

# Parks, Open Space, and Trails

The City of Langley is defined, in large part, by the land and water in and around it. From the shoreline and Saratoga Passage on the north, to the forests and treelines to the west and the south; to the ridges and valleys carved by the retreat of the Vashon Glaciation, and the various wetlands and streams, each natural element contributes to the form and character of the City. Yet, a great deal of these landforms and ecosystems are not reflected in the City's current parks and open space system. Existing parks and open space features are primarily clustered in the downtown area and are situated to take advantage of the views of the Cascade Mountains, but few are situated in neighborhoods or on properties that showcase the other unique land forms and ecosystems located in the City.

This Parks, Open Space, and Trails Element seeks to articulate a proactive strategy to preserve a variety of these distinct landforms and ecosystems, and create an integrated parks and open space system that connects these features. This strategy has been developed through exploring the following questions related to parks and open space:

1. What types of parks and open space do we have?
2. What types of parks and open space do we want?
3. How do we get to our desired future?
4. What are our priorities?
5. How do we pay for our future actions?

The element is organized around the responses to each of these questions.

In the first section, "What types of parks and open space do we have," the element presents an inventory and analysis of the existing park and open space system inside and outside the City, as well as results of a parks survey conducted in 2009. This inventory and analysis presents major findings about the characteristics and use of the existing parks and open space facilities as well as major themes associated with the existing parks and open space system.

The second section, "What types of parks and open space do we want," builds on this analysis of current conditions and articulates a series of plans for future parks, open space and trails. These plans feed directly into a discussion of Level of Service Standards that establish the essential facilities that must be provided to meet the residents of Langley's basic needs and expectations for the parks and open space system. The third section, "How do we get to our desired future," continues this future-oriented focus and establishes the goals and policies that the City of Langley should follow to establish the parks and open space system.

The fourth and fifth sections of the element, "What are our priorities" and "How do we pay for our future actions," present priority actions that should be accomplished by the City of Langley, as well as a funding plan for the projects to be conducted during the next six years. This identification of the priority projects and financing plan, articulated

through the Capital Improvement Program for Parks and Open Space, represent key mechanisms to help the City coordinate its physical and fiscal planning and move from plan to action.

This element has been developed in accordance with state law and the County-wide Planning Policies, and has been integrated with all other planning elements of the Comprehensive Plan to ensure consistency within the document. The plan has particularly been developed in line with the goals related to open space and recreation in the Growth Management Act: retain open space; enhance recreational opportunities; conserve fish and wildlife habitat; increase access to natural resource lands and water; and develop parks and recreation facilities.

## **What Parks and Open Space Do We Have?**

The purpose of this section of the element is to identify the existing characteristics of the parks and open space system. The section identifies the existing parks and open space features that serve the City of Langley, including the facilities inside and outside of the City of Langley, the type of amenities that can be found at each of these facilities, and citizen's perceptions and use of the features. The section also identifies key strengths and deficiencies of the existing parks and open space system.

### **PARKS AND NATURAL AREAS OUTSIDE LANGLEY**

Several parks and open space facilities serve the south end of Whidbey Island. The region contains protected and public land that offers access to the beach, protects wetlands and forests, and offers active use park features (see Table 1).

**TABLE 1: Parks and Open Space Outside of Langley City Limits**

	Proximity to Langley (in Miles)	Size (in Acres)	Public Access	Amenities	Management Organization
South Whidbey Elementary School Grounds	2.0	60.0	Y	One indoor multi-use room/ gym. Two outdoor covered play areas, two soccer fields, a playground, 40 acre forest, trails	SWSD #206
South Whidbey Primary School Grounds	2.2	34.2	Y	Indoor multi-use room, covered basketball court, playfield, covered play area, playground.	SWSD #206
South Whidbey Community Park	2.3	120.0	Y	Large playset, two baseball fields, two softball fields, trails, several soccer fields	SWPR
Metcalf Reserve	2.5	40.0	Y	Forest, trails, wildlife habitat and viewing	Metcalf Trust
Boose Conservation Easement	2.8	10.0	N	Wildlife habitat, forest, aquifer recharge area	Private/WCLT
Saratoga Woods	2.8	118.0	Y	Forest, trails, wildlife habitat and viewing	IC/ WCLT
South Whidbey High School Grounds	2.8	48.4	Y	Two large indoor gyms. Outdoor basketball court, softball field, baseball field, soccer field, football field, track, and seven tennis courts	SWSD #206
Lone Lake County Passive-Use Park	3.3	30	Y	Wildlife habitat, forest	IC
Lone Lake	3.4	5.0 + Lake	Y	Boat ramp, restroom, picnic area	IC
Maxwelton Valley Trustland Trails	4.0	200.0	Y	Mature forest at headwaters of salmon-bearing Maxwelton Creek, trails	SWPR
Maxwelton Wetlands Preserve	4.1	24.0	PO	Wildlife habitat, scenic vistas, wetlands and stream, watershed protection	WCLT
Putney Woods	4.3	600.0	Y	Trails, mature forest/rare plants, wildlife habitat, watershed protection	IC
Goss Lake	4.6	1.0 + Lake	Y	Boat ramp, fishing, swim area, picnic area	IC
Whidbey Institute Conservation Easement	4.7	59.0	Y	Forest, hiking trails, educational use	WI/ WCLT
Zimmerman Conservation Easement	4.8	28.0	N	Forest, agricultural land, shoreline, and wildlife habitat	Private/WCLT
Forest Forever Conservation Easement	5.0	176.0	PO	Wildlife habitat, forest, watershed protection	WCLT
<b>Total Acreage within a Five Mile Radius</b>		<b>1553.6</b>			
Useless Bay Conservation Easement	5.4	54.0	N	Wildlife habitat, wetlands/streams, farmland, aquifer recharge, views	Private/WCLT
Maguerite Braun Memorial Park	5.6	13.0	Y	Trails, fenced off leash area, picnic shelter	IC
Dan Porter Park	5.9	8.5	Y	Ballfields, playground, trails, tennis court, picnic shelter, restrooms	IC
High Point TLT (2009, 50-year lease)	6	40	Future	Stand of mature forest	IC
Maxwelton Salmon Adventure (Outdoor Classroom)	6.0	6.0	Y	Wetlands, salmon-bearing creek, trails, shelter	SWSD #206
Skyline West TLT	6.0	40.0	Future	Wildlife habitat, water quality protection	IC
Clinton Beach Park	6.2	0.6	Y	Beach access, fishing dock, restrooms, temporary mooring dock	POSW
Deer Lake	6.2	0.75 + Lake	Y	Boat ramp, fishing dock, swim area, restroom	IC
Clinton Watershed TLT (2009, 50-year lease)	6.5	40.0	N	Water source, perennial creek with native vegetation	Clinton Water Dist.
Freeland Wetlands	6.7	39.5	Y	Wetlands, forest, trails, wildlife and bird habitat	Friends of Freeland
Brainers Road Trust Land Transfer (TLT)	7.1	40.0	Future	Forest and riparian habitat	IC
Dave Mackie Park/ Maxwelton Beach	7.8	5.0 + Beach	Y	Boat Ramp, playground, restroom, beach access, ballfield, picnic shelters	IC/ POSW
Freeland Park	7.9	17.0	Y	Boat ramp, playground, picnic shelter, pavillion	IC/ POSW
Deer Lagoon	8.2	326	Y	Wetlands, wildlife and bird habitat	IC
Glendale Creek TLT	8.3	40.0	Future	Mature forest connected to Hammons Preserve	IC
Hammons Preserve	8.3	9.5	Y	Next to Glendale Creek TLT, wildlife habitat, wetland/stream,heritage orchard	WCLT
Mutiny Bay	8.9	Unknown	Y	Boat ramp	IC/ POSW
<b>Total Acreage within a 5-10 Mile Radius</b>		<b>679.9</b>			
Possession Point Park	10.1	30.0	Y	Boat ramp, shoreline, trail	POSW
Double Bluff	10.7	0.75 + Beach	Y	Beach access, dog off leash area, picnic area	IC/ POSW
Wahl Road TLT (2009, 50-year lease)	10.8	20.0	Future	Wildlife habitat, low impact recreation	IC
Bush Point Boat Launch	11.8	4.0	Y	Boat ramp	POSW
South Whidbey State Park + Ryan Addition	13.8	354.3	Y	Trails, beach access, picnic shelter, campsites	WSP
<b>Total Acreage within a 10-15 Mile Radius</b>		<b>409.05</b>			

**LEGEND**

Gray=Includes School Structures  
 IC=Island County  
 POSW=Port of South Whidbey  
 SWSD #206=South Whidbey School District

TLT=Trust Land Transfer  
 WCLT=Whidbey Camano Land Trust  
 WI=Whidbey Institute  
 WSP=Washington State Parks

Within a five mile radius of the City of Langley, there are approximately 1553.60 acres preserved for recreational or habitat purposes. This acreage is largely clustered in two areas. One major cluster of protected land is associated with the Saratoga Woods, Putney Woods, Forest Forever and Metcalf Trust lands, which provide around 934.0 acres of protected land northwest of the City of Langley, and the other area includes the lands associated with the South Whidbey School District, Maxwelton Valley Trustland Trails and South Whidbey Community Park. The lands of Community Park, the Trustland

Trails and the school district offer 462.6 acres of land, including active and passive use features, approximately 2.5 miles south of the City on Maxwellton Road.

