%
Have membership elsewhere	3%
Go to gym/gym membership	2%
All other	1% or less
Don't know /refused	5%

Source: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM), September 2009

Residents were asked if they were very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not too satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the aquatic center (Q53).



Source: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM), September 2009

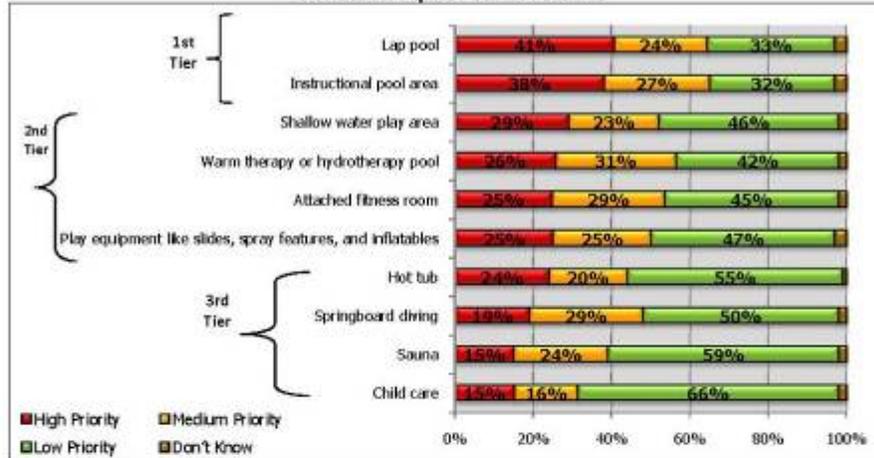
A plurality (45%) of residents were satisfied with the aquatic center (14% very, 31% somewhat), with residents below the age of 55 (51%) more satisfied than those ages 55 and above (32%) – the latter was also an age group most likely to have answered “don’t know” (52%). Thirteen percent (13%) of residents were not too (7%) or not at all satisfied (5%), and a large number of residents (42%) answered “don’t know.”

It should be noted that of those residents who had used the aquatic center once or more in the last year (n=102), 86% were somewhat (56%) or very satisfied (30%) with the Covington Aquatic Center.

ii. Priorities

Residents were asked if ten aquatic features were a high, medium, or low priority to them when it comes to features of an aquatic center (Q55-Q64). Responses are categorized into tiers based on priority level given by residents.

Chart 9
Priorities for Aquatic Center Features



Source: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM), September 2009

First Tier: A plurality (between 38% and 41%) rated each aquatic feature a “High Priority.”

The highest rated feature was a **lap pool**, seen as a high priority (41%) by a plurality of residents (Q55). Twenty-four percent (24%) of residents rated it a medium priority and one-third (33%) viewed it as a low priority. Residents ages 18 to 34 (50%) were more likely than their counterparts ages 35 to 54 (41%) or 55 and above (31%) to rate this as a high priority, as were those living in Covington for 20 years or less (47%) compared to residents of 21 years or more (21%).

Next, 38% said **an instructional pool area** was a high priority feature, 27% rated it as a medium priority, and 32% gave it a low priority (Q59). While findings across demographic groups were similar, one exception was residents living in households with children ages 13 and younger (60%) who were more likely than other subgroups to have rated this as a high priority.

Second Tier: At least one-quarter (25% to 29%) rated each aquatic feature a “High Priority.”

At the top of the second tier, 29% rated a **shallow water play area** as a high priority, and an additional 23% rated it as a medium priority (Q56). Slightly under one-half (46%) rated a shallow water play area a low priority. Households with children under age 5 (67%) rated a shallow water play area higher than other demographic groups.

A **warm therapy or hydrotherapy pool** was rated high by 26% of residents, 31% rated it as a medium priority, and 42% said it was a low priority (Q60). Women (36%) rated this as a much higher priority than men (14%). Residents living in Covington for 5 years or more (29%) also found it to be a higher priority than those living in Covington for less than 5 years (9%).

Twenty-five percent (25%) rated an **attached fitness room** as a high priority, 29% said it was a medium priority, and 45% gave it a low priority (Q63). Almost four in ten (39%) residents ages 18 to 34 rated a

attached fitness room as a high priority, as did those living in Covington for less than 5 years (41%), and women (30%) were more likely than men (19%) to rate this a high priority.

One-quarter (25%) of residents rated **play equipment like slides, spray features, and inflatables** a high priority, and another 25% said it was a medium priority (Q58), while a plurality (47%) said this was a low priority. Residents ages 18 to 34 (37%) and those living in households with children ages 13 and younger (43%) were the most likely of subgroups to rate play equipment as a high priority.

Third Tier: *Less than one-quarter (15% to 25%) rated each aquatic feature a "High Priority."*

At the top of the third tier, 24% said a **hot tub** was a high priority, 20% said it was a medium priority, and 55% said it was a low priority (Q61). Residents age 18-34 compared to all other subgroups rated this as a high priority.

Nineteen percent (19%) of residents rated **springboard diving** a high priority, 29% said it was a medium priority and 50% said it was a low priority (Q57). Youngest residents and those with children were the most likely groups to mention diving as a high priority.

Fifteen percent (15%) rated a **sauna** a high priority, and almost one-quarter (24%) rated it a medium priority (Q62). Six in ten (59%) residents said a sauna was a low priority feature. At the bottom, 15% said **child care** was a high priority, 16% rated it a medium priority, and two-thirds (66%) said it was a low priority.

iii. Needs

Residents were asked if they or members of their household had a need for ten different aquatic options in Covington (Q65-Q74) and if each option served the aquatic needs of their household extremely well, well, not too well, or not well at all (Q76-Q85). These aquatic options are grouped into tiers based on programs in which there is the greatest need and that serve the needs of residents extremely well or well.

First tier: *60% of residents or more had a need for this aquatic activity AND served the aquatic needs of their household extremely well or well.*

Table 12
Aquatics Options

Aquatic Option	Yes Need	Serves Needs Well (Extremely well/well)	Does Not Serve Needs (Not too/Not at all well)
1st Tier			
Open public swims	64%	60% (19%/42%)	31% (9%/23%)

Source: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM), September 2009

Alone in the first tier, 64% of residents said they had a need for **open public swims** (Q66). While one-half or more of all subgroups said they had this need, those ages 18 to 54 (71%) and residents living in Covington for 20 years or less (69%) said they were especially in need of this activity.

Six in ten (60%) residents said this activity served the aquatic needs of their household extremely well or well (Q77), especially those residents ages 18 to 54 (67%).

Second Tier: *Between 43% and 50% of residents had a need for each aquatic activity AND served the aquatic needs of their household extremely well or well.*

Table 13
Aquatics Options

Aquatic Option	Yes Need	Serves Needs Well (Extremely well/well)	Does Not Serve Needs (Not too/Not at all well)
2nd Tier			
Water exercise classes	50%	46% (12%/34%)	45% (14%/31%)
Lap swimming	46%	45% (13%/32%)	45% (15%/30%)
Swimming lessons	43%	47% (14%/33%)	45% (16%/29%)

Source: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM), September 2009

At the top of the second tier, one-half (50%) of residents said they had a need for **water exercise classes** (Q74), with women (58%) having more need than men (41%). Forty-six percent (46%) of residents said water exercise classes served their aquatic needs extremely well or well, with findings similar across all demographic groups (Q85).

Next, 46% of residents said they had a need for the **lap swimming option** (Q65), especially residents ages 18 to 54 (51%), those with 20 years of residency or less (54%), and households with children ages 14 and older (67%). Forty-five percent (45%) said lap swimming served their aquatic needs extremely well or well (Q76), with one-third of all demographic groups to be of this opinion.

Forty-three percent (43%) of residents said they were in need of **swimming lessons** (Q67). A majority of residents ages 18 to 54 (50%), those living in Covington for 10 years or less (54%), women (47%), and households with children ages 10 and younger (80%) reported a need. Swimming lessons served the aquatic needs of 47% of residents extremely well or well (Q78), especially those ages 18 to 54 (53%) compared to ages 55 and above (32%).

Third Tier: 40% of residents or fewer had a need for each aquatic option in the third tier AND served the needs of their household extremely well or well.

Table 14
Aquatics Options

Aquatic Option	Yes Need	Serves Needs Well (Extremely well/well)	Does Not Serve Needs (Not too/Not at all well)
3rd Tier			
Pool rentals for parties and events	40%	38% (8%/30%)	52% (16%/36%)
Springboard diving	20%	26% (5%/20%)	65% (20%/45%)
Competitive swimming	19%	22% (6%/16%)	67% (20%/47%)
Masters swimming	12%	17% (3%/14%)	71% (21%/50%)
Triathlon training	11%	17% (4%/13%)	73% (22%/51%)
Synchronized swimming	4%	10% (1%/9%)	79% (21%/57%)

Source: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM), September 2009

At the top of the third tier, 40% of residents expressed a need for **pool rentals for parties and events** (Q73). Residents with children in their households under the age of 18 (60%) and those residents ages 18 to 34 (63%) and 35 to 54 (41%) were in most need of this option. Thirty-eight percent (38%) said this served their household's aquatic needs extremely well or well (Q84), with households with children under the age of 18 (53%) and residents ages 18 to 54 (44%) the most likely to have expressed this point of view.

Two in ten (20%) reported a need for **springboard diving** (Q68), and one-quarter (26%) said this served the aquatic needs of their household extremely well or well (Q79). It should be noted that 39% of those ages 18 to 34 were of this opinion.

Not far behind, 19% of residents expressed a need for **competitive swimming** (Q69), and 22% said it served the aquatic needs of their household extremely well or well (Q80).

Just over one in ten (12%) said they had a need for **masters swimming** (Q71). It is worth noting that 11% of those ages 55 and above reported a need for this option. Masters swimming served the aquatic needs of 17% of residents' households extremely well or well (Q82), and residents ages 55 and above (13%) rated this slightly lower in terms of serving their needs than those ages 18 to 54 (19%).

Eleven percent (11%) said they needed a **triathlon training** option (Q72), which served the aquatic needs of 17% of residents extremely well or well (Q83). Last, 4% of residents said they had a need for **synchronized swimming** (Q70) and 10% said it served the aquatic needs of their households extremely well or well (Q81).

**Covington Community Survey on Parks and Recreation
September 2009; N=300; general population
Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM)**

Hi, my name is _____ calling from Davis, Hibbitts and Midghall, Inc. a public opinion research company. We're conducting a survey about community issues in Covington. May I please speak to someone in the household 18 years of age or older?

- S1. Are you 18 years or older?
 Yes 1 [CONTINUE]
 No 2 [END]
 [DON'T READ] DK 3 [END]
- S2. Do you live within the city limits of Covington?
 Yes 1 [CONTINUE]
 No 2 [END]
 [DON'T READ] DK 3 [END]

Do you or members of your household participate in recreation activities offered by the following organizations? (Q1-Q9 IN RANK ORDER OF HIGHEST RESPONSES. ALL ITEMS WERE ROTATED)

Response Category	Yes	No	Don't Know
Public or private schools (q1)	41%	59%	*
Churches (q2)	40%	60%	1%
Public agencies other than City of Covington like Kent or Maple Valley (q8)	36%	64%	*
Home owners associations (q4)	36%	63%	1%
City of Covington (q7)	32%	67%	1%
Private organizations like for gymnastics, dance, fitness, private sports (q5)	31%	68%	1%
Youth sports organizations like little league and youth soccer (q3)	26%	74%	1%
YMCA, Boys and Girls Club or similar organizations (q6)	10%	90%	*
Other specified(q9):	13%	N/A	N/A
Various sports activities	2%	N/A	N/A
Outdoor recreation (General)	2%	N/A	N/A
Various parks	2%	N/A	N/A

10. Which THREE organizations do you or members of your household use the most? **(RECORD UP TO THREE FROM PRIOR LIST)**

Response Category	N=300
Private or public schools	21%
Churches	20%
Public agencies other than City of Covington like Kent or Maple Valley	12%
Private organizations like for gymnastics, dance, fitness, private sports	11%
City of Covington	10%
Home owners associations	10%
Youth sports organizations like little league and youth soccer	9%
YMCA, Boys and Girls Club or similar organizations	3%
Other	8%

11. How many times over the past year have you or members of your household participated in recreation programs in Covington including sports, cultural, senior, and other activities? **(RECORD NUMBER PER YEAR)**

Response Category	N=300
0 times	39%
5 times or less	29%
Between 6 and 20 times	13%
21 times or more	14%
Don't know	5%

12. **(IF LESS THAN 6 TO Q11)** What are your main reasons for not participating more often in recreation programs in Covington? **(OPEN, USE EXISTING CODES)**

Response Category	N=205
Busy/no time	34%
Not interested in available activities	30%
Not aware of programs	10%
Quality of programs is poor	9%
Locations are inconvenient	4%
Lack transportation	2%
Times are inconvenient	2%
Other	20%
Don't know	4%

13. Using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all important and 10 is highly important, how important is it to have well maintained parks, trails, and recreation facilities in Covington? **(TRACKER 05)**

Response Category	N=300
Mean	8.0
Combined 9-10 rating	48%

14. Should the smaller neighborhood parks in Covington be maintained by (the City for public use) or (associations like HOA's for private use for homeowners and members)? **(ROTATE OPTIONS IN QUESTION)**

Response Category	N=300
City for public use	59%
HOA/associations for private use	25%
(Volunteered) Both	8%
Don't know	7%

15. How many times over the past year have you or members of your household used walking and biking trails in Covington? **(RECORD NUMBER PER YEAR)**

Response Category	N=300
0 times	29%
5 times or less	18%
Between 6 and 20 times	19%
21 times or more	32%
Don't know	2%

16. What do you believe are the three most needed improvements to parks and recreation in Covington? **(OPEN. PROBE FOR SPECIFICS.)**

Response Category	N=300
Maintenance of park and equipment	23%
Clean up graffiti/trash	17%
Police patrol/park safety	15%
More parks	12%
Sports fields	8%
Better lighting	7%
More trails	6%
Parking	6%
Land development	5%
Playground equipment	4%
Bathroom facilities	4%
More walking paths	4%
Access to park	3%
Community/ recreation center	3%
Recreational activities/events	3%
Dog park	3%
Marketing/ more information	3%
More bike trails	3%
Garbage/ trash cans	2%
Kid friendly	2%
Skate park	2%
Family oriented	2%
All other	1% or less
Nothing	13%
Don't Know	13%

17. If you could spend \$100 for Covington parks and recreation facilities, how would you allocate the funds? I'd like to read a list of 7 parks and recreation facilities and have you assign dollar amounts to each. The overall total for all 7 items will need to equal \$100 dollars and you can spend any amount between \$0 and \$100. **[READ ENTIRE LIST, THEN REREAD LIST AND ASK WHAT DOLLAR AMOUNT SHOULD BE ALLOCATED TO EACH]** What dollar amount would you allocate to...?

