

May 12, 1978

Introduced by: Bob Dunn

Proposed No. 78-430

ORDINANCE NO. 3813

AN ORDINANCE relating to planning; amending the Open Space Development Policies of the Comprehensive Plan for King County, under the provisions of Ordinance No. 263, Article 2, Section 3, and K.C.C. 20.12.030.

PREAMBLE:

The County Council hereby concurs with the park acquisition and development policies recommended by the Park Policy Options Task Force Report, Volume III. These park acquisition and development policies are intended to guide the acquisition and development of parks as funds become available.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF KING COUNTY:

SECTION 1. "King County Park Development Policies", attached to Ordinance No. 3813 are hereby adopted and supercede Policies E-11 through E-51 of Chapter E of the Comprehensive Plan for King County, as authorized by K.C.C. 20.12.030.

SECTION 2. The policies adopted herein are based on the "Sub-county Service Areas Feasibility Study", dated October 27, 1976. Until sub-county areas are formally designated, the policies adopted hereby shall be implemented by using the sub-county areas defined and designated by this study. The "growth reserve" area referred to by the policies shall be equated to the "transitional" area referred to in the feasibility study.

INTRODUCED AND READ for the first time this 15th day of May, 1978.

PASSED this 24th day of July, 1978.

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Bernice Allen
Chairman

ATTEST:

Dorothy M. Quinn DEPUTY
Clerk of the Council

APPROVED this 31st day of July, 1978.

[Signature]
King County Executive

ATTACHMENT "A" TO ORDINANCE NO. 3813
KING COUNTY PARK DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

A.* NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

- 1.* Neighborhood parks should ideally be between 5 and 10 acres in size.

Rationale: Parks of less than five acres are not efficient in relation to economies of scale for maintenance costs or acreage to provide for the uses intended. Parks over 10 acres contain acreage which is not needed for neighborhood use, and if developed for a larger service area, defeats the concept of a neighborhood park.

2. Neighborhood parks should be provided at a service level of 1.25 acres/1000 population.

Rationale: This standard is used by King County in the 1964 Comprehensive Plan. The National Recreation and Parks Association recommends 2.5/1000 for neighborhood parks and playgrounds. Assuming that elementary school sites meet the neighborhood playground need (or 50% of the 2.5/1000), 1.25/1000 for neighborhood parks is consistent with NRPA recommendations.

*A different policy numbering system may be used when these policies are published as part of the Comprehensive Plan. However, policy text will be the same as presented in this attachment.

3. The service area of a neighborhood park should be one-half mile radius, based on a minimum population density of 4000/sq. mile.

Rationale: Using the standard of 1.25 acre/1000 population for neighborhood parks, the minimum density for justifying a 5 acre park is 4000 sq. mi. That figure was derived by assuming the maximum walking distance for this type of facility is 1/2 mile. The minimum acreage (exceptions can be cited) for these parks - based on usability and economies of scale - is five acres. Assuming, therefore, that a minimum five acre park would serve one square mile, using the present county standard of 1.25 acres/1000 population, five acres should serve 4,000 population.

4. Neighborhood parks should include primarily minimal development for informal outdoor recreation such as picnic areas, and open grassy fields, with up to 25% of the park devoted to active recreation such as tennis courts, raquetball, etc. No off-street parking should be provided.

The following policies shall guide acquisition and development of neighborhood parks in the various subcounty areas:

1. King County should provide neighborhood parks for urban and suburban areas in unincorporated King County. These parks should include up to 25% devoted to active recreation such as game courts, tennis courts, etc.

2. Suburban cities have responsibility for neighborhood park and recreation facilities within their boundaries.
3. Much of the unincorporated land area adjacent to suburban cities is at a density too low to justify the development of neighborhood parks. Therefore, King County neighborhood park needs will most probably be limited to acquisition of the sites for future development at such time as the population density warrants it. In many cases, some of these areas will be annexed by the adjacent suburban city, at which time development and operation of the sites should become the responsibility of the city.
4. Neighborhood parks are not generally appropriate for development in growth reserve areas because of the low density (overall average density is currently 800 sq. mi.). However, it is necessary to acquire sites for future neighborhood parks in areas where the population density is planned to reach 4000/sq. mi. If the ultimate density is planned to be substantially under 4000/sq. mi., neighborhood parks should not be planned or acquired. Acquisition should begin when the population density nears 2,000/square mile.
5. Neighborhood parks should not be provided in rural areas or rural towns, because of low population density.

