

# Manual 2

# Planning Guidelines

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January 2024

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# Section 1: Introduction

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## **This section covers the following:**

- ✓ The value of planning
- ✓ Who must plan?
- ✓ Plan eligibility

## **Introduction**

This manual provides guidance for organizations wishing to apply for grants in the following four programs offered by the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board:

- Boating Facilities Program
- Land and Water Conservation Fund
- Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicle Activities Program
- Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (excluding the Farmland and Forestland Preservation Categories)

## **About the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board**

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board is a governor-appointed board composed of five citizens and the directors (or designees) of three state agencies—Department of Fish and Wildlife, Department of Natural Resources, and Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission.

The board manages multiple grant programs to create outdoor recreation opportunities and protect the best of the state's wildlife habitat and working lands. The Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) is a state agency that supports the board.

## The Value of Planning

Planning is vital to the success of any effort to provide recreation opportunities or conserve habitat. Planning in this manual refers to long-range planning that creates a community vision and a timeline of events to inform strategic actions. Developing a long-range plan will improve project outcomes and demonstrate public support for community programs and grant proposals.

Gathering diverse perspectives is a critical first step to ensure the plan will be beneficial and address community needs. Planning should engage everyone who likely will be affected by the plan. This may include residents, community groups, recreation providers and users, land managers, and especially those underserved by recreation or conservation opportunities.

This plan should be a living document. A finished plan reflects the consensus of the participants at the time and should change as people and issues change.

## Who Must Plan?

To be eligible for the grants listed below, organizations must produce a long-range plan.<sup>1</sup> The plan must be adopted and meet the requirements explained in this manual. Grant applicants unsure of which grant program would best fit their proposals should consult [RCO staff](#).

RCO strongly recommends that organizations interested in any grant program develop a plan whether or not the program requires a plan. Grant evaluators often ask for information that typically is found in a plan.

**Boating Facilities Program (BFP)**—Develop and renovate facilities for motorized boats. The following are the eligible applicants:

- Local Agencies
- Special Purpose Districts<sup>2</sup>
- State Agencies
- Tribal Governments

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<sup>1</sup>Washington Administrative Code 286-13-040(2)

<sup>2</sup>District refers to a conservation district, port district, or a park and recreation district.

**Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)**—Parks, trails, wildlife lands, and other outdoor recreation resources. The following are the eligible applicants:

- Local Agencies
- Special Purpose Districts
- State Agencies
- Tribal Governments

**Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicle Activities Program (NOVA)-Trails**—Backcountry trails and off-road vehicle parks. The following are the eligible applicants:

- Federal Agencies
- Local Agencies
- Nonprofits (off-road vehicle only)
- Special Purpose Districts
- State Agencies
- Tribal Governments

**Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP)<sup>3</sup>-Habitat.** Conserve wildlife habitat and restore sensitive state-owned lands. The following are the eligible applicants:

- Local Agencies
- Nonprofits
- Special Purpose Districts
- State Agencies
- Tribal Governments

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<sup>3</sup>Farmland and Forestland Preservation Category grants are in separate Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program accounts and do not require a plan.

**Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP)<sup>2</sup>–Recreation.** Local and state parks and trails, and access to the waterfront. The following are the eligible applicants:

- Local Agencies
- Special Purpose Districts
- State Agencies
- Tribal Governments

## Plan Eligibility

### Standard Eligibility

Once the planning requirements are met, the organization may apply for grants for up to six calendar years from the date when the governing body adopted the plan. Please keep in mind the six years of eligibility starts on the date the plan is adopted, not when it is submitted to RCO.

A plan must remain eligible through the first meeting where the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board considers the proposal. For example, if applications are accepted in November and the board approves the preliminary ranked list of projects in April of the following year, plans that expire on April 30 would provide eligibility for that particular RCO grant.

### Extended Eligibility

RCO may extend eligibility for cities and counties that combine parks, recreation, and/or open space planning into required periodic updates under the Growth Management Act.<sup>4</sup>

To qualify, the organization must submit a [request for extended eligibility](#) in writing to RCO. If approved, the extended eligibility expires on the date the organization is required to adopt its updated comprehensive plan established under Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.130.

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<sup>4</sup>Revised Code of Washington Chapter 36.70A. Per Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.070(8), parks and recreation are elements of a comprehensive plan, though it is not required because the State did not provide funding to help develop these local elements when this provision was added. However, the Department of Commerce encourages entities to plan for and fund these facilities as specific goals of the Growth Management Act.

## Temporary Eligibility

RCO provides the option of temporary eligibility to cities or counties that combine parks, recreation, and/or habitat conservation planning into their first comprehensive plans required under the Growth Management Act. This allows them to compete for a grant with only a draft plan.

To qualify, the organization must submit a [request for temporary eligibility](#) in writing to RCO, as well as a copy of the draft plan before the planning deadline for the specific grant program to which it plans to apply. If approved, the temporary eligibility expires on the date the organization is required to adopt its comprehensive plan established under Revised Code of Washington 36.70A.130. The organization must submit all materials to fulfill the board's planning requirements by this deadline to maintain eligibility.

# Section 2: Developing a Plan

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## **This section covers the following:**

- ✓ The purpose of the plan
- ✓ Options for acceptable plans

### **Plan Purpose**

The first step to plan development is to identify the purpose of the plan. Will it be for parks, recreation, and open space, or will it only include habitat conservation, or only focus on trails or boating facilities? Each organization decides on the purpose of the plan, but it should include any activity for which the organization will seek a grant. For example, if a local government submits a parks and recreation plan, without goals for habitat conservation, the plan eligibility would be good only for recreation grants.

