10 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space



What You Will Find in this Chapter

- Information about Burien's park system.
- A description of the City's plan for parks and recreation to meet a needs assessment
- Themes and goals that describe a vision and that identify desired outcomes.
- A description of strategies and action items.

Our Parks, Recreation, & Open Space Vision

The mission of the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services (PaRCS) department is to enrich and inspire the Burien community through high-quality experiences, people, and places. Our department promotes a healthy, livable community with opportunities for physical activity as well as personal and cultural enrichment.

Exhibit 10-1. Parks, Recreation, and Open Space: 2023 Workshop Engagement Notes



April 2023 Open House



December 2023 Open House

Introduction

This Element incorporates by reference Burien's Parks, Recreation, Open Space (PROS) Plan, March 2024. It excerpts components of the Plan, particularly plan themes, goals, and strategies.

Themes represent the vision for the plan and are the organizing categories for the plan goals and strategies.



Plan for the future of a wholistic system



Celebrate and sustain the natural environment



Support community health and wellness



Foster community connection and identity

For the full context and contents, please see the PROS Plan adopted by Resolution 507.

Conditions and Trends

Today's Conditions

Burien's park system includes 28 park properties and four trail corridors totaling 416.4 acres with 5.5 miles of trails. The acres per 1,000 population is 8.06 acres as of 2021 or 5.61 acres of Resource Parks (e.g., Salmon Creek Ravine, Eagle Landing Park, Shorewood Park, and Walker Creek Wetland) are excluded.

The PROS Plan also looks at distribution of parks in addition to acres. As of 2021, 56% of residential household units in Burien have access to parks within a ¼- or ½-mile radius.

Parks were evaluated by staff for Condition (wear and tear), Development (developed to intended use), Safety (police data), and Amenities (availability and diversity). The conditions of the parks were estimated at:

- 28% of Burien's parks, trails, and facilities are in poor condition
- 42% of Burien's parks, trails, and facilities are in fair condition
- 28% of Burien's parks, trails, and facilities are in good condition
- 3% of Burien's parks, trails, and facilities are in excellent condition

Public Input

Community engagement was organized into four phases between the Fall of 2022 and Spring of 2024 to inform the plan creation. Engagement was conducted by the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services (PaRCS) Department and the City of Burien staff in collaboration with the "Shape Your City" Burien 2044 Comprehensive Plan creation. These phases include the following -

1. Visioning that included 21 events, a community survey, interactive map, and workshops.

2. Community Feedback Loop that including a statistically valid survey, community connectors, user group discussion, and an open house.

3. Plan Sharing that included story map and interactive activities, open house, comment period, and meetings with board and commissions.

4. Legislative process that engaged boards and commissions and city council.

The following key takeaways were identified through community input and were essential in developing the PROS plan's themes, goals, and strategies:

- Parks in Burien are the 3rd highest visited destination;
- Natural spaces are highly valued. When asked what the most important amenities in Burien parks are, most respondents stated walking paths, urban forests, and other natural spaces;
- Seahurst and Lake Burien School Memorial Parks were among the most appreciated parks within the City of Burien;
- Sidewalks were among the biggest barriers to moving to, from, and around Burien today;
- Safety and diversity were among the top responses when asked to imagine an ideal Burien in 2044;
- Many would like to prioritize park improvements with vegetation, lighting, restrooms and accessibility improvements;
- Many respondents would like to see safety concerns addressed in park spaces including lighting, security, and people experiencing homelessness;
- Additional, secure parking throughout the system is important;
- Residents are mostly interested in expanded programs including performing arts, visual arts, and crafts programs followed by expanded education and adult programs; and
- Common desires for new park amenities include shade structures, looped trails, improved signage at park entrances, and improved and maintained play equipment.

Tomorrows' Projections

The PROS plan identifies a need to provide nearly 47 acres of parks with growth anticipated to 2026 (59,955 population) considering the current level of service of 5.61. Another level of service measure includes a goal to increase the percentage of households units within the Park and School Walkshed from 56% to 65% of total units within a ¼- or ½-mile radius by 2026.

