



Columbia Valley Park and Recreation District  
**Comprehensive Park Plan**

January 2021

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The CVPRD Commissioners would also like to thank the Columbia Valley community members who have contributed their time, energy, and wisdom to the planning process.

## REFERENCES

**PLANNING DOCUMENTS USED TO INFORM 2020 CVPRD COMPREHENSIVE PARK PLAN**  
Whatcom County Foothills Subarea Plan (updated) 2014  
Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan (revised) 2018  
Whatcom County Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan (PROPS) (updated) 2016

Community input was critical in informing the planning process. The community input methods and results are illuminated in Chapter 5 of this plan.

*This Comprehensive Park Plan was prepared through a partnership with Western Washington University's (WWU) Sustainable Communities Partnership (SCP). SCP is housed within WWU's Office of Sustainability. This partnership was supported by a grant from First Federal Community Foundation.*



# MAP OF COLUMBIA VALLEY PARK AND RECREATION DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

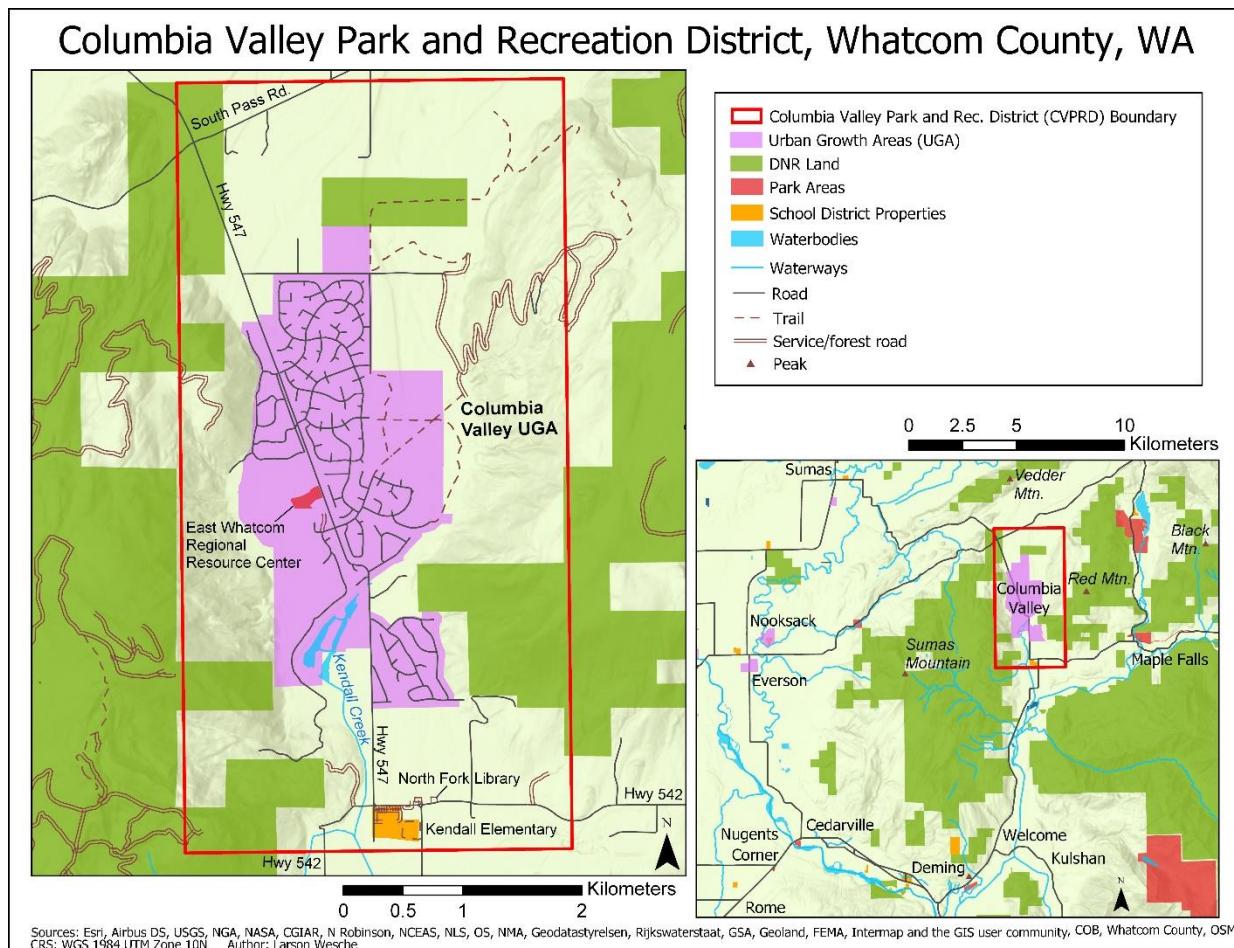


Figure 1: The Columbia Valley Park and Recreation District is situated in the northeast quadrant of Whatcom County.

# 1. INTRODUCTION



Columbia Valley is situated in the foothills of the North Cascades in East Whatcom County (see Figure 1). It is surrounded by mountains and open space. Lush coniferous forests and vibrant Pacific Northwest undergrowth define the area. Open space is vital to the quality of life and sense of place for residents of Columbia Valley. However, while there are plentiful opportunities to access and recreate in open spaces in the larger Whatcom County, there are currently no parks and few recreational opportunities directly in Columbia Valley.

The Columbia Valley Park and Recreation District (CVPRD) was formed by popular vote in November 2016 in order to address the desire for accessible parks within the area. The CVPRD aims to provide the community with spaces to form new connections with one another and to practice healthy habits.

Specifically, the CVPRD intends to build a series of small neighborhood parks within walking distance of all residences in Columbia Valley and to facilitate local recreational opportunities.

## CVPRD MISSION STATEMENT:

To improve the quality of life in Columbia Valley by providing the community with access to diverse parks and recreational opportunities.

## PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

This Comprehensive Park Plan combines community input with the goals and capacity of the CVPRD to provide a vision that serves the unique interests of the Columbia Valley community. This plan will be used as a guiding document as the CVPRD moves forward in park and recreation planning. Additionally, this plan makes the CVPRD eligible for certain funding programs and support through the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO), amongst other sources. This plan will be reviewed and updated by the commissioners on a six-year cycle and will be guided by community input.

## PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process was directed and informed by the input and expertise of the elected CVPRD Commissioners and the Columbia Valley community. During summer and fall 2020, Western Washington University's Sustainable Communities Partnership (SCP) program was contracted to compile

elements of the plan and to facilitate a community engagement campaign. Community input was incorporated into this plan and informed every step of the planning process.

The plan is written in accordance with the guidelines outlined in the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) Planning Manual (2019). It is informed by other planning documents, including the Whatcom County Comprehensive Plan (2018); the Whatcom County Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan (PROPS) (2016); and the Foothills Subarea Plan (2014). It is intended to complement these plans while guiding the CVPRD in developing parks and programming for the Columbia Valley community, addressing the needs of the community, and making progress towards the CVPRD's mission.

## CONTENTS OF THE PLAN

The Comprehensive Park Plan is organized into the following chapters:

- 1. Introduction:** Provides background information about the CVPRD and the plan
- 2. Goals and Objectives:** Provides a policy framework for the CVPRD to work within
- 3. Community Profile:** Provides an overview of the community served by the CVPRD
- 4. Inventory:** Highlights the existing parks and recreational opportunities in and around the CVPRD boundaries
- 5. Public Involvement:** Reviews the methods used to engage the CVPRD community in the development of the plan
- 6. Demand and Need Statement:** Analyzes levels of service, survey results, recreation trend data, and provides context to the proposed capital improvement program
- 7. Capital Improvement Program:** Details a ten-year program for expanding the parks and recreational opportunities provided by the CVPRD
- 8. Plan Implementation:** Describes strategies to implement this plan

## THE BENEFITS OF PARKS

The 2006 article, "The Benefits of Parks" by Paul M. Sherer, released by the Trust for Public Land, outlines the many benefits associated with parks. Several of these benefits include:

- **Health Benefits:** Research shows that people exercise more when they have access to parks. Regular physical activity reduces the risk of obesity, heart disease, hypertension, colon cancer, and diabetes, amongst other physical diseases. Exercise also promotes mental health by relieving symptoms of depression and anxiety, improving mood, and enhancing psychological well-being. Time spent connecting with nature improves both physical and mental health.
- **Property Value:** Research suggests that parks and open space increase the value of neighboring residential and commercial property.
- **Environmental Benefits:** Parks provide many environmental benefits. For example, trees and other landscaping reduce air and water pollution.
- **Social Development:** Parks provide important social and community development benefits. They make neighborhoods more livable, offer recreational opportunities for all community members, including youth and families, and provide places where people can feel a sense of community.
- **Crime Reduction:** Access to public parks and recreational facilities can lead to a reduction in crime. Shared park spaces increase residents' sense of community ownership and stewardship, provide a focus for neighborhood activities, expose youth to nature, connect community members, and clean up and increase visitation to previously vacant lots.

## **2. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The goals and objectives listed in this section consider the input of the Columbia Valley community and the CVPRD commissioners as well as current recreation trends. The CVPRD mission statement provides the larger vision for the CVPRD, while the goals and objectives offer a path of tangible achievements. The CVPRD's mission is to *improve the quality of life in Columbia Valley by providing access to diverse parks and recreational opportunities.*

### **GOAL 1: PROVIDE ALL RESIDENTS WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF THE CVPRD ACCESS TO OUTDOOR RECREATION**

- Create two parks by 2025 and three additional parks by 2030
- Locate parks so that all residents within the CVPRD boundaries have a park within a quarter mile of their residence
- With partners, build connector trails between residential areas and parks to enable safe routes for residents to access the parks
- Build parks to meet ADA compliance guidelines
- Maintain and upkeep parks regularly

### **GOAL 2: PROMOTE THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS**

- Develop and implement free and/or affordable exercise programming in Columbia Valley
- Consider evolving recreation trends to meet the needs of diverse park users
- With partners, develop programming opportunities that promote the use of CVPRD facilities

### **GOAL 3: STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS**

- Promote opportunities for neighbors to meet one another in common place settings, including in parks and at CVPRD programs, such as exercise classes
- Promote opportunities for visitors to engage with the Columbia Valley community at parks
- Host an annual community meal to bring neighbors together

### **GOAL 4: ENCOURAGE COMMUNITY MEMBERS OF ALL AGES AND ABILITIES TO VISIT THE CVPRD PARKS AND PARTICIPATE IN RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS**

- Consider the input, demands, and needs of all community members
- Involve a representative segment of the Columbia Valley community in CVPRD planning
- Prioritize park amenities that serve the needs of community members of all ages and abilities
- Engage with community members regularly through public meetings, updates on the CVPRD website, physical postings at the East Whatcom Regional Resource Center (EWRRC) and corner store bulletin boards, etc.
- Administer a survey no less than every three years to assess progress on goals and community satisfaction with the CVPRD
- Update the Comprehensive Park Plan on a regular basis (no less than every six years) based on input received from the community

### **GOAL 5: STEWARD THE NATURAL WORLD**

- Work in accordance with county, state, and federal guidelines to ensure the protection of the habitat and natural resources within and around park sites

## **3. COMMUNITY PROFILE**

The Columbia Valley Park and Recreation District (CVPRD) is located in Columbia Valley in the northeast quadrant of Whatcom County (see Figure 1). For the purposes of this plan, the Columbia Valley community describes the population residing within the area served by the CVPRD, outlined in red in Figure 1. This chapter describes the community residing within the CVPRD boundaries.

