CHAPTER 8. OPEN SPACE

8.1. Summary of Open Spaces/Natural Areas

Green spaces and open space corridors provide visual and psychological relief from man-made development within the urban area. Within the Port Orchard terrain and geography, open space corridors tend to occupy long, relatively narrow lands that follow roads, creeks, and other natural or wildlife corridors. These corridors may protect environmentally-sensitive areas and provide wildlife habitat. Green spaces and open space corridors are maintained with the intent of limited or no development and may offer limited accessibility for public recreation, such as a steep ravines, creeks, and wetland property.

Natural areas also provide opportunities for passive recreation, such as trails, benches and environmental interpretive panels. Public access via rustic trails within these areas is important to provide passive recreational opportunities, as appropriate with resource protection and environmental regulations.

The selection of natural area sites is based on a variety of criteria, including linkage to or through other open spaces, public facilities, relationship to existing parks in the area, the need to preserve a site’s natural features, and the size and quality of the open space. The primary difference between a site classified as "natural area" and a "green space" is that the natural area is intended to remain in a natural state, while also providing passive recreation opportunities, and is acquired or retained as a site of unique environmental quality (i.e., extensive wooded hillsides or ravine). “Green space”, however, may include parks and associated activities, but through zoning restrictions may also minimize the built environment.

8.2. Open Space Vision

“Create areas within the City that limit development, and create trails, natural areas for the protection of..."
environmental features and greenspaces to be used as a refuge from the increasingly urban environment.”

8.3. Open Space Goals and Policies

GOAL 8.3.1 Obtain public support for determining future open space acquisition and development of existing city open space.

POLICIES:

1. Create open space commission for identifying potential open space and park purchases.
2. Work with community groups to obtain funding for additional open spaces.
3. Develop relationship with citizens and community service groups to develop existing open space facilities.

GOAL 8.3.2: Ensure open spaces are available to all citizens.

POLICIES:

1. Create informational documents pertaining to open spaces and natural areas.
2. Make maps and documents available to all citizens highlighting locations and facilities.

GOAL 8.3.3: Provide open space or natural landscaping throughout the City limits.

POLICIES:

1. Zoning ordinances shall identify and preserve open space areas.
2. Landscaping, such as trees and shrubbery, should be included in the commercial areas of the City.
3. Vacant municipal land not required for municipal services should be maintained to provide a pleasing natural condition.