6.0 PARKS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES ELEMENT

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of the Parks and Community Services Element is to provide goals and policies to guide the acquisition and development of parks, open space, trails, recreation, culture and art, and human services facilities and programs throughout the City of Covington. The Parks and Community Services Element provides goals and policies aimed at meeting the City's recreational, social, and cultural needs.

This element and the Parks Design and Development Standards, a companion document, adopted herein by reference, provide an inventory of park and recreation facilities and programs in Covington; outline accepted standards for parks, open space, and recreation facilities; set standards for such services; and present a strategy for providing additional facilities and programs to meet the needs of the City's residents and visitors.

The Parks and Community Services Element is divided into five sections. The Introduction describes the intent of the Parks and Community Services Element and provides a brief overview of the six different sections. An overview of the remaining five sections is provided below.

6.2 Planning Context

This section discusses legislative directives (including the GMA and the CPP) as well as the Parks and Community Services Element's relationship to other Comprehensive Plan elements and other plans.

6.2.1 Legislative Directives

Growth Management Act

While the Parks Element is considered an optional element under the GMA, park and recreation facilities are required to be included in the mandatory capital facilities plan element. Additionally, the GMA encourages jurisdictions to retain open space, develop recreational opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat,

increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop park facilities. The GMA also addresses open space in requiring that land use plans include identification of "...open space corridors within and between urban growth areas. They shall include lands useful for recreation, wildlife habitat, trails, and connection for critical areas" (RCW 36.70A.160). Land use plans are also required to "identify lands useful for public purposes such as utility corridors, transportation corridors, landfills, sewage treatment facilities, storm water management facilities, recreation, schools, and other public uses" (RCW 36.70A.150).

Countywide Planning Policies

The King County Countywide Planning Policies state that an open space system should be provided and that physical and visual access to rivers, lakes, and streams should be protected throughout the county. These policies encourage local governments to work cooperatively to provide parks and open spaces and to develop coordinated level of service standards for parks and open spaces.

6.2.2 Relationship to Other Comprehensive Plan Elements

The vision, goals, objectives, actions, and recommendations of the Parks and Community Services Element have all been coordinated with, and are supportive of, the framework that has been established in the Comprehensive Plan. The Parks and Community Services Element not only provides for the recreational needs of Covington's residents, but also is supportive of a broader pattern of regional open space and trail facilities that surround the community.

The Parks and Community Services Element functions in concert with the Environmental Element by establishing policies for the acquisition, development, and preservation of City-owned natural areas. The Land Use Element is supported through policies aimed at the continued provision of facilities and services to support anticipated growth. In addition, the Parks and Community Services Element establishes policies for the coordination of funding and level of service requirements set forth in the Capital Facilities Element. Cost and strategies for implementing the goals and policies of the Parks and Community Services Element are located in the Capital Facilities portion of this element.

6.2.3 Relationship to Other Plans

In preparing the Parks and Community Services Element, the park, trail, and open space systems of the City of Kent, Maple Valley,

and King County were considered. The planning direction established by Washington's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Planning (SCORP) program and RCW 36.70 also provided a regional basis for the Parks and Community Services Element.

The Parks Design and Development Standards document is a new companion document developed to contain the operational, design and planning criteria formerly in the comprehensive plan, along with new information, particularly for facility design, risk management, and liability. The Parks Design and Development Standards document is designed to implement to Parks and Community Services Element.

The Parks Design and Development Standards document, adopted by reference in this Comprehensive Plan, provides the detailed findings and data of a Parks Survey conducted by the City. This document also contains the results of a needs assessment which, together with the survey data, form the basis for the LOS standards outlined in this Element. Additionally, the Parks Design and Development Standards provides further information on public participation, park facilities and categories, inventories of existing parks, trail facilities, and projected demands and needs.

The City of Covington Walkway Evaluations document is also incorporated into this Element by reference. This document provides a priority list of sidewalk and school walkway improvement projects throughout the City. Where feasible, trail and bikeway projects should be prioritized to correspond with these prioritized sidewalk and school walkway projects.

6.2.4 Population Implications

Population characteristics of a community are vital to determining local demands for parks, recreation, and trail facilities. A review of Covington's population characteristics helps to determine what types of recreational facilities should be developed. It is noteworthy that Covington in some respects does not track with the national population characteristics described in the Parks Design and Development Standards.

The Washington OFM, which uses 2000 US Census Bureau data, reported that the City of Covington had a population of 13,783 in the year 2000. In general, Covington's population is comprised with a significant percentage (36 percent) of youth and very few seniors (4 percent.) The majority of the population is between 20 and 64 years of age (60 percent). Covington also contains an

approximately 12 percent minority population. The high percentage of youths in the population places special needs on the development of the parks and recreation system such as demand for active recreation parks and a teen center.

It is estimated that Covington's population will reach approximately 19,454 residents, a 31 percent increase, by the year 2023. This projected population increase will create significant requirements for all types of parks, open space, trails, recreation, cultural and art, and human services facilities and programs.