In addition the PROS Plan supports quality and participation measures including:

- Supporting the City's tree canopy coverage goal increase from 30% to 40%
- Increasing annual recreation program participation from 16,000 per year to 20,000 per year by 2026.
- Increasing park visitation goals by 2026:
  - Increase overall annual park visitation to 150,000 Visitors
  - Increase Community Park visitation from 13% to 20%
  - Increase Resource Park visitation from 2% to 10%
- Increasing the percentage of trails, parks, and facilities in good and excellent condition from 31% to 40% by 2026.

Challenges and Opportunities

The PROS Plan identified a series of challenges, including environmental, maintenance, safety considerations. See **Exhibit 10-2**. Opportunities included considering parks and recreation centers as critical infrastructure, communitywide partnership and education approaches, and public art and representation opportunities.

Exhibit 10-2. PROS Plan Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges	Opportunities
▶ Climate Change: The role of Burien's park system in reducing urban heat islands. ▶ Maintenance and Funding Limitations: The invisible resources required to maintain a high standard of service. ▶ Park Safety: The need for safe access to parks and open spaces.	▶ Parks as Critical Infrastructure: Greater appreciation for parks and recreation centers. ▶ Partnerships and Education: A community-wide effort and approach. ▶ Integration of Public Art and Representation: Cultural elements give the community ownership.

Source: Burien PROS Plan, March 2024.

Our Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan

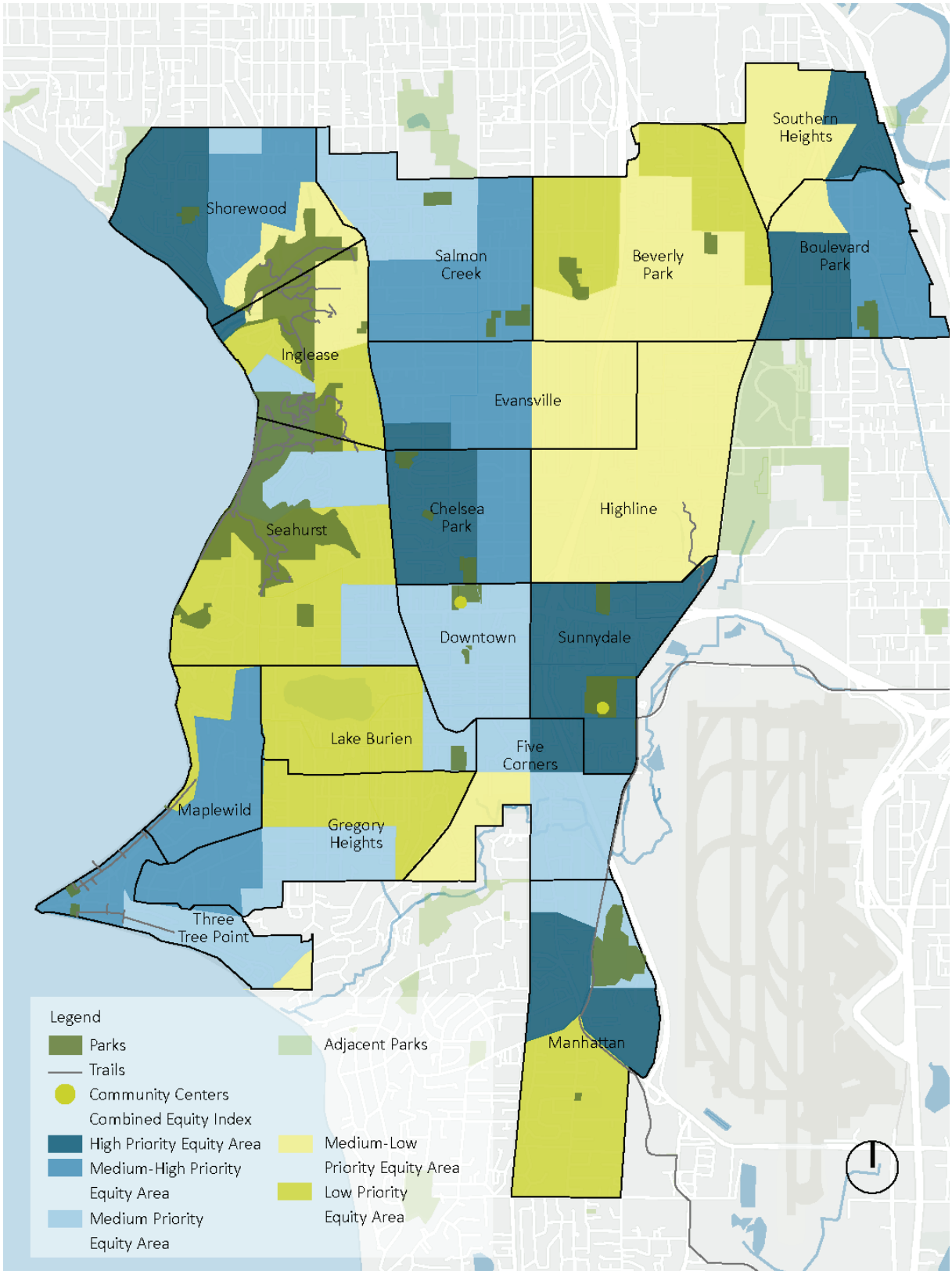
The PROS Plan, March 2024 constitutes the City's plan for this element. The PROS Plan focuses investments in equity priority areas including policy, operational, and capital improvements.