In addition to the areas within five miles of the City of Langley, 679.88 acres of protected land exist within five to ten miles of the City and 409.05 acres of land exist within ten to fifteen miles of Langley. These lands include land south of the City on Maxwellton and Cultus Bay Roads, and areas west of the City, such as South Whidbey State Park.

To understand the use of these parks and open space areas on the south end of Whidbey Island by the public, a parks survey was given to community residents in 2009. As part of the survey, participants were asked the question “what are the three parks or recreation areas on South Whidbey that you use the most and what are the main reasons you visit”. Five parks and open space areas received the most responses: South Whidbey Community Park, Double Bluff, Dave Mackie Park/ Maxwellton Beach, Saratoga Woods and South Whidbey State Park (see Figure OS-1). These parks and open space areas are described below.



**South Whidbey Community Park:** South Whidbey Community Park is a 120 acre park located 2.3 miles south of the City of Langley on Maxwellton Road. The park is run by South Whidbey Parks and Recreation and serves as the main active-use park for the south end of the island. The park contains a number of active-use features, such as a large playground, a skate park, four baseball fields, five soccer fields, and a basketball court, as well as a variety of passive use features, including picnic tables and trails for hiking and biking. South Whidbey Community Park was the most used park facility outside the City of Langley according to the park survey with City residents identifying the trails and Castle Park, the large playground inside the park, as the major features that they enjoyed.

**Double Bluff:** Double Bluff Park is a 24,354 foot long beach located near Useless Bay on the southwest portion of Whidbey Island. The beach is located 10.7 miles southwest of the City of Langley and offers sandy areas of beach on its eastern portion and a rockier, cobble beach as one travels further west on the site. The beach features views of Seattle, Mount Rainier, and the Cascade and Olympic Mountains on clear days and has tide pools and other beach environments for individuals to explore. The park is the second most used park or natural area outside of the City of Langley, according to the respondents of the park survey, and is valued for its beach enjoyment activities, views, walks and off-leash dog area.

**Dave Mackie Park/ Maxwellton Beach:** Dave Mackie Park/ Maxwellton Beach is a park and beach access, co-owned by Island County and the Port of South Whidbey, that is located 7.8 miles south of Langley on Maxwellton Road. The park features a mixture of active and passive use activities including a baseball field with a grandstand, a boat ramp, picnic shelters, a play area, and beach access. Survey respondents said that they enjoyed the beach on the site, walking in the area, picnicking and watching the evening sunsets from the park.

**Saratoga Woods/ Putney Woods:** Saratoga Woods and Putney Woods are two forests that together provide a 720+ acre natural area to the west of the City of Langley. The forests provide miles of trails for hikers, bikers, runners, and back country horse riders, and offer a diverse range of landscapes for users to visit including high bluff waterfront, second growth forest and wetland environments. The area was the fourth most used south end park or natural area outside the City of Langley with park survey respondents identifying the trails and walking through the woods as the primary reason for their visits.

**South Whidbey State Park:** South Whidbey State Park is a 347 acre park, owned and operated by Washington State Parks, that is located 13.8 miles from the City of Langley. The park features a number of trails and natural features, including a remnant old-growth forest and 4,500 feet of saltwater beach access, and offers amenities such as covered picnic areas, restrooms, campsites, and an outdoor pavilion area. Respondents to the survey identified hiking through the area, as well as the mature forest, as the major features that they enjoyed about the park.

## **PARKS AND NATURAL AREAS INSIDE THE CITY OF LANGLEY**

The City of Langley contains a number of park and natural areas in addition to these regional facilities. Langley contains 10.8 acres of park land and 36.3 acres associated with natural areas.

Parks in the City of Langley are primarily community mini-parks that are located along major roads into town or in the downtown area (see Table 2 and Figure 2). Seven of the ten developed parks in the City are located in the downtown area (Cascade Walkway, Langley Park, Phil Simon Park, Robert L. Smith Park, Seawall Park, and Thomas Hladkey Memorial Park), and one park (Generation Park) is located on a major road into downtown. Only one developed park in the City currently functions as a neighborhood park.

The City contains several natural areas in addition to the park facilities. These natural areas include large City-owned parcels, such as the Coles Road Natural Area and the Well Site Natural Area, and a number of privately-owned natural areas that have been preserved as part of the recordation of a subdivision. These parks and natural areas are analyzed in detail below.

### **CITY-OWNED PARKS**

**Cascade Avenue Walkway:** The Cascade Avenue Walkway is a 1.28 acre community mini-park located in the downtown portion of Langley. The park includes the flat area east of Cascade Avenue, as well as a large portion of the bluff east of the walkway. The upland portion of the park provides interpretive signage, benches and views of the marina, Saratoga Passage and the Cascade Mountains. The sloped portion of the area is vegetated and contains no human use areas.

The walkway is the most used park by residents of the City, according to the results of the park survey, with 152 people (82.2 percent of the respondents for the park) saying that they used the site at least once a year, and 105 people (56.8 percent) saying that they used the site twelve or more times a year. Park users primarily identified the views of the surrounding natural features as the major feature of the park that they enjoyed, with 82 people responding that they appreciated the views from the walkway. Other respondents mentioned that they appreciated walking through the park, the proximity of the area to their home, and the ability to watch wildlife such as whales and birds from the park.

**TABLE 2: CITY OF LANGLEY PARK AND NATURAL AREA INVENTORY**

General Information					Ownership Type			General Type			Specific Type (FOR PARK FAC. ONLY)			Pop. Served (FOR PARK FAC. ONLY)	
Key #	Name	Size	Facilities	Critical Area on Site	City-Owned	Private	Other Public	Park Facility	Natural Area	Undev.	Park	Mini-Park	Special Use	Comm.	Neigh.
1	Cascade Walkway	1.28	Benches, interpretive signs	x	x			x				x		x	
2	Generation Park	0.35	Playground, picnic tables		x			x				x		x	
3	Langley Park	0.15	Picnic tables, shelter, chairs, art		x			x				x		x	
4	Langley-Woodmen Cemetery	6.06	Cemetery	x	x			x					x	x	
5	Robert L. Smith Park (Boy and Dog)	0.15	Picnic tables, statue, beach		x			x				x		x	
6	Seawall Park	1.44	Picnic tables, trail, benches	x	x			x				x		x	
7	The Cedars Subdivision-Tract 100	0.65	Playground, benches	x	x			x				x			x
8	Thomas Hladkey Memorial Park	0.25	Benches	x	x			x				x		x	
9	Coles Road Natural Area (Across from WWTP)	14.55	Trail	x	x				x						
10	Langley Well Site Natural Area	8.17	Water pump/ Trails	x	x				x						
11	The Meadows Natural Area	2.14	None	x	x				x						
12	The Cedars Subdivision-Tract 105	0.51	None	x	x				x						
13	Debruyne Right of Way	0.52	None	x	x					x					
14	Mildred Anderson and Faye Bangston Park (Highlands)	1.36	None		x					x					
15	Park Right of Way	0.50	None	x	x					x					
16	Noble Cliff Subdivision-Tract A	1.84	-	x		x			x						
17	Noble Cliff Subdivision-Tract C	0.41	Trail			x			x						
18	The Cedars Subdivision-Tract 101	2.19	-	x		x			x						
19	The Cedars Subdivision-Tract 104	2.27	-	x		x			x						
20	The Cedars Subdivision-Tract 108	0.89	-	x		x			x						
21	The Cedars Subdivision-Tract 109	0.19	-	x		x			x						
22	The Cedars Subdivision-Tract 110	0.39	-	x		x			x						
23	The Highlands PUD-Tract A	?	Trail			x			x						
24	Woodside Subdivision-Tract C	2.12	-	x		x			x						
25	Woodside Subdivision-Tract D	0.63	-	x		x			x						
26	Phil Simon Park (Port of South Whidbey)	0.46	Picnic tables, restrooms, boat launch, dock	x			x	x				x		x	
	<b>Total Acreage</b>	<b>49.50</b>			<b>38.10</b>	<b>10.94</b>	<b>0.46</b>	<b>10.80</b>	<b>36.32</b>	<b>2.39</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4.74</b>	<b>6.06</b>	<b>10.15</b>	<b>0.65</b>



