

Renew the Legacy... Fulfill the Vision

Renton Parks, Recreation, Open Space
and Natural Resources Plan



Steering Committee Meeting #2

Date 2/22/11

Time 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Location Renton City Hall, 7th Floor Conference Center

Participants

Steering Committee: Julio Amador, Marge Cochran-Reep, Chris Hanis, Pete Maas, Britt McKenzie, Kirk Merrill, Larry Reymann, Tim Searing, Rich Turner, Bo Woo

Community Services Administrator: Terry Higashiyama

Team Leads: Leslie Betlach, Vanessa Dolbee

Consulting Team (MIG) Members: Ryan Mottau, Jon Pheanis

Meeting Summary

The second Steering Committee meeting for the Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Natural Resources Plan provided a review of the planning process and discussion of existing conditions and context. The meeting also included preliminary community input findings and a discussion about the community needs analysis and key analysis questions. An image of notes from the meeting is provided at the end of this summary.

Existing Context and Conditions

Following introductions around the table, the consulting team provided a review of the plan process. The presentation included an overview of the findings from the technical analysis of the community context and a snapshot of the existing park, recreation, open space and natural resources system. The committee had previously received draft versions of the Planning Context and Existing Conditions reports and the meeting allowed members to provide comments on these documents.

Comments from the Steering Committee regarding the Planning Context and Existing Condition summary documents included:

- Provide a clearer definition for natural areas to include the types of sites that could be considered for the inventory and for future acquisition and management.
- Address how the City will pay for parks and identify the extent of resources needed to meet park maintenance needs. User fees were one idea discussed by the group.

Community Input

The planning process includes a variety of activities to generate community input during the development and review of the new plan. Outreach opportunities thus far have included stakeholder interviews, focus groups, community interactive workshops, the community questionnaire and the project website. These public outreach opportunities resulted in the identification of several common themes and key findings:

- Improving/making better use of natural resources
- Bringing people together for events or social interaction
- Filling geographic gaps in service
- There is heavy interest in and use of a few key parks
- Providing adequate repair and maintenance of existing facilities
- Providing art and cultural opportunities
- Providing opportunities for fitness and health
- Focusing on youth (programs and athletics)
- Expanding environmental programming and education
- Recognizing salmon as an important part of identity

Additional breakdown of community input was included in the presentation, which is attached to this summary. The Steering Committee offered a number of thoughts sparked by the summary and their involvement in the public input process. These included:

- Consider community gardening as a way to connect diverse elements of Renton's population (age, ethnicity, etc.). There are several good examples including the existing Renton Community Garden.
- It is important to consider safe access to parks, where sidewalks exist, bike lanes and crossings of busy streets.
- The history of the community is another important element that was heard at some of the events, make sure to include it in the analysis.

The key themes of the public input helps move the project from the first phase of, "Where are we now?" into the second phase of the project. The key question of this second phase is, "Where do we want to be?" and includes both the desires of the community and analysis of how potential directions play out across the park system. In order to improve the results of the analysis, the project team posed the following eight questions to the Steering Committee (as well as the Interdepartmental Team and the Joint Parks/Planning Commission meeting). The answers provided by the committee to these questions are summarized below and will provide direction to the needs analysis.

1. Which recreation opportunities should be provided close to home?

- Trail connections;
- Provide places that allow residents to access the natural environment;

Renton Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Natural Resources Plan

- Overcome barriers, create shorter distances and improve safe access to parks; and
- Create educational opportunities through natural and historic interpretation.

2. When evaluating the need for other types of recreation facilities, how do we balance quality versus quantity?

- Provide more sports fields and opportunities for youth sports (baseball fields specifically called out due to the reduction in other programs);
- Sports field capacity has not kept up with growth in the population (while popularity has been steady or growing);
- The popularity of sports facilities can create a high demand leading to increased maintenance, this can be mitigated through the use of synthetic turf which can handle high use more efficiently;
- The continued transfer of (King County managed) park lands should account for the condition of sites, transferred parks seem to have a history of poor maintenance;
- Small parks offer close-to-home park opportunities and should play a stronger role in the park system;
- Some of these small parks should be “re-programmed” to serve a different use than they used to serve. Due to changes in City services and local demographics;
- System-wide maintenance costs should be a major consideration; and
- Some existing fields, specifically some School District fields are unsafe for competitive play (and are not being used).

3. Which outcomes are we trying to achieve with our recreation programming?

- A range of sports opportunities for youth or all ages;
- Provide a variety of programs for seniors which offer social benefits, the ability to learn new skills and the ability to teach and interact with youth and the community;
- Mobility is an especially important part of senior programming; and
- Provide community service oriented opportunities such as volunteering, career development and social networking.

4. When looking at programming decisions, what additional factors should also be considered?

- The park and recreation system should offer a mixture of indoor and outdoor opportunities; and
- Seniors are seeing local programming as an alternative to travel when personal resources get tight.

5. *Why are we protecting natural resources within our system of parks and open spaces?*

- Provides a tool to control development and restore land;
- Increase in property values;
- Improves air and water quality, reduces flooding;
- Creates a “window into nature” that brings nature in the city and potential for nature-based education; and
- Provides habitat for fish and wildlife.

6. *How should we consider green infrastructure in the context of parks and open spaces?*

- Reduce strain and overreliance on city utility infrastructure and treatment systems;
- Create potential for green energy (solar array and wind turbines); and
- Provide public education opportunities on green infrastructure.

7. *When and how could grey infrastructure be acceptable within a park or open space?*

- Facilities should be designed in coordination with the city and nearby residents; and
- Camouflaging utilities such as cell towers may be undesirable to some residents (who could see it as deceiving).

