

Parks, Recreation & Open Space Element

Introduction

The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element guides the expansion and maintenance of Coupeville's park system and environment. These areas interweave with the built environment to preserve Coupeville's small-town character. Additionally, these areas protect wildlife habitat and support cultural, biological, geological, and ecological processes in the community. Maintaining this system while planning for future improvements is the goal of this element.

Existing Conditions Summary

The Town of Coupeville owns and maintains several developed and undeveloped active and passive recreational facilities. These facilities are classified as either parks, open space, or trails and walkways (see Table PR-1).

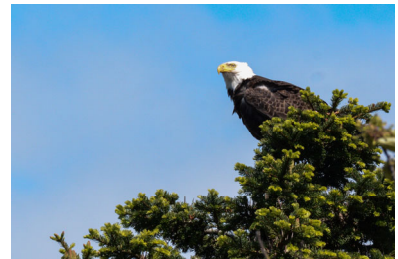
The Town owns and maintains nine parks totaling approximately 12.2 acres, 22.7 acres of open space, and a growing network of approximately 7.7 miles of trails and walkways (including 3.5 miles of sidewalks). The Town is also served by several public recreation facilities owned by other providers, such as the Coupeville School District, Port of Coupeville, and Island County.

Refer to Table PR-2 and Table PR-3 for more details, and Figure 33 for the location of the facilities. Trails and sidewalks are detailed in the Transportation Element.



Picnic shelter at Coupeville Town Park.

The National Park System owns three properties in Town limits. These sites are not included in this list as they are not accessible to the public and future uses have yet to be determined.



Bald eagle (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

Table PR-1 - Coupeville recreational classification system.

Facility Type	Use	Service Area	Locational Characteristics
Parks	Typically have high levels of recreation and/or facility development. Includes parks able to support a wide range of activities or with regionally important facilities, areas for more intense and varied recreational activities, and specialized facilities serving a single purpose, limited population, or specific group.	Varies according to location and size.	May be linked with specific neighborhoods or within proximity to associated uses, within residential neighborhoods (primarily local access), or unlinked to specific neighborhoods (generally with good access/parking).
Open Space	Generally undeveloped with a focus on passive natural systems, including forests, wetlands, aquifer recharge areas, greenbelts, fish and wildlife habitat areas, and, where appropriate, low-impact and passive outdoor recreation, such as trails.	Varies according to location.	Highly diverse character.
Trails/ Walkways	Paved and unpaved routes (including sidewalks) connecting neighborhoods and other recreation facilities.	Varies according to location.	Connect neighborhoods or other facilities.

Table PR-2 - Existing parks, recreation, and open space.

Site Name	Facility Type	Acres	Owner/Provider
Captain Coupe Park & Boat Launch	Park	1.74	Town of Coupeville
Community Green	Park	4.83	Town of Coupeville
Cook's Corner Park	Park	0.09	Town of Coupeville
Coupeville Wharf & Beach Access	Park	0.50	Port of Coupeville
Front Street Deck & Beach Access	Park	0.16	Town of Coupeville
Grace Street Parklet	Park	0.03	Town of Coupeville
Lion's Park (Sixth Street Park)	Park	1.07	Town of Coupeville
North Main Park (Island County Park)	Park	0.20	Island County

Site Name	Facility Type	Acres	Owner/Provider
Sunset Terrace Park	Park	0.90	Town of Coupeville
Town Park & Beach Access	Park	3.00	Town of Coupeville
Waterfront Walk	Park/Trail	0.40	Town of Coupeville
Five Acre Woods*	Open Space	5.00	Town of Coupeville
Forested Property & Community Garden	Open Space	16.23	Town of Coupeville
Johnson Lot	Open Space	0.15	Town of Coupeville
NE Gould Open Space	Open Space	0.69	Town of Coupeville
Peaceful Valley Open Space Strip	Open Space	0.63	Town of Coupeville
Town Hall Lots	Other-Parking Overflow	0.53	Town of Coupeville
NE Ninth Street Open Space	Other-Parking Overflow	1.15	Town of Coupeville
Coupeville Elementary School	Other-School	15.57	Coupeville School District
Coupeville Middle/High School	Other-School	10.43	Coupeville School District
Gymnasium/Athletic Fields	Other-School	7.29	Coupeville School District
Recreation Hall	Other-Indoor Rental Facility	0.44	Town of Coupeville

*The Town recently acquired the Five Acre Woods, an undeveloped and forested 5-acre parcel. The site is currently outside of Town limits with limited public access, and so it is excluded from the existing but included in the future LOS open space calculation in the CFP Appendix.

