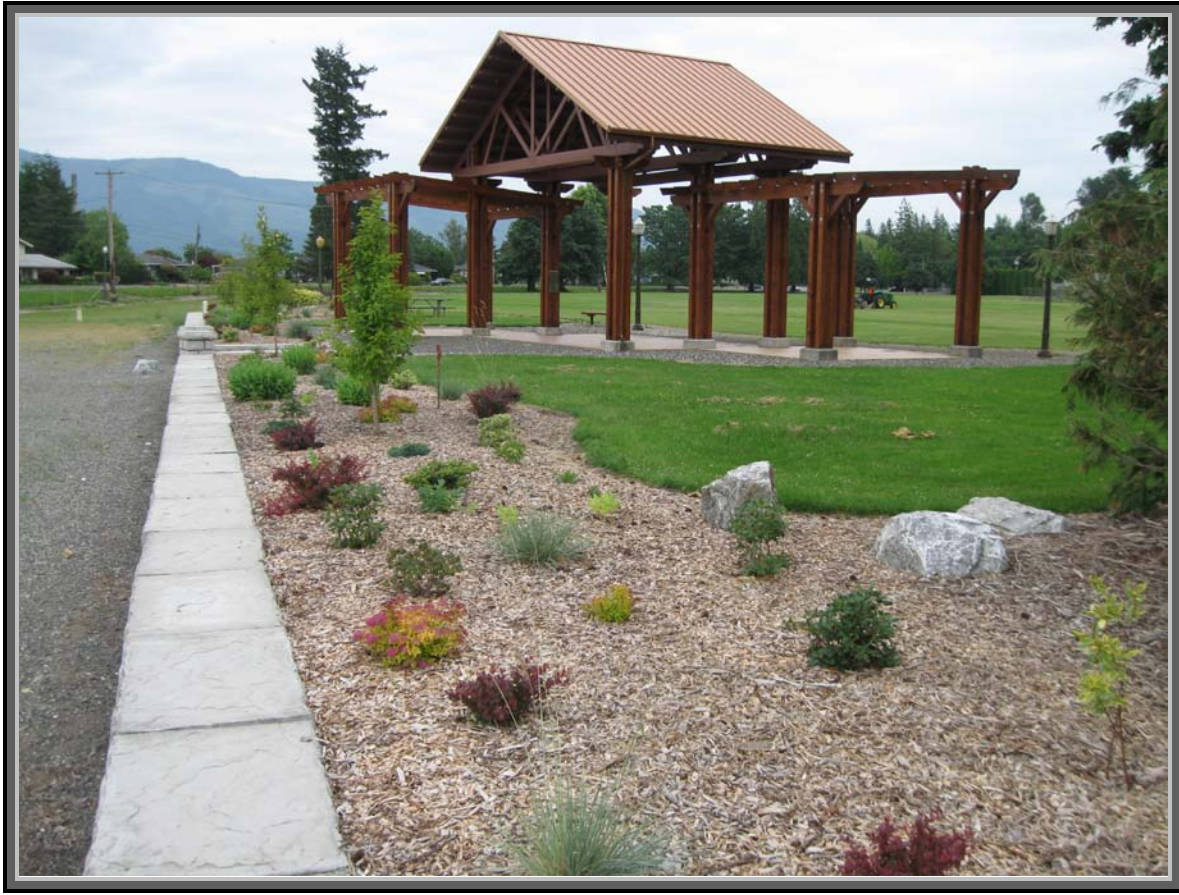


# **CITY OF EVERSON COMPREHENSIVE PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN**

**FEBRUARY 27, 2018**



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**Adopted by the Everson City Council on February 27, 2018**

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## **Authority**

This document is the Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan for the City of Everson, Washington. This is a legally recognized document that provides a framework for assessing the needs and opportunities for developing park space and other recreational facilities for the residents in and around the City of Everson. Development of this plan is authorized by RCW 36.70A and is required to be eligible for some state and federal grant programs administered by Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO).

Once adopted by the City Council, this plan is intended to be used as the basis for developing a Parks Element of the Everson Comprehensive Plan.

## **Scope and Purpose**

This plan contains six (6) mandatory elements as required by the RCO. These elements include:

1. Goals & Objectives – A statement of the City’s long-range goals and a listing of associated objectives that describe specific actions aimed at achieving each goal. These goals support the City’s parks and recreation mission.
2. Inventory – A description of physical setting, agency authorities, standards, physical setting, and sphere of influence or service area. This section also contains a report on the supply and condition of existing recreational facilities, and a report on the annual maintenance and operational costs for each site in the inventory.
3. Public Involvement – A description of the opportunities provided for public involvement in developing the Parks and Recreation Plan.
4. Demand and Need Analysis – Identification of local priorities for acquisition, development, preservation, enhancement, management, along with an explanation of why these actions are necessary. This is accomplished by reviewing survey results and past plans and by receiving input from the public. A plan for acquiring the necessary resources is also included.
5. Capital Improvement Program – A list of land acquisition, facility development and renovation projects by year of anticipated implementation, along with potential funding sources.
6. Formal Adoption – A statement of the formal adoption process through which the City Council of the City of Everson adopted the Parks and Recreation Plan following a public hearing and consistent with all other requirements of law.

