

CITY OF LYNDEN

**Park and Trail Master Plan
2020 Update**

City of Lynden
300 4th Street
Lynden, Washington 98264
(360) 354-5532

Table of Contents

DRAFT

Chapter 1: Introduction and Community Profile

1.1 City of Lynden Parks and Trails Master Plan

The City of Lynden Parks and Trails Master Plan provides a comprehensive guide for identifying and providing park and recreational services for the community. The Plan offers residents and officials the opportunity to evaluate the current state of the City's Parks and Trails program, to appreciate what resources the City has, and to establish a basis and framework for addressing shortfalls that may exist.

The City of Lynden's current Parks Master Plan was adopted in 2014. This current planning effort is a six-year update to that plan. The Lynden Parks and Trails Master Plan is considered an element of the City's overall Comprehensive Plan. The update process is intended to allow residents and officials to continue to evaluate the community's desire for evolving park and trail services and to consider how those desires might be met. This six-year update also satisfies the City's required comprehensive planning efforts for parks and trails as mandated by the State Growth Management Act and satisfies significant eligibility requirements for state and federal grants that may be available for park and trail projects.

This updated Parks and Trails Master Plan was developed with community input, including direct feedback from the City's volunteer parks advisory boards, elected officials, through public meetings, and the results of a widely distributed online public survey. This master plan includes all aspects of parks and recreation within Lynden and its Urban Growth Boundary. The Plan inventories and evaluates the City's existing park and trails system, it assesses needs for park and trail maintenance, ongoing park development and acquisition, it offers specific goals and policies to guide overall park management and helps to cast a vision for the future of the City's park and trail system.

1.1.1 Vision for the Future

Established, safe, and well-maintained parks and trails that offer a variety of recreational options are a fundamental component of any healthy city. The City's Comprehensive Plan and Vision Statement repeatedly discuss the importance of recreational opportunities, as offered through its park and trail system, as a primary factor in the City fulfilling its vision. They are vital for creating a feeling of community spirit, for enhancing and maintaining Lynden's attractiveness, for the conservation of Lynden's natural resources, and for providing opportunities for health and wellness.

It is well recognized that parks and trails are vital for enhancing the quality of life for Lynden residents. They help raise the overall quality of life by:

- Providing recreation opportunities for all ages. This includes passive recreation like walking, nature viewing and places to rest and active recreation such as organized youth sports, and sport fields and courts for everyone to use.
- Well-designed trails offer non-motorized transportation options for residents and visitors. A well-connected trail network gives people the choice of not having to use a motorized vehicle to move around their city.
- They promote health and wellness. For both emotional and physical well-being, people need places to exercise and get outside.

- They are community gathering spots. This can be for organized gatherings such as family picnics, birthday parties, and community events. But they are also intentionally public spaces where neighbors and friends run into each other. They help to prevent community isolation.
- They can instill a sense of pride and ownership in a community. These are public spaces owned by the community.
- They provide aesthetic appeal to residents of an urban landscape. Parks and open spaces provide a visual refuge, even without ever stepping foot in the park, from an ever-increasing urban environment. It is well-documented that the presence of trees and open space contribute to the overall health and wellness of those who live nearby.
- Parks and trails are a financial asset. Their presence can result in increased property values for the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Public parks provide recreation opportunity for all. They are equally available to all residents, regardless of their economic status.

1.2 Park Master Plan - Objectives

The objectives of the Lynden Park and Trail Master Plan are to:

1. Describe the community's long-range desire for parks and trails in the City and establish a foundation for achieving that vision.
2. Establish governing policies that are specific to the management of the City's park and trail system but also contribute to the City's overall Vision Statement and Comprehensive Plan.
3. Determine logical and achievable long-term level of service goals for the entire park and trail system.
4. Identify shortfalls in those levels of service and propose steps for correcting those shortfalls.
5. Categorize and evaluate the existing use and purpose of individual park properties as well recommend specific management needs for each park and park facility in the City.
6. Propose a City-wide conceptual trail network that is contiguous and accessible, that connects park properties to each other, that provides reasonable non-motorized transportation routes throughout the City and that highlights the varied neighborhood features and landscapes of all parts of the City.
7. Create a realistic Six-year Capital Improvement Plan which, allowing for annual adjustments, clearly prioritizes and identifies foreseen acquisition, development and maintenance/operation costs until the next update (2026) to the Parks and Trail Master Plan.

8. Enhance residents understanding and appreciation of the City's Park and Trail System through the publication and distribution of this document.

1.3 Public Involvement Process

Involving the public in the development of this Park and Trail Master Plan, especially because it sets a vision for the use and management of public lands, is uniquely important. The City's parks and trails are set aside and managed for the use and enjoyment of the public. As such, the residents of Lynden have been invited to provide feedback and participate in the advancement of this plan.

Initially, members of the Lynden Regional Park and Recreation District, the Lynden Parks and Trail Advisory Committee, the Berthusen Park Citizen Advisory Committee, the City Council Parks Committee and the Mayor were asked to review the 2014 Park and Trail Master Plan to provide feedback on the contents of that document. These members, both elected and appointed, represent the public and provide direct input on policy and decisions that directly impact the City's park and trail system. Their input was gathered and has greatly informed the development of this plan.

In early 2019, the City published an online community survey that was designed to gather feedback on park and trail related topics (perception, use, desires, and funding) from a broad range of residents in the community. The survey was open to the public for six weeks and the Lynden community was invited to participate through local news media, social media and word of mouth. The response to the survey was well received and generated 1,005 responses. Results of the survey have become an invaluable resource and are discussed in more detail below.

Also in early 2019, the Concept Trail Network Workgroup, made up of members of the Park and Trail Advisory Committee and Berthusen Park Citizen Advisory Committee, gathered to brainstorm and consider logical routes for a wholistic and well-connected non-motorized trail network. The result of that workgroup is the Conceptual Trail Network Map included in Chapter 2 of this plan.

The City released a first draft of this plan to the public in XXXX, 2020 to collect additional feedback from policy makers and the public. That feedback was incorporated into a Planning Commission Draft which was reviewed at a public hearing on XXXX, 2020. The Lynden Planning Commission recommended approval of that draft which was then adopted by City Council on XXXX, 2020.

1.3 Parks and Trails Community Survey

The City developed and published an online community survey designed to gather a wide variety of information from the community on how they use and what they expect from the City's park system. The survey was open during the entire month of February 2019 and the topic generated 1,005 responses. Of those, 892 stated they were Lynden residents. The other 113 were connected to Lynden in other ways (work, church, school district, own property, etc). 892 respondents represent about 6% of Lynden's population.

The survey questions were drafted with the intent of gathering useful information for staff and policy makers but also to educate the respondents. The questions help to highlight the tensions

of growth, maintenance, prioritizing and funding the system. The full results of the Parks and Trails Community Survey are available to the public on the City of Lynden website.

Questions were generally categorized around 4 themes:

1.3.1 Demographics

These survey questions give the context of the survey taker.

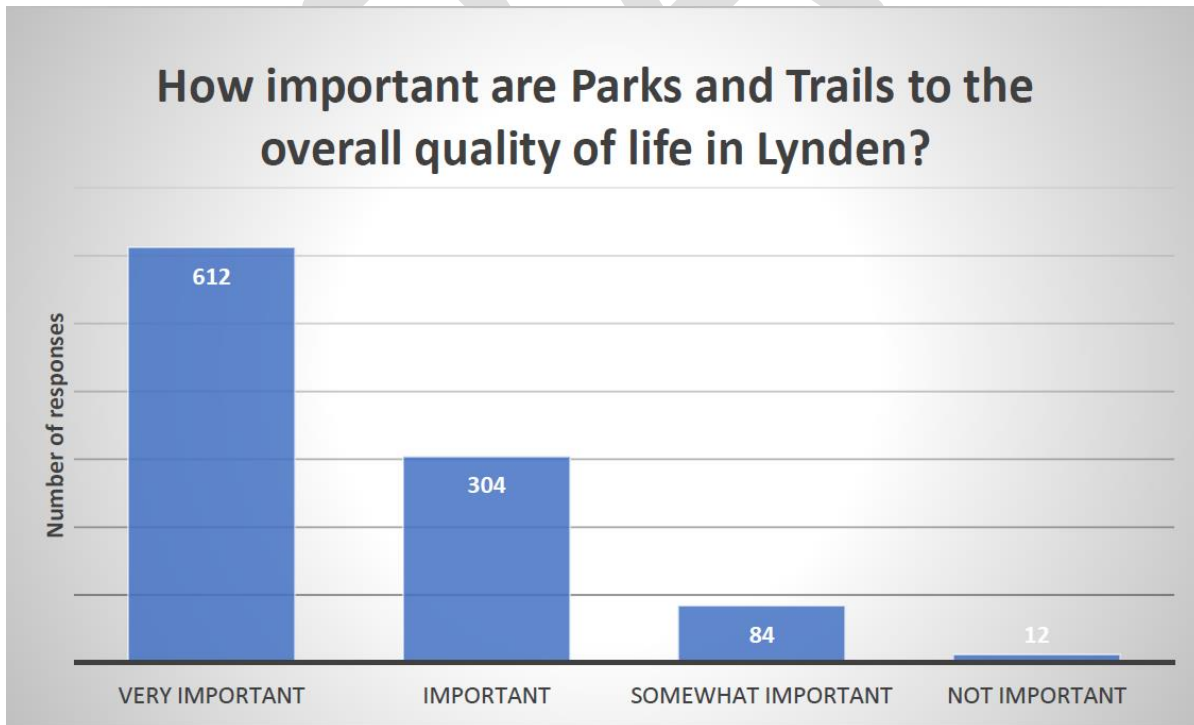
In this case, the demographic questions showed that the survey takers were middle aged (82% between the age of 21-60), homeowners (also 82%) that live in Lynden (89%). In comparison, about 44% of Lyndenites are middle aged and about 66% of Lynden’s homes are owner occupied. This difference intuitively makes sense in that middle-aged homeowners in Lynden are probably more likely to hear about and take an online survey.

