

August 30, 2012



City Council
City of Bainbridge Island
280 Madison Avenue North
Bainbridge Island, WA 98110

Dear Members of the City Council:

In letters to the Planning Commission, dated May 7, 2012, and to the City Council, dated May 18, 2012, the Park District has formally stated our opposition to any portion of Blakely Harbor Park being designated as "Natural" for purposes of the Shoreline Master Plan (SMP). We believe that the park should be classified as "Island Conservancy", consistent with the proposed designations for all other shoreside parks, with the exception of the Close Property shoreline, for which the Park Board agrees with the City's proposed "Natural" designation. On August 23, 2012 at a Park Board work session attended by Park Commissioners, Park staff, members of the City's planning staff, and Council Member Bonkowski, the Park Board was asked to provide the City with a written request stating the reasons why Blakely Harbor Park should not be "downzoned". This letter has been generated in response to that request.

Blakely Harbor Park has historically provided and currently provides a variety of uses both active and passive, all of which are permitted under the current Shoreline Master Plan. In 2001, the Park District adopted a concept plan for the park. While not a true site plan, the District has been using the document as a guide to develop the park as time and finances permit. By reclassifying the South shore of the log pond as "Natural", many of the currently allowed and planned uses, both current and historical, will be prohibited within 200 feet of the shoreline.

Both active and passive use will either be prohibited or greatly restricted by the reclassification in the "Honeymoon Meadow" adjacent to Country Club Drive, and other areas of the park. These activities are typically not water-related or dependent. However, public use of this area has been historical and preceded the Park District's acquisition of the property in 1999. Under the proposed SMP, except as noted in Paragraph 6 of Section 3.2.5.3 Management Policies, all public use except for cultural events and passive recreational uses would be prohibited within 200 ft. of the shoreline. Even those uses would only be allowed subject to compensatory mitigation. Since the meadow is bordered on the North and South by Mac's Dam and Yama Creeks, which both have salt-water estuaries, a 200 ft. setback would effectively eliminate all activities in the meadow as the area outside the 200 ft. buffer would be extremely small.

The proposed SMP only allows trails that access the water, but not those that parallel the shoreline. The park has trails that roughly parallel the shoreline within the proposed "Natural" area. Many of these trails are within the proposed 200 ft. buffer and would be prohibited. Even if existing trails were grandfathered, under the proposed standards, maintenance would be extremely difficult and cost-prohibitive.

Per our concept plan, the District plans to develop areas along the shoreline that would allow users to view the harbor and horizon from different angles. This would be prohibited under the proposed guidelines.

Passive picnic areas require a 50 ft. setback under the current SMP. The "Natural" designation would prohibit these facilities, an action that significantly restricts users' enjoyment and use of the park's shoreline.

The District's plans for the South and West shores of the log pond include only minor access improvements, such as upgrading and maintaining existing shoreside trails that have been overgrown by invasive species, opening up strategically-placed viewing areas along the shoreline, placing a few picnic tables in places where people can enjoy the water view while they have a meal, and allowing public use in the meadow. Enclosed is one of the drawings from our concept plan that we've been using to guide our work. We believe that these are all uses compatible with not only the park's actual setting, but the "Island Conservancy" designation as well.

It is important to note that Blakely Harbor Park is a highly-disturbed post-industrial site. As such, the topography of the land is relatively flat and covered with invasive vegetative species, particularly in the understory. The District believes that designating any part of Blakely Harbor Park as "Natural", including the South and West shores of the log pond, is inappropriate, inconsistent with current and long-standing use, impedes the District's ability to fulfill its duty to the public, and, as it essentially removes all viable use of the property may constitute a regulatory taking from an unwilling property owner. The "Natural" designation is also inconsistent with surrounding shoreline residential uses. The Park District therefore requests that the entire shoreline area of Blakely Harbor Park be designated as "Island Conservancy".

Very truly yours,



Kenneth R. DeWitt, Chair
Board of Commissioners
Bainbridge Island Metropolitan
Park & Recreation District

cc: City Planning Department
Park Commissioners
Terry Lande, Park District Executive Director
Perry Barrett, Park District Senior Planner

Enclosure

Entry / Parking

- Orientation
- Parking for 20 Cars
- Restrooms
- Picnic Lawn

Captain Renton Loop Trail

- 1200' Round Trip, Parking 4x
- Seaborn Avenue
- Access to Seaborn Neighborhood (Halle Bros. Shipyard Site, Englelake Neighborhood, Port Madison/Port Blakely Territorial Road, and Bus Parking)
- Site of Historical Structures
- Interpretation of Mill Community
- Picnic Lawn

North Jetty Trail

- 2000 Round Trip, Parking to Jetty Overlook
- Access to Generator Building and Beach Trail
- Boardwalk over Wetland
- Natural System Interpretive Overlook at Jetty Overlook

Honeymoon Trail

- 4800 Round Trip, Parking to Yama Bridge
- Access to Diverse Trails
- Diverse Habitats
- Bird Blind
- No Water Access

South Jetty Trail

- 6400 Round Trip, Parking to South Jetty
- Access to South Beach Break Area
- Diverse Habitat
- Spectacular View of Harbor and Seaside

West Blakely Trail

- 6000 Round Trip, Parking to Blakely Avenue
- Access to Fort Blakely Cemetery, Pugs Round Environmental Learning Center, West Blakely Wood, Future Park Lands and Island Trail Synch
- Beautiful Ravine and Coniferous Forest

Yama Trail

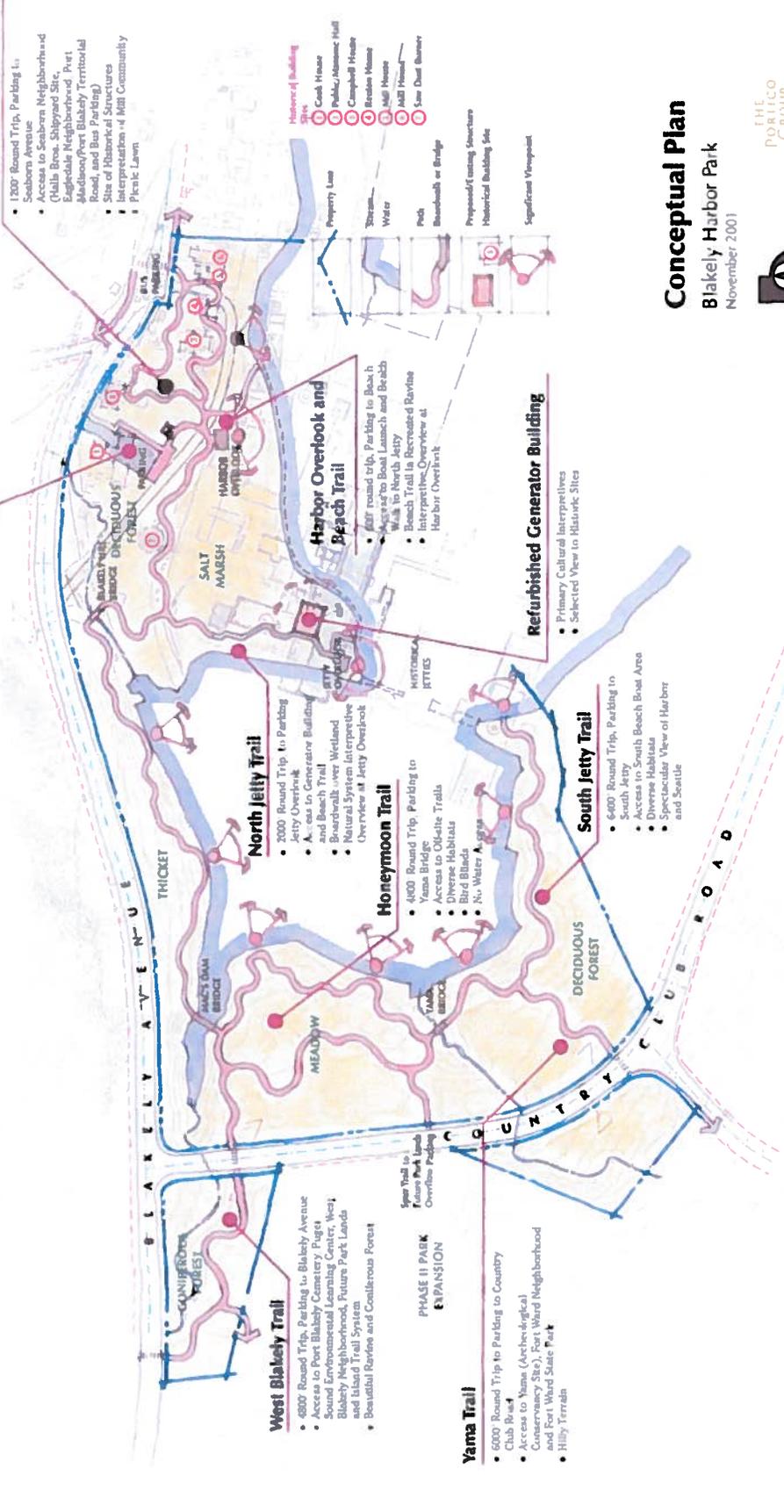
- 6000 Round Trip to Parking to Country Club Road
- Access to Yama (Archeological Conservancy Site), Fort Ward Neighborhood and Fort Ward State Park
- Hilly Terrain

Harbor Overlook and Beach Trail

- 1000 Round Trip, Parking to Beach
- Access to Beach Launch and Beach Walk to North Jetty
- Beach Trail is Recreated Ravine
- Interpretive Overlook at Harbor Overlook

Refurbished Generator Building

- Primary Cultural Interpretives
- Selected View to Historic Sites



Conceptual Plan

Blakely Harbor Park

November 2001