## **II. BACKGROUND**

### **History**

The City of Everson is a small town located approximately 15 miles northeast of Bellingham and approximately ten miles south of the Canadian border. The city of Nooksack borders Everson to the east. Much of the surrounding unincorporated area is zoned for long-term agricultural and mineral resource extraction (gravel mining) purposes. The Nooksack River bisects the town just to the southwest of the downtown commercial district.

Early European settlement was based on access to an important transportation route crossing the Nooksack River that provided access to gold mining to the north in Canada. The town of Everson was incorporated in 1929. Since that time the population has grown to over 2,600. Everson includes a downtown commercial district surrounded by primarily residential neighborhoods and a mix of industrial, agricultural and other uses.

### **Comprehensive Planning**

Everson began the process of complying with the Washington State Growth Management Act (GMA) in the winter of 1990. In the fall of 1991, development of the Comprehensive Plan was underway. The process was directed by a 9-member Growth Management Steering Committee. In 1992, as part of the City's Comprehensive Plan development process, Everson conducted a resident survey to identify the needs of the community. Generally, the results of the survey indicated that Everson was perceived as a friendly town where the quality of life was rated very highly. The survey indicated that future growth should occur at a steady rate, possibly even a little slower than in the preceding few years. Most people were satisfied with the quality of new housing and perceived a need for more single-family housing. There was a great deal of support for bringing in new business and industry and for improving the appearance of the community. The survey asked about most-liked and least-liked features in the city. It found, among other things, that parks and view—including location, rural setting, and a small-town feeling—were among the most-liked features. Lack of community services, appearance, lack of evening activities, and not enough for kids to do were among the least-liked features of the town. Visions for the future included bike paths/walking trails along the Nooksack River, additional baseball and soccer fields, and youth services. The Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1996.

In December 2004, the City Council adopted a limited update of the Comprehensive Plan, including revisions to Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7 therein. Details regarding the current and future needs of the community in relation to the City's parks and recreation facilities were included in the Capital Facilities Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

In 2016, the City Council adopted an updated Comprehensive Plan as required by the GMA. Given that work had already begun on a comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan, but had not yet been completed, the 2016 update of the Comprehensive Plan did not include a separate Parks Element, but rather incorporated substantial information related to the City's parks and recreation facilities, existing conditions, future needs, and capital improvement program into the Capital Facilities Element of the 2016 Plan. Following adoption, the 2018 Parks and Recreation Plan will be incorporated as the Parks Element of the City Comprehensive Plan.

### III. GOALS & OBJECTIVES

#### Park and Recreation Mission Statement

It is Everson’s mission to advance parks, recreation and environmental conservation efforts that enhance the quality of life, not only for the citizens of Everson, but also for those from the surrounding area that visit and use the City’s facilities.

#### Recreation, Defined

Recreation is the refreshment of body and mind, outdoors or indoors, by engaging in enjoyable activities through forms of play, sports, amusement or relaxation.

#### Goals, Objectives & Associated Actions

**Goal 1:** To protect the present way of life by providing recreational opportunities valued by a rural community.

**Objective 1.1:** The City should maintain adequate levels of recreational land to provide for the present and future needs of a growing population.

**Action 1.1A:** Develop parklands in the areas designated for parks and trails in the Everson Comprehensive Plan.

**Action 1.1B:** Develop parklands in underserved areas within the City.

**Action 1.1C:** Realize the full potential of the City’s existing parks and recreation areas and make better use of them through the development of multi-use recreational opportunities.

**Action 1.1D:** Develop improvements that make the City’s existing and future parks and recreation areas attractive and useful for residents and visitors, including those with disabilities.

**Goal 2:** To protect the natural environment and enhance the environment in areas that may be degraded.

**Objective 2.1:** The City should protect and enhance the natural environment by encouraging and promoting volunteer “native tree” plantings.

**Action 2.1A:** Increase the native vegetation along riparian corridors and trails.

**Action 2.1B:** Incorporate educational signage along trails to promote a greater understanding of the benefits of natural systems.



**Action 2.1C:** Work with local schools to create habitat enhancement projects for grade school children.

**Action 2.1D:** Combine outdoor education with enhancement of habitat for wildlife and fish.

**Goal 3:** To improve the community appearance through enhancement and beautification of recreation lands.

**Objective 3.1:** The City should develop and maintain parks and recreation areas to meet the needs of the community, while preserving and enhancing the aesthetic qualities of the natural environment.

**Action 3.1A:** Parks should be landscaped with vegetation in a manner that is aesthetically appealing to people and sustaining for wildlife.

**Action 3.1 B:** Place flowering vegetation in the manicured sections of the Everson City Park and Riverside Park Pergola area.

**Objective 3.2:** The City may require re-vegetation of riparian and trail corridors in conjunction with the approval of development permits.

**Action 3.2A:** Developments occurring within the City limits should be connected to landscaped trails leading to shopping districts, neighboring subdivisions, and/or other recreational opportunities.