Because the respondents fell within these categories, it will be important to consider if those less represented by the survey results might have other priorities or recreational needs. This would include those over the age of 60 and those that rent rather than own their own home [DT1].

1.3.2 General Perceptions

These questions gauge how the respondent feels about the park system. One of the more striking survey responses was from Question 5.

- 91% of respondents said that parks and trails are “Very Important” (61%) or “Important” (30%) to the overall quality of life in Lynden.



In general, this result lines up with scientific studies that link the presence of parks to health benefits and social connection.

Other highlights from the general perception survey questions include:

- 80% feel they live close enough to a City park
- 79% rate park maintenance as “Above Average” (50%) or “Excellent” (29%)
- 51% said the City has enough parks
- 74% said the City does not have enough trails

1.3.3 Use and Expectations

These questions attempt to document how residents use the park system as well as what services they expect from the City’s Parks Department.

Question 12 asked “What are the reasons that you use parks in Lynden?” 82% said “Enjoying the outdoors or nature” and 82% said “Walk or bike for exercise.” The next closest was “General leisure” at 48%. These are passive uses meaning the City just provides the place for these activities to occur.

People are using the trail system for similar reasons – 80% said “Exercise” and 76% said “Experience nature”.

The “recreation” aspect of a City’s park system can take many forms. 73% were satisfied with the City’s current role in facilitating but not managing sports leagues. People are generally interested in the City having some role in organized recreational activity – only 14% stated “The City should not offer recreational programs”. 47% said the City should offer “Aquatic programs” – which was a theme that carried throughout the survey.

For example, question 21 asked how respondents would prioritize the various needs of the system. The top 3, by a wide margin, were:

- 1) Adding to the City trail system
- 2) Building an indoor recreation center
- 3) Building a new aquatic center

Additionally, question 23 asked what the City should do with the current YMCA facility. Only 3% said to “Do nothing”. 48% said rebuild on same location. 37% said build a new facility elsewhere. When asked, improving the City’s aquatic recreational offerings consistently scored high with survey takers.

1.3.4 Funding

These questions attempt to gain some insight on what the respondents might be willing to pay for.

- 62% said new development should pay higher park impact fees (Question 24)
- 79% said they would support park bond initiatives (Question 26)
- When asked what they would be willing to pay higher taxes for: (Question 28)

- 55% said “Building an aquatic center”
- 47% said “Building a new community recreation center”
- 43% said “Adding sections of the City trail”

When asked how much per month their household would be willing to pay: (Question 27)

- 55% said “\$10/month”
- 23% said “\$1/month”
- 6% said “\$50/month”

1.4 Community Profile

Present day Lynden sits in the center of prime Whatcom County agricultural lands within the fertile bottom land of the wide Nooksack River valley. The geographical location of Lynden is in northwest Whatcom County, approximately 5 miles south of the Canadian border, 10 miles east of the Salish Sea (Birch Bay) and 30 miles west of Mt Baker.

This location is within the Nooksack Indian Tribe’s ancestral homeland which goes back thousands of years. Several traditional village sites were located in clusters along the Nooksack River in the area which is now Lynden. The presence of the river provided prime village sites for the Nooksacks as well as the early settlement site for Euro-American settlers in the mid to late 1800’s.

The aesthetic location of Lynden is striking. The City sits on a slight rise above the Nooksack River, and its broad floodplain, as the river meanders its way along the southern city limits on its rapid journey west to the Salish Sea. Lush agricultural fields surround the City, providing a distinctive pastoral feel as one approaches the City from any direction. Mt Baker and the Cascade Mountain Range loom over the eastern horizon. Views to the north are accentuated by the southern extent of the Canadian Coastal Range. The mountain ranges provide spectacular viewsheds and unparalleled outdoor recreational opportunities that are easily within reach for Lynden residents. Lynden sits in an undeniably beautiful location. Its Park and Trail system is meant to provide the public space to enjoy this location and to facilitate regional connections to the greater Lynden area.



The City’s Park and Trail Plan strives to facilitate connections to the greater Lynden area.

1.4.1 Population

As part of the 2016 City of Lynden Comprehensive Plan, Lynden coordinated with Whatcom County and other municipalities to decide on an estimate for population growth throughout the County until 2036. Using this projection Lynden is expecting to add more than 6,400 people to its Urban Growth Area by the

year 2036. More detailed discussion on this estimate can be found in Chapter 2 of the 2016 Comprehensive Plan. The City is not updating those projections as part of this Park's Plan update.

Lynden is in the midst of a significant growth phase. The 2019 OFM estimate for Lynden's population is 14,470. This is an increase of 1,106 people in just the three years since the 2016 Comprehensive Plan update. The 2016 Comprehensive Plan projects there to be nearly 20,000 people in Lynden by the year 2036. This population growth has a significant impact on the demand for City services, parks and trails included, and the ability of the City to provide and maintain those service demands. The Parks and Trail Master Plan is an important evaluation document to help the City to determine what those ever-evolving demands are and to assess where additional resources may be needed.

1.4.2 What has changed since the 2014 Parks Plan was adopted?

Since 2014, the City has invested significantly in its Park and Trail system. The City has added four properties to the system. Benson Park in 2014 (40 acres), Northwood Lynden Jim Park in 2017 (3 acres), Dickinson Park in 2018 (9 acres) and Glenning St Park in 2019 (4 acres). Except for Northwood Lynden Jim Park, which was a development dedication, these properties were land purchases by the City meant to secure them for future park development. They are largely undeveloped properties at the time of this update.

In addition, the City has added to its non-motorized trail system. A significant addition, 14th St to 17th St around Fisher Elementary, to the Jim Kaemingk Sr Trail, was built in 2017. This added approximately 1,800 feet to the trail and sets the stage for additional Kaemingk trail connections across the west side of the City.

In 2018, the City conducted a land swap with the Lynden School District on property behind the former Middle School (516 Main St). This property will allow for a trail connection along Fishtrap Creek from the City Park west to N 8th St. That connection, once built, will result in the Jim Kaemingk Trail extending diagonally across most of the City.

Furthermore, public trail segments have been constructed in East Lynden. A new public trail was built along the north side of the newly constructed Lynden Middle School on Line Road. This trail connects to Northwood Lynden Jim Park and establishes the framework for an East Lynden Loop Trail that will eventually extend, via existing streets and separated off-street routes, throughout the east Lynden neighborhoods. This concept trail is described in Chapter 2.2. The City also amended the East Lynden Subarea Plan to require new development next to the Badger Road to provide a trail easement and crushed asphalt multimodal trail along Badger Road. As a result of that amendment, a portion of that new trail now exists in a section between Line Road and Northwood Road. The Badger Trail would eventually extend across the City's northern city limits all the way to Berthusen Park.

X[DT2]

In November 2019, City residents approved a \$3 million Lynden Parks and Trails bond that will 1) provide funding for trail construction that will connect the Jim Kaemingk Trail to the newly acquired Dickinson Park property, 2) provide basic infrastructure (public restrooms, utilities, and parking) at Benson Park, and 3) contribute to the purchase price for the Glenning St Fields park property. At the time of the writing of this plan, designs are being worked out for the detailed spending of those bond funds.

Future generations will look back at this period as a time when the City made a lasting impact on its Park and Trail system.

Insert map/table that shows the additions to the system since 2014

DRAFT

Chapter 2: Lynden's Existing Park System

2.1 Introduction

For planning and management purposes, Lynden's parklands are classified into categories, generally based on size and the primary use of the park. The diversity of park sizes and uses is meant to serve the community's various recreational needs, offering both active recreational use opportunities as well as passive open space aesthetics. The classifications allow the City to evaluate its full park inventory, to prioritize management needs, to identify opportunities, and to address recreational shortfalls that may exist across the City. It is true that all of Lynden's parks might not fit neatly into just one of the categories, but these categories are helpful for planning and evaluation purposes.

The following parkland classifications are included in this Park Plan and are defined below:

- **Regional Parks:** These are larger parklands that are designed to offer services to the entire Lynden community and beyond. They typically include a variety of amenities such as: sport fields and courts, sitting and picnic areas, playgrounds and active recreational areas. They also include parking areas as they are often visited by people who live outside of the typical walking distance. Bender Fields, City Park, and Berthusen Park are examples of this type of park.
- **Neighborhood Parks:** These tend to be smaller parks (less than 5 acres) and are designed to serve the neighborhood in which they are located. They do not provide a wide variety of park services but may include a playground, informal sports fields or basketball courts and picnic or sitting areas. They also often provide aesthetic green/open space areas and a neighborhood respite from an increasingly urban landscape. They often do not include parking areas as the majority of the visitors to these parks live within walking distance. Patterson Park, Greenfield Park and Northwood Lynden Jim Park are examples of this type of park.
- **Greenspace:** These are lands that may offer little "developed" park services. In Lynden, these lands might not be managed by the Parks Department or they require very little hands-on management. Their intent is to provide ecosystem services and open space aesthetics for the community. They may provide stormwater detention, water filtration or flood protection areas. They might also conserve wildlife habitat, wetlands, or a unique natural area. While these spaces are generally not designed to maximize public access, they often include formal and informal walking trails. Scenic Estates Park is one example of this type of parkland. Other publicly owned greenspaces in Lynden include Fishtrap Creek wetland areas west of the Fairgrounds, and the open space floodplain area north of the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

The City's non-motorized transportation network (trails) can also be categorized based on the intended or primary use. While these categories may blend together on the ground, again, being able to distinguish these types is useful for planning and evaluation purposes. Lynden has approximately 3.5 miles of existing trail, the primary being the Jim Kaemingk Sr Trail that follows Fishtrap Creek as it bisects the City.