Parks and recreation facilities	Allocation of funds (N=300)
Build a community center for indoor recreation, including a gym, walking track, classes, and exercise room	\$ 17.60
Build walking and biking trails	\$ 15.60
Build parks with playgrounds and picnic areas	\$15.00
Build sports fields	\$ 14.40
Enhance the existing aquatic center	\$13.70
Purchase land for parks and open space	\$ 13.00
Build an indoor leisure pool with slides and water features	\$10.70
TOTAL	\$100.00

Do you or members of your household have a need for the following recreation options in Covington? (Q18-Q22, IN RANK ORDER OF HIGHEST NEED. ALL ITEMS WERE ROTATED)

Response Category	Yes	No	Don't Know
A larger, 10-20 acre community park suitable for wide use including sports fields, picnic areas, and pathways, within a short drive from your home (q19)	60%	39%	*
An extended trail system for walking and cycling (q20)	60%	40%	1%
A smaller, 3-5 acre neighborhood park with basic amenities such as play equipment, picnic tables, and open fields, within walking distance from your home (q18)	53%	46%	1%
A park with water access for swimming, fishing, and boating (q22)	46%	53%	1%
Undeveloped and natural open spaces with limited or no improvements (q21)	42%	55%	3%

Do the following options serve the recreational needs of you or members of your household extremely well, well, not too well, or not well at all? (Q23-Q27, IN RANK ORDER OF HIGHEST COMBINED POSITIVE SERVICE RATING. ALL ITEMS WERE ROTATED)

Response Category	Extremely Well	Well	Not Too Well	Not Well At All	DK	Yes Need
An extended trail system for walking and cycling (q25)	24%	44%	15%	14%	3%	60%
A larger, 10-20 acre community park suitable for wide use including sports fields, picnic areas, and pathways, within a short drive from your home (q24)	18%	42%	18%	18%	3%	60%
A smaller, 3-5 acre neighborhood park with basic amenities such as play equipment, picnic tables, and open fields, within walking distance from your home (q23)	16%	43%	20%	19%	1%	53%
A park with water access for swimming, fishing, and boating (q27)	15%	38%	22%	22%	3%	46%
Undeveloped and natural open spaces with limited or no improvements (q26)	12%	37%	28%	19%	4%	42%

Do you or members of your household have a need for the following recreation options in Covington? (Q28-Q39, IN RANK ORDER OF HIGHEST NEED. ALL ITEMS WERE ROTATED)

Response Category	Yes	No	Don't Know
Community events and festivals (q28)	66%	34%	1%
Health and fitness programs (q34)	56%	43%	1%
Informational and educational classes (q37)	51%	47%	2%
Swim instruction and aquatic activities (q36)	51%	49%	*
Sports programs for youth (q32)	44%	56%	*
Sports programs for adults (q33)	43%	57%	*
Arts and craft classes (q35)	42%	57%	1%
Summer programs for youth (q31)	42%	58%	*
Activities and programs for seniors (q39)	37%	62%	1%
Activities and programs for disabled participants (q38)	32%	67%	1%
Before and after school programs for youth (q30)	29%	70%	1%
Programs for preschool age children (q29)	25%	74%	1%

Do the following options serve the recreational needs of you and members of your household extremely well, well, not too well, or not at all well? (Q40-Q51, IN RANK ORDER OF HIGHEST COMBINED POSITIVE SERVICE RATING. ALL ITEMS WERE ROTATED)

Response Category	Extremely Well	Well	Not Too Well	Not Too Well At All	DK	Yes Need
Community events and festivals (q40)	14%	54%	15%	15%	2%	66%
Swim instruction and aquatic activities (q48)	15%	37%	18%	27%	3%	51%
Health and fitness programs (q46)	10%	43%	20%	22%	4%	56%
Sports programs for youth (q44)	13%	35%	15%	33%	4%	44%
Informational and educational classes (q49)	9%	35%	21%	28%	7%	51%
Sports programs for adults (q45)	8%	32%	25%	31%	3%	43%
Summer programs for youth (q43)	8%	32%	16%	37%	7%	42%
Arts and craft classes (q47)	7%	31%	25%	32%	5%	42%
Before and after school programs for youth (q42)	11%	21%	20%	39%	9%	29%
Activities and programs for seniors (q51)	7%	25%	23%	37%	8%	37%
Programs for preschool age children (q41)	7%	18%	16%	46%	13%	25%
Activities and programs for disabled participants (q50)	8%	14%	20%	47%	11%	32%

52. How many times have you or members of your household used the Covington Aquatic Center over the past year? (RECORD NUMBER PER YEAR. IF LESS THAN 6, ASK Q53 THEN Q54. IF 6 OR MORE, ASK Q53 THEN Q55)

Response Category	N=300
0 times	65%
5 times or less	20%
Between 6 and 20 times	8%
21 times or more	5%
Don't know	2%

53. Would you say that you are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not too satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the aquatic center?

Response Category	N=300
Very satisfied	14%
Somewhat satisfied	31%
Not too satisfied	7%
Not at all satisfied	5%
Don't know	42%

54. **(IF LESS THAN 6 Q52)** What are your main reasons for not using the aquatic center more often?
(OPEN, USE EXISTING CODES)

Response Category	N=252
Busy/no time	30%
Not interested in available activities	21%
Not aware of facility	17%
Cost/expensive	7%
Location inconvenient	7%
Quality of facility is poor	6%
Not aware of programs	4%
Lack child care	2%
Times are inconvenient	2%
Quality of programs is poor	2%
Programs are full	1%
Other specified	15%
Don't swim/dislike water:	4%
Health reasons	2%
Too cold	2%
Have membership elsewhere	3%
Go to gym/gym membership	2%
All other	1% or less
Don't know /refused	5%

Are the following a high priority, medium priority, or low priority for you when it comes to features of an aquatic center? **(Q55-Q64 IN RANK ORDER OF HIGHEST PRIORITY. ALL ITEMS WERE ROTATED)**

Response Category	High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority	DK
Lap pool (q55)	41%	24%	33%	3%
Instructional pool area (q59)	38%	27%	32%	3%
Shallow water play area (q56)	29%	23%	46%	2%
Warm therapy or hydrotherapy pool (q60)	26%	31%	42%	2%
Attached fitness room (q63)	25%	29%	45%	2%
Play equipment like slides, spray features, and inflatables (q58)	25%	25%	47%	3%
Hot tub (q61)	24%	20%	55%	1%
Springboard diving (q57)	19%	29%	50%	2%
Sauna (q62)	15%	24%	59%	2%
Child care (q64)	15%	16%	66%	2%

Do you or members of your household have a need for the following aquatics options in Covington?
(Q65-Q75, IN RANK ORDER OF HIGHEST NEED. ALL ITEMS WERE ROTATED)

Response Category	Yes	No	DK
Open public swims (q66)	64%	35%	1%
Water exercise classes (q74)	50%	50%	1%
Lap swimming (q65)	46%	53%	1%
Swimming lessons (q67)	43%	56%	1%
Pool rentals for parties and events (q73)	40%	58%	1%
Springboard diving (q68)	20%	79%	1%
Competitive swimming (q69)	19%	81%	1%
Masters swimming (q71)	12%	83%	5%
Triathlon training (q72)	11%	88%	1%
Synchronized swimming (q70)	4%	96%	1%
Other Specify (q75):	6%	N/A	N/A
Recreational/Health facilities	3%	N/A	N/A
All Other	1% or less	N/A	N/A

Do the following options serve the aquatics needs of you or members of your household extremely well, well, not too well, or not well at all? **(Q76-Q86, IN RANK ORDER OF HIGHEST COMBINED POSITIVE SERVICE RATING. ALL ITEMS WERE ROTATED)**

Response Category	Extremely Well	Well	Not Too Well	Not Too Well At All	DK	Yes Need
Open public swims (q77)	19%	42%	9%	23%	8%	64%
Swimming lessons (q78)	14%	33%	16%	29%	8%	43%
Water exercise classes (q85)	12%	34%	14%	31%	5%	50%
Lap swimming (q76)	13%	32%	15%	30%	9%	46%
Pool rentals for parties and events (q84)	8%	30%	16%	36%	10%	40%
Springboard diving (q79)	5%	20%	20%	45%	10%	20%
Competitive swimming (q80)	6%	16%	20%	47%	11%	19%
Triathlon training (q83)	4%	13%	22%	51%	10%	11%
Masters swimming (q82)	3%	14%	21%	50%	12%	12%
Synchronized swimming (q81)	1%	9%	21%	57%	11%	4%
Other, some other aquatic (q86)	30%	30%	0%	21%	19%	6%

ROTATE Q87 AND Q88.

87. Maintaining existing parks and providing additional recreation activities, programs, and facilities in Covington to meet the needs of residents would increase costs. Funding would have to come from taxes and user fees. As of today, would you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose an increase in taxes to fund recreation activities, programs, and facilities in Covington?

Response Category	N=300
Strongly oppose	25%
Somewhat oppose	16%
Somewhat support	38%
Strongly support	18%
Don't know	3%

88. Buying land for future parks and natural spaces, building new parks, and building trails would require funding through additional taxes. As of today, would you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose an increase in taxes to fund acquisition and construction of parks, open space and trails?

Response Category	N=300
Strongly oppose	28%
Somewhat oppose	18%
Somewhat support	30%
Strongly support	20%
Don't know	4%

DEMOGRAPHICS

These last few questions are for statistical purposes only.

89. In what age group are you? **[READ LIST]**

Response Category	N=300
18-24	12%
25-34	17%
35-44	15%
45-54	23%
55-64	18%
65 and above	13%
Refused	2%

90. How long have you lived in Covington? **(Record number of years)**

Response Category	N=300
5 years or less	14%
5-10	33%
11-20	28%
20+ years	21%
Refused	3%

91. How many children under age 18 currently live in your home?

Response Category	N=300
None (0)	54%
1	19%
2	18%
3	6%
4	1%
5	*
Refused/NA	2%

92. In what age range are the children? **[READ LIST]**

Response Category	N=132
4 and younger	23%
5-10	39%
11-13	26%
14 and older	46%

93. Gender **[DO NOT ASK]**

Response Category	N=300
Female	52%
Male	48%

Appendix C. Teen Focus Group Summary

The following report provides an overview of the teen focus group conducted as part of this Plan.



December 1, 2009

To: City of Covington
From: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM)
Re: Covington Parks and Recreation Teen Focus Group

I. INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY

Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM) conducted a focus group among teens ages 14 to 17 living in the City of Covington. The purpose of this group was to assess the opinions, ideas, and priorities of youth in Covington for improving parks and recreation in the City. This focus group is part of a larger research project that includes a telephone survey with Covington residents ages 18 and older. Findings from these projects will inform the development of the City of Covington's Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan.

Research Design: A total of 9 randomly recruited teens participated in the focus group on November 21, 2009. The group represented a mix of gender, ages, and grade levels. Appendix A has participant demographic information. Participants responded to questions during the discussion and in written exercises. Responses to written exercises can be found in Appendices B-K and the group discussion was video-taped.

The discussion was 90 minutes and led by two professional moderators. Although research of this type is not designed to measure with statistical reliability the attitudes of a particular group, it is valuable in giving a sense of the attitudes and opinions of the populations from which the samples were drawn.

This focus group is a measure of the values, beliefs, and perceptions of young residents as they relate parks and recreation activities in their community and represents a step toward involving youth in City planning processes. Additionally, when combined with the telephone survey, the City has provided a large cross-section of community members the opportunity to have a meaningful impact on the development of the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan.

This memo highlights key findings from the discussions and written exercises completed by each participant. Report sections review a major topic from the group discussions and include representative quotations as well as evaluative commentary. The quotes and commentary are drawn from both written exercises and group discussion.¹ The referenced Appendixes provide complete responses to all written exercises.

¹ Quotations were selected to represent the range of opinions regarding a topic, and not to represent quantitatively the expressed attitudes.

II. SUMMARY & OBSERVATIONS

Teens like living in Covington. They have easy access to a variety of nearby activities and they feel safe in their community.

- Covington affords teens access to a variety of interesting settings –Kent Station, Covington Place, and many restaurants, shops, and nearby towns. Covington is also big enough that they are able to meet new people, but small enough that they feel safe being independent.
- Despite their satisfaction with living in Covington, recreation and social activities like shopping, movies, and “just hanging out” are often in nearby towns such as Kent.

The ideal park for teens is one that is big, safe, and has interesting things to do. It is a park that is for the entire community, not just for neighborhoods.

- Over one-half of participants think parks and recreation in Covington is the biggest issue city officials need to address, including the size of parks, the level of park cleanliness, and the general awareness of parks and recreation in Covington.
- Teens want to see a large park in Covington with diverse facilities that include multiple sports fields, a large skate park, trails, benches, and covered areas. They also want to see community events at parks, such as expanding Covington Days and having concerts and summer and after school camps.
- Feeling safe is essential to their use of parks. They want to see lights at parks so they can use them in the evenings after school or in the summer and feel secure doing so. They also want measures taken to ensure illegal activities such as drinking do not occur at night in parks.

There is potential for expanded use of the Covington Aquatic Center by teens. Teens may use the aquatic center more often with some basic improvements.

- Teens find features such as a spring diving board, spray features, and a shallow play area the most exciting additions to the aquatic center. There is some concern, however, that the existing pool is already too crowded and that there may not be enough room for more additions.
- Some reasons for not going to the aquatic center may be easily remedied. They are concerned about the cleanliness of the water in the pool and the bathroom, and some also feel the water is too cold.

Teens want to know more about Covington parks and recreation opportunities.

- Teens are excited by parks and recreation possibilities in Covington and want to attend events and go to parks. However, they do not have a consistent information source to learn about parks and recreation activities and events and think the City can do more to spread awareness, such as announcements at their schools. They are aware of parks in the area, but are not sure if the City has parks and recreation services.

Outdoor parks and recreation facilities that include larger parks, trails, pathways, and sports fields are very important priorities for all residents.

- Prompted and unprompted throughout the group, teens expressed that larger parks with a variety of activities are most important to them. This same sentiment was found in the community survey, as residents 18 and older rated a larger community park as something that would best serve the needs of residents in Covington.

III. KEY FINDINGS

A. Best Thing About Living in Covington

- "Everything is really close. If I'm feelin' a shake, I can walk to the McDonalds."*
- "Everything is so close. Seattle is only 30 minutes away."*
- "I lived in Las Vegas for 3 years and I never felt comfortable there. Here I feel really comfortable. I feel like I can go with my friends and do anything. It's a nice little community."*
- "I said it was safe but at the same time not small town safe. I know a couple of people here but not everyone. I like that there's enough people in the town that we meet new people and at the same time it's comfortable."*
- "Everything is pretty close. They have Covington Place right down there so I can walk to it and chill with friends."*
- "I like going down to Kent Station. My friends and I go there all the time."*
- "It's [Kent Station] open and really cool to be there."*

Teens responded verbally and in writing about what they most like about living in Covington (Appendix C). There are two main themes from their responses –proximity and access to other places was mentioned by most participants, followed by safety and the “small town feel” of the community. Safety and the small town feel of Covington are aspects that are very important to teens. They appreciate that Covington is a safe community similar to that of a small town, while at the same time value that they have easy access to a variety of interesting settings and activities of a larger city.

Participants continually expressed in written exercises and group discussion their appreciation in accessing places like Covington Place and Kent Station, as well as restaurants, shops, and nearby towns such as Kent and Maple Valley. In essence, they like living in Covington because they have things to do that are relatively easy to access, and feel safe at these places.

