CHAPTER 9. SHORELINES AND WATERFRONT

9.1. Summary of Shorelines & Waterfront

The City of Port Orchard has a vibrant shoreline that is an integral part of the fabric of the Port Orchard experience. The Port Orchard shoreline is a source of income, recreation and aesthetic beauty, and any efforts at redevelopment must include better access and recreational opportunities to the shoreline.

Shorelines within the City of Port Orchard include those portions of Puget Sound lying within the city limits and any associated wetlands, river deltas, and floodways associated with tidal waters whose locations have been designated by the Department of Ecology. The City also contains shorelines of statewide significance (SSWS) which include the marine shorelines from extreme low tide to the middle of Sinclair Inlet, which are adjacent to unincorporated Kitsap County and the City of Bremerton limits.

In addition to the marine shorelines described above, the City contains one creek, Blackjack Creek, which meets the threshold of a shoreline of the state. The estuarine portion of Ross Creek is also a regulated shoreline of the state.

Due to recent annexations, the City also has portions of two lakes that qualify as shorelines of the state. Big Lake, in the extreme southwest portion of the City, is approximately 22 acres, with four of those acres within City limits. Square Lake is approximately 30 acres, with ten acres within city limits.

9.2 Shoreline recreational inventory

**Blackjack Creek Trail.** Blackjack Creek is a treasured salmon stream within City limits. Much of the trail project, viewing platforms, and pedestrian trail elements have been designed to be a fish friendly and environmentally sensitive project. The City continues to implement the Blackjack Creek Comprehensive Management Plan (1987) which includes recreation access to the creek corridor through public trails. The first phase of trail development is the Blackjack Creek...
Wilderness Trail, which will connect the existing Kendall Street Cross-connection trail to the Port Orchard waterfront Mosquito Fleet Trail. The project includes installation of ADA accessible path to viewing areas, interpretive signage, and a trail along the creek. Future phases of the Blackjack Creek Wilderness Trail would include a proposed extension of the entire Blackjack Creek trail network beginning at the shores of Sinclair Inlet and allowing pedestrian travel all the way to the city limits near the Sedgwick & Sidney Road intersection at the southern city limits, providing creek access and viewing opportunities along the entire Blackjack Creek shoreline.

**Bay Street Pedestrian Path/Mosquito Fleet Trail.** The Bay Street Pedestrian Path / Mosquito Fleet Trail is a regional county-wide trail corridor that skirts the eastern shoreline of Kitsap County, connecting historic Mosquito Fleet dock sites along the way. It is a route for use by bicycle commuters, school children, touring groups, recreation users, and tourists. Once complete, the trail will extend from Kingston in the north to Southworth at the southern terminus and will link cultural resources, scenic sites, parks, docks, businesses, schools, transit facilities, public facilities, communities and cities.

The City of Port Orchard portion of the multi-purpose trail will become a part of the Mosquito Fleet Trail identified as a component within multiple regional trail planning efforts including the Port Orchard Urban Waterfront Walkway Plan (1985), the Kitsap County Greenways Plan (1996), Mosquito Fleet Trail Master Plan (2001), Mosquito Fleet Trail Map (2004), Kitsap County Bicycle Facilities Plan (2001), Port Orchard Comprehensive Plan (2008) and Port Orchard Comprehensive Parks Plan (2008). These documents identified the need for recreational facilities. They record extensive public comments and provide a county-wide plan for an integrated network of off-road trails and bicycle lanes that are accessible to all county and city residents along the eastern shoreline of the County.

This portion of the Mosquito Fleet Trail along Bay Street will be a significant segment of the off-road link in the Mosquito Fleet Trail, which eventually will connect the entire eastern shore of Kitsap County, will provide a much needed recreational facility within downtown Port Orchard, and a safe alternative transportation mode for its citizens and workforce. Users are expected to include lunchtime walkers, bicycle commuters, families with children, and recreational cyclists on both organized and independent tours. The trail is also likely to experience heavy multiple use during special events organized and hosted by the City of Port Orchard.

**Water Street Boat Launch.** The City’s only saltwater boat launch is directly west of the City of Port Orchard downtown core. The boat
launch has two ramps separated by a system of floating docks. The adjoining parking lot is owned and maintained by the Port of Bremerton and the launching facility is owned by the City of Port Orchard. The launch is a collaborative effort with underlying ownership by the City of Port Orchard, and a lease for use and maintenance with the Port of Bremerton.

**DeKalb City Dock.** The DeKalb three-hundred fifty foot long pier and dock is owned and maintained by the City of Port Orchard. The city dock is free and is extensively used by pedestrians to access Sinclair Inlet as well as visiting boaters. It is in close in proximity to the downtown and parking is readily available on surrounding city streets.

**Waterfront Park.** The waterfront park is a highly utilized facility that is primarily designed for small children and their parents. The park has significant views of the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard and the Port of Bremerton Marina. The park is owned and maintained by the Port of Bremerton.