- **Recreational Trails:** These trails are designed principally to provide off-street locations for residents to move about the City. Users are most likely to be using the trail for exercise or as a place to get outside and enjoy natural. These trails are generally designed to connect residents to a natural

feature of the City or to provide off-street connections to park properties. A well-linked recreational trail system does provide non-motorized transportation options for City residents, but one is more likely to see a family pushing a stroller or a group of joggers on these trails than a bike commuter. The Jim Kaemingk Trail, which parallels Fishtrap Creek as it bisects the City, is Lynden's most well-developed recreational trail.

- Neighborhood Connectors: These trails are primarily considered part of the City's transportation network. At present time, Lynden has very few of these multi-modal paths that are separate from standard roads. The next update to the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan should further address these pathways. Future neighborhood connectors could be as simple as a path out of a cul-de-sac that allows pedestrian or bicycles direct access to an adjacent neighborhood. Other neighborhood connector options, which at this time are rare, could be the establishment of "safe" cycling routes on existing and appropriate roads already in the City.
- Regional Trails: These are established long distance trails, separate from automobile travel, that are designed to connect public lands and regional destinations. These tend to be recreational and may include rest stops and interpretive stations. The Badger Trail, once developed, is a regional trail that extends outside the City limits. The Nooksack Loop Trail, of which Lynden is included, is a regional trail that is designed to connect several Whatcom County jurisdictions and highlight attractions in each. Other options for regional trails might be a Berthusen Park connector and an eventual Rails-to-Trails style of trail that connects Lynden to Everson.



A recently constructed portion of the Jim Kaemingk Jr Trail that runs behind Fisher Elementary School.

Map 2.1 The existing Lynden Parks and Trails System



Table 2.1 Current Parklands Inventory: See Appendix A for more detailed park information

<u>Park Name</u>	<u>Size (acres)</u>	<u>Classification</u>	<u>Development Status</u>	<u>Primary Use</u>
Bender Fields	56	Regional	Developed	Sport Field Complex
Benson Park	20*	Regional	Undeveloped	TBD
Berthusen Park**	236	Regional	Developed	Trails, natural area, historic homestead,
Centennial Park	0.3	Neighborhood	Developed	Urban greenspace, special events
City Park	10.4	Regional	Developed	Playground, trails, YMCA
Dickinson Park	8.7	Regional	Undeveloped	Trails, greenspace
Glennig St. Fields***	4	Neighborhood	Undeveloped	TBD
Greenfield Park	2	Neighborhood	Developed	Playground, greenspace
Northwood Lynden Jim Park	2.9	Neighborhood	Developed	Playground, trails
Patterson Park	4.2	Neighborhood	Developed	Playground, trails
Open Space				
Fairgrounds wetlands	4.4	Greenspace	Undeveloped	Natural Area, wetlands
Treatment Plant Floodplain	10	Greenspace	Undeveloped	Natural area, views, trails, floodplain, wetlands
Scenic Estates Conservancy	5.9	Greenspace	Developed	Natural Area, trail
Old Middle School Trail	2.3	Greenspace	Undeveloped	Future trail connection
City Hall lawn	2	Greenspace	Developed	Picnic area, lawn

* The City owns the 40-acre Benson property. The final size of the park area on that property is yet to be determined.

**Berthusen Park is not inside the Lynden City Limits

***Glennig St Fields was purchased by the City with an agreement to raise private funds for repayment. It may sell a portion of the property if the full price is not raised.

2.2 Trail Network Inventory

It is increasingly clear that a well-designed urban trail network is a major asset to the residents of a city. Trails provide transportation options, recreational opportunities, health benefits, and connections to nature. They simply help make living in a City more interesting. Trails are a quality of life issue for residents. That proves to be the case in Lynden as well. Survey respondents overwhelmingly (74%) stated that Lynden does not have enough trails. A vast majority of comments about the City's park and trail system described how they use the City's trails.

Currently, the Jim Kaemingk Jr. Trail diagonally bisects the city as the City's most established and developed non-motorized trail. It connects public lands and passes through residential neighborhoods as it follows Fishtrap Creek on its path through the City. It is extensively used as a recreational trail. City policy makers have made it a priority to extend and improve the trail from one end of the City to the other and progress is happening. Since the 2014 Update, trail construction has been completed around Fisher Elementary, the city secured property behind the old Middle School for future trail construction, and residents passed a Park and Trail bond which will construct another segment of trail between 17th St and Front St.



[DT3]

2.2.1 Trail Network Planning

As part of the planning efforts related to this update, a Concept Trail Network Workgroup, formed from members of the Parks and Trails Advisory Committee and the Berthusen Park Advisory Committee, organized and met to brainstorm and formulate ideas on a City-wide trail network. The goal of the team was to discuss and propose feasible routes for a trail network that would be inter-connected across the city and linked to the City's parks and public spaces. Once built out, this network would provide both off-street transportation options and recreational opportunities that highlight some of the City's interesting characteristics and natural features for residents and visitors.

Map 2.2 below is the ambitious and inspiring result of that planning effort. It identifies separate, specific trails and provides a feasible option for their location. Including them as part of this Master Plan means that as future development is proposed in these locations, these concept trails need to be accommodated as part of that development. This accommodation may take many forms dependent on the specific circumstance. At the very least, it would require the establishment of a trail easement that could be built out as funding becomes available. As is often the case with trail building efforts, the full construction of a trail is opportunistic as funding and property becomes available. The importance, though, of having a planned trail network included in this Master Plan is to identify those potential locations so that those opportunities can be acted upon at the appropriate time.

Map 2.2 Conceptual Trail Network

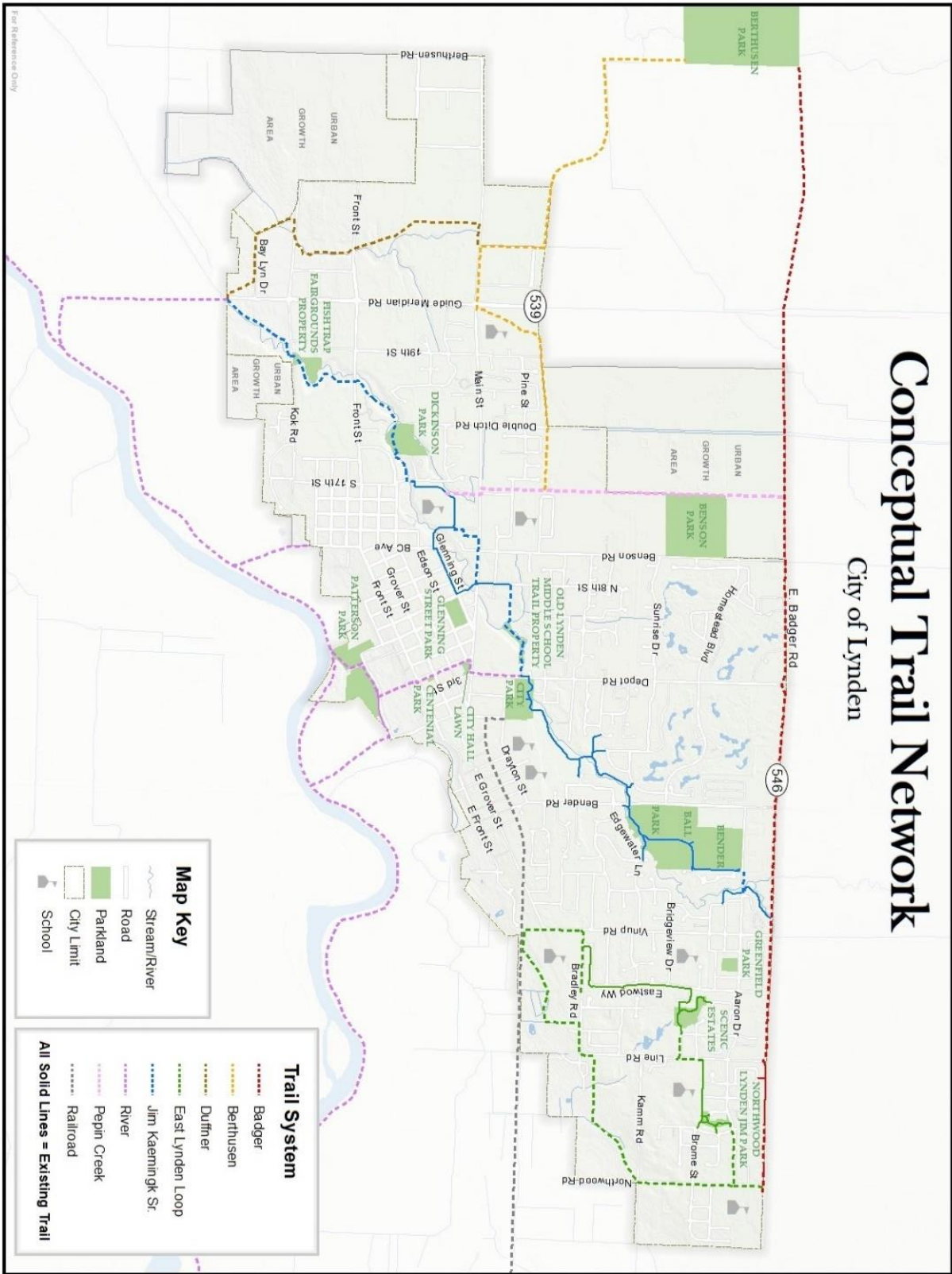


Table 2.2 Lynden’s Trail Network

<u>Trail Name*</u>	<u>Type of Trail</u>	<u>Conceptual Length (Approx.)</u>	<u>Development Status</u>
Berthusen Trail	Regional	2.75 miles	Undeveloped – 0% built
Badger Trail	Neighborhood	4.5 miles	Undeveloped – 7% built
Duffner Trail	Recreational	1.5 miles	Undeveloped – 0% built
East Lynden Loop	Recreational	4.5 miles	Partial – 50% built
Jim Kaemingk Sr Trail	Recreational	5.5 miles	Partial – 60% built
Pepin Creek Trail	Recreational	1.5 miles	Undeveloped – 0% built
River Trail	Recreational	9.75 miles	Undeveloped – 2% built
Railroad Trail	Regional	TBD	Undeveloped – still a RR
Nooksack Loop Trail**	Regional	TBD	Undeveloped

* Apart from the Jim Kaemingk Sr Trail, the Badger Trail and the Nooksack Loop Trail these names are not official.

