

THE BELLINGHAM PLAN



Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

February 12, 2025

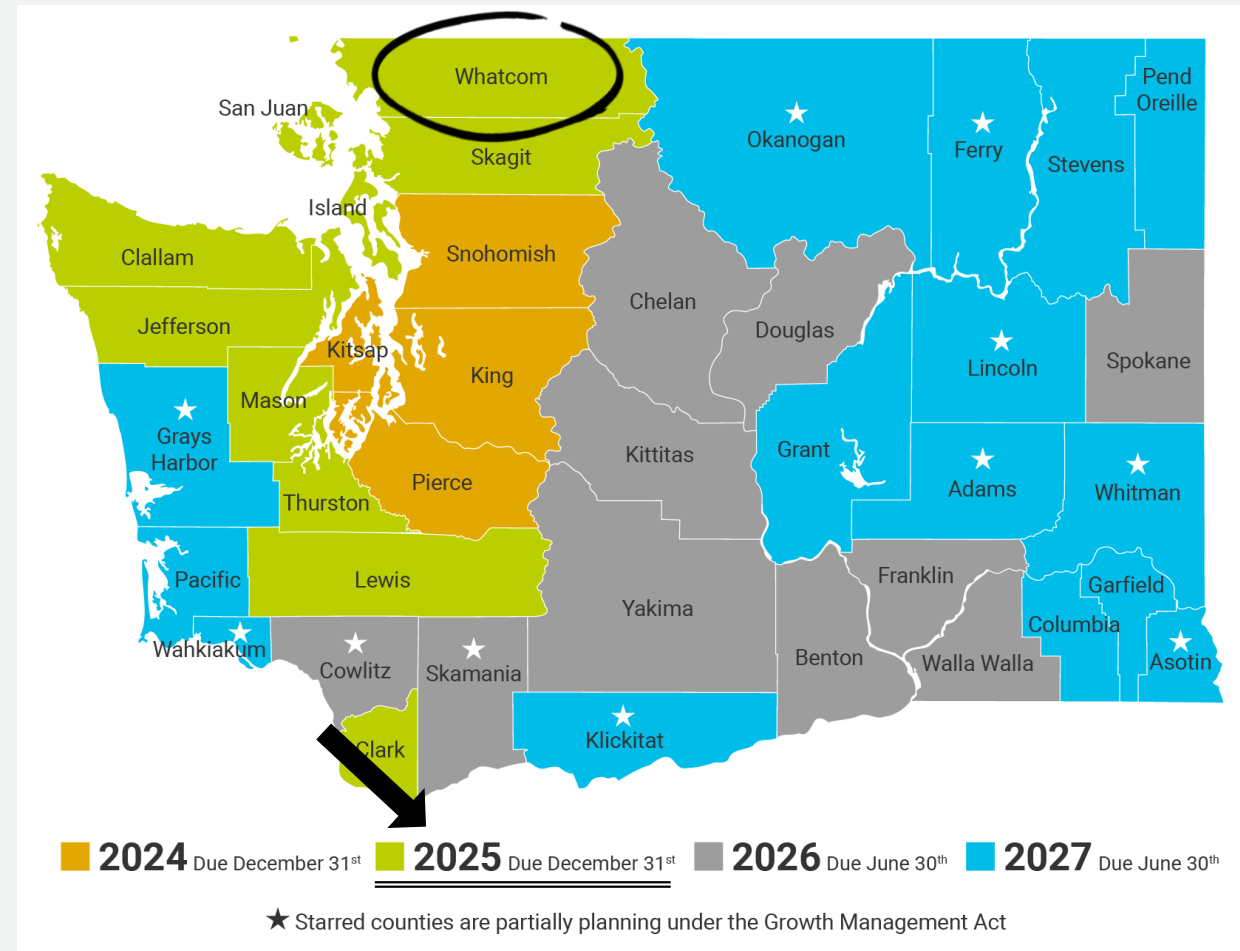
What is a Comprehensive Plan?

