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**AUBURN ENVIRONMENTAL PARK
MASTER PLAN**

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THE VISION

A LITTLE MORE THAN A CENTURY AGO, THE GREEN RIVER VALLEY WAS THE HOME OF A LARGE VARIETY OF WILDLIFE. WATER RAN COLD AND CLEAR ON ITS WAY FROM MT. RAINIER TO THE PUGET SOUND. MIGRATORY BIRDS SOUGHT REFUGE IN NUMEROUS WETLANDS, AND UNTOLD NUMBERS OF SALMON RETURNED EACH YEAR FROM THE OCEAN TO SPAWN. WHAT IF WE COULD TURN BACK THE CLOCK A LITTLE, AT LEAST IN ONE SMALL CORNER OF THE VALLEY, TO CREATE AN ISLAND OF NATURAL ENVIRONMENT WITHIN A WORLD-CLASS URBAN REGION, AN ISLAND THAT WILL HELP TO KNIT THE AREA'S ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES BACK TOGETHER? THE AUBURN ENVIRONMENTAL PARK (AEP) HAS THE POTENTIAL TO ACCOMPLISH ALL OF THIS AND MUCH MORE.

THE AEP IS BOUNDED BY THE WEST VALLEY HIGHWAY ON THE WEST, INTERURBAN TRAIL AND UNION PACIFIC RAIL ROAD ON THE EAST, 15TH STREET NW ON THE NORTH AND AUBURN'S MAIN STREET ON THE SOUTH. THE PROJECT AREA ENCOMPASSES A PORTION OF MILL CREEK WITHIN THE GREEN RIVER VALLEY. STATE ROUTE (SR) 167 BISECTS THE VICINITY BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY, SO DOES MILL CREEK. MILL CREEK ORIGINATES IN WETLANDS ON AUBURN'S WEST HILL NEAR FEDERAL WAY, AND RUNS THROUGH PEASLEY CANYON TO THE VALLEY FLOOR. AS IT FLOWS NORTH, MILL CREEK MERGES WITH THE GREEN RIVER AND FLOWS OUT INTO PUGET SOUND. WHILE PRESENTLY DETERIORATED, IT HAS GREAT POTENTIAL FOR ONCE AGAIN SUPPORTING SALMON. THE AEP IS ALSO THE HOME OF ONE OF THE HIGHEST FUNCTIONING WETLAND MITIGATION SITES IN THE REGION THAT WAS DEVELOPED TO SUPPORT CONSTRUCTION OF EMERALD DOWNS THOROUGHBRED RACETRACK. IN ADDITION TO PROVIDING HABITAT FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE, THE AEP WILL SUPPORT ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION THROUGH NATURE WALKS, BIRD OBSERVATION AREAS AND INFORMATION KIOSKS. RECREATIONAL NEEDS WILL BE SERVED BY TRAILS LINKED BY THE INTERURBAN TRAIL TO THE GREATER PUGET SOUND REGION. IT WILL PROVIDE THE ABILITY TO COLLECT AND CLEAN STORM FLOWS FROM AUBURN'S 100-YEAR-OLD DOWNTOWN. IT WILL ALSO OFFER PASTORAL VIEWS AND A REFUGE FROM THE STRESS OF DAILY LIFE FOR TENS OF THOUSANDS OF COMMUTERS ON SR 167 WHO WILL PASS BY IT EACH DAY.

THE VISION IS BECOMING A REALITY.

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THE WETLANDS OF AUBURN ENVIRONMENTAL PARK



Wetlands are comprised of three components: hydrophilic (water-loving) vegetation; hydric (wet) soils, and hydrology (water). A wetland can take decades, and sometimes even centuries, to flourish and become fully functional. Once a wetland is fully functional, the wetland vegetation and soils provide a means to improve water quality by filtering out heavy metals and other toxicants from the water before it continues on to a stream; the entire wetland provides a catch basin for excess storm water to help control flooding; and the wetland provides habitat to a wide variety of wildlife species. Historically, however, wetlands seldom held much value—they were considered wastelands that

held little value unless drained. The area comprising the Auburn Environmental Park was no exception to this wide-held belief.

1850 – 1900

Prior to 1853, the area comprising the Auburn Environmental Park was mostly marshy, unused and undeveloped land. Settlers began arriving in the Auburn Valley around 1853, making land claims under the Oregon Donation Land Act of 1850, and later the Homestead Act of 1862. The settlers would clear timber and use the land mainly for subsistence farming, animal feed, and dwellings. Flood protection at the time consisted of 1858 legislation that allowed the settlers to construct levees along riverbanks and dig drainage ditches to drain the wetlands. By 1894, the Valley floor was predominately used for agriculture, except for the wettest areas.

Major road improvements and construction began around 1870, with the roadbeds being placed on natural levees for the best drainage (including Main Street, the southern boundary of the Auburn Environmental Park). With the introduction of hops in the late 1880's and continuing expansion of overland transportation, the Auburn Valley became an important agricultural service center. The Northern Pacific and the Great Northern Railroads, which came through central Auburn in 1883 and 1893, respectively, along with the facilities that were developed in the Valley for storing, drying and processing of hops, resulted in the area becoming a leading population center for the period.

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Impacts to the Auburn Environmental Park wetlands would have been localized during this period. Production demands for hops and other cash crops led to the increased amount of drained wetlands to accommodate fields for growing, thereby decreasing the overall area of wetland systems. Because roads during this period were generally dirt and puncheons, or corduroy bridges, surface runoff flow was not impacted and wetland areas were not generally isolated.

1901-1950

When the hop-louse infested Auburn Valley hop crops in 1892, crops were ruined and abandoned, then later dug out and room made for new cash crops. These new cash crops included fruits, potatoes, seed crops, and horticultural crops. Dairy farming was also part of the areas industries. This shift from subsistence farming to cash crop production may have been a result of increased Japanese and European immigration into the area. By 1920 more than 1,000 Japanese farmers cultivated over 25,000 acres throughout the state, and those located throughout the Valley operated some of the peak production farms until the Alien Land Act of 1921, which forced them to relinquish their lands. Growing populations throughout the Puget Sound region provided insatiable markets for the farm and dairy products of the Valley, in turn sparking growth and expansion in Auburn to accommodate these markets. Wetlands were drained or filled, streams were channelized, and rivers were dammed to protect the crops and fields from flooding. Cash crops remained the Valley's primary industry until around World War II when heightened aerospace and other defense industry developments occurred and Japanese farmers were sent to internment camps and their lands taken.