### **Plan Options**

The second step is to determine the type of plan that best fits the purpose. There are options but all plans must include all board-required elements as specified in Section 3.

### **Develop or Update a Long-Range Plan**

Whether it be a first-time plan or an update to a plan, the organization must develop a plan that meets the planning requirements described in Section 3.

### **Develop a Cooperative Plan**

Many communities share geographic areas and may want to collaborate to develop a plan or share a plan. Regional planning organizations and councils of governments often select this option, as it recognizes that a single plan may be the most efficient way to provide recreational facilities. There is no limit to the number of organizations that may be included in a cooperative plan. It is recommended that when more than two organizations are involved, only one agency coordinates the planning activities.



Each partner agency or organization must document its contribution and participation in the planning efforts. The completed plan must be adopted by the organization seeking board funds.

### **Adopt Another's Plan**

An organization may use another (partner) agency's plan to save resources and attain eligibility. Organizations may do this if their geographic areas overlap, by officially adopting another's plan, or by developing a cooperative plan that covers multiple communities with shared goals, such as a regional plan.

Some organizations may wish to adopt a parks and recreation or habitat plan of an organization that covers a broader geographic area. For example, a school district may want to adopt the county's park and recreation plan, recognizing that the park department's facilities can complement the school district's programs. This is especially true when recreational or resource opportunities are provided as a secondary activity to the district's primary mission.

This option may be used only if each of the following can be demonstrated to RCO:

- The area where the organization wishes to seek a board grant is in the planning or service area of a partner agency with a plan that RCO has accepted.
- The organization has formally adopted all plan elements required by the board. The elements may be taken directly from the partner agency's plan as long as appropriate modifications are documented. For example, a school district's recreational goals and objectives may not be the same as the local park department's goals.
- The partner agency supports sharing the plan and has confirmed in writing.
- The plan is no more than six years old.

### **Submit an Existing Long-Range Plan**

Many organizations already may have a plan that meets RCO planning requirements. As long as the plan meets all board-required elements (Section 3) and includes park and recreation or habitat conservation planning, it will be accepted as an eligible plan. For example, the U.S. Forest Service may have a land-use plan that covers the activity, such as trail development, and would submit the existing plan for RCO approval.

Local governments likely have comprehensive plans required under the Growth Management Act. This is another acceptable option for satisfying RCO's planning requirements. Many of the board's planning requirements parallel those in the Growth Management Act, including a capital facility element with inventory, forecast of future

needs, and a multi-year financing plan. It is important that organizations working to meet the board's planning requirements consult with the growth management planners in their jurisdictions. Not only is it likely that both planning groups will discover areas of mutual interest and concern, but they also will be able to discuss coordinating survey efforts, data sharing, and other efficiencies.

**Nonprofit nature conservancy corporations or associations** seeking to become eligible<sup>5</sup> for the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program's habitat conservation account have the option to certify that the corporation or association has published a plan or document that has been accepted or incorporated into a plan or program managed by a public agency for public purposes.

Please note that nonprofit nature conservancies are exempt from the requirement to provide the capital facilities planning element (Number 5 Capital Improvement Program) described in Section 3.

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<sup>5</sup>Complete nonprofit nature conservancy corporation or association eligibility requirements are explained in *RCO Manual 10b: Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program Habitat Conservation Account*.

# Section 3: Required Elements

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**This section covers the following:**

- ✓ Plan requirements
- ✓ RCO review
- ✓ Where to get more information

## Plan Requirements

Whether an organization needs a modest or more robust plan depends on the needs of that organization. RCO has no requirements for the length, number of chapters, or format. A successful plan is one that accurately reflects the purpose and goals of the organization and has included broad public input to shape the final product. Contact RCO staff with questions about meeting the planning requirement.

## Required Elements

RCO looks for a minimum of six elements in a plan. The six elements are detailed below and summarized in Appendix B: Self-Certification Form.

### Element 1: Goals and Objectives

The plan must support the applicant's habitat conservation or park and recreation mission, including the current project, with broad statements of intent, or goals. Goals are aspirational and describe desired outcomes. An example is to "make athletic fields more accessible" or to "provide mule deer habitat."

Objectives, on the other hand, are more specific and measurable (or reportable). Include objectives to help describe when a goal has been attained. An example of an objective is to "develop six accessible athletic fields in East County" or "acquire three-hundred acres of mule deer habitat near the North Creek Planning Unit."

Goals and objectives should be realistic, supported by resources the applicant can reasonably expect to have available, and reflect the needs in the community or service area, or for habitat projects, the needs of species of interest. These needs will be discovered through experience, inventory assessment, and public involvement.

### Examples

- An organization may find that its ball fields are filling up early in the season and that the waiting list has been the same for years. This experience is evidence of need, which can be confirmed by consulting with the public. The applicant may decide the goal is to provide access to ball fields for all players. The objective could be to add lights to extend use, to add a field, or to buy and develop additional property.
- An organization's inventory may indicate that several facilities are obsolete, have reached their useful service lives, or are underused because of their location or changing demographics. A resulting goal could be useful facilities to serve the community. The objective could be a major renovation or relocation of facilities.