While teens feel generally safe in the community, some mentioned in the group discussion not feeling comfortable at Covington parks with little to no lighting.

B. Biggest Community Issue

- "We need a skate park. Kent 360 is a pretty big skate park, but the problem with that is it's not lighted so a lot of kids want to hang out there but have to leave at 5pm because it gets dark."*
- "More awareness. I'm not really sure where parks are. If I knew more about them I might want to go to them."*
- "We don't really have any baseball fields here."*
- "There was just a drug bust at my school, so I think that's kind of an issue everywhere."*
- "No issue for me, but I know a lot of kids that bring up the skate park."*
- "Since I started driving, I've noticed there are a lot of streets that are flooded. That's something I'd ask them to fix."*

Participants were asked to list in writing any community issues or needs that they would most like to see their local government officials do something about (Appendix B). In the written exercises, they mentioned a variety of responses—from teen pregnancy to improving the Covington Multicare Center to repairing roads and sidewalks. Five participants, however, mentioned parks and recreation as the biggest community issue that needed to be addressed.

Issues surrounding parks and recreation include:

- **Park additions:** “Skate parks.” “Baseball fields.” “Lights.”
- **Park cleanliness:** “Parks renovated and cleaned up.”
- **Park awareness:** “More awareness of parks.”

These three themes are found repeatedly throughout the group during specific discussions about parks and recreation in Covington.

C. Awareness of Parks and Recreation Activities in Covington

“We talk about getting stuff here and going somewhere else. My friends and I will start here and go to a lake somewhere else. I couldn’t really think of any Covington activities.”

“I really couldn’t think of anything that Covington does.”

“The city provides the skate park. It’s not that good but it’s a skate park.”

“I know of some organized sports like soccer or baseball that the Covington Community Center does.”

“I have a park in my neighborhood and I know if I go there my neighbors will be hanging out...I’m pretty sure there’s a neighborhood council and you pay a fee so they take care of it.”

“There’s Cedar Creek Park. A lot of people go there for running and stuff. That one’s scary though. It’s in the woods and there are no lights.”

“There are three neighborhood parks all one-half mile from my house. I can walk to all of them, but I think I’m only allowed to one of them.”

While not highly mentioned in written exercises, during discussions teens reported that they do not spend much of their leisure time in Covington. Several participants said, with agreement around the table, teens often leave Covington to hang out with friends, mentioning Kent Station as one of the most popular places. This is true of parks as well. The parks they go to most often are those located *outside* of Covington:

- *“No one really chills in Covington.”*
- *“There’s nothing really to do in Covington. You can go to the grocery store and that’s it. People go to QFC parking lot and that’s about it. Then they go to a party or something.”*
- *“There are not really activities. If you are at Kent Station you can go to a movie but if you’re here you’re here to eat.”*
- *“Everyone leaves [Covington] to hang out.”*

Lack of activities in Covington is not necessarily a complaint; as mentioned previously teens have and like the easy access to a variety of activities, but these are not in Covington. Teens are accustomed to

going elsewhere for activities; however, all agreed a place in Covington for community activities would be nice.

When asked what comes to mind when they thought of recreation activities in Covington (Appendix D), teens mentioned sports such as baseball, basketball, swimming, and skateboarding. Overall, they do not associate these activities with any organization.

This lack of association may be related to their low awareness of organizations providing parks and recreation activities in Covington. When asked which organizations provide recreation activities in Covington (Appendix E), one-half said they do not know of any, and multiple others made a best guess such as "the Covington version of Kent Parks" or "Covington Recreation. I don't even know if that is an organization."

Low awareness is also found in terms of specific services offered by the City of Covington for parks and recreation. One-half of participants said they do not think the City provides parks and recreation services (Appendix F).

When prompted in discussion about locations of parks in Covington, they said that parks in Covington are smaller ones located in neighborhoods. Most believe these parks are maintained by neighborhood associations.

D. Improving Parks & Recreation in Covington

"I like good ones [parks], with fields and lots of room to run around and do stuff, and with lots of benches."

"Lake Wilderness Park is almost my ideal park...there's a lake there and 3 baseball fields and a wooded area with the trails around it so you can ride your bike there."

"Openness and more baseball fields."

"Open fields and the stuff that little kids play on. That's pretty fun."

"I know in Meridian they have summer concerts. People can set up and play."

"A safer environment."

"They could be bigger and they need to be clean because the parks are pretty dirty."

"Events going on there for a variety of people that will go to parks...not just sports."

"Better advertising because sometimes we don't know what's going on and this way we would."

Teens were asked what they believe are the three most needed improvements to parks and recreation in Covington (Appendix G). Three themes stand out:

- **Bigger Parks:** "openness," "big fields," "lots of space to run around," "big parks"
- **Park Maintenance:** "Lights," "not being too dark," "there's a lot of trash"
- **Park Activities:** "music events," "community events," "the play things for kids," "baseball fields," "a bigger skate park in a big park," "BBQ areas," "benches to sit on"

Their ideal park is a place they can go to with a variety of things to do during the day *and* evening. They like the idea of having trails to run and ride bikes on, large fields for baseball, football, and soccer, basketball courts, and a skate park that is integrated into the park. Importantly, they want these areas to be lighted for added safety. They also think that parks can be used for more than sports-oriented recreation activities, with several who would like events such as Covington Days, or have music events and camps at parks.

Participants do not know where to get information about parks and recreation events and would like more advertising about parks and recreation in Covington. Ideas for sharing information with teens include announcements at their schools and hanging banners near high traffic areas.

E. Funding Parks & Recreation Improvements

Participants were asked to allocate a total of \$100 to a list of parks and recreation infrastructure improvements (Appendix H). The mean responses from the focus group and the community survey are illustrated in the table below.

Table 1
Allocation of \$100 on Covington Parks & Recreation Facilities

Parks and recreation facilities	Teen Focus Group (Mean)	Community Survey (Mean)
Build an indoor leisure pool with slides and water features	\$36.67	\$10.70
Build a community center for indoor recreation, including a gym, walking track, classes, and exercise room	\$16.11	\$17.60
Enhance the existing aquatic center	\$15.55	\$13.70
Purchase land for parks and open space	\$12.22	\$13.00
Build parks with playgrounds and picnic areas	\$11.67	\$15.00
Build sports fields	\$7.77	\$14.40
Build walking and biking trails	\$2.77	\$15.60
TOTAL	\$100.00	\$100.00

Source: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM), September and November 2009

Over one-half of teen funds (\$52.22) are allocated towards aquatics – \$36.67 for building an indoor leisure pool with slides and water features and \$15.55 for enhancing the existing aquatic center. In the community survey, a lower amount (\$24.40) is allocated to aquatics – \$13.70 for enhancing the existing aquatic center and \$10.70 to build an indoor leisure pool with slides and water features.

While teens allocated a majority of funds for aquatics, it is worth noting that aquatics are not top of mind for them. It was not mentioned unprompted in the group discussion as a top needed improvement or priority for parks and recreation in Covington, unlike a large community park with trails, pathways, sports fields, and play equipment.

Teens gave a combined \$34.43 toward outdoor parks and recreation, while residents in the community survey allocated \$58.00. The community center received comparable amounts from both teens (\$16.11) and residents (\$17.60).

F. Covington Aquatic Center

"It's not very family oriented. It's a lap pool."

"The water tastes really gross...it's salty from all the sweat."

"None of the showers work and the bathrooms are kind of gross."

"The bathrooms are kind of nasty and you go swimming and they have to go to the gross bathrooms. They could improve that."

"I think they should resurface the dock because it's aggregate gravel and cement stuff."

"[I would go] if it had something I couldn't get anywhere else like a sauna. Where else has a sauna?"

"I hate cold water and I know it's famously cold there."

During the group discussion and prompted about pool features, teens are enthusiastic about aquatic activities generally. Most of the teens are aware of the Covington Aquatic Center, and about half have visited the center. Teens want to see improvements to the Covington Aquatic Center to motivate them to use this facility more often, with size and cleanliness standing out as the top needed improvements.

Size of the aquatic center was perhaps the biggest complaint, even from one participant who uses the pool every day. *"I think they are trying to put too many things into a small pool. They have a waterslide, diving board, shallow area and deep area. It's so crowded and confusing. If you add another feature to the pool, it will be overwhelming."*

Another key issue is cleanliness – the perception is that bathrooms are not clean, and the pool water is “salty from sweat” and that it is too cold.

Participants were given a list of possible improvements to the aquatic center and were asked if each is a high, medium, or low priority. The following table illustrates results based on a weighted ranking where three points are given for the highest priority, two for a medium priority, and one for a low priority.

Table 2
Priorities for Aquatic Center Improvements

Aquatic Feature	High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
Springboard diving	21	4	0
Play equipment like slides, spray features, and inflatables	15	6	1
Shallow play area	15	4	2
Hot tub	12	6	2
Sauna	12	6	2
Child care	9	8	2
Lap pool	6	6	4
Instructional pool area	6	10	2
Warm therapy or hydrotherapy pool	3	10	3
Attached fitness room	3	10	3

Source: Davis, Hibbitts & Midghall, Inc. (DHM), September and November 2009

Teens rated aquatic play equipment highest, including springboard diving and slides, spray features, and inflatables, followed by a shallow water play area. Some expressed concern that the current pool is too small to add any additional features, citing examples of individuals not being able to use the diving board and slide simultaneously, or the need for additional lap lanes.

Some like the idea of adding a hot tub and sauna, two features also rated relatively high. The sauna is seen as a feature other pools do not offer and therefore may motivate some teens to visit the aquatic center.

The community survey rated a lap pool and instruction area highest among all aquatic features, however play features were important especially to those with children under the age of 18 in the household.

G. Final Messages

"Community events in parks would be a great idea, but I guess you would need a bigger park to do that."

"I think they should set a larger area apart...all parks seem to be so little so maybe they could make them bigger."

"Think of all the people who are going to use them and create a place where they would want to go."

"Give us a bigger place to chill and a lighted place to do so."

"Get more community involvement."

Final messages from teens mirror their comments throughout the discussion (Appendix K). They want to see bigger parks with a variety of activities, light for added safety, and more promotion of events and activities.

Each of the participants welcome and support the idea of a large community park. Teens encourage holding events at these larger parks including music concerts, summer and after school camps, and festivals. They are enthusiastic about adding a skate park that is large and well lighted. Overall, all of the teens in the focus group would like to see a large, community park in Covington.

**Appendix A
Demographics**

Current Grade/Last Grade Completed	
9 th Grade	1
10 th Grade	1
11 th Grade	4
12 th Grade	3

School	
Kent Lake Senior High School	4
Kentwood High School	3
RCHS	1
Kent Phoenix Academy	1

Gender	
Male	5
Female	4

Ethnicity	
White/Caucasian	8
Black/African-American	0
Spanish/Hispanic	1
Asian or Pacific Islander	0
Native American	0
Multiracial	0
Other	0

Plan After High School	
University	5
Community College	3
Join workforce/Get a job	1

Appendix B

List any community needs/issues that you'd like to see your local government officials do something about.

Responses

- Skate parks. Baseball fields. More food places.
- Teen pregnancy. Drug control at school with teens. Activities for teens to keep them out of trouble.
- I'm not sure what I would change—maybe more animal shelters.
- There isn't a whole lot that could change. I'm pretty happy with things now.
- Parks renovated and cleaned up.
- Pot holes. Bad streets. Flooded streets. More streetlights. Recycling bins. More benches. More sidewalks. Community activities.
- We need to add lighting to places like skate parks. Move the sport fields because those are the kinds of places a lot of kids hang out, and it's hard when you have to leave at 5pm because it's dark.
- I think the park at the Multicare Center should be improved because lots of people go there and the Multicare Center hosts lots of events like Covington Days. I also think we should add a lighted skate park.
- More community events and awareness of parks.

Appendix C
What do you like most about living in Covington?

Responses

- Friends. Race track is close by.
- It is a small community, but not too small. Easy to get around. More things to do in Covington lately—I can walk there. For the most part it is very friendly and they're family-oriented people here. Good schools!
- I love not being in like a super big city but still having plenty of stores and places to go to hang out are really close.
- I like how there isn't a gross over-population. It's not very often that I go somewhere and it is exorbitantly crowded. I also enjoy that there is a place like Covington Place where there are things to do and it's fairly close by.
- A lot of things nearby. Pool. A lot of restaurants. Recently more stores.
- I love the rural farm-like parts of Covington. Seeing the quiet, serene hills is so comforting to me. I love that I feel safe with the city being so small and not so built up. I wish we had a small-town feel, but overall I love the comfort level of our city.
- Covington is a city where there isn't too much to worry about as much as crime goes, but it isn't comparable to small town comfort where people know everyone else, and they have no worries. Also, the appearance is getting way better and also, it's in the middle of a lot of places.
- I like how there's not a lot of gang violence in Covington. I also like how peaceful it is and I also like how it's a very clean society. I also felt safe in Covington because I used to live in Tukwilla and there was a lot of gang violence and drugs. Plus everything feels really close.
- I like that it is a little smaller than some cities. There's easy access to a lot of businesses. I like that it's growing also.

Appendix D

What comes to mind when you think of recreation activities in Covington?

Responses

- None.
- I really can't think of anything. To me that would be ballet, or movies, or shopping, but it is really just business establishments
- Sports (fast pitch, soccer, volleyball, etc). Not clubs. College trips, museum trips with Kent teen council. Covington Driver's school.
- Sports.
- Skate park. Covington recreation sports teams. Sports for younger kids.
- Running. Swim. Sports in general.
- Skateboarding. Walking. Cycling. Basketball. Going to the gym. Baseball.
- Well, I think of cross country and swimming and baseball and soccer in Covington.
- Food. The pool.

Appendix E
Which organizations provide recreation activities in Covington?

Responses

- No.
- No idea.
- Nothing comes to mind at this moment.
- I don't know of any organizations for recreational activities in Covington.
- Kent parks. I've heard of Kent Teen Council but it was lost before I could use their services.
- I think KING swimming does, but I don't think there's any pool actually in Covington.
- Covington Recreation. I don't really even know if that is an organization. I just see sports teams kind of like Kent Parks, playing in the middle school by my house.
- The Covington version of Kent parks. I don't know what it's called. Jammin' organization. The high schools.
- Schools.

Appendix F**What specific services does the City of Covington provide for recreation?****Responses**

- None.
- I don't really know.
- I don't know what the city would supply for recreation activities—that's why they should put more signs. But I'm pretty sure they support baseball. The schools provide sports and Covington supplies a skate park.
- Can't think of any.
- I don't know of any specific service that Covington recreation provides.
- They help with driving schools and sports organizations.
- Some organized sports—soccer and baseball.
- There are lots of parks and swimming areas in the lakes. That's pretty much everything.
- They provide recreation leagues, referees, etc.

Appendix G

What are the three most needed improvements to parks and recreation in Covington?