Property of White River Valley Museum, Auburn

It is likely that the Trott Family Farm, whose fields were located in the southeastern portion of the Auburn Environmental Park along Main and Western Streets, once yielded the famous White River Potato.

In the early 1900's motor vehicles were introduced into the Valley and competed with trains for passenger and freight transportation. Since area industries required transportation improvements and expansions, the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul line was completed through Auburn (eastern boundary of the Auburn Environmental Park) in 1909 and 1915 had introduced two-lane hard-surfaced highways with good bridges into the Valley. Auburn was selected as the home of Pacific Railroad's West Coast repair yard. Facilities were also developed in Auburn to meet cash crop market expansion, including Borden Company, a condensory, and Libby's, a canning/packing plant. During World War II, Auburn was also selected as home to one of Boeing Aircraft's plants.



Property of White River Valley Museum, Auburn

Milwaukee Rail Train

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During this period, area growth continued at exponential rates which impacted the Auburn Environmental Park wetlands in several ways. First, construction of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul line filled, diked, and divided the wetland system from north to south. Then, further dissection of the wetland system occurred when dirt-filled roads replaced corduroy bridges. Finally, continued agricultural and light industrial land use diminished the size, function, and values of the original wetland system.



Main Street Resurfacing (1934)

1951 – Present

Once the Auburn Valley entered the last half of the century, the area seemed to grow in leaps and bounds. The Valley changed from an area predominantly used for agriculture in the 1950's and 1960's to an area that became predominantly developed with an array of industrial and retail/commercial buildings now seen today. Although many factors played into the change, three are more prevalent: Howard A. Hanson Dam construction; improved transportation infrastructure construction and freight rates; and the purchase, aggregation, and development of land in the Valley for industrial and large-scale commercial purposes.



Industries near Seattle desperately needed to expand to meet market demands, but were limited due to available land. South was the only available direction to go, but the area suffered from inadequate flood control and drainage. The remedy proposed: Howard A. Hanson Dam. The dam was completed in 1962, providing the Valley its much-needed flood control. But drainage still remained an issue, so in 1966 Congress approved the Federal Soil Conservation Service's plan to construct 55 miles of drainage channels designed to collect and carry runoff. With the water at bay, the Green River Valley saw the rapid disappearance of farming and the emergence of industrial plants, shopping centers, residential development, and vacant land.

Although Auburn was serviced by four transcontinental railways (Northern Pacific; Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific; Great Northern; and Union Pacific), there was still a need for an improved transportation network for the area's industries and growing population.

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In 1953, State Route 167 (current western boundary of the Auburn Environmental Park) was designed and construction approved. State Route 167 was completed through Auburn in 1972 and supported by State Route 18, completed around 1960, that ran east to west. The northern boundary of the Auburn Environmental Park, 15th St. NW, was not completed until around 1975. The new freeway, as well as decreased freight rates and the Washington State Free Port Tax Law (1969), encouraged the location and development of distribution warehouses in the Valley.

With the construction of the Howard A. Hanson Dam and State Route 167 came the corporations purchasing agricultural lands for future industrial development. Because the land could now be used for other purposes, the land values increased, and thus the associated taxes, pressuring the small farmers into selling their land. Between 1960 and 1980 over 9,000 acres of the Valley's prime agricultural land was converted to other uses or vacant land, or was filled or covered with impervious surfaces. But not all of the land was developed right away and by 1971 over one-third of Valley land was vacant or unused. Eventually, the area became known as the "industrial breadbasket to the world" having evolved into a way station for American goods to be distributed throughout the Northwest, for domestic goods waiting for export, and for goods imported from Pacific Rim nations.

Residential land use also increased during this period as the Valley underwent a population explosion. While the Valley floor was being converted to industrial uses, the East and West Hills of Auburn were residentially developed. Mill Creek, which lies between the West Hill and the Valley floor, supplies water to the Auburn Environmental Park. Because storm water runoff increases with impervious surface areas, impacts to the flow and drainage of nearby streams were inevitable, and Mill Creek was no exception. Culverts placed under State Route 167 to aid Mill Creek's flow eventually became clogged, overflowing the stream banks and flooding lower lying areas to either side of the freeway. This process is what caused the Auburn Environmental Park area to begin its transformation from fallow farm land to emergent wetland.

It was also during this period, although not until the late 1960's, when federal and state governments began showing concern for the environmental impacts of development. The newly implemented laws attempted to eliminate or limit discharges of pollutants or dredged or fill material into the nation's waters, particularly "special aquatic sites" such as wetlands, by requiring permits from the Army Corps of Engineers for such activities. One law from this period, the Clean Water Act, which has undergone several amendments and revisions since its inception, is still enforced today.

The Auburn Environmental Park and Mill Creek, along with its other associated wetlands, perhaps suffered the greatest impact during this period. Construction of State Route 167 not only divided the wetland system further, but also caused portions of it to be covered with impervious surfaces. Culverts, used during freeway and arterial road construction, were, and still are, inadequately sized for the increased amounts of flow. The two railroads that bisect the floodplain, along with State Route 167, continue to interrupt the cross-valley subsurface flows by compressing underlying peat layers, and thus disconnecting groundwater movement between the creek and its associated wetlands. In addition, continued development, especially industrial development, impacted the larger system as the land was filled so that building foundations could be laid. Pollutants were discharged into Mill Creek and other surrounding tributaries that eventually found their way into the wetland system. Indeed, impact results can especially be seen in the diminished Chinook and Coho populations using Mill Creek today. Historically, these two fish species would migrate up Mill Creek as far as its entrance into

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Peasley Canyon; today, however, Chinook and Coho are rarely found in Mill Creek south of the culvert crossing at S. 277th Street—nearly three miles of prime fishery habitat lost since the late 1960s.

With this degradation in mind, in the late 1990's, The Army Corps of Engineers engaged interested parties in the development of the Special Areas Management Plan (SAMP) for the Mill Creek area. This plan, though never formally adopted, created an inventory of the wetland systems throughout the Mill Creek valley. The premise behind the plan was to identify higher quality wetlands and plan for their restoration, while allowing lower quality wetlands to be filled for economic development reasons. Several jurisdictions, including some regulatory arms of government still rely on the recommendations offered by the plan in the way they conduct business (i.e. mitigation ratios, etc). The Auburn Environmental Park encompasses wetlands marked for restoration under the SAMP.