### **GEOGRAPHIC BOUNDARIES**

Columbia Valley is part of a series of valleys extending from Cultus Lake in British Columbia, Canada, through East Whatcom's South Fork Valley and the Cultus Mountains in Skagit County nearly to the Stillaguamish Reservation. The CVPRD, located in Columbia Valley, is flanked by mountains on three sides: Red Mountain to the East, Reese Hill to the North, and Sumas Mountain to the West. The area is bisected by Kendall Highway (SR 547). The CVPRD boundaries span one quarter mile north of where South Pass Road and Silver Lake Road meet on SR 547 and encompass the properties east and west of that point about one mile each way to the foothills of both Red Mountain to the east and Paradise Mountain to the west. To the south, the boundaries encompass properties both east and west of SR 542, down to the northernmost boundary of the Black Mountain Ranch. The boundaries include Kendall Elementary School, the East Whatcom Regional Resource Center (EWRRC), the Fire District 14 Kendall Station, North Fork Whatcom County Library, and commercial properties around the intersection of SR 547 and Mount Baker Highway (SR 542). Kendall Lake, Sprague Lake, and Kendall Creek divide the subdivisions of Peaceful Valley Country Club and Paradise Lakes Country Club. See Figure 2 for the CVPRD boundaries.

The boundaries of the CVPRD encompass the Columbia Valley Urban Growth Area (UGA) as defined in



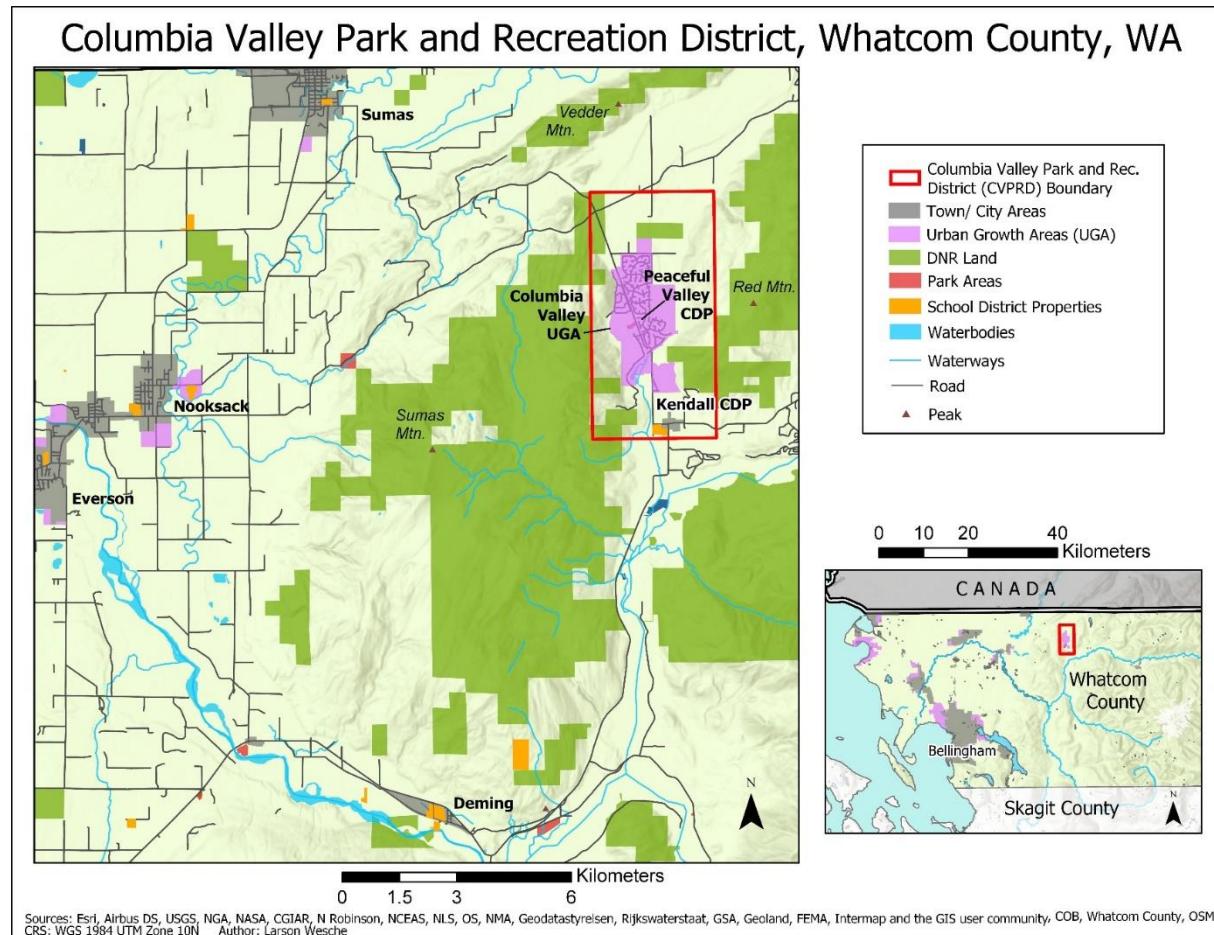


Figure 2: The Columbia Valley Park and Recreation District encompasses part of Peaceful Valley, the Columbia Valley UGA and part of the community of Kendall.

the Foothills Sub-area Plan (Whatcom County, 2014), as well as the Kendall Census Designated Place (CDP) and part of the Peaceful Valley CDP (see Figure 2). These CDPs are, according to the Census of the Bureau (2018), “statistical geographic entities representing closely settled, unincorporated communities that are locally recognized and identified by name. They are the statistical equivalents of incorporated places, with the primary differences being the lack of a legally defined boundary and an active, functioning governmental structure, chartered by the state and administered by elected officials.” Each of these areas intertwine socially and overlap and connect in a small geographic area.

The Peaceful Valley CDP is the largest CDP in the region. It encompasses the Columbia Valley UGA as well as homes that fall outside of the UGA. The UGA is divided into subdivisions, as portrayed in the map in Figure 3. The boundaries encompass Paradise Lakes Country Club Divisions 1 through 8 and Campers Paradise, as well as the properties surrounding that area up to the foothills to the east and west. Kendall hosts the Kendall Elementary School, Kendall Chapel, Whatcom County Library System (WCLS) North Fork Library, Fire District 14 Offices, and two gas stations with convenience stores. The Columbia Valley UGA is the largest population hub within the Foothills Subarea.

## Columbia Valley Urban Growth Area Divisions

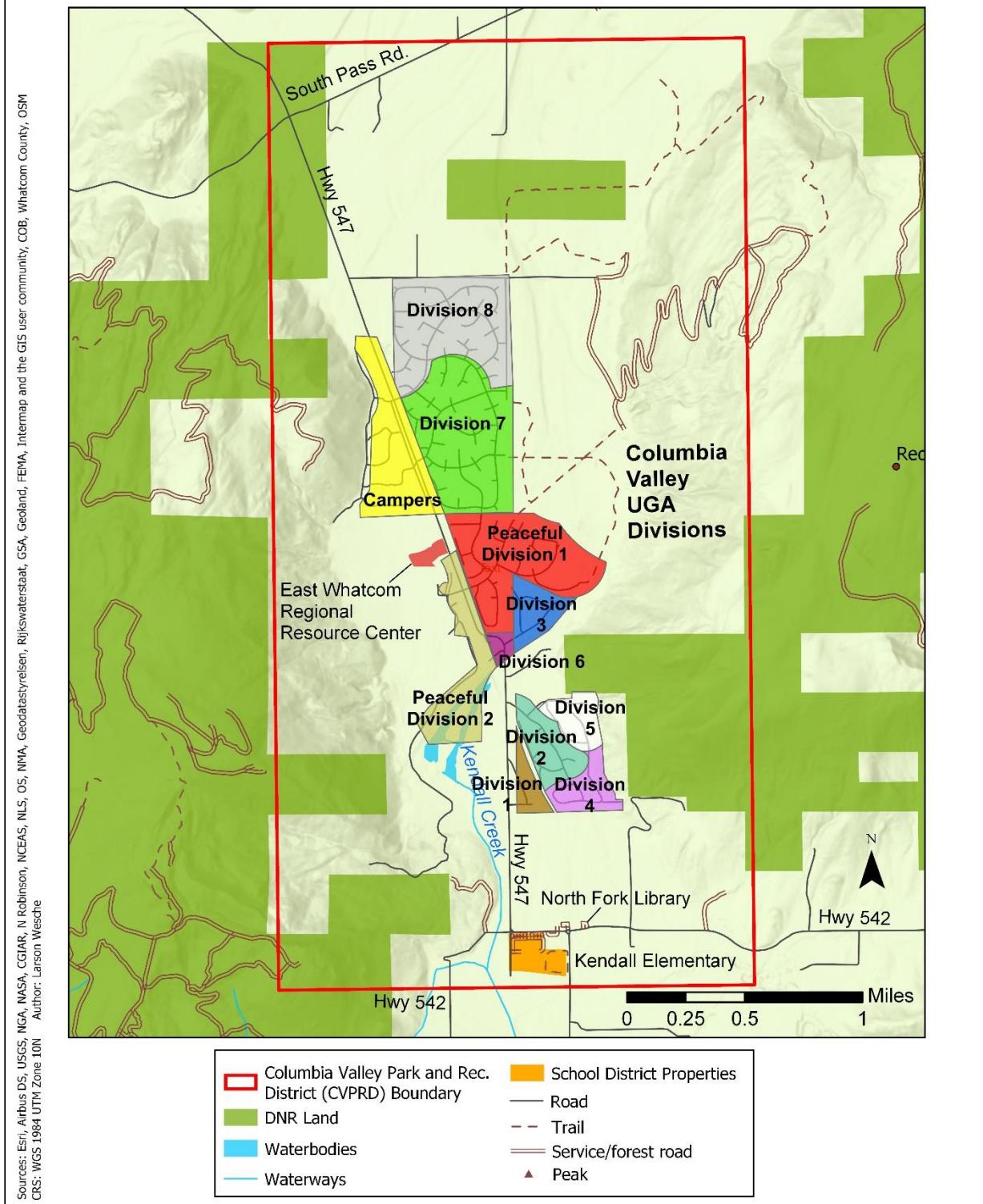


Figure 3: Urban growth area divisions within the Columbia Valley Park and Recreation District.

## DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Demographic data is not available for the precise boundaries of the CVPRD. While the closest alignment is the Peaceful Valley CDP and Kendall CDP, data available through the American Community Survey (ACS) five-year Data Profile Estimates indicates that the error margin for these areas has been high over the past several years and does not accurately portray the demographics of the area. As of 2020, the

CVPRD Commissioners determined the data from the Whatcom County Health Department's "Community Health Status Assessment - Mar 2018" and "Mount Baker Community Health Snapshot - December 2018" to be the most accurate description of the population residing within the CVPRD boundaries. This data accounts for the population residing within the boundaries depicted in the map in Figure 4. This area overlaps with most of the CVPRD but excludes Kendall. This data from the health department is used throughout this chapter and is supplemented with data from the ACS and the two local water districts.

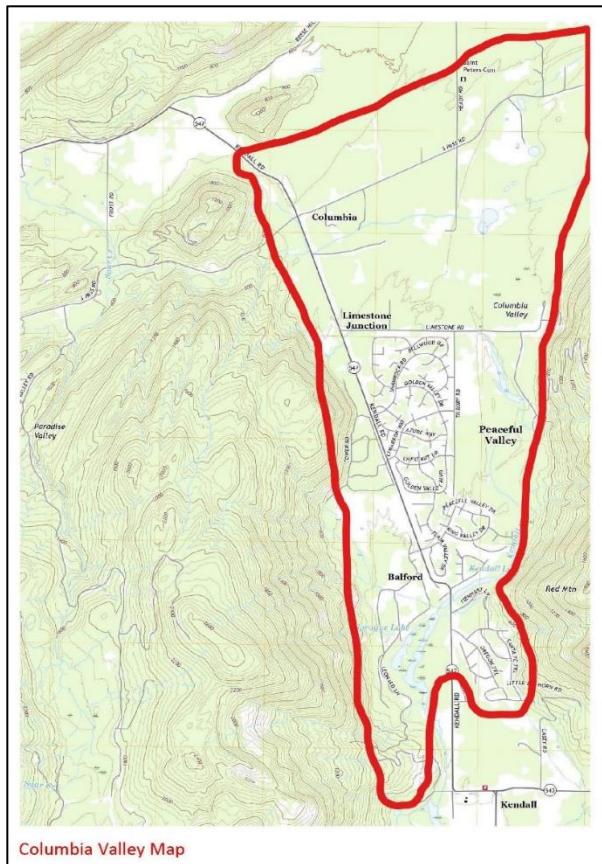


Figure 4: The area outlined in red represents the demographic information for Columbia Valley as defined by the Whatcom County Health Department "Community Health Status Assessment - Mar 2018" and the "Mount Baker Community Health Snapshot - December".

comparable to the average age of Whatcom County residents (37 years) and Washington residents (37.6 years). The age distribution of the Columbia Valley population is depicted in Table 1.