Responses

- Covered areas. Clean. BBQ
- Covered areas. Events going on there—so it's for everyone. Seating.
- Lots of trails. Swings and equipment. Open fields.
- A lot of not so friendly people hang around parks sometimes, so maybe some better management of what goes on around parks.
- Larger. Cleaner. Variety of things to do.
- Need more parks. More community activities. More benches.
- Lights. Bigger size. More of them.
- There should be lots more events. They should add lights to all the parks. They should add more things to the parks as in slides, teeter totter, music stuff.
- Bigger parks with better access. Safer environment. Advertisement—more of it.

Appendix H

Participants presented list and asked to allocate funds to each using \$100 total dollars.

Parks and recreation facilities	Teen Focus Group (Mean)	Community Survey (Mean)
Build an indoor leisure pool with slides and water features	\$36.67	\$10.70
Build a community center for indoor recreation, including a gym, walking track, classes, and exercise room	\$16.11	\$17.60
Enhance the existing aquatic center	\$15.55	\$13.70
Purchase land for parks and open space	\$12.22	\$13.00
Build parks with playgrounds and picnic areas	\$11.67	\$15.00
Build sports fields	\$7.77	\$14.40
Build walking and biking trails	\$2.77	\$15.60
TOTAL	\$100.00	\$100.00

Appendix I

Are these a high priority, medium priority or a low priority for you and your household?

The following table illustrates results based on a weighted ranking where three points are given for the highest priority, two for a medium priority, and one for a low priority.

Aquatic Feature	High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
Springboard diving	21	4	0
Play equipment like slides, spray features, and inflatables	15	6	1
Shallow play area	15	4	2
Hot tub	12	6	2
Sauna	12	6	2
Child care	9	8	2
Lap pool	6	6	4
Instructional pool area	6	10	2
Warm therapy or hydrotherapy pool	3	10	3
Attached fitness room	3	10	3

Appendix K**What is the most important message you have for the City of Covington as they plan for recreation activities and programs to better serve youth in the community?****Responses:**

- A new big park with skate park with lights, baseball fields, basketball courts, soccer field, football field, and places to eat. BIG.
- Go to making parks fun. Safe. Attract all different people. Get us involved!
- I think that the city needs to set aside larger areas for recreational activities instead of trying to fit too much stuff into one area.
- I think the most important thing for the City of Covington is take into account while planning recreation activities for youth is to plan more events in parks like music events and sports.
- Make specific, free areas for citizens, larger parks, and larger pools. Parks specifically for Covington, not just neighborhood parks.
- Think of the people who use it and create a place where anyone and everyone can go and enjoy for years to come.
- Give us more room to chill, and give us lighted places to go to.
- I want them to think of the kid's safety and enjoyment of all the community, and I want them to think of how much it will impact the city.
- We need to become a more involved community. A place where it's safe to walk around, where we actually want to stay and spend time rather than go elsewhere, and to have fun. Just by making improvements on existing parks will make it better.

Appendix D. Public Meeting Summaries



Covington PROS Plan

Meeting Notes

Public Meeting #1
09/30/09
6:45-8:30 p.m.
City of Covington, City Hall

Overview:

Approximately 10 people attended the first Covington Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan open house. Display stations provided nine graphic and narrative information boards for residents to review, comment and discuss. The stations covered the following topic areas:

- Visioning for the Future
- Neighborhood & Community Parks
- Natural Areas & Public Plazas
- Trails
- Aquatics Facilities & Programs
- Recreation Programs

Comment forms were provided at the sign-in table. Remarks made by participants were both written and verbal. The information below is a draft summary of comments recorded during the open house.

Parks:

- Covington Elementary School is moving to a new site along 256th in the northwest quadrant of the city; it would be great to coordinate with Kent School District to provide neighborhood park elements at the school or near the new school.
- There needs to be better street side visibility into parks for security (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, CPTED).
- There is a need for public parks with playground equipment for multiple age groups (toddlers through youth).
 - Parks should also have picnic tables and restrooms.
- There is a need for dog parks.
- Jenkins Creek Park is closed, but the City website doesn't mention anything.
 - Don't hide the truth about the debris/vandalism. Admit it.
 - Will the PROS plan address the closure/maintenance issues?

COVINGTON PROS PLAN
OPEN HOUSE #1
MEETING SUMMARY

- Patrols are needed to increase safety and deter vandalism.
- What can the community/residents do to help reopen the park?
- How much will it cost to clean it up and provide additional patrols?
- Is there a way to make donations for the park/parks?
- Is there a website for donations? If not, one community member volunteered to design one. (*Parks staff has his contact information*)
- Residents are interested in volunteering to help.
- It's important to make the history of the area known.
 - There was a murder in the 1930s in Jenkins Creek Park.
 - Native Americans used to meet in the area near the creek to trade yearly.
 - The Swamp Oaks on the North Multi-Care property should be permanently protected.
 - Highlight the history of Jenkins creek Park through interpretive signage and activities.
 - There is a need for a Museum of Area History in Covington.

Trails:

- Covington needs more trails.
- Make the trails connect to the destinations people want to go.
- Provide linkages for regional trails from Black Diamond to Maple Valley to Covington to Soos Creek Trail.
- The SR18 overpass at 180th is a very narrow and unsafe for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- There is an important bicycle/pedestrian connection on 240th between the future community park and Soos Creek Trail.
- There needs to be migratory trails for wildlife.
- There is a small trail (possibly private) along Jenkins Creek Trail from 247th to 240th.
- The area east of 180th and south of 248th is prone to flooding and would be well suited as an open space/wetland/habitat area.
- Safety and security on trails is an issue, improve visibility onto/into the trails.
- The power line corridors could provide corridor for trails.

Vision:

- There is a need to acquire more property for future parks, trails and open space.
- The residents need to see the results of the plan, they need to see action.
- The plan needs to address the activities and programming needs of the senior population.
- The residents support fee-based program offerings.
- There is a need for a teen/activity center near the Cedar Heights Jr High School.
 - There is a large lot west of the school; the City should acquire it for a teen center.
 - There are a lot of drugs at the schools, as early as Jr High.
 - The kids need to be actively engaged in activities.
 - Possible programs for teens could include art classes, study room, educational videos, music classes and exercise classes.
 - Possible amenities could include a basketball court and swings.

COVINGTON PROS PLAN
OPEN HOUSE #1
MEETING SUMMARY

- Possible programs for adults/seniors could include cards, crafts, exercise classes, dance classes and garden club.
- Possible amenities for adults/seniors could include meeting rooms for men and women.
- There is a need for an indoor playground/play area for parents with toddlers.
 - Communities like Kent and Maple Valley offer 30 minute toddler activity classes with instructors for \$1 per child or \$3 per family.
 - Some good times to offer classes would be 9:30-11:30 am and 1:00-3:00 pm.
- Residents would like a pond or above ground pool for remote controlled model boats
 - It would be a great activity to engage high schoolers.
- There is a need for Pea Patches (community gardens)



Covington PROS Plan

Meeting Notes

Public Meeting #2
11/03/09
6:45-8:30 p.m.
City of Covington, City Hall

Overview:

The second PROS Plan open house was lightly attended, and over a dozen display stations provided graphic and narrative information boards for residents to review, comment and discuss. The stations covered the following topic areas:

- Summary results of telephone survey
- Site inventory assessments by facility type
- Trail system inventory
- Park and recreation priorities

Comment forms were provided at the sign-in table. The information below is a draft summary of comments recorded during the open house.

Parks:

- Parks need water, and they need lights to reduce drug activity and vandalism
- Private parks often include the yards of the adjacent homeowners and will not welcome "visitors" who might get hurt, requiring insurance companies to sue the HOA
- Money is better spent on larger parks with amenities; smaller parks are expensive to maintain
- People move here because of [HOA] parks, which are well-maintained
- Overall parks needs: parking, ADA compliance, restrooms, safe bike and pedestrian paths and routes
- I paid (in higher home price) for my park (Crofton) and I pay insurance for it. I pick up trash left by [illegal] "visitors" and try to re-assemble broken benches

Jenkins Creek

- Needs more attention: mowing, security/patrols, improvements, lighting
- Clear out brush and plant grass in lower area
- Offer an off-leash area to attract users and add more eyes on the park
- Host a festival in the park – in the upper meadow to attract more users

< Placeholder for Meeting #3

< Placeholder for Meeting #3

Appendix E. Stakeholder Summaries



**Covington PROS Plan
Stakeholder Interview Summary
Aquatic Center Users Group :: October 22, 2009**

Location: City Hall
Time: 4 – 5:45p

Ten users of the Aquatic Center attended the small group discussion. Most are involved with and participate in deep water exercise. After brief introductions and an overview of the PROS Plan and planning process, participants were asked for the reasons they use the Center which were noted as follows:

- water exercise/aerobics
- deep water
- lap swim
- general health
- swim lessons for kids
- hang out and be social
- to see friends
- it helps with MS
- joint/knee replacement therapy
- doctor sent me

While the group discussion was dynamic and touched upon numerous issues, the following summary places group comments by topic.

Regarding the facility & operations

Participants offered positive remarks about the appearance, general maintenance and upkeep of the Aquatic Center especially since the remodel; however, they addressed their concerns about the restrooms and changing areas. Specifically, they commented on the cold showers, rusty lockers and problems with toilets and sinks with stopped/clogged drains and/or broken or damaged handles and faucets. Also the hair dryers blow cold air and take too long to heat up, which wastes a lot of energy. They want the City to update these rooms and make it a priority.

Participants liked having the slide and octopus, which are good for open swims. They also mentioned that providing a child care facility would be useful, along with a hot tub and fitness room. Also and especially in the summer, the City needs better signage or direction for parents to use the family changing room. This will help keep little ones out of wrong gender bathrooms. Also, add a shower to the family changing room. The City should consider providing or offering access to belts for the deep water exercise classes and maybe add more equipment, such as slides or inflatables.

Participants felt the City offers good equipment and reasonable hours overall. Regarding pool hours, one participant voiced a comment that the City seems to under-serve the working adults; classes at 8pm are too late in the evening and the City should consider programming for early mornings midweek and on Saturday mornings. Access to the pool for working adults is especially bad in wintertime with the added usage by the high school. Also, there was the feeling that the facility was crowded on Mondays and Fridays.

Stakeholder Interview Summary**Aquatics Users**

Page 2 of 3

Another suggestion was to change the hours of specific programs in summer to alleviate crowding in the locker room (i.e., do water exercise at different time than lessons) and help moderate the noise of the swim lessons for attendees of the classes.

Regarding pool rentals, some participants voiced an opinion that few people like doing home parties and would rather take the kids somewhere for an event, such as a birthday. The City should look to other advertising opportunities to promote the availability of the pool for parties and rentals. According to Pat Patterson, pool rentals book up fairly well throughout the year. Also, people noted that the Halloween party was good (even though it is an event and not a third party rental).

Nearby pools that compete for user's attention include Kent Meridian and Lindbergh.

Regarding programming & staff

The group spent some time talking about programming (specifically deep water exercise) and instructors. Overall, they felt that the lessons are good, programs are well run and that the staff are good (as evidenced by staff retention).

They mentioned that the attributes of a good instructor are: provide routine for exercises, personality and knowledge. Overall, they feel that the City's instructors are good. They would like to have instructors get more training, and several participants shared that it was good when Kristin took a training inasmuch as she brought new information, ideas and routines to the class. They suggested that the City offer cross-training between instructors as a way to improve and share what each group does, what works well and what doesn't work with specific classes. They also want to have the opportunity for end of session evaluations on instructors to provide feedback and allow for growth and improvement. *Critiques of specific instructors are omitted from this summary.*

Pertaining to specific classes, some would like to see the City offer deep water classes earlier than 9:30 a.m. and that the City should work with the schools to look for opportunities to backfill the drown-proofing classes (4th grade) that were cut previously or provide other options for direct lessons. Also, the City should look at options for new classes, such as shallow water yoga, to draw new users. The City should offer diving classes again and explore options with other regional pools to offer it.

As another opportunity, the City should look at special swims days on scheduled school closures (i.e., teacher in-service days) to give parents an option for their kids. Also, the City could connect with local daycare providers (Children's World and La Petite Academy) for a group rate and group usage.

Variety in routines during classes is good; some users are not interested in having the same routine over and over. Others are not interested in being chastised for talking a little or connecting with friends, since part of the draw for the classes is the social aspect. Additionally when music is played, it is often loud and makes it hard to hear instructors because the acoustics are poor.

Other comments about programming included that the City should consider having activities or entertainment for younger kids, so parents can take lessons or swim. Also, they should consider setting time aside for tri-athletes who want to swim faster than is allowed during lap swims.

Stakeholder Interview Summary

Aquatics Users

Page 3 of 3

Regarding outreach and communications

When asked about the availability of information, some mentioned that the website information is hard to locate and that the information about the Center is too many levels deep and not intuitive to find. The City should look at options to make the web information more visible and accessible. Other mentioned that many people pick up programming materials at the pool.

The City should advertise to the non-city users in the Kent Reporter and Covington/Maple Valley Reporter. Also, it was mentioned that the city newsletter doesn't reach non-city users, which makes up about 60% of current users. Also, place flyers in the offices of local doctors, physical therapists and clinics. Other ways to promote the Center include hosting special events, offering a trial or complementary day to let people try out the pool, and publicizing when classes change (instructor or routine detail) to let people know.

The City should also look at options for coordinating with health insurance providers. For example, Premiera HMO pays for a part of the cost through their "wellness" program. Also, look at group health plans, Medicare advantage pro ("silver sneakers") and individual company wellness programs as ways to incentivize programs for new users.

Also, staff currently does not track "why" people don't come back after a class (i.e., after three missed sessions, the instructor should call to inquire). Since many classes are drop-in, it may be difficult for instructors to pay attention to who is not there, but they also lose the opportunity for follow up or explore issues about the class and ways to improve.

Other Comments

One participant voiced concern about identity theft and how the City captures an individual's birth date and name combinations in database, which might create a security threat for that individual if the database were breached or stolen. Pat Patterson mentioned that the City has a work-around for this issue by not collecting specific details.

Scott Thomas had mentioned that the current rates are from 2003/4 and are in need of an adjustment. Participants countered that the City should watch its pricing and keep it competitive with other providers. Scott also asked what the attractors to the Center are: location, price, program, facility better than other nearby pools (i.e., Kent Meridian, Des Moines). Participants said that location is key, but that price is also important. LA Fitness is competitive on price, but offers only lap swim and the water is colder.



**Covington PROS Plan
Stakeholder Interview Summary
Covington Economic Development Council :: October 22, 2009**

Attending: Hugh Kodama, Rick Oliveria, Jennifer Gilbert, David Lucavish, Steven Pand, Jeff Wagner, Loray Rainwater, Barry Anderson, Kevin Holland, Edwin J. Cook, Brian Pounder and City staff: Shalini Bansal, David Nemens, Scott Thomas, Pat Patterson

Location: City Hall

Time: 7:00 – 7:45p

A brief introduction of the PROS Plan was provided to the Council, and a series of questions were asked to stimulate discussion and feedback regarding parks, trails and recreation and their relationship to economic development. Additionally, copies of the Trust for Public Land report "*Measuring the Economic Value of a City Parks System*" were circulated.