The Future

In 1972 Congress enacted the Clean Water Act. Although the Act has been amended and revised several times since then, it still remains the primary regulatory document controlling the activities in the nation's waters. The Clean Water Act, regulated by the Army Corps of Engineers and the Department of Ecology, requires that any developer impacting more than ½ acre of wetland must mitigate the impact. In complying with the federal and state laws, the City of Auburn has implemented their own wetland mitigation requirements for developers. The City requires that for every acre of wetland impacted at least 2 acres and sometimes more must be enhanced or created. Auburn wetland mitigation enhancements and creations require that all three wetland components are present, and usually require a 3- to 5-year monitoring period to insure the wetland changes are successful. Auburn has experienced high success rates for wetland mitigation, partially due to the already existing “wetland” conditions covering most of the Valley floor.

The middle portion of the Auburn Environmental Park, called the Thormod Wetland, was a wetland created under this mitigation requirement. In the mid-1990's, Auburn was chosen as the site for a new horse-racing track, Emerald Downs. Because the new track would impact numerous acres of already existing wetland, the developer was required to mitigate the impacts by creating/enhancing a new wetland area. As part of the mitigation, the developer was also required to grant a conservation easement of the area to the City of Auburn. It was through this easement and later purchases that the entire area for the Auburn Environmental Park came into City possession.

Around the turn of the 21st Century, the State of Washington began looking at the bigger picture: Through the continuing growth and development of the state near and around its waterways, there has been a marked decline in salmon populations and habitat, so much so that certain salmon species are now listed as being threatened by extinction on the Federal list. As a result, the King County Water and Land Resources Division, in conjunction with 16 area Cities developed a salmon habitat restoration plan for all waters within the Water Resource Inventory Area 9 (WRIA 9). This ongoing project proposes to restore salmon habitat within the Green/Duwamish and Central Puget Sound watershed, which includes Mill Creek and the area contained within the Auburn Environmental Park. Most of the Environmental Park area acquired by the City of Auburn has sat unused and vacant for over 30 years, all the while healing and growing hydrophilic vegetation, recharging hydric soils, and maintaining wetland hydrology. The

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City's goal is that the Environmental Park will help restore this area and once again provide habitable waters and educate citizens of its' long storied history.

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THE PLAN

General Design Considerations

In considering the options for the Auburn Environmental Park site, there were several considerations that did not fit clearly into enhancement, rehabilitation, or re-establishment. Those considerations are presented below:

- Social value can be increased by providing passive recreation in a natural environment, such as trails, educational signage, and wildlife viewing opportunities.
- As an urban wetland system, the Auburn Environmental Park wetlands are integral in providing water quality improvement for waters entering Mill Creek and its surrounding floodplains. Various design considerations can be considered to increase the ability of these wetlands to perform this important function including:
 - Create shallow sinuous swales through the existing grass and forb habitats to direct stormwater slowly across the site. This will control the flow of water across the site and can maximize the interaction of water and soils, allowing for nutrient and toxicant removal through chemical interaction between any runoff and the soils.
 - Plant the created swales densely with a variety of native emergent species known to uptake nutrients and toxicants, such as sedge species, rush species, spike rush, red fescue, hard stem bulrush, and small-fruited bulrush.
 - Areas of common cattail should remain on the site as this species is known for its ability to uptake nutrients and heavy metals.
 - Trees known to uptake nutrients and heavy metals include red alder, black cottonwood, and trembling aspen. These species can be planted in drier areas of the wetland.
 - Any stormwater entering this system should be delivered as sheet flow (e.g., dispersal trench) rather than from a point source (e.g., culverts)
 - Whenever possible, stormwater should be treated for water quality prior to entering the wetland (e.g., passing through an oil/water separator and other Department of Ecology approved treatment options). This will avoid overburdening the wetland and will allow it to function for water quality improvement rather than becoming a sink for pollutants.

Design options for compensatory mitigation and/or mitigation banking need to consider that the USACE and Ecology do not allow for mitigation credit when changing viable wetland habitat to an atypical habitat for that wetland's geomorphic setting. For instance, in the Mill Creek floodplain where wetlands were historically seasonally saturated or inundated scrub-shrub and forested habitat, excavating a permanently inundated pond in existing seasonally saturated wetland would not be considered compensatory mitigation and, in some cases, may be considered a wetland impact if the overall functional performance of the existing wetland is degraded.

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Urban Wetland Design Considerations

In addition to the regulatory and ecological considerations, another important consideration includes the cultural context in which the wetland is located. That is, how the wetland is perceived by the Public. Generally, highly functioning wetlands are described as having noticeable wildlife, paths or structures, trees or woodlands, and open water.

Some specific recommendations include:

- Select and design the wetland restorations to support their ecological values and to be part of a contiguous experience of nature for visitors.
- Design restored wetlands to maximize habitat values. Songbirds and waterfowl will be particularly appreciated by visitors and adjacent landowners.
- Emphasize plant restoration rather than relying only major alterations to the hydrologic regime. Allow natural colonization as resources allow. This is a lower cost/lower risk strategy.
- Design wetland restorations to provide cultural cues to familiar aesthetic values that can be seen and understood immediately by the public (structures, signs, strategically placed areas of turf) to help viewers understand the stewardship intention and developing beauty of the wetland.
- Design wetland restorations to include flowering species and to mimic native ecosystems. This will help build an aesthetically pleasing park that builds to the existing flora and fauna.
- Where open water is a part of the ecosystem and appropriate to the site, design restorations to allow people near the open water without fragmenting the wetlands, and design extended views over the water in support of wildlife viewing. This needs to be balanced by the need to protect wildlife from human intrusion into their shrinking habitat.
- Design wetland restorations to anticipate the need for maintenance over the long term, and program resources to provide for maintenance that is attuned to the particular characteristics of the restored wetland.

Auburn Environmental Park Habitat Design

(The design concept for the entire park is shown graphically at the end of this section. It is helpful to reference this map as it is detailed subsequently.)

Historically, the area of the Auburn Environmental Park was used for agricultural purposes. During the late seventies, agriculture ceased on the northern portion of Auburn Environmental Park near 15th Street NW. Several years later the rest of the area encompassing the Auburn Environmental Park was left fallow. Indicative of this area, once human intrusion ceased, the wetlands began to heal themselves. This is evident by the increasing diversity and function of this northern parcel, of which, a significant portion has begun to refer back to a forested wetland condition. With this concept in mind, the restoration of the Auburn Environmental Park

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Wetlands will build on this past experience and is geared towards helping nature to restore itself. In general, the design concept is to conduct minor alterations to flow and to create pockets of habitat that can naturally expand at nature's pace. Because success rates for moonscaping and replanting project areas has been dismal, maintenance and monitoring will play a larger part in the success of this project. It is the City's intent to utilize the expertise of local schools, Green River Community College, Auburn staff and consultants in helping with this aspect of the project.

