

# Parks, Open Space, and Trails

The City of Langley is defined, in large part, by the land and the water in and around it. The shoreline and Saratoga Passage on the north, the forests and treelines to the west and the south, the ridges and valleys carved by the retreat of the Vashon Glaciation, the historic agricultural landscapes, and the various wetlands and streams, each natural element helps shape to the form and character of the City.

This influence of the natural environment on the built form of the City began with the founding of Langley and has continued to the present day. An illustration of this is shown in the placement of the town itself. Langley was settled along Saratoga Passage, but its location was not chosen solely for its proximity to water. Explaining the choice for a town site, Jacob Anthes said, “in exploring the island I found that nearly all the ridges and high hills ran in such a direction that, without climbing any of them, the place where Langley now stands could be reached from any part of South Whidbey.” Initial roads were placed in natural valleys carved by the retreat of the Vashon Glaciation to avoid the “ridges and high hills” and the resultant road pattern formed a distinct hub and spoke development pattern, with the spokes being the various roads and the hub being downtown Langley. These road spokes, which are bounded by ridges on both sides, continue to this day to have few connections between them due to the same topographical barriers that influenced the City’s early development.

Despite this influence; however, the presence of these natural attributes is not always apparent to current residents of and visitors to the City of Langley. This is partly due to the fact that individuals within an automobile may not feel the strain of climbing a ridge, but also because the parks and open space system that is available to the public does not provide access to many of these features. Existing parks and open space within the City are primarily clustered in the downtown area and are situated to take advantage of the views of the Cascade Mountains. Few offer access to the “ridges and high hills,” farms, and other unique features found within the City.

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

1. What parks and open space do we have?
2. What 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 projects?

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

In the first section, “What parks and open space do we have,” the element presents an inventory and analysis of the existing parks 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 features as well as major themes associated with the existing parks and open space system.

The second section, “What parks and open space do we want,” builds on this analysis of current conditions and introduces a series of concepts for the future parks, open space and trail system. These concepts feed directly into a discussion of Level of Service Standards that establish a baseline for essential amenities that must be provided to meet Langley residents’ basic needs and expectations for parks, open space and trails. 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 in expanding and enhancing 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 projects,” 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. The identification of the priority projects and the 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 respond to population growth and community expectations.

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 element 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.

## 1. What Parks and Open Space Do We Have?

The purpose of this section is to identify the existing characteristics of the parks and open space system, by inventorying the existing parks and open space features that serve the City of Langley (including amenities both inside and outside of the city), the type of facilities that can be found at each of these areas, and citizens’ perceptions and use of these assets. The section also identifies key strengths and deficiencies of the existing parks and open space system.

### **PARKS AND OPEN SPACE OUTSIDE LANGLEY**

The south end of Whidbey Island is well served by parks and open space. The region, which is approximately 60 square miles in size (of which the City of Langley is one square mile), contains areas of protected and public land that offer access to the beach, protect wetlands and forests, and provide 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  
 PO=Permission Only  
 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 of land 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 comprise 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 how this broader parks and open space system is used by the residents of Langley, residents were surveyed 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 District 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 comprise 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 a 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 OPEN SPACE IN THE LANGLEY UGA**

The City of Langley Urban Growth Area contains a number of park, natural areas, and critical areas in addition to these regional facilities. Langley contains 10.8 acres of park land, 36.3 acres of City and privately-owned natural areas, and over 250 acres of publically and privately-owned critical areas and their buffers. However, a number of undeveloped areas in the Urban Growth Area perceived by residents as protected open space, especially those lands used for agricultural purposes and important for habitat, are not currently protected. The areas of existing protected parks, natural areas and critical areas are analyzed in detail below.

### **CITY-OWNED PARKS**

City-owned parks found 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 Cedars-Tract 100).

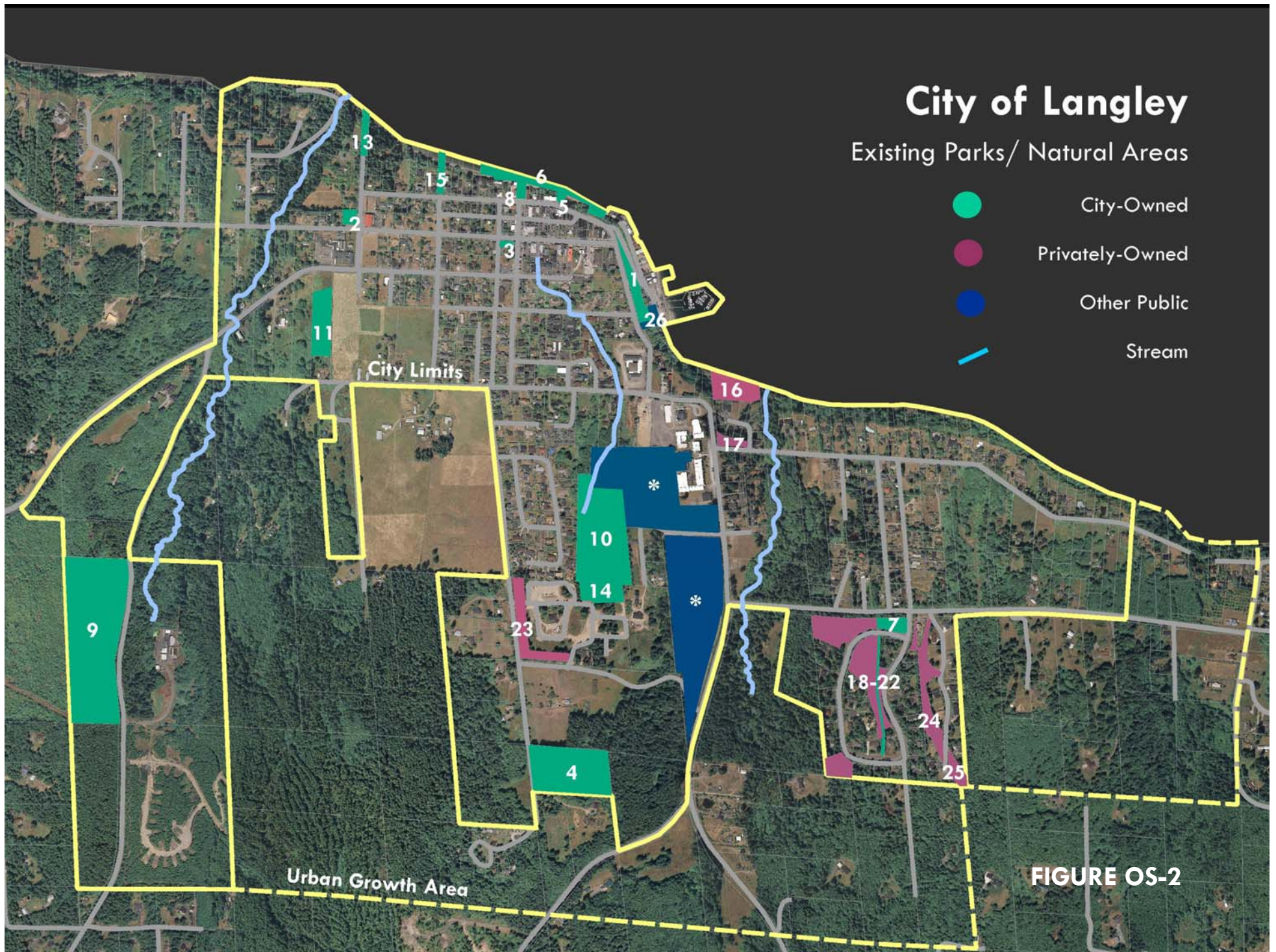
**Cascade Avenue Walkway:** The Cascade Avenue Walkway is a 1.28 acre community mini-park located in the downtown portion of Langley. The park includes the flat area east of Cascade Avenue, as well as a large portion of the bluff east of the walkway. The upland portion of the park provides interpretive 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) 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.