6.3 Park Facilities and Standards

This section provides an overview of existing conditions and facilities including a description of the planning area, an inventory of parks and recreation resources, and a summary of LOS standards for park facilities.

6.3.1 Planning Area Description

The City of Covington is situated in King County, between the Cities of Kent and Maple Valley. The City is bisected by two major roads, SR 18 in a southwest - northeast direction and Kent-Kangley Road (Highway 516) in an east - west direction. Covington's landscape character includes low, rolling foothills divided by three major drainage courses — Soos Creek, Little Soos Creek, and Jenkins Creek. The landforms of the community drain to these major creeks that serve as open space/drainage features. As such, the community's developed residential areas occur on the lands within the major drainage sub-basins. Most of the existing subdivision activity has respected the natural character and ecosystem of these major salmon streams.

The streams and forested slopes are among some of Covington's most striking visual features. The vegetation and topography of these open spaces offer a variety of recreational, aesthetic, and educational opportunities as the context for the Parks and Community Services Element, as an Element of the overall City Comprehensive plan.

6.3.2 Overview of Existing Facilities

This section provides an inventory and overview of Covington's existing public and private developed parks, trails, and recreational facilities and presents standards (guidelines) that have been recommended for parks and recreational facilities, including trails, in Covington.

Covington now owns several parks and recreational facilities. The public recreation facilities available to Covington residents also include seven Kent School District school sites within the City's boundaries, and nearby King County Parks sites. Lake Meridian Park, a City of Kent Parks facility, is located just outside the Covington City limits and is heavily used by Covington residents. The Parks 20-year CIP provides a comprehensive inventory of the City's park, open space, and recreation resources. Figure 6.1 locates the existing park, trail, and open space resources within and around Covington. Proposed parks and other recreation resources are mapped on Figure 6.2.

The park and open space inventory identifies the recreational assets within the Covington City limits. In addition to City-owned park land, Covington benefits from a variety of recreational and open space resources. The major public open space is Soos Creek Park, a 126-acre regional park which partially lies within the western edge of the City's boundaries. Approximately 1.4 miles of Soos Creek Trail, a multi-purpose trail and parallel equestrian trail, runs north-south within the City's portion of this park. The Soos Creek Park forms a greenbelt that separates the City from Kent thus functioning as an "urban separator."

The seven schools of the Kent School System within the City provide additional open space. They also provide the principal sources of active recreation for Covington's youth with their athletic fields, tennis courts, basketball courts, and playgrounds. The largest privately owned open space is Camp McCullogh, a 40-acre Christian campground, located on the western shore of Pipe Lake and owned by the First Presbyterian Church of Tacoma.

Other recreation lands available to Covington residents include the 80-acre Cedar Creek Park and several small parks operated by home-owner associations.

This section provides information only for the types of park and recreation resources for which the City has adopted LOS standards:

- Regional parks
- Community parks
- Neighborhood parks
- Trails

A detailed inventory and classification of existing parks, open space, and recreational facilities is contained in the Parks Design and Development Standards.