Wetland A (Southern Wetland Habitat Design)

Wetland A, approximately 17 acres in size, is situated within the Auburn Environmental Park directly south of the Thormod Wetland Mitigation site and extends south to Main Street. Western Street borders the majority of the eastern edge of this site, with a commercial building and parking lot at the southwest border. SR 167 borders the west edge of the site. Design plans for Wetland A include a variety of uses including a research area set aside for local colleges; habitat improvement; and public access in the form of boardwalks, parking, and an interpretive kiosk. A brief description and locations of these improvements is provided below.

Along the northern border of Wetland A is an area approximately 150 feet wide from east to west that contains emergent grasslands composed primarily of reed canarygrass. This area will be set aside for use by local colleges for wetland research studies including, but not limited to, control of reed canarygrass.

South of this northern reed canarygrass area, and still in the northwest corner of Wetland A, is a monoculture of cattail. The cattail monoculture will remain; however, the patch of emergent grasslands west of the monoculture will be altered to create wetland forested habitat. Plantings will include tree species such as black cottonwood, red alder, Oregon ash, and Pacific or Hooker willow that will assist in decreasing reed canarygrass cover through shading.

In the area south of the 150-foot wide strip, but east of the cattail monoculture, reed canary grass dominates this area and is proposed to be altered. Within this north-central portion of Wetland A lies a small open-water pond that had likely been created as a watering pond. Around the open-water area, reed canarygrass will be controlled as much as possible by grading the area to a slightly lower elevation that will support aggressive, native emergent forbs and grasses that can compete with the reed canarygrass. Plants species can include slough sedge, beaked sedge, ovoid spikerush, least spikerush, hard-stem bulrush, soft-stem bulrush, and small-fruited bulrush, tall manna grass, and American speedwell. This native emergent vegetation will be placed in a crenulated fashion to a width of 50 to 100 feet beyond the open-water pond's edge, ensuring that irregular borders are formed between habitat types. Directly east of the open-water pond and the proposed native emergent habitat, the existing reed canarygrass will be modified to scrub-shrub habitat. Species to include are red-osier dogwood, vine maple, Sitka willow, black twinberry, prickly currant, salmonberry, and pea fruit rose. This scrub-shrub habitat will be configured so that the edge of the adjacent emergent and forest habitats form a visually interesting contrast for human visitors to the site, and will provide a maximum of edge habitat that will attract a diversity of bird species. The shrub habitat layout will occur to the east of the emergent habitat in order to allow a clear view of the pond and open emergent habitat from the interpretive kiosk and boardwalk to the south (discussed in later paragraphs). In addition, a boardwalk allows visitors to walk through this habitat.

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Directly east of the open-water and adjacent to Western St. is an area of upland that is currently composed of blackberry, grasses, and ornamental shrubs. This area is proposed to remain upland and will be enhanced with tree species such as lodge-pole pine, western red cedar, western hemlock, big-leaf maple, with a shrub understory of beaked hazelnut, pea fruit rose, red-flowering currant, salal, Oregon grape, and red huckleberry. The ground layer can include interesting native species such as dwarf dogwood, foamflower, wild ginger, deer fern, lady fern, maidenhair fern, and wild lily-of-the-valley. A trail is proposed through this area and into the adjacent proposed scrub-shrub area to the interpretive kiosk in the upland area to the south. This area will provide educational information by exhibiting a visual representation of habitat changes from upland forest to wetland scrub-shrub and wetland emergent habitat.

Directly north of the building on Western St. (towards the eastern-central portion of Wetland A, the emergent grassland will be altered to reflect a forested habitat. Species to be planted include western red cedar, western hemlock, lodge-pole pine, Pacific crabapple, Scouler willow, black cottonwood, big-leaf maple, snowberry, pacific ninebark, Sitka willow shrubs, vine maple, and prickly currant.

In the southeast corner of Wetland A resides a small monoculture of Himalayan blackberry. The monoculture is proposed to be replaced with forested upland habitat. Species to plant include western red cedar, western hemlock, lodge-pole pine, Pacific crabapple, Scouler willow, black cottonwood, big-leaf maple, snowberry, pacific ninebark, Sitka willow, vine maple, and prickly currant. Along the southern border of Wetland A is a large area composed of a monoculture of creeping buttercup. This monoculture can be enhanced by planting a 10-foot buffer around it with other wetland forbs, including slough sedge, beaked sedge, ovoid spikerush, least spikerush, hard-stem bulrush, soft-stem bulrush, and small-fruited bulrush.

Additional habitat features proposed throughout Wetland A include bat boxes that can be constructed and placed in already-existing forested habitats within Wetland A. In addition, large woody debris and brush piles will be placed throughout the wetland to encourage wildlife diversity by providing additional wildlife habitat for small birds and mammals.

Wetland C (Northern Wetland Habitat Design)

Wetland C, approximately 66 acres in size, is situated within the Auburn Environmental Park directly north of the Thormod Wetland Mitigation site and extends up to 15th Street NW. The Interurban Trail borders the east side of this site and SR 167 borders the west side. Wetland C is divided into two nearly equivalent sections by a gravel utility access road that runs east to west from the Interurban Trail to nearly SR 167. Design plans are proposed primarily to the south of the utility access road and include boardwalks, a birding tower, and habitat enhancement.

Most of the area north of the utility access road will remain unaltered. The following are those portions to be altered. In the northwest corner of Wetland C is an upland area that serves as an access point from 15th St. NW. Of this upland section, the lower 100 feet will be leveled and planted with upland trees to create forested habitat. Proposed plant species for this are based on adjacent upland forest habitat and include Sitka spruce, western red cedar, red alder, Oregon ash (at the edge of the wetland only), black cottonwood, Pacific willow (at the edge of the wetland only), and Scouler willow in the tree layer. The understory layer will include salmonberry, Indian plum, salal, vine maple, and Oregon grape. Proposed plants for the ground layer include bracken fern, and red fescue; and along the wetland edge will be slough sedge, and soft-stem bulrush.