**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 in the parks survey as one of the least used, 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

**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 Meadow's Wetland 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>



Please Note: Areas marked with an asterisk are public lands not owned by the City of Langley that are used for parks, open space and recreation purposes. These areas are not designated to be used solely for recreational purposes and as a result are not included in Table 3

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 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 setting 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 beyond 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 1,140 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, and 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 City-owned Land with Park Type Features:** Several City-owned parcels also have sitting areas and other outside features for passive-use enjoyment. These parcels include land around the Langley Library, City Hall, the Post Office, and Chamber of Commerce buildings. The land around the library includes a Georgia Gerber statue called “Otter Memories” as well as a bench and other places to sit, while City Hall includes a covered area, benches, and a picnic table. The land surrounding the Chamber of Commerce has public restrooms and a small courtyard with a bench, and the land in front of the Post Office includes landscaping and nine benches.

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

**Island County Fairgrounds:** The fairgrounds are a 13.98 acre site that hosts 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 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 located west of Camano Avenue and offers the largest array of active and passive use recreational features found within the City of Langley. The site has a passive use trail system that travels through a forested wetland composed of older alders with a diverse understory including salmonberries, elderberries, sword fern and skunk cabbage. The school grounds also provide a number of active-use 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 the South Whidbey Parks and Recreation District 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**

Langley contains three City-owned natural areas beyond these park facilities: the Coles Road Natural Area, the Well Site Natural Area, and the Meadow's Wetland Natural Area. These natural areas provide 24.86 acres of land for open space purposes in the City, but are currently underutilized by the residents of the City. These areas and the features that they provide are analyzed below.

**Coles Road Natural Area:** The Coles Road Natural Area is a 14.55 acre site located in the southwest portion of the City Langley. The area was logged, though not clearcut, in the early 1980's and features a mixture of individual, older Douglas firs and dense stands of younger western hemlock and red alders. The site also contains some areas of understory vegetation, such as huckleberries and salal, although this understory growth is limited due to the dense forest present throughout much of the parcel. The Coles Road Natural Area contains one informal pedestrian trail that provides access to the land surrounding the Puget Sound Energy distribution station found west of the site, but the City has made no short or long-term plans for the use 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 forested with Douglas fir, red alder and Western Red Cedar trees, and contains a variety of understory vegetation including black and red huckleberry, salal, sword fern, and elderberry. The site contains one informal trail along its western portion, but the City has no short or long-term plans for the future use or care of the area.

**Meadows Wetland Natural Area:** The Meadows Wetland Natural Area is a 2.14 acre parcel that was given to the City of Langley in 2007 as part of the recordation of the Meadows Planned Unit Development. The area includes a portion of the wetland that runs from Coles Road to near Third Street, and is composed of pasture and shrub wetland plant communities, including a number of invasive species such as blackberry and Canada thistle. The City has no plans for the future use or maintenance of this area at this time.

## **PRIVATELY-OWNED NATURAL AREAS**

Natural areas have also been provided by private development within the City. Langley has 10.9 plus acres of privately-owned natural areas that have been dedicated as open space as part of the recordation of a subdivision. These areas are owned and maintained by a homeowners' association, not the City of Langley and exist within the Cedars, Noble Cliff and Woodside Subdivisions, as well as The Highlands Planned Unit Development.

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**

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

**Steep Slopes:** Langley contains 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 habitat and natural areas of land that are primarily privately-owned, but 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 Urban Growth Area. 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 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.

Saratoga Creek, at the opposite extreme, is perhaps the most natural or scenic stream within the City. The creek is piped under two roads and is piped an additional 250 feet at the stream's mouth on the Saratoga Passage; however, little development has occurred around the stream and the stream corridor retains a number of unique natural features.

