

2023 COMPREHENSIVE PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN

Whatcom County Parks & Recreation

December 14, 2023

CPROS PLAN

- Identifies priorities, needs, desires and trends of the community, and informs other planning efforts
- Requirement by the State's Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) to qualify for State and Federal grant funding-BFP, L&WCF, NOVA, WWRP
- Plan has a 6-year life for grant purposes- 3 grant cycles
- 2023 CPROS plan updates the 2016 CPROS plan and is used to update/inform County's Comprehensive Plan



WHATCOM COUNTY
COMPREHENSIVE PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN

October 2023 - DRAFT

PLAN REQUIREMENTS

RCO Required Planning Elements

1. Goals and Objectives
2. Facility Inventory
3. Public Involvement (multiple options)
4. Demand and Need Analysis
5. Capital Improvement Plan
6. Adoption Strategy

2016 CPROS PLAN

- Secured \$1,295,000 in grants for acquisition and development
- Acquired Aiston Preserve Public Access Easement in partnership with the Lummi Island Heritage Trust
- Assigned custodianship of the Glacier Cemetery
- Initiated major capital improvements at Silver Lake Park
- Added 7 miles of multi use, 4 miles of hiking, 4 miles of mountain bike trails, renovated 1 mile of existing trails, developed Chanterelle and Lake Whatcom Viewpoints, and decommissioned 2.5 miles of non-sanctioned user-built trails
- Replaced two existing playgrounds, restored historic structures, upgraded cabins, improved accessibility, added restrooms and parking

Silver Lake Park



- Main road and parking reconstruction
- Parking improvements
- Maple Creek Campground reconstruction
- Red Mt., Maple Creek Campground Shower & Restroom
- Total Project Cost: \$4,120,000



Samish Lake Playground

- Complies with CPSC playground safety guidelines
- ADA Accessible
- Total Project Cost: \$50,000



Maple Creek Park

- Steel construction
- Protected from flood damage
- Total Project Cost: \$115,000



Lighthouse Marine Park

- 7,500 SF boardwalk reconstruction
- Durable composite decking & siding
- Improved Accessibility and user safety
- Meets CPSC playground safety guidelines
- Total Project Cost: \$325,000



Nesset Farm Building Stabilization



- Historic preservation
- Funding donated by Nesset Foundation
- Total project cost: \$185,000

Lummi Island Beach Access



- Beach access improvement
- Structural repairs
- Improved Park Signage
- Total improvement cost: \$91,000

Lake Whatcom Park/Lookout Mountain Forest Preserve



- 10.2 miles of new hiking trails
- 4.3 miles of new mountain bike trails
- 1.1 miles of trail renovation
- 2.5 miles of restoration of unsanctioned trails
- Total Project Cost: \$650,000