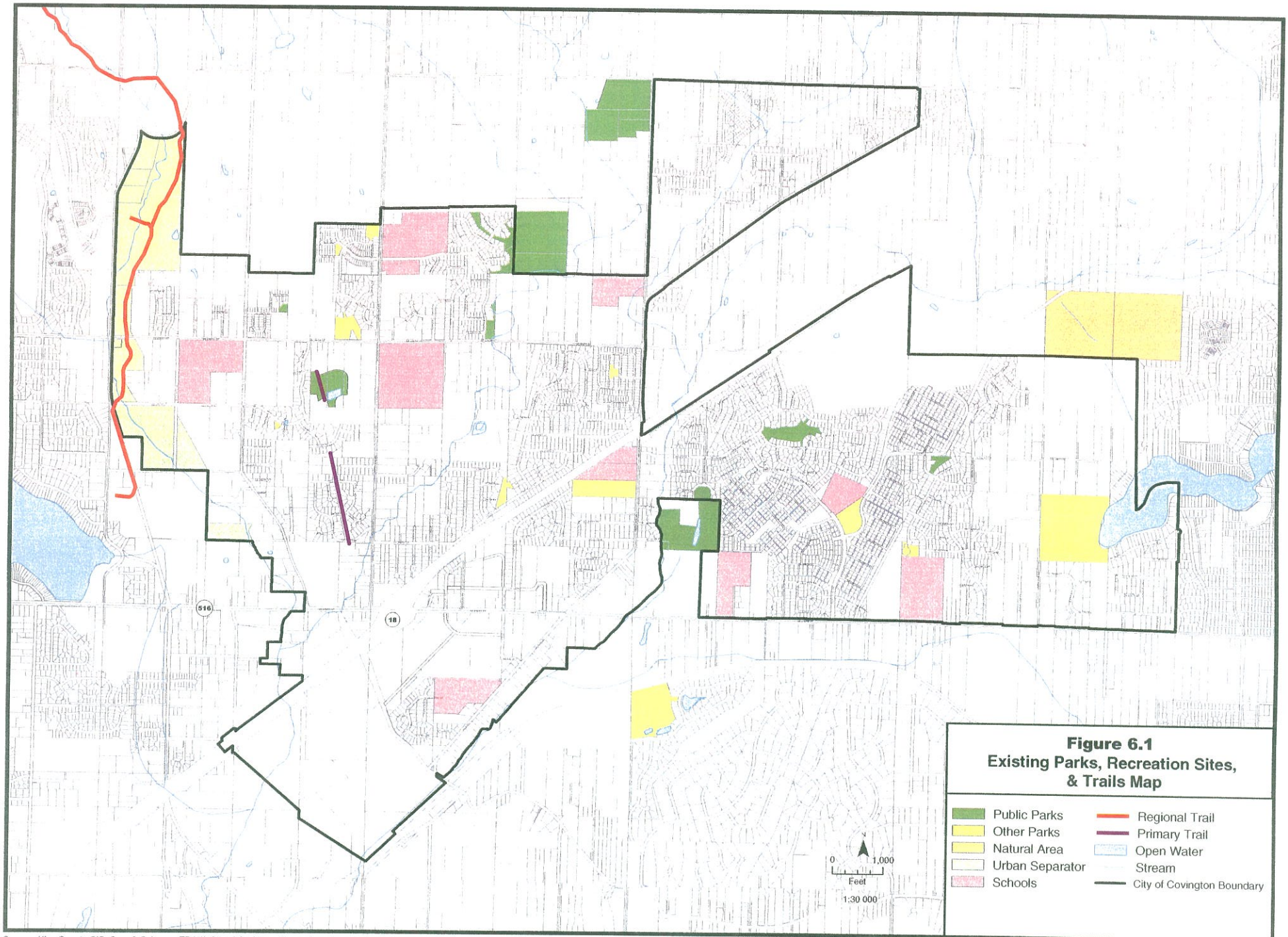
LOS standards for park facilities are one recognized method of expressing the quantity of recreation service provided for a given amount of demand. It is simply a ratio of quantity versus demand (usually measured in numbers of people). It is commonly expressed as a number or acres or miles of facilities per a given population such as 2 acres of neighborhood park per every 1,000 people or 0.5 miles of trail per 1,000 people. The National Park and Recreation Association (NRPA) standards are examples of national LOS recreation standards.

As with any set of standards, LOS standards should be only used as guidelines for evaluating the baseline adequacy of facilities in a community. National standards, for instance, do not account for differences in topography, climate, regional preferences, or community age characteristics. All communities are different, and all communities have needs and demands for park, trail, and open space facilities that vary with population and economic characteristics, as well as with local attitudes. Thus, Covington's recommended standards have been customized for the community after reviewing national and local standards as starting points. The Park Survey and the City's demographics were also important considerations.

Table 6.1 shows the standards (guidelines) that have been recommended for parks and recreational facilities, including trails, in Covington. The 6-year demand and need for these facilities is shown, based on the LOS standards. It is important to bear in mind that the suggested LOS standards are an expression of minimum acceptable facilities for the citizens of Covington. The suggested LOS standards (guidelines) are a starting point for local LOS levels. Only the four (4) proposed LOS levels that will be adopted for the purposes of funding in Chapter 10 (Capital Facilities Element) are presented in the section below. The other LOS measures are provided in the Policies and Standards document for facility planning and design.

Regional Parks

Regional parks are large recreation areas that may serve an entire City or region. They usually exceed 50 acres in size and often include a special use facility such as a zoo. Regional parks are generally designed to accommodate large numbers of people for a variety of day use activities. Regional parks that are largely in a



Source: King County GIS, Gray & Osborne, EDAW, City of Covington, December 16, 2003.