B. COMMUNITY PARKS

1. Community parks should be between 20 and 40 acres in size.

Rationale: Given the service area of a community park and the activities community parks accommodate, twenty acres in urban areas is about the minimum feasible size. If the population density requires over 40 acres, it is recommended that separate sites be acquired and the service area reduced.

2. Community parks should be provided at a service level of 1.25 acres/1000 population.

Rationale: This standard is used by King County in the 1964 Comprehensive Plan. The National Recreation and Parks Association recommends 2.5 acres/1000 for community parks and community playfields. Assuming that Junior High School and Senior High School sites meet community playfield need (50% of the 2.5/1000), 1.25/1000 for community parks is consistent with NRPA recommendations.

3. Community parks should have a 2 mile maximum service radius in urban/suburban areas and a 3 mile service radius in growth reserve areas.

Rationale: Using the county standard of 1.25 acre/1000 population for community parks, and using 20 acres as the minimum number of acres, the

minimum population served should be 16,000 residents. If the service area of a community park is approximately a 2 mile radius then the population density must be 1000/sq. mile in order to justify a 20 acre community park. Unless very special attractions are developed on a community park sites, a 2 mile radius is a reasonable expectation in an urban area. If the minimum size is dropped to 10 acres with a two mile service radius, a community park would be justified if the population density is 500/sq. mile.

In the growth reserve areas, where the automobile is almost the sole form of transportation, a three mile service radius might be argued as a reasonable expectation. A three mile service radius would require a population density of 222 sq. miles for a 10 acre park.

- 4. Community parks will provide a mixture of outdoor recreation opportunities, depending upon the site, community demand, resources, etc. Both informal activities such as picnics and walking paths and athletic fields for league play are within the range of development. Parking areas should be provided.

The following policies shall guide acquisition and development of community parks in the various subcounty areas:

- 1. King County should continue to support a program of providing community parks for the urban/suburban unincorporated areas. The service area of a community park is more flexible than neighborhood

parks, and, therefore, although a population density of 1,000/sq. mi. is an ideal threshold for development (a 20-acre park providing 1.25 acres/1000 population in a two mile service radius) a lesser density may be accepted. The factors that would influence a lesser density threshold for development are the availability of alternative recreation facilities and, in particular, the availability of athletic fields on school district sites.

- 2. Suburban cities should have responsibility for community park and recreation facilities within their boundaries.
- 3. Community parks, which primarily serve the unincorporated areas around suburban cities, are recommended to be provided on a population density basis.
- 4. Community parks in growth reserve areas should be developed as one element of some type of larger community center. If it is at all possible, it is recommended that in these areas school sites be jointly developed by the school district and King County to provide the first athletic fields for the community as it develops. Park sites acquisitioned for future residents should take place timed with development.
- 5. Community parks, if provided in rural areas, should be primarily for athletic activities and active recreation. They should be developed adjacent to secondary schools, or other central collector points.

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C. RESOURCE-BASED PARKS

When analyzing the community parks, the Planning Division found two distinctive groups. While some community parks were constructed essentially from raw land, others were built around a natural resource on the site such as a beach, a view, etc. These parks tended to serve much wider areas than the typical two mile radius commonly used for a community park. Although these parks in most cases serve as the community park for local residents, they also fulfill a more sub-regional role, somewhat between community and major urban parks. For these reasons, this group was handled separately in a new category - resource-based parks - which are defined as "community parks that serve a sub-regional area because they contain a unique resource."

Resource-based parks exist because of the specific quality of the site. And, while adjacent land may be purchased for non-related types of outdoor recreation, the resource remains the major focus of this type of park.

1. Resource-based parks may vary from 1 to 100 acres in size.

Rationale: Depending upon the type of site available, these parks may vary widely in size. For example, Enatai Beach, under one acre, has a popular swimming area and fishing pier which have a wide draw.

- 2. Resource-based parks should be provided as possible through availability of resources and property. These parks usually meet the community park service level policy in developed areas. 5 acre/1000 are recommended in rural areas.

Rationale: The nature of these parks precludes their distribution throughout the county on the basis of population density and spatial distribution. The usual standards for community parks can not be directly applied to parks which exist because of the natural phenomenon of land, which occurs randomly. However, from experience it is known how far users will travel to enjoy various types of waterfront or view park sites, and from this experience it should be possible to determine with some accuracy how well a community is served.