# City of Langley

## Existing Critical Areas

-  Wetland
-  Steep Slope
-  Steep Slope Buffer
-  Stream

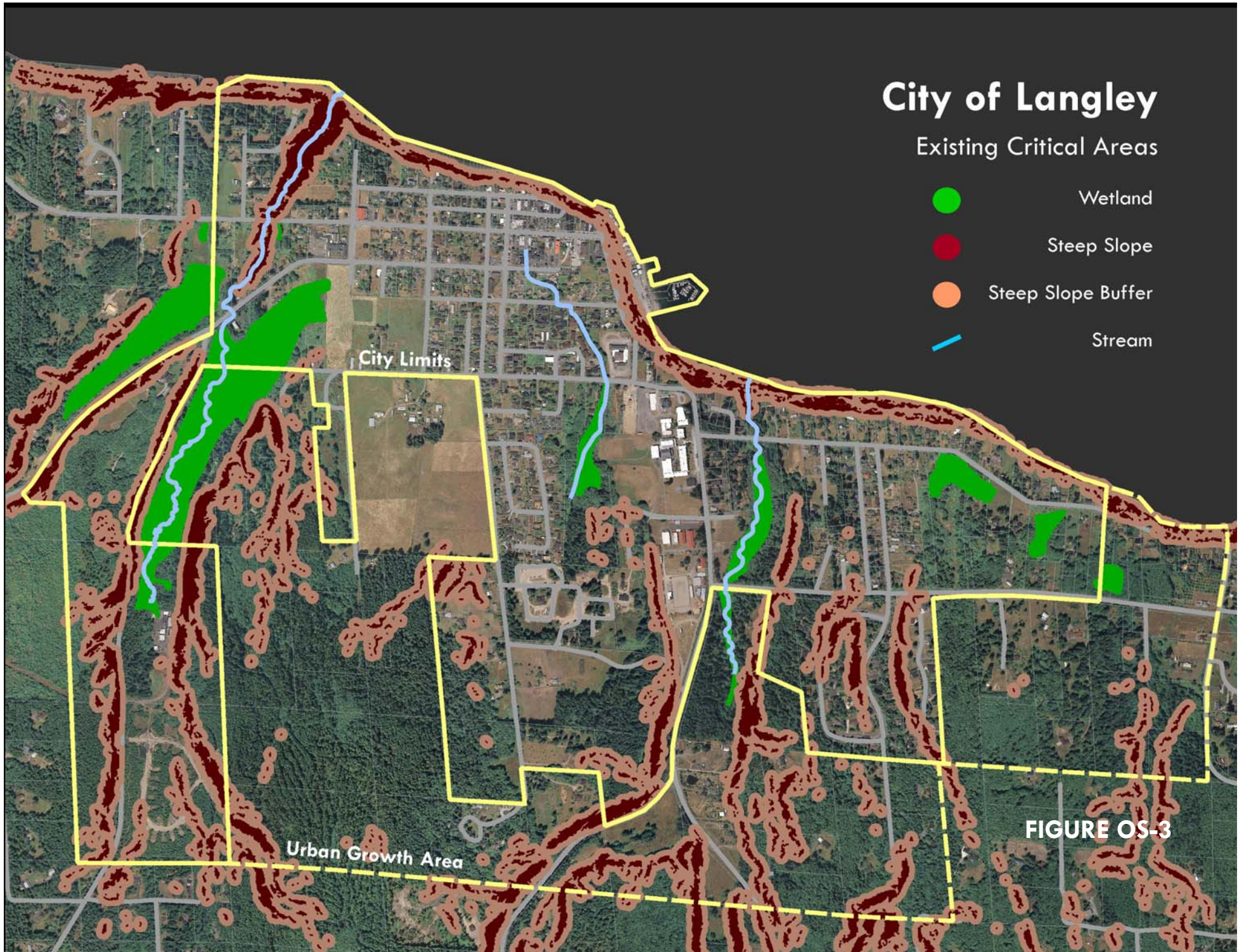


FIGURE OS-3

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 useful for wildlife habitat. As the stream travels north from the wetland, it descends a ravine that is up to 110 feet deep. This depth is especially striking given the fact that only a four foot wide stream now flows through the area. The ravine contains large Douglas Firs, cedars, and some spruce trees, as well as understory vegetation including salmonberries and salal, but invasive ivy is slowly degrading the overall habitat of the area.

Noble Creek follows a similar path to the Puget Sound as Saratoga Creek. The creek begins in a mixed aged cedar and alder forested wetland south of Sandy Point Road; travels through a culvert under Sandy Point Road; and then moves into another riparian wetland system. This riparian wetland north of Sandy Point Road and its buffer includes several cedars with a sword fern understory that transitions to a primarily even aged alder forest moving north to Edgecliff Drive. The alder forest contains a diverse understory including elderberry, salmonberry, skunk cabbage, trillium, and false lily of the valley, and contains few invasive plant species. Beyond this wetland, the stream then descends to the Saratoga Passage via a ravine north of Edgecliff Road.

**Wetlands:** A number of wetlands are also located throughout Langley. These wetlands are associated with each of the streams found in the City, as well as areas of poorly draining soil not associated with streams, such as the eastern portion of the Edgecliff/Sandy Point area (please note: not all wetlands are known or mapped on Figure OS-3). These wetlands are primarily forested, with some areas having a mixed age and species canopy and others having an even aged alder canopy, though some areas of wet meadows and shrub/ scrub wetland do exist, especially in portions of the wetland that runs parallel to Third Street. The overall habitat quality of these various wetlands varies greatly.

## **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 are outlined below.

- 1. Regional Parks and Open Space Features.** The south end of Whidbey Island contains a wealth of parks and open space features. Over 1,500 acres of parks and open space land exist within five miles of downtown Langley and this land is clustered in two main areas: along Maxwelton Road and between Saratoga and Brooks Hill Road.
- 2. 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 the Cascade Mountains, and some provide beach and water access, but few parks or open space features offer access to farmlands, ravines, wetlands, stream corridors, or steep slope areas.

3. **The Distribution of Parks and Natural Areas.** Existing parks and natural areas are not distributed evenly throughout the 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.
4. **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.
5. **Varied Appreciation of Parks.** The use and appreciation of the parks system 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 other parks, including facilities with playgrounds, are only minimally used.
6. **The Prevalence of Passive Use Mini-parks.** Existing parks in the City of Langley are primarily passive use mini-parks. Few parks are larger than an acre in size, or offer a mixture of passive and active uses.
7. **Underutilized City-owned Natural Areas.** Existing City-owned natural areas are underutilized for recreational or habitat purposes. These areas encompass over fifty percent of the parks and open space lands located within the City and have the potential to provide additional public access or improved habitat.
8. **An Incomplete Trail System.** Few publically accessible trails exist in the Urban Growth Area. Trails that exist are fragmented and were created, in many instances, without a larger trail system in mind. No connections between beach access points exist.
9. **Maintenance and Appearance.** Continuing maintenance is essential for the parks and open space system. Few plans exist for the long-term enhancement and maintenance of existing parks and natural areas.
10. **Lack of Signage.** Existing City-owned parks and natural areas have few identification or wayfinding signs. These facilities, as a result, are not clearly perceived by residents as available for public use.
11. **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 Urban Growth Area and are currently protected under the Critical Areas Ordinance of the City of Langley. These areas also represent key features that display the geologic and ecological history of the area.

## 2. 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 also developed the Core Areas and Corridor concept to provide a framework to implement a number of these concepts, especially goals 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. The concept envisions core areas as large habitat areas or areas of open space, including agricultural land, and sees critical areas or other connecting features as corridors to ensure that these larger areas are connected. The concept is summarized by the following six principles:

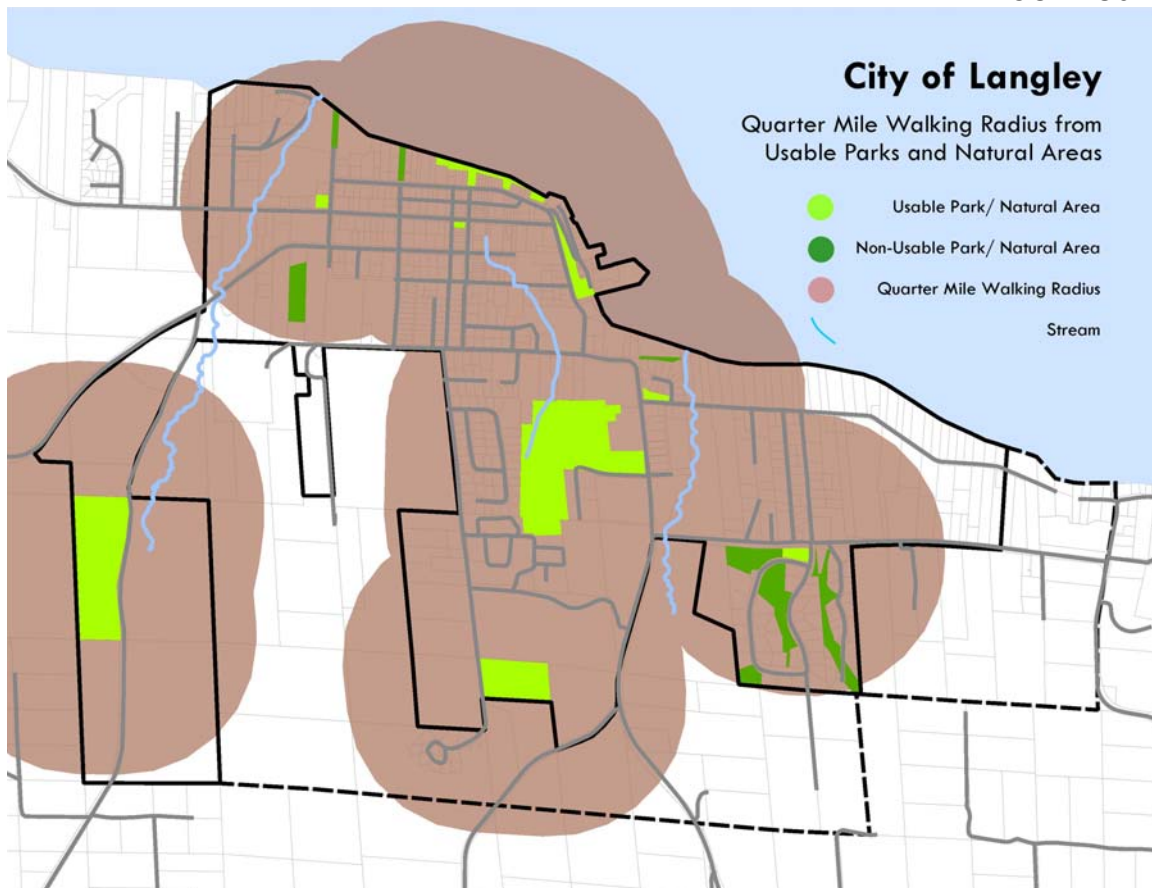
1. Critical areas are the foundation for the parks and open space system;
2. Critical areas form a pre-existing belt/ corridor system around much of the City of Langley;
3. For habitat and open space purposes, the corridors should be as wide as possible;
4. Core habitat or open space areas should be connected 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 and the general goals for the parks and open space system informed the following Level of Service Standards necessary to meet the community's basic needs and expectations, for parks, open space, and trails.

### **LEVEL OF SERVICE – PARKS**

- Each park fulfills a recreational or leisure need that makes it attractive to residents and visitors.
- Each park has safe access for pedestrians to visit the park.
- Each public park clearly welcomes public use through signage or an attractive park entrance.
- 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 access (see Figure OS-4).

FIGURE OS-4

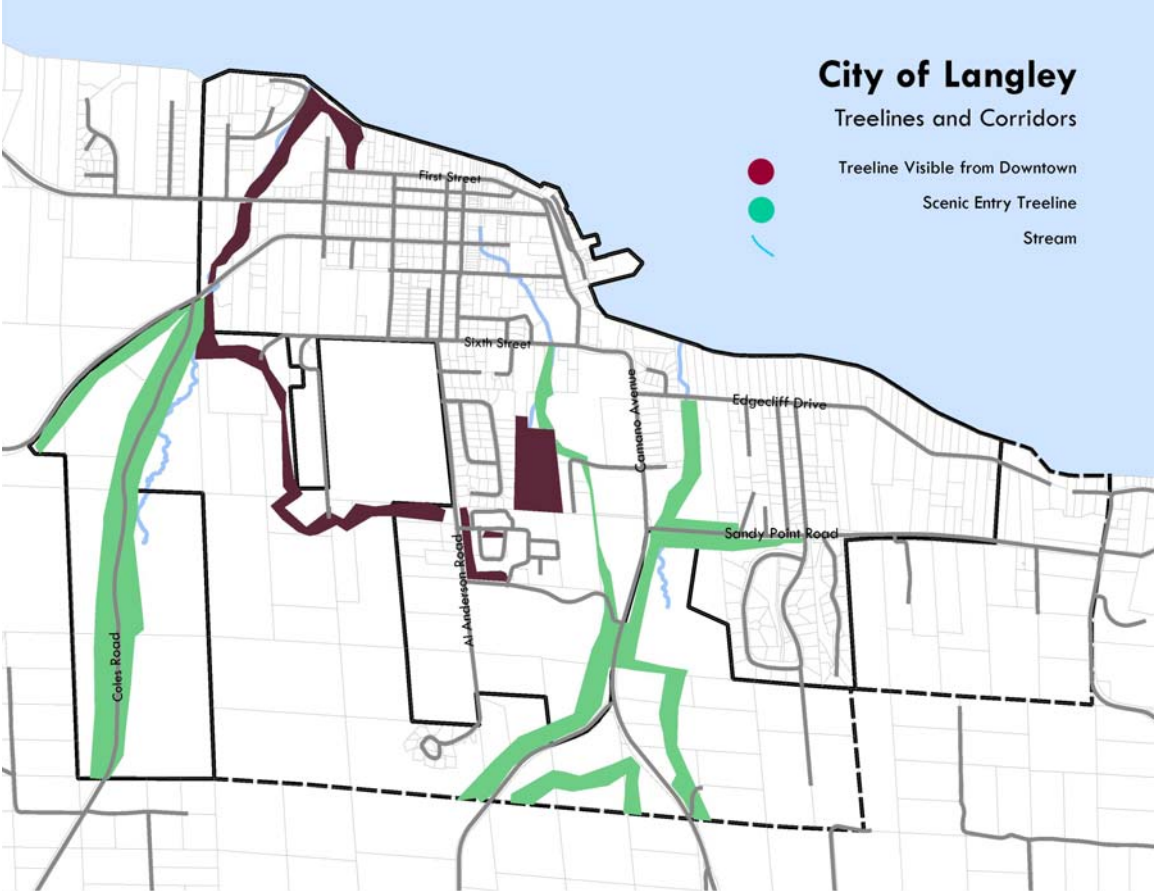


- The park system contains a diverse array of amenities appropriate for the landscape including viewpoints, beach access, passive use features, and structured activity areas.

### **LEVEL OF SERVICE – OPEN SPACE**

- Critical area corridors and buffers are preserved to create open space connectivity through the City.
- 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 farmland, riparian habitat, forested habitat, wetlands, and bluffs.
- ~~Contiguous treelines visible from downtown, neighborhoods and the treed corridors protect the scenic nature of the downtown area, neighborhoods and City entries.~~  
Scenic treelines visible from downtown, neighborhoods and City entries are protected (Treelines visible from downtown and along the scenic entry corridors are displayed in Figure OS-5).

FIGURE OS-5



- Development projects within historically rural areas (as defined in the Langley Municipal Code) contribute the following percentage of their developable land to open space in the City of Langley:
  - A. 0 percent for sites with 70 percent or more critical areas
  - B. 10 percent of the developable land for sites with 60 to 70 percent critical areas
  - C. 15 percent of the developable land for sites with 50 to 60 percent critical areas
  - D. 20 percent of the developable land for sites with 40 to 50 percent critical areas
  - E. 25 percent of the developable land for sites with less than 40 percent critical areas.