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Approximately 100 feet north of the west 350 feet of the utility access road, the existing emergent grasslands should be altered to forested habitat. The new forested habitat's western edge will be in close proximity to a small mixed scrub-shrub patch. The borders should form irregular edges and comprise approximately 1.20 acres. Species to include within this new patch of forested habitat are lodge-pole pine, Oregon ash, Pacific or hooker willow trees, Geyer or Sitka willow shrubs, red-osier dogwood, western crabapple, Douglas' spirea, slender rush, and soft-stem, hard-stem, and/or small-fruit bulrush.

In the middle of Wetland C, an elevated boardwalk is proposed to be constructed. The boardwalk will cross the utility access road twice, with each instance having the boardwalk trail ascending or descending from the elevated road. The boardwalk will be irregular in shape, forming a complete loop, and consisting of approximately 6 walk-out platforms (three to each side of the access road). The northern portion of the boardwalk will loop around the three small patches of spirea habitat lying north of the access road, and the southern portion will loop around the small patch of willow habitat and come close to the open-water area lying south of the access road. Two small patches of emergent habitat will be added within the boardwalk boundary and north of the access road. The two new emergent patches should include small-fruited bulrush, hard stem bulrush, and soft stem bulrush, ovoid spikerush, pointed rush, American speedwell, and slough and/or beaked sedge.

South of the utility access road along the easternmost 350 ft of the site (running from the access road to the southern parcel line of Wetland C) is the wettest portion of this area, with standing water throughout most of the year. Currently this area supports four patches of willow habitat amongst the reed canarygrass and scattered patches of cattail. Four new small patches of forested habitat are proposed to be created from the already-existing emergent grasslands. Species to include in the four new patches are lodge-pole pine, Oregon ash, Pacific and/or hooker willow trees, Geyer and/or Sitka willow shrubs, red-osier dogwood, Douglas' spirea, slender rush, and soft-stem, hard-stem, or small-fruit bulrush.

In approximately the central portion of the southern half of Wetland C, a shallow emergent, seasonally inundated area is proposed. This would entail shallow excavation that will assist in creating less favorable conditions for the existing reed canarygrass. This area would be designed to mimic typical northwest wetland hydrologic conditions. That is, it will hold shallow (6 inches to 1 foot deep) water in the spring and dry out in the summer. This area would extend to the wetter eastern-most area described above and would incorporate irregular edges that dip south then north again. This design will increase available habitat for birds, amphibians, and small mammals; and will be an amenity for the nearby proposed birding tower. The edges of this area would be enhanced with a 10-foot buffer of slough sedge, beaked sedge, and hard-stem, soft-stem, or small-fruit bulrushes.

To the east of these shallow seasonally inundated emergent area, swales are proposed to be constructed through the emergent grasslands area and planted with slough or beaked sedge, soft-stem, hard-stem, or small-fruit bulrush, and least and/or ovoid spikerush. The constructed swales will begin at the northern-most point of Clay St., then twist and meander through the east side of the southern area below the access road and could be constructed so that portions flow underneath the proposed boardwalk.

A birding tower is recommended to be placed towards the southeastern end of Wetland C (there are three small patches of willow and one small patch of cattail located nearby). Access to the birding tower will be provided by a boardwalk trail. There are two optional access

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points for the trail. The first option will connect to the north end of Clay St. and meander to the birding tower over approximately 600 feet of emergent grassland. The second option will connect to the Interurban Trail at a point approximately 500 feet north of the currently-existing building on the eastern side of Clay St. and meander to the birding tower over approximately 300 feet of emergent grassland. A boardwalk is also proposed from the birding tower to the boardwalk loop by the utility access road.

There are four patches of Himalayan blackberry in the southeastern corner of Wetland C (two are along the south parcel line and one is along the Interurban Trail). These four patches of blackberry would be converted to forested habitat. Species to include are red alder, western hemlock, Pacific or hooker willow, Geyer or Sitka willow, black cottonwood, red-osier dogwood, western crabapple, red huckleberry, Nootka roses, prickly currant, snowberry, and western red cedar.

Bat boxes can be constructed and placed in already-existing forested habitats within Wetland C. In addition, large woody debris and brush piles will be placed throughout the wetland to encourage wildlife diversity by providing additional wildlife habitat for small birds and mammals.

Auburn Environmental Park Amenities

There are a variety of design components, features, and amenities that can be incorporated into the Auburn Environmental Park design. These amenities include:

Birding Tower

Birding towers have been used in many bird habitat areas to provide a longer view over tree vegetation. The features within these towers can vary greatly.

Information Kiosk

An important part of the Auburn Environmental Park is providing educational information to visitors. Kiosks provide a means of providing basic information about features and activities around the site.

Paved Trail

An asphalt paved trail 8-feet wide is typical in parks. It consists of a small amount of fill covered with a small amount of crushed rock then 2-inches of asphalt paving over the top. This is usually relatively easy to install and maintain. These types of trails will be limited within the Auburn Environmental Park so as to decrease the need for mitigation.

Elevated Wooden Trail

Paved trails have a footprint that would require filling wetlands in the Auburn Environmental Park. To minimize the impact of filling for trails and the resultant expensive mitigation, elevated wooden trails can be used. These trails consist of supports embedded in the ground, wooden boardwalk areas and handrails. This trail type will be used for most of the trail system within the Auburn Environmental Park.

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Interpretive Center

To provide the richest experience for visitors to the park, a modest building could be constructed off-site to house meeting rooms for educational classes, displays and exhibits, curator/docent offices, and public meeting rooms.

Restrooms

If the public is invited to enjoy the Auburn Environmental Park, it will be important to provide the minimum necessary facilities. Public restrooms need to be able to withstand significant abuse. A small cement block building having stainless steel fixtures for long life and low maintenance is proposed. A restroom adjacent to the Interurban Trail could be designed to also provide drinking water.

Environmental Park District

The Auburn Environmental Park is located within a highly industrialized section of Auburn. A majority of the area within 0.5 miles of the Park is zoned as either Light or Heavy Industrial. To foster Auburn Environmental Park plans, in early 2006 the City placed a moratorium on license applications, permits and approvals for industrial land uses within the area described as the Green Zone. The majority of this area is now proposed to be rezoned to the Environmental Park District, a new zoning designation (see Figure 2 for Environmental Park District location). During the moratorium period, the City will develop code amendments to establish the Environmental Park District. The moratorium area will serve as a buffer to the Auburn Environmental Park and those businesses within the area will benefit from, use, or support the Auburn Environmental Park.