Involving the public is a great way to hear what people have to say about their needs and to give the organization an opportunity to share its purpose.

### Element 2: Inventory

The plan must include an inventory or planning area description, which is a description of the service area facilities, lands, programs, and their conditions. It also may include local, state, federal, and private facilities, and extend beyond the applicant's service area.

Please include the following:

- A description of the planning or service area, including the physical setting and conditions, and relevant demographic, program, and resource information.
- A report on the supply and condition of existing recreational facilities or opportunities, habitat conservation species, or relevant land types.
- A report on the projected annual maintenance and operational costs for each existing recreational or habitat conservation site in the inventory.

The purpose of an inventory is to provide the context for proposed projects. RCO requires no specific format for the inventory; the inventory may be completed in a quantitative or a qualitative (narrative) format.

Assessing the **condition** of the inventory is important. Sites and facility conditions will reveal weaknesses in the organization's maintenance and operation, help identify

facilities that may need renovation or replacement, and provide indicators of use levels. Organizations with habitat or natural areas will want to assess the health of the natural systems, the extent of invasive species, adjacent land uses, and other issues. Habitat conservation inventories may assess habitat types, particular species, threats, ownerships, and historical gains or losses.

Another key consideration is the **capacity** of the current inventory. Are ball fields underused or are teams turned away every season? Do park reservation sites fill at the start of the year? Are trailhead parking lots full, causing people to park on adjacent streets? Is there sufficient habitat to support desired species or functions?

### Maps and Visualizations

RCO strongly encourages use of interactive maps and visualizations. For example, combining inventory mapping with the demand and need analysis, will inform whether recreation sites and facilities are found where people need them most. Research<sup>6</sup> has found that the closer the opportunity, the more likely it is that people will use it.

### Element 3: Public Involvement

Public involvement or engagement is the most important and often most time-consuming element of the planning process. It includes identifying who will be affected by the decision, how and when to engage them, and how to incorporate public input in the final product. A great resource for public involvement is the [International Association for Public Participation](#). Its website includes a wealth of resources.

Please include a description of how the planning process gave the public ample opportunity to be involved in plan development and adoption. Select methods that support the planning strategy. Even the best efforts sometimes do not provide sufficient information, data, or results. For example, there may be a limited response to a survey or a poor turnout at a meeting.

Selecting only one public involvement method may create unanticipated problems. For example, if using only public meetings, the plan could be unduly influenced by those who have the time to attend. There usually are many other people with different perspectives and interests unable to attend meetings for a variety of good reasons. Being flexible in the approach will improve the involvement and ultimately the final product. Consider what works for one community member or group may not work for another.

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<sup>6</sup>[The Trust for Public Land, 10-Minute Walk: Improving Access to Parks + Green Spaces.](#)

Some examples of public involvement methods include the following:

- Online surveys
- A citizen’s task force or advisory committee
- Workshops
- Surveys or interviews (formal or informal)
- Community TV
- “Listening posts” and demonstrations
- Public meetings (in-person and/or virtual)
- Roundtable discussions or focus groups

Surveys are important. A survey can reveal opinions on need, willingness to pay, participation in recreation activities, interest in habitat protection, and so on. It is important that a survey is easy to navigate and accessible to non-English speakers, as well as those with disabilities. For more information, please review accessibility guidelines provided by the applicant’s organization or the [Web Accessibility Initiative](#).

If a survey isn’t possible, secondary data sources may help fill the gaps. RCO, for example, keeps recreation participation data useful at a regional level. The Washington Office of Financial Management has excellent population data and also publishes an annual Washington State survey that includes recreation and other data.

RCO recommends the public involvement process be thorough and suitable to local conditions and the service area. For example, when surveying residents about park needs, make sure the demographics of the people responding match the community population demographics. Consider reaching out to neighborhood associations or community groups likely to use the facility or be impacted by the change in land use.

Whatever the process, consider current public satisfaction with available sites and facilities, as well as demand for additional sites and facilities. Allow sufficient time for the public to respond.

Good documentation of public involvement and support is important. Organizations can use the documentation to defend their plans and decisions. Also, this documentation is one element used by RCO for evaluating grant projects.

## Element 4: Demand and Need Analysis

The demand and need analysis takes the inventory work and public involvement and balances it with public demand and the organization's capacity. The analysis may indicate that the current inventory is sufficient if improvements are made or that a significant expansion of sites and facilities is warranted. If the demands cannot be met with current resources, the plan should include a way to increase resources.

Discuss both the community's and organization's priorities. Explain how the decision to acquire land, develop, preserve, enhance, restore, or manage was made. For example, what options were considered, which were rejected, and what are their advantages and disadvantages. Ultimately, the questions to be answered are "specifically, what does the community want" and "how do we know this to be true."

RCO recommends that "need" is best determined by assessing multiple criteria or metrics.

- For recreation projects, the criteria could include current levels of participation, anticipated change based on trends, capacity of the current inventory, distance between residential areas and existing opportunities in the planning service area, public satisfaction, manager needs, current maintenance levels, and access issues.
- For habitat projects, the criteria could include number and extent of species present, known threats, condition of available habitat, opportunities for habitat restoration or improvement, public support, management needs, stewardship levels, and the potential for compatible public access.