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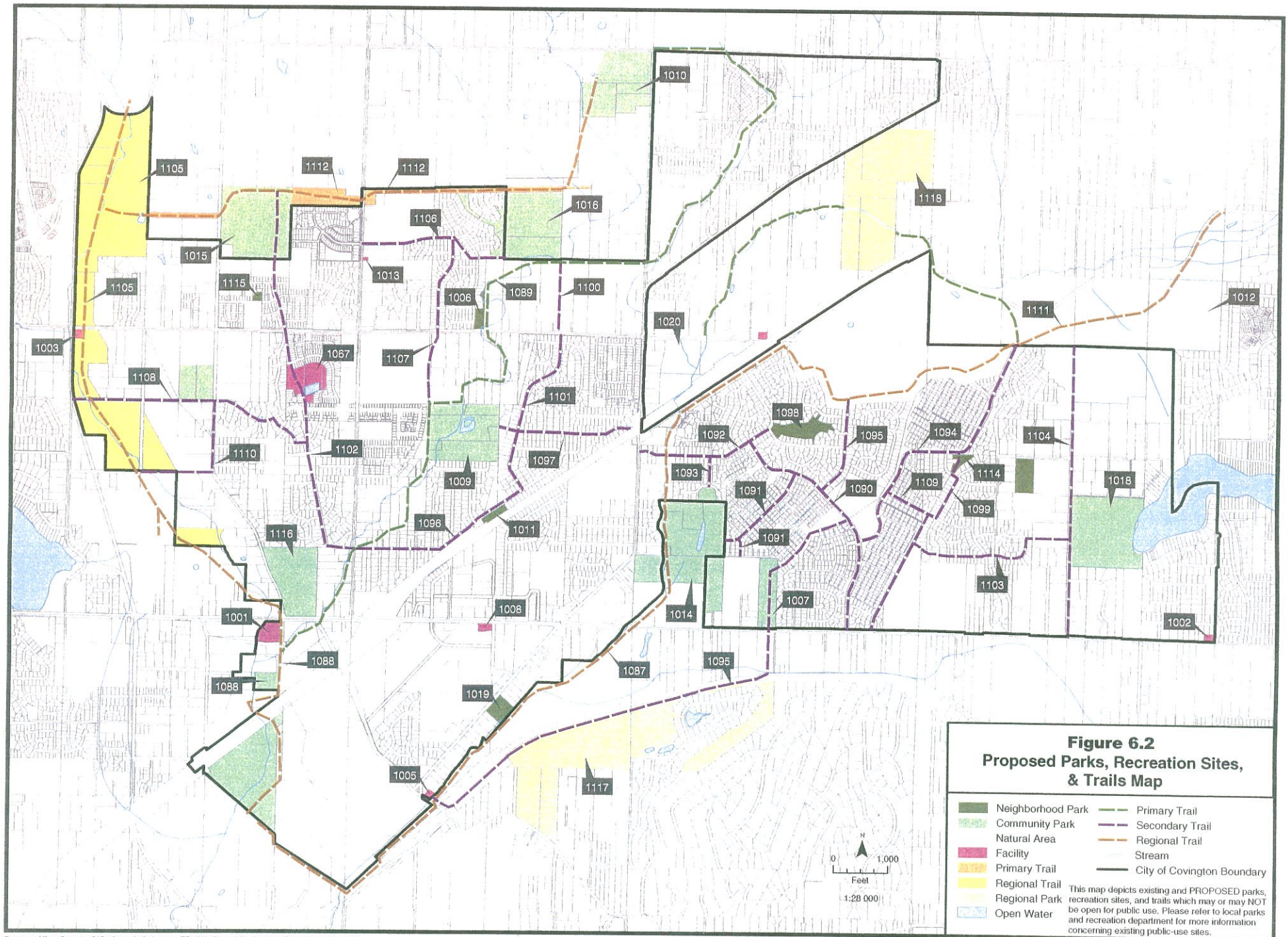

Source: King County GIS, Gray & Osborne, EDAW, City of Covington, December 16, 2003.

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Table 6.1: Six-Year Capital Facilities – Demand/Need

Facility	Covington Adopted LOS Standard	Existing Inventory	Demand 6–Year (2009)	Need 6–Year (2009)
Parks:		acres	acres	acres
Neighborhood	2 ac. per 1,000 pop.	0	32.7	32.7
Community	5 ac. per 1,000 pop.	20[2]	81.9	61.6
Regional	6 ac. per 1,000 pop.	126	98.2	0
Trails:		miles	miles	miles
Bicycle	0.5 mi. per 1,000 pop.	1.4 mi.[3]	8.2	6.8
Equestrian	0.1 mi. per 1,000 pop.	1.4 mi.[3]	1.6	0.2
Walk/Hike/Run	0.5 mi. per 1,000 pop.	1.4 mi.[3]	8.2	6.8

[1] Assumed growth projection between present population (14,850) and population in six years (16,369).
[2] Includes Jenkins Creek Park.
[3] Includes Soos Creek Trail.

natural state or designed to reestablish a natural setting may be used to separate various urban uses (urban separators), protect environmental quality, and provide opportunities for both active and passive outdoor recreation. Linear regional parks can contribute to the City's image of a coordinated park and open space system and can provide a visual and/or functional link between other City parks and open space lands. They may serve as linkages to open space corridors and greenways more regional in nature.

Service Area:	Citywide or greater
Size:	Varies
NRPA Standard:	5-10 acres per 1,000 population
Recommended Standard:	**6 acres per 1,000 population**

Community Parks

Community parks are usually 15 to 30 acres in size and are generally defined as larger, diverse recreation areas serving both formalized active recreation needs as well as recreation use benefiting the neighborhood surrounding the site. The City currently has a shortage of developed community parks. Community parks are where the majority of active recreation occurs. Community parks often include recreation facilities such as sport fields and/or community centers.

Community parks serve a much larger area and offer more facilities than neighborhood parks. Because of this they generally provide parking and restroom facilities. Where there are no neighborhood parks, community parks can also serve as neighborhood parks.