The Environmental Park District is intended to allow uses in proximity to the Auburn Environmental Park that benefit from that location and will complement the Park and its environmental focus. Uses allowed in this zone will focus upon medical, biotech and “green” technologies including energy conservation, engineering, water quality and similar uses. Other uses complementary to and supporting these uses are also allowed. Incorporation of sustainable design and green building practices will be a primary aspect of this zone. The construction of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) and Built Green certified buildings are encouraged and Built Green will be required for multiple family dwellings. The City recognizes that much of the property in this zone was developed under earlier standards, so the goals of the district will be realized over a period of time as properties are redeveloped.

Mitigation Banking

The Auburn Environmental Park has long been thought of as an ideal location for the creation of a wetland mitigation bank. Several properties around the proposed park have been utilized in the past for the purpose of wetland mitigation. One of the most famous is the highly successful Thormod wetland mitigation site. This wetland was created as a mitigation project for impacts associated with the Emerald Downs Racetrack. The City of Auburn will keep open

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opportunities to continue mitigation brokering¹ of properties under Auburn's control as done in the past, but will consider the notion of the creation of a wetland bank under the Washington State Department of Ecology's and the Interagency for Outdoor Recreation's (IAC) Pilot Program's.

Bank Credits

Bank credits are the gains in functions and values from work done in wetland systems. Currently, there are no definitive mechanisms to evaluate how these improved functions and values relate into tangible credits. Hence, it is necessary to work with various agencies to help determine a more definitive means for credit. At times, this process can be subjective. Negotiation and collaboration, through extensive study and analysis with regulatory agencies, has generally been the pathway for establishing wetland mitigation banking credits. These agencies include the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Department of Ecology, and the Army Corps of Engineers.

Generally, the City foresees that for every wetland acre impacted by development, a wetland parcel of equal or greater size will be available for mitigations within the Auburn Environmental Park, up to a total of 83 acres. Bank credit purchase amounts will be based on the current land value and the extent of restoration/enhancement work to be completed. It is likely that a parcel enhanced with a swale and native vegetation would be more costly than a parcel enhanced with native vegetation alone.

Some agencies already provide guidelines for measuring the success of a mitigation projects. For example, mitigation plans submitted to the City often indicate that native plant mortality rates will not exceed 80% in the first year. By corroborating efforts between the City and other agencies, these specific values could easily be incorporated into detailed guidelines for determining mitigation bank credit values.

It is anticipated that the City of Auburn will manage and maintain mitigation bank credits associated with the Auburn Environmental Park. Mitigation bank credits would be made available to developers planning to build within Auburn (incorporated city limits as well as Potential Annexation Areas (PAA)). Keeping this localized to the region of Auburn will assure that losses due to wetland filling and impact will bring forth positive outcomes locally. Those projects seeking mitigation bank credit usage will be subject to certain criteria to determine eligibility (e.g., location, size, type, etc.).

Allocation of Funds Obtained From Mitigation Credits

The City continues to expend significant amounts of financial resources on land acquisition within AEP. The City anticipates that any financial resources received will be allocated in one of the two following ways. First, any mitigation bank resources received would be recycled back into the Auburn Environmental Park for funding amenities not covered elsewhere by other grants or appropriations (See Park Amenities). And second, any received profits not used for AEP amenities would be used for other City wetland mitigation projects (Phase II potential west of Highway 167).

¹ The ability to line up offsite mitigation sites approved and permitted in conjunction with a development application.

Auburn Environmental Park



Imagine the Possibilities



FIGURE 1: Auburn Environmental Park Phase I Design Features

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Introduction

The City of Auburn hosted a public meeting on June 16, 2005, to celebrate the official kick-off of the Auburn Environmental Park Project. The objective of the meeting was to educate the community and solicit public input. A question and answer session allowed people at the meeting to provide input.

Mayor Lewis opened the meeting by introducing Auburn City Council members and provided a brief introduction of his involvement and support of the project. Mayor Lewis urged the Council, community groups, and residents to support the Auburn Environmental Park project.

Auburn Environmental Park Project Overview

Following introductions, the assembly was provided a general project overview. A feasibility study was presented, which indicated there were no project "fatal flaws." Staff then discussed the feasibility study in more detail.

An environmental consultant produced the supporting wetland delineation and functional assessment. The need to enhance and rehabilitate the wetlands results from problems with hydrology and the invasive reed canary grass that has taken over major portions of the site. Public input and collaboration with the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) will guide development of the project and be critical to its success. Staff then discussed the potential features and conceptual plan for the Auburn Environmental Park project.

Eco-Tourism and Partnership Discussion

A Rainier Audubon Society spokesperson described the partnership opportunities associated with the project and presented a check to the City in support of the project. With 500 members, the Rainier Audubon Society represents a significant source of financial and grassroots support. Birding enthusiasts are the largest group of environmental tourists in the country, totaling 71 million and spending \$29.2 billion annually on the hobby and \$9.4 billion on trip-related expenses. In Washington State, more money is spent on birding than hunting, and 47% of residents participate in some sort of birding activity.

Public Comment Summary

Comment cards were provided to the public and generally reflect citizens' enthusiasm for the Auburn Environmental Park project as a place for education and enjoyment of wildlife. All comments received supported recreational opportunities for residents and tourists, and most citizens look forward to a beautiful public location that will simultaneously manage water quality in the area.

Concerned comments were mainly related to project design options. Citizens were focused on creating an environmental space for viewing native wildlife and native plants. To that end, they rejected ideas of Japanese Gardens or butterfly gardens that would require non-native plants,

as well as traditional “park” elements such as large grassy fields or places for dogs. One comment even suggested dropping the word “park.” Citizens wanted to see small open areas and viewing towers to observe the natural wildlife.

The comments reflected an overwhelming desire to be kept informed of this project through various mediums including the newspaper (*Auburn Reporter*), email, the City website, and occasional mail.

Continued Public Input

In addition to the June 16, 2005 Kick-Off Meeting, the City of Auburn has hosted four additional meetings: August 9, September 15, and October 20, 2005, and February 28, 2006. Each meeting has involved the community seeking input regarding recreational, educational, technical, and funding components.

The City intends to continue hosting public meetings to involve the community in helping shape the Auburn Environmental Park. Such meetings will continue gathering public input regarding park components (signage, bird towers, kiosks, etc.) until the City has a final design and is ready to begin work within the park.