The level of service guide in Appendix C is a great tool to answer these questions. RCO recommends, but does not require, determination of a level of service for park and recreation planning, including trails. An analysis with the level of service tool will indicate strengths and weaknesses of parks and trails systems, suggesting where additional resources may be needed. The level of service tool will provide metrics that inform the status of a park and recreation system.

## Element 5: Capital Improvement Program

Include a capital improvement program (capital facility plan) of at least six years that lists land acquisition, development, renovation, and restoration projects. Nonprofits are not required to submit a capital improvement program. The capital improvement program should include the list of projects in ranked order of preference, the year of anticipated implementation, and the plan for financing the projects. Please see Appendix D: Capital Improvement Program Example.

The capital improvement program, or project list, is a list of near-term priorities informed by the goals, objectives, inventory, and demand and need analysis. Include any capital project that will be submitted to RCO for funding. RCO considers all capital improvement and capital facility program costs as estimates.

## Element 6: Adoption

Include a resolution, ordinance, or other adoption instrument showing formal approval of the plan and planning process by the governing entity. The level of governing entity approval must be equivalent to the plan's scope. Thus, a city or countywide plan must be approved at the council or commission level. Department heads, district rangers, regional managers or supervisors, etc., as determined by the applicant in coordination with RCO, may approve other plans.

### RCO Review

The applicant must submit a new or revised long-range plan to RCO before the planning submittal deadline.<sup>7</sup> If RCO does not approve the plan, it will be returned, along with the reason the plan was rejected. Applicants may make any necessary corrections and re-submit the plan to RCO. If RCO approves the plan, the organization may apply for grants for up to six calendar years from the date when the governing body adopted the plan.

## Submitting Draft Plans

Applicants are welcome to consult with RCO staff any time. Applicants may submit an outline, draft, or other material for RCO review. RCO encourages organizations to submit draft plans as early in the year as possible or in the year before the application year. This allows staff time to advise applicants of anything that may need correction before the planning deadline.

Materials for plan eligibility should be submitted to RCO by email or electronic access (Box.com, OneDrive, etc.).

## Submitting a Final Plan for Approval

All planning materials must be adopted by the organization's governing board and received by RCO, in final form, by the planning deadline. This ensures the organization has completed the planning process before applying for grants. Please see [RCO Planning Requirements](#) for how to submit plan materials. The website also includes information on planning deadlines. Typically, plans for the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program are due in the spring of even-numbered

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<sup>7</sup>Please check the RCO website for the planning [deadline](#).



years (e.g., March 1), and plans for the Boating Facilities Program and Nonhighway and Off-road Vehicle Activities program are due in the fall of even-numbered years (e.g., September 1). Please note: RCO records and files are public records that are subject to the Public Records Act.<sup>8</sup> More information about [RCO's disclosure practices](#) is available online.

Organizations not meeting established deadlines are declared ineligible for the current grant cycle. However, RCO may consider minor extensions to the deadline when significant progress has been made and the organization can justify the need.

RCO will review plans for consistency with the policies and guidelines found in this manual.

Organizations that apply for a board grant in the same year their planning eligibility expires must ensure that eligibility<sup>9</sup> extends through the funding meeting in which the projects will first be considered.

## **Self-Certification**

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board uses a self-certification system to ensure completion of its planning requirements. This means that each applicant must do the following:

1. Complete the requirements described in this manual.
2. Use the Self-Certification Form in Appendix B to certify that the requirements are complete.
3. Provide the supporting planning documents electronically to RCO for acceptance. This includes the signed Self-Certification Form and copies of adoption materials.

## **Where to Get More Information**

### **Recreation and Conservation Office**

Natural Resources Building  
1111 Washington Street  
Olympia, WA 98501  
[Email](#)

Telephone: (360) 902-3000  
FAX: (360) 902-3026  
Relay Service for Hearing Impaired: call 711  
[Website](#)

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<sup>8</sup>Revised Code of Washington 42.56

<sup>9</sup>Six years from the date of adoption

*Mailing Address*

PO Box 40917

Olympia, WA 98504-0917

**Other Information Sources**

- [Recreation and Conservation Office](#) website includes information on grant programs, planning requirements, recent reports and studies, and much more.
- Washington State [Recreation and Conservation Plan](#) includes a [mapped inventory](#) of recreation facilities and assessments of the public's and recreation providers' needs. This information could be supplemented with local surveys and outreach to inform goals, objectives, and project needs.
- RCO conducted a study of [Recreational Assets of Statewide Significance in Washington State](#). These are outdoor places that make Washington a great place to live. The study [mapped](#) assets including local facilities that support the most popular forms of recreation in Washington as well as marquee, popular, and destination sites that have regional or statewide draw. The study also identified gaps based on access (walking or drive time) to popular sites.
- [American Planning Association, Washington Chapter](#) has resources for planning focusing on state communities and the Growth Management Act.
- [Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals](#) offers information on resource recreation of particular interest to natural resource managers charged with public access. Please note, a subscription is required.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service [Recreation Opportunity Spectrum](#) is the primary tool for providing recreation input to forest planning.
- [Washington Recreation and Park Association](#) is an excellent resource for local park professionals.
- [Washington State Department of Commerce](#) has planning guidance, especially related to the Growth Management Act. Look at the guidebooks and resources under [Growth Management Services](#).
- National Park Service's [Park Planning](#) offers planning tools intended primarily for national parks but includes documents of interest to general recreation planning.
- [Washington State Office of Financial Management](#) publishes state population data including projections of population change, and the [State Data Book](#), which reports on trends of interest to recreation and habitat planning.

