

**City of Kenmore
Planning Commission Meeting
June 25, 2019 @ 7:00 p.m.**

Planning Commission Members – In Attendance

Mark Ohrenschall, Chair
Carol Baker
Suzanne Greathouse
Nathan Loutsis
Michael Mulcare
Dennis Olson

Consultants & Staff

Debbie Bent, Community Development Director
Maureen Colaizzi, Parks Project Manager
Janina Meeks, Admin. Assistant

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Ohrenschall at 7:00 p.m.

2. CITIZEN COMMENTS

No citizens rendered comments

3. AGENDA ITEMS

The Planning Commission continued discussion of the Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan. Debbie Bent began by introducing Maureen Colaizzi, the parks project manager handling the PROS Plan, and outlined the night's focus on the draft of the demands and needs analysis findings and how those findings inform the PROS Plan. Commissioner Mulcare requested a copy emailed to him as he was conferenced into the meeting and could not see the presentation on the screen. Debbie Bent supplied the presentation to Commissioner Mulcare.

Maureen Colaizzi explained that the City hired a consultant, HBB Landscape Architects, to assist with developing and drafting the analysis; Staff has communicated back to the consultant the questions and information from the Planning Commission from the previous meeting to include in an updated draft coming soon.

In April the Planning Commission was introduced to the PROS Plan and the role of the City's geography and natural environment in the parks system. Maureen reiterated that Kenmore is unique in that the majority of the park space in the City is encumbered by environmentally sensitive areas (80% of the parks system is in a critical area or urban forest); steep slopes limit the conditions available for athletic facilities; public shoreline access is very limited – less than one mile is currently available; and, while the City is very "walkable," safe connections between neighborhoods, downtown and the park system are lacking. There is an expected population increase of about 25% through 2035 as well as an increase in diversity. In general, the majority of density increases are expected in downtown

and on the outskirts near the Snohomish County border as that is where there is more capacity for growth.

Kenmore's park system totals 147 acres that includes 13 parks, 7.5 miles of trails, 7 playgrounds, 1 local trail and more. When State and regional parks systems within the City's boundary are considered, there are 475 acres of parks that includes 1 state boat launch, a 300+ acre state park, 3 miles of regional trails, and more. The parks classifications presented are a little different from the past PROS Plan: there are now only 4 classifications instead of 6 as duplicate classifications were removed to simplify the categories for analysis. The 4 classifications presented are: Regional, Community, Neighborhood, and Linear.

Regional facilities serve beyond the City limits with unique features or amenities (i.e. access to the Burke-Gilman trail). Community parks are usually smaller than Regional parks, but not necessarily, and serve a broad range of needs to meet both passive and active recreational uses. Neighborhood parks are ideal because they serve the community at the closest point and should be within a 10-minute walk from residents' homes. Linear parks can be active or passive open space and are intended as connectors of pedestrian and bicycle users and wildlife habitats.

The City has good distribution of parks and open space, most highly concentrated around the waterfront and in the north of the City. The analysis shows the City does serve the community's needs but through a variety of parks classifications and provides supporting data to help identify what recreation programs and facility improvements should be made and prioritize capital investments.

The data used for the analysis includes community interest and opinion, the City's geography and community demographics, existing facilities and programs, services in comparable parks systems and trends in recreational activities and park use. Key findings from the survey were for parks to be accessible, safe and welcoming and flexible to serve the widest audience of the community. Parks are becoming a key strategy in climate resilience and should be environmentally sustainable, are a catalyst for future stewards of the community by offering a safe place to explore the balance of the community's ecology. Recreation programs need to support active lifestyles of all ages. Parks improve civic pride with public fountains and gathering spaces, interpretation of local history and natural environment, etc.

Community interest focused on a few major themes: waterfront access, improving existing and acquiring new facilities, preserving and protecting existing natural resources, improving connectivity to/between/within parks, and need for local recreation. Top-ranked facility and program needs, many of which carried through from 2013 PROS Plan, include indoor exercise and aquatics facilities, nature trails, recreation center, senior programs, nature/environmental education, and others.

The National Parks and Recreation Association (NRPA) conducts surveys of municipal park and recreation providers. The NRPA prepares annual reports that document operations of programming and facilities across the U.S. The reports are available on their website. . Per the NRPA, Kenmore's overall parks and recreation facilities exceed the national average in parkland. However, Kenmore is below average in providing facilities such as dog parks,

spray parks, community gardens, multi-purpose courts, indoor recreation and aquatic facilities.