8. *How do other providers and facilities fit?*

- School facilities are popular and well used by little league; and
- The public library is also popular and should be part of the inventory

Next Steps

The next steps are additional meetings and public outreach opportunities for identifying community needs, including the interactive map and visioning workshop scheduled as follows:

- Committee of the Whole Briefing – March 28, 2011
- Interactive Map Exercise
- Visioning Workshop – March 29, 2011, Renton Community Center, 6:00 - 8:00pm
- Review and Finalize Planning Context and Existing Conditions Summary Reports
- Complete Needs Assessment and statistically valid Community Priority Survey

Materials Provided

The following materials were provided to the Steering Committee at this meeting (and are included in the summary pdf file):

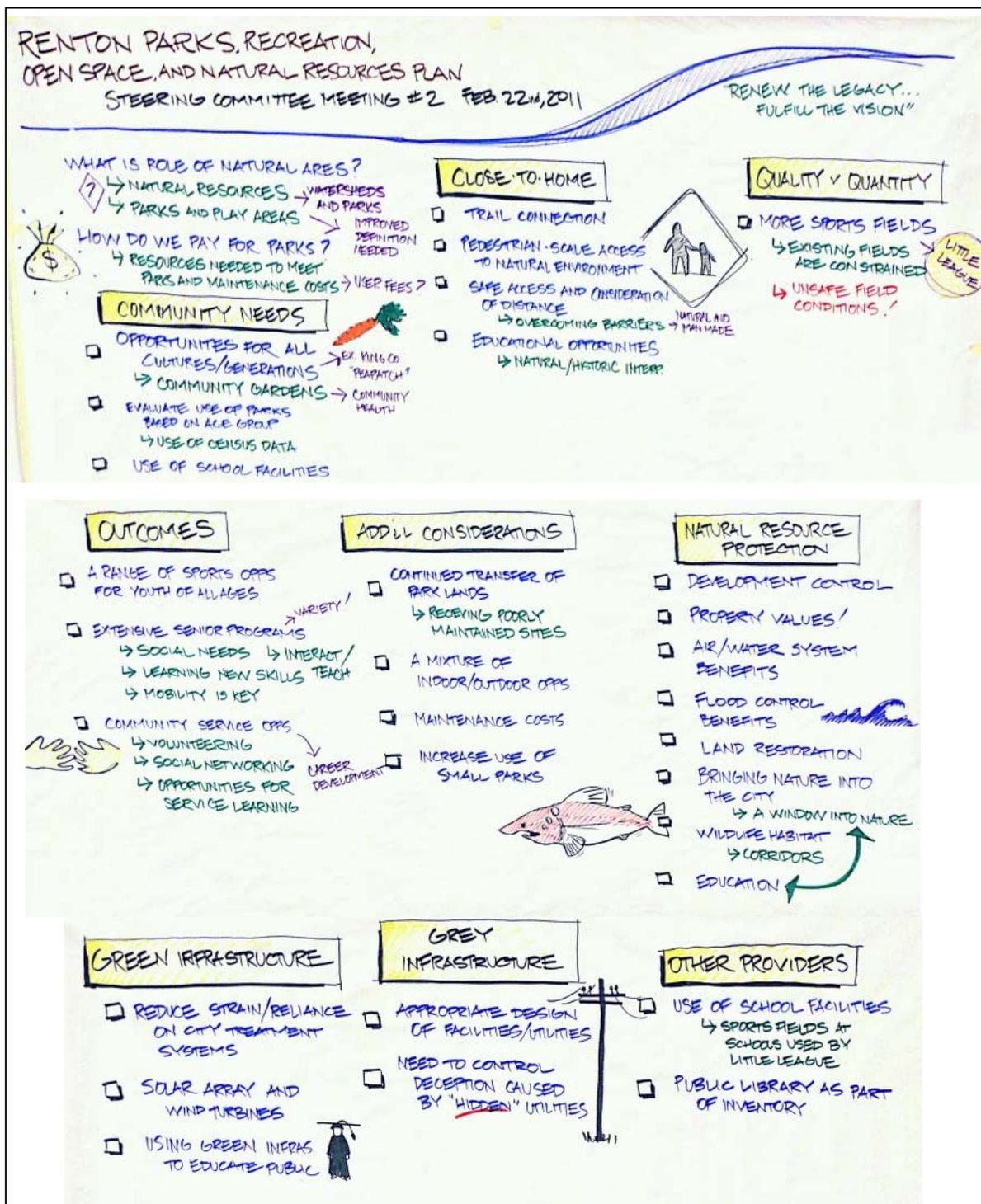
- Agenda
- Key Analysis Questions
- PowerPoint Presentation used during the meeting

The following materials were provided to the Steering Committee at this meeting but were not included due to file size:

- Planning Context Summary Draft (January 2011)
- Existing Conditions Summary Draft (February 2011)

For more information about the project, project calendar and interim documents, visit the City's home page at www.rentonwa.gov and click on "Renew the Legacy... Fulfill the Vision"

Renton Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Natural Resources Plan



Graphic recording of Steering Committee Meeting #2

Renew the Legacy... Fulfill the Vision

Renton Parks, Recreation, Open Space
and Natural Resources Plan



Steering Committee Meeting #2

Date: **2/22/2011**

Time: **6:00PM – 8:00PM**

Location: **7th Floor Conferencing Center, Renton City Hall, 1055 South Grady Way**

Participants

Steering Committee: Julio Amador, Marge Cochran-Reep, Chris Hanis, Gwendolyn High, Pete Maas, Britt McKenzie, Kirk Merrill, Larry Reymann, Tim Searing, Al Talley, Rich Turner, Tim Williams, Bo Woo

Community Services Administrator: Terry Higashiyama

Team Leads: Leslie Betlach, Vanessa Dolbee

Consulting Team (MIG) Members: Ryan Mottau

6:00pm – 6:10 pm

Welcome and Introductions

6:10 pm – 6:30 pm

Planning For Parks, Recreation and Natural Areas

- Planning Process Update (MIG)
- Existing Conditions and Context (MIG)
- Questions/Discussion (Committee)

6:30 pm – 7:00 pm

Community Input

- Findings (MIG)
- Questions/Discussion (Committee)

7:00 pm – 7:50 pm

Assessing Community Needs

- Analysis Methodologies (MIG)
- Key Analysis Questions (Committee)

7:50 pm – 8:00 pm

Next Steps

- Planning Context and Existing Conditions Revision
 - Online Interactive Maps
 - Update City Council – March 28th
 - Community Visioning Workshop – March 29th
-

Go to www.rentonwa.gov and click on the parks plan link for more information!