# Appendix A: Terms and Definitions

## Commonly Used Terms and Suggested Definitions

RCO has found that many terms commonly used in recreation planning do not have consistent definitions from one plan to another. We suggest, but do not require, the following definitions:

**Access:** The public's ability to physically use land or water.

**Active recreation:** Predominately human muscle-powered.

**Capital Improvement Program (CIP):** A list or description of proposal capital projects over a set timeframe (e.g., six years).

**Capital project:** A project that results in acquisition of property or development of a new facility.

**Consumptive:** Recreation that physically impacts natural resources; examples include berry picking, shellfish harvest, hunting, and fishing.

**Development:** Construction or work resulting in new elements, including structures, facilities, and/or materials to enhance outdoor recreation resources.

**Dispersed recreation:** Activities that take place outside of developed camping or concessionaire-operated facilities or outside a single site. Examples include trails, camping, walking, cycling, and jogging.

**Impact (low, medium, high):** The effect that recreational uses have on resources including on soils, water, species, habitat, sites, and facilities.

**Improve:** Expanding or otherwise developing an existing site or facility to serve more people or more types of use.

**Level of Service:** Measure of the status of an entire park and recreation system to inform future need.

**Maintain:** To keep areas and facilities in good condition through repairs and upkeep for the benefit of outdoor recreationists.

**Multiple-use:** Use of one facility by more than one type of recreation.

**Non-consumptive:** Resource recreation that depends on, but does not consume, resources; for example, photographing wildlife.

**Park:** Land or an area set aside for a special purpose, but particularly for leisure or recreation.

- Neighborhood park has a service area of a reasonable walking distance, up to one mile.
- Community park has a service area that includes the city limits of a town or city.
- Regional park is intended to serve populations from multiple jurisdictions.
- State park is owned by the State of Washington.
- Marine park is intended for access via watercraft.
- Day-use park does not allow overnight uses such as camping.
- Camping park allows an overnight stay in a tent or other non-permanent structure.
- Seasonal parks are intended for use in specific seasons.

**Passive recreation:** Activities usually conducted in place and requiring minimal physical exertion such as picnicking, watching a sports event, sunbathing, or relaxing.

**Recreation:** Activities of a voluntary and leisure-time nature that aid in promoting entertainment, pleasure, play, relaxation, or instruction.<sup>10</sup>

**Renovate or renovation:** Activities intended to improve a site or structure to increase its useful service life. This does not include activities to maintain the facility for its expected useful life.

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<sup>10</sup>Revised Code of Washington 79A.05.010

**Restoration:** Bringing a site back to its historic function as part of a natural ecosystem or improving the ecological functionality of a site.

**Shared use:** Use by more than one type of recreation at the same facility.

**Trail:** A recreational facility that also can serve as a non-motorized route for transportation.

### Terms Defined in Washington Administrative Code

Helpful definitions also may be found in the following agency rules:

- The Department of Natural Resources has developed definitions found in [Washington Administrative Code 332-52-010](#) online.
- The State Parks and Recreation Commission has its definitions in [Washington Administrative Code 352-32-010](#) online.

# Appendix B: Self-Certification Form

## Self-Certification Form

The [self-certification form](#) may be downloaded from the RCO website. Below is a sample of the form.

Planning Eligibility Self-Certification Form		
Use this form to certify the need for any grant projects that have been developed through an appropriate planning process. Provide the completed form with the subject plans and adoption documentation to RCO via e-mail or other means of electronic access (i.e., web link, Box.com, etc.).		
<b>Organization Name:</b>		
<b>Contact Name:</b>		
<b>Adoption Date of Submitted Documents:</b>		
<b>Seeking Eligibility for:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation Grants <input type="checkbox"/> Habitat Conservation Grants <input type="checkbox"/> Both		
Initial Each to Certify Completion	Plan Element Certification	Document and Page Number Location of Information
	<b>1. Goals, objectives:</b> The attached plan supports our project with broad statements of intent (goals) <i>and</i> measures that describe when these intents will be attained (objectives). Goals may include a higher level of service (see Appendix C).	
	<b>2. Inventory:</b> The plan includes a description of the service area's facilities, lands, programs, and their condition. <i>(This may be done in a quantitative format or in a qualitative, narrative format.)</i>	

Planning Eligibility Self-Certification Form		
	<p><b>3. Public involvement:</b> The planning process gave the public ample opportunity to be involved in plan development and adoption.</p>	
	<p><b>4. Demand and need analysis:</b> In the plan: an analysis defines priorities, as appropriate, for acquisition, development, preservation, enhancement, management, etc., and explains why these actions are needed. The process used in developing the analysis assessed community desires for parks, recreation, open space, and/or habitat, as appropriate, in a manner appropriate for the service area (personal observation, informal talks, formal surveys, workshops, etc.).</p>	
	<p><b>5. Capital Improvement Program:*</b> The plan includes a capital improvement and/or facility program that lists land acquisition, development, and renovation projects by year of anticipated implementation, including funding source. The program includes any capital project submitted to the Recreation and Conservation Funding Board for funding. *Nonprofit conservancies are exempt from this requirement.</p>	
	<p><b>6. Adoption:</b> The plan and process has received formal governing body approval (<i>that is, city or county department head, district ranger, regional manager or supervisor, etc., as appropriate</i>). Attach signed resolution, letter, or other adoption instrument.</p>	

### Certification Signature

I certify that this information is true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

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Print or Type Name

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Signature (Handwritten or Digital)

---

Title

---

Date

# Appendix C:

## Level of Service Tool and Guide

A “level of service” refers to the amount and quality of recreation facilities that are necessary to meet current and future needs. The level of service tool may be used when developing a demand and need analysis to address quantity, quality, distribution, and access criteria. The level of service results then may inform the capital facility program to determine costs and phase projects to help achieve the planned level of service.