FINANCING

Financing Auburn Environmental Park Amenities

Financing a project like the Auburn Environmental Park is a multi-year commitment which will include the pursuit of grant funding from federal, state and local agencies. Under the auspices of the Parks Safety Net (a municipal non-profit organization), foundation funding will also be sought. Fundraising and sponsorships will also be pursued and possibly a capital campaign will be launched.

Components for Financing Consideration

There are a variety of design components, features, and amenities that can be incorporated into the Auburn Environmental Park design. Each component can be considered separately or in combination with other components when searching for the best funding opportunities. Funding opportunities vary widely in scope and source, but the City is searching for opportunities that will provide monies for project design, construction and/or restoration, and monitoring and maintenance. The City has created a matrix to help track the best funding opportunities (Appendix D). Funding sources vary from federal and state agencies to non-profit organizations and foundations. Some funding sources require match monies that range from 15% to 75% of the total project costs. Some components that can be considered for funding opportunities include:

- ***Birding Tower:*** Birding towers have been used in many bird habitat areas to provide a longer view over tree vegetation. The features within these towers can vary greatly. (Estimated unit cost range: \$30,000² to \$60,000 each (excludes mitigation costs).)
- ***Information Kiosk:*** An important part of the Auburn Environmental Park is providing educational information to visitors. Kiosks provide a low cost means of providing basic information about features and activities around the site. (Estimated unit cost Range: \$5,000 to \$10,000 each (excludes mitigation costs).)
- ***Paved Trail:*** An asphalt paved trail 8-feet wide is typical in parks. It consists of a small amount of fill covered with a small amount of crushed rock then 2-inches of asphalt paving over the top. This is usually relatively easy to install and maintain. These types of trails will be limited within the Auburn Environmental Park so as to decrease the need for mitigation. (Estimated unit cost range: \$30 to \$40 per foot (excludes mitigation costs).)
- ***Elevated Wooden Trail:*** Paved trails have a footprint that would require filling wetlands in the Auburn Environmental Park. To minimize the impact of filling for trails and the resultant expensive mitigation, elevated wooden trails can be used. These trails consist of supports embedded in the ground, wooden boardwalk areas and handrails. This trail type will be used for most of the trail system within the Auburn Environmental Park. (Estimated unit cost range: \$40 to \$80 per foot.)
- ***Interpretive Center:*** To provide the richest experience for visitors to the park, a modest building could be constructed off-site to house meeting rooms for educational classes,

² Note: All dollar figures are in FY 05 dollars.

displays and exhibits, curator/docent offices, and public meeting rooms. (Estimated unit cost range: \$100,000 to \$500,000 each.)

- **Restrooms:** If the public is invited to enjoy the Auburn Environmental Park, it will be important to provide the minimum necessary facilities. Public restrooms need to be able to withstand significant abuse. A small cement block building having stainless steel fixtures for long life and low maintenance is proposed. A restroom adjacent to the Interurban Trail could be designed to also provide drinking water. (Estimated unit cost range: \$50,000 to \$80,000 each)
- **Invasive Species Control:** Reed canary grass is abundant in the Auburn Environmental Park and must be controlled to foster native plant species richness. There are various methods for reed canary grass control and cost would depend upon the method used. To minimize the cost and to encourage educational involvement, local colleges and schools could participate in these activities.
- **Native Plant Species Acquisition and Planting:** One goal of the Auburn Environmental Park is to replace invasive plant species with native, non-invasive plant species. The native plants would need to be acquired and planted within the Auburn Environmental Park. Costs are dependent upon the number and specie types to be planted that will be further detailed during final design. To minimize cost, volunteers and local schools could assist with the planting phase of this activity.
- **Wetland Monitoring and Maintenance:** To ensure the long-term success of the Auburn Environmental Park, it is necessary to maintain and monitor wetland health. To minimize costs, these activities could be conducted by local colleges as part of their educational curriculum or volunteers. It is expected that watering costs will be greatly reduced as the area is intrinsically wet.

PERMITTING

Permits are necessary any time there is a desire to build or alter an existing parcel of land. Project analysis helps determine permissible activities, the extent of potential impacts to sensitive areas, whether mitigation to any sensitive areas is necessary, whether alternative plans are warranted, and what types of permits are needed.

The jurisdictions, agencies, and most likely permits and approvals for the Auburn Environmental Park are as follows:

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

When a project has a federal nexus, such as federal funding or requiring a federal permit, the federal agency involved is required to comply with NEPA. A lead agency is identified and assesses the extent of environmental impacts that could occur if the proposed project is approved. The assessment typically addresses impacts to land use, transportation, cultural, wetland, wildlife, recreation, socioeconomic, air, light, and noise resources. The lead agency will determine if the proposed project impacts could be environmentally significant or not. For projects that could be environmentally significant, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) must be prepared. Non-environmentally significant projects are issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

Assuming the major impacts would be to wetlands that would be mitigated on-site the City does not feel that an EIS would be required. However, the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) will make a final determination when the Section 404 permit application is submitted. If another federal agency provides project funding, that agency may require NEPA documentation such as an Environmental Assessment (EA), and would make such a determination during the funding process.

Joint Aquatic Resources Permit Application (JARPA)

The JARPA is an optional joint application form used to apply for a variety of federal, state, and local permits and approvals including Hydraulic Project Approvals (HPA), SEPA compliance, Shoreline Management Permits, Water Quality Certifications, USACE Section 404 and Section 10 permits, and Coast Guard permits. The JARPA does not necessarily address every permit required for a given project (e.g., local building permits). While not a project permit itself, JARPA is a commonly used process to apply for permits involving multiple agency review.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

Two primary permits issued by the USACE include Section 10 Permit (Work in Navigable Waters) and Section 404 Permit (Discharge of Dredge and Fill Material). Since the waterway is not navigable, a Section 10 permit would not be required. The Auburn Environmental Park would likely require a Section 404 permit if the project proposes to locate a structure, excavate, or discharge dredged or fill material in waters of the United States. Since the on-site wetlands are hydrologically connected to Mill Creek, they are under USACE jurisdiction. The Section 404 permit would trigger the need to obtain an individual Water Quality

Certification and Coastal Zone Management consistency determination of concurrence from Washington DOE (Ecology) and would trigger NEPA compliance. A Coastal Zone Management determination from Ecology is required for all activities and development affecting coastal resources that involve federal actions, federal licenses or permits, and federal funding.