To develop the plan, equity was considered. An overall Equity Index was created and represents a composite of four, equally weighted sub-indices, each of which includes several factors related to quality-of-life determinants that could inform parks and recreation provision. Equity priority areas consider:

- Age, ability, and health conditions,
- Exposure to natural hazards,
- Demographic, economic, and social factors
- Access to parks, tree coverage, facilities, and services

Per **Exhibit 10-3**, the locations in the city with greater need to focus improvements for equity goals are spread, with those of "high" and "medium-high" located in portions of the north and central parts of Burien.

Exhibit 10-3. Park Equity Priority Areas Map



Source: Design Workshop, PROS Plan, March 2024

Themes and Goals

This section contains

- Themes: represent the vision for the plan and are the organizing categories for the plan goals and strategies.
- Goals: articulate a clear purpose or desired outcome to provide a direction for the plan. The numbering of goals in the PROS Plan are contained in parentheses.

See the PROS Plan for additional framework features including:

- Strategies are the general "How to" for achieving the plan goals which include recommended approaches.
- Action Items are actionable steps that are grouped based on their respective theme, goal, and strategy.
- Concept Plans provide design direction for select park locations based on community input.

Plan for the future of a wholistic system

Goal 10.1 **Reduce park access gaps through acquisition or partnerships.**

Goal 10.2 **Increase and diversify park system funding in line with industry standards.**

Goal 10.3 **Increase parks and recreation investments in Equity Priority Areas.**

Goal 10.4 **Enhance park and recreation amenities that cater to the community's unique needs.**

Goal 10.5 **Minimize walking distance to local parks and recreation centers.**

Goal 10.6 **Enhance pedestrian infrastructure to improve park access.**

Goal 10.7 **Develop operational and maintenance efficiencies that aid in park improvements.**

Celebrate and sustain the natural environment

Goal 10.8 **Mitigate climate change and natural hazard impacts within park and recreation center areas.**

Goal 10.9 **Enable community involvement in restoration and preservation efforts.**

Goal 10.10 **Implement consistent educational signage and wayfinding throughout the park system.**

Goal 10.11 **Implement green building improvements in community centers.**

Support community health and wellness

Goal 10.12 **Craft programs and partnerships that address the recreation needs of all age groups.**