Several members commented that the City should promote a pedestrian-friendly environment, with the town plaza as place for people to walk to and walk around within – where connections to trails exist and offer non-motorized transportation options. Another comment was that trails beget parks; more linkages relate to more usage overall. A critical mass of linked trails is needed to get more people out on the trails, and longer and better linkages across the trail system result in more overall users.

One member remarked that a high quality park or town plaza will attract high quality businesses to the city, and that a central plaza leads to and helps build the City's identity. With the design of the town plaza, the City may be able to adjust and re-position itself to attract residents wanting a different lifestyle, along with a different range of businesses that focus on health and are activity-oriented. References were made to REI-style outfitters, bicycle rental/repair shops, natural food stores and similar businesses. It was noted that businesses can relate to identity and community cohesion issues and that they may want to feel a part of community. The town plaza with events and activities, and possibly to a lesser degree trails, can be a civic element that businesses can be part of, help grow and gain business and other benefits from. Such facilities also open the potential for sponsorships, festivals and events that promote the broader community.

In the downtown area, the City should work with and rely on commercial businesses to contribute to, finance and install segments of trails to grow the overall system. The City could then fill gaps to complete specific segments and develop a linked system. Additionally, some members commented that the commercial businesses could fund the capital and aid in the on-going maintenance for trails. It was noted that while it is hard to finance projects in the current climate and that limited capital exists today for new projects, trails are cheaper than transportation concurrency mitigation and roadway expansion (referencing the road work along 272nd).

The discussion also touched on the needs on local employees, in that they also need access to recreation opportunities for stress reduction, better customer service and better health. Elements could include opportunities for walking or running, along with plaza space or seating areas for lunchtime picnics or breaks. In a similar vein, office parks also could play a role in helping to provide trails and recreation facilities.

Stakeholder Interview Summary

CEDC

Page 2 of 2

With regard to recreation facilities, one member voiced interest in having a center that can incorporate a gym, pool, fitness equipment and space for classes. Also it could be a place to provide programs and services for residents with disabilities, along with the potential for rental income from weddings or other events. The City should seek partnerships or relationships with YMCA, Boys & Girls Club, local churches, HOAs, other landowners and developers in consideration of a recreation center.

Regarding other potential partners, Pacific Raceway was identified, along with Puget Sound Energy and BPA, Weyerhaeuser and Comcast due to their local presence.

It was also noted that the City should recognize the private and non-profit contributions that flow into park and recreation system when talking about city budget and its capacity to serve residents. For example, city General Fund in the amount of \$30,000 has been paired with private money in support of the recreation passport program, and that the private contributions really expand residents' access to programs.



**Covington PROS Plan
Stakeholder Interview Summary
Health & Fitness Providers Group :: December 3, 2009**

Attending: George Stevens (LA Fitness), Anne Kertson (Pinnacle), Josh Lyons (Pinnacle), Derek Decater (Pinnacle), Pam Kramer (MultiCare), Sherri Olsen (MultiCare), Toby Mollett (Raise the Bar), Patty Swedberg (Raise the Bar), Scott Thomas (City of Covington), Pat Patterson (City of Covington)

Location: City Hall

Time: 4 – 6:00p

Scott Thomas welcomed the group and thanked them in advance for their participation in the health and fitness focus group discussion. Steve Duh (Alta) offered an overview of the PROS Plan to the group, highlighted the City's interest in seeking partnerships with local businesses to advance recreation options within Covington, and reinforced the relevance of health and wellness themes in regard to the broader PROS Plan update. Additionally, executive summaries of the following reports were circulated: *Play Matters* by KaBoom! and *Building "Generation Play": Addressing the Crisis of Inactivity Among America's Children* by Stanford University.

Health & Activity in Covington

George from LA Fitness mentioned that they recently celebrated their 1-year anniversary and also acquired Miekos. Their current membership count in Covington is approximately 5,500. For reference, he mentioned that Renton has about 10,000 members; Bellevue has 6,000, and Mill Creek has about 10,000. George also noted that Covington members are not the maintenance routine users and that they are generally more overweight and are suddenly aware of health and fitness.

Josh from Pinnacle noted that they serve residents from the Maple Valley and Covington area. He commented that he sees a difference in clients from Maple Valley, who are generally more fitness minded, have higher incomes and education, and have a broader understanding of the benefits of exercise.

Patty from Raise the Bar said that they offer programs specifically to more people of size and that recent trends in reality TV (i.e., *Biggest Loser*) have raised awareness about fitness and have spawned a resurgence in challenge-based programs to get people to be more active.

Overall, it was noted that activity breeds activity and that there is very little activity in Covington. These local providers see a role for the City in offering recreation, promoting events and providing accessible information about fitness opportunities throughout the community. Personal motivation is a key ingredient for healthy residents, but part of the way forward will rely on expanding the level of awareness about recreation opportunities.

George and Pam offered a common breakdown of the key groups in consideration of health promotion. Kids and young adults need life lessons about health and fitness; they need access to programs, events and spaces where they can learn play skills and step away from electronic entertainment. Adults are leading inactive lifestyles and need to be challenged to fitness. Seniors need strengthening exercises and

Stakeholder Interview Summary

Health/Fitness Group

Page 2 of 3

fall prevention programs. Overall the demographics are across the board, and no single demographic group needs more or less attention. Also, Pam noted that families traditionally look to cities for broad program offerings and that the City should consider expanding its role. Since there is a difference in service level between City and private programs, the group was not concerned about direct competition from the City.

Vision for the future

The group was excited about the potential of having more regularly scheduled activities for the community, to include summer programs and events, along with education courses, such as babysitting and bike safety. As the City considers offering more events, it should seek to share costs with private sponsors and develop a series of seasonal activities. As for a vision, the group wants to push Covington to be one of the healthiest cities in Washington.

As the City grows into more programming, it will need to establish a “brand” that people can trust, which includes being responsive to calls and emails and maintain a broader degree of consistency and continuity. Josh had asked what the City’s level of commitment to parks is, since his past experience is that it’s low (i.e., past budget cuts and department closure still hold in the minds of residents). There is a general sentiment of mistrust due to lack of past commitment, and that issue must be resolved before the City can regain credibility within the community. He also noted that any vital city has a downtown park; businesses come and go, but the park is forever. Overall the group stressed that the City should remain committed to the downtown park/plaza because it will provide the focus of community attention and facilitate activities.

Outreach & Branding

To broaden the concept of parks and recreation, the City should consider reframing its services around the notion of health, fitness and activity. At first glance, it might be hard for someone to think of fitness or wellness within the construct of parks and recreation. In developing new materials, the City should prepare visually attractive materials (print or electronic) that have consistency of graphic style and theme. Additionally, the web site should be designed with mobile internet users (Blackberry and iPhone) in mind. If the City decides to do direct mail or email blast, they should make it slick and maybe focus toward a quarterly e-newsletter geared toward local fitness.

Several brand models and tagline exist, such as *Get Moving* and *Exercise is Medicine*, that could relate to the City’s offerings. The City should piggyback on the national monthly health calendar, since every month has been named for a cause (i.e., October is breast cancer awareness month). Also, the City should look at Gig Harbor’s *Healthy Harbor* as an example of a successful, sponsor-based program that could help expand the Cruzin’ Covington passport program.

With regard to physical park sites, consider placing more wayfinding signage around town to help orient people to available parks. Also, street frontage for parklands is critical, since people need to see activity to feel a desire for it. Fitness stations in parks or along trails also might promote more usage.

The city should also consider acting as the local hub of information about recreation, programs, events and activities. This includes information about the benefits of active lifestyles, but also includes

Stakeholder Interview Summary
Health/Fitness Group

Page 3 of 3

information about high school sports, the Passport program and other general information. The Chamber might be a better promotional vehicle for a listing of specific businesses and service providers.

Cross marketing opportunities may present themselves as the City expands its understanding of the services offered in the community. For example, LA Fitness has a minimum age of 14 for members to work out and a minimum age of 17 to swim at their clubs; they do not offer swim lessons or family memberships. These limitations may be opportunities for the City to market its aquatic programs.

Partnership Opportunities

The City should consider reaching out to the following potential partners:

- Coalition for Healthy Communities
- Valley Medical
- Chiropractic Today
- Healthier food businesses, such as Jamba Juice, Subway

Also, the City should consider inviting groups or businesses to present to staff and/or commissions about local services, health trends and opportunities to cross-market programs. For example, LA Fitness offers a member appreciation day toward the end of each month where different vendors are invited to promote other fitness options; LA Fitness also accommodates special interest support groups (i.e., a Parkinson's group), which have grown over the year and provide an opportunity for these groups to discuss their needs.

Separately, the City's role as a partner on community events was briefly discussed. Specific to the parade route on Kent-Kangley, there have been past issues regarding the accommodations due to city issues, such as traffic control/management and safety. It was also mentioned that the 5K run was moving to the Kentwood area because the runners want better routes, but the preference would be to keep the start and finish in the downtown core. Another item was the planning for a 1 mile run preceding the tree lighting.

With regard to further outreach to providers, Patty volunteered to email her list and inquire about existing services and programs within Covington. This could help the City or the Chamber build a list of health and fitness-oriented, local businesses.



**Covington PROS Plan
Stakeholder Interview Summary
Sport Field Users Group :: October 22, 2009**

Attending: Wayne Jenson (Kent Youth Soccer), Dave Lutes (Kent School District), Mark Anderton (Kent Little League), Erik Schug (Covington Community Sports), Nichelle Price (Covington Community Sports), Aaron Nix (City of Black Diamond), Greg Brown (City of Maple Valley), Scott Thomas (City of Covington)
Location: City Hall
Time: 1 – 3:00p

Scott Thomas opened the group session with an overview of the PROS Plan and offered an update on the Covington Community Park design as it relates to sport fields. He mentioned that the park should be constructed in 2011 and fields playable in 2012. Also, Scott highlighted the new Covington elementary school property along 256th. This site might be able to provide a soccer and baseball overlay, and the City will work with Kent School District (KSD), as appropriate.

Aaron mentioned that Black Diamond has a lot of pending residential development that will likely get constructed over the coming 10 year period, and this will drive up the demand for parks and sport fields. Sawyer Woods Elementary has one baseball field for community use, and there is some usage of Kentlake High School. The City is considering a conceptual park plan for Lake Sawyer Regional Park and could see 4-5 fields located there, but they do not have the resources for the project at this time.

Greg highlighted the master planning work for Summit Park, which is a 23-acre site partially within the BPA corridor. The potential number of fields for this site is unknown at this time, but it could be up to six. The Maple Valley City Council has remarked that Summit Park is the best near-term location for additional sport fields to serve the community. The City hopes to start phase 1 in 2010 with some space available by 2011-2012. Phase 2 will likely require a voter-approved bond in 2011 and construction in 2013. The Donut Hole area of the city might be redeveloped, in which case, the City would like to reserve 15-20 acres for a park, if available.

Mark from Kent LL noted that the league leases facilities from KSD. With the state of the current economy, their player numbers were down about 25% this year; the decrease in the player numbers was not a result of an adjustment to their fee structure. Fees haven't changed, but fewer families are in a position to pay. KLL has 500 players (7-13 yr old) now, down from 800. Due to the lower enrollment, the league's need for fields has stabilized, and they are doing OK with what is available to them. Also the league leased fewer fields from King County, but they also leased from local churches. Covington Christian Church has 2 fields, but the league will lose access to one of these fields as a result of pending development of a portion of the church property. Mark also mentioned that King County is considering moth-balling the fields at Meridian High School, and that the league wants to have a 25-year lease with the county, so they can then apply for grants to improve fields. He also noted that the league wants access to and needs tournament fields.

Dave from KSD reminded the group that the school district fields are for the daytime needs of students first, before being made available to the community. He also said that now is a good time to start the

Stakeholder Interview Summary**Sport Fields Group**

Page 2 of 2

process to establish long-term lease agreements with KLL and KYSA. With tightening budgets, grounds upkeep becomes more difficult, and the school district will continue to seek to maximize efficiency and operations. Ideally, some of the grass fields could be upgraded to artificial turf, but that transition also has a long-term cost, since the turf fields only have a 10-15 lifespan and would need and capital will be needed to replace them. Regarding the King County site North Meridian, KSD has a cooperative agreement with the county for maintenance and has priority use of fields until 5pm. After that time and during the summer, they are available for community use. At Kentwood HS, KSD moved the soccer field to build the school and the fields are due for renovation.

Wayne talked about the pea patch (North Green River) that King County was moth-balling. On Jan 1, KYSA got a 30-yr lease agreement for the facility and will be responsible for the upkeep and maintenance, and about 10-12 acres may be available for fields. (Maintenance = \$) Overall, KYSA's approach is to enhance their existing fields first, then develop new fields second. Their maintenance costs continue to rise, and they are now paying \$30,000 per year, which translates to about \$14 per player. KYSA has had an 8% increase in registration this year and had to raise fees; they now serve approximately 1,700 youth. Their preferred field size is 120yds x 80yds, since it's the most flexible to accommodate the range of field sizes evenly and can also accommodate a baseball field in the corner to allow for overlay. He mentioned that they are looking at the Community Partners Grant (King County), and that they would also support a levy to transition fields to artificial turf. For soccer, lighted turf is critical.

Covington Community Sports has Fall flag football and soccer with about 800 kids. Spring soccer has 600, and Spring baseball has 600-700, with the season lasting for 6-7 weeks. CCS also has access to gyms for basketball and indoor soccer and baseball. Their field space is fine for now and have a little room to grow. CCS does want to work with KSD to upgrade some additional fields and possibly add lighting.

Also, youth sports represents economic development too; young referees are paid between \$16-50 per game per referee, and those dollars flow right back into the local economy. On that note, Kent Little League would like to hold tournaments and needs a minimum of 2 fields. Ryan Brunner has one, and then they would need to lease another. Tournaments generate income for the league and local area. With parents and teams staying between 4-6 nights, tournaments promote economic development through lodging and food services.

Considering the aggregate need for maintenance money, the group briefly discussed the concept of a voter levy, which could be a multi-jurisdictional levy or via a special district. The question of who would conduct the maintenance was raised, as was the question of which jurisdictions might participate. Field maintenance is currently managed by 8 entities: KLL, KYSA, KSD, CCS, Covington, Maple Valley, Black Diamond and King County.

It was also noted that other field demands exist for rugby, football and lacrosse that need to be considered as part of a larger package.

Appendix F. Maintenance & Operations Considerations

Park and Trail Design Considerations

The following is informational only and does not constitute specific requirements of the City on private developers. It is intended to offer direction and guidance toward the future design, development, re-development and maintenance of privately-operated park and trail facilities.

The following are consistent with the park development standards outlined in the PROS Plan and can provide guidance for negotiating facility development opportunities in situations when private entities propose park development in-lieu of payment or for other, alternative arrangements.