**The Nooksack Loop Trail would connect from the County to Lynden’s trail network.

2.2.2 Bicycle Transportation Network

Lynden has become a biking destination. In general, the streets in Lynden are wide, flat, and well maintained. The City is also surrounded by quiet rural roads that offer expansive views of the surrounding countryside and endless options for loop trips of various lengths. Cyclists often stop for a cup of coffee or a bite to eat at one of the shops in downtown Lynden after they have finished up a loop in the County. In 2017, the Downtown Business Association partnered with the City to set up a bike maintenance station in the public parking lot next to Centennial Park.

The City currently does not have an established bike route network. The next update to its Transportation Element will include a focused look at how this might be further accommodated.

2.3 Lynden Public Facilities

Besides the abundance of quality park lands, sport fields, playgrounds and trails that make up the City’s park and trail system, the City owns and maintains significant public facilities and structures that provide recreational opportunities for its residents. In general, while these are publicly owned, the City partners with outside organizations that provide the actual programing for activities at these facilities.

2.3.1 Lynden Recreation Center

The Lynden Recreation Center was originally constructed in 1962 as a pool-only structure. In the early 1980s an addition was constructed to cover the pool, add new racquetball/handball courts, an outdoor basketball court, four tennis courts, a gymnasium, fitness room, and locker rooms. The current facility is owned by the City but is operated by the Whatcom Family YMCA, which provides indoor recreational

opportunities to the public through membership and participation in organized classes or leagues. Furthermore, the School District swim teams use this facility for their events and practices.

The YMCA fully utilizes the amenities that are provided at the Lynden Recreation Center, offering an extensive assortment of exercise, fitness and yoga classes. They also offer youth swimming lessons and organized youth basketball leagues.

This facility provides an important recreational role in the City and exemplifies the partnership model that the City has developed with outside organizations in providing coordinated recreational opportunities to residents.

The future of the facility has been the topic of frequent discussion. The facility has lasted beyond its life span and it continues to offer a valuable service to the community. It does not, though, meet the perceived demand for indoor recreational options for Lynden residents. In 2012, Lynden residents voted down a bond proposal to move and rebuild a YMCA center in downtown Lynden. Since then, the City has focused mainly on maintaining the facility to stretch its lifespan. The cost of a full rebuild or major remodel would require significant outside funding or the passage of a new bond.

Since 2014, the City has invested \$454,800 into the pool facility for safety and maintenance projects. These projects include pool equipment repair and replacement, locker room and restroom upgrades, exterior and interior painting, and lighting retrofits. Some \$200,000 of that was spent in 2019 to resurface the pool. These projects were completed to essentially maintain the same level of service.

The Lynden Recreation Center provides a valuable service to the community. Many survey respondents indicated that a quality indoor recreational center and pool should be top priorities for the City. Survey respondents indicated that the top two items that they would be willing to pay higher taxes for were:

- 1) Building a new aquatic center
- 2) Building a new community center

*What funding requests would you be willing to pay higher taxes for?		Total Responses	Percent of Respondents
<small>*Question 28 from the 2019 Parks Plan Online Survey</small>			
1	Building an aquatic center	545	55%
2	Building a new community center (indoor recreation and education)	463	47%
3	Adding sections of the City trail	432	44%
4	Upgrading or developing existing parks	272	27%
5	Purchasing new park land	267	27%
6	Improvement projects to existing indoor facilities	170	17%
7	Redevelopment of downtown green space	118	12%
8	An artificial turf field (football, soccer)	118	12%

9	None of the above	99	10%
10	Other	79	8%

2.3.2 Lynden Community Senior Center

The Lynden Community Center is located in downtown Lynden and serves the community as an activity and social center for seniors. The City of Lynden owns and maintains the 11,253 square foot facility and parking lot, though the Lynden Community Senior Center is an independent 501c(3) non-profit organization. The building has a recreational center, educational rooms, and a cafeteria.

The Community Center offers programs and activities for all Lynden residents but are specifically oriented toward Lynden’s senior residents. It also operates a noon meal program (by donation) and offers home delivery meals to homebound members.

The Community Center operates independently and is governed by a volunteer board. They are responsible for long-term planning decisions. The building is aging, but in good physical condition. While the Community Center has its own parking lot, there are frequent conflicts with other downtown users taking parking spots.

2.3.3 School Facilities

In many communities, school facilities, which often include sports fields, playgrounds, and open space, provide a location for both formal and informal recreational activity for the general public. Of course, safety and scheduling logistics can make effective use of these spaces difficult. In Lynden, School District facilities are available for organized use with permission. When school is out, though, it is not uncommon to see neighborhood kids playing in a playground or playing a game of pick-up basketball or baseball on the unused school fields. Throughout the year, youth sports leagues often use Lynden School District athletic fields for football or soccer games and indoor courts for basketball games.

2.4 Parks and Trails Administrative Framework

The Lynden Parks Department has 6 full-time employees and 5 seasonal workers. The Parks Director reports to the City Administrator and is responsible for the direct management of park staff and allocating the resources needed to care for and maintain the park lands. The Parks Department staff are directly responsible for the physical work of maintaining and caring for the park lands. They also organize facility rentals and other public use opportunities and facilitate partnerships with outside organizations (youth sport leagues, school districts, tournaments, etc) that use the sport fields throughout the year.

Since 2014, full-time staff has remained steady for the parks department, but they have added 2 seasonal workers to help with the ongoing summer maintenance demands. Since 2000, while the park acreage under their care has increase by more than 30%, the Parks Department has only added 1 full-time employee. The City’s parks remain well maintained and care for. As the City’s population continues to rise and park development and maintenance demands also increase, it is anticipated that park staffing will also need to increase.

Lynden is somewhat unique in that the Parks Department does not include any “latch key” programs, as many parks departments do. Nor does it actively manage the many sports leagues that play in the area. Rather, it maintains park assets and schedules team use of play fields. This distinction is worth noting

because the effect of not having those programs and responsibilities is that fewer employees are required to “run” parks facilities. This in turn reduces the impact on the City’s General Fund.

The City Council Parks Committee, made up of a three-member subcommittee of the Lynden City Council, advises and makes recommendations on all matters pertaining to operations and maintenance of the park lands and facilities. They provide leadership and vision in meeting the public’s desires for the City’s Park and Trail System. The Parks Director works closely with the Committee, keeping them informed of the Parks Department activities and needs for the daily and long-term operations of the Park and Trail system.

The Lynden Parks and Trail Citizen’s Advisory Committee is made up of seven community members that are appointed by the Mayor to provide public input into the decision-making process. They are an advisory and fact-finding committee charged with researching, reviewing, and making recommendations on issues related to the operation and management of the City’s recreational programs and facilities. The Parks Director supports the Committee and provides the members with the information needed to fulfill its advisory function.

The Parks and Recreation District is...[DT4]

DRAFT

Chapter 3: Lynden Park's System Level of Service Standards

3.1 Introduction

In the 2014 Park Master Plan, the City established a base Level of Service (LOS) standard at 7 acres per 1000 people. In 2014, the population of Lynden was 13,111 and had a total of 72.4 acres of parkland (not including Berthusen Park). That works out to 5.5 acres / 1000 people which is below the LOS standard. Since 2014, the City has added property to the park system. This includes securing property for future park development even though public access may be currently limited. This acreage includes 2.9 acres of Northwood Lynden Jim Park, ~20 acres of Benson Park, 8.7 acres of Dickinson Park, and 4 acres at Glenning St Fields. While these parks are mostly undeveloped, they are key properties that will help keep Lynden at or above its base LOS for the foreseeable future.

Lynden's estimated 2019 population is 14,470. The total park land acreage managed by the City Parks Department is 367.5. That total includes the 236 acres of Berthusen Park and other undeveloped open space lands which are not necessarily readily accessible to the public. Not including Berthusen Park, but including park land additions since 2014, the City's parkland acreage is 131.5 acres. This acreage gives the City 9.1 acres / 1,000 people based on the 2019 population. This is above the City's established LOS standard of 7 acres / 1000 people.

In the 2014 plan, the Berthusen Park acreage was not included in that LOS calculation. This is because it is not within the City Limits and has its own Master Plan and citizen advisory committee. However, it is managed by the Parks Department, it requires City resources to manage, and is a popular destination for both Lynden residents and regional visitors. For this reason, it should be considered, and highlighted, as a part of the City's overall Park and Trail System.

Table 3.1 City of Lynden Level of Service calculations

Population		Total Parkland * (Acres)	Acres / 1000 (All parkland)	Not Including Berthusen Park	
				Parkland	Acres / 1000
2014	13,111	308.4	23.7	72.4	5.5
2019	14,470	367.5	25.3	131.5	9.1
2036	19,282			135	7

* All parkland including Berthusen Park and Open Space areas

Of course, there are several ways to determine whether the City is meeting the park and recreational needs of its residents. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), which works to establish national standards for park agencies, advises that while a set-in stone LOS standard may be desired by decision makers, it should not be the final answer for what is best for each City. Each community is distinct in what services are available and offered. These standards should help inform plans and management decisions but are just one tool for evaluating how a City is doing in providing parkland and recreational opportunities for its residents.

Besides a simple calculation of total parkland, there are other evaluation considerations that are helpful.

3.1.1 City Demographics

Demographic data analyzed for the 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update showed that nearly 20% of the population is older than 65 years old and that nearly 60% is under 45 years old. Lynden is somewhat unique in that it tends to be a retirement community while at the same time having a high percentage of young families. This characteristic needs to be considered when planning for park facilities.

3.1.2 Recreational Expectations

The 2019 Lynden Parks and Trails Community Survey asked residents what they expect of the City's Park and Trail program. The general consensus is that the City's Parks and Trails are important in maintaining a high quality of life and are a worthy investment for the City.