# City of Langley

## Existing Parks/ Natural Areas

- City-Owned
- Privately-Owned
- Other Public
- Stream

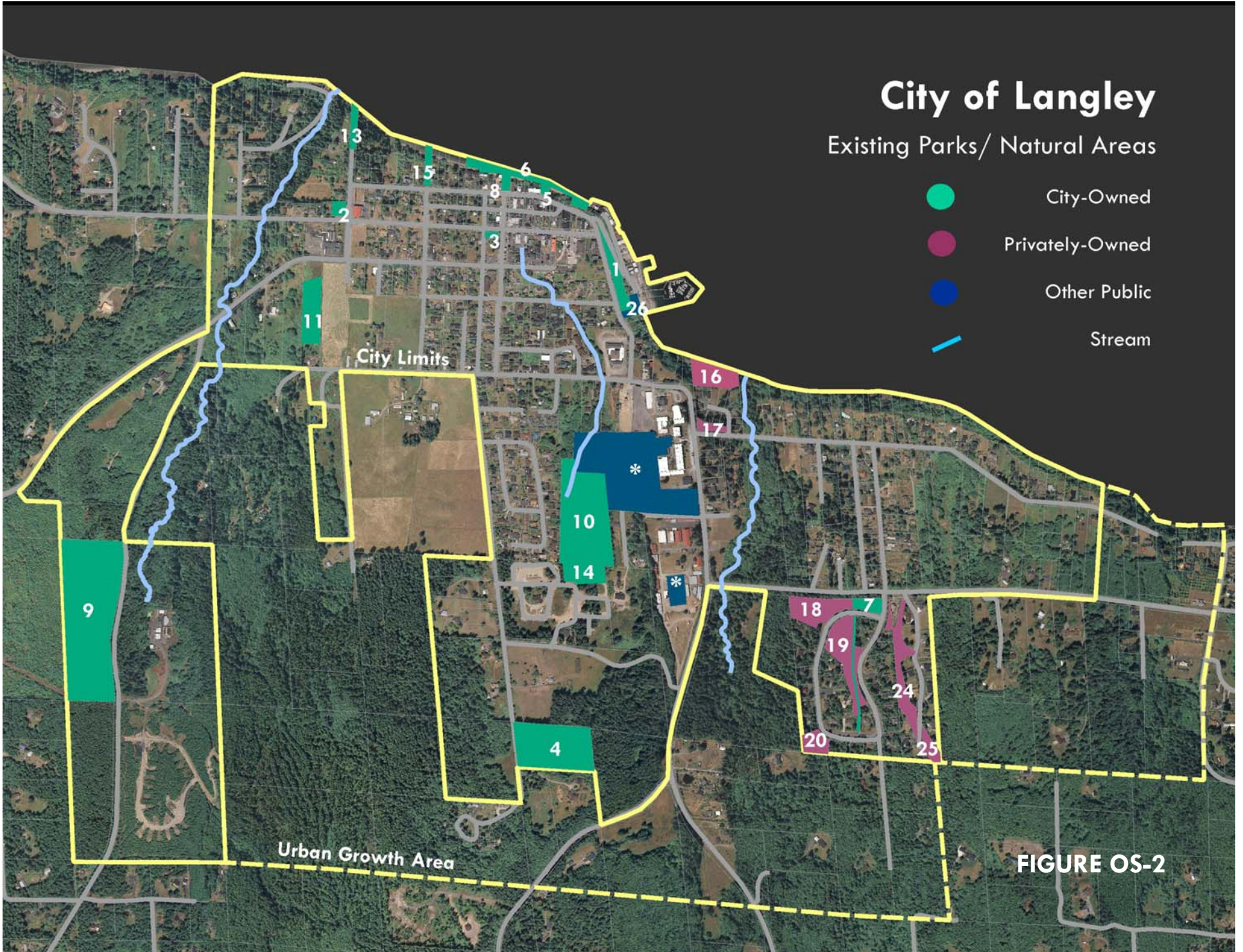


FIGURE OS-2

**Generation Park:** Generation Park is a 0.35 acre community mini-park located at the northwest portion of the Second Street and DeBruyn Avenue intersection. The park was constructed by the Langley Community Club in 2005 on a site previously occupied by the City of Langley maintenance facility, and the area features picnic tables and one of the two City-owned swing and slide play structures. The park was identified as one of the least used as part of the parks survey, with 116 people (or 66 percent of the respondents for the park) saying that they visited the area zero times over the course of a year and only 9 people (5.1 percent) saying that they visited it twelve or more times a year. Respondents that utilized the area said that the park was a good place for kids and that they appreciated the play set in the park.

**Langley Park:** Langley Park is a 0.15 acre community mini-park located at the southwest portion of the Second Street and Anthes Avenue intersection. The park was donated to the City of Langley in 1998 by Nancy Nordhoff and contains a number of unique features, including a shelter constructed of metal and recycled wood, a prayer wheel, and brightly painted lawn chairs and tables. The park is the fifth most used park in the City, according to the results of the parks survey, with 142 people (79.3 percent of the respondents for the park) saying that they visited the area at least once a year and 37 people (20.6 percent) saying that they visited the park twelve or more times per year. Survey respondents said that they appreciated the “charming,” “sweet,” “funky” and “whimsical” nature of the park and identified the park’s central location as a major draw for their use.

**Langley-Woodmen Cemetery:** The historic Langley-Woodman Cemetery is a 6.06 acre special-use park located along Al Anderson Avenue in the southern portion of the City of Langley. The area, while not containing features traditionally associated with a park, combines unique gravesites and tombstones, with the surrounding natural environment to provide a peaceful, contemplative environment for residents of the City.

The cemetery is used moderately by residents of the City according to the park survey, with 56.5 percent of the total respondents for the cemetery saying that they visited at least once a year and 18.5 percent saying that they used the site twelve or more times a year. Individuals that made use of the area said that they appreciated the “peaceful,” “quiet” and “serene” qualities of the cemetery, the trees and natural setting, and the ability to walk to and through the area.

**Mildred Anderson and Faye Bangston Park:** Mildred Anderson and Faye Bangston Park is a 1.36 acre undeveloped neighborhood park that was donated to the City of Langley as part of recordation of the Highlands Planned Unit Development. The park is located south of the Well Site Natural Area and has a trail connection with the natural area. The park contains no other amenities at this time.

**Robert L. Smith Park (Boy and Dog Park):** Robert L. Smith Park, or Boy and Dog Park, is a 0.15 acre passive use community mini-park that is located in the middle of the First Street business core. The park was donated to the City in 1969 by Langley on Whidbey Island, Incorporated (of which park namesake Robert L. Smith was a partner) and the area features two of the most iconic images associated with the City of Langley:

the Georgia Gerber “Boy and Dog” sculpture and the view of the Cascade Mountains overlooking the Saratoga Passage. The park contains several benches to enjoy these features, as well as landscaped areas and stairs that provide access to Seawall Park.

The park is the second most used in the City of Langley, according to the survey data, with 161 respondents for the park (87.0 percent) saying that they visited the site at least once a year and 86 individuals (46.5 percent) saying that they visited the site twelve or more times in a year. Park users identified the view from the park as the primary feature that they enjoyed; however, a number of individuals also identified items such as the benches, statue, stairs to Seawall Park, and using the site for gathering or people-watching as important features of the park.

**Seawall Park:** Seawall Park is a linear 1.44 acre community mini-park that was created in 1975 when the seawall was constructed along the Saratoga Passage. The park offers 1140 feet of saltwater beach access; views of Saratoga Passage, Camano Island, and the Cascade Mountains; and amenities such as totem poles, a walking trail, beach access, benches and picnic tables. The park abuts private property on its southern side, and this neighboring undeveloped property makes the park area appear larger than its actual size. The neighboring private property includes flat portions of the land adjacent to the park, as well as the bluff that divides the park from First Street.

The park is the third most used park by residents of the City, according to the respondents to the park survey, with 158 people (83.3 percent of respondents for the park) saying that they visited at least once a year and 63 people (33.2 percent) saying that they visited twelve or more times in a year. Survey respondents said that they primarily valued the park’s proximity and access to the water and the scenic views from the park; a number of respondents also said that they enjoyed the peaceful nature of the area, its benches, its walkability, and the park’s proximity to downtown.