Goal 10.13 **Advance nature-based programs that leverage the existing trail network and natural areas.**

Goal 10.14 **Continue developing partnerships to bolster programing opportunities that focus on health and wellbeing.**

Goal 10.15 **Ensure park and recreation spaces meet the objectives of universal design.**

Goal 10.16 **Create safe park environments year-round and improve perceptions of security.**

Foster community connection and identity

Goal 10.17 **Plan events and activities that celebrate Burien's diverse community.**

Goal 10.18 **Ensure new parks and park redesign efforts represent the community.**

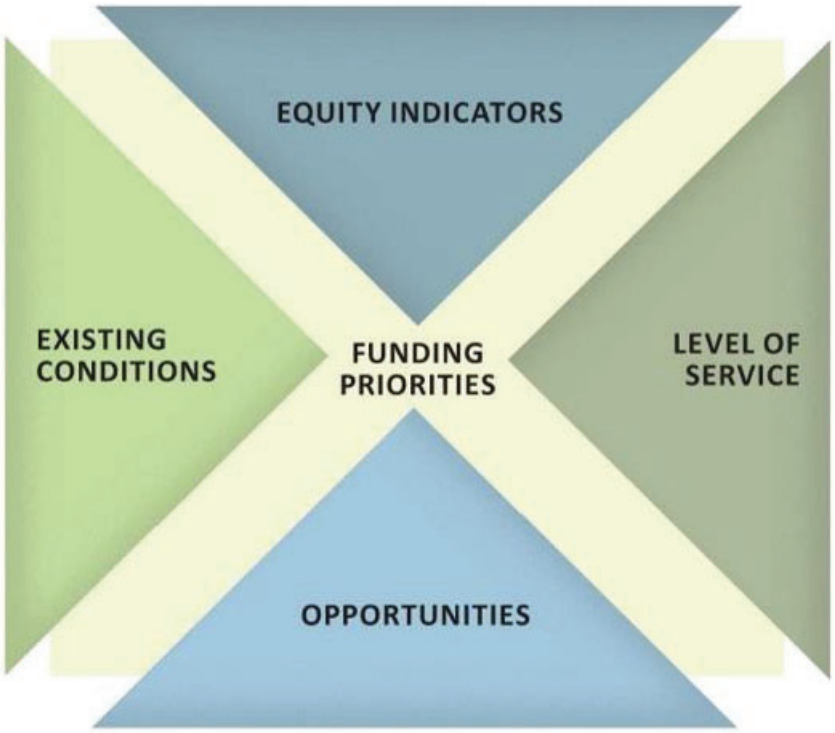
Goal 10.19 **Build community awareness around park and recreation offerings, initiatives, and impact.**

Goal 10.20 **Prepare staff and volunteers to meet the diverse needs of the community and foster inclusivity.**

Implementation

The PROS Plan, March 2024 includes general strategies for long-term approaches and prioritized actions for policy improvements, operational improvements, and capital improvements. Action items in Chapter 4 are prioritized through four criteria identified in the below **Exhibit 10-4**. The Equitable Prioritization Diagram provides a framework to implement the plan's strategies efficiently in order to realize the visions underlying each theme.

Exhibit 10-4. Equity Prioritization Diagram and Indicators



EQUITY INDICATORS
- Age, ability, and health conditions
- Exposure to natural hazards
- Demographic, economic, and social factors
- Access to parks, tree coverage, facilities, and services.

LEVEL OF SERVICE
- Park acreage
- Benchmarking
- Park distribution and access
- Visitation and recreation trends

EXISTING CONDITIONS
- Maintenance and replacement needs
- Features and amenities provided
- Scale of the improvements

OPPORTUNITIES
- Feasibility of acquisition and system expansion
- Partnerships and community initiative
- Available funding sources

Source: Design Workshop, PROS Plan, March 2024.

The 2024 PROS Plan is reflected in the Capital Facility Plan Appendix and the Final Environmental Impact Statement.