PARK PLANNING INITIATIVES



LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN FOREST PRESERVE AND LAKE WHATCOM PARK RECREATIONAL TRAIL PLAN



June 2016

supportive + balanced + flexible + simple + responsive

Birch Bay Community Park Master Plan Report

Whatcom County Department of Parks & Recreation



Robert W. Droll, Landscape Architect, PS

April, 2017

PLANNING PROCESS

❖ INVENTORY

❖ DEMAND AND NEED ANALYSIS

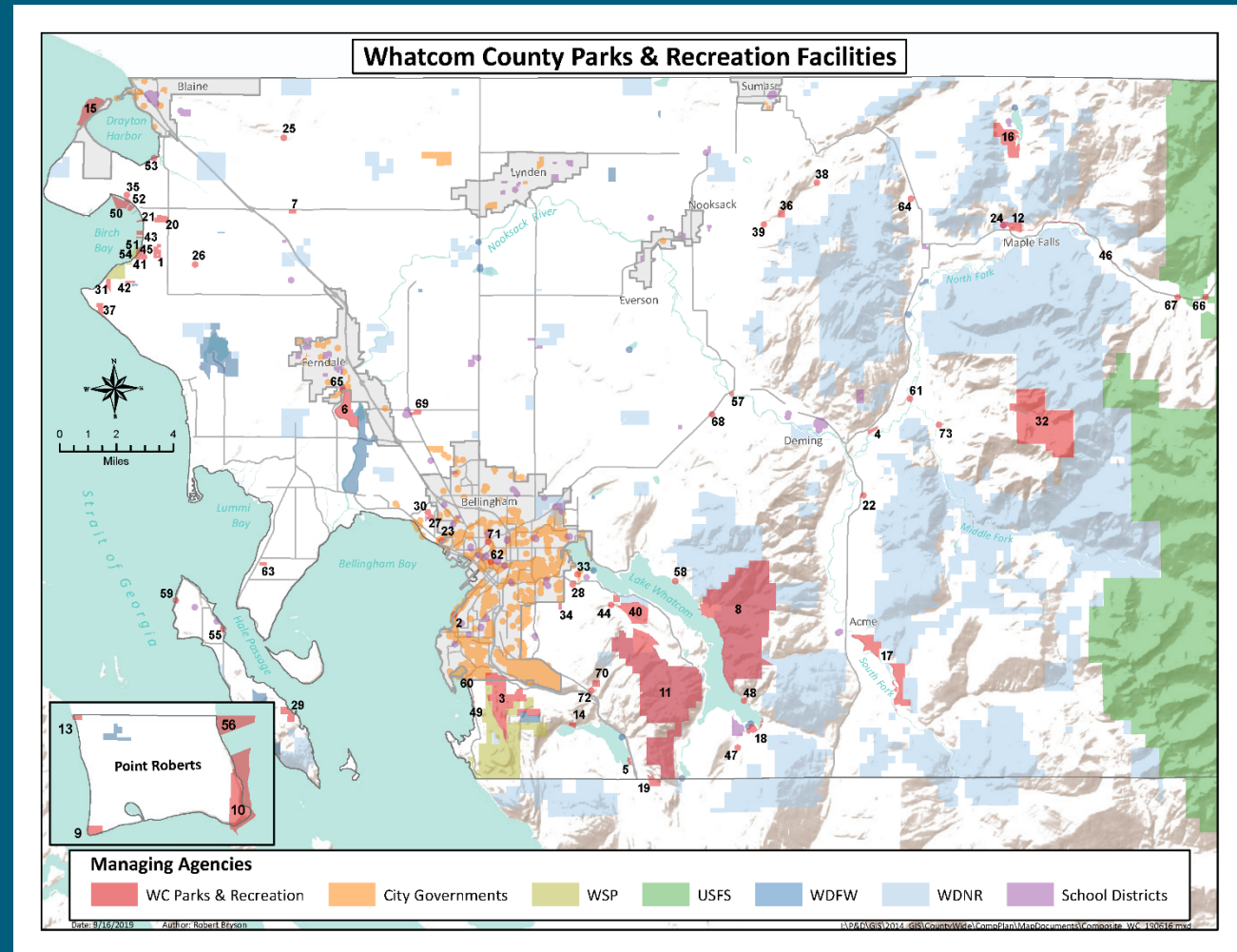
❖ GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

❖ IMPLEMENTATION AND ADOPTION

PLANNING PROCESS

❖ INVENTORY

- Regional Context
- Park Classifications
- Organizational Structure
- Facility Inventory and Condition Assessment



PLANNING PROCESS

❖ DEMAND AND NEED ANALYSIS

- Community Population and Demographics
- Park Visitation
- Level of Service Metrics
- Public Outreach

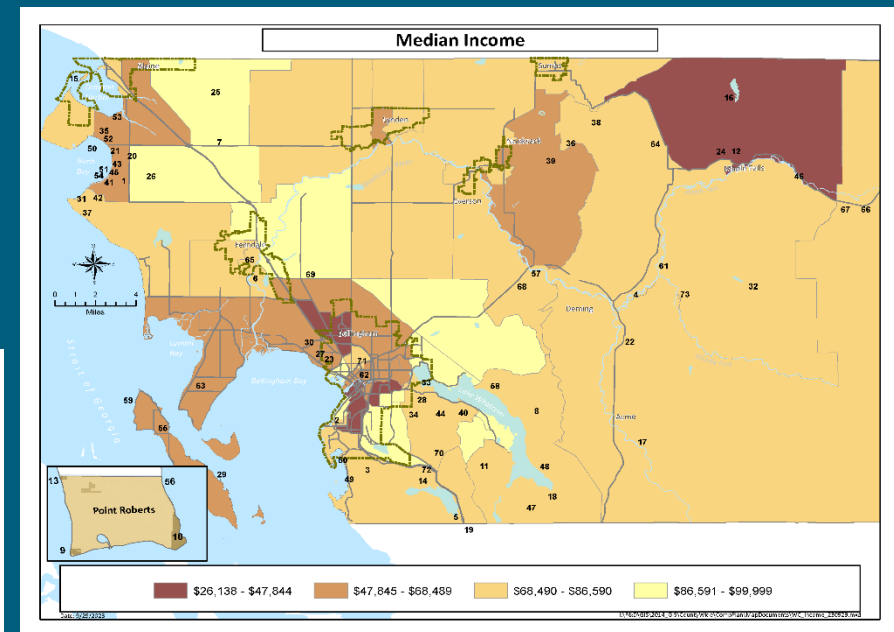
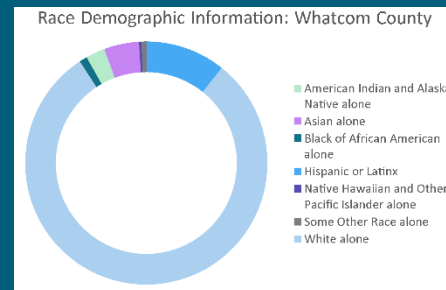
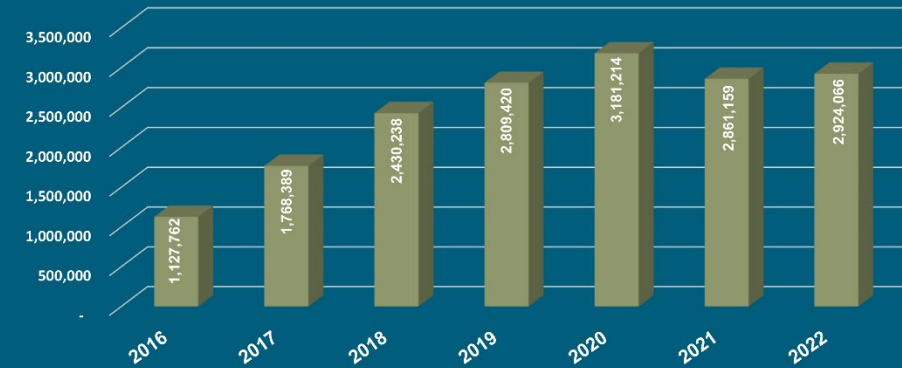
On-line Community Survey