Neighborhood Park Design Considerations

Minimum Suggested Amenities

Amenity	Considerations
Playground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Minimum of 4,000 sq.ft. play area; ■ Equipment should be suitable for and developmentally-appropriate for toddlers and elementary school-aged children
Loop Walking Path	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Minimum 6' wide; ■ ADA-compliant surface to accessible elements (benches, tables, play area); ■ Pathway slope not to exceed 5% grade or no more than 8% for more than 30 lineal feet without switchbacks or railings;
Picnic Tables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Minimum of 2, with 1 meeting ADA-compliance as outlined by ADAAG for access, height, type, etc.
Benches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Minimum of 2, with 1 meeting ADA-compliance as outlined by ADAAG for access, height, type, etc.
Open turf area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide at least 15% of total lawn area with irrigation, preferably adjacent to the play area
Landscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide at least 2 shade trees near play area ■ New trees and shrubs should be irrigated for a minimum of 2 years until established
Bicycle Racks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Minimum of 2, with capacity to serve 4 bikes
Trash Receptacles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ minimum of 1

Additional, Acceptable Amenities

Amenity	Considerations
Picnic Shelter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Minimum of 400 sq.ft.;
Sport field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Practice level for youth soccer, T-ball, baseball and/or softball;
Sport Court	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ ½ court basketball court
Tennis Court	
Alternative recreation court	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Such as bocce ball, horseshoes, lawn bowling
Skate Spot	
Disc golf course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Minimum 9 baskets;
Sprayground	
Natural area	
Water feature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Such as a passive water-based amenity that provides a visual focal point, i.e. fountains, ponds, or waterfalls
Restroom	
Drinking fountain	
Utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Irrigation, Electricity, Water
Parking	

Trail Development Standards

Trails should be constructed according to City specifications. It is recommended that trail layout and surfacing materials be approved by the City and meet the following requirements:

- Trail width should be a minimum of 8 feet wide
- Surfacing should be appropriate to the location; paved asphalt or concrete is recommended for upland areas, and wood chip, crusher waste or boardwalks are appropriate in lowland, wet or sensitive areas (City codes shall apply)
- Hard-surfaced trails should comply with ADAAG guidelines for slope and cross-slope; soft-surfaced trails should include properly placed and designed water bars or other surface water management techniques to minimize run-off and erosion.
- Entry signage should be provided at trailheads or access points, and boundary signage should be placed, as appropriate, to demarcate sensitive edges or private property boundaries.
- Trash receptacles should be provided at trailheads

Maintenance and Operations Standards

General Standards

Grounds

- Grounds are mowed and trimmed.
- Park is free of litter, debris and hazards.

Walkways & Paths

- Walkways have a uniform surface and are level with the ground and free of trip hazards.
- Walkways are free of litter and debris.
- Walkways have unobstructed accessibility, i.e. free from low and protruding limbs, guide wires, etc.
- Walkways are neatly edged.
- Walkways are clear of weeds and grass growth in cracks and expansion joints.

Signage

- Park identification signs are secure and properly installed in a noticeable location.
- Handicap parking signs (as applicable) are secure, visible and to city code.
- Signs are clean, painted and free of protrusions.

Ornamental Plants & Landscaping

- Plants are healthy.
- Plant beds are free of litter, debris, and weeds.
- Plant selection is appropriate for season and area usage.

Playgrounds

Play Equipment

- Play equipment and surrounding play areas meet ASTM and National Playground Safety Institute standards.
- Play equipment and hardware is intact.
- Play equipment is free of graffiti.
- Age appropriateness for the play equipment is noted with proper signage.
- Shade structure is secure and free from tears, if applicable.

Surfacing

- Fall surface is clean, level and free of litter and debris.
- Fall surface meets ASTM and National Playground Safety Institute standards.
- Fall surface is well drained.

- Rubber cushion surfaces are free of holes and tears.
- Rubber cushion surfaces are secure to the base material and curbing.

Borders

- Playground borders are well defined and intact.
- Playground borders meet ASTM and National Playground Safety Institute standards.

Decks

- Planks are intact, smooth, structurally sound, free of splinters and have no cracks greater than 1/4 inch.
- Nails, bolts or screws are flush with the surface.
- Planks are level with no excessive warping.

Fixtures

Benches

- Slats are smooth and structurally sound.
- Hardware is intact and structurally sound.
- Nails, bolts or screws are flush with the surface.
- Seats and backing are smooth with no protrusions and have no exposed sharp edges or pointed corners.

Tables

- Tables are clean, free of rust, mildew and graffiti.
- Table hardware is intact.
- Table frames are intact and slats are properly secured.
- Table seats and tops are smooth with no protrusions and have no exposed sharp edges or pointed corners.

Trash Receptacles

- Receptacles are clean; Area around trash receptacles is clean and free of trash and debris.
- Wood receptacles are painted and free of damage or missing parts; hardware for wood receptacles is intact.
- Concrete receptacles are intact and free of cracks or damage.

Sport Courts

Surfacing

- Surface is smooth, level and well drained with no standing water.
- Surface is free of large cracks, holes and trip hazards.
- Surface is painted and striped as per court specifications.
- Worn painted surfaces do not exceed 20% of total court surface.

- Surface is free of litter, debris, gravel and graffiti.

Goals and Backboards

- Goals and backboards are level with hardware intact and painted as appropriate.
- Nylon nets are properly hung and are not torn or tattered.
- Support poles are secure in the ground and straight.

Restrooms

- Restrooms are clean, sanitary and properly stocked with paper products.
- Lights and ventilation systems are operational.
- Toilets, water faucets, stall doors and hand air dryers are operational.
- Restrooms are free of graffiti.
- Restroom doors are properly marked according to gender.
- Restrooms have clean trash receptacles.
- Restroom doors and locks are operational.
- Restrooms are in compliance with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Additional Resources

Consultant's Guide to Park Design and Development; Park and Recreation Department, City of San Diego, CA

<http://www.sandiego.gov/park-and-recreation/pdf/consultantguide.pdf>

Design Standards for Park and Trail Development (Specifications); Park and Recreation Department, City of Bellingham, WA

<http://www.cob.org/government/rules/guidelines/park-design-standards.aspx>

Accessible Recreation Facilities Guidelines - Access Board

<http://www.access-board.gov/news/rec-guides.htm>

Handbook for Public Playground Safety - National Product Safety Commission

<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/325.pdf>

Appendix G. Funding Options & Incentives

Local Funding Options

The city of Covington possesses a range of local funding tools that could be accessed for the benefit of growing, developing and maintaining its parks and recreations program. The sources listed below represent likely potential sources, but some also may be dedicated for numerous other local purposes which limit applicability and usage. Therefore, discussions with city leadership is critical to assess the political landscape to modify or expand the use of existing city revenue sources in favor of park and recreation programs.

Councilmanic Bonds

Councilmanic bonds may be sold by cities without public vote. The bonds, both principal and interest, are retired with payments from existing city revenue or new general tax revenue, such as additional sales tax or real estate excise tax. The state legislature has set a maximum debt limit for councilmanic bonds of 1½% of the value of taxable property in the city.

General Obligation Bond

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=84.52.056>

For the purposes of funding capital projects, such as land acquisitions or facility construction, cities and counties have the authority to borrow money by selling bonds. Voter-approved general obligation bonds may be sold only after receiving a 60 percent majority vote at a general or special election. If approved, an excess property tax is levied each year for the life of the bond to pay both principal and interest. Covington has a maximum debt limit for voter-approved bonds of 2½% of the value of taxable property in the city¹. Covington recently issued a pair of GO Bonds for multiple street projects. These bonds are due to expire in 2015 and 2027 and are currently serviced by REET and general revenue funds.

Excess Levy

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=84.52.052>

Washington law allows cities and counties, along with other specified junior taxing districts, to levy property taxes in excess of limitations imposed by statute when authorized by the voters. Levy approval requires 60 percent majority vote at a general or special election.

Regular Property Tax - Lid Lift

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=84.55.050>

Cities are authorized to impose ad valorem taxes upon real and personal property. A city's maximum levy rate for general purposes is \$3.375 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. Limitations on annual increases in tax collections, coupled with changes in property value, causes levy rates to rise or fall; however, in no case may they rise above statutory limits. Once the rate is established each year, it may not be raised without the approval of a majority of the voters. Receiving voter approval is known as a lid lift. A lid lift may be

¹ See limitations: <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=39.36.020>

permanent, or may be for a specific purpose and time period. At the present, Covington has \$0.4471 levy capacity per \$1000 at its current tax rate. At today's assessed valuation and if voters approved a lid lift to the maximum allowable rate, that existing levy capacity translates to approximately \$944,600 annually.

Sales Tax

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=82.14>

Washington law authorizes the governing bodies of cities and counties to impose sales and use taxes at a rate set by the statute to help "carry out essential county and municipal purposes." The authority is divided into two parts. Cities may impose by resolution or ordinance a sales and use tax at a rate of ½% on any taxable event within their jurisdictions. Cities may also impose an additional sales tax at a rate up to ½% on any taxable event within the city or county. In this case, the statute provides an electoral process for repealing the tax or altering the rate. The city of Covington currently imposes a total sales and use tax of 1%, which is directed toward the city's General Fund.

Impact Fees

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=82.02.050>

Impact fees are charges placed on new development as a condition of development approval to help pay for various public facilities the need for which is directly created by that new growth and development. Counties, cities, and towns may impose impact fees on residential and commercial "development activity" to help pay for certain public facility improvements, including parks, open space and recreation facilities. Funds received must be spent on approved capital projects within 6 years of collection. Covington municipal code (CMC 18.122) enables the collection of park impact fees, but the City does not currently assess them at this time.

Real Estate Excise Tax

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=82.46.010>

Washington law authorizes the governing bodies of counties and cities to impose excise taxes on the sale of real property within limits set by the statute. This authority may be divided into three parts relevant to park systems.

1. A city or county may impose a real estate excise tax (REET 1) on the sale of all real property in the city or unincorporated parts of the county, respectively, at a rate not to exceed ¼% of the selling price to fund "local capital improvements," including parks, playgrounds, swimming pools, water systems, bridges, sewers, etc. Also, the funds must be used "primarily for financing capital projects specified in a capital facilities plan element of a comprehensive plan . . . "
2. A city or county may impose a real estate excise tax on the sale of all real property in the city or unincorporated parts of the county, respectively, at a rate not to exceed ½%, in lieu of a ½% sales tax option authorized under state law. These funds are not restricted to capital projects. The statute provides for a repeal mechanism.
3. A city or county – in counties that are required to prepare comprehensive plans under the new Growth Management Act – are authorized to impose an additional

real estate excise tax (REET 2) on all real property sales in the city or unincorporated parts of the county, respectively, at a rate not to exceed ¼%. These funds must be used "solely for financing capital projects specified in a capital facilities plan element of a comprehensive plan."

Covington imposes both allowable REETs, and revenues generated by this tax are deposited into the City's Capital Investment Fund established under CMC 3.35.030. Since REET collections are directly tied to the frequency and valuation of real estate transactions, this funding source is widely variable with local real estate conditions.

Real Estate Excise Tax - Local Conservation Areas (King County)

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=82.46.070>

Boards of County Commissioners may impose, with majority voter approval, an excise tax on each sale of real property in the county at rate not to exceed 1% of the selling price for the purpose of acquiring and maintaining conservation areas. The authorizing legislation defines conservation areas as "land and water that has environmental, agricultural, aesthetic, cultural, scientific, historic, scenic, or low-intensity recreational value for existing and future generations..." These areas include "open spaces, wetlands, marshes, aquifer recharge areas, shoreline areas, natural areas, and other lands and waters that are important to preserve flora and fauna." King County does not currently assess a Conservation REET.

Conservation Futures (King County)

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=84.34>

The Conservation Futures levy is provided for in Chapter 84.34 of the Revised Code of Washington. King County imposes a Conservation Futures levy at a rate of \$0.0625 per \$1,000 (6 ¼%) assessed value for the purpose of acquiring open space lands, including green spaces, greenbelts, wildlife habitat and trail rights-of-way proposed for preservation for public use by either the county or the cities within the county. General open space criteria are listed in KCC Section 26.12.025 and are similar to the public benefit rating system identified in the Current Use Taxation program operated by King County. Funds are allocated annually, and cities within the county, citizen groups and citizens may apply for funds through the county's process. The 2009 King County budget proposes expenditures in excess of \$18 million for conservation projects throughout the county.

Federal & State Grants and Conservation Programs

Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program

National Park Service

The Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, also known as the Rivers & Trails Program or RTCA, is a community resource administered by the National Park Service and federal government agencies so they can conserve rivers, preserve open space and develop trails and greenways. The RTCA program implements the natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation mission of NPS in communities across America.
<http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/rtca/>.

Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Grants

National Park Service

The Urban Park and Recreation Recovery (UPARR) program was established in November 1978 to provide matching grants and technical assistance to economically distressed urban communities for rehabilitation of critically needed recreation facilities. Only cities and urban counties meeting established criteria are eligible for assistance. Three grant categories are available: rehabilitation (30% local match requirement), innovation (30% local match requirement), and planning (50% local match requirement). This grant program has been unfunded by Congress since 2002, but recent deliberations by Congress in late 2009 may facilitate renewed program funding in the near future.

Community Development Block Grants

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

These funds are intended to develop viable urban communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment, and by expanding economic opportunities, principally for low and moderate income persons. King County administers CDBG funds on behalf of the King County CDBG Consortium. The Consortium is established under interlocal cooperation agreements between the County and 34 cities and towns and has a Joint Recommendations Committee to advise King County on CDBG funding and program guidelines decisions. CDBG funds in the past that we've used toward our human services programs. Covington has accessed CDBG funds in the recent past and has directed them toward human services programs and a small homeowner repair program. The City does not currently have a policy directing the use of CDBG funds.

National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council (NUCFAC) Grant

US Forest Service

The National Urban and Community Advisory Council has overhauled their criteria for the US Forest Service's Urban and Community Forestry challenge cost share grant program for 2009. Grants will be solicited in two categories: innovation grants and best practices grants. As with the previous grant program, a 50% match is required from all successful applicants of non-federal funds, in-kind services and/or materials. <http://www.treelink.org/nucfac/>.

North American Wetlands Conservation Act Grants Program

US Fish & Wildlife Service

The North American Wetlands Conservation Act of 1989 provides matching grants to organizations and individuals who have developed partnerships to carry out wetland conservation projects in the United States, Canada, and Mexico for the benefit of wetlands-associated migratory birds and other wildlife. Two competitive grants programs exist (Standard and a Small Grants Program) and require that grant requests be matched by partner contributions at no less than a 1-to-1 ratio. Funds from U.S. Federal sources may contribute towards a project, but are not eligible as match. <http://www.fws.gov/birdhabitat/Grants/NAWCA/index.shtml>.

The Standard Grants Program supports projects in Canada, the United States, and Mexico that involve long-term protection, restoration, and/or enhancement of wetlands and associated uplands habitats. In Mexico, partners may also conduct projects involving technical training, environmental education and outreach, organizational infrastructure development, and sustainable-use studies.

The Small Grants Program operates only in the United States; it supports the same type of projects and adheres to the same selection criteria and administrative guidelines as the U.S. Standard Grants Program. However, project activities are usually smaller in scope and involve fewer project dollars. Grant requests may not exceed \$75,000, and funding priority is given to grantees or partners new to the Act's Grants Program.

