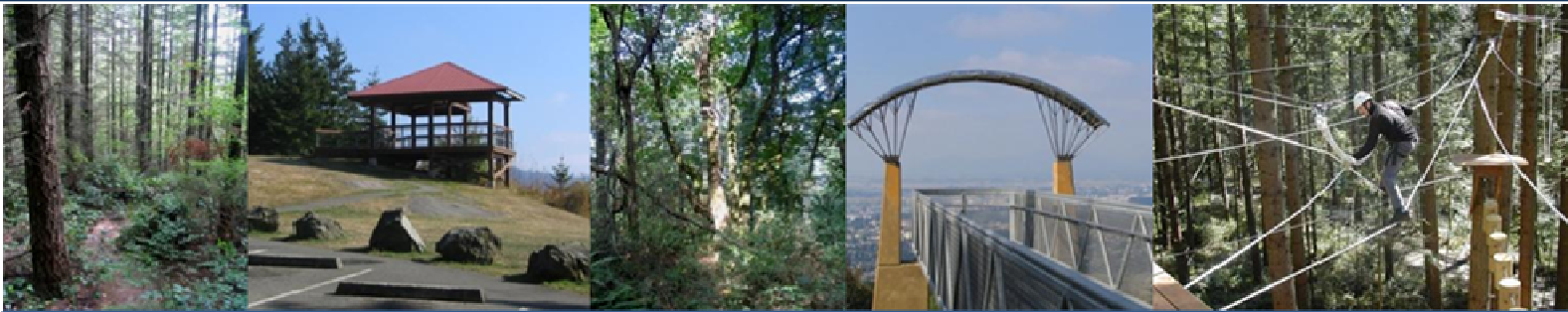


Little Mountain Viewpoint Park Master Plan

May 2009



Update to 1990 plan



Acknowledgements



City of Mount Vernon

Bud Norris, Mayor

Mount Vernon City Council

John Cheney, Ward 1

Little Mountain Advisory Committee

Don Bottles, Former City Council Member and Nature Enthusiast

Bob Helton, Adjoining Property Owner

Juddy Ellison, Mountain Bike Enthusiast and Local Business Owner

Mary Alice Vivian, Mount Vernon Parks Foundation

Steven R. Anderson, Silver Arrow Bowmen

Jim Koetje, Urban Trails Committee

Julie Bistranin, Little Mountain Enthusiast

Hal Lee, Parks Foundation

Jerry Jewett, Skagit County Planning Commission



Mount Vernon Parks and Recreation

Larry Otos, CPRP, Director of Parks and Recreation

Linda Brookings, Recreation Supervisor

James Wepler, Parks Foreman

Kyle McPherson, Eagle Rock Challenge Course Manager

Rashel O'Neil, Account Tech

Tara Small, Office Assistant



Eccos Design LLC

Patrik Dylan, Principal Landscape Architect

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	4
Project Background Information	5
<i>Rational for Plan Update</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>The Planning Process</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Public Participation.....</i>	<i>7</i>
Site Background Information	8
<i>Natural Resources.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Cultural Resources.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Access, Roadways, and Circulation Patterns</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Utilities.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Land Use and Zoning.....</i>	<i>11</i>
Public Input Summary	11
<i>Recreation needs.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Little Mountain Survey Results and Other Public Input</i>	<i>11</i>
LMP Master Plan.....	13
<i>Vision and Goals.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Developing the Plan.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Open Space</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Trails.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Special Use Areas</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Trailheads and Parking Enhancements</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Viewpoints.....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Interpretation Elements.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Infrastructure and Operations</i>	<i>21</i>
Project Summary	24
Appendix A – Conceptual Master Plan Map.....	25
Appendix B - Recommended Plant List.....	26

Executive Summary

Little Mountain Viewpoint Park has been a treasured part of the Mount Vernon Parks system since 1929. The park emphasizes experience of natural areas, preservation of sensitive areas, and highlights the dramatic views of the Skagit Valley. This master plan is an update to a plan developed approximately 20 years ago and seeks to provide a vision for the park for the next 20 years, serving as a guide to the future. The park boundaries were recently expanded with the purchase of approximately 27 acres on the northern boundary. The gravel extraction on the south end of the park is scheduled to conclude in the next 10 years.

The vision of this plan is driven by a comprehensive public process. This public process started with the establishment an advisory committee of user stakeholders, neighbors and citizens, parks department staff, and other interested individuals. With this group serving as a sounding board for all planning decisions, the process commenced in sponsoring an open house in October of 2007 to present an inventory and analysis of existing conditions. This was followed by a community-wide public survey in which over 275 households participated. The survey was completed in November of 2007.

The results of the process was a mandate for a park environment that will allow users to experience and appreciate our region's natural landscapes with an emphasis on activities such as hiking, mountain biking, picnicking, and nature observation. It was highly desired that the recreational uses of hiking and mountain biking be refined and expanded, but done so in a manner that respects and preserves natural areas. There was no groundswell of support for any additional type of recreation. There was no consistent dissatisfaction with any of the uses that are currently allowed, though buffering of the archery course was appropriately requested. There was consensus that the current mitigation plan for the quarry be revisited to provide a program that is more consistent with the overall park.

In terms of infrastructure and operations, the public appreciates and is generally satisfied with the current situation, but additional parking, reduction of vandalism and graffiti, and upgraded restrooms were all desired. The public also expressed a high level of desire for more of a connection to the park from the City itself, via trails, pathways, sidewalks, and bike lanes on streets. There was also a consistent request for additional signs in the park, both interpretive and way-finding.

With the close of the raw public input period, a graphic master plan was developed that was presented at an open house in March, 2008. Reactions to the master plan were consistently supportive and positive. Additional input was gathered during a 30 day comment period. Several positive minor modifications were suggested and integrated into this plan.

Project Background Information

In 1929, the City of Mount Vernon received the gift of Little Mountain Viewpoint when a local women's group presented the deed to City Council members. Located at the southern end of the City (Figure 1), the 517 acres is a wonderful example of northwest Washington second growth forest complete with stunning views of the Skagit Valley and a stretch of pristine stream, Carpenter Creek. Since that time, the park has become a cherished part of the city with many residents enjoying the two major viewpoints, hiking and biking trails, or one of the two major special use areas, the Eagle Rock Challenge Course or the Silver Arrow Bowman Course.

In 1991, the City of Mount Vernon undertook a master planning process to develop a plan for the Parks and Recreation Department that served as the guidepost for various park projects. This plan well-documents the need and manner for forest management, as well as several proposed recreational amenities. The upgrading of the access road and the new viewpoint constructed in 2001 were direct results of this master plan.

In 2007, the Parks and Recreation Department contracted with Eccos Design, a landscape architecture and planning firm, to coordinate an update to the 1990 plan.