Townhall Meetings

Park Staff Feedback

Statewide Recreational Trends

Park/Trail/Senior Center Total Attendance



NEED FOR ADDITIONAL FACILITIES

- Very high ranking
 - Waterfront and Beach Access
 - Restrooms and Parking Areas
 - Accessible Trail Options
 - Forestland Conservation Areas
 - Wildlife Habitat
 - Conservation and Natural Areas
 - Water Resources and Watershed Protection Areas
- Very low ranking
 - ATV, Motorcycle, and ORV Parks
 - Golf Courses and Driving Ranges



PLANNING PROCESS

❖ GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- GMA Planning Goals
- WCCP Planning Goals
- CPROS Goals and Objectives
 - Preserves and Open Space*
 - Historical Resources*
 - Trails, Greenways, and Scenic Byways*
 - Regional Parks and Water Access*
 - Special Use Areas and Facilities*
 - Recreational and Interpretive Programming*
 - Cultural Arts Programs*
 - Design Standards*
 - Financial Resources and Coordination*
 - Human Resources*



PLANNING PROCESS

❖ IMPLEMENTATION AND ADOPTION

- Plan recommendations:

System-wide Regional Initiatives

Site-specific Recommendations

Capital Improvement Program

Funding Sources and Partnerships



RECOMMENDATIONS

System-wide:

- *Maintain and improve existing parks, facilities, and trails.*
- *Provide more and better restrooms.*
- *Provide better trail connectivity between parks, trails, and communities.*
- *Improve accessibility at existing parks and trails for all ability levels.*
- *Improve water and shoreline access.*

Site-specific:

- *Continue improvement efforts at Silver Lake Park.*
- *HVAC replacement at the Bellingham Senior Activity Center.*
- *Improve trailhead and parking facility at Lake Whatcom Park.*
- *Road repair at Lookout Mountain Forest Preserve.*
- *Birch Bay Beach Park Restroom and Parking Improvements.*

FUNDING

REET I:

Park and non-park facilities such as senior activity centers and Plantation Rifle Range

REET II:

Park Capital Improvement Projects

Conservation Futures Fund:

Used for acquisition of parks and natural areas

Parks Special Revenue:

Restricted fund used for maintenance, operation, and parks improvements

Nesset Foundation:

Private foundation funds for restoration, improvement and operation of the Nesset Farm

Whatcom Parks & Recreation Foundation:

Private donations used for various park improvements/programs

GRANT FUNDING:

State: Department of Natural Resources, Department of Ecology, Department of Fish & Wildlife, and Recreation and Conservation Office

Federal: Coastal Management, Federal Highway Administration, National Park Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Agency, and U.S. Forest Service.

Other funding sources:

- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- Lodging and Hotel Tax (RCW 67.28.1816)
- General Fund

NEXT STEPS & QUESTIONS

- Planning Commission Recommendation
- Council Public Hearing and Adoption: January 2024
- Certification and Submittal to RCO: February 2024
- RCO Plan Certification Deadline: March 1, 2024