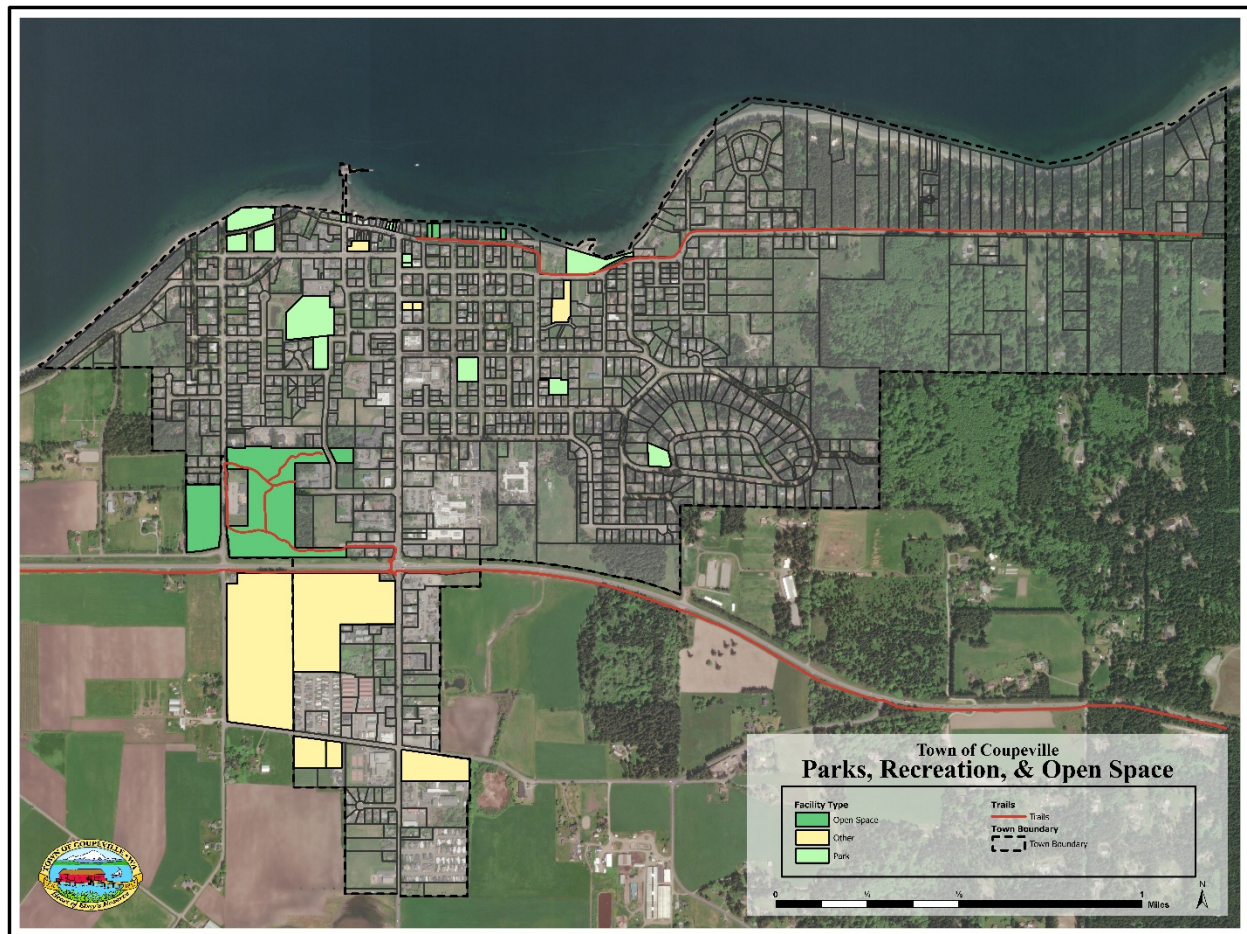
PR-3 - Existing trails and walkways (does not include sidewalks).