Residents expect a variety of well cared-for sport facilities and an expansive and well-connected trail network. There is strong interest in a new or rebuilt public recreation center, including a community pool. Residents tend to be satisfied with the current level of involvement that the Parks Department takes with organized recreational programming. That includes providing a location for and maintaining sports fields but partnering with outside programs to organize the sport leagues.

Lynden is situated in an amazing geographical context. With both mountains and the sea within close driving distance, many Lynden residents satisfy their recreational needs in nearby jurisdictions (federal, state, county, etc).

3.2 Parks and Recreation Comparisons

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) collected performance data from 1,075 unique park agencies and compiled it into the 2019 NRPA Agency Performance Review. This document provides median data which can be used to provide insights on how Lynden compares on a variety of metrics to the full spectrum of park agencies.

Park Metric	Lynden	All jurisdictions	Jurisdictions less than 20,000 people
Acres / 1,000 residents	9.1 w/o Berthusen 25.3 with Berthusen	10.1	11.8
Residents per Park	1,447	2,181	1,231
Residents per playground	2,894	3,706	NA
Residents per baseball field	803	6,980	NA
Residents per soccer field	1,607	7,812	NA
Residents per Senior Center	14,470	28,750	NA

Full Time Employees per 10,000 residents	8.7	8.3	9.6
---	-----	-----	-----

3.3 Access and Connectivity

Besides having an abundance of park facilities, lands and their amenities (playgrounds, sport courts, and open space), it is important that residents have simple and ready access to those park lands. Access to parks is generally measured by walking distance from a property to public lands. Living within ½ mile of a park, a 10-minute walk, is often considered an industry standard for evaluating access to park lands.

Lynden has not adopted a specific level of service for park access. For this update, an accessibility analysis measured the percentage of residents in the City that live within a ¼ mile walk and a ½ mile walk of a park land. This distance was measured by taking barriers into account. The resident must be able to use a public road, sidewalk or trail to walk and reach the specific park property. The results show that 42% of households live within a ¼ mile walk to a park property and just over 74% of households live within a ½ mile walk to a park.

Households in City Limits	6,286	
Households within ¼ Mile of a Park Property	2,634	42%
Households within ½ Mile of a Park Property	4,672	74%

The national average for park accessibility (1/2 mile) is 54%. Lynden well exceeds that average (74%). Of course, a goal for the City is that all of its residents have easy access to its parks and trails. Future trail building decisions and potential park land purchases should take into account how that access can be improved.

Map 3.3 below shows the results of this analysis. The red portions of the map indicate Lynden’s residential areas where access to park lands is limited. This analysis is extremely enlightening for future park management decisions. This data can be helpful in allocating resources and for consideration of future property acquisitions and trail building.

Map 3.3 Residents within 1/2 mile walk to a park property

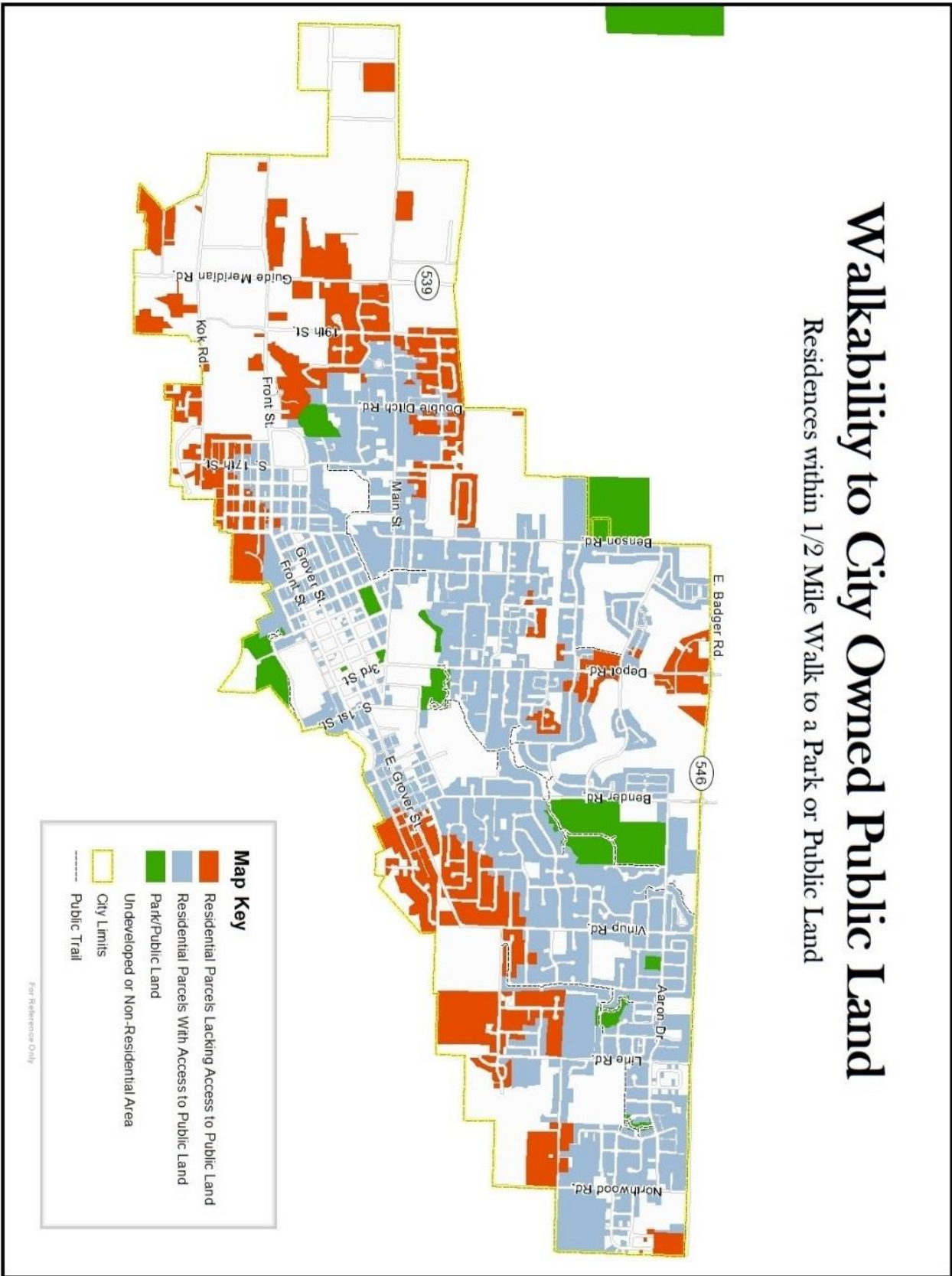


Table 3.3 Walkability to Lynden’s Park Properties

<u>Park Property</u>	Households with ½ mile access to this Park	Percent of Lynden Households	Households with ½ mile access to <u>ONLY</u> this Park	Percent to <u>ONLY</u> this Park
Bender Fields	1,444	23%	578	9%
Benson Park	444	7%	428	7%
Centennial Park	673	11%	0	0%
City Hall Lawn	793	13%	0	0%
City Park	855	14%	263	4%
Dickinson Park	510	8%	392	6%
Glennig St Fields	925	15%	128	2%
Greenfield Park	1,082	17%	0	0%
Northwood Lynden Jim	687	11%	377	6%
Patterson Park	624	10%	5	0.1%
Scenic Estates	799	13%	113	2%

This table shows the specific number and percentage of residents that have access to the City’s individual parks. Obviously, the size (~60 acres) and location of Bender Fields puts it in contact with many residents - nearly a quarter of Lynden households. Greenfield Park, though only 2 acres and with limited amenities, sits within a relatively dense residential neighborhood and nearly 1/5 of Lynden residents live close to this park.

A closer look at the City’s recent park purchases are also interesting. Glennig St Fields provides access to 15% of City households. Dickinson Park, while centrally located in town, has limited access because of the presence of Fishtrap Creek along its entire southern border. This will change soon as trail development plans come to fruition. Building trail access to the Park will provide a bridge across the creek, thereby opening access to the south. The undeveloped Benson Park property, which sits off the northwest corner of the City limits, currently has few people living around it. The importance, though, of this strategic purchase will become evident as the Pepin Creek Subarea develops as the next stage of residential growth in the City.

3.3.1 ADA Accessibility

Will add a brief discussion on the current ADA status for Park properties as well as trail construction standards...(ie. Address trail construction in some locations that might not be able to meet ADA standards).

3.4 Park and Trail Needs and Goals

In general, the City is meeting its level of service goals for parks and recreation in the city. It has secured enough property to meet its LOS acreage goal for quite some time, of course, dependent on the actual population growth that occurs. The City has impressive sport fields and courts. While the demand for their use continues to rise, the existing sport facilities are well used and well maintained. Trail building is a City priority, and while many connection and trail expansion opportunities remain, the City is making efforts to capitalize on those opportunities. Finally, the amount of organized recreational programming within the City is limited, but the City meets most of those demands with partnership organizations.

The greatest needs for the park system are new park development, ongoing maintenance demands, and upgrades to existing facilities.

Park System Needs:

- Park development planning and construction
- Ongoing resources for existing park upgrades and maintenance
- Securing and building City-wide trail connections
- Lynden Recreational Center remodel / rebuild
- Natural areas management
- Coordinate Park signage and trail wayfinding markers

Chapter 4: Capital Improvement and Parks Funding Opportunities

4.1 Introduction

A premier parks and trail system, which is the desire of the City and its residents and is reflected by the ambitions of this plan, requires funding. A Park and Trail Master Plan without the ability to fund its initiatives is only an exercise of the imagination. While casting an inspiring vision for Lynden's parks and trails system is an important first step, funding that vision requires many things - the priority of City Council to allocate resources, a significant effort of City staff to procure and manage grant opportunities, and ultimately the wise and efficient spending of those funds.