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Renton Parks, Recreation, Open Space
and Natural Resources Plan



Needs Analysis Questions

1. Which recreation opportunities should be provided close to home?

Discussion: These are the opportunities people should be able to pursue frequently (once a week or more) and be able to access quickly – they are the basis of the park system. Questionnaire respondents indicated exercise, fitness, walking; play for children; and experiencing nature as their top choices. Social gatherings/meeting spaces and playing sports also rated highly. In other questionnaire responses and discussions arts and cultural activities were also frequently mentioned.

- What is the core set of recreation opportunities Renton should provide at the parks close to home?
- What should we use as measures for evaluating close to home opportunities?
Examples: A walking path of at least 0.5 miles, an active recreation feature such as a sports court or sports field, a playground, a picnic shelter, presence of forest or riparian area, public art, others?

2. When evaluating the need for other types of recreation facilities, how do we balance quality versus quantity?

Discussion: Renton's park system offers a variety of recreation facilities (skate park, swimming pool, boat house, recreation center, dog park, etc.). Through the needs assessment, we will evaluate how these facilities fit within the overall system.

- Which specialty opportunities should be provided at multiple sites? Where might they be located? How far should people have to travel to reach them?
- Which specialty facilities should be unique in the system? Where might they be located?
- Are additional specialty facilities needed in Renton?

3. Which outcomes are we trying to achieve with our recreation programming? Examples: Bringing people together, keeping people active and healthy, celebrating our community's diversity, etc.

Discussion: Recreation programming offers a whole host of benefits, and we would like to define the most important outcomes for Renton to help guide our programming decisions. Questionnaire respondents indicated supporting health and fitness activities, creating positive activities for youth, and supporting neighborhood and family gathering as the top three benefits of the overall parks, recreation and natural area system.

4. When looking at programming decisions, what additional factors should also be considered?

Discussion: Once we know the outcomes we are trying to achieve with our programming, what other considerations should weigh in to decisions.

- Examples of factors include the capacity of our facilities and parks, city financial mandates, strengths of Renton's programming, strengths of other local providers, community input, regional or national recreation trends....

5. Why are we protecting natural resources within our system of parks and open spaces?

Discussion: There are many reasons for protecting natural resources within the system of parks and open spaces. Top benefits for questionnaire respondents were aesthetic appeal, protecting important habitats and providing hands-on interaction with nature.

Example reasons include:

- Meet legal requirements
- Provide access to nature
- Protect locally important habitats or species
- Protect streams
- Protect tree canopy
- Provide respite from the built environment
- Manage stormwater

6. How should we consider green infrastructure in the context of parks and open spaces?

Discussion: Green infrastructure includes the "valuable services nature provides the human environment." Renton's park and open space system offers an extensive system of green infrastructure already, and there have been several proposals to incorporate additional stormwater infrastructure into the system.

- Should we be designing our parks to provide as much tree canopy, pervious surface, and low impact development as practical? Should we attempt to quantify green infrastructure benefits of tree canopy?
- When are features such as detention basins, infiltration basins, bioswales and rain gardens compatible with parks and open spaces? Should these features have to meet certain design criteria to be located in parks?

7. When and how could grey infrastructure be acceptable within a park or open space?

Discussion: Grey infrastructure includes built features such as piped stormwater conveyance systems, vaults, lift stations, pump stations, power lines, water towers, and cell towers that are part of systems designed to support human habitation.

8. When evaluating Renton's parks, recreation and open space system, how do other providers and facilities fit?

Discussion: Besides Renton's extensive resources, there are sites and programs provided by schools, non-profit entities, and other agencies. Some of these are located within city limits, and some are located nearby.

- How should school sites and facilities be considered when evaluating needs?
- How should public parks located outside of Renton, but within close proximity, be factored in?
- What about non-profit providers?

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Fulfill the Vision**

Renton Parks, Recreation, Open Space
and Natural Resources Plan

Steering Committee Meeting #2

February 22, 2011



Why We Plan

- Stay current with community needs
- Set a direction for long-term projects and actions:
 - Programming
 - Property acquisition
 - Development
- Identify priorities and funding strategies
- Grant funding eligibility (for 6 years)