Table 1: Age distribution of the Columbia Valley population (2018) within the boundaries depicted in the map in Figure 4 and described by the Whatcom County Health Department "Community Health Status Assessment- Mar 2018" and the "Mount Baker Community Health Snapshot- Dec 2018".

## POPULATION

The Columbia Valley population was estimated to include approximately 5,657 individuals in 2018, according to information from the Whatcom County Health Department (2018).<sup>1</sup> The CVPRD population has grown over the last several decades. A report from the Office of Financial Management (OFM) revealed that the Columbia Valley UGA has grown in population from 2,267 in 2000 to 3,348 in 2018, an increase of 48% in 18 years. The population of the area is expected to continue to grow in the coming decades.

## AGE GROUP DISTRIBUTION

According to the 2018 ACS five-year Data Profile Estimates, the average age of the population living in the Peaceful Valley CDP is 33.6 years,

Based on population estimate of: 5657		
AGES:	PERCENTAGE:	TOTAL:
0-4	5.2%	294
5-14	11.5%	650
15-20	11.5%	650
25-44	23.1%	1307
45-64	33.3%	1884
65 +	12.7%	718
<b>97.3% Total</b>		

<sup>1</sup> Previous efforts to calculate the population residing within the CVPRD boundaries using data from the American Community Survey (ACS) five-year Data Profile Estimates were unsuccessful due to the high margin of error in the estimates over the last few years. Because of this, in 2020, the population estimate for the area depicted in Figure 4 was determined to be the closest approximation of the population residing within the CVPRD. The population of Kendall is excluded from this population estimate. According to the 2016 American Community Survey five-year Estimates Data Profile, Kendall CDP has a population of 133 individuals, although the margin of error for this data (+/-102) is high.



## Park User Groups by Age

The following list describes park, recreation, and trail user groups by age cohorts.

**Under Age 4:** Youth in this group are often in strollers when visiting park and trail sites. This group uses playground equipment and represents future youth activities participants.

**Ages 5 to 14:** Youth in this group participate in youth programming and use playgrounds and other age-specific recreational equipment.

**Ages 15 to 20:** Youth in this group are moving out of youth programs and into adult programs. This group uses recreational equipment and park facilities such as skate parks, picnic areas, and exercise equipment.

**Ages 25 to 44:** Members of this group might participate in adult programming and often have children or are beginning to establish families who use various park facilities.

**Ages 45 to 64:** Members of this group may participate in adult programming and use park facilities. Characteristics extend from having children using youth programs to not having children or not having children at home.

**Ages 65+ plus:** Members of this group might participate in adult programming. Some members of this group have grandchildren. This group ranges from individuals who are very healthy and active to less physically active seniors.

CVPRD Age Distribution by Park User Group (2018)

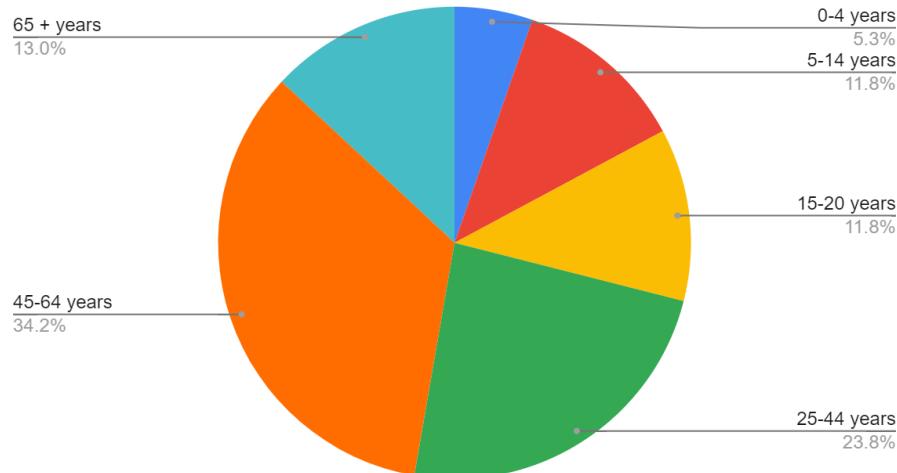


Figure 5: The 2018 age distribution characteristics of CVPRD residents by park user group.

## RACE AND ETHNICITY

According to data from the Whatcom County Health Department, in 2018, 59.8% of Columbia Valley residents identified as White (non-slavic), 25% Slavic, 7.2% Hispanic, 1.6% Asian, 0.3% African American and 0.17% Native American (see Table 2). According to this same data, 9.4% of Columbia Valley residents speak a language other than English as their primary language. The 2018 ACS Data Profile Estimates show that 5.1% of the Peaceful Valley CDP population speaks Spanish at home, 1.5% speak Asian and Pacific Islander languages and 0.6% speak other Indo-European languages.<sup>2</sup>

*Table 2: Race and ethnicity make-up of the Columbia Valley population (2018) within the boundaries depicted in the map in Figure 4 and described by the Whatcom County Health Department “Community Health Status Assessment - Mar 2018” and the “Mount Baker Community Health Snapshot - December 2018”.*

<b>Based on a population estimate of: 5657</b>		
<b>RACE AND ETHNICITY:</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE:</b>	<b>TOTAL:</b>
White (non-slavic)	59.8%	3383
Slavic	25%	1414
Hispanic	7.2%	407
Asian	1.6%	90
African American	.3%	17
Native American	.17%	10

## HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

According to the ACS Data Profile Estimates, the average household size in Peaceful Valley was 2.6 individuals in 2018. The average family size was 3.4, with 34.9% percent of households including children under 18 years of age. The two water districts that serve the area encompassed by the CVPRD boundaries, the Columbia Valley Water District (CVWD) and Whatcom County Water District 13, serviced 1,522 and 386 households, respectively, in the fall of 2020. Adding these numbers, the CVPRD encompasses 1,908 households. As shown in Table 3, 30.2% of the Columbia Valley population within these households includes families with children under 18 years old, 15.6% of the population is disabled, 11.2% of the population includes veterans and 12.9% of the 65+ age group lives alone.

*Table 3: This table depicts the household characteristics of the Columbia Valley population within the boundaries depicted in the map in Figure 4 and described by the Whatcom County Health Department “Community Health Status Assessment - Mar 2018” and the “Mount Baker Community Health Snapshot - December 2018.”*

<b>Based on a population estimate of: 5657</b>		
<b>HOUSEHOLDS:</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE:</b>	<b>TOTAL:</b>
Families w/ Children <18 yr. old	30.2% of 5657 population	1708
Disabled	15.6% of 5657	849
5-17 w/ disabilities	5.5% of 849	47
18-34 w/ disabilities	7.9% of 849	67
35-64 w/ disabilities	14.4% of 849	122
65-74 w/ disabilities	25.40% of 849	216
75 + w/ disabilities	46.5% of 849	395
Veterans	11.2% of 5657	650
65+ living alone	12.9% of 718	93

<sup>2</sup> Demographic data from Kendall Elementary School is informative. While this school serves students from multiple areas in East Whatcom County, many students reside within the CVPRD boundaries. During the 2019-2020 school year, Kendall Elementary School served 394 students, according to the 2019-20 Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) Report Card. This data depicts a student population that is 73.9% White, 14.7% Hispanic/Latinx, 2.8% American Indian/Alaska Native, 0.8% Asian, 0.5% Black or African American, and 7.4% two or more races.

## **HOUSING**

The number of households in Peaceful Valley nearly doubled between 2000 (787 households) and 2018 (1,532 households), according to numbers from the 2000 Census and the 2018 ACS five-year Data Profile Estimates, respectively. While Columbia Valley has historically been a mainstay of affordable housing in East Whatcom County, attracting veterans and new homeowners as well as proprietors of rental properties, the cost of housing has been on an upward trend. The median cost of housing increased from \$112,700 in 2010 to \$146,400 in 2018, an increase of nearly 30%.



## **EMPLOYMENT**

Historically, many residents of Columbia Valley worked in forestry and the saw and shingle mills. Today, some residents within the CVP RD boundaries are still employed by the forestry industry, but more residents work in education (employment at Kendall School, Mt. Baker Junior High, or Mt. Baker High School); professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services; manufacturing; retail; arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services; and seasonal tourism and service (i.e. employment at the Mt. Baker Ski Area). Results from the 2018 ACS five-year Data Profile Estimates show that residents also work in agriculture, construction, and manufacturing. Limited job opportunities are available within the CVP RD boundaries, and many residents commute to Bellingham, Lynden, Everson, Sumas, or Ferndale for work.

## **INCOME**

In 2018, according to the 2018 ACS five-year Data Profile Estimates, the mean household income for the Peaceful Valley CDP was \$47,834, compared to the Whatcom County average of \$76,439 and the Washington State average of \$93,847. According to the ACS, 35% of the Peaceful Valley CDP population had an income below the poverty level in the past 12 months, compared to 15% of people in Whatcom County. Of the 394 students who attended Kendall Elementary School in 2019-2020, 75% fall into the low-income bracket based on the October 1st, 2019, CEDARS Free- and Reduced-Price Lunch (FRPL) data reporting as of March 31, 2020.

## **COMMUNITY HEALTH**

East Whatcom County, including the area served by the CVP RD, qualifies as a rural food desert according to the 2019 East Whatcom Food Landscape Assessment which was prepared by Aly Robinson, MHPc, a Community Health Specialist at Whatcom County Health Department. The area was first assessed as a food desert by the 2013 East Whatcom Food Landscape Assessment conducted by Lina Pinero Walkinshaw, MHP. This first East Whatcom Food Landscape assessment was conducted prior to the loss of three neighborhood groceries: Nugents Corner IGA, Everybody's Store in Van Zandt, and Bromley's Market.

## **Excerpt from “The Health Benefits of Parks: How Parks Help Keep Americans and their Communities Fit and Healthy” by Erica Gies (2006)**

“All people need physical activity to maintain fitness and health. Physical activity increases strength, flexibility, and endurance; relieves symptoms of depression and anxiety; improves mood; and enhances psychological well-being.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), only 25 percent of American adults engage in recommended levels of physical activity, and 29 percent engage in no leisure-time physical activity at all. This sedentary lifestyle is contributing to an increased incidence of obesity along with obesity-related diseases, such as high blood pressure, diabetes, congestive heart failure, and stroke.

As one solution to the increased incidence of obesity, the CDC has called for more parks and playgrounds. Studies have shown that when people have access to parks, they exercise more...

Exposure to nature in parks, gardens, and natural areas can improve psychological and social health. Surgical patients recover faster with windows that look out on trees. Horticultural therapy has evolved as a form of mental health treatment based on the therapeutic effects of gardening. Children who suffer from attention deficit disorder (ADD) can concentrate on schoolwork better after taking part in activities in green settings. Residents in housing projects with views of trees or grass experience reduced mental fatigue and report that they are better able to cope with life’s problems.

Parks provide children with opportunities for play, and play is critical in the development of muscle strength and coordination, language, and cognitive abilities...

Parks increase ‘social capital.’ That is, when people work together in a community garden or to create a park from a vacant lot, they get to know one another, trust one another, and look out for one another. The accomplishment of creating a new park helps people to believe that they can effect change.”

Healthcare facilities are located throughout Whatcom County with the closest doctor clinic in the neighboring city of Sumas. This facility is roughly 15 minutes away by car via the switchback portion of Kendall Sumas Highway or by driving through the city of Everson, which takes approximately 35 minutes of travel from the CVPRD. Everson also has a community clinic operated by SeaMar and both cities have prescription services. The nearest hospital, PeaceHealth St Joseph’s, is about 40 minutes away by car and 70 minutes by bus.