Service Area:	Varies but usually up to 3 miles radius
Size:	20 acres minimum with 30-50 acres optimal
NRPA Standard:	5-8 acres per 1,000 population
Recommended Standard:	**5 acres per 1,000 population based on:** • **60% passive recreation area as defined in #1 above.** • **40% active recreation area as defined in #2 and #3 above.**

Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks are intended to serve residents living within comfortable and safe walking or bicycling distance, and to provide activities geared toward a wide variety of age and user groups including children, adults, the elderly, and special populations. Neighborhood parks are generally thought of as the basic unit of traditional park systems. Development of neighborhood parks should be aimed to achieve a balance between active and passive park uses. For this reason, neighborhood parks should be located on a site that has some natural aesthetic appeal. Active recreational facilities in neighborhood parks are intended to be used in an informal and unstructured manner. These local parks often include a multi-use open field for youth soccer and baseball, and offer opportunities for non-supervised, non-organized recreation activities such as basketball and tennis. Passive activities may include facilities for picnicking, children's playground, trails, and viewpoints. Generally, neighborhood parks do not include restroom facilities because of high construction and maintenance costs and the close proximity of user's houses. Ease of access and walking distance are critical factors in locating a neighborhood park. Accessibility is usually by way of sidewalks along residential streets or neighborhood trails. Parking is also not usually provided at neighborhood parks again because of the proximity of user's homes. However, an ADA accessible parking stall(s) is often included in newer neighborhood park facilities, often as a vehicle pull-off.

Service Area:	0.5 mile
Size:	5 acres minimum with 7-10 acres optimal
NRPA Standard:	1-2 acres per 1,000 population
Recommended Standard:	**2 acres per 1,000 population**

Trails and Bikeways

The only operational public trails in the area are within Jenkins Creek Park and Soos Creek Park, as well as a segment of Jenkins Creek Trail. There will also be a new trail around the regional stormwater facility located at "The Reserve" subdivision. In addition, there are also many informal paths throughout the community that are not easily documented. Typically, these are short-cuts through vacant land and open space that connect neighborhood to neighborhood or schools. When vacant land gets developed these informal paths often disappear which is a loss of connectivity in the community.

Trails and bikeways are frequently confused. Trails are transportation networks that are separate from roads are for non-motorized use (except for off-road vehicle trails). Some, but not all bikeways can be trails i.e., a Class I Bikeway is a trail because it is separated from the roadway. Trails can also be developed to accommodate multiple uses such as pedestrians, in line skaters, bicyclists, and equestrians. Bikeways are different than park or greenway trails in that their principal focus is on safe and efficient transportation. Trails emphasize a strong relationship with the natural environment and may not provide the most direct route from a practical transportation viewpoint. 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 conflict with recreation-type trails and their user groups. For this reason, it is important in planning trails and bikeways that trails not be substitutes for bikeways (and vice-versa). If such dual uses cannot be avoided, it is important that the trail or bikeway be designed with more flexibility, such as for higher speeds, including passing zones and greater widths.

NRPA Standard:	Not an NRPA category	
Recommended Standard:	Pedestrian:	**0.5 miles per 1,000 population**
	Bicycling:	**0.5 miles per 1,000 population**
	Equestrian:	**0.1 miles per 1,000 population**

6.3.3 Community Services and Programs

Recreation

The City of Covington's recreation program is in the early stages of development. The City offers a variety of special event programs ranging from holiday tree lighting to the Arbor Day celebration. The Covington Community Center (CCC) provides

the majority of recreation services to the community. The CCC largely utilizes the seven Kent School District schools' gymnasiums and athletic fields within the City, the Meridian Grange, and the Center's own spaces in their office location. Athletic programs, including basketball, baseball, softball and soccer, are designed to serve elementary and junior high school boys and girls, because there are not sufficient facilities to serve high school youth or adults. The CCC view of these athletic programs is primarily to encourage participation and education of all youth rather than put any emphasis on competition and winning. Aerobics exercise classes for adults are offered at the Meridian Grange and creative writing classes are offered in the CCC facility.

Considering the large percentage of youth in the City population (34 percent of the population age 18 and under), it is highly likely there is a high demand for recreation programs in Covington. Because of limited recreation facilities, the high school age youth and adults basically have no athletic programs. The CCC notes that the population statistics also indicate proportionately low numbers of senior citizens in the community. Attempts by the CCC and other organizations to get senior programs started in the City have not been successful because of what is seen as the lack of a critical mass in numbers of this age group to foster participation. Seniors have reportedly gone outside the City, to Maple Valley and Kent, for some senior programs and activities.

Human Services

An important component in planning effective human services is an understanding of resident needs. Human services needs were identified through a series of interviews conducted by the City and supplemented with US Census data. Defining the human service needs of Covington residents is not a static process. Supplemental information must be gathered in the future by using community meetings, forums, and surveys of human service providers and clients. Covington's Youth and Family Services Commission uses these tools to ensure that the City's resources for human services are allocated fairly and appropriately to meet identified needs.