As part of the Park Impact Fee Rate Study, Staff inventoried all park assets and estimated costs of assets of the park system to determine the value of the park system and projected investment needed for the park system for future population growth. In terms of demographics, recreation facilities that support alternative transportation are desirable because of Kenmore's large commuter population; activities that support active lifestyles for aging adults, etc.

The Trust for Public Lands (TPL) created (Geographic Information System) walkability maps of cities in the U.S. to show how walkable parks are within each community. The TPL walkability map of Kenmore shows that 73% of Kenmore residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park or open space. There are roughly six gaps within the City, ideally filling those gaps would more evenly distribute the number of parks across the city. Much more work needs to be done to determine how to fill the gaps and if it is feasible to do so considering the topographic context of the community.

The city government is small and not set up for recreation program management. So, partnering with other recreation program providers and agencies to provide programming for the community will continue to be important in the future. To expand current programming, the City could develop a method for tracking participation, taking a more active role with programming partners, and consider offering and advertising scholarships for third-party participation, among others.

Commissioner Greathouse questioned if there is information available on the number of miles people are willing to travel for a regional aquatic center. Staff is unaware of the information specifically asked but recalled that Northshore School District did a study for placement of an aquatic center in different communities and found that while there was a lot of interest in having the aquatic center no one wanted to fund it. Commissioner Ohrenschall asked if there is data on the limitations for Kenmore residents to access other aquatic centers; whether it is known what might be limiting that access, whether travel time or cost of memberships that the city could supplement with scholarships. Staff doesn't have this information, but that is a good suggestion.

Analysis was also performed on recreation participation rates within the city; population growth estimations will require additional ball fields to fill that need. City is currently in the process of reviewing leasing options for the ball fields at St. Edward State Park. Current projects within the city at Squire's Landing, Log Boom and Rhododendron Parks expected to meet some of the needs for aquatic programming and waterfront access.

The Commissioners asked for more information about the financial impact and status of in-process projects, especially those stemming from the "Walkways and Waterways" bond measure. addressing to determine. They requested information on how the city finances parks maintenance, especially in relation to the City Manager's budget projections that indicate a deficit in the future. Commissioner Baker asked about the policy and process to utilize volunteers to reduce the cost of parks maintenance. Staff explained that typically parks maintenance is funded as part of the operating budget. The PROS Plan addresses funding capital investments such as new park development or major repair or replacement

of park facilities in parks vs maintenance. The City doesn't have a specific staff person for volunteers to contact, but volunteers are welcome to contact the Public Works department or come to City Hall to inquire about or suggest opportunities.

The City doesn't charge fees for general parks access. There are some fees associated with renting space at the Hangar, City Hall and Moorlands Park. There is concern that charging fees for access to the parks will deter residents from visiting the parks. Other agencies that have implemented fees are typically associated with parking. When considering fee options for parks access, the city's goal to make an equitable and accessible parks system needs to be considered.

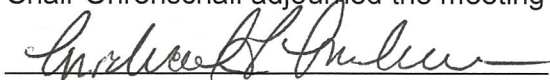
Some of the projects underway from the Walkways and Waterways and Imagine Kenmore outreach programs in the city will address some of the immediate needs identified in the current survey, but not the entire needs of a 20-year vision. Since 2013 the City has acquired property and worked to meet the needs identified in the previous plan, whether access to water, nature trails, etc. There are not any parks in the city currently that are suitable for ball fields; on average about three to four acres not constrained by critical areas is needed for a ball field. Commissioner Loutsis suggested looking into improving the pedestrian and bicycle routes to parks for areas identified within the gaps, as a short term solution until property can be acquired for park space. Partnership opportunities with developers as part of new downtown development can be looked into to supply recreation facilities. The St. Edward ballfields improvement project is still under permit and environmental review, the State has begun the SEPA EIS process and the City is still working with the State for a long-term lease. Assuming the permits are issued and assuming the lease is agreed upon, construction would not start until at least 2024.

Staff recorded comments received from Planning Commission members during their discussion. Staff said they would research their comments and work to incorporate their suggestions in the draft plan. The next step in this process will be to take the information gathered and develop a draft Level of Service for the park system, recommendations for facilities and programs, and develop priorities for the park Capital Facilities Plan. Staff anticipates returning to the Planning Commission later this summer.

Debbie reminded the Planning Commission that the July 2nd meeting was cancelled, the next meeting is July 16th.

4. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Ohrenschall adjourned the meeting at 8:26 p.m.



Planning Commission

Approved by Planning Commission on: 8/20/2019