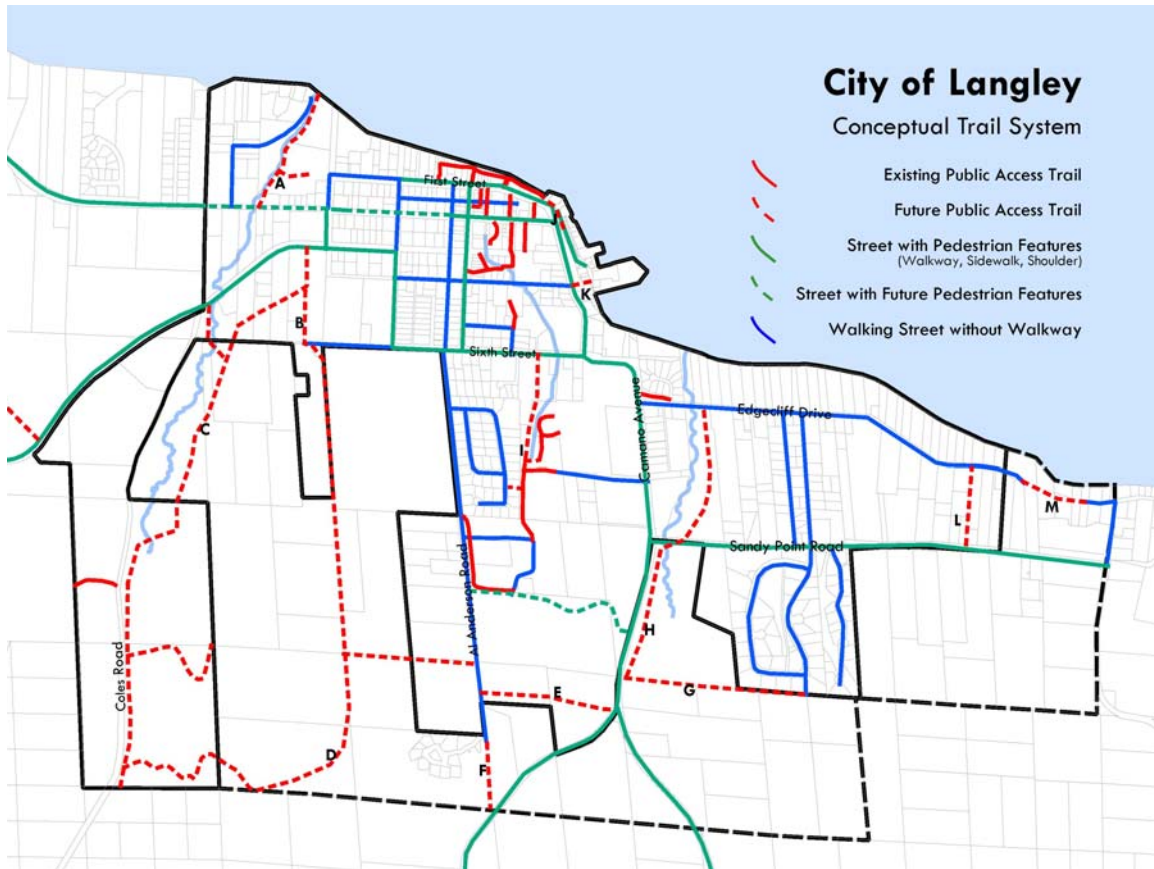
Projects contribute to the off-site acquisition of open space when all of the following conditions are met:

- A. The development site contains developable land less than two acres in size;
- B. The development site is not connected to an open space corridor or other open space area; and
- C. The project does not provide the required open space on-site through the provision of community agricultural land.

## LEVEL OF SERVICE – TRAILS

- A pedestrian trail system connects 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.

- Entrances to publically accessible trails are clearly marked.
- Trails are the minimum width and surfacing required to allow use by the intended user.
- The trail system is interconnected with the city and countywide trails system.

### **LEVEL OF SERVICE – MAINTENANCE**

- Maintenance procedures that relate directly to facility design, context, kinds of use, and frequency of use are written and implemented for each new and existing park, open space and trail feature.
- Invasive native and exotic plants are controlled with an integrated management system according to species requirements.
- Sustainable park, open space, and trail design and maintenance is achieved through methods including: low water usage; minimal alteration of local hydrology; retention of natural soils; minimal habitat disturbance; and use of native species.
- Parks, open space and trail facilities are maintained in clean, working order. Regular inspection and maintenance is included in each park management plan.

## **3. How do we get there? - Goals and Policies**

In order to meet the general goals and Level of Service Standards for parks, open space, trails, and maintenance 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.
- 1.1 Develop a plan to make sure that each park meets the needs of residents, businesses and visitors and work to implement those plans.
  - 1.2 Provide a balance of active and passive open space and parks that are well integrated throughout the city.
  - 1.3 Identify potential parks or open space 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 park or open space 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, community agricultural land, cultural features, and structures and features for children, youth, families, the elderly, and people with disabilities. Ensure that each of the amenities provided is suited to the specific location and environmental conditions of the park.

## **OPEN SPACE AND HABITAT**

**Goal 2:** Work to create an integrated habitat and open space system in the Langley 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 Ensure that Langley's natural environment is a key to the quality of life and economic development of the City.
- 2.2 Ensure that the community's heritage of natural assets - shorelines, streams, views, wildlife habitat, riparian corridors, wetlands, steep slopes, agricultural land, and abundant natural vegetation is protected, preserved, and enhanced.
- 2.3 Implement the Core Area and Corridor Concept to protect habitat and other open space areas, and realize the integrated open space system.
- 2.4 Ensure that core open space areas and connecting corridors are protected by the city to the greatest extent possible, using tools such as including but not limited to direct acquisition, or non-purchase options to the extent permitted by law, including such as conservation easements, development standards and agreements and transfer or purchase of development rights.
- 2.5 Protect critical areas and their buffers as wildlife corridors throughout the City. Create trails in these areas when appropriate if the trail is in the best location to connect areas articulated within the trail Level of Service and the trail is designed to be consistent with the Critical Areas Ordinance.
- 2.6 Preserve core open space areas adjacent to the critical area or corridor system to provide large areas for wildlife habitat, community agriculture or other open space amenities.
- 2.7 Ensure that all new development contributes to open space that connects with critical area corridors or other open spaces.
- 2.8 Preserve a mixture of core natural areas and open space including farmland, forests, steep slopes and riparian habitat.

## **Policies Specific to Land beyond the Urban Growth Area**

- 2.9 Encourage the protection and acquisition of large areas of open space in the county including agricultural, forest, and natural resource lands.

## **TREELINES**

**Goal 3:** Protect 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:** Foster attractive and signature gateways at the city entrances.

## **TRAILS**

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

- 5.1 Implement the trail Level of Service through City funding, development regulations, shared use street standards, development set asides, acquisition, easements and other means.
- 5.2 Enhance circulation between the varied parks and open space features and strengthen connections to neighborhoods through the use of the following features:
1. Pedestrian Paths and Bikeways. Develop a multi-use pathway or trail system that connects points in the city and areas in the county.
  2. Shared Use Streets. View the street as a social space and an extension of the park, open space and trail system. Design and use streets and alleys for several modes of travel, not just the automobile.
  3. Scenic Roads. Enhance the open space role that scenic corridors play for motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians.
  4. Marine Recreation and Water Access. Increase opportunities for public access to the water and create additional connections between access points along the water. Utilize stream corridors/ ravines as opportunities for developing further access to the water.