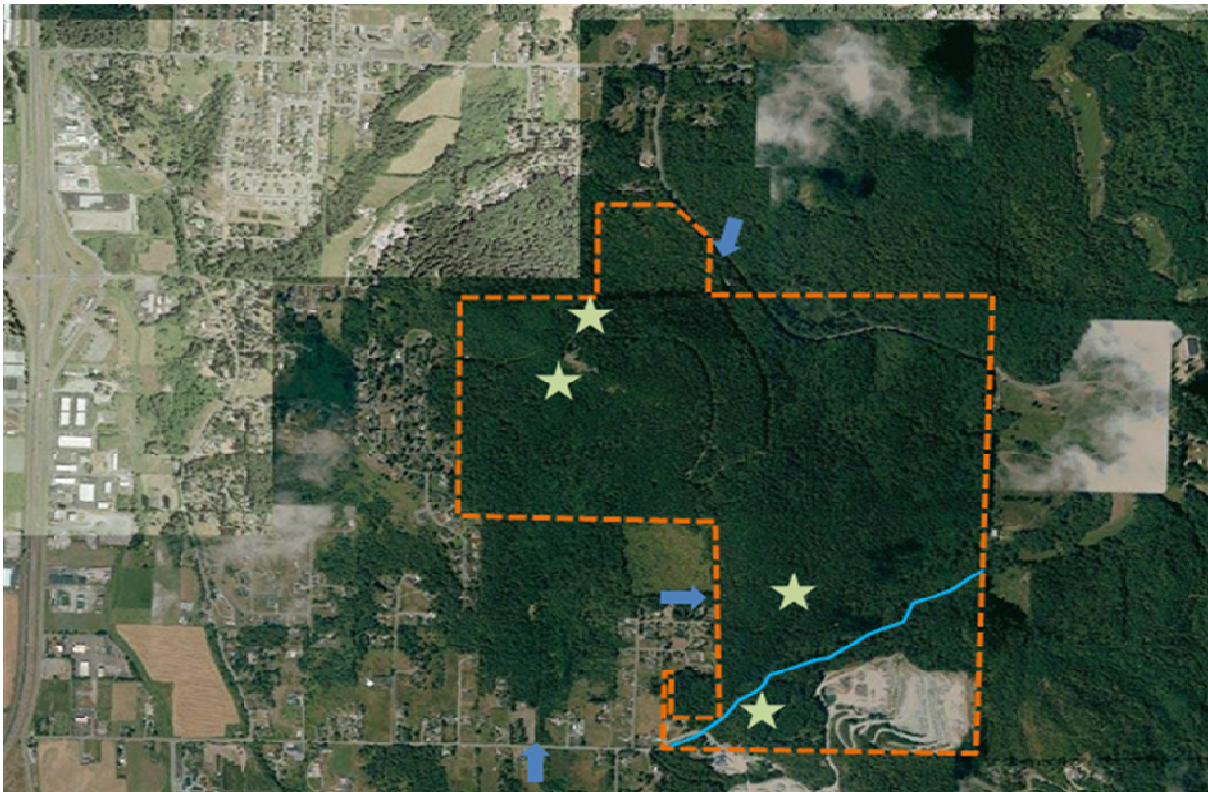


Figure 1 - Little Mountain Park and Major Current Features

Rational for Plan Update

Like many communities in the North Puget Sound Region, Mount Vernon is experiencing a period of unprecedented growth. The City reports building permits for over 3000 new homes are on file. In an attempt to plan for the future of the park, the Parks and Recreation Department undertook the task of updating the park master plan. Other changes since the 1990 plan include:

- Acquisition of 27 acres near the north entrance
- Quarry operations scheduled to conclude and reclamation plan to commence
- Park users requesting improved access
- Installation of the new North Viewpoint
- Increased populations will have an impact on the park and an updated master plan can be a guiding tool in future development decisions

It is important to note that this process did not strive to recreate or redo the work done in the 1990 plan, but is designed to update it based on current community interests, trends, and demands. This resulted in the following process goal:

“Provide opportunity for public input and direction in the preparation of a master plan which will help guide future development decisions.”

The Planning Process

A project timeline was developed that organized the project into the following three stages: 1) Information Gathering; 2) Analysis; and 3) Writing/Plan Production. Below is the general sequence.



Figure 2 – Project Planning Process

Information Gathering

The first objective was to acquire, develop, and organize background information relative to the project. One of the first tasks was the formation of the Little Mountain Advisory Committee. This group consisted of representatives from various biking, hiking, and environmental groups, adjacent property owners, the Parks and Recreation Department, the Urban Trails Committee, and the City Council. Membership was open and as individuals began to learn about the process members were added. The focus of this stage included researching background and natural resource information. The information gathering stage concluded in December of 2007.

Analysis of Public Input

In the analysis phase, the planning team reviewed and discussed all of the background information collected. Then, through a consensus-driven process, a draft list of planning priorities was developed for the types of facilities to be included at Little Mountain Viewpoint Park (LMP) that reflected the desires and needs of the general public and key stakeholders. This list was reviewed by the LM Advisory Committee and was enthusiastically supported.

Writing/Plan Production

The final phase of the project was the writing and production of the new master plan for LMP. This document is a summary of that plan. This updated master plan is consistent with the current Parks, Recreation & Open Space Comprehensive Plan, which has been adopted into the Mount Vernon Comprehensive Plan.

Public Participation

A public involvement component was included to complement and parallel the planning process. It was designed to accomplish two functions: 1) inform people about the project at key stages, and 2) provide opportunities for comment, reaction, and participation in the process. Public participation was accomplished in the following ways:

- A citizen advisory committee was formed at the beginning of the planning process to guide in the development of this plan
- A journal of all meeting notes, meeting agendas, and meeting graphics was placed on the city website for review. Information was generally posted within 48 hours of a meeting.
- A web-based survey was open to all citizens for a period of 30 days.

- An open house was held at Hillcrest Lodge early in the process (October 2007) that allowed the public to react to the materials collected in the information gathering phase and provided comments and input.
- A public meeting was held when the first draft of the plan was prepared so that the public could review the process results
- The draft master plan map was placed on the website and comments were collected from the public for an additional 45 days.

Site Background Information

Natural Resources

Both the Carpenter Creek Watershed and LMP contain a diverse array of natural resources. Upland areas in LMP include forested areas and some existing developed areas including the main access road and two major viewpoints. Aquatic habitats include a beaver pond and the Carpenter Creek stream channel. There are also several wetlands associated on the site. Both resident fish and anadromous salmonids (trout and salmon that migrate from salt to fresh water to spawn) utilize these habitats. Reptiles, amphibians, mammals, and birds also inhabit the upland, wetland, and aquatic habitats throughout the site.



Figure 3 - Beaver pond complex adjacent to Little Mountain Road



Figure 4 -Wetland pond complex near bend on main access road

Forest Areas

The vast majority of the park is forested. While there are many stands of healthy trees and a mature forest community, there remain pockets and patches of unhealthy areas with no living understory and large amounts of fuel wood.

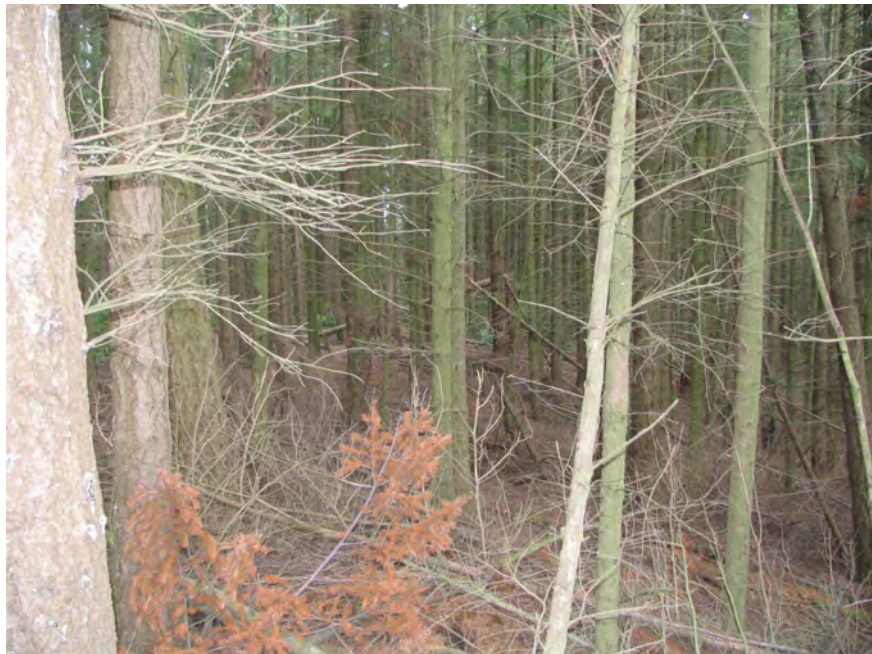


Figure 5 -Forest stand with no understory

Cultural Resources

Four Native American tribes of the Skagit River were known to inhabit the areas around Mount Vernon, however no known Indian sites of cultural or historical significance have been found at LMP. Between 1914 and 1920, LMP and the area immediately east were known as Camp 5, which was an active logging site of the English Logging Company. Notches made by loggers are still visible in old growth stumps at the east end of the park.



Property of MSCUA, University of Washington Libraries. Photo Coll 516

Figure 6 - Historic Photo of Logging on Little Mountain

Access, Roads, and Circulation Patterns

The park is primarily accessed off of Little Mountain Road from the North and on James Street via Hickox Road from the south. Little Mountain Road is a two-lane highway with no center turn lane and can experience high traffic volumes. The park entrance is located on a curve. The James Street access does not provide any on-site parking and visitors often park in the street right-of-way and in front of neighbors' homes.

Utilities

Currently, there is no potable water available on the site. There are a series of communication towers at the summit, which currently are part of the emergency communication network and serve as a revenue source for the Parks Department.

Land Use and Zoning

The Little Mountain Park property is located in the city limits of Mount Vernon. Currently, the site is zoned Public Use District (P). Lands adjacent to the site are a mixture of houses on small and large parcels and homestead farms. While this part of the City remains rural in nature, there are a substantial number of homes in close proximity to the site and based on existing and projected growth patterns, the number of houses will increase significantly until the park is completely surrounded by development.

Public Input Summary

Recreational Needs

Information from Mount Vernon's Comprehensive Plan (MVCP) and Washington's State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) were used to review the city's current unmet, as well as projected recreational needs. Recreational needs that were most sought after and are projected to grow the highest in the next 10 years include:

- More walking opportunities (MVCP / SCORP)
- More nature viewing activities (SCORP)
- More picnicking opportunities (SCORP)
- Biking Activities (SCORP)

Little Mountain Survey Results and Other Public Input

In addition to this data, a survey was developed and delivered on the internet for every household to gauge community desires. Respondents were limited to one reply per household. The results from the survey allowed the planning team to compare the 'desires' of the community as compared to the 'needs' from the SCOPR and MVCP planning documents.

There were a great range of suggestions, but the goal of the committee was to find common themes and trends. The complete dataset from the survey is available from the Parks Department upon request. The following is a summary of the public input gathered throughout the process:

Source		
Sa	=	Survey, category Activities
Sio	=	Survey, Infrastructure and Operations
OH	=	Open House

Very High (greater than 20 percent of respondents)

- Preservation of natural areas is important to the vast majority of park users.
- Some variation exists as to the extent, but all proposed new recreation should incorporate respect and preservation of natural areas. (Sa, OH)
- There is a significant interest in seeing a more refined hiking *and* biking trail system. This includes organization of existing trails and increased quality of those trails. New trails will occur in a manner that reflects statement above. (Sa, OH)
- There is strong interest in seeing parking developed at base of park and explored in other areas as needed. (Sio)
- There is significant interest in maps, signage, and interpretive elements (Sio, OH)
- There is no groundswell of request for a new recreational program element (S, OH)
- There is no stated dissatisfaction with existing opportunities (S, OH)

High (greater than 10 percent of respondents, less than 20 percent)

- There is strong interest in walking and biking connections TO the park from the city and other parks (Sio)
- There is strong interest in increasing the feeling of safety and reducing graffiti and trash in the park (Sio, OH)
- There is interest in addressing the speed of the cars on the main access road (Sio, OH)
- There is interest in improving restrooms (Sio)

Beyond the survey and open houses, the Parks and Recreation Department received additional input via letters as well as ideas that were generated in planning meetings. There were several ideas that were not empirically significant, but were mentioned in the public process and garnered support. The following is that list:

- Opportunistic property acquisition should be a priority
- Mountain bike skills center would be good community service
- ‘Friends of Little Mountain’ and ‘Trails Committee’ would be valuable outcomes
- Strong interest in community assisting in park trails maintenance
- Additional park benches would be appreciated
- Low key, “peek-a-boo” views can be established
- Forest maintenance and native plant restoration worth addressing
- Reclamation plan needs revisiting.

- Eagle Rock Challenge Course (ERCC) would benefit from upgrading of support facilities
- Silver Arrow Bowman Course (SAB) would benefit from better established separation as buffer

LMP Master Plan

Vision and Goals

Little Mountain Park is a premier year-round regional facility that offers a wide range of active and passive recreational experiences, with an emphasis on trail use. All recreation is to happen in a manner that respects the natural environment and meets the needs of current and future generations.

This vision is achieved by accomplishing the following goals:

- Provide facilities and activities that are compatible with the environment
- Design for accessibility
- Design for sustainability, utilizing green building practices for good park stewardship and as a model for techniques for the general public
- Promote non-motorized connections to the park
- Offer a diverse range of opportunities and experiences (i.e., active, passive, individual, group, etc.)

Developing the Plan

The base plan begins with the establishment of the existing conditions. The map below (figure 7) shows the existing topography, access road, Special Use Areas, and some of the critical areas including the largest wetland complex and Carpenter Creek. Public input supported the continuation of these use areas. The existing plan for the reclamation area was reviewed in this process and there was great consensus that it be revisited (current emphasis on organized athletics) and a new plan that is more consistent with the other uses in the park be developed.

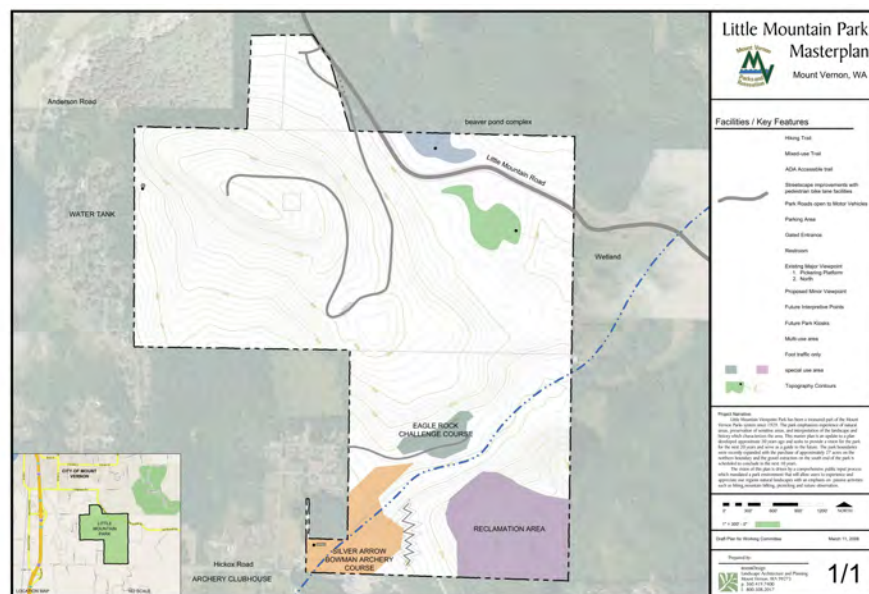


Figure 7 - Existing Conditions and Special Use Areas

Open Space

In order to achieve the balance between the clear public request for more and better trails and the equally clear request that natural areas be preserved, areas not developed for special use are divided into two different zones; ‘foot traffic only’ and ‘multi-use zones.’ (figure 8) Areas that already have some development (points of access, main park roads, and trails) will fall into the multi-use space (yellow on map) and the more sensitive areas (wetlands and steep slopes farther from access and development) will fall into the foot traffic only areas (green on map). The rationale for this separation is that a foot traffic only area provides the greatest amount of natural area protection, while still allowing controlled recreational use. Currently this proposed foot traffic only area is crisscrossed with user-defined hiking and biking trails, often located in inappropriate areas. Areas with steep slopes, wetlands, ponds, and streams will not be developed, thereby protecting them from public use, as is consistent with the Mount Vernon Critical Areas Ordinance. It is important to note that the exact boundaries of these two areas are based on reconnaissance-level information and minor adjustment of these areas, based on field conditions, is entirely appropriate.

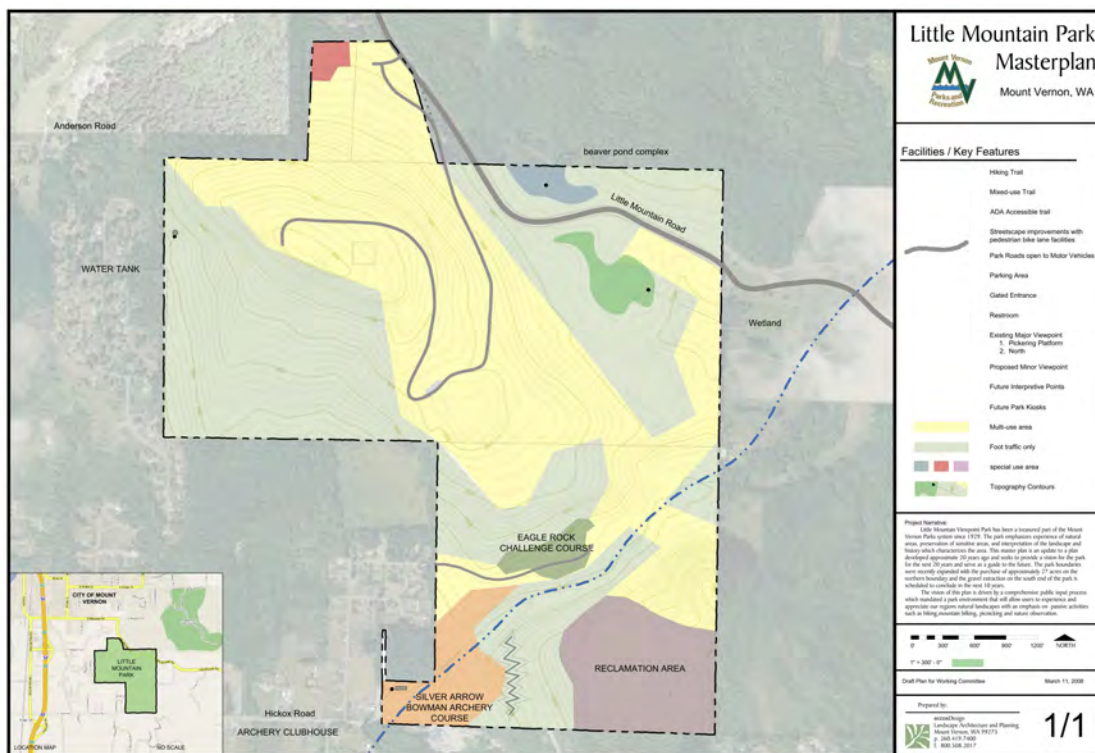


Figure 8 – multi-use (yellow) and foot traffic only (green) zone

Trails

The goal of the trails component is to develop an integrated non-motorized trail network throughout Little Mountain Park that provides for both internal trail use and non-motorized connection from one side of the park to the other. Approximately 9 miles of trails are proposed for the entire park with final location to be determined in the field. The trail types are summarized below:

Trail Types

- *Multi-Use Trails – approx 4.5 Miles*

The plan calls for a network of multi-use trails suitable for walking, hiking, and bicycling. These trails are depicted on the map below with red lines (figure 9). This type of trail could be as narrow as a single-track, but up to three to five feet in width in higher use areas. These trails should be constructed to the standards set forth by the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) Trail Guidelines as well as to National Forest standards.

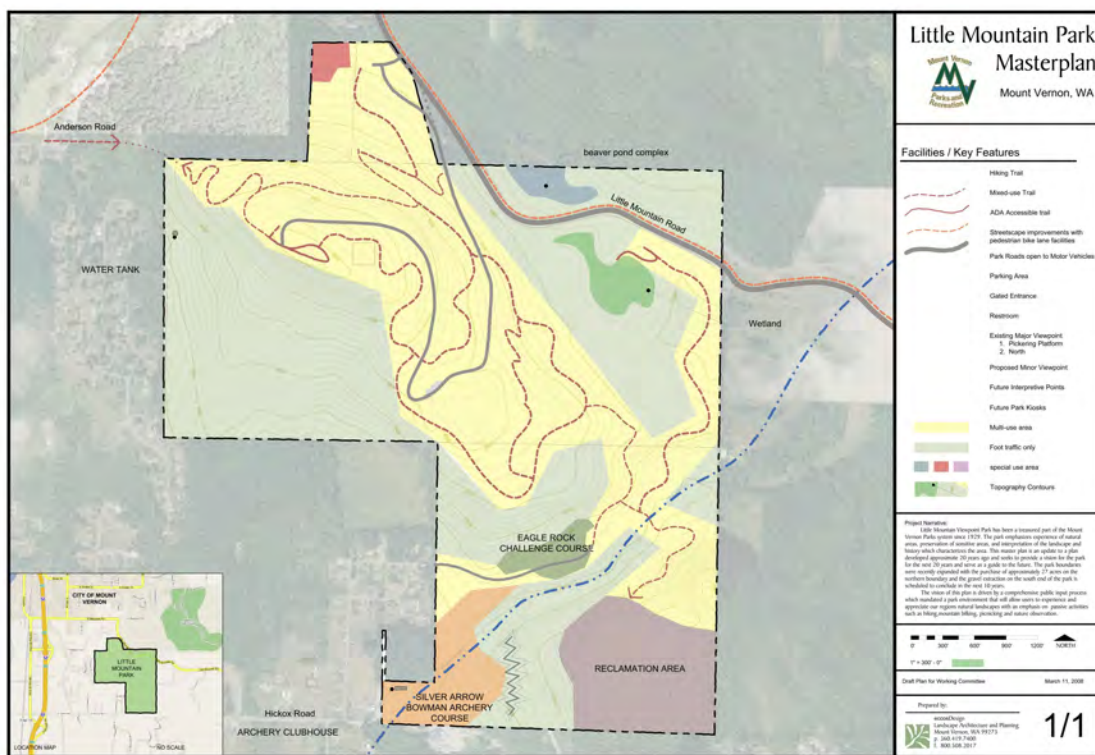


Figure 9 - conceptual routing of multi-use trails (red line)

The surface would primarily utilize native materials, with some sections consisting of crushed rock, with turnpikes or boardwalks as needed. This type of trail would be more rugged and may not be Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible in all areas. The trail is designed on a large loop or hub concept with

various secondary trails that connect within this loop, allowing for either continuous trail use in the park or as connections from one side of the park to the other. The trail would cross Carpenter Creek at a single point to minimize the impact to the Creek, but still allow trail users appropriate and managed access to views of wildlife along the Creek. Short spurs leading to wildlife viewing areas could also be developed.

- *Bike Lanes and Sidewalks*

Bike lanes are provided on Little Mountain Road in areas where separate pathways cannot be constructed. These are shown on the map as a dashed orange line.

- *Foot Traffic Only Trails – Approx 5 Miles*

Trails suitable for walking, hiking, trail running, and general outdoor enjoyment are present throughout the park. These trails are depicted on figure 10 with green lines. This type of trail is more likely to be a single-track in width (similar to hiking in a National Park or Forest). These trails are also conceptually arranged in connecting loops to allow for connective circular use.

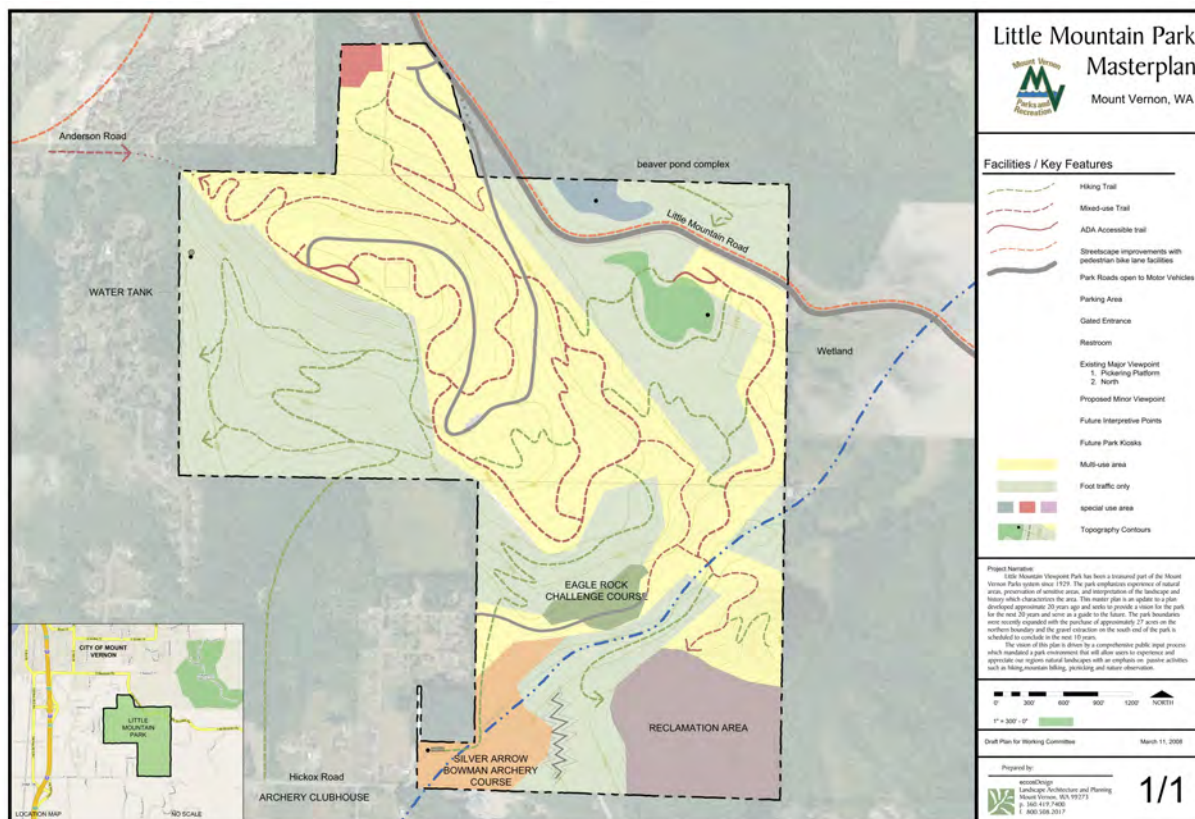


Figure 10 - Conceptual routing of foot traffic only trails (green lines)

- *Interpretive Trails – Approx 0.5 mile*

An important component of the trail system includes several interpretive loop trails. Each loop might be developed around a theme (i.e., cultural, geology, wildlife, restoration, etc.). These trails would be for walkers only and would be ADA accessible where feasible. Two interpretive trails are schematic, located at the top of the park and at the large wetland complex located just off Little Mountain Road. These trails should consist of a hardened, compact surface, possibly using some type of binder for increased compaction. These trails should include frequent, widened ‘pull-out’ type areas with benches and interpretive signs (where appropriate).

Special Use Areas

Mountain Bike Skills Park

Located in the northwest corner (red area) is a proposed new special use area, a mountain bike skills park. This area will serve as a training area for new and seasoned riders in a specified location and provide technically challenging mountain biking opportunities. They usually accommodate a wide range of abilities, with opportunities for skill building and progressively more difficult challenges. The specific design of this area is recommended to a separate process with input by the citizens and enthusiasts identified in the LMP planning process. Design elements usually include a variety of natural obstacles such as rocks and logs, imaginatively constructed features like teeters and ladder bridges, and dirt jumps - all collected in a small setting.

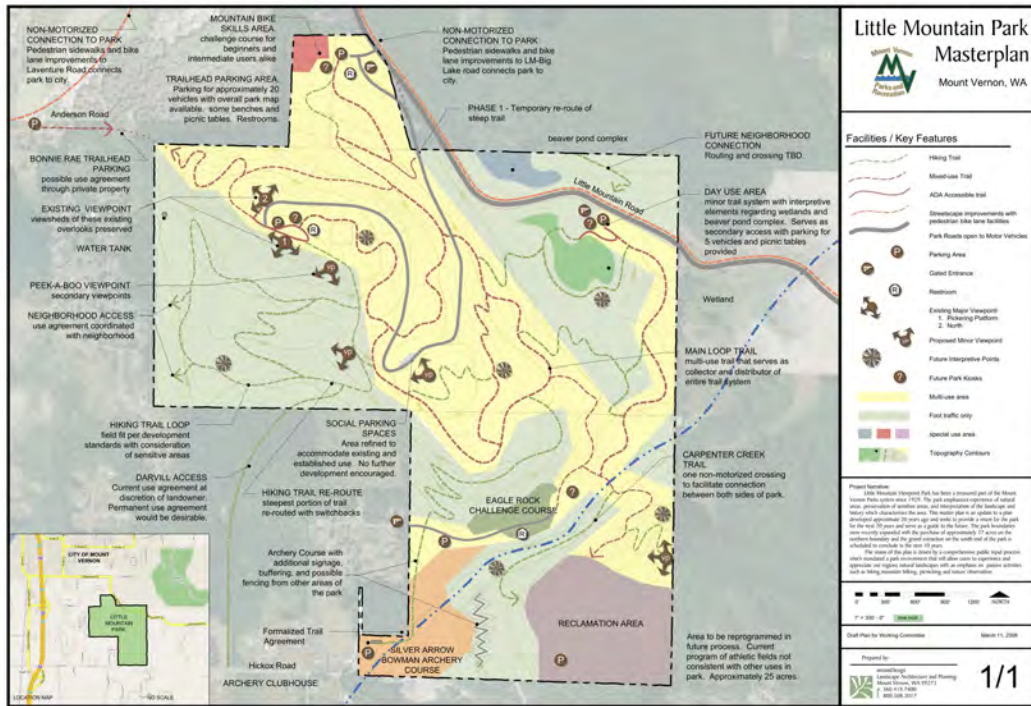


Figure 11 - Conceptual Master Plan



Photo courtesy of IMBA

The footprint shown for the mountain bike skills park is approximately one acre, with another acre for buffering.

Reclamation Area

No program was established for this area other than the need for it to have a designated parking area, which would also serve as a trailhead for the rest of the park. It is recommended that a plan for this area be developed with uses more consistent with the rest of LM Park that take advantage of the area's assets including access to Carpenter Creek, access to overlook, and the unique landscape resulting from the mining operations.

Eagle Rock Challenge Course

The program for the Eagle Rock Challenge Course is well-established, but several support improvements are needed in this area. First is a formalized parking area so that users do not park in the right-of-way of James Street just outside the park. Second would be a formalized restroom facility. Currently, the area is served by "porta-potties" and an upgraded vault restroom system would be an asset. Finally, the course requires a fairly large amount of equipment for each of the stations and events. Currently, this equipment is stored in a towable trailer permanently left on site. A permanent storage facility, as part of an upgraded restroom, would serve this area well.

Silver Arrow Bowman Archery Course

The successful and well-used Silver Arrow Bowman Course is a privately-owned club that holds a dollar per year lease due to expire in 2011. Because of the dangerous potential for conflict of this use with other uses in

the park, it is highly recommend that the perimeter of the area be signed, fenced, or buffered in a manner that will clearly keep uses separated. The parking lot for the SAB clubhouse has also served as a trailhead parking area for the rest of the park. In order to continue this practice, a distinct 'corridor' should be established with appropriate signage and buffer. It may be better for both the SAB and the City of Mount Vernon to slightly modify the footprint of the SAB course to ensure the opportunity for successful buffering and separation. These issues should be addressed during the next lease re-negotiation.

Day Use Area

This is another new special use area proposed to be located near the large wetland on Little Mountain-Big Lake Road. This area will include parking for approximately 5-10 vehicles, trailhead, interpretive wetland trail, picnic benches, and possibly a small picnic shelter. It would be gated and locked at dusk.

Trailheads and Parking Enhancements

Improvements to parking were proposed in several locations of the park.

Bonnie Rae Trailhead: This newly acquired park would be a suitable location for a westerly trailhead parking area for approximately 10 vehicles. It is noted that connection to the park is not possible unless a landowner use agreement is developed for the portion of private property between the two parks.

Trailhead Parking at Main Entrance: The 27 acres located to the north of the park was purchased in 2003 with the intent of establishing the primary trailhead parking area. This will serve the park well as users who drive to the park will be able to leave their vehicles at the perimeter and then hike or bike into forest, and not have to drive to the top. In addition to reducing traffic on the road, this area is large enough to accommodate the inevitable need for more vehicles associated with growth. Other opportunities for this area include location of a restroom, trail map, information kiosk, and a reconfiguration of the entrance to the park from the existing oblique angle to one that will be more consistent with current engineering standards.

Main Access Road 'Social Parking Area': Additional parking is suggested throughout the master plan, but over the years users have carved out a parking area for themselves just before the sharp turn on the main access road. It is recommended that these spaces be formalized to limit their growth and impact.

Viewpoints

Although no new major viewpoints were desired for the park, several minor, 'peek-a-boo' views should be included as part of the trail system. These smaller viewpoints do not require structures, but are intentional

pullouts and widening of a trail, perhaps with the addition of a bench, to encourage the user to pause and take in the scenery. Views from the ridge to the southwest and to the east are not well-established and would be a worthwhile addition. In addition, the two southeastern peaks provide wonderful territorial views of the park itself.

These viewpoints are conceptually located on the map. (figure 11)



Figure 12 - Newly constructed North Viewpoint

Interpretation Elements

The goal of the interpretation component is to develop ways in which the user experience can be enhanced through a greater understanding of the park. These opportunities could be sprinkled throughout the park and are conceptually shown on the master plan. There are several themes that were repeatedly suggested during the planning process that could be developed at the park:

1. Geologic Features - Little Mountain is a major geologic feature in itself and there are clues to its story in its shape, location, and glacial scarring from the last ice age.
2. Salmon Habitat - Carpenter Creek is an example of the salmon habitat present within the urban center of Mount Vernon.
3. The English Logging Company – Early settler industries, economy, and technology.
4. Natural Habitats & Biodiversity - Little Mountain Park includes a great variety of habitats that support a significant diversity of plants and animals.
5. Native American Continuity – Native Americans have for a very long time been inhabitants of this region and continue to preserve their culture here today.

In relation to number 5, Native American cultural and historical continuity should be integrated into the interpretive stories rather than being treated separately. For example, wayside exhibits about natural habitats or salmon could include the Native American perspective. It is recommended that when referring to Native Americans to emphasize their presence and activities today, avoiding the implication that their story is all one of the past.

Guidelines for Interpretation

The following guidelines are recommended:

- Include education as an element of the recreational experience
- Promote public understanding and stewardship of natural and cultural resources.
- Present topics of both local and regional significance.
- All designs are sensitive to natural and cultural values of the site.

Infrastructure and Operations

Opportunistic Property Acquisition

While LM Park is the largest park in the MV system, as inevitable growth continues in the region, the park will begin to feel user pressure. The current park boundary is still surrounded to a great degree by similar forested spaces, but current zoning indicates that in the future the park may be surrounded by urban level development. The ability of the park to provide a quality natural recreation experience and serve as an oasis within the city for natural habitat can only be advanced with acquisition of additional and contiguous property. Additional property acquisition should be pursued to the fullest extent possible.

Forest Management

To address the presence of invasive weeds in the park, work parties are recommended to remove the most problematic species including English ivy, laurel, and holly. In addition, the forestry management practices outlined in the original 1990 plan (Appendix C) need to be implemented to reduce the unhealthy areas of monoculture and reduce the fire risk such stands present. Any thinning done is to be accompanied by a corresponding planting of a native species understory to facilitate the development of a more healthy system. A list of native species to be used in any planting is included in Appendix B.

Darvill Access

The access off of Hickox Road known as the “Darvill Access” should be formalized. Currently the access crosses private property that is held in a conservation easement by the Skagit Land Trust. This easement

allows for a recreational trail through the trust area at the request of the current land owner. Should the property change hands, the conservation easement will stay in place, but the new owner may wish to stop recreational use across their private property. The park would benefit greatly from the chance to formalize and establish, in perpetuity, this well-used trailhead access point.

Signing and Design Standards

Placement of trail maps and way-finding signs is an immediate improvement that could be made to the park. This will help users orient themselves to the park as well as reduce the informal, rough trail network that is partly a result of users not knowing where they are supposed to go. Eventual signage will help communicate which trails are multi-use and which are for hiking only.

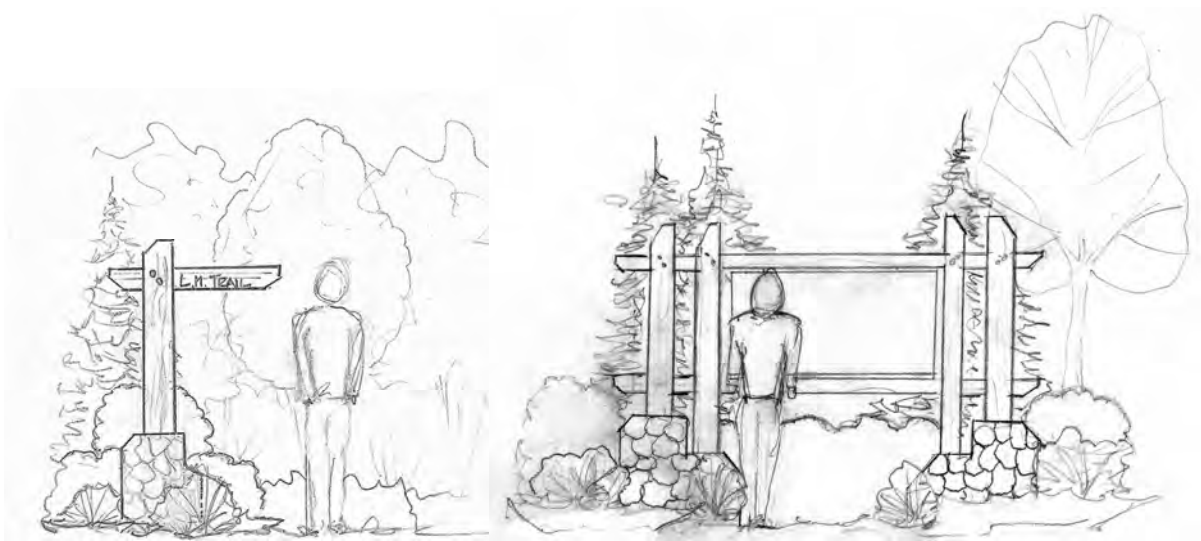


Figure 13 - Conceptual way-finding sign and park map

A park of this size should have a distinct style and design standard for many of the site amenities and signs. This consistency will allow users to easily locate and identify signs as well as contribute to the overall park experience. Standards should be established for the following elements: bollards, gates, kiosks, benches, way-finding signs, rules signs, litter and recycling stations, small bridges, and turnpikes.



Other standardization should include using, where possible, the city logo and development of sign standards with a consistent layout and standard fonts for all signs.

Restrooms

In addition to the new restrooms at the main trailhead and Eagle Rock Challenge Course, the vault toilet at the summit is to be replaced with a larger structure with separate men's/women's rooms that are ADA accessible.

Vandalism and Graffiti

Vandalism is a problem inherent to parks where there is not much chance for the perpetrators to be observed and therefore deterred or caught. To reduce the occurrence it is recommended that there be an increased patrolling of the facility by the police or citizens' patrols, particularly in the hours just after school when youths are known to congregate at the park. Other efforts might include establishment of a 24-hour response program to reported graffiti or consider the concepts of CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) when preparing for park upgrades.

Citizen Committee

Through the planning process it was suggested and supported that two very important outcomes of this process would be the establishment of two citizen committees to aid in the implementation of the master plan.

Friends of Little Mountain: this group would be established to coordinate supportive activities of the park's continued operation and improvements. Tasks and responsibilities could include:

- Fundraising
- Invasive weed removal work parties
- Native planting work parties
- Review of site specific improvement proposals

- General park advocacy

Trails Committee: This group would consist of individuals of diverse backgrounds and interests whose express responsibility would be the layout and approval of new trails. The following backgrounds and interests would ideally be represented on the committee:

- Hiking
- Trail running
- Biking
- Habitat, wetlands, ecology
- Maintenance and operations

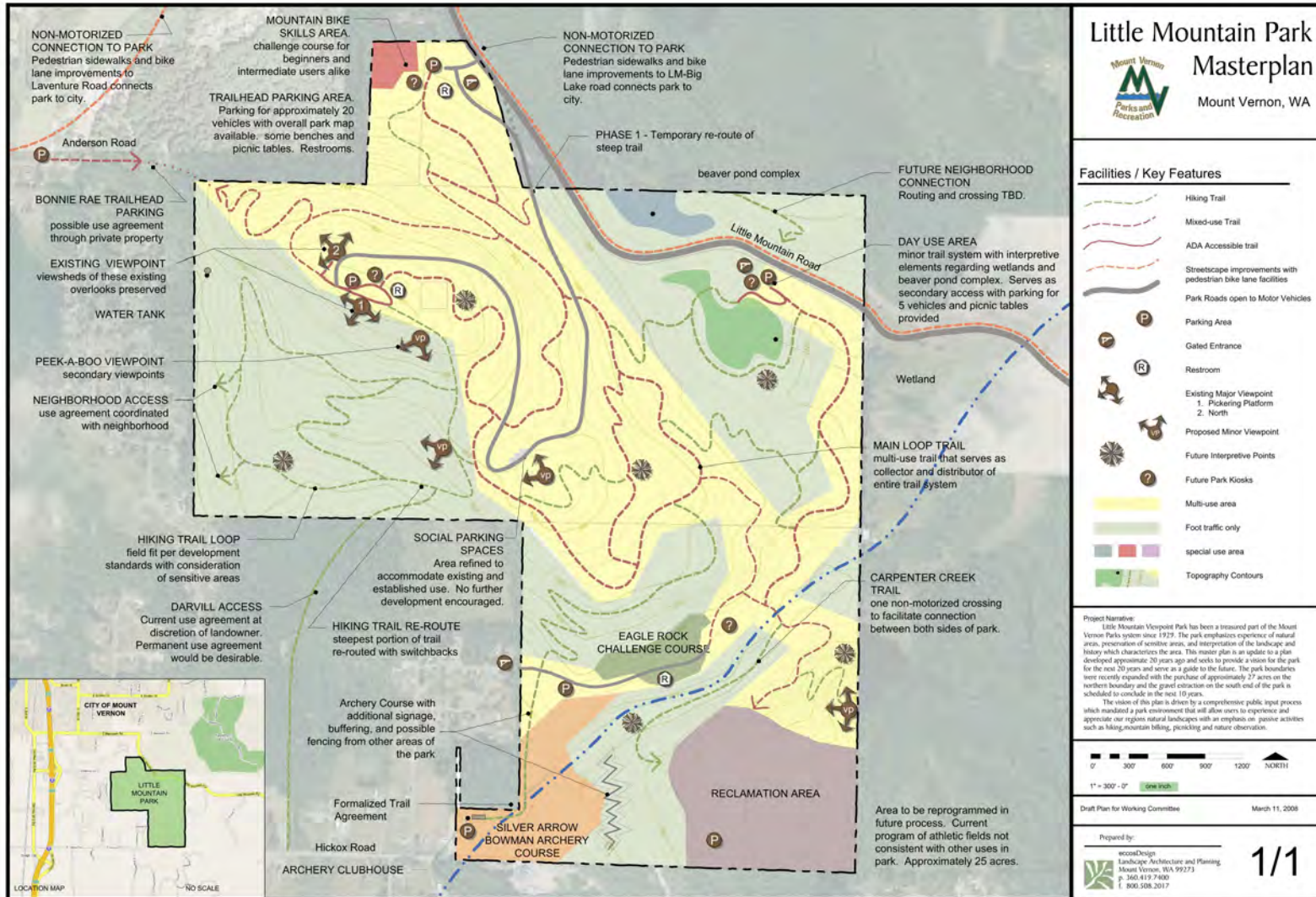
Although the ultimate responsibility of locating new trails will remain with the Parks and Recreation Department, this committee could do much of the preliminary work in layout and staking of trails that fit within the landscape, work with the natural contours, reduce impacts on critical areas, or reduce problems caused by erosion.

Project Summary

The Little Mountain Master Plan update represents a comprehensive and collaborative vision for the City of Mount Vernon. The Little Mountain Advisory Committee displayed dedication and commitment throughout the process to develop a plan that considers the site's natural characteristics and the recreational needs and desires of the community at large as well as community concerns and input.

Additionally, the City of Mount Vernon is committed to employing Best Management Practices and sustainable design methodologies where possible throughout the site to protect this valuable natural resource for generations to come. The Little Mountain Park Master Plan is the vehicle to ensure citizens that quality and sensitive development as well as appropriate program elements will occur throughout the design and development of the park, keeping it the cherished jewel it is in the City of Mount Vernon Parks and Recreation system.

Appendix A – Conceptual Master Plan Map



Appendix B - Recommended Plant List

Riparian / Wetland Areas

Trees:

Oregon ash (*Fraxinus oregona*)
 Black cottonwood (*Populus trichocarpa*)
 Western red cedar (*Thuja plicata*)
 Cascara (*Rhamnus purshiana*)
 Columbia willow (*Salix fluviatilis*)
 Pacific willow (*Salix lasiandra*)
 Piper's willow (*Salix piperi*)
 Rigid willow (*Salix rigida*)
 Scouler willow (*Salix scouleriana*)
 Soft-leaved willow (*Salix sessiliflora*)
 Sitka willow (*Salix sitchensis*)

Skunk cabbage (*Lysichitum americanum*)
 Yellow monkey-flower (*Mimulus guttatus*)
 Streambank springbeauty (*Montia parviflora*)
 Candyflower (*Montia siberica*)
 Forget-me-not (*Myosotis laxa*)
 Water parsley (*Oenanthe sarmentosa*)
 Sweet coltsfoot (*Petasites frigidus*)
 False solomon-seal (*Smilacena racemosa*)
 Laceflower (*Tiarella trifoliata*)
 Piggyback (*Tolmiea menziesii*)

Shrubs:

Red-osier dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*)
 Black twinberry (*Lonicera involucrata*)
 Indian plum (*Oemleria cerasiformis*)
 Pacific ninebark (*Physocarpis capitatus*)
 Swamp rose (*Rosa pisocarpa*)
 Salmonberry (*Rubus spectabilis*)
 Blue elderberry (*Sambucus cerulea*)
 Red elderberry (*Sambucus racemosa*)
 Douglas spirea (*Spirea douglasii*)
 Nootka rose (*Rosa nootkana*)

Herbaceous Plants and Wildflowers:

Maidenhair fern (*Adiantum pedatum*)
 Douglas aster (*Aster Douglasii*)
 Lady fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*)
 Big-leaf sedge (*Carex amplifolia*)
 Columbia sedge (*Carex aperta*)
 Dewey's sedge (*Carex deweyana*)
 Henderson's wood sedge (*Carex hendersonii*)
 Western corydalis (*Corydalis scouleri*)
 Elegant rein-orchid (*Habenaria elegans*)
 Soft rush (*Juncus effusus*)

Woodland Upland AreasTrees:

Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*)
 Western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*)
 Grand fir (*Abies grandis*)
 Western red cedar (*Thuja plicata*)
 Big leaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*)
 Red alder (*Alnus rubra*)

Small Trees and Shrubs:

Vine maple (*Acer circinatum*)
 Cascara (*Rhamnus purshiana*)
 Serviceberry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*)
 Pacific yew (*Taxus brevifolia*)
 Chinkapin (*Castanopsis chrysophylla*)
 California hazel (*Corylus cornuta*)
 Pacific dogwood (*Cornus nurrallii*)
 Oceanspray (*Holodiscus discolor*)
 Nootka rose (*Rosa nutkana*)
 Western rhododendron (*Rhododendron macrophyllum*)
 Indian plum (*Osmaronia cerasiformis*)
 Red elderberry (*Sambucus racemosa*)
 Blue elderberry (*Sambucus cerulea*)
 Western mock-orange (*Philadelphica lewisii*)
 Common chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*)
 Bitter cherry (*Prunus emarginata*)
 Tall Oregon grape (*Mahonia aquifolium*)
 Dull Oregon grape (*Mahonia nervosa*)
 Red huckleberry (*Vaccinium parvifolium*)
 Evergreen huckleberry (*Vaccinium ovatum*)
 Salal (*Gaultheria shallon*)
 Red flowering currant (*Ribes sanguineum*)
 Thimbleberry (*Rubus parviflorus*)
 Snowberry (*Symphoricarpus albus*)
 Woods rose (*Rosa woodsii*)
 Oval-leaf viburnum (*Virburnum ellipticum*)

Herbaceous Plants and Wildflowers:

Vanilla leaf (*Achylis triphylla*)
 Wild ginger (*Asarum caudatum*)
 Ladyfern (*Athyrium filix-femina*)
 Deerfern (*Blechnum spicant*)
 Swordfern (*Polystichum munitum*)
 Bunchberry dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*)
 Twinflower (*Linnaea borealis*)
 Miners lettuce (*Montia siberica*)
 Oxalis (*Oxalis oregona*)
 False solomonseal (*Smilacena racemosa*)
 Starry solomonseal (*Smilacena stellata*)
 Foamflower (*Tiarella trifoliata*)
 Starflower (*Trientalis latifolia*)
 Piggyback plant (*Tolmiea menziesii*)
 Inside-out flower (*Vancouveria hexandra*)
 Trillium (*Trillium ovatum*)
 Wood violet (*Viola glabella*)
 Snow queen (*Synthris reniformis*)
 Red columbine (*Aquilegia formosa*)
 Western buttercup (*Ranunculus occidentalis*)
 Pacific bleedingheart (*Dicentra Formosa*)

