

Comprehensive Plan - Natural Environment Chapter Draft Update

Summary - Social Justice & Equity Commission Briefing, June 24, 2024

Question/Comment	Response
Encampments and illicit activities in natural areas create barriers to accessing parks (perceived safety concerns).	Referenced new policy language addressing issue as it relates to water quality: "PN5.4 Minimize the location and impacts of encampments on water bodies and other sensitive natural areas while reducing health and safety risks to persons experiencing homelessness." Otherwise comment referred to Parks chapter.
Trees are creating accessibility/mobility challenges for people with physical disabilities, due to sidewalk damage.	Referenced sidewalk assessment project currently in progress aimed at addressing such issues. Topic better suited to Transportation chapter
How is the City planning for earthquakes?	Topic better suited to Land Use chapter language addressing geologic/seismic activity, and Public Safety chapter.
Does the chapter address a need to reduce overall trash and pollution in the City?	Yes - specifically regarding water pollution (also addressed in Utilities-Stormwater chapter), and air pollution. Trash in general is addressed in Utilities-Solid Waste Management section.
Did the City engage with environmental organizations for input?	Yes - we received input on the draft chapter from non-profit environmental organizations, state environmental agencies, and the Squaxin Island Tribe (detailed list of community engagement activities included as attachment in Staff Report).
Did the City engage with youth?	Yes - Ideas, comments, and concerns about the environment were captured by 6th, 7th, and 8th graders during Middle School Stormwater Week and considered/incorporated. Youth of all ages were included in community engagement during tabling events and public meetings.
How can the City do a better job of reaching folks who aren't accessing our parks and natural areas out of fear/discomfort being in those spaces?	This was a thoughtful and compelling discussion, with no clear answer as the issue is a result of systemic oppression and historic violence against people with marginalized identities. Comment also referred to Parks chapter.
What is the Stormwater Equity Index?	A GIS-based mapping tool developed for the Stormwater Utility to assist in high-level service equity decision-making. Helps to align the City with WA State HEAL Act and Department of Ecology requirements to address overburdened communities in our stormwater management planning and implementation.
Appreciation for the overarching shift in messaging across the chapter, moving toward balance and reciprocity between a healthy natural environment and a thriving, livable city	Gratitude for the comment; this was a substantial update to the chapter that formerly focused on aesthetic beauty, and was a result of many cumulative related comments from both City staff across departments as well as the public.