While no service level is specified for resource-based parks, except in rural areas, the total acreage available within a planning area is noted and compared to a desired service level for total acres. If a resource-based park is fairly large and encompasses a particularly popular attraction, the need for major urban parks may be considered filled on an acre for acre basis.

The following policies shall guide acquisition and development of resource-based parks in the various sub-county areas:

- 1. In urban and suburban sub-county areas of unincorporated King County, the County should acquire whenever possible, sites with

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outstanding natural features. While development should attempt to enhance the resources, resource-based parks in these areas should be designed to balance preservation with a high person per acre usage. In order to limit pressure on sensitive areas, organized athletics should not be sited on these parks if they create added pressure.

2. Resource-based parks within cities with a sub-regional service area including unincorporated King County should be a shared responsibility between King County and local cities, with the cities taking the lead responsibility.
3. Land which is valued for its natural resources and located in unincorporated King County beyond city boundaries should be acquired for park purposes by King County and/or the city. King County should be responsible for development if the park is needed to meet present county recreation needs. If the park is annexed to a city or developed within a city, that city should assume some responsibility for maintenance and operation costs.
4. Recreational sites in the growth reserve area valued for their natural resources should be purchased while available and held for future development. The amount of land to be purchased should be based upon the quality and significance of the resource and the level of service for community or major urban parks for the proposed service area of the park.

Resourced-based Parks in growth reserve areas should be developed such that the natural systems are minimally impacted.

- 5. King County should acquire and operate parks in the rural areas that are resource-based. Preservation of the natural resource for passive enjoyment is recommended. The recommended standard is 5 acres/1000 population.

D. MAJOR URBAN PARKS

- 1. Major urban parks range in size from a minimum of 100 acres to several hundred.

Rationale: A one-hundred acre minimum is recommended by the National Recreation & Parks Association. Major Urban Parks are recommended in the study to be of such size that the acreage is sufficient to meet the intended purposes of both outdoor recreation and urban open space. Major urban parks are required to accommodate larger groups of users and a variety of activities. A one hundred acre minimum is recommended to meet the purposes for which this type of park is intended.

- 2. Major urban parks should be provided at a service level of 5 acres/1000 populaion.

Rationale: The National Recreation and Parks Association recommends 5 acres/1000 of major urban parks and 20/1000 for regional parks. The

1964 King County Comprehensive Plan recommended 2.5 acres/1000. Because at this time King County is looking at National Park Service Parks and U.S. Forest Service land to meet some regional park needs, the recommendation here is to meet the higher TARGET of 5/1000 standard for major urban parks. (Definition of regional by the NRPA is a park of 250 acres minimum, up to several thousand acres, within one hours travel time.)

3. Major urban parks should have a 6-10 mile service radius, and a county-wide service area for special programs or events.

Rational: These park sites are selected because of attractive natural features, and in addition, having a minimum 100 acre size, they can be developed to accommodate activities that are not feasible in smaller parks.

4. Major urban parks should be developed to serve outdoor recreation needs that cannot be accommodated on smaller sites.

Rationale: Local level facilities are not appropriately located on major urban park sites because these parks then become oversize neighborhood or community parks, precluding the sub-regional or regional facilities which should be developed on these sites.

The following policies shall guide the acquisition and development of major urban parks in the various sub-county areas:

1. Population concentrations in urban and suburban sub-county areas are sufficiently dense to warrant full service major urban parks at the recommended urban standard of five acres/1000 population as advocated by the National Parks and Recreation Association. The level and type of development would be dependent upon other available recreation, other available open space and the type of natural resources found within the park. King County also will assume lead responsibility for major urban parks within incorporated cities, except Seattle.
2. Major Urban Parks should be acquired prior to intense development of areas near suburban cities while opportunities for purchase of large parcels of land with significant natural resources exist. Areas near suburban cities are usually those where growth activity is high, and consequently should be one of the high priority areas for acquisition of major urban park sites to meet projected population demands.
3. Major urban parks should be located and acquired at the time the policy decisions allowing suburban growth in a growth reserve area are made. It is recommended that sites be chosen which have attractive natural resources such that they can be utilized for informal outdoor recreation with only minimal improvements in the interim between acquisition and development. However, sites should have the potential to be developed into a full-service major urban park.

4. Major urban parks are recommended to be in or near urban population centers, and therefore are not recommended in rural areas unless other land is not available.