The US Census provides valuable information for estimating types and amount of different human service needs. The following is a summary of demographic indicators from the 2000 US Census:

In general, the average household in Covington would not be eligible for public housing subsidies, although there are individuals that meet eligibility requirements.

Using conservative employment assumptions, estimated employment growth in Covington would exceed the King County minimum growth target for new jobs by 2022.

Approximately 12 percent of the population in Covington reported a disability in the year 2000. Approximately 37 percent of these individuals are 65 years old and over.

6.4 Goals and Policies

The following section presents the goals and policy statements that have been developed as a result of the park planning process. These statements have evolved from analysis of the input of Covington resident's responses to the Parks Survey review and input from the Parks and Forestry Commission, Arts Commission and Youth and Family Services Commission; analysis of national and local recreation trends and interests; and from evaluation of existing conditions, opportunities and needs.

Goals and Policies presents overall goals for the community for the Parks and Community Services Element and identifies policies to meet the demands for recreational facilities and open space in Covington.

6.4.1 Parks, Open Spaces, Natural Resources and Trails

PRG 1.0 Develop a well-maintained, interconnected system of multi-functional parks, recreation facilities and open spaces that is attractive, safe and available to all segments of the City's population, and supports the community's established neighborhoods and small town atmosphere.

PRP 1.1 Place priority on opportunities for the acquisition or development of new park and recreation areas which are needed, locally unique in character, and financially feasible to maintain.

PRP 1.2 Maximize the use of park, schools, recreation and open space resources within the City by connecting them with a coordinated system of trails.

PRP 1.3 Strive to equitably distribute park and recreation facilities throughout the City.

PRP 1.4 *Coordinate park planning, acquisition and development with other City projects and programs that implement the comprehensive plan.*

PRP 1.5 *Provide, in coordination with other agencies, a range of park facilities that serve a variety of recreational and open space purposes.*

PRP 1.6 *Place priority on maximizing grants, alternative sources of funding, and inter-agency cooperative arrangements to develop the City's park, open space, and trail resources.*

PRP 1.7 *Formulate development plans for existing and future city parks to take maximum advantage of grants or other funding opportunities that may arise for use in resource development, expansion, maintenance, operation or improvements of these facilities.*

PRP 1.8 *Provide parks and recreation facilities that are inclusive and accessible to all of the population regardless of age or physical ability.*

PRP 1.9 *Provide parks and/or park-like facilities that form gateways at the significant roadway entrances into the City in coordination with a community entrance sign program.*

PRG 2.0 Ensure that new park and recreational services are provided concurrent with new development.

PRP 2.1 *All new development shall provide funds or park lands for concurrent park development and maintenance.*

PRP 2.2 *Evaluate the impacts of new development projects on the City's parks, recreation and open space resources through the SEPA environmental review process, identify potential significant adverse impacts of the development, and take appropriate steps to mitigate any reduction in such services.*

PRP 2.3 *Require on-site (or nearby off-site) development of recreation facilities or appropriate and usable park land in conjunction with the approval of any development project involving more than 20 new dwelling units. If such mitigation is not practicable, then in lieu of fees may be accepted by the City. In lieu of fees shall be spent only on designated park improvement within parks that serve the development. Such service area shall be determined by a radius of ⅓ mile from a neighborhood park, ½ mile from community parks and 1 mile from regional parks.*

PRP 2.4 *Provide exemptions from the requirement to provide on-site park, recreation or open space facilities for mixed use development involving more than 20 new dwelling units in the downtown area. Instead, upon approval by the City, in lieu of fees may be accepted for mixed-use developments of more than 20 units, to be spent on designated park, recreational or open space resources that serve the development within the downtown area.*

PRP 2.5 *Require development projects along designated trail routes to be designed to incorporate the trail as part of the project.*

PRP 2.6 *Assign responsibility to new commercial development for financing and providing downtown amenities such as parks, open spaces and public art.*

PRP 2.7 *Sensitive area buffers within proposed subdivisions and short-subdivisions as shown in Figure 6.1, "Existing Recreation Sites & Trails Map," and 6.2 "Proposed Recreation Sites & Trails Map", shall be widened to accommodate additional open space and a public easement for future trails.*

PRP 2.8 *Trail and bikeway projects associated with or linked to city sidewalks shall be*

developed in conjunction with the priority list of sidewalk and school walkway improvements identified in the City of Covington Walkway Evaluations document.

PRG 3.0 Develop, operate and maintain park, recreation and open space facilities, including trails, in a manner that is responsive to the site, and balances the needs of the community with available funding.

PRP 3.1 Ensure that park, recreation and open space facilities are designed, used, operated, and maintained in a manner that is consistent with site-specific and regional natural systems.

PRP 3.2 Specify non-invasive native vegetation for landscaping in park, recreation, and open space facilities to reduce maintenance and encourage wildlife.

PRP 3.3 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.