**The Cedars Subdivision-Tract 100:** Tract 100 of the Cedars is a 0.65 acre neighborhood mini-park that was donated to the City of Langley as part of the creation of the Cedars subdivision. The park features one picnic table and one of the two City-owned play structures in Langley. The park is the least used park in the City according to the parks survey, with 143 respondents (85.1 percent of the total respondents for the park) saying that they visited the park zero times in a year and only 5 people (2.9 percent) saying that they used the park twelve or more times a year. Several respondents said that they did not know that the park existed, where the park was located, or had never visited the area.

**Thomas Hladkey Memorial Park:** Thomas Hladkey Memorial Park is a 0.25 acre community park located at the north end of the Anthes Avenue right-of-way. The park, named after a former Public Works Director for the City of Langley, has been devoted to public use as a right-of-way since the creation of the 1890 Plat of Langley and the area originally provided access to the first marina in Langley. The park was recently redeveloped as part of the Two Totems construction project, a mixed-use development

located west of the park, and the area now includes three benches, a whale bell, landscaping and interpretive signage.

The park receives moderate use, according to the respondents of the parks survey, with 123 people (70.7 percent of the respondents for the park) saying that they visited at least once a year and 32 people (18 percent) saying that they used the park twelve or more times in a year. Survey respondents said the views from the park and the access that the park provides to Seawall Park were the primary reasons that they used the area.

**DeBruyn and Park Right-of-way ends:** The right of way ends on DeBruyn and Park Avenue have been dedicated for public use since the original platting of Langley. These areas have long been thought of as potential mini-park locations; however, neither of these areas has ever been utilized as such. The two right of way ends are located high on the Saratoga Passage bluff and could provide access to the beach if a stairway or lift were constructed to connect the top of the bluff to the shore.

## **OTHER PUBLIC LAND USED FOR PARKS AND RECREATION**

**Island County Fairgrounds:** The fairgrounds are a 13.98 acre site that holds the annual Island County Fair. The grounds include a variety of outdoor spaces and buildings, including an arena, stables and exhibit centers that offer the opportunity for individuals to conduct specialized recreational activities associated with livestock. The fairgrounds area also offers space for a variety of special recreational events including relay races.

**Phil Simon Park:** Phil Simon Park is a 0.46 acre community mini-park that was acquired by the City of Langley in 1975 and transferred to the Port of South Whidbey in 2009. The park is located south of the marina and the combination of the park and marina are the fourth most used recreation area in the City. 146 people (or 78.4 percent of respondents for the park) said that they visited the site at least once per year and 48 individuals (25.8 percent of respondents for the park) said that they used the site twelve or more times per year.

**Langley Middle School:** The Langley Middle School and school grounds is a site located west of Camano Avenue that offers the largest and greatest array of playfields and space for organized sports found within the City of Langley. The school grounds offer a number of outdoor sport fields including two basketball courts; two baseball, softball or T-ball fields; a football field (that is also used for ultimate Frisbee); a soccer field; and a track. Additional recreational facilities, including three gyms, are contained inside the school complex, and are used by South Whidbey Parks and Recreation to provide recreational opportunities for youth and adults.

The outdoor fields on the school grounds receive little to moderate use according to the parks survey, with 73 people (41.2 percent of respondents) saying that they used the site at least once a year and only 25 people (14.1 percent) saying that they used the site twelve or more times in a year. Respondents that used the area said they liked the flat open space provided by the fields, walking in the area, and playing sports on the grounds.

## **CITY-OWNED NATURAL AREAS**

**Coles Road Natural Area:** The Coles Road Natural Area is a 14.55 acre open space located in the southwest portion of the City Langley. The area features a mixture of recently logged forests and older trees, and contains an informal pedestrian trail that provides access to the land surrounding the Puget Sound Energy distribution station. No long-term plans have been developed for the use or management of the area.

### **Langley Well-Site Natural Area**

The Langley Well-Site Natural Area is an 8.17 acre site that houses the wells and well house for the City of Langley. The site is located directly west of the institutional uses of Camano Avenue (the Fairgrounds and Langley Middle School) and directly east of the residential uses along Al Anderson Road (the Highlands PUD and Northview Subdivision). The area is primarily forested and contains one informal trail along its western portion. No long-term management plan has been developed for the area.

**Meadows Natural Area:** The Meadows Natural Area is a 2.14 acre parcel that was given to the City of Langley as part of the recordation of the Meadows Planned Unit Development. The area includes a portion of the wetland complex that runs from Coles Road to near Third Street. No plans have been made about the use or management of the site.

## **PRIVATELY-OWNED NATURAL AREAS**

The City of Langley also has 10.9 plus acres of privately-owned natural areas. These areas have been dedicated as open space as part of the recordation of a subdivision, but are owned and maintained by a homeowners' association, not the City of Langley. Privately-owned natural areas exist within the Cedars, Noble Cliff and Woodside Subdivisions, as well as the Highlands Planned Unit Development, and these areas function to preserve critical areas such as steep slopes (in subdivisions like Noble Cliff, the Cedars and Woodside); buffer development from roads (in the Cedars, Highlands and Noble Cliff); and provide amenities such as trails (in Noble Cliff and the Highlands).

## **CRITICAL AREAS**

In addition to these parks and natural areas, the City and Urban Growth Area has over 250 acres of critical areas and their buffers. These critical areas include steep slopes, streams, and wetlands and are protected under the Critical Areas Ordinance of the City of Langley (see Figure OS-3).