## **SCHOOLS**

The CVPRD falls within the Mt. Baker School District #507 boundaries. The school district encompasses the communities of Acme, Columbia Valley, Kendall, Nugents Corner, Glenhaven, Van Zandt, Glacier, and Maple Falls. Mt. Baker School District is almost entirely rural and serves a diverse population of approximately 2,000 students from preschool through grade twelve. The school district includes three elementary schools, a junior high school (grades 7 and 8), and a four-year high school. Kendall Elementary and Mt. Baker Junior/Senior High School serve the CVPRD.

## 4. INVENTORY



An array of federal, state, county, and other public and private agencies provide recreational opportunities to the larger community of Whatcom County. These agencies maintain multipurpose trails, athletic fields, playgrounds, community centers, waterfront access, picnic facilities, historic sites, wildlife conservancies, and more. However, there are limited opportunities to recreate within Columbia Valley itself. This chapter highlights the existing CVPRD amenities and programming in Columbia Valley as well as additional parks and recreational facilities located in the Foothills area and managed by other agencies.

### PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

The following definitions are used throughout the document to classify parks and other recreational facilities:

- *Park*: an area of land designated for active or passive recreational uses.
- *Neighborhood parks*: serve the immediate neighborhood and are generally smaller facilities with limited activities and parking. They are often located within one half- to one quarter-mile walking distance of residences.
- *Community parks*: serve a single community within a service area of approximately five miles. Community parks generally offer both passive and active recreational opportunities and include amenities such as picnic areas, playgrounds, shelters, playfields, and courts.
- *Trails*: provide non-motorized, off-road pathways. Trails are often incorporated to form a network throughout the planning area and connect neighborhoods with important community spaces. They may be built for a variety of uses including walking, biking, running, and horseback riding.
- *Special use sites*: cover a broad range of parks and recreation facilities oriented toward a single-purpose use. They often fall into three general categories including cultural facilities (gardens, art displays, and historic sites), indoor facilities (community centers, teen/senior centers, aquatic centers), and unique sites (arboretums, cemeteries, plazas, community gardens, golf courses).
- *Programming*: includes a range of organized activities and programs. Programming provides a way for the community to interact with green spaces and other community members.

### CVPRD INVENTORY

The following section includes the sites, facilities, and programs managed by the CVPRD.

#### PARK SITES AND FACILITIES

The CVPRD does not currently own or manage any park properties or facilities. With adequate funding, the CVPRD anticipates opening a park by 2025.

#### CVPRD PROGRAMMING

There are few recreational programs, such as exercise classes and youth programming, within Columbia Valley. To fill this gap, the CVPRD aims to provide an array of recreational programs in Columbia

Valley for community members of all ages. The CVPRD currently has funding for one program, the *East Whatcom Gets Active!* exercise classes.

### ***East Whatcom Gets Active!***

The *East Whatcom Gets Active!* program, funded in 2020-21 by a Project Neighborly Grant from Whatcom Community Foundation, aims to support community cohesion and physical wellness by offering no cost fitness activities designed to accommodate a range of age groups, accessibility needs, and interests. Paid local fitness instructors will offer weekly classes such as barre, yoga, tai chi, zumba, self-defense, and chair or limited mobility versions of one or more of these classes. Classes will meet regularly for 6-24 weeks. These classes will encourage community members to practice fitness habits and will create an opportunity for community members to get to know one another under casual circumstances and bond over the experience of being physically active together. Classes will take place within the CVPRD boundaries, such as at the East Whatcom Regional Resource Center (EWRRC), and, possibly, virtually. The close-to-home location of the classes will make regular physical activity more accessible to Columbia Valley residents.

### **CONDITION**

Once implemented, CVPRD park facilities will be inspected and assessed on a regular basis. The condition of existing CVPRD facilities and programs is listed in Table 4.

*Table 4: The condition of existing CVPRD facilities and programs.*

Park/program name	Condition of facilities or opportunities	Maintenance and operation costs	Funding source
<i>East Whatcom Gets Active!</i>	\$4984 is available for the program.	Professional instructor payment: \$2,700 Outreach materials: \$1,150 Giveaway promotion: \$600 Indirect at 12%: \$534 Total: \$4984	2020 Whatcom Community Foundation's Project Neighborly Grant (one-time, \$4984)  When funding runs out, a sliding scale fee will be put in place, and classes will be taught by instructors who can work for free or reduced wages.

### **PARK OPERATIONS**

The CVPRD is responsible for the operations, maintenance, and oversight of all CVPRD properties, facilities, and programs. CVPRD work is guided by community input and through an elected five-person board of commissioners, in accordance with RCW 36.69. Each commissioner brings different areas of expertise and life experience to the goal of providing parks and recreational opportunities for the community of Columbia Valley.

While the CVPRD does not currently have any full- or part-time employees, the CVPRD intends to hire a part-time administrative employee and a part-time maintenance employee as property is acquired and funding is secured. Professional instructors will be hired for the *East Whatcom Gets Active!* exercise classes. A volunteer program will supplement commissioner and employee hours.

### **FOOTHILLS AREA PARKS AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

The parks, trails, and recreational opportunities listed in Table 5 are located in the area surrounding the CVPRD. See Figure 6 for site locations. While there are parks, trails, and recreational opportunities located close to the CVPRD, none exist within the CVPRD boundaries.

*Table 5: Parks, trails, and recreational opportunities in the Foothills area of Whatcom County and their distance (miles) from the East Whatcom Regional Resource Center, which is in a central location for the CVPRD.*

Classification	Site Name	Size	Managing Agency	Address	Miles from East Whatcom Regional Resource Center
Parks	Silver Lake Park	412 acres	Whatcom County	9006 Silver Lake Rd. Maple Falls, WA	8.5
	Deming Homestead Eagle Park	33 acres	Whatcom County	5695 Truck Rd #5663, Deming, WA 98244	9.4
	Welcome Bridge Access	.6 acres	Whatcom County	5585 Mosquito Lake Road Deming, WA	8.7
	Maple Falls Park	NA	Maple Falls Park Committee	7470 Second St. Maple Falls, WA	5.1
	Maple Creek Park	NA	Whatcom County	7842 Silver Lake Rd. Maple Falls, WA	5.0
Trail	Bay to Baker Trail (Maple Falls to Glacier Trail)	4 miles	Whatcom County	7842 Silver Lake Rd. Maple Falls, WA	5.0
	Silver Lake Trail	3.1 miles	Whatcom County	9006 Silver Lake Rd. Maple Falls, WA	8.8
	Canyon Lake Community Forest Trail	4.5 miles	Whatcom County	8300 Mt. Baker Highway Deming, WA	13.7+5.7 due to washed out road (current as of 2020)
	Ostrom Conservation Forest Trail	.66 miles	Whatcom County/Nooksack Valley School District	4304 South Pass Road Everson, WA	7.1
	Deming Homestead Eagle Park Trail	.30 miles	Whatcom County	5695 Truck Rd #5663, Deming, WA 98244	8.7
Special Use Site/Activity Center	East Whatcom Regional Resource Center	1 center	Opportunity Council	8251 Kendall Rd, Maple Falls, WA 98266	0
	Welcome Senior Center	1 center	Whatcom County	5103 Mosquito Lake Rd, Deming, WA 98244	10.3

## Closest Parks and Trails to Columbia Valley Park and Recreation District

Sources: Esri, Airbus DS, USGS, NGA, NASA, CGIAR, N Robinson, NCEAS, NLS, OS, NIMA, Geodatasource, Rijkswaterstaat, GSA, Geoland, FEMA, Intermap and the GIS user community, COB, Whatcom County, OSM  
CRS: WGS 1984 UTM Zone 10N Author: Larson Wesche

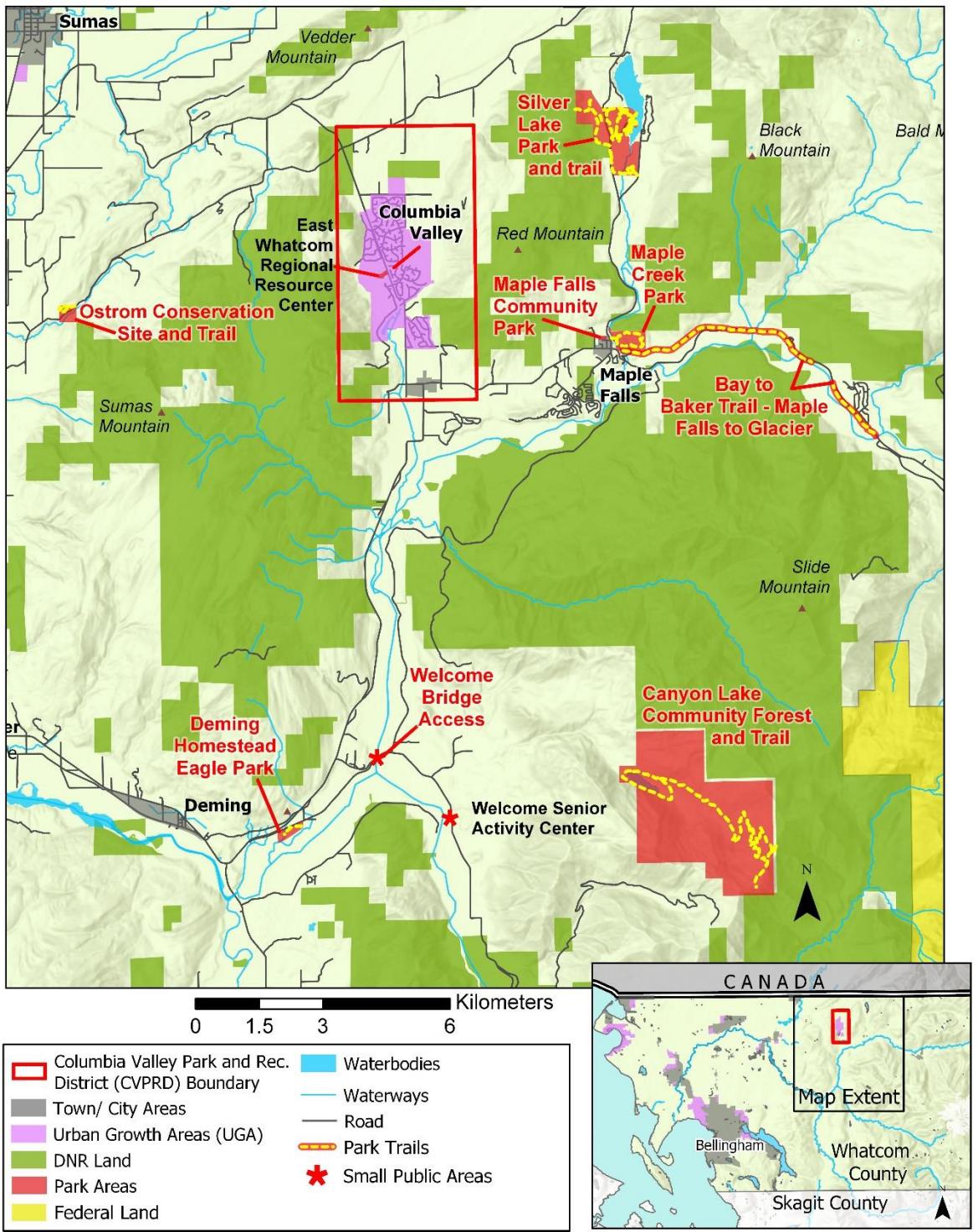


Figure 6: Parks, trails, and recreational opportunities in the Foothills Subarea of East Whatcom County.

## 5. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT



Community input has played a crucial role in developing the CVPRD goals and objectives and in prioritizing capital projects. This focus on community input has guided the CVPRD in establishing a planning framework that will best fulfill the priorities of Columbia Valley residents. The CVPRD has used a variety of public participation methods to elicit community input. This chapter describes the methods used to engage the community and the key findings from those methods.