The level of service uses indicators in the following three categories, each with measurable elements:

- **Quantity Criteria** (number of facilities). It could be helpful to present results of the quantity criteria to support a request for a new ball field.
- **Quality Criteria** (public satisfaction and facility function). This is useful for building a budget request for additional maintenance resources.
- **Distribution and Access Criteria** (population served and accessibility). The distribution and access criteria could help justify providing new trails.

Once the categories and elements have been assessed and scored, choose whether to average the scores or keep each separate. Consider how the level of service scores will be used when deciding.

Using the level of service quantity criteria can help estimate future need. If using per capita data goals and the current per capita levels are determined, the gap is one estimate of future need.

In addition, estimates of the growth of current activities can be made. Participation in various outdoor activities will be affected by changes in population, available sites and infrastructure, lifestyles, economics, technology, and the politics of land use. With an



understanding of these characteristics, available data can be used to estimate the change in recreation patterns in a community.

Completely new activities are nearly impossible to predict: For example, the emergence of personal watercraft and mountain bikes in the 1980s and 1990s were not accounted for in traditional projection methods.

A simplistic way to estimate future need is to use population estimates from the Washington State Office of Financial Management. Recreation participation tends to change slowly, with participation levels often directly tied to overall population growth.

Planners simply can decide that participation in current activities will grow at the same rate as the population. However, this approach should be tempered by consideration of more than simple population growth. Consider the following:

- **Participation by age group** is a key consideration in estimating future participation. Varying physical demands of different activities will encourage or discourage continued participation as people age. Vigorous field sports such as soccer or rugby, for example, tend to be the domain of younger people; walking or bird watching, on the other hand, will appeal to older adults who seek to enjoy outdoor recreation in relative comfort.
- **User group organization and representation** makes up the political landscape in which planning is done. However, as tempting as it is to plan for “those who show up,” it is important to consider that some activities appear not to lend themselves to user group organization. Sidewalk users, perhaps those walking or walking with pets, have not formed known significant organizations apart from socially oriented *Volksmarching* groups or perhaps neighborhood associations that deal with a variety of issues. That is why a robust public process is helpful.
- **Land use and land designations** have profound impacts on recreation. As urban density grows, it is often accompanied by fewer backyards and open lots. Therefore, more density will suggest the need for more parks and open spaces.
- **Economic conditions** strongly influence recreation patterns. Boat sales, for example, are known to follow the national economy. Activities such as walking that do not require big ticket consumer items, on the other hand, may not respond to economic changes because the activity simply does not cost much money.

Statewide projections of recreation change are resources in the [Recreation and Conservation Plan](#). A statewide survey of recreation demand was last conducted in 2022. The survey includes data by region on participation rates, user days, locations of

participation, user satisfaction, and future demand. The survey, updated every six years, may be a useful resource for informing recreation activity participation.

### Level of Service for Local Agencies

The level of service tool works best for local communities considering these grant programs:

- Aquatic Lands Enhancement Account (ALEA)
- Boating Facilities Program (BFP)
- Land and Water Conservation Fund LWCF)–State and Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership programs
- Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP)
- Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF)

The table below provides the metrics for measuring level of service. Additional information.

### Level of Service Summary: Local Agencies

Indicators and Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
<b>Quantity Criteria</b>					
<b>Number of Parks and Recreation Facilities</b> Percent difference (the gap) between existing quantity of parks and recreation facilities and the desired quantity (e.g., eight out of ten would be a Level B: 20 percent gap) (also may use per capita average)	<10%	11-20%	21-30%	31-40%	>41%
<b>Facilities that Support Active Recreation Opportunities</b> Percentage of facilities that support or encourage active (muscle-powered) recreation opportunities (e.g., eight out of ten would be Level A: more than 60 percent)	>60%	51-60%	41-50%	31-40%	<30%
<b>Facility Capacity</b> Percentage of demand met by existing facilities (e.g., 65 percent of reservation requests at a facility can be met would be Level B)	>75%	61-75%	46-60%	30-45%	<30%

Indicators and Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
<b>Quality Criteria</b>					
<b>Agency-based Assessment</b> Percentage of facilities that are fully functional for their specific design and safety guidelines (staff assessment)	>80%	61-80%	41-60%	20-40%	<20%
<b>Public Satisfaction</b> Percentage of population satisfied with the condition, quantity, or distribution of existing active park and recreation facilities (public feedback assessment)	>65%	51-65%	36-50%	25-35%	<25%
<b>Distribution and Access Criteria</b>					
<b>Population within Service Areas</b> Percentage of population within the following services areas (considering barriers to access): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Half-mile of a neighborhood park or trail</li> <li>• Five miles of a community park or trail</li> <li>• Twenty-five miles of a regional park or trail</li> </ul>	>75%	61-75%	46-60%	30-45%	<30%
<b>Access</b> Percentage of parks and recreation facilities that may be accessed safely via foot, bicycle, or public transportation	>80%	61-80%	41-60%	20-40%	<20%