Site Name	Length (ft)	Length (m)	Owner/Provider
Class 1 Trail on SR 20 from NW Broadway to the east edge of the NPS property	4,432	0.839	Island County
Path in Peaceful Valley (NW Krueger, NW 6 th St, NW Wilkes St)	1,259	0.238	Town of Coupeville

Site Name	Length (ft)	Length (m)	Owner/Provider
Path on NE Front Street from Gould to N Main Street	1,371	0.259	Town of Coupeville
Path on NE Leach, 9th Street, and Gould to NE Front Street	1,826	0.345	Town of Coupeville
Path on NW Broadway from Black Road to Madrona Way	2,687	0.508	Town of Coupeville
Path on NW Krueger from NW 7th Street to the end of the cul-de-sac to Comm. Green path	600	0.11	Town of Coupeville
Path on NW Madrona Way from NW Broadway to Vine Street	1,152	0.218	Town of Coupeville
Path on NW Parker Road	5,141	0.973	Town of Coupeville
Path on NW Wilkes Street from NW 6th Street to NW 1st Street	1,125	0.21	Town of Coupeville
Trail from NW Broadway to NW Wilkes Street	1,033	0.195	Town of Coupeville
Trail from NW Broadway to the west end of NW Birch Street	1,205	0.228	Town of Coupeville
Class 1 Trail on SR 20 from NW Broadway to the east edge of the NPS property	4,432	0.839	Island County
Path in Peaceful Valley (NW Krueger, NW 6th St, NW Wilkes St)	1,259	0.238	Town of Coupeville
Path on NE Front Street from Gould to N Main	1,371	0.259	Town of Coupeville

Note: Many of the Town-owned trails provide a connection to the County's Class 1 trail along the SR 20 that connects to other trails in Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve. Sidewalks are detailed in the Transportation Element.

Existing parks, recreation, and open space.



See the *Capital Facilities Plan Appendix* for detailed analysis of the Town's existing inventory, revenue analysis, forecast of future needs, and revenue based on level of service standards, and all known parks projects needed to accommodate projected growth in Coupeville.

Goals and Policies

Goal PR-1: Park and Recreation Facilities. Design, develop, and maintain a wide range of facilities that enhance the community's quality of life, support the economic and tourism base, and respect changing recreation needs across the community.

Park System

PR-1.1 Develop a Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) plan to prioritize the diverse recreation and open space needs of Coupeville. Measurable standards should be included in the Plan, along with a detailed trails plan and facilities list developed by the Parks and Recreation Committee. Other PROS features should include:

- Policies that promote walkable access to parks and ensure safe pedestrian routes to parks and facilities.
- Policies for connectivity, site selection, access for all residents, community engagement, environmental protection, transportation, and public safety.
- Recommendations for updated level of service (LOS) standards.

PR-1.2 Ensure indoor and outdoor parks and recreation facilities are convenient and accessible for Coupeville residents and provide a range of recreational experiences based on community demographics and needs.

PR-1.3 Provide a balance of active and passive recreation opportunities that encourage healthy lifestyles, support lifelong participation, and promote respect for the natural environment.

PR-1.4 Meet or exceed the adopted level of service (LOS) standards as defined in Table PR-4.

Table PR-4 - Parks and recreation level of service standards.

Type of Facility	Level of Service (per 1,000 population)
Park	3.5 acres
Trails/Walkways	5,280 feet
Open Space	3.5 acres

PR-1.5 Enhance and maintain the physical appearance of Coupeville's public parks and open spaces.

A future Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan would address the goals and policies in this Element with more detail. Goals and policies, as well as suggested project and funding lists, would be based on:

- A detailed inventory and assessment of existing facilities.
- Anticipated growth and changes in demand for park and recreation facilities.
- A feasibility study considering upgrades to existing parks, such as Captain Coupe Park and Town Park, and the need for new recreational facilities, such as pickleball courts.
- A dedicated community outreach effort.

The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan would then be adopted by reference in the Comprehensive Plan (similar to the Town's other system plans).

Acquisitions, Upgrades, New Facilities

PR-1.6 Regularly identify desirable lands for future park, trail, and open space development. Prioritize acquisition and protection of the Thomas Coupe House property and other significant historic resources.

- PR-1.7 Design new parks to respond to the context of the surrounding community. For example, a park near a school could accommodate young users with playgrounds, and a park near a senior living facility should be accessible to seniors.
- PR-1.8 Upgrade existing playgrounds regularly and actively pursue opportunities to incorporate new, inclusive play structures in future developments or renovations.
- PR-1.9 Include a measurable standard for providing parks and trails in new plats, based on the adopted Town-wide LOS (see Policy PR-1.4) in the subdivision chapter of the Coupeville Development Regulations.
- PR-1.10 Explore opportunities to enhance non-motorized marine activities in Coupeville, such as sea kayaking and paddle boarding, and consider associated infrastructure needs, such as non-motorized boat storage facilities and beach access.



Grace Street Parklet

Other Policies

- PR-1.11 Encourage community cohesion through support for seasonal activities and cultural events open to all residents of Coupeville, such as the Penn Cove Water Festival, Christmas in Coupeville, the Coupeville Arts and Crafts Festival, and the Memorial Day Parade and Picnic.
- PR-1.12 Encourage continued participation in the Town's community garden.
- PR-1.13 Consider annexing Town-owned parcels adjacent to the Town boundary acquired for park, recreation, or open space purposes, including lands donated or transferred from other government entities.
- PR-1.14 Incorporate educational opportunities on climate preparedness and resilience into park design and recreation programming.
- PR-1.15 Prioritize acquisition and expansion of trail systems, including removing barriers to trail connectivity.

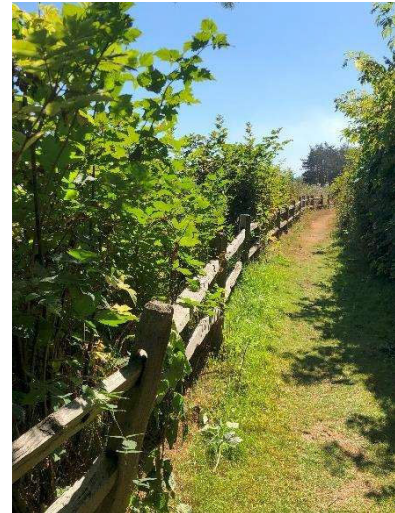


Town Park (photo credit: Dave Wechner).



Whidbey Race Week (photo credit: Dave Wechner).

- PR-1.16 Create a continuous trail, recreation, and open space network along the east/west spine of the Town, starting at Price Sculpture Park on NE Parker Road to Town Park. Prioritize water views, non-motorized connectivity, and recreational amenities.
- PR-1.17 Coordinate with the Coupeville School District and the Boys and Girls Club to enhance public access to recreational facilities and playground equipment, as appropriate.
- PR-1.18 Develop a parks and recreation webpage and informational materials highlighting facilities within and adjacent to Coupeville.



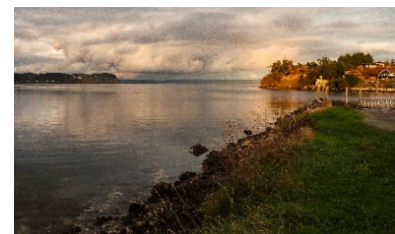
Walking path (photo credit: Elaine Fritsch).

Goal PR-2: Funding. Strive to allocate sufficient funding to support new parks and recreation programs, and to maintain existing facilities.

- PR-2.1 Ensure facilities are easy to maintain with life cycle features that account for long-term costs and benefits. Evaluate existing parks, facilities, and programs to maximize efficient maintenance and operating practices.
- PR-2.2 Consider creative funding mechanisms such as parkland impact fees, enhanced user fees, or cost-sharing opportunities to reduce costs, retain financial flexibility, match user benefits and interests, increase facility services, and distribute costs and benefits to public and private users.
- PR-2.3 Review user fees for the Recreation Hall and Park Pavilion regularly, and consider new user fees for other public facilities, such as the boat launch and dump station.
- PR-2.4 Encourage shared use of public facilities to take advantage of cost savings and to offer the greatest benefit to residents and visitors.
- PR-2.5 Research and actively seek funding from public and private sources for new parks, recreation, and open space areas, facilities, programs, and improvements.



Town Park (photo credit: Dave Wechner).



Captain Coupe's Park & Boat Launch (photo credit: Brian Nelson).

- PR-2.6 Increase public awareness of the Community Commemorative Fund as a way for the public to donate money for public improvements in honor of an individual or group.
- PR-2.7 Actively seek grant funding for parks, recreation, and open space planning, facilities, maintenance, expansion, and acquisition.

Goal PR-3: Open Space Preservation. Preserve open space areas that reflect Coupeville's natural heritage, such as wetlands, significant geological features, forests, shorelines, and other landscape elements or non-renewable natural resources. Ensure landscaping and natural vegetation are a consistent and widespread feature of the Coupeville townscape.