**Goal 4:** To improve walking and bicycle riding opportunities within the City of Everson and the surrounding area.

**Objective 4.1:** The City of Everson should work with the City of Nooksack and Whatcom County to coordinate pedestrian and bicycle trails.

**Action 4.1A:** Ensure that trails connect major developments with shopping districts and recreational opportunities.

**Action 4.1B:** Create additional trail links to ensure pedestrians and bicyclists have safe, clearly marked loops.

**Goal 5:** To create new recreational opportunities for the community as necessary.

**Objective 5.1:** Periodically the City should convene a Parks Advisory Committee (PAC) to assess how recreational needs and desires have changed over time.

**Action 5.1A:** Meet the changing needs of the community by identifying recreational preferences related to changing demographics.

**Goal 6:** To increase access to quality recreational facilities for all citizens.

**Objective 6.1:** Provide “barrier free” recreational opportunities to as many residents and visitors as possible.

**Action 6.1A:** Within feasible limits, trails and other facilities should be constructed in accordance with standards set forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act and other applicable laws.

**Goal 7:** To provide parks and recreational opportunities through mechanisms that are fair and equitable.

**Objective 7.1:** Development occurring within City limits should make a proportional contribution towards development of a Parks and Trail System.

**Action 7.1A:** Evaluate the Parks Impact Fee ordinance to see if it is adequate to meet Park and Recreation goals and objectives.

**Action 7.1B:** Revise subdivision regulations to ensure adequate provision of parks, recreational opportunities and trail connections.

## IV. INVENTORY OF CURRENT CONDITIONS

### Physical Setting

The City of Everson is a small town located in western Whatcom County, Washington, approximately 10 miles south of the U.S.-Canada border. The area within the current City limits includes approximately 881 acres. Whatcom County has designated an additional 360 acres as the City's urban growth area (UGA). The majority of the City and UGA lies within the Nooksack River watershed, although the eastern portion of the City is within the Johnson Creek/Sumas River watershed that drains to the Fraser River in British Columbia, Canada. This plan addresses the area within the current City limits and the designated UGA.

### Population Projections

According to the population estimate prepared by the Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM), the 2017 population within the City of Everson was 2,630 people. The 2016 update of the Everson Comprehensive Land Use Plan indicates that the City and its urban growth area (UGA) had a 2013 base year population of 2,665 people. Based on projections and allocations adopted by Whatcom County in coordination with local cities, the Comprehensive Plan states that the 20-year population projection for Everson and its UGA in the year 2036 is 3,907 people. The Everson Parks and Recreation Plan utilizes this 2036 population figure as the basis for the needs analysis presented later in this plan.

### Standards

The National Recreation & Parks Association (NRPA) sets forth the following definitions and standards for parks and recreational facilities.

**Community Parks.** Community parks generally serve more than one neighborhood and should contain facilities for organized sporting activities such as soccer, baseball and basketball. These activities should be geared for both youth and adults. Community parks often play the role of neighborhood parks for nearby residents. The Community Park should provide on-site parking and perhaps lighting. The service area is ½ to 3 miles and the recommended size is between 15 and 50 acres.

**Neighborhood Parks.** Neighborhood parks are central to a city's park system. These parks typically provide space for a variety of activities, such as playgrounds, play fields, courts and picnic areas. The recommended service area is between ¼ and ½ mile radius. Generally, there is no on-site parking and the recommended size is between 1-10 acres.

**Residential Pocket Parks.** These are the smallest types of parks specified by NRPA. These are usually less than one acre in size and are intended to serve children under 12 years of age. These parks can function as focal points and community landscaped areas as well. These parks should be within ¼ mile radius of the residential area they are intended to service.

**Non-residential Pocket Parks.** These parks are not intended to be standard in use or location. They may be merely a fountain square or a small treed area with tables. In some cases, these parks serve as roadside rest areas, providing local views.

**School Parks.** Schools provide playgrounds, fields and indoor recreational facilities for school needs. The Nooksack Valley School District does allow public use of its facilities when school is not in session. These school resources can provide playgrounds for children, as well as basketball courts and multi-purpose ball fields for school children and the general public. School district gymnasiums can at times be used by groups, provided an application is accepted and a facilities fee is paid to the district.

## **Supply and Condition of Facilities**

### *Community Parks*

Riverside Park. This 8.5-acre park lies just inside the west city limits adjacent to the Nooksack River. Amenities include two parking lots, two baseball fields with bleachers, a pergola (constructed in 2009), and a public restroom building with attached covered picnic pavilion. Other amenities include a playground area, 10 picnic sites, a Scout Cabin, and walking paths surrounding the perimeter of the park and along the river with interpretive signage. The park is in good to excellent condition (except for the baseball fields, playground equipment and Scout Cabin), as most of the facilities were constructed in 1993 or more recently. In addition to serving Everson residents, this park is heavily used by residents of Nooksack and the surrounding unincorporated area. The pavilion, pergola and ball fields may be reserved all together or separately by the public by filling out an application and paying a nominal fee.