### REGULAR MEETINGS

The CVPRD holds several regular meetings, which are open to the public.

#### REGULAR PUBLIC MEETINGS

Public meetings are held by the elected commissioners at 5PM on the second Thursday of each month. These meetings are open to the public. Meetings are generally held at the Peaceful Valley Country Club building or over Zoom when in-person meetings are not feasible. The Zoom meeting information is listed on the CVPRD website.

#### MONTHLY COMPREHENSIVE PARK PLAN MEETINGS

Public meetings were held on the first Friday of each month during the drafting period of the Comprehensive Park Plan.

### OTHER OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

Additional community outreach and involvement methods include:

#### OUTREACH

The following outlets are used to update the community on CVPRD news, events, and opportunities:

- CVPRD website: [www.cv-prd.org](http://www.cv-prd.org)
- Social media including the Columbia Valley NextDoor and Facebook
- Public notices posted on the CVPRD website and in physical locations in the CVPRD

#### PUBLIC FEEDBACK

The following methods are used to elicit feedback from the community on a regular basis:

- Public comment: feedback is accepted online via the CVPRD website, through email, in writing, or during the public comment period of every CVPRD public meeting
- Community feedback survey: distributed no less than every three years

#### CVPRD 2020 SUMMER SURVEY

The CVPRD 2020 Summer Survey was distributed to the public online via community Facebook groups, the local NextDoor Neighborhood Group, and on the CVPRD website. The goal of this survey was to understand the interest of the community in neighborhood parks, preferences for facilities, and funding sources. A total of 73 community members completed the survey. The survey is included in Appendix A.

The results of the CVPRD 2020 Summer Survey provide a benchmark of comparison for future surveys. While the sample size for the 2020 survey was relatively small and, therefore, not significant, the sample

suggests that there is support from the community for new parks in Columbia Valley. Of 73 survey respondents, 91.7% said that they would like parks in Columbia Valley and 5.5% of respondents said that they do not want parks in the Columbia Valley. A total of 65 individuals responded to a question regarding their support for various funding mechanisms for parks. Of those respondents, 19.7% support a six-year levy at 60 cents per thousand dollars of assessed property value, 40.9% support grants and other funding for parks, 36.4% support grants and levies, and 1.5% support all funding opportunities for parks. Overall, 57.6% of survey respondents support funding parks through a levy. Respondents expressed support for ADA accessible programmed parks with amenities such as playgrounds, picnic areas, and dog parks. Both respondents who were and were not in favor of building parks in Columbia Valley voiced concerns that should be addressed in park planning, including concerns about vandalism and drug use in parks and fears about an increase in taxes associated with parks

## SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES PARTNERSHIP

In 2020, the CVPRD partnered with Western Washington University's (WWU) Sustainable Communities Partnership (SCP) to draft this Comprehensive Park Plan. Over the fall 2020, WWU's Dr. Tamara Laninga and students in her Community Development and Participatory Methods course (ENVS 475) conducted a public engagement campaign, including a survey of public demand, a focus group session, and stakeholder interviews to identify community needs and desires for parks and recreation infrastructure. The following key findings were consistent between the methods:

- There is a need for parks in Columbia Valley.
- There is strong support for them in Columbia Valley.
- Columbia Valley residents want to see developed parks with playgrounds, picnic tables, walking paths, dog parks, and more.
- Residents do not want to pay for parks through levies; they do not support an increase in taxes.
- Many residents do not know about the CVPRD.
- CVPRD needs to be involved in more community outreach/education about parks and funding sources.
- The big concerns people have about parks are related to crime/vandalism, litter, and increases in taxes.

The findings from each method are summarized in the following sections.

### SURVEY OF PUBLIC DEMAND

The survey of public demand, included in Appendix B, was distributed online and in paper form in fall 2020 and facilitated by WWU students in ENVS 475. A total of 69 surveys were completed. While decisive conclusions cannot be drawn from this small sample size, the responses contain important information. The following is a condensed description of the survey findings.

Fifty-two percent of respondents identified that they "Strongly support" building parks in Columbia Valley. Thirty-nine percent stated that they voted "Yes" on a parks levy on the November 2020 ballot. This levy was ultimately voted down in 2020. When asked what type of setting is desirable in a new park, a narrow majority of respondents indicated that they would like to use the parks to "Exercise or move about," followed closely by "Relax or be reflective," and "Take the kids to play." Respondents showed support for programmed parks, which typically have physical structures and encourage a specific type of activity. Examples of amenities at programmed parks include gated dog parks, play structures, wooden pathways, and basketball courts. A majority of respondents (51%) said their preferred way to get to local parks is by pedestrian access or walking. Other methods listed were driving and biking.

Of the survey respondents, 27% indicated that they voted "No" on the proposed levy on the November 2020 ballot. The most common concerns that came up during the survey include drugs, crime, and other

illegal activities; litter and vandalism; taxation (in response to the proposed levy); lack of need due to plenty of existing outdoor recreational opportunities in the area; and security concerns.

## **FOCUS GROUPS**

A focus group session included a facilitated focused conversation regarding park development in Columbia Valley. The findings from the focus group session suggest that there is support for building parks in Columbia Valley. Parks would improve the quality of life in the area and provide a place for families to spend time together outside of their residences. They would serve as an easy way to build community in Columbia Valley. Specifically, there is support for parks within walking distance of residences because most of the existing natural spaces surrounding Columbia Valley are far enough away that they require residents to drive. Play structures, a dog park, benches, garbage cans, paved trails for bikes and accessibility, covered picnic areas, security lighting, and workout equipment would all be beneficial amenities to include in parks. Concerns about building parks in Columbia Valley include tax raises (if a levy is passed), vandalism, night-time loitering, littering, and garbage dumping. Installing motion activated lights would ensure a feeling of safety at the park while deterring drug use and illegal activities. Sourcing and maintaining garbage cans would help manage litter.

## **STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS**

Over the course of November 2020, WWU students conducted eleven interviews with various Columbia Valley stakeholders. The interviews helped to elicit information regarding the community's support for and concerns about the CVPRD goal of constructing parks within Columbia Valley. A summary of the findings is included below.

Community members feel that the current stock of amenities in Columbia Valley is not adequate. While there are undeveloped green spaces in Columbia Valley, this space is not accessible or safe enough for regular use. Accessibility proves to be a challenge for many residents to access the local parks that are located outside of the CVPRD boundaries. Community members think that parks in Columbia Valley will have benefits including that they will provide a public place for residents to interact with neighbors and other community members, a safe place for kids to play and make friends, and a place to exercise and partake in recreational activities and sports. Additionally, community members feel that parks will increase community safety. Interviewees voiced support for developed areas with activities for children and teenagers, trails or walking paths, covered pavilions for family and community gatherings, and recreational activities like basketball courts, soccer fields, skate parks, baseball mounds, etc.

Community members are concerned that parks will be used by vagrants and homeless people, that they will turn into places to deal and do drugs, and that they will encourage teens to participate in unsavory behavior. Some community members are also concerned that parks will not be maintained and will lead to lowered home values.

## **PARK DESIGN**

Figure 7 includes visual representations of potential park design based off the community input elicited through various public participation methods. The design includes amenities such as a picnic area, a covered outdoor space, a playground, and walking paths around the park. The design includes ample lighting to increase visibility and promote a sense of safety within parks. The design is meant to provide a representation of what a park could look like. There are currently no plans to implement these designs in park development.

Moving forward, the CVPRD will continue to center the needs and priorities of the community. To achieve this, the CVPRD will partner with local groups and entities to promote public involvement in all stages of planning, implementation, and management.

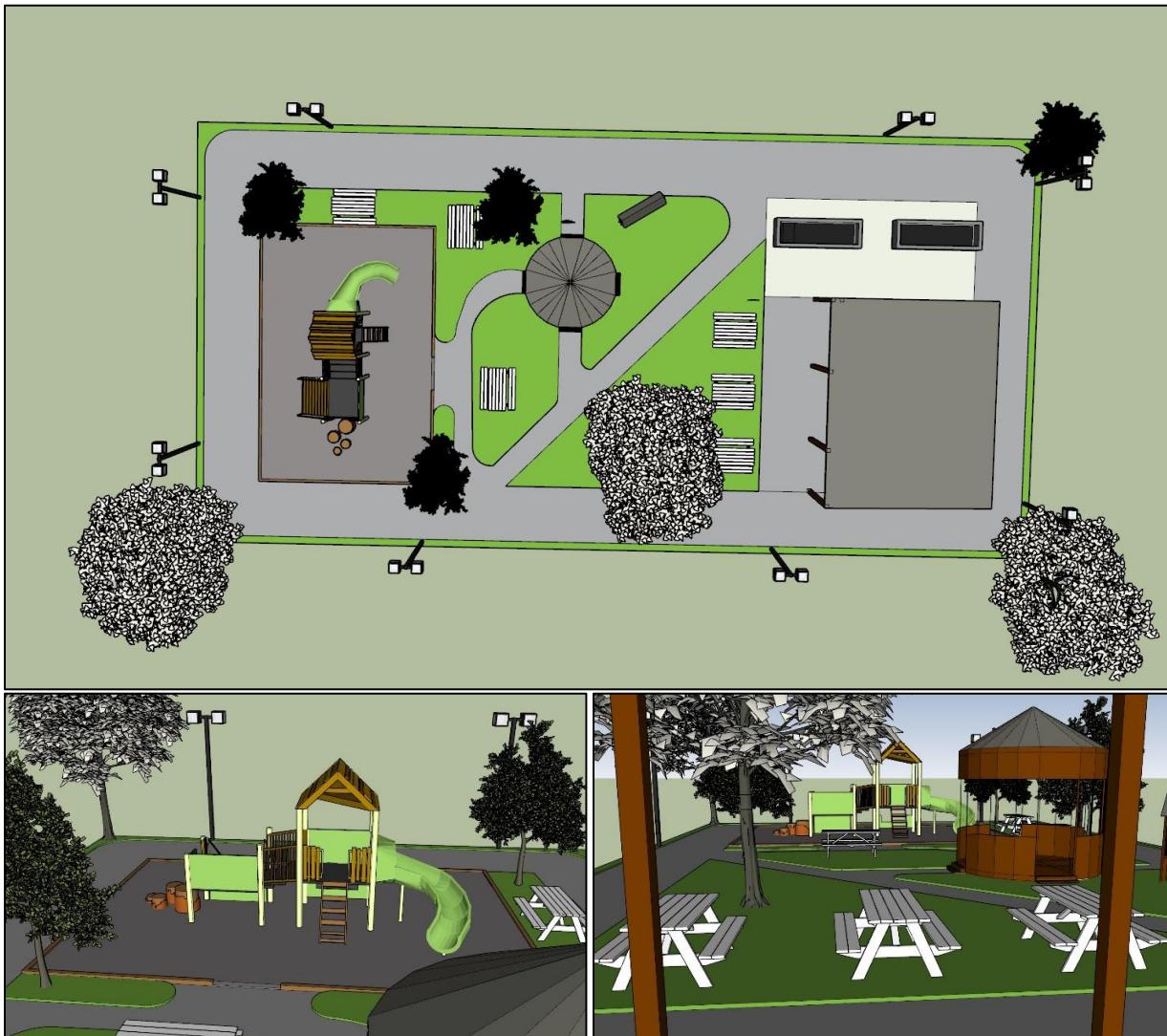


Figure 7: CVPRD park design based off community input. The design features amenities such as covered areas, picnic tables, and a playground.

## 6. DEMAND & NEED STATEMENT

While Whatcom County hosts ample parks, trails, and recreational facilities, Columbia Valley currently lacks adequate recreational opportunities for its residents. The CVPRD was formed by popular vote in November 2016 to address the desire for accessible parks and recreational opportunities within the Columbia Valley. While no parks are currently operated by the CVPRD, with adequate funding, the CVPRD expects to open two parks by 2025 and three additional parks by 2030.