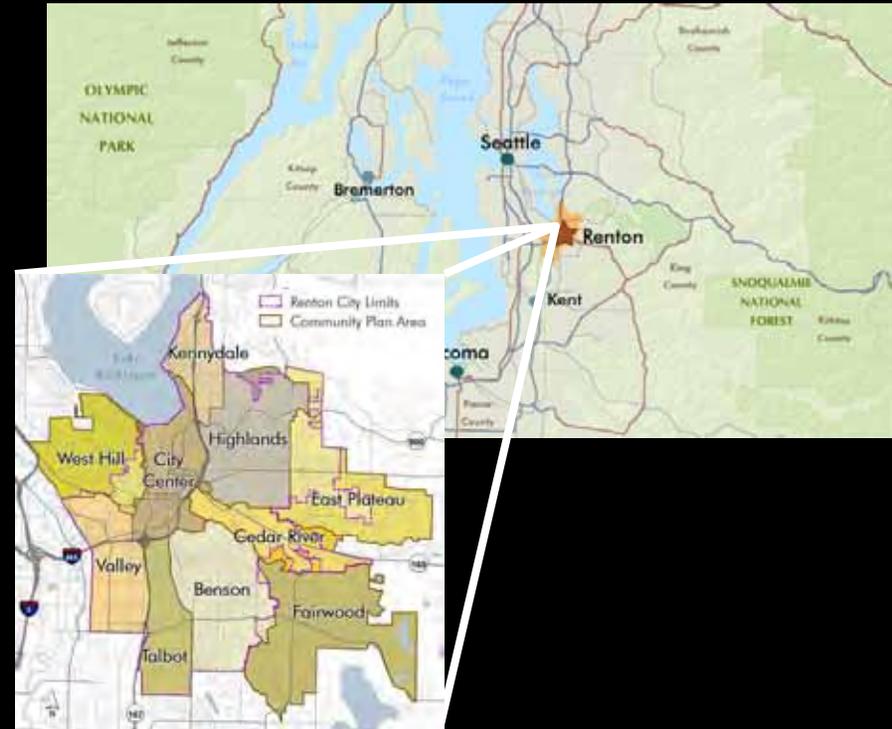
Planning Process

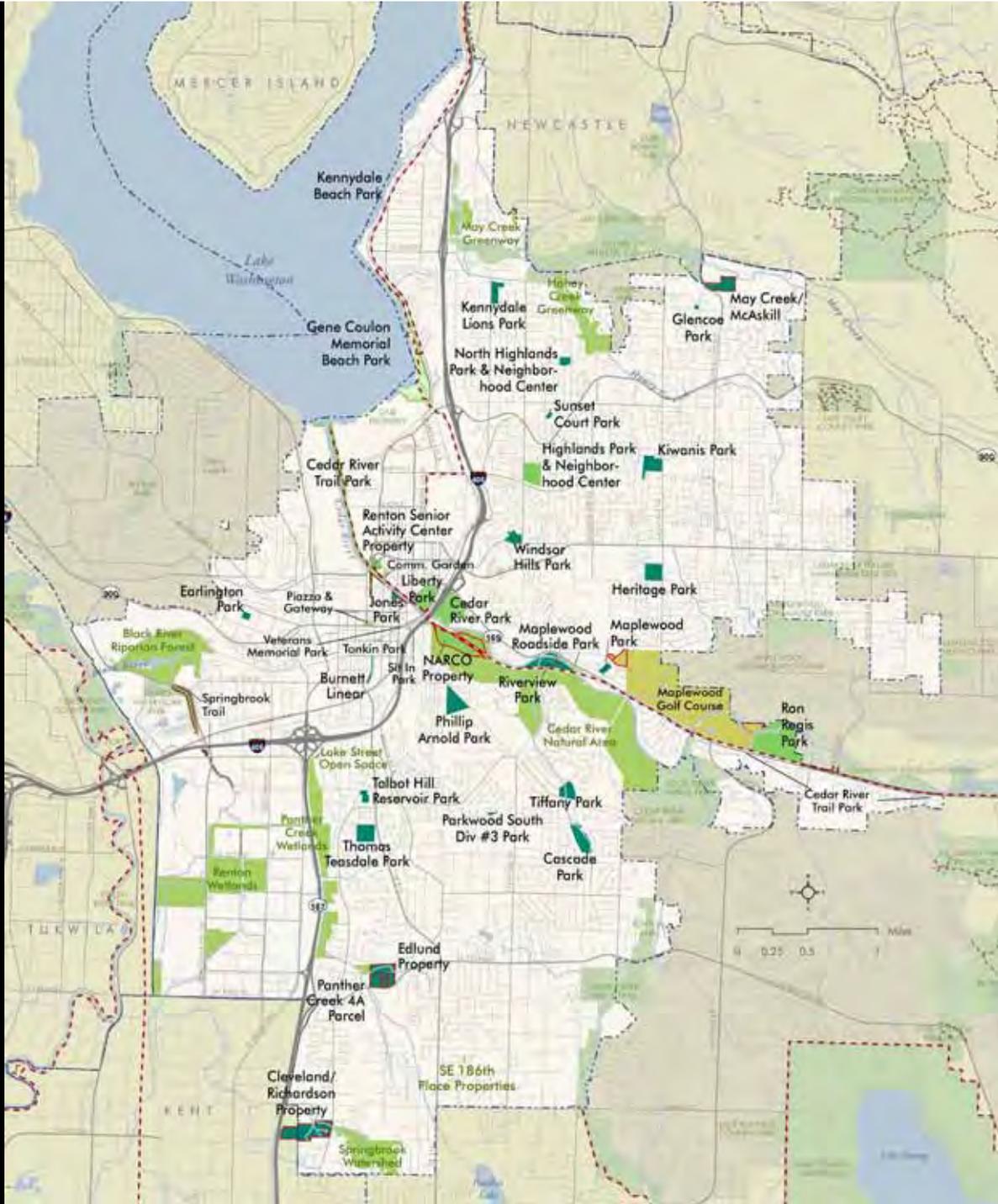
PROSNR Process



Where Are We Now: Context

- Changes 2003-2010
- Related Planning Efforts



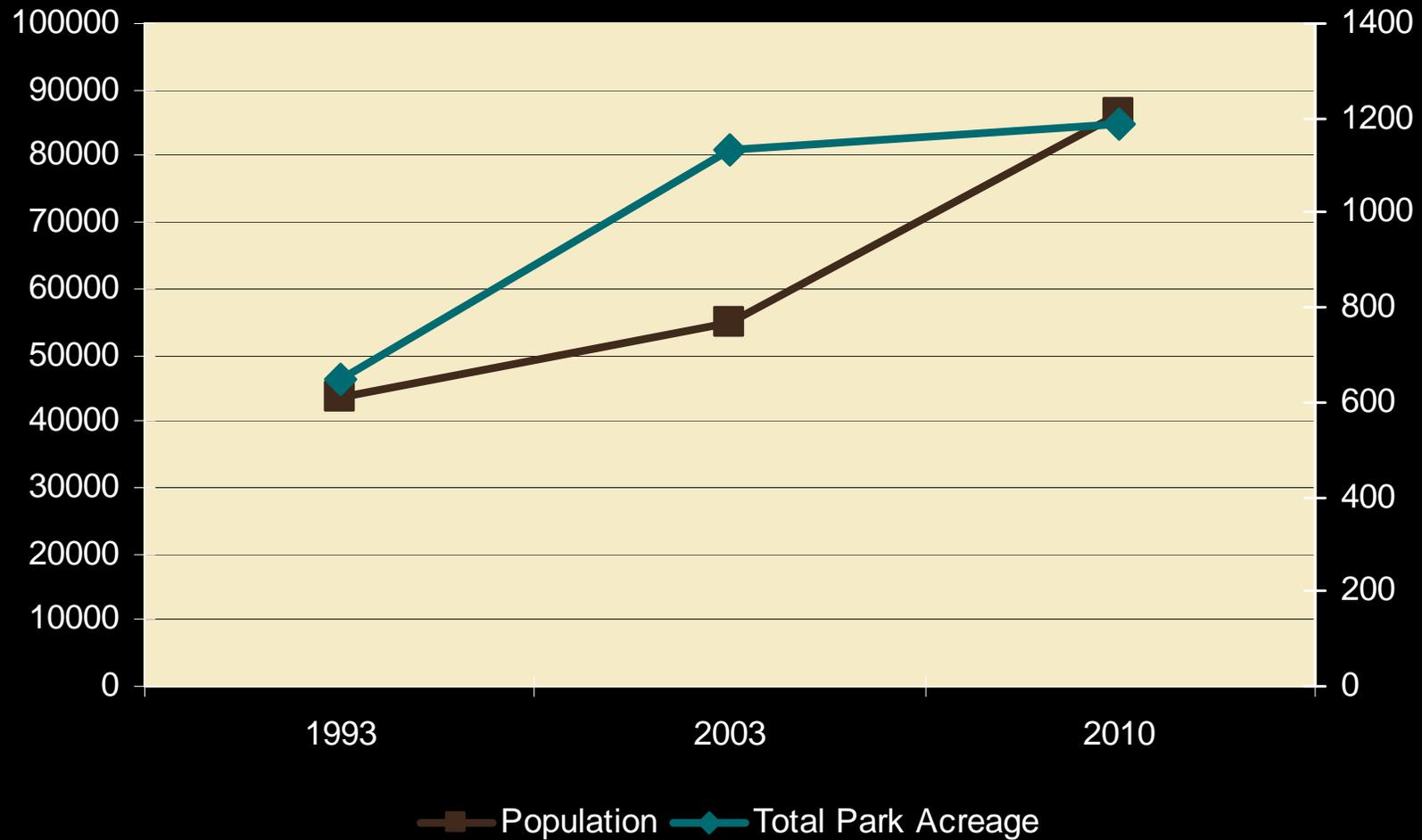


