

Renew the Legacy... Fulfill the Vision

Renton Parks, Recreation, Open Space
and Natural Resources Plan



Focus Group Summary-General

The City of Renton has begun the Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Natural Resources Plan process to update and expand the document that guides the development of the park system. This process includes, for the first time, analyzing and making recommendations for two important elements of the system: recreation programming and natural resources.

The plan process is currently in the early stages, collecting information about the current conditions of Renton's parks, recreation programs and natural resources and the opinions of the community about the improvements and new features that are needed. This includes a wide variety of public input opportunities to reach out broadly to the community as well as to focus in on key topics. This document summarizes three focus groups convened to discuss the existing conditions and needs around identified themes – the environment, organized active recreation and recreation services. Each summary includes the details of the meeting and the major points of the discussion. Attached to this summary are the agendas, invitation lists and materials provided at each meeting. Also attached are transcriptions of the graphic recording produced from each discussion.



For more information about the project including a project calendar and interim documents, visit the City's home page at www.rentonwa.gov and click on "Renew the Legacy... Fulfill the Vision"

Environmental Focus Group

Date 10/28/10

Time 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Location Renton Community Center, Banquet Room

Community Services Administrator: Terry Higashiyama

Team Leads: Leslie Betlach, Vanessa Dolbee

Participants: Chris Anderson, Karen Bergeron, Holly Coccoli, Gerry Edlund, Marilyn Edlund, Judith Fillips, Mike Hamilton, Sara Hemphill, Mary Jorgensen, Suzanne Krom, Keith Lionetti, Joe Miles, Jeff Neuner, Martha Parker, Larry Reymann, Kate Stenberg, Carol Stoner, Dan Streiffert, Chairperson, Jean White, Lee Whitley, Marilyn Whitley

City Staff Participating: Todd Black, Terrence Flatley, Dave Perkins, Kristine Stimpson, Ron Straka, Helen Weagraff, Tim Williams

Consulting Team Members (MIG): Ryan Mottau, Heather Kaplinger

This focus group was convened to get a broad view of the issues and ideas surrounding natural resources in Renton. The City invited a long list of representatives from advocacy groups and local and regional agencies working in and around Renton. The major points of the discussion are summarized below and a graphic record created during the discussion is presented on the next page.

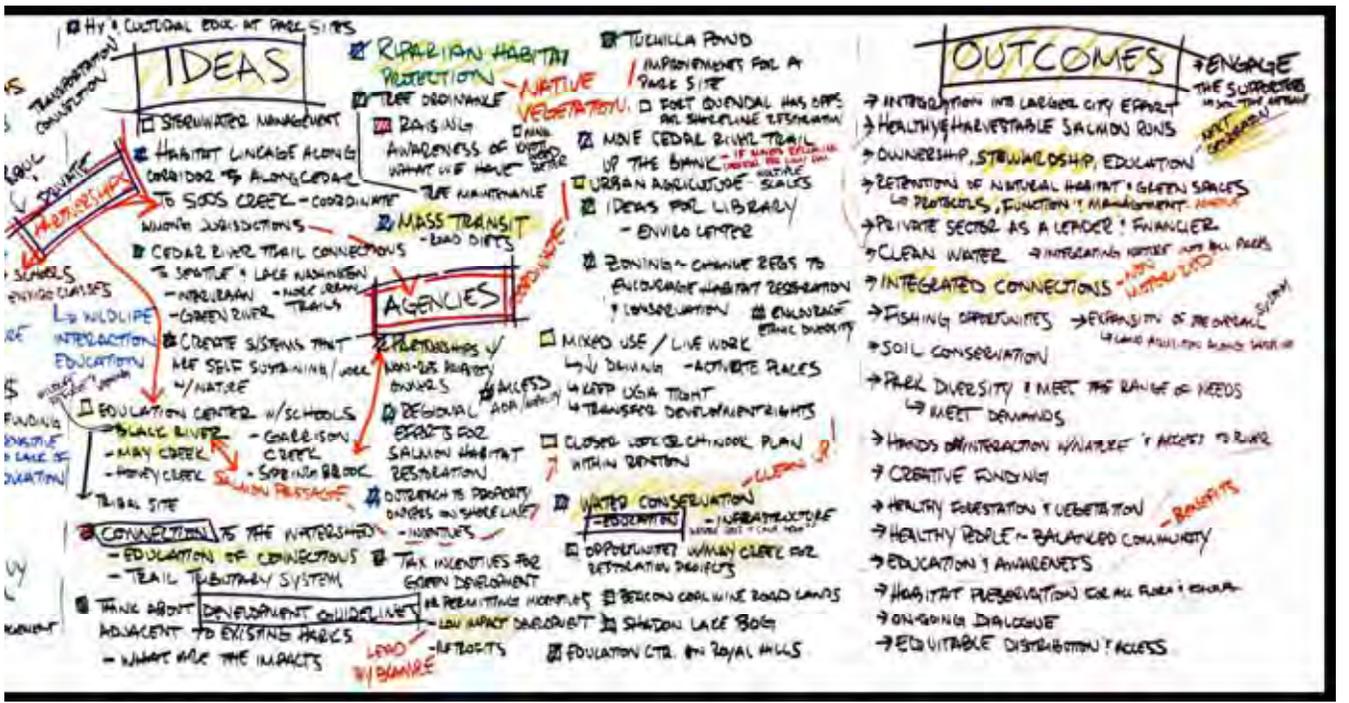
The assembled group was very enthusiastic about the integration of natural resources into the City's planning effort. Further integration was suggested with the City's other planning and implementation efforts, as well as with the School District and other potential education partners. The educational focus centered on the rivers and creeks of the area as well as Renton's history. The Cedar River and May Creek salmon runs were called out particularly for their uniqueness and as a subject that connects many people and agencies. The Black River Riparian Forest was mentioned specifically because of herons.