The CVPRD will offer residents close-to-home parks and recreational opportunities to congregate in, recreate in and build or maintain their healthy lifestyles around. Neighborhood and community parks will promote the growth of social capital within the CVPRD area by offering a communal space for residents to interact in and strengthen relationships. Events that occur within the parks, including family and community gatherings and recreational programs, such as exercise classes, will offer further opportunities for community building and will support healthy habitats. This chapter summarizes the CVPRD Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and the tools used to determine the need for the components of the CIP.

### PROPOSED CAPITAL PROJECTS

Based on determined need and input from the community, the CVPRD Capital Improvement Program (CIP) identifies a series of proposed capital improvement projects for the period of 2020-2030. In summary, the CVPRD intends to open five neighborhood and/or community parks by 2030, each of which will be designed to serve the needs of the community with the available resources. The amenities included in the CIP have been prioritized based on public input. Additionally, the CVPRD intends to implement and support recreational programming and an annual community meal hosted within the CVPRD boundaries. The proposed CIP in Table 6 will be prioritized as funding is secured.

*Table 6: The CVPRD Capital Improvement Program (CIP) identifies a series of proposed capital improvement projects (land acquisitions, developments, renovations, and restorations) for the period of 2020-2030.*

Project	Type (land acquisitions, developments, renovations, and restorations)	Expected year of completion
Neighborhood Park 1	Land acquisition, park development, playground equipment, picnic area with barbecue	2025
Neighborhood Park 2	Land acquisition, park development, playground equipment, picnic area with barbecue	2025
Neighborhood Park 3	Land acquisition, park development, playground equipment, picnic area with barbecue, dog park	2030
Neighborhood Park 4	Land acquisition, park development, playground equipment, picnic area with barbecue	2030
Community/Neighborhood Park 5	Land acquisition, park development, playground equipment, picnic area with barbecue	2030
East Whatcom Gets Active! Exercise Class	Program development, instructor pay	Ongoing
Annual Community Meal	Program development, meal costs	Ongoing

## **ADDITIONAL NEEDS**

Strategic planning and development of volunteer resources for labor and donations is critical to meet the needs and demands of the community. Two part-time staff members are necessary to implement, maintain and operate the proposed capital projects; recruit, train and utilize volunteers; and coordinate efforts with other partners and jurisdictions.

## **DETERMINING THE NEED**

Several tools were used to determine the need for the CIP, including a level of service (LOS) analysis, population projections, an analysis of existing park and recreation opportunity distribution and accessibility, and community input. These tools are described in the following section.

### **LEVEL OF SERVICE ANALYSIS**

A level of service (LOS) analysis quantifies the public facilities that are provided to a community and compares this data to set standards, generally on a per capita basis. A LOS analysis offers insight into how a community's facilities compare quantitatively to those of other communities, agencies, and national standards and can aid in prioritizing capital projects. The LOS analysis portrayed in Table 7 applies the Whatcom County LOS standards to the CVPRD. This LOS analysis confirms that while the East Whatcom Regional Resource Center adequately serves as the activity center for Columbia Valley, there is a parkland and trail deficit within the CVPRD boundaries.

*Table 7: Level of Service (LOS) Analysis for the CVPRD based on Whatcom County standards.*

Based on a population estimate of: 5657				
Category	Whatcom County LOS	CVPRD Total Needed	CVPRD Total	Surplus/Deficit
Parks	9.6 acres/1,000 residents	54.3 Acres	0	-54.3 acres
Trails	0.60 miles/1,000 residents	3.4 miles	0	-3.4 miles
Activity Centers	5 centers/100,000 residents	1	1 (East Whatcom Regional Resource Center)	0

Generally, LOS standards are applied on a county-wide basis rather than on a subarea basis. While the surplus/deficit calculations shown in Table 7 provide useful planning information, the CVPRD is not required to comply with the Whatcom County standards. Still, this analysis offers insight into the need for parks and trails within Columbia Valley.

## **POPULATION PROJECTIONS**

Washington State and Whatcom County have experienced rapid growth over the past decade, and both are expected to continue to grow within the coming decades. Consistent with this trend, Columbia Valley has seen an increase in population over the past several decades and is predicted to continue to grow. The Whatcom County Population and Employment Projections (2013) identified the population in the Columbia Valley UGA as 3,204 in 2013 and projected that the UGA will grow to 4,549 by 2036. The CVPRD will need to work with Whatcom County, other local and regional partners, grants, and private developers to fund, implement, and maintain facilities and programs as the population grows and the demand for parks and recreational facilities increases. Investing in neighborhood parks and close-to-home

recreational programs within Columbia Valley will ensure that current and future generations have access to spaces where they can recreate, connect, and be well.

## PARK AND RECREATION OPPORTUNITY DISTRIBUTION

Understanding the distribution of existing parks in Whatcom County provides a foundation for strategic planning to ensure that current and future residents of the Columbia Valley have access to parks in their neighborhood. Figure 8 reviews the locations of existing parks, trails, and special use sites surrounding Columbia Valley and applies the following park service areas, or the areas that individual parks serve, to these park locations:

- Neighborhood parks: 0.5-mile service area
- Community parks: 5-mile service area

As seen in Figure 8, while community parks serve Columbia Valley, there are no neighborhood parks serving the area. The Columbia Valley is a neighborhood park gap area, with limited recreational opportunities within walking distance from most residences. Research suggests that the closer a recreational opportunity is to one's home, the more likely the resident is to access the opportunity. Residents are most likely to regularly visit parks that are within walking distance of their homes. The greatest acquisition need for the CVPRD is for neighborhood park sites that promote passive and active recreation opportunities within walking distance of residential areas.

## ACCESS TO EXISTING PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

There are currently no sidewalks or community connector trails offering a safe route for community members to walk or bike to established parks or trails in the area surrounding Columbia Valley. The Whatcom Transportation Authority (WTA) 72x bus route runs between Columbia Valley and Bellingham several times each day, with a stop at the East Whatcom Regional Resource Center. However, the route does not travel further east than the CVPRD boundaries and does not offer direct access to the parks and trails closest to Columbia Valley. Traveling to parks and open spaces from the Columbia Valley necessitates a motorized vehicle.

The closest playfields to Columbia Valley residences are at Kendall Elementary School. The closest activity center is the East Whatcom Regional Resource Center. Access to these resources is along SR 547, a high-speed highway, and limited safe options exist for community members to cross from one side of the highway to the other. This creates a barrier for residents to access resources on the other side of the highway. There is a need for safe routes for residents to access existing and future parks and recreation opportunities within Columbia Valley.

## SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY INPUT

Community input has been collected through a combination of methods (outlined in Chapter Five: Public Involvement) and reviewed for CVPRD planning purposes. Through this process, the community has indicated that there is a need for parks in Columbia Valley and that there is strong support for them among residents. Columbia Valley residents most want to see programmed parks including amenities such as playgrounds, picnic tables, walking paths, and dog parks. However, many residents do not want to pay for parks through levies. Finally, some residents are concerned about the potential for crime, vandalism, and litter in parks, and increases in taxes due to a park levy. Community input, including support, desires, and concerns, have provided direction in the CVPRD planning process.

## Existing Park Service Areas in East Whatcom County

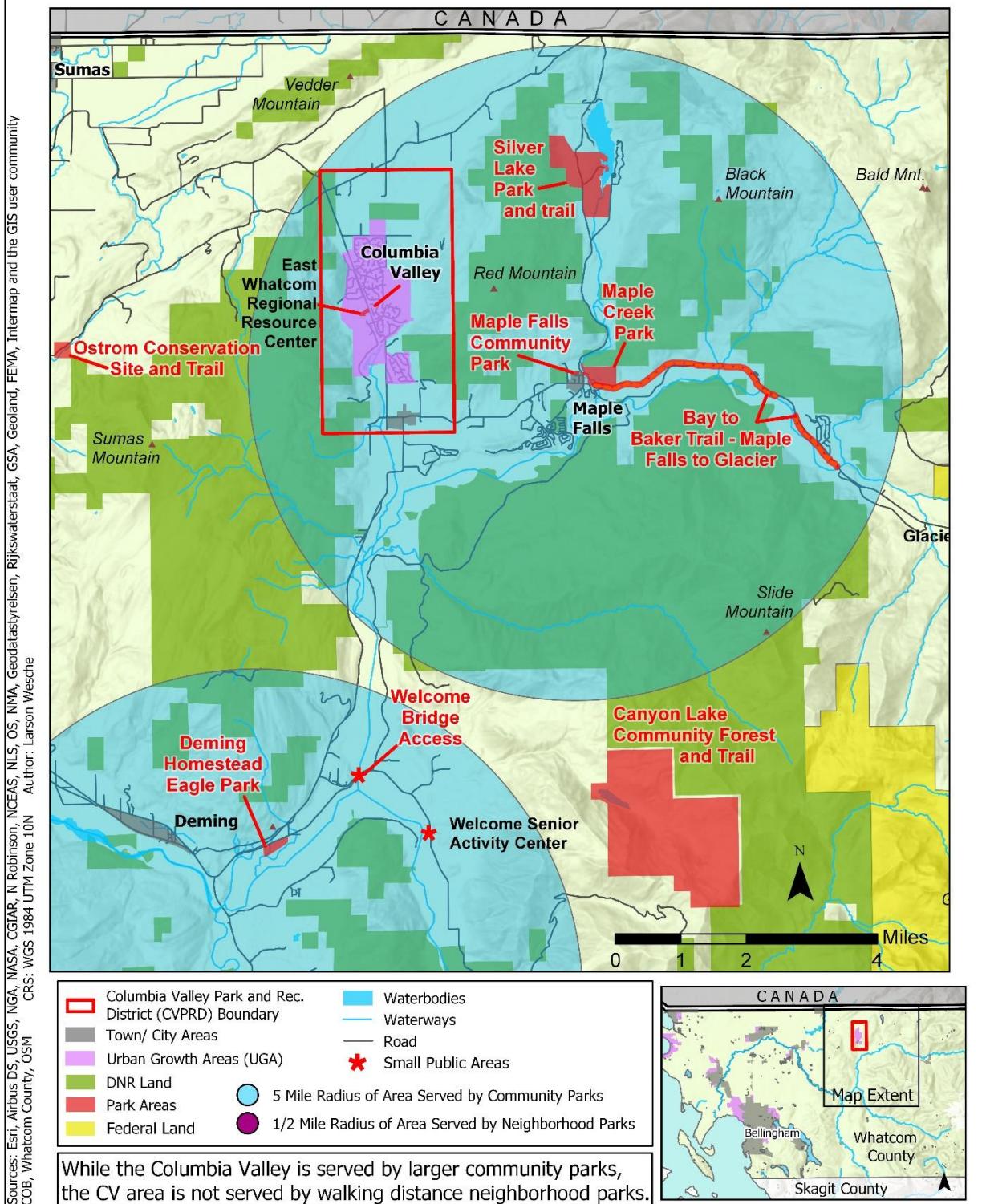


Figure 8: Service areas of existing parks in Whatcom County. The Columbia Valley Park and Recreation District (CVPRD) is within the service area of existing regional and community parks. There are no neighborhood parks within the CVPRD boundaries.

## PARK PLANNING PRIORITIES

The demand and need for parks, summarized in this chapter, has informed several priorities in park planning and development. These priorities include park location, size, and access.

### LOCATION

The locations of the CVPRD park(s) will be prioritized based on where they will serve the greatest number of people, with a goal of eventually having a park within one-quarter mile walking distance from all residences. Figure 9 identifies potential target acquisition areas. While the targeted acquisition areas do not identify a specific parcel(s) for consideration, the areas encompass a broader region in which an acquisition would be ideally suited. These acquisition targets represent a long-term vision for improving park distribution within Columbia Valley.