# City of Langley

## Existing Critical Areas

-  Wetland
-  Steep Slope
-  Steep Slope Buffer
-  Stream

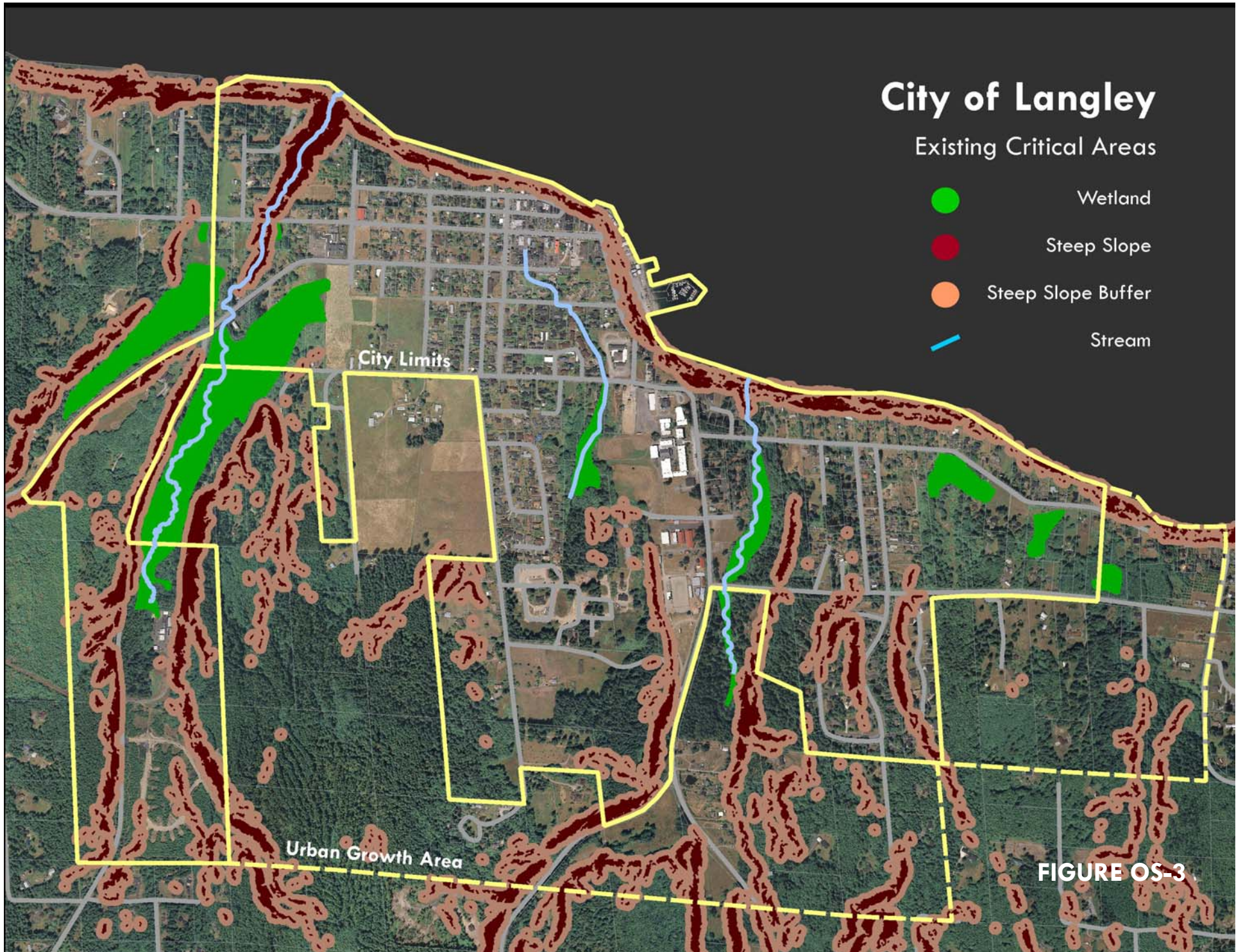


FIGURE OS-3

**Steep Slopes:** The City of Langley and Urban Growth Area contain a number of linear bands of steep slopes that travel through and around the planning area. Most of these bands were created by the retreat and meltwater of the Vashon Glaciation, which formed a number of north trending steep slope systems; however, one belt of steep slopes along the Saratoga Passage was formed more recently through the process of coastal erosion. These steep slope systems display the geologic history of Whidbey Island, and in many instances merge with areas of streams and wetlands within the valleys to form larger natural areas of land that are currently protected under the Critical Areas Ordinance.

**Streams:** Three streams exist in the City of Langley: Saratoga Creek, Brookhaven Creek and Noble Creek. These streams are generally narrow in width, rarely exceeding four feet, and are fully contained within the City Limits and the Urban Growth Area. Nonetheless, each of these streams is unique.

Brookhaven Creek has contributed a great deal to the development of Langley. Initial buildings in the City were located near the creek and early founders utilized the relatively short bluff associated with the outlet of the creek as the logical location for a marina. Early citizens also utilized the water from the creek as a water source. This historic import and the process of the City growing around the stream has made Brookhaven Creek the most urbanized and altered stream within the City. The stream has been put into culverts and pipes in a number of locations, the stream course has been altered, and the wetlands previously associated with the stream have been filled. Houses and other developments have also been placed in the stream's riparian area.

At the opposite extreme, Saratoga Creek is perhaps the most natural stream within the City. The creek is piped under two roads and is piped an additional 250 feet to the stream's outlet to the Saratoga Passage; however, little development has occurred around the stream and the stream corridor retains a number of unique natural features. The creek begins in a large forested wetland that contains a mixture of alders and cedars of varying age, including a number of snags and fallen trees that are useful for wildlife habitat. Traveling north from this wetland, the stream descends a steep ravine that is 110 feet deep in some areas. This ravine depth is especially striking given the fact that only a four foot wide stream is now flowing through the area.

Noble Creek follows a similar path to the Puget Sound as Saratoga Creek. Noble Creek begins in a forested wetland south of Sandy Point Road, progress through a culvert under two roads, and then descends to the Saratoga Passage via a ravine north of Edgecliff Road.

**Wetlands:** A number of wetlands are also located throughout the City of Langley and the Urban Growth Area. These wetlands are located in valleys associated with streams and in areas of poorly draining soil that are not associated with streams. Areas of wetlands exist along Saratoga, Brookhaven and Noble Creeks, as well as the eastern portion of the Edgecliff/ Sandy Point area.

## **MAJOR THEMES FROM THE INVENTORY AND PARKS SURVEY**

Based on this overview of the existing parks and open space system, several themes and issues emerge. These themes include the following items.

- 1. A Narrow Range of Landscapes and Ecosystems.** Existing parks and natural areas showcase a narrow range of the landscapes and ecosystems found in the City of Langley. Several parks offer views of the Saratoga Passage and Cascade Mountains, but few parks or natural areas offer access to farmland, forests, ravines, wetlands, stream corridors, or steep slope areas.
- 2. The Distribution of Parks and Natural Areas.** Existing parks and natural areas are not well distributed throughout the City and Urban Growth Area. Existing parks and natural areas accessible to the public (and known by the public) are primarily located in the historic central portion of the City, and several neighborhoods have no easy access to a park or natural area.
- 3. An Integrated Open Space System.** Existing park and natural features do not form an integrated open space system. Current parks and natural areas exist as distinct entities and have minimal habitat or pedestrian connections between each feature.
- 4. Varied Appreciation of Parks.** The use and appreciation of the parks system by residents varies widely between parks. Existing parks containing views of the Saratoga Passage and the Cascade Mountains are highly valued and used by residents of the City, but some parks, including facilities with playgrounds, are only minimally used.
- 5. The Prevalence of Passive Use Mini-parks.** Existing parks in the City of Langley are primarily passive use mini-parks. Few park facilities are over an acre in size or offer the opportunity for a mixture of passive and active uses.
- 6. Underutilized City-owned Natural Areas.** Existing City-owned natural areas are underutilized for recreational or habitat purposes. City-owned natural areas encompass over fifty percent of the parks and open space lands located within Langley and have the potential to provide additional public access or improved habitat.
- 7. An Incomplete Trail System.** Few publically accessible trails exist in the City and Urban Growth Area. Trails that exist are fragmented and were created, in many instances, without a larger trail system in mind.
- 8. Maintenance and Appearance.** Several existing parks and natural areas are maintained poorly and have a substandard appearance and few plans exist for the long-term enhancement and maintenance of the areas.

- 9. The Importance of Critical Areas.** Existing critical areas and their buffers provide a foundational element for the parks and open space system. Critical areas form a series of belts through and around the City and the Urban Growth Area, are currently protected under the Critical Areas Ordinance of the City of Langley, and represent key features that show the geologic and ecological history of the area.

## What Parks and Open Space Do We Want?

Based on these major themes from the inventory, as well as citizen input about desired park facilities (see Appendix 1), the Parks and Open Space Commission developed a number of goals for the parks and open space system. These goals include: the formation of an integrated open space system; the distribution of park and open space features throughout the City and Urban Growth Area; the creation and preservation of a diversity of park and open space types; the creation of a trail system; improved functionality, including signage, for each park; and improved maintenance for the parks and open space system.

The Parks and Open Space Commission developed the Core Areas and Corridors concept to provide a framework to implement a number of these concepts, especially those related to the preservation of open space. This Core Area and Corridor concept seeks to preserve large areas of open space adjacent to a series of connecting belts; envisions core areas as large habitat areas or areas of open space; and envisions critical areas or other connecting features as corridors to ensure the larger areas are connected. The Core Area and Corridor concept is summarized by the following six principles:

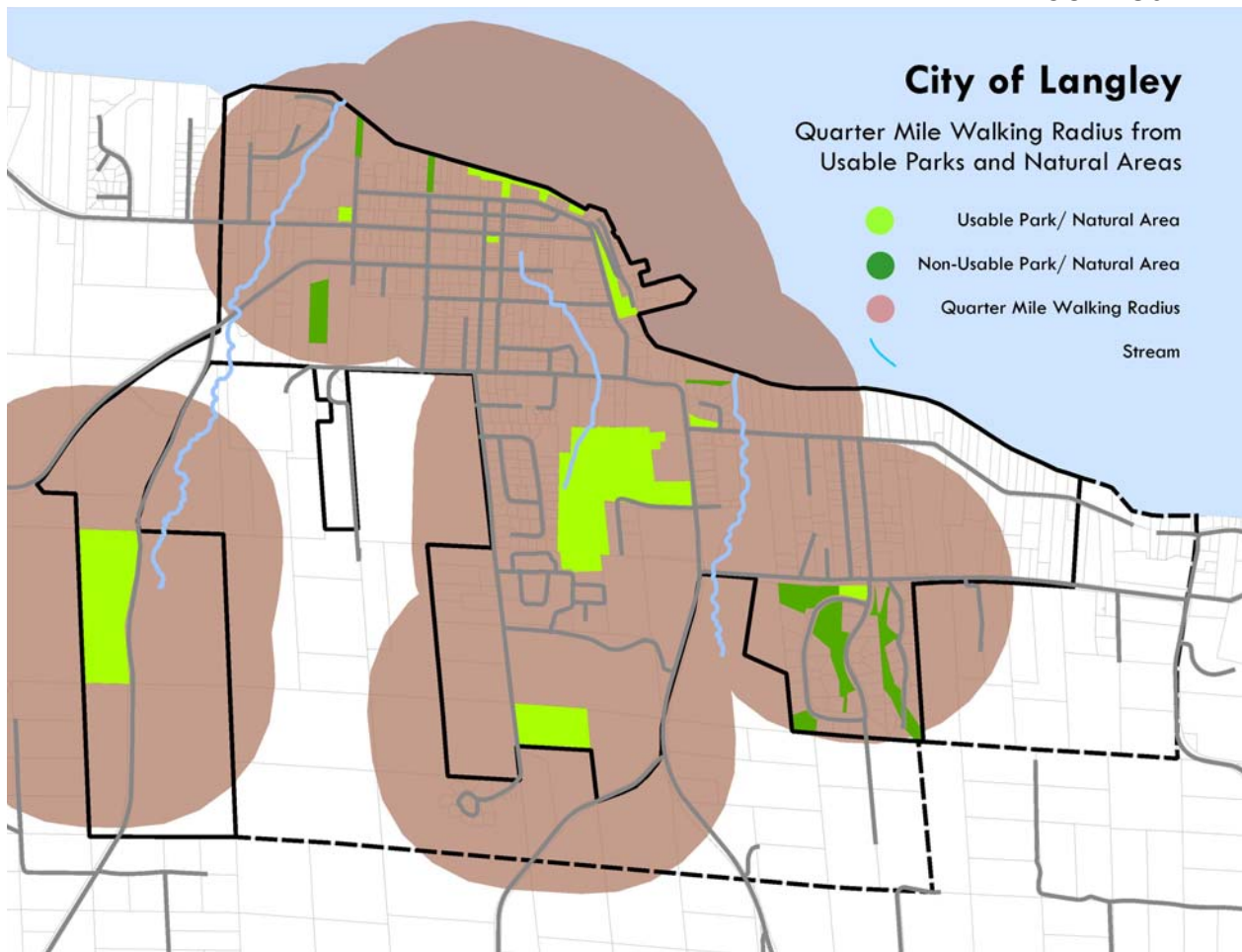
1. Critical areas are the foundation for the parks and open space system;
2. Critical areas form a pre-existing belt/ corridor system around much of the City of Langley;
3. For habitat and open space purposes, the corridors should be as wide as possible;
4. Core habitat or open space areas should be located adjacent to the corridor system;
5. A diversity of core areas should be provided; and
6. Core areas should be as large as possible for habitat and open space purposes.

This concept as well as the general goals for the parks and open space system informed the Level of Service Standards, or standards essential to meet the community's basic needs and expectations, for parks, open space, and trails.

### **PARKS**

- Each park fulfills a recreational or leisure need that makes it attractive to residents or visitors.
- Each park has safe access for pedestrians to visit the park.
- Each residential or commercial space in the City is within a five minute or quarter mile walking distance of a park or natural area with facilities that allow public use access (see Figure OS-4).

FIGURE OS-4

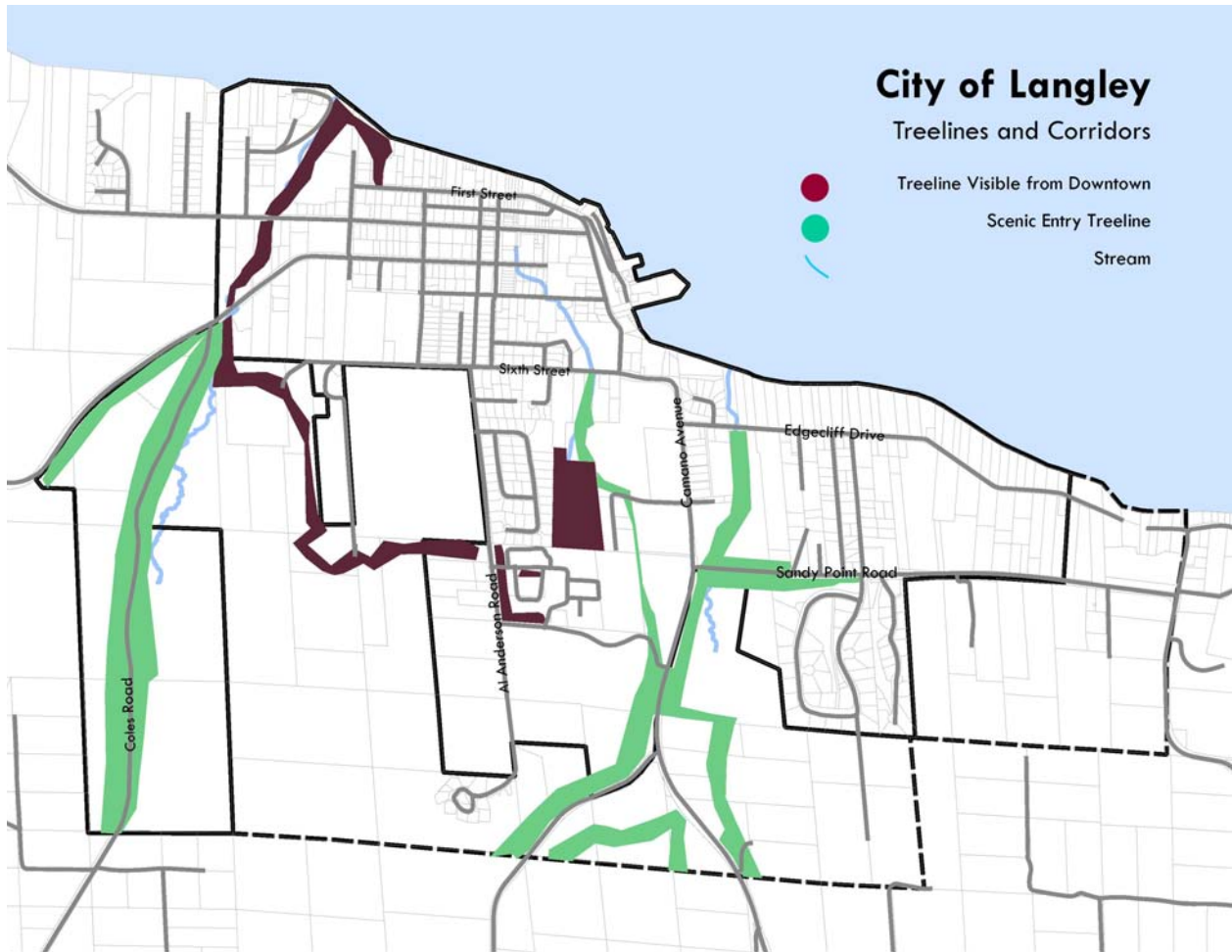


- Each public park clearly welcomes public use through signage or an attractive park entrance.
- The park system contains a diverse array of amenities appropriate for the landscape including viewpoints, beach access, passive use features, and structured activity areas.

### **OPEN SPACE**

- Critical area corridors and buffers are preserved to create open space connectivity through the City (**TO INCLUDE NUMBER AND MAP**).
- Open space set aside as part of new developments connects with critical area corridors and other open spaces.
- The open space system contains a diversity of open space habitats and types including riparian habitat, forested habitat, wetlands, bluffs and farmland.
- Contiguous treelines are visible from downtown, neighborhoods and the treed scenic corridors to protect the picturesque nature of the downtown area, neighborhoods and City entries. (Treelines visible from downtown and along the scenic entry corridors are displayed in Figure OS-5).