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

www.nrcs.usda.gov/PROGRAMS/wrp/

The WRP provides landowners the opportunity to preserve, enhance and restore wetlands and associated uplands. The program is voluntary and provides three enrollment options: permanent easements, 30-year easements, and 10-year restoration cost-share agreements. In all cases, landowners retain the underlying ownership in the property and management responsibility. Land uses may be allowed that are compatible with the program goal of protecting and restoring the wetlands and associated uplands. The NRCS manages the program and may provide technical assistance.

Jobs for the Environment (JFE)

Washington State Department of Natural Resources

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/hab/jfepage.htm>

The JFE program was created by the state Legislature in 1993. The program promotes the long-term, stable employment of dislocated natural resource workers in the performance of watershed restoration activities. The program provides minimum funding commitments for salaries and benefits for displaced workers, and funding is also available for training. Since its inception, the program has completed many in-stream, riparian, and upland restoration projects. Entities eligible to apply for funding include state and local governments, tribes, and nonprofit organizations. Funding proposals will focus on limiting factors and recovery strategies within all or a portion of a Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA). Specific projects will then be identified, prepared, and approved for implementation over the life of the grant agreement.

Forest Legacy Program

Washington State Department of Natural Resources

This program provides funds to acquire permanent conservation easements on private forestlands that are at risk of being converted to non-forest uses such as residential or commercial development. Congress established the program in 1990, and DNR is the lead state agency for the program in Washington State. The program is intended to preserve "working forests," where forestlands are managed for the production of forest products and where traditional forest uses are encouraged. These uses will include both commodity

production and non-commodity values such as healthy riparian areas, important scenic, aesthetic, cultural, fish, wildlife and recreation resources, and other ecological values. Historically, the program focus has been on the I-90 Highway Corridor east of Puget Sound within the Mountains-to-Sound Greenway area. This program may be applicable to properties within the unincorporated urban area with working forest lots.

Recreation and Conservation Office Grant Programs

Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office

www.rco.wa.gov

The Recreation and Conservation Office (formerly the Interagency Committee for Outdoor Recreation (IAC)) was created in 1964 as part of the Marine Recreation Land Act. The RCO grants money to state and local agencies, generally on a matching basis, to acquire, develop, and enhance wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation properties. Some money is also distributed for planning grants. RCO grant programs utilize funds from various sources. Historically, these have included the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, state bonds, Initiative 215 monies (derived from unreclaimed marine fuel taxes), off-road vehicle funds, Youth Athletic Facilities Account and the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program.

Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA)

This program, managed through the RCO, provides matching grants to state and local agencies to protect and enhance salmon habitat and to provide public access and recreation opportunities on aquatic lands. In 1998, DNR refocused the ALEA program to emphasize salmon habitat preservation and enhancement. However, the program is still open to traditional water access proposals. Any project must be located on navigable portions of waterways. ALEA funds are derived from the leasing of state-owned aquatic lands and from the sale of harvest rights for shellfish and other aquatic resources.

Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP)

The RCO is a state office that allocates funds to local and state agencies for the acquisition and development of wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation properties. Funding sources managed by the RCO include the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program. The WWRP is divided into Habitat Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Accounts; these are further divided into several project categories. Cities, counties and other local sponsors may apply for funding in urban wildlife habitat, local parks, trails and water access categories. Funds for local agencies are awarded on a matching basis. Grant applications are evaluated once each year, and the State Legislature must authorize funding for the WWRP project lists.

Land and Water Conservation Fund

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) provides grants to buy land and develop public outdoor facilities, including parks, trails and wildlife lands. Grant recipients must provide at least 50% matching funds in either cash or in-kind contributions. Grant program revenue is from a portion of Federal revenue derived from sale or lease of off-shore oil and gas resources.

National Recreational Trails Program

The National Recreational Trails Program (NRTP) provides funds to maintain trails and facilities that provide a backcountry experience for a range of activities including hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, motorcycling, and snowmobiling. Eligible projects include the maintenance and re-routing of recreational trails, development of trail-side and trail-head facilities, and operation of environmental education and trail safety programs. A local match of 20% is required. This program is funded through Federal gasoline taxes attributed to recreational non-highway uses.

Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF) Program

The YAF provides grants to develop, equip, maintain, and improve youth and community athletic facilities. Cities, counties, and qualified non-profit organizations may apply for funding, and grant recipients must provide at least 50% matching funds in either cash or in-kind contributions.

STP/CMAQ Regional Competition

Puget Sound Regional Council

<http://psrc.org/transportation/tip/selection/>

Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds are considered the most "flexible" funding source provided through the federal Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA-LU). Many types of projects are eligible, including transit, carpool/vanpool, bicycle/pedestrian, safety, traffic monitoring/management, and planning projects, along with the more traditional road and bridge projects. The purpose of the Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) program is to fund transportation projects or programs that will contribute to attainment or maintenance of the national ambient air quality standards for ozone, carbon monoxide and particulate matter. The two goals of improving air quality and relieving congestion were strengthened under SAFETEA-LU by a new provision establishing priority consideration for cost-effective emission reduction and congestion mitigation activities when using CMAQ funding. The King County Growth Management Planning Council serves as the countywide board in the allocation of some federal transportation grant funds to projects within King County, through the Puget Sound Regional Council.

Grant Exchange

King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks

<http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/pi/grants.htm>

The Grant Exchange is a clearinghouse of grant and technical assistance programs offered by the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks with the goals of protecting and enhancing the environment, increasing community stewardship, and providing expertise and consultation to projects. Grants and technical support are an important way in which King County increases opportunities for community stewardship of natural resources. These funds are leveraged by developing and strengthening partnerships with community organizations and local governments. On average, every dollar invested through grants is matched by three dollars in cash and in-kind contributions.

Wild Places in City Spaces

<http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/pi/grant-exchange/wildplaces.htm>

Wild Places in City Spaces provides grants up to \$10,000 to volunteer organizations, community groups and government agencies for projects reforesting urban areas and restoring habitat within the urban growth area of King County. Funds are available under the Urban Reforestation and Habitat Restoration Grants Program. Grants support projects to reforest urban areas, remove invasive non-native plant species or provide wildlife habitats.

Natural Resource Stewardship Network

<http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/pi/grant-exchange/NRSN.htm>

The Natural Resource Stewardship Network assists urban forestry and watershed stewardship projects and provides grants and technical assistance to projects that involve communities and youth in improving neighborhood green spaces and forests. Grants of up to \$20,000 are available for projects within the urban growth area of King County that enhance, protect and manage urban forest, soil and water resources and will reimburse up to 50% of labor and materials costs. Inner-city and low income communities receive priority for support. Funds are provided by the King County Forestry Program and the King Conservation District.

WaterWorks Grants

<http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/pi/grant-exchange/waterworks.htm>

Individual grants up to \$50,000 are available for community projects that protect or improve watersheds, streams, rivers, lakes, wetlands and tidewater. Projects must have a demonstrable positive impact on the waters of King County and provide opportunities for stewardship. A minimum of 10 percent cash match is required for awards more than \$2,500.

Other Methods & Funding Sources

Metropolitan Park District

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=35.61>

Metropolitan park districts may be formed for the purposes of management, control, improvement, maintenance and acquisition of parks, parkways and boulevards. In addition to acquiring and managing their own lands, metropolitan districts may accept and manage park and recreation lands and equipment turned over by any city within the district or by the county. Formation of a metropolitan park district may be initiated in cities of five thousand population or more by city council ordinance, or by petition, and requires majority approval by voters for creation.

Park and Recreation District

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=36.69>

Park and recreation districts may be formed for the purposes of providing leisure-time activities and recreation facilities and must be initiated by petition of at least 15% percent of the registered voters within the proposed district. Upon completion of the petition process and review by county commissioners, a proposition for district formation and election of five district commissioners is submitted to the voters of the proposed district at the next general election. Once formed, park and recreation districts retain the authority to propose a regular property tax levy, annual excess property tax levies and general obligation bonds. All three require 60% percent voter approval and 40% percent voter turnout. With voter approval, the district may levy a regular property tax not to exceed sixty cents per thousand dollars of assessed value for up to six consecutive years.

Public Facilities District

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=35.57>

Public facilities districts may be formed to develop, redevelop, own and operate regional centers, such as convention, conference or special event centers that serve a regional population and cost at least \$10 million. A public facilities district may be created by the legislative authority of any town or city in a county with a population of less than one million or by agreement of the legislative authorities of contiguous towns or cities in a county or counties with less than one million population. The district must have boundaries coextensive with the boundaries of the town, city or group of towns and cities that create the district. PFDs governed by a five-member board appointed by the city legislative authority, or by a seven-member board appointed by the combined cities and towns. They may also charge a tax of not more than one cent on twenty cents on admissions charges to the regional center and a tax of not more than ten percent on parking charges at facilities owned or leased as part of a regional center. The district may also sell general obligation bonds and revenue bonds for authorized purposes. Voter approval requires sixty percent majority.

Business Sponsorships/Donations

Business sponsorships for programs may be available throughout the year. In-kind contributions are often received, including food, door prizes and equipment/material.

Interagency Agreements

State law provides for interagency cooperative efforts between units of government. Joint acquisition, development and/or use of park and open space facilities may be provided between Parks, Public Works and utility providers.

Private Grants, Donations & Gifts

Many trusts and private foundations provide funding for park, recreation and open space projects. Grants from these sources are typically allocated through a competitive application process and vary dramatically in size based on the financial resources and funding criteria of the organization. Philanthropic giving is another source of project funding. Efforts in this area may involve cash gifts and include donations through other mechanisms such as wills or

insurance policies. Community fund raising efforts can also support park, recreation or open space facilities and projects.

National Tree Trust: Tree Seedling Grant Program

Through the National Tree Trust's Community Tree Planting program, municipalities, schools and non-profits can apply for tree seedlings to be planted on public property with the help of volunteers.

National Tree Trust: Partnership Enhancement Monetary Grant

This program is a partnership between the National Tree Trust and qualifying 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organizations. Its purpose is to promote public awareness and a spirit of volunteerism in support of tree planting, maintenance, management, protection and cultivation projects in rural areas, and communities in urban areas throughout the United States. All grant funds must be matched equally (50%) by the applicant with non-federal funds.

American Forests: Global ReLeaf Grant

The Global ReLeaf grant program provides private dollars to support local reforestation efforts and help match other funding sources. American Forests raises a dollar for every tree planted with Global ReLeaf. The dollars fund the reforestation projects. Competitive grant requests must maximize the use of total project funds per tree planted. Grants are available to support rural seedling projects restoring damaged forest ecosystems. Further information regarding Global ReLeaf Grants including application forms and criteria can be found at: www.americanforests.org/global_releaf/grants/

Acquisition Tools & Methods

Direct Purchase Methods

Market Value Purchase

Through a written purchase and sale agreement, the city purchases land at the present market value based on an independent appraisal. Timing, payment of real estate taxes and other contingencies are negotiable.

Partial Value Purchase (or Bargain Sale)

In a bargain sale, the landowner agrees to sell for less than the property's fair market value. A landowner's decision to proceed with a bargain sale is unique and personal; landowners with a strong sense of civic pride, long community history or concerns about capital gains are possible candidates for this approach. In addition to cash proceeds upon closing, the landowner may be entitled to a charitable income tax deduction based on the difference between the land's fair market value and its sale price.

Life Estates & Bequests

In the event a landowner wishes to remain on the property for a long period of time or until death, several variations on a sale agreement exist. In a life estate agreement, the landowner may continue to live on the land by donating a remainder interest and

retaining a “reserved life estate.” Specifically, the landowner donates or sells the property to the city, but reserves the right for the seller or any other named person to continue to live on and use the property. When the owner or other specified person dies or releases his/her life interest, full title and control over the property will be transferred to the city. By donating a remainder interest, the landowner may be eligible for a tax deduction when the gift is made. In a bequest, the landowner designates in a will or trust document that the property is to be transferred to the city upon death. While a life estate offers the city some degree of title control during the life of the landowner, a bequest does not. Unless the intent to bequest is disclosed to and known by the city in advance, no guarantees exist with regard to the condition of the property upon transfer or to any liabilities that may exist.

Option to Purchase Agreement

This is a binding contract between a landowner and the city that would only apply according to the conditions of the option and limits the seller’s power to revoke an offer. Once in place and signed, the Option Agreement may be triggered at a future, specified date or upon the completion of designated conditions. Option Agreements can be made for any time duration and can include all of the language pertinent to closing a property sale.

Right of First Refusal

In this agreement, the landowner grants the city the first chance to purchase the property once the landowner wishes to sell. The agreement does not establish the sale price for the property, and the landowner is free to refuse to sell it for the price offered by the city. This is the weakest form of agreement between an owner and a prospective buyer.

Conservation and/or Access Easements

Through a conservation easement, a landowner voluntarily agrees to sell or donate certain rights associated with his or her property (often the right to subdivide or develop), and a private organization or public agency agrees to hold the right to enforce the landowner's promise not to exercise those rights. In essence, the rights are forfeited and no longer exist. This is a legal agreement between the landowner and the city that permanently limits uses of the land in order to conserve a portion of the property for public use or protection. The landowner still owns the property, but the use of the land is restricted. Conservation easements may result in an income tax deduction and reduced property taxes and estate taxes. Typically, this approach is used to provide trail corridors where only a small portion of the land is needed or for the strategic protection of natural resources and habitat. Through a written purchase and sale agreement, the city purchases land at the present market value based on an independent appraisal. Timing, payment of real estate taxes and other contingencies are negotiable.

Landowner Incentive Measures

Density Bonuses

Density bonuses are a planning tool used to encourage a variety of public land use objectives, usually in urban areas. They offer the incentive of being able to develop at densities beyond current regulations in one area, in return for concessions in another.

Density bonuses are applied to a single parcel or development. An example is allowing developers of multi-family units to build at higher densities if they provide a certain number of low-income units or public open space. For density bonuses to work, market forces must support densities at a higher level than current regulations.

Transfer of Development Rights

The transfer of development rights (TDR) is an incentive-based planning tool that allows land owners to trade the right to develop property to its fullest extent in one area for the right to develop beyond existing regulations in another area. Local governments may establish the specific areas in which development may be limited or restricted and the areas in which development beyond regulation may be allowed. Usually, but not always, the "sending" and "receiving" property are under common ownership. Some programs allow for different ownership, which, in effect, establishes a market for development rights to be bought and sold.

IRC 1031 Exchange

If the landowner owns business or investment property, an IRC Section 1031 Exchange can facilitate the exchange of like-kind property solely for business or investment purposes. No capital gain or loss is recognized under Internal Revenue Code Section 1031 (see www.irc.gov for more details).

Other Land Protection Options

Land Trusts & Conservancies

Land trusts are private non-profit organizations that acquire and protect special open spaces and are traditionally not associated with any government agency. The Cascade Land Conservancy is the local land trust serving the Covington area, and their efforts have led to the conservation of more than 158,000 acres of forests, farms, shorelines, parks and natural areas in the region (<http://www.cascadeland.org>). Other national organizations with local representation include the Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Land and the Wetlands Conservancy.

Regulatory Measures

A variety of regulatory measures are available to local agencies and jurisdictions. Available programs and regulations include: Critical Areas Ordinance, Covington; State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA); Shorelines Management Program; and Hydraulic Code, Washington State Department of Fisheries and Department of Wildlife.