Everson City Park. This 2.7-acre park lies behind City Hall on Lincoln Street. Amenities include the Miller Courts, comprised of one tennis court and two full-size regulation basketball courts that were reconstructed in 2010. The park also includes a covered pavilion (reconstructed in 2006 as a result of an Eagle Scout Project), a gazebo, a playground area and playfield. It is surrounded by sidewalks on three sides and includes interconnected, interior walkways for pedestrians. With the exception of the extremely old playground equipment, City Park facilities are in excellent condition, and the park is heavily used due to its central location. It is the main gathering point for the City's annual Summer Festival. The covered pavilion, gazebo and Miller Courts may be reserved by the public by filling out an application and paying a nominal fee.

### ***Neighborhood Parks***

Aspen Park. This 0.7-acre park lies within the Aspen subdivision at the south end of the City, one block south of Everson-Goshen Road (State Route 544) and across the highway from the Everson Elementary School. Amenities include a small playground area and a half-court for basketball. It also has a small accessory building used as a bus stop for school children. The park is bordered on two sides by sidewalks. This park and its facilities are in poor condition and need substantial upgrades.

Sable Terrace Park. This 1.4-acre park lies within the Sable Terrace subdivision near the southwest city limits south of the Everson-Goshen Road. Amenities include a small playground area and softball field. This park has sidewalks on two sides. This park and its facilities are in poor condition and need substantial upgrades.

### ***Residential Pocket Park***

Maple Ridge Park. This 0.15 acre recreational/open space area lies within the Maple Ridge subdivision adjacent to the western city limits north of the Everson-Goshen Road. This area, known as Tract C, is under control of the Maple Ridge Homeowner's Association. It is grass-covered, has no amenities, and has a sidewalk along the road frontage. The park is well-maintained and is separated from the adjacent residences by a split-rail wooden fence. It is in excellent condition.

### ***Public Open Space***

Former Everson Golf Course. The City recently purchased this 28-acre former golf course located on the east side of town north of E. Main Street (State Route 544). A tributary of Johnson Creek flows through this property. Amenities currently include a jogging trail utilized by the School District and local residents.

### ***Nooksack River***

The Nooksack River is the most prominent feature in the City of Everson. The river divides the town into north and south halves. Only a small portion of the river is within the city limits of Everson, thus providing limited access for recreational users. There is access to the river through Riverside Park on the north bank of the river, downstream of the Nooksack River Bridge. This access point is heavily used during the annual Ski-to-Sea Race. City officials are in favor of creating a series of trails that follow the river (on both sides) and connect to Everson Road (SR544) and the Bay-to-Baker Trail, which was

constructed in 2006 and parallels Everson Road south from the center of town to the Birchwood Addition some 6,000 feet in length.

### ***Private Open Space***

Maple Ridge Common Land. This x-acre area was set aside as common land as part of the Maple Ridge Cluster Subdivision. The area abuts Scott Ditch and includes a walking trail.

### ***Trails***

Bay-to-Baker Trail. The concept of the Bay-to-Baker Trail dates back to the early 1970s when a group was formed to pursue development of a 74-mile trail linking Mt. Baker to Bellingham Bay. It was envisioned that this trail would utilize abandoned railroad rights-of-way, donated property, purchased land and land within cities on its course from the mountain to the bay. The City of Everson was the first City to buy into the concept with the first trail established between Robinson Street and Chestnut Street in 1993. In 2006 the City completed an additional section of this over 6,000-foot, multi-use trail from Lincoln Street to Robinson Street. Shortly thereafter, Nylatech Corporation completed a small section of the trail from Lincoln Street to W. Main Street as part of their facility expansion in 2008. Many segments of the trail that would connect Everson with the city of Bellingham have not yet been developed.

Nooksack Loop Trail. The Whatcom Parks and Recreation Foundation has identified the potential for a loop trail that could be the cornerstone of an emerging trail system in Whatcom County. The Nooksack Loop Trail concept is comprised of four trail segments that have been on Whatcom County's park plans since the 1970s. The public may be familiar with past attempts at establishing such trails as the Bay-to-Baker Trail, the Coast Millennium Trail, and the Nooksack River Trail. The proposed trail route intends to connect the cities of Bellingham, Ferndale, Lynden and Everson, as well as various parks throughout the county. Within Everson, the Nooksack Loop Trail includes extending the Bay-to-Baker Trail north from W. Main Street to the northern city limits.

Nooksack River Levee Trail. A 0.2-mile pedestrian trail has been developed along the top of the Nooksack River levee located on the north bank of the river upstream of the Nooksack River bridge. The trail connects to the Bay-to-Baker trail just north of the bridge and connects to River Street on the upstream end.

### ***Schools***

Nooksack Valley Middle School (W. Columbia Street in Nooksack).The Nooksack Valley Middle School is located just east of the Everson City limits

within the neighboring city of Nooksack. The Middle School includes the following facilities:

1. Gymnasium
2. Soccer, baseball/softball/football fields
3. Outdoor basketball

Everson Elementary School. The Everson Elementary School is located in the southwest portion of Everson, just to the north of Everson-Goshen Road. The Elementary School includes the following facilities:

1. Gymnasium
2. Large grass area for soccer and baseball
3. Outdoor basketball court and playground

### ***Everson Community Center***

The Everson Community Center is a multi-use room located behind and attached to City Hall that is used by government and the public. Users include, but are not limited to: senior activities, City Council meetings, Lion's Club meetings, and Everson Municipal Court. Amenities include a meeting hall with stage, kitchen facilities, three pool tables (for senior use only), and public restrooms. Both the hall and kitchen together or the hall only may be reserved by the public by filling out an application and paying a nominal fee.