Currently, the City Parks Department develops an annual budget designed to meet the needs of managing the Parks and Trails system. This budget is usually paid for with discretionary funds that are allocated annually by the City Council. As such, Park's funding can sometimes be seen as competing with other City services which also need to be funded. The importance of the City's parks and trail system to the quality of life of its residents make adequate funding of that system an essential component of a successful and livable City.

There are many funding options used by the City to fund the park and trail system. These include general fund allocations, special bonds and levies, state and federal grants, user fees, park impact fees, and donations from individuals and civic organizations.

4.1 Parks Department Budget

The 2020 City Parks Budget is \$3,432,513 and is met predominately by the following:

General Fund:	\$881,908
Park Impact Fees:	\$120,000
Park Revenue:	\$29,500
Grants (DOE):	\$500,000
Bond Measure:	\$3,000,000
Real Estate Excise Tax:	\$618,000
Community Donations:	\$400,000
Volunteer labor:	400 Hours

These categories are described in further detail below.

4.1.1 General Fund

These are discretionary funds of the City that are allocated annually for a variety of City services. Historically, approximately 5% of the Park Department budget is funded by the City General Fund and pays for standard operation and maintenance of the Parks Department. The General Fund revenue is made up by a number of local taxes.

- **Property Tax:** This is an annual tax levied on the assessed value of real property. The average Lynden property owner pays \$692 of property taxes annually.
- **Sales Tax:** This is a tax on any taxable purchase or event that occurs within the City. The combined state and local sales tax rate is 8.7%.

- Utility Business and Occupation Taxes: This is a tax levied on the operating revenues earned by private utilities from their operations within the City. Annual General Fund revenue from this tax is approximately \$1,993,000
- Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax: This is the “Gas Tax” on each gallon of gasoline that is purchased within the City. The 2020 gas tax in Washington State is 49.4 cents per gallon.

4.1.2 Park Impact Fees

Impact fees are a one-time development fee imposed by a local jurisdiction for new development projects. They are intended to help pay for the cost of expanding public services due to the increased demand on those services as a result of that new development. Lynden imposes impact fees for Transportation, Fire, and Parks.

The 2020 park impact fee assessment is as follows:

- Single Family or Duplex construction: \$936 per unit
- Multifamily construction: \$546 per unit
- General Commercial construction: \$234 per 1000 square feet of ground floor area (GFA).
- Retail construction: \$140 per 1000 square feet of GFA.
- Manufacturing or Warehouse construction: \$94 per 1000 square feet of GFA.
- Assembly (Schools, churches): \$47 per 1000 square ft of GFA.

Total park impact fee revenue since 2014 was: \$X and has averaged \$X_[DT5] per year. This money has been used for land acquisition (Benson Park, Dickinson Park) and ...

The park impact fees as listed above were established in 2004 by Ordinance 1197 and have not been adjusted since. Adjustments to more accurately capture the cost of new development on the City’s park system are scheduled to be proposed in 2020.

4.1.3 Park Revenue: User Fees and Leases

The Parks Department collects fees for some activities that occur at the City’s park facilities. These can be as simple as an afternoon rental fee for a kitchen facility or a 10-year agricultural lease for use of land within Berthusen Park. Average annual revenue from use fees is \$X which represents x% of the Parks Department budget. Nationally, the median percentage of revenue contribution to a jurisdiction’s Park budget is 27%. In Lynden, park user fees are dedicated to contributing to the cost of ongoing park operation and maintenance expenses.

In 2019, the City collected \$X in user fees.

- Athletic leagues and tournaments: \$X
- School use of fields: \$X
- Kitchen and facility rentals: \$X
- Agricultural land leases:
- Antique tractor club:
- ?

User fees are priced affordably to ensure that park facilities are accessible to everyone. Frequent and careful review of these fees should occur to ensure they remain reasonably priced, but also go some distance to cover the actual cost of the service being provided.

4.1.4 Agency Grants and Appropriations

Occasionally, the City receives state and federal grants to support park and trail improvements. Grants are an important funding source and help the City maintain the level of services that are provided to the public. Due to the competitive nature of receiving grants, the City cannot expect to rely on grants for standard operation of the park system.

Since 2014, the City has received X grants for a total value of \$X. They are described below.

- Department of Commerce Appropriation: \$1 million for Bender Fields parking lot and restroom construction.
- Department of Ecology Clean Water Fund: \$500,000 for the partial acquisition cost of Dickinson Park
- Safe Routes to School: \$X for trails extension behind the newly constructed Fisher Elementary
- RCO grants....

4.1.5 Bond Measures

These are voter approved property taxes that are levied for specific park projects and are paid off over a period of time (20 yrs / 30 yrs). These bond measures require 60% approval to pass. Two (2) park bonds have passed in Lynden. In 1998 voters passed a 20-year, \$1.1 million measure to pay for acquisition cost of the northern 21 acres of Bender Fields Park. That bond was paid off in 2018.

In 2019, voters approved a Lynden Parks Bond, Proposition 2019-1, which is a 20-year, \$3 million measure. This bond will cost the average Lynden homeowner about \$30 per year and will fund three projects. These are:

- \$1 million to pay for initial development of Benson Park. This will include the addition of public restrooms, utility infrastructure and providing access to the historic barn and event space.
- \$1.8 million to pay for the extension of the Jim Kaemingk trail into and through Dickinson Park.
- \$200,000 to pay for a portion of the community led acquisition of the Glenning St Park property.

Bond Measures are difficult to get approved but as shown by 1998 bond and the forthcoming projects being funded by the 2019 bond, they can have a significant impact on improving the parks system.

4.1.6 Real Estate Excise Tax

This is a tax on the sale of property. It is a graduated tax between 1.1% - 3.0% depending on the full sale price of the property. Revenue from this source is restricted to being spent on listed capital projects.

4.1.8 Community Donations and Volunteer Labor

A never overlooked and greatly appreciated source of funding and labor comes from residents of the Lynden community. These donations come in many forms:

- **Community groups** (Mt Baker Rotary, Kiwanis clubs) that organize specific improvement projects within an existing park. In 2006, hundreds of community members came together to fundraise for and build the Million Smiles Playground at City Park. In 2019, the Mt Baker Rotary raised \$XXX,XXX to fund the construction of a new boulder park and sport courts at Bender Fields. Besides direct funding for this project, the Rotary gathered material donations and organized work parties to get the project completed.
- **Material Donations:** The Parks Department often receives in-kind donations of tools, equipment, plants and landscaping materials for upkeep and maintenance projects across the City.
- **Estate Gifts:** While rare, occasionally the City will receive gifts (financial or material) from estates. Similarly, property owners have offered to sell their property to the City for park purposes at below market rates. The Benson Park property was secured from the Heusinkveld family in 2014 at a below market rate.

There is opportunity for the City to increase this type of funding mechanism. The value of this type of activity goes beyond the financial benefits to the City's park system. Residents who contribute of their time or financial resources to a park project will remain connected to that park for the rest of their life. Volunteering creates a sense of ownership of the park system.

In the winter 2019, 150 Lynden High School students worked at Bender Fields for a day to plant 2,000 native trees and shrubs along Fishtrap Creek. Again, besides the incredible value of that labor, those students will be able to come back to that location for decades and see the impact of those few hours of labor. Of course, organizing volunteers and projects requires staff time and effort but the City should make it a priority to get more residents involved in the ongoing maintenance and improvement of the parks and trail system.

4.2 Additional Park Funding Opportunities

As with every municipal budget, especially as growth continues, there is a continual demand for additional funding. Since the 2014 Master Plan, the City has added substantial park land acreage to the system. Those park lands are mostly undeveloped. Just deciding what to develop at those park lands will require significant resources. That is before anything is even built. Construction of trails, athletic fields, and other park amenities, specifically because they are public projects, is not cheap. Additionally, since 2014, the City has added amenities to existing parks. With those additions, the demands on the Parks Department continue to increase. Ongoing operation and maintenance of the existing system requires significant resources. Adding capacity without also adding staff and equipment will only result in a gradual decline in the level of service that the Parks Department is able to offer.

The future is bright for the City's park and trail system. The potential to make significant trail improvements, develop new park properties and add recreational amenities to Lynden's park and trail system has never been greater. Of course, realizing that potential will require the City to increase its funding capacity. Additional funding capacity is discussed below.

General Fund: As the City grows, its budget also grows. The Parks system will continue to rely on the discretionary funds of the city as a stable funding source to maintain its desired level of service.

Grants: Grants are not a reliable funding source, and generally, they do not pay for ongoing operation and maintenance. With the park development demands that the City will be seeing, there may be some opportunity to secure grant funding. If the City can use this Master Plan to identify Capital Improvement needs, it may be valuable to allocate additional City resources to pursue grant funding for those projects. Securing some of that needed funding through grant resources would help to alleviate pressure on the General Fund.

Park Impact Fees: There appears to be support from the community to ask new development to pay more for park services. 62% of respondents said just that in the Online Community Survey that was conducted in 2019. Park Impact Fees have remained the same since 2004. The City intends to increase those fees as part of the 2021 budget cycle.

User Fees and Leases: Careful review and future updates to these fees should reflect appropriate market rates.

Park Bonds: Historically, it has been difficult to pass property tax levies in Lynden. In 2019, though, voters passed a Park bond to pay for specific park improvement and trails projects. The ask was fairly minimal, costing the average Lynden homeowner about \$30 per year. But as the City grows, the value of the City's parks and trails becomes more evident. The recent Covid-19 pandemic is sure to make funding new project with bonds more challenging. Even so, there is evidence that residents are willing to financially support the parks system through their taxes. This is reflected in the 2019 Community Parks Survey. 79% of respondents said they would support bond initiatives to improve the City's park system. More than 60% of respondents said they would pay \$10 or more per month to improve the City's park system.