- 5.3 Develop trail easement guidelines and work with landowners and encourage the donation of trail easements.
- 5.4 Provide public education about trail use etiquette.
- 5.5 Approach Island County to include trail easements in the Public Benefit Rating System for reduced property taxes.
- 5.6 Work with Island County to implement the Non-Motorized Trails Plan. Work specifically to achieve a non-motorized connection to the Saratoga Woods and Putney Woods complex.
- 5.7 Ensure that new trails utilize native soil as a surface material and that no gravel or manmade surfaces are imported except when handicapped accessibility is sought.
- 5.8 Develop new trails that provide access to natural features with minimal disturbance to the ~~surrounding~~ ecosystem. Ensure that trail widths are the minimum necessary for the intended user and native vegetation surrounding the trail is retained.

## **SIGNAGE**

**Goal 6:** Create a signage system for the parks and open space system.

- 6.1 Develop entrance signage or other methods to identify parks, open space, 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, open space, and trails throughout the City.

## **PARK CREATION AND LAND PROTECTION**

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

- 7.1 Develop a broad and creative funding strategy for park creation, open space protection, and trail development. Utilize regulatory, non-regulatory and taxation methods to achieve the acquisition of fee simple property, the acquisition of development rights or easements, the protection of privately owned land, and the use of other organizations' land.
- 7.2 Develop a designated land acquisition fund.
- 7.3 Ensure that public open space is incorporated as an essential component of new public, residential and commercial development.

- 7.4 Require private development in the city to provide or contribute to open space in proportion to the size and type of development involved. Utilize the option of off-site open space when the parcel is less than two acres in size; when the open space will not be used for community agriculture; and when the parcel does not directly abut neighboring open space or critical area land.
- 7.5 Take advantage of opportunities to incorporate public open space as an important element of major public projects, including transportation and public utilities and facilities required to meet the increased demand for public services resulting from growth.
- 7.6 Maximize the potential of the street system for public use through the use of public rights-of-way, where appropriate, for open space, waterfront access, tree planting, landscaping, pedestrian amenities, recreation space, and view corridors.
- 7.7 Retain city-owned lands, including excess rights-of-way, for open space purposes.
- 7.8 Promote private recreation facilities within the city by making allowances for such uses in the zoning and land use regulations.

## **MAINTENANCE**

- Goal 8:** Ensure that parks, natural areas and trails are well-cared for and maintained to preserve the natural beauty and ecological integrity of the area.
- 8.1 Write and implement maintenance plans and procedures for each new and existing City-owned park, open space and trail feature. Ensure that these plans and procedures address the following items when applicable:
    1. Irrigation;
    2. Soil amendment, grading, mulching, and/ or drainage;
    3. Pruning;
    4. Lawn management;
    5. Control and/ or eradication of invasive or exotic plant species;
    6. Maintenance of structures and facilities; and
    7. Garbage removal
    8. Weeding of landscaped areas
  - 8.2 Ensure that each open space parcel donated to the City, or dedicated as open space as part of the recordation of a subdivision or Planned Unit Development, has a maintenance plan to promote the long-term health of the area.

- 8.3 Ensure that each park, open space, and trail acquisition and/ or design is based on realistic maintenance capabilities.
- 8.4 Include long-term maintenance considerations into the design of each park, open space and trail feature through methods such as the use of native drought tolerant species, low water landscaping design, and the minimization of habitat disturbance.
- 8.5 Control and/ or eradicate invasive or exotic plant species in City-owned parks, open space and trails.
- 8.6 Develop and implement strategies to encourage owners of privately-owned natural areas and critical areas to control and/ or eradicate invasive or exotic plant species on their land.

## **COOPERATION**

**Goal 9:** Maximize partnerships to: develop a cooperative, coordinated, and community - based park and open space system; and retain natural amenities essential to the character of Langley.

- 9.1 Cooperate with Island County, the South Whidbey School District, the Island County Fair Board, the Whidbey Camano Land Trust, the South Whidbey Parks and Recreation District, and others to develop and maintain park and open space areas.
- 9.2 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.
- 9.3 Work with the county and other jurisdictions to establish linkages between open space areas.
- 9.4 Promote volunteer programs to plan, develop, operate, maintain and improve parks.

## **WATERFRONT**

**Goal 10:** Preserve, protect and expand, when possible, opportunities for the public to have access to and enjoyment of the waterfront area of the city.

- 10.1 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.

- 10.2 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.

## 4. What are our priorities?

Based on these goals and policies, the Parks and Open Space Commission identified four major priorities for the next twenty years. These priorities and the general actions necessary to achieve them are listed below.

### **Priority 1: Implement the Core Area and Corridor Concept (see Figure OS-7)**

- 1.1 Continue to protect existing critical areas regulated under the Langley Municipal Code to maintain the natural corridor system that is the foundation for the parks and open space system.
- 1.2 Protect core and corridor conservation areas (in the following prioritized order) to supplement the critical area system:
  1. Agricultural land (Over Fifteen Acres).
  2. Land adjacent to wetlands and streams.
  3. Areas that fill gaps between parks and critical areas and critical areas and critical areas.
  4. Areas of Priority Forests.
  5. Agricultural Land (Under Fifteen Acres).
  6. Areas of Other Forests.
  7. Shorelands including areas of shore access.

### **Priority 2: Enhance existing parks and open space amenities**

- 2.1. Prepare management plans for each City-owned park and natural area within the City of Langley, including items such as maintenance, signage, and desired enhancements.
- 2.2 Implement the management plans for selected parks and natural areas.

### **Priority 3: Develop a trail system throughout the City of Langley.**

- 3.1 Develop a trail easement information packet, acquire trail easements, and develop trails.
- 3.2 Work with Island County to implement their Nonmotorized Trail Plan, with particular focus on a connection between Langley and the Saratoga/ Putney Woods complex.

**Priority 4: Support Community Agriculture**

# City of Langley

## Priority Conservation Areas

### CRITICAL AREAS

- 1. Critical Areas and Buffers

### CORE AND CORRIDOR CONSERVATION AREAS

#### CONSERVATION AREAS

- 1. Agricultural Land (Over 15 Acres)
- 2. Land Adjacent to Wetlands or Streams
- 3. Connection between Critical Areas and Parks/ Critical Areas
- 4. Priority Forest
- 5. Agricultural Land (Under 15 Acres)
- 6. Other Forest
- 7. Shoreline

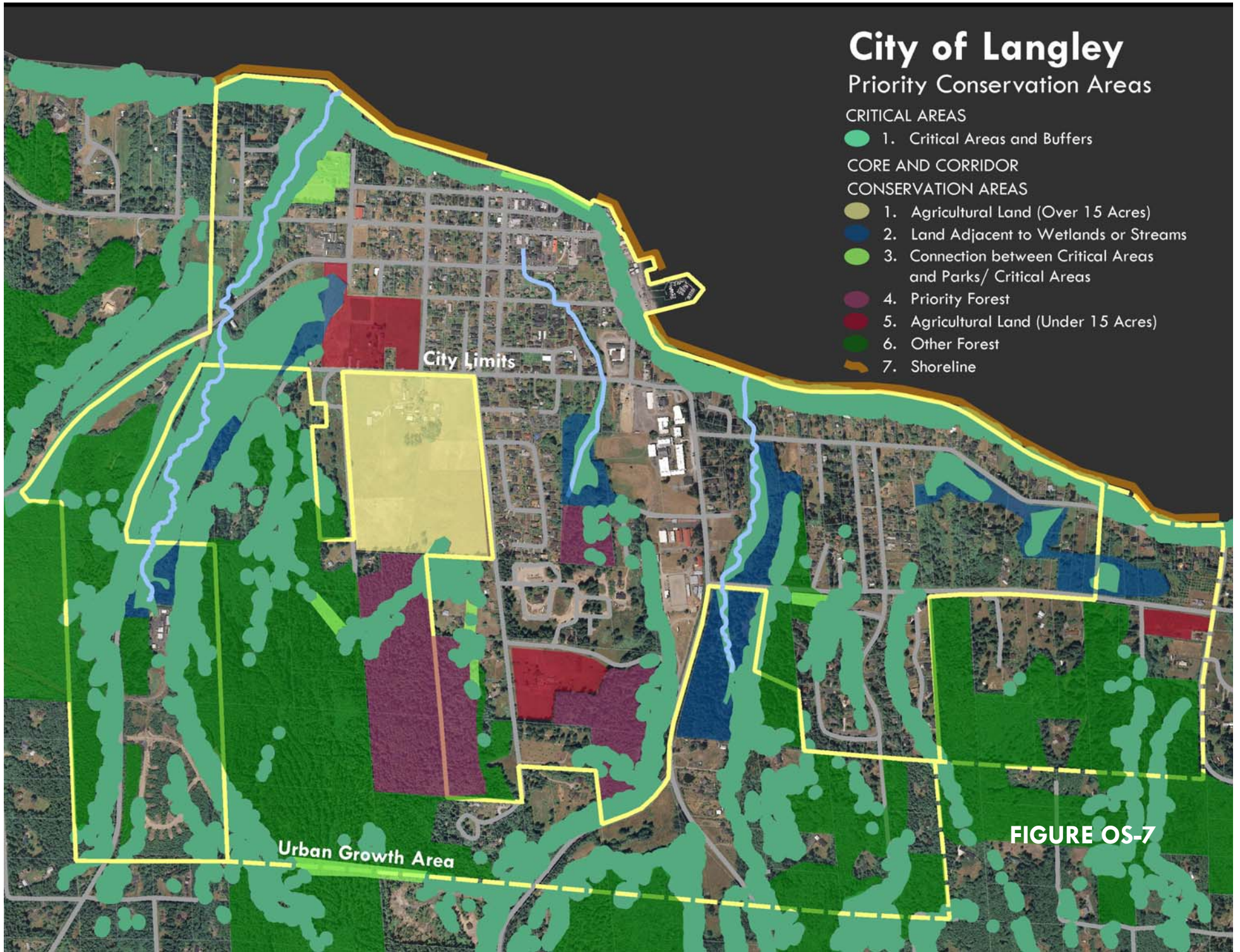


FIGURE OS-7

## 5. How do we pay for our future projects?

In order to achieve these major priorities over the next twenty years, the City of Langley should draw upon a variety of funding sources and approaches to protect and enhance parks, open space and trails. These approaches should include methods to protect land that is not currently owned by the City of Langley, and methods to enhance existing City-owned properties.

### **METHODS TO PROTECT NON-CITY OWNED PROPERTY**

The City of Langley has several options for the future acquisition or protection of land. These methods include the acquisition of fee simple property, the acquisition of development rights through the use of conservation easements, the protection of privately-owned land, and the use of other organizations' land. These approaches are articulated below:

**A. Acquisition of fee simple property.** With the acquisition of fee simple property, the City of Langley acquires the outright ownership of a piece of land. Methods to implement this strategy are:

1. Outright purchase through:
  - a. Grants including:
    - i. Funding administered by the Recreation and Conservation Office, such as the Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account, Land and Water Conservation Fund, Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicle Activities Program, Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program, and Youth Athletic Facilities Fund.
    - ii. Island County Conservation Futures.
    - iii. Funding provided by local service organizations.
    - iv. Funding provided by state and federal departments.
  - b. Loans.
  - c. Donations from citizens.
  - d. A designated land acquisition fund.
  - e. Voter approved bonds or levies including general obligation bonds or a levy lid lift.
  - f. Non-voter approved bonds including councilmatic or revenue bonds.
  - g. Impact fees.
  - h. Real Estate Excise Tax.
2. Land trades.
3. Donations, options include:
  - a. Land donated to the City as part of a subdivision.
  - b. Land donated to the City by a private property owner or other agency.

**B. Acquisition of development rights.** With the acquisition of development rights a landowner continues to own a piece of land, but voluntarily removes some or all of the development rights through a legal agreement called a conservation

easement. The conservation easement permanently limits land uses forever on the property, regardless of who owns the land, in order to protect the land's conservation values. The conservation easement may restrict the allowed number of uses on a parcel, the location of uses on a site, or the allowance of certain types of activities to a level that is mutually agreed upon by the City and the landowner. Potential methods to implement this strategy are:

1. Landowner donation of development rights
2. Purchase of development rights through funding methods listed above in "A".
3. A transfer of development rights program.

**C. Protection of Privately-Owned Land.** With the protection 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 the regulations specified in the Langley Municipal Code. Potential methods to promote the protection of privately-owned land are:

1. Critical area regulations.
2. Subdivision regulations (including standards specifying a set amount of open space or the dedication of privately-owned park as part of the recordation of a subdivision).
3. Zoning regulations.
4. Open space taxation under the Public Benefit Rating System of Island County.

**D. Use of Other Organizations' Land.** 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. Other partnerships with organizations to provide parks, open space and trails.

## **METHODS TO ENHANCE CITY-OWNED LANDS**

The City of Langley also has several options for the enhancement of existing parks and natural areas. These sources include unique sources such as the donation of time and labor in the design or construction of a facility and each of the funding sources listed under "The Acquisition of Fee Simple Property" (though some grant programs are not appropriate for certain projects).

## **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**

Taking into account each of these funding sources, the Parks and Open Space Commission has established the following Six Year Capital Improvement Program (see Table 3).