FIGURE OS-5

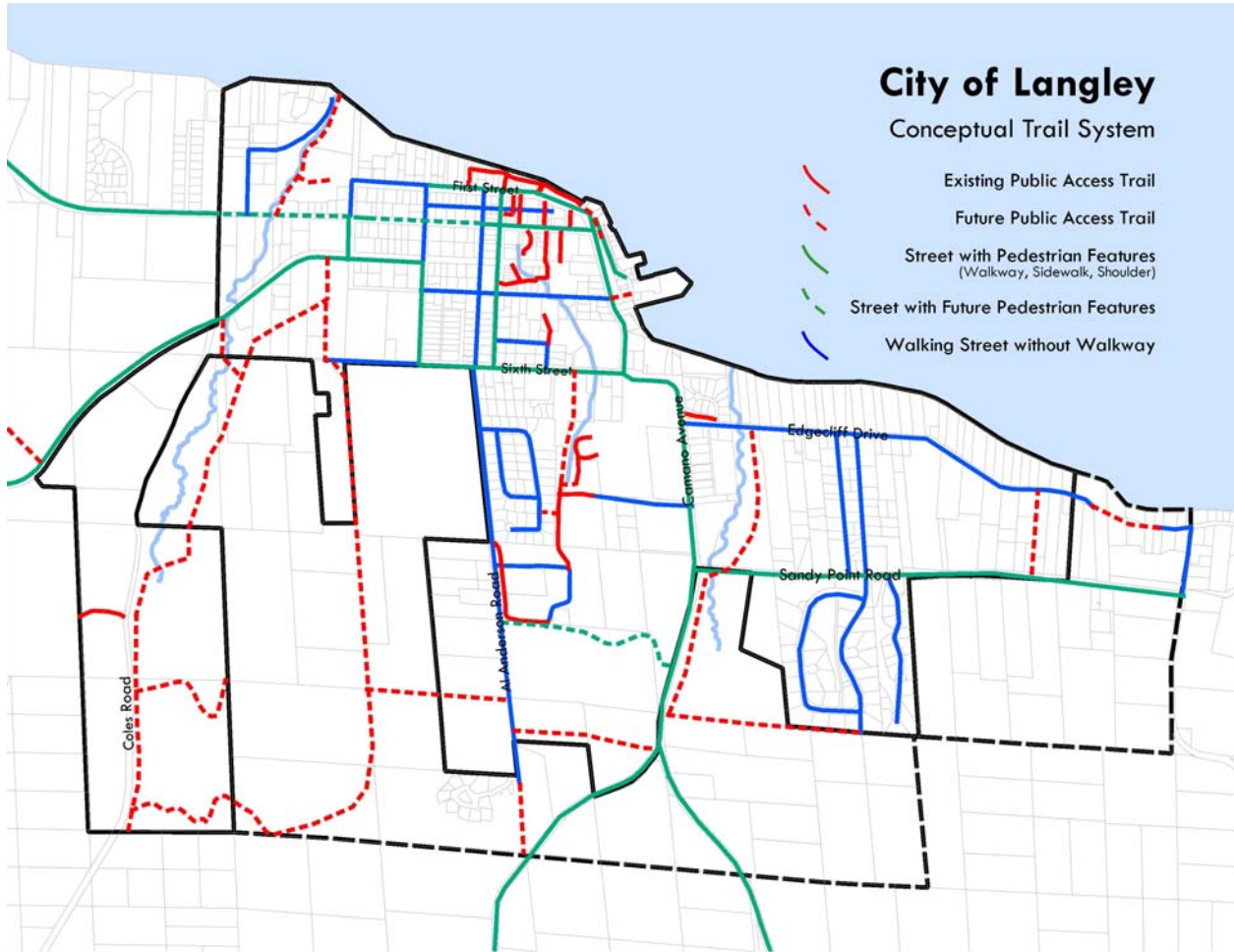


## TRAILS

- A pedestrian trail system is created to connect the following features (potential locations for these connections are represented in the Conceptual Trail System map (see Figure OS-6):
  - a. Saratoga Road and Saratoga Passage (along the Saratoga Creek ravine);
  - b. Third Street and Sixth Street;
  - c. Third Street and the Wastewater Treatment Plant (along the sewer easement or another route);
  - d. The southern portion of Coles Road, Sixth Street and Al Anderson Road;
  - e. The Langley Woodmen Cemetery and Maxwellton Road;
  - f. The south end of Al Anderson and Maxwellton Road;
  - g. Langley Road and the Cedars;
  - h. Langley Road and Edgecliff Drive (along the Noble Creek corridor);
  - i. Highlands and Sixth Street with connections to the wetland behind the Langley Middle School;
  - j. Seawall Park and Phil Simon Park/ Marina;

- k. Cascade Avenue and the Marina;
- l. Sandy Point Road and Edgecliff Drive; and
- m. Edgecliff Drive and Indian Point Lane.

**FIGURE OS-6**



Please note: this map does not represent the exact location of future trails, but only represents potential routes that could connect these areas.

- The trail system has 2.21 linear miles of publically accessible trails per 1000 people.
- Entrances to publically accessible trails are clearly marked.
- The trail system is interconnected with the city and countywide trails system.

## How do we get there?

In order to meet these general goals and Level of Service Standards for parks, open space and trails, the City should strive to achieve the following goals and policies.

## **PARKS**

**Goal 1:** Provide and maintain a safe, attractive, enjoyable and diverse park system that meets the needs of city residents, businesses, and visitors. (*Existing Goal 2*)

- 1.1 Develop a plan for each park that does not currently meet the needs of residents, businesses and visitors and work to ensure that the park fulfills a recreational or leisure need.
- 1.2 ~~Provide~~ a balance of active and passive open space and parks ~~should be provided and that are~~ well integrated throughout the city ~~to serve the needs of children, youth, families, the elderly, and people with disabilities.~~ (*Existing Policy 1.3*)
- 1.3 Identify potential natural areas or parks in areas that are not currently served by the five minute, quarter mile walking radius and work to achieve public access on those properties.
- 1.4 Require all new development in areas not meeting the five minute or quarter mile walking radius to establish an accessible natural areas or park as part of their development.
- 1.5 Ensure that each park has a safe access for pedestrians to visit the area.
- 1.6 Provide a mixture of amenities including: viewpoints, beach access, passive use features, cultural features, and structures and features for children, youth, families, the elderly, and people with disabilities. (*Portions of Existing Policies 1.2 and 1.3*) Ensure that each of the amenities provided is suited to the specific location and environmental conditions of the park.

## **NATURAL AREAS**

**Goal 2:** Work to create an integrated open space system in the City of Langley and Urban Growth Area and preserve large areas of open space beyond the city planning area.

### **Policies Specific to the City Limits and Urban Growth Area**

- 2.1 Recognize and ensure that Langley's natural environment is a key to the quality of life and economic development of the City.
- 2.2 ~~Ensure that~~ Langley's heritage of natural assets-shorelines, streams, views, wildlife habitat, riparian corridors, wetlands, topography, steep slopes, and abundant natural vegetation ~~needs to be~~ is protected, preserved, and enhanced. ~~Areas with earth slide hazards, steep slopes, or other sensitive environmental~~

~~qualities are one type of open space that the city should seek to preserve, and areas of natural landscape and wildlife habitat should be retained. (Existing Policy 1.4)~~

- 2.3 Work to implement the Core Areas and Corridor Concept for the integrated open space system.
- 2.4 ~~Work to ensure that greenspaces core natural areas and connecting corridors, greenbelts, and other undeveloped areas of value as open space, or visual and physical amenities shall be identified and those areas in private ownership shall be are preserved by the city to the greatest extent possible, using tools such as direct acquisition as public funds are available, or through non-purchase options to the extent permitted by law, including conservation easements, development standards and agreements covenants, and transfer or purchase of development rights, through a reciprocal program with Island County. (Existing Policy 1.5)~~
- 2.5 Work to preserve critical areas and their buffers as wildlife corridors and potential trails, where appropriate, throughout the City.
- 2.6 Ensure that all new development contributes to open space that connects with critical area corridors or other open spaces.
- 2.7 Work to preserve core natural areas adjacent to the critical area or corridor system to provide large areas for wildlife habitat or other open space amenities.
- 2.8 Work to preserve a mixture of core natural areas and open space including farmland, forests, steep slopes and riparian habitat.

### **Policies Specific to Land beyond the City Limits and Urban Growth Area**

- 2.9 ~~Encourage the preservation and acquisition of large areas of open space in the county shall be encouraged. Preservation of including agricultural, forest, and natural resource lands outside the city shall also be encouraged.~~

### **TREELINES**

#### **Goal 3:** Preserve treelines essential to the character of the City of Langley

- 3.1 Ensure that a contiguous treeline is preserved in all areas articulated within the treeline Level of Service.
- 3.2 Work with Island County and the Washington Department of Natural Resources to ensure that treelines in the Urban Growth Area and Joint Planning Area are protected.

## **SCENIC ENTRIES**

**Goal 4:** ~~Through land use development standards and design of public facilities and improvements, the city should~~ Foster attractive and signature gateways at the city entrances.

## **TRAILS**

**Goal 5:** Develop a trail system that connects natural areas, parks, residential units, and commercial areas inside and outside the City of Langley.

5.1 Work to implement the trail Level of Service through City funding, development regulations, walkable street standards, development set asides, acquisition, easements and other means.

5.2 Give special attention ~~shall be given~~ to enhancing circulation between the varied open space features, strengthening connections to neighborhoods and improving linkages between open space areas through the use of the following features:

1. Pedestrian Paths and Bikeways. In order to encourage non-motorized access and use of the open space amenities, the city should develop a multi-use pathway or trail to connect points in the city to areas within the county. In some cases, amenities within the right-of-way, such as sidewalks and improved landscaping should be developed to encourage pedestrian use.