- Required by Growth Management Act (GMA)
- Long-range plan (20 years), updated every 10 years
- Variety of topics in different chapters
- Policies set framework for later actions
- Anticipate, plan for, and accommodate growth



State Requirements

- GMA first adopted in 1990
- GMA requires periodic updates
- Codified in Revised Code of Washington (RCW)
- 15 goals as basis for all comprehensive plans
- Office of Financial Management (OFM) population projections
- Whatcom County 2045 population projection: ~293,000



Recent State Legislation

Housing Related:

- HB 1110 – Middle Housing (2023)
- HB 1220 – Housing Affordability for All Income Levels (2021)
- HB 1998 – Allowing Co-Housing (2024)
- HB 1293 – Streamlining Design Review (2023)

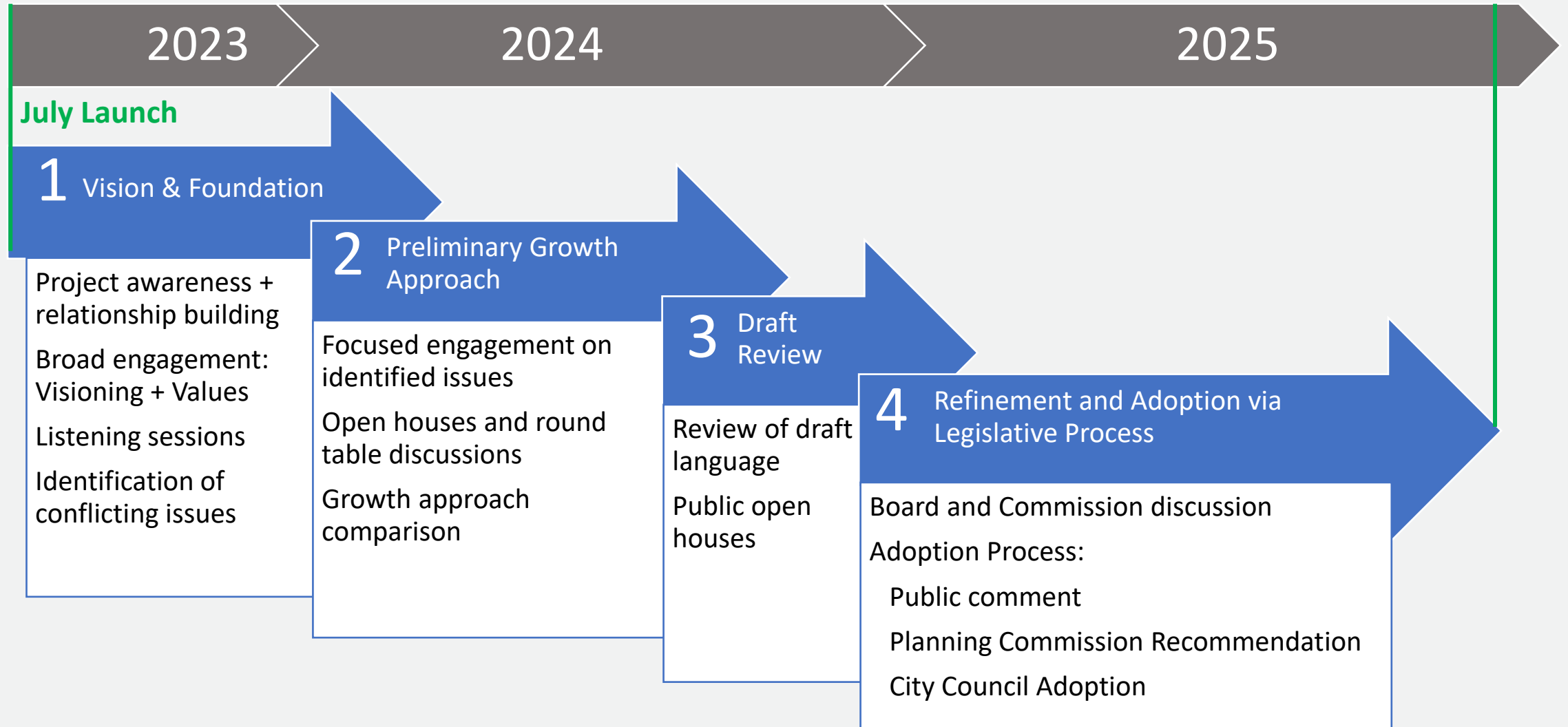
[\(Link to More Housing Legislation\)](#)