USACE permits include Individual Permits and Nationwide Permits (NWP). A NWP may be used if a project's impacts fall below a defined threshold, typically less than one-half acre of fill. Over 40 different NWPs cover a wide variety of different activities and can sometimes be combined. Specific NWPs that may be of note for this project (depending upon the amount of fill) include NWP 4: Fish and Wildlife Harvesting, Enhancement, and Attraction Devices and Activities, NWP 27: Stream and Wetland Restoration Activities, and NWP 42: Recreational Facilities. Individual Permits require an alternative analysis and also have longer agency review and approval periods.

Regardless of permit type (NWP or Individual), the project must be in compliance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and may require the preparation of a Biological Evaluation/Assessment and concurrence with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA Fisheries). The mitigation plan would also need to address the concerns of USFWS and NOAA Fisheries.

FEMA – Flood Plain Permit

As a participant in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), the City is required by FEMA to review and regulate development within floodplains. The City would need to review any proposed development on the Auburn Environmental Park site to ensure that it is consistent with current City floodplain regulations. Generally these regulations require that any structures to be constructed within the floodplain have their finished floor at least one foot above the established base flood elevation and that cut and fill within the floodplain be balanced. If a proposed development includes fill within the 100-year floodplain, the project applicant can request a Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR) or a Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) to re-delineate the floodplain to account for changes due to the fill. The difference between these two is primarily related to timing—the CLOMR is requested in advance of the project, whereas the LOMR is requested after the fill has been placed.

Any development (fill or structures) that is proposed to take place within the FEMA designated Floodway would require an analysis demonstrating that the proposed development would not affect floodway water levels on the surrounding properties or at other points on Mill Creek.

State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA)

The Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) requires the identification of probable environmental impacts that may result from governmental decisions such as issuing permit approvals and adopting regulations or plans. SEPA is similar to NEPA in its content requirements and process, but not identical. The City administers SEPA through its own ordinances, but lead agency status will likely need to be coordinated with the federal agencies reviewing the NEPA documentation.

SEPA compliance has two major components: the SEPA checklist and the Environment Impact Statement (EIS). The checklist is used to describe the project, identify potential impacts, and suggest available mitigation. After reviewing the checklist, the lead agency publishes one of two determinations: either that project impacts are non-significant (called a Determination of Non-Significance or DNS) or that impacts are significant (called a Determination of Significance DS). A determination of significance means that an EIS is required. If a NEPA EIS is required, it typically fulfills the requirements for a SEPA EIS, but the reverse is less true. Coordination with affected agencies will be required at the outset to map the NEPA/SEPA process and ensure all requirements are met.

Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE)

Ecology administers various permits associated with water quality, air quality, hazardous waste, shore lands, toxic spills, and water resources, as well as environmental assessments, watershed planning, and 401 water quality certification for federal permits. Two specific permits that would likely be required include: 1) a 401 water quality certification (triggered by USACE permit); and 2) a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit (triggered if the City disturbs over one acre of soil). As previously mentioned, Ecology also administers Coastal Zone Management determinations for federal projects.

Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)

It is unlikely the WDFW will be directly involved in the project approval process. However, they will review the JARPA. The initial assessment is that no HPA will be required since the City is not directly affecting a defined stream. Should that change with a design that connects to Mill Creek, the WDFW would have a very important role in the project approval process. Furthermore, if fish are introduced on site, an Aquatic Farm Registration and Permit to Transport Fin Fish may be required by the WDFW.

City of Auburn Permits

For a typical land development project, the City has a number of permits that may be required. These permits typically include:

- Site development permit
- Right of way use permit
- Building permit
- Fill and grade permit

MONITORING/MAINTENANCE

Monitoring involves data collection to ensure that plant and water quality components meet certain performance standards. Maintenance involves upkeep (replacing dead plants, removing weeds, picking up garbage, etc.) to ensure that the plant and water quality components are able to meet the necessary performance standards. Maintenance also involves upkeep of trails and other amenities/facilities provided by performing repairs where necessary. Because this is a Public facility, it is expected to be monitored and maintained in perpetuity.

(Section will be expanded by final design and based on recommendations from all regulatory agencies.)

SCHEDULE/TIMING/NEXT STEPS

Project Scheduling/Phasing

Due to its highly public nature, the Auburn Environmental Park project will likely have pressures to build certain parts of the Park Master Plan first. For instance, the City's Public Works Department may have a keen interest in building the storm water quality and control systems. The DOE may want to have any wetland mitigation constructed before other on-site facilities are initiated. The public may want recreational facilities constructed first. The determination of the project phasing will depend on funding, technical requirements, permitting requirements, policy direction, and a variety of other pressures.

Real Estate Acquisition

The City is in the process of negotiation for certain parcels needed to complete the full project.

Funding

The City is currently reviewing several opportunities for funding. Funding sources vary from federal and state agencies to non-profit organizations and foundations. While there appears to be many sources to choose for funding assistance, the City reviews opportunities that will best fit the objectives and goals of the Auburn Environmental Park.

Construction Documents

Once permitting requirements are reasonably understood and obtained, construction documents can be prepared for individual phases of work.

Construction Phase

This is a straightforward phase. The project is publicly bid in sequential phases and awarded to the responsible bidder for each phase. Currently, this phase is projected to occur in summer 2007 or 2008.

Monitoring and Maintenance

This part of the project is to make sure the investment is properly managed (before and after construction) to fulfill the performance standards set for the project. Performance standards for components such as plants, storm control, wetlands, water quality, etc. were established early in the project's design phase. Some of the work to be performed will be completed by City staff, while other work will involve the community through volunteer opportunities.

Next Steps

Comprehensive water quality and quantity monitoring has been taking place within Auburn Environmental Park for several years. With the Master Planning nearing completion, specific project design can move forward as funding is made available. The designers of the master plan put it together in a way that as funds were made available, design and construction could take place on an individual project basis. Permitting would be included on an individual project basis. The City of Auburn has had tremendous success in mitigation brokering in the past.

Recent changes in the funding of these projects at the State and Federal level has allowed for more options. The State of Washington is currently looking for local projects that could be used for the concept of creating wetland mitigation banks. Auburn Environmental Park, because of its magnitude, qualifies as a potential wetland mitigation bank. Further research is ongoing in determining the feasibility of making the Auburn Environmental Park a wetland mitigation bank. At this time, it's clear that wetland mitigation banks have been difficult to establish in the past and only one currently exists within the State of Washington (Snohomish River Valley). Discussion with the regulatory community and others continues in hopes that this process can be streamlined and made available to organizations without expending an exorbitant amount of resources.

PARK OPERATION