Where Are We Now: Park Land

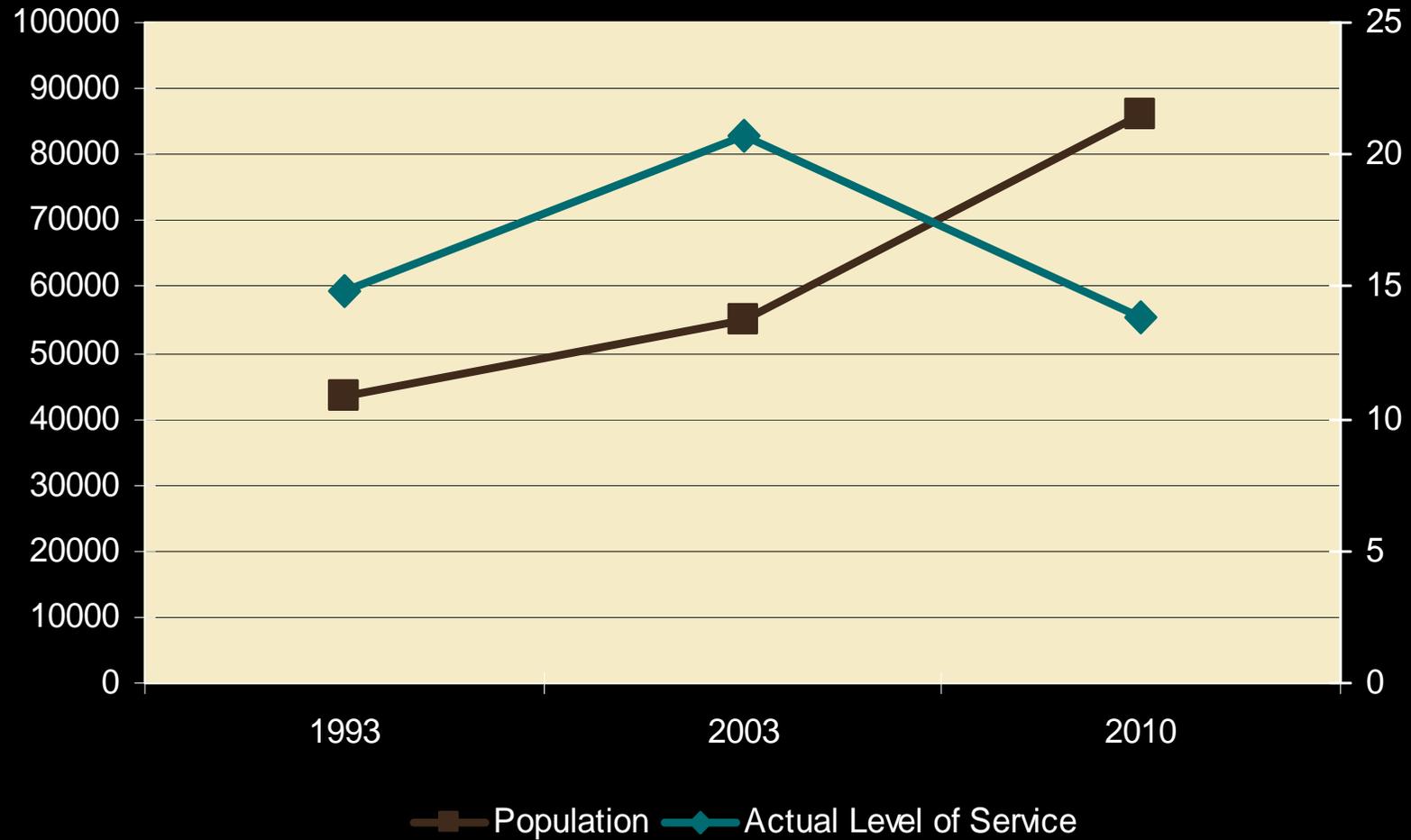
- 1211 Acres of total park land
- 60% Natural resource lands
- 40% Developed parks
- Other providers
 - Schools
 - Other Jurisdictions
 - Businesses, Utilities, Etc.