### ***Church Facilities***

Christ Fellowship Church. The Christ Fellowship church located on the south side of E. Main Street at the east end of town includes a large gymnasium.

## **Maintenance and Operation Costs**

Maintenance and operation costs for the existing parks and recreation facilities are as follows:

City Park. The annual operation and maintenance cost for City Park in 2017 was \$21,905.

Riverside Park. The annual operation and maintenance cost for Riverside Park in 2017 was \$47,558.

Former Golf Course Property. The annual operation and maintenance cost for the former golf course property (proposed Ramstead Park) in 2017 was \$1,664.

Neighborhood Parks. The total annual operation and maintenance cost for the City's two neighborhood parks in 2017 was \$5,287.

Bay-to-Baker Trail. The total annual operation and maintenance cost for the Bay-to-Baker trail within Everson City limits in 2017 was \$5,595.



## **V. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

### **Background**

The City of Everson conducts a public city council meeting every second and fourth Tuesday of each month. This forum provides an opportunity for public involvement in the discussion of a variety of subjects including the City's system of parks, recreation and trail facilities.

The citizens of Everson have been very active over the last several years in providing suggestions, donating time, funds and labor for various endeavors in the parks of Everson. One group is the Everson Garden Club. They have been active over the years in donating time, funds and labor in helping pay for and plant flowers in the downtown commercial district. They, and many others, are responsible for a recently constructed Pergola in Riverside Park. The Everson Chamber of Commerce also regularly donates funds to pay for flowers, and the Everson Lion's Club has also donated and financed playground equipment in Everson City Park and Riverside Park.

The local Boy Scout Troop 4027 has been responsible for several improvements in the City's parks as a part of Eagle Scout projects. These projects have included a new pavilion in Everson City Park, bleachers and trails in Riverside Park, and landscape screening around the Wastewater Treatment Plant adjacent to Riverside Park. Criterion Athletic, a local manufacturing company, donated nets for the two baseball field backstops at Riverside Park. The most recent addition to the City Park is the total reconstruction of the basketball and tennis courts, which were dedicated to the Miller Family and named Miller Courts. This was accomplished through generous donations from all of the above-mentioned groups and other individuals and local companies. Each year the City's public works department mentors no less than four to six eighth-graders in their 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Break-out Projects, and two to four seniors in their Senior Projects, with each committing from 6 to 20 hours of community service, most of which centers on park maintenance and enhancement.

### **2017 Parks Survey**

In years past, the City sought public input regarding the City Comprehensive Plan through citizen surveys, public meetings, planning committees, and public hearings. The development of this Parks and Recreation Plan has relied on many of the same methods, but has also included a 2017 Parks Survey, invitations to the public and interested individuals to submit written or oral comments, and outreach through monthly utility billings and the City's quarterly newsletter. Soliciting input directly from individuals who use the parks and participate in park activities is critical to the success of any comprehensive planning effort. Public input not only provides valuable insight into existing park facilities and programs, but also helps identify issues of concern and define the need for new or additional park amenities and facilities.

In September 2017, the City conducted a citizen survey to obtain input regarding parks and recreation facilities within the City. Surveys were mailed out with the monthly utility bills, and additional surveys were mailed to rental households (locations where the utility bills are not mailed to the property address). Just over 800 surveys were mailed out, and the City received 86 completed surveys, which represents a relatively high response rate of over ten percent. The survey provided valuable insight into how the community views the existing parks system, priorities for use of City resources, and what additional facilities the community would like to see. The full survey results are attached to the Parks Plan as Appendix A, and a summary of the main insights drawn from the survey are presented here and include the following:

- 86 completed Surveys were received.
- The majority (69.6%) visit Everson parks at least once per month, which includes 43.0% who visit at least once per week.
- The highest percentage of respondents has a family size of 2 (43.4%). The average family size is 3.2.
- 26.8% of respondents have children under the age 6 and 34.1% have children between the ages of 6 and 17.
- The highest percentage of respondents are somewhat satisfied with Community parks (39.5%), with maintenance a priority for 62.8%.
- The highest percentage of respondents are neutral about Neighborhood parks (40.0%), with maintenance being a priority for 55.2%.
- At the former golf course property (referred to as Ramstead Park), nature trails, picnic areas, and nature areas received the highest average scores. Tennis, baseball, and basketball facilities received the lowest average scores.
- The highest percentage of respondents are somewhat satisfied with Everson's trail network (35.1%), with 57.0% prioritizing expansion of the trail system.
- When ranking preference for general recreational facilities, respondents had the highest preference for nature trails, natural areas, and picnic areas, which received the highest average scores. Skateboard, baseball, and bike facilities received the lowest average scores.