Participants noted that an important outcome is instilling a stewardship ethic and building ownership of the natural systems and places within the next generation. Other related outcomes included providing access that balanced healthy natural systems with healthy people. Many natural areas could also be used to connect neighborhoods and even cities in the region. Increased intensity of use in any one area could be damaging. Creating additional opportunities for trails and nature access closer to where people are can help distribute potential impact.

Critical challenges to accomplishing these outcomes include funding, not just for acquisition but also for improving the sites, removal of invasive species and ongoing monitoring and maintenance. Other challenges identified include sustaining the tree canopy, addressing light pollution, safety within remote places and finding ways to partner with private entities.

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Ideas to address these challenges were focused on the different types of partnerships that could be formed around projects or community education.



Environmental Focus Group Wall Graphic Transcription

10-28-10

This is a transcription of the notes from the group discussion, taken as the discussion was occurring (an image of these notes is included at the end of this document). Where needed for clarification, additional notes have been added in brackets [to make clear what was added and what came from the original discussion].

WHAT WORKS

- Coulon Park
- Grant funding
- Springbrook mitigation bank
- Green River and Cedar River trails
 - Open space across
 - Riverview Park
- Maplewood Golf Course
- Ron Regis Park
- Salmon spawning channel
- Being able to see the salmon

BENEFITS [of Natural Resources in Renton]

- Clean air
- Salmon habitat
- Flood hazard reduction
- Peace of mind
- Water supply
- Wildlife viewing
- Bird watching
- Natural experiences for youth – nature close to home
- Mental health
- Sound dampening
- Economic benefits
- Place to play
- Exercise
- Educational moments for the kids – the ‘wild’ reality
- Gardening and nutrition (health!)
 - Pea patch
- [City has been focusing on] Concentrating efforts rather than spreading [efforts across city]
- Slow down and think long term
- Volunteering opportunities and partnerships
- Disc golf is a complementary recreational activity

CHALLENGES

- Directed Public Access (What's the balance) (Plan ahead)
- Population growth (Plan ahead)
 - Rethink the analysis with change in economy
- Climate change
- Restoration
- Maintenance/invasives
- Incorporation of existing plans in new annexation areas
- Need for increased recreational activities for youth
- Lake Washington – Lots of bulk heads
 - Need shallow water habitat/restore destruction created in past by industry
- \$\$ Funding \$\$
- Making connections
 - Green spaces, water, trails, etc
 - Remove barriers
 - Continuous system
- Inspiring an environmental ethic
 - Find pride in the natural areas as well as the developed areas
- Maintaining the tree canopy/cover
- Light pollution
- Greening of the parking lot areas
- Need for more open space and parks
- Having programs to engage in environmental stewardship
- Safety in wilder areas
- User education and outreach
 - Youth and schools-required environment classes (partnerships)
 - Wildlife interaction education
- Bridge infrastructure along waterways
- Acquisition and Money
 - Long term funding
- Destruction of sensitive areas due to lack of education
- English ivy removal
- Growth Management Act [noted as creating challenges]

IDEAS

- Historic and cultural education at park sites
- Integrating stormwater management
- Habitat linkage along corridors and along Cedar to Soos Creek trails (partnerships)
 - Coordinate among jurisdictions (agencies)
- Cedar River Trail connections to Seattle and Lake Washington
 - Interurban Trail

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- Green River Trail
 - More urban trails
- Create systems that are self sustaining/work with nature
- Education center with schools
 - Wildlife refuge and viewing
 - Black River (Salmon passage – take closer look at Chinook plan within Renton)
 - May Creek
 - Honey Creek
 - Garrison Creek
 - Springbrook
 - Tribal site
- Connection to the watershed
 - Education of connections
 - Trail tributary system
- Think about development guidelines adjacent to existing parks
 - What are impacts
- Riparian habitat protection
 - Native vegetation!
- Tree ordinance/tree maintenance
- Raising awareness of what we have
- Managing knott weed better
- Mass transit [particularly to get youth to the natural areas]
 - Road diets
- Agencies [more should be involved]
 - *Coordinate!
- Partnerships with non-residential property owners
- Access ADA/mobility [improvements to make areas more useable]
- Regional efforts for salmon habitat restoration
- Outreach to property owners on shoreline
 - Incentives
- Tax incentives for green development or permitting incentives
 - Low impact development
 - Retrofits
 - Tukwila Pond improvements for a park site [noted as an example, also that this is in another City]
 - Port Quendall has opportunities for shoreline restoration
 - Move Cedar River Trail to top of bank [Between Bronson and Logan]
- Urban agriculture
 - [There are] Multiple scales [not just community gardening, can be larger scale such as Community Supported Agriculture or working farms]
- Ideas for library
 - Environment center

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- Zoning – change regulations to encourage habitat restoration and conservation
- Encourage ethnic diversity
- Mixed use – Live/work
 - Decreased driving
 - Activate places [create more reason to be there]
 - Keep UGB tight
 - Transfer Development Rights [Consider TDRs as an option]
- Closer look at Chinook plan within Renton
- Water conservation (clean up!)
 - Education – Where does it come from?
 - Infrastructure
- Opportunities along May Creek for restoration projects
- Beacon coal mine road lands
- Shadow Lake Bog [note: in Maple Valley – unincorporated King Co. used as an example]
- Education center on Royal Hills

OUTCOMES

- Engage the supporters
 - Sell the message
- Integration into larger city effort
- Healthy and harvestable salmon runs
- Ownership, stewardship, education
 - Next generation
- Retention of natural habitat and green spaces
 - Protocols, function and management (adaptive)
- Private sector as a leader and financier
- Clean water
 - Integrating nature into all parks
- Integrated connections (non-motorized!)
- Fishing opportunities
- Expansion of the overall system
 - Land acquisition along shorelines
- Soil conservation
- Park diversity and meet the range of needs
 - Meet demands
- Hands-on interaction with nature and access to river
- Creative funding
- Healthy forestation and vegetation
- Healthy people – balanced community (benefits)
- Education and awareness
- Habitat preservation for all flora and fauna
- Ongoing dialogue
- Equitable distribution and access

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Environmental Focus Group

Date **10/28/10**

Time **6:00 – 8:00 PM**

Location **Renton Community Center, Banquet Room**

Agenda

6:00 pm – 6:15 pm

Welcome and Introductions

6:15 pm – 6:20 pm

Planning Process

6:20 pm – 7:40 pm

Group Discussion

- Opportunities, Challenges
- Green Infrastructure
- Partnerships

7:40 pm – 7:55 pm

Final Thoughts

7:55 pm – 8:00 pm

Next Steps and Follow-Up

Please feel free to write additional comments here and leave with the facilitator