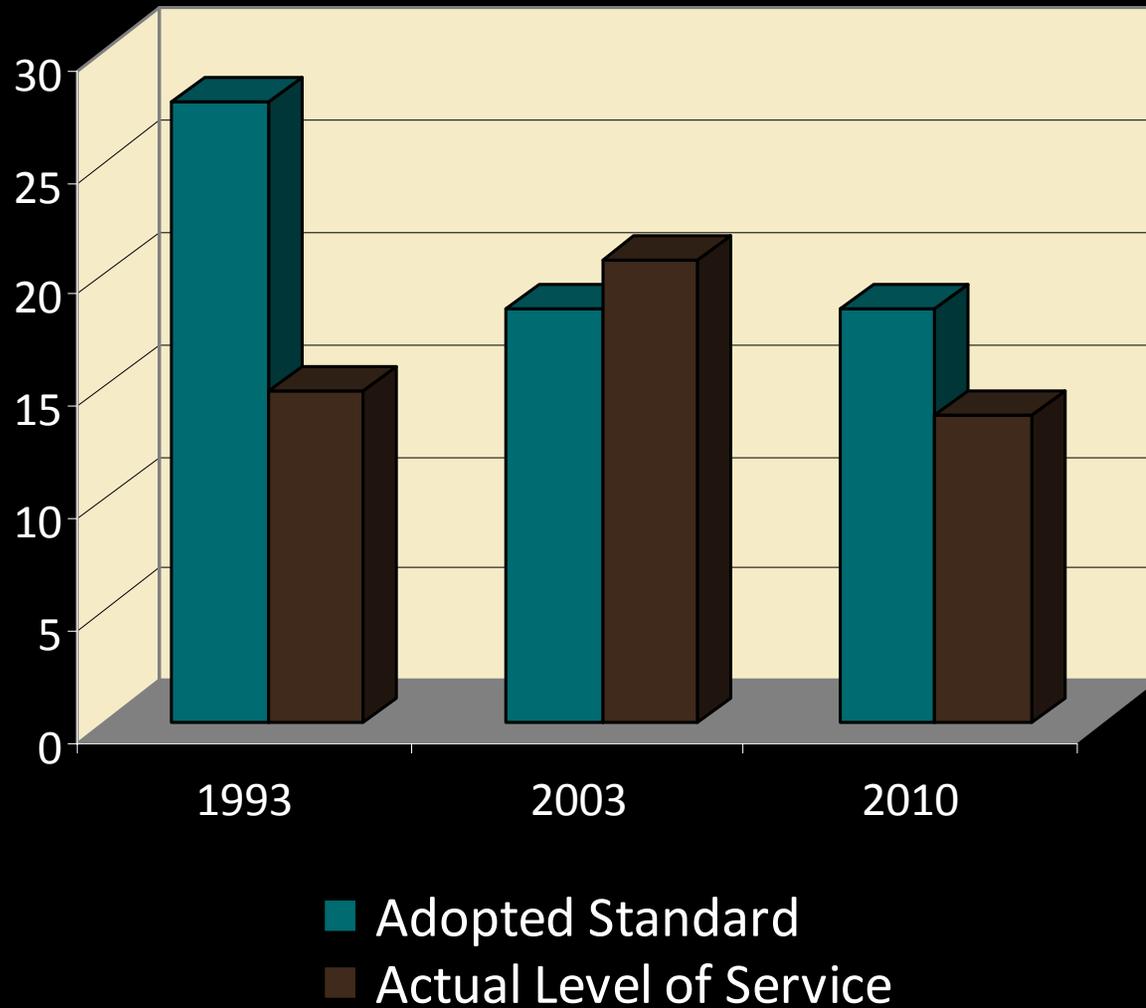
Where Are We Now?



Where Are We Now?