Volunteer Groups and Community Donations:

Volunteerism is a cornerstone of this community and there are opportunities for the City to leverage additional volunteer labor for upgrading and maintaining park lands and facilities. Additionally, the City could work more proactively with community groups like the Mt Baker Rotary to look ahead and plan for specific projects or park initiatives that they would be willing to support. Of course, this puts additional pressure on an already busy staff to organize these events, but the benefits are priceless. Over the course of this planning period, as the City's population continues to grow and demand for park services also increases, there will be a time to add park staff. As that occurs, staff roles that include working with and organizing volunteers should be considered.

4.3 Parks Capital Improvement Planning (CIP)

As with every comprehensive planning effort, it is important to identify anticipated costs over the planning period to ensure that the City's levels of service mandates are met. The City's only adopted LOS standard for Parks is at least 7 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. Expected costs for the park and trail system will largely be for ongoing maintenance, new park development, trail construction and upgrades to existing park lands. Long term planning requires the City to consider trail improvement costs

and expectations through the Comprehensive Planning period – through 2036. For the purpose of practical consideration, this plan identifies a 6-year Capital Improvement Plan which is listed below^[DT6].

Improvement	6-Year CIP	Through 2036
Capital Costs		
Park Acquisition	0 acres	10 acres
New Park Development	13 acres – \$X	35 acres - \$X
Existing Park Upgrades		
Trail Construction	3 miles - \$X	8 miles
Subtotal		
On-Going Costs		
Maintenance and Operations	\$x per year	
Recreation Programs		
Subtotal		
Total Park Costs		

4.3.1 Acquisition

As shown in Chapter 3 of this plan, recent acquisitions have secured enough acreage for the LOS to be met even according to the 2036 population growth projection. The 2014 Plan identified a need for a total of 135 acres of park land to meet the LOS for the projected population growth through 2036. Since 2014, park land acquisitions have secured a total of ~132 acres of park land. This number is somewhat flexible based on the actual acreage that will ultimately be developed at Benson Park and Glenning St Park and the population growth numbers that actually occur. What this means is that the anticipated acquisition costs to meet the City’s LOS through 2036 are going to be minimal.

There still may be additions to the City’s inventory of park land during the planning period. Oftentimes, timing has much to do with the decision to purchase or secure a unique or strategic park land. This was the case with the recent additions – as property owners were interested in selling and the City acted to secure them for park property.

4.3.2 Park Development

Anticipated costs for park development, on the other hand, should be substantial. Benson Park (~20 acres) and Glenning St Park (4 acres) are largely a blank slate and are suitable for high cost active recreational facilities (infrastructure, sport fields, sport courts, structures and facilities). Dickinson Park (9 acres) is also undeveloped and will need infrastructure development (parking, restrooms, trails and bridges) but is more suitable for passive recreation rather than higher cost new athletic facilities. Patterson Park is relatively undeveloped and has the potential for medium cost boardwalk and trail infrastructure and ecological restoration.

Through the year 2036, the City should expect to develop XX acres of park land. At an estimated cost of \$xx,xxx per acre this will total \$xx,xxx,xxx.

4.3.3 Trail Construction

The Conceptual Trail Map (Map X) shows approximately 20 miles of new trail that would need to be constructed to meet that ambitious vision. Of course, the cost of building those trails can vary dramatically depending on the type of trail and the topography of their location. In many cases, the cost can be borne by adjacent development. In others, a full trail is not necessary at time of development, but it is still

important to secure an easement that would allow trail construction when funding becomes available. The City will also be revisiting its trail development standards and will consider a variety of allowed trail standards to match the appropriate trail purpose. For example, adjacent development along the Badger Trail has established a crushed limestone standard rather than full asphalt.

If the City were to meet close to half of that ambitious goal and build 8 additional miles of trail by 2036. An estimate of \$xx per foot would result in a total of \$x,xxx,xxx for full trail construction.

DRAFT

Chapter 5: Goals and Policies

Mission Statement for the Lynden Parks and Trails System:

The Lynden Park and Trail System will seek to provide the community with sufficient and quality parks, trails and open space in order to promote educational, recreational, conservancy, health and wellness, and interpretive opportunities for all ages.

Goal 1: Establish a process for the ongoing evaluation and assessment of the City's Park and Trail System that will identify the recreational needs of the community and seek to rectify shortfalls where they might exist.

Policies:

- 1) The Lynden Park and Trail Master Plan will guide the over-arching management of the City's Park and Trail System and ensure that projects are developed in a manner consistent with the Plan's governing policies, guidelines, and mission.
- 2) A comprehensive review and update of the Park and Trail Master Plan shall occur every six (6) years that will evaluate the current state of the City's park and trail system.
- 3) The Lynden Park and Trail Master Plan shall be adopted by the City Council and will be included as an element of the City's Comprehensive Plan.
- 4) Every three (3) years, City staff and the Council Parks Committee shall review the Master Plan to monitor changes within the City that may require additional amending or updates to the Master Plan.
- 5) Advice and input from the Park and Trail Advisory Committee, an appointed citizen committee, shall be sought and included in subsequent review and updates to the Park and Trail Master Plan.

Goal 2: Provide the community with a diverse range of high-quality park lands, trails, facilities and recreational opportunities that will serve all ages, recreational interests and ability levels.

Policies:

- 1) Acquire and develop enough park land within the City limits to maintain a level of service standard of seven (7) acres per one thousand (1,000) residents. Park land acquisition shall be based on the parcel's suitability for park development that is consistent with the Park and Trail Master Plan.
- 2) The review of land use projects across the City will include an evaluation of park and recreation needs for that development area. This will include an assessment of possible trail linkages, new

park lands and open space areas that may be required as a component of approval of new projects.

- 3) Non-motorized transportation options, such as recreational trails, bike lanes and sidewalks separated from vehicle lanes, shall be prioritized and included in the City's overall transportation system. Highest priority shall be given to those non-motorized transportation options which result in increased linkages between park lands and contribute to the City's conceptual trail network.
- 4) All public lands in the City shall be managed in such a way to conserve the City's limited natural resources, to maintain a connection to the City's rural and agricultural roots, to enhance the City's small-town character, and to preserve and interpret the City's historical elements.
- 5) Develop partnerships with responsible youth sports and recreation organizations to continue to provide residents with high quality recreational programs. Identify potential new partnerships for sport and recreation programs that do not currently exist in the City.
- 6) Evaluate long-term options for the upkeep, remodel or rebuild of the City's community pool.
- 7) Develop an individual stewardship plan for every park land in the City. The Park stewardship plans should recognize the goals and purpose of each park and identify maintenance and funding needs as well as desired improvement and park development projects.
- 8) Encourage the joint use of recreational lands and facilities owned or managed by private and quasi-public organizations so that they can be appropriately accessed and contribute to the well-being of all residents.
- 9) Promote the development of park lands which provide opportunity for residents to engage with and connect to the City's incredible natural setting. These should include opportunity for providing access to the Nooksack River, to capitalize on views of Mt Baker and the Cascade Mountains, and to engage with flora (massive conifers) and fauna (swans, waterfowl, migrating salmon) that are unique to this region.

Goal 3: Provide adequate funding for the Parks Department in order to meet or exceed the adopted level of service standards and to effectively contribute to a positive quality of life for residents and visitors.

Policies:

- 1) Establish funding sources for Parks and Trail development that are adequate to fulfill the community's desires for park and trail use and expectations.
- 2) The Park's department shall establish an operating budget that reflects public demand for park land and facilities but also takes into account the long-term maintenance needs for those resources.
- 3) The City will fund its Park and Trail system through a combination of general funds, real estate excise taxes, development impact fees, grants and legislative appropriations.
- 4) The City will identify projects that may be fundable through bond initiatives where appropriate.

- 5) New development proposals shall pay appropriately prices park impact fees as established by the City's impact fee schedule (**Ordinance XXXX**). Park impact fees shall be reviewed annually to ensure that they adequately pay for (X%) of the City's new park acquisition and development.
- 6) The City will foster relationships with other agencies, jurisdictions, citizen groups and volunteers that may assist in the planning, development, operation and maintenance of City park lands and recreation programs.
- 7) Promote close working relationships with the Lynden Regional Parks and Recreation District, the Lynden School District, Whatcom County and other nearby jurisdictions and agencies. These relationships can help to provide nearby recreational opportunities for City residents that are not specifically within the City limits.

Goal 4: Engage members of the community to participate in the planning, acquisition, development and management of park and trail facilities and programs.

Policies:

- 1) Organize a central information office to provide community-wide park and recreation news, opportunities, program information, and event and league schedules. Ensure the ability for the public to provide feedback to policy makers regarding park and trail issues.
- 2) Maintain an "open-door" policy with City staff and policy makers regarding parks, trails and recreational issues across the City.
- 3) Promote mass communication regarding park and trail projects, milestones, and park sponsored events through the City website, community social media pages, and local news organizations.
- 4) Encourage volunteer programs which allow civic, youth and athletic organizations, and the public to be involved in the development and maintenance of parks and trails.
- 5) Develop interpretive signage for park properties which help deepen the public's understanding and appreciation of the City's park and trail resources.
- 6) The Parks and Trail Advisory Committee will act as an advisory and fact-finding body to the City Council Parks Committee. They will be knowledgeable regarding the City management and operation of the Parks system and make recommendations regarding the development of the Park system and updating the Park and Trail Master Plan.

Appendix A: City of Lynden Park Pages

DRAFT

Bender Fields Park

Regional Park



Bender Fields is a 56-acre sport field complex located at 8770 Bender Road in the northeast portion of the City. It is one of the premier sport field complexes in the region. Bender Fields serves as the location for more than 2,000 organized games every year. Thousands of kids use the fields for soccer, little league baseball, softball, flag football, and lacrosse games. Furthermore, several adult sport leagues use these fields for softball, cricket, and bocce ball. It also provides a location for non-organized recreational activity (trails, playground, dog park, and picnic shelters) for residents.