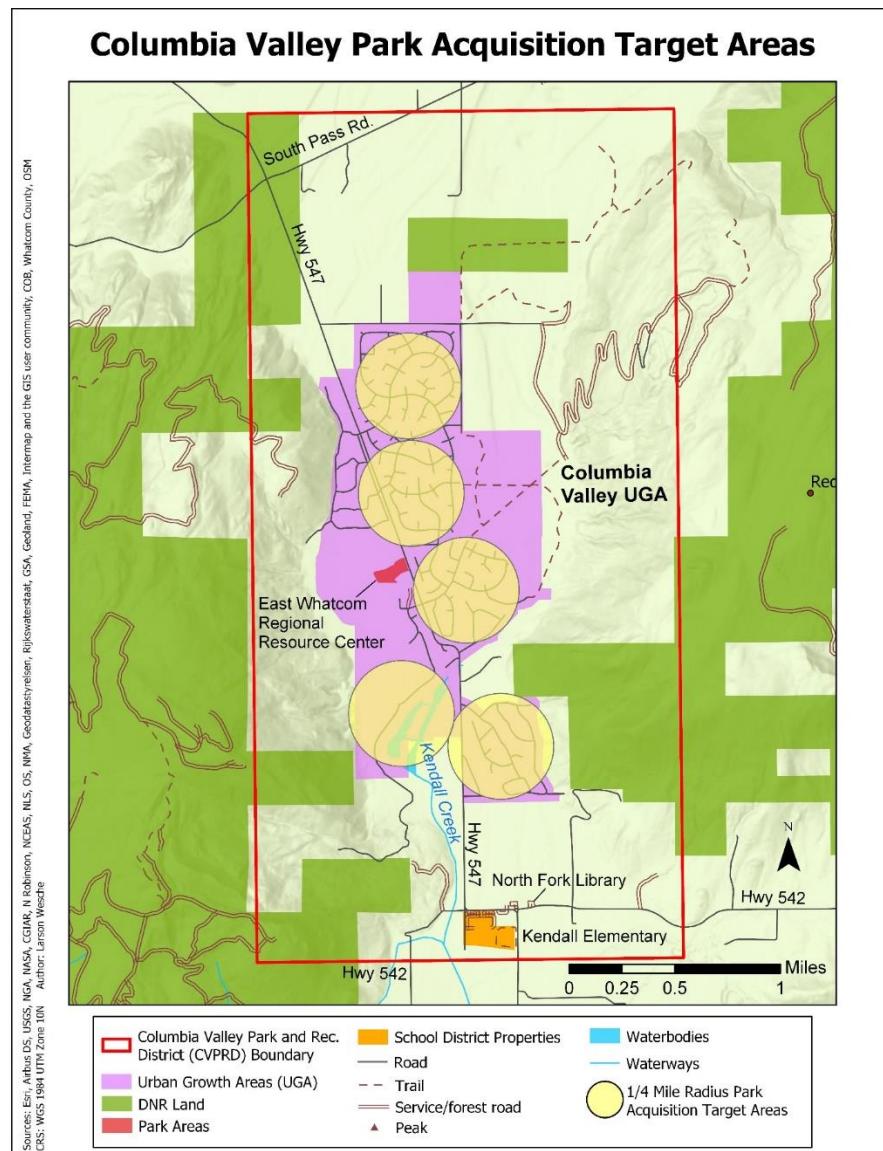


Figure 9: This map depicts the target park acquisition areas for the CVPRD. The circles encompass the primary residential areas within the CVPRD. If parks are built at the center of these circles, most community members in Columbia Valley will have a park within  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile of their residence.

### PARK SIZE

The CVPRD will prioritize parks that are a minimum of one-quarter acre in size. Most lots in the CVPRD are at least one-quarter acre. Larger lots or multiple lot sites would allow for more amenities in one space, thereby strengthening the primary goals of serving community members with varied needs, interests, abilities, and backgrounds as well as strengthening the diversity of community members who interact in each space.

### ACCESS

In implementing this plan, the CVPRD will prioritize incorporating safe routes between parks and residential areas. Safe routes to parks include sidewalks, trails, and other safe corridors for community members to walk or bike along between their residence and CVPRD facilities. Safe routes improve accessibility and promote visitation for those using multiple modes of transportation.

## **Safe Routes to Parks**

Safe routes improve accessibility and promote visitation for people walking, bicycling, and taking public transportation between their residence and their local park. According to the Safe Routes Partnership<sup>3</sup>, safe routes to parks are:

- Accessible via multiple modes of transportation for people of all ages and abilities.
- Conveniently located within, at most, one-half mile (10-minute walk) from where people live.
- Safe from traffic and personal danger.
- Comfortable and appealing places to walk or bicycle.
- End at parks that are well-maintained and programmed.

## **OTHER PLANNING PRIORITIES**

The CVPRD plans to increase access to recreational programming and activities to fill the current gap in such opportunities. The following programs and activities have been identified as priorities in filling that gap.

### **COMMUNITY MEAL**

The CVPRD will host an annual community meal to promote relationship building within the community and to build social capital. This meal will be organized and facilitated by commissioners and volunteers.

### **EAST WHATCOM GETS ACTIVE!**

This program, funded in 2020 by a Project Neighborly Grant from Whatcom Community Foundation, aims to support community cohesion and physical wellness by offering no cost fitness activities designed to accommodate a range of age groups, accessibility needs, and interests. While funding for this program was secured for 2020, it was not implemented due to restrictions from the COVID-19 pandemic.



<sup>3</sup> <https://www.saferoutespartnership.org/healthy-communities/saferoutestoparks>

## 7. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) prioritizes projects and strategic actions to guide the implementation of this plan. The projects were prioritized based on CVPRD goals, community input, gaps in existing parks and recreation opportunity inventory, anticipated CVPRD capacity, and recreation trends. The projects are intended to support the CVPRD mission of improving the quality of life in Columbia Valley by providing the community with access to diverse parks and recreational facilities.

The CIP identifies the prioritized acquisitions and improvements between 2020-2030. Table 8 provides a summary of the CIP, including proposed projects, scope, a timeline, estimated costs, and potential funding sources. Table 9 outlines the ongoing CVPRD operational budget. Details on potential grant funding sources can be found in Appendix C.

*Table 8: Proposed acquisition budget for a target of five total Columbia Valley Park and Recreation District parks by 2030.*

Project	Scope	Estimated Costs	Potential Funding Source
General Costs	Office/storage space acquisition	TBD	Levy, grants, partnerships (shared office/storage space)
	Maintenance equipment	TBD	Partnerships, levy, grants, monetary, or material donations
	<b>General Costs Total:</b> TBD		
Park 1 (Completed by 2025)	Land acquisition	\$35,000	Levy, grants, monetary, or land donations
	Equipment acquisition (playground, picnic benches, barbecue, etc.)	\$20,000	Levy, grants, monetary, or material donations
	Installation/landscaping	\$8,000	Levy, grants
	<b>Park 1 Total:</b> \$63,000		
Park 2 (Completed by 2025)	Land acquisition	\$35,000	Levy, grants, donations
	Equipment acquisition (playground, picnic benches, barbecue, etc.)	\$20,000	Levy, grants
	Installation/landscaping	\$8,000	Levy, grants
Park 2		<b>Park 2 Total:</b> \$63,000	
Park 3 (Completed by 2030)	Land acquisition	\$35,000	Levy, grants, donations
	Equipment acquisition (playground, picnic benches, barbecue, etc.)	\$20,000	Levy, grants
	Installation/landscaping	\$8,000	Levy, grants

	Dog park	\$15,000-\$30,000	Levy, grants
	<b>Park 3 Total:</b> \$78,000-\$93,000		
Park 4 (Completed by 2030)	Land acquisition	\$35,000	Levy, grants, donations
	Equipment acquisition (playground, picnic benches, barbecue, etc.)	\$20,000	Levy, grants
	Installation/landscaping	\$8,000	Levy, grants
	<b>Park 4 Total:</b> \$63,000		
Park 5 (Completed by 2030)	Land acquisition	\$35,000	Levy, grants, donations
	Equipment acquisition (playground, picnic benches, barbecue, etc.)	\$20,000	Levy, grants
	Installation/landscaping	\$8,000	Levy, grants
	<b>Park 5 Total:</b> \$63,000		
	<b>Total:</b> \$330,000-\$345,000		

Table 9: Proposed annual operating budget for Columbia Valley Park and Recreation District

Item	Description	Estimated Costs (annual)	Potential Funding Source
Administration employee salary	32 hrs. per month x \$15.00 per hr.	\$5,760	Levy, grants, Whatcom County
Maintenance employee salary	32 hrs. per month x \$15.00 per hr.	\$5,760	Levy, grants, Whatcom County
Equipment maintenance/repairs	N/A	\$2,500	Levy, grants, Whatcom County
Legal fees	N/A	\$5,000	Levy, grants
D & O Liability Insurance	N/A	\$2,200	Levy, grants, Whatcom County
Miscellaneous Expenses	N/A	\$1,000	Levy, grants, Whatcom County
<i>East Whatcom Gets Active!</i> Funding	Instructor Pay	\$5,000	Grants (ex: Project Neighborly), Whatcom County, participants
<b>Total operation costs (per year):</b>		\$27,220	

## 8. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The strategies and funding opportunities included in this chapter provide the CVPRD with a roadmap to implement this Comprehensive Park Plan. The CVPRD will need to work with the community, partners, and local, state, and federal agencies to secure funding and implement these projects. Table 10 includes a CVPRD park implementation timeline.

*Table 10: The CVPRD park implementation timeline for the period of 2020-2030.*

Park	Park Completion Target	Task	Task Completion Target
Park 1	2025	Land acquisition	2022
		Equipment acquisition (playground, picnic benches, barbecue, etc.)	2025
		Installation/landscaping	2025
Park 2	2025	Land acquisition	2024
		Equipment acquisition (playground, picnic benches, barbecue, etc.)	2025
		Installation/landscaping	2025
Park 3	2030	Land acquisition	2026
		Equipment acquisition (playground, picnic benches, barbecue, etc.)	2030
		Installation/landscaping	2030
		Dog park	2030
Park 4	2030	Land acquisition	2028
		Equipment acquisition (playground, picnic benches, barbecue, etc.)	2030
		Installation/landscaping	2030
Park 5	2030	Land acquisition	2029
		Equipment acquisition (playground, picnic benches, barbecue, etc.)	2030
		Installation/landscaping	2030

## **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

The following implementation strategies serve as a roadmap for the CVPRD to implement this plan.

### **PARK SITE ACQUISITION**

In coordination with Whatcom County and other partners, the CVPRD will explore potential sites for new parks. Public access and population density will be considered when locating potential sites.

### **PARK DESIGN**

Upon securing funding, the CVPRD will identify a contractor or another party to design the proposed parks. Park design elements will be based on the input of the community and CVPRD capacity.

### **PARK CONSTRUCTION**

Upon implementing the previous steps, the CVPRD will apply park design plans to construct up to five parks by 2030. Amenities at these parks will be prioritized based on community input and feedback.

### **PARTNER COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION**

The CVPRD will maintain and further develop relationships with the Whatcom County Parks and Recreation Department, the Whatcom County Health Department, the Mount Baker School District, and other potential partners. The CVPRD will develop agreements that support project implementation including shared use of facilities, cooperative project development, joint programs, and funding.

### **VOLUNTEER AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

Volunteers and community groups will be essential in the implementation of this plan. Volunteer projects might include trail work, brush clearing, planting, and support of events and programs. The CVPRD plans to recruit volunteers through website announcements, social media posts, and physical signs and mailers. The CVPRD will update interested community members on an ongoing basis as volunteers are needed.

### **CAPRA ACCREDITATION**

Upon implementation of this plan, the CVPRD will apply to the National Recreation and Park Association's (NRPA) Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA).<sup>4</sup> CAPRA provides park and recreation agencies throughout the United States with a system of best practices. This national accreditation recognizes an agency's quality of operation, management, and service to the community. By achieving CAPRA accreditation, the CVPRD can ensure that it is providing the highest level of service to the community. The accreditation can also help secure external financial support for the CVPRD.

## **POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES**

The CIP included in this plan requires funding beyond what is currently available to the CVPRD. A variety of funding sources will assist the CVPRD in implementing this plan. The following section includes the funding options that are most likely to be available to the community.