The results of the Parks Survey were presented to the City Council at the October 10, 2017 City Council meeting. The survey results were utilized during development of the Needs Assessment and the Capital Improvement Program, which are addressed later in this Plan.

The City Council received an update from staff regarding the draft Parks Plan at the council meeting held on January 23, 2018. Following release of the draft Parks Plan on January 31, 2018, the City provided the following opportunities for public involvement during the process of reviewing and finalizing the Parks Plan:

- An open house to provide an opportunity for citizens to ask questions and discuss the draft Parks Plan was held on February 13, 2018. Notification regarding the open house was provided in the Lynden Tribune, through an

insert included with City utility billings, on the City reader board, and by mail to survey respondents who had expressed interest in being kept informed.

- Those attending the open house were encouraged to submit written comments and to attend the public hearing.
- An updated draft Parks Plan was made available to the public on February 21, 2018. Public notice regarding the availability of the draft Plan was provided in the Lynden Tribune along with an invitation to submit written comments.
- A duly advertised public hearing before the Everson City Council was held on February 27, 2018, where opportunity for public comment was provided and public testimony regarding the draft Parks Plan was received.
- The final Parks and Recreation Plan was reviewed by the City Council on February 27, 2018, at which time the City Council took final action to adopt the Plan.

## **VI. DEMAND AND NEED ANALYSIS**

### **Introduction**

The Demand and Need Analysis takes into account both the City's priorities and the input and priorities received from the public. The Parks Survey results were analyzed, along with feedback provided at City Council meetings and input from City staff to develop a plan to maintain and expand the City's parks and recreation facilities consistent with the City's vision. As stated earlier in the plan, the OFM 2017 population estimate for the City of Everson was 2,630 people, and the 2036 population allocation to the City (including its UGA) is 3,907 people. These population figures have been used in developing the Demand and Need Analysis.

### **Community Parks**

The two existing community parks total 11.2 acres. Considering only Everson's 2017 population of 2,630, the City has 4.3 acres of Community Parks per 1,000 population, which is well above a typical planning standard of 2.5 acres per 1,000. On this basis, Everson seemingly has excess community park capacity. However, heavy use of Riverside Park by Whatcom County and Nooksack residents complicates the analysis. With approximately 1,500 people in Nooksack, and with Lynden and Sumas parks several miles distant from the City, an assumed service area population of 5,000 is reasonable. The resulting ratio of 2.2 acres per 1,000 is a more realistic estimate of current capacity. City officials perceive Riverside Park as being utilized to its full capacity. In particular, the two ball fields are in almost constant use during the warm-weather months. City officials are interested in developing more capacity at Riverside Park or elsewhere in the future. Undeveloped acreage exists immediately west of the park within the City's UGA; however, much of this area is within the FEMA-designated floodway and could be difficult to develop. See Map 10.

The City has recently purchased a 28-acre piece of property north of E. Main Street formerly known as the Everson Golf Course. This property, which is now informally referred to as Ramstead Park, is viewed as a prime location for a community and/or regional recreational area and as a potential location for a consolidated stormwater management facility to serve the City's downtown commercial district.

Based on Everson's 2036 population allocation of 3,907 people and the city of Nooksack's corresponding population allocation of 2,425 people, plus continued use of Everson's community parks by those residing in the surrounding rural area, a 2036 service area population of 7,500 provides a reasonable basis for analysis of future needs. Using the standard of 2.5 acres per 1,000 population, the City would need 18.8 acres of community park land, which is 7.6 acres more than what is currently available. Excluding those portions of the former golf course property occupied by Johnson Creek and the adjacent floodway, the proposed Ramstead Park contains sufficient usable area to accommodate the City's needs in 2036.

The results of the 2017 Parks Survey indicate that citizens are most interested in a dog park, nature areas and nature trails. All of these facilities could be accommodated at the new Ramstead Park. Based on input received at the open house held on February 13, 2018, local residents are also interested in establishing a location for a community garden. Ramstead Park would likely be a good location for such a facility based on the presence of agricultural soils and access to water. The high demand for ball fields evidenced by the current full utilization of the ball fields at Riverside Park supports the inclusion of additional ball fields at the new Ramstead Park.

Initial plans for improvements at City Park include upgrading the aging playground equipment, constructing a new multi-use hard-surface area, and constructing a spray park. Initial plans for improvements at Riverside Park include upgrading the aging playground equipment. Initial plans for improvements at Ramstead Park include a parking area, multi-use trail and a dog park (off-leash area).

There is also a need for overnight parking and amenities for recreational vehicles. The area immediately west of Riverside Park is within the City's UGA and has been viewed as a possible location that could be developed to meet this need.

### **Neighborhood Parks**

The two neighborhood parks and one residential pocket park total over 2.2 acres, resulting in a ratio of 0.8 acres of Neighborhood Park per 1,000 population, which is somewhat below a typical planning standard of 1.5 acres per 1,000 population. Aside from the issue of gross acreage, there is also an issue of distribution. The south end of the city has three parks, and residents living near the community parks can use those facilities as neighborhood parks, but many neighborhoods have no park facility, including Strandell neighborhood, Rivers Edge subdivision, Washington Park, Green's Lane, Hougen's Addition and Everson Trailer Court. The lack of neighborhood parks is mitigated somewhat by the residential zoning standard that requires 9,500 square foot lots; therefore, many residents have large yards.