[Map](#)^[DT7]

Park Amenities:

- 12 softball / baseball diamonds
- 10 soccer fields (various sizes)
- 2 lacrosse fields
- 1 cricket pitch
- 2 outdoor basketball courts
- 2 pickleball courts
- 1 bocce ball field
- 1 sand volleyball court
- 3,400 ft of paved trail
- Playground
- 2 picnic shelters
- 3 public restrooms
- Community room with kitchen
- Several picnic tables
- Access to Fishtrap Creek
- 1 acre fenced-in dog park
- Exercise stations
- Bouldering park
- Concession stand
- Equipment shop
- Parks Dept offices
- 472 parking spaces
- Mountain views
- Riparian habitat

Park Needs and Management Recommendations:

- Invasive species removal along Fishtrap Creek
- Native plantings within the stream buffer
- Ongoing fields maintenance
- Add **X soccer** fields
- Artificial turf field

Bender Fields

Year Established:

Location:

Size: 56 Acres

Walkability:

Benson Park



Regional Park

The 40-acre Benson Park property was purchased by the City in 2015. Currently, the property is undeveloped for park resources. The property contains a historic barn, a residential structure and an additional farm outbuilding. The fields are leased for agricultural use – potatoes, corn, and pasture. The City holds this property for future park development as this area of the City is projected to absorb much of the City’s residential growth over the next 20 years.

The complete use of this property is yet to be determined. Discussion is ongoing in regard to how much of this property will be developed for park purposes. In late 2019, City residents approved a Park and Trails property tax which includes \$1 million for basic infrastructure improvements (restrooms, utilities, parking) for this property.

Future Park Amenities:

- Historic barn
- Event space
- Playground
- Stormwater detention
- Trailhead

Management Needs and Recommendations:

- Detailed development plan
- Public Comment / Feedback
- Improve public access
- Basic infrastructure development (parking, restrooms)

Benson Park

Year Established: 2016

Location:

Size:

Walkability:

Berthusen Park

Regional Park



Berthusen Park is a remarkable 236-acre regional park located northwest of the city limits in Whatcom County. It is owned and managed by the City of Lynden. The property is the historic homestead of Hans Berthusen who settled here in 1883. Hans and Lida Berthusen left the property to the City upon his passing in 1944. The park provides a unique variety of amenities including trails through old growth conifer forest, the preserved historic structures, antique tractor displays and event space, skeet shooting, picnic areas, and airspace for a model airplane club.

Park Amenities:

- Old growth forest
- 7 miles of nature trails
- Access to Bertrand Creek
- Historic barn
- Antique farm machinery display
- Event space – Tractor club
- Playground
- Baseball diamond
- Skeet shooting range
- Model airplane airspace
- Boy scout cabin
- 2 community rooms with kitchens
- 2 public restrooms
- Group picnic area
- Naturalist activities

Park Needs and Management Recommendations:

- Natural areas management
- Improved restroom facilities
- Trail plan
- Balancing park uses
- Interpretive displays and signage
- Visitor Center
- Maintenance of the caretaker house

Berthusen Park

Year Established:

Location:

Size:

Walkability:

Centennial Park

Neighborhood Park



Centennial Park is an urban greenspace park located in the historic downtown core of the City. The park functions as a town square, focusing attention on the downtown shops, cafes, and public buildings. The centerpiece of the park is a veteran's memorial. It also provides a short pathway, benches, picnic tables and a well-shaded lawn area for downtown employees and visitors to enjoy. Finally, it is also the event space location for several downtown events throughout the year. The Lynden Farmers Market sets up every Saturday during the summer in Centennial Park. Additionally, the Downtown Business Association organizes several movie nights in the park during the summer, the Pioneer Museum hosts the Lynde' 500 adjacent to the park every Labor Day, and the Robert Spinner Memorial Firefighter Challenge also takes place on 4th St adjacent to the park.

Park amenities:

- Shade trees
- Picnic tables
- Sitting benches
- Veteran's memorial
- Lawn area
- Asphalt pathway
- Event space
- Town square

Park Needs and Management Recommendations:

- Long-term redevelopment potential
- Maximize public gathering space
- Develop outdoor venue space
- Promote as downtown amenity

Centennial Park

Year Established:

Location:

Size:

Walkability:

City Park

Regional Park



Lynden City Park is a 10-acre property, located along Fishtrap Creek, in the center of the City. The park's location sits just north of the City's historic industrial core and south of the residential neighborhoods that kicked off a major growth phase for the city in the early 1990s. The park has a unique set of amenities including the remarkable Millions Smiles Playground, the Lynden Recreation Center (YMCA facility), outdoor tennis courts, kitchen and dining rental space, a hub of the Jim Kaemingk Jr Trail and a significant stand of old conifers.

Park amenities:

- Millions Smiles Playground
- Lynden Recreation Center
- Access to Fishtrap Creek
- Nature Trails
- Jim Kaemingk Trail
- Kitchen and Group Shelters
- Public Restrooms
- 4 lighted tennis courts
- Pickleball court
- Basketball court
- Picnic tables

Park Needs and Management Recommendations:

- Balancing all the park uses
- Ongoing structural maintenance
- Streambank erosion and conservation
- Security (vandalism issues)
- Woodlot management
- YMCA building maintenance

City Park

Year Established:

Location:

Size:

Walkability:

Dickinson Park

Regional Park



Purchased in 2019, Dickinson Park is the newest acquisition to the City's Park System. It is an extraordinary 9-acre wooded parcel in the middle of the City. Importantly, it is located within the City's western residential neighborhoods which have been identified as lacking access to parklands. Currently, the property has an occupied single-family house on it with access from the north off Double Ditch Road and from the east off Fishtrap Way. The parcel is heavily forested with 2nd growth conifer trees. The confluence of Fishtrap Creek and Pepin Creek is located on this property. The park is not yet developed for public access. In late 2019, Lynden voters approved a park and trail bond of which \$1.8 million of that is designated to provide trail access to the property. This will include 2 bridges over Fishtrap Creek.

Park amenities:

- Beautiful forested habitat
- Access to Fishtrap Creek
- Environmental education
-

Park Needs and Management Recommendations:

- Detailed park development plan
- Basic infrastructure development
- Public access plan
- Forest management plan
- Connectivity to nearby trails

Dickinson Park

Year Established: 2019

Location:

Size:

Walkability:

Glenning St. Fields

Neighborhood Park



Glenning Street Fields is a recent acquisition to the City's park system with a unique history. This property was donated by Holden and Phoebe Judson in 1888 to house the City's first public school. In 2018, the new Lynden Middle School was opened on the east side of town rendering this property as surplus and no longer needed by the Lynden School District. The City purchased the property from the District with mostly donated funds by the community. Its location for a park property is ideal, centrally located and situated within an established neighborhood near downtown. The property has great potential but is undeveloped at this time. The property includes 2 basketball courts and 4 baseball fields. Additionally, a chain link fence encloses the entire 4 acres. It is often used for community and neighborhood events and passive recreation for the neighborhood.

Park amenities:

- 4 baseball fields
- 2 basketball courts
- Interesting history
- Open space
- Fully fenced in
- Centrally located
-
-

Park Needs and Management Recommendations:

- Long-term development plan
- Ongoing maintenance
- Fundraising for purchase price
-
-
-

Glenning St Fields

Year Established: 2019

Location:

Size:

Walkability:

Greenfield Park

Neighborhood Park



Greenfield Park is a 2-acre neighborhood park located within the relatively densely populated residential area in the northeast portion of the City. The park provides minimal developed infrastructure with a play structure, covered pavilion and sport courts along with an abundance of open space and lawn area. The park is well maintained and provides a fine example of a neighborhood park in Lynden.

Park amenities:

- Play structure
- Group pavilion
- 1 basketball hoop
- 1 ballfield (backstop)
- Open space
- Well-maintained lawn area
-
-

Park Needs and Management Recommendations:

- Ongoing maintenance
- Fence repairs and upgrades
-
-
-
-

Greenfield Park

Year Established:

Location:

Size:

Walkability:

Northwood Lynden Jim Park

Neighborhood Park



This neighborhood park was dedicated to the City in 2015 with the approval of the North Prairie Planned Residential Development. The park is 2.9 acres and is nicely situated within these new residential neighborhoods. The park provides open space and a small woodlot, picnic areas, a playground and a walking trail. The East Lynden Loop Trail extends through the park and connects to the trail section around the new Lynden Middle School.

The park gets its name from Lynden Jim Yelokanum who was the Nooksack Tribal leader who welcomed the early pioneer settlers to Lynden. This park is dedicated to Lynden Jim who is laid to rest in the Nooksack Cemetery just east of the park.

Park amenities:

- Playground
- Walking path
- Open space
- Paved sports court
- Picnic tables
-
-
-

Park Needs and Management Recommendations:

- Ongoing maintenance
- Interpretive info (Lynden Jim)
-
-
-
-

Northwood Lynden Jim Park

Year Established:

Location:

Size:

Walkability:

Patterson Park

Neighborhood Park



Patterson Park is a 4-acre neighborhood park located within the Nooksack River floodplain below Downtown Lynden. The park boasts a playground, walking paths, and a frisbee golf course. Being in the floodplain, the property holds water through the wet months making some of these amenities difficult to take advantage of. Future park development should focus on highlighting the significant natural resource amenities of this area. To the east of the official park property is an additional 11 acres of public land that surrounds the Wastewater Treatment Plant. This floodplain land boasts some of the best landscape views in the city. It also provides overwintering habitat for hundreds of ducks, geese, trumpeter swans and other migrating waterfowl. Park development that connects this property to downtown Lynden could make this a regional destination park for future generations.

Park amenities:

- Playground
- Walking trails
- Frisbee golf
- Wetlands
- Wildlife habitat
- Waterfowl wintering grounds
- Mountain views
- Open space
- Flood protection
-
-
-

Park Needs and Management Recommendations:

- Relocate frisbee golf course
- Wetland restoration
- Boardwalk trails
- Viewing tower
- Bird watching stations
- Interpretive signage
- Long-term park development plan
- Natural areas management
- Invasive species control
- Expand “park” boundaries to the east
- Resolve water issues in playground area
-

Patterson Park

Year Established:

Location:

Size:

Walkability: