

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

WHAT YOU WILL FIND IN THIS CHAPTER¹

- A description of the existing facilities, operations of the system, and intergovernmental coordination;
 - A summary of issues; and
 - The goals, policies and implementation strategies to guide development of the desired future parks, recreation and open space system.
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PURPOSE

Tukwila’s parks, recreation and open space system provides opportunities for all residents and workers, all ages, and all cultures and language groups to enjoy nature, gather together, and exercise. This system supports healthy lifestyles, community interaction and identity, while supporting economic vitality. This system also provides for interaction with nature, protection and conservation of the environment, and a walking and biking network for physical activity and transportation.

The Parks, Recreation and Open Space Element guides decision-making that is consistent with Washington’s Growth Management Act, community priorities, and related planning efforts and policies, which in turn are the basis for determining the future of Tukwila’s parks, recreation, and open space system. State requirements and local aspirations are fulfilled by the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Background Report and the Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Comprehensive Plan, which is incorporated by reference in Tukwila’s Comprehensive Plan.

¹ The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space element of the Comprehensive Plan corresponds largely to the 2020 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space adopted by the Tukwila City Council in March 2020. That planning effort will be updated in 2025, and any changes emerging from that effort will be adopted into future annual updates of the Plan.

EXISTING SYSTEM AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

Park Lands

In total, there are 33 park properties in the City’s inventory, totaling 260.7 acres of parks and open space, classified as either a Local Park, Special Use Park or Open Space, as shown in Table 1.

- Local parks are mostly located in residential areas, range in size from 0.1 acres (Riverton Mini Park) to 10+ acres, and provide places to play, gather, and/or experience nature.
- Special use parks have a single purpose such as the golf course at Foster Golf Links or feature a unique facility or feature that is intended for the entire community, such as Codiga Park or Duwamish Hill Preserve. As noted below, some sites are owned or operated by other providers.
- Open space (and undeveloped parcels) Parks are intended for natural green space preservation, habitat restoration or protection, or similar purposes.

Table 1 – Public Park Facilities in Tukwila

Park Type	Number of Parks	Acres
Local Parks	10	47.7
Special Use Parks	11	182.4
Open Space	<u>12</u>	<u>30.6</u>
	33	260.7

Source: City of Tukwila Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan, March 2020

Of the park and recreation facilities available within the City, several are provided through agreements and easements with other entitles, such as the Tukwila School District, Highline School District, King County, and special districts such as the Tukwila Municipal School District.

Another recreational resource within Tukwila is its trail corridors. Trail Corridors² are linear parks that facilitate pedestrian and bicycle movement via trails in an attractive open space setting. Trails range in length and width and may be located in utility corridors, along street rights of way, in riparian/natural corridors, or in conjunction with other easements.

The existing System Map (Figure 1) shows the location of all parks and recreation resources in the system, comprising developed and undeveloped park lands. Trails, schools, and recreation sites owned by other providers are also part of this system and add to the number of resources available in the City.

² For Trails: See Pages C7 & C8 of PROS Plan Supplement. Walk and Roll Plan is noted as a default resource.

(Figure 1) PROS Existing System Map

Open Space Network

Although not officially mapped, there is an informal and varied network of undeveloped land, made up of the river channel and its banks, creek corridors, landscaped yards and public street trees, and steep valley hills, such as the State highway rights-of-way. This undeveloped open space creates a green network that softens the impact of the urban environment in which we live and work. Much of this informal open space network exists and will be maintained due to community standards and environmental regulations.

Programs and Services

The City of Tukwila offers a wide range of recreational programs and public services. The Tukwila Community Center serves a vital role by providing the majority of public recreation programming and support services in the city. Along with the City-sponsored programs, the number of park- and recreation-related opportunities available to Tukwila residents is expanded through neighboring communities, public schools, private providers and nonprofits. Starfire Sports, SeaTac Community Center, Tukwila Pool, and the Matt Griffin YMCA provide additional programs in and around Tukwila.

Intergovernmental Coordination

Tukwila relies on partnerships with several organizations and local governments to provide services to area residents and to ensure coordination with land use policies. At the crossroads of the regional trail system, Tukwila coordinates with the neighboring cities of Renton and SeaTac, and other governments including King County, to plan, develop and manage the regional trail system. Managing the city's Green/Duwamish River frontage also requires coordination with local, King County and Statewide environmental policies and regulations.

The City partners with area schools to increase access to sport fields and playgrounds in areas that lack parks. The Highline and Tukwila School Districts partner with the City by leasing former school sites for park uses. In general, public schools also present an opportunity for access to recreation activities since they are well distributed in the City, especially in areas without access to park land.

In 2011, Tukwila residents voted to create the Tukwila Metropolitan Park District to fund and operate the Tukwila Pool. This independent entity provides aquatics programming at the pool facility located on Tukwila School District property. The City also works with King County to expand park and recreation opportunities.

ISSUES³

Several community priorities and key needs emerged as a result of outreach and engagement activities associated with the 2020 PROS Plan. These include:

Reinvigorated Quality of Existing Parks and Facilities

The community has expressed a desire to elevate the quality of existing parks and facilities to make them more inviting, comfortable, and stimulating. Reinvesting and maximizing use of existing resources resonated strongly with residents.

- Enhance basic comfort and safety.
- Stimulate park activities and formats- upgrade or expand features within existing parks (e.g., community gardens, playgrounds, and areas for dogs).
- Address barriers — increase maintenance and repair/restoration practices, incorporate sustainable practices and artistic elements into parks.

Safe, Family-Friendly Places

Concern for safety often keeps community members from enjoying parks and trails. When asked to identify barriers within the park system, respondents most frequently cited feeling unsafe in certain areas. Respondents also frequently cited needed maintenance and upgrades to equipment and facilities as key issues. Overall, community members are seeking changes to support safe, family-friendly parks throughout Tukwila.

Affordable, Stimulating Experiences for All Ages

Community feedback also noted many opportunities for parks to offer greater stimulation across all age groups- providing for more things to do and the introduction of new features, facilities, or activities. Suggestions pointed to a need for a rich variety of elements to support multiple types of activities, especially those catering to young children, older youth, teens, adults, and seniors. The Older Adults Recreational Services Needs Assessment (2019) also highlighted a need to address social isolation among older adults, which can lead to significant health issues. Community members are looking for better activation of spaces and more stimulating experiences. They also noted affordability as an important quality to maintain.

Close Interaction with Nature

Getting out in nature is the top reason respondents indicated for spending time in Tukwila parks. Whether getting out to observe, relax, or exercise, community members enjoy close interaction with nature. Further, participants identified providing natural, low impact places that support wildlife habitat as the top idea for improving parks and recreation in the city. Community members value Tukwila's

³ These are the issues listed in the 2020 Parks Plan.

abundant natural elements: forests, Tukwila Pond, the Green/Duwamish River, native plants, and animals (particularly salmon). Another high priority was expanding programs and activities related to nature and outdoor recreation activities, such as wildlife watching, guided hikes, and Wildlife Fairs.

Fun Fitness Opportunities

Exercising, playing, and dog walking are among the most popular activities that draw residents to Tukwila's parks. Community members also value open grass areas for play and pick-up sports. Overall, features and programs that support fitness are an important part of Tukwila's system. Beyond competitive sport facilities, participants are looking for fun play and fitness activities that bring exercise regimes to parks, expand or close gaps in the trail network (specifically east-west connectors and loops), and respond to current trends. Providing a variety of enjoyable ways to stay fit and healthy is particularly crucial in Tukwila, where recent studies show that fewer people exercise as compared to the King County average.

Expanded Parks/Preserved Open Space

Community members conveyed a sense of urgency around preserving sufficient open space for future generations to enjoy. Residents appreciate convenient access to parks and green space for fresh air, exercising, socializing, dog walking, and screen breaks. Particularly with Tukwila's share of denser housing types (over 60% of housing includes four or more units), anticipated residential development, and limited land available for new parks, it is crucial to acquire park land to keep pace with growth. Strategically acquiring land to grow the system may broaden park access to ensure that every resident is no more than a 10-minute walk from a high-quality place to play, exercise, enjoy nature, or link to a trail.

Cultural Heritage Inspiration

A strong connection to cultural roots stood out as a distinguishing aspect of Tukwila's system. The rich cultural heritage of Tukwila can be traced back to the indigenous people of the area. Participants emphasized the importance of respecting tribal traditions and values. One of the top ideas for improving the system is to create unique places that reflect Tukwila's character, history, or culture. Expanding cultural arts programming, cultural celebrations, and educational events are community members' highest program-related priorities. Indigenous peoples' links to nature, stories, arts, and other practices provide inspiration that can be conveyed through physical designs, as well as through programming. Participants expressed a desire to hold cultural events as a way to bring people of different cultures together. The City can explore ways to support these community led gatherings within parks and community facilities.

Vibrant Urban Water Centerpiece

Community members see the Green/Duwamish River and Tukwila Pond Park as major assets that could be further accentuated as a focus of the system. The waters and banks of the 12.5-mile segment of the river sustain fish and wildlife and provide a serene backdrop to nearby parks and trails. Tukwila can continue to lead in restoring this urban ecosystem and maintaining the health of the river. Numerous responses captured a desire to invest in parks and habitat restoration of green spaces along the river and within Tukwila Pond Park. Additional ideas involved expanding river-related recreational activities, such as canoeing or kayaking, and activating portions of the Green River Trail with vendors, cafes, and river-facing patios.

Lively Park-Adjacent Commerce

Participants described nearby food, cafes, and other businesses as an important means of better activating parks. They pinpointed the synergy created between parks and commerce and expressed a desire to see more local businesses and development around parks to stimulate park use. Providing places to gather and eat was also rated among the top ideas for making parks and recreation better in Tukwila. In addition to providing traditional picnic and gathering areas in parks, nearby commerce could help meet the needs of busy residents, workers, and families with convenient access to refreshments and park-facing seating areas.

Convenient, Accessible System

Participants identified unsafe, or lack of, pedestrian and bicycle connections as predominant reasons preventing park use. A long-term goal is for every Tukwila resident to be within a safe 10-minute walk from a quality park or green space. Improving walking paths, bike routes, and trails and closing gaps in the system will facilitate safe and comfortable access. Lack of convenient public transportation was also indicated as a top barrier. Another critical need involves improved promotion and wayfinding around parks. Not knowing where Tukwila parks are located was the top reason respondents identified that keeps them from using parks. Overall, residents seek to maximize use of park and facility resources by making access more comfortable and convenient.

PREPARING FOR FUTURE GROWTH⁴

Tukwila’s population has grown slowly in the past with an average annual growth rate of 2.1% between 2015 and 2023. This was far lower than the county-wide average but only about one-third the rate of growth in the nearby jurisdictions of Renton, Kent, and Burien.

⁴ This section was updated in 2024 to reflect current demographic data.

In terms of housing unit growth, over the past six years there has been a modest increase in multi-family construction, with nearly 1,350 units constructed and more underway. This development has occurred in the northeast part of the Southcenter District and along the Tukwila International Boulevard Corridor. Per King County’s adopted Growth Targets, Tukwila must plan for and accommodate 6,500 net new housing units between 2019 and 2044, or roughly another 5,200 between 2023 and 2044 at a pace of about 250 new units per year. New growth may occur in the Tukwila South District, which is zoned for intensive mixed-use development; within the Southcenter District; existing higher density mixed use zones; and within existing residential areas due to new state legislation that allows additional units on single family lots. New residents and visitors will require additional services and recreation opportunities.

GOALS AND POLICIES

Goals and policies guide the desired future of the parks, recreation, and open space system over the planning period. Policies reflect public needs, past and current planning efforts and priorities, as well as strategic planning, design and management principles. The Tukwila Parks, Recreation and Open Space System Concept Map is the graphic representation of these goals and policies. (Figure 2)

Goal PROS-1: Safe, Convenient and Connected System - Parks, recreation opportunities, and open spaces are close to home and work and are interconnected by safe streets, off-street trails, and public transportation.

POLICIES

- Policy PROS-1.1 Create a system of close-to-home recreation opportunities, aiming for a ¼-mile to ½-mile travel distance between most residential uses and parks and recreation areas. Prioritize historically underserved communities for open space improvements and investments.
- Policy PROS-1.2 Create a system of close-to-work recreation opportunities, aiming for a ¼-mile to ½-mile travel distance between most employment places and parks and recreation areas.
- Policy PROS-1.3 Link parks to neighborhood gathering spots and other destinations in the community and region such as schools, neighboring jurisdictions, regional parks and natural areas, and major employment centers.

- Policy PROS-1.4 Improve the pedestrian and bicycle environment by creating safe and efficient connections across busy streets, railways, and the Green/Duwamish River.
- Policy PROS-1.5 Increase physical and scenic connectivity with the Green/Duwamish River.
- Policy PROS-1.6 Integrate linkages to recreation areas and open spaces when planning and designing the transportation system.
- Policy PROS-1.7 Align parks and recreation programs and services with public transit service and advertise how to attend by transit.
- Policy PROS-1.8 Continue to provide a safely designed and maintained trail system.
- Policy PROS-1.9 Distribute public recreational facilities throughout the City so that they are easily accessible to residents, visitors, and those who come to Tukwila to work.
- Policy PROS-1.10 Create a trail system that links significant community focal points and connects the trail network together at strategic points.
- Policy PROS-1.11 Connect concentrations of commercial and retail activity with the trail network.
- Policy PROS-1.12 Maximize potential and capacity of existing parks and recreation resources to offset existing and future demand.
- Policy PROS-1.13 Identify and create opportunities to develop parks, civic places (including schools) and public spaces, especially in or adjacent to centers.
- Goal PROS-2: A Network of Green Spaces- Recreational amenities, historical sites, rivers, wetlands, creeks, and other natural resources that are connected to each other and neighboring networks of lands. This network defines Tukwila as Northwest city and includes visually significant bands of vegetation that provide protection for wildlife habitat, and that provide a contrast to the built environment.**

POLICIES

- Policy PROS-2.1 Recognize that the City’s open space network will be made up of public and private lands that provide, or have the potential to provide, many different functions.
- Policy PROS-2.2 Retain and expand the open space network through acquisition, donation, easements, partnerships and regulation.
- Policy PROS-2.3 Coordinate with other regional and local plans to complement and enhance the Tukwila open space network.
- Policy PROS-2.4 Integrate natural features, such as daylighting streams, and adding trees, shrubs, and other plants into the built environment, including residential, commercial, and industrial areas.
- Policy PROS-2.5 Increase the public’s awareness and stewardship of the City’s open space resources and benefits, including examples such as organizing volunteer events, developing and distributing information.
- Policy PROS-2.6 Monitor and maintain natural areas to control invasive species and other impacts.
- Policy PROS-2.7 Co-locate public infrastructure, environmental and recreational projects when practicable.

Goal PROS-3: A Sense of Community - Tukwila’s parks and recreation opportunities build community cohesion by providing places and programs for social interaction and gatherings of all sizes, with designs that strengthen community identity.

POLICIES

- Policy PROS-3.1 Design parks and recreation facilities that celebrate unique features of Tukwila and that contribute to quality of life and neighborhood needs.
- Policy PROS-3.2 Hold community events that encourage interaction between neighbors and celebrate the diversity of Tukwila.

Policy PROS-3.3 Interpret local culture, history, and environment throughout the system.

Policy PROS-3.4 Integrate art throughout the City, guided by the Tukwila Municipal Arts Plan.

Policy PROS-3.5 Leverage the opportunities presented by multiple redevelopment projects to expand Tukwila's park and trails system into Tukwila South and Southcenter, serving the needs of new residents, as well as visitors and workers of this evolving area.

Goal PROS-4: Opportunities for All- Tukwila’s parks, recreation opportunities, and public services offer something for all ages, abilities, and cultures, in settings locations and times that are convenient to as many as possible.

POLICIES

Policy PROS-4.1 Offer flexible recreation programming that is constantly improving and responding to current trends and community desires.

Policy PROS-4.2 Provide programs, activities and special events that embrace Tukwila’s many cultures, customs and interests.

Policy PROS-4.3 Design accessible parks, facilities, and programs for all ages and abilities.

Policy PROS-4.4 Increase the capacity at existing parks and recreation facilities to maximize use and expand public access.

Policy PROS-4.5 Provide indoor and outdoor spaces designed for increased access and flexibility of use.

Policy PROS-4.6 Consider future growth needs and planned density when providing parks and recreation opportunities to meet community needs.

Policy PROS-4.7 Expand program options through enhanced partnerships with businesses and organizations, and through volunteerism.

- Policy PROS-4.8 Develop a city-wide special event permitting process to promote and encourage tourism, art, culture and sports events.⁵
- Policy PROS-4.9 Address mobility and accessibility barriers to parks, facilities, and programs through the development and implementation of a transition plan for parks and recreation, consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.
- Policy PROS-4.10 Ensure the provision of a variety of inclusive programs, activities, and events to better serve persons with physical and/or developmental disabilities and adapt offerings to encourage social inclusion and belonging.
- Policy PROS-4.11 Provide, promote and encourage reasonable accommodations, changes, exceptions, modifications or adjustments to rules, policies, practices, programs or services so that a person with a disability has an equal opportunity to use and enjoy parks and recreation facilities, parks and programs.
- Policy PROS-4.12 Provide, promote, and encourage meaningful language access so that persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) can realize improved access to department programs, services, and information, consistent with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Goal PROS-5: Safe, Inviting, and Affordable- Parks and facilities are safe, well maintained and clean, and programs and services that are welcoming and accessible for all people.

POLICIES

- Policy PROS-5.1 Design parks and public spaces using accepted public safety standards such as Crime Prevention through Environmental Design Principles (CPTED) or Defensible Space.
- Policy PROS-5.2 Reflect the highest standard of design quality in public developments to enhance neighborhood quality and set a high design standard for private development.
- Policy PROS-5.3 Develop site-specific master plans or site designs that guide all major park improvements and that achieve cohesive design and efficient phasing of projects.

⁵ New policy from Parks staff

- Policy PROS-5.4 Involve the community, including expected users and neighborhood residents, in appropriate aspects of capital project and program planning and implementation.
- Policy PROS-5.5 Involve community partners and volunteers in the construction and maintenance of parks to increase the sense of public ownership and reduce City costs.
- Policy PROS-5.6 Increase access to affordable, free, or reduced-cost programs and services.
- Policy PROS-5.7 Expand awareness of the full range of program offerings and recreation options made available by the City and others.
- Policy PROS-5.8 Maintain parks and public spaces so that they are safe, clean, and welcoming.
- Goal PROS-6: Healthy People and Places - Parks and recreation opportunities that promote healthy, active lifestyles are designed and managed to engage and enhance the natural environment and the local economy.**

POLICIES

- Policy PROS-6.1 Provide services for all ages to encourage community members to try new activities and build a habit of healthy living.
- Policy PROS-6.2 Promote healthy food choices and active living programs as a central focus for community education.
- Policy PROS-6.3 Strive to create projects and programs that provide social, economic, and environmental benefit to the community.
- Policy PROS-6.4 Leverage the park, recreation, and open space system to meet the needs of the residents while considering economic development and needs of visitors, business, and workers.
- Policy PROS-6.5 Provide public education resources and volunteer opportunities to promote understanding and appreciation of Tukwila’s natural environment and Green/ Duwamish River ecosystem, while building an environmental stewardship ethic in the community.

- Policy PROS-6.6 Encourage and support the use of public lands for urban agriculture activities through existing and new programming or partnerships.
- Policy PROS-6.7 Consider long-term management, operations, and maintenance needs when implementing new projects and programs.
- Policy PROS-6.8 Employ best practices in managing facilities, parks, and open space areas, and provide continuing education for City staff on these practices.

RELATED INFORMATION

- [Parks, Recreation and Open Space Final Draft](#) (March 2020)
- [Parks, Recreation and Open Space, Technical Supplement](#), September 2019
- [Older Adults Recreational Services Needs Assessment \(March 2019\)](#)
- [Public Arts & Culture Master Plan \(January 2018\)](#)
- [Green Tukwila 20-Year Stewardship Plan \(2017\)](#)
- [Tukwila Pond Park Master Plan \(January 2022\)](#)

Appendix A

LOCAL PARKS			
Park	Acres	Ownership	Total Acres
57th Avenue South Park	0.4	City of Tukwila	
Cascade View Community Park	2.4	City of Tukwila	
Crystal Springs Park	11	City of Tukwila	
Hazelnut Park	0.6	City of Tukwila	
Riverton Mini Park	0.1	City of Tukwila	
Tukwila Park	6.4	City of Tukwila	
Total		City of Tukwila	20.9
Crestview Park	10.9	Highline School District	
Duwamish Park	2.1	Tukwila School District	
Riverton Park	4.9	Tukwila School District	
Total		School District	17.9
Joseph Foster Memorial/Lee Philips Park	8.9	Tukwila School District, City of Tukwila	
Total		Tukwila School District, City of Tukwila	8.9
TOTAL LOCAL PARKS			47.7
SPECIAL USE PARKS			
Special Use Park	Acres	Ownership	Total Acres
Bicentennial Park	1.3	City of Tukwila	
Codiga Park	6.7	City of Tukwila	
Duwamish Gardens	2.2	City of Tukwila	
Duwamish Hill Preserve	8.7	City of Tukwila	
Fort Dent Park (Starfire Sports Complex)	51.3	City of Tukwila	
Foster Golf Links	63.3	City of Tukwila	
Ikawa Park (Japanese Garden)	0.2	City of Tukwila	
Macadam Winter Garden & Wetlands	9.9	City of Tukwila	
Tukwila Community Center	12.7	City of Tukwila	
Tukwila Pond Park	24.8	City of Tukwila	
Total		City of Tukwila	181.1
Tukwila Pool	1.3	Tukwila School District/Tukwila MPD	
Total		Tukwila School District/Tukwila MPD	1.3
TOTAL SPECIAL USE PARKS			182.4
OPEN SPACE			
Open Space	Acres	Ownership	Total Acres
Black River Lot	0.3	City of Tukwila	
Christensen Road Property/Riverview Plaza Riverfront	3	City of Tukwila	
Interurban Hill Lot	1.7	City of Tukwila	
Siccardi Parcel	0.9	City of Tukwila	
Southgate Park	10.9	City of Tukwila	
TIB Parcel	0.9	City of Tukwila	
Tukwila Hill	1.8	City of Tukwila	
Tukwila Parkway	1	City of Tukwila	
Wilcox Drive/Pamela Drive Open Space	0.7	City of Tukwila	
Total		City of Tukwila	21.2
Cecil Moses Memorial Park	3	King County	
Lookout Park	0.2	King County	
North Wind's Weir	2.6	King County	
Total		King County	5.8
P-17 Pond	3.6	City of Tukwila, King County	
		City of Tukwila, King County	3.6
TOTAL SPECIAL USE PARKS			30.6
TOTAL ALL PARK LAND			260.7