Based on the standard of 1.5 acres of neighborhood parks per 1,000 population, the City will need a total of 5.9 acres of neighborhood parks in 2036. This indicates the need for an additional 3.7 acres of neighborhood parks. New neighborhood parks are proposed in the UGA south of Greens Lane, in the open space area adjacent to the City's Water Plant (near Strandell), and in the southwestern UGA adjacent to Leaton's Pond. Additional neighborhood or packet parks will need to be developed in conjunction with subdivisions, both inside the city and in the UGA following annexation. The inclusion of neighborhood park facilities in community parks, such as in the proposed Ramstead Park, will also help meet the need for neighborhood parks throughout the city.

The results of the 2017 Parks Survey indicate that citizens place a high priority on maintaining the City's existing neighborhood park facilities. To this end, the City

needs to include capital projects to replace aging equipment at the existing neighborhood parks to ensure that existing levels of service are maintained.

## **Trails**

It is the City Council's desire to provide more pedestrian connectivity throughout the City by incorporating more trails and sidewalks as the city builds infrastructure. This goal is supported by the results of the 2017 Parks Survey where citizens expressed a higher interest in expanding the City's trail facilities. Currently the City provides over 6,000 feet of multi-purpose trail from just north of the Nooksack River south along Everson Road and Mission Road to Chestnut Street. South of the intersection of Mission Road and Chestnut Street, the City has extended a sidewalk approximately 2,000 feet south along Mission Road to a point north of the entrance to the South Everson Lumber Co. (SELCO) property. There is also an abandoned railroad right-of-way south of Chestnut Street that the City is interested in acquiring for recreational/open space that would allow the City to extend the Bay-to-Baker Trail an additional 2,500 feet south to SELCO. The City is in dialogue with the Nooksack Tribe and Whatcom County Public Works to consider options for extending the sidewalk on Mission Road beyond the south city limits to the Tribal Recreational/Genesis Center on Mission Road south of E. Pole Road.

North of W. Main Street, the City will work with property owners to extend the Bay-to-Baker trail to the northern city limits using a combination of multi-use sidewalks and trails. Wherever possible, these trail segments will be dedicated and developed as part of subdivisions proposed by private developers.

The Levee Trail located on the north bank of the Nooksack River connects the state highway with River Street. The City will work with adjacent property owners to extend the Levee Trail farther upstream to establish a trail connection to the south end of S. Washington Street. On the south side of the river, the City will continue to work with Whatcom County and the local land owner to allow access to a trail that runs along the top of the levee located upstream of the Nooksack River bridge.

A multiuse trail was constructed as part of the Maple Ridge subdivision that connects the residential area with Scott Ditch just north of the Everson Elementary School. A creek crossing and trail extension is proposed to connect the trail with surrounding residential neighborhoods and sidewalks planned along SR 544.

## **Plan for Acquiring the Necessary Resources**

The City's plan for acquiring the resources necessary to meet the needs of the community over the next twenty years includes several components. These components include the following:

General Fund. The City will continue to use the City's General Fund as the primary source of funds to pay for maintenance and operation of the City's parks and trails.

These funds are augmented somewhat by fees paid by those renting City park facilities.

Park Impact Fees. The City has established a system of park impact fees intended to ensure that new development pays its fair share of the cost of providing additional community park facilities. Once the Parks and Recreation Plan has been adopted, the City will re-visit the park impact fee ordinance to determine if, based on the adopted capital improvement program, the current impact fees are appropriate or need to be adjusted.

Neighborhood Park Subdivision Contributions. The City's Subdivision Ordinance includes provisions that require dedication of park land for neighborhood parks or, if no neighborhood park has been planned within the property, payments in lieu of dedication to pay a proportionate share toward acquisition of planned neighborhood parks.

Donations and Dedications. The City has enjoyed strong support from the community over the years through donations of time, labor, money, equipment and other resources. It is anticipated that such donations will continue. Dedications of land and/or completing park improvement projects required as conditions of subdivision approvals will also continue.

State and Federal Grants and Loans. Where funding gaps are identified, such as for the largest capital improvement projects, the City will pursue grants and loans from state and federal agencies. This will include applying for grants from the State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) and, if necessary, could include applying for low-interest loans through the USDA, Rural Development.

## VII. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

A capital improvement program has been developed that addresses proposed improvements for 2017–2036. For each project, the estimated cost, potential funding sources and project year have been identified. The capital improvement program will be evaluated biannually and may be adjusted depending on need, funding opportunities and availability of resources.

Table 1: Capital Improvement Program, 2017-2036

Project #	Location	Type	Description	Estimated Cost	Funding Sources	Year
1	City Park	Development	Install 4 Picnic Tables and Concrete Pads	\$8,000	General Fund (GF)	2020
2	City Park	Renovation	Rebuild Gazebo	\$25,000	GF, Donation	2019
3	City Park	Renovation	Repaint Miller Courts (every 5 years)	\$15,000	GF	2020
4	City Park	Development	Replace and upgrade playground equipment	\$50,000	RCO, PIF, Donation	2019
5	City Park	Development	Construct new hard-surface, multi-use play area	\$4,000	RCO, PIF, Donation	2019
6	City Park	Development	Construct bathrooms	\$50,000	RCO, PIF, Donation	2019
7	City Park	Development	Construct spray park	\$50,000	RCO, PIF, Donation	2019
8	Riverside Park	Renovation	Repair and repaint Pergola	\$8,500	GF	2019
9	Riverside Park	Renovation	Repaint Bathrooms	\$8,000	GF	2022
10	Riverside Park	Renovation	Add gravel and sculpt Trapline Parking Lot	\$5,000	GF	2020
11	Riverside Park	Renovation	Add gravel and sculpt Park Dr. Parking Lot	\$10,000	GF	2018
12	Riverside Park	Renovation	Paint bollards in both parking lots	\$2,000	GF	2019
13	Riverside Park	Renovation	Rehabilitate/replace playground equipment	\$30,000	RCO, GF, PIF	2023
14	Riverside Park	Renovation	Remove trees and replace	\$3,000	GF	2024
15	Riverside Park	Acquisition	Acquire park expansion to the west	\$50,000	Park Impact Fee (PIF)	2030



16	Riverside Park	Development	Design and construct park expansion, nature area, parking and trails	\$150,000	RCO, PIF	2032
17	Ramstead Park	Development	Construct parking area, multi-use trail, community garden and dog off-leash area	\$30,000	GF, PIF	2019
18	Ramstead Park	Development	Design and construct new ball fields, playground area, dog park, picnic area, walking trails and parking	\$350,000	PIF, GF, RCO, Donation	2020
19	Aspen Park	Renovation	Relocate playground area to center of park	\$8,000	GF	2021
20	Aspen Park	Restoration	Remove and replace concrete basketball half-court	\$10,000	GF	2023
21	Aspen Park	Renovation	Re-roof and paint bus shed	\$3,000	GF	2027
22	Aspen Park	Development	Install new playground equipment	\$15,000	GF, RCO, Donation	2019
23	Aspen Park	Development	Connect sidewalks with a walking trail	\$15,000	GF	2028
24	Sable Terrace Park	Development	Enlarge playground area	\$20,000	Developer Funds (DF)	2018
25	Sable Terrace Park	Development	Install new playground equipment	\$30,000	DF, RCO	2018
26	Sable Terrace Park	Development	Construct a trail around perimeter of park	\$3,000	DF	2018
27	Sable Terrace Park	Renovation	Upgrade multi-use play field and add soccer goals	\$2,000	GF, Donation	2019
28	Maple Ridge	Development	Work with Maple Ridge Homeowners Association to enhance private open space	\$500	GF	2020
29	General	Development	Install signage to promote trail use and walking	\$4,000	GF	2020
30	General	Development	Construct additional trail / sidewalk	Variable	GF	2018 -

			connections			2036
31	SE UGA	Acquisition and Development	Acquire (preferably through dedication) and develop new neighborhood park in southeast UGA	\$100,000	GF, DF	2024
32	Strandell	Development	Develop new neighborhood park adjacent to Water Plant and wellhead protection area with trail connection to the Bay-to-Baker trail	\$75,000	GF, DF	2022
33	Bay-to-Baker Trail	Acquisition and Development	Bay-to-Baker Trail north of W. Main Street	\$25,000	DF	2019
34	Bay-to-Baker Trail	Acquisition	Acquire former BNSF ROW south of Chestnut Street	\$250,000	GF, DF	2036
35	SW UGA	Acquisition	Acquire park land adjacent to Leaton's Pond	\$100,000	PIF, GF, Donation	2036
36	Maple Ridge	Acquisition and Development	Acquire and develop trail connection from Maple Ridge common land to SR 544	\$100,000	PIF, GF, Donation	2030
37	Levee Trail	Acquisition and Development	Extend Nooksack River Levee Trail farther upstream to connect with the south end of S. Washington Street and Emerson Road	\$50,000	GF, PIF, Donation	2027

## **VIII. PLAN ADOPTION**

Incorporating and expanding on information regarding the City's parks and recreation facilities contained in the 2016 update of the City's Comprehensive Plan, the City prepared a draft Parks and Recreation Plan that was made available to the public on January 31, 2018. Multiple avenues were utilized to invite the public to review and comment on the draft Plan, including public notice in the local newspaper of record, direct mailing to interested parties, and availability on the City website.

A duly advertised community meeting regarding the City's 2018 Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Plan was held on February 13, 2018 where opportunity for public input was provided.

A duly advertised public hearing before the Everson City Council to receive input regarding the 2018 Parks and Recreation Plan were held on February 27, 2018.

Following the closing of the public hearing, the 2018 Parks and Recreation plan was adopted by the City Council on February 27, 2018 through Ordinance No. 790-18.