## Quantity Criteria

Indicators and Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
<b>Number of Parks and Recreation Facilities</b> Percentage difference between existing quantity or per capita average of parks and recreation facilities and the desired quantity or per capita average.	<10%	11-20%	21-30%	31-40%	>41%
<b>Facilities that Support Active Recreation Opportunities</b> Percentage of facilities that support or encourage active (muscle-powered) recreation opportunities	>60%	51-60%	41-50%	31-40%	<30%
<b>Facility Capacity</b> Percentage of demand met by existing facilities	>75%	61-75%	46-60%	30-45%	<30%

### Number of Parks and Recreation Facilities

This indicator measures the quantity of existing park and recreation facilities in a community. It is intended as a classic comparison of population to available facilities: it measures the difference between the existing per capita average of park and recreation facilities and the desired per capita average with respect to the desired quantity of facilities. It is based on goals found in local community plans, as well as national guidelines such as those published by the National Recreation and Park Association.

Whether to include school facilities is a community choice.

**Example:** The community may have a planned goal of five acres of park for each one-thousand people. The current inventory is three acres for each one-thousand people. The difference is two acres per thousand, or 40 percent. The result is a “D” on the level of service.

### Facilities that Support Active Recreation Opportunities

This indicator measures the percent of facilities that support or encourage active recreation opportunities. “Active recreation” is defined as predominantly muscle-powered: walking, jogging, paddling, cycling, field and court sports, and so on. The indicator provides a more direct measure of a park and recreation system’s ability to encourage participation in activities through the types of facilities (and potentially programs) it offers. Whether to include school facilities is a community choice.

**Example:** The community has forty park and recreation sites, thirty of which support active recreation, such as walking, field sports, court sports, and so on. The other ten sites support passive recreation. The active sites are 75 percent of the total inventory. The result is an “A” on the level of service.

## Facility Capacity

This indicator measures the existing capacity of a community’s park and recreation facilities. Whether to include school facilities is a community choice.

**Example:** The city decides what the capacity may be, either the system as a whole or specific site or facility types. The city determines, whether by survey or estimate, the actual use and compares it to the capacity. Ball fields have capacity for 100 regular season adult games, and the city is being asked to schedule 125. The city is meeting 80 percent of demand with the current capacity. The result is an “A” on the level of service.

## Quality Criteria

Indicators and Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
<b>Agency-based Assessment</b> Percentage of facilities that are fully functional for their specific designs and safety guidelines	>80%	61-80%	41-60%	20-40%	<20%
<b>Public Satisfaction</b> Percentage of population satisfied with the condition, quantity, or distribution of existing active park and recreation facilities	>65%	51-65%	36-50%	25-35%	<25%

## Agency-based Assessment

This indicator measures the status or condition of existing park and recreation facilities, as determined by park and recreation staff. Staff assess the percentage of sites and facilities that are fully functional for the specific designs and safety guidelines that have assigned to them.

**Example:** The city planner assessed the park and recreation inventory of fifty sites. The planner finds that five are substandard; the rest, 90 percent, are fully functional according to the city’s standards.

The result is an “A” on the level of service.

## Public Satisfaction

This indicator measures the public’s satisfaction with the condition, quantity, or distribution of existing park and recreation facilities in its community.

**Example:** The city surveys the community and finds that 55 percent are satisfied or highly satisfied with the parks and recreation sites and facilities. The result is a “B” on the level of service.

## Distribution and Access Criteria

Indicators and Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
<p><b>Population within Service Areas</b>                      Percentage of population within the following services areas (considering barriers to access):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Half-mile of a neighborhood park or trail</li> <li>• Five miles of a community park or trail</li> <li>• Twenty-five miles of a regional park or trail</li> </ul>	>75%	61-75%	46-60%	30-45%	<30%
<p><b>Access</b>                      Percentage of parks and recreation facilities that may be accessed safely via foot, bicycle, or public transportation</p>	>80%	61-80%	41-60%	20-40%	<20%

## Population within Service Areas

This indicator measures the distribution of, and population served, by existing park and recreation facilities in a community. This indicator requires the use of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and should incorporate access points, barriers to access, and census block data into the analysis. Whether to include school facilities is a local choice.

**Example:** The city planner maps the community and compares service areas to population. The planner finds that 55 percent of the population is within a half mile of a local park. The result is a “C” on the level of service.

## Access

This indicator measures the ability of people to access park and recreation facilities without a personal motorized vehicle. The measure is an estimate of pedestrian, bicycle, and public transportation access to park and recreation facilities. It may be investigated with the help of GIS.

**Example:** The city has one hundred park and recreation sites and twenty-five are in neighborhoods and can be accessed by sidewalks. An additional ten are on bus stops. The city planner thinks all parks can be reached with a bicycle, but staff reports few bicycles in the bike racks, and there is no demand for additional bike racks. The planner concludes that thirty-five sites are accessible without a car. That is 35 percent of the total inventory. The result is a “D” on the level of service.

### Level of Service for State and Federal Agencies

The state agency level of service tool may be useful for federal and state agency applicants in the Boating Facilities Program, Nonhighway and Off-Road Vehicle Activities program, and the Recreational Trails Program, especially the criteria concerning resource protection.