Other:

HB 1181 – Climate Action [\(Link to Learn More\)](#)



Bellingham Plan Project Schedule



Past Engagement: The Numbers

» 8,992 Total Survey Responses

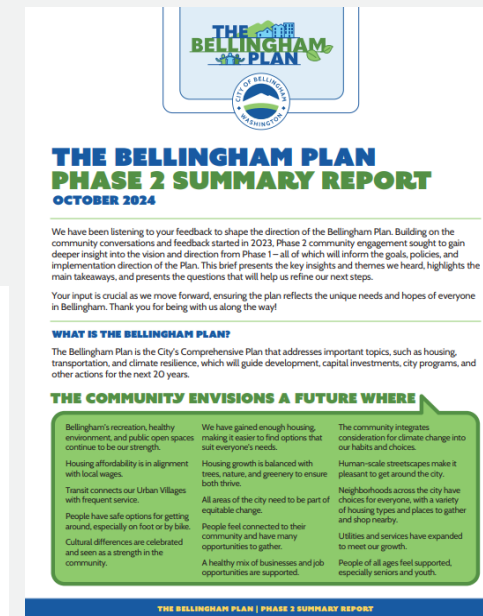
- » 4,287 Community Vision Survey responses
- » 1,475 Housing Preference Survey responses
- » 3,230 Growth Survey responses

» 14 Open Houses

- » 980+ total participants

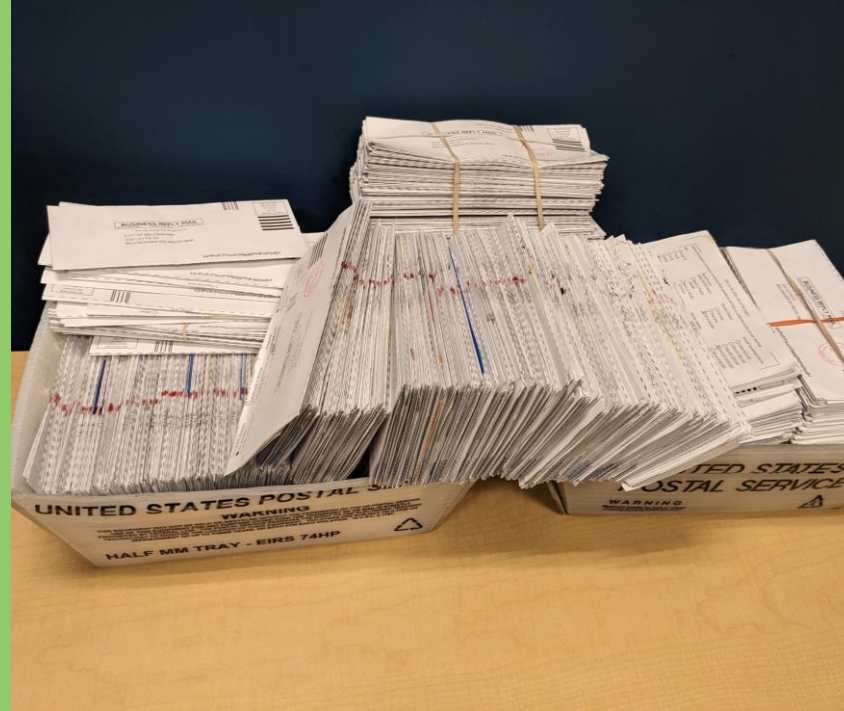
» Engage Bellingham Online Engagement

- » 750+ Engaged participants
- » 9,880+ site visits



Under-represented groups we made specific efforts to reach:

- Latine and/or Hispanic people
- 18-24 age and/or students



Past Engagement: What We Heard *(all chapters)*

Every neighborhood needs to do its part to provide housing choices for everyone.

We care about the outdoor and public realm, too. We want private usable space, walkways, street trees, and defined outdoor spaces.

Transit is not a convenient option for me. It makes more sense to drive instead of waiting for the bus. Please increase the frequency of transit!

I wish it was easier to understand how everything the City is working on relates.

Transportation, housing, and land use are intertwined with climate. We need to consider them holistically.

We need to plan sustainably, with efficient use of facilities and avoiding sprawl.

There are all kinds of ways that we like to use public recreation spaces and facilities.

A connected community is a stronger more resilient one. We want more way to connect with each other.

Some small businesses would be great in our residential neighborhoods, but we are worried about parking and noise impacts.

In 20 years, we want to see our city be healthy, clean, green, and sustainable.

Future high-speed rail is an opportunity for better connectivity throughout the region.



What the Community Said

These descriptions summarize the most common opinions we heard relevant to the Parks Chapter.

Most of us feel that recreational opportunities, a healthy natural environment, and public open spaces are the top three strengths of Bellingham.

There are all kinds of ways that we like to use public recreation spaces and facilities.

Public parks, recreation opportunities, and open spaces are some of the most important community assets.

We have lots of ideas for how to make our parks, trails, and recreation facilities more accessible and inclusive.

There are all kinds of ways that we like to use public recreation spaces and facilities.



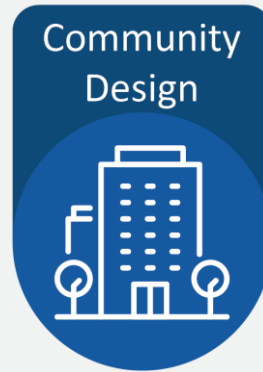
11 Chapters



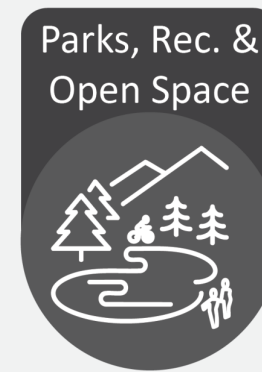
****3 New Chapters (In Blue)***

Plan Chapters by Theme

More Housing Choice



Sustainable Growth



Climate Resilience

Bellingham for All

* 3 New Chapters

Proposed Process & Schedule for 2025

1. Staff drafts Plan (underway)

2. Planning Commission reviews drafted material (February – May)

3. Planning Commission public hearing and recommendation to City Council (July – August)

4. City Council public hearing, discussion, and final plan approval (September – November)

Other Boards and Commissions provide feedback on relevant drafted material to Planning Commission between Steps 1 and 2.

Growth Allocations

Countywide growth 2023-2045 is projected to be between about:

- 57,000 and 86,000 people
- 31,000 and 44,000 housing units
- 24,000 and 38,000 jobs

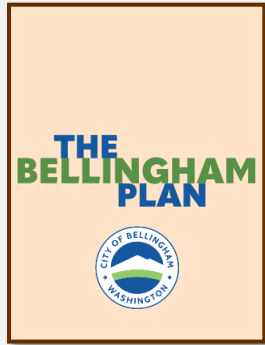


Bellingham's preliminary proposal accommodates:

- **30,310 people** (35% to 53% of countywide)
- **18,390 housing units** (42% to 59% of countywide)
- **19,384 jobs** (51% to 80% of countywide)

Assumes annual **Bellingham** growth of about 1,378 people per year which aligns well with actual 2014-2024 growth of 1,334 people per year.

Planning Documents



20-year
Visioning
Document

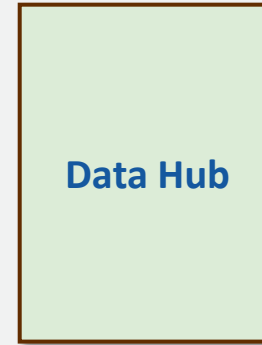


Implementation Documents
(Ex: Pedestrian Master Plan)

- *Adopted by reference*
- *Updated infrequently*



*UPDATED VIA
TYPE VI PROCESS*

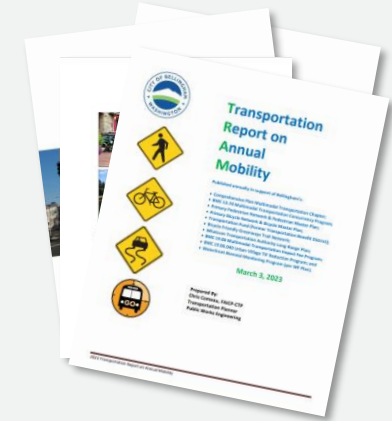


Data Accompanying
Bellingham Plan

- *Supporting information*
- *Updated as needed*



*UPDATED WITHOUT
TYPE VI PROCESS*

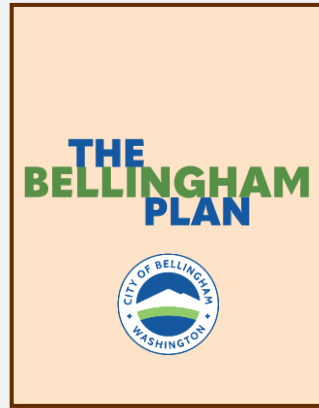


Other Implementation
Documents (Ex: TRAM)

- *NOT adopted by reference*
- *Updated frequently, such as annually*

Goals and Policies (Transportation Example)

*Comprehensive
Plan*



Ex: Transportation Goal:

Provide a transportation system that prioritizes safety, comfort, and reliability for all ages and abilities.

Ex: Transportation Policy:

Reduce and enforce vehicle speeds through traffic calming measures, especially in school zones.



*Implementation
Plan*

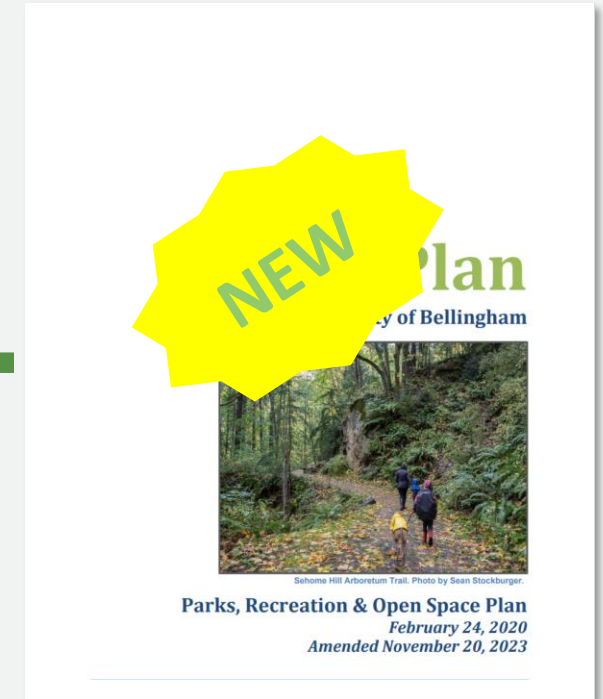
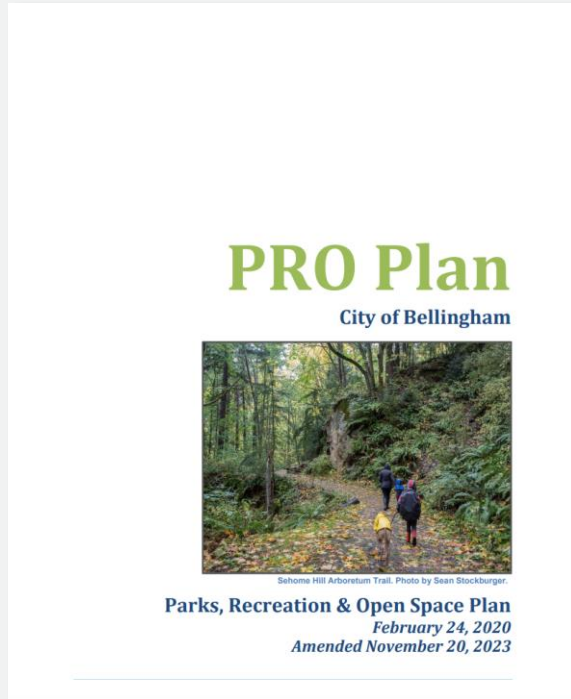


Ex: Transportation Programmatic Action:

Conducting a citywide speed study to assess what changes are needed to achieve lower vehicle speeds.



Parks Chapter and PROS Plan

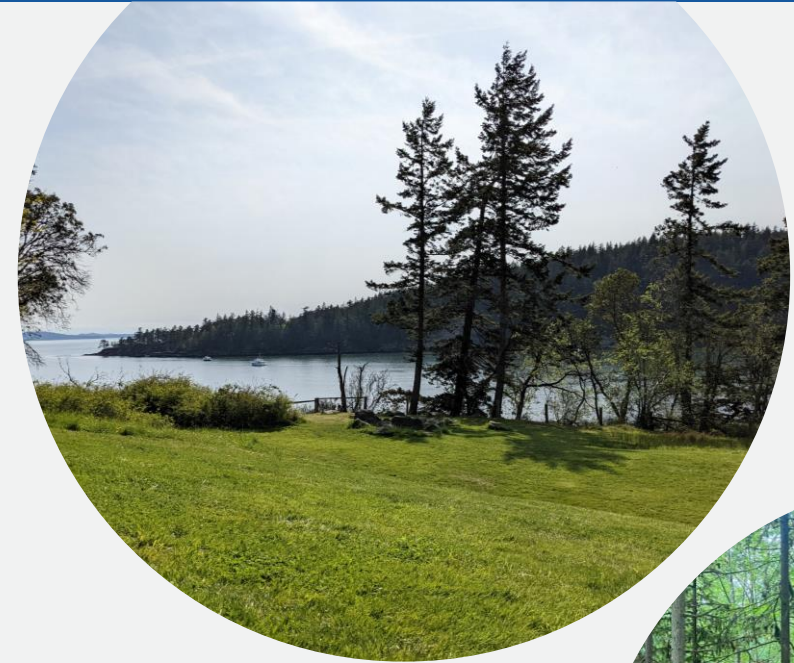


- Parks Chapter and PRO Plan: One document

- Parks Chapter: Goals and policies
- PROS Plan: Separate implementation document, adopted by reference

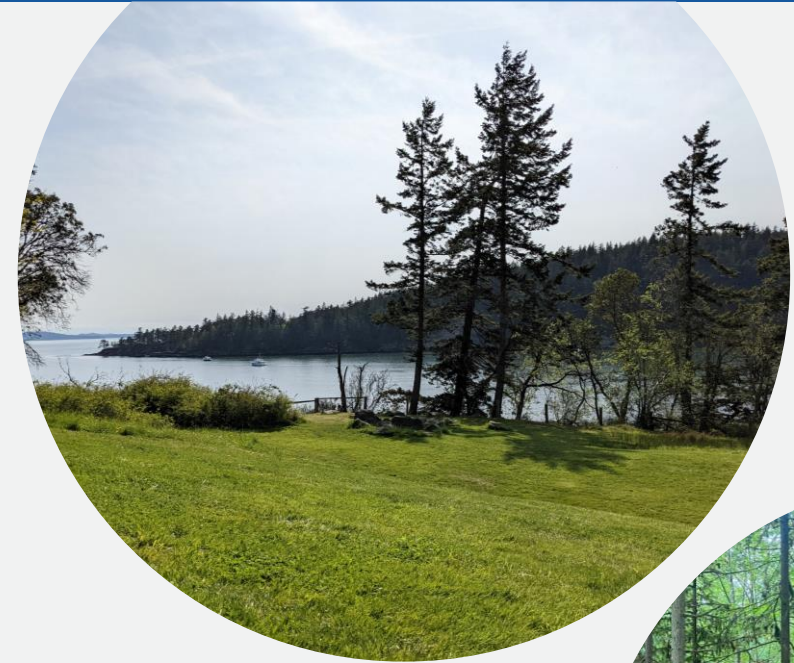
Other Parks-Related Goals and Policies

- Land Use and Community Design
 - Preservation, activation, access and integration of natural areas and open space
 - Recreation opportunities
 - Preserving historic and cultural resources
- Environment and Climate
 - Aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems
 - Coordinated natural resource management
 - Supporting human health and wellbeing
 - Equity
 - Mitigation and adaptation
- Economic Development
 - Supporting recreational amenities



Other Parks-Related Goals and Policies

- Capital Facilities and Transportation
 - Fiscal sustainability to provide parks as we grow
 - Provision of parks and trails
 - Trails as transportation routes, connectivity
- Community Wellbeing and Civic Practice
 - Promoting different forms of health
 - Food systems
 - Community connectedness
 - Tribal relations and cultural resources
 - Inclusive, equitable, and accessible government





Thank you!

Questions & Discussion

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