Public/Private Utility Corridors

Utility corridors can be managed to maximize protection or enhancement of open space lands. Utilities maintain corridors for provision of services such as electricity, gas, oil, and rail travel. Some utility companies have cooperated with local governments for development of public programs such as parks and trails within utility corridors. Several sections of public trail exist within powerline corridors in Covington.

This page is intentionally left blank.

Appendix H. Media Materials



MEDIA INFORMATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – September 15, 2009

Media Contact: Karla Slate, Community Relations Coordinator
City of Covington
253-638-1110, Ext. 2234
206-423-3709 Cell
kslate@ci.covington.wa.us

COMMUNITY MEETING SEEKS PUBLIC INPUT FOR PARKS AND RECREATION PLANNING

Residents are asked to voice ideas, vision for parks plan update

COVINGTON, WA – The Parks and Recreation Department has announced it will sponsor a community meeting at 6:45 p.m. on September 30, 2009 in the Community Room at Covington City Hall. Residents of all ages are invited to attend and voice their opinions and ideas for the future direction of Covington's parks, trails and recreation system.

The informal gathering will provide critical input that will be used to update the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan previously adopted by the City in 2003. This is the first of three community meetings that will be held as part of the planning process. The second meeting scheduled for November fourth will offer citizens the opportunity to review survey results and the third community meeting scheduled for February third will offer an opportunity to comment on a draft plan.

The updated plan will include a review of current conditions and recommend specific capital projects based on goals and priorities. These will be determined largely by public comment. Final review and adoption of the plan is scheduled for May 2010.

"The meeting on September 30 will focus on the 'visioning' element of the plan," said Scott Thomas, Director of Covington's Parks and Recreation Department. "This means we want people to tell us how the city can best meet the recreational needs of individuals and families in the years to come." Participants will be asked to comment on the city's opportunities and challenges for park space and aquatics programming, along with other services such as recreation programs.

"This plan will be the road map for providing high-quality, community-driven parks, trails, open space and recreation programs throughout Covington for the

next six to 10 years," said Thomas. "It is essential to know what local concerns must be addressed in any strategies that are proposed for adoption. The more we can learn from citizens, the better."

While residents of Covington are expected to provide key input, visitors who use the city's parks, trails or aquatics center are also invited to attend the meeting. The community meeting on September 30 will last for approximately two hours and light refreshments will be served. The Covington City Hall Community Room is located at 16720 SE 271st Street.

Additional project information is available on the city of Covington's web site, which can be accessed at <http://www.ci.covington.wa.us>. If you have questions or comments about the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan update or the community meeting at the City Hall Community Room, please contact Pat Patterson at 253-638-1110 (ext. 2223) or e-mail ppatterson@ci.covington.wa.us.

#####

Covington Parks and Recreation Department to host community meeting -... <http://www.printthis.clickability.com/pt/cpt?action=cpt&title=Covington...>

PNWLocalNews.com

 PRINT THIS

Powered by  Clickability

 Click to Print

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

related stories

Covington Reporter

- [Covington's Parks and Recreation community meeting planned for Nov. 3](#)
- [Covington Parks and Recreation Department wins awards for programs](#)
- [Covington hires parks chief](#)
- [Maple Valley Parks & Recreation hosts soccer challenge](#)
- [Covington Community Calendar](#)

South King County

- None at this time.

Community blogs

- [Reminiscences](#)
Memories of the Covington area and changes that have occurred as recalled by a native of the area for over forty years.

Covington Parks and Recreation Department to host community meeting

Sep 15 2009

Covington's Parks and Recreation Department will host a community meeting at 6:45 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 30, in the Community Room at Covington City Hall.

Residents are invited to attend and offer their opinions and ideas for the future direction of Covington's parks, trails and recreation system.

The informal gathering will provide critical input that will be used to update the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan previously adopted by the city in 2003.

This is the first of three community meetings during the planning process.

The second meeting, scheduled for Nov. 4, will offer citizens the opportunity to review survey results and the third slated for Feb.3 will allow for comment on a draft plan.

The updated plan will include a review of current conditions and recommend specific capital projects based on goals and priorities primarily determined by public input.

Final review and adoption of the plan is scheduled for May 2010.

"The meeting on Sept. 30 will focus on the visioning element of the plan," said Scott Thomas, parks and recreation director for the city, in a statement. "This means we want people to tell us how the city can best meet the recreational needs of individuals and families in the years to come."

Participants will be asked to comment on the city's opportunities and challenges for park space and aquatics programming, along with other services such as recreation programs.

"This plan will be the road map for providing high-quality, community-driven parks, trails, open space and recreation programs throughout Covington for the next six to 10 years," Thomas said. "It is essential to know what local concerns must be addressed in any strategies that are proposed for adoption. The more we can learn from citizens, the better."

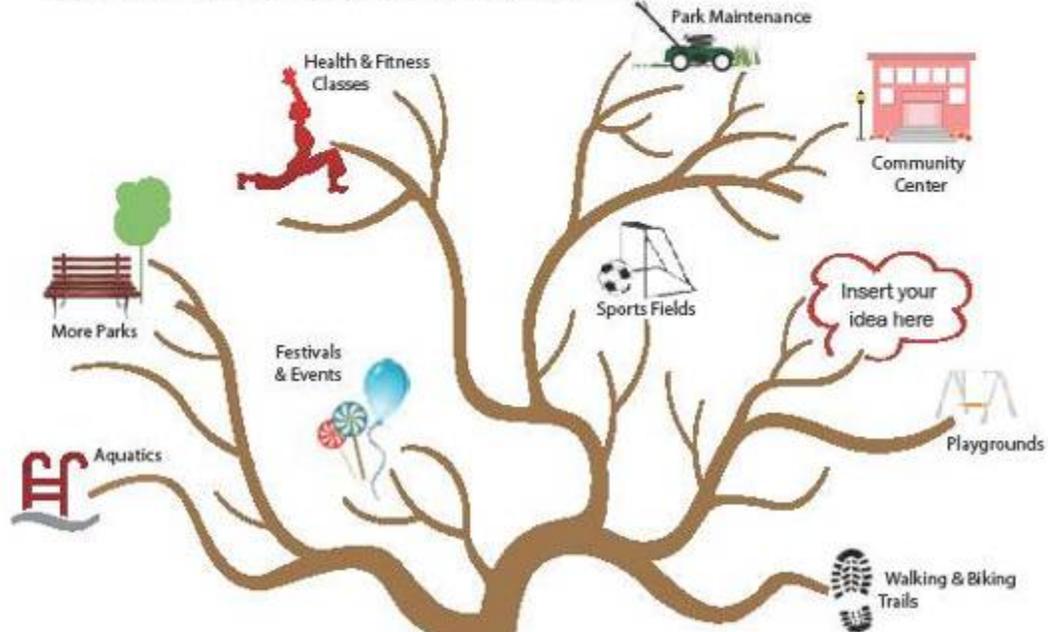
While residents of Covington can provide input, visitors who use the city's parks, trails or aquatics center are also invited to attend.

Additional project information is available on the city's Web site, which can be accessed at www.ci.covington.wa.us.

To offer input or get more information contact Pat Patterson at 253-638-1110 (ext. 2223) or send e-mail to ppatterson@ci.covington.wa.us.

Help complete our tree.

We are growing ideas for the future of Covington's Parks, Recreation and Open Space and we need your help.



PROS Plan Community Meeting #2

TUESDAY, NOV 3, 2009
6:45 PM TO 8:30 PM

WHO
Residents in and near the city, business owners, parks and recreation users, and those with an interest in the future of Covington's parks and recreation programs.

WHERE
Located in the Community Room at City Hall, 16720 SE 271st St.

TOPIC
We invite you to help shape the Parks, Recreation and Open Space plan. The PROS Plan is being updated to map out the next six to 10 years of park and recreation development within Covington.

For more information contact Pat Patterson, Recreation and Aquatics Manager, at (253) 638-1110 x2223 or email at ppatterson@ci.covington.wa.us



City of Covington
16720 SE 271st St.
(253) 638-1110
www.ci.covington.wa.us

pros plan
parksand recreation 



MEDIA INFORMATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – October 20, 2009

Contact: Karla Slate, Community Relations Coordinator
City of Covington
253-638-1110, Ext. 2234
206-423-3709 Cell
kslate@ci.covington.wa.us

PARK SURVEY RESULTS TO BE SHARED ON ELECTION DAY

Surveyed residents place community festivals and events at the top of their list.

Covington, Wash. – Conducting a random survey of residents is just one way Covington's Parks and Recreation Department is soliciting resident input on the future of Covington's parks system. The department is also holding a series of public community meetings to further pick the brains of residents. The first community meeting was held on Wednesday, September 30. But, those who missed it are in luck – the second meeting is coming up on Tuesday, November 3 at 6:45 p.m. in the Covington Community Room. Survey results will be discussed to stir up even more input.

According to the 300-resident park and recreation survey, over half (60%) of respondents report they have the greatest need for an extended trail system and larger comprehensive community parks. And, sixty-six percent (66%) rated community festivals and events as their number one recreation need. The survey, conducted in September, is helping lead the department toward developing the next PROS (parks, recreation and open space) Plan for the city.

The survey confirmed the most common form of recreation residents already use in Covington are walking and biking trails (69%). Residents' recreation needs, however, consist of: community festivals and events as previously noted (66%); open public swims (65%); health and fitness programs (56%); swim instruction and aquatic activities (51%); informational and educational classes (51%); and water exercise classes (50%).

Attendees of the next community meeting will be able to see how their priorities stack up to those of the random sample. Knowing what is important to the average resident is vital to move ahead with the PROS Plan. But, meeting with residents face-to-face allows an understanding of why those priorities exist.

PROS Plan Community Meeting #2 will be held at Covington City Hall, 16720 SE 271st St. Please contact Recreation and Aquatics Manager Pat Patterson with any questions or for more information at ppatterson@ci.covington.wa.us or (253) 638-1110 ext. 2223.

###

Covington's Parks and Recreation community meeting planned for Nov. 3 ... <http://www.printthis.clickability.com/pt/cpt?action=cpt&title=Covington...>

PNWLocalNews.com

 PRINT THIS

Powered by  Clickability

 Click to Print

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

related stories

Covington Reporter

- [Covington Parks and Recreation Department to host community meeting](#)
- [Covington hires parks chief](#)
- [Covington Parks and Recreation Department wins awards for programs](#)
- [Covington Community Calendar](#)
- [Covington Community Calendar | July 16](#)

South King County

- None at this time.

Community blogs

- [Reminiscences](#)
Memories of the Covington area and changes that have occurred as recalled by a native of the area for over forty years.

Covington's Parks and Recreation community meeting planned for Nov. 3

By [KRIS HILL](#)

Covington Reporter News

Oct 20 2009

Covington's Parks and Recreation department staff will continue to gather public input, this time with a meeting at 6:45 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 3, in the Covington Community Room at City Hall, 16720 Southeast 271st Street.

Results of community surveys will be shared at the meeting as well as provide an opportunity to residents to give their thoughts on the city's plans for its parks and recreation system plans.

According to information provided by the city, more than half of 300 residents surveyed in September "report they have the greatest need for an extended trail system and larger comprehensive community parks."

Community events and festivals were rated by 66 percent of respondents as the No. 1 recreation need in the city.

Nearly 70 percent of residents, according to the survey results, are using trails to walk and bicycle, but those who responded also want to see more open public swims, health and fitness programs, swim instruction and aquatic activities as well as informational and educational classes.

Data culled from the survey will be used to help the city develop its Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) plan, which Parks and Recreation Director Scott Thomas has described as Covington's parks and recreation to do list.

"Knowing what is important to the average resident is vital to move ahead with the PROS plan," a city press release said. "Meeting with residents face-to-face allows an understanding of why those priorities exist."

For more information contact Recreation and Aquatics Manager Pat Patterson by calling 253-638-1110, extension 2223 or send an e-mail to ppatterson@ci.covington.wa.us.

Covington Reporter News Kris Hill can be reached at khill@reporternewspapers.com or (425) 432-1209, ext. 5054.

Find this article at:

http://www.pnwlocalnews.com/south_king/cmv/community/65120707.html

 Click to Print

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

Did we pick the right apples?

Your ideas have helped design a preliminary plan for the future of **Covington's parks, recreation and open space**. See the plan for the first time and tell us if our barrel contains your ideal crop.



PROS Plan

PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE
Community Meeting #3

WEDNESDAY, FEB 3, 2010
6:45 PM TO 8:30 PM

WHO

Residents in and near the city, business owners, parks and recreation users, and those with an interest in the future of Covington's recreation programs and parks.

WHERE

Community Room at City Hall, 16720 SE 271st St.

TOPIC

Please join us for the third community meeting for the 2010 PROS Plan. We've heard feedback from you in focus groups and prior meetings. Now we want to show you the preliminary plan and find out if we are on the right path.

This marks the beginning of the process to review and comment on the PROS Plan. Come and share your opinions as they will be used to finalize the preliminary plan before it gets considered by the Parks and Recreation Commission and City Council.

For more information contact Pat Patterson,
Recreation and Aquatics Manager, at (253) 638-1110 x2223
or email at ppatterson@ci.covington.wa.us



City of Covington
16720 SE 271st St.
(253) 638-1110
www.ci.covington.wa.us

pros plan
parksand recreation 

[Home](#) [Doing Business](#)
[City Government](#) | [Departments](#)
[Community Info](#) [Local Services](#)
[Economic Development](#)



[Calendar](#) | [News](#) | [Forms](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Search](#) | [Print](#)



DEPARTMENTS

PARKS & RECREATION

Covington Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan

How can Covington Parks & Recreation meet your family's recreation needs? We want to hear from you!

The city has started to update its Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan previously adopted in 2003 as part of the comprehensive plan. The new PROS Plan will establish a road map for providing high quality, community-driven parks, trails, natural areas and recreation services throughout Covington.

Citizen input is absolutely crucial to make sure program goals and priorities are consistent with community needs and desires. There will be several opportunities for you to participate, including a telephone survey, public meetings and community stakeholder discussions. This process gives us an excellent opportunity to identify ways in which to best serve the recreational needs of our growing community over the coming 8 to 10 years.

Final review and adoption of the plan is scheduled for May 2010.

[Click here](#) to view PROS Plan documents.

Upcoming Community Meetings

- September 30, 2009 8:45pm at City Hall, Community Room
- November 3, 2009
- February 3, 2010

Check back soon for more information about public meetings and other outreach.

For questions or more information about the PROS Plan, please contact Pat Patterson at ppatterson@ci.covington.wa.us or (253) 638-1110 ext. 2223.

[Departments](#)
[Executive Department](#)
[Community Development](#)
[Finance Department](#)
→ Parks & Recreation
[Staff](#)
[Aquatic Center](#)
[Local Athletic Service Providers](#)
[Parks and Trails](#)
→ PROS Plan
[Police Department](#)
[Public Works](#)



City Hall • 16720 SE 271st Street, Suite 100, Covington, WA 98042 • (253) 638-1110



©2010 City of Covington • Designed by Dungeess Communications, Inc. • [Disclaimer](#)

Appendix I. Adopting Ordinance

< SECTION PENDING >