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Discussion Questions

1. How would you define a successful Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Natural Resources Plan? What should the Plan do for the City?
2. What are the greatest threats to Renton's natural systems, currently and in the long term?
3. What is the City doing well in terms of natural resources and where are the gaps?
4. Are there areas where collaboration or partnerships could be increased to advance the preservation and management of the natural environment, or to expand programming that is natural resource-focused?
5. How important is forestry management to the success of the natural environment? What opportunities do you see for improvement?
6. How do you see the open space and parks system being used for managing stormwater?
7. Are there opportunities for more or improved programs that connect people with the natural environment?
8. What should be the highest priority opportunities for the Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Natural Resources Plan to improve the natural environment? Are there any urgent or time-sensitive needs?
9. Keeping our discussion in mind, do you have any final thoughts to share?

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Renew the Legacy...Fulfill the Vision

Environmental Focus Group Meeting Invite List
Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Natural Resources Plan

Renton Community Center, Banquet Room

(1715 SE Maple Valley Highway, Renton, WA)

Thursday, October 28, 2010, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

1. Friends of the Cedar River Watershed (Sue Rooney, Executive Director and Rebecca Sayre, Outreach Person)
2. King County Conservation District (Sara Hemphill, Acting Executive Director; Brandy Reed, Renton Resident and most knowledge of their programs; Bill Knutsen, Chair and Bob Vos, Vice-Chair for Board of Supervisors)
3. DNR (Monica Shoemaker and Vivian Hawkins)
4. Black River Forest Accipiters (Jack Bettsworth)
5. WDFW (Chris Anderson, Wildlife Biologist)
6. Doris Yepez
7. Friends of Black River (Tom Malphrus, Liz Fields and Jerry Holmes)
8. Herons Forever (Kate Stenberg, Suzanne Krom, Dave Mann and Mike Hamilton)
9. Larry Reymann
10. Muckleshoot Tribe (Karen Walter)
11. Scott Dungan
12. Jan Fluter
13. Lee & Marilyn Whitley
14. Gerald Edlund
15. Duwamish Tribal Services (Cecile A. Hansen, Chair Woman)
16. Seattle Public Utilities (S.P.U.) (Cyndy Holz, HCP Program Manager)
17. Discovering Open Spaces (Keith Lionetti)
18. American Rivers (Michael Garrity)
19. Puget Soundkeeper Alliance (Katelyn Kinn)
20. Frank Urabeck
21. Rainier Audubon Society (Carol Stoner)
22. Sierra Club Cascade Chapter, South King County Group (Dan Streiffert, Chairperson)
23. WRIA 9 Salmon Habitat Recovery Team (Green/Dawamish & Central Puget Sound Watershed - Doug Osterman, Watershed Coordinator; Karen Bergeron, Habitat Projects Coordinator; and Dennis Clark, Public Outreach/Stewardship Coordinator)
24. WRIA 8 Coordination Team (Jean White, WRIA 8 Watershed Coordinator and Mary Jorgensen, WRIA 8 Projects & Funding Coordinator)
25. Cedar River Council (Nathan Brown, Cedar River Council Coordinator; Max Prinsen, CR Council/Environmental Group; Homer Venishnick, CR Council/Lions Club Representative; Jeff Neuner, CR Council/Mainstem 2 Representative; Judith Fillips, CR Council/Mainstem 2 Representative; Joan Burlingame, CR Council/Rock Creek Representative; Martha Parker, CR Council/Peterson Creek Representative; and Richard Bonewits, CR Council/Maple Valley Unincorporated Area Council)

Environmental Focus Group Meeting Invite List
Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Natural Resources Plan
Thursday, October 28, 2010, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

City Staff Attending:

Leslie Betlach, Parks Planning and Natural Resources Director
Kelly Beymer, Parks and Golf Course Director
Vanessa Dolbee, Community and Economic Development/Acting Senior Planner
Terry Flatley, Urban Forestry and Natural Resources Manager
Todd Black, Capital Project Coordinator
Lys Hornsby, Utility Systems Director
Linda Knight, Solid Waste Coordinator
Dave Perkins, Recreation Coordinator
Kristine Stimpson, Recreation Manager
Ron Straka, Utility Engineering Supervisor
Helen Weagraff, PW/Utility Systems, Program Specialist
Tim Williams, Recreation Director