PRP 3.4 Actively seek out feasible agreements with utility providers for the use of utility easements for trail purposes.

PRP 3.5 Develop specific park and trail maintenance and operation plans for each facility to complete the maintenance as defined in the Park Design and Development Standards.

PRG 4.0 Ensure that park, recreation and open space areas of local or regional significance are identified and protected from adverse impacts associated with incompatible land use and/or transportation activities.

PRP 4.1 Preserve and protect park, recreation, and open space areas within Covington's jurisdictional boundaries.

PRP 4.2 Park, recreation and open spaces which exhibit one or more of the following

characteristics shall be designated by the City to be of local or regional significance:

a. Contains significant recreation or cultural opportunities or facilities, such as amphitheaters, community centers, sports complexes, regional trails, urban wildlife habitat, community entrances, etc.;

b. Contains unusual or special botanical resources;

c. Contains environmentally sensitive areas (as defined in the Environmental Element) that serve a significant role or provide a significant function in the natural systems within the City;

d. Is associated in a significant way with an historic event, structure, or person with a significant effect upon the City, state or nation; and

e. Contains public art.

PRP 4.3 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.

PRG 5.0 Cooperate with other jurisdictions, public agencies, and the private sector to provide park, open space and recreation facilities.

PRP 5.1 Develop partnerships with other public agencies and the private sector to meet the demand for cultural and recreational facilities in the City.

PRP 5.2 Continue to develop and foster partnerships with the Kent and Tahoma School Districts to utilize school sites to provide active recreation and cultural facilities. Explore

opportunities to co-develop facilities on school property or property adjacent to schools.

PRP 5.3 *Coordinate with other jurisdictions such as King County and Cities of Kent and Maple Valley in the planning and development of regional parks, urban separators, greenways, trails, and cultural and recreational facilities.*

PRP 5.4 *Explore opportunities to preserve and enhance the quality of the Soos Creek corridor with King County, the Friends of Soos Creek Park, and the City of Kent. The City shall develop a strategy to enhance the habitat quality of the stream corridor within the City for salmonids and other wildlife.*

PRG 6.0 Protect and preserve as open space areas that: are ecologically significant sensitive areas; serve as urban separators; provide significant opportunities for restoration buffers between uses and link open space; provide trails and/or wildlife corridors; or enhance fish habitat.

PRP 6.1 *Retain and protect as open space areas where the soils have been identified as having severe or very severe erosion potential, landslide hazard, or seismic hazard.*

PRP 6.2 *Retain and protect as open space areas that provide essential habitat for rare, threatened or endangered plant or wildlife species.*

PRP 6.3 *Retain and protect as open space areas that provide habitat for fish and wildlife species, may serve as a corridor for wildlife movement, and may include and encourage public use for wildlife interpretation and observation.*

PRP 6.4 *Retain and protect as open space areas having a unique combination of open space values, including: 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.

PRP 6.5 *Development within areas designated for open space uses shall, in general, be low density or non-intensive in character. Developments shall be designed and sited in a manner that minimizes or mitigates disruption of the most important open space values of the site. Appropriate uses within designated open space areas may, under proper circumstances, include (but not necessarily be limited to): parks and other recreational facilities; riparian corridors; very low residential development, stormwater storage; and agriculture.*

PRG 7.0 Encourage the preservation of privately-owned lands for open spaces uses.

PRP 7.1 *Promote the use of property tax reductions as an incentive to preserve desirable lands as open space.*

PRP 7.2 *Encourage and support the participation of community-based non-profit organizations that offer options and alternatives to development in the interest of preserving desirable private lands for public benefit.*

PRP 7.3 *Encourage non-purchase options to preserve open spaces and greenbelts within neighborhoods, including using conservation easements, current use assessment, and development covenants. The City shall also accept donations of properties where public access is anticipated or planned.*

PRP 7.4 *Implement a transfer of development rights program to assist with establishing urban separators and other open space areas.*

PRP 7.5 Recognize that designating private property for open space uses does not establish or promote any public access rights to such property.

6.4.2 Recreation

PRG 8.0 Provide quality recreation opportunities, facilities and staff that meets the leisure needs of residents and visitors to the community regardless of age, gender, ethnicity or ability level.

PRP 8.1 Efficiently use the resources invested in publicly owned and operated recreation facilities including, but not limited to, City, County and School District sites.

PRP 8.2 Provide recreation services and facilities where citizens can expect quality staff, programs, and facilities in which:

a. Staff and volunteers are well-trained and knowledgeable;

b. Access to all individuals is ensured;

c. Programs are developmentally appropriate;

d. Neighborhoods are brought together, a sense of identity, community pride and cohesion is created;

e. Programs integrate people of various ages, economic and cultural backgrounds;

f. Specific gaps within the array of public and private recreation services in the community are filled;

g. Vulnerable clients are cared for; and

h. Programming is universally of high quality.

PRP 8.3 Work with other recreation organizations to facilitate coordination of activities and the joint offering of recreation activities.

PRP 8.4 Understand and plan for future needs and trends in recreation by actively:

a. Monitoring changes in Covington demographics and desires;

b. Assessing the changes in recreation and leisure trends influencing participation;

c. Assessing the changes in capacity of Covington recreation providers; and

d. Seeking regional solutions to assist in meeting Covington's recreation needs.

6.4.3 Arts and Cultural

PRG 9.0 Develop diverse cultural and art resources within the City to meet the needs of City residents and visitors.

PRP 9.1 Plan for and develop public art, theater and performing facilities.

PRP 9.2 Promote partnerships between other agencies, private organizations, and individuals in order to meet the needs of the general community for cultural arts facilities and programs.

PRP 9.3 Coordinate and provide a variety of high quality cultural, historical and arts programs and events for residents and visitors to the community.

PRP 9.4 Develop a funding and facilitation program for the establishment of public art.

6.4.4 Human Services

PRG 10.0 Maintain and enhance the quality of life for all citizens through the provision and support of affordable and accessible human services.

PRP 10.1 Consider the social and human development needs of the City's residents in all areas of planning and development.

PRP 10.2 Continue and enhance the City's support of the Youth and Family Services Commission and the Youth and Family Services Staff by establishing a desired target of at least a 2 percent allocation of the general fund budget to address human service needs of the community.

PRP 10.3 Promote the effective use of the City's human services resources, consistent with adopted priorities and criteria.

PRP 10.4 Gather and maintain current information and educate the community regarding human service needs and available resources.

PRP 10.5 Support the long-term stability and viability of a human services system serving the community.

PRP 10.6 Take an active role in regional and sub-regional human services issues and form partnerships to effectively address human service needs.

PRP 10.7 Provide for the full spectrum of human services needs through the support of programs that address emergency needs, preventive services, and quality of life services.

PRP 10.8 Promote and support human services which are culturally relevant and physically accessible.

6.5 Implementation

The Parks Design and Development Standards summarizes information found elsewhere in the Comprehensive Plan that is required as basic elements of a capital facilities plan under the GMA, including the inventory of existing facilities and a forecast of future needs. In addition, a chart listing proposed new facilities

with estimated acquisition and development costs can be found in the CIP. The Parks Design and Development Standards presents proposed park and trail facilities to meet the LOS standards proposed for Covington's Six-Year Capital Facilities Projects. Additionally, park and recreation facilities are included in the Capital Facilities Element of the Comprehensive Plan (Chapter 10).

For many cities, the amount of funds required to acquire the park land and develop the proposed facilities is beyond the financial capabilities of even cities much larger than Covington. Parks must compete for funds with many other vital City facilities and services, including police and fire protection, roads, utilities, planning, regulatory enforcement, and so forth. For this reason, the proposed capital facilities were prioritized, suggesting a continuum as to which facilities should be given the highest and lowest consideration. This prioritization began with projects that have already been identified in the community as having high priority. Analysis of the community's opportunities, demands and needs, population and geographic distribution, and natural features provided the rationale for further prioritization. It is important to note, however, that other park opportunities will present themselves which the City should not ignore and this prioritization should be regularly (at least annually) reviewed and updated.

The Parks Design and Development Standards document also addresses various sources of park and recreation funding that are available to the City of Covington. Some of these sources are limited to particular types of projects or programs, while others are more general and may be applied to most any park project. Jurisdictions like Covington should not rely entirely on any one source for all their funding. Instead, the sources should be used together to achieve the broad goals of a park program. This broad approach provides more opportunities to achieve the goals and does not require any one source or user group to fund the entire system.

The Park Implementation Plan section of the Parks Design and Development Standards notes that it would not be feasible for a new city the size of Covington to be able to achieve the LOS standards proposed for the present population or, for that matter, the estimated population in 6 years. The costs for acquiring the land and developing the parks, trails and open space facilities proposed in the Parks Design and Development Standards would far exceed the financial resources of Covington. For that reason, the proposed parks and trails projects in the Park Implementation Plan were prioritized according to high, medium and low priorities.

The 20-Year CIP for parks trails, and open space takes this prioritization even further and proposes a combination of the highest priority park, trail and open space projects which theoretically could be within the financial reach of the CIP. In addition, the 20-Year CIP lists all funding sources to pay for projects over the next 20 years. The 20-Year CIP for parks trails, and open space is included in Chapter 10, Capital Facilities Element.

The City should rely on a broad approach to park funding and land acquisition sources as is suggested in the Park Funding and Land Acquisition section of the Parks Design and Development Standards. It is highly unlikely that the general fund and grants alone will be able to support both land acquisition and development for the proposed highest priority projects. Capital expenditures of this magnitude will most likely require a bond and/or levy that would require approval by the voters.

6.5.1 Capital Facilities Plan

The Capital Facilities Plan summarizes information, provided in more detail in the Parks Design and Development Standards, regarding proposed park and trail facilities for Covington's Six-Year Capital Facilities projects.