Like the local agency level of service, it is based on three categories. However, the elements of the criteria have been modified to recognize the difference in what state agencies provide as compared to local agencies.

### Level of Service Summary: State and Federal Agencies

Indicators and Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
<b>Quantity Criteria</b>					
<b>Capital Facility Development</b> Biennial average percentage of unmet capital facility development (redevelopment, renovation, and/or restoration) goals	<30%	30-40%	41-50%	51-60%	>60%
<b>Quality Criteria</b>					
<b>Agency-based Assessment</b> Percentage of facilities that are fully functional per their specific designs and safety guidelines	>80%	61-80%	41-60%	20-40%	<20%
<b>Public Satisfaction</b> Percentage of visitor population satisfied with existing park and outdoor recreation facilities, experiences, or opportunities	>65%	51-65%	36-50%	25-35%	<25%

Indicators and Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
<b>Access Criteria</b>					
<b>Sustainable Access</b> Percentage of access or recreation areas or facilities that provide sustainable recreation opportunities (e.g., help protect natural and cultural resources, use green infrastructure to strengthen natural processes, minimize encroachment and/or user-developed facilities, prohibit poaching)	>65%	56-65%	46-55%	36-45%	<35%

### Quantity Criteria

Indicators and Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
<b>Capital Facility Development</b> Biennial average percentage of unmet capital facility development (redevelopment, renovation, and/or restoration) goals	<30%	30-40%	41-50%	51-60%	>60%

### Capital Facility Development

This indicator measures the biennial average percent of unmet capital facility development goals for a state agency. Capital facility development goals generally are defined as any redevelopment, renovation, or restoration projects.

**Example:** The agency capital plan may call for investment of \$70 million in a biennium but only \$30 million is available. The 50 percent difference would result in a “C” on the level of service.

**Example:** The agency may have scheduled fifty projects for completion but was able to complete only ten; 80 percent of the projects were not completed. This would result in an “E” on the level of service.



## Quality Criteria

Indicators and Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
<b>Agency-based Assessment</b> Percentage of facilities that are fully functional per their specific designs and safety guidelines	>80%	61-80%	41-60%	20-40%	<20%
<b>Public Satisfaction</b> Percentage of visitor population satisfied with existing park and outdoor recreation facilities, experiences, or opportunities	>65%	51-65%	36-50%	25-35%	<25%

### Agency-based Assessment

This indicator measures the status or condition of existing park and recreation facilities, as determined by park and recreation staff.

**Example:** Park staff assess an access and recreation site inventory of fifty units. Staff finds that five are substandard; the rest, 90 percent, are fully functional according to agency standards. The result is an “A” on the level of service.

### Public Satisfaction

This indicator measures the public’s satisfaction with current access and recreation facilities, experiences, and opportunities.

**Example:** Staff survey constituents or user groups and find that 55 percent are satisfied or highly satisfied with the parks and recreation sites and facilities. The result is a “B” on the level of service.

## Access Criteria

Indicators and Criteria	A	B	C	D	E
<b>Sustainable Access</b> Percentage of access or recreation areas or facilities that provide sustainable recreation opportunities (e.g., help protect natural and cultural resources, use green infrastructure to strengthen natural processes, minimize encroachment and/or user-developed facilities, prohibit poaching)	>65%	56-65%	46-55%	36-45%	<35%

## Sustainable Access

This indicator measures the provision of sustainable recreation opportunities at state-managed parks, recreation areas, and facilities. Sustainable access generally is defined as recreation opportunities that do not substantially degrade natural, cultural, and historic resources, or provide a measure of protection for these resources.

Examples of sustainable access may include facilities that help protect natural, cultural, and historic resources; use green infrastructure to strengthen natural processes, minimize encroachment or user-developed facilities, and/or prohibit poaching.

**Example:** A trail in a riparian area is unsustainable. A rerouted trail on terrain that drains well would be sustainable. The total system adds up to 250 miles; 35 miles are in sensitive riparian areas, making 86 percent of the inventory sustainable. The result is an "A" on the level of service.

It is up to the agency to determine its resource protection goals and how well they are being met. However, the measure is meaningless unless access is being provided.

Habitat and conservation projects cannot overlook the issue of public access. Access can be important for public support: Even a nature trail with a few interpretive panels could help establish the public support needed to secure and protect a site. Habitat planning proactively should encourage appropriate access.

# Appendix D: Capital Improvement Program Example

## City of Outside Parks

Project Name	Funding Source	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
Ivy Meadows Park <b>Renovation</b>	Tax levy Park Impact Fees	\$8,600	\$50,000				
Urban Trail System <b>Plan Development</b>	Park Impact Fees		\$40,000				
Neighborhood Park– Waterway Beach <b>Development</b>	WWRP Bond funds Partnerships			\$125,000			
Urban Trail System <b>Land Acquisition and Development</b>	Easements LWCF Tax Levy			\$260,000			
Neighborhood Park– Mountain View <b>Land Acquisition</b>	WWRP Real Estate Excise Tax General fund				\$275,000		
Neighborhood Park– Mountain View <b>Development</b>	WWRP General fund Volunteer					\$400,000	
Fish Creek Estuary <b>Land Acquisition</b>	NAWCA Real Estate Excise Tax						\$325,000