Where Are We Now: Standards



Where Are We Now: Recreation Facilities



Sports Fields and Courts

Playgrounds

Picnic Shelters

Indoor Facilities

- Renton Community Center
- Senior Activity Center
- Carco Theatre
- Neighborhood Centers
- Activity Centers
- Community Buildings



Where Are We Now: Natural Resources



Resources within all types of park land and on private property

Key Resources:

- Water
- Forested Areas



Identified Issues:

- Invasive Species
- Maintenance
- Access

Where Are We Now: Recreation Programs

- 13 Program Categories
- Participation (Three Years):
 - Declines in many programs (in part due to reductions in staff and budget)
 - 65-70% residents of Renton
 - Sports are on the rise (facility use and registrations)

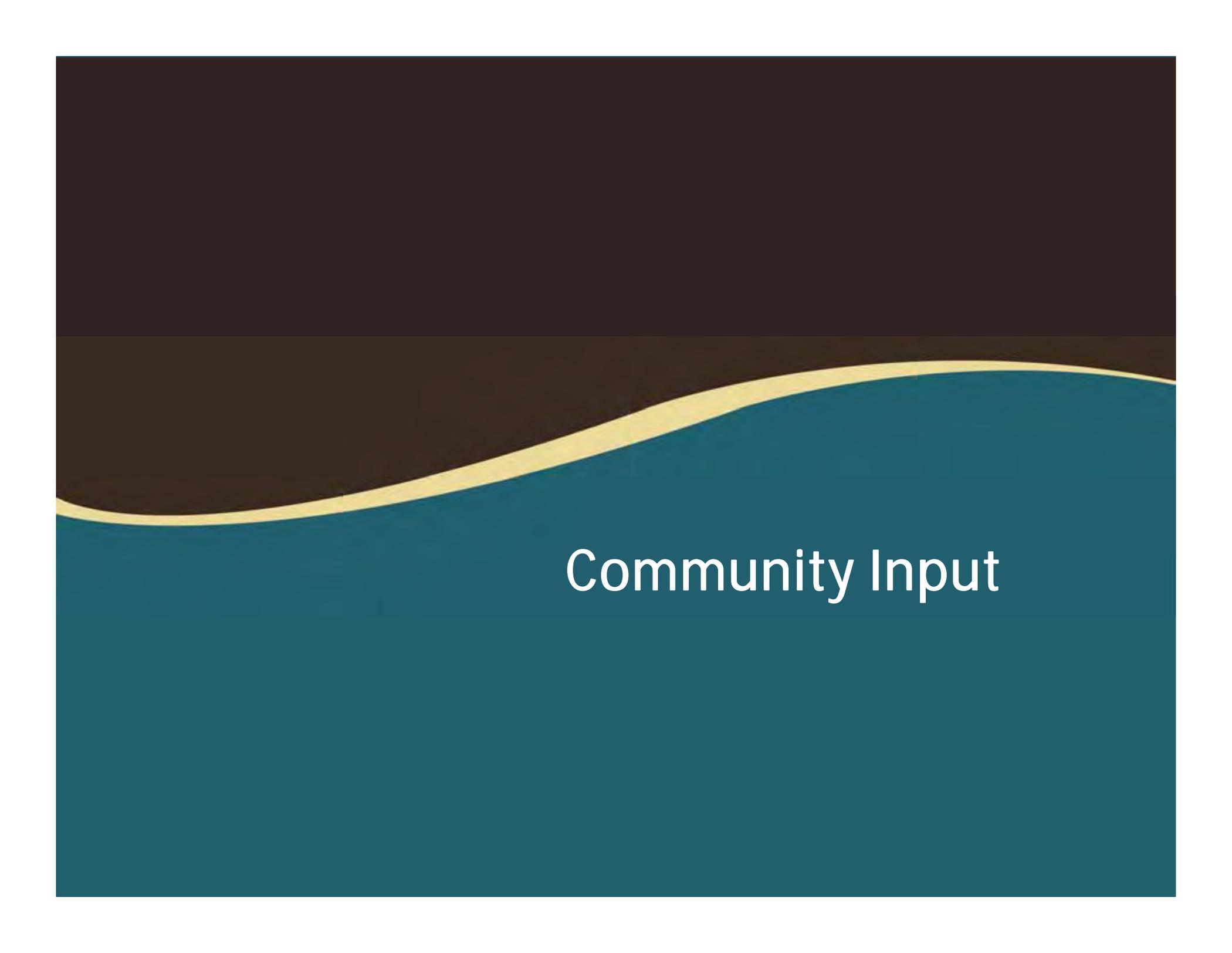


Where Are We Now: Services

- System Management
- Maintenance and Operations
- Capital Investment

Other agencies also provide these services





Community Input

Multiple, Varied Opportunities

Public Input So Far:

- Stakeholder Interviews (5)
- Focus Groups (3)
- Community Interactive Workshops (2)
- Community Questionnaire
- Project Website

Over 700 Participants!



Stakeholder Interviews

- Exploring unique perspectives
 - Boeing
 - Renton School District
 - RUFF/Planning Commissioner
 - Herons Forever
 - Skatepark advocate



Focus Groups



Discussions around a topic

- Environmental
- Recreation Service Providers
- Organized Active Outdoor Recreation



Community Interactive Workshops

Information and Exercises for Any Interested Participant

- Exploring “The Best of Renton”
- Access and Connections Needed
- Skateboarding
- Sports Facilities
- Expanded Programming
- Environment
- Community-Wide Events
- Fitness and Health



Community Questionnaire

**Renew the Legacy...
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Rennton Parks, Recreation, Open Space
and Natural Resources Plan

The City of Renton needs your help creating a new long-range plan for the community's parks, recreation facilities, programs and classes, as well as the important open spaces and natural resources. Please take a few minutes to complete this questionnaire. Your input here along with your fellow community members, will provide us with valuable information about Renton's needs and values. We are hoping to reach as many residents, employees and visitors to Renton as we can in this process so please let your friends, coworkers and family members know about this opportunity to shape the future of our community. Thank you for participating.

Tony Higashiyama
Community Services Administrator
City of Renton

1. What is your age?
1. Under 18
2. 18-24
3. 25-34
4. 35-44
5. 45-54
6. 55-64
7. 65+

2. Are you male or female? (Circle one)

3. Do you live, work or go to school in Renton?
(Check all that apply)
1. Live in Renton
2. Work in Renton
3. Go to school in Renton
4. Visiting
5. Live in nearby community

4. If you live in Renton, please tell us your neighborhood. If you don't know the name of your neighborhood, please provide the closest intersection to your home.