### **GRANTS**

The State of Washington Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) and the Department of Ecology (DOE) offer grants for park acquisition and development projects on a competitive basis. Other grant opportunities are listed in Appendix C. While grants can be used to supplement costs of projects with partial funding, they are competitive and should not be relied upon.

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<sup>4</sup> Read more about the benefits of CAPRA Accreditation and the process by visiting: <https://www.nrpa.org/certification/accreditation/CAPRA/>.

## **CVPRD LEVY**

A levy would support the CVPRD in implementing this plan by providing a consistent source of funding for park development and maintenance. A proposed levy has been voted down by the public multiple times, including in the November 2020 election. Table 11 includes a summary of the projected income from the 2020 proposed levy.

*Table 11: Projected income for the 2020 proposed CVPRD levy*

<b>Item</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Per \$1,000 of value	66.21
Cost of levy per \$1,000 of value	\$0.60
Cost per home	1
Projected levy income per home	\$39.73
Number of homes in District	2,179
<b>Projected Income Total:</b>	<b>\$86,562.59</b>

## **WHATCOM COUNTY**

The CVPRD may request funding for maintenance and capital improvements from Whatcom County. Requests will be made during the County's regular budget planning period.

## **PARTNERSHIPS**

Partnerships with local government, the school district, organizations, and more can include land donations, funding, and volunteer hours. State law allows for interagency cooperative efforts between government agencies.

## **BUSINESS SPONSORSHIPS**

Business sponsorships may be available on a one-time or ongoing basis. Sponsorships might include financial donations or in-kind contributions such as equipment/material.

## **PRIVATE DONATIONS & GIFTS**

Trusts and private foundations may provide funding for parks and recreation projects. Another source of funding includes philanthropic giving which may include cash gifts and donations through mechanisms such as wills. Community fundraising efforts can also support park, recreation, or open space facilities and projects. Community fundraising efforts include programs such as Amazon Smile and platforms such as GoFundMe.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **2020 SUMMER SURVEY**

I would like parks in the Columbia Valley

- Yes, for multiple reasons.
- Yes, for the kids to have spaces to play.
- Yes, for a dog park.
- Yes, so we have neighborhood places to host barbecues and other events.
- Maybe, I am not sure.
- No.

To build parks for my community:

- I support a six-year levy at 60 cents per thousand dollars of assessed property value.
- I support grants and other funding for parks.
- I support grants and levies.

Would you like to be contacts to be on a Pro or Con Committee or to volunteer for future elections related to the Columbia Valley Park and Recreation District?

- Yes (Thank you! Please leave your contact information below or email [cvparks&rec@gmail.com](mailto:cvparks&rec@gmail.com))
- No

Optional contact information:

Anything else you would like us to know?

# **APPENDIX B**

## **2020 SURVEY OF PUBLIC DEMAND**

Hello and welcome to the Columbia Valley Parks Survey!

The following survey has been developed by a team of Western Washington University (WWU) students in the Urban Planning and Sustainable Development program. Our Community Development class has partnered with the Columbia Valley Park and Recreation District (CVPRD) to collect public input about the community's wants and desires for local parks. The CVPRD was formed by popular vote in November 2016, and their mission is to improve life in the Columbia Valley by providing the community with access to parks and recreational opportunities.

With the presence of COVID-19 and many other stresses, we recognize that these are difficult times. It may not be easy to think about ordinary details like what a park in your neighborhood could look like, but we hope it might be encouraging to look towards the future. Studies have shown that spending time outdoors is beneficial to our physical and mental health. The benefits do not stop at children—everyone needs to experience time outside in the fresh air! With this survey, we are aiming to gauge interest in parks in Columbia Valley and understand the types of amenities and activities people would like to see offered in their parks.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary. There are no penalties for not answering some or all of the questions, but since each person will represent many others who will not be surveyed, your participation is greatly appreciated. The answers you provide are anonymous and the results will be aggregated.

**You must be 18 years of age or older to participate.**

Thank you for taking time to fill out the survey! Your input is valuable and will make a difference in future park plans.

Please be sure to complete the survey in one session. The survey will not save your progress if you leave the window and return later.

Based on the information above, do you consent to participate in the survey?

- Yes  
 No

1. What is your age?

- a) 18-19  
b) 20-29  
c) 30-39  
d) 40-49  
e) 50-59  
f) 60 or older

2. Are you Hispanic or Latino

- Yes  
 No

3. What is your race or ethnicity?

- a) Native American

- b) Black or African American  
c) Asian  
d) White (non-Slavic)  
e) Slavic  
f) My race or ethnicity is:

4. Do you currently have children under the age of 18 living in your household?

- Yes  
 No

5. If yes, how many?

6. Do you support building parks in Columbia Valley?

- a) Strongly support
- b) Support
- c) Impartial
- d) Opposed
- e) Strongly Opposed

7. How did you vote on the Parks Levy on the November Ballot?

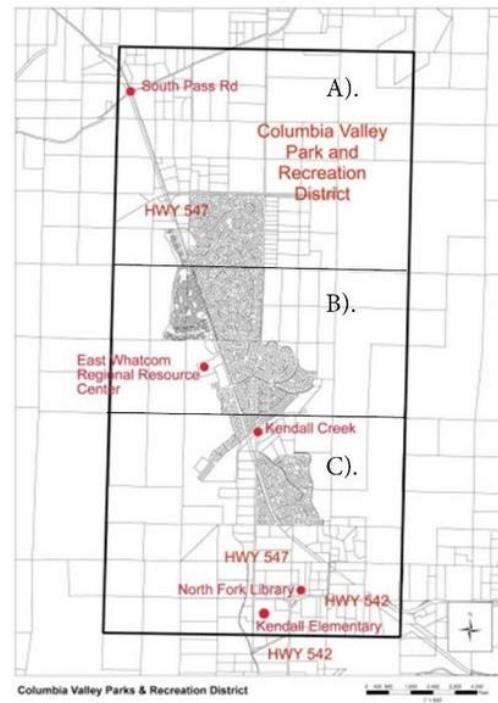
- a) I voted Yes
- b) I voted No
- c) I did not vote
- d) I prefer to not respond

8. If you voted No, what are your reasons?

9. What type of setting do you desire in a new park? Your ideal park is a place to... (select all that apply).

- a) Relax or be reflective.
- b) Gather and hold community events.
- c) Learn about natural surroundings.
- d) Take kids to play or safely hang out.
- e) Grow food in the community.
- f) Exercise or move about.
- g) Other:

Use the map below to complete the next two questions:



10. What part of Columbia Valley do you live in?

- A
- B
- C

11. Where would you most like to see parks in Columbia Valley?

- A
- B
- C

12. What would be your preferred way to get to a local park?

- a) Pedestrian access or walking
- b) Biking
- c) Driving
- d) Other:

13. What concerns, if any, do you have about opening new parks in Columbia Valley?

14. As a community member, how would you like to be involved in parks development?

15. Is there anything else you would like to note about the future of parks in Columbia Valley?

- Email newsletter
- Direct mailers
- Other:

16. How would you like to receive updates about parks in Columbia Valley?

- CVPRD website
- Social media
- Local paper

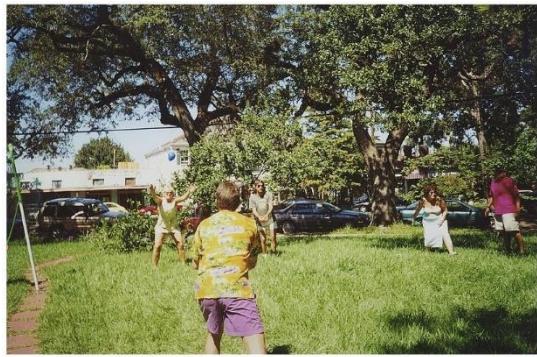
17. Would you like to be added to our email list and receive District updates? If so, please provide your email address.

The following 10 images display a variety of parks and activities. Please rate each image on a scale of 1-10 according to the kinds of parks and activities you would like in Columbia Valley.

- Proceed to images
- Skip

Rate from 1 (not desirable) to 10 (very desirable).





# APPENDIX C

## GRANTS

The following grants may support the implementation of the CVPRD Comprehensive Park Plan.

### National and State Grants

Grant	Website	Administering Agency/Org	Description
Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA)	<a href="http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/rtca/">http://www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/rtca/</a>	National Park Service	RTCA is a technical assistance resource for communities administered by the National Park Service and federal government agencies so they can conserve rivers, preserve open space and develop trails and greenways. The RTCA program implements the natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation mission of NPS in communities across America.
Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program (WWRP)	<a href="http://www.rco.wa.gov">www.rco.wa.gov</a>	Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO)	The WWRP is divided into Habitat Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Accounts. Funds for local agencies are awarded on a matching basis. Grant applications are evaluated once each year, and the State Legislature must authorize funding for the WWRP project lists.
Land and Water Conservation Fund	<a href="http://www.rco.wa.gov">www.rco.wa.gov</a>	Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO)	The LWCF provides grants to buy land and develop public outdoor facilities, including parks, trails and wildlife lands. Grant recipients must provide at least 50% matching funds in either cash or in-kind contributions.
Youth Athletic Facilities (YAF)	<a href="http://www.rco.wa.gov">www.rco.wa.gov</a>	Washington State Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO)	The YAF provides grants to develop, equip, maintain, and improve youth and community athletic facilities. Grant recipients must provide at least 50% matching funds in either cash or in-kind contributions.

## LOCAL GRANTS

Grant	Website	Administering Agency/Org	Description
Project Neighborly	<a href="https://www.whatcomcf.org/community-impact/grants/apply-grant/">https://www.whatcomcf.org/community-impact/grants/apply-grant/</a>	Whatcom Community Foundation	Project Neighborly grants spark ideas about how we can all become better neighbors. They make the necessary resources available to bring them to life.
Funds for Whatcom County	<a href="https://www.whatcomcf.org/community-impact/grants/apply-grant/">https://www.whatcomcf.org/community-impact/grants/apply-grant/</a>	Whatcom Community Foundation	This grant is for applicants who want to cultivate neighborliness; support diversity, equity and inclusion; lift community voice; leverage resources; catalyze change; and, build capacity. Project period is generally one year from the award date. Grant amounts vary, but typically range from \$1,000-\$10,000.
Small Grants Program	N/A	Whatcom Parks and Recreation Foundation	The mission of the Whatcom Parks and Recreation Foundation is to protect and promote parks, trails, and recreational opportunities in Whatcom County, its cities, and communities. When adequate funding is available within our admin budget, the Foundation makes small (\$200 - \$500) grants available to local parks and recreation projects.
First Federal Community Foundation Grants	<a href="https://www.firstfedcf.org/about-us/our-history/">https://www.firstfedcf.org/about-us/our-history/</a>	First Federal Community Foundation	First Federal Community Foundation's mission is to improve the quality of life in the communities in which First Federal Bank maintains full-service branches. Committed to creating broad impact, the Foundation has contributed more than \$3.5 million since 2015 to qualified organizations that provide community support, address the availability of affordable housing, and deliver economic and community development projects in Clallam,

			Jefferson, Kitsap and Whatcom Counties.
Mission-Aligned Community Health Grants (Legacy Grants)	<a href="https://www.chuckanuthealthfoundation.org/grantapplicationguidelines">https://www.chuckanuthealthfoundation.org/grantapplicationguidelines</a>	Chuckanut Health Foundation	The Chuckanut Health Foundation is working to achieve the vision of a community where every child gets a healthy start and every person receives the care they need throughout their lifetime. Legacy grant requests can support capital or specific program related expenses. Requests typically range between \$5,000 and \$25,000.

## OTHER GRANTS

Grant	Website	Administering Agency/Org	Description
The Skatepark Project Grants	<a href="https://skatepark.org/the-skatepark-project-grants/">https://skatepark.org/the-skatepark-project-grants/</a>	The Skate Park Project	The primary mission of the Skatepark Project is to help underserved communities create safe and inclusive public skateparks for youth. Organizations seeking to build free, public skateparks in low-income communities in the United States may apply for a grant from the Skatepark Project.