### 9.2. Integration with the Shoreline Master Program

This Parks Plan strives in a predictable way to be in conformance with all aspects of the Shoreline Master Program. Where conflicts occur, it is the Shoreline Master Program that is to be the controlling document. Applicable goals and policies related to recreation and parks have been excerpted from the Port Orchard Shoreline Master Program and included for reference within this document.

### 9.3. Shoreline Goals and Policies

**GOAL 9.3.1** Provide better shoreline access and facilities to increase recreational opportunities.

**POLICIES:**

1. Pursue funding for construction of the Mosquito Fleet Trail along the waterfront.
2. Add, improve and maintain public access and use areas along the Sinclair Inlet shoreline, including day use, boating and kayaking facilities.
3. Continue to acquire land for public access and recreation, and protection of critical areas, along the Sinclair Inlet shoreline and Blackjack Creek as it becomes available and affordable.
EXCERPTS FROM THE PORT ORCHARD SHORELINE MASTER PROGRAM:

1. Continue to acquire easements and/or require construction of future segments of the Mosquito Fleet Trail.  *(SMP-GP-24)*
2. In compliance with WAC 173-26-221(4), or as subsequently amended, require the dedication and improvement of public access in developments for water-enjoyment, water-related, and water-dependent uses and for the subdivision of land into more than four parcels when either partially or completely within shoreline jurisdiction.  *(SMP-GP-26)*
3. New shoreline development or major redevelopment by public entities, including local governments, port districts, state agencies and public utility districts, shall include public access as part of each development project, unless such access is demonstrated to be incompatible due to reasons of safety, security or environmental impacts.  *(SMP-GP-27)*
4. Pursue funding and acquisition of property and easements for trails serving the shoreline, including the Mosquito Fleet Trail and the Blackjack Creek Wilderness Trail.  *(SMP-GP-28)*
5. The City should encourage conversion into water-enjoyment, public access, or recreational uses of the Department of Natural Resource owned portion of the waterfront parking area within the downtown.  *(SMP-GP-31)*
6. Recreational developments and plans should provide the regional population a varied and balanced choice of recreation experiences in appropriate locations. Public agencies and private developers should coordinate their plans and activities to provide a wide variety of recreational opportunities without needlessly duplicating facilities.  *(SMP-SU-53)*
7. Trail links between shoreline parks and public access points should be encouraged for walking or bicycle riding where appropriate. The City of Port Orchard Comprehensive Park Plan and the Mosquito Fleet Trail Plan should be considered in design and approval of public trail systems.  *(SMP-SU-54)*
8. Access to natural areas, including but not limited to shoreline beaches and Blackjack and Ross Creeks, should be a combination of linear shoreline trails or easements and small parking or access tracts to minimize user concentration to small portions of the shoreline.  *(SMP-SU-55)*
9. Recreation facilities should incorporate public education regarding shoreline ecological functions and processes, the role of human actions on the environment and the importance of public involvement in shorelines management. Opportunities incorporating educational and interpretive information should be pursued in design and operation of recreation facilities and nature trails.  *(SMP-SU-56)*
10. Cooperative efforts among public and private persons toward the acquisition and/or development of suitable recreation sites or facilities should be explored to assure long-term availability of sufficient public sites to meet local recreation needs.  *(SMP-SU-58)*

**GOAL 9.3.2** The waterfront should be preserved and protected to enhance public use.

**POLICIES:**

1. Boat docks and marinas should be encouraged; however, these activities are not to be construed as the sole resource of the waterfront.
2. Public access to the water is required and should be provided for new municipal and commercial development.
3. Viewing decks and similar pedestrian-oriented structures are needed and should be constructed in the urban waterfront area.
4. A waterfront bicycle and walking path should be constructed.
5. Beach access should be identified and developed. This should be integrated with waterfront trail system.

**EXCERPTS FROM THE PORT ORCHARD SHORELINE MASTER PROGRAM**

1. Promote and enhance the public interest with regard to rights to access waters held in public trust by the state while protecting private property rights and public safety. *(SMP-GP-20)*
2. Protect the rights of navigation and commerce, and the space necessary for water-dependent uses. *(SMP-GP-21)*
3. Protect the public’s opportunities to enjoy the physical and aesthetic qualities of the shorelines, including views of the water, to the greatest extent feasible. *(SMP-GP-22)*
4. Regulate the design, construction, and operation of permitted uses in the shorelines of the state to minimize, insofar as practical, interference with the public’s use of the water. *(SMP-GP-23)*
5. The City shall retain and protect existing shoreline parks, trails, and other opportunities for the public to access and enjoy the Sinclair Inlet shoreline and to view the shoreline and water views from public property and roadways. *(SMP-GP-25)*
6. The City shall not vacate any public right-of-way that abuts or connects to shorelines, unless the use of such right-of-way for shoreline access is determined to present a public health or safety risk that would prevent such use for access. *(SMP-GP-29)*