Alternately you can mark where you live on the map above



City of Renton
RENTON. AHEAD OF THE CURVE.

- Easy
- Accessible
 - Online
 - On Paper (Three Languages)
 - Not intended to be statistically valid (that comes later)
- Benefits of Parks and Recreation
 - Social/Community
 - Environmental
- Current Participation and Desired Programs/Activities

Project Website

Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Natural Resources Plan

city of Renton

LOGIN | HOME | SITE MAP | DOCUMENTS | CALENDAR | POLLS | SEARCH | CONTACT US

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for Renton e-alerts »

**Renew the Legacy...
Fulfill the Vision!**

Welcome! The **City of Renton** is in the process of creating a new integrated plan for the future of parks, recreation, open spaces and natural resources in our community. Your input is our most valuable tool in creating this plan and there will be many opportunities for you to get involved!

SEARCH

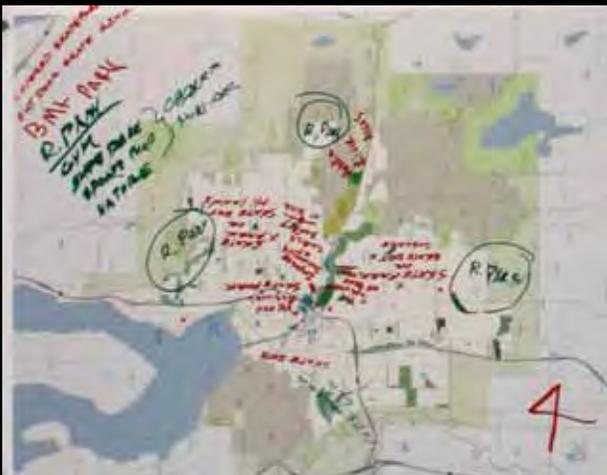
Everything 



 **Online Questionnaire Results Available**
Thanks to the many participants in the park system plan online questionnaire. With your help spreading the word, over 500 people...

 **tell us what you think!**

Major Themes: Overall



- Improving/Making Better Use of Natural Resources
- Bringing people together for events or social interaction
- Filling geographic gaps in service
- Heavy interest in and use of a few key parks
- Repair and maintenance of existing facilities

Major Themes: Continued

- Art and Culture
- Fitness and Health
- Focus On Youth
(Programs and Athletics)
- Environmental Programming
and Education
- Recognize Salmon as an
Important Part of Identity



Additional Findings: Facilities

- Upgraded and additional skateboarding facilities
- Willingness to pay additional fees for better sports fields
- Desire for year-round aquatics at the community center
- Partnerships and resources needed to sustain and make best use of existing facilities
- Desire to reopen activity buildings, especially the restrooms
- Complete trail connections



Additional Findings: Natural Resources



- Many opportunity sites for environmental programming
- Increased management and maintenance of natural sites is needed
- Appropriate access is a balancing act: where is protection the priority and where is access to nature?

Additional Findings: Programming

- Many ideas for new/expanded programs
 - Boating
 - Sports (youth and adult)
 - Yoga/Pilates/Tai Chi
 - Hiking, Nature Walks, Environmental Education
- Scheduling and awareness of programs may be an issue
- Adapting programs and outreach to a more diverse Renton





Assessing Community Needs

From Wants to Needs

- Public input provides a basis:
 - Current/desired use
 - Satisfaction
 - Preliminary priorities
- Evaluation of the system:
 - Access
 - Capacity
 - Program goals
- Key Analysis Questions

Renew the Legacy... Fulfill the Vision
Renton Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Natural Resources Dept.

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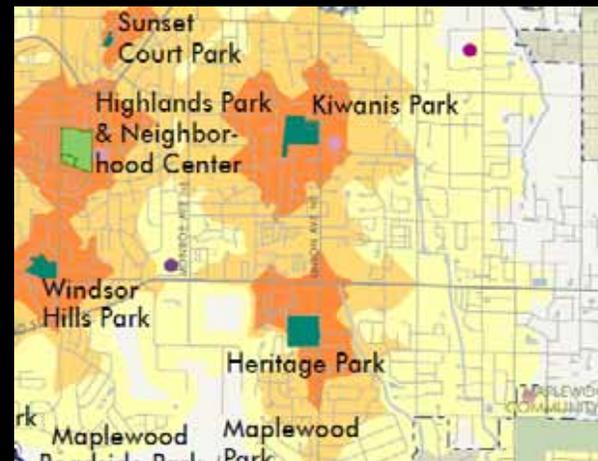
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Which recreation opportunities should be provided close to home?



When Evaluating The Need For Other Types Of Recreation Facilities, How do we balance quality versus quantity?



Which outcomes are we trying to achieve with our recreation programming?



When looking at programming decisions, what additional factors should also be considered?

- Capacity of Parks and Natural Areas
- City's Financial Capacity
 - Capital and Operations
- Competitive Environment
 - Strengths of City Recreation
 - Strengths of Other Providers
- Additional Community Desires
- Recreation Trends
 - Regional
 - National



Why are we protecting natural resources within our system of parks and open spaces?



How should we consider green infrastructure in the context of parks and open spaces?



 Benefits	Total (\$)
 Energy	\$1,205,133
 CO2	\$35,424
 Air Quality	\$252,935
 Stormwater	\$334,601
 Aesthetic/Other	\$572,882
 Total Benefits	\$2,400,975

When and how could grey infrastructure be acceptable within a park or open space?



How do other providers and facilities fit?



Next Steps:

- Committee of the Whole Briefing – March 28, 2011
- Interactive Map Exercise
- Visioning Workshop – March 29, 2011
Renton Community Center, 6:00 - 8:00pm
- Review and Finalize Planning Context and Existing Conditions
- Needs Assessment and Community Priority Survey

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