- PR-3.1 Consistent with State law, the Town shall not vacate street ends that provide visual or physical access to the waterfront.
- PR-3.2 Require new development to preserve natural areas through creative development standards, such as lot averaging or transfer of development rights. Where appropriate, provide for public use and access to these areas. Future development should incorporate open space and green belts into the final design. Where feasible, link open spaces and green belts with existing trail networks.
- PR-3.3 Include a measurable standard for the provision of open space within new plats based on the adopted Town-wide LOS (see Policy PR- 1.3) in the subdivision chapter of the Coupeville Development Regulations.
- PR-3.4 Partner with Island County to enact regulations to restrict the use of jet skis within Coupeville's shoreline jurisdiction and Penn Cove to protect wildlife and the serenity, safety, and ecological function of Penn Cove.
- PR-3.5 Establish links between open space areas in proximity to one another.
- PR-3.6 Develop a public and private tree planting and retention program to encourage a greener Coupeville. The Town should take the lead in this

Natural areas are sites (terrestrial or aquatic) of special biodiversity significance due to the presence of rare plant or animal species, unique natural communities, or other ecological features.

Green belts are an area of land within the Town where development is restricted to maintain open space and natural areas.



*Suva at sail on Penn Cove
(photo credit: Dave Wechner).*

effort through such programs as the Community Commemorative Fund and should encourage and facilitate participation by interested groups and individuals.

- PR-3.7 Develop and maintain an inventory of street trees and a brochure of appropriate species for additional planting, with information on view preservation, proximity of paving, presence of overhead and underground utilities, and maintenance requirements.
- PR-3.8 Provide educational materials to residents and developers highlighting the benefits of landscaping and native vegetation for stormwater management, air quality, wildlife habitat, noise reduction, aesthetics, and ecotourism.



Tree planting event.

Goal PR-4: Coordination. Improve coordination of park and recreational facilities between the Town, Island County, the National Park Service, Coupeville School District, and others.

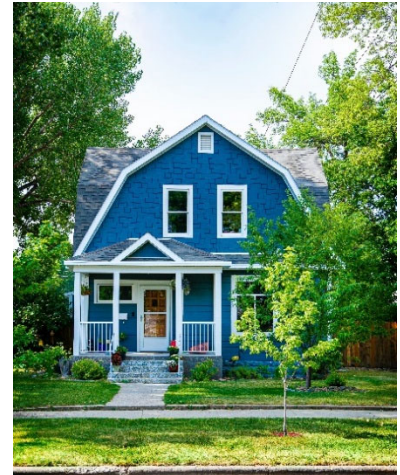
- PR-4.1 Leverage public/private partnerships and other non-traditional sources for recreational opportunities, facilities, and funding. Cooperate with Island County, Coupeville School District, neighboring communities, and other public and private agencies where appropriate and pursue interlocal agreements.
- PR-4.2 Coordinate planning for pedestrian and bicycle travel within Coupeville with Island County's Non-motorized Trails Plan and connect with public paths and scenic areas within Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve.
- PR-4.3 Support Island Transit, the Reserve, and other partners in establishing a seasonal shuttle that circulates throughout the Reserve to improve access to educational opportunities for tourists and provide Coupeville residents with an alternative to single-occupancy vehicle travel to the state parks.

Island County Non-motorized
Trails Plan
islandcountywa.gov/723/Parks-and-Trails-Documents



Island Transit on Whidbey Island (photo credit: AvgjeeKJoe)

- PR-4.4 Foster partnerships and cooperative efforts with other agencies, organizations, community groups, and volunteers in planning and providing for parks, recreation, and open space.
- PR-4.5 Explore partnerships with service organizations or private entities to develop native landscaping sponsorships, tree purchases, native planting programs, or community awards for outstanding landscaping efforts.
- PR-4.6 Encourage use of recreation facilities owned by the Town and partners, such as the Price Sculpture Park, Whidbey Camano Land Trust, Island County, State Parks, and the Coupeville School District.



Street tree in front of the house.

Goal PR-5: Access and Equity. Ensure the recreation system is accessible and meets the needs of all ages and interest groups.

- PR-5.1 Evaluate and upgrade existing parks, facilities, and programs to improve safety and accessibility for all users.
- PR-5.2 Ensure new facilities are accessible and are sensitive to issues of universal accessibility. Increase awareness of accessible features via signage, publicity, and other means.
- PR-5.3 Enhance public access and enjoyment of Coupeville's shorelines through improved physical and visual access.
- PR-5.4 Support cultural arts facilities and programs within Coupeville's parks to increase community awareness, attendance, and participation opportunities.
- PR-5.5 Improve non-motorized connections on the arterial and local access street system in Coupeville to ensure safe bicycle and pedestrian access between park and recreation facilities
- PR-5.6 Prioritize acquisition of parkland and open space in underserved neighborhoods as identified in a future Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Plan. Preliminarily identified underserved areas include South Coupeville.



Grace Street bike rack.