2. Scenic Roads. In order to recognize the importance of rights-of-way as open space and as connectors among open spaces, streets leading into the city and directly above the shoreline may be designated as scenic roads. The intent is to enhance the open space role these routes play for motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians, and to visually link existing and proposed features of the city.

3. Marine Recreation and Water Access. In order to provide for public enjoyment of these unique water resources, the city shall seek to increase opportunities for public access to the water and create additional connections between points of access along the water. Stream corridors/ravines provide an opportunity for developing further access to the water.

4. Shared Use Streets.

5.3 Develop a trail easement packet and plan to work with landowners and encourage the donation of trail easements.

- 5.4 Approach Island County to include trail easements in the Public Benefit Rating System for reduced property taxes.
- 5.5 Work with Island County to implement the Non-Motorized Trails Plan and the projects articulated in and near Langley. Work specifically to achieve non-motorized connections to South Whidbey Community Park and the Saratoga Woods and Putney Woods complex.

## **SIGNAGE**

**Goal 6:** Create an entrance or signage system for the parks and open space system.

- 6.1 Develop signage or other methods to identify existing parks, natural areas, or trails where public access is allowed.
- 6.2 Develop a consistent signage and wayfinding system that can be used to guide individuals to parks, trails and natural areas throughout the City.

## **PRESERVATION METHODS**

**Goal 7:** Utilize a variety of methods to create, preserve and protect parks, natural areas, and trails.

- 7.1 Develop a broad and creative funding and preservation strategy for open space protection including tools such as the acquisition of fee simple property, the acquisition of development rights or easements, the preservation of privately owned land, or partnering with other organizations.

**A. Acquisition of fee simple property.** With the acquisition of fee simple property, the City acquires the outright ownership of land. Potential methods to implement the strategy are:

- 1. Outright purchase, funding options include, but are not limited to:
  - Grants
  - Loans
  - A designated fund
  - Donations from citizens
  - A levy
  - Impact fees
  - Real Estate Excise Tax
- 2. Land trades
- 3. Donations, options include:
  - Land donated to the City as part of a subdivision
  - Land donated to the City by a private property owner or other agency
- 4. The design of public projects

**B. Acquisition of development rights or easements.** With the acquisition of development rights or easements, a private owner continues to own a piece of land, but voluntarily removes some of the development potential through a conservation easement or other legal agreement. Potential methods to implement the strategy are:

1. Donation of development rights
2. Purchase of development rights
3. Transfer of development rights

**C. Preservation of Privately-Owned Land.** With the preservation of privately-owned land, a private owner continues to own a piece of land, but does not necessarily have the right to develop the land due to the previous dedication of the land as park or open space, or regulations specified in the Langley Municipal Code. Potential methods to promote the preservation of privately-owned land are:

1. Critical area regulations
2. Open space taxation
3. Dedications of park or open space land as part of the recordation of a subdivision (with the homeowner association assuming the responsibility for the maintenance of the park and open space land).

**D. Partnering with Other Organizations.** In partnership with other organizations, another agency owns a piece of land and allows the City use of the land. Potential methods to implement this strategy are:

1. A Memorandum of Understanding
2. Partnerships with other organizations to provide parks and open space

7.2 ~~The city shall~~ Make a commitment to fulfill the long range open space goals established in these parks and open space goals and policies by developing a comprehensive Open Space Program and working with the Parks and Open Space Commission Advisory Board. The Open Space Program shall identify funding sources for land acquisition to ensure the permanent protection and public control of important open spaces and to develop park and recreational facilities to meet community needs. ~~Potential public open spaces shall be prioritized for acquisition. Funding for ongoing maintenance expenses shall also be included in the program. Non-purchase options, including donations, land trades, open space taxation, the requirement of open space as part of major public projects, and the donation of conservation easements shall also be pursued.~~ *(Existing Policy 1.13. Strikethrough will be incorporated into element)*

7.3 Develop a designated fund devoted to parks and open space acquisition.

- 7.4 ~~Ensure that~~ public open space ~~shall be~~ is incorporated as an essential component of new residential and commercial development ~~residential and commercial~~.  
(Existing Policy 1.6)
- 7.5 Require private development in the city ~~generally shall be required~~ to provide or contribute to open space in proportion to the size and type of development involved. Off-site open space with public access may be a preferred alternative when it will contribute more directly to urban design objectives ~~and~~ or meet the requirements of the Shoreline Management Act. ~~where applicable~~. (Existing Policy 1.7)
- 7.6 ~~The city shall~~ Take advantage of opportunities to incorporate public open space as an important element of major public projects, including transportation and public utilities and facilities ~~that are~~ required to meet the increased demand for public services resulting from growth. (Existing Policy 1.8)
- 7.7 ~~In addition to the full range of other open space elements,~~ Maximize the potential of the street system for public use ~~shall be maximized~~ through the use of portions of public rights-of-way, where appropriate, for open space, waterfront access, tree planting, landscaping, pedestrian amenities, recreation space, and view corridors. ~~(examples: north ends of DeBruyn and Park Streets)~~.  
(Existing Policy 1.9)
- 7.8 ~~The city should~~ Retain city-owned lands, including excess rights-of-way, for open space purposes. (Existing Policy 1.10)
- 7.9 ~~The city should~~ Promote private recreation facilities within the city by making allowances for such uses in the zoning and land use regulations. (Existing Policy 2.4)

## **MAINTENANCE**

**Goal 8:** Ensure that parks, natural areas and trails are well-maintained.

- 8.1 Make the maintenance of existing park facilities in a safe, attractive, and available conditions during as much of the year as possible ~~should be~~ the highest priority for general fund park expenditures. (Existing Policy 2.1... *QUESTION: DO WE WANT THIS?*)

## **COOPERATION**

**Goal 9:** Develop a cooperative, coordinated, community based park and open space system, which makes maximum utilization of the available resources. (Existing Policy 2.3)

- 9.1 ~~The city should continue to~~ Cooperate with Island County, the South Whidbey School District, the Island County Fair Board, the Whidbey Camano Land Trust, and the South Whidbey Parks and Recreation District, among others, to develop and maintain facilities and natural areas, ~~which~~ that are available to the general public. *(Existing Policy 2.3a)*
- 9.2 ~~The city should~~ Work with the county and other jurisdictions to establish open space linkages with other critical open spaces. *(Existing Policy 2.3b)*
- 9.3 ~~The city should~~ Promote volunteer programs to plan, develop, operate, maintain and improve parks. *(Existing Policy 2.3c)*

**Goal 10:** Partner with Island County to better coordinate project review in the Urban Growth Area, Joint Planning Area and beyond to ensure that open spaces and natural amenities important to the character of Langley are preserved during development.

## **WATERFRONT**

**Goal 11:** Preserve, ~~and~~ protect and expand, when possible, opportunities for the public to have access to and enjoyment of the waterfront area of the city. *(Moved from Goal 3...at some point the goals and policies will be moved into the Land Use Element)*

- 11.1 The city should pursue all reasonable means to implement the Langley Boat Harbor and Environs Master Plan adopted by the City in 2004.
- 11.2 The city should work cooperatively with the Port District of South Whidbey with the objective of expanding boat moorage, improving the boat ramp and the associated Phil Simon Park, and facilitating public access to the waterfront area.
- 11.3 The City should work cooperatively with private property owners as they seek to expand business opportunities in the waterfront area, recognizing the need to do so in an environmentally responsible manner and through means that are consistent with local, State and Federal regulations.

## **APPENDIX 1: PARK FACILITIES DESIRED BY RESIDENTS**

In addition to identifying the use of parks throughout the City of Langley, the parks survey also questioned what additional types of park facilities the City should pursue. Respondents identified responses on a one to five scale, with one being not interested in the activity and five being very interested in the activity. The average response for the desired activity/ feature is provided in Table 3.

**TABLE 3: ACTIVITY/ FEATURE**

Beach swimming	2.0
Beach walks	4.3
Bike trails	3.2
Covered areas/ pavilions	3.0
Indoor activity areas	2.5
Outdoor exercise and activity areas	3.3
Scenic overlooks with benches	4.2
Pea patch gardens	2.8
Picnic areas and tables	3.4
Playgrounds	2.7
Large park with multiple activities and features	2.9
Walking trails	4.3
Water activities: fishing, diving, boating	3.2
Nature/ interpretive signs	3.6

Survey respondents identified walking trails and beach walks as the most desired activities of the potential responses (each registering a 4.3 average score) and scenic overlooks were the third most desired facility (with a 4.2 average score). Other items with an average score above three were nature/ interpretive signage, picnic areas and tables, outdoor exercise and activity areas, bike trails, water activities, and covered areas/ pavilions.