**TABLE 3: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (2010-2015)**

**Parks, Open Space, and Trails**

(Totals in Millions of Dollars)

<b>REVENUES</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
Capital Fund Revenue			1.5			
Grant Funding			0.5			
<b>PROJECTS</b>						
<b>PRIORITY 1: IMPLEMENT THE CORE AREA AND CORRIDOR CONCEPT</b>						
Project 1: Acquire fee-simple ownership or a conservation easement over a portion of the land in one of the two highest priority conservation areas*			2			
<b>TOTAL PROJECTS</b>			2			
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>			2			
<b>ENDING FUND BALANCE</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0

\*Scheduling of this project is dependent on the willingness of landowners and the availability of funding

# 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 4.

**TABLE 4: 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). 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.

## APPENDIX 2: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Parks, Open Space and Trails Element is the result of a seventeen-month planning process conducted by the Parks and Open Space Commission of the City of Langley. This Commission is made up of five volunteers, two of whom have professional experience related to Parks and Open Space.

The Commission has held twenty meetings over this seventeen month period, each of which has been open to the public. Five of these meetings featured tours of existing parks and open space system, and one of these meetings was a public workshop designed to present the Commission's concept for the parks and open space system. Beyond these meetings, the Commission has also conducted a number of subcommittee meetings and presented four times to the Langley City Council. The general timeline for the creation of this element is presented below:

**August 2008 to January 2009** – The Parks and Open Space Commission held its first nine meetings and worked to establish a basic understanding of existing parks and open space in Langley. Over these meetings, the Commission conducted five tours of Langley that featured visits to: Seawall Park, the lands between the Langley Woodmen-Cemetery and the Langley Middle School, Generation Park, the Saratoga Creek Ravine, the Noble Creek Corridor, Cedars Subdivision – Tract 100, Fossek Farm, and the Cascade Avenue walkway.

**December 15, 2008** – The Commission presented the general scope of their planning effort and their preliminary findings to the Langley City Council.

**February 2009 to April 2009** – The Parks and Open Space Commission held three regular committee meetings and a number of subgroup meetings during this period. The Technical Subcommittee of the Commission analyzed data from the tours and worked to create a framework for the parks and open space system, and the Public Participation Subcommittee worked to figure out how to involve the public in the process. The full Commission established definitions for different types of parks and natural areas and, at the meeting of March 9, 2009, created the Core Area and Corridor concept for open space.

**April 2009** – The Commission sent a Parks Survey, developed by the Public Participation Subcommittee, to residents of the City of Langley. Of the 750 surveys distributed, 202 surveys were returned with comments related to existing park use and desired park facilities.

**May 18, 2009** – The Parks and Open Space Commission presented the draft Core Area and Corridor concept to the Langley City Council.

**May 28, 2009** – The Parks and Open Space Commission presented the findings of the survey and the Core Area and Corridor concept on a series of tri-fold display boards at a public meeting at Saint Hubert’s Catholic Church. 38 residents (not including Commission and Council members) attended the meeting and 17 out of the 18 individuals that filled out evaluation forms for the event said the meeting met or exceeded their expectations. A number of comments were recorded on butcher paper in the room and were integrated into the element.

**June 2009 to November 2009** – The Parks and Open Space Commission held seven meetings to work on drafting the Parks, Open Space and Trails Element. Draft versions of the element were posted online prior to each meeting and public comment was allowed at each of the meetings.

**June 15, 2009** – The Parks and Open Space Commission presented the boards from the May 28<sup>th</sup> public meeting to the Langley City Council. Audience and council members were invited to study the materials and offer any comments or concerns.

**August 13 to August 16, 2009** – The Parks and Open Space Commission displayed the tri-fold display boards from the May 28<sup>th</sup> public meeting at the Island County Fair. Comments were solicited on sheets of paper and the City of Langley was presented a blue ribbon for the educational content of the boards.

**September 21, 2009** – The Parks and Open Space Commission presented a draft version of the element to the Langley City Council.

**November 6, 2009** – The City of Langley issued a Determination of Nonsignificance for the draft Parks, Open Space and Trails Element of the Langley Comprehensive Plan. A fourteen day comment period was established for the determination. No comments on the determination were received as of the date of this staff report.

**November 23, 2009** – After due and proper notice, the Parks and Open Space Commission held a public hearing on the Parks, Open Space and Trails Element. No written citizen comments were submitted to be included in the Public Record as of the date of this staff report.

# DEFINITIONS FOR PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

*Editors Note: This sheet represents a draft set of definitions for the Parks, Open Space and Trails Element. These definitions will be inserted in the definition section of the Comprehensive Plan upon approval of the element.*

## REVISED DEFINITIONS

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**Open Space:** Open space as used in this plan, includes hazardous and environmental critical areas, such as steep slopes and wetlands; wildlife habitat and corridors; agricultural lands; forested areas, shorelines, and trails; and aesthetic value lands, such as scenic corridors and viewsheds.

## NEW DEFINITIONS

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### TYPE OF PARK OR NATURAL AREA:

**Natural Resource Area:** Natural resource areas are lands, including forests, streams, and wetlands, that are set aside for the preservation of natural resources or landscapes. These areas retain habitat, preserve lands that define Langley’s urban form, conserve non-developed areas within watersheds, and offer low-impact visitor use opportunities, such as trails.

**Park:** A park is a facility, typically one or more acres in size, that offers a mixture of passive and active recreational uses and natural and manmade elements. No facilities in the City of Langley meet the functional and size criteria for a park at this time.

Wide Variety of Activities/  
Larger in Size

**Mini-Park:** A mini-park is a facility, typically less than one acre in size, which offers a narrow range of active or passive use activities. Existing mini-parks within the City of Langley include: Thomas Hladkey Memorial Park, Seawall Park, the Cascade Walkway, Cedars Tract 100, Generation Park, Langley Park, and Robert L. Smith Park (Boy and Dog Park).

Narrow Variety of Activities/  
Smaller in Size

**Special Use Park:** A special-use park is a facility that is oriented to the single-purpose visit. An example of an existing special use park is the Langley-Woodmen Cemetery.

Single-Purpose Visit Activities/  
Varied in Size

**Undeveloped:** Undeveloped open space areas are lands that have minimal use as a natural resource area and are not currently developed, but could be developed as a park facility.

### POPULATION SERVED BY FACILITY (For Parks, Mini-Parks and Special Use Parks Only)

**Community:** Community park facilities serve the entire Langley community and are generally located in the downtown area and along major corridors of the City. Examples of community

park facilities include: Seawall Park, Robert L. Smith Park (i.e. Boy and Dog Park), the Langley-Woodmen Cemetery, Thomas Hladkey Memorial Park, the Cascade Walkway, Generation Park, and Langley Park.

**Neighborhood:** Neighborhood park facilities are located within residential areas of the City of Langley and primarily serve the population and uses within a quarter mile of the facility. The only example of a neighborhood park in Langley is Tract 100 of the Cedars Subdivision.

## **OTHER DEFINITIONS**

**Treeline:** Treelines are visual amenities that help sustain the perception of a compact village surrounded by successional vegetation. Treelines are not static (trees can fall, be sustainably harvested, and the exact location of treelines can move) but the general location of these features as viewed from downtown, neighborhoods, and scenic corridors are part of Langley's cultural landscape.